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Center for Instruction & Research Technology (CIRT)

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Center for Instruction & Research Technology (CIRT)

CIRT Newsletter Podcast

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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: CONCEPT-FOCUSED PRESENTATIONS WITH PREZI
Dan Richard, Office of Faculty Enhancement & Department of Psychology
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Dan Richard is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology and the director of the Office of Faculty Enhancement. He has used PowerPoint extensively for instructional and professional presentations for years, but that changed when he learned about Prezi last year. He immediately saw the potential for creating his presentations conceptually, rather than fitting his content into bulleted lists.

Prezi takes a different approach than PowerPoint or Keynote. Rather than breaking a presentation down into discrete slides, a Prezi presentation is unified on a single canvas. Progression is made by moving and zooming to different areas of the canvas. This allows the presenter to easily show relationships between concepts and demonstrate hierarchical structures. "In PowerPoint, I often represented relationships among ideas by lists or time. The design of Prezi encourages representing relationships among concepts with distance, direction, size, and aspect or rotation. I found that I have many more options with Prezi."

Prezi is an online tool that can be accessed from any computer connected to the internet. Presentations can also be downloaded and edited or played offline. They are easy to share, embed in Blackboard, or add to websites. Prezi also has a real-time collaboration feature, Prezi Meeting, that lets you work with others to create presentations. This may sound complicated, but it is actually fairly easy to use. Visit the Prezi **website** to see examples of Prezis that others have created.

"I decided to use Prezi for a professional presentation. I converted an earlier set of PowerPoint slides into a single Prezi. The response from the audience was immediate and positive. I then used Prezi for all of my presentations in an undergraduate course in the Fall 2010 semester. The students commented that they thought the presentations helped them understand the concepts. At the end of the semester, a group of students used Prezi to create their own presentation for the class. I don't plan on going back to PowerPoint."

Prezi offers free **educational accounts** which have more features than their standard free accounts. If you would like help getting started with Prezi, please stop by and talk with us.

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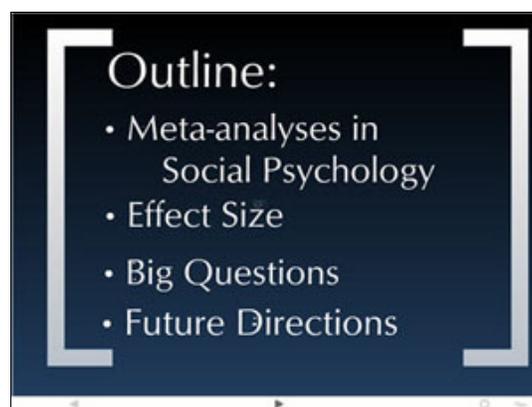
USING AND PUBLISHING OPEN TEXTBOOKS
Deb Miller, Director deb.miller@unf.edu
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What's an open textbook and why should faculty care about them? An open textbook is one for which the copyright holder has granted the public an open license to access, download, and reformat the material at no additional cost. Print copies of open textbooks look like traditional texts, but they are also accessible online at no cost and hard copies are optional and affordably priced. Author payment models vary, as this type of publishing is still evolving. Quality is a frequently cited concern in discussions about open access textbooks, but many follow a traditional peer review model or are vetted by experts. Like the adoption of any textbook, careful examination is needed before making a decision.

The rising cost of college textbooks has been a topic of wide discussion in the last several years, and the recent recession only underscores the problem. The **Higher Education Opportunity Act** (HEOA)
 of 2008 included provisions to address some aspects of the textbook affordability problem, including price disclosure a reasonable length of time prior to the class and the unbundling of texts. The Florida legislature passed legislation reinforcing the HEOA and went further, urging Florida colleges and universities to pursue additional measures that would make textbooks more affordable for students. To support that effort, the legislature established the Open Access Textbook Task Force (OATTF) in 2009 and charged the group with developing a plan for promoting and increasing the use of open textbooks as a method for reducing textbook costs. The OATTF was tasked with: creating an inventory of existing open textbooks; making recommendations for encouraging and promoting faculty development and adoption; and identifying barriers to their implementation.

