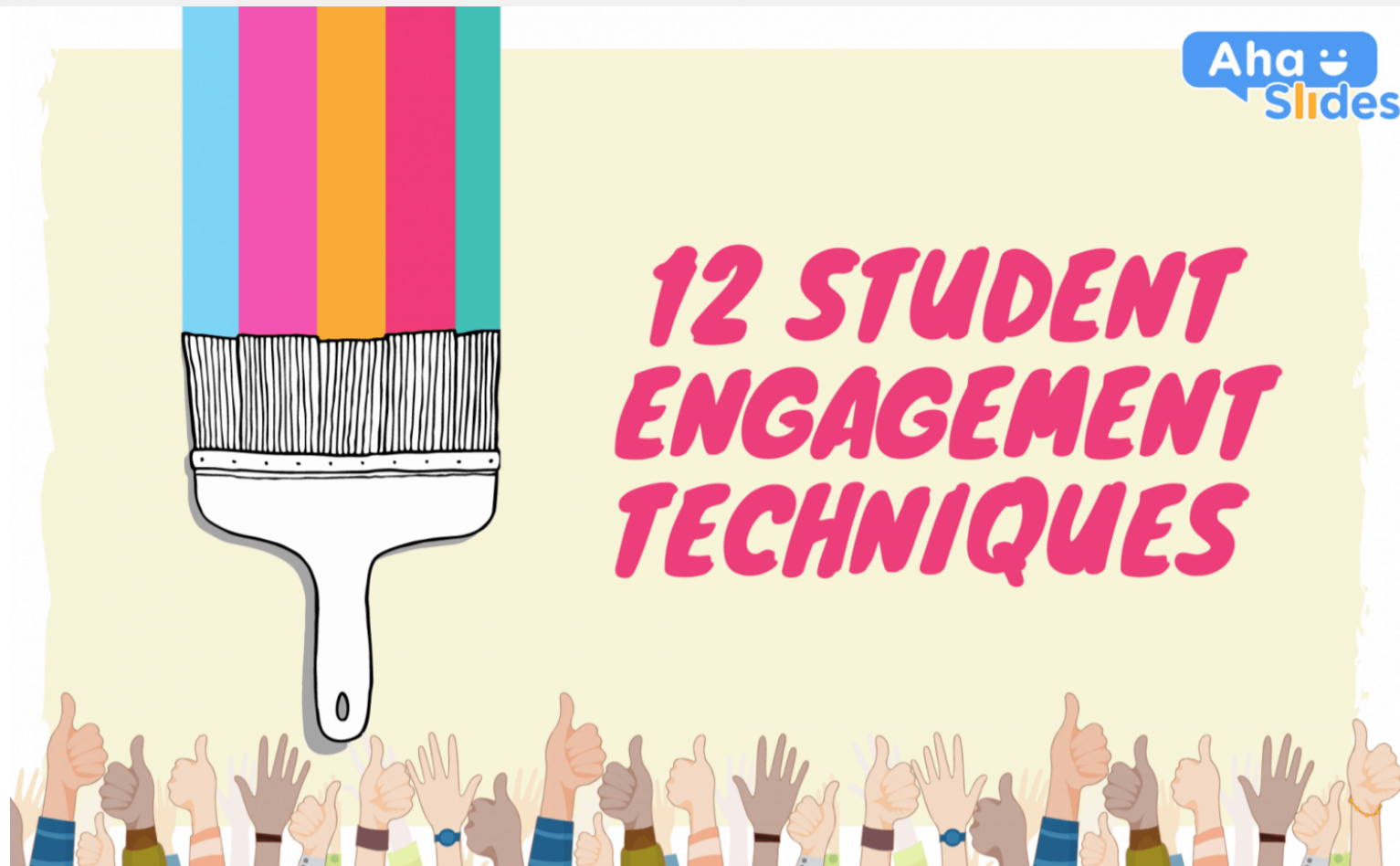


Are you a participant?

AHASLIDES.COM/ENTER CODE...

JOIN



The 12 Best Student Engagement Strategies to Ignite Learning in 2021

12 Jul 2021 • 11 min read



Lawrence Haywood

Former ESL teacher and quiz master converted to the wild slide. Now a content creator, traveller, musician and big time slider preaching the good word of interactivity.

