# Blackboard Basics

- Blackboard Learn is an application for online learning, teaching, collaboration, and knowledge sharing.
- Blackboard Learn provides a platform upon which instructors can teach using any theory or model for teaching because it is open, flexible, and centered on enhancing student achievement.
- Blackboard Learn can be used for the traditional face to face course or online learning.
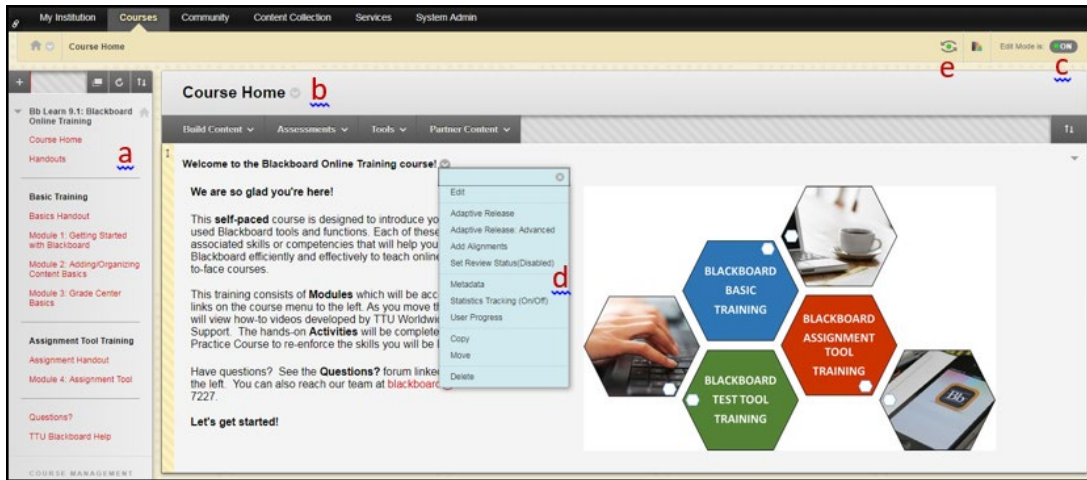
Logging into Blackboard Learn

