

Leveraging Technology to Address Learner Needs: Today and into the Future



**AN LMS BUYER'S GUIDE
FOR BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT
PRESENTED BY ANTHOLOGY**

Blackboard 
by Anthology

At Anthology, our mission is to empower educators and institutions with meaningful innovation that's simple and intelligent, inspiring learner success and professional growth.

We believe that LMS technology has a fundamental role to play in helping organizations provide frictionless, personalized, and meaningful education experiences for learners of all backgrounds. This concise guide outlines key trends for the future of education technology, and the crucial steps to take today to ensure your organization will thrive in this ever-changing landscape.

Contents

**The LMS of the Future:
Trends and Opportunities4**

- LMS data fuels the broader organizational strategy 5
- An increased focus on data security 6
- AI enhances the learning experience 7
- All learning is hybrid learning 8
- Technology breaks down educational barriers 9
- Reskilling assumes heightened importance..... 10

**Blackboard: The LMS for Efficient
Teaching and Better Learning.....11**

- Organizations are choosing Blackboard 13
- Glossary..... 15



The LMS of the Future: **Trends and Opportunities**



LMS data fuels the broader organizational strategy

Harnessing the power of data doubles as both one of education's biggest challenges and its biggest opportunities. Recent years have seen organizations become inundated with data, but often without the required systems and processes in place to make this data actionable and optimize the learning experience.

The LMS is an invaluable source of data. By providing inline insights within the platform, learners, instructors, and administrators alike can understand progress, optimize in real time, and provide the necessary assistance should any challenges arise.

But this is just the start. The insights gleaned from your LMS aren't just relevant for teaching and learning, they can fuel your organization's broader education and training strategy. Understanding the demographics, needs, motivations, and study preferences of your learners can add focus to a range of initiatives across the organization, including regulatory and compliance initiatives, career development, mentoring, skills-gap analysis and hiring, and many more.

"Learning and development analytics play a key role in optimizing training and aligning initiatives with a company's broader business goals. These metrics are a powerful tool that empower L&D leaders to guide their teams, ultimately driving success across the organization."¹

Blackboard Benefits

With Blackboard, insights are embedded into the user experience and appear contextually within workflows. Learners, instructors, and administrators all receive timely progress updates with aligned communication tools to close the loop between insight and action. An instructor, for example, can review detailed analytics on learner progress, easily identify any learners who have fallen behind, and message them directly to offer assistance.

Key RFP Considerations

- Data capabilities should be fundamental to any RFP.
- Data should be both "inline" within the LMS and easily accessible to assist across the organization.
- RFP process should include stakeholders from various parts of the organization, while ensuring that all have a strong familiarity with LMS software to provide a view of the broader application of data outputs from teaching and learning.

¹: "A data-driven approach: The power of L&D analytics," Chief Learning Officer®

An increased focus on data security



Expanding the use of data in the learning experience also brings tremendous responsibility. Organizations need to ensure that all data remains secure, and that learners have clarity on how and when their data is being used.

As outlined by EDUCAUSE, organizations need to focus on developing trust. This is a fundamental shift in mindset related to security, moving the emphasis from compliance with regulations to an investment in the learner, and a relationship where both the learner and organization mutually benefit from the data exchange.

“Reframing the work around cybersecurity and privacy to be a matter of trust provides an opportunity to demonstrate institutions’ understanding that by protecting privacy and safeguarding data, they are protecting and valuing people.”²

The LMS can play a role in helping organizations establish trust. By working with vendors who adhere to the most stringent standards of data security, organizations can provide an engaging learning environment that is fueled by insight without jeopardizing any personal or organizational information and provide necessary assurances to learners that their data is under lock and key.

Key RFP Considerations

- Does the vendor have the necessary data security certifications for your organization and industry?
- Can they demonstrate an ongoing approach to data security that will ensure necessary improvements are made over time?
- Do they have a proven history of building trust with leading organizations that have strict privacy requirements?

Blackboard Benefits

The US federal government has awarded **FedRAMP® moderate SaaS authorization** to Blackboard on Amazon Web Services (AWS) GovCloud. We are the only LMS provider to hold the AWS government certification. Blackboard is also the first LMS to be **StateRAMP® moderate authorized**.



² “#4: A Matter of Trust: Advancing institutional strategies to safeguard privacy and secure institutional data,” 2025 EDUCAUSE Top 10: Restoring Trust”

AI enhances the learning experience



AI has been the biggest talking point in education in recent times. As organizational leaders look to devise policies which balance the opportunities and risks that generative AI presents, there is a crucial role for learning technology to provide innovation and efficiency without jeopardizing control for the user.

