ALFRED L MORSE

BU Digital Learning & Innovation

2023 Annual Report

AUDITORIUM

WELCOME.

Dear colleagues and stakeholders,

I am delighted to present Digital Learning & Innovation's (DL&I) Annual Report for 2023, a year marked by significant advancements in our mission to transform residential education.

In our pursuit of large lecture course transformation, we focus on integrating innovative pedagogy and technology to enhance BU's large lecture courses, prioritizing student engagement, and closing achievement gaps. In progress towards this, we have engaged six faculty teams in an extensive consultation process, laying the groundwork for multi-year transformation proposals.

Generative AI holds profound implications for education, and DL&I is at the forefront of fostering faculty literacy and experimentation with these transformative technologies. In 2023, we held a sold-out symposium on ChatGPT and are currently engaged in efforts that include the launch of the "Future of Learning: AI Grants"(FLAG) program and a well-attended informational webinar series. Additionally, our Center for Teaching and Learning is developing teaching guides and a significant repository of global syllabi and institutional policies.

Among other notable achievements, our educational technology team successfully deployed Blackboard Ally, enhancing accessibility to course materials. Additionally, the Shipley Center's Accelerating Classroom Transformation (ACT) grant series has garnered substantial popularity, funding 23 projects since its inception in November 2022.

Looking ahead to 2024, we are poised to implement large course transformation projects and deepen our role in supporting BU's generative AI strategies. We are also committed to leveraging learning analytics to assess project outcomes and interventions comprehensively.

Thank you for your support on this transformative journey. Together, we shape the future of education at BU.

Sincerely,

Chris Dellarocas
Associate Provost for Digital Learning & Innovation
Richard C. Shipley Professor of Information Systems
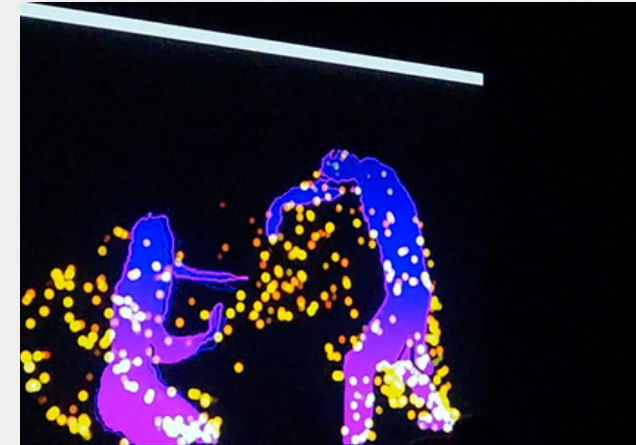
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Our Office

The Digital Learning & Innovation (DL&I) Office comprises the Shipley Center and Educational Technology, and oversees the Center for Teaching & Learning jointly with Undergraduate Affairs.

DL&I is the nexus of expertise on evidence-based pedagogical approaches to integrating innovative educational technologies in learning for BU leadership, faculty, staff, and students.

The Digital Learning & Innovation Office Timeline

The Digital Learning & Innovation (DL&I) Office was established. Hosted First Annual Teaching with Technology Festival.

Supported the rollout of Adobe Creative Cloud licenses to all undergraduate students, select graduate students, and faculty.

Led emergency move to remote and, later, Learn from Anywhere (LfA) teaching and learning. Co-architected, produced, and launched Questrom's Online MBA.

The Shipley Center officially launched in February. Instructional Production Services moved to BU Virtual. Platform Administration moved to IS&T.

2016

2018

2020

2022

2017

2019

2021

2023

Managed the production and successful launch of BU's first two MicroMasters Programs.

Digital Initiatives unit created to continue assisting the production of residential and distance digital learning initiatives.

Hosted the inaugural Faculty Forum 2021 virtual symposium and LfA Creativity & Spirit Awards. The Shipley Center for Digital Learning & Innovation is announced.

