

Moodle

Configuration

Notes

- [Content](#)
 - [Guidelines](#)
 - [Question Bank](#)
 - [English](#)
 - [IXL Based Math](#)
- [Course Settings](#)
 - [Course Formats](#)
 - [Groups](#)
- [Course Management](#)
 - [Conventions](#)
 - [Course Reuse](#)
- [An Open Source World](#)
 - [Open Source Books](#)

Content

Guidelines

Compactness

Students do not like to scroll and scroll. The course should be as compact as possible.

Text Resources

As much text as possible should be copy/pasted directly into Moodle Books or Pages. This is only possible with certain resources that allow copy/paste, like OpenStax or fully open source literature. The benefit of having the content directly in Moodle is that the student's time on the activity can be tracked. Once the student clicks on an external URL, the dedication time is not reliable.

Rhythm of Activities

Each course should have a rhythm of activity that is the same week to week. The types of activities for a course should not be very different, with the exception of capstone projects. For example, In English the read the book, then write the summary. In Math they click on the URLs, do the work, then turn in a screenshot. Course Authors can set up a what ever unique activities they desire, but the pattern should repeat from week to week.

Question Bank

Question Bank

The Question Bank may be accessed through any course using the "more" menu item. By default, when you add a question to the bank, the question is stored under the course name category.

There are system level categories for organizing questions, which may be accessed through any editing the course.

- More>question bank>categories

System Level Categories

Moodle provides system level question categories that may be customized. The categories have been already been defined for Studia Nova. These categories will store questions that are re-used in many different courses. The main purpose of organizing questions in the system-level question bank categories are to present the questions to the students over and over through multiple classes to drive home key concepts.

- As users build classes, questions may be added to or used from the system level question bank.
- All questions in these categories must have a *numbering system* that allows for easy reference to the topic covered.
- All questions will have a very description name for easy reference when picking the question for a quiz
- Questions that driven home key concepts should be organized in the system level categories

Videos Content Questions

External videos from Youtube and other sources are best managed by creating a question from the video. Creating a question out of a video is an easy way to track if the student watched the video and gained some knowledge.

- Select a **Fill-in-the-Blank** question type
- Embed the video link in the Question content area, default the video to start automatically for younger learners
- Create the Fill-in-the-blank question under the video

Videos that are re-used over and over, such as math videos and other content, should be stores in the System Level Categories

Fill in the Blank Questions

Fill in the Blank questions are easier to create than multiple choice. A summary statement of key knowledge is written, then the user selects drop down menu type or typed fill-in-the-blank. The FIB forces the student to read the summary statement and think about how to complete, so at least some of the content is read in detail.

Adding Questions to a Quiz

Questions are presented to the student *only* through a quiz. Create a quiz activity and then add questions from the question bank to the quiz. Users can also create a question directly from the quiz activity, which will by default be added to the course category.

English

English courses mainly rely on open-source literature with audio files. Many courses have been created from [Lit2Go](#) resources. Students are highly encouraged to listen to the audio while reading along. This method produces large gains in reading comprehension and vocabulary rather quickly.

Daily Books

A daily, or sometimes weekly, amount of reading is contained in a Moodle book activity, see [more-on-books](#). Individual Lit2Go chapters are pages in the book. Most of the time, there are multiple Moodle books for each work of literature. The purpose of the Moodle book is to pace the student to read one hour a day, so the Moodle books have about an hour's work of reading of the work of literature selected.

Diaries

At the end of the daily reading, the student is asked to make a Moodle diary entry (see [more-on-diary](#)), summarizing the main ideas of the chapters that were read. There is one diary activity per work of literature, but there is one entry in the diary for each Moodle book.

It is not reasonable to expect the student to scroll back up to the diary activity and make a new entry when done with their reading, they need to see the activity to write the summary directly after completing the book activity.

The URL of the diary activity is copied and added as a URL activity after each book to prompt the user to make a new diary entry. The URL opens each student's own diary for the work of literature.

Optionally, the link to the diary can be added to the Moodle book itself and the end of the reading.

Essays

Essays integrate ideas and concepts. Developing an essay is a multi-step process. There are two essays per semester of English.

/incomplete/

IXL Based Math

Most math classes make use of the IXL.com online resource for daily practice. In general, full courses may be completed in the year if the student completes three skills per day.

