WHAT YOUR COLLEAGUES ARE SAYING . . .

"Teaching Students to Drive Their Learning is a timely playbook that gives educators the research and tools to support student agency in learning. Seamlessly integrating research-based practices into clear actions that teachers can quickly implement in their classrooms, this book is a must-read for all."

—**Arlena Gaynor**, Executive Director of Language, Literacy, and Social Studies, Dallas ISD

"The newest Corwin playbook is one that should be in the library of every educator who strives to accelerate the learning of their students. Through clever analogies and real-world examples, this book creates a clear path paved with strategies for teaching students to take ownership of their own learning and become life-long learners who seek challenges and thrive on their own growth. It's a practical guide to developing the qualities of self-driven learners in your students and promoting a classroom culture that allows the teacher to confidently let students take on challenges and effectively become their own teachers."

—**Jessica Javo**, Instructional Supervisor/Assistant Principal South Effingham Elementary School

"This is a great read for all educators! It really speaks to how we, as educators, need to help students become responsible for their own learning. Students truly need to know what to do when they don't know what to do!"

—**Lydia Bagley**, Instructional Support Specialist Cobb County School District

"This playbook is a great refresher for experienced teachers on ways that they can support students who are having difficulty finding success in the classroom. It's a gentle nod and a great reminder of best practices that all teachers can benefit from."

—**Melissa Black**, Elementary Educator and Education Consultant

"Since implementing Visible Learning practices, we have made great strides as a school district. We have embedded the use of learning intentions and success criteria in our classrooms and made them visible, utilizing them to guide instruction and referencing them as the basis for assessment and reflection. Our students now understand what they are learning, how they know when they've learned it, and where they need to go next."

—**Katie Isch**, Principal, Adams Central Community School

TEACHING STUDENTS TO **DRIVE THEIR LEARNING**

GRADES K–12

TEACHING STUDENTS TO DRIVE THEIR LEARNING

A PLAYBOOK ON ENGAGEMENT AND SELF-REGULATION

GRADES K–12

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INTRODUCTION

This book is about student engagement and self-regulation, but it's not about bribes and control. Rather, it's about designing experiences that allow students to learn more and better. The phrase we use to convey this idea is "teaching students to drive their learning." Teachers play a critical role in creating the conditions that allow students to do so. This playbook is designed for you to work with as you validate and extend what you know. You may choose to jump around, engaging with different modules based on what you or your team need at the time. Or you may decide to read the modules in order. You'll note that the first module sets the stage by focusing on engagement. We propose that high levels of engagement require specific actions and thinking from students and changes in classroom procedures and experiences. When students successfully reach high levels of engagement, they're not simply compliant. Instead, they drive their learning.

Who wouldn't want students to be leaders of their learning, to be engaged in learning tasks, and to take responsibility?

Following this opening module, we focus on the six factors that allow students to drive their learning (see Figure i.1). You'll note that there are many interactive features designed for you to engage more fully with the ideas in each module. We hope you, and perhaps your team, will try on these tools and make this playbook your own. In the final module, we focus on the reasons that students disengage, and we present nine cognitive challenges, and what educators can do about them, to return students to the driver's seat of their learning. But first, let's meet a real student from San Diego who exemplifies the characteristics of students who drive their learning.

Figure i.1 Characteristics of Students Who Drive Their Learning

Assessment-capable learners

1. Know their current level of understanding
2. Know where they are going and they are confident to take on the challenge
3. Select tools to guide their learning
4. Seek feedback and recognize that errors are opportunities to learn
5. Monitor their progress and adjust their learning
6. Recognize their learning and teach others

MEET QUINN

Quinn had a history of struggle in school and, in fact, was recommended by a previous school for grade-level retention. Quinn's mom knew that simply repeating the same class with the same content was not the answer for her child. She transferred Quinn to a different school, one that was focused on teaching students to become responsible for their learning. Two years later, Quinn is performing nearly at grade level. Quinn is also much happier and more engaged with peers, learning, and school work.

The difference? Quinn and classmates have learned how to drive their learning. The idea is appealing, isn't it? Who wouldn't want students to be leaders of their learning, engage in learning tasks, and take responsibility for teaching themselves and others? But what does it mean to have students drive their learning? Let's review the experiences that Quinn has had.

