

# Active Engagement Strategies

## Give 1, Get 1

1. **Description**-Students fold a paper. In the right column they write 'Give 1' and in the left they write 'Get 1'. Students brainstorm a list of all things they already know about the topic and write down their ideas under the 'Give 1' column, then share information with their peers. When sharing they are to write any information they didn't have in the 'Get 1' column. They are to then add to the 'Get 1' column as they learn and then, at the conclusion of the lesson, check over their lists and cross off any inaccuracies.
2. **Description in Context**-This is a collaborative activity that raises students' awareness and increases what they already know. It could be used before a new concept/idea is presented, at the beginning of a lesson to help students think about what they will be learning and then again use it at the end of the lesson for students to check accuracy. This can be used for fiction or nonfiction text.
3. **Suggested Use**-Used to activate prior knowledge at the beginning of a lesson and build upon their individual schema to assist students in organizing the information they already have in their brains and to make connections.

## Clock Buddies

1. **Description**-A quick way to create pairs for partners. A clock with a blank line on each hour is distributed. Students can't use the same partner twice and all spaces must be used.
2. **Description in Context**-Students are instructed to form an inner and outer circle. The inner circle pairs with the student across from them in the outer circle. The outer circle moves one to the right and new pairs are formed.
3. **Suggested Use**-To complete review questions, paired reading, think aloud check lists, to review or edit one another's work, summarize information or text presented, think-pair-share, preview and make predictions about text, and develop test questions.

## Praise, Question, Polish

1. **Description**-Students exchange written pieces of work, read it carefully and make comments. They should praise it and find at least one thing (and preferably more) praiseworthy about the paper, next question it and point out at least one thing in the paper about which you may have a question, and finally polish it and point out at least one thing that could make the paper better.
2. **Description in Context**-Anything that is a written piece of work. For example, book reports, essays, open-ended question responses (PSSA prep questions), and letters.
3. **Suggested Use**-Used for peer editing and then revision.

## **Last Student Standing**

1. **Description**-Write prefixes on index cards. For example, these words have a prefix that means..... You then mix up the index cards. Students can be sitting/standing, come up and pick a card, read the prefix and then come up with a word that contains that prefix. Students that give an incorrect answer sit down until there is only one student standing.
2. **Description in Context**-Students will clarify the parts of the word to help in figuring out how to pronounce the word and its meaning.
3. **Suggested Use**-Math prefixes, when introducing new vocabulary, when having to define a word, when having to fix a problem, in understanding text.

## **Group Test Taking for Practice**

1. **Description**-Allows students to take a test collaboratively. Through this students will be sharing their strategies for attacking test question and the process they use in figuring out the correct answer/response.
2. **Description in Context**-Could be used in all subject areas.
3. **Suggested Use**-Test practice, sharing of test-taking strategies, as a review before the assessment, and to practice working collaboratively as a team.

## **Numbered Heads Together**

1. **Description**-Cooperative learning strategy that holds each student accountable for learning the material. Students are put into groups, each person is given a number dependent upon number of students in the group, teacher poses a question, and students put their heads together to figure it out. The teacher calls a random number to be the spokesperson for the group. Because no one knows which number will be called this strategy ensures that all members of the group are accountable for the answer.
2. **Description in Context**-Could be used in all subject areas. Start with more simple questions and scaffold to higher level thinking questions.
3. **Suggested Use**-When reviewing, answering questions related to text, before, during, or after reading.

## **Each 1, Teach 1**

1. **Description**-Allows students to become part of instruction by sharing their knowledge with their peers. Each student is given an index with a fact or a piece of information from what was taught. Each student has ten minutes to teach, verbally and individually, as many other students as he or she can about the fact or piece of information he was given. He or she is to also listen in order to learn facts/information from other students.
2. **Description in Context**-Could be used in all subject areas.
3. **Suggested Use**-When learning new vocabulary terms, events in history, describe a process in math or science

## **Total Physical Response**

1. **Description**-Teaching language through the use of physical movement and to react to what the teacher says in order to reduce anxiety and increase retention. Students are coming up with motions to represent words/terms/concepts from text.
2. **Description in Context**-Pick five words in from a nonfiction text and come up with hand motions to represent the word. Students are able to demonstrate how they make sense of the word by using movement/motion instead of words.
3. **Suggested Use**-Learning vocabulary, teaching processes, steps to solving problems (math-science), remembering order of events (social studies).

## **Strategy: Four Corners**

1. **Description/Definition**-Students in one corner exchange opinions or reasoning of controversial questions or issues and summarize their reasoning for presentation to the other three corners.
2. **Content**-Label four corners of the room with strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. Teacher asks question or issue to discuss. Students take a stand by choosing a corner. Students in each corner summarize their reasoning for their stand to present to the other three corners.
3. **Activity duration**-15-20 min.
4. **Uses**-Social studies, language arts, science to review factual questions, state and defend opinions.

