
Project Plan

Selection, Installation and Deployment of a Learning Management System

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INTRODUCTION

Background Information

De Anza College has been an early adopter of new learning technologies since the college's opening day in 1967. The founding president created an atmosphere of creativity and innovation, and went to great lengths to create a passion for innovation in our faculty, a passion that exists to this day.

This creative atmosphere has allowed De Anza faculty the freedom to explore new methods for delivery of instructional materials. One of the most significant growth areas of the past decade has been the delivery of De Anza courses over the Internet, using software packages alternately described as Course Management Systems (CMS) or Learning Management Systems (LMS.) Over the decade or so that De Anza has been offering on line courses, faculty have used many different LMS's to deliver their courses. Some have been commercial products (i.e. WebCT), homegrown products (Foothill's ETUDES), community source products (Sakai) and open source products (Moodle.) Faculty are often courted by textbook publishers to use their book in class, and, as an incentive, have offered free on line hosting for the course if it requires the use of the publisher's text. One faculty member at De Anza has even written his own custom learning management system and has delivered his on line course from a server located in his home.

While this approach has helped to foster innovation, it has also made the tasks of training and technical support very difficult. This approach has also limited growth of on line courses, and thereby growth of the college, due to the cost and complexity of supporting multiple LMS's.

Coinciding with the need to unify the on line delivery of courses with one LMS was the conclusion of the 5-year grant funding for the California Virtual Campus (CVC). The CVC, established by the California Community College Systems Office in 1999, provided on line learning support for campuses. This support included free hosting, a significant cost of offering online courses. (The hosting portion of this grant was extended through June of 2006.)

The elimination of free hosting offered by the CVC and the need to improve on line learning for students, instructors and staff, lead to undertaking the task of determining which LMS best supported the college.

Available Alternatives – Process and Participants for Selection of an LMS

In October of 2005 the Distance Learning Coordinator, Linda Elvin, approached the Technology Taskforce seeking support for a campus evaluation of LMS's for recommendation. In response, the Technology Taskforce created an LMS sub-committee, chaired by Linda Elvin. Members were initially recruited from

the Technology Taskforce, but the committee was open to anyone interested in participating. Initially, the committee consisted of seven members, five faculty and two classified staff. Prior to selecting an LMS, the committee had grown to seven faculty, two deans and three classified staff.

There are over 200 learning management systems on the market today, making the task of choosing a campus standard very difficult. Since many of these systems offer similar basic features, the committee decided that focusing on a few well-established systems would best serve the campus. Four systems were selected to evaluate. Two of the systems, WebCT (commercial) and ETUDES (community source), were selected because they are currently licensed by the campus and used by numerous faculty. The other two systems selected for evaluation were Angel Learning, a new commercial software quickly gaining market share and Moodle, an open source software that is being adopted by several four year universities in California and many educational institutions around the world..

A matrix was developed to evaluate the software and demonstrations were scheduled during January and February of 2006 for each of the four LMS's. Sean Keegan of the High Tech Center, and Wayne Chenoweth, faculty, Special Education, volunteered to evaluate the systems to assure that they were Section 508 conforming. The results indicated that Moodle and Angel were closest to conforming, with ETUDES NG third and WebCT last.

It was the consensus of the committee to drop ETUDES NG from consideration prior to the final vote for the following reasons:

1. No administrative access.
2. No conversion tool for WebCT.
3. Unable to evaluate the ETUDES NG at the same level as other systems because guest access is not provided and the playground is not ready.
4. In a Section 508 evaluation by Wayne Chenoweth and Sean Keegan, Angel and Moodle were ranked higher for compliance than ETUDES NG.
5. Unable to host locally.

On March 21, 2006, the LMS sub-committee voted to recommend Moodle as the LMS that would best serve the De Anza campus. Determining factors in this decision included.

1. Open source solution, no licensing fees.
2. LAMP architecture. (Linux, Apache, MySQL, PHP)
3. Rated highest for conforming with Section 508.
4. Scalable to at least 40,000 users.
5. Ease of use for faculty.
6. Able to host locally.
7. Training available from @ONE.
- 8) WebCT conversion tools available

The committee's recommendation was presented to the Academic Senate and the College Council. Both governance groups approved the recommendation.

Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives for this project will focus on implementing LMS technology that:

- Supports all areas of the campus, including Instruction, Student Services and Campus Services.
- Facilitates coordination and information sharing both internal and external to the participating organizations (SFSU and Humboldt State have shown interest in sharing open source solutions as part of a consortium agreement.)
- Enhances the ability and effectiveness of staff to perform their jobs.
- Facilitates coordinated on line delivery of course content.
- Provides high levels of data security.
- Provides an open, flexible, reliable technology base for the future.
- Facilitates the electronic capture of data through our SI system and ports it into Moodle
- Is easy to use and has readily available training.
- Eliminates redundant data entry throughout the organization.
- Conforms to Section 508.
- Is compatible with TurnItIn.com
- Eliminates unpredictable cost increases of commercial products

Project Approach

The Moodle project will begin with a beta installation, running on existing servers, to be used by two faculty during the summer of '06. The installed version will be Moodle 1.5.3, with added modules pre-tested by San Francisco State University. New servers will be ordered during the beta testing period.

Before Winter '07, the new hardware will be installed and the existing Moodle installation and course content will be moved over to the new hardware.

Migration of existing courses created in WebCT or ETUDES will begin during the beta testing period (Summer '06) and will be completed by **the end of June '07**. There are approximately 50 courses that will be migrated to Moodle during the '06-'07 academic year. The Distance Learning Coordinator (Linda Elvin), Academic Coordinator (Willie Pritchard) and the Instructional Designer (TBD) will lead the migration effort, supported by the Multi-Media Web Programmer (Kevin Metcalf.) By the end of the Spring Quarter of '07, all De Anza courses currently using a course management system will be migrated to Moodle and support of WebCT and ETUDES Classic will end. When all courses are migrated to Moodle, implementation of the LMS to other areas on campus will begin.

Training

Initially, Moodle training will be offered in three ways:

- A) On line training in Moodle delivered by @ONE beginning July 2006
- B) Face-to-Face training at SFSU (our faculty are invited), beginning May 2006.
- C) Face-to-Face training at De Anza, offered in July or August 2006 by SFSU.

De Anza training, offered by De Anza staff, will begin in fall quarter '06.
Priority for training and support through the Distance Learning Center will be:

- 1) Distance learning courses currently using an LMS (WebCT or ETUDES.)
- 2) On-campus web-enhanced (hybrid) classes using a LMS.
- 3) Distance learning courses not currently using a LMS.
- 4) New distance learning courses.
- 5) New on-campus web-enhanced (hybrid) classes.

To assist faculty in designing courses, a template (or templates) for Moodle will be created by the Distance Learning Center.

Hardware/Software Budget

The project will require new hardware; including the following:

- Apple Xserve G5 (Dual 2.3 GHz, 8 GB RAM, 160GB 10kRPM HD, Service):
\$11,000.00 each x 4 = \$44,000.00
- APC Smart-UPS 1500VA USB & Serial Rack-Mount 2U 120V: \$700ea x 4+
\$2,800
- Apple Fibre Channel PCI-X card: 1 @ \$500 ea

Hardware total: \$47,300

The project will require software, including the following:

- OS: Operating system for this system is preinstalled: \$0.00.
- Database: Moodle allows for use of MySQL. (open source): \$0.00.
- Web Server: Moodle allows for use of Apache (open source): \$0.00.
- SIS Integration* (including middleware apps): \$0.00. (will be created in house)

Software total: \$0

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Items Beyond Scope

The project does not include the following:

- Network connectivity – This is supplied by and paid for by ETS Data Center
- Power and cooling – supplied and paid for by ETS

Milestones/Project Schedule

The following represent key project milestones, with estimated completion dates:

Milestone	Estimated Completion Date
Beta installation/testing	Summer '06
Specify and order new hardware	June '06
New Hardware/Software Installation and Testing	Sept-Dec '06
Migrate from beta servers to new hardware	Jan '06
Migrate existing courses from ETUDES/WEB CT to Moodle	Sept '06-June '07
All De Anza on line courses previously Delivered using WebCT or ETUDES delivered via Moodle	July '07

ASSUMPTIONS

Project Assumptions

The following assumptions were made in preparing the Project Plan:

- Management will ensure that project team members are available as needed to complete project tasks and objectives.
- Management will support budget required to implement plan
- Failure to identify changes to draft deliverables within the time specified in the project timeline will result in project delays.

- Project team members will adhere to the Communications Plan.
- Mid and upper management will foster support and “buy-in” of project goals and objectives.
- All project participants will abide by the guidelines identified within this plan.
- The Project Plan may change as new information and issues are revealed.

CONSTRAINTS

Project Constraints

The following represent known project constraints:

- Project funding sources are limited, with no contingency.
- Finite human resources.

