Blackboard Instructor Survey – Summer 2003

There were a total of 100 instructor responses to this portion of the survey. The results are shown in the tables below.

1. Name (Optional):

2. School: **For a list of survey participants, see page 5.**

3. How vital is Blackboard to your teaching?

Crucial	38
Increasingly Essential	**45**
Occasionally Useful	9
Minimal Value	8

4. How often do you use Blackboard?

Often	**78**
Sometimes	15
Rarely	6
Never	1

5. Which operating system do you primarily use to access Blackboard?

Windows	**90**
Macintosh	9
Other	1

6. Which browser do you primarily use to access Blackboard?

Internet Explorer	**83**
Netscape	12
Safari	2
Other	3

7. Do you use Blackboard for more than one course?

Yes	**69**
No	31

8. Do you find Blackboard easy to use?

Extremely Ease	22
Very Easy	**47**
Neutral	24
Very Difficult	6
Extremely Difficult	1

9. Which Blackboard functions do you use in your courses? (select as many as applicable)

Announcements	**88**
Course Documents	84
Course Information	82
Assignments (including Quizzes and Surveys)	68
Communication	57
External Links	34
Staff Information	30
Tools (including the Digital Drop Box)	24
Discussion Board	23
Groups	14
Virtual Classroom	4

10. What is your favorite feature in Blackboard?

Other	**40**
Gradebook	39
Discussion Board	13
Digital Drop Box	5
Virtual Classroom	3

11. How much time per week do you spend on managing your Blackboard courses?

Less than 1 hour	24
1 to 2 hours	**45**
2 to 4 hours	19
5 hours or more	12

12. How would you rate your overall experience with Blackboard?

Excellent	31
Good	**40**
Average	12
Fair	10
Poor	7

13. Would you use Blackboard again another semester?

Yes	**93**
No	7

14. How willing would you be to switch from Blackboard to another course management program? (such as WebCT or Angel)

I am fed up with Blackboard and would love to switch to another program even if it means recreating all of my existing courses.	5
Blackboard has its problems, and I would like to have a chance to experiment with another program.	21
I really don't care either way.	29
Blackboard has its problems, but so do all other software packages. I would rather stay with Blackboard.	**38**
I refuse to have to learn another program. Let's keep Blackboard.	7

15. How important do you think it is for UM to standardize on one software platform only?

Extremely Important	29
Very Important	28
Neutral	**34**
Not Important at all	9

16. If you could change one aspect of the Blackboard features, what would it be?
For a list of responses, see pages 6-9.

17. How did you help your students to use Blackboard? (select as many as applicable)

Provided them with your own guidance/support material	43
Demonstrated the use of Blackboard in the classroom	44
Other (See pages 10-11)	**51**

Please indicate how well the statements below match your experience with Blackboard this past spring and summer semester.

18. Blackboard was easy to access, and the server was working correctly at least 90% of the time.

Strongly Disagree	5
Disagree	9
Neutral	25
Agree	**42**
Strongly Agree	19

19. Course space creation and student enrollments were handled in a timely and effective manner.

Strongly Disagree	6
Disagree	5
Neutral	18
Agree	**41**
Strongly Agree	30

20. Blackboard itself was easy to use, and provided tools and features that were genuinely helpful for my teaching.

Strongly Disagree	5
Disagree	9
Neutral	21
Agree	**48**
Strongly Agree	17

21. My students found Blackboard easy and convenient to use.

Strongly Disagree	4
Disagree	13
Neutral	30
Agree	**41**
Strongly Agree	12

22. UM Blackboard support staff provided timely assistance with Blackboard problems.

Strongly Disagree	2
Disagree	2
Neutral	**33**
Agree	32
Strongly Agree	31

Number of survey participants by school.

Air Force ROTC 1
Art 2
Chemistry and Biochemistry 2
Communicative Disorders 1
Computer Science 1
Curriculum and Instruction 4
Developmental Studies 2
Education 1
Education -- Advanced Ed. Center--Tupelo Campus 1
English 6
FCS 1
Finance/Insurance 3
Geology and Geological Engineering 2
Health Exercise Science & Recreation Management 5
History 5
IT 1
Journalism 3
Leadership and Counselor Education 3
Legal Studies 1
Library--course offered out of the school of education 1
Marketing 2
Mathematics 2
Mechanical Engineering 1
Medicinal Chemistry 2
MIS/POM School of Business 3
Modern Languages 7
Music 4
Pharmacology 2
Pharmacy Administration 3
Pharmacy Practice 3
Philosophy and Religion 4
Psychology 4
School of Accountancy 4
School of Business Administration – Management 6
School of Engineering 1
School of Law 3
Social work 1
Sociology and Anthropology 2

Suggestions for changing one aspect of the Blackboard features.

