



DISTANCE LEARNING  
& INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGIES

UNT DALLAS  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS AT DALLAS

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER



Year 1, Number 24

And the Winners Are...

The Office of Distance Learning and Instructional Technology is proud to announce the winners of the **2015 Excellence in Online Teaching Awards at UNT Dallas:**

**Innovative Teaching with Technology Award Winner:**

**Dr. Marco Shappeck** and **Dr. Katie Welch**

School of Education  
Teacher Education & Administration

Courses:

LING 2050: The Language of Now

LING 3060: Principles of Language Study

LING 4030: Acquisition of English as a Second Language

Spring 2015 (Hybrid)

**Outstanding Online Course Award Winner:**

**Dr. Amy McCortney**

School of Human Services

Counseling and Human Development

Course: COUN 5765: Appraisal in Counseling  
Summer 2015 (Online)

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

We want to thank all of our online instructors who strive to make learning at UNT Dallas an exceptional experience for our students.



## 16 THINGS TEACHERS SHOULD TRY IN 2016



9 JOIN A G+ COMMUNITY

10 GAMIFY A LESSON/PD

11 BREAKOUT EDU

12 A VOXER CHAT

## 16 Things To Try in 2016

What are your goals for 2016? There are so many new and exciting things to try both in and out of the classroom. Here is the third set of 4 ideas and EdTech to try this 2016 and help inspire you to try something new this year.

### 9. Join a Google+ Community

I have been singing the praises of Google+ for a while now, and despite what many think, it isn't going away. In fact, it just got a major overhaul. But one of my favorite features is Google+ Communities. These communities can be private or public, and offer a fantastic way to share, connect and learn online.

### 10. Gamify a Lesson or Professional Development

Gamification isn't going anywhere just yet. It is not a fad; gamification is proving to be a viable way to learn. If you haven't tried it yet, start planning a lesson in 2016. And if you are in a position to deliver professional learning, try gamifying your PD!

### 11. Breakout EDU

**Breakout EDU** is a way to bring the escape room type of games into the classroom and teach teamwork, communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills. Each game is a puzzle for the students to solve to unlock the box. This unique and engaging way of learning is great for all ages.

### 12. Participate in a Voxer Chat

It seems everyone is on Twitter now, but many have not experienced **Voxer**. Voxer offers a unique way to connect, collaborate and learn with other educators. It is a walkie-talkie app for smartphones that allows you to have not only one-to-one chats but also group chats. You can use the voice feature, or even text message. The messages are all saved so you can listen/read when you have a chance. It can be overwhelming at first, so start small!

*...To be continued next week!*

Via: [www.shakeuplearning.com](http://www.shakeuplearning.com)

## Rubrics: An Undervalued Teaching Tool

By Stephanie Almagno, PhD

English teachers know a few things about managing the paper load. But managing isn't leading. We should do more than manage the load; we should lead our students through the writing process (invention, drafting, and revising) to help them become independent thinkers who can effectively present their ideas to an audience. Rubrics offer an effective way to guide thinking and learning in any writing-intensive course.

***HINT:** Distribute the assignment sheet and rubric at the same time that you introduce a writing assignment. Students need this concrete information from the onset for self-improvement at all stages of the writing process. Your rubric should be clear enough that students understand your expectations even when you are not available for consultation.*

To learn five different ways to apply this same rubric in your classroom please continue reading the [full article](#). And if you would like to learn how to apply rubrics in your online teaching and learning, Ms. Cynthia Johnson, our

instructional design coordinator at UNT Dallas will be teaching a workshop next week on this topic, [Teaching Online with Rubrics: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly](#). In this workshop, she will explain the purpose and general structure of rubrics and how they can benefit learning and teaching if used as an effective grading tool. Discussion on what instructors inadvertently do to limit the effectiveness of rubrics will also be reviewed. Strategies for using rubrics and a list of valuable websites containing rubric templates will be included in the discussion. Read more and register for this workshop in the next section of this newsletter.



