Creating an Electronic Learning Community

Logging into FCPS Moodle

1. Go to http://moodle.fcps.org/

2. Click on the blue link at the bottom left corner to get to the login page

3. Enter the username and password that has been provided to you.
   a. USERNAME = first.last
   b. PASSWORD = changeme (you will be asked to change it when you log in)

4. Click on the name of your course under the My Courses heading.

TIP:
If you forget your password, click this button and follow the prompt
Organization of Moodle Class Site

- **Navigation Bread Crum** – Tells you where you are in the course and allows you to easily get back to the main course page
- **Blocks** – Adds features to the course. Blocks can be collapsed or expanded, hidden or added.
- **Content Area** – The content area is where you add your course content. It is typically organized by topic or weeks.

Navigating the Course

- **Bread Crum** – Click on the course name to get back to the main course page
- **Switching Rolls** – Click on the course name to get back to the main course page
- **Editing Buttons** – Turn editing on to access additional tools to edit your content and blocks
**Blocks**

Add features to the course such as Upcoming Events, Recent Activity, Calendars, etc. Be sure to turn editing on to be able to adjust blocks.

- **a) Expand/Contract (+/-)** - All participants can decide to expand or contract blocks

- **b) Hide / Show** - While in edit mode, instructors can hide or show blocks to participants.

- **c) Removing/Adding Blocks** - Remove blocks from the course by clicking the X in the block. Add additional blocks by selecting a block from the right hand side pull-down menu.

- **d) People** - Click on Participants to see information about individuals in the course and when each individual last accessed the course.

- **e) Activities** - Quick link to assignments, forums, and resources for the course.

- **f) Admin** - Access settings and files easily from this block.

- **g) Latest News** - Announcements

- **h) Recent Activity** - Shows recent uploads and additions to the course
Creating a Topic Summary on the ELC

One of the benefits of using an ELC is that it creates an electronic record of your session which can be referred back to at a later date. Most people lose handouts and forget what is said, but the ELC allows teachers to review your material if they choose to incorporate your session into a lesson/unit plan.

The topic summary tells the participants what they will be learning. Although it is obvious to the participant when it is the current month’s training, this summary is very important for future reference. The summary should indicate what the learner will take away from the session and some of the skills/concepts that will be learned.

Editing the Topic Description Text

To edit or create a summary, be sure to click the ‘Turn Editing On’ button.

You will see many different icons appear on the page. The Editing icon is the little hand with a pencil in it. Click on it to open the editor for the topic summary.
1 Using TJMS Electronic Learning Community (ELC)

An electronic learning community is a tool which educators can use to interact with each other, share ideas, and learn new skills. One of the many benefits of an ELC is that teachers can participate when it is convenient to them and not have to worry about scheduling themselves to be at a certain location at a certain time. These short tutorial will help you start taking advantage of the ELC.

The topic summary editor is a large text area which can be formatted in a way similar to MS Word. You should use **bold** type and **underline** to emphasize your important information. Using a bulleted list to summarize key points is also a good idea.

When you have entered your topic click the “Save Changes” button to update the site.
Uploading Handouts

Uploading handouts is similar to uploading your syllabus to your class page. In fact, it’s the same procedure. Below are the steps for uploading a syllabus from a separate handout. Follow these same steps to upload any MS Word, PowerPoint, Excel, PDF, or any file you want in your topic. You can even upload video and audio – but there is a better way to present those to the learner. If you wish to add audio or video, let me know.

1. Uploading a file is considered adding a RESOURCE. So select “Link to file or Web Site”

2. You will need to fill out the Name for your file (i.e. 2008-2009 Syllabus)
3. Do not fill in the summary

4. In the Link to file or web site section, click the “Choose or upload file” button.
5. A new window will open. It is your “Home Directory” for your class site. This is where you store your files. You can create folders to separate the files into units, lessons, or however you wish.

6. Click Upload a file to upload your syllabus
7. Click BROWSE to find your syllabus. Locate your file on your computer.
8. Click UPLOAD THIS FILE when you have selected your syllabus

9. Your file is now in your class site home directory. To select this file, click the CHOOSE link

10. Your file name will show up in the Link to a file or web site section.

11. Choose “New Window” in the Window section. This makes it easier to print.

12. Make sure the file visibility is set to “Show” so people can see the link.
13. Click SAVE AND RETURN TO COURSE

Your syllabus is now ready for download! Notice that Moodle knows it is a MS Word file. Repeat these steps for any type of file in any section of your class site.
Adding Web Links to your Topic

The procedure for adding web links is very similar to adding a resource file.

