

# Intentional Instructional Moves

Strategic Steps to  
Accelerate Student  
Learning

## Companion Guide

Chapter 4: Behavioral Engagement  
Introduction



## Chapter 4

### Behavioral Engagement

While behavioral engagement might be the most visible in the classroom, it is closely related to and influenced by the first two types. Behaviorally engaged students will display visible signs of being on-task and understanding the content, such as following along with their eyes and fingers as they read, contributing during discussion, and participating in group work.

When considering how to elevate behavioral engagement, researchers Ellen Skinner and Michael Belmont found that teachers can utilize three main approaches: be involved in the classroom, offer clear and consistent structure, and support students as they take on more autonomy (Abla & Fraumeni, 2019). Being involved means paying close attention to what's happening in the classroom and being in close proximity to students. This will help students be more behaviorally engaged. Are students doing the work, or have they veered off task? Are they following along with the content and comprehending it? Are they actively listening to and participating in class discussions? As discussed in the previous chapter, teachers should also have strategies to redirect students when they aren't meeting the expectations for classroom behavior and norms. Clear guidelines will help everyone understand assessment criteria, use class time more wisely, and transition from one task to another. Effective classroom management also sets clear expectations for social interactions and academic progress. When behavioral supports are in place, students can take charge of their learning and more confidently struggle with rigorous tasks, self-reflect, and ask for help when needed.