

Autumn 2015 Canvas Pilot Survey Results

The Ohio State University
Office of Distance Education and eLearning

Introduction

Following the recommendation of the LMS Evaluation Committee, the Office of Distance Education and eLearning (ODEE) initiated a pilot of the Canvas LMS software during the 2015 autumn semester at The Ohio State University. Fifteen courses were identified and selected for participation in the pilot. Courses represented a range of colleges, disciplines and course levels:

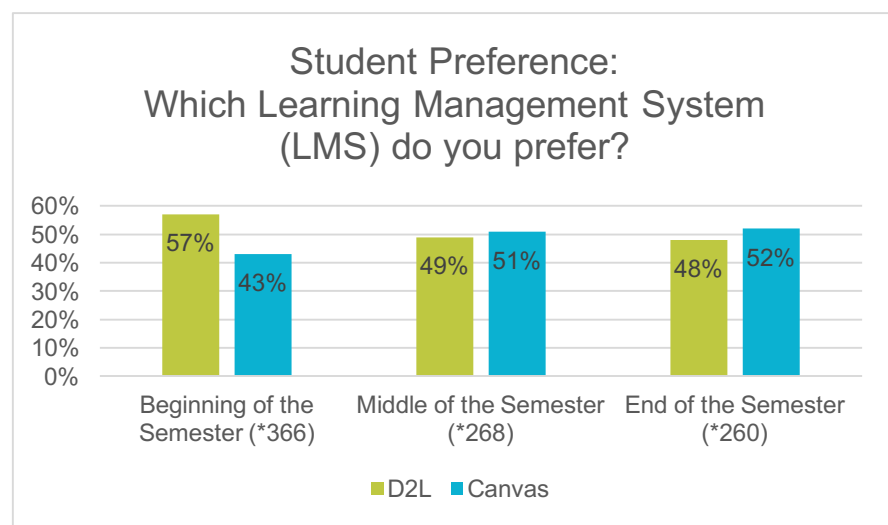
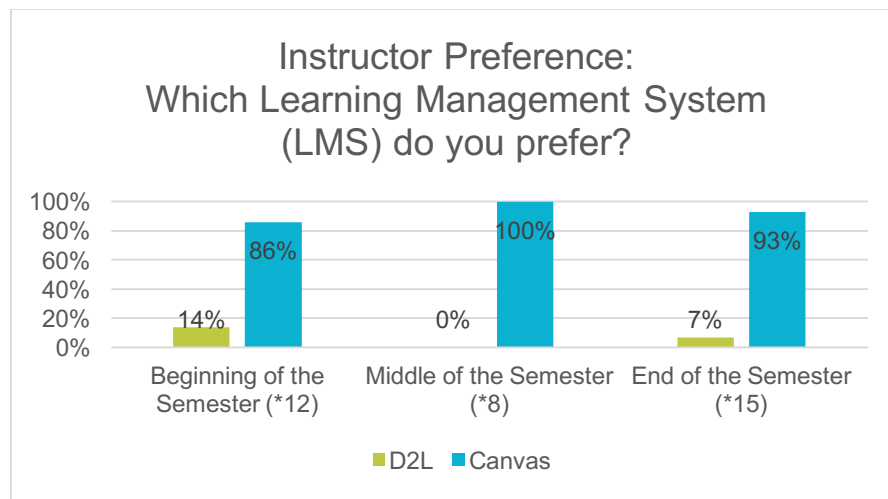
ANIMSCI 2300H	Honors Introductory Animal Sciences
ARTSSCI 2120	Information Search, Evaluation and Use
BIOMSCI 4200H	Concepts in Healthcare 1
COMM 3404	Media Law & Ethics
ENGLISH 2269	Digital Media Composing
ENGR 1281.01H	Fundamentals of Engineering for Honors I
HTHRHSC 2530	The Evolving Art and Science of Medicine
MATH 1130	College Algebra for Business
MEDCOLL 2000.21	Introduction to Medicine
MOLGEN 4500 & 4500E	General Genetics (with Embedded Honors)
NRSADV 4240	Concepts in Community Health Nursing
OPTOM 6560	Ophthalmic Optics
PSYCH 1100	Introduction to Psychology
RELSTDS 2370	Introduction to Comparative Religion
SOCWORK 8403	Methods for Translational/ Intervention Research

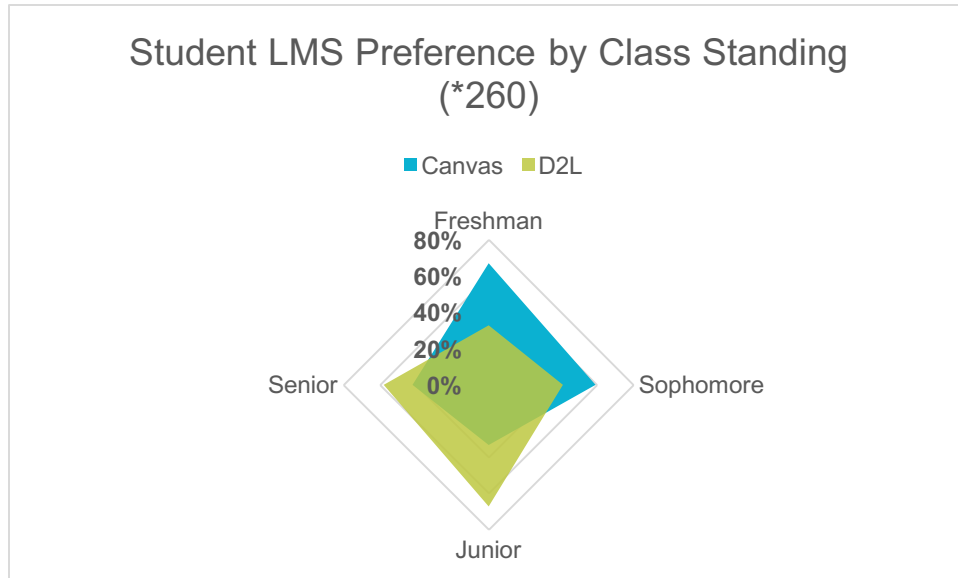
As part of the autumn pilot, ODEE staff surveyed faculty, instructional staff, and students involved in pilot courses. Two separate surveys were created. One survey focused on the perspectives of faculty and instructional staff, and another survey was designed for students. Each group received a survey at the beginning of the semester, at the midpoint of the semester, and at the conclusion of the semester.¹

¹ Faculty and students enrolled in courses spanning only the second session of autumn semester received only two surveys. One survey at the beginning of the session and one survey at the conclusion of the session.

Key Findings

- Faculty respondents preferred using the Canvas LMS over D2L (see graph, below).
- Student respondents initially preferred D2L; however, over the course of the semester student responses indicated a slight preference for Canvas (see graph, below).
- Faculty and instructional staff enjoyed using Canvas' SpeedGrader.
- Students enjoyed the ability to use Canvas' mobile app. 50% of student respondents indicated they used a mobile device to access Canvas.
- While students initially preferred D2L, student opinion of Canvas changed over the course of the semester. In the final survey, 49% of students indicated their opinion of Canvas had changed. Of these, 89% stated that their opinion of Canvas was now better or much better than it had been at the start of the semester.





Faculty and Student Tool Preferences

Faculty, instructional staff and students were also surveyed during the autumn 2015 pilot concerning specific tool functionality and preference. In the final survey, faculty and instructional staff overwhelmingly preferred Canvas for most LMS activities. Faculty specifically preferred Canvas for the following activities:

- using student view
- integrating an external learning tool
- importing or exporting course content
- conducting synchronous online discussions or lectures
- creating and managing groups
- sending and receiving notifications
- monitoring student activity
- managing the course gradebook
- tracking student mastery of learning outcomes
- creating and using rubrics
- facilitated discussions
- giving audio or video feedback
- annotating assignments
- assigning peer reviews
- giving formative feedback on drafts
- publishing course learning outcomes
- posting assignments
- organizing course content and activities
- creating content pages
- posting audio/video lectures
- uploading course materials
- creating a course calendar
- publishing the course syllabus

Faculty and instructional staff responding to the final survey, however, were evenly divided over using Canvas or D2L for creating online quizzes and tests. Students did not express an

overwhelming preference for a single LMS in the final survey. Students slightly preferred using Canvas for the following tools:

- syllabus
- quizzes
- people
- notifications
- modules
- groups
- grades
- discussions
- conversations

In the final survey, students indicated a preference for using D2L to access files and pages.

In addition to general preference, both user groups were asked questions about whether they had tried to accomplish specific tasks in Canvas, how easy or difficult it was to do so, and the usefulness of the tool provided by Canvas to accomplish the task. Graphical representations of faculty, instructional staff and student responses from the autumn pilot are provided in Appendix A.

Canvas LMS Usage

During the autumn 2015 pilot of the Canvas learning management system, instructors and students in 15 courses uploaded a total of 3,537 documents to the platform. By the conclusion of the semester, 50 individuals were affiliated with courses as instructors, while 945 individuals were enrolled in courses as students. A total of 478 assignments were created and 211 discussion topics were established. Activity within the platform spiked at various times throughout the semester. These spikes were often associated with students accessing quizzes or submitting assignments. Consult *Figure 1* for more information regarding usage patterns throughout the semester. In addition, data available at the conclusion of the semester indicated students and instructors heavily utilized the assignments, modules, pages, files, quizzes and grades tools. Canvas' discussion, announcements, and groups tools were not as utilized. For more information on the number of page views for each tool, reference *Figure 2* below.



Figure 1: Activity Data Visualization from Canvas Interface

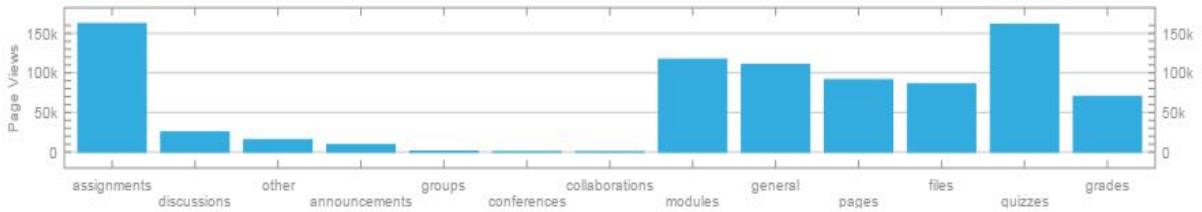


Figure 2: Activity Data Visualization from Canvas Interface

Discursive Feedback from Faculty, Instructional Staff and Students

As a component of each survey, faculty, instructional staff and students were asked what they liked most about using Canvas, what they liked least about using Canvas, and why they preferred the LMS they selected. Faculty and instructional staff often cited the “slick interface” and “modern” design when asked what they liked most about using Canvas. In addition, faculty and instructional staff enjoyed using SpeedGrader to improve the efficiency and ease of grading assignments. Faculty and instructional staff were most concerned about the limited quizzing functionality, the simplistic release conditions in Canvas, and problems with students receiving e-mails. Students indicated that the ability to use Canvas on a smartphone or tablet was a significant advantage. In addition, students enjoyed being able to calculate grades and use the calendar to track assignments and due dates. Student responses indicated unhappiness with the modules tool of the Canvas interface, the inconvenience of having classes in two separate learning management systems, and undelivered notifications. Selected discursive feedback from faculty, instructional staff and students is provided in Appendix B.

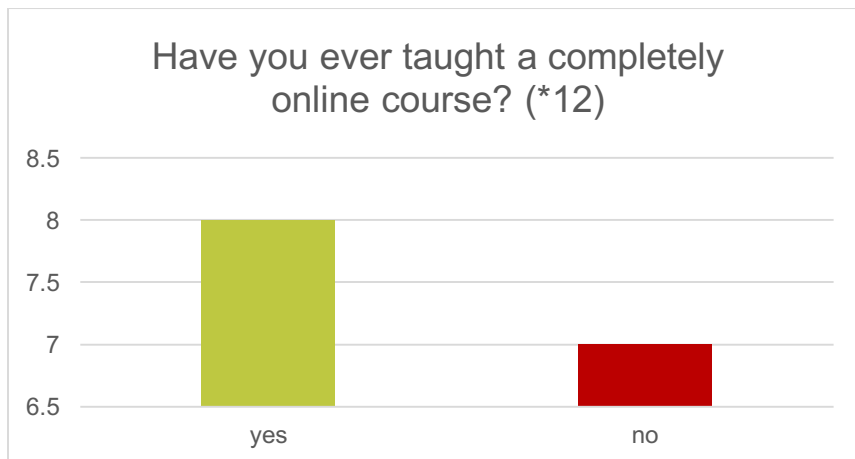
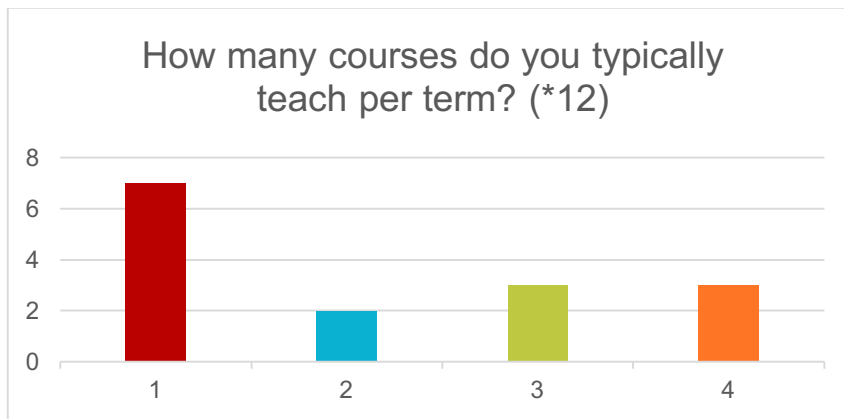
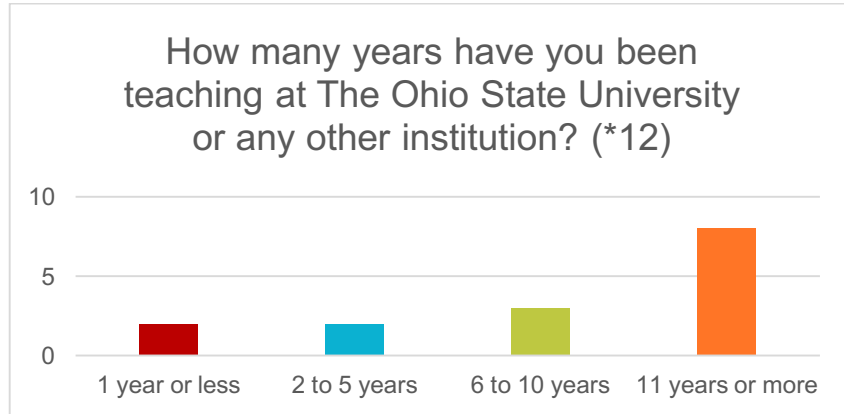
Reported Problems by Faculty, Instructional Staff and Students

In the beginning of the semester survey, six faculty members reported encountering problems while setting up Canvas. In the final survey of the semester, four faculty members reported problems while using Canvas. Commonly cited problems included emailing or sending messages to students, using the groups function, setting up external integrations, and using the quiz tool. While the quizzing function issues were largely attributable to Canvas’ simplistic quizzing tool, issues stemming from e-mail and messaging, group tool functionality and external integrations were largely solved by ODEE staff. In addition to problems described by faculty, 14% of students reported encountering a problem while using Canvas in the beginning of the semester survey. In the final survey, 12% of students reported a problem while using Canvas. Similar to faculty, students reported issues with e-mail/notifications, external integrations, and quizzes not performing properly. ODEE staff were able to address many of the issues associated with e-mail and external integrations. However, student reported problems connected with notifications and quizzes typically centered on functionality that was lacking in Canvas. For selected faculty and student comments regarding problems using the Canvas platform, please consult Appendix C.

Appendix A – Survey Results

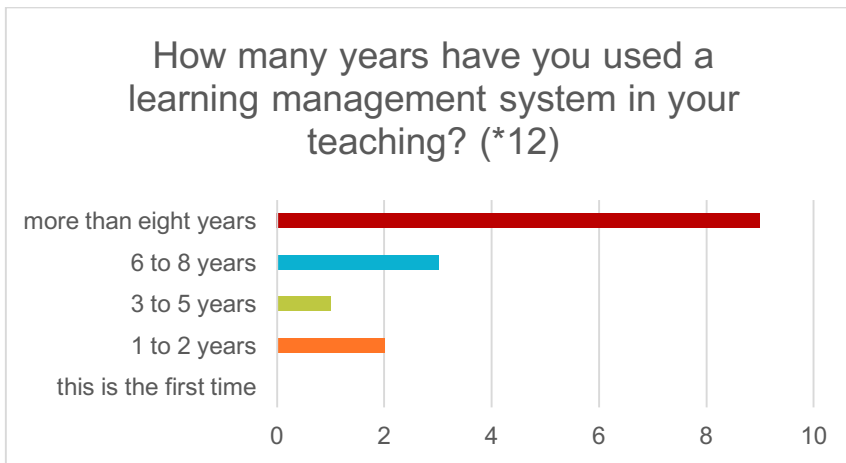
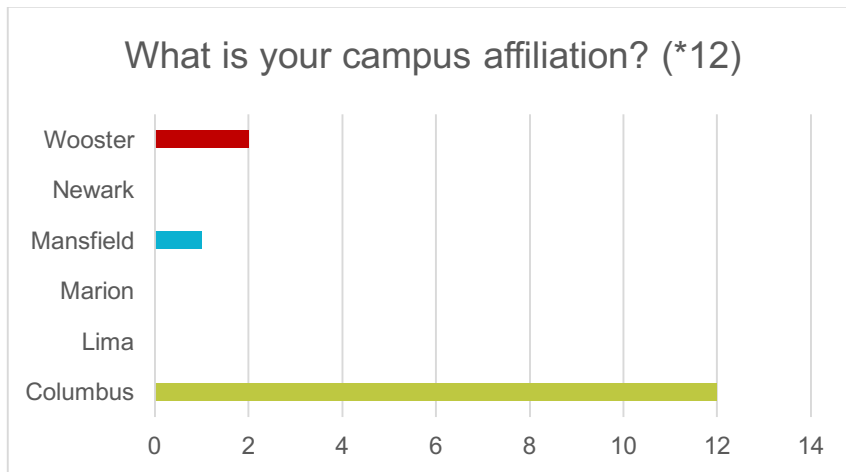
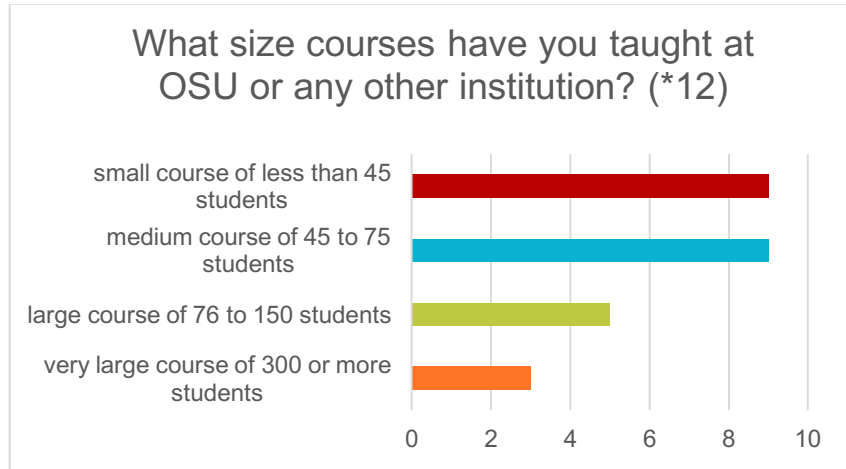
Survey Results from Faculty, Staff and Students