Launched new ACT grants program. Hosted ChatGPT Symposium. Initiated pilot of Blackboard Ally across BU.

Affiliated Units

Shipley Center

The Richard C. Shipley Center for Digital Learning & Innovation elevates the novel uses of educational technologies, celebrates and supports experimentation through project funding and development, and provides BU educators with consultative, design and media production services to enhance the residential teaching and learning experience.

Center for Teaching & Learning

Under the joint leadership of the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs and the Associate Provost for Digital Learning & Innovation, the Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) partners with faculty, staff, and students to cultivate teaching that is inclusive, centered on student learning, and guided by research and practice.

Educational Technology

The Educational Technology (EdTech) team comprises experts in established and emerging educational technologies and provides technology training and guidance to BU academic leadership, faculty, and graduate student instructors to accelerate better student engagement and support innovative experiments in learning.

Promotions & New Hires

Damon Carlson promoted to Sr. Educational Technologist

Diane Carroll promoted to Sr. Project Manager

Sam Macriss promoted to Sr. Admin. Assistant and Social Media Coordinator

Annwesa Dasgupta, Project Manager

Etienne Wasson, CTL Sr. Admin. Coordinator (under Undergraduate Affairs)

Leah D'Sa, Administrative Coordinator
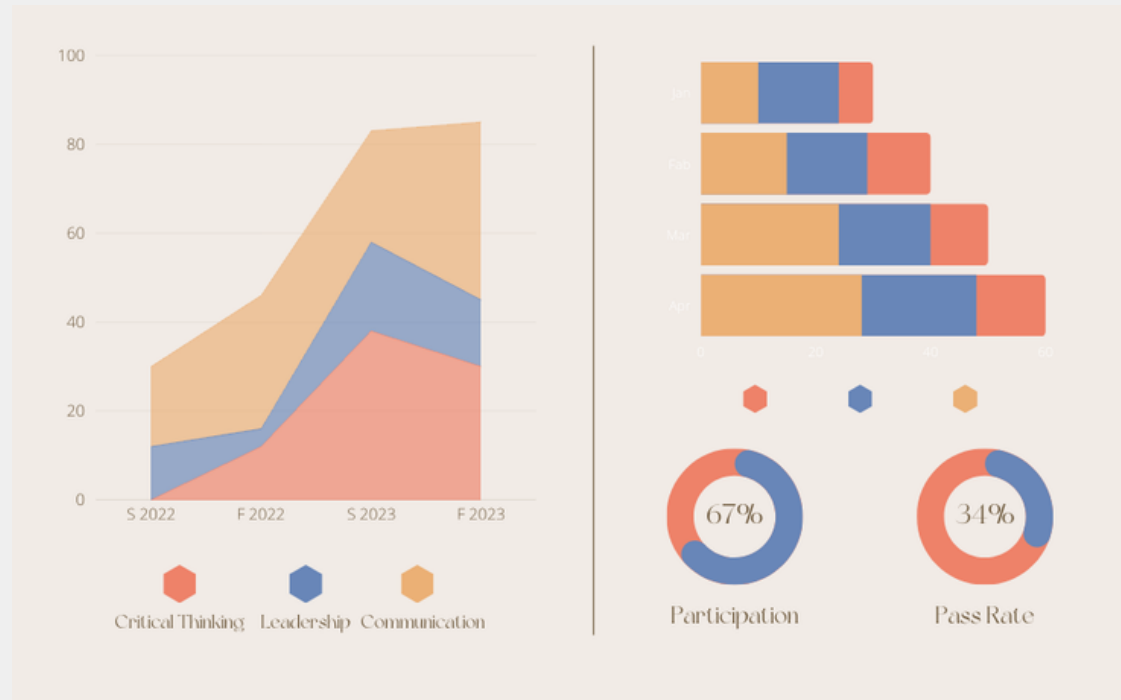
Lisa Burgess, CTL Assistant Director

Cindy Vincent, Communications Manager

Implementing BU's 2030 Strategic Plan

DL&I is committed to carrying out BU's 2030 Strategic Plan. This section conveys just a few of the ways we engage in this work across all five strategic priorities.

