

# Quick communication with students

## FEEDBACK

Students should know whether they are on track. Many don't. You can help. Seed your early feedback and scoring comments with phrases suggesting you want them to know what their goals are and you want them to know how to see your feedback. You may want them to open up an ongoing dialog with you about their progress.

Describe how they check the feedback you provide and their scores. If this isn't in your "Getting Started" folder, consider adding it and making an announcement linking to that folder. If you don't have a getting started area perhaps you have a section on how to check grades in your syllabus. Reiterate that.

## HAVE A CONVERSATION

There are so many ways you could reach out to your students for a conversation. Yes, this takes time. However, it doesn't have to be onerous. Use the tools you have. Give everyone in your class concrete information on where they stand mid-semester.

### Google Forms

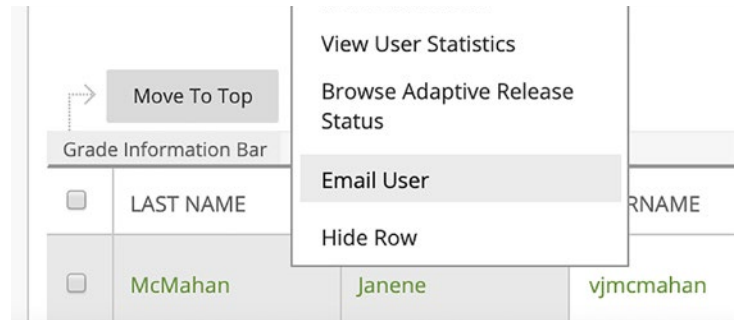
Ask your students to fill out a form with a few questions you can refer to when providing feedback or reaching out to them. These may include class standing, degree, preferred name, their goal for the course, one thing they are looking forward to, and if it is their first time taking an online course. If you ask for this information be sure to make use of it in your feedback.

### Grade Center



Click on the chevron next to a student's first or last name to access options including:

- Hide Other Rows - good for when you're speaking with a student in person or sharing your screen.
- View User Statistics - brings up student name, ID, contact phone, email, the number of items completed, what is graded, in progress, needs grading or is exempt.
- Email User - quickly allows you to email just that one student from inside of Blackboard.



## Quick Ongoing Communication Tips

- 1 Use Announcements to remind students of your office hours or how they might best contact you.
- 2 Grade frequently. Not getting behind makes mid-semester and final grading easier.
- 3 Put zeros in the Grade Center for missed work. This prompts students to contact you to ask about missed assignments or their standing in the course.
- 4 Chat with your students in the discussion board if you have a Q&A forum.

### How I Did It...

*This semester I've required two contacts so far. In week 2 students were asked to reflect on their preparedness for taking an online course. It allowed me to respond to specific questions and concerns as well as to correct what I saw as an ongoing issue where students think an online course doesn't take 9-12 hours per week. In week 4 I asked students to email, phone or schedule a virtual meeting. I called them if that's what they wanted, sent email, or met in person. Many were pleasantly surprised.*

## TAKE ACTION NOW

If you feel you're already behind, look to providing quality feedback and touching base with your students in the next two weeks. Important dates are coming up: the deadline to apply for fall graduation (10/15) and the last day for student- and faculty-initiated withdrawals (11/1).

Make notes for your ideal outcome. Create your plan and break it into manageable steps. Look at what you can automate. Put things on your calendar. The time you spend now is an investment in your future course management.