

Digital Course Redesign to Increase Student Engagement and Success

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Quite often the question for many college professors is “How do you capture the attention of today’s student and keep them engaged?” Traditional teaching methods remain important and should not be abandoned. However, with the ever-expanding use of technology in the classroom, faculty members must consider course redesign to increase students’ investment in and connection with course material. This chapter will discuss the role of faculty in developing strategies and techniques used to redesign courses and how the use of digital technologies can positively influence student engagement and success.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education has changed significantly over the years and the influence of technology has played a critical role in that change. While technology has had a major influence on student engagement and the operations of today's universities, conversations still center on how to manage that technology in a growing and diverse environment while at the same time determining how to best use it to increase student engagement and success. Student engagement has been defined as "participation in educationally effective practices, both inside and outside the classroom, which leads to a range of measurable outcomes" (Kuh et al., 2007), and as "the extent to which students are engaging in activities that higher education research has shown to be linked with high-quality learning outcomes" (Krause & Coates, 2008, p. 493). Similarly, Hu and Kuh (2001) defined engagement as "the quality of effort students themselves devote to educationally purposeful activities that contribute directly to desired outcomes" (p. 3).

Evidence to date suggests that the use of technology has had a significant impact on how faculty and instructors teach, how much students are engaged and how students learn. The use of technology takes place in many forms from simple and sophisticated digital presentations to even the use of mobile devices in the classroom. With such great advances in student learning and instruction, some institutions are now encouraging instructors and faculty to redesign their classes to integrate varying components of these tools to further increase student engagement and success.

Redesign of any class is of course at the discretion of the faculty member. However, the redesign can take shape in many forms to effect student learning experiences and outcomes. Tools that have been explored by some faculty regardless of success or measure include: displaying course material in a digital format rather than hard copy, such as eBooks; and interactive tools, such as mobile devices. Regardless of the mode chosen, educators have determined that redesigning classrooms to become more active and engaging may result in increased student learning and outcomes, which combined with other modes of learning work together to impact overall student engagement and success. With that in mind, the authors of this chapter have chosen to further explore the need to redesign classrooms using a digital format as the impetus to increase student engagement and success. In doing so, this chapter will briefly highlight background information on how higher education has changed

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