1. A web link is considered adding a RESOURCE. So select Link to file or Web Site from the Add Resource menu.

   ![Add Resource Menu]

   Scroll down to the “Location” box. Enter the web address in the box.

   ![Location Box]

2. The easiest way to create the link is to paste or type the web site address in the “Location” box.

   ![Window Settings]

3. Choose “New Window” in the Window section so the web site opens in a new window. This makes it easier to print the document and get back to the ELC.

4. Make sure the file visibility is set to “Show” so people can see the link.
5. Click SAVE AND RETURN TO COURSE
Adding an Assignment

Moodle allows you to add assignments for participants to complete and turn in electronically through the course site.

There are two common types of assignments that you can create.

1. Upload a single file – Participants will do the assignment and upload a single file.
2. Advanced Uploading of Files – Allows participants to upload multiple files as part of the assignment.

Single Upload Assignment

To add a single upload assignment, go to the Activities Menu, scroll down, and select Upload a Single File from the drop-down menu.

Assignment Settings

1. **Assignment Name** – Give the assignment a name that is descriptive.
2. **Description** – Write the assignment directions in this box.
3. **Grade** – Set it to No Grade unless you want to assign points.
4. **Available From / Due Date** – Set the dates the assignment is available.
5. **Prevent Late Submissions** – Choose if you want to allow participants to be able to submit a late submission.
6. **Allow Resubmitting** – Select if you will allow students to submit an assignment after the initial submission.
7. **Email Alerts** – Select whether or not you want an email sent to the teacher(s) of the course when an assignment is submitted.

8. **Maximum Size** - Leave set at 500MB (the largest possible)

9. **Visible** – Leave it set to “Show” unless you are not ready to have participants see the assignment.

### Advanced Uploading of Files

If you will want participants to upload multiple files, choose *Advanced Uploading of Files* from the Activities menu. The settings are mostly the same as the Single File Upload assignment. There is one part that has additional options for the upload of multiple files.

1. **Allow Deleting** – This will allow participants to delete a file they have uploaded but have *not* submitted the assignment for scoring.

2. **Maximum Number** – Set the maximum number of files needed to complete the assignment

3. **Allow Notes** – Notes allows the students to “explain” what they have done for the assignment.

4. **Hide Description** – If set to “yes,” it will hide the description of the assignment before the official “available” date.

5. **Enable Send for Marking** – If set to “yes” will allow the students to submit files over time without being scored. When the assignment is finished, the participant ‘sends’ it to be scored at which time no more changes are permitted.
Organizing your Topic

Moodle has some tools to help you organize your Topic to make easy to find your information and understand its purpose.

Adding Labels
Labels allow you to group similar resources/activities or add additional information about the resources/activities.

Select “Insert a Label” from the Add a resource drop down menu. This will bring up the Add New Label editor.

This editor is like the other editors. You can format the text similar to MS Word. You can create a single line of text to act as a subheading or you can create a new set of instructions for the learner.

When you’re done creating your label, be sure it is set to “SHOW” and click “Save and Return to Course.”
Clicking the Right Arrow icon or the Left Arrow icon will increase or decrease the indent space for that resource/activity. This helps the learner find your information quickly and easily.

**Moving a Resource/Activity**

Moving a link to a resource to the left or right is pretty straight forward. Moodle also allows you to move them up and down in a few clicks of a mouse.

Click on the Move icon (Up/Down arrows) next to the resource/activity you wish to move.

The page will reload and you will see a series of “place holders” represented by rectangular boxes with dashed lines.

Click on the place holder where you wish to move the resource/activity. The page will reload and the resource/activity will be in the position you chose.
Creating and Facilitating a Discussion Forum

Scroll down to the section of your site where you want to add the discussion forum. In the “Add an Activity” drop down menu, choose FORUM.

You will now be able to create the discussion forum.

