



## Orientation to KCTCS Distance Learning

Welcome to KCTCS Distance Learning and the Blackboard Orientation. This Orientation will provide a general overview of KCTCS colleges' online classes and/or In-person classes that use Blackboard. Completion of this orientation will help familiarize you with the look and feel of a Blackboard class. The Orientation topics include Navigation, Tools, Communications, Tools, Breadcrumbs. You may click the tabs to the right to skip to different topics.

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### Navigation Bar



Every Blackboard course has a navigation menu on the left side of the page, which enables you to access various areas of the course. To access an area of the course, click the appropriate button, which will display the contents in the main Blackboard window. An example of buttons you may see in your course area:

#### Blackboard Navigation Buttons

##### Announcements

This is usually the first page you see each time you enter the course. The instructor uses this area to post important messages, updates, and reminders to students. Make sure you check this page regularly. By default, it will display announcements posted within the last seven days. If you want to see older announcements, click the "View Last 30 Days" or "View All" tabs on the top of the Announcements page.

##### Getting Started

Here you may find orientations to the course content, Blackboard and other information and resources necessary for completing the course module.

##### Syllabus

This area includes the course syllabus which provides information about course competencies and outcomes, ebooks and other reading materials, policies and requirements, lab procedures (if a lab is required), and other important information specific to the course module. You should always read the syllabus and familiarize yourself with the course requirements. If you have any questions, please contact your instructor.

##### Learning Content

Not all courses will have this button. Some may have buttons to individual units, chapters, assignments, etc. These folders generally contain all of the learning activities for student review and completion.

##### Communication

This area contains tools that may allow you to communicate asynchronously and synchronously with your instructor and classmates through tools such as email, discussion boards, chat, and a virtual classroom.

##### Resources

This area contains additional resources such as recommended schedules, online textbooks, handouts, and links to student resources.

##### View My Grades

Here you can check the status of the grades for your module.

##### Your Instructor(s)

This area contains information about your instructor including contact information, office hours, and any additional information they might choose to share.

##### Help and Support

This area contains help and support contacts. KCTCS Online offers a 24/7 Blackboard helpdesk to assist with any Blackboard or technical issues. You'll also find resources for course help here.







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## Tools



Every Blackboard course may have a Tools menu on the left side of the page, which enables you to access various tools for communicating, navigating, and viewing your course. Different courses will utilize different tools so it is good to get familiar with what may be available.

### Blackboard Tools

 Communication	Here you will find links to tools such as announcements, collaboration, discussion board, roster, and send email. This is just a sample of the available tools. These tools vary by course depending on instructor preferences.
 Course Tools	Here you will find links to tools such as my grades and user manual. This is just a sample of the available tools. These tools vary by course depending on instructor preferences.
 Course Map	Clicking this link will open a new browser window displaying a detailed view of the course, which may make it easier to navigate and/or search.
 Refresh	Clicking this link will refresh the navigation bar, but you should rarely, if ever, need to use this tool.
 Detail View	Clicking this link will display the tree view of the course, meaning navigation buttons as text with expandable folders, providing a more detailed view of your online course.
 Quick View	Clicking this link will return the display of the navigation bar to buttons.

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## Communications in the Module

Communication methods may vary from course to course, but here is a list and descriptions of several of the communication tools available.

### Blackboard Communication Tools

	Announcements	This link will connect you back to the announcement page of the course.
	Collaboration	The collaboration link will connect you to the Virtual Classroom and also a Live Chat area. Your instructor may or may not use these options. If they choose to use a virtual or live chat office hour, they will post this information with date and time, as an announcement and also via a course mail message.
	Discussion Boards	This link will connect you to a listing of all Discussion forums presented within your content materials.
	Messages	This is course e-mail option. You can e-mail your facilitator and other students within the course. All communication stays within the Blackboard course.
	Send Email	The Send E-mail option allows you to contact your instructors and classmass via email. This feature utilizes your KCTCS email address and will require you to utilize your KCTCS account periodically throughout the duration of the module.
	Live Classrooms	List of Wimba Live Classroom your instructor may announce Live Classroom appointments, if this is a chosen option to your course. You will access the required materials and programs within this link.
	Voice Boards	Voice Boards enable asynchronous group discussions using voice. An option for Live Voice Chat sessions with your instructor and other classmates.
	Voice Emails	Students and instructors can send vocal email messages to anyone, and recipients simply reply by sending their own voice email. Voice emails are particularly useful for role-playing activities and question and answer sessions. And to ensure security, instructors have full control of the distribution of every email. Voice Emails enable you to send emails using voice. Your facilitator may at times send out voice e-mails using this option.
	Wimba Podcaster	Podcasters enable instructors to create an RSS-enable podcast. Your instructor may choose to conduct a live podcast throughout the course module. You will be notified of dates and times if scheduled.
	Wimba Pronto	Wimba Pronto is the only instant messenger designed exclusively for education by educators to advance and promote learning objectives. Pronto is an IM that is synced with all the modules you are taking in Blackboard. You can IM students and instructors in all courses you are enrolled in.

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## Breadcrumb

[VLI MASTER IT1321 HTML CONCEPTS \(VLI MASTER IT1321\)](#) > [LEARNING CONTENT](#) > UNIT 1: HTM

In addition to the navigation bar, Blackboard includes a "breadcrumb" or "crumb trail" (shown above) that gives you an alternate means for navigating your Blackboard course. You will see links just above the main display window in Blackboard listing the links you've followed. To follow your steps up one level from the page displayed simply click the last bread crumb link.

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