

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

GOAL: MAKE STUDENTS' THINKING VISIBLE FOR EVERY CLASS, EVERY DAY, EVERY 5 MINUTES.

Engagement – the observable evidence of a learner's interest and active involvement in all lesson content and related tasks, involving concrete, visible responses. (Pulse and Respiration do not count!) EVERYONE DOES EVERYTHING!

Visible Responses – saying something, writing something, doing something!

Dazzling Ideas

Dazzling Idea #1: Most of the brain is activated during physical activity (even just standing or moving arms) – much more so than when doing seatwork. Movement increases activity in blood vessels that allow for the delivery of oxygen, water, and glucose (“brain food”) to the brain. This can't help but optimize the brain's performance! (Jensen, 1995)

Dazzling Idea #2: Physical movement releases acetylcholine, a brain-chemical involved in communication between neurons. This brain-chemical aids in the planning and retrieval of long-term memory. Movement helps cement memory! (Jones, 2002)

Let's focus on increasing the amount of movement your students do in response to academic instruction. Standing, moving arms, or even giving “thumbs up” signals can help improve learning and memory!

Remember...

- Engagement is not about how funny or intense the teacher is. It's about what the students are saying, writing, or doing.
- Inspect what you expect. If you expect everyone to move, make sure each of them is moving!

Moving or “Doing” Related to Instruction

Instead of:	Try this:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking only students who are raising their hands to answer questions... 	<p>Expect a physical response to a question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thumbs Up, Down, or Sideways • “On the Count of Three, Stand Up if you Agree” • Response Cards (Yes/No, Letters, Numbers) to hold up • Air Write the answer • Point to the answer in the book and show a neighbor where you’re pointing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practicing Spelling Words by writing only... 	<p>Use physical actions to practice spelling words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students spell out words by making letters with their bodies (can be done with a partner). • Try “Spelling Hot Potato”, “Beach Ball Toss”, or “Chaos” (See attached explanations.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practicing Vocabulary only orally or in writing... 	<p>Use activities and dramatizations to practice vocabulary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When possible, have students act out or pantomime vocabulary words. • Play “Charades” with vocabulary words. • Play “Swat That Word” or “Frozen Vocabulary”. (See attached.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecturing only... 	<p>Incorporate more demonstrations and modeling in your instruction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for volunteers to help you demonstrate. • Ask for students to model an instructional task.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orally retelling stories only... 	<p>Incorporate dramatization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students act out or pantomime favorite parts of the story. (It doesn’t have to be rehearsed and “fancy”.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only making sounds that correspond to a letter... 	<p>Teach students actions/gestures that they can do along with the oral sound (See attached.).</p>

Movement Activities to Practice Spelling Words

Spelling Hot Potato

You will need one ball, no smaller than a tennis ball and no larger than a basketball. The teacher will gather up the students in an open area of the room/school. They will then be instructed to sit in a circle facing the center. The ball will be randomly given to one of the students. That student will then be given one word from the spelling list (or the teacher can give the word). The student with the ball will state the first letter of the word. Then that child will gently pass or roll the ball to another child who will add the next letter to the preceding one. This will continue until the word is spelled correctly.

Beach Ball Toss

You will need a beach ball or a bag ball for this activity. Have the teacher begin by stating a spelling word and then tossing the ball to a student who will spell the entire word and then toss the ball back to the teacher. (This can be played with any concept – vocabulary word/definition, state/capital, basic fact/answer, etc.)

Chaos

You will need to have each letter for each word in your spelling list represented on notecards or flashcards. Paper clip the letters for each word together. (Put the letters in random order.) The number of letters for each word should be written on top of that group of letters. (This is the number of students you will need for each word.) You will need masking tape lines on the floor, (or use tile squares on the floor if you have them) to make lines anywhere from 12” to 3” wide, depending on the age or challenge level. (The thinner the lines, the more challenging the activity.) Assign the appropriate number of students for each word and have them line up side by side on their line. Pass the word to the first person in the line. Each student takes the top letter as they are passed down the line. When you give the signal, the students in each group have to figure out what the word is and then arrange themselves in the correct spelling order without stepping off of the line.

