

Canvas Spring 2015 Report: Current and Trends

June 2015

Academic Technology Services

Program Evaluation

Canvas Spring 2015 Report: Current and Trends

Executive Summary

Introduction

In Spring 2015, there were two primary evaluation activities related to the Canvas migration:

1. Qualitative, structured interviews with local school Liaisons to TLT
2. Canvas user feedback surveys for Teaching Staff and Students

Summary Conclusions

As of spring 2015, there has been huge growth in the number of Canvas users and platform activity compared to the spring 2014 pilot phase. All metrics support that conclusion, as well as the schools' commitment to move forward quickly toward the new platform.

At the pilot phase one year ago, the following were among the summary conclusions:

- With preparation, teachers and students appreciate Canvas' strengths, functionality.
- Positive responses offered to the teaching and learning experience supported by Canvas.
- The learning curve and transition can be addressed with focused support, introduction to features, and encouragement to explore Canvas' potential.

One year after the pilot phase:

- Usage moves forward.
 - Over half of teaching staff users are new (56% first semester, Total N=97).
 - Two-fifths on board for a second semester (40%); a few in third semester.
 - About half have only used it for one course so far (51%).
 - One-third of student users had more than one course in Canvas this semester.
- Overall experience with the platform is showing improvement, with limitations.
 - Responses suggest less initial confusion, alongside more need for ongoing support.
 - Lower percentages report they experienced confusion.
 - Higher percentages indicate a need for additional support.
 - One-fourth of students received a course-specific intro for at least one course.
 - Variation remains in use of platform's full range of integrated functions.

Action-Oriented Recommendations

The following brief recommendations based on an initial review of these results are oriented toward creating as smooth a transition as possible for students and teaching staff, as well as maximizing the use of Canvas for pedagogical goals.

- Facilitate the "best practices" early-intro to Canvas for students by, e.g., creating a readily adapted written format for teaching staff to adapt and use for individual courses.
- Examine these report results at the managerial level, to identify top-level issues and achievements, and to consider how to provide support more effectively, with fewer gaps.
- Facilitate discussion of the survey's open-ended comments at the staff level, to identify processes that are working well and action steps to improve user experience.

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Introduction

Spring 2015 Evaluation Activity (Table 1)

In Spring 2015, there were two primary evaluation activities related to the Canvas migration:

1. Qualitative, structured interviews with local school Liaisons to TLT
2. Canvas user feedback surveys for Teaching Staff and Students

We first reached out to and met with academic technology staff at nine schools that have TLT liaison support, to have a structured interview-conversation. The original goal was to gather information that would inform understanding of the final results of the Canvas migration in terms of the diverse challenges and situations faced by schools. A second goal that emerged was to discuss spring 2015 survey plans. The conversation therefore covered two topics: school-specific background and local migration challenges and plans; spring 2015 survey participation and potential survey questions.

Five schools participated in the central TLT survey this spring: HSPH, FAS, DCE, HDS, and GSD. Three schools conducted their own surveys this semester, with some coordination on questions with TLT; one school did not conduct a survey this semester. The Spring 2015 Canvas TLT surveys covered parallel topics for teaching staff and students, with additional questions for teaching staff. Topics included:

- Overall feedback on Canvas – trend data available from Spring 2014
- Use and ease of use for Canvas functions
- Challenges and continued work outside of Canvas
- Canvas value, gaps, and suggestions for other faculty (Teaching Staff)
- Support interests and needs
- “Good Stories” to share with others (Teaching Staff)

Below are response rates for the TLT survey overall and for each participating school.

Table 1. Response Rates by School: 2015

School	Teaching Staff Survey			Student Survey		
	Sample N	Respondents	Response Rate	Sample N	Respondents	Response Rate
HDS	58	33	57%	396	117	30%
FAS	750	332	44%	3000	803	27%
HSPH	78	42	54%	317	134	42%
GSD	49	21	43%	382	105	27%
DCE	350	154	44%	4125	1326	32%
TOTAL	1285	582	45%	8220	2485	30%

Note: The survey was sent to a sample of faculty and students from FAS (approximately 75% teaching staff, 50% students), and a sample of students from DCE (approximately 75%). In other schools, all faculty and students received surveys. Response rates are based on those substantively completed; they include those who entered the survey but did not in fact use Canvas this semester, and therefore exited the survey.

