

Yukon Education Student Network (YESNet) Learning Management System (LMS) Evaluation Rubric

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Precis

The Yukon Education Student Network (YESNet) and Yukon First Nations Programs & Partnerships Unit of the Yukon's Ministry of Education are interested in developing blended secondary courses that are relevant to aboriginal students. The programme will be piloted by the Na Cho Nyak Dun First Nation, who have some limitations and issues with bandwidth and reliability of Internet access that will need to be taken into account. Our assignment is to create a rubric to assist the YESNet with selecting the appropriate Learning Management System (LMS). If the pilot is successful, it will be rolled out to the Yukon's other 12 First Nations.

Rationale for Our Rubric

Our group decided to base its rubric on the Bates and Poole SECTIONS framework because, as it says in the module introduction, “the SECTIONS model helps educators to better analyze learning technologies, both in terms of appropriateness for use in classrooms and the potential (or challenges) for success in relation to institutional contexts.” It also allowed us to specifically consider such key aspects as needs of users (both student and teacher), costs, reliability, functionality, and learning styles. It should be noted that, during our collaborations, we debated whether “Learning Styles” should be placed near the top of the rubric (under “Students”) or in the middle of the rubric (under Teaching and Learning). In the end, we decided that, although learning styles are extremely important considerations, they are not as easy to evaluate as other criteria and should therefore be placed in a lower position of the rubric. This decision was corroborated by Bates and Poole:

It might be thought that effectiveness of teaching and learning should be the first criterion to be considered. If the technology is not effective educationally, it should not be used no matter how cheap or easy to use it is. However, it is much easier to discriminate between media and technologies on the basis of student access, ease of use, or cost than it is on the basis of teaching effectiveness. Therefore, the previous criteria are better discriminators than teaching and learning.

Teaching and learning factors are less accurate as a discriminator because teachers, learners, and media are all very flexible. (p.

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Learning Management System (LMS) Evaluation Rubric

Area for Evaluation	Fails to Meet Expectations 0	Meets Expectations 1	Exceeds Expectations 2
Students			
Demographics	LMS provides no or only minimal mobility access for students. Automatic disqualification from any further consideration.	LMS platform offers a mobile app that provides simple, common navigation for all classes, responsive design, and backward compatibility with 3G technology.	LMS platform offers simple, common navigation for all classes, responsive design for most common screen sizes, and exploits the built-in functionalities and tools of a mobile device, while retaining backward compatibility with 3G technology.
Accessibility	Features of the LMS are not easy to access and there is no accommodation for non-native English language speaking students (features are in English only)	Features of the LMS are relatively easy to access and accommodate non-native English language speaking students (features are translatable in major languages). Translation within the LMS might be possible	Features of the LMS are very easy to access and accommodate non-native English language speaking students (features are translatable in both major and some minor languages). Translation within the LMS is possible
Ease of Use			
Plug-ins, add-ons, extensions	Platform expandability is based on proprietary technology and limited in scope.	Plugins, addons, and extensions are available and reasonably easy to install, activate, and configure.	Plugins, addons, and extensions are available, easy to install, activate, and configure plus regularly updated and well

			supported.
Navigation Panels	LMS cannot be navigated on touchscreens or common mobile devices.	LMS can, with some training and practice, be navigated on most computers, tablets, and other common mobile devices.	LMS can be easily navigated on computers, tablets, and other common mobile devices. Includes navigational breadcrumbs, recent history, and/or voice commands.
Help and Instructions	Poorly written help files only.	Clearly written help documents and illustrated step-by-step tutorials are provided, with video tutorials that demonstrate some of the more complex tasks.	Clearly written help documents and illustrated step-by-step tutorials are provided, with video tutorials that demonstrate some of the more complex tasks. Online chat assistance available 24/7.
Costs			
Software Cost	Costly set-up to the institution, requiring funds exceeding budget constraints. Existing infrastructure cannot be utilized	Minimal additional costs to the institution based on budgeting constraints. Existing infrastructure can be mostly utilized	Costs to the institution are not noticeable and existing infrastructure can be fully utilized
Development Time	Unrealistic and lengthy development time which includes necessary training component	Realistic and manageable development time which includes some training to staff, mostly within the budget constraints	Realistic and manageable development time which includes training to staff, well within the budget constraints
Maintenance and Updates	Maintenance costs are above an affordable range and will require additional staff. Updates are sporadic and unexpected	Maintenance costs are acceptable and updates arrive at regular and expected intervals. No additional staff required	Maintenance costs are not noticeable and may be included in the existing infrastructure. Updates arrive at regular and expected intervals
Unit Cost per Student and	Costs are borne by both the	Costs are borne by the	No cost to the instructor or the

