Using Blackboard to Keep Students on Track

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Workshop Description: Blackboard can help you create a framework for your face-to-face course that helps students stay on track and get the most out of your content. During this workshop, you’ll learn how to manipulate the Course Menu to create clear navigation and how to structure content and activities so students can link what they already know to the content you present.

Setting the Stage

At the outset, it’s helpful to organize your thoughts and map out the way you’d like the course to work. Drawing it out on paper lets you see the big picture and makes it easier to create links between your content and activities.

This is also a good time to set expectations for the course. These expectations aren’t just about how you expect students to behave: you also have to manage the students’ expectations for you. For example, you may want to let students know about your

- communication preferences (email? Phone?),
- grading/feedback timeline, and
- one-on-one availability.

Let’s look at two tools you can use to create a guiding structure in your course.

Course Menu

The Course Menu allows students to navigate your course. It’s helpful to provide them with only the items they need, such as high priority or frequently used items.

It’s also helpful to group items to make it easier for students to find what they need.

Let’s start by manipulating the Course menu:

- adding content areas/tools
- renaming items
- reordering items
- grouping items
Content Areas

It’s easy to organize your content so that it serves as a guide for your students.

Using Items and Content Folders, you can “chunk” or group content so that students can see the relationships among your stated objectives, content, learning activities, and assessment methods.

Let’s start by

- creating items
- creating content folders
- adding details to items and folders

Want more?

For more guidance on course design, enroll in Designing an Exemplary Course, check out Blackboard’s Exemplary Course Program’s rubric, or read the Introduction to the Quality Matters rubric.

If you’d like to add more visual interest to your course, check out a free icon set that you can use right away.