

# DISTANCE LEARNING DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

*"Technology does not teach students; effective teachers do"*  
Open source discussion to improve Distance Learning instruction



## From the Editor



*"Yeah, but I have to get mentored"* my cousin muttered.

Craig had just accepted his first public education position and I was offering the deserved congratulations.

*"Your mentor will prove to be helpful; by the end of the year you'll be grateful"* I explained.

*"But I student taught, what more could they tell me?"*

Oh the naivety of a freshly minted educator...

Mentorship is an underrated and under-utilized practice in education. This newsletter is the result of a wise suggestion by my mentor.

With this newsletter, I pass on the tutelage. The Distance Learning Development Newsletter is your mentor and as the year begins, I hope you find its contents helpful.

I will not mislead you and inject into our conversation the age-old education adage that "you don't have to reinvent the wheel." The DL wheel is being developed and you will be expected to contribute. Part of the honor of teaching on TV is helping to innovate ITV best practices.

continued on page 2



Facilitator

share



Special



## In This Issue:

**From the editor: Distance Learning Mentorship**

**Emotion and Learning : High Jacking The Brains Innate Memory-Emotion System To Make Your TV Instruction More Effective**

**Appropriate facilitator involvement during a lesson**

**From Last Issue: Tell us how you utilize the student camera**

**For the next issue: Tell the DLDN how your ITV methodology has changed since last year!**

**A Taste Of Blended Learning**

**DL Instructor Profile: Dr. Herodes**

**Help others in the DL community by responding to their questions.**

**Do you have a question that needs addressing? Ask it here!**

**Send all questions and contributions to the [dldn.pd@gmail.com](mailto:dldn.pd@gmail.com)**

*Capital Region Distance Learning:*  
157 courses  
52 schools  
13 counties

*Contribute to the Distance Learning Development Newsletter and receive Recognition. See the last page of this issue for details.*

However, you need not start with a blank slate. While the DL wheel is not invented, the spokes, axel, and rim are well established.

Current DL teachers have discovered a lot. Most encouraging, they are bubbling with genuine enthusiasm to share what they have learned. Their means of communicating their priceless knowledge is this newsletter.

Through this publication you will learn what others know about teaching on TV. It will do everything a mentor should: give advice, provide emotional support, whisper encouraging words when you fall down, and connect you to the network of professionals necessary to succeed.

If you're like me, you find value in conversing with another DL teacher **in person**. If so, contact the DLDN and we can facilitate that connection. Meeting and talking with an experienced ITV instructor is invaluable and the DL teaching network is overflowing with instructors willing to lend a helping hand.

This newsletter is the continuous invitation to ask for help. Develop a relationship with your DL colleagues so we can support one another.

As John D. Rockefeller said: *"Never forget that we are all partners; whatever is done is for the general good of us all."*

As we work through the year, we do it together.

My rookie year teaching, the first day of school and minutes before the students arrived, my mentor offered timeless advice.

She said: *"Smile. The students learn from teachers they like."*

So I leave you with this:

*"Smile. You're on camera."*

Have a great year and thanks for reading.

Chris





As ITV teachers, how do we incorporate emotion into our DL lesson to facilitate learning?

Here are five immediately actionable ways to do just that.

### **1) Start your lesson using a relevant resource that induces positive emotions**

Barbara Fredrickson developed the Broaden and Build Theory in 1998. The Broaden and Build Theory, among other things, states that induced positive emotions increase cognitive flexibility and increase attention- both things we desire in our DL students. You've already read about movies, so we'll start there. Many studies use a quick movie to induce positive feelings. Fredrickson and Braginan (2005) used movies of penguins to induce positive emotion and collected data that supports the Broaden and Build Theory. A quick, relevant video resource doesn't seem like a bad way to start class.

