



TAMU
*e*Learning

14th Annual

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES WEEK

ULTRA EXPERIENCE

Monday, October 30 -
Friday, November 3, 2023

PROGRAM

The 14th Annual Learning Technologies Week seeks to promote greater awareness and appreciation for using technologies in the classroom. This week highlights the best emerging technologies in online and blended learning.

MONDAY, 10-30-23

8:30-9:30 A.M.: Communication with Students **ULTRA EXPERIENCE**

Presenter: Ms. Melissa Soulas, TAMIU Instructional Designer

Location: CWT 112

Description: This workshop provides a comprehensive, high-level overview of the Learn Ultra features used to most effectively communicate with your students, create opportunities for communication, facilitate community-building, and help students manage their time effectively.

9:45-10:45 A.M.: Unlock A.I.'s Power: Tools to Use in Your Course

Presenter: Dr. Cynthia L. Sosa, TAMIU Faculty

Location: CWT 112

Description: Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) is a continued emerging technology providing many opportunities to use as a teaching tool in your courses. Join me as we look at a few different A.I. apps you can use.

11:30 A.M.-12:45 P.M.: Using EchoVideo with Engagement Features and Analytics **Lunch and Learn**

Presenter: Mr. Woody Bernardo, Echo360 Customer Success Manager

Location: STC 230

Description: Participants will learn about the engagement features available to faculty and students, such as notes, confusion flags, Q&A and study guide. A review on how to use these from both the student and instructor perspective will be provided. We will cover how to use Interactive Media and build polling questions within videos. In addition, EchoVideo analytics will also be covered.

1:00-2:00 P.M.: Creating and Organizing Your Content **ULTRA EXPERIENCE**

Presenter: Ms. Ivette Soto, TAMIU Instructional Designer

Location: CWT 112

Description: This workshop guides participants through creating and organizing content in their Blackboard Ultra courses. This session will demonstrate a wide range of tools that can be used to create content in Blackboard Ultra and discuss the importance of good course planning and implement rudimentary planning in course design.

2:15-3:15 P.M.: Communication with Students **ULTRA EXPERIENCE**

Presenter: Ms. Melissa Soulas, TAMIU Instructional Designer

Location: CWT 112

Description: This workshop provides a comprehensive, high-level overview of the Learn Ultra features used to most effectively communicate with your students, create opportunities for communication, facilitate community-building, and help students manage their time effectively.

3:30-4:30 P.M.: Recording Content to Answer Questions Before They're Asked

Presenter: Mr. Daniel González, TAMIU Faculty

Location: CWT 112

Description: Classrooms are filled and so are email inboxes, and you are struggling to keep up. Embracing technology and popular platforms such as YouTube will allow you to meet the demands of a professor in the 21st Century. In this session, you'll learn tools and pathways to record content for repeated use in both the online and in-person classroom.

TUESDAY, 10-31-23

8:30-9:30 A.M.: Creating and Organizing Your Content **ULTRA EXPERIENCE**

Presenter: Ms. Ivette Soto, TAMIU Instructional Designer

Location: CWT 112

Description: This workshop guides participants through creating and organizing content in their Blackboard Ultra courses. This session will demonstrate a wide range of tools that can be used to create content in Blackboard Ultra and discuss the importance of good course planning and implement rudimentary planning in course design.

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TUESDAY, 10-31-23 (Cont'd)

9:45-10:45 A.M.: Best Practices Teaching with Digital

Presenter: Mr. Cole Johnson, Director of Access Growth, Follett Higher Education

Location: CWT 112

Description: In this session you will learn how to use all of the features of the e-reader to enhance your teaching practice. You will learn how to highlight important text that may be on a quiz and how to create flashcards and notebooks. You will also learn how to "share" your ebook with students so that they can communicate with you from inside the book, providing context to their questions.

10:30-11:15 A.M.: Virtual Meeting Space for All Learners **Webinar**

Presenter: Dr. Cynthia A. Gallardo, TAMIU Faculty

Location: Virtual

Description: In this webinar, we will explore an Introductory Blackboard Collaborate Virtual Meeting Space tutorial. The Presenter will go into detail about setting up a session, chat features, showing video, and sharing information via this platform. Attendees will have an opportunity to create their own session and practice setting up a session in their Blackboard course, and ask questions on the features.

11:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M.: Imagine it, Create it with Microsoft Designer A.I.

Presenter: Dr. Kele Anyanwu, TAMIU Faculty

Location: CWT 112

Description: Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) and Generative Pre-Trained Transformer (ChatGPT) have become the most talked about buzzwords, yet few understand what they mean and how they are applied to solve problems we face today. During this session, the presenter will explain and demonstrate what these terms mean and the various applications with which they are associated. Participants in this session will be introduced to the latest A.I. tool called Microsoft Designer that is transforming digital art and empowering creativity just like the adage, "Dream it and it will happen;" Microsoft Designer A.I. tool epitomizes this concept. Since it is a web-based tool, part of the session presentation will involve participants in a hands-on activity to unleash their creativity by creating artifacts with this tool. There are similar tools out there, but this new Microsoft Designer is a game-changer especially for instructional purposes. Microsoft, being an equity partner of OpenAI that triggered this tsunami in generative content, has integrated it in the famous Microsoft 365 suite of applications. As TAMIU is a Microsoft applications campus, it invariably means both students and faculty will be inclined to use it. In characteristic Microsoft design and development strategy, Microsoft designer is intuitive, user-friendly interface, and comes free with the Office 365 package.

1:00-2:00 P.M.: Communication with Students **ULTRA EXPERIENCE**

Presenter: Ms. Melissa Soulas, TAMIU Instructional Designer

Location: CWT 112

Description: This workshop provides a comprehensive, high-level overview of the Learn Ultra features used to most effectively communicate with your students, create opportunities for communication, facilitate community-building, and help students manage their time effectively.

2:15-3:15 P.M.: Are A.I. detectors helpful for teachers?

Presenter: Dr. Yong Chen

Location: CWT 112

Description: The advent of ChatGPT, Bing A.I., Google Bard and many other A.I. writing tools have led to educators' nightmares. A.I.-generated content brings challenges for educators to maintain academic integrity and honesty because plagiarism becomes harder to be detected. But the originality of thoughts for intellectual growth must be promoted. This session will review some free A.I. detectors for teachers and how they work will be explained. Strengths and limitations of these detectors will be discussed in detail.

3:30-4:30 P.M.: Creating and Organizing Your Content **ULTRA EXPERIENCE**

Presenter: Ms. Ivette Soto, TAMIU Instructional Designer

Location: CWT 112

Description: This workshop guides participants through creating and organizing content in their Blackboard Ultra courses. This session will demonstrate a wide range of tools that can be used to create content in Blackboard Ultra and discuss the importance of good course planning and implement rudimentary planning in course design.

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WEDNESDAY, 11-1-23

8:30-9:30 A.M.: Assessing Student Learning **ULTRA EXPERIENCE**

Presenter: Mr. Carlos Vallarta, TAMIU Instructional Designer

Location: CWT 112

Description: Explore the power of Ultra courses in Blackboard with this engaging, hands-on session where you'll learn how to assess student learning effectively, create assignments and tests within Ultra courses, and navigate grading workflows for various assignment types. By the end of this workshop, you'll have valuable skills to enhance your teaching experience.

9:45-10:45 A.M.: QM Rubric SRS 5: Ideas to Enhance Engagement & Learner Interaction

Presenter: Dr. Cynthia L. Sosa, TAMIU Faculty

Location: CWT 112

Description: With the update of the Quality Matters 7th edition rubric, a new standard, 5.3, was added to SRS 5 that requires faculty to demonstrate increased interaction with the learners. Join this session to learn about what are exemplary interaction examples that can take your online course to the next level!