**\*\*Example:** When reviewing facts for a test, one student gives an answer and the rest of the class either agrees, disagrees, strongly agrees, or strongly disagrees. They then have to defend their position (or corner) to come up with the correct answer as a group.

**\*\*Alternate Example:** When asking higher level questions, students can give opinions and defend them while other students will choose a corner whether they agree, disagree, strongly agree and strongly disagree and defend their opinions.

### **Strategy: Alphabet Summary**

1. **Description/Definition**-Coming up with facts or words that begin with each letter of the alphabet relating to the topic being studied.
2. **Content**-At the end of an explanation or demonstration, give each student a different letter of the alphabet and ask students to think of one word or idea beginning with that letter that is connected to the topic just concluded. Use the responses for a whole class discussion review. Make it a more challenging activity by having them each (or in groups come) up with a word for every letter of the alphabet. (Use as many letters as possible-groups or individuals that use the most letters receives a reward)
3. **Activity Duration**-30 minutes.
4. **Uses**-In language arts come up with character traits of the main character. In social studies or science, words or phrases that relate to the current topic. In mathematics, students come up with math terms for the letter of the alphabet.

### **Strategy: Roll Call**

1. **Description/Definition**-Used to enhance something discussed or learned the day or week before. Makes every student accountable for giving input. When roll calling, students respond with a term, fact or vocabulary word. It can also be used to challenge a student to come up with the next step in an activity that requires sequencing.
2. **Content**-Before calling roll, explain to the students the required response. When introducing new terms, vocab., geographical areas, raw materials, and numbers, you can give students the task of guessing the phylum, the definition, a bordering country, place of origin or equation that will render the given answer.
3. **Activity Duration**-10 minutes.
4. **Uses**-This can be used in various subject areas. In mathematics, give a number that is a multiple of 4, an odd number or prime number. etc. In language arts, give a vocab. word and brief definition, character, important event from the current story OR sequence events in a story. In science or social studies, give a fact about...

### **Strategy: Ticket to Leave (Exit Slip)**

1. **Description/Definition**-A formative type of assessment for the teacher to check the understanding of the day's topic.
2. **Content**-A student must hand in a slip or index card or give an oral response with a fact or question from the day's lesson.
3. **Activity Duration**-3-5 minutes.
4. **Uses**-Can be used in any subject area to ensure student understanding. Spelling: As each student prepares to leave, ask him/her to spell a word from the day's list. In science or social studies, the student can write a fact or a question they may have concerning the day's lesson. The teacher can use this to reteach or move ahead the next day. In mathematics, "give me a statement explaining how to... or a question you have about today's lesson".

### **Strategy: Inside-Outside Circles**

1. **Description/Definition**-Students exchanging information from the previous day's lesson or unit thus far.
2. **Content**-Organize students into groups of six (three students standing in a circle facing out and three students forming a circle facing in). Each student faces another student. Direct each pair to exchange information related to yesterday's lesson or unit thus far. You may provide questions to get them started. Students are then asked to rotate to face new partner and choose a different topic or question.
3. **Activity Duration**-10-20 minutes.
4. **Uses**-In language arts, discuss theme of story, plot, sequence, characters or vocabulary. In science or social studies, relate facts to current topic. In mathematics, give steps to complete a particular problem or formula to solve. In spelling, each student asks their facing partner how to spell a word; then rotate.

### **Strategy: Turn to your Neighbor and ...**

1. **Description/Definition**-Stimulating dialogue between pairs of students in your class about a current topic or specific question.
2. **Content**-Write a statement on the board and ask students to turn to their neighbor and see if he or she agrees with the statement. If there is disagreement, students must use the previous class assignment to prove the point.
3. **Activity Duration**-3-5 minutes.
4. **Uses**-Any statement from any subject area that requires students to agree or disagree and explain or defend their position (could also be an equation, formula, diagram or photograph). Write the statements on the board and ask the students to turn to their partners and then

### **Strategy: Jumbled Summary**

1. **Description/Definition**-Gives students the opportunity to unscramble the terms, key words, or phrases that are presented to them in random order.
2. **Content**-Write key words or phrases from an explanation or introduction in random order on a photocopied paper. Following a presentation, the pairs of students unscramble the terms and reorder them in logical sequence by cutting and pasting or numbering them in the correct order.
3. **Activity Duration**-5-10 minutes.
4. **Uses**-In language arts, after reading a story put the events in the correct sequence. In math, put the steps to solving a particular type of problem in order. In social studies, put the history of events in the correct order on a time line. In science, put the steps of the water cycle in order.

