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# MOODLE-BASED ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES TEACHING AT HO CHI MINH CITY UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** *This paper delves into the integration of a Learning Management System (LMS) in the pedagogy of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), with a primary focus on the implementation and adaptation of Moodle at Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education. Examining the rationale behind selecting Moodle for ESP education, the paper explores its advantages as a complementary tool to traditional face-to-face instruction, elucidating its seamless incorporation into blended learning environments. The discussion encompasses the diverse perspectives of learners from various classes, whose feedback through surveys reflects a positive inclination towards the utilisation of Moodle in their practical learning experiences. This attests to the platform's efficacy as a valuable supplement to conventional classroom methods. Additionally, the paper delineates Moodle-based strategies for content management and monitoring of students' activities, both in general and within the context of ESP courses. By shedding light on the successful implementation of Moodle in a specific educational setting, this paper contributes to the broader discourse on leveraging technology to enhance ESP education. It highlights not only the reasons supporting the adoption of Moodle but also the platform's tangible benefits, emphasising its potential to foster an enriching and adaptive learning environment for ESP students.*

**Keywords:** *Learning Management System (LMS), English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Moodle, Blended learning*

## INTRODUCTION

Moodle has emerged as a versatile platform for course management and collaborative learning in the ever-evolving landscape of education technology. At Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education, integrating three powerful features—Glossary, H5P, and Workshop tools—and others holds immense potential for enhancing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching. This article explores how these tools can be seamlessly incorporated into the existing framework, offering educators and students a dynamic and interactive learning experience.

Moodle is an increasingly popular open-source learning management system that provides a wide range of features and tools to support online teaching and learning. It facilitates most of the educators' frequent duties such as creating and managing online courses, delivering content and assessing student learning. (Zabolotniaia *et al.*, 2020)

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Essential course materials are now all uploaded to Moodle, making them easily accessible to students at any time. Moodle allows the creation of interactive content and offers various communication tools which foster collaborative learning, facilitate discussions and enable students to learn at their own pace. In the fields of assessment and feedback, educators can create online quizzes, assignments, and assessments within Moodle, providing instant feedback to students. Moodle's tracking and reporting features allow instructors to monitor students' progress, track their engagement with course materials, and identify areas where additional support may be needed.

Through the versatile Moodle platform, at our university, we have established a virtual learning environment where English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learners have access to tailor-made content, interactive exercises, and collaborative projects that are directly aligned with their professional domains.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND KEY CONCEPTS

### Literature review

Moodle, a widely used virtual learning environment, has been employed since 2009, proving highly beneficial for ESP teaching. The focus is on how Moodle supports communicative and collaborative learning, enabling students to enhance language skills and specific vocabulary and simulate real-life scenarios. The paper discusses Moodle's features, including blocks and modules for teaching materials and varied activities, with emphasis on the crucial role of teachers in effectively implementing Moodle for ESP. (Knežević, 2017).

Using the Moodle platform in English teaching aims to foster general and transferable skills aligned with university education priorities, emphasising both learning capabilities and career readiness. Current trends focus on equipping graduates not only with expertise in a specific profession but also cultivating additional skills. Various educational concepts, often rooted in social constructivism, offer advanced courses that adapt to changes in the global business landscape. Notably, they stress superior professional qualifications and language proficiency, addressing the evolving needs of international companies. These approaches support individual and corporate goals, emphasising the importance of soft skills for successful entry into professional careers. (Gluchmanova, 2016)

Survey results indicate positive student attitudes towards ICT, with the experimental group showing increased readiness for using English professionally through online learning, boosting motivation and ESP proficiency. (Akillı *et al.*, 2019)

The primary focus of the integration of the Moodle platform into an English for Specific Purposes course is to assess whether students perceive e-learning, specifically the Moodle course, as beneficial to their learning. The research delves into their attitudes regarding communication with peers and teachers, preferred learning formats, and the correlation between self-assessment and attitudes towards e-learning. The findings aim to provide insights for further research into the effectiveness and preferences related to incorporating Moodle in specific academic contexts. (Đorđević & Stefanowicz-Kocoł, 2016)

