This first newsletter of 2012 focuses on Ferris’ change from Vista to Blackboard 9.1. If you want to teach online this fall, you must have completed your training in the new LMS and gone through a check-off process with your mentor. The bulleted list across this page seeks to clarify some of the bewildering terminology associated with the transition, and articles on page 2 discuss the imminence of the change and the reasons for the required training. If you haven’t gone through the training yet, you'll be interested in the training options discussed on page 3 and in the many resources, described on page 6, that you will have as you go through your training.

Two additional articles are related to Blackboard 9.1: On page 4, Jon shows us how to use Rubrics and Wikis to great effect; and on page 8, I discuss the challenge of using Course Reports to help us keep track of student attendance as required by the U.S. Department of Education.

Of particular interest to us in Languages and Literature (is that still our name?) is the article on page 7, in which Sandy and Roxanne comment about departmental changes related to online: We’ve received approval for two faculty positions that include online teaching experience, and we’ve gained a lot of control over who gets seats in our online courses. And of interest to everyone at Ferris who teaches online is the article (pages 3-4) by Deb Thalner, who recounts the progress being made to that ensure all our online students are ready for online learning.

Finally, our own Betty Stolarek, Faculty in Residence at FCTL, is hosting a panel discussion on March 23 on “Building Community in Online Classrooms”: See page 7 for details. And Jody is hosting a new L and L onLine column, “What Works for Me…”: See page 5.

~Elaine

Names, Names, Names!

- Ferris is switching from the learning management system (LMS) Vista (also called Web CT) to the LMS Blackboard 9.1.
- The terms "Blackboard 9.1," "Learn," "Blackboard Learn 9.1," "Bb Learn 9.1," and "Bb 9.1" all refer to the same LMS.
- "FerrisConnect" is Ferris' brand name for its online presence, regardless of which LMS we use to deliver our online courses.
- "FerrisConnect" is also the name of the Ferris web page that provides information about the transition from Vista to Blackboard 9.1.
- During the transition to Blackboard 9.1, online courses taught in Vista are accessed through a link called "FerrisConnect" and those taught in Blackboard 9.1 are accessed through a link called "Learn."
- Once the transition to Blackboard 9.1 is complete, the link to all online courses will be called "FerrisConnect."
- Eventually, we probably won’t use the Blackboard 9.1 terms any more frequently than we use the term "Vista."

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Changing Times

This is a special year at Ferris. All faculty who teach fully online, blended, or enhanced courses are changing the learning management system (LMS) they use to deliver their courses, from Web CT (Vista) to Blackboard 9.1 (Bb 9.1).

The transition will be complete at the beginning of the fall semester this year, when Vista will no longer be available.

Ferris’s contract with Vista is expiring, and after diligent research and input from Ferris stakeholders, Bb 9.1 was chosen by FAB, E-MAT, CPTS, and others charged with the decision.

Bb 9.1 is not what we’re used to. On the one hand, it has many more options available than Vista has; on the other hand, a small number of basic features we have come to expect from Vista just aren’t there.

We can certainly voice our requests for enhancements and changes to Blackboard. Ferris has even set up a Blackboard “hot(online)”: http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/mytechsupport/ferrisconnect/send_blackboard_feedback.htm/.

But the time has come for all of us to become proficient in Bb 9.1. The in-house training has gotten better and better; face-to-face training sessions are frequent, and by March 5, the fully online training course will be available again. For more information about your training options, see page 3, and for the complete training schedule, go to Ferris’ “FerrisConnect” page: www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/mytechsupport/ferrisconnect/.

You will be assigned your own mentor as you go through your training, and you’ll have a tremendous amount of other support.

For example, two FCTL instructional technologists, Jackie Hughes and Andrew Peterson, are waiting to answer your questions or to sit down with you and work through any Bb 9.1 issues you may have. Jackie, who is Coordinator of Instructional Technology as well as a computer programmer, is especially good at finding ways in Bb 9.1 to do the things you’re used to doing in Vista. Call Jackie or Andrew at x3826.

See page 6 for more about the available training support.

Required Bb 9.1 Training?

Some faculty have responded negatively to the requirement that they must demonstrate certain skills in a Bb 9.1 training course before they are given a Bb 9.1 shell for a regular Ferris class. Even early adopters in the pilot of Bb 9.1 must demonstrate these skills, which involves going through a check-off process with an assigned mentor.

