PREVENTING STUDENT PROCRASTINATION & ENHANCING INTERACTION

Online instructors often report that one of the most challenging aspects of teaching online is student procrastination. When students do not have to be at a physical location, they can sometimes feel disconnected and inevitably fall behind ("out of sight out of mind"). There are however a few simple strategies and tools we can employ to prevent student procrastination and increase interaction with your students.

Set Up a Communication Plan

In our traditional courses, we meticulously plan our lectures, assessments, and learning activities. However, within an online course, a **communication plan** is also critically important to ensure connectivity. An effective communication plan does not have to be too elaborate and can be an effective tool to combat student procrastination. It should chart out your frequency of outreach, the mode (communication tool), and the purpose of each message. Here's an example:

First Day of the Semester

- Post welcome announcement directing students to the syllabus and first module
- Remind them of required first day attendance discussion post due date

First Week

- Facilitate first day attendance virtual "ice breaker" discussion
- Send a reminder of the first day attendance discussion post (using Message Students Who)
- to those who have not posted 24hr and 12hr prior to due

Every Week

- Every Monday morning post an announcement and send a reminder (using Canvas inbox)
- about the weekly module, what is due, and the overall expectations
- Host a weekly online office hour using Microsoft Teams or Blackboard Ultra

Semester Milestones (Fall or Spring)

- 4th Week Performance Report - Send out "performance reports" to all students in the course. Using the New Analytics grade messenger, you can customize your message for A/B students, C students, and D/F students. So, for example, you may require poor performers (D/F) to meet with you in the next online office hour session.
- 8th Week Mid-Point Semester Feedback – Send out survey to students eliciting their thoughts on the course and their performance to date
- 12th Week Performance Report - Send out "performance reports" to all students in the course.

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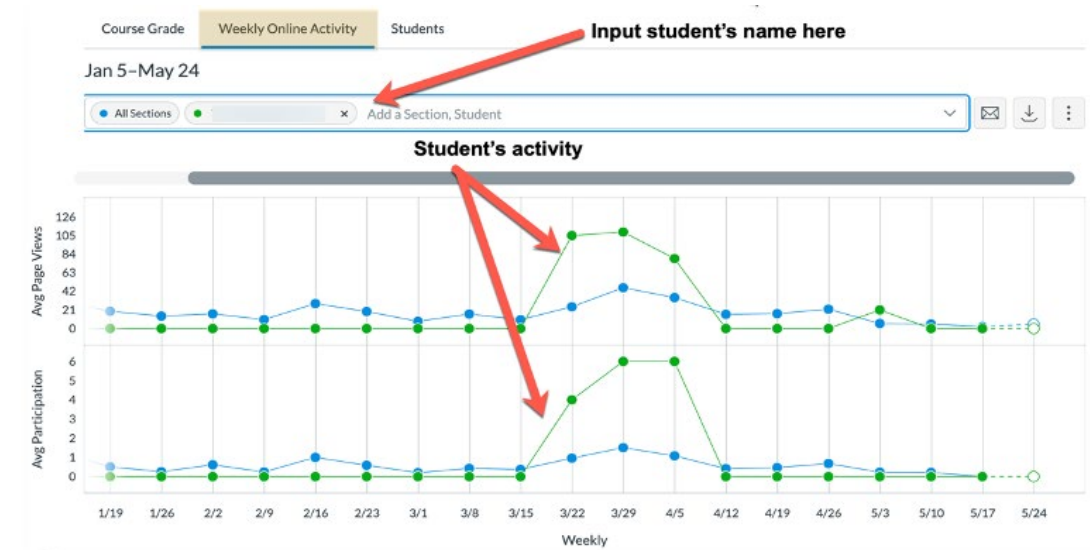DIGITAL LEARNING, INNOVATIVE EDUCATION

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Quick TIP

This is just an example, and your communication plan may look different. When developing your plan consider significant events (milestones) throughout the semester along with any weekly and/or monthly outreach points.

Use New Analytics to Send Customized Messages Based on Student Performance

The Canvas New Analytics tool provides you with a quick overview of your students' progress and a visual breakdown of their page views and participation activity within the course.

You can dive deeper and view the students' individual activity. These data are helpful in examining the students' overall performance and effort. Directly from the interface, you can also use the **Message students who** tool to send unique messages to students based on their performance (grade range).

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Use Assignments as a Communication Tool

Similar to the "message students who" tool from within the New Analytics, this is also available from individual assignments. This again allows you to send customized communications based on specific conditions such as a score or submission status. So, for example, you can send a message only to those students who "haven't submitted yet" or "scored less than _____". This is a quick and convenient way to reach out to engage procrastinators.

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