Feedback from the Moodle Pilot Faculty: Experiences in Teaching with Moodle during Fall Semester, 2008

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On behalf of the Moodle Pilot Implementation Team
March 26, 2009

During fall 2008, North Carolina State University continued a pilot of the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS). As defined by having updated class roles and active student logins, 53 course sections were taught during fall 2008, with twenty-nine unique instructors, and additional support staff supporting these courses and/or developing additional course sections on the Moodle server. Courses included face-to-face (F2F) classes and Distance Education (DE) course sections. The active fall sections included courses in CALS, CHASS, Education, Engineering, PAMS. While there were a number of other sections on the Moodle server in fall 2008 for course development and in support of various activities, only the 53 active course sections and the twenty-nine instructors and associated support staff were included in this survey/report.

An online survey was designed (IRB approval #264-08-6) to gather information about faculty experiences with using LMSs, and emailed to the twenty-nine members and their instructional support staff who had an active course section in fall 2008. Twenty-two of the 29 instructors responded, resulting in an estimated response rate of 75.9%. One additional respondent who accessed the survey indicated their role was primarily administrative or instructional support, and thus his/her response was excluded from this survey in order to represent the instructor viewpoint.

Prior Experiences
Faculty were initially asked to identify their prior experiences in using LMSs to teach courses. 77% of the respondents had previous experience in teaching using Blackboard Vista and/or WebCT Vista. Around 23% of faculty respondents were new to using any LMS (see Table 1.1, Figure 1.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LMS Prior Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New to LMS</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Experience with Blackboard Vista, or WebCT Vista</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>77.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other LMS Experience</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Faculty were also asked to indicate how they were using Moodle (for DE courses only, for both F2F and DE courses, or for F2F courses only). More than half of the faculty respondents were using Moodle to supplement a F2F course (57%), whereas the remaining faculty were divided between doing both (18%) or teaching only a DE course (24%). One respondent declined to answer to this question.

Table 1.2 Moodle Usage for Course Delivery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Delivery Mode</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DE Only</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face Only</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparisons between Moodle and Blackboard Vista, Ease of Use

Using a 5-point Likert scale (see Appendix A), faculty were asked to compare Moodle with Blackboard Vista or WebCT, based on the ease of use of the system. Around 64% of faculty who were able to comment on this question either Agreed or Strongly Agreed that Moodle was easier to use than Blackboard Vista/WebCT, with two faculty respondents selecting a Neutral/Not Sure response (see Table 1.3, Figure 1.3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ease of Use Comparison</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have not used Blackboard Vista or</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WebCT, thus I don’t know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral/Not Sure</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A question of interest was whether or not there was a significant difference of opinion regarding the ease of use of Moodle between experienced Blackboard Vista or WebCT instructors who were only using Moodle to teach F2F, as compared to the instructors who were teaching at least one section as a DE course. To answer this question, those who had no experience in using Blackboard Vista were dropped from the analysis (n=6), and the remaining faculty respondents who indicated how they were using Moodle (n = 15) were divided into two groups; (1) those who were using Moodle to support at least one DE course (n=8), and (2) those who were using Moodle only for F2F (n=7).

The mean scores when rating Moodle’s ease of use, compared to Blackboard Vista or WebCT, for the faculty teaching at least one DE section (4.37), were quite similar to the scores of the faculty teaching only F2F sections (4.28) (see Table 1.4). When analyzing the data using an independent sample t-test, there was no significant difference between the DE and the F2F groups, t(13) = .230, p = .82, at an alpha level of .05 (see Table 1.5). Thus, the conclusion drawn is that there was no statistically significant difference in the opinions of experienced Vista users’ opinions regarding Moodle’s ease of use, regardless if they were teaching a DE section or a F2F section.

Table 1.4 Ease of Use of Moodle, compared to BB, for DE section vs. F2F section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moodle Used</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DE Section</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.3750</td>
<td>.74402</td>
<td>.26305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2F Only</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.2857</td>
<td>.75593</td>
<td>.28571</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.5 Ease of Use, Independent Samples Test
Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances
t-test for Equality of Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.944</td>
<td>.230</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>.822</td>
<td>.08929</td>
<td>.38792</td>
<td>-.74877 to .92735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>.230</td>
<td>12.676</td>
<td>.822</td>
<td>.08929</td>
<td>.38837</td>
<td>-.75192 to .93049</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ratings of LMS Reliability and Performance
Using a 5-point Likert scale (see Appendix A), faculty were then asked to rate the reliability and performance of Moodle, as it compares to any other LMSs that they have used. 72.7% of faculty indicated that the performance of Moodle was Above Average or Excellent, compared with other LMSs. No faculty respondent felt the reliability and performance of Moodle was below average (see Table 1.6, Figure 1.4).

Table 1.6 Reliability & Performance of Moodle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability &amp; Performance of Moodle Compared with any other LMSs</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did Not Respond/Missing Response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - Needs work (I have had many issues and Moodle has been down and slow many times)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - Below average (I have had some issues and Moodle has been slow at times)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Average (Moodle works as well as other C/LMS I have used)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - Above average (Moodle works better than other C/LMSs I have used)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - Excellent (I have never had any issues with Moodle and it has always been fast)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparisons with Blackboard Vista, Likeability

Using a 5-point Likert scale (see Appendix A), faculty were asked to rate Moodle as it compares to Blackboard Vista (e.g. is it much worse, and thus the faculty member would prefer that their classes use something else, or is it much better, and thus the faculty member would prefer that all their classes use Moodle). Most of the respondents who had used Blackboard Vista liked Moodle Better (18%) or Much Better (45.5%) than Blackboard Vista (see Table 1.7, Figure 1.5), with seven indicating they did not know and one respondent indicating they are about the same.

Table 1.7 Rate Moodle in Comparison to BB Vista

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moodle Rating</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Much worse (I prefer Blackboard Vista/WebCT Vista, and I've used and would prefer that all my classes use other systems such as Blackboard Vista/WebCT Vista rather than Moodle)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - Worse (I prefer Blackboard Vista/WebCT Vista for most things, but not everything)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - About the same (Taken as a whole, Moodle is about the same as Blackboard Vista/WebCT Vista)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - Better (I like Moodle better than Blackboard Vista/WebCT Vista for most things, but not everything)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Much better (I prefer Moodle and would prefer that all my classes use it)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have not used Blackboard Vista/WebCT Vista, thus I don’t know

Comparative Rating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.5 Rate Moodle in Comparison to BB Vista

Recommendations to Campus Technology Administrators

From a menu of possible options that included: (a) make the switch to Moodle from Blackboard, (b) look at Blackboard's new product, Blackboard NG, before making a decision, (c) look at other products on the market, including Blackboard NG and others (e.g. Angel, Desire to Learn, Sakai), (d) it doesn't matter to me what our C/LMS is at NC State as long as it is stable and reliable, and (e) other, (see Appendix A), faculty were asked to make a recommendation to campus technology administrators regarding taking the next step in selecting a C/LMS for our campus.

Around 23% of the faculty respondents recommended that we look at Blackboard NG and/or other products before making a decision, whereas 59% of the respondents recommended that we switch to Moodle. Four faculty respondents who selected “Other” had the following comments:

- No recommendation, as have not ever used Blackboard (2, paraphrased)
- Adopt Moodle--Although the Research Collaboration with Sakai seems to make that worth considering to expand function beyond just teaching
- Tweak Moodle before switching.
When considering the two respondents who selected other but still indicated an interest in Moodle, 68% of these respondents are in favor of adopting Moodle, with considerations. Keep in mind, however, that these faculty respondents used Moodle by choice as early adopters in the pilot, which likely influences their response to this question, and we can’t assume that all faculty members would feel this way.

Table 1.8 Recommendations to Campus Technology Administrators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Look at Blackboard's new product, Blackboard NG, before making a decision.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look at other products on the market, including Blackboard NG and others (e.g. Angel, Desire to Learn, Sakai).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make the switch to Moodle from Blackboard.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>81.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.6 Recommendations to Campus Technology Administrators

WolfWare Usage
In consideration of how files were managed by the various faculty members, faculty respondents were asked if WolfWare used this semester in conjunction with your Moodle course section, and if so, how WolfWare was used. Of the twenty-two respondents, 27% indicated they were also using WolfWare. When asked to describe their WolfWare usage, they responded as follows:

- *All of my content was in WolfWare. I also used the WolfWare mailing list.*
- *Email list only*
- *Home page link; repository for files and media*
- *Storage system for online documents*
- *Wolfware is used primarily for its gradebook and listserv functionality*
- *Wolfware was used for assignments and gradebook*

In summary, WolfWare usage include content/file storage (including media files), mailing list, gradebook, and assignments tool.

Table 1.9 WolfWare Use in Conjunction with Moodle Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WolfWare Use</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Response/Missing Response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No - the class that I was either teaching or supporting used Moodle only</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes - the class that I was either teaching or supporting used both Moodle and WolfWare</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.7 WolfWare Use in Conjunction with Moodle Course

Open-Ended Survey Question Feedback: Likes, Dislikes & Features
As part of the survey, five open-ended questions were posed to the faculty, regarding features they believe should be added to the system they used, and what they liked and disliked about the system they used, as follows:

- If you’ve used Blackboard Vista/WebCT Vista previously, what have you liked about it (if anything?)
- If you’ve used Blackboard Vista/WebCT Vista previously, what have you NOT liked about it (if anything?)
- What did you like about Moodle (if anything)?
- What did you NOT like about Moodle (if anything)?
- Are there features that were not available in Moodle that you would like to see added?

**Liked about the LMSs**

**Liked, Blackboard Vista.** Nine of the faculty respondents noted what they liked about Blackboard Vista, as follows (words/phrases that seem to be recurring themes are underlined):

- Discussion boards
- Email functionality
- Flexibility of design (for the most part); students are usually familiar with it
- It had some built in capabilities that made it easy to design a course web site
- Gradebook is very flexible and allows professors to calculate columns and weight assignments
- I liked the grade book better in Blackboard Vista more; It was more user friendly
- I like the internal connectivity – for example, grading posts were easy because the discussion room was connected to the gradebook
- Tools are very robust. Good assignment and discussion tools. Gradebook easy to use.
- I can’t think of anything that was better in Vista

**Liked, Moodle.** Twenty of the twenty-two faculty respondents noted what they liked about Moodle, as follows (for ease of reading, spelling error corrections and omissions are indicated by [brackets], words/phrases that seem to be recurring themes are underlined):

- Easy to set up interactive learning activities such as discussion boards and wikis. Easy to add resources. Easy to assign students to groups.
- Easy to use (training was excellent).
- It loads fast, it’s intuitive, and I like the communication tools.
- That is was very user friendly. The students in my class commented that they wished all their classes used Moodle because it was easier and more reliable than the other systems they were using.
- The ease in uploading files.
- Transparency, ease to learn.
- The design of the pages, more professional appearance - options to make it interactive (block)
- Very customizable in appearance and content. Easy to use and fast. Has interesting features like incorporating external RSS feeds and content that can be directly linked externally such as in emails.
- 1. Open-Source 2. Provided me the ability to do anything I needed for my course. 3. Was easy for students to use. 4. Very reliable--have had NO downtimes. 5. Support (when needed) has been superb.
- Gradebook Icons for editing Calendar Option for topical format [instead] of weekly format. More attractive layout - flexibility of placement.
Moodle Pilot Faculty, Fall 2008

