



# From eCollege to D2L: A Sample of Student Experiences

Jose A. Lopez

Jose.Lopez@tamuc.edu



## INTRODUCTION

The College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) at Texas A&M University-Commerce began teaching online courses using the learning management system (LMS) eCollege (also called Pearson Learning Studio) in Spring 2009. In 2017, A&M-Commerce communicated to all faculty and staff that eCollege was going to be discontinued and began looking into alternative LMSs. A faculty from CASNR was selected to try Desire to Learn (D2L) in Spring 2018, followed by four faculty in Summer 2018, and full implementation of D2L in Fall 2018.

This study summarizes experiences and opinions of a sample of students from the CASNR at A&M-Commerce as they transitioned from eCollege to D2L. The study conducted a survey in Spring 2019 using Qualtrics to collect information about the level of student satisfaction with each LMS.

## OBJECTIVES

The general objective of this study is to serve as a venue for sharing and discussing opinions and experiences about learning management systems (LMS).

The specific objectives are:

- To summarize the plan/strategy that was used to transition into a new LMS;
- To document the challenges faced including each system's pros and cons;
- To identify qualities/characteristics for selecting a new LMS; and
- To provide the basics for assisting other universities in making similar LMS transition decisions.

## METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The Qualtrics XM Platform™ was used to conduct the survey. The survey consisted of 9 questions, 2 of which evaluated the students' satisfaction with respect to both LMS in terms of following dates, sending emails, accessing course materials, submitting or uploading and downloading materials, and following grades (refer to Tables 1 and 2). Only students who had used the corresponding LMS were allowed to rate it. Paired two-sample t-tests were conducted for those students who had taken at least one course in both LMSs to determine if ratings were statistically different.

Email invitations were sent out to all 465 CASNR students (415 undergraduate and 50 graduate students) to participate in the survey on March 26, April 2 (a week later), and April 24 (3 weeks later) during the Spring 2019 semester.

A total of 117 undergraduate (28.19%) and 17 graduate students (34.00%) responded for an overall response rate of 134/465 or 28.82%.

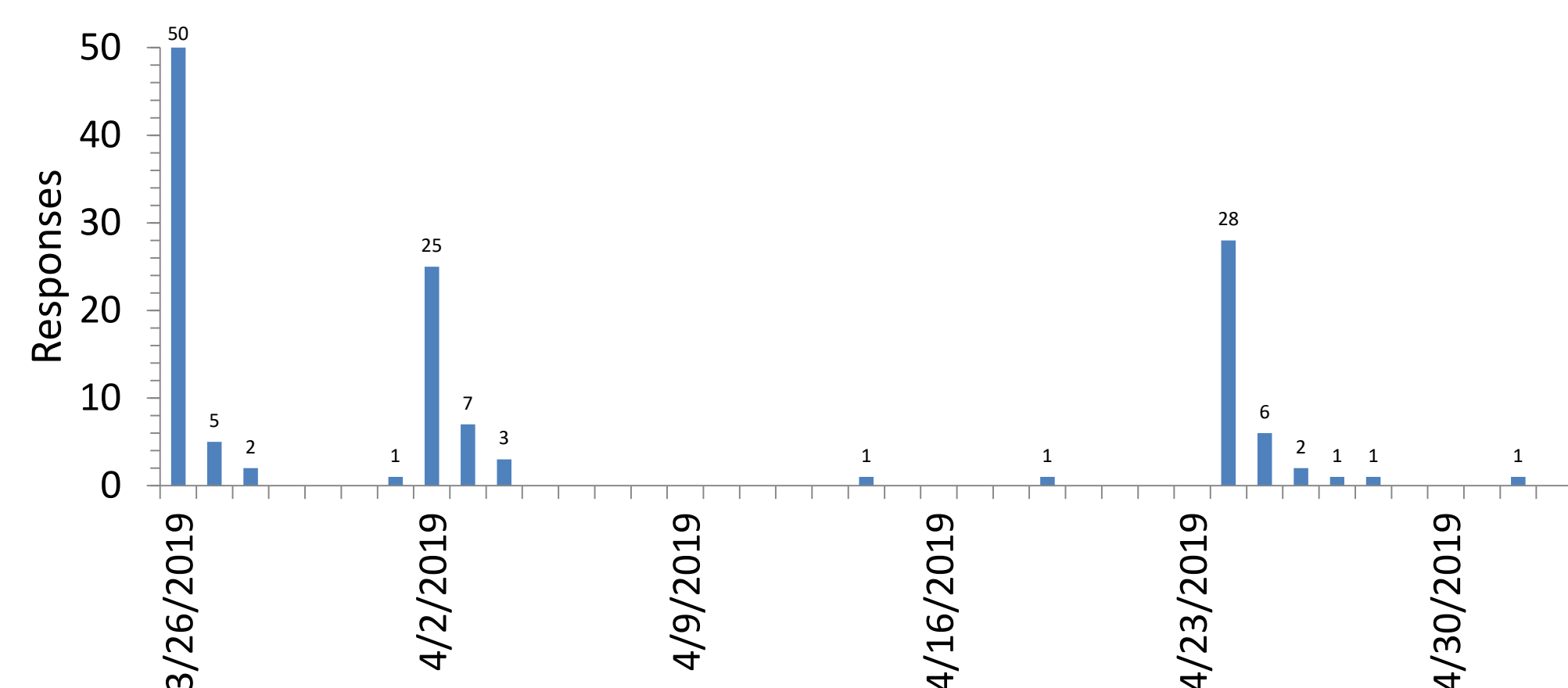


Figure 1. Response Distribution

## TABLES & FIGURES

Table 1. On the scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how was eCollege (OLD platform)?

