

- 2 Upgrading of Blackboard
- 3 CITE Website
- 3 Teaching and Learning Resources Site
- 5 Wired Network Authentication
- 5 Playing IT Safe
- 6 Academic Computing Hub

The Promotion of e-Learning at NIE

Dr Philip Wong, DDIACIS

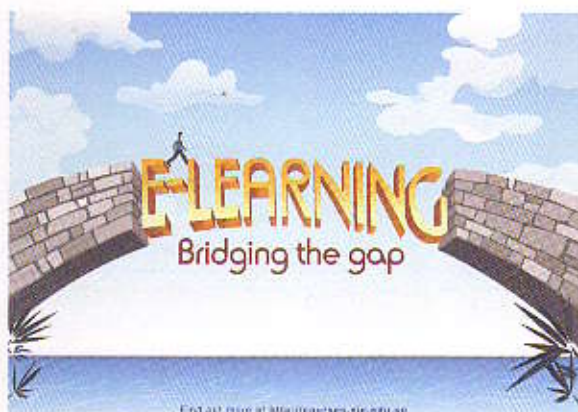
Following the implementation of the IT Masterplan project, NIE's ICT infrastructure has stabilised and is able to support the overall ICT requirements of the institute. In recent years, there has been an increasing trend towards the delivery of online modules as staff become more confident with the use of online delivery modes. Our learners are also now more receptive towards this kind of learning. With this foundation in place, we have started working towards improving the use of e-learning in NIE.

What exactly is e-learning?

E-learning in NIE can be defined as the use of technology to deliver and facilitate learning through a networked enabled environment. This includes synchronous (e.g. video conferencing) and asynchronous delivery (e.g. discussion using an online forum) of lessons, using a blended teaching approach consisting of online and face-to-face lessons.

Why is e-learning necessary?

As NIE is involved in teacher education, it is important for trainee teachers as well as in-service teachers to have a positive experience in using e-learning for teaching and learning. Consequently, with the necessary skills, attitudes and knowledge acquired through these experiences, these participants can, in turn, use e-learning *effectively* for teaching and learning in schools.



Building on the effective use of e-learning for teaching and learning, e-learning tools can also enhance *efficiency* of instruction. With the expected increase in trainee teacher numbers in the coming years and the continual demand for in-service courses, e-learning can complement face-to-face instruction in NIE.

ACIS' role in promoting e-learning

ACIS will continue to update the NIE Learning Management System (LMS) and various learning software according to NIE staff needs. Sharing and familiarisation sessions on effective pedagogical use of the LMS will be conducted. Independent learning modules will also be made available for staff to familiarise themselves with e-learning software at their own pace.

For the development of e-learning materials by academic staff, CITE will provide resources, manpower and training on e-learning development tools.

Alternatively, e-learning materials can be jointly developed by academic staff and CITE where the former acts as the subject-matter expert and CITE will provide consultancy on e-learning resource management.

Role of Academic Groups (AGs)

For this e-learning plan to be successful, a systemic approach and support from AGs is crucial. To integrate e-learning into the curriculum, each AG is to identify one staff to be an e-learning Champion to promote e-learning within the AG, help in identifying relevant modules for e-learning purposes and be a resource person. More details on this have been circulated to the AG Heads.

Academic staff should recognise that e-learning is not competing with the traditional form of teaching. Rather, good e-learning materials increase the efficiency of course delivery content so that other resources can be better deployed. When used appropriately, e-learning is able to engage learners in higher-order thinking activities.

Blackboard Has Just Got Even Better!

Last November, Blackboard was upgraded to include more new and exciting tools to help lecturers deliver online lessons more effectively.

Check out some of the new features available:

Adaptive Release

- ⇒ Lecturers can now choose to display content to certain users for a limited period of time, or only after users meet (or fail to meet) predetermined requirements
- ⇒ Thus, lecturers have the option to create custom learning paths for their course content and online learning activities
- ⇒ Items can be released to learners based on criteria such as date/time, group membership, grades or number of attempts on a test or assignment

Review Status

- ⇒ This feature allows lecturers to track the number of times their online materials have been reviewed by their learners

Performance Dashboard

- ⇒ This new course tool gives lecturers an updated view of key information on learning outcomes by summarising information about learner activity within Blackboard
- ⇒ Thus, lecturers can track learner progress and activity

Improved Assessment Questions

New types of assessment questions are now available for use via Blackboard. Lecturers can choose from ten additional question types, e.g.:

1. Calculated Formula Questions
2. Fill in Multiple Blanks Questions
3. Opinion Scale/Likert Questions

Search LX

- ⇒ This feature gives both learners and lecturers the ability to search for a document within a Blackboard course
- ⇒ It cuts down the time previously needed of having to go through each course individually to hunt for that document

