LTDU

Digital Future

March 2005

The Newsletter of the Learning Technology Development Unit

Contents

Welcome... *to the second Newsletter from the Learning Technology Development Unit in SSDD.*

*This issue will focus on the progess that UCE is making with **Moodle**, the new virtual learning environment for UCE.*

Please Sir, can I have some more Moodle?

Painting by Nicola Bartholomew, School of Radiography, H&CC, UCE.
Reproduced courtesy of the artist. All Rights Reserved. ©
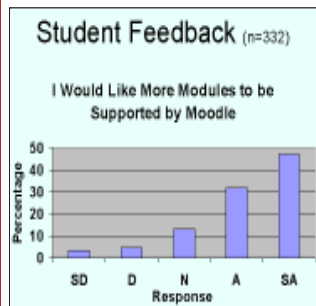
Overall Analysis showing agreement (A,SA)
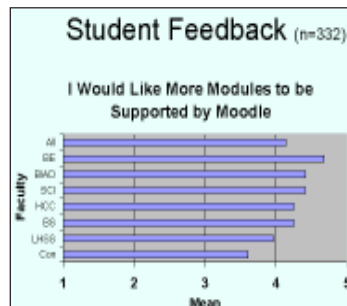
Analysis by Faculty showing mean agreement (4)
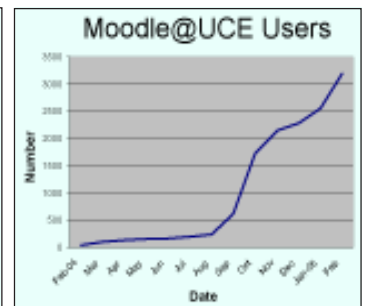
Number of Moodle@uce users over time

Alan Staley
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Edited by Alan Staley / Designed by Balbir K Sagoo

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Moodle @ UCE >> Students' Perspectives of Moodle >> Alan Staley

Alan Staley

The introduction of Moodle at UCE has represented a major shift in focus for IT development, away from administrative support for a relatively small number of administrators working 9 – 5 inside the university, to directly enabling academic staff to do their jobs and provi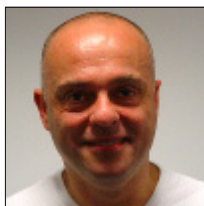de customer support to huge numbers of students 24x7x365 anywhere in the world. Such a radical shift needs some evaluation!

The first question, of course, is do our students want this? Now that we have piloted up to ten modules being supported by Moodle in each faculty we have had the opportunity to ask them what they think of it, and I must say that the response has been beyond my wildest dreams (yes, I do dream about Moodle!).

At this stage the evaluation has been very brief – a survey including just three statements and a Likert scale - although many students have added qualitative comments that prove very useful. A more detailed evaluation will take place at the end of the second semester.

The first statement was 'I enjoy using Moodle', and the response is shown in figure 1. This has surprised even myself, as I expected the responses to be polarised – some loving it, some hating it! But, as you can see, in the main students do enjoy using Moodle.
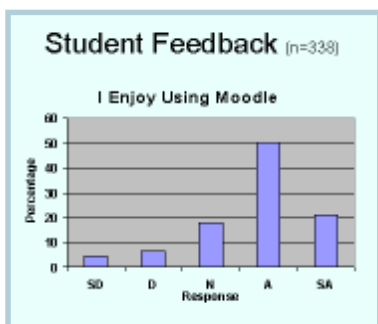
Moodle refreshes the parts that other systems cannot reach....

Note that this phenomenon is occurring in all faculties (figure 2) – not just in the faculties with a technical bias.

BE   Built Environment

BIAD   Birmingham Institute of Art & Design

BS   Business School

Con   Conservatoire

HCC   Health & Commuity Care

LHSS   Law, Humanities, & Social Sciences

SCI   School of Computing and Information

NB. There is no response from the Faculty of Education as they are not semesterised.

The next statement was 'Moodle has helped me to learn'. Now clearly, this is just a perception; we are not trying to prove that the students' performance has improved because of Moodle – not yet. Again, the results are very encouraging (figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3. Overall student response to the statement 'Moodle has helped me to learn the subject'.
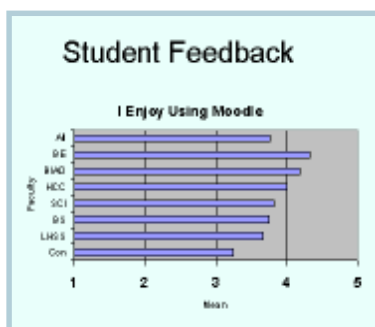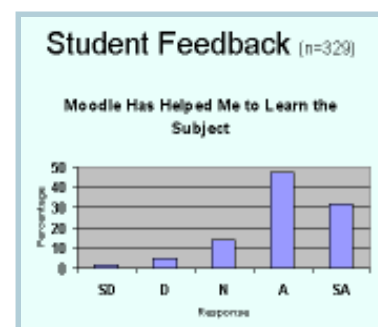
Figure 2. Analysis by Faculty

1 - SD   (strongly disagree)
2 - D   (disagree)
3 - N   (neutral)
4 - A   (agree)
5 - SA   (strongly agree)

Figure 1. Overall student response to the statement 'I enjoy using Moodle'

Figure 4. Analysis by Faculty

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Moodle @ UCE >> Students' Perspectives of Moodle >> Alan Staley
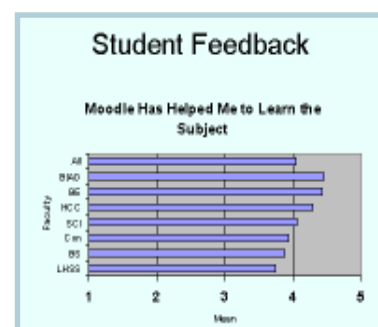
The last statement was 'I would like more modules to be supported by Moodle'. The results in figures 5 and 6 look fairly conclusive don't they?
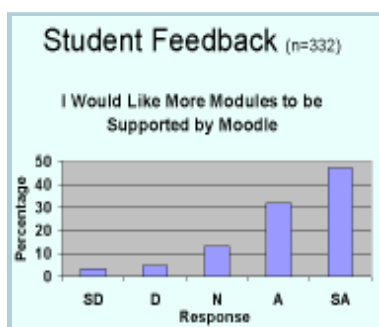

Figure 5. Overall student response to the statement 'I would like more modules to be supported by Moodle'.
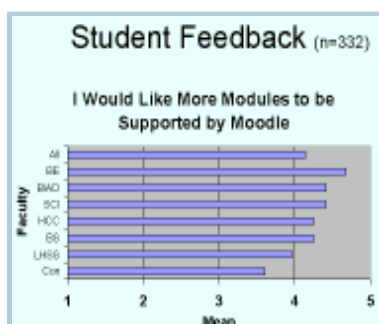

Figure 6. Analysis by Faculty.

To supplement this set of results, here are some comments from students. They were not asked for – students simply scribbled underneath the statements or turned the paper over.

♦ *"Compared to Boris,* [a faculty-based system] *it does make learning a lot more interesting."* (BE Student)

♦ *"I would worry if a future theory module was not supported by Moodle."* (BIAD Student)

♦ *"I think it is an excellent resource that most students on other modules are deprived of."* (BS Student)

♦ *"It has been suggested that all modules go onto Moodle."* (Extract from student feedback to HCC Board of Studies)

Students obviously want the support Moodle can enable. Those students that are not having their modules supported by Moodle clearly feel disadvantaged. So, once the pilots are finished, and Moodle is available to all, I hope you will make use of it. If not, be prepared for one persistent question from the students next academic year:

"Why isn't this module supported by Moodle?"

Another analysis that can give us clues to how valuable Moodle is to the students, is to examine the usage logs. Typically, even at this pilot stage, there are 20,000 records per day. A record occurs when a student enters a module, opens a file, completes a quiz, posts a forum message etc. In other words, Moodle is being used extensively, and there is a huge volume of data moving between academic staff and students.

The only quiet time on Moodle is usually between 3.00 AM and 5.00 AM. The 'night owls' burning the midnight oil have usually had enough by 3.00 AM, but the 'larks' are normally up by 5.00 AM ready to Moodle the day away. Saturdays and Sundays are just another day.

