Teaching with Technology Tip - Be A Student In Your Own Blackboard Course
August 29, 2014

Have you ever wondered how your students see and do things in your Blackboard course? You can now “be a student” to test this out. New this fall, the Student Preview feature allows you to toggle between an instructor and student role in your course to complete course actions just like your students. This feature is different from the Edit Mode On/Off toggle that you may have been using to check how course material appears to your students.

Student Preview is different from using Edit Mode. When Edit Mode is ON, you see all the course content and the editing controls for each item. Edit Mode OFF hides the editing controls but still may display some navigation bar content that would normally be hidden from a student. Also, it doesn’t enable you to see student-only content, such as My Grades.

With the Student Preview feature, you can see your courses and interact with them the same way as your students. You can easily switch into and out of a preview account that is automatically enrolled in the course as a student. Your student role is named Firstname Lastname_PreviewUser.

Click the Student Preview icon which is in the upper right of your screen, next to the Edit Mode On icon. An orange bar shows that you are in student view. Click anywhere in the course as a student and submit assignments, complete tests, and participate in discussion boards, blogs or wikis. Click on MyGrades to see how the Grade Center looks to your students—it is different and customizable. To see how your feedback appears to students, submit an assignment, then switch to instructor role to grade it, then switch back to student role to click on MyGrades and the Assignment name to see feedback. (You can open another browser to see both instructor and student preview roles at the same time.)

When exiting Student Preview, you have the option to “delete the preview user and all data,” or “keep the preview user and all data.” If you keep the preview user and data, you can then use your instructor role to test adaptive release features and grading in the Grade Center. Your Firstname Lastname_PreviewUser name will appear in the Grade Center, just like any other student. Here is a short video demonstration. http://youtu.be/N8sdNZvirKQ

Try being a student again, and see how this perspective helps you as a teacher.