Desire2Learn
LearningEnvironment

Learning Environment 10.3 Features Guide

Contents

Overview

About Learning Suite 10.3

Learning Suite 10.3 continues the momentum started with version 10.0 to update the design and interactions of key workflows in frequently used tools. We placed special focus on responding to client feedback and usability testing results. This document provides a summary of the new features introduced in this release.

Content

Changes to the Content tool in this release build upon efforts made in Learning Suite 10.1 and 10.2 to position Content as the central tool for building out a course structure and its materials.

Content Notifications

Instructors can now notify students of changed content when they update or change a file from Content. They can include a custom message with the notification and choose to reset completion tracking for students who have already completed the activity. Students who completed topics will see the word "Updated" beside the completion indicator to indicate they were reset.

Edit HTML File page with "Notify students that the content" has changed option

Updated content alerts for students

Expand and collapse improvements

The Table of Contents now remembers the expanded or collapsed state of modules across sessions, and includes options to **Expand All** or **Collapse All** modules with a single click. This allows students and instructors to switch between an easy-to-scan list of modules, and one displaying full details. They can also collapse completed modules as they progress through a course.
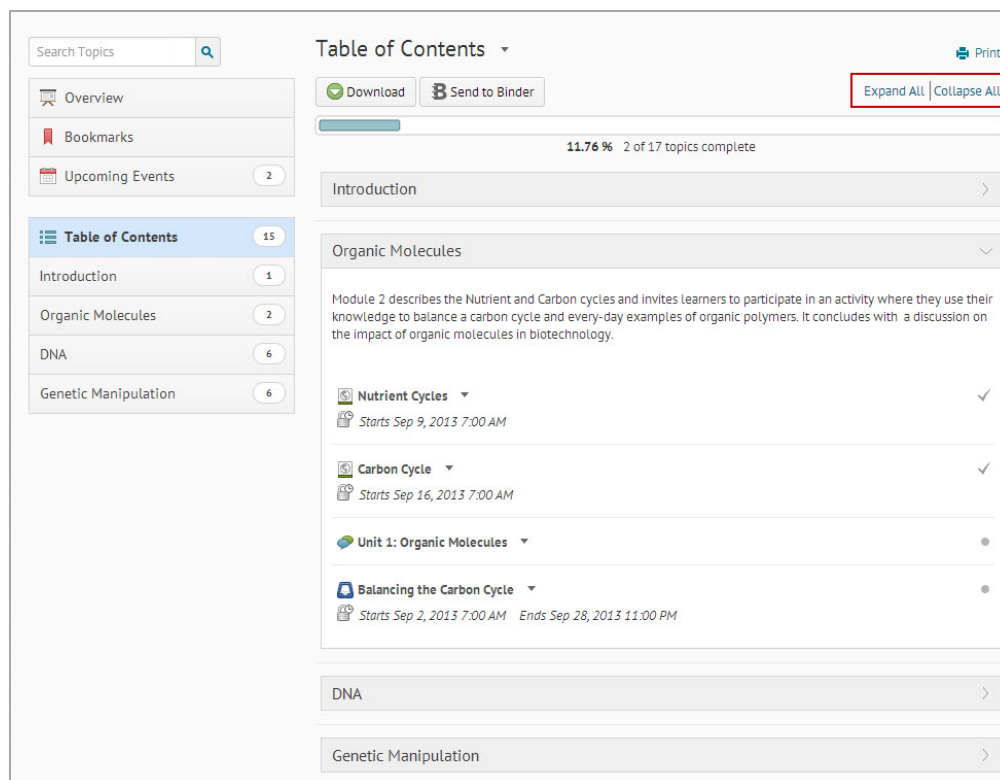
Table of Contents with Expand All / Collapse All controls

Return to Content workflow while editing a quiz, survey, or self assessment activity

When instructors edit a quiz, survey or self assessment in Content, they are now returned to the activity within Content when they click **Save and Close** or **Cancel**. Previously, the instructor was taken out of Content, onto the main page of Quizzes, Surveys, or Self Assessments.

Topic page graphic design and information hierarchy improvements

Graphic design and layout changes were made to topic/activity pages to make them consistent with the Table of Contents view, and to provide visual separation between the main content/activity and the properties and information associated with it.

Table of Contents > Organic Molecules > Carbon Cycle

📖 Carbon Cycle ▾

Instructions

Reminder a full submission includes: a literature review, a peer-reviewed draft, and your final essay.