Perhaps it is the analysis over the Christmas vacation that really demonstrates the world in which we now live. Figure 7 shows a day-by-day analysis, starting with Christmas Eve, and figure 8 reveals an hourly breakdown on Christmas Day.
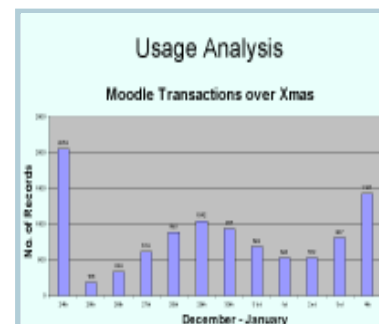
Figure 7. The number of Moodle records over the Christmas holidays.
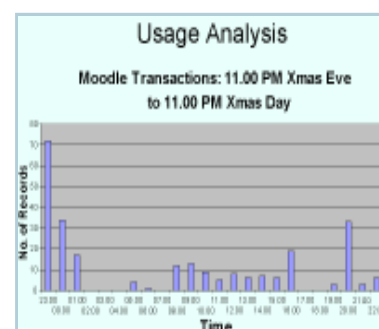
Figure 8. The number of Moodle records occurring throughout Christmas Day.

Since then, Moodle activity has increased dramatically over the examination period, and staff have noticed students accessing Moodle not only a few minutes before examinations, but also a few minutes after them – the modern equivalent of an examination post-mortem!

Moodle has without doubt extended the opportunity for students to learn. It has given them something back after many changes within the university have reduced what we offer. We can all see the consequence of semesterising whilst still keeping terms – huge voids in the academic year when there is no teaching. As I write this article I can see just how much students have gained from Moodle between the end of the autumn term and the start of the second semester.

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Julian Killingley

I have had past experience of maintaining web pages for modules using FrontPage and have found it a troublesome and time consuming task. I first learned about Moodle shortly before this academic year began and resolved to give it a try. The introductory module "e-learning at UCE" is both easy to follow and provides a good showcase for Moodle's capabilities. Three days after enrolling I was up and running and designing my first Moodle modules. Within a month I had five modules up and open for student enrolment and by the end of the semester I had eight modules on the server.

Moodle is a very different package to FrontPage and has some specialist inbuilt capabilities and the inestimable advantage of being easy to build and maintain. Even the most technophobic colleague should be able to build a basic module from existing materials. Although most of my Moodle modules are for course support, I built a self-instructional module for students wishing to learn how to research American law using the Westlaw database. This can be found as *American Legal Research* in the LH&SS courses – Guest access is permitted and there is open enrolment.

Teaching students how to search databases in group sessions is difficult as the class tends to proceed at the pace of the slowest member and is disrupted by the 101 things that tend to go wrong in a room full of computers. My self-instructional module allows students to go at their own pace and access the instructional material from home or on campus. It also allows students to start the module at any time of year.

The module contains a range of resources:

It is delivered in a "copy what I do" style that intersperses text with screen shots. Screen shots were made using SnagIt 7 which comes with a powerful editor that allows you to annotate the screenshots with arrows, text bubbles, highlights etc, and draw attention to particular parts of the screen shot:

The module concludes with an online basic competence assessment. Students have mostly found it a good way of learning how to do American research. The initial investment in time and effort designing the instructional text and the online assessment allows me to concentrate on identifying those areas that still cause problems for some students. I gave a single remedial lecture for those who had failed the assessment in which I performed searches and did the test online. Since Moodle had captured the students' responses, I was able to identify most of their cognitive errors when I worked through the assessment in class. This in turn guided me as to how I could modify my original instructions. It is quite a humbling experience to

discover just how readily students can misunderstand instructions that you believe to be crystal clear.

This module will become progressively more refined as I analyse more learner cognitive errors and adjust the instructional text to correct them. **I expect there to be a substantial time saving payoff in future years – both for me and for those learning.** The chief maintenance task for a module such as this is to ensure that the screen shots in the text reflect current reality in the database, as students find it disconcerting if they follow instructions and their screen does not look just the same as the screen shot in the text. In all I am very happy with Moodle and have no intention of going back to FrontPage course websites.

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David Saint

The advent of Moodle was possibly greeted with a degree of scepticism in the Conservaroire where one-to-one teaching is at the heart of all our courses. The majority of our teaching staff are involved in the delivery of these individual lessons and the highly personal and interactive nature of these sessions is both vital and jealously guarded.

However, members of our young and talented academic team were quick to identify the potential benefits of e-learning for class-taught modules such as History, Analysis, Performance Practice and Professional Development. In particular, the enthusiasm of Steve Halfyard led to her being seconded for a day a week to help develop Moodle for the University and for the Conservatoire. With the expert help of Steve, we now have Moodle pages for 11 modules. The highlighting of two modules will give an indication of the ways in which we have found Moodle to be a valuable teaching and learning resource.

Our first year undergraduate History module has recently been delivered as blocks of three lectures followed by a week of small-group workshops designed to strengthen the students' learning. Integrated into the workshops is a study skills element covering areas such as bibliography, plagiarism, developing a thesis and structuring an essay. We have found that the need for the study-skills work is so great that the discussion of module-related issues has suffered. Moodle has gone a long way in helping us redress the balance because it allows the student to work in his/her own time concentrating on the areas which are weakest and can be set up to give instant feedback. Some of the areas covered in Moodle for this module are:

♦ Time management (quiz)
♦ What kind of learner are you? (quiz)
♦ Taking notes (guide)
♦ How to avoid plagiarism (guide + lesson)
♦ Bibliographies and referencing (guide + lesson)
♦ Structuring your essay (guide)
♦ Lecture handouts

- and much more besides. The other module of special interest is the Year 4 Major Project which requires students to complete a learning contract. The refining of contracts in previous years has been a tortuous process involving many paper versions of the contract and much staff time. Working on the contracts via Moodle has been a significantly more efficient and effective process for three main reasons:

♦ Students work at their own pace
♦ Students do not have to make tutorial appointments to receive feedback on their work
♦ Staff can view the work at their convenience and deliver informal formative feedback electronically.

Undoubtedly we are only at the beginning of developing and understanding the potential of Moodle, but so far we are pleased, excited and even enthusiastic. The Conservatoire embraces Moodle warmly!

Cyril dreamed that one day after landing on the Moon, man would invent a

Modular
Object -
Oriented
Dynamic
Learning
Environment

to drag Crumpton University out of the dark ages.

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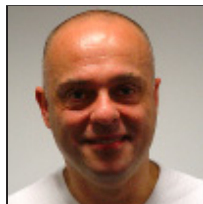
Alan Staley

One of the main reasons for adopting Moodle here at UCE is because it is so flexible and it enables academic staff to support their modules in a variety of ways. In a university with such diverse teaching methods as ours, any system that relies on a standard template is bound to meet resistance.

While this flexibility is very advantageous, it does beg the questions of staff new to Moodle of 'where do I start' and 'what should I do in Moodle and what should I do face-to-face'? As there is little distance e-learning at UCE, getting the 'blend' right between what happens online and what happens in class is all important. To help you think through some of the options, have a look at the 'e-learning Blender' opposite and make a note on the scale what would be most appropriate in your own context.

Another approach for staff to consider might be to re-visit the curriculum model that underpins their modules, and then to 'map' the technology to it. I've tried to do this below. This is a bit simplistic, and there can be plenty of overlaps, but I hope that you find it a helpful starting point.

Effective Practice with e-Learning case studies: www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=elp_casestudies

Lecturer Control
Emphasis on Teaching

Use of ICT

Information Transfer

Online lecture notes/PowerPoint slides
Online voice lectures/video lectures
Online objective testing
Online conference (questions form lecture)

Problem-Based Learning

Online multimedia case studies
Simulations
Online conference (to discuss problem, share workloads, report back to group)

Experiential Learning

Online learning contract
Automatic upload of learning diary entry and portfolio of evidence
Online conference (to link theory/practice)

Student Autonomy
Emphasis on Learning

Over the next few pages some of the early adopters at UCE will be describing their approaches. Firstly, Mark Wareing will describe how video lectures have been used to automate the information transfer – but with the aim of making the following classes more group activity based. Nicola Bartholomew then discusses how Moodle has been used to provide resources on demand when students need them. David Green follows with some problem-based learning in staff development courses, and finally Caron Eyre uses the communication tools in Moodle to link academia with the workplace.

