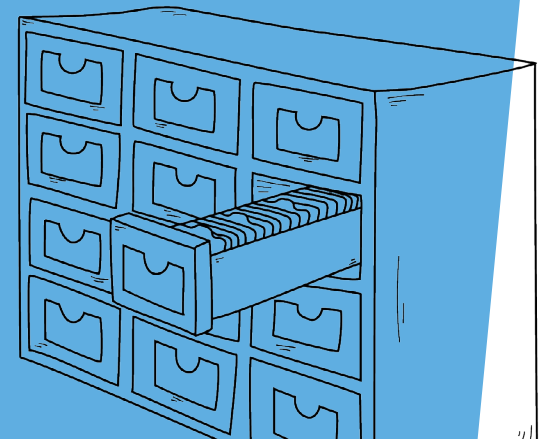
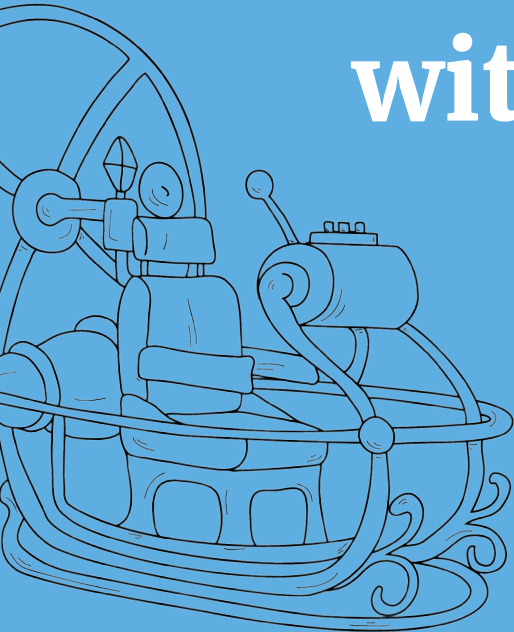
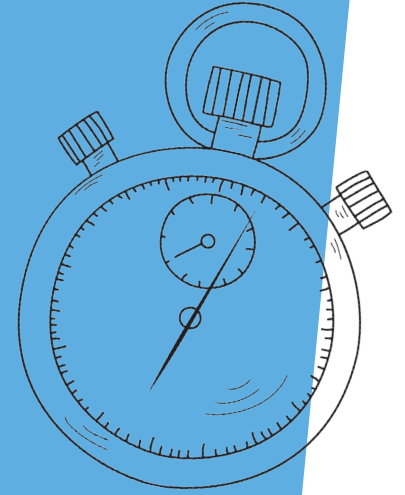


7 Simple Ways to Set Up Your Courses with an LMS



So You Have an LMS. Now What?

Your learning management system (LMS) is one of the most powerful tools in your digital learning toolbox. Its wide range of capabilities include saving you time on everyday tasks to being the backbone of your self-paced, mastery learning, gamified course.

But this incredible breadth of possibilities can leave even the most seasoned digital learning veteran wondering where to start.

So in order to get your cogs turning, we compiled seven of the most effective ways to organize your courses using an LMS. Each of them has unique benefits that can help you design the learning experiences you and your students want.

Let's get started.

An Important Note Before We Begin

Each of these methods for organizing your digital courses via an LMS uses folders to house the content. Why? Here are a few reasons:

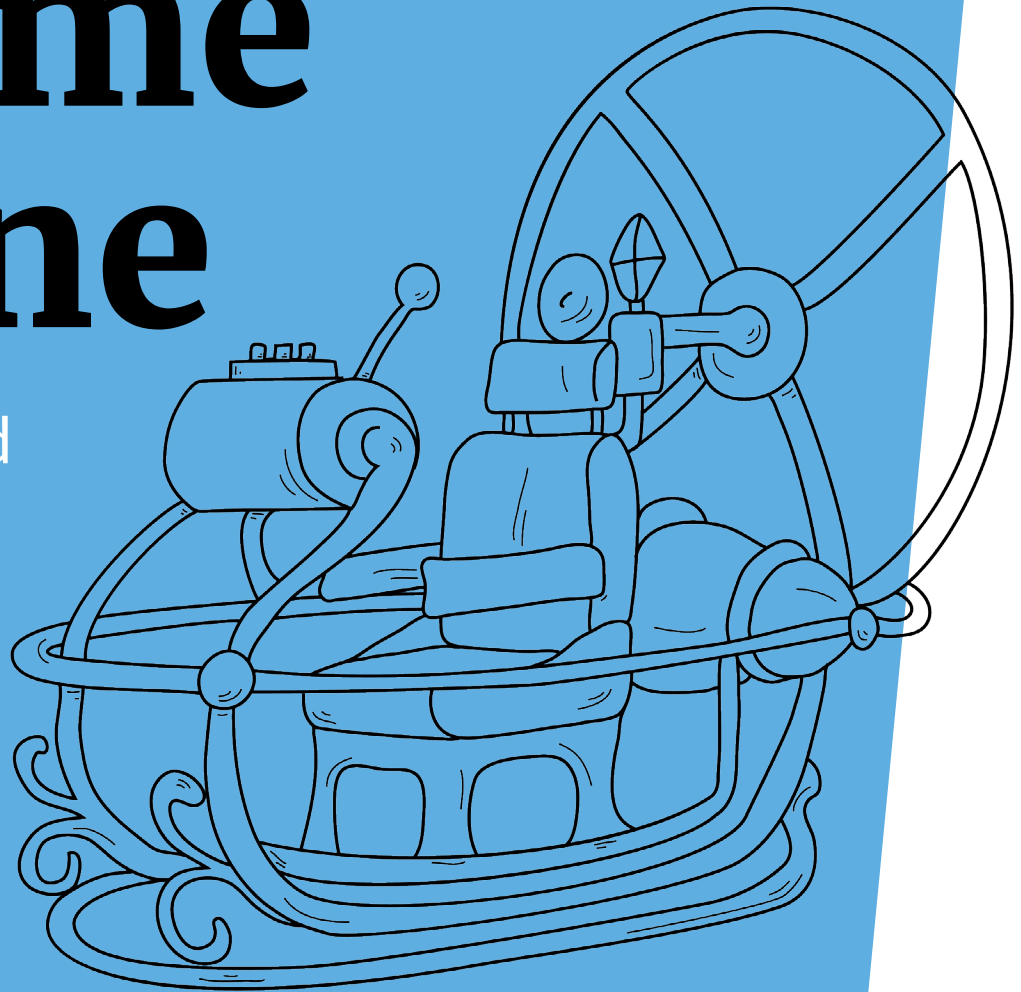
- Folders make it easier to organize lots of content in a coherent way
- They make your course easier for you and your students to navigate
- They enable you to reuse your course year after year with minimal effort (if your LMS allows for that, of course)

