



MAGNA ONLINE SEMINARS

Transcript

Conversations with Students: Methods that Engage & Motivate

A Magna Online Seminar was presented on May 5, 2015 by Melinda Hohman, Ph.D.

Conversations with Students, Methods that Engage and Motivate teaches participants to:

- Recognize and describe the basic principles of an evidence-based, student-centered approach to motivating students
- Describe the processes and uses of values assessments and conversations, assessments of perceived importance or perceived confidence of change, and how to share information in a way that facilitates motivation
- Conduct an academic values exercise and connect it to the behaviors you wish to motivate (studying, test taking, writing, etc.)
- Describe a basic structure for having a motivational and difficult conversation with a student

Editor's note:

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Welcome to Conversations with Students, Methods that Engage and Motivate, cosponsored by Magna Publications and The Teaching Professor. I'm Nancy Kern, and I'll be the moderator today. And now I'm pleased to introduce Dr. Melinda Hohman. Melinda Hohman, Ph.D. is the Director and Professor of the School of Social Work, San Diego State University.

Dr. Hohman has been a member of the motivational interviewing network of trainers since 1999. Her 2012 book, *Motivational Interviewing in Social Work Practice*, demonstrates and applies motivational interviewing to work with both adults and adolescents in individual and group settings. Welcome, Melinda Hohman.

Good morning! Or, at least it's morning here in gloomy dry California. We are having a gloomy day today. But I'm happy to be here and thank you for inviting me to speak.

Today we're going to be talking about a topic called motivational interviewing. And we will look at situations where we see lack of motivation or engagement in our students. And, I should add, I'm still in the classroom, even though I am working as a director of a program. We'll be defining what motivational interviewing is, and really look at what's involved with it-- something that's called the spirit of MI plus the skills of MI.

And within MI, we'll also be looking at what is called "change talk" and how we listen for that from our students, and really highlight it, and recognize it. And link it to some very important motivating values that they may have around their education.

And throughout the presentation today, I have created a vignette based on a real life student. And we'll look at how we'll apply the skills to a vignette. So let's get started with our student this morning.

Arissa is a 22-year-old female who is periodically absent. When she attends, she participates and contributes well. Her performance on papers and quizzes has mainly been A-B work. And she is bright but it's still very important that she comes to class because she has missed a great deal of content.

And I'm sure many of you can relate to students like her, and find it a little bit frustrating. So I was going to ask you, to start off with, what kind of student behaviors do you find that frustrate you, or you're disappointed about when you see that, like in Arissa's case, she's a very bright student and when she's there she contributes, and on the other hand, you know that she is missing content. And really not getting the maximum benefit from the class. And what kinds of things would you like to motivate them about?

I know it's not only just missing class but around coming to class malprepared, or being on their phones in class-- whup. Somebody just wrote, texting in class. That is a very difficult one. Or just students aren't really seeing the connection about how the class fits into their overall academic career, and not really making the most of it.

Yes! Packing up early, putting away things and then looking around like well, I'm ready to go. Not being prepared-- you call on them and you get the blank look. There's a lack of attention. You know they're on Facebook during the lecture. I think we could have quite a conversation here. Sounds like very similar kinds of things that we all experience together.

I'm waiting for a couple more to come up and then we will go forward. Stating that they don't need to know the topic that you are teaching. Yes, like I was saying, that they don't necessarily feel like-- how does this connect with my overall academic career.

Listening to music during lecture. Ah-- earphones in! I don't know if I've seen that one, but I could imagine how you would find that extremely frustrating. And sometimes even more than frustrating, it just kind of feels disrespectful or feels kind of rude.

So let's get back to the topic of motivating and how we motivate our students. One definition of motivation is that it's a student's willingness, desire, and compulsion to participate in, and be successful in, the learning process. What we're really looking at is how can we motivate our students to really want to do this, and to be successful in the process? Someone wrote, it doesn't seem that they read the chapter and they don't print out Power Points. Just kind of show up to class, and then look at you blankly, like OK, entertain me. And I think that's what a lot of-- at least our-- faculty talk about. Feel like with the millennial generation, that we need to entertain them.

