6

Workshops

The workshop activity is the most complex tool currently available in Moodle. Workshops are designed so a student's work can be submitted and offered for peer review within a structured framework. Workshops provide a process for both instructor and peer feedback on open-ended assignments, such as essays and research papers. There are easy-to-use interfaces for uploading assignments, performing self-assessments, and peer reviews of other students' papers.

The key to the workshop is the scoring guide, which is a set of specific criteria for making judgments about the quality of a given work. Open-ended assessments are difficult to score reliably, unless there are very specific performance dimensions the reviewers should follow, such as the presence of a thesis and strong evidence supporting each point. For example, if a grader receives 15 student essays, she may review each one

in turn. She will probably spend more time on the first few papers, carefully marking the grammar and structure of the essay. As the grader becomes fatigued, she may move to a more holistic scoring heuristic, deciding if an essay is "good" or "bad." The level of feedback given to each student can vary depending on where they are in the pile.

Good scoring guides ask specific questions about the work being evaulated. Making a judgment about whether there is a clearly written thesis statement in an essay is a much easier task than deciding if an essay is "well written." As you develop your workshop, you will create a set of scoring criteria that you and your students can follow when evaluating submitted assignments.

Workshops also allow students to evaluate example assignments uploaded by an instructor. You can upload good and bad examples of an assignment so students can practice critiquing. This gives students a valuable opportunity to calibrate their judgments against your expert opinion. If they realize their evaluation of a work is significantly different from yours, they can work with you to figure out why.

Setting up and managing workshops is a complex process. It can take a while to figure out how the system works. Once you get it up and running, however, it is a powerful learning tool.

How to Create a Workshop

Preparing a workshop so students can begin submitting their assignments is a three-step process. First, you need to add the workshop to your course. Second, you need to create the scoring guide you and your students will use to evaluate submissions. Third, if you want students to critique your example assignments, you need to upload those as well.

Adding a Workshop

To create a workshop for peer review of materials

1.   Click Turn Editing Mode On.
2.   Select Workshop from the Add Activity menu in the section where you want to place the link.
3.   On the Workshop page, shown in Figure 6-1, add a title and description.

Figure 6-1. Add a workshop

4.   Select the maximum grade for the workshop assignment.

5.   Choose a grading strategy from these five options:

No grading

Students who review assignments don't give each other grades, just comments. You can then grade the comments, which will give the commenting student his final grade.

Accumulative grading

Later in the process, you can create a multidimensional scoring rubric for students to score each other's work. Accumulative grading calculates the submitting student's final grade based on the cumulative grades received from her peers within each of the dimensions. You assign a scale and weight to each dimension when you develop the scoring guide.

Error Banded grading

You can create a rubric with only Yes/No decisions for the peer reviewer. For example, you could ask if there's a clearly defined thesis statement in an essay. If you use only Yes/No scales, you can create a grade table that determines the final score based on the number of Yeses or Nos.

Criterion grading

In the criterion grading scheme, you create a set of statements used to rank the assessment. Each statement has an associated suggested grade. The criterion statements and grades should be in order so reviewers can select the appropriate grade for the statement.

Rubrics

Rubrics use performance examples that guide decisions about quality. Each element in a rubric is scored on a five-point scale, with each point illustrated by an example of the performance. Reviewers select the level of quality on each element by comparing the submission with the example.

6. Pick the number of dimensions for the rubric. Each dimension is a different aspect of the performance.

7. Decide if you will allow resubmissions. Unlike the assignment module, the workshop module allows multiple submissions to be available at the same time. When the submissions are distributed for peer review, Moodle will randomly pick one of the submissions each time someone reviews the student's work.

8. Choose a number of assessments of example assignments from the teacher. As I mentioned above, you can upload examples of the assignment for students to assess before they move on to their peers' work. These training scores can be used to fine-tune a student's critical eye.

9. Determine the number of peer reviews a student must perform.

10. Choose whether self-assessment is required. Self-assessment always adds one assessment to the number of reviews of exemplars and peer reviews a student must perform.

11. Select whether assessments must be agreed on by peers. This feature requires the reviewer and the reviewee to agree on the reviewer's assessment before it is calculated. The student who submitted the assignment may disagree with the reviewer and send it back for reevaluation. This can continue until the deadline. If there is no agreement before the deadline, the review isn't used. If you're using assessment agreement, you can hide the grades before agreement. Students will have to reach an agreement on the comments only. Once they've agreed the comments are fair, the grade is revealed to the submitting student.

12. Set a maximum upload size for an assessment. The upper limit for the system is set by the system administrator.

13. Set the deadline for submission and review of the assignment.

14. Click Save Changes and you will be taken back to the course's main page.

Obviously, there's a lot here to make sense of without having seen the rest of the process. Bear with me for a bit while we look at how to set up the rest of the workshop, and this will become more obvious.

Creating Scoring Guides

Creating the workshop shell is only the first step. Once you've created the shell, you'll need to set up your rubric, upload exemplars, and finish setting up the workshop for your students.

To create a scoring guide for an accumulative grading scheme:

1. Click on the workshop you created in your main course page. You will then be taken to the Editing Assessment Elements page.

2. For each rubric dimension you created when you set up the workshop, you will see a description, scale, and weight entry, as shown in Figure 6-2.

Editing Assessment Elements ⑦

Element 1:	There is a clearly defined thesis
Type of Scale:	2 point Yes/No scale
Element Weight:	1

Element 2:	How well is the thesis supported by evidence?
Type of Scale:	5 point Excellent/Very Poor scale
Element Weight:	1

Figure 6-2. Accumulative grading scale

3. Enter the first performance dimension you want students to assess when looking at their peers' work. Each dimension should evaluate a critical aspect of the performance.

4. Select a scale for the element. Remember, the scale itself doesn't affect the weight given to that element. A 2-point Yes/No scale can be worth as much or more than a 100-point scale.

5. Set the weight of the element. The weight scale can be between 1 and 4 (the default is 1).

6. Repeat the process for each element you selected for your rubric.

7. Click Save Changes.

To create a scoring guide for the error-banded scoring guide:

1. Click on the workshop you created in your main course page. You will then be taken to the Editing Assessment Elements page.

2. Enter a description of each element as shown in Figure 6-3. These are the elements reviewers will make yes/no decisions about.

Figure 6-3. Error banding grading scale

3. Click Save Changes.

To create a criterion scoring guide:

1. Click on the workshop you created in your main course page. You will then be taken to the Editing Assessment Elements page.

2. Enter a set of criteria for grading the submission (see Figure 6-4). Criteria can be cumulative or self-contained and should be in order of either increasing or decreasing quality.

Figure 6-4. Criterion scoring guide

1. Enter a suggested grade for each criterion. The grades should also be in order.

2. Click Save Changes.

To create a scoring guide for the rubric grading scheme:

1. Click on the workshop you created in your main course page. You will then be taken to the Editing Assessment Elements page.

2. Enter a description for the first element in the rubric form, as shown in Figure 6-5.

Figure 6-5. Rubric scoring guide

1. Select an element weight between –4 and 4.

2. For each of the four grade elements, write a description of what a performance at that level would look like. If possible, use examples from previous student work.

3. Click Save Changes.

Once you've clicked Save Changes, you'll be taken to the Managing the Assessment Page. Below the assignment-description block, you'll see six tabs displaying the steps of the workshop setup and delivery process, as shown in Figure 6-6. Each tab enables different capabilities for you and your students.

Set Up Assignment
> This tab gives you the links to upload your example work for students to review.

Allow Student Submissions
> When this tab is activated, students can score the instructor's examples, upload their own submissions, and complete self-assessments. They will not see other students' submissions for peer review, however.

Allow Student Submissions and Assessments
>   During this phase, students can perform the actions listed above as well as score other students' work.

Allow Student Assessments
>   Once this phase is activated, students can only score instructor examples and perform self-assessments and peer reviews.

Calculation of Final Grades
>   Once all of the assessments are completed, you can set weights for each of the components.

Display Final Grades
>   After you've set the weighting for the final grades, the last phase displays the results.

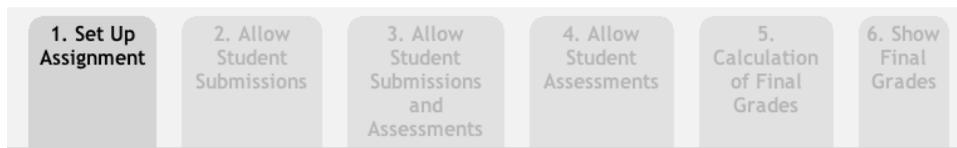| 1. Set Up Assignment	2. Allow Student Submissions	3. Allow Student Submissions and Assessments	4. Allow Student Assessments	5. Calculation of Final Grades	6. Show Final Grades

Figure 6-6. Workshop process tabs

After you've set up your scoring guide, you'll need to upload example assignments for students to review before they can review their peers' submissions.

Uploading Example Assignments

Below the six workshop process tabs, you'll see four links. The one we're interested in right now is the Submit Example Assignment link. Example assignments are graded by students before they move on to their peers' submissions. You may want to use examples from previous semesters, or you can create your own exemplars.

The idea behind using example assignments is to give students a chance to practice evaluating other assignments. Example assignments should contain both positive and negative examples of the scoring criteria so students can practice rating on both ends of the scale. For example, you may want to include one essay with a well-written thesis and a lot of good supporting material, but a number of spelling and grammatical errors as well. Alternatively, you can include an example with few errors and a good writing style, but a weak, poorly supported thesis.

To upload an example for assessment:

1.   Click Submit Example Assignment.

2.   Give your example a title. You *must* give your example a title or Moodle will reject it (see Figure 6-7).

Title	Action	Submitted	Assessments
☐ Example 3		Saturday, 4 September 2004, 12:33 PM	1
☐ Instructor Example 2		Friday, 3 September 2004, 11:18 AM	2
☐ Instructor Example 1		Friday, 3 September 2004, 11:17 AM	2

Submit your assignment using this form:

Title: [   ]

[   ] [Browse...] [Upload this file]

Figure 6-7. Upload example file

3.   Click the Browse… button to find the example file on your desktop.

4.   Click "Upload this file" to upload the example.

Once you've uploaded all your exemplars, you can assess them using the scoring guide. This will be important when comparing your judgment to the students' evaluation of your examples.

To score the example assignments:

1.   Click the Teacher Submissions for Assessment link below the Submit Example Assignment link.

2.   For each element in your scoring guide, rate your submitted example.

3.   Give feedback for each rating.

4.   Add general comments about the example.

5.   Click Save my Assessment.

> *Tip: As you rate your example, give detailed feedback about why you are giving each rating. If students can see your reasoning, they will find it easier to apply the same reasoning to their own peer evaluations.*

Once you've uploaded and scored all your examples, you are ready to move the workshop to the next phase.

Managing Workshops

Once you've set up your workshop, you will need to manage student submissions and evaluation. Fortunately, the workshop makes it easy to track student activity as it happens. You can also choose how much feedback you give to students at any given time.

Workshop Phases

The six tabs on the workshop screen represent the six phases of a workshop. We've just completed phase 1. Phases 2 through 4 allow students to interact with the workshop. Phase 2 allows students to upload their submissions and perform instructor and self-assessments but does not distribute submissions for peer review. Phase 3 allows students to do everything in phase 2, but also distributes submissions for peer review. Phase 4 allows only self- and peer-assessments.

