

Accessing Assignments for Off-Line Grading

Brain Morgan, Marshall University

Introduction

Have you ever been on a plane or on the road and needed to grade student submissions placed within the Blackboard Vista Assignment Dropbox at the same moment that you find yourself not connected to the Internet? When you use the Assignment Dropbox's "Create Printable View" option, not having an Internet connection at the most inopportune moment will not be an issue. This feature allows you to compile all submissions into a single .ZIP archive and easily move it to a Thumb (Flash) drive so that you can grade submissions whenever you have the time, no matter where you are.

About the Assignment Dropbox

The Assignment Dropbox is a very powerful tool for gathering assignments and providing students feedback on their work in one central location within your course. The Assignment Dropbox contains five tabs: Submitted, Not Submitted, Graded, Published, and All. For the purpose of this exercise we will work with the Submitted tab. This tab contains student submissions that are ready for grading and viewing and have not yet been graded or returned to the students.

How to use the "Create Printable View" Feature

Blackboard's Create Printable View feature can be used to compile a group of student submissions for offline grading. To take advantage of this feature, click on the Assignment Dropbox link within the Instructor Tools menu from the Teach tab in your course. Next, click the Submitted tab and either select the assignments individually that you wish to download and grade, or check the box to the left of the Title menu to select all submitted, but ungraded assignment submissions. Lastly, click Create Printable View near the bottom of the window.

The above steps will save the selected assignment submissions as a .ZIP file which can be saved to your computer or portable memory device. To do this, click the link to the file or access the file at a later time through the My Files area under your Content Manager tab within myBlackboard.



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After arriving at your destination and needing to access the assignments for grading, you will have to extract the assignments from the .ZIP file. This will provide a folder for each student's submission and within those folders will be the files which students have uploaded as part of their submission as well as an HTML file that contains any text they entered within the submission text box.

Why is this advantageous?

Besides the obvious fact that this method will allow you to grade assignments while offline or at a distance, I use this option for grading every time I have an assignment submission. Having all of the files organized in one place, and within quick reach allows me to move back and forth easily between student submissions to compare answers and make notes. I take notes on each student's submission, compile my grades and comments all at once and return to the Assignment Dropbox. I copy and paste the comments in to the appropriate location and record scores. I truly feel this feature of the product has enhanced my ability to provide fair, timely, and just assessments of my students' work.

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