	Poor	Fair	Avg.	Good	Exc.	Never Used It	Rating Avg.
How was it to follow dates (such as deadlines, access dates, etc.)?	3	4	12	29	5	1	3.55a
How was it to send emails (such as to contact the instructor or a classmate)?	2	4	22	15	5	6	3.35b
How was it to access course materials (such as lecture handouts, exercises, homework, etc.)?	3	2	10	27	12	0	3.80c
How was it to submit your answers (such as take quizzes and exams, and submit or upload your answers to assignments, etc.)?	0	5	8	23	18	0	4.00d
How was it to view or download graded materials?	1	6	10	21	14	2	3.79
How was it to follow your grades?	2	7	5	24	14	2	3.79e
Overall, how user friendly?	2	4	10	24	13	1	3.79f

Table 2. On the scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how was D2L (NEW platform)?

	Poor	Fair	Avg.	Good	Exc.	Never Used It	Rating Avg.
How was it to follow dates (such as deadlines, access dates, etc.)?	5	16	18	28	31	0	3.65a
How was it to send emails (such as to contact the instructor or a classmate)?	9	11	17	35	14	12	3.40b
How was it to access course materials (such as lecture handouts, exercises, homework, etc.)?	3	14	17	38	26	0	3.71c
How was it to submit your answers (such as take quizzes and exams, and submit or upload your answers to assignments, etc.)?	3	14	15	39	27	0	3.74d
How was it to view or download graded materials?	10	13	19	31	24	1	3.47
How was it to follow your grades?	19	9	19	28	22	1	3.26e
Overall, how user friendly?	7	13	19	41	17	1	3.49f

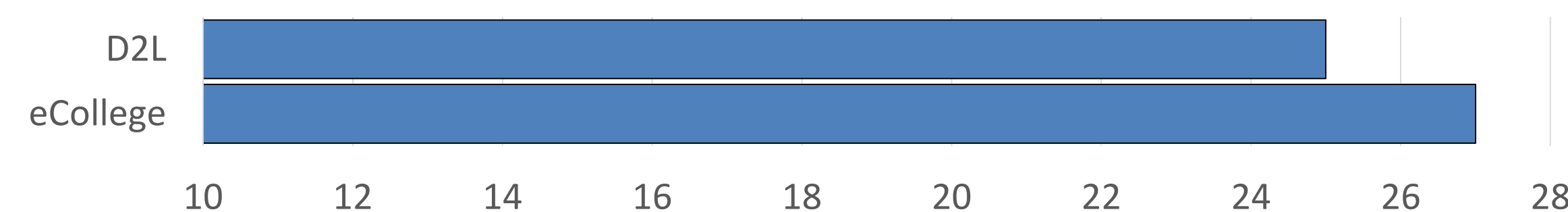


Figure 2. Overall, which LMS do you like better?

## RESULTS

Of the 134 students who participated in the survey:

- 54.5% started as a freshman while 45.5% were transfer students;
- 20.9% were freshmen, 20.9% sophomores, 24.6% juniors, 20.9% seniors, and 12.7% were graduate students;
- 9.7% had taken fully online courses only, 23.1% enhanced courses only, and 67.2% both;
- 60.4% of the students have taken an online course somewhere else (other than A&M-Commerce) while 39.6% have not;

Of the 103 students who had taken fully online courses:

- 55 students had taken a course at A&M-Commerce in our old platform (eCollege), 47 students had not, and 1 did not answer any further;
  - 54 students rated eCollege (Table 1)
- 99 student had taken a course at A&M-Commerce in our new platform (D2L) while 2 had not, and 1 more did not answer any further;
  - 98 students rated D2L (Table 2)
- 52 students answered the question which learning management system they like better (Figure 2)

Paired two-sample t-tests, conducted for those students who rated both LMSs, indicated that eCollege ratings are not statistically different from D2L ratings at 5% significance level, except for downloading graded material. That is, at the 5% significance level, sample size 49 students, the sampled data suggested eCollege ratings were higher (and also different) from D2L ratings only in terms of downloading graded materials.

## CONCLUSIONS

eCollege was hypothesized to be perceived as more user friendly due to its simplicity since it generally required less clicks to perform essential activities such as sending an email to the class or downloading graded materials. D2L was hypothesized to stand out for its many features and capabilities, but it generally required more clicks which made it more difficult to get familiar with at first. From faculty point of view, D2L also had features that may be unlikely to be used, such as dropping the highest grade; and D2L may also be more time consuming when grading assignments due to the use of two scroll bars.

Generally, eCollege received higher ratings than D2L in terms of accessing course materials, submitting or uploading and downloading materials, and following grades (refer to Tables 1 and 2). However, eCollege ratings were statistically different from D2L ratings only for downloading graded material.

Generally, D2L received higher ratings than eCollege in terms of following dates and sending emails (refer to Tables 1 and 2); however, D2L ratings were not statistically from eCollege in neither of these two functions.

Although there is a learning curve associated with mastering a new LMS; in general, D2L was found to performing up to par.

A similar survey will be conducted to collect information about the experiences and opinions of CASNR faculty on transitioning from eCollege to D2L.