Related Projects

District Portal Project
 New SIS system
 TurnItIn.com

Critical Project Barriers

Unlike risks, critical project barriers are insurmountable issues that can be destructive to a project’s initiative. In this project, the following are possible critical barriers:

- Removal of project funding
- Layoff of key personnel
- Reassignment of key personnel

Should any of these events occur, the Project Plan would become invalid.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Project Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities	Participant(s)
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Role	Responsibilities	Participant(s)
Project Sponsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ultimate decision-maker and tie-breaker ▪ Provide project oversight and guidance ▪ Review/approve some project elements 	Tech Task Force, Jeannine Hawk/Wayne Chenoweth
Project Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manages project in accordance to the project plan ▪ Serves as liaison to the Technology Task Force and ETS ▪ Receive guidance from Technology Task Force ▪ Provide overall project direction ▪ Direct/lead team members toward project objectives ▪ Handle problem resolution ▪ Manages the project budget 	<p>Linda Elvin – Distance Learning, Hybrid and instructional projects</p> <p>Marty Kahn – Student Services and other non-instructional projects</p>
Project Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understand the user needs and business processes of their area ▪ Act as consumer advocate in representing their area ▪ Communicate project goals, status and progress throughout the project to personnel in their area ▪ Review and approve project deliverables ▪ Creates or helps create work products ▪ Coordinates participation of work groups, individuals and stakeholders ▪ Provide knowledge and recommendations ▪ Helps identify and remove project barriers ▪ Assure quality of products that will meet the project goals and objectives ▪ Identify risks and issues and help in resolutions 	Kevin Metcalf, Willie Pritchard, DLC Instructional Designer (TBD)
Subject Matter Experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lend expertise and guidance as needed 	To be identified by Technology Task Force
Advisory Committee	Provide expertise and guidance as appropriate	TBD

Issue Management

The information contained within the Project Plan will likely change as the project progresses. While change is both certain and required, it is important to note that any changes to the Project Plan will impact at least one of three critical success factors: Available Time, Available Resources (Financial, Personnel), or Project Quality. The decision by which to make modifications to the Project Plan (including project scope and resources) should be coordinated using the following process:

- Step 1:** As soon as a change which impacts project scope, schedule, staffing or spending is identified, the Project Manager will document the issue.
- Step 2:** The Project Manager will review the change and determine the associated impact to the project and will forward the issue, along with a recommendation, to the Technology Task force for review and decision.
- Step 3:** Upon receipt, the Technology Task Force should reach a consensus opinion on whether to approve, reject or modify the request based upon the information contained within the project website, the Project Manager's recommendation and their own judgment. Should the Technology Task Force be unable to reach consensus on the approval or denial of a change, the issue will be forwarded to the VP of Technology, with a written summation of the issue, for ultimate resolution.
- Step 4:** If required under the decision matrix or due to a lack of consensus, the VP of Technology shall review the issue(s) and render a final decision on the approval or denial of a change.
- Step 5:** Following an approval or denial (by the Technology Task Force or VP of Technology), the Project Manager will notify the original requestor of the action taken. There is no appeal process.

Communications Plan

Disseminating knowledge about the project is essential to the project's success. Project participants desire knowledge of what the status of the project is and how they are affected. Furthermore, they are anxious to participate. The more that people are educated about the progress of the project and how it will help them in the future, the more they are likely to participate and benefit.

This plan provides a framework for informing, involving, and obtaining buy-in from all participants throughout the duration of the project.

Audience This communication plan is for the following audiences:

- VP of Technology
- Tech Task Force
- Project Manager
- Faculty User Group
- Moodle Consortium

Communications Outreach The following is a list of communication events that are established for this project:

Monthly Status Reports The Project Manager shall provide monthly written status reports to the Tech Task Force. The reports shall include the following information tracked against the Project Plan:

- Summary of tasks completed in previous month
- Summary of tasks scheduled for completion in the next month
- Summary of issue status and resolutions

Bi-Monthly Project Team Status Meeting These status meetings are held every other month. Every member of the Project Team will be invited to participate in the meeting. Project Manager sends the status report to each member of the team prior to the meeting so everyone can review it in advance.

Website Use User Group Participants and Subject Matter Experts may be updated monthly at the discretion of the Project Manager. Information will be posted to the project’s website.

ATTACHMENTS/APPENDICES

LMS Committee Matrix

APPROVALS

Sign-off Sheet

I have read the above Project Plan and will abide by its terms and conditions and pledge my full commitment and support for the Project Plan.

Project Sponsor: _____ Date

Project Manager: _____ Date

Project Manager: _____ Date
Tech Task Force: _____ Date
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