



Volume 2, Number 9 | October 7, 2016

Assessing Online Learners

Timesaving Tips Using the Blackboard Grade Center

The *Grade Center* tool in Blackboard Learn provides flexibility to meet the needs of basic and advanced users, institutional requirements, and a diverse student population. Faculty can easily and efficiently perform most *Grade Center* activities from a central view. Here are a few tips for getting the most out of the *Grade Center* in Blackboard.

- **Hide unnecessary columns**
Blackboard by default adds several new columns to the Grade Center, including: Username, Student ID, Last Access, and Availability. There are two options to hide columns in the Grade Center, *Hide from Students (on/off)*(students will not see the column category in their *My Grades*), and *Hide from Instructor View*. **How to:** click the down arrow next to the title of the column, then click either *Hide from Students (on/off)* or *Hide from Instructor View*.
- **Organize columns**
New columns added to the Grade Center are by default added at the end of the Grade Center, with Total and Weighted Total columns near the beginning. Reorder columns to a logical order, such as sequential order by due date. Note - The order in which students see their individual assignment scores in *My Grades* is the order of the columns in the *Full Grade Center View*. **How to:** Select *Manage* from the tabs above the Grade Center, then click *Column Organization*. Click and drag the multi-directional arrows next to each column's name, to reorder them.
- **Customize grading schema for automatically computing letter grades**
A grading schema can be configured to match the grading scale used to compute letter grades. Once customized, this grading schema can be applied to display students' individual assignment grade, running total, or even final grade as a letter. Apply your grading scale for assigning letter grades to the grading schema. **How to:** Select *Manage* from the tabs above the Grade Center, then click *Grading Schemas*. Click the drop-down arrow beside the existing Letter schema and click on Edit. Remove unneeded letter grade values, such as plus and minus grades, and adjust existing percentages of letter grades to match grading scale. Click the Submit button to save.
- **Add custom categories and apply to grade columns**
Categories assigned to columns are included in students display to clearly identify the category that an assignment is applied to and can be used to easily sort columns in Smart Views. Add custom categories to match the types of assignments used to assess student learning. Then, when adding columns, assign a category to each column. **How to:** Select *Manage* from the tabs above the Grade Center, then click *Categories*. Click the Create Category button and enter a name and description if desired. Click the Submit button to save.

- Shorten column titles by adding Grade Center display name**

In addition to the descriptive column name assigned to grade, a shortened Grade Center display name not exceeding 15 characters can be added that will become the column's header in the Grade Center. **How to:** When adding a new column, enter the shortened column title in the *Grade Center Name* box.
- Enter grades directly into cells**

Enter grades directly through the Grade Center spreadsheet. **How to:** To add a grade column, click on the *Create Column* tab. After filling in the column information and submitting, enter grades for students directly into the column cells. Click in a cell to add a score, then press the Enter key to save and move to the next row.
- Provide feedback on any student scores**

Comments can be added to any score. Add comments to student scores when you want to provide individual feedback or clarification on a score. Comments are visible to students in *My Grades*. **How to:** Enter the score in a cell. Then, click the down arrows and click *Quick Comment*. Enter comments in the *Feedback to User* box. Optional *Grading Notes* can also be added available only for instructors and teaching assistants.
- Display score and percent or letter grade for the same item**

Once entering a student score, a secondary display can automatically also be displayed, showing the percentage or letter grade equivalent of the score earned. Add a secondary display to any column where this additional grade view would be helpful. The secondary display is only available in the Grade Center and not *My Grades*. **How to:** Click the down arrows next to the title of the column, then click *Edit Column Information*. Select the desired format of the additional grade display from the Secondary Display drop down menu.
- Exempt a grade for an individual student**

For a student who has a legitimate reason for missing an assignment, that score can now be exempted from the student's cumulative grade. Notation that a score has been exempted is visible in the *Full Grade Center* and *My Grades*, and can be reverted if needed. The original score assigned can also still be found. Exempt scores for students who aren't required to make up missing assignments. **How to:** Click the down arrow icon within a cell and then click *Exempt Grade*.
- Create customized "Smart Views"**

Smart Views provide the ability to categorize students into groups based on selected criteria. Once created and saved, these customized views of the Grade Center area available from the *Current View* drop-down menu within the Grade Center. **How to:** Select *Manage* from the tabs above the Grade Center, then click *Create Smart Views*. Click the Create Smart View button. Enter a name for the view and then select the type of view, criteria, and any desired filtering. Click the Submit button to save.
- Automatically drop the lowest grade**

An assortment of grade computation features are available, including the capability to easily drop the lowest grade from scores within a given category. Columns containing scores must be assigned to the same category. **How to:** Click the down arrows next to the title of the *Weighted Total* column, then click *Edit Column Information*. Select the categories you wish to include in computing the weighted total grade and note the percentage weight for each category. Under *Drop Grades* for the category, enter 1 in the lowest grades box. Click the Submit button to save.