The e-learning 'Blender'

Alan Staley, Learning Technology Development Unit, SSDD, UCE – February 2004

		1	2	3	4	5
A	IMPACT OF LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES ON CLASS CONTACT TIME	Class contact hours remain the same No use of technology	Class contact hours remain the same Online resources used as a supplement (for flexibility of access)	Class contact hours remain the same Teaching methods altered to complement online resources (e.g. to enable more interaction in class following access to online lecture)	Class contact hours reduced Teaching methods altered to complement online resources	Class contact totally removed All teaching and learning takes place online
B	INFORMATION TRANSFER	Traditional face-to-face lectures	Online Lecture Notes (e.g. Word files)	Online Open Learning Resources (Learning outcomes, text, graphics, activities and questions all Desk Top Published as www pages or PDF files)	Pre-Recorded Online video Lectures (Video of lecturer synchronised to PowerPoint slides to watch when required)	Video Broadcast (lecture broadcast at specific times)
C	COMMUNICATION	All face-to-face	Email (to support individual student queries)	Electronic Notice Board (online announcements to students)	Discussion Forums (online discussion to support groups of students in solving tutor-set problems, or to link theory and practice by connecting academia with the workplace)	Synchronous Chat Rooms (online discussion at specific times in 'real time')
D	LEARNING ACTIVITIES	Small scale face-to-face learning activities that break up didactic teaching methods	Print-based case studies and problem scenarios issued and solved in class	Print-based case studies and problem scenarios issued in class but solved online using discussion forums	Multimedia case studies and problem scenarios presented online but solved face-to-face in class	Multimedia case studies, problem scenarios, and simulations presented online and solved online
E	ASSESSMENT	Invigilated formal examinations Assignments submitted by hand	Upload and automatic date stamping of assignments	Online learning diary/journal entry with tutor feedback online	Formative online objective testing and automatic feedback	Invigilated summative online objective testing
F	MODULE EVALUATION	Paper-based module feedback forms Focus groups				Online survey with automated analysis Online evaluation forum (open discussion with staff and students)

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Moodle @ UCE >> Information Transfer & Encouraging Group Activity >> Mark Wareing

Mark Wareing

As a 'new recruit' to higher education my only experience of anything purporting to resemble e-learning was accessing a web-board to download handouts! Coupled with a low boredom threshold towards IT and all the characteristics of a traditional text-based learner, I approached Moodle with benign indifference. My 'Damascus Road' experience came when I acknowledged the maxim that "Moodle is more than the sum of its parts". Consequently, the need to realise the potential of the discussion forum and online video would be crucial if I was to develop materials for students engaged in work-based learning.

Our Foundation Degree students are classed as full-time students (Trainee Assistant Practitioners) and employed as Healthcare Assistants or Physiotherapy Assistants/Technical Instructors. Therefore, although our students are for the most part without previous experience of higher education, they come with a treasury of life experience, clinical knowledge and expertise. Most have full-time posts and work 'the double-shift' by balancing family commitments alongside a demanding degree course. The onus on the student to secure study time at home and work is often a Promethean task!

Clinical Governance (a framework of NHS accountability and quality improvement) is quite a challenging and complex subject area in which to engage students well attuned to the gap between rhetoric and reality in the health service. My strategy has therefore been to engage students in a debate centering on the motion that 'this house believes that the NHS is failing to place patients at the centre of quality'. After a careful survey of the gender and personality mix of the intake, two groups of students were devised to debate the motion via postings on Moodle. The intention was that Group A (for) could not view

Group B's (against) postings so that both groups could hone their arguments in isolation and in rehearsal for a live debate and secret ballot scheduled for the end of the module. My role as a 'Moodle moderator' has been to refresh the debate through summarising postings on a periodic basis and probing students in a reflexive manner via questions based on their contributions . The debate has proved to be tremendously successful in the sense that it has been necessary to refresh the debate twice due to the content, size, and number of student postings.

In seeking to facilitate students' learning of the rudiments of Risk and Risk Management, I decided to record a video lecture (duration 28mins) that students viewed either via CD Rom or by accessing the module's Moodle site (see figure 1). The purpose of this initiative was as a basis for a class-based activity that required students in syndicate groups to explore issues of risk management in terms of a hospital responding to a letter of complaint (see figure 2).

The added value of these two Moodle based learning strategies has given me creative freedom to explore two relatively dry and policy-laden facets of modern healthcare, and deliver teaching and learning via an appropriate method and medium that is sensitive to the particular needs of students engaged in a work-based learning degree course. Furthermore, I believe the process of students encountering Moodle activities throughout their modular workbook makes for a promising and dynamic learning experience that links theory and practice by connecting academia with their own clinical experience.
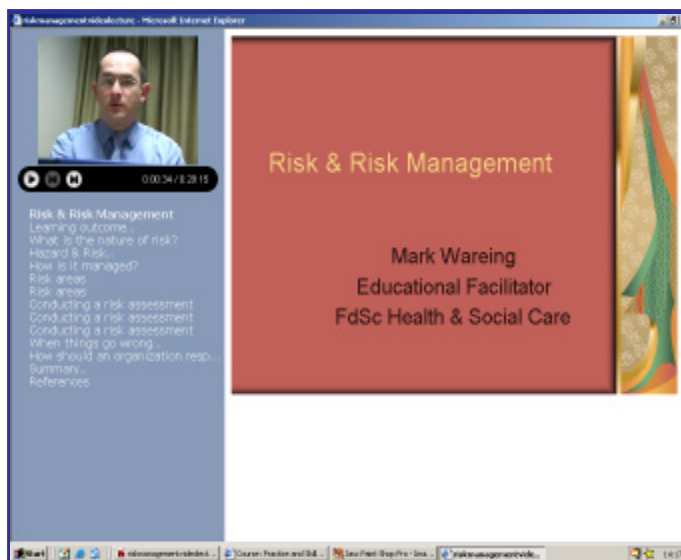
Figure 1

Figure 2: Tutor-set syndicate group activity (based on video lecture)

You are all members of a risk management team holding a meeting to discuss the letter of complaint that has been received from Mr H.

Task: How would an organization respond to this letter of complaint and what action would need to be taken?

Syndicates provided with letter of complaint: *National Institute of Clinical Excellence Guideline (Nov 2004) on Falls in Older People.*

Figure 2

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Moodle @ UCE >> Just-in-Time Learning >> Nicola Bartholomew

Nicola Bartholomew

I started using Moodle at the beginning of this academic year for a level 4 double module called Anatomy and Physiology within the BSc Diagnostic Radiography and Radiotherapy programmes. Like many others within the University I started by making resources such as PowerPoint presentations available and combined them with activities such as quizzes; however, I also created an evaluation forum, inviting students to comment on the module as a whole. Once this forum was available, students started using it to request clarification on certain points as well as commenting on the module, such as...

> *"The workshop has helped me a great deal so far but I still find the nervous system difficult"*

This development offered an opportunity to refocus teaching provision around the learning needs of the students and we began to create custom content to upload to Moodle in response to student needs. These took the form of summary notes, direct forum responses and even video lectures. Tracking with Moodle's 'Logs' utility revealed that these extra resources were well used.

It is important to remember that this is a first year module and at this stage in the course the diversity of our intake is most pronounced, with the widest range of abilities and prior knowledge being present. It is inevitable that some students might require more support than others. Moodle allows us to address this without having to give over part of the lecture and workshop programme to recapping activities. The forum allows quick and easy access for students to communicate their requests; since we respond quickly to these, other students are encouraged to do the same. I also think that as students review the material online and try out the formative quizzes they begin to have more of an idea where their learning (or possibly our teaching!) weaknesses lie.

Re: Module Evaluation
by _____ - Wednesday, 3 November 2004, 06:19 PM

The workshop has helped me a great deal so far. However i was wondering if it is possible to get the questions and answers to the 1st workshop we did... i remember being stuck on one of the important answers that may come up in the exam, it was about the mediastinum and how it is divided etc and a couple of other questions. It would be very helpful if i could get the questions and answers.

Thankyou

Show parent | Split | Delete | Reply

Re: Module Evaluation
by _____ Saturday, 2 October 2004, 08:26 PM

I found the Friday workshop really helpful and clarified lots of things eg: the position of the diaphragm, anchoring points for the crusa and the location of the apertures. However I would like to have a copy of the Task (I think it was 7) where we discussed +ve and -ve feedback, homeostasis etc related to two specific scenarios, I think one involved low blood pressure and the other ?

Show parent | Split | Delete | Reply

Re: Module Evaluation
by Nicola Bartholomew - Saturday, 2 October 2004, 11:14 PM

Hi

Thanks for your comments, I'm glad you found the session useful. I have now included all of the workshop questions on the module resources page.

Show parent | Split | Delete | Reply

Module Support
by Nicola Bartholomew - Friday, 14 January 2005, 01:09 PM

As exams are looming, I would like to know whether there is any part of the module that you would like further support for (on moodle).

