

Provide Varied Resources

Resources are the materials that we provide or assign to students to facilitate understanding of the course content beyond what is learned through lecture and discussion. When used strategically as motivational tools, the resources that we provide can play a significant role in engaging students to help them achieve their learning goals.

In addition to text that is read and discussed in a course, we can use multimedia resources to provide students with various ways of engaging with the content. Students love variety, which is why this approach can help capture and sustain their attention. Examples of such resources include the following:

- podcasts
- TED Talks
- videos
- graphics
- animations
- social media

While multimedia resources can help students access the course content in different ways by appealing to individual learning preferences and styles, providing varied resources can also demonstrate the relevance of the material to students' academic, professional, and personal lives.

Examples of Providing Varied Resources

The table below provides examples of the ways in which you can use varied resources as well as the benefits of doing so. Each of these resources can be utilized whether you are teaching online, in the classroom, or a hybrid course.

Media resource	Example	Benefits
Podcasts	A linguistics instructor assigns students to listen to an academic podcast that covers a wide variety of topics pertaining to how words impact our lives and how our lifestyles shape the meanings of words.	Students instantly have access to perspectives of other professionals in the field while also being exposed to the various ways the course content is applicable to life outside of the course and within different industries or professions.
TED Talks	An instructor of communications assigns students to watch a TED Talk given by a professional in marketing, communications, public speaking, or a similar field.	In addition to engaging with the content provided by the expert in the assigned TED Talk, students can learn from the way in which the speaker presents the information as well as the use of body language, tone, volume, style, and incorporation of media within the TED Talk.
Videos	A mechanics professor creates a video of herself working on a prized vintage vehicle in her garage.	Whether you teach online or in person, a personal video that takes place in a fun setting relevant to the course allows students to see your passion for the material and how you engage with the topics outside of teaching. Videos can also be used to teach processes, introduce new perspectives, or teach the same material in a narrative form.

Media resource	Example	Benefits
Graphics & animations	A statistics instructor uses graphics to demonstrate percentages. A test-prep instructor teaches students about testing style through narratives that use animations.	Graphics and animations allow instructors to visually present the content being taught in the course. This can not only attract the eye but also appeal to learners who may better understand concepts when presented in novel ways.
Social media	A photography instructor asks students to post a picture of a sunset on Instagram without a filter and use a unique hashtag.	Engaging students in the course content through social media can help connect them directly to the content outside of the course. Social media used in this way helps students hold discourse on the topics covered in the course. This can also introduce students to others in the field who use social media to facilitate discussion or share other resources.

Challenges of Making Media Accessible

It is important to ensure that multimedia resources assigned in your course are accessible to all students. Although student centers or other services may provide students who have disabilities with support technologies or software, you can include closed captioning, transcriptions, or other text forms of the videos, TED Talks, or podcasts when possible. This will help ensure ADA compliance and is generally a good practice as many learners benefit from closed captioning and supplemental texts.

Sources

Eberly Center. (n.d.). *Students lack interest or motivation*. Carnegie Mellon University.

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