Canvas LMS Essentials: The Beginner's Guide to Creating a Simple Yet Effective Online Course

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Canvas is arguably the best learning management system out there for creating online courses. It's a thoroughly modern platform, designed from the ground up to meet the needs of both teachers and learners. As a teacher, Canvas' tools provide you with great variety and flexibility in how you structure a course, deliver content, and both interact with and assess your learners.

But all this power and flexibility can make creating a Canvas course an overwhelming experience. With all those tools and features, there are countless ways to approach a course. You might not know where to start.

Fortunately, you don't need to spend the time to learn every Canvas tool to create an effective course. In fact, a course built with basic tools and a simple structure can be even more effective than a complex one because it allows you and your students to focus your energy on engaging with the course content and each other, rather than on the tools.

This guide is designed to show you step-by-step just how to create and conduct a simple, high-quality course. I'll show you how to creatively use a minimum number of tools to easily create a course with all the essential functions of more complex courses.

The guide covers all the needed skills for building and carrying out your first course:

- Identifying course goals, outcomes, and activities
- Uploading documents and other content files to the course
- Creating assignments, discussion topics, and quizzes
- Adjusting user account and course settings
- Creating an effective online course syllabus
- Copying content between courses
- Communicating with students using Announcements and Conversations
- Participating in discussion topics
- Assessing student work and providing feedback using SpeedGrader and Gradebook

Throughout the guide, I've also included summaries and links to tutorials on nearly all of Canvas' more advanced features. After completing the guide, you'll have the foundation for incorporating all of these advanced activities into future courses.

With degrees in media and educational technology, and over 20 years' experience as an educator, I've worked with all age levels in a variety of learning environments, providing me with an invaluable foundation for understanding and applying effective teaching and learning practices. As an instructional designer, I've created and consulted in the development of countless Canvas courses. This book is an opportunity for me to share with you what I've learned from my own experience.

Whether you're creating your first online course, migrating an existing online course from another

platform to Canvas, or are a Canvas veteran looking for a simpler way to build and implement effective courses, this guide is for you!

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