- To log into Blackboard, you will use your eRaider username and password.
- When you log in, you will be on the My Institution page.
- On the My Institution page, you will see Modules. Modules help organize information and links on a page.
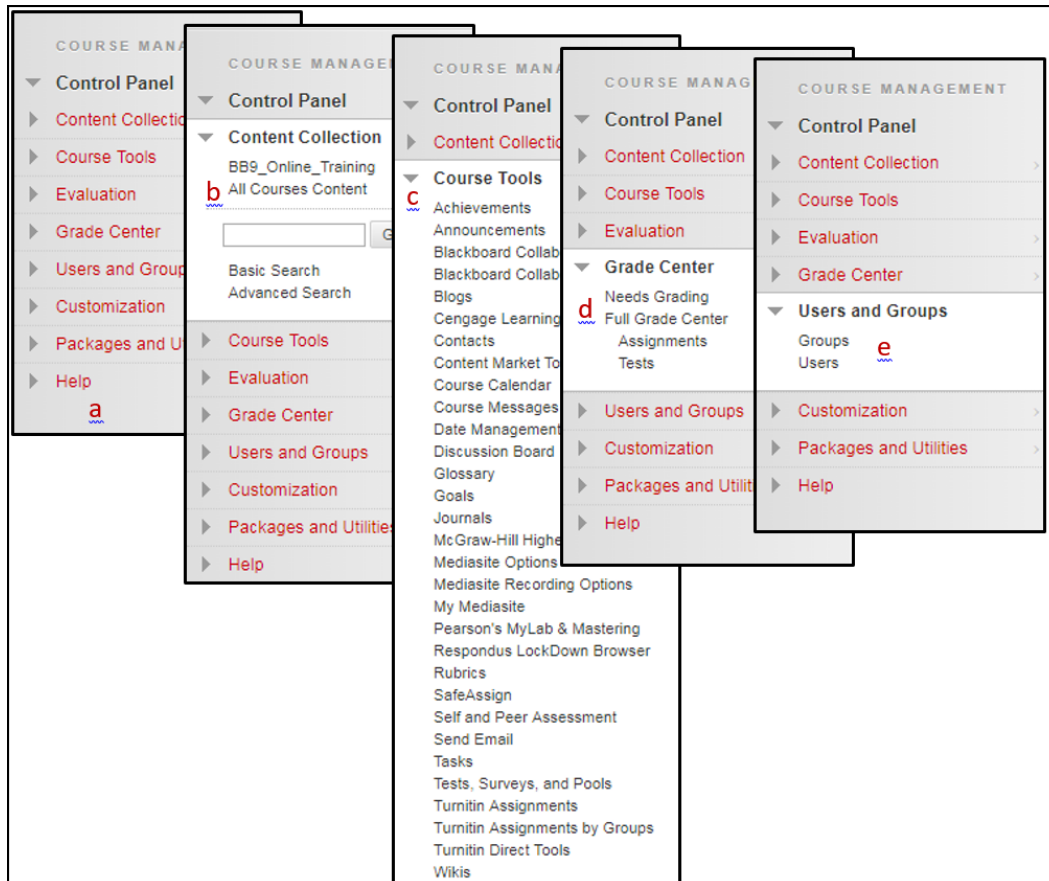- The My Institution page will list all the courses you and students are enrolled in.
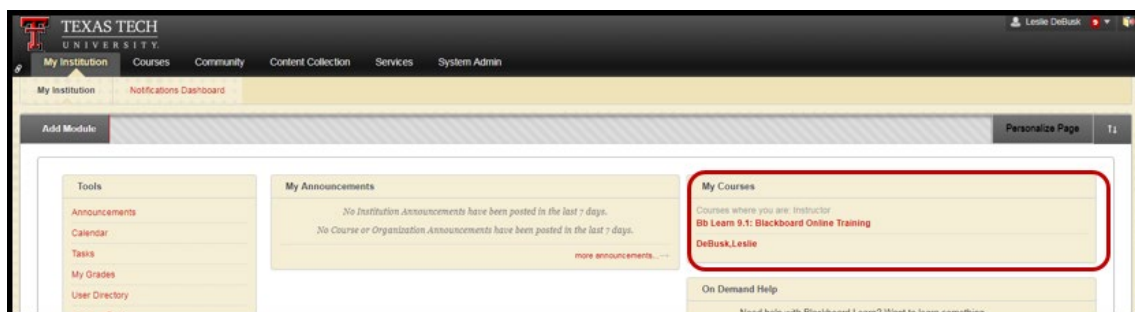
1. **My Courses –** Contains a list of courses that you are enrolled in, either as an instructor, student, or other roles.
2. **Drag and Drop Modules –** Course Modules can be added to the Modules pages only. Modules can be repositioned to reflect the way you want them displayed. Use the mouse to reposition items directly on a page by dragging and dropping to the desired location and releasing the mouse button.

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Course Environment and Navigation

a. **Course Menu** – The Course Menu appears on the left side of a course page. This is the primary navigation for all course users. The menu can be changed and reordered to any format. It contains buttons or text links to Content Areas, Tools, and Links. The Course Menu is usually arranged by subject or the order in which students progress through the course.

b. **Course Homepage (Entry)** – Instructors can select the first area users see when entering the course from the pulldown menu of the existing areas in the course. Go to the Control Panel > Customization > Teaching Style > Select Course Entry Point.

c. **Edit Mode** – The Edit Mode button allows you to change the view of course content on screen from the instructor's view (Edit Mode: On) to the student's view (Edit Mode: Off). While in Edit Mode, users can add, rename, reorder, or delete content. Students do not have Edit Mode. **Tests, surveys, and assignments can be completed by the instructor with Edit Mode on or off, but the results will not be recorded in the Grade Center**.

d. **Contextual Menu** – The Contextual Menu is opened by clicking an Action Link (chevron shaped icon/down-pointing arrow). It is a pulldown menu that provides access to additional actions associated with the item.

e. **Student Preview Mode** – The Student Preview tool allows an instructor to interact in the Blackboard course as a student. Click the icon directly to the left of the color wheel in the top-right corner of your Blackboard course. You will see an orange banner at the top letting you know that Student Preview mode is ON. While in this mode, you can take exams, turn in assignments, and do anything else that the students can do.

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Control Panel (in Course Menu)

a. **Control Panel** – The Control Panel is the interface for managing the content, features, and appearance of a course. Students do not see the Control Panel.

b. **Content Collection** – A file repository that allows faculty and students to store, manage, and share content. The Content Collection functions as a virtual hard drive that users can access from any computer by logging into their Blackboard account.

c. **Course Tools** – A list and entry point to access course tools available in Blackboard.

d. **Grade Center** – In the Grade Center, you can provide and manage your students' grades for assignments, tests, discussion posts, journals, blogs, wikis, and your ungraded items such as surveys or self-tests. You can also create grade columns for any activities or requirements you want to grade, such as special projects, participation, or attendance.

e. **Users and Groups** – Create groups of students within a course, such as a study project group. The Users page lists all enrolled users in the course and allows you to manage their settings.

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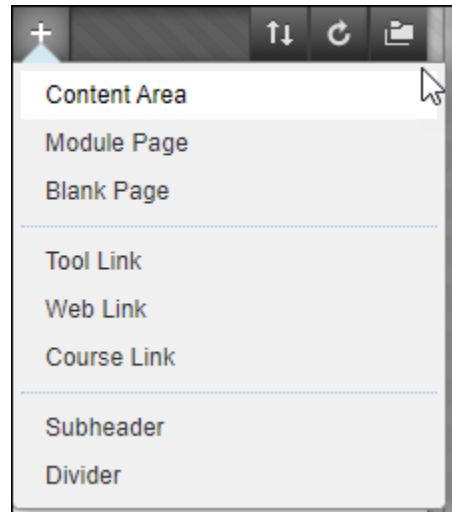Questions? Contact us at blackboard@ttu.edu or 806-742-5933.

Instructions to Add an Additional User to Your Course

1. **Instructors** – For any current or future course, the instructor can be assigned in Banner by the department scheduler. If the instructor needs access to a course they are not assigned to teach, they can be added as the IOR in Banner with a 0% compensation.

2. **Teaching Assistant** (i.e., hired with the title Teaching Assistant) – For any current or future course, TA's can be assigned in Banner by the department scheduler with a 0% responsibility. They will push over to Blackboard as an instructor but will change to the role of a TA overnight.

3. **Course Builder, Grader, Facilitator, ID** – You will need to send an email to TTU Blackboard Support (blackboard@ttu.edu). Please include the following information in your email to TTU Blackboard Support:

   - Course name, number, and section number

   - User's name and eRaider username

   - Role the user should have in the course

Definitions of Blackboard Roles

- **Instructors** have full access to the course Control Panel. This role is generally assigned to the person developing, teaching, or facilitating the course. You can copy materials into a course if you have the role of Instructor. If the course is unavailable to students, instructors can still access the course.

- Users with the **Teaching Assistant** role have access to most of the course Control Panel. You can copy materials into a course if you have the role of Teaching Assistant (TA). If the course is unavailable to students, teaching assistants can still access the course.

- The **Course Builder** role has access to most areas of the course Control Panel. This role is appropriate for an assistant who should not have access to student grades. You can copy materials into a course if you have the role of Course Builder. If the course is unavailable to students, a course builder can still access the course.

- The **Grader** role has limited access to the course Control Panel. Graders can assist an instructor in the creation, management, delivery and grading of assessments and surveys. The grader may also assist an instructor with adding manual entries to the Grade Center. If a course is unavailable to students, the course appears in the My Courses module and in the course list for a user with the role of Grader. However, the grader cannot enter the course until the course is available.

- **Student** is a user role that does not have access to the course Control Panel.

