

Teachers want help with their administrative tasks (95% of all user actions)*

Why we’re more likely to benefit from helping teachers and instructors **effectively manage their materials & improve their communication with students**.

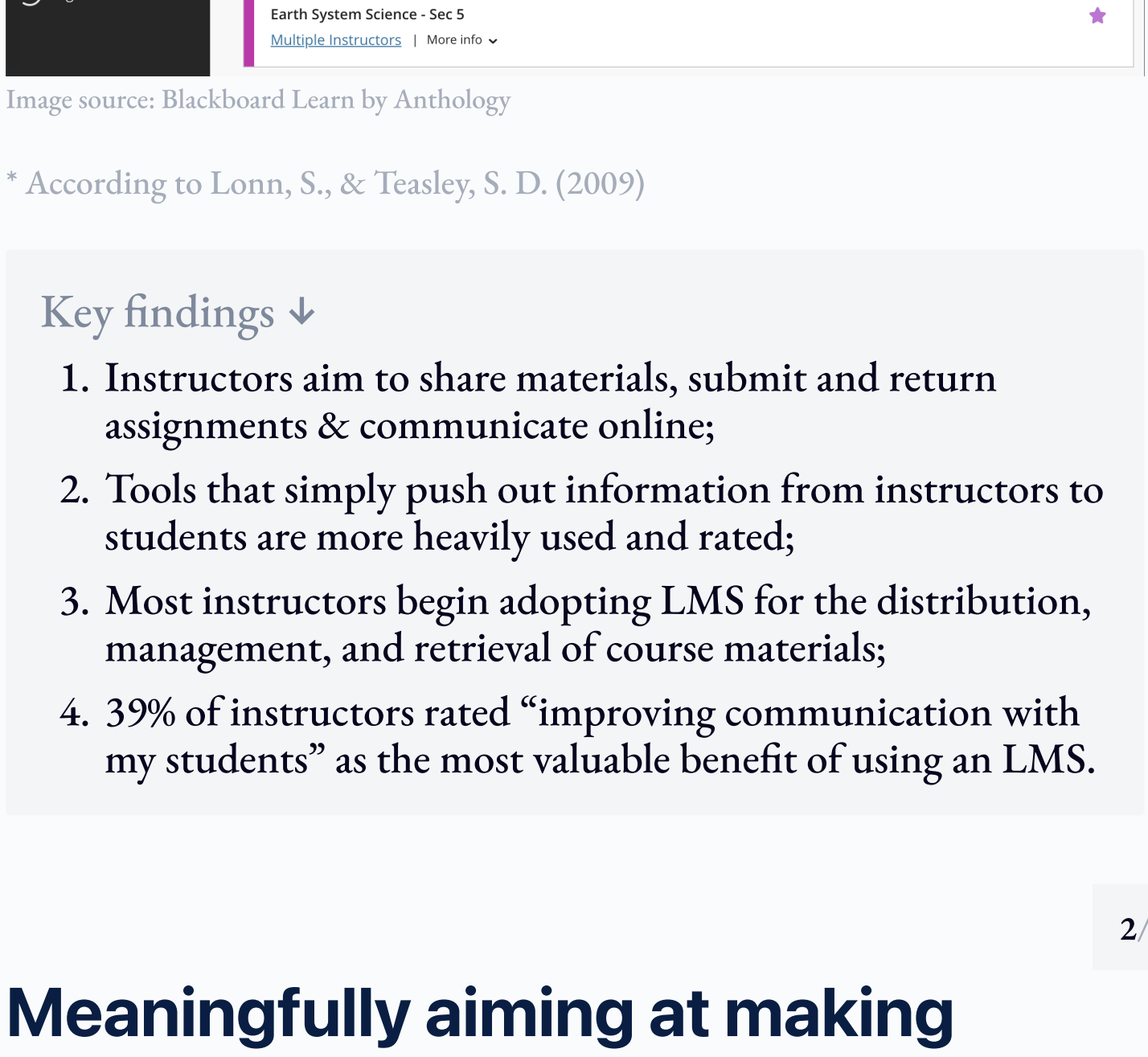


Image source: Blackboard Learn by Anthology

* According to Lonn, S., & Teasley, S. D. (2009)

Key findings ↓

1. Instructors aim to share materials, submit and return assignments & communicate online;
2. Tools that simply push out information from instructors to students are more heavily used and rated;
3. Most instructors begin adopting LMS for the distribution, management, and retrieval of course materials;
4. 39% of instructors rated “improving communication with my students” as the most valuable benefit of using an LMS.

Meaningfully aiming at making teaching more efficient (Morgan, 2003)

Here I ‘m analysing findings from a **desk research** conducted to acquire **domain knowledge** and asses potential **user needs and expectations** of teachers and instructors.

Three main scientific articles were collected based on the **number of citations** & having the intent of **describing the attitudinal and behavioural aspects** of a learning management system main type of users.

The main aim of this early investigation is to help us shed light onto what our audience could be looking out for when considering the adoption of learning management system.

Coates, H., james, R. & baldwin G. A (2005) Critical Examination Of The Effects Of Learning Management Systems On University Teaching And Learning.

West, R. E., Waddoups, G., & Graham, C. R. (2007). Understanding the experiences of instructors as they adopt a course management system.

Lonn, S., & Teasley, S. D.(2007) Investigating Perceptions and Uses of Learning Management Systems (2009).

Where should we truly aim?

These articles, corroborated, aim at clarifying what the target group is **most likely to do** and what they are **most likely to expect**.

At a glance, it does seem to be the case that an overwhelming emphasis is being placed upon two things:

1. Document Management Capabilities;

2. Ease of addressing important information.

Based on this, the administrative tasks pertaining to main activities i.e. teaching pupils, organising class events, grading student work etc. would benefit greatly from having a **system that takes care of such obligations while synchronising announcements to students needs**.

At the end of ingesting this info, we should become more sensitive to our users daily challenges and reoccurring efforts.

This brings on the opportunity to design a **thoughtful solution that both parties**(teachers-students) would ultimately find **meaningful and useful** for their contexts.

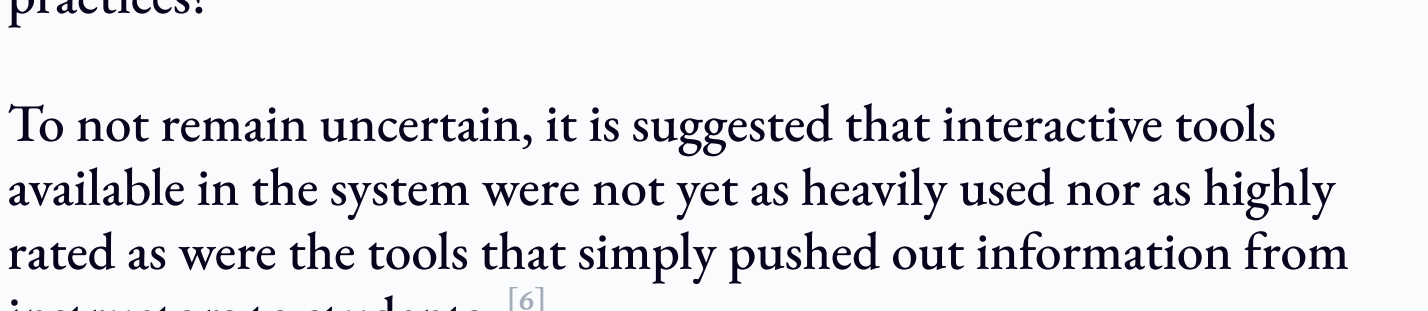
! If our design proves itself against the test of time, we can export it to our document management system platform, thus potentially saving time on development & building momentum.

Providing clarity on user needs

The need for receiving assistance to teaching and learning activities has been identified a while back.

