

7 Habits of Highly Effective Online Instructors

**Proven &
Practiced
Ways
to Captivate
Students
and Avoid
the Pitfalls
of Dated
Methods**



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Introduction

There are a number of platforms available for online education, and while there are many benefits of online learning, there are also a handful of challenges.

Some of these challenges include downloading errors, issues with installation, problems with audio and video, and so on. Keeping students engaged in their learning is arguably the biggest challenge as an educator in this new day and age of remote learning.

The absence of one-on-one support, technical problems, environmental distractions, and difficulties in understanding instructional goals are a few of the challenges facing students in online learning.

To alleviate some of these challenges, online courses should be made dynamic, interesting, and interactive in order to be effective. We have compiled a list of seven research-based strategies to increase student participation, classroom dynamics, student communication and attendance.

Habit 1: Signal Presence Through Classroom Clarity and Organization.

Classroom clarity isn't limited to a clear explanation of

- ideas,
- expectations, or
- assignments,

but also by your virtual classroom's organization.

Having a strong teaching presence online means that you spend time setting up your online classroom so that there's a central hub where the resources are easily accessible, and it is clear where to submit assignments, where to ask questions, and how to use the suite of tech tools you've settled on.

In an analysis of nearly 50 studies on teacher clarity, researchers found that "higher levels of clarity are associated with higher levels of student learning."

Habit 2: Remind yourself that social time is as important as academic time.

If you are teaching online, deliberately use some of your precious time for social connection. For example, begin your class time with a social activity:

- try a short "mental stretch" break;
- offer some monitored hangout time before the lesson starts.

This isn't wasted class time—it's an investment to help keep them motivated and present for the long haul.

Habit 3: Create online surveys to solicit—and leverage—student interest.

Ask students about their interests, passions, and design activities that target things that your students genuinely find personally relevant.

It's not always necessary to make the activities academic:

During distance learning, you should cut down some of your traditional content in order to forge deep connections—the goal is to boost students' long term buy-in for the year.

Habit 4: Get student feedback and respond to it.

Researchers found that successful online instructors frequently collected student feedback “to identify what was working or not.” If you want to improve your online teaching presence, you should communicate to students that their opinions matter. After surveying the literature, here are six questions we recommend that you ask your students:

- On a scale from 1 to 5, how comfortable do you feel using technology in our virtual classroom?
- Have you encountered any technical issues, such as not being able to hear me, or not being able to connect to the internet?
- Are my lessons well-organized and my assignments clear?
- Can you easily find what you need?
- Do you feel like your voice is heard?
- What can I do to improve our online classroom?

Habit 5: Teachers should set time limits and reminders for students to make them alert and attentive.

Students can only focus their attention for so long. When a student is about 12 years old, they can probably focus for a max of 12 minutes during a lecture.

With this in mind, use a timer to keep yourself on track.

Once you've talked for that long, you know it is time to give them a moment to do a think-pair-share, turn and talk, etc.

Using a visual timer will help you keep lectures concise, students learn to budget their time and know when to expect a transition. Being able to expect a transition is huge for students who tend to struggle during these transitions!

Timers can be motivating for students, as they know a task or activity has a tangible end, plus, it helps build an attitude of "I can do this!"

Habit 6: Use music (appropriate and censored) to encourage engagement and participation.

Music helps create an environment where students feel comfortable in and may make the teacher more relatable.

Additionally, integrating music into lessons makes learning more memorable, more engaging and less intimidating. Repetition in lyrics is extremely useful for developing mental fitness in any academic subject.

Building an education on principles of rhythm has subconscious benefits as well; Arithmetic, mathematics, vocabulary and subjective information are developed when musical repertoires expand.

Habit 7: Incorporate movement strategies regularly, even if they are stationary.

Research shows that encouraging free movement can give children space to develop self-awareness and learn non-verbal communication skills, and most importantly, helps reengage students by creating an outlet for students to relieve energy and refocus.

The connection between movement and learning is supported by extensive research, which suggests that exercise enhances cognitive processing.

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