However you decide to organize your courses, use folders or something like them. You will thank yourself later.

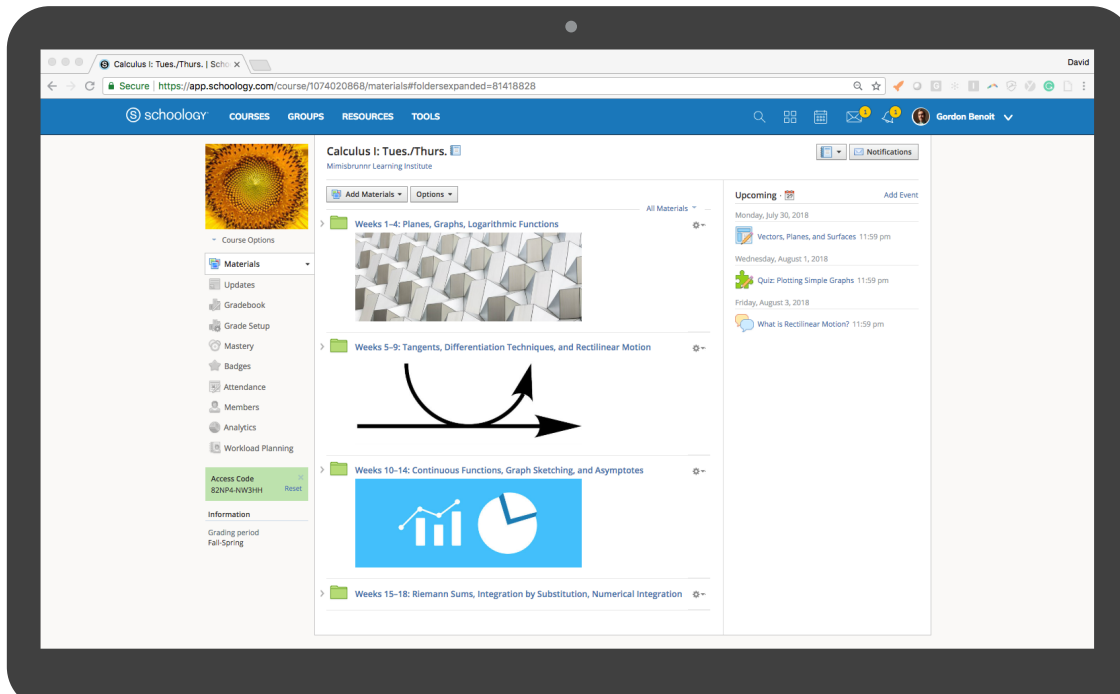
COURSE SETUP #1

The Time Machine

Time travel is possible and quite common in digital courses.



The Time Machine is a very common course setup and is less complicated than it sounds. Just organize your materials using folders labeled in chronological order.



Why Choose *The Time Machine Setup*?

The Time Machine works in tandem with your calendar, making it easier cognitively for you and your students to navigate materials, due dates, etc. with limited adjustment over time. Struggling students can easily jump “back in time” to revisit past lessons, while advanced students can leap into future ones.

Pro Tip: Some LMSs enable you to “hide” folders from or make them available to individuals, groups, or all of your students for a more controlled release of lessons. [Learn to do this using Schoology.](#)

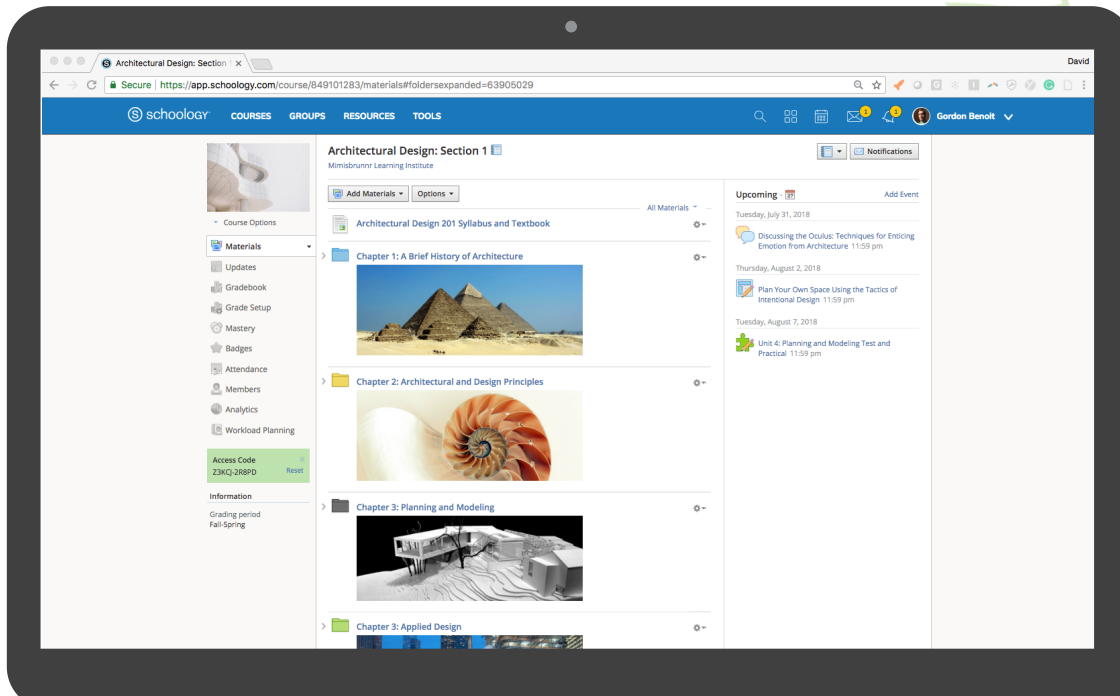
COURSE SETUP #2

By the Book

Let's do this one by the book.



By the Book is exactly how it sounds—a course setup that organizes instructional resources around the chapters of a textbook, a series of novels, or other educational content.



Why Choose the *By the Book* Setup?

Aside from being a really straightforward course setup to navigate, *By the Book* is a great way to align the student experience with your curriculum and scaffold concepts. This method gives you the opportunity to teach students through the relationships between core concepts or literary works, reinforcing how they all fit together at a high level.

Pro Tip: Your LMS may enable you to customize folder colors and add imagery into folder descriptions to simplify course navigation and add aesthetic flair. [Learn to do this using Schoology.](#)

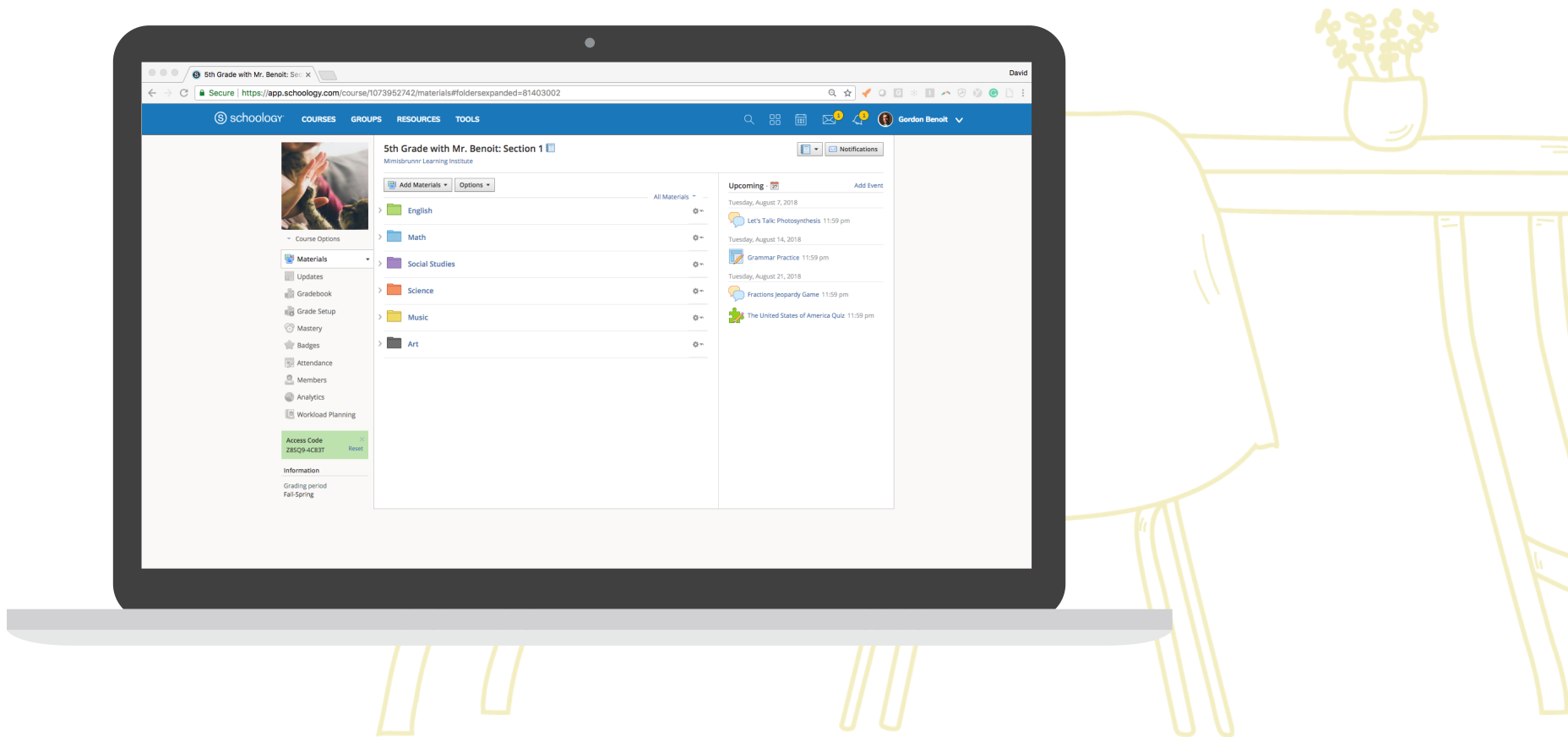
COURSE SETUP #3

The Minimalist

No frills. No Thrills. Just
straightforward course design.



