End of Semester Canvas Webinar Transcript

Introduction

Christine Roach:
Welcome to this eSAIL webinar. I am Christine Roach. I'm an instructional designer at eSAIL. Joining me today in a support role is Gerry Pedraza and Lani Draper. Today our topic is Canvas gradebook and getting ready for the end of the semester.

So how we've structured this webinar is that we're going to start with a quick glance at some of the relevant gradebook features. Then we're going to go over a checklist for the end of the semester that dives into each of these topics in a little bit more depth. So, we will be going over the grading scheme, Assignment Groups, downloading a copy of the gradebook. We'll have a very brief mention of submitting grades to Howdy, and talk about student access after course conclusion.

Our objective today is that participants will be able to successfully navigate and use the Canvas gradebook features to finalize grades.

So, we're going to start today by looking at some of the gradebook features. This is just a general overview of some of the basic features in gradebook, so we're going to take a quick glance at the gradebook features.

Arranging & Filtering Columns 1:15

So, one of the things that's helpful to be able to do, is to arrange all of the columns in an order horizontally. It helps you work more efficiently, and so there are a couple of ways to do that.

So, if you would like to, you can click on the header of the column and drag and drop that column, or resize how wide it is. Or you can click on view and then arrange. And then that will allow you to reorder by these different filters that are set up here [within the dropdown menu]. So, these will put [the columns] in order from left to right so that you can grade what is most recently due, or view in chronological order or, however, whichever of these is best suited to your course or to your grading workflow.

Now another thing that you can do is you can use filters in the view menu to show these dropdown boxes, which help to quickly find a grade column. And when you use these dropdown boxes that are right here [at the top right of the gradebook], what it does, it will show only the grading, only the columns that apply to a certain assignment group or a certain module and the rest are not visible. And for me that really helps to just single out an assignment. I may be able to find it in the gradebook by quickly searching only Module 6, or only week six. That allows me to find that assignment much quick, much more quickly, especially if there's, you know, 20 or 30 columns happening in the gradebook.

And so, to get to this you click on view, and then you click on filters and then you enable these dropdown boxes which appear at the top [right]-hand corner of the gradebook. And if you would like to remove those, you can also click the checkboxes in these dropdown boxes will disappear.

And so that's managing the columns.

Sorting Grades within a Column 3:19

Now let's look at managing the information about students.

So first of all, if you want to sort within a column, you want to sort the vertical order of student results., there's also a couple of ways to do that.

So first of all, you can click on the three dots which appears in the column header. And you can click on 'sort by'. And then you can sort the grades within that column by grade or isolate quickly, which assignments are missing or late. Using the sort by, you can also use the keyboard shortcut S to sort a column.

Yes, did you have a question?

Gerry Pedraza:
Oh, I was going to comment that another useful feature about this menu is messaging students, students who are late or missing, that could be a good way to prompt those students who have not submitted an assignment to do so.

Christine Roach:
Yes, and so you can access that [feature]. That's within the column header for each individual grading column.

Now, I want to mention that even though pretty much everybody already knows about this, but just wanted to mention that each cell can be color-coded within the gradebook, and these are called statuses. So, if you would like to change these colors, you go to 'view' and then 'statuses', and this little interface will pop up that allows you to see, if you don't remember what blue means, you can find the key here or you can actually customize these colors as well. You cannot customize the statuses. That means you cannot create a new status. These five are fixed, but you can change the color. You can check what [each color] means by going into view and then statuses. So, you might not want to change the color to black because you won't be able to read it, but you could change the background color to white, I believe, if you don't want to see as many colors.

In the Gradebook, there is a search bar at the top right-hand corner of the gradebook area. This search bar is for searching for students. So, you have John; he contacts you with a concern. Before you respond to John, you want to look at what he's done so far. What you can do is instead of searching through all 300 of your students, you can type in "John," and that will eliminate all students who are not named John. Then you can click on John's name. Or you can type John's full name or his last name to look at just his row of results, which will allow you to find an individual

student quickly. You cannot search for assignments using the search bar, so that's one thing that was a little confusing for some people. This search function is specifically for searching for students.

Before we move on to our next topic, I want to show you there are keyboard shortcuts. And if you take the time to look at these shortcuts, they may help you streamline your workflow. And if you want to know what these shortcuts are, you can find those right next to the search box. This little icon to the left of the search bar, if you click on it, that's where keyboard shortcuts will pop up.

Creating Additional Columns 6:52

OK, so now we're going to really get into the meat of what we need to talk about today.

First of all, one of the topics that we need to discuss is creating extra columns. So, in Blackboard and eCampus, we could easily create new columns that were not associated with an assignment. But in Canvas, all gradebook columns are associated with an assignment or quiz. So, to create an extra gradebook column for participation grades or a paper quiz, or any other case where you need to enter grades manually, you have to create an assignment.

