



Moodle Implementation Guide

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Table of Contents

Objective	1
Why Moodle?	1
References	1
Implementation Strategy	2
Year One:	3
Phase One: Determination of Needs and Goals	3
Phase Two: Software Deployment	3
Phase Three: Moodle Configuration	4
Phase Four: Professional Development and Support	4
Year Two:	6
Phase Five: Re-Assessment	6
Phase Six: System Customizations	6
Phase Seven: Continued Professional Development	7
Why SqoolTechs?	7
Pricing	8

Objective

The objective of this document is to assist school leaders in implementing Moodle, an open source, learning management system. It will guide you through all the stages of the implementation process and suggest solutions for important decisions.

Why Moodle?

Moodle is an acronym which stands for “Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment.” It has been referred to as the “Swiss army knife” of instructional technology tools as educators sometimes use a single Moodle software feature to address many instructional issues (Hargadon, 2008). Moodle open-source software is being utilized increasingly in K-12 Schools to create “walled-gardens” which allow students to enjoy all the benefits of emerging technologies while at the same time protecting them from the perceived dangers of working online.

The push for reform in education is coming from many sectors. Educational practices in the United States must change to meet the needs of society. In July of 2009, the U.S. Department of Education released the results of a study with the headline “Study Finds that Good Teaching can be Enhanced with New Technology” (U.S. Department of Education Study Finds that Good Teaching can be Enhanced with New Technology, 2009). The study, a meta analysis, points to evidence that instruction that combines components of both online and face-to-face instruction had a greater benefit when compared to instruction that was delivered either entirely face-to-face or entirely online (Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia & Jones, 2009).

Regarding the report, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan commented,

“This new report reinforces that effective teachers need to incorporate digital content into everyday classes and consider open-source learning management systems, which have proven cost effective in school districts and colleges nationwide” (U.S. Department of Education Study Finds that Good Teaching can be Enhanced with New Technology, 2009).

References:

- Hargadon, S. (2008). Implementation Study #3: Moodle . Retrieved November 2, 2008, from <http://www.k12opentech.org/implementation-study-3-moodle> .
- Means, B., Toyama, Y., Murphy, R., Bakia, M., & Jones, K. (2009). *Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies*. Retrieved August 13, 2009, from www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/tech/evidence-based-practices/finalreport.pdf
- U.S. Department of Education Study Finds that Good Teaching can be Enhanced with New Technology. (2009, June 26). Retrieved August 17, 2009, from <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2009/06/06262009.html>

Implementation Plan

For schools or districts just beginning to implement Moodle, we recommend the comprehensive approach listed below. However, each implementation and situation is unique. SqoolTechs can provide services to streamline your implementation regardless of where you are in the implementation process.

Year One:

- **Phase One: Determination of Needs and Goals**
Determine needs and goals that could be addressed using Moodle.
- **Phase Two: Software Deployment**
Make decisions regarding the installation of Moodle software, backups, maintenance, upgrades, and theme customization.
- **Phase Three: Moodle Configuration**
Configure site layout, organizational structure, establish site policies, create courses and user accounts.
- **Phase Four: Professional Development and Support**
Make decisions concerning staff professional development and the level of ongoing support needed.

Year Two:

- **Phase Five: Re-Assessment**
Re-evaluate needs and goals to monitor progress.
- **Phase Six: Customizations**
Determine customizations to the basic Moodle installation:
- **Phase Seven: Follow-up Professional Development**
Determine staff training needed to move beyond basic uses and foster best practices.

Each phase of implementation is detailed in the following sections. Assumptions, where applicable, are provided to assist stakeholders in making informed decisions.

Phase One: Needs and Goals

During this phase, you will determine the needs and goals of your school or district that can be addressed using Moodle software.

