**1. Provide a detailed profile of your intended audience.**

**Who Should Be Reading this Article?**

This article’s intended audience are students who are new to On-Line education who are not initiated to the Canvas Program. For the readers of this article there are a few expectations that would be preferrable to help able in the understanding and assessing of background knowledge that this article does not cover but would be considered common for students.

**Preferable Expectations**

* **Level of Background**
  + Be generalized into a General Readers and or Operators. Why? Because These students would have the least amount of information regarding the topic of this article or because based on this article, they could put the ideas presented into practice since they would be the ones using the Canvas Program.
* **Technical Level in General**
  + In general, the intended audience is a new student to On-Line education, with no exposure to the topic and no specified field of interest in background knowledge, so the technical level would be categorized as General Reader.
* **Computer Literacy**
  + The intended audience is new to On-Line education, however there is anticipation that they possess the common knowledge on basic commands of how to run their PC. Such as,
    - Loading into their email
    - Being able to navigate and point our programs on their PC
    - Simple tasks etc.
* **Decision Making Level**
  + Anticipating Decision Makers because with the information provided the new student will act on the ideas for themselves.

**General Concerns**

There is an understanding that not everyone who reads the article may check off every preferable expectation that was discussed above and with this realization comes the fact that there has to be some basic level of knowledge pertaining towards Computer Literacy. Since the Canvas Program is fully On-Line, the students must have some basic understanding of the PC they are using and or have used similar programs to that of Canvas.

**2. Develop and Provide an Abstract**

With many new students being introduced to On-Line education in these current times, this article will be focusing on Improving Student Effectiveness in On-Line Courses Utilizing the Canvas Program. To have improvements for student effectiveness it is strongly recommended that the student properly utilize core features of the Canvas Program such as with communications/messaging, calendar, help bar and as well as being familiar with the Canvas layout / User Interface. This article will contain the following sections: What is Canvas, Why Do We Use It? First Problems and Issues Getting Started, Let us Get Familiar, Core Features, Utilizing For Improved Effectiveness, A Quick Wrap-Up.

**3. Write Your Article.**

DATE: October 17, 2020

TO: A New Student to On-Line Education, Uninitiated to the Canvas Program

FROM: James Hernandez

SUBJECT: Improving Student Effectiveness in On-Line Courses Utilizing the Canvas Program

**WHAT IS CANVAS**

Canvas is a widely used *Learning Management Platform* **(LMS)** that focuses on the academic and professional career environment for students and workers alike. This LMS program helps in closing the gap and building a better communication relationship between Instructors and their Students. The Canvas program is widely used in North America with a very high popularity throughout all levels of education, this popularity has to do with how effective and promising results that the program has produced.

**Why Do We Use It?**

The reason we use the Canvas Program is because of the effectiveness it has shown from experience and from other Institutes who are also using this program. The Canvas program helps in utilizing its core features, which we will discuss later, to help create a better learning environment for promoting better communications between instructors and students. This program will be a big part in your education and will make most processes easier than they would be without it such as submitting assignments outside of class, talking to other students about assignments and much more.

To generalize this program, you could think of it as a *main-hub*, a central area in which many operations intersect at and or meet, for all of your classes for which most communications whether its towards your instructor or fellow classmates will be held; with the exceptions being email or streaming sites.

With being able to access everything in one general program, students can increase the effectiveness they will have in online education because most of the tools they would need are available in one convenient application.

**FIRST PROBLEMS AND ISSUES GETTING STARTED**

Even though the Canvas Program is one of the most widely used Leaning Management Platforms in North America, it is without question that it has completely no problems for first time students new to On-Line learning.

From the perspective of students who are new to On-Line education, Canvas will feel somewhat foreign to them because they have never experienced an environment like this before. It could and or will be overwhelming upon first glance because of the many options and tools canvas provides to be enabled by the Instructors.

