

Strategies to Enhance International Student Academic Engagement in the Institute of Technology and Polytechnics (ITP) Sector in New Zealand

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<https://doi.org/10.34074/proc.220503>

Abstract

The paradigm shift in learning from a behaviourist to constructivist approach has changed the focus from traditional learning to the development of an interactive learning environment in both the classroom and online settings. An interactive learning environment encourages student engagement with educators, peers and the course content, thus contributing to greater academic success. With the globalisation of education, educators face the challenge of engaging international students (IS) in their teaching and learning environment. IS face significant academic, sociocultural and environmental barriers that inhibit their classroom and online engagement. The purpose of this study is to identify strategies that would help enhance IS academic engagement in the Institute of Technology and Polytechnics (ITP) sector in New Zealand. This paper systematically reviewed existing literature on IS engagement in tertiary business education. The emphasis was on identifying educationally purposeful activities that educators in ITPs can adopt in the classroom and online environment, to influence the behavioural dimension of learner engagement. Three well-known strategies, designing a blended learning environment, effective student–staff interactions, and designing a collaborative learning environment, were identified to enhance student engagement in the tertiary education context. The shift to emergency online teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic has increased the challenges educators face to engage IS. Actionable strategies for educators to engage learners in the online teaching and learning environment are discussed. Knowledge of these strategies will enhance the efficiency of educators to facilitate an interactive learning environment that fosters successful student engagement.

Key words: International students, learner engagement, engagement practices, ITP sector

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This publication may be cited as:

Moses, T., and Yamjal, P. (2022). Strategies to Enhance International Student Academic Engagement in the Institute of Technology and Polytechnics (ITP) Sector in New Zealand. In E. Papoutsaki and M. Shannon (Eds.), *Proceedings: 2021 ITP Research Symposium, 25 and 26 November* (pp. 21–36). Auckland: ePress, Unitec, Te Pūkenga.
<https://doi.org/10.34074/proc.2205003>

An ePress publication

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www.unitec.ac.nz/epress/

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ISBN 978-0-473-65046-9

