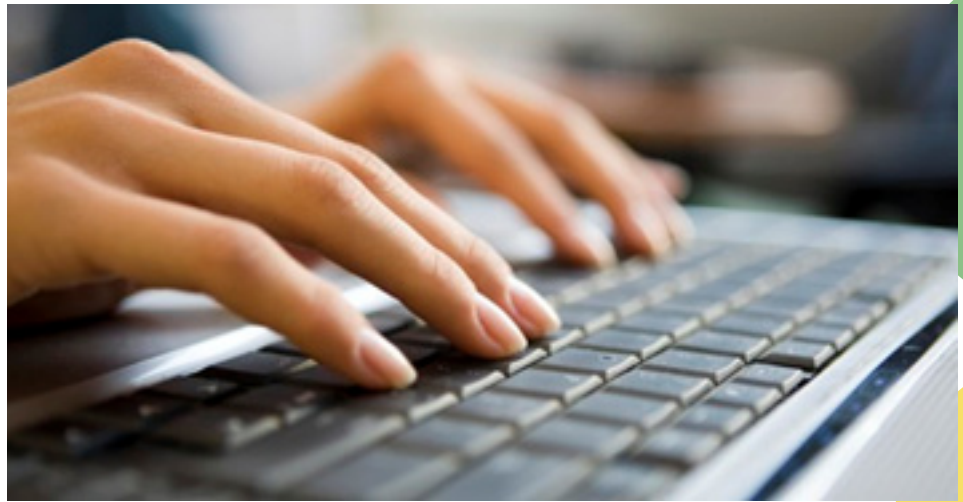# course Signals

Designing Messages for Success

Course Signals gives you two ways to communicate up-to-date information to students about their progress in your course—a signal color and an intervention message. You can start with templates that are pre-loaded for the intervention messages and adapt them, or write your own from scratch. Research on messages sent in past semesters has indicated that these five intervention strategies are the most successful.

Here are some tips on how to make your messages most successful.

Stay up to date: Begin using Course Signals as soon as your students start having graded assignment and keep using it frequently through the semester (weekly or bi-weekly).

Be personal: Communicate directly with your students and sign the messages with your name. Effective messages were sent by the instructors who worked with the students, not from course coordinators. In successful cases, none of the messages were sent from the course coordinators who had no direct interaction with students.

Keep it short: Effective messages are short-on average under 40 words in length.

Focus on advice, not reminders: Don't tell students what they already know. Successful cases are less likely to send reminding messages. Instead, provide advice on how to improve. All of the successful cases provided advice in their messages to students. For example, this message gives students advice about important upcoming projects: "In order to maintain your grade, it is important that you do well on Exam 4 and the group project."

Give the facts: Be factual with your students and focus on providing them with information. Instructors who sent messages with warnings about the negative consequences of low performance or messages expressing concern and support had less success than instructors who stayed focused on the facts of students' performance. For example, this message gives a student facts about course performance: "I am sending this out due to your low percentage in this course. As of now, you are in the bottom 18% of the class."

For more information about Course Signals

Visit: http://www.itap.purdue.edu/tlt/signals
Email: tlt-consulting@purdue.edu
ITaP Gold Answers: http://tinyurl.com/purdue-signals

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