Technology Tuesdays: Blackboard

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Purpose of this Document

This document is intended to provide advice and suggestions to College of Commerce faculty creating web enhanced, online and blended courses using the university's Blackboard Learning Management System.
About Blackboard

Blackboard is the Learning Management System (LMS) that DePaul University uses to enhance traditional courses and to teach in an online or blended fashion. Every course that exists in Peoplesoft will have a corresponding Blackboard course. Your Blackboard course is automatically created during the quarter before you are due to teach. The Blackboard course exists for another two quarters after you have finished teaching, at this point the Blackboard course is archived.

Important points to note:

- Your Blackboard course will initially be empty of content - you will need to add and/or copy content into the course.
- Your student roster is automatically updated each day.
- Your Blackboard course is unavailable (and hidden from students) until you make it available.
Making Your Course Available (and Unavailable)

By default your Blackboard course is unavailable. Your students will not be able to see your course until it is available. Generally your course will be created one quarter before it is taught, and available for another two quarters thereafter. The Blackboard System Administrators will ask you at this point if they can archive your course. Archiving frees up space on the Blackboard servers and improves performance.

It is recommended that you keep your course unavailable whilst you develop content.

Making Your Course Available

1. Click on Settings in the Control Panel (under Course Options).
2. Click on **Course Availability**.

3. Click on **Yes** next to **Make Course Available**.

4. Click on **Submit**.

5. Click on **OK**.

6. Your course is now available.

**Making Your Course Unavailable**

Once the quarter is over and you have finished teaching your course, you may want to consider making the course unavailable.
1. Click on **Settings** in the **Control Panel** (under **Course Options**).

2. Click on **Course Availability**.

3. Click on **No** next to **Make Course Available**.

4. Click on **Submit**.

5. Click on **OK**.

6. Your course is now unavailable.
Course Structure

Structuring Your Content
There are many ways that you can structure your weekly content in Blackboard. This is one suggestion for weekly content:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Content Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment Instructions</td>
<td>Detailed description of what assignment(s) the student must complete by the end of the week.</td>
<td>Text (HTML)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Objectives</td>
<td>What it is expected the student will learn this week.</td>
<td>Text (HTML)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td>Short quiz to determine level of student knowledge. The quiz returns score and feedback (with links to additional resources) but is ungraded. The student may take the quiz as many times as they wish. The Learning Objectives determines what type of questions are asked.</td>
<td>Blackboard Quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture / Lecture Notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading and Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Blackboard Discussion Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td></td>
<td>Blackboard Quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit Assignment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Blackboard Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Content Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>• What was the most useful thing that you learnt this week?</td>
<td>Blackboard Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What was the least useful thing that you learnt this week?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is there anything that you did not understand?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Did you experience any technical difficulties?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is there anything you want to tell me?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Templating Your Course**

1. Login to your Blackboard course.
2. Click on Control Panel.
3. Click on **Course Design** under **Course Options**.

4. Click on **Course Banner**.

5. **Browse** for the image file you will use on your course. Commerce images are available on the shared network drives at **Com / Coms / PUBLIC / Online Learning / Blackboard Banners**.

6. Click on **Submit**.

7. Click on **OK**.

8. Click on **Course Menu Design**.
9. Change the Select Menu Style from Buttons to Text (this will allow for longer names in the menu).

10. Select background color for Menu and Select text color for Menu. Make sure that these colors contrast and produce legible, easy to read text, for example white text on a black background.

11. Click on Submit.

12. Click on OK.

13. Click on OK.

14. Click on Manage Course Menu (under Course Options in the Control Panel).

15. To the right of Course Information click on Modify.

16. Change the Name from Announcements to Syllabus.

17. Check Allow Guest access and Allow Observer access.

18. Click on Submit.
19. To the right of Course Documents click on Modify.
20. Change the Name from Course Documents to Schedule.
21. Click on Submit.

22. To the right of Assignments click on Modify.
23. Change the Name from Assignments to <hr>. Note: This is a hack that will create a horizontal rule, separating the menu.
24. Click on Submit.

