Canvas tool guide for teachers

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