Possible goals and needs included:

- online learning
- blended learning
- teacher websites
- repository for resources
- parent portal
- professional development
- Intranet
- secure repository for administrative and board documents

SqoolTechs offers complimentary one-hour demonstrations, either on-site or online, to help you become familiar with Moodle software. During these demonstrations you will see examples of how Moodle is being utilized by K-12 schools and have an opportunity to have your questions answered.

In addition, SqoolTechs provides a demonstration site for you to get hands-on experience with Moodle before you commit to deploying it in your school or district. Visit demo.sqooltools.com for more information.

Phase Two: Software Deployment

During this phase you will make decisions regarding deployment of Moodle software. Now is the best time to plan for backups, maintenance, upgrades, and branding through theme customization. Possible solutions for software deployment include installation on district servers or hosting on SqoolTechs' optimized servers. Both of these solutions assume that your school or district currently has adequate Internet access and sufficient bandwidth to access the Moodle for the desired number of users. The solutions are detailed below.

Solution One: SqoolTechs provides comprehensive hosting packages based on the number of users who will be accessing the system. Each package is hosted and maintained on SqoolTechs's servers and provides:

- Installation of the latest stable version of Moodle software
- Annual version upgrade
- Security updates
- One help desk account for the site administrator
- One customized theme
- 25 MB of storage per user
- Unlimited teachers and courses
- Automated backup
- Four 3rd party Modules: Book, Questionnaire, Quickmail and Games

Solution Two: SqoolTechs's staff can install Moodle software on district-owned servers. This solution assumes that the school or district will provide a server with sufficient capacity to meet the requirements of the Moodle implementation.

Services such as custom theme development, plug-in installation, version upgrades, and data migration are available and can be purchased as needed. Annual contracts are available for support and maintenance of locally hosted Moodle implementations. Support contracts can be purchased in blocks of \$500.00 and additional blocks can be purchased as needed. Our annual support contract offers two tiers of service, via helpdesk or phone. Regardless of the type of support that you need, you will receive a response within 24 hours. Your organization can determine the number of users authorized to utilize our support services.

Phase Three: Moodle Configuration

During this phase you will make decisions regarding administrative training, Moodle configuration, account and course set up and initiate course and user management strategies.

SqoolTechs can provide training for the designated Moodle administrator(s) in your school or district. This training will prepare Moodle administrator to successfully administer a learning management system by addressing all aspects of Moodle configuration including site layout, organizational structure, site policies, course creation, and user account management.

SqoolTechs' LDAP and Active Directory services can simplify the process of account creation. Moodle user accounts (student, teacher, and administrator) can be created manually or the process can be automated. Automation of account creation is achieved by connecting Moodle to the school or district student information system through the use of LDAP (Novell) or Active Directory (Microsoft).

Phase Four: Professional Development and On-going Support

This phase requires that you make decisions concerning staff professional development and the level of ongoing support needed. You will consider such questions as:

- Which staff members will need professional development?
- Who will deliver the professional development?
- What training materials will be needed?
- Will ongoing support be needed?

SqoolTechs can provide professional development training materials, deliver the professional development on site, and train the staff members designated to train the teachers. Each of these professional development components is describe below:

On-site Professional Development

Any Moodle training on-site or at a central location will require the district or location to provide computers for participants, ample Internet access, and a projection system.

Introduction to Moodle Software for Teachers

This 6-hour, hands-on professional development experience gets teachers who are new to using Moodle up and running. Teachers will be introduced to the basics of Moodle. All standard resources, activities, and blocks will be introduced and demonstrated. Effective course layout and suggested instructional strategies will be also presented.

Train the Trainer

This 6-hour, hands-on session is intended for the individual(s) who will be charged with instructing the teachers in your school or district to use Moodle as an instructional tool. Participants of this session should have advanced technology skills. All the topics of the introductory course are presented as well as advanced topics such as metacourses, groups, embedding Web 2.0 applications, and course maintenance and housekeeping. Training tips and a spectrum of instructional use are also addressed.

