




# Instructor Notes: Why You Need Them



"I really appreciate you.... I don't think I've had a teacher that is so eager to help me...succeed!"



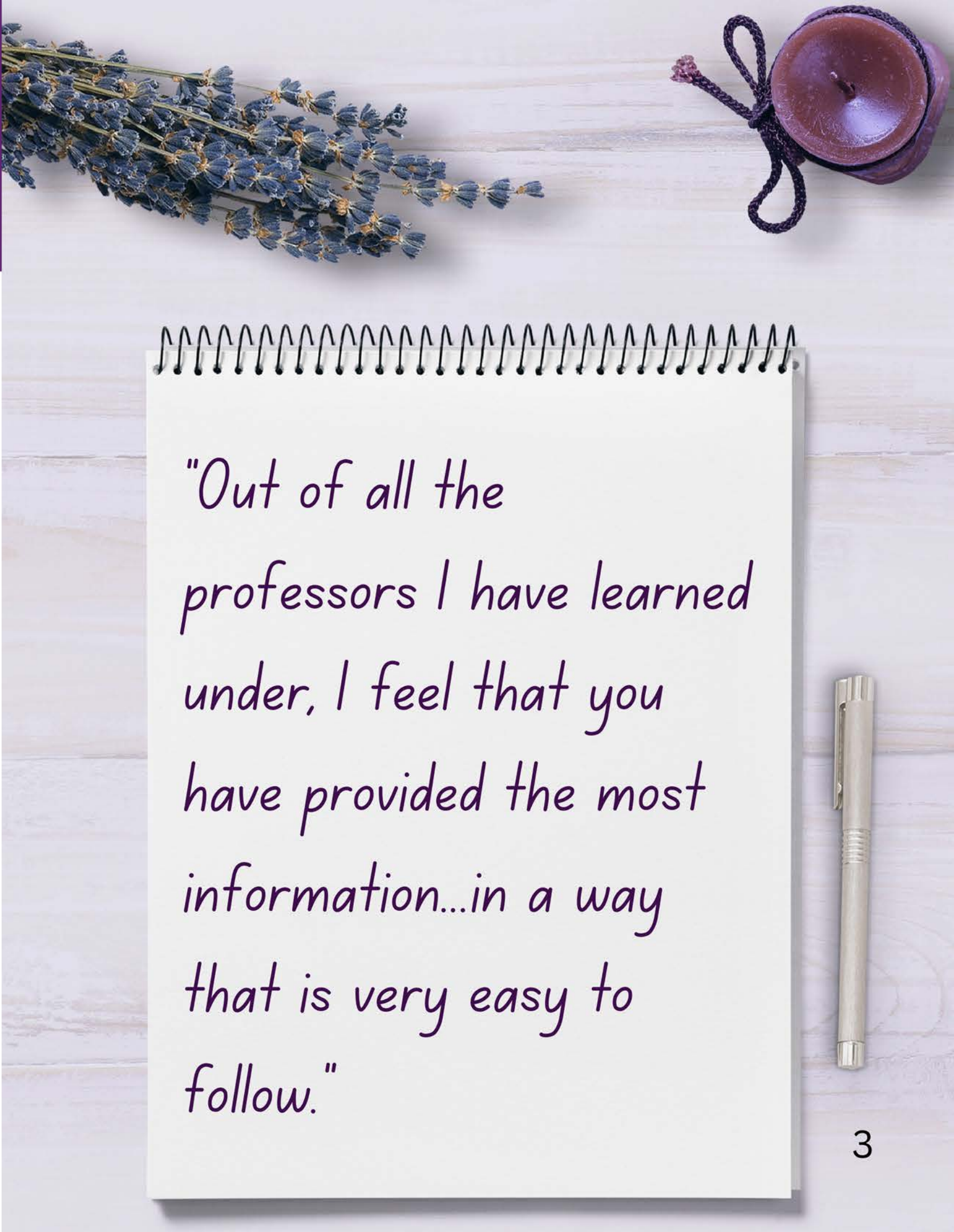
## About Chava Maimon

- Current Instructional designer for Ellucian, which provides services to higher education institutions.
- Prior teaching experience:
  - Graphic design/student development classes
  - Adjunct faculty member
  - Community college - university
  - F2F/Hybrid/Online (synchronous/asynchronous)
  - Blackboard, Moodle, Canvas LMS



## Objectives

- Explain the importance of creating instructor notes in online courses.
- Discuss appropriate locations for instructor notes in online courses.
- Describe examples of content appropriate for instructor notes in online courses.