In February 2010, the **Open Access Textbook Task Force Final Report** was released, which identified and prioritized high enrollment general education courses for adoption of open textbooks. The top ten courses are:

- College Algebra - MAC X105
- Introduction to Psychology - PSY X012
- Introduction to Statistics - STA X023
- Principle of Macroeconomics – ECO 2013
- Principles of Microeconomics - ECO 2023
- Intermediate Algebra - MAC X033
- United States History to 1877 - AMH 2010
- General Biology - BSC 2005
- General Chemistry - CHM X045
- Trigonometry - MAC X114

Orange Grove Texts *Plus**(OGT+)* , a collaboration between the University Press of Florida (UPF) and the Orange Grove Digital Repository (OGR), strives to provide open access textbooks to students that are affordable, accessible, and adaptable to reader preferences. You can visit their **website** to find open-access textbooks and learn more about using them in your courses. There are currently more than 100 texts listed in the repository; these include College Algebra and Introduction to Psychology.

Florida is quickly becoming a leader in the field of open textbooks. The Orange Grove partnership with the University Press of Florida provides full publisher quality control, editing, indexing and other services along with cost-effective production of bound versions of open textbooks. For those interested in publishing open-access textbooks*, OGT+* provides information and guidelines for potential authors **here**.

If you're interested in exploring this topic further, there are several upcoming webinars that cover various aspects of open access textbooks:

- **January 13- The Stitz-Zeager Open Source Precalculus Project**
  Professors Stitz and Zeager will talk about the 18-month process of writing a 900+ page Precalculus book, why they gave it away for free on the Internet, and their plans for the book and its website. **To register: Click Here!**
- **January 27** - Can a Great Textbook be Free? Building a Sustainable New Text Model in the Era of the $200 Textbook
  With the emergence of disruptive new business models, higher education publishing is in a state of tremendous flux. The rise of high quality, peer-reviewed open textbooks challenges the current status quo and the traditional model of overpriced, inflexible and too-often revised textbooks. Registration information coming soon. **To register: Click Here!**
- **February 24** - **Transitioning from the Edge of Education to the Mainstream**

Joel Thierstein, Associate Provost, Rice University, will give a brief description of Connexions (a Content Commons of free, open-licensed educational materials in fields such as music, electrical engineering and psychology) to date and how it plans to transition from the periphery of education to the mainstream. **Registration information coming soon**.

For a complete listing, visit the Open AccessTextbooks project **page**. This national project is funded by a FIPSE grant and led by Susie Henderson, who chaired the legislatively mandated statewide Open Access Textbook Task Force, which examined open textbooks in Florida and made recommendations to promote their use.

Let me know if you are interested in pursuing adoption or publication of an open access textbook, and I will be glad to help you find resources and navigate the process.

UPCOMING EVENTS
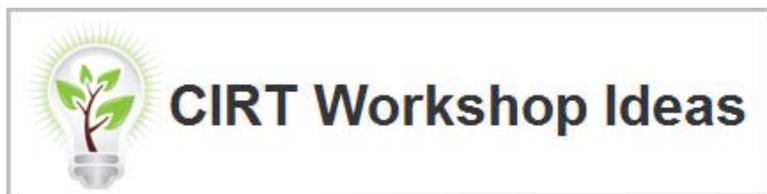
We are trying something new this semester. In response to low attendance at most of our workshops, we are "crowdsourcing" our events schedule. That means we are inviting you, the faculty, to suggest and vote for the events you would like to see offered. Please visit our IdeaScale page, **http://cirt.ideascale.com**. You will be able to suggest workshops and vote for others that have been suggested. We will check the page regularly and schedule popular events.

Please visit the **IdeaScale page** and submit your ideas. You will be asked to provide your email address to register, and within an hour of providing the address, you will receive an email that allows you to activate and submit ideas. Please also vote on other workshop ideas that you see listed so that we know what is of the most interest for you.

