

Increase Online Student Engagement

An online course is more than listening to “information”. Your association must differentiate itself by offering online courses that engage, connect, and transform students. Consider the following strategies to increase online student engagement.

1. Structure your Online Course

A well-organized course provides a clear path for students to progress. **Students must be able to easily navigate within your course to find their course materials, discussions, assessments, and grades.**

Consistency is the key. Like in-person students who get in the habit of going to class at the same time and same place every week, online students need to form those same habits to maintain consistent performance across the term.

Here are a few examples:

- Have all assessments be due on the same day of the week.
- Have all modules open on the same day of the week.
- Open each week with an announcement.
- Provide grades and feedback during specific days of the week.



2. Prepare Students to Learn Online

Here are a few examples:

- Explain the course expectations and why the course is important beyond a requirement.
- Let students know you are available and that you want them to succeed in the course.
- Take students on a guided video tour of your course. Show them how to find materials, assignments, and assessments, and how to communicate in the course.
- After students review the CCO and AIE, have them participate in a Syllabus Quiz or Scavenger Hunt. This would ensure that students understand the course expectations.
- If students need support, they should know how to contact the instructor and helpdesk.

3. Lead by Example

The course shouldn't feel like it's running on autopilot. Engagement by the Instructor should be taking place in an online course.

Here are a few examples:

- Establish a teaching presence early and often.
- Appear on video (show your personality, passion, and expertise).
- Provide weekly announcements.
- Participate in the weekly discussions (guide on the side).
- Provide timely weekly feedback/grades.



4. Build a Learning Community

Many online educators have found that a helpful way to think about "Teaching Online" is to focus on creating three forms of interaction for students in the online environment:

Student-Content Interaction is all about having students DO something with the course content or topic.

Here are a few examples:

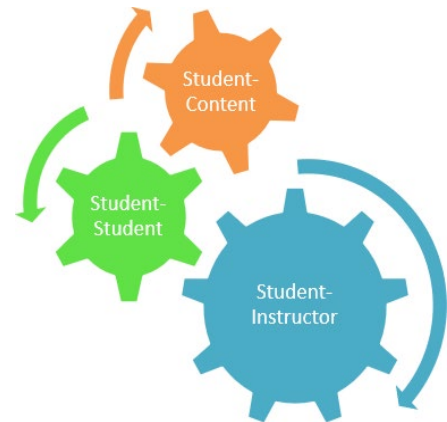
- Create an annotated visual on a PowerPoint slide that shows your key take-away from the reading.
- List five of your take-aways and one question you have based on the reading.
- Identify what you as a reader find to be the clearest point in the reading and the muddiest point.
- Complete a poll to check for understanding.

Student-Student Interaction is when students interact with each other in higher-order thinking. *Here are few examples:*

- Ask students to participate in a role-play or debate activity using online discussions.
- Peer review activities for writing assignments and projects.
- Group projects/presentations.

Student-Instructor Interaction is the third form of interaction, which should involve more than just answering student questions. *Here are a few examples:*

- Participate and engage with students about the course content via online discussions.
- Record and post a short video to introduce a major assignment.
- Provide detailed feedback on assignments (written and/or recorded).
- Hold open or by-appointment office hours by Zoom or phone.
- Create a video (with your pets, etc.) in your home or a safe outdoor environment to provide social presence.



5. Track Participation

Canvas tracks how users are engaging within a course (where, when, how long, and how often). As an instructor, you can use this tracking to see if, when, and how your students have been participating in your Canvas courses.

- [New Analytics](#) - This helps instructors track performance and activity within the course. Learn which students have viewed pages, resources, participated in assignments—and which students may need a little more encouragement.

6. Celebrate Accomplishments

- The more involved an instructor becomes in students' online activities, the more students will feel validated for the learning they're demonstrating.
- Celebrating accomplishments is one of the best ways to keep students involved in and proud of the work that they, and their peers are doing.
- Respond to comments that have not received a response: Ensure that all contributions are validated – move the discussion along with questions for other students to consider.

For additional support, please reach out to the Office of Academic Affairs SPS.