

# Tutor perceptions of the Moodle Learning Management System

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This poster is based on a research project conducted in conjunction with the Open Source Courseware Initiative New Zealand (OSCINZ). The OSCINZ project, led by the Waikato Institute of Technology, focused on the development and implementation of a unique New Zealand learning management system, based on quality open source code provided (and tested) by leading educational providers. The project selected the application Moodle in 2005. This research focused on tutor perceptions of Moodle and how it meets the needs of their teaching. The tutors interviewed came from three diverse vocation based institutions, who had recently adopted Moodle as their institutional LMS.

Wyles & Udas (2004) argued technology should “adapt to fit pedagogy” rather than the pedagogy being dictated by the technology. Malloy, Jensen & Reddick (2004) claim flexibility afforded by open source software can facilitate the development of a system that supports the tradition of academic freedom. In New Zealand it was also important the LMS chosen could incorporate language packs to meet the diverse cultural needs of Māori and Pacific Island communities. This project sought to elicit feedback from tutors on their perception of Moodle as a vehicle for the effective development and delivery of e-learning.

The research methodology was qualitative as focus group interviews were held with a total of 35 tutors from three relatively diverse institutions in relation to geographic location, student populations and the range of programmes offered. Each of these institutions were at different stages in the development and implementation of e-learning and all of them were in the initial stages of using Moodle as an LMS. Each of the focus groups were asked a range of questions to assess their perception of Moodle.

## Conclusions

Tutors were very positive in relation to the introduction of Moodle and the usefulness and user friendliness of the tools within Moodle that allowed them to develop and make changes to their own course/s. In response to questions on learning design, the following quotes are representative of the feedback: *I don't think Moodle has fairy dust to make you instantly a totally different e-learning teacher. It's how you use it and what you put into the course and how you design the course and what activities you use;* and: *Moodle provides a framework which lends itself to the development of activities which can promote critical thinking.*

## References

- Malloy, T. E., Jensen, G. C., Reddick, M. (n.d.). *Open courseware and shared knowledge in online education: The Utah open-source, Java-based learning management system*. Retrieved from <http://www.psych.utah.edu/learn/olms/OLMS-01-11-07.pdf>
- Wyles, R., & Udas, K. (2004). *New Zealand open source virtual learning environment project*. (n.p.).

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