To adapt to evolving training requirements, the article advocates a blended learning approach for ESP, emphasising its key features. Various tools and technologies are recommended for constructing effective blended learning, with a specific focus on analysing the Moodle-based approach. The article underscores the potential of combining the Moodle platform with traditional classroom methods, highlighting how this integration can enhance the overall effectiveness of ESP instruction for economics students. (Чернявська, 2016)

The utilization of Moodle for delivering English for specific purposes (ESP) courses, focusing on careful design considerations for effective learning, tailoring content to learners' needs and preferences, and integrating interactive activities for language skill development. Challenges include addressing diverse proficiency levels and domain-specific knowledge gaps. With feedback analysis guiding implications and recommendations for future ESP course design and assessment Moodle offers insights into optimizing online ESP education, acknowledging both successes and challenges. (Shalatska *et al.*, 2023)

Teachers and learners express positive attitudes towards the platform, which offers advantages in content management and activity monitoring. (Holiver *et al.*, 2020)

The findings highlight the system's capacity for student-centred education but also reveal that lecturers' unfamiliarity with certain features may limit its effectiveness in this regard. (Prasetya, 2021)

Pedagogical adjustments address pacing, input, and considerations of cognitive load, aiming to create an effective communicative classroom dynamic in the online environment. (Cronin & Caria, 2022)

Moreover, one of Moodle's strengths lies in its ability to facilitate interactive content creation and provide diverse communication tools, fostering collaborative learning environments. This enables students to engage in discussions and progress through the learning materials at their own pace. In the realms of assessment and feedback, Moodle empowers educators to develop online quizzes, assignments, and assessments, offering instantaneous feedback to students, thereby enriching the learning process.

Overall, Moodle stands out as an increasingly popular open-source learning management system, offering an array of features and tools designed to enhance online teaching and learning experiences. By addressing educators' routine tasks, it streamlines the creation and management of online courses, content delivery, and student assessment. The platform has evolved to be a centralised repository for essential course materials, ensuring easy accessibility for students at any time.

In the context of our university, the versatile Moodle platform has been instrumental in establishing a dynamic virtual learning environment tailored for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learners. Through Moodle, these learners gain access to bespoke content, interactive exercises, and collaborative projects meticulously aligned with their professional domains, enriching their educational journey. Moreover, Moodle's tracking and reporting features empower instructors at our university to closely monitor students' progress, track engagement with course materials, and identify areas where additional support may be required. This robust, data-driven approach contributes to a more personalised and effective learning experience.

## KEY CONCEPTS

### Learning Management System (LMS)

A Learning Management System (LMS) is a web-based software facilitating the teaching-learning process by providing efficient instruction, training, and development programs. It transcends time and location constraints, enabling instructors, learners, and administrators to access services. Technically, an LMS is defined as a software application managing the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting, and delivery of e-learning courses or training programs. LMS usability depends on specific needs, making it effective for academic or industry purposes. Technical support is crucial for addressing challenges. Other terms like Personal Learning Environment (PLE), Course Management System (CMS), and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) are often used interchangeably. (Su *et al.*, 2022)

### English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

“English for specific purposes (ESP) refers to the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language where the goal of the learners is to use English in a particular domain. The teaching of English for specific purposes, in its early days, was largely motivated by the need to communicate across languages in areas such as commerce and technology (see Benesch 2001, Johns, this volume, Starfield 2012 for reviews of these developments). This has now expanded to include other areas such as English for academic purposes (EAP), English for occupational purposes (EOP), English for vocational purposes (EVP), English for medical purposes (EMP), English for business purposes (EBP), English for legal purposes (ELP), and English for sociocultural purposes (ESCP) (Belcher 2009). A key feature of an ESP course is that the content and aims of the course are oriented to the specific needs of the learners. ESP courses, then, focus on the language, skills, and genres appropriate to the specific activities the learners need to carry out in English. Typically (although not always) ESP students are adult learners. They are also often a homogeneous group in terms of learning goals, although not always in terms of language proficiency. Key issues in the teaching of English for specific purposes are how to identify learner needs, the nature of the genres that learners need to be able to produce as well as participate in, and how we can know that our learners have been able to do this successfully, and, if not, what we can do to help them to do this. These (and many other) issues are discussed in this Handbook.” (Flowerdew, 2012)