In 2002, around **54% of subjects** from Australian universities contained an online component.^[1]

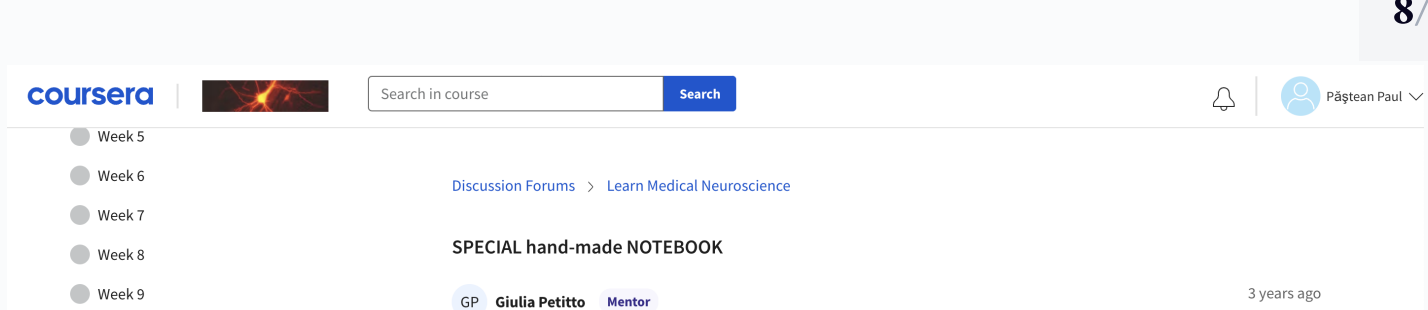
Among the earliest sought after features by universities and alike institutions were **“uploading and integrating digital resources”** and developing **“assessment tasks and space for online discussion”**.^[2]



Blackboard Learn incorporated different methods to help instructors effectively manage their course-related files & documents.

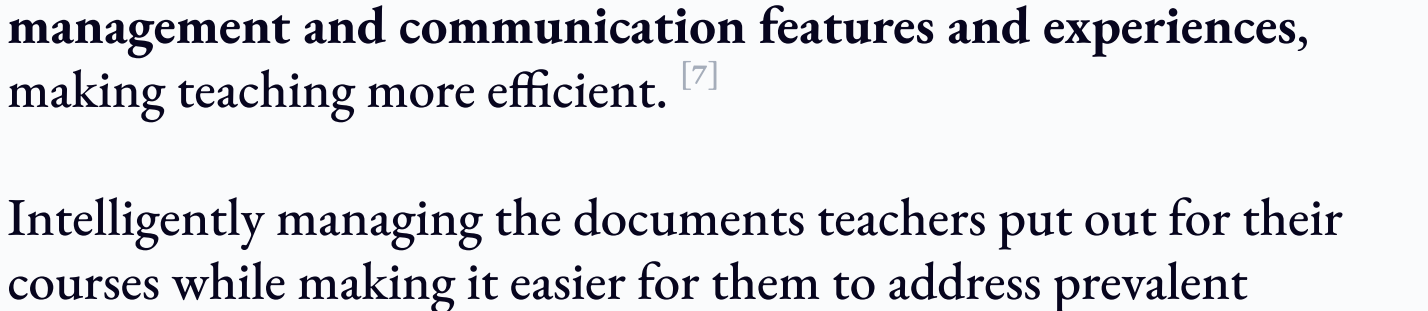
Users of early learning management systems - which used to be called “course management systems” - indicated a **preference for such tools and functions** that help manage materials and information for courses.^{[3][4]}

This means that they looked for help to “facilitate flexible course delivery, the identification and use of resources, communication and conferencing, activities and assessments, collaborative work, and student management and support”.^[5]



Udemycourse.com allows their instructors to upload material with a wide range of options via their interface.

