



Open Engagement

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Introduction to Engagement

The word engagement has the potential to offer diverse learning opportunities for students, that will also meet their learning style needs. However, engagement is often a dull textbook and laborious written assignments. As educators, there's a supreme opportunity to ignite a fire within students to become passionate or sincerely interested in a topic. It all comes down to how a student is engaged.

There are those that may argue that students do not want to be engaged, they just want to be done with the course. And those feelings may very well be true, but what if education was effective and interesting? What if it, you know... worked?



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Digital Storytelling

One technique with engagement is the use of digital storytelling. This idea can be adapted to fit the needs of a class, but it can be used in introductory science courses all the way through graduate courses with international students. The benefits are that digital stories aim to transform student learning including a deepened understanding of their connection to the subject matter, more agency in their own learning process, and to view themselves a vital participant in a collective working together toward a shared objective. Students emerge from the cocoon of the course, as individuals ready to take flight, with a new perspective and understanding of the course materials.

Some examples could be as simple as scaffolding an overarching assignment through a course, that has layers and different components. Even better, the assignment could offer alternatives for students so they can complete the work in a method that suits their learning style. Coursework could include renewable assignments that students can take with them in their future careers or to help build their portfolios.

Bloom's Taxonomy

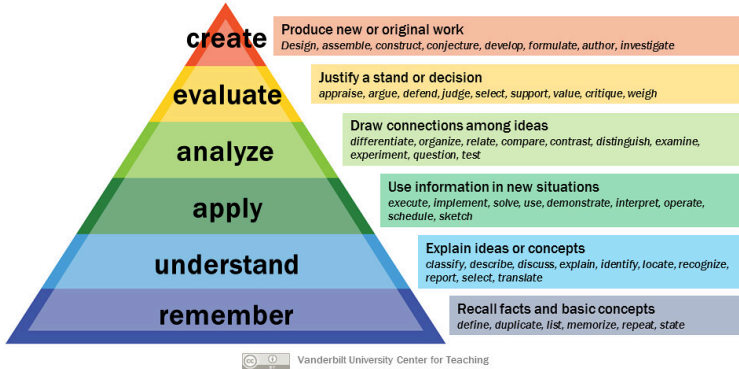


Image Credit: "[Bloom's Taxonomy](#)" by [Vandy CFT](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#).

When developing courses it is helpful to remember Bloom's Taxonomy. Students should be working toward higher order thinking skills. There may be restraints, depending on the learning outcomes that are approved for programs. However, there are ways to engage students in higher order thinking in responses in discussion forums or other assignments. Also consider speaking with an academic director if the learning outcomes could be improved to engage students in higher order thinking skills.

Adapted from: Buturian, L. (2016). *The changing story*. Digital stories that participate in transforming teaching and learning. Open Textbook Library. Retrieved August 23, 2021 from <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/the-changing-story-digital-stories-that-participate-in-transforming-teaching-learning>

The Storytellers

There are two key voices in digital storytelling in an online course: the student and the instructor. Digital storytelling is a culmination of student engagement, technology integration, reflection for deeper learning, and project-based learning. The student and the instructor are actively involved in the learning process.

It is fun to think of this as magic. How does an instructor create magic? More on that soon, first, view this TED Talk by Christopher Emdin called, *Teach teachers how to create magic*.



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<https://pressbooks.palni.org/openengagement/?p=34#h5p-1>

Adapted from: Buturian, L. (2016). *The changing story*. Digital stories that participate in transforming teaching and learning. Open Textbook Library. Retrieved August 23, 2021 from <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/the-changing-story-digital-stories-that-participate-in-transforming-teaching-learning>

Emdin, C. (2013). *Teach teachers how to create magic*. [Video] TED Conferences. https://www.ted.com/talks/christopher_emdin_teach_teachers_how_to_create_magic#t-395018

Moving Forward

If there is a decrease in motivation or engagement on assignments that are usually winners, it doesn't necessarily mean that something is wrong with the class. It just means there is a piece missing for some students. Some students may not be familiar or as fluent in online learning as others, so a little extra help may be required.

