

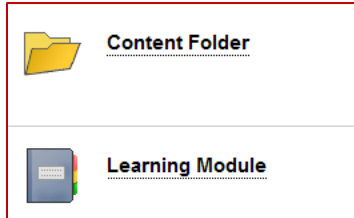
## Folders and Learning Modules eLearning Blackboard Learn 9.1 for Faculty

### Folders vs. Learning Modules

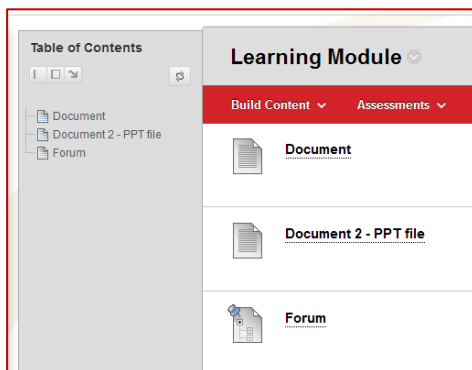
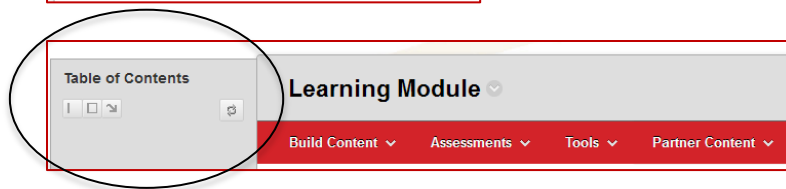
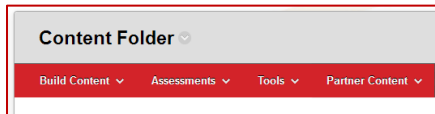
Blackboard offers two methods for deploying content to your students. Unfortunately, as the professor it is not clear what the differences between *folders* and *learning modules* are because in your view, they look identical. Before building them, it is vital that you understand the differences and how they can be used together.

Both *Content Folders* and *Learning Modules* are ways to organize the materials deployed to your students.

Looking at them from a level higher, they look similar except for the icon



Once you click the Content Folder / Learning Module's name to build content inside it, you will notice one significant difference about a Learning Module: The table of contents.



Once you begin building content, you'll see a similar screen for both, with the Learning Module listing the files on both the table of contents and the main area.

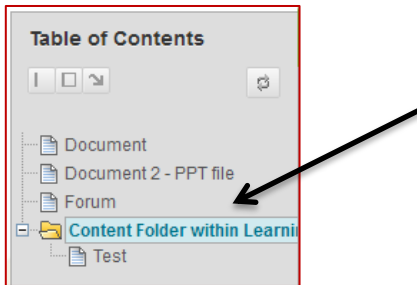
**When your students interact with this, they will see one item at a time with the table of contents on the left.** They will not see the items listed on the right side. As they peruse through the items, they will automatically open. Therefore, it is a good practice to NOT build content of the *file* type as your

topmost item. When a student navigates to your learning module, the file will automatically ask to download. Instead, opt for building an *item* instead and attach a file to it. *Items are almost always preferred over files within a learning module because they will not automatically download and you can attach a description to it.*

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**Learning Modules are best used at the highest level of your material organization. Content Folders make excellent subfolders within the Learning Module.**

If you were to build a *Content Folder* as a subfolder to another *Content Folder*, there would be no indication via a table of contents to help a student understand where they've navigated to. You cannot build a *Learning Module* to act as a subfolder to another *Learning Module*. When you build a *Content Folder* within a *Learning Module*, you will see a subfolder listed as in the following image.



Building a *Learning Module* or a *Content Folder* is the same in practice, but there are a few options that *Learning Modules* have that *Content Folders* don't.

First, start by navigating to the content area that you want to house the container, point to **Build Content** and click either *Learning Module* or *Content Folder*. For *Content Folders*, simply enter in the name, description and your standard viewing options. *Learning Modules* have some specific options that you can adjust.

- **Enforce Sequential Viewing** requires students to progress through the content in the order listed in the *Learning Module*. While in practice, this sounds like a good option, it has a drawback. If a student is on the 5<sup>th</sup> item and needs to reference the 2<sup>nd</sup> item, they must then go back through the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> items to see the 5<sup>th</sup>. They cannot skip ahead, even to a piece of content they've already been to.
- **Open in a New Window** will open the learning module in a pop-up, which can be useful, but in modern browsers with tabbed browsing, it is almost completely useless to do so.
- **Table of Contents**
  - **Show Table of Contents** should be set to *Yes*. It allows students to see the hierarchy display shown in the previous images.
  - **Hierarchy Display** allows you to put bullets next to each item in the module, but is oftentimes unnecessary.

**Learning Modules** are best used for creating a sequential learning experience that utilizes a variety of different tools. For example, you could provide 2-3 articles, followed by a link to a discussion forum and then have an assignment dropbox for a paper based on the articles and discussion. It is NOT useful to house a library of information, such as a collection of files or links to websites. **Content Folders** are best used to house a collection of materials such as files and links, as it doesn't force the users to look at things in order. It allows the student to have a global view of all the content in that folder.