The Minimalist is all about keeping it simple. Just organize your course by material type (assignments, tests, etc.) or by subject—as you might in an elementary course like below.



Why Choose *The Minimalist Setup*?

If you are just getting your feet wet in digital learning or you don't plan to rely on your LMS too heavily, you may appreciate *The Minimalist's* straightforward and simple setup. There are, however, a few glaring downsides to this approach. For one, it doesn't really allow you to organize your course in a pedagogical framework. Also, what you gain in set-up speed, you lose in the simplicity of navigation as resources are added over time.

Pro Tip: Great nomenclature is a must if you plan to organize your course by content type or subject, so figure out a naming strategy and stick to it. [Learn to filter content by type using Schoology.](#)

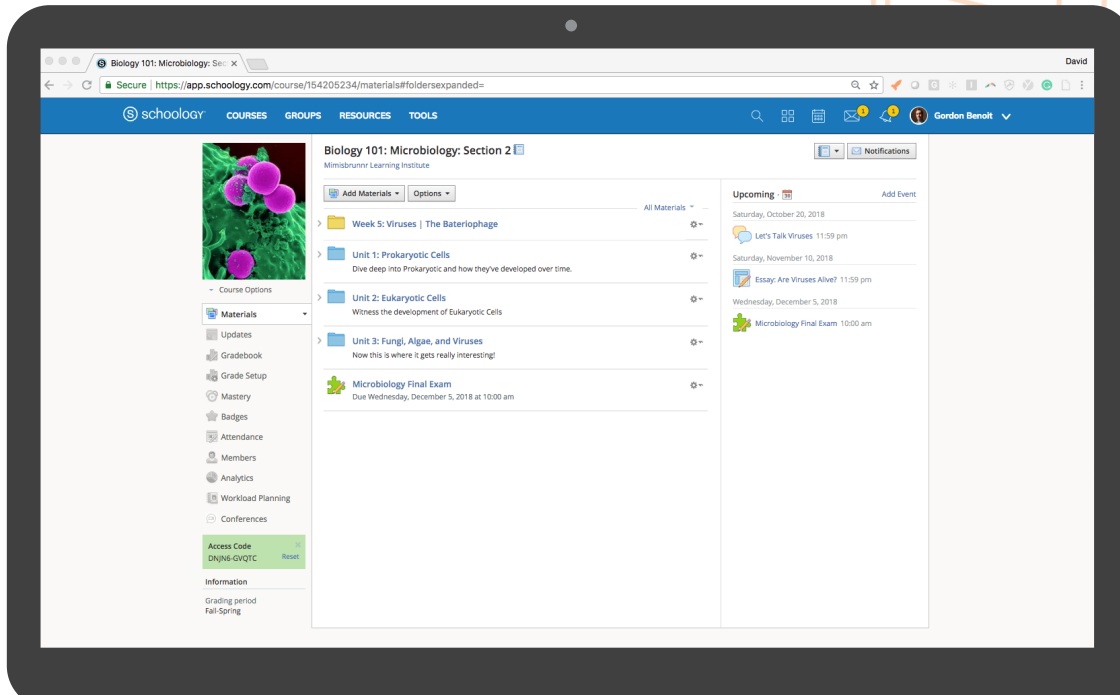
COURSE SETUP #4

The Archiver

Stay calm, cool,
and controlled.



The Archiver helps you control the flow of content by keeping everything in a few top level topic- or unit-based folders with subfolders nested within them. You then pull one lesson (a subfolder) to the top level at the most relevant time and then “archive” it after you’re done.



Why Choose *The Archiver* Setup?

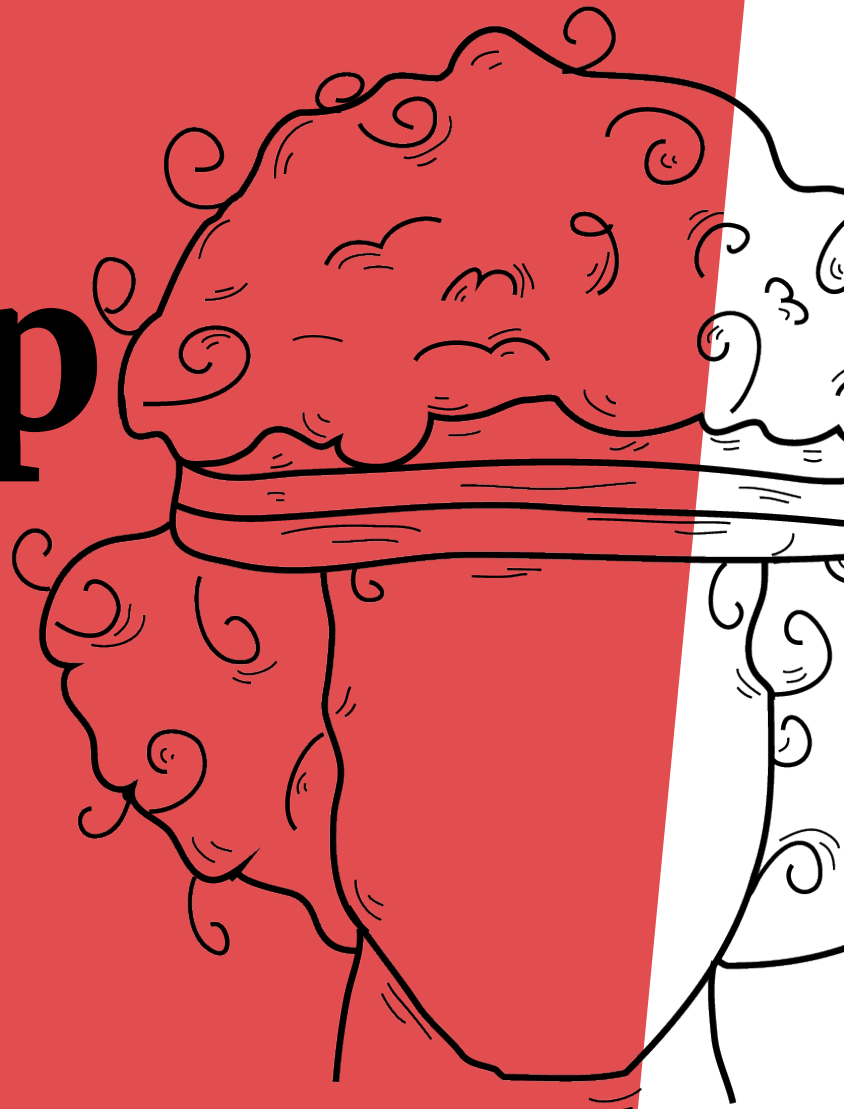
The Archiver is an excellent way to keep your courses meticulously clean and organized, while making it extremely easy for students to know exactly what they're learning at a glance every time they log in. And if your nomenclature is solid, then students can always go back into the “archives” to revisit older lessons or explore new ones.

