Engagement in the Online Classroom

Student engagement refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education.

Some strategies that have demonstrated effectiveness in promoting student engagement are:

- Connect learning to the real world (or the students' world view).

- Encourage students to present and share work regularly.

- Promote group work and collaboration.

- Active learning: A focus on getting students to "do" something, rather than "learn" something.

- Scaffold tasks with checkpoints.

- Emphasize discovery and inquiry.

Types of Engagement

Student to Instructor

The connection to influence of a subject matter expert to student achievement. Some strategies may include access to informal or one-on-one communication, ability to make continuous improvements on content and instruction. The presence of the instructor includes facilitation, and direction of cognitive and social processes for the realization of meaningful learning. This involves instructional design, facilitation, and direct instruction.

Examples of student to instructor engagement:

- Video lectures and tutorials.

- Access to instructor (office hours).

- Live and asynchronous demonstrations and simulations.

- Instructor-led discussion forums.

- Synchronous zoom sessions.

- Video, audio, or written feedback.

Student to Student

The promotion of student autonomy with less instructor control. Leverages the *learner among other learners* model and the social component of learning. This also promotes social presence, or the ability to perceive others in an online environment as "real" and the projection of oneself as a real person. This involves open communication, affective expression, and group cohesion.

Examples of student to student engagement:

- Discussion forums.

- Group projects/collaboration using Google docs/sheets.

- Backchannel communication, (digital conversation that runs concurrently with another activity).

- Peer review activities.

Student to Content

Addressing diversity of learning styles through instructional delivery. Promotes a community of Inquiry by placing content within the world view of learners. This level of engagement also promotes cognitive presence, or the extent to which students can construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse.

Examples of student to content engagement:

- Subject matter or knowledge to be learned.

- Instructional delivery in the form of reading assignments.

- Video lectures and resources.

- Media that provides more than one way to access/interpret learning content.

Engagement through Low-Stakes Activities

- **Think Pair Share:** students reflect on something, discuss with a partner, and then share with the rest of the class once everyone is ready

- **Quickwrite:** write down three questions or points that have been raised by the lesson so far

- **What I know already:** if you're just about to dive into new content, ask students to identify three things they already know about the subject and jot them down as bullet points.

References

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