The thing about motivation is that many times we tend to think about is something either someone has or does not have. They're either motivated or they're not. And yet, research is showing that motivation tends to be dynamic and continuous. And that it waxes and wanes, or it fluctuates.

And I think we could all think about our own motivation around, perhaps, an exercise regimen. You know, some days we're really good about it, and other days, not so much. So motivation is dynamic, and it's something that can be influenced. And that is certainly something that we want to look at today.

And there can be things that we don't influence such as family life, the demands on students' time from family-- many have to work one or two jobs to support themselves. But there are other things that we can have influence on. And that's really what motivational interviewing for, is to look at how can we influence them in a positive way.

There are different types of motivation-- and probably many of you have studied this in social psychology and other kinds of classes-- where there's extrinsic motivators. So a grade is certainly an extrinsic motivator. If I know I want to get into grad school, and I have to do well in the class, that is certainly an extrinsic motivator to try to at least get that grade. It doesn't really matter if I learn the content. An intrinsic motivator is really what we're looking for. That people engaged because they find it exciting, they're interested, or it comes from within.

So we'll be looking at how do we tap into those intrinsic motivators to keep students involved? And we want to look at things like, what is their interest? And we'll be coming back to the words on this slide quite a few times. How do they perceive the usefulness of this class? And what kind of motivation do they have anyway? And how does it fit into their own sense of self-efficacy-- that they can do the work, and have control over the work, and maintain the work, and keep persistent at it.

The research on student motivation is shown-- and you could probably guess this-- that over-reliance on extrinsic motivators really does not help. It decreases achievement and students' perceptions of their own motivators. So having the stick instead of a carrot is certainly just doesn't seem to work.

Or it may work in the short run, but, again, maybe they're studying to make the grade on the test but not really to internalize the information. The more we have intrinsic motivation in students-- it's been found to be related to higher achievement and higher confidence, and, of course, longer retention of concepts. Because the desire to learn is coming from within, and it becomes more internalized.

So let's go back to our student Arissa. And this is exactly what happened in my case. She came into my office one day. And she had missed class that day, so when I looked up, I was surprised to see her. And she said to me, I'm sorry to miss class so much. She came in to pick up her paper.

If this had been your student-- and not really knowing motivational interviewing, or think about-- what kinds of things might you have said to her? What would be your first gut instinct of what you might say to her? OK, what is the reason why? Why are you missing class? Where have you been? Somebody wrote, yeah me too. I'm not sure what that means-- about I'm sorry too. I missed you too. OK. So actually many of those responses would be very consistent with motivational interviewing.

Many times-- and I have to say, sometimes I fall into these too, even though I've learned motivational interviewing and been using it for the last two decades-- is we, very typically, fall into responses about educate. It's important for you to come to class, because you need to have this material in order to pass the test.

Somebody said, you've been missing a great amount of material. Or, we could fall into arguing with students, or telling them, you need to come to class. It's important for you to come to class. We can also get into some kind of veiled threatening-- if you don't come to class, then I really don't think you're probably going to do very well on your paper. I don't see how you can pass the test. A lot of the content is very important in the class.

Or another response, sometimes when we're very busy, is we just dismiss it with a like, OK, whatever. It's not worth getting into. And many of you are typing things like, about-- we talked about how you responded to her about how you missed her as well.

So let's step back for a minute, and look at, what is motivational interviewing? And we'll come back to it and see about how some of the things that you typed in would be fairly or pretty consistent with it.

There are several different definitions of it. And as you can see, on the bottom of this slide, it was developed by a psychologist named William Miller and another one named Stephen Rollnick. And their first book was published in the late 80s, and they're not on the third edition of the book. And they have described it as a collaborative conversation style for strengthening a person's own motivation and commitment to change. So we're looking at the words collaborative here, as well as looking at what the person's own motivation is. That gets into those intrinsic motivators.

Another definition they give again is collaborative, but with a goal of communication with a particular attention to the language of change. And we'll spend just a little bit of time today talking about how they define change talk, and what it is, and how it comes from research about kinds of things that people talk about when they're in the process of change.

