

<https://thejournal.com/articles/2020/09/21/report-describes-how-to-engage-students.aspx>

Remote Learning Environments

How to Engage Students (and Identify Them)

- By Dian Schaffhauser
- 09/21/20

What makes for an engaging learning experience? Multiple factors, including instructional practices used by the teacher, content that's "relevant and relatable to students' lives" and a design that helps students focus. Those are several of the findings shared in the "[2020: State of Engagement Report](#)," developed by researchers at [GoGuardian](#), an education technology company that produces a set of tools for managing one-to-one technology. The company has reported that its software is in use in more than 10,000 schools.

The report relied on insights gleaned from 427 students, 23 teachers, six administrators and seven policy leaders across the U.S. The participants were pulled from the company's own customer database and the professional network of the primary researchers involved in the project.

According to the authors, there are three big areas to examine in supporting and facilitating engaging learning experiences:

Developing instructional practices that include elements such as:

- Performing regular checks for student understanding;
- Articulating clear objectives and directions for the lesson;

- Developing students' metacognitive skills required for learning;
- Serving as a facilitator rather than a "sage-on-the-stage"; and
- Encouraging "productive play and creative expression."

Picking the right kind of lesson content, differentiated to the learner's needs, contextualized to convey relevance and designed to minimize distractions:

- Matching content to students' learning level;
- Making lessons relevant and relatable to students' lives; and
- Finding digital content designed for student focus

Creating a productive classroom culture, including:

- Cultivating positive and productive student-teacher relationships;
- Being consistent in classroom management;
- Investing in students' long-term success; and
- Creating a learning space that's "empowering and future-focused."

The report included a rundown on the signs of engaged students, including these aspects:

- They immerse themselves in activities;
- They have voluntary conversations about relevant information;
- There's an emotional response;
- They cooperate and collaborate with peers;
- They persist through challenges;
- They go above and beyond;
- They seek to share their experiences and contribute their perspectives;

- They take responsibility for cultivating a productive educational environment;
- They're alert and present in their body language;
- They exercise higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy at the create, evaluate, analyze and apply stages;
- They demonstrate pride in their work;
- They ask expansionary questions; and
- They use digital tools to enable exploration, maximize retention, and collaborate with others.

"Engagement levels in a learning experience are dynamic and context-driven, but our research found remarkable commonalities across many school communities and stakeholder groups. We've found a few consistent themes relating to the variables that impact engagement and the indicators that signal students are engaged in what they are learning," said Mariana Aguilar, director of research at GoGuardian, in a statement. "The lessons that created the most engaging experiences for students often were a combination of opportunities that encouraged discussion, gave students learning choices and allowed students to create. These elements are immensely transferable both in the online and in-person classroom and can facilitate a positive learning environment, whether in a synchronous or asynchronous setting."

The report is available with an email address [through the GoGuardian website](#).

About the Author

Dian Schaffhauser is a senior contributing editor for 1105 Media's education publications *THE Journal*, *Campus Technology* and *Spaces4Learning*. She can be reached at dian@dischaffhauser.com or on Twitter [@schaffhauser](#).