Submissions

No submissions yet. Drag and drop to upload your assignment below.

Drop files here, or click below!

⬆ Upload   Choose Existing

☁ Reflect in ePortfolio

Activity Details ⌄

• Task: Submit to complete this assignment

Assessment

▦ Grammar and Formatting
▦ Content and Flow

Table of Contents > Organic Molecules > Carbon Cycle

📖 Carbon Cycle ▾

Instructions

Add Instructions...

> Add Attachments

☁ Reflect in ePortfolio

Activity Details ⌄

✓ Required: Automatic ▾

Submit to the Dropbox folder to complete the activity

Add dates and restrictions...   ✓ Published ▾

Options

Unlimited files
All submissions are kept

Reflecting in ePortfolio is enabled

Assessment

Essays:
First Essay   - / 50

▦ Grammar and Formatting
▦ Content and Flow

Learning Objectives ›

Completion Summary ›

Last Modified 9/16/2013 5:28 PM

Examples of updated student and instructor views of a dropbox activity with rubric associations

Better handling of external links and unsupported file types

Improvements were made to support for external links and file types that cannot load in-place as users navigate between topics. External links automatically open in a new tab or window, as well as a placeholder page within Content. This allows tracking of whether the link was visited while maintaining navigation, and accepts the request to open the link externally. If an instructor includes a file that cannot be displayed in-place, we now provide a placeholder page that includes a **Download** option for the file.
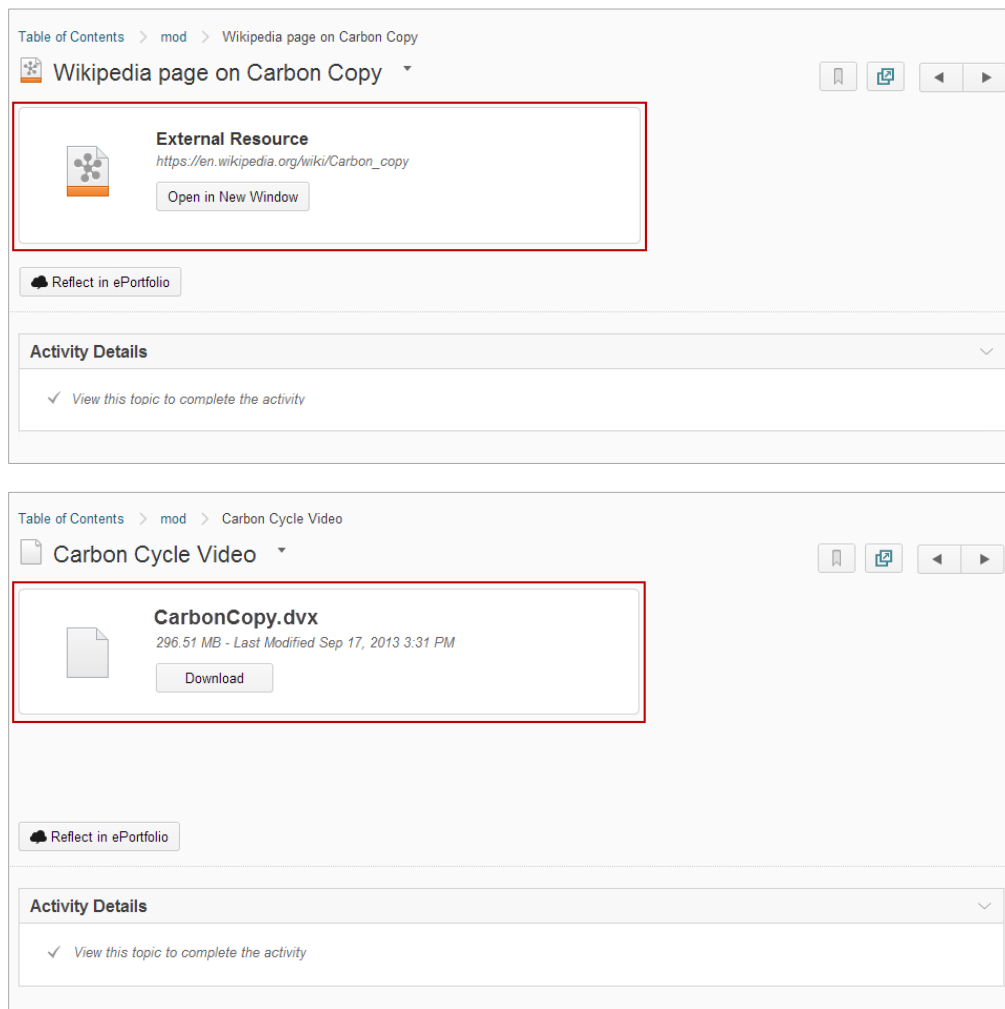
Example of external link and unsupported file type topics

Discussions

Learning Environment 10.2 introduced the first set of updates to our Discussions functionality, starting us on a path toward a simpler, more engaging Discussions tool. The 10.3 release of Discussions introduces a number of updates which will further help instructors deliver the pedagogically-sound learning activities they need.

