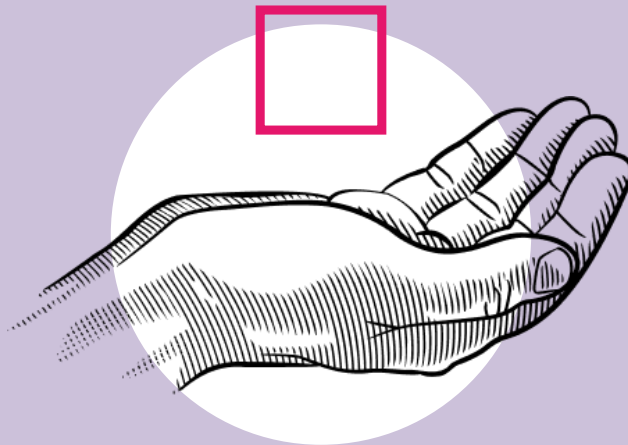
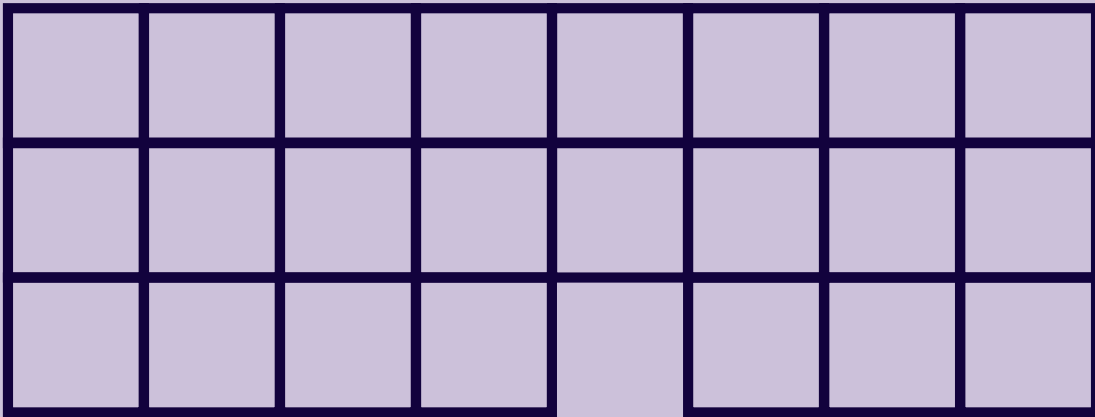




Post-Pandemic Pedagogy:

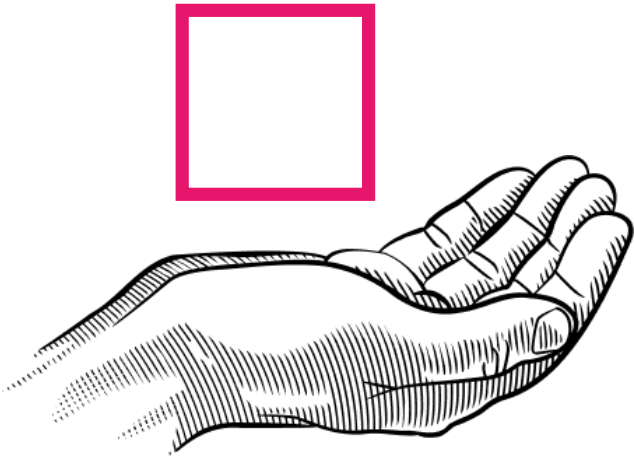
20+ Tips from Three Innovative Educators



Best practices from the online classroom that will motivate
and engage students in your 2021 courses

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- Connect with Students Through Interactive Activities 5
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WHO

James Lang

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WHERE

Assumption College,
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CLASS

English

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[19 Student Engagement
Strategies to Start with in
Your Course](#)

[How to Spark Great In-Class
Discussions: 6 Ideas That
Work](#)

[Free Guide: Reaching Today's
Distracted Students](#)

LESSONS LEARNED

Get Creative to Minimize Distractions

WHAT IS IT

Distractions are the things that get in the way of pursuing and achieving goals. Technology makes it easy to go down these neverending rabbit holes. The longer you try to pay attention to something, the more challenging it becomes. That's because our attention fatigues over time, but change renews our attention.

