

# Moodle and Etudes.

By Eric Rettke

As a computer specialist, I have certified instructors for online readiness in Etudes. As an instructor, I use Moodle to teach my classes. I have used both systems extensively and I prefer Etudes over Moodle as a Course Management System (CMS) for student learning. Here is why:

1. Moodle “default installation” is a loosely bound list of CMS functions that needs on site developers and tech knowledgeable instructors to pull it all together effectively. Moodle, in my opinion doesn’t make the last mile and can lead to poor instructional design.
2. Etudes is a finished online student learning environment. It has a clean consistent look, common course navigation, and smoother workflows to accommodate best learning practices.

The difference with Moodle is that it is completely open source. Cost wise it allows an organization like Mission College to quickly adopt and use the “default mode” product with little effort and no cost other than hosting. Etudes is also an open source project. However, colleges must pay an additional fee to the Etudes foundation. The foundation employs an instructional designer and developers to integrate the instructional tools for sharper workflow and a consistent learning environment in response to an active community of California community college instructors.

**Course functions and features** – Both systems have grade books, tests/quizzes, discussion boards, and assignment upload capability.

- **Grade book Workflow** – Etudes allows automatic cutoff for late assignments. Instructors can easily see when new assignments are submitted and which assignments still need to be graded. Instructors can override quiz scores to adjust individual grades and the changes are reflected instantly throughout the system. Instructors can automate open and close dates for discussion forums. Instructors can grade and read forum posts at the same time. Students can submit assignments with unlimited attachments and paste additional notes to the teacher. Moodle either doesn’t have these features or they require painstaking effort. With that said there is Moodle gem in the grade book that allows you to categorize assignments and quizzes in groups. Then at the group level instructors can assign overall course percentages. In Etudes you have to do the calculations manually and enter the points for each test individually.
- **Modules functions** – Modules like Chat in Moodle have to be installed by the hosting provider to enable it for the instructors to place into their courses. In Etudes these modules are preinstalled in the system and the instructor can enable/disable them in the course menu.
- **Lesson building** – Etudes lesson builder is a kind of PowerPoint wizard crafted to make lesson plans. In Moodle the instructor mixes and matches course features by making web links on a web page. The emphasis is on, “how do I link this page together.” In Etudes the instructor is composing lesson plans.

- **Mobile device support** – Moodle offers multiple mobile apps for download. The Apple store, for example, has 4 apps 1 of which clearly states it is “unsupported”. Others only work for specific colleges. Each app has a separate support community. The apps are buggy having to accommodate a worldwide installation base. Etudes wrote inTouch for Etudes to work for their system and has one point of contact for support. A feature list and screen shots are included on the last pages.
- **Faculty support** – An online faculty support community is built into Etudes. The support discussions are monitored and common instructor questions are definitively outlined in the posts. When flaws are found they are reported directly to the developers and fixed. There is no centralized support community for Moodle instructors.
- **Student interface** -- Etudes places course elements like calendar and the message box are in a standard layout that all course home pages share. The syllabus is listed as a menu item. Etudes discussion threads are easy for students to scroll through and read. In Moodle it is a chore to click into and out of each post to read them all. In Etudes students gain confidence in their ability to participate in each online classroom they take. In Moodle each instructor manages home page layout and course elements are often buried in the content.
- **Student online experience** -- Etudes common placement and fill in the blank approach makes it simple to check for online compliance and reinforces best online practices. Moodle sites can be harder to evaluate and depend more on instructor technical ability and the student’s web proficiency.

In closing, Moodle expects instructors knowledgeable in technology and instructional design to construct online classrooms. The Moodle classroom functions require students to be more web proficient as well. The Etudes foundation provides a better online learning experience guided by an online community of instructors. New instructors and students will readily see the difference just by logging into Etudes.

## Introducing Etudes inTouch!

Stay in touch with your Etudes courses with inTouch!

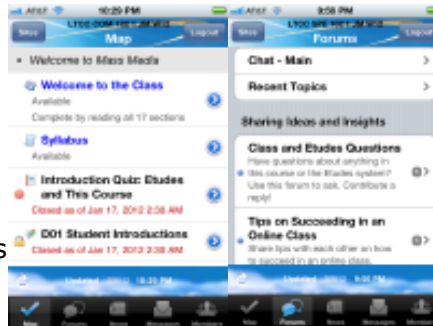
If you are taking courses from a college or organization that delivers and supports classes via Etudes, you can use inTouch to access your courses from your iPhone, iPod touch, or iPad.

Get the inTouch app from the Apple Store today, at no additional charge to yourself and start using it! Once you install it, just enter your existing Etudes userid and password.

### Students can:

- Stay on top of your to-do items
- Monitor due dates and deadlines
- Read class announcements
- Read and participate in class discussions
- Read and contribute to Chat sessions
- Read course materials and lessons
- Download documents and view videos
- View grades for individual assignments
- Send private messages to your instructor and classmates
- View the course roster and information on your classmates

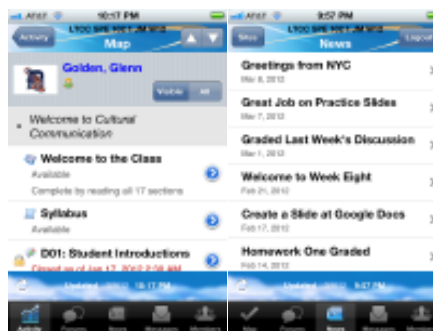
### Sample Screen shots



Course Map Forums / Chat

### Instructors can:

- View class activity
- Stay on top of student performance
- Compose, edit and send class announcements
- Read, create and reply to Discussions
- Read and contribute to Chat sessions
- View grades for individual students
- Send private messages to one or more students
- View the course roster and contact information





Activity Meter News / Announcements

**Requirements:**


Compatible with iPhone, iPod touch, and iPad. Requires iOS 5.0 or later

**Notes:**

 **iPad users:** Etudes inTouch is an iPhone - iPod Touch application, which can be run on your iPad as an iPhone app. A native iPad version of inTouch will come later.

 **Android users:** Etudes inTouch is currently available only for iOS devices. An Android version of inTouch will come later.

 There is no access to assignments, tests, and surveys.

 There is no authoring of assessments or modules.