A final definition they give-- and these are kind of, you can see, increasingly technical definitions-- is that it is designed to strengthen personal motivation for, and commitment to, a specific goal by eliciting and exploring the person's own reasons for change within an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion. And the reason that Miller and Rollnick added, in this edition of the book, the word compassion was because in many ways, they looked at a lot of the business literature and the sales literature.

And many times we're looking at people's internal reasons for, perhaps, making a purchase on a certain car. What motivates them, what are their values? But the idea is we're doing it with compassion, in term of looking at what the student or-- because I'm a social worker, I talk a lot about client's best interest. So we're looking at the best interest of the students.

So we'll be, again, going through how this all works and it will be very quick, because a lot of motivational interviewing is very detailed, but it gives you an overview and an idea that if you wanted to go out and get additional training, or to purchase their book and start reading, it would give you more background.

One of the key things we talk about in motivational interviewing is the spirit of MI. And so it's approaching your student, or your client, as a partner in the process, assuming that they have some ideas, that they have some knowledge, and that they have some expertise about their own life in their own situation. It's not assuming that we understand what's going on in their lives, and we can make some judgements about that. But really thinking to learn about what that is.

And it's really accepting them, in terms of who they are as people, with using empathy. And we'll look at how that's conveyed through reflective listening. Affirming strengths as we see them. And really affirming their autonomy to make their own decisions about what is important to them and about what fits best for them.

We also spend a lot of time evoking, which means asking a lot of questions, just thinking about it, processing it with them-- all again, within the spirit of compassion. What is in the best interest of this student?

So the spirit is combined with a couple different aspects of skills, and the main one is the mnemonic-- and people in MI love mnemonics-- are the OARS skills. We ask open-ended questions, which tend to be those kinds of questions that start with what or why. And again, several of you have that when you said, why are you missing class, to start to understand the student's perspective. What's going on.

We can use affirmations, where we affirm or comment on a strength or a positive aspect of them that we see. And we use a lot of reflective listening with MI. Simple reflections where you're stating back to them what they've already said. Complex reflection can be one that's probably going where you think the conversation is going, or adding more into it. And a double-sided reflection is where you stating both sides of the dilemma or their ambivalence that they may be experiencing. And we'll have examples of these.

And many times in MI, we use summaries to pull it all together, because this helps the student to think about all the different things that they've talked about with you, and to start to reflect on those things.

And we do all this with thinking about change talk, and listening for change talk. And the mnemonic that MI folks came up with on this, and this is based on research from a psycholinguist professor named Paul Amrhein. And if anyone is interested on the research around the change language that he has studied, I'd be happy to give you those references.

They've turned it into the mnemonic DARN CAT, which is people talk about their desire. I want to do well. I want to get a good job. I want to be successful. Their ability-- I have done this before. I know I have done well in other classes. I can do well in this one. Their reasons, what are their reasons for wanting to make this change? The need-- I really need to do this because-- and then the commitment-- I will do this. I will come to class every day.

And Amrhein's research has found-- and it's not surprising, however, it is now some empirical evidence-- that when we can get our students to talk about commitment-- I will come to class every day. I will try to make it on time. That's a weak kind of commitment, but it's still a commitment-- that those kinds of statements are closely related to actual change. Most likely people will make those changes when they say they will do them. And then the key part for CAT is taking steps, that the person is actually making the changes that they say they're going to do.

So let's go back to Arissa. She says, again, she comes to your office after having missed class that day to pick up her paper. She tells you, I'm sorry I miss class so much. What might be a good open-ended question? You've already have said, what is the reason why? Why are you missing class? What might be some other examples of open-ended questions?

Thank you for participating. I really appreciate that. Tell me more about that. That is so consistent with MI. That is the eliciting a revoking part. Basically, what you're saying is what's going on? What's happening? And what are the reasons behind it?

How can I help? Absolutely, again, another open-ended question. These are great examples and would be very consistent with MI. And also they're very consistent with the MI spirit, where it's a very collaborative process. How can I help is another one.