10:00-11:00 A.M.: Humanize Your Online Course with VoiceThread **Webinar**

Presenter: Mr. George Haines, VoiceThread - Instructional Designer and Online Educator

Location: Virtual

Description: Creating engaging online courses is not easy. In many discussion-board based courses, students feel isolated and disconnected from their instructors and classmates. VoiceThread bridges the gaps in social presence typically found in online courses. In this workshop, educators will learn how to establish a social presence and connect with their students using VoiceThread to improve course satisfaction and student learning. We will cover all of the basic VoiceThread features, demonstrate how everything works in Blackboard, showcase a variety of examples from actual courses, and have an open Q&A throughout the training.

11:30 A.M.-12:45 P.M.: Learn Ultra - Optimizing Your Course Experience **Lunch and Learn**

Presenter: Mr. Mike Jester, Client Experience Manager & Ms. Rita Vela, Client Experience Sr. Manager

Location: STC 231

Description: This presentation will highlight features in Ultra that you can use to interact with your students, track their progress, create engaging content, and manage the gradebook.

1:00-2:00 P.M.: Gradebook Management **ULTRA EXPERIENCE**

Presenter: Mr. Julio Tovar, TAMIU Instructional Designer

Location: CWT 112

Description: Use the Gradebook to record students' grades, and monitor students' progress. In addition, this dynamic and interactive tool helps you understand student progress and make informed decisions on how to improve educational performance.

2:15-3:15 P.M.: Quizlet for Differentiated Instruction, Student Engagement, and Building a Collaborative Environment

Presenter: Dr. Cynthia A. Gallardo, TAMIU Faculty

Location: CWT 112

Description: It is important for educators to be familiar with the latest technological advances to engage students in the classroom and for student success. In this session, we will review the introductory features of Quizlet. Quizlet is a fantastic tool that is used to engage students, develop vocabulary, and high yield critical thinking skills. This interactive tool is effective for differentiated instruction and engages all learners. Quizlet features that will be reviewed include: making and using virtual interactive flashcards, reviewing these interactive flashcards, using them to build assessments, and playing interactive games to build rapport and collaboration amongst students and peers.

3:30-4:30 P.M.: Assessing Student Learning **ULTRA EXPERIENCE**

Presenter: Mr. Carlos Vallarta, TAMIU Instructional Designer

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THURSDAY, 11-2-23

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Presenter: Mr. Julio Tovar, TAMIU Instructional Designer

Location: CWT 112

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9:45-10:45 A.M.: When A.I. Meets Research: How to Use A.I. to Supplement Your Research Needs

Presenter: Ms. Rebecca Alvarado, TAMIU Faculty

Location: CWT 112

Description: Are you afraid of research? Don't know where to start? Or maybe you're already comfortable with research and simply wish to perform research more effectively? A.I. is here to help! Learn how A.I. can help you meet your research goals. Regardless of your current experience and level of confidence in research, this session aims to get you excited about the process of performing research and will provide you with new tools, and strategies to help you get the most out of your idea. This session will walk you through the research process from beginning to end; at each step, you will be equipped with several A.I. tools and helpful strategies to give you confidence in the research process and to help you start your next big project. In all, this session will prepare you for all stages of the research process by providing plenty of helpful A.I. tools and creative strategies for implementing them.

11:30 A.M.-12:45 P.M.: Learn Ultra - Optimizing Your Course Experience **Lunch and Learn**

Presenter: Mr. Mike Jester, Client Experience Manager & Ms. Rita Vela, Client Experience Sr. Manager

Location: STC 231

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Presenter: Mr. Carlos Vallarta, TAMIU Instructional Designer

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2:15-3:15 P.M.: Preparing for Future Classrooms: Embracing Emerging A.I. tools

Presenter: Mr. Juan Arellano, TAMIU Faculty

Location: CWT 112

Description: How can we embrace technology when it is replacing us? What can we do about it? How can we take advantage of it? What is the future of teaching like? New tools such as "PhotoMath" and more recently "ChatGPT" have become an issue at schools. In math classes for example, students are able to obtain full solution steps to problems from their phone without having a clue what is going on mathematically. Similarly, in classes that require writing essays, students are able to obtain fully written essays about any topic with little effort. Furthermore, new A.I. tools can now provide tutoring services online that could one day replace human tutors, and perhaps even teachers. In this session, we will revisit some historical perspectives and solutions of when the calculator presented teachers with a similar problem, and then discuss how we can embrace these new technologies to improve education, and use them to increase efficiency and effectiveness as a teacher.

