



Attention and Engagement

Attention span

A Gloria Marks study shows that in 2004, the average attention span was about 150 seconds (2 ½ minutes), in 2012 that dropped to 75 seconds, and between 2020-2025 had dropped again to an average of 47 seconds.

Why is this happening?

Students now are drawn into easy digital distractions such as message notifications, social media, and short format content rather than drawn out ideas. Additionally, the average post-COVID screen time is 8-10 hours daily. This means students are having fewer engagements with sustained attention and focus.

How does this impact college students?

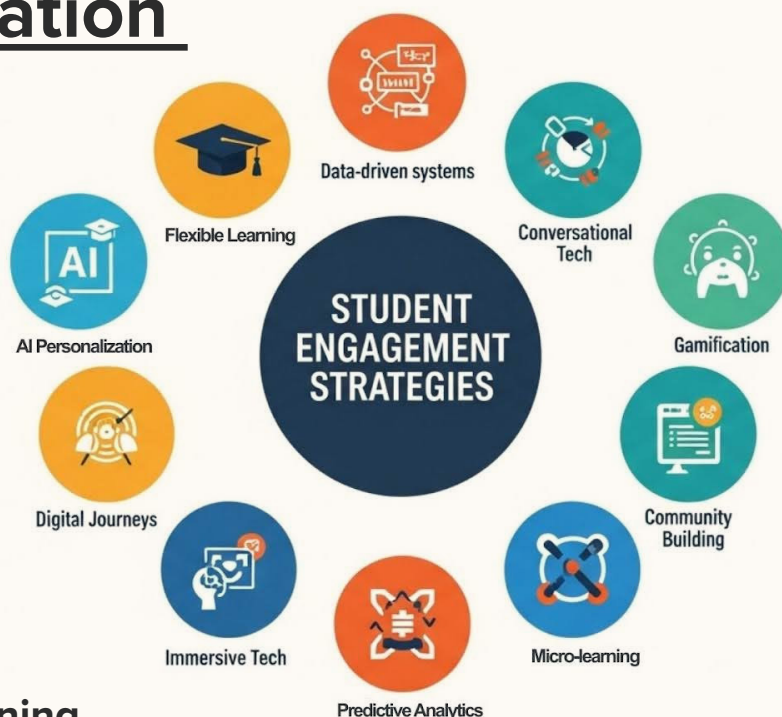
Difficulty with focus, memory, and information retention is greatly impacted as students read complex material and complete longer assignments. Lack of attention span, constant distractions, and rapid switching from one thing to another can create cognitive fatigue, increase in stress and anxiety, and decreased tolerance for feeling bored.

Multitasking and attention in students

Multitasking can decrease productivity by about 40% and can lead to an increased likelihood to complete error-prone work. Factually, only about 2.5% of people can effectively multitask, thus creating an environment with little distractions is important



Ways to increase engagement and participation



Bite sized learning

Create small bursts of information that can be connected to create an understanding of complex topics.

Address problem areas

Encourage students to put away their cell phones during class time.

Brain breaks

Schedule regular mental and/or physical breaks during class time.

Gamification

Connect educational material to game-like structures. This can look like earning points, surpassing levels, competition with others, and more.

Predictive analytics

Take information on performance from previous assignments and projects to predict outcomes for future work. If you think something is not going to work for students based on previous experience, try something new!

Immersive tech

Puts students directly in the environment they are learning about through technology. Teaching about a historical landmark? Show this on Google Earth, or another platform!