A letter distributed earlier this semester by the transition core team (Gloria Lukusa, training coordinator; Robbie Teahen, overseer of the project from Academic Affairs; and Mary Holmes, LMS conversion project manager) listed several reasons for this requirement. One is that feedback after the pilot indicated that some faculty used “few features of the new platform.” Another is that Blackboard has updated Bb 9.1 since both the first and second pilot: New features, new skill requirements.

But the most important reason the letter gives for requiring the training is this: “This concern about faculty preparation was raised by many faculty throughout our surveys and focus groups.” Research conducted in 2011 indicated that faculty themselves were not satisfied with either their own or other instructors’ preparation to deliver online courses (March 2011 Faculty Survey of Online Perspectives, www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/academicaffairs/online).

The sum of the research done during this time led E-MAT to propose 11 recommendations for the future of e-learning at Ferris, which were later approved by the Faculty Senate and the Provost. The goals of these recommendations were to

1. Enhance the quality of the online learning services, programs and courses at Ferris
2. Create a more effective infrastructure for support of high-quality online learning
3. Position the University for its future in online learning
4. Improve the efficiency of both the delivery and support of e-learning at Ferris.

The second of the 11 recommendations was to

Advance and support faculty effectiveness and instructional quality in online learning.

(For the rest of the E-Mat Recommendations to the Provost, go to http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/academicaffairs/online. )

On page 3 of this newsletter, you will read about the progress being made in meeting the first of the 11 recommendations, which the 2010-2011 research indicated that Ferris faculty also wanted:

**Recommendation 1:** Develop and implement a system whereby each student who registers for a fully online course has demonstrated minimum proficiency in skills required for successful online learning.

Requiring training in Bb 9.1 is therefore part of a larger goal of the institution, inspired by faculty themselves: To ensure the quality of online learning at Ferris.
**Bb 9.1 Training Options**

You may take face-to-face or fully online training in Bb 9.1. Both types of training are divided into two phrases; if you want to teach fully online courses, you must complete both phases. If you take face-to-face training, each phase requires attendance at a three-hour workshop plus completion of a check-off process with your mentor. If you take fully online training, the training course site is divided into the two phrases, which you may complete one at a time or together, at your own pace, after which you go through the check-off process with your mentor.

Remember: To teach online this fall, you must have completed your training and gone through a check-off process with your mentor.

### Course Description

**Course Description for Phase 1:** This first phase of the Blackboard 9.1 training course introduces the Blackboard 9.1 environment and highlights some of the instructional tools that enhance student learning and save time for **Web-Enhanced Course**

**Designers/Instructors.** Phase 1 is also a requirement for those wishing to complete Phase 2, for **Blended and Fully Online Course**  

**Designers/Instructors.** You will learn how to navigate your course and to develop content for it; you will also learn how to use these tools: Customization, Announcements, Course Calendar, Messages, Send Email, Syllabus, Glossary, and Grade Center. In addition, you will learn how to connect to FLITE library resources and to apply Best Practices to your online courses.

**Course Description for Phase 2:** This second phase of the Blackboard 9.1 training course highlights the course management tools that enhance student learning and save time for **Blended/Fully Online Course Designers/Instructors.** You will learn how to use these tools: Discussion Board; Rubrics; Collaboration; Contacts; Groups; Tasks; Journals; Blogs; Wikis; Tests, Surveys, and Pools; Packages and Utilities, and Evaluation; and Grade Center (advanced).

### Face-to-Face Training

**Phase 1**

**Schedule for the next Phase 1 training workshops:**
- Monday, March 12, 2012 - 2:00 - 5:00 PM - FLITE 110  
- Friday, April 13, 2012 - 2:00 - 5:00 PM - FLITE 110

**Phase 2**

**Schedule for the next Phase 2 training workshop:**
- Thursday, March 22, 2012 - 2:00 - 5:00 PM - FLITE 110

### Online Training

The fully online training course has been under revision and will be available after March 5.

Please go the FerrisConnect web page to find out more about the training process and to register for your training: FerrisConnect.

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**A Pilot in Response to Faculty Concerns: Are Our Students Ready for Online?**

~ Deb Thalner

We all want Ferris students to be successful in life and in the classroom. But how can we help them be successful in the online class environment?

The first step is to ensure our students are prepared for the demands of online classes. In a 2011 survey of Ferris faculty teaching in FerrisConnect, 81% of faculty either agreed or strongly agreed that a student orientation should be required before students can begin an online course, and 76% of faculty either agreed or strongly agreed that students should be able to demonstrate that they have the capability to be an effective online learner through a pre-assessment (March 2011 Faculty Survey of Online Perspectives, [www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/academicaffairs/online](http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/academicaffairs/online)).

To address this significant faculty concern, the E-Learning Management Advisory Team (E-MAT) focused the first of its 11 recommendations for online learning on students:

**Recommendation 1:** Develop and implement a system whereby each student who registers for a fully online course has demonstrated minimum proficiency in skills required for successful online learning. ([EMAT Recommendations to the Provost, http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/academicaffairs/online/](http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/academicaffairs/online/)).

Once the recommendations were approved by the Faculty Senate and the Provost, a sub-committee of E-MAT began working to create a system to assess student readiness for online learning.

In summer 2012, we on the sub-committee will pilot the assessment system we have created.

### What will we be assessing?

We plan on assessing both “soft” and “hard” skills. For the soft skills, we will use a survey tool developed by SmarterMeasure to assess student learning readiness, which includes learning styles, life factors, and personal attributes. The “hard” skills are technical abilities our students must frequently employ in our new Blackboard 9.1 platform. These include, for example,

- Uploading a document for an assignment submission
- Posting a discussion board thread or reply

(continuation on page 4)
Who will be in the pilot?

Students in the pilot will be those registered in Blackboard 9.1 classes whose instructors have agreed to participate in the pilot. Those instructors will help orient their students to the pilot by giving them a brief assignment (we provide the simple directions) and telling them to complete the assignment during the first week of class in a special course shell we will have provided.

Faculty participants will not have to follow up on the assessment with their students: We will send faculty a report detailing their students’ completion of the assessment.

What will the assessment consist of?

Within their special course shells, students will complete the assignment given by the faculty. Before students are assessed on the “hard skills,” they can learn those skills by reading the explanations or viewing videos we provide. They will also complete a SmarterMeasure survey on their “soft skills” and then attach the survey’s .pdf report in the Assignments module. Finally, students will go to the Discussion Board and respond to a post in a discussion thread.

How will we know if we are successful?

A survey will be sent to all faculty and students participating in the pilot, asking questions that will help us determine if the assessment seemed to help in students’ preparation for taking an online class. In addition, we will review statistics related to the activities the students completed in their special course shells as well as review the SmarterMeasure survey instrument. Our hope is to refine the student assessment process based on the feedback and data we review.

Whom do I contact if I have questions or if I want to participate in the pilot?

We would like as many summer students in this pilot as possible, so if you are teaching a course this summer in Blackboard 9.1, we hope you will participate. The subcommittee members responsible for the pilot are Elise Gramza, Cheryl Cluchey, Spence Tower, Elaine McCullough, Steve Costello, Emily Mitchell, Andrew Peterson, and Deb Thalner. For additional information, contact any member listed, or if you would like to participate in the pilot, contact Deb Thalner at thalnerdl@ferris.edu, or 810-429-1122.

Evaluation and Feedback in Blackboard Learn

~Jonathan Taylor

As I’ve begun to use Blackboard Learn for all my courses, including fully online courses, I’ve found the tools for evaluation and feedback quite effective; two I find especially useful are Rubrics and Wikis. And they all link to the powerful Grade Center.

Rubrics

Both FerrisConnect [Vista] and Learn have Rubrics (check-sheets that make it easier to grade assignments and discussion), but Learn adds several advancements over the tool in FerrisConnect. First, you can move rubrics between courses in Learn, which is possible only with a whole-course transfer in FerrisConnect. Like before, a rubric can be assigned to an assignment or discussion, but in Learn, you can also assign it to certain kinds of test questions and to the Wikis tool.

There are also several options for the scoring scheme. You can use straight points, as before, or you can use percentages, point ranges, or no points at all. This last feature is great for giving feedback on drafts; in the past, I created several zero-points rows to accomplish this in FerrisConnect. Instead of giving only predetermined feedback, in the new tool you can also type in individual feedback in each cell you select.

Wikis

My students use the Wikis tool to write team papers in my class. A wiki has the same online editing interface that many of the other tools have; it’s easy for students to format text, add links, insert pictures and videos, attach files, etc. Students can create pages and edit each other’s pages in the wiki, and Groups can have their own Wikis.

