# Blackboard Tips & Tricks

Customizing Your Course Shell

✓ **Add, rearrange, rename, hide and/or remove navigational items** in your course.

1. Add new navigational items using the + icon in the upper left corner of the screen and selecting the correct type of item (e.g. Content Area, Tool Link or Web Link).
2. Rearrange the order of links by dragging them and dropping them to the desired location.
3. Rename, hide or delete an item by clicking on the gray circle to the right of it to expand and select the correct option.
4. Content areas without any content in them are automatically hidden from students, as indicated by the gray box to the right of the name.
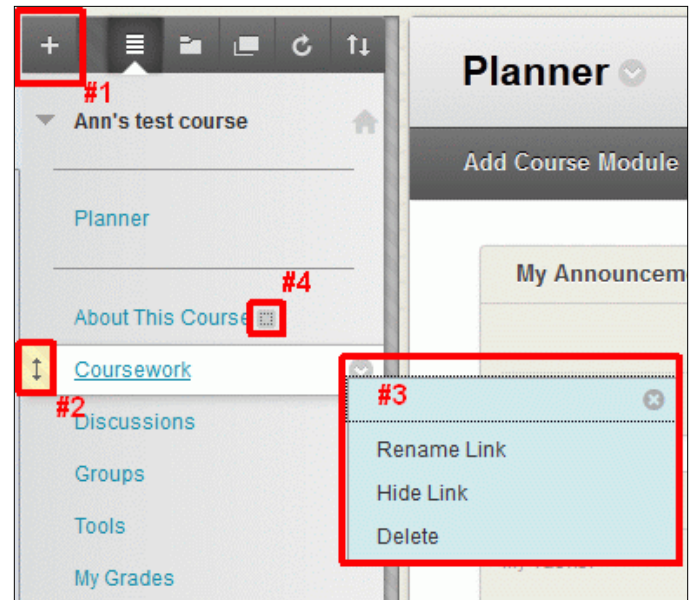
✓ Manage the tools your students will utilize in the course, showing only those you will actively be using and hiding those you will not.

- Click on the "Tools" course navigational link.
- Click on the "Hide Link" button to hide a tool. When a tool is hidden it will be grayed out and a "Show Link" button will appear beside it.
- Click on the "Show Link" button to make a hidden tool available.

NOTE: If you hide a tool here, students will be unable to see or to access that tool if it is included as a Tool Link in the course navigation. For example, if you hide the Discussion Board and/or My Grades tool(s) here, the Discussions and/or My Grades link(s) in the default course navigation will *not* work.

✓ **Change the look and feel** via: Control Panel > Customization > Teaching Style. There you will find options to:

1. **Select Course Structure** (#2) – If the default course navigation simply doesn't work for you, consider using one of the Blackboard Course

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10/10/2012

Structures to provide completely different course navigational links. ***CAUTION:*** *Applying a Course Structure will **add** all of the links in that structure to the links already in the course by default, creating duplicate navigational buttons, often with different labels. There is **no "undo"** option here. Applying a course structure will **require you to edit your course navigation to remove duplicates**.*

2. **Select Course Theme** (#3) – choose a theme to customize the color scheme and "wallpaper" for a course. You can also change the theme using the "quarter color wheel" icon in the upper right corner of the Blackboard course, just to the left of the "Edit Mode" button. Be cautious about using the very dark backgrounds as they can present display issues (e.g. reading black text on a black background) in some browsers with some of the building blocks used in Blackboard.

3. **Select Menu Style** (#4) – choose from a variety of background color options for text navigation. Choose the button shape as well as color if you would rather use buttons for your navigation.

4. **Select Banner** (#7) – Banners (.jpg format) appear at the top of the Planner screen. Create the banner first, and then add it to your course. ITS recommends keeping banners relatively "short" in order to avoid forcing students to scroll unnecessarily to view the content on the Planner screen.

Tutorial: http://www.siue.edu/its/bb/fac_staff/bb_step4i.shtml

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