

# Developing and delivering online courses for students at distance

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# Background

- eLanguages – eLearning research and development unit in Modern Languages, University of Southampton
- Create online resources and online courses
- Explore web 2.0 technologies for language teaching and learning
- Make toolkits in EAP and Study Skills (commercial)
- Create open web-hosted resources: Prepare for Success

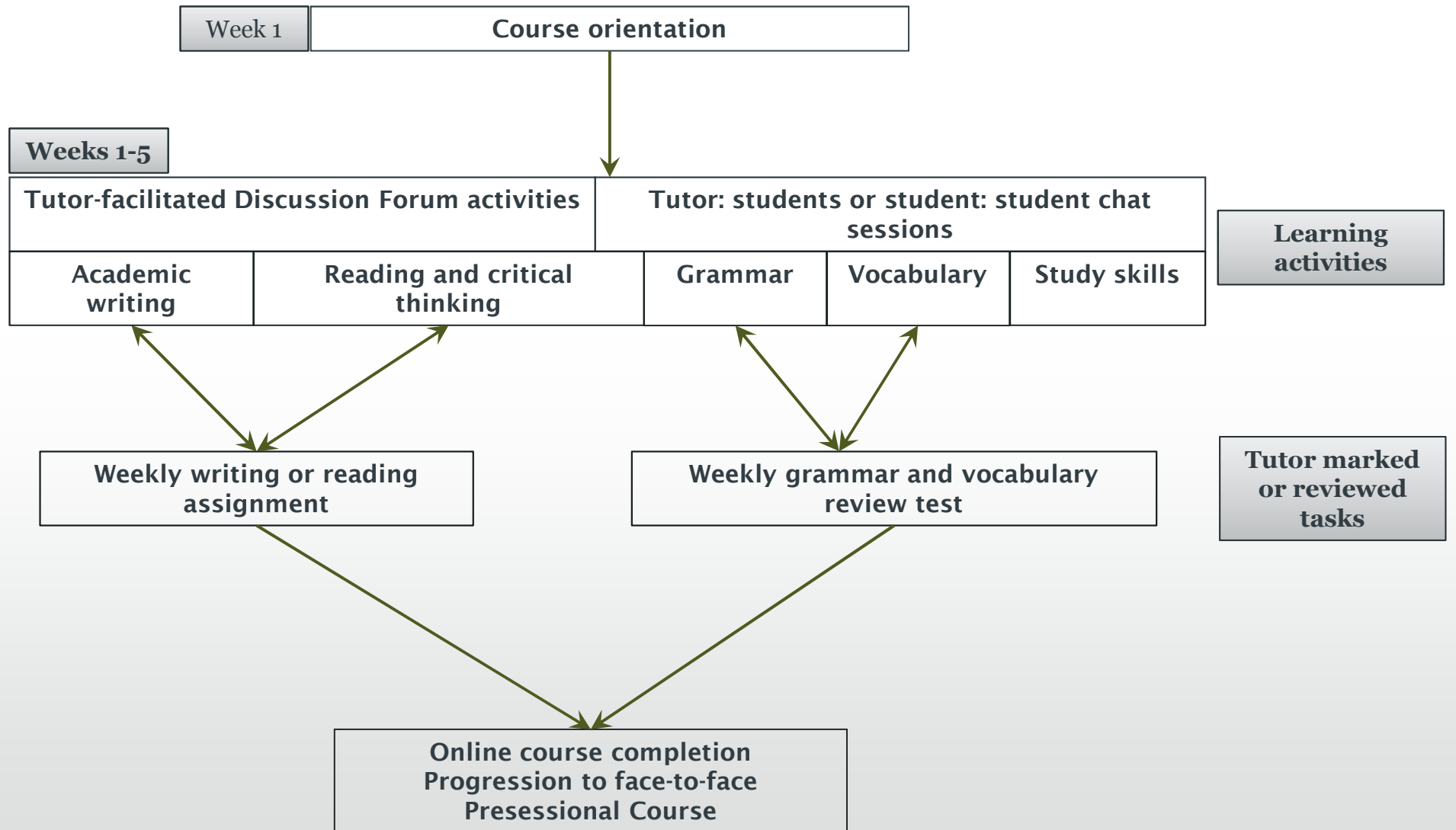
## Our tools and technologies for online course creation

- Platform: customised Moodle for online distance learning
- Communication: email; discussion forums; chat room; web 2.0 tools (social walls; web-hosted video and audio recordings)
- Pre-prepared content: activity-based Learning Objects (LOs); podcasts, videos, links
- LOC authoring tool for teachers for content creation
- Assessment: assignment tasks and templates; Word comment /track changes function for tutor feedback; Moodle quizzes (formative tests)