The tool really shines when it comes time to evaluate the work. I can see each student’s individual contributions to the Wiki. There are summary statistics, but I can look at every student’s wiki sessions to see exactly what they changed for each time they logged in. Students can see a record of their own contributions as well.

Grade Center

What ties all this together is the Grade Center. This tool is robust and takes some time to learn, but it is powerful, and I greatly prefer it over the Gradebook in FerrisConnect. I learned to use it primarily through our Atomic Learning videos:

http://www.ferris.edu/ferrisconnect/atomiclearning/atomic_learning_login.htm [See page 6 for complete login instructions.]

There are too many features to discuss here, but one of the most useful parts is the Needs Grading page. As you might guess, all items that need grading, including assignments, tests, discussions, wikis, etc., flow to this page. It’s a single inbox that shows you everything that needs grading, and it has good filtering tools as well. I can quickly see all the submissions for one student, one assignment or discussion, or one category, such as all discussions.

Another powerful tool is Smart Views. You can easily create multiple views of your grade book, based on any criteria you can think of. You can even create custom queries. Once you create a Smart View, you can designate it a Favorite, and it will appear in your menu as a sub category of the Grade Center.

If I’m doing a round of conferences with students and we’re going over two assignments and I also want to look at their attendance, I can create a Smart View with those three columns, and it’s easy to get the information I need with just a click.

Together these tools have made it more efficient to provide feedback to students. The items I need to grade are collected in one place, the Rubrics tool makes it easy to provide quality feedback, the Wikis tool makes it easy to evaluate team efforts, and the Grade Center ties it all together and makes it easy to find student information.
To keep students in the loop, what works for me is . . .

. . . clearly defining days when I’ll be on FerrisConnect so students know when they can find me there. For instance, I might say, “I always check FC often on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday – but if you need to reach me on other days, call or Gmail instead to get a quick response.”

   -- Erin Weber

. . . sending the class a brief e-mail or announcement twice a week, even if it’s just to say, “You’re doing a great job on this activity.” It lets them know I’m there and keeps us in contact. Also, providing brief Tegrity overviews of assignments lets them hear my voice and understand project instructions more fully.

   -- Roxanne Cullen

. . . including an attendance component in discussion board scoring. To get full points for discussion, students must post on three or more days (of their choice) per week and also meet a “first post” deadline. This helps them engage in real conversation and form a habit of regular log-ins. I also call everyone periodically to touch base.

   -- Jody Ollenquist

. . . holding individual grading conferences. Students have to complete their work by their appointment deadline, and the conference gives them a chance to get answers to any questions about the course. The student and I get a more accurate impression of each other as people and a sense of human “presence” that can be missing when we communicate only in writing.

   -- Jon Taylor

. . . using the improved grading center in Blackboard Learn to create a weighted grade column (for papers carrying different weights like 10%, 20%, or 30% of the total course grade) so that students always know how much they have earned so far toward the total course grade. In the past they kept asking me about this, though the syllabus had the formula for them to use. So far, since I integrated this column, they have all expressed positive feedback.

   -- Dan Ding

About the OTLC

The 2011-12 members of the Online Teaching and Learning Committee are Jon Taylor, Chair; Steve Fox, Recorder; Jody Ollenquist; Roxanne Cullen; Elaine McCullough; Eric Warner; and Linda Sherwood. The OTLC is an open committee and welcomes department members who wish to participate. An unofficial member this year is Erin Weber.

The mission of the Online Teaching Committee is to promote and facilitate online teaching within the Department of Languages and Literature, act as a resource for best practices, support the use of online technology in the classroom, develop policy guidelines for offering courses online, and represent the department’s online interests to other University bodies.

We meet at 11:00 am on the third Thursday of the month, publish a newsletter twice a semester, and host department workshops and campus-wide activities related to online instruction.
Bb 9.1 Training Support

Throughout your Bb 9.1 training, you will find many resources to support your efforts.

I. FERRISCONNECT. When the first pilot of Bb 9.1 was begun in January, 2011, Ferris started a web page called FerrisConnect, which provides information about the transition from Vista to Blackboard 9.1. Some things you'll find on the web page are:

- Descriptions of both online and face-to-face training in Bb 9.1
- The Bb 9.1 training schedule
- Training registration forms
- Transition information for both faculty and students

Here is the link to the home page: FerrisConnect.

