



Year 1, Number 31

## Achieving closure during the concluding weeks

The final phase of a course features a general recommitment to course goals and, as end-of-semester deadlines approach, a slowly building tension. Stress levels increase for faculty and students as time diminishes for teaching and learning content and for completing and grading assignments. On both sides of the desk procrastinators face a brick wall and perfectionists face inevitable disappointment.



**Implications for practice:** Acknowledging these challenges provides an opportunity to address them. Doing so enables conversations either online or in class about productive ways to study. A syllabus revisit can direct a conversation about key content points students now identify with each segment. Providing opportunities for students to recognize not just what they learned but how they learned it gets everyone focused on what was accomplished rather than what was left undone. Acknowledgment, joint pursuit of concrete evidence of progress, and identification of the best avenues for concluding the semester can help achieve positive closure.

The personas of the teacher and the class are conduits for learning: The arc of the semester often catches students off guard, and they're surprised that faculty not only notice the arc, but we experience it too. Using our understanding of the effects and predictability of the arc, we can help students effectively navigate through the highs and lows of a course.

Excerpt from: **The Rhythms of the Semester: Implications for Practice**

By Linda Shadiow, PhD, and Maryellen Weimer, PhD

[Faculty Focus. Higher Ed Teaching Strategies From Magna Publications](#)



## Preparing Distance Learning Courses for Maymester and 8-week Summer Semester

We want to first thank everyone for contacting our office on the status of their course development of their Maymester or 8-week semester online/hybrid summer course(s). Because we only have three weeks left before your class begins, please remember that our office has a course builder to assist with formatting or other tedious administrative tasks. This way, the load will be taken off of you in building a course and you and Cynthia can concentrate on the instructional strategies and quality standards required for the course. All we need is a complete Summer course schedule and your current distance learning syllabus (located in the UNTD Faculty Example Template course shell) to get started, so please email her as soon as possible.

Thank you to those of you that have already been working with Cynthia for the last couple of weeks. And those of you that still haven't started the course development process it's time for you to jump in the wagon!



# TOP 10

# DISTANCE LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS DURING 2015-2016 AT UNT DALLAS



# 1

## INSTRUCTIONAL DIGITAL MEDIA FOR E-LEARNING

Assisting our faculty in the development, production, and delivery of videos, animations and other multimedia resources as Digital Media for the online learning environment in a variety of formats.

# 3

## DISTANCE LEARNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Initiated the advisory committee with the primary aim to support the development of distance learning that meets the needs of our students in a manner that is consistent with the University's mission.

Started a

## WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

in an effort to keep our patrons updated on trends and issues relating to online course development, online pedagogy, instructional technology, and any news of interest in the field and as a way to maximize our support to distance education faculty and community at UNT Dallas.

# 4

A full calendar of **EVENTS** for **FACULTY** development programs as an opportunity to network with instructors from other departments, learn new instructional strategies and tools, and become aware of best practices in online teaching and learning. We offer over 55 events each semester, with an average of 3.5 events per week during the academic year.





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## EXCELLENCE IN ONLINE TEACHING AWARDS

Instituted the Annual to recognize and reward superior online teaching, providing models of excellence and innovation for fellow faculty, and encouraging all UNT Dallas faculty to continue to improve and advance their online teaching pedagogy and their use of instructional technology in support of the teaching and learning process.



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## IMPROVED QUALITY of ONLINE COURSES

Incorporated 12 standards, for a total of 26, to improve the quality of our online and hybrid course offerings.



We've been closely working with the Disability Services Office to improve the **ACCESSIBILITY** of our online courses as well as we've incorporated the Universal design for learning as framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning in online learning environments.



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## ONLINE COURSE SYLLABUS TEMPLATE

Updated our and the Online Course Template as clear communication of course procedures, guidelines, and expectations as well as course navigation are crucial to the success of an online course.



Updated our

8

Increased the number of filled seats with DL offerings by over 739% to a total 4,298 for the 2016 Spring semester. In addition, if compared to the overall seat enrollment, Distance Learning represents a 54% of the university total.

## DISTANCE LEARNING SEAT ENROLLMENT

Online course offerings at UNT Dallas have grown tremendously in the last couple years, our Distance Learning offerings include 221 sections of 162 fully or partially online courses.

## ONLINE GROWTH AT UNT DALLAS

We're working with 92 instructors that teach hybrid/blended and/or fully online courses and work diligently in order for the courses to meet our quality standards for online teaching and learning.