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Description of Course Menu Content Types

- **Content Area (Folder) –** You can create course content areas to serve as containers/folders for your course material. Content areas enable you to present various types of course content in an organized and engaging way.
- **Module Page –** A Module can be a tool, such as a calculator, or it can display dynamic information such as grades, alerts, and announcements. Course Modules can be added to Module pages only.
- **Blank Page –** The Blank Page tool allows you to include files, images, and text as a link in a course area. Blank Pages present content in a different way than an Item. There is no description that appears below the title of the page. Users see your content only after clicking the link.
- **Tool Link –** Create a link to an available tool in the course such as the Calendar, Journals, or My Grades. You can also create a link to the Tools page.
- **Web Link –** Create a link to an external URL to provide quick access to a resource on the Internet.
- **Course Link –** Create a shortcut to an existing area, tool, or item in the course.
- **Subheader –** A subheader is unlinked text. You can group related links under a subheader to help users find information quickly.
- **Divider –** A divider is a horizontal line that visually divides the Course Menu to help users find information quickly. After you create a divider, you can move it to the appropriate position.

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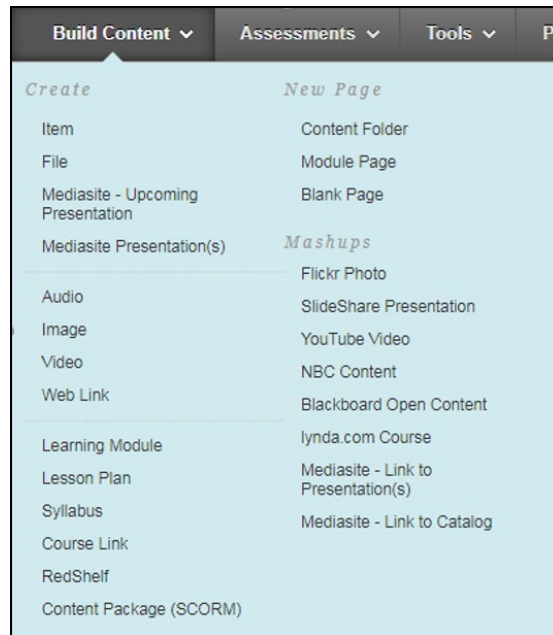
- **Item –** A general piece of content, such as a file, image, text, or link to which a description and other items may be attached.
- **File –** An HTML file that can be used in the course. These files can be viewed as a page within the course or as a separate piece of content in a separate browser window.
- **Audio, Image, and Video –** Upload these files from your computer or Content Collection and incorporate them in a course area.
- **Web Link –** Link to an outside website or resource.
- **Syllabus –** Allows you to attach an existing syllabus file or build a course syllabus by completing a series of steps.
- **Course Link –** A shortcut to an item, tool, or area in a course.
- **Content Folder –** A course area that contains content items. Folders allow content to be structured with a hierarchy or categories.
- **Blank Page –** The Blank Page tool allows you to include files, images, and text as a link in a course area. Blank pages present content in a different way than Items do. There is no description that appears below the title of the page. Users see your content only after clicking the link.
- **Module Page –** A page containing dynamic, personalized content modules that help users keep track of tasks, tests, assignments, and new content created in the course.
- **Mashups –** Mashups allow you to include content in a course that is from an external website.

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Communication Tools

Asynchronous Communication Tools (Not Real-Time)

- **Announcements –** Users and course group members can view important messages from instructors in the My Announcements module or through the Announcements tool.

- **Send Email (external) –** The Email tool allows you to send an external email to other people in your course from within Blackboard Learn without launching an external email client.

  IMPORTANT   Blackboard Learn does **not** keep record of sent or received emails. When you receive or send an email, the email will appear in the Inbox of your external email client.

- **Course Messages (internal) –** Messages are private and secure text-based communication that occurs within a course and among course members. You must be logged into the course to read and send messages.

- **Discussion Board –** Building a sense of community among students is crucial for a successful online experience. The Discussion Board is an important tool for interpersonal interaction and can replicate the robust discussions that take place in a traditional classroom.

- **Journals –** Journals are personal space for the student to communicate privately with the instructor.

- **Blogs –** Blog writing assignments are another medium for reflective learning. With this type of assignment, students are expected to display their research, analytical, and communications skills through a series of commentaries meant for public consumption and comment.

