



Year 1, Number 20

The Rhythms of the Semester: Implications for Practice

By Linda Shadiow, PhD, and Maryellen Weimer, PhD

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

We recognize that in the march of the semester we begin on a different note than we end on. The early weeks hold promise and high hopes, both often curtailed when the first assignments are graded. The final weeks find us somewhere between being reluctant or relieved to see a class move on. There is an inexplicable but evident interaction between our teaching persona and the persona a class develops throughout a semester. Some structural factors influence both: among them—the type and level of a course, the discipline, the time of day, and whether the students are a cohort or a unique collection of individuals.

Calling attention to the structure of the semester

In research that tugs on the edges of something that we take for granted, Mann and colleagues (1970) describe how a structural arc in a semester influences the persona of a class and its faculty. Duffy & Jones (1995) built on Mann's work by addressing the predictable swings of attitudes and emotions during three phases of a semester. There are no discrete boundaries nor fixed lengths of time in the three phases, and their generalizations have differing degrees of influence depending on the personas of the teacher and class. However, once each phase is understood, planning for them can occur.

Developing a community during the opening weeks

Most faculty and students approach the opening weeks of a semester with beliefs about fresh beginnings; students will do better and teachers will be better. These views influence how the community for learning evolves and can be used in building that community.

Implications for practice: Pursuing questions like the following generates mutual respect and trust during the period when the persona of a class is developing: What does it mean to be an *online* learner in this course? What will it take to be an *online* teacher in this course? What is the starting place? What experiences with and views of the content are students bringing with them? How do they want to be learners in the *online* class? What expectations do they have of themselves? Of the teacher? What expectations does the teacher have of them? Of himself or herself?

The strength of the learning community built in the opening weeks can influence the inevitable impact of the midsemester doldrums. *We'll talk more about this later on during the semester.*

References:

Duffy, D. K. & Jones, J. W. *Teaching Within the Rhythms of the Semester*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995.

Mann, R. D., Arnold, S. M., Binder, J., Cytrunbaum, S., Ringwald, J. & Rosenwein, R. *The College Classroom: Conflict, Change, and Learning*. New York: Wiley, 1970.



[BIG NEWS] Revision Assistant is Here!
Detecting More Than Plagiarism...



Turnitin, seeking to expand beyond plagiarism detection, launches Revision Assistant, a tool to help students improve their writing as they write by giving them immediate and actionable feedback on their writing.

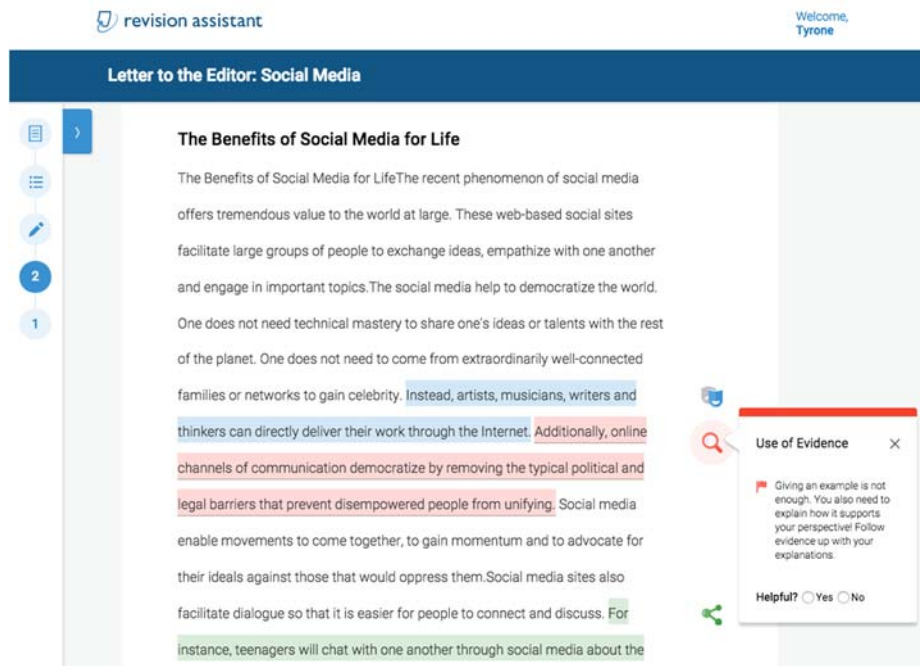
Turnitin in 2014 acquired LightSide Labs, a Carnegie Mellon University-based start-up. Last week, Turnitin launched a rebranded version of the start-up's Revision Assistant, an online writing tool that uses machine learning to tutor students as they draft their essays.

Revision Assistant is a departure from Turnitin's other products, which focus on evaluating students' writing after it is turned in. Revision Assistant doesn't grade students on their writing or check for plagiarism, but gives them feedback in four areas -- language, focus, organization and evidence -- as they write. The feedback can be either positive or negative. For example, the software might remind students that they should use evidence to support their thesis, or compliment those who it detects use clear and precise language.

The software, which is aimed at students in grades six through 12 and introductory college writing courses, has been piloted at a handful of middle and high schools, and also in developmental writing courses at institutions such as Dalton State College, in Georgia.

Jenny Crisp, associate professor of English, said Dalton State has used the software as an additional layer of support. When students are not in the classroom, she said, they can log into Dalton State's learning management system and start prewriting and drafting in Revision Assistant. Once they come to class, the software may already have answered some of their most fundamental questions about writing, meaning they can talk about more advanced topics with a writing instructor, she said.

"It's good for students that write at 3 o'clock in the morning," Crisp said in an interview. "They see things change. They see progress made. They just write more, and with beginning writers, frankly, just writing more makes the biggest difference of anything I've ever seen."



Introducing Turnitin Revision Assistant
Write. Get Feedback. Improve.

Revision is essential to great writing. Help students become better writers with specific, actionable feedback throughout the writing process. Engage students in a supportive writing space that extends the reach of instruction and aligns with learning outcomes.

Engage Students in Writing

Current Draft

Analysis	Focus	Language	Evidence

The Benefits of Social Media for Life

The recent trend of social media is great for the world. These web-based social sites facilitate large groups of people to exchange ideas, empathize with one another and engage in important topics.

The social media help to democratize the world. One does not need technical mastery to share one's ideas or talents with the rest of the planet.

Holistic Feedback

Colorful icons show students how well their ideas are getting across

Targeted Feedback

Highlighted sentences focus students on areas of strength and areas in need of improvement

Actionable Comments

Genre-specific advice guides students through the revision process so that students learn to write for any situation.

Language and Genre Awareness

Look closely at your word choice in your introduction and revise so that you set just the right tone and style for your essay.

I took care of this.

Close the feedback loop between instructors and students, encouraging their growth as writers and learners. Instructors can easily provide feedback on student work. And students get instant and targeted feedback throughout their writing process.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvzt1TvVWHo>



Best of Learning Solutions Webinar Recording Now Available!



The Future of Learning: Where Should We Focus This Year?

Presenter: Nick Floro, CEO/Learning Architect, Sealworks Interactive Studios.
Charity Bryan, Associate Professor and Program Director for Online Education,
Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, Georgia.

This Best of Learning Solutions Webinar, explored the top five trends affecting the learning and performance industry and outline a plan to get started in the process of evolving. Participants left this session with dozens of ideas to reboot their brains with fresh perspectives on how to enhance their learning and engage their audiences.

If you weren't able to attend this webinar or would like to watch the presentation again, the [recording](#) is now available in The eLearning Guild's Online Event Archive. Just create a complimentary Guild [Associate](#) membership to watch the webinar now.



Session handouts are also available on the [recording page](#).

Higher Education in the Year 2050: The Age of IoT Global Connectivity

Would you believe in a future where there is 24/7 living learning environments; and no more curriculums, only data driven content for addressing learning on-demand and/or prepared predictive based learning? Come take a peak of our world in 2050. Watch how we are incorporating education and technology into our daily lives:



https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=BDigP8mInx8

You will note that the primarily role of an educator in 2050 is to design and code/program items and situations (virtual, augmented, and real) for students to interact with and to connect to for personal and adapted learning opportunities.

Please scroll down to the Articles section of our newsletter where you will find the link to read more.

eLearning Faculty Learning Communities

We will continue this semester with our three established faculty learning communities relating to eLearning. You're welcome to join any of these teams as each FLC grows at its own pace and embrace a unique topic. The



FLCs will meet regularly, either in person or virtually, but input from FLC members will help determine the frequency and format for meetings, the duration, and the goals and outcomes—including any projects to be carried out—for each FLC. We are resuming next week, starting with the Teaching with Technology Faculty Learning Community, please see the details below and join the conversation with your peers and colleagues. We are very excited to provide such rich opportunities for community building, interdisciplinary collaboration, and explorations of online teaching and learning!

We are also starting next Monday our **Brown Bag Lunch Series** for this semester. Join **Arturo Cole**, Director of the office of Distance Learning and Instructional Technology on Mondays during lunch time. February Series will focus on Online Usability and Accessibility issues. All UNT Dallas faculty and staff may attend, just bring your lunch or stop by the cafeteria before the sessions and come learn with us. You won't want to miss these!



Our Spring 2016 series will include the following tracks:

1. Online Usability and Accessibility (*February*)
2. Research and Best Practices in Online Teaching and Learning (*March*)
3. Stepping Up Your Online Course (*April*)



UI Design Principles for E-Learning

[Brown Bag Lunch Series]

Don't let your Interface get in the way of your user.

Three Rules for Designing Effective E-Learning User Interfaces.

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

Who Should Attend?

Anyone interested in learning how to create more effective user interfaces for e-learning.

What Will You Learn?

