

Using Smart Views to Organize your Grade Center in Blackboard 8

The capabilities of the Grade Center in Blackboard 8 are designed to meet all the grading needs an instructor might have. With the new Smart Views capability, the instructor is easily able to view the gradebook in different pre-assigned groups chosen by the instructor, such as by recitation section or by lab bench. If you already use groups in your blackboard course, this will simply be an upgrade to the system before; if you do not use groups in your blackboard course, now may be the time to start implementing this system. Either way, this guide will take you through the process of organizing your students into groups and utilizing smart views in detailed, step-by-step fashion.

Setting Up Your Groups

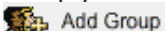
Before you can utilize different views, it is first necessary to set up your various groups of students in your course. If you already have groups set up as a feature, you can skip this section. If not, the simple steps below will help you quickly set up groups in your Course.

1. Lay out your groups ahead of time

Before creating your groups in Blackboard, you should have a good idea of what you want. This simply entails knowing how many groups you need, what you would like to call them, and assigning students to each group. If you already have this planned, skip ahead to Step 2. If not, take a minute to plan them out now.

2. Create your groups on Blackboard

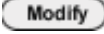
Creating your groups is a breeze. From your course's control panel, select Manage Groups under the User Management heading (pictured on left). This is the main page for your groups, and should list all of the groups you currently have in your course. If you have none, you will simply see an Add Group button and an Ok

button. to create a new group, simply click the  Add Group button. On this screen, give your group a name; you may add a discription if you wish. There are also several Group Options, which allow you to add several different kinds of group-based content to your blackboard course; none of these options affect Smart Views, however, so they will not be explained in-depth here. Click Submit, and repeat the process for all groups that you wish to create.

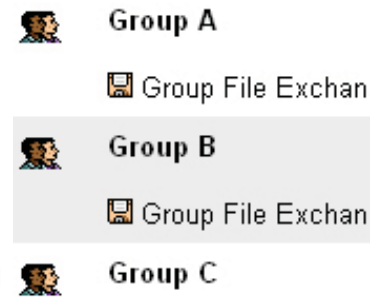
Note: If you are only creating groups to use for Smart Views and do not wish to add Group-based content to your course, be sure to click No next to Group Available under the Group Options Heading; this prevents an empty content area from being added to your course from the student's perspective.

3. Add students to respective groups

Once you have created your groups, return to your Manage Groups page (from the control panel, click Manage Groups as shown in the previous step). On this page, you will see a listing of each group, as well as what group features (if any) you have available for that group. An example of this is pictured on the right.

To add users to a group, click the  button to the right of the group you'd like to add to. From this screen, simply click the **Add Users to Group** link. A User Search bar appears; you may search by Last Name, Username, or email, or you may click List All to list all of the users (including instructors) in the course that are **not currently enrolled in the group**. It is recommended that you

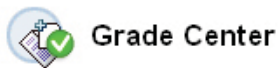
use the search bar for larger courses, as the list all feature can take a long time to load for large classes. Once the desired student or students are listed, click the empty box to place a check next to each student you wish to add to the group, and click Submit. Click Ok on the confirmation screen, and repeat until all the desired students are in each group. You have now finished setting up your groups, and are ready to take advantage of the Smart Views feature!





Using Smart Views in the Grade Center

Once you have your groups set up, taking advantage of the Smart Views feature is easy. From the Control panel of your course, click the Grade Center link, and follow the next few steps.

1. Create your smart views



Hover over the Manage heading (pictured under ) and select Smart Views. To create your smart views, simply click the  button, and enter a name and optional descrip-

tion. Next to type of view, you have several options; Use groups if you wish to have views with Groups you created earlier; this option is useful if you have lab sections or benches, recitations, or other specific groups in your class. You can also use benchmark to create a view with a grade cutoff based on a specific column in your grade center. Finally, choose focus to select a specific student to focus on in the grade center. There is also an Investigate view with which you may build specific searches, this option is for the advanced user and is not covered here. Whichever you choose, set your criteria next to Select Criteria. Below this, you have the option to filter out certain columns in the gradebook. For example, you could select Selected Columns Only from the dropdown menu, which will give you the option of choosing specific columns to include; this is useful if you wish to have a final grade view or assignment-based view. You can also choose to include only specific categories or grading periods from this drop down menu. Once finished, click Submit. Repeat to create views as needed.

Note: If you wish to include all users in your Smart View and only filter out certain Grade Center columns, the easiest way to do this is to choose the Focus view type, and select All Users from the dropdown menu.

2. Change your grade center view

To change your view, simply hover over the title of your current view (directly below ② in the picture). You will see Full Grade Center listed at the top, views for each Grading Period (if you utilize this feature in your course), and then the heading Smart Views. Under this heading, you will have a view for each Smart View you created; clicking on any of these will show a Grade Center with only those students or columns included in that smart view.

3. Set as default

Clicking this button (pictured under ③) will set the current view to the default view for that user. This is again very useful for separate users with different groups of students. You have now learned all there is to know about Smart Views!