Is there a topic area which is particularly unclear? Would you like more quizzes or video lectures?

Please let me know using this forum or by direct e-mail so that I can adapt this site to your specific learning needs.

Happy revising!

Nic

Show parent | Split | Delete | Reply

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Moodle @ UCE >> Problem-Based Learning >> David Green

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) presents the curriculum not as a sequence of narrow subject topics conveyed to the students, but as a number of carefully crafted problems that are multi-faceted and holistic in nature to engage students in independent study, exploring the syllabus in order to provide solutions. Advocates of PBL claim that the approach naturally provides an active learning experience, and leads students to develop enhanced intra- and interpersonal skills, especially with regard to group communications. PBL appears to be gaining a reputation for being particularly effective in vocational and professional disciplines.

David Green

In the Staff and Student Development Department, we have been experimenting with PBL, and the application of online technologies to enable this, for over six years. Initially, we used web pages to create multimedia case studies, with separate conferencing tools (WebBoard) to allow the group to discuss these online. Now that we have Moodle, online problem-based learning can take place in a more integrated and seamless environment.

Our first attempt was to produce the spoof Crumpton University – a university with severe problems! The focus was on badly designed curricula, poor teaching and a highly diverse group of students. Several short video clips help to make the problems 'come alive', hopefully in a fairly humorous way. There is a mutiny in the common room (starring Professor Phil Walkling, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Academic), a student rebellion (Alan & Niall), and can you identify the teaching team in action? – see Figure 1.

Figure 1. Teaching Team in Action at Crumpton

The case study is used as one element on the Postgraduate Certificate (Education) for UCE staff. It triggers considerable debate online, with advice on how to improve things at Crumpton, and a fair amount of critical reflection on the participants' own teaching practice. The whole PBL experience takes place online, and in truth this radical approach receives a mixed reaction, with some staff seeing this as the way forward and others being overwhelmed or put off by the technology. Most value the experience, though, and it's valuable for staff to experience online PBL for themselves before using it with their own students.

PowerPoint presentation from the head of department that predicts doom and gloom, while each of the characters around the table has a CV providing telling information, and the drawers in the filing cabinet reveal a mountain of data that should help find out why Mullock is in such difficulty, and importantly what to do about it.

The Mullock University case study is used on the Designing Academic Programmes in HE (DAP) module, again provided by SSDD for UCE staff. The focus of this case study is much broader – there is some very dodgy management at Mullock!

Staff studying this module access Mullock through Moodle in a face-to-face class by using laptop computers connected to the network. This takes place in a normal classroom with round tables – not in a computer laboratory. Staff then work in groups to solve the problems, and present their findings to the whole class using the white boards as shown in Figure 3. No lectures and an enjoyable day for all!

Figure 3. Whiteboards & round tables

More recently we have created another spoof university called Mullock. You can see in Figure 2 a very different kind of interface. We have used 'Flash' to create a very dynamic visual interface, and users need to 'mouse over' all items in the opening scene. The agenda on the table will provide a link to a

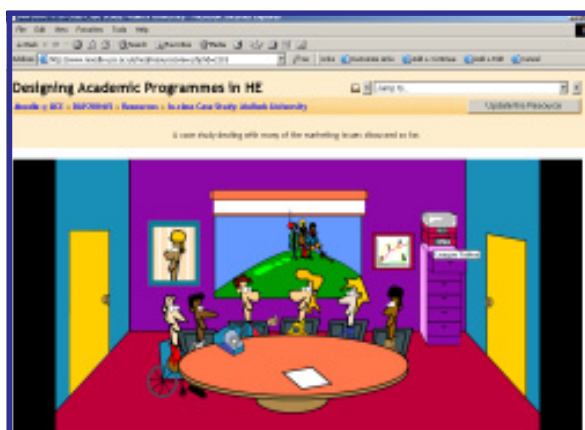*Figure 2. Crisis meeting at Mullock*

If you're interested in joining DAP in the next academic year (it runs in semester one), you can find out more at www.ssdd.uce.ac.uk/esdu/dap Or you can contact staff in SSDD's Educational and Staff Development Unit direct on extensions 6947, 6946 or 7657.

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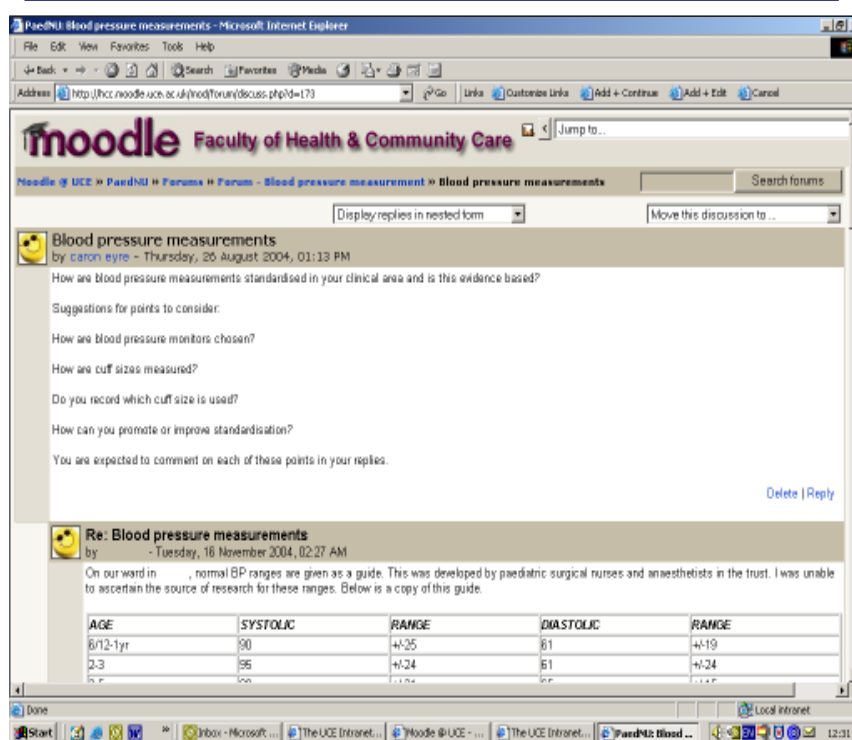
UCE Birmingham

Caron Eyre

The Paediatric Nephro-Urology Pathway is an option of the BSc (Hons) Clinical Nursing Studies. The pathway serves the paediatric renal and urology nursing community which is a small specialist area of nursing practice. It is one of only two courses in the UK and students are recruited regionally, nationally and internationally. Initially, e-learning developments were considered from a practical point of view to reduce students' travelling times and to make the pathway feasible to mature students who work full-time thus increasing recruitment.

The pathway is delivered over two semesters of 15 weeks. The pathway was redesigned so that students attend university once every two weeks instead of every week. The intermediate week's course content is delivered via Moodle. Each session was reviewed to assess its appropriateness for online delivery. The remaining face-to-face sessions were also reviewed to incorporate active learning methods. The online sessions include independent study and also structured reflection on practice. Online discussion forums have also been designed to facilitate analysis of theory and practice. (See Figure 1).

This initiative is currently being evaluated by a focus group of the current cohort of students. The opinion of prospective students and their Trust managers will also be sought via questionnaire at the national conference for paediatric nephrology nurses in March 2005.

In the future it is hoped that clinical experts will be available to contribute to online discussions thus entwining theory and practice. Multimedia delivery will also be explored.

Figure 1 - On the Nightshift! – Connecting Academia with the workplace, and linking theory and practice.

Advantages for Tutor	Advantages for Student
♦ More time to review/research course material due to less face to face contact. ♦ There has been a demonstrated increase in student numbers.	♦ Reduced travel times. ♦ Easier to attend University fortnightly. ♦ Prescreened online reading material. ♦ More effective use of study time. ♦ Increase in active learning. ♦ Online discussion with peers. ♦ Students able to study at a time and place convenient to them. ♦ Increased control of their learning. ♦ Contributions to online activities may be used to contribute towards evidence for clinical competencies.
Disadvantages for Tutor	**Disadvantages for Student**
♦ Less control of students' learning. ♦ Initial increase in workload to redesign content.	♦ Some students may not like this method of delivery or learning. ♦ Need access to a PC and the Internet.

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Nagaraj Konda

The Digital Business Ecosystem (DBE) project is funded by the European Commission under the Sixth Framework Budget. The project is for a three-year duration and is funded up to £14m. Researchers from 20 organisations are working with groups of software and service developers as well as end-user businesses to build and test advanced software services' functionality. Once the DBE is created it will become an open source community and a public asset, to be developed and taken forward by its users.