You create an assignment, but in the assignment options, you will select the submission type and select "No Submission." Or you can choose "On Paper." The purpose of having an "On Paper" submission type is mostly to communicate with students that this assignment exists, that it is graded, but that they are not turning it in via Canvas. They're turning it in by some other means. So maybe something collected in the classroom or something they had to drop off at your office.

The purpose of "No Submission" is simply to create a column in the gradebook where you can manually input those grades. That's not necessarily associated with a quiz you created or a specific assignment where students had a submission.

Gerry Pedraza:
Yeah, it could be like participation in a Zoom session or something of that nature.

Christine Roach:
Right, lots of times there are participation grades that need to be entered in; that's how you'll do that.

Changing Grade Posting Policies 8:37

Also, in the gradebook there is a small gear [icon] in the far-right hand corner. When you click on the gear, that is where you can go to edit the grade posting policy. So, the grade posting policy has two options.

This is the interface that pops up when you click on that. Here is where you can set up late policies. And here is where you can set up deductions for the late policy. And then, the grade posting policy tab looks like this.

Here's where you have two choices, automatic or manual. If you don't want to hide grades from students, the default grading policy is automatic. This means students can view their grades and feedback as soon as it's entered into SpeedGrader or the gradebook. So, if you're OK with this, you don't have to change anything in the gradebook or your process. You don't have to worry about it at the end of the semester; students can see that right away.

If you want to hide feedback, hide grades, or manually post grades, then you have to select that here. You can also do that in the gradebook column as well. I think there are two or three different places where you can manually change this. This is at a course-wide level, but you can do it granularly for each column by clicking on the column header. Then you can change the grading posting policy there, and I believe you can also do it on the assignment details page.

Now, if you set up manually posting grades, you need to make sure to post those grades before the end of the semester. If you select to post grades manually, there will be a visibility icon that will let you know, and that's in the grading column. It'll let you know if those grades are visible to students or not. It's a little grey eyeball or an orange eye, depending on if it's visible or not visible. We're going to come back to this when we discuss the course checklist and why this matters at the end of the semester.

End of the Semester Checklist 11:02

So, let's go on to the end-of-the-semester checklist.

This is what you need to do to ensure your grades are posted correctly at the end of the semester and to avoid chaos and anarchy.

You need to review your grading scheme and verify. First of all, everything that I'm about to go over, we're going to run into more detail. And hopefully, at the end, you'll look at this checklist again, and you will be confident that you know what you need to do.

The first thing you need to do is review the grading scheme and verify it matches the syllabus. Generally, unless you have an unusual grading scheme set up, you probably don't need to change, you just need to verify that it's set up correctly.

Next, if you're using Assignment Groups, you need to make sure that your groups are set up and that the assignments are placed in the correct group. Then that's your group; this includes setting up the percentages or the weight for each group as well.

Then, you need to make sure that all grades are entered and no grades are blank or missing. So, on students in missing grades that have a dash in the cell, they do not appear on the grade calculation, so the students' final grade calculation what they're viewing may not be accurate unless you put a zero in instead of that dash.

You want to make sure that no grades are blank or missing. That will avoid unpleasant surprises. Then you need to make sure grades are posted and visible to students because, again, this won't be included in the calculation if it's not visible to students.

Also, it's always a good idea to download a copy of your grades. Once you've put all of those grades in and keep that for your records, you can download a CSV file. We'll go over that as well.

Before you sign out of your course, you want to go into settings and set up permissions to limit or allow student access to the course after the semester concludes.

And, of course, you need to submit grades to Howdy.

Grading Schemes 13:27

So, let's go ahead and look at each of these items on this checklist. To start, Gerry, why don't you talk to us a little bit about grading schemes?

Gerry Pedraza:
You will be able to have several changes to your grading scheme. This is kind of the overall or "regular" grading scheme where you can have A is equal to such and such percentage. But, if you are doing something custom, this is where you can create a different grading scheme and change it. And, you can also have, depending on the course's needs, you can introduce complete and incomplete if that's something you need in the course. Or you can change the percentages and the letter scheme in this area.

Weighting Grades with Assignment Group or Points 14:19

Overall, you have to have in mind if you will be using a point scheme or a weighted total via using Assignment Groups. The other option will be to calculate without using those weighted averages. It would be doing something like adding all the points; that's how some people do it. I prefer the groups and assigning different weights to those.

Christine Roach:
Yes, setting up Assignment Groups allows you to organize your assignments into groups that match the categories on your syllabus, and to set up a weighted final grade.

Step by Step Demo of Setting up Assignment Groups 15:03

Let's take a look at how to set up assignments and see how that looks. First, you'll click on "Assignments" in the course navigation menu. Then, up here on the top right-hand corner, you're going to click "add group." It's a little plus sign that says "group" - click right there. Then, on "Add group," we're going to add a name. My category will be "quizzes," and I'm going to add another group for "homework." I'm also going to add a group for "Midterm exam," which will be by itself. Plus, I'm going to add a group for "final exam." Last, I'm going to add a group for labs. There we go.

