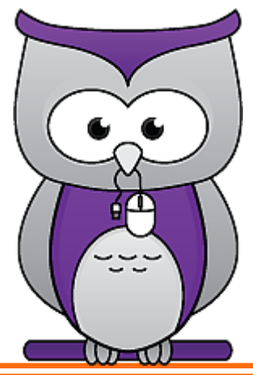


OWL Organization Strategy #1

Use the Course Homepage

A course homepage should welcome students, set the tone for the course, outline expectations, and convey other important information, including how students should get started with the course.

Modify the course homepage by using the Rich Text Editor.
Access it using this icon at the top of the homepage
Instructions for using the Rich Text Editor are available in OWL Documentation

BEFORE

Site Information Display

BSKTWEAV 1001

Recent Announcements

Options

Announcements (viewing announcements from the last 10 days)

There are currently no announcements at this location.

Calendar

Options | Subscribe (Randomly named feeds)

May 2016 < Today >

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5

Message Center Notifications

New Messages	none
New in Forums	none

AFTER

Welcome

Getting Started

To get started in BSKTWEAV 1001, choose the **Course Content** tool from the left hand side menu.

For course mark breakdown, required texts and assessment information select the **Syllabus** tool from the left hand side menu.

Instructor Contact Information

Ima Instructor
Ima.Instructor@uwo.ca
Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:00 - 6:00 pm
Please put the course name in the subject line of your email and I will respond within 24 hours.

Course Description

Fusce volutpat tempor urna commodo fermentum. Curabitur magna tortor, viverra vel tristique ac, tempor nec quam. Morbi et imperdiet urna. Nunc ut blandit dolor. Donec semper tellus quis interdum consectetur. Quisque tristique eu leo vitae rutrum. Integer facilisis neque eget lorem luctus tincidunt. Maecenas diam quam, aliquam vel fermentum vel, ornare lacinia felis. Etiam nec nisi a tellus viverra varius ut volutpat dui. Proin vulputate lacus sit amet aliquet consequat. Phasellus felis mi, luctus sed velit non, porta venenatis velit. Etiam non risus eget metus gravida efficitur. Sed posuere orci ligula, vitae imperdiet ante egestas nec.

Learning Outcomes

- Pellentesque at risus tincidunt, imperdiet felis ac, lacinia nulla.
- Sed sed odio vitae diam mollis dapibus.
- Aliquam molestie nisi at interdum ullamcorper.
- Duis et elit pharetra, iaculis neque vel, lacinia purus.
- Suspendisse dictum justo finibus semper facilisis.

Recent Announcements

Options

Announcements (viewing announcements from the last 10 days)

Welcome to Basket Weaving 1001
(Deanna Grogan - May 2, 2016 2:47 pm)

Assignment: Open Date for 'Assignment 1'
(Deanna Grogan - May 2, 2016 2:45 pm)

Assignment: Open Date for 'Assignment 2'
(Deanna Grogan - May 2, 2016 2:45 pm)

Calendar

Options | Subscribe (Randomly named feeds)

June 2016 < Today

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	1	2

Message Center Notifications

New in Forums	none

Homepages differ in levels of complexity, but all should have the elements in Level One

Level One

- Course name and number
- Instructor/TA name and contact information
- How to contact instructor/TA and their availability
- Short course description
- Course level outcomes
- Getting Started note (i.e., first steps after signing in)
- Use of Headers/other formatting to organize homepage information

Level Two

- Everything in Level One
- Header image
- Course calendar
- Course announcements (if using)

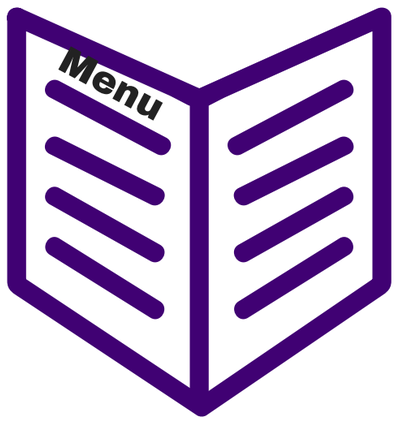
Level Three

- Everything in Levels One and Two
- Welcome video (might also explain the purpose of the course/outcomes) with close captioning and/or downloadable script
- Hyperlinks to syllabus, calendar, or other important areas of the course

