

Moodles of fun with



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Some things you can do with the Moodle course management system:

Assignment— allows the teacher to specify a task that requires students to prepare digital content (any format) and submit it by uploading it to the server.

Chat— allows participants to have a real-time synchronous discussion via the web.

“Choice” poll— the teacher asks a question and specifies a choice of multiple responses.

Email— students and instructors can send e-mail to each other.

Forum— discussion forums that can be structured in different ways and can include peer rating of each posting.

Grades— an online gradebook can be maintained.

Glossary— allows a dictionary or list of definitions to be maintained.

Journal— the teacher asks students to reflect on a particular topic, and the students can edit and refine

their answers over time.

Label— allows you to insert text and graphics among the other activities on the course page.

Quiz— allows the teacher to design and set quizzes made of a wide range of question types.

Resource— content information (documents, presentations, links, text, etc.) the teacher wants to bring into the course.

Scheduler— allows students to schedule one-on-one time with the teacher (in development).

Survey— provides a number of verified survey instruments that have been found useful in assessing and stimulating learning in online environments.

Workshop— a peer assessment activity with a huge array of options. It allows participants to assess each other's projects, as well as exemplar projects, in a number of ways.

Some* ways Moodle is better than Truman's current version of Blackboard

- Moodle can have separate “digital drop boxes” for each student-turned-in assignment.
- Feedback for each student's turned-in assignment can be entered online for each turned-in assignment, obviating the need to e-mail that feedback to each student.
- It's easier to automate online student peer review of each other's papers.
- Quiz questions can be batch-loaded by uploading an ordinary text file containing (properly formatted) questions.
- It's “open source” free software that those who know how to program can modify to their heart's content.

Some* ways Moodle is worse than Truman's current version of Blackboard

- Blackboard has several features Moodle doesn't have: a personalized address book, anonymous surveys, and a virtual classroom, for example.
- In Blackboard, the instructor has more control over the availability of certain areas of the course website— both control over when the areas are available and to whom they are available.
- It is easier to set up “study/discussion groups” in Blackboard.
- There is no company providing support for Moodle (though there is a Moodle website, moodle.org, that provides a fair amount of help).

*: Here I list only some of the ways in which my investigation revealed Moodle to differ from Blackboard. The list of differences is not meant to be exhaustive. I encourage you to try out both Moodle and Blackboard, and use the course management system(s) that best fit(s) your needs.