

Piloting  **Phase I**

Frank (Francis M.) Seidel

**Summer 2010
(and Updates from Fall 2010)**

Submitted December 2010

Contents

Abstract	1
Moodle Survey Results	2
Links to Appendices (PDF Files)	
Summer Grant Application	
Page 1 – Piloting-Moodle-Summer-Grant-Ap-Page1.pdf	
Page 2 – Piloting-Moodle-Summer-Grant-Ap-Page2.pdf	
Sample Courses (Created for Summer 2010 Second Five-Week Session)	
moodlecoursecis101_2_sum10.pdf	
moodlecoursecis101_5_sum10.pdf	
File Content: moodlefilescis101_sum10.pdf	
Samples of Documentation Compiled:	
moodle-m18manual.pdf	
moodle-manual-joule.pdf	
moodlerooms - moodle resources.pdf	
Moodle Survey Instrument Created	
printmoodlesurvey.pdf	
Moodle Survey Instrument Summer 2010 Results	
moodlesurveycis101s_2_sum10.pdf	
moodlesurveycis101s_5_sum10.pdf	
(UPDATE) Moodle Survey Instrument Fall 2010 Results	
moodlesurveycis101_01_fall2010.pdf	
moodlesurveycis101_02_fall2010.pdf	
moodlesurveycis101_04_fall2010.pdf	
moodlesurveycis101_06_fall2010.pdf	
moodlesurveycis101_07_fall2010.pdf	
moodlesurveycis101_11_fall2010.pdf	
moodlesurveycis101_12_fall2010.pdf	
moodlesurveycis101_13_fall2010.pdf	
moodlesurveycis101_15_fall2010.pdf	
moodlesurveycis101_16_fall2010.pdf	
moodlesurveycis101_18m_fall2010.pdf	
moodlesurveycis101_19_fall2010.pdf	
moodlesurveycis101_20_fall2010.pdf	
moodlesurveycis101_21_fall2010.pdf	
moodlesurveycis101_22_fall2010.pdf	
moodlesurveycis101_24_fall2010.pdf	

Piloting Moodle – Phase I

Frank (Francis M.) Seidel

Abstract

The Moodle pilot conducted using CIS101 has determined that Moodle is more than sufficient as a learning management system. This report initially focused on the summer 2010 pilot, but has been revised to include not only the results from the phase I of the Moodle pilot from three sections of CIS101 during the summer 2010 but additional results from phase II of the Moodle pilot using 26 sections of CIS101 during the fall 2010.

The project successfully completed all phases outlined in the initial proposal.

1. CIS101 courses were created in Moodle for the second half of CIS101-ONL1 (8-week) and all of the content for CIS101-2 and CIS101-5 (Second Five-Week Session).
2. Moodle training materials were evaluated and compiled.
3. Moodle training was conducted for CIS101 instructors on the following dates:

Tuesday, July 6, 2010 (Melanie Kalmar and Rabiha Kayed – Second Five-Week Summer Instructors.)

Wednesday, August 11, 2010 and Tuesday, August 17, 2010 for all available CIS101 instructors assigned to section for Fall 2010

