

Checking in with Students

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How Do I Find the Time to Check-in with Students?	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Monitor Your Classroom

Whether you are teaching full face-to-face, hybrid, or online course, monitoring your classroom plays a crucial role in student success.

Techniques for all delivery methods.

No matter the delivery method of your course, the following techniques are effective in any course environment.

- Use announcements to check-in with students. Remind them about due dates, good study habits, give some tips to help overcome difficult topics in the course, share resources
- Monitor the gradebook closely. Who is falling behind, reach out to them, create Aviso alerts.
- Note the last access date column in the gradebook. Contact students who fail to login consistently.
- Remember the struggles, stories, or hobbies students share with you. Ask them for an update, talk about some similar struggles you had as a student, recommend resources to them.

Face-to-Face, Traditional Courses

In a traditional classroom environment, the instructor is always in a constant battle to maintain student's attention. There are many beneficial steps you can take both inside and outside the classroom to help create a connection with your students and better assess their course contributions and motivation.

1. Start by looking at your attendance sheet for the class. Who is present and who is missing? Note which student walked in late. These items provide valuable information to you as an instructor. As soon as you see patterns emerge, begin to address them as soon as possible. Never assume the student is lazy, use these opportunities to visit with the student after class. You may discover important information about the student and their struggles.
2. Next, observe students during class. Make note of students not paying attention or playing on devices. If they have poor grades in the course, these behaviors could be a sign that they are struggling with the topic or frustrated. If they have high grades, it could be a sign they are bored.

3. Finally, find ways to receive feedback from students in class while also involving them in the class by activities such as
 - Saying “can I see a show of hands about....”
 - Saying “All the students on the left side of the room you are A, all the students on the left, you are B, then.....”
 - Walk to the back of the room and make an important point

These may seem like small things, but they are simple “check-in’s” with students to get their attention and show that you want them to be involved.

Your students are always communicating with you either verbally or through their actions. Check in with them and promote positive student behaviors. Small investments early in the course can pay large rewards by the end of the semester.

Hybrid/Blended Courses

In a hybrid/blended classroom environment, the instructor has many tools to ensure students are progressing in the course. Checking in is easier since there are face-to-face and online elements to the course. In addition to the techniques used in traditional classrooms, hybrid instructors have additional techniques they can use.

- Monitor hybrid assignments. Talk with students in class who miss due dates or perform poorly on the hybrid portion assignments.
- Call on students to talk about important topics covered in the hybrid portion for the week.
- Flip the classroom by posting lectures for the hybrid portion, then have an activity for the classroom portion of the course.

Use the hybrid portion of the course as an additional means to monitor students’ progress. The more information you know about your student’s progress in the course, the more effective your check in’s with students will be.

Online Courses

Online courses provide the challenge of connecting with students without a physical presence. There are effective ways you can check on students

- Hold virtual office hours
- Hold group virtual office hours
- Virtually meet with students individually
- Monitor discussion board assignments and contact students not posting.
- Check the gradebook for the students last log in date
- Enter Aviso alerts for students who are not logging in or fail to communicate with you.

Use the communication tools available to you such as

- announcements forum
- email
- virtual meetings
- gradebook

to monitor your student's progress. The more you know about your students in an online environment, the better you can focus your communication with them.

Link Students to Course and Campus Resources

An important conversation to have with struggling students is one that connects them with the resources they need. Organize your course so that course resources are easy for both you and students to locate. Common resources students need are

- important technical support email addresses, phone numbers
- schedule of assignments with due dates
- syllabus
- financial aid resources
- student accessibility resources
- course and institutional policies

It is important to not delete course resource links included in the course template. These resources are valuable for students.

Highlight Your Availability

One of the easiest ways to check-in with your students is to have your students contact you themselves. Increase the probability that students reach out to you when they need help by

- clearly communicating your contact information
- including your email address in announcements
- reminding students about your office hours in class and through announcements
- providing clear feedback on how the student can improve
- demonstrating a growth mindset by contacting struggling students early in the semester
- posting in discussion forums (online/hybrid), leading full class discussions (traditional/hybrid)