

Module 2 Readings Discussion : After you have completed your readings, you will need to select three of the following five questions and respond in Module 2 Readings Discussion.

Your answers should be about 350 words long (each), and should include references. Please post your initial response by Sunday, February 24. React to the postings of at least two classmates. Your reaction should go beyond statements such as, "I agree."

1. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of asynchronous and synchronous learning environments? Are both necessary? What are the best tools for each?
2. What factors should be considered when selecting a new technology? Which factors are most important? What specific role should faculty play in the process? What if there is disagreement?
3. What forces have contributed to the exponential growth of online learning? What impact has this had on the teaching and learning environment?
4. Discuss some of the problems that technology presents in terms of enabling students and faculty to get to know one another and build a sense of community. How can combinations of various technologies be used to help overcome this obstacle? Provide specific examples.
5. Does teaching drive technology or does technology drive teaching?

Topic: Module 2 Readings Discussion Date: February 23, 2008 12:19 PM

Subject: following Lucy's Lead :-) Author: Burnham, Colleen

I've attached my "answers" for this discussion series. The document name is

Burnham_Module2A_answers.doc (I've saved it as a 97-2003 doc from a 2007 docx -- I'm hoping the formatting stays "ok" :-)

Attachments:

[Burnham_Module2A_answers.doc](#)

Select one of the following products (or another approved by your team assistant), and go to their website (linked) to view a demo. Write a review of the product, including how it could effectively be used for online education, how it compares to other products, and why or why you wouldn't recommend the purchase of this product. This activity should be posted to the bulletin board by Thursday of this week. Please react to the postings of at least two classmates.

Topic: Mod 2 Technology Showcase Discussion Date: March 2, 2008 3:19 PM

Subject: We picked Moodle - Colleen Burnham Author: Burnham, Colleen

Choosing an LMS: Our trip to Moodle as a CMS

I've decided to write about Moodle because we are currently implementing it as our primary CMS; we are replacing Blackboard (Basic) after 5 years. It seems valuable to discuss how we got to Moodle a little before I talk about the LMS itself. I confess that I did read Sharon's post re: Moodle before I started writing, so some of this is a sort of response to Sharon's great review :-)

While our original motive to replace Blackboard was financial, we have tried to maintain an eye to comparing the two systems objectively, and based on actual faculty use of and response to the Blackboard environment. We did not just jump to Moodle as our ultimate CMS; rather we surfed around looking at other systems (open source and licensed) keeping in mind the components that we really want to make available.

Interestingly, SharePoint came up in another post. We actually began our search by looking at SharePoint. We currently use it for our student e-portfolios and also occasionally for institutional "sharing" of documents. SharePoint offers absolute confidentiality as a default; users make particular components available to certain others by setting permission levels according to folders and or by users. This feature compared/s positively with Blackboard; we like that it is not public. However, because the user is "the one" who can add or remove permissions, it also means that we cannot simply upload course members to particular course folders – a major drawback at the systems level.

We also considered combining a variety of applications: Office Communicator carries live meeting and chat; SharePoint has a nice wiki and blog function; LISTSERVs can easily serve the function of Blackboard's Discussion Board; etc.. Unfortunately, not all applications require the same level of authentication; some use the global address system, while others require app-specific credentials.

It turns out that Moodle is the one that either offers, or has promised to incorporate, all of the functions that we use regularly, including the ability to link the authentication to our global address system, creating a learning environment that does not require a separate set of credentials of our students or faculty.

The immediate downside to Moodle is that it is **not** something that the “Blackboard lady” can install and manage by herself ;-)! Moodle requires at least one “systems guy” who understands the implications of and manipulation of each of the “pieces” of Moodle in order to effectively and efficiently install it on the campus server. Each of its features is a separate add-on (or plug-in) that must be configured manually, specific to other add-ons; it is a cumulative build that requires a sophisticated knowledge of servers and the systems running the servers. [I have a wonderful “systems guy” whom I reward regularly with gift certificates to Quiznos :-)]

There are lots of “best parts” to the open source application, Moodle, not the least of which is the number of white papers available online. Also available online is the “Sandbox”, the Moodle site on which one can log on to “experience” a demo as a student, as an instructor, or as an administrator. New users may use the Sandbox to try different “tricks” and or to practice the techniques necessary to building one’s own CMS. Not only does the Sandbox offer a place to learn the mechanics of Moodle, it is also a learning opportunity for those who just beginning to use CMS – the layout of the demo course is an example to the learner of effective use of “space” in the online course “window”. While the new user is “puttering around”, s/he is also picking up hints for course design.

Please visit the demonstration site at <http://demo.moodle.org/> to see a Moodle “classroom”.