

Steve Corbett

Moodle Project

Course Name: Story Outlining

EDTEC 700 – The Ins and Outs of LMSs

I chose to develop a course called **CW500 - Story Outlining** for this Moodle Project. The goal of this course is to help learners develop a broad understanding of the key principles and concepts needed to effectively outline a story.

I predominantly build e-learning courses for a Fortune 500 company, so designing and developing a distance education course within Moodle was a completely new experience. In fact, this was the first time I created a course syllabus. Creating the syllabus turned out to be a critical first step to designing this kind of course as it helped me organize the weekly structure. When I organized the course, I chose to focus each weekly module on one component of the story outlining model with the only exception being to spread the course topic of “plot structure” over three weeks. I used the ICARE method to organize the activities and deliverables for each week because of my familiarity with this method.

One of the goals of this project was to use the VDILS model to help design the course to be dynamic. I used the following aspects of the VDILS model within my course:

- In the Getting Started section of the course, I asked the student to introduce themselves and express their objectives for taking the course. I asked the learner to post this in a class forum.
- Per VDILS, the designer should incorporate an activity that fosters learner to learner communication and collaboration. To accomplish this, I implemented a Knowledge Sharing wiki and a Class Glossary.
- My course also declared to the learner the objectives of the course.
- I sought to develop a course that gave the learner greater autonomy over the pace of completing deliverables. Although the “Apply” deliverables were due each week, the “Reflect” deliverables were self-paced.
- I set up the course to simulate a learner contract. Specifically, I focused on making the story outline a step by step weekly process, so it would be easier for the learner to absorb. I provided specific activities and deliverables each week.

After I developed the course, I found three “live” participants to look through the course and perform a usability test on the two modules I had created. All three participants were classmates from the EDTEC 700 course. For the usability test, they rated the course against the High Quality Online Course Rubric (Appendix A). The results of their assessment are shown below:

Category	Rating 1	Rating 2	Rating 3
Learner Support & Resources	Exemplary.	Effective.	Exemplary.

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Online Organization & Design (course syllabus)	Exemplary.	Exemplary.	Exemplary.
Online Organization & Design (organization of course)	Exemplary.	Exemplary.	Exemplary.
Instructional Design & Delivery (Interaction & communication)	Exemplary.	Effective.	Effective.
Instructional Design & Delivery (Learning objectives)	Exemplary.	Exemplary.	Exemplary.
Instructional Design & Delivery (Multiple activities)	Exemplary.	Effective.	Effective.
Instructional Design & Delivery (Activities aligned to objectives)	Exemplary.	Exemplary.	Exemplary.
Assessment & Evaluation of Student Learning (Assessment aligned to objectives)	Exemplary.	Exemplary.	Exemplary.
Assessment & Evaluation of Student Learning (Multiple activities assess understanding)	Exemplary.	Effective.	Effective.
Innovative Teaching with Technology	Exemplary.	Effective.	Exemplary.

Based on a comparison of the ratings received through the rubric, the course achieved exemplary success in the following dimensions:

- **Learner Support & Resources:** Course provides extensive course-specific information, all contact information for instructor, and a wide range of resources to support course content. One participant said, “Introductory information was very helpful to orient the learner to the course. Helps students feel welcomed.”
- **Online Organization & Design:** Organization of course is easy to follow. Course syllabus provides detailed descriptions of what is expected of students. One participant said, “Your course looks great. I glanced through a number of things. It is well laid out, deliverables are clear. I really like it.” Another said the syllabus was “Detailed with clear expectations.”
- **Instructional Design & Delivery:** One participant said, “Each session has objectives clearly defined. Activities and deliverables are aligned directly with objectives.”
- **Assessment & Evaluation of Student Learning:** Assessment activities are closely aligned with learning objectives. One participant said, “I thought your course was very good. I really like the quiz. I think I should improve my quiz so that it gives detailed feedback like yours.” Two of the three participants completed the quiz and received a grade on the quiz.

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- **Innovative Teaching with Technology:** Course uses a variety of tools to appropriately facilitate communication and learning. One participant said, “I like the way you setup your DimDim meeting.” Another participant said, “I have very little constructive feedback, because more than anything, I was learning from how you've set yours up. As I scanned the rubric, I think you are well covered on the innovative teaching with technology.”

The course achieved effective success in the following dimensions:

- **Instructional Design & Delivery:** Course offers some opportunity for interaction and communication among students and with instructor. Per one participant: “Probably could have some more interaction other than the synchronous class meetings. Wiki and glossary are somewhat interactive, but I would say more interactive with the content rather than with other learners or the instructor.”
- **Assessment & Evaluation of Student Learning:** Course has some activities to assess student understanding of course material.

