

# SPACE | Strategies Promoting Active Class Engagement

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## Rationale:

The goal for all teachers is to make the classroom a place for an active community of learners, where they have fun teaching, and their students have fun learning.

One of the biggest challenges in teaching is in activating response and reaction from students. This is one reason why it is more convenient for teachers to be behaviorist and be didactic, where the sharing of information is one-way; than it is for teachers to be constructivist, where they strive to bring out the experiences of the students, or let the students work together, if they are too shy to come out of their shells.

This presentation gives practical tips on how to make the students feel successful in a language class; hence, making them feel more confident in interacting with the teacher, with the lesson, and with the other learners.

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## Critical Teaching Skills for Promoting Active Participation

Active participation, also called active student responding (Salend, 2011), and active student engagement (Cohen and Spenciner, 2009), involves students in lessons or activities by talking, writing, or doing something-usually overt--that is directly related to the content of the lesson or activity.



### Active participation:

**student responding**  
(Salend, 2011)

**active student engagement**  
(Cohen and Spenciner, 2009)

Any technique that a teacher uses to bring about the involvement of all students is an active participation strategy. Most lessons and activities eventually involve all students in active practice or processing of some sort. However, it is very important that teachers provide students with opportunities to actively respond right from the start.

### Importance of Active Participation

**A**ttentive  
**C**ompetent  
**E**ngaged



## Importance of Active Participation

several reasons. First, using these strategies keeps students engaged, making them more likely to learn, retain, and process the information presented. Next, various active participation

Strategies for active participation provide students with opportunities to respond, and are valuable for

strategies allow the teacher to check for understanding early and often during instruction. When students are involved in lessons or activities are made interactive through the use of active participation strategies, they are also more likely to be attentive, less

likely to be off-task, and more likely to feel good about their competence (Lewis and Doorlag, 2006).

### Characteristics of an Effective MODE of RESPONSE (MOR)

**C**LEAR  
**C**ONSISTENT  
**C**oncentric  
**MOR** → **C**omes first



### Considerations for SPACE

**C**lose contact  
**A**ssessment  
**R**e-engagement  
**V**isibility  
**E**quality  
**S**ound



### Types of Strategies

**R**ehearsal  
**I**nvolved  
**P**rocessing



# REHEARSAL STRATEGIES

The goal of rehearsal strategies is to give students a chance to practice or rehearse new information. The following are some examples of how to achieve this goal:

1. Ask a question, and then ask students to say the answer to their neighbor.
2. Ask partners to take turns summarizing, defining terms, or giving examples.



**Strategies 1 and 2 work well when you ask questions that require somewhat longer answers.**

**They are also effective when many students are eager to speak but there is not enough time to call on each student individually.**

3. Ask everyone to write down an answer on paper, on a small blackboard, or on a dry-erase board. Then have them hold it up so you can see it. For example, tell everyone to write an adjective that describes your chair.
4. Ask students to respond using student response cards or other objects. Say, "Hold up the green card if the word is a "noun" or "hold up the isosceles triangle" (Heward et al., 1996)

5. Ask for finger signals from everyone. Guillaume suggests, for instance, that "Students hold up numbers of fingers to respond to mastery questions (e.g., "How many sides on a triangle?"). Other gestures can also be used. For instance, "I will watch while you draw a triangle in the air" (2004, 51), "As I point to each number, put thumbs up if you would round upward."



**Strategies 4 and 5 work well when questions require brief answers. Notice**

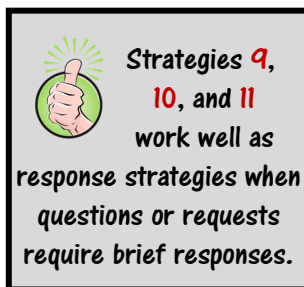
**that in addition to promoting active participation, they allow you to check the understanding of all students.**

6. Use the pausing technique (Guerin and Male, 1988; Salend, 1998). Stop for two minutes after every five to seven minutes of lecturing. Have students discuss and review their notes and the content presented (they can rehearse important points or discuss how the information relates to their own experiences, for example).
7. Use drill partners to work on facts students need to know until they are certain both partners know and remember them all (Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec, 1991).
8. Have board workers work together to answer questions. Have each student play a role: one student is the Answer Suggester; one acts as Checker to see if everyone agrees; and one is the Writer (Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec, 1991).