Pro Tip: Your LMS may allow you to “drag and drop” content and folders to the top organization level or nest them within another folder for easy reorganization. [Learn to do this using Schoology.](#)

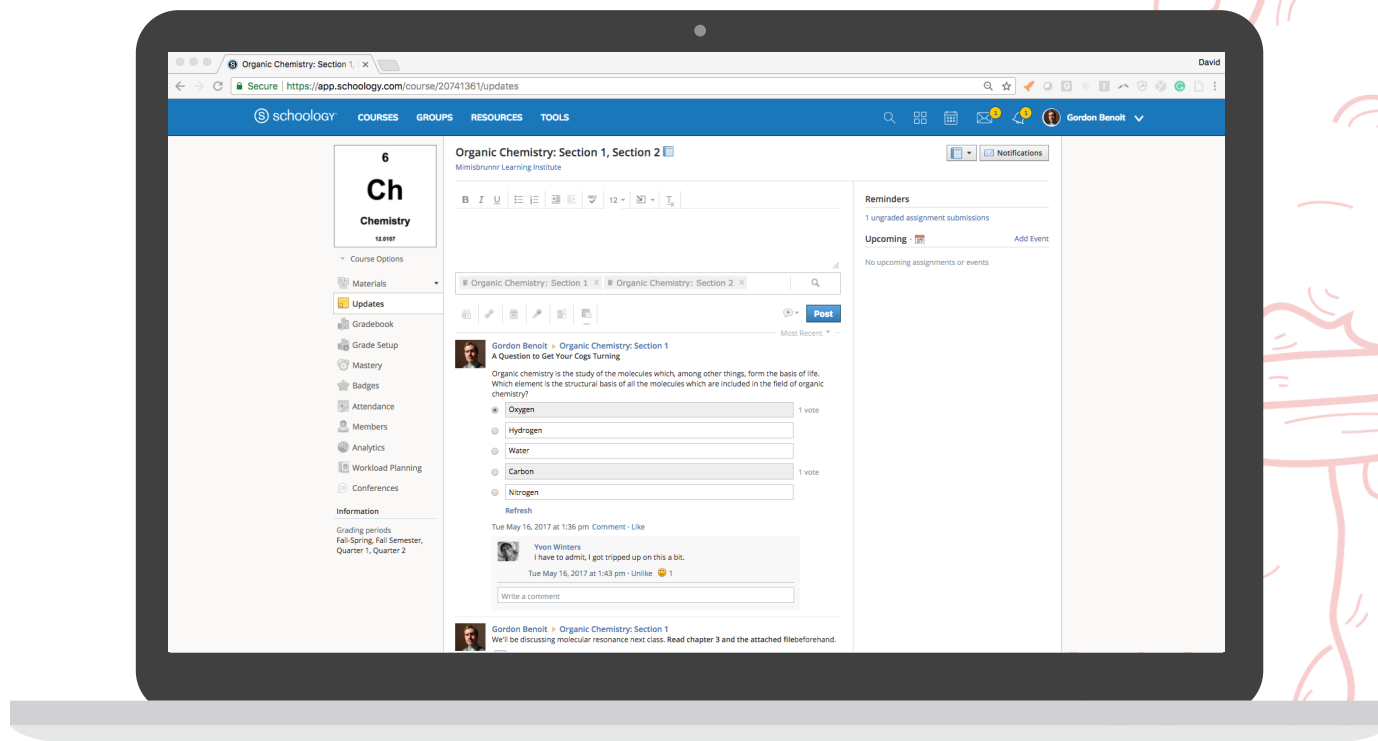
COURSE SETUP #5

The Warm-Up

Let's get those young minds
working! And 1, and 2 ...



The Warm-Up is an effective way to get students ready to learn. Simply begin your classes by asking them a fun or topical question via your LMS's updates or discussion features.



Why Choose *The Warm-Up Setup*?

If you want to get your students' minds percolating before diving into the day's lesson, then *The Warm-Up* is your best friend. It's a great way to establish the beginning of class, help students focus, and get a quick read on what they know about your lesson before you even start it.

