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If the LMS is the swiss army knife of blended learning, are we only using the blade?

Sharon Strauss

Haverford College, sstrauss@haverford.edu

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If the LMS is the Swiss Army knife of blended learning, are we only using the blade?

The Learning Management System (LMS) can help with almost all aspects of the blended course: storing and organizing the syllabus and readings, notifying students of upcoming events, enabling students to share information and ideas, providing assessments and feedback, facilitating group work, collecting learning analytics, and tying into outside systems. Like the Swiss Army knife, the LMS is a convenient one-piece tool that can perform many tasks—even if other single use tools may do some of those tasks in a way you prefer.

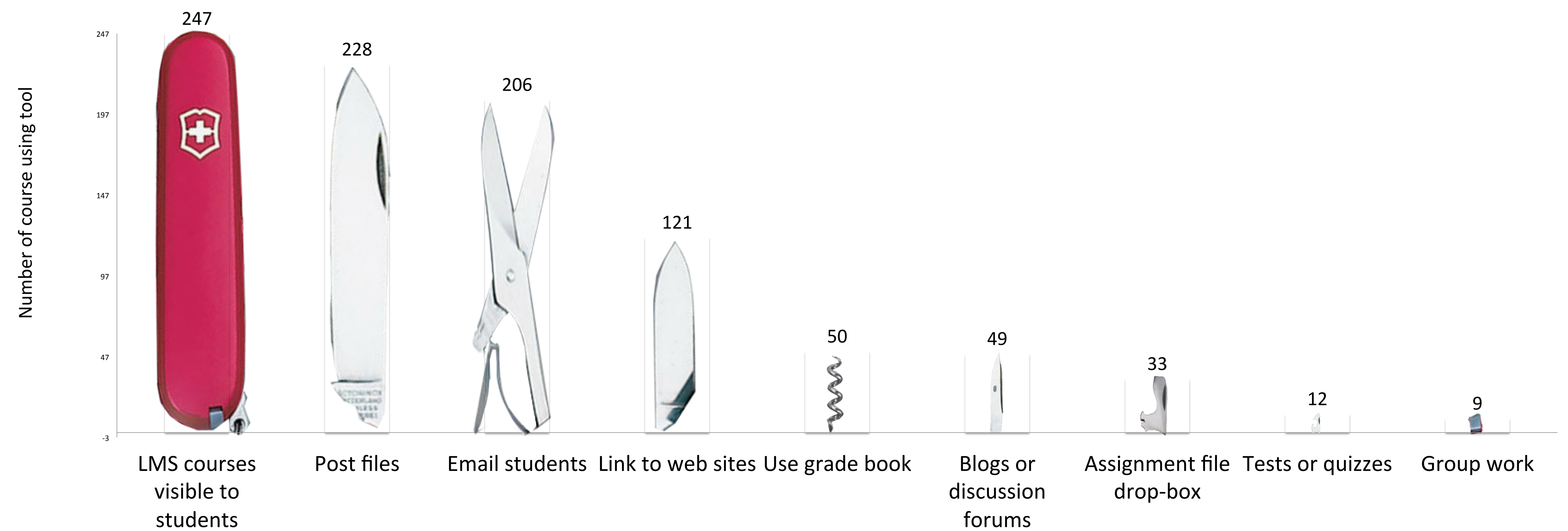
Haverford College, a small liberal arts undergraduate college located outside Philadelphia, uses the Moodle LMS and provides a Moodle shell for each course taught at the college. Faculty members decide which, if any, of those course shells to use. While most faculty members make use of Moodle, few use it for more than posting syllabi, posting readings, and emailing students. However, students tell us that having grades, readings, quizzes, course lectures, and other course materials in our Moodle LMS helps them to easily find important course information all in one place.

The chart shows some basic tools available in the LMS toolset, their functions, and their usage at Haverford.

Have you used any of these tools? Would you like to try any of the tools? Let us know!



LMS Tool Use at Haverford College
Average number of courses per semester, fall 2013 - spring 2016



Tool Function	Moodle Tool Name(s)	Common Uses	Have you used this tool? Add your dot! Green dot for tools you used, and plan to use again. Red dot for tools you used, but do not plan to use again. Yellow dot for tools you want to try in the future.
Post Files	File or Folder resource	Post syllabi and readings in an organized way. Deliver materials only to the people you want, at the times you want.	
Email Students	News Forum and Quickmail block	Notify your students about schedule changes, upcoming speakers, assignment details, etc.	
Link to web sites	URL resource	Direct students to web sites relevant to a topic or unit.	
Grade book	Gradebook	Track and calculate student grades. Let students see their scores and feedback in a timely and secure way. See results from LMS assignments, quizzes, and other activities.	
Blogs or discussion forums	Forum, CP Blog, and OU blog activity	Keep journals. Discuss topics. Have students peer review each others' work. Ask students to find and share articles and other content with each other.	
Assignment file drop-box	Assignment Activity	Collect all assignments in one private, secure, organized space. Clarify due dates to students and time-stamp all submissions. Provide private feedback to students that automatically integrates into the LMS grade book.	
Tests or quizzes	Quiz Activity	Automatically grade certain question types. View class responses by question. See which questions your class gets right or wrong and which questions take longer to answer. Set time limits on take home tests. Give self-graded practice tests.	
Group work	Enable group setting on various activities	Automatically generate small groups in a large class. Provide space for groups to collaborate on projects and submit group work.	