OWL ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY #2

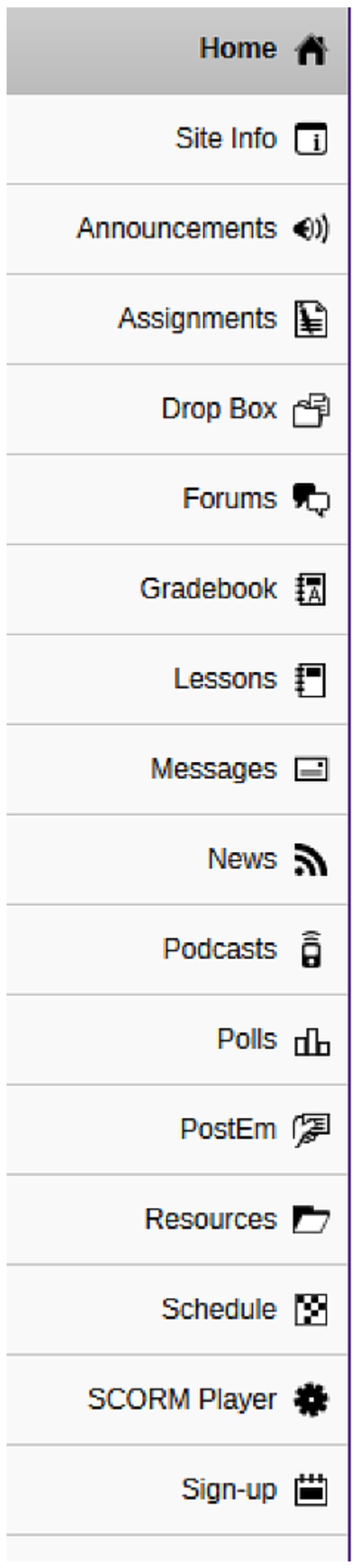
MENU TAB SELECTION AND ORGANIZATION

Students most frequently access course content and tools in OWL using the menu tabs to the right of the page. Purposefully selecting and organizing the tabs that students see and use simplifies user experience and improves course navigation efficiency.



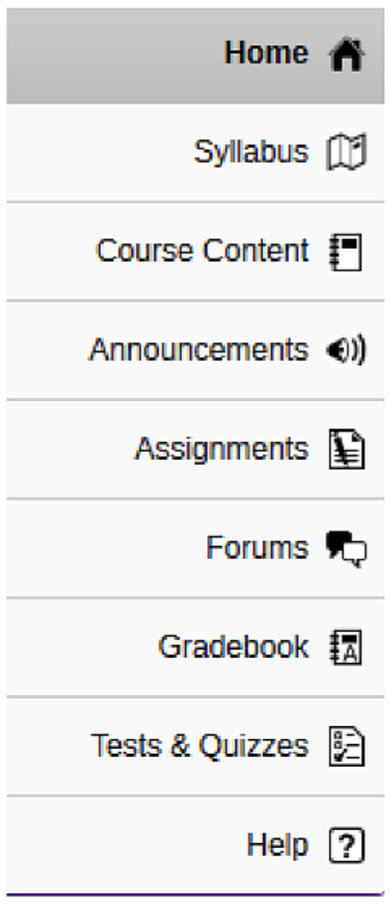
Course menu tabs are reorganized, hidden, made visible, or renamed by using the Site Info Tool--> Managing Site Tools

Before



OR

After



TIPS FOR (RE)ORGANIZING COURSE MENU TABS

Avoiding renaming tabs during a course. Renaming and reorganizing menu tabs once the course has started can lead to learner confusion.

Regularly accessed menu tabs and those with important information should go at the top of the menu. Place the course syllabus tab at or near the top!

Merge tabs with similar information together and use subpages to organize their content, e.g., three separate tabs with assignment instructions becomes the "Useful Information About Course Assignments" tab.

Only make tabs visible if students really need to see them. For example, students don't need to see the Stastics tab. Delete or hide tabs/tools not used in the course.

Avoid renaming core tools, such as Forums, Messages, Syllabus, Assignments, Announcements. Students become accustomed to these tools in OWL. Renaming them can lead students to overlook or ignore them.

If the course lists each lesson/module by tab, make the order in which they should be accessed clear in the title, e.g., Lesson/Module 1: Why Basket Weaving?