We hear it all the time: a great teacher is a great motivator. It's a simple idea, but it rests on a concept that educators have been battling for decades: **how do I motivate my students?**

Well, demotivation breeds demotivation. If you can't motivate your students, *how can you motivate yourself to teach them?*

It's a vicious cycle, but the **12 student engagement strategies** below can help you to stop the rot.

How to Increase Student Engagement – The G

- [Why do Student Engagement Strategies Matter?](#)
- [4 Easy Wins](#)
- [4 Long Plays](#)
- [4 for Online Learning](#)

Hi there, welcome to AhaSlides!
Are you looking for ideas for your quiz, presentation, or workshop?
Simply reply to this message, we are ready to help!

Why do Student Engagement Strategies Matter?

It can be easy to write off disengaged students as unsavable, or even to write off 'student engagement' as a concept for teachers with more time on their hands. But by taking a dive into this topic, you've shown motivation to motivate. And that's motivational!

You've taken the right step towards improving your students' learning. *Here's why it makes so much sense to have student engagement strategies in the classroom:*

- 53% of American students are **not-engaged** or **actively disengaged** in lessons. ([Gallup](#))
- By the end of the 2020 academic year, 1.3 million students had stopped engaging **because of the switch to distanced learning**. ([Remind](#))
- Engaged students are 2.5x more likely to conclude that they get **excellent grades in school**. ([Gallup](#))

Disengagement itself is an epidemic, but there are always techniques to stop it. The tips below will help you rekindle your students innate curiosity to learn.

Student Engagement Strategies – 4 Easy Wins

The four techniques below are the **quickest** and **easiest** ways to capture student interest. They require very little work to set up and they're easily understandable for all levels of your students.

#1 – Use Student Opinions

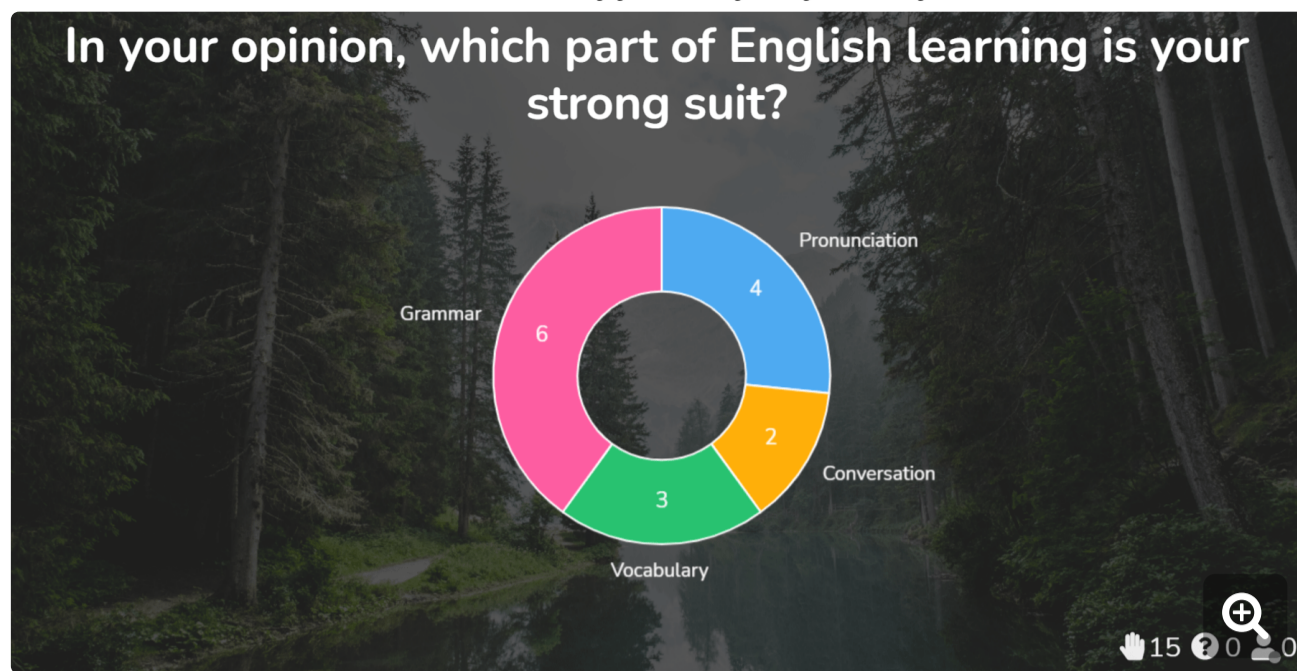
Polls are powerful, because polls connect your subject matter with the centre of any young person's universe – themselves.

