

ENGAGEMENT

Providing Opportunities for Students to Talk About Themselves

THE **MARZANO COMPENDIUM** OF
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES



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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO TALK ABOUT THEMSELVES	2
STRATEGIES.....	4
Interest Surveys	5
Student Learning Profiles	8
Life Connections	10
Informal Linkages During Class Discussion	12
REPRODUCIBLES	14

INTRODUCTION

In 2007, Dr. Robert J. Marzano published *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction*. The framework, composed of three lesson segments, ten design questions, and forty-one elements, was based on research showing that teacher quality is one of the strongest influences on student achievement—that is, an effective teacher can positively and significantly impact student learning. As such, *The Art and Science of Teaching* sought to identify specific action steps teachers could take to improve their effectiveness.

In 2015, Dr. Marzano updated *The Art and Science of Teaching* framework to reflect new insights and feedback. The Marzano Compendium of Instructional Strategies is based on this updated model, presenting forty-three elements of effective teaching in ten categories. Each folio in the series addresses one element and includes strategies, examples, and reproducible resources. The Compendium and its folios are designed to help teachers increase their effectiveness by focusing on professional growth. To that end, each folio includes a scoring scale teachers can use to determine their proficiency with the element, as well as numerous strategies that teachers can use to enact the element in their classrooms. Indeed, the bulk of each folio consists of these strategies and reproducibles for implementing and monitoring them, making the Compendium a practical, actionable resource for teachers, instructional coaches, teacher mentors, and administrators.

PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO TALK ABOUT THEMSELVES

By providing students with opportunities to talk about themselves, a teacher shows that he or she is interested and invested in students' lives. Furthermore, after a teacher learns about the personal lives of his or her students, the teacher uses that information and relates it to the content being taught. This can be a powerful tool in the classroom, as research has shown that students are more likely to pay attention to information that is somehow linked to their personal interests.

Monitoring This Element

There are specific student responses that indicate this element is being effectively implemented. Before trying strategies for the element in the classroom, it is important that the teacher knows how to identify the types of student behaviors that indicate the strategy is producing the desired effects. General behaviors a teacher might look for include the following.

- Students engage in activities that require them to make connections between their personal interests and the content.
- When asked, students explain how making connections between content and their personal interests engages them and helps them better understand the content.

Desired behaviors such as these are listed for each strategy in this element.

Teachers often wonder how their mastery of specific strategies relates to their mastery of the element as a whole. Successful execution of an element does not depend on the use of every strategy within that element. Rather, multiple strategies are presented within each element to provide teachers with diverse options. Each strategy can be an effective means of implementing the goals of the element. If teachers attain success using a particular strategy, it is not always necessary to master the rest of the strategies within the same element. If a particular strategy proves difficult or ineffective, however, teachers are encouraged to experiment with various strategies to find the method that works best for them.

Scoring Scale

The following scoring scale can help teachers assess and monitor their progress with this element. The scale has five levels, from Not Using (0) to Innovating (4). A teacher at the Not Using (0) level is unaware of the strategies and behaviors associated with the element or is simply not using any of

Providing Opportunities for Students to Talk About Themselves

the strategies. At the Beginning (1) level, a teacher attempts to address the element by trying specific strategies, but does so in an incomplete or incorrect way. When a teacher reaches the Developing (2) level, he or she implements strategies for the element correctly and completely, but does not monitor their effects. At the Applying (3) level, a teacher implements strategies for the element and monitors their effectiveness with his or her students. Finally, a teacher at the Innovating (4) level is fluent with strategies for the element and can adapt them to unique student needs and situations, creating new strategies for the element as necessary.

Scale for Providing Opportunities for Students to Talk About Themselves

4	3	2	1	0
Innovating	Applying	Developing	Beginning	Not Using
I adapt behaviors and create new strategies for unique student needs and situations.	I provide opportunities for students to talk about themselves, and I monitor the extent to which my actions affect students' engagement.	I provide opportunities for students to talk about themselves, but I do not monitor the effect on students.	I use the strategies and behaviors associated with this element incorrectly or with parts missing.	I am unaware of strategies and behaviors associated with this element.

The following examples describe what each level of the scale might look like in the classroom.

Not Using (0): The teacher is only vaguely aware of students' lives outside of school. The teacher does not provide opportunities for students to relate content to their personal interests.

