

Borders College VLE: Laying Out Your Course

You now have your idea and plan for creating a course in Moodle it is time to start to build your course. Not only do you have to consider the content but the appearance factor now becomes almost as important as the content itself. This document will give you some key pointers to help you with this and demonstrate, through examples *how to* and *how not to* set out your courses.



Tops Tips for Course Building

- **Be Consistent:** Use the same heading styles, font styles, colours and description formats throughout
 - Use the heading styles available in Moodle (similar to those in MS Word), such as **heading1**, **heading2** and **heading3**.
 - Use a font size of 12 or above.
 - Avoid underlining headings, as they are often mistaken for hyperlinks.
 - Avoid using CAPITALISED TEXT as this is much harder to read. Use bold if you want to emphasis something.
 - Make sure text colour is easily distinguished from the background colour. (Black is a good colour!)
- **Be Descriptive:** Use descriptions and/or labels where possible. Remember that Moodle is a delivery tool and students need clear instructions and direction on how work through a course, adding descriptions and labels to resources helps this process.
- **Be Illustrative:** Try to incorporate some pictures into your course content area. This will not only brighten up the look of your course, but can help to illustrate a point you are making.
- **Be Concise:** It is much more difficult to read information on a screen than from a piece of paper so keep the text in your course short, simple and to the point.

To follow are a couple of examples of a poorly laid out courses with information in the text boxes about why it is a poor example. Beneath each of these examples is an illustration of a potential solution or good example of how the same information can be laid out more appropriately.

Example 1

- How an Introduction to a Topic should not be set out...

Topic outline


The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to the world of the Virtual Learning Environment. This course is intended for the needs of those who wish to learn about such a widely used delivery tool, based on the requirements of modern day learning and teaching practices.

The outcomes of this learning space are defined in the Learning Outcomes document. Instructions for working your way through the materials are provided in the various sections as necessary. If you require any assistance at any time, then please contact your course tutor immediately who will only be too pleased to help.

I HOPE YOU ENJOY LEARNING ABOUT THIS SUBJECT AND THE USE OF THE MATERIALS - PLEASE REMEMBER TO HAVE FUN WHILST YOU LEARN! 😊



Avoid setting a different background colour to text

Light colours (such as yellow) are difficult to read against a white background and should be avoided.


Try to use the same font colour throughout. Think about the colours you use and if they are easy to read on a screen. (Red tends to be difficult to read)

Position images of people to face your text, this draws your reader's attention to the text.

Avoid block capitals as it looks like you are shouting at the reader. Use bold instead if you want to emphasise something.

Resize images before use. They should be included to support your text not overpower it.

Programme Leader,




- Using some of the 'Top Tip' pointers, this can be much improved...

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I hope you enjoy learning about this subject and the use of the materials - please remember to have fun while you learn! 😊

Programme Leader,



Example 2

To follow is another Bad vs. Good Example:

- **A poorly laid out course...**

Underlined text can be confused with hyperlinks so avoid underlining, where possible.

Give your topic a meaningful name. It makes it easier for the users to see what is happening.

1 **Topic 1**

This section is designed to give you an insight into the basic workings of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), aimed to increase your background knowledge of the subject before we progress.

Do these:

- [How To Login \(Video\)](#)
- [How To Login \(Manual\)](#)
- [Simple Navigation \(Presentation\)](#)
- [Chat Module Example](#)
- [Discussion Group Example](#)


Try to use images, captions and labels to make your course more interesting

Give clear instructions about how to use resources, rather than just creating a list

- **A well laid out course (note the consistency and the clear instructional guidance on how to use the resources)...**

1 **Understanding Basics**


This section is designed to give you an insight into the basic workings of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), aimed to increase your background knowledge of the subject before we progress. Firstly, please work through the materials given below on how to login and navigate your way around a VLE system, ensuring that you are comfortable in carrying out both processes:



Logging-In and Navigation:

- [How To Login \(Video\)](#)
A video illustrating the login procedure. Please allow up to 1 minute for the video to load before playback.
- [How To Login \(Manual\)](#)
A manual offering a simple step-by-step guide to the login procedure.
- [Simple Navigation \(Presentation\)](#)
This presentation highlights the main types of navigation offered when using a VLE.

Furthermore, you may already be aware that the current VLE system uses some very important communication features as a support aid for teaching and learning. Please take your time and experiment with examples of these features, given below, as you will be required to use them at some point during your learning:



Communications Examples:

- [Chat Module Example](#)
Chat facilities give members of the course the chance to communicate through a chat "room" (window) in synchronous form.
- [Discussion Group Example](#)
Discussion forums offer members of the course the chance to communicate through posting messages in asynchronous form.

Finally, remember that a simple and consistent approach often works best!