Research that Matters

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

> When we introduce Ally, we are saying, "We care about how you learn and we want to help."

Megan Sullivan
Associate Professor of Rhetoric, College of General Studies

Learning Analytics and AI Expansion

This year, the EdTech team worked on two projects that will open new doors in the use of data analytics to improve student learning. First, they consulted on the selection of a new course-evaluation system, Explorance Blue, whose robust analytics capabilities will become particularly powerful once integrated into the new student information system. Second, EdTech conducted a comprehensive hiring process for an educational technologist who will specialize in the support of learning analytics. This search concluded shortly after the end of the fiscal year with a successful hire that will help drive DL&I's research and engagement in this area.

Blackboard Ally

Blackboard Ally is an electronic tool supporting inclusion and accessibility that allows students to download course materials in alternative formats that work best for them, like HTML for improved reading on mobile phones, Audio for learning on the go, and Electronic Braille for the visually impaired. This year, EdTech, in partnership with IS&T, launched a pilot study of Ally in select Schools and Colleges across BU where faculty could access Ally on an opt-in basis. In support of this effort, EdTech coordinated a team across campuses to meet monthly and successfully promote Ally to faculty.

Community, Big Yet Small

BU SAFE

SAFE comprises an informational video for the general public and an interactive asynchronous training for students, faculty, and staff to inform target audiences about the support provided by the BU Police Department in the event of an active threat on campus. For this initiative, the Shipley Center provided course design, media production, and project management, ensuring its successful roll-out to the BU community in Fall 2023.

Global Engagement

Lightning Talks IEW 2022: Educating Global Citizens

In support of International Education Week (IEW) 2022, organized by BU Global Programs, the CTL partnered with the Study Abroad program, the Center for English Language & Orientation Programs, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the School of Dental Medicine for their virtual panel on Educating Global Citizens. In this Lightning Talks event, faculty presenters broadly highlighted strategies for integrating international students and their experiences into classes, creating community and appreciation of diversity for all students, and exploring ways to help students appreciate cultural diversity when they are studying abroad.

A Vibrant Academic Experience

Creating a vibrant academic experience is at the heart of DL&I's mission and in everything we do. For this particular strategic priority, we are dedicating the rest of our report to showcasing how we provide academic guidance, expertise, and support in three ways: accelerating academic innovation, catalyzing pedagogical transformation, and promoting collegial collaboration across our university communities.

Accelerating Innovation

To accelerate academic innovation at BU, we collaborate with faculty, leadership, and staff to co-create bold new ideas and engage in pedagogical experimentation.

Pilot Project Initiatives

[Pilot projects](#) incubate innovative academic approaches to improve the residential teaching and learning experience. This section briefly describes our new and ongoing initiatives.

Digital Anatomy Lab

This new initiative makes novel use of existing technologies to improve access and equity of anatomical resources and provide a foundation and workflow to democratize digital body preservation.

Home Safety

A new collaboration between Sargent College and SSW to create interactive simulations featuring home environments that will effectively prepare undergraduate and graduate students to safely conduct home assessments.

Prepare with C.A.R.E.

A novel program for general, organic, and biochemistry students to develop prerequisite skills for upper-division courses. At the completion of the pilot this year, a follow-up initiative was launched to further focus on adaptive learning in chemistry education preparation.

SAIL MAST

BU's Software Application and Innovation Lab's (SAIL) new Microservices And Software Tools (MAST) Program will enable the next generation of software engineers to build open-source microservices and software tools for current SAIL applications.

SSW Field Education

This field readiness learning lab enabled students to complete practice scenarios and receive personal feedback and assessment, leveraging voice-based AI.