Now we have all of our groups. So, if you look down here, you'll see all of your groups, and I already have all of my assignments made, so all I need to do is drag the assignment into the correct group.

If your assignments are not yet created, you can add an assignment by adding them directly to the module. Or, you can add one right here at the top of the assignment group. Click on the plus (+), and that will allow you to add an assignment.

That's how you set up the assignments, and you can move assignments from one group to another at any time.

Setting up Weighted Assignment Groups 16:43

Now let's talk about how to set up weighted Assignment Groups. So these are just groups, and by default, Canvas will just calculate based on the points.

Let's adjust the weighting for these groups. By default, Canvas weights by points and will weight everything equally, but let's set up weighted groups.

At the top of the page again, click on the three-vertical-dots menu. Then click on "Assignment Group weights." Now you have to enable "weighting final grade based on Assignment Groups." And now you will see each of your groups, and you can add your percentages here, and the total will come down here. I'm going to say that my midterm is 15%, and my final is 15%. My labs are 10%. My homework is 10%. My quizzes are 10%. And my assignments are 40%. Now I'll save. Now, here at the top of each assignment group, you will see the weight. You can always go back and adjust that as needed.

When you create an assignment group, a new column is created in the gradebook that allows students to see the assignment group's total. Not only can they see the individual grades, but they can see their calculated total in these columns that are created when you create an assignment group.

Gerry Pedraza:
A general recommendation when using Assignment Groups is that you can create as many as you need. Some people get a little bit discouraged because of the simplified nature of the Canvas grading system. In eCampus, you were allowed to do grading columns; it has a lot of customization. And Canvas uses a very simplified approach. If you have difficult quizzes and not-so-difficult quizzes or different types of assignments that are weighted differently, you can create as many groups as you need to represent them. A good thing about the gradebook is that it automatically creates columns for each Assignment Group. So, at every point in time when things are graded, students have an idea of how well they're doing in their quizzes or projects, or in whatever assignment categories you have.

Downloading a Copy of the Gradebook 19:42

Christine Roach:
Let's talk about the next item on our end of the semester checklist, downloading a copy of the gradebook. So, you may want to have an Excel file copy of the gradebook for your records, or just to, if you prefer, look over them in that format. The way to do that is to go to gradebook actions and then export. The Office for Academic Innovation recommends that you export your gradebook to review before you post your grades. So, I've included that here as well.

Gerry Pedraza:
Something else I wanted to mention, a general recommendation: if you decide to keep a copy of the records downloaded from the gradebook, please encrypt that file. That's what IT recommends, to put it in a ZIP file and encrypt it or use some encryption software to keep it safe.

Setting Student Access to Course after Semester 20:51

Christine Roach:
In course settings, there's a section about dates and availability of the course here. These dates are automatically set by the system. The option you may want to customize is restricting students from viewing the course after the end date. Now, students will be able to, by default, view the course, but not participate, after the end date. If you do not want students to see the course, you need to check this box here.

Another way to handle this is to set the availability windows on your modules so that they can't be viewed after a specific date. That is another way to handle access to your course material.

Gerry Pedraza:
That's a very good idea. Just keep in mind that after the course ends, you will not be able to make any changes to your course because it's considered instructional records or something like that. So, you won't be able to modify anything after the end date of the course, which is the official date after all the finals have finished.

Christine Roach:
And at that point, if you're going to reuse the material, you would export it and import it into your development shell or your next course. That's where you can make those changes.

Submit Grades to Howdy 22:07

The last thing you'll need to do, of course, is Submit those grades to Howdy. I also don't have access to this personally, so I just want to say these are the instructions that come from the lms.tamu.edu page. It appears, according to instructions, that you can import directly from Canvas those grades. That is the final step that you need to take in the semester.

Reviewing the Checklist 22:37

We'll take a look back at the end of the semester checklist now.

Review the grading scheme and verify it matches the syllabus, and verify that it matches what your syllabus says. Then you make sure your groups are set up, and each assignment is in the correct group – that all the grades are entered, and none are blank. They are posted; they are visible. Download a copy of the grades for your records. Set up those permissions.

If you'd like to restrict it, whether that is within settings or you set up your module so they're not visible later, or whether you're totally OK with students having ongoing access to the materials, that is one thing to go ahead and check. And then submit your grades to Howdy.

Resources and Conclusion 23:27

So, wrapping up. I always recommend the instructor guide as a resource, along with the Canvas community, especially when it comes to the fiddly details of grading. There's a lot of great information in the forum. Almost every scenario that can be tried has been tried, and you could save yourself time by searching and seeing if someone else has done this already and what the outcome was. Especially if there's something where you suspect that maybe the feature is missing, or it doesn't work the way that you expect it to work. That's one of the fastest ways to find that information.

Feel free to send us an email at EngrLearnTech@tamu.edu for any course development or Canvas troubleshooting issues, and we are more than happy to help you out with that.