



An Extensive Examination of Canvas Learning Management System (LMS) Integration within EnglishWorks! Assessing Efficacy in English Language Enhancement



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Abstract: A Learning Management System (LMS) widely employed to facilitate classroom activities is Canvas. To ensure a conducive environment for online teaching and learning, proficient administration of an LMS is indispensable. The primary focus of this inquiry is to explore the current utilization of Canvas in enhancing English teaching and learning methodologies. Notably, the investigation places heightened importance on EnglishWorks! students' perspectives regarding instructors' utilization of the Canvas platform. Employing a qualitative approach, this study drew insights from EnglishWorks! classroom observations, documentation, and a survey. The analysis's outcomes illuminate how Canvas, equipped with modules for resource sharing, discussion boards, assignment submission, online conferencing, and seamless integration with other platforms, has significantly enriched the process of teaching and learning of EnglishWorks! a US Embassy-sponsored project. These integral features have effectively facilitated the pedagogical dynamics inherent to English education. Despite encountering challenges, students expressed a sense of comfort, enthusiasm, and engagement.

Key Words: English Works!, Learning Management System (LMS), Canvas, Online learning, Pedagogical dynamics

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Introduction

The educational paradigm has transitioned from passive to active learning, where students actively engage in the teaching and learning process. Leveraging the Internet for

communication and information has been hailed as a means to foster participatory and dynamic teaching and learning. An illustration of this shift is the adoption of learning management systems (LMS), such as Canvas. Azizah (2018) defines LMS as a

web-based integrated system for managing learning processes. LMS has found relevance in facilitating the teaching and learning journey, extending beyond traditional offline (face-to-face) classes to provide flexibility for learning experiences.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, technology's role in aiding language teaching and learning has surged. The global crisis has prompted educators to adapt their practices, prompting both students and instructors to embrace technological adjustments. Information and communication technology (ICT) has taken on a new role in teaching and learning, a phenomenon encapsulated in technology-enhanced learning (TEL). TEL entails the incorporation of equipment and infrastructure into education, reshaping the landscape of teaching and learning through streamlined and engaging processes that harness the power of ICT.

Optimization of specific technological tools can enhance the teaching and learning journey. As per UNESCO (2013), cited in Nuraeni and Nurmalia (2020), mobile devices offer applications that aid in daily life, altering the way people learn. Through mobile devices, individuals can access educational materials, engage in communication, and generate content within and beyond the classroom environment. The mobile version of Canvas stands as one such digital tool capable of enhancing teaching and learning practices.

The Canvas by Instructure app serves as a mobile adaptation of the Canvas Learning Management System, enabling users to access their courses from anywhere. Canvas empowers vocational education and training (VET) organizations to elevate learning outcomes, enhance operational efficiency, and adhere to regulatory benchmarks. Beyond being an exceptional instructional platform, Canvas offers advanced learning resources that stimulate teacher creativity, student engagement, and expansive collaboration, culminating in a holistic

learning experience.

Canvas transcends the role of a mere instructional program; it serves as a conduit for student achievement. By harnessing Canvas, users can construct an online learning environment that ensures equitable student achievement and facilitates the execution of learning initiatives across all tiers. Azizah (2018) outlines three critical considerations for designing a robust learning environment: learning circumstances, pedagogical strategies, and learning objectives.

This study is aligned with previous research endeavours, including "Using Learning Management System 'Edmodo' for Sociolinguistic Learning: A Case Study at English Education" authored by Eliana Nur Azizah (2018). This investigation explores the integration of Edmodo in English language education to teach sociolinguistics, revealing its utility in conjunction with assignments and assessments. The user-friendly nature of Edmodo contributed to student familiarity, affirming its role in supporting the curriculum (Ghofur, 2018).

Diverging from earlier research, this study delves deeper into the application of Canvas to enhance English instruction and learning. Beyond exploring Edmodo's utility, this investigation offers comprehensive insights into how Canvas shapes English classrooms, encompassing lesson planning and learning activities. The latest iteration of Canvas boasts multifaceted capabilities that can revolutionize teaching and learning. Respondents for this study encompass college students majoring in English, with one class serving as the focus of observation.