You may not want to use all three phases. There are two strategies for managing workshop phases. The easiest, but not necessarily the best, is to use only phase 3 after you've set up the workshop in phase 1. This gives students maximum flexibility. They can upload their assignments at any point before the due date. The problem occurs when students begin to peer-review each other's work. If students are permitted to peer-review before all of the submissions are in, the submissions won't be distributed randomly. The students who submit and review early will see only other early submissions. Late submitters will see only late submissions. Students who submit too close to the deadline may not give their peers enough time to review their work.

The alternative strategy uses only phases 2 and 4. You can set an interim deadline for student submissions and only accept student work before this due date. After the submission deadline, you'll set the workshop to phase 4 and students will only be allowed to perform peer reviews. This strategy will help ensure an even distribution of student work for evaluation and ensure that everyone has sufficient time for review.

Student submissions

Once you've activated the Allow Student Submission tab, students can begin to interact with the workshop. If you've required students to assess instructor examples, they will need to complete that assessment before they can upload their own work.

The student view of the workshop is very different from your own. Students see a gradual process in which they must first evaluate the instructor examples. Once they've completed these, they will then see the interface to upload their own assignments. Only after they've uploaded their assignments can they access the link to perform self-assessments (see Figure 6-8).

Workshop

Due date: Friday, 17 December 2004, 04:10 PM (10 days 17 hours)
Maximum grade: 100
Details of Assessment: Specimen Assessment Form

Workshop description

Your Assessments of Examples from the Teacher

Title	Action	Comment
Instructor Example 1	View	Graded by Teacher

Assessments by Teachers

Title	Action	Comment
Student Essay 1	View	Friday, 3 September 2004, 11:41 AM

No Submissions available for assessment

Your Assessments

Title	Action	Comment
My Essay	View | Re-assess	Assessed on Saturday, 4 September 2004, 01:33 PM; Graded by Teacher; Assessment not yet agreed
Student Essay 1	View | Re-assess	Assessed on Friday, 3 September 2004, 11:47 AM; Own Work; Graded by Teacher; Assessment not yet agreed

Figure 6-8. Student view of a workshop

> *Warning: Student submissions do not immediately appear in the instructor's workshop interface. The workshop module depends on a process on the server that runs on a regular basis (called a cron job) and won't update the interface until the cron job is complete. Your system administrator can tell you how often the process runs and how often you can expect the workshop to be updated.*

Student assessments

Your view of student activity takes place on the main workshop page. Below the six workshop process tabs, you'll see three links that will help you track the workshop shown in Figure 6-9:

Ungraded Assessments of Teacher Submissions
  From here, can access student evaluations of your example submissions. You give each evaluation a grade and give the students feedback.

Ungraded Assessments of Student Submissions
  Like the assessment of instructor examples, you can grade the students' peer-review evaluations.

Student Submissions for Assessment

Use this link to grade the students' submissions directly. Later, you can use your rating to influence the final grade for the workshop.
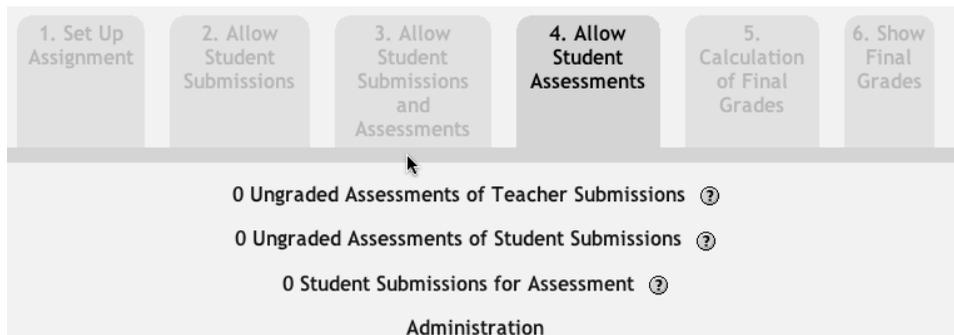

Figure 6-9. Student ativity lnks

Each of these grading opportunities is optional. Which you choose depends on how you want to calculate the final grade for the workshop. Each of these grades can be used in calculating the final grade, which I'll discuss below.

