

 tool guide for teachers:

How to **Interact** with
students online using moodle

Abstract

Learning requires collaboration, and in the dispersed environments in which we operate, both online learning and classroom interaction are critical. In this paper, we will discuss how teachers can interact with students online using the Moodle course management system. The various Moodle tools are discussed, informing teachers of how to facilitate effective interaction inside Moodle.

Introduction:

Moodle (an acronym for *Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment*) is a robust, open source, and free Course Management System (CMS) with over 70,256 active sites registered in 222 countries.

This open source CMS is free, easy to use, and accessible to students from anywhere. Teachers can use Moodle to give formative and summative assessments and distribute and collect assignments. Instructors can also share course content and extra resources, plus customize the entire teaching process according to their needs.

Moodle is designed in particular to support constructivist pedagogy, which supports collaboration, communication, interaction, and project-based learning and is suitable for both K12 and higher education. The included tools can help instructors create a sense of community learning, where they foster active learning and offer immediate feedback.

A popular choice in converting traditional classes into online ones, as well as introducing blended learning options, Moodle is sufficiently robust to be used to conduct all manner of class activities, deliver distance education, and supplement traditional in-person classes. As of today, the Moodle community includes 5,767,515 online courses, 1,292,621 teachers and 56,228,996 users. These are huge numbers and speak for the utility and popularity of the LMS.

Interacting with students using Moodle

Effective learning requires participation and collaboration. Simply deploying software tools does not increase interaction. Terry Anderson explains in his paper on *Theory and Practice of Online Learning* that, "effective learning is community-centered, knowledge-centered, learner-centered, and assessment-centered" (Anderson p.47). Teachers need to see technology as a tool they use to support their objectives, and it's up to them to otherwise create an environment conducive to learning.

Moodle advances these principles by providing tools that promote active learning, interaction, and community. Collaboration is realized when students create wikis, discussion groups, and blogs together. Interaction with instructors occurs through chat, forums, emails, and discussion boards. Prompt feedback leads to active participation, enhanced motivation, and increased drive to learn, not to mention making the assessment process more effective for students and enabling data-driven instruction.

Let's take a look at some tools instructors can use inside Moodle for interacting with students:

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The screenshot shows a Moodle course page for 'e-learning on WizIQ'. The page title is 'e-learning on WizIQ' and it has a 'View 2 journal entries' link. The main content area contains a journal entry with the following text:

For organizations looking to run their teaching/training programs from end-to-end. 1) Create multiple accounts for teachers in your organization. 2) Schedule and deliver classes, view recordings, upload content - all from within Moodle. 3) Create a common content library for your organization and let all your teachers access it. 4) A separate console for your teachers to login. 5) Student attend classes from your co-branded sub-domain without signing up on WizIQ.

Below the text is a button labeled 'Start or edit my journal entry'.

WizIQ is one tool that can be used for holding live virtual classes, sharing content, presentations and screens with many learners at anytime and anywhere. E-learning gets defined here with the help of many useful tools...

At the bottom of the entry, it says 'Last edited: Tuesday, 13 December 2011, 12:00 AM (37 words)'.

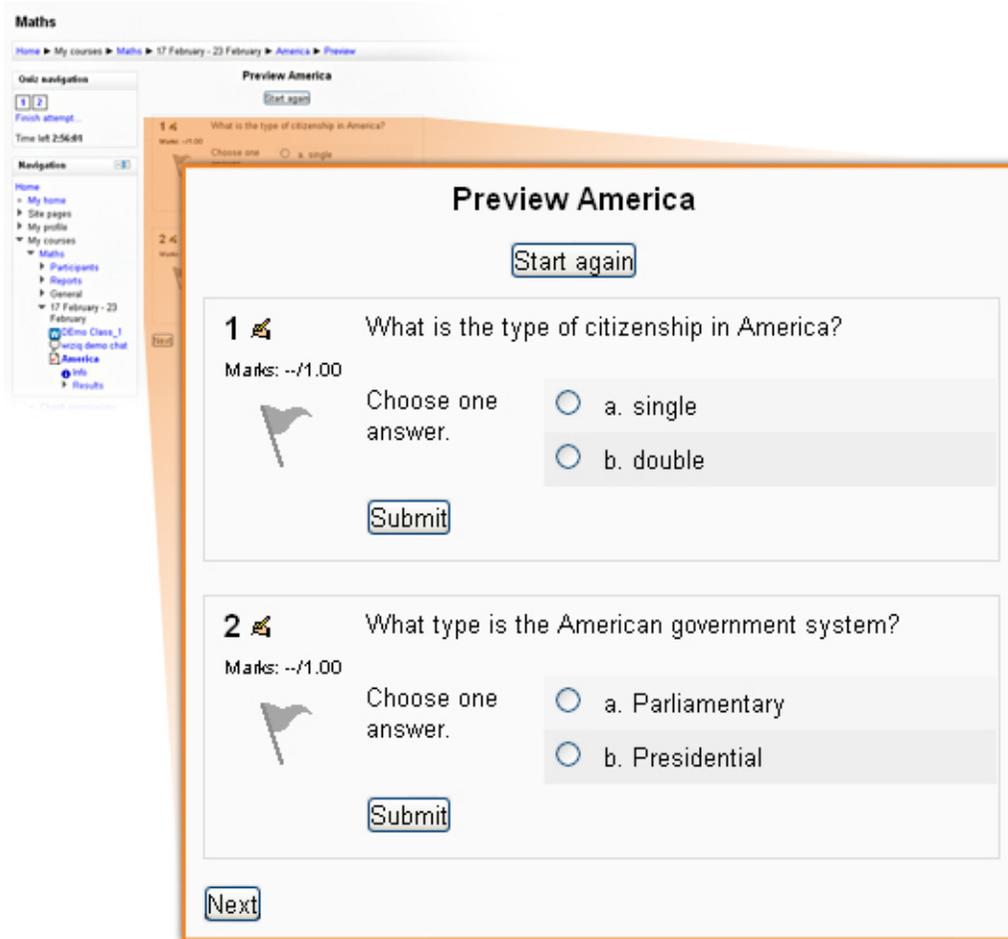
Encourage learning logs, where students reflect on what they've learned

Use the journal activity in Moodle to have your students create learning logs, which help them to reflect on what they've learned. Teachers can access the journals, review their notes and check on their comprehension, offering constructive feedback to correct misunderstandings or prod students toward a deeper understanding, all without hampering the current flow of student's work and in a totally non-threatening environment.



Share and communicate via live chat and forums

In order for education to happen, communication is paramount. Through Moodle, teachers communicate with their students via forums, live chat, and editing documents, through real-time collaboration. Chat allows teachers and students to communicate about a collaborative task, share ideas, share links, and in general work together on projects. Better yet, the live chats can be recorded and saved for future reference.



The screenshot shows a Moodle quiz interface. The main content area is titled "Preview America" and contains two questions. Each question is a multiple-choice type with two options. The first question asks "What is the type of citizenship in America?" with options "a. single" and "b. double". The second question asks "What type is the American government system?" with options "a. Parliamentary" and "b. Presidential". Each question has a "Submit" button. The interface also includes a "Start again" button at the top, a "Next" button at the bottom, and a navigation sidebar on the left.

Preview America

[Start again](#)

1 What is the type of citizenship in America?
Marks: --/1.00

Choose one answer.

a. single

b. double

[Submit](#)

2 What type is the American government system?
Marks: --/1.00

Choose one answer.

a. Parliamentary

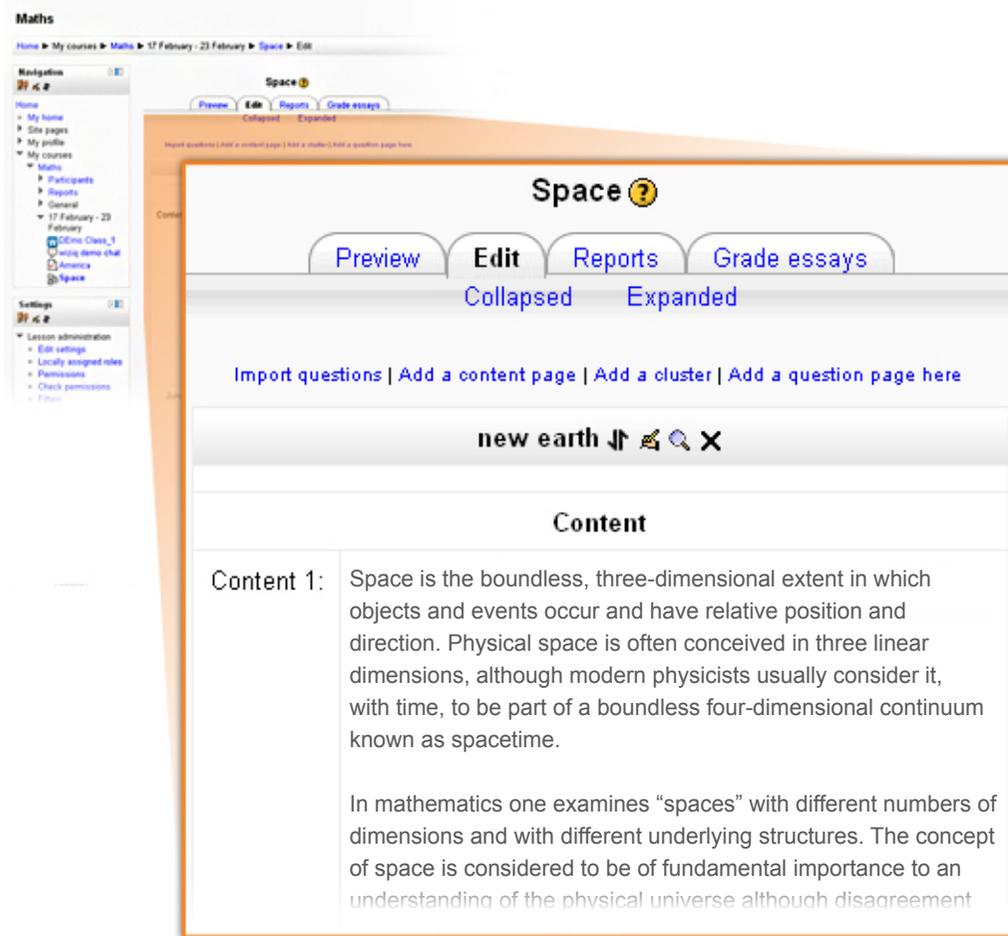
b. Presidential

[Submit](#)

[Next](#)

Give and grade quizzes

If you install [Quiz activity module](#), you can use Moodle to implement multiple choice quizzes. You can give students several retakes to answer the questions correctly, if desired. Display the resulting grades within the results block, and use the feedback option to discuss the results so they understand where they misunderstood and why.



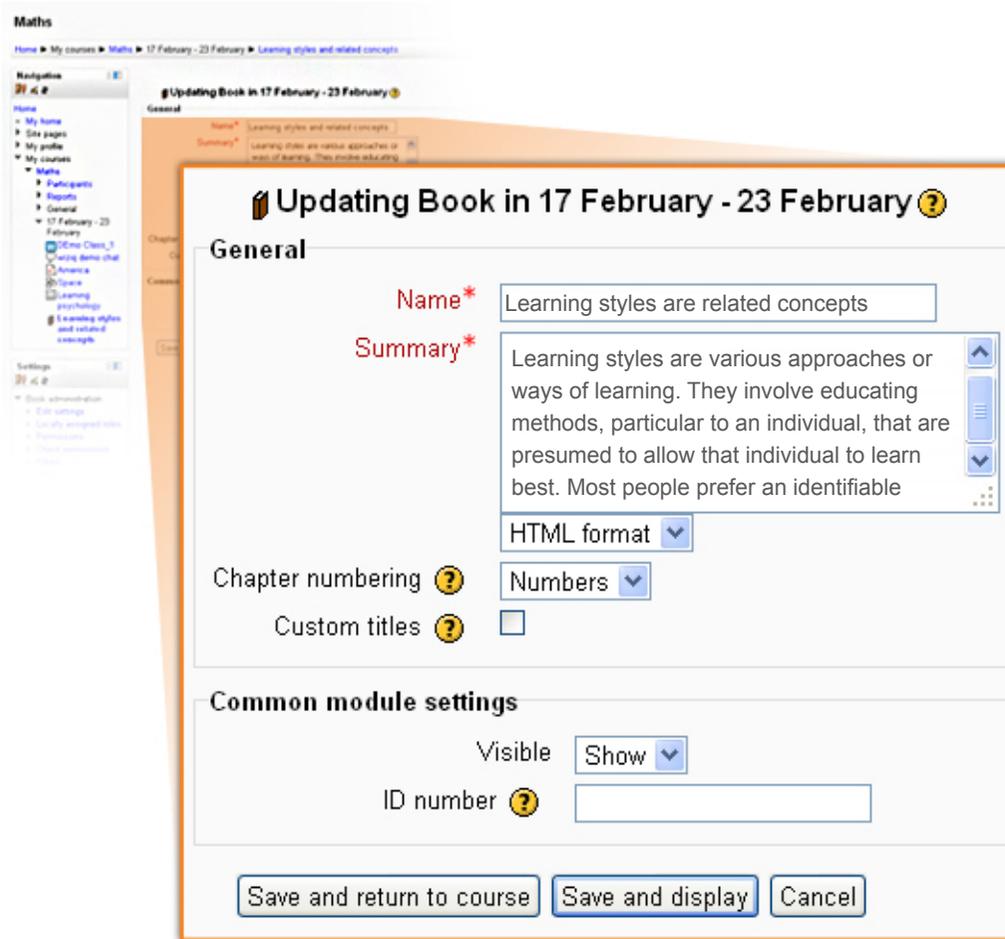
The screenshot shows the Moodle Lesson module interface for a lesson titled "Space". The interface includes a navigation menu on the left, a top navigation bar with buttons for "Preview", "Edit", "Reports", and "Grade essays", and a main content area. The main content area has a header "Space" with a help icon, followed by a sub-header "Collapsed Expanded" and a row of buttons "Preview", "Edit", "Reports", and "Grade essays". Below this is a section for "new earth" with a search icon and a close icon. The main content area is titled "Content" and contains a section "Content 1:" with the following text:

Space is the boundless, three-dimensional extent in which objects and events occur and have relative position and direction. Physical space is often conceived in three linear dimensions, although modern physicists usually consider it, with time, to be part of a boundless four-dimensional continuum known as spacetime.

In mathematics one examines "spaces" with different numbers of dimensions and with different underlying structures. The concept of space is considered to be of fundamental importance to an understanding of the physical universe although disagreement

Make a lesson for the learners

Moodle's [Lesson module](#) allows you to add all sorts of media to lessons, along with adding tests to assess comprehension. You even have the option to send students to a slide containing the right answer for every incorrect answer in these assessments. Essentially, the lesson module self-contained chunks of teaching and learning opportunities, organized to facilitate either independent or collaborative learning.



The screenshot shows the Moodle interface for editing a book chapter. The main content area is titled "Updating Book in 17 February - 23 February". The "General" section contains the following fields:

- Name***: A text input field containing "Learning styles are related concepts".
- Summary***: A rich text editor containing the text: "Learning styles are various approaches or ways of learning. They involve educating methods, particular to an individual, that are presumed to allow that individual to learn best. Most people prefer an identifiable".
- HTML format**: A dropdown menu set to "HTML".
- Chapter numbering**: A dropdown menu set to "Numbers".
- Custom titles**: An unchecked checkbox.

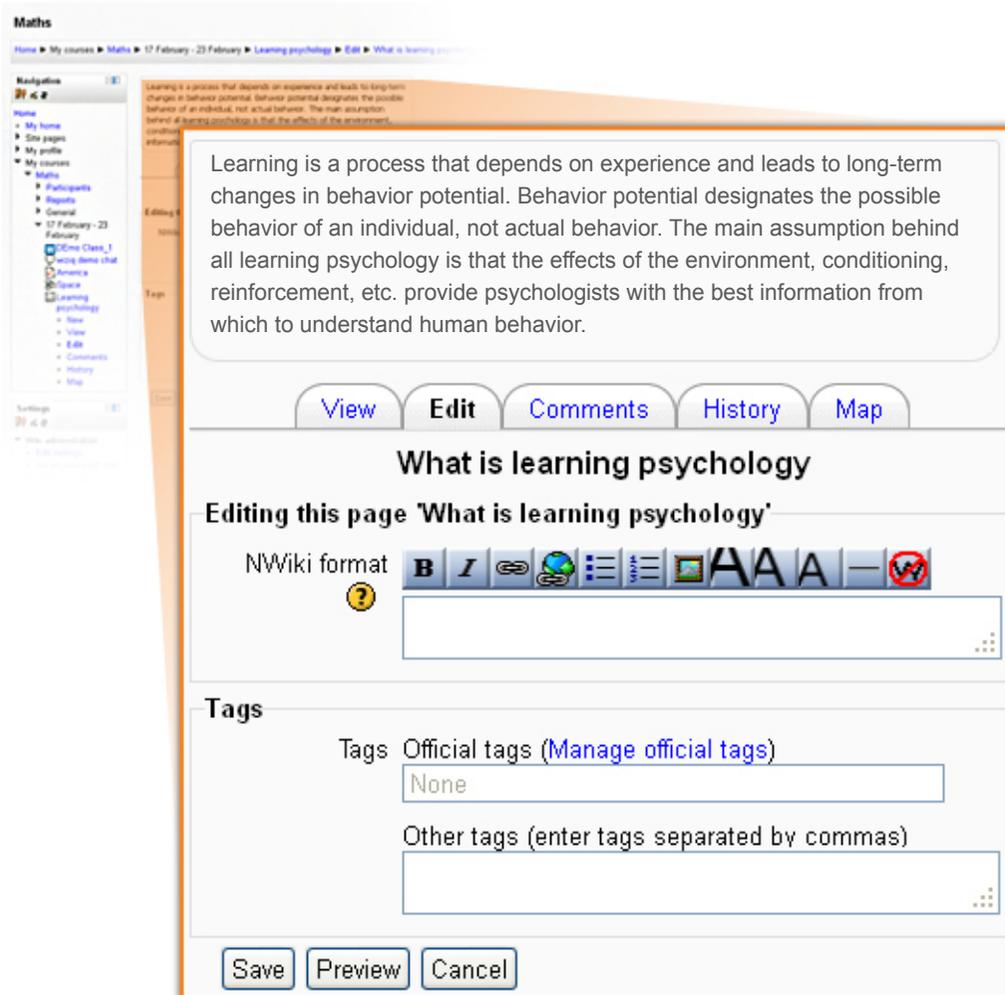
The "Common module settings" section contains:

- Visible**: A dropdown menu set to "Show".
- ID number**: An empty text input field.

At the bottom of the form are three buttons: "Save and return to course", "Save and display", and "Cancel".

Create multi-page content

Book-like collections or microsities can be created inside Moodle with the help of the Book module. Create books with chapters, give links to discussion forums within the book, and even include multimedia objects like Flash movies.



The screenshot shows the Moodle Wiki editing interface for a page titled "What is learning psychology". The page content is enclosed in a light blue box and reads: "Learning is a process that depends on experience and leads to long-term changes in behavior potential. Behavior potential designates the possible behavior of an individual, not actual behavior. The main assumption behind all learning psychology is that the effects of the environment, conditioning, reinforcement, etc. provide psychologists with the best information from which to understand human behavior." Below the text are buttons for "View", "Edit", "Comments", "History", and "Map". The editing toolbar includes "NWiki format" with a help icon, and icons for bold, italic, link, unlink, list, table, image, font size (AAA), and a "No rich text" icon. The "Tags" section has a dropdown menu for "Official tags" (set to "None") and a text input for "Other tags (enter tags separated by commas)". At the bottom are "Save", "Preview", and "Cancel" buttons.

Create and review notes with wikis and podcasts

At the end of the course, Moodle creates a wiki to chapters from a text or particular units of study and can then associate a student with each link. The purpose is to assign each learner to summarize a specific content area and then facilitate review and study by all students.

Instead of merely writing quick notes for every chapter or content area, students can write thorough notes in a single area, making for better notes and, more importantly, better retention and understanding. Students can then use the Podcast module to upload podcasts of their notes, and return whenever they need to in order to review them.

Maths

[Turn editing on](#) [Update this Gallery](#)

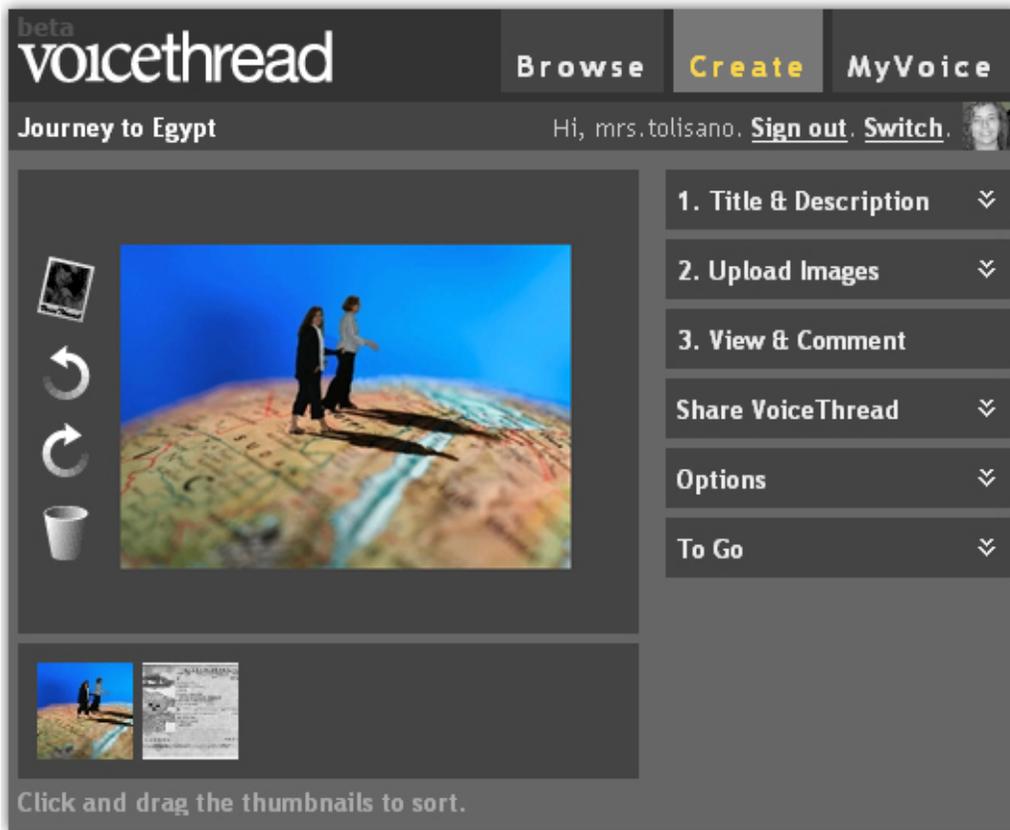
[Home](#) ▶ [My courses](#) ▶ [Maths](#) ▶ [Lightbox Galleries](#) ▶ e-learning storyboard image

e-learning storyboard image



Make educational movie trailers or storyboards

Within Moodle, instructors can provide multimedia learning resources to their students, which can be repurposed and remixed for building their own stories. Students take the images and files and upload them into a storyboarding gallery. They can then access the gallery and learn and review concepts in the form of a story of their own creation.



beta
voicethread

Browse Create MyVoice

Journey to Egypt Hi, mrs.tolisano. [Sign out](#). [Switch](#).

