

## **Moodle 2.5 Course Layout (Tips, Questions and Answers)**

- Audio commentary -

#moodlemooc

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1)

Hi my name is Ingrid Dethloff and I'd like to share some ideas about the topic „Moodle Course layout“ with you.

Moodle has many possibilities and functions and in my experience, several Moodle newcomers are quite overwhelmed. When I say overwhelmed I mean the teachers - the students get along very well.

In this presentation I'll try to give some sort of overview of aspects which are relevant when you design a course. Some kind of checklist how to proceed.

### **2) Didactic parameters**

First of all you have to think about the didactical setting, what you want to achieve with a moodle course. It's a completely different thing whether a lecturer just wants to enrich his class with maybe even optional files and literature or if he creates a blended learning environment or if the Moodle course shall be a component of an online master's degree.

E-Learning is also kind of subject-specific: some subjects of study rely on discussion, some rely on learning facts and some rely on experiments - it's a long list.

I won't read the text to you as you can read it by yourself, but I'll try to add some sort of audio commentary to it.

### **3) Keep it simple**

Most default configuration options will suit your needs, in so far, don't click too much in the settings - it will be difficult to get help later, when you altered configuration options which created problems in the course. Nowadays it is even possible for a teacher to kick oneself out of a course by just clicking once on the „hide“ option in the enrolment menu. Why am I telling that? I don't want to discourage you, but mistakes are natural (you wouldn't be the first) and in most cases they can be corrected. Start simple, you don't have to put every kind of Moodle learning activity in your course - why don't you just start with a consistent structure (maybe one section for information, one for discussion and topic sections which describe the learning goals).

Many teachers use the „switch role to student“ option regularly in order to see what the students see and what they can click on. You don't have to memorize for all learning activities who has got which rights - just use the „switch“-function. Moodle has a role system, which is specified by the technical administrators of the Moodle platform - they also can add plugins etc. and therefore each Moodle installation is at least a little bit different.

### **4) Which Basic (Layout) Decisions?**

When you click on „Add a new course“, you get an empty Moodle course with a certain structure. Most important for you is the button „Turn editing on“ to make changes in the course, to add material and activities. The icons in Moodle have a certain meaning and you'll soon recognize the functions via the icons.

Another very important menu is „Administration / Course administration / edit settings“ - you will have to go there and make changes regarding number of sections, name of the course, weekly or topics format. Unfortunately the setting for the course enrolment key which has been here for years in Moodle 1.9, with Moodle2 was dumped (I mean hidden) deep in the system. You can get there only by clicking on „Users / Enrolment methods / Self enrolment (student)“. There are many reasons that the enrolment key is very

important for us, among them data protection and copyright issues. With Moodle2 (when the enrolment key is active on your Moodle site) the system generates a random enrolment key which you have to change afterwards.

#### 5) Which learning activities?

You are free to experiment in your Moodle course, but in most cases you will simply be interested that what you intended is really working: so start simple. Wikis are nice but most teachers and students don't know how to use them in Moodle and if you want to add collaboration activities just use forums or glossaries. The database activity is only nice to use, if someone has already created the technique (I mean the template) around it. I really like the choice activity - just try it, you won't regret it.

#### 6) How to help mobile users?

Many teachers may already use a smart phone, but they aren't aware that you could use Moodle via a smart phone and that students do exactly that! In my opinion the navigation dock was a great improvement in Moodle2, everyone can put all (or some) side blocks in a dock in order to reduce the elements and maybe only see the middle part of the Moodle course. That's also a thing many teachers aren't aware of and which I mention in my training courses. A big change in Moodle2.5 comes with bootstrap that means that Moodle design themes may get responsive design. That means that you don't have to do anything, but that Moodle users with mobile devices will see the course differently.

I didn't mention the several mobile apps which have been on the market for years - some need changes on the server, you have to pay for some and others have only a few functions. The new official Moodle app called „MoodleMobile“ (it's the one with a white letter „m“ on an orange background) is for free, the Moodle administrator has to enable web services and then you can use it. It hasn't many functions yet and refers to the original Moodle site in most cases. So it's still necessary that the Moodle site administrator thinks about activating the Moodle Theme „MyMobile“ or thinks about using a design theme with responsive web design for the whole platform.

#### 7) Changes from 2.4 to 2.5?

Badges are a very interesting thing, they are also one of the educational trends mentioned in the current Horizon Report Higher Education. In this Moodle MOOC I have seen them in action for the very first time. I'm still not sure if they are a hype or something we will be used to in some years.

In Moodle2.5 the long (and I mean long and complicated) Moodle setting forms got a revision: now they collapse. That looks nice and may make it easier for helpdesks to help people. At the moment, I can't say much about the changes regarding the learning activities, at first glance, they seem small - but that's what the Moodle Release Notes are for.

8)

That's it. Thank you very much for watching. For actual use, I recommend the pdf file with the slides which you find on my blog.

<http://blog.idethloff.de/wordpress/>