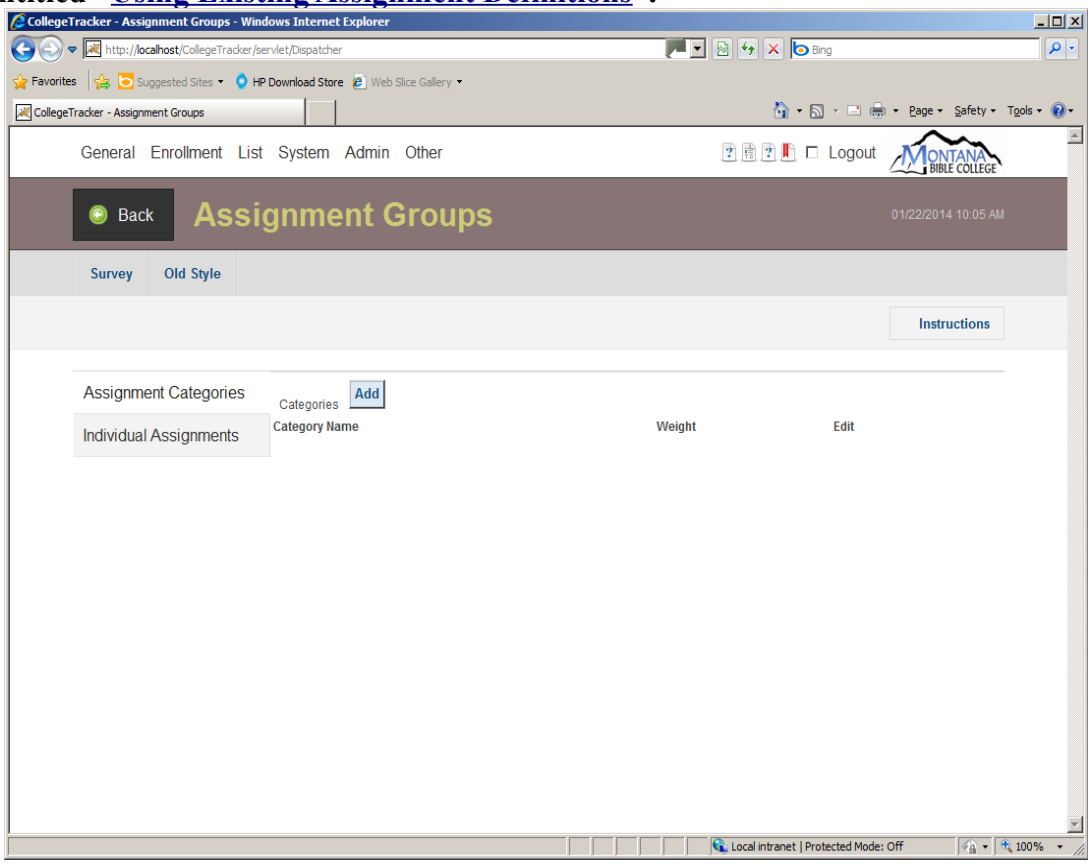
Start Here

From your teacher home page, click the “Classes” button and then click on the “Create” link under assignments. You will end up on this page (Assignment Groups). Assuming you haven't already begun creating categories and assignments, your page will look like this. **If you have taught this class before and have already created assignment definitions that you would like to use again, please see the section entitled “Using Existing Assignment Definitions”.**

