



Top Ten Engagement Tips

1. Keep it Simple

Engagement does not need to be complex. Post a good question in the discussion forum. Present a good activity for students to explore new learning on their own. Create a good assignment. Ask students to engage with a good reading focused on key questions and then have a related quiz to assess comprehension. It just needs to be simple. Do not overthink this.

2. Consider Variety in Engagement (Asynchronous vs. Synchronous vs. Groupings)

Student to Self = reflections, creating content, independent learning, assignments, reading

Student to Student = 1:1 sharing, pairing, collaborating, discussing, producing demonstrations of learning

Students to Students (groups) = sharing, collaborating, discussing working on shared spaces

Student to Instructor = 1:1 – keep to minimum, but this could be consultations, emails, discussion

Students to Instructor = presenting learning collectively, sharing content creation, new knowledge

Instructor to Students = asynchronous presentation of content, videos, emails, synchronous BlueJeans etc.

3. Engagement = Learning

Listening, Reading, Watching = passive engagement (low “stickiness”) – lower brain connections and processing

Doing, Thinking, Responding, Debating, Justifying, Analyzing, Applying = active engagement (high “stickiness”)

4. Do Limited Group Work Activities – Asynchronous and Synchronous

Keep group work activities to a minimum – do not complicate things. Could consider students working in groups sharing and collaborating offline for small activities, low stakes learning etc. Large group work assignments will just be a headache.

5. Blackboard Learn has Limited Engagement – Discussions, Wiki, Blog – But there are Other Tools To Use

Use Blackboard Learn where you can. It has discussions, wiki and a blog – okay tools but not always good for all activities. For better engagement you need to go outside the ‘walled garden’ to places like Socrative, Poll Everywhere, Padlet, Prezi, Explain Everything, Evernote, etc. to have more interactive and collaborative engagement.

6. **Have Students Go Out to Own Area/Community to take part in Real World Learning**

Anytime you can leverage the local/area and community for engagement in authentic experiences – do it! Especially since so much of the learning is now done online – it is nice to get outside and apply learning to the real world. Engage students in own community, going on web/internet search to find local/discipline info, get authentic examples, local interest groups (e.g., maker space group) – or encourage students to attend open webinars, sessions and workshops.

7. **Consider Student-Led Engagement**

Have students build a session, a training session, teaching experience, about topics they are passionate about etc. and then be the leaders/facilitators of the session. Ask the students to reflect on the experience. Students to create a handout summary of key points, moderate discussion. Instructor fills in the gaps. Use BlueJeans for students to present to instructor and record the session to share with rest of class. Narrated PowerPoint can also be another format for students to engage in their learning. Non-presenting students provided feedback on a single point rubric and then shared with group. Students in groups create questions on day's class/readings and pass around/share with class.

8. **Engage Students in Current News or Timely Stories**

Anytime you can create an authentic (or timely, news-based, current situation) engagement for students to explore, uncover, find solutions for – you make learning real and meaningful. Especially in this pandemic, can you challenge your students in authentic assignments, activities, problem-based cases?

9. **Provide Routine Engagement Activities**

Try to build consistent engagement across a digital learning experience by having routine engagement activities. For example, each week you may have a pattern of engagement experiences. Monday may be a quiz to assess readings, Wednesday may be students sharing their plan for learning that week in the discussion forum, Fridays may be touching base with a course 'buddy' to share what they are learning etc. This builds community and consistency for engagement throughout the week.

10. **Have Fun!**

Teaching needs to be fun. Learning must be fun! Learning = Engagement. Learning = change. If you do not experience any fun in all your work, then let us talk and get you enjoying this experience.