D2L
Optimizing student success in MSU's digital academic hub

The more educators can treat students as professional learners by providing them with reliable, timely, and accurate information about their progress in a course, the more likely it is that students will persist, thrive, and ultimately succeed in their educational journey.
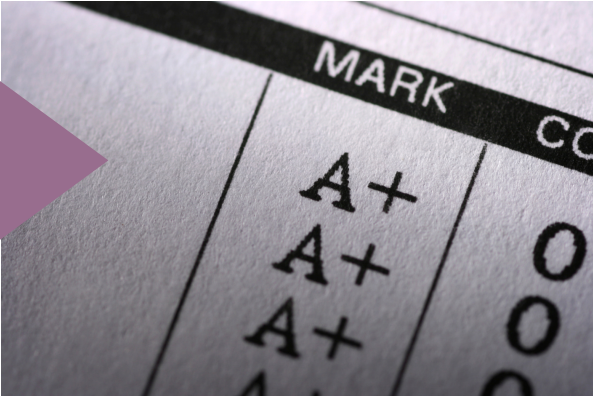
The typical learning experience in American high schools is an in-person experience that is infused with online tools. Students are regularly required to engage with learning content in online platforms, and they have constant access to their grades, class announcements, and course materials via online and mobile platforms. Given that this is the most common learning experience students have prior to beginning at MSU, it follows that establishing a digital learning environment that mirrors the students' known processes will create a more seamless transition into the MSU learning ecosystem.

An effective way to support student learning is for educators to use the learning management system as a student-centered academic hub for their course. At MSU, that means using D2L in specific, targeted ways that are intentionally geared toward meeting most students' needs. In addition to optimizing the students' experience, this intentional deployment of the learning management system serves to streamline much of the administrative load that is inherent in teaching, thereby simplifying many of the time-consuming tasks that often dominate educator's lives. Accomplishing this need not require a comprehensive deployment of D2L in your course. In fact, using the LMS in four or five critical ways, and perhaps modifying your practices slightly to facilitate that use, can make a significant difference in students' perceptions of your course.

Use the grade book
- Students are accustomed to regular, up-to-date access to their current course grades; they seek timely feedback about their status and their overall learning gains
- The grade book provides certainty about status in a course, increasing students' engagement
- An up-to-date grade book keeps the course top-of-mind in an otherwise busy schedule
- Like a weekly 1-1 meeting with a supervisor in the workspace, gradebook access functions as a regular motivator for consistent engagement in the course

01

Post a clear syllabus and course schedule
- A syllabus should detail course-specific information and serve as the course's constitution
- Like a job description, the syllabus is a tangible document that clearly outlines their primary responsibilities and duties
- A clear course schedule, often a component of the syllabus, functions like a project tracking mechanism common in many work environments
- The schedule gives guidance to students about pending deadlines, key horizon events, and the general trajectory of the course

02

Use the announcements tool
- Students in American high schools are accustomed to weekly course newsletters; regular course announcements in D2L mirror that experience
- Announcements are a platform for instructors to highlight critical points, underscore key dates or topics, and provide generalized clarification on common questions
- They function like a one-way version of a workplace's Slack channel or MS Teams space
- They allow for clear, just-in-time communication about unforeseen changes or needed points of clarification

03

Distribute course materials
- Students are accustomed to a paperless environment
- Using the LMS as opposed to to email ensures higher levels of digital accessibility and utility on mobile devices
- Students are entering into a world of work that is dominated by digital documentation
- Using digital documents in class will help prepare students for that reality

04

(Optionally) use the assignment submission tool
- Most students are highly accustomed to using online platforms to submit assignments and take assessments
- Many have limited access to printing (or must pay for printing services), thus they prefer digital submission
- Using the digital drop box will align with students' known ways of being in a class
- Digital submission streamlines the use of the online gradebook
- The practice is akin to the digital reporting processes that will dominate Spartan graduates' work lives

05