Motivating and Working with Non-Participating Students

Motivating e-learners and keeping them involved in your course is a constant challenge. Below are some best practices to help you keep your students motivated or motivate those students who aren’t participating fully in your course:

- Sending individual, rather than group emails to students, to make the messages more personal
- Emailing encouragement to students on a regular basis
- Sending emails that ask questions and prompt students to think about their goals
- Offering assistance to students in finding information or sites on the Internet that could help their studies.
- Telephoning students to have a synchronous conversation and learn more about students’ goals and concerns
- Establishing telephone “office hours” during which the teacher is available to take students’ calls
- Telephoning students who had not been active for a period of time to encourage them to stay with the program
- Providing completion certificates for pre-determined units of work
- Offering drop-in times for students who wanted in-person assistance from a teacher
- Using praise and positive feedback on students’ work
- Offering constructive criticism
- Helping students see how the content they are studying could be applied to situations they encounter in their daily lives
- Providing Instant Messaging (IM) “office hours” as an option for students who prefer to communicate that way
- Setting up a telephone “help line” where students call in and leave a message that a teacher responds to on a daily basis

Note: Many colleges have specific policies regarding non-participating students and the use of “administrative withdraw” as a tool for dropping students from your class.