Improved Discussions List

As an ever-increasing number of discussions are created, there is a need to provide high-level information in a more compact, less cluttered manner. Learning Environment 10.3 introduces a new Discussions List which further enforces the notion of "focus on the conversation, not the overhead".

The new Discussions List presents information about your topics in a compact and easy-to-scan format. Quickly scan down the columns to see which topics have unread or unapproved posts, and dive into the conversation with a single click.

For courses with a very large number of forums and topics, there is now a "Hide All Topics" option which allows you to hide all the topics in your course so you only need show those topics you care about.

To further reduce confusion, the ability to subscribe to a forum or topic has been moved into the forum or topic's context menu, along with all other actions for that forum or topic.
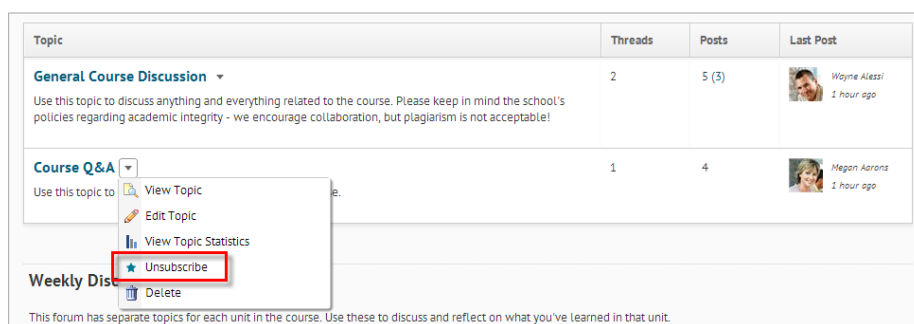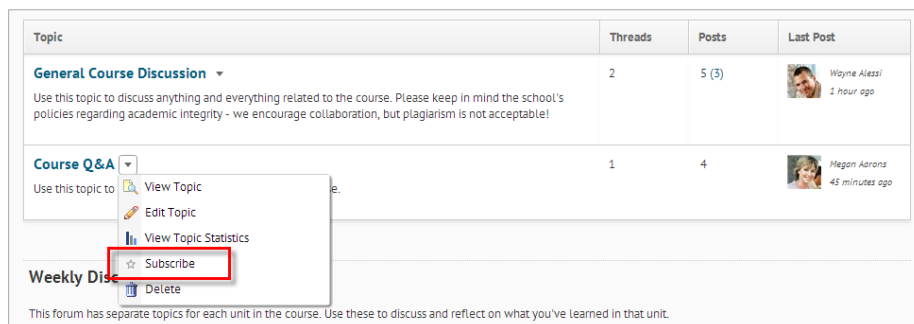
Improved options for rating discussions

Learning Environment 10.3 includes some much-needed updates to how Discussions uses ratings. The most visible update is that now you can set ratings on a per-topic basis, rather than for the entire course.
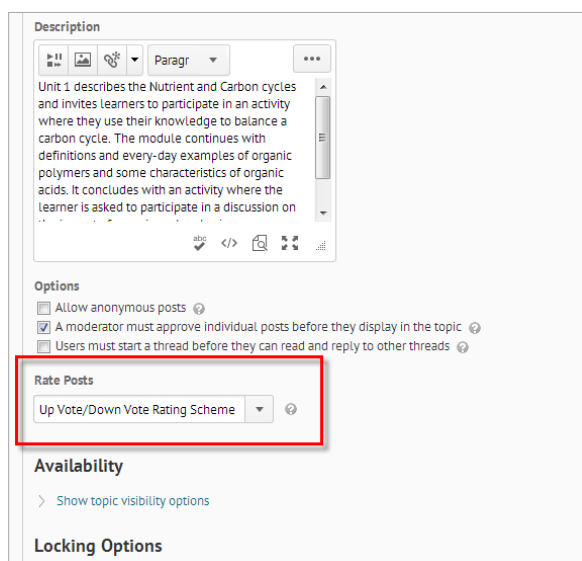
Learning Environment 10.3 also introduces two new rating schemes for discussions based on voting (in addition to the existing 5-star rating scheme). The first new scheme allows the class to vote posts up and down, giving each post a cumulative score.

The second new rating scheme allows the class to only vote posts up as a way to show agreement or approval.

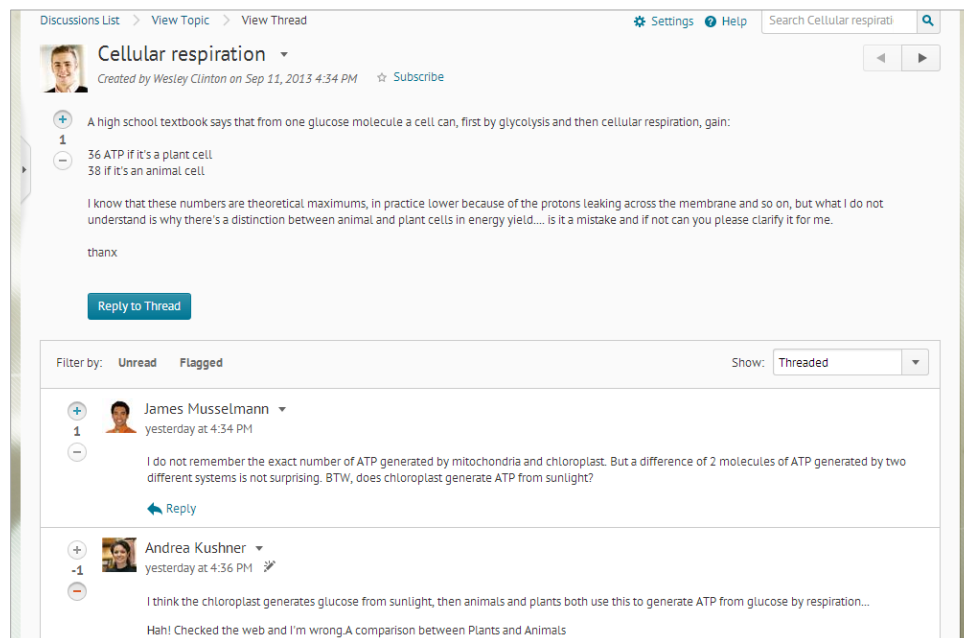In both schemes, your vote displays along with the cumulative score for that post. You can also configure it to show only your vote for cases where you don't want students to see the cumulative score.

To make it easier for instructors to use these new rating schemes, they can set a default rating scheme in Discussions Settings that apply for all newly created topics and any topics imported to the course without a rating scheme set.
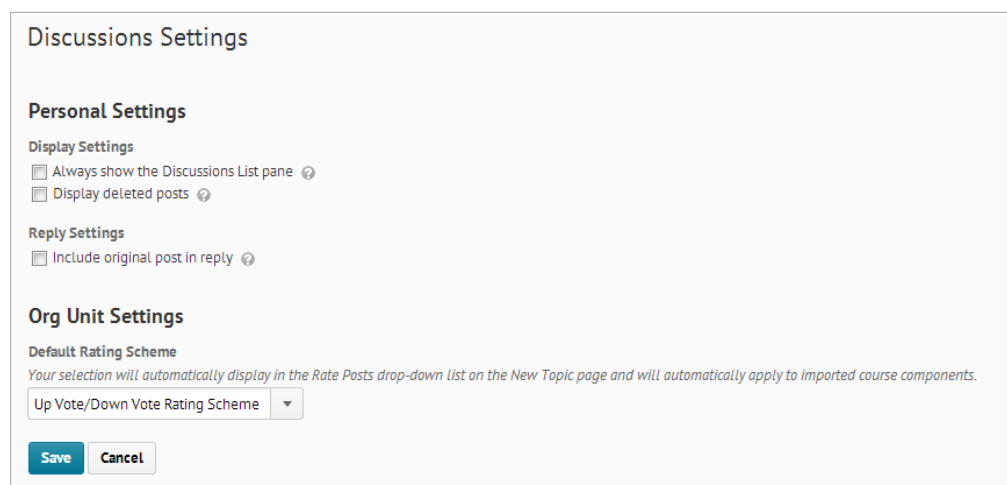
If an instructor wishes to change the rating scheme in the middle of a discussion, they are free to do so, and all rating data is preserved in case they decide to switch back.

