

Technische Hochschule Ingolstadt

Learning Companions

User Documentation

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Created by: ICON Vernetzte Kommunikation GmbH
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Introduction

The Learning Companions consist of three Moodle plugins whose purpose is to connect students with each other via direct exchange possibilities.

Students can create groups on their topics in which they can chat with each other to provide mutual assistance. Groups can be open or closed. Open groups can be read by anyone and anyone can join open groups.

Closed groups require students to apply and be unlocked before they can see who is in the group, what has been written in the group so far and before they can join the chat themselves.

Students seeking expert advice can specifically contact mentors with their questions. Students can qualify for the mentor role by acquiring the necessary badges.

In addition, they can interact with each Learning Nugget (Moodle activity) via a comment block.

The three plugins that make up Learning Companions are:

- `local/learningcompanions` - this plugin does most of the work. It provides the group chats and group searches, mentor chats and searches, and adding the comment blocks to the Learning Nuggets.
- `block/learningcompanions_mygroups` - this is a block plugin that is used for navigation and to jump from any Moodle page to the group and mentor searches and chats.
- `tool/learningcompanions` - this plugin provides administration functionality that allows users with higher rights (admins/managers) to delete reported posts and manage all groups.

Quick start

Installing the plugins

Like all Moodle plugins, these just need to be copied to the appropriate place in the directory tree.

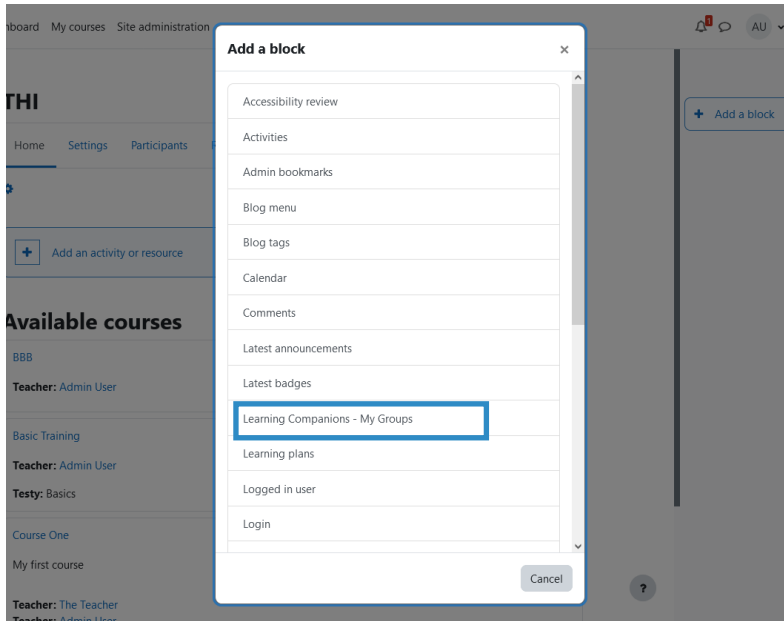
`local/learningcompanions` must be in `local/learningcompanions`, `block/learningcompanions_mygroups` in `local/learningcompanions` and `tool/learningcompanions` in `admin/tool/learningcompanions`.

After the plugins have been moved to the appropriate places, you log in as an administrator and are automatically prompted to update, as Moodle recognises the new plugins on its own.

At the end of the update process, a form is displayed with the newly recognised settings. A detailed documentation of all settings and their meaning can be found at the end of this document.

Adding the Block Plugin

In order for the block plugin block/learningcompanions to be displayed on all pages, it must be added to the start page [/?redirect=0].



Then configure the block. In the section „Where this block appears“ select for „Page contexts“ the option „Display throughout the entire site“. This block is displayed for all users on all pages.

▼ Where this block appears

Original block location

Site home

Page contexts

Display throughout the entire site

Default region

Right

Default weight

0

▼ On this page

Visible

Yes

Region

Right


Weight


0


Save changes


Cancel


Learning Companions - My Groups


 **KI Basics** 03.03.2023
Hat jemand beim Webinar mitgeschrieben?

 **IT Semester 1** 23.01.2023
Schau mal im Buch auf Seite 10, letzter Abschnitt


 **Test-Gruppe** -


 Show 1 more groups

 Group me up


 Go to admin area


My mentors

 My questions

 Search for mentors

My mentorship

 Manage mentorship(s)

 Go to overview

If you belong to more than three groups, only three will be displayed at first. Additional groups can be displayed by clicking on „Show (x) more groups“.

The link „Go to admin area“ is only displayed to users with extended rights. The authorisation required for this is „local/learningcompanions:group_manage“. By default, all administrators and users with the role „manager“ receive this authorisation when the plug-in is installed. In the admin area, reported contributions can be managed and orphaned groups can be deleted.

