

Figure 2-9. Administration block

lists events you've created in the calendar, such as exams and holidays, together with assignment and quiz deadlines. At the bottom of the block are links to view the calendar and add new events. Also, there's the Recent Activity block, which lists recent course activity, such as forum postings and uploads.

The middle column is where the action is. This is where you add all of your content and activities, such as forums, quizzes, and lessons for students to access. Before we get to that, however, you need to make a choice about the format in which to present your course.

## Course Formats

*This section covers the following MTC skills: 2.2 Course format*

Unlike some CMSs that force you into one format, Moodle provides you with a number of options for the general format of your course. You can choose to order your course chronologically by week, conceptually by topic, or socially with a big forum as the central organizing principle.

The course formats you can choose are:

### *LAMS format*

The Learning Activity Management System (LAMS) is an open source Learning Management System (LMS) that allows teachers to use a Flash-based authoring environment for developing learning sequences. LAMS has been integrated with Moodle to allow teachers to develop LAMS activities within a Moodle course. This course format makes LAMS central to the course, only displaying the LAMS interface. If you are interested in using LAMS, check with your system administrator to see if he has installed and configured LAMS. Very few institutions use LAMS, as it duplicates much of the Moodle functionality.

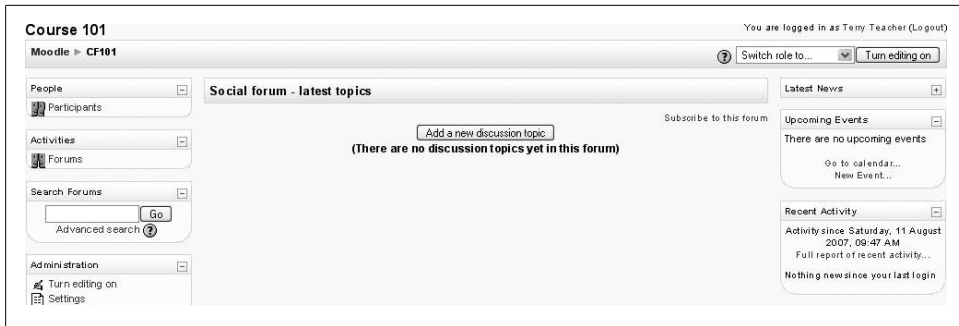


Figure 2-10. Course page in social format

### SCORM format

The Sharable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) is a content packaging standard. SCORM packages are self-contained bundles of content and JavaScript activities that can send data to Moodle about the students' scores and current locations. Moodle can use SCORM packages as an activity type or as a course format. If you have a large SCORM object you want to use as an entire course, you can select this course format.

### Social format

The social format is based on a single forum for the whole course, as shown in Figure 2-10. It's useful for less formal courses or for noncourse uses such as maintaining departmental sites.

### Topics format

When you create a course using the topics format, you start by choosing the number of topics you will cover. Moodle creates a section for each topic, as shown previously in Figure 2-8. You can add content, forums, quizzes, and other activities to each topic section. If your course design is concept-oriented, and students will be working through a range of concepts but not necessarily according to a fixed schedule, this is a good choice.

### Weekly format and CSS/no tables

With this format, you specify a course start date and the number of weeks the course is to run. Moodle will create a section for each week of your course, as shown in Figure 2-11. The current week is highlighted. You can add content, forums, quizzes, and so on in the section for each week. If you want all your students to work on the same materials at the same time, this is a good format to choose.

The CSS/no tables variant of the weekly format displays the weekly course format without using tables for layout. This improves the accessibility of the format, but older browsers may have trouble displaying it correctly.

To set the course format:

1. Click Settings in the Administration block.

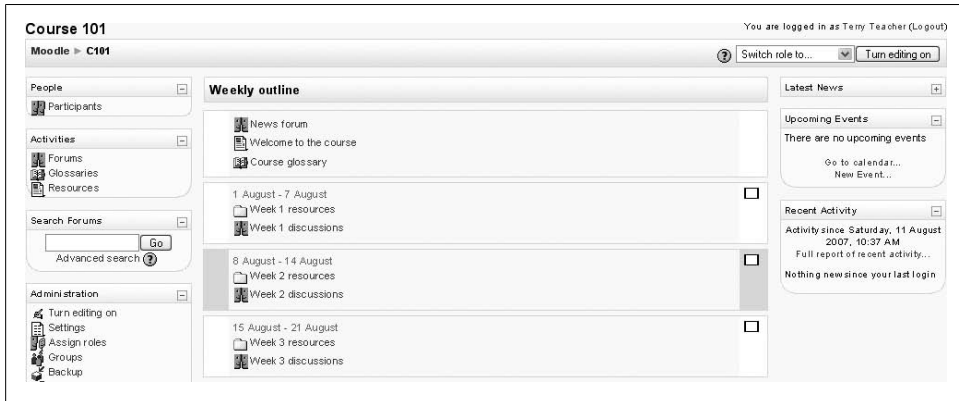


Figure 2-11. Course page in weekly format

2. Select the course format from the drop-down list just below the course summary (see Figure 2-12).
3. Enter the parameters for your course:
  - For the weekly format, set the start date and the number of weeks.
  - For the topic format, set the number of topics.
  - For the social format, set the course start date. You don't need to worry about the number of weeks or topics.

