NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

Managing Diversity, Maximizing Potential: Harnessing *eUreka* for Solving Logistics Problems and Enhancing Learning in an Academic Writing Course

presented by

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Outline

- Background – the challenges
- Process Writing and Project-Based Learning
- Learning theory: Vygotsky's Social Development Theory
- Web 2.0 and Social Networking with eUreka
- Decision-Making Model
- Summary & Recommendations

Background – *the challenges*

- Increasing student populations

  – *large classes & accompanying management issues*

- Increasing 'internationalization' of student populations

  - students from diverse linguistic & cultural backgrounds

Background – *the challenges* (cont'd)

- Issues relating to course design & pedagogy

  - differing levels of proficiency – what level should pedagogy aim at?

  - different academic experience – different traditions of writing, different exposure to & experience in writing in English

  - ELT instructor not usually a subject expert in students' discipline

The Course –HW102 *The Art of Academic Writing*

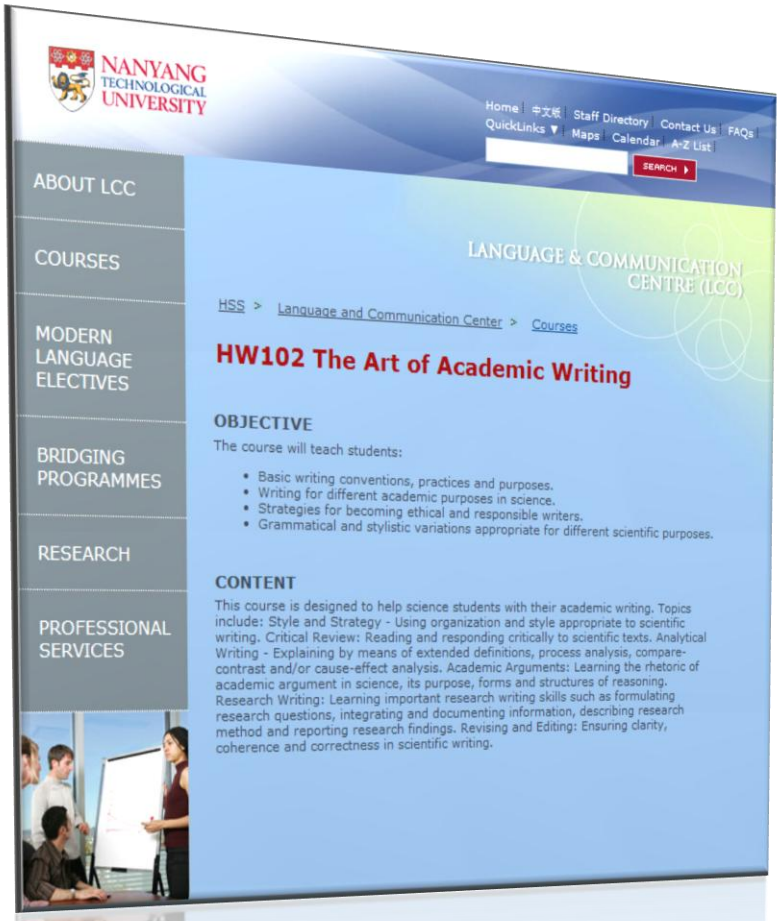
- **The Students**

  - from the School of Biological Sciences & School of Physical & Mathematical Sciences

  - multilingual students – from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, China, Thailand, Philippines, Myanmar, Mauritius, Azerbaijan, etc.

- **Class size**: 25-30 per class; 6-7 project groups
- **Each Tutor**: 4 classes; 24-28 project groups to manage

Description of Course



- **Syllabus:** Genre-based – the research report
- ***Approach***: Process-writing (with recursive revision)
- **Methodology**: project as focal task; collaborative & co-operative learning; lectures + tutorials
- **Assessment**: Group and individual; tutor and peer (limited)

Activities

- Tutorial activities include:

  - mini-input from tutors

  - group discussions

  - text analysis/deconstruction tasks (report sections/abstracts, etc. from journal papers)

  - collaborative writing (e.g. survey questions)

  - peer review of writing assignments

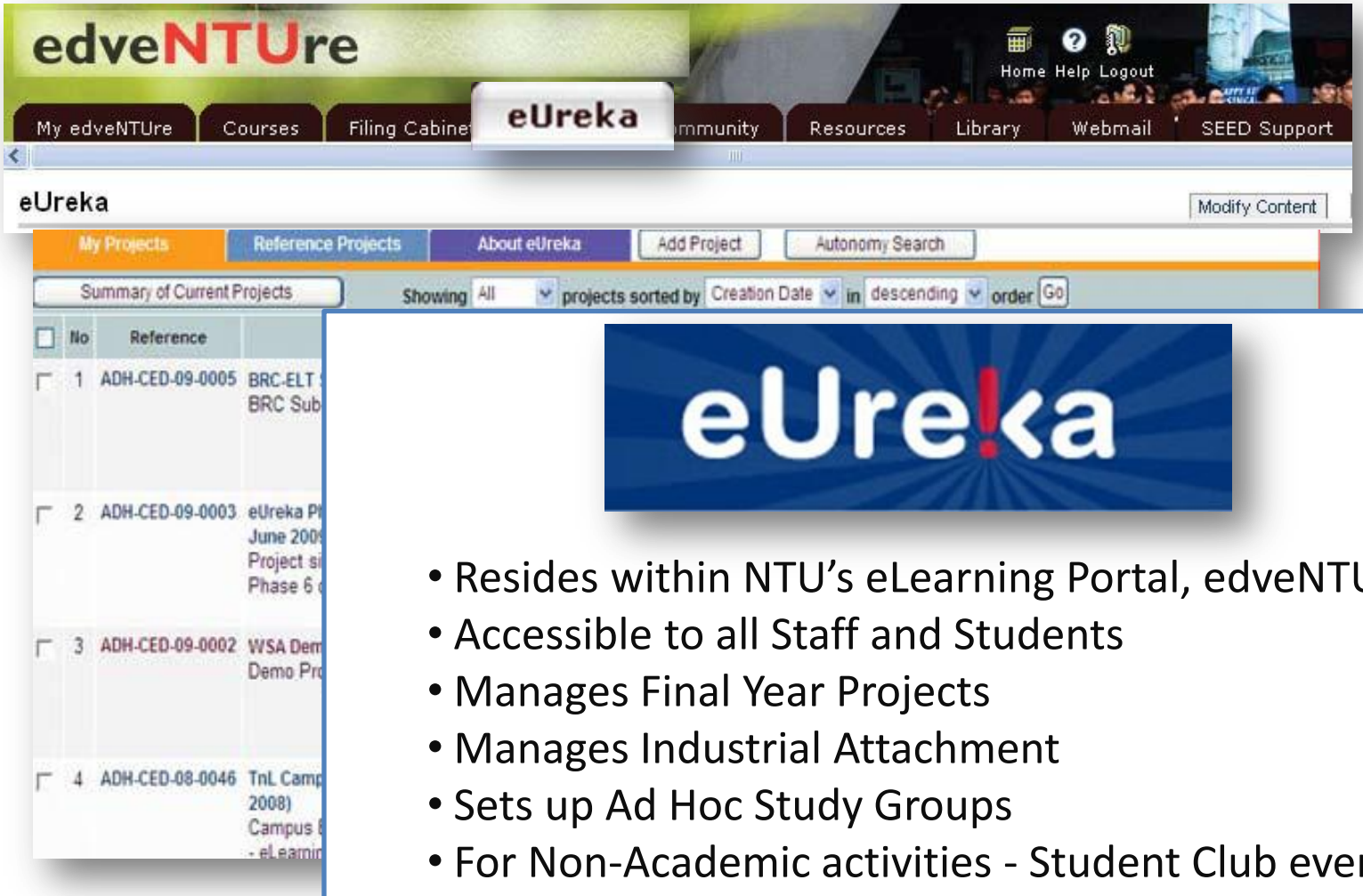
  - conferencing (Student-Student; Teacher-Students)

- Weekly Reflections (personal) online

The Tools

- **eUreka** – *online project work management system*
- **Concordancing** – *basis for inductive learning of language (Todd, 2001), or data-driven learning*
- **Weblogs** – *encourage individual reflection on learning & reflective writing; formation of a* ***'community of learners'*** *through shared experiences & interests*

Some Background on eUreka



- Resides within NTU's eLearning Portal, edveNTUre
- Accessible to all Staff and Students
- Manages Final Year Projects
- Manages Industrial Attachment
- Sets up Ad Hoc Study Groups
- For Non-Academic activities - Student Club events

Using eUreka for HW102 - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by HSS IE Browser
https://equinox.ntu.edu.sg/eLearning/elearningtools%40NTU/eureka/HW102/using_eureka.htm
NTU Library Customized Web Search
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Using eUreka for HW102
Page

eUreka
Create - Discover - Innovate

OVERVIEW
FEATURES
BENEFITS
USER GUIDES
TUTORIALS

Using eUreka for HW102

1. The writing assignment requires submission of:

- Project Proposal (group assignment)
- Final Report (group assignment)
- Abstract of the Final Report (individual assignment)
- Three (3) weblog entries of reflective writing separately in week 4, 7 and 13 respectively
- To use eUreka weblog for the reflective writing assignments

2. Online Briefing on use of eUreka for HW102.

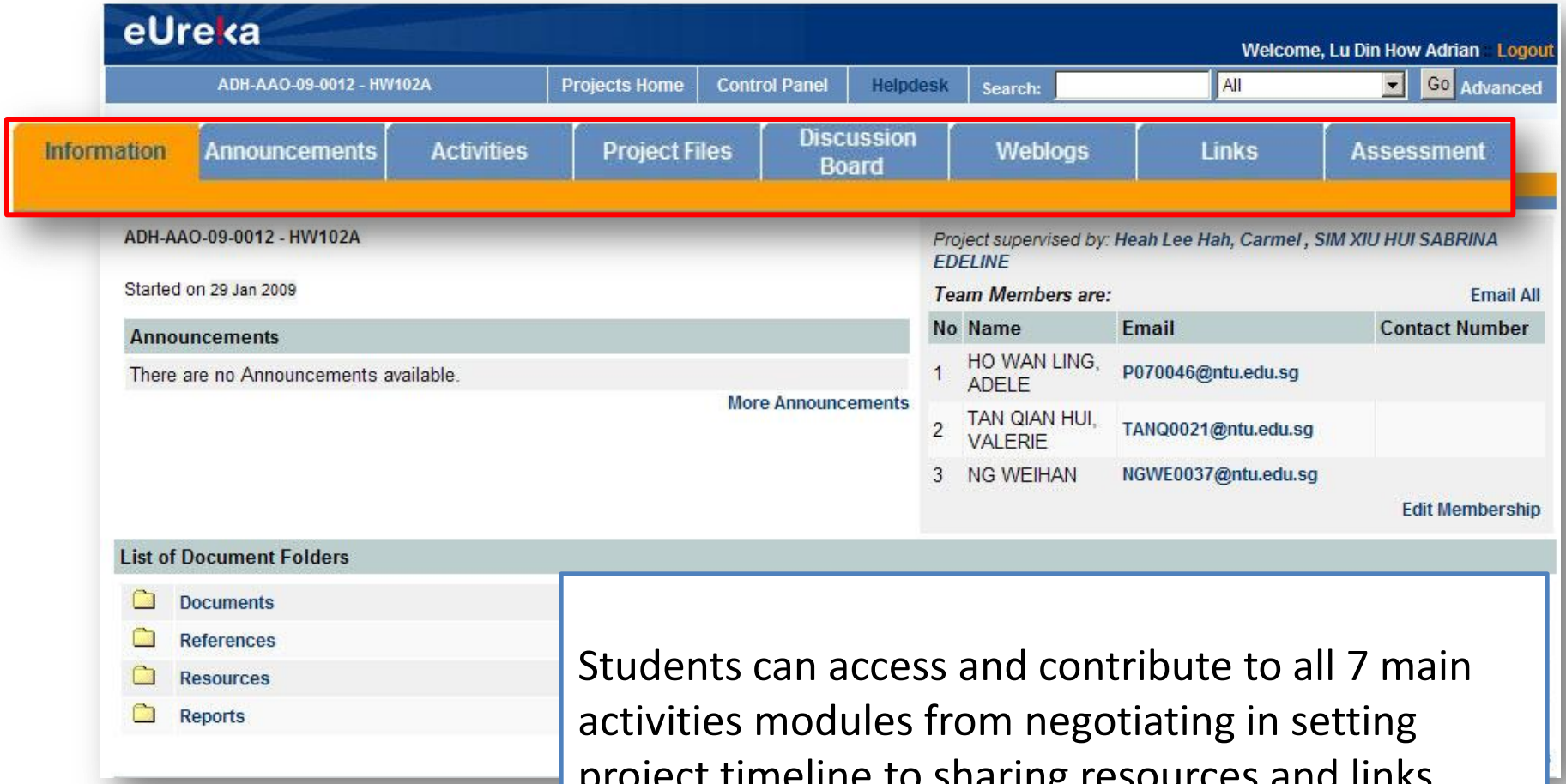
3. Student Briefing Notes - eureka_sharing_HW102_SBSAug09.pdf

4. Quick Guide on 'Using eUreka' – Using_eureka_Aug09.pdf

USEFUL LINKS

- Terminologies
- Articles
- Resource Links
- Support
- FAQs

eUreka, Process Writing, Project-Based Learning



Students can access and contribute to all 7 main activities modules from negotiating in setting project timeline to sharing resources and links.

Managing Project-Based Learning with eUreka

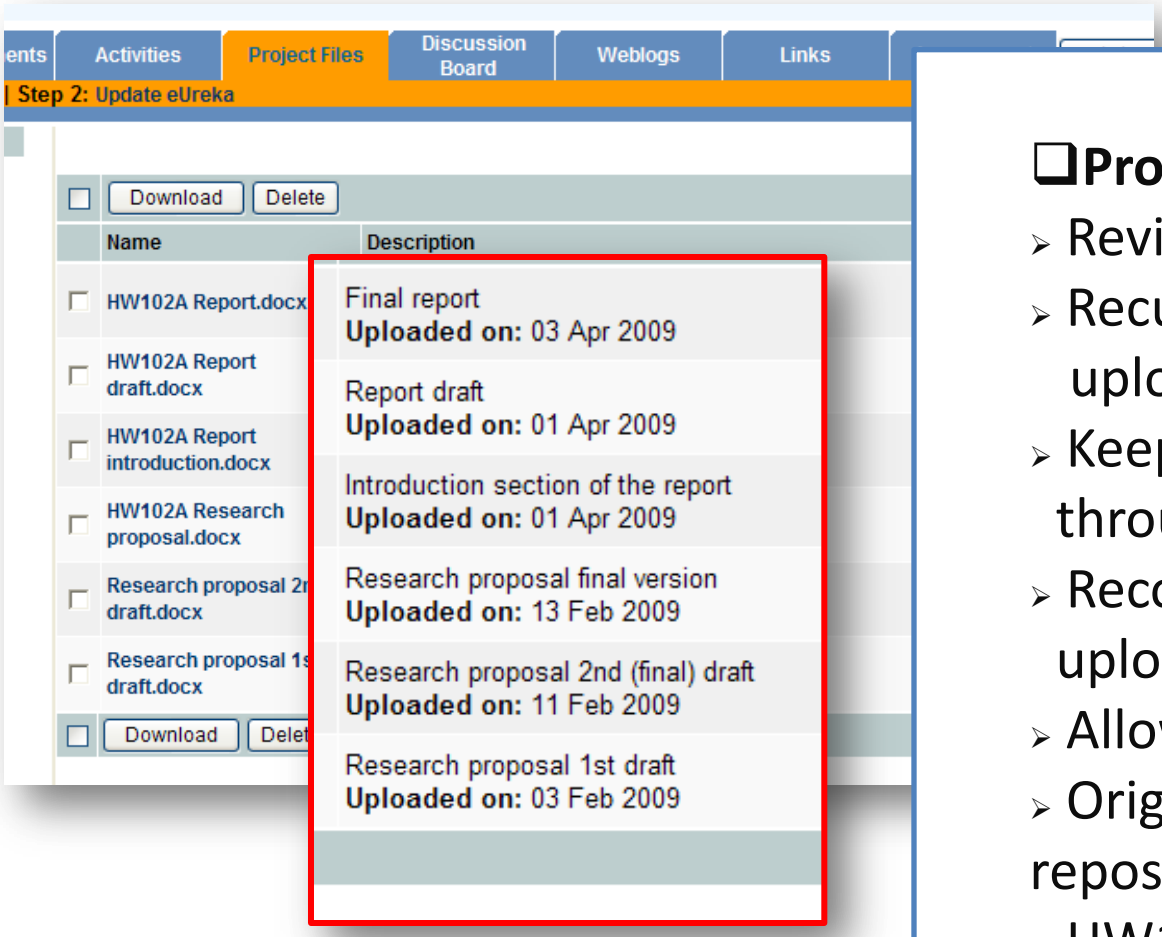
Features of eUreka

- **Information & announcement**
- **Activities**

How the Course Benefits

- Students are able to access the latest announcements regarding uploading of project files; updating of work flow process for project.
- Gantt chart generated - graphical representation of work flow process
- Version tracking – history of project work flow process.

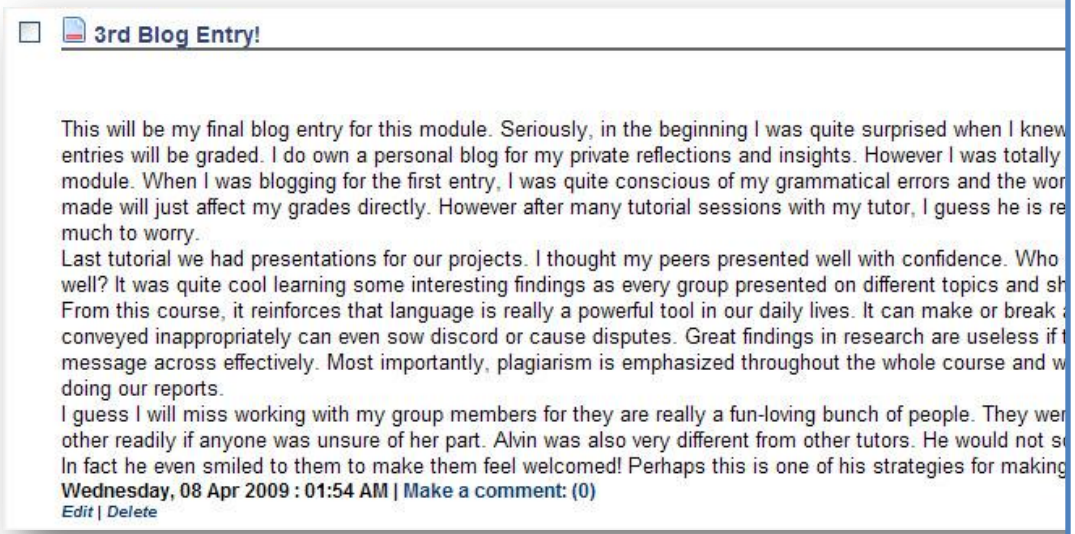
Managing Project-Based Learning with eUreka



❑Project Files

- Revision of drafts is important
- Recursive writing - students upload drafts to project sites
- Keeps track on the drafts through **time stamp**
- Record shows history of uploads
- Allows draft versioning
- Originally designed as repository function
- HW102 made extended use of **Project Files** feature

Managing Project-Based Learning with eUreka



3rd Blog Entry!

This will be my final blog entry for this module. Seriously, in the beginning I was quite surprised when I knew entries will be graded. I do own a personal blog for my private reflections and insights. However I was totally module. When I was blogging for the first entry, I was quite conscious of my grammatical errors and the wor made will just affect my grades directly. However after many tutorial sessions with my tutor, I guess he is re much to worry.

Last tutorial we had presentations for our projects. I thought my peers presented well with confidence. Who well? It was quite cool learning some interesting findings as every group presented on different topics and sh From this course, it reinforces that language is really a powerful tool in our daily lives. It can make or break conveyed inappropriately can even sow discord or cause disputes. Great findings in research are useless if t message across effectively. Most importantly, plagiarism is emphasized throughout the whole course and w doing our reports.

I guess I will miss working with my group members for they are really a fun-loving bunch of people. They wer other readily if anyone was unsure of her part. Alvin was also very different from other tutors. He would not s In fact he even smiled to them to make them feel welcomed! Perhaps this is one of his strategies for making

Wednesday, 08 Apr 2009 : 01:54 AM | Make a comment: (0)

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… it reinforces that language is really a powerful tool in our daily lives. It can make or break a conversation. Words and expressions conveyed inappropriately can even sow discord or cause disputes. ***Great findings in research are useless if the researcher is unable to convey the message across effectively.***

❑ Weblogs

- A vehicle that allows learners to reflect on their learning experience
- An insight to student's thoughts: *'I didn't know that writing is important to a Mathematician…"*
- Hosted in a secure environment
- Entries viewed with writer's permission
- Encourage students to share their views/opinions on issues without fear

Harnessing Technology to Achieve Pedagogical Objectives

- A *VYGOTSKYIAN perspective*

Theoretical Explanation: Learning according to VYGOTSKY

- Takes place in Zone of Approximal Development (ZPD)
  - Each individual has a different ZPD for a particular task, process, or concept
  - Many ZPDs throughout life for each learning area

Implications:

- Need to cater to students with different ZPDs
- Need for *spiralling* in the curriculum

Theoretical Explanation: Learning according to VYGOTSKY

- Learning PROCESS:
  - **SOCIAL** ('INTER-psychological') → **PSYCHOLOGICAL** ('INTRA-psychological')
  - **OBJECT**-regulation → **OTHERS**-regulation → **SELF**-regulation

Theoretical Explanation: Learning according to VYGOTSKY

OBJECT-regulation:

- Artifacts, rituals, practices, etc

  i.e. CONCRETE/PHYSICAL realization

Implications:

MODELS & MODELLING are important at the beginning

How eUreka Helps to Realize Aspects of Vygotskian Theory

OBJECT-regulation:

- Replicating the research (writing) process through the syllabus
- Texts from JOURNAL ARTICLES for each report section
- Lecturer/Tutor MODELLING of text analysis & evaluation
- TEMPLATES for writing
- Some *eUreka* tools (e.g. GANTT chart for project planning; FILE REPOSITORY in the system – a customizable document structure which allows uploaded files to be stored in multiple folders)

Theoretical Explanation: Learning according to VYGOTSKY

OTHERS-regulation:

- More EXPERT OTHERS providing guidance
- Includes teachers, MORE EXPERT peers

IMPLICATION:

Provide for both teacher & peer instruction

How eUreka Helps to Realize Aspects of Vygotskian Theory

OTHERS-regulation:

- Lectures (face-to-face & online) – explicit instruction
- Tutor-student conferencing (group/individual)
- Detailed tutor feedback on drafts using online tools

  (drafts uploaded to repository in **Project Files** on eUreka)
- Peer conferencing/critique (through **Project Files**)
- In-class group discussions/tasks
- On-line platforms for sharing (**Discussion Forum** on eUreka)

Theoretical Explanation: Learning according to VYGOTSKY

SELF-regulation:

- Individual must process learning personally
- Includes THINKING & DOING *independently*

IMPLICATION:

Ensure REFLECTION & INDEPENDENT work

How eUreka Helps to Realize Aspects of Vygotskian Theory

SELF-regulation:

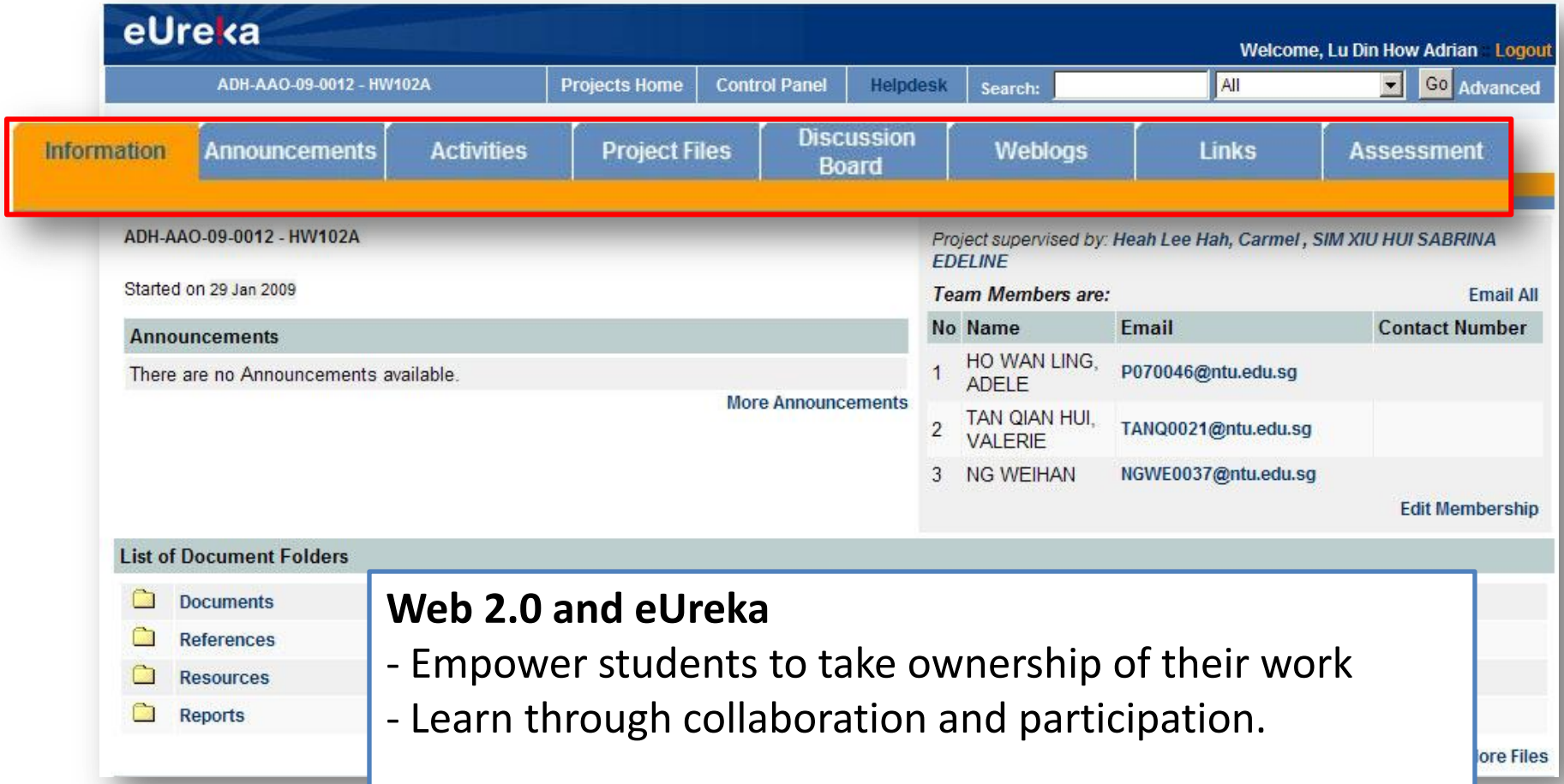
- Group Project – getting hands dirty doing real-life research
- Weekly REFLECTIONS (online blog **Weblog** on eUreka)

Social Networking, Web 2.0, eUreka

Web 2.0

- A gentle revolution in 2003
- Web 2.0 – from information to participation
- Web Users - from being just an audience to becoming involved in production
- Users **own** the data
- Examples: Wiki, Blogs, youTube, Flickr, Facebook…
- These different applications all work on a similar principle – that is knowledge creation through **collaboration and participation**.

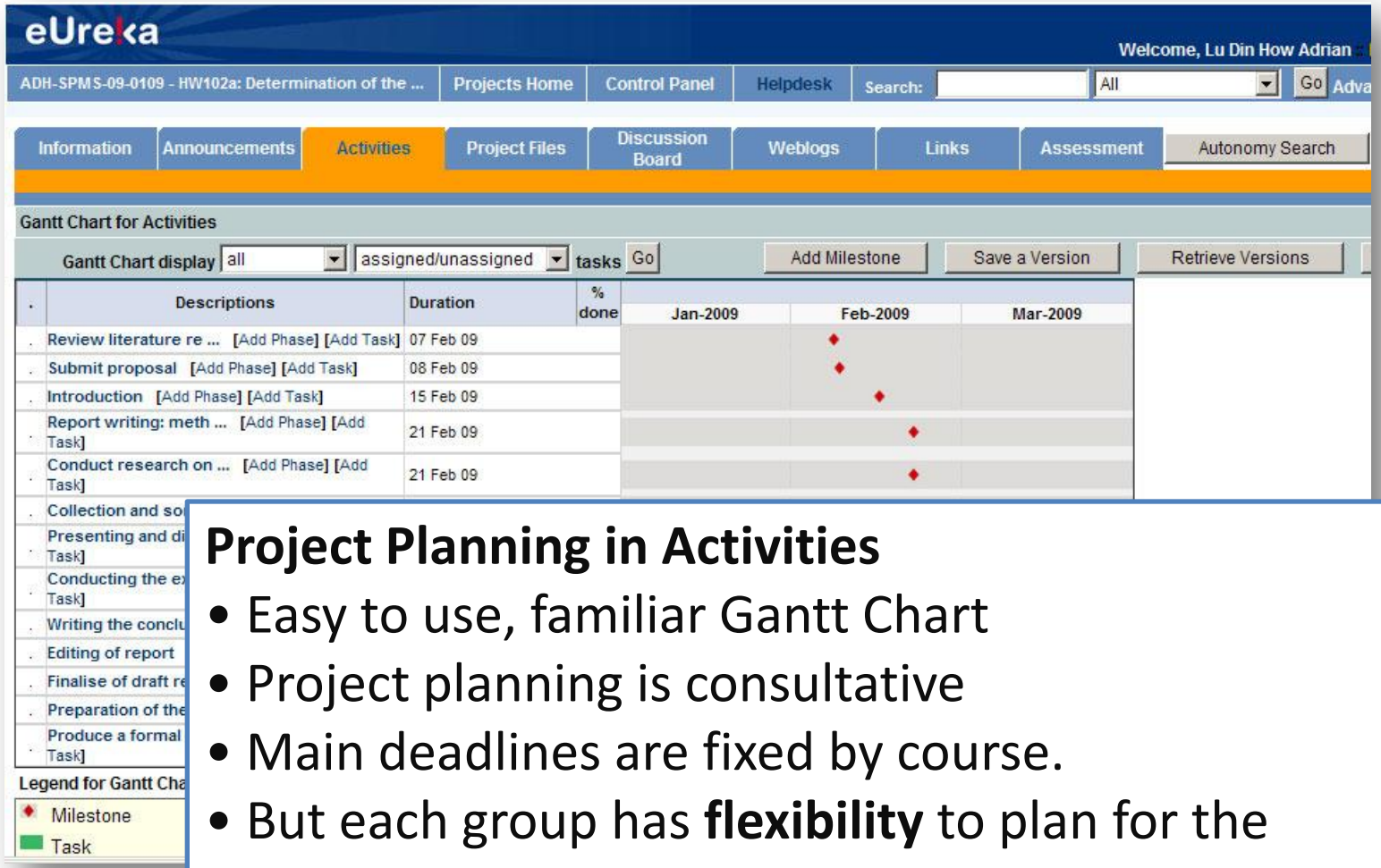
Social Networking, Web 2.0, eUreka



Web 2.0 and eUreka

- Empower students to take ownership of their work
- Learn through collaboration and participation.

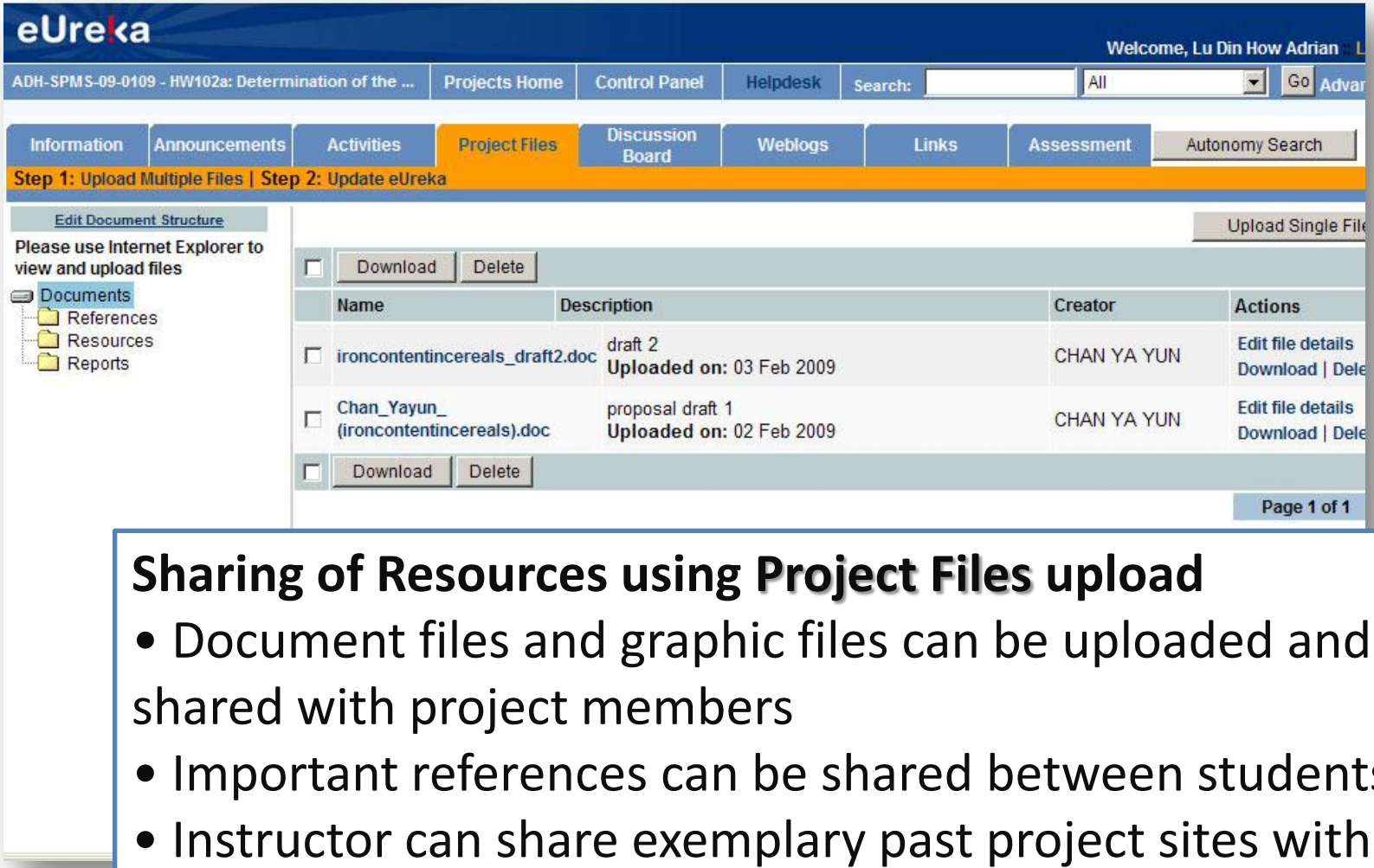
Social Networking, Web 2.0, eUreka



Project Planning in Activities

- Easy to use, familiar Gantt Chart
- Project planning is consultative
- Main deadlines are fixed by course.
- But each group has **flexibility** to plan for the milestones and delegate task to group members.
- Learn time-management and project planning skills.

