This Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) snapshot reports findings on junior and senior students' perceptions with regard to the impact of ELMS-Canvas on students' learning. The data represent results from the University of Maryland Student Survey (UMSS), an annual survey administered by the CAWG Assessing Campus Experiences Subgroup (ACES). Respondents completed the survey during the 2019 spring semester in Professional Writing courses.

This UMSS survey builds on previous research conducted by the Academic Technology Experience (ATEX) team within the Division of IT, which has characterized instructor and student ELMS-Canvas usage using system and survey data in order to inform design, training, and instruction. This UMSS survey probes further to understand how students perceive the relationship between specific ELMS-Canvas resources and their learning. With such combined insights, instructors and administrators will hopefully better understand, first, how ELMS-Canvas usage contributes to student learning at the University of Maryland and, second, how to better leverage ELMS-Canvas resources to enhance opportunities for learning.

The UMSS was administered in the spring of 2019. At that time, ELMS (Enterprise Learning Management System) and its online digital environment Canvas were widely used at UMD on a voluntary basis. In the spring of 2020, the university's move to an online environment required instructors to begin or further develop their use of technology tools such as ELMS.

Although our use of ELMS has changed significantly in 2020, ELMS-Canvas has not. This Snapshot captures attitudes toward ELMS that are useful in our current understanding of this important tool.
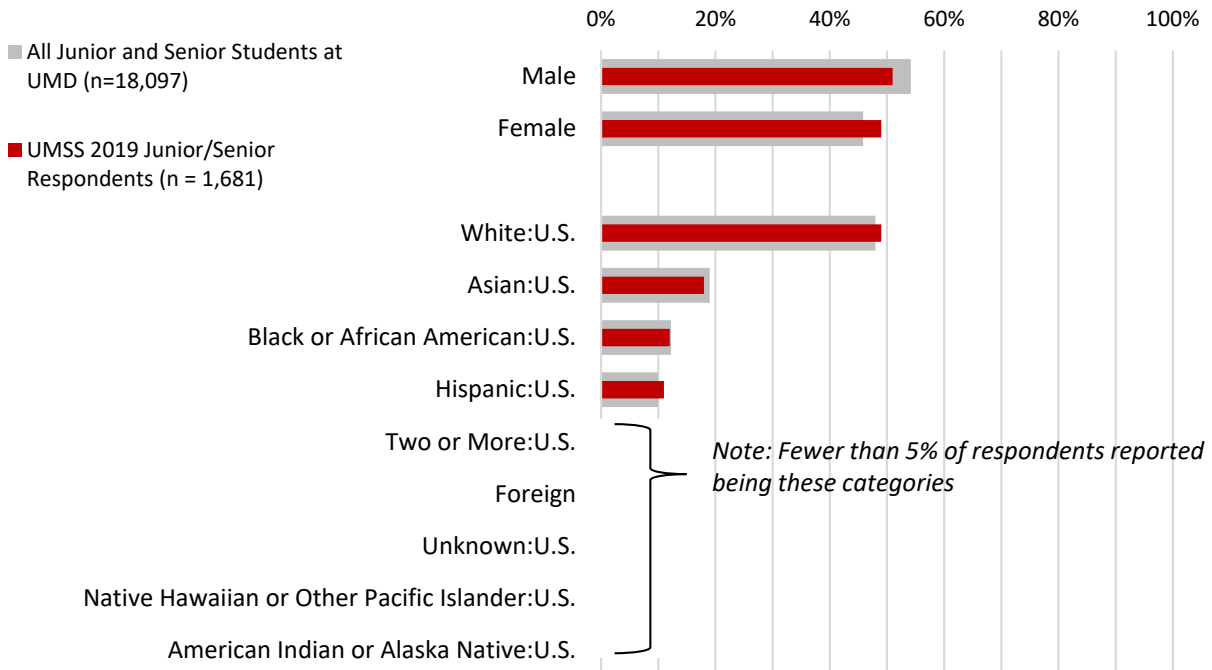
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Respondent Demographics

During the spring semester of 2019, 52% (1,834) of juniors and seniors who were enrolled in Professional Writing courses completed the survey. However, demographics were only available for 92% (*n* = 1,681) of these survey respondents. The demographic breakdown of respondents generally reflected that for all juniors and seniors.

As this is a convenience sample (those enrolled in Professional Writing in the spring semester), use caution when generalizing; the data in this snapshot represent only survey respondents, not all UMD students. Percentages may not sum to 100 throughout the report due to rounding.
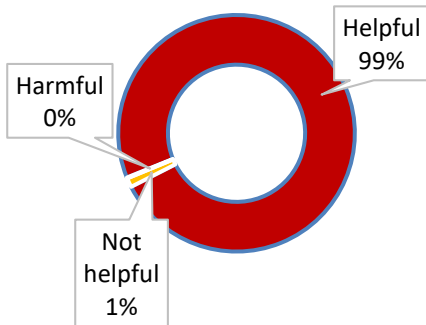
■ All Junior and Senior Students at UMD (n=18,097)

■ UMSS 2019 Junior/Senior Respondents (n = 1,681)

Male
Female

White:U.S.
Asian:U.S.
Black or African American:U.S.
Hispanic:U.S.
Two or More:U.S.
Foreign
Unknown:U.S.
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander:U.S.
American Indian or Alaska Native:U.S.

