

Distance Learning

Strategies for Student Engagement

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What is student engagement?

The term “[student engagement](#)” refers to a variety of attitudes, behaviors, and organization of the learning experience. When referring to attitudes and behaviors, student engagement denotes the level of enthusiasm, intellectual curiosity, and connection a learner experiences. From an organizational standpoint, student engagement refers to the level of involvement learners have within the learning institution itself.



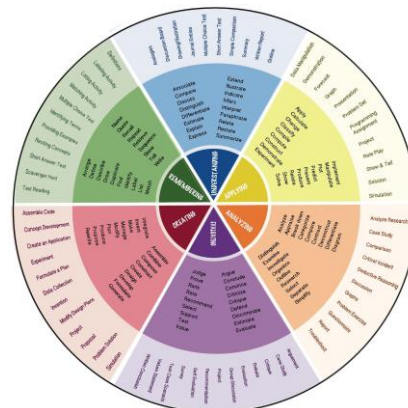
Student engagement takes many forms, such as intellectual, behavioral, emotional, physical, and social. In general, the term is used to describe the level of involvement students have in the learning environment. That involvement can take place inside and outside of the classroom and determines how a learner interacts within the learning organization and related experiences.

Engaged learners not only contribute to a positive learning environment. They often perform better on assessments than non-engaged peers and are shown to be more likely to complete their course of training. Therefore, engaging learners is an important tool in creating successful training programs.

What is Bloom’s Taxonomy?

Bloom’s Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain is a model used to classify cognition by levels of complexity. The model is composed of six hierarchical levels: Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating. Lower order thinking skills, or LOTS, are depicted in the first three levels, with higher order thinking skills, or HOTS, being depicted in the top three levels.

The [Bloom’s Wheel](#) illustrates the taxonomy in a circular rather than hierarchical fashion. The inner circle indicates the level of learning, with the middle ring providing associated action verbs for each level. The outer ring of the diagram suggests related activities educators can plan for students to engage in each level of learning. Feel free to use the wheel when writing your objectives and planning learning activities.



How Do I Engage Students?



Engaging your learners can be intimidating, especially to a new instructor, but there is a myriad of ways to accomplish this goal. Below are just a few suggestions.

Set (and meet) expectations.

Communicate your expectations to students and give them the opportunity to share their expectations with you. This creates a shared understanding of how teaching and learning will occur and engages your learners in the course.

Provoke conversation by asking probing questions.

Use questioning to guide conversation around the topic and encourage students to question you and one another. Establish a culture of inquiry where the group comes together in pursuit of what can't be learned individually.

Validate student learning through feedback and interaction.

Provide timely feedback to your learners and work to interact with them on a consistent basis. Feedback and interaction aid learners in navigating the learning experience and provide a sense of comfort and belonging.

Use real world examples.

Make the classroom relevant to real life practice whenever possible. Help learners connect to information on a deeper level by making it relevant to their future professional roles and responsibilities. Tell stories about your own experiences to provide real-world connection and application.

Incorporate active learning techniques.

Use approaches such as Think-Pair-Share, group problem solving, and reflection exercises to get the students actively involved with the topic.

What Tools Can Help Me?

MCW's learning management system, Brightspace, offers several features to aid you in student engagement. Online Discussion Forums can be managed synchronously or asynchronously, while Assignments allow students to submit their work for grading and feedback. Rubrics provide a way to communicate expectations to students and score their assignment submissions. In addition, Brightspace's Virtual Classroom tool allows you to interact with learners via video conferencing, fostering synchronous learning with remote attendance.

TopHat Audience Response System also offers features to engage your learners. Polling students for answers to multiple choice questions is just one of many opportunities the software provides. Questions can be made available for several hours rather than immediate response, allowing you to get a true sense of where your learners are and the opportunity to adapt your teaching to their needs. Follow-up from live sessions is possible through the Homework function, allowing students to submit assignments directly into the TopHat system.