I kid, of course. Still, letting them contribute their opinion to something, and seeing how their opinion fits within the surrounding system, **can do wonders** for student attention.

Giving them a participating voice in your lesson has numerous benefits, but none more so than letting students know that *their* opinion, not *your* subject matter, is the real star of the show here.

Take a look at this question below, which can be asked in an ESL lesson.

Hi there, welcome to AhaSlides!
Are you looking for ideas for your quiz, presentation, or workshop?
Simply reply to this message, we are ready to help!



This poll works great for engagement because:

- The question is all about **them**.
- Students can instantly see how their opinion **stacks up with others'** around them.
- You, as a teacher, can learn about aspects of your students that you didn't know before.

From a solid and diverse poll, strategy number 2 becomes the natural next step...

#2 – Get 'em Talking

There's one learner engagement strategy that's more comprehensive than a poll. A **full-blown discussion**.

Having students voice their own nuanced opinions in an eloquent and measured manner is one of the ultimate dreams of teaching. Sadly, in the classroom, this dream occupies the finest of lines between *no one speaking up* and *absolute chaos*.

And *this* is why edtech exists.

Many edtech tools encourage **written responses** to open-ended questions, which helps everyone to have their voice heard and keep things **completely orderly**.

Do you think the man in that story was right to be angry? Explain your reasons.

I think his anger was understandable. If I had also left my wallet on the bus 5 times in a row, I would also be angry.

Penny

Not at all, it was completely his own fault!

Hariku

He was not right to be angry, but he HAD A RIGHT to be angry. Big difference.

It seemed to be one of those days when everything just piled up. I get it!

Deera

Nope. Especially because he shouted at innocent people.

Laura

Yes - 100%. I also get like that sometimes, so I can sympathise.

Menu 6

Hi there, welcome to AhaSlides!
Are you looking for ideas for your quiz, presentation, or workshop?
Simply reply to this message, we are ready to help!

Once submitted, the answer enters a level playing field with all the others. You can then elicit discussion from each equally valuable answer on the board, all in a totally orderly manner.

And the shy kids? **They can enter their answer anonymously**, meaning there's no fear of judgement for what they wrote. For the strong contingent of every class that has self-conscious students, the simplicity of anonymous answering can be an incredible boost to engagement.

Want to read more? 💡 We've got a full guide on [how to hold a student debate in 6 steps!](#)

#3 – Breed Competition with a Quiz

The overhanging force of competition is absolute gold dust for teachers. Unfortunately, aside from a haphazard and ultimately meaningless star reward system, competition as a student engagement strategy is still wildly underused.

“Competitions have much to offer in education, no matter what your view is... and should enjoy broader acceptance.

[Dr. Tom Verhoeff](#), Eindhoven University of Technology.

What's one of the most engaging types of competition we often partake in during adult life? Well, if you're anything like me, it's quizzes. By quizzes, I don't mean exams or tests; I mean a proper quiz with a leaderboard, fun, drama and one hugely engaged set of participants.



Live quizzes are excellent student motivators in class.

Either solo or in teams, the rush of students competing against their peers can be a whirlwind of engagement. If stakes are high (i.e., the prize is good), quizzes can be one of the most effective student engagement techniques in this list.

Here are some tips for creating a great educational quiz:

- **Keep it to around 10 questions** – Let your students get into it, but don't let it.
- **Mix the difficulty** – Keep everyone on their toes.
- **Use technology** – In personal experience, pen and paper quizzes are hard to manage with a big class. Try running your quiz on [professional edtech software](#).

