NEO

by CYPHER LEARNING

Getting started guide for Teachers

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Introduction

NEO is a world-class, award-winning learning management system (LMS) for schools and universities. The platform is known for delivering a great user experience while incorporating all the essential tools schools need to support effective teaching and learning.

NEO is a product of CYPHER LEARNING, a company that specializes in providing learning platforms for organizations around the world. CYPHER LEARNING provides a similar LMS for use by businesses called MATRIX and an LMS for use by entrepreneurs called INDIE. CYPHER LEARNING products are used by over 20,000 organizations, have millions of users, and have won several awards.
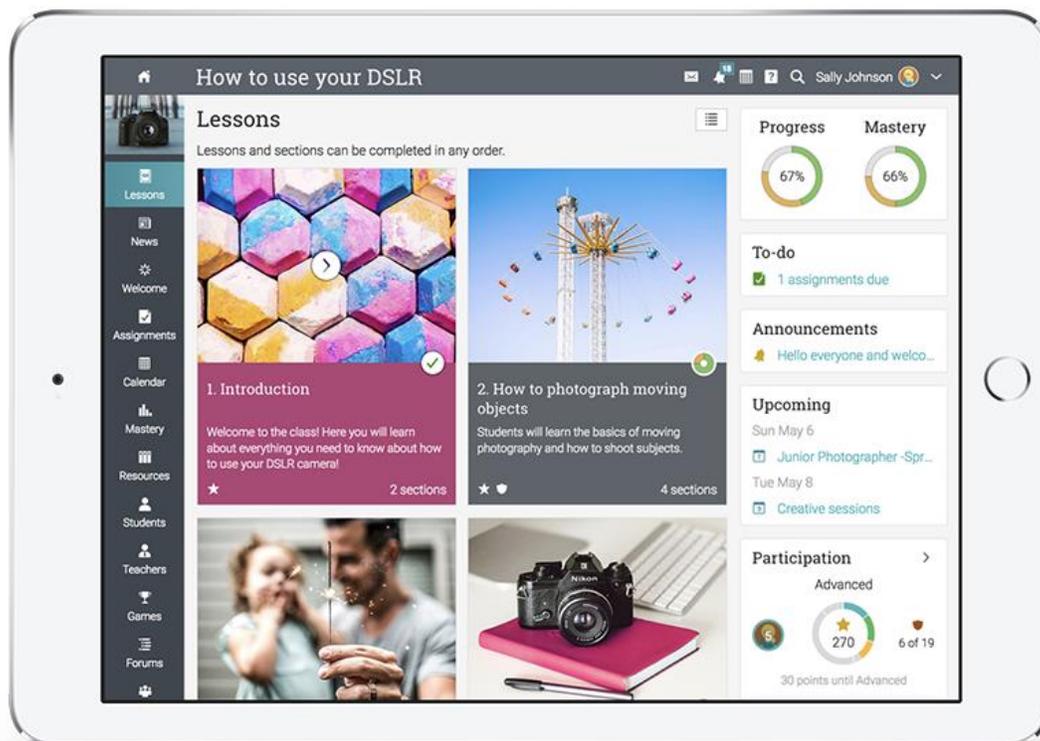
Getting started guide for Teachers

We want you to get the best results when using our site, especially when you are just starting out. That is why we created three getting started guides for the main types of users on NEO: administrators, teachers, and students.

Getting started guide for Teachers (this guide) explains topics such as: creating a class, using competencies and grading assignments.

Getting started guide for Administrators explains topics such as: navigating in NEO, configuring features, customizing the platform and managing users.

Getting started guide for Students explains topics such as: enrolling in classes, submitting assignments and communicating with teachers.

This guide covers the most common steps teachers go through when they start using NEO. Please consult the table of contents if you want to find a specific topic.

If you have any additional questions or want to explore more of the platform's features, please browse the Help Center or visit our support forum.

Navigating the platform

The teacher dashboard is the first page you see when you log in to your account. Here you can find an overview of the most important site information. On their dashboards, teachers can also see their calendar, to-do list, announcements, and more.

Icons and navigation

You will see various icons in the platform that are used for adding, editing, deleting, and other actions.

Here is an overview of the most important icons:

Add content such as classes, sections and resources.

Remove items from your platform.

Edit a page or an item.

Configure different items, such as your classes.

Delete items.

Access your messages through the messages icon in the top right bar.

Notifications allow you to keep up with different changes in the system.

The trash icon opens a pop-up with deleted content such as classes or lessons.

Your shopping cart contains your ordered learning items (if e-commerce is enabled).
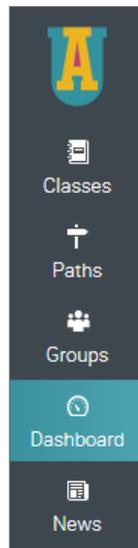
This icon provides access to the NEO Help Center.

Use the search icon to find specific content on your site.

Left bar

The left bar displays tabs that allow you to quickly navigate to the main areas of the site, such as Classes, Groups, Dashboard, News, Welcome, Users, Resources and Reports.

The left bar allows you access to these tabs no matter where you are in the site. If you hover over a tab, a pop-up window will appear with the most important options for that area.
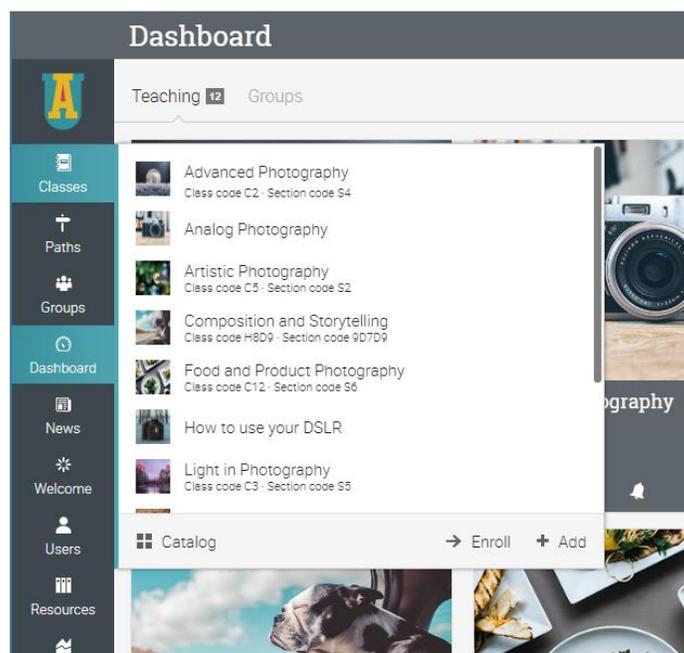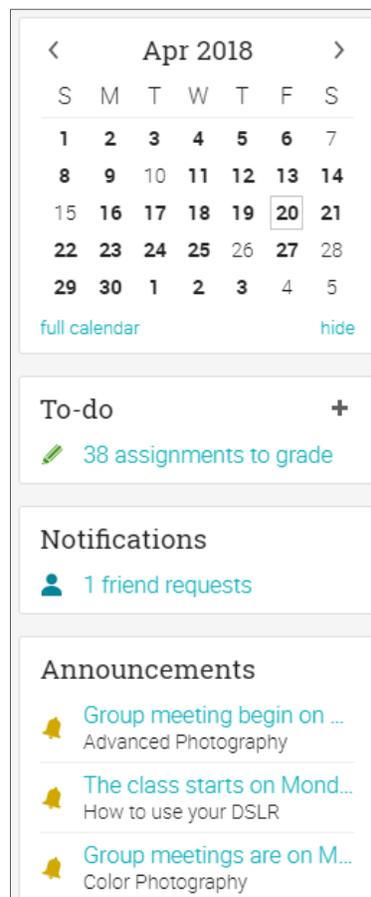
Top right bar

The top right bar displays icons which you can click to access your messages, notifications, calendar, trash can, help center, search and profile.

Right bar

In the right bar you can find your to-do list, announcements, upcoming events and a list of any minimized windows. To see more details, just click on an item.

News feed

The home page news feed aggregates news items from your classes, groups, friends and school. Product News announcements usually contains updates from the NEO team and your site administrator. By default, a news feed only shows the latest news and you can scroll down the page for more items.
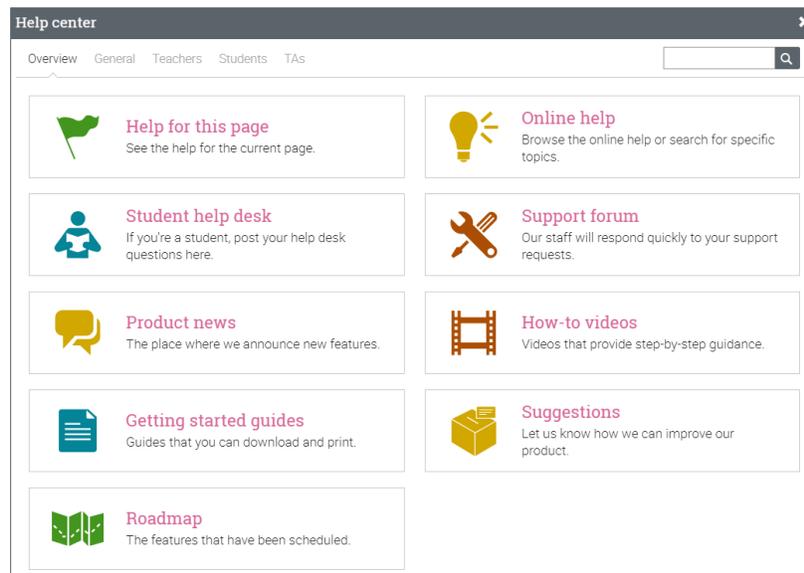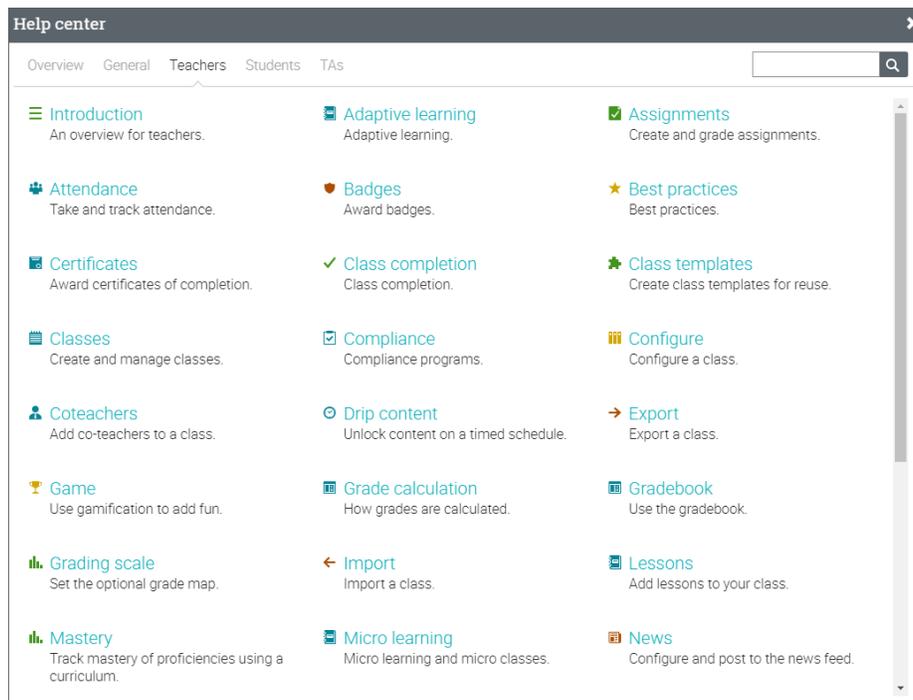
Help Center

We provide extensive support at every step of our collaboration. To access the Help Center, click the icon at the top right bar.

A pop-up box will open with different options. Use the searchable online help to browse different help topics. If you are on a certain page and need guidance, a help for the current page option will also appear. Here you can also find access to our Support forum and Product news, where we frequently post updates on new features.

Help center ✕

Overview   General   Teachers   Students   TAs

Help for this page
See the help for the current page.

Online help
Browse the online help or search for specific topics.

Student help desk
If you're a student, post your help desk questions here.

Support forum
Our staff will respond quickly to your support requests.

Product news
The place where we announce new features.

How-to videos
Videos that provide step-by-step guidance.

Getting started guides
Guides that you can download and print.

Suggestions
Let us know how we can improve our product.

Roadmap
The features that have been scheduled.

You can find the topics that are most relevant to you in the searchable online help. Most of them have detailed instructions with screenshots. The Help Center is a pop-up so you can browse through the topics without leaving your current page.

Help center

Overview   General   **Teachers**   Students   TAs

Introduction An overview for teachers.	**Adaptive learning** Adaptive learning.	**Assignments** Create and grade assignments.
Attendance Take and track attendance.	**Badges** Award badges.	**Best practices** Best practices.
Certificates Award certificates of completion.	**Class completion** Class completion.	**Class templates** Create class templates for reuse.
Classes Create and manage classes.	**Compliance** Compliance programs.	**Configure** Configure a class.
Coteachers Add co-teachers to a class.	**Drip content** Unlock content on a timed schedule.	**Export** Export a class.
Game Use gamification to add fun.	**Grade calculation** How grades are calculated.	**Gradebook** Use the gradebook.
Grading scale Set the optional grade map.	**Import** Import a class.	**Lessons** Add lessons to your class.
Mastery Track mastery of proficiencies using a curriculum.	**Micro learning** Micro learning and micro classes.	**News** Configure and post to the news feed.

Profile

Your profile page shows your basic information, account details, photos, and more. The information that is visible depends on your account type and the portal's security settings.

To start setting up your profile, go to the top right bar and click on the profile button. Then, click on the Edit button in the top right.

Go to the Settings tab in the left bar to choose different options related to your profile, such displaying your online status for students or allowing users to request to chat with you.

Example of a class

Before we show you how to create your own class, we would like you to become familiar with how a NEO class might look like. We will show you how to navigate in a class, explore the main tabs, view lessons and assignments, and more.

The default landing page of a class is its Lessons area. Here, you can see many aspects of your class, including the lessons, a left bar with tabs that give you direct access its most important areas. The right side provides access to a quick class Administration, to-do list, announcements and even games leaderboards, if gamification is enabled.

Next, we will go over each section.

Main left navigation

When you are in a class, the main left bar is minimized. You can navigate in any area of the site by simply hovering over the icon from the top left.

