

30 STRATEGIES TO BUILD LITERACY SKILLS

Engagement at **Every** Level of Thinking!

ERIC JENSEN

LEANN NICKELSEN



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Reproducible pages are in italics.

About the Authors	xi
Introduction	1
The Common Core State Standards	2
The Three Engagement Zones	2
Overview of Chapters	3
Chapter 1. Success Formula for Engagement	5
Understanding Engaged Learning	5
Fostering an Engaging Climate	6
Conclusion	8
ASQ Time	8
<i>Criteria for Engagement: Primary (Grades K–3)</i>	9
<i>Criteria for Engagement: Intermediate (Grades 4–8)</i>	10
<i>“Who Are You?” Interest Inventory</i>	12
<i>Learning Preferences: Primary (Grades K–3)</i>	13
<i>Learning Preferences: Intermediate (Grades 4–8)</i>	14
<i>Subject Area Interests and Strengths: Primary (Grades K–3)</i>	15
<i>Subject Area Interests and Strengths: Intermediate (Grades 4–8)</i>	16
Chapter 2. The Common Core State Standards	17
The Basics of the CCSS	17
Reading Anchor Standards	19
Writing Anchor Standards	25
Speaking and Listening and Language Anchor Standards	28
Conclusion	30
ASQ Time	30

Chapter 3. How to Turn Standards Into Targets	31
The Three Engagement Zones	31
Designing a Three-Step Target	32
Standard-to-Target Walkthrough	36
Self-Assessment	37
Conclusion	40
ASQ Time	40
<i>Daily Stoplights Student Self-Assessment</i>	41
<i>Daily Targets Student Self-Assessment</i>	43
<i>My Progress Learning Graph</i>	45
<i>Weekly Progress Monitoring</i>	46
<i>Cruisin' Clipboard Documentation</i>	47
Chapter 4. Zone 1: Engage to Build Basics	49
Jumpstarting the Brain	50
When to Use Zone 1	51
How to Build a Zone 1 Target	52
Conclusion	53
ASQ Time	54
Chapter 5. Strategies for Zone 1	55
Building Background Knowledge Strategies	55
Activating Prior Knowledge Strategies	65
Conclusion	74
ASQ Time	75
<i>IDEA Vocabulary Organizer</i>	76
<i>The Important Book: Primary (Grades K–3)</i>	77
<i>The Important Book: Intermediate (Grades 4–8)</i>	78
<i>Historical Event Web: Primary (Grades K–3)</i>	79
<i>Historical Event Web: Intermediate (Grades 4–8)</i>	80
<i>Super Sleuth</i>	81
<i>Skimming and Scanning: Primary (Grades K–2)</i>	82
<i>Skimming and Scanning: Intermediate (Grades 3–5)</i>	84
<i>Skimming and Scanning: Challenging (Grades 6–8)</i>	86
<i>Reporter Goes Big Time</i>	87
Chapter 6. Zone 2: Engage to Explore	89
Asking Questions to Keep Students Engaged	89
When to Use Zone 2	90

How to Build a Zone 2 Target	91
Conclusion	92
ASQ Time	92
Chapter 7. Strategies for Zone 2	93
In-Depth Research Strategies	93
Daily Exploration Strategies	103
Conclusion	109
ASQ Time	110
<i>Brainstorming Bonanza</i>	111
<i>Brainstorming Bonanza Checklist</i>	112
<i>Credible and Accurate Resource Tracker</i>	113
<i>Different Perspectives</i>	114
<i>Presentation Rubric: Primary (Grades K–3)</i>	115
<i>Presentation Rubric: Intermediate (Grades 4–8)</i>	116
<i>Reflective Conversations With Nonfiction Checklist</i>	118
Chapter 8. Zone 3: Engage to Own	119
Close Reading	120
When to Use Zone 3	121
How to Build a Zone 3 Target	122
Conclusion	123
ASQ Time	123
Chapter 9. Strategies for Zone 3	125
Close Reading Strategies	125
Daily “To Own” Strategies	141
Conclusion	152
ASQ Time	152
<i>Close Reading Marks</i>	153
<i>Reciprocal Teaching Cards: Primary (Grades K–3)</i>	154
<i>Reciprocal Teaching Cards: Intermediate (Grades 4–8)</i>	156
<i>Additional Reciprocal Teaching Role Cards for Grades 4–8</i>	159
<i>Student Steps for Reciprocal Teaching</i>	162
<i>Reciprocal Teaching Conversation Notes</i>	163
<i>Reciprocal Teaching Self-Assessment Form</i>	164
<i>Stop-n-Think With Checkpoints</i>	167
<i>Stop-n-Think for Primary Students</i>	168
<i>Interactive Notebook</i>	169