25. Click on Add Content Area.
26. Change the Name from Assignments to Weekly Materials.
27. Click on Submit.
28. Click on 6 (next to Weekly Materials) and change the value to 5.
29. Click on **Add Tool Link**.

30. Change **Type** from **Address Book** to **Discussion Board**.

31. Click on **Submit**.

32. Click on **OK**.

33. Click on 7 (next to **Discussion Board**) and change the value to 6.

34. Click on **Add Content Area**.

35. Change the **Name** from **Assignments** to `<hr />`. **Note:** This is a hack that will create a horizontal rule, separating the menu.

36. Click on **Submit**.

37. Click on **OK**.

38. Click on 7 (next to **External Links**) and change the value to 8.

39. Click on **Add Tool Link**.

40. Change **Type** from **Address Book** to **Staff Information**.

41. Change the **Name** from **Faculty** to **Faculty Information**.

42. Click on **Submit**.

43. Click on **OK**.

44. Click on **OK**.
45. Click on Manage Tools (under Course Options in Control Panel).

46. Click on Tool Availability.

47. Uncheck tools that you will not be using in your course, such as:
   - Glossary
   - Calendar
   - Chalk Title Management
   - Course Objectives
   - Collaboration
   - Dropbox
   - The Electric Blackboard®
   - Manual
   - Tasks

48. Click on Submit.

49. Click on OK.

50. Click on OK.
Learning Units

Learning Units are a new (and somewhat neglected) way of assembling content in a sequential order.

1. Navigate to an area within your course that you want to assemble content. Click on Edit View.

2. Click on Select Learning Unit and then click on Go.

3. Choose a Name.

4. Type in some explanatory Text (if necessary).

5. Change Track number of views to Yes.

6. Click on Submit.

7. Click on OK.

8. Click on your newly created Learning Unit.

9. Start to assemble content and reorganize by using the numbered dropdown options.

10. Click on OK.
Announcements

Announcements are the first thing students will see as they enter your Blackboard course. Use the announcements as a way to provide positive feedback and keep your students on schedule. Students will not see announcements unless they log on to your course.

Creating An Announcement

1. Click on Announcements in the Control Panel (under Course Tools).
2. Click on the Add Announcements button.
3. Type in your Subject (this is required).
4. Type in your Message (this is optional).
5. Choose whether the announcement is permanent (always in the last 7 days folder) or not, by making a selection in Options.
6. Add a Course Link if you want to link to a resource (document, discussion board, etc.).
7. Click on Submit.
8. Click on OK.

Notes

The last modified announcement will appear at the top of the page.

Permanent announcements will always be displayed at the top of the page.
Miscellaneous Tips

**Faculty Information**

Use the Faculty Information pages to introduce yourself to your students. You should also provide contact information and office hours. Uploading a photograph of yourself will help in establishing a trust relationship with your students.

**Discussion Board**

The Discussion Board is arguably one of the most powerful elements of Blackboard. This is main location for communication with and between your students. Discussion boards work best when there is a clear focus on what is expected.

**Roster**

Blackboard has the ability for students to create homepages, where students can upload a photograph and biography. Assign this as task the first week of your class. You can view your student’s homepages from the roster.

**Group Pages**

Group Pages allow your students to work and communicate in small teams. You can create discussion boards within groups. Only members of the group can view and contribute to the discussion.
Blackboard Assessments

There are multiple types of quiz/question you can use in Blackboard:

- Calculated Formula
- Calculated Numeric
- Either/Or
- Essay
- File Response
- Fill in Multiple Blanks
- Fill in the Blank
- Hot Spot
- Jumbled Sentence
- Matching
- Multiple Answer
- Multiple Choice
- Opinion Scale/Likert
- Ordering
- Quiz Bowl
- Short Answer
- True/False
- Random Block

Plus the option of assessing:

- Attendance (course statistics)
- Quality of contributions (discussion board)

Best Practices

- Write simply and clearly (Strunk and White is your friend).
  - Ambiguous questions create error, frustration, and compound biases related to language and disability.
- Measure knowledge of material and concepts, not vocabulary.
• Give yourself enough time to evaluate items after a day or two.
  • Revise, edit, and ask others to read before administering the quiz (ideally one person creates the quiz, another reviews the quiz).

