## Distance Learning at UNT Dallas

Are you considering teaching an online course? Do you know where to start? The Office of Distance Learning and Instructional Technology (DLIT) can assist you in critically thinking about the needs of your learners, effective course design, issues of access and copyright, and multimedia options.

DLIT can also assist you in effective course design to develop a robust and quality course that has proven to increase faculty workflow efficiency and increase student learning success by addressing issues with faculty presence, interactivity/engagement, and retention. Offering flexible and accessible learning formats to distance learners is laborious work up front, but once the course is developed, it practically runs itself.

**- We're here for you!**

## If you've been nominated for an "Excellence in Online Teaching" Award …

You are encouraged to submit the documentation. Nominations will be evaluated based on the criteria listed for each award. Please refer to:
http://www.untdallas.edu/dlit/awards/criteria

Remember that the **only required document** to be considered for the award is your reflective statement letter. Supporting documentation is **optional** but strongly encouraged for a competitive submission and will only be shared with the members of the Review and selection committee. Length is not as important as quality –provide specifics as to how your nomination meets the award criteria. Please refer to:
http://www.untdallas.edu/dlit/awards/guidelines

The **deadline** for submitting documentation is this upcoming Monday, October 31, 2016.

**Ensuring Student Success in Online Courses** (Part 1 of 4)

Now that you may be starting the design and development process of your spring 2017 online courses, we would like to share with you some strategies to ensure your students success in your online course. We will be sharing these in the forthcoming issues of the newsletter. Be sure to read them, but most importantly, consider applying them in your online course design.

Students like online classes due to their flexibility and convenience. But not all students do well in these courses; the statistics indicate that online classes have a much higher dropout rate compared to traditional face-to-face classes. The attrition rates in online courses tend to be 10 to 20 percent higher than in face-to-face classes. While there are some personal factors that could influence a student's decision to drop out, many of the factors are related to institutional and course level support—and these barriers can be addressed with thoughtful planning and implementation. Institutional level factors like technical support, academic support, advising, and availability of resources can support student success in online courses. At the course level, there are many simple strategies and techniques that instructors can use to support students' success in their online classes.

**Course organization and layout**
Many students drop out of online courses because they feel overwhelmed and sometimes frustrated with the amount of information presented to them and the way it is presented. Learners can experience "cognitive overload" if the information presented to them is not logically organized and the course design is not easy to follow. In such cases, learners will end up spending a lot of mental energy just trying to figure out how the course is organized and how to find information, and may end up feeling overwhelmed and frustrated. The design and layout of the course can minimize this frustration and help students focus on the content rather than on navigation issues.

- Provide a simple and consistent layout and navigation for the course. Use the same layout for each module (for example, overview, objectives, readings, viewings, assignments etc.; differentiate between required and recommended reading), as too much variation could overwhelm students.
- For variety, present some information via the visual channel and some information via the verbal channel.
- Explain and show the structure and layout of the course by making a "course tour" video.



**How Teachers Are Using Instagram in the Classroom**
[Track 3: Technology in the Classroom]
Presenter: Shannon Holden, Educational Technology Integration Specialist
Instagram revolutionized photography with an engaging and simple social platform that allows photo editing and sharing. Use this free app in your classroom with both smartphones and tablets. You can even start an account just for your class!
Instagram is the social media platform of choice for millions of students across the

globe. Wouldn't it be great if there were an instructional use for it? This webinar will show teachers how to increase student engagement with Instagram.
Monday, October 31, 2016 @ 12 PM - 1 PM, Founders Hall, Rm 127
Send email to register for this event.


**OCT 31   2016 Excellence in Online Teaching Awards**—Deadline for nominees to submit award application


### Gamification In Action: Real-World Results
[Track 5: Gamification]
Presenter: Carol Leaman, CEO of Axonify
There's lots of talk about gamification at a theoretical level and how it's used to engage people in learning. But seeing is believing. Learn how gamification is having a real impact on corporate learning. You'll discuss: game interfaces and aesthetics; rules and challenges; mechanics and reward systems—and you'll hear the learning story of Bloomingdale's. This session will be presented by Carol Leaman, CEO of Axonify. Carol has received numerous awards for presentations delivered on the future of learning and has recently been featured in leading publications such as Fortune Magazine, Wired Magazine, The Next Web and Business Insider.
Tuesday, November 1, 2016 @ 11 AM - 12 PM, Founders Hall, Rm 127
Send email to register for this event.


