Introduction

Bonnie Nicholas teaches English and settlement to new immigrants in the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program at NorQuest College. Although this is a college setting, the adults in the program are foundational learners. One of the program goals is to help newcomers prepare for the workplace so computer skills and digital citizenship are essentials. Bonnie has taught in fully online, blended, and face-to-face environments. and she has come to realize the central importance of instructor presence for course facilitation and robust instructional design in the teaching and learning process.

Name(s)
Bonnie Nicholas

Designer(s) [Slide 1]
I am a faculty member at NorQuest College, working with foundational learners. We use Moodle as our LMS and are given a shell for each of our courses.

Purpose of Design
My colleague Rozita and I were seconded to design a Moodle course to prepare our foundational adult English language learners (ELLs) for online and blended language learning.

Scope and Delivery Mode [Slide 2]
The course is 100% asynchronous and is hosted entirely within Moodle. There are 10 stand-alone modules. The course was designed to have an instructor but an IA has been assigned to facilitate the course.

Number of Learners
Open; students are required to take this free course first if they want to enroll in a blended or online language course.

How often the course/workshop design has been tested?
It was piloted in the spring of last year and is now in the second full iteration.

Unique, Innovative, Interesting, Challenging? [Slide 3]
We simplified the Moodle design to 2 columns and eliminated non-essential blocks like "latest News", "Upcoming Events", and "Recent Activity".
We also eliminated the announcement-only "News Forum", replacing with an "Ask your classmates, ask your teacher" Q & A and encouraged learners to answer their peers' questions, to develop learner autonomy.
We focused on accessibility:
  - *We increased the font size, made it black, and worked with tech/Moodle people at our college to get linked words that are linked in the course dictionary changed from red to grey – this had to be changed for the entire college.*
  - *We used a lot of visuals and videos (introductory and how-to screencasts).*
  - *We had transcripts available for every video and audio files for all text.*
  - *Every book followed the same basic pattern.*
  - *We tested the course on mobile devices, tablets, laptops, and desktops (old for some of you but new for us).*

Outcomes? Intentions?
Our intention was to make the course accessible and easily navigable by learners with developing language skills and little to no experience with online learning. We hope to give this group of learners the skills and confidence they need to succeed in online and blended learning.

What did you learn about your design approach? [Slide 5]
I'm now teaching a course where the learners spend 3.5 hours each day in class and 1.5 hours on directed learning outside of class. We use Moodle but we don't officially call this a blended model.

I've taken what I learned designing the Prep course and applied it to my current course. I'm always striving for a clean design so I use 2 columns and limit the number of blocks.
I put everything in the book: discussions, choice, SCORMs, etc. are put in an orphaned section. Students can't access this section but activities are accessible in the books by enabling "Activity names auto-linking".
There's still a steep learning curve for students.

Slide 1

Slide 2

Preparation for Online Learning: The 10 modules

1. Introduction to Online Learning
2. Vocabulary for Online Learning
3. Using a Learning Management System
4. Technology Skills
5. Problem-Solving Strategies
6. Digital Citizenship
7. Finding and Using Online Information
8. Time Management & Study Skills
9. Synchronous Classes
10. Working with Others for Successful Online Learning

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Slide 3

Slide 4

Slide 5

Slide 6

Bonnie: Books in my current course

Slide 7

Bonnie: Orphaned Activities

• The "Orphaned Activities" section is not visible to students but they access the activities through the weekly book.