

Summary of Fall 2004 Blackboard Survey Results

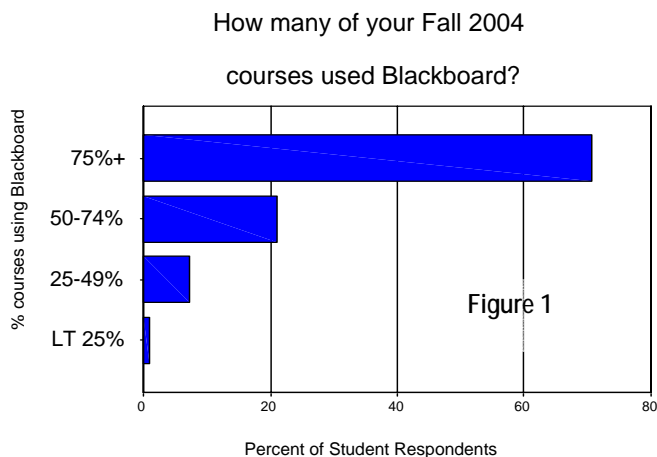
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In late November and early December 2004 all student and instructor Blackboard users were offered the opportunity to respond to the student and instructor feedback survey. 2264 student and 159 instructor surveys were received. Highlights of the survey results are contained in this summary.

Key Findings

- Students appreciate the Blackboard gradebook feature; many want that feature to be used by more courses and faculty
- Students and faculty both report that Blackboard is a convenient tool for communication
- Blackboard, when used effectively, is perceived as a useful tool for efficient management of course information and documents by both students and faculty
- Students and faculty both commented on Blackboard's support for fairness and mutual accountability
- Faculty rely most heavily on immediate sources of information (online documentation, faculty colleagues, and email help) for help with Blackboard or instruction in using Blackboard's features



Frequency of Blackboard Use Reported by Students and Faculty

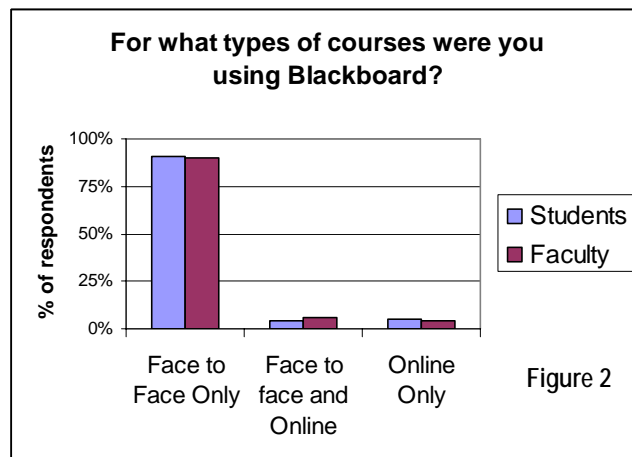
Most students who responded (92%) reported that Blackboard was used in at least 1/2 of their courses; a majority (71%) indicated that Blackboard was used in at least 3/4 of their Fall courses (Figure 1). Faculty survey respondents also represented fairly active users of Blackboard. Most faculty who responded (88%, n=136) indicated that they were maintaining an active Blackboard site for each of their Fall courses.

Characteristics of Survey Respondents

The majority of respondents indicated that their primary affiliation was Arts & Sciences, and this proportion was roughly equivalent for both faculty and student respondents (57% faculty; 56% student). Similarly, Engineering faculty and students responded in roughly equal proportions (13% faculty; 14% student).

Respondents to the survey (both faculty and students) were overwhelmingly using Blackboard to support campus based face-to-face courses. Approximately 90% of both faculty and student respondents reported using Blackboard as a tool to support face-to-face courses only (Figure 2).

Additional details and information about the respondent pool is included in Appendix A of this report.

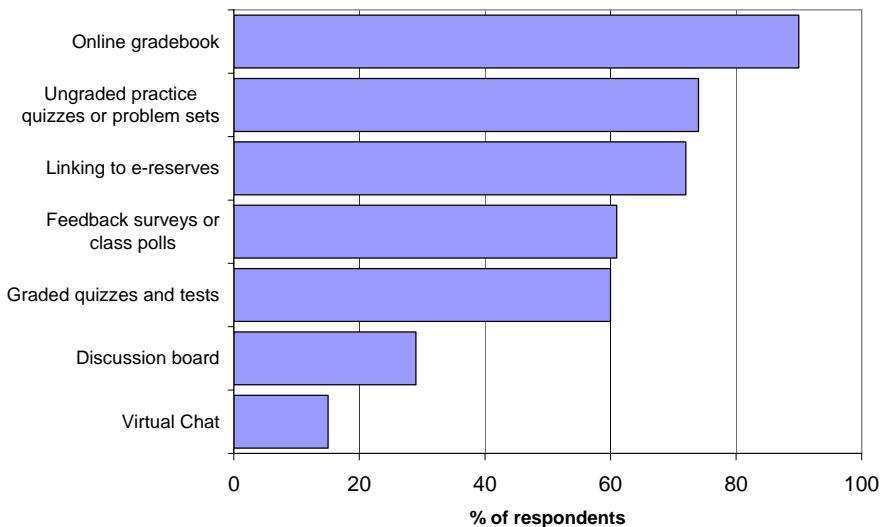


Blackboard Features Most Helpful Students

Students were presented with a list of seven instructional uses of Blackboard other than distributing course documents. The chart below summarizes the features which students indicated would be

helpful in all or most courses (Figure X). Only the discussion board and virtual chat tools were not reported by a majority of respondents to be helpful in all or most courses.

