Student Engagement in Online Courses (June-July 2015)

When we teach online, technology is a mediator between us and the students. Because of this intervention, the way in which we understand and experience the phenomenon of student engagement changes.” (p. 211) Claire Howell Major makes that observation in her new book, Teaching Online: A Guide to Theory, Research, and Practice. She then proceeds to outline what makes engagement more difficult when students aren’t physically present. When we teach in a classroom students are more or less a “captive” audience. That physical proximity makes the class a group that comes together for a specified time to exchange information and ideas. That all changes significantly in an online environment. “In many ways, some of the control and authority of engagement shifts from teachers to students in online courses.”

Self-Regulated Learning: The Details (March 2016)

As the name implies, self-regulated learning is “self-determined and active efforts to initiate activities targeted towards learning goals, to perform them effectively, to monitor progress and to adapt them if necessary.” (p. 455) Said a bit more simply, it’s learners taking charge of their learning—recognizing that it’s their responsibility to decide on a plan, implement that plan, and then assess both the outcomes and the process. Self-regulated learners are independent, autonomous, and self-directed.

Assignments: How Students Perceive Them (November 2016)
https://www.magnapubs.com/newsletter/the-teaching-professor/129/Assignments-How-Students-Perceive-The-14272-1.html

Assignments are one of those ever-present but not-often-thought-about aspects of teaching and learning. Pretty much every course has them, and teachers grade them. The grade indicates how much the student learned by doing them. But is this learning something that students recognize? Too often students see assignments as work the teacher makes them do for a grade. How often do students see or experience assignments as learning opportunities?

Teaching Evaluations: A Misinterpretation Issue (October 2015)

“Even measures with perfect validity can be rendered useless if they are interpreted incorrectly, and anecdotal evidence suggests that teaching evaluations are frequently the subject of unwarranted interpretations based on assumed levels of precision that they do not possess.” (p. 641) And now there’s some research verifying that faculty and administrators do make unwarranted interpretations. “We investigated if differences in teaching evaluations that are small enough to be within the standard error of measurement would still have significant effects on judgments made about teachers.” (p. 641)