Calling All Instructors: August Teaching Workshops Offered 'Just in Time'

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There are less than three weeks to go before the first day of classes on Aug. 21, which means there are less than three weeks left for instructors to prepare for the fall semester.

To help with last-minute preparations, the UA's Office of Instruction and Assessment is offering a series of 11 Just in Time workshops to address common questions that come up from faculty, instructors and graduate teaching assistants at the start of the school year.

The hands-on, two-hour workshops, which are being offered on Aug. 10, 11, 14 and 17, cover a variety of topics, from how to build a useful, interactive syllabus to how to make courses more inclusive.

Those interested in participating can view a schedule and register online.

"These are topics that tend to be of high interest ? or maybe high anxiety ? before the school year starts," said Ingrid Novodvorsky, director of teaching, learning and assessment in the Office of Instruction and Assessment, and coordinator of the workshop series.

"The goal is for instructors, as well as graduate teaching assistants, to get the year off to a good start," Novodvorsky said. "We try to structure the workshops around topics that are particularly relevant or urgent at the start of the semester."

The workshops, facilitated by Office of Instruction and Assessment staff, are especially useful for first-time instructors, Novodvorsky said. Many of the sessions focus on common questions about Desire2Learn, or D2L, the UA’s online course management system.

This is the third year the Office of Instruction and Assessment has offered the Just in Time series. Between 150 and 200 people participated last year.

This year’s workshop offerings are:

- **How Can I Be Sure That Students Get Feedback in D2L?**
  Learn how to use D2L features to give effective feedback to students on quizzes, assignments and discussions using a variety of audio, video, text and ratings tools.

- **How Can I Build a Useful Syllabus in D2L?**
  Learn about best practices for creating an effective, interactive online syllabus in D2L.

- **How Can I Manage Content to Help Students Stay Organized?**
  Learn how to use features in D2L to help students stay organized throughout a course.

- **How Can I Use Clickers Effectively?**
  Learn how to effectively use clickers for teaching and assessing student learning. Clickers can be used as classroom polling tools, as well as attendance takers, and can
help with engagement in the classroom.

- **How Can I Use the D2L Gradebook Effectively?**
  Learn how to use the D2L Gradebook more effectively and efficiently.

- **How Can I Use D2L Page Templates?**
  Learn how to use new D2L style templates to create an accessible, responsive, aesthetically pleasing and easy-to-navigate course website.

- **How Can I Use D2L to Get My Class Off to a Good Start?**
  Learn how to set up your D2L course site to clearly communicate course goals and expectations and get students involved.

- **How Can I Use D2L to Make My Course More Inclusive?**
  Learn how to establish an accessible, inclusive and effective learning environment in D2L. Participants will learn how to use principles of universal design to create and sustain an inclusive climate.

- **How Can I Use Panopto Effectively?**
  Learn how to use the Panopto tool in D2L to capture video and audio of lectures and to livestream events.

- **How Do I Know What My Students Are Learning?**
  Learn how to create effective classroom assessments to measure learning outcomes.

- **What do TAs Need to Know About D2L?**
  Learn about the most important features of D2L for graduate teaching assistants.

Full workshop descriptions are available on the Office of Instruction and Assessment website. All sessions, with the exception of “How Do I Know What My Students Are Learning?” will be offered in rooms with computers, so participants can work hands-on with their own course sites.

“We're not only teaching instructors to use these tools, but to use them in a pedagogically appropriate way,” Novodvorsky said.

The "Just in Time" series supports the Office of Instruction and Assessment's greater goal of offering professional development opportunities for instructors who teach online, face-to-face or hybrid classes.

Throughout the school year, the office offers workshops, minicourses, self-paced tutorials, consultations and "miniprimer" introductions to a variety of teaching topics. The office also offers a 10-unit Certificate in College Teaching program focused on effective teaching in higher education. More than 120 people have completed the graduate certificate program since it was launched in 2011.

In addition, the Office of Instruction and Assessment consults with instructors who teach in the UA's collaborative learning spaces - traditional lecture-style classrooms that have been reconfigured in ways that promote student collaboration.

**Lisa Elfring**, director of the Office of Instruction and Assessment, said the Just in Time workshops, along with the office’s other offerings, provide not only an opportunity to enhance teaching skills but also to make connections on campus.

"We have a tremendous set of facilitators who are incredibly knowledgeable and creative," she said, "and participating is a great way for instructors to build relationships with others in the UA teaching community."