Recommendations for Managing an Online Classroom

New to online teaching? Your peers can help. This week's Teaching Tip features recommendations from experienced online instructors on how to manage online classrooms. Best tip? Use the "Set Grade Center Due Dates" screen under Course Management > Course Tools to update all your due dates at once.

Welcome back to a new semester! If you're new to online teaching (and even if you're a seasoned eLearning-supported instructor), these hints from fellow faculty and instructional designers will help.

SET GRADE CENTER DUE DATES

Previously, updating Blackboard assignment due dates each semester meant editing each assignment through the Grade Center or by finding the item. Each date change took at least three clicks. This resulted in some faculty choosing to not enter due dates. However, utilizing due dates tied directly to assignments is a good practice; it reminds students an assignment is pending.[1] On the student side, these dates are visible in several areas including: "My Grades," individual assignments and the Calendar View they access from the Global Navigation Center.

Set grades all in one place! Use the *Set Grade Center Due Dates* screen under Course Management > Course Tools.

SEE WHAT STUDENTS SEE

Check the student view of your Blackboard course to head off possible problems before students email you. This feature was updated in a recent Blackboard upgrade. From your course, in the upper right there is an icon that looks like revolving arrows with a dot in the middle. Click on this to see the student view of your course. When you click on "My Grades," you'll see the Grade Center from the student side including due dates.

To get out of the student view click on the "Exit Preview" button in the orange header.

Blackboard asks if you wish to keep the student-view user and data. If you were in preview mode to access a test, submit an assignment, try out a safe assignment, or test Grade Center calculations, keep the user and data. That way you can view the results. Removing the student-view user is easy. Go to Users and Groups > Users then click the box next to "student-view" user. Choose "Remove Users from Course" from the pop-up *Options Menu: Username*.

You can find additional tips for efficient use of Blackboard at Teaching Tip: More Blackboard Hints and Tricks: http://elearning.uaf.edu/go/tt-bb-productivity

PERSONALIZE POSTS TO DISCUSSION FORUMS

Make your online discussion forum people-focused. Instead of a discussion board looking non-personal and anonymous with a row of gray non-people, ask students to upload a photo.[2] This helps the forum be more friendly and engaging.
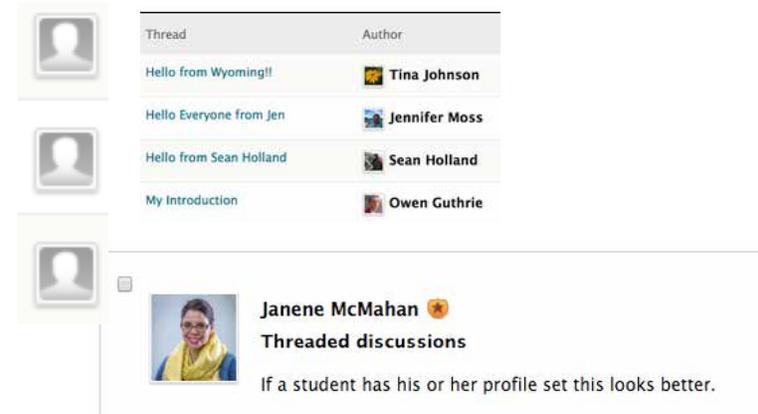
JOIN THE DISCUSSION

What are some of the practices you find helpful? Contact Heidi (hcolson@alaska.edu or call 907-455-2090) or share your recommendations on iTeachU.

REFERENCES

[1] Set Grade Center Due Dates
http://elearning.uaf.edu/go/tt-setgrades

[2] Use Profile Pictures to Increase Engagement
http://elearning.uaf.edu/go/tt-bb-profile-photos

iTeachU   More Teaching Tips at: http://elearning.uaf.edu/go/tt-archive
Contact us at: http://elearning.uaf.edu/go/iteachu-contact

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