



# EFFECTIVELY ENGAGING STUDENTS

## *A Tip Sheet for Sexuality Educators*

You may have worked in classes where getting the students to engage with the learning is a challenge, for whatever reason. Effectively engaging students takes skill, skill to know the community, connect with students, connect the content to their lived experiences and interests, and establish classroom routines to encourage engagement.

### ***Know the Community***

Knowing the community from which your students come can help you connect with them and better engage with them. If you are a working in new school or organization, contact site ahead of time. Ask questions about students' demographics such as racial/ethnic background, age range, level of education et cetera. Ask about the organizations motivation for providing sex education. Stay up to date with local news and events and spend time in the community.

### ***Connect with Students***

Show up early and be available to talk with students. Highlight the student by learning about their interests and passions. Build connection by finding commonalities. Ask questions about their lives. Get students' input on the day's activities when possible. Use icebreakers to get to know the students. Acknowledge each student by their name and make sure you pronounce it correctly.

### ***Show Your Own Enthusiasm***

Showing your own enthusiasm for sex ed can help build up students' enthusiasm too! Get grounded by pausing and taking a breath before you start teaching. Share your personal enthusiasm for the topic of the day. Smile and use warm body language and tone.

## **Connect Content to Lived Experiences**

Frame the purpose of learning activity in the context of lived experiences. Refer to students by their names when encouraging learners to share experiences. Reinforce the need for confidentiality. Find commonality in lived experiences. Invite reflections on the relevance of the content. Demonstrate caring about their social and emotional needs. Invite students to compare and contrast their experiences with those in media.

## **Set Up Classroom Jobs for Students**

Classroom jobs, such as bike rack attendant, note-taker, or time-watcher, can help students remain engaged in learning. Explain the roles and expectations of each job. Ask for volunteers and look for non-verbal readiness clues that indicate a student's willingness to take on a classroom job. Assign the various roles and trade off roles appropriately. Offer other ways to sign up for a role such as after class. Let them know about future opportunities to take on a classroom job.

## **Check in with an Individual Student**

There may be times when you need to check in with an individual student privately about their engagement. Ask them if it's a good time to talk privately. Share observations of learner's engagement. Ask the student if things are emotionally okay. Point out the student's strengths and build them up. Ask the student for feedback on engaging the rest of the students.



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