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DIVISION OF
INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY
ACADEMIC TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Creating and Managing Content in ELMS

A guide for instructors

LEARNING TECHNOLOGY DESIGN
Integrating pedagogy and technology

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Creating and Managing Content

This workshop will introduce you to several options for presenting course content to your students and will suggest some strategies for ensuring that the design of your course supports both the objectives of your course and your teaching "style". By the end of this workshop you will be able to:

- Identify three options for hosting content
- Upload files to and manage the Files environment
- Create a structure for delivering course content with Modules
- Design a graphic interface for content presentation with Pages
- Manage what content students see with "Draft State"
- Link to third-party integration, such as Campus Pack

What are the Options for Sharing Content in ELMS?

ELMS provides three options for presenting and managing content in a course space: Files, Modules and Pages. The **Files** area serves as a repository for documents, presentations, images, pdf files and media that have been uploaded from your local computer or that have been migrated or copied from another course. This area can be hidden from students (while still sharing the content in it through other tools) or you can choose to share the repository itself with students. **Modules** are used to create a structured, link-oriented, sequential presentation of content. Modules can link to files, web pages, third-party integrations, and other ELMS tools (such as Quizzes or Discussions). **Pages** are wiki-like web pages that not only can display text, graphics and embedded media, but also provide links to other course content. Pages can be used to design a course "home page" or starting point.

Files Revisited

As we saw in the *Getting Started in ELMS* workshop, the Files area is a repository for content; each course has its own Files area. Building a course space entails linking files (docx, pdf, pptx, etc.) located in the Files area into the course space itself. You can additionally upload files from your local computer to the Files area, either one at a time, or in bulk via a zipped file. If you have been using ELMS for a while, you will notice that the environment has been improved to provide enhanced visual cues about file types and intuitive methods for moving files between organizational folders in the Files area.
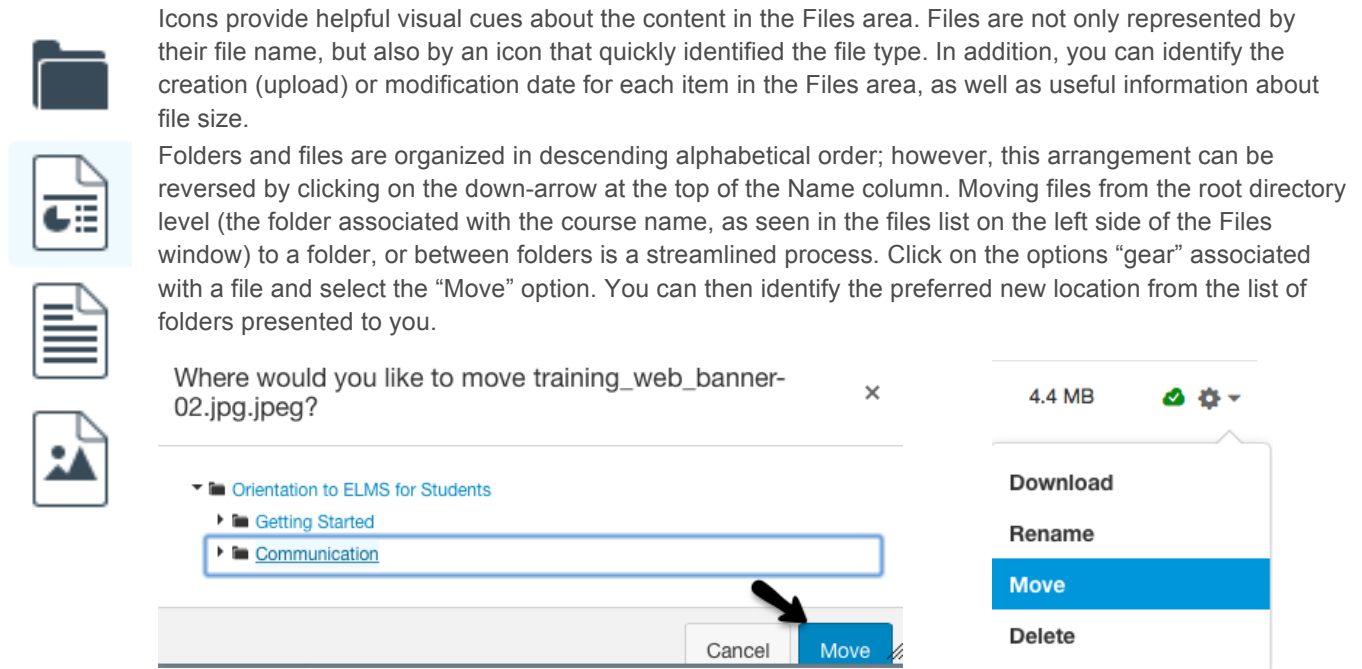
For the most part, students are not given direct access to the Files area (although instructors can enable such access). Student exposure to content is limited to the links to files provided in the course space that provide a "read-only" view of a single file at a time. In order to give students access to view and download files located in the Files area, you must first make the **Files** link visible on the course menu.
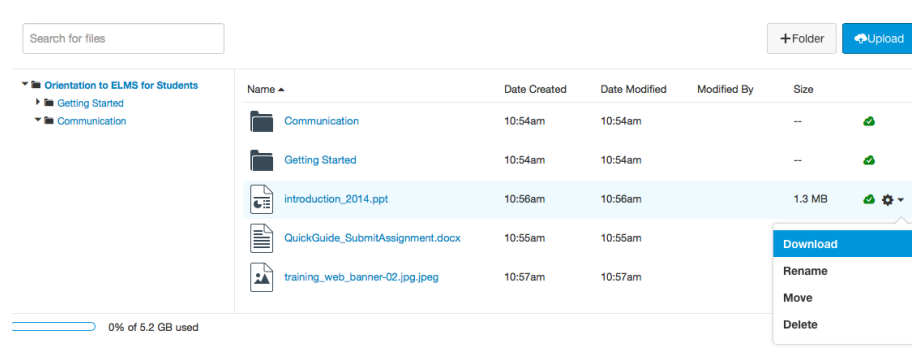
Identifying and Moving Files

Icons provide helpful visual cues about the content in the Files area. Files are not only represented by their file name, but also by an icon that quickly identified the file type. In addition, you can identify the creation (upload) or modification date for each item in the Files area, as well as useful information about file size.

Folders and files are organized in descending alphabetical order; however, this arrangement can be reversed by clicking on the down-arrow at the top of the Name column. Moving files from the root directory level (the folder associated with the course name, as seen in the files list on the left side of the Files window) to a folder, or between folders is a streamlined process. Click on the options "gear" associated with a file and select the "Move" option. You can then identify the preferred new location from the list of folders presented to you.