Movement Activities to Practice Vocabulary Words

Swat That Word

You will need two fly swatters, a chalkboard, and a vocabulary list with definitions. To play this game, simply write all of the vocabulary words on the whiteboard in a block pattern. The teacher is to keep the copy of all of the words and their corresponding definitions. Divide the class in half to form two teams. Give each team a fly swatter. Have the class line up in two single file lines in front of the whiteboard. The first one in each line begins at the whiteboard. The teacher reads a definition and when the student knows the answer, he/she hits the right word on the whiteboard with the fly swatter. Whoever hits the word first earns a point for his/her team. Both students then pass the fly swatters to the next person in line and those students do the same thing as the teacher continues through the vocabulary list.

Frozen Vocabulary

No materials are necessary for this activity. Before beginning make sure students are at least an arms length away from each other and have enough room for movement. Begin by having your students do an activity in place next to their desks. This can include jogging in place, jumping jacks, toe touches, etc. They will continue the physical activity until you call out a vocabulary word, at which point they have to “freeze”. They may not resume activity until someone uses the word properly in a sentence.

Letter	Word/Gesture Cues for Alphabet Letters (tied to HM Journeys when possible)
a	apple – Hold an “apple” in front of you and “sweep” the “apple” across the front of you while saying /a/. (Hold out the short a sound.)
b	bear and ball – Pretend you are a bear bouncing a ball when you say /b/, /b/, /b/.
c	cat - Pretend you are a cat. Hold up your claws and say /k/, /k/, /k/.
d	duck – Pretend you are a duck. Flap your wings and say /d/, /d/, /d/, or dig – Pretend you are holding a shovel and are digging while you say /d/, /d/, /d/
e	echo – Put your hand up next to your mouth and pretend you are going to make an echo in the mountains while you say /e-e-e-e-cho. (Hold out the short e sound). (Note: HM uses “elephant”, but most researchers do not recommend this because the /l/ sound following the /e/ can be confusing.)
f	fish – Pretend you are a fish. Make “fins” with your arms and pretend you’re swimming in place while you say /f-f-f-f-f-f/.
g	goose – Pretend you are a goose. Hold your neck high and say /g/ /g/ /g/.
h	horse – Pretend you are a horse that has just finished galloping. You are out of breath! Breath out while you say /h/ /h/ /h/.
i	iguana – Pretend you are an iguana with an itch . If you have an itch, you scratch it. Scratch your arm and say /i/ (Hold out the short /i/ sound.)
j	jump – Jump up high when you say /j/.
k	kangaroo – Pretend you are a kissing kangaroo. Blow kisses when you say /k/ /k/ /k/.
l	lion – Pretend you are a lion licking a lollipop while you say /l-l-l-l-l-l-l-l/. (Students should keep the tips of their tongues just behind the top set of teeth when making this sound.)
m	mouse – Pretend you are a mouse eating some yummy cheese. Rub your tummy while you say /m-m-m-m-m-m-m/.
n	noodle – Pretend you are a noodle with a necktie . Pull your necktie tight around your neck while you say /n-n-n-n-n-n-n/.
o	octopus – Make an octopus out of your hand, and make it swim while you say /o/ (Hold out the short o sound.)
p	pig – Pretend you are a panting pig running away from the Big Bad Wolf. Say /p/ /p/ /p/ while you try to catch your breath.
qu	queen – Pretend you are a queen, and put a crown on your head while you say /kw/. Remember: Q and U stick together like glue.
r	rooster – Crow like a rooster when you say /r-r-r-r-r-r-r/.
s	seal – Pretend you are a seal and swim through the water while you say /s-s-s-s-s-s/, or snake –I sound like a snake when a make the sound /s-s-s-s-s-s/.
t	tiger – Pretend you are a tapping tiger . Hold some sticks and tap on the floor while you say /t/ /t/ /t/.
u	umbrella going up – Pretend you have an umbrella. Open it up while you say /u/ (Hold out the short u sound).
v	volcano – Pretend the lava in your volcano is boiling. Vibrate your body and say /v-v-v-v/ while it boils!
w	wiggly worm - Wiggle like a worm while you say /w/ /w/ /w/.
x	X-ray - Put your arms out and pretend they’re long bones. Hit them together, making an “X” with your arms while you make the /ks/ sound.
y	yo-yo – Pretend you have a yo-yo in your hand. Make it go down and up while you say /y/ /y/ /y/.
z	zebra - Pretend you are a zebra with a zipper . Put your hands all the way down to your toes and pretend you are zipping your striped fur coat while saying /z-z-z-z-z/.