**ENGAGING THE LEARNER**

**As a principal, one of your major responsibilities is the teaching learning process. As you observe and evaluate instruction, an important factor is ensuring that the learning takes place within the classroom. For students to learn, they must be engaged in the process. As the instructional leader, not only must you observe the teacher, but observe the students as they engage in the process. How can you tell if students are engaged in the learning?**

**\_\_1. Make instruction a part of the focus of the staff. Include sessions in staff development that focus on engaging the learner to increase knowledge. Have teachers demonstrate the instructional practices that increase learning.**

**\_\_\_2. As you visit classrooms, circulate as you observe and note the involvement of the students. Lecture is only one instructional strategy and it creates a passive learner. Look for other techniques that engage the students. *(See the Instructional Sandwich diagram)***

**\_\_3. Understand that engaged learning is created when the students are the major focus of the instruction. Increasing their interaction with the teacher and with other students helps to involve them in the lesson and increases their responsibility for demonstrating their knowledge.**

**\_\_4. As a principal, what should you look for? Students working together in cooperative learning groups, together in pairs or simply being active during the lesson indicates an active learning environment*. Sitting and listening to the teacher is not an example of students assuming responsibility for the learning.***

**\_\_5. Develop discussions with teachers on student involvement. Choice in the learning process increases the level of engagement. If students can choose to work alone or with a partner, they may develop more interest in the lesson. Offering a choice in the product is also an option. *Can students submit a drawing, map, or paragraph instead of completing a worksheet to demonstrate their acquisition of knowledge?***

**\_\_6. Learning centers or stations can enable the lesson to be broken into smaller components and can include activities to increase the level of engagement of the students. This may be an opportunity to have teachers model for their peers and demonstrate successful use of centers.**

**\_\_7. Teachers should provide opportunities for students to generate their own work by creating a variety of products to demonstrate learning outcomes. Worksheets, note taking and copying from the text are lower level products that require little thought. Deciding how you will demonstrate your own knowledge is a powerful learning tool.**

**\_\_8. Problem solving can be integrated into any lesson by posing a higher-level question to challenge thinking. Allowing students time to think about their answer, then sharing their thoughts with each other or with the class can increase interactions and engagement for all the learners.**

**PRINCIPAL’S FIELD TECHNIQUE: Some teachers have traditionally used lecture or teacher- directed instruction. To change instruction for the benefit of the learner, it is a rethinking of how lessons are presented and who is responsible for the learning. Some teachers may be uncomfortable with a change, so as the instructional leader, you must lead. Find resources and time and others to help you work with teachers. All efforts benefit the students and the learning.**