

Resources & Annotated References for Using Engagement Strategies to Increase Students' Meaningful Participation in Learning

Supporting and responding to behavior: Evidence-based classroom strategies for teachers. | This practice guide is an updated version of Supporting and Responding to Student Behavior (Office of Special Education Programs, 2015). "Supporting and Responding" summarizes evidence-based, positive, and proactive practices that support and respond to students' social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) needs in classrooms and similar teaching and learning environments (e.g., small-group activity).

Guide: <https://www.pbis.org/resource/supporting-and-responding-to-behavior-evidence-based-classroom-strategies-for-teachers>

High Leverage Practices 8 & 22: Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide student learning and behavior. | This video introduces and defines high-leverage practices (High Leverage Practices s) 8 and 22 and provides the rationale for this practice appearing twice on the list of High Leverage Practices s. The video also features four teachers demonstrating examples of the four key components of this High Leverage Practices . These four key components are that effective feedback is goal directed, constructive, immediate, and respectful/positive.

Video: <https://highleveragepractices.org/hlps-8-and-22-provide-positive-and-constructive-feedback-guide-students-learning-and-behavior>

High Leverage Practices 7 — Establish a consistent, organized, and respectful learning environment | Teachers create predictable routines, clear expectations, and a respectful climate that supports engagement, safety, and learning for all students. [High Leverage Practices](#)

Leadership Guide: <https://highleveragepractices.org/hlp-leadership-guides/hlp-7-guide>

Faculty Guide: <https://highleveragepractices.org/hlp-faculty-guides>

High Leverage Practices 8 — Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior | Teachers give specific, actionable, and affirming feedback that helps students know what they did well and how to improve, increasing engagement and self-regulation.

Leadership Guide: <https://highleveragepractices.org/hlp-leadership-guides/hlp-8-guide>

Faculty Guide: <https://highleveragepractices.org/hlp-faculty-guides>

High Leverage Practices 11 — Identify and prioritize long- and short-term learning goals | Teachers work with students and teams to set clear goals tied to standards and individualized needs, helping students see purpose and relevance in their learning.

Faculty Guide: <https://highleveragepractices.org/hlp-faculty-guides> **Leadership Guide:**

High Leverage Practices 12 — Systematically design instruction toward learning goals | Teachers plan instruction that is intentional and aligned to goals, sequencing activities so students can engage meaningfully and make progress step by step.

Leadership Guide: <https://highleveragepractices.org/hlp-leadership-guides/hlp-12-guide>

Faculty Guide: <https://highleveragepractices.org/hlp-faculty-guides>

High Leverage Practices 13 — Adapt curriculum materials and tasks | Teachers modify activities and materials so that the content is accessible and relevant to each learner’s strengths and needs, supporting deeper participation.

Leadership Guide: <https://highleveragepractices.org/hlp-leadership-guides/hlp-13-guide>

Faculty Guide: <https://highleveragepractices.org/hlp-faculty-guides>

High Leverage Practices 15 — Provide scaffolded supports | Teachers strategically support students with prompts, models, or tools to bridge gaps between current ability and instructional demands, keeping learners engaged and successful.

Leadership Guide: <https://highleveragepractices.org/hlp-leadership-guides/hlp-15-guide>

Faculty Guide: <https://highleveragepractices.org/hlp-faculty-guides>

High Leverage Practices 16 — Use explicit instruction | Teachers break down skills and content into clear steps, model thinking and procedures, and guide practice with feedback so students stay actively engaged with learning.

Leadership Guide: <https://highleveragepractices.org/hlp-leadership-guides/hlp-16-guide>

Faculty Guide: <https://highleveragepractices.org/hlp-faculty-guides>

High Leverage Practices 19 — Use assistive and instructional technology | Teachers integrate technology tools that extend access to content, provide multiple means of participation, and help learners engage with instruction in ways that match their needs. [High Leverage Practices](#)

Leadership Guide: <https://highleveragepractices.org/hlp-leadership-guides/hlp-19-guide>

Faculty Guide: <https://highleveragepractices.org/hlp-faculty-guides>

Providing reading interventions for students in grades 4–9 (WWC 2024005). *U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences.* | This practice guide synthesizes evidence-based instructional recommendations, emphasizing explicit instruction, feedback, engagement, and background knowledge to improve student outcomes. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/practiceguide/29>