Training Materials

SqoolTechs has a variety of training resources available to assist districts in delivering professional development. These training resources can be installed in your Moodle. Each of the training resources is described below.

Digital Teaching Guide

Designed for teachers new to Moodle, this printable manual provides an introduction to the tools that are available in Moodle. It provides step-by-step instructions on how to use those tools.

FAQ Tool

This tool is installed in your Moodle and provides quick answers to commonly asked “how to” questions. The FAQ was built using the standard Moodle glossary tool so it can be edited to meet the needs of your teachers. The FAQ can be searched by keyword or browsed by category.

Beginning Training Course

A four- part course designed to help your Moodle Trainers get your teachers up and running using Moodle. This course includes the following parts:

- Moodle 101 – introduces teachers to the very basics of the Moodle interface.
- Resources, Activities, and Blocks – introduces teachers to all standard Moodle resources, activities, and blocks.
- Assignments and Quizzes – introduces the 4 types of assignments and demonstrates the creation of quizzes.
- Moodle in K-12 Classrooms – describes effective ways to utilize Moodle at the K-12 level

Advanced Training Course

This five-part course is for teachers who have mastered the basics and are ready to use some of the advanced features of Moodle.

- Metacourse and Groups – demonstrates how to create and effectively use metacourses and groups.
- Lesson Module- demonstrates how to create interactive, self-paced branching lessons.
- Educational Embeddables – demonstrates how to embed Web 2.0 resources within Moodle and where to find such resources.
- Housekeeping- demonstrates the process of the Backup, Restore, Import, and Reset features.
- Spectrum of Instructional Use- demonstrates how Moodle can be used to its potential.

On-going Support

Annual contracts are available for support and maintenance of locally hosted Moodle implementations. Support contracts can be purchased in blocks of \$500.00 and additional blocks can be purchased as needed. Our annual support contract offers two tiers of service, Regardless of the type of support that you need, you will receive a response within 24 hours. Your organization can determine the number of users authorized to utilize our support services.

Phase Five: Re-Assessment

In this phase you will assess the progress that has been made toward meeting the goals and needs of the school or district. Surveying key stakeholders can provide valuable insights into the progress of your implementation. SqoolTechs can provide a bank of survey questions from which you can create a survey that meets the specific needs of your implementation.

SqoolTechs can also provide consulting services to examine your Moodle implementation and make recommendations using a spectrum of use tool. This will allow you to make decision about further customizations and determine the need for additional training.

Phase Six: System Customizations

During this phase you will determine the customizations, if any, that are needed to the basic Moodle installation. A vast array of 3rd-party modules and integrations can extend the basic Moodle installation. Possible customizations include additional modules and plugins, or integration with other applications such as Google Apps, Mahara, etc.

SqoolTechs can give you access to our demonstration Moodle so that you can experiment with plug-ins before having them installed in your Moodle. SqoolTechs can install plug-ins and complete integrations to ensure compatibility with your Moodle version.

Phase Seven: Continued Professional Development

As a result of completing the reassessment of your Moodle implementation, you may determine that additional teacher training is needed. SqoolTechs can provide on-site training for advanced users and custom training for the plug-ins and integrations that have been added to your Moodle system.

Why SqoolTechs?

The company was started in 2007 by a team of Missouri educators with expertise in using Moodle as an instructional tool in the K-12 environment. SqoolTechs, LLC is an educational technology company whose mission is "**S**upporting **Q**uality **O**nline **O**pportunities for **L**earning." We believe that all students deserve the benefits of a 21st century education. Our goal is to simplify the process of integrating web-based technologies while at the same time keeping costs down. In pursuit of our mission, we provide services to schools and districts related to learning management systems built with Moodle open-source software.



