



wisewire

Teacher Times

Brought to you by Wisewire Education Marketplace

PRACTICAL IDEAS TO MOTIVATE AND ENGAGE YOUR STUDENTS

Bring the Spring Into Students' Steps!

As testing season draws to a close, teachers, parents, and students alike may find themselves wondering: what now? After eight months of intensive learning and high-stakes test preparation, not to mention weeks of test taking itself, pupils often experience a "late spring letdown," or decrease in motivation and engagement, as the pressure lifts and summer beckons. What can you do to best address this phenomenon and make the last six weeks of school just as valuable and powerful as the first? What will inspire students to continue to learn, study, and perform at the highest levels even after they've cleared their biggest hurdles of the school year? In other words: How can educators bring the spring into students' steps (and minds!) as the school year winds down? Read on for a few suggestions!

Democracy in Action Invite students to submit ideas for what type of content and activities they would most like to learn and participate in during the last six weeks of school, and implement as many as possible.

Make It Real. Invite a scientist, a business leader, or other professional into your classroom to speak about their field and how they use concepts students are learning about every day in their work. Coordinate one-on-one interviews or job shadowing sessions between

Testing Season Tips

Longer days, blooming flowers, warmer temperatures...and testing. For teachers around the country, the onset of spring marks more than just a change in season; it signals the beginning of a busy, challenging, and often stressful time for you, your students, and their families. How can you best manage the expectations and pressure associated with testing season? Trust the preparation. In the hubbub

students and professionals in their areas of interest, and have students report the connections they uncover between their academic and professional goals.

Group Effort. Design a project—the creation of a newspaper, magazine, or journal edition, a performance of a scene from a play, a presentation explaining a concept to younger students, a multifaceted puzzle or riddle, a mapping or scavenger hunt activity, a design for a game, app, or other product, the building of a structure or product using math, science, technology, or engineering concepts, etc.—and work as a class to complete it during designated times over a number of weeks. Assign roles and teams as needed and celebrate the completion of the project.

Attitude Is Everything. Model the behavior you wish to see in your students enthusiasm, focus, and excitement for learning—when you're teaching and interacting with students. Reinforce positive behavior from your students with praise and recognition.

Prove Me Wrong. Challenge students to take on the role of “content detectives” by unearthing faulty reasoning or inaccuracies in false statements related to relevant concepts. Ask students to identify what is incorrect and to explain why to the class.

Forward Thinking. Create mini-milestones or events for students to work toward each week. For example, plan a field trip or outdoor lesson that students must prepare for by achieving certain objectives, or spend part of every Friday engaged in an ongoing class trivia challenge.

Make It a Game



Everyone loves games—How can you use games in your classroom to engage learners and activate imaginations all at once?

Educational games continue to grow in number, sophistication, and accessibility. While paper flash cards and worksheets will always be helpful tools for skill practice, interactive games that students can play on their computers, tablets, or phones provide an extra dose of excitement and an undeniable “cool” factor. Even better, they can be accessed and played in or out of school—so getting students hooked on educational games this spring increases the chances they'll keep playing—and practicing skills, maintaining skills, and learning—all summer long.

Elementary School

that surrounds testing season, it can be easy to forget that you have been preparing all year for these assessments . There's no need to cram or panic. Frame testing as an opportunity for students to show their skills and knowledge, not an event to be feared.

Theories of Motivation

What factors cause a student to be motivated or unmotivated, engaged or unengaged? Psychologists and cognitive scientists have been debating just that for decades. Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs is perhaps the most famous of all theories on human motivation. According to Maslow, humans are driven to seek five ascending levels of need, with each level a prerequisite for the next. The hierarchy begins with physiological needs and steps up one by one to safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. Incentive theories of motivation propose that individuals are driven to act in certain ways by the promise of rewards, or incentives. How can theories like this affect teaching and learning in the classroom? If

- ✔ Step into the [PBS Kids Lab](#) for a vast array of math, vocabulary, and writing games for children ages 3-8.

