DIGITAL DIGEST

LSC-ONLINE

April 2024

How'd We Do?

Thank you for reading our newsletter. Please take our survey to let us know what type of content you like the most.
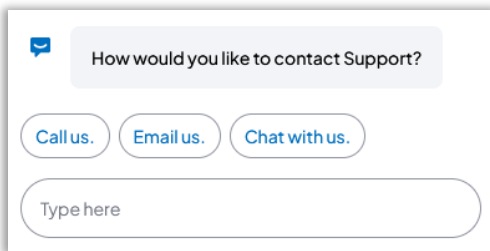
Summit Success!

On April 11 and 12, LSC-Online hosted its inaugural and international Online Teaching & Learning Summit. This virtual event featured faculty and staff from all across the Lone Star College System, with just under 600 attendees from six different countries, and over 30 sessions across two days. Attendees had a wealth of options related to instructional technology, pedagogy and best practices, and student services and support. Topics included AI detection, student engagement, accessibility, testing integrity, and virtual reality. The keynote speaker was Dr. Kasonde Musoma, who went viral in 2017 for holding a baby while teaching his class so that a single mother could attend. He was later dubbed "The Professor of Kindness."

Got a bad case of FOMO? All of the sessions were recorded and are listed on the 2024 OT&L Archive page. That should hold you over until next year!

D2L Live Assistance via AI Virtual Assistant

Last year, we introduced D2L's AI-powered Virtual Assistant, accessible through the "Get Help" button in the bottom-right corner anywhere inside D2L. We're excited to share that D2L has recently expanded the functionality of this tool, making it even easier to get live help by adding the ability to contact D2L's Helpdesk Support directly in the Virtual Assistant.

Previously, sending an email or chatting with the D2L Helpdesk was done through the D2L support website, but now the process has been streamlined by moving their contact point to right inside the D2L Virtual Assistant. Now, if the Virtual Assistant can't fully address your query, no worries. You can either fill out a form in the Virtual Assistant which sends an email to the D2L Helpdesk for further support, or, for immediate assistance, you can start a live chat with a D2L Helpdesk agent. The chat will also open right inside the D2L Virtual Assistant, removing the need to visit a separate website.

You can still reach out to D2L Helpdesk support outside of the Virtual Assistant by phone at (877) 325-7778. For more information on using the D2L Virtual Assistant, visit the D2L Virtual Assistant article in VTAC.

Need D2L support? Visit the Virtual Teaching Assistance Center.

Semester Wrap Reminders

Summer is just a few weeks away! Here are a few links to common end-of-semester tasks as well as ways to get prepared for summer courses and beyond.

Faculty Assistance …………………………………. [Virtual Teaching Assistance Center (VTAC)](#)

Student Assistance ………………………………… [Virtual Learning Assistance Center (VLAC)](#)

Converting a Word doc to a D2L quiz? ………. [Use Respondus 4.0](#)

Need to print your D2L gradebook? …………... [Export Grades](#) and [Print Grades](#)

Want a paper copy of an exam in D2L? ……… [Print a Copy of the Final Exam](#)

Have a student with an incomplete? …………… [Extend Course Access for a Student](#)

Thinking about next term? ……………………… [Review the Semester Start Checklist](#)

Need help designing your course? ……………. [Meet Your Instructional Designers](#)

Summer Happenings in D2L and Beyond

The summer is usually a busy time for LSC-Online because that's when existing features often get updates and new features are turned on. Here are some of the highlights of what's happening this summer:

SMS Notifications Retiring

In July, D2L will retire its SMS notification service. Going forward, students will be encouraged to use the [Pulse app](#) for D2L notifications. By making this switch, they will continue to stay informed about course updates, deadlines, and other important information, all conveniently accessible on their mobile device.
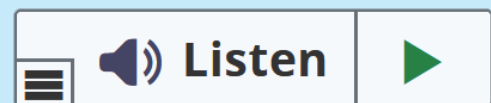
WebEx Changes with CirQLive

Starting in August, when you kick off your first Webex session through D2L, Webex will now prompt you to authorize CirQLive MEETS with your account. This authorization will stay active for three months from the last session held. And don't worry, if you take a breather from MEETS for more than three months, you'll just need to authenticate with Webex again to dive back into the action! This change will not impact students.

ReadSpeaker Available in SoftChalk

ReadSpeaker, a powerful text-to-speech solution, will be available in SoftChalk content starting this Summer. Already integrated into D2L, [Readspeaker](#) makes it easy to meet accessibility standards, in addition to supporting the entire student population and improving learning outcomes for all learners. It also offers students the ability to download an audio version of the document as an .mp3 file for use on all devices.