Journal LX (Blog)

- ⇒ Lecturers can now create blogs within Blackboard for students to gather information and for reflection and evaluation exercises
- ⇒ Learners have the flexibility to review and comment on their peers' postings

Teams LX (Wikis)

- ⇒ Teams LX allows for online collaboration between learners & lecturers
- ⇒ The added feature is that contributions can be edited in addition to the content itself

SafeAssignment

- ⇒ SafeAssignment gives lecturers a chance to check for plagiarism in students' work
- ⇒ Submitted assignments are checked against a host of online journals (e.g. Ebscohost) and websites
- ⇒ Copies of the students' work can be kept in the database, and all future submissions can be compared against this repository as well

Document Packager

- ⇒ Lecturers now have the freedom to upload their online materials in a single zip file within a folder

- ⇒ Blackboard will unpackage the zip file and translate the content into folders within your course

Advanced Group Management

- ⇒ This tool vastly simplifies the process of creating sub-groups within a course and assigning learners to each group
- ⇒ Very helpful for co-coordinators managing large numbers of learners within a course

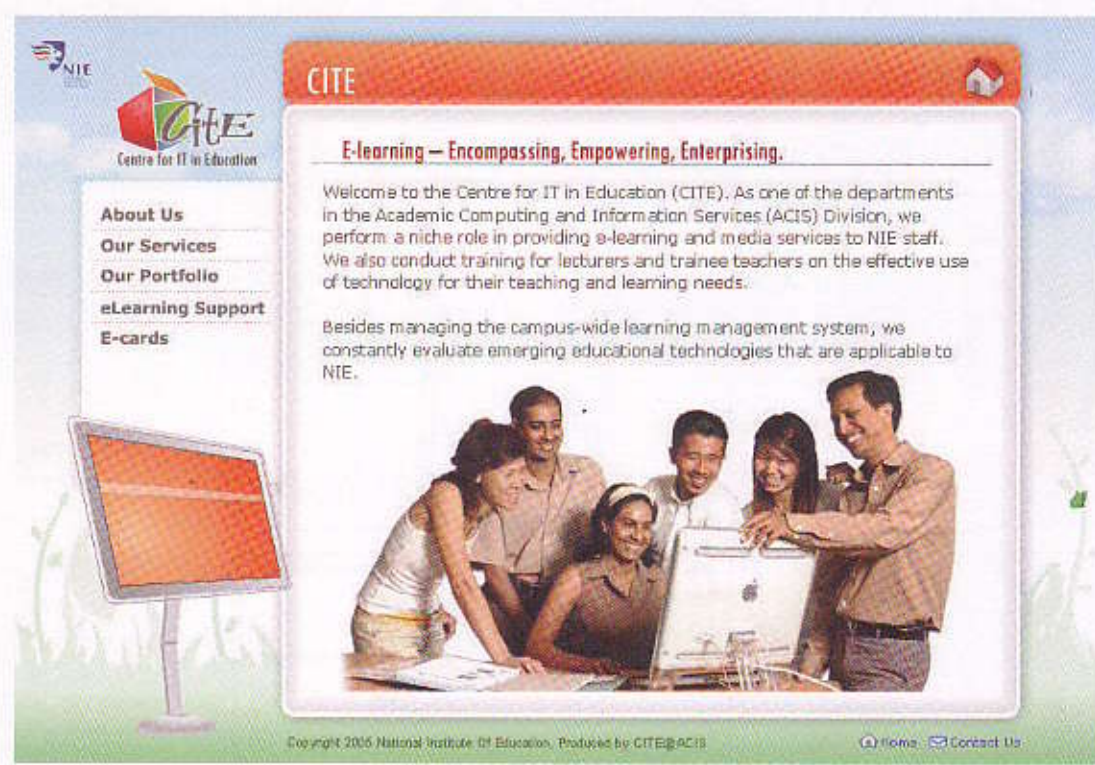
User Participation

- ⇒ Lecturers can easily track whether learners are accessing their courses regularly for updates and send email reminders to those who have not been participating actively in the online lessons

If you find all this exciting and would like to learn more, please visit <http://courses.nie.edu.sg>

