

Microlearning for Teachers

(5 minutes total)

High-Leverage Practice 18

HLP 18: Use strategies to promote active student engagement.

Why It Matters

Active student engagement is a prerequisite for learning. When students are cognitively, behaviorally, and emotionally engaged, they have more opportunities to practice skills and receive feedback. This includes additional chances to make meaning of new content. Research shows that engagement increases when instruction is explicit, culturally responsive, and interactive—especially when students have frequent opportunities to respond and see clear connections between learning and their own lives. Purposeful engagement strategies help educators sustain attention, reduce off-task behavior, and create classrooms where all learners can participate meaningfully.

Try This Tomorrow

Review one upcoming lesson and intentionally embed engagement strategies.

- **Plan Opportunities to Respond (OTR):**

Build in frequent, structured opportunities for all students to respond (e.g., choral responses, response cards, whiteboards, or digital polls). Active responding increases academic achievement and on-task behavior.

- **Use Explicit Instruction with Engagement Routines:**

Follow a clear lesson structure (I do, We do, You do) and embed checks for understanding, guided practice, and immediate feedback. Explicit instruction supports engagement through clarity, modeling, and feedback.

- **Connect Content to Students' Lives:**

Incorporate examples, scenarios, or questions that reflect students' cultures, interests, and real-world experiences. Culturally Inclusive Pedagogical Practices (CIPP) improve motivation and relevance.

- **Vary Engagement Formats:**

Balance teacher-led strategies (think-alouds), peer-assisted strategies (turn-and-talk, partner problem-solving), and student-regulated strategies (goal setting, self-checks). Multiple engagement modalities sustain attention and deepen learning.

Look-fors in the Classroom

You will know it's working when:

Most students are responding frequently and visibly during instruction—not just a few volunteers.

Students remain on task because expectations, routines, and lesson pacing are clear.

Teachers provide timely, specific, and positive feedback that sustains effort.

Lessons include a mix of whole-group, peer, and independent engagement strategies.

Students demonstrate increased confidence, participation, and understanding over time.

Student-Facing Learning Support Template

(Aligned to HLP 18 | Stay Actively Engaged in Learning)

Today's Learning Goal

I am learning:

This matters because:

First: I Get Ready to Learn (Engagement Plan)

Today, I will stay engaged by:

- ☐ Listening for key ideas
- ☐ Participating when asked
- ☐ Trying even when it feels challenging
- ☐ Asking questions when I'm unsure
- ☐ Connecting the learning to my life

One goal I have for my engagement today:

Next: I Actively Participate (During the Lesson)

Ways I showed engagement today:

- ☐ Responded to questions (out loud, writing, or signals)
- ☐ Used whiteboards, notes, or response tools
- ☐ Talked with a partner or group
- ☐ Followed along during modeling or examples
- ☐ Practiced during guided work

One way I actively participated:

Then: I Check My Understanding (Practice & Feedback)

What helped me learn today:

- ☐ Teacher feedback
- ☐ Partner discussion
- ☐ Seeing examples
- ☐ Practicing step-by-step
- ☐ Asking for help

One thing I understand better now:

Quick Engagement Self-Check

Right now, I would say:

- ☐ I stayed focused and participated
- ☐ I participated some of the time
- ☐ I need to work on staying engaged

One thing that helped me stay engaged:

After Learning (Reflection and Transfer)

One engagement strategy I will use again:

One way I can be more engaged next time: