Moodle …far too many features to list so here's the skinny:

It's all about Communities

✓Moodle centres on community. Moodle course participants are encouraged to establish a personalized online identity, to share their ideas and to play an active role in learning experiences. Workgroups can be established that promote peer assessment and feedback. Learning groups can be defined in a way that they proceed as cohorts through lesson activities where they are made visible or separate from other groups sharing the same course.

✓Courses can be shared by multiple teachers, tutors and facilitators. Every Moodle course includes a teachers' forum which promotes dialogue around course development and pedagogical issues. Professional development is user-centred, collaborative and situated within the specific context of instructional practice.

✓Development of the Moodle platform espouses a true participatory design model. Teachers, administrators, course developers, instructional designers and programmers form a world wide network that converges at **moodle.org** to discuss any number of issues. It is these discussions that drive Moodle development. Every member of the community is invited to contribute where they can, whether it is by sharing experiences, offering suggestions or participating in the development of new extensions to the Moodle platform.

Support

✓Support is integrated throughout Moodle. End-users can dynamically select their interface language from an ever increasing number of languages and dialects; 39 at last count! Upon selecting their interface language, all site navigation and component labelling is presented in the target language customized for the individual user.

✓Context sensitive help is provided to learners, course instructors and system administrators through an abundance of hyperlinked symbols. Clicking on this symbol displays an explanation or helpful advice on how to make best use of the particular feature.

✓Every course includes a teachers' manual linked from the administration panel.

✓A direct link to **moodle.org** is incorporated into a button on the start page of moodle courses. Users are likely to find answers to most of their questions within the keyword searchable community forums at **moodle.org**. If you cannot find an answer there, you can post your questions. Users commonly receive an emailed response within the hour, courtesy of fellow moodlers from around the world.

✓Instructors can choose from three different course templates; Topic (organised around learning topics), Weekly (organised by a fixed schedule), or Social (discussion board style).

Adaptability

- ✓ With ever changing educational contexts and newly emerging instructional resources, online courses need to be easily adapted in order to stay current. Moodle provides teacher/developers with an intuitive editing interface. Introducing new learning activities is as simple as selecting items from a drop-down box.

- ✓ Moodle runs on many platforms including: Linux, Windows XP, Mac OS X and Netware 6 operating systems.

- ✓ Administrative duties, including site management, user management, course creator and instructor designations, can be structured to suit local needs. The moodle administrator has the flexibility to choose from user self-registration, users entered manually, or user accounts can be drawn directly from the institution's existing database. Most major databases are supported.

- ✓ Moodle is scaleable. It can be downloaded and installed on a single machine, integrated into classroom LANs, or used on larger institutional networks to support thousands of users.

- ✓ Moodle's look and feel is entirely customizable. An increasing selection of customizable templates is provided with every Moodle download. There is a dedicated forum at **moodle.org** where members collaborate on new interface designs. Moodle uses CSS, making it very simple to incorporate institutional or corporate colours, theme elements and logos.

- ✓ Like all Open Source software, Moodle's source code is open and accessible, allowing it to be extended to meet localized needs.

Philosophy

- ✓ Certainly skilled instructors and designers can create meaningful learning experiences using most any platform. However, it is shortsighted to believe that the implicit designs of learning systems do not influence how courses are ultimately developed. Most learning environments adopt content driven approaches, geared toward the transmission of objectified knowledge. Conversely, Moodle's design is guided by a particular philosophy of learning, known as "*social constructionist pedagogy*".

- ✓ Social constructionist pedagogy recognizes that learning is inherently a social activity. It does not take place only internally, nor is it a passive development of behaviours shaped by external forces. Meaningful learning occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities.

- ✓ Moodle's toolset and structure orient development beyond the simple presentation/transmission model towards developing activities that engage learners with the content and one another. Learners are likely to be more engaged, feeling more connected to what they're doing with the content and who they're doing it with.