Development of an online student orientation: Supporting success in the digital environment

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Context and Question

About the University of St. Thomas

• Private, Catholic university in Saint Paul/Minneapolis MN
• Includes 60 graduate degrees (some online)
• Undergraduate population (6,212) current and growing interest in online and blended courses
• We recently adopted Canvas as our LMS

Question: How can we ensure that our undergraduate students who are not in an online program have the necessary online readiness supports prior to taking an online course at St Thomas?
Our Timeline

- **Sum 2017**: Online Courses offered to undergraduates. High interest!
- **Sum 2018**: New! Orientation to Online Courses site for Undergraduates in online classes
- **Fall 2018**: All first year undergrads enrolled into revised Digital Learning site.
- **Spg 2019**: Continue and adjust Digital Learning site
- **Sum 2019**: Updated Version(s) for Summer 2019 student group. Online readiness for student success!
Orientation to Online Courses

- Home page message of welcome, expectations and start up
- Student guide videos
- Self-Assessment
- 6 modules
- 989 students enrolled, 744 participated to some degree
- Undergrads in online courses (freshmen, soph, jr, senior, other universities)
- 418 “completers” (41%)
Themes of Student Feedback*
Informing Our Fall 2018 Version

• The orientation site helped students with navigating Canvas
• Liked knowing about specific technology tools and resources
• Liked a site flexible and responsive to their own needs
• Not wanting to spend time on things they already know
• Having the site earlier in their program would be helpful
• For some it was either too much content or too much time
• There were numerous positive comments about Canvas

*See sample quotes at the end of the slide deck
Fall 2018-All First Year Undergrads

Digital Learning Essentials
• Voluntary, not required
• 3 modules
• Self-Assessment, Quick Reviews and “Try Its”
• Weekly announcements from a team of moderators
• Option- Certificate
• 1836 1st yr students enrolled
• Anyone else also welcome
• 106 Self-Assessments
• 29 Certificates to date
# Self-Assessment Sample

## Your Tech Prep

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree/Yes</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree/Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree/No/Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have access to a reliable computer multiple times a week (including a laptop, desktop or iPad, not only a smartphone).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am connected to the internet with a fairly fast, reliable connection.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I know who to contact for technology help.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have at least two up-to-date internet browsers on my computer.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I know where to find free St. Thomas software.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have headphones or speakers, and a microphone to use if a class has a videoconference.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Self-Assessment: Online/Digital Learning

### Recommendations: YOUR TECH PREP

Your responses suggest that you might find it helpful to spend time in the **Your Tech Prep module** to be further prepared with the technology before you have assignments due.

### More suggestions include:

- **The Locating Desktops or Laptops page (Your Tech module)** provides ideas on accessing a computer for coursework at times when you need more than a Smartphone. If after reviewing those materials you still struggle with accessing a reliable computer, reach out to a site moderator or advisor to problem-solve together.

- **The Check Your Browser and Internet Speed page** helps you test out both of these things and gives you ideas for fast, reliable internet connection. If after reviewing these materials you still struggle with accessing a fast, reliable internet connection, contact a site moderator or advisor to problem-solve together.

- **Yes, Bookmark Technology Help to know when and how to contact the St. Thomas Tech Desk and the 24/7 Canvas support.**

- **Changing to another browser can be one of the first things to try with a tech glitch. See the Check Your Browser page to learn how to identify your browsers or add another browser.**

- **The Information Technology Services (ITS) website and ONE5!Thomas intranet have free software to support your studies.**
Quick Reviews with Feedback

Question 2
1 pts

Check the correct statement about the Canvas Profile page. Also, if you did not yet complete the Try It: Canvas Profile activity, please try it!

- Each student can add a photo and a description ("bio").
- Everytime you are in a new Canvas class you must create a new Profile page.
- Instructors needs to give students the control to add a student profile.

Comments, if the student chooses this answer:

Actually, students already have the control to create their own Profile page. The far left purple navigation bar under "account" is where you create or change your profile.

Read this reminder of how to add a photo and description into your Canvas profile.

If you did not yet do this, please give it a try!
A Related Student Success Resource

Degree Planning Essentials Advising Tool

- **Required** during first semester
- Module quiz "pass" releases hold
- 1,828 first yr undergrads (and transfer students)
- 1,489 "completers" over 6 weeks
Learning to Date
We Are Learning Effective Ways to...

1. Introduce the orientation/success site in ways that help learners notice and remember it is there.
2. Design a site that is interesting and easy enough to navigate so that students spend time exploring (and want to come back).
3. Create a variety of ways that students can meaningfully engage in learning in the digital environment.
4. Focus on the relationship between Features and Function.
5. Develop resources with an eye on genuine impact and value in their lives (and not busy work).

What are your best ways to do these things? What ideas of ours inform or help your work? Let’s talk!
Please Explore Our St. Thomas Digital Learning Essentials site!

To login, insert https://stthomas.instructure.com/register into a new browser window.

- Select the green “I'M A STUDENT” button
- Fill out the form using the information that follows:
  - In the top line, use the following join code: RFJMLD
  - For username, use a valid email address (gmail, someone’s school.edu, etc.)
  - Create a password (8 characters)
  - Agree to terms of use
  - Select “Start Learning”

To revisit the site: Go to https://stthomas.instructure.com/login/canvas and log in with the credentials you chose. It will not work to go to canvas.stthomas.edu.