Teacher-Delivered Behavioral Interventions in Grades K–5 (WWC 2025001). | The report identifies key, research-supported practices, *including frequent opportunities to respond, structured engagement routines, positive feedback, and instructional supports that improve student engagement, on-task behavior, and participation while reducing disruptive behavior.* It provides educators with actionable recommendations for designing and implementing behaviorally supportive instruction that aligns with Tier 1 PBIS and MTSS frameworks. These *interventions are framed as proactive components of effective instruction that promote meaningful participation by creating predictable, supportive, and interactive learning environments. The guide emphasizes embedding engagement and behavior-support practices within daily instruction and using them consistently across planning, teaching, and monitoring student progress.* <https://whatworks.ed.gov/>.

Funds of knowledge toolkit. | Practical guide helping teachers capture key information about students’ cultural and family backgrounds; includes a matrix linking data to classroom application.

https://ospi.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/2023-10/funds_of_knowledge_toolkit.pdf

Social identity wheel activity guide. | Provides a protocol for exploring social identities; useful for teacher reflection and promoting equitable classroom interactions.

<https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/equitable-teaching/social-identity-wheel/>

Get to know you survey. | A survey tool to gather student background and preferences, supporting relationship building and relevant learning.

Colorado Department of Education. (2011). Active student engagement strategies. | Lists various engagement strategies that teachers can incorporate into lessons to increase participation.

https://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/facilityschools/download/pdf/edmeetings_04apr2011_asrstrategies.pdf

Learner-Centered Collaborative. (2023). Learner-centered feedback tool. | Middle/high school tool for providing structured feedback that promotes active engagement and self-reflection.

https://learnercentered.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/LCC-Tool_Feedback-Protocol.pdf

ReACT. (2024). Wise feedback overview. | Overview of feedback strategies to foster student reflection, engagement, and ownership.

<https://bpb-us->

[e1.wpmucdn.com/blogs.uoregon.edu/dist/f/19192/files/2024/08/WiseFeedback_Overview-1.pdf](https://bpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/blogs.uoregon.edu/dist/f/19192/files/2024/08/WiseFeedback_Overview-1.pdf)

Habits of Effective Classroom Practices | This practice brief describes how we (a) develop habits of effective classroom practice and (b) expand effective habits in our schools, districts, and states. Be sure to watch the [related webinar](#).

<https://www.pbis.org/resource/habits-of-effective-classroom-practice>

Thematic choice board examples.

<https://www.torreytrust.com/design-projects#h.95idxhj90fj6>

Spot and check protocol. <https://searchinstitute.org/resources-hub/spot-check; Protocol> | Tool to gather structured student feedback on engagement and classroom experiences.

<https://d2pck61xhq74q6.cloudfront.net/Spot-Check.pdf>

Top ten list and diamond sort. <https://searchinstitute.org/resources-hub/top-ten-list-and-diamond-sort; Protocol> | Student feedback tools to rank and prioritize ideas, supporting student voice.

<https://d2pck61xhq74q6.cloudfront.net/Top-Ten-List-and-Diamond-Sort.pdf>

Picture essay protocol. <https://searchinstitute.org/resources-hub/picture-essay; Protocol> | Visual tool for students to express perspectives and experiences, enhancing engagement and self-expression.

<https://d2pck61xhq74q6.cloudfront.net/Picture-Essay.pdf>

Resources to facilitate project-based learning. | Collection of tools and templates to support engagement and collaboration in PBL environments.

<https://my.pblworks.org/resources>

Roles that encourage equitable collaborative learning in middle and high school. | Discusses student roles in PBL to foster equitable participation and active engagement.

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/roles-encourage-equitable-collaborative-learning>

Annotated Reference List

Aronson, B., & Laughter, J. (2016). The theory and practice of culturally relevant education: A synthesis of research across content areas. *Review of Educational Research, 86*(1), 163–206. |

This research synthesis reviews empirical studies across subject areas examining culturally relevant education. Findings consistently link culturally relevant practices to **improved student engagement, motivation, academic achievement, and deeper comprehension**, particularly for historically marginalized students. The authors highlight relevance, identity affirmation, and instructional responsiveness as key mechanisms.

