Teaching Online: Engaging Learners

Rachel Levine MD, MPH
Associate Dean for Faculty Educational Development
Joseph Cofrancesco Jr MD, MPH,
Director, Institute for Excellence in Education
Robert Kearns
Director of Online Education
Goal and Learning Objectives

The goal of this session is to increase educator comfort and satisfaction with teaching online.

Learning Objectives:

1. List 3 key features of learner engagement and motivation.

2. Describe key components of a communication strategy to engage learners.

3. Describe 2 ways to enhance teacher-learner engagement and 2 ways to enhance learner-learner engagement.

4. List 3 active learning strategies.
Agenda (45 minute session)

• Some sharing of content
• Some demonstration of active learning techniques and online resources
• Some time for discussion
Introductions
Using the Zoom chat function:

– Name some strategies that you have used to engage learners in live (not online) teaching sessions.

– Name some challenges you have faced to engaging learners in live (not online) teaching sessions.
Learner Motivation and Engagement

What motivates learners?
Why is learner motivation important?

Think about what is motivating you to participate in this session.
What is your goal for being here?
outcome (possible) and efficacy (capable)

Learning Environment

attainment, intrinsic and instrumental

Figure 3.1. Impact of Value and Expectancy on Learning and Performance

How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching, Ambrose, 2010
If a goal is *valued and expectancies* for success are positive *and* the environment is perceived to be supportive, learner motivation will be highest.

*How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*, Ambrose, 2010
Establish value & build positive expectancies

– Link content to learner’s interests and future learning
– Create authentic learning activities
– Provide clear descriptions of expectations, learning objectives, and learning activities
– Align expectations, LOs and instructional methods

How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching, Ambrose, 2010
Establish value & build positive expectancies

- Identify and ensure the appropriate level of challenge
- Share rubrics and examples
- Provide focused feedback
- Allow for flexibility and learner control
- Promote reflective practice

*How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching, Ambrose, 2010*
Have an Approach to Planning Teaching Activities

- Who are my learners?
- What is it I want to teach?
- How will I teach it?
- How will I know they have learned it?
### Questions to ask yourself

**Who are my learners?**
- What are their goals and motivations? What are their needs and expectations?
- What are the similarities and differences among my learners? How can this be leveraged?

**What do I want to teach my learners?**
- What experiences have learners already had?
- How can learners help direct their own learning?
- What do they already know? What will they need to know?
- How can I encourage higher order thinking and transfer of learning?

**How will I teach them?**
- How will I ensure an appropriately supportive and challenging learning environment?
- How can I foster relationships between learners and myself?
- How can I encourage higher order thinking and transfer of learning?
- Which teaching strategies align with my content, setting and LOs?

**How will I know that they have learned?**
- How can I make their learning visible?
- How can I help them identify how to take next steps?
Course/Session Expectations

• Have them and communicate them with learners
  – Communications and interactions
  – Online etiquette
  – Participation, assignments, timelines
  – Make your language welcoming, clear and consistent
  – Consider creating an exercise to build shared expectations (small groups)
Example: exercise to build shared expectations

Using the Zoom chat function, share 1 learning goal you have for this session.
Engaging with Learners

• Establish a communication strategy (how, when/how often, purpose)

• Create many opportunities for learners to engage with you
  – Video introduction, routine video instructions (keep these short and make them personable)
  – Routine, live online office hours
  – Discussion boards
  – Email
Engaging with Learners

• Assess learning and provide feedback
  – Pause to ask questions using chat function
  – Polling/quizzing
  – Video or audio feedback
Example: formative assessment exercise

Using the Zoom chat function, share 1 question you still have about this content.
What is Active Learning?

- Active learning is generally defined as any instructional method that engages students in the learning process.
- Activities that students do to construct knowledge and understanding. The activities vary but require students to do higher order thinking.
- Active learning requires students to do meaningful learning activities and think about what they are doing.
Active Learning Strategies

Definition: Students perform meaningful learning activities and think about what they are doing.

- Reflect in Writing
  Use “quick writes” and “writing to learn strategies.” Writing is a thinking tool.

- Solve It
  Brainstorm solutions to a problem collaboratively or individually.

- Generate Questions
  Develop questions about the topic and pose them to peers.

- Relate It
  Relate the info to something you have experienced.

- Feel It
  Find a way to feel intensely curious about the material so that it sticks in long term memory.

- Teach It
  Being able to fully explain the idea to a peer means that you have internalized the topic.

- Brain Blast

- Control Your Environment
  Allow yourself to do “deep work” by minimizing distractions.

- Summarize
  Students can restate salient points in everyday vernacular.

- Compare Notes
  Share your notes with a peer, discuss the differences, and make additions or revisions.

- Self Assess
  Ask: How well do I understand the concept? What areas still need more work?

todd-finley.com
Active Learning Efficacy Evidence

- Less chance of failure

- 0.5 SD improvement on performance measures

- May improve inclusivity and reduce achievement gap
  - Both URMs' and women


Slide credit Dr. D Cayea
Making Time for Active Learning

Adapted from Thinking Together: Collaborative Learning in the Sciences – Harvard University – Derek Bok Center
How to *Intentionally* Use Active Learning

![Warning: Easily distracted by shiny objects](image)
Education Planning

- Learning Objectives
- Assessment Method
- Level of Mastery
- Teaching/Learning Methods

Minimize cognitive load
Maximize authentic learning

Slide credit Dr. D Cayea
Active Learning Tips

• Active Learning strategies must fit the LOs and content

• Instructions/activity should not be too complicated (cognitive load)

• Active Learning should be incorporated in regular intervals

• Learners should be able to be successful

• Consider adult learning principles (experiential, relevant)
Example: Active Learning exercise

• Zoom breakout, click JOIN
• Pair share
  – With a partner describe an active learning exercise you could use in a current teaching setting. Or describe an active learning strategy you have used in the past.
Zoom Interactive Capabilities

• A word about privacy (passwords or waiting rooms)
• Chats
  – Turn on and off, turn off private chat,
  – Pause to use for questioning
• Whiteboard
• Polls-can be created on the fly or ahead of session
• Breakouts
  – Can be created on the fly, learners randomly placed in rooms, learners must click “join”, host can move from room to room
  – Can be created in advance at the time of scheduling the meeting or editing the meeting

• For Zoom FAQs and video tutorials
• https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials
Other resources

- Kahoot
- Polleverywhere
- Glisser
- Microsoft Teams
- Google Classrooms
- Others?
- https://www.chronicle.com/interactives/advice-online-teaching#1
- https://ai.umich.edu/keep-teaching/teaching-strategies/
Open discussion

• What has been working well?
• What has been challenging for you?
• What other topics would you like to cover in this format?
Bloom’s Taxonomy

1. Remember
   - Recall facts and basic concepts
     - define, duplicate, list, memorize, repeat, state

2. Understand
   - Explain ideas or concepts
     - classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate

3. Apply
   - Use information in new situations
     - execute, implement, solve, use, demonstrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch

4. Analyze
   - Draw connections among ideas
     - differentiate, organize, relate, compare, contrast, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test

5. Evaluate
   - Justify a stand or decision
     - appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, critique, weigh

6. Create
   - Produce new or original work
     - design, assemble, construct, conjecture, develop, formulate, author, investigate

https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/