Date: Fri, 15 Jul 2005 18:29:59 -0700
To: Charles Severance <csev@umich.edu>
From: charles kerns <charles.kerns@stanford.edu>
Subject: why is moodle pedagogy friendly???
Cc: Phillip Long <longpd@MIT.EDU>,
malcolm.B.Brown@Dartmouth.EDU (Malcolm B. Brown), lois
Brooks <lbrooks@stanford.edu>, joseph Hardin
<hardin@umich.edu>
Bcc: charles.kerns@stanford.edu

You asked me to explain why moodle is perceived as the
pedagogically friendly cms [course management system]. I
quickly jotted down some reasons below.

I am also sending this to Phil and Malcolm in the pedagogy
group who may want to chime in. Also to Joseph and Lois as
FYIs.

ck

1. Creating a site is creating course activities:

From the manual "Building a course involves adding course
activity modules to the main page in the order that students
will be using them."

The main page acts like a syllabus with active links (like a
super malete)

It has three course formats that govern layout of the site
based on three models of teaching (1. time based or 2.
content based (these two look like melete); and 3. forum
based) These three are important for online learning.

The first two allow you to combine content, a single
surveys, a forum or thread , a chat at a specific time, etc
as a part of a unit.

The organization is not tools-based but sequences of
activities (even before they integrated LAMS)
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2. The Discussion tool is viewed as most important (this is
stated in the documentation) and has features that make it
especially useful for teaching and online courses

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3. It Has Teaching and Learning Help, i.e., "Why would I do
this in my course"-not just "what button to push" help

As you edit an activity there is item specific help that
relates to the teaching or learning implications of that

item (not just how to do set the setting)-

a.Example from workshop

If you turn this option on, then students will be allowed to submit more than one piece of work to this assignment. This may be useful if the teacher wants to encourage students to do better work by an iterative process. (emphasis mine)

b. Another example is in chat – there is a guide to participating in a chat built in

Ask Good Questions

A good way to help other people think about a subject is to ask them a question about it. Being asked a good question can really help us put information together, evaluate our existing ideas and create new ideas. . . . it has examples to use in asking questions
    * What do you mean when you say _____?
    * What is your main point?
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4. Pedagogically relevant options in tools

The options are based on pedagogical requirements in many tools (

·   a. workshop which includes models, rubrics, faculty weighting for assessment, in a peer review process. (the kinds of things that we have had to drop from Samigo and the Grade book because of time constraints and the specification process based on gap analysis for replacing current CMS, not designing a new CMS.

·   b.Chat has built in times for setting up sessions'

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5. Some Tools that are especially for teaching (dialog, glossary, workshop)

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6. Php tools that were developed elsewhere for teaching and learning and then added to Moodle (Hot potatoes, workshop) One can develop in PHP rather than worry about the TPP, -- if you are an instructor interested in creating a learning tool you can just knock out something quickly and try it out knowing that you can add it in.

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7. The teacher focus in the documentation. It shows care about the end user teachers. We think of our sakai users as campus computing groups and worry about architecture and

usability but not teaching. Moodle has a teaching philosophy
link on the main page that defines the drivers for most
important innovations in teaching. They focus on adoption by
individual facultywe are leaving that to campus computing
support groups.

When you look at the Moodle site you feel like it is
directed to instructors. The Features demo is directed
towards teachers –There is a teachers manual that talks
about setting up courses and activities rather than tools
(its language is that of instructors)