

Tips & Tricks to Increase Student Engagement

Transcript

Introduction 00:00

Randy McDonald: Good afternoon and Happy New Year, everyone. My name is Randy McDonald, and I am happy to welcome you to our webinar today on Tips and Tricks to Increase Student Engagement. We have staff members from eSAIL, the Engineering Studio for Advanced Instruction & Learning, who will make presentations today.

We're also excited to have a special guest, Dr. Shawna Thomas, who has been helping us deliver this workshop over the break. We're happy to have Shawna here today. She's going to share some great information from her own experiences.

We're delighted to have you all here today and logged on to prepare for a new semester.

This webinar is about student engagement. We're going to include some student engagement in today's webinar; you'll play the role of the student. So, we will ask for *your* engagement and participation today.

Overview of Session Time 01:24

- Benefits of engagement
- Techniques for using breakout rooms and polling in Zoom
- Plan for interaction and engagement
- Planning and presentation design for live synchronous delivery
 - Pre-recorded lectures
 - Check for understanding (CFUs)
- Planning and presentation tips for online asynchronous settings
 - Providing feedback in Discussions
- Additional resources

I'll give a little more introduction to today's session. In a moment, we'll talk about the benefits of engagement and discuss techniques for using breakout rooms and polling in Zoom. We will talk about planning for interaction and engagement, and we'll discuss planning and presentation design for live *synchronous* delivery. We will also discuss planning and presentation tips for online *asynchronous* delivery. Then we'll share some additional resources you can use and reference after the presentation is over.

Benefits of Student Engagement 02:11

- Promotes student attention and focus
- Allows for clarification of understanding
- Provides an opportunity to apply or rehearse new concepts and information
- Can clarify muddy points
- Creates social networks for future support
- It is fun
- What other benefits?

A few other points we want to share are that student engagement allows for clarification of understanding, especially if you allow students to ask questions or express their level of understanding; that gives us the opportunity to make clarifications.

It also allows students to apply or rehearse new concepts they've learned, depending on how you plan and the engagement activity. And, as we know from learning theory, applying what you've learned or rehearse helps the learning stick with you longer.

It can clarify muddy points and create social networks for future support, meaning students might have an opportunity to get to know one another and make connections to set up study groups. Or help one another in different ways, possibly with a teaching assistant. And as stated by some of you, it's fun!

So, there are several great benefits to student engagement, and, of course, that's what we all believe in. That's why we're here today.

Tips to Increase Engagement using Zoom



Shawna Thomas

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At this point, we want to turn things over to Dr. Shawna Thomas. Many of you may know Shawna already; she is an instructional Assistant Professor here at Texas A&M University. She strongly believes in student engagement and promoting student success. We're thrilled that she's agreed to join us today and present some things from her knowledge and experience. So, Shawna, I'm going to turn the microphone over to you at this time.

Problems faced in class 04:17

Dr. Shawna Thomas: Great. Well, hello everybody! I'm glad to be here and share what I've experienced in my classes, and, hopefully, you'll find them helpful and low bar to put into yours. Let me share my screen. Perfect. Good. All right.

The problem:

It can be difficult (or next to impossible!) to start a discussion going in classes, especially in large groups or online

A solution:

Launch a poll!

This can wake students up and help jump-start a discussion

One problem I've had in my classes (and I don't think I'm the only one) is that sometimes when you ask a question or start a discussion, especially if it's a big class, it can be hard to do. You ask, and everyone just stares at you. I think they're hoping someone else will answer the question and start.

Some of my classes have 100 students. You have to have some bravery to speak in front of all those classmates. So, I understand why I had the problem, but I didn't want it to stay that way.

Use of Polls 05:15

One of the tools I used was Polls. I'm not sure if you've used a poll before, but they're really simple to set up, and I was amazed at how quickly students got excited about it and engaged. It started their conversation going with just this simple trick.

Why Polls Work 05:38

Why do polls work?



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Engineering

Students are **more comfortable**

Students **gain courage to share** in follow-up discussion

You can point out similarities and differences **without singling any student out**



The reason why polls work is it helps students feel more comfortable to share. They know that they're doing it in a safer way that it's somewhat anonymous. Then, when you talk about the results, you can point out similarities and differences without single anyone out. So, you're not putting anyone on the spot.

One person might know they're in the smaller group that answered the poll one way, but they're not identified that way to their peers. So, that helps them be more comfortable to share in the first place.

And then once they get this, like, "Oh, I put my answer in a poll, I've kind of started to think about the question, and I saw that I'm not alone." Then, when you ask them to discuss it, they're more ready to do so.

Polls Benefits 06:31

Poll benefits



Easy to insert, very little prep

Students practice sharing low-risk things,
more likely to share higher-risk things

Habit of engagement

Students learn from each other, not just you!

Gauge prior experience and knowledge



What I love about polls is they're easy, you know? You can put them in any class session. It doesn't take a whole lot of prep work ahead of time. I've even done it live, on the spot.