Using VR to Address Social Determinants of Health

Using VR learning environments to increase medical and social work students' confidence to mitigate health-related social needs, the team continued to support clinical teams of BU medical, physician assistant, nutrition, and social work students.

This project explores the effectiveness of the Yellowdig platform to foster active learning, higher-order thinking, purposeful interaction with the target language, the capability to build community and allow for multiple meaningful interactions, and the use of multiple modalities in language learning courses. The project team completed their Spanish language pilot in summer 2023 and are now incorporating the Yellowdig platform into other language learning courses and assessing opportunities for expansion. **READ MORE**

" *By combining the writing portion and the shareability portion of Yellowdig (videos, links, images) we were essentially creating a single platform within Blackboard tied to our Blackboard Grade Center, where students could be targeting all of their skills at once.*"

-Alison Carberry Gotlieb,
Master Lecturer of Spanish

Pilot Project Initiatives

Interprofessional Leadership in Healthcare

A collaboration between Sargent College and SSW that delivers a non-credit online certificate to increase healthcare professionals' skills and knowledge in interprofessional leadership. This year, alumni mentors led a 4th cohort focused on addressing complex issues in healthcare settings and ways to support person-centered outcomes.

PhD Progression

A digital badge program for BU doctoral students to monitor learning progress, share benchmarks, and develop career planning practices. This year, the team received an NSF Innovations in Graduate Education award and the badging pathways integrated Skillsmatch by Lightcast to align to career families.

The Network for Professional Education

The School of Social Work initiated The Network to leverage BU's talented alumni and offer nationally renowned training for health and social service workers across the country. This year, the team focused on national outreach to increase engagement with The Network, which is up to 106 agencies in 21 states.

Create Open Lessons Online With BULB
BU Learning Blocks

Building BULB
(BU Learning Blocks)

EdTech and the Shipley Center collaborated with Wayne LaMorte, a Professor of Epidemiology and Assistant Dean of Education at BU School of Public Health, and BU's web development team to build a WordPress plug-in that enables BU faculty to create interactive online learning modules, BU Learning Blocks. This year, a new webpage was created for the project and new resources were created in the Tsai Performance Center and Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation. **READ MORE**

Catalyzing Transformation

In addition to accelerating innovation, DL&I is committed to providing the knowledge, expertise, and resources for catalyzing pedagogical transformation across BU that builds and sustains a culture of academic innovation.

"We are in a cultural, intellectual, and technological moment. It feels exciting but also a little worrisome and urgent."

–Deborah Breen, Director of CTL

Ethics, equity, active learning and student engagement, and educational technology policy: these are just a few of the areas to consider as we respond to ChatGPT and other generative AI tools in teaching and learning. In March 2023, DL&I and CTL co-sponsored a symposium that featured a stimulating session devoted to these topics while learning from and with colleagues as they shared ideas, information, and approaches to teaching and learning in an AI ecosystem.

ChatGPT Symposium

Opportunities and Challenges in Teaching and Learning with ChatGPT

Karen Jacobs
Clinical Professor and Associate Dean Sargent College of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

Roscoe Giles
Professor Electrical & Computer Engineering and Computing & Data Sciences

Sarah Madsen Hardy
Director CAS Writing Program

Chris Dellarocas
Facilitator Associate Provost for Digital Learning & Innovation

BU Digital Learning & Innovation   BU Center for Teaching & Learning

The much-anticipated symposium, "ChatGPT and Other AI Tools: Challenges, Opportunities, and Strategies for Teaching," was soldout and saw an attendance of 180 participants in the Trustees Ballroom. The energy and focus of both the presenters and participants were remarkable, with one attendee exclaiming that the three hours felt like the fastest they had experienced in a long time.