Activity 2 – Create a Folder, Upload a File

1. Click on the **Files** link in the course Navigation menu.
2. Click on the **Add (+) Folder** button at the top right of the window.
3. Type a name for the folder in the Folder field and press the Enter/Return key on your keyboard.
4. Click on the Upload button at the top right of the window.
5. Locate a file from your local computer (.docx, .pdf, .zip) and click on the Choose button.
6. Click on the Options gear associated with the file and "Move" it into the folder you created.
7. Double-click on the foldername link to expose its contents.

Changing the Status of Files

All files uploaded to the Files area start out in a "Published" state. This means that when you link them to a Module, Assignment or other content area, the file content will be visible, as long as the Module, Assignment, etc. is also published. You can change the status of a file by clicking on the green "Publish" cloud associated with it. If you select to "Unpublish" the file, it will not be visible in any location to which you have linked it. In other words, if you link the file to a module, the file will appear to be unpublished in that module and not visible to students. We will talk more about this so-called "Draft State" condition later in this workshop.

The "Publish" and "Unpublish" options affect file visibility to students in a content area. Another file status option, "Restricted Access", affects the visibility of a file to students who have been given access to the Files area. If you plan to use the Files area are the primary method for sharing documentation with your students, if may be appropriate to release the availability of the documents, as opposed to making them visible at all times. Or, you may want to share access to certain files by providing a unique hyperlink to it, external to the ELMS course space, rather than making it visible in the Files area. The "Restricted Access" option is rather specific and you may want to explore its use with an instructional designer or other ELMS support person to ensure it appropriate and successful use.

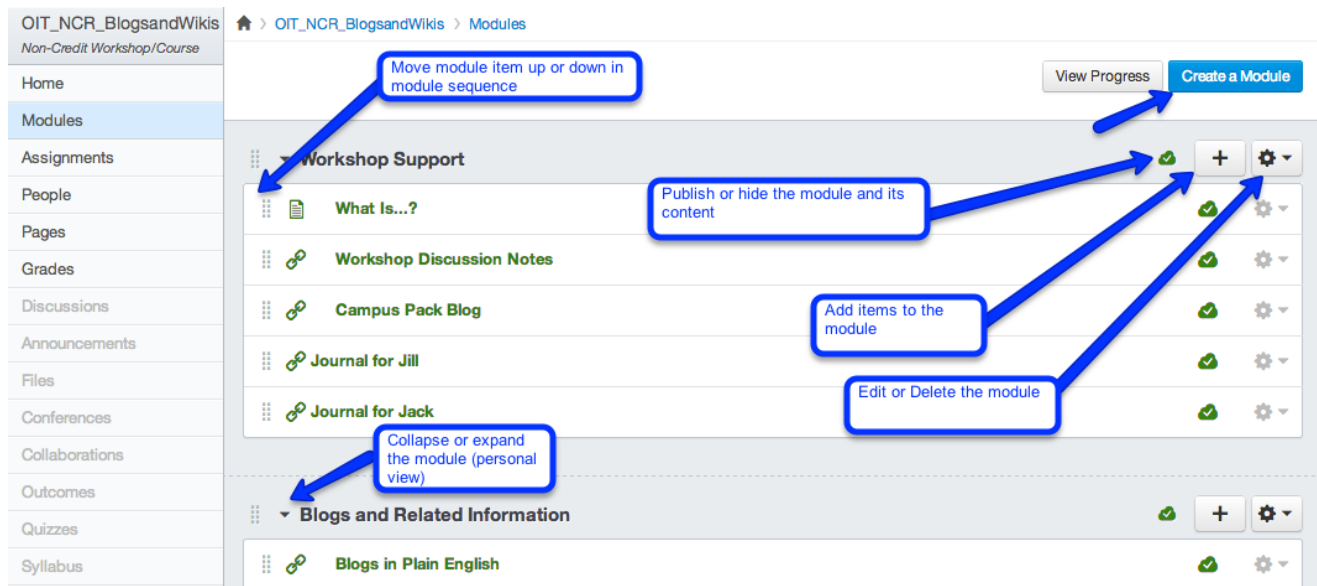**Why Would I Want to Share the Files Area?**

This is a valid question that actually we hope our faculty will help us answer over time as they become more expert practitioners of ELMS course design. However, one could envision a course space in which the primary goal is to share content. Files access might also be useful for leaders of organization spaces where, again, the objective is to provide access to files for the organization membership. Note: for organizations, if the objective is to facilitate interactive file sharing between members, a better option would be to create a group with shared Files access in the organization space.

This concept is discussed in the ELMS Guide available at: http://guides.instructure.com/s/2204/m/4212/l/55567-how-do-i-store-and-share-files-within-my-group
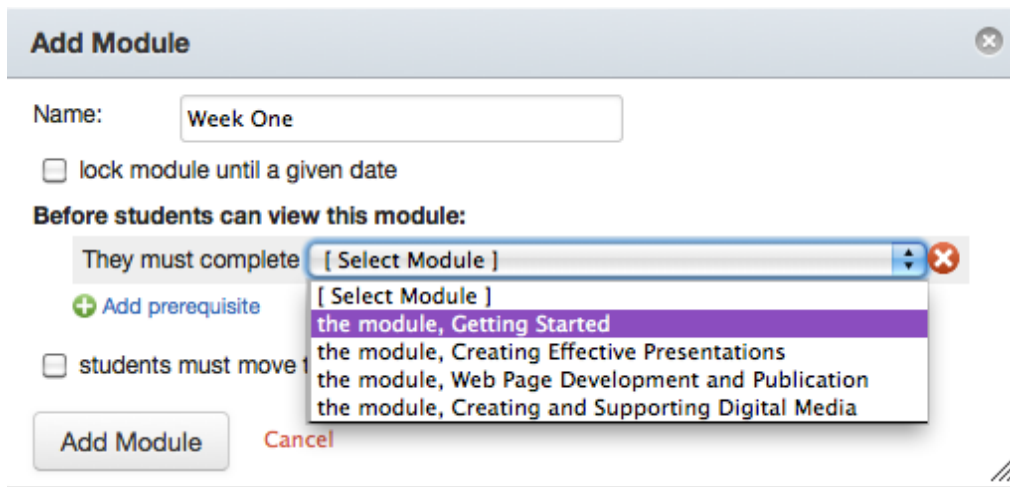
Modules

Modules enable you to create a structure for leading students through the content of the course. You can use modules to organize your course by units, weeks, chapters, etc., and pull together all of the resources needed for each "module" in one location. With modules you can create a one-directional linear flow through content and activities for your students. Modules can contain links to files, ELMS Pages, external web pages, discussions, assignments, quizzes, and

third party integrations such as Campus Pack wikis or blogs. You can build the module by linking to resources that you have already created elsewhere in the course space or you can create new items on the fly.

