

Blackboard as an Assessment Tool for Academic Staff and Learners

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ABSTRACT

This research work focuses the importance of the use of Blackboard for test tool by academic staff and learners at College of Computer Science and Software Engineering, University of Hail, Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia. Especially the academic staff are utilized the Blackboard for conducting test, assessment, quizzes and Homework. A survey was conducted to academic staff and learners and data were collected from both. The result of this survey exhibits that the importance of using Blackboard for test, assessment, quizzes and Homework and the survey result is 80.4 %. This shows the effectiveness of Assessments on Blackboard.

Keywords : Blackboard, Assessments, Test Tool, teaching and learning, Academic Staff, Learners.

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of technology in the fast growing field of teaching and learning, predominantly in e-learning in educational sector, have offered educators with many more technologies to explore. Nowadays, Blackboard acts as an important role in e-learning. The effects of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) on the sector of higher education raised the awareness of staff regarding the need to improve process of teaching and learning. In turn this has led to the development of new teaching strategies that accompany the new technology. Online learning is one of the outcomes of the improvements in ICT. At the elementary level online learning provides students with improved access to study materials. But online learning offers much more, it can improve learning practices and teaching experiences by providing new learning approaches.

Currently the Blackboard platform is one of the most globally used educational systems specifically in Saudi Arabia Universities aiding Blended learning. The Blackboard Learning System is an effective and

simulated learning environment and course supervision developed by Blackboard Inc. It is a Web-based server software that supports course management, customizable open architecture, and accessibility that allows combination with student information systems and authentication protocols. Blackboard system may be installed locally on a localhost server or remotely by Blackboard ASP Solutions. The main objectives of Blackboard usage are to add online components to the courses other than traditionally delivered face-to-face and to develop completely online courses with few or no face-to-face meetings.

A. What is Blackboard?

It is a communication and sharing tool that supports the users to communicate with each other and share any type of media between them. These two ways includes:

1. Communication: Announcements can be set by faculty members to be viewed by students at the date specified by staff which facilitate the communication between staff and students. Announcement can be found under the tab of

announcement, or can be set to pop-up when student access blackboard. Also discussions allow students to create discussion thread and reply for these discussions, chat feature on the other hand allows students to online chatting to their classmates, while the mail function facilitates sending e-mail between staff members and students, also students to each other.

2. Content feature enables faculty members to post tutorials, tests, quizzes, labs and videos, while the Calendar feature allows faculty member to set their announcements in specific dates. The Learning modules function is to support online classes by allowing faculty members to submit their tutorials for their students. Assessments feature in turn allows students to work their quizzes online and results will be provided directly once they finish their assessments. Students can submit their assignment online using this function, Grade center can be posted through this feature for students by faculty member and faculty members can post videos or any other media by Media Library feature.

B. Tests and Quizzes in Blackboard

Applying online assessment cannot prevent all forms of cheating cases. Except we are giving the test in computer lab to proctored it, you should consider Blackboard assessments equivalent to a take-home exam. If take-home exams are not appropriate, faculty member should not use Blackboard for assessments. Blackboard has a variety of question types that we can add to online tests, examinations, and quizzes. The following figure 1 shows the individual types of various questions.

The remaining of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 contributes related literature. Methodology of this research is explained in section 3. In section 4, the result obtained from the experiments is discussed and section 5 concludes research with possible tracks for future works.

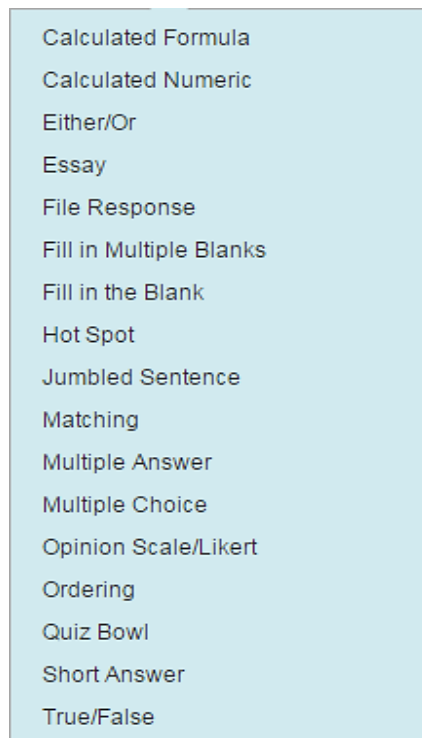


Figure 1 : Types of Questions In Theblackboard

Also we can reuse the questions that already built. Create online tests and quizzes using Blackboard's Test tool. The tests created in blackboard can be used in evaluating learning along with grades or to support students in mastering concepts using self-assessment. Furthermore it is also possible to do more on tests and quizzes the following:

- ✓ Create a Test
- ✓ Deploy a Test
- ✓ Preview a Test
- ✓ Modify the Settings for a Test
- ✓ Create Test Availability Exceptions
- ✓ Show Test Results and Feedback to Students
- ✓ Manage Due Dates and Late Submissions
- ✓ Test Access Log

Pools are collections and groups of questions that you can include in tests and surveys in the Original Course View. Staff member can use Blackboard tests and surveys to measure student knowledge, progress, and as student information gathering tool. Students

should be aware that they need to use an internet connection while taking tests. Wireless connections are more expected to suffer from network problems. The stability of the signal depends on duration and bandwidth students draw, which is similar to 4G phone data connections.

Key Features

Timelines : Support different evaluation timelines built on different team-taught and different listed courses.

Centralized: where Emails, invitations, notifications and reminders can be sent automatically and centralized to specific group.

Comprehensive report: Reports can be drawn at any level based on existing course and instructor's fields' selection.

Response Rates: Provides access to view which student currently participating online.

Customizable: Adjusting questions at every level, for example by course, instructor, department, institution, program, etc.

Anonymous: To ensure privacy and confidentiality advanced security features can be used.

Analysis Track teaching and learning enhancement over time along with longitudinal analysis.

Optimization: improves advanced response rate optimization functionality.

Online Paper Adaption: adjusting paper and online course evaluations, hybrid models, mid-term reviews, and in-class evaluations.

Accessibility: Accessing forms through any web-enabled device such as computer, tablet or mobile.

Text Analytics: which help discovering hidden views in open-ended student comments.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Neville et.al., focused on Blackboard's assessment tool, especially for weekly quizzes. The midterm and final examinations were managed during class in the

traditional approach. Experiments on Advanced pharmacology course, these examinations were weighted as follows: weekly quizzes (30%), midterm (35%), final exam (35%). Historically, the course evaluation result related to weekly quizzes is satisfied the student with the assessments' relevance and motivation factor, Even though the weekly quizzes were stressful, they did make the research and keep up with the material.

Shu-Chiang Lin et.al., examined the students' acceptances for the use of Blackboard Learning System using Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as an analysis approach. There are four factors that effect on TAM: Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Attitude, Behavior Intention, and Perceived Interactivity as an additional factor were used as the evaluation model factors to measure the students' technology acceptance and a total of six hypotheses were proposed. An online questionnaire was conducted to extract the information from students of National Taiwan University of Science and Technology (NTUST) and a total of 302 respondents were collected. A Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the model. The analysis result explained that a value of 36 percent of student' acceptance to use Blackboard Learning System can be described by the evaluated factors.

Jacek Uziaket.al., evaluated the preferences of mechanical engineering students at the University of Botswana regarding course delivery, with special consideration for Blackboard technology. The study was conducted through three continuous academic years (from 2007 to 2009/10) studying one course in the mechanical engineering degree program. A questionnaire was carried by three units of third year in mechanical engineering program students; with total of 101 participating students in the study. As the results of this study were encouraging, it is recommended that more courses in the program should migrate to a blended mode of instruction

delivery using Blackboard or any other approved learning management system.

Ana Carvalho et.al., compared Blackboard and Moodle with limited samples and focused on students' perceptions only, also try to relate those perceptions to the impact of the learning management systems (LMS) on student level of engagement. They assessed the extent and depth of use of the two LMSs, presenting the results of a study of students' perceptions and experience with both Blackboard and Moodle. More students (46.5%) stated a preference for Blackboard over Moodle, while 34.7% preferred Moodle, and nearly 20% had no preference.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study is dramatic in nature. It purposes to examine and explore the college at two sides:

UOH faculty members and instructors perceptions regarding the use of Blackboard in teaching or e-learning in terms of effectiveness, perceived advantages and disadvantages, helpfulness of training programs in using this technology, and the obstacles presented in the utilization of it. The sample of the study consisted of (35) faculty members within the College of Computer Science and Software Engineering. These members are involved in using Blackboard were randomly selected and invited to participate in a survey prepared by the researchers and designed to obtain responses about teaching Assessment via Blackboard. Faculty members were notified that their involvement in the project was voluntary and highly appreciated. They could withdraw from participation without any consequences at any time. A questionnaire was developed to assess examining and exploring faculty (members and instructors) perceptions regarding the use of Blackboard in teaching after reviewing the theoretical literature. The questionnaire comprised of

(30) items. The questionnaire was reviewed by a specialist in instructional technology who directed to establish the validity of the questionnaire.

