

Center for Learning and Teaching
faculty-focused



Blackboard – Getting Started

Educational Technologies Series



OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
DISTANCE LEARNING

Workshop Summary

Center for Learning and Teaching

Topic	Getting Started with Blackboard
Overview	<p>Blackboard is used at Old Dominion University as a course management system. As such it is a container for course materials that is delivered via the Internet (the Web). It contains tools for communication, collaboration, and interaction both faculty to student and student to student.</p> <p>This workshop provides a quick overview of the Blackboard system and the absolute basics you need to post announcements, distribute your syllabus and other course materials, and to post your grades.</p>
Workshop objectives	<p>In this workshop, participants will learn about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blackboard Editing Features• Types of support for using Blackboard from ITS and CLT• How Blackboard can assist in teaching
Workshop activities	<p>Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blackboard at Old Dominion University• How Faculty and Students access Bb• How Faculty and Students access Bb support <p>Exercise 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore My Blackboard & Courses view <p>Exercise 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore content navigation buttons• Explore the control panel and user roles• Explore the navigation path in control panel• Explore tools in the control panel <p>Exercise 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add content into the Blackboard learning environment and explore content navigation buttons <p>Exercise 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Managing the Course Menu and Settings• Copy, Export, Archive Course Features• Establishing a Timeline for Maintenance and Backup
Who should attend	Faculty and their teaching assistants
Workshop expected outcomes	Participants will become familiar with the Blackboard learning management system and ways it can assist them in teaching.
Resources	Workshop Summary & Handouts

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Blackboard Getting Started: Overview

In this exercise you will learn about:

- Blackboard at Old Dominion University
- Online Resources for Faculty and Students
- How Faculty and Students access Blackboard
- How Faculty and Students access Blackboard support

Roles with these privileges:

- all

Assumptions:

Blackboard is used at Old Dominion University as a course management system. As such it is a container for course materials that is delivered via the Internet (the Web). It contains tools for communication, collaboration, and interaction both faculty to student and student to student.

Faculty and students do not require a special Blackboard “account;” there is no such thing. Blackboard course sites are automatically generated and populated based on scheduling and registration information for any semester.

Faculty and students require an active Old Dominion University email account and password to login to Blackboard. Note that faculty are required to use an ‘internet’ or ‘browser’ password as opposed to their desktop LotusNotes client password.

TIPS:

Faculty: To confirm whether or not you can log in to Blackboard, make sure you can open your ODU email from a web browser [<http://fsnotes.odu.edu>]. If you are unable to do so, you likely need to set up or change your internet/browser password. Directions are located on or near page 6 in the PDF version of the LotusNotes R5 User Guide which is available on the webmail page [<http://fsnotes.odu.edu>]. NOTE: Refer to the Blackboard help site periodically for the most current information regarding accessing Blackboard.

Activities:

- Review “Introduction to Blackboard”
- Review “CLT Bb Quick Reference”

EXERCISE 1: Explore My Blackboard & Courses View

In this exercise you will:

- Explore the My Blackboard view
- Explore the Blackboard courses view

Roles with these privileges:

- Faculty roles
- Student roles

Assumptions:

Blackboard is used at Old Dominion University as a course management system. As such, it is a container for course materials that are delivered via the Internet. It contains tools for communication, collaboration, and interaction both faculty-to-student and student-to-student.

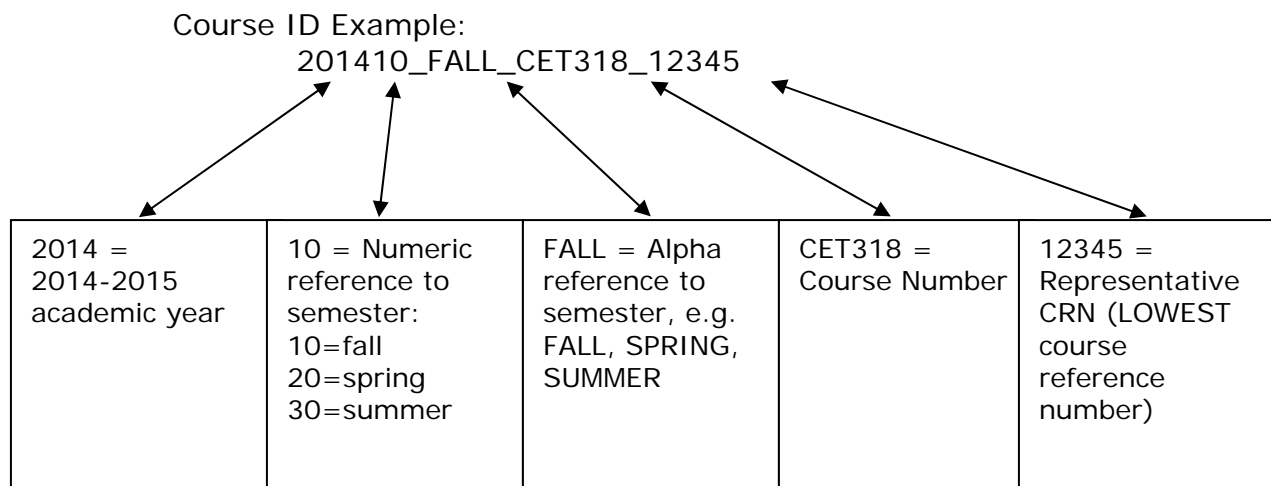
Selected modules of the institution view are implemented.

TIPS:

The list of courses on the Institution View is displayed with the alpha name of the course sites with their availability status only.

The list of courses on the "Courses" view is displayed with course ID, alpha name, and instructor name(s).

Course IDs indicate the semester as shown:



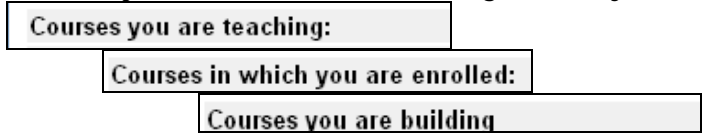
EXERCISE 1: Explore My Blackboard & Courses View

Activity 1: Explore the My Blackboard & Courses view

- Login to <https://www.blackboard.odu.edu>
 - Note the default view is “My Blackboard & Courses”



- Explore each of the panels.
 1. The Minimize/Maximize Tool allows you to collapse or expand a content module on the display.
 2. Display options are available on some panels, but not on others, and vary based on the panels.
 3. Select panels will include a “remove” tool. To add a panel back, click the “content” button near the top of the display.
 4. Add and Reorder Modules
 5. Personalize Page
- Examine the “My ODU Courses” Panel – organized by semester.



- Observe the categories and note that the “course name” and “course ID” are displayed.
- Observe the categories and note that the course “availability” is displayed.
 - Course names are listed with an *availability* indicator.
 - If the course site is labeled “unavailable,” you CAN access the site to edit it, but students cannot see it. If there is no indicator, then you AND students can view the site.



[Available to faculty only]



[Available to faculty AND students]

EXERCISE 2: Explore the Blackboard Course Site View

In this exercise you will:

- Explore the content navigation buttons
- Explore the control panel and user roles
- Explore the navigation path in the control panel
- Explore tools in the control panel

Roles with these privileges:

- Course site navigation: all
- Control Panel access and navigation: faculty, teaching assistants, graders, and course builders

Assumptions:

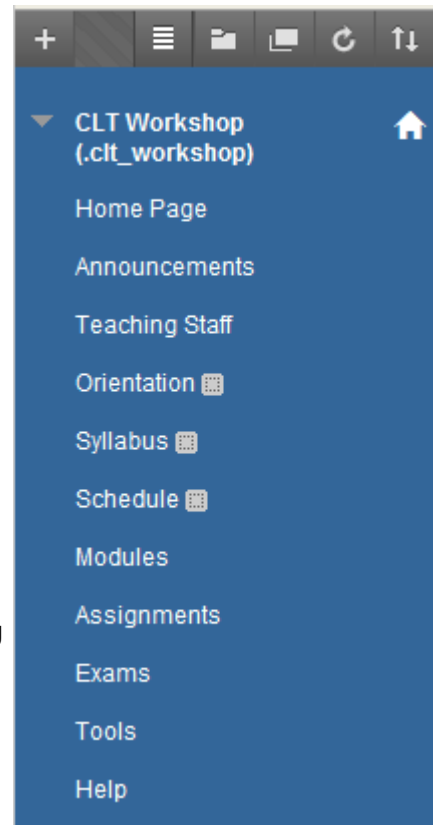
- There are no Blackboard “accounts” per se.
- Course sites are populated with instructors and students in an automated process.
 - When faculty members are assigned as instructors in Banner, Blackboard associates a course site accordingly.
 - Students are linked to Blackboard course sites after registering for a course.
 - Banner information is updated in a batch process each night, so faculty assignments and student roles are automatically updated.
- Course sites are automatically marked “unavailable” and faculty must set them to “available.”

TIPS:

- To have teaching assistants, graders, or course builders added to a course site, contact your instructional designer in CLT or OCCS Technical Support.

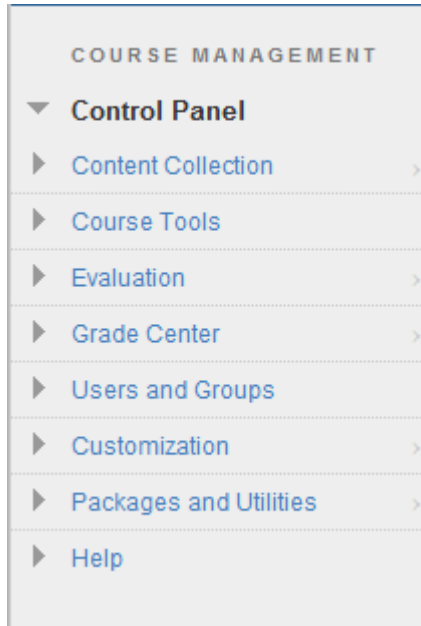
Activity 1: Explore content navigation buttons

- Open an unused course site and observe the course site navigation link. By default there are:
 - Home Page
 - Announcements
 - Teaching Staff
 - Orientation
 - Syllabus
 - Schedule
 - Modules
 - Assignments
 - Exams
 - Tools
 - Help
 -
- Links can be added by adding content areas by clicking the + sign at the top of the menu.
- Links can be edited using the drop down contextual menu for each one.



EXERCISE 2: Explore the Blackboard Course Site View

Activity 2: Explore The Control Panel



Expand or Collapse the Control Panel or any of its sections as needed using the triangles.

Content Collection: contains links to the course content and your personal content.

Course Tools: contains tools you need as a Blackboard Instructor or Teaching Assistant to configure and manage your course environment.

Evaluation: contains tools that you can use to track student progress or to receive alerts based on your criteria about student performance.

Grade Center: contains a spreadsheet type of system for posting and calculating grades; for receiving student work; and for accessing online test and survey information.

Users and Groups: contains tools to list users and to manage groups in your course

Customization: contains tools for setting Properties such as availability and Teaching Style by adding a banner; contains options to enable additional tools as well.

Package and Utilities: contains tools for backing up your course (export) and for copying your course from one semester to another (copy); also contains tools for incorporate course cartridges if they apply

Help: contains links to Blackboard's online Instructor Help and the Blackboard On Demand site where video tutorials are available; also contains an email link directly to ITS help at ODU.

EXERCISE 3: Adding Content to a Course Site

In this exercise you will learn how to:

- Add an announcement
- Add an item
- Add a folder
- Add an external link
- Add a course link
- Add an assignment link

In each activity you will explore:

- Content editor
- Attachments
 - Link to attachments
 - Display attachments

Roles with these privileges:

- Course site navigation: all
- control panel access and navigation: faculty, teaching assistants, graders, and course builders

Assumptions:

Prior to adding content to a particular course site, it is expected that content organization is already planned, and content areas are enabled or disabled as needed for use in that site.

Adding Blackboard extensions follows a step-by-step format with options and attachments. The first step identifies the object and the last step is always to submit the object to the system. Interim steps typically deal with options and/or attachments for the object.

Steps are labeled numerically.

TIPS:

Organize your content in a similar folder/directory structure on your computer so that it is easy to locate documents for updating.

