Group Rubric Assignment: Delivery Platform Evaluation Rubric

Scott Alexander, Johanne Brochu, Kenneth Buis, Conroy Hall

University of British Columbia

ETEC 565

Submitted to John P. Egan

June 1, 2011

Delivery Platform Evaluation Rubric

Précis

In a need to develop an online environment for lecturers who cannot attend face-to-face to share their expertise with students, our group was asked by Margo Fryer, the Director of UBC Exchange Humanities programme, to sit on the Online Learning Development committee to develop a strategy for selecting the most appropriate LMS. The UBC Learning Exchange program "links to students to inner-city schools and community groups, and has a storefront location in the Downtown Eastside" (Stueck, 2009, p. 3). As mentioned by Stueck (2009), in a desire to build a presence in the surrounding area, UBC students were matched "to inner-city schools in activities such as sports, academics and art, and has grown from the participation of dozens of students to hundreds" (p.3).

In light of our first experience as a committee at the University level and our insufficient knowledge about similarities and differences between LMS, we have decided to develop a rubric for evaluating various learning management systems available to us. This is our initiative to strategically and comprehensively distinguish the particularities between these available learning management systems and determine what would be the best online space according to the particular complex situation of Downtown Eastside (Stueck, 2009).

Since the UBC Exchange Humanities programme courses, mainly the 101 courses, "offer low-income community members a taste of university-level education" and "are taught by volunteer faculty and graduate students from various departments and faculties at UBC" (UBC Learning Exchange) it was clear from the beginning that this LMS will serve to satisfy certain needs such as interactivity between instructors/lecturers and students maintaining easy access at low cost. With that in our minds, our committee emphasized its LMS rubric's criteria on features that will best facilitate this type of activity in this specific context. However, we have decided that, even though the main purpose of the site was not to deliver course material, it would be interesting to find a LMS that will allow most possibilities at less convenient as possible. Indeed, that is the main reason we have included some general criteria that will help us make our decision.

The following rubric is reflecting what we are thinking are the most valuable criteria we should look for in this UBC programme in a desire to serve best both instructors/lecturers, helping them reach their goal at low cost for the university, and students in a user friendly environment with easy access for low-income students.

Rubric

Criteria → Sections ↓	Fails to Meets Expectations (0)	Meets Expectations (1)	Exceeds Expectations (2)
Student Access	Access to features is	Access is open to most	Access is open to all

	dramatically restrictive. It is limited to 25 users or less simultaneously using the site's facilities	students but can be accessed by guest log in as well	students with privacy protection via username and password
Content Management	Site performs limited possibilities for instructors/ lecturers to develop/manage course contents.	Site performs reasonable possibilities for instructors/ lecturers to develop/manage course contents	Site performs great possibilities for instructors/lecturers to develop/manage course contents.
Pedagogical design	The site provides basic access to well-structured materials, but few opportunities for student interaction, constructivist methods	The site provides basic access to well-structured materials and tools that facilitate student interaction and a constructivist approach	The site provides access as well as student friendly engaging tools and automatic update of new pedagogical tools
Website Structure	Site structure allows instructors/lecturers to develop the class material and allows for facilitating navigation into the website with limitation	Site structure allows instructors/lecturers to develop the class material and allows for facilitating navigation into the website with reasonable efficiency	Site structure allows instructors/lecturers to develop the class material and allows for facilitating navigation effectively and with efficiency into the website
Course Work (assignments and submission)	Site provides some simple course work features for students to access easily (e.g. drop box) and limited access (e.g. deadline clock) for work's delivery	Site provides some good course work features for students to access easily (e.g. drop box) and limited access (e.g. deadline clock) for work's delivery	Site provides excellent course work features for students to access easily (e.g. drop box), a reminder (e.g. calendar) and limit access (e.g. deadline clock) for work delivery
Ease of Use & Reliability Students	Hard to navigate and confusing	With some effort, users are able to retrieve and post information	Site is intuitive and users can easily retrieve and post the required information
	Does not function with minimum system requirements	Meets most system requirements	Meets all system requirements (i.e. supports video, audio)
Ease of Use & Reliability	Site is rigid and does not allow for customization	Site is structured and allows for some	Site is intuitive and provides a template as a

