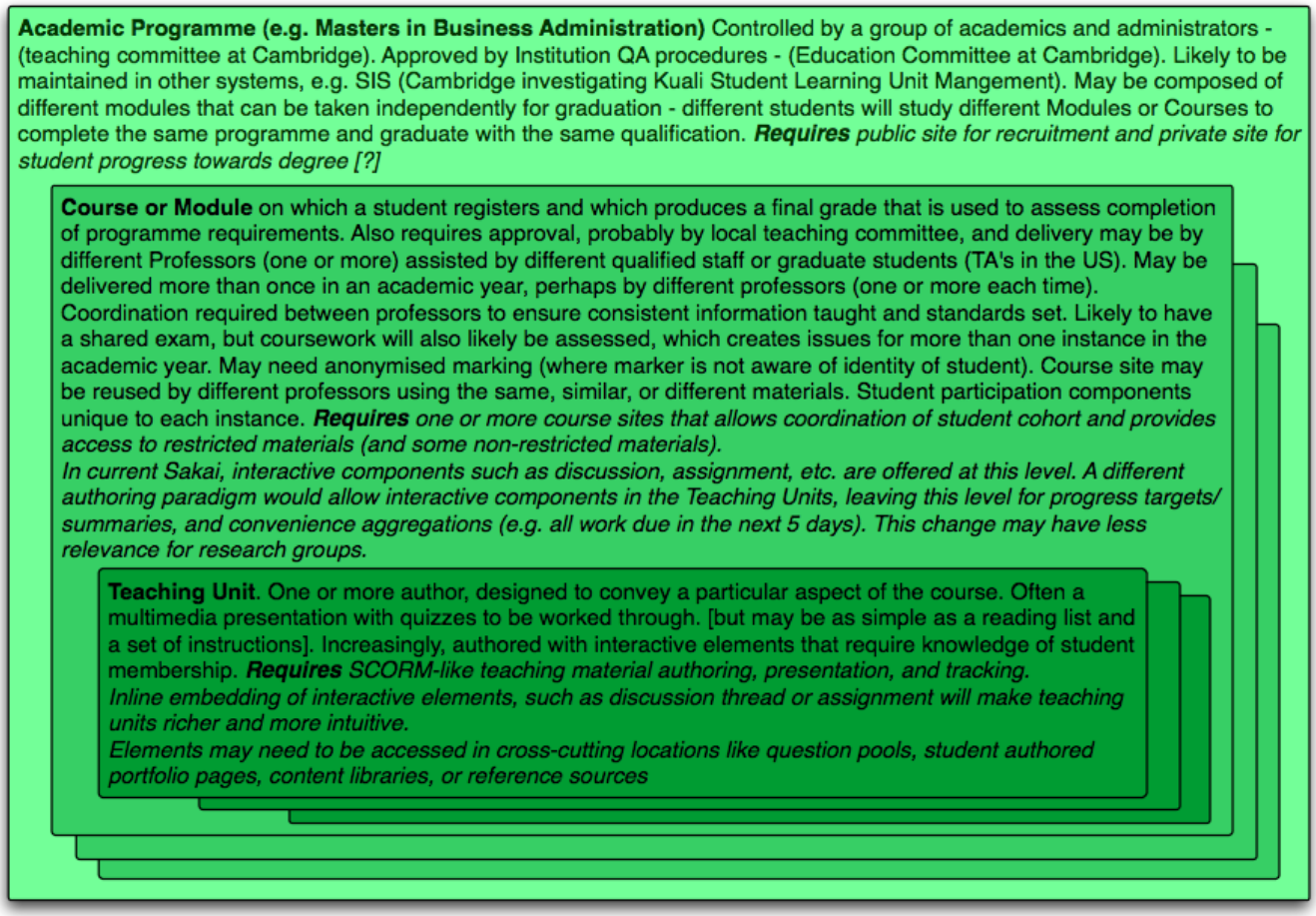
Authoring Contexts

I have tried to write down some key points about the different contexts in which we may be discussing authoring:



We haven't touched much on the top level, public presence (mostly) and private presence (a bit) for a programme, or collection of courses. Matthew Bucket's hierarchy presentation at Paris showed something of how useful this can be. Sakai mainly operates at the course/site level and the thinking behind widgets is to move some of the interactive functionality (discussion threads, tests, reference lists, etc.) from this level to the teaching unit level and integrate them with the more traditional teaching unit content. The other attraction of widgets is to enable cross-cutting information to be just as available, like all my late assignments for this programme (collection of courses), student-centred Portfolios across all course work, shared teaching materials, etc. I currently understand Mathieu Plourde's concept as being aimed at a general solution for the teaching unit, Mark Norton's concept as being a more traditional concept of teaching unit authoring, Michael's word plugin as a limited scope concept for part of the course or module authoring context and Noah's concept addressing the cross-cutting authoring context. The 'Edit in Place' or 'Google Sites' concept I was pushing was aimed at the course context, but after drawing this diagram I can see that I was mixing in teaching unit issues. I need to think more about how important it may be to keep these contexts separate.

I hope to review where common technology can help next, by reviewing the way Google has specialised tools for different contexts that all seem to draw on some common technology. I am imagining this could be a way forward for Sakai.

Note: I already know that we don't use FCK editor very wisely. I am pretty confident that we may want to look at Tiny MCE as an alternative, but there **could** be an argument for writing our own. We should certainly be trying to think about how to analyse the choice.

Note: I also think we should go into this with a lot of secondary issues in mind - e.g. export/archive formats, standards and interoperability, accessibility, internationalisation, adaptability to rapid change, etc.