Instructor Results, Beginning of Term



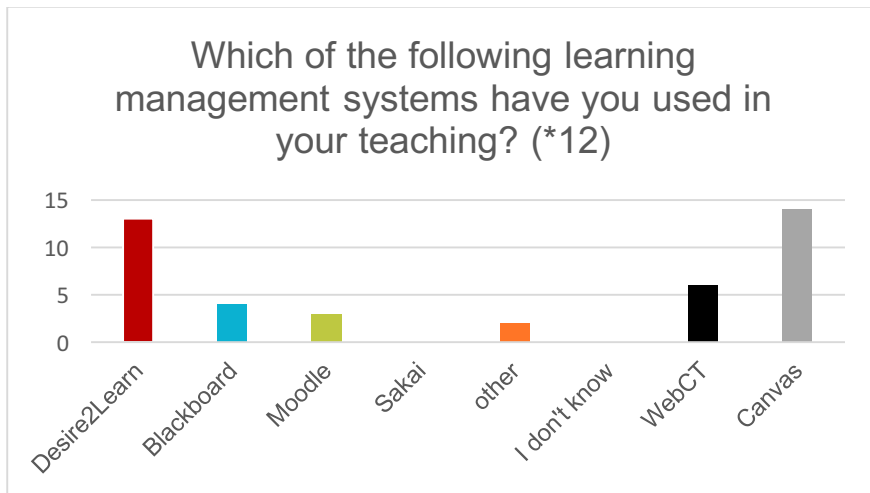
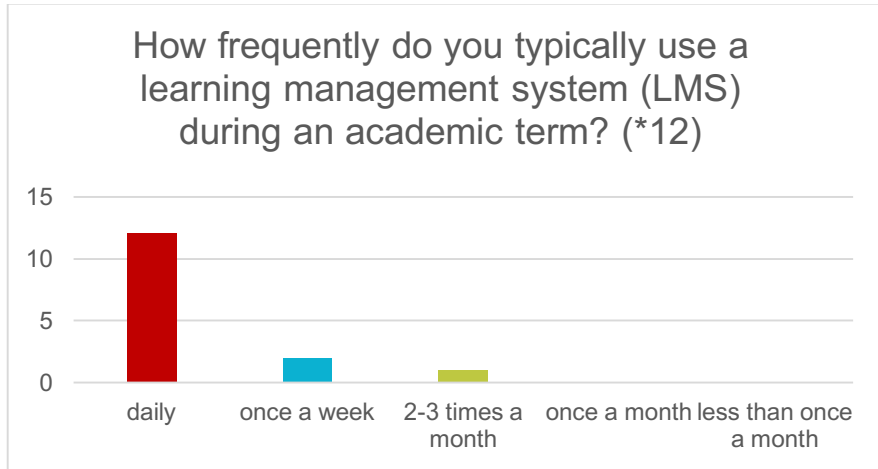
Appendix A – Survey Results

Instructor Results, Beginning of Term (continued)



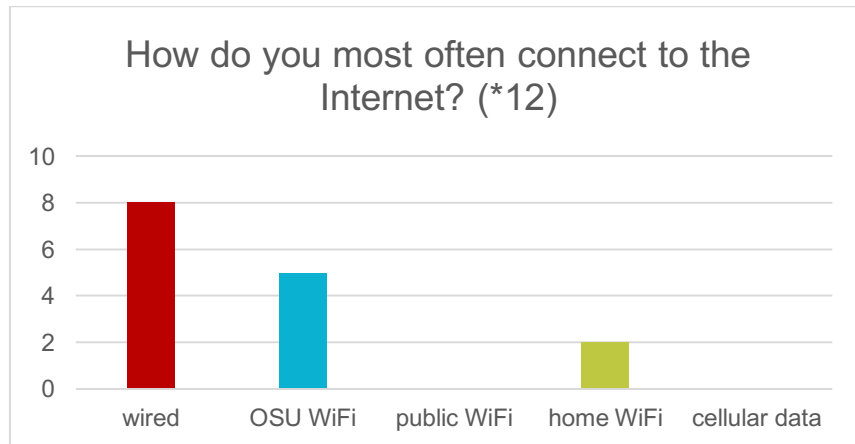
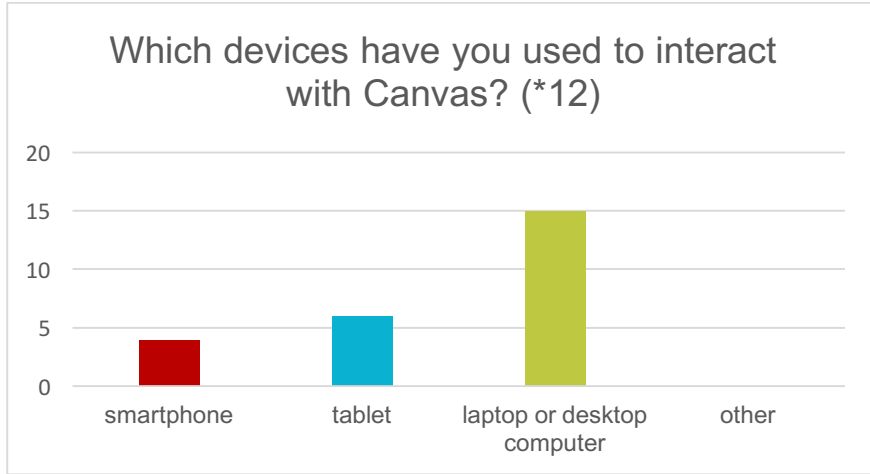
Appendix A – Survey Results

Instructor Results, Beginning of Term (continued)



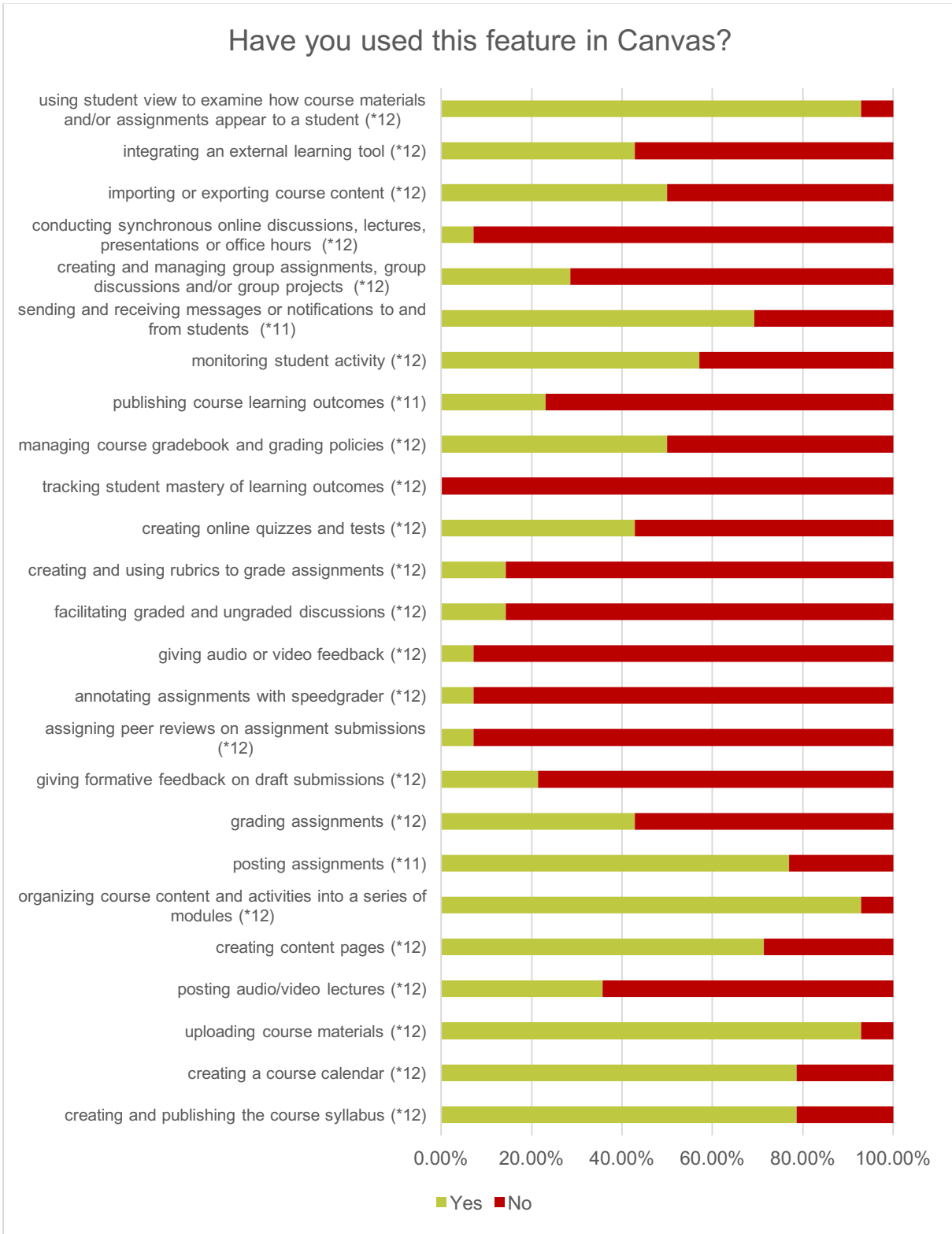
Appendix A – Survey Results

Instructor Results, Beginning of Term (continued)



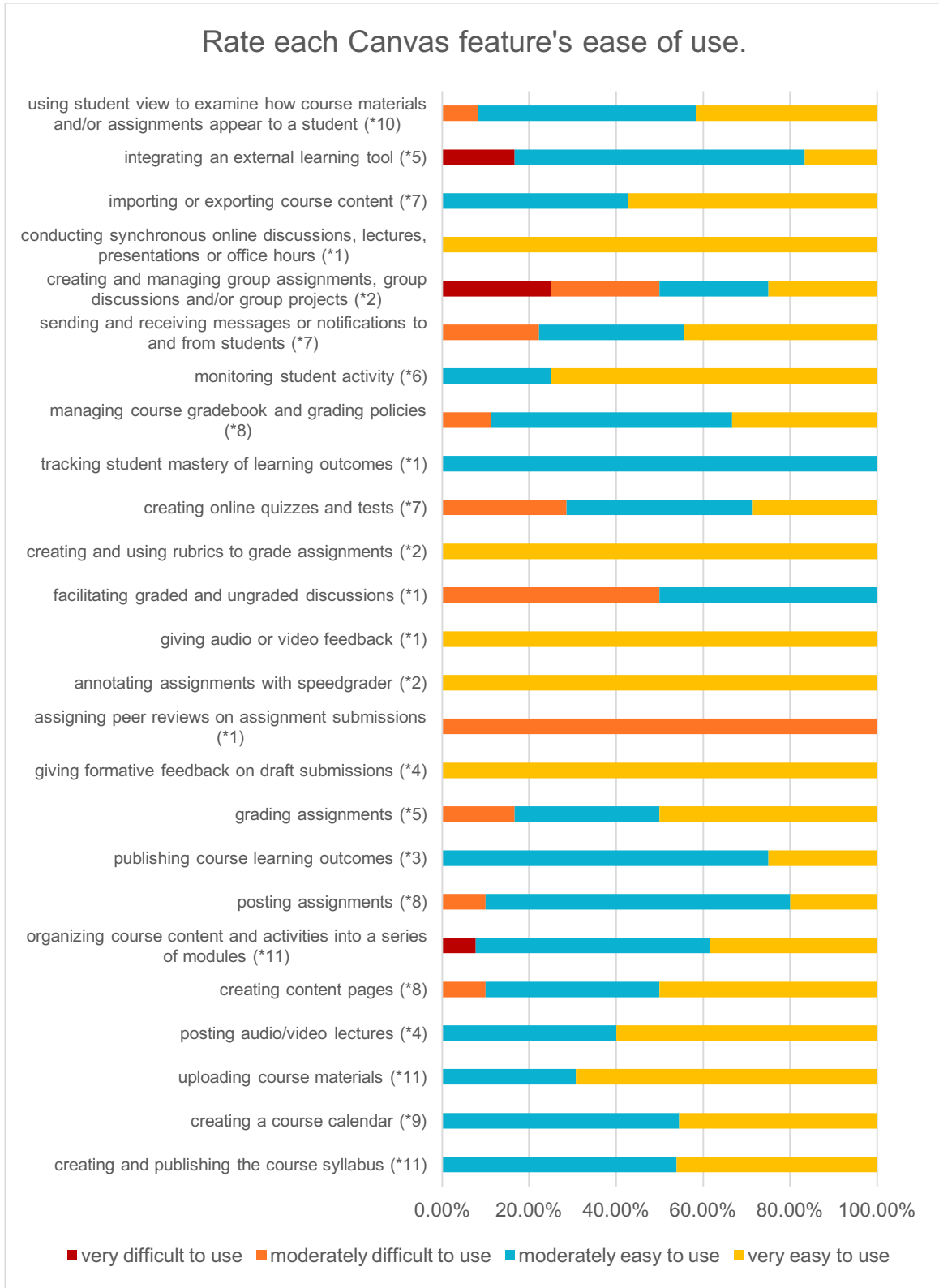
Appendix A – Survey Results

Instructor Results, Beginning of Term (continued)



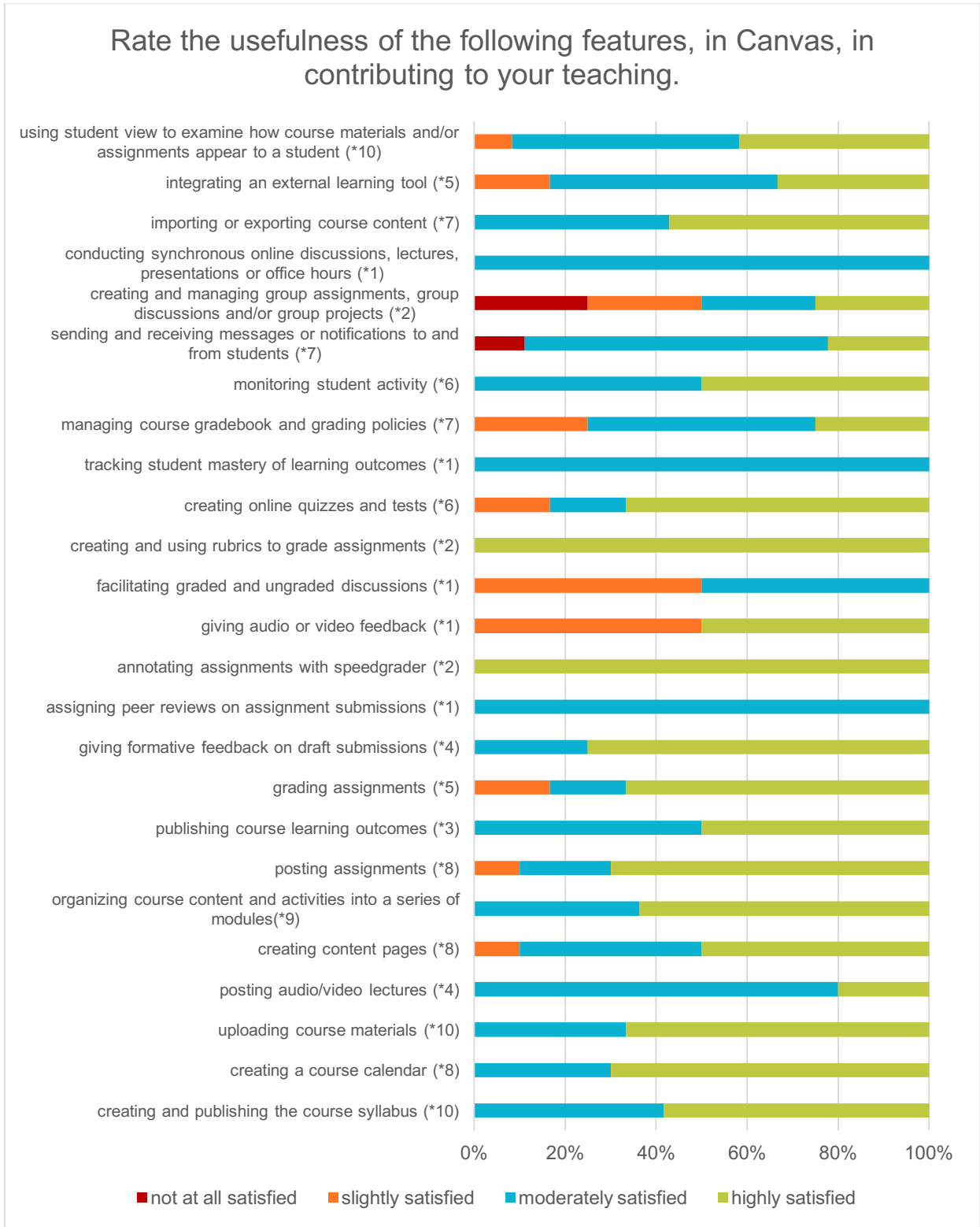
Appendix A – Survey Results

Instructor Results, Beginning of Term (continued)



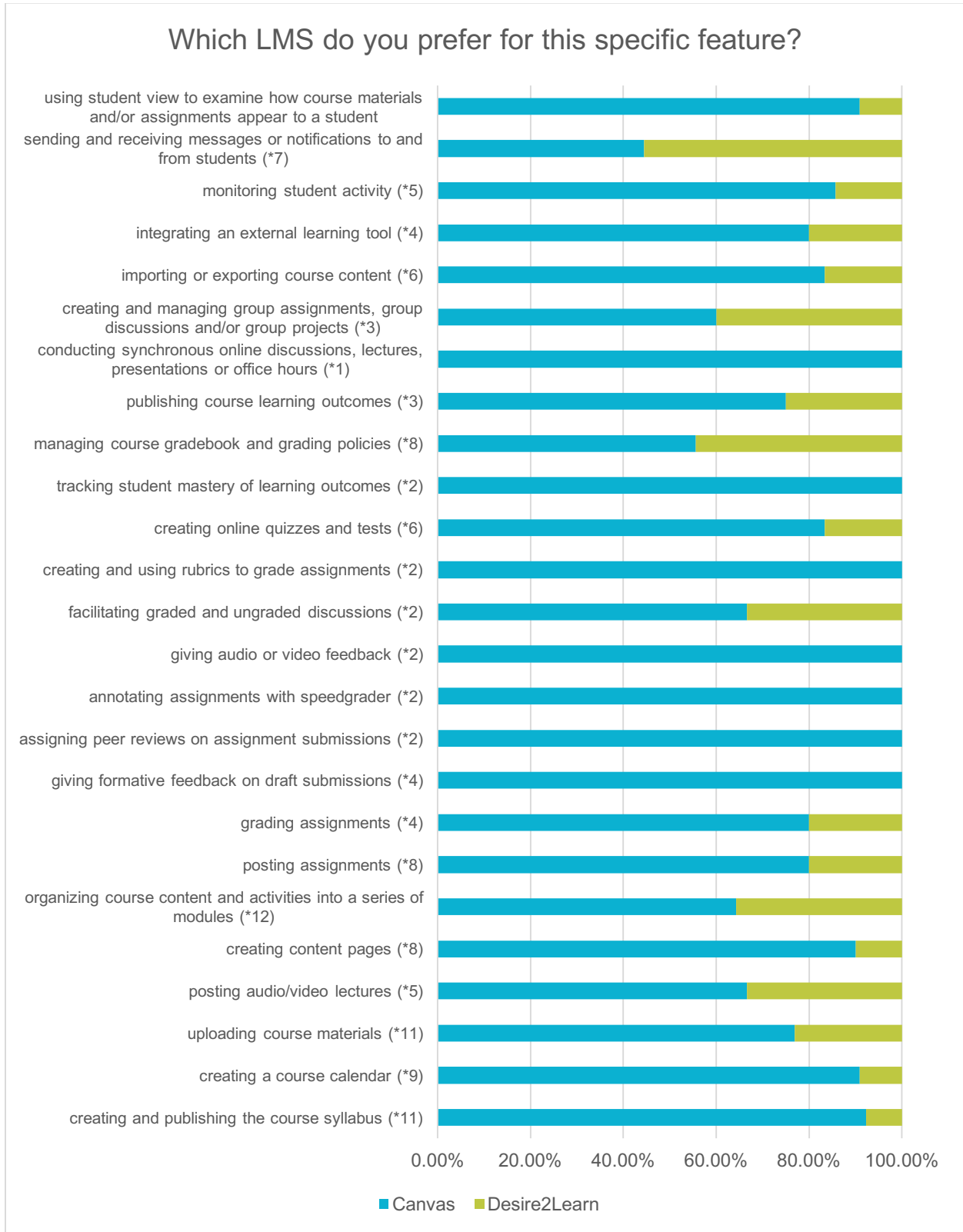
Appendix A – Survey Results

Instructor Results, Beginning of Term (continued)