<https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315582066>

Capin, P., Stevens, E. A., Stewart, A. A., Swanson, E., & Vaughn, S. (2020). Examining vocabulary, reading comprehension, and content knowledge instruction during fourth-grade social studies teaching. *Reading and Writing, 33*, 1143–1170. | This experimental study demonstrates that instruction **intentionally building background knowledge** and academic vocabulary improves reading comprehension and content learning. Results show that knowledge-building instruction supports deeper understanding, particularly for students with learning difficulties. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-020-10106-5>

Cornelius-White, J. (2007). Learner-centered teacher–student relationships are effective: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research, 77*(1), 113–143. | This meta-analysis finds strong positive effects of learner-centered practices on student achievement, engagement, motivation, and classroom behavior. **Supportive relationships and instructional approaches that center student voice are associated with reduced discipline issues and improved academic outcomes.**

<https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298563>

Elleman, A. M., & Compton, D. L. (2017). Beyond comprehension strategy instruction: What’s next? *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 48*(1), 84–91. | This review **emphasizes the importance of background knowledge and language development for long-term comprehension**. The authors argue that comprehension improves when **instruction intentionally builds and activates prior knowledge** rather than relying solely on strategy instruction. https://doi.org/10.1044/2016_LSHSS-15-0129

Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research, 74*(1), 59–109. |

This foundational review conceptualizes engagement as behavioral, emotional, and cognitive. Across studies, higher engagement is linked to improved achievement, persistence, and positive social-emotional outcomes, providing a strong empirical basis for engagement-focused instructional practices.

<https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543074001059>

Freeman, S., Eddy, S. L., McDonough, M., Smith, M. K., Okoroafor, N., Jordt, H., & Wenderoth, M. P. (2014). Active learning increases student performance in science, engineering, and mathematics. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 111*(23), 8410–8415. |

This meta-analysis finds that active learning strategies significantly increase academic performance and reduce failure rates. While conducted primarily in postsecondary settings, the engagement mechanisms align with K–12 instructional practices and are widely adopted in secondary education.

<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1319030111>

Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (3rd ed.). Teachers College Press. | This book synthesizes decades of research on culturally responsive pedagogy. Evidence indicates that culturally responsive teaching improves student motivation, engagement, academic achievement, and classroom climate by aligning instruction with students' cultural knowledge and lived experiences.

Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. Routledge. | This synthesis summarizes meta-analytic findings on instructional practices affecting student achievement. Engagement-related strategies—such as feedback, teacher clarity, and active learning—show moderate to large positive effects on student learning outcomes.

Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), 81–112. | This review identifies feedback as one of the most influential instructional practices for learning. Specific, timely, and actionable feedback is associated with improved achievement, self-regulation, and student confidence. <https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487>

Haydon, T., Mancil, G. R., & Van Loan, C. (2009). Effects of opportunities to respond during teacher-delivered instruction. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 18(1), 53–71. | This experimental study shows that increasing opportunities to respond improves student engagement and academic accuracy while reducing problem behavior. Findings support OTRs as a high-impact instructional and behavioral practice. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10864-009-9084-z>

Korpershoek, H., Harms, T., de Boer, H., van Kuijk, M., & Doolaard, S. (2016). *Review of Educational Research*, 86(3), 643–680. | A meta-analysis of the effects of classroom management strategies and classroom management programs on students' outcomes. This meta-analysis finds that proactive classroom management and **engagement strategies improve academic achievement and student motivation while reducing disruptive behavior**. Results support structured, inclusive instructional environments. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315626799>

Lane, K. L., Baldy, T., Becker, T., Bradshaw, C., Dolan, V., Dymnicki, A., Freeman, B., Holian, L., Lemire, S., McIntosh, K., Moulton, S., Nese, R., Payno-Simmons, R., Porowski, A., & Sutherland, K. (2024). Teacher-Delivered Behavioral Interventions in Grades K–5 (WWC 2025001). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. <https://whatworks.ed.gov/>.

MacSuga-Gage, A. S., & Simonsen, B. (2015). Exploring the effects of specific praise and opportunities to respond on the on-task behavior of elementary students. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 24(2), 217–236. | <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10864-014-9218-1>

This study demonstrates that This meta-analysis finds that proactive classroom management and **engagement strategies improve academic achievement and student motivation while reducing disruptive behavior**. Results support structured, inclusive instructional environments. Findings support recommended OTR rates as a practical engagement strategy.

Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2017). Culturally sustaining pedagogy. In D. Paris & H. S. Alim (Eds.), *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world* (pp. 1–20). Teachers College Press. | This chapter articulates culturally sustaining pedagogy as an approach that sustains students' cultural and linguistic identities. **The authors link CSP to increased relevance, engagement, and meaningful participation in learning.**

Partin, T. C. M., Robertson, R. E., Maggin, D. M., Oliver, R. M., & Wehby, J. H. (2010). Using teacher praise and opportunities to respond to promote engagement and reduce disruptive classroom behavior. *Journal of Behavioral Education, 19*(2), 144–162. | This study shows that combining **praise with increased OTRs improves engagement and reduces disruptive behavior**. Effects were small to moderate but consistent across students with challenging behavior. DOI: [10.1080/10459880903493179](https://doi.org/10.1080/10459880903493179)

Payno-Simmons, R. L. (2021). Centering equity in school discipline: The Michigan PBIS Equity Pilot. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth, 65*(4), 343–353. | This study provides empirical evidence that equity-centered PBIS **implementation reduces disciplinary disproportionality while improving student engagement and school climate**. Findings highlight the importance of culturally responsive engagement practices within PBIS. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988X.2021.1937024>

Recht, D. R., & Leslie, L. (1988). Effect of prior knowledge on good and poor readers' memory of text. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 80*(1), 16–20. | This classic study demonstrates that **prior knowledge significantly influences comprehension and recall, sometimes outweighing reading ability**. Results underscore the instructional importance of building and activating background knowledge. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.80.1.16>

Riddle (Payno-Simmons), R. (2014). *Cultural mismatch and silenced voices: Experiences of historically marginalized elementary students within school-wide positive behavior supports* (Doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University). | <https://doi.org/10.25335/36hj-9735>
This qualitative study reveals how **PBIS practices can unintentionally marginalize students when cultural relevance and voice are absent. Findings emphasize the need for engagement strategies that affirm identity and student agency.**

Santiago-Rosario, M. R., McIntosh, K., & Payno-Simmons, R. (2022). *Centering equity within the PBIS framework: Overview and evidence of effectiveness*. Center on PBIS, University of Oregon. | This report summarizes empirical evidence supporting equity-centered PBIS practices. Findings link **culturally responsive engagement strategies to improved behavioral outcomes, student belonging, and instructional effectiveness**. <https://www.pbis.org/resource/centering-equity-within-the-pbis-framework-overview-and-evidence-of-effectiveness>

Simonsen, B., Myers, D., & DeLuca, C. (2010). Teaching teachers to use prompts, opportunities to respond, and specific praise. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 33*(4), 300–318. | This review highlights **behavior-specific praise as an effective engagement** and behavior support practice. **Studies show consistent links to increased engagement and reduced disruptive behavior**. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0888406409359905>

Smith, R., Snow, P. C., & Serry, T. (2021). The role of background knowledge in reading comprehension: A critical review. *Reading Psychology, 42*(3), 214–240. | <https://doi.org/10.1080/02702711.2021.1888348>
This review confirms that **background knowledge is a key predictor of comprehension**. Instruction that intentionally **builds knowledge supports deeper learning and reduces comprehension gaps**.

Sutherland, K. S., Alder, N., & Gunter, P. L. (2003). The effect of varying rates of opportunities to respond to academic requests on classroom behavior. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 11*(4), 239–

248. | <https://doi.org/10.1177/10634266030110040501>

This experimental study finds that **higher OTR rates increase academic responding and decrease disruptive behavior among students with emotional and behavioral disorders.**

Van Camp, T., Wehby, J. H., Maggin, D. M., Kern, L., & Gustafson, J. R. (2020). Increasing opportunities to respond to intensify academic and behavioral interventions: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 28(3), 135–149. | This meta-analysis demonstrates that **increasing OTRs produces positive academic and behavioral outcomes, particularly for students receiving intensive supports.** Findings support OTRs as an evidence-based intensification strategy.

Vaughn, S., Gersten, R., Dimino, J., Taylor, M. J., Newman-Gonchar, R., Krowka, S., Kieffer, M. J., McKeown, M., Reed, D., Sanchez, M., St. Martin, K., Wexler, J., Morgan, S., Yañez, A., & Jayanthi, M. (2022). Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9 (WWC 2022007). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. | This practice guide synthesizes evidence-based instructional recommendations, emphasizing **explicit instruction, feedback, engagement, and background knowledge to improve student outcomes.** <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/practiceguide/29>

Note: These resources are curated for K–12 educators to inform engagement strategies, relevant learning practices, and culturally sustaining pedagogy.