

Engaging Students' Attention

The art of retention is the art of attention. Also, to remember anything well, a student must *want* to remember it. To aid attention and motivation, you can:

1. Explore students' experiences and expectations.
 - All new learning builds on past knowledge. Assign reflective writing throughout the course to reveal students' initial views and see how their understandings change.
2. Emphasize relevance, relationships, and applications.
 - Challenge students to relate concepts to unconventional situations (a bowling alley, a zoo, another class, a dorm).
3. Be enthusiastic, flexible, and professional.
 - Share stories about what got you interested in a topic, what has sustained your interest, and what you still hope to learn.
 - Let students influence the course's direction. Ask them to write a paragraph at the end of each unit about where they think the course should go next. Assign brief, open-ended presentations about what has been most personally meaningful about the material.