



# User experience benchmark study

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## UX Survey results - Key Insights Summary

# Introduction & Overview

## Moodle's 4.0 release kicks-off!

We're very excited to be kicking off on Moodle's 4.0 release.

This is a long-term support release that will see a significant shift towards user-centered design with a commitment to improve the Moodle LMS user experience for all our users.

To do this, we asked for your help and got fantastic feedback about your experience with your Moodle products.



## Our objective

**Our key objective is to find out and understand what problems our users are currently facing when using their Moodle product/s.**

This research is aimed at identifying and improving the user experience within key Moodle products:

- Moodle LMS
- Moodle apps
- Moodle.org

**“... I think the step to 4.0 is the most important you ever made! ”**

*Moodle administrator / Teacher who creates courses.*



# Key Insights Summary

# Number of respondents

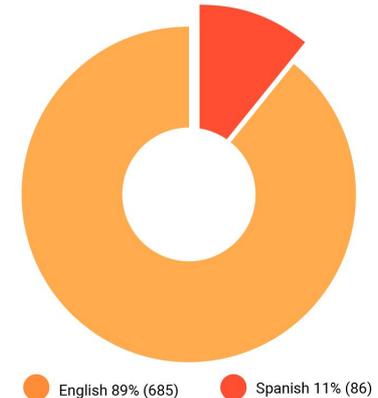
**We had a great result of 771 responses resulting in a confidence level of 95%.**

All results were collected and securely managed by the online survey tool, Survey Monkey.

*Moodle Senior UX designer, **Hina Khan*** - analysed all respondent data and put together this report to present the results and overarching themes that emerged from the user feedback.

A simple severity ranking model was used to highlight areas of potential work as part of the recommendations section.

685 participants responded to the English language survey, while the Spanish survey had 86 responses.



## Q4. What is the one thing that challenges you the most on a day-to-day basis about your use of Moodle?

In order to analyse the answers to the above open verbatim question, similar issues expressed by the respondents were counted and grouped into broad categories. The frequency of mentions is indicated by the level of each category bar.

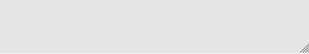
Further to this, two severity rankings were assigned to each category

1. Usability
2. Sentiment

The severity rankings were also measured and verified against Nielsen's and Hess's principles for interaction design that were used as a framework and as a best practice benchmark.

What is the **one thing** that challenges you the most on a day-to-day basis about your use of Moodle?  
This can include: the web interface, the mobile app, or even moodle.org

Don't be shy - we want to understand!

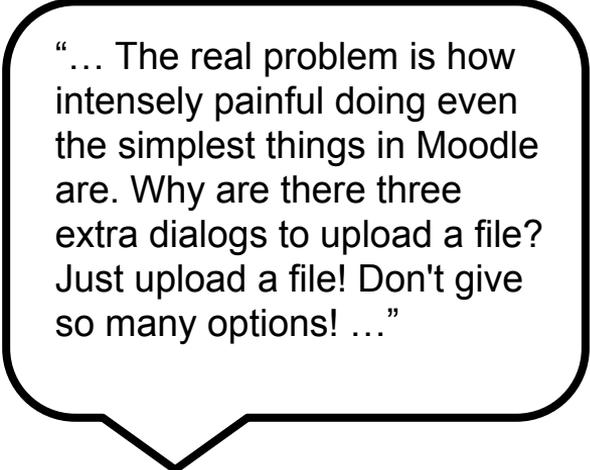


The open verbatim response allows respondents to use their own words. This is a powerful way to understand the emotions behind the words which helps us understand the sentiment behind the issue indicating the value the user places on the issues.

