Using Groups in BlackBoard

BlackBoard allows you to put students into groups for collaboration on assignments. There are several tools available to groups to help them collaborate:

**Discussion board**
This is exactly like the discussion board used for all students except it is limited to only the students assigned to this group. Students can only access the discussion board for their group and cannot see posts made by other groups. Any questions that you want all groups to discuss must be posted individually in each group’s discussion board. This can be done with a simple “copy & paste.”

**Email**
This provides an easy way for students to send email to everyone in their group. The sender sees a list of group members and can check off who should receive it or send it everyone.

**File exchange**
This is a place for students to share files with other group members. For example, if you ask the group to develop a PowerPoint presentation, the file exchange gives them a place to post the file for everyone in the group to access.

Collaboration
This tool allows for synchronous collaboration where all participants are online at the same time. There are two collaboration tools that are available here:

**Virtual Classroom**
This tool gives students access to a chat box that they can use to discuss an assignment. It also includes a whiteboard where students can brainstorm and share diagrams and drawings. The group browser allows students to visit websites together and discuss them in the chat window.

**Lightweight Chat**
This tool is an alternative to the Virtual Classroom and may be better for students who have a slow, dial-up connection. It only provides a simple text-based chat room where students can discuss topics in real time.

Students can complete their collaboration in groups and present their finished product to the entire class in the class discussion. Please contact our office if you’d like to see an example of how group assignments can be used with a class.

Digital Resources from Publishers
Many textbook publishers now include digital resources for the instructor that supplement the material being covered. This can include PowerPoint files, additional graphics, interactive simulations, and banks of test questions. Our office can put these resources in your BlackBoard course to make them available to all students. Keep this in mind the next time you are selecting a textbook to use with your course and select a book that offers the most for you and your students.
Using Video in an Online Course

Using video in online courses is an effective way to communicate with your students. In addition to taping you or a speaker we can also capture video footage from DVD or VHS to provide additional resources to your students.

You can find examples of course videos on the College website at [http://www.justice.eku.edu/odems/sample.asp](http://www.justice.eku.edu/odems/sample.asp)

**Why Use Video?**

- Vary instructional delivery method
- Show what can’t be seen in a traditional classroom setting
- Reinforce information explained verbally
- Demonstrate psychomotor skills
- Trigger class discussion
- Capture student’s attention
- Build rapport with students

**Types of Videos**

- Mini lectures
- Demonstrations of Procedures
- Expert Interviews
- Case Studies
- Narrated PowerPoint
- Video-Field Trips

**Mini Lectures**

Mini lectures are short video clips in which you introduce a lesson or topic, explain a complicated concept within a lesson, or summarize a lesson for students to make sure they know what the important points were.

Mini lessons can be recorded in the studio in the Perkins building with a teleprompter so you can use a script and have as many takes as you need to get it just right.

- Write your script verbatim the way you want to say it on camera. Practice reading it out loud. Speak directly to students in a friendly, conversational tone.
- Don’t try to replace the textbook or online reading assignment. Use the video to introduce or summarize a topic and clarify major points.
- Use graphics and bulleted lists to emphasize important points. You can point to the side and interact with the graphics and text will be added later.
- Waist high or full body shoot? Full body shots will be smaller and facial expressions less noticeable.
- Sit or stand straight; don’t slouch.
- Smile ☺
- A seamless take is best but video tape is cheap. If you stumble over a word, just start back at the beginning.
- Don’t wear anything that is green, shiny or has a small pattern in it, such as small stripes.

This short article includes a video sample showing the difference exaggerated expressiveness can make on camera. [www.seriousmagic.com/varticles.cfm?article=newscaster](http://www.seriousmagic.com/varticles.cfm?article=newscaster)

**Student Access to Videos**

An overwhelming majority (91%) of visitors to the College website are using high-speed broadband connections to the internet. Nation-wide, over 70% of active internet users are expected to have broadband access in their homes by the January 2006 and over 81% of Americans accessing the internet from work do so with high-speed connections.

All of this high-speed connectivity means students can easily access rich media content such as the video we offer in our courses. Rich media experiences are now the norm and not the exception.

What about the small percentage of visitors to our site that don’t have high-speed connections? The video content is still available to them, as well. The video will load over dial-up connections but it will take time. We also provide transcripts of all video used in our courses to make the content available to all students.

**Student Comments about Course Videos**

“The use of video segments for the COR 350 online course provided me with the opportunity to view my instructor as well as get a feel for her personality. The use of Flash video, cartoons, and graphics provided interesting and fun ways to not only hear the information but also to visualize it and ultimately learn it. Video segments allow students to see the effort and time instructors put into their course. The use of video segments provides a better learning experience than that of the basic online course.”

*Samantha Salmons, COR 350*

"I really like the video clip summary concept, best I have seen in my 6 classes of distance learning."

*Rusty Hunt, graduate student studying from Iraq, CRJ 890*

“Whatever you do, don't quit using the videos. They are a large part of the interaction of this class, which is one of its best features. Without the videos, I wouldn't feel like I actually know the instructor.”

