## 2016 Excellence in Online Teaching Awards - Call for Nominations!

The office of **Distance Learning and Instructional Technologies** is proud to promote and recognize outstanding models of online course design and pedagogy as well as the creative and innovate use of technology in teaching and learning at UNT Dallas.

Please take this opportunity to help identify your colleagues at UNT Dallas who have made creative and effective use of technology to improve their courses and programs by nominating them for any of the following awards. There are 2 easy links available to nominate a class/instructor for recognition, whether you are a student, peer or self-nominating your own class:

- **2016 Innovative Teaching with Technology Award**:
  https://unt.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_9pr3Y2MfR4WjfsF

- **2016 Outstanding Online Course Award**:
  https://unt.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_1SJj2ap6NbpeTvn

For more information on nomination guidelines, eligibility criteria, as well as to review the evaluation instruments and links to the nomination forms please visit:
http://www.untdallas.edu/dlit/awards

*Get your colleague's model course noticed!*
Deadline to submit nominations: October 21, 2015

**Trying Something New? Seven Things that Boost Success Rates**
Adapted from a post by Maryellen Weimer, PhD in the Teaching Professor Blog

So, the fall semester is about to begin and you've decided to try something new in one or more of your courses. Maybe it's a different quizzing strategy, a revised assignment, or a new group activity. Or perhaps you read about a note-taking technique or exam review strategy that you want to try. You want it to work—you want to make learning better for most students (hopefully better for everyone, but there's value in being realistic). Here are some things you can do to increase the chance of success when you roll out something new in your courses.

Teaching Professor Blog Plan for it carefully – Don't just up and do it because you think it sounds like a cool idea. Start a bit more objectively by exploring questions such as these: Which of your learning goals is it best equipped to accomplish? Should you be trying it in all of your courses, or does it fit better in certain ones? At what point in the course should it be implemented? What logistical decisions need to be made before you implement the activity? How will you assess its impact?

Modify, adapt, and alter – Don't plan to do it exactly the same way as the person you learned it from. The new approach needs to work with the kind of content you teach, the kind of students in your courses, and the kind of teaching you do. When it worked for someone else, those variables were different. You need to make the innovation your own, and I think there's justification for trusting your gut. What do you think needs to be changed? What strikes you as a reasonable way to change it? Think creatively and make this new approach something that you believe will make a difference for your students.

Talk about it – Changes have a better chance of making a positive difference if they aren't done in isolation. Consult with a trusted colleague as you plan and make alterations. But even more importantly, involve students in discussions about the change. They are the ones who are going to experience it firsthand. It makes sense to talk about the new approach before they do it, while they're doing it, after they've done it, or at all those times. New approaches have been known to strike fear in students, to foment protests, and result in resistance. The best way to prevent that kind of negative response is to communicate openly. What motivated the change? What's the educational rationale on which it rests? What objectives are you hoping it will accomplish? Instructional change directly affects students; the chance for success improves significantly if you make them part of the process.

Implement confidently – Preparing, adapting, and communicating all build confidence, and teacher confidence contributes to successful implementation. Students take their cues from the teacher. If you look tentative and unconvinced, they'll start to feel unsure. Your confident commitment decreases their anxiety and helps them get more involved, and that, in turn, grows your confidence. You and the students are in this together. Implementing confidently doesn't mean you expect everything to go smoothly and work perfectly. When it doesn't, that's when confident leadership makes a huge difference. An "I know how we can make this work" attitude can keep things from going off the rails.

Forage for feedback – Aggressively seek feedback, and then devour it. One of the values of thinking about assessment before implementation is that you can develop a plan for collecting feedback. It's essential that you receive feedback from students, and the question to them is not whether they "liked" whatever you've had them do. You need to know the impact of this new policy, practice, activity, or assignment on their efforts to learn. What about it helped them learn, hindered their learning, or had no effect on their learning? Use that student input to confirm, deny, elaborate, or adjust your sense of how things went. You may have designed it, but they did it.

Try to fix it before you toss it – This is good advice even if student feedback confirms your sense that it didn't go well. Sometimes a few minor changes can make a big difference. As with most everything else in teaching, the second time through is better—whether it's a new course, new content, or a new approach. Here's another situation where student involvement benefits them and you. Students are usually quite articulate about what didn't work. They should be challenged to help you figure out what could make it more effective.

Finally, loop back to the beginning – Start planning what you'll do differently the next time you implement this approach.