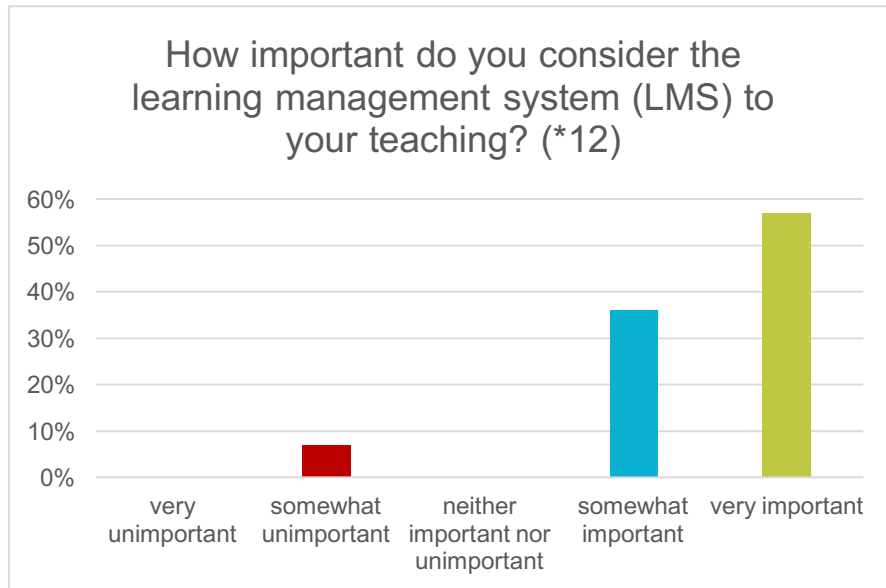
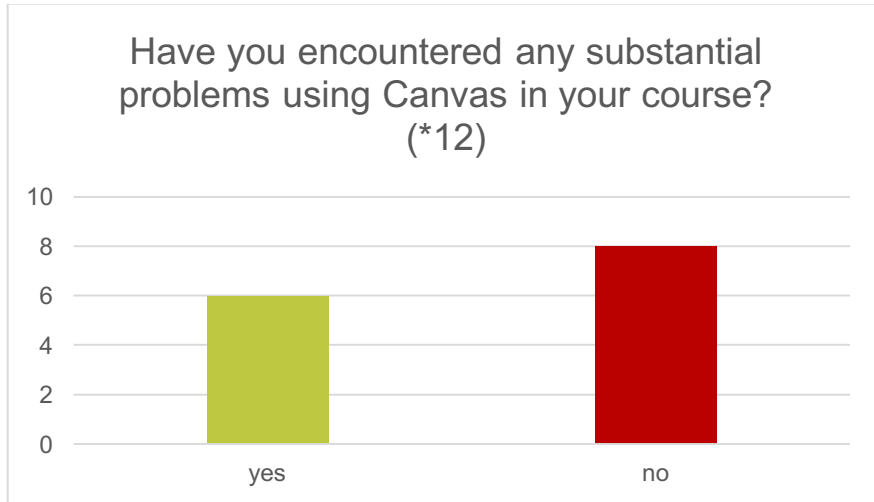
Appendix A – Survey Results

Instructor Results, Beginning of Term (continued)



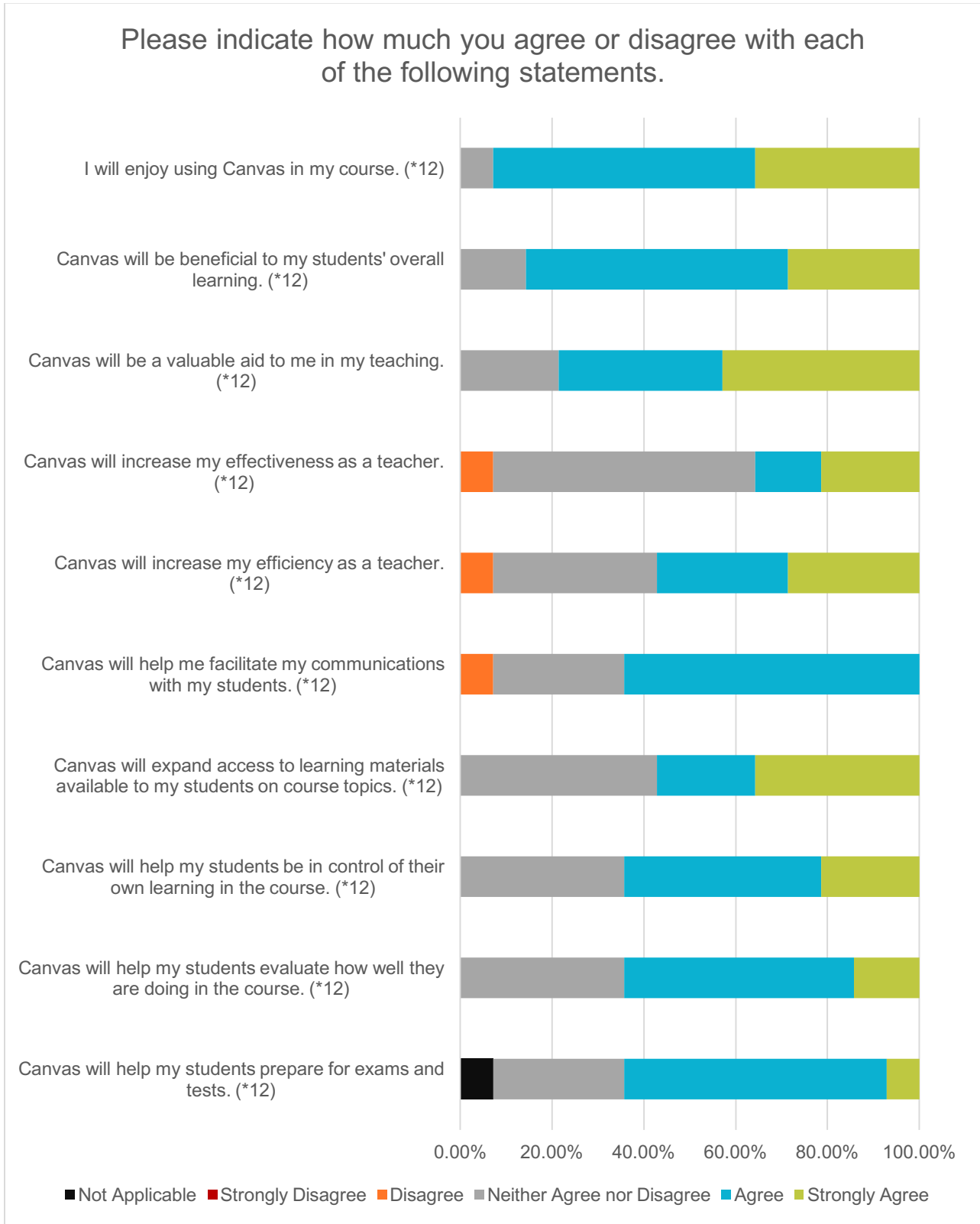
Appendix A – Survey Results

Instructor Results, Beginning of Term (continued)



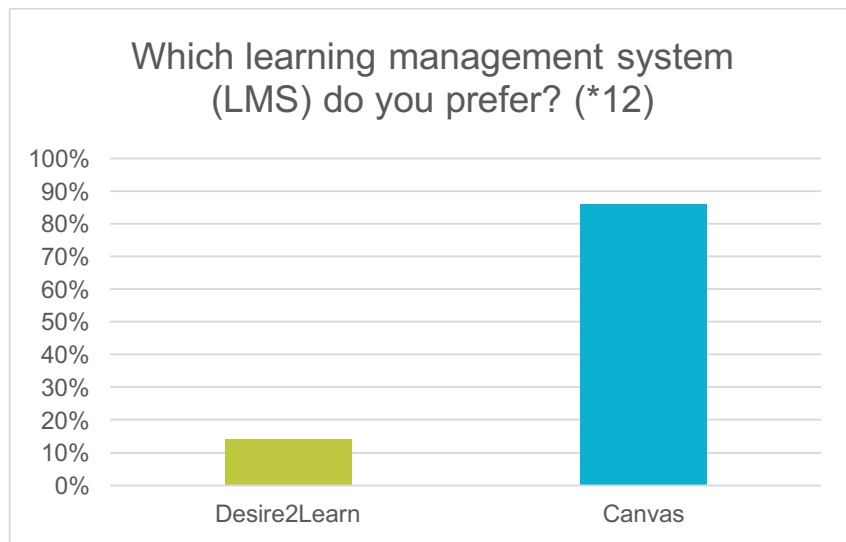
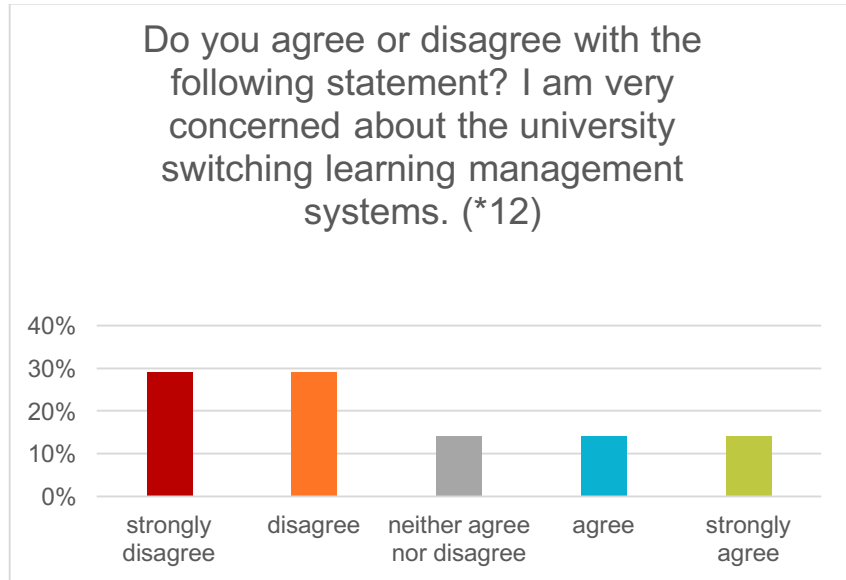
Appendix A – Survey Results

Instructor Results, Beginning of Term (continued)



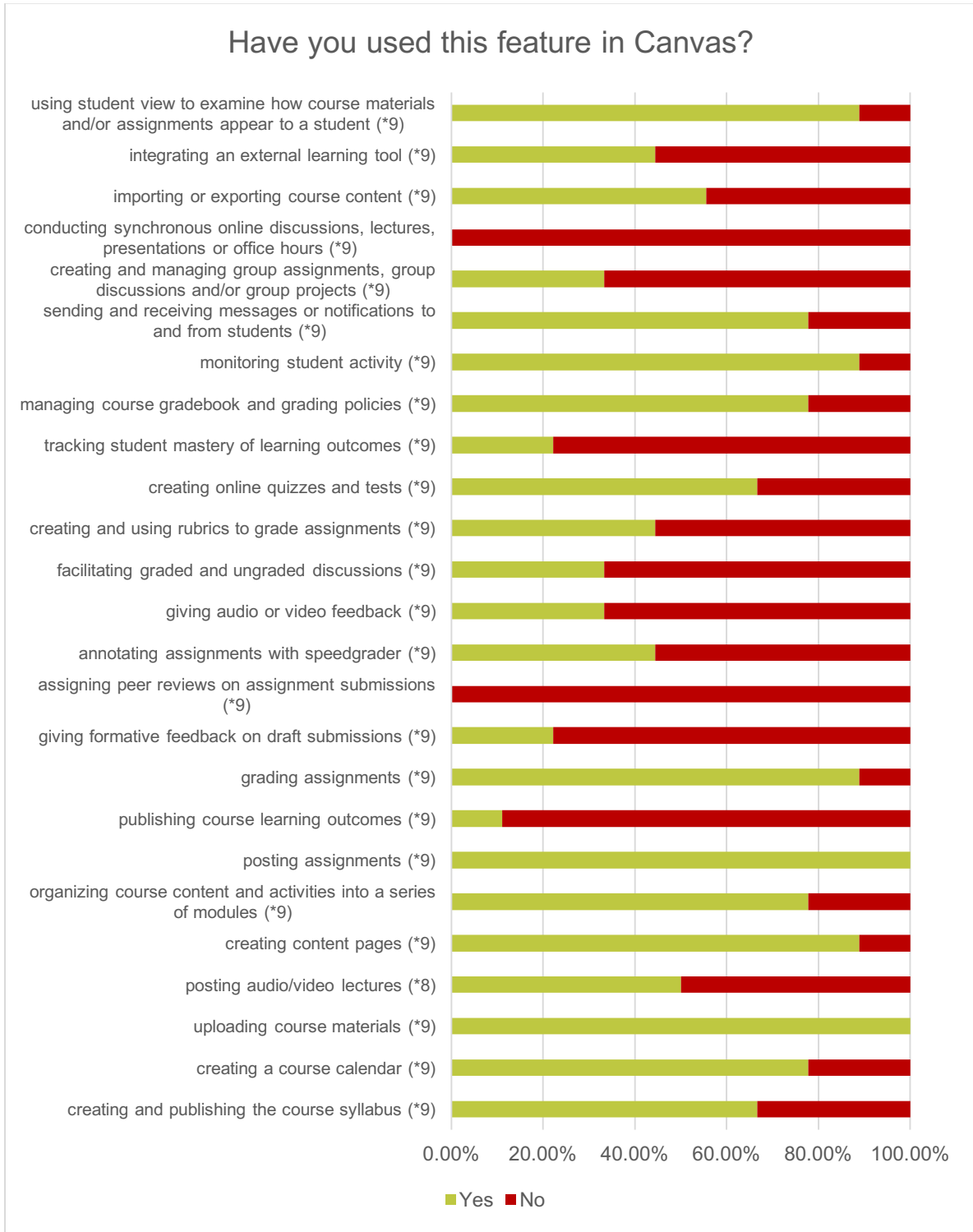
Appendix A – Survey Results

Instructor Results, Beginning of Term (continued)



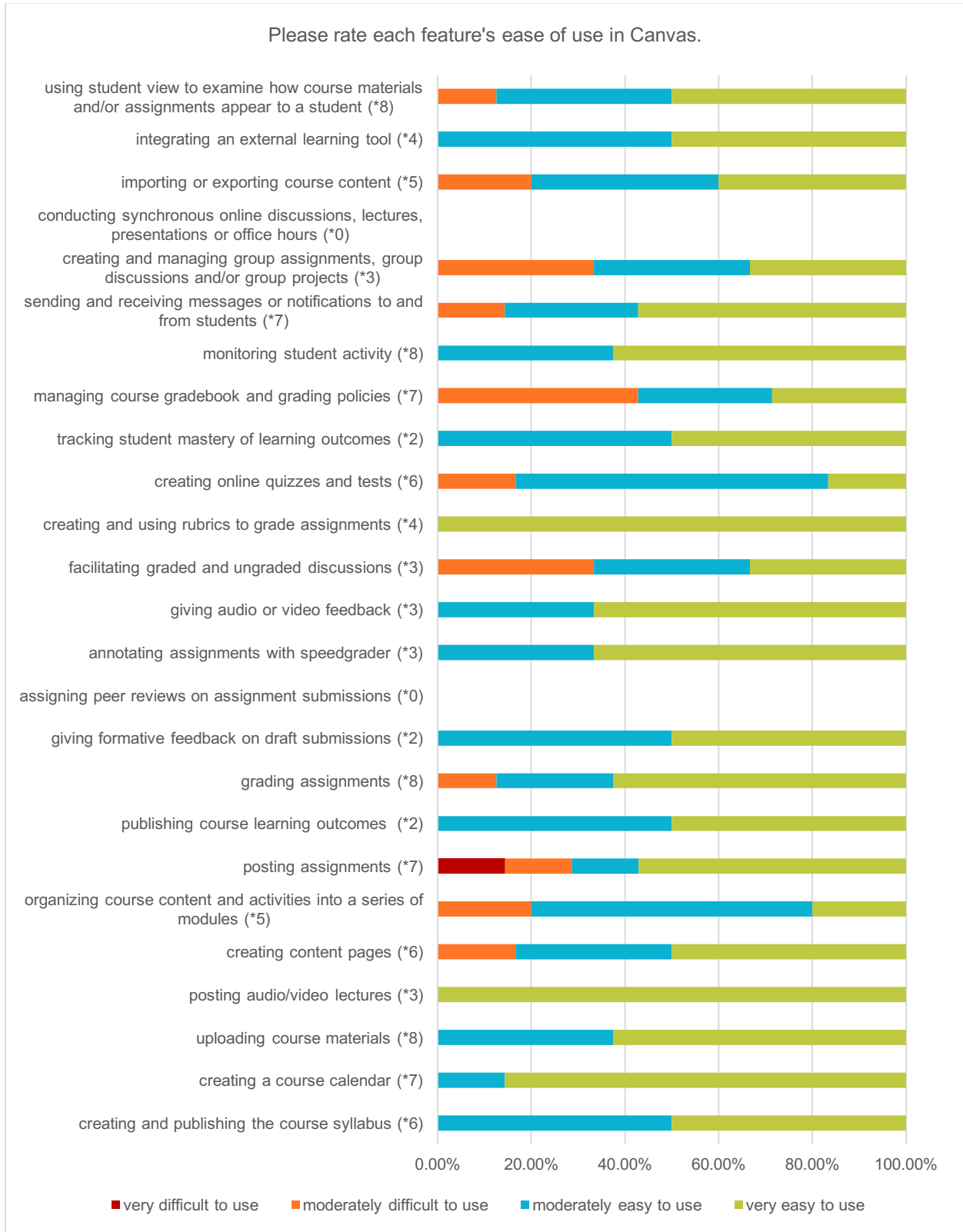
Appendix A – Survey Results

Instructor Results, Middle of Term



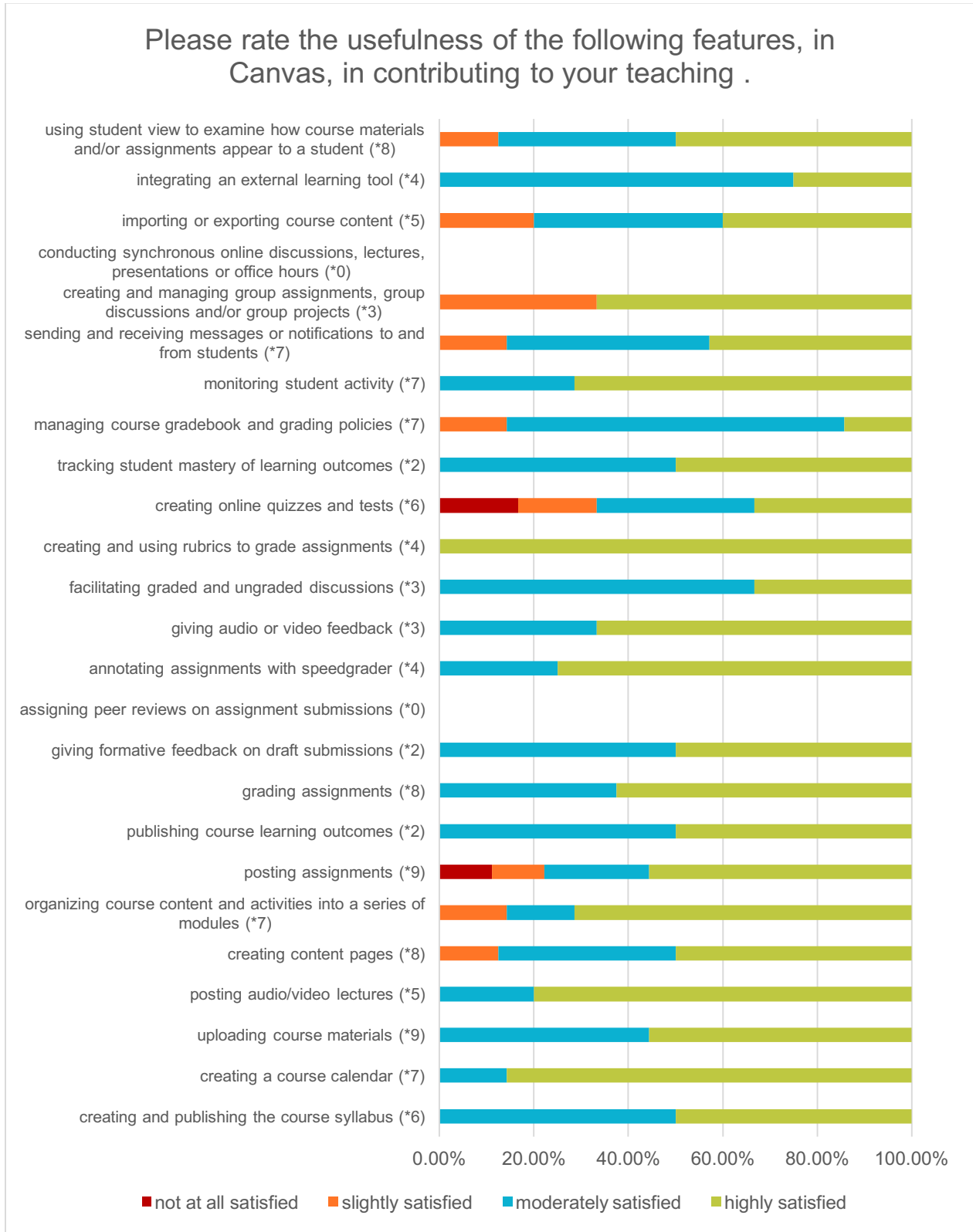
Appendix A – Survey Results

Instructor Results, Middle of Term (continued)



