

The Role of Reinforcement Motivation in Enhancing Engagement Among Remote Students in Asynchronous Global Campus courses

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Abstract

As online education rapidly expands through Global campuses, maintaining student engagement in asynchronous remote courses has become a critical priority for higher education institutions aiming to uphold academic quality and reduce attrition. This study addresses the influence of reinforcement motivation on student engagement across classes shared by on-campus online students and fully remote (Global campus) learners. Anchored in Skinner's behavioral psychology theory, the study evaluates the impact of instructor-led reinforcement motivation, operationalized as weekly motivational announcements, on engagement, measured via a composite index of standardized page views and participation data from Canvas LMS analytics. The study sample consisted of 119 students across three asynchronous course sections, taught by different instructors but following an identical syllabus. One section received the motivational reinforcement intervention, while two sections served as controls. Using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA), results demonstrated a significant positive effect of the reinforcement intervention on student engagement ($P < 0.0009$) with a moderate effect size, confirming the effectiveness of this motivational strategy. A significant interaction effect was observed ($p < 0.019$), indicating that Global campus remote students experienced greater engagement gains than on-campus peers, highlighting the need for tailored interventions addressing modality-specific challenges. These findings highlight the importance of simple, cost-effective instructor-led motivational strategies in promoting behavioral engagement and academic persistence, particularly for remote learners who are vulnerable to disengagement. The study contributes actionable insights for online education practitioners and affirms the importance of differentiated instructional support in increasingly prevalent asynchronous learning environments.

Keywords: online class, asynchronous, global campus, student engagement, reinforcement motivation.