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Ways to Engage Resistant Learners

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"To Engineer" = verb: "To arrange, manage, plan, construct, or guide the course of something in skillful and artful ways."

Here are 7 ways to keep your classes and training programs both interesting and relevant while easily engaging even the most resistant learners.



1. Engineer the content.

Divide your lecture material into VERY SHORT segments of time (10 – 20 minutes maximum). Each segment should have an interesting opening, middle, and closing.

See the free micro-course titled "[How To Teach It So They Learn It](#)" at www.Bowperson.com.

Between each lecture segment, insert a short TOPIC-RELATED review activity (about 1 – 2 minutes) that engages learners while quickly revisiting the content you've just presented.

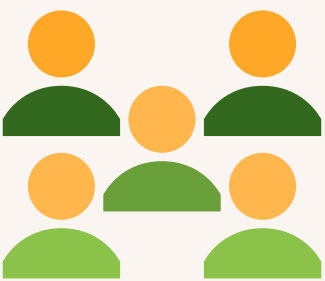
See the free article titled "[Marking the Middle: Involving Learners in the Middle of A Lecture](#)" at www.Bowperson.com.

2. Engineer review/revisit activities.



Arrange classroom tables or desks so that learners are facing each other and not just facing the front of the class. Have them work together in groups of 4 - 6 people. Have a large empty meeting area in the back or front of the room for whole group activities. Have space around the room's perimeter for chart-writing by learners.

3. Engineer the environment.



Before beginning the class or training, invite learners to sit in diverse groups of mixed jobs, genders, ages, or places of origin. Have them introduce themselves to the other group members and then choose a group facilitator to help guide the group discussions and activities. Suggest that they rotate the facilitator's job.

4. Engineer the table groups.



Tell learners they will be working in collaborative groups, which will help them learn better. Also let them know they have the "right to pass," and can just listen quietly, if they wish. The "right to pass" is a psychological safety tool that dramatically lessens resistance because the choice to participate or not rests with each learner.

5. Engineer the expectations.



After introductions, have table groups discuss their responses to a topic-related question posted on a slide. Examples: "What are three facts you already know about the topic? What do you want learn from this class?" After each lecture segment, have another question ready that relates to the content you just presented. Examples: "What are the most important facts you just learned? What can you do with this information? What is a question you still have?"

6. Engineer the conversations.



When learners physically move, there is an increase of oxygen to their brains which means they are more alert and can learn more easily. Have them do a simple stretch at least every 20 minutes during a class or training.

See the free blog post titled "[How to Use Topic-Related Body Breaks](#)" at www.Bowperson.com.

7. Engineer more physical movement.