**What Could Happen?** – Not all professors enable the same tools provided by Canvas which will lead to somewhat of a uniqueness trait for each class. This uniqueness can cause a problem for students because helpful tools offered in one class may not be offered in others. So, the students would have to find other ways to compensate for the missing tool.

**Personal Experience With Issue** – My first time logging into canvas I noticed that some helpful tools such as discussion boards to ask questions were not available to me in other classes because those instructors had not enabled them which led me to more traditional methods such as email.

Another problem that these students could be facing is the amount of support they would receive when comparing In person education. When education is fully On-Line, there could be trouble in adapting on how to communicate with others and ask for help. In person you would simply ask someone but compared to online it can be a bit more complicated depending on your situation.

**LET US GET FAMILIAR**

Now that we have acknowledged possible drawbacks that new students to On-Line education could potentially face, ***how can we go about utilizing Canvas to improve their effectiveness in On-Line education?***

**First** – Getting familiar with the program itself so that students will not see Canvas as a foreign program. The reasoning behind getting familiarized with the program is because a tool you are fluent in, is how you maximize your effectiveness using it.

**How can you access Canvas?**

Currently Canvas can be accessed from most web browsers and mobile devices.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Web Browsers*** | ***Mobile Devices*** |
| * Chrome \* | * Phones |
| * Safari \* | * Tablets |
| * FireFox \* |  |

\*However, milage will vary due to each browser and device functioning slightly different

Knowing this bit of information will allow you to sync information on canvas to your phone and or tablet so that you may always be in communication with your fellow classmates and instructor.

**Layout Description**

The Canvas team took an approach for designing the platform to be *minimalist*, which means that they only show what is available to you and nothing that would be unnecessary towards your learning. Every component of what you see when logging into canvas is useful and beneficial to you. Having this minimalist approach creates an ease of navigation among the program.

**How is This Accomplished?** Canvas shows you clearly labeled components to take you to desired pages without having you to go fishing through the program to find what you are looking for.

**How This Affects You** -This will improve your effectiveness in On-Line education because you will not have to spend aimless hours trying to search for something, instead you will be find what you are looking for by following the clearly labeled components that will help you in completing your tasks.

**CORE FEATURES**

Most like other programs with their core features, Canvas has its own core features that greatly improve the effectiveness for On-Line education such as:

* **Communications**
  + Canvas’ biggest strength lies on its ability for bridging the gap between students and instructors as well as to other students. This feature allows for a central hub to be created for you to ask questions and to become more involved in your studies since you will not be able to *IRL*, in real life/ in person.
* **Calendar**
  + The calendar feature that Canvas provides shows all your course work due dates that are currently being provided by your instructors. By being able to physically see all due dates in a Calendar format it allows you to properly plan out a schedule in completing your coursework on time. From personal experience this feature has come in handy on multiple occasions because its only one click away and shows me a better visualization of assignment due dates.
* **Help**
  + The help feature that Canvas provides is a very resourceful tool that all students can access and should access upon first logging in. On the Help feature you may find tutorials, guides, and frequently asked questions with helpful documentation to help you better understand the Canvas program. This help feature allows for more effectiveness in your On-Line education because it properly shows you how to navigate and work with the program allowing you to maximize the full benefits that this program offers.

**UTILIZING FOR IMPROVED EFFECTIVENESS**

**What I should do now?**

Being unfamiliar with the program is a hinderance towards your effectiveness in On-Line education. You must become more familiarized with this program if you are to improve your On-Line education.

**How to Achieve This**

* Take advantage of the tools offered to you by the program and read over documentation. This document only covers a few of the many ways Canvas helps students in creating a better On-Line learning environment.

**A QUICK WRAP UP**

By utilizing the Canvas program, there will be improvements towards a student’s effectiveness in On-Line education because the program offers many tools that are useful and beneficial towards the students. Since the program promotes communications between students and instructors as well as other students this creates a central hub for students to communicate increasing the effectiveness they will have for On-Line education.