



What's New and Different for Instructors in the *Blackboard Learning System* (Release 6)

Course management innovations in the *Blackboard Learning System* include advanced content management features, Gradebook and Assessment enhancements, and a new Collaboration Tool. A full description of each of these changes is available in the product documentation and the product release Notes; this is meant to be an informative overview.

Course Management

New! Customizable Course Menu

In the *Blackboard Learning System*, instructors have complete control of the architecture through which students access course information.

- Easily create and name course navigation elements
- Link from the Course Menu to any content item, URL or Blackboard tool
- Option of text-based navigation in a range of colors

New! Observer Role

Based on instructor controlled settings, an Observer can view the course work and course activities of a particular student.

Change! Course statistics now show averages per month not details per month.

Course Content

New! Content Anywhere

The *Blackboard Learning System* puts instructional design decisions in the hands of the instructor. Any type of content, including folders, items, assessments, surveys, and internal course links, can now appear in any content area.

- Content can easily be copied and/ or moved to another place in the course
- Course links connect to content or tools in other areas
- Flexible placement of URLs allows for external links to be placed anywhere in content areas

New! Content Copy

Instructors can copy and move content between Course Areas. Tests and surveys can not be copied, but questions can be reused in multiple assessments.

New! Instructors can also copy and move content between courses and organizations.

Change! The look & feel of the Content Area in the Course Control Panel has been updated. Less frequently used items are located under the drop down menu.

Assessment and Evaluation

New! Test Canvas

Creating an assessment in *Blackboard Learning System* is easier than ever.

- Build and edit assessments, then deploy them in any content area
- Use the Creation Settings to set default point values for questions, enable individualized feedback for answers, and define categories/keywords for location of specific questions
- Attach images and links to questions and to feedback
- Built-in math and science notation
- Create questions offline and upload them directly into assessments

Better! Test Manager

The Test Manager gives Instructors more flexibility in creating and managing assessments.

- Choose the method for delivering assessments (e.g., question by question or all at once)
- Edit deployed assessments without clearing existing grades
- Tests & surveys are now deployed through content areas instead of through the test and survey managers.
- Announcements for tests must now be separately created by the instructor.

New! Assignment Manager

The *Blackboard Learning System* includes a new system for managing Assignments. This powerful, easy to use system enables Instructors to create Assignments and post them for Students to complete. This new type of content is available through the pull down menu in content areas. It is distinct from the Digital Drop Box which no longer allows for sorting and filtering.

- All content management options (including time-release) are supported
- Download one or multiple student assignments for grading offline
- Feedback opportunities for instructors and students to add comments to an assignment
- Files are organized, viewed and graded in the Blackboard Gradebook

Better! Gradebook

A number of enhancements have been made to the *Blackboard Learning System* Gradebook in response to instructor feedback. These enhancements include:

- Use raw scores, letter grades, customized options and/or percentages to display grades
- Assign weighted values to grades by category or by item
- Export and import grades for advanced grade analysis and use of third-party tools
- Multiple disparate views have been collapsed into one central spreadsheet view.

Collaboration

New! Lightweight Chat

The Lightweight Chat is a text-based chat tool that allows a group of users to conduct an online session through text-based messages.

- Send private messages to participants
- Breakout Sessions can be created for group work
- Section 508 compliant
- Instructors control archiving of sessions, allowing for more privacy of online meetings.
The archive can be started and stopped throughout the session.

New! Virtual Classroom

The Virtual Classroom in the *Blackboard Learning System* contains all the features of the Lightweight Chat tool and more. Although session leaders can no longer annotate web pages with the Whiteboard tools, or click a link in a Web page and force all users' browsers to go to that link, several other features have been added.

- Use math equations and scientific notation in the whiteboard
- Instructors *and* students can respond to questions from session participants
- View course materials i.e. PowerPoints in the whiteboard
- Snapshots can be made of content in the Whiteboard and added to the session archives
Ability to grant privileges to users based on their passive or active status
- Option to have multiple Collaboration sessions available, controlled by time/date release