Blackboard Tips for Faculty
December 3, 2010

Blending Classroom and Online Environments

Consider extending the impact of your campus course by offering online components in place of classroom activities. By combining face-to-face and online experiences, you can build flexibility into courses (especially helpful with North Dakota winters), and tap into more ways of communicating with and assessing students. Blended courses replace 30-79% of traditional face-to-face classroom time with online assignments and activities (Sloan-C, 2007). As you plan your spring term courses, consider visiting with an instructional designer to discuss options for expanding your classroom using Blackboard and other online technologies. Here are a few examples of strategies and activities:

Content
- Record lectures so they are available throughout the semester for student review, with narrated PowerPoint and embedded quiz questions. Recorded lectures can provide more time during class for group discussions and activities. Students WILL still come to class.
- Invite experts and guest speakers from around the world to present information or reinforce your content in “webinars” or “virtual classroom sessions.”

Communication
- Promote student reflections on content or learning processes through private journals or class blogs.
- Classroom discussions can be fast-paced and cover many topics. Encourage student discussions about theories, applications, or case studies outside of class so the “thoughtful” student has time to participate.
- Peer review of papers and projects invites deep levels of discussion.
- Student-led instruction or content helps students see themselves as professionals in the discipline.

Assessments
- Action learning projects can incorporate a variety of media and be viewed by classmates outside of class time.
- Help students gauge their progress with automatic graded assessments or self-study exercises. Then evaluate these to prepare for class or provide material reviews. You can also pull course or question statistics from a single course or multiple sections.
- Assigned reading with student writing provides prompts for in-class discussion in a “priming the pump” manner.
- Watch the process of student collaboration unfold as they use wikis to work on group projects or presentations. Students can review their final projects and offer comments and recommendations.

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