Hi there, welcome to AhaSlides!
Are you looking for ideas for your quiz, presentation, or workshop?
Simply reply to this message, we are ready to help!

Protip 🍷 Mix things up with a spinner wheel. You can try different formats, like the *Million Dollar Race*, or use it as a bonus round for your quiz!



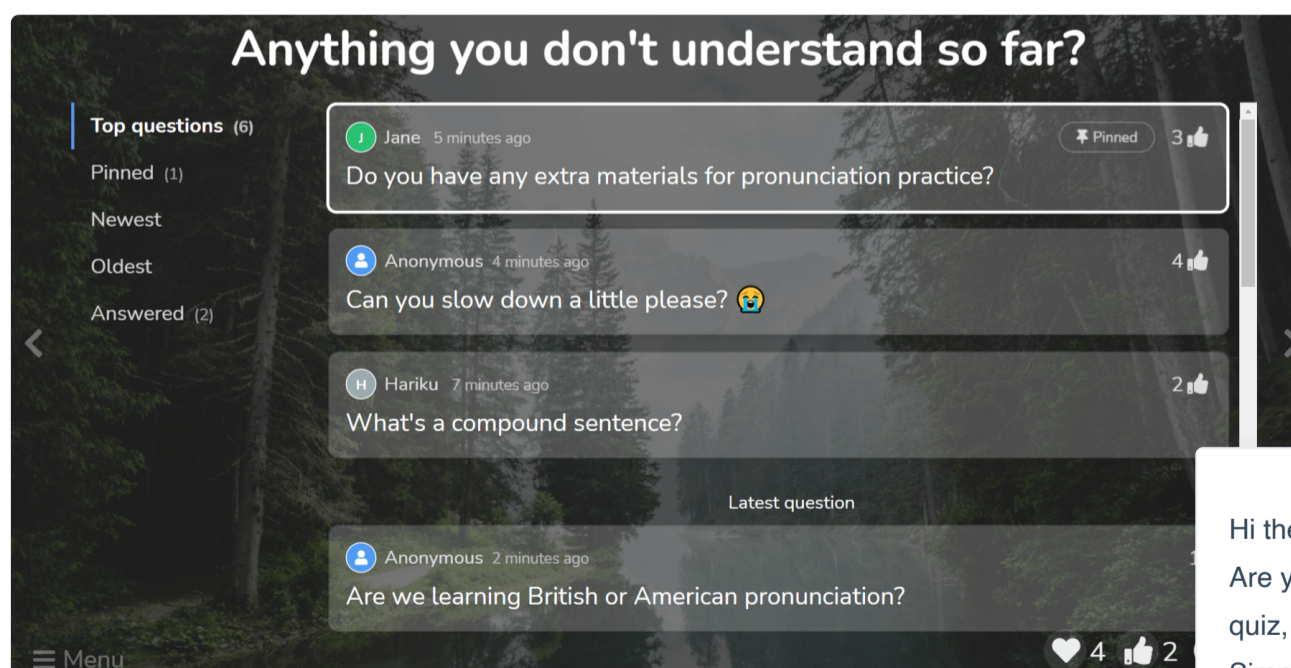
#4 – Set up Q&A Checkpoints

One of the biggest contributors to disengagement isn't to do with behaviour, it's to do with **comprehension**. No matter the quality of the subject material, if your students don't understand it, you're going to be looking out over a room of zoned-out faces.

Sure, you can ask them if they understand your explanation of a new concept, but how many typically self-conscious students are going to admit, in front of everyone, to not be following along?