Based on the feedback from my participants and after studying the VDILS model further, some aspects of my course I would change include:

- Implement a quiz at the beginning of the course to check the prior knowledge of each learner. This would then allow me to develop a more individualized learner contract with each learner. Each learner would then be able to have a negotiable set of objectives.
- Implement a weekly schedule to give each learner the opportunity to meet with me synchronously to go over the learner contract. This would enable us to modify and amend the learning contract as the learner’s needs change during the course.
- Add more quizzes and use them as knowledge check milestones instead of using them to affect the learner’s grade. The learner would need to pass the quiz before moving on to the next week’s learning activities.
- I would add a group collaboration activity for one or more of the “Apply” activities as this will increase learner to learner communication and learning.

The aspects of my course I would keep the same include:

- I would keep the “Reflect” deliverables self-paced. This provides the learner the right level of autonomy over the pace of completing the deliverable most important to them – creating a story outline for their own story. It is critical for the creative process to remain free of hard deadlines and structure.

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- I would keep the Knowledge Share wiki and Class Glossary activity in place because these activities also foster learner to learner communication and collaboration.
- I would keep the blog activity as the main vehicle for capturing the “Reflect” deliverables because it provides the best means for enabling a learner to capture the internal dialogue associated with creating their own story outline.
- I would keep the course outline aligned to the components of the story outline model because this breaks up the model into easier-to-absorb chunks of content. It also supports the concept of reusability as other creative writing courses may only need to include portions of the model.

While developing the course in Moodle, I discovered the following pros and cons associated with using Moodle:

Pros:

- Administrative function: I liked being able to control access to the course by allowing guest access to the course, restricting access based on roles, adding students manually, or allowing students to self-register.
- Course creation functionality: The weekly format made it easy to set up the course and I liked having an introductory bucket before the weekly buckets. This made it easier to keep all of the Getting Started activities in one place. I also liked the variety of communication tools and collaborative activities offered by Moodle, the ability to create my own web pages within Moodle for content, and the ability to link to resources outside of Moodle.
- Editing functionality: I liked that I could change the color scheme for the course and easily change the order and name of menu items for the course.

Cons:

- Administrative function: The quiz tool in Moodle is not very intuitive. It took me some time to figure out how to use the percentage scale it used for grading. I also did not like that blog posts from other courses were visible in my course. I was unable to determine how to hide them.
- Course creation functionality: UDUTU does not link up well to Moodle. There has to be an easier way. Also, it would be nice if Moodle had its own whiteboard tool instead of having to use an external whiteboard like DimDim.
- Editing functionality: Although I could change the order and name of resources and activities, we should be able to control their placement within the course more. I would like to have simply dragged and dropped them into my bullets instead of creating my own links to the same resources and activities.

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APPENDIX A - High Quality Online Course Rubric

Category	Baseline	Effective	Exemplary
Learner Support & Resources	Course contains limited course-specific information, limited contact information for instructor, and limited resources to support course content	Course provides necessary course-specific information, all contact information for instructor, and necessary resources to support course content	Course provides extensive course-specific information, all contact information for instructor, and a wide range of resources to support course content
Online Organization & Design	Course syllabus is unclear about what is expected of students	Course syllabus identifies expectations of students and instructors	Course syllabus provides detailed descriptions of what is expected of students and instructors or where to find more information about expectations
	Organization of course does not make sense and it is difficult to find information	Organization of course makes sense and information is accessible	Organization of course is easy to follow and there are no difficulties finding necessary or supplementary information
Instructional Design & Delivery	Course offers limited opportunity for interaction and communication among students and with the instructor	Course offers some opportunity for interaction and communication among students and with instructor	Course offers ample opportunities for interaction and communication among students and with instructor
	Learning objectives are vague or incomplete and do not align with goals of the course	Learning objectives are identified, but may not always align with goals of the course	Learning objectives are identified and align directly with goals of the course
	Course provides few visual, textual, kinesthetic and/or auditory activities to enhance student learning	Course provides some visual, textual, kinesthetic and/or auditory activities to enhance student learning	Course provides multiple visual, textual, kinesthetic and/or auditory activities to enhance student learning
	Instructional activities are not closely aligned with learning objectives	Instructional activities are somewhat aligned with learning objectives	Instructional activities are closely aligned with learning objectives
Assessment & Evaluation of Student Learning	Assessment activities are not closely aligned with learning objectives	Assessment activities are somewhat aligned with learning objectives	Assessment activities are closely aligned with learning objectives
	Course has limited activities to assess student understanding of course material	Course has some activities to assess student understanding of course material	Course has multiple, timely, and appropriate activities to assess student understanding of course material
Innovative Teaching with Technology	Course uses limited tools to facilitate communication and learning	Course uses some tools to facilitate communication and learning	Course uses a variety of tools to appropriately facilitate communication and learning