

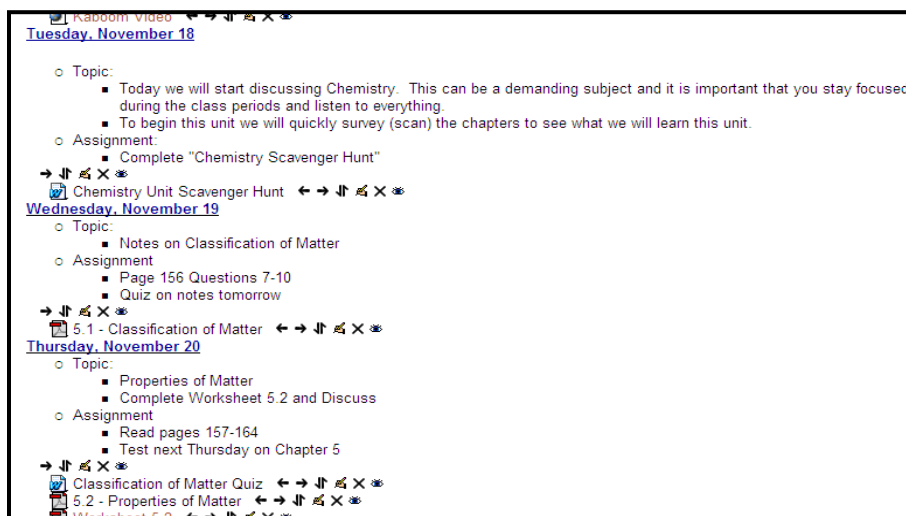
## Here we go a “Moodling?”

*Kim Harrington, Teacher, Cariboo Adventist Academy, Williams Lake, BC*

When I was asked to write this technology article for CATnet, my first thought was - me? Are you sure you've emailed the right person? You see, I am not what you would call technologically literate. Sure, I know how to manage office programs and I'm on facebook but, whether the NVIDIA G-Force GTX 280 video card is better than the ATI Radeon HD-3870, I don't know, and truthfully, as long as it works, I don't care. However, I do have a “brush with technology” everyday – sometimes it's good, sometimes well...it's technology.

In September of 2007, the teachers of Cariboo Adventist Academy, through West Coast Adventist School, started teaching live synchronous classes. We still have some students sitting right in front of us in the classroom but now they are joined by a group of online students through a virtual classroom. Each morning, instead of going to the whiteboard to write the date, homework assignments, and notes for my classes, I now go through a different process. I turn on the projector, microphone and soundboard, log into the virtual classroom, upload any notes and assignments to the correct technologies and then I am ready to begin. Is it more work? Absolutely! However, now I am able to teach sciences to any student that enrolls throughout the province of British Columbia. I have met a lot of amazing students and parents.

Our school uses two main technologies to connect with our DL (distributed learning) students - Moodle and Elluminate. Moodle (Modular Object-Orientated Learning Environment) is an open source classroom management program. It was developed in 1999 and since that date has grown exponentially. Moodle currently has 24,930,829 registered users and is available in 75 languages and 193 countries. Moodle runs on Windows, Mac OS, and any other systems that support PHP and databases (My husband, the techie, told me to include that). According to Wikipedia, moodle is now considered a verb – which is great because I find myself “moodling” frequently (too bad it wasn't a cardio workout as well). Teachers are able to choose whether they manage their courses by topic or weekly format. I prefer the weekly format because it allows students to see what is going to be covered in class that day and allows them to easily access materials needed for the class to occur as smoothly as possible. Through Moodle (a section of my science nine class is pictured below) I am able to create links to assignments and websites, easily create my own single page websites, create forums that allow for student discussion, and include many other activities like quizzes, wikis, and student-created glossaries. Teacher can individualize their moodle sites according to their personalities and the needs of the students in their classrooms.



The screenshot shows a Moodle course page for "Cariboo video" on Tuesday, November 18. The page is organized into weekly sections:

- Tuesday, November 18**
  - Topic:
    - Today we will start discussing Chemistry. This can be a demanding subject and it is important that you stay focused during the class periods and listen to everything.
    - To begin this unit we will quickly survey (scan) the chapters to see what we will learn this unit.
  - Assignment:
    - Complete "Chemistry Scavenger Hunt"
- Wednesday, November 19**
  - Topic:
    - Notes on Classification of Matter
  - Assignment:
    - Page 156 Questions 7-10
    - Quiz on notes tomorrow
- Thursday, November 20**
  - Topic:
    - Properties of Matter
    - Complete Worksheet 5.2 and Discuss
  - Assignment:
    - Read pages 157-164
    - Test next Thursday on Chapter 5

At the bottom, there are links for "Classification of Matter Quiz" and "5.2 - Properties of Matter".

The other technological interface we use to connect with our DL students is a program called Elluminate. This is the virtual classroom through which we communicate to students throughout the province. Elluminate was founded in 2000 and since then has won many awards for its technological advancements. This program uses Java and works with any computer that allows Java. One of my favourite features is the technical support that is offered. I can email a concern I have in my virtual classroom and by the end of the day, my concern has been addressed.

I like Elluminate because it allows me to get in contact with the students. Many mornings, when I arrive in my online worship classroom, I am greeted with a picture that my students have drawn for me (usually of snowmobiling – a hobby of several of the guys in my classroom). I can share applications like word documents or PDF files and upload PowerPoints and pictures to the white board. I am able to talk to my students as I give a lecture and we are able to have a class discussion with everyone talking. I am able to chat with my students individually and have a full class discussion as well. When students need to work together on a project or assignment, I can send them to individual breakout rooms where they are able to chat, use the whiteboard, and talk with each other in a group setting.

The SDACC has recently chosen these technologies as they further develop online education across Canada. They have negotiated an Elluminate licence for this school year, including an unlimited number of users until January 15. The SDACC is also hosting a Moodle site. I would encourage any teachers interested in seeing what online education is all about to try these technologies. To try out these programs, contact Betty Bayer (bbayer@sdacc.org).

In the mean time, I hope you are now “elluminated” and have fun “moodling.”

### **Resources:**

<http://moodle.org/> - this site includes demonstrations of all of the capabilities of Moodle

<http://www.illuminate.com/> - learn more about Elluminate

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elluminate>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moodle>

<http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6545453.html?industryid=47079>