On a daily basis, Quinn can tell you what the class is learning. Quinn also understands what current levels of learning mean, recognizing that there is no "bad" place to be. Quinn can identify "I know where I'm going," which is one of the signature characteristics of students who drive their learning. Perhaps more importantly, Quinn knows what to do next to further learning. The tasks teachers assign allow Quinn to engage in learning that is just the right amount of challenging—not too easy, not too hard, and not too boring.

Quinn also can select the tools needed for the journey. For example, while working on an essay, Quinn recalled prior lessons that focused on writing introductions and chose an introduction type to match the topic. On another day, Quinn asked for peer feedback on a draft, recognizing this type of support provides another learning opportunity. Quinn's teachers have taught a range of cognitive and metacognitive tools, but it is up to Quinn to select from them and then apply them to the learning task.

Students often wrongly believe that errors are evidence of their character, rather than an expected and welcome part of learning.

Quinn also has come to understand *what to do when you don't know what to do*. That sounds complex, but it is straightforward. When Quinn gets stuck, there are strategies in place to help get unstuck. For example, when confronted with a complex mathematical task, Quinn was not sure where to start. Rather than be stymied by this, Quinn decided to reread the problem and identify the given and the units, ask what the problem was asking, and check with a peer to validate thinking. Quinn could also seek help from teachers and peers, work backward from the answer to better understand the math ideas and steps, or rework some of the basic math ideas inherent in the task. Quinn struggled with this task but knows that there are actions that can be taken to figure out things.

Quinn also engages in self-talk, recognizing that there are things to do to become successful in the face of setbacks or when learning progress stalls. Quinn knows that a wide range of supports—teacher and peers—is available to ensure success. In other words, Quinn is beginning to see errors are opportunities for learning. This is key, as students often wrongly believe that errors are evidence of their character, rather than an expected and welcome part of learning. Errors should never be seen as sources of embarrassment or statements about one's skills and commitment, but as wonderful opportunities to tackle the next most appropriate challenges. In Quinn's school, teachers regularly comment, "We celebrate errors because they're opportunities to learn." They teach their students how to recognize their own errors. Then these teachers leverage these errors for the learner's benefit.

Further, Quinn knows how to track progress. Of course, the teachers also monitor progress through formative evaluation of students' work and summative tasks that allow them to demonstrate mastery. But Quinn knows that responsibility is shared with the teacher, and they can monitor learning together. Quinn does not wait for feedback from others but instead seeks out feedback from peers and the teacher.

In addition, Quinn has been taught several strategies to self-assess. For example, the teachers have provided students with a checklist for assessing their own participation within the group (see Figure i.2). Quinn has come to appreciate that quality engagement with peers directly affects their collective learning. Quinn and the teachers know that learning is enhanced when students are active participants in the discussion. Quinn has discovered several skills, including getting the group back on track when they lose focus.

Figure i.2 Self-Assessment for Collaborative Learning

During my collaborative group time, did I

- ☐ Track the speaker?
- ☐ Recognize and build on the comments of others?
- ☐ Remain focused on the topic at hand?
- ☐ Bring the group back to the task when we got distracted?
- ☐ Listen carefully to ideas I did not agree with?
- ☐ Seek consensus to help the group make decisions?
- ☐ Monitor my nonverbal behavior to ensure that it communicated that I was interested?
- ☐ Make and learn from errors?
- ☐ Contribute to the group such that our tasks were completed?

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And finally, Quinn recognizes when learning has occurred and engages in teaching others. The best exit ticket from any series of lessons is the skill to then teach others. This implies confidence in knowing and understanding what has been taught. As teachers, we know that we need to listen to others, evaluate how they are solving problems, and teach them to monitor their progress—the very skills we also want to develop in our students. While monitoring success, Quinn notes where those successes lie and which areas still require attention. Quinn communicates this with teachers (and others, including family members), working to interpret learning data and setting mastery goals. Quinn knows that learning is important and is motivated by success. This success drives Quinn to want to learn more, and the cycle starts again. As a result, Quinn is engaged in learning and uses a number of self-regulation strategies. No one had to tell Quinn to be engaged; rather, teachers focused on teaching all students in the school to drive their learning.

