

## Engaging Students Through Technology Symposium Student Survey 2015

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### Synthesis of Results

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The 2015 Student Survey was designed by the symposium organizing team, and distributed broadly via Canvas, email and blogs. This document provides a partial snapshot; deeper analysis will be posted on the symposium website at a later date. Please send comments to Anu Vedantham, Director, Weigle Information Commons at [vedantha@upenn.edu](mailto:vedantha@upenn.edu)  
Survey Dates: October 8 to 21, 2015 Number of Responses: 942 (Usable: 938)

### Responses by School and Year

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School	Number
SAS	629
SEAS	145
Wharton	160
Nursing	59
Total	938

Class Year	Number
First-year	343
Sophomore	228
Junior	145
Senior	186
Fifth Year / Other	36
Total	938

### Question: What should your professors do to help you engage more with required reading?

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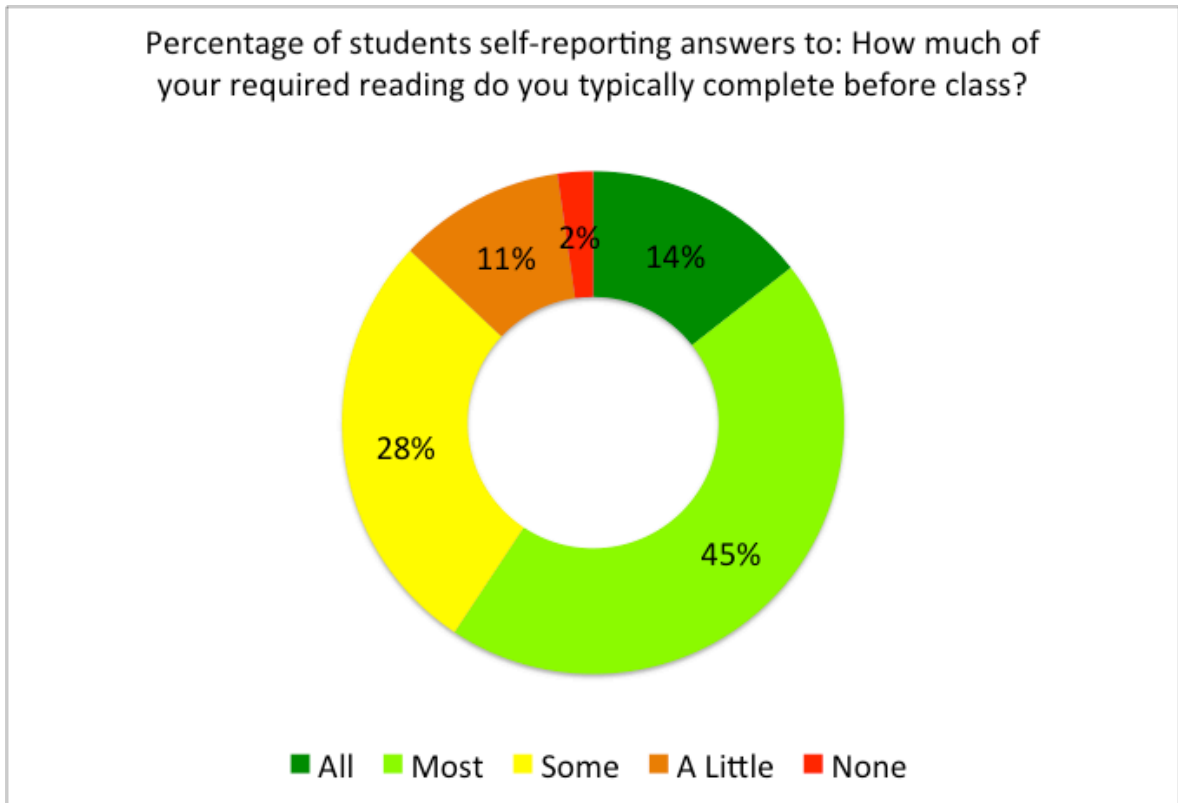
Technique	Votes
Discuss readings during class sessions	563
Provide guiding questions or roadmap	418
Canvas Discussion Board	236
Ask me to create a summary	191
Reading Quizzes	185
Ask me to present / teach the content to my peers	173
Use tweets and social media	88
Ask me to create an annotated bibliography	9

