# Letters Principle for Online Teaching: Communication

*Know **when** and **why** to employ certain online teaching strategies to best serve students' rights and needs.*

*Per AP4105, practice intrusive, instructor-initiated instructor-student communication strategies that consistently and meaningfully monitors and supports active student participation during the semester, addressing the affective domain (students' lives outside the classroom space)*...read more

## Welcome to a Discussion with Time for Application

This recorded discussion is one episode in a sustained look at our Letters' Principle for Communication in Online Teaching. Thank you for joining us! We want this to be an interactive experience, so prepare to find opportunities to explore your own teaching, share ideas, and build plans in a shared, Google Doc space. Collaboration is the goal!

Tony and I will kick things off. We hope you'll join in often. We've scheduled time and curated space for hands-on application, so even if you interact with this discussion later, you can access the Google Doc and contribute your communication practices (listening is FLEX eligible; Letters faculty who contribute to the Doc may claim remuneration).

Our Principle for Communication with students covers many important practices: from providing regular feedback to creating clear, multimodal assignment prompts. Today, we "explode" the pedagogical and rhetorical affordances of the typical, "weekly announcement."

**Explode the Weekly Announcement**

How can simple weekly announcements be designed as effective expressions that engage students in discovery and decision making within the dynamics of our courses?

**Our Plan**

30 minutes: framing discussion
30 minutes: hands-on content designing
20 minutes: open discussion

# What is a Weekly Announcement?

| Purpose and Affordances | Modes and Tools | |
|---|---|---|
| **Information**<br>● Here's what we're doing<br>● Here how to do that | Text | Hyperlinked |
| **Affirmation/Encouragement**<br>● You did this!!<br>● You got this!! | Visual | Audio |
| **An Affective Experience**<br>● A person (professor) responding to a community of people (students)<br>● Sets daily/weekly tone | Video | Interactive |
| **Course Cohesion**<br>● Links materials/concepts together<br>● Serves as Reminder | Reusable | Emailed |
| **Teaching**<br>● Clarifying<br>● Further explaining<br>● Enrichment: curating stuff | Spoken | Posted |
| **Navigation Tips**<br>● Direct link<br>● Tours | Online | Onsite |
| **Individualize or Tailor the Course for a Class**<br>● Echo student sentiment | [add more…] | A thing worth points |
| **Reach Students the Announcements do not Reach** | | |
| **Co-Creation of Class Content**<br>● (Seemingly) spontaneous announcements<br>● Social media-inspired<br>● See Chad's post below for examples | | |
| **[Add more…]**<br>● [add an illustration...] | [add more…] | [add more…] |

# Explode Your Own Announcements

## curry dibs this space

How can your weekly announcements be designed as effective expressions that engage students in discovery and decision making within the dynamics of your course?

| Describe or Build a Weekly Announcement | Analyze, interrogate, and dream |
|---|---|
| Announcements for my asynchronous English 100, 8-week class.<br>Screencast with my camera on<br>● 7-15 minutes<br>Sent via Canvas' Announcement<br>● Minimal text<br>Viewing assessed with Canvas' Quiz<br>● 3 questions; one fill in the blank<br>● weekly modules remain locked until the quiz is complete<br>Post 10am on Saturdays<br><br>**Spotlight on Great Writing**<br>You actually have a lot of content to build a draft<br>- Show 1-2 students "Share your Song" posts<br>  - Examples; explanations; claims<br>- Show 1-2 students "Share a Source" post<br>  - Context and more explanations<br><br>These can be put together<br>- Intro<br>- Body paragraphs<br>  - TS<br>  - Evidence<br>  - Reasoning<br><br>**What's New in Week #?**<br>Workshop Week<br>- Draft due<br>- Virtual meeting/alt assignment<br>- Reading and Self-review for 2 Drafts<br><br>**ENGL 100 Tip**<br>LOG-IN EARLY, Read options, then RSVP<br>- Quick tour of module and key content | Announcements are guide rails for navigating open spaces that position students as agents. Viewing announcements need to feel productive, like it matters to engage with the announcement.<br><br>Celebrating and spotlighting student writing affirms and inspires student growth; alos makes the announcement super super long.<br><br>Does quiz-taking + discovery? Feels punitive.<br><br>I have an idea to Chunk Up the announcement:<br><br>using bold visual cues, like markers in film making. Here are some slides I'm toying with<br><br>send them out in different ways throughout the week, maybe using pronto as an additional delivery tool |