Report Goal and Methods

The overall evaluation of the Canvas migration is designed to support TLT in order to make the transition as smooth as possible, set appropriate expectations, and guide decision-making related to Canvas development as a teaching platform. At this stage of the Canvas roll-out, the report has two goals:

- Report on current Canvas migration in terms of scope and size
- Describe patterns of Canvas functional use as a platform for teaching and learning
- Describe trends in basic user feedback and experience
- Identify support needs and patterns among users

The report includes data from two sources:

- 1) Operational analytics that describe pilot scope and scale
- 2) User surveys, including some questions repeated for trends

The first section of this report reviews the metrics and analytics to describe the amount of program activity in different areas. Sources for the analytics section include:

- Review of ServiceNow tickets
- Canvas analytics on course activity
- Internal records and activity tracking

The second section of the report summarizes findings from the surveys of faculty and students involved directly in Canvas-based. Spring 2015 survey methods and reporting were as follows:

- The survey was emailed to Canvas users via Qualtrics, with identifying information in the email, and confidentiality assured unless the respondent chose to self-identify.
- An initial email was followed by two reminder emails within a two to three week-period. The emails were tailored to the school, and signed by the TLT Program Evaluator and a leading member of the school's academic technology team.
- Most schools received the survey initially on March 30; the survey was initially sent to DCE teaching staff and students on April 17.
- In order not to have individuals receive the survey from more than one school, the lists of users contacted for the survey were adjusted around those teaching or taking courses in more than one school.
- In addition to this report, each school was also provided with a set of tables for the responses from that school.

Canvas Migration Operational Metrics

Canvas Participation and Course Activity (Tables 2-3)

The process tracking and system analytics summarize the amount of activity in Canvas. The current metrics in the two tables below are based on records as of 5/19/15. Activity analytics also show the change from Spring 2014.

Table 2. Course Participation and Activity Analytics: 2014 and 2015

Participation Measure	End-Term 2014 (6/11/14)	End-Term 2015 (5/19/15)	Number-Fold Increase 2014-2015
Courses	47	743	16 times
Teaching Staff Members (unique count)	284	1,747	6 times
Students (unique count)	2,820	14,727	5 times
Assignments	1,006	7,709	8 times
Discussion Topics	1,273	10,741	8 times
Files Uploaded	2,642	55,845	21 times
Media Recordings	165	3189	19 times

Note: Student count including guests would be 15,246, which would potentially include some duplication. "Number-fold increase" is rounded to whole number. Canvas analytics figures have limitations.

Table 3. Current Canvas Course Size Distribution and Student Enrollment: 2015

Course Size (Enrollment)	Courses in Canvas		Students Enrolled	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
200 or more	13	2%	3,452	16%
100-199	32	4%	4,342	20%
75-99	23	3%	1,958	9%
50-74	42	6%	2,534	11%
25-49	138	19%	4,858	22%
10-24	234	31%	3,723	17%
3-9	216	29%	1,294	6%
1-2	45	6%	73	0%
Grand Total	743	100%	22,234	100%

Communications, General Support and Newly-Built Tools (Table 4)

This section reports on methods used to communicate and provide support to the Canvas community at Harvard and the academic support staff at the schools.

Migration-related group meetings, updates and communications

- Communication around surveys (see above)
- Coffee and Canvas meetings (1/16/15, 3/27/15, 6/5/15)
- Ongoing wiki for instructional support staff and others
- Nine academic platform updates communicated to instructional support staff
- School-level reports of Canvas feedback survey provided to five schools

The table below indicates that the number of support requests has increased by these measures, with a shift toward the Qualtrics Help link. It also appears that users are reaching out earlier in the semester, compared to pilot Canvas users a year ago. It is possible that early adopters prepared to use Canvas differently and were perhaps more technically savvy.

Table 4. Support Requests: 2014 and 2015

Number of Support Requests	End-Term Spring 2014	End-Term Spring 2015
Tickets with "Canvas" in TLT queue / Canvas service	298	349
Help requests to ServiceNow via Canvas Help / Qualtrics	125	283
Mid-Term Proportion of Total Requests		
Tickets with "Canvas" in TLT queue / Canvas service	44%	73%
Help requests to ServiceNow via Canvas Help / Qualtrics	66%	88%

Tools Integrated into Canvas

This section lists the new LTI tools developed and added to Canvas in this time period.

The following additional tools have been integrated into Canvas:

- Reserve reading lists built by TLT
- Lecture video display built by TLT
- Skype group chat link built by TLT
- Manage People capability built by TLT
- Manage Sections built by TLT
- Student locations built by DCE teaching staff/TLT staff
- Flashcards built by ATG
- HarmonyLab built by ATG
- Academic Integrity Policy built by ATG
- Hello World built by DCE

Spring Canvas Participation by School (Tables 5-6a,b)

The following tables provide metrics by school. As above, the data source is Canvas analytics.

