

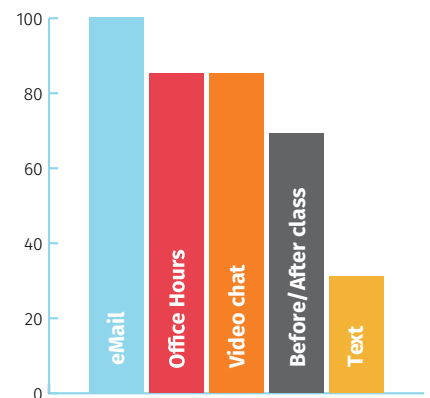
ENGAGE ME!

5 Tips from Students to Instructors

Student engagement is consistently a top concern from instructors.

There are numerous factors that affect engagement and we've all had a few pandemic related curveballs thrown into the mix as many, including instructors and students, found themselves in virtual settings for the first time.

We asked recent webinar participants what they are doing to engage with students. It is not surprising to see that email is used by everyone and that video chats have been widely embraced. The last year has seen its share of challenges, but there has been a wealth of creative approaches from all of you in the education community over the last year as you work to encourage and support your students.



Student Needs

- Additional Support
- Affordable Materials
- Quality Content
- Simple Tools



We asked participants about student needs – the overwhelming majority stated that additional support due to the pandemic was the most pressing need.

We asked students

“What do you wish your instructors would do”

and are pleased to give you these **5** quick tips:



TIP 1

Remember what it's like!

Students are balancing now more than ever. Take a moment to remember your time as a student and think about what your students may be experiencing: some may be away from home for the first time, they might be confined to an apartment or dorm and feeling isolated. In some cases they may be returning to college after many years away. Many are balancing jobs, busy schedules, family, and in 2021, added stress due to the unknowns facing all of us.

Students learn best when they trust and respect their instructor. Reach out individually when you can. Let them know you are tracking their progress and are available to help and support their learning journey. A little human touch, even virtually, can be more impactful than you might think. A quick note reminding them that you're here to support can go a long way!

Students can smell stale content from far away – Students will know if you've been using the same text and slides year after year. It can be as simple as adding just one new article or discussion activity term to term. Maybe something from your own research or current events. When it comes to content, don't forget about video! Students love absorbing information from video and there is a lot of great content out there.

Coursework. Mix up what you're asking students to do – have them analyze a case study, prepare a news cast, work as a team. Find creative ways for them to use the concepts being taught beyond the standard research paper.

Finally, the classroom – You don't have to rely solely on lecture. This is especially important in virtual settings where zoom fatigue is real. Bring in guest speakers (easier now more than ever via video). Try games and simulations. Whether it's Quizlet flashcards turned into crossword puzzles, Kahoot or the incredible virtual labs from PhET – we've never had better access to digital learning tools.



TIP 2

Keep it Fresh



TIP 3

Get to Know Me!

Whether virtual or in person, find ways to connect with your students. Virtual office hours are a good place to start, but consider turning your classroom Zoom on 15 minutes early to chat, or offering to stay 15 minutes after for any student questions or discussions.

Consider formalizing group outreach – Host mini office hours with small groups of students or think about crafting a focus group or small assignment cohorts. Even if you don't get to everyone, you'll get to know a little bit about most of the students in your course and the fact that you invested the time to get to know them will go a long way.

Remember - A little goes a long way! Small touches can make a big difference. We're all starved for time, seek systems that can take some of the load off with automatic updates to students. There are some great courseware options that enable you to schedule personalized outreach. Some can even be programmed to trigger outreach if a student gets behind or appears to be struggling. Make this technology your friend, it can be a great supplement especially when managing large groups of students.

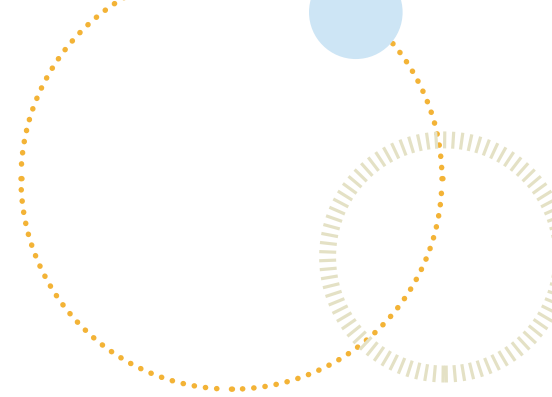


TIP 4

The Real World

Applied learning is more than a buzzword and it much more than simply researching a topic and writing an essay.

Consider case studies - they have been used for a long time in law, business and medical programs but can be effective in any discipline. Case studies, with professors leading discussions and pushing students to apply concepts, can solidify learning because students are forced to dig into the concept as it relates to a messy real world situation with multiple variables at play.



You've heard the term 'shop local' – what about 'classroom local'? Local businesses are a wealth and the benefits can go both ways. Find businesses that align with your topic – talk to them about the skills they are looking for, set up job shadows, guest speakers, or mini consulting projects.

Engaging with the community, even virtually, helps students to break out of the walls of their classroom (or dorm rooms) and helps them see the bigger picture applicability of what you're guiding them to learn. Knowledge, especially experiential knowledge, will help them better understand and explore the world around them and potentially open new professional doors – either now or down the road. The fact that you provided experiences to expand their view of the world is likely going to be remembered fondly for years to come.



TIP 5

Teach Local



Bonus Time: Keep it simple and affordable!

Extra logins, visiting 6-8 websites per lesson, downloading files, is cumbersome and often confusing for even the most prepared students. Try to manage all your resources in one place and make them easy to use – avoid popups, downloads, and other distractions to keep them focused. And don't forget the expense of education, seek materials that are affordable.

Quality courseware can address all of these tips.

Many platforms, including XanEdu FlexEd, offer student analytics, content and assessments. XanEdu's FlexEd courseware is a full 'course in a box' solution offering supplemental materials for students and everything an instructor needs from lecture slides to homework, discussion topics and even assessments. Because FlexEd is based on OER content, the platform is affordable and the platform has been carefully designed to integrate with any LMS. FlexEd features an easy, DIY drag and drop interface so you can add or delete content quickly and in real time – no technical expertise required!

Here is how FlexEd can help you tackle these tips from students:



Remember what it's like:

While FlexEd can't help with memory lane, the integrated and easy to use student communications make it fast and efficient to deliver meaningful touchpoints to your students.



Keep it fresh:

FlexEd is great here, there is a wealth of content from a variety of sources and media types from video to articles to interesting homework assignments. You don't have to track it down, or worry about quality or copyrights – we've got you! However, if you have a favorite piece of content, it's fast and easy to add it yourself with the drag and drop interface.



Get to know me:

FlexEd puts actionable data front and center. Instructors have easy access to dashboards with simple ways to personally understand where each student is within the class. Add in your course learning goals and then craft outreach accordingly.... even automated touchbases - easy and fast!



The real world:

FlexEd features numerous case studies throughout the courses, and with the easy editing features, you can quickly add your favorites! You can also add 'real time' news articles, current events and the latest research at the click of a mouse.



Think local:

Plugging into local businesses may take some legwork but leveraging FlexEd to house content whether a local business or charity, news article, case study, discussion thread or guest speaker notes, its all easy to add into the platform.

Simple and affordable – FlexEd has you covered.

All material is based on quality OER content and the platform was built from the ground up to integrate with any LMS.

Thanks for reading these XanEdu FlexEd Quick tips! To learn more about FlexEd, visit our website or schedule a conversation with one of our experts.

For more information about XanEdu FlexEd, please contact us

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