What's New with Brightspace?

May 2022 Update Summary

This month's Brightspace update is primarily aesthetic (e.g., improved visual accessibility with sharper and darker fonts). Since there are no new features or significant changes to functionality, this month we bring you a more elaborate…

Did you know?

You can evaluate Assignments according to customised grading schemes that assign point values, rather than the other way around.

Let's say, for instance, that you have a Complete (100%) / Partially Complete (50%) / Incomplete (0%) assignment activity and would like to grade it using these "symbols" instead of assigning point values. Setting up this type of grading workflow can be accomplished in three easy steps.

Step 1: Create a custom Grade Scheme

1. Go to the **Grades** page for your course via the *Progress* menu in the navbar.
2. Click on the **Schemes** tab just below the navbar on the *Grades* page.
3. Click the **New Scheme** button.

There are three essential fields to populate in your grading scheme.

- **Symbol:** This is the message or symbol that will appear as a grading option.
- **Start %:** A value is required for this field, but it is only important for grading using point values. For our purposes, you can make it identical to the next column:
- **Assigned Value %:** This indicates what the actual value of the grade level is for the purpose of calculating the final grade.

You can assign a colour if you want, but it will be visible only to you. By default, these colour schemes do not display for students.

Note: These symbols can be messages like "Excellent!" or "Needs Improvement". But you can also incorporate emojis and emoticons, whether Likert symbols (e.g., 😁), traditional stickers like a "gold star" (☆), or any other symbol (e.g., 🐵 or (╯ ಠ_ಠ)╯ ︵ ┻━┻). On PC, press the Windows logo key + . (period) to open an emoji menu; on Mac, press CTRL+CMD+SPACE. Or copy & paste them from online.

Note: Grade schemes for assigning letter grades already exist in the system and can be used for grading this way. The designations High / Medium / Low refer to which end of the grade range the point values lie, which affects the calculation of the final grade. E.g., the "A" range always falls between 85% and 89.99%. But the High scheme will assign a point value of 89.99%; Medium, 87.5%; and Low, 85%.
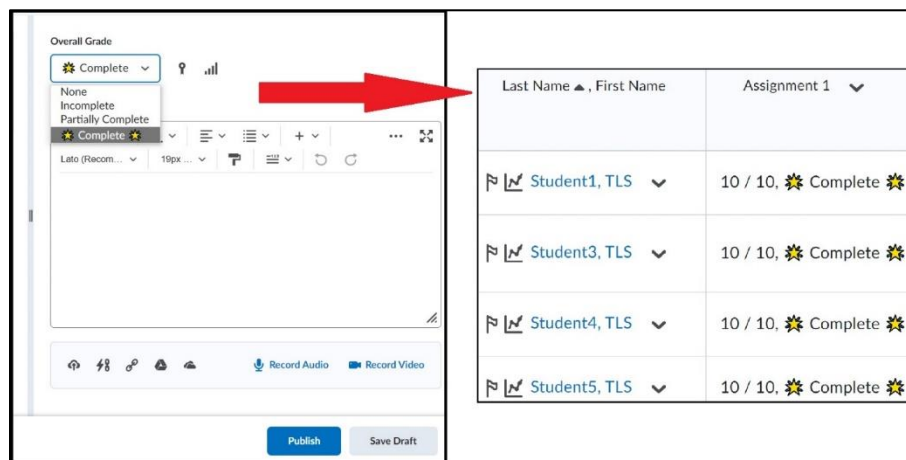
Step 2: Create the Grade Item
Follow the instructions on our support site here [for creating a Grade Item in the Gradebook](#).

1. Choose **Selectbox** when prompted to select a *Grade Item Type*.
2. Fill in your values (Name, Max Points, and Weight), and then **select the scheme** you created from the *Grade Scheme* drop-down menu.

Step 3: Link your Assignment to the Selectbox Grade Item
1. Go to the **Assignments** page via the *Activities* menu in the navbar.
2. Either **Create** a new assignment or **Edit** an existing one.
3. Click **Ungraded** to expand the grading settings.
4. Click **In Grade Book** and select **Edit or Link to Existing** from the drop-down menu.
5. Select the **Link to an existing grade item** and select your **Selectbox Grade Item** from the drop-down menu.

Now when you grade your students' assignments, instead of asking you to assign a point value Brightspace will give you the choice of symbols / icons / messages for your Grade Scheme from a drop-down menu.

Note: Currently, this only works for the *Assignments* tool. Other tools are not able to link with Selectbox Grade Items.