

## **The Impact of Instructor-Student Engagement and Student Satisfaction on The Academic Success of Online MSW Students**

**Jackson de Carvalho, PhD**

Professor & MSW Program Director  
Prairie View A&M University  
Prairie View, Texas 77446  
United States of America

**Felix O. Chima, PhD, MSW, MBA**

Department Head, Professor & BSW Director  
Department of Social Work  
Prairie View A&M University  
Prairie View, Texas 774446  
United States of America

### **Abstract**

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*In the current competitive landscape of higher education, numerous Master of Social Work (MSW) Programs are dedicated to strengthening academic performance, student retention, and graduation rates through the strategic deployment of online education and meaningful instructor-student engagement. While student assessments are commonplace, limited research has been directed toward the specific program components influencing instructor-student engagement, student satisfaction, and academic outcomes. By emphasizing these influences, there is a heightened recognition of their pivotal role in enhancing online learners' educational experiences and successes. Therefore, examining MSW students' experiences with online instructor-student engagement and its influence on student satisfaction is essential in propelling elevated academic achievement. The findings of this study, particularly those concerning adjunct instructor status, synchronous/asynchronous classrooms, and blended learning, enrich our understanding of how instructor-student interactions and student satisfaction impact academic success. Furthermore, they offer valuable insights for advancing success in online programs, fostering optimism and promise for the future of online education. These findings are not only intriguing but also hold the potential to significantly benefit your work in this field.*

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**Keywords:** Online learning, factors, *instructor-student engagement*, satisfaction, and academic success.

### **1.0. Introduction**

Student satisfaction with the online program, a well-established variable in the relevant literature, is a significant predictor of academic success (Heilporn et al., 2020). In this study, the online MSW student-instructor engagement levels were found to be closely associated with student satisfaction. More specifically, the engagement between online instructors and students was identified as a significant predictor of student satisfaction leading to academic success (Hassan et al., 2018; Konyana et al., 2022; Park & Kim, 2020; Sandstrom, 2023; Schwarz & Zhu, 2015).

These findings not only reiterate the importance of online student-instructor engagement but also significantly contribute to our understanding of its impact on student satisfaction and academic success, highlighting the crucial role of the instructor in the field of online education.

Graduate Social Work Programs are designed to train practitioners to improve micro and macro systems while promoting social and economic equity policies at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. At the graduate level, Master of Social Work (MSW) programs across the country are tasked with educating future social work professionals to conduct advanced evaluations and interventions relevant to the client system (Curran et al., 2017). These graduate programs, which often feature coursework related to human behavior and social environments, social work policy and advocacy, evidence-based interventions, and advanced supervised clinical field education or practicum, are designed to prepare individuals for advanced practice positions in social work.

A unique and significant development in recent years has been the exponential growth of online MSW programs, which offer a distinct learning environment characterized by asynchronous learning, virtual group discussions, and self-paced assignments. These online programs, while providing flexibility and accessibility, also present challenges such as maintaining student engagement, fostering a sense of community, and ensuring the quality of instruction. This adaptability of online MSW programs not only poses unique challenges but also underscores the effectiveness of these programs in preparing individuals for advanced practice positions, providing a sense of reassurance about the quality of online education (Konyana et al., 2022; Sandstrom, 2023).

While most MSW programs still offer traditional face-to-face education, the exponential growth of online MSW programs since 2019 forged a significant gap in our understanding of the relationship between online student satisfaction with the program, instructor-student engagement, and academic success (Council on Social Work Education, 2020). This gap is not just a matter of curiosity but a pressing issue that demands our immediate attention. There is an urgent need for more social work research studies associated with student satisfaction with online graduate social work programs, instructor-student engagement, and academic success (Curran et al., 2017). Most literature exploring student satisfaction with social work programs focuses on face-to-face undergraduate programs. This article, therefore, plays a crucial role in focusing on graduate-level social work programs, specifically online MSW programs, in bridging the knowledge gap about online MSW student satisfaction, student-instructor engagement, and academic success in increasing graduation (Freeman et al., 2013; Richardson et al., 2017).

