

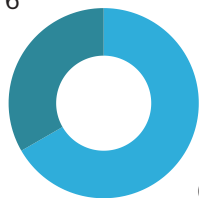
Focus Group and Survey Data Overview

Our team aimed to better understand the user experience, so we held a brief focus group and followed up with a survey to gather feedback from students. Here are some key insights we gathered from the data collected.

We Heard From Experienced Online Learners

Q: How many online courses have you taken in Canvas?

More than 6
33.3%



4 - 6
66.7%



We Learned

83% of students **prefer shorter, segmented pages** over one long page that requires scrolling.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Visuals Are Valued

83% of students agree they are **more engaged in courses that are visually appealing.**

66%

Mixed Reviews

66% of students navigate courses organically. 33% navigate them linearly.

66% agree that **wrap-up pages help them** visualize what they have learned and prepare for the next module.



100%

Whats Important To Them

100% agree that **overview pages** help them effectively plan for upcoming tasks.

100% agree that **consistency in design** and course structure is important in their learning experiences.

Quotes

“I know this might not be possible because each instructor is different, but having every class designed the exact same way would seemingly streamline the learning process.”

“I'm just really happy, like, 'Oh my God, this is my teacher!' For me, it's all about seeing my teacher. I feel like that's my way of connecting with them.”

(In reference to teacher bios with a photo)

Focus Group Quotes

Categorized



We organized emerging themes from the focus group into various categories, then pulled out the main takeaways. [Transcript Link](#)

Dislikes / Suggestions

This might not answer your question specifically, but just showing that the module page, made me remember that every class, I've figured out how to navigate what I need to do, but I think that some professors have there's like a format of how the page should be set up.

But maybe different professors have things set their own way. Like one class I'm in now emerging technologies doesn't have a module page.

I mean, I wouldn't mind if I was told what the discussion was before I did all of the readings. Like I do think I'm always like clicking through the module to see what the discussion is and then going back because you want to be aware of what your assignment is while you're taking notes, especially because you're asked to site. And so if you're going to want to site, you're going to want to keep track of where you read that.

One idea that my image in my head was there to be readings, but then also like this master class type thing where maybe not something you're participating in live because we're all over the world and stuff.

But like, these presentations today, for example, we're very engaging. I would love to watch like a ted talk or a master class style thing like a professor talking about something they're an expert in for like 30 minutes or 20 minutes or whatever length.

I'm just speaking of off of accessibility. So I'm hard of hearing, so sometimes VoiceStar can be a little bit difficult for me. I rely a lot on reading lips sometimes, and Panopto does have captions, which are just super helpful and less weird when I have to try to explain to a professor, oh, by the way, I can't really hear. Can you make sure everything's accessible to me? So sometimes a VoiceThread with just a little bit more difficult for me to navigate so they just couldn't.

But in every course on Canvas, there is, or at least the last couple of courses I've taken, there's a place for question, but those questions never get answered. I haven't had a professor answer yet

Main Takeaways

- A hard-of-hearing student had issues with VoiceThread as the captions were not accurate.
- Students need to click through the module to view the discussion question while reading, which disrupts their workflow.
- A student suggested adding TED Talk-style videos from professors.
- Another mentioned inconsistency across courses, where some include overview pages, and others do not.

Likes

I personally would like a video, but obviously, like I said in the past, I hadn't really seen it. So I'm just really happy like, oh my God, this is my teacher. For me, it's just all about seeing my teacher. I feel like that's my way of connecting with them. And I know, with Professor Flink, I think we talked about [OVERLAPPING] oh, you worked for Scripps News that was so cool.

Yeah. I really as far as putting before columns there. It just seems so much more organized. I know a lot of the modules are really organized as is

Personally, I like how in the beginning of the week on the new stuff, you can see a or a preview of everything that's going to go through. Some of the professors have links all right there. So instead of clicking through the module when you're doing your assignment to go back, you can just go find them and view.

Every like class makes sense, but the ones that you've put it in so far, it's nice. (In regards to interactions)

That's just the one I can think of right now with the gold banner, but it was very nice to kind of have seeing the preview of what we're going to go into and then go like the module page by module. And then it helped me organize during the assignment of where do I need to go back to reference and the new design that is.