*"Out of all the professors I have learned under, I feel that you have provided the most information...in a way that is very easy to follow."*

Let's brainstorm together!



Imagine that you are the instructor for an online course. The popularity of the class leads to the hiring of additional instructors to teach more sections.

***What type of information about the course might you give these new instructors to facilitate a smooth transition that will benefit both the instructors and students?***



## What are instructor notes?

- Notes within an online course that are developed for instructors to help them effectively teach a specific course.
- The notes can be included throughout the course and be targeted to apply to the entire course or a specific area.
- The notes may be in text and/or video format.

## Where are instructor notes placed in online courses?

- Create one instructor-facing page or multiple sections within each week's content area.
- Create one instructor-facing page/section within the general course information content area.



Module 1: Overview of Change Leadership Concepts		✓	+	⋮
⋮	📄 Instructor Module 1 Notes (Not Published)		⊘	⋮
⋮	📄 Module 1 Learning Pathway	✓		⋮
⋮	💬 M1.0 Introductions	✓		⋮
⋮	📄 M1.1 Module Notes: Overview of Change Management Processes	✓		⋮
⋮	💬 M1.2 Discussion: Why Have Change? Sep 3   100 pts	✓		⋮
⋮	📄 M1.3 Essay: Complexity and Difficulties with Change Sep 3   100 pts	✓		⋮
⋮	💬 M1.4 Reflection: Complexity and Difficulties with Change Sep 3   100 pts	✓		⋮
⋮	📄 M1.5 Team Project: Overview	✓		⋮

Source: Ellucian client course development.

Online course is developed/taught/improved upon by one instructor

- Continuous improvement
  - Instructors can take notes as they teach an online course:
    - What was successful? What needs further adjustment?
- These notes are also helpful if:
  - Additional instructors are hired to teach the course
  - The original instructor stops teaching the course.



## Online course taught (not developed) by multiple instructors

- Instructor notes can help instructors understand the course/their responsibilities.
- Instructors may have limited editing ability/be unable to improve the course.
- Instructors can be encouraged to:
  - a. Take notes.
  - b. Share notes with the department.
  - c. Notes are converted into instructor notes.



## Content for Instructor Notes

- Creating instructor notes is a best practice that can enhance instruction, thereby facilitating student success.

