Student Preview

Previously, in Blackboard Learn, the Edit Mode On/Off control was the only way to approximate a student view. In addition, NIU faculty could request a pseudo student ID to view their courses, but that was not always a convenient process. The Student Preview mode feature provides faculty with the ability to easily see the course exactly how a student would see it, such as content, Assignments, Tests, Grades, and the Discussion Board.

To access the feature, an instructor would click on the small icon which resembles an eye highlighted here. The instructor enters the Student Preview mode, allowing him or her to view the course as a student. The student preview icon will be at the top of every Blackboard course an instructor teaches. When the student preview mode is enabled, then what is observed is really what students see in their Blackboard course.

Upon entering the Student Preview mode, the instructor will no longer be able to see the Edit Mode in the upper right corner. In addition, the Control Panel is no longer visible. This really and truly is a student preview. During the entire time there will be an orange banner display indicating that the Student Preview mode is enabled.

An advantage of the student preview mode over and above turning the Edit Mode off, is that the student preview really does reveal the student view of the tools in the course. For example, one can actually see My Grades now, whereas in the past when you turned Edit Mode off, you still couldn’t see My Grades. One can also view the discussion board as a student, whereas in the past an instructor was not able to see what students saw on the discussion board.

When closing the Preview Mode, one is presented with several options. One can choose to keep the data that is generated as a student or to delete that data. The reason that this is significant is if the instructor is in student preview mode, and they have submitted an assignment for example, there is the option to keep that preview user and keep the data. When returning to the Instructor mode, one can enter the Grade Center to actually view that assignment and grade it to see what that workflow looks like. If the instructor chooses to keep the preview user data, what is observed in the Grade Center is the instructor’s name_preview user, which is the instructor’s alternate identity for who that data is associated with.

Alternatively, one can delete all of that data, such as a submitted assignment, permitting the instructor to hop in and out, to say, I looked at the course I now I am done. This option will come up every time one attempts to exit the student preview mode, unless the instructor selects the option to remember your choice and not ask again. The instructor mode is now in effect once more.