STANDARD HIGHLIGHT

National Standards for Quality Online Teaching
Standard D: Learner Engagement

The online teacher promotes learner success through interactions with learners and other stakeholders and by facilitating meaningful learner engagement in learning activities.

D1 The online teacher uses digital tools to identify patterns in learner engagement and performance that will inform improvements to achieve individual learner growth.

STANDARD OVERVIEW

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Online teaching relies on a different toolset to gauge student learning and their understanding of the material. We often hear about course “pace”, but using that as an acronym for “Progress and Course Engagement” helps to frame the question of “What tools can we use to identify patterns in learner engagement and performance?” Virtual learning ecosystems, content, and tools generate data we can use to answer that question beyond just looking at grades.

Peak Activity by Time of Day

Data removes "best-guess" ideas for how to support students. Looking at when students are most active can help inform online programs on when to provide real-time supports, ensuring there is help available when students need it. Providing flexible support keeps students on pace and encourages student agency.

MARCH 2022 - ISSUE 6
HELPFUL HINTS for putting standard into practice

Other helpful hints for building learner engagement include:

- Think of student data to gauge pace in two categories, activity and participation.
- Activity data tells you if the student is “active” (i.e. logins, attendance, page clicks). However, it does not tell you what they are learning.
- Participation data demonstrates “engagement”. (i.e. discussion participation, submitting assignments, responding to teacher assignment feedback, emails, reassessment)
- Know what data points your learning ecosystem archives. Do you have access to time of day, duration of access, reassignment attempts, and communication logs?
- Do you use a variety of tools that do not integrate or pass data to a single portal (usually your SIS)? Having fewer places to view student data makes the process of identifying patterns easier and more efficient.
- Is there a time of day when the student(s) are working and there are no synchronous supports available for them during that time?
- Be explicit with weekly expectations for how often and for how long students should be accessing their course(s).
- Be explicit with when assignments are due, and how long students are able to reassess using teacher feedback.
- Provide feedback to students using data points compared to expectations to help students grow and improve their proficiency.

RESOURCES to support standard use (mostly practical)

- **Using Data to Inform Instruction**
  "This resource has been designed as a step-by-step tool for educators interested in ways to use data to inform their instructional practice. This tool can be used by individuals or teams to guide the identification of a problem statement, selection of data sources, data analysis, action-planning, and adjustments to practice."
- **How to Best Use Data in Remote Learning**
  "With data analytics, schools can provide more equitable and effective learning environments for all students."
- **Using Learning Analytics to Assess Student Learning in Online Courses**
  "Learning analytics can be used to enhance student engagement and performance in online courses. Using learning analytics, instructors can collect and analyze data about students and improve the design and delivery of instruction to make it more meaningful for them."
- **Differentiation: How do I use data to adjust instruction for groups and individual students?**
  "To serve students equitably, teachers must support the holistic needs of all learners, especially targeting the needs of students who are furthest behind. Using data effectively helps educators better understand learners, build relationships, and personalize instruction to meet unique needs."
- **Expanding Evidence Approaches for Learning in a Digital World**
  Sound decisions must be made at each step of a continuous improvement process to successfully guide refinements. Without thoughtful analysis of data, iteration is a random walk.
- **The Importance of an Online Learning Ecosystem**
  Having the right tool for the job is just as important in education as it is for any other field. Teachers are used to many of these tools they used daily in the traditional classroom. However, now that educators find themselves in unfamiliar territory, many of the tools they once used in the face-to-face world are no longer useful."

Author/Organization Bio

VIVLC is Vermont’s public education online learning program, providing a wide range of supplemental and full-time options for K-12 students. Using a “cooperative partnership” model, VIVLC does not compete for students with their brick and mortar schools. Instead, VIVLC acts as an extension of the school to offer courses for students not offered locally, cannot be accessed due to scheduling conflicts, or allowing students to learn at times to maximize the success of each student. Created in 2009, VIVLC has grown into a robust program providing learning opportunities for schools, Career Technical Education centers, and adult education and literacy program across the state.

Check out the NSQ Professional Learning Portal and NSQ Website for more resources at [www.NSQOL.org](http://www.NSQOL.org)