

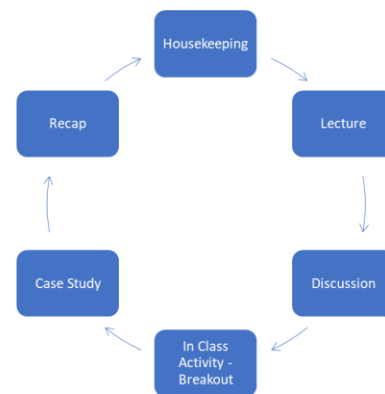
The Challenge of Engaging Graduate Students in Online Classes

Applying an Engagement Framework for Student Success

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Research indicates that engagement is a critical aspect in student satisfaction in face-to-face and online classes. (Lavin, 2019). The link between student–instructor interaction and perceived quality of learning and satisfaction has been previously studied; it is no surprise that students who have frequent, meaningful interaction with their instructors felt that they learn more effectively in their coursework (Swan, 2001). The link between the student and instructor and its effectiveness in promoting learning leads to the conclusion that, in an online learning environment, synchronous learning might be a key element in a student’s successful journey. In today’s digital economy, institutions of higher education are challenged with providing students graduate level education that is both challenging and convenient. Increasingly, programs are taking advantage of robust web conferencing tools to deliver graduate level courses. To that end, faculty members teaching in these classes must develop ways to enhance the student experience and engage adult learners who are taking online classes in addition to busy life schedules.

To that end, we have developed a framework of engaged learning that is focused on employing the traditional faculty led lecture while integrating student discussion, in class activities and case analysis in the course of the session. Each three-hour session is delivered through the model framework, designed to deliver targeted course content with supporting in class activities, case studies and discussion. The in-class activities are designed to support and further the concepts covered in the lecture so that in smaller breakout sessions, the students are provided the opportunity to apply the knowledge immediately. The case studies supplement the material, by pulling in relevant content from the session materials, resulting in the students’ ability to conceptualize the content in a real-world setting. Finally, a professor led class recap reiterates the concepts and ties the material together.



Professors Martin & Lavin both teach online graduate level classes and have utilized this framework within the classroom. In this TREO talk, we will provide an overview of the framework as well as a real example of how the class proceeds from start to finish.

References

- Lavin, A. (2019). Assessing student characteristics for success in online versus face-to-face environments. Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses A&I. (2234241887).
- Swan, K. (2001). Virtual interaction: Design factors affecting student satisfaction and perceived learning in asynchronous online courses. *Distance Education*, 22(2), 306-331.