- I fully support the use of open source software in our classes. We can develop good collaborations between IT staff and faculty to develop solutions in Moodle that will make it an even better fit for our classes.
- I liked the many capabilities in Moodle, and the organization of the main page.
- I thought it was just fine. I was testing it for possible use in a fully asynchronous DE course. It was capable of delivering all the course content that I developed (narrated lecture and lab, quizzes, web activities, discussion forums).
- Less clunky. More flexibility. Relatively easy to add materials and [select] how they will appear (e.g., new window with or without resize and scrolling options, same window, etc.). Creating books and webpages is easy. Messaging interfaces well with email (I can respond via email to messages sent using Moodle, for example.) RSS feeds for forums are good, as is ability to add external RSS feeds to the course page. THE BROWSER’S BACK BUTTON ACTUALLY TAKES YOU BACK ONE PAGE! Quiz builder is relatively easy to use.
- Like the ability to add pictures that go along with individual's profiles and postings. Like the layout.
- Moodle is not perfect, but I find it much more intuitive to learn and much more customizable. It is easy to manage the course using moodle.
- Moodle offers an experience that is innovative and creative for both instructors and students. The diverse features found in Moodle allow for pedagogical nuances while delivering substantive content. The formats for delivering curriculum scope and sequence are amplified, with seemingly endless possibilities.
- Organization
  - That I could have students read a paper, come up with a question independent of others' questions and then have them come to class prepared for a discussion of the paper (this was a graduate literature-based class).
- Weekly schedule allows students to see progression through semester. Easy to set up and maintain course and add necessary materials with limited instruction. Customizable to fit needs of a course.

Overall, several faculty respondents noted that they like the grade book, discussion tools and functionality currently available in Blackboard Vista. With Moodle, the ease of use and flexibility of organization and layouts were recurring themes related to what faculty liked, with two responses specifically supporting open source. Additional features specific to Moodle (e.g. RSS feeds, working “back” button) were noted as plusses.

Did Not Like about the LMSs

Did Not Like, Blackboard Vista. Thirteen of the twenty-two faculty respondents noted what they did not like about Blackboard Vista, as follows (for ease of reading, spelling error corrections and omissions are indicated by [brackets], words/phrases that seem to be recurring themes are underlined):

- Slow to load in the browser.
- Slow to setup. Requires multiple layers to perform simple changes. Only seems to be repository for files rather than an interactive site to facilitate class [management].
- It's too slow, unwieldy, and the grading system is too complex.
- I didn't think it was always intuitive for the student to find what they needed there.
- It was harder for students to find materials in the folders.
- Too difficult to organize my course in logical structure.
Moodle Pilot Faculty, Fall 2008

- **Blackboard is clunky dungware.** It is loaded with features that I have no interest in using and is, at best, marginally customizable. The fact that you could only do certain things if you were in certain tabs, the "design" or the "teach" or the "student" tabs; how annoying is that?

- Not easy to teach other instructors how to use--the options and paths are not intuitive. Also, the cost of using Blackboard Vista is astronomical.

- "maneuverability" of the pages - "folder" format of the material

- Compared to Moodle, it is cumbersome and multilayered. In Moodle, at least I 'feel' that I can do and understand things easily. With Blackboard, there is a level of complexity and nontransparency that is concerning.

- Clunky and ugly. Mail tool lacks proper integration with regular webmail (sender is root@smtp..., so you can't reply). Can't use the browser's back button. My browser version always tends to be ahead of Vista's authorized versions, so I get the "verify browser" reminders.

This semester I'm using Vista for a grad course, mainly to be able to publish assignments, and because Vista doesn't support Firefox 3.0, I have to use Safari (which I rarely use) to edit the assignment settings.

- It was too hard to change/update, especially for advanced users. Uploading/downloading files had to be done individually, which was very time consuming. It also was not stable -- students complained about not being able to log in at essential (busy) times. Gradebook was also hard to use and not customizable enough; it was "clunky" to write complex formulas and such.

- Gradebook was awkward to use - too many steps for entry. Slow response speed. Uploading files was difficult.

Did Not Like, Moodle. Fifteen of the twenty-two faculty respondents noted what they did not like about Moodle, as follows:

- Wiki functionality did not work! This is the primary reason I switched to Moodle, but we have improvised with Wetpaint. Process for uploading files is time consuming - building quizzes is cumbersome (add an import capability across multiple sections of the same course?)

- Grade book issue are still unresolved: don't understand some of the inner communication mechanisms (E.g., like how to find an email I distributed to the class earlier in the semester--where if anywhere is that stored?)

- Grade book needs improvement. Need easier way to incorporate attendance.

- Gradebook seems somewhat limited and not very straightforward.

- Gradebook has been improved, but more tweaking is needed. Discussion forums are not as easy to use as Vista -- for example, can't arrange views by author, title, date, etc. Ability to set default pagination is not very good -- in fact, it stinks. For example, Moodle will not allow me to set the default Participants view as "Show all, in ascending alphabetical order." It defaults to 20 users per page, arranged by last access time. Manual regrading of quizzes is not very convenient -- one should be able to add comments, change grades, etc. without a new window opening.

- Some features don't seem to work (like uploading personal photo) Q &A; A forum didn't work as advertised (??) Stop cursor from disappearing when you scroll up or down (in gradebook)

- The grade book could be better. I like the ability to make categories and such, but it is difficult to customize the way that I would like. Also, I have not figured out yet how I can extract all of the comments that the grader left on a particular assignment for all students (i.e., the notes with the grade). I would appreciate the ability to delete students who dropped the class as well.

- The grade book was hard to use.

- The grading system is clunky, and hard to understand.

- Not very intuitive on how to use. I would have liked to use more functions, but never got the time to explore how.

- I could not figure out how to create a discussion board, blog, etc. The email class feature also does not allow for a subject line
Rearranging items (moving things up and down) seems a bit clunky but it works.

Size limitations on uploaded files. Inability to just move topics to specific locations in the topic outline (rather than one block at a time). Difficulty in adding/removing extras from the course under specified roles.

The interface design is rather sophomoric. I couldn't figure out how to get the assignments tool to return an assignment that had been marked. The gradebook is difficult to use - with a lot of grades, it is hard to figure out whose row you are looking at and the gradebook scrolls off of the screen. No ability to have scores, higher than 100.

Nothing major.

Overall, repeating themes from faculty respondents regarding their dislikes of Blackboard Vista included the perceived slowness, clumsiness and difficulty in using this tool. There were two responses specifically noting the difficulty in using the Vista gradebook. With Moodle, the difficulty of using the gradebook was a recurring theme across more than half of the open-ended responses. In addition, several specific Moodle tool related dislikes were noted around the functionality of the wiki, building and re-grading quizzes, and setting default pagination, to name a few. It is possible that some of the comments (e.g. “I could not figure out how to create a discussion board . . .”) reflect a lack of training rather than a limitation of the tool (this could be the case for a number of the comments for both Blackboard Vista and Moodle).

Features to Add, Moodle. Fourteen faculty respondents made a suggestion for improving Moodle, as follows (for ease of reading, spelling error corrections and omissions are indicated by [brackets], words/phrases that seem to be recurring themes are underlined):

- Will the assignments tool and gradebook be updated, and/or training developed so a better understanding of how to use can be developed? How can we upload multiple files into Moodle easily? And have both public and private spaces? Just migrating to Moodle right now is not enough - how will Moodle and WolfWare be integrated?
- Chat tool, preferably with audio and video options and group chat functions. *Ability to publish assignments, as in Vista. *Tabbed layout, drag-and-drop modularity (think iGoogle) *WebDav file transfer capability
- Ability to "hide" rows and/or columns in the gradebook while in teacher mode (you can hide columns from the student, but not from yourself). Alternatively you could "lock" the name column and/or top (header) row so they don't scroll off the screen in a large class with many rows and columns
- Easy grade book
- Email import capability across multiple sections of the same course for quizzes/tests and files.