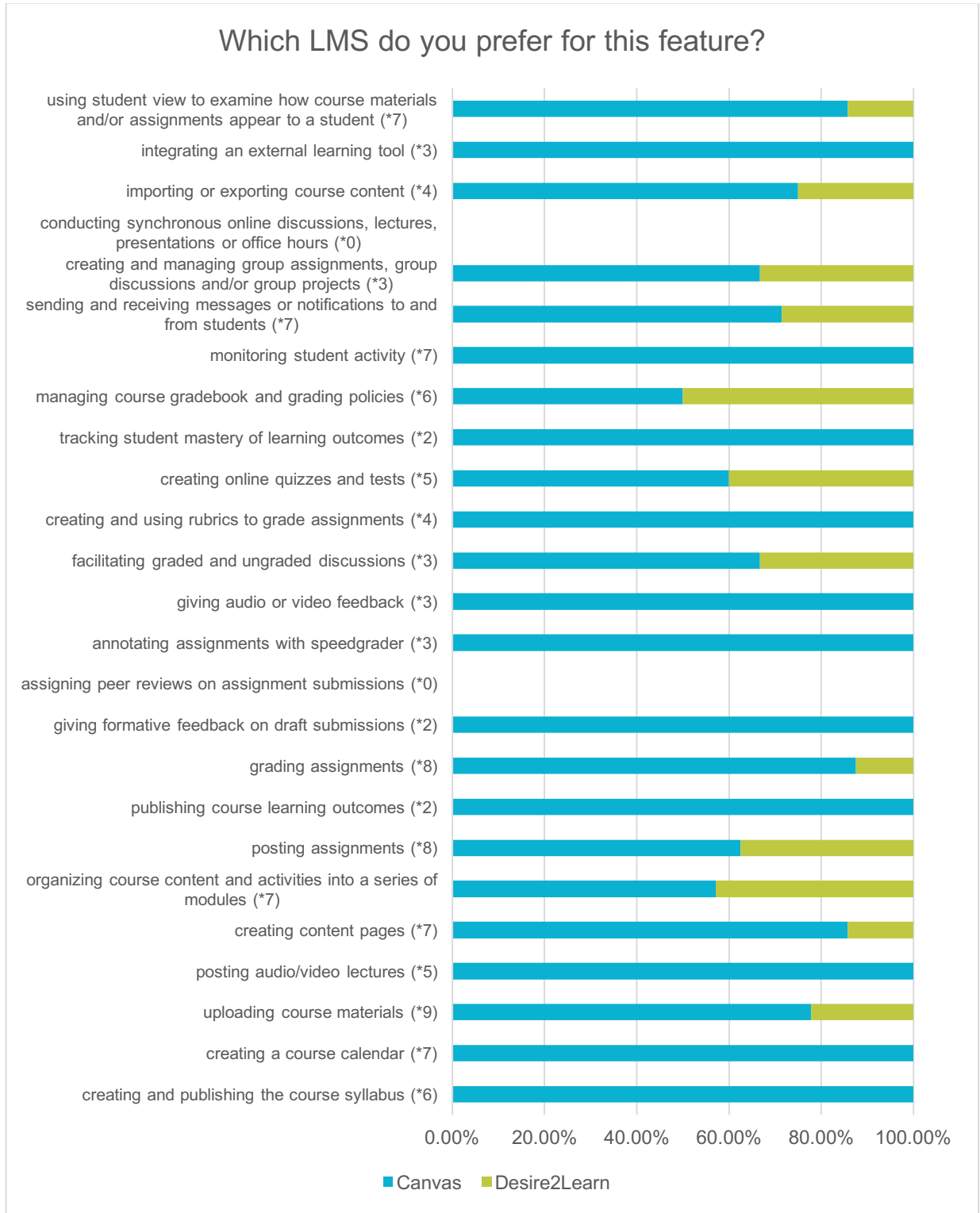
Appendix A – Survey Results

Instructor Results, Middle of Term (continued)



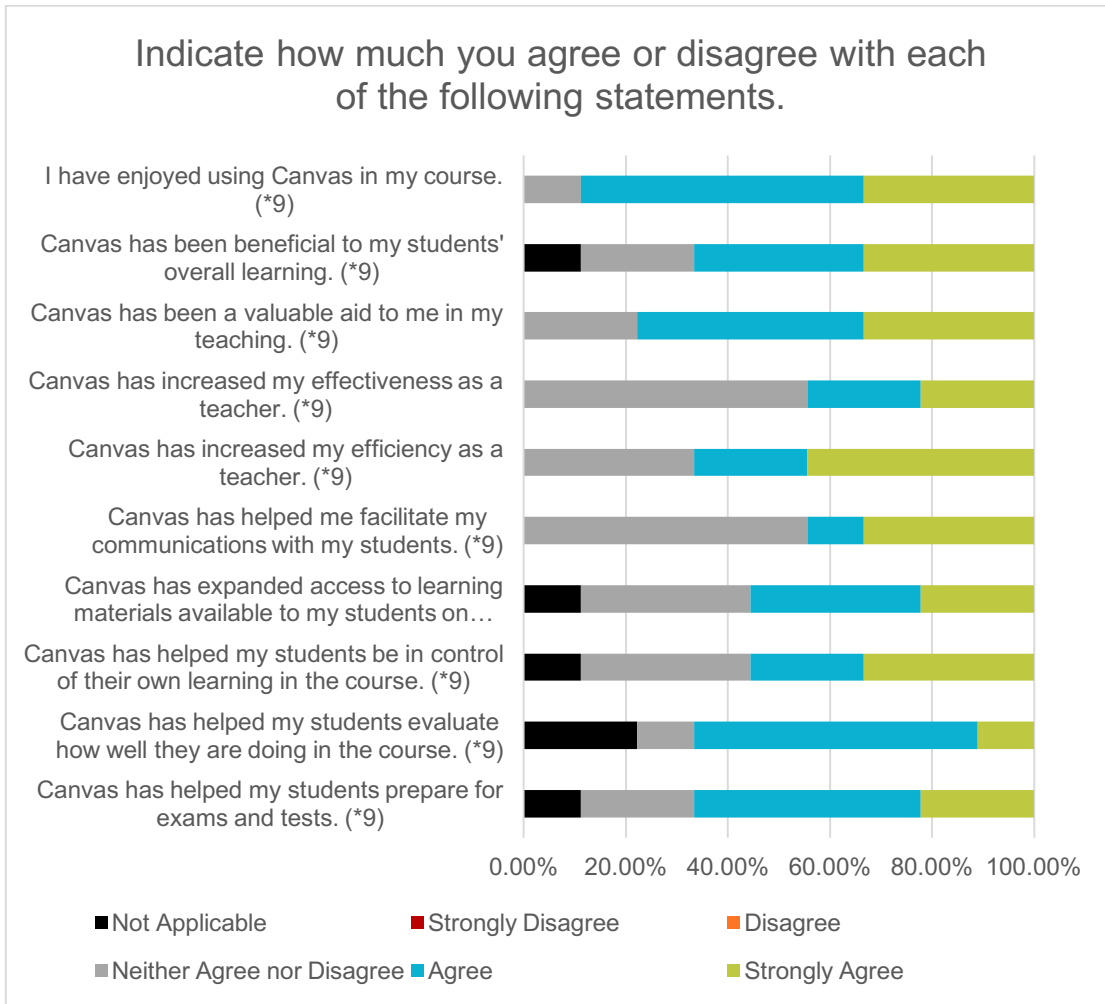
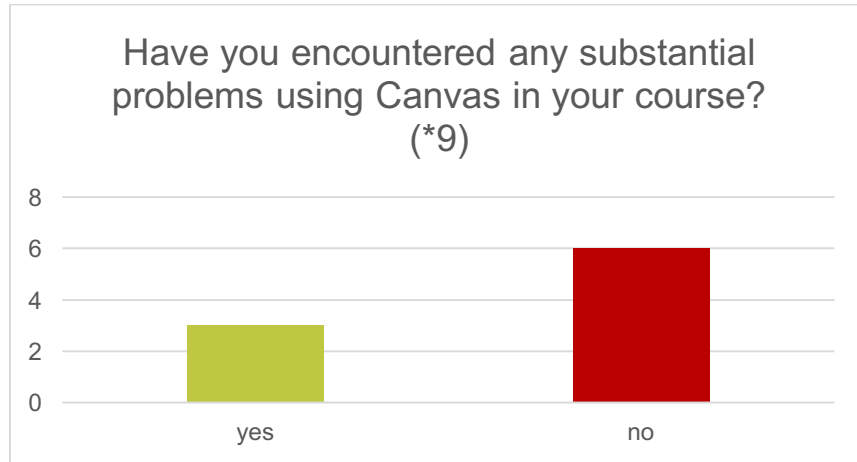
Appendix A – Survey Results

Instructor Results, Middle of Term (continued)



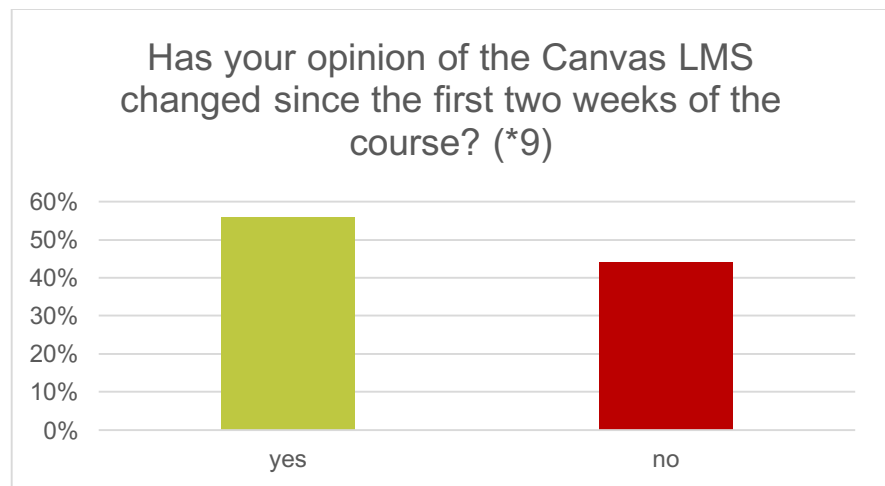
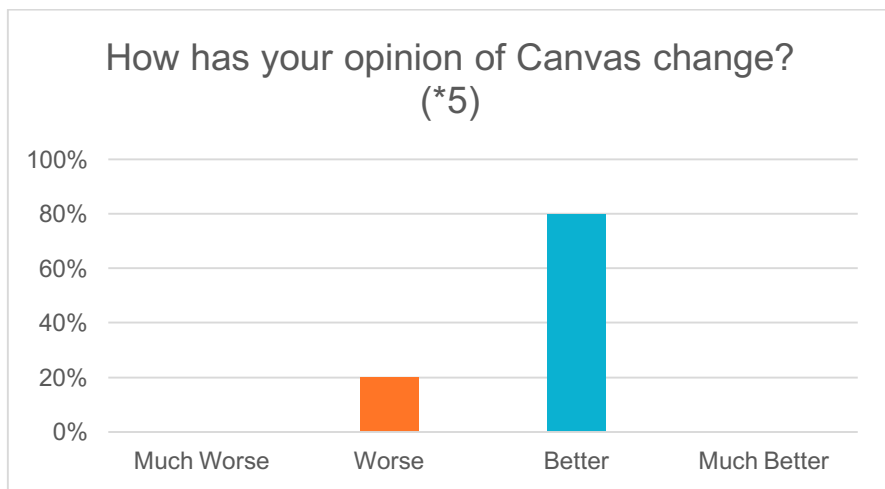
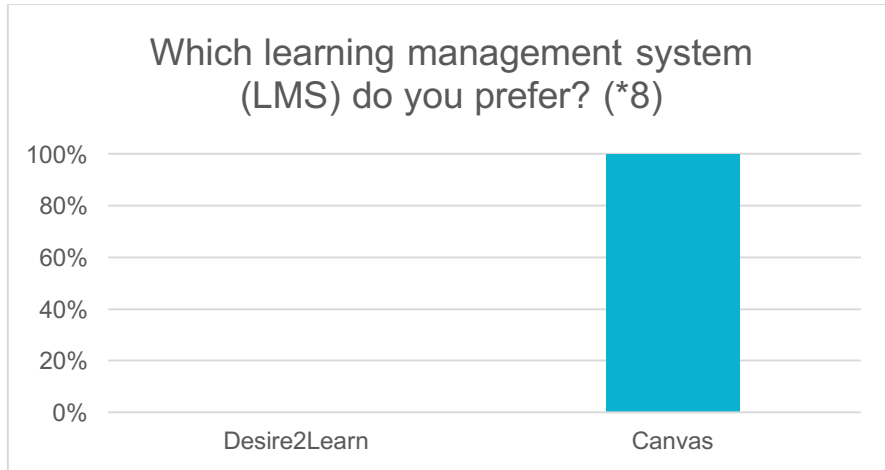
Appendix A – Survey Results

Instructor Results, Middle of Term (continued)



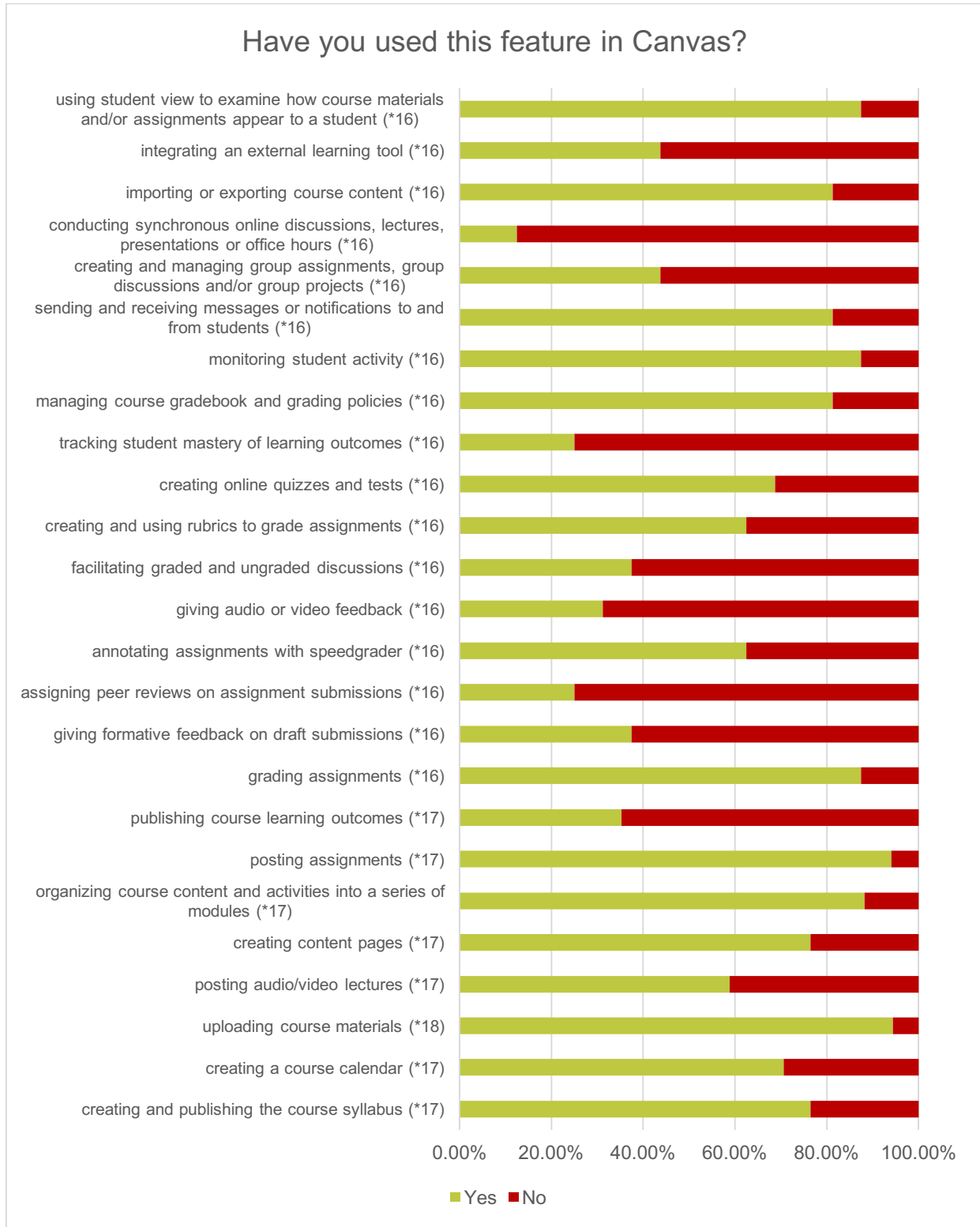
Appendix A – Survey Results

Instructor Results, Middle of Term (continued)