Instructor	student and the instructor	institution and not the individual students or instructors; costs are minimal	student; open source no cost to institution
Teaching and Learning			
LMS Features	Several of the expected features are lacking	<p>LMS contains most of the following list of features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● assignment dropbox ● course calendar ● discussion forums ● email ● instructor announcement section ● real time chat area ● view grades ● course content ● simple yet comprehensive text input and editing features ● student contact list ● ability to embed a variety of media formats ● student statistic tracking ● simple and easy navigation tools ● assessment features (quizz, test) ● customizable layout and view ● ability to track threads ● secure login/ability to change password ● seamless integration with Google Drive 	<p>Features meet basic list of expectations and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Integration with iOS features such as push notifications and FaceTime ● any functionality that supports constructivist pedagogy
Learning Styles	LMS fails to provide opportunity	LMS provides opportunity for	LMS provides opportunity for a

	for differentiated lesson delivery to accommodate various learning styles and individual learning needs	some differentiated lesson delivery to accommodate a variety of learning styles and individual learning needs	variety of differentiated lessons to accommodate numerous learning styles and individual learning needs
Interactivity			
Interaction and Feedback	LMS relies heavily on Web 1.0 technology and restricts students from interacting with other students, teachers, or the content itself.	LMS contains most of the following list of features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● discussion forums ● group forums ● group defined work areas ● email ● online chat ● eportfolios ● various multimedia (video, animations, presentations) ● shared workspace with provision for both synchronous and asynchronous collaboration ● commenting functionality 	LMS exceeds features within the list
Interaction and Feedback	Student and instructor interaction and feedback is either not possible or limited	The LMS promotes interaction and feedback between students and instructors	There is a high level of feedback and interaction between groups of students, individual students and instructors
Organizational Issues			
Server/Hosting Technologies	Personal data stored on servers outside of Canada, with no capability for local (Canadian) hosting.	Utilizes both server-hosted and cloud-based infrastructure to provide security, speed, and backup redundancy of teacher and student data.	Utilizes both server-hosted and cloud-based infrastructure to provide security, speed, and backup redundancy of teacher and student data. Also makes use of CDN and SSD

			technology to provide minimal page load times
Institution Training and Support	Institution is not familiar with LMS and has little to no funding/time allocation for training and support within its own staff resources; no face-to-face support and minimal online/help desk	Institution is familiar with the LMS and has some funding/time allocation for training and support within its own staff resources; might be some face-to-face support as well as online and help desk	Institution has experience with LMS and has funding/time allocation for training and support within its own staff resources; includes face-to-face support as well as online and help desk
Novelty			
Current Status of LMS	LMS is relatively new and unproven; beta version	LMS is established in education sector with a proven track record	LMS is a leader in the education sector with a very established track record
Design, Layout and Appeal	LMS layout is confusing, with little regard for organization or aesthetics.	LMS appeals to both students and instructors; design is fairly easy to navigate	LMS appeals to both students and instructors; design is easy to navigate
Speed			
Transfer of Existing Content	Little or no ability to import/export content from other sources and platforms	Ability to easily import/export content from other sources and platforms; some built-in conversion tools included	Importing/exporting content from other sources and platforms is seamless; built-in conversion tools where needed
Ease With Which Templates Can be Created	LMS provides limited or no functionality for creating templates.	LMS provides some functionality for creating templates and/or pre-designed templates that are customizable.	LMS provides strong functionality for creating templates as well as a selection of pre-designed templates that are customizable.

References

Bates A. W. & Poole, G. (2003). A framework for selecting and using technology. In A.W. Bates & G. Poole, *Effective teaching with technology in higher education* (pp. 75-108). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 4.