The section „My mentorship“ is only visible to users with the role „Mentor“ or who are qualified for this role. On the „My mentorships“ page, you can see the topics for which you are already registered as a mentor and for which you can still activate yourself as a mentor. A prerequisite for being activated as a mentor for a topic is receiving a special badge. More on this below. „Go to overview“ leads to the questions that have been asked of the mentor and the open questions that have been asked of all mentors, provided one is registered as a mentor for the associated topic. Also displayed are the latest comments on learning nuggets from courses in one’s own topic.

Edit your courses and enter the associated topic there. These topics help with the group search by topic and determine for which topic a mentor is qualified if he/she has earned a corresponding badge in the course.

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Configure Badges

To become a mentor for a topic, one must have earned a specific badge in a course of that topic. Which badges qualify for this role is defined in the plugin settings of the plugin local/learningcompanions.

These settings can be found under Site administration > General > Learning Companions > Local plugin learningcompanions or the URL `admin/settings.php?section=local_learningcompanions`.

There you will find the setting „Mentor badges“:

Mentor badges
local_learningcompanions | badgetypes_for_mentors

Default: expert

Which badges qualify for the mentor role? Comma-separated list of badge names.

Here you can enter several terms, separated by commas, which must be part of the badge name. If a user receives a badge with one of these terms in its name, he or she has thus qualified as a mentor for the subject of the course, is informed of this via a Moodle message and can decide for himself or herself whether to accept this role (via the page „My mentorship > Manage mentorship(s)“).

Group me up

If the block `block/learningcompanions_mygroups` has been added as described above, then users can jump from any page to the page „Groups > Find Group“ via the link „Group me up“ in this block. When I jump to this page from a course or course module, the list of groups is already pre-filtered by the current course.

By removing this filter (here „Basic Training“) one can then get the whole list of available groups again. The icon in the

Groups / Find groups

Find group

Show entries

Course	Topic	Name	Joining	Members	Created on	Last activity
Basic Training	Test	My basic training group		1	18.01.2023	-
Basic Training		Course 1 Book group		1	18.01.2023	-

Showing 1 to 2 of 2 entries (filtered from 7 total entries)

Previous Next

[Create new group](#)

„Joining“ column indicates whether the group is open or closed. Anyone can join an open group or view the chats without being a member of the group. For closed groups, you have to request to join.

Create a group

If I have not found a group in the table on the „Find group“ page that meets my needs, I can create a new group myself using the „Create new group“ button. A form opens in which I can enter all the relevant information about the group. The group name is displayed in the group search and overview of my groups. It should describe as precisely and concisely as possible what the group is about. It is the only mandatory field.

The field „Topic“ can be filled freely. It does not have to be congruent with the topic of the course. This is an autocomplete field with tagging function. This means that suggestions appear while you are typing that contain the text you have entered.

By clicking on such a suggestion, it is taken over. You can also create new topics by entering the text as usual and pressing Return(Enter). Several topics can be added.

Course context is pre-filled with the course I came from when I arrived here via a course. Multiple selection is not possible here. Like all fields except Group name, this field is optional. The field can be useful when users are looking for a group that is relevant to a particular course.

Learning nugget context is also an autocomplete field. Here, activities (learning nuggets) are available that are included in the course selected for „Course context“.

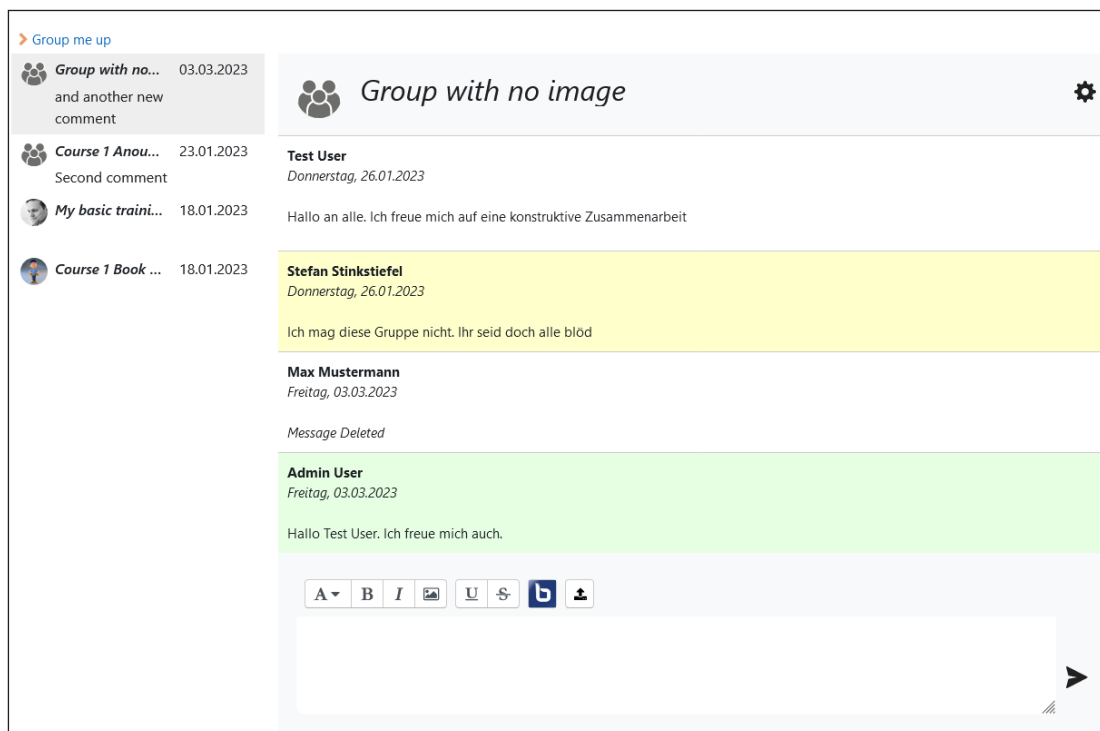
With the option „Closed group“ I can define whether everyone can/may visit the group or a membership has to be applied for and approved.

