# making large classes feel smaller:

## engaging teaching strategies for large classes

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# Agenda

# Poll

What challenges have you experienced around student engagement?



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# barriers

- Fear, anxiety, belonging
- Student resistance
- Structure/logistics
- Concerns about coverage, workload

(Allen & Tanner 2017; Armbruster et al 2009; Caldwell 2007; Deslauriers et al 2011; Deslauriers et al 2019; Eddy & Hogan 2017; Freeman et al 2011; Knight & Wood 2005; Theobald et al 2020)

# why student engagement matters

- Reduced DFW rates
- Improved comprehension, performance, & retention
- Narrowed achievement gaps
- Improved attention & enjoyment
- Increased sense of belonging

Citations



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# strategies that work

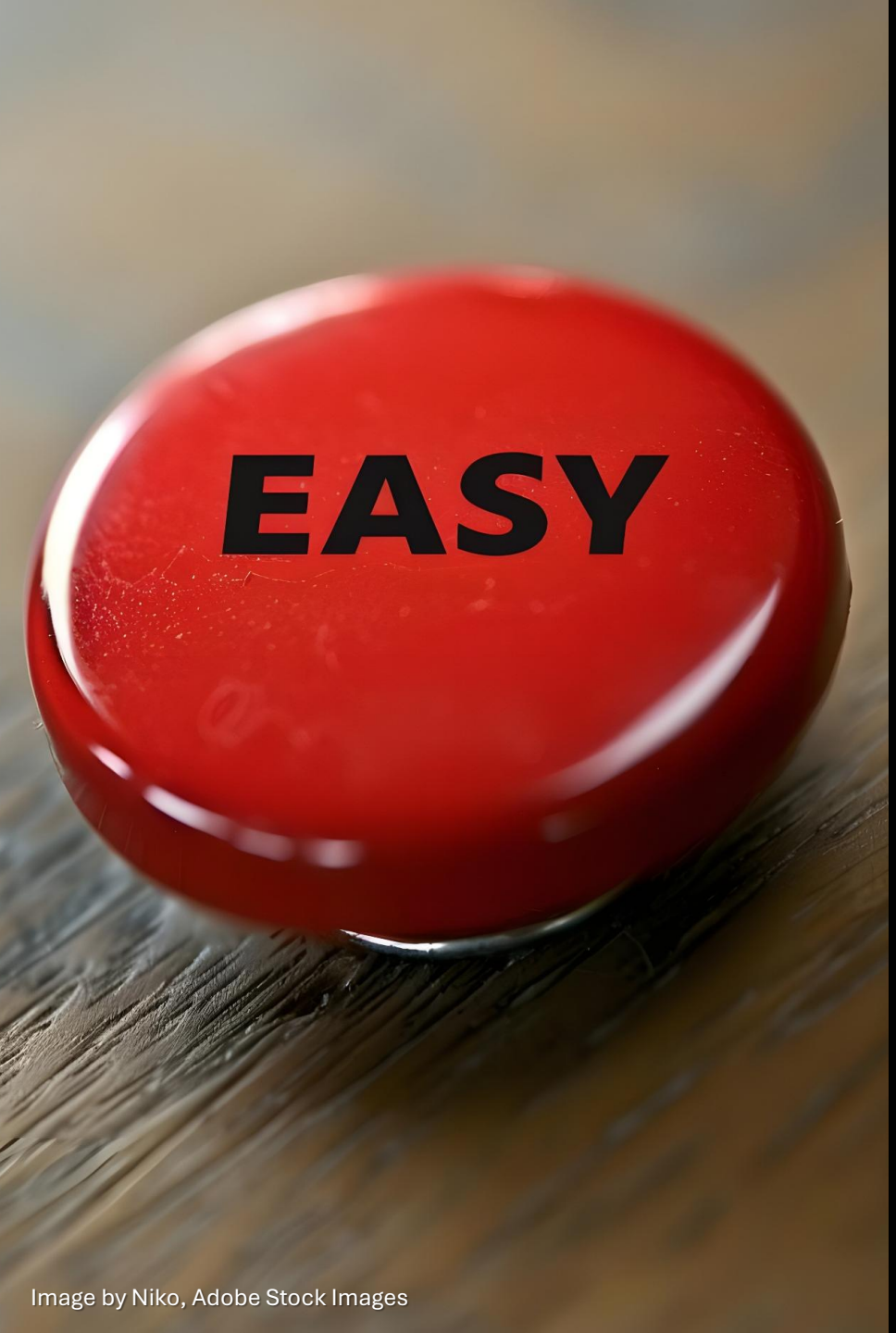



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# a few low-stakes, low-tech activities

- Think/pair/share
- Minute papers
- Informal group work
- Concept mapping
- Whip-Around/Pass the Mic
- Four Corners
- Fishbowl Discussion
- Row Race

(Heaslip 2014; Luscombe 2016; Panhwar 2022; Waqar 2025; Yasmin 2026

# deliberate practice & retrieval practice

- Reading quizzes & pre-class assignments
- Weekly practice exams
- Class notes summaries

Citations




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# collaborative strategies

- Team-based learning
- Gamification
- Polling
- Peer instruction
  - “Combination mode”:
    1. Individual response
    2. Peer discussion
    3. Revote
    4. Instructor explanation

(Carlos 2023; Campbell 2025; George 2021; Haixia 2025; Hodges 2020; Luo 2026; Panhwar 2022; Ssentongo 2025; Waqar 2025;Yasmin 2026)

# a few no-cost/low-cost tech tools

- Wayground (formerly Quizziz)
- Pear Deck
- Edpuzzle
- iClicker
- Mentimeter
- Socrative

(Heaslip 2014; Luscombe 2016; Sseentongo 2025; Wagar 2025; Yazmin 2026)



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# let’s try it!

# managing student resistance

- Explain the purpose of active learning early
- Normalize productive struggle
- Use low-stakes grading
- Gather feedback regularly
- Provide early opportunities for success & positive reinforcement
- Communicate the value of collaboration



(Andrews 2021; Caldwell 2007; Cooper 2018; Deslauriers et al 2011; Deslauriers et al 2019; Gordon 2022; Nguyen 2021; Owens 2017; Shekhar 2024; Tharayil 2018)

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# classroom environment

- Physical proximity/ social presence
- Active monitoring
- Responsivity
- Dialogic & student-centered
- Growth mindset
- Positive reinforcement
- Sense of community
- Student/teacher rapport

(Carlos 2023; Eddy & Hogan 2017; Kim 2024; Maggiore 2024; Martin 2018; Martin 2020; Montenegro 2025; Nguyen 2021; Panhwar 2022; States 2023; Theobald et al 2020; Tomkin 2019)

# steal this idea!

1. In the chat, share one engagement strategy that has worked in your own class.
2. Read through the ideas shared in the chat.
3. Identify one strategy shared that you HAVEN'T used, and add it to the chat by writing **"Stealing _____"**

# Want more engagement ideas?

- ENGAGE program/mini-course