

Rise, Teach, Learn - Season 4 Episode 2

Canvas and Accessible Learning Materials

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Welcome to the Rise, Teach, Learn podcast. I am Dr. Chiara Ferrari, Director of Faculty Development at Chico State. And we are happy to make these resources available to our campus community and beyond. The podcast is hosted by Dr. Jamie Gunderson. And she will engage in timely conversations with faculty, staff, and students and give you a taste of the Chico experience. Subscribe to our podcast and explore the many resources available on our website. Thank you for listening.

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Hello, and welcome to Rise, Teach, Learn. I'm your host, Jamie Gunderson. In this episode, we will learn more about how to prepare for our migration to Canvas. I'd like to welcome to this episode Chico State's Academic Technology Officer Kathy Fernandez. Kathy, welcome back to Rise, Teach, Learn, I'm really happy to be speaking with you again.

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Thank you. Thanks for having me. Appreciate it.

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Absolutely. So let's kick this off. Can you start by telling us a little more about all of the work and support that has been happening on campus since the pandemic?

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it's really amazing to take a look back and look as far back as March 2020, when we had a one-day remote teaching online conference. And then we went into the summer 2020 doing Go Virtual with 330 faculty. In fall 2020 everybody was teaching online. And in winter 2021 any faculty member who didn't get to Go Virtual during the summer had their opportunity, then by summer 2021, we were in the goflex, where we had over 150 classrooms integrated with new technology, and 95 faculty participated in that. And then in fall 2021, we launched what was called Wildcat computing support to respond to students who had put into their fall survey that they were looking for more support for the technology. And then in the spring and summer 2022, here we are preparing to launch a new learning management system from Blackboard to Canvas. And this fall, we have 25 faculty actually trying it out as well as new tenure track faculty with over 3200 students. So, it has been quite the marathon.

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Wow, the amount of work that has gone into making sure our campus can still do what it does best and engage in education across all these different modes of instruction. There's really been a lot of work that's gone into that. So, thank you to you and your team. Quite remarkable. Yeah, let's talk about Canvas, I think a good place to start would be just kind of what is happening currently with those 25 faculty on campus?

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Okay, so we call those 25 faculty, the Canvas crew. And in August, we actually did you know about, I guess it was nine days of training in Canvas to get everybody started and oriented Canvas is not fully implemented, we still have quite a few integrations to do. But we had the integrations done for the 25 faculty who needed that. And so, they continue to teach and give us feedback. We meet once a month we ask questions about how things are going and how the students are doing and continuing to refine, you know, documentation and information we know we're going to need as we launched this to a larger group.

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So can you tell us what, with those 25 faculty giving you that feedback and implementing in Canvas, Can you tell us what you have learned so far about this implementation?

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Well, no surprise, you know, Blackboard was 10 to 12 years old. And so the Canvas interface is a much nicer interface that's just comes off, right out of the gate. It is a different workflow. So when you get used to working with Blackboard and the way that it functions, Canvas provides a different kind of workflow. And so getting used to that is, is an adjustment, but again, with a nicer user interface. The students, the majority, we've done a survey and the students just say it's much easier. Of course, Canvas also has a teacher mobile app and a student global app. And so having the apps that are a lot more functional than what Blackboard had is outstanding. And something that I will highlight actually, there's a few things around the gradebook. There is something called Speed Grader and Canvas designed speed grader to make it easier for faculty to go through assignments and grade more quickly. So that is a nice feature. There is also something called "analytics" that allows you to look at the students, each student individually or the overall engagement students have with the course. So that is a nice feature. Something else is like message all students who and you can say something like message all students who got greater than 90% Here's what I want to say great job and then message all students who got lower than a 70 "Hey, we have supplemental instruction or maybe you want to Consider a getting a tutor in this area." In other words, there's some features there that make it much nicer for faculty regarding that workflow.

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Are those features difficult to learn? Are they difficult to integrate within the platform? Can you speak a little bit more about what like the faculty have to do to prep and get ready to engage with those features?

