Adding a Chat Activity

The **Chat** activity module enables course participants to have text-based conversations in real time with other course participants. Because these conversations are synchronous (or in real time), participants need to be logged in at the same time to communicate with each other. Chat sessions can be organized into small groups or they can be accessed by each course participant.

Although participants need to be online to participate, the communication data in **Chat** sessions is saved and the resulting transcripts can be made available to all course participants or they can be restricted to users with permission to access them.
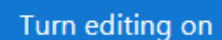
Using the Chat Activity to Enhance Blended Learning

Chat activities provide students with an opportunity to interact outside of the classroom. This may be especially useful for classes that do not meet frequently. Advances in voice communication have reduced the need for this type of text communication; however, the Chat activity module provides an alternative mode of real-time communication for students unable to access online voice technology. Teachers may also be interested in its archiving feature and use it to host a 'question and answer' session with a guest speaker or during regularly scheduled online office hours.
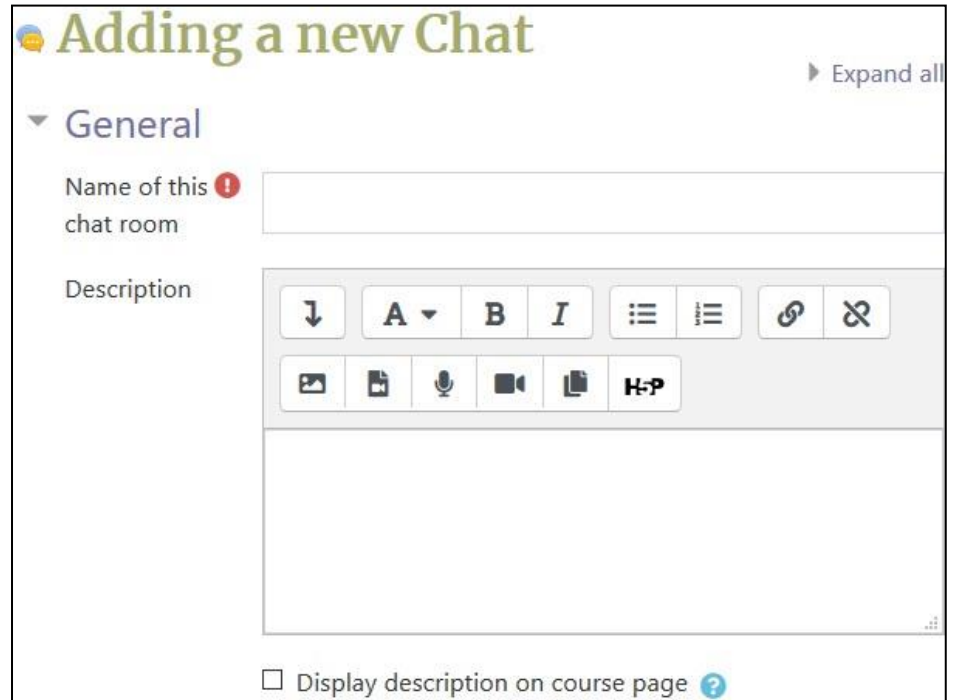
Step-by-Step Instructions for Adding this Activity

1. On your course, click the **Turn editing on** button.

2. Click the **Add an activity or resource** link in the appropriate.

3. The **Add an activity or resource** pop up appears.

4. Select **Chat** in the **Activities** tab.

    The **Adding a new Chat page** appears.
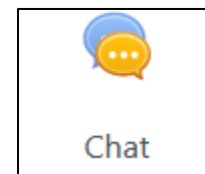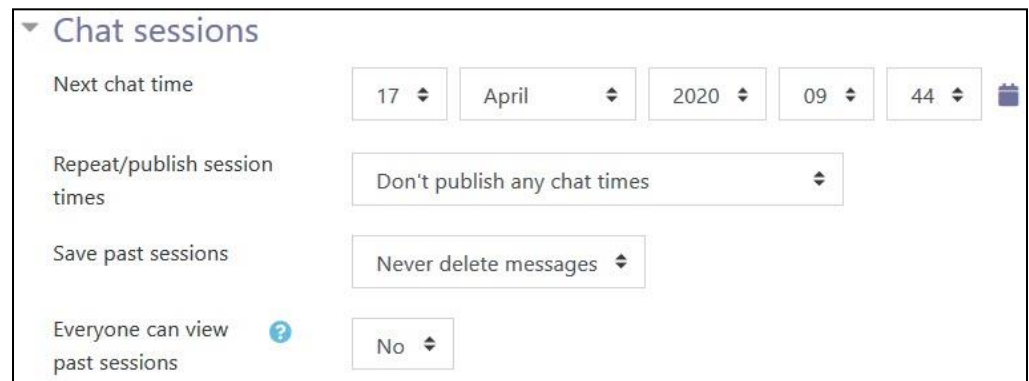
Settings in the **General** section are used to set the general information about the activity.