What is EnglishWorks!

EnglishWorks! Is a US Embassy-sponsored project. The primary objective of the "EnglishWorks!" is to bolster English language proficiency and workforce development in Pakistan. This initiative aims

to address the skills gap by improving participants' English language skills, thereby increasing their employability and enhancing their overall contributions to the workforce.

The "EnglishWorks!" Project Encompasses Various Components Designed to Achieve its Goals:

1. **English Language Training:** The project offers comprehensive English language training programs to participants. These programs are tailored to cater to different skill levels and provide participants with the necessary language proficiency required for success in the workforce.
2. **Workforce Readiness:** In addition to language skills, the project focuses on enhancing participants' overall readiness for the workforce. This includes developing essential soft skills, communication skills, and workplace etiquette to ensure participants are well-prepared for employment opportunities.
3. **Job Placement and Support:** "EnglishWorks!" emphasizes job placement and support services to connect participants with suitable job opportunities. This includes assisting participants in finding employment that aligns with their newly acquired language and workforce skills.
4. **Employer Engagement:** The project collaborates with employers to identify their specific workforce needs and tailor the training accordingly. This alignment ensures that participants are equipped with skills that are in demand in the job market.
5. **Technology Integration:** "EnglishWorks!" incorporates technology to enhance learning and training experiences. Technology-assisted learning methods and digital resources contribute to effective language acquisition and workforce

development.

Impact of EnglishWorks!

The "EnglishWorks!" project envisions a significant impact on individuals' lives by equipping them with English language skills that are highly valued in the job market. By bridging the gap between language proficiency and workforce requirements, the project aims to contribute to poverty reduction and economic growth in Pakistan.

The integration of 21st-century skills and the latest learning apps within the EnglishWorks! project represents a dynamic and forward-thinking approach to language acquisition and workforce development. As the modern world continues to evolve, so do the skills and tools required for success in both professional and personal spheres. By harmonizing cutting-edge educational technologies with the essential skills of the 21st century, EnglishWorks! strives to empower participants with a holistic and future-ready learning experience.

Embracing 21st-Century Skills

The 21st century demands a diverse skill set that extends beyond traditional academic competencies. EnglishWorks! recognizes the significance of 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and digital literacy. By infusing these skills into its curriculum, the project equips participants with the capacity to navigate the complexities of today's interconnected world. These skills foster adaptability, innovation, and the ability to thrive in various professional environments.

Leveraging Latest Learning Apps

Learning apps have emerged as transformative tools in the realm of education. EnglishWorks! leverages the power of these apps to provide engaging, interactive, and personalized learning

experiences. These apps offer diverse modes of instruction, enabling participants to learn at their own pace and in alignment with their unique learning styles. Additionally, the integration of learning apps facilitates continuous learning beyond traditional classroom settings, empowering participants to access educational content wherever and whenever they choose.

Benefits of Integration of the latest learning apps in EnglishWorks!

The integration of 21st-century skills and the latest learning apps within EnglishWorks! carries several benefits:

1. **Relevance:** By aligning with modern skills and technologies, the project ensures that participants are well-equipped to meet the current and future demands of the workforce.
2. **Engagement:** Learning apps captivate participants through interactive content, gamification, and multimedia elements, enhancing their engagement and retention of information.
3. **Personalization:** Learning apps offer personalized learning pathways, catering to individual strengths, weaknesses, and preferences.
4. **Flexibility:** Participants have the flexibility to learn on a flexible schedule, promoting a balance between education, work, and other commitments.
5. **Skill Transfer:** 21st-century skills acquired through the project transcend language learning, benefiting participants in various aspects of their lives and careers.
6. **Tech Proficiency:** Familiarity with learning apps fosters digital literacy, a crucial skill in the modern world.

Incorporating 21st-century skills and learning apps in EnglishWorks! underscores the project's commitment to holistic skill development. This integration not only

enhances participants' English language proficiency but also equips them with the multifaceted competencies needed to excel in the rapidly evolving global landscape. Through this innovative approach, EnglishWorks! empowers individuals to become lifelong learners, adaptable professionals, and active contributors to their communities and economies.