### How do you prefer to receive feedback from your professor?

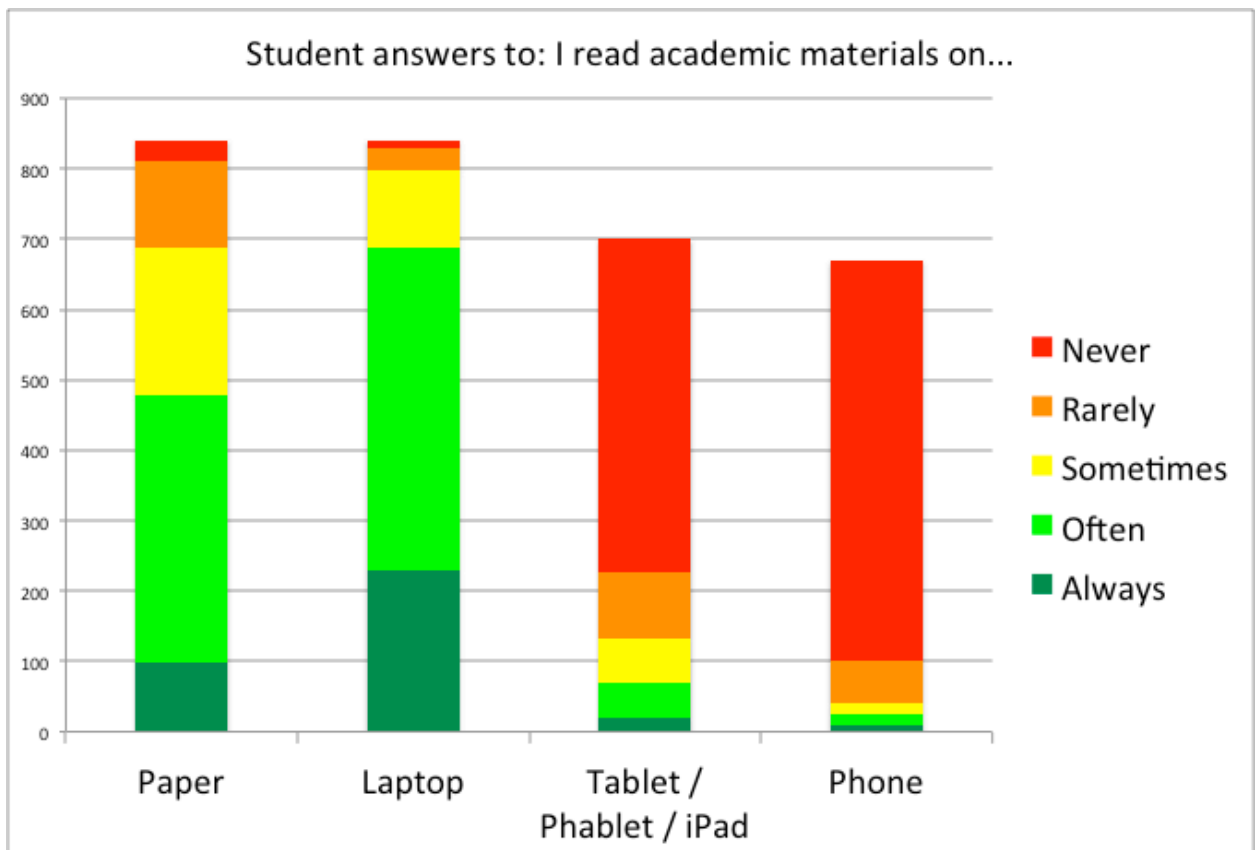
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Technique	Votes
In-person (after class, by appointment or office hours)	433
Hand-written on paper	409
Through Canvas Gradebook	354
Personal email	292
"Track changes" on a Word document	187
Video or audio commentary	12

Question: How much of your required reading do you typically complete before class?



Question: I read academic materials on...



## Question: What are your reflections on exams and quizzes through Canvas?

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The results of this survey reflect different views on the effectiveness of Canvas as tool for test and quiz administration. Most students agree that they don't mind taking short quizzes on Canvas, with some actually preferring that method for its convenience. Essays also seem to be generally accepted on Canvas, though the potential for technical difficulties leaves some students concerned. There appears to be a general distaste for taking exams online because of their inflexibility and the unforgiving nature of the online grading system, which marks submissions as incorrect if the answer submitted doesn't exactly match what the system recognizes as a correct answer. Additionally, the ability to work out problems with pen and paper, as compared to online systems that generally don't allow for that, is another benefit of traditional assessments. Several students remarked that online assessments make cheating much easier, creating academic integrity issues. Many students simply do not like the technological takeover, preferring the nature of human interaction found in taking an essay or exam with paper and pen.

## Question: This year's theme is Ed Tech 2020. What technology can you imagine in use for Penn courses in 2020?

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**Vision:** All of the chalkboards are replaced with smart-board like devices. All lectures are recorded automatically (including annotations professors make and questions students ask) and available for students to view on iPads or tablets. Classroom seating supports laptop and iPad use, and desks have built-in touch screens. Endless practice problems are available for all tests. All homework and problem sets are completed and submitted online and all textbooks and lecture notes are in digital form. Booking of rooms, office hours and group study meetings is online without requiring email. Clickers are replaced by apps for student phones. Students can Skype with professors for office hours.

### **Details:**

More than fifty students mentioned the importance of recording what happens in lecture. They recommended video, audio, screen-recording and transcripts of what the professor says and the questions students ask. They described advantages of watching lecture recordings at high-speed and quickly finding a section of a recording during study meetings. More than 20 students mentioned specific technologies: Piazza, Canvas, 3D printing, smartboards, clickers, holograms, laptops, tablets and iPads.

More than twenty students talked about the importance of reducing the emphasis on technology and increasing human face-to-face connections during class with comments such as, "Force professors to interact with students personally" and the need to ensure that "professors are conscious of the amount of technology use and make sure to utilize face-to-face interactions and discussions as the primary source of communication."

Clickers received both positive and negative comments with some students wanting clicker-type activities through their cell phones and others appreciating the option to interact during lectures. Students desperately wanted more interactive classrooms, with comments such as "Hopefully no more PowerPoint!"

Students mentioned technologies such as 3D scanning, holograms, 3D video, hoverboards, Slack, Trello, Google Keep, Google Glass, McGraw Connect, nervegear, Oculus Rift, Tesla Powerwall and Microsoft Hololense. Light-hearted suggestions included "robot cat companions," "sharks with frickin' laser beams" and "robots to carry papers to and from lecture halls." Futuristic suggestions included teleporters, time travel, holographic teachers on cell phones "helping us with assignments" and a "next generation sequencing machine in the biology department".