Blackboard Blogs and Journals

Blogs (short for web logs) are an open communications tool for students to share their thoughts. A journal is a self-reflective tool for students. Blogs and journals are created by opening the Course Tools menu in the Control Panel.

Creating a Blog

To create a Blog click on Blogs in the Course Tools area of the Control Panel.

Click on Create Blog and the blog creation screen will be displayed.

Enter a name for the blog and any instructions for the students.

Select Yes to make the blog available and set the date and time parameters as needed.
There are two types of blogs created through the control panel -- course blogs and individual blogs.

**Course Blogs:** All enrolled users are able to post Blog Entries. All enrolled users can post Comments to Blog Entries. The Instructor can edit and delete Blog Entries. The Instructor can delete Comments.

**Individual Blogs:** Only the owner of the Blog is able to post Blog Entries. All other users enrolled in the Course are able to view and add Comments.

Anonymous posts can be allowed with either type of blog. **Note:** Once a blog is created the type of blog (course/individual) can not be changed.

Indicate whether the entries should be indexed by month or by week and check the options to allow students to edit and/or delete their own entries or comments.

If the blog will be graded, select the **Grade** option and enter the possible points. Click **Submit** to complete the setup.

**Making a Blog Available to Students**

Once a blog is created it must be made available to students. There are two options for accessing blogs -- one is to create a link from a content area and one is to create a link from the course menu.

**Creating a link from a Content Area** Go to the content area where the link will be presented and click on **Create Blog Link** from the **Collaborate** menu. Links can be created to a blogs page or to a specific blog. If a link is to a specific blog the list of blogs will be displayed and one of the blogs must be selected.

If no blog is available to link a new blog can be created by clicking on **Create New Blog**. Click on **Next** to continue.
Set the availability and the date and time restrictions as needed. Click **Submit** to complete the link setup. To create a link from the course menu, click on the + (add button) symbol and select **Create Tool Link** from the options listed.

Provide a name for the button, select **Blogs** from the drop down list of tools and make the button available to students. Click **Submit** to create the button.

### Reviewing Blog Entries

A blog consists of entries posted by students and comments from instructors and other students. Blog entries can include text, images, links and attached files.

You can access blogs from the menu (if a button was created) or by selecting **Journals** from the **Course Tools Area** of the **Control Panel**.

Each blog is listed along with the last date it was modified and any the number of entries. Click on the name of the blog to open it.
Depending on the Blog settings, entries may be edited or deleted by their authors. Blog Entries can be saved as a draft to edit or delete at a later time.

Enter a Title – this is what is displayed in the Blog Index. Enter a Message using the Text Box Editor. Messages can contain formatted text, images, links and attachments. Click on Post Entry to save the message and post it to the blog. Blog entries by students are indexed and displayed in the box on the right side of the screen. Click on the link provided on a student’s name to read the entries posted by a particular student. Entries can be displayed for all students or only those that have posted.

New comments are indicated by text balloons and new entries are noted with a push pin icon.

Comments to blog entries are created by clicking on Comment and typing in the text box. Click Add to post the comment.

Grading Blogs
If grading has been setup, a grading option will be displayed.
Click on Edit Grade to enter the points the student received and any applicable feedback. Remember, feedback will be seen by the student but grading notes are not displayed.
Group Blogs

In addition to creating individual and course blogs you can also create blogs for groups. Blogs are available on the tool list for groups and can be selected when the groups are created or can be added as a tool later. Group blogs work like a course blog in that all members of the group can post entries and comments. Links and attachments can also be used in group blogs so projects and documents can be shared and reviewed by the group members.

Journals

A journal is a self-reflective tool for students. Only the student and the instructor are able to comment on journal entries. It is possible for the instructor to change the settings to allow others in the class to view journal entries.

Creating Journals

To create a journal click on Journals in the Course Tools area of the Control Panel.

The journal creation screen will be displayed. Click on the Create Journal button.

Enter a name for the Journal. Be sure the name is descriptive so that users will understand the nature of the Journal. Use the text box to enter instructions for posting to the Journal. The instructions are optional, but can help users understand expectations and any associated rules or
Journals can be set to display on a specific date and time and to stop displaying on a specific date and time. Display restrictions do not affect the content in the Journal, only the appearance of the Journal throughout the course.

Select the time frame, weekly or monthly, for indexing Journal Entries. Entries will be grouped under weekly or monthly links.

- To allow users to edit and delete their entries check the box provided.
- To allow users to delete their comments check the box provided.
- To allow other course members to read the journal entries check the box provided. If the journal will be graded, select the Grade option and enter the possible points.
- When finished creating the journal, click Submit.

Making Journals Available

Once journals are created they need to be available for students to enter thoughts and comments. Journals can be accessed two ways - through the button on the menu or from a content area.

**To link to a journal from a content area --**

Go to the content area where the link is to be located and click on Create Journals from the Collaborate menu.

There are two options for creating a link. One option is to link to the Journal Page which will provide access to all of
Creating blogs or journals will create a column in the Grade Center automatically if the graded option is selected at setup.

Teaching & Learning Center

click on the + (add button) symbol and select Create Tool Link from the options listed.

Make the link available and set date and time parameters as needed.

To link to a journal from the menu -
Click on the + (add button) symbol and select Create Tool Link from the options listed.
Provide a name for the button, select **Journals** from the drop down list of tools and make the button available to students. Click **Submit** to create the button.

### Reviewing Journal Entries

A journal consists of entries posted by students and comments from instructors. Journal entries can include text, images, links and attached files.

You can access journals from the menu (if a button was created) or by selecting **Journals** from the **Course Tools Area** of the **Control Panel**.

Each journal is listed along with the last date it was modified and any the number of entries. New entries are in parentheses. Click on the name of the journal to open it.

The instructions provided for the journal will be displayed. On the right side of the screen there is box with links to student journal entries.

- Student journals are listed in the **More Journals** section.
- Each student’s name is listed as a link to the journal. The push pin icon indicates a new entry.
- A new comment is identified by a text bubble.
- Only journals with entries are displayed initially -- to list all students click on **Show Empty Journals**.
- To view one of the journals click on a student’s name. The entries will be displayed -- to comment on the entry click on **Comment** and type into the box provided. To post the comments to the journal click

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**About this Journal**

- **Author:** Gayle Boddett
- **Entries:** 0
- **Comments:** 0

**More Journals**

- **Show Empty Journals**
  - Gayle Boddett (0)
  - Meredith Student (1)
  - Daily Student (1)

**Index**
Read other comments by clicking on the Comments link.

**Grading Journals**
If grading has been setup, a grading option will be displayed.
Click on *Edit Grade* to enter the points the student received and any applicable feedback.
Remember, feedback will be seen by the student but grading notes are not displayed.

**Journals in Groups**
The journal tool is one of the options that students can be given when groups are created. When used in a group, the journal is assessable for all members of the group.
Each group member can post an entry with attachments. Entries are readable by all members of the groups and comments can be added to any entry by any group member.

**Tips for using Journals and Blogs**
- Use course blogs when you want all of the students in the course to be able to post and comment.
- Use journals for private conversations or student reflection - if you allow course participants to view other students’ journals make that clear to everyone before they begin posting entries.
- Journals provide a good solution for allowing students to create electronic portfolios since items can be attached with entries.