For many people, this sounds idealistic and unattainable. But it did happen. It happened for Quinn, a real student in a real school, with real teachers who understood the value of teaching students to drive their learning. Those teachers provided Quinn and others with specific experiences that built their competence and confidence, reinforcing the necessary characteristics that learners who self-regulate and take responsibility for their own learning possess. It's not pie in the sky but an attainable goal when school teams focus on a few things that work well. And it is not just students

who learn to think this way. Their teachers also think about their role to teach students to think, act, and become their own teachers—to know what to do when they do not know what to do. We introduced you to Quinn to show you it's possible. If you aspire to have students drive their learning, each of the factors explored above is critical to success. And the foundation for this is Visible Learning®.

WHAT IS VISIBLE LEARNING?

Visible Learning describes a constellation of efforts. It is a research database (see Meta[x], **www.visiblelearningmetax.com**), a school improvement initiative (see https://us.corwin.com/en-us/nam/visible-learning), and a call to action to focus on what works best to impact learning (Hattie, 2023). The *Visible Learning* database is composed of over 2,100 meta-analyses of the work of over 400 million students. That is big data when it comes to education. In fact, some have said that it is the largest educational research database amassed to date. To make sense of so much data, one author of this playbook, John Hattie, focuses his work on interpreting the meaning of these meta-analyses.

Understanding the effect size lets teachers know how powerful a given influence is in changing achievement.

A meta-analysis is a statistical tool for combining findings from different studies with the goal of identifying patterns that can inform practice. In other words, it is a study of studies. The tool that is used to aggregate the information is an *effect size.* An effect size is the magnitude, or size, of a given effect. To draw an imperfect but functional comparison, consider what you know about how earthquakes are measured. They are reported as an order of magnitude on a scale called a Richter scale. Some earthquakes are imperceptible except by specialized measurement tools. Other earthquakes have a minimal "shake" that results in a small, momentary impact but no lasting effects. A few register high on the Richter scale and have a definitive impact on an area. Just as numbers on the Richter scale help us understand the effect of an earthquake, effect sizes from meta-analyses of several studies help us understand the impact of an educational influence.

For example, imagine a study that demonstrated statistically significant findings ($p < 0.01$ for example) for having students stand while learning math. People might buy stock in "standing tables," and a new teaching fad would be born. But then suppose, upon deeper reading, you learned that the students who stood had a 0.02 month gain (an effect size of 0.02) over the control group, an effect size pretty close to zero. You realize that the results were statistically significant because the sample size was large, but the size of the learning gain itself was not very meaningful. Would you still buy standing desks and demand that students stand while learning math? Probably not (and we made this example up, anyway).

Meta-analyses can also identify whether an overall effect size differs across contexts. For example, is it different in elementary school versus high school, for males and females, in San Diego or Melbourne? Understanding the effect size lets us know how powerful a given influence is in changing achievement—in other words, the impact for the effort. Some things are hard to implement and have very little impact. Other things are easy to implement and still have limited impact. Educators search for things that have a greater impact, some of which will be harder to implement and some of which will be easier to put into play. When

deciding what to implement to positively impact students' learning, wouldn't you like to know what the effect size is going forward? Then you can decide if it's worth the effort.

John was able to demonstrate that influences, strategies, actions, and so on with an effect size greater than 0.40 allow students to learn at an appropriate rate, meaning at least a year of growth for a year in school. While it provides an overall average, often specific conditions can be more critical—such as whether you are measuring a narrow construct (like vocabulary words known) or a wider construct (such as creative thinking). Before this level was established, teachers and researchers did not have a way to determine an acceptable threshold. Thus, weak practices, often supported with statistically significant studies, continued.

Let's consider some real examples from the Visible Learning database (www.visiblelearningmetax.com). We'll focus on a few factors that we think of as prerequisites for teaching students to drive their learning.

TEACHER EXPECTATIONS

All teachers have expectations for their students. Therefore, there really is no point in asking the question, "Do teachers have expectations for their students?" The better question is, "Do they have false and misleading expectations that lead to decrements in learning or learning gains—and for which students?" (Hattie, 2023, p. 220). The effect size of teachers' expectations for student learning is 0.58. Let's state it another way: If teachers expect their students to learn a full year (or more) of content for a year of input, they probably will. These expectations are communicated every day, in ways that include everything from the teacher's demeanor to the challenge of tasks assigned to students. Expectations must be at the forefront as teachers plan units of study and engage students in quality learning experiences. (Sadly, if teachers expect students will not make a full year's growth, they probably will not, regardless of the student's potential, interests, prior achievement, etc.)