Listen to this podcast episode from Faculty Focus Live: Finding the missing piece: How to help your students who are struggling with online learning (16:19). There are resources shared in the podcast that may be beneficial to look at for the future; follow the link below to access the additional resources.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://pressbooks.palni.org/openengagement/?p=39#h5p-3>

King, T. (2021, April 5). Finding the missing piece: How to help your students who are struggling with online learning (No. 7) [Audio podcast episode]. Faculty Focus Live. Faculty Focus. <https://www.buzzsprout.com/1552018/8275747-finding-the-missing-piece-how-to-help-your-students-who-are-struggling-with-online-learning>

PART I

PART I: EXPLORING THE OPTIONS

How do you define engagement? This part of the book will share specific engagement strategies, starting with ones that are probably familiar to those that maybe a little new to you. It's important to keep an open mind; trying new things, even if they fail, is a good experience.



“Defining love” by [chris_jd](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC 2.0](#).

Creating Magic in Discussion Forums

It is hard to manage a full course load at maybe one or two universities, plus advising, plus developing, and whatever other responsibilities someone may have, to take the time to create. To make magic. And learning how to make media, of any kind is a commitment. There are oodles of unfinished projects stored on computers everywhere.

But, there's an easy way to put magic in a class. And it's something courses, especially online, asynchronous courses, rely on: discussion forums.

Consider the ideas below when creating a discussion forum. They may not all apply to you, but hopefully a few will.



Is it Magic?

Let's break this down a bit.

Memorable: Does the post require higher levels of thinking? Is it thought-provoking? Do the responses ask students to evaluate their everyday life or to make something?

Aligned: Of course, posts need to be aligned to the learning outcomes for the course. All the magic in the world means nothing if it does not connect with the mastery of the learning outcomes.

Generalizable: Could the response apply throughout the course? Are there opportunities for real-life application? Could the posed question be modified to be used in another course?

Innovative: This seems obvious: try something new! If it doesn't work, it's okay! Asking students to make infographics, or memes, or use a variety of media in their responses will lead to more creative responses rather than the standard, dull responses. They can also express themselves in a way that makes sense for them.

Continuous: Renewable assignments for an instructor or for a student are very important. And hugely important for open education. Why assign work that's immediately trashed? Let's create experiences for student that last longer and are useful in the real world!

Listen to the podcast below to learn more about creative ideas in discussion forums.



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<https://pressbooks.palni.org/openengagement/?p=69#h5p-4>

King, T. (2021, March 10). Online discussion boards: Creative ideas to ask better conversation and engage students (No. 5) [Audio podcast episode]. Faculty Focus Live. Faculty Focus. <https://www.buzzsprout.com/1552018/8101900-online-discussion-boards-creative-ideas-to-spark-better-conversations-and-engage-students>

Three Categories of Digital Stories



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Chapter 2: Finding the Perfect Video

Teaching with Accessible Videos

Videos are a very attractive form of education for many, but there are some important components to consider when assigning videos in a course.

- Is the content engaging? Videos are excellent for education when the content is engaging and relevant. If not, students may skip right over it.
- Is it accessible? Consider whether your videos have transcripts or closed captions. If they do not, it may be hard for those with different learning styles or potential impairments to appreciate the content the way it was intended.
- Is it the right length? Videos that are longer than 15-20 minutes are not recommended for use in classes. There may be exceptions to that rule, but overall it should be avoided. Consider an hour long seminar; how long before someone starts doodling? Looks at their phone? Falls asleep? Breaking up the content in manageable chunks just makes sense.

Select the blue hotspots below to learn more about the 3R's of videos.



