

INNOVATIVE TEACHING METHODS SELECTION TOOL
















Evidence-based interventions provide educators with a roadmap to convey vital information to students. If your organization has been using the same program for a number of years, you may find you need to switch things up. Innovative Teaching Methods is an umbrella term for teaching methods that can improve participation, student engagement, and retention of information and create more student-centered services. Use this tool to inspire brainstorming amongst your team to determine what kinds of innovative teaching methods might work in your programming. Note that this is not meant to be an exhaustive list of teaching methods and tools. We invite you to explore a teaching method that you and your team may not be familiar with and try it out.





































Before you consider new methods, start by asking yourself, **“what are my main goals for incorporating new methods into my work?”** Identifying your goals might make it easier to home in on some methods and related tools and resources that can help you achieve them! Then, you can make a plan for how you will incorporate your new methods into your programming.

Step 1: Use the **Goal Identification Checklist** to identify your main goals and the potential methods that can help support you in reaching each goal. Explore these methods by clicking on the strategy icon, which will take you to the **Innovative Teaching Methods – Details** table, where you will find a description of each strategy, its pros and cons, and some associated resources. There might be several different methods you could explore to help you reach your goal.


Remember to talk with your Project Officer before making adaptations to your program!





















Goal Identification Checklist




		Real-time Polling	Digital collaborative space	Quiz	Digital cards	Brain breaks	Gamification	Discussion
	Increase youth participation in virtual settings.							
	Gather input from youth on their needs.							
	Make roleplay activities more engaging.							
	Obtain anonymous feedback.							

		Real-time Polling	Digital collaborative space	Quiz	Digital cards	Brain breaks	Gamification	Discussion
	Increase comfort level of youth in group discussions.							
	Create a safer learning environment.							
	Help youth get to know each other.							
	Manage classroom behavior.							
	Increase participation of introverted students.							
	Quickly assess students' understanding.							
	Help students connect emotionally with the content.							
	Improve problem-solving skills.							
	Increase students' sense of agency in the classroom.							
	Other:							

Innovative Teaching Methods – Details


 **Note:** Some of the resources and tools listed are free and some offer different types of functionality with levels of paid subscriptions. Often you can get what you need from the free options (this may vary based on how many youth are you serving at one time).

Method	Description	Pros/Cons	Example Tools
<p>Real-time Polling</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quizzes, polls, word clouds, anonymous questions • Great for brainstorming, True/False activities, anonymous question boxes, and icebreakers • Makes presentations interactive and encourages audience participation 	<p>Pros: Easy to use; dynamic; brings all students into discussion</p> <p>Cons: Students all need a smartphone, laptop, tablet, or other device; can be distracting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentimeter  • Poll Everywhere  • Slido - Audience Interaction Made Easy  • Nearpod  • Classpoint  <p> Go back to the goals checklist</p>
<p>Digital whiteboard or other collaborative space</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great for posing a question and enabling students to share ideas • Lots of built-in templates for sharing ideas 	<p>Pros: Helps focus all students' attention to the same place</p> <p>Cons: Students may distract others and mark up the whiteboard during instructional time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Padlet  • Mural  • Zoom whiteboard (virtual learning)  <p> Go back to the goals checklist</p>
<p>Quizzes</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great for true/false activities, review games, and knowledge checks 	<p>Pros: Easy to use; keeps score</p> <p>Cons: Students need a smartphone or other device; apps are expensive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kahoot!  • Quizzizz  • Blooket  <p> Go back to the goals checklist</p>
<p>Digital “cards”</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital “cards” that can be used a variety of different ways • Great for risk continuums, sorting activities, condom steps activity, and parking lots/bike racks • Adds gamification 	<p>Pros: Works well for evidence-based intervention “card” activities; you can moderate posts before they are published</p> <p>Cons: Limited number of formats</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Padlet  <p> Go back to the goals checklist</p>

Method	Description	Pros/Cons	Example Tools
Brain breaks and mindfulness/grounding activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short activities designed to get participants to be present in the classroom • Great for icebreakers or between intense topics 	<p>Pros: Can help students self-regulate; does not require any additional tools</p> <p>Cons: Depending on what you select, you might need audio-visual support, but many of these have no cons!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Box Breathing ↗ • Chair Stretches ↗ • Grounding Exercise ↗ • Dance break • Corner of classroom where student can excuse self from a triggering conversation if needed • Talking stick • gonoodle.com ↗ - lots of activities and videos (breathing, dancing) <p>Go back to the goals checklist</p>
Gamification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies typical elements of game play (e.g., point scoring, competition with others, a timed challenge) to other areas such as education • Great for icebreakers, content-heavy topics like birth control or sexually transmitted infection, and review or assessment 	<p>Pros: Popular with students; lots of resources available</p> <p>Cons: Competition can cause students to lose focus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kahoot ↗ • Jeopardy Templates ↗ • Repurposed board games <p>Go back to the goals checklist</p>
Discussion-based methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes discussion among students and student-led learning • Promotes learning from one another 	<p>Pros: Low-tech ways to increase engagement</p> <p>Cons: Requires clear instructions so students don't get off topic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think, Pair, Share ↗ • Fishbowl ↗ <p>Go back to the goals checklist</p>

Step 2: Make a plan for how you might try out new methods or tools within your existing programming and determine if they are a good fit. Use the **Action Planning Template** below to get started! Start by filling in the main goals you identified. Then, fill in the resources or tools you want to learn more about, and add any information or additional research you will need to do before you decide whether to incorporate the new resources or tools. Once you make a decision about incorporating any new teaching method(s), you can use the Implementation Plan column to document the steps you will take to incorporate your method(s) into your programming and the final column to note how it went and lessons learned. Some reflection questions you may want to consider as part of your action plan are as follows:




- Which, if any, subscriptions will you purchase?
- Which activities will you modify or add?
- Will any staff training be needed?
- Who will be responsible for each step?
- What is the deadline for each step?

 **Note:** Determine whether you need to contact your Federal Project Officer about adapting your curriculum or purchasing a subscription to a tool with project resources.

Action Planning Template

What is your Goal? (Use one row per goal)	Resources or tools identified (See list above)	Information Needed (Resources, Research)	Implementation Plan (How will you specifically incorporate your new tools into your programming?)	How did it Go? (Lesson Learned and strategies)
1				
2				
3				

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO EXPLORE

- [Bringing Content to Life: Techniques for Effective Group Facilitation Video Series](#) 
- [Getting Tech Savvy: A Guide to Virtual Prevention Programming with Teens](#)
- Blog Post Resources:
 - [10 Best Tech Tools to Grab Youth Students' Attention](#) 
 - [Supporting Student Engagement with Technology](#) 

This tool was developed by RTI International under contract #HHSP233201500039I Task 3 with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau.

Suggested Citation: Jean Gainor, K., Unti, L., Dickinson, D., & McIntosh, C. (2024). *Innovative teaching methods selection tool*. Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau.