

IDEA Moodle Redesign

March 2021

OVERVIEW

To support Swarthmore Library staff in learning about white supremacy and applying antiracist tenets to their work, the IDEA committee created a Moodle course on equity and antiracism. On the site, short articles, videos, or podcasts are posted to spark discussion and reflection among library staff in the forums. The site was created to offer a structured place for antiracist work to take place and to reiterate to library staff that IDEA is part of everyone's work, regardless of their role within the library. So far, two sets of readings have been posted, but the engagement levels from library staff have not been as robust as originally expected. It is unclear what is the root cause(s) of these engagement issues (confusion, discomfort/fear, unwillingness to participate); however, redesigning the Moodle course, specifically, the activity blocks and discussion forums, could be a possible solution to the lack of engagement.

SOLUTIONS

1. Implement course and activity objectives

Rationale: If a course's or activity's objectives are unclear, participants may be confused about the work or not see the point of it, leading them to be unmotivated.

- In the Zero Block of the Moodle site, prominently display 3–5 course objectives.

The Zero Block is the first block in Moodle below the title.

Examining Institutional Racism in Libraries January 2021

Home / My courses / Institutional Racism January 2021

Turn editing off

+ Announcements

+ Course overview - please read before starting!

+ Code of Conduct

+ Confidentiality agreement

+ Introductions

Edit

Edit

Edit

Edit

Edit

+ Add an activity or resource

- In the summary for each activity block, include 1–2 course objectives. Click Edit on the right-hand side of the activity block, then choose Edit week from the drop-down menu.

+ Week 1

+ Week 1 readings & some shared definitions

+ Discussion of Week 1 readings

Edit

Edit week

Hide week

Delete week

+ Add an activity or resource

Summary of Week 1

Expand all

General

Section name

Custom

Week 1

Summary

Rich text editor toolbar with icons for undo, font color, bold, italic, bulleted list, numbered list, link, unlink, insert image, insert video, insert audio, insert link, and help.

Restrict access

Save changes Cancel

- Best practices indicate that these objectives should start with an action verb. [Find ideas for action verbs here.](#)
- When planning the course, consider [designing activities backward](#)—that is, start with your course objectives and then find activities that connect to and help participants meet those objectives.

2. Create a “Muddiest Point” forum

Rationale: Without a dedicated space to express their questions, participants who have been trained in organizations where questions are seen as inconveniences/indicators of unintelligence may be hesitant to ask their questions. Continued confusion will lead participants to disengage.

- The muddiest point is the most confusing thing in a course or module. To create a space where participants feel comfortable asking questions, create a Muddiest Point forum in the course Zero Block.
- Dedicate time every week to go through these questions, and encourage participants to contribute answers as well.

3. Make space for participant choice

Rationale: Without options for participant choice, participants may feel stifled or as though their learning needs are not being met.

- Scaffold forum responses by offering participants a choice of what to contribute, such as 1 thing they learned, 1 thing they want to think further about, or 1 connection to something they already knew.
- Encourage participants to respond to discussion forums in a variety of ways, such as in a written post, audio recording, video clip, or artistic mode such as a collage or mind map.

4. Create community in discussion forums

Rationale: Without trust in or ties to the learning community, participants may be hesitant to participate in group discussions.

- Instead of using a traditional discussion forum, use the Q&A forum. participants will not be able to see other participants’ answers in Q&A forums until they have posted their own answers. This restricted view will demonstrate to participants the importance of contributing to *and* reading forums, creating a shared responsibility of vulnerability and participation.
 - To create a Q&A Forum, click “add activity or resource” in the block for the

week. Choose forum from the list. Then, on the forum editing page, choose question and answer as the forum type, and save your changes.

Updating Forum in Week 1 [Expand all](#)

General

Forum name

Description

¶ **A** **B** **I** **☰** **☰** **🔗** **🔄** **📷** **📄** **🎤** **📺** **📄** **🔗** **🔗**

A single simple discussion
Each person posts one discussion
Q and A forum
Standard forum displayed in a blog-like format
✓ Standard forum for general use

Forum type

[Availability](#)

[Attachments and word count](#)

[Subscription and tracking](#)

[Discussion locking](#)

- Ask participants to respond to X number of peers, and encourage participants to subscribe to posts in the forum. They will receive email notifications when new replies are posted.
- The instructor can sort participants into smaller groups and ask them to respond to those peers' posts. Participants can respond to this group for a few weeks to build camaraderie and encourage participation. Advise partners to reach out to each other if they don't see one another's posts.