EDT 620

Website Evaluation

Name: Moodle

Main URL: http://moodle.org

Publisher: Free Software Foundation
51 Franklin Street, Suite 500
Boston, MA 02110-1335
Phone: 1-617-542-5942
Fax: 1-617-542-2652
There are also links at http://www.fsf.org/about/contact/ to email them.

Price: This is free open source software.

Brief Description: Moodle stands for Modular Object Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment. It is a course management system (CMS) that was designed to structure learning. This is a free web-based application for educators to use to create effective online learning sites for their students. There is a youtube video that describes Moodle and what it was designed for at http://moodle.org/about.

Type of Website: Interactive, Informational, Tutorial, Video, Tool, Resource, Web-based learning environment

Grade Level: K-12 Education, Post-Secondary Education, and Adult Education

Subject Area: Any subject can utilize Moodle.

Educational Use: Moodle has a wide variety of uses which can include: multimedia, links to resources, learning activities, forums, wikis, glossaries, blogs, and parental involvement. Students can also submit assignments, receive comments and grades, peer edit, and design group projects. Moodle can be used as a teacher tool, student tool, or communication tool.

Specific plans for use: My current use of Moodle is primarily to post assignments and due dates. This gives students 24 hour access to any work and allows parents to know what is going on in my classroom. I also post notes so that students can have an electronic copy. My next step is to create podcasts of my lessons. This will allow absent students to stay on top of any new material that they miss and any student to review what was talked about in class. I will have to start off using a computer lab with my students. However, in 2012, every student in my high school will be getting a netbook computer, which will allow me to have much more frequent and easy access to Moodle during class time. I will be using the quiz option to give students pre and post tests for each unit. This will give individual students immediate feedback on how they are doing and will create a system for students to make goals for each unit. I will have students use the blog option for reflective journaling. I may have them write about what we learned that day

and have some questions to answer. I may show them some student work for a problem and ask them to critique it. They would have to tell me if they agree or disagree and what they would do differently. I think that this blogging/journaling option will really help individual students to think and analyze what they are learning. I will create a glossary where we can keep vocabulary for each chapter. Instead of using the glossary option I will use a wiki. This will allow students to add words and definitions. If they have a word that they are unsure of, they can add it to the wiki and anyone from the entire class (student or teacher) can fill in the definition. This will come in handy for students when they are studying. I can use the wiki and submission of assignments for small group projects. I can also create a lesson through Moodle that will walk the students through material. This could be done individually or in small groups. I am thinking about creating a hybrid or blended class, which would mean that student would be required to do some learning online. I could create a lesson that walks them through the content. They may have to read material, watch videos, and answer questions. Depending on how they do, the lesson will direct them to where they need to go. I could create a lesson for any topic that we are talking about. I will also create a forum (discussion board) where we can talk about the topics that we are covering. I think that it is important that student talk about their misconceptions and find out why they are wrong. This would help them to better understand the correct method. I could set up these forums for large groups or the whole class.

Alignment with standards: Moodle is a very broad program and can cover mathematical content from many different courses as they are implemented into the software. Listed below are some of the strands of the standards that can be covered using this program. This software can be used to provide information, links, or activities that cover the standards underneath each one of these strands.

- HSCE:
  - Strand 1 – Quantitative Literacy and Logic
  - Strand 2 – Algebra and Functions
  - Strand 3 – Geometry and Trigonometry
  - Strand 4 – Statistics and Probability
- CCSS:
  - Strand N – Numbers and Quantity
  - Strand A – Algebra
  - Strand F – Functions
  - Strand G – Geometry
  - Strand S – Statistics and Probability

Moodle also meets the requirements of the Michigan Educational Technology Standards (METS) for K-12 students. The strands, listed below, are covered with this software. Each lesson or activity covers the standards underneath each of these strands.

- Technology Standards:
  - Standard 9-12.CI. – Creativity and Innovation
  - Standard 9-12.CC. – Communication and Collaboration
  - Standard 9-12. CT. – Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making
  - Standard 9-12.DC. – Digital Citizenship
  - Standard 9-12. TC. – Technology Operations and Concepts

Provided below is an example of the type of activity that could be done through Moodle. It shows the objectives of the activity and the standards that it covers.

Geometry Glossary Wiki – Chapter 1: Foundations for Geometry

- Lesson Objectives:
  - Help students organize the new concepts they will learn in Chapter 1.