All right, I am going to go on here. And she says to you-- you say, you know, what's going on, or what's happening? And she says to you, I am carrying too many classes. I have six of them. I've had to take that many to get everything into graduate on time. If I come to your-- in my case, 8:00 AM class-- often I end up falling asleep in a later class. But I really do like your class. And then, when she said that, she gave me a great smile, like trying to win me over in a way.

So thinking about a reflective statement-- a reflective statement is where it's a statement. It's not a question. It's where you're repeating back to them something that they have said, or something that they might say next. And this lets you know that you've heard her, you understand the situation. Many times when I train people in motivational interviewing, they say, oh, if I repeat back to the student, particularly when it's something that doesn't make a lot of sense, or you find is not a very good reason, it feels like you're agreeing with them. You're not. What you're doing is you're letting them know that you've heard them.

So I'm going to go back to her statement. And she says, I'm carrying too many classes. I have six of them. I have had to take that many to get everything in to graduate on time. What might you reflect back to her?

If you were to look at this statement and to repeat, or to, again, say something that goes beyond-- what might you say differently? And the thing about reflections are that you can repeat just about anything they're saying. So you're saying that you are really overloaded right now. Absolutely. That's a great reflection. And she didn't say she was overloaded, she just said she's taking too many. So it's really taking it beyond and making that a complex reflection. And Amrhein's research shows that the more we can do complex reflections, the more likely we are to get into change talk. OK.

You would think you're taking more classes than you can handle? That would actually be a closed-ended question, because when you say do you, you can get a yes or a no answer. So thinking about how that could be changed into reflection could be something like, you are taking more classes than you can handle, which sounds like it could be a pretty empathetic statement.

So again, with the reflections, you can think about whatever it is that you want to reflect-- you can draw on-- but in the back of your mind, you're also having what's called a target behavior. So that you're starting to think about listening for language around discussions, around the target behavior. And in this class, it would be I want to motivate her to get to class, and to come to class even when she's typing.

I understand. The same thing happened to me in my undergraduate class, and I ended up failing one class. So I hope you don't repeat. OK, think about a reflection about what she said. It's about her and the kinds of things that she's saying. So maybe something even a little bit more empathic would be, again, about because you understand what it's like to take a lot of classes, you can say, yeah, taking on all those classes just feels very overwhelming at times. So many times we think about, maybe, how we felt about a situation and could kind of throw it out there almost as if maybe they're feeling the same way. So many times a reflection is a hypothesis of what we think is what's going on with them.

So on to the next one. And here's just one. That's always much easier when you have time to think about it. Can write it into a slide. And this is a double-sided reflection, because I'm talking about everything that she has going on with her, and both sides of her ambivalence. On the one hand, you have a lot on your plate and it's hard to fit everything in without being exhausted. And on the other hand, when you do come to class, you really like it.

And so, as you can see, I have highlighted the change talk. This is the reason that she says, I like the class. So in motivational interviewing, when we hear a statement about I like the class, or I'm getting a lot out of it, I can see how this fits in with my career-- our ears perk up with that. And this is something that we might want to repeat back to them.

Another thing that-- and this comes as you get more technical with motivational interviewing-- you always want to end with what you want them to hear last. And in psychology, they call that the recency rule, that people tend to remember what they've heard last. So we're empathizing-- on the one hand, you have a lot on your plate and it's hard to fit everything in without being exhausted. And on the other hand, when you do come to class, you really like it.

So hopefully, she picks up on the fact that, yeah, you know, she heard me say I'm tired. And on the other hand, when you do come to class, I really like it. Yeah, I do like that class. It really is important to me.

So let's say, we had actually said this to her. And she comes back and she says yes, I've had to take all of these classes, plus I have to work about 20 hours a week. I get to bed around 1:00 AM, and I just can't get up early all the time. But when I do come to class, I can see how I can use what we are learning in my work as a social worker. And to also give you the context of my class, my students are getting ready to go into their internship, and so they do see the content as relevant to what they're going to do as a social worker.

So I'm going to go to the next slide, ask you some questions about this statement, and then I'm going to flip back to it so you can see this statement again. Where is the change talk? Desire, ability, reasons, or need? Let's start with that one first. Where do you see the change talk in this statement?