Left bar

The class left bar allows you to navigate in different areas of a class such as: news, lessons, calendar, assignments and the gradebook.
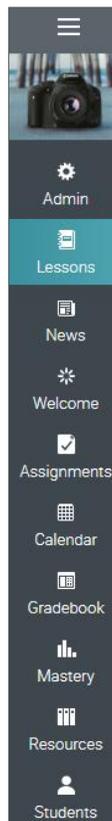
Here is more information about the left bar tabs:

- ✓ **Admin** - configure the class, copy the class, import/export content;
- ✓ **Welcome** - create a welcome page for your students;
- ✓ **News** - shows the latest news items from your class;
- ✓ **Lessons** - lists the lessons in the class;
- ✓ **Calendar** - shows current and upcoming class events;
- ✓ **Assignments** - shows the class assignments;
- ✓ **Gradebook** - displays all the grades;

- ✓ Mastery - track class competencies;
- ✓ Resources - the area where you can store resources that are independent of any lesson;
- ✓ Students - lists all the students that are in the class;
- ✓ Teachers - lists all the teachers that are in the class;
- ✓ Teaching assistants - lists all the teaching assistants that are in the class;
- ✓ Parents - lists all the parents that can see the class;
- ✓ Games - if the class has a game this is the area where you can see an overview;
- ✓ Automation - see a list of rules based on automation that you have set for your class;
- ✓ Attendance - track student attendance;
- ✓ Seating chart - allows teachers to organize how students are seated in class;
- ✓ Forums - forums for discussions between class members;
- ✓ Groups - groups for class members;
- ✓ Chat - users can exchange text messages in real time;
- ✓ Wiki - a collection of pages that more than one person can edit;
- ✓ Blogs - students and teachers can share their online journals;
- ✓ Purchases- if you have e-commerce enabled, this tab offers a list of all the purchases of a class;
- ✓ Syllabus - the syllabus area allows you to create an overview page of the class.
- ✓ Reviews - allows you to see students' ratings and reviews of classes they are enrolled in.

You can configure the class to enable or disable most of these tabs and depending on how your site administrator has set up your platform.

News feed

The news feed shows class announcements, posts from teachers and students, new assignments, lessons, events, and more.

You can edit and delete any news item, including posts and comments by students.

Right bar

In the right bar, you can find the Admin control panel that allows you to quickly publish the class and find the class access code. Here is also the to-do list, announcements and a game leaderboard if you have enabled games for the class. To view more details, click on an item.

Admin	⚙
🔍	Published unpublish
🔒	Access code: DDDY-CIDC reset
👥	Enrollment: open
👤	Creator: Alina Toderascu
⊞	Catalog: Fashion, 1st Year

To-do

✏ 39 assignments to grade

Announcements

🔔 Hello everyone and welco...

Participation	>
① Steven Timm — Advanced	⭐ 408 🛡 9
② Zsolt Bertalan — Advanced	⭐ 283 🛡 7
③ Sally Johnson — Advanced	⭐ 270 🛡 6
④ Ken Sanders — Advanced	⭐ 260 🛡 3
⑤ Ryan Smith — Advanced	⭐ 210 🛡 2
⑤ Tracy Mullon — Intermediate	⭐ 210 🛡 2

Lessons

If you click on the lessons tab, you will see all the lessons in the class. You can reorder lessons using drag and drop.
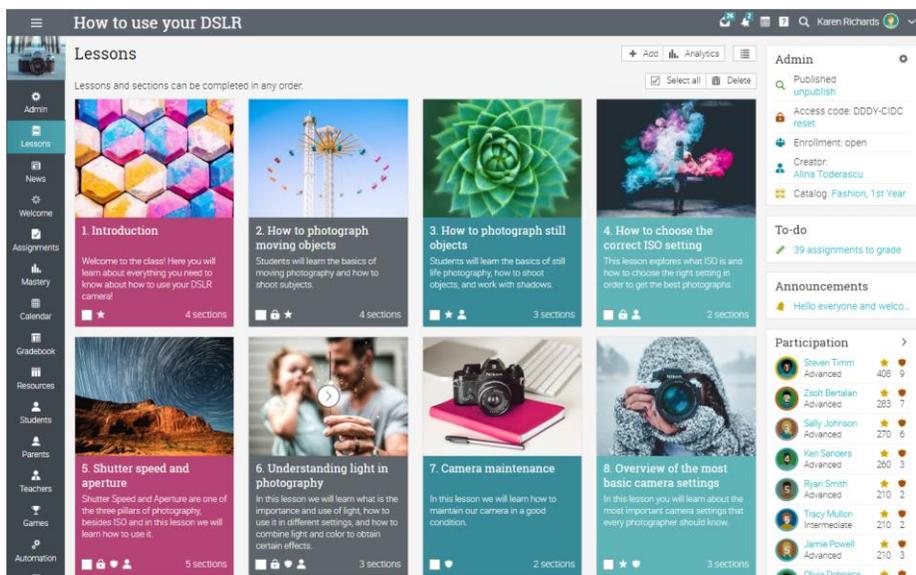
Depending on your preferences, you can also switch to the List view option from the top right. This view shows all the sections for all lessons:
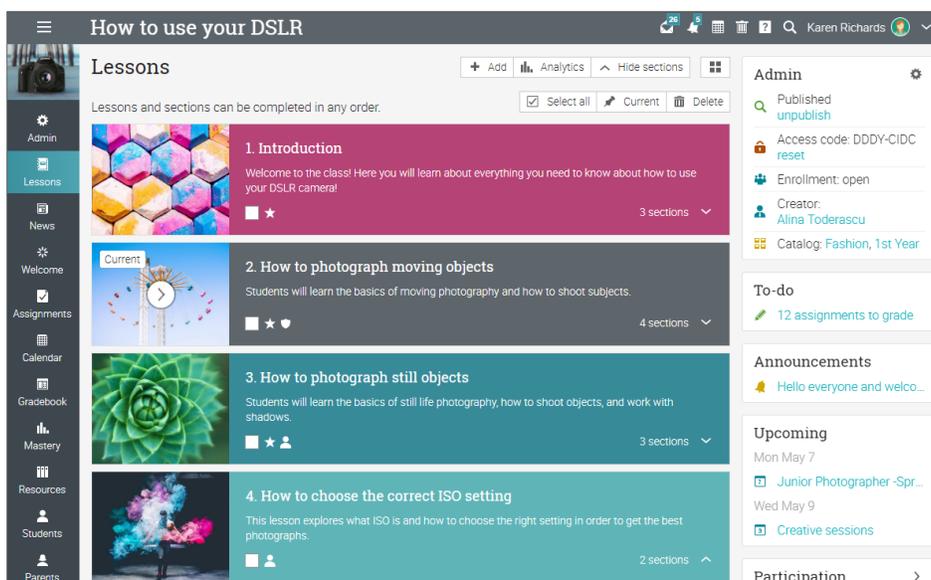
A lesson is usually comprised of content sections and assignments. You can see the sections of lessons by going to the Sections tab.
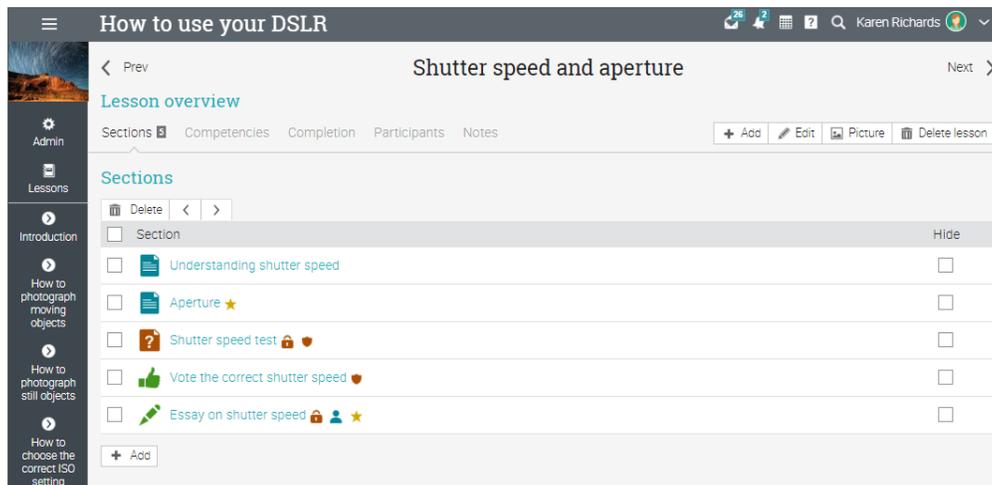
Content pages

A content page is created by using our built-in HTML editor and can contain any kind of media, including audio, video, Office documents and Google Docs. You can create rich, engaging lessons with little technical knowledge. Here is how a content page might look like:
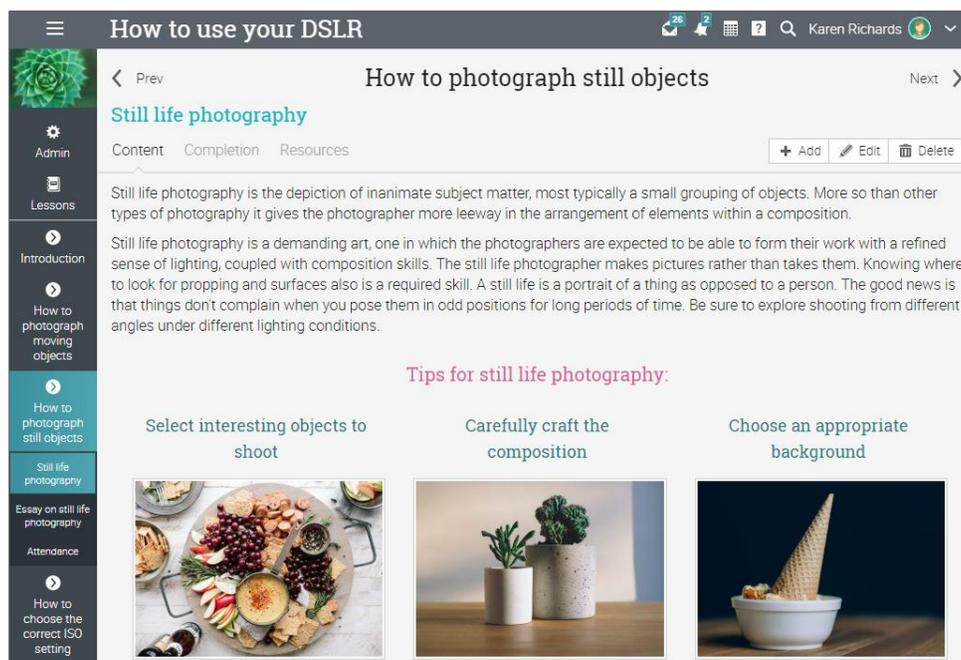
If a class is self-paced, you will see the Completion tab, where you can add completion actions that should be performed when a student completes the section.
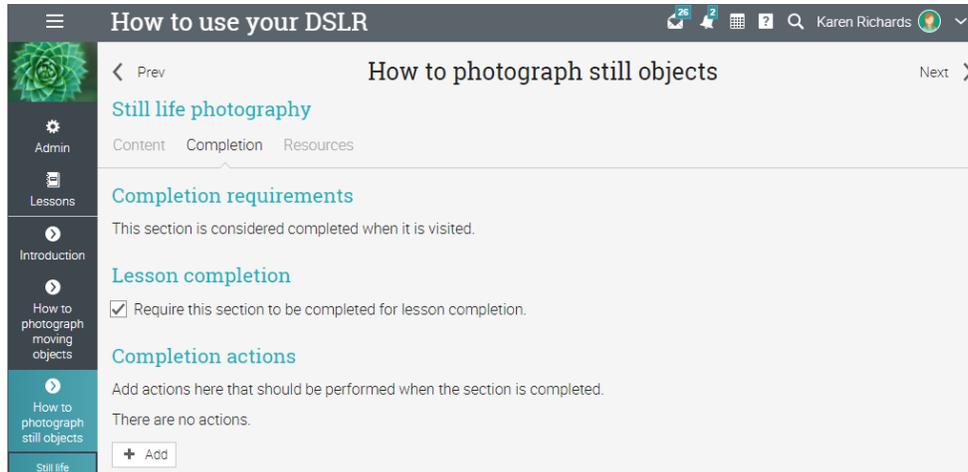
Each page has its own Resources area, where you can upload learning resources such as files, pages, or add existing ones from your personal, organizational or school library.
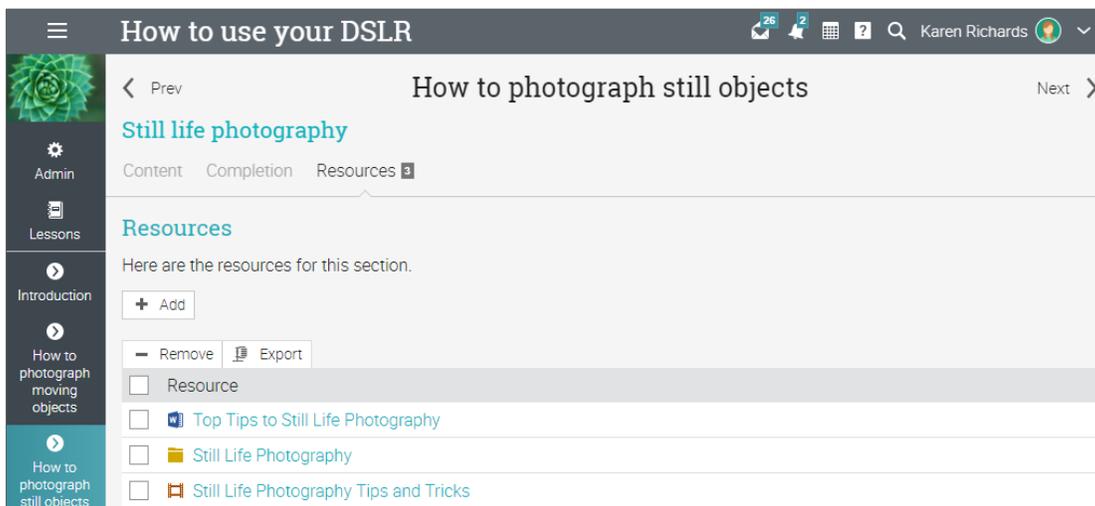
Getting started guide for Teachers

Assignments

To see a list of the assignments for a class, go to the Assignments tab. An assignment can be connected to a lesson or a standalone task.

You can create twelve different types of assignments:

- ✓ Quiz - a set of questions that students can answer online;
- ✓ Essay - students can submit their response using the HTML editor, and include an unlimited number of attachments;
- ✓ Offline - a traditional assignment such as a paper-based test or reading a book. There is no online submission for this kind of assignment, and the teacher is expected to enter the grades for each student based on the results of the offline work;
- ✓ Survey - choose between multiple choice and freeform questions;
- ✓ Discussion - students earn points by participating in a single thread of discussion that is started by the teacher;
- ✓ Debate - students add arguments for or against a proposition that is supplied by the teacher;

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✓ **Team** - allows groups of students to work on joint submissions. The teacher organizes the students into teams, each of which get their own private group;

✓ **Dropbox** - students upload one or more files as their submission;

✓ **SCORM** - captures the results of a SCORM item;

✓ **Attendance** - awards points based on a student's attendance record;

✓ **Turnitin** - add assignments that can have an originality check through our Turnitin integration;

✓ **Custom LTI assignments** - integrates 3rd party LTI assignments.