• Consider use of language: “quiz” is friendlier than “test.”

• Avoid time limits on quizzes unless strictly necessary for grading/assessing.

• Clearly indicate what is expected of the student before the student takes a quiz (time, structure, grading, feedback, etc.).

• Understand that every quiz is open book (your students are connected to the Internet).

• Consider several short, focused quizzes rather than one large one.

• Use quiz feedback to engage learning (jumping points to the material).

• Use regular surveys (perhaps weekly) to identify areas where either your students are dissatisfied or not completely understanding the material.

• Determine the most important objectives (your learning objectives) to assess and use these as the outline for your quiz. You can use:
  
  • Facts
  • Definitions
  • Comprehension
  • Analysis
  • Applications

Multiple choice
• Offer the most flexibility in terms of content.

• Do not “give away” answers via information in other questions.

• Construct questions with a single correct answer.

• Refrain from using the choices “all of the above” or “none of the above” (lazy).

• Include a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 options.
• The more “homogeneous” the options, the higher the degree of difficulty.

• Avoid negative wording (especially double negatives).

• When item is controversial, indicate whose opinion is sought.

• Avoid irrelevant cues to correct answer (length, grammar).

• Items should test one central idea or concept.

• Present options in alphabetical or logical order.

**True/False**

• Usually limited to fact recall (low level of cognitive ability) or logic.

• Students more likely answer “true” if they do not know the answer (60/40 rule).

• Large number of questions needed to provide reliable feedback.

• Keep statements short and simple.

• Use exact language.

• Avoid use of absolutes (easy to prove false).

• Avoid use of negatives (or double negatives).

One strategy is to create a series of true statements and then convert some to false statements.

**Essay/Short Answer**

• Essays measure the student’s ability to communicate effectively, not just their understanding of content.

• Easier (quicker) for instructor to create but harder and (more subjective) to grade.

• Requires model answer to grade effectively.

• Can limit amount of material tested.

• Short and focused is the most appropriate use.

• Clearly define task, scope, and directions for a “good” answer:
  
  • How long or short an answer is sought?
  
  • Should they show their work?
  
  • Whose opinion do you want (book, lecture, their own)?
• Allow time for thought.

• To reduce instances of plagiarism, require some personal opinions from students in answers. Ask students to provide examples from their own lives.

**Matching**
• Best used for testing knowledge level:
  • Term – Definition.
  • Cause – Effect.
  • Problem – Solution.
  • Symbol – Meaning.

• Keep each matching set short.

• Arrange responses in alphabetical or logical order.

• Reusing matching set will reduce guesses.

• Provide more answers than questions.

• Indicate basis for matching.

• Ensure only one correct answer.

**Ordering**
• Keep options short.

• Arrange responses in alphabetical or logical order.

**Fill in the blank**
• Best used for testing fact recall or application of knowledge.

• Anticipate alternative spelling and capitalization.

• May require manual review.

**Multiple answer**
• A different form of multiple choice.

• Items should test one central idea or concept.
Multiple answers must be clearly correct.

Creating Quizzes
1. Click on Test Manager in the Control Panel.
2. Click on Add Test.
3. Give your quiz a Name.
4. Provide a Description. This is what the student reads before taking a quiz. Provide information that prepares the student and outlines your expectations.
5. Provide Instructions. This is what the student reads after entering the quiz. Your Instructions may be similar to your Description.
6. Click on Submit.
7. Click on Creation Settings.
8. Check the default settings you wish to use then click on Submit.
9. Click on OK.
10. Select the type of question on the Add dropdown menu then click on Go.
11. Enter your Question Text, Point Value, Answers and Feedback. NOTE: the type of question you selected dictates your options.

Deploying Quizzes
1. In Control Panel click on the Content Area where you want your quiz to be.
2. Click on Add Test.
3. Select you quiz from the Add Test window and click on Submit.
4. Click on OK.
5. Click on Modify the Test Options:
   a. Change Make the link Available to Yes.
   b. Select the Test Availability options you want.
c. Select the **Self-assessment Options** you want.

d. Select the **Test Feedback** options you want.

e. Select the **Test Presentation** options you want.

