

8 Tips to Overcome Student Apathy

By: The TFA Editorial Team

No matter how hard you try, some days, your students aren't engaged. There's no way around it. If there's a day here and there when a student—or the whole class for that matter—seems out of sorts, don't be alarmed. They're kids! However, there could be cause for concern when student apathy becomes the norm—and you are unable to accomplish your collective, class goals. While there may be deep-rooted and serious reasons behind your students' disinterest, and getting your students back on track may not be easy, it's important to employ different strategies based on your class dynamic. Here are eight tips to combat student apathy and regain the interest of your class.

- 1. Give students duties and responsibilities.** It can be as simple as assigning roles, such as “classroom greeter” and “door opener,” but simple tasks and jobs teach students accountability and can make them more invested in class.
- 2. Take your students seriously and celebrate their successes,** no matter how small. What may seem trivial to you, may be a big deal for your student. If a student holds the door for another student, acknowledge his or her good deed.
- 3. Teach what's relevant.** Students always want to know why something is worth knowing. When lesson planning, think about what's relevant to your students and incorporate their interests to hold their attention.
- 4. Be positive and a model of good behavior.** It's always better to show (rather than tell) your students what you expect of them, but when you do, make your directions simple and specific. This way you'll know immediately when, and if, your directions are being followed. Don't forget to smile and say “please” and “thank you.”
- 5. Be consistent and fair.** Enforce the same rules no matter the student and set rules you are willing to enforce. Appearing unfair will only lead to increased apathy among your students.
- 6. Allow your students to have a voice.** If you allow students to help you make decisions, it will empower your students and increase their stake in the class. It can be as simple as letting them have a choice of assignments or class project.
- 7. Listen to your students.** It's important to understand where your students are coming from and know their stories. Even finding out a small fact like a favorite movie or sports team can lead to a bigger connection with a student.
- 8. Accept the fact that you won't connect with each and every student.** But at the very least, you will have tried to build relationships—and this is the only way to know which students are within reach.

What other strategies do you employ to combat student apathy?

