

K-12 Online Engagement Strategies

Curriculum

- 1 Make learning authentic, when possible. Incorporate service learning or application to real-life in each course.
- 2 Give learners control of their interactions with media, make assignments active--drag, drop, remix, burn, rip, build, design, post, investigate and report, chart, comment, photograph, podcast, scavenger hunt, webquest, etc.
- 3 Provide opportunities for collaboration on projects and peer feedback. Wiki projects are a great start.
- 4 Include social networking, IM, gaming technologies, avatars, and mobile learning options (i.e., “fresh” technologies) where and when possible.
- 5 Provide opportunities for reflection through blogs, peer dialogues, or showcases of their work (synchronous and asynchronous).
- 6 Include parents in the curriculum itself (for example, do a survey on topic as part of a class, student version and parent version). Help the parents understand the system by incorporating them in where applicable.
- 7 Address multiple modalities of learning with curriculum material options (audio, video, text, experiential, etc).
- 8 Introduce free online content, and teach students to find their own.
- 9 If online quizzes are used to prepare students for testing, include response feedback after each question.
- 10 Incorporate deadlines that give some flexibility (1 week, 2 weeks, etc.). Offer a “golden ticket” exemption once or twice per class.
- 11 Expand class offerings to include AP and dual credit courses.
- 12 Create small successes that build on each other. Allow students to work ahead of schedule, if desired.

Teaching & Support Personnel

13. Encourage participation online by pointing out strengths and growth toward educational goals. Feedback is a great motivator.
14. Improve teacher efficiency by creating regular timelines and due dates that assist teachers and students to work on a schedule.
15. Help students understand they have a responsibility in the learning partnership. State your expectations and what you're willing to deliver in return to help them meet their personal goals.
16. Promote opportunities to share diverse opinions and thinking, and diversity in culture. Highlight diversity as an asset, something desired.
17. Write up 50 ways to use Elluminate (daily message, one-on-one tutoring, class discussions, small group meetings, brainstorming, teacher training sessions, student presentations, and more!). Encourage your kids to lead a discussion in Elluminate.
18. Invite guest experts to chat live with kids. Record it, and archive it so it's available for those who can't show up.
19. Consider social networking with students via Facebook, Twitter, or your blog.
20. Develop a professional learning community where teachers can connect online to share ideas that work--and those that don't!
21. Be proactive in student outreach to reduce the need for reactive support. Consider recording introductions and overviews to lessons or units or major assignments.
22. Faces are important, whether they are real or pixel avatars. Development of trust is supported by a visual connection. Create an online presence and integrate it where possible.
23. Determine at what point you contact the student if assignments aren't being turned in. At what point will you hand it over to administration to do follow-up? Identify "red flag" students via monthly teacher meeting, and plan intervention.
24. Develop phased training, provide peer mentoring. Training should be ongoing, on-demand, and online. Follow online teaching standards to guide development of training.
25. Outreach and teach in multiple modalities. Start the week or unit with a "welcome" email. Follow-up with Elluminate meetings, make self available by phone/IM/Facebook/Twitter. Give students opportunity to post comments to your blog, YouTube channel, or Flickr photo album. Give them something to engage with, in a way they like to engage.
26. Continue to develop support mechanisms, such as iCentral, that support all aspects related to student learning.
27. Teach kids where the benchmarks are, then provide some type of acknowledgment when a student completes a specific benchmark (80% complete, 100% complete, 50 lessons done, etc.). It's even better when they can see this progress in a visual form in the LMS.

Technological

1. Consider adopting/using technologies that support engagement (any social networking technology, IM, Google Apps, virtual worlds)
2. Fine-tune mechanisms in existing technology platforms to support best practice (i.e., add due-dates to assignments, reminders, calendar assignments, etc).
3. Run data sets on those who are successful vs. those who drop-out. Are there technology use patterns you can identify to support success and prevent drop-out?
4. Conduct a student self-efficacy survey at the start of their program. They are great predictors of success in online learning. Customize learning strategies to promote growth in self-efficacy with technology and learning, in general.

Community

5. Integrate pay for work opportunities/internships.
6. Provide parents and students opportunities for vital roles in the health and functioning of the school and the community
7. Provide students leadership opportunities in Student Clubs and Associations.
8. Offer events to bring students together in-person--traditional is good (prom, graduation, etc.), but think outside-the-box! (digital media student art exhibit, GPS-enabled study of the Oregon Trail, coordinate a community Dia de los Muertos celebration).
9. Partner with universities on grant projects. Trial pilot innovations and get free evaluation data.
10. Consider student teacher placements, build opportunities for interaction between students and student teachers (for ex., student feedback on an Elluminate session).