



---

## *Teaching Tips*

# *Planning for Effective Implementation of a Course Management System*

Janet Rankin and Laura E. Hess  
*Associate Directors*

As many of you know, Brown is currently in the process of adopting a Web-based course management system, designed to facilitate the management and delivery of courses. As you consider using a CMS and its various components in your course(s), consider the following issues in order to make this new resource as effective as possible:

### **Questions about General Issues**

- What are my goals and objectives for this course?
- How will I know that students have achieved my course goals and objectives?
- How will the use a CMS advance my goals for this course?

### **Questions about CMS-Specific Issues**

#### Components

- What components of a CMS am I thinking about implementing?
- What specifically about these components appeals to me?
- What specifically about these components will appeal to my students?

#### Usage and implementation

- Do you plan to use the CMS to support an existing course, or do you plan to use it in the revision of an existing course or in the development of a new course?
- If you plan to implement aspects of the CMS to revise an existing course, how will the new course differ from its previous incarnation?

- If you are designing a new course that utilizes a CMS, what unique role will this course management system play in it?
- Will you use the CMS (1) to disseminate information, (2) to administer your course and/or conduct student assessment, (3) to facilitate student interaction (e.g. through threaded discussion), and/or (4) to allow for on-line student engagement with course material?
- Which, if any, aspects of the CMS will students be required to use? How will you ensure that students utilize them?
- What is my time frame for adopting various components of a CMS? Do I have short- and long-term goals for implementation?

### Reflective Teaching

- How will the use of a CMS improve and/or alter student learning?
- How will I know what role the CMS has played in student learning?
- How will the use of a CMS change my role as a teacher? How do I feel about this?

The Sheridan Center wishes to compile information about how instructors use a CMS during the year ahead, so please help us by responding to as many of the above questions as you wish. Send your reply to [Sheridan\\_Center@Brown.edu](mailto:Sheridan_Center@Brown.edu).

## What is a Course Management System?

A course management system (CMS) is a Web-based product that enables instructors to manage many of the time-consuming logistical aspects of teaching a course with a single interface, the course Web site. While use of a CMS has no inherent pedagogical value, it is intended to facilitate how faculty use time required for logistical issues and may permit more time to be devoted to developing a reflective teaching practice.

CIS will be offering a campus-wide CMS in the near future. CMS features are designed to be used only by students properly enrolled in a course and include:

- Course Information (syllabus, assignments, calendar, announcements)
- a course Gradebook
- digital Dropboxes for written assignments
- online Quizzes
- Course content support: hyper-links, uploaded files
- inter-student communication aids such as: Discussion Boards
- Chat “rooms”

A CMS will permit instructors to be able to build a course Website without using, or having to learn, “HTML.” For more information about a CMS, e-mail [Faculty\\_Liaison@brown.edu](mailto:Faculty_Liaison@brown.edu), or call Stephanie Birdsall (x 37299).