

Blackboard Tip of the Week

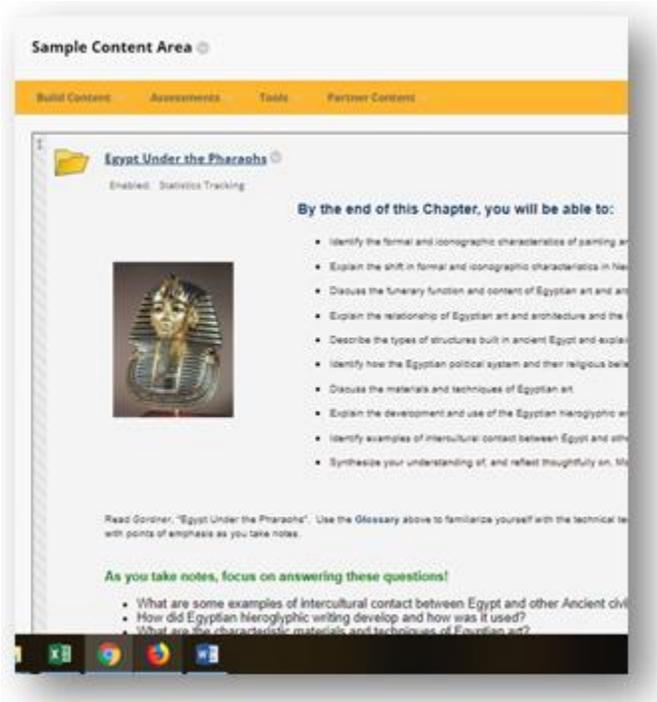
May 30, 2019 Mark R Petersen

Bb Learn 3500.0.5

Folders perform multiple important functions in *Blackboard*. They give you the ability to group several related items, such as blank pages, files, tools, links, etc., that you want or need to keep together. As such, Folders represent a tool for ensuring a well-organized course. By enabling you to create coherent clusters of related course content, Folders also offer you an effective means of organizing course content in such a way that your students can readily grasp, for example, what work is due or required, what your expectations of them are, etc.

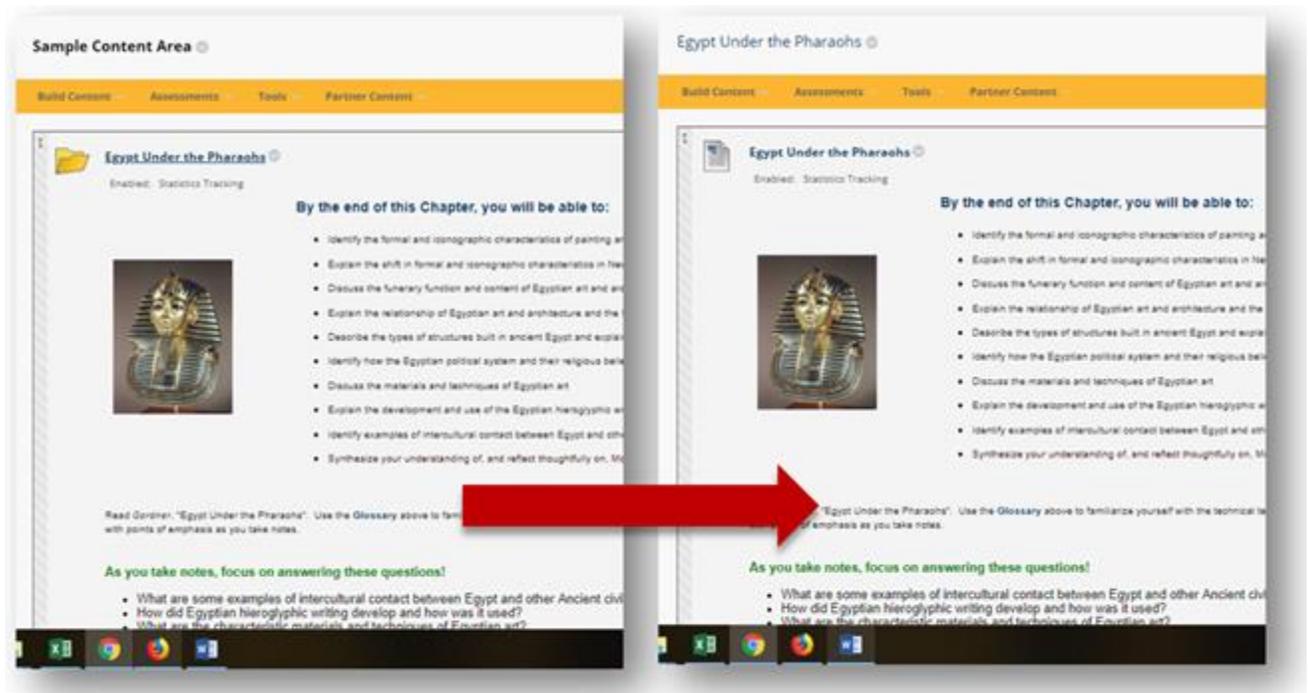
That said, it is often the case that instructors use Folders in *Bb* in a way that runs counter to their intended purpose, or does not take full advantage of their features.