Beginning (1): The teacher administers student interest surveys and student learning profiles at the beginning of the year. However, the teacher does not use the data gathered to relate the content to students' lives.

Developing (2): When appropriate, the teacher provides opportunities for students to make linkages between the content being taught and their lives. However, the teacher does not try to determine if making these linkages helps students remember the content.

Applying (3): The teacher uses interest surveys to better understand students' personal lives and keeps a running list of relevant information about students. The teacher then uses the information on this list to create informal linkages during class discussion and let students comment on those linkages. The teacher notices that, since she has been using these strategies together, students seem more engaged in the material.

Innovating (4): The teacher identifies students who seem to be disengaged in the material and asks them to fill out more in-depth interest surveys. Using the data gathered from the additional surveys, the teacher creates informal linkages during class discussion or, when needed, meets with students to relate content being taught to their personal interests and have them comment on the linkages.

STRATEGIES

Each of the following strategies describes specific actions that teachers can take to enact this element in their classrooms. Strategies can be used individually or in combination with each other. Each strategy includes a description, a list of teacher actions, a list of desired student responses, and suggestions for adapting the strategy to provide extra support or extensions. Extra support and extensions relate directly to the Innovating (4) level of the scale. Extra support involves steps teachers can take to ensure they are implementing the strategy effectively for all students, including English learners, special education students, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and reluctant learners. Extensions are ways that teachers can adapt the strategy for advanced students. In addition, some strategies include technology tips that detail ways teachers can use classroom technology to implement or enhance the strategy. Finally, each strategy includes further information, practical examples, or a reproducible designed to aid teachers' implementation of the strategy.

Interest Surveys

At the beginning of the school year or the beginning of a unit, a teacher should take time to reach out to students and get to know them better. One highly practical method for gathering information about students is an interest survey. These surveys can cover a range of topics such as interests, goals, personal or family history, existing knowledge about the content area, or expectations and desires for class. The teacher might administer an interest survey on the first day of class, then review the survey throughout the year as needed.

Teacher Actions

- Creating survey questions that elicit students' interests and goals
- Encouraging students to answer survey questions thoroughly and completely
- Evaluating survey responses to identify students' interests and goals

Desired Student Responses

- Responding to survey questions honestly and in detail
- Describing the teacher as someone who is interested in them

Extra Support

- Asking students to record their responses to interest surveys (audio or video)

Extension

- Asking students to tell about projects or investigations they have already completed related to their interests

Interest Survey Item Bank

When creating a student interest survey, teachers should consider the grade level and subject area they teach and customize their surveys accordingly. To ensure that interest surveys are not overwhelming, teachers should not include more than ten items on a survey. Teachers can choose questions from the following list, which is sorted into categories: general education, specific classes, extracurricular activities, and students' personal backgrounds.

Questions Related to General Education

- What is your favorite class? Why?
- What is your least favorite class? Why?
- What class do you find to be the easiest? Why?
- What class do you find to be the most difficult? Why?
- What class do you find to be the most interesting? Why?
- What is a subject you are curious about or would like to learn more about?
- When you encounter a challenge at school, how do you address it?

Providing Opportunities for Students to Talk About Themselves

- What is one aspect of school you find to be challenging?
- What is one aspect of school you find to be rewarding?
- What is one aspect of school you find to be easy?
- What characteristics have your favorite teachers all shared?
- What can a teacher do to ensure that you remain engaged during class?
- What is an activity or assignment from a previous class that you found to be interesting or meaningful? Why?
- What is an activity or assignment from a previous class that you thought you did a good job on? Why?
- What careers seem interesting to you?
- What careers do you think you would be successful in?

Class-Specific Questions

- What do you expect to learn in this class?
- What is an area related to this class that you are excited to learn about?
- What do you think you already know about this subject or this unit?
- Why do you think the content in this class is important?
- How do you think this subject relates to your own life?
- What have you previously learned that you think may contribute to your understanding of the content in this class?

Questions Related to Extracurricular Activities

- When you are not at school, how do you spend your time?
- What is a hobby of yours? Why do you enjoy it?
- Do you belong to any clubs? If so, which ones?
- Do you belong to any sports teams? If so, which ones?
- Do you have a part-time job? If so, what is it, and how often do you work?
- What are things that you are responsible for out of school? How do these responsibilities make you feel?