Learners understand that generative AI is likely to be an important part of the future workforce, and thus want it included in their learning programs now to aid their development. A recent **LinkedIn study** established that four out of five professionals want to learn more about how to use AI in their profession, and adopting learning technologies that embrace AI capabilities becomes an important consideration to meet learner needs.

An important first step is to empower instructors to use AI responsibly with tools designed for education. Instructors are the gatekeepers of learning, meaning that wherever technology can add efficiency to their roles, learners will be the ultimate beneficiaries. The adoption of AI in learning technologies can streamline administrative tasks and provide instructors with inspiration for high-quality courses, learning materials, and assessment tasks, delivering great learning experiences more efficiently than ever before. This, over time, allows organizations to then consider other AI opportunities within teaching and learning, including tools specifically designed to increase learner interaction.

Key RFP Considerations

- Ensure providers have an established AI policy and a proven history of applying it to their solutions. This should extend to stringent protection of all user data.
- Look for partners investing in the full potential of generative AI, not just rebranding simple rules-based algorithms that have existed in all major software for an extended period.
- Prioritize LMS technologies with existing AI innovations, as well as detailed development plans for the future.
- Consider the role of partnership: With tech giants investing billions in generative AI, look for EdTech vendors who have strong relationships and are implementing best-in-class AI tools in their solutions.

3: "2024 Workplace Learning Report: L&D Powers the AI Future," LinkedIn

4: "EY Pulse Survey: insights into the integration of AI in government," EY

80%

of professionals want to learn more about how to use AI in their profession.³

52%

of US government employees already look for AI literacy when assessing job candidates.⁴

Blackboard Benefits

The **AI Design Assistant**, developed in partnership with Microsoft, makes Blackboard the first major LMS to leverage generative AI to inspire instructors' course structure, test questions, authentic assessments, and grading rubrics.

All learning is hybrid learning



Following the upheaval of the pandemic, learners have spoken! With the boundaries between online and in-person continuing to blur, hybrid learning has emerged as the preferred modality for many learners.

Organizations will need to leverage technology to provide the desired level of flexibility and adopt pedagogical practices which aren't tied to any single modality. Depending on the subject area, you may wish to facilitate self-paced learning within the LMS to allow learners to advance at their own speed and balance their courses with other responsibilities.

Combining the hands-on learning benefits of in-person interaction with the flexibility and robust tools of online is important to align with learners' needs, and it's essential that your LMS provides a consistent experience throughout. This starts with a quality mobile experience, which should be key criteria in any technology decisions your institution makes moving forward

73%

of instructors say blended learning increases engagement.

Key RFP Considerations

- Don't restrict the evaluation process to desktop, ensure mobile application is tested as a fundamental need for both learners and instructors, with no degradation in functionality.
- Ensure that the LMS can support blended learning—with capabilities to support self-paced, virtual classroom, brick-and-mortar, and any combination of these within a course.
- Consider if the vendor has practitioners on staff who can help your team make the most of the platform and tooling to ensure high engagement and best-in-class learning experiences regardless of and across modalities.

Blackboard Benefits

The recent release of Blackboard's **enhanced mobile app** is receiving great feedback from learners and instructors for providing superior workflows and instant access to all-new product features. Whether doing a knowledge check inside or outside of the lecture hall, Blackboard technology is consistent. Robust synchronous and asynchronous collaboration tools allow for high engagement outside the physical classroom, whether between peers or learner-to-instructor.

Technology breaks down educational barriers



As organizations strive to foster success for all learners, technology will play an essential role in improving accessibility for learners of all backgrounds.

Your LMS is an enabler in reaching learners with varied learning styles, needs, and accommodations. Learning technology must be inclusive by design, with the inbuilt functionality to allow learners to receive learning content in the format that works best for them—whether in their native tongue, as audio rather than written content, or with an accommodation tool such as a screen reader, auto-captioning of recordings, immersive reader, and more. When learners can access content in their preferred format, and this is automated by the LMS with no extra work for instructors or course designers, engagement and learning outcomes are improved as a result.

Additional thoughtful functionality in the LMS can further support learner needs. This includes the ability for instructors to allow additional time or other accommodations where learners require them, as well as a clear display of upcoming tasks and progress through the course so learners can prioritize the most important tasks.

20%

Despite increased attention, only one in five online corporate learning programs are truly accessible.⁵

+35%

Research has found that inclusive professional teams are significantly more productive.⁶

Key RFP Considerations

- Is accessibility built into the LMS design? Can learners access content using alternative formats such as audio, electronic braille, ePub, immersive reader, and more?
- Can content be translated on the fly, without rework by instructors or course designers?
- Are course designers assisted in making learning content more accessible?
- Does the LMS make it easy for learners and instructors to collaborate?

