



Published on Free Software Magazine (<http://www.freesoftwaremagazine.com>)

## **Book review: Using Moodle Teaching with the Popular Open Source Course Management by *Jason Cole, Helen Foster***

### **A user guide geared toward the teacher/instructor**

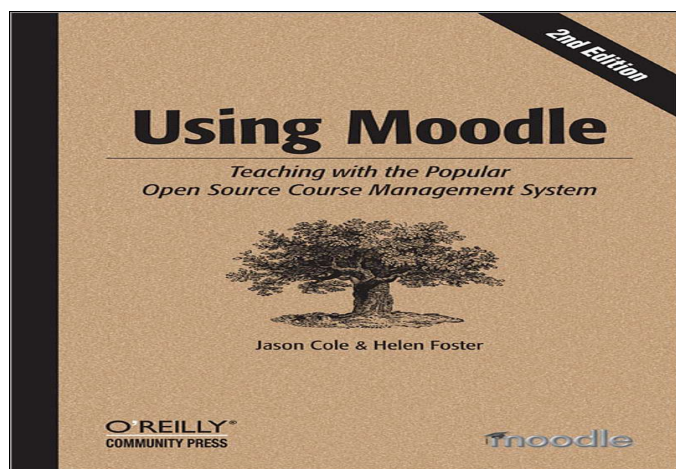
By Brian Turner

PUBLISHED: 2008-11-26

The book “Using Moodle Teaching with the Popular Open Source Course Management”, by Jason Cole, Helen Foster, is a much needed reference book for Moodle.

Moodle is an open source Course Management System that allows you to organize and deliver information online in a structured and controlled format. Moodle also supports the creation of forums, chats, quizzes, assignments and the recording of grades.

The authors have the experience required to cover both the technology and the educational aspects of this unique tool. Jason Cole has been involved with universities moving to Moodle and has worked directly with teachers in the classrooms. He knows what works and what doesn't. Helen Foster is the Moodle documentation steward and facilitates the “Using Moodle” course on Moodle.org. She has also spent time teaching in a classroom and has implemented Moodle in various schools.



The book's cover

My first impression when reading this book was that it is geared specifically toward the new user and not to an administrator. This is appropriate enough for a book called “Using Moodle”, but I've always felt that a user

can benefit from knowing how a system was installed. The authors know their audience best though. The last chapter of the book does address the topic of administration and briefly covers quite a few excellent points. If you are involved in administering Moodle though, you will want to use the help documents found in the application for further details.

**Geared toward the user, not the administrator**

## The contents

The book is quite readable, with 282 pages of detailed information. The chapters are laid out in a very logical format and the book reads quite well from cover to cover. However, since you might not need to implement every feature, the book also is divided up cleanly and makes for a good reference text as well. For instance, you might simply want to host content and collect grades. Skipping over the sections on Wikis and Blogs would make perfect sense. There are chapters addressing everything from creation of content, quizzes, assignments, and grades to surveys, databases, forums, and some administration.

## Who's this book for?

This book is for instructors who want to teach a course using Moodle and looking for specific guidance on how to use the tool. There are certainly many ways to use Moodle and many options available. This book is written for the teacher/instructor and approaches the subject matter from their point of view. It sticks closely to the users concerns and does not burden the reader with administrative detail.

## Relevance to free software

This book highlights the free software aspect of Moodle and shows the obvious benefits gained from community contributions. Not only is Moodle free, but the book provides information on where to find additional guidance for free! The subject matter is not proprietary and the authors don't pretend that this is the only source of information you'll ever need. Obviously books have not been entirely replaced by on-line information. There will always be something useful about having the written text beside you as you work. If you intend to work with Moodle, this book is a great collection of information with the topics explained clearly.

By using Moodle, you will also be exposing dozens, hundreds or maybe thousands of students to free software. This helps spread the word about the usefulness and quality of community produced products through demonstration and use. There is no better way to convert others to free software than by being able to show them how you use it to accomplish your tasks and goals. This book will help you do just that.

**A great collection of information, with topics explained clearly.**

## Pros

If you are looking to use Moodle at some point, this will be a fabulous resource to have by your side. It will guide you through the steps required to be successful in your use of the software and it also helps explain what benefits Moodle might bring to you.

## Cons

If you don't already have a Moodle administrator, you will find yourself searching for more information. Just remember, this book is aimed at the users.

This book is also available through the O'Reilly Safari Books On-line system. Depending on your environment, this may be a better purchase for you and deserves consideration.

### Book

Title	Using Moodle, Second Edition
Author	Jason Cole, Helen Foster
Publisher	O'Reilly
ISBN	059652918X
Year	2007
Pages	282
CD included	No
FS Oriented	10
Overall score	8

### Teaching with the Popular Open Source Course Management System

## Biography

Brian Turner (/user/14825" title="View user profile.): After 18 years supporting communication networks, satellite and microwave, I've discovered some fun on the PC again. GNU/Linux, Mac OS X and MS Windows all have their uses, but GNU/Linux is where the fun is at.

## Copyright information

This article is made available under the "Attribution" Creative Commons License 3.0 available from <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>.

---

### Source URL:

[http://www.freesoftwaremagazine.com/articles/book\\_review\\_using\\_moodle\\_teaching\\_popular\\_open\\_source\\_course\\_m](http://www.freesoftwaremagazine.com/articles/book_review_using_moodle_teaching_popular_open_source_course_m)

---