The DBE consists of two main elements that the users can see - a Service Factory and a Runtime Environment. The Service Factory is the 'toolbox' from which application services can be built by software developers and application service providers. The Runtime Environment is the network of servers that supports the delivery of DBE services. These will be part of the Internet so that the DBE is a global functionality. Like the Internet, the Runtime Environment will be distributed among various service providers, but interconnected and standardised so that the benefits of the system for business interactions can be maximised, including the possibility for peer-to-peer (P2P) interactions between businesses.

The DBE will support the formation of a community of practice among software developers and users. At the core of this support will the Moodle Learning Environment. The DBE has chosen Moodle based on its openness and the flexibility that it offers for future evolutions. Intel, one of the project partners, will be leading the implementation and evolution of Moodle. A few screenshots of the current development are attached below:
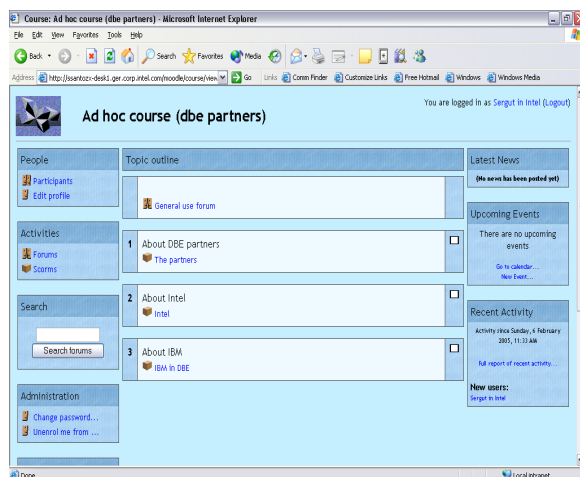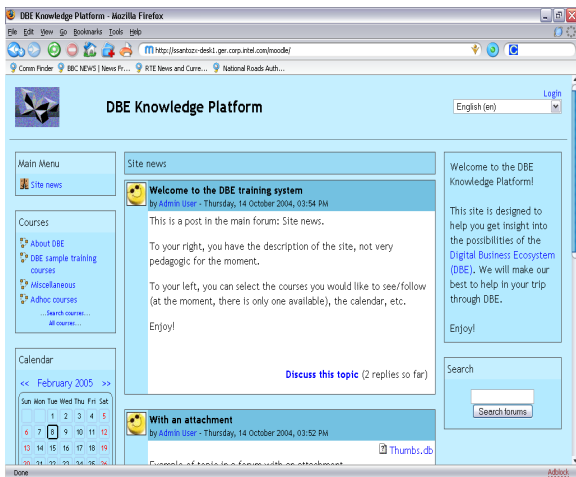
For more information regarding DBE please contact: Rod Shelton, rod.shelton@uce.ac.uk
Nagaraj Konda, nagaraj.seetharamon.konda@uce.ac.uk UCE Business School.

Why not study

for a qualification

in Learning

Teachnology?

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Moodle @ UCE >> Content Developers' Perspectives: CourseGenie >> Niall MacKenzie
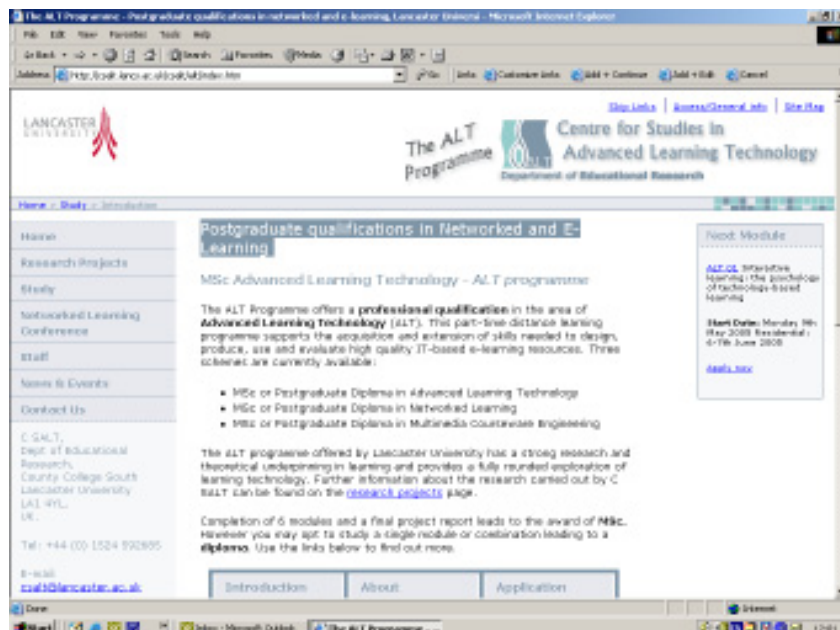
Niall MacKenzie

A new and simple tool for developing content has been adopted as a standard by UCE and will be on most staff's desktops in the very near future. **CourseGenie** is a plug-in for Microsoft Word that anyone with basic word processing skills can use to create good-looking multimedia course material quickly and easily.

The beauty of the package is that existing documents in Word can have multimedia, multiple choice questions, pop-up windows and navigation menus added by simply applying some paragraph tags and formatting.

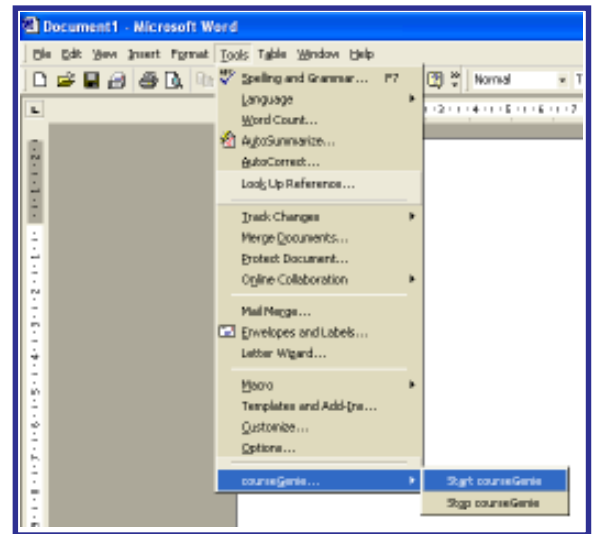Once the formats have been applied, CourseGenie creates a fully navigable set of web pages with just a click of a button or two. The web pages can then easily be integrated into online courses in their own directory structure or better, a (SCORM compliant) package that can be directly uploaded into Moodle. Moodle can then track the movement of learners within the structure of the package.

Moodle is great for uploading simple files, like Word and PDF files but CourseGenie will enable staff to upload resources that can be viewed in a web browser, rather than learners having to have Word or Acrobat readers on their PCs or Macs.

Creating visually appealing resources has always been a time-consuming process and not practical for most academics. Hopefully, CourseGenie will allow a new set of academics the ability to create multimedia resources quickly.

It is hoped that CourseGenie will be automatically integrated into the next rollout of Word, which will be loaded onto staff machines as part of the upgrade to Office2003 in the next few months.

The latest versions of CourseGenie address issues of accessibility and the SENDA legislation, and this package has now been adapted by the Royal National College for the Blind.