Since the inception of the first MSW web-based program in 2002 (Cummings et al., 2015), there has been a need for more studies exploring predictors of student satisfaction and academic success with hybrid or online MSW programs (Curran et al., 2017). The existing studies have identified factors such as faculty involvement and the ability to complete online tasks, but these need to be further explored in empirical research studies with suitable methods and relevance to ensure rigor and replicability. Given the diverse components of a social work program, such as curriculum, student services, advisement, career services, and quality of interaction with faculty, this study aims to identify the strongest correlates of student satisfaction for online MSW programs, a task that has the potential to significantly impact the field of social work education.

This study aims to gather insights for creating effective practices for online MSW programs, optimizing resource allocation to improve instructor-student engagement and satisfaction, ultimately leading to academic success. It will also influence departmental policies to enhance the quality of online education. This study can inspire new recruiting strategies, resource allocation, and departmental policies (Cummings et al., 2015; Curran et al., 2017). This study aims to delve into the experiences of MSW students with online instructor-student engagement and its influence on student satisfaction, ultimately leading to enhanced academic success.

## **2.0. M Background**

Online education is increasing, and there are many terms for online education. Nevertheless, online education is defined by Blackmon (2013) as a teaching and learning process using technological approaches to reach learners virtually. Allen and Seaman (2016) suggested that virtual education is a byproduct of the technological engagement of teachers and learners free of time and location constraints. Since 2002, online higher education has steadily grown, with more than 3 million students enrolled in online programs and another three million enrolled in hybrid or campus-based courses (Seaman et al., 2018).

This growth trend has remained consistent over the last two decades, even as enrollment in campus-based learning has flattened or declined. Nevertheless, the COVID-19 crisis brought about a significant shift, with nearly all classes being mandated to be taught in a virtual format. This unprecedented situation led to the rapid implementation of online courses, including Zoom lectures, to replicate the face-to-face classroom experience (Allen & Seaman, 2016). This surge in online education underscores its adaptability and relevance in the current educational landscape, where it has become a necessity rather than an option.

Given the increasing familiarity with online education, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has granted accreditation to social work programs for offering online courses, under the condition that the programs can show evidence that students have attained mastery of the required competencies (CSWE, 2020). This research seeks to examine how student-instructor engagement and satisfaction impact academic success. In the case of Master of Social Work (MSW) students, academic success is defined as the attainment of CSWE competencies and completion of the program with a GPA of 3.0 or better (De Carvalho & Spears, 2019).

The concepts of student-instructor engagement, student satisfaction, and academic success are foundational elements in students' academic journey (Jan 2015). It's important to acknowledge that these constructs are closely interconnected and significantly influence students' academic experiences. Various authors have underscored the importance of student-instructor engagement and student satisfaction as consistent and essential factors that impact academic success (Bye et al., 2009). However, the lack of a universal operational definition for these constructs in online student academic performance research is a notable criticism, highlighting the need for further exploration (de Oliveira, et al., 2017). In this context, student-instructor engagement is illustrated as the interaction between instructors and students, while student satisfaction refers to the student's subjective preference for educational experiences and outcomes. Furthermore, academic success is defined as attaining a higher-Grade Point Average (GPA) and mastering learning objectives, skills, and competencies (de Carvalho & Colvin, 2015; Hwangji, 2020).

### **3.0. Student-Instructor Engagement**

The concept of instructor-student engagement, as defined by Hwangji (2020), encompasses the connection between instructor and student. As universities transition to online, asynchronous modalities where students and instructors are not required to be online simultaneously, it is essential to comprehend the impact of instructor-student engagement on student satisfaction. Understanding the dynamics of instructional interactions and their effects on student outcomes is crucial in navigating the evolving landscape of higher education (de Oliveira, et al., 2017). Although adjunct roles offer cost-saving benefits to institutions, the reliance on part-time faculty can pose challenges in fostering meaningful instructor-student engagement and maintaining consistent teaching quality (Hanson & de los Reyes, 2019; Martin & Bolliger, 2018).

