

The screenshot shows the FLAX website interface. At the top left is the 'flax' logo with the tagline 'interactive language learning'. To the right are navigation links: 'library', 'demos', 'downloads', 'about', and 'Login'. Below the navigation is a paragraph describing the FLAX project: 'The FLAX (Flexible Language Acquisition) project aims to automate the production and delivery of practice exercises for overseas students who are learning English. Exercise material comes from digital libraries, which can supply a virtually endless supply of collaborative and competitive language activities. (All software produced by this project is open source, issued under the GNU General Public License.)' Below this are links for 'Book of FLAX', 'FLAX videos', 'More FLAX videos', and '视频'. The main content area is divided into three sections, each with a green header bar:

- FLAX Distributed Collections**: Lists 'The Best of Password', 'Earth Science', 'Happy English Learning', and 'Image activities demo collection'.
- FLAX Resource Collections**: Lists 'British National Corpus', 'Learning Collocations', 'Web Phrases', and 'Web Collocations'.
- British Academic Written English Collections**: Includes a note that these collections come from the BAWE corpus and lists 'Physical Sciences', 'Arts and Humanities', 'Life Sciences', and 'Social Sciences'.

 At the bottom, there is a section for 'Collections Created by Registered Users' with a note: 'If you would like to build your own collections and put them here, please email us'. Below this are links for 'Live and work in Aotearoa New Zealand' and 'Expert writing'.

The stand-alone FLAX website, showing the list of collections

3. Stand-alone FLAX or Moodle-FLAX?

FLAX runs both as a stand-alone software system and as a facility within the Moodle course management system.⁴ The difference affects some operational details, but not the main core of FLAX's functionality. The way you look at documents, create language activities, use them, and build collections does not depend on which way you are working. But the way you get started does.

Stand-alone FLAX ...

To use FLAX in stand-alone mode, go to the URL of the FLAX server.⁵ This will show you the image on the opposite page. It gives a list of the standard collections that are available on the server, plus a list of collections created by users. Just click the name of any collection to go to its home page,

If you have installed the FLAX server on your own computer you will see just the collections at the top ("FLAX Distributed Collections"), and perhaps those at the bottom ("Collections Created by Registered Users"), if there are any, but not the ones in between, which are specific to the FLAX project server. FLAX is open source software; the server is completely free, and easy to install (see Section 8.1).

To create your own collections, you need to register as a user.⁶ After doing this you can log in using the button near the top right of the screen. Any collections you create will be available to all users. If you want to keep them private, you need to install your own server – which is what we recommend.

The way you create new collections is exactly the same for stand-alone FLAX as for Moodle-FLAX, and is described in Chapter 6.

⁴ Moodle is at <http://moodle.org>.

⁵ The FLAX project demonstration server is at <http://flax.nzdl.org>. Anyone can use it.

⁶ You can register as a user of the demonstration server by emailing your name and the name of the organization where you work or study to flax@cs.waikato.ac.nz.

The Best of Password is one of the standard digital library collections distributed with FLAX. From within Moodle you can create your own collections and make them available on Moodle to your students or throughout your institution.



A FLAX collection in a Moodle course

Adding a FLAX activity or resource to a Moodle course

... or Moodle-FLAX

For Moodle users, FLAX can provide students in a class with convenient searching and browsing facilities that are accessed directly from their course. And for teachers, it lets them create new activities and new document collections without leaving the Moodle system.

Before you begin, the administrator of your Moodle system must first install the Moodle-FLAX module, which is available from both the FLAX and Moodle websites. Assuming that this module is installed in your system, a digital library collection is just another kind of Moodle resource. The small top picture opposite shows a fragment of a FLAX course that contains a digital library collection, whose name is preceded by the FLAX logo. Click it to enter the collection, exactly as shown in Chapter 2.⁷

In order to add to a course a FLAX collection, or a single document in a collection, turn editing on and use the standard Moodle *Add an activity or resource* menu. When the Moodle-FLAX module is installed, this contains a new item:

- FLAX language learning.

This takes you to the page shown opposite, where you opt to add a language resource or a language activity. All teachers who use Moodle will be familiar with this kind of display.

If you select *Language resource*, you see a list of FLAX collections that have been built within that Moodle installation, and when you select one of these you see a list of documents in it. You can add any of these documents or collections to your course.

If you select *Language exercise*, you see a list of collections and a list of activities associated with the currently-selected collection – as shown here. For example, here the selected collection is *The Best of Password*, and it has several associated activities, *Scrambled Sentences*, *Word Guessing*, and so on (these are described in Chapter 4).

There is also a link called *Make a new collection*. The process of making your own collection is described in Chapter 6. The list of collections will contain any new ones that you – or anyone else – has added to your Moodle installation. Beside any collection that you have added, buttons will appear that let you edit or delete the collection.

⁷ You can see this in the [How to use FLAX](#) course, which contains both the [Best of Password](#) collection and the single article ["Adventure sports"](#).