

Blended learning using Blackboard in SML

What did/do you do?

Treating Blackboard as an expansion of a module can encourage students' to engage with the module content, with each other, and with the tutor.

Who is involved?

Franck Michel's use of Blackboard was commended in SML's ISR.

How do you do it?

Franck uses a number of methods to make Blackboard an extension of the French language classroom:

- adding links to podcasts and audio material (in the target language) that expand on academic content covered in timetabled sessions
- setting up small weekly quizzes for students. These can be grammar quizzes for language modules, or multiple choice questions for French History modules
- using Blackboard as a repository for information to support students during their year abroad. The effective approach here seems to be to 'think like a student' when organising and naming folder structures, so content is accessible to students with as few sub-folders as possible. Colour coding can help here, for example if all week 1 materials have blue headings across the Bb community, week 2 materials are red...

Why do you do it?

Using Bb to expand on content covered in timetabled sessions is an example of blended learning: online and face-to-face learning are considered as a whole, rather than as two separate things.

The quizzes aim to help students consolidate what they've learned that week. They can also be useful for revision: at the moment Franck finds that students use the quizzes more for revision before exams than for regular and ongoing consolidation, but tying each quiz to a given week's module content offers both possibilities.

Making information accessible makes it more likely to be used. This applies to all students but can be particularly important for those on a year abroad, so that information is available and findable when they need it.

Does it work?

Franck includes a Bb evaluation question on module evaluation questionnaires. This asks whether this module's Bb is better, as good as, or worse than other modules': student responses are largely positive.

Bb can also monitor how many times students use quizzes. Whilst the quizzes took a while to set up they can be rolled forward, so the time invested pays off.

Teaching and Learning Case Study

HaSS 'communicating with students' project, 2010/11

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Coherent Curriculum theme:

- Student Engagement
- Assessment and Feedback

Other keywords:

- eLearning
- Blackboard