Questions Related to Personal Background

- List the members of your immediate family and briefly describe each individual.
- Who would you consider your friends?
- How would you describe yourself?

Providing Opportunities for Students to Talk About Themselves

- How would your friends describe you?
- How would your previous teachers describe you?
- What is your favorite book? Why?
- What is your favorite movie? Why?
- What is your favorite television show? Why?
- What is your favorite sports team? Why?
- If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go? Why?
- If you had the chance to have a conversation with anyone (dead or alive), who would it be and why?
- If you had one wish, how would you use it?
- If you won the lottery, what would you do with the money?
- What is something you think you are good at?
- What is something that you want to get better at?
- What is your favorite type of music or who is your favorite musical artist? Why?
- What is your favorite food?
- Explain a time you felt proud of your accomplishments.
- Explain a time when hard work has paid off.
- Do you consider yourself introverted or extroverted? (Note: a teacher may need to explain the difference between introversion and extroversion to students before including this item on an interest survey.)
- What is something you consider yourself very knowledgeable about?
- What is an interest that you have that is not related to school?

Student Learning Profiles

The teacher uses student learning profiles to collect self-reported information from students about their preferred learning activities and styles (such as visual, auditory, kinesthetic, analytical, or practical), the circumstances and conditions under which they learn best, and ways in which they prefer to express themselves (for example, writing, oral communication, physical expression, artistic media, and others). The teacher might create student learning profiles using formal inventories or informal discussions and surveys. After a teacher has gathered data using student learning profiles, he or she should use the information to inform his or her interactions with students.

Teacher Actions

- Creating learning profile questions that elicit students' learning styles and preferences
- Encouraging students to think about how they learn best while completing learning profiles
- Evaluating learning profile responses to identify students' learning styles and preferences

Desired Student Responses

- Responding to profile questions honestly and in detail
- Explaining how they prefer to learn and how they learn best

Extra Support

- Asking students to describe (written or orally) the best learning experiences they've had

Extension

- Asking students to investigate their learning styles to identify activities that could help them learn

Technology Tips

- Use online survey tools to administer learning preference surveys to students. Analyze the results to understand students' preferences and improve lessons.
- Use polling technology to administer student learning profiles. Analyze polling data to understand students' preferences and prompt discussions about learning preferences.

Student Learning Metrics

Learning Styles

Learning styles refer to the way that an individual best processes new information. There are three learning styles that teachers can be aware of: (1) visual, (2) auditory, and (3) kinesthetic. Visual learners are those who best learn through seeing content during its presentation. They better remember things that are written down or that they can relate to an image. Auditory learners best process information when it is presented to them through sound. They often prefer to have things explained to them out loud or engage in conversation about the new information. Kinesthetic learners are hands-on learners who prefer to use activities to understand new content rather than have a concept explained to them using words.

Providing Opportunities for Students to Talk About Themselves

Teachers can include the following questions on a student learning profile to determine the learning style of a student. The teacher presents each of the options and asks students to rate the degree to which they agree or disagree.

- When learning new material, I prefer to (1) get a handout with the information on it, (2) have it explained to me by the teacher, or (3) try it out myself.
- When studying, I'm most successful if I (1) create visual outlines, flashcards, charts, or graphs of the material covered so far, (2) have someone verbally quiz me or repeat my notes out loud, or (3) do something active (like pacing back and forth) while studying.

Expression Preference

Students may differ in the ways in which they prefer to express themselves. While some students might prefer a written exam, other students might prefer a creative final project or an oral presentation. Expression preference is often correlated with learning type, though not always. Teachers can use the following question to determine students' expression preferences.

- What is your preferred type of assignment? (Note: a teacher may choose to tailor this question to provide options for summative assessments, such as giving students a choice between an essay, oral exam, physical expression, or creative project.)

Working Preference

Working preference refers to whether students best work individually, in small groups, or in large groups. Teachers can ask students directly about their working preferences using the following question.

- Do you prefer to work alone, in a pair, in a small group, or in a large group?

However, teachers may also prompt students to explain why they hold these preferences.

Learning Conditions

Teachers can also use student learning profiles to determine the circumstances and conditions under which students best learn. Teachers can use the following questions to ask students about their preferred learning environments.

