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Chapter 10 Summary
Learning Design, and Emergence: Two Case Studies of Moodle in Distance Education

This chapter goes in depth to the world of Moodle and how it was used in two different ways by two different programs. Andrew Whitworth and Angela Benson give us their case study on two program sites. One is called PAP (“Public Administration Programme”) which is a UK online Master’s program and another one called E-TECH which is based in the US and is also a Master’s program. The programs’ organizational structures are very similar but their philosophies on online teaching differ greatly.

E-TECH had two primary goals that drove the program. They were to provide a site for research by providing online teaching tools and to provide a stable online program. They do not solely use Moodle as their learning resource. E-TECH used other commercial technology tools in its programs as well. They used these online resources to guide their instruction. Another part I found interesting is that the staff of E-TECH are the ones who build the course content and activities. This philosophy makes the program more of an open and non-standardized course design. This allows them to have interactions with the instructor’s that are teaching the material and to change/revise it accordingly.

As for PAP, it only had one program goal and that was to provide a stable and effective online program that was self-supporting. PAP staff are the builders of courses but unlike E-TECH, the content and activities are provided by content experts. Trained tutors, not instructors, are then the ones who teach the courses. PAP tends to be more standardized in their course design.

To sum it all up, these two programs have similar structures to Moodle but their philosophies of using it are very different. E-TECH researchers and instructors have more freedom to explore other resources while PAP tutors must use Moodle in certain set ways. I would have to say the main idea this study was trying to portray was that a program like Moodle can be used in two different ways and be effective in both. It can be standardized for users who want explicit instruction or it can be individualized for users who want to be able to customize and explore other resources.