

Who Would Have Thought?

Tips and Instructions for Doing Extraordinary Things in Blackboard

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Text Box Spacing

The text box is double-spaced by default. To move down one line instead of two, hold the Shift Key when clicking Enter.

To order an announcement:

Announcement A - Display After 8/12/04 at 8:10 am

Announcement B - Display After 8/12/04 at 8:05 am

Announcement C - Display After 8/12/04 at 8:00 am

The work around is to set the "display after" time/date for the announcements in the specific order you want them displayed; latest to be released is on top and others fall below in sequence.

Managing Multiple Sections

Create a column in the grade book

Assign each student a section code or number

Sort by that column

**Be sure to have all students enrolled before the sort occurs otherwise students added will be at the bottom of the sort, not in alpha within the section.

SAVE button in Assessments

The SAVE button appears in any assessment. If Force Completion is not checked the student can use Save and return to the assessment. If Force Completion is checked the student can save periodically and submit. If the connection is severed and the student has saved any saved answers will be recoverable by the instructor in the gradebook. The assessment cannot be restarted by the student. Pedagogical Consideration: Have a policy that states the exam will be considered "complete" if XX% of the exam is submitted; otherwise the attempt is reset and the student takes it again.

Importing Tests through Respondus

Respondus is a software that can create Bb test pools from existing test files (word processed documents) and test generator programs. If tests are in electronic format already there are ways those files can be manipulated into Blackboard. See Patrice in the Teaching and Learning Center, x5295 for more information about this service.

Modify Test Description

The Test Description is stored in two places; one is in the Text Box of the Item for the link to the test and one is in the Description box in the Test Manager. If the Description box is changed in the Test Manager the description for the test will not be updated until the Item is modified and submitted or vice versa.

Undeliverable E-mails

Students who have Yahoo, Hotmail, AOL or other Web-based E-mail accounts may have security settings set at a level that blocks E-mail sent through Blackboard.

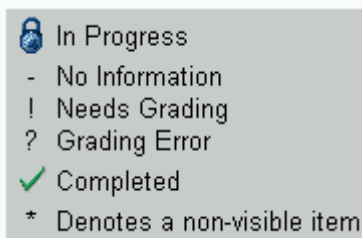
Email sent to students who have an ICC Email address in Blackboard but who have never accessed their ICC email will also result in an undelivered message. The ICC Student email account is not activated until the student logs in for the first time. This problem can be resolved if students change their email addresses or login to their ICC student email accounts before an instructor sends messages through Blackboard.

Miscellaneous Testing and Test Options Issues

1. Launching tests in a new window may cause problems if the user has pop-up blockers enabled on his/her computer.
2. "Do you want to make the link visible" is checked No by default. Check Yes when the test is to be deployed even if the time it will be deployed is in the future.
3. Force Completion is not checked by default. If the student is required to complete the test in one sitting Force Completion must be checked. If it is not checked the student can start, save and resume the test without submitting it as long as the link to the test is available.
4. If the Display Until check box isn't checked it will be checked when the test options are submitted. This will cause the link to become unavailable as of the current date/time. Uncheck the Display Until box or set it to a desired time before submitting the test options after modifying.
5. Test Presentation mode can be all at once or one at a time. One at a time may have an advantage over all at once if the student has submitted at least one question and his/her connection fails. Theoretically, any saved answer data is recovered. However, the navigation for one at a time can be confusing. Be sure to explain the navigation icons to the student. If possible, allow backtracking in the event the student accidentally moves to the end of the test, not the next question.
6. DO NOT place an essay question in the last position of the test if backtracking is allowed. If the student answers the essay and clicks back before submitting the answer to the essay question will be lost.
7. Changing the number of possible answers on a test question will delete question text or answers already typed. Change the possible number of answers before typing anything in the question field.

Clearing a Test Attempt for a Student

1. Control Panel
2. Gradebook
3. Click on the padlock or question mark in the student's score cell
4. Click the View button on the right side of the page
5. Click Clear Attempt



Enabling Group Features

The Groups Pages command under the Communication area in Manage Course Menu must be enabled for the group features to appear. Therefore, the Groups Pages link will appear in the Communication area and the instructor can enable a Groups button to appear. Instructors and students can use either the link in Communications or the Groups button to go to the Groups Pages. If the instructor does not want the Communications button with the Groups Pages link to appear the instructor must create an individual area for each feature under Communication and make the Communication button not available.

Copy and Paste Into Text Boxes in Blackboard

Blackboard has new copy and paste buttons built into the Text Box Editor. The text box will now allow the right-click function to perform copy and paste actions. To copy and paste out of or into a text box use the buttons provided or use the keyboard shortcuts: Control+C is copy and Control+V is paste. In the Test Manager the button bar is collapsed by default. Use the small gray drop down arrow on the left to expand the button bar and find the copy and paste buttons.

Copying Items or Folders to Folders

A folder must be visible to be able to copy an item or another folder to that folder.

OK Button on the Test Canvas Page

The OK button at the bottom of the Test Canvas page occasionally and intermittently gives an error to contact the System Administrator. The button does not "save" any content; it's purely navigational, moving from the Test Canvas page back to the main Test Manager page. The last edits or additions made to the Test Canvas should be saved. To recover from the error, scroll to the top of the page and click Test Manager in the navigational trail. Click Modify to double-check the test. Changes or additions should be saved despite the error.

Hiding the Total and Weighted Total Columns in the Gradebook

The Total and the Weighted Total Columns are displayed at the end of the spreadsheet view of the gradebook. The Total column will represent the total number of points possible and the total points the student has earned, to date. The Weighted Total will show the overall percentage earned based on reported scores. The Weighted Total is configured by the Weight Grades button at the top of the gradebook. Grades can be weighted by category or by item. If grades are not weighted the Weighted Total column can be hidden from students' views. Hiding the Total column may help students who are confused by a total that represents only a portion of his/her grade, such as Blackboard quizzes and tests but not paper and pencil assignments or "offline" activities. To hide either the Total or the Weighted Total columns:

1. Click on the title of the column in the gradebook.
2. Click Item Information.
3. Change the Make item visible to students selection to No.
4. Click Submit.

Surveys Show 0 Instead of Check Mark

The "Display As" selection must be changed. There are two Complete/Incomplete selections in the Display As drop down box. Change the selection to the second one to make a survey appear as a check mark instead of an 0 in the gradebook.

1. Click on the title of the survey in the gradebook.
2. Change the Display As selection to the second Complete/Incomplete.
3. Click Submit