EXERCISE 3: Adding Content to a Course Site

Activity 1: Add Announcements and Contact Information

1. Open a course site.
2. Click Control Panel.

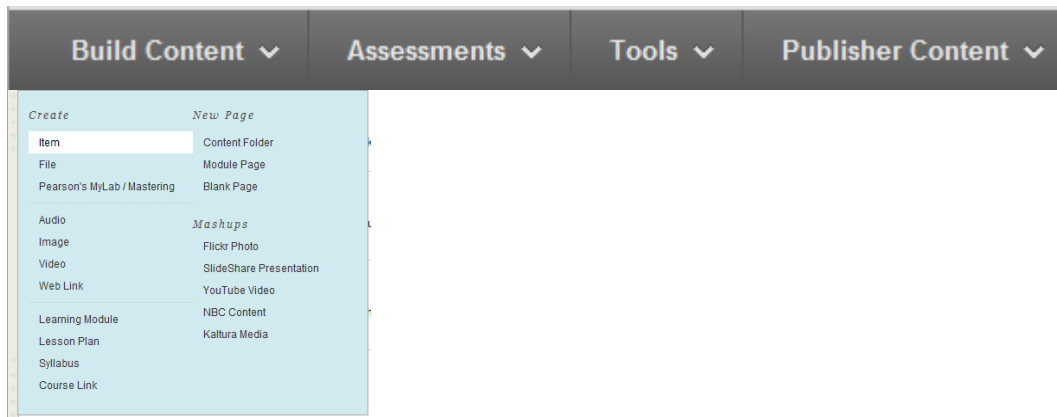
Add ANNOUNCEMENT

1. Expand Course Tools
2. Click Announcements
3. Locate and click the function button named "Create Announcement."
4. Define the announcement.
 - a. Type **Welcome** in the Subject field.
 - b. Type **Welcome to [enter your course name]** in the Message field.
5. Set options for the announcements.
5. Link to a location in the course site – *Course Link*. This step is optional.
6. Submit the Announcement.
 - a. Click Submit.
 - b. View the receipt and clear the receipt.
7. Observe the editing options now attached to the announcement.
8. View the announcement from the student view by turning Edit Mode Off temporarily.

Add CONTACT INFORMATION

1. To add a profile:
 - a. Click Contacts under Course Tools in the Control Panel.
 - b. Click "Create Contact".
 - c. Fill in the Profile Information.
2. Set options for the profile.
3. To submit the profile:
 - a. Click Submit.
 - b. View the confirmation and click the Close (X) to close the confirmation.
4. Observe the editing options now attached to the profile.
5. View the profile from the student view by turning Edit Mode Off temporarily.

EXERCISE 3: Adding Content to a Course Site



Activity 2: Add Item

1. Open a course site.

Open the One of the Content Areas

Note: Follow the same steps as for other content areas.

1. Click Build Content, then click Item.
 - a. Define the item by filling in the name under step 1. Either select a name from the drop down menu or type your own name in the blank field.
 - b. The text box is optional. A description of the item may be entered, if needed.
2. Add attachment if needed.
3. Set options for the item.
 - a. **Permit Users to View this Content ← Select Yes.** If no is selected, the item will not display in the student view until the option is changed to yes.
 - b. **Track number of views ← Select Yes or No.** Tracking allows statistics to be collected to indicate by whom, when, and how often the object is accessed. There is no need to track ALL items.
 - c. **Choose Date Restrictions ← Leave as default** where Display After and Display Until are NOT checked to make the content always available. Set Dates and times if restriction is needed. **NOTE: If you use Adaptive Release rules, do not set date and time restrictions here, but set them in Adaptive Release instead.**
4. Step 4: Submit the Item.
 - a. Click Submit.
 - b. View the receipt and clear the receipt
5. Observe the editing options now attached to the item.
6. Preview the student view by turning Edit Mode Off temporarily.

EXERCISE 3: Adding Content to a Course Site

Activity 3: Add a Folder

Activity 4: Add A Web Link

TIP: Open external links in a new window

Activity 5: Add a Course Link

Activity 6: Add an Assignment Link

Activity 7: Working with Attachments

Add Attachment

- a. **File to Attach:** Click Browse to locate the appropriate attachment. It is good practice to avoid spaces and special characters in file names. Some browsers will be able to display file names with spaces while others may not. NOTE: Always avoid the # symbol in a file name. For example: do not use assignment#3.doc; use assignment3.doc instead. The # symbol will cause a link to be disabled.
- b. **Name of Link to File:** This optional field can be filled in if you want the name of the link to be something other than the file name. If the field is left blank, the file name will appear. For example: The attachment is named "**assignment3.doc**," but you may want the student to click "**Directions for Assignment 3**." If the name field is left blank, the student will click assignment3.doc. If the name field is filled in, the student will click "Directions for Assignment 3" to open or download. assignment3.doc.