You can also check out our past events and handouts, sortable by topic:
http://www.unf.edu/cirt/events/Past_Events.aspx

DIGITAL THINKING: DEMONSTRATION VIDEO
Dave Wilson, Coordinator of Educational Media, david.wilson@unf.edu
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If I mentioned "educational video," the first thing that you may think of is a recording of a course lecture. Lecture capture is one use for educational video, but there are also several others, including demonstrating concepts and techniques.

Several faculty at the University have created video demonstrations. A great example is the Physical Therapy Program. Their faculty record demonstrations of therapeutic techniques which are made available to students as a podcast in Blackboard. By using videos, the students are able to review the technique as many times as they like. They can even download the videos to their mobile devices. Because the videos are online, there is more time in class for the students to practice the techniques. Similarly, a lab instructor in the Chemistry Department recorded demonstrations of each of the lab experiments students are assigned to complete in the course. Again, these videos are made available in Blackboard for students to review as often as they like before they perform the experiment.

Faculty in several departments on campus, including Psychology, Accounting & Finance, and Art & Design use screen capture software like Jing and Camtasia to record narrated screen capture videos of software like Excel and Photoshop. In one online graphic design course, the professor creates short videos to answer student questions about software.

Creating a video demonstration takes time, with the majority spent on planning and setup. It's helpful to create a list of steps that will be covered in the demonstration. Fortunately, this may be done already. In the case of the chemistry experiments, the instructions created for the students were used as the script for the video. When you have a good script, the actual filming and editing go quickly.

Video simulations allow instructors to demonstrate or visualize things that you can't record with a camcorder, like mathematical concepts and particle interactions. We've assisted professors with the creation of video simulations to demonstrate army advancement during the Civil War and plotting algebraic functions.

Visit our **Digital Video page** to learn more. If you are interested in creating video demonstrations or simulations, please stop by CIRT to discuss with us.

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BEST PRACTICES ONLINE: DISCUSSION BOARDS
Julie Carter, Coordinator of Instructional Design, **julie.carter@unf.edu**
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Although the intention of an online group discussion is to replicate an in-class group discussion, it is sometimes more difficult to engage students in online discussions. Maintaining the same synergistic effect of a face-2-face class discussion in comparison to an online discussion is an ongoing challenge, too. Therefore, I'd like to share with you several best practices for creating engaging online discussions. These practices come from a diversity of sources – some from UNF and other university instructors and some from an online webinar that was sponsored by the professional online education consortium – Sloan-C. This article is written using some of the best practice guidelines recommended.

Best Practice #1 - Manage Students' Expectations
Best Practice #1 is pretty self-explanatory; students want to know what is expected of their participation in online discussions.

- Specific Guidelines
  Instructors agree that when students are given specific guidelines, such as checklists and rubrics regarding the type of required and acceptable postings that they can make, the overall participation of students in online discussions increases. It is recommended to include in the grading rubric the requirement that specific connections should be made to the course readings.
- Structure the Posting Activities
  In order to help structure the discussion forum, here are three (3) best practice guidelines that have proven to be very effective:
  1. The first one is to give guideposts to help your students think of things to say that are academically meaningful. For example, one instructor posted a few questions that the students should answer in their postings.
  2. The second guideline that helps keep the postings structured is for the instructors to use enticing subject line/headers for their postings, and to require the students to change the subject line when they are submitting their posts.
  3. And the third guideline to keep the discussion board structured and easier to read is to require the students to insert a "?" in the subject line of their postings when the posting includes a question.

- "Payoff" for Participation
  By following the best practice #1 of managing students' expectations, instructors should have their students fully engaged in the online discussions, right?! Not necessarily...remember, there are students who need that extrinsic motivation, or "payoff", as a few instructors describe it, to remind them that their postings are worth points toward their final grades. Many instructors post the points earned per discussion, and remind the students of the importance of their understanding of the content in the online discussions, since it is likely to be on an exam.

- Schedule for Participation
  The last guideline of the best practice #1 section is related to this question: "What weekly posting schedule results in the highest level of students' participation?" Since many students make a majority of their posts over the weekends, quite a few instructors setup their weekly posting schedules from Wednesday through Tuesday of the following week (and require that students must start participating by the 5th day of the week). One instructor said that he deducted one point per discussion for each student who did not post by the 5th day of the week.

