

CTools Features FA 2005

Pedagogical Principles

- **Be consistent**, both within your course and with standard CTools practices.
 - Reduces student frustration
 - Reduces the time students spend learning to use your CTools site
 - Reduces your work time when you have a “template” to follow
- **Reduce the number of places students have to go** to find information.
 - Decide if students will mainly interact with CTools through Resources or Schedule.
 - If you’re using the Schedule as the main way for students to access readings, feel free to organize Resources by topic (cardiovascular unit, nursing policy, etc.) or type of media (readings, handouts, web sites, etc.)
 - If you are not using the schedule, arrange all the Resources for one week (or lesson or unit) in one folder. This way, students know they can go to *one* folder and read everything in it and be prepared for class. This is much easier for students than having to get one item each week out of folders called “Readings,” “Web Sites,” “Handouts,” etc.
- **Cut extraneous information** and links.
 - Eliminate similar-but-not-identical documents, web sites, etc. Even conscientious students who love to read will skip material that looks like duplicate info at first glance.
 - Avoid adding resources “just in case they need it.” Consider, instead, having an assignment where students submit the 2 best links they can find on a topic, annotated like a bibliography. Then post the whole annotated list under Resources.
 - Hide all the tools you’re not using. The most common items to hide are Assignments, Chat, Discussion, Drop box, E-mail Archive, News, and Web Content. Feel free to contact me (espring@umich.edu 7-0354) to discuss what you might eliminate.
 - If you’re not sure if you’re going to use it, hide it at the beginning of class and show it later. Students will look at something new; they won’t look at something old that was empty/unused when they first looked at it.

New and upcoming tools

Syllabus – new; currently available

Description

The point of this section is so everyone can post their syllabus in the same place. At the moment, you have two options for using this tool:

- build your syllabus using the tool (copy-and-paste from your Word syllabus)
- link to an existing syllabus (must be online somewhere; could be within the Resources folder)

Recommendation

In my opinion, neither of these options is *currently* (FA ‘05) worth the effort. If they make a button that lets you upload your syllabus (or point to the syllabus in Resources), then we should use it. If there is a larger institutional/administrative reason to have all syllabi in this format (e.g., accreditation reviews), we should use it. But in the meantime, upload your syllabus as one printable document (PDF or Word) to Resources in a clearly-labeled fashion.

Tests and Quizzes – new; available Winter or Spring?

Description

This will replace UM Lessons to allow you to give tests and quizzes online. The first look at it revealed:

- Has usual set of features for online tests: several options for type of question; can randomize both questions and order of multiple-choice answers to make cheating more difficult; times how long students take to complete test.
- Will score most questions automatically; you can grade essay questions by hand and assign points online.
- Will interface with the online gradebook.
- Will allow students to see their scores as soon as they are graded.
- Summer '05 it had an awkward user interface, and limited grading schemes available.

Recommendation

- Wait until it has been used “live” for 1 semester before using

Gradebook – new; available Winter or Spring?

Description

- Will let you record grades for your entire course online, no matter how assignments are submitted.
- Will automatically record grades from tests and quizzes given online.
- Summer '05 it was not yet automatically posting the grades from *assignments* graded online.

Recommendation

- Wait until it has been used “live” for 1 semester before using

Melete – new; available Winter or Spring?

Description

For building online modules. Will let you string together text, web pages, documents (like PDFs or PowerPoint), and quizzes in an easy-to-navigate format.

Example of finished module (or “lesson”)

MyWorkspace | DEMO 101 01 | PILOT 101 SP05 |

Home | Syllabus | Modules | Schedule | Announcements | Resources | Discussion | Assignments | Chat Room | Site Info | Help

users present:
Vivie Student

MODULES

Up | Lesson 1 | Lesson 2 | Lesson 3 | Lesson 4 | Lesson 5

Up » Rome - Appian Way » Rome - Baths of Caracalla » Rome - The Colosseum

Lesson 5: Italy - Visiting Rome

5 . 2 : Rome - Baths of Caracalla

The ruins are quite impressive in their size, but not all that much remains. Still, the spires of wall an that jut skyward often make evocative photos, and I've tried to capture them here.

Rome, Italy Picture - The Baths of Caracalla

Creating an item

You can create content for this section in one of three ways:

Compose Content*

Edit View Insert For

Normal Default font 12 A B I U

In an ideal earth (from an atmospheric motion standpoint), there would be a uniform surface and no seasonal change. Recall the Hadley cell from the previous section. The Hadley cell is a model for the more complex pattern of global circulation. Conduct some research and see if you can label the red blanks in the figure below:

Arctic Circle ()

Tropic of Cancer ()

winds

winds

The editor will let you insert pictures, format text, use non-Roman alphabets, and copy and paste HTML and Word documents *without losing formatting*.

Recommendation

- Wait until it has been used “live” for 1 semester before using
- Once it’s stable, use heavily, especially for online courses or courses with numerous, diverse resources

Refreshers on existing tools

Library reserves – currently available

Theoretically, lets you request a list of “reserve” materials from the library for your course. They create a link directly to the electronic, full-text article, while negotiating all copyright issues for us. Students can click the “library reserves” link and see all the items on reserve.

Snags:

- Has been some poor service with scanning articles (I think they also charge to scan).
- Links have not been pointing to articles directly; students have to slog through layers of firewalls, logins, searches, etc.
- Creates a second place for students to go to get resources.

Current recommendation: scan articles and put them in the Resources folder. However, this can be of dubious legality, especially if the readings start to approach “course packet” length. I will be developing a document on copyright issues this semester.

Schedule – currently available

The document we refer to as the “syllabus” often has a schedule included. This traditional format is still acceptable – it is easy to print, and students know where to find it. CTools’s Schedule Tool has a few advantages:

- Students can view the schedule for your course only, and they can also view their entire schedule for all their courses IF all their faculty members use the schedule tool.
- The schedule can serve as “one-stop shopping” for students to find out what to read, what’s due, etc. if you use the Schedule as your starting point for building your course. e.g., create a

class meeting item and attach the readings to the item so students know what they are to read for that class. The attachments can be archived in Resources and can be found from either browsing resources or looking at the schedule. (See Maureen Belden’s N252 001 for Mon, Sept. 26)

News (RSS newsfeeds) – currently available

RSS (“really simple syndication”) feeds are constantly-updated news headlines that you can post on your site. For example, if you are teaching a class on public health, you can post a link on your CTools site that will display public health news, pulled from wire services like the Associated Press and medical news sources, updated several times a day. Great for current events! To include a newsfeed:

- Go to <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/index.php?page=newsfeed>
- Pick the newsfeed you’d like to include.
- Click on the link (do not copy this link!)
- Copy the link shown in the 6th line of the code that appears (see diagram below)



- Go into CTools and edit the “News” tool.
- Paste this URL into the space provided.

Current Issues with CTools

- Not saving preferences for number of announcements shown, custom URLs in Welcome area, etc.
- List of events is only printing first line of events.
- You can get the URL of any item in Resources, copy it, and paste it anywhere you might “link to a web page”. Just go into Resources, find the item you want, click Edit, and look toward the bottom of the page – the URL will be listed.
- WebDav having some problems – isn’t setting up desktop folder correctly.