1. Title & Description

2. Upload Images

3. View & Comment

Share VoiceThread

Options

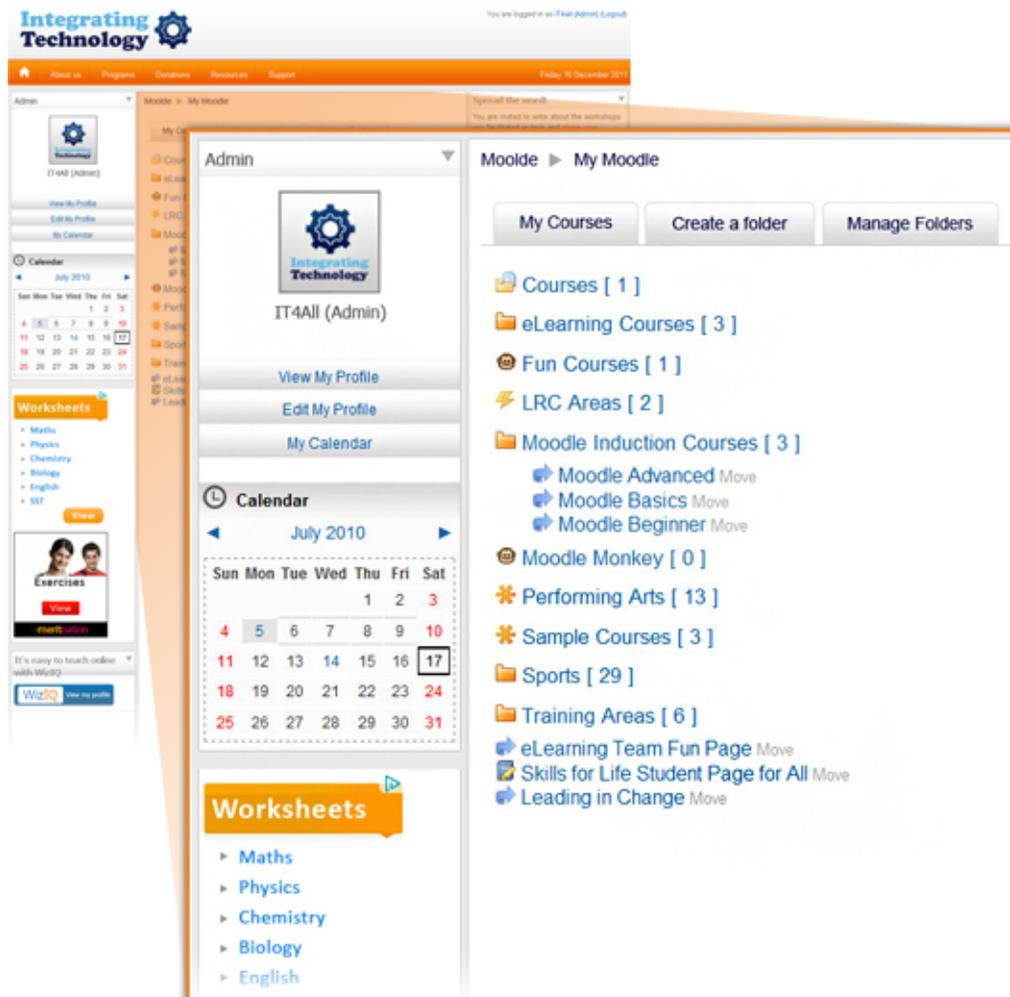
To Go

Click and drag the thumbnails to sort.