### **Strategy: Mix and Match**

1. **Description/Definition**-Gives students the opportunity to get up and move around by finding their 'match' to terms or words.
2. **Content**-A set of students is each given an index card with a term, word or problem written on it. Another set of students is each given an index card with the definition, synonym/antonym for the other word or answer to a problem. The students have to mingle around the room to find their 'match'.
3. **Activity Duration**-10-15 minutes.
4. **Uses**-In mathematics, write problems on one set of cards and answers on the others. Students with problem cards must find the student with the correct answer to the problem. In science and social studies, write vocabulary definitions on one set and the vocabulary words on another set and have students find their match. In language arts, write a homophone such as blue, blew, to, too, and two etc. on one set of cards and their respective meanings on another set of cards. Have students find the correct match, or write a set of vocab. words on one set of cards and write the synonyms or antonyms on another set and students have to find their match.

### **Strategy: Stump the Teacher or Stump the Chump**

1. **Definition/Description**-After a reading passage or after a unit or section of student, have your students formulate questions that they ask you. By having your students behave like teachers, you are empowering them and requiring them to process the material more deeply. They get to ask you the questions they develop. If they stump you, the students get a point. If you answer correctly, you get a point. These points can be used creatively to further motivate students. The sky is the limit.

2. **Strategy in Context**-First, you will need to spend some up front time talking about question writing. I recommend that you model this for your students. Otherwise, you will get questions that focus on minutiae that are both meaningless and impossible to answer. Second, this strategy lends itself to factual recall of content, which is important, but not the only type of questions we want our students to ask. This strategy would be difficult to use when you want your students to formulate higher level questions. Another idea is to use the questions they create on tests or quizzes; this further engages and empowers students.
3. **When to use**-This strategy is great for reviewing content that you have taught. It is also excellent to help student prepare for quizzes and tests.

### **Strategy: Can O' Sticks**

1. **Definition/Description**-Can o' Sticks is a formative assessment technique used to check understanding. One way to make it work is to number each of the desks in your room and then have corresponding numbers written on craft sticks that are stored in a can on your desk. As you ask questions, you randomly pull a stick and the student whose number is chosen is responsible for answering the question.
2. **Strategy in Context**-Asking students to raise hands to answer questions can lead to a large number of the students in your class out of the conversation. After all, it is easy to be passive if you are allowed. Can o' Sticks can remedy this. When you are reviewing for a test or quiz, when you are discussing a reading assignment, or when you are solving math or science problems you can use this random method of choosing a student to keep all of your students "on their toes".
3. **When to use**-Any time you ask a question to your whole group.

### **Strategy: Roll Call**

1. **Description/Definition**-The Roll Call is often used at the beginning of class as a warm-up or at the end of class as closure. It lends itself to questions that have many answers. Generally, the teacher poses a question to the class then, one by one, calls out the name of each member of class for their answer. Each member of the class must supply a different answer because, as the teacher, you have one answer to this question in mind. Whoever guesses your answer gets some reward.
2. **Strategy in Context**-One way to use this is when you have a list of something that you want students to memorize. For example, "I am thinking of a chemical element, try to guess which one." Then as you take roll and call on each student, they give you an element. At the end, assuming at least one student selected the element you picked, that student or those students get some sort of reward, perhaps two or three points on a quiz, for example.
3. **When to Use**-Any time you have questions in which there are many answers. Examples: elements, presidents, states and capitals, etc...

## **Strategy: Think-pair-share**

1. **Definition/Description**-The think-pair-share (TPS) requires the teacher to ask a question or pose a problem followed by a brief period of time (2-3 minutes, maybe even less depending on the question) for students to THINK by themselves. As they think alone, they can be encouraged to write notes down regarding their thoughts, etc... They then PAIR with a partner, usually their nearest neighbor, and each member of the partnership SHARES their response with their partner. During this sharing, the students should be noting the similarities, differences, errors, strengths, weaknesses, etc... of each other's responses. Finally, the teacher randomly calls on a pair or pairs of students to SHARE their responses with the whole class.
1. **Strategy in Context**-The TPS can be as simple as a pair of students turning to talk to one another to share thoughts on a question or as extensive as described above. The point is that it can be used any time a teacher poses a question or problem to the entire class. It forces the students to process the problem by thinking and then verbalizing. They cannot 'check out'. It is imperative that, as students are discussing in pairs, the teacher monitor the conversations and hold the expectation that the conversations are related to the topic. As you begin to use TPS, it is best to teach the expected behavior through modeling and practice.
2. **When to Use**-Any time the teacher presents a question or problem to the entire class.