

Canvas™ K-12 Case Study

Park City School District and Canvas™

canvas k-12

INSTRUCTURE



Institution Type

K-12 School District

Interesting Facts

Park City is nestled in Utah's Wasatch Mountains, about 7,000 feet above sea level

This former mining town is home to the U.S. Ski Team and the renowned Sundance Film Festival, and is a winter sports haven for the rich and famous

Several students compete internationally in skiing and ice-skating

Population

Middle School students	700+
Junior High students	700+
High School students	1,000+
Faculty	300

After funneling thousands of dollars into education technology, Park City School District reached a point where *more* wasn't necessarily *better*. According to Mike Kisow, district technology coach, "There were simply more places for files to get lost." To tackle this issue plus narrow the technology gap between families of diverse incomes, district officials determined to implement a 1-to-1 program where each student would be assigned a laptop until graduation.

The Challenge

- Matching the LMS to the 1-to-1 Program

When district officials first discussed how to best implement the program, they focused primarily on logistical and hardware issues. "In hindsight," Kisow recalls, "**the real value-added piece would be the LMS.**" After evaluating several competing LMS offerings from companies like Blackboard, Pearson, and Moodle in March 2010, they learned about Canvas™ by Instructure™.

It's safe to say **Canvas offered everything district officials were looking for:** cloud hosting and storage, an integrated calendar, ePortfolios, Google Docs integration, and native web conferencing, to name a few capabilities. They were also impressed that Canvas was intuitive and easy to use. Kisow immediately recognized Instructure as a forward thinking technology company that would provide an outstanding product with excellent customer support.

Implementation

- Easy to Set Up, a Breeze to Use

Beginning in August 2010 with Ecker Hill Middle School (700+ students), Park City decided to roll out the 1-to-1 program jointly with Canvas over a three-year period. Kisow says the students required **virtually no training** to learn the interface. Canvas is familiar to the average Internet user because it's built with the same technology as popular websites. "Our problem was that they found the features too fast," Kisow recalls, jokingly.

Due to tight scheduling, the district had less than a month to train the first round of teachers and set up Canvas throughout the school. Initially, Kisow

"Canvas is the most value-added element to our 1-to-1 program."

— Mike Kisow, Technology Coach
Park City School District

conducted a handful of half-day training sessions, which went well overall. But he observed that job-embedded training would be more appropriate since **teachers didn't have to learn Canvas per se**. Instead, they had to learn how to set up their individual classes on Canvas. Kisow now offers new teachers a half-hour demonstration of the interface and they return later with course-specific questions.

Teachers quickly learned Canvas on their own, which led them to creating their own pages immediately. While this proved the solution's ease-of-use, it also created a problem, too much variety. Administrators collaborated with the Instructure support team to tightly tailor the template and provide fewer options to teachers. After a few months, they struck a sensible balance between teacher autonomy and a uniform look and feel.

In August 2011, Park City introduced Canvas and the 1-to-1 program to Treasure Mountain Junior High (also 700+ students). **"In a matter of months we had thousands of courses in Canvas**, which is a testament to its relevance and functionality," Kisow says. Looking forward, the district plans to complete the final phase and introduce the program in the fall of 2012 to Park City High School (1,000+ students). This will total over 2,400 students and **(approximately 300)** instructors using Canvas throughout the district.

The Outcome

- Creating More Avenues for Teaching

Mike Kisow is confident that each teacher can accomplish virtually any task using Canvas. "I tell them, 'Get



your crazy idea and **I can guarantee you we can make it work in Canvas.**" The most widely used features in the district are Speedgrader™, Modules, and the Integrated Calendar, the latter having supplanted the paper-based planners the district once purchased for each student.

Teachers enjoy the ease of communication and assignment submission. For example, an English teacher who was initially resistant to an LMS because she prefers grading by hand, learned that through the "Download all" feature she could print all of her students' essays in just a few clicks. Students can submit their assignments conveniently online while she continues to grade them by hand. Even the P.E. department at Treasure Mountain Junior High now has an online presence and uses Canvas to post rules to sports like badminton, among other things.

Kisow attests to the solution's "unique ability to not pigeonhole any of my people. **Canvas really does offer**

something for all of my instructors." It has also brought a common language to the 1-to-1 program. "It doesn't matter if you speak 'math' or 'literature' or 'history' or even 'P.E.' everyone here speaks Canvas."

He concludes, "Canvas is common, controlled, secure, and scalable. **Canvas is the most value-added element to our 1-to-1 program.**"

About Instructure™

Instructure, Inc. is a technology company focused on improving education. Founded in 2008 by two Computer Science graduate students, Instructure built Canvas™ — the only commercial open-source learning management system and the only LMS native to the cloud. Instructure now services over 100 institutions in higher education and K-12. Investors include OpenView Ventures Partners, EPIC Ventures, and TomorrowVentures.



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