These new rating schemes are great for running activities like a Q&A or a class-curated FAQ; simply create a topic with one of the two new rating schemes, and use the "Highest Rated Thread" sort option in the topic to show popular questions at the top of the page.

Similarly, when viewing a thread, use the "Highest Rated Reply" sort option to bring the most popular answers to the top.

Improvements to Must Post to Participate

The 10.0 release of Discussions introduced the ability to force students to create a thread before being able to read and reply to other student's posts. The 10.3 release of Discussions introduces two improvements to this feature.

First, instructors can now set posting restrictions at the forum level, which will then apply to all topics within that forum. This is great for situations where instructors are making use of group topics - now the option only has to be set once, rather than on each topic individually.

Weekly Discussions
Must post first.
This forum has separate topics for each unit in the course. Use these to discuss and reflect on what you've learned in that unit.

∨ Hide Topics

Topic	Threads	Posts	Last Post
Unit 1: Organic Molecules ▾			
⚠ *Moderated.*			
Unit 1 describes the Nutrient and Carbon cycles and invites learners to participate in an activity where they use their knowledge to balance a carbon cycle. The module continues with definitions and every-day examples of organic polymers and some characteristics of organic acids. It concludes with an activity where the learner is asked to participate in a discussion on the impact of organic molecules in biotechnology.			
You must start a thread and have it approved before you can read and reply to other threads			
Unit 2: DNA ▾			
🔒 *Unlocked: Monday, October 7, 2013 9:00 AM EDT - Friday, October 25, 2013 5:00 PM EDT.*			
Unit 2 gets back to the roots of DNA research, and introduces the learner to some of the founding fathers in the field. After introducing the learner to the history of genetic engineering, Module 3 continues with an explanation of the roles that DNA plays in the life of an organism and concludes with a brief introduction to chromosomes and some of the characteristics of these genetic building blocks.			
You must start a thread before you can read and reply to other threads			

Second, we have introduced a new permission: **Override Must Post to Participate Restrictions**. When a role is granted this permission, they can read and reply to a topic without first having to create a new thread. This is great for TA-type roles that need to be keeping an eye on the discussion, but who shouldn't have full permission to manage Discussions.

Improvements to discussion statistics

Discussion statistics are a great way for instructors to see what's happening in their discussions at a high level. In the 10.3 release of Discussions, statistics will now call out the number of threads created and replies posted separately:

First Name ▲ , Last Name	Number of Posts				
	Threads	Replies	Read	Unapproved	Scored
Aldo Calle	2	8	30	1	0
Alexa Ewald	3	5	22	0	0
Andrea Kushner	5	12	43	2	0
Bryan Krach	0	2	10	0	0
Ceasar Bentley	1	1	3	0	0
Chloe Shields	1	12	28	5	0
Chung Bartram	0	0	0	0	0
Della Evert	1	2	8	0	0
Fred Simmer	6	20	55	0	0

This is very helpful when instructors are running activities where students must compose a certain number of original threads and then reply to other student's threads.

Discussion statistics has also been updated to include information about the voting-style rating schemes.

Forum/Topic Title	Number of Posts					Post Ratings		
	Threads	Replies	Pinned	Unapproved	Scored	Up	Down	Star
⊟ Welcome to Foundations of Biotechnology	0	0	0	0	0			
General Course Discussion	0	0	0	0	0	122	78	
Course Q&A	0	0	0	0	0			3.5
⊟ Weekly Discussions	0	0	0	0	0			
Unit 1: Organic Molecules	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	
Unit 2: DNA	0	0	0	0	0	42		

Note Statistics for ratings no longer appear rolled up at the forum level.

Data Purge for Email now available

Email messages can consume a significant amount of storage space. To help deal with this concern, we've introduced new Data Purge plugins for Email. These plugins will automatically archive and purge email messages older than six months, allowing clients to reclaim a significant amount of storage.

Discussions Grid View removed

The Grid View in Discussions is deprecated and is no longer available. This allows you to focus on a single, unified view of Discussion, and no longer requires you to support two separate and very different views of Discussions.

Shared Forums removed

In order to streamline workflows and reduce confusion among first-time users, the existing Shared Forums tool has been removed in Learning Environment 10.3. Existing Shared Forums will be migrated to standard discussions residing at the level from which they were shared.

