



NUDGE CAMPAIGNS

High GPA and Low Persistence Prediction – Mindset Fall



Driving Student Success Through Nudges

A **nudge campaign** is a communication strategy, built upon a data-informed insight, that an institution designs to nudge a targeted group of students to achieve a specific, measurable outcome.

Nudges are small pushes in the right direction that do not require prescribed actions, but encourage certain behaviors. When students are presented with a nudge sent from a trusted person at your institution, they have the freedom to make their own choices with information about behaviors we know are more strongly associated with positive persistence and graduation outcomes.

- Kuh, George D., et al. *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter*. John Wiley & Sons, 2011.

Growth mindset is the notion that if a student believes that she can overcome challenges over time and with effort, and that her abilities are not fixed, but can grow, she will respond resiliently when challenges arise.

- Yeager DS, Dweck CS. Mindsets that promote resilience: When students believe that personal characteristics can be developed. *Educational Psychologist*. 47: 302-314. DOI: 10.1080/00461520.2012.722805

About the Nudge Campaign

Opportunity

Having a high GPA is often considered a signal that students are on track for success. However, students often leave school for non-academic reasons such as financial, logistical, and social-psychological. The persistence prediction is created using academic and non-academic factors and provide a signal of risk for high GPA students.

Goal

The goal of this nudge campaign is to nudge high GPA students with low persistence predictions into behaviors that will aid in their success within the current term, and persistence into the next term.

Students

The target student group for this nudge campaign is students with high GPAs and low persistence prediction, e.g., students with a GPA greater than 3.0 and in the bottom or second persistence prediction quartile, or Very Low to Moderate persistence predictions.

Owner

The owner of the the nudge campaign is the person responsible for sending the nudges to the students and receiving and acting upon replies from students. Choose the most appropriate person at your institution to send the nudges. Remember, emails sent from a person the student knows are most likely to be read. Advisors or faculty are often appropriate owners for a nudge campaign.

Strategy

This nudge campaign is a series of mindset nudges designed to help students with high GPAs and low persistence predictions build a growth mindset. The nudges are intended to build upon each other and can be reinforced through a call-to-action.

Nudges are sent at four different points during the academic term and utilize the following mindset principles:

- Growth Mindset
- Empathy
- Normalizing
- Goal Setting

First Two Weeks of the Term

Nudge for Very Low, Low and Moderate Persistence Predictions

Subject Line: Your hard work will pay off!

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

Tackling the challenges of college is not easy. You know this given the academic successes you've experienced in the past.

As this [TERM/SEMESTER] starts, keep reminding yourself that hard work and perseverance will pay off in the end.

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION]

[SIGNATURE]

Nudge for High and Very High Persistence Predictions

Subject Line: Your hard work will pay off!

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

Tackling the challenges of college is not easy. You know this given the academic successes you've experienced in the past.

Remind yourself when challenges arise that it's another part of the learning experience and hard work will carry you through!

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION]

[SIGNATURE]

Prior to Midterm Exams

Nudge for Very Low, Low and Moderate Persistence Predictions

Subject Line: How do you navigate stress?

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

The days leading up to any exam period are stressful. You've been through this kind of thing before and know the importance of pacing yourself and preparing well; but it's still a major stressful time in the [TERM/SEMESTER]!

Think of a time in the past you have successfully navigated all the stresses of life during midterms, and channel those thoughts. You can do this!

I just really wanted to reach out to provide you some encouragement during this time and say that I'm here to support you. All your hard work will pay off in the end.

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION]

[SIGNATURE]

.....

Nudge for High and Very High Persistence Predictions

Subject Line: How do you navigate stress?

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

Exam period is stressful, right?! Fortunately, this period of stress is short-lived, and soon you'll be on the other side of these exams.

As you prepare for your midterms, remember that your previous successes show you can do this. Don't give up, it is hard and stressful, but so worth it!

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION]

[SIGNATURE]

After Midterm Exams

Nudge for Very Low, Low and Moderate Persistence Predictions

Subject Line: How is learning like exercise?

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

Are you feeling really stretched academically this [TERM/SEMESTER]? If so, that's good!

Feeling too stretched by all of life's obligations? That's not good!

Learning engages the brain in so many ways and it's like exercise, sometimes it hurts a bit but pays off later with diligence and hard work. But it's hard to focus on studies when life feels like it's getting in the way. This is a great time in the term to connect your goals and set plans in motion to finish this term well and plan for next [TERM/SEMESTER].

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION]

A goal brought you here, and I'm confident [INSTITUTION NAME] can help you achieve that goal.

[SIGNATURE]

.....

Nudge for High and Very High Persistence Predictions

Subject Line: How is learning like exercise?

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

Are you feeling really stretched academically this [TERM/SEMESTER]? If so, that's good! Learning engages the brain in so many ways. Learning is just like physical exercise; sometimes it hurts a bit, but it pays off later with diligence and hard work.

Your hard work in your academic pursuits is going to help you reach your goals. As you contemplate the courses you will take next in your program, let me know if there are ways I can help you help you achieve your goals.

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION]

I'm here to support you in whatever ways I can.