Functionality is available, but often hidden in obscure, hierarchal menus.
Not Sure, because I stopped using it in the middle because it was faster and easier to simply post the stuff on my web page.
It has been several years since I used Blackboard. I just remember it was difficult to use, crashed a lot, etc. There is nothing on Blackboard I cannot do just using Web pages (more reliable). Blackboard might be better than it was now, however.
Allow the incorporation of other programs within the course site to make posting slideshows possible.
Nothing
Difficulty in arranging for accounts and managing them for me and my students.
It's ok
Make it easier to back up grade book on a spreadsheet like Excel
The gradebook is very tedious. You have to click on a student, enter the grade, click on the confirmation, etc. etc. There are too many clicks. I would like to be able to enter the grade directly onto the course roll just as you would in using a spreadsheet.
Make sure software is ready before releases
It was too slow or unavailable far too often
No real ideas for change. If, in fact, essay questions can't be over about a page's worth, this needs to be expanded, but I don't use this feature.
Have an easy way to record high quality voice overs for each lecture slide Have it not delete course statistics at apparently 30 day intervals
Make it more user and intuitively friendly. It is frustrating to have to totally delete information and then have to repost the information if you just want to make minor changes--need a save change function. Some of the questions above do not lend themselves to the categories of answers you have supplied. I will have to use blackboard again as there are currently no other options from which to choose. We should be able to put our grades in from our Excel files instead of having to do the whole process the way it is currently structured.....
I am using it for a first time and like it to this point. Not having used another platform and not spending a lot of time with blackboard to this point my answer to this question is limited.
I do not use the grade feature of BB, because it is a total pain. I wind up doing my grades in Excel and posting a PDF document containing the students grades. I have tried to download and upload spreadsheets, but I cannot get that feature to work properly.
TOO slow--in that you have to \accept\" everything."
No comment
Quicker downloading by students of Powerpoint presentations stored on Blackboard
Announcement page
Reduce the times it is unavailable to students and professors.
Although I don't use the \chat\" feature I have seen it used and I think it is unacceptable mainly from the field of view that the \"chatter\" has and the lack of flexibility to manage that field of view."
Maybe a little more detailed instructions for setting up course
The sorting abilities in gradebook. I often teach large courses with 150+ students from 4-5 sections in a team-teaching situation. It would be nice to be able to sort by groups, once we have them assigned to the groups.
Have folders in the digital drop box.

It is slow and too often down.
I don't use very many of the \'esoteric\' features, so I'm really pretty satisfied with it. I did find that in some cases students using Macs were unable to download powerpoint presentations from the documents area. Once I had them change to a PC it worked well.
I manage four sections of one course on one blackboard connection. Having a copy/paste feature would help tremendously.
Incapable of using diacritical marks (accents, foreign characters) and having to write with codes, although I can get around it by pasting in from my word processor
Easier to enter all of the grades by cursoring to next user, without having to use the mouse to select each user.
Improve BB's performance in administering quizzes.
I ask students in large classes to submit weekly papers. To collect and manage the papers, I have to use discussion board to save time. Downloading each paper from the Digital Drop Box is too time consuming for a class with over 45 students. I would like either: 1> That the discussion board include a feature permitting only the instructor to view each submission 2) or to have the digital drop box include a universal collect feature like the discussion board
The gradebook could be better designed. Also, there are some annoying issues with the automatic grading causing me to go back in and manually review more than I would like.
Allow for loading documents in a batch mode rather than one at a time.
Nothing.
I would like to be able to control the grade statistics the students view (in the gradebook function). Once I found out that I could not, I ceased using blackboard for my courses.
I wish all students had their e-mail addresses listed in front of their names.
I would like the most recent assignments posted to be listed first rather than added to the end. Blackboard may already be able to do so, but I find the help feature to be unhelpful. I care more about the assignments being posted in the order that I want than the helpfeature.
Provide more information to students when they initially start up a course, regarding their access to grades, assignments, etc. A few students, of course, may not have followed up on a timely basis with their work, so this delay of information may be their own lack of initiative.
Not sure
Would like to be able to do more manipulations with grades
It's a bandwidth hog.
It's hard to navigate and too time consuming. I don't know that much about Blackboard because I found that it was much easier to simply post information on a site that was provided by the School of Business. All I had to do was paste files to a folder, and the students could read the info (but could not alter it). Very easy and quick.
Test administration. The available formats for questions are limited (wish Blackboard would partner with QuestionMark). And I wish that we could use Blackboard successfully to administer an exam to 90-student classes.
The virtual classroom has proven to be difficult for students of various machines. I typically avoid using it.
ALL students would be familiar
Needs easier and better capabilities for including graphics, sound, video, etc., into web pages.
My primary use was for posting grades, and I found the gradebook function quite