General  
Information

Preventing  
Issues

Instructor-Student  
Engagement Best  
Practices

Time-  
Saving Tips



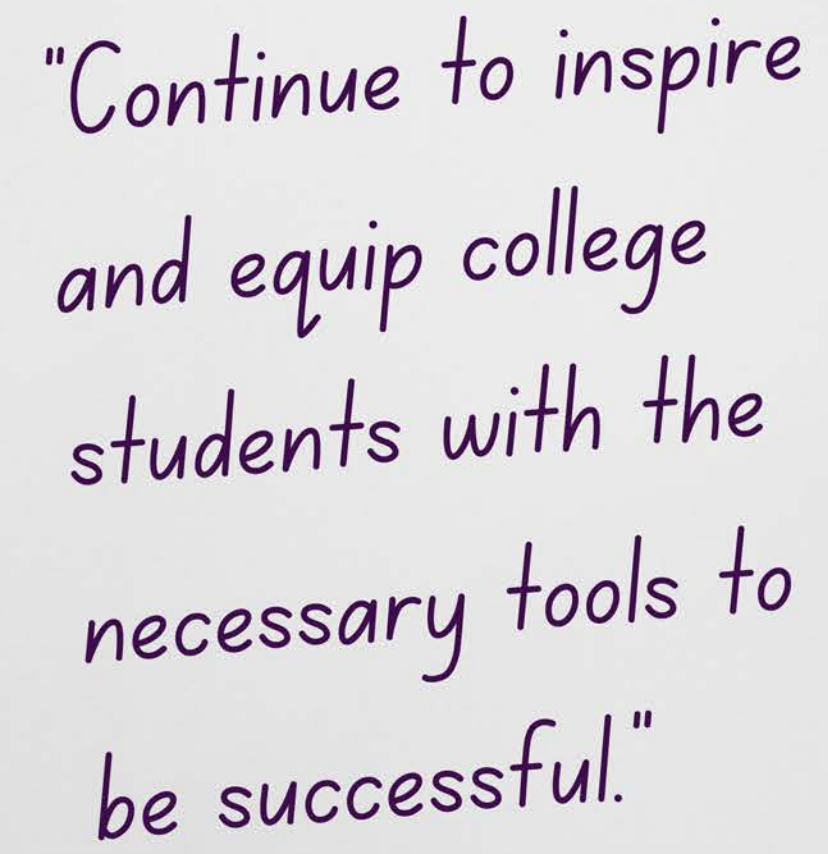


## General Information

- Provide the instructor with helpful information about the course or a specific week's content.
  - **General Information (course) Example:**
    - Team project scaffolded throughout the course - the instructor may need to set up groups, be aware of special grading requirements, etc.
  - **General Information (specific week) Example:**
    - Student presentations - the instructor may need to remind students via announcements, etc., on how best to prepare.

## Preventing Issues

- Share common issues that the instructor may need to address before they become problematic.
  - **Instructor Notes Examples:**
    - Clarify common points of confusion for students (assignment details, etc.).
    - Check resources: broken links/outdated information.

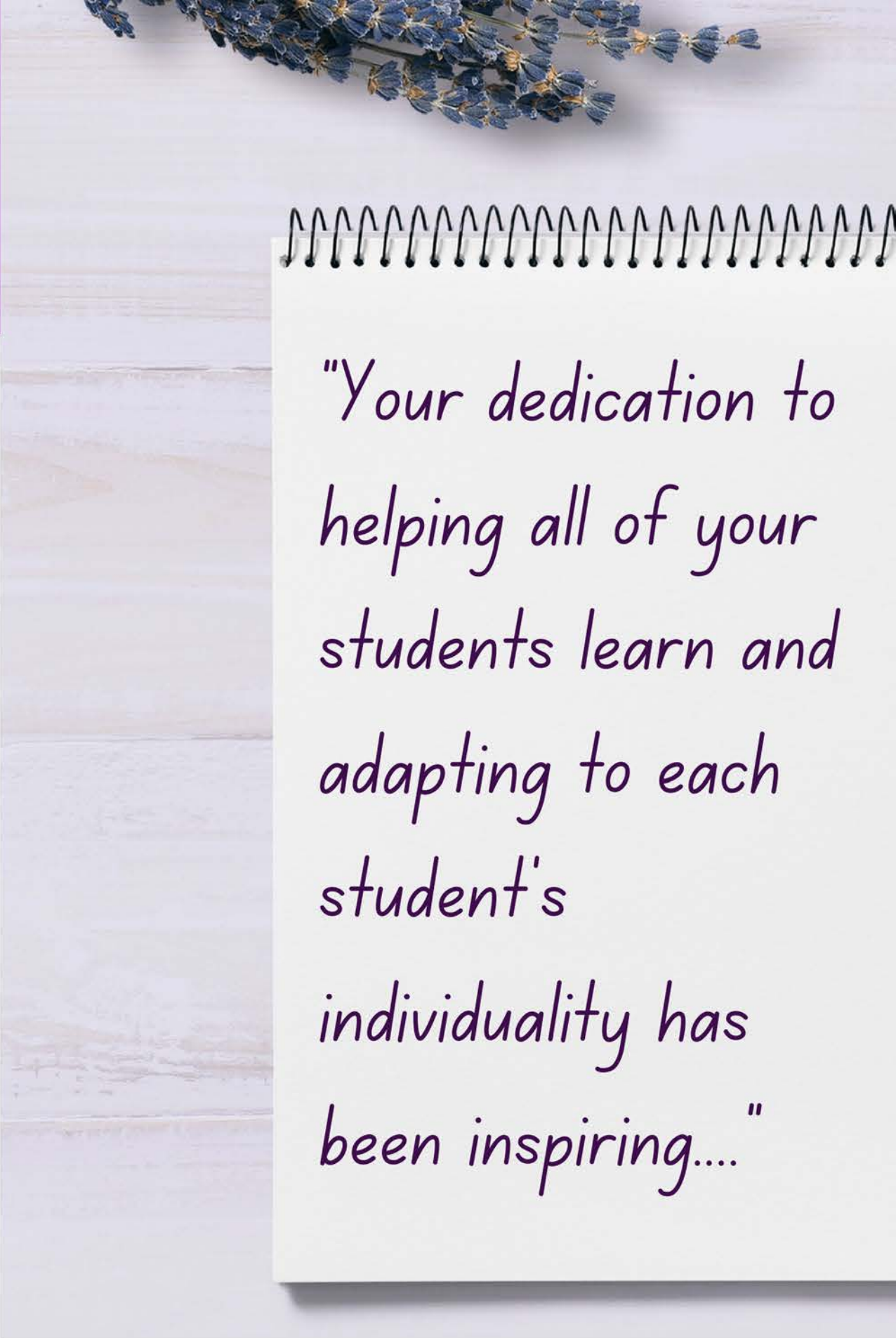
A handwritten note on a light-colored piece of paper, placed on a wooden desk. The note is written in purple ink and reads: "Continue to inspire and equip college students with the necessary tools to be successful." The desk also has a purple pen, a purple gift box with a bow, and some makeup items in the background.

