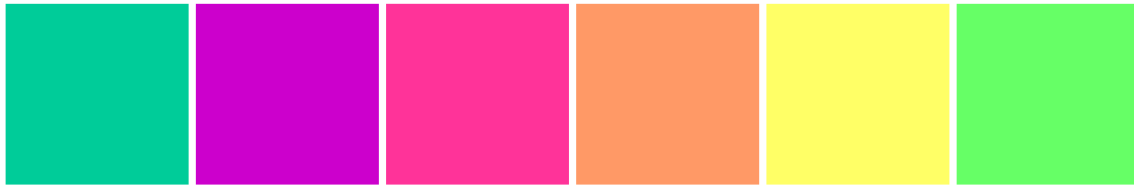


# Getting ESL online with course management systems

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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.**