

What Is Engagement? (Independent Learning)

UNDERSTAND (Why?)

Teaching students what it means to be engaged helps them understand how to participate fully in their learning, leading to better comprehension and retention of information.

PREPARE (Students)

Let's talk about the word engagement. Being engaged means paying attention and being involved in what we're learning. It looks like raising your hand to ask or answer questions, sharing your ideas, and really focusing on activities so you can learn and have fun at the same time.

TEACH (Explicitly)

When we're engaged, we pay attention, ask questions, and share our ideas. (Write the word Engagement on the board and add some simple drawings or icons, like an ear for listening, a hand for raising, a speech bubble for sharing ideas.)

Being engaged looks like listening carefully when someone is speaking, actively thinking in your mind, raising your hand to ask and answer questions, and sharing your ideas with the class. I want you to think of a time when you felt really interested and focused during a lesson or activity. What were you doing that showed you were engaged? (Call on students to share with the group or have them all share with a partner.) **Under the word Engagement, I am going to write down some of the examples I heard you share.** (On a chart write engaged, and under that write some of the ideas you heard.)

Now I'm going to read you a story. As I read, I want you to listen carefully and think about the characters and what is happening. AND, I want you to think about how you are engaged. After the story, we'll revisit what we read and discuss how engaged we were. (Read a short, interesting story to the class.) **When we are engaged, we usually can tell what happened in the story and we know about the characters. Turn to your partner and share something about the story and the characters.** (Pause for students to share.) **Now, think about how you were engaged as we read the story. What behaviors of engagement did you use? Turn and talk to your partner and discuss how you were engaged.** (Pause for students to share.)

Now we are going to work in small groups to make posters that show what being engaged looks like. These posters will help us remember what engagement is. You can draw pictures or write examples of engaged behavior, like listening, asking or answering questions, and sharing ideas. (After groups finish, have each group share their poster with the class.)

Let's think about what we learned today. Think, were you able to stay engaged? What helped you pay attention and get involved? Now I want you to think of one thing you will do to stay more engaged in your learning. It could be something like, "I will raise my hand to answer questions" or "I will listen carefully when someone is speaking." (Pause to give students time

to think. Then, have a few students share their goals with the class.) **Today, we learned about being engaged. Engagement means paying attention, asking or answering questions, and sharing your ideas. You were very focused while practicing these behaviors! We will keep working on our engagement goals this week and throughout the year, and we'll check in to see how we are doing. Remember, being engaged helps us learn and have more fun!**

SUPPORT (Pivots)

- It may help to also explain the other two levels of engagement. When learning or completing a task, a person can be engaged (as discussed here), passive (compliant in behaviors, giving little or no effort to learning or the task), or disengaged (off task, disruptive).
- Give each student a small journal where they can reflect on their engagement at the end of each day. Prompt them with questions like, “What was one way you showed you were engaged today?” or “What was something you did today that helped you stay focused?” You can also include a section for setting daily engagement goals. Reviewing these journals weekly can help students become more mindful of their engagement and identify areas for improvement.

CONTINUUM OF ENGAGEMENT

DISENGAGED	PASSIVE	ENGAGED
Disrupting Avoiding the work Off task Playing around	Compliant Low effort Lack initiative Withdrawn	Asking questions Answering questions Showing interest Investing in learning Setting goals Seeking feedback Self-Assessing

Adapted and based on Amy Berry’s research on teachers’ perceptions of engagement (Berry, 2022)