WHAT BLACKBOARD CAN DO FOR YOU

A. TO ENHANCE ON-CAMPUS CLASSES

1. Post all course materials in clearly labeled folders (syllabus, weekly study guides, readings, assignments, exam reviews, grading rubrics).

Advantages

- Students can access course documents from anywhere with internet access. They cannot claim to have lost materials.
- Cuts down on time spent handing out materials in class.
- Allows instructor to track which students have in fact accessed materials.
- Cuts down on paper use.
- Visually- or hearing-impaired students can “translate” electronic text.
- Enables differentiation within the class: study guides can refer more ambitious students to more challenging sources, including internet sites.
- With due consideration of copyright factors, material can be provided for students whose textbooks are slow to arrive at the beginning of the semester.

2. Embed images and links to internet sites, and to (for instance) specific areas of the Library website, for research resources.

Advantages

- Makes such material available to students and enables the professor to use it in class, on-screen, with minimum fuss.

3. Use the Announcement and Email (all or selected students) features.

Advantages

- Quick communication.
- Announcements can be permanent, so students can’t claim not to have heard.

4. Create discussion boards, for continuation and extension of in-class discussions.

Advantages

- Engages students more fully.
- Encourages shyer students who are reluctant to speak in class.

5. Create blogs within which students can work in groups, uploading text, images and links.

Advantages

- Builds learning community.
- Encourages creativity, multi-media approaches, and interdisciplinarity.
• Particularly useful for group research activities
• All of this material can be accessed and used in the classroom.

6. Assignments – post the tasks on Blackboard and have students upload their assignments direct.

   Advantages:
   • Students can't lose the instructions.
   • Assignments are neatly grouped for you to read and grade.
   • You can type comments on their assignments – no need to print them out.
   • Saves class time otherwise devoted to handling back assignments – students get feedback faster.

7. Record grades in the Grade Center.

   Advantages:
   • The Grade Center is remarkably swift to use.
   • You can't lose your grading sheet.
   • Students can access their grades easily – alternatively, you can prevent this if you find they are becoming too grade-obsessed. Manual changes can be made at any time.
   • The Grade Center provides a running total of grades and can sort grades in various ways.

8. Tests and Quizzes

   Various automated options are available. For example:
   • “Forced choice” questions (ie, multiple choice or true/ false) can be automatically graded, and grades can be made available instantly.
   • Tests can be re-set (partially or in their entirety) if students need to re-take.
   • You can provide automatic feedback on answers, and refer students to specific areas they need to review if they have answered incorrectly.

B. Online Classes

   All of the above apply, but the weekly Discussion Board becomes more crucial, as it is the virtual ‘classroom’ for the course. See attached rubric for encouraging effective DB participation.
   • You can upload SmartBoard notes from an on-campus section of the same class, to enable distance learners to feel connected with the classroom students.

C. For Hybrid Courses (which combine face-to-face meetings with online interactions)

   An early face-to-face meeting builds connections which strengthen the online community. Scheduled meetings provide accountability for students who struggle with a purely online learning community.

   Again, all of the above can apply. In particular:
   • Discussion Board continues and extends the classroom conversation.
   • Assignments can be set, received, and returned via Blackboard, with face-to-face feedback to
• Reinforce.

• Readings and Discussion Boards can prepare students for class meetings, to maximize the face-to-face discussion time.

• Inclement weather doesn’t interfere with class. Blackboard can be the fall-back plan for face-to-face meetings, so the course doesn’t fall behind.

• Summer week can be enhanced significantly by Blackboard:
  - Get students started online on June 1st.
  - Assign online assignments and provide feedback the first three weeks of June.
  - Meet in person the last week of June.
  - Students have all of July to work on the major papers and projects, using Blackboard as necessary.
  - Students can keep working even if away (summer tends to involve family travel), assuming computer access.

**NOTE:** Efficient creation of Master courses means that once you have built a course, you can re-use most of the course materials with minimal alterations.

From the Technology Working Group: Bob Klonoski, Nancy Krippel, Chandra Mason, Kate O’Connell, Nicole Oechslin, Beverly Riddell, Katherine Turner, Laura Van Assendelft
Please feel free to ask any of us for further help or advice, or information on Blackboard use in specific courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: Exceptional for collegiate-level work</td>
<td>Remarks are well written and argued effectively, above the level normally expected of college students. The student visits the discussion board 3 – 4 times per week, reads the discussion posts and responds to the postings of his or her fellow students. The student engages collaboratively with others, interacting intelligently and thoughtfully, supplementing existing posts with additional new and relevant material (properly cited). The student may challenge existing posts and ask probing questions. Personal experiences, if used, are concise and on topic and are used only to make a significant contribution to the course and the material covered in the session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Above average for collegiate-level work</td>
<td>Remarks are at or above the collegiate level in writing and argument. The student visits the discussion board 2 – 3 times per week, reads the discussion posts and responds to the postings of his or her fellow students. Most interactions are collaborative and advance the conversation; they are thought provoking and motivate responses from others. Responses to existing posts are well-articulated and demonstrate an understanding of course concepts. Personal experiences, if used, are generally relevant and make a contribution to the class understanding of the course material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Average participation for collegiate-level work</td>
<td>Remarks, in general, are at the collegiate level in writing and argument. The student visits the discussion board at least once per week and contributes to the dialogue. Interactions with others, however, are generally one-way and do not lead to probing thought; they seldom advance a conversation. Personal experiences, if used, are only marginally relevant and make little contribution to the class understanding of the course material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Below-average</td>
<td>Remarks are poorly written and/or argued. The student visits the discussion board 0 – 1 times per week, or inconsistently throughout the semester. Contributions are rarely interactive or engaging and do not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participation</td>
<td>advance the conversation. Personal experiences, if used, are not generally relevant to the course material and do not contribute to the discussion of the course material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Unacceptable level and quality of participation</td>
<td>Little or no participation; remarks, when written, do not advance the conversation. The student visits the discussion board less than once every other week and makes little or no meaningful contribution to the dialogue. Personal experiences, if used, are irrelevant to the course material and make no meaningful contribution to the class dialogue.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>