

Introduction to the University of Winnipeg's Learning Management System (LMS)

Characteristics of Online Courses

The University of Winnipeg wants to ensure that each Online ESL TCP course displays the following characteristics:

- High-quality content and professional presentation
- Approachable, student-friendly design
- Logical presentation of written information to organize content and provide systematic steps for students to follow as they learn
- Interactive elements (blogs, discussions, shared slide presentations) that allow students to learn directly from the instructor and each other
- Clear administration for the instructor and program director

University of Winnipeg LMS

The University of Winnipeg is in the process of changing its computer system to one that will be the most up-to-date in Canada. The anticipated start date for the brand-new LMS was Fall 2010, but it has been revised to January 2011.

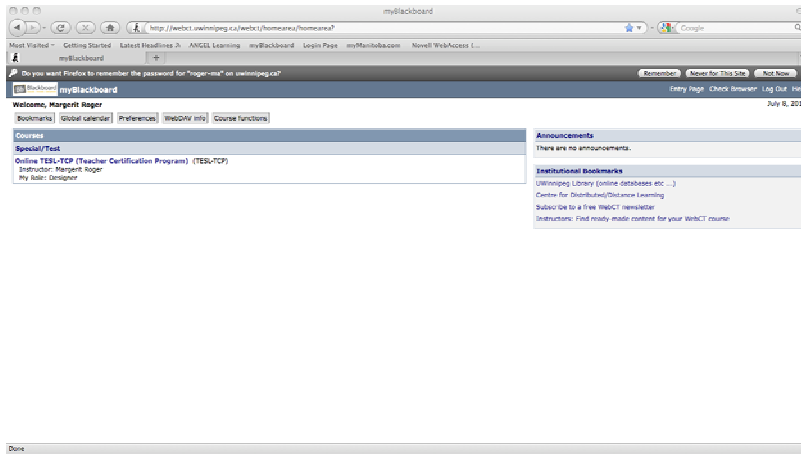
The existing LMS is a 1998 version of WebCT, a highly-popular platform used by many universities and colleges in Canada. This LMS will be used until the new LMS is active.

The first course of the Online ESL TCP will be offered using a combination of WebCT and interactivity applications (see details below). Specifically, the Online ESL TCP course will be using WebCT for content management and WikiSpaces for interactivity.

Subsequent Online ESL TCP courses are expected to be offered entirely on the new LMS.

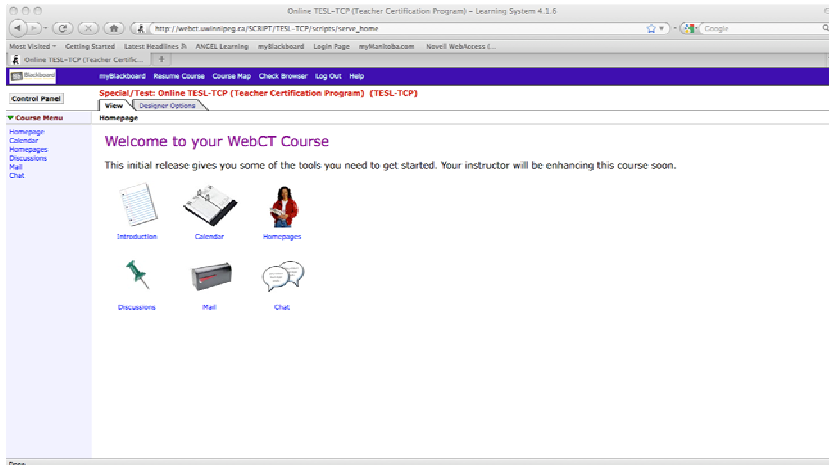
A. Content Management: WebCT

Students in Canada would reach their course through the following landing page:

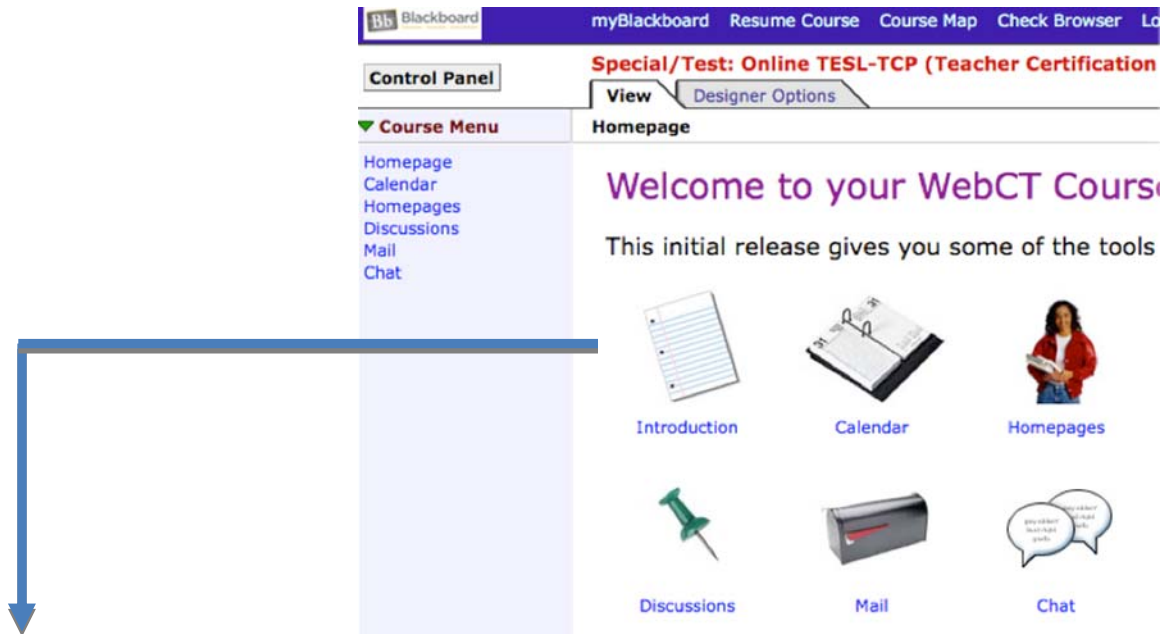


Note: Landing page for overseas students may differ.

The main course page is as follows:



WebCT has the following features:



The **Introduction** contains general information about the course.

The **Calendar** can show dates for assignments, online meetings and deadlines.

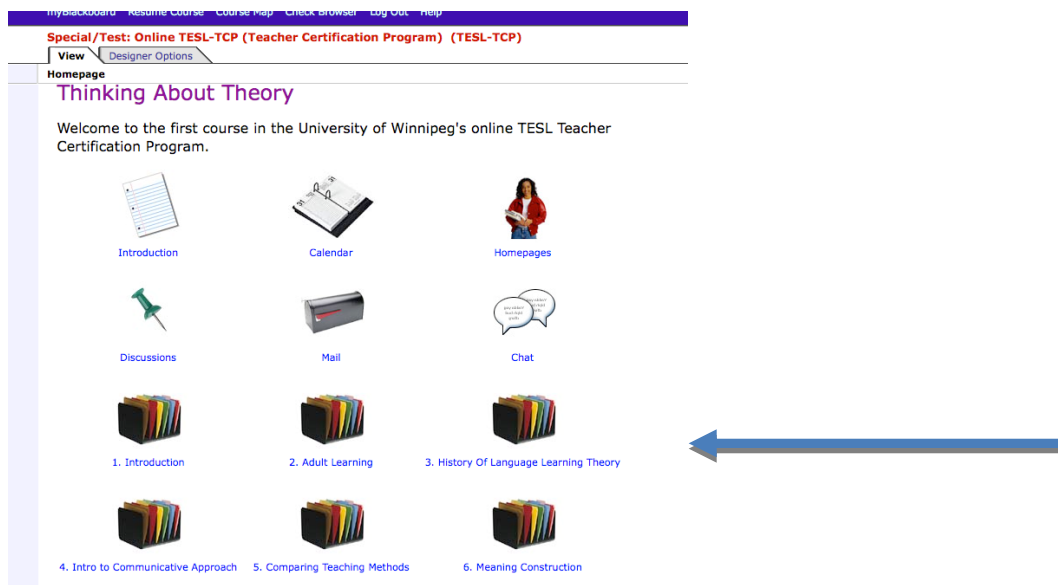
The **Homepages** are for students to introduce themselves and show what they are working on.