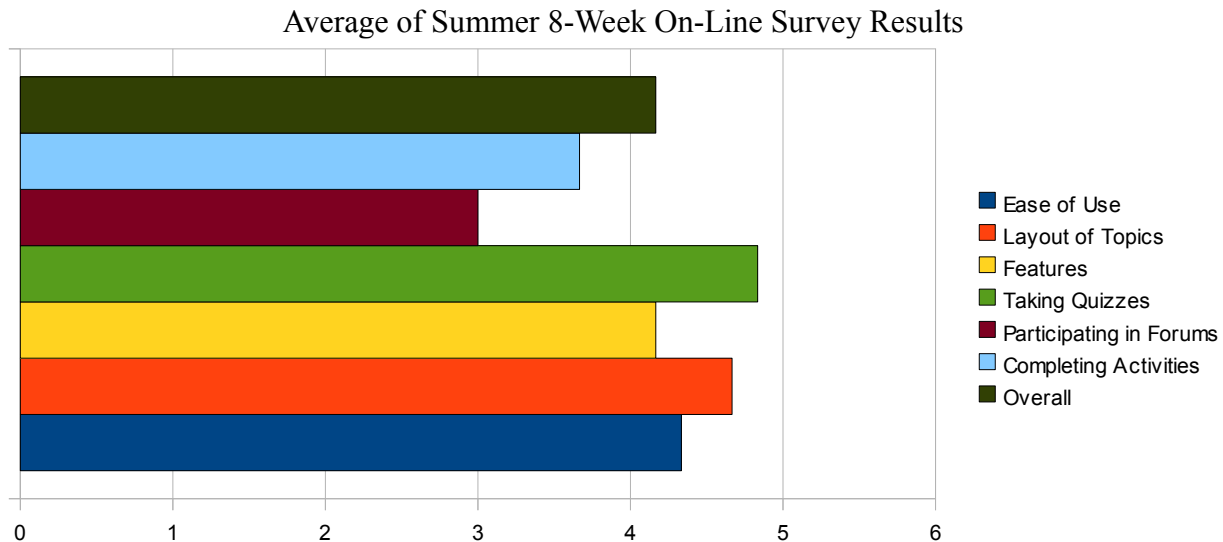
4. An evaluation instrument was created and reviewed by Jurgen Hilke and Alberto Ramirez. Their suggestions were incorporated into the survey which was turned into a Moodle questionnaire to be conducted in the second five-week summer sessions and as an option in the fall 2010 sections of CIS101.
5. The survey was conducted with six participants from the CIS101-ONL1 (8-week) section, 31 participants from the second five-week summer session and 214 participants from the fall 2010 sessions. The results are included in the remainder of this report and the appendices.

The overall experience using Moodle has been positive, with only a few minor issues that will need to be addressed should Frederick Community College consider adopting Moodle as a Learning Management System. The Moodle service provider, MoodleRooms, has created an enhanced Moodle product, Joule, that may be worth investigating further because these enhancements may address the issues found in the standard Moodle system.

Moodle Survey Results

I. The following results are from the first draft from CIS101-ONL1 during the eight week Summer 2010 session. Students in this section used Blackboard 7 for the first half of the course and Moodle for the second half of the course.

1. Rate the Moodle Learning Management System on the following criteria (from 1 lowest to 5 highest)



2. What features of Moodle do you like best (or better than Blackboard)?
 - The viewing option of events that were due and returned in on then right side.
 - There weren't any features I liked better than Blackboard. I prefer Blackboard over Moodle Rooms.
 - Overall, I just thought the set up of Moodle made so much more sense than Blackboard. I absolutely loved how when taking tests and quizzes, you could see ALL the questions before submitting them, not one at a time. Because I'm used to taking tests on paper, it just makes me feel less overwhelmed when getting to a question I need to skip and come back to. I also liked the layout better. There weren't as many pointless options in the menu, which made navigating the site much easier. I feel like it took me no where near as long to get comfortable with Moodle as I did when I first started using blackboard.
The layout of the test was nice. Easy to read and the ability to scroll through the test was convenient. I also liked the way we uploaded assignments.
 - I liked the assignments being posted on the main page of the course site. I also liked the upcoming events tracker located on the front page of the course site. That was very useful.
 - From the first page of our course, we find a list of activities to complete. we do not have to open tabs after tabs to access our assignments.
In addition, in "assignments", we can see which assignments have already been submitted and which ones are not completed.