## Q4. Usability and Sentiment ranking

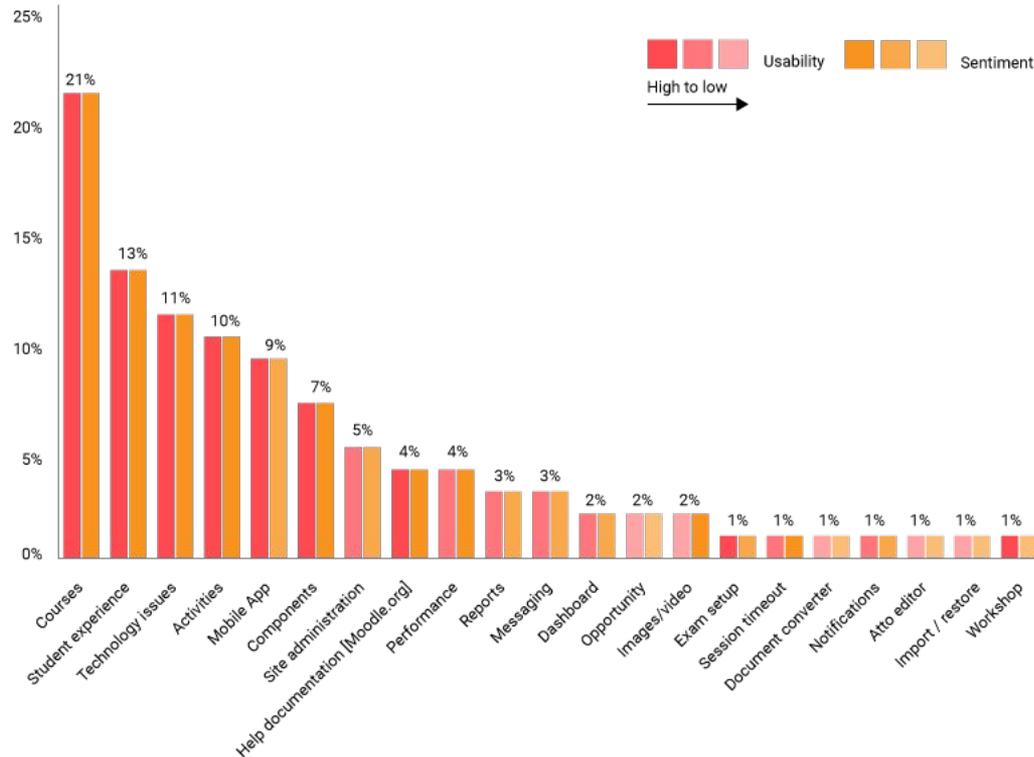
1. **Usability** - Measuring against the usability ranking using industry best practice standards and guidelines as a benchmark, ensures the product meets the users' needs.
2. **Sentiment** - Being able to voice their issues in their own words helps us understand the sentiment and emotion behind the issue. This also indicates the value the user places on the issues which allows us to consider the impact on users emotional state and prioritise the issue accordingly.

Each severity ranking is ordered as **high, medium** or **low** to allow a more granular interpretation of the issues. This also allows us to identify the issues in terms of high to low priority when planning work.



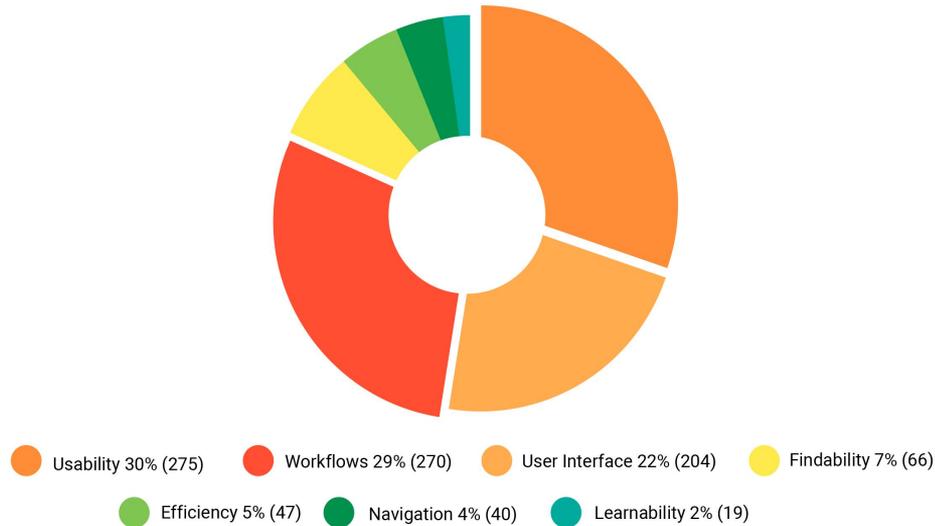
“... The real problem is how intensely painful doing even the simplest things in Moodle are. Why are there three extra dialogs to upload a file? Just upload a file! Don't give so many options! ...”