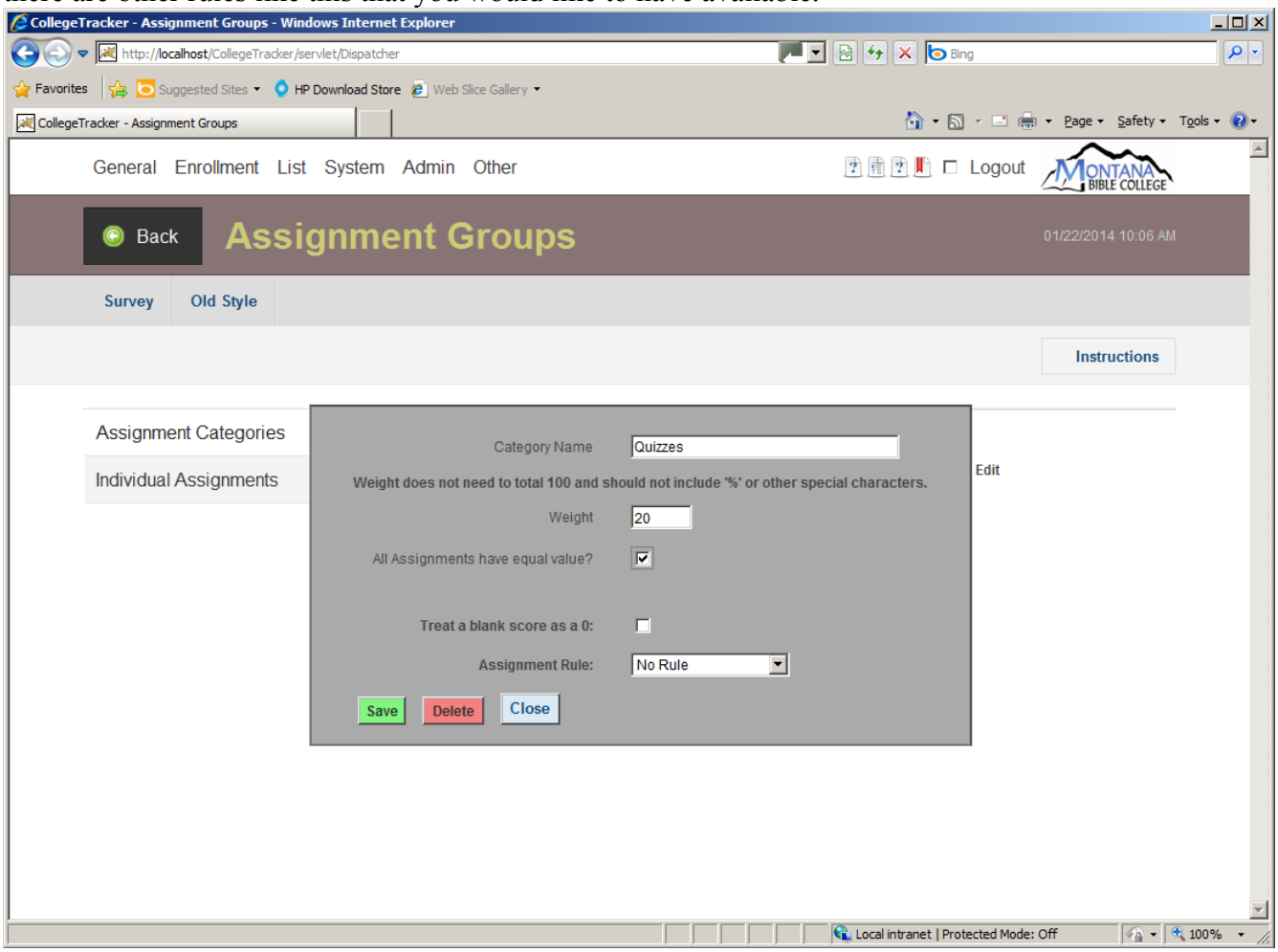


Categories are used to define collections of assignments which will be used to calculate a portion of the student's overall grade. For instance, if your class grading is composed of Quizzes, Reports, and Exams, you can create categories for each of these. Before you begin, you may want to figure out how much the various categories you are going to create are going to be worth as a percentage of the student's total grade... For instance, you could have your quizzes be worth 20% of the final grade, and reports and exams worth 40% a piece. Most likely, you have specified this on your syllabus... If not, you may want to consider doing that in the future since, otherwise, students do not know how the grading will be done in the class. Within each category, you can tell the program that all assignments within that category have equal weight OR, you can distribute the weight based on the number of points for each assignment – for instance, in the latter scenario, a quiz with 10 maximum points will have half the “weight” on the final grade as a quiz with 20 maximum points. In the “all equal” scenario, a 10 point quiz and a 100 point quiz would have exactly the same impact on the final grade.

