

# OWL Early Adopter Program (EAP) Final Report

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## Overview

This report contains information about the courses and participants involved in the OWL EAP as well as feedback about their experiences with OWL Brightspace. The report also includes a summary of how the feedback has been incorporated into OWL Brightspace resources and training for faculty, staff, and graduate teaching assistants across Western and the affiliates.

### EAP Courses and Participants

- 18 courses with ~4500 students were selected to participate based on instructor volunteers
- EAP instructors received 1-on-1 support from the Centre for Teaching and Learning and Western Technology Services to migrate an existing course from Sakai to Brightspace in Fall 2023, then teach it using Brightspace in Winter 2024

### EAP Student Feedback Survey

- Survey was distributed to students mid-February and received 375 responses
  - 68% of students were aware of the OWL Brightspace Help webpage
  - 66% of students were aware of the OWL Brightspace Learner Course
  - Students reported that Brightspace's navigation and organization was useful; however, students needed to adapt to how the content was structured
  - Some tools were reported to not be intuitive to use and this feedback has been incorporated into the training
  - Many students highlighted that announcements did not have email notification and the default has now been updated

### EAP Student Focus Groups

- Two focus groups, back-to-back with 11 students in total
- Students were asked a series of questions to better understand their experiences with Brightspace so that the team could make improvements; Paa worked with the students and actioned the feedback
  - Some students had previous experience with Brightspace in high school; however, the layout was different, but familiar
  - Students had minor technical issues, but no major glitches when using Brightspace online, more issues with Pulse App
  - User experience issues based on knowledge gaps; instructors are now encouraged to walk students through how they have set up their course
  - Students commented that it was challenging in Winter 2024 because they were in Sakai and Brightspace; going forward it should be easier

### EAP Instructor Feedback Surveys

- EAP instructors were surveyed in the fall and winter
- Informal feedback also collected from instructors via IDs; living document was created based on this feedback and actioned based on priority
- Instructors were surveyed about the training, resources, and building their sites in Brightspace
  - Common theme was the better interface and design for students
  - Some tools made it easier to manage the course (e.g., Intelligent Agents)

### EAP Instructor Focus Group

- One focus group with 6 instructors
- Instructors were asked about technical difficulties, navigation, creating content, tools and features, and future training
  - No major technical difficulties and fairly intuitive to use
  - Brought forward issues, especially those related to workload
  - Also discussed interface and desire for customization, especially homepage with widgets and perhaps navigation bar

### Resources and Training

- Resources and training have been designed based on the feedback that has been collected from students and faculty over the past 6 months
- Weekly workshops and drop-in sessions will continue to be offered to support instructors with OWL Brightspace
- Documentation continues to be updated both on the websites and in the Brightspace instructor training site
- WTS and IDs are offering one-on-ones based on ticket submission for those in need
- Faculty-specific training is being offered (e.g., Engineering and WELC)

### Summary and Future Action

Overall, the EAP was successful, and it accomplished several goals that have prepared Western and affiliates to migrate more effectively to OWL Brightspace. Members of the CTL and WTS have been extremely responsive to feedback that has been collected during this process and they continue to advocate for changes that will have a positive impact on the community. The following items are currently being implemented and investigated:

- New survey design for summer students and instructors to collect meaningful feedback on their experiences with Brightspace since changes have been implemented
- Content templates are being created (basic and advanced versions)
- Brightspace customization (e.g., Navigation bar) is being explored
- Self-migration bootcamp has been scheduled for July and August to prepare instructors to run their courses in Brightspace in the fall
- Members of the team will be attending D2L Fusion in July to learn more about the platform and how other institutions are using it