

Summary

Student engagement is the learners' active participation in the educational process within or outside of the educational setting with the aim of achieving tangible outcomes (Kuh et al., 2007). The same author (Kuh, 2009, p. 683) also describes student engagement as “the time and effort students devote to activities that are empirically linked to desired outcomes of college and what institutions do to induce students to participate in these activities.” In simpler words, student engagement is when learners go through class motivated and eager to learn and participate in the teaching and learning process.

In universities, students are involved in academic work established by the teacher, including completion of tasks, exams, group works, and other teaching and learning activities (TLAs). The purpose is to accomplish the university mission, namely achieve the academic mastery of the knowledge and skills as predetermined per the outcomes of the course/program. Numerous studies have indicated the important role that student engagement plays in accomplishing the academic mission of universities, namely having knowledgeable and skillful adults who are ready to live a meaningful life (Bernstein, 2021). A Gallup study found that, “Student engagement significantly positively affects student growth” (Bernstein, 2021). Therefore, universities ought to maximize the use of student engagement strategies in their classrooms.

These three types of engagement (known as the ABCs of engagement) are closely connected to each other:

Affective –emotional: students' attitudes & feeling (happy, sad, bored) towards university, classmates, educational system

Behavioral: students' academic engagement, their effort, time devoted, absence of disruptive behavior

Cognitive: students' involvement in learning process, self-regulation, usage of learning strategies, thirst for knowledge

Using these three components together we create a learner who has a good relationship with the educational institution, teachers and students (affective), will participate better (behavioral), and over time have more robust commitment to learning (cognitive).

Benefits

Students' active engagement in the teaching and learning process offers numerous benefits (*Benefits of engagement*. CSUSB. (n.d.):

- Learning with peers
- Developing leadership skills
- Making friends
- Learning life skills
- Higher grade point averages
- Learning inclusive practices
- Interpersonal skills
- Having fun
- Enhancing your collegiate experience

Strategies

There are numerous strategies on how to increase student engagement in our educational settings. Kimberly D. Tanner, professor at San Francisco State University, categorized student engagement strategies into five groupings representing the overarching goals teachers have for their teaching contexts.

- Promoting thinking
 - Wait time

- Giving students time to write
- Think pair share
- **Encouraging learners' participation**
 - Hand raising
 - Random calling using popsicles / index cards (there are a variety of ways to call randomly on students. In smaller-sized courses, having a cup with popsicle sticks, each with the name of a student on it, can make the process transparent for students)
 - Assigning reporters for small groups
 - Whipping around (The mechanics of the whip are that the instructor poses a question to which each individual student will respond, with each response usually being <30 seconds long)
- **Building an inclusive and fair classroom community for all students**
 - Learn students' names
 - Integrate culturally diverse and relevant examples
 - Work in stations and small groups
 - Use varied active learning strategies
 - Be explicit about promoting access and equity towards all students (Being explicit about one's goal of cultivating an inclusive, equitable, and fair classroom learning environment reiterates that students and instructors are on the same side, not on somehow opposing sides, of the teaching and learning process)
- **Monitoring behavior to cultivate divergent thinking**
 - Ask open ended questions
 - Do not judge responses
 - Use praise with caution
 - Establish classroom community and norms
- **Teaching all students in the classroom**
 - Teach them from the moment they arrive
 - Collect assessment evidence from every students

References

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