

## January 9: How to Use Assignment Manager in Blackboard 8.0

### No More Digital Drop Box: Use Assignment Manager



The Assignment Manager has replaced the Digital Drop Box in Bb 8. This is a more robust and manageable system for students to submit files in response to an assignment. This tool allows separate course entries for each assignment for which students must submit files, and each file submission is automatically tied to its grade book entry. (The Grade Book has become The Grade Center.) There are tools to view or download single files, multiple files at once, or to even remove files once you have submitted grades for them. Given that the file submissions are separated by assignment, there is no problem of confusing file submissions with the wrong assignment. Best of all if a student does save a file rather than submitting it, the Grade Center indicates this to the instructor, cutting down on potential confusion.

The Assignment Manager is located in the drop down menu Select, which is in the upper right of any Content Page (in editing mode): click on the menu, choose Assignment. This will open an Assignment item: you provide the title, description, grading details, points. When you submit, an Assignment Manager appears in the Content Area (Assignments, for example) and in the Grade Center there appear a column where the file(s) uploaded into this Assignment by the student appear for you to download.

(If the Assignment choice does not appear in the upper right menu, you will need to make this "tool" available: go to the Control Center, click on Manage Tools, then on Content Type Availability: scroll down to Assignment, check the box, then SUBMIT. The Choice will be available in content areas now.)

For further instructions on using the Blackboard Assignment Manager, check out this video: [Creating Assignments in Blackboard \(YouTube\)](#).<sup>\*</sup> Here is an animated (silent) tutorial on [Creating an Assignment](#)<sup>\*</sup> using Assignment Manager. Finally, here is an audio segment on how Assignment Manager improves the Digital Drop Box: [Drop the Drop Box \(11:17\)](#)<sup>\*</sup>

If your instructions in your fall semester (or earlier) course ask students to submit work via the Digital Drop Box, you will need to update these instructions: ask the students to use the Assignment Manager, and place an Assignment Manager in the assignment area – in the folder containing the assignment, for example.

Please watch for announcements about workshops explaining new Blackboard features.

<sup>\*</sup>URLs: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwu\\_4kGlt7A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwu_4kGlt7A)

[http://behind.blackboard.com/docs/LearningServices/Release6/Create\\_Assignment\\_viewlet\\_swf.html](http://behind.blackboard.com/docs/LearningServices/Release6/Create_Assignment_viewlet_swf.html)

<http://www.palomar.edu/atrc/audio/podcasts/Segments/0762/atrc0762BbFeature.mp3>

## November 29: How to Import Blackboard 6 Courses into Blackboard 8.0

The Spring 2009 course shells are available: if you have been listed by your department as the instructor for a section, your section is now ready.

To find your section, go to your CUNY Portal home page and click on [NEW-Spring 09 Courses – Blackboard 8](#) (see November 21 below)

Fall 2008 course sections should have been copied into your Bb 8 courses (as of 1/9/09). However, if you need to import a Blackboard 6 section into Bb8, follow these steps:

- In Blackboard 6 ("all Other Blackboard Courses," see below), open the course you need to reproduce.
- In Control Panel, select Archive Course, Submit (wait for Receipt).
- Upon Receipt, follow instructions (Save As) and save the "ArchiveFile\_LC\_....zip" to a convenient place, like the desktop.
- Return to the Portal (probably still open), select [NEW Spring '09 Courses](#), and open the course into which you will import this archived content.
- In the Control Panel, choose Import Package: select the package by browsing to find the ArchiveFile just saved, and select it.
- Select materials to include: usually these include Content, Announcement, Discussion Board, Settings, Staff Information, Tests.
- Import: wait for response "This action has been successfully queued. An email will be sent..." (however, the imported content is usually ready well before the email arrives).
- Check your Spring 09 - Bb 8 course: you will perhaps need to remove duplicate Menu items (Control Panel > Manage Course Menu), perhaps clean up the Discussion Board (remove threads that identify students in their content since initial postings that open threads are preserved), and edit the content to reflect changes like the missing Digital Drop Box.

Done!

## November 21: How the Blackboard 8.0 Courses will appear in the CUNY Portal



In preparation for the Spring 2009 semester, courses have been made **available to Faculty** for development in the new upgraded Blackboard 8.0 system. Faculty, please access this system from the link below.

### [NEW - Spring '09 Courses – Blackboard 8.0](#)

All Online Baccalaureate Program Courses and Graduate Center Blackboard Courses can still be accessed via the links below.

### [Online Baccalaureate Program Courses](#) [Graduate Center Blackboard Courses](#)

If your professor has identified your course as being part of the Fall '08 Early Adopter Rollout program, click here:

### [Early Adopter Rollout Blackboard Courses](#)

For all Other Blackboard Courses, click the link below.

### [Blackboard Courses.](#)

## November 13: Availability of Spring 09 Courses in Blackboard 8

The course shells for Spring 09 are scheduled to be available in Blackboard on Monday, November 23, 2008.

## November 12: Materials presented at the General Faculty Meeting



## *Upgrading to Blackboard 8 from Blackboard 6*

### Answers to frequently asked questions

***What are the main differences between Blackboard 6 and Blackboard 8?*** There are several differences between the two systems. The two main differences are, first, the Gradebook is now known as GRADE CENTER and the Communication area is greatly enhanced, and second, Blackboard 8 does not have a DIGITAL DROPBOX, which means that assignments to be graded will appear directly in the GRADE CENTER, where they can be graded and returned. There is an

increased flexibility in the DISCUSSION BOARD, an enhanced E-MAIL and the ability to link to an RSS Video Feed directly from your course. Another expanded feature of Blackboard 8 is the ability to enroll students across CUNY. For example, if there is a student from Bronx Community College or Hunter College interested in your course, you may enroll him and he will have the same access to the material as the Lehman College Students.

***We know that there have been some technical issues with the MAC and Blackboard 6. Will this be the case with Blackboard 8.*** Blackboard 8 will perform well on both the Windows and MAC operating systems and on all browsers.

***When can I expect to begin to use Blackboard 8 to get my courses ready for the Spring Semester?***

As we have been told by CUNY-CIS, November 17<sup>th</sup> is the target date to have the courses available for instructors. We suggest that you ARCHIVE your current course in Blackboard 6 and then RESTORE it in Blackboard 8. If you need assistance with this process, please feel free to contact Stephen Castellano at college extension 8658 or by e-mail: [steve@lehman.cuny.edu](mailto:steve@lehman.cuny.edu) One additional note on getting access to Blackboard 8: you must be the teacher of record for the course that you wish access to.

***What does Blackboard 8 look like? Is it very different from what we are using right now?*** The new version of Blackboard that CUNY is upgrading to look very similar to what we are using now. There are some subtle differences in the Control Panel of the course. But for the most part, everything is similar. The student view is the same too.

***Will there be training ?*** Yes, training will be available on the following days - December 4<sup>th</sup> at 4pm, December 9<sup>th</sup> at 4pm and December 10<sup>th</sup> at 4pm – and subsequently on a regular schedule. Each session will be held in C-107.

***Is the new system stable and reliable ?*** Yes, we have actually been using Blackboard 8 for almost one year. Although it has been in a testing phase, the Blackboard Administrators throughout CUNY have been using it and testing the system and putting it through its paces. It is being used this semester in the CUNY Online BA and BBA, at the Graduate School, and in selected courses at Lehman. The Blackboard 8 system is a new installation and it should be just as stable as the present system. However, with any new system, sometimes problems can, and do occur. We ask for your patience as we work on this new system together.

**Blackboard 8 will be used for all courses in the Spring 2009 semester**

## **Transition from Blackboard 6 to Blackboard 8: Detailed Points**

Differences between Bb 8 and Bb 6:

- Grade Center (replaces Grade Book) has Assignments included, is more flexible for sorting and presentation, and incorporates the Digital Drop Box. (Digital Drop Box is no more.)
- Discussion Board is more flexible: can open, close, be hidden, locked, filtered, sorted, graded.
- Platform independent: works equally with IE, Firefox, Safari, PC, Apple, etc.
- Allows “push” features like RSS feeds and emails of Announcements.
- Enrollment in courses and organizations across CUNY, shared sites and users.

#### Performance

- Not slower, not more prone to breakdown, but this is a new installation with attendant occasional, transient events.
- No change in the manual (not automatic) assignment of instructors to courses: local entry remains an option for late instructor appointments.

#### Conversion of courses to Bb 8 from Bb 6

- Courses for Spring 2009 will be opened in Bb 8 on or about November 17. The instructors of record (i.e. listed by name in eSIMS) will have access to their course sections.
- Fall 2008 courses (presently in Bb 6) will be copied into Bb 8 in a batch conversion process on or about November 17.
- To copy courses from Fall 2008 to Spring 2009, use the regular course copy command in Bb 8 that you have used in Bb 6.
- Courses in Bb 6 (going back three semesters to fall 2007) will remain available. To copy course content from Bb 6 to Bb 8, archive the Bb 6 course, then