
Tip sheet – Using analytics to support student learning

Monitoring student success should take place at several levels: throughout a course, across topics and within a topic. Student progress in a course and across topics is monitored according to the [Student Progress Policy and Procedures](#). It is critical to monitor students' engagement and progress within topics, particularly early in the topic to provide support or intervention that enables the student to get back on track and complete the topic. This should be a high priority for [first year topics](#).

A key part of the [transition to tertiary study](#) (Kift, 2015; Kift, Nelson & Clarke, 2010; Kift, 2008) is to monitor student engagement and performance to be able to intervene and aid students in a timely manner. While having an early, low stakes assessment piece particularly in first year topics is a good strategy, there are additional approaches which may be useful. You can use reports available within FLO to evaluate student engagement with your FLO topic to provide targeted support to a student; prioritise outreach to students and assess participation. Monitoring student engagement within FLO can also lead to improved student engagement and improved retention.

Tips for monitoring student engagement in topics

1. Before teaching begins, choose two early time periods for communication with students who are showing lower engagement (end of week 2 and just before census date for example). In addition, you may wish to choose a third time to check in with your students, later in the semester. Think about your students and choose a time to intervene before students begin having questions, run into difficulties with the topic and/or their engagement drop offs (or out).
2. Decide what you plan to do to support those students (e.g. directing them to specific consultation sessions that you will hold, providing online resources, referring to relevant student support services). [Research shows](#) (West et al., 2019) that students are more likely to respond positively to direct contact from the topic coordinator rather than an automated message from 'the University' or a professional staff member. Remember the communication you send is only the signpost to the support, training, or intervention that is available.
3. You may also like to collaborate with colleagues to ensure that 'reach out' practices are coordinated. Depending on the topic this may involve conversations with colleagues who teach in the same course in the same year level to determine whether the same students are being identified across multiple topics.
4. Provide students with a reason why you are contacting them and clear action(s) that they can take to get back on track (e.g., reply to you directly, complete a poll indicating that they need further help, apply for an extension etc.) – see appendix for examples.

Determine **how** you will identify students with low engagement:

- Identify students who have **low FLO access levels** during a specified timeframe and/or
- Identify **key activities** in your FLO topic that you can use to tell if students are engaging with the topic at those time points.

Low FLO access levels

- Students with [low FLO access levels](#) can be identified in FLO by accessing the participants list in your FLO site.
- Using the filters at the top of the screen, select:
 - Match = All
 - Select = inactive for more than (and determine the appropriate timeframe, eg 1 week, 2 weeks)
 - Add conditions – Status = active, Roles = student

-
- Clicking apply filters will give you a list of all students who are active (enrolled) and who have not accessed FLO since the time selected
 - Download the student list and create a [mail merge](#) or bulk (bcc) email to contact students.

Key activities method

Prior to the start of the topic

- Determine **key activities** in FLO that you can use to tell if students are engaging with the topic at those time points. For example this could be posting in the discussion board about the first two tutorials and completion of the first quiz.
- Turn on [completion tracking](#) across your topic
- Set up [completion tracking](#) on the key activities. See the tip sheet on activity completion, progress bars and topic completion for more information.

At the time of monitoring

- Generate an [activity completion report](#) and download as a CSV file.
- Open the CSV in Excel and, using the key activities you have previously identified, sort by completion status.
- Identify low engagement students (Tip: use find and replace to change 'Not completed' to '1' – then you can create a sum of multiple items).
- You can then create a [mail merge](#) or bulk (bcc) email to contact students.

Other tips for understanding and improving students experience

There are a number of other approaches to understanding and improving the experience of students in your topics. These include:

- Monitoring class engagement overall to see if they are accessing resources using [activity report](#) and [topic participation](#) reports. Reports are also available for [Kaltura](#) (video platform), [Collaborate](#) and [readings](#). An [overview of all reports available in FLO is available](#). Use these reports to inform how you might adjust your teaching practice or FLO topic design to increase engagement.

Understanding if and how students are utilising resources within a topic can assist in improving the teaching materials, the sequencing of materials and the curriculum structures at both a topic and course level. It can also suggest some key questions to ask yourself or your students in relation to why students are or are not accessing materials and the frequency with which they do so. For example, are they accessing some materials frequently because they don't understand a concept or are they not accessing something because it is buried in the topic structure.

- If you noticed an individual student having difficulty on tasks you can review their individual engagement using [complete](#), [outline](#) and [all logs](#) reports. You might use these to take a deep dive into a students' engagement levels over time, or to explore which activities and resources they have used.
- Ask students if they need help: After covering a key concept relating to an assessment task use a [poll](#) for students to indicate whether they need additional support. Download the poll results and email students requesting extra help directing them to an allocated consultation session (or other means of help).

Requesting assistance

If you require assistance with using and accessing analytics within FLO, please speak with the [Learning Designer in your College](#) or [view the overview of all reports available in FLO](#).

References

Kift, S. (2008) *The next, great first year challenge: Sustaining, coordinating and embedding coherent institution-wide approaches to enact the FYE as everybody's business*. Conference Proceedings 11th Pacific Rim First Year in Higher Education.

Kift, S., Nelson, KJ., Clarke, JA. (2010) *Transition pedagogy: A third generation approach to FYE-A case study of policy and practice for the higher education sector*. International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education 1 (1), 1-20.

Kift, S. (2015) *A decade of transition pedagogy: A quantum leap in conceptualising the first year experience*. HERDSA Review of Higher Education 2 (1), 51-86.

West, D., Searle, B. Vanderlelie, J., Toohey, D. Luzeckyj, A. & Bell, K. (2019) *Learner Facing Analytics: Analysis of Student Perspectives*. Innovative Research Universities. Melbourne, Australia. Available: <https://www.iru.edu.au/news/learner-facing-analytics-report/>

Appendix – example ‘reach’ out messages

Example – week 2

Hi, just checking in for [topic code] and to see how you are going because I noticed I can't see your response to the tutorial discussion for week 1 or 2 and you seem to have missed the first quiz. If you were a late enrolment and have managed to get to class this week please ignore this email (but if you need help you can contact me). If something happened in week 1 (like getting lost or not knowing about tutorials) and you managed to get to class this week, that is also fine (you can ignore this email as well). If you attended but missed the discussion or quiz – please email me the details of the class you attended and I can point you in the right direction. If you were away for medical or compassionate reasons be sure to let me know.

Otherwise just a quick note to say I am available for consultation on Tuesday and Thursday if you are having any difficulties, feel a bit lost, and need some help. Just send me a reply email if this is the case and I can schedule you in.

If you missed it, I have recorded our Orientation session and put it up on FLO, also the materials from week 1 and 2 tutorials (and lectures) are all online to catch up, and there are quizzes in week 1 and 2 that you need to complete by the end of next week.

Other sources of support are askflinders@flinders.edu.au (for enrolment support, questions about the Uni more generally or changes to your enrolment). There is also Health, Counselling and Disability (8201 2118) and the [Student Learning Support Service](#) (for help on academic skills development). Otherwise, I hope you are enjoying your semester and beginning to find your way, but if not please reach out.

Example – close to census date

Dear «Firstname»

I am writing you this email, because I am concerned about your engagement into the topic [topic code and name]

According to my record, you haven't yet participated in the topic, at least I do not have any record of any activity on FLO.

I might be wrong, but it seems to me you have not [mention activities to be completed]

Since we are already in week 4 of the semester, I am concerned about your chance of completion of the topic. If there is anything, I can do to help, please let me know. If there is anything unclear, of what is expected of you or how the topic is working, please let me know.