Howley-Rouse (2021) underscored the urgent need for immediate and comprehensive research to validate the influence of instructor-student engagement on student satisfaction. This research area holds immense promise as student satisfaction is pivotal in education, shaping students' perceptions of their learning journey and their drive to earn a degree. The potential benefits of this research for our esteemed audience, university administrators, educators, and researchers in the field of education and social work are profound. It can offer insights to enhance student satisfaction and academic success, thereby paving the way for significant improvements in educational practices and inspiring a sense of hope and motivation for the future of education (Sandstrom, 2023; Seaman et al., 2018).

Numerous studies (Beloucif et al., 2022; Hassan et al., 2018; Jowallah, 2014; Keržič et al., 2019; Park & Kim, 2020; Sandstrom, 2023) have indicated a positive correlation between the quality and depth of instructor-student engagement and student satisfaction. This correlation has the potential to impact the overall learning experience and academic outcomes (Jamerson, 2021). Consequently, understanding and addressing the impact of technology on interpersonal relationships is crucial for fostering effective instructor-student engagement in both synchronous and asynchronous online learning environments (; Keržič et al., 2019; Park & Kim, 2020).

The studies of Baber (2020) found that the shift to online, asynchronous programs has shown unintended consequences, such as instructors needing to prepare to transfer the benefits of face-to-face instructor-student engagement to online, asynchronous interactions. This lack of preparation has led to delayed feedback, reduced student engagement, and decreased student satisfaction, all of which have affected academic success (Keržič et al., 2019). The study by Preuss et al. (2019) defines online, asynchronous interactions as an online platform that allows program flexibility and fosters a sense of community while providing a high-level structure course design.

University administrators aim to provide educational programs that attract students and facilitate their academic success, with student satisfaction serving as a leading indicator of academic success (Hassan et al., 2018; Konyana et al., 2022; Sandstrom, 2023).

While several studies have explored the dynamics associated with instructor-student engagement and satisfaction among graduate students, there is a pressing and unmistakable call for more research (Alqurashi, 2019; Bolliger & Halupa, 2018; Francescucci & Rohani, 2018; Gavrilis et al., 2018; Park & Kim, 2020). This call is particularly urgent regarding instructor-student engagement and Master of Social Work (MSW) student satisfaction in online, asynchronous environments as they grapple with high dropout rates. Immediate and concerted action is needed to address these issues and enhance the learning experiences of MSW students, underscoring the urgency and critical importance of this research (Park & Kim, 2020; Richardson et al., 2017).

The relevant literature on instructor-student engagement revealed three main factors impacting instructors' relationships with their students, student satisfaction and academic success. These impacting factors are a) adjunct instructors, b) synchronous/asynchronous classrooms, and c) blended learning.

### ***3.1. Adjunct Instructors***

The COVID-19 crisis and technological advancements have significantly reshaped the educational landscape, leading to a surge in college enrollment and a subsequent rise in contingent faculty, particularly adjunct instructors (Finkelstein et al., 2016). These instructors, who teach higher education courses in a part-time capacity without being hired as full-time faculty members (Fedock et al., 2019), have emerged as the backbone of higher education, constituting the predominant majority, with approximately 75% of the tenure track in 2015, and 43% engaged in part-time work (Finkelstein et al., 2016; Hanson & de los Reyen, 2019).

