

Check & Connect Psychological & Cognitive Engagement Intervention Examples

Cognitive Engagement

Empower the student

- Enhance the student's personal belief in self and personal competence through repeated contacts, goal setting, problem solving, and relationship building.
- Model positive, affirming "self-talk" in which students encourage themselves with messages like, "I can do this."
- Discuss the link between the student's effort and the outcome achieved, and provide feedback on the student's effort.
- Encourage the student to have control over their destiny in the classroom (e.g., underscore student's decision about actions taken paired with a plan/supports for the student).
- Provide the student with opportunities for success.

Set goals

- Ask the student about their goals, who they admire, and what they look forward to.
- Specify clear lesson objectives – what the student will learn.
- Guide students in setting personal goals for monitoring their progress on large assignments and in the course in general.
- Enhance or explicitly identify the relevance of schoolwork to life and future goals (and career).
- Encourage the student to focus on their own goals, not the goals of classmates.

Plan strategies for reaching goals

- Focus on necessary steps to reach/pursue personal goals and career aspirations.
- If the ultimate goal is too challenging, help the student set proximal goals.
- Model and practice "self-talk" in which the student learns to talk their way through each step of the task.
- Encourage the student to map out a plan before starting a big project. Consider providing a template for planning/goal setting.

Support the student in overcoming obstacles

- Explain that without facing challenges, one cannot progress and therefore will not overcome feeling behind.
- Teach strategies for coping with failure and persisting.
- Validate that some work is boring, but explain that it is necessary and how it is beneficial.

<p>Cognitive Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain calm and professional, talk through situations, and use think-aloud procedures for both academic and behavioral concerns. • Help the student problem solve using the following steps: Stop and think about the problem, think of some choices, choose one and do it, and then evaluate how well it worked. • Model optimism—the perspective that there is a way to figure this situation out and to advance the student toward greater productivity in the school setting. • Recognize that students know when they are behind; however, they seldom know how to rectify the delayed performance. <p>Teach metacognitive and self-monitoring skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement self-monitoring interventions (e.g., graph progress toward goals). • Explicitly teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies (e.g., mnemonic strategies) and effective note taking and study skills. • Encourage students to monitor their comprehension and to review or ask questions when they don't understand something. • Give informed feedback in a nonjudgmental way—encourage the student to self-observe, self-evaluate, and self-reflect on progress. • Have students make predictions about how they will do on a task.
<p>Psychological Engagement</p>	<p>Build a relationship with the student</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convey that students are valued and important: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Warmly greet students (in hallway, at classroom door) ○ Smile at students • Make sure the classroom is a pleasing, respectful environment. • Ask the students questions about themselves (e.g., How was your weekend? What do you like to do outside of school?). • Show the student that you listen by following up on previous conversations (e.g., How was your basketball game last night?). • Show interest in the student's interests. • Welcome the student back after an absence, note that they were missed, and help them catch up or make up work. • Be persistent in building the relationship. Often, the most disengaged student benefits the most from a positive teacher-student relationship. <p>Provide personalized support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalize education (e.g., alter assignments to match personal interests and goals). • Provide extra support for the student in a timely fashion. • Make it possible for the student to get help without embarrassment. • Create a signal for the student to use to cue the teacher that they need assistance. • Help decrease student stress by validating feelings, remaining positive, and emphasizing that things will get better.

Psychological Engagement

Build community

- Teach students to treat each other with kindness and respect.
- Create an environment in which students feel safe and cared for.
- Do not tolerate name-calling, exclusion, or bullying.
- Allow time for students to share about themselves (e.g., upcoming events, personal successes, life changes).
- Celebrate student success as a group.
- Enhance peer connections through peer-assisted learning strategies.
- Empower students to take an active role in the classroom through helping teaching staff and other students with tasks.
- Encourage students to participate in non-academic aspects of school (sports, clubs).

Provide positive feedback

- Call attention to the student's success.
- Avoid lecturing, nagging, or threatening.
- Provide more frequent acknowledgement of the student's appropriate behavior than inappropriate behavior.
- Make an effort to send home positive notes or make positive phone calls as often as possible, even for small successes.
- Send good work home on a regular basis.
- Try to provide the student with four positive comments for every one negative or correctional comment.
- Help the student see their strengths.
- Recognize effort and participation.
- Teach the student to use affirmations (e.g., I am a good writer, I have confidence in my ability to learn, I can do things I set my mind to.)
- Dignify student responses ("I can tell you are thinking about the lesson, but let me help you correct your answer" vs. "No, that's not right!")
- Affirm a growth mindset.

Resources come from Check & Connect research from the University of Minnesota. Learn more at checkandconnect.umn.edu