The program consisted of three parts: 1) A framing panel that outlined the key challenges and opportunities ChatGPT presents for teaching and learning at BU, 2) a panel of BU instructors who shared examples of how they have used ChatGPT in their teaching, and 3) a panel that discussed policy considerations around ChatGPT, including whether there should be departmental, school, or university policies and what those policies should contain. **READ MORE**

Launching ACT Grants

In November 2022, the Shipley Center initiated the Accelerating Classroom Transformation (ACT) grant program, intended to fund small, low-cost, technology-enabled projects. ACT Grants serve as a springboard for the exploration, design, and implementation of new or improved pedagogical approaches in courses and educational programs that support learning for BU students.
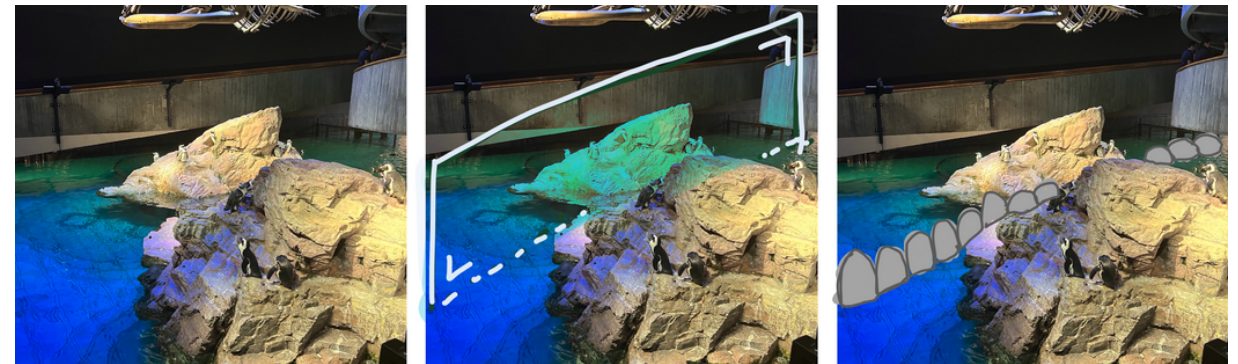
OER for Science

The OER for Science ACT Grant project models the integration of educational technology in science education and creates active learning through media engagement. This project provided transformational impact on courses by modeling an example of the Triple E Framework for technology integration.

RANDOM ACTOR

RANDOM ACTOR is a software tool that allows for real time design with an intuitive user interface eliminating the need for designers to write code. A former pilot project, this ACT grant allowed the project team to acquire a faster graphics-processing computer to improve the real-time interplay of the graphics with performers.

ZooU

The ZooU ACT Grant project leverages app technologies to provide students with more immersive and flexible learning opportunities when paired with active learning environments, like zoos and aquariums. After using this app, student learning outcomes improved by 50%.

Poll Everywhere ACT Grant

"For those of us who teach large classes, this is a way to connect to students and generate the feeling of a small class discussion for people who want to connect without feeling intimidated."

- Joe Harris,
Associate Professor of Sociology

Joseph Harris
Associate Professor
BU School of Sociology

As many faculty know, it is often difficult to create meaningful student engagement in large-enrollment courses. Joe Harris, Associate Professor of Sociology, ran into this problem in his SOC 100 Principles of Sociology class, so he set out to find a way to use technology to enhance student engagement in a cost-effective way. An online polling software that records student responses on laptops, phones, and other devices, Poll Everywhere, did just that. **READ MORE**

Blackboard's New Look

Blackboard Ultra is the new, modern interface for Blackboard Learn, BU's learning management system. Compared to the Blackboard Original view, Ultra has simplified workflows, a modern look and feel, and a fully responsive interface on all devices. EdTech provides training, guidance, and support for faculty and students as they learn to navigate the new look and feel of the platform.

MediaKron Available at BU

MediaKron is a versatile tool to illustrate course content with maps, timelines, and rich media, with an interface simple enough that students can use it to produce maps and timelines collaboratively. MediaKron was developed at Boston College and supported at a pilot level by BU's EdTech. Now, MediaKron is open-source and EdTech has helped establish it at BU, where it is hosted through CAS IT.

