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The QUICK GUIDE to

SIMULTANEOUS, HYBRID, & BLENDED LEARNING

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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt on strategies to ensure your task design is inclusive—engaging all learners in your simultaneous learning environment.

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4. **Cost.** Finally, learners internally evaluate what may be given up by choosing to engage in a specific learning experience or task. For example, logging off of their online gaming platform to join your trigonometry class is a real dilemma. Furthermore, how do we ensure that their time logged in to class or in our classroom does not have any negative experiences associated with it? For example, requiring them to turn their cameras on may jeopardize their emotional safety and make the cost of this task too high.

Here are suggestions for ensuring that your task design is inclusive—engaging **all** learners in your simultaneous learning environment.

Videos

- Use closed captions for your presentations and videos.
- Offer copies of the transcripts of the chat boxes to all learners. These can be posted on your learning management system (LMS) to reduce the need for paper.
- Make videos readily accessible if possible so they can be watched again for those who may benefit from experiencing content more than once.

Images

- Aim for representation in your use of images and videos. One way to enhance task value and a sense of inclusion is to make sure learners can “see themselves” in your images and videos.
- Ensure the color and font on your slides, the writing utensil you use with the document camera, and the lighting allow learners to comfortably see the images.
- When learners are expected to view the image and take in essential information, do not talk or provide audio while they are observing the image. Give them time to just look at the image.
- Provide digital copies of the images on your LMS so that learners can revisit them during their asynchronous time or pull them up on their own devices.

Printed Materials

- Use readable PDFs, not scans of texts. You can check the readability of a PDF by trying to copy and paste individual words. If you can do that, a screen reader will be able to detect text; otherwise, the screen reader will simply interpret it as an image.
- Clearly define special terms or jargon to help support and build toward understanding for multilingual constituents for whom English may not be a native language.
- Provide electronic versions of any printed material.

Face-to-Face Experiences and Tasks

- Ensure that emotional safety is secured before engaging learners in social interaction. Initially, vary activities so that Roomies and Zoomies have the option to not just partner or engage in collaborative/cooperative learning, but rather have time for individual work.
- Preassign groups to ensure the individual dynamics of the group or team are conducive to learning (see Fisher, Frey, & Almarode, 2021).
- Establish and model norms for experiences and tasks that require a great deal of social interaction. Provide channels for all simultaneous learners to communicate with you and share feedback about their experiences in a confidential way.

Although the research on student perceptions of task value is interesting, translating those four components of task value into practice is another thing altogether. Are there guidelines, suggestions, or even specific strategies that might help us enhance student interest, utility value, and attainment value and lower the cost of engaging and persisting in simultaneous learning? Fortunately, there is research on what this might look like in practice. In 2015, Antonetti and Garver published *17,000 Classroom Visits Can't Be Wrong*, where they reported on data from over 17,000 classroom walk-throughs. Today, this database contains more than 23,000 walk-throughs, some of which are virtual walk-throughs. Embedded in the data were eight features of classroom tasks that were associated with sustained engagement. As learners fluctuate in their levels of engagement, we can make adjustments in these eight areas to re-engage those learners that have waned in their engagement, as well as sustain the engagement of other learners before they disengage.

- ➔ **Make sure there are clear and modeled expectations.** Does the learner have a clear understanding of what success looks like? This characteristic refers to clear learning intentions and success criteria. Recall the examples shared in Figures 1.1 and 1.2. How do we differentiate the learning intentions and success criteria for simultaneous learning?
- ➔ **Provide more opportunities for personal response.** Does the student have the opportunity to bring their own personal experiences to the learning experience? Examples include any strategy or learning experience that invites learners to bring their own background, interests, or expertise to the conversation. Zoomies can **safely**, and **when appropriate**, use their living environment as their learning environment.
- ➔ **Create a sense of audience.** Does the learner have a sense that this experience or task matters to someone other than the teacher, the grade book, or merely clicking the submit button on Canvas? Tasks that have a sense of audience are those tasks that mean something to individuals beyond the teacher. In simultaneous learning, Roomies can serve as an audience for Zoomies as they teach something back to their peers.

Similarly, Zoomies can serve as the audience for Roomies as they narrate a recording comparing and contrasting student work samples (see Figure 1.6).

- ➔ **Increase the levels of social interaction.** Does the learner have opportunities to socially interact with peers in breakout rooms or through discussion boards? Providing learners with opportunities to talk about their learning and interact with their peers supports their meaning making and development of conceptual understanding. Are there ways to structure simultaneous learning so that Roomies can interact with Zoomies?
- ➔ **Ensure emotional safety.** Does the learner feel safe in asking questions or making mistakes? To be blunt, if learners feel threatened in your classroom, they will not engage. What steps are we taking to make sure our learners feel respected, valued, and cared for beyond an attendance record?
- ➔ **Offer more choice.** Does the learner have choices in how they access the learning? As learners engage in any learning experience or task, we should offer choices around who they work with, what materials and manipulatives are available, and what learning strategies they can use to engage in the experience and complete the task. In simultaneous learning, do we provide an online portal or common location for materials and manipulatives?
- ➔ **Utilize novelty.** Does the learner experience the learning from a new or unique perspective? Learners do not pay attention to boring things. How can we present content in a way that captures their attention?
- ➔ **Make the learning authentic.** Does the learner experience an authentic learning experience, or is the experience sterile and unrealistic (e.g., a worksheet versus problem-solving scenario; simply converting a PPT to a narrated slide deck versus using reciprocal teaching to gather and share information)?

As each of us strives to foster, nurture, and sustain student engagement in a simultaneous learning environment, we have to keep several main points in mind:

1. Engaging learners in a face-to-face environment utilizes the same principles as engaging them from a distance.
2. Engagement is a multidimensional idea that is best described on a continuum from active disengagement to active engagement with passivity in between the two.
3. To sustain engagement, we have to constantly monitor and be prepared to adjust simultaneous learning when engagement and persistence wane in our learners.