

## Structuring Classroom Experiences for Success

### *Proactive Management Strategies*

## Ensuring that students are actively participating during lesson closure

### ***Understanding the problem...***

Many teachers habitually lose track of time and teach right up to when the bell rings. Several problems occur when this happens. First, there is a mad rush for students to be packed up and move out into the hallway to get to their next class on time. Second, students often check their watches and in anticipation of the bell, turn off their learning mode and begin packing their materials even as the teacher is attempting to address additional new information. Further, opportunities are lost to engage in powerful learning enhancers that can be used at the end of a lesson to bring closure, consolidation, and extensions of student understanding.

When students do not actively participate at the end of the lesson, there are a number of undesirable consequences. The teacher and the students may become emotionally reactive to one another. For example, the teacher may feel ignored and become agitated because

### ***A key to the solution***

Like great novelists, effective teachers captivate their audience until the end. Maintaining high rates of student participation at the closure of the lesson requires planning and creativity. A well-structured closure to instruction combines a review of previously learned content with statements describing thoughts or ideas that will be developed. Creating this delicate balance motivates students to remain actively engaged and also prepares them for future learning activities.

One solution to improving dwindling attention and student participation at the end of the lesson is to offer flexible teaching formats that promote active student engagement. Providing opportunities for high rates of responding creates momentum that is captivating and motivating. Teachers who maintain involvement until the bell rings are maximizing students' learning and modeling effective and efficient time-management skills.

students have prematurely terminated the lesson, whereas the students may feel overwhelmed and become anxious about the material or upcoming assignments. Either way, the relationship between them becomes strained and students are more likely to demonstrate uncooperative behaviors.

### **Management Tips**

**Step 1** Reflect on what you want students to learn, and at the end of the lesson, re-state explicitly what students are expected to learn. Limit the focus of an instructional activity to one or two objectives that are specific, measurable, and observable.

For example, the teacher might say ...

*There were two primary objectives of this lesson. By now, you should be able to provide 3-5 examples of how DNA replication and cell division has impacted society in the past 10 years.*

*Also, you should be able to predict how our knowledge of DNA replication and cell division may continue to influence our society in the new millennium by citing 3-5 significant implications.*

*Let's review and practice this for a moment ...*

**Step 2** Brainstorm creative ways to involve the students at the end of the lesson. During this process, it is often helpful to visualize the conclusion of the instructional activity. What do you see the teacher doing? What do you see the students doing? What activities could be offered to increase student involvement?

**Think Pair Share to extend**  
**Question and answer with response cards to review**  
**Graphic organizer to summarize**  
**Small-group discussions to apply core ideas**  
**Metaphors to connect**

**Step 3** Reflect on your expectations regarding student behavior during high rates of responding. Chaos easily erupts when several students are actively engaged. In order to avoid this undesired outcome, teachers need to identify what students will do during these times and how they will do it. *Clearly stated expectations* and *structured transitions* are the most effective methods to ensure that active participation occurs in an organized and structured manner. At this time,

it is also necessary to anticipate any problems that may arise during instruction as a result of active student engagement.

**For example ...**

**The Problem:**

Students might discuss personal or social issues during the Think Pair Share time.

**The Solution:**

Encourage students to use the Ready, Aim, Fire strategy before they divide into pairs.

**Step 4** Generate a plan for making participation happen at the end of the lesson. The plan should focus on delineating the instructional and behavioral expectations that are relevant to the conclusion of the lesson. Incorporating past learning also increases the plan's effectiveness.

**For example ...**

**Think Back (End) – DNA Replication & Cell Division**

**THE IDEA:**

Engage students in a Think Pair Share activity” to review the topic of DNA replication and cell division. For example...

**Application questions ...**

*The core idea of today's lesson has been about how DNA replication and cell division has impacted our society in the 1990s – especially the ethical concerns that have emerged because of cloning. As our scientific knowledge in this area becomes more sophisticated, how could it impact our society in the new millennium? What advances could occur? How could our quality of life be improved? What new concerns might be raised?*

**The PLAN:**

- I. Remind students to use the Ready, Aim, Fire strategy.
- II. Pose the question & structure think time.
  - a. Have students identify partners.
  - b. Inform students that they are to think of an answer to the question that you are about to pose, but not to say anything out loud until you give a signal.
  - c. Pose the question and provide about 1 minute of think time.
- III. Cue the students to share their responses with their partner.
- IV. Call on two students (each from a different pair) to share their responses with the class. Facilitate class discussion around similarities or difference in opinions that various groups generated.

**Step 5** Implement the plan. Be ready to monitor and adjust the plan if necessary. The ability to think on your feet is a hallmark of effective teaching. Continually gauging students' responses allows you to be responsive to their instructional and behavioral needs.

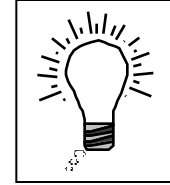
For example ...

If you were unable to cover the content you had intended to during instruction, you need to modify your plan for the end. Continue with the Think Pair Share activity as previously planned; however, change the specific types of questions you pose to the students. Instead of application questions use ...

**What? So what, Now what? Questions...**

*What is the most important thing you have learned about this so far?*

*So what? Why do you think it's so important?*



### **Jazzing It Up**

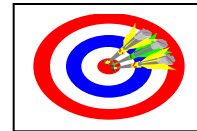
1. Use consistent signals to manage transitions during activities that promote active student engagement. It can be difficult to regain students' attention after frequent student-to-student interactions.

For example, use the **Ready, Aim, Fire** strategy...

State the following...

*"In 2 minutes you need to put your eyes on me.*

*Remember to use your **Ready, Aim, Fire** strategy to help you."*



Or, use the **SWING & SHIFT** mnemonic...

**SWING = Silently Wind It into the Next Gear!**

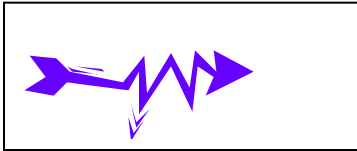
**SHIFT = Silently Hustle It Forward Together!**

State the following: *In 2 minutes you need to **SWING & SHIFT!***

Decide on a signal and stick with it to be effective.

2. Teach students to use self-talk to encourage continued engagement at the end of the lesson. For example, *There are only 5 minutes left in this period and I am free! I need to use my Ready, Aim, Fire strategy to pay attention so I won't miss important information.*

3. Maintain an appropriately brisk instructional pace. Closing the lesson too quickly will create confusion, whereas dragging it out will result in loss of interest. In either case, the integrity of the lesson structure is compromised and students' learning is sacrificed.



4. Be consistent and maintain a sense of humor!  
Remember to be cautious of the "once and done" trap. The key to success is to consistently and continually revisit the behavioral and instructional expectations during the beginning, middle, and end of the instructional activity. In doing so, the positive classroom climate is not only created but -- more importantly -- it is maintained over time!



### ***What's Next?***

Additional strategies for making positive or desired student behavior(s) happen at the end of a lesson include

- Reviewing expectations for end-of-the-lesson behavior
- Facilitating reflection on goal attainment and performance

Management Tool Box

Tactics for ENDING a lesson