5: "Creating eLearning For All: How To Design Accessible And Interactive Learning," eLearning Industry

6: "Why Is Diversity and Inclusion Important?" LinkedIn

Blackboard Benefits

Blackboard provides an **accessible and engaging** learning environment for all. With a clear and consistent interface and easy creation of alternative formats to support varied learning styles and accommodations, all learners and instructors are supported in pursuing their goals.

Reskilling assumes heightened importance

Blackboard Benefits

With a new **Mastery Gradebook and integrated badging and microcredentials**, Blackboard allows both learners and instructors to focus on the competencies that allow further opportunities in the workforce. It's not just about completing a predetermined learning path, but also about the collection of skills across a multitude of diverse courses. Regardless of working toward a certificate or demonstrating skill mastery across course areas, Blackboard allows for the complexity you need to enable, track, and leverage up-and-reskilling in your organization.

With the shape of the economy and the skills required by employers changing faster than ever, the number of professionals looking to re-and-upskill will only continue to grow. Employees understand that their career path likely won't be as linear as in the past and actively seek out organizations that support reskilling initiatives and life-long learning. For organizations, reskilling represents an important opportunity to maintain a dynamic and agile workforce, without needing to go through hiring processes each time a new competency is required.

LMS technology must evolve as a result. It's essential that your LMS supports multiple modalities to enable genuine skill development, including the facilitation of engaging and dynamic lessons, innovative assessment options, and increased flexibility for instructors. Fostering collaboration via group spaces, peer assessments, and other communication tools is also essential as teamwork will remain an integral component of successful organizations moving forward.

+10%

The number of skills required for a single job is increasing each year.⁷

41%

of companies have used upskilling initiatives to cover skill gaps.⁸

Key RFP Considerations

- Does the LMS allow instructors to be innovative with the course, lesson, and assessment design?
- Does the LMS promote teamwork and other valuable skills that will help learners' career development?
- Will your instructor require additional assistance from the vendor to deliver skills-based learning in a digital environment?

7: "Gartner HR Research Finds 58% of the Workforce Will Need New Skill Sets to Do Their Jobs Successfully," Gartner®

8: "The Future of Jobs Report 2023," World Economic Forum

Blackboard: The LMS for Efficient Teaching and Better Learning

More flexible. More inclusive. More insightful. With modern, intuitive workflows and hundreds of new features, Blackboard is driving change for leading organizations.

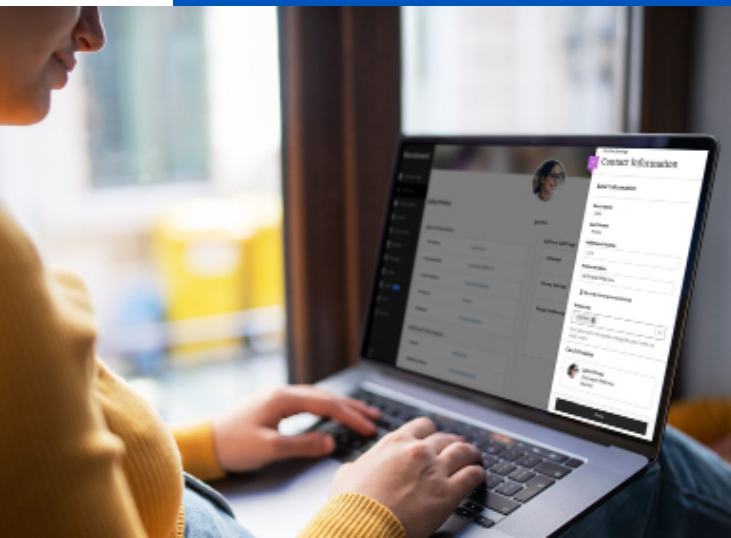
More time for what's most important: teaching and training

The **AI Design Assistant** in Blackboard, powered by Microsoft Azure OpenAI Service, leverages generative AI to inspire instructors' course and assessment creation.

