Don’t hold back! Is there anybody out there, feeling something? ENGAGE ME!

Breathe the courage of your STUDENTS!
Don’t hold back, make it be for the good!

YouTube: A Vision of K-12 Students Today
How can we maximise student engagement in the classroom?
How can we maximise student engagement in the classroom?

Importance of the focus issue:

- Engagement is an important issue in teaching because it affects how much students learn on a daily basis.

- Engage students because... quality learning depends greatly on a students interest and a teacher’s ability to create a motivating environment.

- As casual teachers, it is often a major struggle to hold the attention of students therefore it is necessary to devise strategies that promote student engagement.
- **Disengagement** revolves around minimal participation, motivation and misbehaviour amongst students as well as limited group interaction.

- **Engagement** as defined by Bomia et. al (1997) refers to a “student's willingness, need, desire and compulsion to participate in, and be successful in, the learning process,” (p. 3).
Our Literature Review findings...

Our review allowed us to identify authors who confirm that student engagement must be addressed in the classroom.

All aspects of student engagement need to be considered in order to implement strategies which casual teachers can use successfully.

The ideas raised within student engagement have been divided into the following themes:

1. Definitions and levels of engagement
2. Influences to be considered
3. Implementation strategies
An article on the Australian government website for the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations states three levels of engagement:

- **Behavioural engagement**: rule following, adherence to norms, participation, attention and persistence.
- **Cognitive engagement**: a student’s investment in learning, learning goals and self-regulation.
- **Emotional engagement**: reactions in the classroom such as interest, anxiety and boredom.

This is also known as the multi-dimensional stages of engagement.
2. Influences to consider

When analysing whether student engagement affects learning various influences should be considered. These include:

- External factors such as social background and geographic location,
- School factors including pedagogy and curriculum,
- Interest in learning
Teachers are quite capable of engaging students as it is only a matter of taking action and implementing the right strategies.

- A teacher should be **enthusiastic and knowledgeable** about the content of what they are teaching
- Promoting a ‘**hands-on, minds-on**’ approach in a realistic environment
- Providing opportunities for children to use their **creativity** in their work and reflect on their learning
- Developing **student learning goals** to provide focus and direction.
- Include a **variety of transition activities** to maintain student interest.
- **Grouping students** with different members throughout the day

**These strategies make learning more realistic to the child’s life and it teaches them beneficial yet practical skills.**
Welcome to the School of Engagement!
The School of Engagement is a Catholic school and provided the basis for our action research.

It’s a two stream school which has students that come from families who are of low to medium socio-economic status. It’s got a happy, energetic vibe and it makes the most of the resources available.

The school is very multicultural, with the following nationalities contributing to the community: Filipino, Islander, Sudanese and Anglo Saxon.

There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of Catholic values such as honesty and integrity.

Stages Two and Three have an interactive whiteboard in every classroom.
The grass area/oval which faces the Stage Two classrooms.
Entry to the Year Four classes.
Inside the classroom – regular and interactive whiteboard.
Table setting
Natural and artificial lighting
Plenty of room to display students’ work
What strategies have you OR would you use to engage your students?
Ways to make learning engaging according to students

What makes a lesson interesting?

- Sharing Ideas: 39%
- Games: 31%
- Active lessons: 10%
- Working with friends: 9%
- Not doing worksheets: 5%
- Not doing worksheets: 6%
- Other: 10%

165 students were interviewed
A teacher should be **enthusiastic and knowledgeable** about the content of what they are teaching

→ Arrive early to ensure you have plenty of time to become familiar with the day’s activities. Modify and adapt the lesson for it to become more practical.
→ Communicate conversationally rather than being an ‘expert’.
→ Be positive, share feedback and have fun!

Promoting a ‘**hands-on, minds-on’ approach** in a realistic environment
→ Using Interactive Whiteboard when available.
→ Laminated activity flash cards used across all grades.

Providing opportunities for children to use their **creativity** in their work and reflect on their learning
→ Making positive comments about their peers.
→ Sharing at the end of a lesson
Intervention Strategies

- Developing **student learning goals** to provide focus and direction.
  → Setting an outline with students of what is to be achieved for the day.

- Include a **variety of transition activities** to maintain student interest
  → Using music to ease into a different lesson topic.
  → Playing a simple game such as Hangman as students pack up and gather on the floor for next lesson.

- **Grouping students** with different members throughout the day
  → Using different strategies such as mixed ability group selection, then friendship groups etc.
Outcomes of Intervention Strategies

• The way outcomes were measured was through the use of ‘before’ and ‘after’ data collection methods.
• Multi-dimensional stages of engagement have formed the basis in which teacher observations and questions have been devised.

