

STRATEGY 1 – Interactive Lessons

Computer Science interactive lessons:

[Codecademy](#) or [Runestone Interactive](#)

Interactive lessons in different topics and grade levels:

[Nearpod](#), [Peardeck](#), or [Playposit](#)

[Newsela](#) for ELA, Social Studies, Science, Computer Science, World Language, Health, Physical Education, ESL, and more

[Khan Academy](#) for math and science

[PhET](#) for Science simulations, [NOVA](#) for Science

[Commonlit](#) for ELA

[Smithsonian Open Access](#) for many different topics and exhibits

[EdPuzzle](#) - where you can tap into videos already created on educational channels like:

[Khan Academy](#), [YouTube](#), [National Geographic](#), [TED Talks](#), science and engineering [Veritasium](#), [Numberphile](#), and [Crash Course](#). EdPuzzle also has its own collection of videos to choose from when finding interactive lessons for your students, with questions already embedded into the videos. Again, another timesaver for teachers.

You could also gamify your content by building it using [Kahoot](#) or you can use one of the Kahoot pre-made games based on topic and grade level. Using games in your summer supplement reach out is a sure winner with students.

And for your ELL students, check out [ESL Video](#), [ESL Cyber Listening Lab](#), and [Bits English Language Learning](#) for interactive lessons, quizzes, video, audio, books, and games.

The second strategy is sharing **adaptive learning platforms** with your students. Adaptive learning platforms first assess students to see where their proficiency lies, and then the platform delivers lessons and assessments based on the student's benchmark, with the mission for progress and growth. Sharing adaptive learning platforms in your content area literally meets students where they are at in their knowledge and skills. The instruction is adjusted based on the students' academic needs, so the learning is personalized.

If you teach Math, [ALEKS](#) is a super resource. Our high school students enjoyed supplementing their math classes with time in ALEKS in my computer lab during lunch. If you are an ELA teacher, introduce your students to [ReadingPlus](#). [Whitebox Learning System](#) is an adaptive learning resource for STEM, and

[DuoLingo](#) for World Language are other examples of adaptive learning platforms. The only snag with most adaptive learning platforms is that they are not free because of the personalized learning component based on pre-assessment. Teachers whose districts already purchased adaptive learning platforms have it easy to supplement the content with personalized learning offered by these platforms. My district has ALEKS and ReadingPlus and both are superior adaptive learning platforms.

The third strategy is to focus on **social-emotional learning (SEL)**, supporting students in ways that many EdTech platforms are embracing. And due to the pandemic, most of the educational sites mentioned above like [Nearpod](#), [Newsela](#), and [Peardeck](#) have SEL interactive lessons created and accessible on their websites. [Commonsense](#) offers an excellent curation of SEL curriculum for students as well. When we prioritize social-emotional learning, we help our students in all their subjects.

The fourth strategy is to **create a website** where you embed videos and add links to interactive content. You can also add images, infographics, quotes, memes, gifs, and fun videos. Since there is only one link to your webpage students use to find your content, this strategy offers easy access for students. Plus, since you can curate many different resources on this one webpage, students should not feel overwhelmed with many different links which turn into many different clicks.

You can also create a QR code for your webpage and place it in the emails so students can easily scan the QR code using their phones and take your website with all its learning along with them all throughout their day.

Additionally, by filling your page with different content, students have options to choose what they want to check out. And we know as teachers, options empower students because it gives them some control over how they spend their time and their mind. Some places to create an easy webpage are [Google Sites](#) or create a page in your school's LMS (Learning Management System). If you do the latter, you will need to create a course and add your new students inside the course, unless your school or district allows your LMS pages to have public visibility.

The fifth strategy is to present students in your emails to a **digital scavenger hunt** that connects to your content. One way to do this is to create a QR Code scavenger hunt. Check out this [QR Code Scavenger Hunt creator](#) by Classtools.net. Or create your own QR Codes by using this [Free QR Code generator](#).

Again, remember all these websites, apps, and platforms are linked in this episode's show notes.