When you assess a student assignment, you'll see the same scoring guide you set up in the beginning of the workshop (see Figure 6-10). You'll use it to give the student a score for his work. Later, you can choose to include your assessment directly as part of the final grade or include it with the other peer reviews.
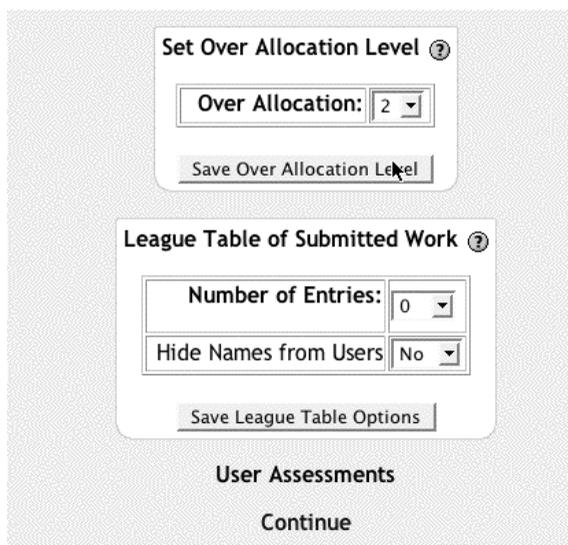
Administration

The administration area serves two important functions. First, below the tools, there is a complete record of all student submissions and evaluations. The system first lists your submissions and their assessments. Below your submissions is each student's assessment. It's easy to see the ratings each student has completed and get a quick overview of their scores. Finally, you'll see a list of each student's submissions with corresponding assessments.

Figure 6-10. Assess student work

The administration area also holds two important tools shown in Figure 6-11. The first tool sets the over allocation level. Over-allocation is the amount any given student submission will be assigned for peer review over the level needed for an even distribution of assignments. If the over-allocation is set to 0, then each submission is assigned the same number of times. Over-allocation greater than 0 allows each assignment to be assigned one or two more times more than the even distribution level.

Figure 6-11. Workshop administration tools

If you allow submission and peer review at the same time, increasing the over-allocation level will increase the chances a student won't have to wait for all the submissions before she receives her full quota of peer-review submissions. The disadvantage is that some students will receive one more or one less review of their assignment than their peers.

The other tool in the administration area creates a league table of student submissions. Like the standings in a sports league, a league table lists the highest-scoring papers. You can set the number of submissions listed and whether the students can see the names of the submitters.

Calculation of final grades

Once the workshop is completed, you can configure the calculation of the final grades by moving to phase 5. There are a number of factors you can weigh when assigning the final grade for the workshop, as shown in Figure 6-12. Each item is assigned a relative weight on a scale from 0 to 50. If each of the items is assigned a weight of 1, they will all factor equally into the score. The same will hold true if all the items are set to the same nonzero number. An item set to a weight of 10 will have 10 times the impact on the student's final grade than an item with a weight of 1, but 1/5 the impact of an item with a weight of 50.

Figure 6-12. Calculation of final grades

Weight for Teacher Assessments
   Teacher assessments are your grades for the students' submissions. Set this weight to
   a nonzero number to include your score as a separate factor.

Weight for Peer Assessments
   Assign a weighting factor for the scores from the peer-review process.

Weight for Bias
   This factor measures the bias of the student receiving the grade. Bias is measured as
   the difference between the student's rating of peer submissions and the peer averages
   for those assignments. So if a student consistently rates their peers higher or lower
   than the average, they will receive a lower bias score. The workshop developer
   recommends *not* giving the bias factor a high weight.