Table 5. Canvas Participation by School at End-Term (Counts): 2014 and 2015

School	Courses		Students		Teaching Staff		Registrations 2015
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	
FAS	24	402	1735	6453	185	1053	10845
DCE	11	147	909	5834	59	402	7175
GSD	1	22	9	359	2	48	550
HDS	7	93	84	437	13	87	963
HKS	1	7	53	282	6	16	311
HSPH	3	17	137	336	33	78	466
HLS		35		1080		102	1211
GSE		22		554		78	732
Total	47	743	2927	14,967	298	1755	22253

Source: Canvas subaccount analytics for term; calculated as sum of rows. Figures include duplication of courses and registrations across schools. Figures may not match other sources of analytics.

Table 6a. Canvas Course Activity by School at End-Term (Counts): 2014 Only

School	Assignments	Discussion Topics	Files Uploaded	Media Recordings
FAS	497	380	1661	65
DCE	225	869	898	10
GSD	6	12	41	1
HDS	116	77	79	0
HKS	21	38	87	0
HSPH	33	31	231	0
Total	898	1407	2997	76

Source: Canvas analytics at school's top-level subaccount for term; totals calculated as sum of rows.

Table 6b. Course Activity by School at End-Term (Counts): 2015 Only

School	Assignments	Discussion Topics	Files Uploaded	Media Recordings
FAS	4379	4929	30869	2103
DCE	2175	4010	14829	1078
GSD	165	298	1478	31
HDS	643	646	4404	88
HKS	237	367	1584	9
HSPH	220	232	1131	24
HLS	48	540	2219	4
GSE	238	574	4402	84
Total	8105	11596	60916	3421

Source: Canvas analytics at school's top-level subaccount for term; totals calculated as sum of rows.

Detailed Spring Survey Results

Respondent Background and Canvas Experience (Tables 7-11)

The following describes the level of the teaching staff members who responded to this survey and how much they actively used Canvas in their role.

- Teaching Assistants and Faculty make up the majority of the respondents, and in the same proportions (41% each).
- Those who responded showed a range in terms of how often they used Canvas in their teaching role. A majority indicated they used it “a moderate amount” or “a great deal” (55%)

Table 7. Role of Teaching Staff Respondents (Count, Percent)

Q: Please indicate your role in using Canvas.		
Response	Count	Percent
Faculty	243	41%
Teaching Assistant/Research Assistant/Teaching Fellow	248	41%
Preceptor	21	4%
Faculty Assistant	36	6%
Administrative Support Staff, Librarian and Other	69	12%
Total Responses: 599		
Multiple responses possible.		

Table 8. Teaching Staff Involvement in Course Platform (Count, Percent)

Q: How often did you use Canvas and its pedagogical resources directly in your role in Canvas this semester?		
Response	Count	Percent
Never	55	12%
Rarely	68	14%
Occasionally	92	19%
A moderate amount	131	28%
A great deal	126	27%
Total	472	100%

In contrast to 2015, at the pilot stage in spring 2014, there were four teachers with prior Canvas experience among those who responded to the end-term survey. Current 2015 data from the Canvas user database and survey data suggest how much experience teaching staff and students have accumulated with Canvas at this stage.

The three tables below indicate teaching staff and students:

Teaching staff (survey data)

- Around half are using Canvas for the first time, in one course.
- Over half have not used Canvas in any previous semester.
- Two-fifths are in their second semester of using Canvas.
- Very few are in the third semester of using Canvas.

Students (Canvas analytics and survey data)

- Canvas analytics indicate: around two-thirds of the student users have only one course using Canvas in this term, around one-fourth have two courses, and around one-tenth have three or more courses in this semester in Canvas.
- Almost half of the student survey respondents have used Canvas before at Harvard.

Table 9. Teaching Staff Usage as Courses and Semesters (Percent of Total): Survey 2015

Number of Courses	Number of Semesters			Grand Total
	1	2	3	
1	48%	2%	0%	51%
2	4%	13%	0%	18%
3	1%	11%	1%	13%
4	2%	8%	3%	13%
5 or more (or unclear)	0%	5%	0%	5%
Grand Total	56%	40%	4%	100%
Total Number of Respondents: 97				

Table 10. Student Canvas Usage as Number of Courses (Count, Percent): User Download 2015

Number of Courses for Student Canvas Users	Count	Percent
One	9745	65%
Two	3580	24%
Three	1286	9%
Four or more	356	2%
Grand Total	14,967	100%

Table 11. Student Experience with Canvas (Count, Percent): Survey 2015

Q: Have you used Canvas at Harvard before this semester? "Yes" (N=2,269)	Count	Percent
		1043
Q: In how many courses are you enrolled this semester that are using the Canvas platform?		
One	1,671	58%
Two or more	1,089	38%
I am not aware of using the Canvas platform in any course this semester	121	4%
Total	2,881	100%

Current Platform Usage and Patterns (Tables 12a,b-14)

In spring of 2014, survey results indicated the Canvas functions that were of most interest to faculty and students. At that time, rankings indicated three sub-groups in terms of interest and use.

