

October, 2001 - Alessandro C. Calianese, Computer Science

Blackboard (BB) -A Web tool to aid faculty and students in and out of the classroom -and it's easy to use! If you can use a word processor you can use the features of Blackboard.

Blackboard is a powerful software tool that can deliver online course content. The benefits of BB are: it allows students to view the features listed below anytime as long as they have access to the WWW (all computer labs and possibly at home) and cuts your Xerox bill and time spent on Xeroxing to just the bare minimum. Its flexibility and customization can enhance any course whether it is a full-fledged online course or a Web component to a traditional class. This article will concentrate on the latter and provide helpful information that will allow you to augment your courses and provide a Web-based learning experience to your students. First some basics. The following table outlines some of the features of BB and those that I suggest (marked with an X) you use at different levels of your experience (with BB).

Features of BB	1 st Time Users	Little BB Experience	Moderate BB Experience	Expert in BB
Content Area				
Announcements	X	X	X	X
Assignments	X	X	X	X
Course Information	X	X	X	X
Staff Information	X	X	X	X
Course Documents		X	X	X
User Management				
Add Users		X	X	X
List/Modify Users		X	X	X
Course Tools				
Send E-mail			X	X
Discussion Board			X	X
Digital Drop Box			X	X
Assessment				
Online Gradebook			X	X
Course Statistics				X
Assistance				
Online Manual	X	X	X	X
Additional Features				X

1st Time Users

The above features will allow you to place on the WWW your syllabus (Course Information), course announcements, assignments, and your office hours (Staff

Information). You will be able to access an online manual. Only students who are registered in your course will be allowed to access this information. Course creation and adding students will be accomplished for you. See the note concerning people resources.

Little BB Experience (2nd & 3rd time users)

Same features as the 1st time users plus adding course content (Course Documents), adding users, modifying user information (in case they forget their password).

Moderate BB Experience

Same features as those with little BB experience plus sending students e-mail messages, using a true electronic bulletin board for class discussion items, allowing students to send you assignments using the digital dropbox, using the online grade book. The gradebook feature allows students to view only their grades for assignments, quizzes, exams, projects, etc.

A number of colleagues have been using Blackboard for several years. All would be qualified as those with moderate experience and some as experts. They can be used as resource people to help you understand BB and instruct you how to move from one level to another. Please take special note of the IT support personnel - they will create your course(s) and register your students. They will also provide you with each student's username and password so they can access the course information.

Resource People (IT):

Anthony Russo (Russo_A@spc.edu) 9375 X123 (creates the BB course)

Richard Biela (Biela_R@spc.edu) 9058 (registers your students)

Resource People (Colleagues)

Hank Brightman (So/Cj)

Dick Caccamise (M/M)

Alec Calianese (CS)

Dennis Carmody (Ps)

Mike Doody (Director of Instructional Technology)

Rich Hamilton (Dean of Professional and Continuing Education)

Rev. Donal MacVeigh, S.J. (CS)

Donal Malone (Pp/So)

Marcia Mitchell (CS)

David Surrey (Ur/So)

Rev. John Wrynn. S.J. (Hs)

Enjoy!