Using Google Docs Commenting for Grading Within Moodle

The commenting and editing features within Google Docs can sometimes be more user-friendly than the Moodle interface. There are two main ways to utilize the Google Docs interface while still keeping your work within Moodle.

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1 - Using a Regular Assignment and Online Text

- For this approach, create an assignment like you typically would, but under Submission Types, make sure to only check **Online Text**. Then, instruct your students to get a sharable link to their document (this works for docs, slides, sheets, and anything stored in Google Drive) and paste it into the online textbox. To make it even easier for you, show them how to make it a clickable link.
- When you grade the assignment, right click the link (or copy/paste) to open it in a new browser tab and add your comments. Then go back to the Moodle tab to enter the grade and save changes.

Considerations when using this approach:

- Students must share the document with you. Otherwise you'll get the dreaded "request access" screen when you click the link.
- If students don't make the link clickable, it takes additional clicks to open the document in a new tab.
- Students retain editing rights after turning in the assignment. You can, however, look at the version history to see what, if anything, was changed after the due date.
- If a student revokes your access to the document or deletes it from their Drive, you have no record of what was submitted.
- This *does* retain all the typical features of a Moodle assignment -- due dates, cut-off dates, grading options, etc.

2 - Using The External Google Assignment Tool

Adding an Assignment

- Start by entering your course and turning editing on.
- Click **Add an Activity or Resource** at the bottom of the section where you'd like the assignment to appear.
- Choose **External Tool**. It has a green puzzle piece icon.
- Name your assignment.
- From the **Preconfigured Tool** dropdown, choose **Google CourseKit Assignments** .
- Click **Grade** and enter the proper number of points. *(While you can go back and edit this later, it does need to be done before you start grading, or things get messy.)*
- Adjust the other settings as needed and click one of the blue **Save** buttons on the bottom.

Turning In an Assignment

- Students click on the assignment within Moodle. If it's their first time using this method, it will ask them to log into their Google Account. It's important that they use their MLC accounts.
- Once students have connected their MLC account with Google CourseKit in Moodle, they'll be able to choose their file from their Google Drive. This is not limited to Google Docs -- it works with any file that is saved in their Drive. *Note: Students must be the owner of the document to be able to turn it in.*
- Once a student submits it, the document is shared with you as the instructor and they can no longer edit the assignment. They are able to unsubmit the assignment, edit it, and turn it in again, but you will see the new submission date/time within Moodle.

Grading an Assignment

- Click on the assignment activity to open it.
- Before you grade anything, make sure the points are set correctly in Moodle by clicking the gear in the upper right corner of the assignment screen and choosing **Edit Settings**.

- If it's the first time opening an assignment like this, it will ask you to log into your Google account. Be sure to use your MLC account.
- Set the number of points at the top of the Google assignment window -- make sure this number matches what has been entered in Moodle.
- Click the name of the student you want to assess.
- The student's document will open in a window that looks very similar to Google Docs. You can use the commenting and editing features like you would with regular Google Docs. On the right side, enter the grade and any general comments in the comment box.
- Move to the next student by using the arrows in the upper left corner of the window. You can also pick a specific student with the dropdown menu.
- When you're done (either with one student, or with everyone), click the blue **Return** button. This gives editing access back to the student and makes a copy of the document within your Google Drive that you retain control of if needed for future reference.

Considerations when using this approach:

- If you don't have the points set the way you want them prior to grading the assignments, it is very difficult, and sometimes impossible, to change the point value. This can be worked around in the gradebook, but it's easier to set it the first time :)
- Your Google Drive will get "cluttered" with lots of copies of documents. These are best left wherever Google puts them within your Drive and then ignored unless needed for future reference.
- Whatever the student wants to turn in must be in their Google Drive.
- You cannot give a grade to a student who hasn't submitted something -- you need to override the grade from the Moodle gradebook.

Google has more information on CourseKit here.

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