Edinburgh Medical School

Medical Digital Education Unit

CMVM

Bb Learn – Best Practices

Building Content
Version: v2.1

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med.digital.education@ed.ac.uk

Contents

Overview

This guide has been designed for users already familiar with the Blackboard Learn platform.
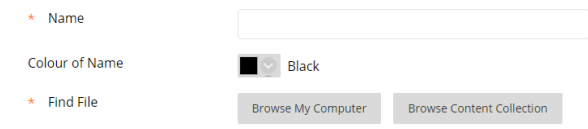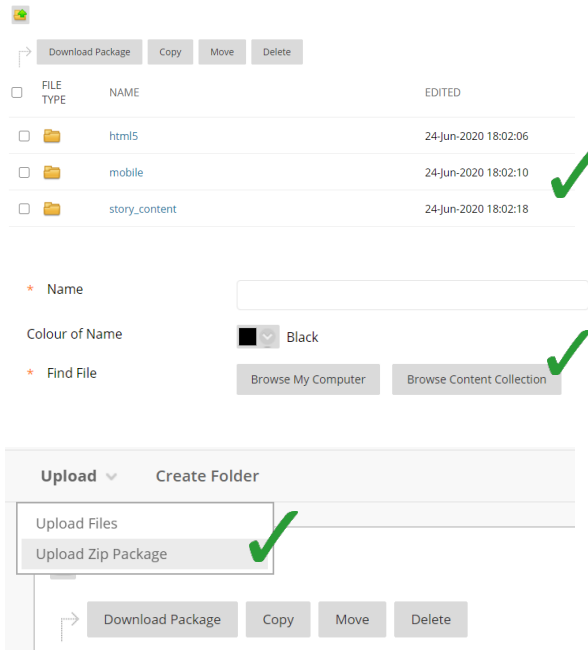
There is variety of ways in which users can set up courses and organise content in Bb Learn. This short guide presents some options you may consider to implement in order to keep consistency across your courses.

1. Content collection

The Content Collection serves as a repository for all the files an instructor uploads to a Learn course. When a course is created, its own folder is automatically generated in the Content Collection (accessible from the left side menu).

1.1 File upload

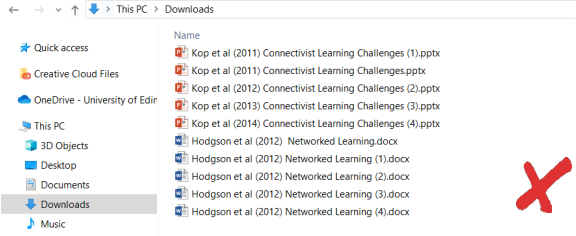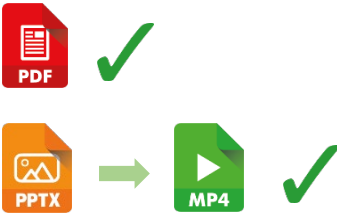There are two ways in which files can be uploaded to the content folder:

1) Browse Computer to Upload File	Upload files/images to your course by 'Browsing your Computer'. Files will be automatically saved in the course folder. Please note that over time this could lead to a long list of files and some file duplicates.	
2) Browse Content Collection to Upload File (Recommended)	Create a 'Folder Structure' under the course folder, upload files to the content collection, then browse the content collection to insert files/images in your course. You will be able to find files easier and avoid file duplicates. When uploading multiple files, compress you files then upload a 'Zip Package'.	

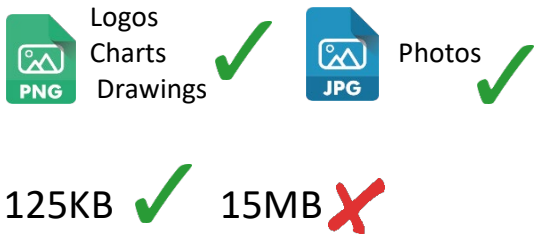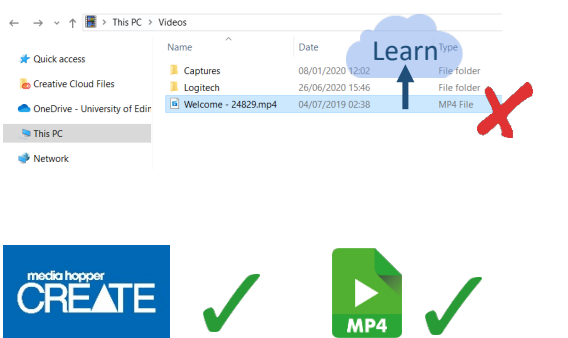**Important:** Give your files 'descriptive names' allowing identification before access.