Creating the discussion forum

A discussion forum allows users to participate in an asynchronous (not at the same time) chat. For the purposes of the ELC, we will want to allow the teachers to create discussion topics and reply to each other’s discussion threads. There are many options to use for this but we will want to use the default options in our discussions.

There are several different types of forum to choose from:

A single simple discussion - is just a single topic, all on one page. Useful for short, focused discussions.

Standard forum for general use - is an open forum where any one can start a new topic at any time. This is the best general-purpose forum.

Each person posts one discussion - Each person can post exactly one new discussion topic (everyone can reply to them though). This is useful when you want each student to start a discussion about, say, their reflections on the week's topic, and everyone else responds to these.

Q And A Forum - The Q & A forum requires students to post their perspectives before viewing other students' postings. After the initial posting, students can view and respond to others' postings. This feature allows equal initial posting opportunity among all students, thus encouraging original and independent thinking.
1. **Forum Name** – Type a name for your forum
2. **Forum Type** – Usually leave as default, “Standard forum for general use.” Click the yellow help bubble for a description of the other types.
3. **Forum Introduction** – This is a “Rich Text Editor” box that is similar to MS Word. Here you will type the question/topic you wish the teachers to discuss. It is good practice to utilize the **BOLD** face type, create **bulleted lists** and to break up the information into chunks if you have a lengthy question.
4. **Force everyone to be subscribed?** – When a person is subscribed to a forum it means that they will be sent email copies of every post in that forum (posts are sent about 30 minutes after the post was first written). Keep this set at NO but request the teachers choose to subscribe to this forum when they post a discussion topic.
5. **Read tracking for this forum?** – Leave this as the default, “Optional.” It will display the unread postings for the teacher to help find the new messages faster.
6. **Maximum attachment size** – Teachers can attach a copy of a lesson plan they make or any other file they want to share. This is a great way to encourage the sharing of information. The file size can be changed to a maximum of 20 MB. The default is 500KB which is ok for most Word documents without a lot of pictures. If you know you’ll need larger than 500KB, you can choose a larger size.
7. **Grade** - Leave it as the default

8. **Post threshold for warning / blocking** – This will set a limit on how many posts a teacher can submit. The warning level will give the teacher a message they are getting close to the blocking point. The blocking point will prevent further discussion in this forum.

9. **Time period for blocking**: Will set how long the teacher will be blocked. Leave at 0

10. **Group Mode**: Leave as no groups unless you know what “Groups” are and how to manage them.

11. **Visible**: This will SHOW the teachers the forum. You can choose to HIDE the forum if you don’t want them to see it yet.

12. **ID Number** - Leave it blank

Click SAVE AND RETURN TO COURSE when you are done.
**Tips on Facilitating Online Discussion**

The success of any online discussion lies in the quality of the responses. Facilitating an online discussion requires the teacher leader to be more active in the discussion and encourage participation.

- Provide a discussion prompt that is open-ended and will require some thought.
- When appropriate, ask the participants to share specific classroom experiences of the concept being discussed or upload a lesson plan, an outline, or an example of the new skill which incorporates the ideas of the lesson on which they are reflecting.
- Require participants to post a message and reply to at least two other participants.
- Have the participants choose to subscribe to the forum so they will be emailed when people post responses.
  - Click on the blue link when reading the forum introduction

- Model your expectations by posting a response to your own discussion question.
- Encourage participation and deeper reflection by asking follow up questions. We want to avoid the “one sentence response.” You can use some of the following examples.
  - “I like your example of XXX. How would you apply that in your classroom?”
  - “When you say, ‘XXX,’ what do you mean?”
  - “Can you share with the other participants some ways you have used this strategy in your classroom?”
  - “It’s good that you agree with that point. Can you provide some details about what aspect(s) are most important to you?”

**Requesting a Moodle Site**

Request a Site from - [http://acad.fcps.org/moodle/](http://acad.fcps.org/moodle/)

**Moodle Tutorials and Help**

- Clickable - Help/Moodle Docs
- Moodle Training Course – Resources
  - [http://moodle.fcps.org](http://moodle.fcps.org) - CODE: moodle (If you are not automatically enrolled)
- Katie Phillips ([katie.phillips@fcps.org](mailto:katie.phillips@fcps.org)) – For advanced techniques and questions