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version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://pressbooks.palni.org/openengagement/?p=61#h5p-5>

For more about Teaching with Accessible Videos:

National Center on Accessible Educational Materials (n.d.)
Teaching with accessible videos. OER Commons. Retrieved August
23, 2021 from <https://www.oercommons.org/courses/teaching-with-accessible-video/view>

Video Learning and Other Learning Styles

Video learning is a very popular style for learners of all ages. Want to learn accounting? YouTube it. Want to learn how to crochet? There's a video for that. And for some, that's the best (and maybe the only) way they will learn. Please view the following video from John Green (18:01): The Nerd's Guide to Learning Everything Online.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://pressbooks.palni.org/openengagement/?p=79#h5p-6>

Green, J. (2012, November). The nerd's guide to learning everything online [Video]. TEDTalk. https://www.ted.com/talks/john_green_the_nerd_s_guide_to_learning_everything_online

Learning Styles Matrix

Learning styles are nearly as diverse as people are, when you think about it. For example: a person may learn well watching a video and then completing the task themselves; but prefer to read or listen to audio books. Those are different ways to absorb materials. When building a course, consider how diverse you are as a learner or your colleagues are and then evaluate whether the learning materials and activities are diverse. It is a mission, as a Quality Matters institution to meet the needs of all learners, not just a few. Consider the learning styles matrix below. Where do you fall?



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<https://pressbooks.palni.org/openengagement/?p=84#h5p-7>

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Chapter 3: Perfecting Podcasts

Podcasts are a unique opportunity for education. Students can make podcasts. Faculty can make podcasts. Or instructors can use podcasts made by other, outside people. The topics and possibilities are really unlimited. This is a very exciting medium with which to engage students! Also, this is an opportunity for a “renewable” assignment. Giving students an opportunity now, to build skills in creating podcasts, is a skill and body of work that they can use in their portfolio or help them in their to-be career. Offering opportunities for skill-building, that can be generalized to a larger scope is something that will benefit students for years to come.

But as usual, there are some factors to consider. The factors are similar to videos. Complete the ungraded assessments below to test your knowledge from videos.



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<https://pressbooks.palni.org/openengagement/?p=89#h5p-8>



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<https://pressbooks.palni.org/openengagement/?p=89#h5p-9>

For more information

For more information about building an accessible podcast, check out this [resource from CUNY](#) (full citation shared below).

Then, listen to The Onliners Podcast, provided by Trine University, which discusses ways to engage online learners, embedded below.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://pressbooks.palni.org/openengagement/?p=93#h5p-10>

City University of New York (2021, June 24). Accessibility toolkit for Open Educational Resources (OER): Podcasts. Retrieved August 23, 2021 from <https://guides.cuny.edu/accessibility/podcasts>

Eberts, K. & Buell, K. (2021, March 31). Engaging your online learners [No. 28]. The Onliners. TrineOnline. <https://theonliners.transistor.fm/28>

Chapter 4: OER

What is OER? Open Educational Resources, like this interactive text book, offer learning materials that are openly licensed, to students, faculty, and really... the world! This is at no cost for the user. If you or someone in the world is paying for that resource, it's probably not OER. True OER needs to have a Creative Commons License applied to it. Creative Commons is a whole world, learn more by experiencing the padlet, below.



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<https://pressbooks.palni.org/openengagement/?p=97#h5p-11>

The Anatomy of a Creative Commons License

There are some distinct parts in a Creative Commons License, please view the slides below to learn more! Tip: Make the slides full screen to better experience the content. The double arrow in the bottom right corner of the slides will make the slides full screen.



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<https://pressbooks.palni.org/openengagement/?p=104#h5p-13>

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Why Should I Use OER?

There are many benefits to using OER.

Money: The biggest benefit of course, is the money that it saves students. With tuition costs, living expenses, and all other expenses, there's plenty to pay for when in college (or life, really!). If we can save costs by using openly licensed resources, why not? There is evidence, provided by [Florida Virtual Campus](#), that demonstrates the following statistics:

Results of a 2018 survey



64.2% of surveyed students did not purchase a required textbook because of the cost, which these student felt resulted in them earning poor grade (35.6%) or failing a course (17.2%)



42.8% of students surveyed also indicated that they have taken fewer courses occasionally or frequently.