OWL ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY # 3

SETTING CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

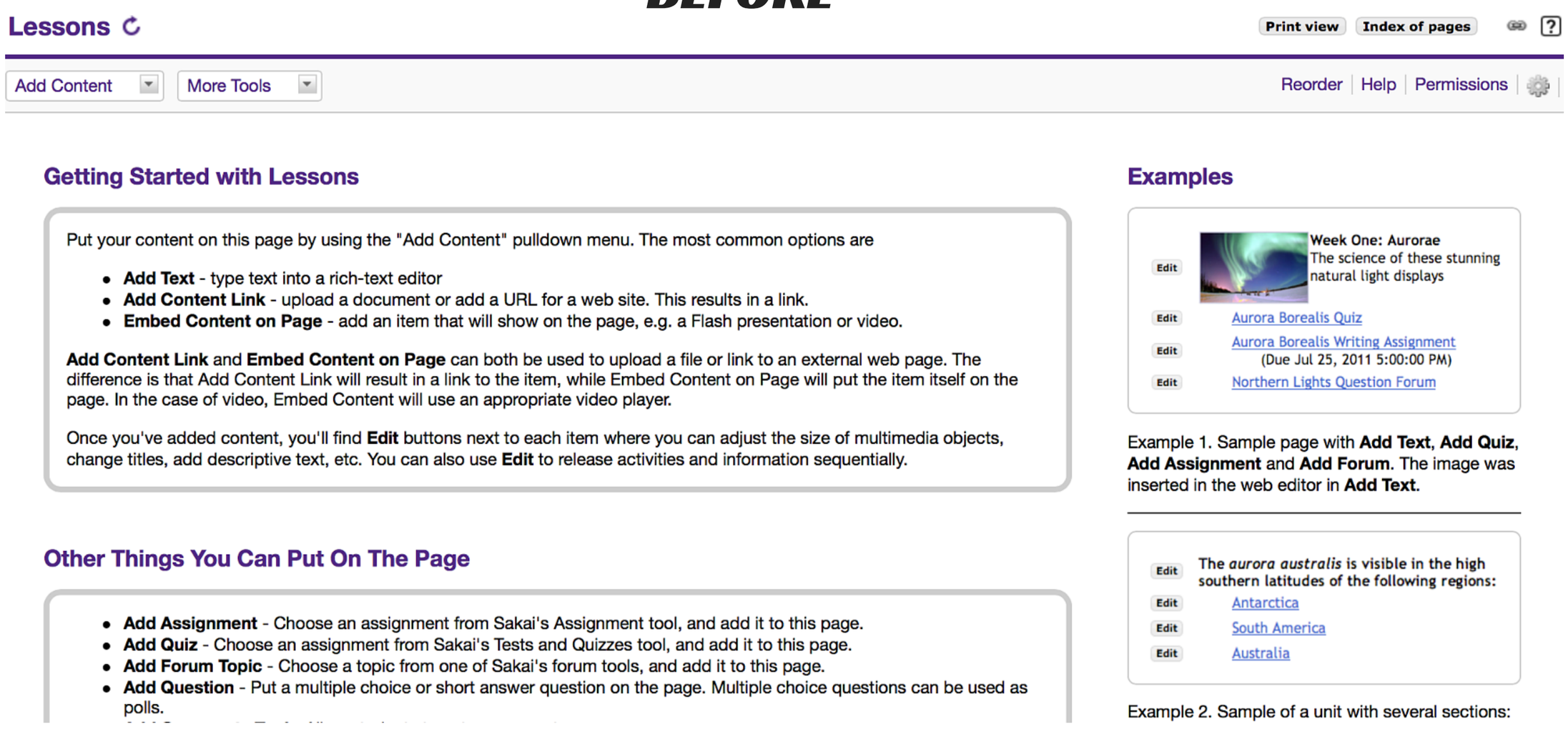
Clear and consistent communication and course organization helps students know exactly what they should be doing in the course and when they should be doing it, helping them to achieve the course outcomes.

