

# TOP TIPS

## how to connect with pupils



Learning is optimized when students are actively engaged in an activity. Research on teaching and learning shows that most of us remember:

- 10% of what we read
- 20% of what we hear
- 30% of what we see
- 50% of what we both see and hear
- 70% of what we have discussed with others
- 80% of what we have experienced personally

Practical experiences and active engagement are important elements of effective learning. Here are some ideas and approaches you can use to help develop your relationship with pupils in a school:

- ✓ Discuss your introduction with your teacher. Would you like the students to address you by your first name or as Mr or Ms? Ask for a seating plan or see if students can make name/desk badges beforehand. Addressing them by their name can make a big difference to the atmosphere of a session.
- ✓ Greet the students at the door and use them as a resource during the session (by handing out things, being assistants in demonstrations, holding up pictures and reading the whiteboard...) this engages the rest of the class and takes the focus off you for a little while.
- ✓ Smile and make eye contact.
- ✓ Think about the things that might grip /intrigue /delight students about your activity and build these into your session. It might be your enthusiasm, your experience, your expertise, your everyday examples, your life-changing examples...It might be a key starter question that acts as a 'hook'.
- ✓ Try different ways of asking questions to encourage all students to join in. Asking students questions by name is simple and effective, alternating boys and girls. Alternatively, try coloured dots: "I wonder if anyone with a blue dot could have a go at answering?" Or see if the school uses individual white boards and then each student can jot down their answer and hold it up.
- ✓ Ask for a show of thumbs to see who understands: thumbs up = yes; thumbs down = no, or thumbs to the side = unsure.



- ✓ Challenge stereotypes of who is an engineer / scientist and what we do - use examples of women and men and include examples and applications that are likely to appeal to students with diverse interests and aspirations.
- ✓ Try using questions to introduce the different sections of your session - it can work well to engage and stimulate students. Start with 'what?' questions and move to trickier 'How' and 'Why' ones.
- ✓ Use pair work to give students a chance to think and share ideas before answering. Asking them to turn and talk to their partner for a few minutes often gets them talking right away and is particularly good for students with low levels of literacy.
- ✓ Try different ways of allocating roles in team challenges e.g. randomly, have single sex groups, have job-share roles. Observe: Who is leading activities? Who is note-taking? Who is most active in the hands-on activities?
- ✓ Bring prizes/rewards - these don't have to be big or expensive. Stickers and certificates of participation work just as well.
- ✓ Leave time at the end for questions. If you prefer you can have a question box and collect questions anonymously then address them at the end.
- ✓ Ask the teacher what works well for them in maintaining students' attention - this may give you food for thought however you don't have to use the same strategies, as drawing on your individual approach and personality is a key strength.



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