Staff		customization	starting off point Creator can customize the site as required
	Creator has difficulty adding content to the site	Creator is able to upload and create material	Creator can easily upload and create material
	Video, image and other files take too long to upload and provide a limit on downloading.	Video, image and other files upload relatively quickly and provides a limit of 100 Mb for downloading	Video, image and other files upload quickly and provides unlimited Mb for downloading.
Costs	Over 9$ per student	9$ per student	Open Source
	Unit costs are based on individual class	Unit costs are based on university	Unit costs are free
	Set-up time for LMS is greater than 480 hours	Set up time for LMS is 480 hours	Set up time for LMS is less than 480 hours
Teaching & Learning	A learning community is not evident	A learning community is evident	A learning community is not only evident but promoted
	Multiple learning styles are not address	Allows for some difference in learning styles in LMS	All learning styles are accommodated
	Learning theory cannot be supported in LMS	Learning theory can be supported in LMS but with limitations	Learning theory (e.g. Constructivism and discovery learning) can be supported effectively in LMS
Interactivity	Little or no interactivity features.	Features such as: →Alerts →Discussion Boards →Email →RSS feeds →Chat All available to be	In addition features such as: →Who's Online →Group specific features →Whiteboards →Blogs and presentation spaces

		monitored by the instructors/lecturers	
Organizational Issues – Tech Support	Online support aimed at IT professionals F2F support at a high cost (IT staffing)	Available online in one resource location Online tutorials and self-directed support is available	Available 24-7 online for teacher/student Online support for those who are new to format, not professionals
	Membership required for support pages	No face-to-face IT support	F2F on site through IT support staff Self-directed support also available
Novelty	Program is a beta version in education	Program is being run in a current education system	Program is the leader in the industry
	Lacks appeal to students and professors	Program appeals to students and professors	Program appeals to students and professors at a level that increases participation
Speed	Program speed depends on user load	Program speed may be affected by features such as video conferencing as well as user load	Program speed is constant
	File transfer is slow and cumbersome (1 Mpbs or less)	File transfer is at industry standard for High Speed Internet (7.5 Mpbs)	File transfer exceeds industry standard for Extreme Speed Internet (25 Mpbs or greater)

Rationale

In a dynamic world where technology is rapidly changing the traditional learning environment and there is a greater need for effective and efficient learning management systems, it is important that UBC Exchange's Humanities 101 programme Online Learning Development committee develops an appropriate strategy for selecting a possible LMS. We are aware that a rubric is the most effective tool for meticulously collecting information that is deemed relevant in choosing the most suitable LMS for our online programme. Thus, in choosing learning management systems, we need to consider all aspects of each option, their learning implications and potential for educational innovation. When adapting new technology, strategic planning is

essential if we are to enable successful adaptation of the LMS by lecturers who need to share their expertise with students in their programs without face-to-face situations.

Not only is a rubric an excellent vehicle of assessment, it can also be utilized to evaluate technology and its possible adaptation to education. With both the student learning needs and instructor teaching needs in mind, our group decided to use varying degrees of *expectations* as a tool of measurement for quality of an LMS. With regard to making decisions about educational technology, Bates & Poole states:
"…teachers or educational administrators making decisions about educational technology should have some theoretical model or framework that guides the choice of media and technology. If not, they will be constantly driven by the latest technology development, whether or not they are appropriate" (2003, p. 80).

A well-defined rubric assists in the direct comparison of elements of learning management systems leading to a choice that suits all parties of interest.

Following Bates and Poole' SECTIONS (2003) focus on students, ease-of-use, cost, teaching and learning, interactivity, organizational issues, novelty and speed. We built in assessment based on Panettieri's descriptions of MIT's Stellar Course Management system upgrades, we utilized the elements of good learning management systems, including: content management, website structure, homework, ease of control, student interaction and ease-of-use enhancements. We also built in elements such as site structure and assessment to round out the evaluation.

By utilizing an expectations model of assessment based on a 0,1,2 scale, we are able to view the subtleties of an LMS, while also keeping in mind the needs of learners and instructors. Not only does the scale provide an opportunity for close scrutiny of software options, it builds a framework of elements that would suit the needs of administration who are buying the program, instructors who are utilizing its options, and most importantly, students who are engaged in its knowledge building opportunities and interactivities.

Our rubric is universal in its design, so while it is intended for our specific scenario, it is flexible enough to be utilized by any educational group intending to provide a greater level of online service for their learners.

References

Bates, A.W. & Poole, G. (2003). Chapter 4 : A framework for selecting and Using Technology. *In effective Teaching with Technology in Higher Education: Foundations for Success. (pp. 77-105).* San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers.

Panettieri, J. (2007). Addition by subtraction. *University Business*, August, 58-62. Retrieved from http://www.universitybusiness.com/viewarticle.aspx?articleid=845

Stueck, Wendy. (2009). Troubled residents can teach us a thing or two; If only we'd listen. *The Globe and Mail*, March 2009, 3-4. Retrieved from http://www.learningexchange.ubc.ca/files/2010/11/Troubled_residents_can_teach_us_a_thing_or_two_PDF2370.pdf

UBC Learning Exchange. Retrieved from http://www.learningexchange.ubc.ca/