

Moodle Tricks: Layout and Design for Student Engagement

Video Transcript

I'm going to take you through a tour of my Moodle page and some of the strategies that I've used to make it cleaner to look at and a little bit more engaging for the students, while still maintaining all the information that I want available to the students in an LMS.

I'm Angel Kaur, I'm at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, and I'm an assistant professor of Neuroscience.

I'm going to start by giving you a look at the student side of the page and then show you some of the ways in which I make that happen on the faculty side of the page. The tools I'll be using here are Moodle itself, the H5P Interactive Plugin that comes into Moodle, and a lot of Google Docs.

So, I'll start by going in as a Moodle student here to my Neuropharmacology page.

At the top, I have a header that I created in Canva, basic information about the class, and the syllabus and such. I have activity completion turned on for everything, so students can check along with the boxes on the course and know how far they are along their work.

I've organized all of my assignment details and I have major projects in my course and have a lot of individual little pieces to them. I've organized them all in a Moodle book. So this is one of the tools that I've used to make my pages more engaging. If you look in the Moodle book. I'll look at this podcast instruction page for instance. What I can do here is include basic instructions, along with a link out to the instructions themselves. So if I went in and signed into my Google Docs here, I'll be able to get to that page. And also a link to the folder that has all of the other little instructional pieces that I want for them. I have embedded the main document right here in the first page and then in each of the pages in the Moodle book I've copied and pasted their individual assignment instruction.

So for instance, the first one that they had to do was a group contract. And I have here a copy of what's in their checklist and rubric document so checklists, the rubric and I've linked out to the document they need to use in order to complete this part of the project.

In addition to having those as main pages like the next ones, the proposal, etc. I also have some chapters to give some examples. So here I have an example for them to look at for this podcast project that takes them to my website where I have podcasts stored from where my students are creating them, and I'm publishing them. And they can go in here and be like, huh, I wonder what this is like, go through, play the podcast episode and see the other information that ends up on this website at the end. So this gives me a way of giving students everything that they need without actually clogging up the main page. So I go back to the main page. You can see that it's just one single link here with an explanation of what it is.

And I've done that for the other assignments, you have a block here for my zoom recordings and then what's more interesting is the sort of weekly breakdown and I'll scroll down a bit to show you how I've cleaned it up a bit.

So we just finished week three, and we're talking about drug abuse and addiction, because it's a Neuropharm course. At the top, I have a forum where they can ask questions about the mini lectures that they're watching because they're watching all the content videos outside of class and then we discuss them in class. They can go in here into this book and they can find a link to what pages of the textbook we're covering, the lecture slides themselves. This will take them to, again, a Google slide deck that they can download and a video embedded in here along with some knowledge questions that are coming from the use of that H5P plugin.

What I like about this is that everything is kind of in one spot. They can pull out those lecture slides and look through them as you're listening to the video. They can fill in their notes and then just come down here and fill in these questions for the knowledge checks.

When they finish these questions, so long as they hit this check button, it'll get recorded in Moodle gradebook. And that makes it really easy for me to go in and see how they're doing.

And again, I've used several pages to organize it because there's four videos they watch for this module. So we'll go into the next one. And again, they'll find the exact same layout of the lecture slides, YouTube video and the knowledge check question that goes with it. The slides themselves are just stored in a folder on Google Drive and I just make it so that anyone with the link at my university should be able to view this document and that lets me allow students to just use these links to go through.

Every subsequent week this is what it's going to look like there's going to be the Tuesday meeting and Thursday meeting and there's just one book that has all of those things that they need to do. You can also embed discussion boards within a Moodle book and I can show you how I did that really quickly, as well. So mostly what I'm trying to do is minimize the number of clickable things that are on this page for them and then keep the same structure every week. Though I didn't do that for some of it because I was figuring out how to do this well.

So what does this look like on my side? I wish I could tell you it was as clean as it is for the students. But it's not!

So, going back into the same course, I'll go back to that week three space that we talked about in the student side. So here's the week three, in order to make this happen. I have individual H5P questions that are set up as each piece.

What I do to set this up is, I add an activity, pick H5P, click on Add and within it, it has different types of questions that you can embed

So let's say I wanted to do a multiple choice question, I would click on that, it would give me the option to set it up and fill in the details. Come down here and in the grades, I would set how much I want this to be graded as. And the key here is to go into the common module settings and switch it to make available, but not shown on course page.

This makes it so I can embed this within the Moodle book without having to have the students see the back end of it. So I'm going to cancel this so we don't accidentally add stuff to my class here but

Going back to that week three. So I can have a number of questions and I will be able to see them individually, but they won't. So when I set up my Moodle book, there's the opportunity to change the settings of each of these pages, or you can add a new page you can hide any of them or delete them and move them up and down after you've made them. So in here, if I wanted to come in and add another question, I would pull this up, go in here and enable the code view. And then in a different tab. I would go through and find the question that I want to embed

Here's a question I want to embed, for instance, so click on the question and will show me what it looks like. And there's an embed option. If you click that and copy over the embed code, you can go back and paste it directly into this window, turn it back into a normal read view and when you scroll down, you should see that second question is shown up here. And that's how you can easily embed an H5P interactive question. And I'm going through and deleting it, so I don't accidentally confuse my students.

The way I'm using this is to get students to engage with lecture material online as they're watching it, and all of these are set up to have unlimited attempts, so they can really use it as a mastery quiz. They're really trying to learn all the information in this place before they move forward. But I found that it's working well.

It does require telling students how to use Moodle book because it's not something that a lot of them have necessarily seen, but it seems to clean up the Moodle space a lot for them.

So the last hack that I've used is getting one more thing out of the view of students by embedding discussion boards directly in. So you'll see here that there is a discussion board and it's grayed out, so students can't actually see it. But if they go into the module that they can see, which is that readings and videos module, when they scroll down at the bottom there is a consider the questions and post your answer in the discussion forum.

So we were looking at that, from the student view, which I don't have set up right now, what you would see is just this one link for the day and you wouldn't see any additional pieces here.

So I hope you found some of this helpful and can figure out ways to make your Moodle space look a little bit more clean.