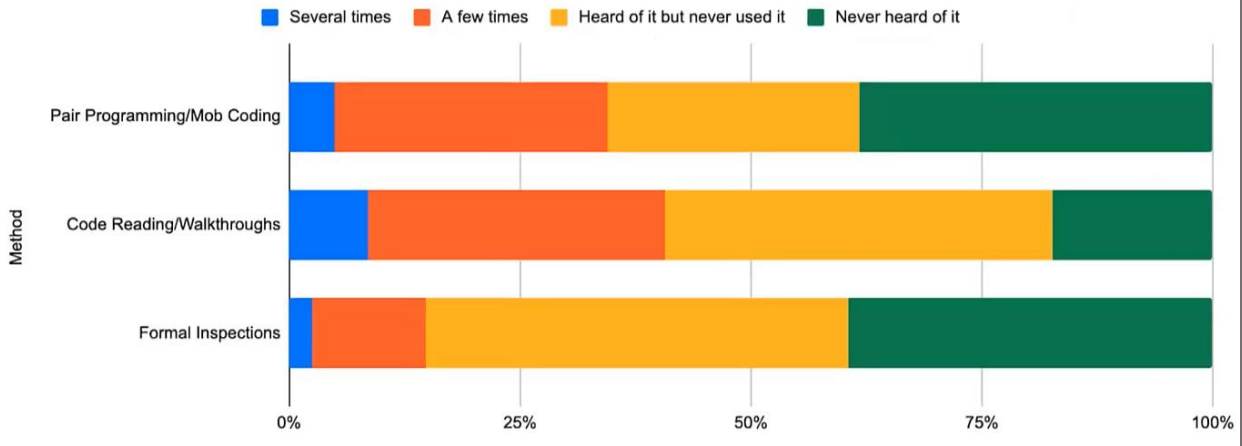
My students were doing this activity where they're designing a point of sale system for Layne's chicken fingers, which I personally like, but then there was this discussion, "Well, is Cane's better, or is Layne's better?" Even though it didn't relate to the point of sale system they were developing, I was like, "Let's make a poll! Let's see." It got them excited, so when they went to the point of sale system creation, they were excited about it. They were somewhat invested in it. It was just with a simple, "Which is better?" kind of poll.

As students practice sharing low-risk things, they're more likely to share the higher-risk stuff because they've had the experience that, "This is a safe place. The instructor's not going to shoot me down. No one's going to ridicule me for what I might say. I can share." It keeps students in this habit of staying engaged and watching because it's not just, say, "I'm sitting watching a video." It's, "Now I have to answer a poll. I have to do something. I have to respond." So, this is really great tool.

You can also [use polls] to ask about what experiences or prior knowledge they've had before with your topic, which gets them to start sharing with their peers. I sometimes find they'll listen much better when their classmates share than they'll share with me. So, it can be a really powerful tool to help get them started.

Polling in action: Sharing prior experiences

Collaborative Development Prior Experience



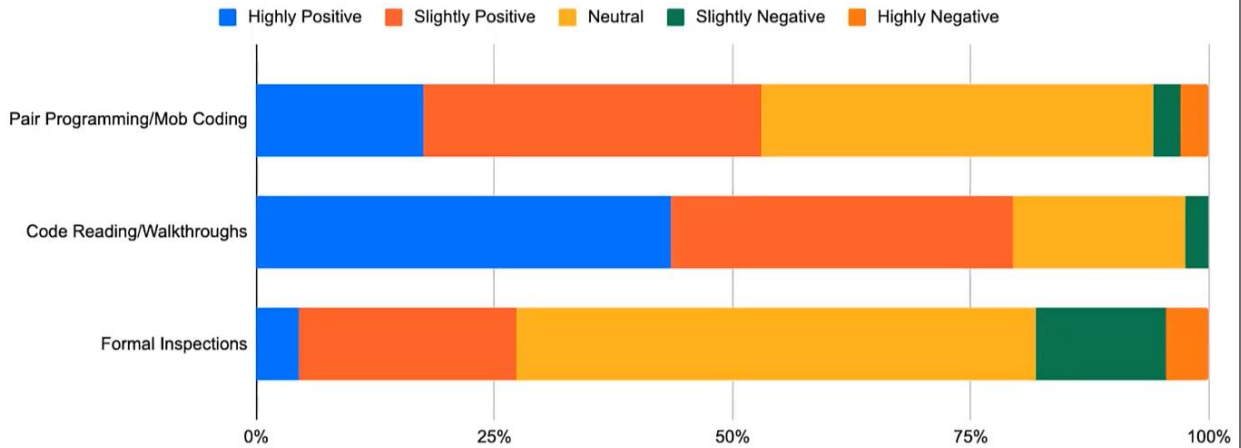
So, here's an example of [a poll] I used in my classes last semester. This is a computer science course where they're learning about software development principles and methods. We were going to talk through these different strategies. So, beforehand, I asked them, "What kind of experience have you had?" It's a question everyone can answer. There's no right or wrong answer, so it's very low stakes. I'm not using it in their grading or anything like that.

Then they can suddenly see, "Oh, some of my classmates are just like me. They've had experience or never had experience. Or, they have no idea what I'm talking about." Right? It helps them realize they're not alone, especially in a class where some of my students are on Zoom. They're probably sitting in a room alone. It helps build this kind of community so they [don't feel] isolated.

Then I can point out trends we see and start talking about them. I can even say, "Hey, I see a few of you have done pair programming before. Someone tell me about that." Right? And I know someone's done it because they've answered the poll that way. So, it gives me the confidence to wait longer to hear the response, instead of just assuming, "Oh well, I guess no one's done this." I have the answer already. I can even go, "Hey, I know some of you have done it, what was it like?" Right? Then someone starts to speak up. Then, once one does it's like a domino. Then they're like, "Oh, I can do that too." So, it's been really effective that way.

