

Blackboard User Survey Analysis

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EDUC 792T: ISD Internship

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Blackboard User Survey Analysis

Executive Summary

My internship was with the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) Instructional Technology & New Media Department. The internship was in the form of a project in which I was to work with data obtained through the UMBC Blackboard User Survey which was conducted at the end of the Spring 2007 semester. There were 1433 responses. My focus was an open-ended essay question, Question 13 - If you could pick one professor who uses Blackboard really well, who would it be and why?

After coding the data, adding additional data and feedback from my client patterns started to emerge. We selected the top 6 courses and I then observed the actual courses. The survey data revealed what was actually going on in the courses.

It was evident in the two top courses that a true learning community was in existence. Palloff and Pratt explain that an important part of the learning process is the “interaction among students themselves, the interaction between faculty and students, and the collaboration in learning that results from these interactions” (Palloff & Pratt, 1999, p. 12). The students in these courses collaborated to help each other answer questions about the content through discussion board participation.

The ability to obtain class documents was the highest rated usage for the students. But overall, the quality of “presence” (Salmon, 2000, p. 160) was the most valued quality of the instructors according to the students. Presence is seen in the survey data by the fact that the students ranked the following as 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th: C-Timely/Prompt/Keeps Updated, A-Grades (the gradebook was kept up to date), C-Announcements, and C-Discussion Groups. In the observation of the courses, the top two professors had at least 30 announcements for a one semester course. They also kept their grades updated and participated in the discussion groups. In the discussions they provided encouragement, answered questions, or prompted the students by asking additional questions to help guide them in the right direction. By my observation of the questions and the answers, I could tell that the students were engaged and learning.

Personal Lessons Learned

During this project I have learned that a large amount of survey data in the form of open ended questions is conquerable. The key to organizing the data is coding it correctly. The way to code it correctly is to work with other people that have the knowledge to help you break down the information and to do research into the subject area so that you understand the language of the data.

I also learned that the key to the “perfect” online course is instructor presence in the course. The teacher will always have content that makes it convenient for the students to access information, this is a given. The key is the communications. It can be in the form of announcements (one-way communication) or discussions (two-way communications.) Although the students did not mention this, communications might also include an instructor blog, wiki, or synchronous session.

If I had to do anything differently, I would have sped up the whole process so that I could interview the teachers. The interviews will now occur in the fall.

I would advise others that are going to complete projects to document the whole process as they are completing it so that they have a record for their final report.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank John Fritz and Robert Armstrong for all of their guidance during this internship. I would also like to thank Jeffrey Berman, intern from the Computer Science Department in the Instructional Technology & New Media Department, for the data that he supplied. Additionally, thanks to Deb Arnold, Instructional Technology & New Media Department for her support.

Background

The purpose of this internship project was to document and describe the perfect online course. It seeks to provide an understanding of extemporary models of online learning that are at UMBC. The larger project included the components listed below. During the time allotted, I accomplished numbers 1, 2, and 7.

1. Study the top 50 most active Bb courses for common trends in course design and "best practices."
2. Compare the top 50 list with names of professors students have recommended in our Bb users survey (a lot of duplicate names keep appearing)
3. Interview some of these professors to develop mini profiles or short "show & tell" podcasts we can post in iTunesU or our site.
4. Explore converting the Blackboard Reports site into a Bb "Building Block" other schools might use (and improve); perhaps the Maryland Blackboard Users Group (MDBUG). For more info, see <https://lists.umbc.edu/lists/info/mdebug>.
5. Study the grade distribution reports for students in these courses; how do A & B students use very active Bb courses? This would require approval.
6. Compare the NSEE student responses by courses that may be in the Top 50 (we don't have logs from 2005 when UMBC last did NSEE)
7. Analyze the open-ended essay questions on the recent blackboard user survey results (which are now on the Bb reports site at <http://www.umbc.edu/oit/newmedia/blackboard/stats>).

Major Questions

The questions that guided this project were:

- Who do the undergraduate students at UMBC feel is using Blackboard well? (#7)
- What teachers have the most active Bb courses? (#2)
- What are the top teachers doing in their Blackboard course that demonstrates what the students say the teachers are doing well? (#1)

Overview of Data Collection Methods

The overview of data collection methods includes my journals for the course.

Phase I – Data Analysis

5/16/07 – Initial Meeting – During the initial meeting with John Fritz, Bob Armstrong, Jack Prosko, and Deb Arnold, the team decided that I would analyze the Spring 2007 Blackboard Undergraduate Student Survey. The team decided that I should focus on Question 13 – “If you could pick one professor who uses Blackboard really well, who would it be and why?” During this meeting, I discussed my motivation for wanting to work on this project: I wanted to find out what the “perfect” online course looked like. While I worked on this project, another intern from the Computer Science department was compiling data on the top 50 most active undergraduate Blackboard. It was concluded that I would code the qualitative data from question 13.

5/16/07 – 6/1/07 – Coding - As I analyzed the survey results I pulled out the professor’s names and patterns started to emerge with the data. The students did mention what the professor did best such as updated the course regularly, used the discussion board, updated grades quickly, and other things. I was working from data that was in an Excel spreadsheet so I added columns to my spreadsheet to represent the activities that the students were pointing out. By the conclusion of my work I had a spreadsheet that could be reviewed by the team.

6/1/07 – Review of Work – We had a second meeting with John Fritz, Bob Armstrong and Jeffrey Berman. During this meeting I presented the data that I had compiled. The team offered suggestions on how to breakdown the responses on what the teacher did in the Blackboard courses. They wanted me to use the 3 Stages of Blackboard Use: Communication (C): Document Management (DM), and Assessment (A) to categorize the responses from the students. After the meeting Bob Armstrong and I categorized the topics that I was discovering into the 3 stages. The common student responses categorized by stages is below in Table 1.

Table 1 - Stages of Blackboard Usage Areas

A-Grades

A-Homework
A-Quizzes/Tests
A-Practice Exams/Exam Keys/Example Essays
A-Turnitin.com
A-WebAssign
C-Timely/Prompt/Keeps Updated
C-Announcements
C-Discussion Groups
C-Communicated with Students
C-Group Communication and Sharing
C-Chat
C-Wiki
C-CPS
C-Blog
C-Peer Questions/Answers Questions
C-Monitors
DM-Course Documents/Assignments
DM-Links/Supplemental/Resources
DM-Organized
DM-Syllabus
DM-Study Guides
DM-Video/Audio

6/1/07-6/14/07 – Coding – I continued to work on my spreadsheet so that I could produce charts that represented the number of times a teacher was mentioned and the number of times the above topics were mentioned. I used pivot tables and charts to represent the data. Table 2 represents the number of times an Area from the Blackboard stages was mentioned in the student data.

Table 2 - 3 Stages of Blackboard Usage Rank

3 Stages of Blackboard Usage	
>Sorted by Number of Hits	
Sum of Hits	
Area	Total
DM-Course Documents/Assignments	296
C-Timely/Prompt/Keeps Updated	183
A-Grades	181
C-Announcements	108
C-Discussion Groups	106
A-Homework	54
DM-Links/Supplemental/Resources	48
A-Quizzes/Tests	40
A-Practice Exams/Exam Keys/Example Essays	36
C-Communicated with Students	30

DM-Syllabus	25
DM-Organized	25
C-Group Communication and Sharing	16
A-Turnitin.com	8
C-Chat	8
C-Wiki	7
DM-Video/Audio	6
A-WebAssign	6
DM-Study Guides	6
C-Peer Questions/Answers Questions	2
C-CPS	2
C-Blog	2
C-Monitors	1

6/14/07 – Meeting – During this meeting, I presented my data with tables and charts. The tables and charts listed the number of times the teacher had been mentioned as a professor that uses Blackboard really well. The tables and charts also showed the numbers of times the students mentioned a particular way the teacher used Blackboard. One of the tables presented to the team is below, Table 3. During this meeting we determined that the next stage of this project will involved interviewing the teachers. The other team members are determining if there is a way we can correlate student grades to how much they used Blackboard, this issue is pending. Initial contact for the interviews will be setup by John Fritz. During this meeting, the team decided on the teachers that would be contacted based on the data in my table.

Because of differing numbers of students in the teacher’s classes, Jeffrey Berman was assigned the task of averaging the number of student usage hits over all of the courses the teacher taught in Blackboard. My next assignment is to create a new spreadsheet with the selected teachers, the numbers of times a student mentioned them in the survey, the average hits per user for the course, and the number of times the students mentioned the way the teacher used the course.

6/14/07 -6/29/07 - Selected Instructors Spreadsheet Update – I have updated the spreadsheet to only include the selected teachers the numbers of times a student mentioned them in the survey, the average hits per user for the course, and the way that the areas of Blackboard usage the students listed.

