



AdvanceHE

#52etc



advance-he.ac.uk/52etc

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#52etc: Principles for engagement

A set of shared principles to underpin inclusive and supportive engagement can be a useful 'sense-check' for innovation.

These examples may inspire your own principles: think about how to set expectations for what you want your learning environment to look and feel like.

In our learning today I / we will:

- + respect the diversity of experiences and identities in the room
- + pay attention to each other, welcome feedback, and think about the impact of what we say
- + reflect on our own learning, connections to the material, and how our ideas and opinions are formed
- + consider the needs of others in terms of access to materials and discussions
- + stay curious.



Key

On each card we detail in what format the concept is delivered. A simple key can be found below – these appear on the bottom right of each card.

- F** **Face-to-face:** the delivery is undertaken in person.
- R** **Remote:** the delivery is undertaken in a virtual environment.
- B** **Both:** the delivery can be undertaken either face-to-face or remotely.



Ian Turner

Professor in Learning and Teaching
in Higher Education

“Engaging students with their learning process is critical for their development of higher level thinking skills, it also promotes meaningful learning experiences. These cards offer a diverse range of pedagogy strategies to reach out and engage learners in your sessions. Though all the ideas may not suit you, they will act as a prompt to try or think about things differently. Ultimately the idea will allow students multiple opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and achieve their potential.”



@DocWithTheSocs



Jess Moody

Senior Adviser, Advance HE

“ Creating a sense of belonging, inclusion and engagement is so important. These cards may prompt you to try something new: to question or make visible ‘hidden’ norms of pedagogy and interaction; to reflect, discuss and critique your practice; and to consider how varied forms of discussion and activity enable different student groups, identities and needs. ”



Stuart Norton

Senior Adviser, Advance HE

“ These cards provide a variety of engagement tools available for you to adopt and encourage meaningful interactions amongst your classes. We urge you to invest the time to explore, expand, and adapt the various methods suggested to make learning, be that online, face-to-face or a hybrid approach, more engaging and accessible to all. ”



@S_J_Norton

A



Think, pair, share



Outline a question and ask students to pair up. The pairs then discuss for an allocated period of time. Then two pairs can join up to form a four and repeat the discussion. Finally, the groups feed back to the whole class on their shared ideas. Which two go with which two is decided by the teacher. This means students are likely to forge more diverse groups in the four, while still having the comfort of being with someone they know for the two.



Ace up the sleeve



Give each student a playing card from a pack (or multiple packs!). Use the cards as 'currency' in your class. For example, draw a card and show it to the class. If it is say, a three of hearts, you could ask for an answer from someone with the exact card, or any three or any heart.

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Google storm



Look for opportunities for students to use their phones or other devices. For example, ask the students individually or in pairs to brainstorm a given topic using the Internet. The same approach could be used in scenarios, case studies and much more. This requires anticipation of access needs (ie in a computer lab, or with some tablets available for use).

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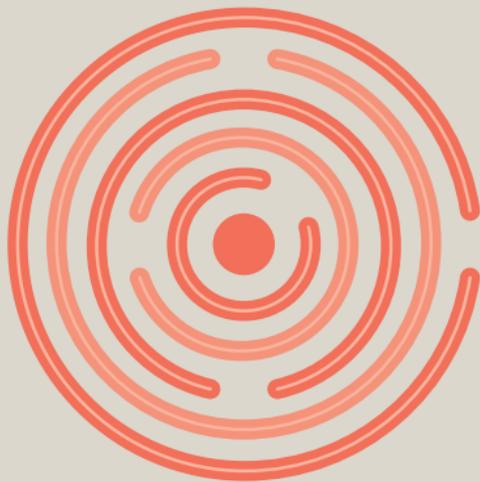
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Creative time wasting



A break is as good as a rest. Incorporate activities in your planning that may be unrelated to the session but re-energise the students and create a buzz in the classroom. For example, a logic puzzle, topical quiz, some charades or even encouraging students to find their own ways to relax or have a 'time out'.

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Props and demos



When delivering a session always consider an alternative way to describe the word(s) or diagrams. You can support interaction with a prop in a number of sensory ways: touch, sight, describing it to another. An analogy works just as well, for example, some piping to illustrate blood vessels. Be aware the metaphorical language can be more challenging for some so ensure the analogy is alongside the standard explanation, and signposted.

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Different perspective



If the opportunity arises and you have the confidence, consider delivering a session from a different perspective such as the development of a scientific theory through the lens of their contemporaries in another discipline. If you are especially brave you can role-play this perhaps even including appropriate attire. The lecture will certainly be memorable.