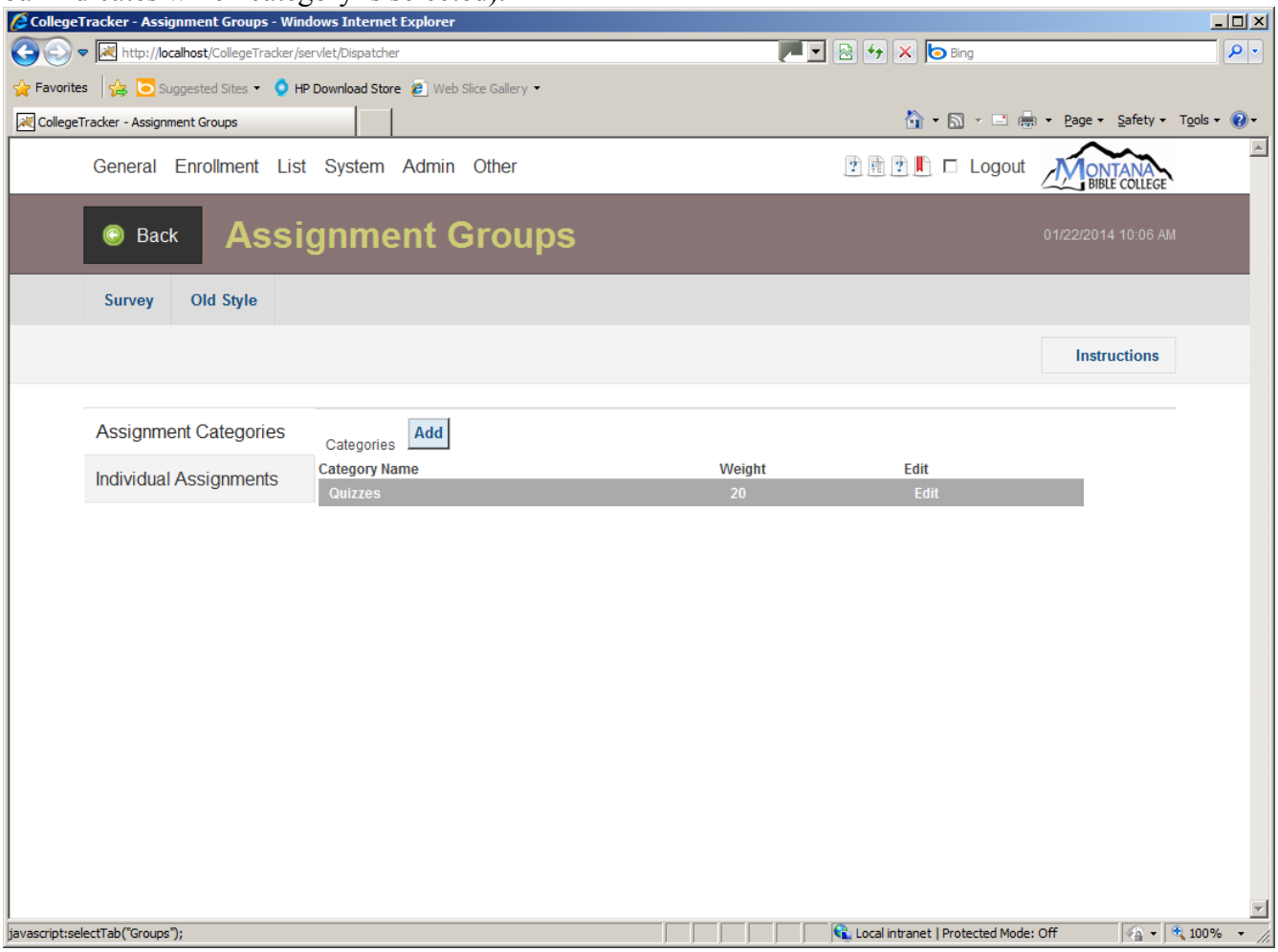
Assignments are individual quizzes, tests, or whatever other grading you are going to do for the course, these **always** exist within a category and a category **must have** at least one assignment for this system to work.

Creating new Categories

So, let's start by creating the categories you are going to use for your various assignments. Start by clicking on the “Add” button next to “Categories” (down an inch or so from the back button). Fill in the Category name and, at minimum, the weight. If you would like all of the assignments to be considered equal no matter how many points you are going to give to each assignment, click the “All assignments have equal value”. “Treat a blank score as a 0” means that all assignments within this category are required and, once any student's score for any particular assignment has been entered, any scores for that assignment that are left blank (and not excused) will be assumed to be a 0. When you have made your entries here, click the “Save” button at the bottom of the page. The Assignment Rule at the bottom allows you to specify special rules in handling the assignments within a category – currently, the only rule allows you to drop the lowest scores once a certain number of assignment scores have been entered. Contact me if you wish to use this feature and I can describe it further. Also let me know if there are other rules like this that you would like to have available.