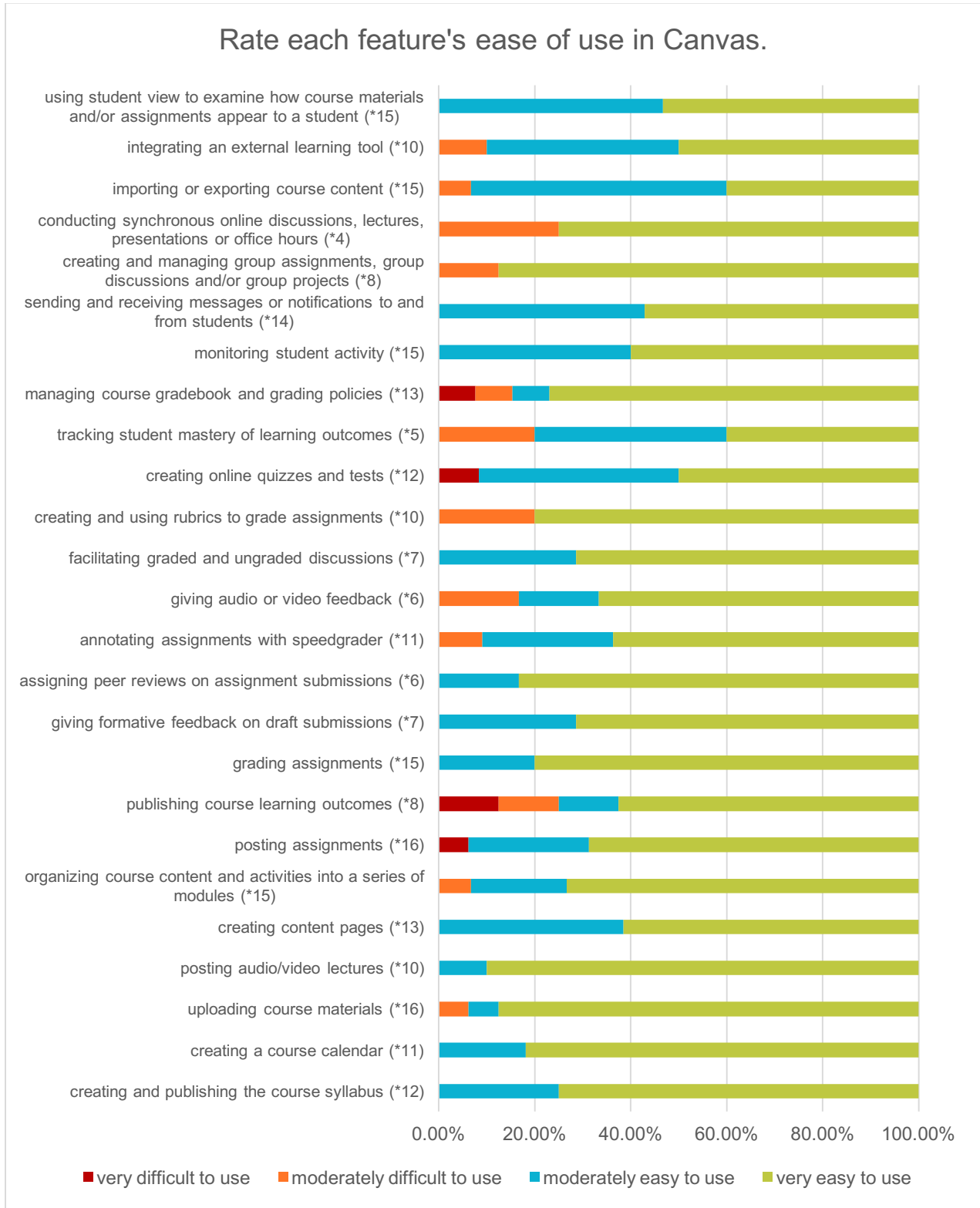
Appendix A – Survey Results

Instructor Results, End of Term



Appendix A – Survey Results

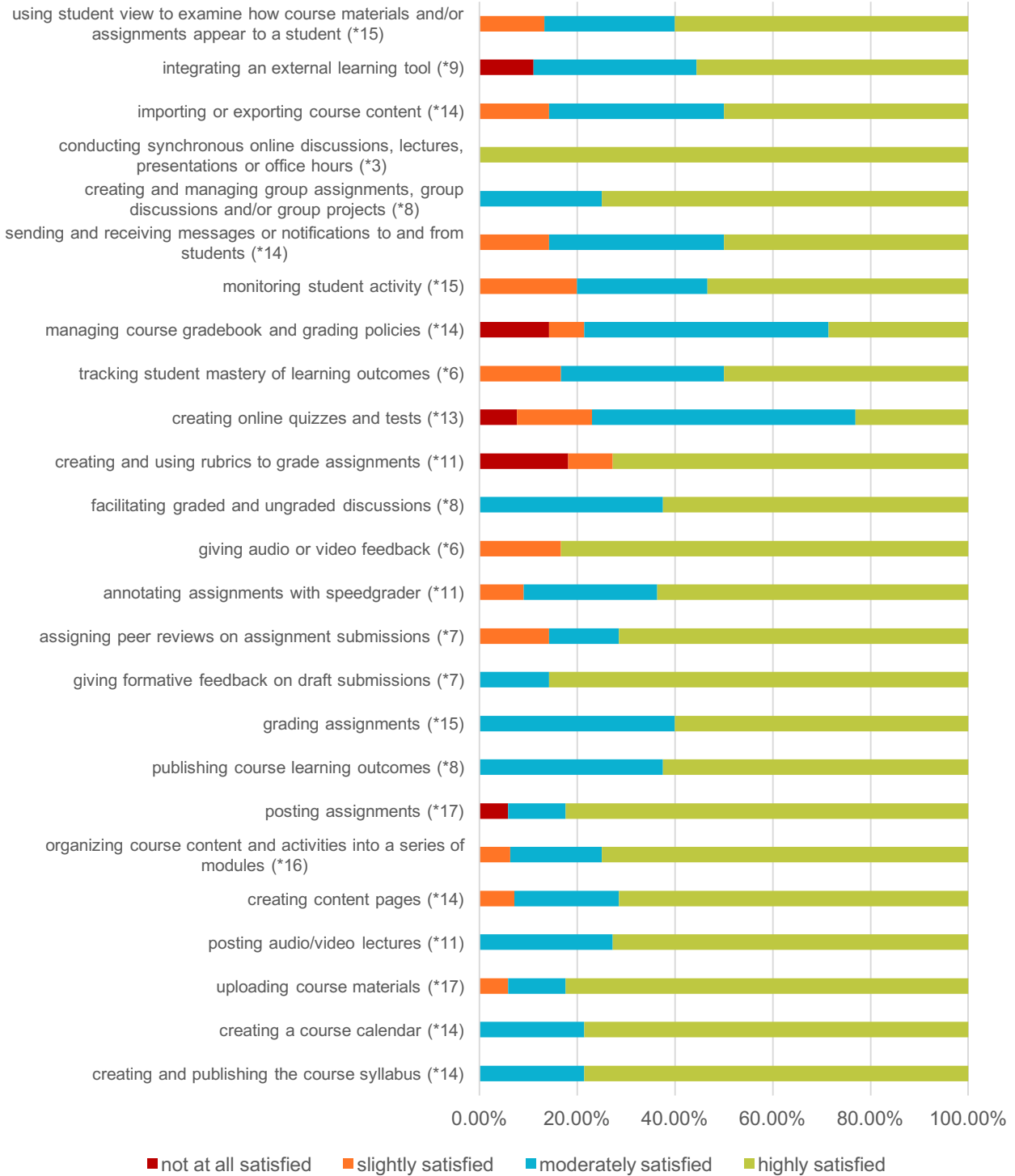
Instructor Results, End of Term (continued)



Appendix A – Survey Results

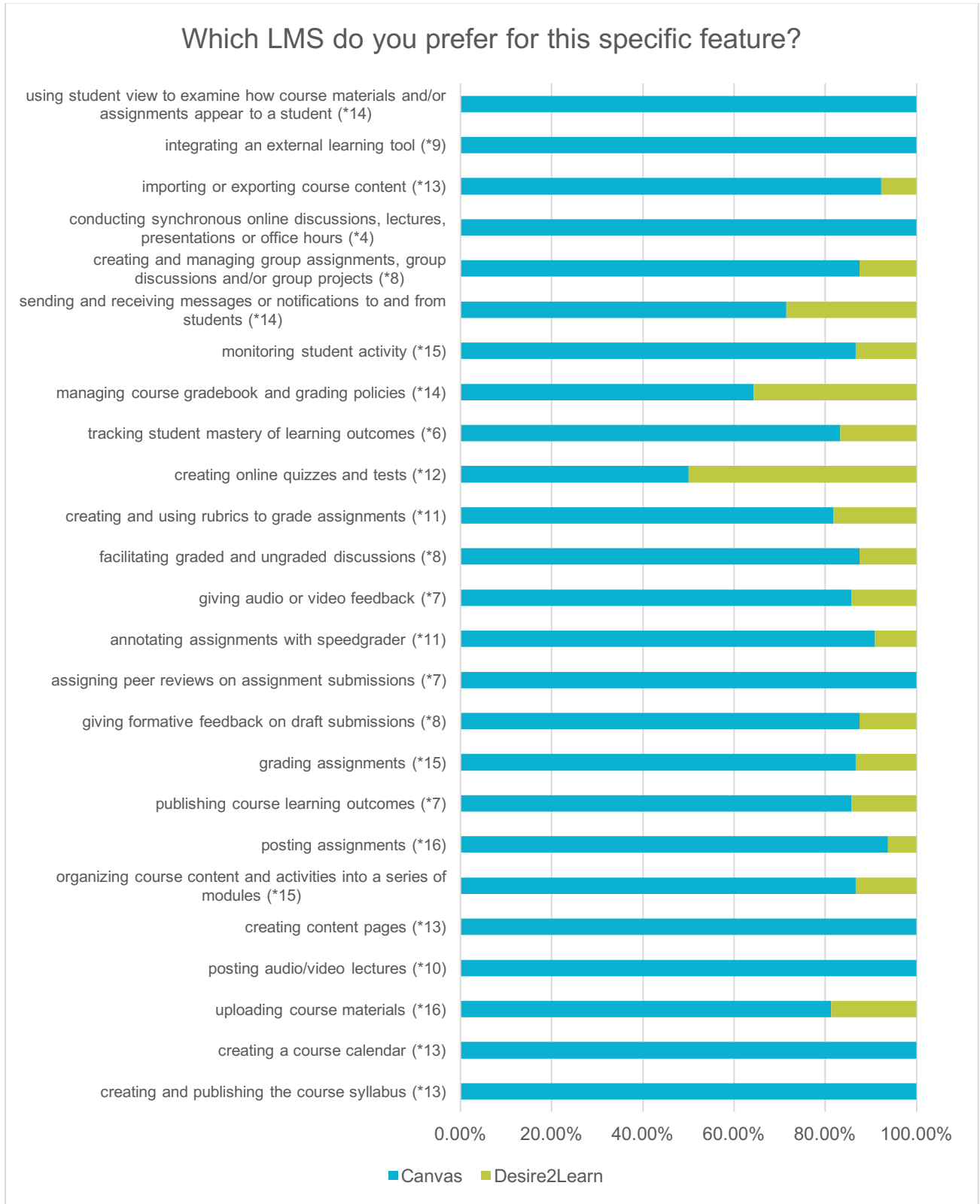
Instructor Results, End of Term (continued)

Please rate the usefulness of the following features, in Canvas, in contributing to your teaching.



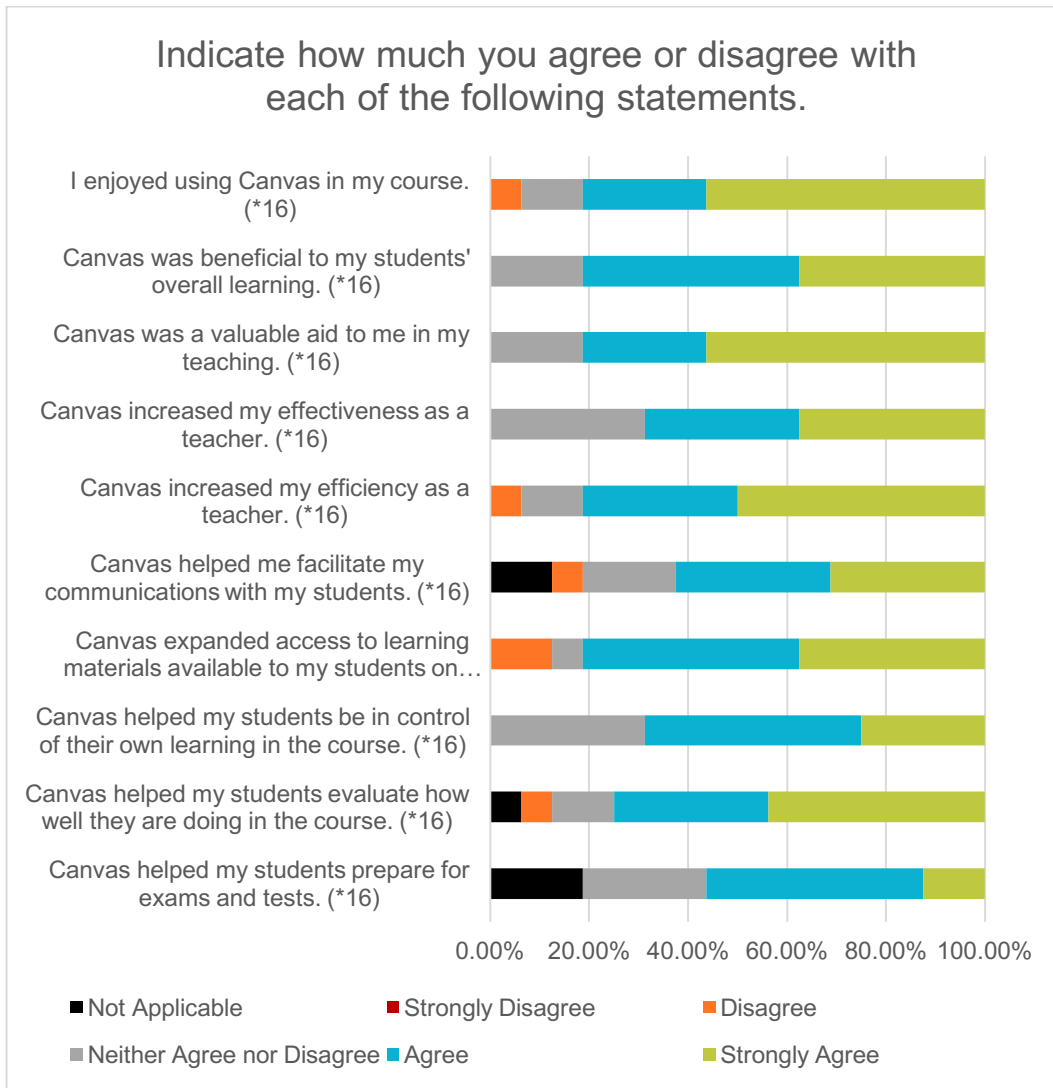
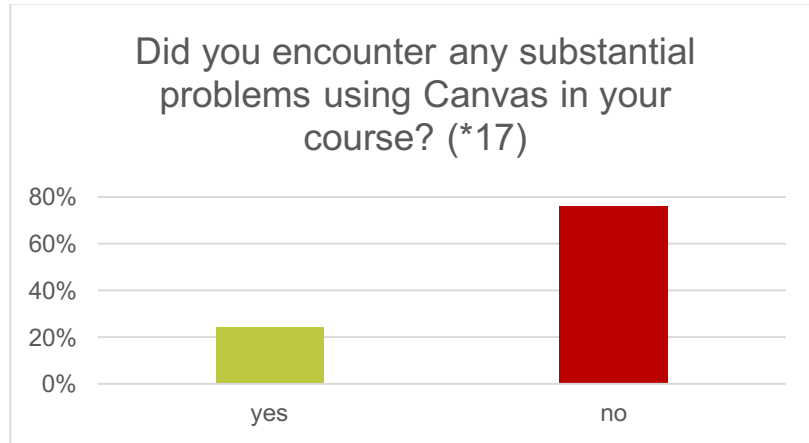
Appendix A – Survey Results

Instructor Results, End of Term (continued)



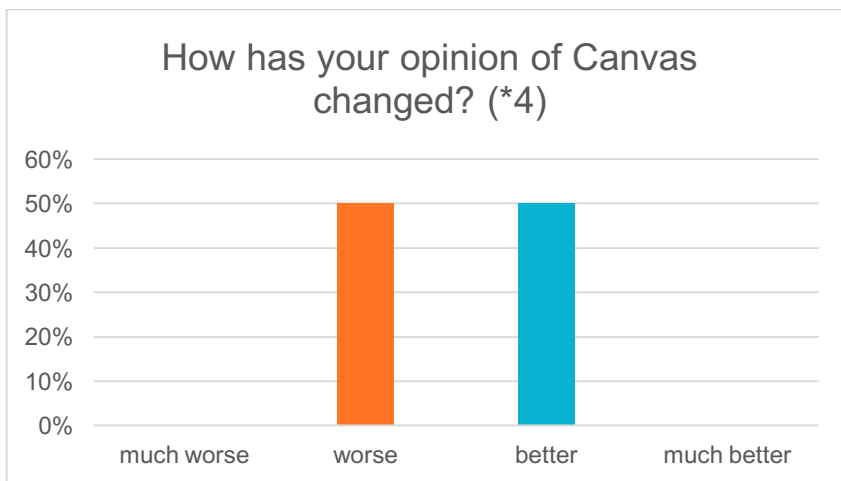
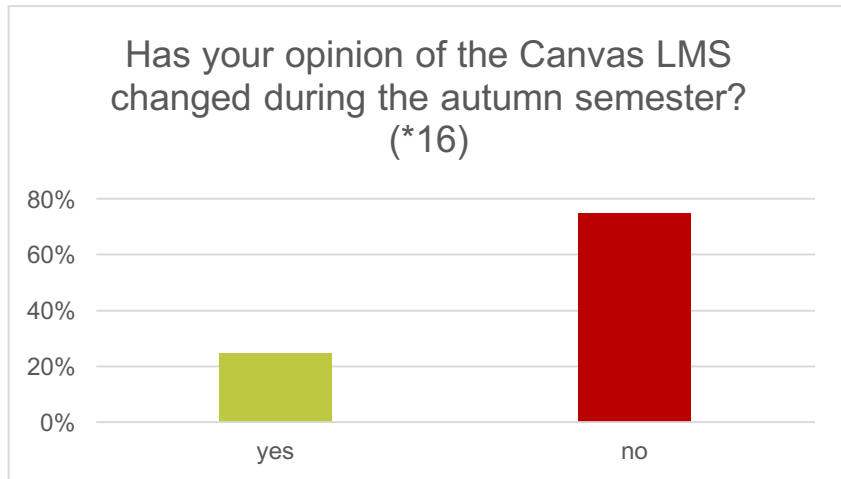
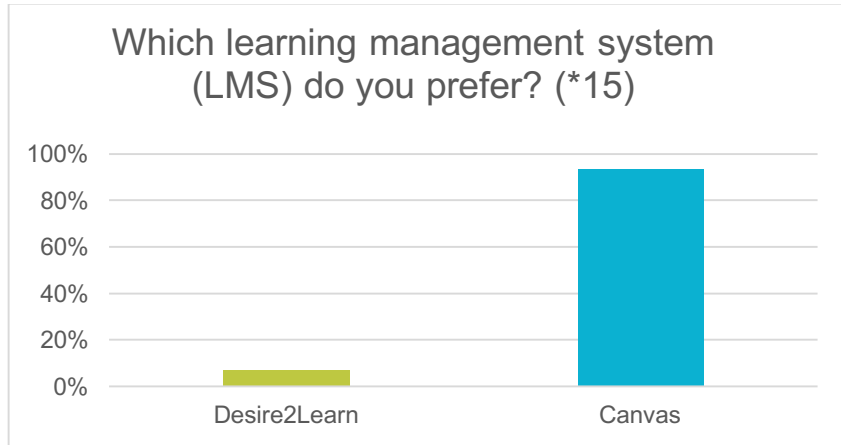
Appendix A – Survey Results

Instructor Results, End of Term (continued)



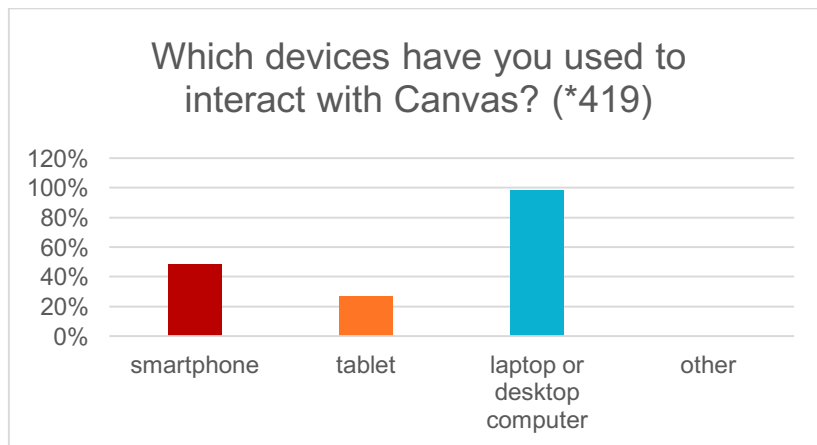
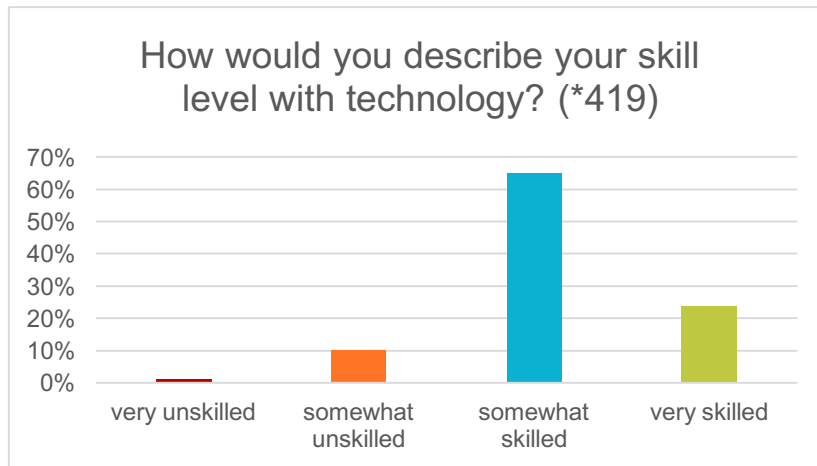
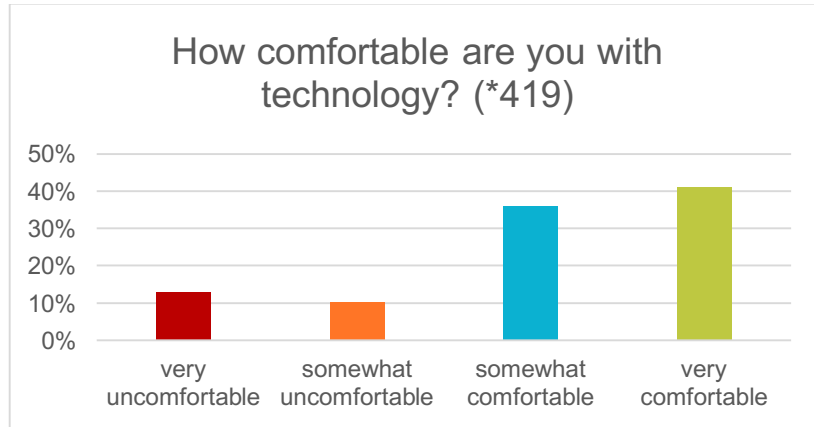
Appendix A – Survey Results

Instructor Results, End of Term (continued)