Polling in action: Sharing prior experiences

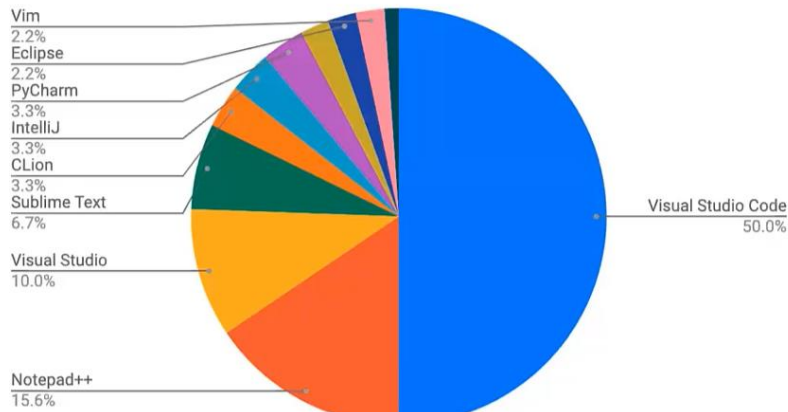
Collaborative Development Impressions



Then, say I want to ask a follow-up poll. I said, “Hey, how was your experience if you had one?” and not presuming they’ve had a good experience with the methods I’m about to teach them. But, what was it like? And then having students share, and then we can discuss, “Why was it positive? Why was it negative? What do you think could have been done differently?” That was much more valuable than me walking through what each method was and how you do them. They got to hear from their peers how it goes in the real world. Because they’ll say, “I had this internship and got to do this.” And then it was like, “Oh, that was cool. Yeah, I did this!” Or, “It didn’t work for me; my manager did such and such,” so we talked about that. And so, it was really great discussion, just from asking them this poll. I know if I had just cold asked them, “Hey, anyone do an internship? What was it like using this?” I wouldn’t have gotten a response.

Polling in action: Sharing personal preference

Favorite Coding Editor



I also use [polling] to help [students] share personal preferences to get them to think about something else. So, for example, here, I asked them this very safe question. “What editor do you like to program in?” Right? There’s no right or wrong [answer], etc. That day we were talking about different ways of writing code and style guidelines. I get them started talking about this, and then I go, “Can your editor conform to the style guidelines?” “Can your editor do this?” and I start to apply it to the content material, but I start with a question that’s very easy for them to answer. Everyone has an opinion about it, and then they can see, “Oh, this was really popular. This one’s not.” It gets them excited about the class.

Tips for Effective Polling 11:40

Tips for effective polling



Make it **low-bar**, everyone can join in

Make it **no-stakes** (anonymous)

Make it **personal**

Tap into their passions

Validate responses, **support** discussion

Reinforce a safe learning space

Poll **frequently**

Establish a habit of sharing



So, here are some tips. When you ask a poll / a question, make it really low bar. You want to ask a question so that everyone can have a response. So, for example, I didn't just ask, "What is your experience?" I first asked, "Do you have experience?" Right? Everyone can answer that question. I also make it "no stakes." So, it's completely anonymous. That allows [students] to feel really safe in the response they give, and not feel like, "Oh, what if I get it wrong?" I don't use polling to assess things like a quiz. If I'm going to do that, I'll use a quiz. I use polling solely for engagement.

I also try to make it personal. I talked about the restaurant preference, so they get excited about it or their coding editor preference. That helps them tap into those passions they might have, and then they're ready to listen to the rest of the material.

It can support a discussion by taking what their responses, and then, "Let's talk about them. Let's talk about the trend. Why is it this way? Why isn't it that way? Were you surprised? Is that what you expected?" Those kinds of questions. And every time someone responds, you validate that they responded, like, "I'm glad you shared that." What I love about Zoom is it [displays] their name, so I can say, "Hey, Sam, I'm really glad you said that. That reminds me of this." And, I can look back at the chat history and go, "Oh yeah, that's when 'so and so' said this similar idea." Right? And then it starts to go, "Oh, ok. This is a supportive environment."

I also do polls quite frequently. Not necessarily every single class session, but many of them. It just gets them in the habit of sharing and discussing and knowing that when they come to class, they're not just watching a movie or sitting passively. They're going to have to do something. But the things they're doing aren't hard, and it can be quite fun.

Polling Tools 13:49

Polling tools



Leverage what you already are doing:
eCampus, Canvas, Zoom polls

Use a polling website:

[Sli.do](https://www.sli.do/), [PollEverywhere.com](https://www.poll-everywhere.com/),
[Socrative.com](https://www.socrative.com/), [Kahoot.com](https://www.kahoot.com/)

Or just keep it simple:
Google form



Polling websites from the slide:

- [Slido](https://www.sli.do/)
- [Poll Everywhere](https://www.poll-everywhere.com/)
- [Socrative](https://www.socrative.com/)
- [Kahoot](https://www.kahoot.com/)

There's a bunch of different tools. I suggest using whatever you're comfortable with and already using for something else. That makes it an easy way to start. You can do them with eCampus and Canvas. They're called surveys there; I've done them on Canvas. I've also done them in Zoom. Then, I've used different websites where I wanted to do something live. So, all of these websites allow you to do different kinds of polls. You can do all kinds of things like word clouds, pie charts, and bar charts, and all sorts of fancier things. Or, you could just keep it really simple and say, "Here's a Google form; fill it out." Then, you can look at the results live with them.

