

OPTIMUM CHALLENGE ↔ STRESS BALANCE

Students perform best when there is an optimum level of challenge – usually determined by an equal capacity to manage the stress induced by the demands of the learning activity. It's important to be mindful of the students' stress management capacity, and be responsive to the need for making changes to adjust this balance at times.

Suggestions:

1. Consider and plan the timing of exams and assignment due dates to prevent placing undue stress on students.
2. Provide instructional feedback at different stages of assignments in order for students to incorporate changes during the development of the project.
3. Spread out the weighting of the course grading, to avoid placing 50% or more of the course grade on the final exam or assignment.
4. Reduce the number of assignments, distribute the grade weighting between the remaining ones.
5. Provide opportunity for clarification of expectations around assignments.
6. Make available quiz/exam writing opportunities with no penalty (a.k.a. practice tests)