TEACHER CREDIBILITY

Learning is a risk-taking endeavor. It requires that the learners put their faith in the teacher's ability to lead. The credibility of the teacher inspires confidence and a willingness to be open to risk. It is also a source of motivation for students to draw on when the learning is difficult or when a setback occurs. Being able to tell oneself, "I know my teachers know what they're doing, so I'll be okay" speaks to the trust the student has in the teacher.

The teacher's credibility inspires confidence and increases the students' willingness to be open to risk.

Teacher credibility involves three constructs: "competence, character (or trustworthiness), and perceived caring" (Finn et al., 2009, p. 519). The first, competence, is related to the teacher's projected subject matter knowledge and ability to organize instruction. (Nancy recalls her six-year-old granddaughter's assessment of a substitute teacher's first day: "Nana, she doesn't know the right math!") The second construct, which is character, includes perceptions of fairness and respect. (John recalls one of his sons saying that a teacher "treated everyone the same." When asked how, John's son said, "It's not like we all get the same rewards or punishments

regardless of what we do; there is no fairness in that.") The third, which is caring, is understood by students to include responsiveness and nonverbal actions such as eye contact, smiling, and open and inviting body language. Doug recalls a professor of his who said, "I don't know how you're going to learn this, but it's on the midterm." The effect size of teacher credibility is 1.09, and it is simple: If a teacher is not perceived as credible, the students just turn off.

We chose these effects because they clearly impact students' learning and are not likely to be a surprise to educators. There is sufficient evidence to back up the claim that these three factors increase students' likelihood of learning. We'll focus on a number of effect sizes throughout this playbook and provide the magnitude of the effect for each. Of course, you can look up all of the effects—positive, neutral, and negative—on the website (www.visiblearlearningmetax.com), but this playbook is about putting them into action so that students take responsibility for their own learning.

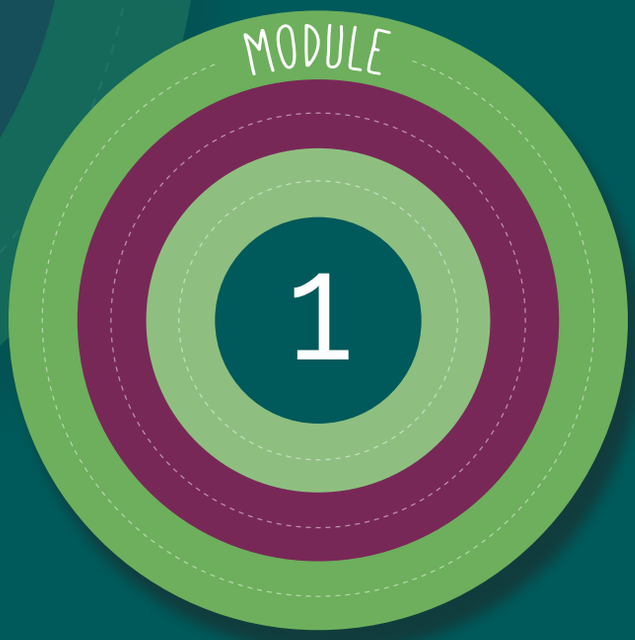
CONCLUSION

What we need are learners who understand their current performance, recognize the gap between their current performance and the expected performance, and select strategies to close that gap.

We have a goal for schools to make learning visible to every student. That's a tall order. It requires that teachers focus more on learning and less on teaching. Yes, we all use a range of instructional approaches, but is this instruction resulting in learning? That means we must know the impact we have on learning; we measure it and monitor it. And teach the students to monitor and evaluate their own progress, their strategies of learning, and their closeness to the success criteria for the lesson(s).

In order to make learning visible, we must teach students to drive their learning. Too many students are adult-dependent learners. Others are compliant learners. Too many teachers have no concept of "release of responsibility" (Fisher & Frey, 2021). Too many students (especially the above-average students) want the teacher to provide all the direction, as these students like direction and are good at following it, and it is easier for them to comply with teacher direction than to direct their own learning. Still others avoid learning altogether. Neither approach will serve our society well. What we need are learners who understand their current performance, recognize the gap between their current performance and the expected performance, and select strategies to close that gap. When schools are filled with students who have those characteristics, learning becomes not only visible but also palpable. In that case, as students become drivers of their learning and assume shared responsibility for their learning, learning is not limited to experiences inside the classroom.