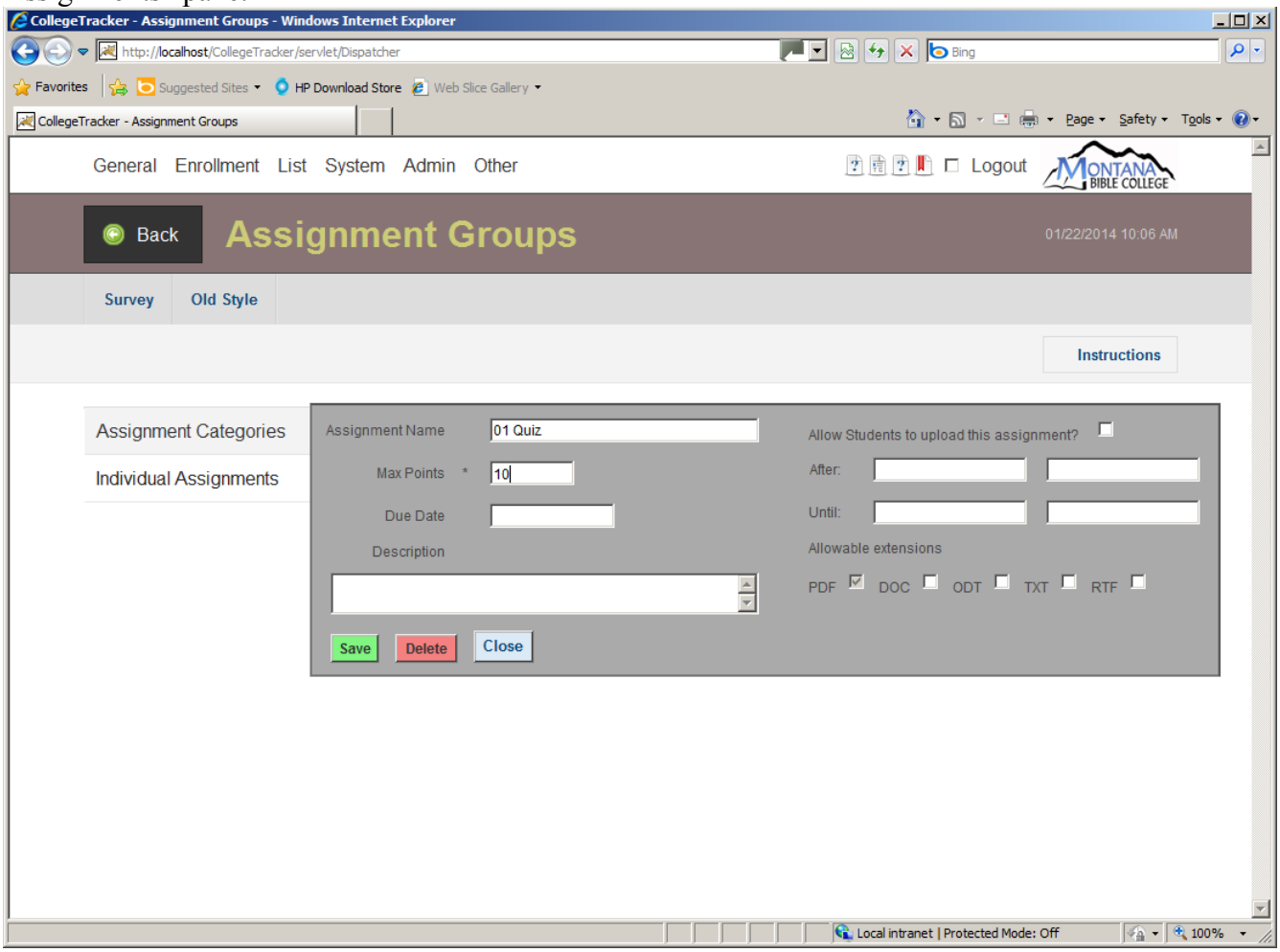


Once Save has been clicked, you will see the category show up on the left hand side of the page, the editing panel at the bottom of the page will close and the “Add” button next to “Category Assignments” will be enabled. You can now add assignments to the category that is selected on the left side (the Grey bar indicates which category is selected).

