How to Ping Pong
Designing and tutoring an online international introductory course
A view from a tutor
University of Uppsala and University of Coimbra

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E-learning history: the present and the future, June 12th
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Roads to Democracy(ies) - The structure

- Joint two-year master program between University of Uppsala, Sweden, and University of Coimbra, Portugal;
- The master follows the Tuning Educational Structures;
- Students chose if they want to make an exchange of university, in the second semester;
- These students have, in first semester, a common online introductory course, using a Learning Management System (LMS) - Ping Pong;
- In the second semester, students from Coimbra go to Uppsala and students from Uppsala go to Coimbra;
- In the third and fourth semester, students write their thesis.
What is Ping Pong?

- A Learning Management System (LMS);

- As a LMS, Ping Pong allows you to have several courses and each one have several sections:
  - Menu - Where you can get help
  - Training - Where is the course
  - Reference - Where you can save documents
  - Contact - Communication area
The characters in Ping Pong

- **The Students** - Construct their knowledge
  - Reading List / Questions → Discuss the questions / Comment other contributions

- **The Teachers** - Guide the students in their construction of knowledge
  - Learning Outcomes; Tasks; Reading Lists; Provide feedback to the students; Evaluation

- **The Computer Science Expert**
  - Install and configuring the web application; manage logins and passwords

- **The Tutor**
  - Design the course in the LMS (based on teachers instructions); check if students are doing what they are asked (motivation); provide feedback to the students in a more technical way; provide how to’s; provide knowledge about web environment (citing online references; checking if a website is reliable)
“Three basic steps are involved in creating an effective syllabus for an online course:

1) defining outcomes and objectives;
2) choosing appropriate reading material;
3) establishing a topic-driven course outline.”

“We have found that the most successful classes are guided by a syllabus that is topic-driven. In other words, the weekly “schedule” for the class includes a discussion topic for the week, with readings geared to spark discussion of that topic.”

### Introduction
- Welcome the students;
- Learning Outcomes and Competencies;
- General instructions about tasks;
- Presentation of the teachers;
- Presentation of the features of the LMS

### First assignment
[The student is required to make an online presentation of himself in discussion forum and to fill in the profile section]
- Teach the students how to work with the application
- Teachers and students to get to know each other

### Second assignment
[Quizzes about Democracy in Sweden and in Portugal]
- Break the ice
- Web research

### Third, Fourth and Fifth assignment
- Subject of the online seminar
  - specific outcomes
  - tasks and deadlines
  - questions

### Final Work
- Discussion about thesis project proposal

### Evaluation
- Give feedback to the students
- Gather feedback from the students
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-section</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Message Board</td>
<td>- To get the attention of the students;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- changes in calendar activities</td>
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<td>- information about seminars that students must attend to</td>
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<td>- information about students moving to another country</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAQ [Frequently Asked Questions]</td>
<td>- To provide answers to questions that teachers or tutors think other</td>
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<td></td>
<td>students might ask</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Forums</td>
<td>- To provide a place to students answer the questions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- To provide a place to students discuss subjects with each others</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- To provide a place to students interact with teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIM [Ping Pong Instant Messenger]</td>
<td>- Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar</td>
<td>- Warnings about deadlines</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Manages tasks</td>
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Formatting the contents: The administration area

- Administration area easy to manage;
- Options
  - Courses open as pop-ups - resolution (800x600)
  - Fonts type - sans-serif
  - First page to appear to users when they login in Ping Pong
- The need of HTML code (hypertext, table, open link in another window)
Statistical area: how students move and how can this help?

- Sections that students see / click - how many times
- Pages that students see / click - how many times
- Posts in the forums
- Answers to the quizzes
- Answers to the surveys
Final Issues

• Students
  • Difficulties with the web application;
  • Do not like internet;
  • Different habits

• Teachers
  • Difficulties with the web application
  • Time issues
  • Change of role