*Justin Wallace, COR 311*

“The videos were awesome. This is the first online class I have took where the instructor had actual videos of lectures, and I have taken a LOAD of online classes. I found it easier to learn the material rather than just reading about it. It was also entertaining, so I didn’t dread watching them every week. Also, they helped so much on the tests!”

*Brittany Twinam, COR 311*
Encourage Student Participation

Just as in a traditional class setting, the instructor must provide opportunities for students to actively participate in the course. Since there is a record of all participation, it’s harder for students to sneak by with out contributing. Consider using some of these ideas to ensure student participation, collaboration, and reflection.

**Weekly Discussion Questions or Problem Sets**

Require each student to post one answer to the assignment and also to reply/comment on other students’ answers.

**Group Assignments**

Divide students into small groups and assign a collaborative project, paper, or presentation. There are several tools available to help students collaborate on group projects.

**Online Journals**

Require students to keep an online journal of their learning experiences and reflect on both the content and online experience. This can be a private area accessible only to the student and the instructor or it can be made public for all students to see each others’ writings.

**Online Fieldtrips**

Provide the opportunities/assignments for students to perform research online, visit related sites, and report experiences to the rest of the class. Contact our office for help finding online resources for specific topics.

**Online Guest Speakers**

Arrange for a subject matter expert to answer student questions in a chat or discussion board. Guest video lectures can also be included in the course.

**Open Forum**

Provide a chat or open discussion area for students to communicate without the constraints of an assignment. This will promote friendly relationships. In the J&S demo course there is a “Class Lounge” discussion board for this.

**Team Sites**

Team Sites provide instructors a way to create open-ended assignments within Blackboard. Team sites allow students to work cooperatively in groups as they seek to formulate, organize and present their solutions online in the form of websites.

Using an easy to use browser-based HTML editor, students collaboratively author web content, upload images, link to documents and external resources, all the while forcing them to think critically and analytically as they find, use and organize appropriate learning resources.

Team sites also provide instructors a rich set of assessment tools that allow an instructor to gauge the individual contributions of each student and to track the evolution of the group’s response during the problem solving process.

Start Planning NOW to Have Your Course Online for Summer or Fall 2006

Are you considering offering your course online during the summer or fall ’06 semesters? Now is the time to start planning it.

The first place to start is with our Course Development Checklist. The checklist is available on our website and will give you an overview of BlackBoard and some ideas to think about as you begin to plan your course.

If you’re not ready to teach your course completely online next semester, perhaps you’d like to start your venture into online learning with a blended course. A blended course is a course that meets in a traditional face-to-face setting that is supplemented with additional resources and assignments that students access through BlackBoard outside of class.

In a blended course you can also replace some of the face-to-face meetings with online assignments and discussions. This can keep you from missing classes when you have to be away from campus at meetings or conferences.

Please contact our office now to start the process for either a fully online course or a blended course. We will help you set everything up and also be there to assist you throughout the semester as well.

[www.justice.eku.edu/odems/docs/courseDevChecklist.pdf](http://www.justice.eku.edu/odems/docs/courseDevChecklist.pdf)
Assessment in BlackBoard

An assessment is a series of questions an instructor presents to students. The purpose of the assessment can be to evaluate concepts, provide drill and practice exercises, perform opinion polls or administer course evaluations.

There are two assessment options to choose from:

**Survey:** The survey option creates assessments that record answers anonymously. Use this when you want to perform opinion polls or course evaluations. Survey results are non-graded and anonymous.

**Quiz/Test:** In the quiz/test option, you can assign point values to each question. Student answers can be submitted for grading, and the results are recorded under each student entry in the grade book.

There are many types of questions you can use in assessments. These include:

- Multiple Choice
- True False
- Fill in the Blank
- Multiple Answer
- Matching
- Ordering
- Short Answer/Essay
- Hot Spot Images
- Opinion Scale/Likert
- Calculated Answers
- Jumbled Sentences

Random Blocks of Questions
You can also build a question pool that BlackBoard can use to generate a different test or quiz for each student.

A question pool can contain several categories of questions, a different category for each main topic being assessed. When the random questions are selected, you can choose how many and what type of questions get chosen from each category.

This means that no two students will see the exact same assessment so cheating is less likely to occur.

Mid-term and final exams can also be easily generated using questions from previously created tests or quizzes. Within a single test, you can have questions that every student sees and also blocks of questions that are randomly selected from the pool.

Many publishers now include a test question banks that can be easily imported into BlackBoard.

Random Blocks of Questions

Common Problems Students Encounter during Bb Quizzes

**Dial-up:** AOL and some other ISP’s will automatically disconnect users after periods of inactivity.

**Quitting by Accident:** If a quiz is set up to allow only one attempt, students can lose the right to take a quiz if he accidentally closes the browser, the computer crashes, the electricity shuts off.

**Resizing Erases Data:** In Netscape, resizing the quiz window will cause all information entered by the student up to that point to be erased. All answers will need to be reentered. For this reason, we do not recommend using Netscape to take quizzes.

**To clear a student's attempt you need to...**

1. Access the Gradebook from the Control Panel
2. Under the specific column for that test select the Lock icon for that student
3. Click View located at the right of the page
4. The Clear Attempt button is located at the upper right side of this page

If you or your students ever experience any problems with Bb Quizzes, please contact our office for assistance.