## Q4. Broad categories based on user mentions of challenging issues



The number of mentions of issues that presented challenges to users were counted and sorted into broad categories

## Q4. User experience principles

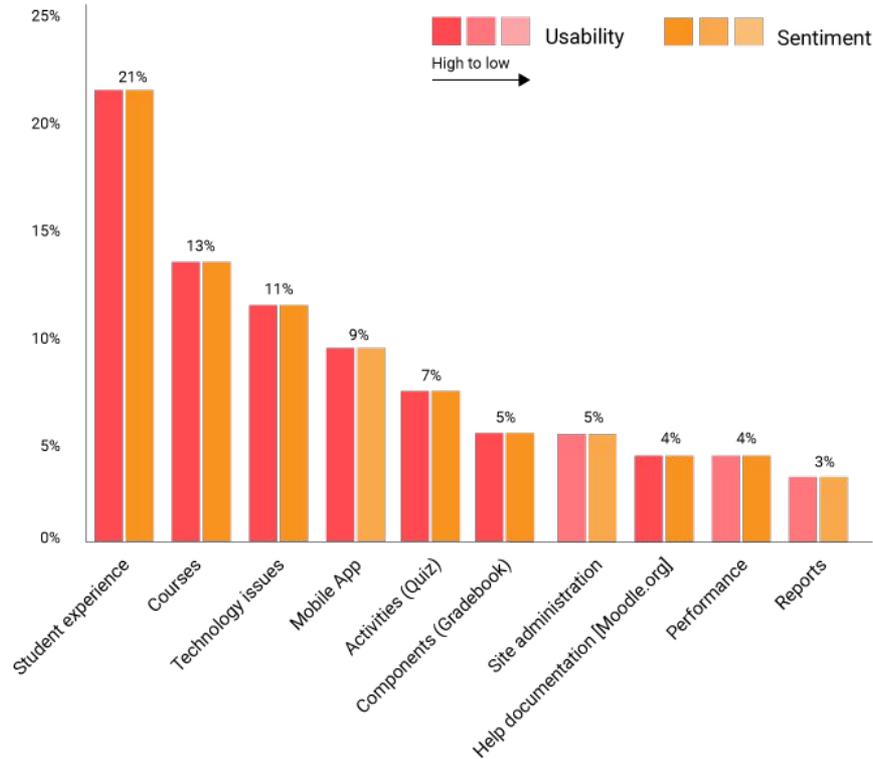


7 key principles of user experience were drawn out from the broad categories identified which highlight issues from interface design to findability (total mentions = 921).

Designers use principles such as **visibility**, **findability** and **learnability** to address basic human behaviors. We **use some design principles to guide actions**. ... That way, we **put users in control in seamless experiences**.

(Design Principles, Interaction design foundation)

## Q4. Showing top 10 categories



Showing Top 10 broad categories

In the full report, the top 10 categories recorded are explained in more detail.

1. **Courses**
2. **Student experience**
3. **Technology Issues**
4. **Mobile App**
5. **Activites (Quiz)**
6. **Components (Gradebook)**
7. **Site administration**
8. **Help Documentation**
9. **Performance**
10. **Reports**

# Insights

The following themes stood out in the data:

**1. The interface is unnecessarily complicated**

Complicated interfaces are causing frustration.

**2. It's hard for new users to enjoy Moodle**

We have found our workflows are cumbersome.

**3. Everyday tasks should be easy for educators**

Educators are relying heavily on admin support staff

**4. Everything takes too long in Moodle**

Our technical documentation is hard to understand and sometimes incomplete.

“Moodle is a very powerful LMS that support effective teaching. ... I Love Moodle. ... Many users don't use Moodle because it looks complicated.

*Teacher, Course designer, Admin/Support, Content developer*



## 1. The interface is unnecessarily complicated

Complicated interfaces are causing frustration.

It is clear that the inconsistent and cluttered user interface creates too much unnecessary 'noise' for users.

The interface is packed with features for beginners and power-users alike with no clear hierarchy based on tasks. This makes it difficult for users to easily find their way around the site, resulting in more time spent on task completion. This could also potentially affect task success rate and increase error rates.

