25 teaching strategies to foster learning and participation in MOOCs

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1. Planning and preparation are key factors for effective distance learning. This applies to both developers and teachers.
2. It is vital to plan how to motivate and encourage students to participate.
3. Objectives must be clearly and precisely defined so that students can fully understand them.
4. The length of the course along with each of its modules and units should be clearly specified.
5. The evaluation criteria should be clearly specified to students. Students will also appreciate efficient time management, which fosters learning.
6. It is important to establish learning routines. This helps build students' confidence, which in turn fosters commitment to the program.
7. Collaborative and individual learning activities should be balanced. Distance learners may find too many collaborative activities difficult to complete. In addition, synchronous and asynchronous activities should be balanced as far as possible. Again, distance learners generally find it more difficult to complete synchronous activities.
8. As far as possible, the learning activities should be designed to engage students in active learning.
9. A good balance is needed between presenting theory and working on practical examples, which tend to be more meaningful for students.
10. It is important to use a variety of strategies to obtain frequent and specific feedback from students. Overly general questions such as, "Does everyone understand?" are less than ideal for gathering specific feedback.
11. It is important to guide students through the course with a student workbook, either electronic or paper.
12. It is important to use good-quality presentations, with programs like PowerPoint or Keynote. Too often, materials are not clearly presented, or else they contain too much text.
13. For effective online teaching, it is vital to use a variety of strategies to ensure "proof of attendance" and "evidence of learning." Teachers should put themselves in the student's place and imagine how they might try to avoid fully participating.
14. It is vital to design stimulating learning activities where students are required to apply the principles they have learned.
15. A good balance is needed between formative and summative assessments.
16. A diversity of strategies should be used for ongoing assessment of students' progress throughout the course.
17. It is important to provide students with complementary and optional activities.
18. All courses should include an evaluation mechanism for the course itself, to enable continuous improvement.
19. At the end of every course, the main principles should be summarized.
20. All courses should include multimedia content: videos, images, audio files, websites, and so on. Videos should be shorter rather than longer.
21. It is important to provide a glossary of terms with clear and simple explanations so that students can understand all the concepts and more easily assimilate course content.
22. Students should be provided with a list of references, indicating those that are required reading or particularly relevant to the course as well as supplemental readings.
23. An effective communication system should be established, not only between the teacher and students, but also among students. It should be simple and user-friendly for everyone. It should be kept in mind that some students might be reluctant to ask questions via a forum, and others reluctant to respond. In addition, today's students are used to communicating with each other on their cell phones, using ever-briefer formats. **Remind** is just one example of a communication tool that teachers can use to connect immediately with their students, in a format they are familiar with.
24. It would be helpful to explain the benefits of active learning to students.
25. It would also be helpful if participants could find information on both the course developer and the course teacher. This way they could get a better idea of where the teacher is coming from, how the course is situated in the field, and more.

2014