- HSCE Standards:
  - Standard G1.1.6 – Recognize Euclidean Geometry as an axiom system, knowing the key axioms and understanding the meaning of and distinguishing between undefined terms (e.g. point, line, plane), axioms, definitions, and theorems.
  - Standard G3.1.1 – Define reflection, rotation, translation, and glide reflection and find the image of a figure under a given isometry.

- CCSC Standards:
  - Standard G-CO.1 – Know precise definitions of angle, circle, perpendicular line, parallel line, and line segment, based on the undefined notions of point, line, distance along a line, and distance around a circular arc.
  - Standard G-CO.4 – Develop definitions of rotations, reflections, and translations, draw the transformed figure using, e.g. graph paper, tracing paper, or geometry software. Specify a sequence of transformations that will carry a given figure onto another.

- Technology Standards:
  - Standard 9-12.CC.1 – Identify various collaboration technologies and describe their use (e.g. desktop conferencing, webinar, listserv, blog, wiki)
  - Standard 9-12.CC.2 – Use available technologies (e.g. desktop conferencing, e-mail, videoconferencing, instant messaging) to communicate with others on a class assignment or project.

Special Requirements: In order to have your own Moodle site, you have to have server space. School districts already have a server that can be used. As an individual, you could use an old computer as a server or purchase server space on the internet. If you used bluehost.com to purchases this server space, it would cost you $5 a month or $60 a year. There are also many plug-ins that are available to download when you also download Moodle. These are extra modules that will give you more options on your Moodle site. There are no requirements for plug-ins that you have to have on your computer in order to use the Moodle site. As a teacher, I may attach a PDF file, embed a video, or link another website. This may make it may be necessary to have Adobe Reader or Java installed on your computer in order to utilize these options from the teacher. If a school computer is being used, these plug-ins would be previously installed. On a personal computer, you may have to check if you have these plug-ins.

Ratings:
Exemplary, Adequate, Unacceptable

CONTENT

Accuracy	Exemplary	All information that is put onto the Moodle site is dictated by the teacher. Thus, the teacher can make sure that all content contained on this site accurate and reliable.
Authoritative source	Adequate	Moodle is partnered with 53 companies including Remote-Learner USA, ClassroomRevolution.com, Moodlerooms Inc, and NewSchool Learning. There are no awards listed, but lots of statistics on the increase in numbers of Moodle users.
Bias	Exemplary	There is no bias from this website. No purchase is necessary since the site is free. Teachers have the freedom to use any sources that they would like to use.
Best Medium Used	Exemplary	This website can utilize audio, video, pictures, links, and built in tools. Students can experience a concept through many different forms of presentation.
Images	Exemplary	Images can be inserted throughout a Moodle page to catch students' interest or to add to the content. Pictures are clear and of good quality.
Sound	Exemplary	Podcasts can be added throughout a Moodle page. This provides narration, directions, and content to students. Audio is clear and of good quality.
Video Content	Exemplary	Video clips can be embedded into any Moodle page. This allows students to stay at the Moodle site in the safe environment. Videos are clear and of good quality.

EDUCATIONAL VALUE

Useful	Exemplary	This site is easy to use and can incorporate any information that is needed. It is really nice to have one place with all necessary resources for a class to use.
Timely	Exemplary	The lastest version of Moodle was developed July 1, 2011. There are also updates made weekly for any fixes.
Readability	Exemplary	The text on a Moodle site can be made consistent and organized by the teacher in an easy to read manner. Reading levels can be made for the specific grade level of the class.
Availability	Adequate	The tools provided through Moodle can be found using other sites such as BlackBoard. However, Moodle is a free open source product where BlackBoard is not.
Collaboration Support	Exemplary	Moodle provides many tools that promote collaboration of students. Wikis, blogs, discussion forums, and chat rooms are built in tools that will help students to work together. Teachers can also create activities through Moodle that

		will utilize collaboration including webquests and group assignments.
Responsiveness to Queries	Exemplary	There is a contact link on the main page of Moodle. It provides a support document, Helpdesk, and a bug reporting station, and a message center.
Evidence/Analysis of Student Learning	Exemplary	Student learning can be tracked through quizzes, polls, assignments, and lessons on Moodle. These tools will provide data to the teacher to what the students understand.

