



DISTANCE LEARNING
& INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGIES

UNT | DALLAS
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS AT DALLAS

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER



Year 1, Number 28

Celebrate three of UNT Dallas' top professors this Monday in Founders 138 for the Excellence in Online Teaching Awards. Dr. Marco Shappeck, Dr. Katie Walsh, and Dr. Amy McCartney will all receive awards for excellent and innovative teaching.



INAUGURAL
AWARDS

You're invited

to the reception honoring
finalists and recipients of the

2015 Excellence in Online Teaching Awards

UNT | DALLAS
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS AT DALLAS



MONDAY

April 4, 2016

Reception starts at 4:30 pm
Awards will be presented at 5:00 pm

Founders Hall Building
Room 138

Refreshments will be served.

AWARDS2015

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Join President Mong and Provost Becker as they present the 2015 Excellence in Online Teaching Awards at a ceremony April 4 at Founders Hall, Room 138. The awards reception will be from 4:30 to 5 p.m. followed by a ceremony from 5 to 6 p.m. with complimentary refreshments and a chance to meet this year's finalists and honorees. The ceremony, sponsored by the Office of Distance Learning and Instructional Technology with support from the Office of Academic Affairs, is free and open to the campus community.

Discussion Feedback Challenges

When teaching online one of the toughest challenges to face is providing feedback for online discussions. Some instructors have huge classes consisting of over 100 students which drives them to reconsider making discussions mandatory at all let alone giving a grade for them. Considering that the online discussion forums take the place of the conversations that typically occur in the classroom during a face-to-face class, we can see that there is immense value in holding online discussions and providing feedback. This is where students can get misunderstandings cleared up, hash over difficult concepts and alternate viewpoints with classmates, and really process the information they take in through readings and lectures.

So how can instructors manage all of those posts and give meaningful feedback to students about their posts? One method that Tina Stavredes mentions in her book *Effective Online Teaching: Foundations and Strategies for Student Success* is to use a Microsoft Word Form. If you have a PC with Microsoft Word, then there

is an option to create Forms. You can craft a short note and incorporate a drop-down menu of standard feedback statements to complete the feedback note. Feedback statements should be based on criteria you are looking for in a quality post such as: “Posts were substantive and supported by outside sources”. The Forms feature then creates the completed note which removes the drop-down menu and just shows the note as a complete paragraph. Although it can take some time to create the Form template, once you have it ready, grading discussions becomes much more efficient.

Of course Forms are not the only way to help with grading discussions. What strategies do you use for providing discussion board feedback?

Ramp up your discussion board for deeper student engagement



How well do discussion boards create engagement in online classrooms?

For many educators, the answer is ... not very well.

Despite their universal use in online teaching, discussion boards have significant drawbacks for educators and students alike. They don't engage students easily, and they can't duplicate the dynamics of a face-to-face classroom discussion.

Some complain that they only get perfunctory responses from their students. Others point out that discussion boards as they currently exist simply do not recreate the energy and interaction found in a face-to-face classroom.

Before abandoning the discussion board altogether, consider watching [*Beyond the Discussion Board: How Can I Engage Online Students?*](#) —the 20-Minute Mentor video from Magna Publications. DLIT provides Free On-Campus Access (through a group subscription). There is no need to create an account or log in when accessing the subscription on campus.

Dr. Stephanie Delaney of Seattle Central College explores innovative ways for breathing fresh life into this standard discussion forum and reveal exciting ways to engage students separate and apart from discussion boards. You'll learn how to:

- Create options for student engagement that are geared specifically for your classes
- Avoid the common pitfalls of discussion boards
- Use tactics like collaborative document editing, movie night, and group work to stimulate and involve students
- Derive more satisfaction from grading
- Ask provocative questions that drive discussion

Engage your online students—and discover exciting new options for carrying classroom discussions to a deeper level.

Getting to Know canvas Series

The spread of LMSs that institutions actively use in production continues to narrow suggesting a consolidation in the marketplace. Most institutions are standardizing on 6 major LMS platforms: Blackboard Learn, D2L Brightspace, Instructure Canvas, Moodle, Pearson's Learning Studio, and Sakai. With a dominant design now generally agreed upon, we believe that 2016 will see even more new takes on what a LMS should be.

This is just a proactive effort on familiarizing ourselves with Canvas. Regardless of which tool we ultimately use as online learning environment, our courses will still be pretty much the same: where you share materials and build assessments, host discussions and post news for the class. The future iteration of eLearning at UNT Dallas should have the same functionality it has now, and then some. Join us on Thursdays in April as we learn more about what Canvas could offer us!