- How bad user interface decisions distract from the learning process
- Rules for designing effective eLearning user interfaces
- How to visually distinguish interactive elements from your course content
- How to promote intuitive action by the user through visual cues

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

[Register here.](#)



Blackboard Open Lab

Whether you're just starting work on your summer or fall course or putting on those finishing touches in your spring courses, visit our Blackboard Open Labs for advice, assistance, or simply a collegial place to work. We will have worksheets, information and ideas on constructing assignments. Staff from the Office of DLIT will be available to discuss online/hybrid/traditional course design and help with Blackboard or other instructional technology. Please note, there is no formal program and there's no need to make an appointment. This is a drop-in-when-ever-you-can event.



Tuesday, February 2, between 2:00 PM and 4:00 PM in DAL1, Rm 336

[Register here.](#)



Teaching with Technology [eFLC]

Explore a range of software and web-based tools to enhance teaching and learning. No matter if you are teaching a fully online, a hybrid, or on-ground sessions join **Brian Miller**, our Digital Media Instructional Designer, to learn how you can incorporate educational technologies as a means to enliven the classroom and promote active learning experiences.

Wednesday, February 3 (3:00 PM – 4:00 PM), Founders Hall, Rm 127

[Register here.](#)

Unlocking The Grade Center

Does the grade center in Blackboard give you nightmares? This workshop will help you understand how the grade center works in Blackboard.

The instructor will show you the following features:

1. How to set up and organize the Grade Center
2. How columns are added (for both internally and externally graded items)
3. How to manage the Grade Center
4. How to enter grades into the Grade Center
5. How to configure the Total and/or Weighted Total columns to assure accurate calculations
6. How to download and upload the Grade Center using Excel

Presented by **Brian Miller**, Digital Media Instructional Designer

Thursday, February 4 (2:30 PM—4:00 PM), DAL1, Rm 336

[Register here.](#)



(Click the images to read the articles)



[The 4 Hottest eLearning Trends For 2016](#)

With 2016 upon us, we now have a firm footing into the 21st century. Although we're not quite at the Johnny Five stage yet (the robot demonstrated the ability to scan and instantly assimilate information in the 1986 movie, *Short Circuit*), technology is starting to revolutionize the learning landscape. In this article PulseLearning, an eLearning company, shares the 4 hottest eLearning trends for 2016.

[Read more...](#)



[7 Tips To Create An Effective Constructive Feedback System For eLearning](#)

Feedback is a powerful tool in the eLearning industry. This is primarily because it gives eLearning professionals a peek into the minds of their audience, and offers learners the opportunity to improve their behaviors. In this article, Christopher Pappas shares 7 tips that can help you create a successful feedback system for your eLearning courses.

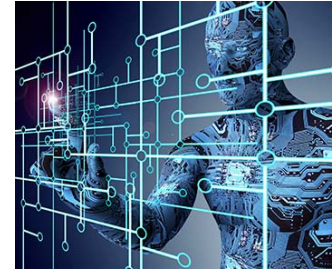
[Read more...](#)

[Higher Education in the Year 2050: The Age of IoT Global Connectivity](#)

Robbie Melton, Tennessee's emerging educational technologies evangelist, [goes back to the future](#), to the year 2050 to share what she sees in our higher education future.

What are your thoughts about the future?

[Read more...](#)



More



- | | | | |
|---------------|--|---------------|--|
| FEB 8 | Video Captioning Features, Costs, Good Practices, and How Captioning Benefits All Students
(12:00 PM)
Founders Hall, Rm 127 | FEB 15 | Promoting a Culture of Accessibility for Online Students
(12:00 PM)
Founders Hall, Rm 127 |
| FEB 9 | What's Wrong with Wikipedia? Best Practices for Evaluating Student Sources
(1:00 PM - 1:30 PM)
Founders Hall, Rm 127 | FEB 16 | Blackboard Open Lab
(2:00 PM - 4:00 PM)
DAL1, Rm 336 |
| FEB 10 | Hybrid/Online Teaching [eFLC]
(3:00 PM - 4:00 PM)
Founders Hall, Rm 127 | FEB 16 | Newbies [eFLC]
(2:00 PM - 3:00 PM)
Founders Hall, Rm 127 |
| FEB 11 | Millennials, E-learning, And The Evolving Workplace
(1:00 PM - 2:00 PM)
Founders Hall, Rm 127 | FEB 17 | Experiential Learning: Overcoming Barriers & Elevating the Online Learning Experience
(2:00 PM - 3:00 PM)
Founders Hall, Rm 127 |
| | | FEB 18 | Accelerating Experience-Based Learning for High-Performance
(2:00 PM - 3:00 PM)
Founders Hall, Rm 127 |

[Register to any of our February events here.](#)



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



To unsubscribe:

If you would like to be removed from this list please [click here](#).

Arturo Cole, M.S.

*Director - Office of Distance Learning
and Instructional Technology*

University of North Texas at Dallas
Office of Distance Learning
7400 University Hills Blvd, Ste. 123
Dallas, Texas 75241
972.338.1606 | untdallas.edu/dlit