A common error is to place instructional content **outside** of a Folder, which is designed instead to be a **container** of content:



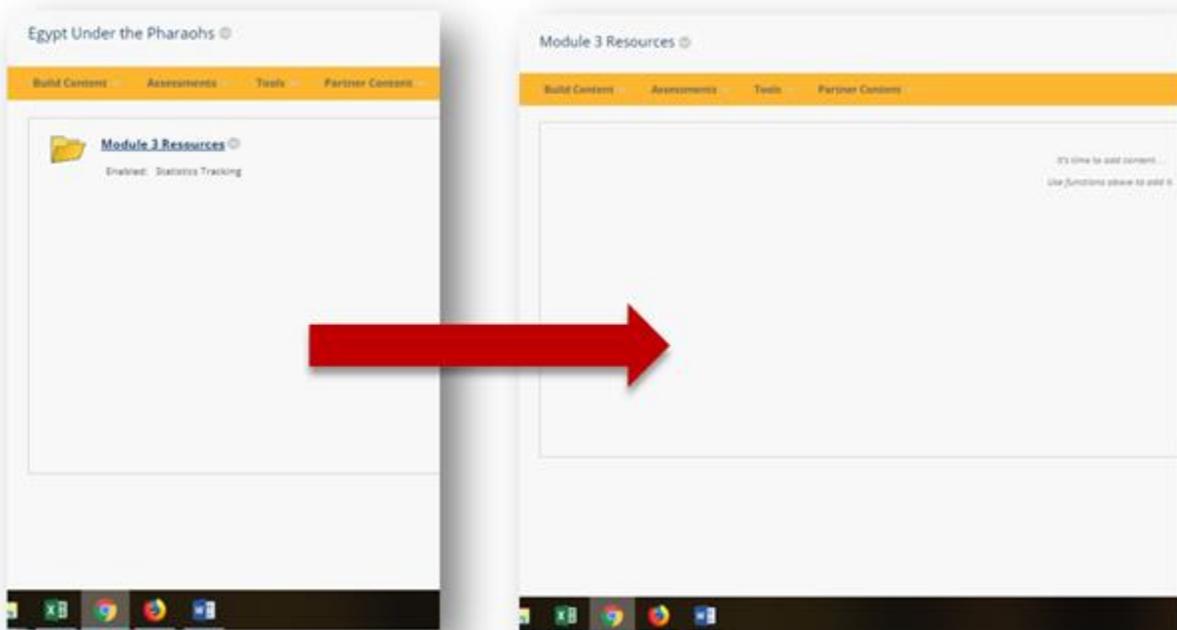
The Fix, putting instructional content **inside** the folder, honors the Folder's function, but it also takes into account a change in how *Blackboard* appears to users: simply put, more and more users are navigating and working in *Bb* using mobile devices, in addition to laptop and desktop computers; and mobile devices **see Blackboard** differently than do laptops and desktops. One important way in which mobile device users' **view** is different is that they can not see any content that is placed outside of folders. Since HVCC students rely increasingly on mobile devices to peruse course content, they would not be able to view pertinent content that is placed outside of Folders, and they might miss out on important information. By placing all content inside of Folders, you will ensure that your students don't encounter this pitfall.