inflexible, and the way statistics were presented was misleading to students.
I would reduce the number of clicks (and corresponding load time) it takes to accomplish any given task. I would also (I know you only asked for one thing) like for students to be AUTOMATICALLY enrolled in the blackboard component of a course as soon as they are registered for the lecture class.
I had no problems with it. I really like it and would hate to lose it!
This is not a comment about what to change in Blackboard, but this is the only space I can put comments, so I am putting this here. The only significant difficulty that I have had with Blackboard was that after spending MANY hours getting class documents formatted for use with Blackboard and uploaded, most of the links resulted in file not found errors after one of the recent upgrades in Blackboard. I was very discouraged about using Blackboard after that because I don't know that the time invested will have lasting effects. Now that I take this survey and it sounds like you are considering switching to another package, I am again worried that work I put into setting up my course material in Blackboard may be wasted. My answer to question 12 is related to this concern when asked about switching to another program. The time required to \learn\" these programs is trivial because they are relatively simple but the time invested in setting up all of the course material is not trivial and I do not want to waste the time I have invested if we go through another upgrade or switch programs. The effects of upgrades or program changes should be thoroughly investigated; I was told that \"there shouldn't be any problems\" with having course documents carry through when the upgrade was done but there were."
The grade input procedure is ridiculous. Speed. I don't know anything about other possible programs and thus I can not comment.
Nothing, really. Amelia is wonderful if I have a question!!!!!!!!!!!!!
I've been teaching at Ole Miss since last fall. I used Blackboard more in the spring than I had in the fall, and learned as I went, often by trial and error. Between uses/semesters, I forget. The staff have been very kind about teaching me, but I guess I'd be more independent with a manual of printed directions to refer to.
Blackboard message board works o.k. for posting compositions. Blackboard assignments and gradebook are not user friendly. it seems blackboard has all the features neeeded but they need improvements, ex. the locks, ex. the date when assignment grades are assigned to the gradebook, printing the gradebook, keeping the best score (and not the latest) in the assignments, etc., etc. these should be optional and blackboard should be more flexible. blackboard developers should understand the need for these features. UM blackboard support people are great. the problem seems to be at the other end.
Larger space for writing with chat groups
It's fine
Far too many to list here
Testing would be more reliable.
No big problems - the upgrade last spring was a bit of a pain
I need to learn to use it since I am a beginner; anything that will ease the time and effort on faculty would be helpful. thanks
Improved testing features
Nothing I can think of.
Announcements should be posted for more than one week.
Ability to upload grades. Other concerns were address over the last year or so.
Better accessibility/compatibility of the Virtual Classromm features (chat) for users of various platforms.
I would change the gradebook to give more weighting options.

Putting in student grades is tedious. I would like to be able to upload grades from Excel. As far as I know, this can't be done.
I would add a UM HOME prompt to the log-off page. If I log out, in order to protect the information for each class, it is time consuming to have to log on to the home page again.
Assignments (including Quizzes and Surveys) It is not practical at all. Especially when problems like the \lock\" show up and nobody knows why. I would not use blackboard for my assignments."
I can't comment on getting rid of Blackboard as I know nothing about the other platforms. Gradebook program is rather tedious to manage and time consuming
Easier gradebook program
Faster access to grades on-line and a better format for the page - sometimes I can't see what student I'm entering grades for.
The #2$% chat feature.
Ease of scheduling assignment postings
The ability to download my class roll from the internet directly into blackboard. More flexibility with the grade book such as setting formulas for calculating final grade.
Blackboard didn't record some students who logged in last semester, which counted as a quiz grade. I had this problem in both of my classes.
Let students change their e-mail addresses to the one they use most often rather than forcing them to use the Ole Miss address. Let the students be enrolled using their Ole Miss email address but allow them to change to their most often used address afterwards.
Nothing
It takes forever to download a file that is just a little havier. And after 30 minutes it fails. That's where I would like to see some improvement.
Virtual Classroom that allows more effective instructor control and efficient web browsing
Ability to post grades by assignment for all students rather than posting one student's grade at a time-very time consuming
It's fine just like it is.
The ability to manage my course names myself without having to email management. I don't want every course I've ever used Blackboard for to be shown on the screen, yet it's seemingly impossible to delete.
I wish I could see more than 25 student names at one time. Since I often teach classes with 150 students, it is very time consuming and inconvenient to have to move from page to page to find the particular student record(s) I want to see.
I would make the grade book easier to use in terms of calculating percentages of each grade in the course, etc.
I previously completed a survey...so this one may not be valid. I want to start using Discussion Boards though. Can you give me more information? Also I want to be sure we are going to be able to use Blackboard this Fall, as I am doing up my Fall syllabus. Will we have it for sure?? Mari
Gradebook
Allow searches by name in digital drop box