She's giving you at first all the reasons why she has to miss class. And in MI-speak, we call that sustained talk. Well, I have to take all these classes. I have to work. I'm up till 1:00 AM and I

can't get up early. That's all reasons for the status quo, the same talk. She says when I do come to class, I can see how I can use what we were learning. What do you see as what would be the change talk here?

Absolutely. I can use what I'm learning. So in MI, we, again, have our ears go up on that one. And perhaps we could do a reflection about that. So a reflection could be, you really see how applicable the class is. You see how you can use what you are learning. What you are learning is making a lot of sense to you. What you're learning is very practical. There's many different ways to do a reflection.

She recognizes the problem. So let's go forward to this question. How might you affirm her? So she's recognizing there is a situation. An affirmation is a statement about somebody's strengths or their abilities, so thinking about that, that she recognizes that there's a problem, what might be an affirmation that you could give her?

And again, thinking about what does this say about her, or what kinds of things might she say that's underneath all of this about what she values? What might be an affirmation?

Some that I came up with was to think about it's very important for you to do well in your career. Recognizing that she has a longer term goal. It's important to do well in her career.

And then just think about it, and I feel overwhelmed when I listen to her talking about taking six classes and working 20 hours a week, just think and how does this-- I know she's young, so the sleeping is a little bit easier, to go without sleep-- she wants to be a good social worker.

Absolutely. So to recognize the fact that it's very important to you to be a good social worker. It's important for you to do well in your career. You want to be effective as a social worker.

The other piece of it would be to honor all that she's going through in order to do that, and to say something like, you are really willing to do what it takes to get through school. So sympathy and support. Absolutely. In MI-speak, we would call it empathy, about really understanding her problem and her situation. And so to comment on you are really a hard worker. You are willing to do what it takes. Wow, you really have so much on your plate. I think all of those would be very supportive statements, and I think would draw her in as a student to think about what makes her motivated.

I'm going to move on here. And really what I was talking about fits into the role of values and people in students' education. And it's important to understand what their values are, because those kinds of things are the things we can affirm or that we can reflect on about it's important to be effective in your career, you are somebody who is willing to do what it takes.

And so just listening though, the things that we've been talking about, and the kinds of things that you've been writing, how might incorporating student values into our open-ended questions increase change talk? Let's go back to Arissa.

She said, I had to take all these classes, plus I have to work 20 hours a week. When I come to class, I can see how I can use what we learned as a social worker. So what values do you hear?

I think we've covered some of this already. OK. Hardworking, absolutely. And so to comment on you are a hard worker, to have somebody recognize that. And there is some very preliminary research-- and I probably shouldn't even talk about that, because I don't know it, but I've been told-- is that many times affirmations are very-- you are very determined. That's great. You are very determined-- that there seems to be some kind of research showing that when people are affirmed, it helps to drop their cortisol levels, that people have a physiological response. And again, if people are interested in that research, I will dig that up for you. Cortisol is our stress hormones.

So again, just-- I've pretty much said this all-- wow, Arissa. It sounds like you are really a hard worker-- just what somebody said-- and you are dedicated to your education. You will do whatever it takes to get your degree. I don't think I'd say it quite as hammy as I just said it here. You want to do well as you can too as a professional when you start to work in your career.

You can go with an open-ended question. Say something like, I'm curious, why is this so important to you? And it's kind of interesting when you start to explore values with students, so like, really, what is important to them and why is it so important? And then, at some point in the conversation, to bring it back to your target behavior and link it to that.

And I was surprised by her answer, because to me, she looks younger than she probably is. She said to me, well I'm a little bit older. She said, I fooled around a lot when I was younger, and I didn't do well in school as an 18-year-old college student. Now I'm thinking it's time I grew up and became an adult. And I was really stunned when she said that, again, because, to me, she looked more in the regular college-student age. But then she started talking about this whole piece around wanting to become an adult, and how it was time to become an adult.

What might you say back to her here that could be a reflection? What thoughts do you have about, if you could pick something out of here, what might you say back to her? You are really determined. You're hardworking. You know, and you think about it, to have somebody who is in authority-- your faculty member-- say that to you, and acknowledge those kinds of things, it's only going to reinforce those behaviors. So to comment-- you are determined, you are really hardworking-- is giving them a message that you're seeing them for what they're doing. And I think that means a lot to students too.

