

What is real engagement? When students choose to invest (and reinvest) their attention and effort in the pursuit of a learning goal.

Compliant, Dutiful Learner	Engaged Learner
Follows oral and written directions with minimal prompting	Follows oral and written directions with minimal prompting but may pursue an alternative approach to personalize the experience
Completes explicit procedures and requirements in a timely manner	Pursues own train of thought regardless of task at hand or feedback from staff, which may make it difficult to finish in a timely manner
Intently focuses on task completion to finish the assignment	Focuses on the learning and wants to talk about it regardless of prompting or consideration for those around them
Participates in group activities and discussion when prompted	Can be reticent in group activities and discussion because still mulling over ideas and information or because still actively immersed in the previous task
Responds to straightforward questions but needs scaffolding to pursue a more complex question	May be bored or unmotivated to respond to straightforward questions but is fascinated by questions that require teasing out ambiguity and complexity or questions that are personally interesting and relevant
Seeks approval, credit, or high marks because of effort, quantity, or adherence to directions	Seeks recognition for the thoughtfulness of the work or originality of the work, even if it isn't complete or doesn't adhere to directions
Plays it safe by electing to follow known procedures, explore familiar topics, utilize tools that have been mastered; dismisses or avoids alternative points of view or approaches	Chooses to take risks by exploring something new, attempts to solve a problem in a novel way, and considers an alternative point of view
Completes work with no expectation for finding personal relevance, connection, or interest	Seeks work that is interesting—or seeks to make it work interesting
Takes information at face value and does not question the credibility or validity of “experts” (e.g., a teacher, an online source, the textbook interpretation).	Constantly questions both text and people to better understand an issue, topic, or problem
Waits patiently for assistance to get help or decides not to ask a question because the conversation would require more work	Demands immediate assistance or attention and feels justified for doing so in light of a deep connection to or curiosity about the topic, or investment in the task at hand

Why does real engagement matter?

- invites students to participate in the learning process
- take ownership over their own learning within and beyond the walls of the classroom
- teaching feels good again

How do we promote engagement?

4 Keys to Student Engagement	WHAT it is	WHAT you can do
Clarity	What am I asking students to do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify learning goals to ensure assignments are worth doing• Eliminate the guesswork of what it is you really want
Context	Why is this work important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify powerful questions and pursuits that are worthy of accomplishment• Create a standing opportunity to “pursue interesting”• Connect assignments to authentic audiences
Challenge	How does this assignment stretch my students?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify and address the underlying skills embedded in assignments• Build flexible assignments to challenge students where they are• Manage students’ perceptions of the work
Culture	How do I show my support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set the expectation that learning is not efficient or linear—it’s messy• Build a culture of critique