[SIGNATURE]

Last Two Weeks of the Term

Nudge for Very Low, Low and Moderate Persistence Predictions

Subject Line: The work is worth it

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

This is the last hard push for the [TERM/SEMESTER]. It's so normal to feel exhausted, but don't throw in the towel now! You can do this and be one step closer to your goal!!

Exam period is extremely stressful. Take some time for yourself and remind yourself that the work now is worth it, and dedicated efforts over time to study will pay off when you complete your program.

Keep in mind that the adventure of this [TERM/SEMESTER] has stretched you, and that's a marker of a [COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY] education. You're here because we believe you have what it takes to be successful. Don't give up now! A little more hard work and dedication to your studies will help you finish strong.

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION]

[SIGNATURE]

Nudge for High and Very High Persistence Predictions

Subject Line: The work is worth it

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

Do you know that you're here at [INSTITUTION NAME] because we believe you have what it takes to successfully navigate the challenges of this program? If you didn't know that, this is a gentle reminder :-)

This is the last hard push for the term. It's so normal to feel exhausted, but don't throw in the towel now! Take some time for yourself and remind yourself that the work now is worth it, and dedicated efforts over time to study will pay off in the end.

A little more hard work and dedication to your studies will help you finish strong. Keep up the hard work!

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION]

[SIGNATURE]

Call-To-Action

A nudge campaign is intended to encourage student behaviors that lead to an increased likelihood of success. To have an impact on students' likelihood to persist and graduate, the nudge must alter students perspectives or illicit actions that increase their chances of meeting their educational goals.

*A nudge can be reinforced with a request for a student to think or behave in a way that will likely improve their educational outcomes. This is a **Call-To-Action**. Including a call-to-action in a nudge is optional, but highly recommended. Nudges that ask a student to do something specific make it significantly more likely that they will do it and it will have an impact.*

It is important not to overwhelm the student by including a long list of resources or choices. Include just one call-to-action and make it specific to the target student population.

Four calls to action are described below along with examples of each.

Types of Calls-To-Action

1 Thought Exercise

Students' attitudes and beliefs can be changed simply by asking them to think about a question or reflect on a hypothetical situation. For example, asking students to remind themselves about the reasons they are going to college can reinvigorate a sense of determination to help carry them through a tough point in the term.

Thought exercises have the benefit of being powerful yet not requiring any additional resources beyond sending the nudge. They also provide students cognitive tools they can use anytime to increase their resilience when facing challenges.

2 Link to a Resource

Your institution has resources available to support students throughout their academic journey. You may also know of resources outside your institution that would be helpful for certain student groups. Provide a link to a resource related to the purpose of the nudge or to the targeted student group. This call-to-action leverages existing resources without requiring additional time or new initiatives.

3 Request to Signup or Attend

Your institution has a variety of support activities already in place for students, such as orientation sessions and student clubs. Ask students to signup, attend, and participate in one of these events or activities. This also has the benefit of not requiring any additional resources to support students beyond what is already allocated.

4 Schedule an Appointment or Visit

Ask students to schedule an appointment with someone in their academic support network. The call-to-action may be especially impactful for students in need of acute intervention such as students with Very Low and Low persistence predictions.

Asking students to schedule an appointment or visit an advisor, faculty, success coach, mentor, or academic support center requires the capacity to handle the influx of students wanting to utilize those resources. This is especially important to consider when using this call-to-action in a nudge campaign with a large targeted student group.

Thought Exercise Examples

Remember goals and aspirations

Think about the reason you applied to [INSTITUTION NAME] in the first place. Remind yourself about those goals and aspirations; you can achieve your goals here.

Use good habits

Good habits you discovered as a first-year student are the ones you can re-use to experience success this year. What habit will you use this week to prime yourself for success in your classes?

Address challenges

Now is the perfect time to consider a *new* way to tackle a *new* challenge. Working through new challenges is how we all learn. What new challenge are you facing? What is one way you will address this challenge today?

Link to Resource Examples

Study tips

Final exams are coming up. Click here for tips on how to beef up your study skills.

Time management resource

Juggling life and school is challenging. Here is a link to a guide on time management that may help.

Getting around

Getting around campus can be tricky. Here are links to campus maps and shuttle routes.

Learn about support services

Did you know that you have access to [WRITING CENTER/TUTORING/SUCCESS CENTER] to support you while you learn and grow at [INSTITUTION NAME]? Click here to learn about how you can take advantage of these services.

Request to Signup or Attend Examples

Join a student club

At [INSTITUTION NAME] we have a variety of student clubs you can join to meet students with similar interests as you. They are a great way to get connected to your learning community. An information session with representatives from the various clubs will be held at [TIME AND LOCATION]. Come to the session and meet student like yourself.

Attend orientation

It's important to attend one of your upcoming orientation sessions. They provide information that will help you be successful as you start your journey as a [MASCOT NAME].

Signup for an activity

A bunch of your fellow [MASCOT NAME] are volunteering at a local school this weekend. There are lot of opportunities to get involved with your peers and give back to the local community. Signup for an upcoming volunteer opportunity.

Schedule an Appointment or Visit Examples

Advising appointment

Schedule an appointment with me so we can review your plan for next term.

Tutoring center

[COURSE NAME] provides foundational information you will need in future courses. Like many students, if you feel like you need support learning the material, visit the tutoring center.

Office hours

Making a connection with your professors is important. Make a goal to visit all of your professors at least once this term.