"Continue to inspire and equip college students with the necessary tools to be successful."



## Instructor-Student Engagement Best Practices

- Instructors with expertise in their subject area may:
  - be new to teaching (online), and/or
  - benefit from best practice reminders on how to effectively help students master the material in an engaging way that facilitates their success.



*"Your dedication to helping all of your students learn and adapting to each student's individuality has been inspiring...."*

## Instructor-Student Engagement Best Practices: Examples

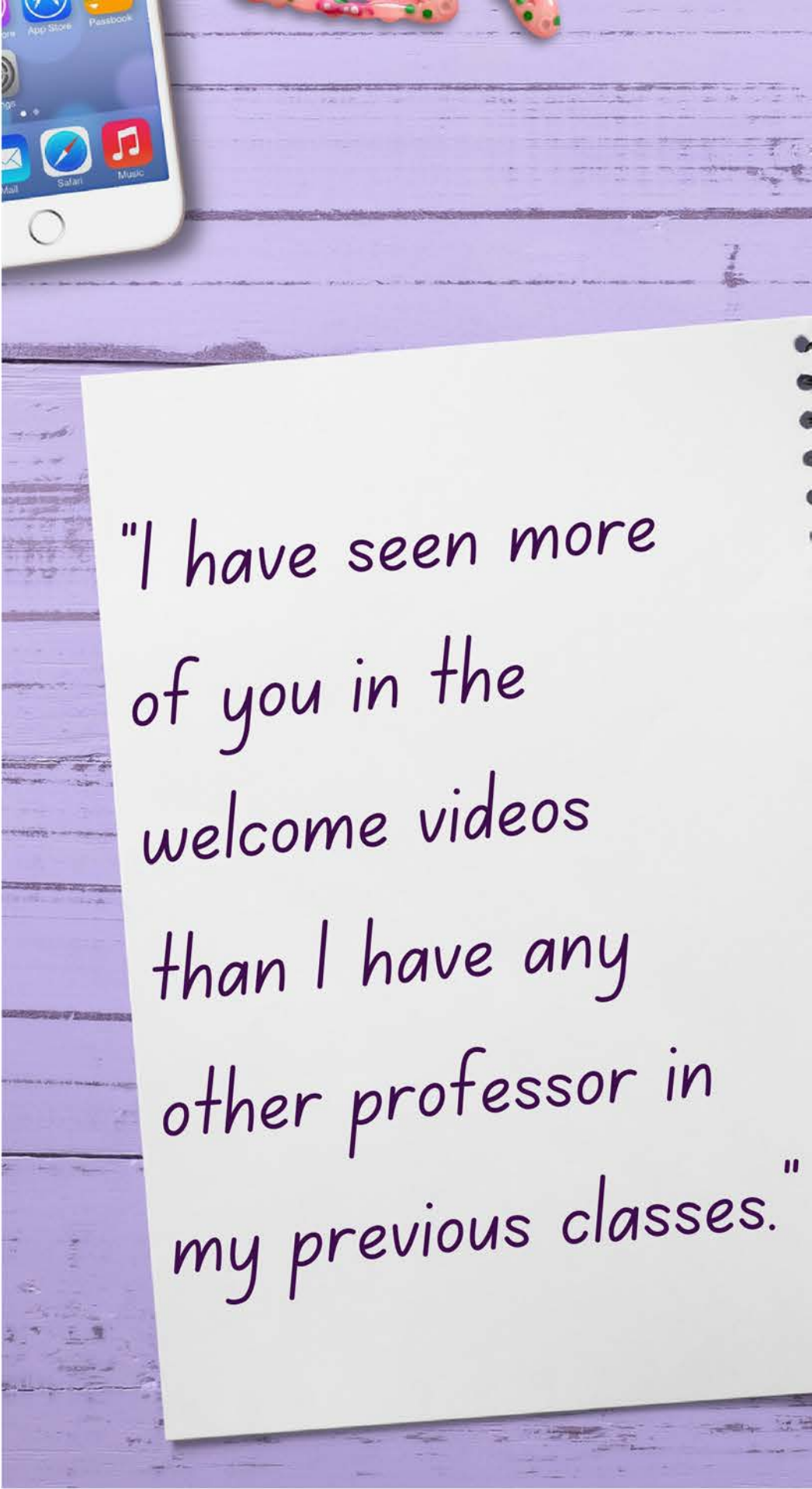
- Professor Binns: Little class engagement/doesn't know student names
- Professor Lupin: Strong (encouraging) class engagement/learns student names
- **Instructor Notes Examples:**
  - Offer one-on-one Zoom calls.
  - Ask for and use preferred names and pronouns.