File.pdf ✗

Hodgson et al (2012) *The Theory Practice and Pedagogy of Networked Learning*.pdf ✓
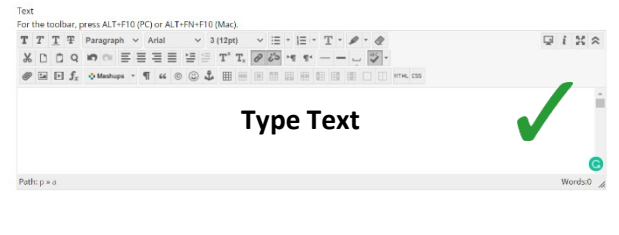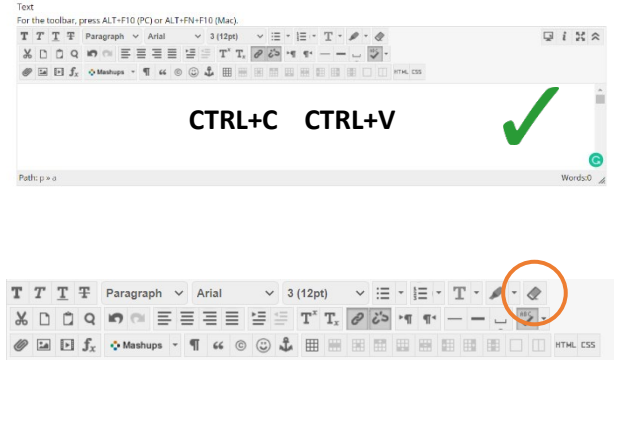
1.2 File Format

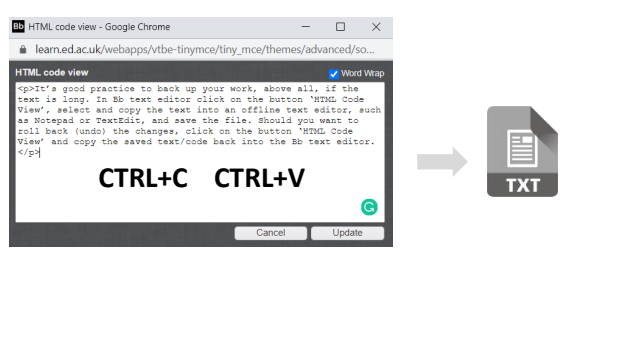| 1) PowerPoint, Word Document	Bb Learn accepts a variety of text, audio, image and video formats. Files such as PowerPoint and Word documents, will be downloaded to the student's computer when they click on the file link. It may lead to one or more copies of the file being download into one or more of the student's devices. Be mindful of the purpose of the document. For example, you may want a document to be downloaded and edited by the student. Where the file is to be downloaded, provide advance warning (e.g. "File Download")	 Hodgson et al (2012) *Networked Learning*.docx ('File Download')
2) PDF files (Recommended)	PDF files are more accessible across devices and platforms and have the advantage that they can be opened in the student's browser window (no forced download). Where files don't need to be downloaded by students, you may choose to convert them into PDF documents. Narrated PowerPoints can be converted to .MP4 video files and uploaded to Media Hopper Create.	

1.3 File Sizes

1) Images (Recommended)	As a rule of the thumb use the PNG format for simple graphics, such as logos, charts and drawings. The JPG format is usually better for photos and also allows for better file compression. Make the file sizes as small as possible (while maintaining the image quality). The images will download quicker and take less disk space.	
2) Videos (Recommended)	Do not upload videos to Learn: You can link videos rather than upload your video files to your course. Upload videos to Media Hopper Create Channel, then embed them into your courses (or add as a link). A variety of video file types are supported: MP4 is preferred.	

