



Course Design in Moodle

Overview

Careful planning of your Moodle course is essential for creating a positive and effective learning experience for your students. Before you begin to design your course online, review your current teaching strategies, the course learning outcomes and the learning activities used to assess the outcomes.

Articulating the learning outcomes and aligning them with teaching and assessment strategies—"constructive alignment" (Biggs 1999)—will help you select your course content and plan the learning activities for your students.

Benefits

Effective course design minimises course navigation time, leaving more time for students to spend collaborating, communicating and engaging with the course. Moodle is flexible enough to allow you to create learning paths specific to the needs of your students, through the sequencing of resources and activities.

Challenges

Without planning, the flat structure of Moodle can result in a long list of links on a course home page. This can require a lot of scrolling and discourage student engagement.

Giving your content and activities a clear structure is essential if students are to participate actively . If they can't find an activity, or a particular resource, they'll get confused and frustrated.

Case studies and examples

Example 1

In this example links to all files and activities sit on the course page, as does some of the content and assessment information. This results in a busy looking course. The majority of activity takes place offline as students work alone with no collaboration opportunities provided.

1

Sustainable Development: The Legislative Context

Environmental risk is brought about by the direct relationship between humans, human activity and the environment. In a corporate context there are two categories of risk 1.) risk to the environment and 2.) risk to an organisation through non compliance with legislation. The Learning Guide directs you to list the risks you see facing specific organisations and environmental contexts. As you progress through this course you should refer back to your original list to see how your knowledge has expanded.

When you have completed your list - visit the forum (icon below) and post your brainstorm list. You will find it interesting to view your colleagues' lists at this time.

You'll need to paste your list and make at least one reply commenting on the ideas of your course colleagues before you can proceed to the next part of the course.

-  [Introduction to Risk Management](#)
-  [Types of Business Risks](#)
-  [The Regulatory Framework](#)
-  [Legislation](#)
-  [Company Initiatives](#)
-  [Week 1 Learning Guide](#)
-  [Industry Risks](#)

2

Corporate Initiatives

This week we will explore the difficulties of financing large international projects. The financial demands can be extensive as in the case of the Johansson project in China which exceeded \$1.5 billion. The Boral project in South Africa to date has cost around \$1.8 billion. Companies rarely have the capability to finance large investments from cash flow. There are exceptions to this which are mentioned in the notes for Week 3, however, we will explore this in greater detail in Week 4. At this point in the course, you should read back over the notes from Week 3 and think about the conclusions you made. When you have done this go to the forum in Week 3 and post any new conclusions you have drawn based on the what you have learned in the preceding weeks. Also, please respond to the posts of other students.

Quiz Information - Read this before you attempt the quiz

Each of the 5 quizzes has 10 multiple choice questions

- Each quiz is worth 5%. In total, the quizzes are 25% of your overall mark.
- You have two chances to complete each quiz
- You have 30 minutes to complete each quiz
- Don't leave the page until you have submitted the quiz.

-  [Week 2 Notes](#)
-  [Environmental Issues](#)
-  [Economic risks](#)
-  [Reading](#)
-  [Lecture Notes](#)
-  [Reading - Financing and Sustainability](#)
-  [Economic Risks](#)
-  [Quiz 1](#)
-  [Additional Reading](#)
-  [Lecture images](#)

Example 2

The same course redesigned with extensive use of the Book resource in Moodle. Students regularly participate in online discussions and activities, all of which can be linked to from inside the Book. In the case of a distance course, a photo of the course instructor and their relevant contact details situate the teacher in the course. This is the first step in creating teacher presence that is strongly linked to "students' sense of learning community" (Shea et al., 2006).

Contact Details



Course Convenor
A/Prof. Sarah Jamieson
Email: s.jamieson@unsw.edu.au
Online hours: Mon 9-10 Thur 2-4

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FreeDigitalPhotos.net

Environmental Risk Management



- Getting Started
- About you
- Course Discussions
- Latest News

Useful Links

- [UNSW Library](#)
- [The Learning Centre](#)

1 Sustainable Development: The Legislative Context

- Week 1 Resources
- Week 1 Resources
- Discussion: Sustainable Development

2 Corporate Initiatives

- Week 2 Resources
- Discussion: Corporate Initiatives

Find out more about using the [Book resource](#).

Guide

Checklists

See:

- [What can you do with Moodle?](#)
- [Course template recommendations](#)

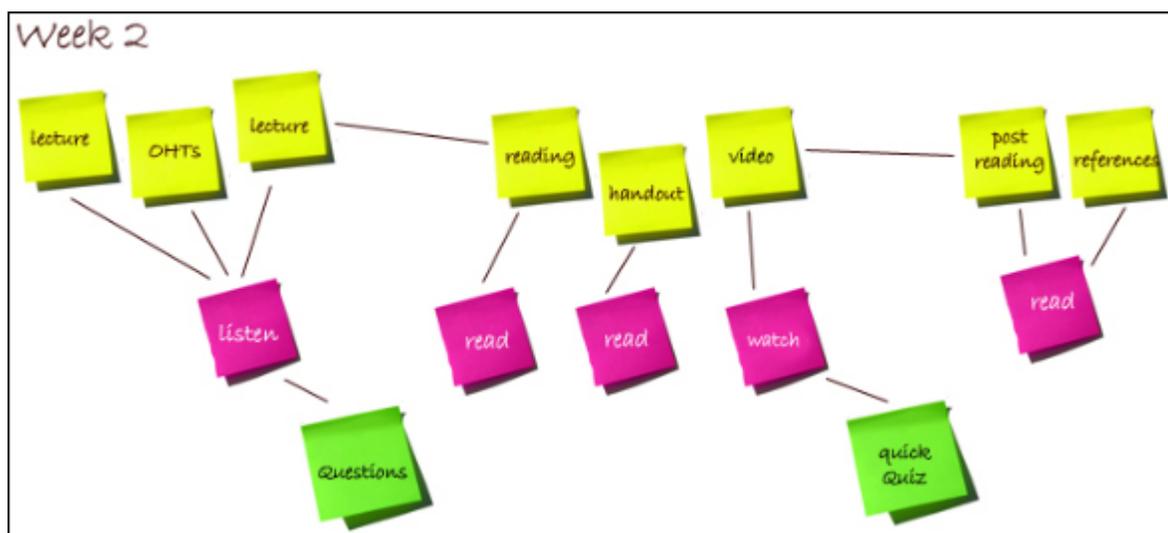
How do I get started

Planning

With your course outline and program of lectures, use coloured sticky notes to physically identify and order your class activities from week to week.

- Use one colour (say yellow) to represent the points at which you provide input to students (content).
- Use another (say pink) to identify the activities that students do during the course.
- Use yet another (say green) to identify the points of assessment—both formative and summative—throughout your course.
- Lay these notes out on the table to see how the course (or learning process) looks to your students as an overall experience.

You can do this overall for the duration of the course, or break the course down into weekly maps of your students' learning experience.



You may see a number of weeks where the learners are only passively receiving content in the form of lectures, videos, handouts and readings. These present opportunities to use Moodle to add student activity or engagement with your content.

If you are satisfied with the course, its structure and experiences, you might consider where you can augment the student experience with asynchronous discussions, access to external resources or a formative assessment to help students judge their progress independently. Use some other sign (e.g. red dots) to mark these opportunities.

Building

Once you have planned your course, choose the Moodle course format that is appropriate for your needs and start building. When you select content for your course in Moodle, choose content that can be used to construct learning

activities that encourage student engagement. Choose learning activities that enhance what your students learn in the classroom, not replicate what they are already doing.