Features helpful in all or most courses (n = 2266)



Among students using Blackboard for only online courses or for both online and face-to-face courses (10% of respondents), the Discussion Board was considered much more important, with 67% of students taking both and 84% of students taking online courses indicating that the Discussion Board was helpful in all or most classes.

Impact on Campus-based Courses

Faculty were asked how Blackboard had affected their experiences in teaching campus-based courses. Faculty described Blackboard as enhancing these courses by:

- Providing a forum for students to react to material
- Making communication more efficient, as well as providing an official record of information communicated about requirements and due dates
- Providing convenient access to readings and assignments
- Reducing the amount of paper used and enabling faculty and students to work more effectively from off campus
- Improving tracking and communication about grades

Nearly every faculty responding to this question reported positive impact; however, a few negative comments were included. Some faculty complained about Blackboard's interface, with some comments describing the system as "inflexible", "cumbersome" and "unwieldy", and "maddening to have to click many times to perform simple task". Also, one faculty member noted that Blackboard's chat tools are "totally useless for mathematics."

Students had a number of comments about how Blackboard has impacted their course experiences.

Students commented positively on the use of Blackboard's email and discussion board as helpful communication tools.

Also, several students commented on the synergistic role of Blackboard as a complement to campus-based courses. For example, one Pratt student noted, "[The Blackboard site] should be extensive enough that a student can be sick for class and still catch up on most of the material by using the site. In other words, blackboard and in class experiences should help each other out, in harmony."

How has Blackboard impacted your campus-based teaching?

"A huge help in posting assignments; in emailing students; in posting short extra readings, and in promoting class discussion. I mean to require more blackboard discussion participation -- that opportunity is extraordinarily valuable. The system has saved time and improved my teaching -- a double plus."

"[Bb] allowed me to make better use of class time by putting assessments and assignments on-line and to communicate with my classes easily."

"It has allowed me to communicate easily with the students in the class. Also forced me to be more organized and responsive to their needs."

"It is a great system to disseminate information. I know that my students have access to certain information 24/7 and hold them accountable accordingly."

Faculty input on future directions for Blackboard at Duke

Faculty were specifically asked for feedback on two issues facing the Blackboard team: additional features and tools to meet faculty instructional needs, and the development of a policy for archiving old course sites.

Future Blackboard enhancements

Faculty were offered a slate of five potential enhancements to Blackboard for their reaction. For each potential enhancement, faculty were asked to rate the priority of this feature, or to indicate that this feature would not be of interest to them. All five enhancements were of interest to a majority of

faculty respondents; the strongest support was for a content management system, described to faculty in nontechnical terms as a system that would allow them to upload documents once and link to it in multiple places or multiple course sites without needing to re-load the document. (Figure 3).

