

# CREATING A COURSE NARRATIVE

Academic Technology Services - Fall 2021

## Why Do We Need a Course Narrative?

Creating a narrative in your course is not synonymous with telling a story. This can be applied to any subject and any type of course. It is all about creating context, connections, and real world application so the learner can better understand and retain the information you are presenting. You don't have to be a master storyteller to add narrative to your course.

There are three main things we are trying to achieve by establishing a course narrative. First, creating an overall structure will make it easier for your learners to navigate the course. They will have more brain power to focus on the content rather than the logistics of the LMS. Chronological structures can be built in the form of a timeline or a focus of major events. Learners will be able to see the logical progression forward and how each section is connected. Next is establishing an emotional or real-world connection to the content. If learners are able to make a personal connection, they are much more likely to remember and apply the information. Abstract concepts can be hard to internalize, but once you provide context and purpose, it becomes tangible. The last concept is the ability to provide a view of the bigger picture while allowing the chance to focus in on significant smaller details. To use the timeline example again, your course could span 50 years with the option of honing in on important events throughout.

## MOU Specs:

**Rubric Criterion 2.2:** Course modules or learning units contain learning objectives and a cohesive course narrative. The purpose of all instructional material is clear.

**Rubric Criterion 5.1:** Course clearly demonstrates instructor presence.

## ETSU Online Scoring Rubric

## Course Narrative Levels



Need Help?

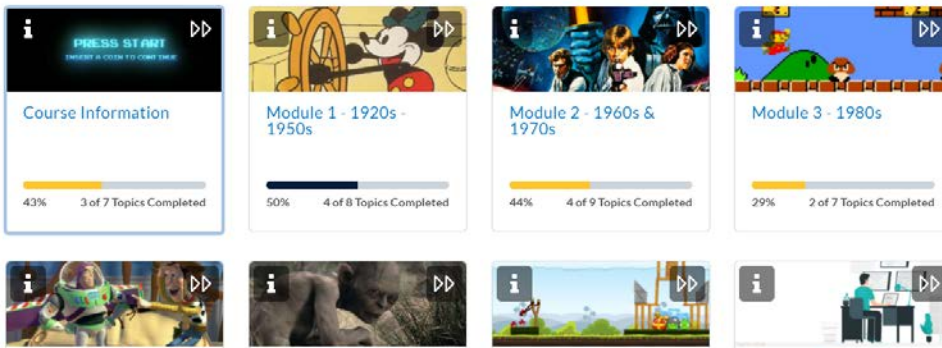
423-439-8611 · ats@etsu.edu



# Where does it go?

A course narrative is usually peppered throughout your course in a variety of areas. These are some of the most common:

- Module Introductions
- Lecture Videos
- Assignment Descriptions
- News Items
- Emails (Note: emails are usually considered "teaching" not development)

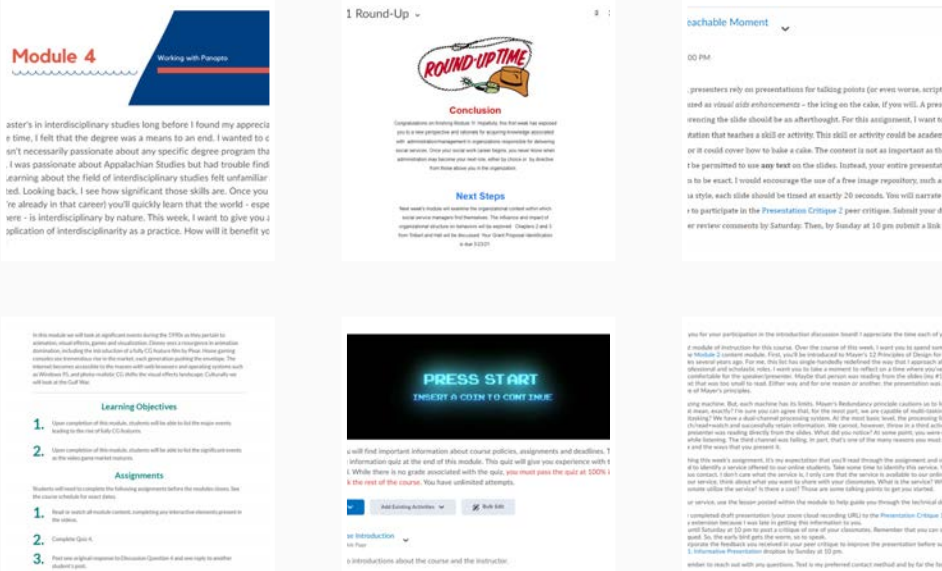


**"Narrative provides a metacognitive framing to help your students develop their expectations about why certain topics connect to each other and how they may or may not lead to the next chapter in your course."**

ONLINE TEACHING PRACTICES:  
DESIGN AND DELIVERY

# Examples of a Course Narrative

Click to see each example





# TIPS

**1**

Use your **course goals** to create an overall **structure**.

Example: If your course is looking at the progression of technology over time, use a chronological structure.

**2**

**Know your audience!** Are they nursing majors? Gen Z? Working professionals? Adapt the context to what is important to your learners.

**3**

Use **conversational language**. It makes your narrative more personable and relatable. Try it in News Items and Module Introductions.

**4**

Let your **personality** shine through! Translate your in-person spark to a written narrative in your online course. Write down those **anecdotes!**

**5**

**Create scenarios.** Using a real world context, create an issue to solve and give an assignment to create a solution. This helps students understand why they are learning the material and will help them remember it in the future.