A group picture can be uploaded. It appears in the overviews and helps to distinguish the groups from each other more quickly. If no picture is uploaded, a placeholder picture is displayed instead.

Group-Chat

In the group chat, users can write texts and apply simple formatting such as bold, italic, underlined and strikethrough. They can also upload pictures and files or start a video conference using the BigBlueButton.

Own comments are highlighted in green, reported comments in yellow. Deleted comments appear in the chat with the text „Message deleted“ replaced.



Hovering over the comments gives you the option to report posts or delete your own.

Plugin-Settings

Local/learningcompanions

Group image max filesize (local_learningcompanions | groupimage_maxbytes)

Default value: 1000000

This value determines the maximum file size that a group picture may have. Users who create groups have the option of uploading a picture for their group. Since there can theoretically be very many groups, it makes sense to limit the maximum upload size. The value given here is in bytes. The default value of 1000000 is therefore 1MB.

Add comment block to activities (local_learningcompanions | commentactivities)

Default: assign,assignment,book,choice,data,feedback,folder,glossary,h5pactivity,lesson,lit,quiz,resource,page,scorm,survey,workshop

In order for learners to be able to exchange information about the Learning Nuggets, the plugin adds a comment block to each Learning Nugget. Under certain circumstances, such a comment block is not desired for all Learning Nugget activity types. For example, because the comment block is distracting or does not fit well into the layout for the activity. Therefore, this setting can be used to specify which activities should automatically receive a comment block.

Mentor badges (local_learningcompanions | badgetypes_for_mentors)

Default: expert

Users can be qualified to become a mentor for a topic by receiving certain badges. In order for the platform to know which badge qualifies for this role, at least one badge name must be entered here. It does not have to be the full badge name, but a component of the name is sufficient. I.e. if, for example, the default value „expert“ is kept, then a user can qualify to become a mentor by receiving a badge called „Expert in IT“ or „Maths Expert“. Upper and lower case letters are ignored. Multiple badge names can be entered, separated by commas.

Minimum ratings to become supermentor (local_learningcompanions | supermentor_minimum_ratings)

Default: 10

Through positive ratings in mentor chats, mentors can advance to supermentor. The value given here determines how many positive ratings are needed to obtain the status of supermentor.

Latest comments: Max. amount (local_learningcompanions | latest_comments_max_amount)

Default: 20

Mentors can display the list of the most recent comments on their topic. The value given here indicates how many comments are displayed.

Upload limit per message (local_learningcompanions | upload_limit_per_message)

Default: 5

In group chats, users can upload files. The sum of the files uploaded in a message must not exceed the specified number of MB.

Upload limit per chat (local_learningcompanions | upload_limit_per_chat)

Default: 100

The total amount of uploaded files in a group chat must not exceed the number of MB specified here. If the value is reached, no more files can be uploaded in this chat.

Inform tutors about unanswered questions after x days (local_learningcompanions | inform_tutors_about_unanswered_questions_after_x_days)

Default: 14

Learners can ask questions to individual mentors or open questions to all mentors. If such a question remains unanswered for a longer period of time, a tutor is automatically informed about it. The value specified here determines after how many days this happens.

Shortname of tutor role (local_learningcompanions | tutorrole_shortname)

Default: teacher

As mentioned above, tutors are automatically notified about questions that have remained unanswered for a longer period of time. The value here defines which role a user must have in order to be considered a tutor and to receive the notification. The role short name must be specified.

The settings for the plugin local_learningcompanions can be edited at any time via the URL admin/settings.php?section=local_learningcompanions.

The Admin Tool and the Block Plugin have no settings.

02. Impressum

Date of this documentation:

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