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Introduction

Blackboard Learn™ 9.1, Service Pack 13

Service Pack 13 for Learnline the Blackboard Learn platform delivers exciting innovations as well as deep improvements to core capabilities, resulting in a product that is more intuitive, engaging, and focused on you. More than 2000 individuals – including educators, students, instructional designers, and administrators – contributed to the development of Service Pack 13 and have made platform simply better.

Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to provide educators and students with an overview of the new features and enhancements that are part of Service Pack 13.

Discussions

Feature Enhancement for All Users

With this enhancement, Blackboard has thoroughly redesigned the Discussions interface while adding some new functionality as a direct response to feedback. Highlights include:

- **All posts on one page:** The entire discussion thread appears on a single page, thereby maintaining the context of posts and replies to one another.

- **Avatars:** The user profile avatars are more prominent in the new Discussions.

- **Conditional highlighting of lecturer’ posts:** It is easier for students to find posts from lecturer in a sea of other posts.
• **Respond to posts inline**: When clicking “Reply”, the content editor appears in the context of the discussion so as not to disrupt the flow of the user. The full content editor is available for the user to write a reply. When finished, submitting the post adds it directly into the page without losing context.

• **Post first feature**: In addition to the user enhancements described above, we have also introduced a new setting that permits lecturer to specify that students must enter their own thread before viewing other threads in a forum. (Note that initially this capability only applies at the forum level, not the thread level. This means that post first is not an option when students are not permitted to create threads.)
Calendar *(Available Now on release SP10)*

*New & Improved Feature for All Users*

The calendar has been completely rebuilt, giving users a much more modern tool – both in terms of look and functionality. This new version allows personalization and customization. Users can select views (month, week, day) and color-code the events to differentiate courses and personal items.

Items with due dates automatically appear on the new Blackboard Learn calendar. If an instructor changes a due date, the calendar gets updated as well. On the flip side, moving a calendar item (by clicking on the item or drag and drop) simultaneously changes a due date for a lecturer. Users can also create recurring events by selecting the “repeat” checkbox.
Calendar events may be viewed at once– or filtered to show only the desired mix of class and personal events. Users can select which calendars to view, ranging from personal to institution to individual course listings.

These calendar items can also be exported via an iCal feed to Outlook, Google or other 3rd party calendars.
Retention Center

New Feature for Educators

The Retention Center is a new feature for educators who use Blackboard Learn. The Retention Center highlights retention factors and student engagement, quickly alerting educators to potential risk and allowing them to take immediate action. Easy-to-understand views and pre-configured rules make it simple to identify at-risk students within a course, and it requires no set up on the part of the instructor or administrator. However a lecturer can also modify these rules to suit their individual teaching methodologies and approaches.

The intuitive layout lets a lecturer know what to focus on. They can dig deeper into a student’s performance and engagement, and then set monitoring alerts and view notification history.
Inline Assignment Grading

New Enhancement for Educators

Inline Assignment Grading is an improvement to the workflow for grading Assignments in Blackboard Learn. Instead of requiring lecturer to download student-submitted files to view or edit those submissions, a lecturer will now be able to view student-submitted files “inline,” i.e. in the web browser, without requiring any plug-ins, applets, or additional applications. Supported document types that can be converted are Word (.doc, .docx), PowerPoint (.ppt, .pptx), Excel (.xls, .xlsx), and PDF (.pdf). Formatting and embedded images of the original document are preserved in the conversion.

Files that have been uploaded and converted for display in the inline viewer can be annotated directly within the browser. The tools available for annotation are: Comment, Draw, Highlight, Text and Strikeout.
The Inline Assignment Feature introduces a new sidebar for inline grading. This sidebar provides assignment details, previous attempts, the grade, rubrics, grading notes and grader feedback.
Test Enhancements

*Feature Enhancement for Educators*

Tests in Blackboard Learn have been updated in response to enhancement requests. These enhancements make specific improvements to how tests are designed and deployed, and will help meet specific scenarios that frequently arise.

The process of creating or editing a Test within Learn has improved in this release. The first change makes it easier to create a new question in the desired location with respect to other questions that have already been created. Lecturers can now add a question in the middle of the test *exactly* where they want it to go.

A new rule-based method for adding availability “exceptions” to tests has been added to the Test Options page. Using this new capability, lecturers may select one or more groups or users, and make a number of exceptions to the already established delivery settings for other students. Specifically, the exceptions that can be made for users or groups are: Number of attempts, Time of test, Auto submit on/off, Availability start & end date and Force completion on/off.
We've implemented a new event-based method for releasing test feedback. We've also added additional feedback options to provide lecturers with more control over what kinds of feedback students can or can’t see. Events can be specified to trigger specific feedback settings.
Test Access Log

Feature Enhancement for Educators

A source of frustration for students, lecturers, and graders is the inability to confirm whether students began a test or ran into problems during a test. Teachers and graders have no way to verify student activity or lack of activity during a test. Students have no way to prove that they did begin a test and when. If students reported problems occurring during a test, they were either given the benefit of the doubt and the test was reset, or they were penalized for circumstances beyond their control.

SP13 addresses this issue by providing detailed information on student test attempt interactions. Lecturers and other users, who are granted permission, can view the Access Log for a test from the Attempts page of the test.

The access log shows a detailed list of every interaction that students engage in when taking a test. If a student claims to have started a test, the log will show the time the test was started. If a network or internet disruption occurred during the test for example, the log would show an unusual gap in the time.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and Time</th>
<th>Access Type</th>
<th>Test Time</th>
<th>Time Spent*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/7/13 5:21:13 PM</td>
<td>Test started</td>
<td>00:00</td>
<td>00:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/7/13 5:25:35 PM</td>
<td>Saved question 1</td>
<td>00:21</td>
<td>00:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/7/13 5:25:45 PM</td>
<td>Saved question 2</td>
<td>00:31</td>
<td>00:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/7/13 5:25:55 PM</td>
<td>Saved question 3</td>
<td>00:41</td>
<td>00:09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/7/13 5:27:38 PM</td>
<td>Saved question 4 multiple times over a period of 01:43</td>
<td>02:24</td>
<td>01:42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/7/13 5:29:17 PM</td>
<td>Test submitted</td>
<td>04:03</td>
<td>01:38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The times appearing under the Time Spent column may not accurately represent the time the Student spent on each question; the Student may have looked at other questions before answering and saving individual questions.
Quick Links

*New Feature for All Users*

The Quick Links tool will help significantly improve the navigation experience for sighted, keyboard-only users. This tool can be quickly accessed on any page using a link at the very top of the page or a keyboard shortcut (Control+Alt+L). It will aggregate a list of all of the landmarks and headings on a page and allow a user to select one and jump directly to that location within the page. It will also collect and highlight any keyboard shortcuts that exist for the current page or tool, providing another method for quickly completing key tasks within the application.
Content Editor – WIRIS Updates

Enhancement for All Users

WIRIS provides the Math formula editing capabilities of the Content Editor introduced in Blackboard Learn Service Pack 10. SP13 brings a new WIRIS editor that is based on JavaScript. This removes dependence on Java and, as a result, enables full math-editing capabilities on platforms that cannot run Java in browsers e.g.: iOS. This extends the functionality of the WIRIS math editor to all platforms capable of running a JavaScript enabled browser.