Promoting Collaboration

One effective approach to innovation is to stand on the shoulders of giants, which is why we foster and promote collegial collaboration through our communities, collectives, and funded initiatives. Through these groups, participants meet and connect with colleagues, share ideas, learn from and with each other, and discuss emerging educational technologies designed to improve students' learning experiences and outcomes.

Lightning Talks Exploring Innovations in Teaching and Technology

Offered in partnership with DL&I and CTL, Lightning Talks are a reflection and learning forum where BU faculty and invited guests identify areas of challenge and opportunity and share strategies for creating engaging educational experiences in online and residential learning environments. Continuing into our third year of Lightning Talks, this year we held two: Educating Global Citizens in November 2022 and Writ Large: The Place of Writing in University Learning in April 2023.
LEARN MORE

ChatGPT: What Now? What Next?

Matt Parfitt
Associate Professor
Rhetoric Division
BU College of General Studies

David, (he/him)

Writ Large: The Place of Writing in University Learning

The central place of writing in university learning and intellectual life is not disputed; however, our definition of what constitutes writing continues to evolve, along with our teaching approaches and tools. In a world of multiple Englishes, new writing technologies like ChatGPT, and expectations in the workplace of collaborative writing, what should we as educators know about the place of writing in the university and beyond? In this Lightning Talks event, faculty presenters delivered informative presentations and spirited conversation with colleagues on the evolving place of writing in higher education. **READ MORE**

- Moderator: David Shawn, Master Lecturer in the CAS Writing Program and Associate Director for Writing in the Disciplines
- Dr. Megan Young is an Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Section of Geriatrics at Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine.
- Kyle Gobrogge is a lecturer in the Undergraduate Program in Neuroscience and Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies in the College of Arts & Sciences. He is also Director at the Principles in Neuroscience Laboratory.
- Darren Roblyer is an Associate Professor in the Department of Biomedical Engineering at the College of Engineering.
- Kimberly Shuckra is a Master Lecturer in the CAS Writing Program.
- Matt Parfitt is an Associate Professor in the Rhetoric Division at the BU College of General Studies.
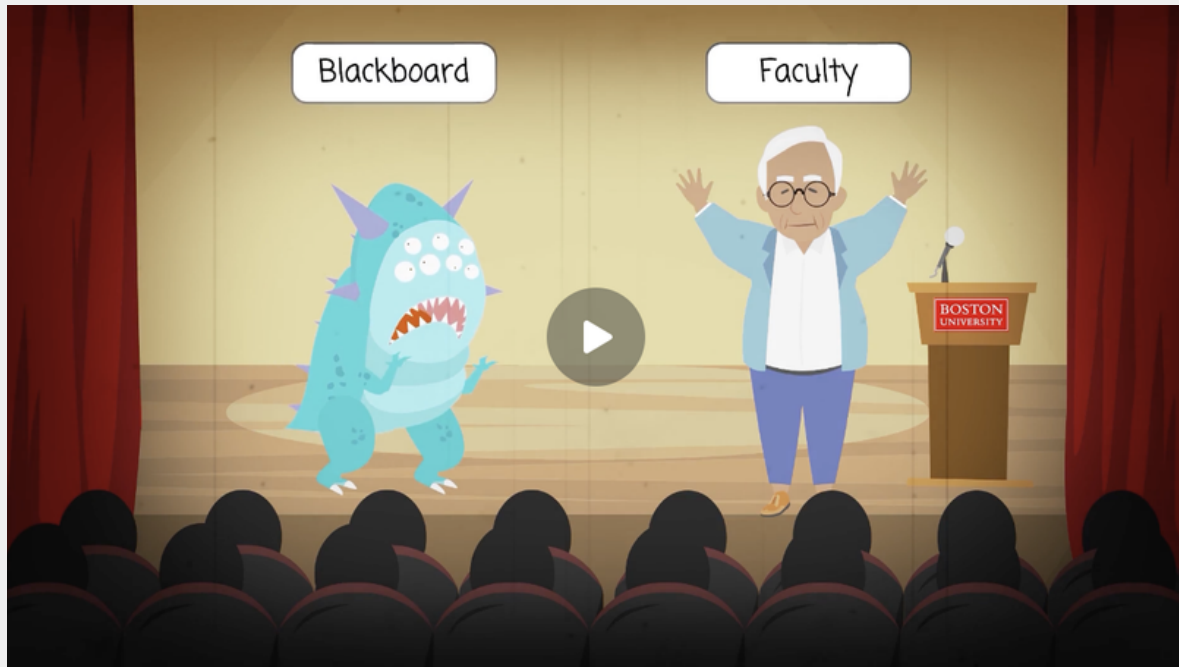
"I invite you to consider how writing functions to help students learn, to communicate, and even to transform themselves."

