ITIBB-0100-WEB: Introduction to Blackboard
Unit 3: Course Menu Basics

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UNIT 3 – COURSE MENU BASICS

UNIT INTRODUCTION

During this unit of instruction, we will provide a foundational overview of the purpose, function, and operation of Blackboard's course menu area. We will focus on the use of the following three types of menu buttons: Content Area, Tool Link, and Web Link.

UNIT OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this unit you will be able to:

- Locate the Blackboard course menu area for a given Blackboard course shell.
- Explain the purpose of each of the following Blackboard course menu button types: Content Area, Course Tool Link, and the External Link.
- Add, edit, delete, hide, show, and reorder Blackboard course menu buttons.

PART II – BLACKBOARD COURSE MENU AREA OVERVIEW

Blackboard course menu will always be located on the left-hand side of the course area. Use the area below to explore the various key features found in a common course menu area:

Blackboard Course Menu Area
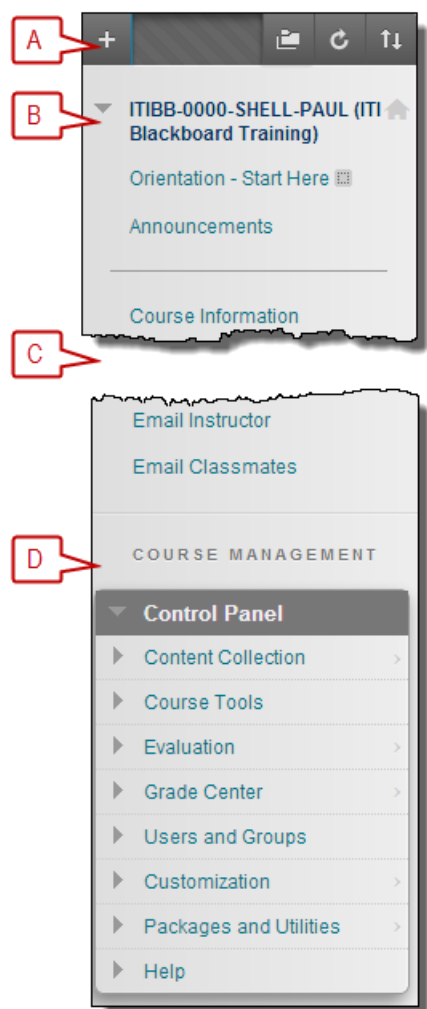
A: Menu Management & Controls

Add Menu Item: Use this button to add new course menu buttons.
(Button visible to instructors only)

Display Course Menu in a Window: Use this button to view course materials as a directory tree in a new window.

Refresh: Use this button to refresh your course page/menu without losing your place in your course.

Keyboard Accessible Reorder: Use this menu button to change the order of how menu buttons are listed.
(Button visible to instructors only)

B: Course Menu Collapse, Title, and Home Features

Use this button to collapse the course menu buttons area – but not the Course Management/Control Panel area.

Use this button to quickly go directly to the course's entry/starting page.

C: Course Menu Buttons

This area will contain all a course's specific menu buttons that students will use to navigate course.

D: Course Management Area

The course's ***Control Panel*** is located in this area. The ***Control Panel*** area is where instructors access the course's *Grade Center*, *Course Tools*/Assessments, and various tools allowing to change the look/feel of a course. The controls here are more "behind the scenes" type of course controls.
(Control Panel area is visible to instructors only)

## PART III – COMMON CSCC MENU BUTTON TYPES, PURPOSES, EXAMPLES

There are three primary course menu buttons every instructor should know how to properly use:
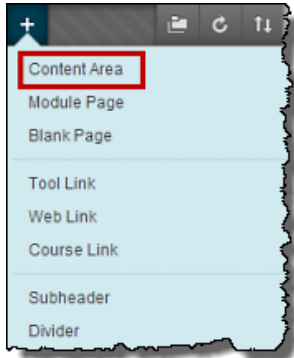
1. **Content Area menu buttons** have two functions - It adds a menu button to your course and creates a new area to upload content into your course shell. This type of button is the first step in developing a course content area.

   Examples of popular *Content Area* menu buttons:
    a. Orientation – Start Here
    b. Our Classroom
    c. Test & Quizzes
    d. Course Resources
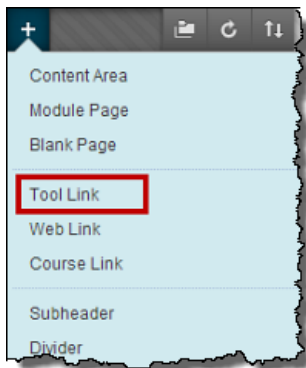
2. **Course Tool Link menu buttons** – This type of menu button adds a course menu button that brings students to a specific built-in Blackboard course tool.

    Example of popular *Course Tools* menu buttons:
    a. Discussion Board – add a menu button that will enable students to go directly to the discussion board area in the course.
    b. My Grades – add a menu button that will allow students to quickly access their course grades.
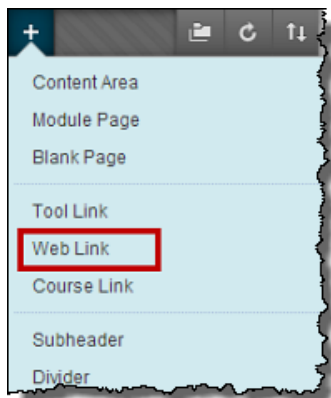
3. **Web Link menu button** - Add this type of menu button when you would like to have a direct link to guide students to a specific website outside of the Blackboard course shell. Use this button ONLY when you have a key resource site that applies to ALL of your course content and learning outcomes as a whole. Generally, there should never be more than two *Web Link* menu buttons in a course menu.