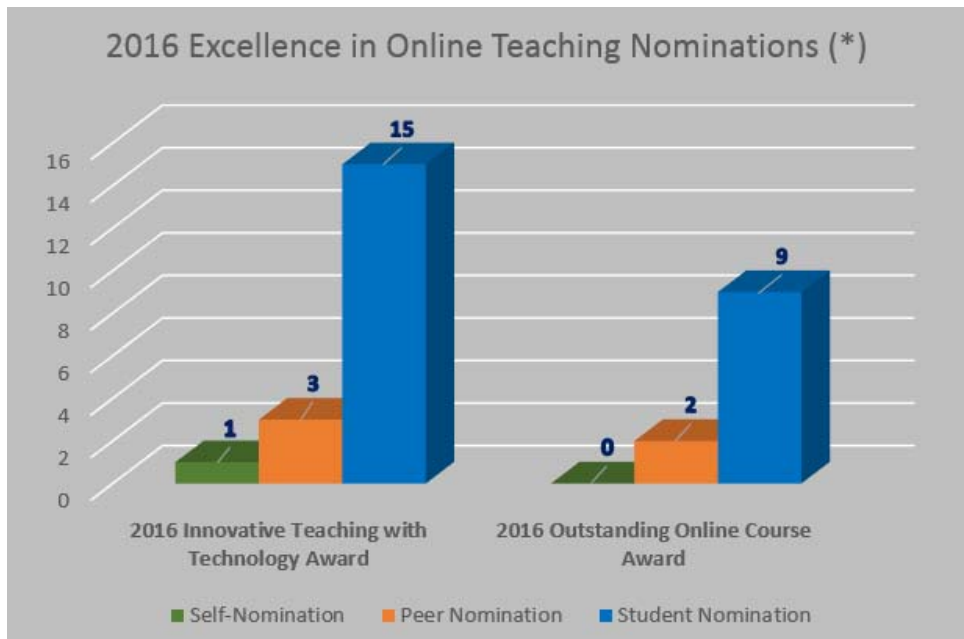




Deadline for nominations is near - Excellence in Online Teaching Awards

Remember that the 2016 Excellence in Online Teaching Recognition Awards is currently accepting nominations. Please check the DLIT website for full details.

Status Update: So far we've received a total of 30 single nominations for the awards. The graph below shows the breakdown:



* Nominations received as of today (10/07/16).



Email notifications will be sent out at the beginning of next week to all faculty that has been nominated. Remember that the next step after receiving a nomination is to accept it and you must submit the supporting documentation. The only document that is required is your reflective statement letter (1 or 2 pages long). Any other additional supporting documentation is completely optional. If you receive a nomination and would like to see the type of documentation that you may submit please visit:

<http://www.untDallas.edu/dlit/awards/guidelines>

Please take this opportunity to help identify your colleagues or your instructors at UNT Dallas who have made creative and effective use of technology to improve their courses and programs. If you or someone you know has provided an exemplary online learning experience to their students in the past year or someone who has used technology in an innovative way in their teaching and learning fill out a nomination forms. Click the links to access the nomination form for each of the awards:

- **[2016 Innovative Teaching with Technology Award:](https://unt.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9pr3Y2MfR4WjfsF)**
https://unt.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9pr3Y2MfR4WjfsF
- **[2016 Outstanding Online Course Award:](https://unt.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1Sj2ap6NbpeTvn)**
https://unt.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1Sj2ap6NbpeTvn

Important deadlines:

Submit a nomination: **Friday, October 21, 2016.**

Accept nomination and submit supporting documentation: **Monday, October 31, 2016.**



30 Apps in 60 Minutes

[Track 3: Technology in the Classroom]

Presenter: Michelle Luhtala, Head Librarian, New Canaan High School, CT

It's time for our annual app review! In this session, discover apps that change the way students and teachers think about learning. The presenter will feature apps that promote essential 21st century learning skills – critical thinking, collaboration, communication – and apps that fuel creativity. This webinar will benefit librarians, faculty, and curriculum leaders.

Monday, October 10, 2016 @ 2 PM - 3 PM, Founders Hall, Rm 127

Send [email](#) to register for this event.

DLAC Meeting – Meeting 2 for the Fall Semester

The Distance Learning Advisory Committee (DLAC) is a crossfunctional team focused on providing guidance in the formulation of guidelines and strategies regarding resource allocation and quality accountability for online instructional excellence, as well as improving the overall quality of distance learning at UNT Dallas.

This group of faculty members and staff is involved in providing leadership in a number of key areas, including development of appropriate guidelines for online learning as well as research into best practices and faculty/student perceptions of online learning. Additionally, the Advisory Committee members serve as communication liaisons between DLIT and their respective schools, programs and departments.

All of the meetings for this semester will be held on the 2nd Tuesday of every month starting in September. Agendas, meeting documents, and web links are posted to the DLIT website for archival purposes.