2. Written Content

2.1 Adding text

1) Type in the text	Type your text directly in the text editor and format it with the available options.	
2) Copy and Paste text (Recommended)	Copy and paste text into Bb text editor. **Important**: Clear text formatting before copying information across. This can be done by pasting the text into an offline text editor, such as Notepad or TextEdit, then copying the text into the BB text editor. **Important**: If you choose to use the 'Remove Formatting Button' available in the Bb text editor, note that it could potentially remove some of the formatting you want to retain.	

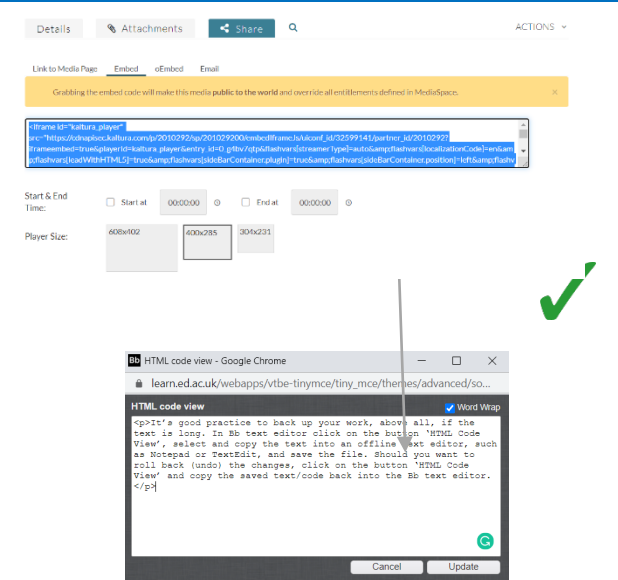## 2.2 Back up text

Backup Code (Recommended)	It's good practice to back up your work, above all, if the text is long. In Bb text editor click on the button 'HTML Code View', select and copy the text into an offline text editor, such as Notepad or TextEdit, and save the file. Should you want to roll back (undo) the changes, click on the button 'HTML Code View' and copy the saved text/code back into the Bb text editor.	

3. Building Content

There are different ways in which content can be presented. Consistency will support your students to navigate your course.
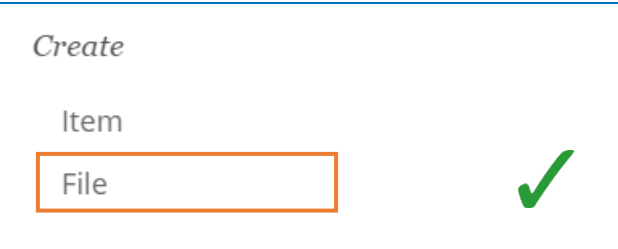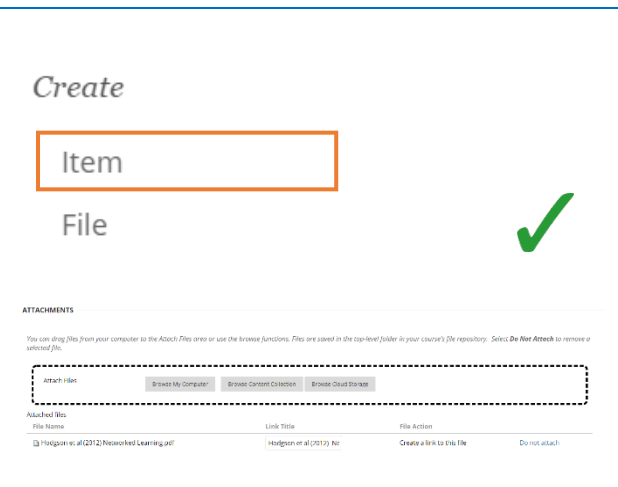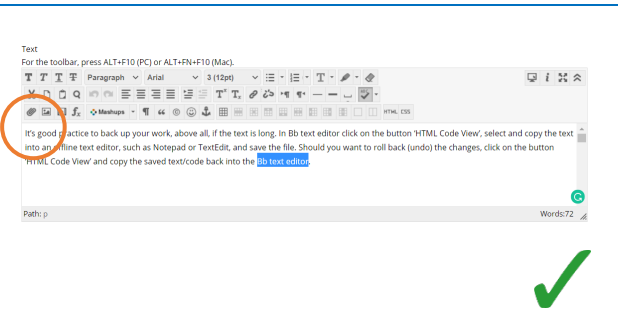
3.1 Adding Videos