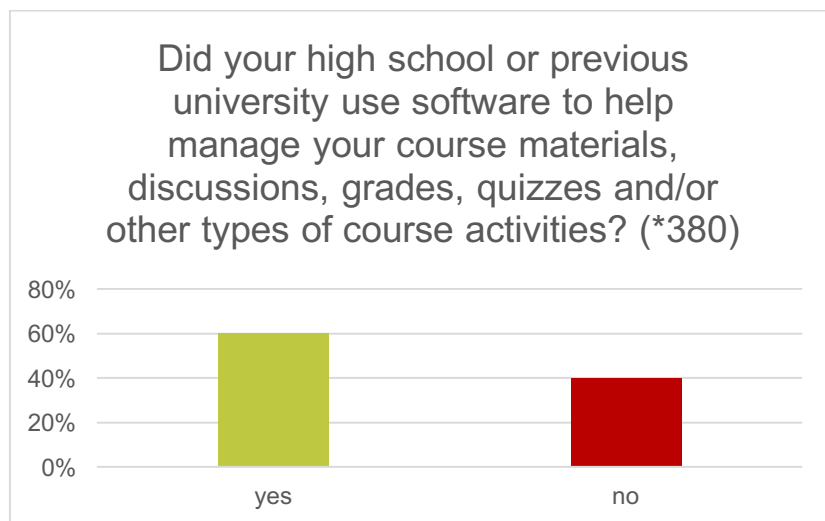
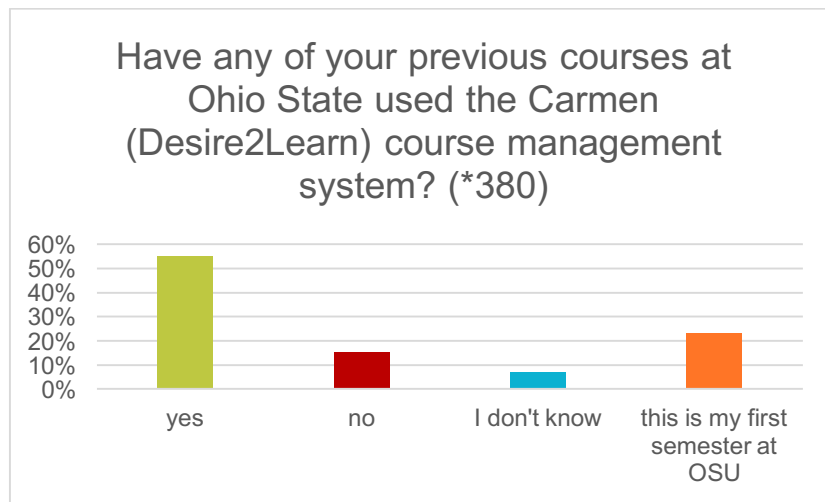
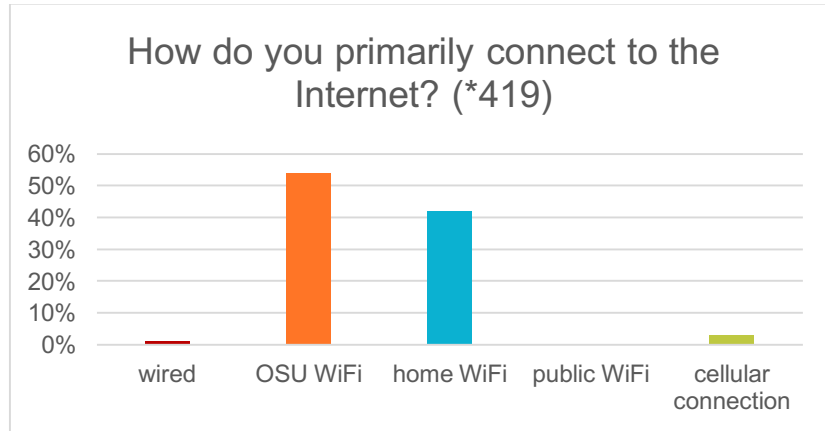
Appendix A – Survey Results

Student Results, Beginning of Term



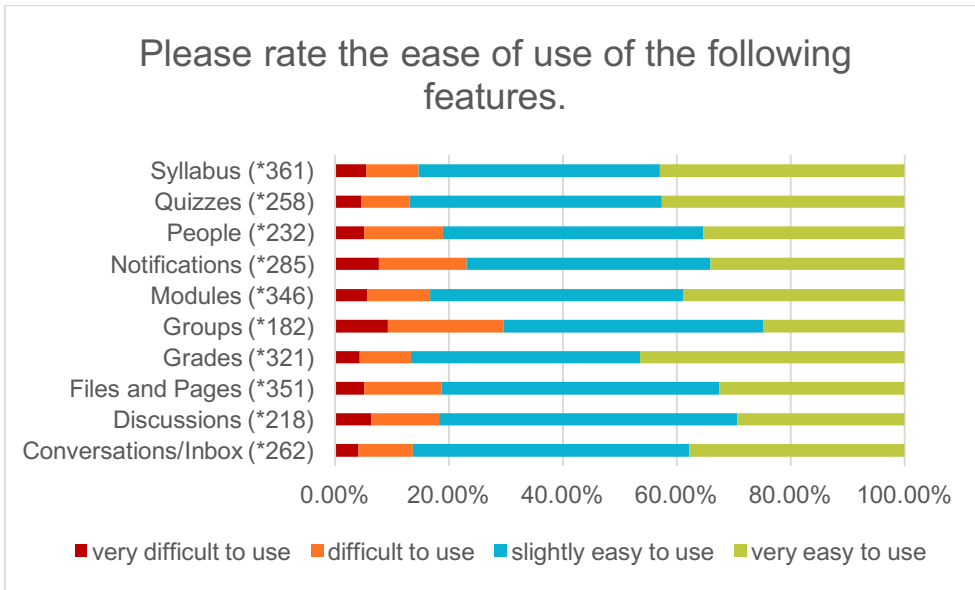
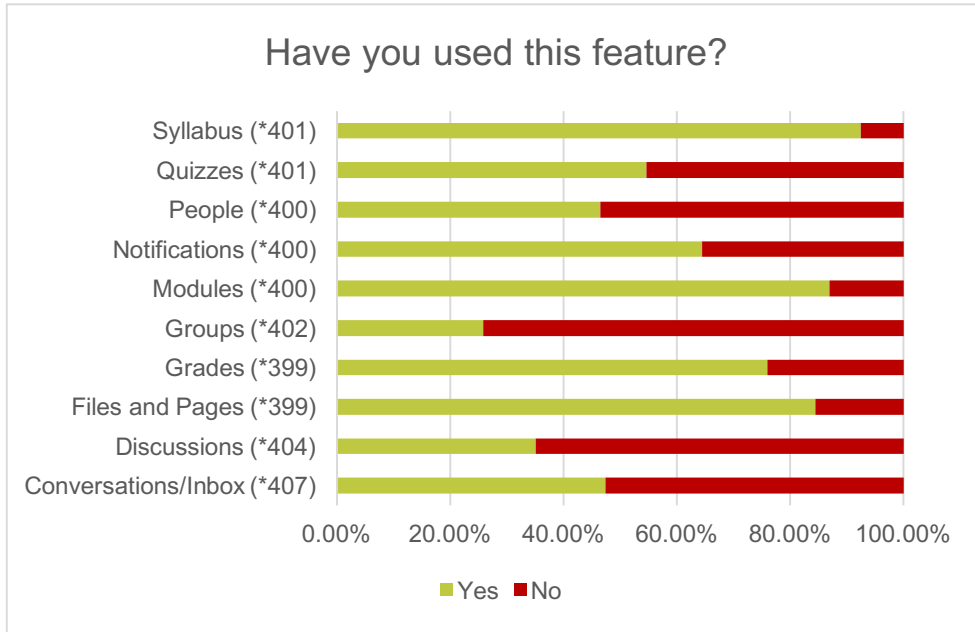
Appendix A – Survey Results

Student Results, Beginning of Term (continued)



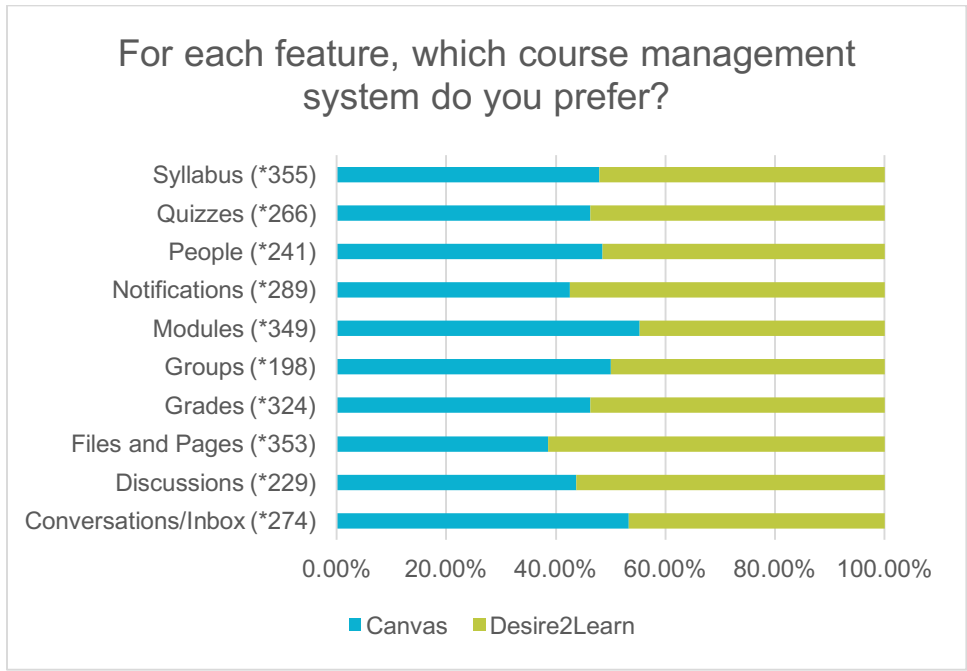
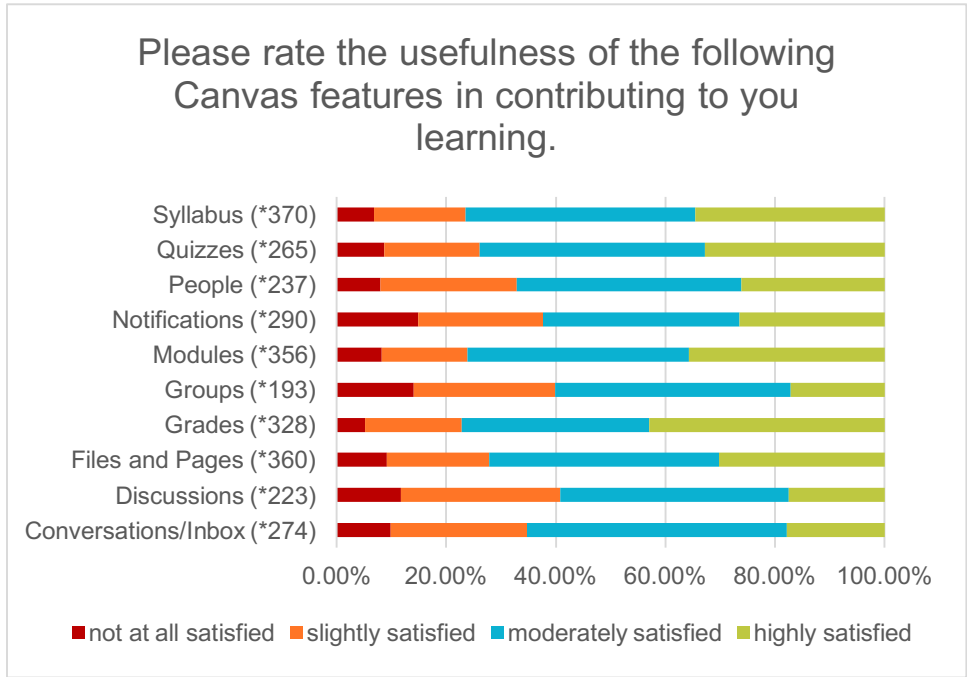
Appendix A – Survey Results

Student Results, Beginning of Term (continued)



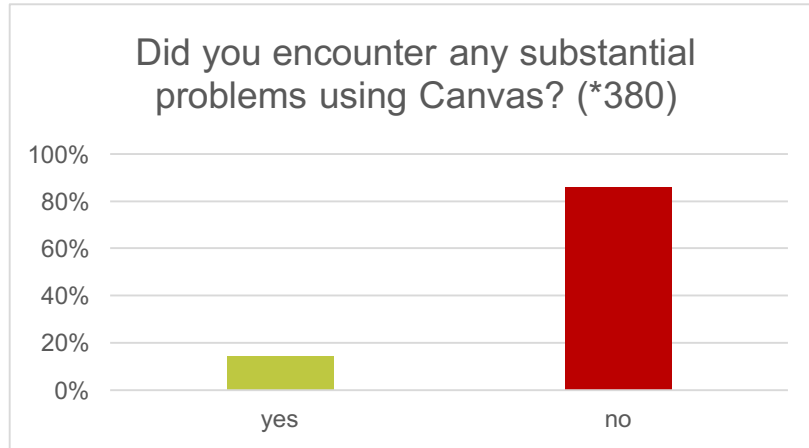
Appendix A – Survey Results

Student Results, Beginning of Term (continued)

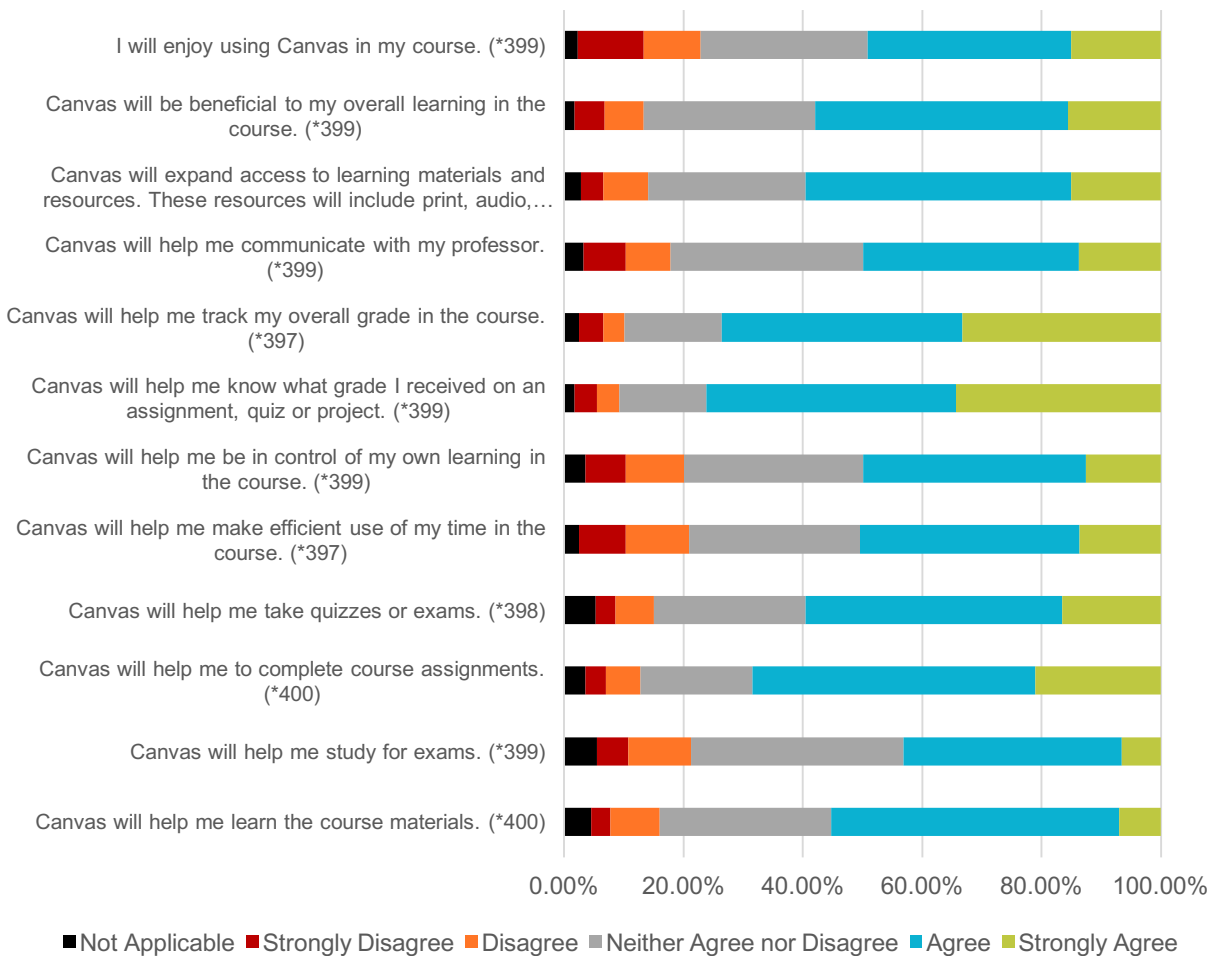


Appendix A – Survey Results

Student Results, Beginning of Term (continued)

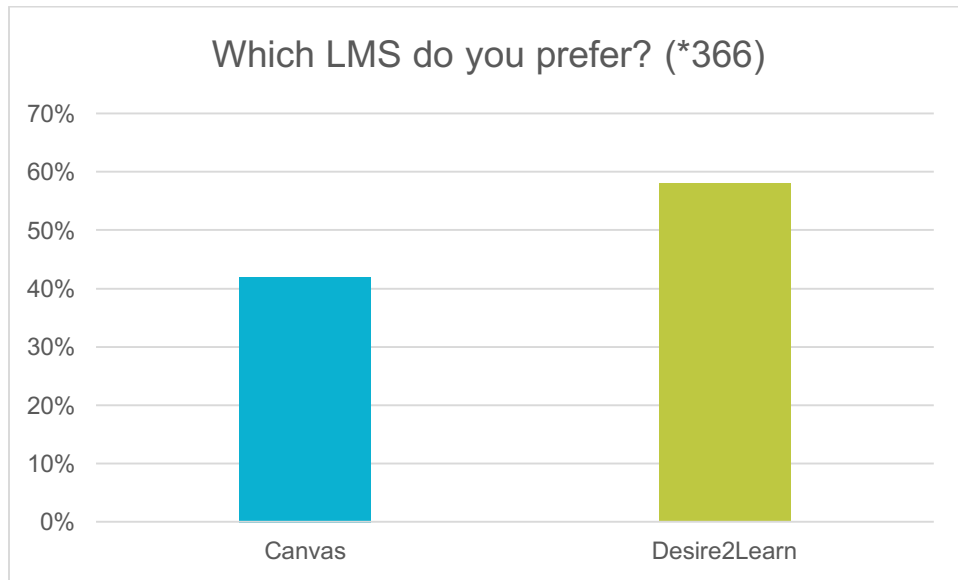


Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.



