

# **Extreme Usability Issues with the Online Submission for the Assignment 2.3 Module**

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I have spent the last couple of months finding out how many new and wonderful things we can now do with rubrics and the advanced grading part of the assignment module, but I've been mostly looking at it for offline assignments and upload assignments. It is amazing!

I am hopeful that we will be able to discuss, here, how best to resolve the remaining feature issues so that teachers will love it more now than ever.

# The Way it Used to Be (or, Why We Fell in Love)

This is just a shot from way back (early 1.9, I think) that shows why teachers loved this assignment type so much and why they are frustrated with the current workflow in 2.3. The red annotations are from back then when I was touting the advantages to using Moodle assignments. The orange and black and white annotations are the relevant marks for today's discussion.

**Usability Plusses** (aka what we loved and why we loved it so much):

1. The grade, the feedback, and the submission were all conveniently visible in one place so you didn't have to worry about getting confused regarding whose work you were looking at, nor would you forget between clicks what you'd intended to say for feedback.
2. It has already been pointed out that inline comments were really popular and are no longer available. Having the ability to delete what you didn't need from the entry and focus on the relevant parts of concern was MUCH handier than having to copy/paste a quote in from an entry displaying in a different window. (see current workflow discussion below)
3. Save changes was easily accessible and would take me to the next entry right away without me having to click back and forth at all. PLUS, as I've noted elsewhere in a separate tracker item, I could choose whether I sent a grade notification out or not for that particular grade change posting (handy if you save it only to find that there was a minor error you need to fix; no need to keep notifying students over and over in the same grading cycle).
4. All 312 words showed up in the same space. Sure, I had to scroll, but that was much better than trying to click back and forth between windows.

The screenshot shows a Moodle assignment interface for 'Romeo and Juliet Sample Unit'. The top navigation bar includes 'MAOnline > R&JSample > Assignments > R & J Journal/Short Writing Assignment'. A red box highlights 'easy to track student submissions' with an arrow pointing to 'View 3 submitted assignments'. The main content area shows a student submission by William Shakespeare, dated Thursday, 26 June 2008, 10:35 PM. The submission text is 'Thoughtful choices for casting. I'd be interested in seeing this production! A little bit short on content, though. Late penalty applies.' A red box highlights this text with an arrow pointing to '1'. Below the submission, a black box contains the text 'The entry would automatically post here, inline, too, for ease of making comments directly within the student's work, when necessary. VERY useful'. A red box highlights the 'Send notification emails' checkbox, which is checked, with an arrow pointing to '3'. Below this, a red box highlights 'automatic late flags and messages' with an arrow pointing to '4'. The submission is marked as '(76 days 6 hours late)'. The submission text is '(copy of actual student submission)'. The submission is marked as 'G) I would like to put on my own production of Romeo and Juliette. I want to'. The submission is marked as '(312 words)'. The submission is marked as 'Grade 31 / 40' and 'Final grade: 31.00'. The submission is marked as 'Save changes' and 'Cancel' buttons. The submission is marked as 'Save and show next' and 'Next' buttons. The submission is marked as 'Jump to...' and 'Update this Assignment' buttons. The submission is marked as 'All participants' and 'Separate groups' buttons. The submission is marked as 'Direction responding length/del' and 'a) Through and Julie J, and exp Laurence' and 'b) Parent Montague can't see points.' and 'c) Write a be in her as possib justify you' and 'd) Fate: a them, how several p outcome make it se effect-me text to support your points.'

## The Way it Was in 2.2

Home > Courses > Grade Level Sample Courses > Eng8DataDemo2 > 16 January - 22 January > Poetry Journal #1

[View 10 submitted assignments](#)

**Poetry Journal #1**

Use the poems from previous assignments as models of definition poems in order to complete this journal:

- 1) "Poetry," Marianne Moore
- 2) "The Voice You Hear When You Read Silently," Thomas Lux
- 3) "The Trouble with Poetry," by Billy Collins
- 4) "Some People Like Poetry," by Wislawa Szymborska

**Directions:** Write a poem of your own defining your idea of what poetry is. Make it at least fifteen to twenty lines long. (Caution: A poem is not a dictionary entry. For example, if you think rhyme is an important part of poetry, make your poem rhyme to show this, but don't make one of your lines, "A poem should rhyme.")

