

# Active Learning and Engagement

at University of California  
San Diego

## Introducing Professor Leanne Chukoskie

Dr. Leanne Chukoskie is a seasoned scientist, entrepreneur, and educator. Leanne boasts a PhD in Neuroscience and years of experience in developing innovative curricula. But when active learning started dipping in her class at University of California San Diego, she adopted Engageli and experienced powerful results.



### INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Leanne Chukoskie



### CLASS

Complex system analysis for  
a changing planet



### STUDENTS

56

## The challenge

After learning and teaching with science-backed models for 10 years as part of an NSF Science of Learning program, Dr. Leanne Chukoskie returned to the public university system only to discover that the best teaching practices—though backed by research—were not always being implemented. “I was disappointed to see this gap between what we’ve learned from science and how students are actually learning in Higher Education. We know what works, but we are not always using this knowledge in the field to drive real impact.” Leanne notes.

Her primary challenge was promoting active learning in her classrooms. She needed a video conferencing tool, but UCSD’s options were limited. “It was all very clunky,” she said. “You can do breakouts and polls, but it’s clearly not built for active learning. I want my students to be curious, to ask questions, to be engaged—and I needed a platform encouraging that.”

Leanne also noticed another urgent challenge: student motivation and persistence. “When lectures shifted online [during the COVID-19 pandemic], students quickly learned that they can book two classes at the same time because they don’t have to physically be there. They try to multitask, but this is not conducive for learning. If we want them to show up, to engage, to be active, we need real human connections and incentives for learning.”

To combat these learning hurdles, Leanne tried different digital tools and platforms, but found it challenging to implement in large classes.

“When students can’t see each other, the entire classroom model breaks down. When you get used to a face to face environment or small groups, it’s hard to move to an anonymous online classroom.”

“We know what works for learning, but we are not always using this knowledge in the classroom. Engageli allowed my students to naturally form closer relationships and become more active and engaged in their learning.”

—Dr. Leanne Chukoskie



“The Engageli table groups are a huge step forward.”

—Dr. Leanne Chukoskie

## The solution

One of Dr. Leanne Chukoskie's classes proved the perfect testing ground for a new solution she wanted to try: Engageli. Leanne's class—named Complex System Analysis For A Changing Planet—was project-based and aimed to enhance students' research skills as well as prepare them for the real world.

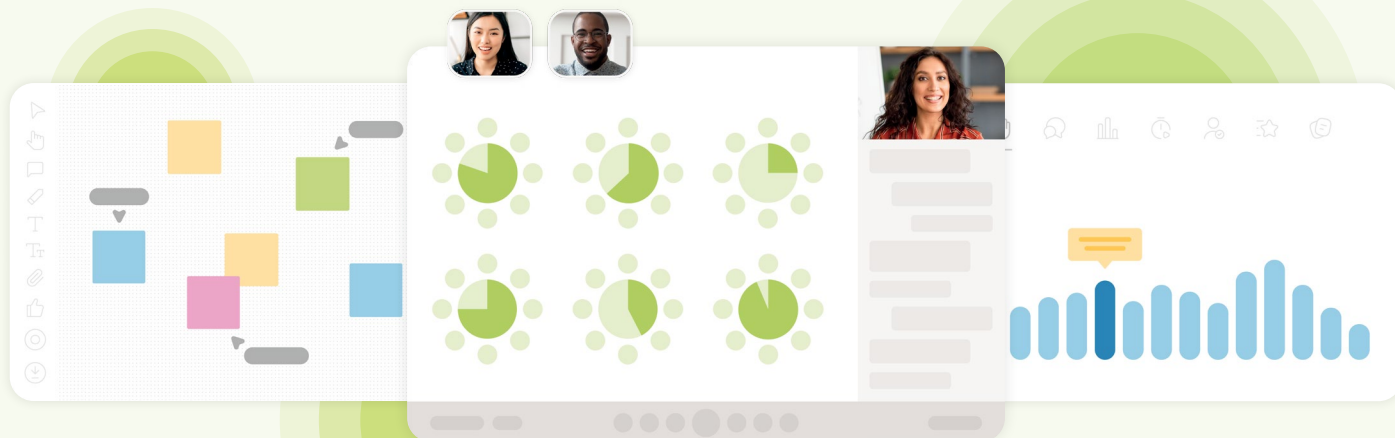
Leanne described her class in more detail, explaining: "Students work in groups on a shared project. They're learning the tools for taking an amorphous idea and generating insights. As an example, one group was working with the City of San Diego. Their goal was to level up micro and small businesses with data science tools. They received a large dataset and were told to discover insights. These are real world problems—there is not one correct answer. They need to come together, discuss, and figure it out."