Top Tip!
Create a "Landing Page" for each Lesson/Module using the Lessons Tool

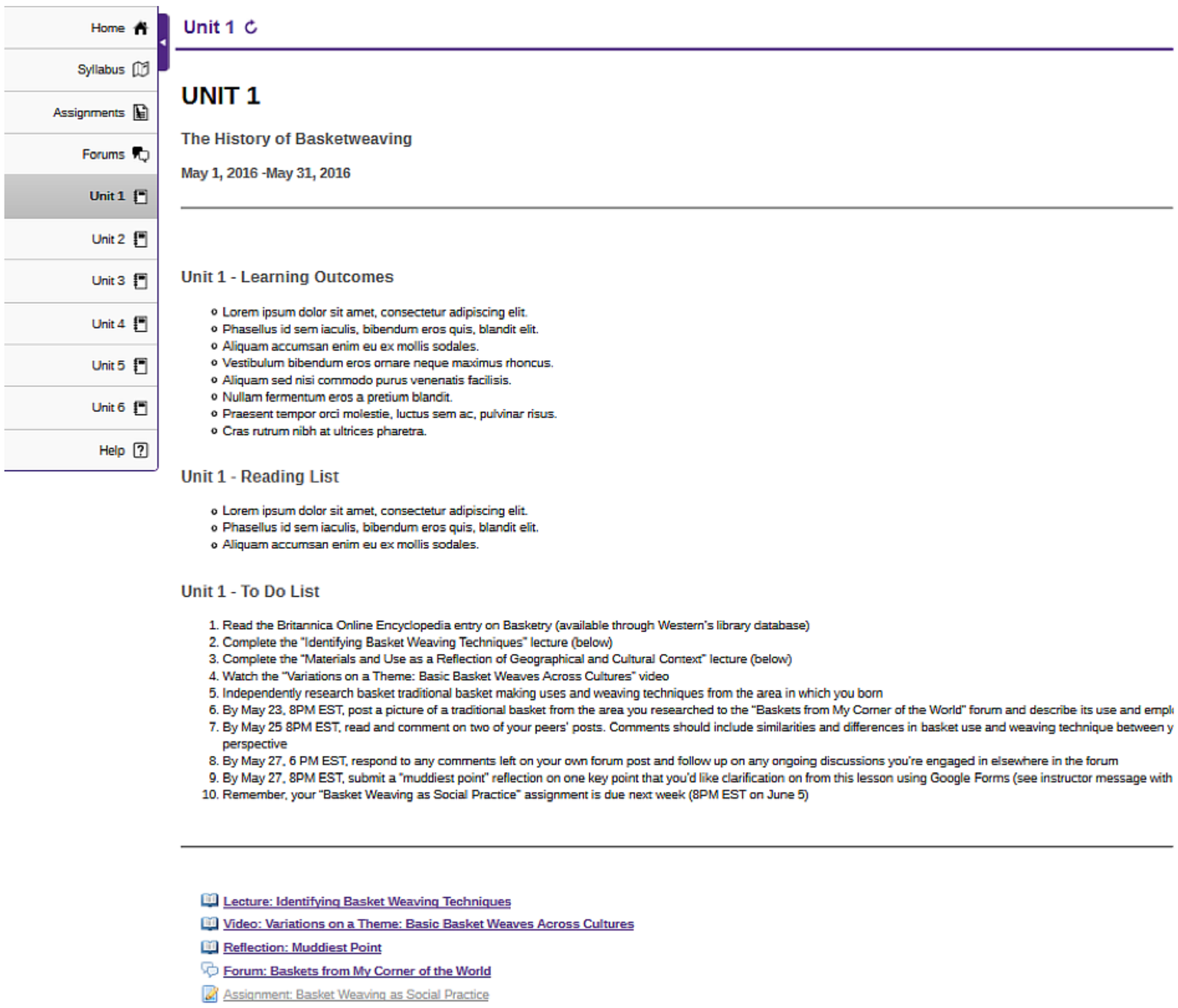
Landing Page Elements:

- title of lesson/module
- start/end dates of lesson/module
- learning outcomes
- reading list
- links to resources outside of OWL
- numbered "To Do" list of tasks and work students should complete tasks (with due dates)
- links to lesson subpages (in order of access)
- Optional: Instructor summary videos, paths to work submissions areas

BEFORE



AFTER



Other Tips for Setting Clear Expectations

Manage your menu tabs (See OWL Organizational Strategies #2 resource sheet)

The Messages and Announcement tools can be linked to students' Western email so communication happens without signing in to the course

Include descriptions for Assignments, Forums, Wikis, etc., in multiple places, including in the area where work is submitted (e.g., Assignment submission page, top of Wiki, Forum description); lesson/module landing page; and course syllabus

OWL ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY #4

STRUCTURING LESSONS/MODULES

Students engage most effectively with online course content when it is divided into manageable sections and presented in a variety of modalities (e.g., text, image, interactive learning object).