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Yeah. So there's, there's a whole lot to say in that area, Canvas documentation is much better than Blackboard documentation ever was. The documentation and the support inside Canvas is contextual, you know, sensitive. So if you're in the gradebook, then the documentation will speak specifically about oh, are you trying to do this with the gradebook? So that's very helpful. We also have premium support, which the Chancellor's Office paid for, that allows faculty to have to sign up for live webinars. Some of them start at six o'clock in the morning, because of course, they're training people on the East Coast to as well as on Demand training. And again, much of the support Canvas helps with that, we're actually

going to eventually have a chat feature available for live support. So generally, I will say the support for faculty to learn any aspects of Canvas, I think, are much easier and much more accessible than they were on Blackboard.

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That's great. One thing I was thinking about, I haven't jumped into the Canvas crew yet, but I am hoping to be in the first wave of that migration. I'm wondering a little bit about any features that might be available in Blackboard, let's say like, Pronto, would they still be available in Canvas?,

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Yes, as a matter of fact, over the summer, we chose about 15 or 20 integrations with Canvas that were top priority, and those have been completed. And there is a project plan that's available on the TLP Canvas web page that shows you Priority One, two, and three. What we're basically working on now is the remaining integrations that were with Blackboard, and most of them are publishers. So of course, if you have McGraw Hill, yeah, that's already there. But if you're using some of the other less known publishers, we're still doing those integrations and testing those out. So we expect that all of what you had available in Blackboard will be available in Canvas as far as third party integrations.

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All right. So, can you tell us where we are headed in the next couple of years with this migration plan?

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Yeah, so the next couple of weeks, we are actually going to be launching. So let me step back and say, We know that faculty are in the middle of fall teaching with the load that they have. And many people are excited to get into Canvas and can't wait to, you know, spend some time getting to know. So, what we're going to do is week by week, message both in the LMS pop-up windows as well as emails and on the TLP website, giving chunks to help faculty get on the on ramp. And so the first week will be here's how you log in. And there's a getting started that you can actually go through to just start getting the feel of Canvas. The next week, we'll share with you more about that live online training as well as where to find documentation and how to use some of the contextual help. Then the following week, we're going to actually have a 10,000 migrated courses from Blackboard to Canvas. So then faculty can can, and I will say softly navigate around that might get graded course. And if you use the LMS heavily, you may find that you just want to start over in Canvas, taking the pieces from that migrated course and actually build your course fresh. If you haven't used a lot of Blackboard, you may just find that the migration works just fine for you. Again, depending on how you use the LMS. And what tools that you use. The idea is to continue week by week through the fall, providing a bite sized information so that faculty about the middle of November can decide all right, am I ready to take one class to Canvas for the fall? I mean, sorry for the spring 2023? Or do I want to take, you know, two classes. So again, our work is to support faculty in really just sort of getting in getting familiar and then making some choices, let's say in the middle of November about what they want to do for spring.

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This is great. So essentially, this is kind of a heads up and a little bit of a call to action so that they're just to recap will be bite sized training and support starting, you know in the fall. So, in the next couple

of weeks and then the idea is that faculty can utilize that support, get started with those trainings, and if they choose to migrate a course over to Canvas, they can make that decision by November, and then the goal would be for them to have their course published by January per se. So in order to start this semester?

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Let me summarize that we are migrating 10,000 2022 courses to Canvas. Faculty will have access to their 2022 courses, and they can request courses previous to 2022. All of those will already be in Canvas. So, for the spring faculty will actually have their Blackboard course shell, in Blackboard, and for spring 2023 classes, as well as the migrated courses. So technically, faculty will be able to choose whether they want to develop in Canvas for spring or develop in fall for spring, all of the content will be there, of course, like moving a house, you will still have to rearrange in Canvas, but everything will be there. And then one of the big differences with Canvas is that faculty have to choose when to publish the course. So, we'll be reminding everybody in January to publish the course so that the students know where they can find the published course in Canvas.