To see the details for an assignment, click on its name. Here is how an assignment in a lesson looks like:
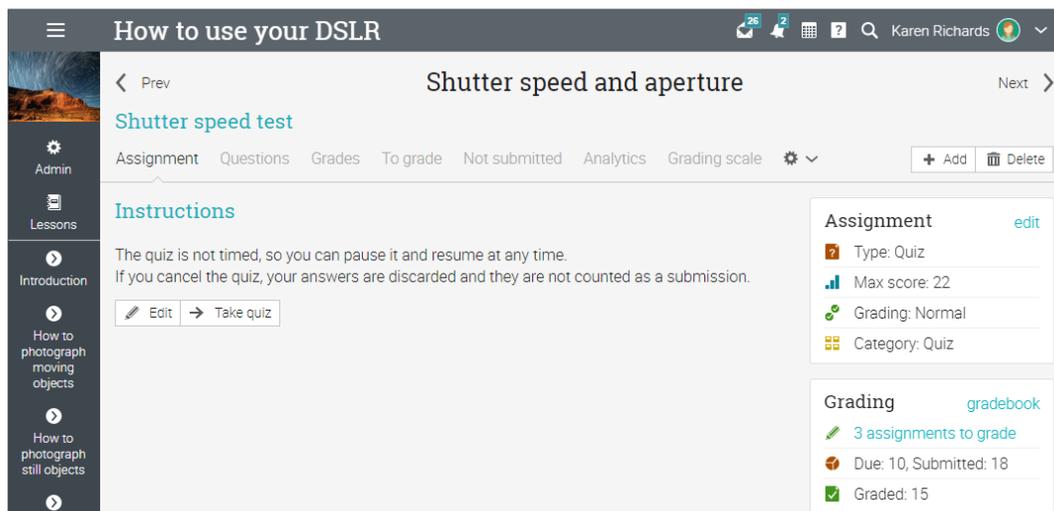
Depending on the type of assignment, you can find some or all of the following tabs:

✓ **Assignment** - shows the most important information about the assignment, such as its grading status, submissions and instructions;

✓ **Questions** - displays the questions of an assignment if it's a quiz or survey, and the number of points that are allocated to each of them;

✓ **Grades** - shows a list of student grades for the assignment, submissions for each student;

✓ To grade - indicates the assignments that need to be graded;

✓ Not submitted - indicates the assignments that haven't been submitted yet;

✓ Analytics - displays the grade distribution amongst students;

✓ Grading scale - here you can see the grading scale associated with the assignment;

✓ Rubric - view the rubric associated with an assignment;

✓ Competencies - see the competencies that are assessed by the assignment;

✓ Completion - if the class is self-paced, you can add rules that are performed when the assignment is completed;

✓ Score rules - add rules and actions for when learners achieve a specified score;

✓ Personalize - you can personalize an assignment to only show it to certain students or hide it from certain students.

We will go into more details about adding assignments later in this guide. Now that you know how a complete class looks like in NEO, you are ready to start creating your own.

The next sections of the guide will show you how to create a class, configure it, add lessons and assignments, grade assignments, enroll students, and more.

Creating a class

To create a class, hover over the Classes tab from the left bar and choose Add.
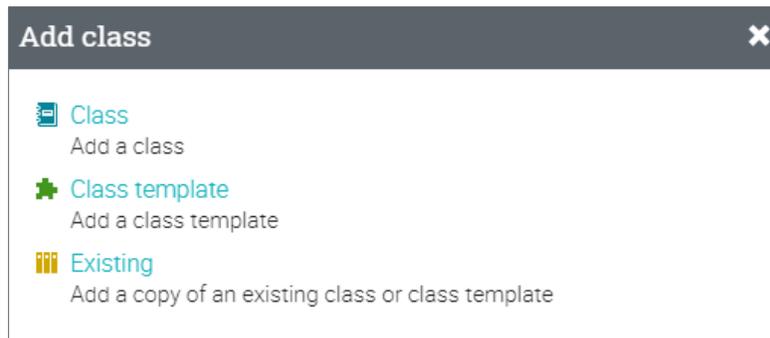
Here are some notes when creating a class:

- ✓ Access code - if you enable the access code option when creating a class, the access code (for self-enrollment) is displayed on the class landing page, in the right bar under "Admin";
- ✓ Style - you can choose from four different styles:
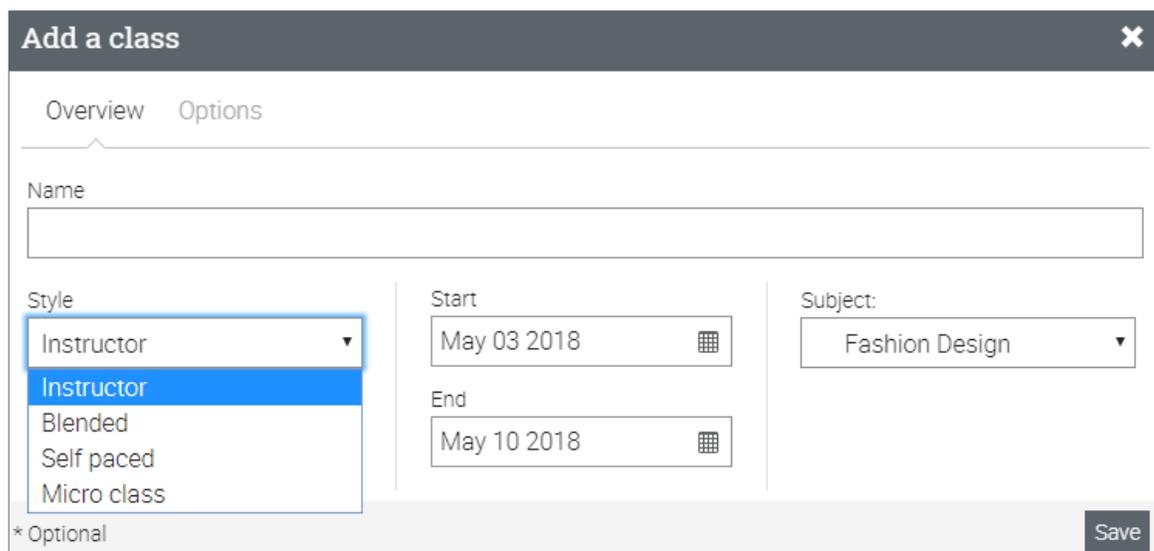
- **Instructor** - learning takes place in a traditional classroom environment. This is the most common choice for schools that are using online learning in combination with their regular school setting;
- **Blended** - learning takes place in a classroom environment, but some of the modules are self-paced, often with gateway assignments that only allow students to proceed once they've achieved a certain score;
- **Self-paced** - all lessons are self-paced, and students can take the class anytime, anywhere.There is no class schedule, no dates for particular lessons, no "giving" or "due date" for assignments, and no grading periods;
- **Micro class** - a very lightweight class that provides access to lessons/sections and no other tabs. In all other aspects, it is the same as conventional classes.
- ✓ **Duration** - you can select the dates between which the class will be held, or if your class is self-paced, you can specify a duration without setting fixed dates;
- ✓ **Subject** - choose the subject of the class from the list provided;

For more advanced options, visit the Options tab.

Here you can set up your class language, time zone, the semester that the class is held in, the number of credits for the class, organization and associate the class with a Grading scale.

Once you've added a class, you are taken to its default landing page, which is its Lessons area.

Configuring a class

As a teacher, you have many options for configuring your class, from choosing which tabs are displayed in the left bar, to setting what happens when a student completes the class.

Go to Admin and select Configure in the the left bar.

Next, we will go over the most important configuration options.

Tabs

You can select the tabs that you and your students can see in the class left bar, such as news, lessons, calendar and collaboration tools. By default, only the most common features are enabled, less common features such as wikis and chat are disabled.
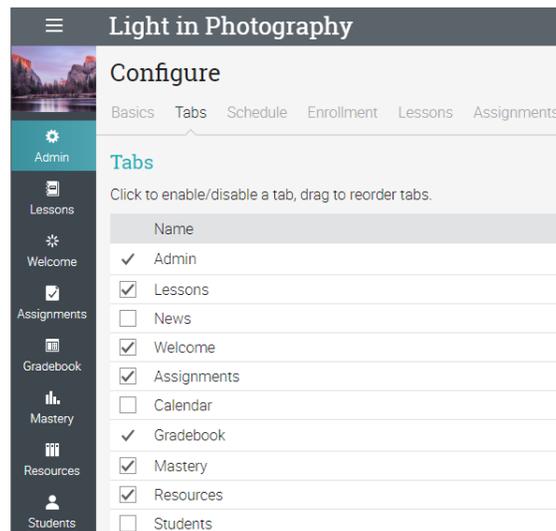
Enrollment

This area allows you to select enrollment options. For example, you can choose if you want students to be able to enroll or unenroll themselves from the class. You can also set up rules that should be performed when students are enrolled or unenrolled, such as sending an automatic message to them.
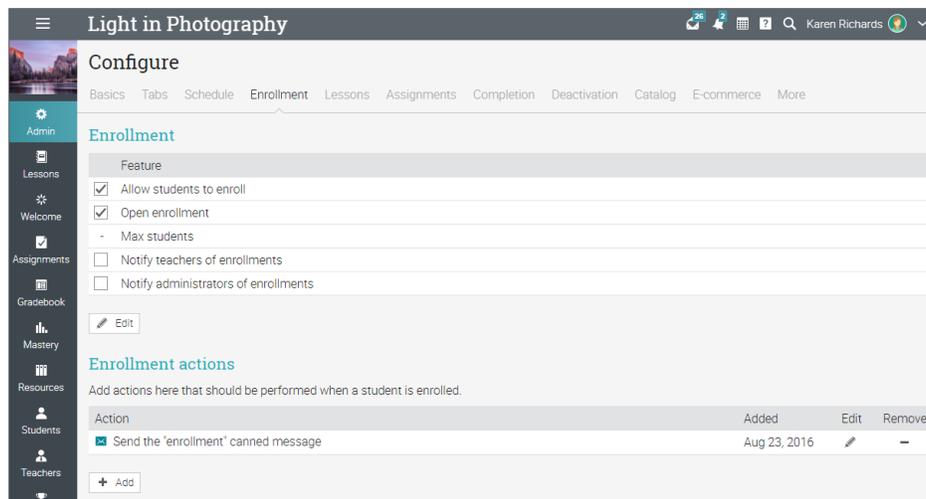
Lessons

In this tab, you can configure your lessons and sections. Choose whether you want your students to complete them in order or not and configure the lesson layout. You can also enable drip content, whcih allows you to schedule student access to lessons rather than have them all available at once.
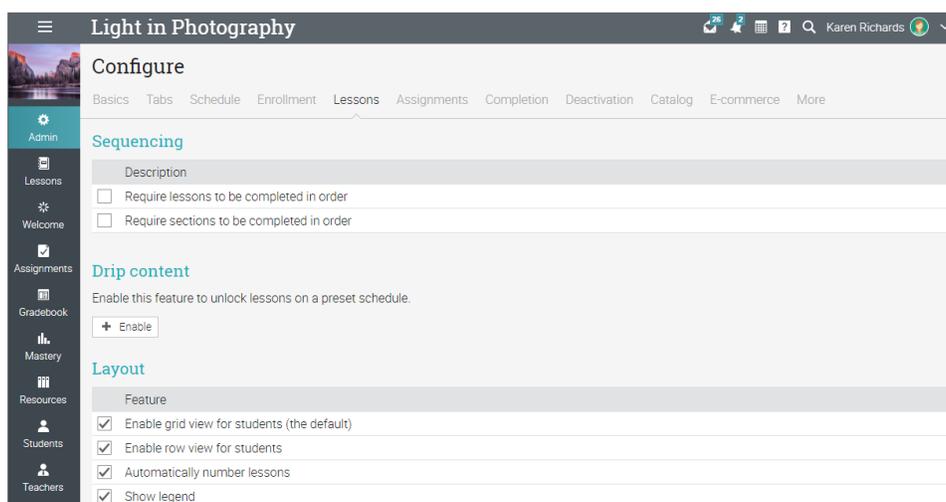
Completion

Add actions that should be performed when a class is completed, such as awarding a certificate, badges, sending custom messages to students or enrolling them in another class.
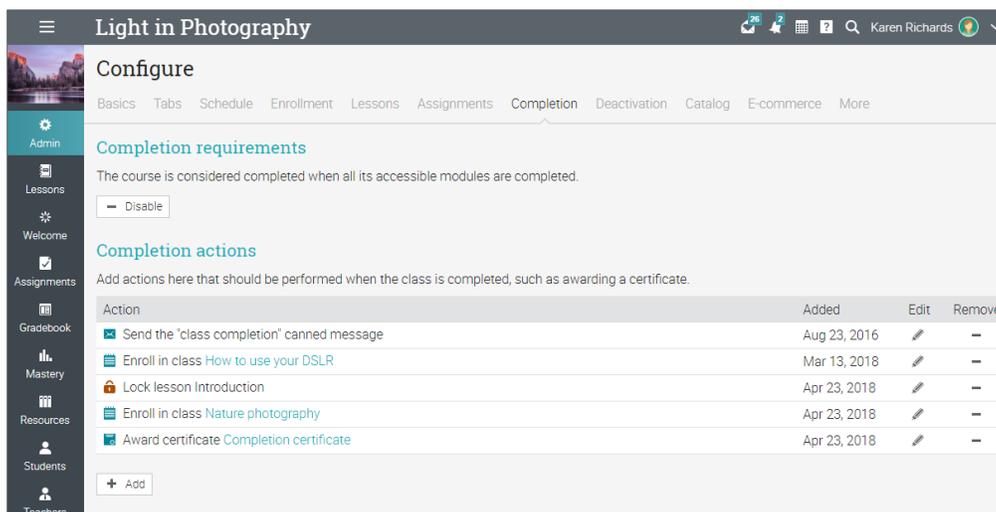
Adding lessons

