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In the Classroom "One Size Does Not Fit All": Exploring Elasticity of the Classroom Experience

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St. Petersburg College (SPC) serves a diverse array of college students with varying backgrounds. The average age of a SPC student is 28.8, 75.0% of SPC’s more than 53,000 students are employed and 65.7% take 1 or more online courses. At SPC, an area of focus for the faculty is the ‘Classroom Experience’; however, the non-traditional, diverse student population and multiple coursework modalities requires an elasticity within the experience. Education studies have shown student engagement is a major factor of the Classroom Experience. Education Reform (2016) states “learning improves when students are inquisitive, interested, or inspired, and that learning tends to suffer when students are bored, dispassionate, disaffected, or otherwise disengaged.” Moreover, engagement experiences are crucial for both face-to-face and online courses. SPC student feedback regarding classroom engagement suggests “one size does not fit all” with some students responding positively to group assignments while some prefer PowerPoint presentations delivered by an enthusiast instructor and even others learn best with active or service learning experiences. In this session, we will discuss the importance of student engagement within the classroom and mechanisms to promote engagement (both face-to-face and online). Specific examples of activities designed to promote engagement, group activity and information ownership will be shared (e.g. Translation Trail, Water Properties Picture, Weekly Selfie Scavenger Hunts).

Keywords: classroom experience, student engagement, learning activities