



PART
1

BATTLING BOREDOM

99 STRATEGIES TO SPARK STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



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An Eye On Education Book



Strategies in the Book

- Contents include:
- Strategies to Begin a Lesson
- Strategies to End a Lesson
- Strategies for Solo/Independent Work
- Strategies for Whole Group Work
- Strategies for Partners and Small Groups
- Strategies for Student Movement
- Bonus Strategies for Reluctant Learners

What to expect in viewing this course:

- You'll see some **samples from this book**, which has 99 strategies. We'll sample a variety of 9 from the book. Just like using the book itself, you can be selective, focusing on the ones you really might use and passing over the others.
- When we have a time to share in groups, feel free to share a version of how you might use one or two of the ideas. You aren't expected to remember all nine!



“We don’t pay attention to boring
things.”

John Medina Brain Rules

Even if bored,
Eric Jensen says,
there is
learning....

They're learning.....

School is pointless

School is irrelevant

Learning is pointless

While
everything can't
be fun....

A better goal
would be to get
students engaged
enough to help
them get
interested and
involved.

These ideas are designed for teachers who want strategies that are:

Simple to use

Ready-to-go

Classroom tested



HOW?

New or novel

Imaginative

Active

Choices for own style, subject, or age

New:
Understanding Our Need
for Novelty
and Change
by Winifred
Gallagher

- In this recent book, we can uncover why novelty is so brain tantalizing!
- From the days of the caveman, if we didn't pay attention to something that was changing, or new, in our environment, there could be life or death consequences.
- Our medulla oblongata, at our brain stem, is hard-wired and triggered to pay quick attention when we become aware of a change.
- So when our cell phone rings, we can't stand to look away.
- When we call a business, they claim we must "listen closely as our options have changed."



Novelty is brain
compatible!

We need to
keep doing
things that are
new or novel!



#1: Alphabet Summary

- Variations:
- Whole topic review with long banner across the room
- Several letters of the alphabet on 3 x 5 cards for each student to review and share with partner
- Color Illuminated letters for alphabet history of Middle Ages, terms underneath
- Dictionary of your school for creative writing, individual or whole class

#2 Fantastic Facts

Start a new lesson or unit with some little known, curious, funny, or very surprising, significant facts to lead into a new focus. Can also be a source of 20 questions to guess who your facts are about.

Collect a large cart of books on various levels of difficulty on the topic of a new unit, for instance, Rainforests. Ask students to read from a variety of these resources for a few hours, and collect 8-10 fantastic facts that will later be used with a partner or small group to make a poster using the best fantastic facts.



3 Found It! Variations

- Make a list of key terms to be found in a reading assignment. Have students find the terms, by themselves, or in pairs, and list the page number and location on the page, graph, map, etc. Help each other find hard locations. Add the meaning of the word after the page number.
- Provide students with phonetic spellings of some key words, especially foreign words or hard names. Have them find the correct word in their reading and identify the meaning or importance.
- You could also give the students questions for which they have to find the surprising answers. (Another variation of 20 Questions!)

#4 What's in a Bag?



- Using a brown bag, a suitcase, or even a funny hat, pull out objects that relate to the subject of the day, or the start of a new book or unit. Objects can be significant and important or funny.

Some examples:

For Abraham Lincoln, use a copper penny with his face, a map of Illinois, a tall black hat, a calendar with Presidents' Day circled, a Lincoln car ad.

For a unit on the solar system, use sunglasses, a Christmas tree star, a Mars bar, a Venus ladies' razor, an ad for The Cloud and other trendy products using solar system names.

Lock boxes with problems to solve to find out the combination of a key could also be a fun way to conceal something, this time with a reward inside.

5: Create the Test and # 6: 2 Truths and a Lie

- Ask students to review recent work and help create a final test. Each student could write test questions on index cards, and provide the answers on the back sides of the cards. Depending on age, you may have to teach them how to write types of questions, such as multiple choice, T-F, essay, matching. Have them share theirs with a partner, and choose the best cards to submit.
- A short version of this idea is to teach students to write 2 True statements and 1 False statement about a topic to review. (The result will be a Multiple Choice question, which may help them learn how to answer a MC question on a test.) The wrong fact should be unique enough to make students stop and think.

7: Wear a Word



1

Provide each student with a sticky name tag, or file folder title sticker that is large enough to write on.



2

Have students look at their book, notes, etc and choose a word that they think is important to write on their name tag or sticker. Have them prepare to explain it to others.




3


Put the sticker on their arm or sleeve, and begin walking slowly around the room. When the teacher says, "Stop," they turn to another person or small group to exchange what they know about their terms.

Variations on “Wear a Word!”

Give each student a sticker with a term or an important name or event , but place that sticker on their back.



Challenge the class to give helpful hints that are not too easy, and have students circulate around the room, giving each other clues. If the person guesses his/her term, it is okay to continue to circulate and give hints to remaining classmates.



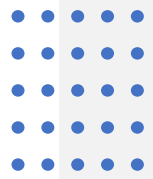
The real goal is to be able to give good enough hints that people don't guess too easily.

#8: Stump the Teacher

This takes a while to be most effective and fair! Directions are on the next slide...