To add a lesson, go to Lessons view then choose Add. Enter its title, an optional date, a description, then click Save.
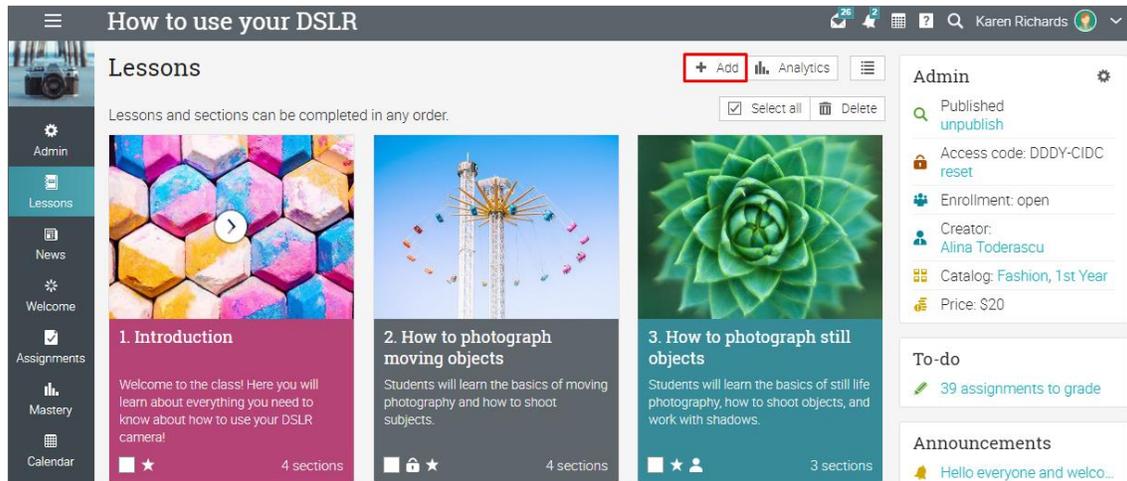
Once you've added a lesson, you can use the edit icon to change settings or description and the picture icon to change the picture. You can then add a section to your lesson, which can either be a content section or assignment.
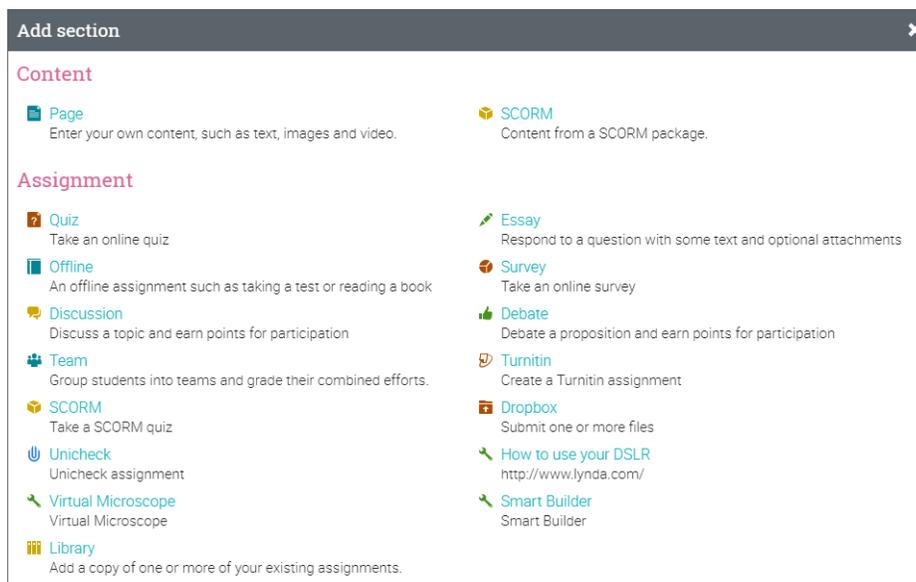
Adding sections

To add a section to a lesson, click on the Sections tab, then select the kind of section you want to add (see the picture above). For example, add a content Page, enter a title and you can use the HTML editor right away to create content.
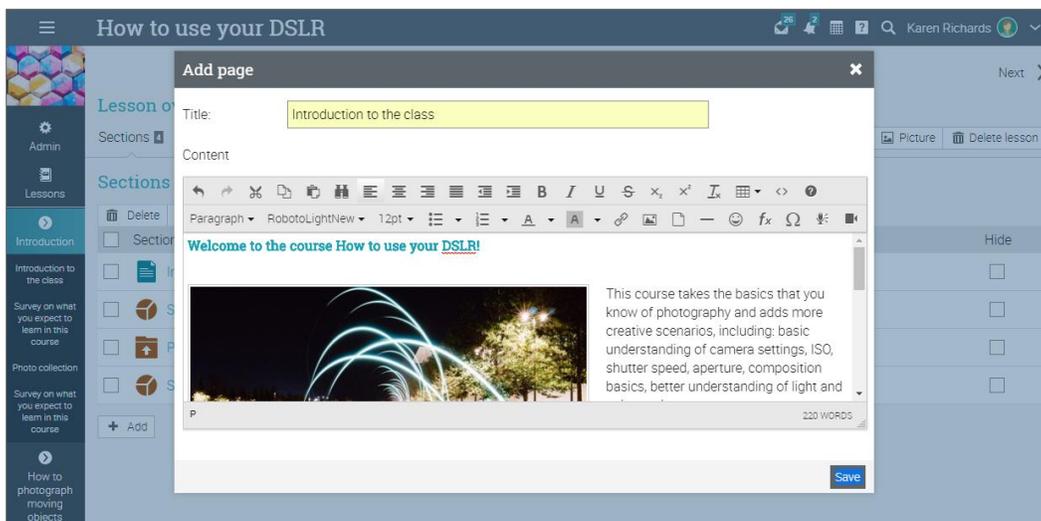
Here you will have many options for editing your content page. You can use the picture icon to upload pictures, add text, upload any kind of file, including video and audio. Additionally, you can record video or audio content directly from your browser. Here is how your created page might look like:

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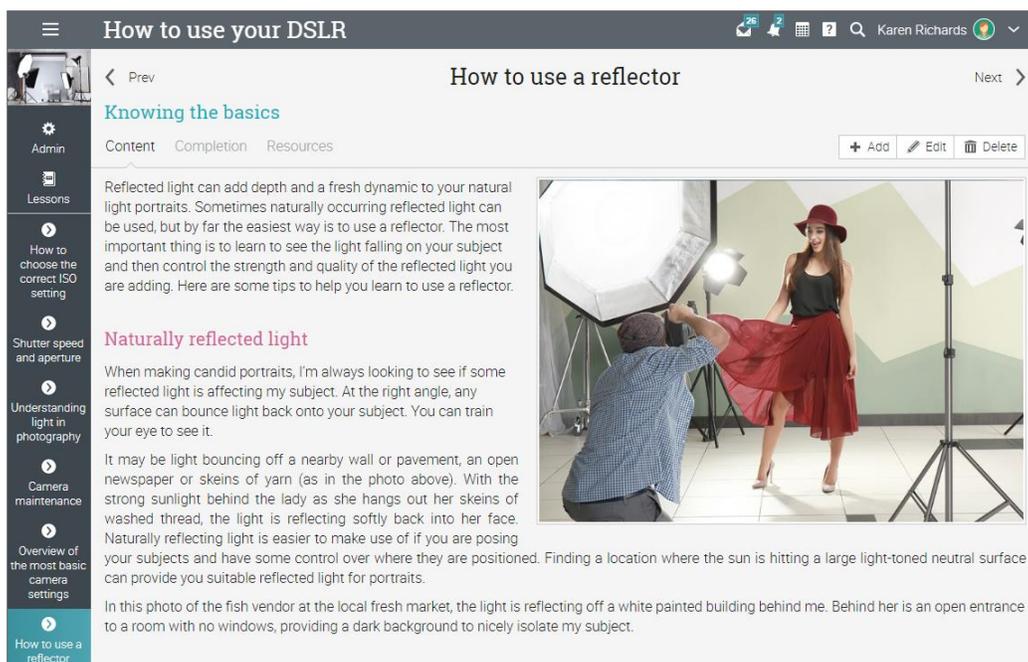
To add resources to a content page, click its Resources tab, then select the type of resource that you want to add.
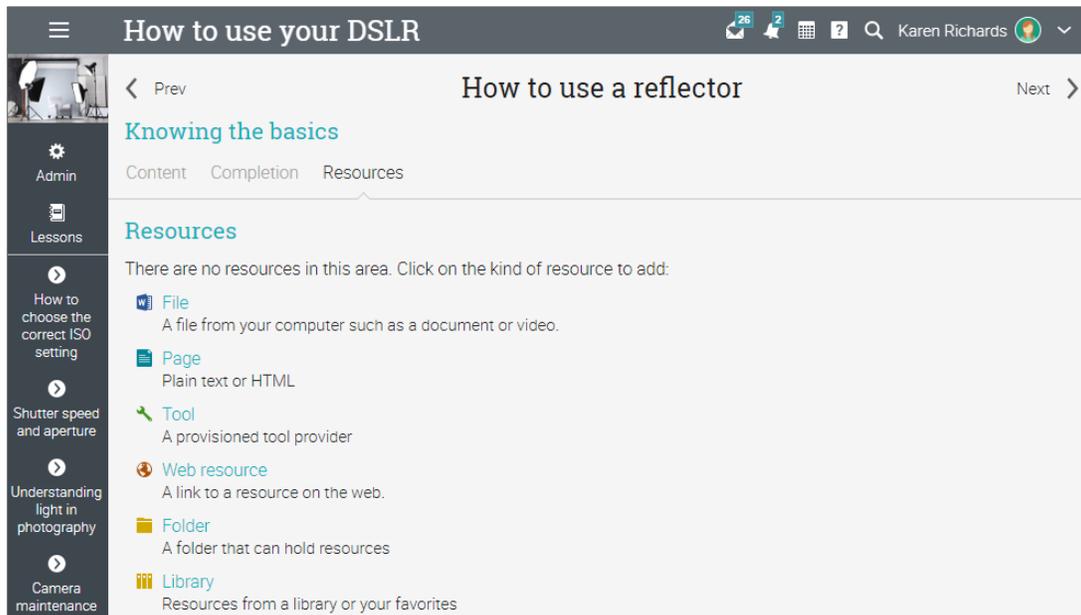
For example, to add a file from your computer, click File, select the file you want to upload, a description and the library that this resource will be a a part of.

Setting competencies for a lesson

If your class is associated with competencies, you can set them for a lesson. Go to the lesson, then click its Competencies tab, select the related competencies then click Save.
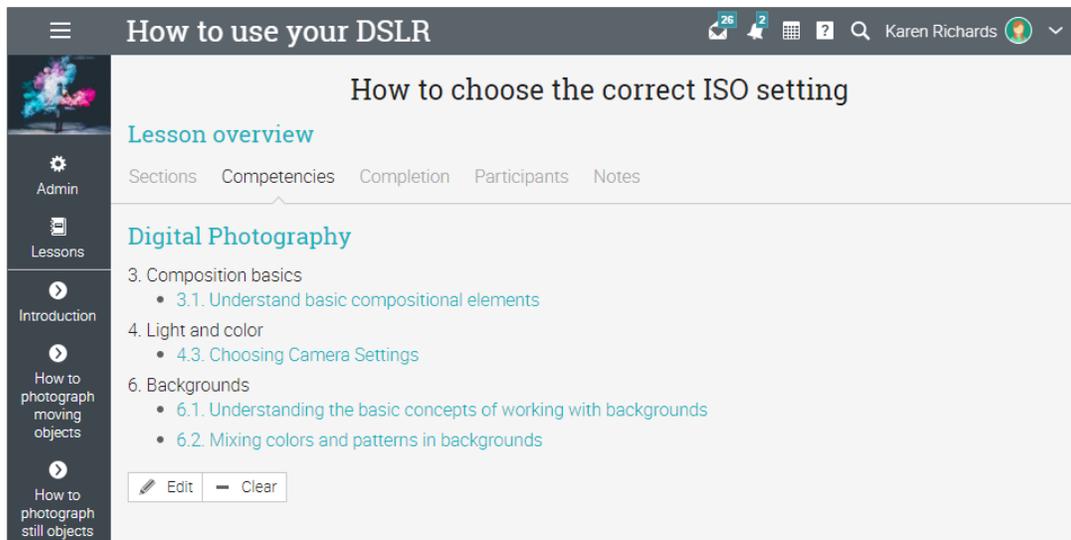
To reorder lessons or sections in a lesson, you can use drag and drop. To delete items, select them, then click Delete.
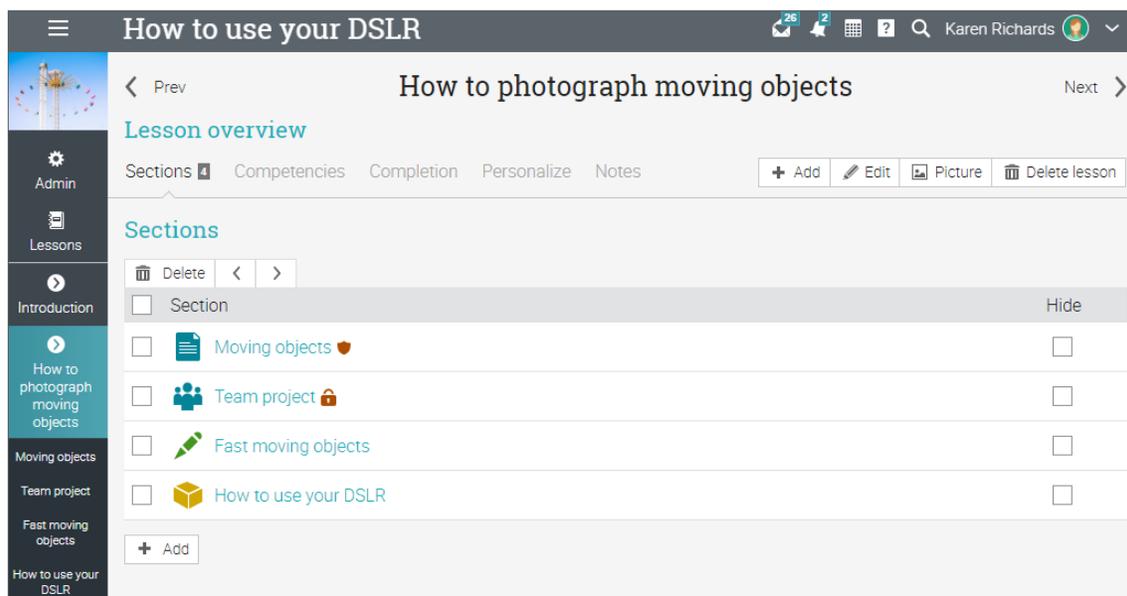
Enrolling students

To begin enrolling students in a class, go to the Students tab in the class left bar.

Then click Add in the top right and select one of the following choices:

Classes tab

If you give students a class access code, they can use it to enroll in a class themselves. Alternatively, if you have enabled the class catalog, they can hover over the Classes tab, click Catalog, then enroll from there.