The **Discussions** page is for teacher-led discussions that anyone in the course can participate in.

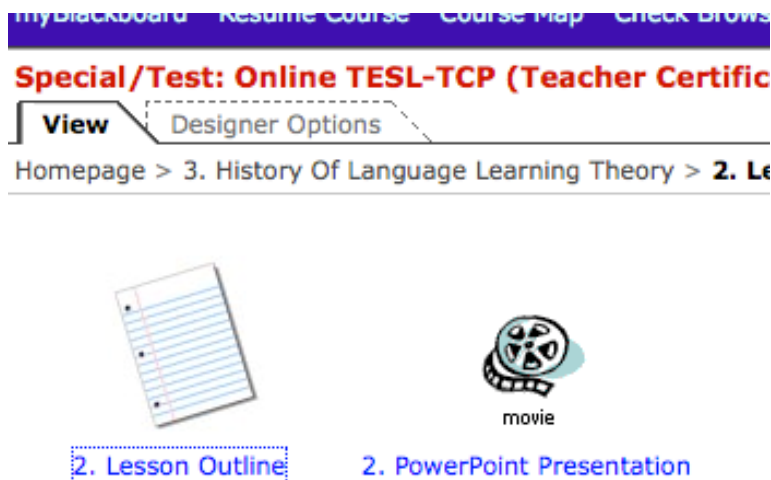
Mail is for private communication between two or more people.

The **Chat** pages are for social conversations.

The course content is arranged into modules (the file icons below):



The course content itself can be found by clicking on the correct folder. For example, the folder about the History of Language Learning contains a document and a PowerPoint presentation.



Sample Lesson Outline

<p>I. Thinking About Theory</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">Module 5: A Brief History of Language Learning Theory</p> <p>A. INTRODUCTION</p> <p>Current theories of language learning have grown out of a long tradition of thinking about how best to learn – and teach – languages. Research has been done by thousands of researchers in the fields of psychology, neurobiology, linguistics, sociology and education. As new theories about learning are published, new teaching methods and materials get developed to turn theory into practice. These methods and materials are then implemented in thousands of classrooms with many different types of learners and teachers. As the theories are put into practice, new ideas about language learning and teaching emerge. Some theories have brought the desired results; others need to be revised. These findings are taken up anew by researchers and theorists and, in this way, learning theory continues to evolve.</p> <p>It is useful to understand these cycles and to see how the roots of theory and practice have influenced what happens in the language learning classroom today.</p> <p>B. AFTER YOU FINISH MODULE 5</p> <p>After working through this module, you should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· List some of the factors that have influenced the development of language learning theories over time.· Name at least five methods or approaches that have been used for language teaching in the last 100 years.· Describe situations in which some of the older methods might still be effective today. <p>C. BEFORE YOU START</p> <p>Time and Materials: This module should take about 1 hour to complete. You will need your computer and your note-taking supplies. You will also need to open the file for the Powerpoint presentation called "A Brief History".</p> <p>D. LET'S GET STARTED</p> <p>Presentation</p> <p>While the history of language learning theory is not identical across countries around the globe, the last 100 years of language learning theory in Europe and North America can be divided into roughly five periods. Each period was marked by specific events that helped to shape the ideas about language learning and language use.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Watch the PowerPoint presentation about the five periods in language learning theory. The file, called "A Brief History of Language Learning Theory", can be found in the same folder as this document. <p>Note: Depending on your Internet service, the presentation may take a few minutes to download and open. If, for some reason, you cannot open the file, a duplicate is stored online.</p> <p>As you go through the presentation, notice how the pendulum swings back and forth between different approaches to language teaching and learning. Each time the pendulum swings, new elements are added to the collective understanding of how language learning can be supported in the classroom.</p>

Each Lesson Outline has the same features:

An **Introduction** that describes the information that will be covered

A list of **expected learning outcomes**

Information on the **time and materials** needed for the module

A sequence of steps to walk learners through each lesson in a logical and well-paced manner. These steps may include:

- Thinking activities
- Reading activities
- Exercises
- Reading comprehension questions
- Videos to watch online
- Academic readings to download
- Worksheets to complete
- Writing exercises
- Journal or blog entries
- Discussions with small group members or the class as a whole
- Assignments