The screenshot shows the Blackboard interface for a 'Test Canvas'. At the top, there are navigation tabs: 'My Institution', 'Courses', 'Services', and 'Search'. Below these, a breadcrumb trail reads: 'COURSES > TRIAL COURSE FOR NIA AIK SONG (CITE TUTOR) > CONTROL PANEL > TEST MANAGER > TEST CANVAS'. A 'Test Canvas' header is visible with a checkmark icon. Below the header, there is a text instruction: 'Add, modify, and remove questions. Select a question type from the Add Question drop-down list. Default options, such as feedback and images, are available for question creation.' The main area shows a dropdown menu for 'Add' with a 'GO' button and 'Creation Settings' link. The dropdown menu lists various question types: Calculated Formula, Calculated Numeric, Either/Or, Essay, File Response, Fill in Multiple Blanks, Fill in the Blank, Hot Spot, Jumbled Sentence (1 point), Matching, Multiple Answer, Multiple Choice, Opinion Scale/Likert, Ordering, Quiz Bowl (1 point), Short Answer, True/False, Random Block, From a Question Pool or Assessment, and Upload Questions. At the bottom, a question is partially visible: 'Question 3' with a dropdown set to 'Essay' and '1 points'.

CITE's Website Has Morphed!



Yes, we've changed our look and we want to welcome you to a new interactive experience. The new refreshing CITE website is here to serve you better and help you find out more about us and what we do.

Visit the new site today and look out for our latest projects under our "Portfolio".

Searching for Teaching and Learning Resources is a Piece of Cake Now...

Are you tired of using the same old Microsoft PowerPoint template for your presentations? Do you need pictures of the NIE landscape? Are you thinking of using interactive learning objects (LOs) to engage your students in class?

If your answer is "yes" to any of these questions, look no further. Check out CITE's Teaching and Learning (T&L) Resources Site.

Explore the site and you will find lots of useful resources such as instructional templates which you can use to enhance your teaching materials and learning objects to supplement your teaching and learning needs.

Apart from this, there are also audio clips, photographs of NIE, and graphics which you can use for preparing your teaching materials or presentations. Annotations and suggestions are provided on how these resources can be used in a teaching and learning context. All academic staff members are welcome to browse through and download these resources.

If you have any teaching and learning resources that you want to share with the rest of the staff members, you can also upload them at this site. Hence, the next time you log on to Blackboard, do check out the resources available. Certainly, searching for teaching and learning resources is a piece of cake now!



You can access CITE's Teaching and Learning Resources site under "My Course" in Blackboard

A Sample of Some Teaching and Learning Resources

Instructional Templates



Overview

In this section, there are three categories of templates available for your teaching and professional presentation needs.



Instructional Templates (5 Designs)



Each PowerPoint template contains five slides. All the slides are linked with navigational buttons. Hence, lecturers need to only worry about inserting their content.



5R Templates (3 designs)



These PowerPoint templates were created based on Dr. Philip Wong's 5R pedagogical approach to learning, i.e. Read, Research, React, Reflect & Report.

Lecturers just need to insert their content into each of the five sections. To create a self-directed learning package for their students to explore online, lecturers can use [Impatica](#) for PowerPoint. This will help to drastically reduce the size of the PowerPoint files and allows users to export the files as a webpage.



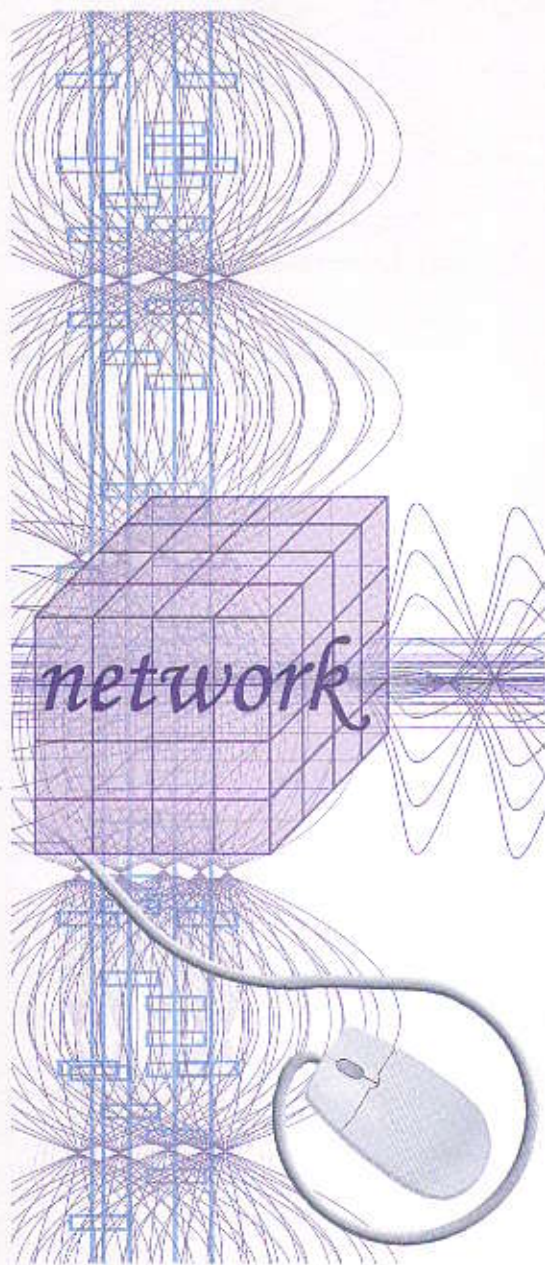
Problem-Based Learning HTML Templates (5 designs)



These HTML templates were created using the Problem-Based pedagogical approach based on the book by A/P Tan On Seng "Problem-based Learning Innovation" (2003).