While Moodle's flexibility is its strength, it also makes it difficult to use. This is potentially due to the way in which flexibility is perceived and implemented - it is not used to make tasks easier, but to 'turbo-charge' a feature that will often only benefit more advanced users.

Flexibility is needed to make the everyday tasks to be successfully and easily completed for all course creators, beginners and experts alike.

*"Transferring a student out of one course and into another is convoluted and required many steps. This results in our staff struggling to complete all steps, or avoiding doing it entirely because they "don't have time"*

*Course designer, Administrator,  
Support, Software developer*



## 2. It's hard for new users to enjoy Moodle

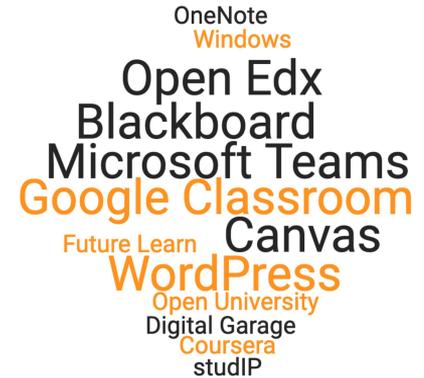
We have found our workflows are cumbersome.

921 mentions from all 771 participants described difficulties with the overall user experience of the product.

Within this group, 7 key areas of user experience were highlighted: Usability 30% (275); Workflows 29% (270); User interface 22% (204); Findability 7% (66); Efficiency 5% (46); Navigation 4% (40); Learnability 2% (19).

This suggests that, overall, the product suffers from broken workflows, indicating that not enough attention is paid to the complete life-cycle within each component and how they relate to other components.

For example, the student enrolment user journey does not take into account how students move in and out of the system nor how all associated information is handled. This potentially results in loss of student data, makes it hard for admins to manage multiple systems and has flow-on effects that adversely impact educators' time.



### Similar products mentioned based on:

- Ease of use
- Contemporary look and feel
- Better workflows
- Student interaction
- Educator and student interaction
- Assessment and grading
- Integrations with other products



### 3. **Everyday tasks should be easy for all users**

Educators are relying heavily on admin support staff.

We found that daily tasks are taking too long and users feel they are wasting a lot of time setting up courses and depend heavily on busy admin staff for help.

This causes a lot of frustration and leaves educators feeling powerless and 'locked out' of most settings.

When Educators do not have the skills they need to use the product and are also hamstrung by the product's limitations, they will lack the confidence to build well constructed and designed courses that are engaging for their students.

“Teachers are very busy and want moodle to do the heavy lifting of creating a course layout quickly. So they can focus on linking pedagogy to tools.”

*Support*



#### 4. Everything takes too long in Moodle

Our technical documentation is hard to understand and sometimes incomplete.

Beginners and novices who had lower rates of satisfaction with the product could potentially be struggling with a very basic onboarding experience that does not have clearly defined steps and tell the users what to do next.

For new users who rely on help documentation we learned that they are having trouble finding the right documentation and sometimes finding it unhelpful and incomplete.

We also found that the lack of proper technical documentation potentially leads to incorrect or incomplete installs, resulting in educators and students missing out on features at best, and causing errors the user cannot fix, at worst.

“The development of code for the platform and its existing code makes it quite difficult to extend and/or modify.”

*Software developer*



A big thank you to all our participants :)

We had a great response and appreciate the time you took out of your busy schedules to provide us with such great feedback!

We look forward to hearing your thoughts again and will be working hard with everyone to improve your experience with Moodle.



Barbara



Candice



Hina

**Thank you!!**

*UX Team - Moodle LMS*



# References

*Featured quotes:* Tell us what you think! UX Survey 2020

*Slide 9:* Creative Research Systems, Confidence levels and sample sizes:

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*Slides 23-36:* Jakob Nielsen, Ten Usability Heuristics

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Whitney Hess: *from* Design Principles, Interaction Design Foundation

<https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/design-principles>

Anna Kayley, Match Between the System and the Real World: The 2nd Usability Heuristic Explained

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*Slide 39:* Measuring system usability scale example:

<https://uiuxtrend.com/measuring-system-usability-scale-sus/>

**Icons from the Noun Project:** Icon Fair, *Mountain*; Talking & Felix Westphal, *Party*