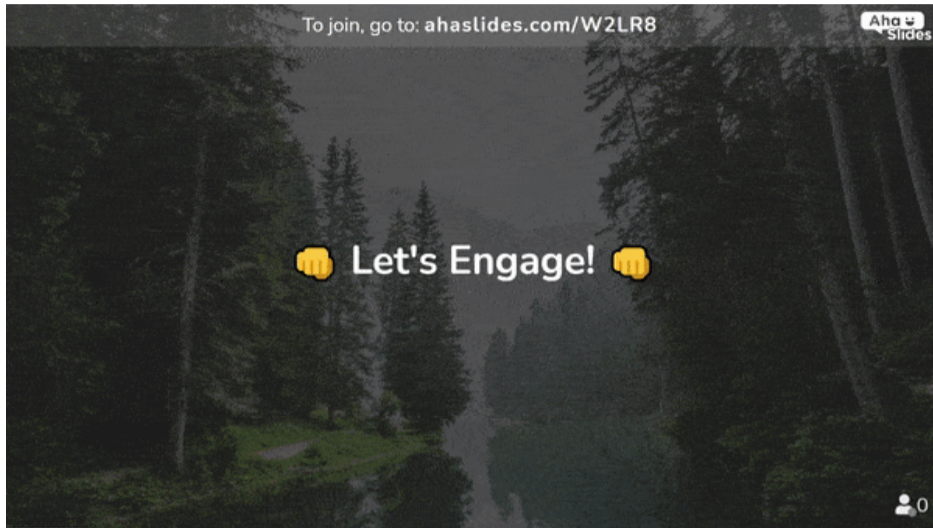
In the age of edtech, the answer is **Q&A checkpoints**. Here's why they work:

- **They're anonymous** – Students can remain nameless and ask anything without fear.
- **They're detailed** – Students have time to thoughtfully lay out what they don't understand.
- **They're organised** – All answers are written, can be sorted into different categories and remain permanent.



Hi there, welcome to AhaSlides!
Are you looking for ideas for your quiz, presentation, or workshop?
Simply reply to this message, we are ready to help!

Did you know? 💡 The 4 student focus techniques above are possible on [AhaSlides](#) – a free piece of software that helps you create an engaging, live dialogue between you and your class.



Ignite *real* learning.

Get everything above, and more, for 100% free. Download the full student engagement template and get students participating live in class.

LET'S ENGAGE!

Student Engagement Strategies – 4 Long Plays

These four techniques are a bit of a long game. They're small changes to your teaching approach, and therefore require **time to understand and set up**. Still, once you've got them in the locker, these can be some of the most engaging techniques to use in the classroom.

#5 – Let them Teach it

One of the tragedies of classroom disengagement is the fact that [85% of school assignments](#) are too rigid to allow for higher thinking skills. This, despite the fact that thinking higher than a restrictive syllabus is often what makes lessons engaging.

For a teacher alone, this is hard to overcome, but giving students **the responsibility of teaching part of the subject matter** is a fantastic remedy.



Cycle back to your own teacher training. Were you more engaged during textbook exercises on behavioural management, or when facing a sea of young faces during an observed practical? At which point were you thinking and operating at a higher level?

Here are a few tips on turning students into teachers:

- **Do it gradually.** There's a reason this is a 'long play' student engagement strategy. Students need time and practice to teach anything, even to a small group. Space out the practice time throughout the year.
- **Keep it timed.** Give them a brief time slot to teach, so as not to overwhelm them. When they're teaching, keep an eye on the clock so that they understand that time is a crucial factor in teaching.
- **Raise your expectations.** Students are often capable of way more than we give them credit for. Give them a challenge and watch them meet it.

#6 – Mix up your Style

The many approaches to learning styles is one of the fundamentals of teacher training. We know them, sure, but as much as we may think we appeal to *visual*, *auditory* and *kinaesthetic* learners, the chances are that we're failing at least one of those core student groups.

If you're a kinaesthetic learner, you need more than a token practical activity thrown your way every week. Auditory learners need more than 2 discussions each semester. They need **consistent stimulation** to stay engaged in lessons.



Every lesson, make sure there's **at least one activity for each learning style**. The be...

- Illustrating concepts, taking notes, watching videos, playing quizzes – **(Visual)**
- Listening to podcasts, having discussions, reading aloud, creating music – **(Auditory)**
- Doing experiments, creating something physical, roleplay, moving around the classroom – **(Kinaesthetic)**

Hi there, welcome to AhaSlides!
Are you looking for ideas for your quiz, presentation, or workshop?
Simply reply to this message, we are ready to help!

Remember, this may be a lot of work, but it's definitely worth it. As your lessons become less predictable, your students stay tuned in for longer.

Protip 🍷 Define each student's individual learning style with [these 25 questions](#).

