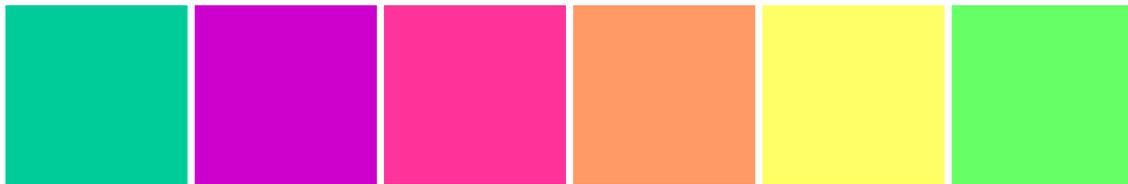


Getting ESL online with course management systems

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TESOL 2007

Download this session's PPT, references, etc. at
<http://www.soundsofenglish.org/Presentations/TESOL2007/>



Best Practices:

1. Know your goals:
 - * Why are you using a CMS?
 - * What do you hope students get out of using a CMS?
2. Know your learners:
 - * What do they know about the learning goals?
 - * What do they know about technology?
 - * Why are they in your course?
 - * If it is a distance course, are they there for the right reason?
3. PLAN, PLAN, PLAN!!!!
 - * What tools do you want to use?
 - * How do you want students to navigate through your course?
4. Make sure the technology does not get in the way of the learning.
 - * Know your tools - sign up for workshops at your school, befriend the technology trainers, and get a good reference book! Don't ask students to do things you don't know how to do yourself.
 - * Take into account the typing proficiency of your students.
 - * Create or use clear how-to guides with plenty of pictures and simple text.
 - * For instances where a CMS is just a support for a Face-to-face course, provide alternatives for the technology-timid.
 - * Support different learning styles (use images, video, audio, opportunities to interact, etc.)
5. Create an Active Learning Environment.
 - * Set learning goals or specific assignments for the CMS.
 - * Use the Discussion Board to encourage interaction.
 - * Use information gaps - have students post information they have that other students need.
 - * Showcase - have students present projects and assignments to others.
 - * Provide clear ways for students to get in touch with teachers and ask questions (e-mail, on-line office hours, discussion board about course questions, phone, etc.).
 - * Give marks for on-line attendance and participation.
6. Focus Attention
 - * Use the CMS to highlight important information.

- * Create a task checklist for students to download.
 - * Post updated and highlighted schedule or syllabus.
 - * Avoid information overload.
7. Connect Knowledge
 - * Post links to related topics.
 - * Incorporate multimedia.
 - * Post pre-tests.
 8. Provide Timely Feedback
 - * Use on-line grade book so students can check grades.
 - * Show that you value and assess on-line discussions and interactions. Participate regularly in on-line discussions - students won't care if they don't think you do!
 9. Support and Scaffold
 - * Use WebQuests to guide on-line information gathering.
 - * Post examples of student work.
 - * Post assessment rubrics.
 - * Host on-line office hours in a chat environment for distance students or students with busy schedules.
 - * Set up groups so students can work together (with group guidelines).
 10. Consider the 3-click rule

What doesn't work?

- Overly complex ideas - simplify!
 - Start with one or two features
 - Don't do things beyond your technical abilities
- Chatting with large classes - try groups
- On-line writing with beginners
 - Technology issues:
 - Logging in twice
 - Steps to get to BB discussion (number of clicks)
 - Mousing
 - Lack of keyboard skills
 - Students shutting down before posting work
 - Couldn't follow written directions
 - Unfamiliar with computer language such as 'submit'
 - Students overwhelmed
- Setting up a distance course and letting it go - you must be actively involved!

For references, links, examples, and information about some common CMS, please visit the website for this presentation.