- Functions with substantial agreement on importance and high use
 - Provide Course Assignments
 - Provide Course Readings
 - Keep Students Posted via Announcements
- Functions with higher ratings and some difference between staff and students
 - Provide and Grade Quizzes/Problem Sets
 - Provide Course Assignment Grades
 - Use Online Course Calendar
 - Create Online Class Discussions
- Functions with lower ratings, variation, and uneven use
 - Create Online Sections
 - Hold Online Office Hours
 - Web Conferencing with Class
 - Use a Chat Feature for Course
 - Use a Mobile App for Course
 - Integrate Wikis into a Course
 - Integrate Blogs into a Course

These earlier 2014 results also indicated how well users felt Canvas helped accomplish specific course goals:

- A relatively large proportion of students and faculty rated Canvas highly at these tasks:
 - Receiving assignment grades (80% students, 70% teaching staff)
 - Class-wide communication (73%, 66%)
 - Receiving feedback (74%, 66%)
 - One-on-one communication (62%, 65%)
- Items on student engagement and enhancing learning received fewer high ratings from both students and teaching staff.

The results below indicate the current functional usage and experience with Canvas in Spring 2015. The three tables below show the following:

- Use of Features: The first two tables demonstrate the limited use of some functions in Canvas, including where awareness is high versus low for teaching staff and students.
- Learning Curve: These two tables also indicate how teaching staff and students assessed how “easy” it is to get up and running with the various functions.
- Comparisons and Course Pattern: The third table compares the results for teaching staff and students. The patterns also suggest which functions are being used by larger courses (student use is higher than use among teaching staff).

Table 12a. Awareness, Use and Rating of Canvas Functions: Teaching Staff 2015 (Sort by Use)

Function	Did Not Use Function		Used Function		Total Count
	Percent Unaware	Percent Aware	Percent Used	Mean Rating (5 pt. scale)	
HIGH USE					
Assignments	2%	16%	82%	3.8	498
Announcements	2%	20%	78%	4.0	497
MEDIUM USE					
People and Profiles	10%	24%	66%	3.7	492
Pages	15%	23%	62%	3.6	491
In-Canvas Messaging (via Inbox/Conversations)	14%	24%	62%	3.6	493
Gradebook/SpeedGrader	7%	33%	60%	3.7	498
Post Course Readings	17%	25%	58%	3.9	494
Discussions	9%	40%	51%	3.8	499
Manage Notification Preferences	23%	29%	48%	3.6	492
Calendar (viewing and/or create events)	16%	38%	46%	3.5	486
Groups	17%	40%	43%	3.4	494
Modules	24%	34%	42%	3.6	491
Canvas Dynamic Syllabus	31%	28%	41%	3.5	493
LOWER USE					
Provide Course Lecture Videos	18%	47%	35%	3.8	493
Quizzes/Surveys	17%	51%	32%	3.6	493
Provide Other Course-Related Videos	22%	49%	29%	3.7	489
Canvas Mobile App	37%	38%	25%	3.4	491
Attendance/Seating Chart	36%	45%	19%	3.6	493
Online Office Hours Sign-up	40%	41%	19%	3.0	492

Table 12b. Awareness, Use and Rating of Canvas Functions: Students 2015 (Sort by Use)

Function	Did Not Use Function		Used Function		Total Count
	Percent Unaware	Percent Aware	Percent Used	Mean Rating (5 pt. scale)	
HIGH USE					
Assignments	2%	4%	94%	4.1	2,312
Announcements	4%	7%	89%	4.0	2,317
Discussions	9%	17%	74%	3.8	2,325
Gradebook/SpeedGrader	19%	13%	69%	4.0	2,318
MEDIUM USE					
Pages	26%	9%	65%	3.9	2,305
Provide Course Lecture Videos	20%	16%	64%	4.1	2,314
Modules	29%	11%	61%	4.0	2,317
In-Canvas Messaging (via Inbox/Conversations)	24%	18%	58%	3.8	2,312
Quizzes/Surveys	26%	17%	57%	4.1	2,308
Manage Notification Preferences	30%	14%	56%	3.8	2,294
People and Profiles	25%	20%	56%	3.9	2,314
Canvas Dynamic Syllabus	35%	10%	55%	4.0	2,305
Post Course Readings	30%	16%	54%	4.0	2,306
Provide Other Course-Related Videos	28%	20%	52%	4.0	2,309
Calendar (viewing and/or create events)	30%	20%	49%	3.9	2,306
LOWER USE					
Groups	33%	22%	44%	3.7	2,306
Canvas Mobile App	44%	21%	35%	3.7	2,306
Online Office Hours Sign-up	54%	19%	27%	3.8	2,311
Attendance/Seating Chart	58%	18%	24%	3.8	2,315