–David Shawn, Master Lecturer in the CAS Writing Program and Associate Director for Writing in the Disciplines

Communities of Practice

AR/VR/XR Learning Community

A BU faculty and staff community group that explores the purposeful use of virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and extended reality (XR) technologies at BU and beyond. This year, the group engaged in field trips to the Harvard University Visualization Research and Teaching Laboratory to learn about and explore various uses of AR, VR, and XR technologies in the classroom.

Blackboard Buddy Program

This program leverages a "buddy system" approach and pairs instructors with an educational technologist who will support them in maximizing Blackboard features through the duration of their course. This year, the program continued steadily, and was available for faculty to receive close personal support in navigating the powerful but sometimes bewildering array of features that Blackboard offers.

EdTech Collective

This collective creates space for BU staff supporting educational technologies and tools to discuss ways in which technology tools can benefit students' learning and learn about emerging technologies discussed by guest presenters. This year, the Collective discussed and examined several BU educational technology tools, including Blackboard Ally, Pronto, and Explorance Blue.

Teaching with Technology Faculty Community

This community creates a network for BU faculty to share ideas, learn new approaches to teaching with digital technologies, and discuss ways in which technology tools can benefit students' learning. This year, the group discussed active learning strategies; homework, problem sets, and other low-stakes assignments; StoryMapJS for experiential learning; and alternative approaches to grading.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Learning Community

This is a new learning community, led by CTL and Luis Perez, a consultant for CAST, that will run Spring 2023 - Fall 2023. This community brings together instructors to learn about UDL, a teaching framework that identifies barriers in the learning environment rather than "deficiencies" in the student. In Spring, participants met three times and gained a foundation in UDL principles.

Our Partnerships

This year, we worked with 13 BU Schools & Colleges and 14 BU offices on collaborative projects and initiatives to create vibrant academic experiences and support BU's efforts to cultivate belonging and community.

Schools & Colleges

School of Medicine

College of Communication

College of Fine Arts

Computing & Data Sciences

Metropolitan College

Sargent College of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences

School of Social Work

College of Arts & Sciences

College of Engineering

College of General Studies

School of Dental Medicine

Questrom School of Business

School of Law

Wheelock College of Education

OUR PARTNERSHIPS

BU Hub

BU Police

BU Spark!

BU Virtual

BU Offices

Human Resources

Global Programs

Inclusive Pedagogy Initiative

IS&T

Office of the Dean of Students

Office of the Provost

Newbury Center

Residence Life

Sponsored Programs

Undergraduate Affairs

Our Impact

This year, we continued to make progress towards our goal of improving the residential educational experience, appeared in the media 6 times, and supported the scholarship on teaching and learning in 9 publications.