## Instructor-Student Engagement Best Practices: Examples

- Course icebreaker/introductions:
  - **Instructor Notes Example:**
    - An instructor can post their own introduction video that more effectively connects with students than text alone.

A photograph of a white spiral-bound notebook with a handwritten note in purple ink. The note is placed on a purple wooden surface. In the top left corner of the image, a white smartphone is visible with its screen showing various app icons like App Store, Passbook, Mail, Safari, and Music. The handwritten text reads: "I have seen more of you in the welcome videos than I have any other professor in my previous classes."

"I have seen more of you in the welcome videos than I have any other professor in my previous classes."



## Instructor-Student Engagement Best Practices: Examples

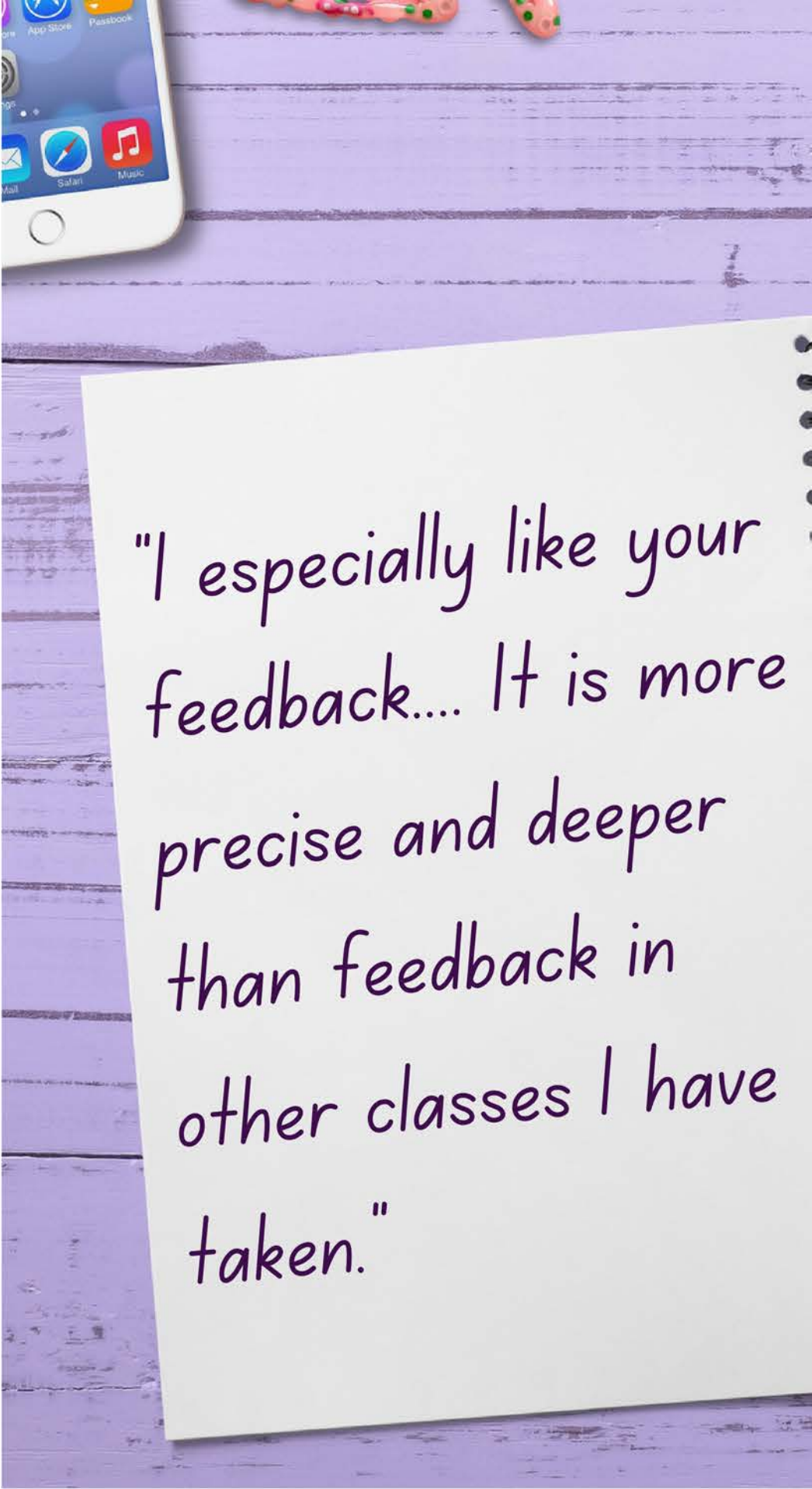
- Post weekly announcements:
  - **Instructor Notes Examples:**
    - Overview videos share expertise/hands-on examples.
    - Homework due date reminders help students stay on track.
    - Encouragement at the end of the week
      - Text, animated GIF (giphy.com), etc.

