

Principle: Do not teach middle schoolers the way you are taught in college.

- Middle schoolers need to be physically active. Incorporate movement throughout the class (e.g. moving to form different work groups, standing in different parts of the room to show categorization of concepts, simulate movement of molecules in different physical states, etc).
- Scrap the long PowerPoints and lectures, and instead capture their interest with novel activities, challenges, and projects that incorporate the senses. Let them talk and do! Some examples include:
 - Use what you learned about cancer biology today to propose an experiment you'd like to conduct.
 - Design a store using what you learned about the psychology of shopping.
 - Make an argument that Supreme Court justices should have term limits.
- Provide structure for behavior and learning.
 - Set and enforce rules calmly.
 - Middle schoolers are just beginning to learn how to process new information. You can provide worksheets, graphic organizers, and visual aids that help them identify the core concepts. This is especially useful for more complicated or abstract ideas.

Principle: Support students' emerging sense of autonomy and self-definition.

- Offer choice within projects and activities. When possible, present opportunities for creative self-expression.
- Give students opportunities to lead. You might help them develop expertise in a particular subtopic, then ask them to share their knowledge with the class.
- Invite students to tackle big, open-ended questions with real-world importance.

Principle: Recognize and incorporate diverse interests and learning styles.

- Middle schoolers have different strengths, competencies, and areas of weakness. Offer multiple examples, strategies, approaches, and ways to show their understanding.
- Consider setting up an “anchor activity” for the whole group to work on, then pull aside individuals or small groups to provide appropriate support and feedback.
- Middle schoolers ask lots of questions, including questions that deviate from the teacher’s plan. You might build time into the class where students can ask questions driven by their own curiosity.
- Be ready to skip a lot of your prepared material depending on your class’s learning pace.
- Provide frequent, ongoing feedback to help students recognize their learning, successes, and challenges in real time. For core classes, you could use exit cards to gauge understanding and adjust your next class accordingly.

Principle: Account for students' social-emotional development.

- Many students are afraid of “looking dumb” in front of their peers. As the teacher, you can normalize struggle and model the process of discovery by asking difficult questions you don’t know the answers to and exhibiting your thought process.
- Middle schoolers have emerging empathy and metacognitive (thinking about thinking) skills. Engage with these interests by offering perspective-taking activities (eg. role playing different philosophers and holding a debate).
- It might be easier for students to present in front of the class in groups rather than alone.

- Validate the insights that students share. Also validate the students responses by saying “Interesting question.” or “Good response.” This will encourage more student participation. However, make sure to vary up your comments (Don’t say “Good question!” after every single question).