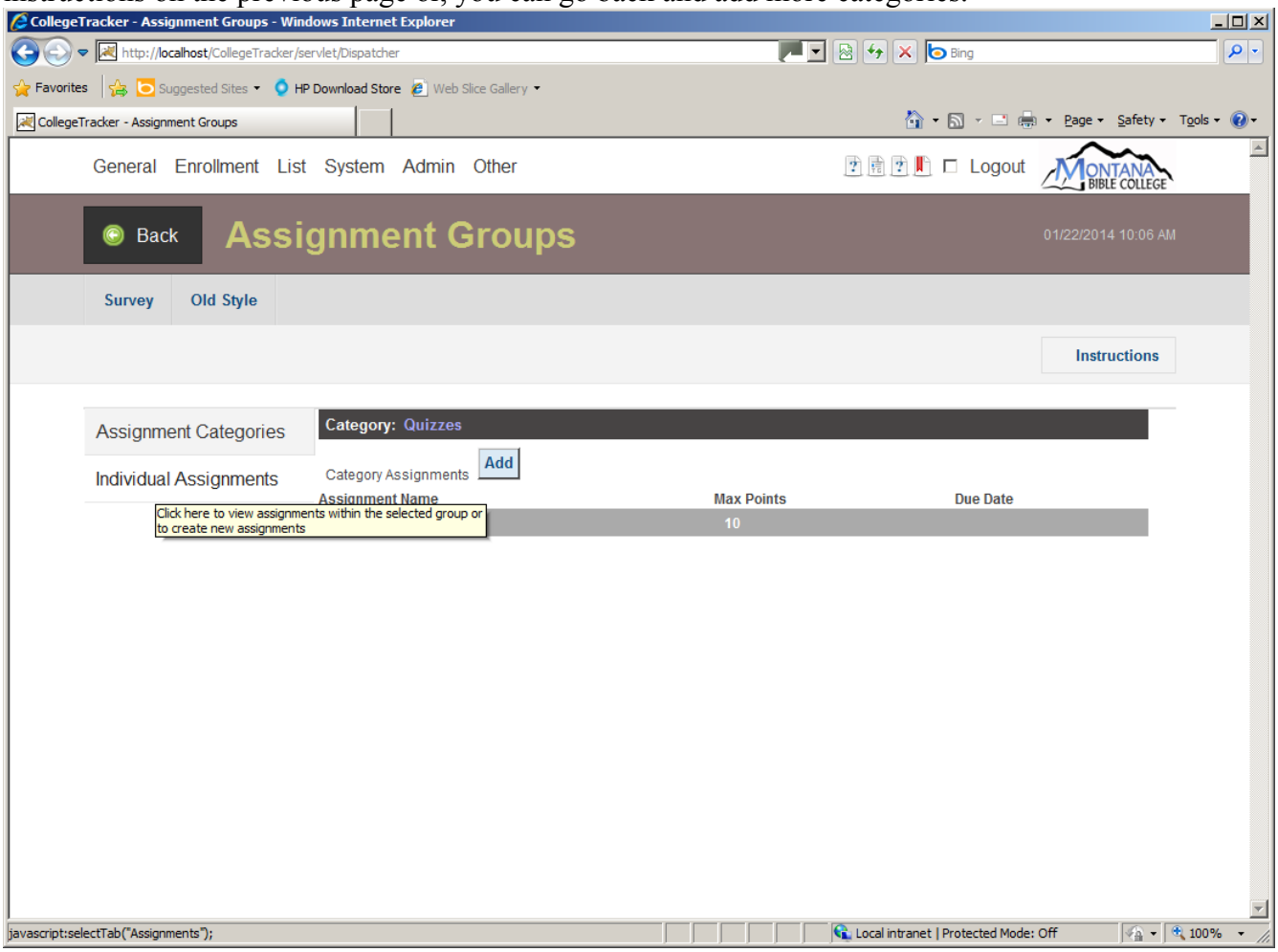


Creating new Assignments

With a category selected, click on the “Add” button next to Category Assignments. The edit pane will open up and let you edit information about the new assignment. At a minimum, fill in the Assignment Name and the Max Points. You can also specify a due date for the assignment and give a description of the assignment which the students can see to know what needs to be done. On the right side of the edit pane, there settings which will allow a student to upload an assignment (for instance, a report) directly into CollegeTracker. To use this feature, you have to click the checkbox at the top of the right pane and then, at a minimum, specify which file extensions you are going to allow students to upload. You can also specify a time period during which uploads will be allowed... For instance, if your deadline for an assignment was 3/5/2013 by 5pm. You could specify that as the “Until” date/time. You could specify the “After” date/time as, say, a week before that date. You will notice that PDF is always selected, this is because PDF can be read pretty much anywhere and, therefore, is the preferred format within the system. Let me know if you need spreadsheet support and I can add that to the tool fairly quickly. Once you have filled in everything you want, click the “Save” button at the bottom of the Edit pane, the edit pane will close and the newly created assignment will show up on the right hand “Category Assignments” pane.