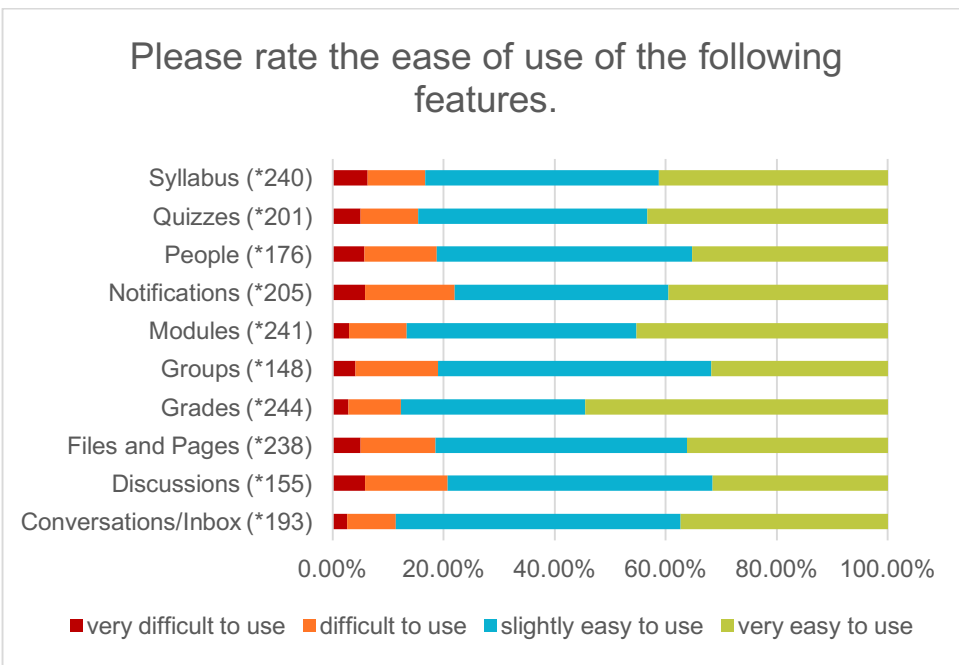
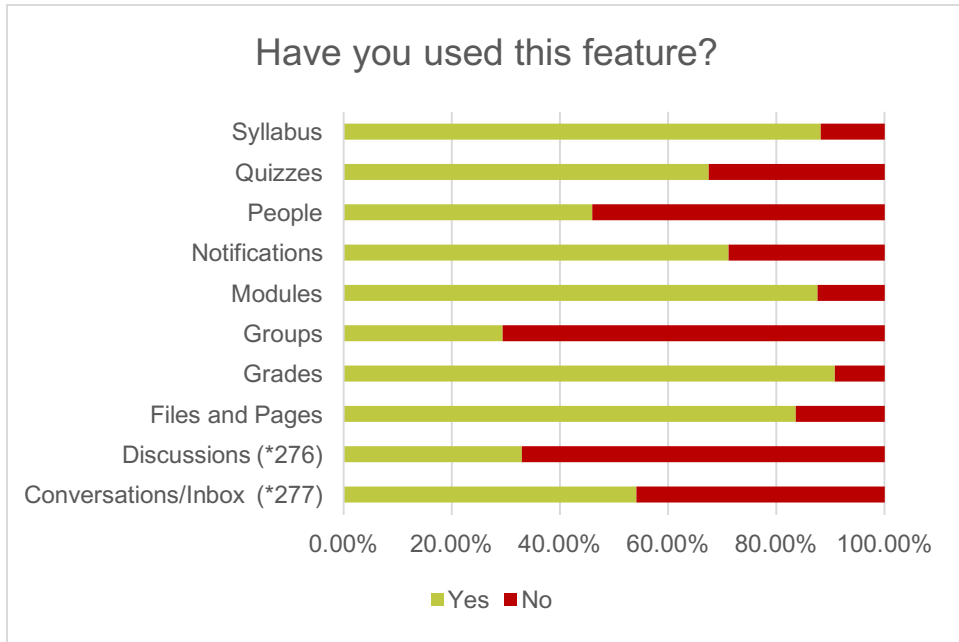
Appendix A – Survey Results

Student Results, Beginning of Term (continued)



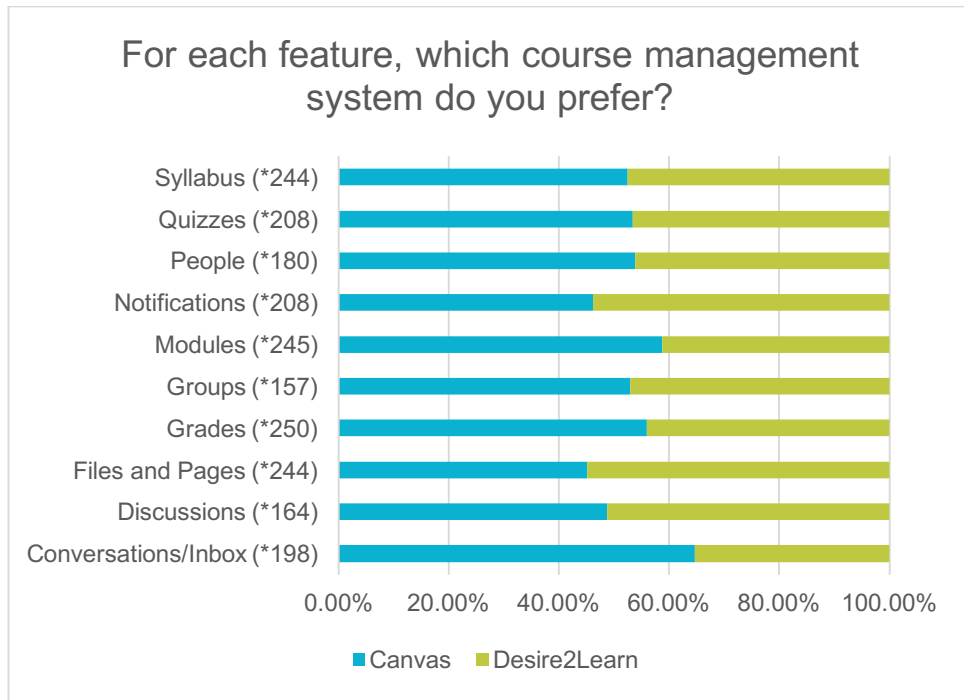
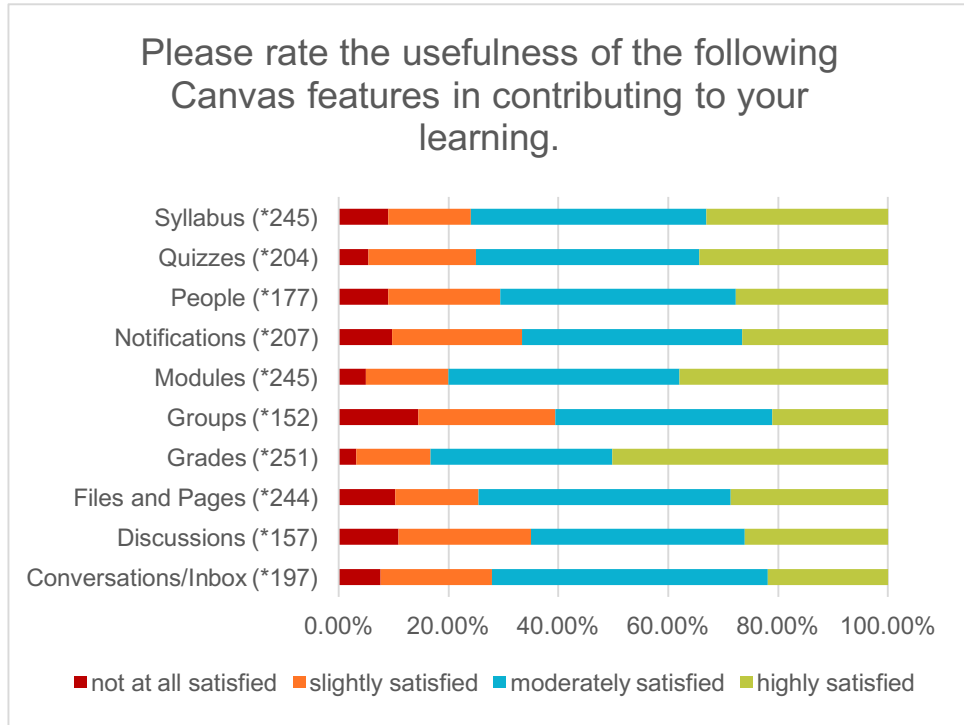
Appendix A – Survey Results

Student Results, Middle of Term



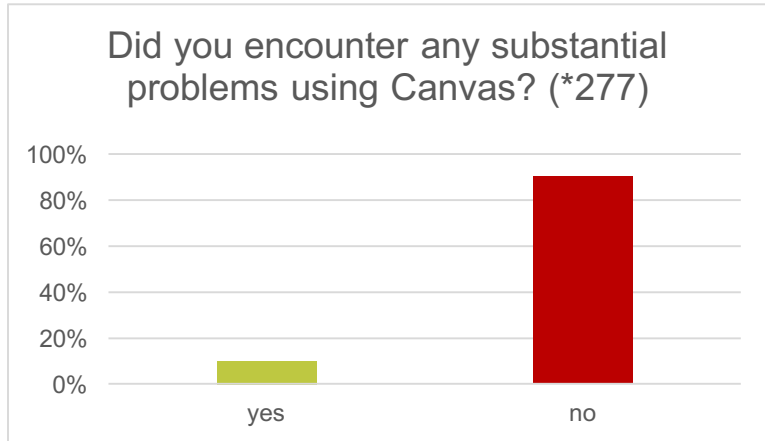
Appendix A – Survey Results

Student Results, Middle of Term (continued)

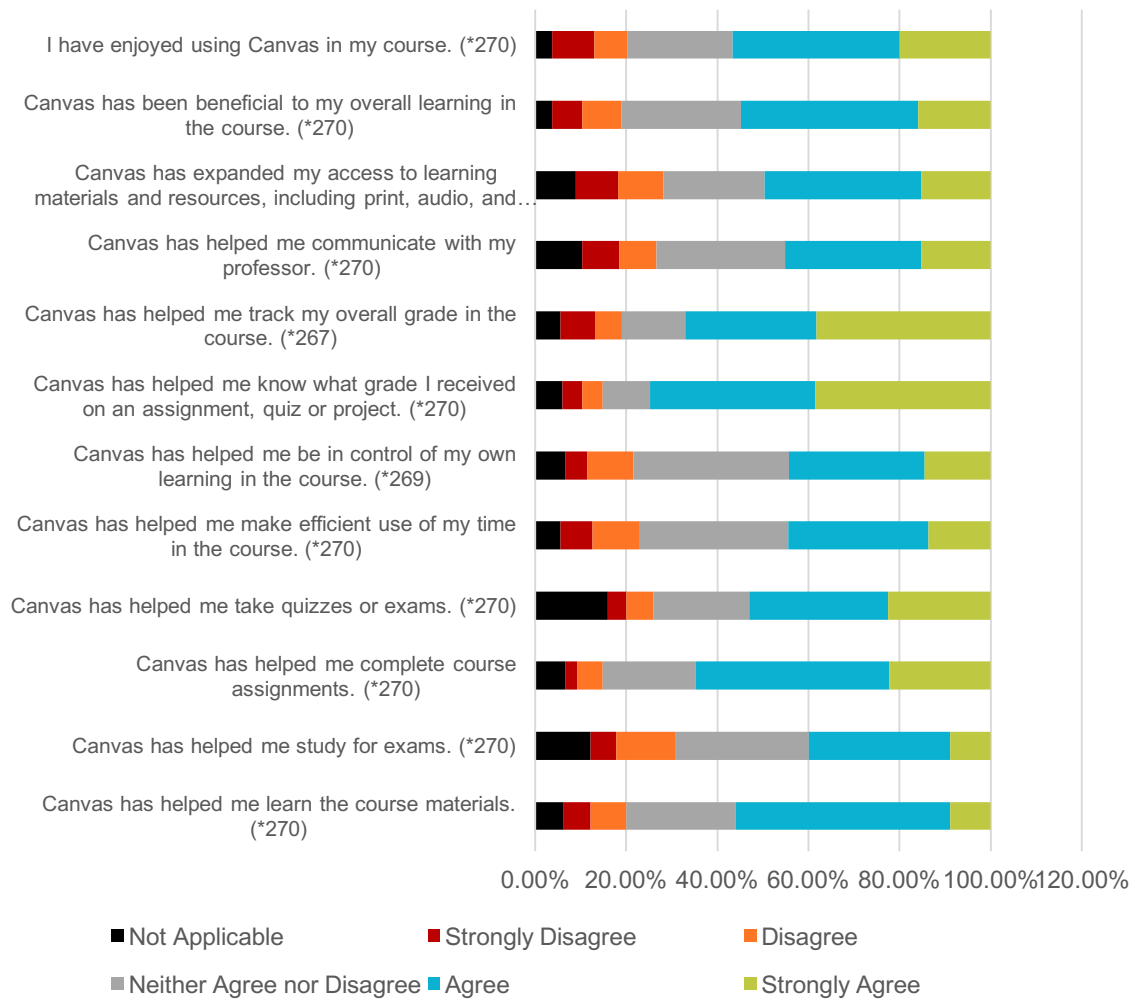


Appendix A – Survey Results

Student Results, Middle of Term (continued)

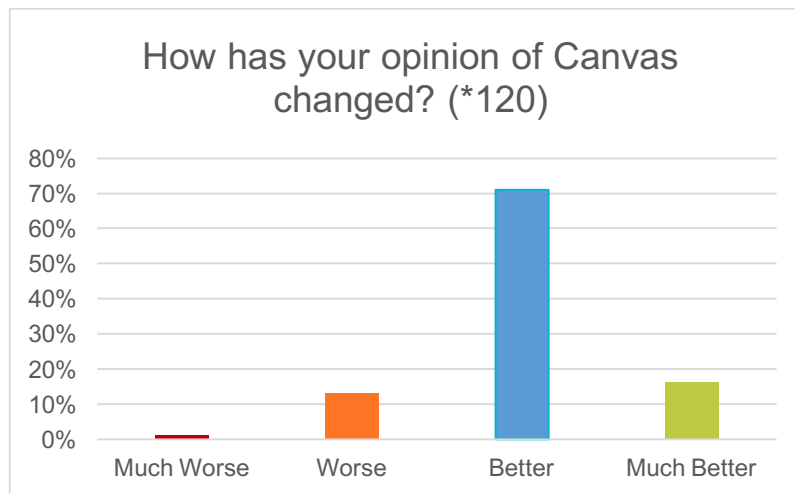
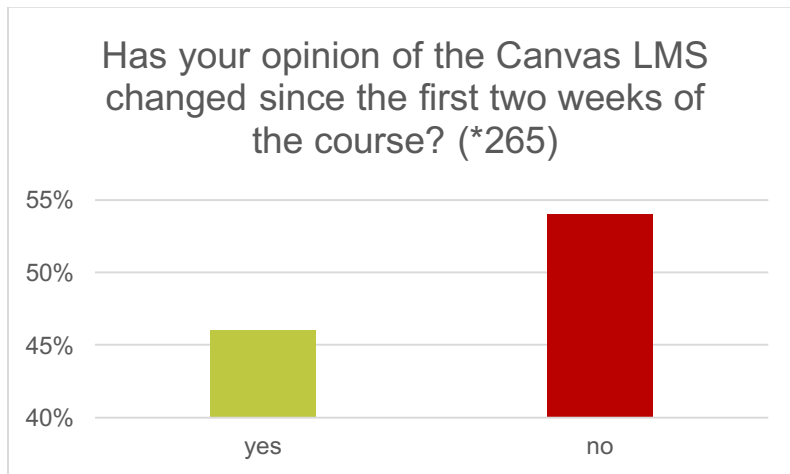
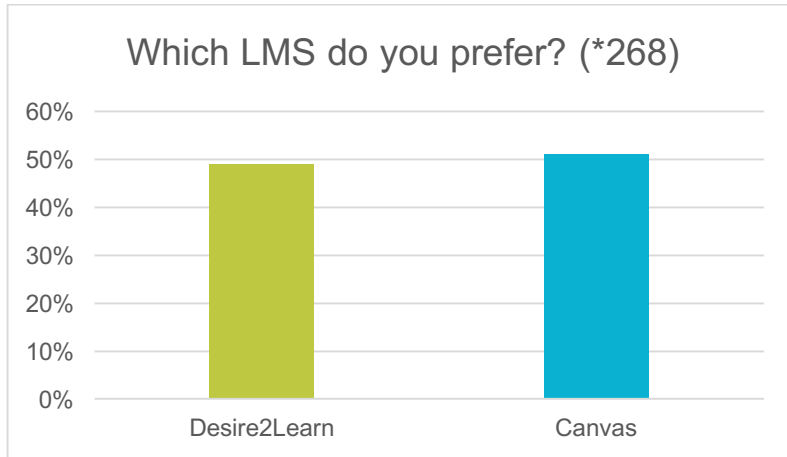


Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.



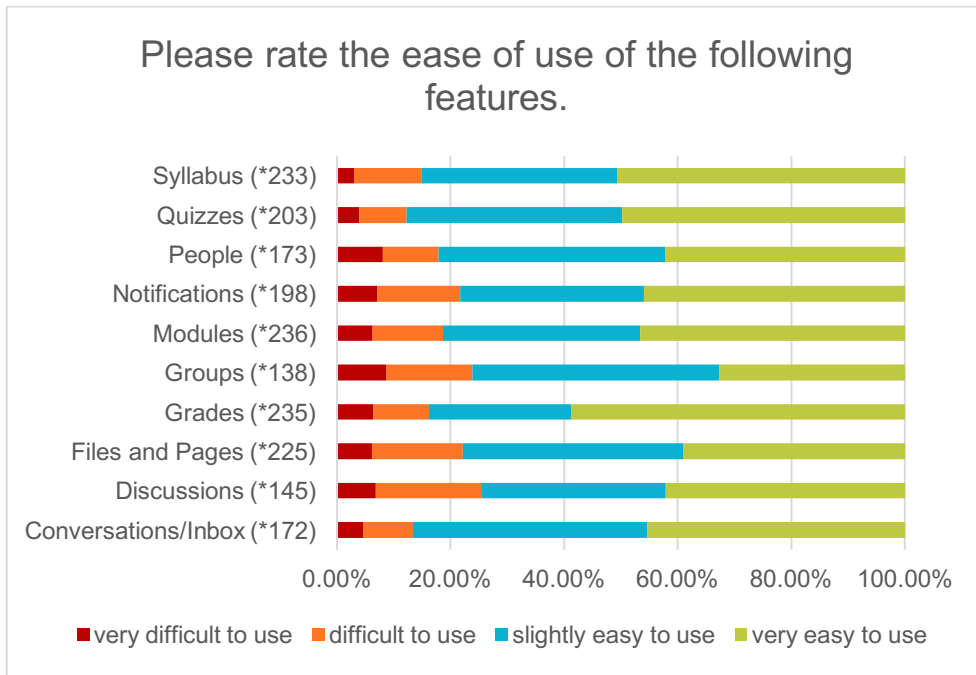
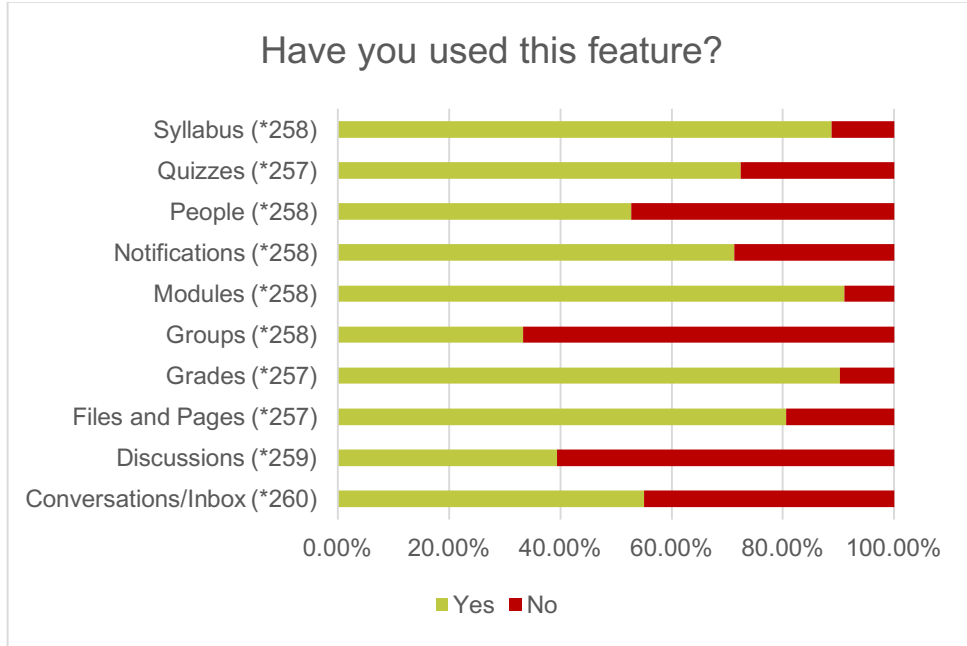
Appendix A – Survey Results

Student Results, Middle of Term (continued)



Appendix A – Survey Results

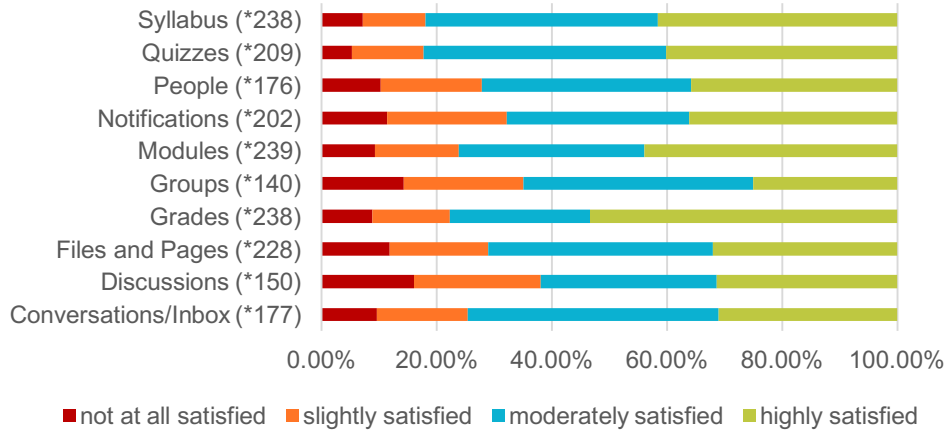
Student Results, End of Term



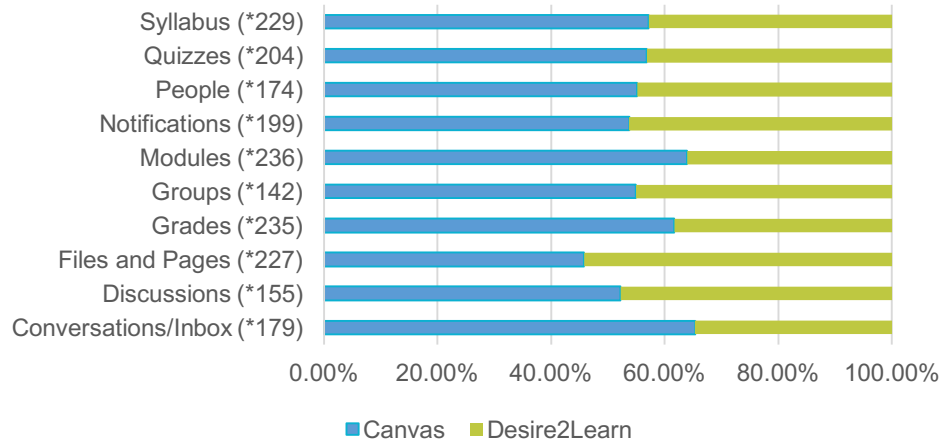
Appendix A – Survey Results

Student Results, End of Term (continued)

Please rate the usefulness of the following Canvas features in contributing to your learning.