CourseGenie sits in the Tools menu bar in Word
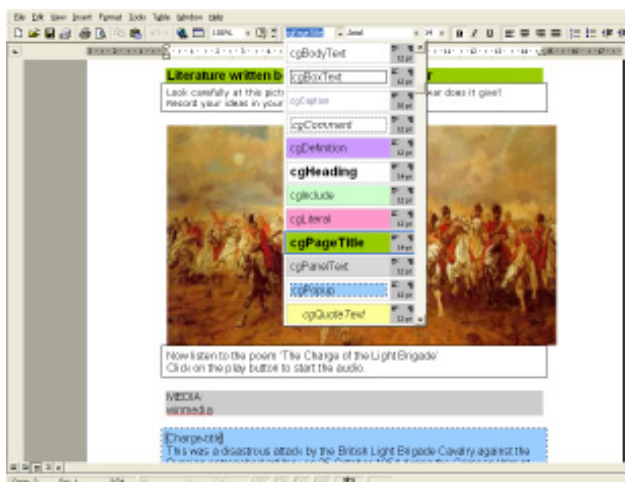
Special CourseGenie paragraph styles are added to Word
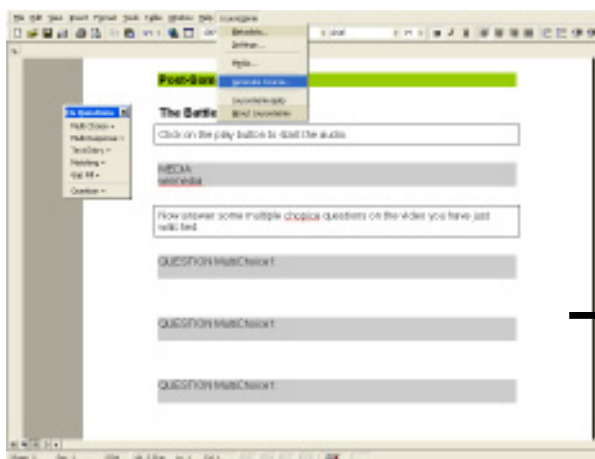
The formatted document in Word   .... two clicks later....   A multimedia package as web pages

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Moodle @ UCE >> Administrative Perspectives >> Steve Halfyard

Steve Halfyard

The most ambitious thing we attempted with Moodle in the first semester of this year was in relation to our BMus4 Major Projects. This is a module worth 48 credits (no, that's not a typo) of the final year of the degree programme, and is student-defined, which raises a number of issues. Firstly, we are dealing with around 90 individually defined programmes of study, being administered by two members of staff; secondly, we therefore have to agree tailor-made marking criteria for all 90 of them; thirdly, we have to ensure a comparability of level among the projects being undertaken; and fourthly, we have to ensure that there is real educational value in what is being done by each student; and this is all being administered by two members of staff.

The main tool for all this has been a learning contract that, in theory, students complete at the start of the year. This itself has caused two main problems: firstly, students writing very vague learning contracts that need substantial revision in order to provide us with a clear rationale and a set of learning intentions that will allow us to supervise and assess the project effectively; and secondly, the administrative nightmare of trying to keep track of 90 pieces of slightly crumpled paper with new pieces of paper gradually coming in with revisions on them.

An additional, but related problem has been getting students to do the revisions needed to make their contracts workable. These projects tend to be very practical: students will do such things as perform a concerto or song cycle, undertake a community music project, or produce a CD of their performances or compositions. They tend to be very interested in and motivated to do the practical work; they are, as a general rule, much less interested in making sure the administrative side of their project runs smoothly. They don't always see the connection between what they write in the learning contract and how we are going to be marking them: surely it will be obvious if what they do is any good or not?

It seemed to me that Moodle offered a solution to many of these problems, keeping the information resources online where students have easy and continual access to them, and storing all the contracts electronically.

The main obstacle was getting all the 4th year students enrolled into Moodle as quickly as possible: we have no access to computer labs here at the Conservatoire, so this was something we had to trust students to do in their own time. This stage actually worked very well. By mid-October, we had 62 out of 88 contracts submitted, a staggering number compared to previous years; by Christmas, we had 86, and the last two stragglers got their contracts in by the end of January this year. There are still 16 contracts in need of revision, but we do at least know exactly who they are, and the forum has allowed me to do regular nagging *en masse*, while the participants' profiles allow me to email individual students directly when necessary.

Moodle has simplified and clarified the two biggest administrative headaches: keeping track of exactly what stage each student is at with their contract; and being able to have an ongoing dialogue with each student about the contents of their contract. We devised a very simple system for logging which contracts were complete: contracts submitted but in a format that wouldn't open got 25%; contracts in need of revision got 50%; complete contracts got 100%. Using the grades area in the Administration block means we can see at a glance who has completed and who hasn't.

Meanwhile, the assignment feedback system lets us keep track of when the student last made revisions, when we last gave them any feedback, and whether their revisions have addressed the things we asked
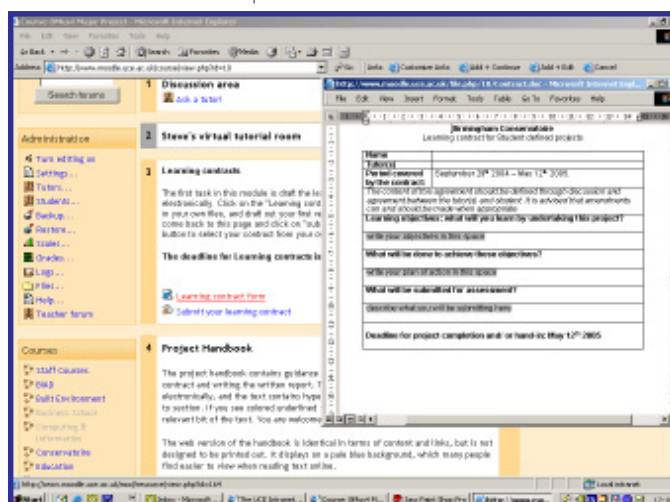
them to do. One can add to the feedback as one goes along, giving a complete "audit trail" of the contract's development and negotiation.

There have been hiccups: the entire 4th year had their network id numbers changed at the end of October, which created an awful lot of confusion, and some students ended up with two accounts – but with the help of Niall MacKenzie and David Streather, we weathered the storm; and some of the students are severely technophobic, which came as a surprise to me. However, we are already briefing the third year about how this is going to work next year, and having got through the first year of running the projects online, this is definitely the way to do it. Yes, in all honesty, it creates a lot more work, but that's actually because we're now administering the project properly rather than in the slightly haphazard way it ran before, with too few people trying to keep tabs on too many students doing too many different things. Now we have a system in Moodle that does all the organizing and keeping tabs for us, and allows us to track what's going on at the click of a mouse.

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Moodle @ UCE >> Managing Student Placements >> Carolyn Keenan

Carolyn Keenan

The introduction of Moodle last summer enabled the Placements Department in the Business School to embrace the 21st Century.

The Preparation for Placement Module presents essential information to students searching for a placement in a professional and easily accessible format. The module has been divided into individual sections of relevant information. For example, the first section is about Placement Search Strategies which help students to identify the right placement for them and how to go about finding it.

interview with a company, they can then access information on how to prepare for it and for Assessment Centres. This allows them to be confident and knowledgeable in an interview situation.

Other useful links have been included such as web links for practice psychometric tests, business news sites and trade journals.

One advantage of using Moodle over the previous hard copy folder is the ability to include profiles from previous placement students imparting their experiences to future placements. Students can take part in
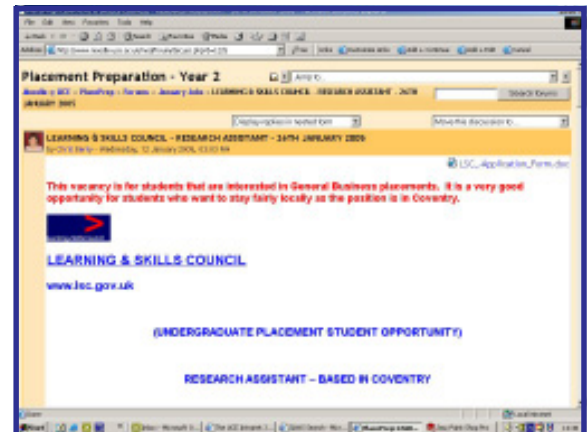
first student was placed. The events section and calendar allow us to alert students about employer presentations and recruitment fairs.

Above all, the use of Moodle has enhanced the delivery and management of the placements programme. Setting aside the Big Brother issues, it enables us to track the students' participation and allows us to intervene early to encourage students to keep applying.

Furthermore, this year's students who go out on placement will be able to use their knowledge of Moodle to maintain communications while on placement and share good practice, reflect upon experience, make connections between workplace and academia, and support each other.
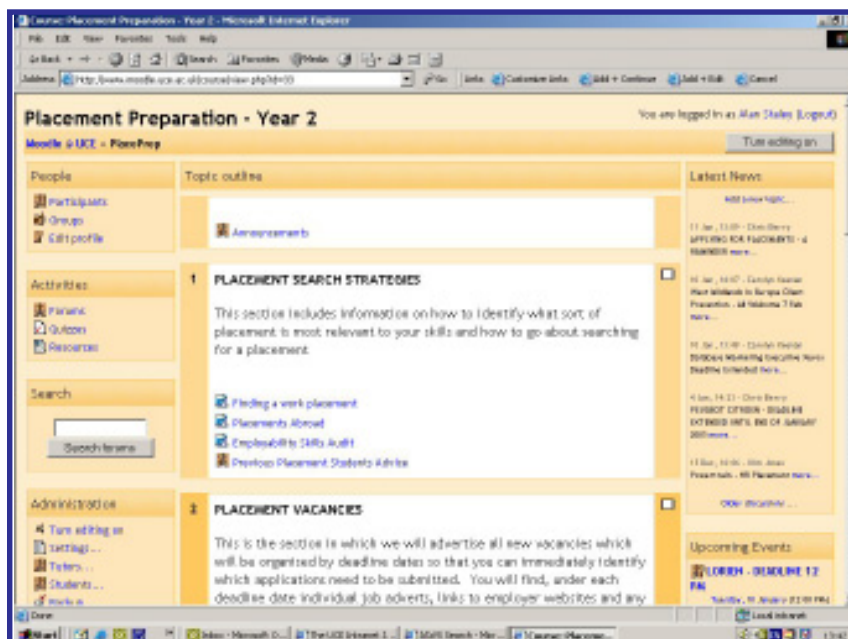
Another section focuses on the placement vacancies and contains individual job adverts, links to employer websites and application forms to be downloaded, as well as website links for those employers who only recruit online.

