

# Blackboard course design

## Does your Blackboard course support remote teaching?

The following tips are quick to implement and will assist you to deliver teaching online through your Blackboard course. For practical advice on implementing Blackboard tools, visit [www.sites.reading.com/tel-support](http://www.sites.reading.com/tel-support)

There are simple adjustments you can make to your Blackboard course to support remote teaching:

- **Navigation:** group resources into clearly named/dated folders, ensure all content is logically labelled
- **Signposting:** 'join the dots' for students, what should they look at first, do next and by when?
- **Structuring resources:** use E-tivities to frame content and online activities if unsure (see page 2).

Illustration below gives an example of a well signposted resource.

The screenshot shows a Blackboard course page with a sidebar on the left and a main content area. The sidebar includes links for Announcements, Staff contacts, Learning Materials, Reading Lists, Assessment, MyGrades, Email, Help for Students, Interactive tools, All webinars, All course discussion boards, Sign up lists, webinar tool, view all team wikis, and Calendar. The main content area features a welcome message, an activity titled 'Activity 1 duration - 10 minutes', a video player for 'Week 1 Video - Business Concepts', and a quiz titled 'Activity 2: Week 1 quiz (Business Concepts)'. Five yellow callout boxes with numbered circles (1-5) point to specific elements on the page, providing annotations on how to design resources for remote teaching.

**1** Clearly labelled resource, showing which lesson the material supports.

**2** Activity labelled, includes Video duration and instructions

**3** Video file available for download; some students may not be able to live play the embedded video

**4** Details linking the activity to the 'big picture' e.g. Learning Objectives in module handbook

**5** Optional: Link to informal self assessment quiz (automated) or an informal submission link to collect non-assessed activity.

\*Graded submission links should be displayed in the Assessments area.

## Structuring resources

We recommend using an 'E-tivities' framework when curating content and structuring your Blackboard course. E-tivities deploy useful, well-rehearsed principles and pedagogies for active learning, in an asynchronous teaching / distance learning scenario.

The framework below can be used as a checklist when adding content, designing activities and preparing your Blackboard course for asynchronous teaching.

### E-tivities Framework

| Structure                     | Reason  |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Title                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enticement to take part, keep it short but interesting</li> </ul>  |
| Purpose                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain. If you complete this section/activity you will be able to...</li> <li>You will understand better how to....</li> <li>You will find it essential for the assignment X....</li> <li>Link directly with your outcomes and/or objectives for the unit, module, course, programme</li> </ul>   |
| Brief summary of overall task | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you find you have more than one major activity or question, divide into more e-tivities</li> <li>Clear but brief overview.</li> <li>Check that the task/s are self contained and clear to follow</li> </ul>   |
| Individual contribution       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set expectation for individual response and/or contributions. Specify exactly what the participant has to do in response to the spark, with what media (e.g. discussion board, audio file, etc) and by when (i.e. day and date). Tell them the length of contribution required.</li> <li>Clearly indicate where the response should be posted, e.g. a link to a submission point, forum etc</li> </ul>         |
| Dialogue begins               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If students are required to collaborate - request a response from individuals to others. State how long, where and by when. Students come online to see if others have read and responded.</li> <li>If students are working individually, how can they ask questions and communicate about the task? FAQs in a discussion board provide a useful space for peer support as well as teacher guidance</li> </ul> |
| E-moderator interventions     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly indicate what the moderator will do and by when.</li> <li>Explain that the moderator will summarise, give feedback and teaching points to close the activity, and when this will happen.</li> </ul>  |
| Schedule and end-time         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total calendar/elapsed time allowed for this activity, completion date, estimated total study time required (e.g. 2 x 1hour)</li> </ul>  |
| What next?                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Link to next e-tivity</li> <li>You may suggest additional resources to help with the task - indicate whether they are required or optional.</li> </ul>   |

*Adapted from Salmon, G. (2002) E-tivities: a key to active online learning. Routledge, London.*