Course Menu

Description – In this tutorial, you will learn how to manage the Course Menu. Other than the top Breadcrumb bar, the Course Menu is the primary navigation system in your course. Items on the Course Menu should be limited to content that is germane to student learning. Extraneous items can distract students from germane content and hinder learning. When looking at your Course Menu for the first time, new students should be able to readily understand each link. Eliminate ambiguity so your course doesn't turn into a scavenger hunt for students. The preferred template design for SCC presents the following links on the Course Menu:

- Announcements
- Course Contact
- My Grades
- Faculty Information
- Smarthinking
- SCC Resources
- Technical Support and usually some method or methods of communication unless they are embedded in Course Content.

Smarthinking, SCC Resources, Technical Support and a hidden Instructor Guide are now included within every course template.

Managing the Course Menu

1. Expanding/Collapsing - starting at the top of the Menu, you will be able to turn on or off the expansion option of the Course Menu. This menu can expand or collapse. If it is collapsed, most likely you or your students will only see the Announcements page. Look for the tab with the arrow on the left side of the screen to expand the menu.
2. **Content Area** - click on the plus (+) sign on the top of the menu to gain understanding of the items on the expanded dropdown menu. The first item listed is Create Content Area. Typically, most of your course content will be located within a Content Area.

3. **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. This reduces the amount of scrolling and streamlines the appearance of the course area. Blank pages can include Mashups, links to course content, and file attachments.

4. **Tool Link** - a tool has a specific function such as a Discussion Board or Messages. Remember to use the drop down menu to select the specific tool when creating this type of link.

5. **Course Link** - a Course Link is a link internal to the course. Typically, Course Links are created within content areas rather than on the Course Menu.

6. **External Link** - This link allows you to link to content outside of Blackboard such as a specific Web page.

7. **Module Page** - Modules are items that include content, links, or tools that can be added to personalize a page. Users can browse for a module by category or search module titles and descriptions by keyword. A Homepage would be an example of a Module Page.

8. **Subheader and Divider** - These items help organize the Course Menu. For instance, I can add a Subheader entitled Additional Resources to organize the resource links: SCC Resources, Smarthinking, Technical Support, and the Instructor Guide. The Divider works similarly but it is a hardline rather than text.

9. **Moving items** - Through the use of drag and drop technology, items can easily be moved up or down on the Course Menu. On the top left of the Course Menu, there is a second method of reordering the items listed on the Course Menu. The drag and drop method provides the same function.

10. **Hide, show, or rename links** - The action links to the right of each item provide options to hide or show links, rename links and delete them.