

Best Practices for Canvas

** You should consider doing these practices in Canvas even if you did not do them in BlackBoard, because the interface is likely to change student workflow, and you risk new problems if you do not adapt.

1. **Use student groups.** Students get their own tools (wiki pages for shared notes, chat tool for backchannel conversations, internal discussion boards) that enable a much more robust (micro)community.
2. **Use the Calendar tool.** In Bb it didn't matter much if you chose to ignore the calendar, but in Canvas students are likely to rely on it for scheduling all their tasks across classes. Since the calendar tool shows them items from ALL classes on the same screen, if your "due" items are not included, there's a chance students will do the ones for the other classes but not yours.
3. **Hide the Files tool.** Students can see your complete list of materials uploaded to Files, which is not how Bb worked. You may even want to hide ALL tools so that the only navigation buttons left on the side are Modules and Grades, and thus link students to all items (pages, files, lectures, discussions, quizzes, assignment dropboxes, etc.) via the modules tool.
4. **Create "Assignment Groups" before you add graded discussions, quizzes, and dropbox assignments.** If you don't do this step, all items that are graded will be lumped together in the gradebook as an "assignment" and the tool to assign weights will not function. Note: you can also create assignment groups after-the-fact and move graded events into them later.
5. **Add a colleague as a student so you can see a true student view.** While there is a Student View under Settings, it does not show you how the gradebook functions, and any sample quizzes taken will not "record" the result. The only way to see Canvas as a student is to add an external person as a student (under Settings/Users).
6. **Mute Assignments in the grade book before doing any grading.** By default, students can see results in their Grades tab as soon as the items are graded. If you want students to learn the grades all at once, rather than live as you are grading them, set assignments individually to "mute" in the pull-down for each column in the grade book, and only un-mute them after all the grading for that assignment is done.

Further assistance:

- For assistance with the Canvas interface and tech help, contact the Help Desk (help@usf.edu)
- For assistance with pedagogy, course design, and Canvas tool selection for FULLY ONLINE classes, contact University College (etg@usf.edu)
- For assistance with pedagogy, course design, and Canvas tool selection for Face-to-Face (or 50/50 hybrid) classes, contact the Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence (atle@usf.edu)