# Involvement Strategies

A major goal of involvement strategies is to keep students alert and attentive during instruction. The following are some examples of how to achieve this goal:

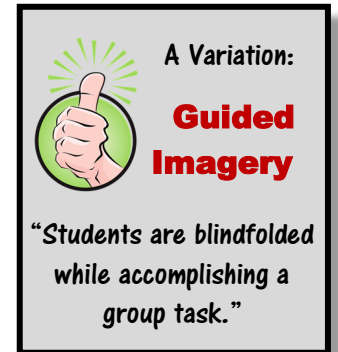
9. Ask for unison responses from the whole class or from rows or groups. Say, "The name of this river is... Everyone?" Make sure that everyone is, in fact, responding.



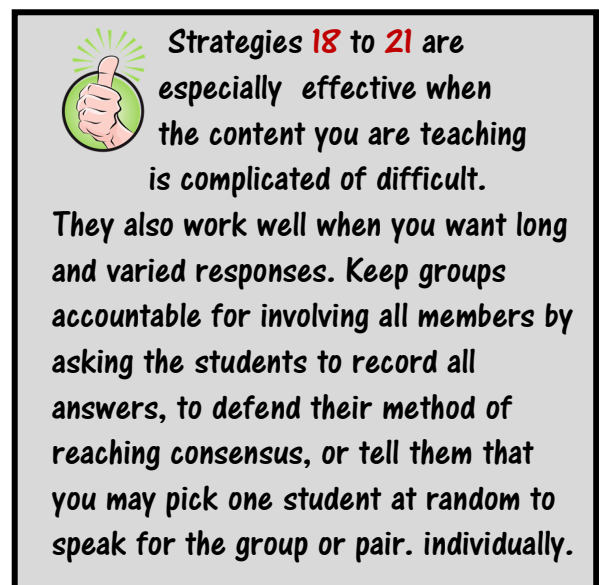
10. Ask students to use response cards. Say, "When you hear one of the new words in the story, hold up the card."
11. Ask students to write a response. Say, "On your list, check off the steps for resolving conflicts as I model them."
12. Have students stand to share answers (Kagan 1992). When students have an answer, have them stand up. Call on one student to share the answer. Have everyone with the same or similar answer sit down. Students continue to answer until everyone is sitting down.
13. Have students do choral reading of context text as an alternative to "round-robin" reading. Students can read whole sentences or paragraphs as a group. Teachers can stop at various places and have students fill in words or phrases when they are reading.

13. Have students take notes during teacher presentations, speeches, films, or readings. Skilled note-takers can write their own notes; provide others with partially completed notes.

14. Use covert strategies such as a "think-about" or visual imagery. For example, say to the students, "Imagine for a minute what it would feel like to be teased about the color of your skin," or "think about a time when you helped a friend." Use visual imagery by asking students to "picture" something in their minds (for example, "Try to imagine how the ferocious lion looked").



15. Use a "think-to-write preview" to get students thinking about today's topic. Give students three minutes to write down everything they know about the topic.
16. Brainstorming, followed by the teacher calling on individuals randomly, gives students an opportunity to participate.



# Processing Strategies

The goal of processing strategies is to allow students the opportunity to think about new information. The following are some examples of how to achieve this goal:

18. Ask students to think about the answer to a question. Have them then discuss the answer with their neighbor. Call on pairs to share their answers, such as in Think-Pair-Share (Lyman 1992).
19. Two students become Worksheet Checkers and complete a worksheet together. One student is the reader (reads the question and suggest an answer) and the other is the writer (agrees with the answer or comes up with a new one). When both students agree, the answer is written in on the worksheet (Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec 1991).
20. Ask a question, and then ask students to share and discuss their answers in small groups, such as in Buzz Groups (Arends 2004).
21. Ask a question, and then call on individual team members to answer, such as in Numbered Heads Together. After you ask a question, the students in each team (who have numbered off) put their heads together and make sure everyone knows the answer. Then, call out a number and students with that number provide answers to the whole group (Kagan 1992).

21. "Bookends is a cooperative learning strategy whereby students meet in small groups before listening to an oral presentation to share their existing knowledge about the topic to be presented. The groups also generate questions related to the topic, and these questions are discussed during or after the oral presentation" (Salend, 1998, p. 231). This technique could also be used with a group discussion or a videotape presentation.
22. Have students complete a think to write review in which they write what they learned. Give students three to five minutes to write down everything they learned in the lesson or activity just taught.

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