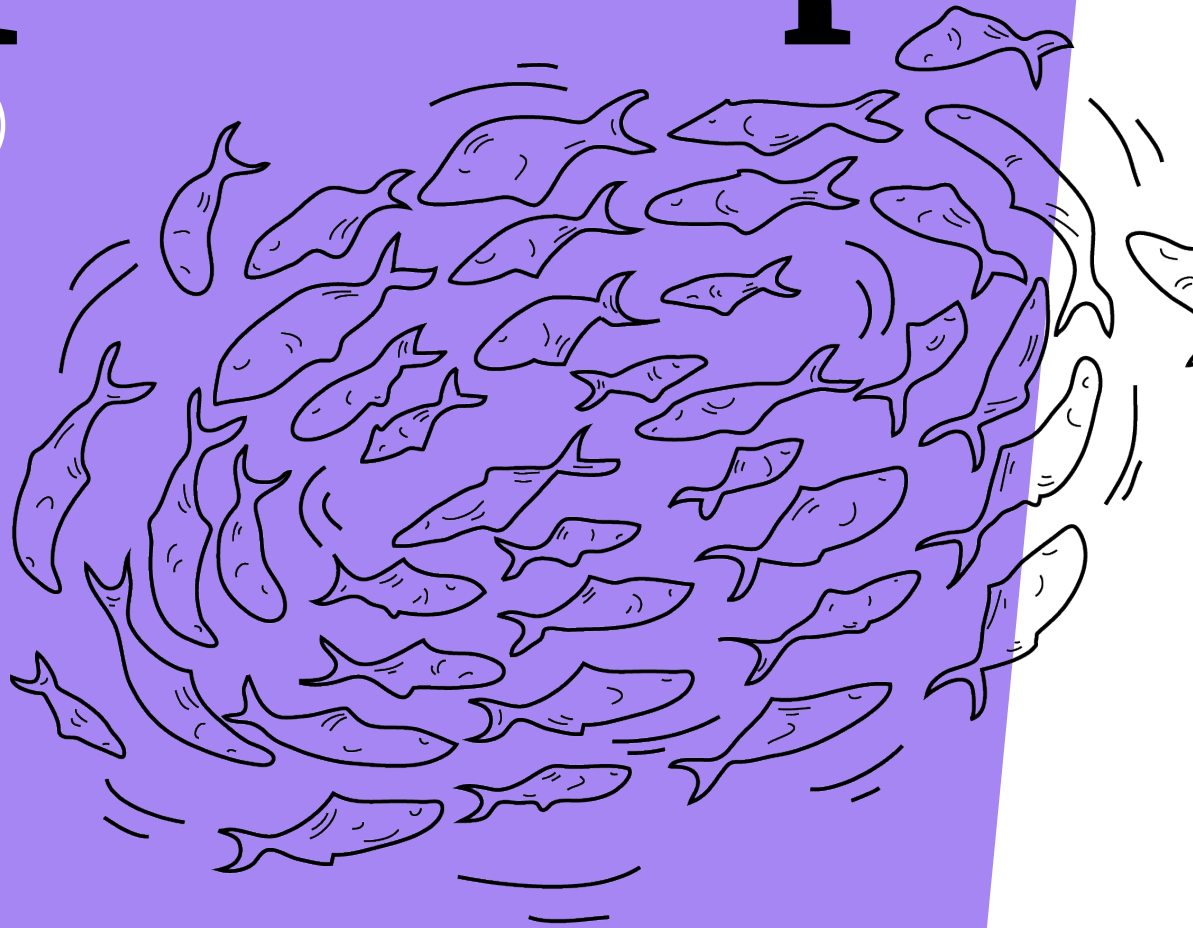
For this method to work, it's important to set expectations that every class will begin with a warm-up. Then you just have to follow through.

Pro Tip: Your LMS may allow you to set your course landing page to an updates feed or message board, so it's the first thing students see when they log in. [Learn to do this using Schoology.](#)