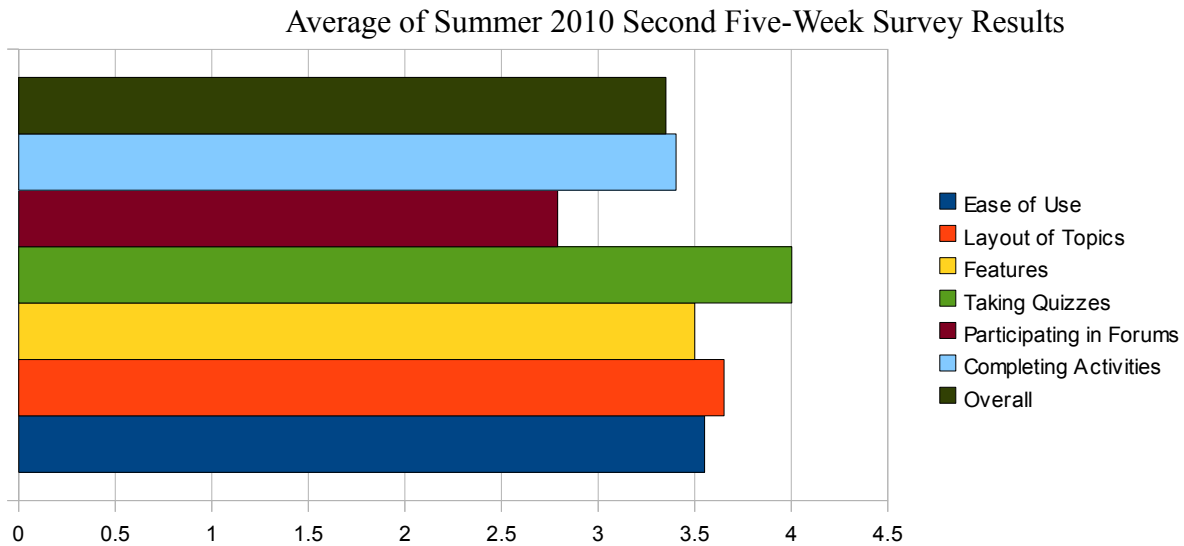
3. What features of Moodle do you think could be improved?
- I liked the forums better than Blackboard. I didn't particularly care for the forum responses being emailed to my FCC account.
 - I'm still not entirely happy with the discussion boards. I did like Moodle better because for some reason my internet browser won't let me respond to discussion boards on Blackboard, which makes posting a reply that should've taken a minute more like five minutes. However I still just wish there was a better format. I don't really have any suggestions on how to make it better, I just wish the set up was a little different. It's not hard to follow, I just think there would be ways to set it up that would increase conversation between classmates.
I was at a loss on the forum set-up. Maybe it was just that I was used to the way I did it in Blackboard. It didn't help that I got kicked out a few times when I went to submit. I also had trouble when I submitted quiz and review tasks. I would submit them and it would say page unavailable. Then I would hit the back button and have to do the task over again. Again, I'm not sure if it was the site or if it was on my end.
 - I could not seem to find a link to e-mail the professor. That would have been useful or maybe just having a training course like for Blackboard would have helped. I also like more about Blackboard than on the grades page it shows what you have submitted already. It was very confusing to know what was already submitted or not.
 - Forums. Whenever a participant publishes a comment in this section, I automatically receive an e-mail in my FCC account. Some days, I found more than 10 electronic messages generated by the Moodle forum in my FCC account.
4. Would the use of a blog in Moodle by your instructor be something that you would find useful for a course?
- Yes
 - I don't think I would blog on Moodle.
 - To me, this would be incredibly useful. The number one thing I don't like about online courses is the lack of communication between students and teachers. Even if I get all the work done with no help from the instructor needed, I still would like to hear from the instructor just so I can get a real person's viewpoint on the material covered. Text books are helpful, but there's certain things that a person can tell you that a text book just can't.
This may be useful in that the instructor could share more advice and/or instruction, especially in the case of students having certain issues or concerns with the class work.
 - I am sure anything extra would help. The more information the better I feel.
 - Yes. I think a blog in Moodle is interesting and useful. The features were well-structured, and the design and content of the blog was straight-forward.
5. Would the use of a blog in Moodle by your other students be something that you would find useful for a course?
- Yes
 - Not really sure if I would find it useful for my instructor to blog on Moodle.

