Communication in Canvas

The “Profile” is the best place to start

Use the “profile” to set the groundwork
Students can control their personal information in canvas. A good rule of thumb is to encourage students to complete the following

- **Upload a profile pic**: Why is a profile picture important? It is an easy way for you to get to know your students. It is also a good idea for you to model this behavior to aid in creating a presence online as well. Students can change their profile pic through their account > profile > photo
- **Add additional emails**: Within the “settings” tab of their account, students can also add additional emails to their canvas account. This may be particularly helpful if you know that students have more than one email account

Keep in mind that students do not have to modify their profile to receive notifications. However, it is good practice to begin with the profile to establish a solid framework to begin the notification process.

Notifications

The “Notifications” in Canvas tells the system **WHAT** information the students wish to receive outside of Canvas, **HOW OFTEN**, and **WHERE** it is sent.

Through the “Notifications” area, a student has a number of options for receiving information. A good rule of thumb is to encourage students to set up their notifications at the beginning of the term to avoid missed communications throughout the term.

Announcements

Announcements are a great way for instructors to communicate with the entire class. Within Canvas, “Announcements” can be found in two areas: 1) via the “Announcements” navigation on the left side, and 2) as a feed on the front page of the course site.

Similar to the rich text editor found on within Canvas pages, the instructor is provided with a number of formatting options, including adding video, images, and attaching files. Announcements are helpful to:

- Point students to internal and external resources in the form of written content/attachments or even audio/video comments.
- Remind students about upcoming deadlines.
- Announce important events that may be of interest to your students.
- Create short conversations
Think of “Announcements” as your tool for “broadcasting” information to your students

**Discussions within Canvas**

Canvas has an integrated feature for class discussions allowing both instructors and students to create and post discussion topics. Discussions can simply serve as a forum for questions and current events in the class or they can be created as an assignment to allow grading of student contributions. Instructors might introduce a class project in a discussion forum allowing students to ask questions and make suggestions.

**Types of Discussions**

1. **Discussions:** These are current discussions within the course. Discussions can remain open indefinitely, or you can specify a date range in the available from/until date setting. Students will only see this section heading if there are discussions within this section.

2. **Pinned Discussions:** These are discussions that you want your students to see at the top of their page. Pinned discussions can be arranged in any order. Students will only see this section heading if there are discussions within this section.

3. **Closed for Comments:** These discussions have been manually closed for comments, or the discussion is past the available from/until date. Students will always see this section heading, even if there are no discussions within this section.

**Things to think about**

When designing discussions, you want to consider the following options:

- Will the discussion be threaded or unthreaded?
- Should podcast feed be enabled?
- Should students see posts only after they've submitted their post first?
- Will it be graded or ungraded?

If you set a discussion to 'graded' then the options for creating an assignment will appear. Under the “settings” tab, there are additional options where you can control the student experiences.

Think of “Discussions” as your tool for facilitating a public dialogue within your course

**Conversations in Canvas = Email**

Canvas’ email option is “Conversations”, a messaging tool that allows for direct communication with a course, group, individual student or a group of students.

Through the “Inbox” icon on the left side of your navigation panel, you have access to all of your conversations within canvas. From here, you can send messages, view past messages and delete. Although you can attach a file and video recording, it has limited rich content editor features.
To ensure that your message went through, you can adjust your notification preferences in your Canvas settings; check the column to the far right of “Conversations Created By Me” in order to receive email confirmations.

**Conferences**

The “Conferences” tool in Canvas allows the instructor and students to communicate in real-time using video (via webcam), audio (via USB headset), and text. Conferences allows you to broadcast real-time audio, video, demo applications on your desktop, share presentation slides or demo any online resources. This feature can accommodate approximately 50 users in a conference at a time.

**Uses for conferences**

- Connect with your students for online office hours or special study sessions designed to help them prepare for a test.
- Connect with your colleagues for professional development webinars.
- Practice presenting online. Students can set up practice presentations in their student Groups.
- Invite special guests to your classroom by adding them as a student or observer to your course.
- Broadcast a live event or lecture to the students that can't be onsite.
- You can also record your conferences so students can view them at a later date. Note: Recordings are automatically deleted 14 days after the conference ends.

http://facdev.e-education.psu.edu/node/325
http://guides.library.upenn.edu/c.php?g=476068&p=3255677
http://wikis.evergreen.edu/computing/index.php/Communicating_in_Canvas