Weight for Reliability
   Reliability is another measure of how well the student's peer reviews compare to the
   average reviews. The reliability measure averages the difference between the
   student's grade and her peers' average grades after discounting for bias. So if a
   student closely follows the average score for all the assignments she assessed, she
   will get a good reliability rating.

Weight for Grading of Assessments

> This factor calculates how much weight your grades for student assessments will carry in the final calculation.

Option for Peer Grade: Include Teacher's Grade

> You can choose to roll your own grade of the student's submission into the peer assessments. If you feel the averages for peer assessments are too high or too low, you can add your own score for a student's submission into the average.

Once you save your final weights, you'll see a grade sheet listing each student in the class, the scores of each factor, and a final grade. If you're not happy with the grade calculation, you can go back and change the weighting before you determine the final grades.

Under the grade-weighting table, you'll also have the opportunity to create a new league table that will be visible when you publish the final grades.

After you've completed the grade weighting, you can display the final grades to the students by moving to the sixth and final phase, Display of Final Grades.

After the final grades are displayed, students can view their grades and the detailed score for each factor by clicking on the workshop link again.

Effective Workshop Practices

The workshop is the most complex tool we've looked at so far. The extensive setup and management process can be daunting, which is why it is especially important to have a plan for how you will use the workshop before you start working. If you know in advance how you want the workshop to function, the important evaluation criteria, and how the students will interact with the submissions and with each other, you'll save yourself a lot of potential confusion later.

There are a few important decisions to make before you get started:

- How many instructor examples do you want students to practice on?
- How many peer reviews can you reasonably expect them to perform?
- How long will you give students to submit? How long to perform assessments?
- How will you control the quality of the student assessments, i.e., how will you prevent students from just giving each other A's?
- Do you want the workshop to focus on peer assessment or instructor assessment?

Once you've made these decisions, you have the beginning of a plan for your workshop. The last decision is critical in determining the shape of your workshop. I've been in classes where peer review was required but didn't influence the grade. I've also been in

classes where peer assessment counted for half of the grade I received on a paper. It's important to decide this ahead of time so students know how much their peer ratings will influence the final grades.

If peer review is very important to the assignment, be sure to put measures in place to moderate student assessments. Plan on adding your assessment of a student's submission to the peer-review pool. This will help pull the average toward a score you think is reasonable without completely overriding the consensus view.

Creative Workshop Practices

Once you've mastered the basics of creating and managing a workshop, you can begin to use them in creative ways. I've detailed a few ideas below.

Intermediate steps

Writing, and many other creative processes, is an iterative endeavor. It takes multiple revisions of a work to make it the best it can be. Early in the process, it is useful to receive feedback from peers and experts about the structure and direction of the work.

To facilitate a continuous feedback process, consider setting up workshops for the intermediate steps in projects during the semester. For example, if students are writing an essay, you could set up a workshop for the topic proposal. Students could evaluate each other's proposals according to the dimensions you think are important. Later, they could submit outlines or early drafts for feedback as well.

For early work, you may want to make a student's grade more dependent on the feedback they give their peers than on the quality of the work itself. Later on, you could increase the value of the assessment of the work itself. Students won't have to submit perfect work right away, and the early grading and feedback on their assessments will help them calibrate their responses.

Presentations and performances

Most instructors use the workshop module to assess written work, but a workshop is not limited to just written assignments. Just like the assignment module, the workshop module can accept any electronic document smaller than the maximum upload limit. You could also submit links to media stored on other servers if a video or audio file is too large.

You can use the workshop module for peer feedback on presentations and performances. If students are required to give a presentation in class, you could set up a workshop for peer review and self-assessment. Students would submit their presentation slides or notes. The scoring guide could ask students to rate each other on both the live presentation and the submitted materials.

Randomly assigning assessments can be a useful motivational tool in this context. If students don't know in advance which presentations they will be required to assess, they are more likely to pay attention to all of the presentations and take good notes so they can articulate an informed judgment later.