Get vocal with voice thread

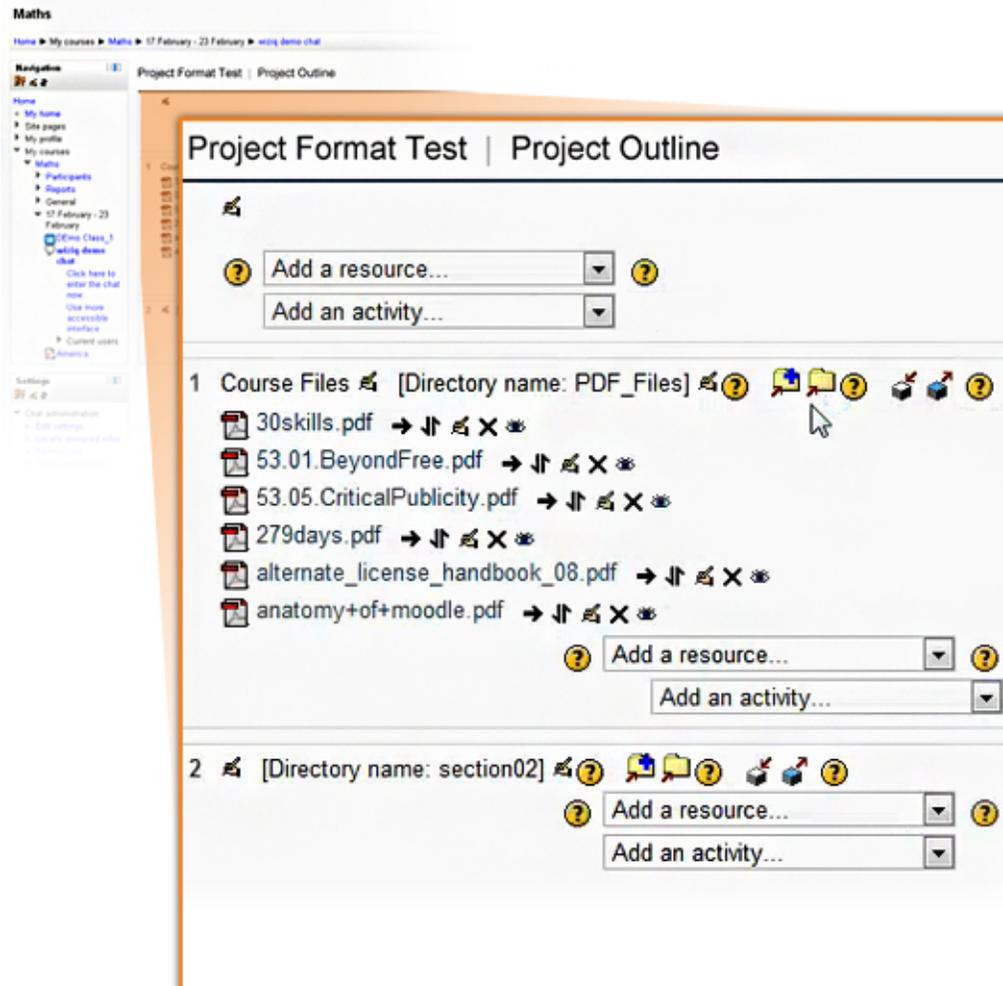
Make use of the microphone in laptops and netbooks by embedding a voice thread in various formats, which allows learners to speak and record what they have to say. Use voice threads to let learners tell what they think of a particular topic, and to give input on what their peers are saying. Voice threads bring a fun, personal, and attractive aspect to e-learning and can have broad implications for students with verbal disabilities and impaired writing abilities.

An alternative option is the [Nanogong](#) plugin. This module helps the students in recording verbal responses to questions, which can be reviewed by tutors, who then respond with feedback.



Turn your Moodle course page into a website

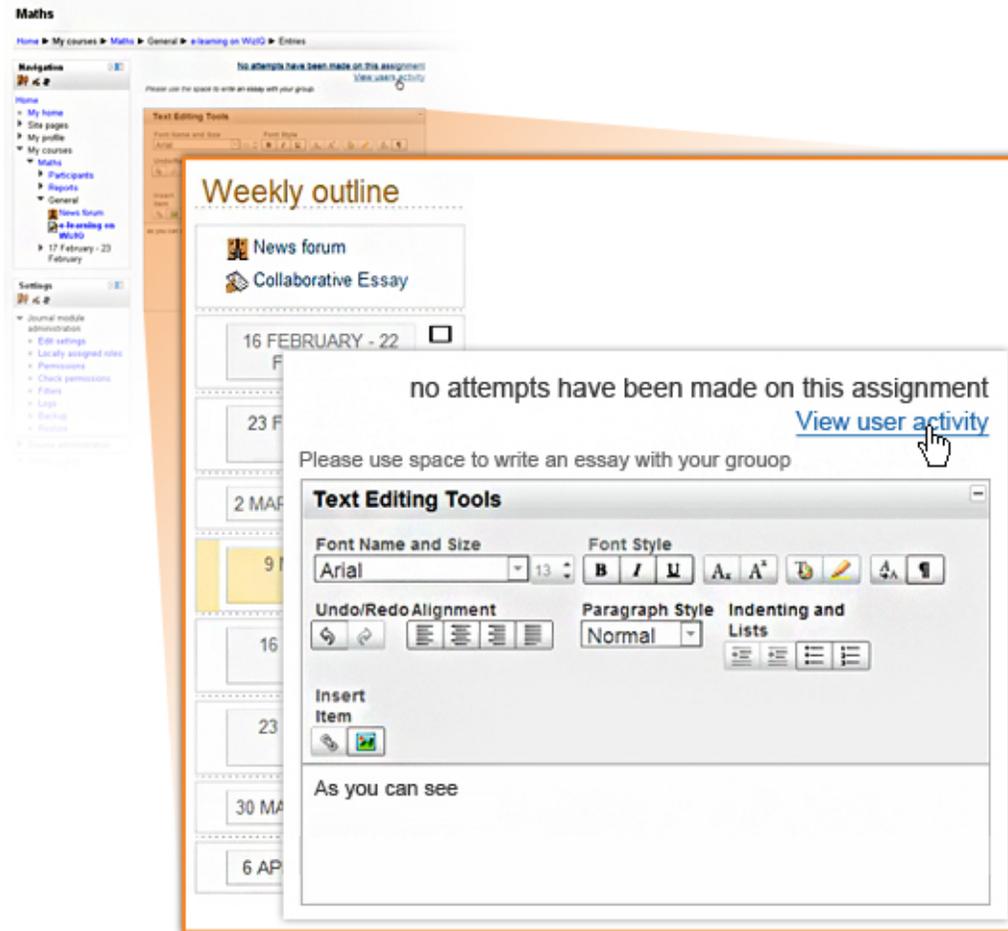
Increase student engagement and interest by adding gadgets, RSS feeds, and embedding content to make your page look like a website. An increasing number of educational institutions and organizations are using Moodle as a content management system, in addition to an LMS.