Login questions reach out to Jo Montie jkmontie@stthomas.edu
Also visit St. Thomas Stelar stthomas.edu/stelar and https://blogs.stthomas.edu/stelar/
Session Evaluations & Drawing

- Download and open OLC Conferences mobile app
- Navigate to specific session to evaluate
- Select “Evaluate Session” on session details screen (located under session type and track)
- Complete session evaluation*

*Each session evaluation completed (limited to one per session) = one contest entry

Five (5) $25 gift cards will be awarded to five (5) individuals
Must submit evals using the OLC Conferences mobile app or website
Supplementary Slides

The following slides are not a part of the formal Discovery presentation yet are additional resources for conference attendees.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with further questions and/or to share your stories and ideas on how to support student success in onboarding/orientation!

Jo Montie
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St. Thomas E-Learning and Research Team (Stelar)
Planning and Development Process

Both an “outside” and “inside” look to develop vision, content and overall structure.

• Reviewed other university sites and best practices around orientation and onboarding for student success.
• Interviewed key stakeholders in various service areas of the university.

• Developed content that is relevant to the student learning environment.
  • Content development included using Canvas’s features and Cidi Labs design tools for visually engaging interface.
  • Reviewed the course site for accessibility practices (closed captioning with media, color contrast, accessible documents, screen reader review).

• Engaged faculty and students in reviewing plans, providing feedback about orientation sites throughout development.
  • Development work started in December 2017 and from December through April the course site was developed.
  • The site was fine tuned and reviewed in May, ready to launch the last week of May 2018.
Sample of Student Quotes that Informed our Fall 2018 Version

• Comments from undergraduates about the summer 2018 orientation site:
  • It helped me to understand how to navigate through Canvas easier and the different aspects that are available to help me complete my online class.
  • Info that I felt was worthy of knowing such as how the test was proctored and what software systems I would use.
  • It showed me what resources are available and what I will need - 2 browsers, updated windows.
  • It was useful to learn that Canvas has its own support that is 24/7.
Quotes (continued)

• Comments from undergraduates continued:
  • I like that you come back to it at any time during your summer course. I liked that it only took as much time as you needed to understand and read the material, and you could spend more or less time on it.
  • It was helpful to become more familiar with the navigation of the website (Canvas). Last J term I had an online class without that training and I was confused about the organization as I went through the class. This helped a lot and will save students a lot of time searching through the website.
  • I think there were useful aspects but I also don’t have a lot of free time and have been using Canvas for awhile so I got frustrated reading and watching videos on things I already knew how to do.
Try It: Submit an Assignment

Purpose:
The purpose of this "try it" practice is to give you an opportunity to practice submitting assignments before you begin your coursework.

Task:
1. Open up a word processing program (Word, Pages, etc.) on your computer.
2. Type your answer to this question: **What is your back-up plan for turning in your assignments if your computer or internet connection stops working?**
3. This assignment only accepts uploads in Word or Pdf so save your work accordingly.
4. Attach the file to this Assignment and click the Submit button.
   
   Review the [Try It: Submit and Assignment](#) page if you are having problems.
More Canvas Resources

- Home page, Syllabus and Modules
- Grades in Canvas
- Groups in Canvas
- Taking Proctored Exams in Canvas via Proctorio if your professor uses that test proctoring system
- Quizzes and Exams in Canvas
- Using VoiceThread in Canvas
How Should I Prepare To Take My Exam Online?

- You need to use a regular computer (Windows/Mac computer or laptop) with a working webcam and microphone (depending on the options your instructor has selected). Note: your instructor can make arrangements for you to take the exam on campus with the necessary equipment if you do not have a computer/laptop with a webcam and mic.

- You must use the Google Chrome web browser & the Proctorio Extension. To Install the Proctorio Extension takes less than 30 seconds.
  *The exam that requires Proctorio will usually prompt you to install the extension if you need it.*

- Have a photo ID available. Depending on the settings your instructor has used for the exam, you may be asked to hold up your ID to prove you are the test taker.

- Be ready for room scans. Again, depending on the settings on your exam Proctorio may ask you to do a room scan: turning your web camera in a 360 degree pan to look at the room. Proctorio may ask more than once if the program hears noises - the application is trying to ensure there is nobody else in the room.

Using Proctorio is fairly simple. Proctorio walks you through the process as you’re taking the exam, so you do not need to refer to any instructions while you’re using Proctorio. The best way to prepare is to practice! If your instructor has set up a practice exam be sure to take it so you are prepared.

To make sure you’re ready to use Proctorio before an exam, review this interactive Proctorio Student guide.

Questions and Troubleshooting

1. Click the shield icon in your web browser to access Live Chat.
   *See this 12 second YouTube video for details.*

2. You can also call or email Proctorio Support: 1-877-687-6411 or support@proctorio.com

*Click the back arrow if upper left or Modules upper left course navigation bar to return to the modules list.*
Future Idea??!!

What are the specific knowledge, skills and competencies to demonstrate in order to "earn" a certificate?

Also, how to ensure you have a personalized certificate?

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION
DIGITAL LEARNING ESSENTIALS/ORIENTATION TO ONLINE COURSES

Congratulations to STUDENT NAME

Congratulations on completing this resource site! We hope that you feel more confident and knowledgeable about online learning, and continue to visit this site as a way to stay connected to our online community and digital resources.

Issued by
Jo Montie, on behalf of the St. Thomas Team Supporting Student Success with Digital Resources!

Semester Awarded
Fall, 2018
Nov 3, 2018