People picker

You can enroll students using the people picker, which allows you to filter people by name, account type, groups, organizations and classes. Select the students you want to add and click the middle arrow to move them in the column on the right, then click Add.
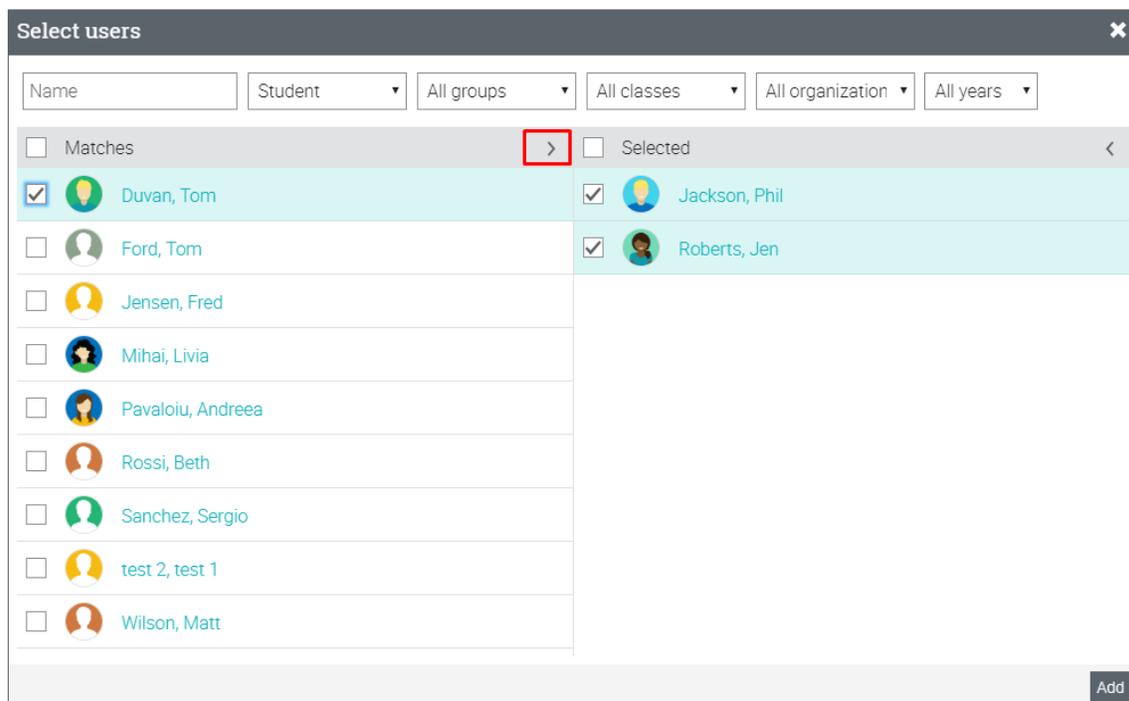
Email invitations

Select the approximate number of invitations to send, then enter the email addresses and names of the students to add them to your class.

An email is sent to each user. The email includes the invitation message and a clickable link. When the person clicks the link, they are sent to your site and asked to click an "Accept" option. When they click Accept, they are logged in to the system and taken to their home page.

Adding assignments

An assignment is a task that a student has to complete in order to earn points. These points add up towards a final grade based on the selected weighting scheme.

There are two ways of adding assignments: you can add an assignment directly from the lesson page or from the Assignments tab of the class. From a lesson page, click Add Section, then select an assignment from out list of twelve different types:
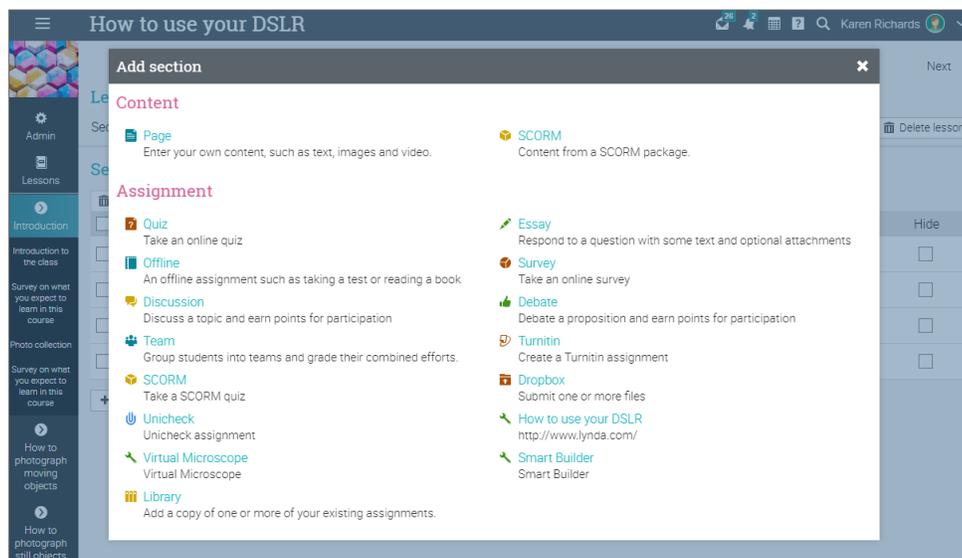
From the Assignments tab of your class, click Add Assignment from the top right.
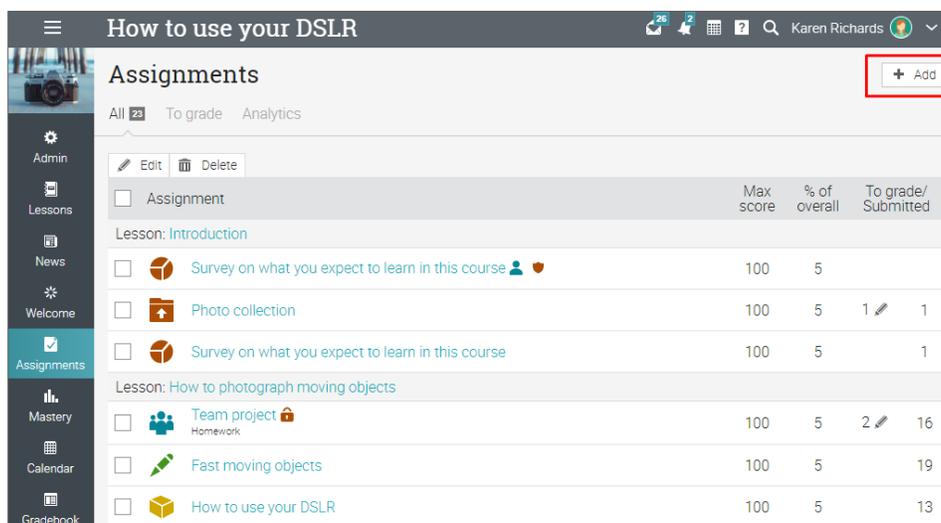
For example, if you select an Essay assignment, you can see the following options:
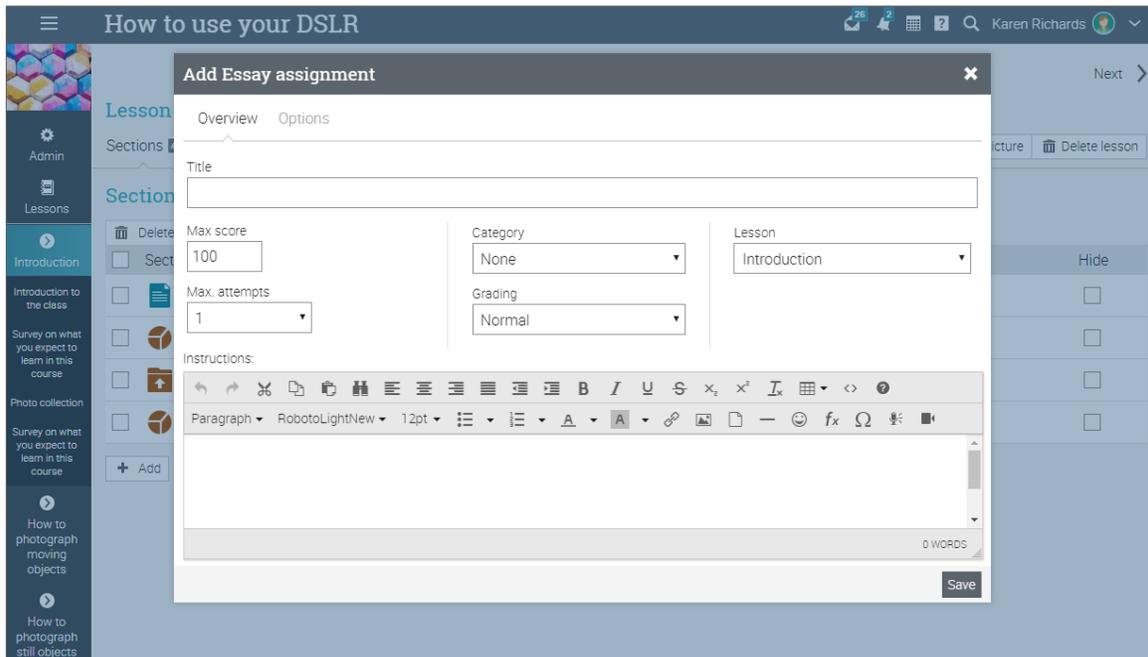
Here are some notes on the assignment settings:

- ✓ Max score - the maximum score that a student can obtain;
- ✓ Points - if you selected "weight by points", then these are the points that the assignment is worth;
- ✓ Category - the category of the assignment. You can see the available categories via Admin/Configure/Assignments;
- ✓ Grading - here are the options:
  - ▪ Normal - the assignment grade, counts towards the final grade;
  - ▪ Extra credit - a bonus towards the final grade;
  - ▪ Ignore - does not contribute to the final grade;
  - ▪ Not graded - the assignment is not graded and does not contribute to the final grade;

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✓ **Max attempts** - the maximum number of attempts that a student can have for submitting an assignment;

✓ **Allow late** - allows students to submit the assignment after the due date has passed;

✓ **Lesson** - indicates the lesson associated with the assignment, if any;

✓ **Allow students to comment** – students can comment on the submissions of other students;

✓ **Gateway** - an optional minimum percentage that a student must achieve to pass the assignment;

✓ **Instructions** - instructions on how to perform the assignment.

Grading assignments

There are three ways to grade an assignment:

- ✓ Automatically - quiz assignments are automatically graded if they do not contain freeform questions; survey assignments and attendance assignments are always automatically graded;
- ✓ From the assignment page - online assignments that are not graded automatically are best viewed and graded from the assignment page;
- ✓ From the gradebook - offline assignments are not submitted online, so the most common way to enter their grades is via the gradebook.

Note that when you visit your teacher dashboard or a class landing page, assignments that need grading will appear in the to-do list. You can click on an item in the list to see more details and to go to the grading page.
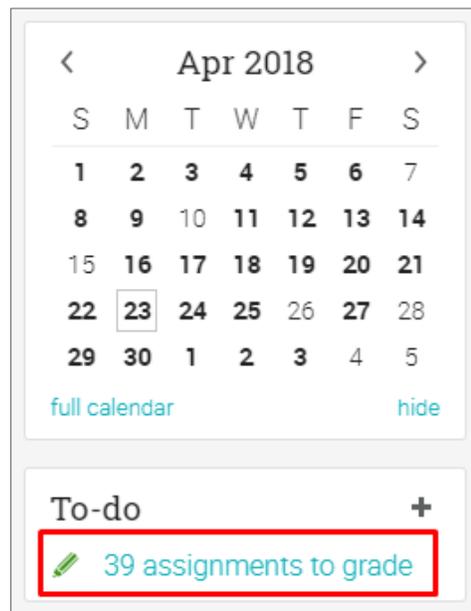
Grading from the assignment page

If you go to an assignment page and there are submissions that need to be graded, they will be indicated under Grading.
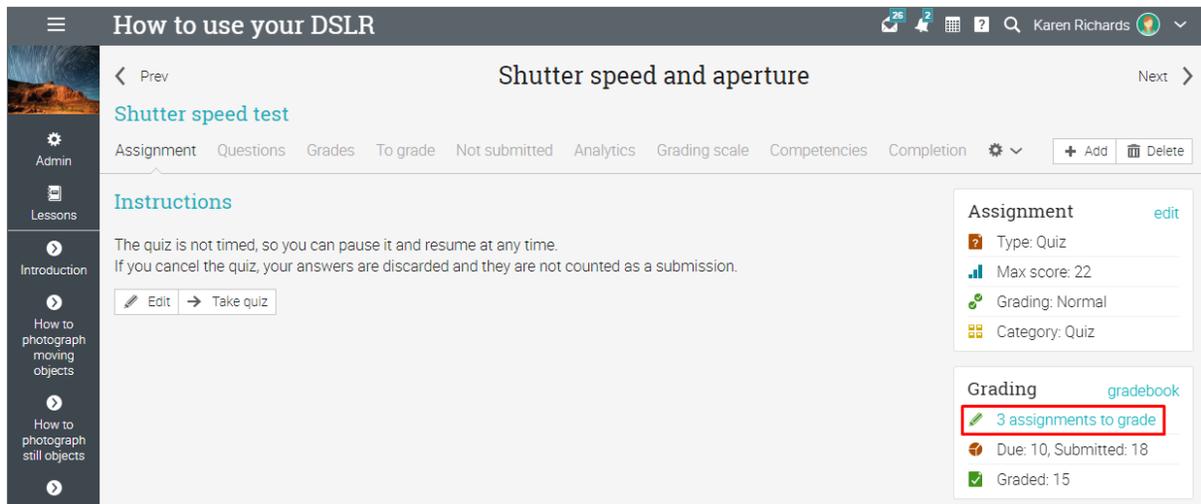
Or you can visit the To grade tab.

To grade a submission, click on the Edit icon. A new window will show you the student's submission.
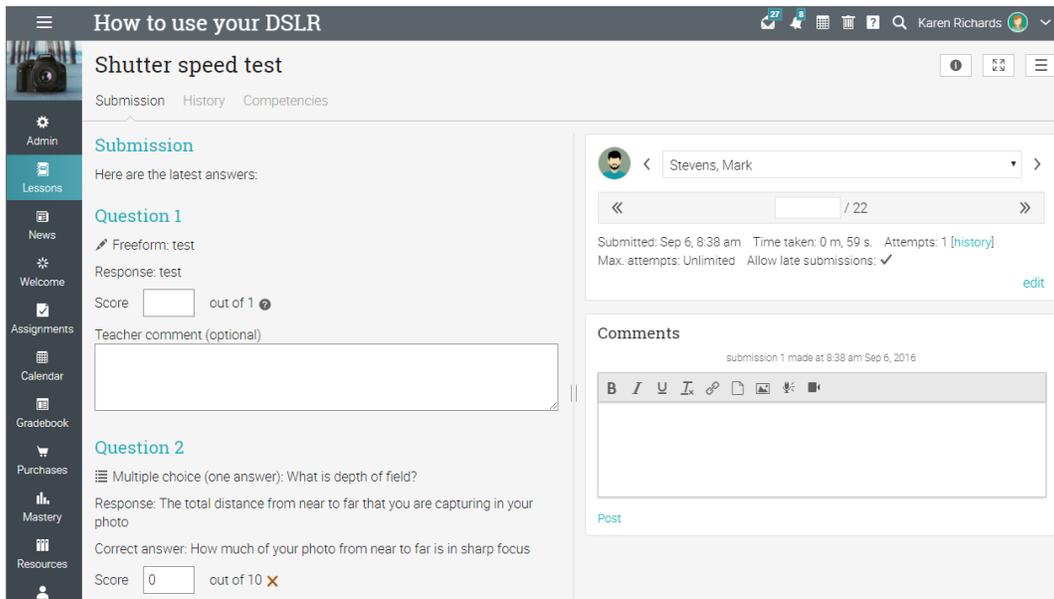
✓ On the right side, you can see assignment information such as the date of submission and number of attempts. Click on edit to override the default maximum number of attempts. Here you can also find the threaded comment section should you wish to leave a comment for your student. Threaded comments allow teachers and students to maintain a threaded dialog for every submission'

✓ The History tab shows you a complete history of the submission;

✓ The Competencies tab allows you to see the competencies that the assignment is associated with;

✓ Use the arrows to navigate from one student's submission to another.