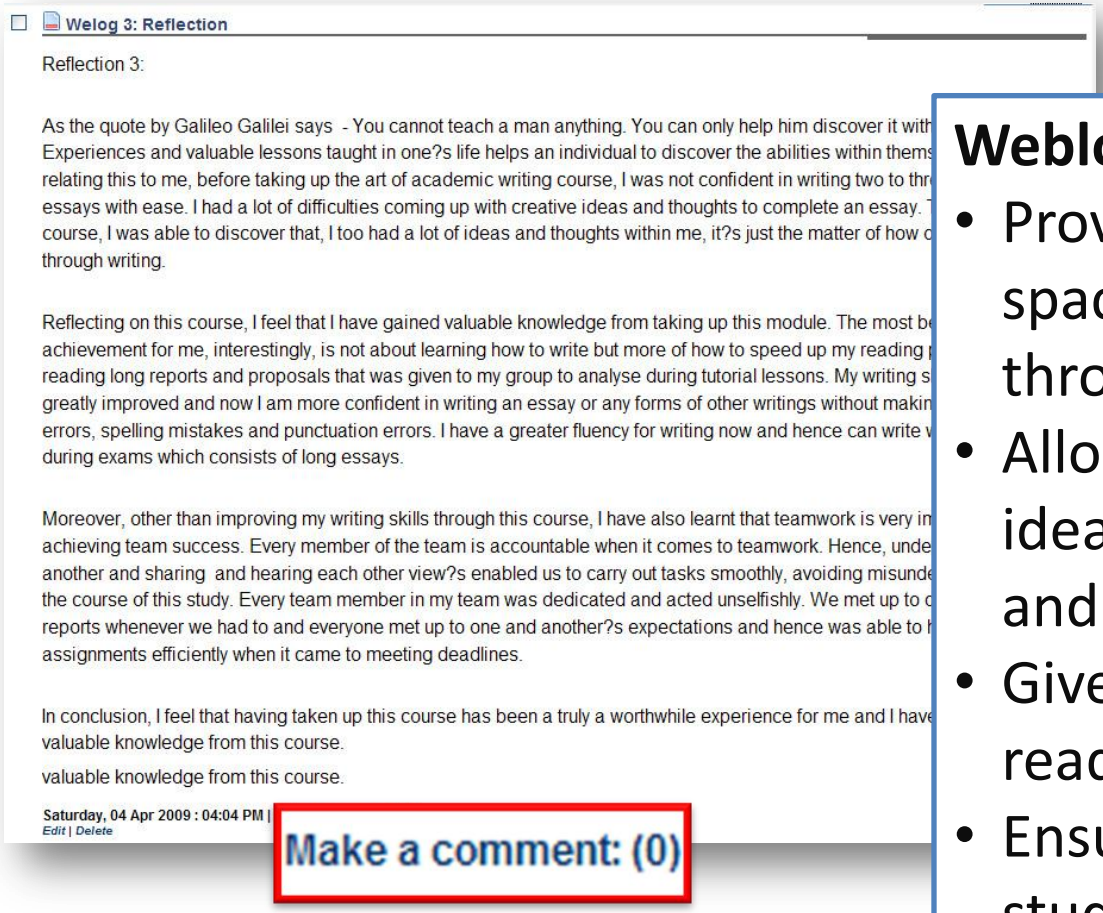
Social Networking, Web 2.0, eUreka



Sharing of Resources using Project Files upload

- Document files and graphic files can be uploaded and shared with project members
- Important references can be shared between students
- Instructor can share exemplary past project sites with the new batch of students.

Social Networking, Web 2.0, eUreka


Welog 3: Reflection

Reflection 3:

As the quote by Galileo Galilei says - You cannot teach a man anything. You can only help him discover it with
Experiences and valuable lessons taught in one?s life helps an individual to discover the abilities within thems
relating this to me, before taking up the art of academic writing course, I was not confident in writing two to thr
essays with ease. I had a lot of difficulties coming up with creative ideas and thoughts to complete an essay.
course, I was able to discover that, I too had a lot of ideas and thoughts within me, it?s just the matter of how c
through writing.

Reflecting on this course, I feel that I have gained valuable knowledge from taking up this module. The most be
achievement for me, interestingly, is not about learning how to write but more of how to speed up my reading
reading long reports and proposals that was given to my group to analyse during tutorial lessons. My writing s
greatly improved and now I am more confident in writing an essay or any forms of other writings without makin
errors, spelling mistakes and punctuation errors. I have a greater fluency for writing now and hence can write
during exams which consists of long essays.

Moreover, other than improving my writing skills through this course, I have also learnt that teamwork is very in
achieving team success. Every member of the team is accountable when it comes to teamwork. Hence, unde
another and sharing and hearing each other view?s enabled us to carry out tasks smoothly, avoiding misunde
the course of this study. Every team member in my team was dedicated and acted unselfishly. We met up to c
reports whenever we had to and everyone met up to one and another?s expectations and hence was able to h
assignments efficiently when it came to meeting deadlines.

In conclusion, I feel that having taken up this course has been a truly a worthwhile experience for me and I have
valuable knowledge from this course.

valuable knowledge from this course.

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Weblog as communication space

- Provides a communication space for teachers and students through “Comment” feature
- Allows students to express ideas about writing, share ideas and reflect on work done.
- Gives students control over readership of their blogs.
- Ensures secure environment for students to honestly express their thoughts and views (**without fear**).