Table 3 - Teacher Ranking Combined with Stages of Blackboard Usage

Name	Fall 2006 SCEQ Avg #9	Spring 2007 Survey Rank	Survey Count	AvgHits PerUser Rank	AvgHits Per Student	Hits	Students	Courses (Avg Hits Per Student)	DM-Organized	DM-Syllabus	DM-Course Documents/Assignments	DM-Links/Supplemental/Resources	DM-Video/Audio	DM-Study Guides	C-Timely/Prompt/Keeps Updated	C-Announcements	C-Discussion Groups	C-Communicated with Students	C-Peer Questions/Answers Questions	C-Group Communication and Sharing	C-Monitors	C-Chat	C-Wiki	C-Blog	C-CPS	A-Grades	A-Homework	A-Quizzes/Tests	A-Practice Exams/Exam Keys/Example Essays	A-Turnitin.com	A-Wah.Accinn
Phillip Sokolove	3.66	1	50	38	384	118670	309	BIOL100_0101_SP2007 (393)	2	1	1	3	2	2	1	1	2	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	2	1	2	0
Lili Cui	3.93	2	41	8	673	284021	422	PHYS112_0101a_SP2007 (996)	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	9	1	8	5	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	3	2	4	0
Tara Carpenter	4.00	3	28	218	142	114777	803	CHEM102_0101a_SP2007 (159)	10	0	1	3	2	0	0	0	8	2	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	6	0	3	4	
James Sandoz	3.87	5	16	112	237	106110	447	BIOL275L_0101_SP2007 (278)	0	0	9	0	0	0	7	3	6	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	8	0	0	0	2	
Daniel Sheckells	4.00	6	16	11	624	167312	268	SCI100_0201a_SP2007 (662)	1	0	6	2	0	0	2	3	5	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	
Katie Morris	4.00	10	8	79	285	7411	26	SOWK397_8020_SP2007 (285)	0	0	4	1	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	
Eric Anderson	4.03	13	7	240	127	80281	628	PHYS122_0101_SP2007 (182)	0	1	2	0	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	1	
Chris Swan	4.47	15	7	3	998	53923	54	GES302A_0101_SP2007 (999)	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	
Anne Spence	4.20	19	5	51	335	25489	76	ENME204_0101_SP2007 (335)	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	
Linda Benson	3.69	20	5	184	162	13342	82	ENGL243_0101_SP2007 (224)	0	1	3	0	0	0	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Amy Everhart	na	23	5	124	224	25090	112	IS101_0101_SP2007 (243)	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	
Kriste Lindenmeyer		26	5	62	310	21728	70	AMST384_0101_SP2007 (310)	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	
Carolyn Seaman	na	30	4	48	350	7717	22	IS125_0101_SP2007 (350)	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0		
Lark Claassen	2.00	49	3	81	278	55957	201	BIOL100L_0101_SP2007 (278)	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	

Based on the analysis and the previous knowledge of John Fritz and Robert Armstrong, it was decided that I should focus on the courses of 6 instructors.

P Sokolove	BIOL100_0101_SP2007
C. Allen Bush/Tara Carpenter	CHEM102_0101a_SP2007
James Sandoz	BIOL275L_0101_SP2007
Karin Readel/Dan Sheckells	SCI100_0201A_SP2007
Katherine Morris	SOWK397_8020_SP2007
Lili Cui	PHYS112_0101A_SP2007

Phase II – Analysis of the Blackboard Courses

7/6/07 – Permission is being obtained for me to enter the faculty members Blackboard courses.

7/13/07 – I have been given access to the courses and am going through each course. I am trying to decide how to put the information together. I am observing the courses to see patterns and decide how to put the information together. I am also referencing the chart above while doing this.

7/20/07 – My contact has suggested that I analyze the courses based on the Quality Matters rubric. Created a spreadsheet based on the rubric and statistics gathered from Blackboard. Based on the results of this grading, this grading was put aside.

7/27/07 -8/10/07 – Analyzed the courses based on the categories of use comments from the students. I examined the syllabus for each course to see if the teacher referenced Blackboard and to see if there were points awarded for using Blackboard. I then went through each section of the course site to see what the instructors had placed on the site. I also retrieved statistics on discussion board usage. Created a report based on my observation. This report is listed in the Findings section.

Findings

Blackboard Course Highlights

The following observations were made on 6 top Blackboard instructors based on their students' responses to the Spring 2007 Blackboard User Survey. In the observations below, the abbreviations are based on the 3 Stages of Blackboard Use: Communication (C): Document Management (DM), and Assessment (A) which were used to categorize the student responses. The numbers in parenthesis beside headings designated with a C, DM, or A represent the number of times the students mentioned this category in the survey.

The course observations started with a review of the syllabus, course menu, and exploration of each content area used in the Blackboard course.

All direct quotes from the courses are in quotation marks or indented if they are large blocks of text. Due to the nature of a Blackboard course, I have listed the citation in the table with the teacher's name and course name.

Teacher Name	Phillip Sokolove
Courses (Avg Hits Per Student)	BIOL100_0101_SP2007 (393)
Fall 2006 SCEQ Avg #9	3.66
Spring 2007 Survey Rank	1
Survey Count	50
AvgHits PerUser Rank	38
AvgHits Per Student	384
Hits	118670
Students	309
Citation	(Sokolove, 2007)

Syllabus Reference to Blackboard

Dr. Sokolove's course syllabus included the following references to Blackboard.