Theoretical Framework

The concept of affordance, introduced by Gibson (1979), initially aimed to explore psychological aspects of perception (Xiangming & Song, 2018). This concept highlighted the connection between individuals and their environment, leading to the development of the affordance theory that has been applied in various fields of study. Hutchby (2001), as referenced in Xiangming and Song (2018), posited that affordances encompass both enabling and constraining aspects of user engagement. This perspective emphasizes the analysis of technology's benefits and limitations. This study focuses on exploring the capabilities and drawbacks of technology, specifically inbuilt features and functionalities, as a foundational aspect of data collection.

Rahayu (2020) asserts that cameras effectively facilitate human interaction in synchronous learning, which is often termed online face-to-face learning. Online synchronous learning involves real-time engagement through web-based conference applications, enabling live interaction within a structured learning context. It differs from asynchronous learning primarily in terms of time and engagement. Online synchronous learning activities employ technology and applications to deliver content and achieve learning objectives. Through tools like online meetings and conferences, educators can create a virtual classroom environment that simulates face-to-face interaction.

Perception refers to an individual's

interpretation of the world. According to Pratiwi (2013), drawing from Kreitner and Kinicki (1992), perception is a cognitive system enabling individuals to comprehend and interpret reality. Multiple factors influence perception. Pratiwi (2013), citing the Department of Education and Culture (1987), outlines two categories of influencing factors: internal and external. Internal factors are intrinsic to students, encompassing thoughts, emotions, motivation, gender, needs, and willingness. External factors arise from the external environment, including educational background, experiences, culture, environment, and beliefs.

Media serves as a crucial tool for delivering educational content. Muakhiroh (2020) asserts that dynamic, effective, and engaging learning necessitates the integration of techniques or mediums. The Internet, recognized as a supplementary educational tool, enhances the academic curriculum by offering a dynamic learning environment. Leveraging the Internet in education enriches students' abilities and supports the academic curriculum (Ghofur, 2018).

Learning Management Systems (LMSs) create an interconnected network between educators and students in higher education. In online learning settings, LMSs are invaluable tools for both instructors and learners. LMSs facilitate communication, fostering teacher-student interactions and providing resources for effective learning. Azizah (2018) defines LMS as an integrated, web-based system for managing learning. The application of LMSs varies, with several types in use today, each catering to specific educational needs (Adzharuddin, 2013).

Canvas

The mobile version of Canvas, known as Canvas by Instructure, provides users the ability to access their courses from any location. This application is accessible online

through Google Play for Android users and the Apple App Store for iOS users. Canvas is compatible with both phones and computers, serving students, educators, and parents alike. Canvas serves as a versatile platform for learning, fostering teacher innovation, student engagement, and extensive interaction and collaboration. Despite its potential, Canvas remains underutilized, especially within educational contexts. The array of features within Canvas facilitates integrated learning and teaching administration, offering capabilities such as a dashboard, courses, calendar, announcements, syllabus, modules, discussion forums, conferences, and collaborative tools.

Dashboard

Canvas's dashboard provides users with a personalized view of the most relevant course information, streamlining task management and enhancing focus on learning objectives.

Courses

The course features enable students to collaborate, communicate, and explore concepts. Live or asynchronous interactions, file sharing, and group collaboration are all enabled by this feature. It facilitates staying updated on group course announcements, curricula, assessments, quizzes, grades, modules, discussions, conferences, and networking with other platforms.

Calendar

The Calendar feature is employed to display date-related information for courses, groups, or individual activities. It serves as a tool for sharing and scheduling information, showcasing the course schedule and assignment due dates.

Announcements

Announcements can be accessed through the

Announcements feature, offering a chronological view of course notifications, with the most recent appearing first.

Syllabus

The Syllabus tool empowers users to provide course overviews, classroom guidelines, weekly reminders, and crucial information. The Canvas Syllabus simplifies conveying precise requirements for each course stage.