Cool Tools for Jazzing Up Your Online Course

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

Presenters: Marcia Ham, Sr. Instructional Designer & Faculty Development Coordinator, Jessica Phillips, Sr. Instructional Designer & Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, DiAnna Palmer, Instructional Designer, Office of Distance Education and eLearning, Ohio State University

This session will offer a large amount of information on different tools instructors can use to help their online courses stand out from the rest. Fostering student interest and engagement in the course with the content, each other, and you while staying true to web accessibility guidelines was the focus of our conversation.

Monday, April 4 (12:00 PM - 1:00 PM), Founders Hall, Rm 127

[Register here.](#)



Blackboard Open Lab

[Blackboard Support Program]

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, April 5, between 2:00 PM and 4:00 PM in DAL1, Rm 336

[Register here.](#)





"What's the Frequency, Kenneth?" Voice Commenting Strategies

[Turnitin Webcast Series]

How can you be sure that the feedback that you are providing to students is getting heard? Are you looking to better take advantage of using voice commenting to better tune your students into your suggestions for improvement?

Join us for a discussion on strategies for best using the voice commenting feature in Turnitin to provide feedback to students that truly resonates.

Presenters: Lisa LaBrake, English teacher, Sweet Home High School in Amherst, NY.

Kristin Brabec, Education Manager for Turnitin.

Tuesday, April 5 (11:00 AM - 11:30 AM), Founders Hall, Rm 127

[Register here.](#)

Using Respondus in Blackboard LEARN

[A DLIT Instructional Technology Workshop]

Respondus is an application which allows users to create and manage exams that can be printed to paper or published directly to Blackboard LEARN.

This workshop will focus on:

1. Creating exams and assessments
2. Using various question types
3. Formatting and importing questions using Microsoft Word and rich text formats.

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

Wednesday, April 6 (10:00 AM - 11:00 AM), Founders Hall, Rm 127

[Register here.](#)



Canvas, an LMS and Beyond

[Getting to Know Canvas Series]

Canvas by Instructure will present a 50-minute webinar demonstrating the functionality of its Canvas learning management system. You'll see why some of the largest and most innovative colleges and universities have made the move to Canvas and never looked back.

Thursday, April 7 (2:00 PM - 3:00 PM), Founders Hall, Rm 127

[Register here.](#)



Articles



[10 Netiquette Tips For Online Discussions](#)

By Christopher Pappas

Source: eLearning Industry

As an online learner, you already know that participating in your eLearning course online discussions contributes to your critical thinking and writing skills' development. However, there is a netiquette code for online discussions too. In this article, the author shares the 10 top netiquette tips for



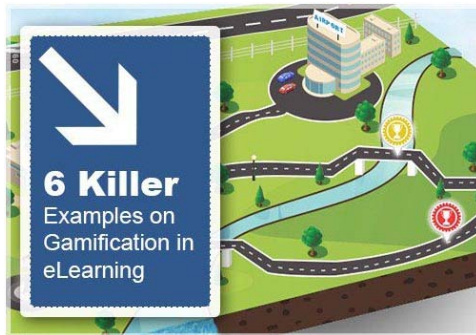
participating in online discussions, so that you will be able to make the most of your eLearning experience.
[Read more...](#)

5 Tips To Create Multi-Sensory eLearning Courses

By Christopher Pappas
Source: eLearning Industry

Transform your eLearning course into a visual, auditory, and tactile feast for the senses. In this article, the author shares 5 tips that can help you design multi-sensory eLearning experiences for your audience.

[Read more...](#)



6 Killer Examples Of Gamification In eLearning

By Asha Pandey
Source: EIDesign Energising Learning

Wondering how to use gamification in your organization? Gamification in eLearning is fast emerging as an effective technique to engage learners. It has found its place under the sun for serious learning (that is, meeting specified learning outcomes). In this article, the author shares 6 examples that outline how they have created immersive learning experiences using gamification for varied training needs like induction and onboarding, professional skills enhancement, compliance, soft skills enhancement, and

behavioral change programs.
[Read more...](#)

More



- APR 11** [Using Images in an Online Course](#)
(12:00 PM)
Founders Hall, Rm 127
- APR 12** [BITS #4 - Are You Bored With Discussion Boards? Collaborative Strategies in Blended and Online Courses](#)
(2:00 PM - 4:00 PM)
DAL1, Rm 336
- APR 14** [Get to Know Canvas - The Smart and Easy LMS](#)
(2:00 PM - 3:00 PM)
Founders Hall, Rm 127

- APR 18** [5 Ways to Personalize Your Next eLearning Course](#)
(12:00 PM)
Founders Hall, Rm 127
- APR 19** [Blackboard Open Lab](#)
(2:00 PM - 4:00 PM)
DAL1, Rm 336
- APR 20** [Using GoToMeeting for Web Conferencing](#)
(3:00 PM - 4:00 PM)
Online
- APR 21** [Migrating Your LMS Made Simple](#)
(2:00 PM - 3:00 PM)
Founders Hall, 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



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