

# Student Accountability in Online Environments

Student accountability is not just about following guidelines; it also encompasses an attitude of being committed to learning. Introducing accountability helps students develop ownership, increases confidence, and leads to success. Holding students accountable for learning can be challenging, especially during online learning environments. It may be more difficult for teachers to motivate or monitor students, and simply replicating what teachers do in a physical classroom may not be an effective solution to adapt to the online environment. Student accountability is more likely to develop and grow when students interact in safe online learning environments.

1. What does 'being accountable' mean to my students?
2. What are the foundational elements of student accountability?
3. Why are some foundational elements of student accountability more challenging than others in blended and online learning?



to Consider

Student accountability means that students are committed to their learning process, take responsibility for their actions, identify and pursue their own learning goals. Student accountability means that students attend classes, participate actively, and complete assignments on time. Helping students develop personal accountability can improve students' academic performance and achievements, increase their confidence, and prepare them to succeed in the future.

Establishing a culture of respect and responsibility, where students have a sense of belonging, feel connected to their peers and teachers, and are conscious of the consequences of their actions, increases the probability that students take responsibility for their learning. Strategies that teachers can employ to create a positive culture online include: setting clear standards and expectations, providing tangible reinforcement for desired behaviors and achievements, promoting student agency or ownership by giving students voice and choice, promoting self-assessment with opportunities for reflection and planning, and establishing and maintaining school-home connections to help parents and families actively monitor student progress.

In online environments with no in-person touchpoints, lack of teacher supervision, and a less structured school day, students may have difficulty staying on track with their schoolwork. Teaching students to be accountable for their learning process can help them succeed in online environments. Many teachers use tangible reinforcers, such as sticker charts or candy, to track and encourage appropriate student behavior. While this form of reinforcement is challenging to replicate in an online environment, an alternative is to allow students to earn symbolic tokens that can be redeemed for electronic rewards. Teachers may set up activities to track student achievements and provide feedback via tools such as Google or Microsoft Forms, Edulastic, Quizlet, Kahoot!, and EdPuzzle. Promoting student ownership by giving students voice and choice on assignments gives students a sense of responsibility. Additionally, teachers can encourage students to design their own plans for improvement. Holding individual virtual meetings with students periodically to review progress and performance is another way to support student accountability.

Supporting families is essential, and effective communication with families and parents starts with positivity. One strategy is to provide opportunities early and often to interact through virtual student-family-teacher conferences. Considering some parents and families might be communicating with many teachers, it might be beneficial to ask parents and families about their preferred communication methods and when to reach out with communication. Promoting student accountability in online environments is challenging, but preparing students to invest in their own learning is beneficial to their future success.

## KEY Elements