Other methods used by instructors to help their students learn to use Blackboard.

I gave them no help. Most of them have used it before.
Referred them to OleMiss Online
I asked them to ask for assistance from the computer center. The questions concerning access from off-campus to having a valid email account--I could not help them with.
I made sure they could login in our computer lab. I did think it was kind of poor that some students officially enrolled had to go across campus to get a new password since their SS# wasn't working. I guess it is a security issue but if they could have emailed a request to the help desk that would have worked as well.
I do not feel that BB instruction for students is an appropriate use of classroom time or instructor time. If the online documentation is not sufficient, then BB should be covered in student orientation.
Rely on their familiarity from other classes--which doesn't work well. I don't have a lot of class time to devote to training, so this is a problem
Told them how to log on
A few in class instructions
I don't. I tell them that they are responsible for learning Blackboard. It's a tool of doing business. I teach engineering, not Blackboard.
Through email correspondence
Referenced them to the online help.
Suggested they work together with others
Most students are familiar with Blackboard by the time they get to my class.
I've been creating and distributing CDs with course information (PowerPoint lectures, instructions for in-class data analysis exercises, etc.), so students seem to spend less time using BB and I\'ve spent less time teaching students to use it.
I also send them to the help page or refer them to Ole Miss On-line.
All of my students were already well versed in how to use Blackboard.
Provided no assistance
One hour hands-on training in the Language Resource Center.
In addition to my own attempts to explain, I have found that students primarily are learning from their classmates.
They already knew how to use from other courses
Most of our students know how, because they have been exposed earlier in the curriculum. However, I have had to help a few students one-on-one to learn the use of the platform. Neutral responses were selected for all of the questions below, because I had primary responsibility for classes in the Fall, not Spring or Summer.
Gave them the URL and told them to explore the entire site--they learn by doing.
I provide links on their online syllabus to the Blackboard Student Manual and to the Helpdesk, and I am CONSTANTLY fielding questions about Blackboard in class.
I didn't. I told them to go the site and follow the instructions.
Students with Blackboard experience from other classes helped classmates; I also recommended the campus support staff at Weir Hall who have been very patient and helpful to me.
Referred them to Ole Miss Online Tech Support and/or Blackboard Help Desk
Send them to the computer lab - especially as they just begin using the system (early in semester)
Most learned on their own or from each other or computer center
I have a webpage providing information on how to self-enroll and then I give a link

to Blackboard. I use it mainly to log grades, make announcements, and to tell them how I graded their papers.
Most students already familiar with the system.
I also always directed them to the IT HelpDesk for technical problems that I could not troubleshoot.
I had them download and read the manuals.
Told them what to do and to follow on line instructions.
Verbally covered the sign on process and access to course. Those who were not successful with this came to my office and I walked them through. (I am free with the recommendation that they take their ID's to Information Technology and get help if this doesn't work.)
Really didn't - tell that's where the information is and they need to get on - refer them to computer help.
Talked through the process; encouraged them to help each other
It is their responsibility to learn it.
Classroom practice, graded assignments requiring Blackboard use.
They all know how to use it.
I created a word document of Blackboard instructions accompanied by a video demonstration of Blackboard features. Ole Miss Online technicians posted the video as streaming media on our course website for the students to reference throughout the semester.
#16---etc. Information below----I did not use Blackboard in the spring or summer semesters. My last experience was in the fall of 2002.
Minimal instruction - primarily the responsibility of students to learn basics of blackboard.
Students seem to already know how to access the system.
At the beginning of the semester I show them which section to enroll in and ask them to send a sample file so that they are comfortable submitting assignments before they have to send them for a grade