



## Creating Effective Announcements



### How does this affect my students and my course?

University College has believes in the following [values](#) :

- **Honor the Individual:** we meet others where they are; work inclusively; and embrace diversity of thought, background, and perspective
- **Champion Learning:** we know first-hand the powerful outcomes that result when education extends over a lifetime
- **Transform Lives:** we make a positive, lasting impact on the lives of others
- **Work Together:** for us, this begins with the cultivation of mutual understanding and extends to collaboration and collective ownership of results
- **Pursue Excellence:** we go the extra mile to deliver exemplary educational offerings and service to others

Therefore, our commitment to well-supported, rigorous courses requires the commitment of our faculty to be actively engaged in courses on a regular basis. Research shows that instructor responsiveness and active engagement in the course transforms the experience for students by increasing their dedication and investment in the course. Online and on-campus courses are about so much more than absorbing information. A personal touch not only improves student satisfaction, but also helps students feel connected to the material, and allows them to learn at a deeper level.

Best practice suggests that frequent, high-quality faculty-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions are crucial to creating an effective learning community. Additionally, faculty should be visible in the course (through multiple methods such as discussions, announcements, updates, assignments, etc.) and outside of the course (emails, phone calls, "office hours," etc.).

### The Importance of Instructor Engagement:

[Cho, Moon-Heum, and YoonJung Cho. 2014. Instructor scaffolding for interaction and students' academic engagement in online learning: Mediating role of perceived online class goal structures. \*The Internet and Higher Education\* 21: 25](#)

This study found that student engagement in the course increased their depth of learning and retention. Cho and Cho revealed that developing scaffolding, or structures, for student interaction in the course increased the success of student metacognition (or self-regulated learning) and student satisfaction.

[Sull, Errol Craig. 2013. "Student Engagement in the Online Classroom." \*The Chronicle of Higher Education\*. Accessed October 30, 2015. <http://chronicle.com/article/Student-Engagement-in-the-136897/?cid=wc>](#)

This Chronicle of Higher Education article addresses the effect of Instructor Presence on Student Engagement.

▼ Expand All ▲ Collapse All

#### ▼ Importance of Engagement

Creating course announcements can be an effective way to touch base with students each week. Often, instructors will use weekly announcements to **reflect on the past week** by commenting on what went well in the discussions and assignments and reiterating key concepts. At the same time, announcements can be used to **set the stage for the coming week** by emphasizing learning goals and reminding students of upcoming course activities.

Announcements might also be used for just-in-time items such as:

- **Connecting the last unit's outcomes and topics to the current week's topics and outcomes**
- **sharing current events in the field**
- **sharing links to additional resources** that will help students who are struggling with certain concepts or skills
- **announcing additions to the course or grading updates**
- **reminding students about course events** (such as a visit to the library or optional online office hours)

For a guide on creating announcements in Canvas, see the Canvas guide: ["How do I make an Announcement in my Course?"](#)

Contact your [Instructional Support Specialist](#) for ideas and assistance on enhancing course engagement.

## Connecting Weekly Concepts Example 1

**Title:** Welcome to Week 3!

**Message:**

Hello Class,

I hope you are all doing well! Week 2 introduced references, resources and methods of identifying threats and vulnerabilities to the organization. I was extremely impressed by the level of engagement last week. Keep up the great work on providing substantive comments and asking thoughtful questions.

Just last night, we saw a prime example of our Week Two conversations around the methods of identifying threats. Check out the video below and stay tuned as we will dive into data breaches more this week. There are examples everywhere!



As we transition to Week 3, we will continue to explore the relationships between the elements that create risk to focus on the identification, development, and management of risk scenarios. This week you will start to apply the concepts you have learned conducting a vulnerability assessment of a virtual computer system running an outdated operating system. You will be introduced to the first of four real world threat scenarios: Data Breaches. In Weeks 4, 5, and 6, we will discuss the remaining threats: Phishing Attacks, Unauthorized Employee Access, and Third-Party Credential Theft.

As a reminder, each of you should be looking ahead to the [Strategic Threat Assignment](#), which is due in Week 9. As we dive into the major threats in weeks 3-6, you will want to choose an area of focus to help inform your final assignment in this course. No need to worry about your specific topic and organization now, however, it's a good idea to keep your mind open as we explore these concepts.