Because of the cost of required textbooks:

- 40.5% did not register for a course.



- 22.9% dropped a course.



- 18.1% withdrew from a course.

[2018 Florida Student Textbook & Course Materials Survey](#) by Florida Virtual Campus is licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#).

Customized Course Materials: Textbooks are written with a specific goal in mind. Similarly, courses are built with a focus, which is usually the learning objectives. There is a movement in education, shifting the focus off of textbooks. But sometimes textbooks do not support that mission. So, when making custom materials, like OER, an instructor can remix or create a text, video, podcast, and other openly licensed learning materials that make sense for the course. Faculty can use, improve, and share materials. Faculty can network and collaborate with others. And in turn, this creates materials that are tailored to a course, with current information (and they can be updated regularly!). Please note: some Creative Commons Licenses do have restrictions, like NoDerivatives (nothing can be changed) or ShareAlike (it must be shared with the same licensing).

PART II

PART II: APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In this second section, the focus will be on creation of engaging materials and the reflecting on the experience. It is important to apply learning, especially in a safe educational space, in order to fully understand and realize how to create engaging content.



“Application” by [Got Credit](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#).

So first, application. In this component, you’ll be reviewing a game card and determine what kind of engagement you’d like to offer your students. If possible, consider making a renewable assignment that students can use in their later work and openly licensing it for other instructors to use as well.



“Reflection” by [Escura10](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#).

Next, you’ll be reflecting on the experience with these engaging materials. Reflection provides an opportunity to assess and redirect as needed. It’s also a time for evaluation of yourself and the materials. How can you make them better? Can you make them better? Who could you ask to help you?

Chapter 1: Application

Review any of these engagement strategies that you have not used in the classroom. Select the question mark for more information about the strategy. Then, consider how you would develop one of these strategies in your courses.



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<https://pressbooks.palni.org/openengagement/?p=128#h5p-14>

Accessibility Checklist

Review the checklist below which offers insight to where accessibility may be a concern. This is not an exhaustive list, the more innovation there is in courses the more this list may grow.

Text:

- All text appears in a font size of at least 12 pt.
- Only San Serif fonts were used throughout the content (QM SRS 8.2)
- All bulleted or ordered lists were designated using the editor toolbar
- Text is not underlined unless it is a hyperlink (QM SRS 8.1)
- Hyperlinks are descriptive to provide meaning and context and not URLs (QM SRS 8.1)
- Text formatting (shape, color, style) is not used to convey meaning (QM SRS 8.2)
- Headings have been created using heading styles. (QM SRS 8.2)

Navigation:

- Course can be navigated with only a keyboard (QM SRS 8.1)
- Navigation menu items are consistent on each webpage (QM SRS 8.1)

Images:

- Images do not blink, flash, or use animation (QM SRS 8.3)
- All pictures, charts, and graphs that contain information or data also have alt text or a text description that conveys the same information (QM SRS 8.3)
- Images of text have been avoided except where a particular presentation of text as images is
- Essential to the information being conveyed (QM SRS 8.3)

Colors:

- Text and background color have sufficient contrast on all documents and webpages (QM SRS 8.1)
- Avoid these color combinations: red/black; red/green, and blue/yellow (QM SRS 8.2)
- Color alone is not used to indicate meaning (QM SRS 8.2)

Tables:

- Tables are use for tabular data not layout purposes (QM SRS 8.3)
- Complex tables with merged or split cells have been broken down into simple tables (QM SRS 8.3)
- Tables include properly identified column and/or row headings (QM SRS 8.3)

Media:

- All audio content includes transcripts (QM SRS 8.4)
- All transcripts included synchronized captions (QM SRS 8.4)

