

Strategies for Engaging Students

In blended and online learning, teachers face unique challenges in capturing and maintaining student attention. Utilizing engagement strategies for online environments increases the attention and interest of students when they are learning online. Effective engagement strategies allow students to build relationships with others, develop competence, and exercise autonomy and self-direction. By being intentional when designing instructional content and activities for online environments, teachers can use technology to foster meaningful and engaging experiences for students.

1. What has my experience been with engaging students in online environments?
2. How do I organize my online environment to promote student engagement in blended and online learning?
3. How do I facilitate blended and online learning to promote student engagement?



to Consider

It may be challenging to keep students' attention focused on their academic studies and stay connected with their teachers and peers when learning online. Effective engagement strategies help teachers overcome these challenges by providing opportunities for students to build relationships with others, cultivate self-efficacy, and develop autonomy or self-direction. To promote engagement, give students voice and choice in their learning. Also, design a schedule for online learning that is consistent and predictable for students and their families, such as a weekly planner that includes the week's objectives and daily tasks.

Online learning can be synchronous, asynchronous, or a combination. For synchronous learning, use video conferencing sessions to conduct whole-group discussions or small-group discussions, such as think-pair-share activities, to foster engagement. For asynchronous learning, applications such as Nearpod, Flipgrid, or Padlet can be used to promote student sharing and interaction with their peers. When creating tasks for increased student engagement, allow students to brainstorm ideas and select the most appropriate one on their own. To promote active involvement in the learning process, move from procedural to problem-solving approaches. In blended and online learning, students need to quickly and easily identify what they need to do to engage. Clarity, coherence, and compression are essential elements that an engaging online environment should include. Clarity can be achieved by setting clear intentions and providing constructive feedback and specific guidance. Coherence can be used to promote consistent ways of thinking and ensure students are acknowledged and supported. Compression can be achieved by splitting content and materials into smaller chunks and targeting appropriate individual skill levels and needs.

Varying activities, using multimodal representations, and activating prior knowledge are three ways to increase student engagement. When possible, provide students with various learning activities, tasks, and assessments that match their characteristics and preferences. Provide information and instruction through multiple modes of representation, such as text, pictures, audio, and video. Identify students' prior knowledge and skills to determine how to tailor instructional content for individual students. Teachers should also consider their instructional strategies. Using game elements in online instruction can promote student understanding and engagement. Also, it might be beneficial to provide video-based instruction and support, as many students prefer learning by watching someone demonstrate and explain instructional content. Platforms such as Padlet and Flipgrid can be used to support peer engagement and collaboration through texts, pictures, drawings, videos, and hyperlinks. Additionally, authentic, real-life learning scenarios can be used to facilitate student learning, increasing engagement through real-world relevance. Maintaining student attention is challenging in online environments, but deliberate structure and strategies can help to foster engagement.

KEY Elements