## Case study 1: Online Pre-sessional Course

- A blended Pre-sessional Course in EAP - 5 weeks online and pre-arrival (followed by 11 weeks f2f at University of Southampton)
- With focus on academic writing and reading; study skills, vocabulary and grammar review/development
- Online, tutored and assessed
- In 2013 - 105 students

# Course Learning Design



# Tutor's role

- Different from a face-to-face tutor
- Guiding students through course (introduce and explain course elements; highlight key functions / requirements; motivate and encourage participation; announce events / deadlines)
- Discussion activities (asynchronous); weekly chat sessions (synchronous)
- Linking LO content and assignments through discussion
- Monitoring student participation and recording grades
- Providing feedback on assignments

## Student comments

- *The course showed me a lot of **basic knowledge of the language**, and **taught me the study skills to improve my learning ability**.*
- *This course is very useful to me. I **developed writing and reading skills** by weekly study and assignment. And if I have some problem I **can chat with my classmate**.*
- *I gain knowledge about writing, reading and studying skills which are useful for my main course. Moreover, **I went over grammar and vocabulary through a weekly test**. That's helping me avoid doing mistakes.*
- *I think (an) online course is a good way to prepare the international students before arrival in the UK. This course made me **confident to communicate with many people** and **I made friends**.*

## Student comments about the tutoring

- *(The) teacher gave us many appropriate suggestions, and his feedback helped us to recognize and solve our problem more easily.*
- *(Tutor) taught us with great patience, whenever we had any kind of questions.*
- *(The teacher) gave us very good studying directions and suggestions and the learning course materials are pretty useful to me, which let my English abilities get a great improvement.*
- *In addition, I can practice by doing assignments and review (the) tutor's feedback.*



## Case study 2: Get Ready for Southampton

- Online course focusing on acculturation - practical aspects of living in Britain + preparation for study at the University + UK academic culture and study skills
- Not tutored or assessed ( in 2012 – 2100 students)
- Study pace and length of use *decided by individual student*
- *Broad focus: Automated* course invitation, sign up process and account creation through a single entry point
- Self-access *learning content with feedback* (activity-based LOs)
- *Community-building/personal contact* through Social Wall and other social software



**Welcome to Get Ready for Southampton, a free online course that is designed to introduce international students to living and studying in the UK and at the University of Southampton. Whether you have a confirmed place at the University, are awaiting an offer or are just interested in finding out more about studying at a UK university, this course will help you.**

**Already created your account? Log in below:**

Username:   
Password:

[Forgotten your username or password?](#)



## Topic 2: Arriving at the University of Southampton

In this topic you can find out about the University of Southampton and aspects of daily life on campus.

-  [About the University of Southampton](#)
-  [Finding your way around campus](#)
-  [A place to live](#)
-  [Money matters](#)
-  [Dealing with the change in culture](#)
-  [The University's structure and your subject area](#)
-  [Student social life](#)



## Topic 3: Academic culture in the UK

In this topic you can explore aspects of British academic culture which may be different for you.

-  [Understanding course assignments](#)
-  [Ways of being taught on your course](#)
-  [Differences in university study](#)
-  [Managing your course work](#)
-  [Academic writing at university](#)
-  [Studying independently](#)
-  [Listening to lectures](#)









wallwisher



murally

*Pinterest*

Social Walls  
(virtual cork boards)

## Student use of social wall vs. discussion forum

### ➤ Social wall

- introducing self and greeting others
- exchanging contact details (email, facebook MSN, QQ, weibo etc) for 'off course' communication

### ➤ Discussion forum

- questions and answers - e.g. travel or visa arrangements
- seeking other students - same course of study, same home country, to travel with, to share a house



## Student comments

- *I was surprised by the **size of the site**. It really helps you to prepare for **every dimension of living and studying** in Southampton. Well done!!*
- *... it's **helpful and informative** especially for those who are coming to the UK for the first time. It gives **a whole picture** of what university life is like in Southampton.*
- *It helps International students on **what to expect** when they plan to study in the UK.*
- *Get ready for Southampton has been an eye opener to me. I hope **if provided an opportunity to study there**, the hints about Southampton which I have acquired will simplify my stay within and outside the lecture room.*
- *I found it very **useful and reassuring** and **give me self confidence and sense of ease***

# Summary of overall approach to design

- embrace a range of established and new technologies
- relatively low-tech to ensure ease of student access
- practical development approach involving repurposing of content
- flexible tutoring model; varied roles
- low cost delivery and maintenance
- model offering scalability ( small to large size cohorts)



# References

- Watson, J. (2010) A case study: developing learning objects with an explicit learning design. *Electronic Journal of e-Learning*, 8, (1), 41-50.
- Watson, J. and White, S. (2012) Designing and delivering an e-presessional course in EAP for the 21st first century international student. In, *CALL: Using, Learning, Knowing, (Eurocall 2012)*. Proceedings, Gothenburg, Sweden, 22 - 25 Aug 2012. pp. 1-6.
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# Thank you



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