

Promoting student engagement

Student engagement is defined as a student's willing participation in efforts directed toward learning, in addition to understanding and mastering knowledge and skills academically. Student engagement increases student satisfaction, enhances student motivation to learn, reduces the sense of isolation, and improves student performance as it pertains to digital learning (Martin & Bollinger, 2018). Because today's students have grown up in the digital age, teachers should take advantage of technology to increase student engagement. According to *How to Increase Student Engagement (2018)*, "Technology in the classroom allows students to gain a deeper understanding of topics that interest them, collaborate with each other, and direct their learning" (Para. 4).

Creating learning opportunities and using strategies to promote student engagement is crucial to student learning and participation. Technology plays an integral part of a student's environment and is identified as an influential factor in student engagement. Educators should reflect on their ability and confidence in becoming initiators and facilitators of educational technology within their classroom (Bond & Bedenlier, 2019).

SUMMARY

Technology can help teachers create a learning environment that fosters student choice, curiosity, and collaboration.

- Provide opportunities for interaction and collaboration with peers
- Allow students to review each other's work and provide feedback
- Encourage critical thinking and creativity by assigning rigorous, enriching, and academically extending activities



Why it matters



- Detailed research has been conducted on the importance of student engagement. Research supports the conclusion that a student who is engaged is prepared to learn (D'Mello, 2021). Digital learning technologies can be designed to improve engagement and promote and sustain meaningful learning. "Teachers no longer need to compete with digital tools of the current age. Instead, the tools can be used to enhance instruction and promote learning" (Johns, Troncale, Trucks, Calhoun, & Alvidrez, 2017, p. 56).
- According to ISTE Standards 4, 5, and 6, students should use a variety of technologies to identify and solve problems as well as to communicate clearly and express themselves creatively. The role technology plays in promoting learning and engagement is identified through a myriad of applications. Whether it be gamification, digital storytelling, or a digital whiteboard, engaging students through technology spans across many disciplines. Pedagogical approaches seek to explore how best to engage technology as a tool to lead students to be engaged, self-directed learners (Campbell, Detres, & Lucio, 2019).

What it looks like in practice



PRINCIPALS SEE

Teachers' instructional planning allows for 21st century learning skills (i.e., creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking) to be utilized and for personalized learning experiences to take place

Students are being provided opportunities to work collaboratively and to communicate via the use of various digital tools (e.g., Google Slides, Padlet, Flipgrid, Teams)

TEACHERS SEE

Students choose the appropriate platform (e.g., slides, videos, infographics) and tools (e.g., Flipgrid, Canva, PowerPoint) to address learning objectives

Students use digital tools (e.g., chats, video conferencing, virtual field trips) to connect with others and engage in meaningful discussion as well as providing constructive feedback to peers

FAMILIES SEE

Students are asked to complete meaningful assignments that allow them to use their creativity, collaboration, communication, and/or critical thinking skills

Teachers and students develop digital portfolios that showcase student work throughout the school year or their educational journey



What you can try

- >> Adapt Think-Pair-Share to Zoom, Teams, or Google Meet by giving students a prompt, breaking them into groups, and then placing them in breakout rooms to discuss and record their answers on a shared Google doc or Jamboard. This allows for collaboration between students when sharing their thinking in writing or during discussions.
- >> Create a virtual gallery walk using digital tools such as Google Slides, PowerPoint, or Google Sites to give students an opportunity to view their classmates' projects while learning from each other. Students can present their own projects through five-minute screencasts, and then each student uses either Google Sheets or Microsoft Excel to provide feedback to their peers by answering prompts provided by the teacher.

REFERENCES

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

8 Strategies to Improve Participation in Your Virtual Classroom Educators share their best synchronous and asynchronous strategies to boost student participation during online learning. <https://www.edutopia.org/article/8-strategies-improve-participation-your-virtual-classroom>

8 Tips to Strengthen Parent Involvement with Digital Tools Explores tips for using technology to keep parents in touch with the classroom. <https://edtechmagazine.com/k12/article/2018/06/8-tips-strengthen-parent-involvement-digital-tools>

How to Increase Student Engagement with Technology. Discusses how educators should be taking advantage of technology, rather than viewing it as a distraction, to increase student engagement. <https://www.chalk.com/resources/increasing-student-engagement-technology/>

ISTE Standards The ISTE Standards provide competencies for learning, teaching and leading in the digital age, providing a comprehensive roadmap for the effective use of technology in schools worldwide. <https://www.iste.org/iste-standards>

