Concurrent Enrollment Tool Kit, Week 4: Communicating With Your Professor

Sherry Franklin, Mary Braggs
Published by *K20 Center*

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Time Frame 10 minutes

Essential Question(s)

- Discuss with students the importance of respectful communication with their professor(s).
- Explain strategies for communicating with professors via email or in person.

Summary

Week 4 of the Concurrent Enrollment Tool Kit is designed to facilitate a discussion with students about how to appropriately communicate with a college professor when they have questions or need to discuss a topic.

Learning Goals

What are the benefits of communicating with your professor?
When students communicate with their professor, it helps them feel more comfortable and connected to the course. Professors are there to help clear up any confusion on assignments or topics. When students communicate with their professor, it shows their commitment to the course. This skill can help them once they are in the workforce or looking for a job.

Attachments

- CE Tool Kit, Week 4.docx
- CE Tool Kit, Week 4.pdf
- Communicating With Your Professor—CE Tool Kit, Week 4 - Spanish.docx
- Communicating With Your Professor—CE Tool Kit, Week 4 - Spanish.pdf
- Communicating With Your Professor—CE Tool Kit, Week 4.docx
- Communicating With Your Professor—CE Tool Kit, Week 4.pdf

Materials

- CE Tool Kit, Week 4 (attached)
- Communicating With Your Professor handout (attached; one half-sheet per student)
- Device with internet access (optional)
- Student planner (recommended)
- Pen/pencil

Guiding Notes

Begin the meeting by greeting the student by name and inquiring about their classes and how they are going.

Ask the student if they are aware of their professor's office hours. If not, have them look in the syllabus for this information. Explain that these hours are the best times to reach out with questions, schedule meetings, and to expect replies to emails.

Inform students that they should plan on waiting up to 24 hours for a response when they email their professor. This means they need to plan ahead and ask questions with plenty of time prior to assignment due dates or exams. It is generally acceptable to send a follow-up email if you haven't received a reply within 48 hours.

Provide the student with the attached **Communicating With Your Professor** handout and discuss the criteria for how to communicate effectively and respectfully with their professors through email. Suggest that they do not use slang, type in all caps, or use multiples of punctuations marks.

Discuss preparations for meeting in person. Student should greet the professor when they walk in, have their questions written down to help them facilitate the conversation, encourage them to dress appropriately, and thank the professor for meeting with them before they leave.

Discussion Starters

Consider starting the discussion by asking:

- Have you personally communicated with your professor yet?
  - If so, was it via email or in person?
  - What did you notice when communicating with them?
- Were you or are you intimidated by the idea of communicating directly with your professor?

Discussion Questions

To guide this week's discussion, consider asking some of the following questions:

- How is your course going?
- Do you have any questions about the course?
- What are some reasons for emailing your professor?
- Is there anything you are still unclear about in your course?
- Who is someone who could assist you if you need help communicating with your professor?

Next Steps

To prepare for next week, ask students to:

- Reach out to their professor and introduce themself.
- Bring their device for the next meeting.

Research Rationale

Research shows a clear and strong link between concurrent enrollment and increased student academic performance (Jones, 2014; Dingess, 2018). Several studies have also found that students who participate in concurrent enrollment have time to acclimate to the college environment and thus earn higher grades in their postsecondary careers (Allen & Dadgar, 2012; Dingess, 2018). This opportunity to build momentum also provides an avenue for those students who might carry complex social and educational challenges from high school as they transition into the university setting (Wang et al., 2015). A consistent concern with students as they transition from high school to PSE is that many of them might have difficulty in fully acclimating to the rigor and expectations of university-level coursework (Taylor, 2015; Vargas et al., 2017). This is especially apparent when looking at students who identify as first-generation college students, as they might feel overwhelmed by everything from student support to the specifics of financial aid (Lee et al., 2022). Concurrent enrollment offers a bridge between the familiarity of high school and the frontier of higher learning, building on the initial benefits of concurrent enrollment in high school to build toward greater academic momentum fueled by a smooth transition from high school to university (Wang et al., 2015).

To expand on the inherent benefits associated with concurrent enrollment programs, these programs are most successful when students are provided with extra guidance in how to navigate this new academic environment (Witkowsky & Clayton, 2020). Though students in concurrent enrollment programs might be high-performing, it is helpful to remember that they are still high school students and stand to benefit from “wraparound” services that counselors can provide as a bridge between high school and university-level expectations (Witkowsky & Clayton, 2020). Whether partnering directly with specific higher education institutions as part of the concurrent enrollment program or not, wraparound services can still be designed with the university course expectations in mind.

These tool kits are designed as conversation starters to provide the kind of ongoing support that allows concurrent enrollment students to be most successful (Johnson et al., 2021; Lile et al., 2018). Spanning a range of topics between goal setting and writing expectations, each conversation serves as an opportunity for relationship building and mentoring with students. For students who might not know which questions to ask or which resources to look for, these tool kits can help concurrent enrollment coordinators set a foundation for success for students to draw on after high school.

Resources

Allen, D., & Dadgar, M. (2012). Does dual enrollment increase students' success in college? Evidence from a quasi-experimental analysis of dual enrollment in New York City. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 11-19.

Dingess, E. (2018). The impact of the number of dual enrollment credits on racial minority students' completion time at five Virginia community colleges. ODU Digital Commons. https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/efl_etds/68

Johnson, J. M., Paris, J. H., Curci, J. D., & Horchos, S. (2021). Beyond college access: An exploration of the short-term impact of a dual enrollment program. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory, & Practice*, 1–23.

Jones, S. (2014). Student participation in dual enrollment and college success. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, *38*(1), 24-37.

Lee, J., Fernandez, F., Ro, H. K., & Suh, H. (2022, January 4). Does dual enrollment influence high school graduation, college enrollment, choice, and persistence? *Research in Higher Education, 63*, 825-848. https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s11162-021-09667-3.pdf

Lile, J. R., Ottusch, T. M., Jones, T., & Richards, L. N. (2017). Understanding college-student roles: Perspectives of participants in a high school/community college dual-enrollment program. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 42*(2), 95–111. https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2016.1264899

Taylor, J. L. (2015). Accelerating pathways to college: The (in)equitable effects of community college dual credit. *Community College Review, 43*(4), 355-379. https://doi.org/10.1177/0091552115594880

Vargas, J., Hooker, S., & Gerwin, C. (2017, November 1). Blending high school and college can sharpen the focus of each. *Phi Delta Kappan, 99*(3), 13-18.

Wang, X., Chan, H., Phelps, L. A., & Washbon, J. I. (2015). Fuel for success: Academic momentum as a mediator between dual enrollment and educational outcomes of two-year technical college students. *Community College Review, 43*(2), 165–190. https://doi.org/10.1177/0091552115569846

Witkowsky, P., & Clayton, G. (2020). What makes dual enrollment work? High school counselor perspectives. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 44*(6), 427-444.