Remove Attachment

Under the Item Attachments category of an item, a list of the currently attached files will appear. Note the option to not attach the file.

EXERCISE 4: Managing Course Delivery

In this exercise you will learn about:

- Managing the Course Menu
- Managing the Course Settings
- Course Copy
- Export Course and Archive Course
- Establishing a Timeline

Roles with these privileges:

- Control Panel access and navigation: faculty, teaching assistants, graders, and course builders

Assumptions:

- The Course Site is "Unavailable" to students (users) until the instructor sets it to "Available." [*Control Panel > Course Options > Settings > Course Availability*]
- Items and folders inside the course site will be visible or not visible, as indicated, after the course site is made available.

TIPS:

- **To prepare your students:**

Consider maintaining a website outside of Blackboard that informs your students you will be using Blackboard. This may be a personal webpage, a departmental supported page about you, etc. Use this page as your first point of contact with students taking your courses.

- Tell students when you expect to make the course site available.

Some Blackboard instructors make course sites available several weeks or several days before the semester, some on the first day of classes, and some during the semester, depending on when the first activity is scheduled.

- Make your expectations clear.

EXERCISE 4: Managing Course Delivery

Activity 1: Manage Course Menu

The Course Menu defines the Course Navigation:

Each Content Area, Tool Area, Course Link, and External Link from this view will be added to the course navigation buttons/links in the left-hand frame of the course site view.

Activity 2: Manage Customization/Properties for Availability

With Properties under Customization in the Control Panel you can control **availability** to your students. DO NOT change anything else on that page.

Activity 3: Course Copy

You will be able to copy course materials from one course to another course. You must have appropriate user privileges in order to copy course materials to a destination course.

1. Prepare the new course. If your course menu is different from the default menu, go to the destination course, the new one, and remove all the content areas except Announcements. If your course menu matches the default menu, go to the next step.
2. Copy the old course. In the source course (the old one you are copying) go to Control Panel, expand Packages and Utilities and click Course Copy. On the copy page, browse choose the destination course. Then click the button "SELECT ALL" when identifying content to copy. NOTE: "UNCHECK" announcements. Don't change anything else and Submit.
3. Edit the new course. Wait for the email confirmation that the course copy is complete, then go to the destination course (the new course) and make the necessary changes for the new semester.
4. Make the course available to your students. Go to Control Panel, expand Customization and click Properties. On the properties page, make the course available = Yes and Submit (do not change anything else).

Activity 4: Export Course

Export Course creates a compressed file (.zip) of the selected content areas of a course for reuse. This tool will allow you to use materials from a course that may no longer be available to copy within the system.

1. Open Control Panel.
2. Click Export Course.

EXERCISE 4: Managing Course Delivery

Activity 5: Establishing a Timeline for Maintenance and Backups

- Global Timeline Considerations:
 - **Mid Semester:** The next semester's course sites will become available for you to begin work.
 - Copy an existing course site and make modifications.
 - Import an archive from a previous course site and make modifications.
 - Add new materials directly into the course site.
 - **Before or at beginning of semester:** Make course site available.
 - **End of semester:** Make course site unavailable.
 - **Add semester begin & end dates to your Calendar as reminders.**
- Course Site Timeline Considerations:
 - Establish a routine for making course backups using Export.
 - Periodic (weekly, monthly, etc.)
 - After each Grade Center change or major update to course content
 - Add date to the file name of each archive and maintain at least the two most recent copies.



Instructional Design Tips

Blackboard believes that instructional design plays an important part in developing online education. Not surprisingly, critical elements contributing to the success of an online learning experience are the role of the instructor and the instructional design of the course. “Materials themselves do not teach but provide a medium that with appropriate use can support learning,” (Oliver, Herrington, and Omari, 1996). Accordingly, the instructor must incorporate the organization, presentation, and integration of materials into the online environment.

