



## Implementing a “Late Bank” Can Reduce Student Stress

### What is this Research About?

Assignment deadlines are a common source of stress for university students. Flexible assignment deadlines have been shown to improve the quality of student work and the overall learning experience. One type of flexible deadline is a “late bank” policy, where students can submit an assignment late without having to request permission or explain the reason for the late submission. In this study, the researchers tested students’ perceptions of a late bank in online graduate-level courses.

### What did the Researchers Do?

The researchers surveyed 78 students in 5 online graduate-level Psychology courses at a large university in Western Canada. Students had access to a “late bank” where they could choose to submit one of their course assignments up to 5 days late without penalty. Participants completed a survey about the usefulness of the late bank, their stress levels during the course, their reasons for using the late bank (if they chose to use it), and their attitudes toward the course instructor.

### What did the Researchers Find?

The researchers found that approximately half of the respondents (51%) used the late bank. Most respondents reported that having access to the late bank helped reduce their stress. Reasons for using the late bank included the need to balance other coursework, unexpected personal situations, and school-life balance. Most students (62%) reported that the late bank policy had a positive impact on their attitude toward the course instructor.

# SoTL

## Snapshot

A synopsis of a scholarship of teaching  
and learning journal article

### ➔ How to Implement this Research in Your Classroom

A “late bank” is a flexible assignment deadline that gives students additional days to submit assignments late, with no penalty and no questions asked. A late bank policy can be included on the course outline and described in class. Research demonstrates that the option of the late bank reduced students’ stress. Students also reported that the late bank policy had a positive impact on their attitudes toward the course instructor. Instructors could consider implementing a late bank policy as a simple and effective way to reduce student stress.

### ➔ Citation

Schroeder, M., Makarenko, E., & Warren, K. (2019). Introducing a late bank in online graduate courses: The responses of students. *The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 10 (2), <https://doi.org/10.5206/cjsotl-rcacea.2019.2.8200>

### ➔ Keywords

stress  
post-secondary education  
assignments

graduate education  
online



OFFICE of  
TEACHING AND LEARNING



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Canada License.

Snapshot Writer: Jennifer Reniers