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MOSS:**

Having used the See and Learn system for many years, I was comfortable and proficient at navigating the online system. However, the See and Learn system was not efficient at meeting my requirements as an instructor in areas of online grading and linking assignments. I'm sharing my experiences with organizing and designing a new Sociology of Education course in Brightspace-- *Five Weeks, Five Top Tips, and Five New Skills*. Let's get started.

Tip one, think logically. Attend a TLS workshop such as this, review online Carleton documents and videos, and book a meeting with the Brightspace consultants. Decide if it's best to create a course from scratch or to adopt previously learned course material that has been migrated over to Brightspace. The prospect of creating a new Spring course from scratch was overwhelming initially. But with the assistance of TLS and helpful online resources such as the webinars and online documents, I was able to customize and import all my course content into Brightspace.

Tip two, templates are terrific. Start by creating home pages. Here, you go to Course Admin. The next tab is their Home page, and then you finally land on the Create Homepages tab. Once in Create Homepages, customize your course with titles, course content, descriptions, headers, and layouts.

Tip three, build your modular content. And this also includes modules for Admin items, assignments, career service developments if you've embedded career service links into your course, student lounge for discussion feedback surveys, as well as rubric modules. Under content, create 12 modules using titles. And these act your temporary placeholders.

There are several options here to display your course content. Either upload files directly or you can create web pages. I designed web pages where I imported course content into weekly modules, which included tabs for required readings, lecture slides, Zoom link, guest speakers, and assignments.

To design a web page, create a file. Then you select the document template. This is where customized templates come in handy.

The other option is to upload files directly into your modular shell. Here, you would go to Content add a title to your module and a description or graphic, if you wish. And on this page, you can manage your files by uploading files, videos, audios, or your links.

Tip four, customize your Gradebook. Here, go to Course Admin. Next, the Grades tab. And then finally, you end up on the Manage Grades. You have the option to create new grades, items, or you can click on assignments or the grade items to edit. Editing the grade items allows instructors to assign grade points, as well as weight the grades.

Tip five, rely on rubrics-- which, for this course, I didn't. I taught a small seminar class of 22, and so I utilize the Grade tabs instead. So I clicked on the assignments, then I ended up on the Enter Your Grades. Here, I entered grades and feedback for students, whether for an individual student or for a group of students. Due to time constraints, this was the quick and dirty method to manually enter in my rubrics. I am visiting, though, the rubrics feature this Summer to update my Fall courses with online rubrics.

We've done five weeks, five tips, now let's get to the five scale competencies that I developed as an instructor, and that I brought into my online classroom. Number one, digital literacy. And this really increased my course management. And it helped with the flow and the ease of how the course operated online. And it also cut down on clarifying questions from students.

Number two, communication is an online environment. So student announcements, class emails, and feedback are all important to keep those lines of communication open online. Number three, diversity and intercultural awareness. I had the closed captioning feature added to all my lectures. I also embedded inclusivity paragraphs in my syllabus. I had a discussion board and I anchored all this work and equity framework in all my modules and across all of the course design.

All the content is accessible for all students and Brightspace is also an easier layout for accessing content, and also for quick links. Overall, I was more aware, also, of the content that I was posting. It's very evident on what you post, what's not there, some of the gaps, and what you want to improve upon.

Number four, professionalism. Brightspace has a professional feel and tone when displaying content and it makes it easier for the instructor to be transparent with feedback, as well as with student marking. Number five, community engagement. As an instructor, I promoted community and student engagement by offering several platforms to share and stimulate conversation outside of class, such as the Student Lounge tab, the BigBlueButton reoccurring Zoom link, and class email.

Here, the community were the students in Sociology 4860. And I used the feature in Brightspace to foster the sense of community in the course. And on a final note, in an informal feedback survey, one student wrote, "I enjoyed how the instructor did a great job at recreating an in-person experience in the class while we were all learning virtually."

So to recap, the top five tips are to think logically, templates are terrific, build your modular content, customize your Gradebook, and rely on rubrics. With these tips and skills, you'll be in a great position to teach your new course in the Fall in Brightspace. Looking forward to sharing these and more experiences with Brightspace in the next TLS session, *Welcome to My Classroom*, with me July 21. See you then.