



CASE STUDY



IHE Delft Institute for Water Education uses Moodle to put the focus on water engineering globally

IHE Delft Institute for Water Education is the largest international graduate water education facility in the world, having provided graduate education to more than 15,000 water professionals from over 162 countries, with the vast majority coming from the developing world.

Based in Delft, The Netherlands, IHE Delft has a vision of a world in which

people manage their water and environmental resources in a sustainable manner, and in which all sectors of society, particularly the poor, can enjoy the benefits of basic services.

The Institute aims to contribute to the achievement of its vision by offering several educational products, including:

- fully accredited MSc degrees;
- PhD degrees in collaboration with partner universities;
- accredited online courses for professionals;
- online Professional Diplomas;
- summer courses;
- short tailor-made training; and an OpenCourseWare (OCW) platform with free open educational resources).



Problem

Part of IHE Delft's mission is to contribute to the education and training of professionals.

Embracing the opportunities of digital technologies, IHE Delft is expanding its online education efforts to make it more flexible and accessible to learners worldwide. In this way, the institution is analysing needs, implementing processes and exploring possibilities to enrich its portfolio and improve education with the use of digital technologies.

To be able to achieve their mission, IHE Delft needed to work with a learning platform more powerful than their existing simple content management system.

The Institute needed an online learning platform that would offer them flexibility, customisation options, is used globally and of an open nature to meet the needs of its learners in developing and transition countries.



Action

IHE Delft's adopted Moodle as its learning platform in 2009 to deliver its graduate education products and courses.

Nelson Jorge, Senior e-Learning Advisor at IHE Delft shared that they use Moodle for three main reasons:

Firstly, because Moodle is a very flexible and customizable learning management system, allowing the Institute to easily adapt it to their specific needs.

IHE Delft's course design is focused on learning activities and Moodle contains a very diverse set of activities that allow us to build interactive and engaging courses.

Secondly, because Moodle is open source. As an institution working with people mainly from developing and transition countries, it is important for the Institute to offer and promote open education software, content and practices.

Thirdly, because Moodle is supported by a very active community of educational developers.

"The Institute is committed to help solving the world's water crisis by educating people, mainly from developing and transition countries," Nelson explained.

"Open software and open education are therefore very important to us, since IHE Delft also supports educational initiatives by strengthening capacities in these countries."

"Moodle plays an extremely important role in this activity because it's open source technology."



Results

The Institute now uses two Moodle installations: one for their campus & online education, and one for their OpenCourseWare initiative. This allows the Institute to easily transfer open content from one environment to another, making the process very efficient.

Campus students follow courses at a very fast pace. Being able to use Moodle to access educational resources, submit assignments and interact with peers is very important for successful engagement.

In the online courses Moodle is used in a more intensive way, since the entire teaching and learning process is realized online. Learners carry out a sequence of learning activities, interact with fellow participants, and receive guidance, support and personal feedback from academic staff.

Moodle is also used to create collaborative working spaces for several projects, allowing IHE Delft and its partners worldwide to share information and collaborate online.

“Online education at IHE Delft with Moodle allows the Institute to reach a worldwide audience of professionals who are willing to expand their knowledge and build more skills in the water sector,” observed Nelson.

Looking into the future, a new initiative using Moodle is being developed that consists of:

- implementing an institute-wide online course development process, to continuously increase the quality of our educational products;
- growing the number of Accredited Online Courses and Professional Diplomas to meet the needs of professionals and reach a broader audience;
- starting a new product open to everyone – Massive Open Online Courses – to expand their portfolio and offer open education to all;
- scaling-up the number of courses in their OCW platform that can be studied and reused by everyone;
- including Online Courses in their MSc programmes to gradually move into a flexible blended learning format;
- enriching the overall learning experience, both online and on campus, with the use of digital technologies.
- a new Moodle theme to enhance learners’ experience, providing a more learner-centred, modern, responsive and user-friendly learning environment.

“Moodle offers several activities and resources that allow us to build our courses according to what was initially planned in the course design,” said Nelson.

“Our focus is concentrated on designing learning activities that engage our learners in solving real world problems, a core skill promoted by IHE Delft.”

“In fact, being able to build our courses with a strong focus on learning activities is one of the strongest motives for IHE Delft to use Moodle.”



More Information

Handy tip for using Moodle from IHE Delft: A well-organized course structure and a focus on learning activities can have a very positive impact in the learning experience and make a difference when offering online education.

Keeping it simple, designing engaging learning activities with clear instructions and providing good quality resources is extremely important.

For more information at IHE Delft:

Visit the website at <https://www.un-ihe.org>

Or connect with the Institute through:

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ihedelft>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ihedelft/>

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