Applying Chickering and Gamson's Principles to Engage Today's Online Learner:
A Literature Review

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chickering and Gamson introduced seven principles for engaging undergraduate students into the literature in 1987. The principles provided faculty with the foundational best practices they could incorporate into their own courses. Using Chickering and Gamson's best practices, the authors of this chapter conducted a literature review on how these best practices could be used for engaging learners through the support of technology. Institutions of higher education are incorporating online degree programs in their strategies and should understand how to prepare faculty, especially new faculty, for facilitating online courses for nontraditional students using the learning management system (LMS), technology, pedagogical approaches, and best practices.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will provide a review of the literature through the lens of Chickering and Gamson's (1987) seven principles for engaging undergraduate learners. Chickering and Gamson's (1987) principles are visible throughout the literature as methods used by faculty to engage learners using technology. Through a review of the literature, this chapter will offer faculty and administrators at institutions of higher education examples of how technology can be used to support Chickering and Gamson's (1987) principles to engage students in online courses or distance learning experiences.

Chickering and Gamson (1987) stressed the importance of engagement in the classroom by providing faculty with best practices and approaches to engage students. Although these principles were introduced over three decades ago, these best practices are visible in today's literature related to student engagement. The foundational principles proposed by Chickering and Gamson (1987) for creating student engagement in the classroom have provided faculty with opportunities to explore different ways to engage students. These principles are relevant for any instructor transitioning from on-ground to online learning. One example is the pivot to emergency remote learning due to the impact of COVID-19. There are pedagogical approaches that support Chickering and Gamson's (1987) methods that faculty may want to incorporate into their own teaching practices using available technology, either externally or through a learning management system (LMS). The additional approaches outlined in this chapter, used in conjunction with Chickering and Gamson's (1987) principles, may help faculty identify methods appropriate for their online classroom to effectively engage the online learner.
The seven principles identified by Chickering and Gamson (1987) are as follows:

1. Encourages contacts between students and faculty.
2. Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students.
3. Uses active learning techniques.
4. Gives prompt feedback.
5. Emphasizes time on task.
6. Communicates high expectations.
7. Respects diverse talents and ways of learning. (p. 1)

By reviewing the existing literature for effective uses of technology to support student engagement in online courses or distance learning experiences, faculty who are interested in incorporating technology into their courses to support learner engagement may draw inspiration from successful examples of student engagement that align with Chickering and Gamson's (1987) principles.

BACKGROUND

Studies conducted by online faculty or administrators that detail the use of technology supporting these best practices, explicitly and implicitly, provide other online faculty and administrators with an understanding of how Chickering and Gamson's (1987) principles can be applied to a variety of online learning settings in higher education. Student engagement is essential to retention, therefore, understanding how to leverage Chickering and Gamson's (1987) principles supported by technology may have an impact on how a student perceives their own success and interest in their online course (Steele & Fullagar,

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