

Creating engaging and evidence-based asynchronous online courses

I have been teaching fully online asynchronous classes over the last 9 years. To create engaging and evidence-based asynchronous online courses, one needs to gather evidence (best practices) in online teaching and learning via training such as webinars, read books, attend conferences and finally reflect upon one's own teaching practices and refine them from time to time. Over the last several years, I have done exactly that and incorporated student feedback while designing and implementing the courses. Some of the evidence-based practices I would certainly like to mention as examples are maintaining student-to-student (via class discussions, peer to peer feedbacks on presentations), student to content (via class notes, class videos, simulations) and student to instructor interactions (via instructor or student created videos, e-mails, synchronous meetings) throughout the semester.

There are various evidence-based theoretical frameworks one can use to make this process efficient such as use of the Community of Inquiry framework which discusses teaching presence (having designed the course using best practices such as Quality Matters or the Online Learning Consortium framework along with course facilitation by the instructor in a constructivist paradigm), cognitive presence (engaging students in constructive ways of knowledge creation and critical thinking) and social presence (ice-breaker interaction and communicating personal choices in a social environment)

Creating an engaging online class needs passion from an instructor along with optimum usage and application of a variety of practices as per the course needs and intended course outcomes. So, in a nutshell, the creation of engaging courses needs time and effort along with the courage to try out various pedagogical techniques.