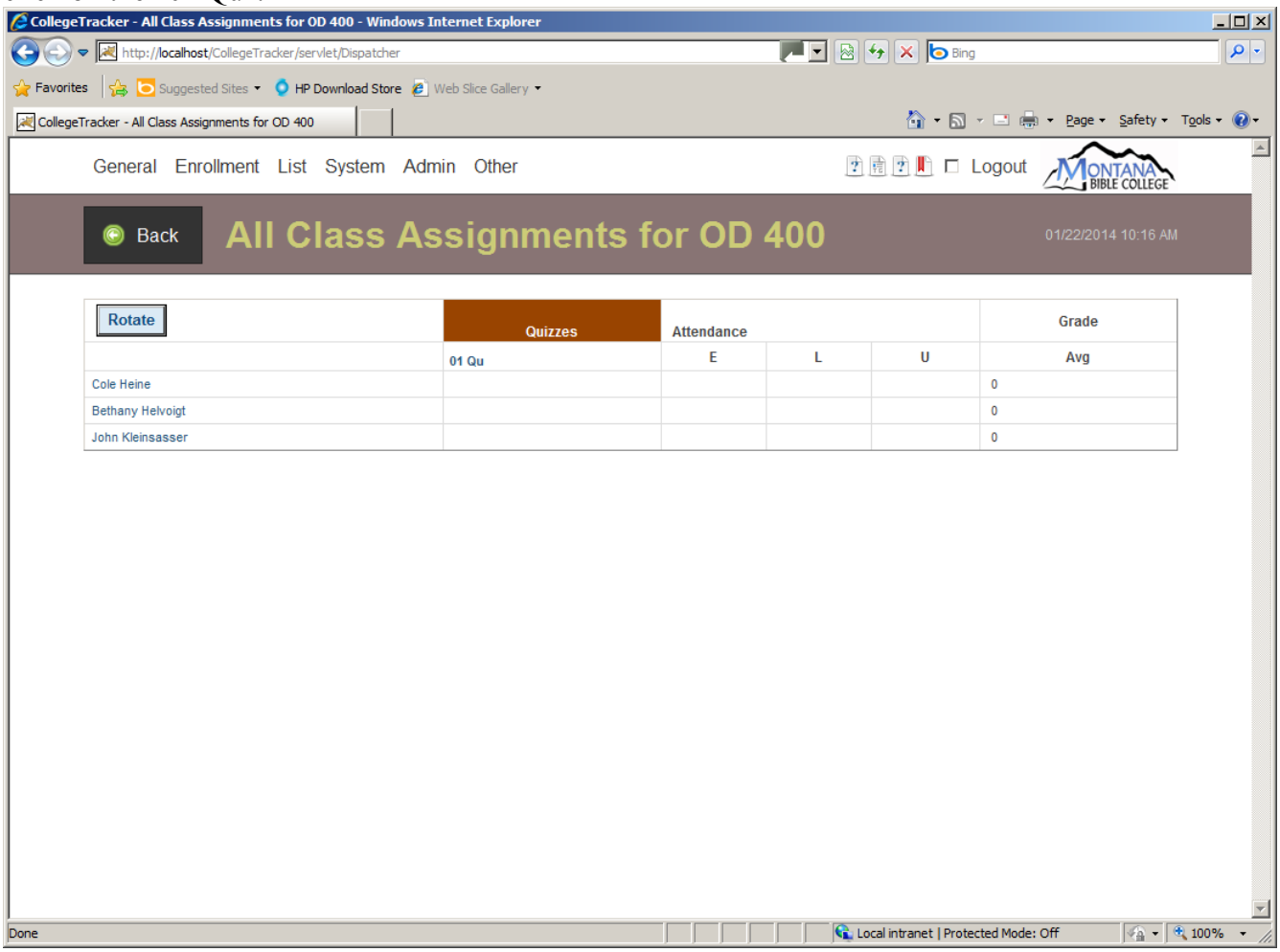
Your page will now look like this. At this point, you can add more assignments, by following the instructions on the previous page or, you can go back and add more categories.