1) Mashup Item	Go to 'Build Content' then choose either 'YouTube Video' or 'Media Hopper Create Media'. The video will be added as an item.	
2) Embed Video into a Page or Item (Recommended)	Go to the video hosting site and copy the 'Embed Video Code (iframe)'. In the Bb text editor click on the button 'HTML Code	

	View' and paste the code where you want the video to appear. **Important:** Edit 'width' and 'height' to make sure that all videos dimensions are the same If you have a number of Media Hopper videos to include in a single section of your course. Consider using a 'Playlist' or 'adding links' that take learners to Media Hopper.

3.2 Uploading Documents

Choose your preferred option and keep it consistent across your pages/courses.

1) Create File	Go to 'Build Content' then choose 'File'. Give it a 'descriptive name'. Browse the Content Collection to upload the file **(See item 1.1)**	
2) Create Item and Attach Files	Go to 'Build Content' then choose 'Create Item'. Give the Item a 'descriptive name'. Browse the Content Collection **(See item 1.1)** to attach files. Give the file a descriptive name (Note that changing the 'link title' when attaching a file, won't change the file name). You may choose to add a short description of the file in the text editor. If you are about to upload a Word or a pdf document full of text, it may work better for the students if the content is added (or pasted) into an 'item' (or series of items) directly on Learn.	
3) Add Content Link	'Select a portion of text' in the Bb text editor and click on the button 'Insert file'. Browse the content collection and select the relevant file. For PDF files (ONLY) you may choose to open the file in a new window **(See Item 3.3)**. The file should have a descriptive name.	

Important: For any of the options above, the file should be accompanied by an explanation of what it is and what students are expected to do with it.
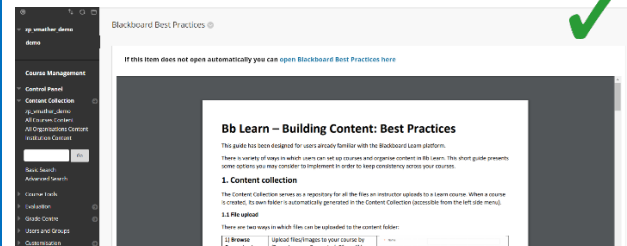
3.3 Opening PDF Documents