Two further sections contain hints and tips on applying for jobs, such as how to write a covering letter and a CV and how to fill out an application form. Once students have secured an

discussion forums on various topics as well.
The use of announcements and forthcoming events is an invaluable tool to remind students of approaching deadlines, and as a motivational tool to encourage students to persevere with their applications. For example, we recently sent out an announcement when our

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Moodle @ UCE >> Library Perspectives >> Peter Ebrey
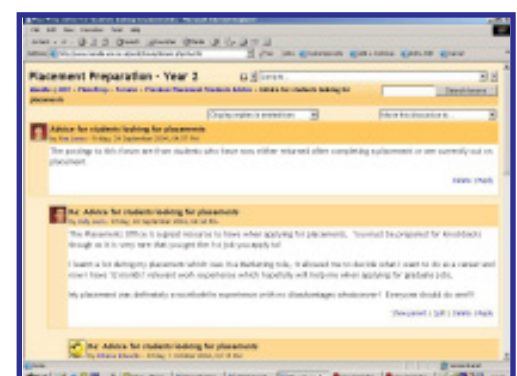
Peter Ebrey

Following the successful piloting of the system at Westbourne Road Campus, UCE Library has now moved over fully to use TalisList as its software for 'Resource Lists' (rather than adopting the old terminology of 'Reading Lists'). In doing so, we are realising that the one key issue in creating lists is not so much the software but more the pro-active and mutual dialogue that needs to take place between the Library and departments to investigate just what academic staff are hoping to achieve from their lists and what expectations are being raised in students from these.

TalisList can now link through to UCEEL

Ongoing 'user needs' discussions with academic staff across the University have been particularly illuminating, indicating the varied nature in which information resources are already being treated within Moodle, and several colleagues have questioned the validity of traditional reading lists in a Moodle environment: when students have course content delivered online, they will naturally expect that the bulk of their supporting reading should be accessed in precisely this same way. The good news is that recent additions to TalisList functionality enable resources used at any position in a module to be co-ordinated in a single place, to ease subsequent updating and also to offer similar functionality to those courses that have not yet moved over to take full advantages of delivery via the VLE. TalisList does this and has been seen to provide benefits over the present ways of working by enabling virtually anything that might be considered an information resource to be included, and we're pleased to say that includes items available via the University's Electronic Library UCEEL : specific electronic journal papers; electronic journal contents pages; bibliographic databases; specific web pages; general web sites;

individual digital objects such as video clips and image files; in addition to references that are available in the physical University Library and which can be found via the OPAC (i.e. books!). Of equal importance is the flexibility offered in the organization of lists which can take on the different hues required of different courses, even - if appropriate - in the same department.

Moodle, TalisList and UCEEL working together means that we are one step further down the road to 'seamless' linking of resources.
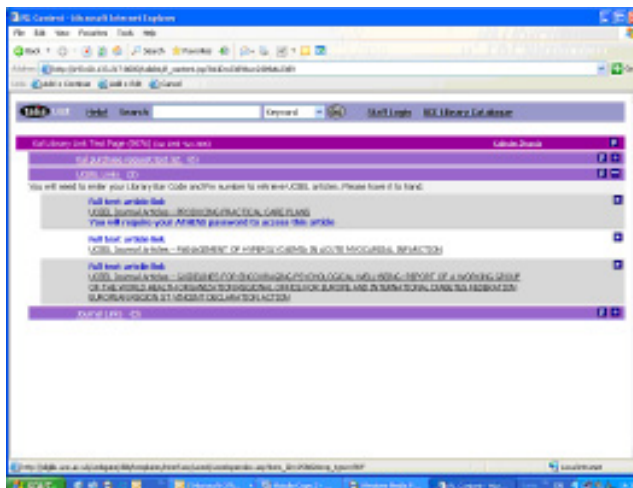
Video & Audio on Moodle & UCEEL (Digital Library)

The Learning Technology Development Unit, IT Services and Library Services are currently working on enhancing the ability of Moodle users, especially tutors themselves, to add streamed video and audio content for their students. It is anticipated all copyright (i.e. externally produced) audio and video, including off air recordings (e.g. BBC tv and radio programmes), will be added to the UCEEL (Digital Library) as certain license requirements require a central service to manage and monitor these resources. For most internally produced material, especially video lectures and multimedia presentations, a

special UCE 'Media collection' will be developed utilising the same content management system UCEEL and JAWS (UCE Document Library) uses. UCEEL's specially configured video streaming server and storage capabilities should help 'Moodlers' to confidently deliver multimedia content to their students. It will also mean that by placing these media-rich resources in a central location, many Moodle modules will be able to link to them – i.e. we begin to share resources. This will be of great benefit for generic topics such as study skills, presentation skills, research methods etc.

UCEfulLibSkills on Moodle

Work on the Library's interactive information skills tutorial UCEfulLibSkills is well advanced, and we hope to have it live by the summer. (See the October issue of LTDU Digital Future (p12).

Here's a sneak preview!

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Moodle @ UCE >> Operational Perspectives >> Alan Staley

Alan Staley

At the last Moodle Working Group (14/12/04) it was agreed that Faculty instances of Moodle would be permitted, and that two faculties (Business School, and H&CC) would pilot this approach in Semester 2 with a view to all faculties having their own instance of Moodle in the summer of 2005 if successful.

An instance of Moodle means a replication of Moodle for each faculty that resides on one centrally controlled server – it does not mean a proliferation of Moodle servers. This gives all of the benefits of centralisation (security, economies of scale, opportunity for extended support), but allows faculties some degree of customisation, local control of their own staff and student accounts, and provides a sense of ownership. It also adds a new layer of structure making it much easier for faculties to delineate faculty information, course management, and module delivery.

Moodle Roles

Moodle administrators are needed at a faculty level for when the Moodle pilots finish, and Moodle becomes a mainstream activity in September 2005. It may also be desirable for this role to include wider technical support, especially considering the fact that Moodle access is dependent on a current record in the Student Records System (QLS), and a complicated enrolment process functioning properly.

Each Faculty will be advising the Moodle Working Group of the member of staff likely to take on this role.

During the pilot phase, staff have acquired creation rights by enrolling on a short Moodle course, 'e-learning at UCE' delivered by the Learning Technology Development Unit. This course, which is not very onerous, enables staff to experience using Moodle as a student, to experiment with many of the Moodle features, and to see the potential for using Moodle in a number of ways to support a variety of pedagogies. Having engaged with this course (i.e. taken part in a number of activities, rather than a formal assessment) staff are granted creation rights and they are able to create their own modules. Online support is still available via the 'Moodle Development' course that gives access to manuals and technical discussion forums.