5. Type a descriptive name in the **Name of this chat room** text box.

6. Type the purpose of this Chat area and any other important information in the **Description** text box. Learners will see this before they enter the chat.

7. To display the description on the course home page, select **Display description** on course page. (To keep the page less cluttered this is not recommended.)
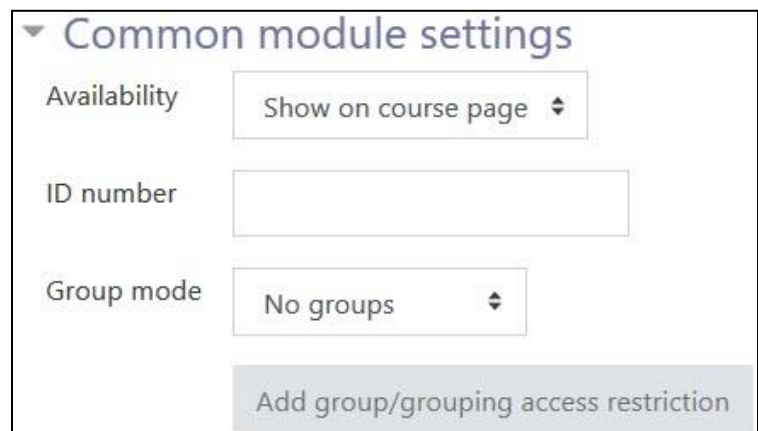
The **Chat sessions** section sets the time of the chat and controls access to the chat transcript.

8. The **Next chat time** setting is used to schedule the next chat session. This information will appear in the **Calendar and Upcoming events** block.
   Note tha a **Chat** activity is always available to students unless it is hidden or access restrictions are imposed. (See below.)

9. Select **Don't publish any chat times** in the **Repeat/publish session times** option to have an open-ended, unscheduled chat activity. The options in this setting allow the scheduling of **Chat** sessions to be repeated daily, weekly or not at all (i.e. **No repeats - publish the specified time only**).

10. The **Save past sessions** setting specifies how long chat transcripts will be saved. Select **Never delete messages** to maintain a permanent archive.

11. Select **Yes** in the **Everyone can view past sessions** setting to allow students read-only access to a **Chat** session transcript. (Select **No** to prevent students from reading past **Chat** sessions transcripts.)

    Settings in the **Common module** section are common to many Moodle activities and resources.

12. The **Availability** setting is used to **Show/Hide** the activity. This is identical to using the **Show/Hide** icons when the Turn editing on function is enabled on a course home page.

13. The **ID Number** setting sets an ID number for advanced use of the grade book. (This is not used in the LINC courseware.)

14. The **Group mode** setting enables the use of groups. (More information is available in the **Groups** documentation in the Stage 3 **Course Management** section.)

15. The **Grouping** option enables the use of groupings (a collection of groups).

    Settings in the **Restrict access** section can be used to limit access to the activity. (More information is available in the **Setting up and Using Restrict Access Settings** section of the Stage 3 **Course Management** section.)

16. Click on the **Add restriction...** button to display the **Add restriction** pop up.

Settings in the **Activity completion** section are used to set completion tracking, a viewing requirement and the expected completion date. (More information is available in the **Completion Tracking** documentation in the Stage **3 Course Management** section.)

17. Click on the **Save and display** button to save/update the activity or click the **Save and return to course** button.

Using a Chat Activity

1. The **Chat activity** link appears on the course main page.

- The **Chat room** for that activity appears, showing three options.

- The **Click here to enter the chat now** link opens the chat window.

- The **Use more accessible interface** link opens the chat window that is suitable for older web browsers.

- The **View past chat sessions** link provides access to the transcripts of previous **Chat** sessions. (Teachers can use the **Delete this session** option to delete specific **Chat** sessions.)
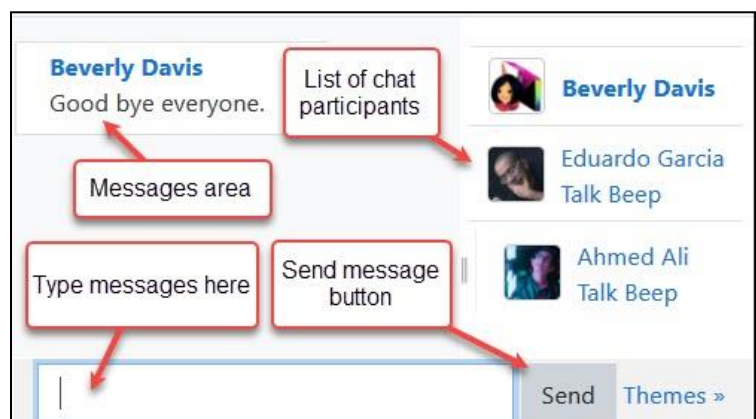
2. Click the link, **Click here to enter the chat now**.

