Inline Grading for Assignments Release Notes: Mar 13, 2013

Release Information

Original Launch: March 13, 2013

Requirements: Service Pack 10 and later

Inline Assignment Grading is a revision to the workflow for grading Assignments in Blackboard Learn. Instead of requiring Instructors to download student-submitted files to view or edit those submissions, Instructors will now be able to view student-submitted files "inline," that is, in the web browser, without requiring any plug-ins, applets, or client-side applications. Additionally, annotations tools will be made available as part of the inline viewer, enabling Instructors to provide feedback – comments, highlights, and even drawing/annotation – directly on the inline view of the document.

Supported Platforms

The Inline Assignment Grading Building Block is supported on the following platforms:

- Blackboard Learn, Release 9.1 Service Pack 10 (Build: 9.1.100401.0)
- Blackboard Learn, Release 9.1 Service Pack 11 (Build: 9.1.110082.0)

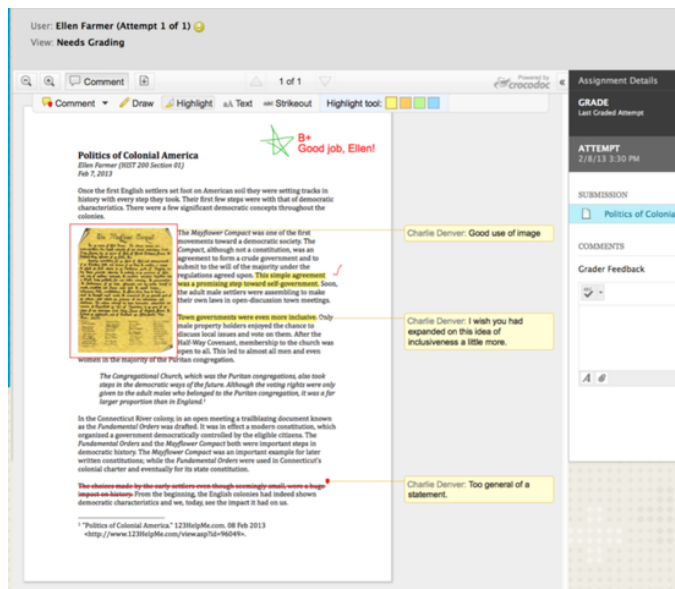## Release Highlights

Viewing Assignments Inline

- When an Instructor views a document submitted through an Assignment, that document is converted to a format that is viewable inside the web browser. Supported document types that can be converted are Word (DOC, DOCX), PowerPoint (PPT, PPTX), Excel (XLS, XLSX), and PDF (PDF). The converted document is displayed in a viewer on the Grade Assignment page. Formatting and embedded images of the original document are preserved in the conversion.

- The viewer has a toolbar with following features:

  - Zoom In and Out. This feature is also available to students when they view their submission.

  - Comment - Shows a menu of all annotation tools.

  - Download - Downloads a copy of the document. If annotations have been made, there is an option to download the copy in the original format or in a PDF version that includes the annotations. This feature is also available to students when they view their submission.

- Page Forward and Back buttons. This feature is also available to students when they view their submission.

- Show all annotations button

- The viewer is supported on current versions of Firefox, Chrome, Safari, and Internet Explorer. No plug-in or another application is necessary.

- If the student has uploaded a file that *isn't* in a format supported by the inline viewer, then instead of seeing the viewer, the Instructor is prompted to download the file in question.

- The inline viewer is powered by a third-party, cloud-based technology called Crocodoc. To learn more about Crocodoc, see Important Notes.

Annotation

- Files that have been uploaded and converted for display in the inline viewer can be annotated directly within the browser.

- To begin annotating a file, the Instructor clicks Comment to display the annotation toolbar. The tools available for annotation are:

  - **Comment**: Insert a comment in the sidebar to the right. There are three ways to comment:

    - A **point comment**, where a pointer is inserted into the document and the comment is attached to that pointer.

    - An **area comment**, where a red box is drawn around a particular area of the document, and the comment is attached to that area.

- ▪ A **text comment**, where the Instructor can highlight text, and the comment is attached to the highlighted text.
  - ◦ **Draw**: Free-form draw on the document in different colors
  - ◦ **Highlight**: highlight text in the document in different colors.
  - ◦ **Text**: insert text boxes with text directly into the document.
  - ◦ **Strikeout**: Cross-out text in the document.