<i>Self-Assessment and Rubric for Interactive Notebook</i>	174
<i>Interactive Notebook: End of Unit Reflection</i>	177
<i>Daily Door Pass for Interactive Notebooks</i>	178
<i>Walking in the Shoes of Another</i>	179
<i>Socratic Seminar Evaluation</i>	180
Chapter 10. The Big Picture	183
Unit Plan Organizer	183
Engaging Lesson Plan Template	184
The Formative Assessment Process	186
Ways to Differentiate Instruction	188
Transformative Habits	188
Support of Strategy Implementation	189
Self-Empowerment	190
Conclusion	192
ASQ Time	192
<i>Unit Plan Organizer</i>	193
<i>Engaging Lesson Plan Template</i>	194
<i>Door Passes</i>	195
Appendix A. Incorporating Differentiation	197
Lesson Plans and Preassessments	197
The Standard, Target, and Criteria for Success	198
The Cha-Cha-Chas	199
Lesson Closure	202
Appendix B. Matching the Engagement Strategies With Anchor Standards	205
Reading Strand	205
Writing Strand	207
References and Resources	211
Index	217

Connect with their interests using a “Who Are You?” Interest Inventory (Jensen & Nickelsen, 2008; see page 12 for a reproducible or visit go.hbe.com.au to download). Ask what they do in their spare time, what sports they like to play and watch, what genre of books they read, and overall, what they enjoy. For younger students, you can read the inventory aloud and have them answer the questions verbally. The answers will help you understand that student better and enable you to reach out to him or her in a way that will encourage a love for learning.

A *learning profile* can help you organize all of this valuable information. Just create a file folder for each student with relevant information, like the interest inventory. We use learning profiles ourselves, and anytime we need to understand a student better, create choices, reteach, help a student become an expert, or group students, we look at that student’s learning profile to assist us (Jensen & Nickelsen, 2008). We also want students to know how they learn best, and these inventories will help them better understand themselves as learners. Students are welcome to keep the folder up to date, and we recommend revisiting the pieces in January since students change so much throughout the school year. Other information to include in a learning profile might be:

- **Strengths**—Parents will commonly talk about their own children as being very tech-savvy, musical, street smart, or hands on. These descriptions are typical of the varieties of ways that kids show their strengths.
- **Emotional intelligence**—Evidence suggests that social-emotional skills contribute to academic achievement (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). This is why it’s important to value not only the skills of accurately perceiving emotions in self and others, using emotions to facilitate thinking, understanding emotions, and managing emotions but also programs or processes that build these skills.
- **Learning preferences**—We all have preferences when it comes to learning comfortably. For example, some prefer to work in small groups while others would rather learn independently. Some prefer to hear classical music during writing while others prefer no noise at all. For learning preference questions and questions about subject area interests and strengths, see pages 13–16 for reproducible or visit go.hbe.com.au to download.
- **Observations**—Notes from previous teachers about a student’s subject or test experiences can give current teachers great insight into the student’s background knowledge as well as behavior and preferences.

Not only will connecting with your students improve your classroom climate, but it will also set an example for how students interact with one another daily. Setting high expectations for cooperative learning during group work is vital. Pointing out and praising good social interactions is key to improving social skills all day long.

Differentiating Instruction

This second ingredient is foundational for a positive learning climate and daily success with each student. Differentiation is about using various strategies, materials, and tools to help all students reach the standards they need for success. It involves changing the content, thinking processes, pace of instruction, or assessments so each student can get to the standard. Teachers need a powerful growth mindset to help all students reach the standard or daily outcome, knowing students will arrive via different strategies on different days. Differentiation is meeting a student’s learning needs individually or in a small group so he or she can attain

Learning Preferences: Primary (Grades K–3)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Circle your favorite between the two choices. *(Note: For nonreaders, just do this interview style.)*

I would like to learn . . .

1. By myself OR in a small group
2. While listening to music OR while there is little noise in the room
3. By drawing a picture OR writing
4. By solving story problems OR adding or subtracting lists of numbers
5. Near a window OR away from a window
6. In the front of the room OR in the back of the room
7. At my desk OR on the carpet on the floor
8. By typing my words OR by writing my words
9. By being the leader of a group OR by being a part of a group
10. In the morning OR in the afternoon

Jensen, E., & Nickelsen, L. (2008). Deeper learning: 7 powerful strategies for in-depth and longer-lasting learning. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.



Access this reproducible resource at: go.hbe.com.au

CHAPTER 5

STRATEGIES FOR ZONE 1

In the previous chapter, we explored how you can consciously prepare and prime your learners' brains and helped you discover what your learners already know (good, bad, right, or wrong). This step supports the process of making sense. Meaning-making becomes more powerful when we help students connect the new information to what they already know.