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That brings up a great question about the students and their perspective and their use of Canvas. So, let's say we have a faculty member, let's use me, as an example, I would love to migrate course over in in spring to get started. And I'm hoping to migrate all of my courses over by fall. But in just preparing for that one course, what do I need to know to communicate to my students about if I choose to migrate over to Canvas or stick with Blackboard? Will that be confusing for them?

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So, there are a couple of things we're going to do. First of all, there will be pop-ups in both LMS is to say, if you don't find your course, here, you may want to look over there. We will tell students that Canvas is the primary learning management system. So look there first. And if faculty have published their course, you will see that in your dashboard. Then again, the popups will point to the opposite side. So in Canvas again, that's where we're going to tell faculty, I'm sorry, students to look first. And then if faculty are in Blackboard, they can actually send the message to their students or again, the pop up in Canvas will say check over here. And we will ask faculty to literally put up in both LMS says, "Hey, this course is in Blackboard, or this course is in Canvas." Again, both courts shells will be available to both faculty and to students. So, faculty can take charge to decide. This is where I need to put the message that we're going to be in the different LMS.

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Alright, so now I kind of want to transition to talk more about accessible learning materials. And I know that in Blackboard Learn, we're really pushing, you know, faculty to use Ally, to run their accessibility report and to work with TLP for remediation on their course materials. Given this change in the LMS system, would any of that or all of that change on the faculty end?

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Yeah, let me say that there's two aspects to accessibility in the learning management system. Canvas as far as its navigation and its interface, as well as for faculty editing in the rich context editor. It is all

much more accessible than Blackboard, mostly because it's much newer system than Blackboard. But as you know, faculty load contents, load documents, load files into the learning management system. And that's where we would like to ask faculty to take action, to go to the TLP website, and to request that we support them in remediating their content of their courses to be more accessible. In Canvas, Ally will also be available. So as faculty bring content over it will actually show you in the in the dials that we've gotten used to and Blackboard, Ally will show you what needs to be improved. And we're really hoping that since Canvas is a more accessible learning management system, that faculty will allow us to work on their documents to make those more accessible, and hence for Canvas provide to our students are more successful and accessible learning environment.

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And we're going to make sure to link the page to submit the ticket for course for mediation on our FDEV podcast web page will link this as a resource to this particular episode. And in addition, Kathy, when we were talking and planning for this episode, you mentioned a TLP Canvas webpage that is coming soon. Can you tell us a little bit about what information will be available on that page?

14:58

Yes. So the first thing is TLP has created a Canvas page. And we're in the middle of actually changing that. And when we begin to prepare next week, you're going to be able to have the here's how you get access. Here's the getting started. Here's a blog series on how we are going to assist faculty step by step to get into Canvas. And here's access to the Training and Documentation. We'll have more information about, hey, when you look at your migrated course, here's a checklist of the things that you want to look at to make sure it got migrated. And, of course, typical information, frequently asked questions, and other information. So the TLP website has a canvas in the menu has a Canvas link. And on that page next week, there's going to be a lot of changes and a lot of information available for faculty.

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Well, this is all really exciting. I'm excited about a new LMS that's a little bit more accessible and intuitive and easier to navigate for our students. And I look forward to learning more about what that looks like on my teaching end. But Kathy, I can't say thank you enough. On behalf of everyone on campus, it's been really great to watch all of the work that's gone into making our campus transition to virtual and back to face to face really successful. So, thank you for that work.

16:21

Thank you. Appreciate it, Jamie and on behalf of TLP thanks to everybody for your support of even TLP as we continue to work together for the success of our students.

16:38

And there you have it, folks. Today we explored what the campus migration to campus might look like. And I'd like to thank Kathy Fernandes for her contributions to this episode and her efforts to advancing the instructional technology access across campus. Please don't forget that you can access previous episodes of Rise, Teach, Learn as well as all of the resources associated with this and other episodes

through our FDEV podcast webpage. A big thank you to you for listening and until next time, we got this Wildcats.

We would like to thank the Mechoopda on whose traditional lands this recording is taking place. Without their support and continued positive presence in our community, we would be unable to afford the cultural and educational work that is at the heart of this recording.