I think your course was very interactive. I personally would like to see more of that because I'm more of a visual learner

I like how it's colorful too, but also having all of your reading links up front, it just helps me because I'm like, I know I have to do all of this and then I can get into the module and go through the rest of the lesson because sometimes the readings do take a long time to get through. So just preparing myself mentally for how much time I need to focus on the readings and then the lessons.

Okay. I was going to add, I don't know if it's something I just noticed this semester or not, but I noticed now the teachers have bios and stuff too, where their picture and stuff is there.

I thought that was really cool, to log into my course, and that was the first thing that I saw, and I could read up upon them like, they did this. Actually, I think Professor Flink was the first professor that I saw. I was like this is nice. They got this award, this is cute.

Main Takeaways

- Students love seeing and learning about their professors. It helps build a connection and makes them feel comfortable reaching out.
- Teacher bios, including photos and professional achievements, were well-received.
- Students appreciated preview sections and overview pages that allow them to plan and allocate their time effectively.
- The new, more organized design received positive feedback.

General Design Responses

And that's something that could be evergreen (in reference to "ted talk" style videos of the professors), you can kind of have some things like AI are changing every year and the updated, but other things can.

For example, a professor, like Berkeley had front they have frontline, like investigative journalists are very key component, but this different professors that are in each of the expertise, this can be a masterclass.

That's just how I've done it, but that's just because of my scheduling, that's what's worked best for me. I think it depends on the class because most classes, yes, I do the reading and then I go on.

But there have been one or two where I went ahead and looked at what the discussion post was going to be about because that might influence either the order I do the readings or the notes that I take down so that I can do my best on the discussion post.

So you're like at, whoever. That's Canvas messing with that bill. Some professors, I'll bring it up and they'll say actually, I don't have a way to change that, it's just the way it's set up for this class. That's the way it's set up for this learning management system like.

That's one of that is one of the not so great improvements that came in that build over the summer. I'm just going to ask inmates be me, but I know like on my canvas, I still see all my courses, I get confused. Is there a way to delete or?

Maybe that's another thing to it. Discussion groups are they're usually very easy to go in and you have threads like some comment you reply. It gets confusing where it doesn't you don't reply to the individual comment, you're just replying to the thread, and then whoever just post most recently is on top.

This isn't really an interface question as much as what's within the modules. But one thing, I feel like the expectations of what each class is going to have, we're going to have these articles and videos, is something that we've all picked up on.

Main Takeaways

- Students are noticing patterns in course design (e.g., consistent use of videos and articles).
- There is interest in professors having high quality educational videos.
- Some noted confusion with Canvas features, such as replying in discussion threads.

Videos

So having to sit and I have ADHD too so having to sit and just read and read and read. I get that's a part of graduate school, but it's also like, when can I meet my classmates? When can I see my teacher? When can I watch a video? I think your course incorporated that very well

I think the videos are nice because it gives you that human interaction. And then you feel like, Oh, I can reach out. Oh, I could set up a Zoom with them to talk about something else, so we can go further in depth or when you don't see somebody and you're online, it's just like Ashley said you forget about it.e.

In the courses where I've gotten to see the professor on video, that's to me, it's a much better experience.

Main Takeaway

- Video features in courses are highly valued, and students want more of them.
- High-quality educational videos from professors are a strong preference.
- Videos help students feel connected, focus better, and engage more with the material.

Student Survey Responses

This survey was sent out to the 12 students in the focus group. We had 50% of them participate in this survey. Here is a breakdown of the takeaways from their responses.

Questions	Answers	Takeaways
1. How many online courses have you taken in Canvas?	More than 6 33.3% 4-6 66.7% 0-1 2-4 4-6 More than 6	* The students surveyed are experienced online learners. 100% of them have taken 4 or more online courses in Canvas.
2. I am more engaged in courses that are visually appealing.	Strongly Agree 33.3% Agree 50% Neutral 16.7% Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree	* 83% of students agree that they are more engaged in visually appealing courses.
3. I prefer content to be organized in shorter, segmented pages rather than through one long, scrolling page.	Strongly Agree 33.3% Agree 50% Neutral 16.7% Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree	* 83% of students prefer shorter, segmented pages over long, scrolling ones.
4. Interactive exercises (flash cards, drag-and-drop, accordions, click to reveal) increase my engagement.	Strongly Agree 33.3% Agree 66.7% Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree	* 100% agree that interactive exercises increase engagement.