After implementing Engageli, the class was empowered beyond what Dr. Chukoskie thought possible. The platform allowed students to address complexity, collaborate effectively, and present their community-changing solutions.

Engageli also allowed for flexibility. Students with different needs or tendencies could make their own choices. Some students immediately leveraged Engageli's table architecture to help them focus on the instructor while reducing distractions. Meanwhile, other students were discussing the class content through their table chat threads.

"Students had significant discussions, and seemed to truly enjoy the social aspect. The interactive polls were also a big hit. Students loved participating and answering questions during class."

—Dr. Leanne Chukoskie





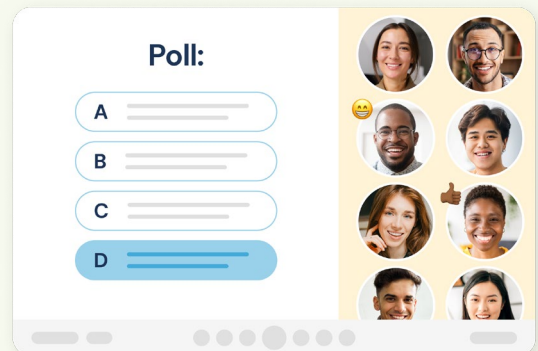
One of Leanne's students shared her experience, saying, "I liked that I could see the instructor's screen while talking with classmates at my table. The ability to interact with my table and easily switch tables to speak with other classmates was extremely intuitive. The clickable polls and interactivity with instructor slides is also great!"

But was introducing this new tool demanding or time-intensive for Dr. Chukoskie? In response to this question, Leanne noted that using Engageli actually made it easier to prepare for classes. "The only modification was creating the interactive poll questions, but those are quick and easy to create. I use polls to prepare students for class, asking them about previous topics to support their recall of information. I use 'thumbs up' and emojis to find out whether my student's understood concepts, if they're following the lecture, and whether they did the prep work prior to class."

Leanne and her students raved over Engageli's dynamic tables and class groupings. The platform allowed Leanne to quickly and easily divide her class into smaller discussion groups, or change them up dynamically throughout the session. This feature proved invaluable for keeping students engaged.

"The table-based structure lowers the barrier for launching and returning from breakout activities. And changing tables to discuss content with other classmates gives us a seamless, digital version of 'speed dating' in class."

—Dr. Leanne Chukoskie



## The outcome

Dr. Leanne Chukoskie's class was uniquely designed to prepare students for the real world. When students learn to collaborate, share ideas, create proposals, and provide meaningful feedback, they're learning skills that will empower them when they join the workforce. Engageli's platform is the perfect tool for these goals, encouraging group work in a natural and intuitive way.

"When working in groups," Leanne says, "there's always a diversity of profiles. You've got everyone from the layabout to the one who takes on all the work solo. Engageli supported every student and their unique learning methods."

One group of students, for example, tapped into the full potential of Engageli's dynamic table feature. One of the students explained how they decided to play their own version of digital musical chairs—switching between Engageli tables to discuss concepts with other groups of students.

Leanne noted that this playfulness and opportunity to connect is unique to Engageli. This created a significant difference in the overall class dynamic, particularly when compared with other tools she's used prior to Engageli.

### CLASSROOM BENEFITS

- ✓ Increased attendance
- ✓ Better engagement and participation
- ✓ Stronger peer collaboration
- ✓ Supports different learning preferences
- ✓ Dynamic table groupings
- ✓ Easy and seamless polls
- ✓ Asynchronous chatting

## Experience the power of Engageli in your classroom.

Learn how our platform can help you boost attendance and engagement, transform peer collaboration, and improve student learning outcomes.

Demo with us →