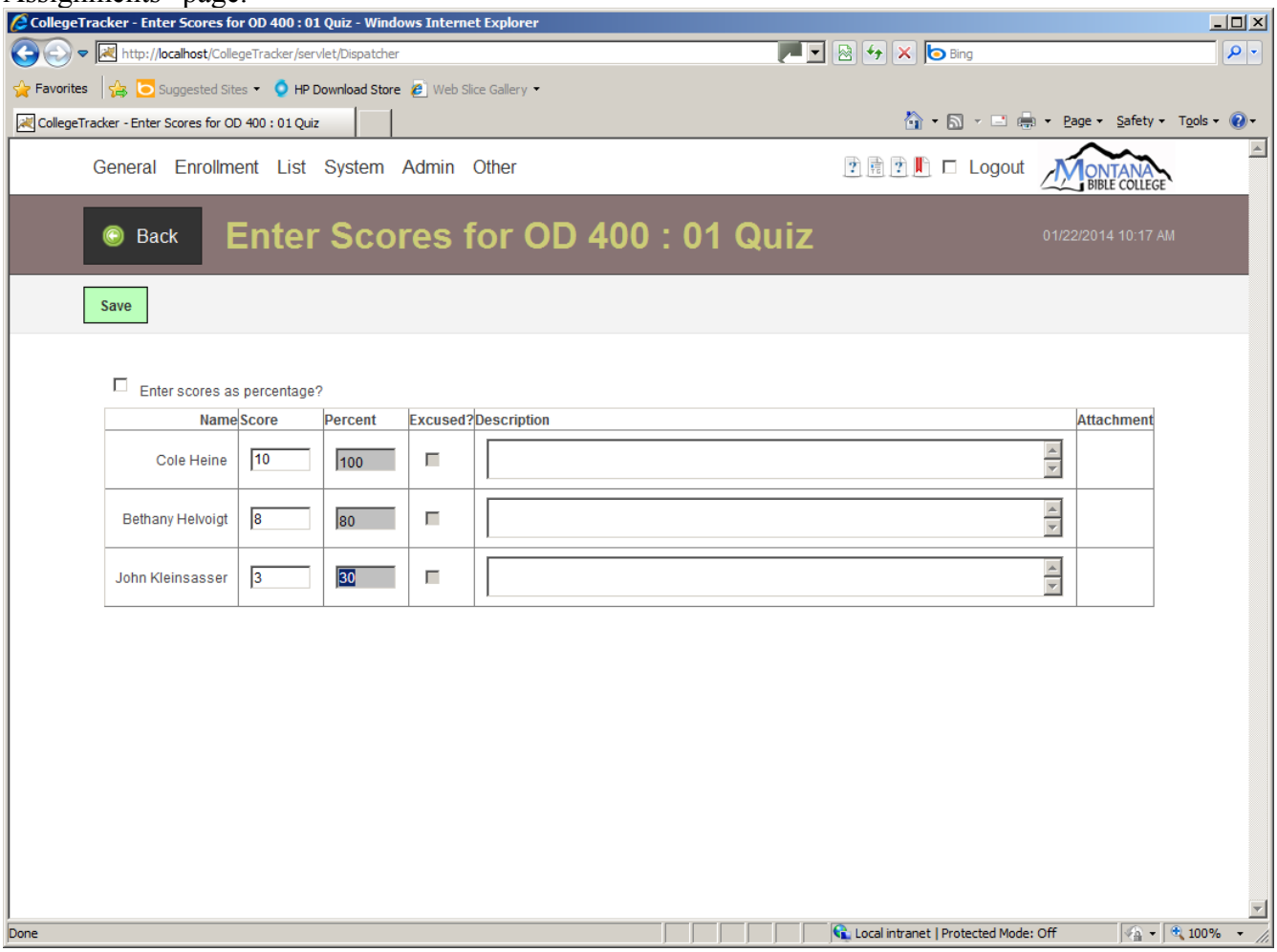
To edit an assignment, click on the assignment name... To edit a category, click on the edit link. To add an assignment similar to an existing assignment. Click on the existing one first and then click the “Category Assignment” Add button. You can do the same with a Category.

