

**Podcast – July 21, 2006:
Student Frustration and What to do about it**

Last week I talked about an article by Tim Dotson in which he presented some reasons accounting for why some online students don't post – or post infrequently – even when they realize that lack of posting can negatively affect their grades.

One of the thoughts Dotson throws out is to reconsider the value of requiring students to post. And if we make it a requirement (as I do), we should be able to justify the educational value that posting contributes to student learning.

While I was thinking about this issue – required posting and its value – I came across a couple of reports I'd like to talk about today. These are only indirectly related to the issue of student posting and do address student frustration and student engagement.

First, addressing the issue of frustration expressed by online students, Burford and Gross suggest three kinds of messages can allay student frustration.

- Clarify expectations – right at the beginning – for what you expect of students
- Feedback – hard to overemphasize the importance of this, and how much students appreciate it
- Encouragement/Reassurance – obviously this is best when it's keyed to specific student performance

Second, Dereshwsky and Moan in their paper on maximizing student engagement, offer some practical and effective tips. These are things instructors can do to motivate students and, equally important, sustain that motivation throughout an online class.

1-2 Weeks prior to class	send CD (FAQ, slide show orientation, screen shots of web site) along with a welcome letter (voice emails through Bb would work well here), purpose is to get students in a back-to-college mindset and to remind them of things they can do to get ready to succeed
About twice a week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a newsletter is sent to all students which contains important updates and changes to the course • personal comments about students as appropriate (Chris just had a baby – congrats!) • a positive-thinking story, poem, or quote
About once a month	student emails a self-report to the instructor containing what's working well what's not working suggestions about how to solve problems suggestions for other improvements – from their perspective

Dereshwsky and Moan reference

http://www.usdla.org/html/journal/NOV00_Issue/index.htm