

The Office of  
**Adjunct Faculty &  
Academic Support  
Programs**

## Adjunct Faculty Academic Calendar

### December

9 Classes End

14-19 Final Exam Week

22 Grades Due to Registrar by Noon

23 University Closed until January 4, 2018

### Workshops:

16 Specific Ways to Engage Students in the Online Learning Environment  
Noon Teams

17 Specific Ways to Engage Students in the Online Learning Environment  
5:00 p.m. Teams

Register for these and other workshops at: [svsu.edu/workshops](http://svsu.edu/workshops)

## With an Eye Toward Next Semester

1. **Self-Monitoring:** Have you been keeping a log of your teaching experiences? A written record of what went well and what could be improved upon at the end of each week is one way to be a more reflective instructor. Not only will a log help to improve your teaching immediately, but it can become a part of your teaching portfolio when it comes time to apply for those ever-elusive full-time positions.
2. **Audio/Video Recording:** Have you ever seen yourself teach, or heard one of your own lectures? Record your last lecture of the fall semester. It is a great way to see yourself as your students see you. You can also show the video to colleagues and ask them for feedback. Warning: prepare to be surprised. If you don't have a video camera, call SVSU's ITS office at x4225. They can help.
3. **Student Feedback:** Those student evaluations at the end of the semester that we're required to administer are valuable. But, you can ask your students for information that the evaluation form does not address. For instance, ask your students to include with their last assignment, a handwritten letter describing one big question that was answered for them, and one big question they still have.

## SVSU's Grading Procedure

The online grading system is available at [my.SVSU.edu](http://my.SVSU.edu). Log-in and go to the Faculty tab.

- According to the Registrar, the only grades that are accepted at SVSU are: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, D, and F. Grades like A+, C- or D+ are not a part of our grading policy.
- If a student has withdrawn from your class, it will be noted on the grade roster.
- For every student who receives an 'F', you must include the last date the student attended your class in a space designated on the page.
- For more information on this process, please go to this page: <http://www.svsu.edu/officeoftheregistrar/servicesforms/gradingandinc ompletes>
- Grades are due by Noon on Tuesday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## Google Voice

As you begin work on next semester's syllabus, think about getting *Google Voice* to receive voicemails and texts from your students. In the past year or so, we have heard that faculty are giving students their personal phone numbers which can lead to all sorts of privacy issues. An alternative to this practice is Google Voice. Once you have created a Google account, you can easily download the Google Voice App from your iPhone, Android, or computer...for directions to get Google voice follow this link:

<https://support.google.com/voice/answer/7207482?co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop&hl=en&oco=1>

*All of us in the  
Office of Adjunct Faculty  
Support Programs wish  
you Happy Holidays!*



*The Office of Adjunct Faculty hosted a workshop just prior to the Thanksgiving break. A number of faculty who attended the workshop were concerned about keeping their students engaged. We thought this article might be of some help as you begin to prepare for your winter classes when some students might be attending remotely. As you will see, this University uses the LMS Blackboard. So just substitute Canvas for any reference to Blackboard. We hope this helps!*

## Ten Ways to Overcome Barriers to Student Engagement Online

(Academic Technology: At the College of William and Mary)\*

By Ali Briggs.

Student engagement is a concept often discussed in education and an abundance of research exists on the topic. Student engagement is something instructors want to *see* and *feel* in their classrooms. Generally, student engagement tends to be viewed as the level of interest students show towards the topic being taught; their interaction with the content, instructor, and peers; and their motivation to learn and progress through the course.

Online learning presents new challenges when compared to a traditional classroom because students are separated from their instructor by a computer screen. How can we engage our students in the content, learning activities, and assessments? How can we prevent feelings of frustration or isolation and keep them motivated? These questions are frequently asked by online instructors looking to maintain the same levels of engagement they *see* and *feel* in their face-to-face classrooms.

I have a deep interest in this area and decided to explore it further by completing an online workshop from the [Online Learning Consortium \(OLC\)](#) called [Fundamentals: Increasing Interaction & Engagement](#). The learning objectives of the workshop were twofold: Identify strategies that help overcome obstacles to student engagement and develop a plan to improve student engagement in your online course. Obstacles to student engagement were broken down into three areas: social, administrative, and motivational. Looking at student engagement barriers in this way made them seem easier to overcome. I found the experience helpful and have summarized ten ways to overcome barriers to student engagement online based on what was discussed during the workshop.