- I'm not sure the use of a blog by other students would be something I'd personally find helpful. I know that with online classes, it's sometimes more difficult to truly grasp how to recite or talk about the information covered, and putting everyone's interpretation of that together would simply confuse me. That's why I feel it would be best for an instructor blog; students would have just the little extra bit of help needed to make truly understand the information in a way that can be applied to every day life.
 - It would be helpful if students could share their experiences and or difficulties during the session.
Yes. Since I found it well-structured, I think other students may feel at ease. They first have to familiarize with the platform.
6. Would the use of Moodle affect your decision to take a course? If so, would it be a positive or negative factor?
- No
 - I would let Moodle Room interfere with my decision to take a particular class. Blackboard is definitely better, in my opinion, but Moodle Room wasn't awful.
 - The use of Moodle has already affected my decision to take courses! Due to my work schedule, I've always taken online classes, but am now a little sad that I'll have to return to blackboard. Moodle would definitely make me want to take more online classes, and also feel like I could handle more. The way moodle was set up just made it so much more clear what exactly was supposed to be due by when. And when I can spend more time doing the work and less time trying to figure out the site, I'm a lot less stressed.
 - Currently, I may be a little hesitant only because I am so familiar with Blackboard. I know that one thing is for certain, "Nothing every stays the same", so I would have to adjust and adapt to the change.
 - As long as I have an orientation class for moodle I think I would do take that course. Just afraid I would miss something very important if I didn't know my way around the program correctly.
 - No. I found it more useful than blackboard (easiness to use and to complete activities).
7. Is there anything else about Moodle (not the course) that you would like to share? It was easier to learn quickly and the layout was not as confusing as the first part in blackboard.
- The only thing I did not like was the fact that we had to switch over halfway through. It constantly bothered me that half my grades were in one place, and half were in the other. Otherwise, I absolutely loved Moodle more than I thought I would, and hope that somehow the switch is made and Moodle completely replaces Blackboard at FCC.
 - I also had a problem whenever I went to log on to the site. I saved it in my favorites and when I would log on it always said web page unavailable, so I would hit the back button as suggested and try again. It always went in on the second try. Again, it could be on my end. I just had my computer worked on so I would hope that is not the case.

- Not that I can think of. As with anything new once the bugs are worked out I think that this will be easier to navigate through than blackboard.
- There should be a space for announcements and a feature to help students send e-mail to their instructor and other classmates.

II. The survey was review and an electronic form was included in Moodle for on-campus CIS101 Sections 2 and 5 for the second five-week summer session. The detailed results of the survey from the 31 participants are in the corresponding appendices.

1. Rate the Moodle Learning Management System on the following criteria (from 1 lowest to 5 highest)



2. Answers to remaining survey questions are found in the corresponding appendices.

1. Some significant responses about things students liked about Moodle included:

- I like being able to look at what we are doing for each day on this site. I like being able to take the tests on the computer, instead of on paper. I particularly dislike blackboard.
- I like the ability to see all of my assignments at once on one page, and the ability of the teacher to utilize the web page as a database for all the students who need help or have something to turn in. I enjoy using Moodle in this regard.
- Test and Quizzes features Activites Uploading Assignments
- The features I like best is the way everything is organized and to the point.
- The lay out of assignments under classes.

2. Some suggested improvements to Moodle included:

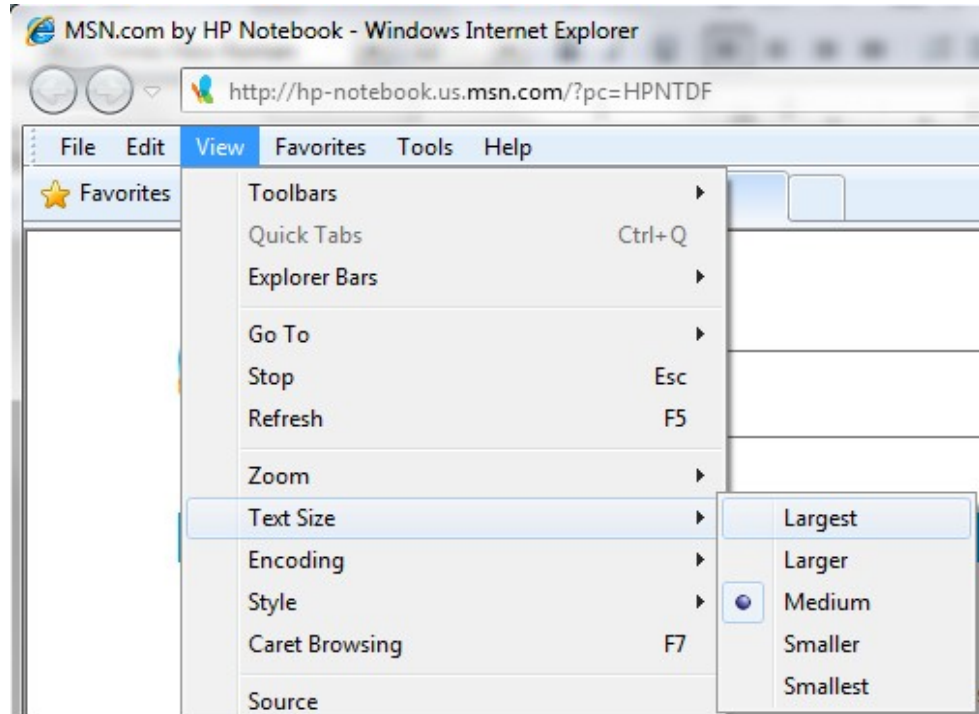
- It is hard to keep track of assignments that are completed and ones that still need to be completed.
- The text is small and everything runs together for people with poor eyesight.
- When you have completed something can you for the love of god highlight the