Empower instructors with AI

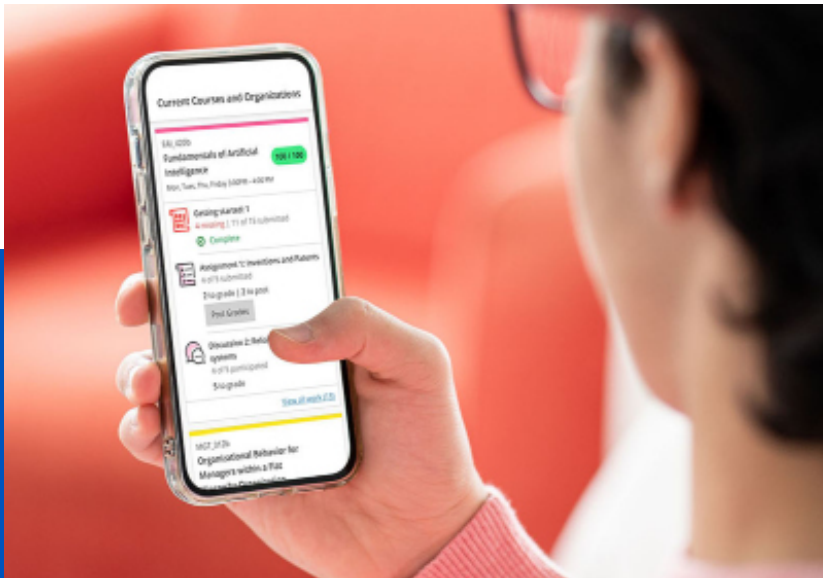
- In its first **12** months, **618** institutions enabled one or more AI Design Assistant capabilities, powering **738,414** education tasks
- The **test question generation** feature has been used more than **119,000** times by **493** institutions

Read the ***Twelve Months of the AI Design Assistant white paper.***



Amazing on any device

Access content on the go, and get the same modern, intuitive experience on a laptop, tablet, or smartphone. Blackboard is designed to provide a better experience for instructors and learners from any device or location.



Let every learner shine

Creating a fair, accurate, and equitable testing environment has always ranked among the biggest challenges for online education. Blackboard is designed to create a stress-free environment where learners can achieve their true potential.

A pathway to success

Blackboard provides inline insights direct to instructors, learners, and advisors at every step in the learning journey. This creates a data-informed approach to education, where courses, content, and delivery can be constantly optimized to help every learner achieve their goals.

Grading that's less grating

We've collaborated with hundreds of instructors to create the Flexible Grading experience in Blackboard. With the option to grade either by learner or by question, progress tracking for grading tasks, and easy access to multi-media feedback tools, Flexible Grading is designed to save instructors time.

Organizations are choosing Blackboard

Whether new to Blackboard or renewing their commitment to the LMS, organizations consistently find it to be the best choice on the market. Blackboard is regularly selected over other vendors for its industry-leading innovation and vision, frequent feature releases and improvements, and user-friendly interface—all designed to enhance the online learning experience.



“With Blackboard, it’s everything in one spot. It’s the convenience of it for instructors and learners, because everything is right there.”



Lynnae Lockett
Director, MetroHealth System

[Read the Case study ▶](#)

“Our compliance is the best it has ever been in the history of the Department of Social Services because of utilizing the learning management system, Blackboard.”

Stephanie Diamond
Workforce Development Bureau Chief
Department of Social Services

“Blackboard will transform how our judiciary members access educational resources, training materials, and professional development opportunities. Our goal is to empower every member of the judiciary with convenient access to comprehensive training programs, ensuring they remain equipped to uphold justice and serve our communities with excellence.”

Paula Couselo-Findikoglu
Court Education Director
New Mexico Judiciary



Why not try it for yourself? **Visit anthology.com/try** for a FREE trial of Blackboard.

Blackboard by Anthology: The LMS for the Future

“We’re not using Blackboard just to deliver curriculum. We’re using it as a place to support communities of practice, we’re using it to support personal and professional development, we’re using it to speed employee enculturation in very technical fields.”



Tony Gagliardo

Vice President of Enterprise, Nuclear, and Technical Learning, Xcel Energy



Glossary

AI = Artificial intelligence, where technology learns and adapts without input from a human agent.

AR = Augmented reality, technology augments real-life experiences.

Hybrid Learning = A learning method that combines both virtual and in-person learning experiences.

LMS = Learning management system, a digital technology designed to facilitate the design and delivery of learning experiences, such as Blackboard.

VR = Virtual reality, where technology creates completely unique, virtual experiences.

About Anthology

Anthology delivers education and technology solutions so that students can reach their full potential and learning institutions thrive. Millions of students around the world are supported throughout their education journey via Anthology's ecosystem of flagship SaaS solutions and supporting services, including the award-winning Blackboard® (LMS), Anthology® Student (SIS/ERP), and Anthology® Reach (CRM). Through the Power of Together™, we are uniquely inspiring educators and institutions with innovation that is meaningful, simple, and intelligent to help customers redefine what's possible and create life-changing opportunities for people everywhere. [anthology.com](https://www.anthology.com)