

Chapter 6

Training Faculty to Motivate Adult Learners Through Best Practices in Online Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

Online teaching can be intimidating to faculty, and most educators new to online teaching do not have the knowledge necessary to create and flourish a community of learners who are active, engaged, and collaborative. Students need adequate support to be motivated and take responsibility for their learning in online learning environments and authentic learning experiences and assessment tools are integral to this process. Yet, most novice online course instructors don't understand how to translate these kinds of active learning experiences to online course environments. This chapter will go in depth with effective online instructional techniques to help train faculty to motivate online learners through best practices in online pedagogy. Topics include creating a welcoming course environment, creating and moderating engaging course discussions, creating assignments and giving meaningful feedback, motivating students to achieve, and motivating students to work with integrity and academic honesty.

INTRODUCTION

Online teaching can be intimidating to new online instructors, and most new educators do not have the knowledge necessary to create and flourish a community of learners who are active, engaged, and collaborative (Vitale, 2010). Students need adequate support to be motivated and take responsibility for their learning in online learning environments. Authentic learning experiences and assessment tools are integral to this process (Kawkw & Larkin, 2011). Yet, most novice online course instructors do not understand how to translate active learning experiences to online course environments. Instead, they

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rely on recordings of campus-based lectures to deliver course content. This can lead to a lack of a community of inquiry as well as increased isolation and dropout rates (Cantrell et al., 2008; Fisher, 2009; Wood et al., 2020).

Online teaching can be more demanding than face-to-face teaching, particularly when course enrollment is high and the instructional content, advising, and assessment requirements of effective online instruction are extremely time consuming (Anderson & Avery, 2008; Tomei & Nelson, 2019). COVID-19 accelerated the transference of course content to online modalities for most colleges and universities and many instructors had no prior online teaching experience. Through this abrupt transition to emergency remote learning, many students encountered online learning for the first time and experienced confusion with learning management systems, technology use, and the expectations for successful performance in online studies. Likewise, many instructors had no previous online teaching experience and had no time to adapt to changing teaching modalities (Hebert et al., 2022). For many instructors new to online teaching, a lack of competence and experience combined with a lack of university support and training led to frustration at their inability to best support their students, which negatively impacted course efficacy (Ramlo, 2020; Seetal et al., 2021). For experienced instructors who taught online prior to COVID-19, a lack of understanding of the importance of online course design and technical competency can still result in ineffective online course practices (Khoza, 2022; Martin et al., 2019).

Many instructors experience negative emotional responses and identity disruption when faced with teaching online (Cutri & Mena, 2020). Rather than intuitively know or learn through practice how to teach effectively online, instructors must be explicitly taught best practices in online teaching. Whether new or experienced instructors, the transition to online teaching can be a confusing one and a lack of effective techniques can result in student disengagement from the course. This book chapter will go in depth with effective online instructional techniques to help train instructors to motivate online learners through best practices in online pedagogy. Topics will include creating a welcoming course environment, with content on how to maximize teaching presence and utilize course announcements and icebreakers. Another section will focus on creating and moderating engaging course discussions, with detailed information on best practices in creating, facilitating, and grading course discussions. A third section will focus on creating assignments and giving meaningful feedback, with detailed information on best practices in assessment. A fourth section will focus on motivating students to achieve, with information on student engagement and troubleshooting course participation issues. A final section will focus on motivating students to work with integrity and academic honesty, with content on best practices in plagiarism prevention, including teaching students proper citation procedures and when attribution to others' work is needed.

The Community of Inquiry model of online instruction is a constructivist approach that emphasizes cognitive, social, and teaching presence, with a focus on engaging students in reflection, critical discourse, and relationship building with peers (Garrison et al., 2010; Rogers-Shaw et al., 2018; Carrillo & Flores, 2020). Personalized, social, and formative instruction positively influence online teaching and learning (Carrillo & Flores, 2020). Student presence is as important as instructor presence in creating interactions that enhance student learning (Carrillo & Flores, 2020). Students learn most effectively through project-based, active, and collaborative learning activities, with an active instructor presence and a variety of instructional methods (Billings, 2007; Ramlo, 2020). In contrast, teacher-led lecture-based instruction leads students to become disengaged and less involved in their learning (Perera-Diltz & Moe, 2014). Students must shift their perspective from knowledge consumers to knowledge creators in order to achieve higher order learning outcomes (Fasso et al., 2013). Online instructors can support

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