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I'm Engaged! Maximizing the Online Learning Experience

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I'm Engaged! Maximizing the Online Learning Experience

JoAnna Williamson, Matt Barclay, Jacinta Banks

Franklin University, 2016

Engaging Learners Online

How do we engage learners online? In this poster, we present design and teaching solutions to help engage students in online learning.

Format and Pedagogy

"The lack of engagement was attributed less to the online setting and more to students not experiencing active and collaborative pedagogies, interacting one-on-one with faculty, or experiencing social and academic support."

(Meyer, 2014)

"Fisher (2010) clarifies that the problem of engagement (or learning or retention) cannot be attributed solely or exclusively to the online setting, **but to the lack of appropriate pedagogical choices** that include the kind of learning activities that seem to encourage student engagement in online learning."

(Meyer, 2014, emphasis added)

"By **applying the theories and techniques for student engagement** in online learning, instructors and designers of online courses **can improve and increase student engagement** and help higher education produce graduates who can contribute to their families, communities, and the economy."

(Meyer, 2014, emphasis added)

Maximizing Engagement Through Design

Issue #1

- Discussion posts don't stimulate discussions.

Best Practices

- Use discussion boards in creative ways: focus on pedagogy and strategy, e.g., debates, cases, blogs-type discussions, go outside of discussion board and report back (Meyer, 2014)

- Much depends on the questions asked of students; instructor needs to be involved but not dominate (Meyer, 2014)

Example: MGMT 312 – Grade the Manager

Assignment: Practice Controlling Discussion

Purpose
To assess your ability to begin creating solutions for controlling in an organization.

Overview
As a manager, what do you do when employees stray from the plan? In this assignment, you will get to watch a manager's attempt at controlling. You will be the evaluator. What grade will you give this manager and why?

Action Items

- Review what you have learned about controlling so far.
- View the McGraw-Hill video "Unhappy Aggression."
- Use the concepts and principles from the readings in chapters 12-15, as well as insights from the given example (video), to evaluate the manager's (Lenny's) efforts to control for this organization in this situation. Give a letter grade on the normal grading scale (A, A-, B+, B-, C+, C-, D+, D-, F) and justify your evaluation. (Do this in about one page in length – don't get caught up on the word count. This is a rough guide.)
- Reference the relevant and appropriate concepts and principles about conflict, communication, teams and controlling in your work. Post your evaluation for controlling to the discussion board.
- Assess the role of a management consultant and review the work posted by one peer. In your review of your peer's work, indicate 2 to 3 items in their solution that you feel would be effective and why. Then identify one item they would do differently and why. (Do this in about 75-100 words. Again, don't get caught up in the word count. Just use it as a guide but focus on the quality of your feedback.)

Submission Instructions

- By Thursday, copy & paste your text to the discussion board.
- By Sunday, post a response to one peer. Select a classmate who has not yet had his/her work reviewed.

Grading Criteria (0-25 points)

- Evaluation of controlling: the student evaluated the manager accurately; the student justified the evaluation made. (1-15 points)

Maximizing Engagement Through Design (cont'd)

Issue #2

- Assignment clarity is essential, directions are sometimes unclear; disconnect between assignment and instructor expectations.
 - FF: Better able to get immediate clarification.
 - WW: Less time to ask questions; email response time.

Best Practices

- Teach before the assignment is due; use crystal clear learning outcomes in language of the student; show whole task; activate prior knowledge; give worked example (Merrill 2013)

Example MGMT 440 – Worked example

Assignment: Practice Controlling Discussion

Purpose
To represent pictorially the relationship between strategy, performance (Hesket calls this "execution"), and culture, and to interpret the importance of this dynamic in an organization.

Overview
Imagine that you are a leader in an organization where culture change has recently become a focus. The top leaders have discussed it with specific plans for making improvements.

