

CULTIVATING ENGAGED STUDENTS

We identify 3 types of engagement that thinking routines foster: 1) engagement with others, 2) engagement with ideas, and 3) engagement in action. In engaging with others, we recognize that learning unfolds in the company of others and is a social endeavor. The group supports our learning as well as challenges it, allowing us to reach higher levels of performance. At the same time, learning demands a personal engagement with ideas, building understanding is an active process that involves digging in and making sense. Exploring meaningful and important concepts connected to the world often means students want to take action. Providing opportunities and structures for them to do so encourages students' agency and power while making the learning relevant.

Secondary math teacher Jeff Watson at the International Academy in Oakland County, Michigan, reflects on the difference in engagement in his students through visible thinking. "Math classrooms tend to be lecture-oriented, teacher-centered environments," he laments. In contrast, Jeff notes that "thinking routines are an incredible way to change the entire classroom dynamic, as learning naturally turns over to the students and places them in a more active role. The best part is that while the changes are so powerful, they don't cost any money, require any curriculum changes, or sweeping reform."