Table 13. Use and Rating of Functions: Teaching Staff and Students 2015 (Sort by Staff Use)

Function	Percent Using Function		Mean Rating for Ease of Use	
	Teaching Staff	Students	Teaching Staff	Students
Assignments	82%	94%	3.8	4.1
Announcements	78%	89%	4.0	4.0
People and Profiles	66%	56%	3.7	3.9
Pages	62%	65%	3.6	3.9
In-Canvas Messaging (via Inbox/Conversations)	62%	58%	3.6	3.8
Gradebook/SpeedGrader	60%	69%	3.7	4.0
Post Course Readings	58%	54%	3.9	4.0
Discussions	51%	74%	3.8	3.8
Manage Notification Preferences	48%	56%	3.6	3.8
Calendar (viewing and/or create events)	46%	49%	3.5	3.9
Groups	43%	44%	3.4	3.7
Modules	42%	61%	3.6	4.0
Canvas Dynamic Syllabus	41%	55%	3.5	4.0
Provide Course Lecture Videos	35%	64%	3.8	4.1
Quizzes/Surveys	32%	57%	3.6	4.1
Provide Other Course-Related Videos	29%	52%	3.7	4.0
<i>Canvas Mobile App</i>	25%	35%	3.4	3.7
Attendance/Seating Chart	19%	24%	3.6	3.8
Online Office Hours Sign-up	19%	27%	3.0	3.8

Note: Blue font indicates higher percentage of students than teaching staff, suggesting larger courses. Canvas Mobile App is in italics since this is a choice that the two groups make independently.

In response to some perceived platform limitations, the table below shows how much users currently work outside of Canvas for their Canvas-based courses. The results indicate that several aspects of assignments and grading still occur outside of Canvas for a significant portion of users, as reported by both teaching staff and students. There is also a significant proportion that messages the entire class outside of Canvas.

Table 14. Work Outside of Canvas “Regularly” (Percent): Teaching Staff and Students 2015

Q: How often do you currently complete the following course-related tasks outside of Canvas for your Canvas-located courses?		
Course Purpose	Teaching Staff	Students
Message entire class (Faculty only)	40%	
Message individual students [or teachers]	37%	30%
Record/receive grades on assignments	55%	50%
Provide/receive written feedback on assignments	47%	42%
Communicate grades on assignments (Faculty only)	48%	
Receive/turn in student work/assignments	51%	55%
Arrange/sign up office hours or other event sign up	34%	18%
Use discussions, blogs, wikis, or other tools that enable collaboration and class participation	23%	25%
Other course-relevant task	37%	28%

The “other” tasks specified by teaching staff respondents included the following:

- Split class into sections and give different assignments
- Surveys using Qualtrics and distributed via email
- Posting items (cited by several respondents):
 - Slides for just students in my sections
 - Readings, electronic documents and lectures
 - Handouts, problem sets and solutions, using i-sites
 - Course videos
 - Assignments
- Communication
 - Communicate with guest lecturers, TFs, and instructors
 - Emailed graduate section
- Collaboration
 - Collaborate for regular class sessions
 - Using Google Docs collaboration integration for assignments
- Exams and grading
 - Final Exam
 - Calculate grades and prepare written materials (exam questions)
 - Grading assignments
- Big Blue Button Conferences
- Add guest and other admins
- Learning Catalytics
- Attendance and schedules
- Tweeting
- Student videos posted in Dropbox
- Bug fixes and creative problem-solving drawing on my HTML skills

Trends in Overall User Experience (Tables 15-16)

Two questions were asked in 2014 and 2015, as a way to track trends in general user experience. One is a general rating of Canvas as a platform; the other includes items related to the use and learning experience.

The table below shows that general ratings of the platform have gone up consistently on all aspects, for both teaching staff and students, from the small pilot group to the current larger group of users. Most increases are moderate, however several areas show notable improvements for teaching staff (“Very Good” or “Excellent” ratings on 5-point scale):

- Navigation: 20% vs. 40%
- Ease of Using Site Functions: 24% vs. 36%
- Overall Experience: 33% vs. 47%

Table 15. Platform Ratings (Percent “Very Good” or “Excellent” on 5-point scale): 2014, 2015

Aspect	Teaching Staff		Students	
	2014	2015	2014	2015
Functionality	46%	52%	54%	60%
Visual Look and Feel	48%	54%	60%	61%
Site Navigation	20%	40%	41%	48%
Ease of Using Site Functions	24%	36%	47%	53%
Overall Experience	33%	47%	49%	57%
Number of respondents varies. 2015: Total N of students = 2,321 to 2,335. Total N of teaching staff = 485 to 490. 2014: Total N of students = 584 to 595. Total N of teaching staff = 31 to 43.				