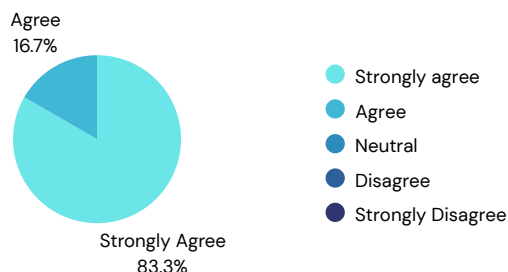
Questions

Answers

Takeaways

5.

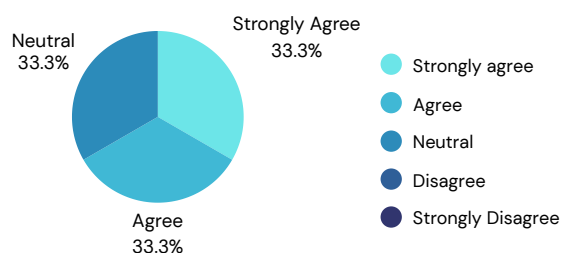
The overview pages at the beginning of each module help me effectively plan for upcoming tasks.



* 100% agree that overview pages help them plan for tasks effectively.

6.

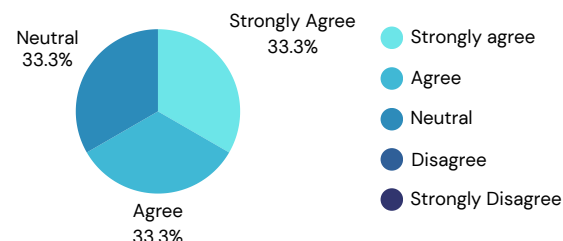
The summary wrap-up page at the end of each module in Canvas helps me visualize what I've learned in the module and prepare me for the next module.



* 66% agree that wrap-up pages help them reflect on learning and prepare for the next module.

7.

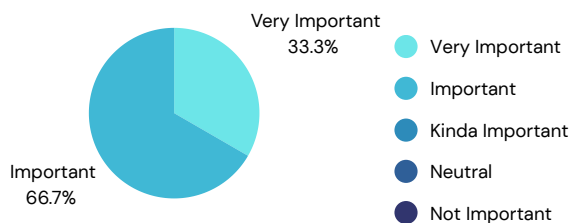
Course pages have helped me easily find important information such as deadlines, modules, resources, and instructions.



* 66% agree that course pages help them locate critical information easily.

8.

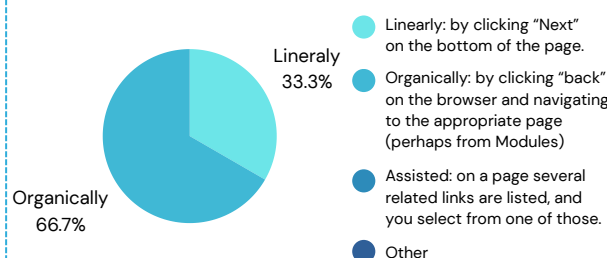
How important is consistency in course structure and design for your learning experience? (Having the same layout or organization for modules and overview pages. Assignment design, navigation and theme consistency)



* 100% agree that consistency in design and course structure is important for their learning experience.

9.

How do you prefer to navigate through your Canvas course?



* 66% of students prefer to navigate courses organically, while 33% prefer a linear approach.

10. What information or features on the overview page do you find most useful when starting a module or assignment?	Task List66.7% Overview33.3% The overview of the module or assignment The weekly goals of the module or assignment A task list for things to complete within that module or assignment Other	* The task list and overview summery are the most valued pieces of information on the overview pages
11. How does the new course design for the Journalism Online Master's Program compare to other previous online classes? (At UM in general or in the JOURN program)	Not sure16.7% Much better33.3% No comparison16.7% Somewhat better16.7% Much Better Somewhat better About the same Worse I have not taken other online courses so I dont have a comparison point Not Sure. This is my first time being an online stutend	* This one is pretty split but 50% stated that the updated Journ course design is much or somewhat better then previously.
12. Optional: Please share any additional positive or negative feedback you'd like to offer about your experience with this courses design.	One Comment Submitted: " I know this might be impossible, because each instructor is different, but having every class designed the exact same would seemingly streamline the learning process."	* Their is a desire for consistency in course design is this program.