Adding a Journal Activity to Your Blackboard Course

A journal within a Blackboard course is a collection of individual student postings, which may only be viewed by the student and the instructor. Like a blog, a journal is a tool for self-reflection with the added benefit of being private by default. In our Blackboard environment, a journal is a variation of the blog activity. Creating a single journal activity creates an individual journal for each user in the course at once. An instructor can choose to create group journals, but the entries will still remain private between teacher and student. The journal tool is one of the few tools available that allows students to add content to a Blackboard course web site.

To add a Journal Activity to Your Blackboard Course:

1. Click the Edit Mode switch to turn on editing.
2. Click on a Content Area in the Course Menu to the left of the page.
3. Navigate to the appropriate location within that area where the blog is to be added.
4. From the Add Interactive Tool tab, select Campus Pack Blog.
   Note: If Campus Pack Blog is not an option within the dropdown menu, it will be necessary to activate it under Control Panel→Customization→Tool Availability. Simply check the box under Available in Content Area and click [Submit].

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5. In **Blog Information** options:

   ![Blog Information Options](image)

   a. Give the journal activity a **Name**.

   b. Set **Make the blog available** to **Yes**, for students to access.

   c. **(Required)** Click on the radio button next to **Private Journal**. By default, the **Allow blog members to view Instructor's entries?** setting is set to **Yes**. This allows the instructor to write entries in the journal for all to see. This is a good way of communicating to all the students within the journal activity.

   d. Other settings are up to you. For certain foreign language courses (Japanese, Hebrew, or Arabic, for example) you can change the setting for **Text direction for blog content**.

6. In the **Members Settings** options:

   a. If you expect all students to write a journal, leave **Blog Members** set to **All course members**

   ![Member Settings](image)

   **Other Options**

   b. **Allow students to permanently delete blog entries?** - We recommend leaving this unchecked.
c. **Allow members to export their blog entries?** – This is up to you, but would allow students to keep a record of their work offline.

d. **Allow members of the blog to comment on pages?** - Choosing a commenting option allows others to comment on each blog entry without altering the entry. We recommend enabling **View Comments** and **Write Comments** for the entire class. Comments, like the journal entries, are only viewable between the instructor and individual student. Comments to the instructor’s entries are viewable by all journal members.

e. **Set date and time restrictions for editing the blog** - Use this option if you want to enforce due dates on work done in the blog. You do not have to set these dates.

7. In choosing to make the blog a "Private Journal" in step 5c above, the Non-Member Settings options are greyed out and disabled.

8. In the **Create Grade Book Entry** options:

   ![Image showing Create Grade Book Entry options]

   a. Check **Create a Grade Book entry for this blog** for a quick and easy way to automatically add a grade column for this journal in the Grade Center.

   b. Complete the **Entry Name, Points Possible** fields, and choose whether or not to **Display grades to students**.

9. Click the [OK] button when finished setting the options to create the journal.