- What sort of activities do you think best help you learn?
- Describe your ideal classroom to learn in.
- Under what circumstances do you find it difficult to focus or learn?

Life Connections

Effective teachers intentionally plan breaks during instructional time so that students can identify and discuss links between the content being studied and their own personal experiences, hobbies, and interests. Students can look for and explain similarities and differences between their interests and experiences and the content being studied. Students might also complete analogies comparing aspects of their experiences and interests to elements of the content. Lastly, students can create nonlinguistic representations (such as graphic organizers, pictographs, or figures) that express relationships between the content being studied and their personal interests and experiences.

Teacher Actions

- Scheduling breaks during instruction for students to make connections between the content and their experiences and interests
- Asking students to share and explain connections between the content and their lives
- Taking notes about students' connections to the content

Desired Student Responses

- Explaining how the content is connected to their experiences and interests
- Describing the content as relevant and interesting

Extra Support

- Inviting guest speakers to speak to students about how they use content in the real world

Extension

- Asking students to identify how learning the content has affected their lives

Technology Tips

- Have students write and post entries on a class blog that relates their lives to the content being taught.
- Have students use audio or video recording software to record their personal connections to content.

Life Connections

Name: _____

Class: _____

In class, we are studying:

This content relates to my life because:

My hobby, interest, or personal experience this content reminds me of is:

This content reminds me of this hobby, interest, or personal experience because:

The content is similar to my hobby, interest, or personal experience because:

The content is different from my hobby, interest, or personal experience because:

Use the space below to draw the relationship between your hobby, interest, or personal experience and the content being taught.

Informal Linkages During Class Discussion

To create informal linkages between the content and students' lives, the teacher should become familiar with the interests and personal experiences of students in the class. As topics are discussed in class, the teacher can relate the content to his or her existing knowledge about students' lives. However, teachers can also refer to a previously compiled list of students' interests if necessary. Once a link is established between the content and a student, the teacher verbally notes this link. For example, a teacher might say, "Robert, you're interested in astronomy, aren't you? What do you think about the information we just read and the new information about Pluto?" during a science unit on the solar system.

Teacher Actions

- Compiling a list of students' interests
- Identifying content that relates to students' interests
- Highlighting connections and referring to students' interests while presenting information

Desired Student Responses

- Describing the teacher as someone who knows what they are interested in
- Elaborating on their interests and connecting them to the content when prompted by the teacher

Extra Support

- Alerting students ahead of time that the class will be learning about something related to their interests, and inviting them and helping them to share their knowledge about the topic

Extension

- Inviting students to complete independent investigations of topics related to their interests and present their findings to the class

Informal Linkages During Class Discussion

Name: _____

Class: _____

The upcoming unit is about:

It is important to students' lives because:

I can relate the content to my student, _____, because of his/her interest in _____. These two things relate because:

I can relate the content to my student, _____, because of his/her interest in _____. These two things relate because:

I can relate the content to my student, _____, because of his/her interest in _____. These two things relate because:

Notes:

REPRODUCIBLES

Teachers can use the following reproducibles to monitor their implementation of this element. The reproducible titled Tracking Progress Over Time helps teachers set goals related to their proficiency with this element and track their progress toward these goals over the course of a unit, semester, or year. Tracking Teacher Actions and Tracking Student Responses allow observers in classrooms to monitor specific teacher and student behavior related to this element. Teachers themselves can also use the Tracking Student Responses reproducible to document instances of student behaviors during class. The Strategy Reflection Log provides teachers a space to write down their thoughts and reflect on the implementation process for specific strategies related to this element. Finally, this section provides both a student survey and a teacher survey, the results of which provide feedback about teachers' proficiency with this element.