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Location, location, location



Think about changing the dynamic of the class by considering, where possible, varying your physical position around the space, as long as you can still communicate clearly to all. This keeps the students' attention and allows you to better gauge their engagement with your session. You could change your background if you are teaching online such as teaching volcanology from Mount Etna.



Points of view



Challenge students to critique your material, activity or task from an alternative/specific viewpoint. Discuss the challenges and advantages of taking different theoretical or experiential perspectives. Students in pairs or groups can take it in turns 'swapping' perspectives.



Looping



Arrive in the room early and set up the computer to play an interesting video (with captions). When you're ready, stop the video and 'step up' on the lectern or switch on your webcam. The video switch-off has the amazing ability to bring the class to immediate attention. To increase anticipation, try to link the video in some way to the lecture content.



Paper aeroplanes



Hand out some scrap paper to all students as they enter the room. At a point(s) in the session ask them to write the answer on the paper. When you are ready ask them to fold it into an aeroplane and simultaneously launch them into an empty space. It creates a buzz in the room, and you can either read out selected responses or collect them in for later use.



Magic hat



Use a real or virtual 'hat' to collect students' anonymous questions or comments about a pre-defined subject area. In the session draw these out randomly and answer them or discuss them as a class. Students may need guidance on what constitutes an appropriate question or comment.



Traffic lights



Give all students three pieces of coloured paper at the start of a session and explain whenever you ask a question related to their understanding they either 'get it' (show the green card) 'kind of get it' (yellow) or 'don't get it' (red). This is instant feedback on how the lesson is going and where additional support may be required. Making the back of the sheets white removes the embarrassment of holding up a 'red'. Make sure the cards have the colour printed in text on them.

K



Use the chat box



Take the time to use and read the chat box. Encourage learners to ask questions (or respond to yours) via this area. Allow yourself the time in a session to read and answer the questions. You should encourage students to answer each other's questions. You might find it useful to ask a nominated student to turn on their microphone and dictate some of the questions to save you scrolling up the chat box.



Annotate



Use the features in your technology platform that allow you to annotate. The tools available such as pencils and pointers allow you to interact with your shared slides and files. Especially useful for highlighting images and diagrams. For extra engagement, allow the students to draw or type their responses to a question on your slides (or a blank slide).



Share your screen



Sharing your presentation is common practice but what about other resources? It increases both the engagement and experience if when talking about a key paper, book or website you share it with students. For extra engagement undertake a 'live' literature or internet search and allow students to direct your search terms and the sources you select. Make sure the sharing is clearly narrated for those with varying screen views.



Interact



Think carefully about what will happen before your session begins. The ten minutes before the session starts when students login can set the tone for the whole experience. Consider how to interact with students in the space for example, by asking open questions, having some questions or challenges visible on the slides or even have some welcome music playing.



Breakout groups



Use breakout rooms or groups on your delivery platform to allow smaller group discussions. Make sure you outline the task (and the time allowed) clearly before separating students. Hop between groups to check everyone is clear on the task. When you pull them back allow them to share the ideas through the chat box or by annotating the slides.

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Fieldwork



Learning from fieldwork (including virtual) and allowing students to understand concepts in real-world situations is wholly beneficial to their studies and placing content in context. Examples will vary by discipline but could include observations of groups of people within a given setting, how crime theory has impacted on the urban environment in housing estates or town centres, students visiting specific locations or finding digital artefacts with real world impact using local archives, social media and Google Earth.

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Advance calls



Allow students time to type answers to your questions in the chat box. Do this by posting the questions you plan to ask ahead of the sessions and encourage students to prepare their responses. Ask every student to add at least one answer to a collated 'board' of questions in advance, so the time in class can be spent reviewing key themes. This also allows students the chance to comment on others' answers.

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Discussion time



Build question and answer time into the session and signpost any further opportunities for informal discussions. Advertise this to the students and use this space for an optional informal discussion of anything covered in the session. If you normally mute student microphones this is the place to allow oral dialogue. A space for students to drop anonymous questions might be useful too. Sometimes the most challenging and rewarding questions come in discussion time.



Polls



To encourage engagement, use the built-in online polling tools to quickly gain an idea of students' perceptions, understanding or other. The polls can be repeated pre- and post- an activity to monitor progress. For extra engagement allow students to dictate the direction of the discussion or debate by choosing which topic will be covered next.



