Moodle Handbook

This handbook contains directions on using tools and resources in Moodle.

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Logging in to Moodle

The web address for Moodle is

http://eperalta.org/fall2014  (the last part of the address changes each semester)

Before you can start editing and adding items to your Moodle shell, you need to Turn Editing On!!
Setting up your Shell

The Administration block has some important tools.

Use **Edit Settings** to set up the format for your course

**Grades** is the link to the Grade book in Moodle

You can **back up** and save a copy of your course here

Don’t forget to edit your **Profile**!
Settings

The show/hide has been moved here, under the course category, you must change this to Show when you are ready for students to see your course.

Moodle allows for various formats. Notice that all of these options are collapsed now.

Topics Format: use this format if you are using your shell just as an additional resource for students and don’t need a separate block for each week. You can simply add as many blocks as you need for each topic, for example: Homework, Handouts, Lecture notes, etc.

Weekly Format: this is the default format; it is set up with a start date and a block for each week in the semester.
Setting the date:

You can adjust the start date here if needed.
Editing your Profile

It is very important that you edit your profile before you make your course available to students

Click here to edit your profile
You can change your password here
Make sure you upload a picture here; otherwise students see a big green head instead of you!
Creating a Welcome Message

When your students open your Moodle shell they may not know how to proceed. Creating a “Welcome” message in the top block of the page will help guide your students on what they will need to do for your course.

The following are suggested items to include in welcome message and should be placed in the very top area of your course, which is called “Block Zero”:

- **Introduce yourself!** A brief introduction to you and the course is a great way to connect you to your students
- **Contact information**: Provide students with ways to communicate with you.
- **Have virtual office hours?** Post those here.
- **Learning objectives**: Providing students with your learning objectives gives students an idea of the goals they are expected to meet for the course.
- **How to get started**: Provides students with assistance in locating course material in the Moodle shell. You could also include a link to the course syllabus.

Some other things you might consider adding are

- **Textbook Information**: Your Moodle shell could be one place students look to find out ISBN info about the textbook.
- **Exam information**: Listing exam dates and assignment deadlines is helpful to your students.
- **Course FAQ’s**: What do students really need to know about your course?

To edit Block Zero, click the “edit summary” button, which looks like a Gear.
In Block Zero, which is the top block, write a welcome message, with all pertinent info. When you are done, be sure to save changes.

Remember, on the web it is very important to make things readable, you can do this by using headings and making sure there is white space between paragraphs, keep it clean and simple.
Adding Files to Moodle

This is your homepage in Moodle. To edit this page, make sure you turn editing on.

Before you can edit or make changes, you must Turn Editing On.
Click on Add and Activity or Resource and choose file

Give your file a name and a description and then click on ADD
Find your file, and remember it is better to upload PDF files, not Word docs, not every student will have Word on their computer!

You can double click the file or select the file and choose Open.
Be sure to test your link!

The file now appears here and you can save and return to course
Link to an external website

Moodle is also a great tool to enhance your students’ learning experiences, as it can provide them interesting resources to view and use.

To do this, you may want to link to an external website.

It is not necessary to close your Moodle course shell when to go out to the Internet to find an external website

Use your browser to open a new tab

In Firefox, clicking on this + sign allows you to open a new tab so that you can look for your resource and go back and forth from your course shell to your search.
Go to the website you want to use as a reference

Select and copy the URL (web address)
Save and return to course, and you will see your link

Don’t forget to test your link to make sure it works before proceeding.
Adding a YouTube Video to your course

YouTube has a ton of great videos you can embed in Moodle

First search for the video that you want

For example here are a bunch of biology videos
Back in Moodle, you should create a webpage in your course where you will embed your video. See the directions above.

Give your resource a name and then paste the code in the bottom box but click the HTML button FIRST to get to code view, that is very important!
This will bring up the HTML Source Editor, paste your code in that box

Click on “Save and Display” to make sure that your video is working

Note: You can also include a “live” link to the video in the HTML block and the video will appear.
Two more tools you might like to use are “Assignments” and “Forums”

**Forums** allow for asynchronous discussion, such as question and answer boards.

**Assignments** allow students to upload papers, etc, online, and make grading so much easier for you!

**Adding a Forum to Moodle**

Forums are an activity in Moodle, go to Add an Activity or Resource and choose Forum.
Give your forum a name

The directions for your forum go here
If you decide to use forums

If you decide to use forums in your course, and I hope you will as forums provide many advantages and support for students, you should also include specific instructions and guidelines on how to use the forum for students.

Below is an example of information you might provide. Notice that there is also an example of a rubric provided.

Each week we will have at least one discussion forum. You must post THREE times in each forum to get the maximum number of points for your participation. Each substantive and complete post is worth 25 points.

As the instructor, I will facilitate student discussions but I will not address every single post. In most cases, I might share a related idea, intervene when the discussion goes off-track, or tie student comments together to help deepen student learning. Consequently, I will not directly answer questions in the discussion area unless they are addressed to me. I will check the discussions daily during the week, and occasionally on the weekends.
Some characteristics I consider to be part of excellent discussion contributions are outlined below. I will consider these characteristics when assessing the quality and level of student participation.

- Submit initial post(s) early in the week, and subsequent responses to the posts of other learners at timely intervals throughout the duration of the session. The goal is to have a dynamic discussion around the topic that lasts throughout the entire session.
- Posts and responses should be thorough and thoughtful. Just posting an "I agree" or "Good ideas" will not be considered adequate. Support statements with examples, experiences, or references. Be brief — keep each post and response to one or two short paragraphs. Keep in mind that fellow learners will be reading and responding to you, too.
- Make certain that all posts and responses address the question, problem, or situation as presented for discussion. This does not mean you should not extend the topic, but do not stray from the topic.
- Discussions occur when there is dialogue; therefore, you need to build upon the posts and responses of other learners to create discussion threads. Make sure to revisit the discussion forum and respond (if necessary) to what other learners have posted to your initial responses.
- When relevant, add to the discussion by including prior knowledge, work experiences, references, web sites, resources, etc. (giving credit when appropriate).
- Contributions to the discussions (posts and responses) should be complete and free of grammatical or structural errors.

**What do I mean by a substantive post?**

The following are some ideas to set the stage for substantive participation for the development of your critical thinking skills:

1. Ensure that the posting contributes to the overall discussion thread that is being developed. Your response must contain some reference back to the original discussion question. Stay on track by always referring back to that original discussion question.
2. Try to use your posting to add value to the discussion. This is more effective than simply responding to meet a requirement.
3. Check to see that the posting expands on the main theme (in the discussion question, or assignment posting).
4. Make sure your posting is at least 50-150 words.
Other Ideas for Participation

- Share a related experience.
- Comment on others’ experiences.
- Ask students questions about their ideas/experiences.
- Consider an idea being discussed, and offer a different perspective on it.
- Describe an interesting idea from the week's reading, and explain what insights you gained from it.
- Ask the group a question about the week's reading.
- Disagree (respectfully, of course) with a point that someone else has made.
- Discuss a related issue on which you would like some feedback.
- Describe how you have applied the recent course concepts to your personal/professional life.
- Share another resource you have used as you explored the course topics.

Here is a suggested rubric for forum discussion posts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantity and Timeliness</td>
<td>Does not submit at least one post early in the session and/or does not submit at least two responses to other learners at various times during the session.</td>
<td>Submits at least one thoughtful post early in the session and at least two responses to other learners at various times during the session.</td>
<td>Submits two or more thoughtful posts early in the session and more than two responses to other learners at various times during the session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of content and applicability to professional practice</td>
<td>Post(s) and responses show little evidence of knowledge and understanding of course content and applicability to professional practice.</td>
<td>Post(s) and responses show evidence of knowledge and understanding of course content and applicability to professional practice.</td>
<td>Post(s) and responses show evidence of knowledge and understanding of course content and applicability to professional practice and include other resources that extend the learning of the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generates learning within the community</td>
<td>Posts do not attempt to elicit responses and reflections from other learners and/or responses do not build upon the ideas of other learners to take the discussion deeper.</td>
<td>Posts attempt to elicit responses and reflections from other learners and responses build upon the ideas of other learners to take the discussion deeper.</td>
<td>Posts elicit responses and reflections from other learners and responses build upon and integrate multiple views from other learners to take the discussion deeper.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adding Assignments to Moodle

A student can upload a single file.