I have always tried to change things up every semester - sometimes with success, sometimes not. I haven't always taken the time to contemplate the process I use to reflect on the pros and cons of my changes. I usually discuss my experiences more with my colleagues than with the students for feedback - your article has reminded me to consider the students as the most valuable stakeholders in my decisions for trying something new and use their feedback more to guide me for my changes. Sometimes though, I realized that my students may not have appreciated the changes I have made to a course while they were taking it (from feedback), but later (in the next semester or year), they have mentioned to me what a great thing I did in the class that has helped them understand something better now (although they didn't state that at the time, and gave negative feedback). Sometimes I have made changes, that haven't actually been an improvement, based on their first feedback. This isn't to say that student feedback isn't valid and important - just a reminder that your point about trying to fix it before tossing it and to try to collect feedback over a few semesters may be a good approach before abandoning or altering it altogether. Thanks for the reminders!



**Monday Morning Mentor: Arturo**

It's a great way for you to start the week!
Join Arturo (for no more than 20-30 minutes max) to discuss and answer questions regarding current issues important to online teaching and learning.  This is a great approach to get faculty training in a compact format!
Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: https://zoom.us/j/803674905
Or iPhone one-tap (US Toll):  +16465588656,803674905# or +14086380968,803674905#
Or Telephone:
Dial: +1 646 558 8656 (US Toll) or +1 408 638 0968 (US Toll)
Meeting ID: 803 674 905
Monday, September 19, 8:30 AM - 9 AM, virtual (online)

**Are You a Boring Explainer or Engaging Storyteller?**
[Track 1: Student Engagement and Retention]
Presenter: Ray Jimenez, Ph.D., Chief Learning Officer of Vignettes Learning Tools
The main skill of instructors and designers is to impart knowledge. But reflect upon this: Do you simply explain content and bore learners to death or do you generate enthusiasm and engagement with a story? How do you distinguish what your true style is? It is difficult to assess one's self and find the right balance. It is even more difficult to shift skills and approach to become an effective storyteller. Explainers tend to impact information while storytellers are equipped to help learners experience the information.
In this webinar, you will review and assess yourself using the "Trainer / Designer Style Self-Awareness Survey." You will gain insights on how to transition your skills from being a boring explainer to a high-impact storyteller.

Topics to cover:
• Recognizing the art of story design and storytelling and its growing popularity in social learning, micro-learning, face-to-face presentation, in writing and multimedia
• What to do to improve yourself
• Finding opportunities to impact learning by being a story designer
Tuesday, September 20, 2016 @ 12 PM - 1 PM, Founders Hall, Rm 127
Send email to register for this event.

## Articles

(Click the images to read the articles)
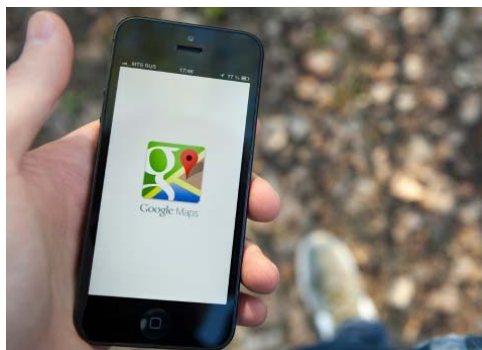


### A Real-World Writing Project Integrating Mobile Technology and Team-Based Learning
By: Lindsay Doukopoulos, PhD
Source: Faculty Focus
⏰Time to read: **4 min**
Teaching first-semester freshmen presents some unique challenges. You are teaching them not only your subject, but also how to be college students. One of the best strategies I have found is to begin with a collaborative project that asks them to research their new home: the campus.
Read more...



### One Size Won't Fit All: The Future of Personalized Digital Learning
by Jeff Batt
Source: Learning Solutions Mag
⏰Time to read: **7 min**
Here's another takeaway from The eLearning Guild's FocusOn Learning Conference & Expo: What if your digital learning could adapt, adjust, read, and assess the needs of each of your "digital students," then serve up a personalized course specific to each of them based on their personal learning history? We already have the technology to do this. This article explains what's needed.
Read more...

### How Can Social Learning Spice Up Your Existing Learning Strategy?
By Asha Pandey
Source: elearningindustry.com
⏰ Time to read: **4 min**
In this article, I will touch upon what social learning is and the reasons why you should adopt it. I will also outline how exactly you can use it to enhance your existing learning strategy and the business gains that will accrue as a result.
Read more...

**Mark Your Calendars!**

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| **SEP 26** | **Free Learning Resources: How OER Can Help You and Your Students** (1 PM - 2 PM) FH, Rm 127 | **SEP 29** | **2016 Legal Update on Digital Accessibility Cases** (1 PM - 2 PM) FH, Rm 127 |
| **SEP 27** | **The Impact of Recent Lawsuits on Video Accessibility Requirements** (12 PM - 1 PM) FH, Rm 127 | **OCT 3** | **Monday Morning Mentor: Cynthia** (8:30 AM - 9 AM), virtual (online) |



**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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