A list of **self-assessment items** based on the expected learning outcomes

Multi-Media Samples

Some samples of multi-media embedded in the course content are shown below:

Using Dictionaries in Instruction



Using Radio Stations to Teach Listening



Watching Videos to Learn



Complete Learning Styles Surveys

Directions

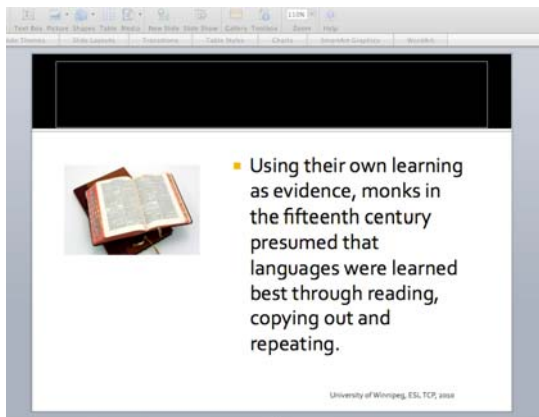
Please provide us with your full name. Your name will be printed on the information that is returned to you.

Full Name

For each of the 44 questions below select either "a" or "b" to indicate your answer. Please choose only one answer for each question that applies more frequently. When you are finished selecting answers to each question please select the submit button.

- I understand something better after I
 (a) try it out.
 (b) think it through.
- I would rather be considered
 (a) realistic.
 (b) innovative.
- When I think about what I did yesterday, I am most likely to get
 (a) a picture.
 (b) words.
- I tend to
 (a) understand details of a subject but may be fuzzy about its overall structure.
 (b) understand the overall structure but may be fuzzy about details.
- When I am learning something new, it helps me to
 (a) talk about it.
 (b) think about it.
- If I were a teacher, I would rather teach a course
 (a) that deals with facts and real life situations.
 (b) that deals with ideas and theories.
- I prefer to get new information in
 (a) pictures, diagrams, graphs, or maps.
 (b) written directions or verbal information.

Watch PowerPoint Presentations



Download Documents

December 1992

Eight Approaches to Language Teaching

Dan Snow, Amity Foundation, Overseas Coordination Office

Where there was once consensus on the "right" way to teach foreign languages, many teachers now share the belief that a single right way does not exist. It is certainly true that no comparative study has consistently demonstrated the superiority of one method over another for all teachers, all students and all settings.

Presented here is a summary of eight language teaching methods in practice today: the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Audio-Lingual Method, the Silent Way, Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning, the Total Physical Response Method, and the Communicative Approach. Of course, what is described here is only an abstraction. How a method is manifest in the classroom will depend heavily on the individual teacher's interpretation of its principles.

Some teachers prefer to practice one of the methods to the exclusion of others. Other teachers prefer to pick and choose in a principled way among the methodological options that exist, creating their own unique blend.

The chart inside provides a brief listing of the salient features of the eight methods. For more details, readers should consult *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching* by Diane Larsen-Freeman, published in 1986 by Oxford University Press in New York, on which this summary was based. Also see references listed in For Further Reading.

Grammar-Translation Method

The Grammar-Translation Method focuses on developing students' appreciation of the target language's literature as well as teaching the language. Students are presented with target-language reading passages and answer questions that follow. Other activities include translating literary passages from one language into the other, memorizing grammar rules, and memorizing native-language equivalents of target language vocabulary. Class work is highly structured, with the teacher controlling all activities.

Direct Method

Teaching Approach

Lessons in the WebCT LMS are generally set up with the following teaching sequence:

- a. **Preflection:** a preliminary exercise to refresh the student's memory about a particular topic, to initiate the thinking process, to "set the stage" for upcoming learning
- b. **Introductory New Learning:** basic introduction of new material through a reading, with subsequent comprehension and analysis questions
- c. **Expansion:** expansion of the introduced topic through additional readings, exercises or audio-visual material; intended to introduce more complex ideas and questions, to engage the learner's mind more fully, to lead towards application exercises
- d. **Guided application:** transition exercises in which students must take the key concepts from readings, videos and introductory exercises and use them in a guided manner to develop teaching ideas
- e. **Unguided application:** More difficult application of learned material and concepts without the guidance of the instructor; often a submission online for public viewing or discussion, or an exercises to be handed in for marking
- f. **Self-assessment:** reflection to allow for integration of learned material and development of personal philosophy of instruction, based on learned material

Critical thinking is an important element of the course. Students are expected not only to use information they have learned but be able to explain and justify why it is appropriate.