Regarding In-class Activities: Unlike many large, introductory courses, this class will involve more than simply listening to lectures, taking notes, reading the text and taking exams. You will be expected to take an active role in the learning process, and **28% of your final grade** will depend upon verbal and non-verbal activities that take place in classes, in discussion sections and on Blackboard's Discussion Board forums. There are a number of ways that you can be involved in this "active learning" section of Biology 100. Although I hope that as the semester progresses you will begin to find in-class participation less intimidating and more rewarding, **speaking out in the large lecture session is NOT the only way to earn in-class activities credit.** Dialog between students, both in the large class and in small groups, is known to aid the learning process, and I will do whatever I can to promote such dialog. There will also be activities credit opportunities to interact with your peers on Blackboard.

In-class and on-line activities = **Any activity that is not a quiz or an exam.** Such activities can, and often will be **non-verbal:** wearing your name badge to class; providing thoughtful self-assessments of your own participation; participating in CPS activities; asking good questions and

engaging in on-line dialogs on the Blackboard Discussion Board forums. You will find, however, that often you will also be participating verbally: discussing questions and concepts within your team; raising questions and responding to questions in discussion sections; asking and responding to questions in the large class. Sometimes you may be eager to participate in the large class, but I won't notice that your name sign is raised. Don't despair. If you raise your name sign and are not recognized, there will be a means of keeping track of your attempt.

Dr. Sokolove awards points for discussion participation.

Course Menu

The course menu contains the following items:

- Announcements
- Course Syllabus
- Course Information – contained the course syllabus
- Staff Information
- Course Documents
- Discussion Board
- Communication - Standard
- Groups
- Books
- Student Tools - Standard
- External Links

DM-Course Documents/Assignments (15)

The Course Documents Content Area contained the following folders:

- Course Syllabus -The Course Syllabus folder was a copy of two other locations for the Course Syllabus. This folder also included the Course Objectives
- Exams – This folder contains the answer keys to the exams.
- “Handouts”, Notes, Study Questions, etc. - Academic Integrity Pledge, Exam Study Questions, Study Questions with an Answer Key, Notes on various systems and a note regarding the CPS pads.
- Lecture Outlines - The Lecture Outlines Content Area contained RTF outlines off lectures based on chapter number and date.
- CPS Questions – This folder contained a file that included all of the CPS questions for the semester.

The Course Documents folder also contained two documents: the Final Exam Information and the .Grade Curve

DM-Links/Supplemental/Resources (3)

22 links in the External Links content area the links are mostly subject related links with links on Plagiarism.

C-Timely/Prompt/Keeps Updated (17)

The evidence of Timely/Prompt/Keeps Updated is in the student comments. The students stated that Dr. Sokolove is posting things everyday, he answers discussion questions, and his grades are updated.

C-Announcements (12)

Dr. Sokolove had 33 Announcements. In each announcement he communicated information regarding the status of grading, answers to CPS questions, updated to study questions, items that have been posted, information about the next class, encouragement to participate in the BB Discussion Board, information on where items are posted for lectures, and the class curve.

C-Discussion Groups (21)

In the Discussion Board there were 6 forums. The most active was “Questions about Course Content.” In this forum there were 213 posts. The students had posted questions and other students participated by answering the questions. Dr. Sokolove also responded to the posts with prompts to help the student find the answer to the questions such as “How might you rephrase your question?) Where might you look to find the answer to your second question?” He also jumped in to agree with answers from the students and say that they were having a “great discussion.”

Questions and Course Content – Description: “Use this forum to post questions that you have about CONTENT and CONCEPTS presented in lecture or found in your textbook. Do not post questions here about non-content topics (like, "where does my discussion section meet?") .Use the Procedural Questions Forum instead. NOTE: Please use the Study Questions forum to ask others in the class about a Study Question. Please DO NOT use this Content Questions Forum to discuss Study Questions.”

C-Group Communication and Sharing (2)

There were 78 Groups defined. Upon examining a few of the groups, there were not a lot of posts in the group discussions. Biology Section 104 Meets Tuesday 2:30 PM was the most active group with 60 posts. They had also exchanged many files.

A-Grades (10)

The gradebook was fully populated. There were 3 exam grades, a final exam grade, CPS Points, Quiz Total, and TotalPts Earned.

Lecture Outlines

Dr. Sokolove provided lectures outlines for the students.

Teacher Name	Lili Cui
Courses (Avg Hits Per Student)	PHYS112_0101a_SP2007 (996)
Fall 2006 SCEQ Avg #9	3.93
Spring 2007 Survey Rank	2
Survey Count	41
AvgHits PerUser Rank	8
AvgHits Per Student	673
Hits	284021
Students	422
Citation	(Cui, 2007)

Syllabus Reference to Blackboard

Dr. Cui's course syllabus had the following references to Blackboard under Course Website.