    Example of popular *Web Links* menu buttons:
    a. English/Comm Skills example – link to an online APA or MLA handbook.
    b. Chemistry – link to an interactive periodic chart
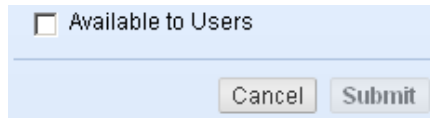   c. Mathematics - link to a tutorial/resource site that covers all topics being taught for a given course.

PART IV - HOW TO ADD COURSE MENU BUTTONS

HOW TO ADD A CONTENT AREA MENU BUTTON

1. Enter the course to add a new content area.

2. Make sure **Edit Mode** is **ON**.

3. **Hover/Click** on the **Add Menu** Item button.

4. **Select** the **Content Area** menu item.

5. Type in the name of the new content area in the *Name* text entry box.

6. To make the content available check the ***Available to Users*** box. Note to make the content unavailable leave the ***Available to Users box*** *unchecked.*

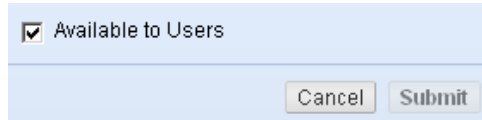7. **Click** the **Submit** button.

HOW TO ADD A TOOL LINK MENU BUTTON

1. Enter the course to add a tool link menu button.

2. Make sure **Edit Mode** is **ON**.

3. **Hover/Click** on the **Add Menu Item** button.

4. **Select** the **Create Tool Link** menu item.

5. Type the name of the Tool Link Menu button in the ***Name*** text box.

6. Use the *Type* drop-down menu to select the Blackboard tool link button.

7. Check the *Available to Users* box, to make the Tool Link menu item available to users. *To make the tool menu item unavailable leave the **Available to Users** unchecked..*
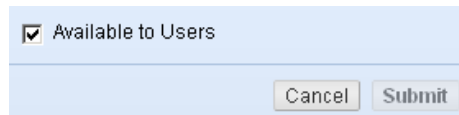

8. **Click** the **Submit** button.

HOW TO ADD A WEB LINK MENU BUTTON

1. Enter the course to add a new external link menu button.

2. Make sure **Edit Mode** is **ON**.

3. **Hover/Click** on the **Add Menu Item** button.

4. **Select** the **Web Link** menu item.

5. Type the name of new external link menu button in the *Name* text box.

6. Type in (or copy & paste) the FULL website address (URL) into the *URL* text box.

7. Check the *Available to Users* box, to make the link available. *To make the link unavailable leave the **Available to Users** unchecked.*
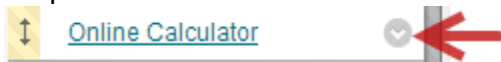

8. **Click** the **Submit** button.

To open the external link menu button in a new window do the following steps:

1. Hover mouse pointer over the Web Link menu button and click on its contextual drop-down menu button.

2. Select **Set Link to Open in a New Window**.

## PART V - MANAGING COURSE MENU BUTTONS

HOW TO DELETE COURSE MENU BUTTONS

Use the following steps to remove a menu button from a course menu. It's always a good idea to back-up a course before removing menu areas.

Tips:

- When removing <u>content area menu buttons</u> using the steps below, it also will delete all content found within that content area for a given course.

- When deleting a tool menu button, the information and setup of the tool is maintained and it's just the menu button that is being removed.

Steps for deleting a course menu button:

1. Enter the course to remove a menu button.

2. Make sure the *Edit Mode* is **ON**.

3. Hover mouse pointer over course menu button and click on its contextual drop-down menu button.
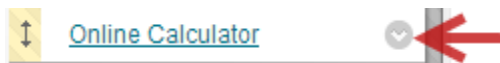
4. **Select Delete** from menu listing.

HOW TO CHANGE THE ORDER OF COURSE MENU BUTTONS

1. Enter the course to change the order of the menu buttons.

2. Make sure the *Edit Mode* is **ON**.

3. Reorder the course buttons by hovering over the menu button, then click and hold the up/down arrow to the left of the menu item name and drag/drop the menu button to its new position.
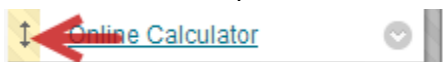
WHAT DO THE LITTLE ICONS AFTER MY MENU BUTTONS MEAN?

This link is hidden from students: This icon is letting you know that your students will not be able to see or access this course menu button and area.

 For students to be able to view a menu button and its contents please do the following:

1. Click on the button's contextual menu.
2. Select Show Link.

This link has no content: This icon generally appears when adding content areas to a course. The icon is letting you know that you have successfully added a content area to your course, but the content currently does not contain any content. When a content item is added to the area, this icon will disappear from view.

TIP: Students are not able to view (or access) empty content area menu buttons.

HANDS-ON PRACTICE:

LESSON SUMMARY

- The course's menu will always be on the left-hand side of course shell area.

- The primary course menu button types used in courses are: Content Area, Tool Link, and Web Link.

- Students do not have the ability to modify a course's menu, nor are they able to see/access the course's *Control Panel* area.

- When removing <u>content area menu buttons</u> using the steps below, it also will delete all content found within that content area for a given course.

- When deleting a tool menu button, the information and setup of the tool is maintained and it's just the menu button that is being removed.

- If you ever need any help with your Blackboard course, please make sure to contact the Faculty Assistance Center at 614-287-5991.