



UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

Information management in the Virtual Learning Environment

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Virtual Learning Environments



Desire2Learn 

What's the problem

- Student complaints about “Inconsistency”
- Unrealistic expectations of technology
- Increasing demand for “minimum standards”. (Reed & Whatmough, 2015)
- Talk of “Gold”, “Silver” and “Bronze” sites.
- Very difficult to agree on a “gold standard”



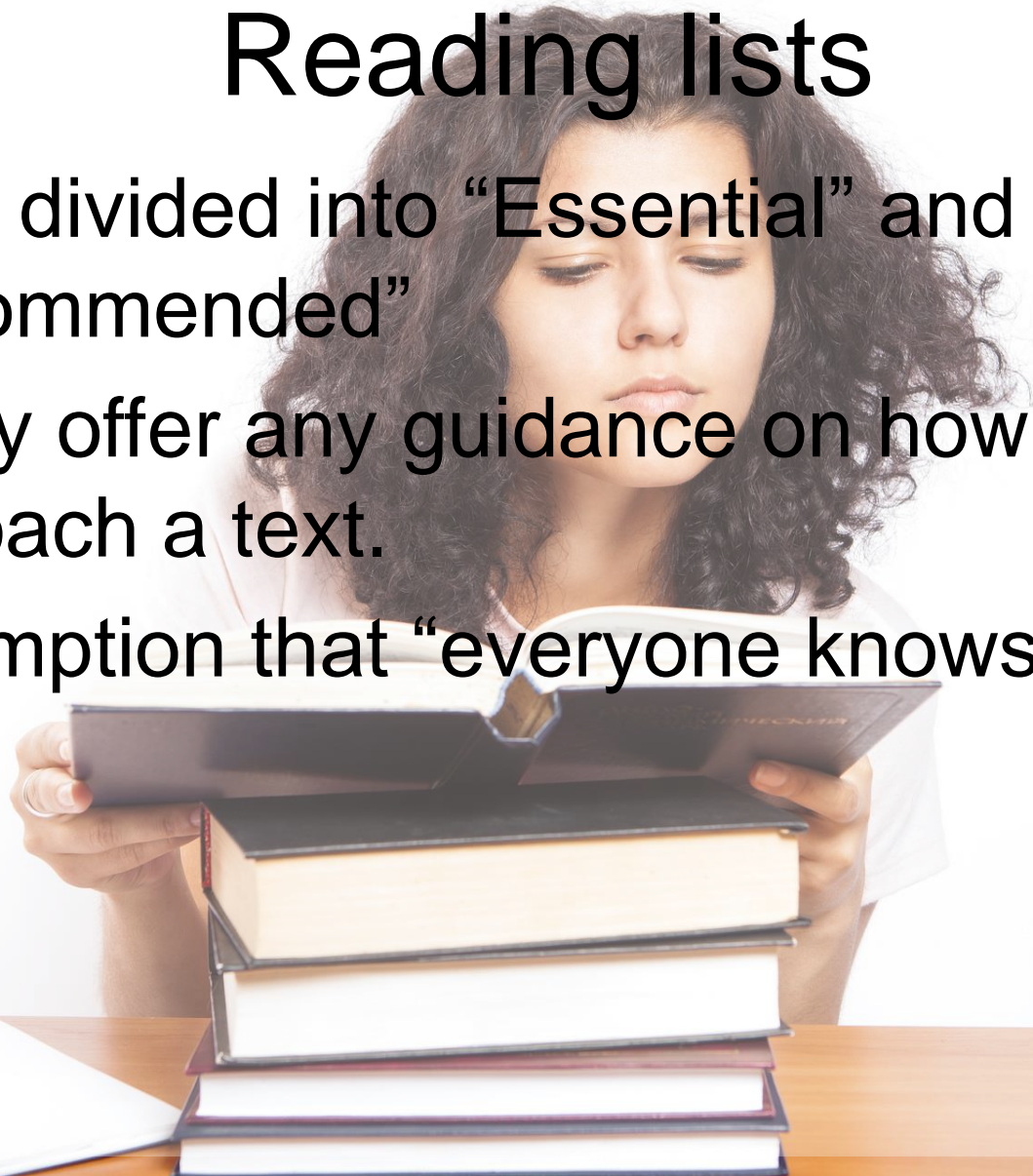
making students as
an instructor
getting used to



Image credit: Michael Beckwith <https://www.flickr.com/photos/118118485@N05/16438065636>

Reading lists

- Often divided into “Essential” and “Recommended”
- Rarely offer any guidance on how to approach a text.
- Assumption that “everyone knows what to do”.



A fairly typical VLE site

The screenshot displays a Blackboard VLE interface. At the top, the browser address bar shows the URL: https://blackboard.lincoln.ac.uk/webapps/blackboard/content/listContentEditable.jsp?content_id=_517679_1&course_id=_55899_1&mode=reset. The page header includes the University of Lincoln logo and the text "Blackboard". Navigation links include "My Blackboard", "My University", "My Sites", "Library", "Careers", "Content Store", "System Admin", and "Help & Support".

The main content area is titled "Learning materials" and features a sidebar on the left with a menu. The menu items are: Announcements, About, Staff Details, Discussion Board, Learning Materials, Assessments, and Tools. Below this is a "SITE MANAGEMENT" section with links for Control Panel, Content Store, Site Tools, Monitoring, Grade Centre, Users and Groups, Customisation, Packages and Utilities, and Help. A "Quick Enrol" button is also present.

