

MOODLE: A HANDS-ON DEMONSTRATION OF THE VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT SOFTWARE

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Summary:

The use of virtual learning environments (VLEs) or learning management systems (LMS) by educational institutes to support teaching and learning is very much now commonplace. In the author's opinion, there is little difference between available software solutions with the key to success being planning, management and provision of engaging high quality content.

The choice of a VLE or LMS can be difficult with many considerations to be made such as budget, training and the life expectancy of the software. In recent years, in Ireland and the United Kingdom, Moodle has been gaining popularity and is now recognized as viable alternative commercial products such as WebCT. Moodle differs from commercial products in that it is available for free and is entirely open source.

In this half-day workshop, the speakers will provide information on the development of Moodle and its ongoing support and development via the Moodle users community. The structure and basic functions of Moodle will be explained in detail and attendees will be able to create a number of course interactions using a live version of Moodle. This pre-workshop will be limited to 24 people.

Pre-workshop's Objectives:

To outline the development of Moodle and to demonstrate its use in a medical school setting. To allow users to try Moodle for themselves by creating online activities such as assignments, quizzes, forums, choices and to manage course content.

Pre-Workshop's Benefits:

If you even wondered what that software with the funny sounding name actually was, this is your chance to find out more. The workshop will also allow attendees to explore the Moodle architecture and layout by actually creating course content.

Pre-Workshop's Pre-requisites:

Attendees do not require anything but basic keyboard and Internet skills. Prior knowledge of other virtual learning environments may help the group to make comparisons and share experiences. However, this is by not essential.

Pre-Workshop's Intended Audience:

Those who are interested in exploring the features of Moodle either as a first use of a learning environment or to replace an existing installation.

Pre-Workshop's Instructors:

Primary Presenter: Eric Clarke

Eric Clarke began working in Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland as a member of the Anatomy technical staff and since 1989 has been involved in the development of information and communication technology at the College. Throughout the last 10 years Eric has also been closely involved in the RCSI compulsory laptop scheme. He has pursued formal training in Informatics and was awarded the degree of MSc in Healthcare Informatics in 2000. Eric was appointed as lecturer at RCSI in Medical Information Technology in August 2002 and lectures in both RCSI undergraduate training programs in Dublin and Bahrain

Eric has been involved in the use and implementation of Moodle to support postgraduate surgical training since January 2004. He is also a member of the team, which extended the use of Moodle to the schools of medicine, physiotherapy and pharmacy.

Co-presenter: Claire Doody

Claire began work as an instructional designer/project manager with a leading e-Learning consultancy - Intuition. She was appointed Head of Instructional Design with Intuition in 2004, leading a team of 12 instructional designers and guiding the learning strategy and design of many custom e-learning projects. Claire has worked on medical e-learning including postgraduate surgical training, histology online, infection control and decontamination. She has also worked on major projects for a number of global financial institutions including compliance, data protection, IT security, systems training, financial knowledge etc.

Since joining the RCSI in 2006 as e-Learning Manager, Claire's focus is on improving what is already have in place while stimulating the development of new techniques, delivery mechanisms and pedagogical approaches, to ultimately improve the student learning experience through technology.

Co-presenter: Ruaidhri McVey

Ruaidhri McVey graduated from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. He completed his internship at Beaumont Hospital, Dublin. In 2005, he successfully completed the Irish Basic Surgical Training Training Residency Program in 2005. He is currently writing a thesis for MD 'Novel strategies in undergraduate Surgical and Obstetric Training in Ireland'. Ruaidhri is a team leader in the development of the on-line curriculum in undergraduate surgery and Obstetrics & Gynaecology at the RCSI. Ruaidhri commenced his formal Obstetric training at the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin in 2006.

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