#7 – Make it Relevant

When I was teaching English in Vietnam, I noticed that all textbooks exclusively referenced British or American culture. According to the [National Council of Teachers of English \(NCTE\)](#), because my Vietnamese students found **nothing relevant to their culture** in lessons, they were much more likely to tune out.

The problem goes beyond culture. If there's nothing in your lessons for students to relate to, then why should they bother learning the topic at all?

For teenage students especially, linking your topic with something relevant to their interests is more or less essential.

Discovering these interests can be done through a **simple survey**. In the 90s, the state of Connecticut [ran one called the Interest-a-Lyzer](#) in public schools, which is far too lengthy and far too *90s* for modern use, but the questions it asks can be used for your own survey. (This also has the added bonus of being a pretty good writing exercise!)

Once you've got answers back from your students, you can shape explanations and exercises around their interests.

#8 – Give them a Choice

In the case of older students, there are two things that all activities need to have: relevance (which we just discussed) and choice.

At an age where your students are finding their own way in the world, **choice is everything**. Education is very rarely a matter of choice for learners, but giving them choice in the classroom can offer an amazing increase in student motivation.

Here are a few ways to incorporate choice into your classroom:

- **Activities** – Provide a bunch of activities as an exercise, then let students choose.
- **Structure** – Lay out the structure of the lesson and let them choose how they want to proceed.
- **Decor** – Let them have a say on the layout of the classroom.

It's best to introduce choice slowly into your lessons. Most students are so devoted to their school, and possibly in their lives, that they're often not sure how it works in the

Hi there, welcome to AhaSlides!
Are you looking for ideas for your quiz, presentation, or workshop?
Simply reply to this message, we are ready to help!

Want to read more? 💡 Check out [this excellent account](#) of how a teacher increased student focus through offering choice.

Student Engagement Strategies – 4 for Online Learning

Online learning is becoming more and more widespread, but keeping students motivated across distances seems to be getting tougher and tougher. Here are 4 tips to try something different in your **remote classroom**.

#9 – Embrace the Technology

When pretty much all lessons went online in 2020, there was an understandable tendency for teachers to stick with the offline methodology that they knew. That have flown in the early stages; it won't fly now.

The wealth of educational, creative and collaborative tools out there have revolutionised the virtual classroom. There are ways to do things that neither teachers nor students would have dreamt of at the dawn of Coronavirus.

Here are a few **free** tools that teachers and students can use in online lessons:

1. [AhaSlides](#) 📊
An interactive presentation maker that allows students to host a topic and create live polls, quizzes and thought sessions about it.
2. [Colorcinch](#) 📷
A simple but powerful piece of photo editing and graphic design software. has a large collection of vector graphics, stock photos, and special effects.
3. [Canva](#) 🖋️
An easy way to create images, posters, brochures, pamphlets etc. Canva has a huge library of templates and premade elements to build on.

Hi there, welcome to AhaSlides!
Are you looking for ideas for your quiz, presentation, or workshop?
Simply reply to this message, we are ready to help!

4. [Miro](#) 

A communal whiteboard that students can use to brainstorm, illustrate thinking processes and design solutions with each other at the same time.

5. [FlipGrid](#) 

A video platform where teachers can pose questions and receive video responses from students.

Students of a certain age have a natural curiosity for technology, so embracing it can be a really good strategy to increase learner engagement. However, be wary of overdoing it – too many new tools in one go can be distracting for students.

#10 – Flip the Script

‘**Flipped learning**’ refers to students learning concepts at home, then using class time to actively discuss and solve problems related to the learned concept. Think of it as the usual schoolwork and homework relationship, just... flipped.

In the remote schooling world, where schoolwork and homework are done at the same desk, flipped learning is more about swapping the roles of synchronous work (with the live teacher) and asynchronous work (without the live teacher).

There’s a lot of evidence that points towards a flipped learning revolution in remote schooling. One of the most encouraging stats comes from [a survey from the Flipped Learning Network](#) – 80% of teachers trying the method reported **improved student motivation**.