The main list of learning materials includes:

- Level 1 - Week 1**
Attached Files: Level 1 - week 1.pdf (90.297 KB)
- Level 1 - week 2**
Attached Files: Level 1 - Week 2.pdf (87.802 KB)
- Hybrid Project 2**
Attached Files: Project - Hybrid 2.pdf (64.975 KB)
- Hybrid Project Header Sheet**
Attached Files: Hybrid Project Header Sheet.pdf (89.99 KB)
- Hybrid Project [redacted] please bring with you**
Attached Files: Hybrid Project [redacted] please bring with you.pdf (9.604 KB)
- Level - week 2 - Theory**
Attached Files: Level 1 - week 2 Theory - Essay.pdf (95.57 KB)
- Hybrid Projec**
- Level 1 - week 4 - Theory - Library Presentations**

The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the system tray with the time 14:58 and date 06/05/2016. Open applications include Signpost_Forest_..._W..._jpg, Desire2Learn.png, blackboard_Logo.png, and moodle_Logo.jpg.

Strategy

- Examine one years worth of sites in my own institution (*2013-14 n=1197*) (*done*)
 - Highly varied practices, but four identifiable models emerged
- Interview a range of staff in different institutions (*incomplete, ongoing*)
 - Strong desire to meet need of students.
 - Frustration about practicalities (e.g. copyright)
- Survey students (*to be done*)

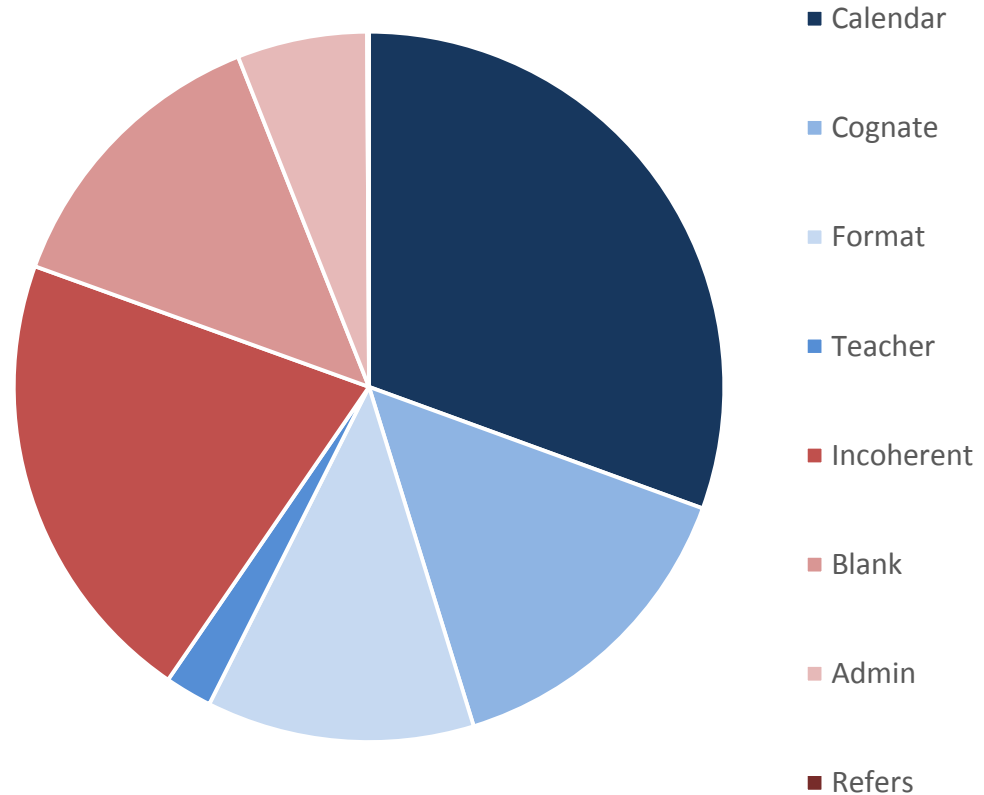
Models

- Calendar – simply tries to follow teaching. (week 1, 2, etc.).
- Cognate – attempts to organise the subject into topics
- Format – attempts to organise by pedagogical model (lectures, seminars, etc.)
- Teacher – organised by individual academic folders

Model distribution

No of sites

Model	Number
Calendar	356
Incoherent	244
Cognate	171
Blank	157
Format	142
Admin	69
Teacher	25
Refers	1



Interview data

- **Strong desire to work with students**
 - we might have to change learning activities depending on the actual student group and how they're engaging (Respondent B)
 - I'd ask them in class "If you like I can take a picture of this, and put this up and they're like "yeah, that's great, that's really helpful" (Respondent H)
 - the director of teaching and learning has invested money in getting Blackboard analytics. But we can't make it work and so we can't really access all the data with regard to that. (Respondent F)
- **But practical problems. Especially around IPR**
 - the whole issue of copyright, which you can only digitise one chapter blah blah, so in terms of International students having access, you know that's an issue" (Respondent C)
 - "you know, if this really is going to be a problem then that makes a lot of VLEs not fit for purpose" (Respondent E)

Thank you



Image credit: University of Lincoln