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Sarah L Mabrouk* (smabrouk@frc.mass.edu), Framingham State College, Mathematics Department, 100 State Street, Framingham, MA 01702-2499. *Using Online Discussions in an Introductory/Intermediate Algebra Course.*

Teaching an introductory/intermediate algebra course is challenging: the students have seen the material and, believing that they "know" the subject matter, tend to spend what seems like little or no time on valuable review and practice. Teaching such a course becomes tricky when it is noncredit and the students, placed into the course based on their performance on a placement exam, must successfully complete the course before they are allowed to take a credit bearing college-level mathematics course. Group work and in-class discussion of the course material are beneficial but this valuable practice must continue outside the classroom. Given the opportunity, students enjoy sharing their work. They also enjoy email, IM, interacting online, and using the Internet. Combining these provides a wonderful opportunity for student interaction, practice and review, and helping students to take ownership of course material as they discuss and present the exercises and applications to each other. In this presentation, I will discuss how I use email, IM, and online discussions in my noncredit General Mathematics course, the students' reaction to their use, the benefits for the students and the instructor, and the overall effect on student performance and student reaction to the course. (Received September 16, 2008)