Several studies (Danaei, 2019; Harris et al., 2019; Murray, 2019) found that adjunct faculty face many challenges in higher education institutions, such as job insecurity, unfavorable working conditions, and inadequate institutional support. Despite these hurdles, adjunct instructors demonstrate remarkable resilience and dedication. Without a collective bargaining agreement or formalized contract, contingent faculty may have no legal expectation of reappointment, leading to uncertain employment prospects (Murray, 2019). While some full-time adjuncts have better access to benefits, they still need to grapple with job instability compared to tenured faculty. Still, despite possessing comparable qualifications to full-time faculty, adjunct faculty also undertake comparable responsibilities under these challenging conditions (Danaei, 2019; Harris et al., 2019).

The study by Harris (2019) indicated significant potential ramifications of universally dissatisfied part-time faculty, suggesting a potentially severe adverse effect on the overall quality of education in higher education institutions. Given the employment challenges they face, the ability of adjunct instructors to effectively engage with students and provide adequate support becomes limited (Harris, 2019). The prevalence of adjunct positions in higher education institutions, driven by economic considerations and enduring financial challenges, poses essential implications for faculty satisfaction and student experiences (Hanson & de los Reyen, 2019). Understanding the dynamics of instructional interactions and their effects on student outcomes is crucial in navigating the evolving landscape of higher education (Sandstrom, 2023). Although adjunct roles offer cost-saving benefits to institutions, over-reliance on part-time faculty can present challenges in establishing meaningful instructor-student engagement and ensuring student satisfaction with the program. This, in turn, can significantly and negatively impact student's academic outcomes (Sandstrom, 2023; Martin & Bolliger, 2018).

### ***3.2. Synchronous/Asynchronous Classrooms***

The hybrid approach combines synchronous and asynchronous teaching methods to create a dynamic learning system (Xin Xie et al., 2020). This approach balances live sessions and self-paced learning, providing a practical and flexible learning experience. Asynchronous teaching liberates instruction and learning from time and place constraints and forms the foundation of online MSW Programs. On the other hand, synchronous e-learning focuses on real-time educational exchanges (Peck et al., 2018). Asynchronous online learning allows students to progress through course materials at their own pace, without live video lectures.

In contrast, synchronous online learning adheres to a predetermined schedule, requiring students to participate in class activities at specific times every week. This method benefits students who thrive in a well-organized setting and prefer live instruction at specific times (Francescucci, & Rohani, 2018). The critical difference between asynchronous and synchronous learning lies in including live instruction at specific times. The structure of online program platforms plays a crucial role in bridging the engagement gap between instructors and students. The primary aim of online MSW programs should be to promote connection and engagement among participants in both asynchronous and synchronous modalities (Croxtton, 2014; Moore, 2019).

It's important to recognize that while synchronous modes aim to replicate traditional classroom environments, they come with their own set of challenges. Students are required to be present at specific times and need consistent internet connectivity (Artino Jr., 2010). Traditional learning thrives on direct, face-to-face engagements, but spatial boundaries limit it. Synchronous online platforms break these barriers but struggle to accommodate diverse schedules and learner preferences (Sandstrom, 2023). Despite the advantages of asynchronous learning's flexibility, instructors are tasked with sustaining student engagement and promoting active participation in the course. The decentralized nature of this modality often leads to learners feeling isolated, necessitating more effort from their end to foster student-instructor engagement and collaboration (Schwarz & Zhu, 2015). Although flexible, asynchronous modalities require sophisticated IT infrastructure and can improve instructor/student interactions, leading to lower satisfaction and academic success (Xin Xie et al., 2020; Park & Kim, 2020).

Several studies (Costouros, 2020; Entezari & Mohammad, 2016; Fiorella L & Mayer, 2013; Huitt et al., 2015; Hyun et al., 2017; Oakes et al., 2019; Tatachar et al., 2016) showed that when enhanced with traditional lecture methods, asynchronous learning increased student satisfaction and academic success. A study by Jowallah (2014) also demonstrated that online MSW students benefit significantly from clear and personal communication, mainly when instructors engage synchronously in the usually asynchronous environment. Bolliger and Halupa (2018) also noted that supportive instructors offering prompt feedback created a positive student experience. A study by Jowallah (2014) demonstrated that online MSW students benefit significantly from clear and personal communication, especially when instructors engage synchronously in the typically asynchronous environment.

