

Blackboard Basics III

Part III -- Communications

There are several different ways to communicate with students in Blackboard.

 Announcements

 Discussion

 Messages

 Email

 Chat



To add any of these to the Menu, click on the [+] and then "Tool Link."

In the "Add Tool Link" window, there is a drop-down menu where you will find the communication tools as well as others. Notice the *. You have to provide a name, probably the same as the tool you will use. Also check "Available to Users" and click Submit.

Creating a Discussion Form

Creating a Button on the Menu

1. As above, click on the [+] and then "Tool Link"
2. Type Discussion Forum in the * area
3. In the drop-down menu, select Discussion Board.
4. Check "Available to Users"
5. Click Submit.

This places a "Discussion Forum" item in the menu. If you don't want it in the menu and the "Tools" link is in the menu, you can click on that and get to the Discussion Board from there.

To Add a Discussion Topic to the Forum

1. Either from the Discussion Forum Button or Tools Button on the menu, access the Discussion board.
2. Click on the "Create Forum" Button
3. Give the Forum a name
4. Provide a description of what this forum is to be used for, such as "Introduce Yourself to the Class."

5. Check "Available" under Forum Availability.
6. Enter date restrictions if necessary
7. Check the Forum Settings you desire
 - a. If you click "Allow members to subscribe to forum, and they do, when there is a posting, they'll get an email.
8. Click Submit.

To Add A Thread to a Forum Topic

After a topic has been created, you may want to start a thread. An "Introduction" topic is a good way for the class to get used to using the forum. You can start the thread by introducing yourself.

1. Get to the Discussion Forum and click on the topic you want to create a thread in or reply to.
2. Click on the "Create Thread" button
3. Type in a title in the *box
4. Type in your message
5. Click Submit

Sending Messages

Blackboard has two means for sending messages, "Messages," or "Email." It is recommended that you use one or the other, but not both.

Messages stay within Blackboard. Some like this as you have a permanent record and it's not filling up your KCTCS email box. You do have to take the effort of checking to see if there are messages.

Email goes out of Blackboard to email accounts. The downside to this is that students don't check their KCTCS email, resulting in filled inboxes to the point that further emails bounce.

1. Decide on which method you will use.
2. Click on the Tools link in the Menu
3. Find the method you won't use and click on "Hide Link." Students then won't see this too.
4. You and the students can access the Email or Message tool from the Tool Link on the Menu.
5. To Create a button on the menu:

- a. Click on the [+] at the top of the menu
- b. Click on the "Tool Link."
- c. Provide the name (EMAIL for example) in the *box
- d. Click on the drop-down menu until you find Email (or Messages if you're using that)
- e. Check "Available to Users."
- f. Click "Submit."

To Update Your Email Address

This may be something to share with your students, as the occasion might arise where an email address might need to be changed. When you log into Blackboard, you should see on the left-hand side a menu labeled "Tools."

1. Click on "Personal Information."
2. Click on Edit Personal Information
3. Update your email address and other information.
4. Click Submit

5. Click on the "Courses" Tab to go to your course(s) if this is where you need to go.