- **Wikis –** Wikis allow multiple students to share and collaborate on one or more pages of content. Pages can be created and edited quickly, while tracking changes and additions. Instructors can create one or more wikis for all course members to contribute to, and wikis for specific groups to use to collaborate. Wikis can also be used to record information and serve as a repository for course information and knowledge.

Synchronous Collaboration Tools (Real-Time)

- **Class Collaborate Ultra –** Allows instructors to Web conference and connect with one student or the entire class using audio, video, and recording capabilities.

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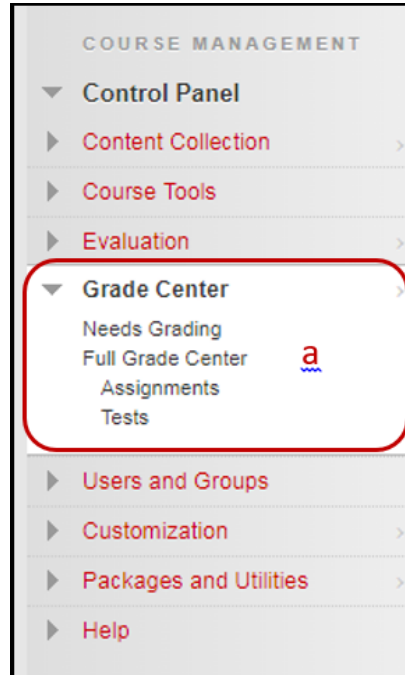
Full Grade Center

a. **Full Grade Center –** The Grade Center entry point is located in the Control Panel. Note that there are additional filter selections on the menu to allow for viewing only items that need to be graded or specific types of assessments. You can also hide and show columns, associate columns with Categories and Grading Periods, and view columns in any order.
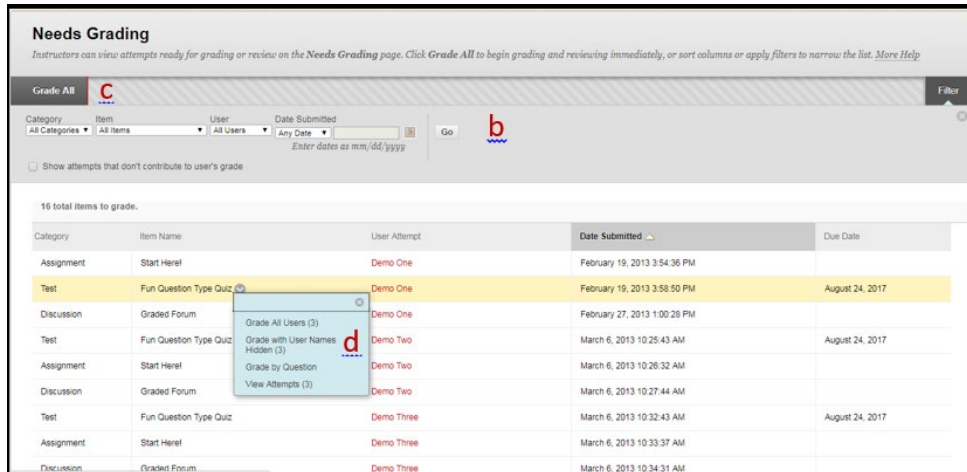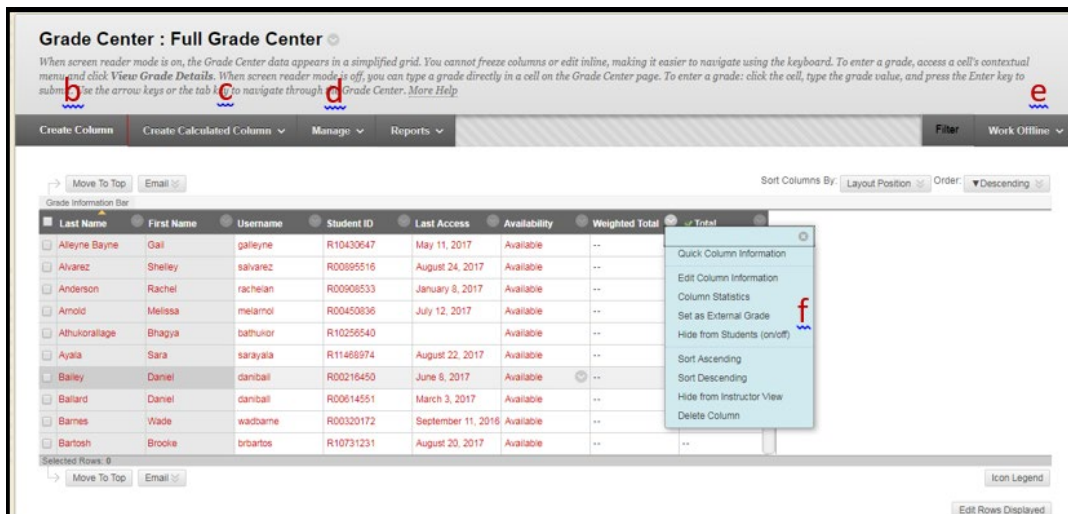
b. **Create Column –** Click to create a column that represents a gradable item in your course. Grade columns represent gradable items such as tests and assignments. You can create grade columns for activities students complete outside of Blackboard Learn or for activities that do not have grade columns created automatically for them.