The series of statements about the Canvas experience shows both progress and a new support challenge. As the table below indicates:

- The proportion indicating initial or continued confusion regarding the user interface has gone down for both teaching staff and students.
- In a challenge to the migration, the proportions indicating that they had a sufficient introduction and access to helpful support as needed decreased.
- The remaining items showed no significant change: close to two-thirds agree that with sufficient introduction the platform functions well and about half that there are minimal technical concerns.

Table 16. Learning Curve (Percent Agree or Strongly Agree with Statements): 2014, 2015

Statement	Teaching Staff		Students	
	2014	2015	2014	2015
The user interface was confusing at first*	73%	53%	49%	32%
The user interface was confusing throughout the course*	27%	19%	22%	13%
I received sufficient introduction to the platform at the beginning of the term	51%	36%	35%	27%
With sufficient introduction, the platform functions well for students	62%	65%	64%	62%
Helpful support on using the platform was available if needed	76%	60%	44%	34%
There were minimal technical concerns overall in using this course platform	47%	49%	55%	56%
*Negative Phrasing				
Number of respondents varies. 2015: Total N of students = 1,491 to 2,153. Total N of teaching staff = 379 to 462. 2014: Total N of students = 347 to 546. Total N of teaching staff = 37 to 45.				

Support and User Experience (Tables 17-20)

Both teaching staff and students were asked how long it took for them to learn to use Canvas at their current level. The table below shows results for both groups.

While the comparison is interesting, there is an obvious difference in what each group needs to learn to use Canvas effectively. Nearly all of the students spent a small amount of time: 71% less than one hour and 20% between 1 and 2 hours. Yet, even with much more to learn, a large proportion of teaching staff also spent less than one hour (26%) or between 1 and 2 hours (25%). About one-tenth of the teaching staff spent the largest number of hours (more than seven), with the remainder in the middle.

Table 17. Amount of Time Spent Learning Canvas: Teaching Staff and Students, 2015

Q: How much time would you estimate it took you to learn how to use the Canvas platform at the level at which you use it?		
Amount of Time	Teaching Staff	Students
Less than 1 hour	26%	71%
Between 1 and 2 hours	25%	20%
Between 2 and 4 hours	22%	7%
Between 5 and 7 hours	17%	2%
More than 7 hours	10%	1%
Total	100%	100%
Number of Respondents	459	2,219

The table below shows the use and rating of various support resources as “helpful” or not. While the question changed since 2014, the few comparable categories indicate that there is little change in this area.

Table 18. Awareness, Use, and Helpful Rating of Support (Percent): Teaching Staff 2014, 2015

Resource	Did Not Use		Used Resource		Total Count	Used 2014
	Unaware	Aware	All	Helpful *		
One-on-one with my instructional support staff	31%	24%	45%	68%	450	44%
Phone calls and emails with my instructional support staff	28%	25%	47%	69%	448	
Experimenting and learning it on my own	4%	3%	93%	66%	450	
School or department-level group meetings or workshops	48%	28%	24%	40%	447	
Canvas 101 for Instructors (link at TLT website)	45%	23%	32%	37%	447	
Canvas live chat or phone (24-hour Instructure support)	50%	33%	17%	50%	447	
Canvas-produced guides on Canvas website	38%	22%	40%	33%	448	48%
Submitting a help ticket to Canvas	43%	30%	27%	46%	446	
Canvas online feature request forums	58%	29%	13%	17%	447	30%
Other (please specify)	39%	39%	22%	52%	119	
* Rating: “Very” or “Extremely” Helpful (5 pt. scale) Number of Respondents: 2014 = 41 (use-only question)						

In a new question for 2015, students were asked if they received the identified “best practice” introduction to Canvas, as an early-term brief face-to-face introduction by course teaching staff. As noted in earlier reports, results from students as well as from research conducted at other universities indicates strong support for in-class course-related demonstrations as a way for students to learn about Canvas. The table below shows that at this stage, around one-fourth received that training in at least some of their Canvas courses (26%).

Table 19. Student Canvas Introduction (Percent): Students 2015

Q: Did you receive an introduction to using Canvas in the course at the beginning of the semester from the professor or other teaching staff?		
Response	Count	Percent
Yes, for all of my Canvas courses	321	14%
Yes, for some of my Canvas courses	274	12%
No, not for any of my Canvas courses	1,281	57%
I don't remember	374	17%
Grand Total	2,250	100%

Open-ended responses from teaching staff and students also provide insight into their experience as Canvas users at this stage, and the opportunities and challenges facing the migration team. The summary below indicates the number of responses, along with a brief analysis of responses to two teaching staff questions.

