Online Instruction and Student Feedback

"Reading student faces and getting that immediate feedback is such a huge part of teaching in person." Dr. Kerrie Douglas, Purdue University Assistant Professor of Engineering Education, talks about how to get the same type of feedback through online course instruction using short video segments and frequent assessment cycles. She also has found a great way to still have face-to-face engagement through her own video feedback specific to a student and teams.

TRANSCRIPT

Another concern a lot of instructors have when they first start thinking about going online is reading student faces. Getting that immediate feedback is such a huge part of teaching in person. I can say something and judge sort of by the look of the students' faces whether or not they're following me, or whether or not they're starting to snore, or if there's a bunch of looks of confusion. The learners can raise their hands and tell me, “Hey, the way you said that, I don't really understand. Can you say it differently?”

When we chunk those segments of video and pose questions, and then go back and review the students' responses to those questions, we can see then what concepts they are struggling with from the beginning. It takes very little time to then make another quick video. It doesn't have to be professional grade. It can just be capturing from my camera on the computer and say, “Hey, let me say this a little different,” or “Sounds like some of you were struggling with my explanation of this. Let me rephrase that for you.” We actually can be responsive to the learners almost in real time to when it's happening.

For instructors, maybe you're concerned it's just creating this huge amount of time and this is going be way more on me than if I were just lecturing in person. I think when we make these videos that are in chunk times, then we always have one we can revisit. So then instead of spending the time in class saying this information, we actually are spending that time reviewing the student work and giving them direct feedback. I think learners really appreciate that connection from the instructor or the people in the support team interacting directly with them. I feel like I get to know my learners on an individual basis really well because I'm reading their work and I'm responding directly to them and they feel a real sense of connection.

We can have really good conversations, not just everyone all in the discussion board, which gets to be kind of noisy, but when we have them in groups. Have them interacting with three or four of their peers, they can have real meaningful conversations and then I can engage with them at that higher-level.
There are a lot of ways of ensuring that students aren't getting lost. For the individual students, if we structure this as such then we are really able to be meeting their needs.