

Blackboard Help

Learn / Administrator / Self- and Managed-Hosting / Release Notes / Understanding the Changes / ANGEL and Learn Feature Comparison

Feature Information for Instructors

Assignment Dropbox

The "Assignment" tool in Blackboard Learn should feel familiar in function to anyone who is accustomed to using the "Dropbox" tool in ANGEL. Each tool offers standard text and file attachment submission from the student perspective, and offers rich [Assignment Grading](#) and [Assignment File Download](#) options from the instructor perspective. While there is a terminology difference between ANGEL and Blackboard Learn on this tool, the functionality and usage should emulate one another pretty closely. One key addition that is available with Blackboard Learn Assignments is [SafeAssign](#), a plagiarism detection component available to assignments.

Calendar

While both LMS applications contain a calendar functionality that ties into both the course and overall institution levels of the environment, Blackboard Learn has upgraded functionalities and features. The [Blackboard Learn Course Calendar](#) is modernized and offers a great deal of additional features over the ANGEL Calendar and was created to be familiar to users of other modern, popular calendar tools such as Microsoft Outlook. Feature for feature, we believe the new Blackboard Learn Calendar compares favorably to the ANGEL Calendar tool and should offer a full improvement in calendar capabilities.

To learn more, watch the [Introduction to the New Blackboard Learn Calendar](#) video (available in English only).

Using a Blackboard provided Building Block, called "Date Management", allows dates in a course to automatically update to adjust content and deployment dates in a course. This ability enhances the already robust calendar. This tool works with the content and calendar to allow for easy transition to a new section of a course's materials. To learn more, see [Date Management](#).

Grading

Grading functionality is an essential piece of any LMS application. ANGEL and Blackboard Learn each have feature rich grading tools which allow for course personalization, and to adhere to custom grading schemas, weighted grade categories, and many other adaptable features to fit the course grading setup.

The grading tool in ANGEL is called the "Gradebook," whereas the same feature in Blackboard Learn is called the [Grade Center](#). The Grade Center in Blackboard Learn offers many of the same features that are available in the ANGEL Gradebook, along with some very important feature improvements, such as [Grade Exemptions](#) and [Grading Schemas](#) (known as Grading Scales in ANGEL) that can go above 100%.

Another key feature in Learn is inline grading. Instructors can view student-submitted files "inline," meaning in the web browser itself, without the use of any plug-ins or the need to download the files. Annotations tools are available as part of the inline viewer, enabling instructors to provide comments and highlights directly on the inline view of the document.

Learn also offers two other grading features not found in ANGEL: [Anonymous Grading](#), and [Delegated Grading](#). With Anonymous Grading enabled, instructors can view and grade submissions without knowing which student submitted the work, eliminating grading bias. Delegated Grading allows instructors to divide up grading tasks, assigning groups of student submissions to other users within the course, such as TAs.

Groups / teams

Courses in each system offer a function to group students into [Groups](#) in Blackboard Learn, or Teams in ANGEL. While there is a terminology difference between the two tools, the functionality should feel relatively familiar. In Blackboard Learn, you can set up groups to participate in shared content such as Group-only Discussions, Blogs, and other content/tools through the [Course Group Tools Menu](#). You can also configure assignments to be released per a group set up so that if there are group-specific assignment topics that outcome is possible.

Mail tools

Both ANGEL and Blackboard Learn offer tools that allow users to communicate with one another via email/messages- though the functionalities differ significantly between the two applications. ANGEL has a single mail tool, called CourseMail, which allows internal email to be sent to other users of the application. These messages can be forwarded to an external email if preferred, but cannot be sent directly to an external email account, such as campus email, Gmail, and so on.

Blackboard Learn contains an [Email](#) tool that can only be used to send messages to external email addresses. These messages are delivered to the email associated with the recipient's account in the system, but cannot be viewed from within Blackboard directly. Blackboard Learn also contains a [Course Messages Tool](#), and Messages are intended to fill that functionality of having an internal application only tool for sending messages back and forth between users of a shared course enrollment.

Course Messages are also part of the [Notifications](#) framework. Anyone enrolled in a course can receive a notification that they have new messages from the Updates area in My Blackboard, in the What's New module on both institutional and course module pages, and from email. Users can manage their

notification settings to include course messages and set preferences.

Parent/observer accounts

While the ANGEL LMS had a built in tool called Mentor Accounts (Insight Window) designed for parent access, Blackboard Learn leverages Observer Accounts to provide view-only access to courses and content for parents or academic advisors. [Managing Observer accounts](#) allows parents to maintain their own login in Learn, and utilizes the same full interface that students see in their courses. Observer accounts and their association with students can be created via batch and integration tools.

To learn more about creating these accounts in batch, see [SIS Integration](#) and [Observer Association Elements in Feed File](#).

Portfolios

With a "Content Management License" in Learn you have access to Portfolios. ANGEL's similar feature comparison would be ePort, but the Learn comparable is far more developed. Portfolios in Blackboard Learn allow for academic and professional development and provide a powerful means for users to collect and organize artifacts showcasing their work completed over time. Portfolios can be created to demonstrate progress and achievement in a personalized and cohesive format. They can be shared and modified easily. Instructors can also assign and make [Portfolios](#) gradable.

Social Learning Tools

Social learning is based on the concept that students learn by observing and interacting with peers. These tools are available in courses/organizations to allow users to connect and collaborate and share thoughts, information, and projects. All of these tools rely on specific building blocks installed on your Learn environment.

- **Blogs/Journals:** ANGEL users may recall experiencing some frustration with the lack of functionality available using Blogs and Journals. Blackboard Learn improves these tools significantly, with the addition of easy-to-use grading and sharing capabilities of [Blogs](#) and [Journals](#).
- **Discussion Boards:** ANGEL and Learn have very similar Discussion Board capabilities, though Learn Discussion Boards integrate more deeply into the course structure. This tool in Learn should feel familiar to an ANGEL user. See the link for additional information regarding [Discussion Boards](#).
- **Wikis:** For ANGEL users, Wikis were a point of frustration as they lacked rich features. It will please many to know that Blackboard Learn Wikis are far more developed and they allow for a variety of formats to display collaborative information. Linking, editing, and managing a Wiki is made easy. Instructors have the ability to see each user's contributions and edits to a page. And the instructors can enable grading for Wikis in a variety of ways. Additional description regarding the

rich enhancements to [Wikis](#) can be found at the link.

- **Collaborate:** The Blackboard hosted web conferencing service allows instructors to connect with one student or an entire class. Instructors and students can collaborate using audio, video, a whiteboard, screen sharing, and a variety of tools to facilitate interaction with a large group, such as polling. The collaborate service is available for integration with Learn and Angel as well as a stand-alone platform, but Learn supports a more seamless integration with courses. For more, see [Blackboard Collaborate Sessions](#).

Test/assessment

Each LMS application offers a feature rich test-taking tool, and while the terminology differs slightly between ANGEL and Learn 9.1, the functionalities are similar and should lend themselves to an easy transition. "Assessment" is the ANGEL term and "Test" is the Learn 9.1 term. Each tool offers a broad list of potential [question types](#), as well as in-depth functionalities for grading, randomization, and [question pools](#).

To learn more, see [Tests, Surveys, and Pools](#).

User profiles

In ANGEL a student could create a Profile with student "registry" information and a picture. But this Profile was not available to be shared with others. In Learn, schools that meet system prerequisites, have the ability to turn on "Social Profiles and Tools" via the administrator panel. This tool allows for all users to create personal academic Profiles including information about their experiences, work, education, and involvement. This develops an individual's academic identity and it allows for users to connect and reach out to classmates. Depending on what features the school uses and what privacy options are set, users can determine what is shared. Users must opt-in before any information is shared from their [User Profile](#).