Consider your current course topics or units and try to match these to the skills and understandings to be addressed in your course. Consider the relative size of these topics and the order in which you cover them.

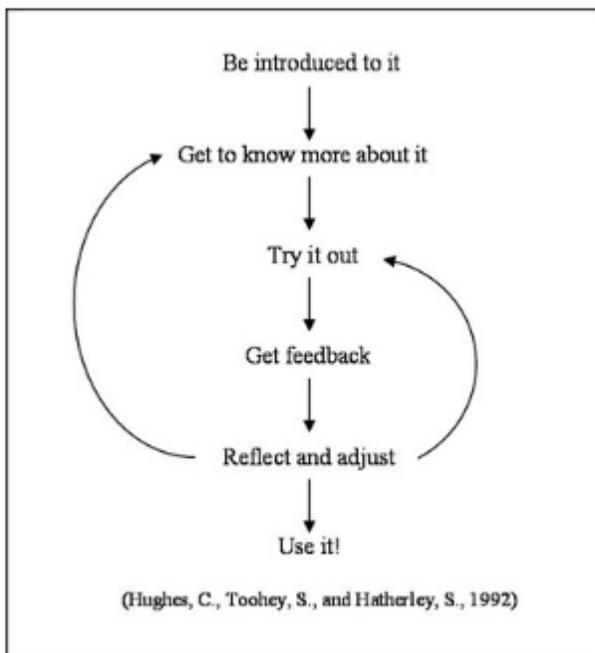
In selecting and sequencing your content the main objective is to support the course learning objectives. Decide how to sequence your content by choosing one of the options below based on your purpose for using Moodle:

- chronologically
- topics
- problem-based
- case studies.

Examples of course formats are available in this self enrolment course [**Planning Your Use of Moodle**](#).

Activities

When choosing learning activities, reflect on the learning process, What do we actually do when we learn something? One model by Hughes et al. (1992) suggests that in order to learn something you need to do the following:



Considerations

1. When you design learning activities consider the following:

- All learning requires some type of activity.
- Engage your learners to encourage active learners.
- Consider different learning styles.
- Design authentic learning activities that make learning outcomes achievable.
- Allow learners to use different approaches to achieve the same outcome.

Activity is the key word here. Think about what students can *do* other than passively receive your content.

- Can they discuss an issue or concept? Example using the **Forum** activity
- Can they construct something like a written paper or piece of media that they publish to the class?
- Can they read and record their reaction to a reading?

2. Consider what you want to achieve with each learning activity.

Is the activity for:

- information transfer
- communication and interaction
- collaboration
- formative assessment, or
- summative assessment?

Additional information

Other considerations

Some final considerations for course design in Moodle.

Accessibility for all:

- Provide alternative text (alt text) for images.
- Use high contrast.
- Information conveyed using colour should also be conveyed in other ways.

Design for diverse learning styles:

- Include activities and resources that visually engage, e.g. video and images.
- Use charts, tables and graphs to aid processing of text-based information.
- Break up recorded lectures into manageable chunks and supplement with video, maps and diagrams.
- Use voice-over with PowerPoints.
- Provide opportunities for students to discuss and collaborate.

General:

- Use simple, consistent layouts.
- Remove unused blocks.
- Use Moodle styles (e.g. heading , paragraph) for course titles, topic titles and subtitles.
- Avoid abbreviations.
- Avoid redundancies e.g. "Forum Week 1"; instead use "Weekly Forum".
- Hide embedded activities in an additional week/topic.
- Provide only useful links that you expect the students to use.
- Edit your course for spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors.

Library materials

If you want to include Library content in your course, make sure you contact the Library as early as possible to arrange this.

External resources

Leaving behind the Moodle "scroll of death"—A Moodle Evolution

Moodle Tool Guide for Teachers

Online Learning Activities

Further assistance

If you experience technical or other issues, consult the **Where to get help** page.

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<https://teaching.unsw.edu.au/moodle-course-design>