NOTES



ENGAGEMENT

From Disrupting to Driving Learning

LEARNING INTENTION

We are learning about engagement and the ways in which we can teach students to drive their learning.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can discuss the value of viewing engagement as a continuum.
- I can describe each of the levels of engagement and identify student actions at each level.
- I can identify factors that allow students to drive their learning.

Educators know how important engagement is for student learning, but do we ever teach it? Caring and responsive educators recognize the fundamental importance of acquiring the academic skills and accompanying language needed to succeed in subject areas and therefore teach both with intention. Yet curiously, we often leave investment in their own engagement almost entirely up to the students. Instead, there is an overreliance on external mechanisms, including classroom rules and extrinsic rewards like table points, but little in the way of instruction on engagement. This puts students at heightened risk for the punitive measures of punishment and exclusion. We'll put it another way: When school is viewed as a series of compliance hoops to jump through, rather than a place of learning and mutual investment, we all lose.

Students engage when they learn to drive their learning.

Nearly every student has a deep reservoir of motivation, but many choose not to invest their motivation in school work. So often the disengaged in class are absorbed with nonschool tasks (videos, social life, sport, music, etc.). Engagement is not a function of pushing and pulling students to do the work and love the subject, but an argument as to why they should invest in this work rather than that work.

But we all want to win. In fact, we want to create win-win situations in which students learn more and better, and their teachers recognize the impact of these situations on students. In the previous paragraph, we made it seem simple: *teach engagement*. And we do believe that students should understand what it means to engage in learning. But it's more complicated than that. As we will explore in this module, there are levels of engagement. Simply participating in class is not sufficient to ensure deep learning, much less assuming responsibility for your own learning. We see engagement as much more comprehensive and expansive. We won't bury the lede: *Students engage when they learn to drive their learning.* The question is, how do we create the conditions necessary for students to do so? What needs to occur for students to take increased responsibility for their learning, self-regulate their actions, and take ownership of their progress? That's true engagement. And that's the focus of this playbook.

TEXT IMPRESSION STRATEGY

The Text Impression strategy is used to activate a learner's background knowledge and invite predictions about a topic (McGinley & Denner, 1987). It uses a list of vocabulary words and phrases directly from the text. Learners use the list to write their own summary of the text before they have read it. They later compare their initial text impression with what they learn when they read the text. Text Impressions increase curiosity about the text and invite readers to engage more deeply in what they are reading. Importantly, curiosity has an effect size of 0.90, with a strong potential to accelerate learning. In each of the modules that follow, we'll invite you to engage in the Text Impression strategy.

TEXT IMPRESSION

Use the following words (in any order that works for you) to create an impression about what you think will be covered in this module.

behavioral engagement • cognitive engagement • emotional engagement • continuum • investing • withdrawing • engagement intention

Engagement is at the core of learning (Eccles & Wang, 2012). Disengaged students learn less and are often negatively labeled as "unmotivated" or having "a behavior problem." Without question, a disengaged learner may well be a bored one. With an effect size of −0.46, boredom is a powerful decelerator to student learning. Many of us have witnessed this firsthand, as students put their hoodies up and their heads down. Or they turn their attention to something else such as a device or peer rather than the learning at hand.

Gauging student engagement is more than just cataloging who is turning in their assignments or leaning forward in their seats with eyes on the teacher. Engagement has historically been understood across three dimensions: behavioral, cognitive, and emotional (Fredricks et al., 2004). But these three dimensions are so interrelated that none of them is individually very predictive of student success. Of course, if a student is sleeping, they can't engage. And if students are asking relevant questions, they are more likely to be engaged. Following a review of a historical model of engagement, we'll turn to a model that presents engagement along a continuum, which we find more compelling from a learning perspective.

Berry (2020, 2022) took a novel approach to this engagement conundrum by asking teachers how these dimensions were manifested by their students. These interviews revealed that teachers saw engagement as a continuum of passive and active

forms of engagement as well as disengagement. Instead of seeing engagement as a dichotomy—students are engaged or not—the continuum suggests that there is a range of actions, which can include a mixture of the cognitive, metacognitive, behavioral, and emotional dimensions that result in a state of being during learning. Berry called these stages of engagement *disrupting, avoiding, withdrawing, participating, investing,* and *driving*.