One suggestion for faculties to consider, is to adopt the same approach at a faculty level – 'e-learning in
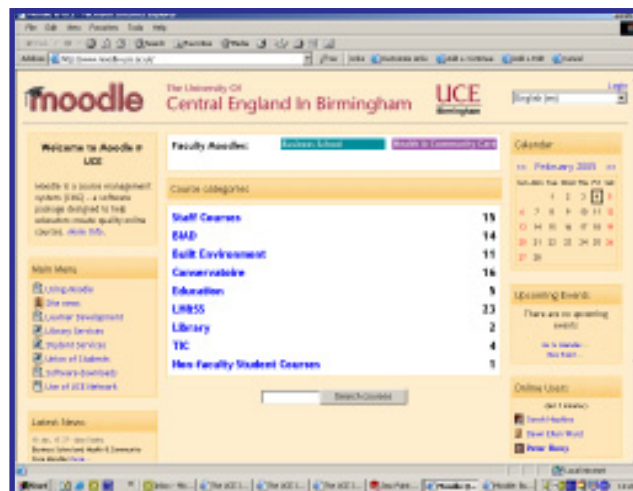
The 'Main' Moodle

Health & Community Care Moodle

Business School Moodle

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Moodle @ UCE >> Operational Perspectives >> Alan Staley

H&CC', and 'e-learning in Art & Design' for example. This would enable faculties to make use of the generic materials available from the Learning Technology Development Unit but to customize them for their own contex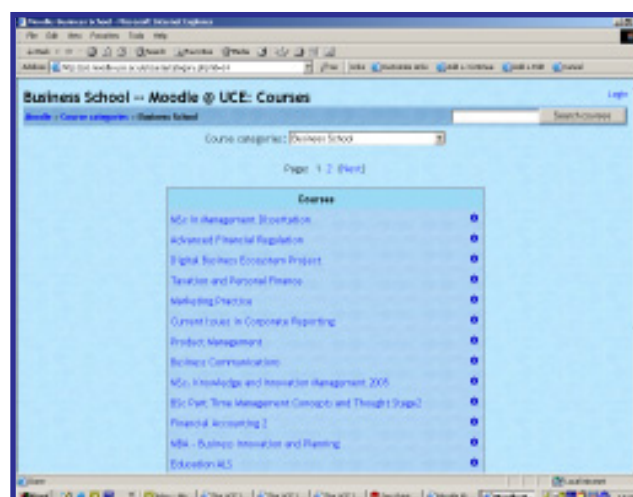t. This has the advantage of improving relevance, building a faculty-based community of Moodle users, and giving ownership to the faculty.

Other considerations may include the need for some face-to-face training sessions (centrally or locally) prior to giving certain rights, and the use of guides and other documentation. Perhaps staff need to agree that they are aware of the copyright regulations and the 'Use of UCE network statement' for example.

Whatever procedures are put in place, they should keep the 'spirit of Moodle' – empowering academics to do things for themselves, and not overly controlling usage to the point where academics are reliant upon a couple of staff at the centre or indeed within the faculties.

Each faculty will be documenting the procedure to be followed before allocating the various Moodle roles, such as 'creator' or 'tutor' to staff.

Quality Procedures

As Moodle becomes a mainstream activity at UCE, quality procedures will be needed primarily because of the transparency of the web-based medium, the permanent nature of electronic resources, and the ease and speed at which these can be forwarded to other people. There is also enormous opportunity to improve the quality of our courses at

UCE if we decide to insert a quality process before the 'release' of modules in Moodle to students.

Currently, anyone allocated creation rights can create new modules in Moodle, and can allocate tutors to those modules. Both creator and tutor can upload files, add discussion forums, learning journals, quizzes, etc. These modules can be invisible, so that as they are being developed no one can see the work-in-progress. Alternatively, they can be visible but protected by an enrolment key that the creator or tutor gives to appropriate students (or staff). In addition, the creator can choose whether or not to select 'Make Available To Students'.

These options make it possible for staff to be developing modules not in isolation, but to seek the opinions of others before the module is made 'live' or 'released' to students. In other words, it would be quite easy to incorporate a peer review with colleagues of a sample of the module prior to release, and much of this could happen online with very little bureaucracy. There are other options of course!

Each faculty will be documenting a procedure to be followed before Moodle enabled modules are 'released' to students.

The Bigger Picture

Moodle is just one of the initiatives that is taking place at the moment. I hope that you can see how CourseGenie (Niall's article on page 13) will help us to create content simply for ourselves that can be placed into Moodle. I also hope that you can see how the new interface to UCEEL (Peter's article on page 16) will enable many Moodle

modules to share good quality multimedia resources without having to re-invent the wheel.

These developments come on top of the national and regional digital repositories that were mentioned in the first edition of this newsletter, which mean that we can start by downloading already existing content free of cost and copyright issues. Rather than creating content from scratch, the name of the game is now re-use and re-purposing.

All of these systems, and more, are shown on the opposite page. There is a clear vision of how all of these systems fit together, and most of these systems are now in place. We have come a long way in just over 12 months!

There are still a couple of tools that staff need access to on the right hand side of the diagram, and I hope that these can be in place before the next academic year, but as we manage by committee, many things take longer than they need!

I guess that the portal is the most contenious issue on the diagram at the moment. I would like to see this development, as it would enable staff and students to access the various systems through a common interface, whether they are inside or outside the university, making support much easier.

It is usually possible for individuals to customise and personalise their view of the portal to their own requirements, thereby only 'opening doors' to relevant systems and useful information. If UCE go down this route there will be plenty of thinking to be done…

A Managed Learning Environment at UCE

Managed Learning Environment (MLE)

Management Information Systems (MIS)

Student Record System
Enrolment
Marks
Awards
....
Quality Assurance System
Finance System
....

Library

Catalogue
Electronic services

UCEEL → TalisList

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

Moodle(s)   SW28

Simple Resources
Upload file
Compose text/web page
Link to website/file

Display directory
Insert label

Resource-based Activities
Lesson
Glossary
SCORM package

Assessment-based Activities
Assignment upload
Quiz (objective testing)
Journal
Workshop (peer assessment)

Communication-based Activities
Discussion forum (asynchronous)
Chat (synchronous)
Choice (voting)
Create groups
Wiki (collaborative development)

Evaluative Activities
Survey

Management
Calendar
Upcoming events
Recent activity

Tracking usage
Latest news

PORTAL(s)

Staff
Students
Internal Access
External Access

External Content

JISC Repository
National: JORUM
Regional: HSLI

Commercial Packages

UCE Content

'Simple' Office Tools
Microsoft Office SW03

Content Packaging Tools
CourseGenie SW35

'Advanced' Creation Tools

	Category A		Category B
	Microsoft		Macromedia
WWW page creation (html)	Front Page SW02		Dreamweaver SW02
WWW Graphics	Image Composer SW02		Fireworks SW02
Animations	PowerPoint Front Page (very limited) SW03 SW02		Flash Director SW02
Video Editing	Producer (free plug-in-to PowerPoint 2002) SW03		Director SW02
Video Synchronisation with Presentations (Video lectures)	Producer SW03		Director Dreamweaver MX SW02
Image Manipulation	SW30 TBA		SW30 TBA
Document Formatting and Exchange	?		Adobe Acrobat Pro

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Moodle @ UCE >> Learning Technology Events 2005

12 April 2005
JISC Conference
International Convention
Centre Birmingham
http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=conf_2005_intro

13 April 2005
e-Assessment Tools and
Techniques

14 April 2005
Detecting and Deterring
Plagiarism

Netskills Workshops
University of Newcastle

http://www.netskills.ac.uk/workshops/forthcoming.html

14 April 2005
M-Learning: Taking
education into the
community?
University of York.

http://www.alt.ac.uk/workshop_detail.php?e=176

28 April 2005
Finding and Using Audio-Visual
Media in Further and Higher
Education.
BUFVC, 77 Well Street,
London W1.
http://www.bufvc.ac.uk/
courses/bufvc_courses.html#fe

27 May 2005
Managing blended learning
activities
University of Dundee

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/SSeLF.htm

1-4 June 2005
Computer Support for Collaborative
Learning, National Central University
of Taiwan, Taipei, Taiwan.

http://www.isls.org/cscl/

20-23 June 2005
European Distance and
E-learning Network,
Helsinki University of Technology
Lifelong Learning Institute Dipoli,
Otaniemi Science Park, Finnish
High-Tech, Espoo.
*http://www.eden-online.org/
eden.php?menuId=7&contentId=290*

27 June - 2 July 2005
Ed-Media: World Conference on
Educational Multimedia,
Hypermedia and
Telecommunications, Montreal,
Quebec.
http://www.aace.org/conf

21 July 2005
Designing blended learning
activities
University of Southampton

5 September 2005
Planning for blended learning
Manchester Metropolitan University

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/SSeLF.htm

6-8 September 2005
ALT-C 2005: exploring the
frontiers of e-learning -
borders, outposts and
migration.
University of Manchester

http://www.alt.ac.uk/altc2005/

17 October 2005
Sharing blended learning
activities
London Metropolitan University

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/SSeLF.htm

24-28 October 2005
E-Learn 2005
Vancouver
Canada

http://www.aace.org/conf/eLearn

28-30 November 2005
Best Practices in e-learning
Online Conference
Hosted by University
of Calgary

http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/conference/