Zoom Black Hole 14:41

Experiencing a Zoom black hole?



The problem:

It can be difficult to facilitate a group activity and keep everyone engaged and on task, especially online

A solution:

Provide structure to keep students on task and multiple outlets for getting help

Virtually “walk” the breakout rooms

The other thing I wanted to share is that the class I taught does many group work activities. And, normally, if we're all in person, they would be at their different tables, and I can walk around and watch and see if some table is having trouble and go help them out, or see someone's hand raised. It's really hard to do that in Zoom. It seems like Zoom's a black hole, right? Because you send them off, they're in their breakout rooms, and you're not there. You can't use proximity to help keep them on task, and it's... You're losing a little bit of that body language and communication that you used to have.


I've gotten around this and made that time more effective for my students by giving them a very clear structure. “This is what we're going to do and why we're doing it.” “Here's what you need to complete, and here's the amount of time you're going to have.” Then, in the breakout rooms, I'll send them an update. “Hey, you have five minutes left.” You know, “Two minutes left.” That sort of thing. So, they're never surprised, “Oh, it's time to go!” I make sure they have just enough time to do the task, so they know they need to work right away when they get sent over. In the first few sessions, they always come back going, “That wasn't enough time!” but they get the rhythm of it, and they know, “We can't just hang out for half the time... and then decide to work. We really need to work.”

The other thing I do is virtually walk the breakout rooms. I have my TAs help me with this. I usually stay in the main room in case a student has a question. They can always come to the main room and ask. But, then I send my TAs to the different rooms, and I rotate them around. And when the TA's been there for a few minutes, they'll come back to the main room, and I'll send them to the next one. I let the students know this will happen so they don't feel like they're being snooped on. I tell them, “We're gonna pop in and out of the rooms, just to check if you have questions or if there's anything we can help with.”

They've been really responsive [to] that. They enjoy that. Sometimes the TA answers a lot of questions. And, sometimes they're like, "Nope, they're on track. They're on task," and they move on.

Structural Support 17:07

Structural support

 TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Engineering


Set breakout room expectations

- What to do?
- How much time?
- What comes next?

Guide with an activity sheet

- Gives focus
- Gives accountability

Break into small segments



The kind of support I give [students] is I tell them what they're going to do, how much time they'll have to do it, and what comes next. What are we going to do with whatever they produce? So, if they're going to discuss something in a small group, I'll tell them, "We're going to share the discussion as a big group." Or, if they're building a design, I'll say, "You're going to build the prototype. Then we'll use the prototype to do this when you come back," so they know the work they do is important and will get used.

At the end of the class session, I collect [students'] work electronically. They are graded and assessed on the quality of their work, so they know this is important. It helps give them some accountability and focus when they're working in [the breakout] rooms.

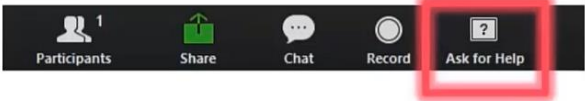
The last thing I do is I usually have a worksheet [students] fill out, and I divide it up into small segments. I give them the whole sheet at once. But then I tell them, "We're going to do this piece, and I'll bring you back in five minutes. Then we'll discuss and do the next piece." This helps them not get lost or off track or spend too much time on a certain part and keeps them at a nice pace.

Call for Help 18:29

Call for help



Establish multiple lines of communication

- Zoom Ask for Help button



- Return to main room
- Shared Google doc

Remind student each time of these lifelines



I also remind them there are many ways to ask for help. They can always [use] the “Ask for Help” button in Zoom. They can go to the main [Zoom] room.

I also have a shared Google Doc. It’s a blank document I share with the class. Before we start, I say, “I’m watching the document. If you have a question, put it in there.” Because, unfortunately, with Zoom, in their breakout room, they can’t send me a chat message if I’m in the main room. So, I use Google Docs to help facilitate for them.

Each class session I remind them, “Remember, I’m going to put you in your breakout rooms, and you’ll have five minutes to do this. I’ll give you a two-minute warning. Remember, you can ask for help. The TAs are coming by. You can always put something in the shared [Google] Doc.” I put the link in the chat for them again. Even though the link is always the same, it helps keep it at their fingertips, so they don’t feel like, “I need some help, but I don’t know how to get it.”

The Problem:

TAMU needs a new system to replace HOWDY that provides a more streamlined experience for the student user.

In Breakout rooms:

- Assign roles
- Decide (and justify) your software construction environment, use the checklist on pages 69-70 in [Code Complete](#) to guide discussion



I want to show you what one looks like, so you can see. The way I structure in class is I'll present, "Here's the problem you're going to work on." For this one, I say, "A&M needs a new Howdy system. You all have experience with it. Now, you want to make something that's more streamlined for the student. I'm going to put you in your breakout rooms, and here are your jobs. Assign the roles and decide your construction environment." ...because we were talking about that that day, and I tell them a timeframe.

In Breakout rooms:

- Sketch your high-level design (can draw on zoom whiteboard, google docs, use webapp)

Then, when they come back, I say, "Ok, now you're going to draw a sketch, and then you're going to come back."

In Breakout rooms:

- Define development phases and time spent ([Code Complete](#) Chapter 3 has some examples)

When they come in again, I say, "Ok, now you're going to do this with your sketch." What are the next steps? I break it up into really small pieces for them.