Furthermore, Bolliger and Halupa (2018) noted that supportive instructors offering prompt feedback created a positive student experience. This indicates that transactional distance, which refers to the psychological and communication space between the instructor and the student, did not hinder instructor-student engagement but increased student satisfaction and academic success. By combining synchronous lectures with asynchronous elements in online programs, students can create manageable schedules while still being able to engage with their instructors and classmates in real time through platforms such as Zoom (Hassan et al., 2018; Zhu, et al., 2022).

Several studies (Francescucci & Rohani, 2018; Park & Kim, 2020; Xin Xie et al., 2020) have emphasized the importance and benefits of instructor-student engagement in online, synchronous, and asynchronous learning. Including synchronous lectures in asynchronous programs can significantly influence instructor-student engagement, satisfaction, and academic success. These findings make us consider how online learning, when enriched with synchronous lectures, can be as effective as traditional face-to-face instruction (Francescucci & Rohani, 2018; Park & Kim, 2020).

Additionally, research conducted by Sandstorm (2023) underscores the importance of rapport-building in synchronous lectures and students' preference for post-class Zoom sessions during instructors' office hours (Zhu et al., 2022), as it enhances engagement. Additionally, the study by Schwarz and Zhu (2015) found that instructor engagement positively influenced student satisfaction, highlighting the crucial role of instructors in creating conducive learning environments in online programs. This finding should inspire instructional designers to prioritize fostering solid instructor-student engagement in online education programs. This indicates that transactional distance, which refers to the psychological and communication space between the instructor and the student, did not hurt instructor-student engagement but increased student satisfaction and academic success. By combining synchronous lectures with asynchronous elements in online programs, students can create manageable schedules while still being able to engage with their instructors and classmates in real time through platforms such as Zoom (Park and Kim, 2020; Sandstrom, 2023).

Several research studies have analyzed the importance and benefits of instructor-student engagement in online, synchronous, and asynchronous programs (Francescucci & Rohani, 2018; Park & Kim, 2020; Xin Xie et al., 2020). Results indicated that including synchronous lectures in asynchronous programs can significantly influence instructor-student engagement, satisfaction, and academic success. These findings underscore the pivotal role of educators, instructional designers, and researchers, highlighting their significant contribution to the future of online education. Online learning can be enriched with synchronous lectures, making it as effective as traditional face-to-face instruction (Francescucci & Rohani, 2018; Park & Kim, 2020).

Lastly, research conducted by Sandstorm (2023) emphasizes the significance of building rapport in live lectures and students' preference for post-lecture Zoom sessions during instructors' office hours (Zhu et al., 2022), as it boosts engagement. Moreover, the study by Schwarz and Zhu (2015) discovered that instructor engagement positively impacted student satisfaction, highlighting the essential role of instructors in creating supportive learning environments in online programs. This discovery should motivate instructional designers to prioritize the development of strong instructor-student engagement in online education programs.

### **3.3. Blended Learning Approaches**

Blended learning, a method that integrates face-to-face and online teaching, has gained popularity for its potential to cater to the diverse needs of MSW students. The study of Concannon, Flynn, and Campbell (2005) identified blended learning as a combination of a harmonious fusion of traditional teaching methods and modern technology, creating a virtual environment where students can engage in their studies. While evidence of its effectiveness compared to traditional face-to-face approaches is mixed (Kiviniemi, 2014b), the potential of blended learning to enhance student satisfaction is promising, as indicated by Watson et al. (2020).

