

Customising Moodle Forums for Individual Personal Communication with Students

Situation

Dealing with private student questions via email results in student correspondence being separated from the eLearning system where all other information is kept. Students often have questions and issues that they need to raise with their lecturer. Many of these may be personal to particular individuals, for example queries regarding feedback they received on their own assignment, and submission of late assignments. In large classes (300 – 500 students) queries can be numerous and can easily become lost amid other email communication.

Task

The aim is to organise and track personal student correspondence within Moodle.

Action

A grouping was created in Moodle where every student was placed into single person groups. Forums were set up that used this grouping so that whenever a student posted to one of these forums only the lecturer and the particular student could read the posting. The lecturer could then reply to the posting in the forum, which also kept the reply private. The lecturer can also initiate a posting to an individual student by finding out the group that the student belongs to and posting to that group via a dropdown list.

Auto-create groups

▼ General

Naming scheme

Auto create based on

Group/member count

▼ Grouping

Grouping of auto-created groups

Grouping name



Group #

Members per group ⇅

1

New grouping ⇅

Individual Students

Figure 1. Creating groups with one member each

▼ Common module settings

Availability	?	Show on course page
Group mode	?	Separate groups
Grouping	?	Individual Students

Figure 2. Applying the grouping to the forum

Separate groups (Individual Students)

Add a new discussion topic

All participants

All participants

Group 1

Group 10

Group 100

Figure 3. Selecting a group to initiate communication with an individual student

 FORUMS

 Announcements

 Questions regarding the Lectures and Workshop Exercises

Posts to the two forums below will only be seen by the course coordinator. General questions will be moved into the appropriate public forum.

 Private Issues (Including Assignment Issues)
(Individual Students) 2 unread posts

 Late Submission of Assignments
(Individual Students) 1 unread post

Figure 4. How the forums appear on the main Moodle page

Result

- Individual personal communication with students is collected into one place for a course.
- Posts can be left marked as “unread” until they have been answered, so that unanswered posts can be easily identified.
- Communication for a single course to be processed at one time, making it easier to apply consistent approaches to different students with similar issues.
- Efficiency is improved because many postings will require logging into the same web page and these can be left open between resolving issues for different students instead of needing to re-login for each student query.
- Responsiveness is improved

Presentation

See the seminar presented to the Scaling Education CoP and Discussion on 4 December 2020:

<https://thebox.unsw.edu.au/video/using-moodle-forum-for-managing-individual-student-communication-in-large-classes>

For more information about this resource, contact Steven Davis: S.Davis@unsw.edu.au

Steven is a member of the Scaling Education Community of Practice (CoP).

[Click here](#) to learn more about the CoP or contact the EF Team at ef@unsw.edu.au.