Hand tools



Use either a show of hands or the 'hands' icon on your platform as a quick way to gather feedback. For example, for understanding "if you understand this raise your hand", judging the pace "raise your hand when you have read these quotes" or even following a rest break "raise your hand when you're back from the break". These can also be used to indicate whether students can hear you and/or see relevant content.



Flipped summaries



Instead of summarising a session or part of a session, invite the students to do it. This could be a self-nominated student to the rest of the class or students to each other in pairs. It could even be a written 'abstract' of the session that students publish in their own learning journal or micro blog.

J



Whiteboard splash



Use a physical or digital whiteboard as a brainstorming tool to capture students' responses to a prompt/question. This could either be pre or post session or produced 'live' as part of the session itself. Make sure the splash is discussed in a session or groups and encourage it to become a 'living resource'.



Check for transfer



Explore students transferring an idea from one domain to another. Ask them to relay a theory or concept to an external environment (subject dependent). Ask the students to post an image and explanation of their translation in a discussion board or digital whiteboard. A reminder at the start of class “if you haven’t yet done X, you now have a few minutes” is handy.

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Buzzed



Use an agreed audio-visual prompt perhaps linked to the subject matter eg hammer and gavel for law to bring control back from group breakouts. This can be embedded in presentations to draw the student's attention. It can also be used to indicate a change in the three key roles (facilitator, note taker and time keeper) in a breakout group.

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Spinner



Allocate the students into four (or more) different colours. Use either a digital or physical 'spinner' with quadrants as a tool to work out which group of students answer the question proposed at that time. The quadrants can be used as 'teams' in any gamified elements to your session such as quizzes. The quadrants should include both a colour and number/alpha eg Team G (green) and Team R (red).

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Misconception check



Provide learners with a mixture of truths and common misconceptions on a topic and get them to vote true or false. This will both allow them to self-check their understanding and provide a prompt for you on areas to cover.



Artefacts and objects



Ask the students to bring in or have to hand an artefact that is linked to the subject/session covered. As part of the session allow students to share their experiences with the class or in small groups. Alternatively, ask them to record a short video or audio clip explaining their artefact which can be shared prior to a live discussion. Provide advice on tools for example, “if you want to record a video we advise using X because it also auto-captions”.



Quizzes



Short, up to 7 question quizzes to check learning are a quick way for students to self-assess their learning. They can be used periodically at either the end or beginning of sessions to help guide learners to points they need to clarify. Popular platforms like Kahoot! allow the quizzes to be gamified and add some friendly competition to the quiz.

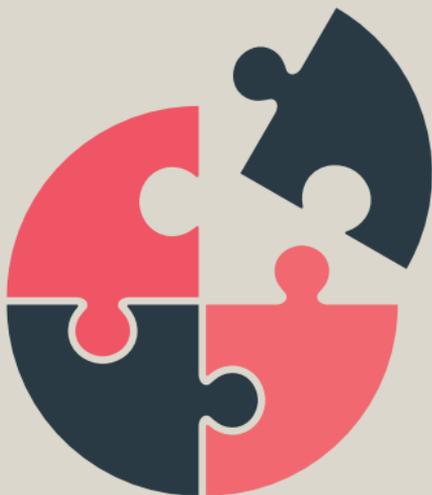
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Jigsaw groups



Outline a task to the whole cohort before breaking it into 'pieces'. Assign each piece to a group using breakout rooms/groups or sections of the lecture theatre. Each group works on their piece before restructuring when one person from each group reports to bring the pieces together.

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Thought for the day



Start each session with a challenge or question: these can be presented on the slides as the students enter the session. Make sure there is an opportunity for the students to share their findings with each other and the class. Consider linking these questions to formative activities such as discussion boards or digital whiteboards to capture the students' thoughts.



Rapid questions



Ask students a series of rapid progressive questions to direct their attention and engage them in a topic. Make the first question general but narrow in on the focus with subsequent ones. Ask students to write down the first word(s) that are linked to your question. Students will require some instruction prior to the activity commencing.



Mind maps



Show students a mind map/session schematic ahead of a session to allow them to see how topic and areas interconnect with each other. As an enhancement, ask students to produce their own during or post session and share on a digital whiteboard.

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Storybook



The narrative of a session is important for helping students engage. The classic structure of a storybook; beginning, middle and satisfying end are a useful structure. Remember in a book, the beginning makes you want to read more, and the end leaves you pining for the sequel.

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Mash-ups



Instead of delivering material to students, ask them to educate each other. Divide the students into groups and divide up the session's learning outcomes. Ask the students to produce a specific number of slides that explain their outcome. Mash these slides to each other and ask students to present their sections, or for an added challenge, present yourself with a clear narrative!

