

**Purpose:**

One of the most difficult aspects of online teaching involves student engagement. Due to the nature of online education many students feel isolated from one another and their instructor, which can foster a decreased sense of engagement as well as lead to an overall lack of motivation when it comes to doing the work required in a course. While every course is different, it is helpful to analyze an existing online class in an effort to give current or prospective online instructors a better sense of how to engage students in their own classes.

As two of the leading providers of free online courses, EdX and Coursera are good places to start when looking at what works and does not work in terms of creating engaging course content. Both of these institutions work with leading universities across the country to provide free, high-quality college-level courses to anyone in the world. However, a growing body of research is beginning to demonstrate that this model of education is, perhaps, not all it appears to be.

By auditing an existing online course, Participants will be able to take a step back and see things with a fresh set of eyes in an effort to look for techniques that would work well to engage students in addition to figuring out what things should be avoided. This will then give Participants a better sense of what they can do in their own online courses to engage students and help students to stay active throughout the semester.

**Instructions:**

1. Sign up for an account at EdX ([www.edx.org](http://www.edx.org)) or Coursera ([www.coursera.org](http://www.coursera.org)) and search the catalog for a single course to audit. If do not need to pay for this, since most of the courses they offer are free, but you will not receive any type of official certification if you do decide to complete the course on your own time.
2. Enroll in the course and begin looking through the materials. Watch some videos, look at a few lessons, audit the discussion board, and spend time digging through the course with an eye on student engagement.
3. Analyze the course with a focus on student engagement, and think about things the instructor could do differently in order to provide a more engaging online environment which would in turn lead to greater student involvement and academic success.
4. Post your answers to following questions on the discussion board:
  - a. Briefly describe the course and why you chose to enroll in it
  - b. Comment on the overall course environment in terms of engagement. Does it seem like an inviting, welcoming class? What do you see as barriers to student engagement? If you were a student enrolled in this course for real, would you be motivated to do the work? Explain your answers and provide any additional comments you want.
  - c. What could the instructor or course designer do differently to create a more engaging environment for students. Also, what might you do differently in your own course to make it more engaging as a result of auditing one from EdX or Coursera?
5. Throughout the duration of this Workshop, use the discussion board for this assignment to engage in a productive and thoughtful dialogue with other Participants in order to more thoroughly explore these concepts of student engagement.

**Assessment:**

	<b>Exemplary (A)</b>	<b>Satisfactory (B-C)</b>	<b>Emerging (D-F)</b>
<b>Evaluation</b>	Based on the Participant's post on the discussion board it is evident that the Participant has spent time thoroughly investigating and evaluating an online course	Based on the Participant's post on the discussion board it appears as though the Participant has not spent much time in the online course	Based on the Participant's post on the discussion board it is clear that the Participant has not spent any time thoughtfully evaluating an online course
<b>Discussion Post</b>	Discussion post contains thoughtful and complete answers to all three prompts	Discussion post contains answers to all three prompts, but answers are short, unclear, or somewhat meandering	Discussion post, if present, does not adequately address the three prompts in any substantive way
<b>Discussion Responses</b>	Participant provides thoughtful and insightful responses to other Participants' posts throughout the duration of the Workshop	Participant provides one or two responses to other posts, or Participant waits until the final few days of class to engage in any meaningful way	Participant does not respond to other posts on the discussion thread, or waits until the last day to give any responses.