Assignment Grading Sidebar

- The features of the Inline Assignment Grading sidebar are:
  - ◦ **Expand Assignment Details** shows the information from the assignment content item.
  - ◦ **Show Additional Attempts** provides a drop-down list of all attempts. Clicking on the attempt loads the attempt's submission in the inline viewer and updates the sidebar with the appropriate attempt-related data.
  - ◦ **Enter Grade** is where the grade is typed for the attempt.
  - ◦ The **Rubric** button displays the grading rubric associated with the Assignment.
  - ◦ **Show Grading Notes** displays an area where the Instructor can add private notes, not visible to the student as feedback.
  - ◦ **Download Original Submission** downloads the originally submitted file. If more than one file was submitted for the attempt they are available here.
  - ◦ Grader Feedback is where the Instructor or grader can provide feedback the student sees. Files can be attached to the feedback, and the Feedback field can be expanded to take advantage of the full content editor capabilities.
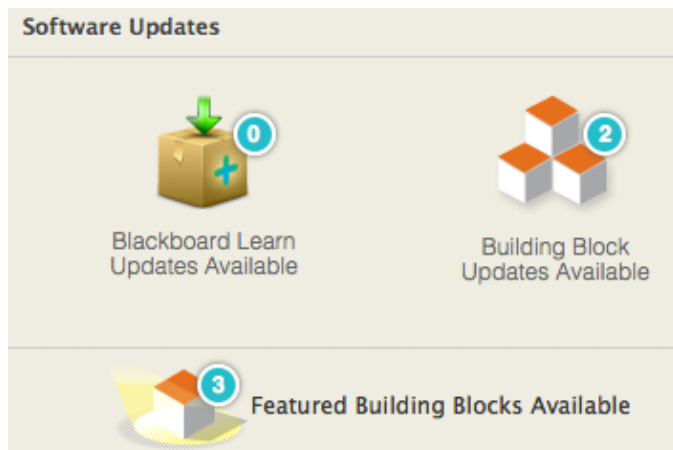
How to Install and Activate the Inline Assignment Grading Building Block

You can use Software Updates to install the Inline Assignment Grading building block directly from the System Admin panel. Alternatively, you can manually download the Inline Assignment Grading building block from Behind the Blackboard Downloads.

Software Updates

Software Updates are located on the System Admin panel. When a new building block is available or has been updated, you are notified by a change in the icons. Simply click the **Feature Building Blocks Available** icon and

locate the Inline Assignment Grading building block. Click **Install**. You will need to make the building block available once it has installed.

Behind the Blackboard Downloads

Download the Inline Assignment Grading building block from Behind the Blackboard Downloads home, located under Feature Building Blocks for Learn. Save the file on a local drive. Unzip the package to access the `.war` file.

1. Navigate to the System Admin panel. Click **Building Blocks**.

2. Click **Installed Tools**.

3. Click **Upload Building Blocks** from the action bar.

4. Browse for the Inline Assignment Grading building block `.war` file.

5. Click **Submit**.

6. You will get a success message when the building block is installed. Set the building block to **Active** and click **Approve**.

How to Make the Inline Assignment Grading Building Block Available

Once installed, you must enable Cloud connector and configure it to contact Blackboard Cloud.
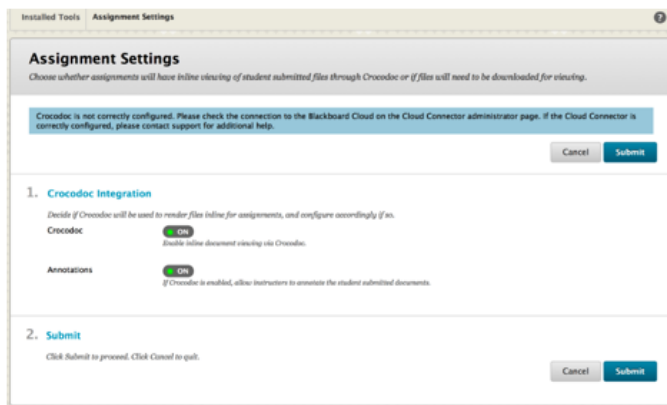
You must then make the Inline Assignment Grading available in existing courses.

1. From the System Admin page, click **Tools** from the Tools and Utilities panel.

2. Locate **Assignment** in the list of tools and select **Always On** for **Assignment** to turn the tool on for all courses. Select **Default On** to allow instructors to turn the Assignment on or off in their courses from the Control Panel under **Customization Tool Availability**.

