



# eLearning ACUMEN by ITS

## January 2016

A NEWSLETTER FROM INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AT MSUM

IN THIS ISSUE

## ITS welcomes you to spring 2016!

This is the inaugural issue of the **eLearning Acumen**, a quarterly newsletter published by Instructional Technology Services (ITS) here at MSUM.

Our mission in ITS is to provide instructors with support and resources for using technology in the development of customized learning environments.

We offer a variety of services for faculty including **instructional technology training, accessibility advising, and instructional design & Quality Matters consultations**. It is our hope that this newsletter will help further the mission of ITS and MSUM.

We hope you will find the information within to be informative, interesting, and maybe even a little enlightening. Here's to a beautiful spring!



### **D2LB: Did you know?**

Have you ever tried the Record Audio feature in D2L Brightspace? Find out more about the variety of ways you can start using this cool tool.

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### **Can we meet in person? But from afar?**

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### **Don't Settle for Tunnel Vision**

Hosting a WebEx meeting with more than one person in the room?

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### **PD Picks**

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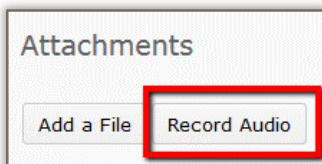
### **Also in this issue...**

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## D2LB: Did you know? Record Audio

**Did you know** you can record audio directly within your course? The Record Audio feature can be found within a variety of tools, including News, Dropbox, and Discussions. You can record up to 5 minutes of audio to add a bit of variety and personalization to your course.

The Dropbox tool allows you to provide feedback to students in multiple ways: in a feedback window within the tool, as annotated attachments of the student's original work, using the Rubrics tool, and as an audio recording. Providing feedback to the students via the Record Audio option can come in useful when delivering critical or exceptionally positive feedback. The tone of your voice can convey volumes in praise, and also in softening the blow should your feedback include some critical comments for the student.



Audio feedback can be very personalized to the student. Feelings of connectedness to the course and to you, as

the instructor, increase when students perceive their feedback is personal and individualized. Thankfully, a little can go a long way. **Although the Record Audio tool allows up to 5 minutes of recording time, sometimes just a minute of your voice will make a difference for the student.**

While only you, as the instructor, can Record Audio in the News tool, students, are able to Record Audio in the Dropbox and Discussion tools. Consider the possibilities! Shake up your assignments a bit! Allow students to add a bit of their voice (literally) to their assignments and activities. Students could:

- Submit a rough draft of a speech in audio form.
- Demonstrate pronunciation.

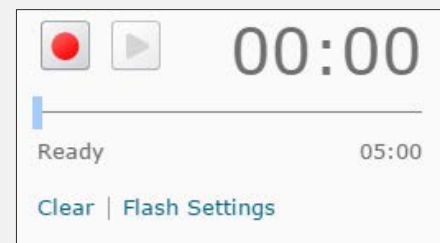


- Post a personalized introduction.

As you work toward integrating this feature into your feedback methods and assignments, be sure that you know your students and their needs. Always remember to consider your audience. You may need to provide a text equivalent of the audio for students with hearing difficulties or for whom English is not their first language. Your course should be accessible to all students.

### RECORD AUDIO

As long as you have a microphone for your computer, you can record audio clips (up to five minutes) within certain D2L Brightspace tools. This can be done in the *Discussions* tool (when starting/editing a new thread), in the *News* tool (when creating/editing a news item), in the *Dropbox* tool (when evaluating a Dropbox submission from the evaluate submissions page for a student).



### Ready to give it a try?

Visit the [Record Audio tutorial](#) on the ITS website for step by step instructions.

([https://www.mnstate.edu/uploadedFiles/Level\\_2/Content/Instructional\\_Technology\\_Services/Desire2Learn/Faculty/Record%20Audio.pdf](https://www.mnstate.edu/uploadedFiles/Level_2/Content/Instructional_Technology_Services/Desire2Learn/Faculty/Record%20Audio.pdf))

## Can we meet in person? But from afar?



### Try virtual office hours!

The traditional student is no longer the norm. We can no longer assume that most of our students enroll immediately after graduating high school, is physically on campus until graduation and has limited family and financial obligations. Many students now delay enrollment, attend part time for a portion of the academic year, work full-time and/or have dependents.

While some of the circumstances students find themselves in these days has changed drastically, the benefit of one on one time with their instructors who can mentor and advise them has not. Are you accessible to your students who are non-traditional and are juggling many competing priorities? Do you require they drive to campus to meet with you

for 15-20 minutes? If you could meet virtually and have more of the human element involved would you consider it?

