

Salve
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Teaching with WebCT

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Special points of interest:

- "Open Learning," featured in the Course of the Month
- "Redesigning a Course," an online presentation from University of Illinois in the Resources section.
- "Rubric for Online Instruction," from California State University, Chico in the Resources section.

Course Design and WebCT

Designing a course is like building a house. A house is made from many different materials—wood, brick, glass, stone; but how these are combined depends on your blueprint. Your course structure is made up of content presentation, learning activities, study materials, assignments, and assessments; but just as the plan for a ranch house differs from a mansion, the plan for a web-supplemented course differs from a fully-online course. So before you plan you need a vision of what you want the final product to look like. For a course this would be your broad goals and specific learning objectives, both for content and skills.

Once you have your vision, then you need to work on your plan. Do you want the ranch house or the mansion? What features are important? What will make the home livable for you? You want to ask yourself similar questions for your course. Is it going to be a web supplement to an on-campus class, fully online, or somewhere in between? How will you interact and communicate with your students? How will they receive the content and practice and study what they need to learn? How will they show you what they have learned? What will make these tasks easier for you? With answers to these questions in mind, you can make a plan that will work

for you and your students.

Communication is like the framing of a house; your course will fall without it. Even if your plan allows for face-to-face meetings, email should be an included feature for one-on-one communication. Group discussion is important in the online environment and is a good



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Focus on Tools: Organizer Pages & Content Modules

Organization in an online course is critical to student learning. If students have difficulty finding your material, they are not likely to use it or benefit from it. WebCT provides several tools for presenting material to students. You have two choices for organiz-

ing your material: organizer pages and content modules. Which you choose will be determined by your course goals.

Organizer pages are the backbone of WebCT. The homepage is an organizer page. All tools, including con-

tent modules, are added to organizer pages. You can nest organizer pages (add organizer page to organizer page), which is a good way of grouping similar tools together. For example, a course homepage could have individual tools

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Focus on Tools, cont.

like the *Syllabus* and *My Grades*, as well as organizer pages for communication tools and course materials. You can control the visibility or release of any tool placed on an organizer page, which is one of its major benefits.

Content modules are the primary tool for presenting course materials. Files can be uploaded and organized into a sequence for the students to follow, yet its table of contents makes it easy for students to revisit any page or restart where they left off. The content module has a variety of tools in conjunction with it: annotations (notetaking), audio and video, links, glossary, references, self-tests. You can also link directly to quizzes, discussions or chat from any page of content. Content modules have the advantage of being trackable, meaning that

you can see how often each individual student uses each page of the module.

To add an organizer page to the Homepage, in designer view click *Add Page or Tool* from the *Action menu*. Select the *Organizer page* link on the left side of the screen. Enter a title, such as "Course material." Select where you want the link displayed. The page you were on when you added the tool is selected by default, in this case the *Homepage*. To change locations, click on the arrow by the dropdown box. Add the item to your course.

To add a content module, go to the organizer page where you want to add the module. This could be the *Homepage*, or one you have created specifically for holding multiple content modules. Click *Add page or tool*

from the *Action menu*. Select the *Content Module* link under the *Course Content tools* heading. Enter a title, such as "Week 1." Select where you want the link displayed. The page you were on when you added the tool is selected by default, in this case the "Course Material" organizer page created earlier. To change locations, click on the arrow by the dropdown box. Add the item to your course.

By combining organizer pages and content modules, you can present your material in a format that is easy for the students to follow, yet allows you to control their access to, and track their use of the course materials.

Course of the Month

Open Thinking from British Columbia Open University incorporates many of the elements of strong course design. The course is designed around Bloom's Taxonomy. "Open Thinking is a competency-based course designed to guide learners from initial awareness (Bloom's knowledge) to deep reflection (Bloom's evaluation)." The course is well organized, with overview, outcomes, references and topic sections in each module. Within each topic information is chunked in a variety of ways, from bulleted lists and tables to boxed notes and pop-up reminders. Course material is presented using a variety of tools: goals, discussion, internal and external links, video/audio, and access to electronic reserves and ebooks at the library. Students are encouraged to communicate through discussion boards and emails,

Open Thinking truly deserves its title of exemplary course for its strong use of instructional design.

as well using chat for group projects. Along with a reflective journal, assignments are designed so that students must apply what they have learned. Instructor feedback "is done with the view to increasing students' learning" rather than just marking. The final project is a portfolio where students demonstrate that they have understood and applied the concepts presented in the course.

I encourage everyone to study this course for its truly exemplary instructional design. http://www.webct.com/exemplary/viewpage?name=exemplary_2003_pollock

Training

Please help us plan our training for next year!

What issues in teaching with technology would you like to learn more about? Is there a specific tool you would like to use? Are you wondering how WebCT will fit into a laptop environment on campus? How do you prefer to be trained: one-on-one, small group, online tutorials?

Please give us your feedback: annette.torrey@salve.edu, 341-2413.



Managing your course: The Course Menu

The Course menu is the navigation bar on the left side of the screen. It is available from every page of the course. When adding any page or tool, you are given the option of placing it on the Course menu; the question is whether or not you should.

For a course that is extremely structured, it can be beneficial for students to see the structure outlined in the course menu. Students can quickly jump from the homepage to the section of the course they need to work on. However, a cluttered course menu can actually hamper navigation. In a less structured course you might want to consider only adding to the menu the tools or pages that students will use most.

Any tool that displays “below the fold” of the homepage (students must scroll down to see it) needs to be placed on the course menu or students may not notice it.

