



SIES School of Learning and Leadership Development (SISSLDD)

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on

**Seven Strategies Educators Should Follow
To Keep Students Engaged**

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SIES School of Learning and Leadership Development (SISSLDD),
SIES Education Complex, Plot 1E, Sector-5, Nerul

Navi Mumbai-400 706

Backdrop:

Keeping students engaged inside the classroom in educational institutions has been a matter of considerable research all over the world. The word engagement used here implies “active engagement”, meaning thereby the learners are both physically and mentally present and involved in the classroom activities while the session is on. The shrinking attention span of today’s generation coupled with technological explosion towards availability of free educational ocean of information with click of a button has been making the job of teachers difficult. Educators all over the world have, therefore, been in constant search for innovative strategies to find new ways of keeping the students both involved as well as engaged in the classroom.

Seven Major Strategies to Keep Students Engaged:

Strategies are always contextual; they depend on the level of course, mix of students and subject. Expected outcomes also influence the underlying strategy to some extent.

Seven major strategies that can be used by the educators to enhance student engagement are given below:

1. **Creating a conducive learning environment:** An educator must create an environment in the class, which is inclusive, free from intimidation, loving, and caring where all are respected and can participate. Such an ambience is necessary for free participation and expression of views even by the most introvert student. This is the first step towards creating emotional connectivity and active engagement by the students.
2. **Catering to the needs of all types of learners:** Different students have varying learning styles. A good teacher should cater to the unique learning style of a specific cluster of students; these include visual learners (who learn through various visual means including images), auditory learners (whose focus of attention is through different types of sound including music) or kinesthetic learners (who rely to learn from practical experiences / experiments). This special focus enables the differing categories of students to pay attention and remain engaged with the classroom deliberations.

3. **Engaging distinct learners:** There could be certain students inside the classroom who are new to the subject / course altogether and have no background at all or may be “specially abled”. It is the duty of the teacher to identify such students and adopt special techniques. For example, students coming to a business management post-graduate with a science background would need special remedial / bridge course of certain subjects like Accounting or Economics to bring them to the level of students with Commerce background. Similarly, special classes need be run for “specially abled students” to bring them to the minimal standards and they should always be attended to properly.
4. **Being flexible:** A good teacher is always flexible and able to move up or down according to the level / reach of students or complexity of the subject. This ability of flexibility is crucial for engagement as a good teacher should understand the needs / expectations of students and change his / her delivery depending on the requirements and expertise of the target group. The teacher should also try to be equal, if not ahead, of the students in terms of knowledge and application of technology.
5. **Driving through communication:** Communications particularly by the teacher play a crucial role in improving the quality of discussions in the classroom. It is not enough to know the subject; it is equally important how good a teacher is at communicating the content to achieve the desired outcome. The quality of transmission and level of attention span of the students depends on how good a teacher can communicate effectively with empathy and active listening. The movement of the teacher inside the classroom also assumes importance in this context.
6. **Following active engagement strategies:** According to research, students usually do not learn from books. They learn more from experiences they undergo as these provide a practical application and reinforce the theoretical framework. Thus, teachers often use various immersion / experiential techniques like experimentation, role plays, case studies, business simulation, VR/AR, industry visits, etc. to engage students actively by experiencing and learning therefrom. The teachers worldwide use these experiential

techniques to keep the students attracted to the classroom as well as facilitate them to learn by their own. The teachers assume the role “facilitators” rather than “transmitters”.

7. **Developing relationships outside classroom:** It is often believed that the role of a teacher is much more than inside a classroom set up. How he / she behaves with the students outside the classroom is equally important to make the classroom more attractive for the students. Research has often proved that the teachers who are sound human beings outside the classroom and show good behavior are often more accepted as teachers inside the classroom and students remain more engaged in the classrooms of such teachers. They are considered as “mentors” and “role models” and become “inspirational teachers” for generations of students.

Conclusion:

Keeping the students engaged is a matter of concern as well as a subject of ongoing research in the educational parlance. New generations of students are different and so are their expectations. The strategies discussed above may help the new generation teachers to adopt some of them to become more effective in the classroom. However, there is no one answer to this complex issue, and a teacher has to find his / her own ways to involve the students to keep the classroom engaged.