For clients who wish to continue sharing forums, this can easily be accomplished by creating a forum or topic at the level you wish to share it from, then linking to it from anywhere in the system using options like custom navbar links, shared homepage widgets, global news items, etc.

For more information on how to share forums without the Shared Forums tool, please see the Learning Environment Upgrade Guide 10.3.

Quizzes and Surveys

Both Quizzes and Surveys have undergone usability improvements in their tab structure and the contents within tabs to make creation and management more intuitive, allowing you to complete these tasks faster. You can now create and manage the most important and commonly-used information in the initial tabs, and gradually take advantage of more advanced options in the latter tabs.

Add/edit questions first

In the past, users creating quizzes and surveys had to navigate to the last tab to create or edit questions.

Now users can begin adding questions from the first tab, and not the last.

New Assessment tab

For Quizzes, all information related to quiz assessment such as associated Grade Items, Rubrics, and Attempts are now combined into a new Assessment tab. For Surveys, the ability to associate Rubrics is now moved to the Assessment tab.

New Quiz Assessment Tab

New Surveys Assessment tab

IP restrictions now applicable to quiz submission views

Now the same IP restrictions which apply to students taking a quiz can apply to a quiz's submission view: the view of quiz information, such as the user's score and optional question and answer information, after the user has submitted a quiz. This extends the security feature, providing additional protection of question & answer information once a quiz is submitted.

You can add IP restriction on submission views by clicking **Add Additional View** in the Submission Views tab and creating an additional view with the **IP Restriction** check box selected. This selected check box will apply the same IP address restrictions used for quiz completion to quiz submission view.

Setting IP address restrictions on students' quiz submission view

Limiting the availability duration of quiz submission views

Previously, quiz submission views (which can include the user's score and optional question & answer information), had a starting availability date and time that ended at a defined date and time. As a result, students submitting their quizzes at different times would have unequal access duration to the quiz's submission view. However, in version 10.3, when you want to create the same limited availability of the quiz submission view for all students, you can set a length of time in minutes the view is available in the Limited Duration area, and the starting availability now begins at time of an individual's submission.


Setting the availability duration of students' quiz submission view

Dropbox

Evaluate non-submissions and system-external submissions

It is now possible to evaluate a student from Dropbox even if no submission was made to the dropbox folder. This supports the cases in which an instructor wants to assign a student a comment and a grade after the due date has passed, or the submission occurs outside of Learning Environment. Currently this feature is only available from Dropbox, but we plan to implement this feature for Content's Dropbox Completion Summary in a future release.
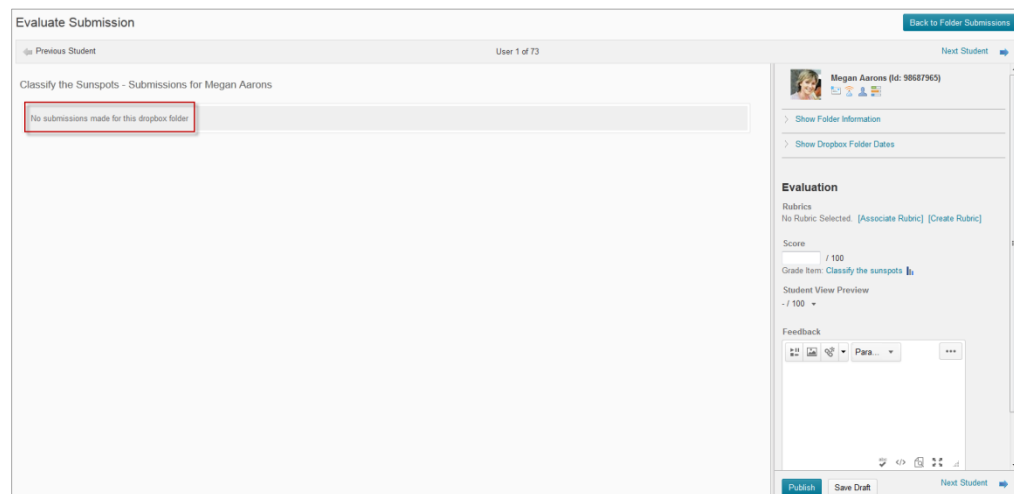
Evaluate a student's dropbox folder non-submission

Rubrics

Student view of rubrics from Content before and after a dropbox folder submission

Now students submitting to a dropbox folder from Content can access the dropbox folder's evaluation rubrics before submission, and also access completed rubrics after their evaluations are published.

Student View of a rubric before submitting to a dropbox folder

Student view of a completed rubric