In Breakout rooms:

- Reflect as a group
- Submit your work to Canvas

At the end I say, “Alright, when you’re done, make sure you submit your work to Canvas.” I have it as a group assignment for them. I want to remind them that they need to turn this in.

Sample Worksheet 20:37

Impromptu Design Session

This activity counts as part of your in-class activity grade.

Introduce yourself to the people in your group.

Group member 1:	UIN:
Group member 2:	UIN:
Group member 3:	UIN: I
Group member 4:	UIN:

Then, they would get an accompanying worksheet that looks something like this, where I have them put everyone’s group name and UIN. This is just in case there’s some mess-up with the submission in Canvas, and I need to match and make sure I know who exactly worked on this document together.

Roles:

Everyone will participate in designing the software construction environment, but some will have an additional role:

Role	Purpose	Fulfilled By
Scribe	Fills out activity sheet	
Reporter	Shares group experience in class discussion	
Moderator	Makes sure everyone gets a turn to give input	

Then, I usually give them some roles. I say, "I need you to assign a role, and here they are." So they know they have a specific task to do. It helps give them focus.

The Problem:

TAMU needs a new system to replace HOWDY that provides a more streamlined experience for the student user. As a team, decide what software construction environment you will use. In your discussions and decision-making, justify your choices. Use the checklist on pages 69-70 in [Code Complete](#) to guide your discussion.

Describe your selected software construction environment:

Example questions to consider: What are the system requirements? What language will you use? What tools will you need? Will you use a sequential or iterative approach? What conventions will you use? How will code be reviewed, tested, and integrated? How will coding take place? How will revisions be managed?

I

Describe your construction environment here. Explain why you made the choices you made.

Then, the same instructions I had on the slide are here, but with more detail. They'll take this document and edit it, and that's what they'll submit to Canvas as a PDF.

Define your development phases and percentage of time spent for each:

Use the examples in Chapter 3 of [Code Complete](#) to help with defining and estimating.

Phase	Definition	% Time Spent (should all add up to 100)

Also, at the very end, because some students are online, you may have this issue where some students decide 20 minutes before class is over that they're done for the day, and they log off. Well, that's not fair to their teammates. So, their teammates need a way to communicate, "Hey, 'so and so' really didn't pull their fair share here." Or, "'so and so' was absent today." What I do here is they need to write their name, what percentage each person participated, and they put their initials, kind of like a signature. And I tell them, most of the time these are all going to all be even percentages. Or, it might be a zero if someone wasn't there that day. But, sometimes they might be different. It gives them enough accountability that after the first few assignments, pretty much everyone's working their equal share, or they were sick that day. Something like that. This helps give a lot of structure for them.

Alright, I believe that was it. Let me make sure there's nothing [else] here.

Take a tour

Visit different breakout rooms

- Gives students another outlet for help
- Helps you gauge timing

Running smoothly

- No surprises
- Get help from TAs
- Second device to monitor main room



We talked about visiting different breakout rooms. It also helps: I'll sometimes ask the TAs, "How are they doing? Do you think they'll need more time?" And sometimes they'll say, "Yeah, they're only about halfway." Then I'll broadcast a message and say, "Looks like you need a little more time; we're going to extend it." Most of the time we keep the tasks small enough so the pace stays on track. I want to make sure we get to the end by the end of class.

Tips for Effective Breakout Activities 23:12

Give everyone a job

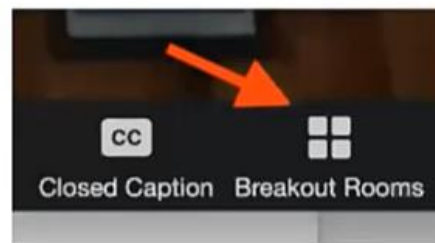
Everyone expected to contribute in a specific way

Provide clear instructions and explicit expectations

Everyone stays on the same page

Debrief with full class discussion

Establish a community of learning



My tips: Just like you would in a regular class, provide clear instructions and explicitly state your expectations. Also, I want to always do something with what they produce; it helps make their work valuable to them. So, when we come back, we always discuss; we always share. Zoom's nice because

they can share their screen to share some of their work. We can have a discussion, and it's another way to build this community of people learning together.

So, in [my] examples, those were actually Canvas surveys I had them complete ahead of time as part of responding to videos they watched. It was sort of a flipped classroom setting. Sometimes, if it was just a straight-up bar chart, I would show them directly from Canvas. It was easy to do. But when I wanted to do something like a pie chart, like what you saw, I actually exported the data into a Google spreadsheet and made a chart that way. But when we do Zoom polls, it'll show those live, and you can have Zoom record the responses if you want to compare things.

One thing that was nice about doing it ahead of time is... I talked to two sections of the same class, so I was able to show them like, "Hey!" when there was something different. Most of the time, their responses were the same. But if there was a different distribution, I'd say, "Hey, by the way, that's kind of interesting; I wonder what's going on there." So, it helps them see there's more than just *their* class going on. But those two were Google charts. I don't know offhand what the different participant numbers are for the other tools.