UOH students in College of Computer Science and Software Engineering, 150 students were participated in this study. A 15 items questionnaire was developed by the researchers. The student's responses for this instrument were marked directly on the survey. The questionnaire instrument was designed to help the researcher for identifying student's perceptions toward the use of blackboard for Assessments. Also, questions were intended to gather information about student's difficulty and satisfaction toward the use of Blackboard software to deliver course materials as a communication tool.

The data from the two questionnaires were evaluated by using SPSS. Descriptive analysis and (T-Test) were used.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Faculty members and learners were asked to respond to 20 items in the survey to measure using Blackboard Assessment in their courses. The criteria designed based on researcher model. The scales of one to four in "Importance" one as "Very Important" and four as "Not Important" and the average percentage is shown in Table 1 as following.

TABLE 1: ACADEMIC STAFFS AND LEARNERS PERCEPTION OF USING BLACKBOARD ASSESSMENT.

Question #	Research Questions	Percentage
1	Ease of use of Web Environment	82 %
2	Online Environment	83 %
3	Ever use Blackboard before	66 %

		%
4	Ever use Blackboard Assessment before	72%
5	Knowledge about the functions of Blackboard	74%
6	Log easily in Blackboard sites	56%
7	Preferring using Blackboard in computer sciences courses	89%
8	Time duration when using Blackboard	94%
9	Complete the quizzes within the deadline	88%
10	Face the difficulties to clarify the questions	93%
11	Grade is confidential	91%
12	Grade is available immediately	91%
13	It is comfortable to do from geographically different place	83%
14	Prevent all forms of cheating	69%
15	Feel satisfaction of using Blackboard Assessment	75%
	Over all Percentage	80.4%

From the above table, it is evidentially prove that the importance of using Blackboard Assessment in the CCSE, University of hail, and it arrived to survey results 80.4 %. Performance analysis of using blackboard assessment by academic staff and learners is shown in Figure 2.

Other hand, another Research question about How convinced are academic staff and learners of CCSE, University of Hail are interaction in their Blackboard Assessment?. They are asked to respond whether they were “Very Satisfied,” “Satisfied,” “Less Satisfied,” or “Not Satisfied” when asked “How convinced are you with the level of interaction in Blackboard

Assessment?” is illustrated in Table 2. Figure 3 shows the level of interaction in blackboard assessment.

TABLE 2: LEVEL OF INTERACTION IN BLACKBOARD ASSESSMENT

Level of interaction in Blackboard Assessment	Percentage
Very Satisfied	63%
Satisfied	21%
Less Satisfied	9%
Not Satisfied	7%

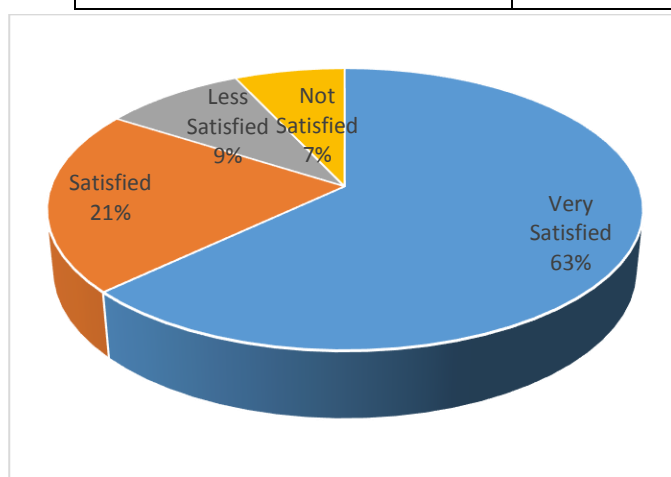


Figure 3 : Level of interaction in Blackboard Assessment

V. CONCLUSION

This study analyses the responses of academic staff and students using the Blackboard Assessment. There are different assessment methods are available in Blackboard. A total of 150 students completed a questionnaire. The questions were designed to evaluate their opinion of the testing procedure identifying their preferences and concerns. As well as, the sample of the study consisted of (35) faculty members within the College of Computer Science and Software Engineering (Female branch), University of Hail, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. These members are involved in using Blackboard were randomly selected and invited to participate in a survey prepared by the researchers and designed to

obtain responses about Teaching and Assessment via Blackboard. The results were analyzed producing some encouraging observations. It was observed that there was a strong overall acceptance of the innovative assessment tool Blackboard as a valuable contributor to the learning experience. In addition, Blackboard has promise result as 80.4%. Furthermore, this research can be extended to other colleges with more participants from various universities also. It will be encouraged the students to complete their assessment via purely online.

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