

Using Blackboard Effectively to Enhance Teaching

Larry Crookham

Academic Technologies

Blackboard Administrator & Instructional Software Developer



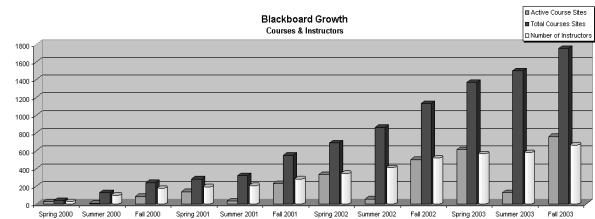
How widely used is Blackboard at Boise State?



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.

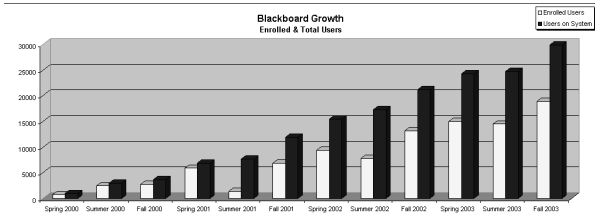
Blackboard Growth Courses & Instructors



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

Blackboard Growth Enrolled & Total Users



Bb Statistics – Fall 2003

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

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.

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



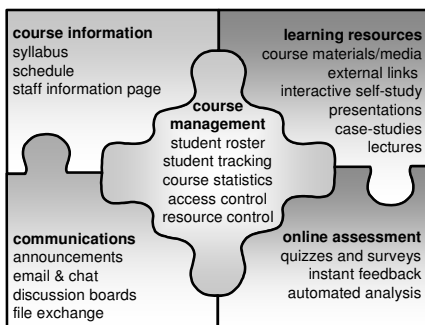
Enhancing student-to-student and faculty-to-student communication

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).

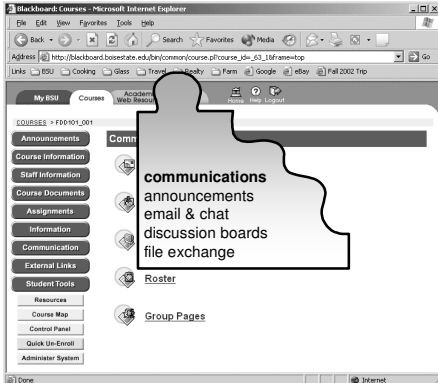
Bb Tools and Features



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.

Bb Communication Tools



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.



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.

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 student
- From the assessment reinforced, frequent reinforcement provides motivation.
- Online assessment tools provide instructors with many ways to build, distribute, and compile information quickly and easily.

online assessment
quizzes and surveys
instant feedback
automated analysis

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

Reducing Amount of Faculty Time Spent on "Administrivia"

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

course information
syllabus
schedule
staff information page
course management
student roster
student tracking
course statistics
access control
resource control

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

Questions?

