

course Signals



Top 10 Tips

Course Signals detects early warning signs and provides intervention to students who may not be performing to the best of their abilities before they reach a critical point in the semester.

The Course Signals program is most effective in large enrollment classes where individual feedback from the instructor may not be feasible. With Course Signals, students get feedback that can help them make informed decisions about their academic performance early in the semester.

Here are some tips on how to make Signals work best in your class.

Provide regular interventions: Run your interventions on a regular schedule so students will know when to expect the feedback. You might choose to run an intervention every Monday, or after the grading of each assignment and/or exam.

Make it cumulative: Although it is not required, consider keeping the columns used in intervention 1 as a part of intervention 2, and so on. As the students build points toward their final score, your interventions follow along.

	8/08 2011	8/08 2011	8/12 2011
Summer-2011-ENGL-42100-06T	✗	⚠	✓
Summer-2011-ENGL-42100-06T	✓	⚠	✓
Summer-2011-ENGL-42100-06T	✓	✓	✓
Summer-2011-ENGL-42100-06T	✓	✓	✓
Summer-2011-ENGL-42100-06T	✓	⚠	✓
Summer-2011-ENGL-42100-06T	✓	⚠	✓

Update your messages to students: Signals allows you to change the text of your intervention emails at any time. You can customize these messages to let students know which grades factored into the calculation of their risk group. You can also use your own tone and writing style; students should see this is a message from you, not from the Course Signals program.

Double check your results: After running an intervention, and before releasing stoplights or sending intervention emails, review your results. The Course Signals dashboard shows the stoplights assigned to each student, and is a good place to review the results that will be displayed and/or emailed to your students.

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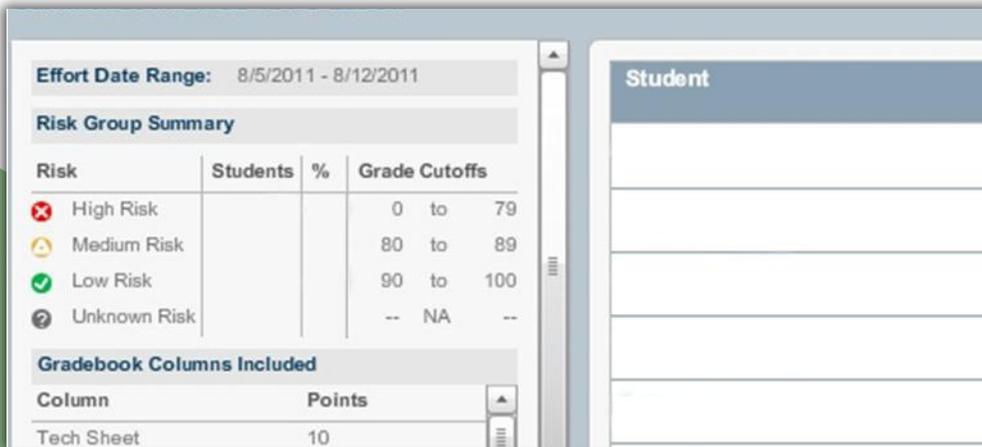


Include available help resources in your Signals emails and messages: Most of the departments and university centers already have student resources... here's a way to get students to use them!

Remove old stoplights: If you stop using Course Signals for several weeks, be sure to remove the stoplight indicators so your students don't see a light which misrepresents their current risk group.

Place a statement in your syllabus: Add a statement to your syllabus outlining how you plan to use Course Signals in your class. The syllabus is a good place to let students know how paying attention to interventions can increase their chances of success.

Use calculated columns in your Blackboard gradebook: Using calculated columns can help you more accurately represent students' performance in your class when you run interventions. You can weight certain points (e.g., attendance) less than others (e.g., quizzes and tests), which will provide students with an accurate view of the overall point distribution for the course.



The screenshot shows the Blackboard interface for a course. At the top, it displays the "Effort Date Range" as 8/5/2011 - 8/12/2011. Below this is a "Risk Group Summary" table with columns for Risk, Students, %, and Grade Cutoffs. The risk groups are High Risk (0 to 79), Medium Risk (80 to 89), Low Risk (90 to 100), and Unknown Risk (NA). Below the summary is a "Gradebook Columns Included" table with columns for Column and Points. One column, "Tech Sheet", is listed with a value of 10.

Risk	Students	%	Grade Cutoffs
High Risk			0 to 79
Medium Risk			80 to 89
Low Risk			90 to 100
Unknown Risk			-- NA --

Column	Points
Tech Sheet	10

Use short but descriptive grade book column names: Creating short but descriptive column names in your grade book will make it easy to select the grade columns in Course Signals.

Include the maximum value for each column: Entering a maximum value for each grade column in the Blackboard grade book will save you time in Signals. Signals will read the maximum value from the grade book column and help you avoid having to enter it manually.



The graphic features a stack of books on the left and a text box on the right. The text box is titled "Course Progress" and contains the following text: "Let students know where they stand in the course by updating the signal on the course management system home page and via e-mail."

For more information about Course Signals

Visit: <http://www.itap.purdue.edu/tlt/signals>

E-Mail: tlt-consulting@purdue.edu

ITaP Gold Answers: <http://tinyurl.com/purdue-signals>