Activity 2 – Create a New Module

1. Click on the **Modules** link in the course Navigation menu.
2. Click on the **Add (+) Module** button at the top right of the window.
3. Type a name for the module in the Name: field (e.g., Week One).

   Other options in the Add Module window enable you to create "selective release" criteria for the module itself or for the content items that you will associate with it. There is no requirement to provide any selective release criteria, however.


4. You can lock the module until a specified date in order to keep access to the module and its content hidden from students.
5. If this is not the first module you are creating, you can elect to require that students complete the readings and activities in another module before gaining access to this module.
6. Likewise, you can force students to go through the items listed within a module in sequential order. This conditional release can be quite helpful in self-paced or fully online courses.
7. Click on the **Add Module** button to add the module.

Once it is created, a module is in an "unpublished" state, which means neither it or any content within it is visible to students. You can reveal the module by clicking on the "Publish/Unpublish" icon associated with it. Once the module exists, you can start adding linked items to it. Click on the plus sign icon (+) in the module title bar.

As you note from the image to the right, item types include Assignments, Quizzes, Files, Content Pages, Discussion Topics, Text Headers, URLS, and External Tools. For many of these options, if the item (say, a file) does not already exist in the ELMS course space, you can browse to upload or, in the case of something like an Assignment, create a new item on the fly.
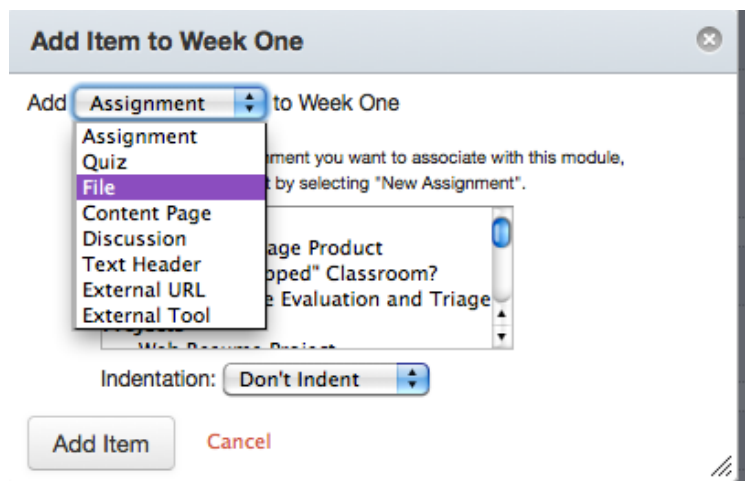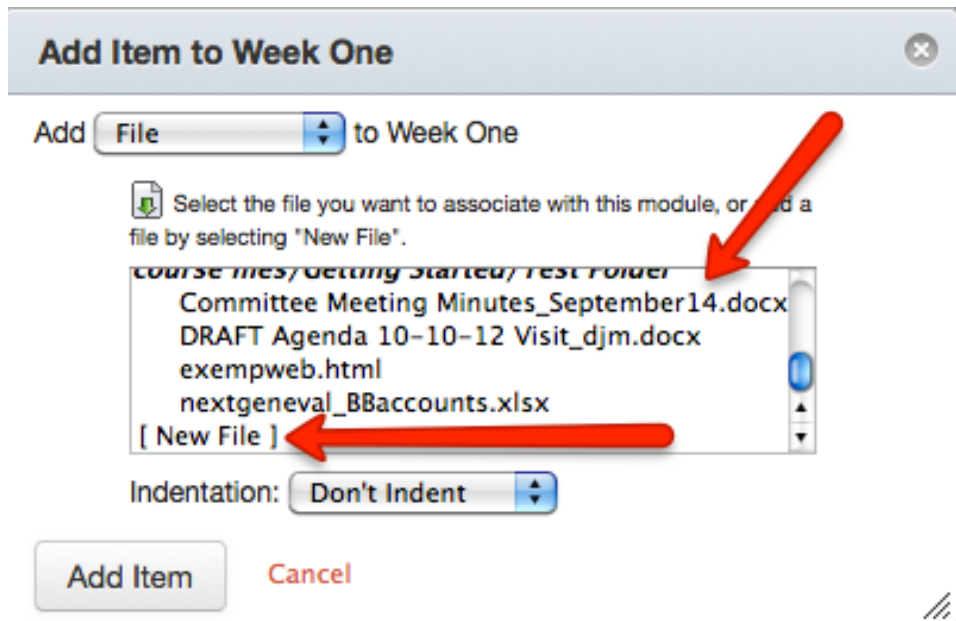
Activity 3 – Build a Module

1. Click on the plus sign icon associated with the Week One module, then click on the **Add Content** link.
2. Select the **Text Header** option from the Add menu. Type text in the Header field that will become a sub-heading under the module (e.g., Required Readings).
3. Click on the **Add Content** link again and select the **File** option. You can view the files that are organized in your Files area and select one, or you can browse your local computer to upload a new file. To enhance the layout of the module structure, choose **Indent 1 Level** from the Indentation menu.
4. Click the **Add Item** button.
5. Add one more file to this module following steps 3 and 4 above.

There are options that enable you to manage individual items in a module. These options become available for a specific item when you click on the "Options" gear icon associated with a module item.
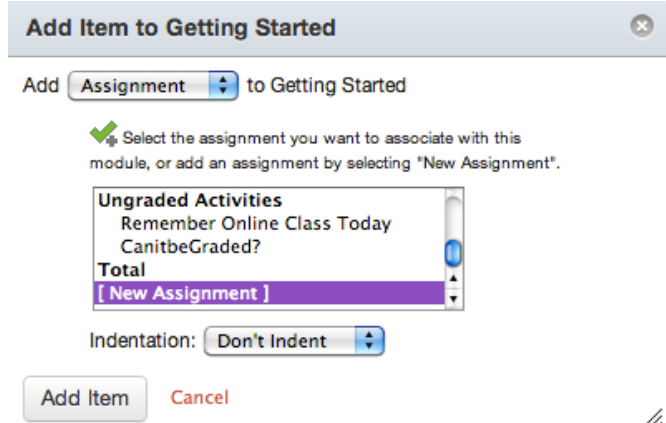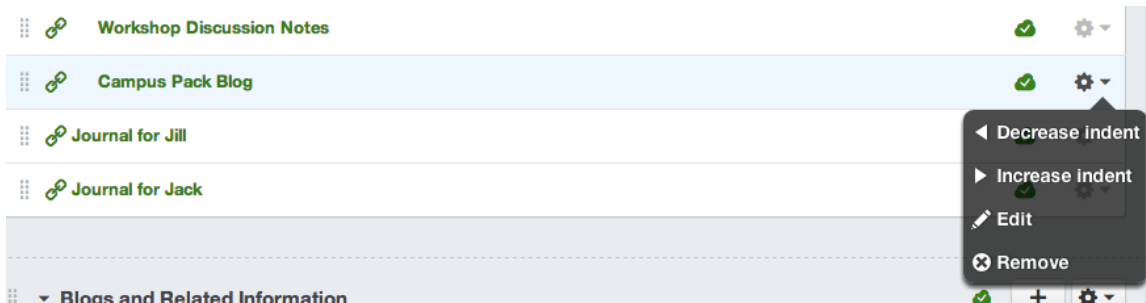

The **Edit** option can be quite helpful if the item is a link to a file; you can change the title to something other than the file name without breaking the link to the file.

You can change the order of items by using the Up-Down icons to the left of the item type icon to drag a selected item to a new position in the module.

Adding Other Kinds of Items to a Module

In addition to adding links to files in a module, you can link to Assignments, Discussions, External URLs, as well as External Tools. When linking to Assignments, you can either view a list of existing Assignments or create a New Assignment on the fly.
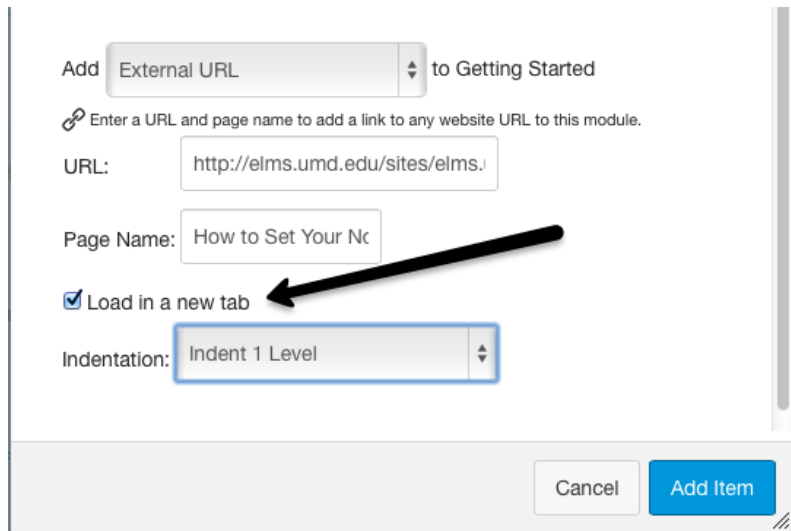
This would become a "place holder" for an assignment that you would edit and define at a later time. To add a link to an external web site, you would select the External URL option and provide both a complete web address (inclusive of http://) and a Page Name that would become the link to the web site in the module.

A note about links to external web sites: browser security settings have become rather restrictive of the kinds of external web content one can link to from within a ELMS module. If the site linked to is NOT an https site, the web page will not show up in the ELMS display space. Therefore, it is recommended that you click in the "Load in new tab" checkbox in order to force the web page to open in a new browser tab rather than within the ELMS window.

Activity 4 – Add Additional Items to a Module:
1. Click on the plus sign icon associated with the Week One module.
2. Select the **Assignment** option from the Add menu and further define that by clicking on the *New Assignment* option.
3. Type Placeholder Assignment as the Name, and click **Add Assignment**.
4. Click on the **Placeholder Assignment** link. Note that you now have the option to **Edit Assignment** and provide the details of the assignment requirements. Note: creating assignments is explored in the *Creating Assignments and Assessments in ELMS* workshop.
5. Return to editing Modules by clicking on the **Modules** link in the course Navigation menu.
6. Click on the **Add Content** link and select **External URL** from the Add item menu.
7. Type the URL of your department or college web site in the URL: field and type a name for the link to that site in the Page Name: field.
8. Click the "Load in a new tab" checkbox.
9. Click the **Add Item** button.
10. Delete the Placeholder Assignment item by clicking on the **Delete item** icon associated with it.

Adding an External Tool to a Module

You can incorporate third-party tools (e.g., Campus Pack wikis and blogs, Ares Course Reserves, Sharestream) in your course space from one of two tools in ELMS: Modules and Assignments.

Activity 5 – Add an External Tool:

1. Click on the **Add Item to Module** link associated with the Week One module.
2. Choose **External Tool** from the Add Item menu (you may need to change the position of the Add Item window that pops up in order to allow enough room for the menu to fully extend).
3. Click on one tool in the list (for this example click on the *Campus Pack Wiki* option).
4. Click in the "Load this tool in a new tab" checkbox. This will open the Campus Pack tool in a new browser tab when students click on the link; **this is the required method** of incorporating third party tools in order to avoid browser security issues.
5. Click on the **Add Item** button.
6. Click on the **Campus Pack Wiki** link in the Week One module to see what happens.
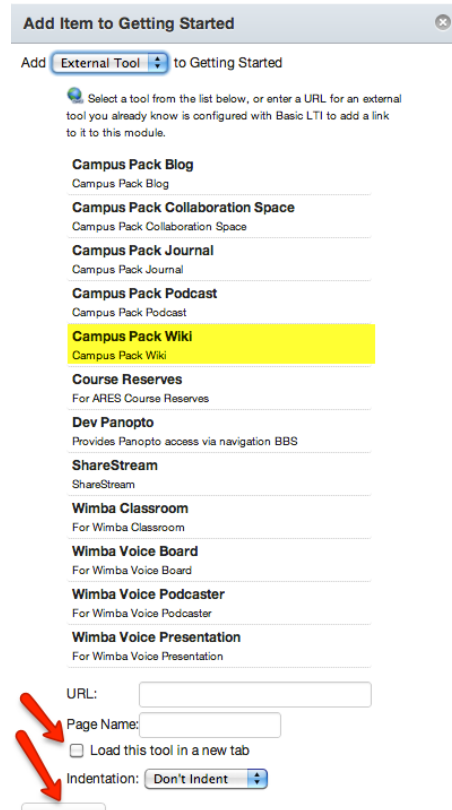
Draft State

As you build modules you may not want to publish them for student viewing immediately. The "Publish" / "Unpublish" toggle icon enables you to easily hide or reveal whole modules or individual module content. When you click on the **publish/unpublish** icon, the content remains visible to the instructor in a "draft state".

However, in Student View (the view that simulates what students will see), the unpublished content is not visible at all.
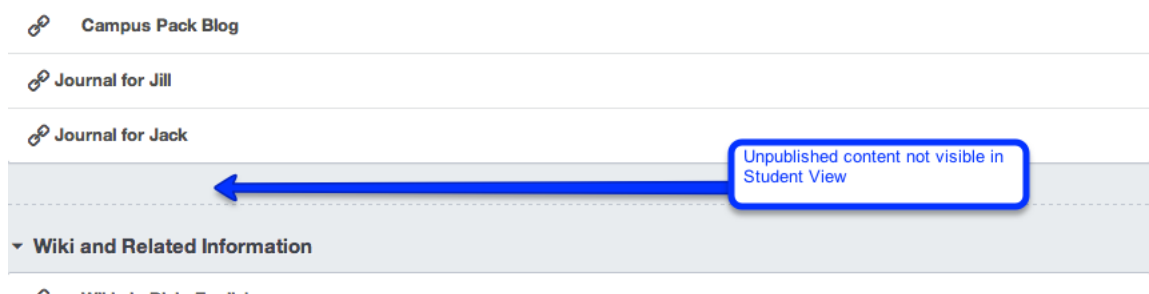
Revisiting Prerequisites and Sequencing

ELMS has several options for "forcing" students to move through module content in predictable ways. Recall that when you create or edit module settings, the Edit Module Settings dialog box identifies these options.

In order to establish sequencing criteria, you must make use of the Assignment tool. Assignment options will be covered in detail in the *Creating and Managing Assignments in ELMS* workshop, so we will simply suggest the opportunity they provide when structuring your course based on modules. Links to files, external web sites or external tools in and of themselves do not establish criteria for creating sequencing requirements or for locking down the availability of modules based upon activity in other modules.

In the image above, the Week One module has been "locked down" pending student completion of a quiz at the end of the previous module. To sequence a combination of traditional assignments and assessments (e.g., homework, discussion posts, quizzes) with required readings, you would need to turn the required reading (with its link to files or a web site) into an "ungraded" assignment.

Viewing Student Progress

If you create a module with prerequisites or sequencing requirements, you can view the progress students are making through the content and assignments. To do so, click on the **View Progress** button at the top of the modules window.

As you can see in the example above, for each student you will be able to see which requirements have been completed, which requirements are still unsatisfied, and which modules remain locked pending completion of prerequisites.

**Why Would I Want to Use Modules?**

The structure for Modules is quite bare bones; there is no option for integrating graphics and the process for including explanatory text is contrived, at best. However, if you want to emphasize the linear nature of your course, e.g., Read Document A → Contribute a related discussion posting → Read Document B → Visit XYZ web pages → Take a chapter quiz → Submit a paper online and you want to constrain student progress through the materials, Modules is a highly effective way to scaffold content, assessments, and collaborations. When you use Modules to organize your course, you can often "hide" many links in the Navigation menu since the Module structure serves as a navigation tool. What Navigation menu links might need to remain visible to students?
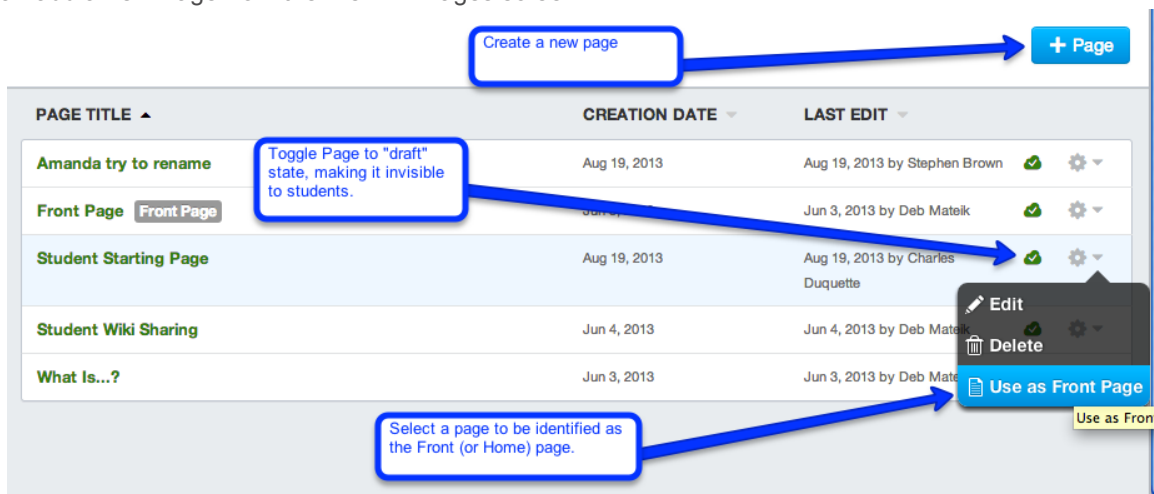
Pages

Pages present an opportunity to integrate graphical and multi-media resources, in addition to narrative content, and links to files and other ELMS tools. You can create links between Pages, essentially turning much of the organization of your course into a wiki.

You can add new Pages to create content organization and presentation areas in your course space by clicking on the **Pages** link in the course Navigation menu. In addition, two Home Page Layout options, "a Page I'll Design Myself" and the "syllabus" portion of "the Assignments with Syllabus," are also default Page design options for the course Home page.

You have the option to **Edit this Page** or **View All Pages,** which lists all of the pages in the course space presented in alphabetical order.
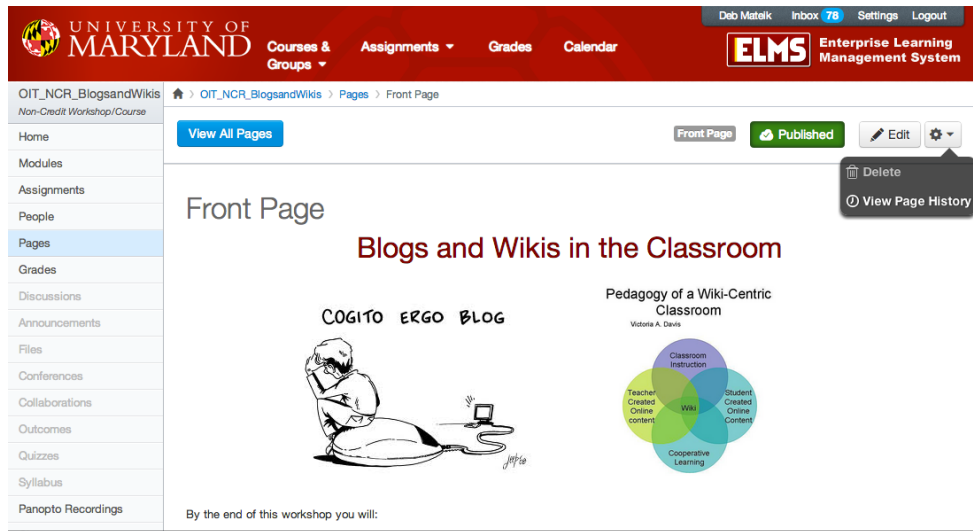

You can add a new Page from the View All Pages screen.

Additionally, this environment enables you to Publish/Unpublish a page (make it visible or invisible to students) or to identify a specific page as the course Home page. In this way, it can be quite easy to identify different pages as the Home page throughout the semester. The Pages rich content editor, content frame and Page Tools enable you to design the structure and content of a page.
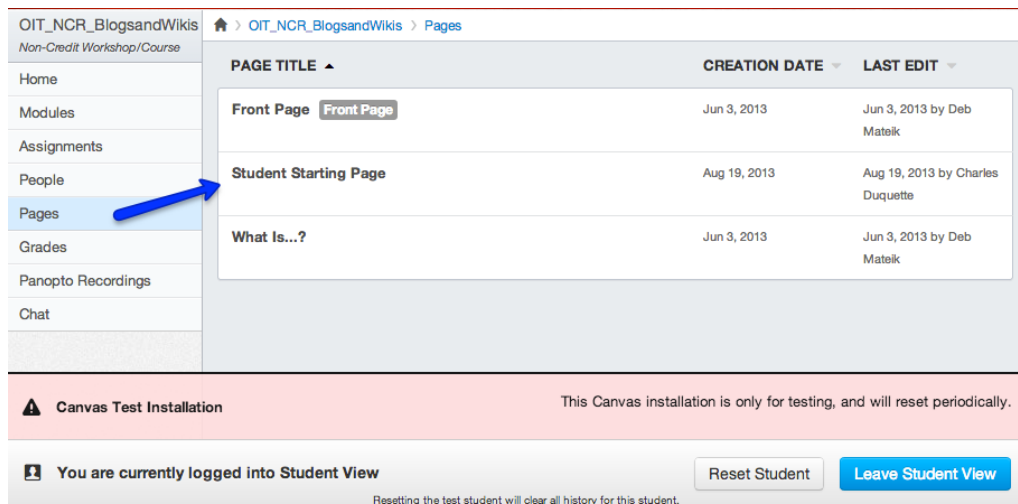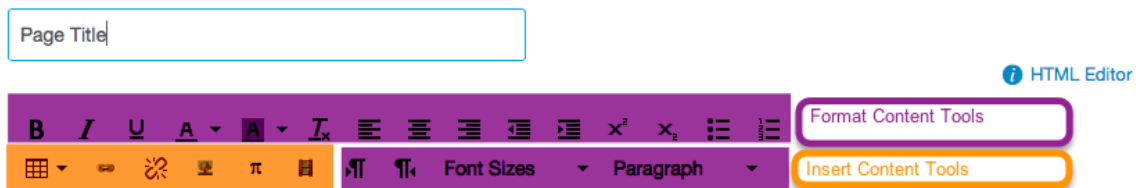
Students will only see those pages that have been identified as "published" when they click on the View All Pages link from the course home page.
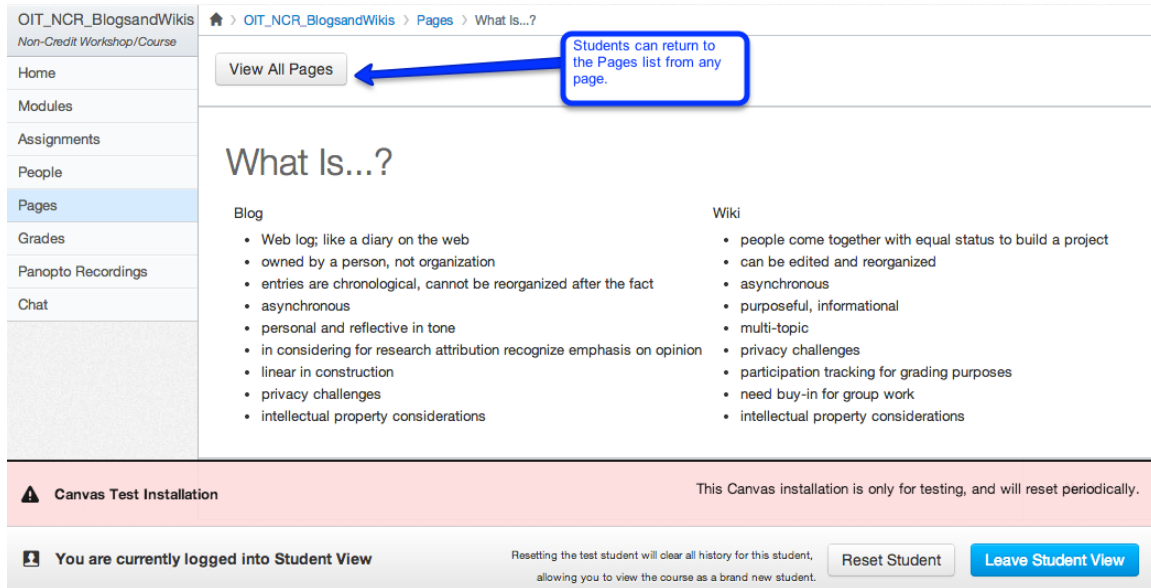
In order to edit an existing Page, click on the **Edit** (pencil) icon associated with the page to access the Rich Content Editor.

Rich Content Editor Tools for Developing Page Content

From left to right, the rich content editor tools are: (top row) bold, italic, underline, text color, highlighting color, clear formatting, left, center and right content alignment, super- and sub-script, bulleted text, numerical list; (bottom row) insert table, hyperlink, break (or remove) hyperlink, embed external image, insert equation, record/upload media clip, indent and outdent, font size selection, paragraph style. You can type content into the Content Frame and format it with these editing tools. You can also copy and paste text from an external text editor (note, however, that if you plan to paste content from an MS Word document, you should first convert the Word document to text only in order to avoid copying Microsoft propriety code into the Content Frame).

Note that you can also switch to the HTML Editor to view and edit the HTML code created through the use of the Content Editor tools. We will look at the Page Tools panel in more detail shortly.

