Tech Snacks: Intelligent Agents and Awards

Instructors often spend a lot of time tracking down students throughout the semester for various reasons, including student inactivity in the course and low grades. Intelligent Agents and Awards are both automated tools in Brightspace that instructors can use to reach out to students who may need it–for multiple reasons.

Intelligent Agents

Intelligent Agents is an automated tool in Brightspace that will send pre-formatted emails when certain conditions are triggered. An Intelligent Agent can have multiple different triggers, including when a student hasn't logged into Brightspace or hasn't accessed the course within a set number of days. To access the Intelligent Agents tool, click on the Progress tab, then Class Progress. Then click on the link labeled "Use agents to automate feedback."

What can I do with Intelligent Agents?

Early alerts (login activity and course activity) — Early alerts are useful and can be set up to run all semester to keep reminding the students to stay engaged with a course. When a student has not logged in a set number of days, the Agent will send an email to the student and/or instructor. You can customize the email message, and include variable strings that automatically personalize the text to each student.

Automated grade checks — An Agent can be scheduled at critical times during the semester: early alert, last day to withdraw with a "W", midterm, etc. As long as you have the final calculated grade released in the Gradebook, you can set an Agent to send emails to students whose total grade drops below a set percentage.

Automated feedback — Positive or corrective feedback lets students know where they are standing in the class which can alleviate anxiety or spur them into action. Agents can be tailored to send the student a congratulatory email for a job well done, or encourage struggling students to seek tutoring help.

Awards

Awards are an automated tool in Brightspace that will "gift" students with award badges when certain conditions are triggered. Awards are set-up by the instructor and can be used for multiple different reasons. To access the Awards tool, click on the Progress tab, then Awards. Like Intelligent Agents, you can customize the message the students will receive upon earning an Award.

What can I do with Awards?

Motivate — Awards can be used to send students nuggets of motivation throughout the semester. If a student earns a perfect score on a test, you can have an automated Award to encourage them on their performance.

Inform — Awards can serve as reminders upon logging into Brightspace, as well as a platform to provide students tips and tricks for working through your course.

Support — Awards can serve as messages of support throughout the semester. For example, sending out awards at mid-semester, for tough assignments, and informational resources to help students succeed.