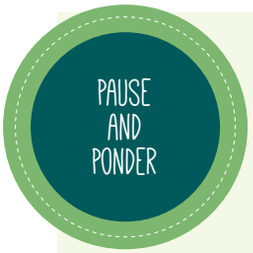
Since Berry's studies were published, classroom teachers around the world have utilized the continuum of engagement as a toehold for teaching students about its role in learning. Using the continuum as a visual, they name and label each stage of engagement, equipping their students with the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional language to take ownership of their learning by setting their goals and intentions. In other words, they teach the tools of self-regulation that are essential inside and outside of school. There are different ways that teachers help students to set their engagement intention and monitor their levels of engagement. Here are a few examples:

- A kindergarten teacher developed a graphic version of the continuum and placed it on each student's desk. Students placed a chip on the image that matched their intention and then were asked to self-assess at the end of the lesson.
- A third-grade teacher had students create posters for each stage. At various times during the day, students moved their nameplates to one of the posters to indicate their intention for that time period.
- A sixth-grade teacher gave each student a die and had them turn a number up to represent which stage they intended to be at, ranging from 1 for disrupting to 6 for driving.
- A middle school math teacher had index cards printed with labels for each stage. Each student was given a set of six cards on a ring. They could choose the card for the stage they were at and place it on top of their desk.
- A high school science teacher had students indicate their intention through the quiz feature in their learning management system. At the start of each period, students responded to the "quiz" so that the teacher would know where each student intended to be.

As noted in these examples, there is not just one way to invite students to set their engagement intention. But each of these ways allowed students to recognize their internal state of mind and communicate it with their teacher. A middle school teacher told us,

> Having students set their intention for engagement helps me make adjustments to the learning. And it helps me make decisions about how I approach different learners. For example, if a student tells me that they are withdrawn, it invites a conversation so that I can figure out what's happening and if there are things that I need to do because of that. When students are clear about their level of engagement, I take some of their actions less personally, which keeps me focused on the learning.

As Dewey noted many years ago, "We do not learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on experience. Reliving of an experience leads to making connections between information and feelings produced by the experience" (Dewey, 1933, p. 78). The essence of successful reflection is making evaluative claims—was the experience worthwhile, and did it have a positive impact on learning?



What is your reflection about teaching students about engagement?

How might you have students set their engagement intention and then reflect on their level of engagement?

EXPLORING THE CONTINUUM OF ENGAGEMENT

Notice that the continuum locates passive thinking and actions in the center and radiates in both directions as students become more active. And yes, we've all seen students who are actively disengaged as well as those who were actively engaged. As we have noted, teaching students the language of engagement is helpful, but getting students to drive their learning is more complicated than simply labeling the stages. We'll consider each of the stages with notes about students who exhibited specific actions.

Many of the students who disrupt learning are actually struggling academically and would rather be seen as "the bad kid" than as "the stupid kid."

Disrupting Learning

In this case, students are actively disengaged, and their behavioral and cognitive actions indicate that they are not learning. They may be engaged in problematic behaviors, including actions that harm others. They may also yell out in class, make jokes, and generally cause a scene. In terms of their cognitive and metacognitive engagement, they are not in the learning space. Their attention is elsewhere and may even be devious or destructive. Interestingly, many students who disrupt learning are struggling academically and would rather be seen as "the bad kid" than "the stupid kid." We're not excusing the behavior; teachers need systems to interrupt the disruption, such as restorative practices and positive behavioral support systems. But we all recognize that disrupting learning means that there is likely very little learning occurring.

Avoiding Learning

Although they are not disrupting the learning of others, students at this stage along the continuum are avoiding tasks that allow them to learn. They are often off task but may be doing things that seem useful, such as sharpening a pencil or waiting for help. Of course, both of those can be useful in the right context, but often they are signs that the student is avoiding learning. They may also be off task doing things that are counterproductive to their learning, such as playing video games on their phone or leaving for the restroom when they don't really need to go. When the cognitive demands are too great, learners may need a break and may seem, at least temporarily, as if they are avoiding learning.