We have several faculty on campus who are using WebEx to meet with students in a "virtual office". WebEx allows you to have an online room where you can share your webcam, documents, computer screens, work through problems and converse. Since there is a mobile version of the WebEx app for all devices students could connect with you from virtually anywhere on almost any device.

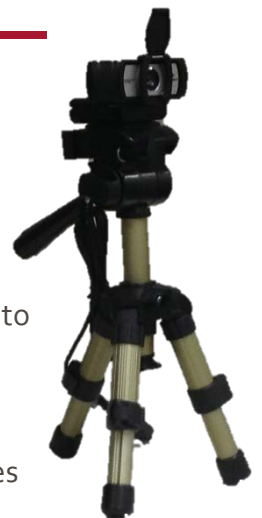
#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you are interested in learning more, send an [email](mailto:support@mnstate.edu) to support@mnstate.edu and we can walk through how to get started!

## Don't settle for tunnel vision!

Many of us have built in web cameras on our computers, tablets and phones. This makes it really easy to see others when connected on the web using software that allows camera sharing. Many MSUM faculty and staff are using WebEx for classes and meetings. In most cases the web camera built into our devices are designed to capture a single person. Often, that is all you need. However, if you've ever tried to capture a group, it can take some crazy gymnastics to get a built in camera to capture more than one person. If you have ever tried to use the webcam built into your laptop lid when in a group setting you know the pain...

Instructional Technology has purchased a wide angle webcam that is mounted on a tripod that makes capturing a group of people much easier. You can borrow this as the need comes up by simply giving us a call or sending an [email](mailto:support@mnstate.edu) to support@mnstate.edu.





## PD Picks

*Light up your learning!*

### Conferences

#### STAR Symposium

February 19, 2016 (virtual)

This virtual one-day conference will focus on pedagogical approaches including delivery via face-to-face, blended, flipped and online classrooms.

Cost is only \$50 to attend sessions all day! Registration fees can be covered by MSUM. [Email catherine.artac@mnstate.edu](mailto:catherine.artac@mnstate.edu) prior to registration to request a P.O. number.

[STAR Symposium details and registration](http://minnesota.qualitymatters.org/symposium/) information are available online (http://minnesota.qualitymatters.org/symposium/).

#### IGNITE!

#### Minnesota D2L Regional Users Conference

April 15, 2016, Normandale Community College

IGNITE! is a day of collaboration and discussion of topics related to enhancing teaching and learning in Minnesota. Sponsored by D2L in collaboration with MnSCU, this users' conference is open to all faculty, staff, and K-12 educators. [IGNITE! details](http://www.brightspace.com/conferences/regional/minnesota/) are available online (http://www.brightspace.com/conferences/regional/minnesota/).

#### MN eLearning Summit

July 27-28, 2016, MCTC

The MN eLearning Summit is the premiere event of the Minnesota Learning Commons and is a gathering place for K-12, college, and university educators and innovators in the Midwest who are committed to effective online and blended learning.

[MN eLearning Summit details and registration information](https://cceeevents.umn.edu/minnesota-elearning-summit/) are available online (https://cceeevents.umn.edu/minnesota-elearning-summit/).

#### Fusion 2016

July 18-19, 2016, Washington DC

The D2L Brightspace International Conference brings together educators, experts, and innovators. One of this summer's keynote speakers will be Sir Ken Robinson!

[Fusion details and registration information](http://www.brightspace.com/conferences/global/) can be found online (http://www.brightspace.com/conferences/global/).

#### Distance Teaching & Learning (DTL) Conference

August 9-11, 2016, Madison, WI

The annual DTL conference provides a variety of learning opportunities and experiences for you to teach, learn, and connect. For more than 30 years it has been one of the premier events for DTL professionals.

[DTL Conference details and registration information](https://dtlconference.wisc.edu/) can be found online (https://dtlconference.wisc.edu/).

### Workshops, Webinars & More

#### Applying the QM Rubric (APPQMR)

Starts March 22, 2016

This online, asynchronous, 2-week workshop is QM's flagship workshop. It is intended for those who wish to understand more about the QM Rubric and process of course review.

The cost is \$40. Registration fees can be covered by MSUM. [Email catherine.artac@mnstate.edu](mailto:catherine.artac@mnstate.edu) prior to registration to request a P.O. number. [Workshop details and registration information](https://qm.northlandcollege.edu/registrations/register/H3G3FEQXNZ/) are available online (https://qm.northlandcollege.edu/registrations/register/H3G3FEQXNZ/).

#### Improving Your Online Course (IYOC)

Session 1: Starts Feb. 2, 2016

**(Registration closes 01/26!)**

OR

Session 2: Starts April 19, 2016

The IYOC is an online, asynchronous, 2-week workshop. It explores the QM Rubric, examining 21 essential standards.

