

Creating Effective Announcements

Be Consistent	1
Be Mindful of Post Frequency	2
Bullets Points are Your Friend	2
Consider Announcements Beyond an Automatic Process	3
Link the New Week's Content to the Previous Weeks to show Context	4
Use Announcements as a Teaching Opportunity	4

Creating Effective Announcements

Be Consistent

Determine a set pattern for your announcements. What major items will you address with students in your announcements? Think about what types of assignments with upcoming due dates warrant an announcement reminder. Below are some ideas to get you started

- Send a welcome announcement a few days before the course starts
- Send an announcement before the start of each module summarizing your expectations
- Send an assignments due alert announcement one or two days before a due date
- Send a reminder of large assignments that require multiple weeks to complete
- Send a whole class feedback announcement preparing students for upcoming large assignment reminding them of difficult components of the assignment.
- Send a whole class feedback announcement after a major assignment. Highlight aspects of the assignment that were consistently overlooked or missed

Find a consistent pattern or schedule and stay close to these patterns. You may need to adjust throughout the semester but focus on consistency and how to give students a constant stream of informative and helpful announcements.

Be Mindful of Post Frequency

Try not to overwhelm students with daily announcements. If an instructor sends announcements too frequently, students may develop a disinterest in figuring out if the announcement is critical or not. Sending an announcement once or twice a week provides a good balance. Experiment with announcement frequency to see what works best with your course; however, be mindful not to overwhelm a student's email inbox and potentially lessen the impact of your most critical announcements.

Creating Effective Announcements

Bullets Points are Your Friend

To help avoid students missing valuable information, consider using bullet points to pull out important text from a paragraph. Bullet points offer several benefits including

- pulling important information out of paragraph text
- showing students the most important items of the announcement
- helping students read the email more quickly, making it more likely they will read it

See the examples below

Announcement Example 1

“Class, remember you have three items due this Sunday night at 11:00 PM. The assignments are

- Lab 1
- Discussion Forum 2
- Homework questions for Chapter 2

Do not wait until the last minute to finish your assignments. If you need help, come by my virtual office hour, or send me an email, and we can discuss it.”

Announcement Example 2

“This week we discuss action verbs used in Bloom’s Taxonomy that develop effective learning objectives. We will thoroughly discuss each of Bloom’s levels this week in class. Here are some key topics I want you to focus on to prepare for class.

- Is the order of levels significant? Why?
- What is the purpose of each level? Think how you could use each level in a course.
- Which level would you use the most in specific circumstances? Bring some examples to class.

Bring a copy of Bloom’s Taxonomy with you class. We will complete some scenarios and break out into small discussion groups.”

Creating Effective Announcements

Consider Announcements Beyond an Automatic Process

If you have all your announcements set to automatically post, consider sending some of them manually. It may take a few more minutes, but it will remind you where students are at in the course. It will also give you an opportunity to proof your post and see if anything needs to be added or edited.

Link the New Week's Content to the Previous Weeks to show Context

When you show learners how course content prepares them for future activities, it provides the context they need to stay focused and motivated.

Announcement Example 1

“Class, remember you have three items due this Sunday night at 11:00 PM. The assignments are

- Lab 1
- Discussion Forum 2
- Homework questions for Chapter 2

Let's build on the great discussion we had in our first forum. Remember to answer each question and follow our class discussion norms for replies just like you did last week. The chart on page 31 from Chapter 1 will help you with some of the concepts in Chapter 2. Reference it as you work on the Chapter 2 homework.“

Announcement Example 2

“Class, this week's chapter lecture is the final lecture before our first exam. Take some time to go back and review the key concepts from each of the previous chapters. The class lecture videos, lab assignments, class discussions provide, and study guide provide valuable resources to help you study for the exam.”

Each example shows the instructor encouraging students to connect prior learning to upcoming assignments. The more students see a link between your material and future assessments, the more clearly they will understand the importance of participating in the course each week. Use announcements as another tool you have to emphasize the relationship between course material and assessment.

Creating Effective Announcements

Use Announcements as a Teaching Opportunity

Each announcement provides an opportunity to offer instruction to your students. Include key concepts from the textbook chapter, important items to remember in an assignment, or restate core concepts in the weekly announcement.

Announcement Example 1

“In Chapter 1 we learn about the First Principles of Instruction by David Merrill. According to Dr. Merrill, instruction must

- tie back to real world application
- evolve around solving a problem
- build on prior knowledge

Keep these critical concepts in mind as you make your discussion posts this week. Consider how you can take the lesson plan you made and integrate these strategies into your lesson.”

Think of an announcement as another teaching tool that promotes learners and offers another opportunity for learning to occur.