### Overcome Social Barriers

It's important to build community in an online course. Students may become disengaged if they feel isolated or if they don't get to interact with their instructor and peers. Foster community in your online course and overcome social barriers to student engagement with the following strategies:

1. **Make first contact before the course begins.** Send an email message to introduce yourself and provide instructions on how to get started. Add a personal touch by including a short video message relaying the same information so students can get a sense of your personality.
2. **Create an introductory activity.** Connect your students with each other and make them feel like they're part of a community of scholars. Create a simple Blackboard discussion forum for introductions. You can also ask students to upload a picture to their Blackboard profile.
3. **Provide opportunities for learner interaction.** Blackboard discussion forums, [Padlet walls](#), or [VoiceThread](#) activities are great ways to promote student interaction. You can also create online study groups where students meet through [Google Hangouts](#) or another video conferencing service. The first study group could be guided by instructor-created questions and then you could challenge students to come up with future questions. [WM Apps](#) are an easy way for students to develop content together and [WM Wikis](#) also provides opportunities for collaboration.
4. **Encourage sharing.** Social media can be used to engage students in your content. Students can share resources related to the course informally through a Facebook group or [Twitter hashtag](#). You can even embed a Twitter feed into your Blackboard course!

Students may get frustrated if they don't know how and when to contact you. They may also get discouraged if they don't know their progress in the course or if expectations aren't clearly

communicated. Set your students up for success using these strategies to overcome administrative barriers to student engagement:

5. **Establish contact methods and hours.** Communicate your email address and phone number as well as the best days and times to reach you. Let students know in advance when you'll be away longer than 24 hours to avoid feelings of frustration. Besides email and phone, you can hold online office hours using [Adobe Connect](#) or [Google Hangouts](#). These services allow you to share your screen with students and have drawing capabilities.
6. **Provide directions often and in various ways.** Be clear and concise with your directions and expectations. Also provide your directions in multiple ways, such as through email and within the online course. If you create a video with instructions on how to complete a task be sure to provide the same directions in text.
7. **Provide effective and timely feedback.** This is important in any course, especially online. Make your presence known in a discussion forum by getting involved early and asking questions that keep the discussion going. Students should also be aware of their progress throughout the duration of the course. Blackboard's Assignment tools and Grade Center can help you communicate student progress. Self-check activities also help guide student learning and prepare students for course assessments.

Procrastination can happen to the best of us! Students may face additional distractions when completing online course work from the comfort of their own home or in a busy coffee shop. Overcome motivation barriers to student engagement and keep your students on track using these strategies:

8. **Chunk your content.** Simply put, chunking means breaking down information into smaller pieces that are easier for the brain to digest. Content should be organized in a logical way that guides the learning process. Conceptually-related information should be grouped together making it more meaningful and easier to understand. Video lectures should also be broken into shorter segments, usually 5-7 minutes. [Read more about chunking from eLearning Coach Connie Malamed.](#)
9. **Send reminders to keep students on track.** Populate the course calendar with deadlines and send reminders to your students so they stay on track. If a student falls behind, make time to speak with that student on what he or she can do to get back on track. It's also helpful to provide some sort of checklist for students so they know what they have to complete and when.
10. **Use a variety of multimedia and modalities.** You will have different types of learners in your course and using a variety of content-delivery methods and learning activities will help keep them engaged. If your course is text-based, consider including images or graphs to clarify concepts. You can also replace some of the text with videos or audio depending on the topic. Small changes can drastically improve the learning experience for your students.

As you can tell, there are many different ways to engage your students in an online environment! What strategies have you used to increase student engagement in your online or blended course? Share your ideas by commenting below.

*If you are interested in learning more specific ways to engage your students next semester, please consider attending a workshop being held on Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at Noon or Thursday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. You can register for this workshop by going to <https://appsc.svsu.edu/workshops/workshopsOffered> Of course, all adjunct faculty attending up to five workshops during a semester are compensated \$30.00.*

\* This article was accessed from [https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/news\\_item/ten-ways-overcome-barriers-student-engagement-online/](https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/news_item/ten-ways-overcome-barriers-student-engagement-online/)