

Session Takeaway: Layers of Support Using Canvas

Purpose

This handout provides quick, practical strategies to help you use Canvas to build routines, increase engagement, and support inclusion for all learners—especially students receiving special education services.

Why Structure Matters

Predictable routines reduce anxiety, support executive functioning, and increase student independence. When Canvas is structured intentionally, students spend less time navigating and more time learning.

Core Canvas Routines to Implement

- Consistent Home Page layout
- Weekly overview or agenda
- Clear links to current modules
- Standardized module naming
- Step-by-step task sequencing

Layers of Support in Canvas

- Clear written and visual instructions
- Icons and checklists
- Embedded video directions
- Chunked assignments
- Multiple submission opportunities

Accessibility & Inclusion Tools

- Immersive Reader
- Closed captions
- Alt text for images
- Accessible headings and tables
- Text-to-speech compatibility

Engagement Strategies

- Structured discussion prompts
- Low-stakes check-ins
- Visual cues and emojis
- Student reflection opportunities
- Choice when possible

Supporting Student Well-Being

- Predictable routines
- Clear expectations
- SEL check-ins
- Reduced cognitive load
- Built-in organizational supports

Quick Wins You Can Try Tomorrow

- Update or redesign your Home Page
- Create a module template
- Add visuals to one assignment
- Embed one accessibility tool
- Use consistent language across assignments

Remember

Inclusive design benefits all students. Small, intentional changes in Canvas can create powerful layers of support that foster confidence, engagement, and independence.