Moodle allows you to switch between formats if you find that a given format isn't working for you. Simply follow the preceding instructions and select a different format. You can also add or remove topics or weeks at any time. So you don't have to worry too much about locking yourself into a format before you really understand the system.

## Course Settings

*This section covers the following MTC skills: 2.1 Course settings*

The settings page, as shown in Figure 2-12, where you set the course format, also gives you access to a number of important course options. You'll find it is important to take a moment to review the settings for your course to ensure that it behaves the way you want it to.

To change your course settings:

1. Click Settings in the Administration block on your course page.
2. Review each of the general options to ensure they are correct for your course:


### Category


Your system administrator may have created course categories, such as department or college labels, to help students and teachers find their courses.


**Edit course settings**


---




**General**















































Full name\* 

Short name\* 

Course ID number 



Summary\* 


Trebuchet   **B** *I* U ~~S~~  $x_2$   $x^2$    


This is a demonstration course.


Path: body


 


Format 


Number of weeks/topics


Course start date 


Hidden sections 

News items to show 

Show grades 

Show activity reports 

Maximum upload size 

Is this a meta course? 

Default role

Figure 2-12. Editing the course settings

Depending on how your system is set up, you may be able to categorize your course by department, subject, or other organizational principle.



You will only have the option to change the category if you have been assigned the appropriate capability. (We'll cover roles and capabilities in Chapter 4.)

### Full name

This is the name that is displayed on the top header of every page in your course and also in the course listings page. The name should be descriptive enough so students can easily identify the course in which they are working, but it

shouldn't be too long. For example, use “English 400—Beowulf” and not “ENG400—Beowulf and the heroic poems of the ancient world.”

#### *Short name*

Enter the institutional shorthand for your course. Many students recognize “Eng101,” but not “Introduction to Composition.” The short name also appears in the navigation bar at the top of the page.

#### *Course ID number*

The course ID number is used to provide a link between Moodle and your institution's backend data systems. Most Student Information Systems (SIS) have a unique identifier for each course. Moodle has its own unique identifier, which is different from the SIS ID. This field is used by Moodle to store the SIS unique ID so Moodle will know which course the SIS is talking about when synchronizing courses and enrollments.

#### *Summary*

The summary appears in the course listings page. A good one-paragraph summary will help communicate the essence of your course to your students.

#### *Format*

This is where you can set the course format as discussed previously.

#### *Number of weeks/topics*

Use this to set the number of sections your course will have. If you need to change this later, you can. Increasing the number results in sections being added to the bottom of your course page; reducing the number results in sections being removed from the bottom of your course page, and any content in them hidden.

#### *Course start date*

The start date is the day the course is first active. If you are using a weekly course format, the first week will start on the date you set here. The start date is also used in course reports as the earliest possible date for which you can obtain logs, activity, and participation reports. In general, if your course does have a real starting date, then it makes sense to set this date to that, no matter what course format you are using.

#### *Hidden sections*

When you hide an upcoming topic section to prevent your students from jumping ahead, you can choose to display the title as a collapsed section or simply hide the topic altogether. Displaying the collapsed sections gives your students a road map of the upcoming topics or weeks, so it's probably a good idea to leave this on the default setting.

#### *News items to show*

Use this setting to determine the number of course news items displayed on the course page.

### *Show grades*

This setting allows you to select whether students can see the gradebook. If set to No, it doesn't stop instructors from recording grades, but simply prevents the students from seeing them.

### *Show activity reports*

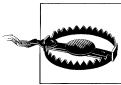
This setting allows students to view their activity history in your course. This is useful if you want students to reflect on their level of participation.

### *Maximum upload size*

This setting limits the size of files you or your students upload to the course. Your system administrator sets the maximum size for the system, but you can choose to make the limit smaller than the system maximum. You can also further limit the size of files that your students upload as assignment submissions and for other activities. (We'll cover them as they come up later in the book.)

### *Is this a meta course?*

A meta course automatically enrolls participants from other "child" courses. Meta courses take their enrollments from other courses. This feature can populate many courses from one enrollment or one course from many enrollments. For example, a course is part of a program (meta course). Each time a student enrolls in (or unenrolls from) this course, they are enrolled/unenrolled from any meta course(s) associated with it.



You cannot designate a course as a meta course if you have already enrolled students. If you want to change a course into a meta course, you will need to unenroll all the students first, then set the course as a meta course and choose the child courses from which the meta course will draw its enrollments.