Grading from the gradebook

Another way of grading assignments is from the gradebook, which is particularly useful when you have offline assignments such as a traditional paper-based test. To see the gradebook, either click Gradebook from the class left bar or from the assignment page.
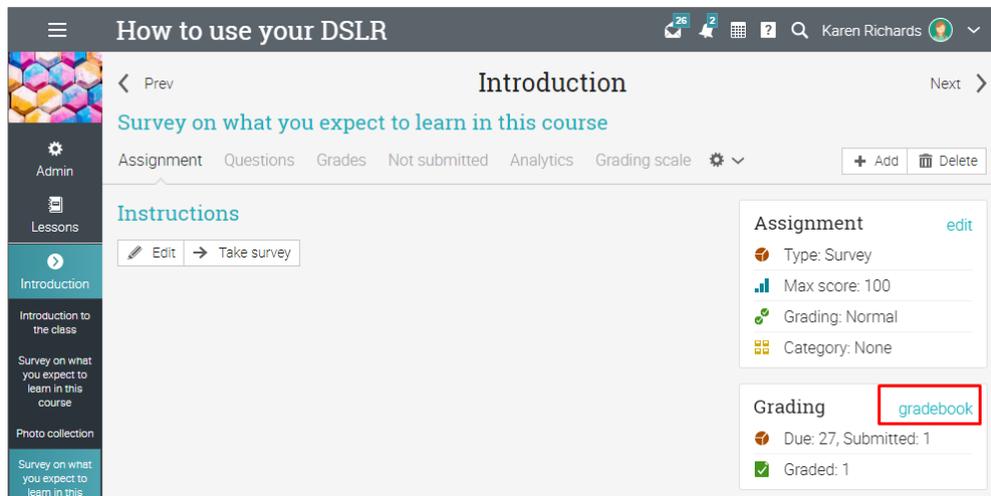
Depending on how many students and assignments there are, scroll bars that let you scroll through the grades list will appear.

Each assignment is listed at the top of the gradebook, with an icon to indicate its type, a link to the assignment and the number of points associated with the assignment.

To edit a gradebook cell, click on it and then enter the number of points, a percentage (a number followed by %), a letter grade, a blank (to clear the grade), and select from exceptions such as Excused, Missing, Absent, or Incomplete.

If you double click on a cell, a pop-up window will appear with an extra option for leaving a comment.

To configure the settings for the gradebook display, click the Configure icon in the top right. You can then select options such as what combination of points, percent and grade to be displayed in each cell.
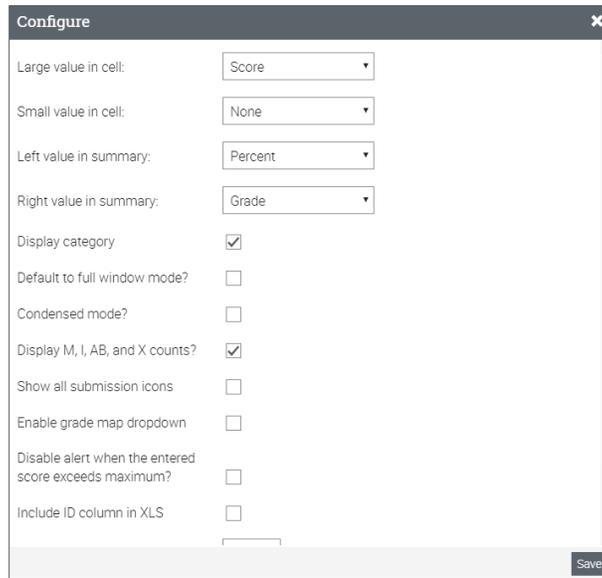
The gradebook has a full-screen mode and configurable display options, including ordering of students and assignments. It also has pop-up analytics for the whole class, for individual assignments or for individual students.
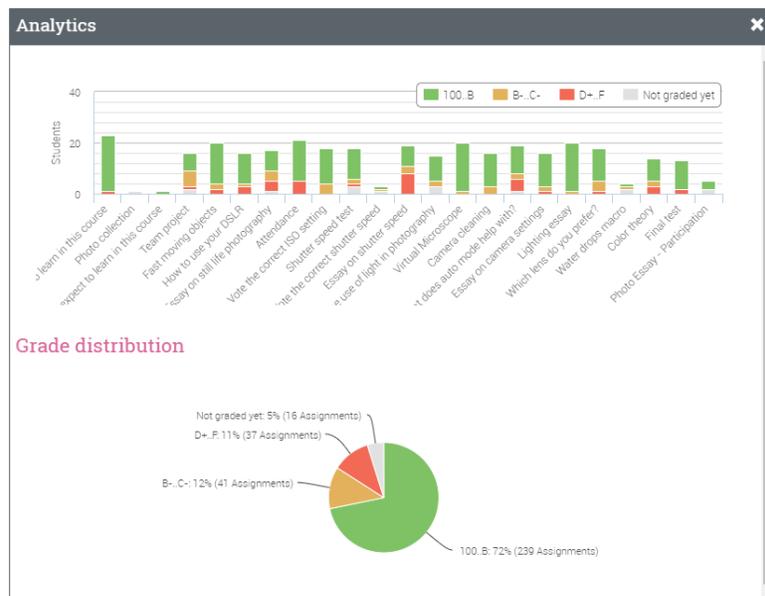
To export the gradebook, click the Export icon in the top right. Then select if you want to export an XLS or CSV file. If you choose CSV file, select the fields to export, then press 'Export'. This creates a comma-separated-value (CSV) file that you can import into other systems.

Mastery and competencies

You can track your students' progress and undestanding of the class material through competencies. Competencies are associated with lessons, including content pages and assignments. To associate a class with competencies, visit the Mastery tab and click Add competencies.
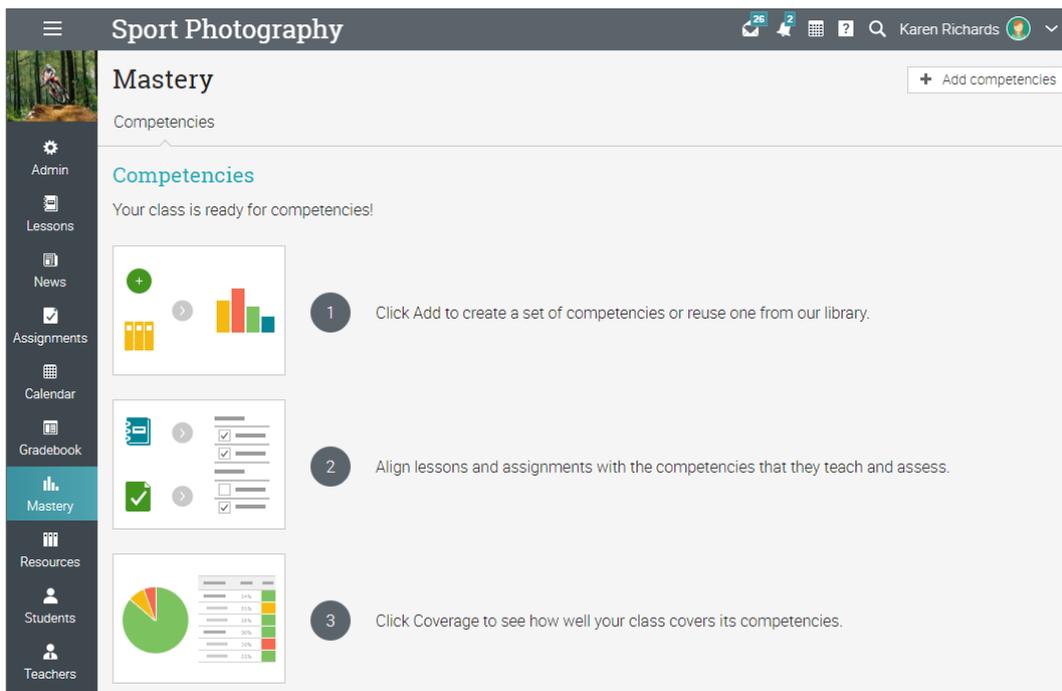
You can add your own or use pre-existing competencies from a library.
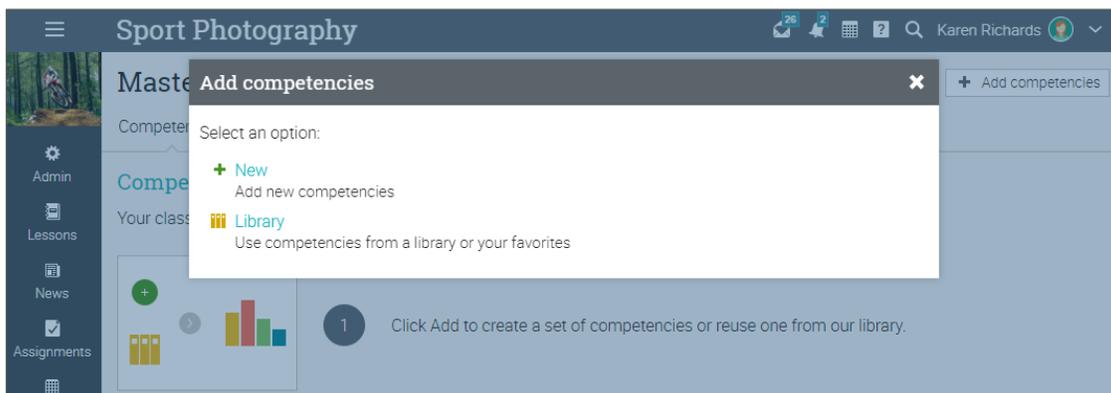
Then fill in the required information and you are ready to start adding competencies using a form or by importing them from a file:
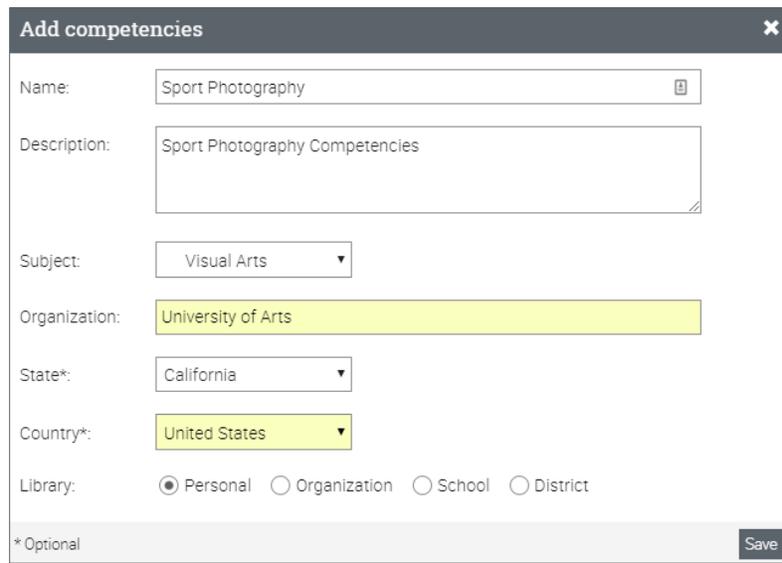
For example, this is how the competencies for a class might look like:

Once the list of competencies is prepared, you can tag lessons with the competencies that they should be teaching and assignments with the competencies that they should be assessing:

In the Coverage analysis tab, you can see how well the class covers the competencies.

In the Mastery grid you can see the students' progress through each competency and identify the ones that are doing well or the ones that are struggling.

Competencies are also saved as resources and can be shared through the Resources catalog:
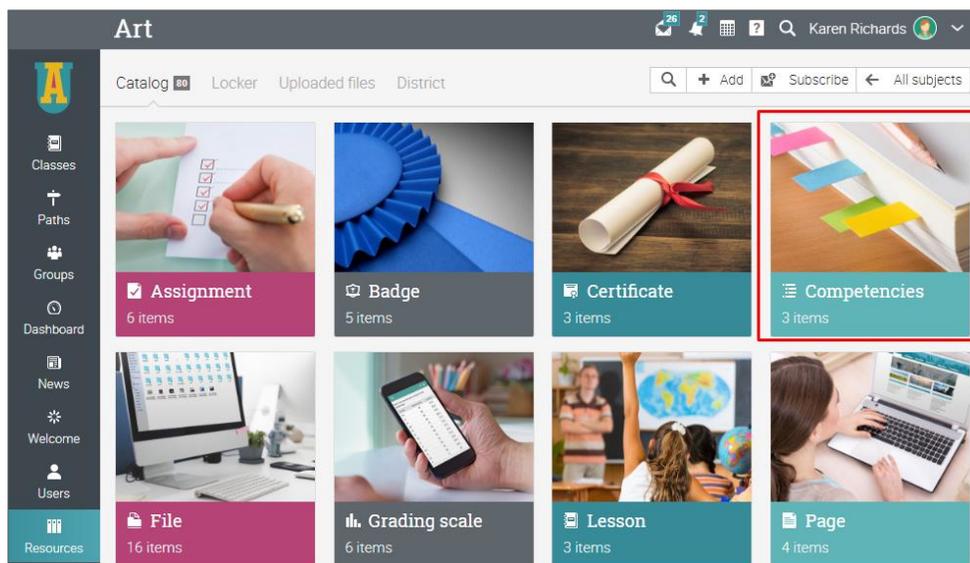
Using automation in a class

Automation helps teachers save time and makes classes more enjoyable for students. The automation feature allows you to define actions that occur under certain conditions. You can set up rules that are performed when students do certain tasks. For example, you can send a custom message when learners enroll in a class or award certificates when they finish it.