Table 20. Number of Responses to Open-Ended Questions: Teaching Staff and Students 2015

Question	Number of Responses
Teaching Staff	
Significant challenges with Canvas functions	285
How/why particular Canvas functions are valuable	244
Gaps between Canvas and current teaching practices or needs	206
Advice, information or recommendations for other faculty	203
Additional comment	114
Specific positive experience where Canvas enhanced your course	59
Students	
Comment on working outside of Canvas	518
Liked about Canvas	882
Did not like about Canvas	880
Additional comment	208

Below is a summary of responses to two open-ended questions from the teaching staff survey.

Top challenges cited:

- Grading (20)
- Intuitiveness (20)
- Messaging (13)
- Design (10)
- Assignments (8)
- Time consuming (8)
- Training (7)
- Notifications (6)

“Other” Course Tasks cited for working outside of Canvas

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Email (20) | • Github (1) |
| • Hardcopies of Assignment, Quiz (9) | • Google Calendar (1) |
| • Excel (5) | • Google Docs (1) |
| • Office Hour tool (5) | • Mathjax (1) |
| • Piazza (4) | • MIT's annotation studio (1) |
| • Microsoft Word (3) | • Tools for writing/drawing (1) |
| • Facebook (2) | |
| • Blackboard (1) | |

Below are the responses to the teaching staff question on a specific positive experience using Canvas this semester (a small number of negative responses to this question are excluded).

Question: *[SCHOOL] and TLT could use your stories to help others get up to speed on using Canvas. In the space below, please provide a brief description of a specific positive experience with Canvas or how Canvas has enhanced your course.*

- DCE Easy and intuitive LMS to work and use.
- DCE I always asked for one volunteer (who's name I noted for participation) to make at least one post related to the readings on the Discussion board. It was a complete success. Our course Discussion board was well used each and every week, which had not been my experience prior to this course.
- DCE We had 20 students in the classroom taking the course live, approximately 50 students watching the video live on campus and participating in the real-time chat room with the TA, and an additional 15 students watching the recorded class video on canvas and participating in the discussion board. It sounds crazy, but Canvas made it happen, and the course has been great. After a short learning curve, we became Canvas fans quickly. /
- DCE At least the links to files did not disappear as was common in iSites.
- DCE Speed grader really saved grading time.
- DCE Canvas made grading weekly labs faster and more efficient.
- DCE Happy to share about the challenges of an online course with heavy group interaction/peer groups.
- DCE About three quarters into the semester the Canvas site wasn't accepting any more files because it reached capacity. I submitted a ticket to Academic Technology Services and within minutes the amount of space available was increased. Thank you such a quick turnaround.
- DCE Canvas definitely made grading easy and convenient.
- DCE Having the ability to easily create quiz, projects, assignments and grade all from a single point is very helpful
- DCE The virtual classroom and live chat were spectacular resources.
- DCE Canvas was very helpful in juggling two courses at one time. Everything was separate and much easier to keep track of than having everything (communication, assignments, etc.) flooding my email at once.
- DCE By using the Announcements and Messenger features in Canvas, I keep all of my student correspondence organized. Student emails no longer get lost in the bottom of my inbox.
- DCE The most useful feature of Canvas for my course was the ability to assign students to groups (not official sections) and have special areas restricted to members of the group (and the teaching team) where students in the group could share files, discuss, etc. This really facilitated group work in a web conference course.
- DCE It is a good course management tool. It is a great tool to communicate with the students, keep course materials up to date and share course related materials.
- DCE Canvas has really allowed me to have much better course management on the Harvard platform - it's been very helpful. Grading quizzes and assignments has been so much easier on Canvas.
- DCE It was easy to track attendance and assignments.
- DCE The single best aspect of Canvas for this course was the threaded discussion feature. This gave the course an immediacy that was comparable to that of an in-person class. It was simply not as intuitive in iSites, making students much more willing to engage in debates, post their own topics, and engage with each other even though they weren't face-to-face. It was in some ways more conducive to every student being heard than in-person discussion can sometimes be, as it's impossible to lurk at the back of a class. For instance, at the beginning of the course, we set up a threaded for each week on the IT news of the week, asking students to respond to emerging security news, etc. with their own responses. The response was overwhelming. Initially, I had planned to select a few articles, post them, and solicit student responses. Instead, students began introducing a wide range of their own reading, engaging in healthy debate on scores of key IT topics. It really encouraged everyone to connect coursework with current applications beyond their own areas of expertise.

