

Learning Management System Migration: The good, the bad, & the ugly

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Information collected via Sli.do during the presentation. Most of the attendees did not utilize Sli.do. Everyone jumped into the conversation in-person. Even most remote participants used the facilitator to ask questions, so the Sli.do data is not as helpful as we were anticipating. However, it did generate some interesting information that reflected (in part) what we heard in the room.

In the room discussion:

Topics of conversation –

Decision making process

Faculty participation in the LMS migration decision – absolutely a must. Resistance from faculty, and to a degree from students to top-down decision making process

Training

How close to starting new LMS do you start training? Closer is better for students, longer for faculty as long as they have access to a Sandbox.

Policy? Are faculty members required by policy to complete training on the new LMS? How did you get your policy approved? In our situation, the policy was approved by the Faculty Senate and the Academic Council. The policy underscores best practices in baseline and ongoing training for online teaching and course development. However, not every institution represented in the session had the support of a policy.

Timing of transition

Pilot semester, Parallel systems? Why or Why not? We found during a previous migration experience that a pilot semester running both systems resulted in too much confusion for faculty and staff. Although others in the session took different approaches.

Time to convert/move course content

Several conversations following the presentation centered on how long to expect it to take faculty to move their content. Recommendation: two long semesters. Approaches varied depending on how the various institutions structure their course development process – how much of the effort is shouldered by the faculty, etc.

Migrate or rebuild?

Our university, and many in the OLC session found it was a good idea to use migration as an opportunity to redesign, update, refresh, rebuild – rather than simply move all existing content.

Communication plan

How early did you start the communication process? We constructed our implementation and communication plans 18 months before the existing contract ended. Once the decision was made, we immediately began the monthly timeline-to-transition email updates, regular meetings with various committees, and use of our electronic signage across campus to keep everyone up-to-date. Training on how to prepare for the move began about six to eight months before the deadline.

Support for faculty and students?

Do you outsource any of the LMS support? In our case it is a combination of outsourcing to Canvas for some 24/7 tier 1 support, with escalation for some issues to our in-house team. There was discussion in the session for different approaches to handling support for faculty and student issues.

Sli.do Polls: Participants sent 36 votes in 3 polls

1. Session Topics - select the top 3 you want to discuss today (15 participants)

Knowing your Stakeholders	0 %
Setting Priorities	33 %
Campus Involvement	20 %
Communication Plan	53 %
Product Demonstrations	13 %
Contracting Process	0 %
Faculty Training	93 %
Lessons Learned	73 %

2. Where is your institution with its Learning Management System (LMS) plans? (16 participants)

Thinking about changing to a different LMS	31 %
In the decision-making process	31 %
In the process of migration	13 %
Recently migrated to a new LMS	13 %
I'm ready for a change, but my institution is not	13 %

3. What advice do you have to offer anyone leading, or going through, their institution's LMS migration efforts? (Lessons learned?) (5 participants)

Our LMS champion was a librarian in the social sciences college. Her college had the smoothest transition

Did you use a rubric for decision making?

Have a migration team, have one on one assistance (we called them Canvas Consults, faculty had to take intro training to sign up for consults), have an online student orientation to new LMS,

Just started an LMS review. We are relying heavily on faculty sponsors (champions) and over-communicating on the intent of the review. So far, the review process has been well-accepted.

Insist that faculty are involved in decision making and LMS design.

Instructional design support is a nice touch, communication is key.

Popular Questions via Sli.do :

1. Any regrets on switching from Blackboard to Canvas?
2. How do you convince admin to utilize faculty in developing the LMS?
3. Ok, where I work they pick an LMS based on what Admin wants, and then try to force it onto faculty. We have been through 3 in 3 years.