As of 2023, IXL does not provide any direct integration with Moodle. As students complete their skills, they are asked to turn in a screenshot using the [assignment](#) activity. The assignment activity must be configured to NOT accept files, the students paste/drag their screenshot into the text area. When grading the activity, the grade checks the screenshot shows the titles and the score.

The screenshot method is not full-proof. Students can use "inspect element" and directly change the HTML code on the screen to improve their score. The student is made aware that their IXL account will be cross-checked. Teachers can view all student accounts on IXL platform.

IXL skills are either added a URLs, with pop-up (under Appearance) being the most convenient.

Standard pop-up window size should be 1000 width by 750 height

Alternatively, the links can be added to the Assignment in the description text box and links. The assignment can display the description box on the course page. The advantage of this approach is less scrolling and a more compact course. The disadvantage is that the IXL window can not be controlled.

If students are not logged into IXL with their own credentials, their work will not be saved. If they turned in a screenshot and the work is not saved, when the student's account is spot-checked, the work will not show, the teacher may assign a zero in this case.

Course Settings

Course Formats

Weekly Format

Courses may be configured with a specific number of weeks. If weeks are used, then Moodle creates a header that auto-calculates the weeks based on the course start date.

By default, all courses are created with 18 weeks, as a semester generally has 18 weeks of study.

If in the School configuration, the school decides to run classes with more or less weeks, then the default setting should be changes by the admins. This would also mean all the default courses will need to be manually updated, with the number of topics changes, and activities condensed or expanded to fill the number of weeks the school has chosen. see: [weeks-in-a-term](#)

Changing the number of weeks is easily done in the course settings page. The weekly format should be used for most courses fourth grade on up. Grouping the effort in weeks helps students stay on track.

Topic Format

Topic format is used for short courses or "band-aid" courses that address a specific skill deficit. Topic courses can be used for condensed content that spans a term or part of a term. Topic courses are also great for younger grades, as the format is simple and more juvenile.

Any number of topics may be chosen. Topic section titles are defaulted to Topic 1, 2, etc, and they may be edited.

When using course reuse function, which pulls in content from another course, the topics in both courses are automatically mapped. This can be very confusing to sort out. see [course-reuse](#)

Topic courses are not affected by school configuration changes since there is not calendar element to the course.

Trail Format

Trail format shows the student a graphical pathway to the end of the course and is suitable for younger learners. Trail format allows the user to upload a picture for each section. The format does not however keep track of where the student is along the trail.

Groups

Groups are used to create sections of the course that correspond to various teachers. Students are organized into groups, which allows the teacher to only access and view their own students.

Groups must correspond to Sections in the PEMS see [groups-and-sections](#)

Course Management

Conventions

Hierarchy

The Studia Nova Course Hierarchy has been defined under "Manage Courses and Categories." Top level categories are by subject area, and K8 is separated from High School.

The hierarchy is meant to easily find and work on a course, it does not correspond directly to any subject as defined in the PEMS. It is not necessary to align the subjects in the Moodle Hierarchy with the PEMS, but it may be desirable.

[Studia Nova Course Manager](#)

Naming Conventions

Course Names and short names may be changed without affecting any part of the system.

Naming conventions for K8 course follows the Studia Nova approach and default spans. At the beginning of a span, each successive course is labeled by class name then, A, B, C, D etc. If the school configures different spans, the course naming conventions for K8 will no longer make sense. However, the mismatch in course names does not affect the integration with the PEMS.

The Course ID number must not be changed. This number is referenced in the PEMS. There is no way to specifically lock down this field, so all course authors must be made aware to not edit the Course ID field.

Course Reuse

An Open Source World

Open Source Books

Reading original authors is far more interesting and compelling than reading over-processed text books.

Open Source books are books that are in the public domain and free to use. There is a phenomenal amount of free knowledge out there if we are willing to input it all into Moodle. All copy-rights' age out and eventually all copy-righted books will be in the public domain. Usually copy rights last TBD years. [Internet Archive](#) and [Project Gutenberg](#) provide many complete books.

Text documents found on Project Gutenberg are much cleaner than any other source and preferable, however you will have to replace carriage returns at the end of every - discussed below.

Internet Archive provides a greater variety of documents, and the document are available as PDFs or less-cleaned-up text files. It may be better to convert the PDF directly to a Microsoft Word Document using adobe for Internet Archive documents, this is considerable more effort.