Choose your preferred option and keep it consistent across your pages/courses.
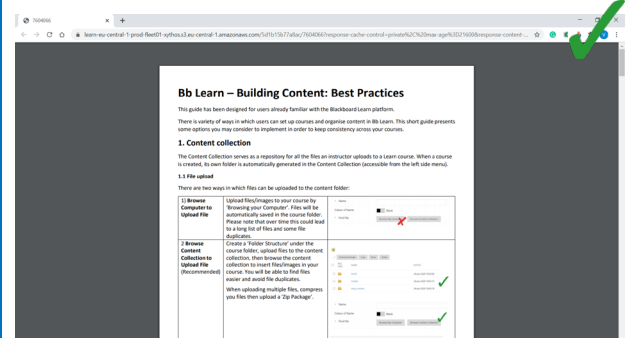
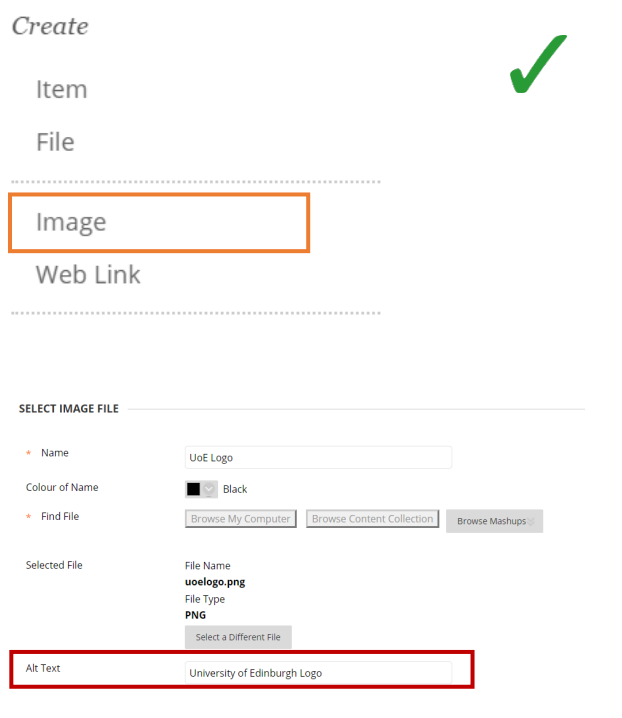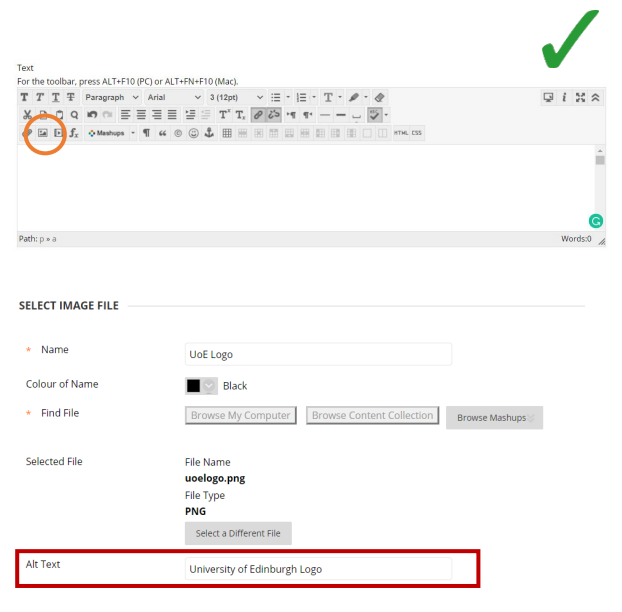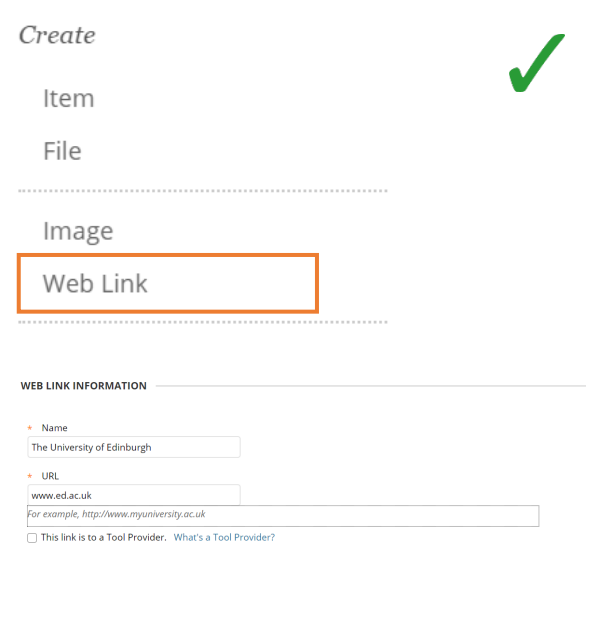| 1) Same Window	When you chose to open a PDF file on the '**Same Window**' the file will be displayed differently depending on how the document was uploaded **(See item 3.2 above)**. If you have chosen the option '**Create file**' the course menu will still be visible on the left side. When you '**Add a Content Link**' the menu will disappear and the student will need to use the 'Back Button' in their Browser to be able to see the course menu. Attached files will always open in a '**New Window**' Choose your preferred style for consistency.	**Create File** (Course menu visible) **Create Item and Attach Files** (New Window: Back Button Disabled) **Add Content Link** (Same Window: Back Button enabled)
2) New Window	Independently of how files were uploaded, your PDF file will be opened in a 'New Window'.	
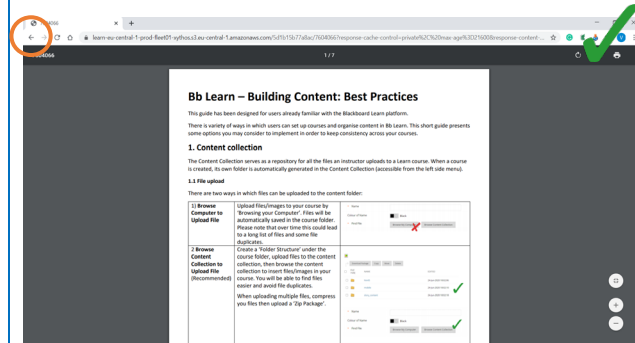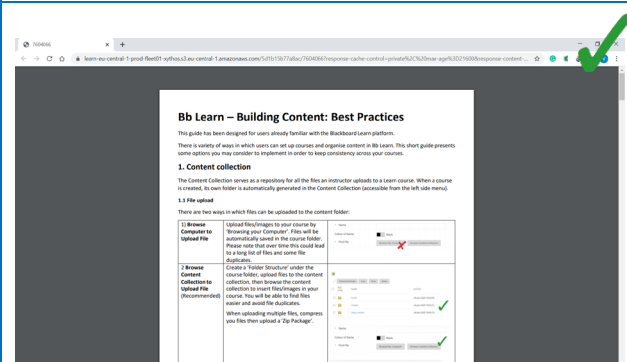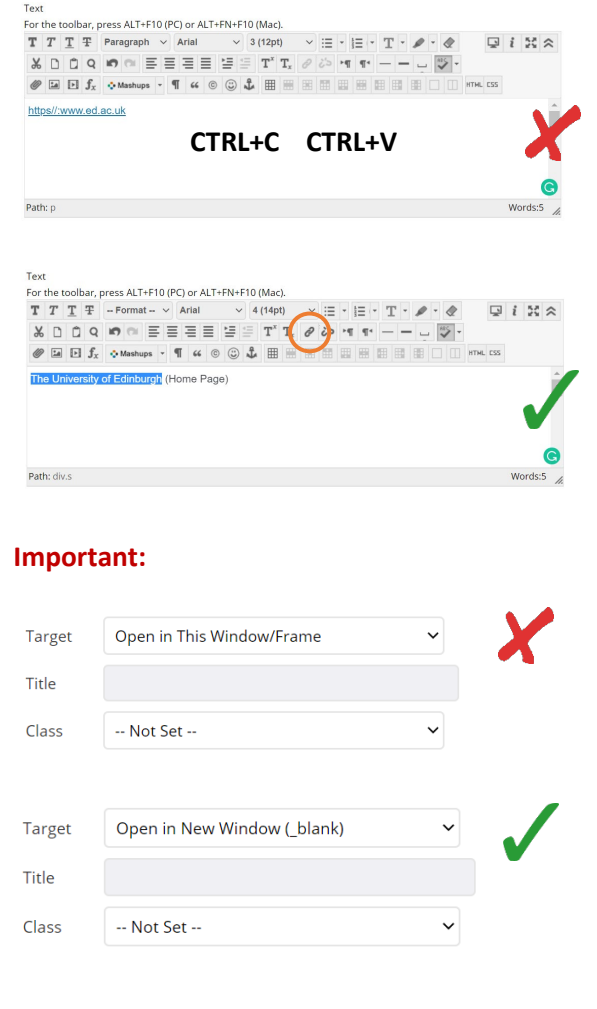
3.4 Adding Images