3:30-4:30 P.M.: Gradebook Management **ULTRA EXPERIENCE**

Presenter: Mr. Julio Tovar, TAMIU Instructional Designer

Location: CWT 112

Description: Use the Gradebook to record students' grades, and monitor students' progress. In addition, this dynamic and interactive tool helps you understand student progress and make informed decisions on how to improve educational performance.

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FRIDAY, 11-3-23

8:30-9:30 A.M.: Creating and Organizing Your Content **ULTRA EXPERIENCE**

Presenter: Ms. Ivette Soto, TAMIU Instructional Designer

Location: CWT 112

Description: This workshop guides participants through creating and organizing content in their Blackboard Ultra courses. This session will demonstrate a wide range of tools that can be used to create content in Blackboard Ultra and discuss the importance of good course planning and implement rudimentary planning in course design.

9:45-10:45 A.M.: Enhancing Authentic Motivation for Online Learning: Providing Culturally-Relevant Instruction for Students of Mexican Descent

Presenter: Dr. Heriberto Godina, TAMIU Faculty

Location: CWT 112

Description: How can an authentic definition of culture enhance online-learning experiences for students of Mexican descent? More importantly, how can we effectively remove the stigma associated with Mexican descent that may hinder students' self-esteem and perceptions of competence within academic settings? We know that having effective online-instruction requires creating an authentic connection between a teacher and students. In an online environment, the connection to cultural variables can be a challenge, but I argue that integrating cultural variables can enhance and complement an academic learning objective. During this session, I will share some of my successful online-teaching experiences that have correlated cultural variables as a way to enhance an academic focus on instruction, and also created a learning community that is specifically inclusive of Mexican descent. I will describe how the CAP model integrates an emphasis on culture-academics-psychology and is used for an operational definition of "culture" which includes Mexican descent, social class, and gender. Some specific shared examples will include: how role models can be understood as a motivational factor for students; how seasonal holidays can be repositioned as learning events, and how the use of everyday food and language can be re-connected to specific academic concepts. Educators who wish to create a more motivational online-learning experience for students of Mexican descent should find this session informative.

11:00-12:00 P.M.: Engaging Students with Top Hat

Presenter: Ms. Melissa Soulas, TAMIU Instructional Designer

Location: CWT 112

Description: Top Hat is a dynamic courseware platform that allows educators to create engaging presentations for their students and provide authentic learning experiences. This workshop will introduce participants to integrating Top Hat into the classroom, by creating and delivering live polls and quizzes, using asynchronous activities to promote student engagement and learning, and integrating Top Hat with Blackboard LMS.

Partner Presenters



Mr. Mike Jester - Mike Jester has over two decades of experience in education as an instructor, academic advisor, instructional designer, and curriculum developer for online programs in higher education. Based in San Antonio, Mike started working with Blackboard in 2021, where he support clients optimize their LMS for their most important users: Students and Faculty.

Ms. Rita Vela - Rita Vela joined the Anthology team eight years ago and serves as Sr. Manager for the Client Experience team where she provides support for colleges and universities for a variety of education initiatives. She has over 15 years of experience in the e-learning industry including years of experience in the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of online, hybrid, and web-augmented courses in higher education.

Mr. Woody Bernardo - Woody Bernardo is a Customer Success Manager with Echo360. Woody has been with Echo360 for nine years and is based out of Sterling, VA. He works closely with Echo360 cross-functional teams including product and engineering and technical support to ensure a successful implementation, onboarding and ongoing success for the institution, instructors and students.

Mr. George Haines - George Haines is the instructional designer and online educator at VoiceThread. He is a former instructional designer on the higher education level and a former K-12 teacher.

Mr. Cole Johnson - Cole Johnson will help TAMIU assess the health and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of TAMIU Books IncludEd, as well as assist faculty and students in utilizing digital content.

