

# Blackboard Day - Panel Discussion

Faculty and students shared their experiences, thoughts and challenges with using Blackboard

## How do we help students to get off to a strong start in Blackboard?

Getting Started in a course - [Instructor comments]

- Syllabus quiz
- Announcements
- Start Here button: Do this, this and that...
- Picture of instructor – [or video]
- Tight structure – so students know exactly what to do...
- Checklists can alleviate students worrying about missing something
- Quick start video (go through buttons, review all components, online live meeting first week for any initial issues)
- Review tool lists (welding class with tool requirements) could be a document, audio or video review
- Be clear about the turnaround (response) time students can expect from instructor

*I like to try to meet with the students before the class begins. This is partly so they can ask questions and get to meet me and each other. Sometimes it seems to work better and get things off to a good start - other times I'm just not sure.*

Getting Started – [Students responses]

- Appreciate instructor intro
- Student (Blackboard) orientation helpful
- Having syllabus ahead of time helpful – especially for blended schedule options to plan time
- All resources on blackboard – to review/prepare ahead of time
- Taking tests online
- Check for understanding (test tools)
- Bb serves as a running conversation between instructors and students
- Appreciate materials in BB but need/want f2f interaction

Audience questions:

If there was one welcome meeting – what would students want?

- Meet and greet – de-mystify
- Faux class so students can test their communication skills – what is acceptable, etc.

## Content presentation – Standard Bb shell [QM compliant]; instructors can enhance design and student navigation

How does the (default) shell enhance course design – what do you add?

[instructors]

- Course Resources (wisc-online, techconnect, instructor contact, )
- Start Here Button (in shell)
- Start/end date to discussions (open Sunday - reply by W, reply to others by Sunday)
- Mixed appreciation of default shell – face-to-face training would be an opportunity for more communication-initial training for instructors
- Inconsistency is a problem for students
- Opportunity for instructors to cover the basics.
- BB as intimidating for new instructors.
- Learning modules with all pieces for Week 1(eg.)
- Less (clicking) is better

*I always have someone who seems to like to jump in immediately each week and they give me a lot of feedback if there are problems with the unit. I have a "goody bag" where they can pick an item as a reward for doing this for me.*

*I am getting better at giving more feedback and was glad to hear that students like that. I do get some really awesome comments in the journals - let them talk about either the assigned topic or whatever they want that is in any way related.*

*...will plan to check if Khan Academy has anything that I can use. I know they have math, but the students who could really benefit are usually the ones who don't look to get any help - they just hope they can squeak by. (alternative multimedia resources)*

[Student comments]

- Learning modules are helpful – just go down the list, know what to do.
- Mark review Adaptive release helps to keep track
- Post resources (outside, current events) [Would like to see]
- Would like an opportunity to see grades for all classes in one view. (global navigation grades link does show grades for all classes in one view)

## How are students engaging on three levels (content, colleagues, instructor)?

What do instructors do to engage students on all levels? [Instructors]

- Group spaces, submit a summary of what we will be discussing in class this week
- Discussion for students to discuss upcoming big assessments – talk with students not normally communicating with...
- Instructors:
- Feedback is important to adult learners – Netiquette conversation, followed by quiz
- Open blog – for questions after class, or whenever
- Have students realize that instructors can see when students have been online

- Weekly announcements (motivation, carrots, preparation)
- (allow for editing posts (for grammar/spelling))
- Add comments to grades

*I got myself a "TextNow" account so that the students can send a quick text at any time and I will get it super quickly. This seems to get used a lot and I think is a help for me and the students - they can send a quick message when they run into a problem and I get the message super quick and can respond within minutes usually.*

**Accessibility and readability: Navigation, media, documentation of accessibility, text formatting, alternative content formats**

What challenges do you encounter with content in a Bb course?

- Hyperlinks – dead links, have to copy/paste, (format underlined, blue)
- Sometimes documents copied, scanned are incomplete or hard to read.
- Labeling content – when should be accessed.
- Elicit problems in the course from students pov (open blog)
- Closed captioning- khan academy, cc correctly, multi-language
- –open links in new window
- WORD accessibility tool
- \*\*check accessibility tools in BB\*\*

**General Comments:**

When is the best time to post announcements (agenda)? Next week's agenda after class for current week....

[Addressed to students] Do you ever feel you get too much content/notifications?

- Every class is different
- At least post grades!!
- (from an advisor pov) – We can't advise if we don't know where the student stands in the class
- If using GC – keep grades updated!