

## Monitor Student Activity and Take Quick Action

Ongoing monitoring of students' online activity will help you identify students who may not be participating as regularly as they need to in order to succeed in your online course. Your learning management system's (LMS) gradebook function likely provides a quick overview of which students are not completing assignments and/posting late to discussions. In addition, most LMSs provide an analytics function that allows you to monitor the time students spend online—their level of activity in discussions, their time spent on quizzes, the amount of time they interact with other students, and the number of missing or late assignments. It is particularly important to monitor students' online activity and their completion of assignments during the first few weeks since students who fall behind at the beginning of a course often struggle to catch up or complete the course (Boettcher & Conrad, 2016).

Research indicates that there are many reasons why students fall behind or struggle to effectively engage with online courses, including

- technical difficulties,
- problems in their personal life or their work,
- feeling disconnected from the instructor or other students,
- lack of preparation for the material,
- lack of comprehension of the material, and
- falling behind and then getting overwhelmed (Jaggars, 2011).

It is important to reach out to students as soon as you recognize they are not participating at the levels needed to be successful in the course. When you reach out to a student, try to avoid making assumptions about low participation or missing assignments. Ask them how they are doing, listen to them, and let them know that you are interested in helping them succeed in the course and in helping to get them back on track. In addition, make sure they are aware of your virtual office hours and the campus support services for online students; and offer assistance in connecting them with those supports.

### Example message:

*Hi Jennifer! I've noticed that you have not been posting in our discussion forum for the past two weeks, so I'm wondering if everything is okay. Are you having any trouble with the material? Please let me know if there is anything I should know or any help I can offer. Also, here is a link to a list of support resources that might be of help. I look forward to hearing from you and helping in any way I can!*