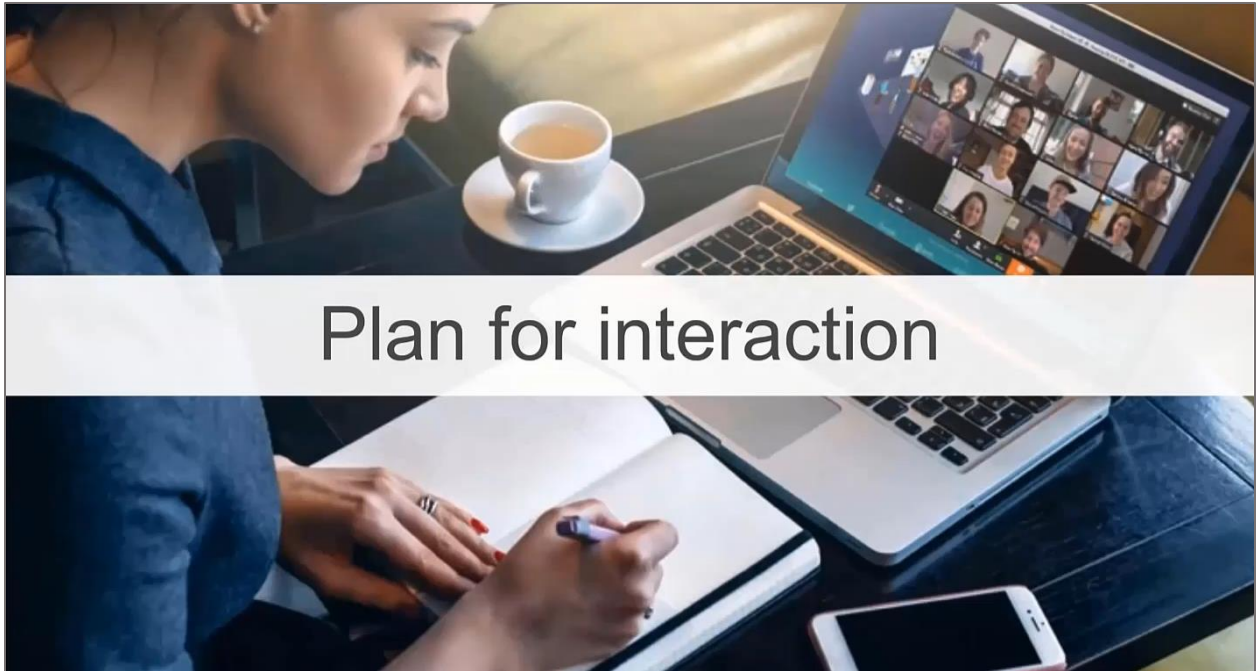
One workaround, sometimes it works; it depends on what you're asking. Let's say it only allows 40 participants, but you have 80 students in your class. Then, you can have them answer the poll together in pairs, so you only have 40 answers. You can group them like that. It's trickier because you have to put them in a breakout room together, have them answer the poll, and come back. But it is possible.

[Poll Everywhere](#) works really well; I don't remember the numbers for that one. [Socrative](#) is another good one, but I'd have to look up their participation numbers and the cost for that one.

Plan for Interaction 26:07

Gerry Pedraza: Well, thank you very much for your presentation. It was very complete, and that's great advice for keeping students engaged.

One of the things that I wanted to continue this conversation [with] is engagement and interaction. They go hand in hand, right? But, what does it require from faculty to keep students engaged?



Plan for interaction

One thing that comes to mind is we need to have a plan. This is very important during a live class. You probably have taught your class for some time. When you're in the room, you do things very naturally. But sometimes, if you plan for your class based on your experience, you already have specific questions you want to ask based on others' questions [from] the past. If you collect this data and use it [to] your advantage, you can make your class super interactive.

Importance of Sync/Async Interaction types in Online Learning

27:22



Both sync/async are important and play a role in online learning.

I wanted to add that both synchronous and asynchronous types of interactions are important, so the conversation doesn't stop once the live class or the Zoom session stops. To maximize and give continuity to the conversation and create a learning community, it's important to create, for example, discussion questions or forums with the same topic or carries the conversation outside the room or virtual environment.



Build an interaction strategy that tries to solve questions ahead of time based on previous FAQs and teaching experience...

So, it's great if your interaction strategy tries to solve questions before they happen. Based on your experience in the class, you have already come up with, "Hey, most of the time, students ask about this topic because this is what's usually for them." So, you can already have those responses or kinds of interactions pre-populated in your class.

Now, we're going to discuss a little bit more about both kinds of interactions - synchronous and asynchronous.

Introducing Lani 28:52

Randy: Thank you, Gerry. Now, to continue the presentation, we'll turn it over to another one of our Instructional Designers in eSAIL, Lani Draper. She will present and talk about preparation [for] some of the things Gerry introduced. Lani?

Plan for Engagement in Asynchronous Setting 29:21

Lani Draper: So, several of the examples that Shawna gave are great tips for when you actually have [students] in a live Zoom session. She did a lot of the polling. You can also do things when you're asynchronous. You're not there for them in the live class, but your presence is still important. I wanted to discuss ways to ensure you have that presence in your course, even when you're not in live sessions, by using feedback.

Pre-populate Feedback 29:57

The screenshot displays a quiz interface titled "Pre-populate Feedback". At the top right, there are icons for a calendar, a person, and a word count of "14 words". Below the title, the word "p" is centered. The interface shows two answer options:

- Correct Answer:** "design databases" (highlighted in a green box).
- Possible Answer:** "Sometimes is, sometimes it's son" (highlighted in a blue box).

