



Creating an Engaging Online Community

The Need for Online Classes

- Online education is growing.
- Students want the convenience of working from home.
- Life/study balance is important to students.
- Students expect and need online classes to be comparable in quality to those conducted on campus.

Possible Pitfalls for Online Education

- Lack of instructor push allows students to procrastinate.
- Inability of the instructor and student to interact.
- Absence of a sense of belonging.
- Feeling the work is corrected by a robot.

Avoid Technical Pitfalls



- Ensure that your institution's server can handle the load.
- Use common file types that work on a variety of platforms.
- Make sure your webpages display and function properly on mobile devices.
- Have quick-response tech support available; the longer a student waits for help, the higher her or his anxiety.

Studies Have Shown

- If students are not engaged, they will not perform at their best.
- A feeling of belonging to a group enhances student performance.
- Having a place to discuss issues with other students increases student effort.
- Online study groups help students to stay focused.
- Interaction with the instructor makes the student feel that he or she is being heard.

Keys to Success

- To ensure online teaching success, student engagement is of paramount importance. Students need:
 - To feel they are part of a class.
 - A platform to voice concerns and have open discussions.
- Your institution needs to provide:
 - A secure Internet connection.
 - Dedicated servers that can handle the load.

Tips for Engaging Students

- Use video chat for “face-to-face” talks with students.
- Respond to student postings in a timely manner, i.e., in less than 24 hours.
- Make yourself available to students during set office hours.
- Post pictures of yourself and your students—it helps students understand that they are interacting with real people.
- Provide a platform that enables students to talk among themselves.
- Have a way for students to collaborate on projects.
- Start the first class with a brief video introducing yourself as the instructor.

And Finally . . .

- Make sure the education is solid.
- See your students as real people with real needs.
- Have fun! When you enjoy what you teach it inspires online students just as it does those in the classroom.

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