

# VIKTOR RYDBERG GYMNASIUM

PART OF THE VIKTOR RYDBERG SCHOOLS

Promoting Technology Adoption to Drive Blended Learning

**LEVEL:** High School

**INITIATIVE:** Adoption and Student Experience

**USERS:** 200 Students



Canvas was procured to replace disparate and outdated IT systems, and provide a cohesive and collaborative approach to course delivery.



Canvas allows the group of schools to offer a blended learning experience - empowering students to learn in a way that suits them.



The schools were impressed by the comprehensive and flexible platform and its ease of use.

## THE CHALLENGE

In the face of a national teacher shortage, competition between education institutions in Sweden is fierce. To attract and retain staff, and to effectively serve an increasing student population, schools and colleges must offer a better working environment for teachers as well as an engaging and personalised learning experience for students.

Viktor Rydberg Schools are a group of five public schools in Stockholm, tasked with preparing advanced students for success in tertiary education. The group believes it's vital that students are not only academically qualified, but also equipped with a variety of practical skills and capabilities.

To help students focus on the best possible outcome, it was important that VRG delivered upon a cohesive learning experience and support their teachers in developing innovative approaches to pedagogy. Therefore, the schools



collectively agreed to make a significant investment into a blended learning model. A blended learning approach would enable students to learn on their own terms and in their own way while allowing them to have more access to one-on-one and small group seminars with their teachers; using technology to leverage more quality time with their teachers.

WHAT VRG LIKES ABOUT CANVAS:

*“CANVAS ENABLES FLEXIBLE, MEASURABLE AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING. IT IS ADAPTABLE AND SCALABLE AND WILL SUPPORT US AS WE GROW.”*

*Kristy Lundström, Principal at VRG Djursholm*

**THE DECISION**

VRG recognised the power of digital technologies in empowering students to learn in a flexible and mobile environment. “Historically, we’ve used a number of disparate IT tools,” says Kristy Lundström, Principal at VRG Djursholm. “The ability to offer a coherent blended learning environment across disciplines and platforms has been difficult.”

*“WE NEEDED A SYSTEM THAT WOULD ALLOW OUR TALENTED STAFF TO CONTINUE DEVELOPING FLEXIBLE AND CREATIVE TEACHING PRACTICES, BUT THAT WOULD ALSO HELP US DELIVER A CONSISTENT EXPERIENCE.”*

“Added to this was the need to operate within the strict national curriculum parameters in Sweden. A tough challenge for any tech provider!”

“We evaluated products from traditional LMS vendors as well as from MOOC providers and publishers, but Canvas offered something different. It goes beyond ‘features and functions’ and enables flexible, measurable and collaborative learning. It is adaptable and scalable and will support us as we grow.”

For the VRG group, adoption was crucial. They needed not just to procure and implement this new system, but to familiarise teaching staff and students with the benefits it could bring. “Change is never simple,” continues Kristy, “Canvas is easy to implement, but persuading a group of institutions to fundamentally change the way they work is less straightforward. Canvas has been a true partner through this process with responsive, collaborative and tailored support.”

**THE RESULT**

To help teachers and students understand the benefits of Canvas, the group is taking a staggered approach to change. The group is currently piloting Canvas within Kristy’s high school, Viktor Rydberg Gymnasium in Djursholm, before it is rolled out across the group. Kristy said, “We know that more hesitant staff may need reassurance and guidance from their peers - and a step-by-step approach is helping. Teachers who are ahead of the curve - the early adopters - are promoting Canvas within the group. According to our surveys, students who have used Canvas in one course are actively asking for it from other teachers.

“For us, blended learning, led by teachers, involves leveraging the technology to afford each student a more personal learning experience, including increased student influence over the time, place, path, and/or pace of learning,” Kristy continued. “But for some, student empowerment brings with it the threat of diminished teacher influence. Using Canvas is different. At our school, we are focused on creating the best possible learning environment. The Canvas tools which collect information on performance, and enable real-time and actionable insights are important in empowering both students and teachers. Being able to adjust teaching quickly to address student needs can increase engagement and ultimately improve student learning results. Teachers are the most important factor in our students’ learning. We must equip them with the best tools.”

Kristy concludes, “Students, teachers and managers all have a hand in evaluating and using Canvas — and ultimately this will guarantee its successful adoption. We’d counsel other institutions, in a similar position, to realise that while implementing new technology can be daunting, the benefits of the investment will far outweigh any apprehensions.

*“CANVAS IS A GAME CHANGER, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO REAPING THE REWARDS.”*