To add a page or tool to the course menu select the checkbox by *On the Course Menu* when creating the tool. You can also add it to the course menu later by selecting the radio button in front of the icon and then clicking *Copy to course menu* in the *Action menu* on the right side of the screen.

Rearrange items on the course menu by going to *Control panel > Course settings > Edit course menu*. Select the box in front of the item and choose to move it up or down, or indent it. You can manually hide

and reveal, or delete, a link from here. With *Edit link* you can change the title of the link or set a selective release for it. Items can also be moved or copied from here to an organizer page.

There are a few quirks to the Course menu. If you delete an icon from an organizer page, its corresponding link on the Course menu must be deleted separately. If you edit a link, either from the course menu or an organizer page, be sure to select the checkbox next to *Apply to associated link* in order for the corresponding link to update. Failure to do this will have students going to different files when clicking on the corresponding links. 🖱

Tips and Tricks

- Create folders in Manage Files for each unit. Upload files into their respective folders. This makes files easier to find when adding them to a content module. 🖱

- Start file names with numbers to correspond to their unit or week. This will group all

Any tool that displays “below the fold” of the homepage (students must scroll down to see it) needs to be placed on the course menu or students may not notice it.

files for a unit together in the file list when adding them to a content module 🖱

- When numbering files, use 01, 02, 03, etc. to avoid having the following happen: 1, 10, 11, 12, 2, 3, 4, etc. 🖱
- Chunk content in a Content module by listing files under

headings. You can also indent files to give a visual flow to the material. 🖱

- Limit the need to re-date assignments and activities by making due dates general (Friday, week 1) instead of specific (Friday, April 7) 🖱
- To more easily upload multiple files, zip the files with WinZip or Windows XP and then unzip using the function in *Manage Files*. 🖱

Resources

- *Redesigning a Course*. Presentation on designing a course to match with exemplary rubrics. http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/pointersclickers/2004_05/index.asp
- *Designing e-Learning*. Includes sections on Learning Design with “show-and-tell stories”, as well as a Gallery of Strategies on course organization, learning activities, assessment and student support., <http://designing.flexiblelearning.net.au/>

[index.htm](#)

- *Creating Distance Learning Courses*, Lesson 2: The Instructional Design Process. A University of Washington faculty development course on distance learning. Lesson 2 focuses on the principle of instructional design. <http://depts.washington.edu/eproject/lesson2.htm>
- *Rubric for Online Instruction*, created by California State University, Chico is a

way to evaluate how your course measures up in six different areas: learner support, organization, instructional design, assessment of student learning, innovative use of technology, and faculty use of student feedback. <http://www.csuchico.edu/tlp/onlineLearning/rubric/rubric.pdf> Also check out their *Instructional Design Tips for Online Learning* organized around the same six areas. <http://www.csuchico.edu/tlp/onlineLearning/rubric/instructionalDesignTips.pdf> 🖱

WebCT

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From the editor:

Summer is a good time to review your course from last year and prepare for next year. Did you accomplish what you set out to do? How well did the students learn? Are there new topics to cover or new activities you would like to try? This issue discusses some elements of course design to consider as you evaluate your course.

Our lead article focuses on the importance of having a vision for your course and developing a plan to follow. Our two columns, Focus on Tools and Managing Your Course, discuss various ways to organize your course to make it easier for you to manage and for your students to learn. The tips this month should also make file organization a little easier.

Resources this month include presentations and lessons on course design, rubrics to evaluate your course, and examples from those innovative Aussies (who have a long history in distance education).

Take some time to look at the Exemplary Course of the Month. It includes many of the elements discussed in this month's issue.

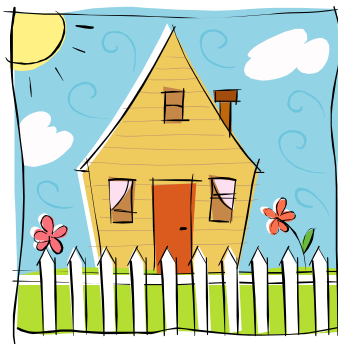
I'll be available all summer if you want to discuss plans for your course.

Annette

Course Design and WebCT, cont.

supplement to an on-campus course. If you do group projects, adding a chat tool for students to work together online can be a viable option, as can private discussion topics. The calendar feature can be used to post assignment due dates or schedule group meetings.

Course content is the windows of your course. Providing content for your students is simple. Start with your syllabus, then add any handouts you usually distribute to students. Does the publisher of your textbook provide supplemental materials? You can add them to the course or link out to them. Add your in-class PowerPoint presentations for students to review after class, or provide handouts for them to print out and bring to class to take notes on. Put supplemental readings in the course, or link to them at the library site. Add a page of references or links to websites that supplement your



course or a specific lesson. Images, audio files, or short video clips can enhance student learning.

You can also add tools to help your students study the materials. Self-study quizzes, a glossary of terms, references to supplemental material, and note-taking tools increase a student's time on task.

Assessments are like the fixtures in a house; most serve a necessary func-

tion, but some can make life easier. Quizzes can be created that are taken online and automatically scored and recorded in an electronic gradebook. Assignments can be collected in an electronic dropbox, ready for you to download or review online. Student projects can be uploaded and shared with the entire class, enabling electronic peer review in a discussion board.

Each of these tools is like a room in your house. You have to choose according to your plan. Not everyone wants a mansion, and many who do have to start small and build up to it. Homesteaders started with a two-room cabin and kept adding a room each year. As long as you have a plan in mind, you can add tools each year as your comfort with them grows. Without a plan you may end up with a hodgepodge that is not appealing to the end users, you or your students. ☺