

Ten Tips for Fostering Scholar Engagement



1. Know Your Stuff

- To effectively lead True2U activities, you need to know them inside and out.
- Preparation is key: The better you prepare, the more confident and engaging you'll be.
- The curriculum has some big updates this year! Whether it's your first year or your fifth, review the materials closely. Please reach out to True2U staff with any questions or if you would like to set up a time to meet. We're here to help.

2. Attention Grabbers

- Have a consistent phrase or routine to quickly refocus scholars. You can also ask the teacher if they already use one that the class knows.
- Examples: "5...4....3...2...1...", *"Everyone put your eyes on me"*, *"Clap once if you hear me, clap twice if you hear me."*

3. Less is More

- If scholars are off-task, don't point them out or call them out loudly. Instead, move closer to the scholar or group without touching or interrupting the flow. Proximity often corrects behavior without disruption.

4. Wait...

- Don't compete with side conversations. Use a calm phrase that signals you won't continue until you have everyone's full attention.
- Examples: *"I'll wait..."*, *"When everyone is quiet, we'll continue"*, *"It needs to be quiet in, 5,4,3,2,1..."*
- Be patient and consistent, it may take some repeating.

5. Choose Your Battles

- If a scholar is disengaged (head down, withdrawn, etc.) decide whether it's worth the effort at this time. Sometimes it's just not their day. Quietly check in with the teacher (either during or after the session) to ensure support. Save your energy to re-engage with them next time.

6. Transitions, Transitions, Transitions

- In order to help with the chaos that can sometimes accompany transitions, give all directions before scholars begin to move. A simple trick:
 - Start with “*When I say go...*” → *give directions* → *then say “Go.”*
- If anyone moves early, pause, regroup, and reset expectations.

7. Remember Scholars’ Names

- Nothing makes a scholar feel more valued than hearing their name. Use memory strategies, name tents, work with your mentor partner (if applicable), and practice regularly. Showing that you care enough to remember builds trust and engagement.

8. Equality for All

- Avoid favoritism, stereotyping, or labeling (“troublemaker,” “the smart one”). Scholars notice quickly when they’re treated unfairly, and it can undermine your ability to lead. Show equal respect and encouragement to ALL.

9. Show Excitement!

- You get to see your scholars once a month, make it count! Bring energy through your tone, body language, and presence. Let them know that you are excited to see them and spend time with them.
- Ask them about things they mentioned during your last session. “*How was that math test?*” “*How’s your basketball team doing?*” Remembering what scholars have told you can go a long way.

10. On Your Feet, Not in Your Seat

- Stay standing and moving throughout the session, this can help the scholars be engaged.
- If you’re not leading an activity, stay engaged by circulating the room, supporting scholars and your mentor partner (if applicable).
- Leading by example, your presence sets the tone.
- **Avoid cell phone use to show you are present and they have your full attention.**

Remember, have fun, be authentic & be True2U!