A structural equation modeling study conducted by Zeqiri et al. (2021) explored the impact of blended learning on student performance and satisfaction and found positive effects with course management and instructor-student engagement influencing students' satisfaction with the program and academic success. Notably, instructor-student engagement was crucial, showing a pronounced impact in the blended learning setting. Alammery et al. (2014) examined blended learning teaching evaluations and student learning outcomes. Data revealed that students exposed to the blended learning approach outperformed those receiving traditional face-to-face teaching. Students expressed that those digital resources enhanced their learning outcomes, improved instructor-student engagement, improved their understanding of teacher expectations, and increased their satisfaction with the virtual learning environment. These findings indicate that implementing a blended learning approach substantially increased student satisfaction with the instructors, the program, and overall academic achievement.

Blended learning has been met with initial hesitation among instructors and institutions, as noted by Watson et al. (2020), due to uncertainties regarding its effects on student satisfaction. However, recent studies by Zeqiri et al. (2021) and Alammery et al. (2014) indicated a consistent rise in student satisfaction with blended learning approaches. This trend underscores the urgent need for further investigation into the impact of instructor-student engagement, student satisfaction, and academic success in blended learning. Notably, Nelson et al. (2010) found that students prefer post-class in-person sessions, suggesting their potential to enhance student engagement within blended learning environments. This preference highlights the importance of exploring diverse modalities to foster student engagement, satisfaction, and ultimately higher levels of academic success in blended learning settings.

### **4.0. Student satisfaction**

Up until 1960, there was only one study on student satisfaction documented in the literature (de Oliveira, 2017). Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, higher education institutions experienced a surge in student enrollment, abundant financial resources, and the trust of external stakeholders. Consequently, student satisfaction surveys were primarily utilized to gauge student engagement and contentment with campus activities, and the data was typically only shared with department administrators. During this period, it was common for student dissatisfaction to be attributed to the student's shortcomings rather than institutional inadequacies (Taylor et al., 2017). However, by the late 1970s, higher education transitioned into an era of decreasing financial resources and waning trust from external stakeholders. Avery, McKay, and Wilson (2007) observed that employers were especially concerned about the quality of higher education received by their prospective employees. Consequently, the administration of student satisfaction surveys and the significance of their findings contributed to developing strategies and policies connected to accountability, competition, recruitment, enrollment, and resource allocation in higher education institutions (de Oliveira, 2017; Richardson et al., 2017).

Since the 1980s, a substantial body of research and theories has been dedicated to unraveling student satisfaction's intricacies. Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that student satisfaction significantly influences student motivation, retention, recruitment, and fundraising efforts, underscoring the importance of conducting student satisfaction surveys (Liu et al., 2013). However, the evaluation of student satisfaction has not remained static. It has shifted from mid-level staff to upper-level authorities in higher education administration, highlighting the increasing responsibility and importance of this task (Richardson et al., 2017). Presently, the assessment of student satisfaction remains a pivotal element of the accountability of higher education institutions (Park & Kim, 2020; Schwarz & Zhu, 2015).

The practical use of data from student satisfaction surveys is well-documented. Assessing students' contentment with their academic experience can be a valuable tool to evaluate the effectiveness of higher education programs. The findings offer valuable insights into the aspects of the educational experience that resonate with students and those that do not. When utilized effectively, these results can offer crucial information for enhancing student services and improving education (Richardson et al., 2017). Additionally, the results of student satisfaction surveys provide diagnostic evidence for administrative decision-making and can aid in better understanding student retention, as unsatisfactory experiences with their educational journey often precede dropout.

Student satisfaction has become increasingly crucial considering the growing competition among higher educational institutions for student recruitment. The online MSW experience's impact on student satisfaction is influenced by various individual and institutional factors, and existing literature suggests that instructor-student engagement and service quality strongly correlate with customer satisfaction. The primary factors affecting student satisfaction in higher education settings include a) Faculty Services (Richardson et al., 2017), b) Self-Efficacy with Online Learning (Alqurashi, 2016), and c) Academic success - GPA (Shen et al., 2013). These studies offer valuable insights for administrators and educators seeking to enhance programs and services and elevate student satisfaction in higher education. Further exploration of this phenomenon is warranted, particularly considering the increasing interest in online graduate education and, more specifically, in the context of online MSW programs (Francescucci & Rohani, 2018; Schwarz & Zhu, 2015).

