



Paul J. Gutman Library

Instructional Technology @ PhilaU

A Guide For Using Technology
In The Classroom

Blackboard Electronic Submissions
Assignment Manager and Digital Drop Box
Blackboard 6.3



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Assignments vs. the Digital Drop Box

Introduction

The Blackboard Learning System (Release 6) introduces a new function called the Assignment Manager. This new tool combines the file exchange capabilities of the Digital Drop Box with the organization and management functionality of the Gradebook.

When deciding which tool to use, it is important to establish the final outcome should be for the user. This decision rests with each instructor and at times a combination of both tools can be used to achieve the desired goal.

Faculty should consider using the Digital Drop Box when file exchange is needed between the instructor and one student, a select group of students, or when a project will not be graded. On the other hand, an Assignment may be more effective when a grade will be assigned to student work and the graded product requires the submission of one document.

The following scenarios present several different examples of how the Digital Drop Box and Assignment Manager might be used separately or together to collect student work.

This overview is designed for Instructors who will be building and teaching courses with the Blackboard Learning System (Release 6).

Assignments Overview

The Assignment content type in Blackboard allows users to post an article or other document with an assignment, retrieve the completed assignment from a student, and grade that assignment via the Gradebook. With Assignments, Blackboard provides enhanced item management options, including bulk downloading and cleanup of these files.

Digital Drop Box Overview

The functionality of the Digital Drop Box tool in the Blackboard Learning System has not changed from previous versions of the application. The Drop Box still provides a shared area where students and instructors can store and exchange digital files. Students are able to send files to the instructor; the instructor can retrieve and review those files, then return them to the students.

Assignments vs. Digital Drop Box

Scenario #1: Students Write a Graded Paper with Graded Drafts

Situation

Students are asked to write a paper which counts towards their final grade. The instructor reviews outlines and drafts of the paper throughout the project; each of these milestones is part of the final project, and each milestone has a due date. Each milestone also contributes to the total grade for the paper.

Possible Solution

Use an Assignment.

The instructor can create an Assignment for each phase of this project, and place them in a relevant Content Area. Each Assignment can be made Available on a certain day, and automatically disappear after the due date.

Each Assignment can have specific details on what will be graded for that particular section and how it will contribute overall to the final grade.

Note: The solution will create multiple entries in the Gradebook, but since the objective is to check and monitor progress throughout the writing of the paper, this solution would work best for grading and providing feedback.

Scenario #2: Students Write a Graded Paper with Ungraded Drafts

Situation

Students are asked to write a paper which counts towards their final grade. The instructor reviews outlines and drafts of the paper throughout the project, but these drafts do not count toward the total grade for the paper.

Possible Solution 1

The instructor can follow the solution for Scenario #1 and ignore the grading options for each milestone, or indicate completion of that milestone with a check mark in the Gradebook for that item.

This solution allows the instructor to track student completion and keeps the various drafts of the paper organized based on when they were due.

Possible Solution 2

The instructor can create one Assignment that gives the guidelines for the paper, and instruct the students to submit all preliminary drafts via the Digital Drop Box. When they are ready to turn in the finished work, it can be submitted as an Assignment.

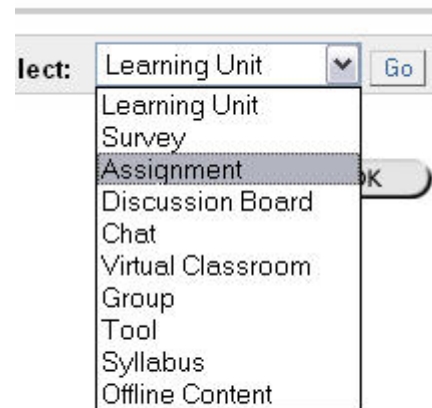
This will create a single column in the Gradebook in which a final grade for the paper can be placed. If the instructor does not track submissions throughout the process and just assigns a single grade this option might be a good choice. The drawback to this strategy is this all the various drafts are located in the Digital Drop Box and it can be difficult to manage the separate versions of each student's work

Assignment Manager

How do I use the Assignment Manager?

To add an assignment:

1. Click on **Control Panel**.
2. Click on the name of the **Content Area** where you wish to add the assignments, for example, **Course Documents**.
3. From the drop-down list on the right side of the page, select **Assignment**, then click **GO**.
4. Fill in all the required information and click **Submit**.



The Student Experience

Student View

A posted Assignment may look like this. A student will click on **“View/Complete”** link first, to review the Assignment, and then later, to submit their work.



Lesson 4 Projects

Download a copy of the projects and the Einstein and Ben Flash file

Complete all instructions and submit electronically through Blackboard

Imagine if Albert Einstein and Ben Franklin would get together in real life. Tell me what they would talk about.

>> [View/Complete Assignment: Lesson 4 Projects](#)

Uploading the Completed Assignment

After writing the paper or otherwise completing the Assignment, a student clicks on the **“View/Complete”** button again to upload their work, and send comments to the instructor.

Students will be prompted to Browse their computer to find their files, and they can also post Comments about the Assignment. These comments will appear in your Gradebook.

