



# Using a Content Management System as a Learning Environment

**Dr. Julie K. Little, EDUCAUSE, [jlittle@edUCAUSE.edu](mailto:jlittle@edUCAUSE.edu)**

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## + A course management system offers:

- An easy to use interface to facilitate putting course content online.
- An online classroom environment where teachers and learners can interact.
- The building blocks for creating effective learning environments.

## + Via tools and access

To customize course content to fit individual learner needs and teaching styles

### ■ A set of "management tools" to:

- **Organize:** syllabus, calendar, roster/grade book, learning modules, media library
- **Distribute:** post content, quizzes, surveys, assignments
- **Communicate:** announcements, email, discussion board, chat
- **Collaborate:** share whiteboard, group work spaces

### ■ And the ability to access wider set of web-based content-creation tools and resources (existing, teacher- and student-created):

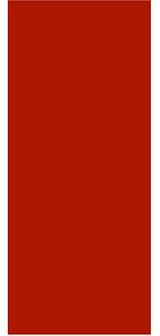
- Blogs, podcasts, video
- Wikis and collaboration environments
- Games, simulations, immersive environments
- Social networking

## + To engage with others and content

- Post lecture notes, readings, and other files for anytime/anywhere access or review
- Host student-generated content using a variety of web-based tools
- Encourage student interaction through small-group work and peer knowledge sharing
- Enhance student reflection and critical thinking skill development
- Leverage student participation, communication, and collaboration
- Evaluate student progress

# + It's what you do with the tools that counts

- Most CMS have a similar set of tools.
- Just as in a face-to-face classroom, it is up to the instructor and students to leverage the available tools (whiteboard, overhead projector, computer, furniture, etc.) to create the best learning environment.
- An effective learning environments relies on the SKILL of the carpenter and a vision for what is being constructed. The tool doesn't dictate what's created.



Blackboard

**ANGEL**  
Course Management System



# + Creating a vision for learning based on learner needs

Irrespective of geographic location, the NetGen share many common characteristics

## Characteristics

- Digital (growing up in constant contact with digital media)
- Connected
- Action-oriented
- Experiential
- Immediate
- Social

## Learning Preferences

- Teams, peer-to-peer
- Engagement & experience
- Visual & kinesthetic
- Things that matter

*Educating the Net Generation (2005)*  
<http://www.educause.edu/educatingthenetgen>



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- Social

## Learning

**Interactive and Social:  
The way these students prefer to think and work.**

that matter

*Educating the Net Generation (2005)*

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“Unlike all previous generations,  
generation Y is probably the largest  
and only truly global generation.”



Fadi Abdul Khalek  
CEO, Universal Knowledge Solutions, UAE

## + Life and work 2.0 will be:

- Global
- Social
- Negotiated
- Collaborative
- Immersive

And it will require knowing how to ask a good question rather than knowing the right answer.

Van Eck (2007), Cisco (2008)

# + Shift the Locus of Learning

Learning occurs through conversations, web surfing, social interactions, group work, spontaneous interactions, sharing, making connections



- Problem-based
- Group/team/community-based
- Learning-by-doing
- Authentic/real world
- Web-based
- Hybrid delivery
- Redesign of physical spaces
- Visual
- Social

*ELI Discovery Tools: The Net Generation*  
<http://www.educause.edu/NetGenTool>

*ELI Discovery Tools: Learning Space*  
<http://www.educause.edu/learningspaceworkshopguide>



# + Questions

- How do we facilitate the change that the teachers have to go through in order to be skilled creators of effective learning environments?
- How can we make sure that Web 2.0 tools are properly integrated into any learning environment?
- What tools do we use to entice learners to contribute to the content-building process?
- What changes are required to foster a collaborative-learning environment?
- What are the optimal methods to use social networking in a learning environment?

# + Project ENJOY: 12 Guidelines for Designing Engaging eLearning Environments

Eva de Lera, Senior Strategist of the Office of Learning Technologies at Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Barcelona

- 1. Personalization** – The environment must make the student feel like a person and not like a user.
- 2. Identity** – Use real images to help students identify with the values and the community in a quicker and more efficient way.
- 3. Brand** – Ensure that the brand and the brand values are reflected throughout the virtual environment to reinforce the relationship between the student and the institution.
- 4. Community** – Offer options to communicate, relate, and participate. Make them visible and easily accessible.

## + Project ENJOY: 12 Guidelines for Designing Engaging eLearning Environments (con't.)

5. **Surprise** – Introduce positive surprise elements or special events in the initial entry pages or in strategic locations to make the students feel that they are part of a creative and dynamic community.
6. **Innovation** – Integrate innovative elements in the virtual environment, things that students may begin hearing or reading about in the media and other trend environments.
7. **Zen** – Ensure that there is not an overload of text on the screen and that white spaces as well as photographic or graphic elements are used. Avoid unnecessary noise.
8. **Search** – Provide shortcuts for students who have little time which ensure that they can find the information they need by doing a simple search.

## + Project ENJOY: 12 Guidelines for Designing Engaging eLearning Environments (con't)

9. **Clarity** – Use lively and bright colors to facilitate interaction, reading, and information visualization.
10. **Situation** – Ensure that the student quickly recognizes the structure or map of the environment in a glimpse, without needing to scroll.
11. **Aesthetics** – Ensure a consistent "look" throughout to help guide the students through their tasks and objectives.
12. **Recognition** – Use standard icons and symbols that can be understood easily and quickly without requiring alternative text or an extra click to "get" it.