



**ST. JOHN'S
UNIVERSITY**

ONLINE LEARNING
AND SERVICES

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ONLINE COURSE CREATION

COMMUNICATION WITH ANNOUNCEMENTS

As you transition to the online environment it is critical to maintain high levels of communication with your students. The announcements tool in Blackboard is highly recommended for this purpose. All announcements are maintained in the corresponding Blackboard course shell. This means that student can return to them and review throughout the semester. Enabling the "Send a copy of this announcement immediately" function within the announcements tool will push this announcement into each student's email inbox as well.

CURATE AND PRESENT CONTENT USING THE ITEM TOOL

The "Item" tool in Blackboard is recommended to present course content to students. All course content that a student would need to review for the week should go here. You can put the course readings, PDFs, hyperlinks, Power Points, and videos all within one item in Blackboard. We encourage faculty to embed videos using Panopto or the YouTube Mashup tool.

If you have multiple topics to cover in a week you may want to create two items however, we advise against creating a separate item for each **type** of course content. This is difficult for students to navigate, especially on a mobile device. Instead, use this item as another way to create a pathway through your course content. Think about how you would guide students through your course material, i.e. what would you like them to view first, read second, etc.?

Options for delivering content online include but are not limited to: Scholarly articles, Web content, PPTs, Word docs, Excel sheets, YouTube or other external videos.

ENGAGE STUDENTS IN LEARNING ACTIVITIES VIA THE DISCUSSION BOARD

Discussion boards are a powerful pedagogical tool to promote community, engagement, and peer learning in the online learning environment.

When you are managing an online discussion, it's important to strike a balance in your interaction with the students so that the discussion board has a focus on learning and is interesting enough to pull learners into the conversation, but at the same time is not so dense and complicated that learners are overwhelmed.

The first step is to identify your goals for the discussion board assignments and your reasons for using this tool. You can clarify this by answering some of the following questions: What are your measurable objectives for the activity? Who will lead the discussion, the instructor or

students? Will the discussion board be a reaction to assigned content or student generated resources?

GATHER STUDENT ASSESSMENTS WITH THE ASSIGNMENT TOOL

The “assignment” tool in Blackboard is recommended as a way to collect, review and provide feedback on student work. Students can upload multiple types of files through the assignment tool. Faculty can provide feedback without ever leaving the Blackboard LMS. Students can easily click on “My Grades” and see their grade and detailed feedback easily and quickly.

Rich, detailed and timely feedback is essential in an online course since there is no synchronous feedback in the classroom as there once was. Meaningful online feedback is necessary in an online learning environment because it provides constructive academic feedback learners need to assess their knowledge level and progress in the course. Timely feedback can impact learners in meeting course goals and learning objectives.