item in a different color so im not opening the stupid link 5 times to see if i did the work or not

- The forum because it was hard for me to use it.

III. Analysis and Recommendation

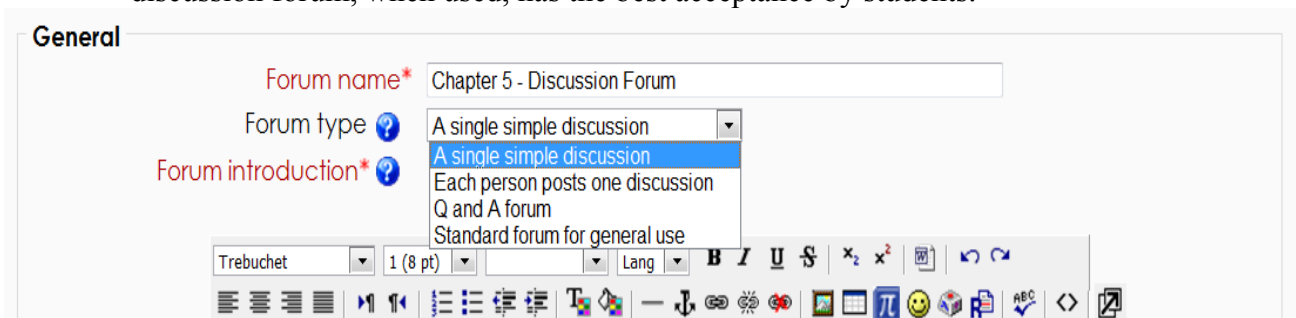
1. The majority of student found Moodle to be a sufficient learning management system for CIS101. More experience and training will help with the issues that many students found. For example:



- Small text is adjustable through the browser using the View menu, Text Size option.

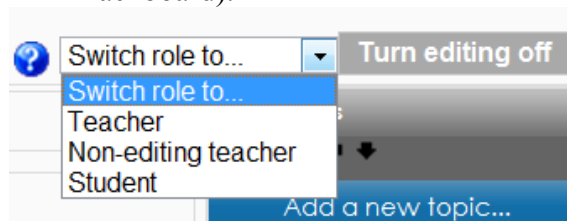
There are some student enhancement suggestions that could be modified in Moodle since, unlike Blackboard, Moodle is open source and can be customized by programmer at our college.

2. The main issue with the forum stems from Moodle's multiple “types” (i.e., configurations) of forums. The course designer or instructor, should select “A single simple discussion” for a simple one thread discussion. I have found in my own CIS101 sections that this form of discussion forum, when used, has the best acceptance by students.

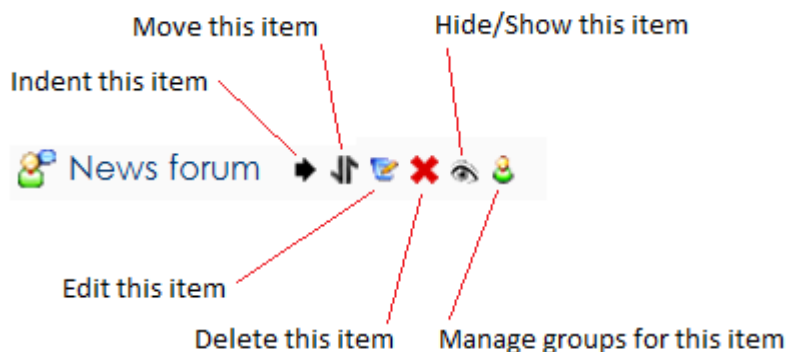


3. All of the faculty using Moodle during the Summer and Fall 2010 were interviewed and none of them had any major issues that would preclude them from using Moodle in the future. Some of the features were considered by faculty to be better than Blackboard, while Moodle was found to be lacking features found in Blackboard. The most significant examples of “pros” and “cons” reported were the following:

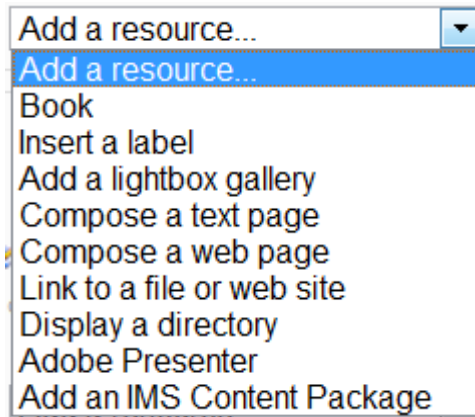
- Pros:
 - The outline format showing the course content on the main page without have to navigate through buttons and folders.
 - The gradebooks “save and next” feature than allows the instructor to immediately access the next student's submission for an assignment after grading the previous student's work. The teacher does not have to return to the grade book to access submissions from the next student.
 - The ability to switch views from Teacher to Non-Editing Teacher (to avoid making inadvertent changes to assignments) or Student (to see exactly what the student sees). Additionally, when editing mode is turned on, it doesn't turn off during Navigating the course (unlike Blackboard).



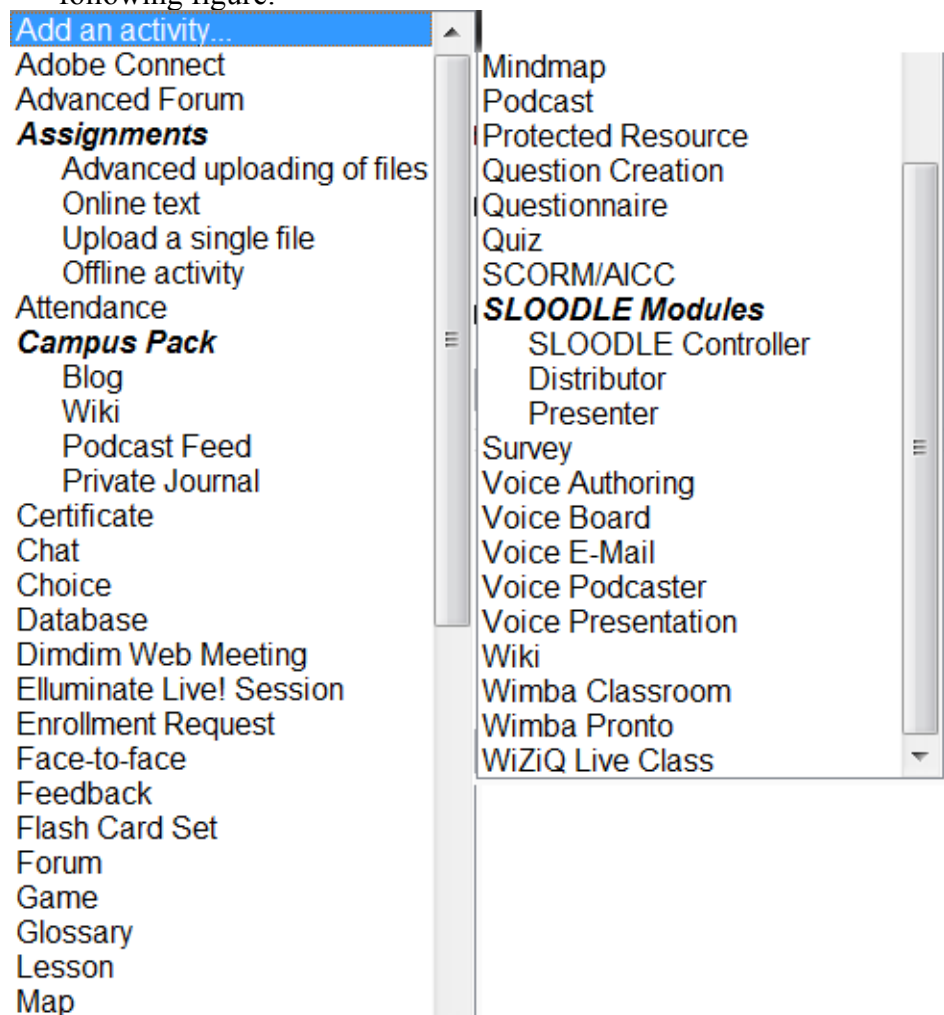
- The direct/immediate controls for each item usable without having to traverse menus. The eyeball was especially useful to hide/show something quickly. The control are show in the following figure:



