Chapter 21
A Framework for Student Engagement:
Strategies for Faculty Teaching Online

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ABSTRACT

When teaching online, many instructors are provided with a master course that contains the learning materials, discussion forums, assignments, and assessments. With more higher education institutions opting to offer master course shells, it can be difficult for instructors to know how to incorporate their personality, experiences, and insights into a pre-designed course. Faculty who teach online may be searching for ideas on how to personalize their master course and increase student engagement. Many faculty express concerns about students who are disconnected. Personalization of master courses increases student engagement while allowing students and instructors to feel more connected during the course. The authors will explore best practices to increase student engagement and provide a framework to implement these strategies that assist online instructors in demonstrating their personalities and expertise in master courses.

INTRODUCTION

Student engagement strategies and technology are a necessity for personalizing master courses and engaging students. When teaching online, many instructors are provided with a master course which contains the learning materials, discussion forums, assignments, and assessments. With more higher education institutions opting to offer master course shells, it can be difficult for instructors to know how to incorporate their personality, experiences, and insights into a pre-designed course. Faculty who teach online may be searching for ideas on how to personalize their master course and increase student engagement. Many faculty express concerns about students who are disconnected. Personalization of master courses increases student engagement while allowing students and instructors to feel more connected during the course. From personalized weekly announcements, individualized feedback and check-ins, to dialogue creation in discussion forums, and audio feedback, there are a variety of ways an instructor can incorporate strategies that increase engagement and add personality to the course.

In this chapter, the authors explore strategies to increase student engagement and provide a framework to implement these strategies that assist online instructors in demonstrating their personalities and expertise in master courses. Strategies can be separated into three components, engaging with the instructor, with peers and with course content.

Chapter Objectives

- Explore the student engagement framework for online teaching.
- Examine evidence-based strategies to build engagement.
- Share ideas to implement strategies in practice.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Engagement

In an online environment, engagement is a necessary component for learning to take place (Revere & Kovach, 2011). Students who actively participate learn more than those that do not (Zappala, 2012). Faculty who teach online must intentionally develop and implement strategies that increase students' engagement with the course content, with the instructor, and with peers (Nandi, Hamilton, & Harland, 2012; Briggs, 2015). Dail (2012) asserts that in the online environment technology enables this interaction. In this section, the authors explore the three types of engagement explaining the evidence-based strategies related to each.

Engaging with the Content

To engage with the content, assignments should be designed to connect texts, articles and other reading material to previous work or professional experience (Dail, 2012). Technology has allowed for students to engage with course content in the online classroom (Dyer, Aroz, & Larson, 2018). Many innovative tools and delivery methods provide ways for students to engage with the content. They add that "the use of technology helped students become invested and engaged in the classroom, making the material

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