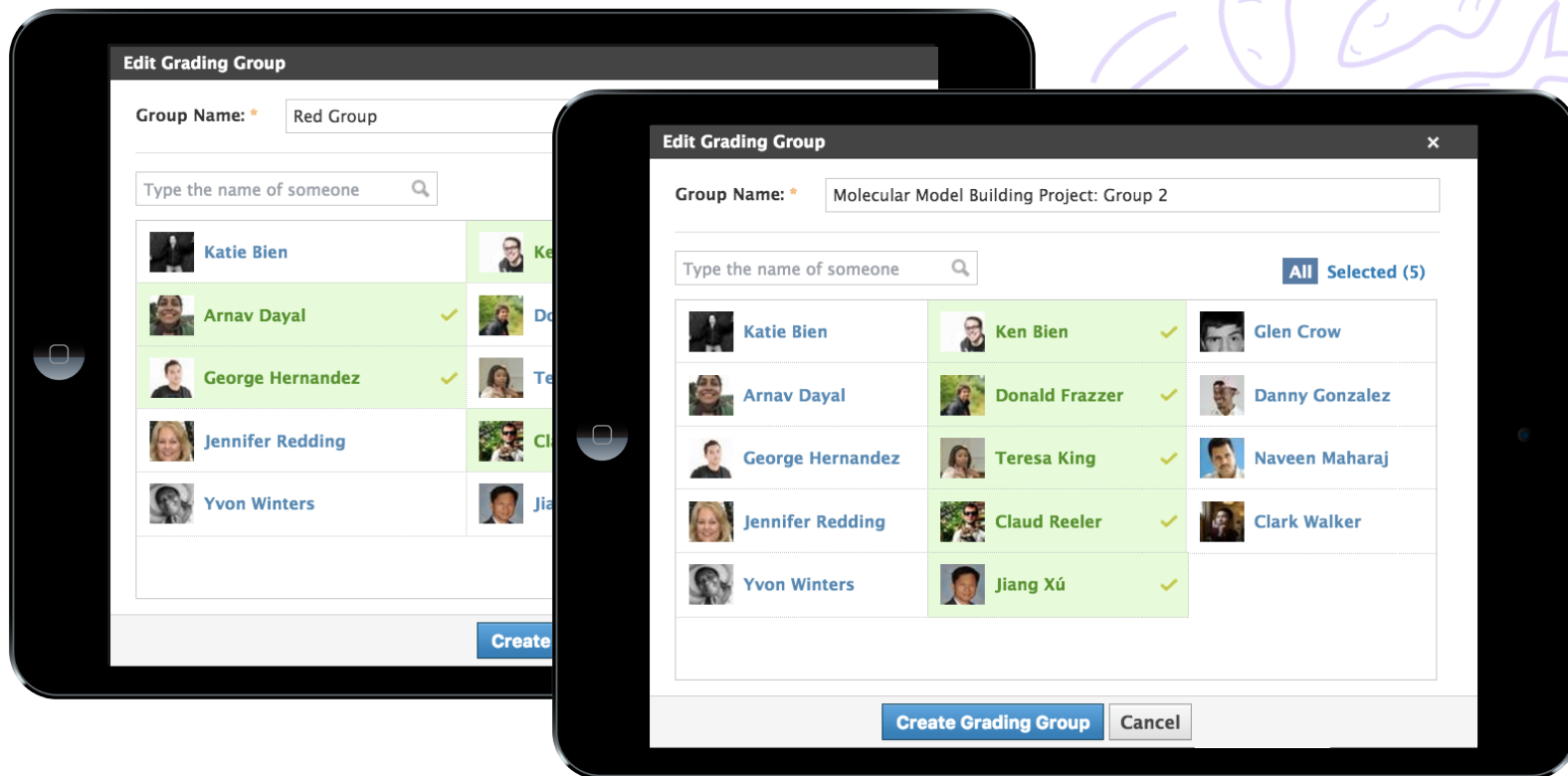
COURSE SETUP #6

Group 'em Up

It takes two (or more)
to tango learn.



The Group ‘em Up method allows you to differentiate instruction by organizing your students into small groups (a.k.a. Grading Groups in Schoology) and curating content accordingly.



Why Choose the Group 'em Up Setup?

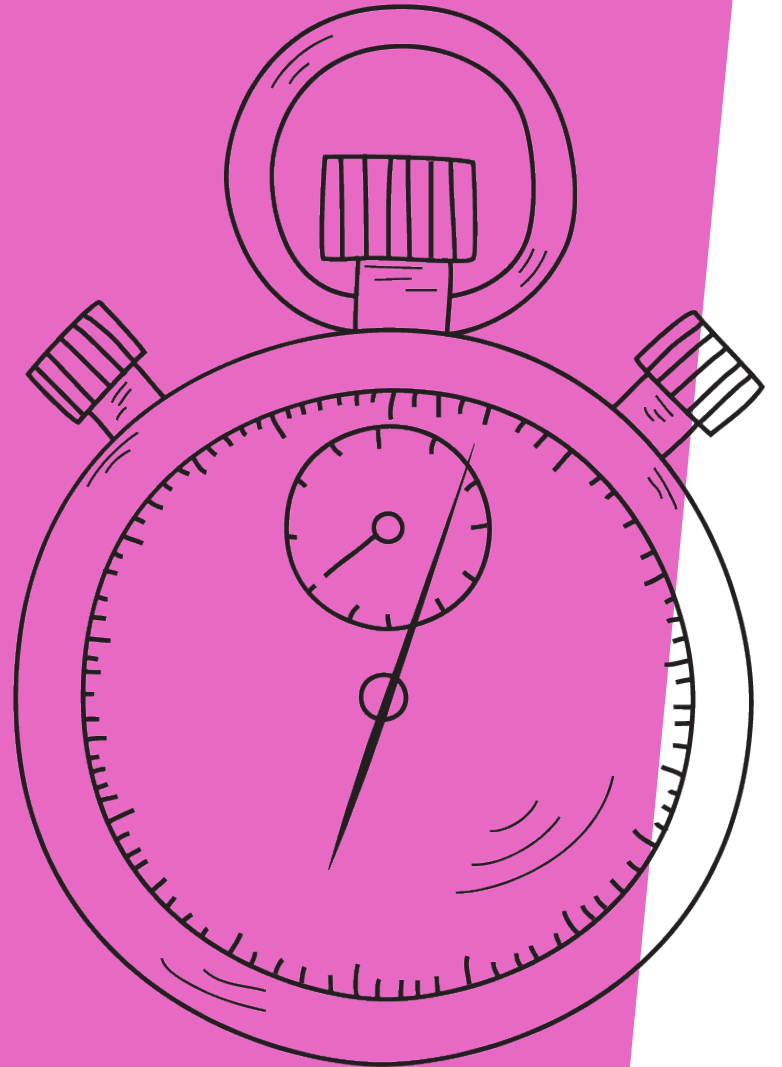
Organizing your students into small groups within your digital course allows you to tailor instruction to their learning speed, level of need, etc. While this may sound like too much work, the LMS has made differentiating instruction easier than ever before. Depending on the functionality of your LMS, you may be able to group your students; assign them projects, discussions, tests, and more based on their grouping without other groups knowing who's doing what; and track it all easily.