Got a comment-- it's interesting she wants to be an adult, but doesn't understand how to be responsible at an 8:00 AM class. OK, well, let's go onto the next slide, because she actually addressed that. You have matured a great deal. Ah! That's another excellent affirmation.

I said to her, you want to be an adult, be responsible, and you want to do well in school. I started connecting all those things together just like I see University of Wisconsin, Superior, do. And she said, yes-- and truly, this is what happened-- she said, I can see that it means that I have to

get up early and be on a work-like schedule, since I'll be doing it soon enough. That's intrinsic motivation. She put those pieces together. I didn't sit her and tell her that. She put that together. And so I wanted to bring my ding, ding, ding bell that she was giving me very, very good change language.

Another tool that we use in motivational interviewing-- and this is, again, this is come out of Miller's research-- is that there's two aspects to change. One is importance of change and one is confidence. And they have developed what they call a change ruler. And they have found that people can be high in importance and low in confidence. Like it might be very important to do something-- pass the test in a class-- but I have no confidence that I can do this geology course and the material. It's just too difficult.

Or people can be low in importance, but high in confidence. Sometimes you think about people who are smokers. They may say, it's really not that important for me to quit, but if I were to do it, I know I could. And so you can ask this-- and it's kind of fun to ask scaling questions, because it's not something we typically use. How important for you right now would it be for you to come to class every time? It's really starting to zero in on exactly what it is, between 0 and 10. And you ask for a number, and then you say, why are you at a, say she said 8, and not a lower number. She starts to give then more reasons about why it is important. And those are the kinds of things we can reflect back.

And if you did decide to come to class every time, how confident are you that you could succeed on a scale of 0 to 10. And again, she says to me, well, you know, I think I'm a 9. I'm pretty confident. Well, why are you a 9, and say, not a 5. Well, I'm telling myself, you know, it's time for me to be an adult. You know, I'm almost 30 years old-- is what she said to me. I really need to do these things. And I know that I've done it in the past, and I can do it other times.

And, as you bring it all together, you can do a summary. So in this case, I said, Arissa, you stated that this class is important to you in terms of your future career and that you realize coming to call consistently is also an important step in developing your skills and knowledge. Based on what she told me with the change ruler, I said to her, you are somewhat confident that you can attend classes regularly, as you've had been able to do so for other early courses, and you've thought of some ways to address feeling so overwhelmed and tired. What is your next step? Where do you go from here? And that's really where we go into putting it back into their laps and asking them exactly what they're going to do.

So we have the goal. It's very specific. You will come to class every week. It's important for you to have this material, because you can see how it's going to affect your career and you want to do well in your career. You have some ideas about how you will try to get to bed, set the alarm, whatever idea she came up with. And elicit commitment. You know, will you do this? Or, where do you go from here? So it's a way to bring the conversation to a close.

I've included this because it's a fun exercise around values that you can do in the classroom as well, and it's part of your handout. And it's pretty much a variation of a change ruler, but, as you

can see, it has all these different boxes. And in the little box, above the battery box, is where you have them put in a number from 0 to 10 about how important this domain is in your life. So of competence-- let's say that one-- say she puts in thinking about being a professional. She writes that this is very important. And then in that smaller box is where the battery cable leads into-- you have them put in where they rate themselves now in terms of how much reward, reinforcement, or meaning they've gotten in the past two weeks on this, or you could do it in the past semester.

And then in the large battery boxes, they write the difference in the number. And you can ask them then, pick out two or three of these. Do it in a small group exercise. Why is your confidence at a 6, instead of a lower number? And what might it take for you to feel even more confident, to stretch that? So this is just another version of using the change ruler and linking it into values.

So to conclude, using open-ended questions and reflections really helps explore the issue. And to think in your mind exactly what it is you're trying to motivate them to do. What's the target behavior? And as you listen for change talk and values, you can reflect that back. And if you have time, you can look at how important and confident they are around change in the target behavior. You can have them work to set a plan and ask for commitment to that plan, summarize it, and then, if need be, meet again to evaluate.

