



Student Engagement in Distance Learning

This content-agnostic resource¹ provides examples of concrete strategies a teacher can employ in an effort to ensure high student engagement during distance learning. We encourage using this as a companion resource alongside our content-specific guidelines: [Math Guidelines for Distance Learning](#), [ELA Guidelines for Distance Learning](#), [Science Guidelines for Distance Learning](#).

Tips for All Lessons (Synchronous or Asynchronous)

- Use a warm and positive tone.
- Start fast to ensure you don't lose students' attention.
- Lean on activities, rituals, and routines you've used in the past.

Tips for Asynchronous Lessons

- Speak and behave like the students are there.
- Speak slowly and pause often to give students a chance to catch up.
- Be precise with directions, explaining clearly what you want students to do at any point in the lesson (e.g., "Pause the video and complete the 'Do Now' in Google Classroom").

Tips for Synchronous Lessons

- Structure the lesson to ensure that students are building connections between classmates and teachers.
- Create opportunities to address confusion or misconceptions that arose in assignments or asynchronous work.

¹ Adapted from [Teach Like A Champion](#).



Concrete Strategies

Strategy	Description	Synchronous/ Asynchronous
Orientation Screen	Have a slide up that clearly articulates to students what they need to be best prepared for that day's lesson.	Both
Learning outcomes and directions	Post on a slide and add to LMS documents the learning outcomes and directions for a given lesson.	Both
Engaging opener	Start a lesson with an engaging opener, one that does not necessarily need to be connected to content. Consider students' current interests and use the chat function or other response platform to boost engagement.	Both
Combination teaching	Combine synchronous and semi-synchronous instruction within a learning block to break up lengthier learning sections.	Synchronous
Zoom poll	Pre-program a poll into the Zoom meeting before the start of class. Ask a question, give students narrated time to think or write, then launch the poll.	Synchronous
Private chat	Ask students to send their responses to a question in a private chat to the teacher. This practice serves an instructional purpose (CFUs/ensuring students can't just wait for their classmates to respond) and promotes teacher-student relationship-building.	Synchronous
Chat to all: Speed question	Ask students to quickly "chat to all" their response to a question. This is an effective strategy for rapid replies, data collection, and questions that will prompt a variety of responses.	Synchronous
Chat to all: Wait question	Ask students to construct their responses in the chat, but wait to press "send" until given a signal. Use this strategy when students need to provide longer responses to a question.	Synchronous



Strategy	Description	Synchronous/ Asynchronous
Hand-raise	Ask students to volunteer to respond to a question by raising their hand in the participants menu.	Synchronous
“Show me”	Ask students to share their responses visually on screen (e.g., “1 if you chose A, 2 if you chose B”; writing responses on a white board).	Synchronous
Student feedback	Provide thorough and diverse feedback on the work students submit; this is especially critical during distance learning—particularly when students are in asynchronous instruction. If students think teachers are not bothering to look at their work, they will stop submitting it.	Both
Breakout rooms	Use small-group work as an effective way to keep students engaged and focused on the task. Effectively using breakout rooms can function in the same way, with teachers bouncing from room to room as necessary.	Synchronous
Integrate technology platforms	Refer to this document , which details different technology platforms that support student engagement, make visible student thinking and work, and hold students accountable for their time during online learning.	Both

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