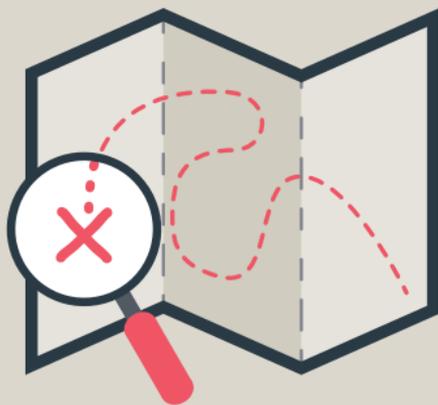
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Treasure hunt



Using the Internet or Learning Resource Centre students can be tasked to search for a given topic and then brought back together or in groups to comment on what other students find. The 'hunt' can be made more advanced by including evaluative goals or by asking students to find relevant examples where concept X has been used effectively.

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Table top exercise



Students are split into groups, they are posed a hypothetical situation to analyse. The active group are provided with limited information and further information is 'drip fed' as they ask the 'right' questions/deduce information from the observing group leading to further information as they work through the task in 'real time'. Active communication among the group of students enables both groups to see their logic steps as well as encouraging views from various viewpoints. This can be achieved through breakout rooms or separate tables.



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Think about it...



Give students as many options to stretch themselves as possible. Try and balance all sessions' content with a mixture of questions. For example, if $X = Y$, what happens in the case of Z ? Give more questions than answers to send the students home curious to find the answers. This is particularly beneficial in subjects that do not necessarily have definitive answers.



Voice



Maximise the impact of your voice. Consider the pace, volume and tone of your voice. Make regular eye contact with the student to check engagement. If you have a tendency to read slides, have less text and more images. This is especially important to consider when remote teaching.





Humour



The use of humour, if delivered correctly can really help students engage with sessions and make them memorable. The use of topical cartoons and memes may be easier than trying to generate that punchy one liner. Take care that any humour is appropriate and inclusive of all learners, irrespective of cultural background.



Picture this



Encourage the audience to take pictures of the session (slides/educator only) as it proceeds (like academics do at conferences!). Encourage them to stitch these together in a photo or video tool with some annotations.



Create a hashtag



Creating a 'hashtag' which can be used across internal and external social media and discussion fora (as preferred) may be helpful and allow students to connect together their ideas and thought with others.



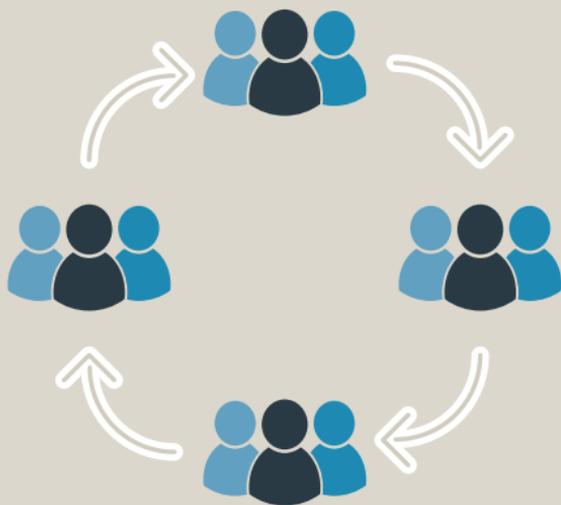
Blurb or trailer



Prior to any session create a piece of blurb that lets students know what to expect and creates a sense of anticipation. For increased engagement, create a film trailer using free video software (eg iMovie) to really heighten the anticipation.



Rotation



Engaging with every student, or even groups of students can be challenging in large classes. To allow richer engagement with learners, consider rotation. Produce a schedule of groups and select an appropriate number to support in each week's activities. This could be aligned to which groups present their findings to the class or formative assessment.



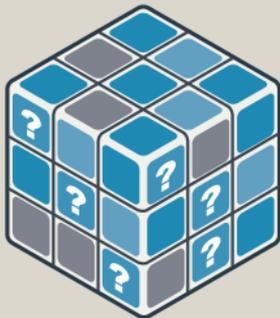
Drill, drill and drill again



Students are given the same materials repeatedly until mastery is achieved. In each iteration, students are given similar questions to answer or activities to perform (eg coding for computing, chord progression for music, performance technique for dance) with a certain percentage of correct responses or actions moving the student to the next stage or activity.



