

How to design
more actionable edtech dashboards:
design examples

How to design more actionable edtech dashboards: eleven design principles



understand



decide



action
(e.g. Instructor)

Help users quickly understand, interpret, and navigate data by visualizing to:

1. **Tell a story** of the journey of your user to their end goals

2. **Strive for the five-second rule** for your users to be able to answer their questions

3. **Reduce noise** using calm, consistent design and cues so insights pop

Help users make high-value decisions by providing and combining metrics to:

4. **Create a 360 degree picture** of a learner and their learning

5. **Provide formative insights** for tactical decisions at valuable moments

6. **Help strategic planning** with trends for course and class adjustments

7. **Ensure insights are appropriate** and reliable for the type of decision

Help users take impactful actions with features, content, and messaging that:

8. **Enable efficiency** by ranking issues, and clustering common problems

9. **Close the gap** by helping instructors see which learners need help, when, and how

10. **Amplify impact** by teeing-up evidence-based interventions

11. **Promote self development** by helping learners see their progress and grow grit

How to design more actionable edtech dashboards: recommended user-centered, outcome-driven methodology

First, a quick summary about the methodology that I use with product teams and recommend for edtech dashboard design:

1. **Partner with your target users and customers**, and involve them throughout the process.
2. **Start at the end**, by developing a clear understanding of the outcomes they are trying to achieve.
3. **Understand the decisions they are trying to make** and why, day to day, week to week, month to month.
4. **Understand the types of interventions they can or would like to make** based on those decisions (these could include deploying materials, meetings, helpers, or communications).
5. **Start your designs in black and white**, but only after you've nailed 2-4. Designing in black and white forces you to focus on what's most important for your users and visually simplifying it for them. Only re-introduce color when you have a solid set of designs.

How to design more actionable edtech dashboards: context for these design examples

In the pages that follow are four mockup designs to illustrate the principles of designing more actionable edtech dashboards. For context, a few health warnings:

1. **These designs are illustrative only.** In fact, I've broken my first rule of development and not involved customers to incubate these designs. You should always start by workshoping with your target customers to identify what they are trying to achieve (their “outcomes”).
2. **Good design is unobtrusive.** So, if these designs do a good job, they will not be startling. Instead, they will get “out of the way” to enable understanding, decision making, and high-value actions.
3. **Courseware for US higher-education instructors.** These designs illustrate dashboards for instructors using a fictional courseware product. The insights and actions are therefore geared to adult students and instructional models.

Enjoy!

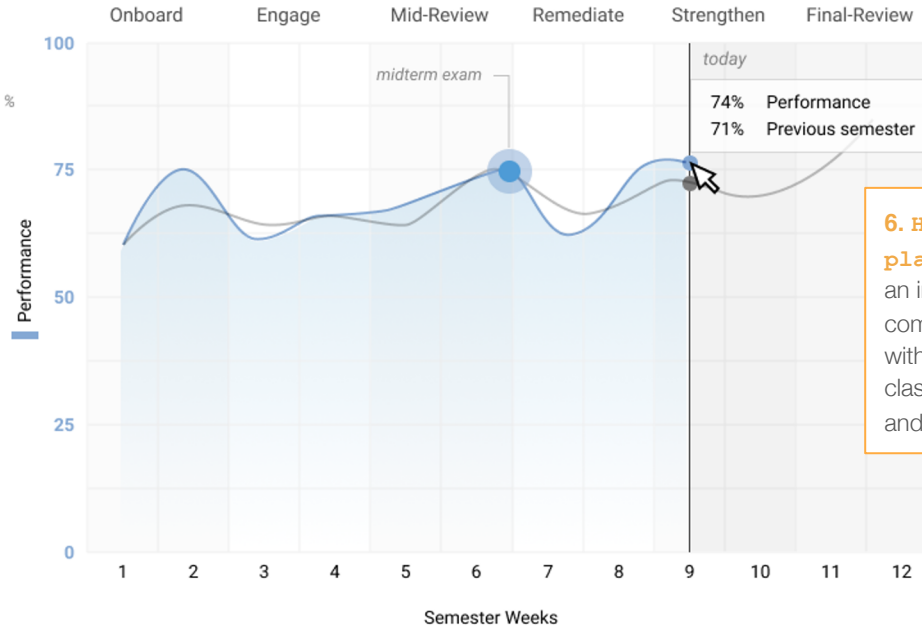
Design example 1:
class weekly performance trends
to help instructors to make course corrections

1. **Tell a story** by helping an instructor to focus on key phases of their journey to achieving their course goals

Class trends

class average by week

- Performance**
avg. learning objective score, %
- Compare to**
- ☒ Previous semester
 - ☐ National average
- Select overlays**
- ☐ Engagement
total activity time, mins
 - ☐ Study
total ebook time, mins
 - ☐ Perseverance
avg. resubmissions per activity, #
 - ☐ Confidence
avg. post submission, 1-5



6. **Help strategic planning** by allowing an instructor to compare performance with their previous class to guide course and class adjustments

Design example 2:
class weekly 360-degree view
to give instructors a richer context of performance results

4. Create a 360° picture of learners and their learning to give instructors context for performance and insights into how to help

