How to Drive Student Engagement Asynchronously

Active learning is not an isolated activity. In fact, you can incorporate active learning practices across every part of your curriculum and if you are employing both synchronous and asynchronous methods, this can be done before, during and after class. Here are some examples of activities that can be used at different stages of the learning journey:

**BEFORE CLASS**

**Short Quiz**
Have students complete a short quiz on concepts discussed during the previous lecture. Regular, low-stakes assessments improve knowledge retention while giving instructors a mechanism to gauge how well students are grasping key concepts. If necessary, review the results before diving into the next topic, or spend more time on concepts that posed the greatest challenge for students.

**During Class**

**Discussion Threads**
Have students exchange drafts of their work and then come up with questions and comments for each other. Be clear about what the goals of the exercise are. For example, do you want to test a student’s understanding of a topic? Or perhaps how well they are able to apply something they learned to a real-life situation? You can also use discussion threads to explore more sensitive or polarizing topics by having students respond anonymously—a great way to engage, whatever the material.

**Interactive Readings**
With digital textbooks and course materials, you can incorporate active learning principles into simple reading assignments. This includes breaking up text with video and other multimedia elements and embedding questions to test for comprehension before students move onto subsequent sections. Online active learning platforms like Top Hat can automatically tabulate these results allowing you to shape your next lecture to address student needs.

**After Class**

If your class does not have a synchronous component to it, the likes of quizzes, discussion threads and interactive readings are still essential in order to keep students engaged in—and add valuable structure to—a self-paced learning environment.