Activity 6 – Create a New Page and the Rich Content Editor Tools

1. Click on the **Pages** link in the Navigation menu.
2. Click on the **View All Pages** button at the top of the ELMS window. Then click on the **Add (+) Page** button.
3. Type a title for the page, e.g., Introductions.
4. In the blank content area type: Welcome to Our Course.
5. Select the text and choose a font size of **24pt** from the Font Size menu. In addition, while the text is still selected, choose a font color (other than black). Click on the **"centered"** alignment icon.
6. Press return or enter on your keyboard. You can now type text in this window or, if you have prepared text in a word processed or text editor document, you can copy and paste the text into the content area.
   a. Open the **sampletext.docx** file from the course files folder on your computer.
   b. Copy the text, then click at the insertion point below the Welcome header in the content frame. Paste the copied text.
7. Select the text **"best practices"** and click on the **hyperlink** icon in the toolbar. Type: http://www.designingforlearning.info/ in the URL text box. Click on the **Insert Link** button.

Note about links to external web sites: browser security settings have become rather restrictive of displaying content emanating from an http (insecure) site within the ELMS window. You can open an external web page in another browser window by adding a "target" attribute to the hypertext reference code that identifies the URL. To do so, click on the HTML Editor link at the top of the Rich Content Editor. Amend the <a href= code as seen below:

`<p><a href="http://www.umd.edu" target="_blank">University of Maryland</a> hyperlink.</p>`

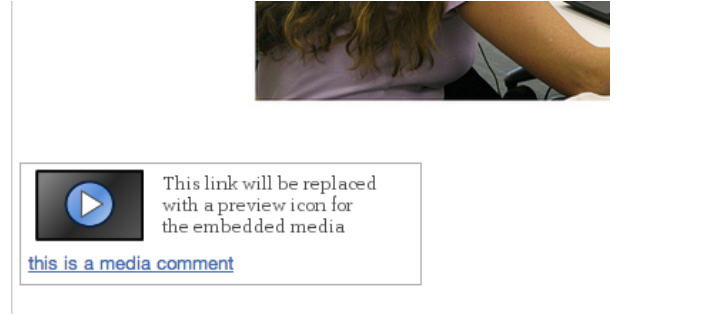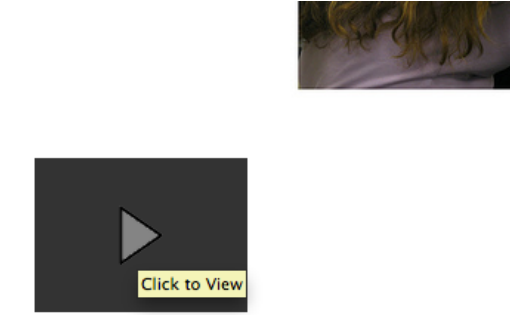Then click on the **Visual Editor** link to return to the normal view of the Rich Content Editor.

8. Click an insertion point after the Welcome text and before the paragraphs of text. To add an image to the page, click on the **Add Image**. You can either provide the hyperlink of an image located on the web, or you can search the "creative commons" gallery of copyright-free images.
   a. Click on the **Search flickr creative commons** link.
   b. Provide a keyword search term, i.e., teaching technologies
   c. Click on an image to embed it in the Page.
   d. Click once on the embedded image and click on the **"centered"** alignment icon.

Note that the image can only be resized in the Firefox browser; this capability is not available in Chrome or Safari.

9. Click an insertion point below the embedded image. Click on the **Record/Upload Media Comment** icon.
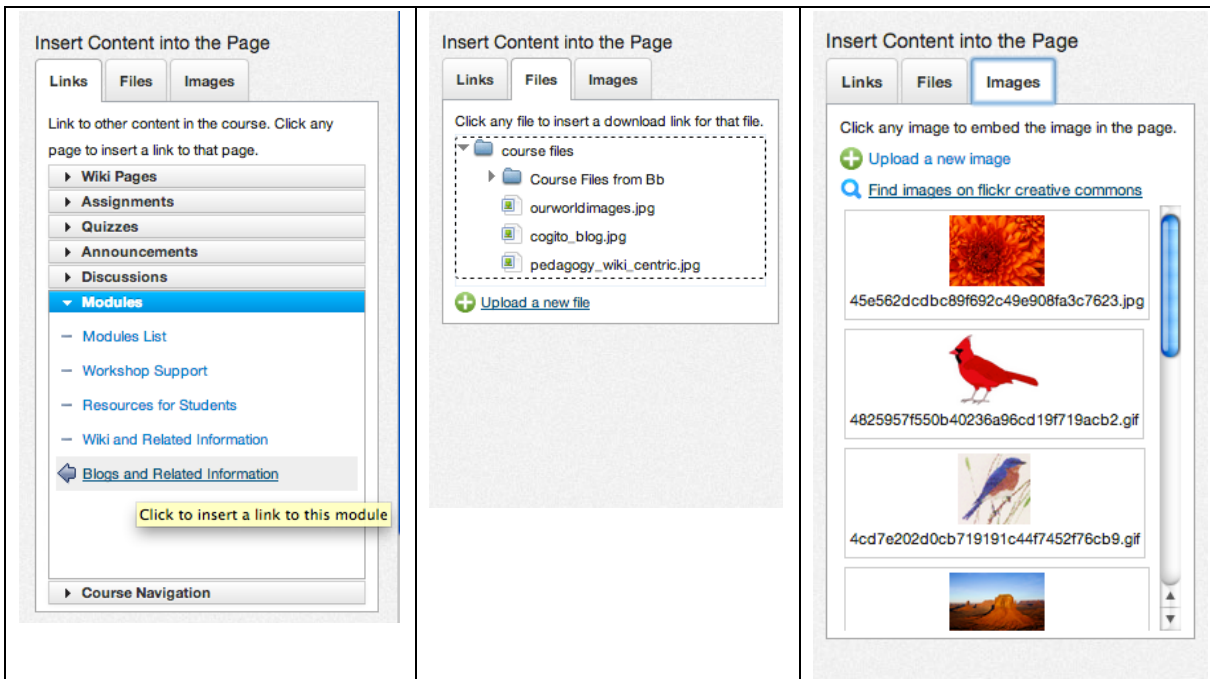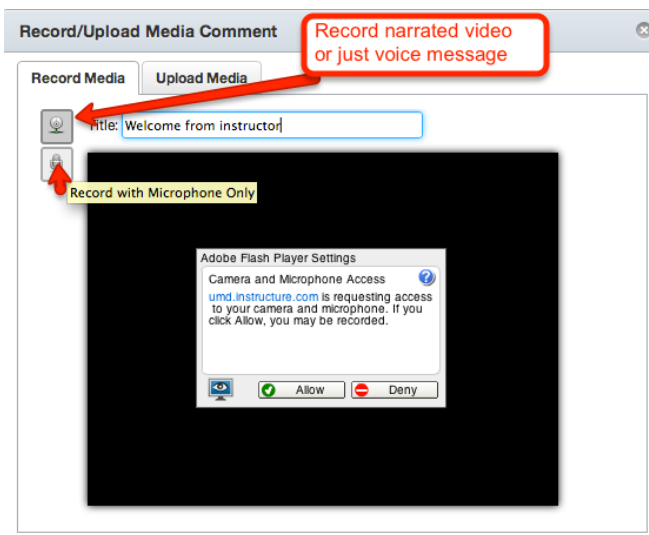
7. Click on either the camera or microphone icon, type a title for the comment and click on the **Allow** button.
8. Click anywhere in the recording window and start talking!
9. Click on the **Stop Recording** button and then click on the **Save** button.

