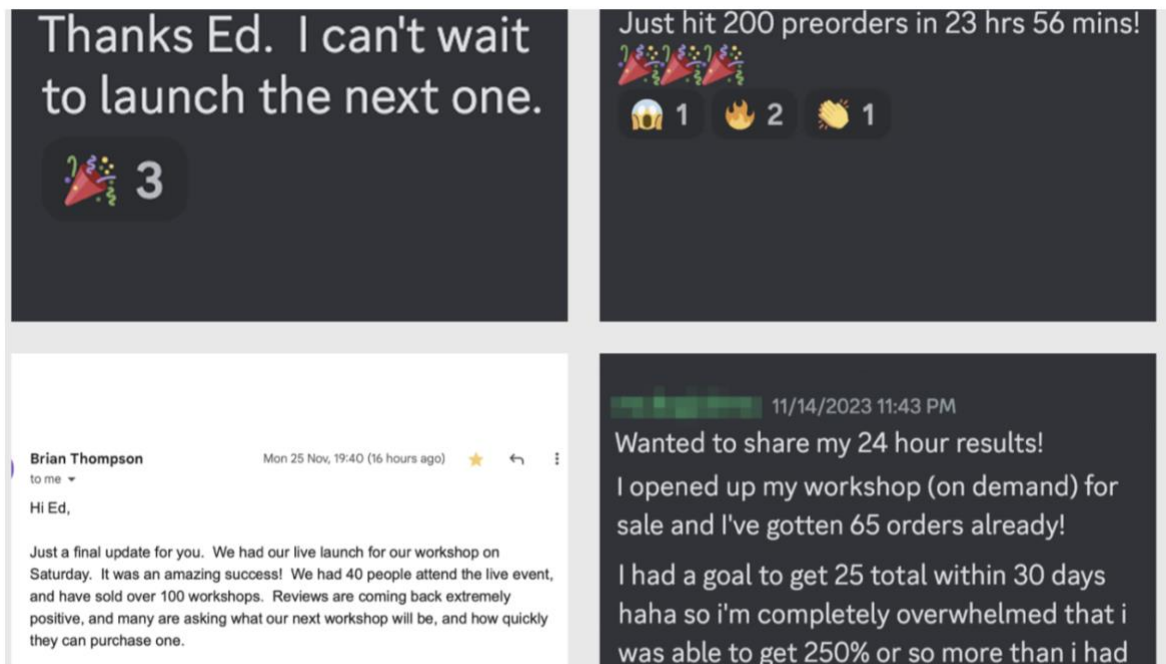




Glowing testimonials from Film Booth site

Ghosting or Gestating? How to Estimate Student Satisfaction with Quiet Students



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What silence really meant in a thriving course, and how Ed learned to read between the lines.

Ed from [Film Booth](#) has built one of the most successful and talked-about YouTube strategy courses out there. With a devoted student base, killer course design, and consistent sign-ups, he seemed to be doing everything right: hundreds of thousands of [YouTube subscribers](#) and a packed online course.

When he came to me, he'd already conducted student interviews - and all the feedback was glowing. "5 stars" across the board. So why reach out?

Because something didn't feel right. Engagement looked lopsided. He was hearing praise but seeing a lack of engagement. Ed assumed that silence meant dissatisfaction. Were students getting what they needed? Was it time to change the course?

Ed needed clarity.

The Research Process

Ed's course contains:

- Extremely active discord channel
- Three live calls per week with instructors, each focusing on a specific specialty (YouTube, copywriting, etc.)
- 30 hours of video content in two levels of difficulty

Our Methodology:

Interviewed 21 active and less active students across a variety of business types, audiences, and levels. Explored student goals, expectations, learning styles, and their definitions of "success" and "satisfaction."

- Phase 1: 15 one-on-one video interviews with current students (10 highly active, 5 less engaged)
 - Phase 2: Two focus groups with 6 past students (those who signed up but did not complete the course)
 - Ongoing: Shadowed Discord discussions and reviewed course materials to understand pacing and support.
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Offline study time

Key Insights

- **Engagement isn't always visible.** Students often went quiet not because they were frustrated, but because they were deep in the work.
- **The course was strong and students knew it.** Many felt lost on where to start and how to prioritize.
- **Scriptwriting and thumbnails were major hurdles.** These were commonly cited blockers. Learning new technical skills was taking more time than they thought.
- **External factors and not the course itself caused most students to be less present.** Learning new skills was a major reason to be less visible.
- **90 days was too short.** They felt like they were “drinking from a firehose”.
- **Satisfaction trumped engagement.** *Regardless of engagement, all students reported being happy with the course.*

What makes Ed's students unique is they're not traditional students. They're creators, entrepreneurs, and business owners trying to build audiences and income. They have different constraints, learning styles, and motivations - and they bring their own internal pressures with them.

My Recommendations

- **Reframe disengagement.** Not all students will show up in Discord or hop on calls. That's not failure. It's a sign of different learning rhythms.
- **Focus on satisfaction, not visibility.** Track course impact through personal outcomes, not just call attendance or chat frequency.
- **Longer course duration or ability to pause membership**

- **More tutorials and onboarding docs for technical skills needed**
 - **Consider additional call sessions for later time zones**
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What Changed

Ed ran with the findings. In his own words:

“The biggest change was actually not so much what I did but what I stopped doing. I stopped letting in a certain type of person and the amount of support needed dropped off a cliff.”

He also made structural improvements:

- Extended the course by six months
- Introduced optional onboarding calls
- Replaced recurring live calls with on-demand support and short, AI-driven resources
- Built script templates and content designed to reduce overwhelm

His biggest takeaway?

“The person we were letting in was the biggest problem. When I raised the barrier to entry, it was a total game changer.”

The Impact

Since implementing these changes, Ed reports:

- Less burnout from support
- More students finishing the course
- Fewer complaints about “drinking from a firehose”
- A massive improvement in overall student satisfaction and self-sufficiency

In Ed's words:

"We get very little comments about drinking from a firehose now and a massive amount of people who seem to not struggle."

Why It Matters

This wasn't a problem of bad curriculum. It was a misread of student behavior. Ed thought silence meant disengagement, but it turns out many of his students were just learning quietly, at their own pace.

By shifting the focus from engagement metrics to satisfaction signals, Ed preserved what made Film Booth great while giving his students the space to grow on their own terms.



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