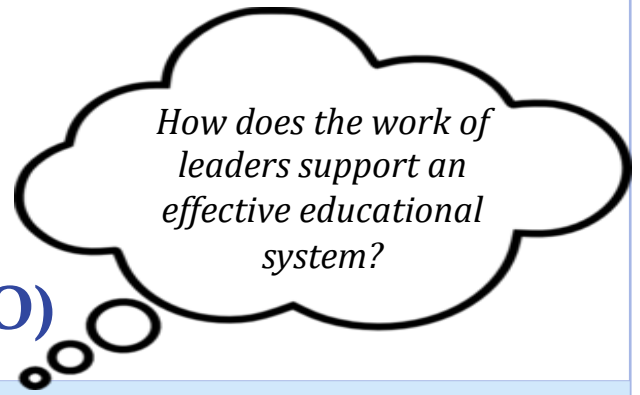


# Critical Question: How do we teach effectively to ensure students are learning? (DO)



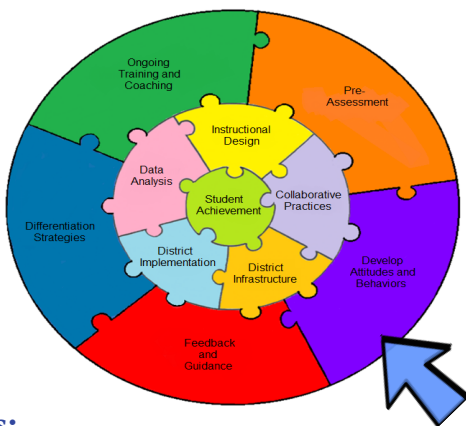
**Fundamental Practice 7. Instructional strategies actively engage students in learning and as a learner in order to develop the attitudes and behaviors that lead to high levels of learning such as motivation, self-direction, and personal responsibility for their own learning.**

Active engagement of students in various ways is critical for students to learn at high levels. It is incumbent on teachers to design lessons that create engaging classroom instructional activities including student-centered activities, cooperative group learning, discovery or inquiry, problem solving, project-based learning, etc. Engagement of students might be described on four levels with the ultimate intention for all students to be engaged as learners (Sadler, 1989):

1. Engagement with appropriate learning behaviors (compliance)
2. Engagement in the classroom activities (on or off task)
3. Engagement in learning
4. Engagement as a learner

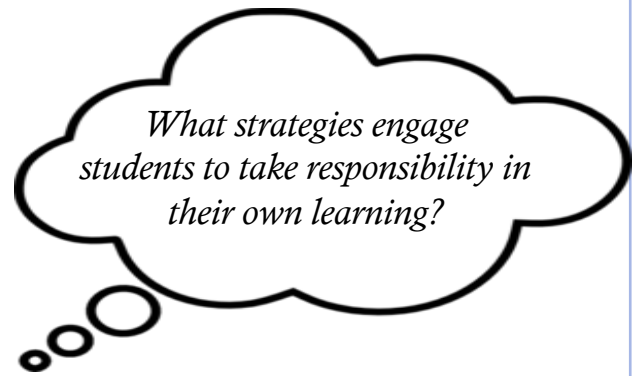
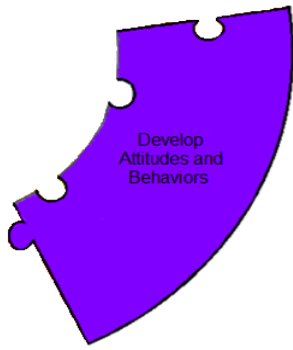
## Guiding Questions:

- How is instruction designed to engage students in learning, provide them with feedback on their learning, and help them learn strategies to demonstrate their learning at a mastery level?
- How are teachers actively engaging students in their own learning?
- What strategies that engage students in their own learning are consistently evident in classrooms?
- How would students describe their responsibility for actively engaging in their own learning?
- How are teachers and students collaborating to support learning?



## Reflections:

1. As a leader, what is my role in ensuring this fundamental practice is taking place in my district and schools?
2. What are current barriers that are getting in the way of successfully implementing this fundamental practice systemically in my district and schools?
3. When I return to my district/school, I will complete the following three action steps to begin enhancing our (my and my staff's) application of this fundamental practice:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_



Carol Dweck, Gregory Walton, and Geoffrey Cohen define academic tenacity as “non-cognitive factors that promote long-term learning and achievement.” This tenacity refers to the mindsets and skills that allow students to look beyond short-term concerns to longer-term or higher-order goals, and withstand challenges and setbacks to persevere toward these goals. Some students bring these mindsets and skills with them to school, but these mindsets and skills can also be taught. “Psychological interventions that target these critical processes could change academic outcomes for the better.” These interventions do not alter the classroom curriculum or teachers’ practices but “cultivate a growth mindset in students; buttress the belief that they belong in school; encourage goals that promote challenge-seeking, engagement, and learning; and foster the skills that enable students to pursue these goals tenaciously.”

Properties of teachers and schools that foster student tenacity and performance:

- Create challenges and hold students to high standards (promoting a growth mindset and learning goals)
- providing cognitive and motivational support (promoting effective self-regulation) to help them reach those standards
- make students feel connected and supported (promoting a sense of belonging and affirmation)

To view this article in it’s entirety please visit: <https://ed.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/manual/dweck-walton-cohen-2014.pdf>

#### Connect to Resources

For additional resources on this topic, visit the critical question 2, fundamental practice #7 section of the toolkit.

In the article, *Does Active Learning Work* (2004), Prince states pre-learning teaching methods are becoming increasingly popular, as they prepare for active learning strategies in class, where students “do meaningful learning activities and think about what they are doing”, and the core elements are “student activity and engagement in the learning process”. In their article, *Preparing students for Flipped or Team-Based Learning methods* (2015), Balan, Clark and Restall outline the seven steps to prepare students for pre-learning instruction.

#### Preparing Students for Pre-Learning Instruction

Step 1: students are formed into groups

Step 2: groups select a name, and members introduce themselves

Step 3: identifying student learning motivations and expectations

Step 4: introducing teams and team members, and reporting learning motivations and expectations to the whole class

Step 5: exploring aspects of learning

Step 6: identifying the requirements for success in the course

Step 7: review of the learning purpose of each of the above steps

To view this article in it’s entirety please visit: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/ET-07-2014-0088>