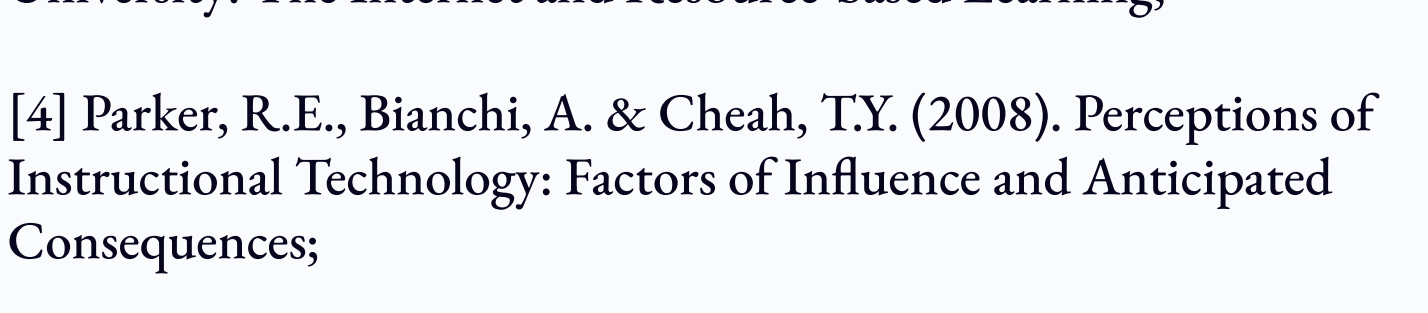
The journey of providing value for the processes related to the distribution, management and retrieval of course material is a **popular reason for adopting an LMS** among instructors.^[6]



Moodle Academy provides the ability to import different kinds of file types - such as CSVs - for making the migration of the course easier.

Yet, it should not be mistaken that the mere presence of such software in the teachers’ realm holds intrinsic value.

For what matters is “the way the tool is used in given course and if it helps achieve the desired course goals”.^[7]



Google Classroom does a great job at making the tasks of uploading class materials user-friendly, by placing forth the choices the user can take to add their files.

How do these needs map out?

Based on usability related data, an overwhelming amount of user actions i.e. “Content sharing”, “Assignments”, “Announcements”, “Schedule” and “Syllabus”, more specifically around **95% had to deal with document management and broadcast oriented communication tools**.^[6]

When surveyed, very few instructors and students rated these as “Not Valuable”.^[6]

Which brings us to the next important question:

What about leveraging this technology for innovating pedagogical practices?

To not remain uncertain, it is suggested that interactive tools available in the system were not yet as heavily used nor as highly rated as were the tools that simply pushed out information from instructors to students.^[6]

Google Classroom - along with Blackboard Learn - meets the need for pushing out important information via their announcement feature.

We’re repeatedly informed that features which enable access to learning resources, communication between staff and students, along with interactive multimedia, personal bookmarking and note-taking can well support the discursive interaction underpinning individual students learning.^[2]

Therefore, the correspondence between teachers aims at keeping their pupils up to date on course material news and the students need on being cognisant of significant study unit changes is emphasised and stressed across different dedicated platforms.

Coursera.org syncs the staffs announcements regarding a particular course with their pupils through a discussion forum.

All this body of knowledge indicates that our development efforts would be better off in terms of user adoption and satisfaction at the institutional level, by focusing on providing **great document management and communication features and experiences**, making teaching more efficient.^[7]

Intelligently managing the documents teachers put out for their courses while making it easier for them to address prevalent information to their students, makes it probable that the user adoption and satisfaction would have a favourable ROI, such as:

• Wasting less time guessing at design level;

• Speeding up the development process by having a clear vision;

• Emulating already approved interface patterns from competitors;

• Potential buy-in at the organisational level for the distribution of employee training related documents;

Bibliographical references

[1] Bell, Bush, Nicholson, O’Brien and Tran (2002) Universities online: a survey of online education and services in Australia;

[2] Coates, H., james, R. & baldwin G. A (2005) Critical Examination Of The Effects Of Learning Management Systems On University Teaching And Learning;

[3] Ryan, S., Scott, B., Freeman, H., & Patel, D. (2000). The Virtual University: The Internet and Resource-based Learning;

[4] Parker, R.E., Bianchi, A. & Cheah, T.Y. (2008). Perceptions of Instructional Technology: Factors of Influence and Anticipated Consequences;

[5] West, R. E., Waddoups, G., & Graham, C. R. (2007). Understanding the experiences of instructors as they adopt a course management system;

[6] Lonn, S., & Teasley, S. D.(2009) Investigating Perceptions and Uses of Learning Management Systems;

[7] Glenda Morgan (2003) Faculty use of Course Management Systems.

Further readings

Newton, Diane & Ellis, Allan. (2005). Effective implementation of e-learning: A case study of the Australian Army;

Boettcher, J. V., & Conrad, R. M. (2015). The online teaching survival guide: Simple and practical pedagogical tips;

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