

# Using Blackboard Effectively to Enhance Teaching

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## What is Blackboard?

- A Web-based Course Management System
- Four primary areas of functionality:
  - **Content management**—personal information, course elements and documents, academic Web resources, publisher-provided digital material.
  - **Communication**—asynchronous and synchronous collaboration tools.
  - **Assessments**—test and quiz capabilities, gradebook.
  - **Control**—instructor management utilities for instructors.

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## What's needed to use Blackboard?

- Computer with Internet access
- Windows 95+ or Macintosh 7.5+
- Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0+  
Netscape Navigator 4.03+
- Email account
- Blackboard user account
- Basic computer & Internet skills

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## How widely used is Blackboard at Boise State?




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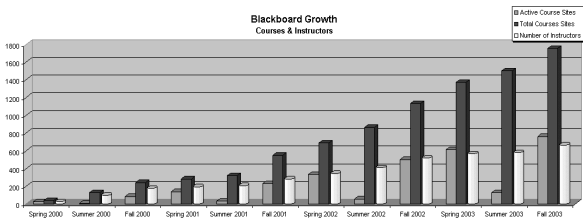
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## Blackboard Growth Courses & Instructors




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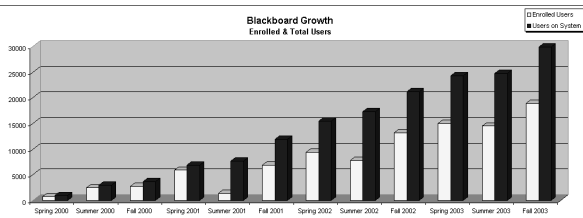
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## Blackboard Growth Enrolled & Total Users




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## Bb Statistics – Fall 2003

<b>Distinct Students</b>	13,196
<b>Seats in Course Sites</b>	25,763
<b>Course Sites in Use</b>	762
<b>Sections</b>	872
<b>Virtual Course Sites</b>	72
<b>Instructors</b>	350

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## Resources and Support

- Blackboard Assistance 8-5 M-F
- Bb Training Workshops
- Student Technology Assistants
- Academic Technologies Staff
- Academic Technologies website
- E-Learning at Boise State – Online orientation and an Online Course
- Blackboard.com website



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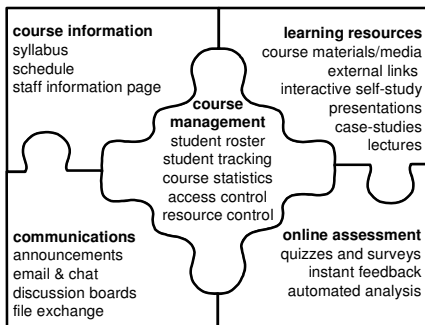
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## Bb Tools and Features



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Educational Advantages Arise when Supplementing a Course with Web-based Tools. These include:

- Enhancing student-to-student and faculty-to-student communication.
- Enabling student-centered teaching approaches.
- Providing 24/7 accessibility to course materials.
- Providing just-in-time methods to assess and evaluate student progress.
- Reducing "administrivia" around course management.

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**Enhancing student-to-student and faculty-to-student communication**

Discussion boards, chats, and e-mails increase communication between class members and faculty.

Researchers have found that adding these elements to a course increases student motivation and participation in class discussions and projects.

Students are "more willing to participate [and] a measure of anonymity, which serves as a motivator... people feel more empowered. They are daring and confrontational regarding the expression of ideas," (Kubala, 1998).

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**Enhancing student-to-student and faculty-to-student communication (cont.)**

- **Students share perspectives**
  - Research supports that "as learners become aware of the variations in interpretation and construction of meaning among a range of people [they] construct an individual meaning," (Alexander, 1997).
- **Students experience a sense of equality**
  - Each individual has the same opportunity to "speak up" by posting messages without typical distractions such as seating arrangements, volume of student voices, and gender biases.
- **Instructors are more accessible**
  - Benefits students by providing an additional layer of instructor accessibility.

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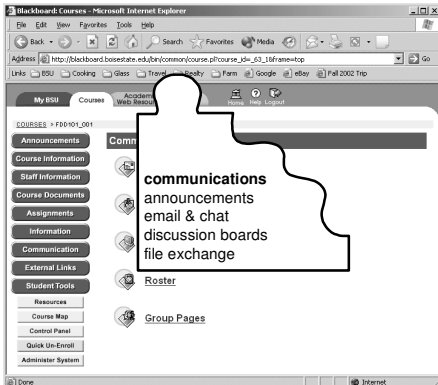
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## Bb Communication Tools



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## Enabling Student-Centered Teaching Approaches

Every student has a unique learning style. Some students are visual learners, some learn better when they "learn by doing." Web-based learning environments permit the instructor to build one course, yet implement a variety of resources, so students can utilize materials in whichever way works best for them.

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## Enabling Student-Centered Teaching Approaches (cont.)

- Accommodate different learning styles (media showcase)
- Provide opportunities for exploration via External Links
- Encourage additional rehearsal time  
Additional benefits for those who "learn by doing" occur when students participate in online discussions, as students are exposed to an extra period of information rehearsal.

**learning resources**  
course materials/media  
external links  
interactive self-study  
presentations  
case-studies  
lectures

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## Providing 24/7 Accessibility to Course Materials

Some students work best in the morning, some in the evening. Some students commute to campus and others take night classes. Scheduling time for homework and group projects can be difficult depending on each student's course, job, and personal responsibilities.




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## Providing Just-in-time Methods to Assess and Evaluate Student Progress

- Tests and surveys inform the instructor whether teaching methods and course structures are successful.
- Assessments progress is **online assessment** student
- From the **quizzes and surveys** instant, frequent **instant feedback** kept **automated analysis** motivation.
- Online assessment tools provide instructors with many ways to build, distribute, and compile information quickly and easily.

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## Reducing Amount of Faculty Time Spent on "Administrivia"

- Students can **course information** (syllabus, schedule, staff information page), save, and print.
- Instructors can **course management** (student roster, student tracking, course statistics, access control, resource control) use E-mail to communicate with students more efficiently and maximize the classroom experience.

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## Summary

- The integration of web-based learning components with software like Blackboard bring added value to traditional education.
- Students and faculty benefit from using the communication and assessment tools.
- Students have a customized approach to knowledge acquisition that suits learning styles and busy schedules.
- Continual access to resources through online delivery and automated management tools minimizes the faculty's cost and time associated with the experience.
- The advantages of online education make a significant impact in higher education today and, as technology evolves, promise to deliver even greater benefits in the future

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## Questions?



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