# Explode Your Own Announcements

## _Tony_____ dibs this space

How can your weekly announcements be designed as effective expressions that engage students in discovery and decision making within the dynamics of your course?

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| 1.What I currently do... <br><br> Text-Based Announcement(sent out each week): <br> Bullet-pointed text… <br>    ● Reminds...due dates/times <br>    ● highlights ….names concepts/lists videos/resources to investigate <br>    ● Guides….give 'em "best ways" of thinking about weekly work <br>    ● Humanizes….sometimes share an anecdote/student experience, etc. <br><br> Always finish with an invitation to chat… <br><br> Video(embedded at top of page, under copy-pasted announcement from above) <br>    ● Reviews...last week <br>    ● Clarifies...work for week <br>    ● Sets Tone...funny examples, etc. <br><br> 2.  Questions: What's missing/not as strong as could be? <br><br>   - Student successes/strong writing (All-star move) <br>   - Keeping tabs...whose reading all announcements, etc. <br>   - Back and Forth/Engagement…"Announcement as Conversation" (Think about on-ground beginning of class questions and insight….23 students shouting that last week's work was too hard/unclear;) <br><br> 3. Ideas to Implement <br><br>   - Announcement as Discussion Board? (credit for responding) <br>   - Strong Student Writing/Thinking as Announcement (in drafting weeks, etc.) | I really want to break away from the routine while understanding that students/people often flourish within routine. <br><br> I really want to hop right in and get to the fun stuff...the ideas. (Analogy:  first day syllabus reading is to the course as the announcement is to the week.)  I never read the syllabus on the first day. Instead, we do stuff and that "announces" a lot. <br><br> Choose your own adventure.  I can't turn every student into the type of student I want them to be.  Can't get every student to see the course how I see it.  Not sure I want to worry too much about keeping tabs.  (I want them to succeed, of course…..) See routine (above)... |

# Explode Your Own Announcements

## <u>Katharine</u> dibs this space

How can your weekly announcements be designed as effective expressions that engage students in discovery and decision making within the dynamics of your course?

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| <u>What I have done in the past</u>:<br><br>● Explained the assignments for the week<br>● Reminded about important upcoming due dates<br><br><br><u>My New Plan</u>:<br><br>What will it do?<br>● It will welcome students into the "ideas" for the week that we will be exploring as a group<br>● It will explain the steps we are taking that week (e.g. what can I expect this week?)<br>● It will provide affective affirmation and encouragement<br>● It will highlight great ideas and great writing from the students in the past week's work<br><br>I will link to this announcement in more than one way so that students who don't normally read announcements will still see it.<br><br>Since I am concerned about students not reading the announcements or watching the announcement videos, I will take inspiration from curry's quiz idea, meaning I will make opening the week's module dependent upon providing some kind of insight or response to something in the announcement. I don't want to "quiz" them on the content, but I would like to find a way to have them creatively respond to something introduced in the announcement. I may also have them answer a couple of true/false or multiple choice questions just to ensure they understand what's coming up. | I would like to give more thought each week to inviting students into the ideas for the week right from the beginning (rather than just within the content). I think this will help set the tone of exploration for the week.<br><br>While I do already have written affirmations as part of my announcements, I think making a video to do this would be more effective. I could combine this with a video about the big ideas for the week, to which they will respond in the quiz-ish.<br><br>I would really love to incorporate more ways of making the students' responses visual, not just written. |