The sixth strategy is to **prep your AP course** students for the rigor in your AP course by sharing links to the [Khan Academy AP course](#) lessons. Khan Academy has 16 AP courses.

Or you could prep your students for the LSAT or SAT exams they are taking in the next school year. Send students links to the LSAT or SAT prep lessons from the Khan Academy [LSAT](#) or [SAT](#) Prep courses.

The seventh strategy is to **share ebooks** with students, which is the new way to give students a summer reading list. Online places to find ebooks are [eBooks for Students](#), [epubBooks](#), [Gateway to the Classics](#), [Open Library](#) by the [Internet Archive](#), and [Project Gutenberg](#). Know that the ebook sites I just told you about are for middle and high school students.

And, give students the link to the [ReadAloud app](#) in the Microsoft Store and instructions on how to download and install the app so students have the option for online books to be read aloud to them while they follow along with the text. Also, give book choices to students, and to make it look cool, I'd place the links to the eBooks in either a [Wakelet](#) or [Pearlree](#) to give the effect of the student checking out the titles on a bookshelf in the library or your physical classroom.

With many locations still in lockdown and some families not feeling safe to do their annual summer vacation, get your students to virtually travel to different locations using Google Tours. This eighth strategy can be a real pick-me-up when we expose students to **virtual location visits** with some very cool 360 VR imagery on these locality platforms. Some sites to check out for virtual visits are [Google Tour Builder](#) or [VR Google Tour Creator](#) or [Google Earth Creator](#). And, if you would rather not create your own tours, no worries. There are some really great tours out there already created. Check out these [14 Google Earth tours](#) I've linked for you curated by makeuseof.com. [Google Street View by Google Maps](#) is another way to "plop" students smack dab into a digital location so they can check out panoramic images placed at that address.

Virtual field trips would be another way to get your students excited to visit and learn along the way. Peruse through these field trip collections at [National Parks](#), [Exploring by the Seat of your Pants](#), [Google Arts & Culture](#), the [YouTube Virtual Reality channel](#), [Discovery Education Field Trips](#), [GeoGuessr](#), [City Guesser](#), [Virtual Field Trips by the Nature Lab of The Nature Conservancy](#), and [FlipGrid LIVE Events](#). It's a MUST for you to check out all these virtual field trip hubs. The quality of Virtual field trips has definitely improved with all the advances in digital media since I started using virtual field trips 15 years ago in the classroom with my students.

The eighth strategy is to **hold challenges** over the summer for your students and place those challenges on your website or LMS page. It may be a reading challenge or a writing challenge. Or maybe you challenge your students to a problem-solving contest or an art contest. You could also make a challenge a virtual field trip, a scavenger hunt, reading an eBook, taking a Google tour, or doing an interactive lesson, at sites I mentioned in the earlier strategies in this episode. And your challenges can have their own set of guidelines to ignite the competition—such as setting a time limit, or students submitting the "proof" that they met the challenge -- I'd suggest no more than two guidelines.

Another way to promote the challenges is to showcase students' who met the challenge on the website after each challenge ends. To make it a hit, I'd offer some sort of prize. Prize ideas could be gift cards for Amazon, UberEATS, or a movie theater in the student's community. It could even be homework passes for the upcoming school year or the student's choice of seat location in the classroom. Intersperse fun challenges between your content-related challenges to get more students involved. Hopefully, after participating in the fun challenges, students come back for the content-related challenges as well.

The last strategy and the one that is my favorite is all about the phone, which entices students to want to participate. Create a group in [Microsoft Flipgrid](#) and send an email to your students with instructions on downloading the Flipgrid app on their phones as well as the group's join code or link. Then, on a regular basis, create a topic and share it with your students providing both the join code and the link to

the topic. Or students can access the topic in the group. **Video discussions using Flipgrid** are high engagers for students, especially when they use the Flipgrid phone app.

Make sure after you create the topic, you start the video discussion rolling by recording your response. I recommend adding stickers and filters along with a cover photo to model what you want students to do in the video discussion. When you make it fun, you increase the chances of student participation.