- DCE As mentioned previously, I had no experience with Canvas, or any training, workshops, etc. I was able to learn this on my own, while using the program, and grading student assignments. It was a user-friendly program! I appreciate that students can always see their grades! Students can remain pro-active in their own grading experience, with communication with the instructors.
- DCE ability to post students grades for them to see online is helpful, particularly with final exam scores and final course grades.
- DCE I especially like it for correcting student papers. I use all of the functions in this regard. I also like it as a depository of readings and videos for students. /
- DCE Canvas' SpeedGrader feature has been one of the highlights of my transition to Canvas - it truly lives up to its name. With over 350 students in the courses I'm involved with, managing the grading of assignments is a tall order. Using the "Grade by Question" feature I can quickly flip through the responses to a particular question *for every student in the course.* When I'm finished reviewing a particular student's response, I can enter their point total (Canvas takes care of tabulating their total score for the assignment), leave a text or even audio comment, and move onto the next student's response to that same question - no scrolling or opening a new document required. Canvas completely eliminates the "overhead" work associated with grading (collecting submissions, tabulating scores, returning assignments). Finally, if a student has a comment about a particular question or score - I can pull up their response in seconds and respond directly in Canvas. It absolutely couldn't be easier.
- DCE I think the speed grader is a better way to grade and report. // I haven't seen a place to say this, and I know it doesn't belong, but it was much easier to add graphics to iSites. The look of canvas seems uniform between courses: one size fits all.
- DCE my online interaction with students on the canvas discussion forums. // my first semester using it was a disaster because student submissions were often lost by the system. it was an administrative nightmare. // i trust the system far less now and so expect much less of it. i have really toned down the type of questions i ask online, which means there is less opportunity for things to go wrong.
- DCE I'd have to say the canvas speedgrader has truly enhanced my experience. That alone has been a hugely (as in tectonic shift) positive experience for me.
- DCE I much prefer online grading with Canvas to offline grading.
- FAS I assigned a selfie assignment after a museum field trip. Submitting the student selfies and write-ups worked very well; easy to see and grade with comments.
- FAS Canvas has made collecting and grading assignments as easy as pie!
- FAS One of the best experiences with Canvas was using speed grader to make comments and corrections to a particular assignment, and then receiving students' replies to my comments. We could go back and forth and talk about improvements without sending emails back and forth. // This is not a specific story, but using Canvas has allowed me to get feedback to students more quickly, which is especially helpful for language classes that meet every day.
- FAS As I mentioned earlier in the survey, the new features in canvas have the potential to enhance the teaching experience and provide better support than the old isites. It was very useful for me to switch from in-class quizzes to take-home ones using canvas. But my overall experience was absolutely dreadful. Almost every time I need to edit/add materials, I run into bugs/system limitations that are both frustrating and time consuming.
- FAS Canvas has been particularly helpful for submitting assignment comments and grades, since it enables commenting directly in a PDF for a large class without needing to deal with the logistics of returning those PDFs to students.
- FAS I enjoy Canvas for it's grading functionality and course messaging service. These functions have helped to save me significant amounts of time over the course of two semesters of use.
- FAS I am a visiting faculty member with a one-year appointment, and had to learn a new software package in any event. Canvas was extremely helpful by providing a great deal of flexibility with readings and other resources that could be posted to the syllabus, scheduling individual meetings with students, keeping track of grades, watching student interest during registration, and learning student identities. It was not always intuitive and I needed help at various points, but went to Canvas office hours and found them very helpful.
- FAS Communication and availability to students.
- FAS The quizzes, exams, and grading features are far superior on Canvas compared to iSites.

- FAS The course is based on students reading journal articles. It's very easy to post these articles, assignments related to the readings, and organize it all. We used to print all this out, so we're saving a lot of paper!
- FAS This platform certainly stimulated my creativity and imagination while teaching my course.
- FAS I found the canvas interface easy to use to communicate directly to the whole class.
- FAS The Canvas SpeedGrader has made it feasible for a large course team to evaluate long student assignments quickly.
- FAS I think there's a lot of potential in the Chat and Discussion features and the other many modules and applications
- GSD Canvas allowed me to flip course material out of class time. I also believed it allowed me to engage students more effectively before they came to class, to bring the topic of the session to life for them ahead of time.
- GSD Email was good.
- HDS The Inbox was helpful.
- HSPH the capability to post videos was a big plus
- HSPH My favorite feature of Canvas is the Speed Grader. I was a grader for two assignments for this course in 2014, and that process took a long time. With Canvas, students were able to submit their homework directly to the web site and it kept track of everything for me. From there, I could create a rubric for each assignment, which made grading a snap - simply click a button for full credit or no credit, you could enter in partial credit and leave feedback on the assignment. The students received their grades right away, and it was much less of a headache for me.
- HSPH great for grading and submission of assignments!