c. **Create Calculated Column –** From the pulldown menu, select one of the following calculated columns: Average, Minimum/Maximum, Total, or Weighted. The Weighted column is a type of calculated column that generates a grade based on the result of selected columns and categories, and their respective percentages.

d. **Manage –** From the pulldown menu, select an option to manage Grading Periods, Grading Schemas, Grading Color Codes, Categories, Smart Views, Column Organization, Row Visibility, or Send Email.

e. **Download Grades –** From the Work Offline pulldown menu, full or partial data can be downloaded from the Grade Center and saved to your computer.

f. **Contextual Menu –** The Contextual Menu is opened by clicking an Action Link (chevron shaped icon/down-pointing arrow). It is a pulldown menu that provides access to additional actions associated with the item.

Needs Grading
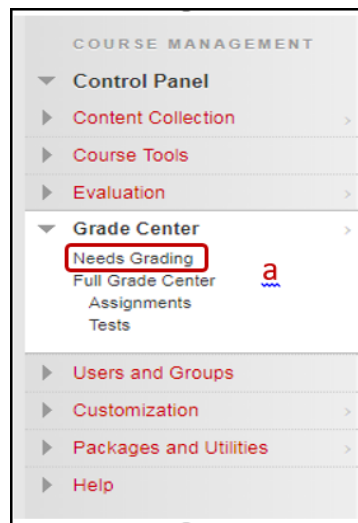
a. **Needs Grading –** The Needs Grading entry point is located in the Control Panel. Instructors can view attempts ready for review or grading on the Needs Grading page.

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b. **Filter Criteria –** Use the filter pulldown menus if you want to narrow the list of items to grade by Category, Item, User, and/or Date Submitted.

c. **Grade All –** Click Grade All to place attempts in a queue for easy navigation among items. If a filter has been applied, only the filtered items appear in the queue. Attempts appear in the order they were sorted on the Needs Grading page. Once attempts have been graded, they do not appear on the Needs Grading page, and the number of items updates to reflect the current number that needs to be graded.

d. **Grading Options in Contextual Menu (pulldown) –** Use an assignment's contextual menu to Grade All Users or Grade Anonymously. For tests, the contextual menu also includes Grade Tests by Questions and View Attempts. The total number of attempts for the selected item is listed in parentheses.

Support Information

Instructor Support

- TTU eLearning & Academic Partnerships – Blackboard Support Office
- [Blackboard Support](#)
- [Blackboard Support Email](#)
- 806-742-5933
- 24/7 Blackboard Support – 844-897-0537

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Student Support for Blackboard Learn 9.1

- Tutorials and How-to Guides: [Blackboard Student Support](#)
- IT Help Central for technical issues (eRaider, browser, network, device, etc.)
- 806-742-HELP (4357)
- [IT Help Central Email](#)

Website to Access Blackboard Learn 9.1

- [Blackboard Login](#) (Click the Login to Blackboard button)