Tracking Progress Over Time

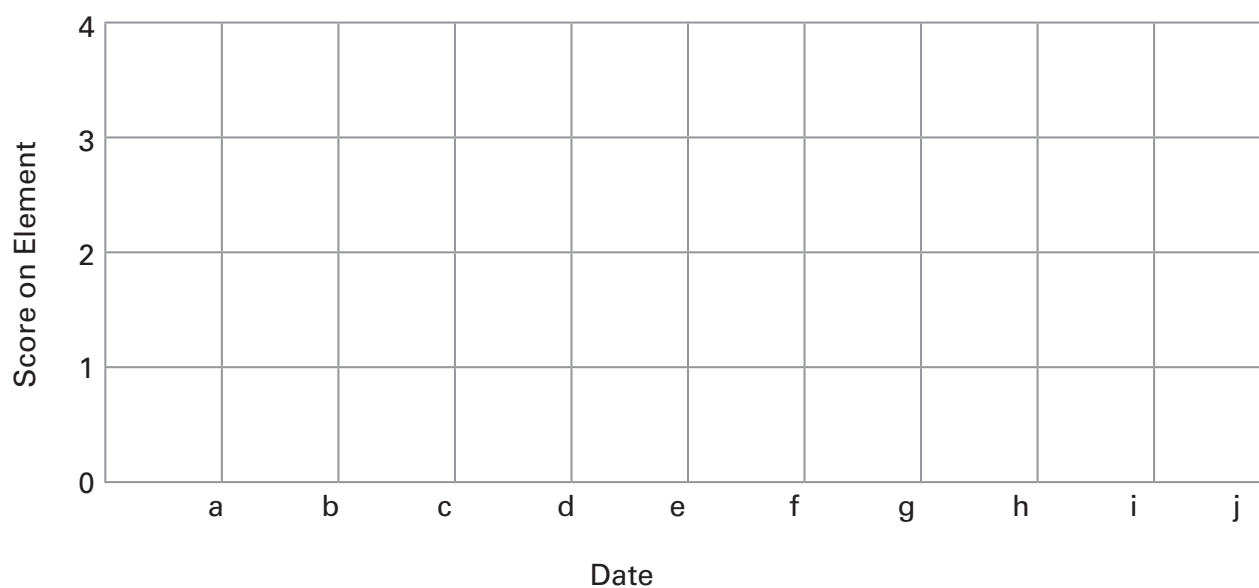
Use this worksheet to set a goal for your use of this element, make a plan for increasing your mastery, and chart your progress toward your goal.

Element: _____

Initial Score: _____

Goal Score: _____ by _____ (date)

Specific things I am going to do to improve: _____



a. _____

f. _____

b. _____

g. _____

c. _____

h. _____

d. _____

i. _____

e. _____

j. _____

Tracking Teacher Actions

During an observation, the observer can use this form to record the teacher's usage of strategies related to the element of providing opportunities for students to talk about themselves.

Observation Date and Time: _____ Length of Observation: _____

Check Strategies You Intend to Use	Strategies	Description of What Was Observed
	Interest Surveys	
	Student Learning Profiles	
	Life Connections	
	Informal Linkages During Class Discussion	
	Other:	
	Other:	

Tracking Student Responses

A teacher or observer can use this worksheet to record instances of student behavior to inform planning and implementation of strategies associated with providing opportunities for students to talk about themselves. Any item followed by an asterisk is an example of undesirable behavior related to the element; the teacher should look for a decrease in the number of instances of these items.

Observation Date and Time: _____ Length of Observation: _____

Behavior	Number of Instances
Making connections between personal interests and content	
Showing increased interest in content	
Providing information about interests, hobbies, and life experiences	
Describing the teacher as interested in their lives	
Elaborating on connections made by the teacher between personal interests and content	
Explaining how they prefer to learn and how they learn best	
Answering surveys completely and honestly	
Other:	
Other:	

Strategy Reflection Log

Use this worksheet to select a strategy, set a goal, and reflect on your use of that strategy.

Element: _____

Strategy: _____

Goal: _____

Date	How did it go?

Student Survey for Providing Opportunities for Students to Talk About Themselves

1. My teacher wants to know about me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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2. My teacher provides opportunities to learn about different careers and education beyond high school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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3. My teacher asks me questions about my interests and activities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------------------	-------	----------------

4. My teacher knows what I am interested in.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------------------	-------	----------------

5. My teacher wants me to understand how school connects to my life and interests.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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6. The things I learn in class are applicable to the real world.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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Teacher Survey for Providing Opportunities for Students to Talk About Themselves

1. I am aware of students' interests.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know

2. I make connections between students' interests and the content being taught.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know

3. I structure activities so that students relate their personal interests to the content being taught.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know

4. I appear interested when students talk about their interests.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know

5. I use student interest surveys to understand my students' personal backgrounds, interests, and feelings about school.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know

6. I use student learning profiles to determine the learning needs of my students.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know