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### **Gamify Your Next E-Learning Course**

[Brown Bag Lunch Series. Track 3. Stepping Up Your Online Course]

Presented by Tim Slade, e-Learning Authoring Tools trainer.

Who Should Attend?

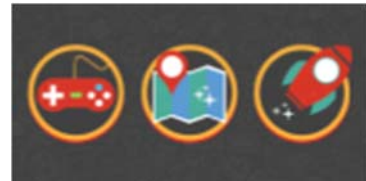
Anyone interested in learning how to add gamification elements to their next e-learning course.

What Will You Learn?

- What "gamification" really means
- How gamification creates more engaging e-learning
- Simple techniques to gamify an e-learning course

Monday, April 25 (12:00 PM - 1:00 PM), Founders Hall, Rm 127

[Register here.](#)



### **DLAC Meeting #3 for the 16SP Semester**

The Distance Learning Advisory Committee (DLAC) is a cross-functional team focused on providing guidance in the formulation of guidelines and strategies regarding resource allocation and quality accountability for online instructional excellence, as well as improving the overall quality of distance learning at UNT Dallas.

All of the meetings for this semester will be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month starting in February. Agendas, meeting documents, and web links are posted to the DLIT website for archival purposes.

Tuesday, April 26 (10:00 AM – 12:00 PM), Founders Hall, Rm 127

### **Finals Grading Café**

Gearing up for Finals grading? Have trouble setting up your Grade Center on Blackboard? Don't know how to create and manage grade center columns? Please join us for our open "Grading Cafe." Staff from the Office of Distance Learning and Instructional Technology will be glad to assist you on how to organize your Full Grade Center.

Tuesday, April 26, (2:00 PM – 4:00 PM), DAL1, Rm 336

[Register here.](#)



### **Making the Change to a New LMS—and Making it Easy**

[Getting to Know Canvas Series]

Which is harder? Transitioning to a new learning management system or maintaining an LMS that no longer meets the needs of your institution. Watch this free webcast with David Thomas, director of

academic technology at the University of Colorado Denver / CU Online, to find out how evaluating, selecting, and implementing a new LMS can be made easy.

Thursday, April 28 (2:00 PM - 3:00 PM), Founders Hall, Rm 127

[Register here.](#)

# Articles



(Click the images to read the articles)

Online learning may be the key to increasing the [skills of recent graduates](#), especially with new [credentialing programs](#), and may even have a large impact on the [culture of institutions of higher education](#).



## [Govt needs to look at online learning for skills shortage, says expert](#)

By Shannon Williams

Source: IT Brief

Online learning might be the answer to global inequality, according to new information from online learning platform ALISON. ALISON founder Mike Feerick says global inequality and the skills gap is one of the biggest challenges facing governments, and free online education is one of the most powerful modern tools available to address it.

However, he says governments and advisors are looking in the wrong places for answers, and asking the wrong people for solutions.

“We have been stopping people from educating themselves, and stopping those who can teach from having a wider impact,” Feerick explains.

[Read more...](#)



## ['Stackable' Credential Options Rise in Online Education](#)

By Jordan Friedman

Source: US News

In some programs, learners can earn several smaller credentials for an immediate career boost and build their way up to a degree. "Stackable" degrees might also be a good option for those who aren't completely sure which type of credential to pursue, experts say.

[Read more...](#)



## [7 Tips To Reduce Cognitive Overload In eLearning](#)

By Christopher Pappas

Source: eLearning Industry

Cognitive overload is the thorn in the side of eLearning professionals. In a perfect world, the human mind would be limitless and have the power to absorb an infinite amount of information without feeling strained. Unfortunately, this is not the case and we must ensure that our eLearning courses strike a perfect balance. Give online learners too much information and you overwhelm them; not enough, and

you bore them. In this article, I'll share 7 tips to reduce your learners cognitive overload when designing eLearning experiences.

[Read more...](#)

**More**







**Contact Us!**

The **Office of Distance Learning and Instructional Technologies** invites faculty and staff to join and participate in our development programs. These events provide an opportunity to network with faculty from other departments, learn new instructional strategies and tools, and become aware of best practices in online teaching and learning. Hope to see you there, and don't forget to register for our workshops and sessions! Please contact us with ideas and suggestions for future events:

Web: <http://www.untdallas.edu/dlit>

Phone: 972-338-5580

Email: [UNTDDistance@unt.edu](mailto:UNTDDistance@unt.edu)



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