### Moodle

“Learning Management System (LMS) is an application software that is used to help in the online learning process. Moodle is one of the most popular LMS applications and is very appropriate for online learning study. Moodle has various features that can support student activities online. Some learning activities supported by Moodle are (1) Videos; (2) Discussion forums; (3) Chat; (4) Materials; and (5) Quiz. This research is quasi-experiment research that is research conducted to see the effect of the treatment of the sample in this research students. This research aims to look at student learning activities that are learned online using LMS-based Moodle applications.” (Simanullang & Rajagukguk, 2020)



## Blended learning

“Blended learning (BL) integrates seemingly opposite approaches, such as formal and informal learning, face-to-face and online experiences, directed paths and reliance on self-direction, and digital references and collegial connections, to achieve individual and organizational goals.” (Rossett & Vaughan Frazee, 2006)



Glossary



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The glossary activity module enables participants to create and maintain a list of definitions, like a dictionary, or to collect and organise resources or information.

A teacher can allow files to be attached to glossary entries. The attached images are displayed in the entry. Entries can be searched or browsed alphabetically or by category, date or author. Entries can be approved by default or require approval by a teacher before they are viewable by everyone.

If the glossary auto-linking filter is enabled, entries will be automatically linked where the concept words and/or phrases appear within the course.

A teacher can allow comments on entries. Entries can also be rated by teachers or students (peer evaluation). Ratings can be aggregated to form a final grade which is recorded in the gradebook.

Glossaries have many uses, such as

- A collaborative bank of key terms
- A ‘getting to know you’ space where new students add their name and personal details
- A ‘handy tips’ resource of best practice in a practical subject
- A sharing area of useful videos, images or sound files
- A revision resource of facts to remember



H5P



**H5P** (CC by Copyright © 2024 Open LMS, All Rights Reserved.)

H5P is an abbreviation for HTML5 Package - interactive content such as presentations, videos and other multimedia, questions, quizzes, games and more. The H5P activity enables H5P to be uploaded and added to a course.

Any question attempts are marked automatically, and the grade is recorded in the gradebook.



Workshop



**Workshop** (CC by Copyright © 2024 Open LMS, All Rights Reserved.)

The workshop activity module enables the collection, review and peer assessment of students’ work.

Students can submit any digital content (files), such as word-processed documents or spreadsheets and can also type text directly into a field using the text editor.

Submissions are assessed using a multi-criteria assessment form defined by the teacher. The process of peer assessment and understanding the assessment form can be practised in advance with example submissions provided by the teacher, together with a reference assessment. Students

are allowed to assess one or more of their peers' submissions. Submissions and reviewers may be anonymous if required.

Students obtain two grades in a workshop activity - a grade for their submission and a grade for their assessment of their peers' submissions. Both grades are recorded in the gradebook.

## ACTIVITIES

### Glossary

The Glossary feature enables participants to generate and manage a compilation of definitions, akin to a dictionary. While it can be configured and utilized solely by the instructor, its primary purpose is to serve as a collaborative exercise. The Glossary auto-linking filter highlights any term within the course that is present in the Glossary.

To access the Glossary, students simply click the icon on the course page. The Display format is contingent on both the teacher's and administrator's settings, but students will consistently encounter the "Add a new entry" and "Search" buttons. Entries may either be automatically approved and perpetually editable, or the teacher may opt for manual approval with restricted editing permissions. The availability of comments and ratings is variable. Icons for editing (if enabled), deleting, and obtaining a permanent link are displayed at the bottom right of a student's entry.

To create and manage a glossary activity in Moodle, the procedure should be as follows.

- Turn on editing mode.
- Choose the desired section to which this glossary will be added.
- From the drop-down menu labelled "Add an activity...", select Glossary.
- Type a name for the glossary and write a description of it.
- Add entries to the glossary.
- Manage entries by editing, deleting, or approving them.
- Export or import entries.