Note: Fewer than 5% of respondents reported being these categories

ELMS-Canvas Resources: Course Design

We asked students to evaluate how helpful ELMS-Canvas course design resources are to their learning, regardless of their contribution to the course grade.
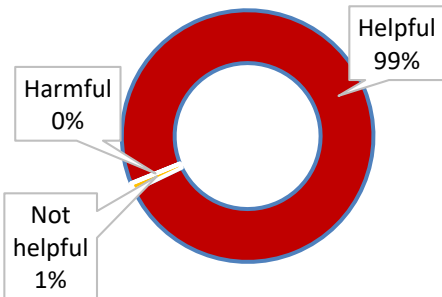
Assignment submission (ability to submit assignments electronically through ELMS-Canvas)
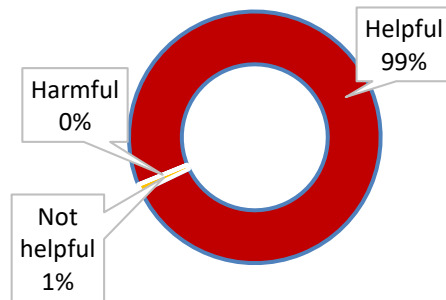
Used resource: 99%

- Helpful 99%
- Harmful 0%
- Not helpful 1%

Course materials available in ELMS-Canvas course site

Used resource: 99%

- Helpful 99%
- Harmful 0%
- Not helpful 1%

Having an ELMS-Canvas course space available

Used resource: 99%

- Helpful 99%
- Harmful 0%
- Not helpful 1%

Assignment and other activity due dates (deadlines that feed into ELMS-Canvas, To Do lists, etc.)

Used resource: 99%

- Helpful 96%
- Harmful 0%
- Not helpful 4%
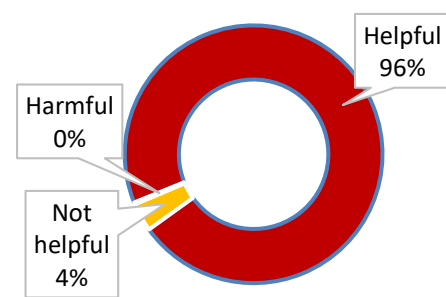
n = 1,676– 1,679 depending on item

Nearly all respondents reported using these four ELMS-Canvas resources and found them to be useful; these functions are essential to using ELMS-Canvas.

Questions to consider

Almost all respondents (at least 96%) who used these resources found them useful in their learning, but ATEX found that only 80% of courses use ELMS-Canvas. Why aren't some courses using ELMS-Canvas?
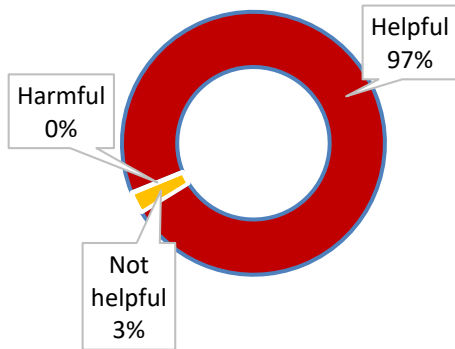
ELMS-Canvas Resources: Communication

We asked students to evaluate how useful ELMS-Canvas communication resources are to their learning, regardless of the resource's contribution to their grade.
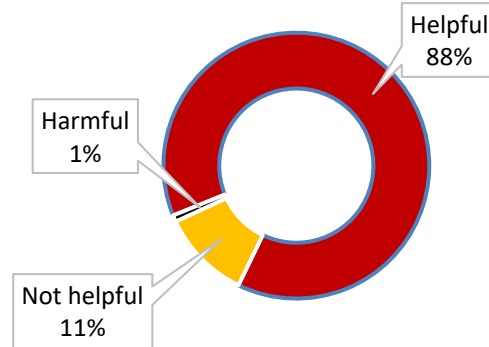
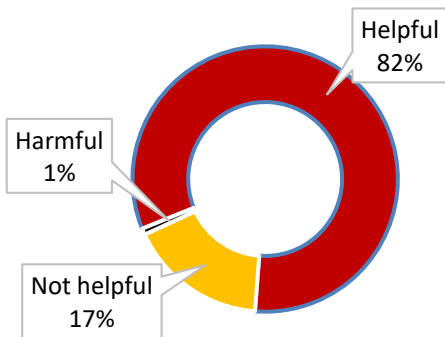### Announcements in ELMS-Canvas