Here is a list of rules that you can add:

Adding rules

Rules can be added to various areas such as classes, lessons and different sections of a lesson.
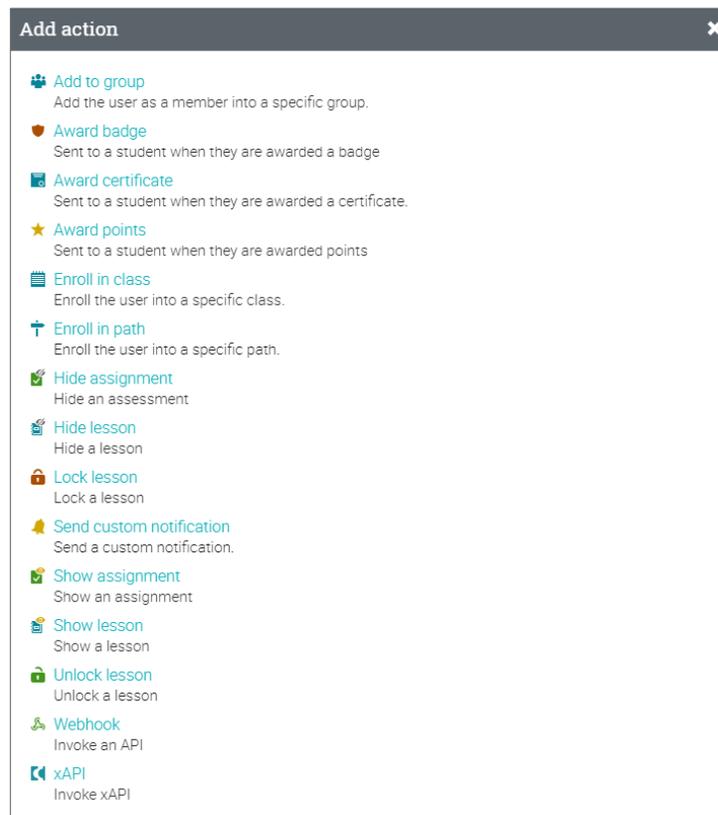
Adding class completion rules

You can add actions that should be performed when the class is completed by going to the class Admin/Configure page and the Completion tab. Here is where you would normally choose the "Award certificate" option.

Adding rules for lessons

To add rules for a specific lesson, click on a lesson and go to its Completion tab. The process is similar for content pages.
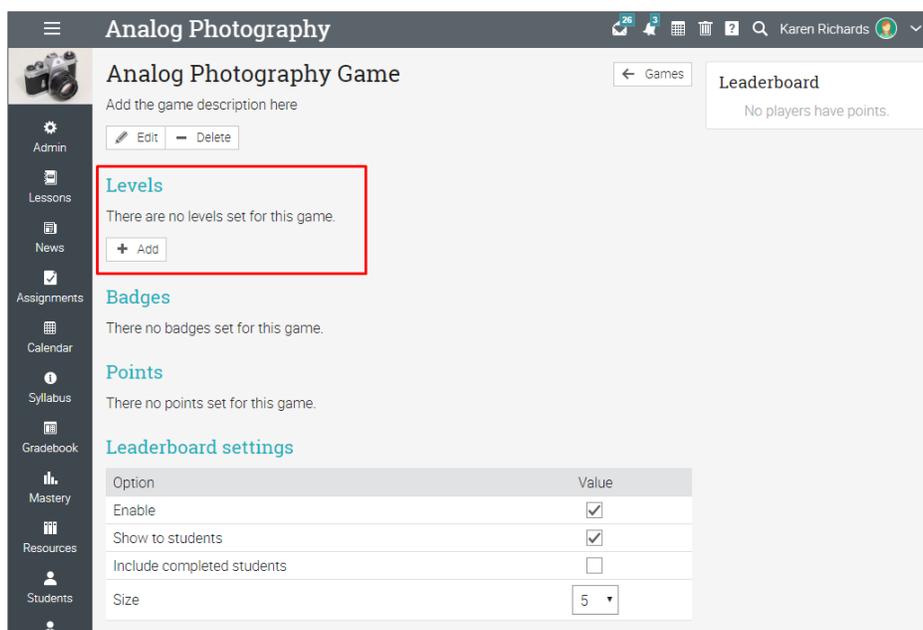
Using gamification

Gamification is based on our automation feature and allows you to create site-wide and class-wide games where students can earn points and badges by doing certain tasks such as completing assignments. They can also advance through levels and see leaderboards with rankings.

Configuring gamification in a class

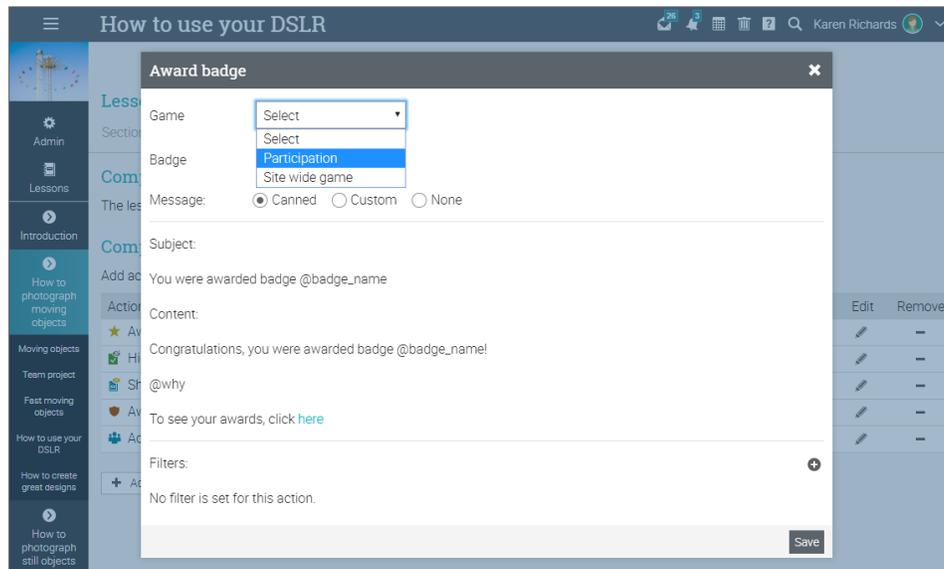Visit the Games tab and click Add to add a new game to your class.
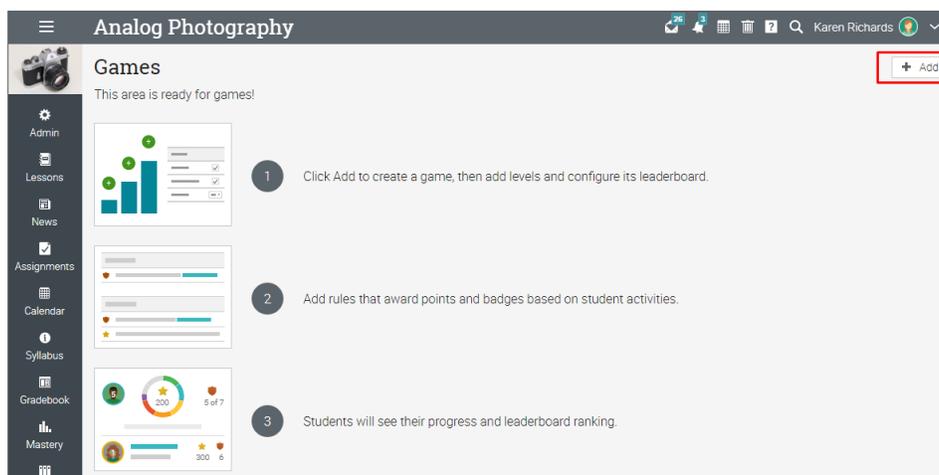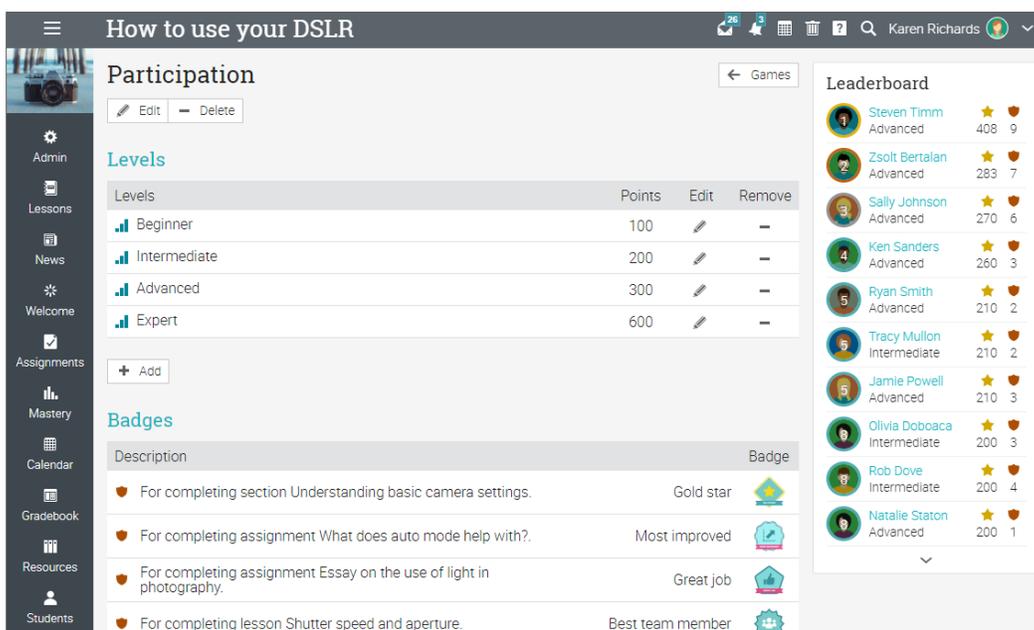

Now you can start adding levels for the game.

After adding the levels and points for each one, you can begin adding rules for lessons, sections, and assignments that award points and badges.

For more details on gamification, visit the Game topic in our Help Center.

Taking attendance

You can track student attendance for a class session, including arrival on time, arrives late, leaves early or is absent. You can also excuse a student and include a note. You can award points for attendance by adding one or more attendance assignments.

To record attendance for a session, click Add, enter the time of the class session and the details for each student:

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To see a summary of students' attendance, click the Summary tab.

To export the list, use the Export button:

Importing/Exporting class content

Our site allows you to import/export class content using Common Cartridge Format (CCF), which is the industry Standard for import/export of class content. We also support importing classes from Moodle or Blackboard.

For example, to import content into a class, click Admin/Import. Similarly, to export class content go to Admin/Export.
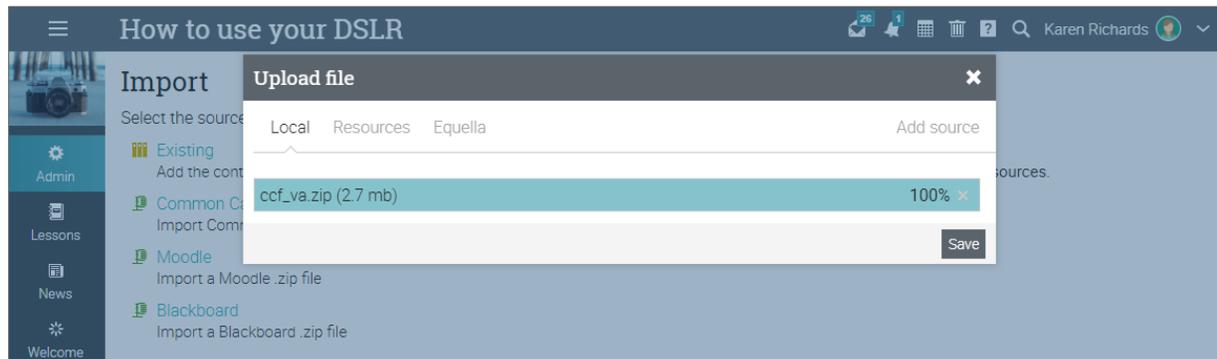
Select the file to upload and click Continue. You will receive a message when the upload is complete.
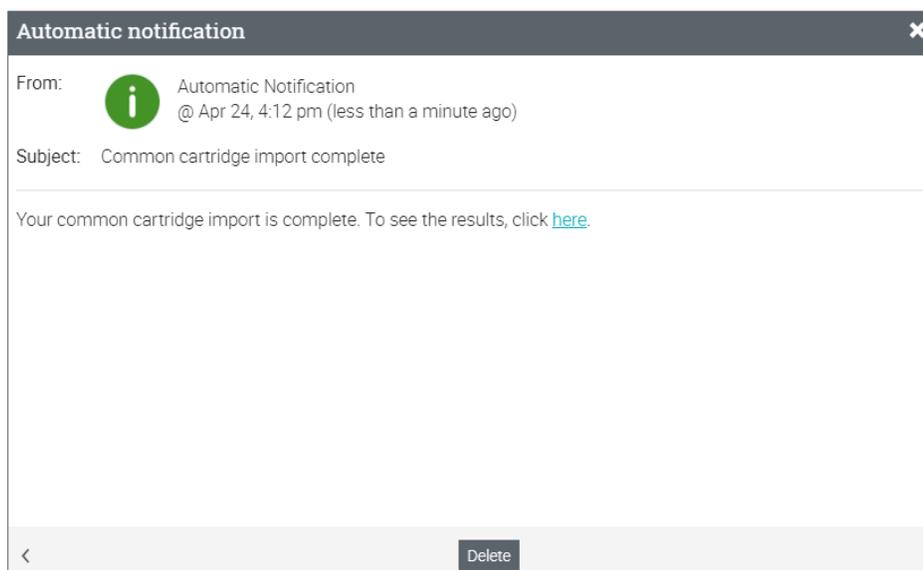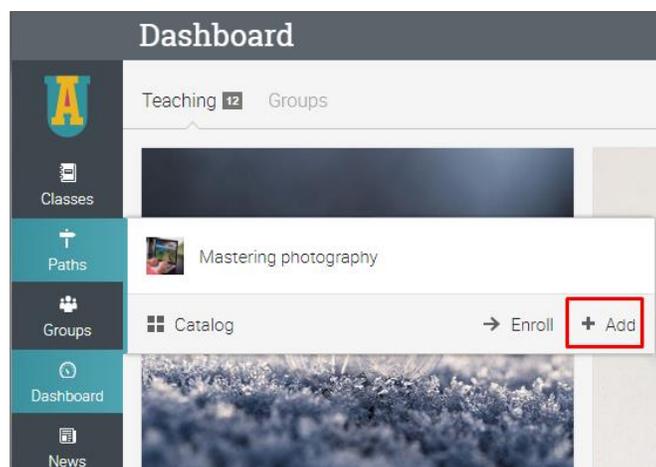
Creating learning paths

A learning path is a set of goals that a student must accomplish. Paths are used to create a personalized learning experience for them. You can configure goal completion and define actions that occur when the path is completed.