# Explode Your Own Announcements

__Sou___ dibs this space

How can your weekly announcements be designed as effective expressions that engage students in discovery and decision making within the dynamics of your course?

| Describe or Build a Weekly Announcement | Analyze, interrogate, and dream |
|---|---|
| Good morning, class! Below are some reminders.<br><br>1) If you haven't finished Writing 2 on food insecurity and are struggling, please come seek my help this Thursday, October 21 from 8:30AM - 10:30AM. We are at the midway mark, so you do not want to fall behind. You can email me for an individual appointment at slackkaty@miracosta.edu.<br><br>3) We are now in Week 7. Please start work on this module in a timely manner.<br><br>4) Please continue to do research for Writing 3 as soon as you're finished with the submission of Writing 2. If you're still working on Writing 2, please focus on Writing 2. If you're ready to move on with Writing 3, please start with the databases at MCC's Library. Of course, you can use video contents as support as well as the written ones. Try to database Academic Video Online. If you will choose your own videos, please make sure they come from a legitimate source like a recognized news organization or other programs like TED or PBS.<br><br>5) If you need more ideas/feedback or revision help, please submit your paper or the prompt to the Writing Center. Have proof of this and submit this to Writing 3's Assignment page. You can submit multiple documents and drafts here.<br><br>**Kudos to the students that already started with research for Writing 3. It is evident in the PPT that you are on your way to writing an AWESOME paper!**<br><br>**By the way,** I am available for Office Hour tomorrow Thursday, October 21 from 8:30AM to 10:30AM. Here is how you join me via Zoom. The passcode is **?**.<br><br>If you need to contact me with any concerns or questions, email me at slackkaty@miracosta.edu.<br><br>**Have a WONDERFUL week!** | I removed links to the course assignments for you, but the students are given links to them for easy access.<br><br>I do an overview video for each weekly module already, so my announcements are just reminders. Besides, too much of a good thing "ain't good." From the students' perspective, if I have to watch videos after videos from my professors, I would be quite annoyed.<br><br>I think the Announcements do serve their purpose for me.<br><br>I also try to encourage the students to keep on doing a GREAT job!<br><br>Then I bug them to death about meeting up with me for office hour sessions :)<br><br>I want the Announcements to be just that – Announcements. I am not trying to teach or lecture. Okay, a little nudging lecture, maybe. |

# Explode Your Own Announcements

## __JJS___ dibs this space

How can your weekly announcements be designed as effective expressions that engage students in discovery and decision making within the dynamics of your course?

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| Written Announcement Released Sunday nights<br>Inform students the week's assignments are released and open for their consideration.<br><br>Contextualize and situate where we are in the unit--where we've been, where we are and where we are headed.<br><br>Prioritize the assignments and inform students of assignment expectations.<br><br>Encourage students to push through and affirm past work<br><br>Welcome and invite students to meet during office hours/appointment through Zoom.<br><br>Reminder Announcement during the week<br><br>---<br><br>Video Announcements (available in the detailed week's page)<br><br>1. Brief/Compartmentalize<br>● Make specific to the course/semester<br>● Affirm work--show example/name students<br><br>2. Make distinction between content and announcement<br>3. | Hyperlink assignments and pages in Canvas in the note? Does it work via the email or only through the Canvas announcement?<br><br>A reply with a "got it" to confirm receiving the email or other code word during the semester?<br><br>Comment on the announcement in Canvas?<br><br>---<br><br>Use a script/outline Uniformity with creative space/uniqueness<br><br>Easier said than done.<br><br>Use different video software wirth video editing capability |

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## <u>Chad</u> dibs this space

