



IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE



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Attending class sessions helps students to stay on track, understand expectations, promote a sense of connectedness and improve performance. Shimoff and Catania (2001) discovered that simply by recording attendance (without awarding course credit), both attendance and overall academic performance of students improved significantly.



Also, Dickson and Stephens (2016) increased both lecture attendance and course performance by informing students of their accumulated attendance percentage; with larger effects for students from lower performers.

Here are some strategies to improve student attendance:

Provide information about attendance at the beginning of the semester. Instructors should clearly define attendance policy and how exactly attendance grading is done, which helps students to know whether attendance is part of the evaluation. Also, you can share with students the importance of attendance. Chenneville and Jordan (2008) found that students may be unaware of the negative impact that missing class has on academic performance. It may be that undergraduate students lack the experience to understand fully the impact that missing class has on one's grades.

Model excellent attendance. The attendance of teachers has a strong relationship to the attendance of students. Chronic student absenteeism exists where the majority of teachers are also frequently absent (2013-14 Civil Rights Data Collection: A First Look).





Chronic absenteeism is most commonly defined as missing 10% or more of the school year for any reason, excused or unexcused. An overwhelming body of research demonstrates the negative short- and long-term consequences of chronic absenteeism on academic achievement.

Give unannounced or pop quizzes. Unannounced quizzes encourage students to prepare for each class so they have a basic understanding of the current terms and concepts.

Make it clear that the quizzes can't be made up later by absent students. Also, keep in mind that the number of these quizzes and their points should be included in the syllabus and you should inform students about these quizzes at the beginning of the semester.



Give incentive for attendance. Latif and Miles (2013) highlight that to encourage class attendance, instructors might provide incentives to students such as assigning a certain percentage of grades for class attendance.

Monitor student attendance. Instructors should build relationships with students, ensuring that there is follow up with the students if they are not in class. Sending e-mails shows concern and interest in the students. The student will also realize that the absence was noticed and someone does care. Bowen et al. (2005) found that 75% of students thought attendance should be monitored, because it made them feel that their university cared about their success.





Create a culture of belonging, community, and involvement. According to Oldfield et al. (2019), establishing relationships, conversations, learning names and creating activities of involvement and inclusion can help to create a sense of belonging. According to Braun and Sellers (2012), fostering a supportive learning environment will not only help prepare students for class, but also help them not fall behind, which will positively influence their psychological well-being, and likely, their academic success.

Use more active learning strategies. According to Persky et al. (2014), implementing more active learning exercises by using in-class group work increases student engagement and class attendance. Also, Alexander and Hicks (2016) emphasize that students need to be motivated to attend class so one of the solutions may be incorporating more active learning strategies into the lesson, as well as more effective use of digital material.

References

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- Improving Student Attendance, Center for Teaching and Learning. Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis. <https://ctl.iupui.edu/Resources/Classroom-Management/Tips-for-Improving-Student-Attendance>
- 2013-14 Civil Rights Data Collection: A First Look. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/2013-14-first-look.pdf>



Further Reading and Resources

- [How Student Attendance Can Improve Institutional Outcomes, Macmillan Learning.](#)
- [Student Motivations to Attend Class by Lindsay Shaw, University of Windsor, Centre for Teaching and Learning.](#)
- [Taking Attendance - Must We? By Rita-Marie Conrad. University of Berkeley, Center for Teaching & Learning.](#)
- [Motivating Students. The University of Kansas, Center for Teaching Excellence.](#)