You can access the course site through Blackboard. I will put all my teaching materials in this website. After log in myUMBC, click on the "Blackboard" tab and then click on "SP07 PHYS112" in the "My Courses" area. Click on the "Blackboard Help" tab if you have trouble using it. Please contact UMBC office of Information Technology (OIT) for assistance with computer problems. You are **required** to logon to the course website *at least once before/after each class meeting*. **You are responsible for all materials delivered through Blackboard.**

You will use the website for:

- Accessing course materials: Syllabus, Schedule, and Lectures notes etc.
- Checking the course Announcements.
- WebAssign (Web-Homework System, See below).
- Checking the Points that you have earned in the course so far.
- Interacting with the Instructor and others in class using Discussion Board.

The following was in the syllabus under Tips to Succeed.

Check Blackboard often. I found those students who frequently checked Blackboard (Course Document, Discussion Board, & Announcement) tended to get a better grade, from my statistical analysis last semester.

Dr. Cui did not award points for discussion participation, but Blackboard is the backbone of her course.

Course Menu

The course menu contains the following items:

- Announcements
- Course Syllabus
- Staff information - Empty
- Course Documents
- Communication - Standard
- External Links - Empty
- Tools

DM-Course Documents/Assignments (24)

The Course Documents Content Area included 6 folders:

- Lecture Note - Lecture Notes for all lectures (37) were provided. They were originally PowerPoint slides that have been converted to PDFs. They were provided in 3 or 9 slide per page format.
- Homework Key - The Homework Key, Quiz Key, Exam Key, and Old Exams are mentioned below.
- Quiz Key
- Exam Key
- Old Exams
- Discussion Package - I am not sure what the Discussion Package references, but there are two there that explain various physics principals.

C-Timely/Prompt/Keeps Updated (10)

I could only see dates associated with the Announcements so my assumption is that these students commented on timeliness based on the number of announcements, current documents in the Course Documents, and Dr. Cui's response time in the discussions, and up to date grades in the gradebook.

C-Announcements (9)

Dr. Cui had 37 announcements; they started with a welcome and how to register the CPS clicker and instructions for WebAssign. There were announcements encouraging the students to do their homework and pre-reading assignments. Announcements included pointers to where to find study materials for tests, statistics for exam scores, and dates for exam review sessions.

C-Discussion Groups (18)

Dr. Cui has 4 Forums with 177 participants and 1682 posts! The Forums were as follows:

- Forum Syllabus
- Forum Homework & WebAssign
- Forum Lab
- Forum Study Group.

The Homework & WebAssign forum had 1524 posts. In this forum the students asked questions and answered questions from their peers. Dr. Cui encouraged the students, “Very neat job! Thanks for your participation in the discussion board, and especially to those who are willing to spend your time explaining to other students!” and answered questions. She did this with caring and humor.

Dr. Cui has encouraged them to learn together and the students have conformed.

A-Grades (10)

There were 33 items in the gradebook and all were completely filled with grades.

A-Homework (13)

Dr. Cui provided answers with explanations for homework assignments. Step by step solutions were provided when appropriate for the question. These documents were hand written and scanned into PDFs.

A-Practice Exams/Exam Keys/Example Essays (4)

Although there were not many comments on quiz keys, Dr. Cui did provide the keys for 8 quizzes. With the keys, she also provided feedback regarding the answers or pointers on why students got questions wrong. Dr. Cui provided Exam keys with comments also. In addition to the quiz and exam keys, Dr. Cui also provided copies of old exams.

Lecture Outlines

Dr. Cui provided lecture outlines in Blackboard. In the Syllabus under Lecture section, the following was stated:

I will post my PowerPoint slides on Blackboard the night before every class. You should print them out to take lecture notes on if possible. But remember these slides are not the complete content of the class but only an outline of what is being done. Printing them out is not a substitute for attending lectures.

Teacher Name
Courses (Avg Hits Per Student)

Tara Carpenter / C. Allen Bush
CHEM102_0101a_SP2007 (159)

Fall 2006 SCEQ Avg #9	4.00
Spring 2007 Survey Rank	3
Survey Count	28
AvgHits PerUser Rank	218
AvgHits Per Student	142
Hits	114777
Students	803
Citation	(Carpenter, 2007)

Syllabus Reference to Blackboard

Dr. Carpenter's Syllabus did not refer to Blackboard.

There were no points awarded for discussion participation.

Course Menu

The course menu contains the following items:

- Announcements
- Course Syllabus
- Staff information
- Course Documents
- Communication - Standard
- External Links - Empty
- Tools

DM-Course Documents/Assignments (1)

In the Course Documents folder the following folders were included:

- Suggested problems from the textbook
- Movies
- Answer keys and solutions for exam questions
- Additionally, the lecture slides and notes for all lectures included in the Course Documents folder.