Participants come away with a plan for course improvement. **Prerequisite:** must have an existing online course to examine during the workshop.

Cost is \$30. Registration fees can be covered by MSUM. [Email](mailto:catherine.artac@mnstate.edu) catherine.artac@mnstate.edu prior to registration to request a P.O. number. [Workshop details and registration information](#) are available

online (<https://qm.northlandcollege.edu/registrations/register/H3G3FEQXNZ/>).

QM - Summer 2016

May and June 2016: Several QM opportunities for all levels of expertise will be available this summer.

*Watch for details coming your way soon!!*

## Accessibility Tip: Adding Alt Text to Images

Images are a superb means of conveying meaning. They make a helpful addition to many courses. Images can be used in course documents created in various formats including Word, PDF, and PowerPoint. Images can also be easily inserted in the various [HTML editors](#) in D2L Brightspace, such as those found in News, Discussions, Content, and Quizzes.

To ensure those great images are accessible to all who may encounter them, be sure to add **Alternative Text (Alt Text)**. Alt Text helps people using assistive technologies understand the meaning you are trying to convey with the selected image. Both a Title and Description can be added. However some screen reading applications do not read the Title field, so be sure to enter your text into the Description field. The description should not be just a depiction of the image characteristics, but rather a summation of the intended meaning or content you are trying to convey in the image.

Alt Text is a must. Make it a habit. The act of adding Alt Text is simple; how-to steps are available online. However, the art of adding Alt Text (*a bit trickier to master*) is making it meaningful, yet concise.



*"A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably."*

Ludwig Wittgenstein  
*Philosophical Investigations*



**Poor Example of Alt Text:**  
House damaged from Hurricane Patricia.

**Better Example of Alt Text:**  
In wake of Hurricane Patricia, distressed boy standing in ruins that were once his home.

### More details:

[D2LB HTML Editor](https://www.mnstate.edu/uploadedFiles/Level_2/Content/Instructional_Technology_Services/Desire2Learn/HTML%20Editor.pdf)

([https://www.mnstate.edu/uploadedFiles/Level\\_2/Content/Instructional\\_Technology\\_Services/Desire2Learn/HTML%20Editor.pdf](https://www.mnstate.edu/uploadedFiles/Level_2/Content/Instructional_Technology_Services/Desire2Learn/HTML%20Editor.pdf))

[Alternative Text practices](http://webaim.org/techniques/alttext/) (<http://webaim.org/techniques/alttext/>)

[Alt Text in Word](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/kb/g23919) (<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/kb/g23919>)

[Why Alt Text?](http://accessproject.colostate.edu/udl/modules/word/tut_alt_text.php) ([http://accessproject.colostate.edu/udl/modules/word/tut\\_alt\\_text.php](http://accessproject.colostate.edu/udl/modules/word/tut_alt_text.php))

## QM Tip:

### Starting with Standard 1.1

Standard 1.1 is a relatively easy standard to meet, making it a good choice for newcomers to QM to examine first.

Several related components are required for you to meet Standard 1.1. A **Course Overview** section in your Syllabus is crucial, but what else is needed to get students started on the right path?

While copyright restrictions prevent us from printing Standard 1.1 in this newsletter, the general gist is that you should make sure students know how and where to get started in your course.

The QM Rubric Workbook is designed to help you understand how you can meet each standard, providing annotations and examples (if you are in need of a *QM Rubric Workbook 5<sup>th</sup> Ed.* request a copy via [email](mailto:catherine.artac@mnstate.edu) to catherine.artac@mnstate.edu).

To make sure you're meeting Standard 1.1, carefully review the Standard and Annotations in the Workbook. Also, consider the following:

➤ **Welcome Email**

Before your course starts, send a welcome email to

your students that contains the following:

- WELCOME to your course
- WHERE to find your course
- HOW to access the course
- WHAT to click first to get started

View a [sample Welcome Email](#).

([http://www.mnstate.edu/uploadedFiles/Level\\_2/Content/Instructional\\_Technology\\_Services/TeachingLearning/SampleWelcomeEmail.docx](http://www.mnstate.edu/uploadedFiles/Level_2/Content/Instructional_Technology_Services/TeachingLearning/SampleWelcomeEmail.docx))

➤ **"Welcome" or "Start Here" News Post**

Students have logged in to the course. What do they do now? Write a News post on the course homepage providing them with specific steps on what you want them to do to get started.

View sample [Getting Started News posts](#).

(<http://collaborate.mnstate.edu/public/blogs/itsblog/files/2016/01/SampleWelcomeNewsPost.pdf>)

**Questions?** [Email](mailto:support@mnstate.edu) support@mnstate.edu.



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