Challenging questions



Dependent on the subject, ask questions that are challenging and make students really think.

Contextualising questions in current affairs/the real world can really provide both context and meaning to a session. Expand the question into a group-based problem learning exercise and let them explore the question in a safe and structured way. Students may need to be supported with ground rules on how to ask challenging questions in a respectful way.



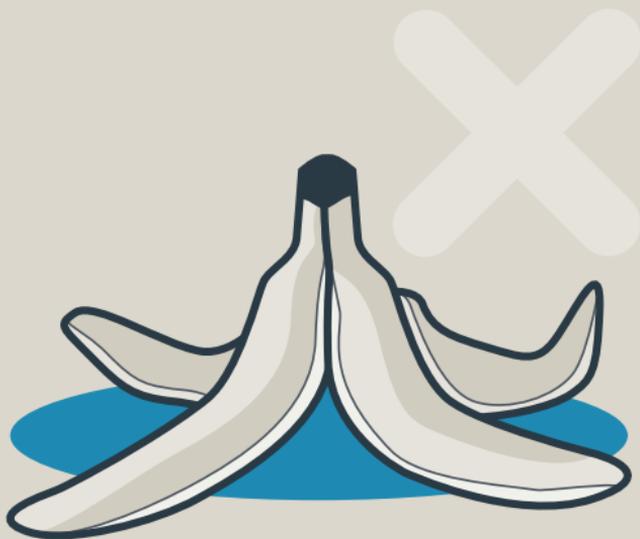
Fishbowl



Allow students to engage in tasks in a safe manner, but with peer observation. In this activity, a group (or groups) of students are chosen to work through a topic or challenge. The rest of the group watches and listens, either live or asynchronously. This group then leads a discussion regarding the process undertaken and outcomes of the group observed.

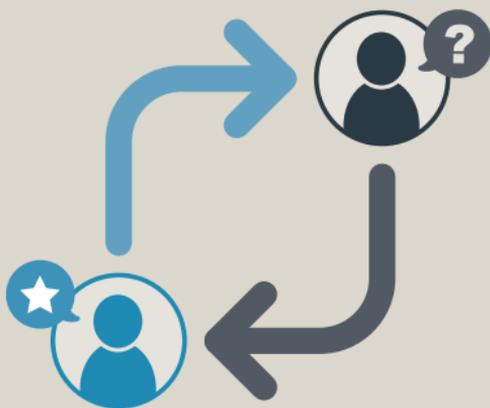


Mistakes



Learning through failure is a powerful pedagogic tool. Structure activities, tasks and questions so that students can make mistakes. Carefully watch the 'mistake' and allow students to follow through on it if you feel it is beneficial. It is important to allow students to reflect (with your support) on the mistake in order to learn from it.

Ask for feedback



Understand your own performance by asking students for feedback on the session. Outside of any formal module evaluations consider more current approaches for micro-evaluation such as: oral feedback at the end, chat comments, use of a digital whiteboard or polls. It is best to ask specific questions about activities and concepts to focus the questions.



Wiki



Over the course of a module/semester /programme encourage students to create their own 'wiki' – this would be facilitated through programmes such as Google Docs. This will help shape collaboration, bring a range of resources together in one place and empower the students through collective knowledge.





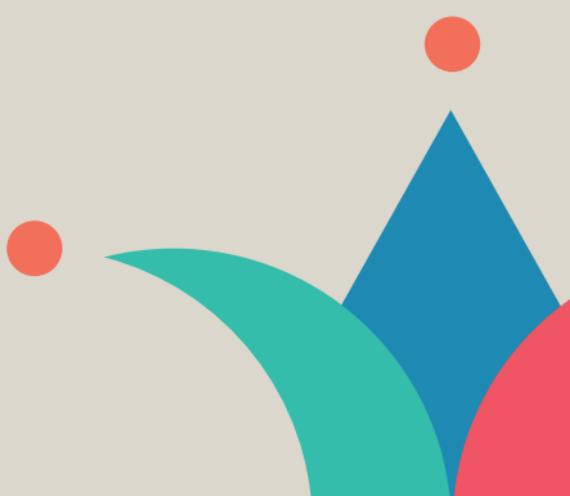
Blogs, vlogs and podcasts



Principally a student oration presented in either text, video or audio. This can include a comments feature for peer review. This can allow students to reflect on topical issues within their field of study and develop critical analysis. If used as a reflective tool it can help reinforce, deconstruct or reconstruct as well as internalise their knowledge alongside peer critique and review.



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