Middle School

- ✔ “Practice that feels like play” is the name of the game—or games, rather, across math, language, arts, science, and social studies—at [IXL](#).

High School

- ✔ Searching for a way to make history come alive for students? Look no further than the [Ultimate History Quiz](#), where students can test their knowledge and compete against other users.

Check out our [complete list of free interactive games](#) for even more grade-level appropriate suggestions, as well as for ideas on how to use our playlists to build comprehensive learning experiences that integrate standards-based instruction with the best of what the world wide web has to offer!



It's All About Those Books

“Books are a uniquely portable magic,” famed author Stephen King once said. Dr. Seuss put it more succinctly but no less truly: “Be awesome! Be a book nut!” Most students are accustomed to receiving a summer reading list before they depart for summer break. But in a world of myriad options and distractions, how can you persuade students to crack open a book from the reading list instead of binge-watching their favorite TV show or texting with their friends? How can you inspire students to find their inner book nut and discover the magic of books on their own?

Make It Interactive.

- ✔ [Wisewire.com](#) provides free templates where you can send

students are disengaged, consider if their basic needs are being met—Are they hungry? Do they feel left out?—and if not, if there’s anything you can do to improve that situation. Or, consider creating an incentive program. Find out what is meaningful to students (Computer time? Recess? Free writing, drawing, or reading time?) and design rewards accordingly.

Sliding into Summer...While Avoiding Summer Slide

As the school year winds down, teachers must consider how they can help their pupils retain the hard-earned knowledge they have gained over the preceding nine months. Research shows that learning losses frequently occur between June and August, when many students lack access to learning opportunities. The good news? Summer slide is preventable. Prepare your students for the summer months with these ideas:

- ✔ Invite a local librarian to talk to the class about summer learning programs.

interactive assessment questions and prompts to students on their readings. Suggest students also keep a reading journal, create drawings or graphic novel versions of books they read, or act out their favorite parts with friends.

Make It Social.

- ✔ Encourage students to join a book club at the local library, or enter the [Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge](#).

Make It Personal.

- ✔ Challenge students to find and read books that they feel personally interested in or connected to. What is their favorite genre? Why?

- ✔ Provide students with lists of websites with free games and resources. (You can search [Wisewire.com](#) by topic and build a list of your favorites)
- ✔ Print out passages, worksheets, and other materials and prepare summer learning packets for students.

This Month's Q&A

Q: What are OERs?

A: OERs, or open educational resources, are educational materials that are available online for anyone, anywhere to use, free of charge and without restrictions. OERs include online textbooks, courses, lessons, modules, lectures, quizzes, worksheets, syllabi, graphics, videos, interactives—virtually anything you can think of in the educational space. Teachers, professors, publishers, and students themselves can both use create, and post OERs. A number of websites and forums exist that specialize in curated OER collections, including [Wisewire.com](#). Because there are no usage restrictions, OERs are adaptable, meaning teachers and learners can mix and match them as they wish. The next time you need a learning object for your classroom, check out an OER site and see what you can find!



Professional Development: Upcoming Events

- ✔ ISTE 2016
June 26–29 in Denver, CO
<https://conference.iste.org/2016/>
- ✔ NAESP Best Practices for Better Schools Conference
July 6–8 in National Harbor, MD
<http://www.naespconference.org/>
- ✔ 2016 ASCD Conference on Teaching Excellence
July 8–10 in New Orleans, LA
<http://www.ascd.org/conference-on-teaching-excellence.aspx>
Building Learning Communities Education

Summer provides wonderful opportunities for educators to connect with one another, share ideas, and learn about new developments in the field. Check out one or more of the exciting conferences on the agenda for the summer of 2016 and find one that's right for you! And stay tuned for the 2016 Summer issue of



Conference 2016

July 20–22 in Boston, MA

<http://novemberlearning.com/blc-education-conference-2016/>



EdmodoCon

August 2–3, a virtual event

<https://www.edmodocon.com/>

Teacher Times for more PD support!

Navigation

Explore

Create

Follow Us



Preference

Visit our website