The screenshot shows the Moodle interface for a course titled "Maths". The main content area is titled "Project Format Test | Project Outline". It features a navigation menu on the left and a central content area with two sections. Section 1, titled "Course Files [Directory name: PDF_Files]", contains a list of PDF files: "30skills.pdf", "53.01.BeyondFree.pdf", "53.05.CriticalPublicity.pdf", "279days.pdf", "alternate_license_handbook_08.pdf", and "anatomy+of+moodle.pdf". Each file has a set of icons for actions like view, download, and delete. Below the file list are two dropdown menus: "Add a resource..." and "Add an activity...". Section 2, titled "[Directory name: section02]", also has "Add a resource..." and "Add an activity..." dropdown menus. The interface includes a top navigation bar with "Home", "My courses", and "Maths" links, and a left sidebar with "Navigation" and "Home" sections.

Upload and share notes on Moodle

The database activity module allows students to upload their notes or answers and access others' after they have uploaded two of their own. This feature creates notes or question database and a useful resource for both teaching and learning. Requiring students to upload two first ensures that they're taking their own notes and doing their own work before turning to someone else's.



The screenshot shows the Moodle Collaborative real-time editor interface. The main content area displays a calendar for February with dates 16, 23, 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, and 6 AP. A pop-up window titled "Text Editing Tools" is overlaid on the calendar. The pop-up contains the following elements:

- A message: "no attempts have been made on this assignment" with a link "View user activity" below it.
- A prompt: "Please use space to write an essay with your group".
- A "Text Editing Tools" toolbar with the following sections:
 - Font Name and Size: Arial, 13
 - Font Style: Bold (B), Italic (I), Underline (U), Text color (A), Background color (A), Bulleted list (B), Numbered list (1), Indent (I), Outdent (O)
 - Undo/Redo Alignment: Undo, Redo, Left, Center, Right, Justify
 - Paragraph Style: Normal
 - Inserting and Lists: Bulleted list, Numbered list, Indent, Outdent
- An "Insert Item" section with icons for link and image.
- A text input area containing the text "As you can see".

Real-time collaboration

Use Moodle's Collaborative real-time editor module for collaboratively editing documents, just like in Google Docs. Including multiple viewpoints greatly helps in resource creation and the ability to edit simultaneously provides powerful opportunities for group work both in and out of the classroom.



The screenshot shows a Moodle course page for 'English'. The page title is 'English' and the breadcrumb trail is 'Home > English > WizIQ > English- everything about English'. The course is titled 'English- everything about English!!' and is a 'User Event' scheduled for '05/30/2011-06:38 AM (GMT+01:00)'. The duration is '30 Minutes', the type is 'Audio and Video', and recording is 'No'. A 'Live Stream' window is overlaid on the page, showing a whiteboard with the Moodle logo, a video gallery with five participants, and a chat window with a message from John: 'perfect'. The chat window also shows a 'Send' button and a 'Write your message here' field. The bottom of the screenshot shows a timer for the live stream at '00:01:46' and 'Elapsed Time 00:02:08'.

Virtual Classroom

Schedule and launch live class sessions from within Moodle, via virtual classroom tools like Adobe Connect, eLecta, elluminate, and WizIQ by using Moodle's 'Activity' feature. Scheduled sessions get listed in the 'Block,' and are automatically listed on the Moodle course calendar. Thus, students can easily join their teachers' live classroom sessions and learn in real-time.

Conclusion

Moodle fulfills most e-learning interaction needs while offering flexibility in when and where students learn. In 2007, researchers Ajlan and Zedan noted that Moodle is better than most other virtual learning environment (VLE) systems because of its underlying philosophy and strong pedagogical features.

Teachers can make use of Moodle's various interactive features to enrich and enhance the learning process. Moodle has been adopted in many institutions in America, as well as around the globe, filling the growing need for online learning platforms. Most often, Moodle is used for blended learning, but the distinction of virtual and traditional in-class teaching is blurring more each day. Virtual course delivery and the use of web-based supplements to physical classrooms are becoming the norm rather than the exception. Because it is both free and extremely mature, Moodle provides a powerful entry point into e-learning.

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