

Canvas tool guide for teachers

From the CreATE team at the Faculty of Education and Social Work, the University of Auckland - October 2015.
Based on the Moodle tool guide for teachers by Joyce Seitzinger (www.cats-pyjamas.net)



Pedagogical / Teaching goal →

↓ Canvas tool (and how easy it is to set up and use)

Information transfer

Is it a tool for disseminating information to your students?

Assessing learning

Will this tool allow you to assess your students' learning?

Communication & interaction

Can students communicate with each other and the teacher?

Co-creating content

Can you and your students collaborate and create content together?

Announcements

Very simple to set up, and students will get automatic email reminders of the notices you post

Announcements are valuable for info transfer unless you dilute their impact through overuse

Announcements should not be used for assessment - use discussions instead

You can enable student replies to announcements, but interaction may be better as a discussion

Announcements shouldn't be used for the co-creation of content

Discussions

Very easy to set up opportunities for you and the students to interact

Can be valuable, but information overload is a risk; important details may be lost in the chatter

Marked discussions are possible, but you should put thought into the pedagogical design

Discussions are an easy way to encourage students to interact with you and each other

Discussions can be used to negotiate, research, and discuss, but not really for the content creation itself

Files

Easy to upload and organise PowerPoints, PDFs, images, and other documents through the file menu

Yes, this is the primary purpose of the files menu

Students upload files through assignments or discussions rather than via the files menu

Files are used for the distribution of content, not for interaction or communication

Students in groups can share files within the group; otherwise, use discussions or group assignments

Pages

Easy to create, edit, and embed content, including links and media files

Yes, this is the primary purpose of pages

Pages are not used for assessment unless you enable student editing (see next row)

Pages present information passively, unless you enable student editing (see next row)

Pages can only be used this way if you enable student editing (see next row)

Pages [student editable]

You need to identify a clear purpose and communicate with your students when you enable wiki-like editing

You can 'seed' pages with content but students may edit or change it

You can assess student activity but it does not connect automatically to the gradebook

Students can interact by editing each others' work

Yes, students and teachers can design, edit, and embed content individually or together

Assignments

Assignment set-up and use can be easy or complex; see the Canvas Assignment Guide for options

Assignments shouldn't be used for information transfer (except for the instructions!)

This is the primary purpose of assignments; try Speedgrader to mark entirely online

Students and teachers can communicate through feedback and (optionally) peer review or group work

Can be used for co-creation of content if you make it a group assignment

Quizzes

Effective quizzes require prior thought and some careful set-up

No, quizzes are an assessment tool

Yes, excellent for immediate feedback and student reflection; can be formative or summative

Ungraded surveys can be used to elicit feedback and students can add comments to a completed quiz

Quizzes are not typically used for the co-creation of content

Collaborations

Students must connect their Canvas and Google accounts first to enable collaborative writing in Google Docs

Teachers have the option to 'seed' content to guide students, but this is not its primary function

Yes, students can share and submit their collaborations as assessed work

Teachers and students can communicate and interact through collaboration comments and content

Probably the best tool in Canvas to encourage co-creation of content

Conferences

Running live sessions online requires thought around timing, structure, and flow

Requires set-up but can be used to disseminate information by running live lectures online

You could technically do this, but it does not connect with the gradebook

Excellent opportunities to communicate with video, audio, and text chat

Saved archives may not last (depending on your institution); consider using a collaboration instead

ePortfolios

ePortfolios work differently from other tools so it is important to develop student familiarity

ePortfolios are generated by the student so they are not used by the teacher in this way

Yes, a strong way of assessing student development and reflection

You can allow for comments on ePortfolio pages but this is not their primary purpose

ePortfolios do not allow for other students to co-author content

Key:

Good match for this purpose

Can work with some learning design

Not the best tool for this purpose