Bb Quick Access Links—Why Bother?

A few menu items in your Blackboard shell have been added to enable instructors to provide “quick access” links to content located deeper within modules. They are: Readings, Lectures & Video, Assignments, and Assessments. The benefit to students of quick access links is that it allows them to easily find material based on the category (a lecture, a reading) of information instead of what topic or module it is associated with.

The classic example of this is of a student who is trying to locate a particular reading from earlier in the semester—but cannot recall what topic or module it was in. He can use the Readings link on the left hand navigation bar to quickly see all of the readings in the course and choose the one he wants instead of searching through each module.

Unfortunately, the use of quick access links does not come without a price. While it is easy to create a course link is a pointer to a content item deep in a module, the text embedded in the content item will not be displayed. Creating the links often requires a follow-on step of copying some text or creating additional links for attached files—and then remembering to update the quick access area if the source content changes.

Therefore, while quick access links are helpful to students in finding content, remembering to update them when you make module changes can be difficult. When undergoing course development ask yourself this question:

What content is a student likely to want to return to for review?

Let the answer to that question be your guide in determining how and what items to provide redundancy links for when propagating your content in the quick access areas.

Suggestions for Links in the LCB Shell Quick Access Areas

Lectures & Videos
- Direct links to all of the narrated lectures
- Links to other videos, such as YouTube videos that you are using. It can be convenient to use this area as a course-wide “dumping ground” for external videos instead of putting links in the modules.

Readings
- Direct links to all .pdf or .doc readings in the modules.
- Useful as a dumping ground for optional readings.

Quick Access Areas In Your Shell Include:
- Lectures & videos
- Readings
- Assignments
- Assessments

Create additional areas as needed for other types of content.

Golden Rule
Provide multiple ways for students to access course content.

TIP
The best time to add items to the quick access areas is after the module contents are complete. It should be one of the last steps in your course development.