Adapted from:

Angelo State University (n.d.) *Digital accessibility checklist for courses*. Information for Faculty and Staff. <https://www.angelo.edu/faculty-and-staff/instructional-design/accessibility-checklist.php>

Standards from the Quality Matters Higher Education Rubric,

Sixth Edition. Quality Matters. Retrieved from [Specific Review Standards from the QM Higher Education Rubric, Sixth Edition.](#)

Moving Forward:

As you develop content, consider the resources in this book to guide you in the development of engaging resources. Continuously improving our courses is not always easy, but it is a great service to students.

Here's a final audio experience as this comes to a close by Faculty Focus and Tierney King: Listen: Creating Pockets of Joy, Humor, and Positivity in your Face-to-Face and Online Class (15:50)



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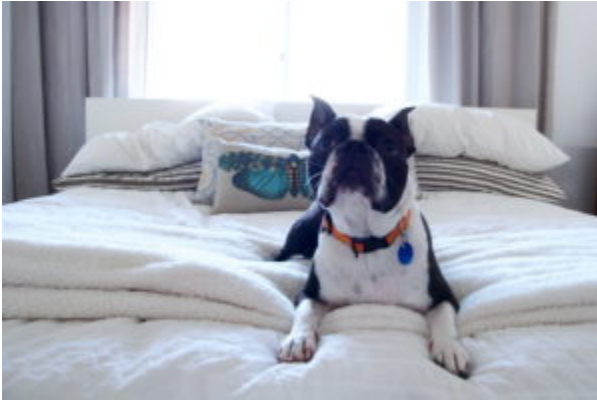
<https://pressbooks.palni.org/openengagement/?p=139#h5p-17>

King, T. (2021, October 14). Creating pockets of joy, humor, and positivity in your face-to-face and online class. (No. 21) [Audio podcast episode]. Faculty Focus Live. Faculty Focus. <https://audio.buzzsprout.com/4ao2hntmr4r666s1hmx6sjzlm2ex?response-content-disposition=inline&>

Chapter 2: Reflection

As mentioned, reflection is a great opportunity to learn, evaluate, and progress in work, education, and other facets of life. A favorite way to reflect is the two things prompt (see below): review, reflect, and move forward!

Question 1:



“Comfort Zone Suge” by [emily @ go haus go](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#).

What are two things within your comfort zone? Is it the discussion forums? Maybe videos? What things are tried-and-true methods for you?



“[Elephant Stretching for some Food](#)” by [Augapfel](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

Question 2:

What are two things that stretched your comfort zone? Was it the podcasts? OER? What things would be a little bit of a challenge to implement, but not too overwhelming for you?

Question 3:

What are two things that overwhelmed you? Memes? Gamification? It's good to be challenged right? Now, to be fair, adding engagement to add engagement is not helpful. But if it aligns to the learning outcomes and makes sense, why not try it? Ask for feedback from students and feedback! Ask your IT department or instructional designer for assistance, too!



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“Communication Can Be Hard to Get Into” by [cogdogblog](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

“Defining love” by [chris jd](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC 2.0](#)

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“Problem, Solution, Result...” by [duncan](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC 2.0](#)

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“Sound II – Anthony Gormley @ Winchester Cathedral Crypt – ‘Reflections’ Assignment” by [slynkycat](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#)

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Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (2021). *What's your learning style?* 20 Questions. <http://www.educationplanner.org/students/self-assessments/learning-styles-quiz.shtml>

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Prud-homme-Genereux, A. (2021, March 29). 21 Ways to structure an online discussion, part 1. Faculty Focus. <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/online-student-engagement/21-ways-to-structure-an-online-discussion-part-1/>

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Watkins, C. (n.d.) *Inclusive design for learning: An educator's guide to Open Education Resources (OER)*. Retrieved August 23, 2021, from <https://www.oercommons.org/courseware/lesson/69462/student/>