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| **Context** - My announcements have traditionally been a text-based combination of the following:<br><br>● Silly Intro with Exclamation Points<br>● Recap, Reminders, Resources<br>● "I'm Here for You" Affirmation Ending<br><br>**New Possibilities**<br><br>**1. Scheduled Weekly Announcement** - At this point, let's just say this will look somewhat similar to what I'm doing now.<br><br>**2. "Spontaneous" Follow-Up Announcement** - Here I'm imagining a kind of follow-up announcement, which should feel spontaneous but it could be scheduled on my end, designed with the **affective and social media in mind**. Similar to a social media post that you discover and to which you can't help but respond, the idea here is to **post something relevant and spontaneous between the scheduled weekly announcement and the next class meeting**. I think images or vids could be really fun here, and could ultimately give the students a chance to co-create class content. What do I mean by co-create?<br><br>Let's say it's Week 6 and I'm planning to introduce my second unit on food to a class that meets on Thursdays. And let's say I'm going to bottom-up--i.e., start with student knowledge--introduce some new concepts like "food deserts." This is where things could get really fun:<br><br>1. I could take a short selfie vid of me shopping in a supermarket that I go to like H-Mart or 168; it would be a good opportunity to introduce many students to Asian markets and their amazing fish selection.<br>2. Next, I could share this selfie vid as an announcement.<br>3. Finally, I could ask the students to respond to the announcement and share, in text or vid, where they shop and some of the things they like about the market. | I kind of did this in the left column. Sorry, curry. |

While these responses would allow me to reference actual student experiences during class, they would also allow me to gradually lead toward relevant questions: "So, I'm noticing that many of us are shopping at similar markets. But what happens when you don't have easy access to markets and fresh foods? What if you live in an area that is more than a mile from fresh fruits and vegetables? Does anyone know what this kind of area is called?" And this, of course, is where/how I'd introduce "food deserts." But it would all begin via an invitational, co-creation-based spontaneous announcement.

This approach also touches on when/how we might use different modalities in our announcements. While I could see myself using text for my scheduled announcements, I would try to avoid text as much as possible for my spontaneous announcements. This adds variety and creates a distinct tone while simultaneously establishing student expectations for each kind of announcement in terms of how to read and respond.

# Explode Your Own Announcements

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| <u>What I have done in the past</u>:I utilize text based announcements with font and specific colors to draw the attention of students in. I try to approach announcements as "short" and "sweet". Many of my students have reflected that longer announcements feel overwhelming and they typically have trouble following them even with headers. As a result, I typically keep "directions" and "to do's limited to the module space.<br><br>What I do now:<br><br>Good Tuesday Morning to all of you,<br><br>Week 10 is now live.<br><br>Congratulations to anyone who was able to submit their MLA Annotated Bibliography on time.<br><br>If you have not submitted your MLA Annotated Bibliography, you still have time; however, the longer you wait the shorter amount of time you will have to submit revisions.<br><br>**Here are some more updates:**<br><br>**Research Essay Draft 1** is due next week on Nov. 5th. You are welcome to submit early for feedback and you will still have an opportunity to revise and resubmit Draft 1 until Nov. 5th.<br><br>**Nov. 19th is the due date for all assignments** assigned <u>prior to</u> Nov. 19th. I will be adding most scores in for outstanding assignments this week. You will receive a separate announcement about Grades and Feedback later this week.<br><br>**Additional Credit** opportunities have been added. Check out Las Juntas today from 2pm to 4pm. And/Or Watch the Video of a Talk with Teachers.<br><br>What I want to do: Be more creative and methodic about when announcements appear. | What I want to do:<br><br>I want to utilize the "short" and "sweet" along with repetition and acknowledgement to draw students attention.<br><br>I think a **"Your Week is Live" Short message** that points at a major assignment due and how you can gain assistance if you're stuck. Or a here's where you start this week and here's how you might finish.<br><br>**A Follow-up/Check In Reminder** message to students who may show signs of struggle might assist students with jumping back in mid week prior to my first office hours.<br><br>As we end the week a Reflection providing students with opportunities to see what I've noticed in different student writing followed with a "Here's where you are and here's where we are headed message". I imagine this as a short video that helps students see and hear me while I work through their efforts. |

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