How to Fully Engage Students Online

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Our Discussion For Today

• Overall, how do you fully engage students online?

• How do you capture the student’s attention from the beginning of the course?

• How do you continue to hold their attention each week?

• How do you get students to interact with one another online?
Beginning Tips for Any Online Course

• Usually an online course opens for students one full week prior to the start of the class.

• With this in mind, I send a welcome note to students prior to the course beginning; I let them know a few facts about the course; and also let them know that they can send me any questions they might have.
• Let students know that you are both accessible and approachable.
Approachability

• Invite students to ask as many ?’s as they need.
Engaging Students Online

• Sending the syllabus ahead of time is truly a way to put students at ease.

• It allows them to have something tangible to see what your expectations are for the course.

• Also, allows students to explore textbook buying options & have it in their hands at the beginning of the course.
Provide A Calendar of Imp Dates

• Many students are full-time working adults with families, etc.

• Provide them with a calendar of due dates for homework assignments and exams early...
Navigating in a New Course

• Opening class 1 week ahead allows students the opportunity to get familiar with interface, and learn how to navigate all the parts of the course on Bb.

• I consistently have 85-90% of students taking advantage of this prior to the course start date.
Practice Module

• Create a “Practice Module” for students so they can practice how to:

  • Post discussions
  • Upload assignments
  • Send an email from the course
  • Open and take an exam
Establishing Student Interaction

- Student interaction usually begins during the week prior to the start date of the course.
- I begin by introducing myself and telling students things about myself (i.e. how long I have taught the course), my hobbies, my extracurricular activities.
- Sharing something of yourself sets an important tone with the students.
Encourage Students to Share

• It is important to create an environment for students to introduce themselves.
• This happens either prior to the start of the course or during the 1st week.
Setting A Tone For Interactions

• Become engaged with the class immediately as instructor.
• Students will know you are out there.
• For example, respond to student introductions & share commonalities right away.
As soon as the course begins, it is important to present your first topic in an engaging way. Students already begin to feel that they are a part of something & it makes interaction easier.
Content of Discussion Board is Key

• Each discussion thread must stimulate the thought processes of the students.
• Vary the topics on Discussion Boards
• I move to a subtopic midweek to draw the students in deeper.
Contributions of the DB to Learning

• Student contributions on the Discussion Board is where you will see if the students are learning.
• The DB will show you that students can apply information, where as exams show that the students know factual information and that they can memorize.
• DB prepares students for essays on exams.
Giving Feedback on Discussion Boards

• When grading DB give feedback to every student
• For example, Thanks for your excellent posts this week, or missed your contributions on the DB this week and hope your week was not too hectic 😊, etc.
• This shows the students that you are truly concerned.
Overall Feedback

• It is critically important to give feedback to students.

• Establish where & how to give feedback.
Further Engagement Among Students

• Encouraging students to set up study groups.
• Create WIMBA classrooms for students to study with their peers.
• Offering office hours online
• Offering online tutoring (new service)
Questions or Comments
Thank You 😊

Your time is important! Thank you for taking the time to listen to my presentation!