Well let me share a little bit, this is the first semester I’ve ever used GPS, and I have colleagues that have been using it probably since you piloted it who have been harping on me to use the system and I’ve been kind of like yeah, yeah whatever.

So this semester due to that harping, when I posted my midterm grades (which is also the first time I’ve ever done that), since I have higher level classes and I wasn’t required to do it but I was just trying to be proactive this semester and reduce the number of F’s or petitions for withdrawing after the deadline in my courses. So I got my midterm grades done, I actually submitted them via LOUIE and then I went through the system having never gone to any training or read any of your materials I just kind of clicked the link — it was pretty intuitive to use I have to say — and first I sent a message to everybody who was getting D’s or F’s and I just did the grade, I didn’t specify what the grade was I just said there is an issue with your grade (whatever that checkbox was) for all the people who had D’s and F’s and then clicked send.

Then I went to all my students who had A’s and I sent the positive response (whatever that was, send a positive comment) and the comment that I sent was just a really simple comment, I copied it and pasted it to all the students I wanted to send it to, it was just “you are doing great in CTE347” with an exclamation point, that’s all I said, and then for all the other students who weren’t getting an A or a D and F, I went and there was like this little box down at the bottom, that was really cool, that said send everybody else a message that said you reviewed them and everything’s fine (or something to that effect, I don’t know exactly what the wording was) and so I did that for the remaining students; and I got a response back via email from everybody that I either sent you did bad, or you’re doing great to. It was everything from as simple as, a student that I said was doing great said “thanks for the positive feedback, I’m really enjoying this class” to one specific feedback about my class saying “that I was doing great too, so are you — great teacher, I hope to have more classes with you — you inspire me to keep going.”

So I have to say that as much as the students that were doing well got something positive from me I got something positive from them. Because a lot of times we don’t get evaluations or feedback until the form at the end of the semester or if we’re lucky. I teach online classes so my response rates are still very low for my evaluations. Sometimes I need a pick-me-up in the middle of the semester too. I had underestimated the way it would be reciprocal between me and the student.

Every student who was doing poorly also responded back to me. Very quickly, and even though I posted the mid-term grades, and posted the grade in vista — I never hear back from students when I do it that way — and that email they all immediately got back with me. Everything from “I’m really sorry, I want you to know I’m trying really hard” people who just knew they were doing bad and wanted to apologize for it. To students who specifically commented “I don’t know what I need to do differently, can you please help me” but in all cases they immediately reached out to me. I happened to be their adviser too, so I serve a dual role, and we were able to set up appointments with each of them, and kind of go through what they might be able to do to get back on track, make a decision on whether they might consider retaking it another semester, and it was just a positive experience all the way around.

So I called my colleagues that had used it before, and I was all excited — I’m like “hey have you seen this really cool feature in this GPS thing where you can send these messages to students that you checked their grades and nothing’s wrong, so everybody can get a message” and he’s like no I’ve never seen that before, and he felt kind of a little guilty that I had found some cool way to use this the first time, and he’s been using it as long as you guys have had it and hadn’t found that yet. So he went it and tried to do that for his students as well.

It was such a positive experience — I’m just really talking it up. When I saw the opportunity to share it, I wanted to share what I did with it, how simple it was, and I will probably follow up now that we’re past the midterm — and getting to the point where they may need a pep talk, to just keep my students on track, and to go back through it again. And I normally wouldn’t do that again at this point in the semester, so just the fact that it’s out there and I know it’s a tool I can use is pushing me to give feedback that I might not have normally given.