Stump the Teacher Step-by-Step

- Provide students with time to review materials, text, and notes on the subject of the challenge.
- Have each student write 5-10 questions and their answers.
- In groups or pairs, have students share their ideas, refine questions and answers, and put their best 4 -5 questions on index cards.
- Collect the index cards, and answer the questions! If stumped, ask who came up with the best questions! You might even offer a prize or treats for the whole class if you want.



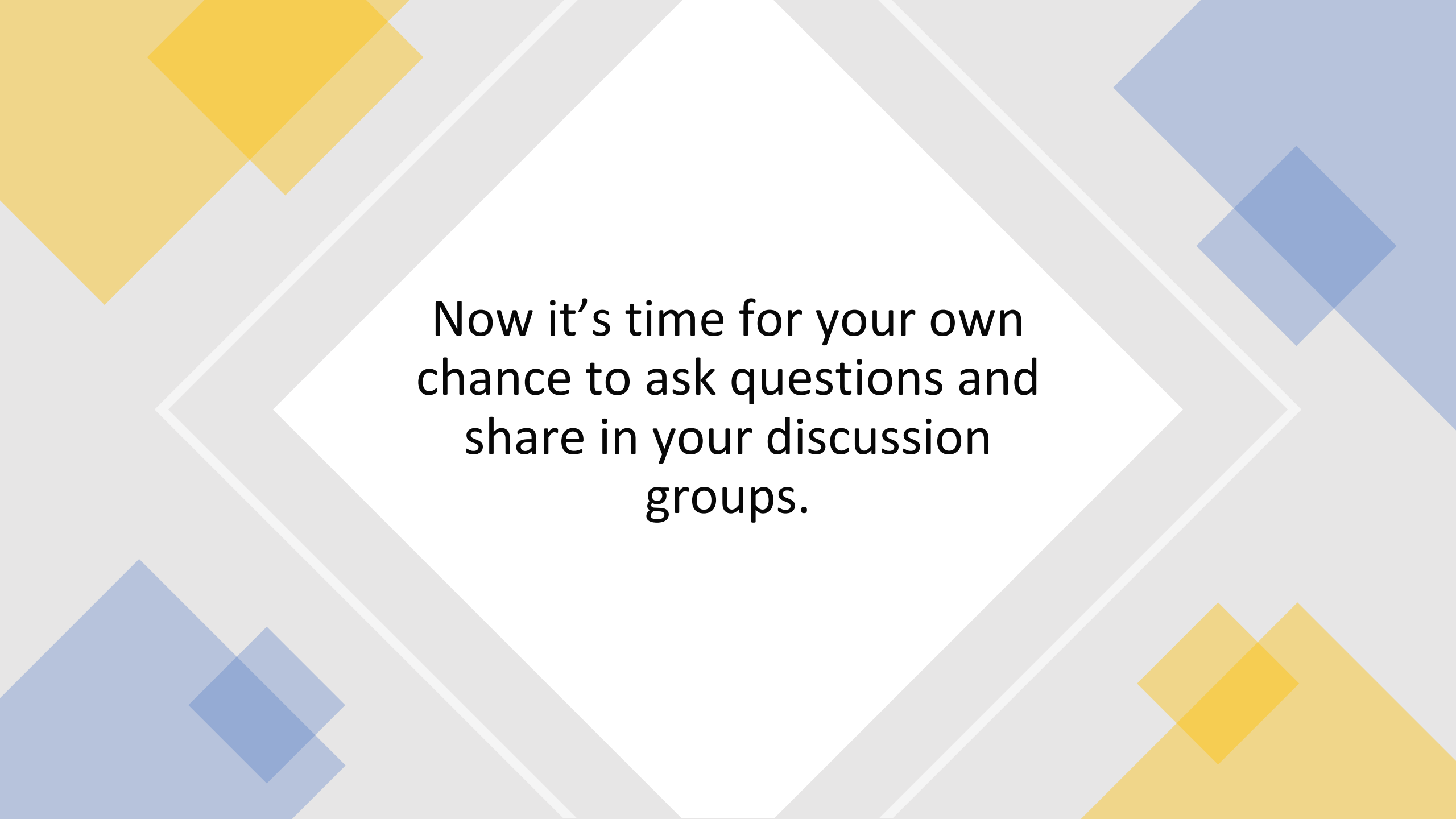
9: Line-Ups Variations

- To get students more acquainted, have them line up with their first, middle or last names in alphabetical order. You can also use prompts like months of their birth to quickly find out upcoming birthdays.
- To review a book or discuss an opinion about the importance of a character or an event, tell students that they will line up along an area of the room you've designated, according to their opinion. They will be asked to stand along the continuum at the point they are in agreement. An example: "_____ is the most important character/event in this book." Follow with a discussion and even allow people to move from their first position as they hear what others have said.

Just a final tip:

- If you decide to try one of these strategies, and you find the students get too worked up and/or do the lesson differently than you have planned-----
- See if the way they chose to do it is a good variation.
- OR
- Consider this a first draft, explain how it needs to be done the next time, and challenge them to do it again, only better. Since the students will have gotten over the process novelty-element, they'll be able to do it again, in more depth.





Now it's time for your own
chance to ask questions and
share in your discussion
groups.