Title:
Fostering Student Engagement in Online Learning Environments by Designing Experiences

Submission category:
Best Practices

Session abstract:
Online instructors and instructional designers in higher education are prompted to consider what conditions affect learner engagement online and how their efforts might encourage and foster such engagement within virtual spaces. Participants will gain an understanding of theoretical constructs influencing engagement and the learner experience in online learning environments and will leave with ten guidelines to help them design engaging online learning experiences.

Target audience:
Instructors and instructional designers of online learning in adult or higher education

Session description:
Learner engagement has been suggested to be one of the most significant predictors of learning and academic achievement and, as a result, remains a hot topic throughout education. Disengagement or detachment of the learner is a common concern in education, especially within online learning environments that are already characterized by physical distance and isolation. As online learning becomes increasingly more prevalent in higher education, instructors and instructional designers are prompted to consider what conditions affect learner engagement online and how their efforts might encourage and foster such engagement within virtual spaces.

This interactive presentation will be deliberately provocative by arguing that we must place more emphasis on designing for the learner experience and less on delivering content in order to engage learners in authentic, meaningful ways. A brief review of the literature will be presented to provide a conceptual framework and to gain an understanding of theoretical constructs influencing engagement and the learner experience in online learning environments. This will be followed by discourse relating to design strategies and best practices to foster engagement in online learning environments. Ten guidelines for the design of engaging online learning experiences will be presented.