

NEO

VS

Blackboard

Table of contents

Introduction.....	3
User interface.....	4
Ease of use	6
Features.....	7
Cost.....	12
Summary.....	13

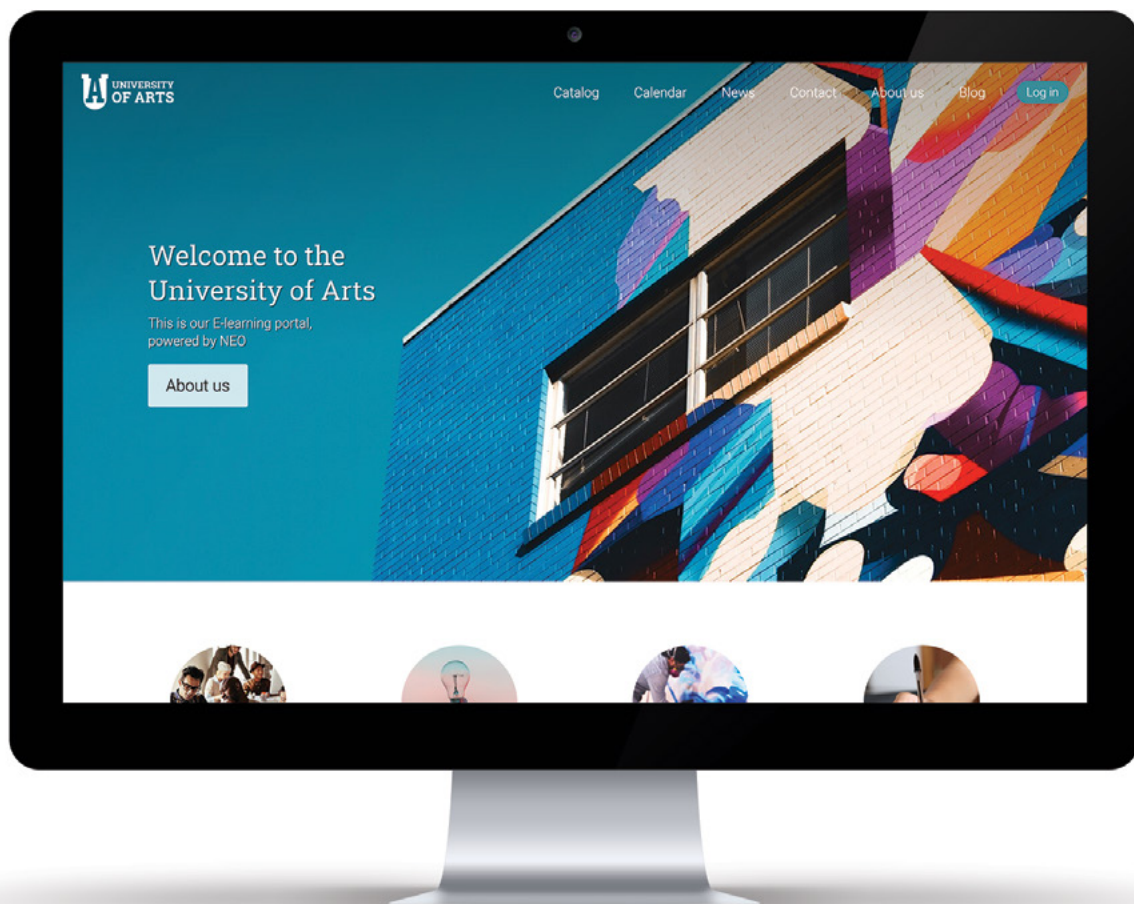


Introduction

This is a detailed comparison between NEO and Blackboard, taking into consideration the features, functionality, and cost of each platform.

NEO is a world-class, award-winning learning management system (LMS) for schools and universities. NEO helps schools manage all classroom activities, such as creating and delivering educational content, assessing students, tracking their results, and promoting communication and collaboration between students and teachers/faculty.

Blackboard Learn is a cloud-hosted LMS developed by Blackboard Inc.



User interface

The **NEO** interface has a modern, responsive design that looks sharp and automatically adjusts based on the type of device. It provides attractive tile-based dashboards for students, teachers and administrators, and a graphical class catalog. NEO also has a unique “activity display” feature that indicates the level of activity within classes and groups using a pulsing indicator on their tiles together with real-time widgets that scroll through the latest activities.