Blackboard offers the following instructional design tips to help you develop an engaging and instructionally sound CourseInfo CourseSite:

- Focus on organization of online materials.
- Provide transition between learning components.
- Encourage opportunities for knowledge acquisition.
- Encourage student participation.
- Provide ample opportunities for feedback.
- Provide methods for assessment.
- Follow proven instructional design techniques.

Focus on organization of online materials

In traditional classroom-based education, students are presented with assignments coordinated to lecture materials. The instructor distributes required activities as appropriate and can answer student concerns/questions in the classroom environment.

When distributed online, students may be exposed to an entire semester's worth of materials all at once. As a result, they must be given clear, concise instructions regarding navigation within a CourseSite and organization of the material.

When developing online components, be sure to provide students with:

- An overview and/or an orientation of the entire CourseSite.
- A clear explanation about how the course materials are organized.
- A list of priorities, deadlines, and responsibilities.

This is, most often, the same type of information included in a syllabus. Providing this extra organizational information can prevent students from feeling “lost” or “overwhelmed” by the material, as disorientation can significantly limit instructional outcomes. (Oliver, Herrington, Omari, 1996)

Try and create CourseSites with explanations, descriptions, and cues about goals and accomplishments, as students "prefer clearly defined learning outcomes, or tasks, and recommended sequencing, from which they can orient themselves at any time," (Campbell, 1997). Guide students through the CourseSite by including elements such as:

- Weekly announcements listing priorities and deadlines
- Reminder e-mails (to both individuals and the entire class).
- Downloadable syllabi, checklists, or task-lists students can use to monitor progress through course materials.

Provide transition between learning components.

Since the instructor is not physically present during the online learning process, it is important to explain exactly WHAT materials are provided and WHY they are important in the scheme of the course. Indicating relationships between materials helps students develop bridges, see associations, and recognize the relevance of content elements. Without this, instructors run the risk of presenting fragmented information "that appears to the user as a series of discrete rather than coherent information elements," (Oliver, Herrington, Omari, 1996).

You can easily add transitions into your CourseInfo CourseSites by providing:

- Clear explanations describing what each file is, what programs are necessary to access it, and how the file fits in with the overall goals of the lesson.
- Comprehensive descriptions with each online assignment indicating the relevance to the classroom-based course component and corresponding materials.
- Placement cues directing students to the "next" related assignment, reading, or course document.

This does not mean that each step and learning activity be spelled out for the student. While this may be appropriate for some content-based exercises, advanced concept integration is better served when students are gently directed to a goal. In such cases, "it is more appropriate to guide the students towards expected end-results and let them organize their learning on their own," (Duchastel, 1997).

Encourage Opportunities for Knowledge Acquisition

While the instructor should determine the basic structure of the online learning experience, ample opportunities for active learning and cognitive assimilation must be provided. This is important because students presented with an engaging, quality learning experience make their own bridges between concepts and obtain higher learning. Utilizing CourseInfo's framework, you can plan and encourage activities that:

- Provide representations of materials that support all types of learners, such as text, video, audio, or multimedia activities.
- Present real-world and case-based scenarios that require students to visit external links and perform web research.
- Encourage practice and application of concepts by having students take online tests and quizzes.
- Foster knowledge acquisition through collaboration, discussion and negotiation by assigning group projects where students "meet" online.

Encourage Student Participation

Equally important to the role of the instructor in online education is the role of student communication. If students share information by performing group activities and posting assignments, learning is facilitated in a two-fold method. First, students are independently rehearsing and restructuring the knowledge while they develop opinions and create their postings. Second, students are gaining exposure to other students' evaluations of the materials when participating.

To insure that your CourseSite provides ample opportunities for student participation, collaboration, and reflection, consider incorporating the following:

- **Weekly Discussion Questions or Problem Sets.** Require each student to post one answer to the assignment and to reply to comment on at least one other student's answer.
- **Group Assignments.** Divide students into small groups and assign a collaborative project, paper, or presentation.
- **Online Journals.** Require students to keep an online journal of their learning experiences and reflect on both the content and online experience. Make this available for all students to view.
- **Online Fieldtrips.** Provide the opportunities/assignments for students to perform research online, visit related sites, and report experiences to the rest of the class.
- **Online Guest Speakers.** Arrange for a subject matter expert to answer student questions in a chat or discussion board.
- **Open Forum.** Provide a chat or open discussion area for students to communicate without the constraints of an assignment. This will promote friendly relationships.