Tuesday, October 11, (10:00 AM – 12:00 PM), Founders Hall, Rm 127





The Rise of Competency-Based Education [Track 6: Innovation in Teaching and Learning]

Presenters: Scott Jaschik, Editor, Inside Higher Ed, editor of The Chronicle of Higher Education, Doug Lederman, Editor, Inside Higher Ed

Competency-based education (CBE) is taking off – and its impact extends throughout higher education. In CBE, students are evaluated and awarded credit and degrees not on seat time or completing traditional courses, but based on their ability to demonstrate specific skills and competencies.

For many students, this speeds up degree completion. And for adult students who have extensive work experience and knowledge gained outside the classroom, and are frequently unable to attend courses offered during traditional classroom hours, CBE can provide a way to earn degrees reflecting that experience and knowledge.

In this webinar our editors will discuss how more and more colleges are launching competency-based programs, the strategies they are adopting, and the regulatory challenges they face.

Tuesday, October 11, 2016 @ 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM, Founders Hall, Rm 127

Send [email](#) to register for this event.



BITS #2: Strategies for Providing Effective Feedback to Students in Online Courses

[Blackboard Innovative Teaching Series]

Presenter: Caitlin Frano, Northwestern University School of Continuing Studies
Meaningful feedback is a critical element in the learning cycle that needs to be done frequently and consistently to ensure learning outcomes are achieved by

all students. Given there are only 24 hours in a day and not one minute more, how can instructors provide frequent, meaningful feedback to learners in a manner that is easily consumed and put into practice? Attend this seminar to learn: new techniques to provide feedback to students; missed opportunities to provide feedback; strategies to provide feedback that will be implemented by students; and what type of feedback students desire.

Wednesday, October 12, 10 AM — 12 PM, Founders Hall, Rm 127

Send [email](#) to register for this event.

How To Engage Modern Learners: When to "Push" and When to "Pull"

[Track 1: Student Engagement and Retention]

Presenter: Jennifer Hofmann, President, InSync Training

Does your personal expectation of learning align with how you learned 10, 20, or even 30 years ago? Of course not. Because you are a modern learner! You have a choice in how you learn, and so do the learners you're developing and designing training content for.

The modern world requires us to develop strategies that engage your learners, keeping your audience and the anticipated learning environment in mind. Not all learning needs to be formally scheduled or assessed. As a matter of fact, most modern learning takes place in the moment of need. The design of the learning will be influenced by where and when learning is anticipated to occur, and success will be dependent on the technology selection, implementation strategy (stand alone, blended, or micro-learning), and design approach.

Thursday, October 13, 2016 @ 12 PM - 1 PM, Founders Hall, Rm 127

Send [email](#) to register for this event.



Articles



(Click the images to read the articles)



[New Flipgrid Launch Fuels Active, Social Learning in Classrooms and Enterprises](#)

by News Editor

Source: Learning Solutions

Time to read: 2 min

A video discussion platform is updated to offer a more accessible and connected environment. Flipgrid fuels active, social learning among co-workers and the leadership team. Because Flipgrid is accessible on a variety of digital platforms (desktop, iOS, and

Android), educators, companies, and HR managers use it to host MOOCs and train their workforces from virtually anywhere.

[Read more...](#)



[Turn Passivity To Interactivity: How To Use Interactive Videos For Learner Engagement](#)

By Asha Pandey

Source: eLearning Industry

Time to read: 3 min

The popularity of videos and increased use of mobile learning or mLearning have led to extensive usage of videos in online training. Even though videos appeal to the learners, they are passive. This article highlights how to use interactive videos for learner engagement by negating that passivity.

[Read more...](#)



Mark Your Calendars!

- OCT 17** [Monday Morning Mentor: Cynthia](#)
(8:30 AM - 9 AM), virtual (online)
- OCT 18** [Picnic Office Hours](#)
(12 PM - 1 PM), Courtyard
- OCT 19** [Blackboard & Bagels](#)
(8:30 AM - 10 AM), FH, Rm 122
- OCT 19** [How to Find Stories for eLearning](#)
(12 PM - 1 PM) FH, Rm 127
- OCT 20** [Gamification by the Numbers](#)
(12 PM - 1 PM) FH, Rm 127

- OCT 20** [Overview of UNT Dallas' Online Quality Assurance Checklist](#)
(2 PM - 3 PM) FH, Rm 127
- OCT 21** [How to Shoot Rich Cultural Videos on a Smartphone](#)
(12 PM - 1 PM) FH, Rm 127
- OCT 21** [2016 Excellence in Online Teaching Awards](#)—Deadline for nominations
- OCT 24** [Monday Morning Mentor: Arturo](#)
(8:30 AM - 9 AM), virtual (online)



Contact Us!

The **Office of Distance Learning and Instructional Technologies** invites faculty and staff to join and participate in our development programs. These events provide an opportunity to network with faculty from other departments, learn new instructional strategies and tools, and become aware of best practices in online teaching and learning. Hope to see you there, and don't forget to register for our workshops and sessions! Please contact us with ideas and suggestions for future events:

Web: <http://www.untDallas.edu/dlit>

Phone: 972-338-5580

Email: UNTDDistance@unt.edu



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