Blackboard’s Ultra interface is an improvement to the original experience. However, there are certain elements that are missing. For example, there are no graphical catalogs, just rows with no images. The closest thing to a dashboard that Blackboard offers is the institution page, where administrators can add an image, helpful links and custom content.

NEO offers a simple pop-out navigation system, quick and easy access to all important areas of the site, and shortcuts.



In [Blackboard](#) Ultra, the navigation is minimalist but not as intuitive as in NEO. For example, to add a new element to a class section, teachers have to click on a tiny icon that appears only as you hover on one section. Users can open different tabs in “layers” and use a left navigation bar that lacks a pop-out function. To access messages, for example, users have to load a page instead of simply accessing the dropdown menu as in NEO.

[NEO](#) makes it easy to create attractive classes and organize lessons into a graphical row or tile layout. For educators, class tiles show important information such as the number of students, a link to the class calendar, news area, and assignments to grade. For students, each lesson in a class shows the number of sections in the lesson, the badges and points awarded, and certificates associated with the lesson. Students can also easily see progress icons for each class and lesson, making it easy to know which lessons have to be started or resumed and which ones are completed.

The Blackboard class layout only offers a row view. Users have to scroll down or search for class content to find what they need. The course content is organized on one page only, including sections and resources, making it necessary to keep opening pages and closing them instead of seamlessly navigating through all lessons.

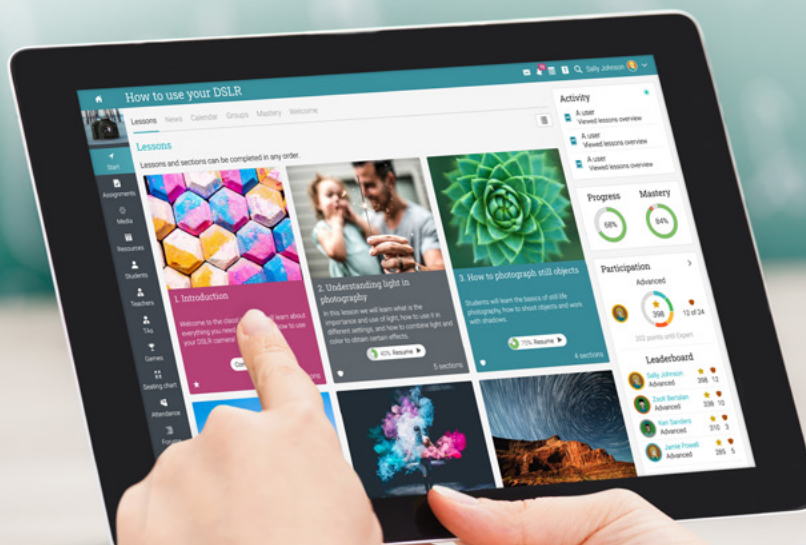
In Blackboard, it's harder to organize lessons since there are no lesson sections, only folders in which you can add content. For example, the layout does not offer a drag and drop option. If the teacher adds a link resource, they cannot move it to a folder afterwards.



Ease of use

NEO is very intuitive and easy to use. In addition, it includes an online help center with videos, getting started guides, and searchable help content. NEO also has a rapid response support forum where staff members typically respond to questions within 15-30 minutes during business hours 24/5.

Blackboard is easy to use, includes a customer support forum, help guides, live chat and phone support.



Features

NEO offers a central hub with all the tools schools need to manage classroom activities, assess students, track progress, and promote collaboration between students, teachers and parents. Many features can be enabled or disabled to suit young children through college students.

In Blackboard, teaching and learning activities can be more difficult to manage and less efficient by not having all the LMS tools needed in an academic institution in a single, centralized platform as NEO does. The main features that an LMS should have are structured in different products: Blackboard Collaborate for communication features, Blackboard Connect for campus communication, Blackboard Intelligence for analytics and reporting, and more.

Creating content

In NEO, teachers have a variety of options for creating classes, whether they are instructor-led, blended, self-paced, or micro learning. Using the NEO authoring tool, teachers can record audio or video directly from their browser. Teachers can create learning paths to inspire students to achieve learning goals. Each goal in a path can represent a class or a certificate and students can be rewarded with points and badges as they complete goals.

Blackboard has instructor-led, blended, and self-paced classes. However, there are certain inconveniences with creating classes. For example, if schools switch to the Ultra experience, teachers cannot create classes on their own, only administrators can add a new class.

Student assessment

NEO provides 15 assignment types, including essay, survey, discussion, team, debate, Dropbox, SCORM, attendance. Teachers can also create a quiz assignment with 7 question types.