The CCSS ask us to plan more opportunities for students to speak, listen to one another, and write. Taking that directive into account, we've compiled ten strategies for building background knowledge and activating prior knowledge to help your students make more meaningful connections. While the other two zones have daily and long-term strategies, all strategies in Zone 1 are short and sweet. They can be done daily with any content and any target.

Building Background Knowledge Strategies

We have four great ways to build background knowledge in this engagement zone, including Pre-Exposure and Priming, *The Important Book*, the Historical Event Web, and Kinesthetic Vocabulary.

1. Pre-Exposure and Priming

Pre-exposure is a long-term advance notice. Just as studios and theaters want us to preview a movie to garner interest, pre-exposure is the process of covertly preparing students for future content or skills days, weeks, months, or even years before accountability. If you find yourself frustrated over the lack of background students have in a subject, you can build the background in class through pre-exposure. This process can be a bonanza for teachers who often get a blank stare from students when presenting new information. Pre-exposure is often based on skill acquisition (for instance, we prepare ourselves to eventually drive a car by driving a tractor, go-cart, or bumper car as a kid). We believe that "in a well-planned curriculum, students are getting pre-exposure all the time. For example, fourth graders can be exposed to algebra by working with symbols in basic problem solving, or they can prepare for geometry by building models that expose them to points, lines, planes, angles, solids, and volumes" (Jensen & Nickelsen, 2008, p. 74).

Priming is a short-term notice. It happens minutes or even seconds before exposure to a learning event. It prepares the learner for the understanding of concepts and gives the brain information to build into a semantic

How would you sort and label these groups of words?

How does _____ compare/contrast with _____?

What are the pros/cons for/against _____?

What might the next section be about, and why did you say that?

What was the purpose of this section/paragraph/sentence? Give evidence from text.

How could you compare and contrast _____ with _____?

Why is/did _____? Give evidence from text.

Can you explain _____ in more depth?

Where else was that said? Where else could _____? Why?

What is the effect of _____ on _____? Give evidence from text.

Why did the author believe/say/write _____?

What was the MVPI (Most Valuable Piece of Information) and why? Give evidence from text.

If you could change _____, what or how would you do it? Why?

Ideally, a student's first question is good and the second question is better. Guide students by asking, "Are you sure that is a better question? How do you know?" These better questions should be more open ended but shouldn't require you to think as much as the next level (best).

Finally, for the grand finale, have students create and ask the best, highest-level questions about the photo. Congratulate them on generating their own questions. Your students will understand the photo so much better after they go through all question types: good, better, best.

Tell them there is a three-step process they can go through to brainstorm the best research questions (adapted from Rothstein & Santana, 2011). The stronger their background knowledge on a topic, the better the questions can be (they should have been learning about the topic somewhat before doing this activity if it is leading them to a research project). Sometimes we use this three-step process just to generate great questions before closely reading text. Questions are powerful and help the students stick with a challenging text rather than abandoning it.

1. Produce your own questions:

- Ask as many questions as you can.
- Don't stop to discuss, judge, or answer the questions.
- Write down everything exactly as it is stated.
- Change any statement into a question.

As a whole group, discuss the major points from each group. Facilitate this time with questions that you heard and ones that you created as well. Eventually, choose a student leader for this facilitation role (be sure students understand how to perform this role). This stage should take about thirty minutes.

When finished, simply say, “This is a good place to stop.” Students should return the room to the original set-up and then begin evaluations. Each student should complete the Socratic Seminar Evaluation and ask another student from his or her small group to complete the peer section. This is a powerful evaluation that gets students writing about the topic too.

Assessment

There are a couple ways to assess a Socratic seminar.

- Give students these questions to ask others in the group as part of a peer evaluation:
 - Here is my view and how I arrived at it. How does it sound to you?
 - Do you see gaps in my reasoning?
 - Do you have a different interpretation? Different data?
 - Do you have different conclusions?
 - How did you arrive at your view?
 - Are you taking into account something different from what I have considered?
- Last, but not least, evaluate. See the Socratic Seminar Evaluation reproducible.

Your students will relish the opportunity to have a debate in the Socratic seminar style. We encourage you to gradually release the responsibility with this strategy. You will be amazed how quickly they will want to take on the teacher’s role.

Conclusion

We hope that you will enjoy taking your students to Zone 3: Engage to Own. This level does more than connect with the Common Core; it challenges students beyond what they’re used to. It is tough and requires quite a bit of reasoning skills. But ultimately, it’s the most satisfying level of engagement. As students complete these activities, they’ll develop a level of academic self-confidence that prepares them for far greater challenges next year.

ASQ Time

1. **Action step:** What is the single most valuable next step you will take after having read this chapter?
2. **Summary of learning:** Summarize in three to five sentences what you learned in this chapter.
3. **Question:** What discussion questions do you have for other readers, for the authors, or for self-reflection to explore more from this chapter?