The link to the media file will look like this in the Edit Page view.	Students will see a media placeholder on the page. When they click on it, the media file will play.

10. Click on the **Save** button to view the Introductions page.

Page Tools for Developing Page Content

In addition to typing or copying textual content and embedding images and media files in the Page, you may also want to use the Page as a vehicle for linking to content in your Files area or to other pages, assignments, discussion posts, modules, etc., in the course space. To do this, use the options on the Page Tools palette.

Links Tab

The **Links** tab enables you to create hyperlinks to other wiki pages in the course space, to a specific assignment (or an entire list of assignments that would be visible under the **Assignments** link on the navigation menu), an announcement, discussion post, a module listing, even to an item on the navigation menu that you might not have revealed to students in any other way. The power of being able to link to these resources from a Page is that, like Modules, you can control where and how students access the resources. One assumption might be that, if you link to a discussion and assignment from a Page, you would not make the Discussions and Assignments links available on the navigation menu.

Files Tab

You can make a file stored in the Files area available to your students by inserting a link to it from the **Files** tab. Additionally, if you want to upload a file from your local computer to associate with the Page, clicking on the **Upload a new file** link uploads the file to the Files area AND inserts a link to it in the Page.

Images Tab

The **Images** tab provides access to options that enable you to upload an image from your local computer or search the flickr creative commons. Uploading an image places a copy of the image file in the Files area and also embeds it on the Page. In addition, it also displays a gallery of recently uploaded images that you can embed in the page by clicking on the preferred image. The method of Image integration overcomes a limitation of embedding an image using the rich content editor toolbar **Image** icon where you are limited to integrating images residing on the Web or in the flickr creative commons gallery.

Activity 7 – Creating Content with Page Tools

1. Click on the **Edit this Page** link on the right to continue editing the Introductions page.
2. Click an insertion point at the end of the last paragraph and press Enter or Return.
3. From the Links tab set of options, click on **Course Navigation**. Click on the **Wiki Home** link. This will create a direct link between the Introductions page and the course home page.
4. Press Enter or Return and, again, type: Get to know your classmates. Select the text and click on the **People** link under Course Navigation in the **Links** tab area.
5. Select the text "new methods of teaching" in the first paragraph of text. Click on the **Files** tab.
6. Click on the **Upload a new file** link. Click the **Browse** button and locate the Files4ELMSTraining folder on your desktop. Open the CreatingandManagingContent folder. Select the **effectivepractices.pdf** file and click on the **Open** button.
7. Identify the location in the Files area to which the file should be uploaded.
8. Click on the **Upload** button.
9. For an alternative way of linking to a file, click an insertion point in a blank area of the Page. Click on the **course files** folder under the **Files** tab. Click on the **effectivepractices.pdf** file again.

   What is the difference between the two methods of embedding a linked file?

10. Click on the **Images** tab under Page Tools.
11. Click an insertion point above the second paragraph. Click on the **Upload a new image** link.
12. Click on the **Browse** button and select the **btnGoals.gif** image file from the workshop folder. Click the **Open** button.
13. Identify a place in the **course folder** to which the image should be uploaded, then click on the **Upload** button.
14. Click the **Save Changes** button.
15. Explore the page, clicking on links and listening to your welcoming recording.
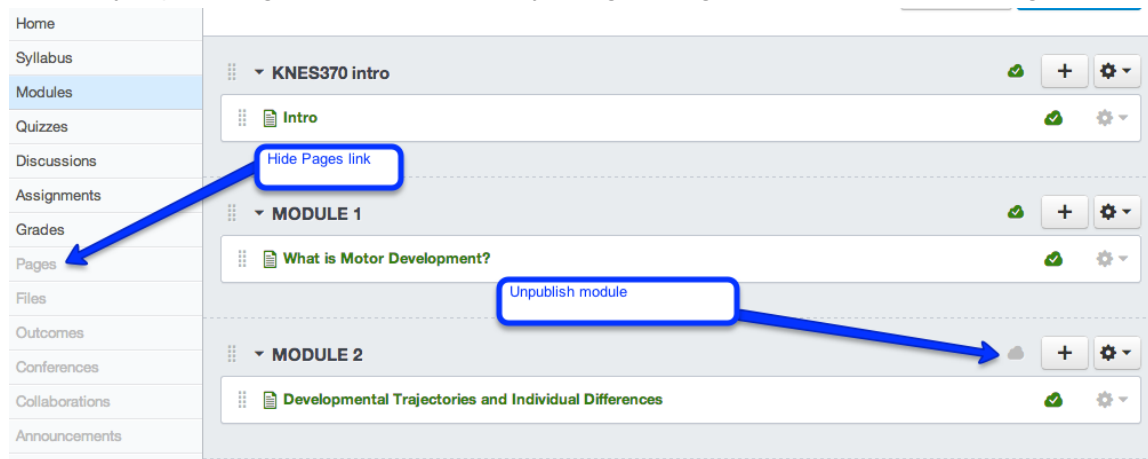
Why Would I Want to Use Pages?

Pages is a place where you can integrate text, images and other media content. If you envision a highly graphical interface for your course, Pages is the way to go. If you used "Items" in Blackboard to provide context or formatting for "Content Areas", Pages will provide you with similar capability. You can provide a narrative to tie together content and other features of your course space.

The Best of Both Worlds?

Many faculty integrate Modules and Pages quite effectively. Modules become a gateway to unit pages that house the critical content of the course. Thanks to the Draft State (Publish/Unpublish) option, instructors can limit access to Page content by unpublishing certain modules and by hiding the Pages link from the course Navigation menu.

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