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:

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 content area menu buttons 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?

**Office Hours**

*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.

**Homework**

*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 content area menu buttons 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.