DM-Links/Supplemental/Resources (13)

Based on the students listing Links/Supplemental/Resources, I believe the students were referring to the Course Documents items, but especially the Movies. There were 22 movies on Chemistry topics. The movies explained some of the chemistry principals. They did not appear to be produced by the instructor of the course.

C-Announcements (10)

There were 21 announcements on this course site. The announcements related to times and locations of discussion sections, exam schedules, grade postings on Blackboard, seating assignments and final grades.

Lecture Outlines

Dr. Carpenter provided lecture outlines for the students in Blackboard.

Teacher Name	James Sandoz
Courses (Avg Hits Per Student)	BIOL275L_0101_SP2007 (278)
Fall 2006 SCEQ Avg #9	3.87
Spring 2007 Survey Rank	5
Survey Count	16
AvgHits PerUser Rank	112
AvgHits Per Student	237
Hits	106110
Students	447
Citation	(Sandoz, 2007)

Syllabus Reference to Blackboard

Dr. Sandoz's course syllabus had the following references to Blackboard.

(3) You must read email to your UMBC email address. Blackboard automatically sends to this address and I can't keep track of multiple addresses for students. If you have a different preferred email address, set things up so your UMBC email is forwarded to it.

There were no points awarded for discussion participation in Dr. Sandoz's course.

Course Menu

The course menu contains the following items:

- Discussion Board
- Course Documents
- Course Syllabus
- Staff Information
- Communication
- External Links
- Tools
- Announcements

DM-Course Documents/Assignments (9)

In the Course Documents folder the following folders were included:

- PowerPoints
- Turnitin Assignments (6)
- Data Sheets and Graph Paper
- Bergey's Stuff

In addition to the folders, documents were in the Course Documents folder such as the final exam, Cartesian Graph Paper, Presentation Guidelines, MPT Table, Some Dilution Problems, and Independent Project Proposal information.

C-Timely/Prompt/Keeps Updated (7)

Dr. Sandoz had 24 announcements. The students mentioned this in the survey.

A-Grades (8)

The students commented that Dr. Sandoz updated the grades regularly.

Lecture Outlines

Dr. Sandoz provided lecture outlines for the students.

Teacher Name	Karin Readel
Courses (Avg Hits Per Student)	SCI100_0201a_SP2007 (662)
Fall 2006 SCEQ Avg #9	4.00
Spring 2007 Survey Rank	6
Survey Count	16
AvgHits PerUser Rank	11
AvgHits Per Student	624
Hits	167312
Students	268
Citation	(Readel, 2007)

Syllabus Reference to Blackboard

Dr. Readel's course syllabus had the following references to Blackboard.

E. Other Assignments/Participation – Participation on Blackboard
“Participation on Blackboard – 5%: You will be expected to routinely access Blackboard, and post at least one meaningful item per week on either your lab group discussion board or the whole class discussion boards. These postings may be in response to particular assignments from lecture or lab, or be related to your group project. This does not include participation in the Extra Credit Discussion Board. At the end of the semester you will submit a final self graded portfolio highlighting your efforts. Failure to submit the portfolio will result in a loss of credit.”

VII. Materials for Lecture and Lab:

“In addition to the Ecobeaker custom lab packet, a variety of other materials (lecture handouts, lab handouts and readings) will be placed online on the course website. It is each student’s responsibility to print out the lab exercises and any necessary lecture materials prior to coming to class! Your grade may suffer if you do not come to lab prepared with the appropriate handout. Assuming a cost of \$0.10 per page, the total cost should not exceed \$20.00, which is substantially less than the cost of the average textbook. Please note that this does NOT include the cost of printing out any written work to be turned in for a grade. Also note that there are no “open” computer facilities in the Physics Bldg. “

XI. Miscellaneous

“If you are unable to attend a lecture class it is your responsibility to obtain notes from someone else in the course. Any power point presentations used in lecture will not necessarily be posted online.

You WILL be expected to routinely (at least twice per week) check both your UMBC email account and the course Blackboard site during this semester. If you depend on the campus computer labs for internet access, plan your time accordingly.”

In addition to this information from the syllabus there are instructions on Blackboard Participation in the Course information folder. It includes a template and a rubric for the Blackboard participation portfolio.

Dr. Readel awarded points for discussion participation.

Course Menu

The course menu contains the following items:

- Announcements
- Staff information
- Course Information
- Discussion Board
- Group Project
- External Links

DM-Course Documents/Assignments (6)

The Course Information folders included:

- Lecture Schedule and Syllabus - Lecture Schedule and Syllabus includes the syllabus and schedule.
- Lab Materials includes the labs for each class and instructions on how to write a lab report.
- Lab Material
- Quizzes - Quizzes contained 6 Blackboard quizzes
- Lecture Papers - Lecture Papers included instructions on how to write a lecture paper and Turnitin submission items
- Lecture Outlines and Handouts - Lecture Outlines and Handouts contained many resources that related to the class. There were links, PDF files, videos, and teacher created items. It also contained a midterm review and final review sheet.
- Extra Credit Information - Extra Credit Information contained information on how you can obtain extra credit.
- Group Project Information - Group Project Information on the group project, how to create web pages, and a group grading rubric.
- Blackboard participation Info – This item contained a rubric for Blackboard participation. The folder also contained a template for submitting the Blackboard Participation Portfolio.