## 5.0. Summary

The study findings expand our understanding of the impact of instructor-student interactions and student satisfaction in synchronous/asynchronous classrooms, blended learning, and how to increase academic success in online programs. Studies have shown that integrating synchronous learning within an asynchronous environment can positively influence student satisfaction (Park & Kim, 2020) and that online learning, when conducted synchronously, can be as effective as face-to-face instruction (Francescucci & Rohani, 2018). Furthermore, the significance of building rapport in synchronous settings has been highlighted (Sandstorm, 2023), with students expressing a preference for in-person sessions for instructor contact, indicating their potential to enhance student engagement (Bolliger & Halupa, 2018). Additionally, instructor engagement has been linked to higher student satisfaction and positive academic outcomes (Schwarz & Zhu, 2015). Additionally, integrating blended learning principles and thoughtful course design elements contributes to a more effective and satisfying educational experience (Hashim et al., 2021; Keržič et al., 2019).

Considering the findings, there are several important implications for practitioners in enhancing MSW students' experiences with online programs. This can be achieved by prioritizing instructor-student engagement, which in turn can lead to improved overall satisfaction and academic outcomes. In higher education institutions, it is widely recognized that evaluating student satisfaction is crucial, and many schools of social work regularly conduct exit surveys to assess faculty services, student satisfaction, and academic success (Francescucci & Rohani, 2018; Sandstorm, 2023).

In the field of social work, it is essential to thoroughly analyze the different aspects of online programs that contribute to student retention, academic performance, and graduation rates. Research indicates that online programs should carefully consider student feedback and tailor exit surveys to the specific needs of the programs. This approach is not just important, but rather crucial for enhancing the quality of online graduate programs, promoting engagement between instructors and students, and ultimately improving satisfaction and graduation rates (Blayone, 2018; Moore et al., 2015; Vernon et al., 2009).

## 6.0. Implication for practice

The valuable recommendations from the relevant research literature on enhancing instructor engagement and improving overall satisfaction are powerful tools that, when implemented, can significantly enhance students' experience in MSW online programs. For instance, MSW online programs must prioritize establishing effective communication channels between instructors and students in online learning environments. This endeavor entails providing clear communication guidelines, utilizing multiple communication platforms, and ensuring prompt responses to student emails, crucial in making students feel valued and respected. Considering the significant technical challenges reported in research studies, online programs must provide comprehensive orientation and technical support services to empower students to overcome technological barriers. This effort involves offering tutorials, troubleshooting guides, and access to instructional designers or IT support staff.

Directors and faculty of online programs must proactively cultivate a strong sense of community and engagement among students enrolled in online MSW programs. This effort can be achieved through various means, such as organizing virtual social gatherings, facilitating interactive discussion forums, and promoting collaborative group projects. In addition, instructors should aim to enhance their availability and responsiveness to students' needs in online classes. This may entail establishing regular office hours, delivering timely assignment feedback, and actively participating in live online discussions.

Strategies should be implemented to enhance student motivation and engagement in online learning, which can be achieved by integrating multimedia content, interactive learning activities, and providing meaningful and relevant learning experiences. It is also essential to acknowledge and celebrate student achievements. Additionally, online programs should offer resources and support services to help students build self-efficacy and confidence to succeed in online learning environments. This effort, which includes providing workshops on study skills, time management, and goal setting, is crucial in keeping students informed and prepared for their online learning journey. Additionally, online programs must prioritize the well-being of MSW students by providing essential resources to help them achieve a healthy work-life balance. This entails offering flexible scheduling, access to counseling services, and promoting self-care practices. In addition, program directors should actively seek student feedback to continually enhance the online learning experience and ensure it addresses the diverse needs of students.

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