

10 Strategies for Enhancing Presence and Engagement in Your Online Classes

Office of Instructional Innovation

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Strategies for Enhancing Presence and Engagement

	Strategy	How to Go About This	Intended impact
1	Create an opportunity for students to learn about you.	Create an introductory video, post a picture, create an avatar, add a statement about your teaching approach, and/or list personal or professional interests.	Decreases relational distance and allows students to see you as a real person.
2	Write regular/weekly announcements in Blackboard.	Craft a supportive note providing an overview of the week's course content, outcomes, and expectations; add a comment about a current event related to the course or an activity happening at OHIO.	Lets students know you're engaged in their learning and care about their success.
3	Provide timely and meaningful feedback.	Respond to discussion posts and emails frequently; grade assessments prior to the next assessment. Post summative feedback in an announcement, pointing out where the class as a whole has succeeded or needs to review content further.	Keeps students on track in their learning journey and facilitates opportunities for continual improvement.
4	Communicate in multiple formats.	Use Teams/instant messaging, informal chats, and embedded audio/video via VoiceThread in addition to announcements, emails, and discussion board posts.	Provides students multiple ways to engage with you and their classmates in a less formal way, creating a more relaxed atmosphere.

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5	Set expectations for response times.	Post clear information about your email/messaging response times, when each assignment will be graded, or other timelines.	Reduces student anxiety if they don't receive an immediate response. Establishes trust with you when you meet the timelines you've set.
6	Schedule office hours.	Set a schedule for office hours and communicate your availability. Have an open Teams channel when you'll be available for students to pop in during your office hours or allow students to book time with you using the Microsoft Bookings Tool or your Outlook Calendar.	Allows students individual time with you to focus on their specific learning needs and further establishes your relationship with them.
7	Check in on students who "go missing."	Send an email or Teams message or even call students who are not engaged in the class activities, assignments, or assessments. If extenuating circumstances exist for the students, co-develop a plan to help them get back on track to complete the course successfully.	Assists you in determining if there are extenuating circumstances that you might help resolve. Provides the student an opportunity to re-engage with the class and shows that you are concerned for their learning and well-being.



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8	Help students to connect the dots.	At the beginning of each new section, provide a quick overview on how the new material relates to the learning objectives, as well as how it builds upon prior knowledge. Emphasize areas that are going to be important for future work.	Helps students to scaffold their learning Helps students start to frame the material conceptually.
9	Encourage students to persist with the "tough stuff."	Acknowledge when material is tapping into higher order thinking skills. Remind them that they are learning valuable transferable skills. Point out how the material relates to their lives/future courses/professions. Remind them of resources they can use to support their learning.	Helps students recognize that learning is dynamic (promotes a growth mindset) Showing value and relevancy helps students to remain motivated.
10	Have some fun!	Schedule social chats or encourage students to do so, co-watch a movie or show, post amusing images or messages, ask for introductions to pets, etc.	In modeling self-care and showcasing your personality, allows students to relax around you and their peers and promotes community. Provides an opportunity to relieve stress and to engage with the class in a new way.

Teaching Support Resources

If you need additional support in thinking through opportunities for engagement or other areas of your teaching, please contact oii@ohio.edu or [schedule a consultation](#) directly with an instructional designer.

Please also find videos about engagement and other topics on the Keep Teaching site: <https://www.ohio.edu/keep-teaching/resources-and-support/workshops/pre-recorded>.