Important Notes

- There are no changes to the workflow for submitting assignments, with the exception for one minor UI change to the field where a user would enter an assignment response via the content editor (as opposed to uploading a file). All of the changes are focused on the Grade Assignment page.

- The only requirements are the Course Delivery module and a modern browser.

- When students view their submitted attempts, they see the converted document in an inline viewer (as well as any annotations the instructor may have added). Students cannot edit instructor annotations or add their own annotations.

- Inline Assignment Grading can convert, display, and annotate Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and PDF file formats. This accounts for well over 95% of submissions to Blackboard Learn Assignments (based on a sampling of Managed Hosting clients). File formats that cannot be converted are presented for download, as in the past.

- The conversion retains most formatting for supported file types. There may be some very complex page layouts that don't render perfectly, but those are uncommon exceptions.

- Inline Assignment Grading is powered by Crocodoc (http://www.crocodoc.com). Crocodoc is a third-party, cloud-based conversion, display, and annotation service.

- Crocodoc is a third-party cloud service that Blackboard has licensed for use with the Inline Assignment Grading feature. It is not a Blackboard-managed cloud service. However, the Inline Assignment Grading Building Block *does* contact a Blackboard-managed cloud service to retrieve a unique Crocodoc token per Blackboard Learn instance. This token is used to identify the Blackboard Learn instance with the Crocodoc service. Acquisition of this token happens automatically when the Inline Assignment Grading Building Block is available. For this acquisition to occur, the Cloud Connector needs to be enabled and configured to contact the Blackboard Cloud. In the event that the Inline Assignment Grading Building Block has difficulty obtaining the Crocodoc token from the Blackboard-managed cloud service, the following error will appear in the Inline Assignment Grading Building Block's settings page:

The Cloud Connector only needs to be enabled for the Building Block to request and retrieve the Crocodoc token. The Cloud Connector is not required for regular use of the Inline Assignment Grading feature once the token has been successfully retrieved.

- Student file submissions are stored in your Learn instance, as always. A copy of the submission is transmitted to the Crocodoc cloud service for conversion. The converted version of the document lives in the cloud on servers managed by Crocodoc.

- The Crocodoc application and associated data (converted documents and annotations) live in the Amazon Web Services cloud, hosted in the United States.

- The files in Crocodoc are stored only in the US.

- No personally identifiable data about a student is sent to Crocodoc. Learn retrieves a document ID from Crocodoc and assigns it to the document. That mapping of Document ID to user, course, assignment, and attempt is tracked locally in Learn. None of that data is available to Crocodoc. All that is transmitted to Crocodoc is the file for conversion. (Of course, the content of the file could contain personally identifiable information.) The converted file is stored in the Crocodoc service, as are any annotations made on the converted file.

- The files are secure in the Crocodoc service. Blackboard, Crocodoc, and Amazon Web Services go to great lengths to secure access to the content stored in the cloud.

- Annotations are made to the converted document. They are stored as metadata associated with the converted document in the Crocodoc cloud service.

- It's possible to download the annotated document as a PDF file.

- The Crocodoc service can convert files in any character set, including double-byte character sets. Likewise, comment annotations can be entered in any character set, including double-byte character sets. However, the inline viewer's interface itself is *not* localized, so the labels on the inline viewer toolbar and any other textual interface elements of the inline viewer will always be displayed in English. Blackboard is working with Crocodoc to get more clarity around their timeline for supporting localized interfaces.

- Text files, HTML files, and content created via the content editor can already be displayed inline natively in the browser, so we do not send them to Crocodoc for conversion. Since they are not processed through Crocodoc, they cannot be annotated.

- When a converted document is loaded a session is initiated in Crocodoc. Annotations made in the session are automatically saved. However, that session expires after an hour, so if an Instructor takes longer than an hour to annotate a document, annotations made after that session expiration may not be saved. As a workaround, navigating away from the Grade Assignment page to another page in Blackboard Learn, then navigating back to the Grade Assignment page will re-establish a new session. Blackboard is working with Crocodoc to determine how we might extend this session to be more in sync with the Learn session itself.

Known Issues

- Students cannot annotate documents.

- This does not work with SafeAssign, Self & Peer, Forums, or Content Collections.

- This does not work in Mobile Learn.

- The Crocodoc inline viewer interface is always displayed in English at this time.

- Annotation sessions expire after an hour, so if an instructor takes longer than an hour to annotate a document, annotations made after that session expiration may not be saved.

- Arabic Office files (.DOC and .DOCX) submitted by students are formatting incorrectly when viewed by instructors.