‘BEFORE’ METHODS

• Before methods would take place before there was any implementation of strategies formulated to engage students in the classroom.
• Used in 6 lessons prior to implementing strategies. Referred to as ‘before implementation’.
• Look at how motivated students are in the current classroom setting and from this, what needs to be put into action in order to combat the lack of engagement amongst students.

‘AFTER’ METHODS

• After research methods was the way in which the achievement of engagement was measured following strategies being put into place.
• To make this investigation valid, ‘after’ methods were used in 6 lessons either during the lesson or after strategies were applied to lessons to measure engagement. Referred to as ‘after implementation’.
Outcomes of Intervention Strategies

‘BEFORE’ METHOD

1. Interview between teacher and student
   • To find out about their thoughts concerning learning styles they have been exposed to.
   • Each question comes under a different multi-dimensional stage of engagement to ensure that all areas of engagement are being investigated.

Outcomes:
• Allowed us to understand what children in today’s society value in terms of their education and interests.
• This was conducted to evaluate appropriate intervention strategies for various grades for us to implement as part of our attempt to engage students.
What do you like learning about?

- Art: 35%
- Sport: 26%
- Science: 18%
- Maths: 13%
- Religion: 5%
- Other: 3%

165 students were surveyed
2. Operational Checklist and Operational Tally

- **Checklist** - Designed to measure individual engagement of ten selected students in the class that exhibit different learning styles, behaviours and attitudes towards learning.
- **Tally** - overall class engagement was assessed.
- Completed by the teacher prior to strategies being implemented into lessons, and again once strategies had been put into place.

**Outcomes:**

- Students are more attentive when lessons are catered to their interests and learning needs.
- Improvement observed in the ‘after’ checklist and tally.
- Restraint of data collection – was hard to measure as before and after results were on two different stages.
## Operational Checklist:
### Measuring Individual Engagement

#### Rating Key:
- Frequently +
- Sometimes ✓
- Not Yet 0
- n/a = Students competent in task.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Male or Female</th>
<th>Listens</th>
<th>Asks for help</th>
<th>Answers questions appropriately</th>
<th>Follows class rules</th>
<th>Interacts with peers</th>
<th>Displays positive behaviours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 6</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 7</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 8</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 9</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 10</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘BEFORE and ‘AFTER’ METHODS

3. Teacher Journal

• The teacher writes a journal entry each lesson, reflecting on the outcomes of the lesson and when strategies were implemented, where different engaging strategy has been applied. The teacher considers the strategies used and what observations were made as a result of the implementation of strategies.

Outcomes:

• Provided assistance for teachers to reflect on their teaching style and the success of the intervention strategies implemented in the lesson.
• Allowed us to monitor our own teaching in relation to the student engagement rubric.
‘AFTER’ METHOD

4. Student Survey

• Showed how students felt about their learning and what they liked or disliked about particular strategies that were used in the lesson.

• It was designed as a short survey for only Stage 2 and 3 with a mixture of closed and open-ended questions. This was to ensure that students were giving insight into their feelings about learning and that it was appropriate to their age level.

Outcomes:

• Overall results show that the strategies used were successful, although some needed to be used more throughout lessons, for example creativity.

• Students’ observational skills are evident in survey results, particularly with the question regarding music. Music was always used for lesson transitions, although some students still answered ‘no’ on the survey.
Did students find these strategies interesting?

- **Music during lessons**: 63 Yes, 37 No
- **Music between lessons**: 94 Yes, 6 No
- **Group work**: 80 Yes, 20 No
- **Use of resources**: 93 Yes, 7 No
- **Opportunities for creativity**: 80 Yes, 20 No

171 students were surveyed.
These approaches to teaching can continue to be used throughout all areas of student learning.

It is easy for anyone to adopt these methods of teaching as they do not usually require more than what is already in schools. For example, mathematics resources are usually found in most classrooms and ready to be used, just like music.

Should be adopted by permanent classroom teachers who seek to engage students in their learning.

It is impossible to implement each and every strategy in all lessons. Teachers need to recognise where it is appropriate and a good opportunity to use some of the techniques for engaging students in learning.

Assessment – Teachers need to cater for assessment of strategies to take place to ensure that these methods are truly engaging students making a difference in students’ learning.

This is exactly how students’ engagement in the classroom is maximised!
Remember...
Don’t Hold Back!
Engage your students!