Provide Ample Opportunities for Feedback

Communication and feedback, provided throughout an online learning experience, facilitate social interchange, build relationships, and increase student motivation. Your feedback is important to ensure students feel their contributions are an important priority and contribute to the overall educational experience of the class.

Consider checking class discussion lists and responding to student e-mail on a daily schedule to provide your students with ample feedback. This helps build positive interpersonal relationships with your students and increases instructor credibility.

Instructor feedback in discussion forums is also critical to maintain the focus of the activity. Monitor student discussions to ensure students remain "on track" with the assignment. If necessary, provide guidance and suggestions to the group or to individual students. "The teacher's role in coaching, observing students, offering hints and reminders, providing feedback, scaffolding and fading, modeling, and so on, are powerful enhancements to any learning situation," (Oliver, Herrington, and Omari, 1996).

Provide Methods for Assessment

You can help students check conceptual understanding and evaluate progress through materials by providing assessment opportunities. In addition to assessing student progress, assessments:

- Confirm student understanding and recall of information.
- Serve as advanced organizers to the student, indicating what core content is important and suggesting ways it may be applicable in the workplace or "real world."
- Increase student motivation and interest in the course when proof of achievement and performance are reflected.
- Provide quantification/proof that the student took the course and can gain credit.
- Report to the instructor if the pace and material developed is satisfactory or indicate areas where course content needs revision or further explanation.

You can add assessment activities to a CourseSite by incorporating review questions, tests, and essays. You can also perform assessments by monitoring student participation in discussions and group projects.

When developing assessment tools for online delivery, it is necessary to:

- Provide clear directions on how to complete the assessment and (if necessary) how to submit the assessment for grading.
- Provide students with access/help information if they need to consult with the instructor or technical support staff during or after the assessment.
- Make sure activities are structured appropriately to prove student understanding of the concept being evaluated.
- Provide students with a time frame and access information about receiving feedback and grades.
- Provide detailed explanations and responses to the student when the assessment is evaluated.
- Allot ample time for students to complete the assessment.

Follow Proven Instructional Design Techniques

Although the instructional medium can change from paper-based to classroom-based and to online delivery, all effective course materials need to maintain basic elements that support solid instructional design. Keep in mind that all course content should contain:

1. Pre-instructional activities (prerequisites & objectives)
2. Information presentation (content)
3. Learner participation (practice)
4. Testing (based on objectives)
5. Follow-through (summary, review)

Final Considerations

After all of your CourseSite content is developed, review the material before permitting student access. Evaluate both the online and classroom-based material to ensure content, opportunity for participation and feedback, and appropriate guidance is included. These guidelines, based on Dick and Carey's Instructional Systems Design, can be used:

1. Is there appropriate motivation established to insure student attention to the material and assignments?
2. Is the necessary content provided for all course components?
3. Is the presentation sequence of the content accurate and clearly indicated to guide students through the material?
4. Is all the required information available to the student in some format?
5. Do ample practice exercises exist for students to achieve appropriate rehearsal, processing, and knowledge acquisition of the content?
6. Are there adequate opportunities for instructor and classmate feedback included in the materials?
7. Are appropriate tests, activities, and evaluation tools provided to assess student progress?
8. Are sufficient follow-through activities provided to maintain learning and motivation over time?
9. Is the student presented with clear paths, navigational guidance, and transitional information to direct them through the course material and components?
10. Are supplemental handouts, such as outlines or checklists available to the student to facilitate transfer of learning provided?

Answering "YES" to all these questions ensures that students are presented with well-organized, instructionally sound, and engaging course material. However, since "courseware alone rarely constitutes the full learning environment," (Schneider, 1994), it is imperative to support students by creating a positive online educational experience. Utilizing the instructional design tips discussed in this paper will insure that your CourseSite provides students with an online environment rich in feedback, full of guidance, and ample opportunities for knowledge acquisition.

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