**Available from:** Tuesday, 17 January 2012, 10:00 am

## View All Submitted Assignments

1. I could choose to look at the entire submission in a pop-up that still allowed me to control other open windows so that I could line it up next to my comments/grade window when using quick-grade (see quick grade on example).
2. I could choose to view one submission at a time by clicking the Grade/Update link.

Home > Courses > Grade Level Sample Courses > Eng8DataDemo2 > 16 January - 22 January > Poetry Journal #1 > View 10 submitted assignments

[See all course grades](#)

First name : [AllABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ](#)  
Surname : [AllABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ](#)

Page: 1 2 (Next)


[Download all assignments as a zip](#)

|  | <a href="#">First name / Surname</a> ↓         | <a href="#">Grade</a> | <a href="#">Comment</a> | <a href="#">Last modified (Submission)</a>                       | <a href="#">Last modified (Grade)</a> | <a href="#">Status</a> | <a href="#">Final grade</a> |
|--|--|-----------------------|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
|  | <a href="#">Louisa May Alcott Test Student</a> | 16 / 20               | Good ideas, ...         | <a href="#">I wrote ...</a><br>Thursday, 8 March 2012, 02:05 pm  | Friday, 9 March 2012, 02:53 pm        | <a href="#">Update</a> | 16.00                       |
|  | <a href="#">Jane Austen Test Student</a>       | 20 / 20               | Good work.              | <a href="#">I like ...</a><br>Thursday, 8 March 2012, 03:07 pm   | Thursday, 13 September 2012, 12:19 pm | <a href="#">Update</a> | 20.00                       |
|  | <a href="#">Anne Bradstreet Test Student</a>   | 18 / 20               | Creative! ...           | <a href="#">I once ...</a><br>Thursday, 8 March 2012, 05:35 pm   | Friday, 9 March 2012, 02:53 pm        | <a href="#">Update</a> | 18.00                       |
|  | <a href="#">Willa Cather Test Student</a>      | 10 / 20               | Late ...                | <a href="#">Sorry this ...</a><br>Friday, 9 March 2012, 03:57 pm | Friday, 9 March 2012, 04:21 pm        | <a href="#">Update</a> | 10.00                       |
|  | <a href="#">Smith Student Demo 1</a>           | -                     |                         |  |                                       | <a href="#">Grade</a>  | -                           |
|  | <a href="#">Charles Dickens Test Student</a>   | 15 / 20               | You worked ...          | <a href="#">I'm not ...</a><br>Thursday, 8 March 2012, 04:53 pm  | Friday, 9 March 2012, 02:53 pm        | <a href="#">Update</a> | 15.00                       |

## Assignment Grade and Give Feedback Screen for One Student in 2.2

1. I don't have any ready-made tests that have a large word-count, but I don't think they were truncated in 2.2. This is the whole test entry here. Note that like before, I can see the full submission and the grade/feedback options next to each other.
2. I didn't test automatic reproduction of entry for inline comments in the feedback area, but I'm pretty sure it still worked that way as of 2.2.
3. Note, too, that I could still control whether that feedback notification update went out via email or not.
4. The option to save and move on to the next entry is still there.

**Feedback: Jane Austen Test Student**

 Jane Austen Test Student  
Thursday, 8 March 2012, 03:07 pm

**Submission**

1

Open in a popup window (25 words)  
I like writing novels, but you will also find some bits of poetry woven into them, too. Check out what I've written [here](#).