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Pricesheet for Schools Purchasing Multiple Services
 updated June 15, 2010

Hosted Moodle Software Packages					
Each package is hosted and maintained on SqoolTechs' servers and provides <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of the latest stable version of Moodle software • Annual version upgrade • Security updates • One help desk account for the site administrator • One customized theme • 25 MB of storage per user • Unlimited teachers and courses • Automated backup • Four 3rd party Modules: Book, Questionnaire, Quickmail and Games 	Hosted Plan	Bandwidth Allowance	Number of Users	Storage Allowance	Annual Fee
	VLE-500	Unlimited	500	12.50GB	\$750
	VLE-750	Unlimited	750	18.75GB	\$1125
	VLE-1000	Unlimited	1000	25GB	\$1400
	VLE-1500	Unlimited	1500	37.5GB	\$2100
	VLE-2000	Unlimited	2000	50GB	\$2500
	VLE-3000	Unlimited	3000	75GB	\$3750
	VLE-4000	Unlimited	4000	100GB	\$4400
	VLE-5000	Unlimited	5000	125GB	\$5500

Moodle Software Installation on District Servers		
SqoolTechs can provide the installation of Moodle software on your district or school server. Pricing is based on remote installation. *Contact us for server specifications	Installation Specifications	Cost
	Linux LAMP server*	\$600
	Windows server*	\$750
	Unconfigured server (Linux installation)	\$2,400
	Unconfigured server (Windows installation)	\$2,600

Annual Support Contract (Blocks of \$500)		
Annual contracts are available for support and maintenance of locally hosted Moodle software implementations. Support contracts can be purchased in blocks of \$500.00 and additional blocks can be purchased as needed. Our annual support contract offers two tiers of service, Regardless of the type of support that you need, you will receive a response within 24 hours. Your organization can determine the number of users authorized to utilize our support services.		
Support services are billed in 15 minute increments (e.g., 1-15 minutes = 15 minutes; 16-30 minutes = 30 minutes, etc.). Support contract billing is calculated according to the following schedule:	Type of Support	Cost
	Email/Helpdesk	\$60/hour
	Telephone Support	\$80/hour

Standard Services

The items below are billed at a flat rate for both hosted and locally installed Moodle Software solutions.

Theme Modification		
Modification of a standard theme using district/school colors and logo (provided by district in a web-friendly format)		\$150
Additional theme customizations		\$100/hour
Moodle Software and Student Management System Synchronization	LDAP	\$200
	Active Directory	\$300
Module Installation	Installation of 3 rd party Moodle modules	\$100
Migration Services	Linux server to SqoolTech's server	\$300
	Windows' server to SqoolTech's server	\$300
	Linux server to Windows' server	\$600
	Windows server to Linux server	\$300
Administrative Services		\$150/hr
Other Moodle Software Services		\$150/hr
Administrative password reset		\$100

Moodle Software Training

Training	Description	Hours	Cost
Introduction to Moodle Software for Teachers	This day long training gets teachers who are new to using Moodle up and running.	6	\$1,800
Advanced Moodle Software for Teachers	This day long session introduces Moodle users to advanced topics such as Groups, Meta-courses, Plugins, Lesson Module, and embedding content.	6	\$1,800
Moodle Software for Administrators	This session will prepare this person(s) to successfully administer a learning management system. It will provide an opportunity to develop an understanding of how Moodle works by exploring the various settings in the site administration panel.	3	\$1,000
Train the Trainer	This training is intended for the individual(s) who will be charged with instructing the teachers in your school or district how to use Moodle as an instructional tool.	6	\$1800

Moodle Software Training Materials

Administrative Manual	Provides screen-shots of all Moodle administrative pages and includes recommended setting for the use of Moodle in the K-12 environment.	\$40.00
Teacher Manual	Printable manual with step-by-step instructions for beginners.	\$15/per teacher
FAQ Tool	Customizable tool installed in your Moodle that provides quick answers to commonly asked "how to" questions.	\$10/per teacher
Training Courses	Introductory and advanced courses installed in your Moodle.	\$30/per course per teacher