

CMS Paper - Usage of a CMS in Upper Elementary School

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LDT 832 - Designing e-Learning Within Course Management Systems

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Across the board, our country is facing massive ramifications due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In March of 2020 when schools abruptly moved to online instruction, it was to manage a crisis. The emergency usage of course management systems (CMS) forced K-12 teachers to adopt a new way to still run and manage their classes. This unforeseen circumstance has shaken up the field of education and has school leaders viewing education through a different lense. Due to the pandemic, millions of laptops were given out across to students and are now being reclaimed by districts. A dramatic influx of technology and reliance upon its capabilities will undoubtedly be a trend in public education moving forward. At the heart of computerized education is the CMS. The CMS should become as integral a part of the teaching and learning process in K-12 as it is in higher education, especially if one of the goals of K-12 is to prepare certain students for college.

Our school and surrounding areas would be classified as an urban area with an ethnically diverse population of Latino, African American, Caucasian as well as other nationalities represented. Families generally have access to technology, as well as the aforementioned influx of laptops/tablets belonging to the school. Access to technology is not too much of a hindrance.

My context of learners are generally upper elementary school students. Students I've worked with in the past are usually emerging readers with some students proficient. The students are still developing work habits and tend to struggle with organization. More than half students in a class function below grade-level expectations. Other characteristics of this general learning population would be their increasing independence. Pre-adolescents, along with their access and draw to technology, are also growing up navigating a world both online and in-person. Students almost need to have a dual-personality... both a sense of self and confidence in their online presence to fit-in among their peers navigating similar waters.

To design an ideal CMS for this learning population, there would need to be certain features in order to make the entire experience worthwhile and beneficial for multiple parties. The first aspect the CMS would need to be able to do would allow for the learning experience to become more learner-centered. Shifting the onus onto the student to assume responsibility for their learning is a desirable outcome for teachers in today's schools. A CMS with rock-solid design can allow for this by creating meaningful learning experiences for the student to progress through. Careful selection and consolidation of instructional materials, videos and OER is important to ensure that there is a flow to the course as opposed to choppy material distribution. The CMS should be easy to navigate on both student and teacher end. If the navigation is frustrating, students and teachers will both be reluctant to use the program. The inclusion of games, self-checks, low-stakes testing are all ways to make the learning student-centered.

Another aspect of a CMS to support students and teachers would be communication tools to allow for interaction. This idea of interacting with others online, I see, is an important skill that should begin to be taught in schools. Students will be growing up in a world with as much online communication as face-to-face. Practicing good interaction techniques and online etiquette can be taught through messaging tools built into a CMS. Further, this is a great way for teachers to disseminate information to the masses of students and perhaps even parents/families too.

One learning theory that can be supported through the integration of a CMS is a flipped classroom. According to Steed, "The flipped classroom model involves the teacher delivering the 'taught' element outside of the classroom. Students complete this element of their learning prior to attending the lesson. This allows the teacher to spend more 1:1 time with students in lessons consolidating their learning and allowing them to progress to more challenging tasks

quicker.” Implementing a flipped classroom could be an option given the affordances of a CMS. Teachers could then rethink how class time is spent, especially if the learning population generally struggles. Small group instruction and more personalized interventions with data provided from the CMS can help drive instruction for teachers. At the same time, the class can continue to progress with all information available on the CMS, shifting responsibilities onto the learner too.

I think the affordances provided by a CMS will begin to pave the way for new generations of learning to come. The pandemic has taken its toll on education and an influx of technology will help to reshape the way schools look in the future.

References

Steed, Anthony. **Teaching Business & Economics; Hassocks** Vol. 16, Iss. 3, (Autumn 2012): 9-11.

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