



Instead of This ... Try This!

Strategies for Increasing Student Engagement

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Starting class with a question to the whole group, such as “Who can tell me what we learned yesterday?”	Assign a Type One writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">In 5 lines or more, write down as many things as you can remember from yesterday’s lesson. OR Assign a Type Two writing that reviews a specific topic: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Yesterday we discussed ____ (e.g., the reasons why the Treaty of Versailles eventually led to WW2). Identify at least 3 of the ____ (e.g., reasons) we discussed. THEN Have students draw a line below their responses and share their answers with a partner, small group, or the whole class, adding new ideas below the line.
Walking around the room checking homework and asking if there are any questions	Assign a Type One writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">What was one problem or question that was difficult for you in last night’s homework? Explain why in 4 lines or more. THEN Check over the shoulder for common questions, and partner students to work on those problems in pairs while you circulate. OR Check over the shoulder for common questions, and tackle those areas first.
Asking, “Is everyone with me?” or “Does this make sense?” and looking for head nods and thumbs-up OR Calling on the same few willing volunteers to answer every question you pose	Ask students to “turn and talk” and respond orally to a question related to what you just taught. THEN Call on a few students to share their answers. OR Say “I’m seeing some blank faces. Let’s see how we’re doing,” and assign an impromptu Type Two that quickly checks understanding of what you were teaching. THEN Check students’ responses quickly over the shoulder to gather formative data. Reteach as needed or move ahead.
Teaching to the bell ... You have so much to cover!	Stop teaching 5–8 minutes before the bell (many students have zoned out by now, anyway) and assign a Type Two writing that reviews what was taught. Focus on your learning objectives or essential question for the day. OR See our list of Ten Great Type Twos for go-to prompts.
Ending class with “Don’t forget to study tonight!” as students walk out the door	Assign a Type One writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">In 5 lines or more, explain two things you will do tonight to prepare for tomorrow’s test. THEN Quickly share strategies in small groups or with the whole



	class and ask students to add at least one new study action to their lists.
Reminding students about tomorrow's quiz and what might be on it	<p>Assign a Type Two writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a fair and challenging question that I could include on tomorrow's quiz. <p>THEN Share test questions as a class and add any that students may have missed. Ask students to add new questions to their notes, forming their own study guide.</p> <p>OR Choose the best question submitted and include it on the quiz. Students whose questions are selected get full credit for their submitted questions on the quiz.</p>
Reviewing content with a whole-class game that has only a few students answering questions at a time, while others watch, cheer, and wait their turn	Play Quiz-Quiz-Trade or another retrieval-based game in which everyone is able to participate and respond at the same time.
Providing a review sheet and going over it with the class before a test	<p>Assign a Type One writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List at least 6 topics (or names, formulas, techniques, etc.) that you think will be on our upcoming test. <p>THEN Hand out your review sheet and have students compare their answers to the items on the review sheet.</p> <p>OR What is one question you hope will not be on tomorrow's test? THEN Form study groups to go over various questions.</p> <p>OR Review the questions with the whole class.</p>
Spending lots of time providing feedback on students' work, posting their grades or handing back their papers, and moving on, while hoping everyone reads your comments (hint: they don't)	<p>Assign a Type Two writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify one thing you did well on this assignment/test and one thing you need to work on. (Optional: Provide one example for each part of your answer.)
Going over a recently graded test or assignment while students watch and listen	<p>Show students a sample response or answer and assign a Type Two writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify two mistakes in this student's work and explain how to fix them. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify one thing this student did well and include an example. Then give this student one tip to improve their work. <p>THEN Briefly discuss students' responses.</p>
Assigning a Type Three writing and writing the Focus Correction Areas (FCAs) on the board for students to copy	<p>Show students the prompt they'll be responding to and assign a Type One writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think our FCAs should be for this assignment? List at least 5. <p>THEN Share and discuss answers before revealing the FCAs you have chosen. You may even end up modifying some of your FCAs to reflect students' ideas!</p>