The ultimate avoidance behavior is absenteeism. At a time in education when we are witnessing unprecedented levels of this, we must be courageous enough to look into the "black box of chronic absenteeism" that includes student well-being and the learning climate (Childs & Lofton, 2021, p. 215). Unfortunately, these are not commonly considered when examining the root causes that lead some students to vote with their feet by not showing up at all. The key is whether or not students (and schools) have the tools necessary to recognize that they are avoiding learning and then to change this behavior.

Withdrawing From Learning

Sometimes, students withdraw more passively from learning and learning tasks, physically or cognitively. In some cases, students remove themselves from their peers to withdraw from learning, and other times they stare into space, put their headphones on, or hide their faces. The good thing is that they are not distracting others. The bad thing is that they are not learning. Cognitively, these students may not see relevance in the learning goals, or they may not have sufficient prior knowledge to make sense of the current learning.

Unfortunately, sometimes we accept participation as engagement and don't expect much more.

Participating in Learning

The first level on the engagement side of the continuum is still fairly passive. Unfortunately, sometimes we accept participating as engagement and don't expect much more. After all, the student is doing the work and seems to be paying attention. Frankly, that is a pretty low bar, and it confuses compliance with learning. When students get to this stage, they're much more likely to learn some things than when they withdraw, avoid, or disrupt learning. However, they will not learn to drive their learning or take responsibility for their learning at this stage. It's just too passive, and we shouldn't accept

this as sufficient engagement but rather teach students the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional actions that allow them to invest in and drive their learning.

Investing in Learning

This is when students begin to take increased responsibility for their own learning. It's not just about doing work, but rather about valuing the learning. At this phase, students are much more curious and ask more questions. They engage with their peers and talk about what they are learning with others. In fact, they are excited about learning and anticipate future learning. Behaviorally, they are much more attentive and think along with their teachers, rather than observe their teachers doing the work.

Driving Learning

The highest level of engagement is reserved for students who drive their learning. Yes, they complete tasks and pay attention. They ask questions and think along with their teachers. But they take this to the next level as they set goals for themselves based on the class's learning intentions. They seek feedback from others and monitor their progress, often using tools their teachers have provided. They are so invested in their learning that they teach others, because they see that learning is valuable.

We have created a graphic version of this continuum with some of the actions that students take at each stage (see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1 A Continuum of Engagement

ACTIVE ← PASSIVE → ACTIVE

Disrupting	Avoiding	Withdrawing	Participating	Investing	Driving
Distracting others Disrupting the learning environment Engaging in problematic behavior Destruction of materials Persistent talking about something other than the topic of the lesson Speaking with unkind words	Looking for ways to avoid work Off-task behaviors Packing backpack before class ends Using various excuses to leave the classroom Returning to class late from a break	Being distracted Physically separating from group Daydreaming Sleeping in class Acting or imitating participation Hyperfocus on a task other than the one at hand	Doing work Paying attention Responding to questions Observing teachers doing work Following teacher instructions Complying with a new rule	Asking questions Valuing the learning Recognizing that there are things worth learning Collaborating with peers Talking about their learning with others Thinking along with their teachers	Setting goals for themselves based on what the class is learning Seeking feedback from others Self-assessing and monitoring progress Teaching others Being inspired to learn more about a topic or pursue an interest
DISENGAGEMENT			ENGAGEMENT		

Source: Adapted from the work of Berry (2022).

Wouldn't it be great if all it took to engage students and significantly impact their learning was to show them the continuum of engagement?? As every educator knows, it's not that simple. Yes, students should know what it means to engage, but they deserve to be taught what it means to drive their learning. Doing so is a daily exercise, one that requires shifts in the experiences that students have. To be clear, we believe that teachers also have responsibilities in the classroom, and they should help students drive their learning. We are not suggesting that educators abdicate their responsibilities in the name of students driving their learning. Teachers are a significant variable in students' learning, but it's what the teachers do that makes the difference.

