Swarthmore College Libraries

IDEA Moodle Redesign

March 2021

OVERVIEW

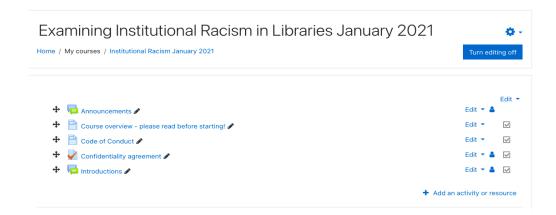
To support Swarthmore Library staff in learning about white supremacy and applying antiracist tenets to their work, the IDEA committee created a Moodle course on equity and antiracism. On the site, short articles, videos, or podcasts are posted to spark discussion and reflection among library staff in 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

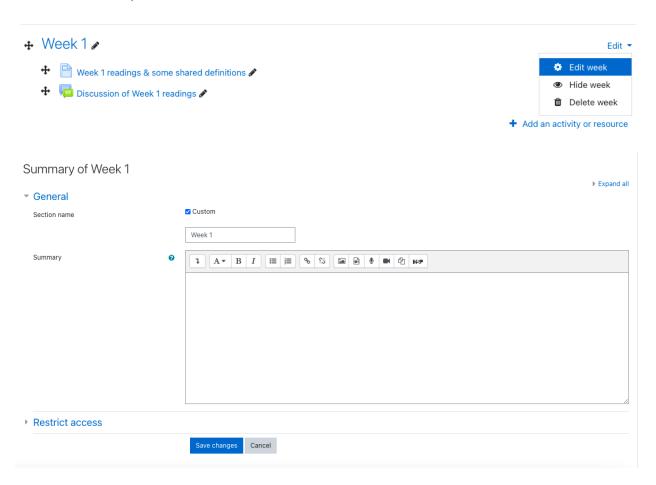
1. Implement course and activity objectives

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.



• 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.



- Best practices indicate that these objectives should start with an action verb. <u>Find</u>
 ideas for action verbs here.
- When planning the course, consider <u>designing activities backward</u>—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 muddlest point is the most confusing thing in a course or module. To create a space where participants feel comfortable asking questions, create a Muddlest 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.

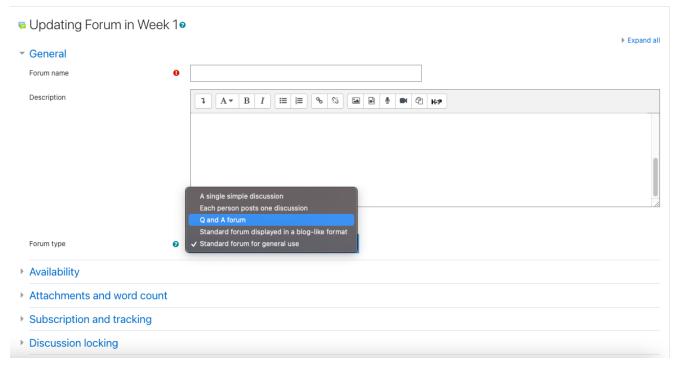
- Scaffold forum responses by offering participants a choice of what to contribute, such as 1 thing they learned, 1 thing they want to think further about, or 1 connection to something they already knew.
- Encourage participants to respond to discussion forums in a variety of ways, such as in a written 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.
 - o 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.



- 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.