**Grades**

Grade: 20 / 20  
Current grade in gradebook: 20.00

**Feedback**


2

Feedback:  


Font family Font size Paragraph  
B I U ABC x x  
Good work.

3

Path: p

Send notifications  ☐

**Last grade**

 Master Shakespeare Test Teacher  
Friday, 9 March 2012, 02:53 pm (187 days 21 hours)

4

Save changes Save and show next Next Cancel

## View all assignments with quick grade enabled in 2.2

Before rubrics were integrated with the assignment module, the simplest way for me to grade large numbers of submissions was to turn on quick grade and go down the line, clicking on each submission to get the pop-up, making comments right there in the grade window, marking the grade, and saving changes periodically (about every four or five grades, or so).

1. Note that pop-ups of FULL individual assignments can display next to the window where I'm marking and I can keep track of whose entry I'm grading without clicking back and forth.  
2. The grade and feedback are easily accessible with no clicking or mental gymnastics to remember where I was what I wanted to say on this, hypothetically the 50th poem I'd graded in 4 hours. And that's really it: It isn't just that the clicking in 2.3 adds extra steps and makes us work harder than we want to work; it breaks concentration and communication patterns. See for yourself below.

The screenshot shows the Moodle interface for 'English 8 Student Data Demo v2'. A table lists student submissions with columns for First name / Surname, Grade, Comment, and Last modified. A pop-up window for 'Louisa May Alcott Test Student: Poetry Journal #1' is open, showing the submission text 'I wrote this poem.' and a 'Close this window' button. Arrows and numbered circles (1 and 2) highlight the workflow: (1) clicking the submission in the table to open the pop-up, and (2) clicking the grade field in the table to open the grade window.

| First name / Surname           | Grade   | Comment   | Last modified                                |
|--------------------------------|---------|---|--|
| Louisa May Alcott Test Student | 16 / 20 | Good ideas, but you missed some of the point    | I wrote ... Thursday, 8 March 2012, 02:05 pm |
| Jane Austen Test Student       | 20 / 20 | Good work.                                      | I like ... Thursday, 8 March 2012, 02:05 pm  |
| Anne Bradstreet Test Student   | 18 / 20 | Creative! One or two places in this poem didn't | I once ... Thursday, 8 March 2012, 02:05 pm  |

## And the workflow now in 2.3...

1. First, let me say that the grading summary is a really nice addition. Simple and very useful to see how many submissions still need to be graded.
2. The link to view/grade all submissions is accessible in the settings block and below, so no trouble there, either. It isn't until you click the link that the trouble begins.

**Settings**

- Assignment administration
  - Edit settings
  - Locally assigned roles
  - Permissions
  - Check permissions
  - Filters
  - Logs
  - Backup
  - Restore
  - Advanced grading
  - View gradebook
  - View/grade all submissions
  - Download all submissions
- Course administration
  - Switch role to...
  - My profile settings

Home ► My courses ► May 18 - May 24 ► Poetry Journal: Definition Poems

### Poetry Journal: Definition Poems

**Poetry Journal: Definition Poems**

Use the poems from our weekly readings as models of definition poems in order to complete this journal:

- 1) "Poetry," Marianne Moore
- 2) "Some People Like Poetry," by Wislawa Szymborska

**Directions:** Write a poem of your own defining your idea of what poetry is. Make it at least fifteen to twenty lines long. (Caution: A poem is not a dictionary entry. For example, if you think rhyme is an important part of poetry, make your poem rhyme to show this, but don't make one of your lines, "A poem should rhyme.")