Technology intensifies the problem of distraction in the classroom, but it's not really the source of the problem. The source of the problem is the human brain. Our brains are always looking for novelty. The middle ground is the place to be. If you say, "I've got to focus for three hours and do this without a break," that doesn't work. It also doesn't work to be changing every five minutes. You've got to find a happy medium.

“What we need to think about is how we structure the class in a way that sustains someone's attention through an extended period of time.”

WHY YOU SHOULD DO IT

Today's technology is really good at taking advantage of our attention fatigue and giving us quick little bursts of satisfaction. As teachers, we can do a lot more to create learning environments that cultivate attention—and reward and support attention.

The way instructors teach is often at odds with how students learn. We take for granted that students should pay attention. Instead, what we need to think about is how we structure the class in a way that sustains someone's attention through an extended period of time. We need to think like playwrights. They have acts and scenes, there's an intermission, the action rises and falls. You also have to think like a poet in terms of "what's going to reawaken the attention of my students?"

HOW TO DO IT POST-PANDEMIC

Help students be more attentive to one another: If I pay attention to you, you're more likely to pay attention to me. Cultivate a sense of belonging from the beginning of your class to help your students engage in collaborative, attentive dialog.

Be deliberate in choosing learning exercises: Alternate lecturing with something that will give students a break and let them engage in a task (like turning to a neighbor in a face-to-face class, or via the live chat feature if learning is happening online, to share one new thing they have learned thus far). Afterwards, we can come back to another exercise or topic that might be more cognitively challenging.

Intersperse 'signature attention activities' throughout class time: In my class, signature attention activities are the exercises and units planned throughout the semester. Forty-five minutes into your lecture, what are you going to do to get people reawakened for the last half hour? These are the moments that are going to re-energize the class.

Set goals with your students: If you have a strong commitment to a goal, you're probably more likely to stay focused on it. In a classroom setting, you want to make the goal clear to students—or you want to give them the opportunity to form their own goals.

Use the first five minutes of class to cultivate attention: Often, students come to class trailing with all the distractions of their lives. An opening activity is a great way to transition students from the world outside to 'now we're here and this is where our attention is going to be.' I use five- to ten-minute writing exercises for this or even polls. It's not so much about doing a deep dive on content during the opening moments, it's more about getting students in the mode of class.



WHO

Frank Spors

Associate Professor,
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WHERE

Western University of Health
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CLASS

Optics and Contact Lenses

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[21 Team-Building Activities
for Students](#)

[10 Essential Icebreaker
Activities for Any Online
Course](#)

[Active Learning Exercises for
Multiple Teaching Modalities](#)

[Customer Story: Simplifying
the Switch to Online
Teaching with Interactive
Content and Courseware](#)

LESSONS LEARNED

**Connect with Students Through
Interactive Activities**

WHAT IS IT

During the pandemic, I wanted to make sure my students stayed engaged—and that meant keeping learning interactive. I designed a series of activities purpose-built with flexibility in mind, which helped meet students on their level. These activities were created to provide me with essential insights into student progress. Regardless of what modality you may be teaching in, I know activities like these will come in handy this fall.

"Lecturing works, but it needs to be carefully facilitated with opportunities for student engagement."

WHY YOU SHOULD DO IT

College students, particularly incoming freshmen, may be ill-prepared for the rigor of primarily in-person college classes. That makes interactive learning all the more important.

Infusing a human element into your course through frequent interactive activities and opportunities for building connections can help sustain community, collaboration and engagement, wherever learning takes place.

Student participation is integral to building an engaged classroom community. In hybrid or blended learning courses, it's important to build in opportunities for students to stay engaged with their learning before, during, and after class.

HOW TO DO IT POST-PANDEMIC

Pre-lecture assessments: Pre-lecture assessments can spike student interest, while polls interspersed throughout the lecture allow students to apply their understanding of course content.

