


## Why use Blackboard Announcements for Blended or Face-to-Face Courses?

As a default, current announcements are the first thing students see when they access a Blackboard course. Since announcements are accessible to an entire class, all students can view the announcements at any time. As an added benefit, the instructor has complete control over the use of announcements. The Announcement Tool can stretch far beyond the posting of “announcement” type material. This is the ideal place to post time-sensitive material for students to access outside of class time. The announcement environment encourages a dynamic course atmosphere and analysis of course material.

### Why Announcements?

- Creating a “Welcome to the Course” message. Included in this message could be a link to an orientation to the course and/or online learning.
- Create a supportive learning environment.
- Providing learning goals/timelines/reminders.
- Feedback - since all students see the message, use it to promote a sense of accomplishment.
- Assist student’s progress by posting weekly summaries and to do lists.
- Providing learning tips throughout the course. If there are trouble areas, difficult concepts or learning problems, post supporting tips as announcements.
- Letting students know where information/resources can be found within the Blackboard course site. Use the HyperLink feature to link the student directly to the area of attention.
- Motivating students
  - Let students know they are part of a positive experience and a group working towards a common goal.
  - Attention grabber.
- Help simplify the Bb course for students – by highlighting important details in a weekly announcement to prepare students for the upcoming week.
- Letting students know that adjustments have been made to the course.

### Announcement Example:

 Fri, Mar 18, 2005 -- **Weekly Review**

Great work this week on the group projects. I saw excellent teamwork and an improvement in the quality of work from everyone. This past week we covered topics from Chapter 10, 11, and 12 (refer to the course outline for the specifics). Modify Remove  
Posted by Patrick Kelly

Next Week: Make sure you come to class prepared by reading the material for Week 8 as we will spend most of our classtime in small groups working on projects and discussing the main concepts covered in the pre-class material.

Have a great weekend.  
Course Link: [Course Documents / Week 8](#)



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### **Tips for using the announcement tool include:**

1. Being consistent with its use: Students can then get in the routine of looking for announcements on a regular basis. In general 1-3 announcements per week is acceptable.
2. For really important information, make the announcement permanent so it always shows on the announcement page (A word of caution though, keep these to a minimum as they do take up screen space).
3. Don't overuse - too many announcements can be overwhelming, take up lots of screen space, and students might start to ignore them.
4. Use Date Restrictions to keep the announcement area tidy.
5. Remember that announcements show up on students "Welcome to Blackboard" page, so students do not have to come into each of their courses to receive their announcements.
6. Archive announcements in a content area by copying and pasting (weekly) (Depending on how the course is organized).
7. Use in conjunction with the Blackboard Email tool – so that students also receive the announcements in email format.

### **Where Can I Go for More Information?**

#### **1. A guide for teaching on-line and web enhanced courses**

An online manual created by St. Louis Community College at Meramec for faculty who intend to teach a course online via Blackboard.

<http://www.stlcc.edu/mc/services/cst/online/manual.htm>

#### **2. Digital Communication Tips**

A series of tips from Linda Gibbs (2004) about digital communication within an online course

<http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/public/students/communicating.pdf>

#### **3. Motivation, Goal Setting, and Success**

An article by the University of Iowa's Advising Centre about student motivation, goals and success in an online course

[http://www.uiowa.edu/web/advisingcenter/aac\\_curr\\_students/improving/motivation.htm](http://www.uiowa.edu/web/advisingcenter/aac_curr_students/improving/motivation.htm)

#### **4. Building Learning Communities in Cyberspace: Effective Strategies for the Online Classroom.**

An excellent book by Rena Palloff and Keith Pratt (1999) about effective strategies for the online classroom

<http://www.josseybass.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0787944602.html>

#### **5. Motivating Students**

An excellent series of tips about motivating students in the online environment from the Teaching Effectiveness Program (2005) at the University of Oregon

<http://tep.uoregon.edu/resources/faqs/motivatingstudents/motivating.html>