One day, the CEO gathers the leadership together to announce that in order to remind the leadership on a daily and even hourly basis about the culture change effort, several new pieces of art will be featured in the company's building. The CEO has asked you and all of the other leaders to create a representation of the relationship between strategy, performance, and culture – something that captures the essence and detail of this dynamic that will at the same time inspire the leadership group.

"Really?!" one of the leaders asks. "You are going to hang our creations on the walls here?"

"Absolutely!" responds the CEO.

"I'm not an artist," another leader adds.

"You don't need to be. I don't want you to get caught up in the art of it to the point where you lose the focus of capturing the relationship in a simple but inspiring way."

The CEO also expects an interpretation to accompany the image. The image and interpretation which best achieve the goal will be mounted in the board room. Other "honorable mentions" will be mounted in the hallways.

Action Items

- Create an image:** Create an image that represents the relationship between strategy, performance (execution), and culture in an organization. You can create an image from scratch (your own drawings, computer renderings, or original photography) or make a collage from other images you gather. You may not borrow a single image and simply use that as your entry. Here are two examples with accompanying interpretations that will give you an idea of the type of work expected of you on this assignment: [Example 1](#) [Example 2](#).
- Note:** You can create your artwork with (but are not limited to) any of the following:
 - Photoshop, PowerPoint, Word, or another program.
 - By hand, such as a real poster and then take a picture of it with your iPhone or other camera.
 - Create and scan your artwork.
 - Your piece can include images, letters, words, colors, gradients, etc.
- Inspire and capture the essence:** Create an image that will inspire others while capturing the essence of the dynamic. Be simple, creative, accurate, and inspirational. Let your work lift your fellow leaders and build their resolve to improve corporate culture through a more solid understanding of strategy, performance, and culture.

Note: In creating your "masterpiece," please build in order to maximize the following: *clarity, inspiration, or your present role, position, and culture person.*



Issue #3

Group Projects- Groups don't meet! Email, phone, and text.

Best Practices

- Avoid big group projects & 2-3 pairings vs larger groups to assist with logistics
- Faculty "drop in" group meetings in addition to meet sessions
- Clear expectations & grade peer feedback (Michaelsen, Bauman-Knight, & Fink 2004)

Maximizing Engagement Through Course Delivery

Areas of Engagement

With Course Content With Other Students With the Instructor

In face-to-face classes, students are engaged through instructor-facilitated classroom discussions, group breakouts, Q&A, projects outside of class, and the same is true for the online classroom, but what does this look like in the online environment?

Microphones/Webcam

For Instructor Presentation of Course Content, Student-to-Student Interactions & Student-Instructor Interactions; Note: Not always used, due to concerns with bandwidth issues. An alternative is to post a photograph during synchronous sessions.

Chat

Ongoing free-flowing dialogue, comments and responses, fuels momentum in the discussion. Students are able to quickly respond to and build upon each other's comments. Students can "talk" at the same time. (Faster than getting comments one-by-one on mics) Allows instructor to compare/contrast responses. Ability to send private chats to check in with "quiet" students.

Whiteboard

Equivalent to a "dry erase board" in the online classroom. Useful for collaboration (e.g. brainstorming sessions).

Poll

Ask questions about the content; Cast votes (e.g. on best day/time for meet sessions); Get real-time feedback; Open-ended questions or multiple choice; Publish responses or keep anonymous

Recording of Session

Recordings can be accessed by students (whether they attended or not) to play back and reinforce concepts they may have missed or need to hear again.

Breakout Rooms

Allow students to meet in smaller groups to work on discussion questions, project, etc. Breakout groups have access to whiteboard if needed. (Breakout rooms are not recorded).

Student Presentations

Students present their work to the instructor, guests/clients, classmates, etc. in real-time and receive feedback, answer questions, etc.

Instructor

Knowledge of subject matter; Ask questions and pause to encourage responses; Acknowledge responses and affirm/build/re-direct as needed; Enthusiasm, pacing and clarity of instructor also contribute to engagement!



Source: 1-87vehicles.org

- Interaction
- Customization
- Enthusiasm

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