Add a new entry

Browse the glossary using this index

Special | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | ALL

### Caliper

Definition: a device for measuring widths or distances, consisting of two long, thin pieces of metal fixed together at one end

Function: A caliper is used to measure the distance between two sides of something, where accuracy is often essential

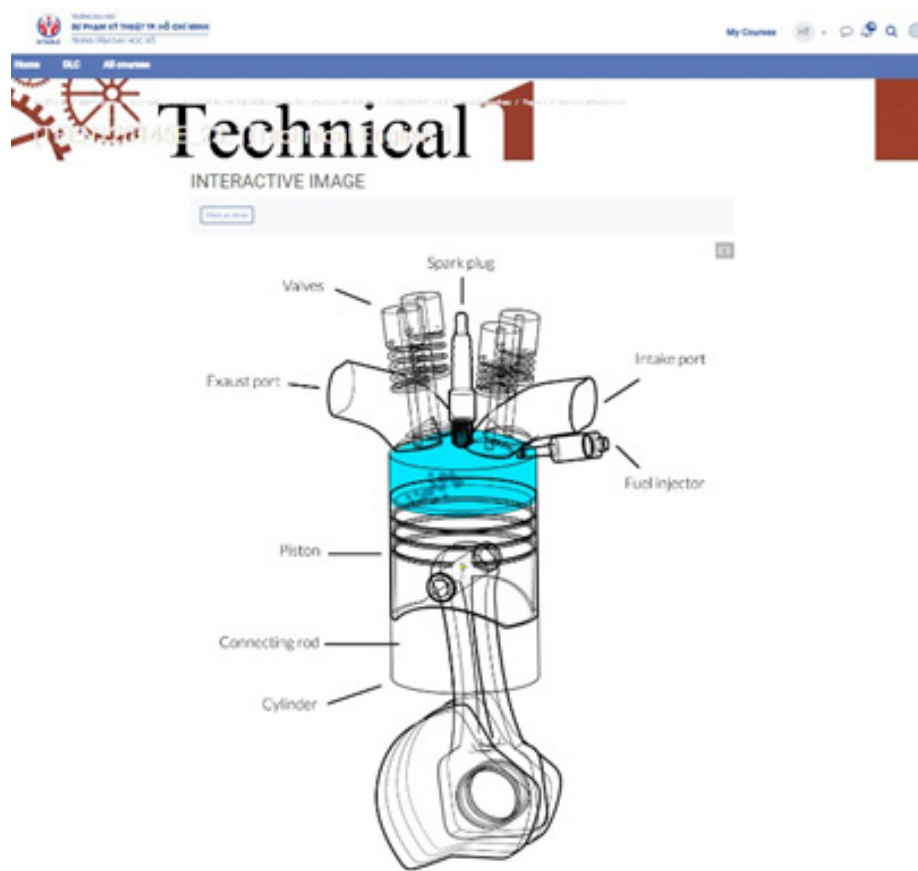


## ***H5P***

H5P is an abbreviation for HTML5 Package. It enables educators to create content such as interactive videos, quizzes and presentations.

To create an H5P activity in Moodle, the procedure should be as follows.

- Log in as an administrator or a user who has permission to create H5Ps inside a course.
- Go to the course we wish to add the H5P content to.
- Press “Add an activity or resource.”
- Select H5P - “Interactive Content” and click “Add”.
- Finish creating or uploading your H5P content.



## **Workshop**

The Workshop serves as a potent peer assessment activity where students contribute submissions, subsequently distributed among their peers for evaluation based on a grading scale specified by the instructor.

To access the Workshop, students click on the corresponding icon within the course. Initially, they encounter either the setup phase (if the instructor is still preparing the Workshop) or the Submission phase, during which they can submit their work. Different phases become visible at various times based on the teacher’s settings. During the Assessment phase, students scroll down

the page to review the submissions assigned to them. After grades are computed, and finalized, and the workshop is closed, students can view their two grades.

Once a Workshop activity is created and saved, it enters the Set-up phase. For students to submit work, they must transition to the Submission phase and then move to the Assessment phase for peer review. This transition can occur automatically or manually.