So the take-home messages here are, many times out-of-class interactions are a time for listening. And we can list for what those hooks are-- and it goes back to that original slide about the students' values, around perceived usefulness, their interests, their goals around achievement, self-efficacy, control, and persistence. And using reflective listening, instead of usual responses, such as telling or educating, many times gets at the true story of what's underneath, and helps us listen for the value underneath. In using the change rulers are just a fun way to really gauge if this is an importance issue or is this a confidence issues? And think about, perhaps, ways to strengthen their confidence.

Complete information about our upcoming seminars is available at www.magnapubs.com. Thanks again for joining us and have a great day.

Additional Question and Answer

Question:

Ada Duffey: Any techniques for creating the opportunity to have this type of discussion? Many students miss class and never have a conversation about it - or the window of opportunity is very short either before class, at a break or possibly after class

Answer:

Dear Ada,

You are right, it is hard to have a good conversation when it is quick or other people are mingling around, say, after class. I sometimes email the student directly and ask if everything is ok, since I haven't seen them. Sometimes I learn that they are having family issues etc. and then express concern. Some students respond to this.

From a Motivational Interviewing (MI) perspective, if you did have a quiet minute with a student, I might say something like, "How are you doing?" or "How is the class going for you?" I would then reflect back what they say and maybe ask another open ended question, like, "What seems to be speak the most to you about what you are learning?" or something like that. At some point, I might ask if it would be ok to share something with them--usually people always say yes, and then share that I am concerned that I don't see them a lot in class and again, ask if everything is ok. For me, demonstrating some concern is a way of connecting with them. I am (trying to, anyway) not acting like a parent but more come from a curious stance. If the class is small enough, I sometimes say something like, "I miss you when you are not here. You have so much to contribute."

Sometimes, as I said, they have a real issue/reason and other times, it is just because they have so much on their plates. Just taking the time to connect and be concerned sometimes pays off--sometimes!

Adobe Connect Chat Transcript

University of Wisconsin - Superior:Texting in class

Carri Hales:packing up early

UW-Milwaukee Biomedical Sciences Dept:not prepared for class

University of Wisconsin - Superior:Lack of attention

Marshall University School of Pharmacy:Facebook during lecturing

Linda Nilson:Doing other things in class, even homework in another course

Penn Foster:Stating they donot need to know the topic you are teaching

University of Wisconsin - Superior:Listening to music during lecture

Linda Nilson:Playing games in class

Ada Duffey:It doesn't seem that they read the chapter. They don't print out powerpoints.

Angela Borman:why is it that you're missing class?

Penn Foster:What is the reason why?

Ada Duffey:Perhaps, -where have you been?

Carri Hales 2:Yeah, me too

University of Wisconsin - Superior:That's OK (even though it's not)

Treasure Valley Community College:I missed you, too.

Linda Nilson:"I'm sorry you've been missing class, too. You've been missing some great material."

Treasure Valley Community College:Tell me more about that.

University of Wisconsin - Superior:How can I help?

Treasure Valley Community College:So, you are saying that you are really overloaded right now.

Penn Foster:I understand you are trying to graduate on time.

Linda Nilson:Do you think you are taking more classes than you can handle?

University of Wisconsin - Superior:I understand. The same thing happened to me in my undergraduate classes, and I ended up failing one class. So, I hope you don't repeat.

University of Wisconsin - Superior:I can use what I learn.

Penn Foster:When I come to class I can see how it will help me.

University of Wisconsin - Superior:Recognizing the problem

Carri Hales 2:Wants to be a good social worker

University of Wisconsin - Superior:Show sympathy and support

Penn Foster:Hard working

Penn Foster:Determined

University of Wisconsin - Superior:It's interesting that she wants to be an adult, but doesn't understand how to be responsible in relation to the 8 am class.

Linda Nilson:You have matured a great deal.

Ada Duffey:Any techniques for creating the opportunity to have this type of discussion? Many students miss class and never have a conversation about it - or the window of opportunity is very short either before class, at a break or possibly after class