Effective Strategies for Fostering Student Engagement

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Objectives

Provide a comprehensive overview of what SE entails

Discuss intricacies associated with SE

Suggest strategies for fostering SE in university classrooms
What does student engagement mean to you? How would you define it?
Active, involved, **cognitive**, and **emotional** investment (Bender, 2017)

**Studying, analyzing, and solving problems** (Robinson & Hullinger, 2008)

Activities and conditions likely to generate **high-quality learning** (Weimer, 2012)

**Participation** and intrinsic **interest**, involving **behaviours, attitudes** and **affect** (Akey, 2006)

Activities considered ‘**academically meaningful**’ that contribute to **learning** and **personal development** (Delialioglu, 2011)

Students’ **cognitive investment** in, **active participation** with, and **emotional commitment** to learning (Zepke & Leach, 2010)
Levels of Student Engagement

Behavioural:
- Completion of tasks, participation, focused attention, time management

Emotional:
- Affective reactions (e.g. interest, boredom, confidence, anxiety)

Cognitive:
- Intrinsic motivation, perceiving, comprehending, analyzing, applying, creating

(Baron & Corbin, 2012)
Why Promote Student Engagement?

- Students become **co-producers** of knowledge (Taylor et al., 2012)
- Active **student citizenship** (Zepke, 2013)
- **Contributions** to an effective learning environment (Samson, 2015)
- Stronger **mastery** of abstract concepts, and **positive attitudes** toward course (Huston, 2009)
Learning Objectives

- Collaboration Skills
- Self-Direction
- Time-Management Skills
- Analytical Skills
- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Knowledge-Application
- Higher-Order Thinking

Student Engagement Supports:
Disengagement strongly linked to student attrition (Baron & Corbin, 2012)

Disengagement = lack of class preparation/reading, refusal to engage with others, non-participation (active), resistance to (attendance) requirements (Booth, 2001)

First year = highest attrition rate = most critical to promote student engagement (Baron & Corbin, 2012)
Traditional Classroom
- Instructor prepares material to be delivered in class.
- Students listen to lectures and other guided instruction in class and take notes.
- Homework is assigned to demonstrate understanding.

Flipped Classroom
- Instructor records and shares lectures outside of class.
- Students watch/listen to lectures before coming to class.
- Class time is devoted to applied learning activities and more higher-order thinking tasks.
- Students receive support from instructor and peers as needed.
The Flipped Classroom

**IN CLASS**

- Students practice applying key concepts with feedback

**OUT OF CLASS**

- Students prepare to participate in class activities
- Students check their understanding and extend their learning

**BEFORE**

- Students prepare to participate in class activities

**DURING**

- Students practice applying key concepts with feedback

**AFTER**

- Students check their understanding and extend their learning
Flipping the Class for Active Learning

Before Class:
- First Exposure
  - e.g. readings, case studies, video explanations, comprehension checks

During Class:
- Practice w/ Feedback
  - e.g. hands-on activities, class discussions, small group work, clarifying mini lectures

After Class:
- Additional Practice
  - e.g. problem sets, writing assignments, projects
Learning Objectives

- Encourages higher student engagement
- Promotes peer interaction and collaboration
- Fosters independent learning
- Provides increased individualized attention
- Students receive support as needed
- Deeper understanding of content

Flipped Classroom
Students learn by ‘**doing**’; activities promote learning (Weimer, 2002)

Learning organized around **projects** or **tasks** guided by an in-depth **question** or **problem**

**Task → Process → Product → Reflection**

(Mills & Treagust, 2003)
Facilitates student engagement via an active learning process (Hmelo-Silver, 2004)

Self-directed learning is an essential component for problem-centred approaches (Samson, 2015)
What’s the Difference?

**Project-Based Learning**
- Individual or group
- Teacher defines the problem
- Teacher identifies action steps
- Create a product

**Both**
- Teacher as guide
- Students at centre
- Real-world connections
- Active learning
- Self and peer assessment

**Problem-Based Learning**
- Groups
- Students define the problem
- Students identify action steps
- Create a solution
## Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline/Course</th>
<th>Problem-Based</th>
<th>Project-Based</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>Identify a social problem and suggest the most appropriate social policy response to address the issue</td>
<td>Formulate your own policy document to address a current social problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Studies</td>
<td>Identify a social issue and suggest how scholars would approach this from various different theoretical perspectives</td>
<td>Design a theoretical matrix outlining the key perspectives and scholars within the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Methods</td>
<td>Identify a problem that you would like to research and suggest the most appropriate methodology and method for pursuing this research</td>
<td>Conduct your own research study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Examples

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<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Identify a controversial legal issue and propose arguments both in favour of and against</td>
<td>Organize a class debate regarding a controversial legal issue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>Identify ways to assess a patient’s condition in hypothetical scenarios</td>
<td>Conduct a simulation of a potential scenario in which a patient’s condition needs to be assessed</td>
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<td>etc</td>
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Addressing Challenges

- Students who are shy or do not wish to actively participate
- When time is limited (e.g. in a tutorial/lab)
- Varying environments:
  (e.g. a lecture hall vs a small tutorial group)
## Activity Suggestions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Dynamic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entry/Exit Discussion ’Tickets’</td>
<td>Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clickers / Kahoot</td>
<td>Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainstorming/Concept Mapping</td>
<td>Individual or Pairs or Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations/Projects</td>
<td>Individual or Pairs or Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative Note-Taking</td>
<td>Pairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Peer Review’ of Notes</td>
<td>Pairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Think-Pair-Share</td>
<td>Pairs or Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Pairs or Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jigsaw Activity/Peer Instruction</td>
<td>Pairs or Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishbowl Discussions</td>
<td>Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Debate</td>
<td>Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games (Exam Prep)</td>
<td>Groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Home Group A  Home Group B  Home Group C  Home Group D

Expert Group 1  Expert Group 2  Expert Group 3  Expert Group 4

Observers

Players engaged in conversation
A threshold concept can be thought of as a “portal” opening up a new way of thinking about information.

After one has been introduced to a threshold concept related to a particular concept, their way of thinking becomes transformed in that they see reality in a new way.

(Meyer and Land, 2003)
General Suggestions

- Arrange **classroom space** appropriately (e.g. U-Shape or into groups)
- Choose **open-ended questions** that require ‘thoughtful and critical analysis’
- Transcend course content and relate activities to **wider social context**
Learning Objectives

- Student engagement = higher self-efficacy
- High self-efficacy = greater student engagement
- Try to cultivate student engagement that fosters ‘growth’ (academically, intellectually, personally)

(Barnacle & Dall’Alba, 2017)
SE fosters diverse perspectives, experiences, and knowledge (Mahendra et al., 2005)

SE requires an ethics of care

Actively resist stereotypes and generalizations

Equally value all student contributions and be mindful of various experiences and needs
Learning Objectives

- Explore ideas/practices that develop critical consciousness
- Allow students to critically reflect, ask questions, challenge taken-for-granted information, and have agency in their learning

Moving Beyond the Mainstream

(Zepke, 2015)
Student engagement should support:

- critical reflection and questions
- engaging with troubling ideas
- understanding others’ positions
- engaging in communicative action
- challenging hegemonic discourses
- recognizing abuses of power
- acting constructively in the world
Suggestions

Please feel free to share any tips/techniques/strategies of your own that have been effective when promoting student engagement.
Thank You
Your Students Learn by Doing, Not by Listening
References


References


References