Choose your preferred option and keep it consistent across your pages/courses.
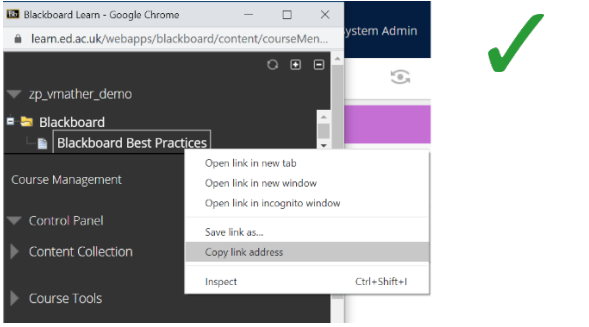
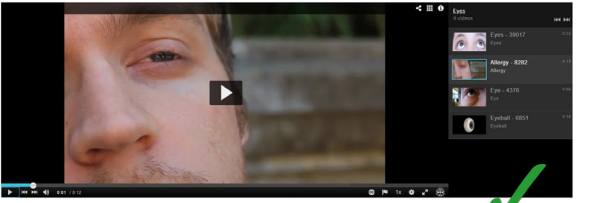|		
1) Create Image	Go to 'Build Content' then choose 'Create Image'. Give it a 'descriptive name'. Browse the Content Collection to upload the image (**See item 1.1**). You may choose to add a short description of the image in the Bb text editor. **Important**: Include an "Image Description" (= Alternative Text) to improve the accessibility of your content.	
2) Insert Image using Bb Text Editor	Click on the button "Insert/Edit Image". Give the image a 'descriptive name'. Browse the Content Collection **(See item 1.1)** to insert image. **Important**: Include an "Image Description" (= Alternative Text) to improve the accessibility of your content.	

