Canvas Implementation Project
Lessons Learned

What was good about the project?
1. Information about transition from Blackboard to Canvas
   a. Not a lot of requests for Blackboard files
2. “Post Card” highlighting the project and the training available
3. Weekly meetings were good
   a. Good Project Manager (PM) & Vendor Rep.
4. Ongoing document of what was happening with the project
   a. Helped keep track of issues
5. Training offerings
6. Having onsite meeting with vendor staff (technical and non-technical)
8. Great initial adoption by campus.
   a. Smooth transition into the full implementation semester. The HelpDesk requests were addressed quickly and thoughtfully, campus felt supported (overall). Some of the upfront efforts and new hires helped minimize the bumps in the full transition semester.
9. RFI, Campus demonstrations and review, committee review and RFP processes went well and laid a foundation for a good selection.
10. InterNet2 consortium contracting worked well to save some money and processing.

What was not so good about the project?
1. Requirements were not consistent
   a. A formal requirements document would have helped
   b. Broader participation by stakeholders may have avoided later issues
2. Transparency of project (tied to Communications)
   a. Registrar did not know details about grade pass-back effort
   b. All stakeholders (particularly Registrar’s office) were not included throughout the entire project.
   c. Tier 1 support was a later issue that was not widely known.
      i. Should have been change request
3. Involvement of key stakeholders
   a. More involvement up front would help with buy-in and appropriate timeline
4. Part time PM could not focus on project. Full time would have been better
5. Identify resources with appropriate skills or provided training for skills needed
   a. Some new skills had to be learned as things went along
6. Communications
   a. Start communication sooner
      i. By the time the “Post Card” went out some training had already happened
   b. Conversations around issues (Grade Passback, TIER1) seemed to be a struggle at times.
   c. Communication to all campus (stakeholders) was not done on a regular basis.
   d. Consistent communication to all project members could be improved (to keep all on the same page)
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e. There were gaps in the coordination of the efforts that ebbed and flowed, however the reports to the Sponsors did not indicate when there were gaps in coordination or internal issues arising.

7. There was not full buy-in initially across the implementation team. Need to ensure all team members understand their role and are committed to it.

8. Should have had more thoughtful planning on our part before bringing the Instructure team onto campus. At the time, we felt like we were prepared for the meeting and thought the right people were being asked to be in the room and to be an active participant in the process.
   a. We hit questions and critical points that we made quick decisions about that we later had to work around.
   b. There were also times when the right people were not at those meetings, and other who were there but did not engage in the work (perception that someone else was responsible for tasks). Need to make team members responsibilities clear from the start.

Suggestions for future projects

1. Have project repository for easy access to all project documents
2. Understand technical needs/aspects/capability before signing contract (timelines also)
3. Consider/discuss any “policy” issues that impact projects up front
   a. i.e. Use of pictures
4. Have Vendor technical staff in project status meeting
   a. Helps resolve issues quicker
5. Identify test resources up front (have on notice) instead of waiting until needed
6. Build partnerships among stakeholders on project
7. Check availability of resources when planning project
8. Ensure all stakeholders are identified and, those needed, are present for all project meetings for the duration of project.
9. Share documented outcomes / action items from project meetings to keep all stakeholders on same page.
10. Project manager should be someone with project management expertise, preferable as a core responsibility.
11. Have a process to ensure the work of one does not impact the project. Perhaps sign-offs by key stakeholders, periodic project reports that reflect feedback from key team members, and clearer benchmarks defined to monitor.
12. Communicate to the implementation team members that they are part of the project team that is responsible for the overall success of the project, not just their parts (consider the whole project and how to best contribute to the effort)
13. Ensure there are clear identification of roles / responsibilities for project team members
14. Increased communication to three groups: 1) all stakeholders (campus), 2) project team members, and 3) project sponsors.