Modules

Teachers can organize course content effectively using modules, which offer structure to the course flow. Modules can be structured based on weeks, units, or other organizational approaches. They provide a linear path for student engagement, with each module containing documents, discussions, assignments, tests, and additional educational materials.

Discussions

Discussions encourage deeper engagement with the subject matter, allowing students to reflect comprehensively. Real-time conversations foster interaction among individuals or an entire class, and students can also participate in group-specific discussions.

Conferences

The Conferences feature enables synchronous virtual meetings for all course participants. Users can share presentations, engage in real-time audio and video broadcasting, and interact with peers and instructors.

Collaboration

Canvas integrates collaborative technology, enabling multiple users to collaborate simultaneously on the same document. Changes made by any user are instantly reflected in the real-time collaborative

document.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach to address its research questions. Qualitative research is a method used to explore and understand the meanings attributed by individuals or groups to social or human situations (Creswell, 2014). It involves exploring emerging issues and techniques within the research process, often collecting data within participants' natural environments. The data analysis is deductively derived from specific instances. In this study, data collection was accomplished through observation, document analysis, and surveys.

Observation involves the purposeful and detailed examination of participants' behaviour in a natural setting (Cowie, 2009, as cited in Pusparini, 2013). It was utilized to gather information about the integration of Canvas in the English classroom and to address the initial research questions.

Document analysis, as mentioned by Sukmahidayanti (2015), considers documents as appropriate text sources for qualitative analysis. To gather insights about the usage of Canvas for lesson planning in the English classroom, document analysis was employed. Additionally, a questionnaire was chosen as a method for data collection. The questionnaire consists of open-ended research questions, allowing participants to provide more open and relevant responses. Post-midterm examination, a survey was conducted using Google Forms to capture students' experiences, challenges, and perceptions of the value of Canvas in the teaching and learning process. A questionnaire is a written instrument where respondents answer a series of questions or statements by writing their responses or selecting from pre-prepared options (Brown, 2001). This questionnaire specifically addressed the second research question

regarding students' perspectives on the use of Canvas for enhancing teaching and learning.

Findings and Discussion

Integration of Canvas in Teaching and Learning

The findings from the observation revealed that the instructor effectively integrated Canvas into the teaching and learning process based on the students' needs. Canvas, a platform known for its versatility, facilitated the exchange of information between professors and students. Furthermore, instructors were more inclined to create smaller study groups and assign tasks to students using Canvas. The instructor assumed the role of managing these groups and overseeing the tasks assigned. During the initial class session, the instructor guided students through the process of accessing and using Canvas, ensuring that students understood its functionality. To access the course, students were required to obtain the teacher's permission and access code, limiting usage to enrolled students. Although the process was relatively straightforward, some students encountered login challenges due to unreliable network connections, which is particularly common given Canvas's high bandwidth requirements.

During the initial observation, instructors effectively employed Canvas's module and discussion features. Synchronous engagement was achieved through discussions, and students could directly access course content through embedded links in Canvas. The researchers relied on observation to determine the impact that Canvas has had on the teaching and learning process. Document analysis was another method that was used to acquire deeper insights regarding the incorporation of Canvas into the lesson plans utilized in English classrooms. A questionnaire was given to the participants so that we could

augment the data that we had already acquired.

Canvas displayed a variety of skills, each of which contributed to the improvement of the teaching and learning process that takes place in English classrooms. It proved to be quite helpful in easing content distribution, encouraging engaging discussions, allotting and managing learning activities, promoting online communication, and supporting collaboration across several platforms.

Synchronous e-learning, also known as real-time web-conference learning, enables remote and real-time education (Rahayu, 2020). In this entirely digital setting, both students and instructors can engage in learning and teaching in real time online. During synchronous sessions, the instructor interacted with students, clarifying doubts and addressing queries as needed. Following this interaction, students were assigned tasks through Canvas's assignment function. This process allowed students to complete assignments within the platform itself. The teaching and learning process flowed seamlessly according to the instructor's lesson plan.

Subsequently, a second observation aimed to identify additional Canvas features that could enhance engagement and meaning in the teaching and learning process. The Canvas conferencing feature was utilized, enabling instructors to conduct online meetings or conferences with students. This synchronous interaction is akin to face-to-face engagement and allows for real-time participation.

