



## What's New and Different in *Blackboard Learning System* (Release 6)?

### *A Blackboard Learning Services Tip Sheet*

## Introduction

Innovations in *Blackboard Learning System* (Release 6) include advanced content management features, Gradebook and Assessment enhancements, and a new Collaboration Tool. A full description of each of these changes is available in the Product Release Notes; this is meant to be an informative, high-level overview for instructors.

## Course Management

### **New!** Customizable Course Menu

In *Blackboard Learning System* (Release 6), instructors have complete control of the architecture through which students access course information.

- Easily create and name course navigation elements
- Link from the Course Menu to any content item, to a URL or to Blackboard tools
- Choose either text or button navigation, and select from a range of colors and patterns

### **New!** Content Copy

Instructors teaching several courses can copy and move content between Course Areas in different courses.

### **New!** Observer Role

An Observer can view the course work and course activities of a particular student. Instructors can also block Observers from a course.

## Course Content

### **New!** Content Anywhere

*Blackboard Learning System* (Release 6) puts instructional design decisions in the hands of the instructor. Any type of content, including folders, items, assessments, surveys, and discussions, can now appear in any content area.

- Content can easily be copied and/ or moved to another place in the course
- Course links connect to content or tools in other areas
- A new Course Map provides direct links to folders, tools, and content

## Assessment and Evaluation

### **New!** Test Canvas

Creating an assessment in *Blackboard Learning System* (Release 6) is easier than ever.

- Build and edit assessments, and then deploy them anywhere, anytime
- Use the Creation Settings feature to set default point values for questions
- Attach images and links to questions and to feedback
- Built-in math and science notation

### **Better!** Test Manager

The Test Manager gives Instructors more flexibility in creating and managing assessments.

- Change the properties for specific assessments
- Choose the method for deploying assessments (e.g., question by question or all at once)
- Edit deployed assessments without clearing existing grades

**New!** Assignments

*Blackboard Learning System* (Release 6) includes a new system for managing Assignments. This powerful, easy to use system enables Instructors to create Assignments and post them for Students to complete.

- All content management options (including time-release) are supported
- Download one, some, or all completed assignments for grading offline
- Provide feedback to students as comments attached directly to a file
- View and grade assignments in the Blackboard Gradebook

**Better!** Gradebook

A number of enhancements have been made to the *Blackboard Learning System* Gradebook in response to customer feedback. These enhancements include:

- Use raw scores, letter grades and/or percentages to display grades
- Assign weighted values to grades by category or by item
- Export and import grades for advanced grade analysis and use of third-party tools

## Collaboration

**New!** Lightweight Chat

The Lightweight Chat is a text-based chat tool that allows a group of users to conduct an online session through text-based messages.

- Send private messages to participants
- Breakout Sessions can be created for group work
- Section 508 compliant

**Better!** Virtual Classroom

The Virtual Classroom in *Blackboard Learning System* (Release 6) contains all the features of the Lightweight Chat tool, and more. Although session leaders can no longer annotate web pages with the Whiteboard function, or click a link in a Web page and force all users' browsers to go to that link, several other features have been enabled.

- Use math equations and scientific notation in the chat window
- Manage questions from session participants
- Access the Course Map to collaboratively view content and course tools
- Archive sessions for review

## Education Opportunities

Blackboard Learning Services offers comprehensive classroom training programs and educational materials for the *Blackboard Learning System* and *Blackboard Community Portal System*™ products. For more information about how Blackboard Learning Services can serve your institution's training needs through on-site events, synchronous WebEx seminars, or via our Certified Education Center partners, please contact your Account Manager at Blackboard or visit the online [Training Center](http://behind.blackboard.com) at <http://behind.blackboard.com>.

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