MODERN
Mobile & Digital E-learning Toolkit

Pedagogical Assessment of:

Modern Tool Rating: 4.5

Website: www.blackboard.com

Bb Blackboard

Usage

Blackboard Learn enables educators to design and manage blended and online courses, assign assessments and grades, and augment their systems using the so-called Blackboard Building Blocks.

Campuses can choose to host the learning management system themselves or have Blackboard host the system for them. Blackboard also offers a dedicated set of collaboration tools (Blackboard Collaborate), analytics for tracking student retention, enrolment, and engagement (Blackboard Analytics), a mass notification system (Blackboard Connect), a social media manager for K-12 institutions (Blackboard Sociability), as well as commercial content from major publishers.

Ease of Access

As with any learning management system, it must be set up by the administrators of the institution. Internet access is necessary in order to use it. In addition, windows operating systems should also be used as this software can support all of Blackboards features.

Pedagogical Assessment

Teachers can easily set up and manage many courses and track the progress of their students.

A useful feature of Blackboard is that it allows educators to organise contents, links and tools into their Modules for student viewing. This is beneficial, as students can access material from a variety of sources which helps to expand their understanding of a topic.

Blackboard also makes more accessible to students who can revisit content when they are studying for examinations or if they have missed class content for any reason. The learning content should promote greater independence in learning and can be used for in class assessment.

Reviews

"Blackboard's interface is easy to use and fairly standard from institution to institution. For students, the layout couldn't be more simple and to the point; and for instructors and administrators the customization tools help give class and department pages a personal touch without throwing students for a loop.

The mobile app also makes the Blackboard experience so much easier to interact with classes on the go and allow for students and professors to stay in touch without the need for laptops and the need to search for wifi while out and about."- Christopher R.C. (Graduate assistant at Arkansas Tech University)

Advantages

- It is an established tool, providing many features and plug-ins
- Very well-equipped, with more tools and services available via the Blackboard suite.
- Extensions (Blackboard Building Blocks) add additional functionality.
- Incorporates many partnerships (e.g. with scientific publishers)
- Standout interoperability with other systems (e.g. Student Information Systems).

Disadvantages

- User interface is unintuitive and old fashioned and makes things take long than what would be expected
- Creating courses can require the user to be technically savvy
- Although pricing depends on the institutional requirements, it can be expensive

Conclusion

Blackboard is an established LMS tool that offers many features; modules can be easily built. Although the learning curve might be steep and many options remain obscure for the less tech-savvy, it is still the preferred option in many institutions.