Used resource: 99%

Helpful
97%

Harmful
0%

Not helpful
3%

Communication with instructor in ELMS-Canvas

Used resource: 89%

Helpful
88%

Harmful
1%

Not helpful
11%

Communication with other students in ELMS-Canvas

Used resource: 85%

Helpful
82%

Harmful
1%

Not helpful
17%

Discussion boards in ELMS-Canvas

Used resource: 89%

Helpful
69%

Harmful
2%

Not helpful
29%
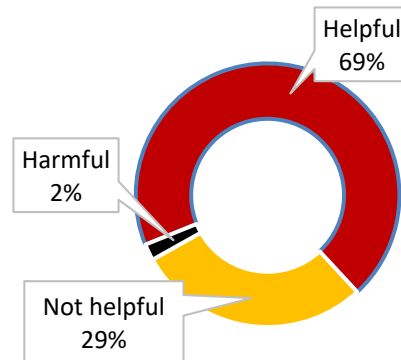
n = 1,676 – 1,679 depending on item

Even though announcements are almost universally used and found to be helpful, respondents report that two-way communications are less helpful, especially discussion boards (29%).


Questions to consider

Are students communicating with each other about their courses through other means and, if so, how and why are they using other platforms?

What makes a resource harmful as opposed to not helpful?

What role do faculty and students play in making conversation helpful?

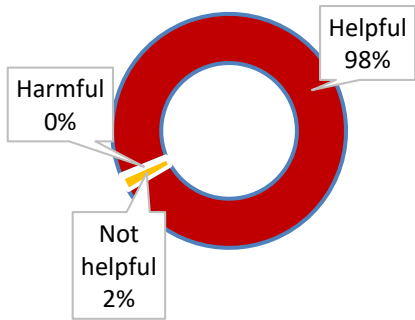Are there differences between online and in-person discussions? If so, what are they?
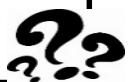
ELMS-Canvas Resources: Review and Grading

We asked students to evaluate how useful ELMS-Canvas grading resources are to their learning, regardless of their contribution to their grade.
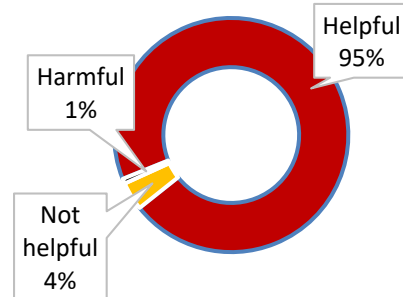
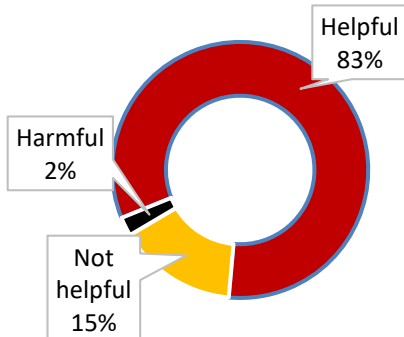### Up-to-date grades in ELMS-Canvas Gradebook
Used resource: 98%

Helpful
98%

Harmful
0%

Not
helpful
2%

Course average grade and spread for each ELMS-Canvas assignment
Used resource: 96%

Helpful
95%

Harmful
1%

Not
helpful
4%

Turnitin Document Review in ELMS-Canvas
Used resource: 68%

Helpful
83%

Harmful
2%

Not
helpful
15%

Peer Review through ELMS-Canvas
Used resource: 66%

Helpful
75%

Harmful
3%

Not
helpful
22%
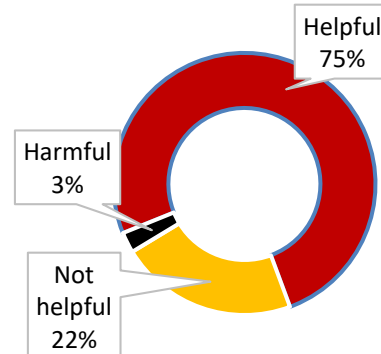
n = 1,672 – 1,678 depending on item

Peer review was one of the least used tools by students; of those who used it, 22% found it not helpful and 3% found it harmful.

Similarly, Turnitin was the second least used tool by students; of those who used it, 15% found it not helpful and 2% found it harmful.

Questions to consider

Which factors might impact students' perceptions of ELMS functions as helpful or harmful? What role does the faculty's use of ELMS functions play?

Why are Turnitin and Peer Review the least-used features of ELMS-Canvas? What factors might impact usage and how can the university encourage the use of these tools?

ELMS-Canvas Resources: Overarching Questions

Now that the March 2020 online learning migration is in effect, CAWG poses additional questions to consider:

What effect, if any, has the migration had on student communication within ELMS-Canvas; for example, communication with the instructor, communication with other students, discussion board participation, and peer review?

What effect, if any, has the online migration had on the civility of student communication? How have students' perceptions of communication within ELMS-Canvas changed? What can UMD do to help safeguard students in online instructional space?

How might the migration to the online environment impact future instructional methods long term?

How might the campus further investigate communication inside and outside the classroom, as well as possible enhancements to ELMS-Canvas?