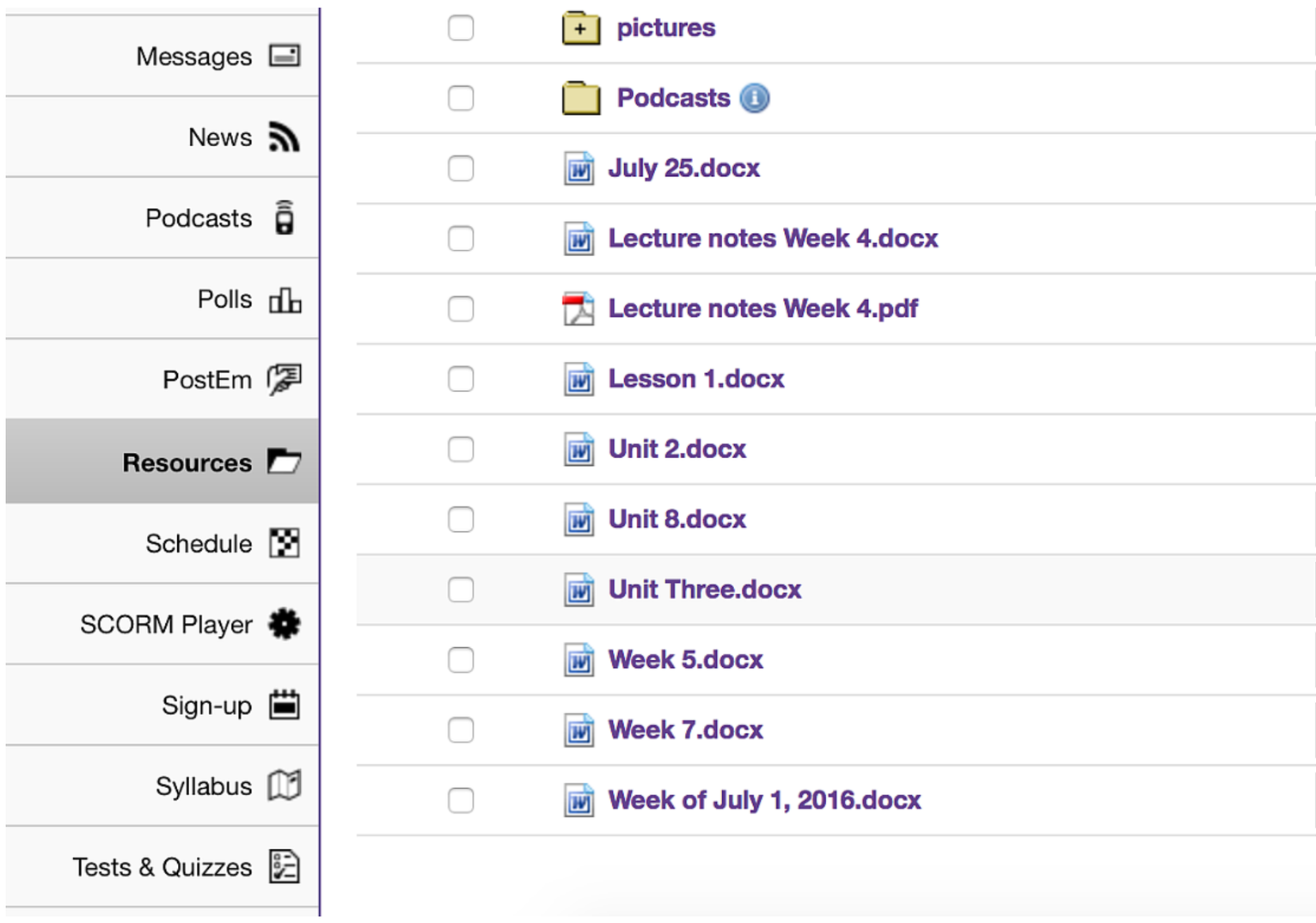
Use the Lessons Tool to create a course "Landing Page (see OWL Organizational Strategy #3 Resource sheet) and then divide lesson/module content into subpages.

Each subpage functions as a mini-lesson. You can:

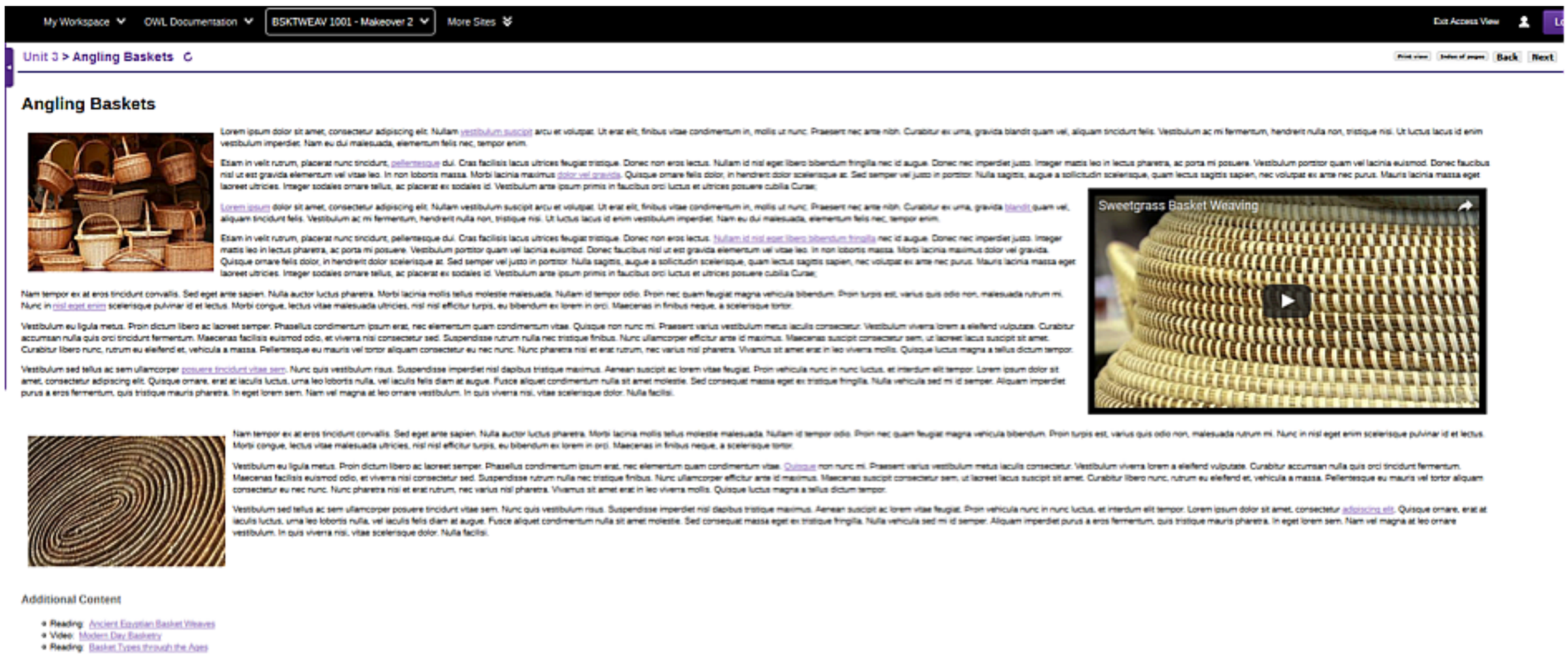
- Use the Rich Text Editor Tool to add text and other content
- Use the Lessons Tool to add content links or embedded media such as images, videos, PDFs, or hyperlinks
- Embed or make links to any forums, assignments, or quizzes that are mentioned on a subpage