### *Default role*

The default role is assigned to everyone who enrolls in your course, unless they are specifically granted another role. We'll cover roles in Chapter 4.

## 3. Select the enrollments options:

### *Enrollment plug-ins*

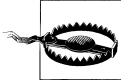
Moodle has a number of methods of managing course enrollments, called enrollment plug-ins, which we'll cover in Chapter 16. This setting allows you to choose an interactive enrollment plug-in, such as internal enrollment or PayPal. Your system may well use a noninteractive enrollment plug-in, in which case this setting has no effect. We recommend you leave this setting as default and leave the choice of enrollment plug-ins to your system administrator.

### *Course enrollable*

This setting determines whether a user can self-enroll in your course. You can also limit enrollments to a certain date range.

### *Enrollment duration*

This setting specifies the number of days a student is enrolled in the course, starting from the day she enrolls. If set, students are automatically unenrolled after the specified time has elapsed. This setting is useful for rolling courses without a specific start or end date.



Be very careful when using the enrollment duration setting.

*Jason:* When I first started using Moodle, I thought the enrollment duration was how long a student had to enroll in a course, not how long she would stay enrolled. After 14 days, hundreds of students were suddenly unenrolled from their courses, causing headaches for weeks.

4. Select the enrollment expiry notification options to determine whether users are notified that their enrollment is about to expire and how much notice they should be given.
5. Select the groups options:

### *Group mode*

Moodle can create student workgroups. We will cover groups extensively in Chapter 4. For now, you need to decide whether your students will be organized into groups and, if so, whether the groups will work independently or will be able to view each other's work.

### *Force groups*

You can set the group mode separately for many activities or force group mode to be set at the course level. If everything in the course is done as part of a group, or you are running cohorts of students through a course at different times, you'll probably want to force group mode to make management easier. Forcing the course group mode overrides the individual activity group settings. If you have forced group mode, every activity in the course will have that group mode set.

6. Select the availability options:

### *Availability*

Use this setting to control student access to your course. You can make a course available or unavailable to students without affecting your own access. This is a good way to hide courses that aren't ready for public consumption or hide them at the end of the semester while you calculate your final grades.

### *Enrollment key*

A course enrollment key is a code each student must enter in order to self-enroll in a course. The key prevents students who aren't in your class from accessing your Moodle course. Create the key here and give it to your students

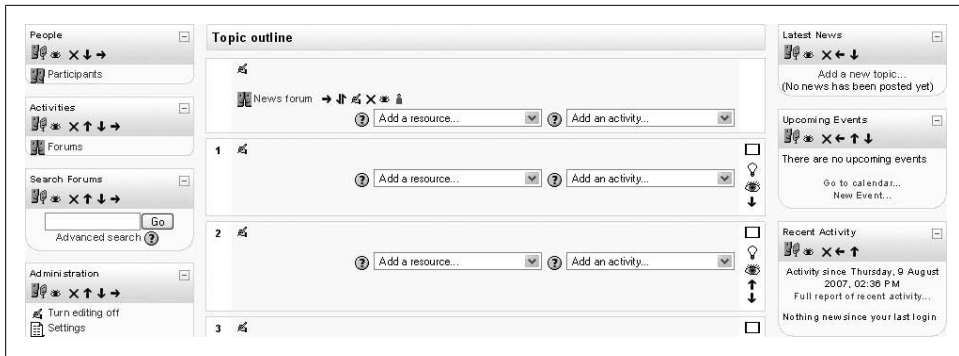


Figure 2-13. Course page with editing turned on

when you want them to enroll in your Moodle course. They will need to use the key only once when they enroll.

### Guest access

You can choose to allow guests to access your course, either with an enrollment key or without it. Guests can only view your course and course materials; they can't post to the forums, take quizzes, or submit assignments.

### Cost

If you are using an interactive enrollment method such as PayPal, you can enter a course cost. Students will then be required to make a payment before enrolling in the course.

7. Choose whether to force the language. If you do so, your students cannot change languages within the course.
8. Once you've made all your selections, click the "Save changes" button.

## Editing Mode

*This section covers the following MTC skills: 3.1 Managing blocks*

Now that you've decided on a format and settings for your course, we'll look at how to add content. To start the process, you'll first need to turn editing on (see Figure 2-13), which will allow you to add resources and activities to your course. At the top right of the page of any course you are teaching, you'll see a button labeled, surprisingly enough, "Turn editing on." Clicking on this button will present you with a new array of options.

Starting at the top of the screen, let's look at what turning editing on enables you to do. At the top of each section, you'll see an icon of a hand holding a pencil. When you click it, you are presented with a Summary text area. You can use this to label and summarize each topic or weekly section in your course. You should keep the summary to a sentence or two for each block to avoid making the main page too long. Click "Save