Below the possible answer, there is a red-bordered text box for feedback. The text inside reads: "Comments, if the student chooses this answer: Think again about the specific definition of this term. If you look back at the lecture when I talk about this in slide 2, you can see a better definition." Above this text box is a rich text editor toolbar with options for Edit, View, Insert, Format, Tools, and Table. The toolbar includes icons for font size (12pt), paragraph style, bold (B), italic (I), underline (U), text color, background color, text alignment, link, unlink, list, and indent.

This image is part of the quiz function. If I was going into a quiz like one of the examples that we've talked about or given, it is a kind of check for understanding. Shawna spoke about having a lot of the lecture material pre-populated, prerecorded. So, she uses the live sessions to do a lot of the engagement. But, you can also create these check-for-understanding quizzes before they get to that live session or to replace the live session. You may just ask two or three questions in a quiz, and to immediately give your feedback, you can populate that inside the quiz itself.

So, what you're looking at is, here's the correct answer that you put in. Here's another possible answer, but it's incorrect, so I can make a comment. You see this red box; this is my feedback telling them, "Think again about your answer." You could even go into more detail, "If you look back at the lecture material on this particular slide, you might get more information." You can make that little area as detailed as you want.

You can also give positive feedback. Where you see this green box, that's where you can provide positive feedback. Pre-populating that feedback helps automate interaction and engagement when you're asynchronous.

Use of Discussion Board 31:45

Use the Discussion Board for Course Questions

Blueprint Published Edit ⋮

Course Question Board [▲]

All Sections

Course Question Board

This discussion board can be used to collect and answer student questions. Please see the sample below.

This is an ungraded discussion area that you can use to post general class questions. If you are unclear on directions, assignments, etc. please feel free to post your question(s) below.

Please Note: If your question is related to a grade you have received or other personal matter, do **not** post it here. Instead, contact me directly: [About Your Instructor](#)

Unread 👁 ⏪ ⏩ ✓ Subscribe

The other way to be present and engaged in an asynchronous setting is by using the discussion board. What you see right now is a discussion board that's already pre-populated into the blueprint that Academic Innovation provides for you. So, when you're getting ready for the spring, make sure you go look for this, and you can use it. It will already be published for you. If you notice, here on the right, it says, "Blueprint," so I know this is the one from Academic Innovation, and it shows me it's already published. Make sure you go and look for that.

The benefit of using this course question board is that you can "tailor" some responses and answer questions for the whole class that usually come in through email. So, you're being more efficient with your time. You're not answering the same questions over and over again. This is also something I know a lot of professors will have the TAs help them with to monitor the discussion boards.

Timely Responses in Multiple Formats 32:58

Often, to get more engagement using the discussion board, you can [attach] a grade to it. This "forces" [students] to do a discussion that's more tailored to your module topic. So, you give them a prompt, and they're more apt to use that kind of discussion.

The other thing you can do – I've seen professors do this – is when you get those questions through email, you can post your answer in the discussion. So, they know if they send you an email, the answer's probably going up in the discussion. Then, they'll have other people respond to that, so they'll feel less like, "This is a stupid question, and nobody else has it."

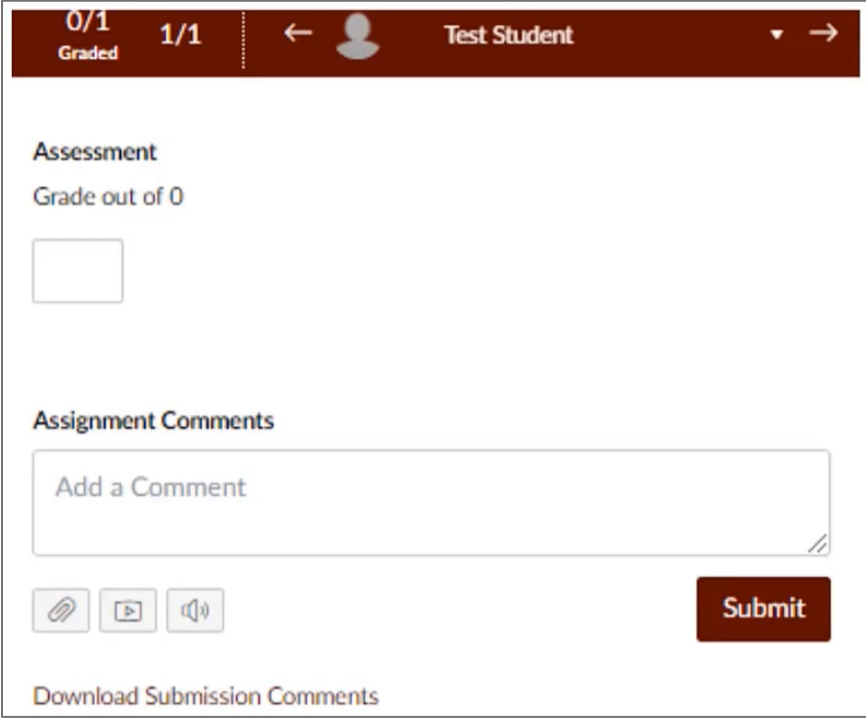
Gerry: Another thing you...

Lani: You can create the pattern. Go ahead.

Gerry: Another thing you could do is make it part of your class policy. Like, “Hey, if you have non-personal questions, those need to go through the discussion forum, and I will respond to them there.”

I guess Lani’s suggestion will also be good if you tied a little percentage in there. That might also serve as motivation to use those. But I know it’s a little bit hard.

