

BUILDING COMMUNITY & FOSTERING ENGAGEMENT IN AN ONLINE COURSE

1 MAKE THE COURSE INTERACTIVE & DYNAMIC

Few students like watching someone lecture nonstop for an hour and Bb discussion boards don't always allow students to get to know each other in a more immediate way.

- *Chunk the lecture into shorter segments; find natural points to break up the content.*
- *Pose questions for the students to answer before moving on to the next video to encourage follow-through*
- *To mimic in-class dynamism, consider using [FlipGrid](#); it functions like an audiovisual discussion board for you and the students.*

2 DIVERSIFY DELIVERY

If consistency and transparency are key for course design, variety is central to maintaining student interest.

- *Engage learners' brains by using a mix of content delivery methods—video, text, audio, and presentations.*
- *Bring in guest instructors and speakers so they don't get tired of seeing the same face and hearing the same voice.*
- *Don't ignore the effect of audio: when someone talks into our ear, we're more likely to connect with that person and what they're saying. There's a reason podcasts are popular.*

3 ENCOURAGE ACCOUNTABILITY

Remind students they're not alone by checking in with them periodically.

- *Leverage the **BB Attendance Tool** to analyze students' engagement with your course.*
- *Study groups can also act as powerful accountability reminders. Establish groups of learners to discuss topics or work together on their own time in familiar social networking platforms and collaborative work spaces such as **Google Docs**, **Zoom**, or **GroupMe**.*

4 GIVE STUDENTS A SENSE OF OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL

Learners are more motivated and engaged when they know they have some say in what they're doing.

- *Give students some choice in assignments. They may lean toward diving deeper into specific topics or may prefer one delivery method (video, audio, essay) over another.*
- *Give students an opportunity to make their voice heard by asking for feedback on the learning experience and content. Don't wait for the end of the course to find out about adjustments you can make along the way.*

5 NURTURE INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Intrinsic motivation compels a student to keep doing difficult tasks, like juggling an online course with other responsibilities. They should know that what they're doing here matters.

- *Remind students how their new knowledge and skills will help them make a difference in the world, even in small ways.*
- *Talk explicitly about how assignments improve their skill set or contribute to their future profession, or how it might impact their future customers or clients.*

6 MAKE SPACE TO PROCESS WHAT'S HAPPENING

Consider together the disruption we all are experiencing. Offer students opportunities to share what they're feeling; acknowledge that they might be scared and uncertain about the present and future. Reassure them that you will help them learn and succeed in the course.