### **2) Facilitate arguments and discussions**

Fortunate for many DL teachers, we teach upper level electives where content is relevant. Relevant content is often controversial and emotional. Learn to embrace argumentative discussions because an inevitable consequence of arguing is emotion. Further, responding to the needs of students by facilitating a discussion decreases transactional distance.

### **3) Choose your words carefully**

*"Good morning, I'm HAPPY to see everyone and EXCITED to begin our time together today. I was SAD to leave our last activity but I'm PUMPED to show you what I have planned for us."* Simply using emotional vocabulary is an easy way to inject an emotional component into your lesson.

Further, don't just say the emotional words, SAY the emotional words. Alter your volume, pace, and emphasis when talking. Act out "sad" by being sad and happy when saying "happy." There are funny little cells in brains called mirror neurons that make the recipient of the stimuli feel the same way as the person they are observing. Therefore, if watching someone happy, you feel happy.

Induce emotion by acting emotional while using emotional language.

### **4) Encourage and embrace cooperative efforts**

Cooperative learning, when implemented correctly, has innate social components. And by definition, social situations are emotional. While interacting with their classmates, they become emotional and the content learned during the activity is retained.

### **5) Pretend that they are a small engine and prime them**

Shawn Achor has an awesome book called *The Happiness Advantage* where he describes affect-induction. Without getting into the nitty-gritty science, an individual's brain works better after the individual pictures something that makes them happy. Affect (feeling) induction (forced) involves you, the instructor, telling your students to close their eyes and picture the last time they were happy. After a few seconds, proceed with your lesson. That's it- give it a try, it works.

Fredrickson, B; Branigan, C. (2005) Positive emotions broaden the scope of attention and thought-action repertoires. *Cognition & Memory*, 19.

Liu, D; Graham, S; Zorawski, M. (2008). Enhanced selective memory consolidation following post-learning pleasant and aversive arousal. *Neurobiology of Learning and Memory*, 89, 36-46.

Nielson, K.A. & Arentsen, T.J. (2012). Memory modulation in the classroom: selective enhancement of college examination performance by arousal induced after lecture. *Neurobiology of Learning and Memory*, 98(1), 12-16.

Nielson, K.A., and Powless, M. (2007). Positive and negative sources of emotional arousal enhance long-term word-list retention when induced as long as thirty minutes after learning. *Neurobiology of Learning and Memory*, 88, 40-47.

Nielson, K.A. & Lorber, W. (2009). Memory modulation by arousal after learning is influenced by arousal predisposition and emotion regulation but not by stimulus valence or arousal. *Neurobiology of Learning and Memory*, 92, 70-79.

Steidl, S; Razik, F; Anderson, A; (2011) Emotion enhanced retention of cognitive skill learning. *Emotion*, 11, 12-19.

# Facilitator

## Appropriate Facilitator Involvement During a Lesson- Feedback From Distance Learning Instructors

*"My facilitators are fantastic-they are truly the reason that my DL course is successful. I depend on my facilitators as passengers depend on an airline pilot. I encourage my facilitators to be as involved as they would like. It is OK with me for my facilitator to sit back and relax during the lesson or it is OK for my facilitator to become involved like a second instructor; and I've had both. They simply need to communicate to me how involved they would like to be so I know what to expect."*

*"I've been very fortunate to have amazing adults in my remote classrooms. My facilitators and I need to be on the same page. I invite them to participate in the lesson, but only if our goal is the same. I note this because once, while presenting both views concerning a controversial subject, my facilitator adamantly expressed how one point of view was incorrect. I lost my students at that point- seeing another adult criticizing the primary instructor was enough to lose their trust for the rest of the course."*

share

## Tell us how you...

Tell us how you: utilize the student camera

"I use the student camera to develop a sense of community. It is important for the students at the host site to be seen by the students at the remote site. When welcoming everyone at the start of class, concluding activities, or simply during transitions, I showcase the host students using the student camera."