Class trends

class average by week

Performance
avg. learning objective score, %

Compare to
☐ Previous semester ▼

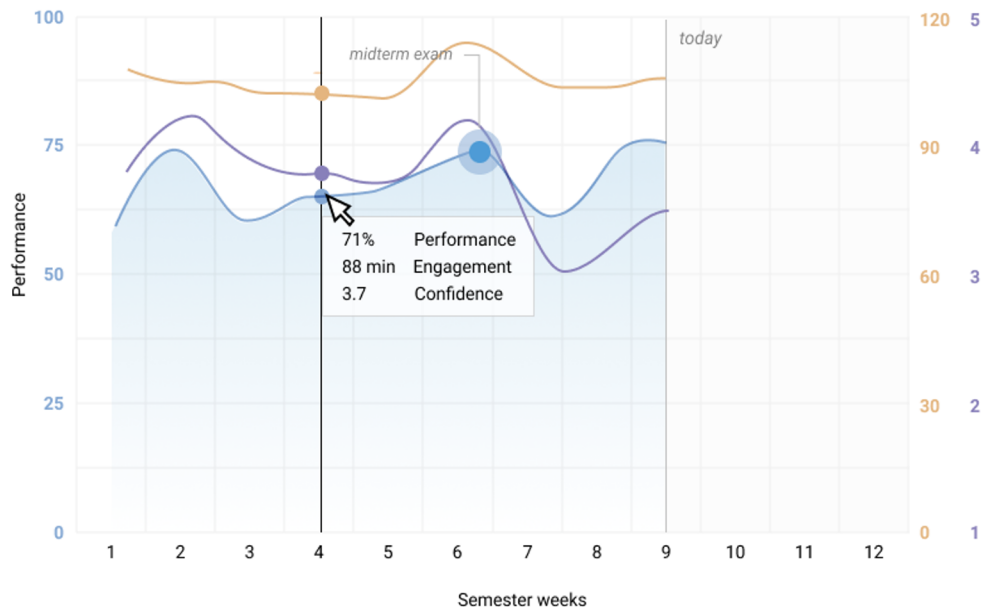
Select Overlays

☒ **Engagement**
total activity time, mins

☐ **Study**
total ebook time, mins

☐ **Perseverance**
avg. resubmissions per activity, #

☒ **Confidence**
avg. post submission, 1-5



























3. Reduce noise using calm, consistent design and cues (color, visualization, orientation, and sequencing, and wording) so insights pop

Design example 3:
student weekly 360-degree view
to help instructors to identify which students to help and how

Student performance: Week 9

⋮ dotted lines = class average

Roster		Performance <i>avg. learning objective score, %</i>	Behavior			
			Engagement <i>total activity time, mins</i>	Study <i>total ebook time, mins</i>	Perseverance <i>avg. resubmissions per activity, #</i>	Confidence <i>avg. post submission, 1-5</i>
 Tam Nguyen	●	37% 	72 min 	27 min 	3.6 	3.2 
 Jane Ruiz	●	45% 	40 min 	20 min 	3.5 	2.2 
 Imani Russell		75% 	75 min 	54 min 	4.7 	4.2 
 Zahra Naser		90% 	71 min 	42 min 	3.1 	4.8 

4. Create a 360° picture of a learner and their learning to give instructors context for performance and insights into how to provide individualized help

5. Provide formative insights for tactical decisions and interventions at valuable moments

9. Close the gap by helping instructors see which learners need help, when, and how

3. Reduce noise using calm, consistent design and cues so insights pop

Design example 4:
student intervention clusters
to enable instructors to efficiently help
groups of students

Student intervention categories: Week 9

I want to understand my class

y-axis

Performance

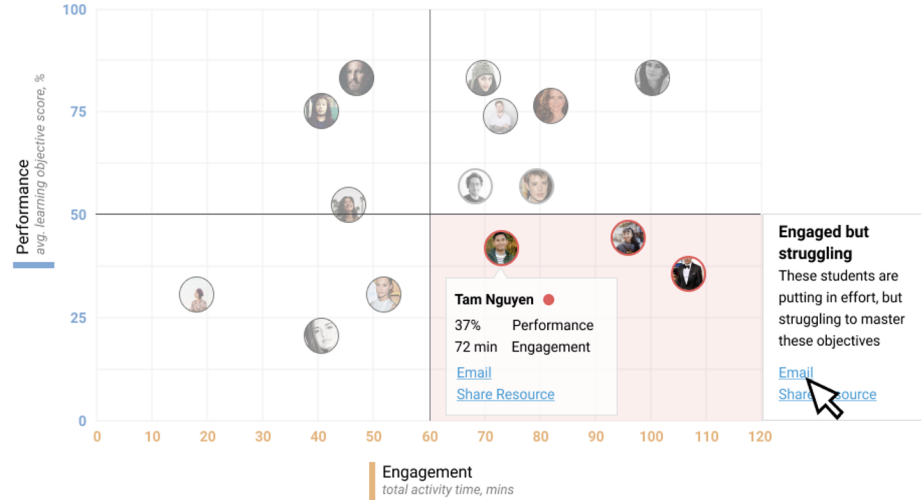
Engagement
Study
Perserverance
Confidence

versus

x-axis

Performance

Engagement
Study
Perserverance
Confidence



10. Amplify impact by
teeing-up evidence-
based interventions

8. Enable efficiency by
identifying students
with common
challenges and one-
click targeted help

To: Robert Fox X Tam Nguyen X Darrell Steward X + Add more students

Message

Amet minim mollit non deserunt ullamco est sit aliqua dolor do amet sint. Velit officia consequat duis enim velit mollit. Exercitation veniam consequat sunt nostrud amet. Amet minim mollit non deserunt ullamco est sit aliqua dolor do amet sint. Velit officia consequat duis enim velit mollit. Exercitation veniam consequat sunt nostrud amet.

Amet minim mollit non deserunt ullamco est sit aliqua dolor do amet sint. Velit officia consequat duis enim velit mollit. Exercitation veniam consequat sunt nostrud amet.

SEND MESSAGE

Thank you!
www.enablinginsights.com