6. Click on **Submit**.

7. Click on **OK**.

8. Click on **OK**.

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### Creating Assignments

Assignments are a mechanism to upload documents directly into the Gradebook, where an instructor can review the work and allocate a grade.

1. Select a **Content Area** in the **Control Panel**.

2. Click on **Select Assignment** and then click **Go**.

3. Give your assignment a **Name**.

4. Allocate **Points Possible**.

5. Type your **Instructions** to your students.

6. **Make the assignment available**.

7. Ideally, provide a file (which the students will complete as their assignment) and a **Name of Link** to File.

8. Click on **Submit**.

9. Click on **OK**.

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### Grading Assignments

- From the **Control Panel** click on **Grade Center**.

- Click on the chevron next to the assignment you want to grade.

- Click on **Assignment File Download**.

- You will see a list of all your students and the date and time they submitted their assignments.
• Check the student assignments you wish to download and click on Submit.

• This will export the assignments into a zip file. Click on Download assignments now.

• Click on OK.

• The zip file contains your student assignments and any comments they have made. Review these files at your leisure and then allocate grades.

• To enter grades simply type your grades into the column in the Grade Center. Pressing Return will progress to the next field in the column.

Exporting and Importing Grades

The Grade Center is where you can monitor assessment activity and alter grades. In certain situations you may choose to import or export grades. You can only import grades from a file you have previously exported.

Exporting

• From the Control Panel click on Grade Center.

• Check the student names you wish to download grades for.

• Click on Manage / Download.

• Select Data to Download.

• Choose a Delimiter Type and click on Submit.

• Click on Download.

• Click on OK.

• Open the file in Excel and make whatever changes you would like.

• Save the file.

Importing

• Click on Manage / Upload in the Grade Center.

• Attach local file and click on Submit.

• Check the column(s) to upload and click on Submit.

• Click on OK.
Course Copies

There are two methods that you can use to copy course content from one Blackboard course to another Blackboard course: ITD’s course copy, or manually copying elements yourself.

**ITD Course Copy**

To request course contents to be copied from one Blackboard course to another:

1. Go to http://www.itd.depaul.edu
2. Click on **Blackboard Request Forms**.
3. Next to “To request materials be copied from a previous course to a new course:” click on “click here.”
4. Type in your **Campus Connection username and password** and click on “login”.
5. Check the **Course You Would Like Materials Copied From**.
6. Check all the **Content you would like copied**:
   - **Content** (course materials, syllabus, etc.)
   - **Assessments and Pools** (quizzes, etc)
   - **Discussion Board** (existing discussions, students)
7. Check the **Course You Would Like Materials Copied To**.
8. Enter any **Comments and Notes** you think are required.
9. Click on **Submit**.
Manually Copying Elements

1. In Blackboard, click on EDIT VIEW.

2. Next to the item you want to copy, click on Copy.

3. Under 2 Destination, change the drop-down menu Destination Course to the course you want to copy content to.

4. Click on Browse to select the location in the new course where the copied content will go.

5. Click on Submit.

6. Click on OK.
Adding a DePaul User to Your Course

1. Go to http://www.itd.depaul.edu
2. Click on Blackboard Request Forms.
3. Next to “To add a DePaul user to the course (including TAs):” click on “click here.”
4. Type in your Campus Connection username and password and click on “login”.
5. Type in the User information:
   - User’s First Name: (required)
   - User’s Middle Name:
   - User’s Last Name: (required)
   - User’s EmplID/StudentID: (required)
   - User’s Telephone: (required)
   - User’s Email: (required)
6. Decide what level of access to provide:
   - Student.
   - T.A.
   - Builder.
   - Grader.
   - Instructor.
7. Check the course(s) you would like the person to be added to.

8. Check all the **Content you would like copied:**

9. Enter any **Comments and Notes** you think are required.

10. Click on **Submit.**