Assignments are an activity and there are four types.
Upload a single file

This could be a Word document, spreadsheet, or anything in digital format. After students upload their files, the teacher will be able to open the submission and use the Moodle interface to assign a grade and offer comments as feedback. A student may submit a file as many times as they like up until the deadline, as long as resubmitting is permitted. Only the latest file is retained, and this is the one the lecturer marks.

Online Text Assignment

Online text assignments allow students to submit text using the normal Moodle editing tools.

Teachers can grade them online and even add in-line comments or changes.
Allow resubmitting

By default, students cannot resubmit assignments once the teacher has graded them. If you want students to be able to re-submit their assignments, you will need to turn this option “on”, then students will be allowed to resubmit assignments after they have been graded (for you to re-grade). This may be useful if the teacher wants to encourage students to do better work in an iterative process.

Comment In-line

If this option is selected, then the original submission will be copied into the feedback comment field during grading, making it easier to comment in-line (using a different color, perhaps) or to edit the original text. Of course even if the teacher makes in-line comments and changes, the student’s original submission is kept intact.

If in-line comments are not permitted, then the teacher will see the student’s submission and a separate area for making comments.
This is what the student sees when interacting with an online assignment in Moodle.

Please compose a brief paragraph describing your reactions to the film we watched in class. Try to relate your reactions to the topics that have already come up in class, but do not feel that you must limit yourself to those topics.
Advanced Uploading of Files

Features

- This feature allows teachers to send files back to students in response to their submissions.

  *Example:* A typical way to use this would be to edit the student's submitted file by adding comments and/or corrections, and then returning this file back to the student via the assignment. When a student clicks on the assignment, files sent to him or her appear as a list of Response files.

- Response files can be uploaded before submission, which can be used to give each student a different file to work with.

  *Tip:* Be sure that “Gradebook” settings for that assignment allow the grades/response files to be visible to the student.

  *Tip:* The teacher must also include a comment in the text comment box, or the student will not be able to see the file.

- Students may also enter notes describing the submitted files, progress status, or any other text information.
• Submission of this type of assignment must be manually finalized by the student.
• Teachers can review the current status at any time, unfinished assignments are marked as Draft.
• Teachers can revert any ungraded assignment back to draft status.

**Settings**

**Maximum size**

This setting specifies the maximum size per file of each of the files that the students can upload as their submission. For example, if you set the limit to one megabyte, students can upload files up to one megabyte in size. If your students are uploading word processing documents or spreadsheets, typically you only need to allow for a few megabytes. If your students are submitting multimedia projects or other files with many images or audio clips, then the space allowed will need to be larger.

**Allow deleting**

If enabled, students may delete uploaded files at any time before submitting for grading.

**Maximum number of uploaded files**

Maximum number of files each participant may upload, this number is not shown to students. It is a best practice to remind students of the actual number of requested files in assignment description. For example: "Only 3 files maybe uploaded in this assignment."

**Allow notes**

If enabled, students may enter notes into text area associated with the assignment. This text box can be used for communication with the grading person, assignment progress description or any other written activity.

**Allow Send for marking**

If enabled, students may progress from Draft status by clicking the “Send for Marking” button. The submission is then pushed through for grading.

This means that they can no longer edit their submission (to do so would risk invalidating any work their assessor had done on their submission). If students regret their decision and wish to edit, they need to request that somebody with editing access reverts them to Draft Status.
Hide description before available date

If enabled, assignment description is hidden before the opening date.

Offline Activity

This is useful when the assignment is performed outside of Moodle. It could be something elsewhere on the web or face-to-face. Students can see a description of the assignment, but can't upload files or interact with the assignment. Grading works normally, and students will get notifications of their grades.
Adding a Book to Moodle

Moodle offers a tool called a “book” that allows you to add multiple pages of related content. This is a great way to organize information for students to view.

To add a Book:

Turn editing on in your Moodle shell and then click on Add a Resource/Book
Give your book a name and write a brief description of what the book is for in the Summary Box.

Click on Save and Display.
Pages in the book are called “Chapters”, so don’t get confused!

You can add live links, text, graphics and any other type of objects to pages in your book.
When you create and save a page, you will go to this screen. A table of contents appears on the left, you add a new page just by clicking on the red plus sign.