

Blackboard

Faculty Feedback

Strengths:

- Grade Center
- Offers some efficiencies for managing large classes
- GTFs are familiar with it as a default LMS, so no additional training is necessary
- It's efficient to have students on a common platform. They don't have to learn and navigate multiple platforms.
- Communication systems work well (email, blog, adequate discussion board)
- Does not take a long time to learn (at a basic level)
- Easy to set up self-contained learning modules within a larger course site
- Banner integration
- Having the template set up; not having to register students
- Ability to support multiple sections
- FRPA compliant; good security
- Great for large classes.
- "Course Copy" and the ability to share content across multiple sections

Deficiencies/Concerns:

- Non-CRN courses are difficult to accommodate
- *"If you hit the wrong button you could lose everything"*
- Time-limited tests are difficult to administer
- Upgrades do not always result in improvements in functionality. Something is usually lost in the process.
- Inputting media is difficult
- *"It is a closed system, and that's not how academe works these days "(or needs to work).*
- Instructors cannot see the students' version (unless they also have a student identification).
- *"The mobile interface is hilarious."*
- The discussion tool is clunky and "first generation"
- *Too many user tools are posted up front. "Tries to do too many things and ends up doing nothing particularly well. "*
- Difficult to grade student feedback, i.e. discussions
- Bb Corporate can be unresponsive to simple requests
- Bb is optimized for "text-only" classes
- Email and word processing still quite "rudimentary"
- Not intuitive
- Gradebook does not do conditional statements, e.g. drop the lowest grade

- Building blocks...it has never been easy to extend. The open source systems are appealing in that respect. Bb language is Java and we do not have a lot of Java expertise on campus.
- Bb deficiencies are “death by a thousand cuts,” nothing is serious, but there are so many irritations
- Uploading files is very time consuming.
- App is too limited, and not free.
- Too much needs to be done manually that should be simple to do automatically, e.g. creating sections or groups.

Desired features:

- Social networking
- More design flexibility
- Flexibility to set different levels (basic, advanced)
- Better/more capability to integrate student feedback
- Good learning object management system
- Search and collect all comments/posts by an individual student
- *“I need a platform that allows me to be more of an instructor and less of an administrator”*
- Something that scales down to a very small and collaborative environment
- Activity monitors (for students), and more analytics in general.

Transition:

- Majority of faculty only know Blackboard. Need a sense of what else is available
- Allow for plenty of time for training (preparing faculty to use a new system is more important than spending most of the time we have on selecting a new system)
- Must be able to easily migrate existing course materials and structure to a new platform. Ideally, faculty would get hands on help in migrating content. (If we go with a commercial system, this should be one of the requirements of the vendor).
- *“I do think personally that it does not matter what LMS we go with, there are going to be user challenges. It’s not so much about Bb or Oba or Moodle it is about **SUPPORT.**”*
- The systems need to be simultaneously available (Bb plus any new platform). Two terms overlap at least.
- *“No multiple platforms please! It’s not good for the students.”*
- Bring back the summer workshops through TEP
- How will pay for the training?
- We need to be thinking “inter-institutionally.” Working collaboratively with other institutions may offer more support.
- There is no perfect product.

Products to look at:

- Sakai
- Canvass
- D2L
- Oba Verse (Moodle)
- Blackboard, i.e. different versions