Students received email invitations to join these conferences. The instructor initiated the learning process by discussing students' current understanding and revisiting previous topics, often employing quiz applications to reinforce learning objectives.

For the final observation, researchers assessed learning outcomes. Students were

assigned one week's worth of assignments, graded using Canvas's assignment function. This assessment aimed to gauge students' comprehension of previously covered material facilitated by Canvas.

Following the observations, a questionnaire was administered to address students' feelings about using Canvas. The concept of "affordance," as proposed by Xiangming and Song (2018), was adopted to explore the benefits and drawbacks of Canvas. The questionnaire was distributed to the English classroom group via Google Forms. Students' overall sentiments toward Canvas were positive, with expressions of enjoyment, amazement, and satisfaction. However, challenges associated with Canvas were also acknowledged.

One participant expressed, "I enjoy using Canvas because of its diverse features that facilitate learning activities such as question responses, material access, video conferences, etc." Students found value in Canvas discussions, which encouraged deeper thinking through interactive dialogues. Canvas's Conference tool enabled synchronous interactions between students and instructors, enhancing engagement (Tuan, 2023).

Although most students had a positive perception of Canvas due to its novelty and its role in facilitating successful teaching and learning activities, challenges were noted. Issues with mobile data consumption, particularly during conferences, were reported. Participants cited occasional difficulties in accessing Canvas, often attributed to poor network conditions or the need to use specific links provided by instructors.

These challenges, tied to reliable internet access, align with the categorization of perception-influencing factors into internal and external categories proposed by Pratiwi (2013) and the Department of Education and Culture (1987). The findings highlight

students' initial experiences with Canvas, reflecting both internal and external factors shaping their perspectives.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that Canvas's integration significantly enhanced the teaching and learning process by offering a range of capabilities. Canvas facilitated content delivery, discussion interactions, assignment submissions, online meetings, and cross-platform collaboration, supporting the administration of effective teaching. Despite challenges, students reported positive experiences with Canvas, indicating its potential to improve the teaching and learning journey.

Conclusion

This study is aimed at understanding the utilization of Canvas for enhancing teaching and learning in EnglishWorks! classrooms and exploring students' perceptions of its use.

To address these inquiries, a qualitative approach was adopted by the researchers. To address the first question related to Canvas's impact on the teaching and learning process, the researchers employed observation. Insights into the integration of Canvas into English classroom lesson plans were further obtained through document analysis. To supplement the gathered data, a questionnaire was administered to the participants.

Canvas exhibited multiple capabilities, contributing to the enhancement of the teaching and learning process within English classrooms. It proved instrumental in facilitating content delivery, fostering interactive discussions, assigning and managing learning tasks, facilitating online communication, and supporting cross-platform collaboration.

It can be inferred that the incorporation of Canvas likely contributes to better performance and assessment outcomes for students. The multifaceted features of

Canvas align with the objectives of EnglishWorks! to bolster English language proficiency and workforce development. By enhancing content delivery, encouraging active discussions, enabling effective assignment management, and facilitating online communication, Canvas potentially leads to more engaged and well-prepared students. The positive emotions and enthusiasm expressed by students using Canvas further underline its potential to boost their performance.

Therefore, the integration of Canvas within EnglishWorks! aligns with the initiative's goal of enhancing workforce readiness through improved English language skills. The platform's features potentially enable students to acquire language proficiency, soft skills, and effective communication, consequently enhancing their overall contributions to the workforce.

It is plausible that the use of Canvas helps students achieve higher levels of performance and assessment success, which is something that can be inferred. Canvas's many facets match with the goals of EnglishWorks!, which are to improve students' command of the English language and to expand opportunities for professional growth. Canvas has the ability to lead students who are more involved in their coursework and who are more equipped through improving the delivery of content, stimulating active conversations, enabling effective assignment management, and simplifying online contact. The optimistic feelings and excitement that have been voiced by students while using Canvas further demonstrate the potential of the platform to improve their academic achievement.

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