

# How to use Google+ for Education

The screenshot shows a Google+ profile page for the "UNCG Division of Continual Learning". The profile picture is a dandelion seed head. The page header includes the Google+ logo, navigation icons, and a search bar. The profile name is "UNCG Division of Continual Learning" with a tagline "The central hub of online and continuing education at UNC-Greensboro" and an "Edit Profile" button. Below the profile information are tabs for "Posts", "About", "Photos", and "Videos". The main content area displays three posts:

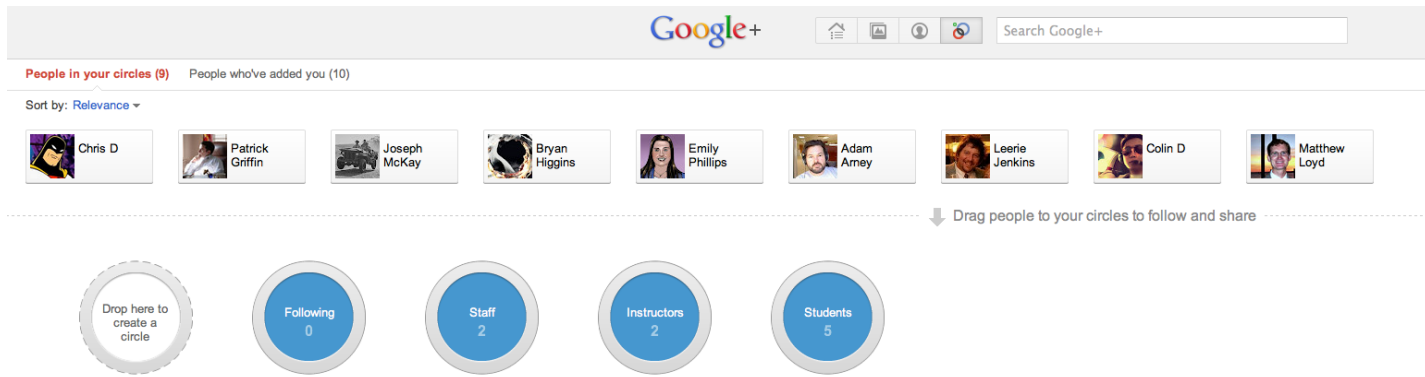
- Post 1:** "UNCG Division of Continual Learning - Jan 4, 2012 - Limited". Text: "UNCG Online can redefine and accelerate your future." Link: "UNCG Online Ad 2". Image: A video player with a play button. Caption: "vimeo.com - An ad for UNCG Online." Interaction: "+1 - Comment - Hang out - Share".
- Post 2:** "UNCG Division of Continual Learning - Jan 4, 2012 - Limited". Text: "What online programs are best for you? How can you get the most out of your online education? Does Facebook really work for class discussions? Find the answers to these questions and more on our blog." Link: "UNCG Online Blog". Image: A blue graphic with a pencil and numbers. Text: "Latest Posts. WHAT'S THE RUSH? Is an accelerated college degree for you? Efficient, Effective: Getting a Business Certificate Online; HELP!?! Where can I take graduate courses online? Questioning ...". Interaction: "+1 - Comment - Hang out - Share".
- Post 3:** "UNCG Division of Continual Learning - Jan 4, 2012 - Public (locked)". Text: "Whether you're looking for a traditional on-campus experience or online programs you can take conveniently from home, discover the educational opportunities for learners of all ages. Visit our website to find out how our emphasis on lifelong learning awakens curiosity, making your mind a more interesting place to live." Link: "Division of Continual Learning | UNCG". Interaction: "+1 - Comment - Hang out".

On the left side of the page, there are sections for "10 +1'd or added to circles" with a "Share your page" button, "In UNCG Division of Continual Learning's circles (9)" with a "View all" link, "Have UNCG Division of Continual Learning in circles (10)" with a "View all" link, and "Change who is visible here". At the bottom of the page, there is a "More" link and a copyright notice: "©2012 Google - Terms - Content Policy - Privacy - English (United States) / Set region".

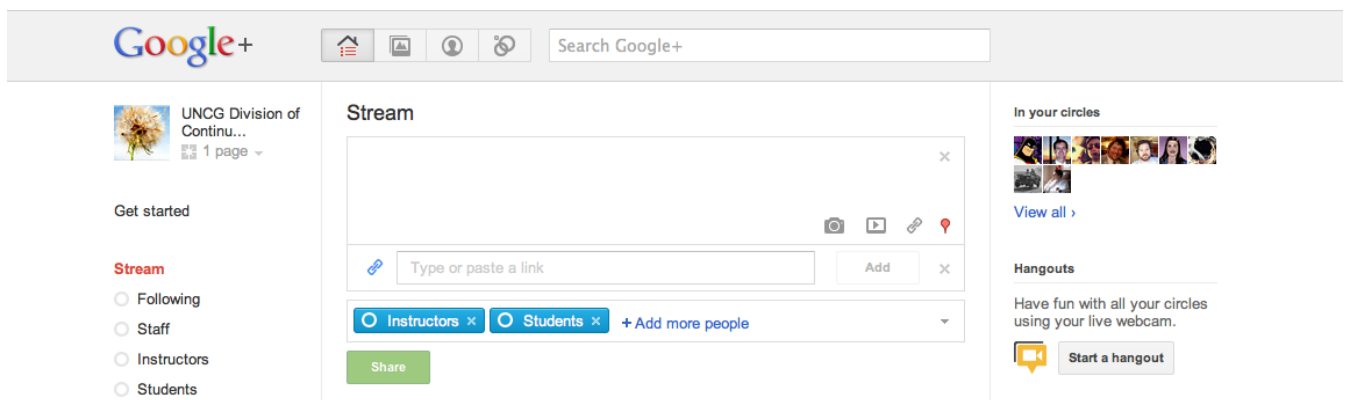
In its form and function, Google+ is very similar to Facebook. But the relatively new platform has far more privacy options than Facebook along with a powerful video-chat option built in, making it very useful for education.

You can interact with students either with your personal account or by creating a page for the specific class (click on the "create a Google+ page found on the right side of the screen). The advantage of creating a page is that you can authorize multiple instructors to post content there. It also provides a single destination for students to go to find class materials. The downside is that students can only comment on a page's content and not post their own.

The key to leveraging the advantages of Google+ is mastering Circles, which are the groups you create for the purpose of sharing content. Once you've signed in to Google+, click on the "circles" icon at the top of the screen to bring up the circles page.



Google+ starts you off with some pre-made circles, which you can rename. Search for your students using their email addresses and then drag those students into a different circle for each class. You can also create a circle for your teaching colleagues so you can share materials with them that you don't want your students to see.



Posting content on Google+ is very similar to Facebook, and you have the same options of sharing text, photos, videos, or links. The key difference is the field right above "share" where you specify if your content is being shared with everyone or just those in specific circles. If you've created circle with all your students in Class A, for instance, and another circle for Class B, you can post an assignment and choose which class (or both) will see the content.

Organizing your circles also enables you to use the "Hangout" feature, which you'll see on the right side of main Google+ screen. Using your computer's built in web camera and microphone, Hang-outs trigger a videochat involving you and anyone in the circle you specify who wants to join in. The platform supports up to 10 people video-chatting at once. This is a great way to hold virtual office hours or for students to conduct a study session.