Similarly, it occasionally happens that there is content outside of the Folder, and that content is also duplicated inside the Folder:



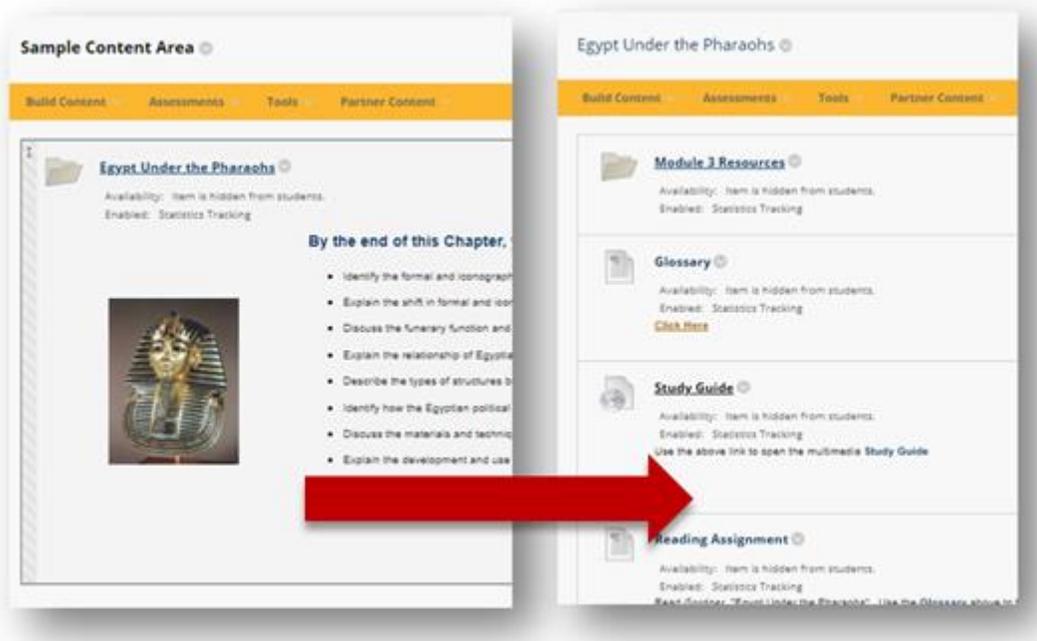
As this can cause considerable confusion for your students, the remedy, again, is to make sure that content is placed *inside* of Folders.

On the flip side, some instructors create Folders that, when users navigate into them, don't contain content:



Whether this result is intended or not, it produces a Folder without a function, which can be another source of confusion for users. As previously, this outcome can be avoided by using Folders as what they were designed to be: **containers** of content.

As containers of content, Folders count among their many benefits their ability to help you control student access to your course content. A common practice is to place the content for an online course Module inside a folder, and then either to make the folder unavailable so that students can't access it, or to set display duration dates for it, which establishes a strict time-frame within which students can access it. However, some instructors take the extra step of also restricting student access to each item inside the Folder:



This is unnecessary! If students can't see or access a Folder in *Blackboard*, they will **not** be able to see or access its contents, so you can avoid the redundant process of also making the contents unavailable to students (**Note:** in our most recent versions of *Bb*, you don't need to **edit a Folder** to make it available/unavailable—you can simply select the chevron button for the Folder, and then select **Make Unavailable**, or **Make Unavailable**, from the pop-up menu that appears).

Use the following link to view previous Bb tips of the week: **[BBTOTW-Archive](#)**

As always, please feel free to contact the Distance Learning Office (629-7070/DLHelp@hvcc.edu) if you have any questions about this.