Interactive homework: Encourage students to continue learning after class with interactive homework assignments complemented by in-class discussions, polls and activities—and use the generated insights to offer help to those who might need it.

Peer-peer learning: Consider how you can use technology to provide opportunities for students to learn from and interact with one another in small groups, keeping diverse learning styles in mind. Instructors and TAs can act as a support system by being available through accessible virtual channels.

Weekly quizzes: Frequent low-stakes assessments provide valuable insight into student progress. Understanding where students may be struggling helps instructors tailor lecture content to address areas where learners need further clarification.



WHO

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WHERE

Perimeter College, Georgia State University, Decatur, GA

CLASS

College Algebra

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[How Technology In The Classroom Can Impact Student Learning](#)

[Strategies to Make Online Teaching and Learning Stick](#)

[8 Essential Active Learning Strategies for Your Next Class—In Any Modality](#)

[Customer Story: Using Ed Tech to Find the ‘Aha!’ Moment](#)

TOP HAT

LESSONS LEARNED

Inject Learning Science Into Your Teaching

WHAT IS IT

For genuine learning to take place, it must be effortful. The goal of learning science tactics is to lead students to deeper and more long-term learning. These strategies overcome the illusion of competence that can occur when students are familiar with course concepts.

"The key is building activities—grounded in learning science—on a foundation of actionable learning objectives."

WHY YOU SHOULD DO IT

In my experience, the key to successful learning is recognizing that durable, long-lasting and serviceable knowledge is acquired when there is increased cognitive effort. However, that’s not always easy to achieve. The key is building activities—grounded in learning science—on a foundation of actionable learning objectives.

Why is this important? The reality is, if there is a shortcut available, most students will take it. They’ll skip readings or skim them in order to complete the homework questions. And while this might be enough to achieve a passing grade on an assignment, many of these same students would end up failing a high-stakes assessment.

I’ve come to realize that even small changes can have a significant impact. The tenets of learning science have transformed the way I engage students and maximize outcomes throughout the learning process.

HOW TO DO IT POST-PANDEMIC

I've made a few small tweaks that changed the way I conduct my courses and the way students interact with the material. These worked well for me while teaching online during COVID and they're just as appropriate in a face-to-face classroom.

Elaboration is the process of summarizing concepts and connecting these concepts to prior knowledge. I end each section with a discussion question through platforms like [Edstem](#) to give students time and space to answer some leading questions about the concepts and how they build on prior material.

Retrieval practice is the act of recalling facts from memory. I implement this practice by incorporating quick checks throughout the assigned readings by answering a simple question about that concept.

Interleaving is the process of mixing up your assignments with similar but related topics. Rather than 'block' practice where students work on the same type of problem in the same way, I intersperse a related type of problem that requires students to retrieve information from their brains.

Generation is the process of thinking and struggling with a concept prior to being formally introduced to it. I start each section with a real-world problem. Using a discussion platform like [Harmonize](#), students have to think about that problem and how they could solve it.

Spaced practice is the process of returning to a topic periodically over time. I employ this tactic by adding questions on each homework assignment that students missed from earlier chapters that are essential to the course.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO TEACH YOUR COURSE

Use Top Hat to increase engagement and keep students motivated and connected

One platform, one less thing to manage

Take attendance, present slides, host discussions, give homework, assign interactive readings and run tests—all in one place. (Phew!)

Crank engagement up to 11

Make learning active with live discussions, polls and quizzes students can respond to on any device. Videos, GIFs and 3D images can easily be added to your course materials, so you'll always have plenty of tricks up your sleeve.

Assess your class early and often

Let instant feedback from polls, quizzes and assignments guide your teaching. Save time with question packs and auto-grading, and run secure in-class tests or remote proctored exams. Plus, get insights to support class and individual progress. Reaching out to struggling students is only a click away.

[Learn more](#) about the capabilities of the Top Hat platform.

[Click here](#) to get a personalized demonstration of Top Hat.

**We empower educators to engage students
and unleash their potential.**



TOP HAT