### Picnic Office Hours
Join Cynthia Johnson, our Instructional Design Coordinator, in an informal drop-in discussion. Just grab lunch from the cafeteria and find her in the red blanket on the lawn in the courtyard.
Tuesday, November 1, (12 PM - 1 PM), Courtyard *(Weather permitting)*


### Making the Online Connection: Tools to Reach and Engage Students
[DLIT Technology Workshop]
For faculty, who teach online courses and desire to connect with students. This workshop will discuss the importance of using video and audio tools to increase faculty presence in online environments.  Topics to be discussed include: facilitating communities of inquiry, free audio and video resources available to instructors, using avatars, and the purpose of welcome videos and audios in a course.
Presented by **Brian Miller**, Digital Media Instructional Designer
Thursday, November 3, 9 AM—11 AM, Founders Hall, Rm 127
Send email to register for this event.


### Pulling Learners to Your Content: How to Make it Work
[Track 1: Student Engagement and Retention]
Presenter: Jennifer Hofmann, President, InSync Training
This session will build on the previous discussion by providing examples of how to make pull learning work in different learning environments and in different moments of need. We will discuss:
• How do we design pull learning for specific learning environments? Specifically, how is the pull learning environment impacted when working at
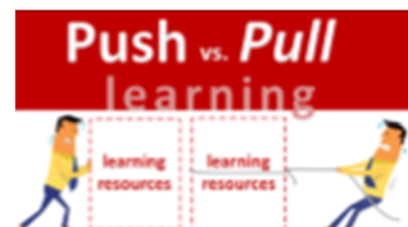
your desk as opposed to learning on-the-go?
• When are microlearning technique most appropriate, and how to format like video, infographics, and short e-learning modules support different situations and moments of need?
• What role do social collaborative technologies play in a pull learning environment, and when should we encourage informal collaborative learning?
A theme throughout the discussion will be building a culture of trust: learners need to trust that the content is available to them when they need it, and also need to believe that social collaborative interactions will result in reliable content in a timely way.
Friday, November 4, 2016 @ 12 PM - 1 PM, Founders Hall, Rm 127
Send email to register for this event.

## Articles

(Click the images to read the articles)



### 6 Tips To Create Great eLearning Quiz Questions
By Scott Winstead
Source: elearningindustry.com
⏰ Time to read: **3 min**
How do you make great eLearning quiz questions and keep them both useful and entertaining?  How do you know your learners are retaining knowledge in appropriate volumes and timeframes? That's right: You throw in assessments, and see if the students "catch your drift". Obviously, there is a boring way to assess performance through brick-and-mortar tests, but there's also an engaging way – through online quizzes. Check out these guidelines and surprise your audience.
Read more...



### Reader Survey Finds Unprepared Students a Persistent Problem
By: Mary Bart
Source: Faculty Focus
⏰ Time to read: **5 min**
Quick, what's your biggest teaching challenge? If you said it's students who don't read their assignments or prepare for class, you're in good company. For the fourth consecutive year that we posed that question in our survey, Faculty Focus readers identified students who come to class unprepared as their biggest day-to-day challenge. It was followed closely by students who are not prepared for the rigors of college.  Finishing third this year was institutional budget cuts, which edged out student motivation for the first time. Technology distractions remained as the fifth biggest challenge.
Read more...

## Short Videos Can Animate eLearning
by Pamela Hogle
Source: Learning Solutions
🕐 Time to read: **3 min**

A well-crafted short video complements other eLearning content—a simulation or game where learners participate, links, text, checklists, images, charts—to generate buy-in from learners, inviting them to an experience that pulls them in, carries them along, and stays with them.

Pairing pithy videos—the epitome of hip modernity—with the ancient art of storytelling can invigorate otherwise ordinary eLearning.

Storytelling is among the best ways to communicate, share experience, and teach; a good story stays with the audience for a long time. Video storytelling might be a relative newcomer, but it has surged to supremacy. Reading a story or listening to a great storyteller can activate the imagination and lead learners to visualize a sequence of events, but a video can take them there and re-create the feeling of being part of the event. Newer technologies, like 360-degree video and augmented or virtual reality, promise to immerse learners even more realistically in stories.

Read more...

## Mark Your Calendars!

**NOV 7**    **Monday Morning Mentor: Arturo**
(8:30 AM - 9 AM), virtual (online)

**NOV 7-11** **USDLA—2016 National Distance Learning Week: Events TBA**

**NOV 8**    **DLAC Monthly Meeting**
(10 AM - 12 PM) FH, Rm 127

**NOV 9**    **Blackboard & Bagels**
(8:30 AM - 10 AM), FH, Rm 122

**NOV 14** **Monday Morning Mentor: Cynthia**
(8:30 AM - 9 AM), virtual (online)

**NOV 15** **Picnic Office Hours**
(12 PM - 1 PM), Courtyard

**NOV 16** **BITS #3: Supporting the Seven Principles with Blackboard Learn**
(10 AM - 12 PM) FH, Rm 127

## 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

Join our Mailing List

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