**1 Grading summary**

|                |                                  |
|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Students       | 6                                |
| Submitted      | 6                                |
| Needs grading  | 1                                |
| Due date       | Thursday, May 31, 2012, 12:45 PM |
| Time remaining | Assignment is due                |

**2 View/grade all submissions**

## View/Grade All Submissions


1. Note how overwhelmingly large this list of submissions is now, in both screen real estate AND information. There is a LOT of good info here, but it is hard to see even when I make the window as large as it can get on my Macbook.
2. The addition of the inline submission comments here is really nice, but I didn't understand it was a two-way conversation spot until I looked at it from the student perspective. I also found out that "save comment" link is the only way the comment will save. Saving grades and feedback won't save submission comments. Not a big deal, but it is good to know that the save is a two-step save.
3. We already have a big scroll problem in this space, so I am fine with truncation of the entry (even to the one or two word truncation we had before). However, see what happens next when I click the spy glass.


| Home > My courses > May 18 - May 24 > Poetry Journal: Definition Poems > Grading  |                        |  |   |   |   |  |                                       |  |               |  |
|---|------------------------|--|---|---|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------|--|
| Choose...   |                        |  |   |   |   |  |                                       |  |               |  |
| Poetry Journal: Definition Poems  |                        |  |   |   |   |  |                                       |  |               |  |
| picture   | First name / Last name | Status   | Grade   | Last modified (submission)              | Online text   | Submission comments  | Last modified (grade)                 | Feedback comments  | Final grade   |  |
|  | Smith Student Demo 1   | Submitted for grading 104 days 11 hours late<br>Graded |  10.00 / 20.00 | Wednesday, September 12, 2012, 11:48 PM |  3<br><b>Dots</b><br><br>"An artwork is a dot on a line."<br><br>"Art is a state of encounter."<br><br>--Nicolas Bourriard,<br><i>Relational Aesthetics</i><br><br>Are all dots in ...<br><br>(75 words) | <b>Comments (2)</b><br><br>Smith Student Demo 1 - 11:50 PM, Sep 12<br>Hi, Mrs. Smith. I am sorry this is late!<br><br>Smith Teacher Demo 1 - 1:05 PM, Sep 13<br>Interesting poem. I'm sorry it is late, too. Please submit it for publication in the literary magazine, and I will cringe as I now apply the extreme late penalty to this masterpiece.<br><br>Add a comment...<br>  | Thursday, September 13, 2012, 1:16 PM | General comments on where submission meets skill benchmarks, etc. etc. | 10.00 / 20.00 |  |

## Detail of workflow after clicking on the spy glass.

### Radical in the upheaval

I can see the whole text, but this did not open in a new window. It opened in the same window and wiped out any comments or grades I hadn't saved in the previous window yet . Plus, now I have to go back to a screen where I can't see the text to remind myself what I wanted to say.



 Home | You are logged in as Smith Teacher Demo 1 (Logout)



## View/Grade All Submissions

Okay, so I click the back button, and now I have to assign the grade still, which means I have to click the checkmark icon.

Home > My courses > > May 18 - May 24 > Poetry Journal: Definition Poems > Grading

Choose...

### Poetry Journal: Definition Poems

| picture | First name / Last name | Status  | Grade         | Last modified (submission)              | Online text  | Submission comments   | Last modified (grade)                 | Feedback comments  | Final grade   |
|---------|------------------------|---|---------------|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|--|---------------|
|         | Smith Student Demo 1   | Submitted for grading<br>104 days<br>11 hours<br>late<br>Graded | 10.00 / 20.00 | Wednesday, September 12, 2012, 11:48 PM | <b>Dots</b><br><br>"An artwork is a dot on a line."<br><br>"Art is a state of encounter."<br><br>--Nicolas Bourriard,<br><i>Relational Aesthetics</i><br><br>Are all dots in ...<br><br>(75 words) | <b>Comments (2)</b><br><br>Smith Student Demo 1 - 11:50 PM, Sep 12<br>Hi, Mrs. Smith. I am sorry this is late!<br><br>Smith Teacher Demo 1 - 1:05 PM, Sep 13<br>Interesting poem. I'm sorry it is late, too. Please submit it for publication in the literary magazine, and I will cringe as I now apply the extreme late penalty to this masterpiece.<br><br>Add a comment...<br>Save comment   Cancel | Thursday, September 13, 2012, 1:16 PM | General comments on where submission meets skill benchmarks, etc. etc. | 10.00 / 20.00 |

## Detail of workflow after clicking on checkmark grade icon or update option under edit.

1. Back to the truncated view.
2. I am really liking this new feature. This is not a comment I would ever make to a real student, but it is one I've wanted to write upon occasion. :-) Again, I say, yay for the new comments feature!
3. These three features are largely still the same and still intact. Please keep them!