Lani: Yeah. Also, I saw in the chat [window], somebody uses a FAQ. That’s another thing you could set up, and it could be a part of the discussion board or part of a “Getting Started” module where you answer all those questions. Of course, [students are] not all guaranteed to read them, but it’s a good step to becoming more efficient.



The screenshot displays the SpeedGrader interface for a student named "Test Student". At the top, it shows "0/1 Graded" and "1/1" next to a back arrow, a user icon, and a forward arrow. Below this, the "Assessment" section shows "Grade out of 0" and an empty box. The "Assignment Comments" section features a text input field with the placeholder "Add a Comment". At the bottom, there are three icons: a paperclip for attachments, a video camera for video comments, and a speaker for audio comments. A red "Submit" button is located to the right of these icons. At the very bottom, there is a link that says "Download Submission Comments".

The last thing I wanted to talk about is responding to their assignments (especially) or their quizzes. What you’re looking at here is part of the SpeedGrader inside Canvas. You have an option to use a rubric, which can also speed up your time, and you can pre-populate feedback using the rubric.

But if you look at these buttons at the bottom, you can use different formats to create feedback for your students. This is a text comment box that you could put, depending on your assignment, like if you had a Word document, PDF, or something, you can mark up the document, and then attach it; that’s what this paper clip is. But, you could also provide an audio or video comment as well. That’s a way to give them more personal feedback and your presence inside the course.

Gerry: I'm not sure, but I think you could also use this type of media in the discussion questions. I don't know if Lani or Christine can add to that because I think students can also participate by posting a video if you let them. I'm not sure if that works on...

Lani: Yeah, I think they can... they can attach files, I know. So, they could attach some kind of file on their end. But, anywhere you use the SpeedGrader, whether that's on an assignment or discussion, you'll see these icons at the bottom. And I'm gonna...

Gerry: Reuse the responses from your previous semester to create a FAQ that builds on and becomes...

Lani: That's a good [idea].

Gerry: I don't know if those will be preserved as anonymous responses if you bring them over from a previous term. I certainly think they would not carry [over] the names of the students.

Lani: Right.

Introducing Christine 37:10

Randy: All right. Thank you, Lani, for that. We have just a few minutes left, so we'll ask Christine to share some ideas about planning for engagement during a live, synchronous delivery. We've talked about polling and breakout rooms as one great strategy for engagement, but some other things can be done, and Christine will share some ideas with us. Christine?

Balance Synchronous and Asynchronous 37:35

Christine Roach: All right. Hopefully, everybody can hear me this time.

Randy: Yes.

Christine: Ok! If you could move ahead to the next slide, Randy. As Gerry mentioned earlier, it's good to keep a balance of synchronous and asynchronous elements. Sometimes we think a class must be either fully synchronous or fully asynchronous. And, that's really not the case because you can mix those elements up to create a more ideal learning experience for your students.

Research Observations 38:12

Weekly Live Sessions as:

- Team work sessions
- Targeted study/tutoring sessions
- Tackling nuanced material
- Incremental deliverable progress check-in

Research has found that students positively perceive synchronous learning because they receive immediate feedback and feel part of a community. They also appreciate the aspects of asynchronous learning, allowing them to work the learning experience into their schedules and enabling them to engage with content at a more deliberate pace and a deeper level. So, finding a balance between those formats helps support students' cognitive and social needs to promote better levels of engagement.

Structure your class to designate synchronous time for collaboration and active learning participation. You could analyze your materials and activities to decide which ones could be presented asynchronously to create or free up some time for weekly synchronous (live) sessions. These sessions can be used as team work sessions or targeted study tutoring sessions, all sorts of things.

Make sure that every activity is purposely designed around your clear learning purpose. Eliminate anything not directly related to achieving your learning goals and keeping the students engaged with the materials.

All right. Thank you, Randy.

Session Summary 40:02

In closing ...

- Engagement increases student learning and student satisfaction
- Planning for interaction and engagement yields the best results
- Feedback in asynchronous courses is an important way of engaging students
- Pre-recording lessons allows opportunities for increased engagement
- Zoom breakout rooms and polling are useful and easy to use

Randy: Thank you, Christine. We've already heard from Lani. So, in closing, just to cover some of our main points today.

We've talked about how engagement increases student learning and student satisfaction. We've talked about how planning for interaction and engagement yields the best results. So, good engagement requires some advanced planning. Feedback in asynchronous courses is an important way of engaging students. Prerecording lessons allows opportunities for increased engagement in a live setting. And, Zoom breakout rooms and polling are useful, easy-to-use ways to promote student engagement.

References & Resources 40:54

Randy: We also have some references and resources here. We'll send these to you in an email after today's presentation. But, several online resources present more information from research on student engagement and other techniques, and we'll share those links with you.

- [Student Engagement in Online Learning: What Works and Why by Katrina A. Meyer](#)
- [Vanderbilt: Interacting Asynchronously](#)
- [Cornell CTE Active Learning](#)
- [EDUCAUSE](#)

Email for Questions 41:20

Our email address is also on this screen, EngrLearnTech@tamu.edu. If you ever have any questions or need support from our staff here at eSAIL, you can send an email to that address, and we'll be happy to respond in any way we can.

Closing Remarks 41:45

In closing, Dr. Thomas, thank you again for presenting for us today. And, we've really come to the end of our time. I really appreciate everyone's participation in the chat today. Lots of great information was shared from our presenters and our participants. We appreciate everyone being here, and that will conclude our workshop for today. Thank you all for coming.