Fixing Carriage Returns

Open source books generally made available as text document or PDF documents. Many text version contain a 'carriage return' at the end of each line of text. When you hit the enter key on your computer, you are putting in a carriage return. When you copy/paste directly from a PDF document, you always end up with a carriage return at the end of the line. This carriage return can be viewed in any editor by click on the paragraph symbol. The carriage return makes formatting the text very difficult. There are two methods for removing the carriage returns:

Search and Replace Method

Microsoft Word is the best application to use for this function. Open the find and Replace tool in your document. To find the paragraph returns, enter ^p, replace with a space, ie. hit the space bar one time in the replace field.

This approach will eliminate all normal paragraph breaks, and you will have a monolithic text where you need to go back and re-enter the normal paragraphs.

If your text has two carriage returns for normal paragraphs, one for the end of the line, and one for the paragraph, you are in luck. In this case you will replace any two carriage returns in a row with a special character sequence, such as &%. Use an odd combination not likely to be found in your text, so as not to replace any actual text.

For Microsoft Word Document:

- Open the find/replace tool and find ^p^p, then replace with &%.

- Open the find/replace tool and find ^p and replace with a space bar.
- Go back and find/replace the &% with a single ^p

Using the above method, you will preserve the normal paragraphs while eliminating the unnecessary carriage returns.

For LibreOffice or other Word Processors, refer to the [Apache Open Office Standards](#)

Adobe Converting Method

PDFs are created using software provided by the company Adobe. Adobe provides a version of its software free to all to use. However, if you want to convert the PDF back to a Microsoft Word document, you will need a paid version. Be careful to sign up for the lowest cost version that allows converting to Microsoft Word documents.

- Upload your PDF to the Adobe Site
- Convert the PDF to Microsoft Word

Formatting

Select all the text of the document and clear formatting. When you copy text in to Moodle that is formatted, you want you have clean text.

Fixing OCR mistakes

There is no way around the fact that OCR creates text documents with many errors. Read all text carefully and fix the errors. When you open the document in a program like Word or Only Office, the errors will be underlined in red.

You may find patterns where words are routinely spelled incorrectly, use the find/replace function to your advantage.

Creating Book Activities in Moodle

Prepare the text as clean as possible. Once the formatting is off in Moodle, it is very hard to clean up.

Create a Moodle activity called a "book". A book has multiple pages the student can read through. The book activity is meant to break up the original book into assignable amounts to read on either a daily or weekly basis. The Moodle book activity does not have to follow the chapters in the original book, but it may. In general

- For non-fiction text, plan for 20 minutes on the topic daily
- For fiction texts, plan for 40-50 minutes of reading daily.

In your word processing application, you can find the number of words in a given text. To determine much text can be read, use an average reading rate of about 200 words per minute.

Alternatively, if you are creating audio files, then use the length of the audio file as your guide.

Images and figures

Usually images and figures get lost in the text processing. You will need to go back to the original PDF and screenshot the images and paste back into the Moodle Book.

Audio Files

Audio read-along files are extremely helpful to pace the student through the text, so that they don't just skim and answer the question.

Record your own voice

Use the microphone icon in the Moodle editor to start your voice recording.

Use a Robot Voice

Robot voices with paid subscriptions are quite good. Free robot voices are poor quality. If you are going to go through the trouble of creating audio files, get the best rendering possible. Create the audio file then upload with the audio/visual media tool in the Moodle editor.

Creating Questions

When you create a Book Activity in Moodle, this is a resource, not points can be given directly for reading the book, the points are only given through the activities that follow the text. Another method that provide more control is to use a question in the question bank. The best type of question is a fill in the blank question, as just one question can easily test on multiple ideas.

Guidelines for Moodle Text-Based Questions

- Use Fill in the Blank style questions
- Number the questions that reflect the order of the text in the original document, including a numbering system that reflect the original chapters.
- Give a descriptive title to the question.
- For the fill in the blank style question, just write a summary of the text and let the students complete key missing words.
- Do not add more text that would fit on a page, too much scrolling is annoying.
- When creating the quiz, only allow one long text question per page.

Categories

Managing your question bank is really important. Create a category of each author you are using, under the author, create a category for each book. It is best if your open source library is at the system level, so that the information can be used in any class, rather than at the course level.