TECHNICAL QUALITIES

Working	Exemplary	All links that are on a Moodle site are posted by the teacher, which means that all links should be working properly. The built in tools are also developed by the teacher and working properly.
Current links	Exemplary	Links can be implemented for any content related websites, webquests, or online resources.
View – Concise/Quick	Exemplary	For one class, everything is on the same Moodle page. The teacher can choose to have the site set up as that everything is seen on the same page or students can select which topic they want to see. Teachers also have the option to hide any information that is not yet needed.
High Speed Connection	Adequate	High speed connection may be nice for video and audio clips but is not necessary to use this site.
Clear & Friendly	Exemplary	The website can be set up by the teacher in a very clear and organized manner. It is very user friendly for students and parents.
Navigational Elements	Exemplary	The teacher can choose how to navigate the page. Everything can show on one page by scrolling down. The other option is that one topic will show at a time and students can switch between topics. There are also boxes along the side that always show such as a calendar.

Accessibility and Accommodations: There are a few adaptations that can be made on the computer, such as enhancing the size of the screen to help with visual impairments or providing ear phones to help students concentrate and focus on the task at hand. Other adaptations need to be made by the teacher. When creating a lesson, a teacher can create different tracks for students to follow. This would allow all students to be able to understand the material as well as being pushed in their learning. In essence, each student would get to work at their own pace. For English language learners (ELL), a teacher could create glossaries with the vocabulary from the course in both languages that the student knows. In order for the teacher to make that translation, they could use the

Google Translate tool. They could also put a link on the site for Google Translate so that it is easily available to students. English as a Second Language (ESL) students could also be provided teacher assistance, allowed to work in a group, or allowed the use of special devices such as translators or a paraprofessional. For visual impairments, students could enhance the screen size, use a screen reader, use text to speech software, work in a group, and ask for teacher assistance. For motor disabilities, students could work in a group or benefit from having a paraprofessional. Any student that would need to use a special adaptive devise would be allowed to use it so that they can benefit from the class and have the same learning experience as their peers.

Learner-Centered Activities: The variety of tools that are provided through Moodle are a major benefit of this website. The teacher can create activities for the students to work through on any learning standard. Students can write a blog entry about a given topic and explain their thinking or method of solving the problem. Students could also be involved in a chat room or discussion forum as a way of communicating with the class. They would be required to have a certain number of posts, which holds them responsible for being involved in the discussion. A paper, project, or group work could be assigned and submitted through Moodle. This would give the students freedom to use other resources or their peers to look deeper into a topic and solve real world problems. Students could be given open-ended question or asked to create their own problem (with or without solution) related to the standard that they are learning to demonstrate their understanding. This provides students with an opportunity to use higher order thinking skills. Students could work on activities or lessons in small groups, pairs, or individually. In a classroom setting, it would also be beneficial for students to present their work to the class as a whole. There could be different methods to finding the solution, and the student would be able to share their methods with the class which could then lead to a discussion.

Special Features: There are many websites that allow you to make your own teacher site, but they do not have the all of the built in tools that are available through Moodle. It provides a safe environment for students to access many different tools including: blogs, wikis, forums, podcasts, lessons, assignments, glossaries, calendar, polls, questionnaires, chat rooms, surveys, and more. Each of these tools allows teachers to engage students while teaching any of the learning standards for the class. There is also a module that allows teachers to track which students have been on the website and when they are active.

Best Features: Many school districts choose to use Moodle as their online learning environment because it is a free service. This is great considering the lack of money that schools have available. As mentioned above as special features of Moodle, the variety of tools that this site offers provides many avenues for student learning within a safe environment. It is a great way to engage students and teach the learning standards at the same time. This site is also parent and student friendly. It is easy for students to use and for parents to access. This is a great way to communicate with parents and administration so that they know what is going on in our classes.

Worst Features: There is a little bit of a learning curve for teachers when it comes to

using Moodle. There is a trick to uploading a file, and the site offers many options that need to be explored before using. It takes a lot of time for a teacher to set up and organize their Moodle pages. There should be a different page for each subject/class that is being taught, and it is time consuming to get all of the needed information on to the page.

Overall Quality: I would recommend that school districts and their teachers implement and use Moodle. It is a great website with many options. It is a way to get students actively involved in class as well as spending time with learning material outside of the school day. This website can help teachers to track student learning, gather data, and communicate with parents and administration. Once the initial set up for a page is complete, the time to keep the page update is very manageable. I would also recommend the use of Moodle because it gives the teacher the freedom to implement any material for their classes onto this site. Teachers can use the multiple tools to engage students on any learning standard for the class. Since this is a free website, I would highly recommend that schools explore and implement Moodle into their districts.

[A very good review, although I think include a description of a specific activity where students would use Moodle to acquire the knowledge and skill described in the mathematics subject area standards (above) would have been very helpful. Without it, it is unclear how use of Moodle would lead to realization of those standards? Otherwise, very good job!

Distinguished rating.

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