Tech Snacks: Faculty Week One Check In

With Canvas going fully live at the start of the Spring 2025 semester, OTLE did a "check-in" to see how Canvas has been integrating with faculty and students, alongside a general gauge on how the semester is starting. We gathered some common issues that students and faculty have been experiencing since Canvas went live.

OTLE asked these questions each session:
1. What are the main Canvas issues students are reporting to faculty?
2. What issues are faculty having in Canvas?
3. Does Canvas feel easier or more complex than Brightspace/D2L?

This handout will gather notes from all three discussions, highlighting common issues in Canvas, as well as compare some notes on Canvas vs. Brightspace/D2L.

Part 1: Student Canvas Issues & Solutions

- **Safari Browser:** Students are getting a "user doesn't exist" popup when logging into Canvas through Safari. Safari tends to cause issues in general, so here are some options for students:
    - Update their Safari Browser to the latest version of Safari to ensure Canvas compatibility.
    - Download Chrome, Edge, or Firefox Browsers. We have seen minimal issues in these browsers compared to Safari.
- **Redirecting to Brightspace**: Some students have reported they are being redirected to Brightspace upon clicking the Canvas link or logging into Canvas. How to resolve:
    - Regardless of what browser students are using, they simply need to clear their browser cache as that browser is defaulting to Brightspace with their SSO (single sign-on) login.
- **Logging In**: Previously students only had to use their NetId to login to Brightspace, however, for Canvas it is netid@msun.edu.
- **Homepage Button Links not Working:** The most common issue with this is that the modules the buttons are linked to are not published, making a lock icon appear when students try to view those. To check your modules, enter the Student View to ensure everything is working correctly and published where necessary.

Part 2: Faculty Canvas Issues & Solutions

- **Using Teams:** To use Teams in your course go to Settings<Integrations<Toggle the switch to on and then click "Synch Now." This may take a few minutes, but when creating meetings it will make it easy to *Add Entire Class* automatically.
- **Teams Recordings not in Canvas:** Some faculty have reported they are not able to find their Teams recordings anywhere in Canvas. There is a simple solution for this:
  - After a recording is completed, whether you're using Teams in Canvas or not, the recordings are saved to a Microsoft product called "Stream." This is part of our Office365 License, so to access "Stream," simply login here as you normally would any Microsoft product, or open any other Microsoft products (Word, Teams, OneDrive, etc.) in a browser and click on the top left corner dots. This will give you access to ALL Microsoft products, including Stream. There you will find your Teams recordings.
- **Too Many Courses on Dashboard:** Go to Courses< View all courses, and Star (pin in Brightspace) the ones that are needed and they will be at the top of the dashboard.
- **Textbook Publisher Troubleshooting:** For any faculty connecting a publisher to Canvas in their courses, we encourage you to include their support desk information on those courses in Canvas should you or your students need help with any publisher issues. Most publisher issues can't be resolved through OTLE as we don't have root access to their platforms.

Part 3: Canvas vs. Brightspace/D2L

While there are pros and cons to both platforms, we've found there's been more positive feedback for Canvas, coming from students and faculty. However, Canvas isn't without its challenges, so here's a few areas of note between the two:

- **Messaging System:** While Brightspace had an email students could use to message their instructors, Canvas does not have that option, though it acts very similarly.
  1) The "inbox" on your left side navigation is where you can communicate with students outside of regular email. By default, anytime a student messages you in Canvas, your email will be notified immediately. This works the same way for students. Those notifications can be adjusted at any time in your notification settings.
  2) You can also use the "Canvas Teacher" app to communicate with them so you don't have to use a desktop anytime you need to message them. Students also have this option in their "Canvas Student" app.

- **Navigation in Modules:** One of the biggest struggles we've seen with course design is not having the Brightspace "content" area set up the same way "modules" are in Canvas. Because of this, many students have had trouble scrolling through all the modules to access certain course materials. Here's a few options to mitigate that:
    1) Minimize how much you keep on the modules page. If there are items that can be easily accessed through Pages or elsewhere in Canvas, consider putting more content in a Page that can be linked through modules, rather than including too much info within one module.
    2) Keep some modules hidden until students need access. Unless students in your course need access to the entire semester on day one, consider making modules visible in increments. This allows for less navigation at the start, and you can hide completed items if students no longer need access to it.
    3) Condense content into fewer modules. If possible, consider combining relevant topics/sections in your modules that work together. The more modules that exist, the more scroll-work students have to do.
        a) Pages are also useful to condense resources.

As always, thank you all for what you do, we are here to support you as much as we can, especially through the Canvas transition. Please don't hesitate to reach out to any of us in OTLE for help!