

DRIVING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN LARGE CLASSES WITH PIAZZA



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1 Use Piazza instead of emails

Post on Piazza to eliminate redundant emails. Encourage students to use the Search function (perhaps even penalize repeat questions). Leaving questions unresolved creates an informal To Do list.

2 Allow anyone to answer

Don't restrict who answers questions. Mark good answers to help students build confidence and feel connected and a sense of belonging to the discipline.

3 Allow anonymous posts

Allowing anonymous posts enables students to post without fear of embarrassment or ridicule. Also allow private posts so students don't feel like they're giving away the answer.

4 Delay responding

Wait 10 - 15 minutes before answering questions. Often students will figure out the answer themselves, and it allows other students to answer. Be sure to mark good answers to validate responses.

5 Utilize pins

Pin content to keep it from scrolling off screen. Include a handout and FAQ for each assignment. Have TAs share a pin for office hour updates and cancellations.

6 Assign Piazza hours

Assign hours to TAs to monitor questions on Piazza. Establish goals (e.g., reply to all questions within 30 minutes). Rotate TAs to avoid burn-out.

7 Augment evaluations

View which students provide good answers to give them extra credit or identify potential TAs. Look at responses and response rates to evaluate current TAs.

8 Keep star students engaged

For students who finish assignments quickly, encourage them to answer questions within Piazza. This assists other students and helps them maintain their connection with the class.

9 Add images to threads

For questions that are difficult to explain in words (e.g., a chemical reaction or computer code), use the in-built function within Piazza to include a photo or screenshot in the thread.

10 Monitor conversations

Allow students to post anonymously to other students but they must reveal their names to the professor/TAs to reduce fake news, flame throwing, and grade lobbying.