3.5 External Resources/Links

Choose your preferred option and keep it consistent across your pages/courses.

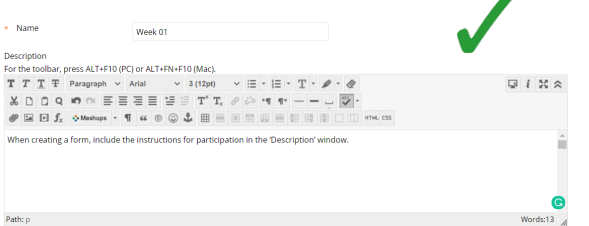|		
1) Create a Web Link	Go to 'Build Content' then choose 'Web Link'. Give the Link a 'descriptive name'. Insert the link in the 'URL box'. The Web Link will open in a 'New Window'.	
2) Using Bb text editor	2.1 **Copy and Paste a link into Bb text editor** (X) Copy and pasting a link into the text editor will work, however, the link description will be the same as the URL. Please note the very long links may not be descriptive, can be hard to read and, in some cases, can break the page layout. 2.2 **Use the Bb Link Button** (Recommended) Select a portion of text and click on 'insert/edit link' button to add a hyperlink. **Important:** Change the 'Target' to 'Open in New Window', otherwise the student will require an extra step (i.e. an extra click) to access the external resource.	

3.6 Internal Resources/Links

Create a Web link or use the Bb Text editor (Recommended)	Internal links can be added in the same way that external links are added **(See item 3.5 above).** Copy your links from the course menu. **Important**: Use with caution. Internal links in Learn are 'permanent URLs', which means that when courses are copied (for example as part to the annual course roll-over) the links (*if not edited*) will 'remember' the address and take students to the previous course.	

4. Page Length

Avoid long scrolling (Recommended)	Using the 'Build Content' options in Learn (such as 'create Item, File, Image, Web link or Video') may result in a long list of items. To *avoid long scrolling* consider: **(1)** Avoid the 'Build Content' options (where there is a lot of content), **(2)** Use folders and **(3)** Playlists (for videos, and possibly images). **Important**: As a rule of the thumb, folder structure should not be deeper than 3 levels whenever possible.	Where there is a lot of content: Playlists:

5. Forums

Instructions for participation (Recommended)	When creating a form, include the instructions for participation in the 'Description' window.	

6. Accessibility

Various (Important)	o Use alternative text for images and graphics **(See item 3.4)** o Use PDfs whenever possible and provide alternative formats upon request **(See item 1.2)** o Ensure fonts are large enough to read (minimum 12pt) o Pay attention to colour and contrast o Make sure that any recorded sounds are clear o Whenever you work with Word documents (and the resulting pdfs), please ensure that your file is accessible. Find out more: Word documents, pdfs

7. Copyright

Lectures and other Teaching material (Important)	Content used in lectures and other teaching material (including images, sounds, demonstration videos and clips) is subject to copyright law. This includes closed educational environments, such as Blackboard Learn. To avoid any concerns around copyright infringement use content that (1) is yours, (2) has been licenced under a Creative Commons or Royalty-Free license, (3) is in the Open Domain, or (4) with written permission from the copyright holder.

8. More Information

For more information on 'Best Practices' when building content, visit Bb Help – Best Practice: Presenting Content.

Help and Support

Should you need help with any of the above, contact your local Learning Technology support team at
Med.digital.education@ed.ac.uk

Revision History

Date	Description	Sections Affected	Revised by
01.07.2020	Document Release	N/A	Vanessa Mather
03.08.2020	Table of contents added, Consider [...] 'adding links' that take learners to Media Hopper, Captioning Videos note excluded.	Session 1, 2 and 3	Vanessa Mather
26.07.2021	Document presentation	All	Vanessa Mather