



Blackboard Advanced Topics: Content Organization

I. How will you use Blackboard?

- Teach an online course
- Supplement a face-to-face course
- What will you post? Syllabus, Grades, Lecture material, Assignments, etc...
- What features will you utilize? Discussion Board, Digital Drop Box, Online Gradebook, Assessment Manager, etc...

Incorporate features according to your comfort level. Avoid implementing all within your first course.

II. How will material be organized?

1. By chapters, topic, week
2. Course Terminology
 - a. Use consistent terminology when referring to your course structure to reduce student confusion.
 - b. Do not refer to course work as assignments in one location and then as homework in another.
3. Course Layout
 - a. Determine folders and/or subfolders needed. Remember "By What" they are organized and to follow course terminology.
 - b. Use a consistent course layout. For example: inside the Week 1 folder is an Additional Resources folder, however, in Week 2 there are no additional resources. Still create the Additional Resources folder stating there are no additional resources that week. This will ease the minds of students wondering if material is missing.
4. Determine where content will be posted on button bar - Course Documents, Course Material, Assignments, etc...

III. Creating a Course Shell

1. Finalize course settings
 - a. Select appropriate content areas (button names) to be displayed on button bar.
 - b. Disable any unnecessary buttons or features
 - c. Avoid using confusing or redundant buttons
2. Create folders and/or subfolders according to course layout and terminology.
 - a. Creating your folders first will save you time because items cannot be moved into folders.
 - b. If you do not like your course layout change before you begin adding content.
3. Take your course for a "Test Drive" by navigating inside course as student. If you like what you see, begin adding content to your course.

IV. Adding Content: Step-by-Step instructions of a typical course layout

1. Access the Control Panel
2. Click on the content area link you would like to add content - Course Material
3. Click the Add Folder button
4. Type Week 1 into the 'specify your own name' textbox
5. Type a description of what content can be found inside this folder in the text area. (See *Common Folder mistake below*)
6. Set options of availability and then click the Submit button



7. A receipt of success page appears, click O.K. button.
8. Find the folder you just created and click on the folder name
9. You are now ready to add content inside that folder. Again, you have the option of adding items or folders. If you add folders here, they are considered to be subfolders. Add any subfolders now
10. Now, lets add a folder inside the Week 1 folder called Lecture Materials. Click on the Week 1 folder and then click the Add Folder button. Type Lecture Materials in the text box. Detail what content can be found in this folder. (*Once again, remember the common folder mistake. - see below*)
11. Set options and then click the Submit button
12. Click O.K. button
13. Repeat the above process until you have created your course shell
14. Now, lets add an item to the Week 1 folder called Overview. Click on the Week 1 folder, and then click the Add Item button. Type Overview in the textbox.
15. Enter content into the text area.
16. Set options and then click the Submit button
17. Click O.K. button
18. Find and click on the Lecture Materials folder to add content inside
19. Click the Add Item button and type Lecture 1 PowerPoint in the textbox.
20. Leave the text area blank or type - "Click the link above to access the Lecture 1 PowerPoint presentation."
21. Browse and find the Lecture 1 PowerPoint
22. Set options and then click the Submit button
23. Click O.K. button
24. Continue this process for the following weeks

Common Folder Mistake

Confusion seems to set in for some when adding content to folders. The common mistake is to add a folder and then place the content you wanted inside that folder on the outside. Then, when students click on the folder a message appears stating that the folder is empty. This could cause some confusion. To avoid this common mistake think about adding a folder the same way as creating a three ring binder with an outside cover letter.

Creating a three ring binder	Adding a folder in Blackboard
1. Obtain binder	1. Create folder - click the add folder button
2. Create cover letter and slip it in the outside sleeve	2. Give your folder a name and detail what content is found inside that folder in the text area
3. Open binder and place material on the rings	3. Click on the folder name and then the Add item or Add folder button.