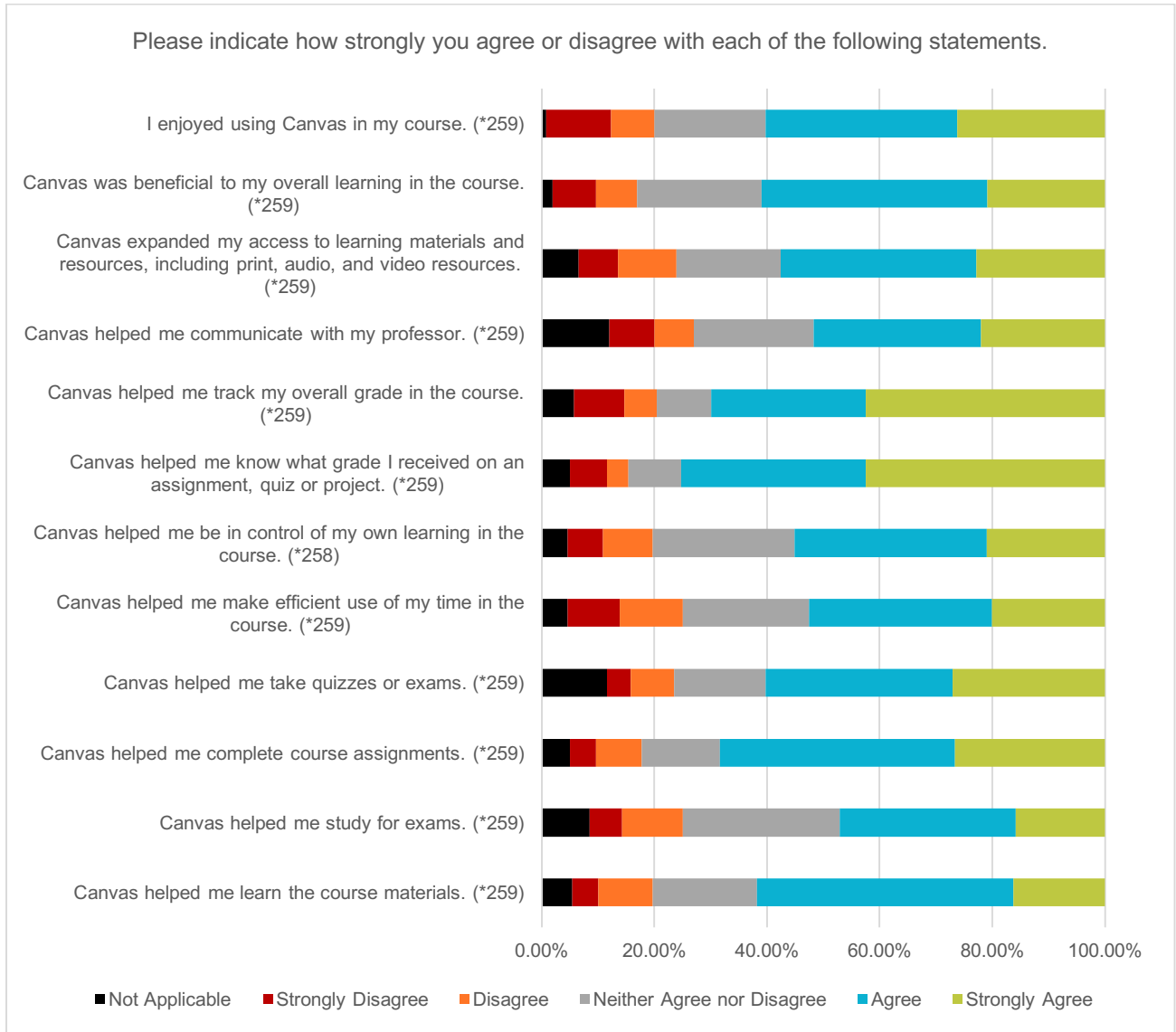
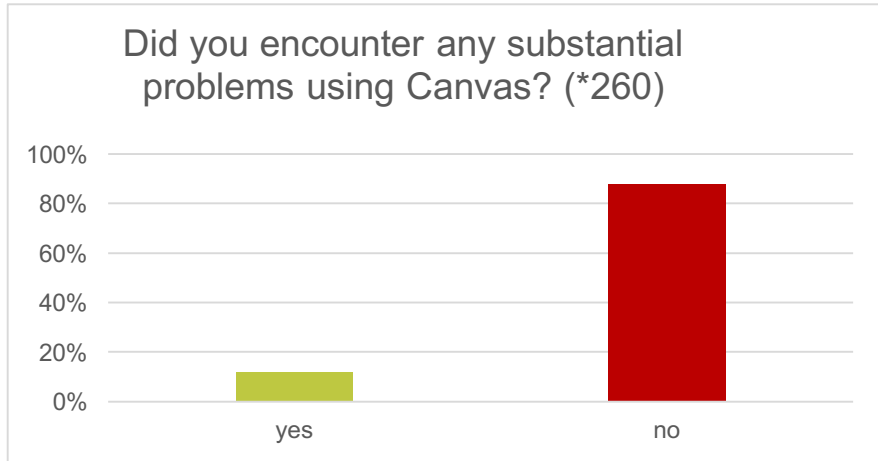


For each feature, which course management system do you prefer?



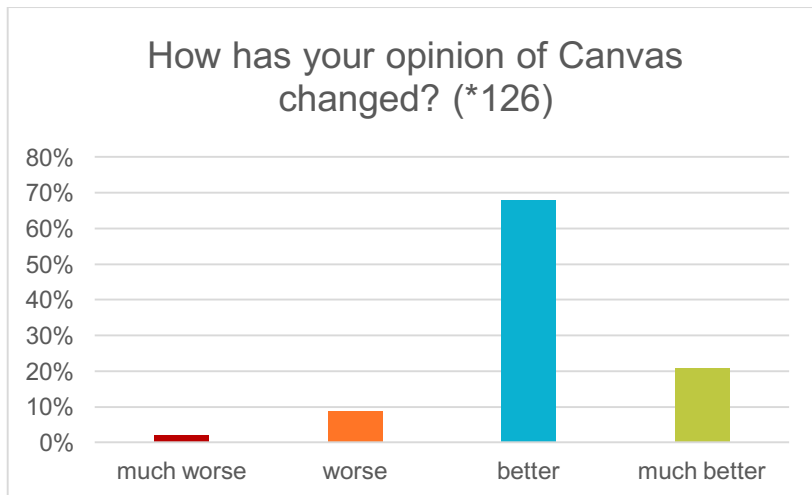
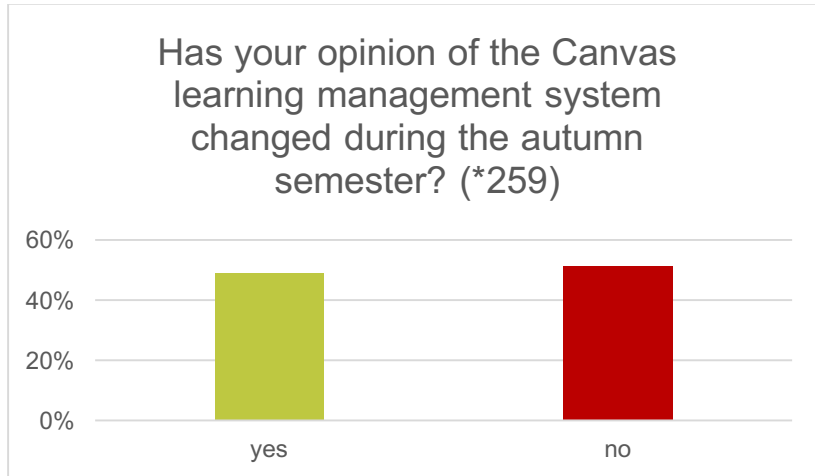
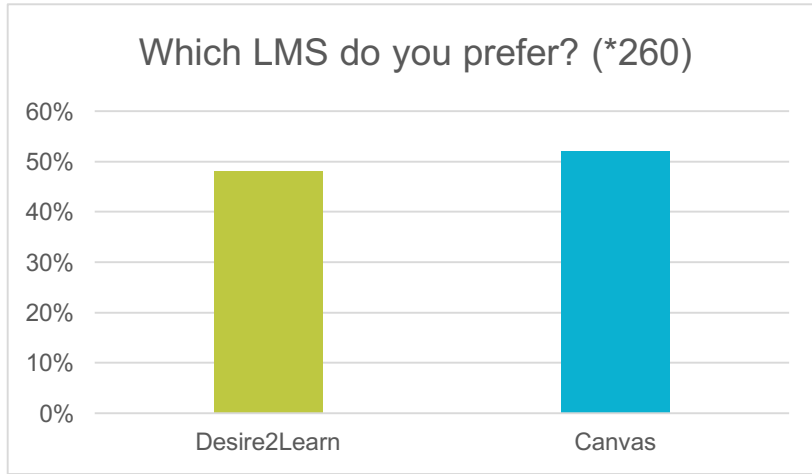
Appendix A – Survey Results

Student Results, End of Term (continued)



Appendix A – Survey Results

Student Results, End of Term (continued)



Appendix B – Discursive Feedback

Selected Discursive Feedback from Faculty, Staff and Students

Beginning of Term

	Faculty and Staff	Students
Positive	<p>“I like the high degree of integration inherent in Canvas' design. Grades, course module components, and assignments are all linked together in a way that makes Canvas efficient to use and easier to navigate than the current setup in Desire2Learn.”</p> <p>“The look, feel, and set up are very clean and easy to use.”</p> <p>“I think the calendar and syllabus features make it really easy for students to know what is going on and what is due when.”</p> <p>“It is extremely intuitive and structured to serve a student. The grading is a big improvement over D2L and being able to see how students are working is HUGE!”</p>	<p>“I enjoyed actually having a profile, so that I can better connect to my peers.”</p> <p>“The module system is cool.”</p> <p>“I like how each course has its own page with all the options to click along the side instead of Carmen where they are on the top under different weird headings.”</p> <p>“Better organized than Carmen and doesn't seem to be down all the time.”</p> <p>“The way assignments and readings appear in chronological order.”</p> <p>“The weekly roadmap is very helpful for time management and breaks everything down for the week by days. Very helpful!!”</p>
Negative	<p>“It was difficult to initially figure out how to move or upload items. Is there a 'back' or 'undo' button-still have not figured this out.”</p> <p>“Communication with students via e-mail is more of a challenge using Canvas. Students' messages to me have to go through Canvas' e-mail system and often end up in a Spam folder instead of my inbox. This means I effectively have to constantly check my e-mail and the inbox on Canvas to be certain I am receiving student messages. Additionally, details about a student, such as their name.#, are not as easily accessed.”</p>	<p>“It is organized in a strange manner and not everything is intuitive. Also grades and other data is easier to find on Carmen. There is also a lack of notifications from Canvas. Making students use both is cruel and time consuming.”</p> <p>“The submission page needs to be easier to edit on a PC. I couldn't edit the text on the website, I had to type it up on a Word document and copy and paste it instead of inputting it directly on to the website. Being able to submit word documents directly would be nice.”</p> <p>“Navigation browser is not always visible.”</p> <p>“I enjoy both of the systems. As of right now, Carmen is just more convenient due to the fact that I have more courses on Carmen. It is a little inconvenient to log on to a different site for one class.”</p>

Appendix B – Discursive Feedback

Middle of Term

	Faculty and Staff	Students
Positive	<p>“Ease of use. All of the functionality is easy to find and easy to configure. The default options seem to make sense. SpeedGrader is fantastic. The mobile apps are nice to use.”</p> <p>“It is very intuitive to student needs. The calendar is GREAT! Perfect for flipped class environment.”</p> <p>“The messaging system. I love being able to communicate straight through Canvas rather than emails.”</p> <p>“The increased efficiency using this LMS.”</p> <p>“I like many things about Canvas — very straightforward, very simple, clean interface. The analytics are very nice — but they seem quite limited, I would need to know more about how they inform about trends across multiple courses or multiple sections of the same class.”</p> <p>“If the students are happy, then I'm happy.”</p>	<p>“The grading system, way better than Carmen.”</p> <p>“It looks much smoother and runs faster. It has a mobile app.”</p> <p>“The module system is infinitely better than the Carmen system. I don't have to click through multiple pages to find what I need; it's all right in the module for the next day.”</p> <p>“I like to see my grades on Canvas. It's very easy and I can see my percentage in the class.”</p> <p>“The module organization.”</p> <p>“Very easy to use. I like the email notification I [receive] when the Grades are posted.”</p> <p>“I like that I can see my overall grade at all times.”</p> <p>“The feature that shows each grade and allows you to type in possible grade values.”</p>
Negative	<p>“I wish groups had more options.”</p> <p>“Some of the features that I suspect are used most heavily (gradebook, quizzes) especially in larger classes are woefully underdeveloped. No release conditions is a HUGE impediment to online classes, and we have invested so much in terms of developing online programs and courses, GE online — a significant effort will have to be made in redevelopment.”</p> <p>“Grading details not as robust as I would like.”</p> <p>“I still have no idea as to how to create or use modules. I would also like messages sent to me that highlights a feature or tool with clear instructions on what it is, what it does, and how to use it.”</p> <p>“Had some trouble understanding how to use the assignments feature and ultimately gave up.”</p>	<p>“Inbox system is slow and doesn't show read messages well.”</p> <p>“My professor does not use Canvas up to its potential, such as entering grades or putting assignments in.”</p> <p>“Not a clear notification system; I like the ‘red dot’ on Carmen.”</p> <p>“That more courses do not use it. The only downside to Canvas is when you window it instead of having it full screen Canvas decides that it doesn't need to show the drop down menu on the left which is mildly frustrating.”</p> <p>“It can be hard to navigate out of the pages. Not as easy as it could be.”</p> <p>“I do not like how the website is organized.”</p>

Appendix B – Discursive Feedback

End of Term

	Faculty and Staff	Students
Positive	<p>“Ease of use, it is more intuitive than any of the other 6 platforms I have used in my teaching career. Love the speed grader!!!! And ease of use of rubrics.”</p> <p>“I think it looks more organized and easier to follow. The graphics look nicer too.”</p> <p>“The ease of creating (assignments, content, announcements, etc.) in Canvas.”</p> <p>“The organization, calendar, communication, assignment/module creation.”</p> <p>“Once my students and I got used to it, we liked the streamlined design and the ability to navigate in several ways. I grew to appreciate both Speedgrader and the ability to provide comments, attach documents, and other options for responding to students' work. And the students appreciated comments that were longer and more specific, as well as more timely.”</p>	<p>“It works well on mobile.”</p> <p>“My favorite part is the grading section. Being able to include hypothetical grades and see your percentage as you go is extremely convenient in seeing how you are doing. Also, having the easy to view calendar with all of your class assignments, the to-do, and recently graded tabs are very convenient.”</p> <p>“The ease of use and access.”</p> <p>“It was extremely easy to understand and access. I could find the most relevant things about the course easily.”</p> <p>“I also enjoyed the access to audio and visual.”</p> <p>“I extremely enjoyed the grades feature of Canvas. Made it much easier to track your grades and calculate how new grades would affect your current grade.”</p>
Negative	<p>“The inbox feature would be better if it also linked to the student email. Confusing on how the individual vs. group feature works in the inbox. I also did not find the group feature easy to separate. For example, I wanted to be able to see overall schools for each individual group and have the option to grade each group separate, but Canvas does not do that.”</p> <p>“Usability sometimes means oversimplification...for example there are limited release conditions for content and the group discussions might be too simplistic.”</p> <p>“Only frustration lies in use of the email system to whole class. It just is not working smoothly like it does in Carmen.”</p>	<p>“The only thing I did not enjoy about Canvas was that any notification went to my junk mail instead of my inbox. Although that may be a problem on my end.”</p> <p>“One of my biggest issues with Canvas is how the grades are displayed. I don't like that when you first open up Canvas the grade you received on an exam is displayed to the left so if you are near other people they are able to see your grade even if you are just logging on to view modules and not your grades.”</p> <p>“Linked better with my other OSU sites. Canvas still has to link up with email and course sites.”</p>

Appendix C – Reported Problems

Selected Reported Problems from Faculty, Staff and Students

	Faculty and Staff	Students
Reported Problems	<p>“Some of the biggest problems have to do with the abilities of Canvas and the Quiz tools. Not being able to have a MC question with more than one answer being taken as correct (or allowing it to give partial credit for a response) was not something I expected to encounter and required modification to quizzes and tests. Additionally, the lack of regular expressions for [evaluating] the short answer questions is disappointing...”</p> <p>“Emailing the whole class list.”</p> <p>“Features are lacking in Canvas that I consider to be very important — cannot summarize the results of a rubric unless learning outcomes were previously set up. This makes it impossible to create a rubric "on the fly" or a rubric for a simple assignment that doesn't necessarily require links to learning outcomes. Also can't "re-code" rubrics if learning objective is changed or altered.”</p>	<p>“When first using, I wasn't aware that the browser needed to be expanded in order to view the navigation column for a course (Syllabus, etc).”</p> <p>“All of the emails being sent from Canvas to my buckeye mail account were sent to spam so I never saw them and I missed an assignment. I also think Canvas is very confusing to navigate and it makes it hard to find due dates.”</p> <p>“A window always pops up whenever I'm on Canvas using Safari (my only web browser) that says my web browser doesn't support the minimum requirements for Canvas.”</p> <p>“Inability to submit homework assignments.”</p> <p>“Not being able to post in discussion boards.”</p>
ODEE Mitigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ODEE has notified Canvas of the deficiencies in its quizzing tool. Canvas is working on a new quizzing tool that will incorporate some of the feedback provided by ODEE staff. • ODEE staff members worked with faculty and instructional staff to explore the ways different tools operate in Canvas. ODEE support staff provided instructions for faculty members to e-mail classlists in Canvas. Moreover, ODEE staff directed faculty and support staff to the Canvas Community for additional support using the platform. • The Rubric tool in Canvas does not provide the range of functionality faculty and staff would prefer. ODEE staff has discussed the limitations of the Rubric tool with Canvas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ODEE staff learned that resizing the browser window may cause the navigation menu to “disappear.” ODEE staff sent communications to instructors and students as well as posting resource center articles directing pilot participants to click on the “hamburger” icon to display the navigation menu. • The University E-mail Service was consulted regarding e-mails from Canvas flagged as spam. Canvas’ e-mail addresses are now whitelisted for university e-mail accounts. In addition, ODEE published resource center articles to support students and staff whitelisting Canvas e-mails in personal e-mail accounts. • Some web browsers are not supported by the Canvas platform. Canvas supports Internet Explorer 11, Edge, Chrome 46 and 47, Safari 8 and 9, and Firefox 42 and 43 (Extended Releases are not supported).