The screen has different functions/parts.
A **list of participants** in the chat area appears in the right column.
Messages posted appear in the large area to the left of the participants.
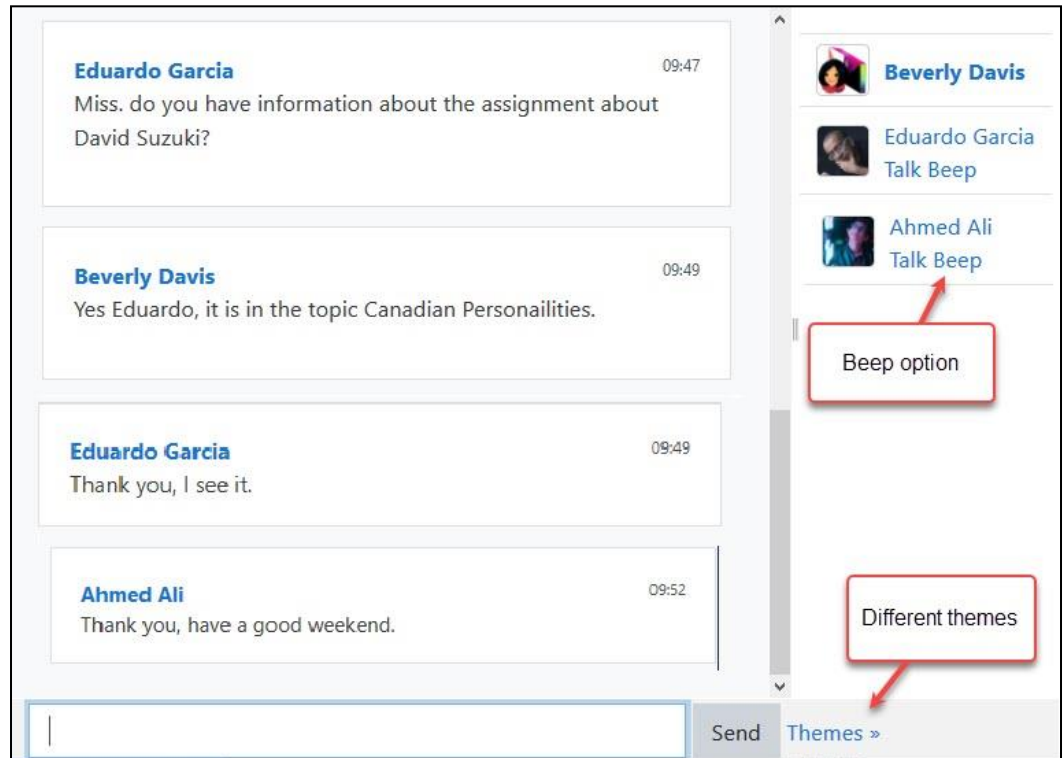Messages are typed at the bottom of the window in a **text box**.

The **Send** button next to the text box is clicked to post the message.

3. A **chat** with participants conversation appears as below. Note the **Beep** option, which can be used to signal another participant.

4. There are different chat window **themes**. These may improve accessibility for some students.

Deployment Tips

- Consider posting any rules or etiquette you require students to follow in the Introduction text box.

- Saving the transcript could be useful for group work discussions or for the teacher to review the Chat session and monitor students' chat behaviour.

- The Chat activity works best with small groups.

- Chat sessions can be easily dominated by students who can type quickly. Implementing strategies to ensure everyone has access to a group may be beneficial.

- Different chat areas can be set up for the same course. They can be used for specific meetings at scheduled times, or they can available at all times.

- The teacher can control who can view the chat transcripts.

Video Resource

This [video](#) shows you how to set up and use a chat room in Moodle 2.x. (Note: there is no Add an activity drop-down menu in the courseware as demonstrated in the video. Please refer to steps 1 to 6 in the first section's step-by-step instructions to learn how to add a **Chat** activity to a course.)

Chat Activity Help files

[Moodle documents: Chat module](#)
<http://docs.moodle.org/39/en/Chat_module>

[Moodle documents: Chat settings](#)
<http://docs.moodle.org/39/en/Chat_settings>

[Moodle documents: Using Chat](#)
<http://docs.moodle.org/39/en/Using_Chat>

[Moodle documents: Chat FAQ](#)
<http://docs.moodle.org/39/en/Chat_FAQ>