Instructor Name

## Connecting Weekly Concepts Example 2

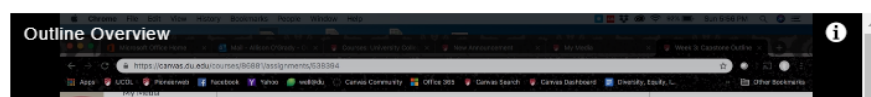
**Title:** Week One Close/Week Two Preview

**Message:**

Thank you for all of your hard work on your proposals last week! You will see your grades and my feedback in your Canvas gradebook. This week you have two main tasks:

1. Provide feedback to your partner's proposal in Week Two: Proposal Review. Please post your proposal to the discussion forum as soon as you can. I have divided you up into four groups. You will need to provide feedback to two other students.
2. This week's writing assignment is your outline. Think of this as your plan for your paper. Review all the material, but pay close attention to Week Two: Preparing an Outline. This guide contains a video with some useful tips on how to prepare an outline. Please see the instructions in Week Two: Capstone Outline.

See the video below for a short overview of what I am looking for in this outline assignment.





You completed the first week of your Capstone Seminar. I look forward to working with you as your projects unfold.

Instructor Name

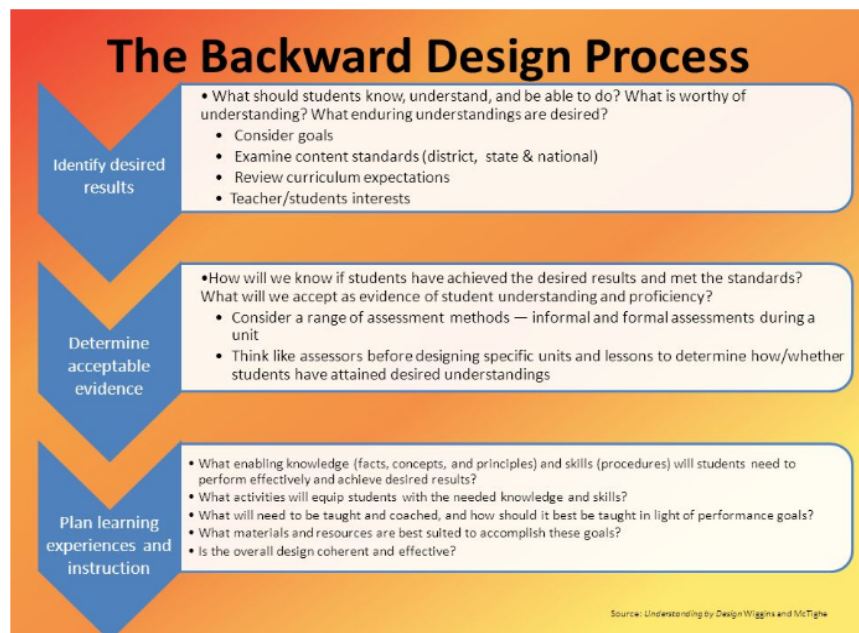
## Connecting Weekly Concepts Example 3

**Title:** Week 4: Connecting assessments to articulated competencies (Outcomes)

**Message:**

Hello Class,

This week, we will connect the outcomes we crafted last week to different types of assessments and assessment methods. We will focus our attention on the second level of the backward design model (see the graphic below as a reminder of what we discussed in Week 1 in terms of the backwards design process).



We will start out this week by investigating the role of formative assessment in adult learning. After you complete the assigned readings and the self-check quiz on formative assessments, you should be prepared to dive into the discussion questions about how best to assess for comprehension *throughout* the learning process, not just at the end. The focus on formative assessments is especially important since many of you are in teaching contexts where summative assessments already exist in the form of standardized tests (GED, hiSET, praxis, CASAS, etc.).

This week provides the foundation for Week 5, in which we take a deeper look at how to design learning experiences that support students' ability to successfully complete the assessments (both formative and summative!) and meet the articulated course outcomes. Hopefully, you're starting to see how these concepts are related! As we discussed last week, it's critical to identify the learning outcomes first. Only then can you design meaningful assessments (Week 4) and appropriate activities to support student learning (Week 5).

Finally, don't forget that you have the first draft of your learning plan due next week. If you haven't had a chance to review the assignment

expectations yet, I would recommend doing so this week so you have time to reach out with any questions.

Please contact me if you have any issues or concerns!

Instructor Name

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