Pro Tip: Your LMS may allow you to organize your students in more than one group, so you can tailor instruction more easily based on their Lexile scores and have a different grouping for one-off projects. [Learn to do this using Schoology.](#)

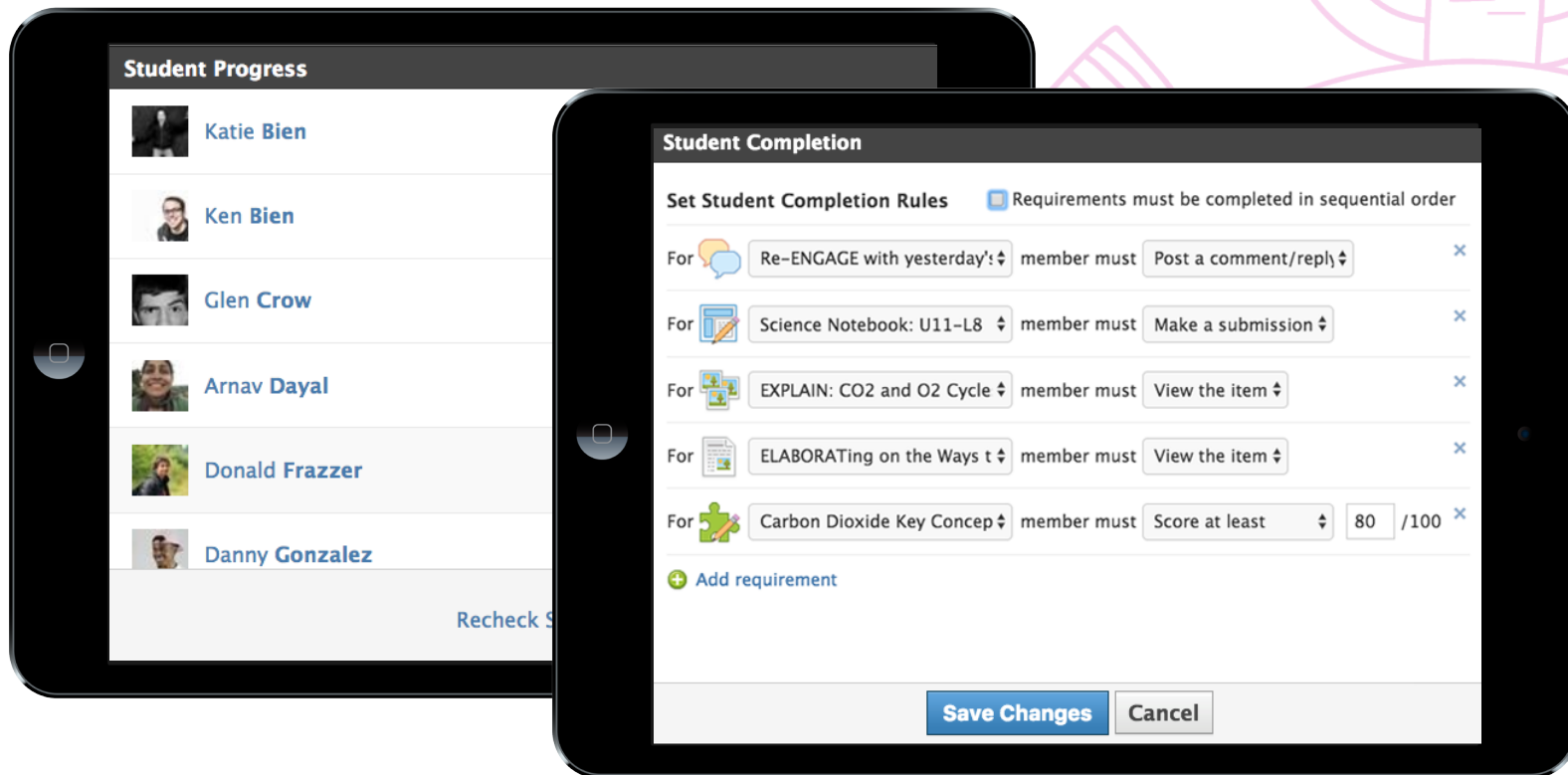
COURSE SETUP #7

Pace Yourself

Free as a bird ... to learn.



The Pace Yourself setup is the ultimate way to provide students independence and coach them while they learn. By adding step-by-step requirements as to how your students interact with your content, you can pace students individually and track their progress.



Why Choose the *Pace Yourself* Setup?

Students learn at different paces and sometimes different times of the day. *The Pace Yourself* course setup helps you account for that while still making it easy to keep track of everyone's progress. Your LMS may allow you place requirements on content, such as *view item, post a comment, make a submission, or score at least "x"*. This gives your students the freedom to learn at their own pace and gives you more time to help those who need it most.

Pro Tip: If your LMS allows for self-pacing, then it probably has a way for you and your students to check their progress. This provides greater transparency and helps to inform instruction. [Learn how to do this using Schoology.](#)

A FINAL WORD

As you can see, there are many ways to set up your courses, and this is just the tip of the iceberg. In fact, the few setups described in this ebook can be combined to compound their benefits.

For example, *The Warm Up* and *The Archiver* combine to create a clean and controlled course with a daily prompt. *The By the Book*, *Group 'em Up*, and *Pace Yourself* setups together create a concept driven, differentiated, and self-paced learning experience.

The point is, when you understand your goals and you have a great LMS to help you reach them, there is no course too complex to build.

Want to see an LMS with everything you need to meet your educational goals? Explore our platform in a fun, self-guided tour.