Overall, Moodle is much more intuitive than Vista. Once a successful upgrade can be completed and additional bugs worked out, then this will be a great system. I understand that this has been a "pilot." The reports of student activity are great. When the time comes to upload grades to Registration and Records, I anticipate it will be more fluid than using Vista for the gradebook.

- I REALLY wish that there was a feature in the Quiz tool that would allow me to give an extension on a single quiz to a single student.
- Would like the ability to extend deadlines in the quiz module.
- In reading about SAKAI they promote the value of the research/project collaboration along with the course management. Given that NCSU has such a large focus on research and many national and international projects, it seems like this capability might make it more valuable to NCSU community. I am not sure if similar features exist in Moodle--although I assume they are just a slightly different application of the tools used for teaching. It would be nice to have that capability added if it is available with [Moodle].
On the pilot server, I have admin rights to a sub-category "Soil-Science." Those rights give me the ability to share a single exam question bank across all of my courses. I'd like to see functionality implemented that ties the question bank to the user-id so that when I'm logged in, the questions are available to be regardless of course. By doing so, Moodle would not needed a highly nested structure such as; CALS; Soil Science; Crouse. Then again, maybe it make logical sense to organize the courses under a college - department - instructor nesting. Either way, allows the instructor to minimize the replication of the questions (i.e., editing a typo once, replicates to all courses where that question is used)(Contact info deleted)

There is a Moodle countdown plugin available to help keep students aware of upcoming events and due dates for assignment.

TA role

No

No, it seemed to have everything I needed.

Yes, I would like to see Moodle make the office coffee each morning in 13 Ricks Hall. Other than that, it's fine.

Faculty respondents made a number of suggestions for improving tools that campus technology support staff should consider as part of moving forward with Moodle. While specific tools were mentioned for improvement considerations several times (e.g. gradebook, quizzing), perhaps the most pertinent comment posed was by one respondent who asks: “Just migrating to Moodle right now is not enough - how will Moodle and WolfWare be integrated”

Summary & Discussion
Twenty-two of the 29 fall 2008 Moodle instructors responded to an online survey about their Moodle experiences (76%). Of those respondents, 77% had previous experience in teaching using Blackboard Vista. Around 23% of faculty respondents were new to using any LMS. More than half of the faculty respondents were using Moodle to supplement a F2F course (57%), whereas the remaining faculty were using Moodle for both F2F and DE courses (18%) or teaching only a DE course (24%).

Using a 5-point Likert scale, faculty were asked to compare Moodle with Blackboard Vista along several comparison points, with Moodle favored over Blackboard Vista on all points:

- Around 64% of faculty commenting on Moodle’s ease of use either Agreed or Strongly Agreed (on a 5-point Likert Scale) that Moodle was easier to use than Blackboard Vista/WebCT, with two faculty respondents selecting a Neutral/Not Sure response (9%) and the remaining six indicating they could not compare the two as they had not used both.
- Around 73% of faculty indicated that the performance of Moodle was Above Average or Excellent, compared with other LMSs. No faculty respondent felt the reliability and performance of Moodle was Below Average.
- Around 64% of respondents who had used Blackboard Vista liked Moodle Better (18%) or Much Better (45.5%) than Blackboard Vista (see Table 1.7, Figure 1.5), with seven (32%) indicating they did not know and one respondent indicating they are about the same.

A question of interest was whether or not there was a significant difference of opinion regarding the ease of use of Moodle between experienced Blackboard Vista instructors who were only using Moodle to teach F2F, as compared to the instructors who were teaching at least one section
of a DE course. To answer this question, those who had no experience in using Blackboard Vista were dropped from the analysis (n=6), and the remaining faculty respondents who indicated how they were using Moodle (n = 15) were divided into two groups; (1) those who were using Moodle to support at least one DE course (n=8), and (2) those who were using Moodle only for F2F (n=7). The mean scores when rating Moodle’s ease of use, compared to Blackboard Vista or WebCT, for the faculty teaching at least one DE section (4.37), were quite similar to the scores of the faculty teaching only F2F sections (4.28). When comparing these groups using an independent sample t-test, there was no significant difference between the DE and the F2F groups, \( t(13) = .230, p = .82 \), at an alpha level of .05. Thus, the conclusion drawn is that there was no statistically significant difference in the opinions of experienced Vista users’ opinions regarding Moodle’s ease of use, regardless if they were teaching a DE section or a F2F section.

From a menu of possible options that included: (a) make the switch to Moodle from Blackboard, (b) look at Blackboard's new product, Blackboard NG, before making a decision, (c) look at other products on the market, including Blackboard NG and others (e.g. Angel, Desire to Learn, Sakai), (d) it doesn't matter to me what our C/LMS is at NC State as long as it is stable and reliable, and (e) other, (see Appendix A), faculty were asked to make a recommendation to campus technology administrators regarding taking the next step in selecting a C/LMS for our campus. Around 23% of the faculty respondents recommended that we look at Blackboard NG and/or other products before making a decision, whereas 68% of the respondents recommended that we adopt Moodle (with tweaks/considerations elaborated on in the open-ended responses). Keep in mind, however, that these faculty respondents used Moodle by choice as early adopters in the pilot, which likely influences their response to this question, and we can not assume that all faculty members would feel this way.

Of the twenty-two respondents, 27% indicated they were also using WolfWare, with WolfWare usage including content/file storage (including media files), mailing list, gradebook, and assignments tool. Considering the continued WolfWare usage even in conjunction with Moodle (and frankly, with BB Vista, too), WolfWare should be addressed as part of any considered next steps in LMS decisions on our campus.

Similar to the spring and summer faculty survey, open-ended responses indicated that Blackboard Vista has some features that are liked (for example, robust assignment, discussion and gradebook tools), as well as disliked (for example, Blackboard was described by several respondents as clunky and slow). This was also true for Moodle, with many open-ended responses complimenting the ease of use and flexible layout (with the RSS feeds mentioned twice as a useful additional tool). On the other hand, the gradebook was often mentioned in the responses as a problematic tool within Moodle, with some other concerns cropping up once or twice in the responses (wiki and forum functionality, file management). When asked what features they would like to see in Moodle, respondents had a number of suggestions, with the gradebook and quizzing tool mentioned several times, as well as a number of different, additional tweaks. Technology support staff should look at the responses regarding the problematic elements and feature requests, and work with the LMS committees to determine how to address these issues, should we choose to underpin our LMS with Moodle.
Moodle Pilot Faculty, Fall 2008

While overall, the faculty respondents seem positive towards considering Moodle as a (partial) solution for our campus LMS, as a final comment, it is important to once again note that the twenty-two faculty respondents in this survey may not be typical of the general faculty population that use LMSs on campus. This report simply tries to provide highlights and summative comments from a small dataset, and the reported findings cannot be extrapolated to the larger faculty population.
Appendix A: Letter to Faculty

Dear Colleagues,

For at least one of your Fall, 2008 courses, you had a course section that was delivered via a Course/Learning Management System (C/LMS) currently being piloted at NC State University called Moodle. You are receiving this email because your name is listed as having the role of "Teacher" in a Moodle course section, which means it is possible that you are either the course instructor or in a support role for the course - in either case, your feedback is welcome!

This purpose of this survey is to obtain your input/feedback regarding your experience with Moodle. This survey gives you the opportunity to give us feedback on your experiences with the system you used this semester in order to help technology decision makers from across campus make more informed decisions in long term planning for C/LMSs such as Moodle at NC State.

All data will be compiled and your individual responses will not be identifiable in the survey data. You will not provide any identifying information at any point (e.g. Unity ID or name). Participation in this survey is completely voluntary and there is no penalty for not participating.

This survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete, and is located at: [http://ceres.cals.ncsu.edu/surveybuilder/Form.cfm?testID=6428](http://ceres.cals.ncsu.edu/surveybuilder/Form.cfm?testID=6428)

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Dr. Donna Petherbridge, donna_petherbridge@ncsu.edu, 513.3737. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Deb Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515-4514), or Joe Rabiega, IRB Coordinator, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515-7515).

We thank you for your considered participation.

Best,
Donna
Fall 2008 Moodle Pilot Faculty & Staff Survey
Owner: Dr. Donna T. Petherbridge

For at least one of your Fall, 2008 courses, you had a course section that was delivered via a Course/Learning Management System (C/LMS) currently being piloted at NC State University called Moodle.

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We thank you for your considered participation.

1. Have you taught classes before using other Course/Learning Management Systems (C/LMS)? (Check all that apply)
   □ No, this is my first time teaching with an C/LMS
   □ Yes, I have taught using Moodle
   □ Yes, I have taught using WolfWare
   □ Yes, I have taught using "Blackboard Vista" (Formerly, "WebCT Vista") OR some prior version of WebCT OR Blackboard
   □ Yes, I have taught other C/LMSs beyond those listed above
   □ I am primarily in an administrative, design or support role, rather than a teaching role.
2. Which response best describes how you used Moodle during the fall 2008 semester?
   - To supplement a face-to-face class or lab
   - To teach a distance education class or lab
   - I used Moodle for both my face-to-face and my DE class or lab
   - Exploration and/or design or support only - I did not use to teach at all

3. Overall, the C/LMS you used this semester (Moodle) is easier to use than Blackboard Vista/WebCT Vista.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral/Not Sure
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
   - I have not used Blackboard Vista/WebCT Vista, thus I don’t know

4. I would rate the reliability and performance of Moodle as:
   - 5 - Excellent (I have never had any issues with Moodle and it has always been fast)
   - 4 - Above average (Moodle works better than other C/LMSs I have used)
   - 3 - Average (Moodle works as well as other C/LMS I have used)
   - 2 - Below average (I have had some issues and Moodle has been slow at times)
   - 1 - Needs work (I have had many issues and Moodle has been down and slow many times)

5. Regarding Blackboard Vista and Moodle only, based on my experience, I recommend that campus technology administrators take the following next step in selecting a C/LMS for our campus:
   - Make the switch to Moodle from Blackboard.
   - Look at Blackboard's new product, Blackboard NG, before making a decision.
   - Look at other products on the market, including Blackboard NG and others (e.g. Angel, Desire to Learn, Sakai).
   - It doesn't matter to me what our C/LMS is at NC State as long as it is stable and reliable.
   - Other:

6. Was WolfWare used this semester in conjunction with your Moodle course section?
   - Yes - the class that I was either teaching or supporting used both Moodle and WolfWare
   - No - the class that I was either teaching or supporting used Moodle only
Moodle Pilot Faculty, Fall 2008

7. If WolfWare was used to support your Moodle course, how was it used?

8. If you have used Blackboard Vista/WebCT Vista, how would you rate Moodle in comparison to Blackboard Vista/WebCT Vista?
   - 5 - Much better (I prefer Moodle and would prefer that all my classes use it)
   - 4 - Better (I like Moodle better than Blackboard Vista/WebCT Vista for most things, but not everything)
   - 3 - About the same (Taken as a whole, Moodle is about the same as Blackboard Vista/WebCT Vista)
   - 2 - Worse (I prefer Blackboard Vista/WebCT Vista for most things, but not everything)
   - 1 - Much worse (I prefer Blackboard Vista/WebCT Vista, and I’ve used and would prefer that all my classes use other systems such as Blackboard Vista/WebCT Vista rather than Moodle)
   - I have not used Blackboard Vista/WebCT Vista, thus I don’t know

9. If you’ve used Blackboard Vista/WebCT Vista previously, what have you liked about it (if anything?)

10. If you’ve used Blackboard Vista/WebCT Vista previously, what have you NOT liked about it (if anything?)

11. What did you like about Moodle (if anything)?

12. What did you NOT like about Moodle (if anything)?

13. Are there features that were not available in Moodle that you would like to see added?