

# Closing the Engagement Gap™

## Focus on Active Learning and Engagement

This workshop series provides participants an opportunity to engage in experiential learning and professional dialogue about strategies that so engage students that they may even forget that they are learning. Based on the book, **Active Learning and Engagement Strategies**, this workshop helps teachers build capacity to move students toward mastery of the **Common Core State Standards** and to demonstrate their own skillfulness with the teacher performance criteria that focus on student engagement.

### Essential Question

What do classrooms look like when they are organized around a commitment to the achievement of high standards by all students?

### Focus Questions

- Why concern ourselves with active learning and engagement strategies?
- How do we provide students opportunities to actively construct meaning?
- What are the ways in which we create a safe-nonthreatening yet challenging environment that respects and responds to learner needs?
- How can we enable our students to engage in relevant and rigorous applications of learning?
- How does active learning and engagement promote the development and use of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills?

Participants explore over 60 strategies that will help them build strong core instructional programs that meet the needs of diverse learners as they:

- access prior knowledge and surface misconceptions and naive understandings
- set purposes for reading, listening, or viewing that cause students to be critical users of quality, valid, and reliable information
- gather pre-assessment data, check for understanding, gather and use formative assessment data, and, therefore, make assessment a learning experience
- promote student reflection, self-assessment, and goal setting
- focus on big ideas and key concepts
- ensure relevance and real-world connections
- facilitate the development of speaking and listening skills
- build collaborative skills through pair and group work
- integrate technology so that students access, select, display, analyze, evaluate, create, and communicate information
- promote vocabulary development and integrate literacy across the curriculum
- build students' creative and critical thinking skills through the use of project-based learning, data-driven inquiry, and inductive thinking models



Given the deep research base on the power of active learning for adults, this workshop is structured so that participants discuss and experience the use of the approaches included in **Active Learning and Engagement Strategies**, and teach one another as much as possible. Through their own active engagement, participants refine and expand their repertoires for creating learning-centered environments that features:

- Varied sources of information including technology
- Opportunities for students to actively construct meaning
- Growth-producing feedback
- A safe-nonthreatening yet challenging environment that respects and responds to differences in learners
- Real-world examples and rigorous applications of learning
- Use of a variety of assessment strategies to provide ongoing opportunities for students to demonstrate learning

## Resources

- **Active Learning and Engagement Strategies** by Paula Rutherford
- **Closing the Engagement Gap Participant's Manual**

