10 Simple and Effective Solutions to Improve Student Success Through Carmen

Compiled by the Undergraduate Student Government at Ohio State, the University Institute of Teaching and Learning, the Office of Distance Education and eLearning, and the Council on Distance Education, Libraries, and Information Technology

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Students face many obstacles on the path toward academic success. In order to maximize opportunities for growth, **instructors must provide consistent, ample resources that accommodate the needs of an increasingly diverse learning community**. This is a critical component of the effort to improve educational accessibility and underlies the fundamental principles of quality education in the 21st century.

Unfortunately, **instructor utilization of Ohio State's CarmenCanvas online resource is widely inconsistent**. This may lead to confusion, stress, or an unnecessary loss of learning opportunities for students. In order to alleviate this situation, a few simple solutions can be implemented to Carmen course pages that may lead to a considerable increase in student success.

Upload course syllabus to the "Syllabus" tab and provide as a downloadable file

Easy access to course policies makes navigating courses much easier. Instead of scrambling for upcoming assignments, students will have access to a comprehensive resource in a reliable location that provides them with answers to many of the questions they might have regarding their class responsibilities.

To learn how to upload course syllabi to Carmen, please visit: https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmencanvas/post-your-syllabus

Upload assignments to the "Assignments" tab with instructions and clear due dates

Uploading assignments to Carmen allows students 24/7 access to their schoolwork and gives them the opportunity to be proactive with their class responsibilities. Additionally, providing clear due dates on the assignments makes it easy for students to keep track of their work outside of the classroom. As an added benefit, when due dates are uploaded, the assignments are automatically loaded into the Carmen calendar which helps students keep track of their assignments on a weekly and monthly basis.

To learn how to upload course assignments to Carmen, please visit:
https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmencanvas/assignment-gradebook-setup

Enter grades into the "Grades" tab when grading is complete

Providing grades for students online reduces anxiety and increases classroom transparency. It also allows students to gauge their performance within a class and adjust their habits accordingly.

To learn how to import grades into Carmen, please visit:
https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmencanvas/assignment-gradebook-setup
https://guides.instructure.com/m/4152/l/220009-how-do-i-use-the-gradebook

Use consistent mode of communication and mention it in class (announcements, emails, etc.)

Using a consistent form of communication makes it easier for students to know exactly where to look when questions arise. Students are not notified regarding Announcements unless email notifications are activated and functioning. Even then, many email notifications will be filtered as spam. It is important to let students know which form of communication will be used so that they can make the necessary adjustments.

To learn how to utilize Announcements, please visit:
https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmencanvas/communicating-students

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Organize course materials into "Modules" according to content matter

Modules make it easy for students to follow along with course material. This organization will increase students' ability to access and utilize necessary course files, and decrease the chance that assignments get lost amongst other files.

To learn how to organize course files into modules, please visit:

https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmencanvas/setting-course-content

Remove unused sidebar tabs

An overabundance of pages within a course on Carmen may lead to unnecessary confusion for students. Simple removal of unused pages can help students find files quickly with less stress.

To learn how to remove unused sidebar tabs, please visit:

https://guides.instructure.com/m/4152/l/57079-how-do-i-reorder-and-hide-course-navigation-links

Organize home page with instructor contact information

Instructor contact information is universally required by students. An organized home page with this essential information makes it easy for students to initiate conversations with their instructors and increases classroom transparency.

Utilize clear and consistent naming conventions for assignments and files

Students are often confused by file and assignment names that are titled according to the week or unnamed entirely. To provide clarity, instructors should be mindful of the file name when uploading content to Carmen. For example, instead of naming a file "Week 1" instead state what the content of the file is and put it in a "Week 1" module.

Provide open access resources when feasible

Students often pay hundreds of dollars every semester to acquire necessary learning resources for coursework. This reduces educational accessibility and places limitations on students with lesser financial resources. Instead of using costly learning materials, instructors should make a reasonable effort to provide affordable, open access learning resources. Examples of open access resources include links to lectures on YouTube and various library resources such as the online multimedia catalog: http://guides.osu.edu/multimedia/video

For more information regarding open access resources at Ohio State, please visit: https://affordablelearning.osu.edu/resources

Leverage your resources

Ohio State provides instructors with a wide variety of resources to supplement their courses. For additional information regarding instructional reform and proper usage of Carmen, please consult the following university resources:

University Institute of Teaching and Learning
https://uitl.osu.edu/

Office of Distance Education and eLearning
https://odee.osu.edu/

Council on Distance Education, Libraries, and Information Technology
https://senate.osu.edu/committees/delit

Undergraduate Student Government at Ohio State
https://usg.osu.edu/