



Blackboard Model Course

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The model course is actually a template that I offer instructors who are beginning to design online courses using Blackboard. The model serves as the first module in any course and can be inputted directly into a blank course. Once inputted, the instructor simply follows the model in designing the rest of the course, and in the process, hopefully saves a lot of time and effort.

I created the model based upon instructional design principles, current pedagogical theory, and best practices in online teaching. Its main attributes are that it:

- provides organization to the course,
- builds a community of learners,
- provides the instructor with a learner analysis of the students,
- serves as a student tutorial for Blackboard,
- gives students a sense of accomplishment at the beginning of the course in order to increase the retention rate, and
- is flexible enough to allow instructors to modify as they wish.

Each module begins with a "cover page". This page includes the following:

1. **Introduction.** This is simply a short paragraph that introduces the topic(s) of the module.
2. **Objectives.** These tell students up front what the expected outcomes of the module will be.
3. **Making the Connection.** This can include questions or activities to connect students' prior knowledge to what they are about to learn. It should help provide a context for the students and get them excited about the learning tasks ahead of them.
4. **Your Tasks.** These include assignments, one of which should be some sort human interactive assignment (such as a collaborative learning lesson) and some sort of assessment device (such as a quiz).
5. **For More Information.** This section lists web sites that extend students' learning and/or remediates those who didn't master the objectives of the module.

In addition, the model contains the following elements:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A customizable syllabus that contains elements necessary for online students • An entire first module, featuring 5 assignments, that is only a few short instructor modifications away from being finished • Seven other modules that are ready for instructor modifications • A whole-class discussion assignment template in the last seven modules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An opening class announcement • Pre-set Discussion Board forums • Pre-set grading columns in the Grade Center • An end-of-semester student survey • Group forums that are already set up • External technical support links • Frequently-asked-questions for the class in general, for Module 1, and a template for subsequent modules
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