NIE Wired Network Authentication In Operation!

Jeffrey Hong, CSC



Users in NIE campus are now required to have a software client with valid credentials running on their notebooks in order to use the network points.

The **Wired Network Authentication** (WNA) in Yunnan Garden Campus has been in place since 15 December 2005. Similar to our campus wireless network, WNA requires all NIE staff and trainee teachers to login as proof of identity before any network access is granted. Through WNA, we can better protect our IT resources and users from disruptive activities caused by unauthorised persons plugging into our public network points. Generally, WNA is implemented in network points found in public areas such as the library, tutorial rooms and lecture theatres.

For those unfamiliar with WNA, you are required to install an IEEE 802.1X compliant software with valid credentials in your notebook before you plug into the network point. For the computers in tutorial rooms and lecture theatres, this software has already been installed. All you have to do is to input your credentials when you are prompted to by the software.

In NIE, we are offering two 802.1X software to our staff and trainee teachers. They can choose either **Odyssey Client** from FUNK (<http://www.funk.com>) or **SecureW2** from Alfa & Ariss (<http://www.securew2.com>). If you are a wireless user with NIE, your notebook already has the Odyssey Client installed. You may refer to the **FAQ** section of our WNA Support website (<http://wire.nie.edu.sg>) for the Odyssey Client configuration. By following the instructions in the configuration guide from the website, you can easily get the software working for WNA.

These two software clients support Microsoft Windows 2K and Windows XP only. For Macintosh users, 802.1X software comes together with the operating system (MAC OS version 10.3 'Panther' and above). NIE staff and trainee teachers may approach our ACIS Services Hub for the software or check out the Download section of WNA Support website (<http://wire.nie.edu.sg>) and Wireless Support website (<http://wireless.nie.edu.sg>).

All software provided are for your convenience and NIE does not endorse these software in any way, and disclaims all liability whatsoever for any loss of data or damage to hardware due to the use of these software. All users have to acknowledge and adhere strictly to NIE's Information Technology (IT) Security Policy for the use of the software and our campus IT resources.

Playing IT Safe

Nenny Noorman, ACIS

Worms. Virus attacks. Hacking. Phishing. Pharming. These are just some of the terms which seem to appear in almost every Information Technology (IT) article nowadays. You might have heard of these terms and are probably thinking, "These things will never happen to me." Think again. Have you done your part in protecting your own data against such attacks?

Protecting your data is your responsibility. Even the most non-IT savvy person can contribute to ensure that data is protected from security breaches. Learn about the measures which you can implement to ensure the security of your data and personal

information by attending the IT Security Awareness Programme conducted by the Office of Academic Computing and Information Services. Also do look out for announcements for programmes catering to your Academic Group/Department.

If you are interested in knowing more about IT security, go to the Staff Portal and, under the *Info Center* tab, click on *Policies and Schemes* and then on the *IT Security Policy* link. More information on the IT Security Awareness Programme is also available on our website at <http://www.nie.edu.sg/ITSecurity>. Alternatively, you may wish to contact our IT Security Officer at itsecurity@nie.edu.sg.

Academic Computing Hub - A Place not to be missed!

Illustrated by Damon Teng, CITE



Equipment/Services available:

- ◆ DIY Video Conversion Station
- ◆ DIY Audio Conversion Station
- ◆ Various DIY Video Editing Systems
- ◆ Optical Mark Reader System
- ◆ CD-R Duplicator
- ◆ DVD Writer
- ◆ A3 Laminator
- ◆ A4 Flatbed, Film & Slide Scanner
- ◆ A3 Colour Laserjet Printing (including printing of banners)
- ◆ A4 - A1 Colour Printing Services
- ◆ Provision of IPAM e-learning stations

Further services available at ACH:

- ◆ Password resetting
- ◆ Data migration
- ◆ Personalised technology education programmes/sessions

Please contact the ACIS Helpdesk at Tel: 6790 3033 for any enquiries, or just walk into the Academic Computing Hub, which is open during NIE operating hours.

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