Teaching with Technology Tip—Getting Started Checklist for Blackboard Courses
August 15, 2015

REMEMBER: Make Your Course Available
Courses are set as unavailable to students when they are created, to allow instructors time to update the content before students see the course. To allow students to see your course when they log into Blackboard, you must make your course available. Log into your course and follow these steps: Control Panel > Customization > Properties > Set Availability > YES > Submit.

Create an Announcement to Welcome Students to your Course
Create an announcement for students to see when they log in to Blackboard. Check the Email Announcement setting to send a copy of the announcement as an email to students at the same time, for double the impact.

Copy Content from Another Course
Quickly copy the content and settings of an entire course into a new course, or selectively copy specific areas. The Course Copy option is one of the most convenient and useful features of Blackboard, and usually involves just a couple of clicks of your mouse and then less than five minutes to complete. You will receive an email when the course copy is complete. Please be patient and do not retry the course copy until you receive your email, as you might otherwise create duplicate items in the new course. If you only want one item copied, use the Copy option for that individual item by clicking on the chevron (arrow) on the right of the item title and selecting Copy from the menu. It is not recommended to use the Move option from the menu. Here is a video on the process of copying a course: http://screencast.com/t/HjOzAQmuno

Combine Multiple Sections into one Combined Blackboard Course
Faculty who combine several sections of the same course into one Blackboard course site reap the benefits of posting information only once for display to students in all sections. To request a combined course, complete a course/organization request, linked under the Blackboard Help tab at the top of the Blackboard screen. At the same time, you can also indicate that content from a previous course, or one of your current updated sections, should be copied into this newly combined course—or you can use the Copy Content instructions above to quickly do it yourself. Once students submit blog or discussion board entries, or assignments have been entered into the Grade Center, it will not be possible to combine the sections, so NOW is the time to consider this option.

Manage sections by creating a Group for each section and using the Adaptive Release option to customize content for each section, or release information at different times. By organizing your course with groups, you can email separate sections for class updates, view different sections (Smart Views) in the Grade Center for quick and easy grading, or collect group assignments with one submission. If you have questions about the advantages of combining sections, contact an Instructional Designer for a discussion of class management strategies.

Be a Student in Your Own Course
Two features allow you to “see” your course as a student, and to “act” as a student. Now you can see and complete work, and also view the My Grades window. The Edit Mode indicator in the upper right of the screen is a toggle button to view content as your students do. The Student Preview “eye” icon in the upper right of the Blackboard screen is toggled to display an orange bar at the top as a reminder of your Student Preview User role (the Student Preview icon appears next to the Edit Mode indicator). Then you can see and complete work as a student, give yourself a grade and feedback as an instructor, and view it in My Grades as a student. When grading your “student preview self”, use two different browsers to separate and see both roles at the same time—you’ll see your name in the Grade Center. Note: To retain your student data so that you can view and grade it, change the default Student Preview settings to “remember the settings” and “keep the preview user and all data.”

Edit the Tools Menu to Hide Unused Tools. Clicking the “Hide Link” toggle button on tools prevents students from viewing tools you are not using, and manages access for others. It “declutters” the page.
Groups, Smart Views, and Group Assignment Submissions
Once you have created groups, you can then create a Smart View in Grade Center which filters the student list using group memberships. Smart Views is useful when using groups for different class sections of a combined Blackboard course site. Do not select the Smart Views option when you first set up a group, as you will be unable to rename it. Set up Smart Views separately after creating groups.

When setting up Smart Views in the Grade Center under Manage > Smart Views, click the star under “Add as Favorite” so that it turns green. The Smart View for that group will then display under the Grade Center navigation menu for quick access.

Set up groups to allow one member of the group to submit assignments on behalf of all members, which also displays the file, instructor feedback and grade to each member in the group. You have the option to change a grade for individual members, if appropriate. Use the Assignments > Submission Details section to activate it.

New SafeAssign Integration and Assignment Settings
Assignments now include SafeAssign plagiarism checking options. When creating an assignment, open the Submission Details section. Check the “Exclude submissions” box if using this for a draft assignment so that the file is not checked against itself when submitted later in the course. Note these new assignment features:
- Grading Options allow anonymous grading and delegation to course graders (used rarely)
- Display of Grades settings allow customization; categories are still set in Grade Center
- Select individual, group (allow one person to submit for everyone) and portfolio submission formats

Add a Tegrity Link in Your Menu
Send an email to UND.techsupport@UND.edu to request a Tegrity link in your course menu so that students have easy access to your recorded lectures, or click on Blackboard Help in the black banner to use the Course/Organization Request form to ask for the link. If you copied a course from a previous semester, check that the link has been updated. Watch this one-minute video for more details: http://tinyurl.com/UNDTegrityLink

Set Clickers – Turning Technologies Availability On
If you are using clickers in your classroom, click on Tools in your left menu bar and scroll down to the Turning Technologies Registration Tool link to confirm that your students can see the link.

Update your Respondus/Studymate License
UND’s annual license for Respondus and Studymate is renewed in July, so you need to update the serial number when using it for the first time after that renewal date. The serial number is in the Faculty Resource Site under Downloads/Serial #s > Respondus or Applications > Respondus/Studymate.

Organize Your Course List in Blackboard
Rearrange the list of courses that is displayed in your My Courses List by hiding courses from previous semesters or changing their order. When in Blackboard, click on the Gear in the green bar of My Courses or Course List to display a list of your courses and check boxes. Uncheck the box just to the RIGHT of the course name to hide the course—it will remain available to you for four semesters if you need to view it again. Use the arrows on the LEFT of the course name to rearrange the course list. Click Submit to set your changes.

New Blackboard Features
- Student Preview (be a student in your own course)
- SafeAssign Integration within Assignments and Report Formats
- Assignment Grading Options include Anonymous and Delegated Grading
- Portfolio Assignments and Blackboard Profile
For information and videos on these new Blackboard features, visit: http://und.edu/tech-support/faculty-staff/bb-resources-faculty.cfm

Center for Instructional & Learning Technologies | 701-777-6305 | cilt.UND.edu | UND.techsupport@email.UND.edu