DL&I Through Numbers

5 FACULTY & INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

BU Offices
18 including: Undergraduate Affairs, Global Programs, Diversity & Inclusion, Alumni Relations

Schools/Colleges
17

Consultations
806

Help Tickets
807

Media Projects
90

1 ACADEMIC INNOVATION

30
Projects Managed Across 7 Schools/Colleges: BUSM, CAS, CFA, SAR, SSW, STH, CDS

$205,882
Seed Funding Provided

2 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

17
Schools/Colleges

5
Learning Communities

47
Participants

118
Trainings

476
Participants

3
Events

296
Participants

4 EXTERNAL VISIBILITY

Research
9
conference presentations and publications

Media Mentions
6
local and national publications

Web Visits
98,880
unique website visitors

Impressions
132,713
on X and LinkedIn platforms

3 TECHNOLOGY GOVERNANCE

BU Task Force to adopt
explorance.

BU Task Force to adopt
Blackboard ALLY

BU Educational Technologies Governance Committee

DL&I in the Media

Photo by: *BU Today*

Digital Learning Offices Help Faculty Thrive in Hybrid Environments

Stone, A. (2022, August). EdTech Magazine.

BUSSW Field Ed Team Adopts AI-Assisted Telehealth Training in Pilot Project

Boston University School of Social Work (2022, August).

My internship at BU's Office of Digital Learning & Innovation

Malcolm, A. (2022, September). Boston University College of Fine Arts.

How Higher Ed Can Contend with Learning Platforms

Dellarocas, C., & Hagiu, A. (2022, December). Harvard Business Review.

BU Department Unanimously Adopts New AI Policy

Ellin, M. (2023, April). Boston.com

Office Artifacts: Romy Ruukel

Griffin, A. (2023, June). BU Today.

DL&I-Supported Collaborations

Research Publications & Presentations

- The Boston University Interprofessional Leadership in Healthcare Certificate Using an Alumni Mentoring Approach. Karen Jacobs, Craig Slater, and Bronwyn Keefe presented a workshop on their Interprofessional Leadership in Healthcare Certificate Using an Alumni Mentoring Approach pilot project at the World Federation of Occupational Therapists Congress in Paris, France in August 2022.

- Interprofessional leadership in healthcare certificate using an alumni mentoring approach. Craig, Slater, Karen Jacobs, and Bronwyn Keefe presented their Interprofessional Leadership in Healthcare Certificate Using an Alumni Mentoring Approach pilot project at the Nexus Summit 2022 conference in Minneapolis, MN in September 2022.

- Interprofessional leadership In healthcare certificate: Pilot Study. Karen Jacobs, Craig Slater, and Bronwyn Keefe presented their Interprofessional Leadership in Healthcare Certificate Using an Alumni Mentoring Approach pilot project at the Massachusetts Association for Occupational Therapy annual conference in Norwood, MA in October 2022.

- Development and Evaluation of the Interprofessional leadership in healthcare certificate. Karen Jacobs, Craig Slater, and Bronwyn Keefe presented their Interprofessional Leadership in Healthcare Certificate Using an Alumni Mentoring Approach pilot project at the 66th Human Factors & Ergonomics Society International annual meeting in Atlanta, GA in October 2022.

- Virtual Reality Simulated Learning Environments: A Strategy To Teach Interprofessional Students About Social Determinants Of Health. De La Vega, B., et al. published research on their project, Using VR to Address Social Determinants of Health, in Academic Medicine in December 2022.

- Driving Engagement in Language Learning. Alison Carberry Gottlieb and Sue Griffin virtually presented their Yellowdig pilot project at the 2023 Yellowdig Learner Engagement Summit in January 2023.

- Leading Technology-Enabled Innovation: Fostering Community with Cutting-Edge Language Instruction. Alison Carberry Gottlieb, Sue Griffin, and Diana Marian presented their Yellowdig pilot project at the NERCOMP Annual Conference in Providence, RI in March 2023.

- Opening Night: Implementing Emerging Technologies with Emerging Artists. Clay Hopper and Diane Carroll presented their RANDOM ACTOR pilot project at the NERCOMP Annual Conference in Providence, RI in March 2023.

- Learning Platforms: Navigating the Coming Revolution. Associate Provost Chris Dellarocas presented at the Digital Universities_US conference in Chicago, IL in May 2023.

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