"The student camera is to display the awesome work by the students. During student presentations or quick discussions, I'll use the student camera to zoom in on the specific student. At first, they find it funny and uncomfortable, but after a couple seconds they calm down and feel special because they are now a movie star!"

"I ask my facilitators to optimize what is shown by the student camera. I request that they seat all students together and zoom in on them. I ask that they minimize dead classroom space. I like to see my remote students and this set up allows to do that."

For The Next Issue: Tell the DLDN how your ITV methodology has changed since last year!



In the last issue, another DL teacher asked:

*"How does everybody handle sick and personal days when you have to teach on T.V.? I feel that I often drag myself to school when not feeling well just because I'm nervous of what would happen if there was a substitute teaching my DL course. Also, the technology component simply makes me nervous."*

### You Responded:

*"Being absent is no doubt difficult. As substitute plans, I often have student centered activities where the remote and host students interact. They love the flexibility and it brings the whole group closer together. Trust your students- they'll step up when you're not there."*

*"I know that this is not the answer everyone wants to hear, but I RARELY miss school because of my DL classes. I find myself going to class simply because coordinating plans between three sites is overwhelming. Further, most substitute teachers are uncomfortable with the technology. I find it easier and less stressful to simply attend school."*

*"For a planned absence, I use my facilitators. I'm lucky that I have amazing individuals at my remote sites. I communicate directly with them and they, together, work through the lesson. I also choose one trust worthy student and show them how to use the technology (what buttons to push) in the case that the substitute is unfamiliar with the technology."*

Readers sent these questions to be addressed by the DL community:

*"I get nervous/excited feeling before teaching on T.V. Any ideas on how to get over this? I guess it is like stage fright☺"*

*"How does everyone handle time during a block when your lesson is faster than you planned? How do others deal with unexpected "free" time? It is much more difficult to take advantage of this time because necessary materials need to be distributed to remote sites."*







# DL Instructor Profile: Dr. Herodes

## Recognizing the longest running DL course

For twenty (20) years, metaphors, imagery, alliteration, assonance, iambic pentameter, blank verse, free verse, song writing, similes, personification and young men and women, who love to write, have all been at the center of Distance Learning's longest running course. Poetry, a course instructed by Dr. Deborah Herodes, from Middleburgh Central School, has been a mainstay, "on the system." When asked 20 years ago by her high school principal, if she wanted to represent Middleburgh High School, as a DL instructor, she agreed, as long as she was allowed to teach poetry- and there she has stayed for 20 years! Loving the subject area or the art helps one create a class that is vibrant, diverse, intense and thought-provoking. Dr. Herodes, a published poet herself with two books of poetry on the market, insisted on being the textbook for the DL class. She has since put together her own chapbook, which features her approach to finding one's own voice and expressing it through the vehicle of poetry. At first, the class was mostly inhabited by females, who wanted to express their adolescent emotions on paper. However, over time, boys became more prevalent and diversity on all sides began to emerge. Dr. Herodes has also taught theater, philosophy, classical literature, and a myriad of other classes on DL, but poetry is her true love.



***"Teaching children from other districts is really no different than teaching kids from you own district. You grow to love them, despite the physical distance, because the technology allows you a close up and personal view of them, with clear, loud voices accompanying what I like to call the talking heads. Through the use of the electronic blackboard, know to many instructors as the ELMO, and the amazing sound system, it is very possible for both the visiting school students and the host school students to receive a rich education."***

Lifetime friendships have been made between teacher and aides from all over DL land. Students have stayed in touch for years, as Dr. Herodes has involved them in Pen In Hand and Teen Ink literary adventures for years. Conferences for the creative have brought students from different schools together for a week-end of camaraderie. At last count, Dr. Herodes has sent 50+ students to Pen in Hand (a juried conference) and 30+ students have been recognized by Teen Ink (a national writing magazine) as talented, up and coming writers. Also, field trips to poetry slams and poetry havens, and three inspirational meetings with famed poet, Maya Angelou, opened up a new world of "thinking for a living" for Dr. Herodes's students.