Best Practice #2 – Instructor's Participation (and lack thereof)
Best Practice #2 is to increase (or decrease) the instructor's participation, depending on how the discussion is evolving. When an instructor teaches a face-2-face course, it is important for the instructor to be a good listener and know when and when not to intervene in the classroom discussions. Well, the same guideline holds true with online discussions, too. It is recommended that instructors develop their postings to show their teaching presence by publicly acknowledging quality student participation and providing content-module summary postings.

- Beginning of Term Participation
  At the beginning of a semester term, it is recommended that instructors post more frequently to develop a rapport with the students, and then post less as the term progresses. For example, if an "Introduce Yourself" ice breaker discussion exists, it is recommended that the instructor respond to every posting to attempt to put new and anxious online students to ease and build rapport with them.
- Summary Discussion Participation

As mentioned earlier, it is recommended that instructors provide content-module summary postings. For example, at the end of each week, one university professor created a post with weekly "pearls of wisdom" and summary comments, both positive and negative. Another instructor said that she used the "Build List" technique after a weekly discussion where she asked the students to list 10 Critical Points from the weekly discussion. As the first critical point, she added her idea supported with research and then left the others blank so the students could complete them. As a result of this summary activity, one of her students told her that he liked this "Build List" discussion board activity, because it provided an automatic take-away deliverable that he could either print or save on his computer.

Best Practice #3 - Evaluate discussions forums

And finally, I'll discuss Best Practice #3, which is to have the students participate in a semester-long evaluation discussion in which they evaluate the course and discussion activities. Similar to content-related online discussions, it is recommended that students' participation in this evaluation discussion count toward their final grades. Throughout the semester, the consistent feedback that instructors will receive from the students' postings can be immediately analyzed, and teaching and learning changes can be implemented to benefit both the students and instructor. Some of questions that can be included in a course evaluation discussion are:

- Asking the students how things are going.
- Asking the students what is working and what is not working.
- Asking the students for suggestions to make the discussions (and course, in general) better.
- Asking the students what should be included in the course that is not included.

If *you* have any Best Practices for Online Discussions to share or questions to ask, please contact us at **cirtlab@unf.edu** or 620-3927.

Further Reading: http://sloanconsortium.org/webinar_best_practices_sept2010

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BLACKBOARD NEWS: BB UPGRADE
*Erin Soles, Coordinator of Instructional Design,* **esoles@unf.edu**
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Blackboard was recently upgraded to Blackboard Learn, version 9.1. The instructor interface in Blackboard 9.1 changed slightly but students will not observe a difference in the Blackboard interface. The buttons for adding content within Blackboard content areas have been reorganized: Build Content, Create Assessment, Add Interactive Tool and Assign Textbook and Blackboard now allows instructors to designate the specific type of content to add: Item, File, Audio, Image, Video, URL, Folder, or Mashups.

The Grade Center was also upgraded and is accessible via a direct link on the Control Panel menu, rather than from the Evaluation section of the menu. The Grade Center now includes options for anonymous grading, grading by question attempt, filters for workflow personalization, options to setup custom views (Smart Views) and shortcuts to the Smart Views on the Grade Center menu. Assessments also include some new options: a question finder, question sets, linking questions, batch update of question points and copy options for single assessments. The Test Canvas page now also displays the total questions and total points in an assessment.