Are all dots in ...  
(75 words)

Submission comments

Comments (2)

Smith Student Demo 1 - 11:50 PM, Sep 12  
Hi, Mrs. Smith. I am sorry this is late!

Smith Teacher Demo 1 - 1:05 PM, Sep 13  
Interesting poem. I'm sorry it is late, too. Please submit it for publication in the literary magazine, and I will cringe as I now apply the extreme late penalty to this masterpiece.

Add a comment...

Save comment | Cancel

Grade out of 20 10

Current grade in gradebook: -

Grading student 1 of 6

Feedback comments

Font family Font size Paragraph

B I U ABC X<sub>1</sub> X<sub>2</sub>

General comments on where submission meets skill benchmarks, etc. etc.

Path: p

Save changes Save and show next Cancel

Next



## Student View Workflow Issues, too

1. I wanted to see what the student sees, so I logged in as the student user. It turns out that the student can't see his/her full entry after it has been submitted either. That is a problem. A big problem. We use this area A LOT for discussing growth in portfolios, etc. I happen to have "allow edit after deadline" turned on, in which case the student can see her work that way, but this is not always possible.

2. Worse, the teacher's feedback is truncated. The student can't see all of my feedback without clicking on the spy glass. Do you know the chances of the student reading my feedback even if it is right there in front of them? And now the ones who want to read it have to notice the spy glass and know to click on it to read it.

Okay, so let's click on it.

Overflows.  
"Tree roots," the plumber declares, and begins

To extract ...  
(63 words) **1**

Submission comments

▼Comments (2)

Smith Teacher Demo 1 - 13 Sep, 00:07

Not exactly a definition of poetry, but a good example poem.

Smith Teacher Demo 1 - 13 Sep, 00:10

This version is much improved.

Add a comment...

Save comment | Cancel

Edit my submission

Feedback

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Grade             | 18.00 / 20.00   |
| Graded on         | Thursday, 13 September 2012, 12:46 AM   |
| Graded by         | <div>Smith Teacher Demo 1</div>   |
| Feedback comments | <div><b>2</b> 🔍 So it appears the feedback comments are for the assignment wrap-up, and the subr...</div> |

as TestD studentD (Logout)

## Student view of feedback after clicking on the spyglass icon

Like the teacher, the student has to click back and forth between screens to view her full grade and feedback info when it should all be in the same area for her to make it make the most sense and learn from it.

**Poetry Journal: Definition Poems**

**Poetry Journal: Definition Poems**

Use the poems from our weekly readings as models of definition poems in order to complete this journal:

1) "Poetry," Marianne Moore


2) "Some Poets Like Poetry," William S. Burroughs

Ignore my aha moment about the difference in feedback types. This was just before I tried to edit a submission from the student's viewpoint (with submission comments newly enabled) and figured out that the comments area can be a two-way conversation (yay!).

Note that this student can see the assignment directions, but she can't see what she wrote to merit the feedback given.

So it appears the feedback comments are for the assignment wrap-up, and the submission comments are time-stamped/dated, but not able to be edited for those types of assignments requiring draft stages in intermediate feedback?

[Back](#)

 [Home](#) | You are logged in as TestD studentD (Logout)

## Conclusion

Overall, I am still super excited about how versatile this new assignment module will be and its potential for providing several levels of assessment feedback. These current online submission usability issues will be pretty crucial to solve if we want to keep teachers in their happy place with Moodle, but I'm confident the community wizards will solve them. Thanks for all you do!