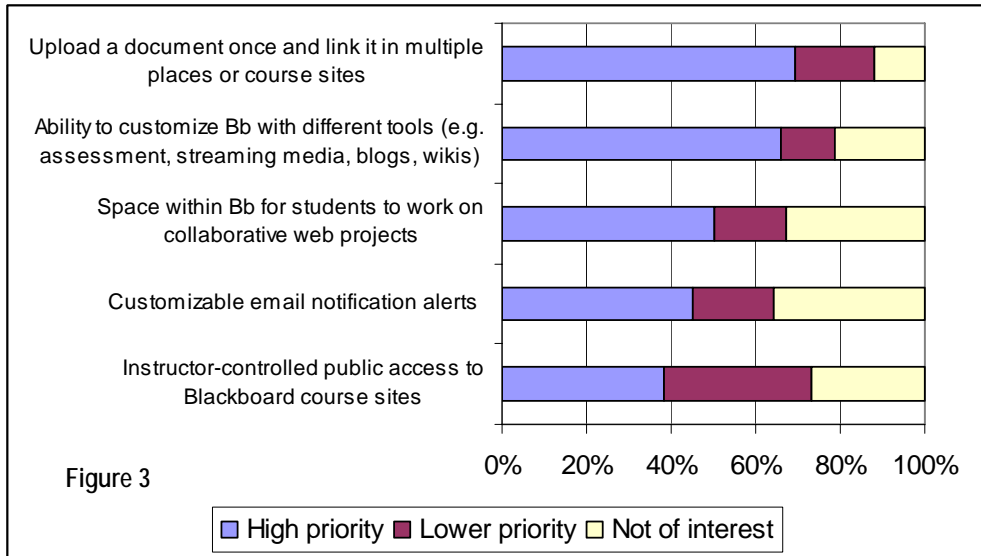


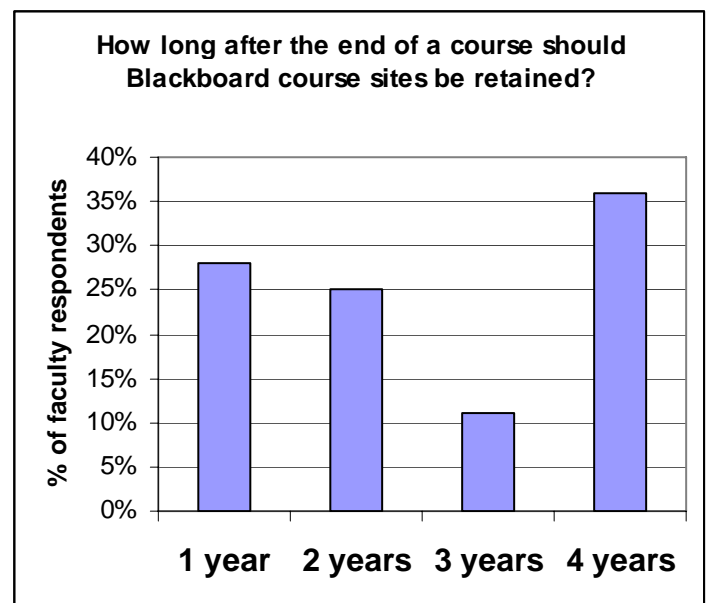
Figure 3

Faculty attitudes on policies for retaining Blackboard course sites

Faculty were divided as to the length of time that course sites should remain available after the end of a course (Figure X). Primary issues raised by faculty that should be considered when developing a policy for retaining course sites:

- Recognition that some courses are offered infrequently
- Variable needs by department and program (e.g. policies for undergraduate course sites vs. course sites for certification preparation or online programs)
- Training and support for faculty to archive old course sites to hard media or other long-term storage outside of Blackboard

Many faculty comments indicated that they would favor a standard procedure or length of time as long as the policy included flexibility for individual instructors to request that a particular course site be retained.



Student suggestions and advice for effective Blackboard use

Students were asked about instances where Blackboard had been used effectively, as well as their suggestions to faculty about how Blackboard should or should not be used.

The feature most appreciated by students was the gradebook. Many student respondents commented on the advantages of more quickly receiving their grades, using Blackboard's gradebook to keep track of their progress, and several also commented on having been able to notify faculty of inconsistencies in recorded versus reported grades.

The second most common request was for faculty to upload more resources on the site. Students requested content such as practice tests, class handouts, lecture notes, and solutions to problem sets.

Specific student advice to faculty for using Blackboard effectively included:

- Keep the course site up to date
- Keep the content organized (especially by using folders to group content and by clearly naming files)
- Use Blackboard in a consistent manner throughout the course

Online Lecture Notes

"It's great when professors add their powerpoint presentations before class. Then you can print and follow in class, rather than scrambling to write everything down. It allows you to concentrate more on what they're saying and ask intelligent questions."

- Arts & Sciences undergraduate

"I especially like having handouts in class to follow along with a lecturer so that I can add my own notes...rather than try and write notes while they lecture. Invariably I will miss half of what they've said while I'm writing because I'm trying to concentrate on what they said 30 seconds ago."

- School of Nursing student

Communication Tools

"Blackboard is one of the main forms of communication from professors to medical students."

-Medical School student

Consistent Use

"Switching back and forth between blackboard and a personal class website is confusing and leads to missed deadlines and announcements."

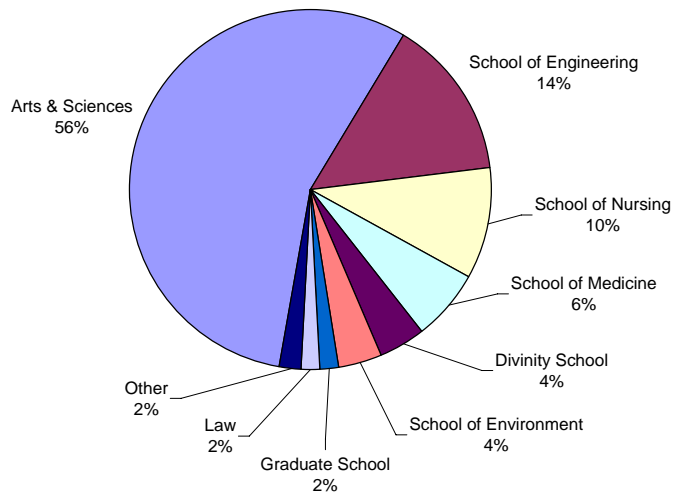
- Arts & Sciences undergraduate

"Blackboard made it easier to find the class roster & corresponding emails. When I had to email my student presentation to the class ahead of time, blackboard made it so much easier."

- Arts & Sciences undergraduate

Appendix A: Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Student Respondents By Affiliation
Fall 2004 Blackboard Survey



Faculty Respondents by Affiliation
Fall 2004 Bb Survey