Blackboard has less options for assessing students, most notably lacking an essay, Dropbox and debate feature. However, while in NEO users can use different grading scales to assess individual assignments in a class, as well as a grading scale for each class and for the entire school. Blackboard does not support multiple grading scales.

Tracking progress

NEO provides support for competency-based learning that allows teachers to track how well students are understanding the taught concepts based on their mastery of skills or subjects. Measuring student performance is easy and teachers can get instant insights using extensive analytics, built-in reports, and custom reports. Schools can also use compliance to manage mandatory professional development for their staff.

Blackboard has a mastery feature, but there is no option to trigger actions when students achieve certain mastery levels or drop below a threshold for a competency. The platform does not have a compliance feature.

Most importantly, to access more advanced analytics, schools have to purchase and integrate the Blackboard Analytics add-on, meaning that the basic LMS offers little to none in terms of visualizing data. For example, in NEO you can see a mastery coverage of how well a class teaches the relevant competencies. Analytics are updated in real time.

Communication and collaboration

NEO offers all the tools users need to communicate efficiently, such as built-in messaging with bidirectional email integration, newsfeeds, chat, social networking, blogs, forums, web conferencing, groups, and teams.

Blackboard offers similar communication tools, with the main difference being that schools have to integrate Blackboard Collaborate to use more advanced features, such as web conferencing.

Personalization and engagement

NEO helps teachers save time through automation, by setting up actions that are triggered when students complete tasks. Rules can be added in many areas of the platform such as classes, learning paths, groups, accounts, and mastery. For example, when students complete a course, they can automatically be enrolled in a learning path to learn more about a certain subject.

NEO also has a powerful gamification feature, through which students earn points and badges, and they can also see a leaderboard with their results.

The **Blackboard** Open LMS (formerly Moodle rooms) has a Personalized Learning Designer feature for automation. However, it is harder to create rules since instructors have to go to a separate page and define events, conditions and actions.



In addition, here is a list of the features included in [NEO](#) that are not supported by [Blackboard](#):

User Interface

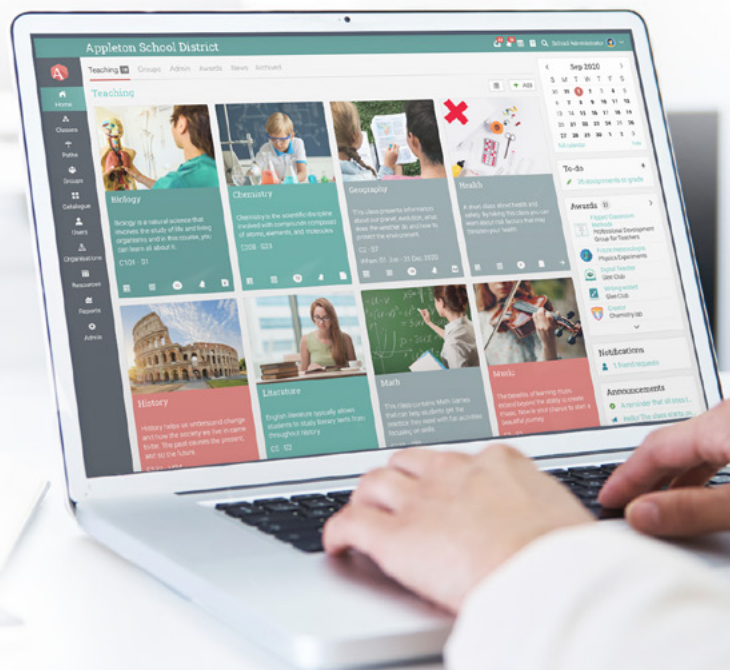
- Graphical resources catalog
- Graphical class catalog
- Graphical dashboards
- Automatic translation of messages and forum posts
- Support for more than 40 languages
- Activity display

Content and assessment

- Learning paths
- Micro learning
- Content sync
- Compliance
- Personalized assignments
- Class ratings and reviews
- Prerequisite certificates
- Dropbox, essay and debate assignments
- Waitlists

Collaboration

- Social networking
- Teams
- Public blog
- Public profiles



Web conferencing

- GoToTraining
- GoToMeeting
- Zoom

Integrations

- Integration with your own email server
- Integration with 1,500+ apps via Zapier
- MS Immersive Reader
- Safe Exam Browser
- CometChat
- MailChimp
- MathJax
- Kimono
- Udemy
- Clever
- Go1
- H5P