Image courtesy of [Lecturio](#)

Why? Check out some of the benefits of flipped learning for increasing student participation:

- In class, students can participate **at their own pace**. Lower and higher ability students can concentrate on tasks at the right level for them.
- More **autonomy** and freedom of ownership of their studies puts students in a hugely motivating factor.
- Flipped learning gives students **something to do**, rather than treating them as passive consumers of information. This sets your lessons apart from other standard lessons throughout the school day and encourages students to get involved.

Hi there, welcome to AhaSlides!
Are you looking for ideas for your quiz, presentation, or workshop?
Simply reply to this message, we are ready to help!

Want to give it a go? Try this is your next online class:

1. **Before the lesson:** Create a shared folder of topic material for students (videos, podcasts, taped lectures, reading resources, etc.) and tell them to progress through each material.
2. **At the start of the lesson:** Give students a quick quiz to gauge understanding of the topic, then group each student by their level of understanding.
3. **During the lesson:** Present each group with stimulating activities (discussions, collaborations, problem solving) in order to consolidate understanding.

Want to read more? 💡 Check out this [great introduction to flipped learning](#) by Lesley University

#11 – Take a Gallery Walk

How much more motivated would you be if you knew that your work was going to be shown to your peers? Probably quite a bit. That's the idea behind a gallery walk.

Essentially, a gallery walk is a slideshow in which students' works are displayed for each other to see. While viewing a piece of work, students make observations and note down their feelings on the piece.

Here's why it's such a great student engagement activity:

- It increases **student motivation** through their inherent sense of competition.
- It increases **student focus** as they're viewing works from their peers, rather than someone unrelated to them.
- It increases **student freedom** of expression, which is always a positive for motivation.

On your part, a gallery walk is super simple to set up. Just create a presentation with room for noting down comments, like below.

Hi there, welcome to AhaSlides!
Are you looking for ideas for your quiz, presentation, or workshop?
Simply reply to this message, we are ready to help!



#12 – Never Forsake Group Work

Of all the learning formats that fell by the wayside in the big migration to distanced learning, perhaps the biggest casualty was group work.

At a time when students needed **social interaction and collaboration** the most, many teachers decided that translating group work to the online world was an impossible task. What resulted was students spending most of their ‘learning’ time feeling completely isolated from their classmates.

That takes a serious toll on learner motivation. Here are a few group work tips to fight it:

- Give them access to file sharing software, like Google Drive.
- Give them access to kanban board (task assigning) software, such as Trello.
- Use ‘breakout rooms’ on Zoom and other video calling software to simulate real-world group work.
- Break large projects into multiple small tasks to be completed in groups.

Get hands raised in *every* lesson.

Hi there, welcome to AhaSlides!
Are you looking for ideas for your quiz, presentation, or workshop?
Simply reply to this message, we are ready to help!

AhaSlides helps you boost student participation, by giving your students a voice. Create a dialogue today with **15% off** any plan! Type in the reference code AHAFORSTUDENTS2021 at checkout

MORE PARTICIPATION FOR LESS

Tags: [engagement strategies](#) [Engaging lessons](#) [student engagement](#) [student focus](#) [student motivation](#)

More from AhaSlides

[45,000 Engagements in 2 Months: How Abu Dhabi University Boosted Student Learning with AhaSlides](#)

[AhaSlides Promo Codes, Vouchers and Coupons - the Most Up-To-Date List](#)

[The Ultimate Guide on How to Avoid "Death by PowerPoint"](#)

[A Survey into Work from Home Culture \(or the Lack Thereof\).](#)

Engage your audience by adding real-time voting, Q&A sessions, quizzes and games to your presentation downloads. No credit card required.

Hi there, welcome to AhaSlides!
 Are you looking for ideas for your quiz, presentation, or workshop?
 Simply reply to this message, we are ready to help!

Company
[About](#)

Product
[Features](#)

Support
[Help](#)



[Contact](#)

[Pricing](#)

[Facebook community](#)

[Terms](#)

[For Business](#)

[Reddit community](#)

[Privacy](#)

[For Education](#)

[System status](#)

[Security](#)

[Spinner Wheel](#)

[Alternatives](#)

GET STARTED FOR FREE



Hi there, welcome to AhaSlides!
Are you looking for ideas for your quiz, presentation, or workshop?
Simply reply to this message, we are ready to help!