B. Interactivity: WikiSpaces

WikiSpaces

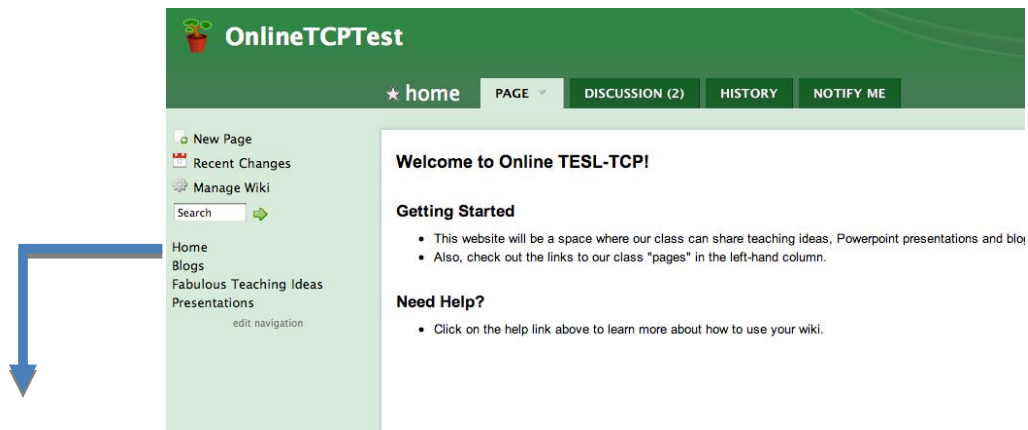
In order to make the course as interesting and current as possible, additional interactivity has been integrated into the course. The links to WikiSpaces are embedded in the course material in the WebCT LMS.

Online interactivity is important to the University of Winnipeg for the following reasons:

- Research has shown that students learn better if they can use multiple modalities (seeing, hearing, reading, writing, discussing)
- Multi-media presentations create variety and interest, increasing motivation of students
- Students need to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning

- Students can learn a great deal from each other
- Participation in group discussions and team assignments increases accountability and quality of work
- Once they are teachers, the participants in the Online ESL Teacher Certificate Program will need to be familiar with online learning techniques and resources

WikiSpaces adds the following features:



- A place for student **blogs** (journals)
- A place to develop a Wiki of tried-and-true **teaching ideas**
- A place for student **presentations**

SlideShare

Students may also be asked to post presentations for public viewing on SlideShare:

<http://www.slideshare.net>

Elluminate

In addition, interactivity may be added through live lectures using Elluminate, a web conferencing program used by many educational institutions. It is similar to iVocalize.

Information on Elluminate can be found at <http://www.illuminate.com/>

Links to SlideShare, Elluminate and other applications are also embedded into the course materials in the WebCT LMS to make it easy for students to use.

C. Observation and Practicum

After students have started to develop some theoretical understanding of language teaching, they will begin to observe other instructors in action. In the online environment they are asked to observe and comment on videos found online to illustrate specific points. They are then asked to set up classroom visits to complete their observation requirement.

The final component of the Online ESL Teacher Certificate Program is a 10 hour teaching practicum in an Adult ESL classroom. Students will be required to arrange a practicum placement with a certified, experience teacher. The lessons will be videotaped and sent to The University of Winnipeg to be viewed by a practicum supervisor, with expertise in second language instruction and the mentorship of educators. Students will benefit from the feedback of their practicum supervisor in informing subsequent teaching experiences in their selected classroom.

Links to the videos and forms for the observation are embedded in the course content of the WebCT LMS.

D. Final Marks

Final marks for the course will be composed of the following:

- Online participation
- Completion of interactive elements (blogs, discussions, Wiki contributions)
- Completion of submitted assignments, which include writing, lesson-planning and research assignments.

Marks are tracked in WebCT so that students are constantly aware of their standing in the course and program.