

Learning Management System (LMS) Group Presentation Script

12 - 15 minutes in length

Introduction of the Presenter and Agenda

Hi, I'm Kayla Burns. My team and I have been searching for the best Learning Management System for Winthrop University. For the next few minutes, I will present our findings and recommendations, and propose a professional development strategy to bring everyone in the university up to speed with the new platform.

Our team is comprised of four members, Irielle Davis, Ashlie Seibles, Zion Smith, and myself. Each one of us brought a unique perspective to the search.

Overview

So what is a learning management system? The book *Learning Management Systems* by D. Barreto, A. Rottmann, & S. Rabidoux (rhymes with playdough) defines a learning management system, or LMS, as "a platform that assists the delivery of content online for learning purposes." There are hundreds of learning management systems out there. How did we know which was the best fit for Winthrop University? We started with **the student**. Students want an intuitive interface that works just as well on their phones as on a computer. They want their online course to be as easy to use as possible. The more shallow the learning curve the better. We narrowed our options down to three reputable learning management systems: Canvas, Brightspace D2L, and Blackboard.

Student usability is important, but meeting the needs of instructors and administrators is important too. It was at this point we did two things. A side-by-side comparison of the three platforms, and a needs analysis in the form of a survey sent out to students, instructors, and administrators.

Evaluation

We compared our LMS finalists across teaching and learning features, analytics, interface, file management, storage, and system maintenance. This allowed us to uncover the strengths and weaknesses of each LMS. Here is what we found.

Canvas is famously user-friendly and great on mobile devices and desktops alike. It encourages collaboration with its use of integrative tools, but it lacks some advanced features such as customization options, and mobile app functions.

Brightspace D2L distinguishes itself by offering personalized learning and data analytics. The learning management system makes learning more personalized for each student. It can change the learning path based on how a student is performing, giving them a custom experience. Teachers can use its powerful tools to monitor student performance and engage in real-time, which helps them adjust their teaching to fit each student's needs. However, it can be challenging for new users to navigate and the learning curve for the advanced features are quite steep.

Blackboard has a reputation for being a comprehensive Learning Management System (LMS) that excels in course management and assessments. But, like D2L, it can be a little difficult to navigate at first.

Plan the Needs Analysis

Our next step was to conduct a needs analysis to understand which features were most important.

We identified our stakeholders and collected their LMS needs and priorities through a Google Forms survey. Survey questions were crafted to gain insight into any challenges, improvements, or preferences with the current LMS. From there we analyzed by organizing data into categories with distinctive labels to help optimize the learning process and results. It was essential that we organize data based on the role of the user. For example, learner satisfaction with the LMS could provide real-world insight while an admin

response could help us understand the backend of the LMS. We tracked the results and used them to determine what features were most important.

Justification for Recommendation

It was a tight race, but we had a winner. **Blackboard.**

Blackboard provides a robust set of tools for instructors to organize and manage course content, customize learning environments, and streamline administrative tasks. The discussion boards and grading are as good as it gets. Blackboard offers a 24-hour Help Desk for students, instructors, and administrators. We could account for the weakness in the interface by offering training.

Limitations of Recommendation

Some limitations of our recommendation are ongoing administrative costs. No one can know the future, but at some point, Blackboard's competitors may pull ahead of it and become a better alternative through improved functionality. Winthrop may decide in the future that it wants more robust tools for personalized learning.

Professional Development Strategy

So what is our plan for getting students, instructors, and administrators to be confident users of Blackboard? First, we will introduce system administrators, instructors, and students to Blackboard by engaging users with key functions and features of Blackboard. We will then offer training to all users to ensure user-friendliness and awareness of navigating the LMS. Finally, we will track progress and encourage users to provide feedback and identify areas for improvement and features or functions they find helpful.

Key Knowledge

Training sessions will teach the use of:

- Tools and features to support diverse learning needs.
- Extensive support resources, including tutorials, documentation, and user forums.
- Intuitive navigation and customizable dashboards for ease of use.
- Diverse assessment options, including quizzes, tests, and surveys.
- Advanced grading features such as rubrics, inline grading, and automated feedback.
- Discussion boards, blogs, and journals for interactive learning.
- Real-time communication tools like virtual classrooms and messaging.

Key Skills

Training sessions will also focus on teaching key skills. Every stakeholder needs to learn to use Blackboard features for communication and collaboration, time management, and continuous learning.

Administrators need to learn system configuration, course management, data management, and support and troubleshooting.

Instructors need to know about course design and content creation, assessment and evaluation tools, and engagement and communication features.

Students need to learn navigation and organization, course participation, and basic technical skills.

Proposed training sequences

See slide

Conclusion

We confidently recommend Blackboard as the LMS of choice for higher education institutions due to its robust and comprehensive suite of features designed to enhance the learning experience. Blackboard

offers advanced tools for course management, assessment, and analytics, allowing instructors to create dynamic and engaging learning environments. It's integration capabilities and extensive support resources ensure that both instructors and students can maximize their potential.

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¹ https://edtechbooks.org/learning_management_systems/introduction