

Blackboard Best Practices

General information.....

1. Disable any buttons or tools that you will not use in your course.
2. Choose whether you will use email or messages as your communication device. Disable the other method.
3. Put a picture of yourself, contact information and relevant information about yourself in the Staff Information section.
4. Add content before you actually want students to see it, and set it as unavailable until it is needed. This avoids the rush and possibility that you will have technical problems at the last minute.
5. Use the Content Collection rather than uploading documents to each individual course.
6. Include directions in your course on what file format students are expected to use when submitting assignments. For example, tell them that you want them to create and save the file using Microsoft WORD.
7. Use Check Collection Links to verify Blackboard finds files in the content collection.
8. Use the Course Health Check (in the Control Panel) to check the integrity of external links.
9. Archive your course and save to a backup drive.

Using the Discussion Board.....

1. Post **Netiquette** guidelines for posting to the discussion board.
2. Create an “**ice breaker**”. Have students create individual “bios” that include brief paragraph about personal and/or professional interest, picture of the student, and hobbies. The purpose of the assignment is to begin creating a sense of community among learners through the Discussion Board. Make sure to include a statement about you to get students started.
3. Create a **frequently asked question** discussion board. The idea is that students will answer each others questions about the course. As the instructor you can respond to students questions and possibly answer others questions at the same time.
4. Create a **grading rubric** and even a sample discussion posting to show students what you expect and how they will be evaluated.
5. Encourage students to type their post in WORD or Notepad then copy/paste into the discussion board.
6. Have students respond to other postings by making it a requirement. (ex. You will be required to post to 2 other students postings for full credit).
7. Put deadlines on discussion postings. For example, they have to complete their weekly posts by midnight Sunday.
8. Keep the current discussion forum at the top by reordering the forums.

Using the Gradebook.....

1. Use short names or titles for assignments and tests. Using long titles causes the column's in the gradebook to take up a lot of space.
2. Make sure to hide any gradebook items that you do not want students viewing if allowing students to view grades.
3. Create a short verification quiz in Blackboard for students to take during the drop/add period for verification of participation.
4. Export your gradebook weekly and after testing and save to a backup drive.