

CITL Course Template Tour Transcript

NIU educators have the option to request a Blackboard course template from the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning. This template utilizes a weekly folder structure to help you organize your content and assessments. And everything in this template is fully customizable to better suit your individual needs.

The template includes the following:

- A welcome page that contains information to help your students get started
- An instructor page where you can introduce yourself
- A folder for your course syllabus and schedule
- A folder with links to student support resources and services, such as to the University Writing Center
- An instructor folder containing resources to help you build your course
- And a weekly module structure to organize your materials and assessments

While every course is unique, it's a good practice to always include certain pieces of information. This template models those foundational elements, and you will also find placeholders for information you should supply.

The Welcome page is one of these customizable areas. There are placeholders for you to type in your specific course learning objectives. You can also customize the getting started section to advise your students on their first steps. The template includes a pre-prepared accessibility statement, and you can fill in the specific meeting times for your course.

The next page you'll see is the instructor page. Here, you can welcome students and provide a little background information about yourself. Again, if you want to add, delete or modify anything, just look for the 3 dots and click edit. For example, if I had a different area of my course reserved for my communication policy, I could click the 3 dots, click Edit, and then I could delete or change any of the text.

The syllabus and course schedule folder contains a number of items. If you click on the course syllabus document, you'll be prompted to add this material. Other areas, like the academic integrity page, may not require any modification from you. You'll want to check each area to determine your needs.

The student support folder contains Ultra documents with information regarding university campus services. Students will be directed to use Blackboard Assist, a tool located on Blackboard's base navigation panel, where they can view the most current list of student support services.

After this introductory information, you'll see the course learning modules. Each module represents 1 week of coursework. Everything students need for week are housed in that folder. We recommend that you include meaningful names and dates for ease of navigation.

The template provides a sample learning module to give you an example of how you can organize your course materials. In the sample module, content is presented using three Ultra documents. The learning module also contains three assessments: an assignment, a discussion board, and a quiz. Typically, students will access content in the order in which it appears, so consistent, chronological order may help you stay organized.

In the sample learning module, the first Ultra document is called Module Introduction and Objectives. Though it is not required, it is a good practice to start each learning module with a document that highlights your expectations for the week. You can even include a brief video or paragraph to introduce new subject matter content. The document is also a good place to list learning objectives, required tasks, or specific assignments. After you are finished reviewing the Sample Module, be sure to delete it from your course or course shell.

The course template includes 16 learning modules – one for each week of the course. If your course is not a standard 16-week course, be sure to delete the learning modules you don't need.

Inside the learning modules, you will find document placeholders. This is similar to the sample module setup, but you are ultimately going to determine the content and structure of each module. To save time and to create a consistent feel, you may wish to consider building one full learning module that will serve as a prototype for the other modules to follow.

Ideally, everything a student needs for the week should be located within the learning module. If that is not possible, be sure to include clear instructions for where to locate the material. Finally, the last item in the template is a folder that's hidden from student view. Inside the Instructor Support folder, you will find links to information and tutorials that can help you build your course. You'll want to keep this folder hidden, as you may wish to refer to it periodically throughout the course

This concludes the tour of the CITL template. If you would like to schedule a consultation with a CITL team member to discuss how the template may meet your needs, please visit the CITL webpage at www.niu.edu/citl .