### Words of Wisdom from Poetry instructor Dr. Herodes

#### **DLDN: Can you highlight the most important aspect of Distance Learning?**

Dr Herodes: *"Teaching DL has allowed me to meet with children all over the state of New York, and as much as they may have gained from me as an instructor of this amazing art form, I have also been blessed with minds of students, who are often quiet in a traditional classroom; DL poetry has given them a forum, where they feel comfortable sharing. Distance Learning excites them because they are surrounded with people who love to think and love to write and most especially are instructed by a fellow writer, who is a little bit zany and a little bit brainy, every day of the week."*

#### **DLDN: How has the change in technology impacted your DL instruction?**

Dr. Herodes: *"Through the years, the dedicated folks who keep improving Distance Learning have kept up with state of the art technology and have made it a virtual reality for me to teach three classrooms at a time from as far away as 300 miles and as close by as our sister school district. Allowing students to meet and greet others who they do not see on a year to year basis, but share 45 intense minutes a day with, on a television screen, has allowed a certain freedom of idea sharing. There doesn't seem to be the tension of sharing your innermost yearnings or desires across a television screen."*



# Give this a Try!



**Embrace Blended Learning:** *“I like to assign ‘notes’ for homework. The students have access to my ppt slides on our website and work through a guided notepacket outside of school. When I do have them in class, I can focus on stressing important points and attempt to connect the content to real-life experiences by using narratives. I find that upper-classman embrace the outside of school ‘notes.’ ”*

Blended learning has many definitions and is a great way to extend your classroom outside of the school day. Consider blended learning a way to accomplish more in the same amount of time. Certain lesson components can be completed by the students outside of school (like guided notes referenced above). That leaves more time when connected synchronously to focus on other lesson components. Utilize your website (such as Blackboard or Schoology) and post the ‘out of school’ expectations and assignments. The students are free to complete it when they please. Try assigning movies to watch or guided notes to complete to begin your blended learning experience!

# Contribute to the Distance Learning Development Newsletter and Be Recognized

**TEACHING DL IS DIFFICULT AND YOU DESERVE RECOGNITION. CONTRIBUTE TO THE DLDN AND BE RECOGNIZED.**

**THE DLDN IS A LEARNING COMMUNITY WHERE DL TEACHERS SHARE BEST PRACTICES.**

**SUBMISSIONS ARE NOT LIMITED TO LISTED TOPICS. FEEL FREE TO SUBMIT USEFUL LINKS, VIDEOS, OR A PICTURE OF YOUR DL CLASS!**

*Though everything submitted will be read and considered, the editor has final discretion.*

## Quick Opportunities to contribute to DLDN:

Some features of the DLDN are interactive and require reader participation while other features ask for quick thoughts and experiences. Many of the topics are time sensitive; please adhere to the submission deadline shown below.

share

Share your views, thoughts, or experiences regarding each monthly topic!



Ask a question or respond to another reader's question!



Respond to the poll with a 1-2 sentence description! Poll results are published the next month.



Administrator

Do you have anything you wish that your administration knew or understood about DL?



Share something with the DL community that you are proud of! Encourage others to try something new!

Facilitator

The remote facilitator is one of the important pieces to the DL puzzle. Share your facilitator best practices!



There are a variety of unique topics that warrant discussion. Find one that you are passionate about, research your idea, and share it!

Special

Anything and everything that does not fall into a specified category- any length discussing any content. Have fun and be creative!

## Opportunities that require research and DLDN correspondence:

Feature Articles are research based and serve as literature based best practices. Submitting an article of this nature requires time, research, and DLDN correspondence. Topics are variable and the DLDN is willing to include anything you feel is important. Start by proposing a Feature Article topic to DLDN!



Special

*Please send all material to*  
[dlmn.pd@gmail.com](mailto:dlmn.pd@gmail.com)