One part that makes this strategy shine is that students get to see each other's faces and hear their voices when they view each other's videos. This sensory appeal makes Flipgrid video discussions a hit with students.

Also, make some of your prompts fun, for example, "What are you enjoying about your summer?", mixed in with content-related prompts. As an added bonus, in Flipgrid topics, you can add media resources to your prompts such as videos, gifs, emojis, images, bitmojis, [Kahoot](#) games, [Wakelets](#), where you can build resource curations, or add interactive lessons from Nearpod, [Bunce](#), and Newsela. You can also add images, websites, and videos you created in [Adobe Spark](#) or [Wonderopolis](#) question explorations.

Flipgrid, essentially, could be its own learning management system in one video discussion platform. Check out my ☆ [Flipgrid FREE GUIDE for 50 Ways to Use Flipgrid in the Classroom](#) ☆. I've also included a checklist to help you start your first Flipgrid group and topic. Grab it today!

Whether you decide to keep in touch with your students you have this school year or reach out to the new students who you teach in the next school year, supplementing their learning over the summer offers more benefits to students than just the academic advantages. Use this time to build relationships with new students or continue the relationships you have with the students you taught this school year. Check-in with their social-emotional wellness. Choose the frequency and the platform. One last tip is to choose one platform and stay there. Again, make it easy for students to interact in these summer enrichment activities by narrowing in on the ease of the connection.

Which one of these strategies will you put into action to help students close gaps during their summer break or to get to know your new students? What strategies do you already do that worked in the past to close gaps over the summer break for your students?

Find EdTechEnergy on your favorite social media to Share your ideas or post on your social media and tag @edtechenergy. I would love to read all your summer reach-out ideas.

And remember, I gave you a lot of website, app, and platform ideas to use in these nine strategies. Get all the links in this episode's show notes at edtechenergy.org/listen5 or go to melanie.education/listen5.

Want to know next week's episode topic: I'm going to share with you the secret ingredient you absolutely need in your course for student success! Come back next week to find out the secret! You won't want to miss it.

And let me share a special offer for all secondary teachers, grades 6 through 12. Enroll in my new 6-week teacher online PD online course titled, Engagement is the Name of the Gain. The course provides 5 tried and true engagement strategies, 20+ video and audio lessons, 20+ EdTech tutorials, an action plan, and a roadmap and blueprint for each of the 5 engagement strategies. Yes, you are getting all of that content to show you ways to increase student engagement in your classroom which will ripple effect to increased student participation, achievement, and attendance. And, I'm throwing in as bonuses, 6 LIVE group coaching sessions which will all be recorded, our own private community, and unlimited access of the content with all future updates and additional bonuses for the lifetime of the course. You will get all of this for \$99, the cost of this teacher pd online course.

The course begins August 2, 2021, and ends September 12, 2021, but you can also complete the course at your own pace. And, when you complete the course, you will receive a teacher professional development certificate for the course.

As another bonus, if you enroll in the course, Engagement is the Name of the Gain, starting June 15th through June 30th, which makes you a Founding Member, and as a Founding Member you will receive a FREE full-year group EdTech coaching membership valued at \$228.

How can you not enroll for all this EdTech engagement treasure chest!

Let me help you prep this summer for your 2021-2022 back-to-school course work. You'll get it done quicker and using all the strategies and timesavers you'll be getting in this course.

If you want to sign up for the Waitlist so that you receive an email from me on June 15th, letting you know the Founding Member enrollment period for \$99 and the FREE full-year group coaching membership valued at \$228 is open!

Go to EdTechEnergy.org and join the waitlist on the homepage.

Thank you for joining me in this episode. Remember to take care with self-care!

<http://edtechenergy.org/blog/2021/5/29/how-can-you-help-students-close-their-gaps-over-the-summer-break>

[Convert Words to Time - Talk Time Calculator](#)

<https://www.pinterest.com/edtechenergy>

How can you help students close their gaps over the summer break? Read my blog post to learn 9 Strategies to connect with students over the summer who you taught this year or you'll teach next school year to close gaps and continue or build relationships.

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