BEFORE

The course does not use the Lessons tool. Instead, lesson/ module content is located in the Resources folder as PDF or Word documents



AFTER



TIP: Subpages must be listed in viewing order on the landing page. Otherwise, the subpage "next" button causes lesson content to appear out of order

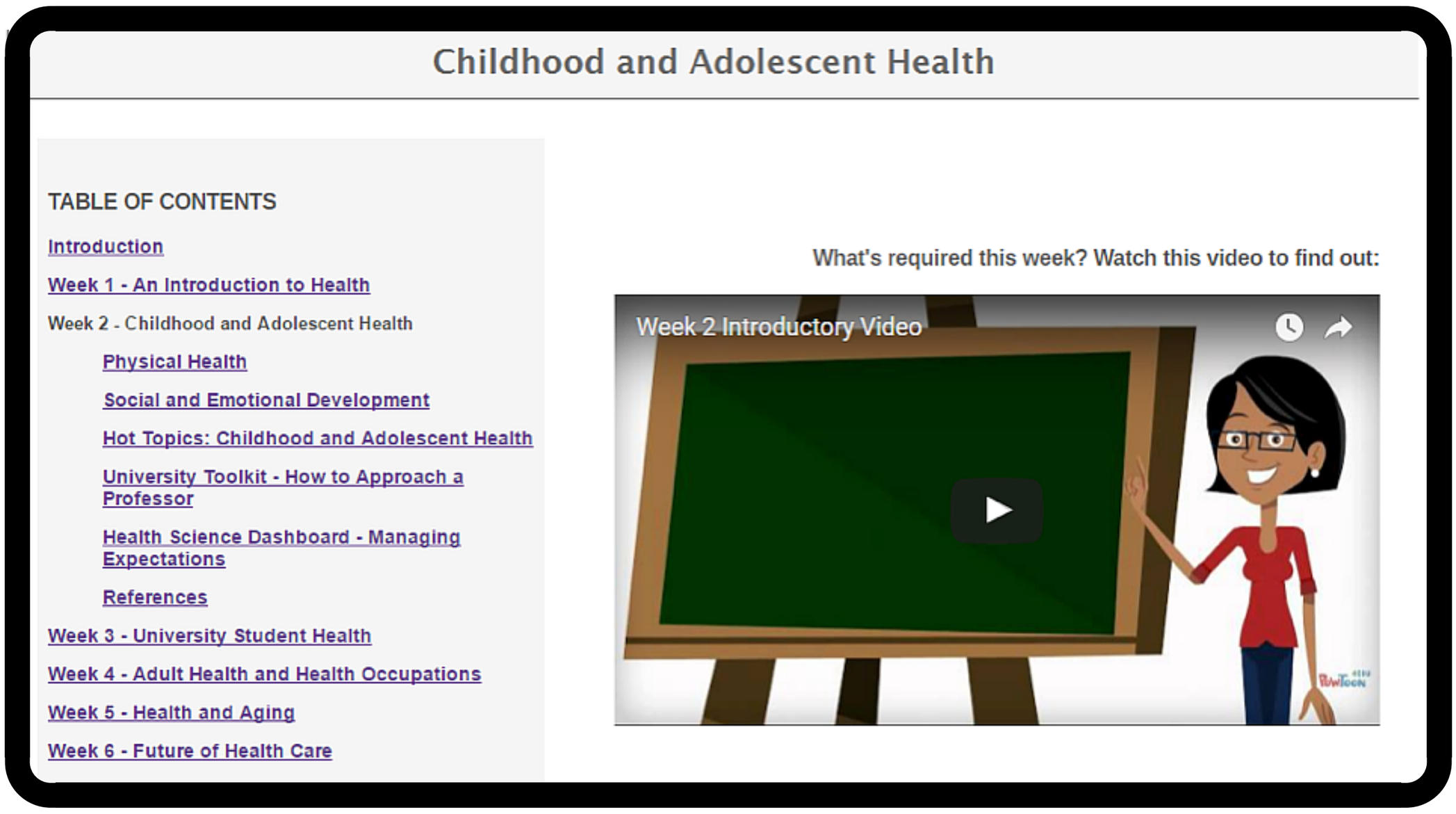
Use the Rich Text Editor Tool to create headings, subheadings, and other visual organizers:

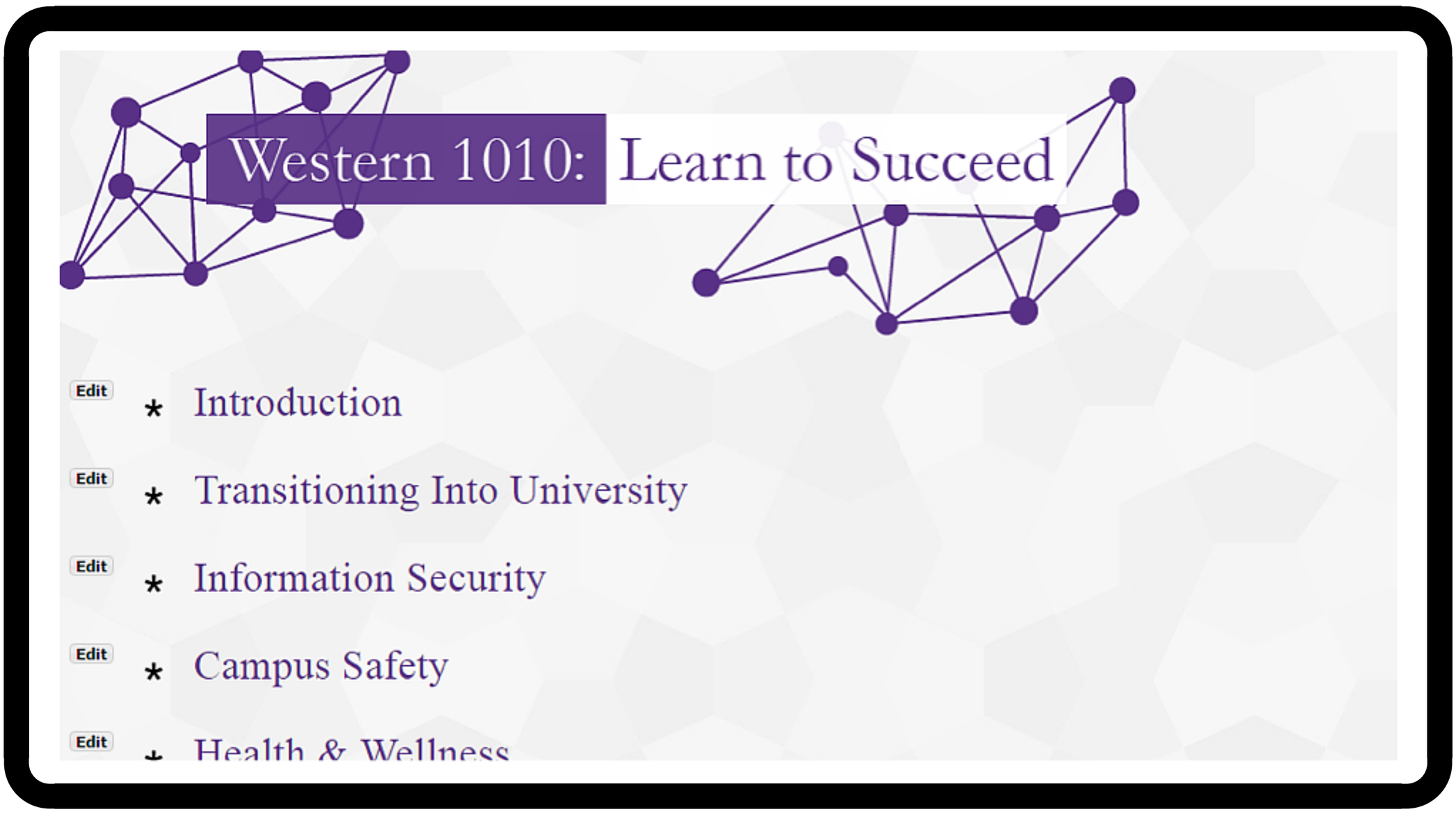
- Use the “Format box” in the Rich Text Editor to choose an appropriate heading or subheading
- Other boxes allow you to create charts, align text, and embolden or italicize text

Create a consistent look and feel across each lesson/module:

- Use the same font, font sizes, and heading/subheading formatting throughout the course
- All lessons/module, forums, assignments, quizzes, etc. should indicate the order of access by including this information in their title, e.g. “Lesson 1: A Brief History of Basketry,” “Forum 2: Baskets in My Corner of the World”
- (Optional) A cascading style sheet will ensure a common look and feel across course content (the ITRC can help you!)