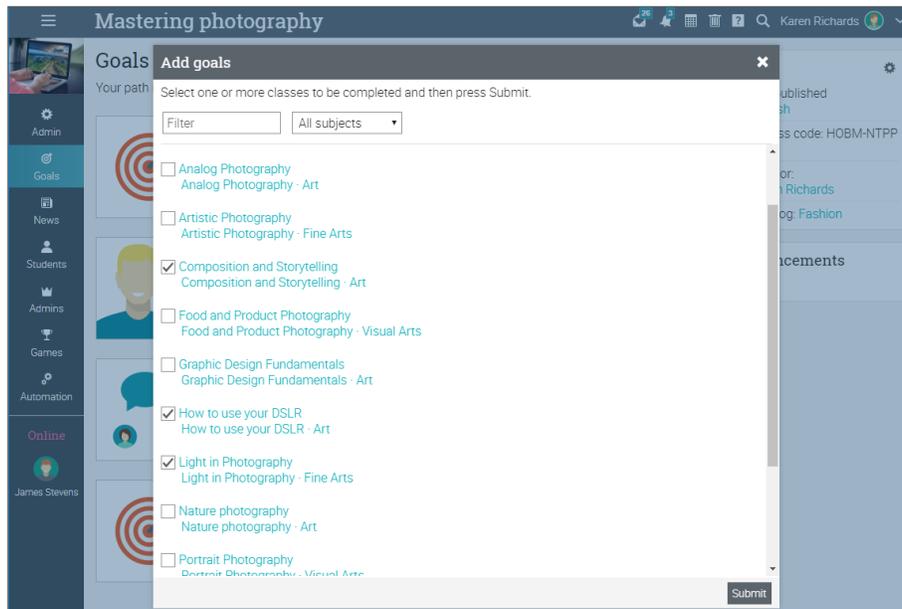To add a new learning path, go to the main left bar.

Choose a name, then you will see an overview page, complete with an Admin panel to the right.
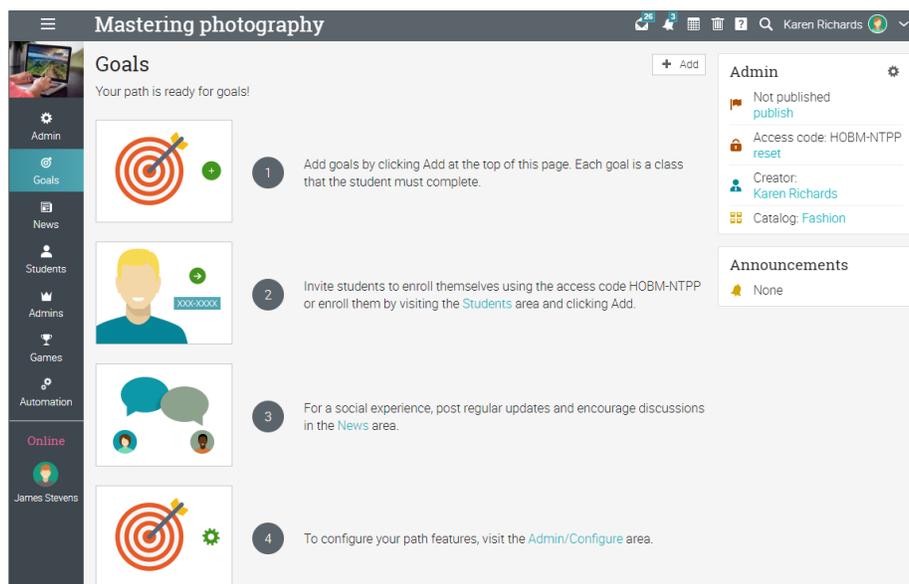
Choose the classes that you want as part of the learning path:


You can then post news, enroll students and configure the learning path. You can also add rules such as enrollment actions through the Automation tab and games in the Game tab. Personalize the learning path by clicking the configure icon next to a goal:
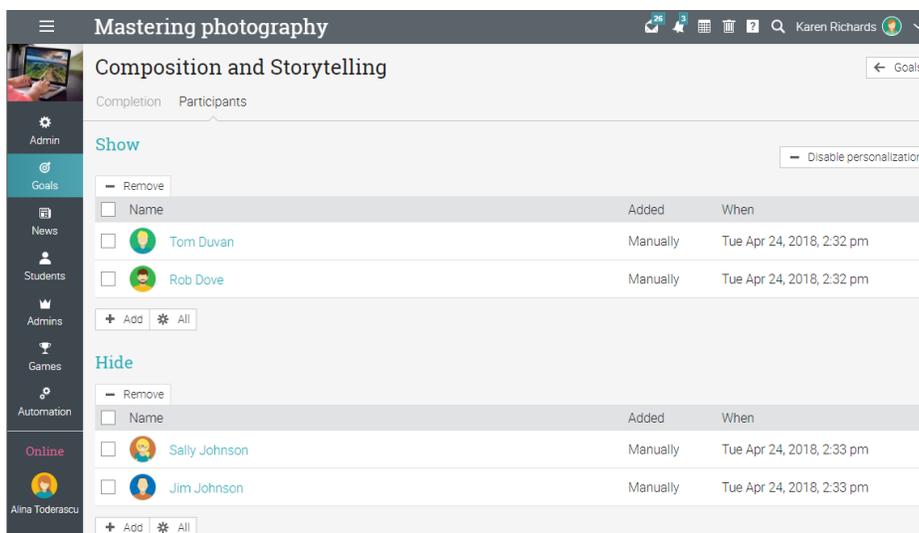
Communicating with users

You can communicate with your students and other users through our private messaging system. To see your inbox, click on the message icon in the top right bar. A drop-down menu will appear that lists your most recent messages.
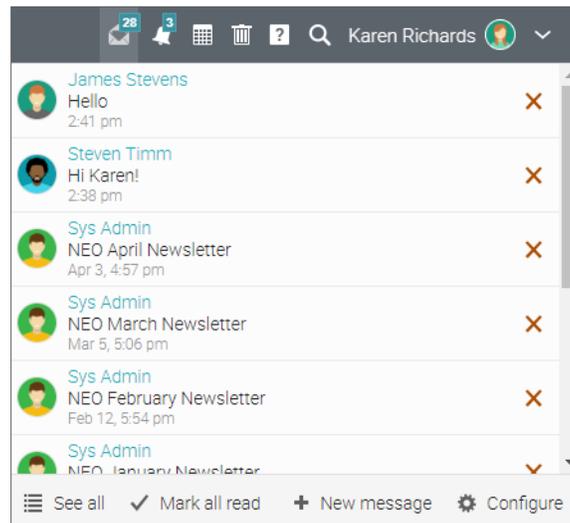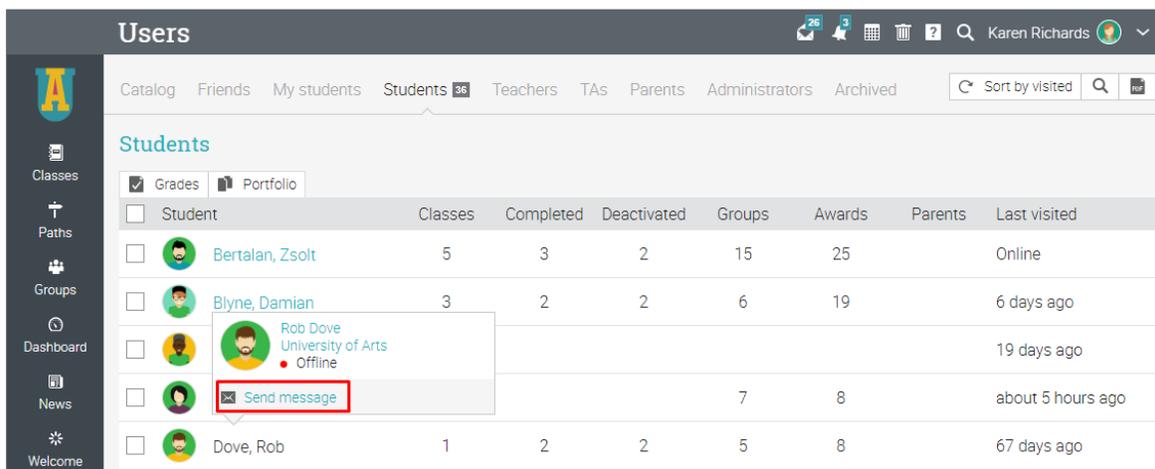

To read a message, click on it. To reply to a message, click Reply, enter your response and click Send. To delete a message, click Delete.
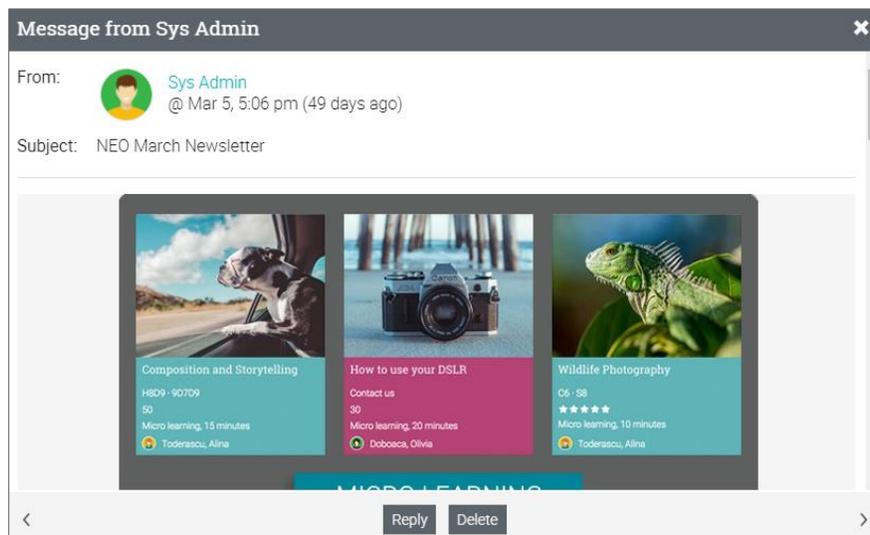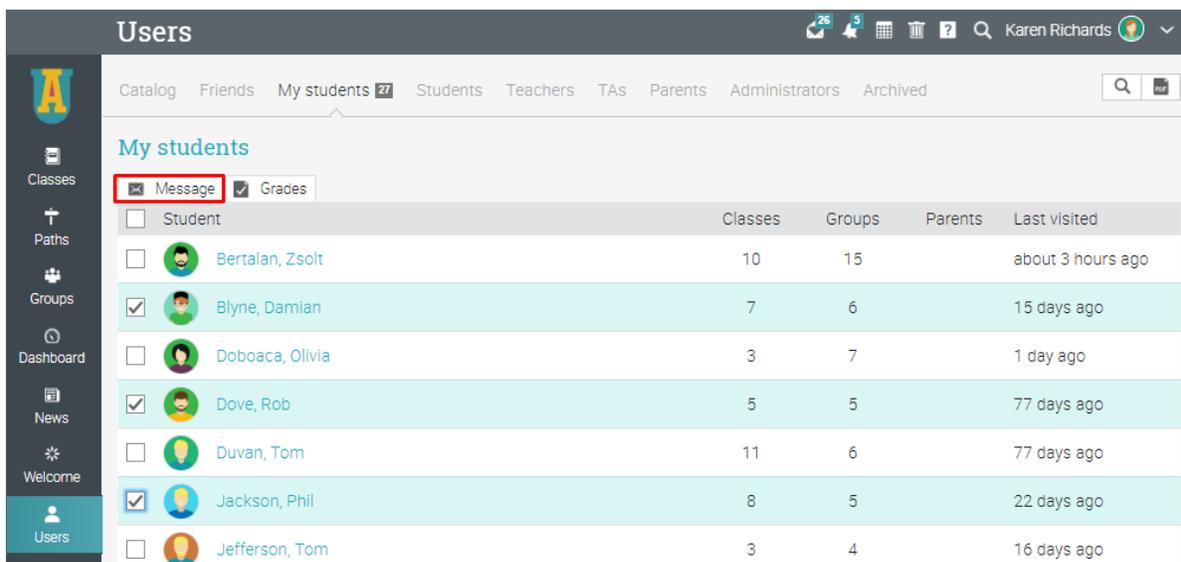
To send a message to someone, hover over their name (links to users appear in most places in the site such as a list of students, teachers, profile pages and in the forums), click Send Message, then enter your message and click Send.

To send a message to multiple students at once, select them from the list and click Message.

Similarly, if your site administrator has enabled this option, you can also chat with online users.

You can also add users as friends:

Notifications

To see all your notifications, click the notifications icon in the top right bar. A drop-down menu will appear that lists your most recent notifications. Notifications include posts from forums you are subscribed to, enrollments, new submissions that need grading, and more.
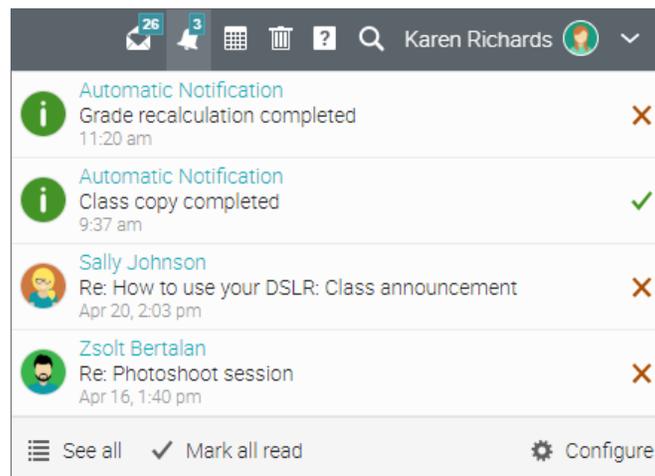
To select which notifications are automatically emailed to you, click the Configure option. If you are subscribed to a forum, you can reply to a posting directly from the notifications box or click "See thread" to see the entire thread on the forum.
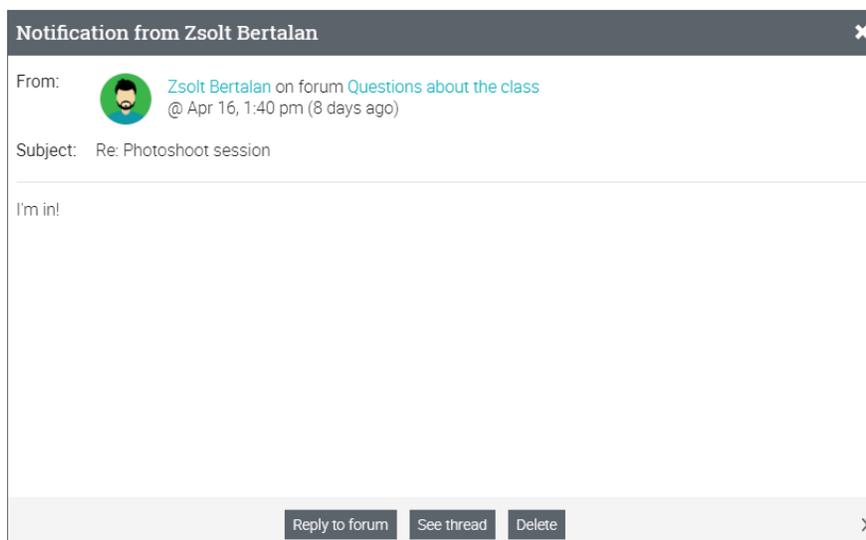
Summary

The Getting Started Guide for Teachers provided the basic information that teachers need when they first start using NEO.

Some of the topics we covered were: navigating in NEO, using the Help Center, creating and configuring a class, adding lessons and assignments, enrolling students, communicating with students and taking attendance.

If you have any additional questions, please browse the Help Center or visit our support forum.

www.neolms.com