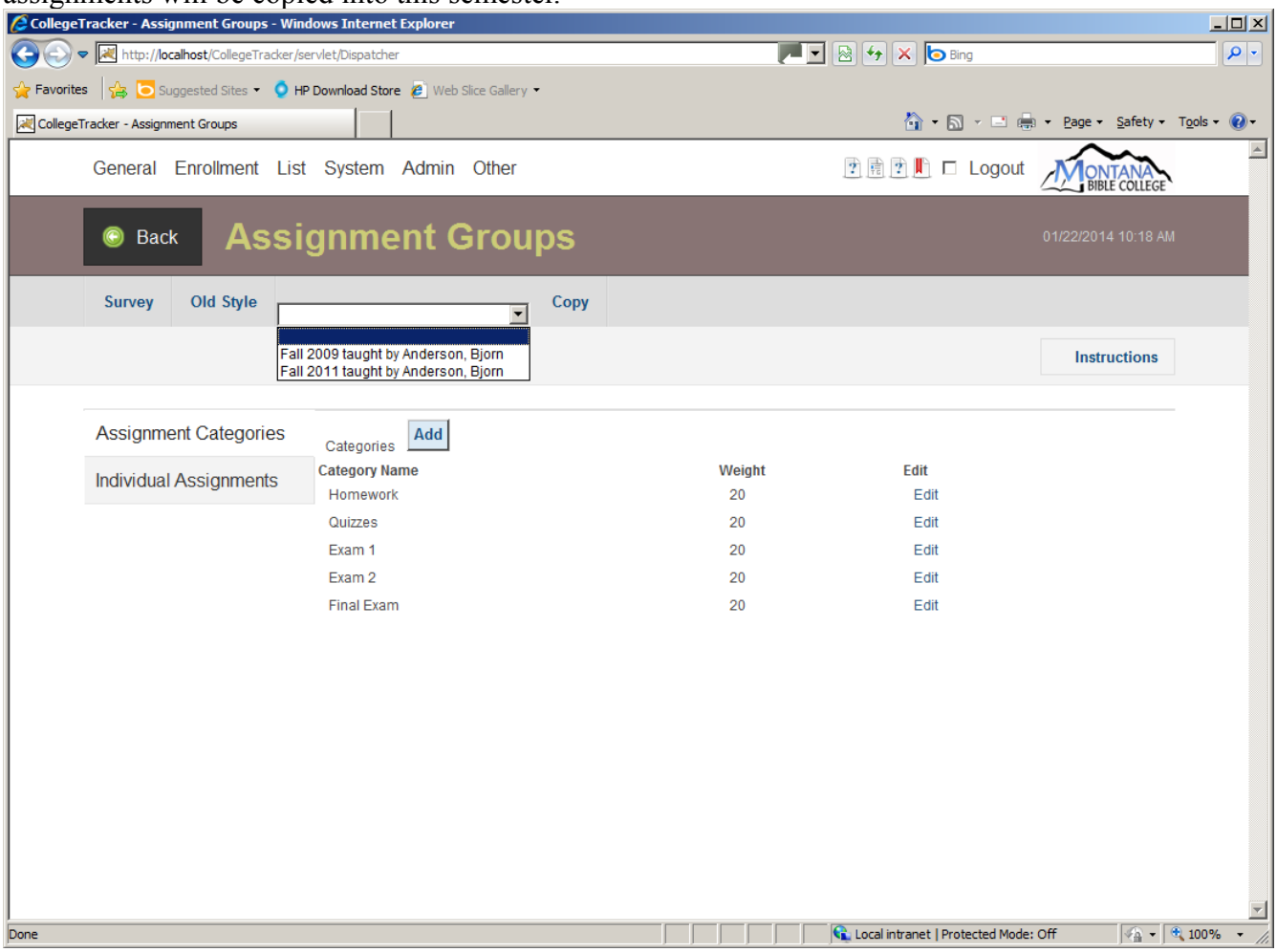
Entering Assignment Scores

If you return to the “Classes” page (click the “Back” button in the Title header on the page) and then click on the “View” button in the Assignments area, you will presented now with a page similar to this. This page displays all assignments you have created in the previous steps and will allow you to enter assignment scores for each student and every assignment. To use this page, you will need to click on the Assignment Name OR on the student name. You will notice that this page only displays the first 5 characters of the assignment name. The assignments within a category are also sorted in alphabetical order (thus the reason I suggested putting a number at the front of the assignment name. For now, I'll click on the “01 Qu”.



You will arrive at the “Enter Scores” page where you can either enter raw scores or, if you'd prefer, you can click on the “Enter scores as percentage” and we will automatically calculate the points based on the maximum points you entered when you created this assignment. You can enter the score or, if the student was excused the day of the quiz and isn't required to make it up, you can mark them as excused. You can also enter a reason why the student received the grade they got (if you want to). If the student is allowed to upload their finished homework, you will see the attachment on this same line (far right). When you are finished entering grades, click the Save button which will return you to the “Class Assignments” page.



Using Existing Assignment Definitions

There is one other item worth exploring on this subject. Back on the Assignment Groups page, you will see a select with a list of previous terms that the program has identified this class has been offered and for which there are assignments created. For instance, if you know you taught this course last fall and entered assignments at that time, you can select last fall from the drop down list that is displayed. If you find one you believe will work for you, you can click the “Copy” button and the categories and assignments will be copied into this semester.