II. BLACKBOARD. Here are links to three excellent training resources from Blackboard Inc.:

Blackboard Learn Instructor Guide: http://library.blackboard.com/ref/a86c3648-80a5-43cc-8fed-b3f5d24518ce/index.htm

Blackboard on Demand video tutorials: http://ondemand.blackboard.com


III. ATOMIC LEARNING. Ferris recently purchased Atomic Learning modules, which are brief tutorials (about a minute long) on hundreds of kinds of software, including Blackboard 9.1. In Atomic Learning, you'll find 176 Blackboard 9.1 tutorials for faculty and 60 for students.

To get to these tutorials, go to MyFSU and find "Atomic Learning" on the left side of the screen, under "Login Links." After clicking on the link and logging in with your regular Ferris user name and password, you'll be taken to the Atomic Learning home page. Go to a section called "Browse Available Training and Projects." Be sure "Tutorials" is checked and then click on the down arrow next to "Applications."

Soon you'll see a list of the many software applications for which tutorials are available. File that information for future reference! Now scroll down to "Blackboard," click on it, and hit Enter. On the next list, click on the item that begins "Blackboard 9.1." Then you'll be taken to a list of 4 collections of tutorials on Blackboard 9.1. Three of the collections are for faculty and one is for students. You'll want to begin with "Blackboard 9.1 Instructor Training," but notice that "Advanced Training" and "Grade Center Training" are available and remember that you can refer your students to some of the tutorials in the student collection.

If you stay logged in to Atomic Learning, in the future you can access a list of all the Bb 9.1 tutorials Atomic Learning has to offer by clicking on this link: Blackboard 9.1 Instructor Training.

IV. PEOPLE.

- The core team for the transition:
  - Gloria Lukusa-Barnett: Bb 9.1 Training Coordinator (x2842)
  - Mary Holmes, Bb 9.1 Project Manager (x2067)
  - Roberta Teahen, Associate Provost (x3805)
  - Todd Stanislav, Director, FCTL (x3541)
  - Jackie Hughes, Coordinator of Instructional Technology, FCTL (x5439)

- Faculty trainers in every college:
  - Eunice Beck (UC, x3772)
  - James Bender (COEHS, x5080)
  - Allison Bernknopf (COP, x4612)
  - Patrick English (CET, x2356)
  - Lisa Eshback (COB, x3197)
  - Clifton Franklund (CAS, x2552)
  - Kim Hancock (COP, x2234)
  - Harvey Hanna (CAS, x3673)
  - Gloria Lukusa-Barnett (UC, x2842)
  - Sheila MacEachron (CAHS, x2319)
  - Tara McCrackin, (KCAD, x2787)
  - Peter Raphael (COB, x1734)
  - Randy Vance (MCO, x2092)

- Two members of the OTLC in Languages and Literature:
  - Jon Taylor (x5853)
  - Elaine McCullough (x5875)

- All the people at FCTL, in its new location on the 4th floor of FLITE. Call them at x3826, or go online to http://www.ferris.edu/fctl.

- All the people at TAC. Now available 24/7, TAC is at (231) 591-4822 or at its toll-free number (877) 779-4822. Also, at the TAC website, http://www.ferris.edu/techsupport, you can chat with the support operator.

- Your mentor, who will be assigned to you when you begin your training.

Remember: To teach online in the fall, you must have completed your training and gone through a check-off process with your mentor.
In the past, CPTS has registered all online students and maintained a cumbersome waitlist for the many students who cannot get into the online course of their choice. But, as Roxanne notes, “The Department of Languages and Literature has been working with CPTS to come up with a less chaotic process for enrolling students in fully online classes. CPTS will register students who are in fully online programs ONLY. We will pre-register main campus students who have designated [academic] need for a fully online upper level English. All other main campus students will be directed to take face to face or hybrid versions of the course. In order to accommodate these ‘few’ students with [academic] need, for instance, students who are away on internship but must take the course to graduate, we are asking for you to send us their names prior to the beginning of fall registration, March 23.”

Languages and Literature is one of those areas: We do not have the capacity to meet students’ demand for online sections, particularly in English 321, 325 and 311. However, according to Sandy, this spring we received approval from the Provost and President to post “two 9-month positions (ABD/doctorate in rhet/comp; exp teaching upper-level professional, business, and/or technical writing; experience w/online)” which should help us meet this demand for the coming year, after which we hope to convert these positions into tenure track.

