Communication Tools

Research supports the relationship between interpersonal interaction in the online environment and the learning that takes place. When members of an online community direct their efforts toward a common goal, powerful connections are made. Learners can achieve more through in-depth conversations, relationship building, and problem solving in a community. Without a goal, connections, and conversations, there is no community.

In a successful online learning community, students have the right tools for their interactive tasks. Blackboard Learn offers four communication tools for self-reflection, collaboration, and communication. The Discussion Board, Blogs, Journals, and Wikis tools allow you to provide rich assignments and evaluate students in authentic ways where students can share and create knowledge.

Discussion Board
The Discussion Board often becomes the online classroom. Because students contemplate before posting, more thoughtful conversations evolve. You can observe students demonstrating their grasp of the material, as well as exchanging ideas, debating topics, asking questions, and working in groups. You can moderate, evaluate, and even grade discussion posts. You can also invite subject matter experts to participate in discussion threads.

Blogs
Blogs allow authors to communicate their knowledge and opinions to others. Course members can express their ideas and use feedback from you and their peers to refine their thoughts. Blogs facilitate critical thinking and knowledge construction, and support the development of communication skills in a “public” arena of your course.

Journals
Journals are self-reflective spaces where students post thoughts on experiences or course topics. Journal assignments help students create meaning and internalize learning as they engage in personalized one-on-one conversations with you. The private nature of journals offers students a safe environment to express themselves and receive individualized feedback.

Wikis
Wikis allow students to contribute and modify pages of course-related material in a collaborative area. Students can create new content or edit existing content as well as view revisions and provide comments. As students construct knowledge, the instructor acts as a facilitator instead of the provider of all course content. Unlike a blog, which is more personal, wikis necessitate intense collaboration, as students build upon each other’s contributions and refine their final work.

Child Pages

- Add Twitter Widget to Content Area
- Blogs
- Discussion Boards
- Journals
- Messages versus Email
- Using Web 2.0 Tools in Blackboard
- Wiki

Sources and Relevant Links

- Discussion Board Help
- Blog Help
- Wiki Help
- Chat Help
- Getting Started with Interactive Tools
- Creating Announcements