Blackboard – Ask Any Question Learning Bytes Session – 26th January 2011

Q1: Is there any integration with ASIS in the new version or possibility of integration in the future?

A: Unilearn (BB9.1) will continue to take data from ASIS to enrol students on their modules. There is a project looking at whether marks from GradeMark can be transferred to ASIS without needing to be manually keyed in, but this is a work in progress at the moment.

Q2: Will there be a better interface to request an Elluminate session i.e. to include the emails for all students invited into the email invite?

As Elluminate is a bolt-on to Blackboard it is unlikely that this functionality will be any different to the old version.

Q3: Tests in Bb9.1 – have they changed? Is there a pool to put questions in so that they can be re-used?

A: Yes, creating tests in Bb9.1 has been streamlined, all options are available on one screen reducing the amount of time it takes to populate a test. Bb9.1 also has the ability to search other question pools and assessments using the 'Reuse Question' functionality. This allows you to search for previously created questions using various criteria such as question pools, individual tests, question types, categories, topics, difficulty and keywords. Just to add that a Question Pool facility is available in Blackboard 8 and has been in previous versions.

Q4: Would the module list be replaced with icons on the Module Tab?

A: This isn't something that's there out of the box, and it would require somebody to design an icon for each module, which may not be feasible.

Q5: Any changes in functionality relating to the reading list?

The library is leading a project called MyReadingList which students will be able to access via Blackboard. This will aim to give students direct access to texts where possible. The academic librarians can provide more information about this project and its roll out.

Q6: Will existing students receive training on UniLearn?

The main changes are to how staff will manage the modules; the changes will be quite subtle from the student's perspective. Most of the functions students use will be very similar, so there shouldn't be a need for extensive training. However updated help sheets will be made available for students

who need some additional information, and we also plan on creating a screencast to explain the differences to students.

Q7: How are students being informed about the changes?

We are going to prepare a screencast for students, which we will ask the LTAs to put on each School's Blackboard home page.

Q8: Are there any new or enhance test options in UniLearn?

The main change to tests is in marking and grading. You will be able to mark on a question by question basis rather than student by student. Changes to the infrastructure which runs Blackboard should make the testing facilities more robust.

Q 9: Can there be an additional feedback box for students to reflect immediately on their answers to a test?

There are a couple of ways to achieve this. You could add a survey to the same folder as the location you deploy the test to, and use adaptive release to only release this when the student has completed the test. You could set the test up to show feedback after each question, and follow that with an essay question of 0 points for their feedback.

Q10: What is the alternative to using the digital dropbox?

The Assignments Tool is Blackboard's built in tool for this, or Turnitin can be used (note that you can turn off the originality reports side of Turnitin if that's not appropriate). Compared to Digital Dropbox the Assignment tool is much more organised where the tutors can collect student work from the Grade Center showing which students have submitted and who have not. Student submission is not very different from the Digital Dropbox so will not require extra training either.

Q11: Are there any changes to how the new version interacts with Turnitin?

Currently no, the building block will be exactly the same. For the future a new direct integration plug in for Turnitin is being developed by n-Learning, the company which runs Turnitin UK, and it's likely that we will evaluate that to see whether it offers any benefits to the University.