Payment gateways

- Authorize.net
- PayU Latam
- PagSeguro
- PayUbiz
- Flywire
- PayPal
- Stripe

Other

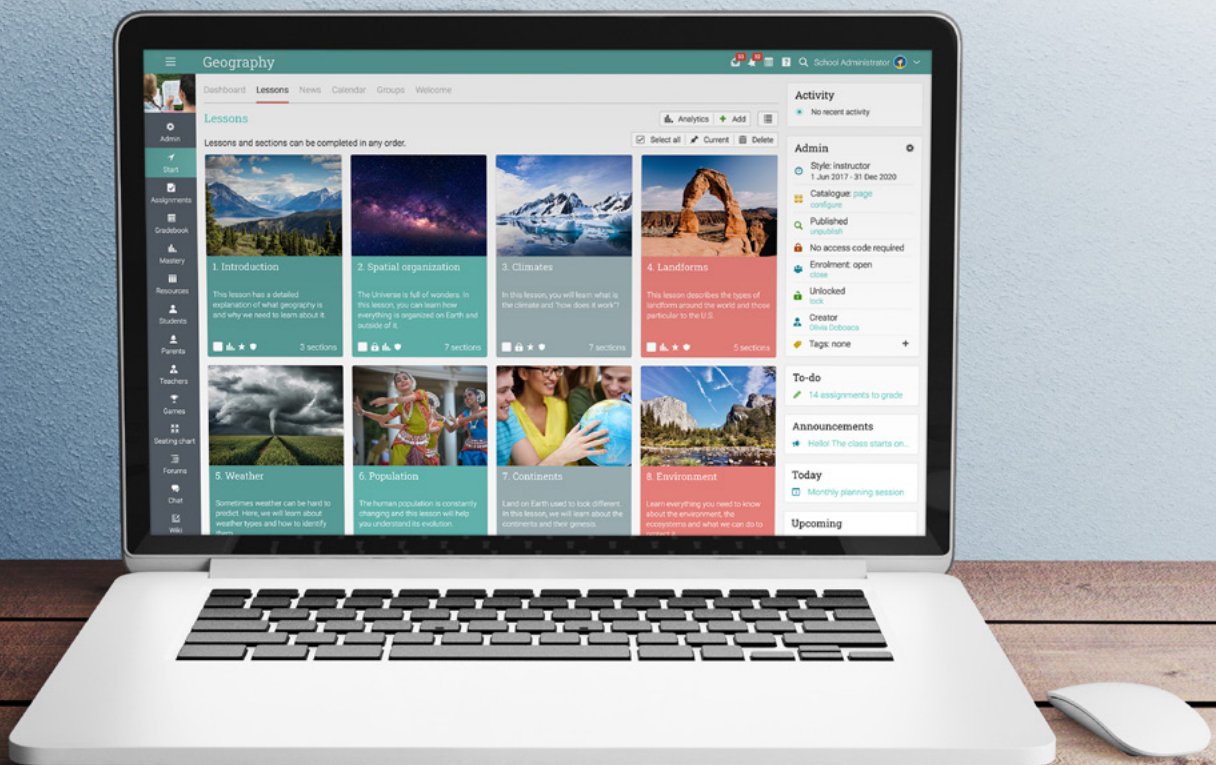
- Terms and conditions
- Archiving students
- Student help desk
- E-commerce functionality
- Graphical badges gallery
- SEO features
- Trash can for restoring deleted content



Cost

NEO has a Free plan with a comprehensive set of essential LMS features and a Premium plan for schools that need more powerful functionality. There are no setup fees, cancellation fees, storage fees, bandwidth fees, support fees, or other hidden costs.

Blackboard does not make its pricing plans officially available to the public. There is an implementation fee of around \$15,000. The total costs rise with the addition of other services. For example, to have more collaboration options, schools might opt for Blackboard Collaborate, which costs around \$10,000 per year or more.



Summary

This was a comparison of the most important feature differences between [NEO](#) and [Blackboard](#).

NEO is a more intuitive solution than Blackboard. NEO is easier to use, customize and offers all essential tools in a centralized platform, at a better value than Blackboard.

If you require additional information on NEO, please contact us at sales@cypherlearning.com.

www.neolms.com



This comparison was written in August 2020 based on publicly available documentation on both vendors' sites. It was prepared as a guide and is not intended to be exhaustive. The comparison information does not constitute any contractual representation, warranty or obligation on our part. Liability for errors, omissions or consequential loss is expressly disclaimed. If you find any information in this comparison guide to be inaccurate, please contact us and we will correct the information.