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TAMIU PRESENTERS

Ms. Rebecca N. Alvarado - Rebecca Alvarado is a recent graduate from Texas A&M International and new adjunct faculty member for the College of Arts and Sciences in the Department of Psychology & Communication.

Dr. Kele Anyanwu - Dr. Kele Anyanwu graduated with a Doctorate in Education (Ed. D.) in Curriculum and Instruction with specialization in Instructional Technology from University of Houston and a master's degree (M.S.) in Instructional Technology from University of Houston – Clear Lake. Presently, Kele is an Associate Professor of Educational Technology at Texas A&M International University. Cutting edge technologies that enhance teaching and learning, enabling teachers and students to make meaning of the world around them is his passion. Technology should be more accessible and inclusive, such that everyone can learn, understand, and explore freely and creatively.

Mr. Juan Arellano - Juan Arellano is a TAMIU Graduate. He has been a math faculty member in the College of Arts and Sciences for the Department Of Mathematics and Physics at TAMIU for eight years and was the 2020 Instructional Technology Excellence Award recipient at TAMIU.

Dr. Yong Chen - Dr. Yong Chen is an Assistant Professor in the Division of International Business and Technology Studies in the A. R. Sanchez, Jr. School of Business at TAMIU. He values the principle "learn by doing." He positions himself as a facilitator for student learning.

Dr. Cynthia A. Gallardo - Dr. Cynthia Angélica Gallardo is an Assistant Professor of Educational Administration for Texas A&M International University's College of Education. Dr. Gallardo is an innovative and dedicated educational leader bringing expertise in research, program, classroom oversight, course planning and student success.

Dr. Heriberto Godina - Dr. Heriberto Godina is an Assistant Professor in the College of Education at TAMIU. His instructional specializations include the Science of Teaching Reading, Bilingual Education, and Online Instruction.

Mr. Daniel González - Daniel A. González is a TAMIU alumnus and a current faculty in the A.R. Sanchez, Jr. School of Business for the Division of International Business & Technology Studies. He uses technology and active learning techniques to meet the needs of students in the 21st Century.

Dr. Cynthia L. Sosa - Dr. Cynthia Sosa has over 20 years experience in education as a former elementary educator and instructional technology specialist. She is an Instructional Assistant Professor for Texas A&M International University's College of Education teaching undergraduate and graduate students, provides service in several committees, and serves on the Board of Directors representing Area One for TCEA.

Ms. Ivette Soto - Ivette Soto is an experienced Instructional Designer I with four years of dedicated service at Texas A&M International University. With a background as a student and LMS administrator, she is deeply passionate about empowering faculty and students with knowledge about instructional technologies used at TAMIU.

Ms. Melissa Soulas - Melissa Soulas is an Instructional Designer III with 17 years of teaching experience and a Master's in Curriculum and Instruction. She brings energetic enthusiasm to the higher educational realm. With a passion for pedagogy, Melissa enjoys educating and empowering faculty with the best practices for online teaching.

Mr. Julio Tovar - Julio Tovar is an Instructional Designer IV at Texas A&M International University with over 25 years of professional experience in education and technology. He is a certified Quality Matters course review manager and passionate about creating high-quality online learning experiences.

Mr. Carlos Vallarta - Carlos Vallarta, an Instructional Designer with over 14 years at Texas A&M International University, specializes in elevating higher education standards through Blackboard support, third-party tool integration, and high-quality course designs. As a dedicated expert in instructional technology, he enhances faculty development and contributes significantly to support online course development as a Quality Matters Coordinator, Facilitator and Peer Reviewer.

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Join the giveaway!

Giveaway will be broadcasted via livestream from CWT 112 on Friday, November 3, 2023 at 12:00 P.M. CST.

The more sessions you attend, the better chance you have to receive one of these cool gadgets!



Amazon Fire TV 43" 4K UHD Smart TV



Amazon Fire TV Cube



AirFly SE,
Audio Transmitter for AirPods



Waterproof Portable
Bluetooth Speaker



Apple AirTag



Logitech MK270 Wireless
Keyboard and Mouse

For more information, contact:
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