Examples Of OWL Sites With Cascading Style Sheets





OWL ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY #5

MANAGING MATERIALS IN THE RESOURCES TOOL

The Resources tool stores any file uploaded to a course (e.g., Word documents, PowerPoints, videos) and shares links to useful websites. It can also create and post HTML (web) pages and simple text documents. That's a lot of material, and if it's not organized, items can be very hard to find, especially when making changes later on in the course.

How the Resources Tool Supports the Lessons Tool

Since all files have their "home" in the Resources tool, any file that is added to a lesson/module page or course homepage is essentially a link from its home in the Resources Tool. Keeping Resources material clearly labelled, organized, and up-to-date makes it easier to find files to upload, replace, or delete. It also allows students to find information easily in the Resources tool, should they need to access it.

Suggestions for Organizing Resource Materials

Remember: The Resources tool should not be the primary tool through which students access course content. The Lessons tool is usually a more appropriate and efficient tool because content context and purpose can be explained and combined with other learning modalities (See OWL Organizational Strategy #4 resource sheet)

Moving a file in the Resources tool breaks its link to a lesson page, so it's best to begin with well-organized resources to avoid needing to move them later

Create a folder for each lesson/module in the course. Give it the same title that the lesson/module has in the menu tab (See OWL Organizational Strategy #2 resource sheet). Store all lesson/module files in that folder

If lesson subpages have a lot of file/weblink/html type content, etc., create subfolders in your lesson/module folders. Store all content files in that folder

If there are a lot of web links, videos, or other types of common files in the course, consider creating folders entitled “Weblinks,” “PDFs,” “Videos,” etc., so that students can easily find them without having to go back through every lesson/module.

(Tip: It's fine to upload the same file to more than one place in the Resources tool, just remember which file is linked to a lesson page

If there is content that needs to be in the course, but students don't need to see, hide it (e.g., content from a previous run of the course, answer sheets)

You can add release criteria to folders so that they are only visible to specific groups or during certain date ranges

At the beginning and end of each semester, review the materials in Resources and delete anything that is no longer needed

BEFORE

Location: BSKTWEAV 1001 Resources

Copy

Title		Access	Created By	Modified	Size
BSKTWEAV 1001 Resources	Actions				
2014 Files	Actions	Entire site	Deanna Grogan	28-Apr-2016 10:33	12 items
instructor stuff	Actions	Entire site	Deanna Grogan	28-Apr-2016 10:36	0 items
pictures	Actions	Entire site	Deanna Grogan	28-Apr-2016 10:38	8 items
Podcasts	Actions	Public	Stephanie Horsley	02-May-2016 15:01	0 items
July 25.docx	Actions	Entire site	Deanna Grogan	28-Apr-2016 11:08	27.2 KB
Lecture notes Week 4.docx	Actions	Entire site	Deanna Grogan	28-Apr-2016 10:34	27.2 KB
Lecture notes Week 4.pdf	Actions	Entire site	Deanna Grogan	28-Apr-2016 10:36	45.5 KB
Lesson 1.docx	Actions	Entire site	Deanna Grogan	28-Apr-2016 10:34	27.1 KB
Unit 2.docx	Actions	Entire site	Deanna Grogan	28-Apr-2016 10:34	27.1 KB
Unit 8.docx	Actions	Entire site	Deanna Grogan	28-Apr-2016 11:08	27.2 KB
Unit Three.docx	Actions	Entire site	Deanna Grogan	28-Apr-2016 10:34	27.2 KB
Week 5.docx	Actions	Entire site	Deanna Grogan	28-Apr-2016 11:08	27.2 KB
Week 7.docx	Actions	Entire site	Deanna Grogan	28-Apr-2016 11:08	27.2 KB

AFTER

Resources

Site Resources | Upload-Download Multiple Resources | Permissions | Options | Check Quota

Location: BSKTWEAV 1001 - Makeover 1 Resources

Remove Move Copy Show Hide

Title			Access
BSKTWEAV 1001 - Makeover 1 Resources	Add	Actions	
Module 1	Add	Actions	Entire site
Module 1 Lecture Notes.docx		Actions	Entire site
Module 1 Reading List.docx		Actions	Entire site
Module 1 - Supplementary Materials.docx		Actions	Entire site
Module 2	Add	Actions	Entire site
Module 3	Add	Actions	Entire site
Images	Add	Actions	Entire site
Weblinks	Add	Actions	Entire site