C-Announcements (3)

There were 14 announcements on topics such as the stream cleanup, Ecobeaker custom lab packets, exam times and dates, announcements on posted items, and a welcome.

C-Discussion Groups (5)

This course has 6 Forums, 196 participants and 922 posts.

The forums included:

- Lecture Material
- Procedural Questions from the lecture or lab
- Current Events About Water & Science - Description: “Use this discussion board to talk about anything you find in the news that has to do with either science (basic science in the news, ethical issues in science, etc.) or water (resources issues, drinking water, local water quality, etc.).”
- Clean Up
- URCAD Discussion Board
- Extra Credit Discussion – Description: “This is the place for all extra credit postings and interaction. Click on the title to enter this discussion board.”

By far, the most popular forum was Current Events about Water & Science (536 Totals Posts, 71 Participants) and the Extra Credit Discussion Board (147 Total Posts, 9 Participants).

Lecture Outlines

Dr. Readel provided lecture outlines for the students.

Teacher Name	Katie Morris
Courses (Avg Hits Per Student)	SOWK397_8020_SP2007 (285)
Fall 2006 SCEQ Avg #9	4.00
Spring 2007 Survey Rank	10
Survey Count	8
AvgHits PerUser Rank	79
AvgHits Per Student	285
Hits	7411
Students	26
Citation	(Morris, 2007)

Syllabus Reference to Blackboard

Dr. Morris's course syllabus had the following references to Blackboard.

Suggestions on How to Do Well in this Class
Participate on blackboard, posting questions and responding to colleagues. If you have a question about an assignment, chances are your peers may have the same question, post the question and get feedback from your peers if you are all still unclear pose the question to the instructor.

BLACKBOARD

Each student is encouraged to check blackboard weekly. Blackboard is an excellent way to communicate with the instructor and your peers. Please re-familiarize yourself with this program and use the tools that this program affords including Resources tab for information on APA format and Discussion Board tab to communicate with your peers. If you have a question about an assignment or the readings I encourage you to use discussion board and discuss with your peers before contacting me.

Points awarded for discussion participation

Though I did not see points awarded for Blackboard participation in the syllabus, the Blackboard site was used to collect assignments. The teacher of this course seemed to use the assignments and Turnitin feature frequently.

Course Menu

- Announcements
- Syllabus
- Lectures
- Readings
- Assignments
- Course Information
- Communication-standard
- Resources
- Tools (Course Tools) - standard
- Staff Information

DM-Course Documents/Assignments (4)

The content areas were organized differently because they were arranged at the course menu level, see the Course Menu above.

- Lectures contained the lectures and lecture notes in PowerPoint or Word documents.
- Course readings contained the reading list and articles.
- Assignments contained links to 5 Blackboard and Turnitin assignment items.
- Course Information contained class rules, forms for interviewing individuals, rubrics, forms used in field experience, APA format information, and student samples.
- Resources contained information on writing, APA format, resources at Shady Grove, Resources at the Main Campus, UMBC Academic Conduct Policy, NASW safety guidelines, Library 101, Web Search engines, etc. It seems very similar to Course Information but is not a replica.

C-Announcements (1)

There were 13 announcements that included a welcome, encouragement to use the discussion board, feedback on papers, information on how attendance is going to affect grades, information about a change in the syllabus, and a thank you.

C-Discussion Groups (2)

Though the discussion board had 23 forums, it was not very heavily used.

Lecture Outlines

Dr. Morris provided lecture outlines for the students.

Next Steps

The next steps of this project will focus on interviewing the teachers of the courses. The interviews of these professors will result in mini profiles or short "show & tell" podcasts that can be posted in iTunesU or on the Instructional Technology & New Media Department website. The interview will highlight the best practices that are listed above in the Findings section.