1 Assignment Information

Name	Lesson 4 Projects
Instructions	Download a copy of the projects and the Einstein and Ben Flash file Complete all instructions and submit electronically through Blackboard Imagine if Albert Einstein and Ben Franklin would get together in real life. Tell me what they would talk about.
Assignment Files	Lesson_4_Project.doc (Lesson_4_Project.doc) Einstein_and_Ben fla (Einstein_and_Ben fla)

2 Assignment Materials

Comments

File To Attach

Currently Attached Files:

3 Submit

Click **Save** to stop working and continue working later. Click **Submit** to finish. Click **Cancel** to quit without saving changes.

Note: Students may click Add Another File to submit multiple files for the same project. When accessing these files, they will all appear with one another in the Gradebook (unlike in the Digital Drop Box, where they appear as multiple entries).

Reviewing and Grading Assignments

Overview

Instructors can retrieve and grade Assignments through the Gradebook, much like any other kind of assessment. However, Assignments have additional tools that make managing multiple files much easier.

Reviewing a Single Assignment Submission

To retrieve an individual student's Assignment submission, select the individual entry from the Gradebook. You can enter a grade from this screen, or click View to see the student's work.

View Grades

Enter or modify a grade for the assignment. Click View to access files sent by the student, to enter feedback or instructor notes, or to send a file to the student.

Student Name	Item Name	Date	Grade	Points Possible	Class Average	Weight	
Tricia Casey (tcasey)	Ch1 Assign (Assignment)		<input type="text"/>	100.0		0.0	View

Student's Comments: I would like to schedule an office hour visit to discuss one of the questions in the exercise. I look forward to your comments.

Feedback to Student:

Instructor Notes:

After clicking on **View**, you will be able to download the file/s that the student has submitted, add **Feedback** that that student will see in his/her Student Gradebook, and add private Instructor Notes that will not be seen by the student.

Reviewing Multiple Assignment Submissions

One of the strengths of working with Assignments is the ability to download one, some, or all student submissions at once.

To download multiple files at one time,

1. Click on the name of the **Assignment** at the top of the **Gradebook** column
2. Click **Item Download**.

Note: Other choices on the Item Options page will allow you to enter all students' grades at once, modify

Item Options

- ▶ [Item Grade List](#)
- ▶ [Item Information](#)
- ▶ [Item Detail](#)
- ▶ [Item Download](#)
- ▶ [Item File Clean Up](#)

instructions, descriptions, and point values, and to see statistics for an assignment.

You can select one, some or all of the students' assignments.

Download Assignment: Assignment

1 Select Students

[Check All](#) | [Check Ungraded](#) | [Uncheck All](#)

	Student Name	Date	Grade
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ahemich, Samid	2003-11-17 10:09:20.0	90
<input type="checkbox"/>	Casey, Tricia	2003-11-17 10:09:29.0	95
	First, William		N/A
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lewis, Arthur	2003-11-17 10:09:41.0	82

2 Submit

Click "Submit" to finish. Click "Cancel" to abort this process.

Cancel

Submit

Note: After you select the Assignments that you wish to download, Blackboard will create a .zip containing those files, so you can save them to your computer desktop or hard drive. You may need WinZip or another .zip utility to open this file.

Grading Written Work

One of the ways you can grade a student's assignment is to use **Microsoft Word's Reviewing Tools**.

To enable the tools:

1. Open the document in MS Word.
2. Select **Tools**
3. Select **Track Changes**.

Note: With the Track Changes feature turned on, each insertion, deletion, or formatting change that you make is tracked. This means that added text is shown underlined or in a different color, and deleted text is noted in a balloon in the margin of the document. You can also choose Insert, Comment to add your own notes in a balloon. By combining your pre-defined own grading style and employing tracking changes, your students will have a clear idea how they were graded for the assignment. This also keeps maintains a file that does not need to be printed out, adding comments, grades, etc...

Returning Assignments

To return a graded assignment:

1. Click the individual entry from the Gradebook.
2. Click **View**.
3. In the Feedback to Student section
 - a. Enter a **grade**, **comments**, and **attach the graded assignment**.
 - b. Click Submit.

Using the Digital Drop Box

Introduction

The functionality of the Digital Drop Box tool in the Blackboard Learning System has not changed from previous versions of the application. The Drop Box still provides a shared area where students and instructors can store and exchange digital files. Students are able to send files to the instructor; the instructor can retrieve and review those files, then return them to the students.

About the Digital Drop Box

Business Rules

The following Business Rules apply when using the Digital Drop Box:

- Adding a file to your drop box does not send the file
- Any files added by you to your drop box cannot be seen by others.
- Students can send to Instructors only, not to other Students

Student View

The Digital Drop Box allows students to send and receive files to the Instructor.

To access the Digital Drop Box,

1. Click **Tools** on the **Course Menu**
2. Click **Digital Drop Box**.

Note: The Instructor may also create a direct link to the Student Drop Box on the Course Menu.

The Group Pages area of the course includes a File Exchange tool, which is very similar to the Digital Drop Box. An important difference is that the File Exchange allows a student to share files among other students in the Group, as well as with the Instructor.

Instructor View

For the Instructor, the Digital Drop Box is multi-directional; an instructor can send files to a single student, selected students, and to all enrolled students in the course.

To enter the Digital Drop Box,

1. Click **Control Panel**,
2. Click **Digital Drop Box** link in the Course Tools area.

Using the Digital Drop Box

Adding Files to the Digital Drop Box

Why Use it?

Students can upload a file to the Drop Box as a web-based location to store any file, paper, or presentation. For example, students who use campus computer labs can use the Drop Box to store their work between edits. Instructors might add a file to the Drop Box so they do not have to carry disks between work and home. The files in the Drop Box can be retrieved from any web browser at any location.

Note: When adding a file to the Drop Box, it is only visible to you and no one else. This applies to both instructors and students.

Adding Files to the Drop Box

When a user wishes to Add File, they are simply posting a file to be stored as a part of the course. A file that has been added to the student's Digital Drop Box will appear as shown below.

The screenshot shows the Digital Drop Box interface. At the top, there are two buttons: 'Add File' (with a floppy disk icon) and 'Send File' (with a floppy disk icon and an arrow). Below these buttons is a list of files. The first file is 'Deliverables', which is highlighted with a red box. It has a floppy disk icon, the title 'Deliverables', and the text 'Posted on: 2003-07-09 2:21:31 PM' and 'Comments: I added this file, but did not send it.' To the right of this entry is a 'Remove' button. Below 'Deliverables' is another file entry 'Test', which has a floppy disk icon, the title 'Test', and the text 'Submitted by: Mark Student (mark_student)' and 'Submitted on: 2003-07-09 2:14:28 PM'.

Sending Files with the Digital Drop Box

Why Use it?

The Send File action is useful when an Instructor wishes to deliver a particular file to selected students in the course. This functionality separates the Drop Box from the general Content Areas of the course where all enrolled users can view every file.

For the student, the Send File action guarantees that the instructor receives a submitted file in a timely manner. It also alleviates the need to visit on campus to deliver a particular project or assignment.

Sending Files from the Digital Drop Box

The **Send File** button performs two actions. When a user chooses this option in the Digital Drop Box, the file they select will be added to their Drop Box, and will be sent to the Drop Box of an identified user.

Digital Drop Box

The screenshot shows the Digital Drop Box interface. At the top, there are two buttons: 'Add File' (with a floppy disk icon) and 'Send File' (with a floppy disk icon and an arrow).

No files found.

OK

Clicking on the Send File button in the Instructor's Digital Drop Box will pull up the following screen:

Select which users you want to receive the file.

Note: To select multiple users, hold the CTRL key down and select each user. To select all users, hold the SHIFT key down and click on the first name and last name in the list.

The screenshot shows a 'Digital Dropbox' window with three main sections: 'Select Users', 'File Information', and 'Submit'.
1. **Select Users:** A 'To:' field with a dropdown menu containing a list of users: Bankowski, Helene (bankowsk); Berts, Bryen (berts); Boston, Melene (boston); Bradley, Samuel (bradleys); Elason, John (elason); Harman, Susan (harman); Kay, Kenneth (kay).
2. **File Information:** Fields for 'Name' (highlighted in yellow), 'File' (with a 'Browse' button), and 'Comments' (a text area).
3. **Submit:** A section with the instruction 'Click Submit to finish. Click Cancel to quit.' and 'Cancel' and 'Submit' buttons at the bottom right.

To send a file the user can either:

- Click **Select File**, then selecting the desired file that is in the drop box;
- Type a unique name in the Title field, and then click Browse in the File field and select the desired file they wish to send.

Note: Since students can use the Drop Box to send files to the instructor only, the student view of the Drop Box does not have a recipient list.

After Sending the File

After a file has been sent it will appear in both the user and the recipient's Drop Box as shown below.

The screenshot shows the 'Digital Dropbox' interface with two buttons: 'Add File' and 'Send File'. Below the buttons, a file entry is shown: 'Chapter-2-test0-draft-10.doc' with a 'Remove' button to its right. Below the filename, it says 'Gall, Brian (gallb)' and 'Submitted Thu Jun 22 2006 13:19'.

Digital Drop Box Tips

The following are some helpful tips when using the Digital Drop Box:

Time/Date Stamp:

The Time/Date stamp can help you establish which students have turned in their work on time. This field is automatically created once a user has submitted a page, and is based upon the time setting on your institution's Blackboard server.

Comments:

Add comments to the file you are placing in the Digital Drop Box. For example, an instructor returning a file may add comments about the file instead of entering comments directly into the file itself. You can also:

- Write comments in a word processing document and send the document to the student via the Drop Box or email.
- Send the student an email with comments.

File Naming Conventions:

Blackboard software assigns a unique identification number to every uploaded file. If multiple users upload files with the same name, the application will be able to distinguish them from one another. However, you may end up with multiple files with the same name when offloading the content to a local source (i.e. hard drive, floppy disk, CDR). You should instruct your students to use a standard naming convention, such as including student initials or last name, to keep files separate.

Virus Protection:

Whenever a user downloads a file posted or submitted by another user, make sure that students use virus protection software to scan the file for computer viruses.