### Mid-Term Grading Café

[DLIT Blackboard Support Program]

Gearing up for Mid-term 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.

The following webcast will be showcased during the café:

#### [What You Need to Know About the Grade Center.](#)

Presenter: Dr. Julia VanderMolen, Davenport University

The Blackboard Grade Center allows instructors to record, calculate and share grades with students through their Blackboard course. This webinar will show instructors the basics of recording and sharing grades and comments with students through the Grade Center. Come to this café and also learn some tips and tricks for managing grades.

Tuesday, March 1 (2:00 – 4:00 PM), Dal1 Rm 336

Free snacks, and a chance to break out of your office for a couple of hours!

[Register here.](#)



### Teaching Online with Rubrics: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

[A DLIT on Instructional Design for eLearning Original Workshop]

In this workshop, the purpose and general structure of rubrics will be explained and how they can benefit learning and teaching if used as an effective grading tool. Discussion on what instructors inadvertently do to limit the effectiveness of rubrics will also be reviewed. Strategies for using rubrics and a list of valuable websites containing rubric templates will be included in the discussion.

Presented by **Cynthia Johnson**, Instructional Design Coordinator

Wednesday, March 2 (10:00 AM - 11:00 AM), DAL1, Rm 336

[Register here.](#)

### Using Web-based Technology for Interactive, Formative Feedback in Online Learning

[Turnitin Webcast Series]

Teaching and tutoring in an online modality creates challenges to providing high-quality, individualized, formative feedback for student learning. However, course design, interactive tutorials, video feedback, and personalized tutoring provide opportunities for dynamic, multimodal feedback.

This session discusses how using technology and proven online pedagogies for interaction and substantive student



feedback increases student engagement in online learning.

Presenters: Melody Pickle, Writing Specialist for the Writing Across the Curriculum program at Kaplan University and Ray Huang, Senior Customer Programs Manager at Turnitin.

Thursday, March 3 (10:00 AM - 10:45 AM), Founders Hall, Rm 127

[Register here.](#)

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## Articles



(Click the links or images to read the articles)

### [Public Colleges Lead in Adopting Competency-Based Programs](#)

By Chronicle Staff

Source: The Chronicle of Higher Education

That's among the findings of one of the first comprehensive surveys of how this model of learning is being used. Competency-based education, which measures students' progress according to how well they master material instead of how much time they spend in class, has been growing in popularity. Nearly 600 colleges and universities are offering or developing such programs; this report reflects data from 179 respondents.

[Read more](#) about the survey findings...



### [Understanding Project-Based Learning in the Online Classroom](#)

By: John Orlando, PhD

Source: Faculty Focus

Project-based learning puts students into the position of having to determine what information they need by asking the right questions. John Orlando offers strategies for incorporating PBL into your courses.

[Read more...](#)



### [7 Tips To Use Visual Metaphors In eLearning](#)

By: Christopher Pappas

Source: eLearning Industry

Metaphors are a powerful tool all on their own. However, adding visuals into the mix can make them an amazing eLearning resource. In this article, I will share 7 tips on how to use visual metaphors in eLearning, regardless of your subject matter or target audience.

[Read more...](#)

### [Personalization and Quality Assurance Will Be Central to Higher Ed's Shifts in 2016](#)

By Deb Adair

Source: The evollution



Higher education is shifting toward using technology to help scale the delivery of personalized and customized experiences and implementing accountability measures to ensure quality to both internal and external stakeholders.

[Read more...](#)

**More**



- MAR 7** **Unlocking Possibilities: The Latest Research Findings in eLearning**  
(12:00 PM)  
Founders Hall, Rm 127
- MAR 8** **10 Educational Apps New Teachers Need Now**  
(4:00 PM - 5:00 PM)  
Founders Hall, Rm 127

- MAR 14** **Spring Break**
- MAR 19** **Mid-Term Grades Due**
- MAR 21** **Myths, Legends and Finding Bigfoot: A faculty member's foray into online teaching**  
(12:00 PM)  
Founders Hall, Rm 127

[Click here](#) to register for any of our **March** events.



**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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