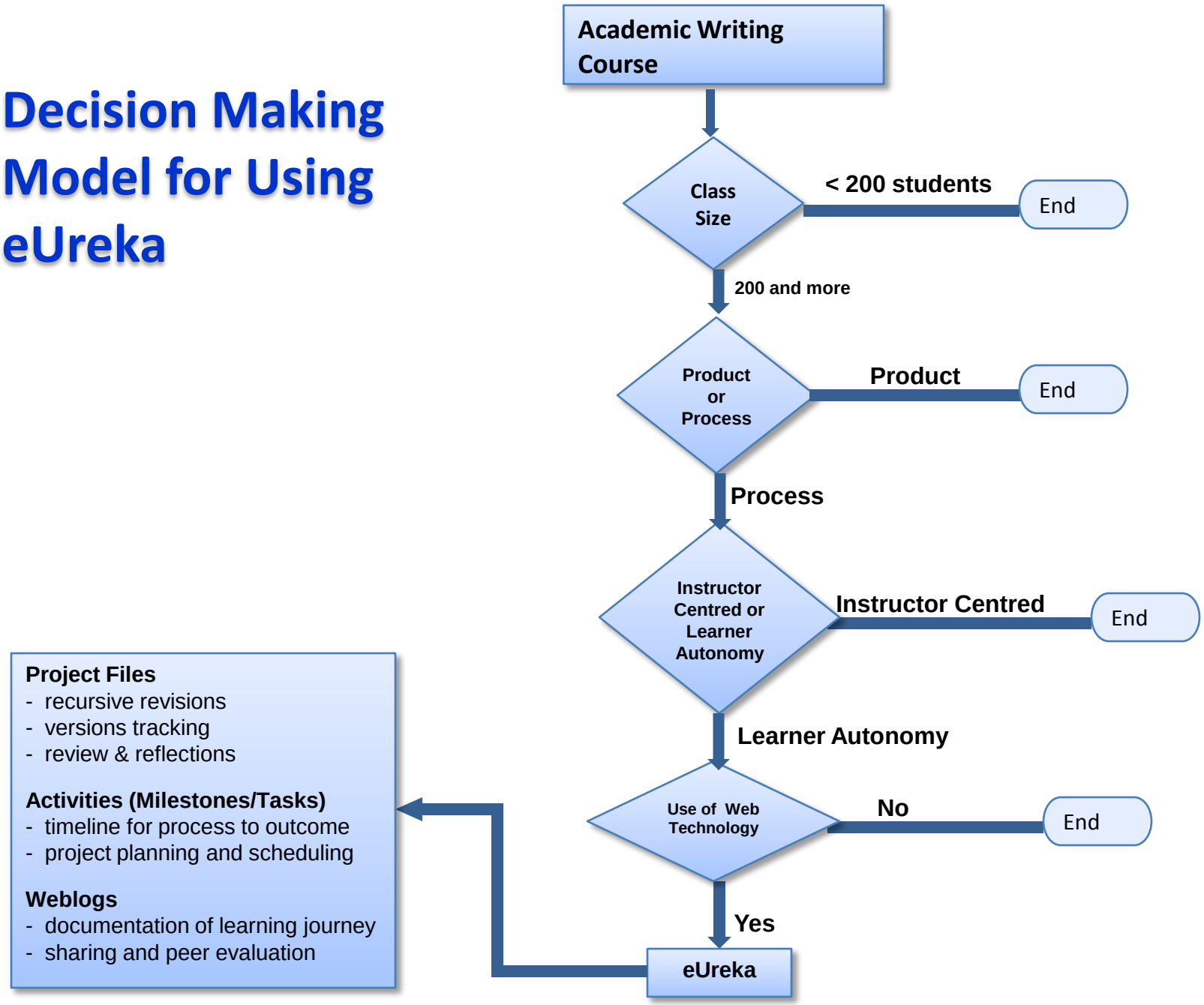
Social Networking, Web 2.0, eUreka

… it reinforces that language is really a powerful tool in our daily lives. It can make or break a conversation. ***Words and expressions conveyed inappropriately can even sow discord or cause disputes.*** Great findings in research are useless if the researcher is unable to convey the message across effectively.

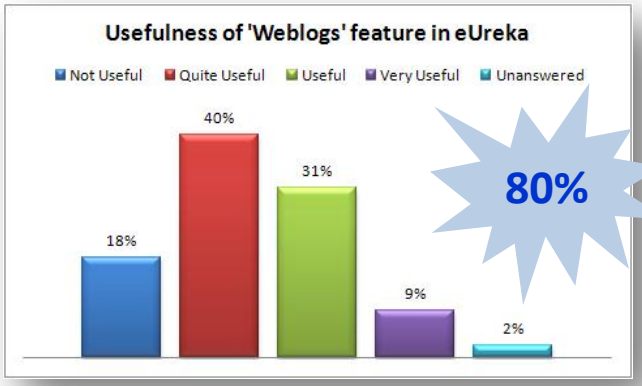
Peer Evaluation and Life Skills

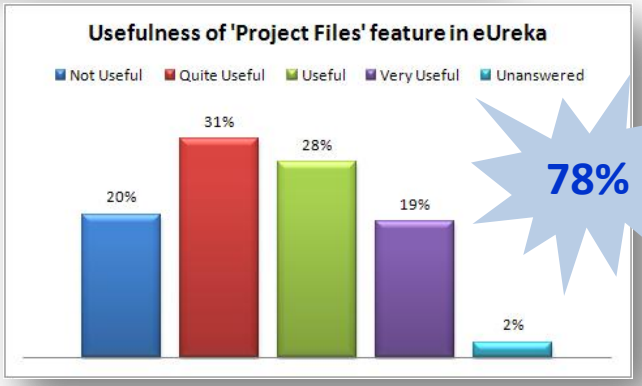
- Students learn to give feedback as they peer-evaluate each other's work
- Students learn to use socially accepted (diplomatic) language to critique their classmates' works
- Evaluating their peers' writing develops students ability to think critically & reflect critically on their own writing.

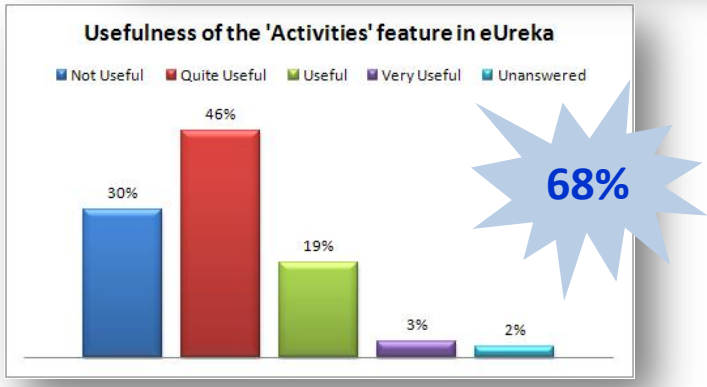
Decision Making Model for Using eUreka



What the students think…







The features in eUreka that the students found useful were **Weblogs, Project Files and Activities** – appropriately, these same modules were used by the tutors for HW102 assignments/group work

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Summing Up

What our experience shows:

- Integrating genre & project-based approaches: a way to address challenges
- Academic writing *can* be made exciting & meaningful even for large classes with technology
- Technological tools such as eUreka can be harnessed to achieve pedagogical objectives as well as manage diversity
- Systematic decision-making is vital in harnessing technology (takes into account the needs of stakeholders)

References

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