To make recommendations about teaching students to drive their learning, we draw on the work of Absolum et al. (2009), Conley and French (2014), Frey et al. (2018), and a host of learning sciences and educational psychology research (cited in each of the modules in this playbook). We have organized the research evidence and our experiences into factors that guide experiences for students to learn to drive their learning, including the following:

- **I know where I'm going**. Students understand their current performance and how it relates to the learning intention and success criteria, as well as the longer learning progressions.
- **I have the tools for the journey**. Students understand that they can select from a range of strategies to move their learning forward, especially when progress is interrupted.
- **I monitor my progress**. Students seek and respond to feedback from others, including peers and teachers, as they assess their own performance. Students know that making mistakes is expected in learning and indicates an opportunity for further learning.
- **I recognize when I'm ready for what's next**. Students interpret their data in light of the learning intention and success criteria of the lessons, as well as the overall learning progression, to identify when they are ready to move on.
- **I know what to do next**. Knowing what to do *when you do not know what to do* is surely the mark of the educated person. It is the difference between knowing how to persist and simply giving up when faced with an early challenge. It is the essence of being a lifelong learner, one who knows how to research, organize information, and continue his or her own learning.

CONCLUSION

We are not interested in gimmicks or bribes that temporarily gain students' attention. Yes, in truth, we have used those tools out of desperation. We want students to engage in learning and benefit from the hard work of their teachers. We want students to develop skills they own and can use in various settings, and not be dependent on their teachers to decide when specific learning tools should be used. And we want students to share responsibility for learning with their teachers and peers. In other words, we want to teach students to drive their learning. We'll explore the metaphor of driving further in the next module. For now, suffice to say that driving requires learning and the transfer of responsibility. Imagine what we can do for our students if we equip them with the skills necessary to increasingly own their learning, understanding that we're all on a path to learning more and better from those around us.

NOTE TO SELF

John identified the actions and behaviors of highly accomplished, lead teachers. In reality, these teachers did a lot of things differently and used a variety of learning strategies. There is no one right way to teach, but the key is to know whether or not you're having an impact. And when the impact is not acceptable, effective teachers change their approach. The actions that these highly accomplished teachers have in common are shown in the following table. How might you think about these actions in your classroom?

Actions of Highly Accomplished Lead Teachers	What This Could Look Like in My Classroom	Impact on Students
Communicate clear learning intentions		**Understand the learning intentions**
Have challenging success criteria		**Are challenged by success criteria**
Teach a range of learning strategies		**Develop a range of learning strategies**
Know when students are not progressing		**Know when they are not progressing**
Provide feedback		**Seek feedback**
Visibly learn themselves		**Visibly teach themselves**

TEACHER ACTIONS

In each module in this playbook, we provide a list of actions we have observed in classrooms. Sometimes, well-intentioned teachers derail their efforts to create the learning environment that they want. Other times, their actions develop students' skills and knowledge. Consider the following actions that reinforce or derail efforts to ensure that students understand what it means to engage. How can teachers use (or avoid using) these actions to focus on teaching students to drive their learning? We have included blank lines for you to add your ideas.

Teacher Actions That Reinforce Students' Understanding About Engagement	Teacher Actions That Derail Students' Understanding About Engagement
• Teaching students how to engage as explicitly as they teach academic content and language development • Recognizing that student acts of disruption, avoidance, or withdrawal are often attempts to hide struggles • Changing the approach when it's not proving to be effective • Providing clear criteria for success, so students can ask for specific feedback • Modeling being a lifelong learner; divulging to students the teacher's own goals in improving their teaching craft	• Assuming students know how to monitor their level of engagement • Taking it personally when a student is actively disengaged • Accepting participation as the end goal • Expecting students to engage in behaviors that have not been explicitly defined and modeled • Continuing with the same approach despite evidence that it is not having the desired impact

RETELLING PYRAMID

Retelling content positively impacts learning as learners summarize information and share it in their own words (Morrow, 1985; Qin et al., 2019). Using a retelling pyramid is one way to encourage and support retellings of informational texts. Create a pyramid of words, using the following prompts, that provides summarizing information. You're more likely to remember this information if you share with a peer.

1. One word that conveys an important topic in this module
2. Two words that convey the value of an engagement continuum
3. Three words for actions you can take based on this module
4. Four words that are key to your understanding
5. Five words that convey a goal you have based on this module

Revisit the Text Impression summary you developed at the beginning of this module, and compare it to your current level of understanding. Where did your learning deepen?

Using the traffic light scale, with red being not confident, yellow being somewhat confident, and green indicating very confident, how confident are you in your ability to

- Discuss the value of viewing engagement as a continuum?

- Describe each of the levels of engagement and identify student actions at each level?

- Identify factors that allow students to drive their learning?

NOTES