Guiding Students with Extra Feedback

Michael J Armstrong, Associate Professor, Brock University, michael.armstrong@brocku.ca

Outline

- Excessive optimism
- Practice exams
- Reflective journals
- Purdue Signals
- Grade forecasting

Excessive optimism

- Students can be too optimistic: Wright, Cairns, & Goodwin (2009); Sitzman et al (2010); Armstrong & Fukami (2010)
- People are not good at forecasting: Leitner & Leopold-Wildburger (2011)
- Feedback is important for learning: Butler & Winne (1995); Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick (2006)

Practice exams with answer discussion: Strasser (2003)

Reflective journals: Pavlovich, Collins, and Jones (2009)

Purdue Signals

- Tracks term marks and student behaviors
- Displays colour-coded signal lights and automatically sends emails to at-risk students
- Game-ification encourages good practices in large intro classes (250-400 students)
- At-risk students seek help sooner & more often
- Grades include more B & C, fewer D & F
- 73% of students recommend system use

Grade forecasting

- Students forecast their end-of-course grades to get predictive feedback
- Linear regression on last year’s marks provides estimates for this year
- E.g., Course = 24.3 + 0.298 Test1 + 0.416 Test2
- Equations are embedded in a spreadsheet posted on course web site near end of semester
- “A” students 7 times more likely than “D” students to participate
- 29% have forecasts lower than expected, 6% higher
- Feelings: 31% more positive, 35% more worried
- Motivation: 56% increased, 7% decreased
- Studying: 47% increased, 6% decreased
- Recommended use: 74% say yes, 6% no

What Do You Think?

- Comments or questions? What methods have you tried? How well did they work?
Main References


Also of Possible Interest


Ferris WP. (2002). Students as junior partners, professors as senior partners, the B-school as the firm: a new model for collegiate business education. Academy of Management Learning and Education 1 (2), 185-193.