References

- Carpenter, T. (2007, Spring). *CHEM102_0101a_SP2007 Blackboard Course Website*. Retrieved August 15, 2007, from University of Maryland Baltimore County Blackboard Academic Suite database: <http://blackbaord.umbc.edu>
- Cui, L. (2007, Spring). *PHYS112_0101a_SP2007 Blackboard Course Website*. Retrieved August 15, 2007, from University of Maryland Baltimore County Blackboard Academic Suite database: <http://blackbaord.umbc.edu>
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Blackboard Academic Suite database: <http://blackbaord.umbc.edu>

Spring 2007 Student Course Evaluation Questionnaire (SCEQ) results, published by the

UMBC Office of Institutional Research (OIR): <http://www.umbc.edu/oir/sceq/>

Appendix

A. SP2007 Blackboard Student Survey

<http://www.umbc.edu/oit/newmedia/blackboard/stats/surveys/SP2007studentsurvey.pdf>

Attempts: 1125 (Total of 1441 attempts for this assessment)

Question 1

Which answer best describes your primary role at UMBC? (S)

Full-time Undergraduate student 90.133%

Part-Time Undergraduate student 9.333%

Unanswered 0.356%

Question 2

Which answer best describes your primary use of Blackboard? (B)

As a faculty member teaching a course. 0.178%

As a student in a Blackboard class site. 98.133%

As a teaching assistant of a Blackboard class site. 0.267%

As a member of a Blackboard organization or community site. 0.356%

As a manager of a Blackboard organization or community site. 0.444%

Unanswered 0.622%

Question 3

How do you normally log into Blackboard? (B)

Through myUMBC? 88.978%

Directly at <http://www.umbc.edu/blackboard> or

<http://blackboard.umbc.edu>. 10.133%

Unanswered 0.889%

Question 4

Which browser do you use most often? (B)

Internet Explorer 50.222%

Mozilla Firefox 42.844%

Safari 5.6%
Opera 0.711%
Unanswered 0.622%

Question 5

Which of the following best describes your use of Blackboard at UMBC? (b)

As a supplement to a face-to-face course 69.6%
For an online course 4.356%
For a hybrid (part online, part face-to-face)
Course 18.578%
Community/Organization for research or other 6.222%
Unanswered 1.244%

Question 6

Please choose the following tools that you use on a regular basis. (Check all that apply)

(B)

Course content (course documents including syllabus, PowerPoints, sound/video files, etc.) 88.178%
Announcements 76.533%
Email 54.311%
Discussion Boards 54.4%
Chat 8.622%
Groups 16.267%
Assignment Upload for papers/projects 44.089%
Turnitin Assignment Upload 25.156%
Wikis 2.311%
Blogs 1.956%
Wimba Voice Tools 2.756%
Pronto 0%
Blackboard Backpack 0.978%

Question 7

How important are the following advantages to using Blackboard. (1 = Not important, 7 = Most Important) (B)

Answers 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Communicating directly with other students in your class.
22.222% 9.956% 12.267% 12.8% 15.289% 8.444% 15.378%

24/7 access to course content.
5.778% 1.6% 1.867% 2.133% 4.711% 10.222% 71.556%

Increased student engagement in the course.
15.556% 10.578% 12.622% 21.422% 16.978% 8.533% 10.222%

Reinforcement of learning through practice quizzes.
19.022% 6.933% 10.133% 16.356% 15.378% 12.089% 14.844%

Secure place to post grades.
4% 3.556% 3.467% 5.511% 8.444% 19.111% 53.333%

Convenient place to collect research materials and communicate with colleagues

17.156% 9.778% 13.511% 15.289% 14.311% 9.778% 13.867%
Other (Please describe in the last question)
16.8 89% 1.156% 1.511% 2.844% 2.578% 1.067% 4.889%

Question 8

What do you consider to disadvantages of using Blackboard? (B)

Reliance on technology 56.8%
Learning curve to becoming proficient in the use of it 11.911%
Learning environment too impersonal 14.933%
It's too time consuming 13.511%
Other (Please describe in the last question) 13.511%

Question 9

My professors are effectively using Blackboard in the following ways: (S)

User & Document Management
* Password-protected class & group space
* Upload or copy/paste documents (expiration) 58.844%
Communications & Interactivity
* Announcement
* Email, messages
* Discussion & Chat 79.644%
Assessment & Grades
* Electronic assignment delivery & collection
* Quizzing, Surveys
* Grade book 87.733%

Question 10

How would you rate your professors' overall use of Blackboard? (S)

Outstanding 18.844%
Good 58.222%
Fair 18.844%
Poor 3.022%
Unanswered 1.067%

Question 11

What do you think is the single most needed improvement about the administration of Blackboard? (B)

Login 5.867%
Enrollment into Blackboard course and community sites 6.489%
Server reliability 37.956%
Student training and support 4.622%
Faculty training and support 9.778%
Performance (e.g., "slowness, error messages, looping") 26.756%
Other (Please describe in the last question) 3.556%
Unanswered 4.978%

Question 12

Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of Blackboard as a learning tool? (B)

Very good 44.533%

It's okay 49.333%

Not very effective 5.156%

Unanswered 0.978%

Question 13

If you could pick one professor who uses Blackboard really well, who would it be and why? (B)

Question 14

Thank you for participating and please include any other additional comments/suggestions you may have about the use of Blackboard at UMBC. (Remember to click "Submit" when you have finished.) (B)