Blackboard 9.1 includes a new Course Files option which provides instructors with file storage accessible from the Control Panel menu of a course. Course File items within a course may be linked to multiple locations within a course and changes to items stored within Course Files are reflected in all instances where the items are linked. All items within Course Files may be downloaded in a package (.zip) for storage or use outside of Blackboard.
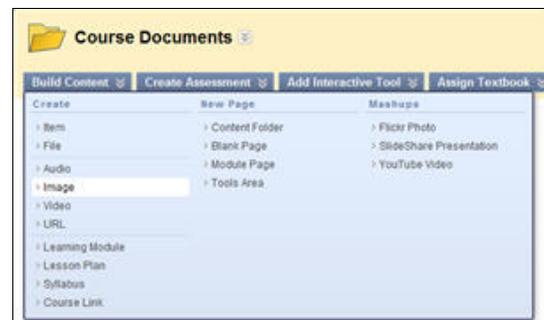
Resources

- What's New in Blackboard 9.1 Handout **http://www.unf.edu/cirt/events/materials /2010_12_Bb9_1_NewFeatures.aspx**
- What's New in Blackboard 9.1 Video **http://stream.unf.edu:8080/ramgen/CIRT/Bb/upgrade.rm**
- New Features in Blackboard 9.1 **http://www.unf.edu/cirt/bb/about/New_Features.aspx**
- Resolved Issues in Blackboard 9.1 **http://www.unf.edu/cirt/bb/about/Resolved_Issues.aspx**

- Known Issues in Blackboard 9.1
  http://www.unf.edu/cirt/bb/support/Known_Issues.aspx

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WHAT'S NEW IN CIRT: LiveScribe, Bamboo Pen Tablet, and iPads

We have several small items available for checkout. This provides a great way to try new technologies and determine if they could be useful for your instruction or research. Please contact us by phone or email to reserve one of the items listed below.

- The **Livescribe Pulse** Smartpen records audio as you write. Tapping on notes or drawings with the tip of the pen plays back the audio recorded while that particular item was being written. A built-in camera captures every stroke and transforms your notes and audio into interactive movies. This could be a great tool for interviewing--view a demo **here** to learn more.

- The **Bamboo Pen** tablet is a great tool for Elluminate users who want an easy way to use the whiteboard while in session. It can also be used to write with digital ink, mark up documents and presentations with your own handwriting, draw quick sketches, or explore your creative side. The small tablet connects directly to your PC via standard USB port.

- Apple's **iPad** is an amazingly easy-to-use multitouch tablet that excels at web browsing, email, video,book reading, map navigation, and so much more- all at only 1.5 pounds! It's an ideal substitue for a laptop on conference travel. There are also tens of thousands of apps availalbe for productivity, entertainment, and media consumption.

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CONFERENCE POSTER PRINTING UPDATE

Beginning February 1, 2011, CIRT will update the paper used for poster printing. The new paper is heavier, with a semi-gloss finish that results in a very professional final product with longer-lasting colors. We have had multiple requests from faculty to provide a higher-quality paper and tried several before settling on this one. The new paper is more expensive, so the cost is being raised from $3 to $5 per linear foot to cover the increased expense.

Conference Posters, up to 42" x 85" inches, may be printed at no cost for UNF faculty members who are **first author** on a paper or poster session that takes place **off campus**. There is a limit of one poster per conference. The faculty member simply needs to submit a copy of their acceptance letter/email when making an appointment for printing.

Acceptable file formats include PDF, PowerPoint, JPG, or Photoshop. PowerPoint is a good authoring environment for posters; when setting up your poster, make it half of the actual print size; ie , for a 42" x 56" printed poster, set up as 21" x 28". When pasting tables or charts into a PPT poster from Excel or Word, use Paste Special and choose the Enhanced Metafiles option for best results. Visit our **poster gallery** to find a variety of PPT files set up for poster development. CIRT staff are also available to assist with poster design by appointment. Please call x. 3927 with questions or to set up an appointment.

Other posters and/or large format jobs for research or instructional purposes may be printed at a cost of $5 per linear foot. Faculty will receive an invoice for prints which may be paid at the cashier's office with personal funds, or by budget transfer through their department.

Faculty should make an appointment for poster printing 2 - 3 days before the print is needed. Student research posters may be printed by the supervising faculty member. For large numbers of student poster prints (>6), arrangements should be made several weeks in advance.

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This newsletter is a publication of the
Center for Instruction & Research Technology at the **University of North Florida**.
Deb Miller, Editor

Please direct any comments or questions to **cirtlab@unf.edu**

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