- The vast possibilities for content resources as show in the following figure:



- The vast possibilities for content activity types as shown in the following figure:

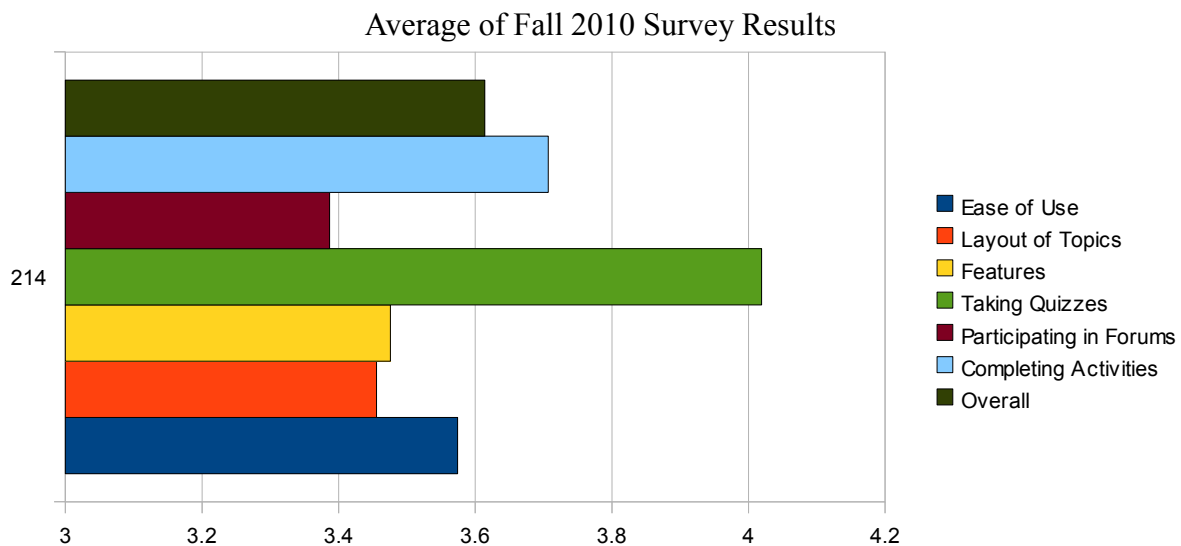


- The “look and feel” of a topical outline found on a syllabus.
- Cons:
 - Restarting a quiz once a student completed it was a difficult process.

- Quiz/test questions must be loaded into the question bank before using them in a quiz/test.
 - Cannot bulk download all students submissions for an assignment using a “ZIP” file.
 - Assignment grades are whole numbers.
 - Running percentage is not accurate if instructors do not enter 0 grades for non-submitted work.
4. Moodle is more than adequate for use by on-line and course companion learning management. Students and faculty generally have a positive opinion of Moodle after using it.

IV. UPDATE – FALL 2010 RESULTS – SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

1. Results from 214 student questionnaires were compiled at the end of the Fall 2010 semester. These results reenforce that students are typically more than satisfied with the use of Moodle Learning Management System instead of Blackboard. Average scores on all queries ranged between 3.39 and 4.02 on a scale from 1 (lowest rating) to 5 (highest rating).



2. Based upon the results of the surveys, students find Moodle:
- Easy to Use
 - Well designed in terms of:
 - Layout of Topics
 - Features
 - Taking Quizzes/Tests
 - Completing Activities
 - Participating in Forums, while rated the lowest at 3.39, still rated toward the positive side of the scale and has a sufficient design for use by students. Faculty were trained to use “A single simple discussion” instead of a “Standard Forum”.