But we have reservations about which students we admit to online courses. As you read in the February 13 email from Roxanne, “The demand for online is ever increasing and our first priority is to provide online seats for those who are not physically able to be here on campus. We also have data that shows that the likelihood of a student earning a D,F, or W increases to nearly 25% for main campus students enrolling in fully online sections.”

Because of these two issues (lack of faculty and poor performance by certain students in fully online classes), once we have provided online seats to those who can’t be on campus, our primary goal should not be to provide online seats to all students who want them but to provide seats as best we can to students who are ready for online learning. And now we have a way to do that.

In the past, CPTS has registered all online students and maintained a cumbersome waitlist for the many students who cannot get into the online course of their choice. But, as Roxanne notes, “The Department of Languages and Literature has been working with CPTS to come up with a less chaotic process for enrolling students in fully online classes. CPTS will register students who are in fully online programs ONLY. We will pre-register main campus students who have designated [academic] need for a fully online upper level English. All other main campus students will be directed to take face to face or hybrid versions of the course. In order to accommodate these ‘few’ students with [academic] need, for instance, students who are away on internship but must take the course to graduate, we are asking for you to send us their names prior to the beginning of fall registration, March 23.”

With this new control of who enrolls in our online courses, we can direct those at-risk, main-campus students away from fully online courses and, as Roxanne says, “to hybrid and fully face to face sections where they perform better.”

Further, with two new positions and this new control over our online enrollments, the department should be able to balance the demands with the needs of our students.

Building Community in an Online Class

Our own Betty Stolarek, now Scholar in Residence at the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, is hosting a panel discussion related to online teaching as one in FCTL’s series: Discussions on Teaching and Learning.

On Friday, March 23, from 1:00-2:30 in FLITE 133, please join panelists Beverly DeMarr and Spence Tower (Management), Sheila MacEachron (Nuclear Medicine), and Elaine McCullough and Jonathan Taylor (Languages and Literature) as they discuss ways to build community in an online class. And come prepared to share your own ideas, too!
Keeping Track of Attendance in Bb 9.1

You may recall the particular emphasis the Federal government is now putting on tracking weekly attendance in online courses. Robbie Teahen’s article “How to Document Attendance in the Online Environment” in this newsletter’s December 4, 2010, edition spelled out the most pressing reason: “With existing federal financial aid guidelines, universities that receive aid in support of their students must be able to document students’ engagement with the academic content of their program. Recent actions of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), United States Department of Education (USDOE), have explicitly driven home this point. (See the “Attendance Matters” article in the November [2010] Academic Affairs Newsletter.)” Robbie also noted several ways we could keep weekly attendance in our online courses, one of which was to “Assure that each online course has at least one substantive contribution by each student each week (not all contributions need to be graded).”

In Vista, an easy first step in tracking all students’ attendance was to click on Tracking>Student Tracking and then to select a date range; on a single screen you could then see a list of all the students in the class, plus an array of information about their participation, including the number of times they logged on during the period, the amount of time they were logged on, and the different course modules they spent time in. You could also select a particular student from the list and get detailed information about that student’s course participation. However, you would still have to take a second step and check your grade book or other course module, such as the Discussion Board, to verify that each student had made “at least one substantive contribution” each week.

But that first step in keeping track of student attendance is not as easy in Bb 9.1 as it was in Vista. Nor does Bb 9.1 provide you with as helpful an overview of all students’ participation as that available in Vista.

The Bb 9.1 path to tracking student participation is Evaluations>Course Reports>Overall Summary of User Activity. (Instead of this last link, you have the option to choose activity in forums, groups, or all content areas.) You will then be asked to select a time period and one or more students. If you select more than one student, the report you get will be unwieldy: The report for a single student is 10 pages. The tracking report will present attractive, colorful pie charts, bar graphs and other graphics. However, the first pie chart you see can be misleading: it indicates the percentage of “hits” a student made in various course areas. (For instance, if a student spent two minutes in a class and “hit” 7 content areas quickly, an impressive color pie chart divided into seven areas will appear, seeming to indicate substantial course activity. You will also find interesting tables and graphics on the times of day and days of the week the student accessed the course, but you must hunt for when and how long a student was in the course or in a particular learning module.

Using the information you find in this report, however, you will be able to verify whether a particular student actually logged in to your course during the time period you selected, and you will see which modules/tools of the course the student entered. You just have to spend more time in this tool than in the Vista tool to get the information you need to take your first step in tracking student attendance.