To use the Workshop in Moodle, the procedure should be as follows.

- Turn on the editing in your course.
- Click on + Add an activity or resource where you want to add the Workshop on your Moodle page.
- In the pop-up window select the ‘Workshop’ activity.
- Give it a name and a description telling students what the workshop is about.
- Clicking the question mark icon next to any setting you don’t understand will display extra help.

English

WORKSHOP 15

Mark as done

Setup phase

Setup phase Current phase	Submission phase Switch to the submission phase	Assessment phase Switch to the assessment phase	Grading evaluation phase Switch to the evaluation phase	Closed Close workshop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Set the workshop description</li> <li>✗ Provide instructions for submission</li> <li>✓ Edit assessment form</li> <li>✓ Switch to the next phase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provide instructions for assessment</li> <li>✓ Allocate submissions expected: 36 submitted: 0 to allocate: 0</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Calculate submission grades expected: 36 calculated: 0</li> <li>✓ Calculate assessment grades expected: 36 calculated: 0</li> <li>✓ Provide a conclusion of the activity</li> </ul>	

### Discussion/Reflection

The findings derived from surveys and observations conducted at Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education indicate a strong preference among learners for the incorporation of specific features, namely Glossary, H5P, and Moodle’s Workshop, into the learning process of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Numerous previous studies have also highlighted the efficacy of integrating these features, underscoring their positive impact on the overall learning experience. (Babayan, n.d.; Đorđević & Stefanowicz-Kocoł, 2016; Gluchmanova, 2016; Holiver *et al.*, 2020; Krajka, 2018; Shamsutdinova, n.d.)

### **Glossary: Building a Collaborative Learning Space**

The Glossary activity module within Moodle offers an increasingly extended opportunity to create a bank of key terms essential for ESP courses. Acting as a collaborative dictionary, it enables participants to contribute and maintain a shared repository of definitions, proving invaluable in courses where specific terminologies play a crucial role.

Moreover, the flexibility of enabling files, images, and comments on entries fosters a dynamic learning environment. Teachers can employ the glossary for various purposes, such as introducing students to the course content, sharing multimedia resources, and even implementing peer evaluation through ratings. The auto-linking feature further enhances accessibility, creating an interconnected web of concepts within the course.

### **H5P: Transforming Content Delivery with Interactive Multimedia**

H5P, an acronym for HTML5 Package, offers a gamut of interactive content options ranging from presentations and videos to quizzes and games. Integrating H5P into Moodle allows for the seamless incorporation of multimedia elements, transforming traditional content delivery into an engaging and interactive experience.

In the context of ESP teaching, this tool can be utilized to create immersive learning materials that cater to the specific needs of students. From language-rich presentations to interactive quizzes tailored to industry-specific jargon, H5P empowers educators to craft content that aligns with ESP objectives. The automatic grading feature not only streamlines assessment but also provides instant feedback, facilitating a more efficient learning process.

### **Workshop: Enhancing Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes**

The workshop activity module facilitates diverse digital submissions, including documents and text input, fostering inclusive learning. Structured peer assessment with predefined criteria and preparatory examples promotes understanding and constructive feedback. Anonymity options for both submissions and assessments encourage honest evaluation, contributing to an open learning environment. The dual grading system, recording submission and peer assessment grades, ensure a comprehensive evaluation in the grade book. Overall, the module enhances student engagement, collaboration, and critical evaluation skills, aligning with contemporary educational needs for a more holistic learning experience. Continuous monitoring and refinement are essential for sustained effectiveness.

## **CONCLUSION**

The integration of Glossary, H5P, and Workshop tools into Moodle at Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education offers a holistic approach to ESP teaching. By leveraging these features, educators can create a collaborative and interactive learning environment that caters to the specific linguistic needs of students. As technology continues to play a pivotal role in education, embracing these tools not only enhances the teaching and learning experience but also prepares students for the language demands of their respective fields.

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**VIETTESOL INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION 2023**

**ELT FOR 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY EXCELLENCE**

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