*"[The] announcement videos have been indispensable between the feedback of previous assignments and insight into the current ones."*



## Instructor-Student Engagement Best Practices: Examples

- Grading Feedback:
  - **Instructor Notes Examples:**
    - Address the student by their preferred name/pronoun and provide detailed feedback.
    - Positive feedback > Needed improvements > positive feedback > one-on-one help (via Zoom, etc.).

A photograph of a white notepad with a spiral binding on the right side, resting on a light-colored wooden surface. The notepad has a handwritten note in purple ink. In the background, a smartphone is visible with its screen showing various app icons like App Store, Passbook, Mail, Safari, and Music. There are also some colorful, round objects, possibly candies or small toys, scattered on the wooden surface.

"I especially like your feedback.... It is more precise and deeper than feedback in other classes I have taken."



## Time-Saving Tips

- Provide the instructor with time-saving information.
  - **Instructor Notes Examples:**
    - Schedule announcements.
    - Utilize the Canvas comment library.
    - Take notes of weekly videos to refer to for future semester recordings.



## Module 1 Instructor Notes

- Send each registered student an individualized email. ←
  - Address the student by name/request their preferred name/pronouns.
  - Ask the student if required software has been procured; if not, what is their plan?
  - Encourage the student to reach out with issues.
- Icebreaker discussion: ←
  - Post your own video that addresses all student prompts.

## Module 4 Instructor Notes

- Announcements ←—————
  - Post 3-4 times per week.
  - Demonstrate the use of the tools covered and provide your own tips.
  - Provide additional resources that you feel will be helpful to students.
  - Remind students of upcoming homework due dates.
  - Congratulate students at the end of the week and wish them a good weekend.
  - Time-Saving Tip: [Schedule](#) your announcements ahead of time ←—————



## Development of Instructor Notes & Faculty Buy-In

- Instructor notes should ideally be written during course development; update as part of continuous improvement.
- Faculty may feel that they are not needed, are repetitive, or will not be read. Training can help with faculty buy-in.

How can instructor notes help your institution?



*Discuss takeaways from this session that could help your institution.*



Session Prize!



*Who will receive this session's (useful) prize to help keep instructor notes in mind?*



Contact Chava Maimon

**Thank you so much for attending!**

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If you have any questions or would like to discuss further, please feel free to reach out :).

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