Condense a Long Course Down for Summer

Ack! You've just been told that you have to teach a summer, 6-week course… but all you have are your regular 16-week courses! How are you supposed to squeeze all that instructional content down into 6 weeks?

Don't panic, you can do this. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

1. Identify your learning outcomes (LO). You probably have these already, taken directly from the course catalog.

2. If necessary, break these down to objectives. LOs can be quite narrow (ex. Describe the structure of cell membranes and the movement of molecules across a membrane) but are often fairly broad (ex. Identify the principles of inheritance and solve classical genetic problems). From BIOL 1406 "Biology I for Science Majors"

3. Identify your learning materials (textbook chapters, online resources, labs) that directly address these outcomes. Be brutal. Leave out the "nice to know" content, winnow it down to the "need to know" topics.

4. Create your primary summative assessments based upon the instructional topics.

5. Make a course calendar. This step is critical! Your course calendar serves multiple purposes:

    *   It provides your students with a map of when readings, labs, activities, and assessments start and are due.

    *   It provides you with the information you need to set start dates and due dates on your learning items and assessments in D2L.

    *   It serves as a guide for designing your course.

6. Create your content modules in D2L. For a short course like this, I recommend structuring your course by the week, to help keep your students on track.

7. If applicable, copy your long course into the short course shell; move the course contents to their proper locations.

8. Otherwise, begin placing your learning materials in the content modules.

Does this sound like a lot to try to do alone? Have no fear, the Instructional Designers here at LSC are standing by to help! Make an appointment today!

It's Time to Purge

No, we aren't talking about that kind of Purge!

We are talking about the kind of yearly maintenance that we do to maintain a high-quality user experience within D2L. In accordance with Office of the General Counsel policy, LSC-Online will purge data for the earliest courses still present in D2L. The purge process will result in the *complete deletion of course data*.

Starting on May 22, all courses from 2016 will be purged.

If you have 2016 course data that has not been backed up, please do so as soon as possible. You can either export your content to a .zip file or create a sandbox and copy the content to it.

The latest information and answers to common questions can be found on the D2L Course Purge page in VTAC.

Invest in Yourself with Professional Development!

As we approach the summer break, let's seize this opportunity to invest in our professional development. Imagine the potential for growth and innovation as we engage in workshops, conferences, and online courses designed to enhance our teaching skills. By dedicating time to learning, we can stay ahead of the curve, discover new techniques, and collaborate with fellow educators. Professional development isn't just about sharpening our skills; it's about enriching the learning experiences we provide for our students.

Here are a couple of ideas:

- [D2L Fusion Conference](#) (free for virtual attendees)
- Check your campus PD website
- [VTAC Event Calendar](#)
- Online Teaching & Learning Summit Recordings ([see page 1](#))
- [VTAC Training Library](#)
- [Udemy Learning](#)

SoftChalk Training for LSC

SoftChalk Cloud allows faculty to easily create professional-looking, interactive lessons to upload into their online classes. Join SoftChalk as they present training sessions specifically for LSC employees:

- [Friday, May 3, 1-2 p.m.](#)
- [Friday, May 17, 1-3 p.m.](#)

YuJa Enhancements

[YuJa](#), the video platform officially supported by LSC-Online, offers many exciting features, including machine captioning, video quizzing, and a video editor. One of the great things about YuJa is that it regularly gets major software improvements.
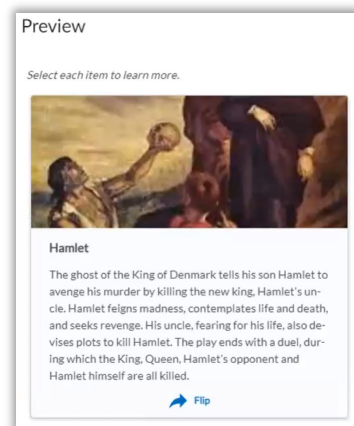

Below are some examples of Yuja upgrades that occurred over the last several months:

- The Video Editor now offers the ability to preview slides, watermarks, and overlay changes
- A new video player has added functionality and a fresh user interface
- New Generative AI detects video chapters (moments of impact) in videos
- A brand-new mobile app for iOS and Android

Summer cont.

Creator+ Update

In [our last issue](#), we wrote about some of the new features coming in D2L's Creator+ package. LSC-Online technologists and instructional designers are currently testing the features and writing the help documentation.

Stay tuned for more details about all these changes in upcoming D2L announcements, as summer is right around the corner!