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## GREETINGS FROM ODL



Welcome back! The fall semester is around the corner and we're excited to see campus buzzing in anticipation of new beginnings. This past academic year has been unlike any other, filled with challenges that were overcome through the expertise, creative thinking, and perseverance of our FSU faculty, students, and staff. As we all move forward, ODL is eager to work with our campus partners in support of offering innovative instruction for FSU's online, flex, and traditional courses. In this issue of *Distance Up Close*, we'll look at ways to implement ODL's strategic goals of quality, affordability, and accessibility.

FSU focuses on fostering quality in online programs and courses, and you'll read below about how a quality design course in Canvas can help you fulfill this goal. The course provides access to our series of quality-centered webinars, where you can attend a session via Zoom or view the recordings at your convenience. We've also updated the quality template in Canvas Commons, which helps guide you toward achieving standards of the Quality Matters rubric, our guidepost for quality courses.

Rising textbook costs can prevent some students from purchasing the materials needed to perform well in a course. To help students alleviate this financial burden, FSU Libraries have launched a new eTextbook program that identifies available eBook titles that students can access through the Libraries' existing licenses. The Libraries also offer alternative textbook grants to help instructors replace commercial texts with open educational resources. These grants are offered on a rolling basis throughout the year, so check out the article below for more details.

FSU is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment by ensuring that course materials are accessible to all students, regardless of ability. ODL and the Office of Accessibility Services have been awarded funding to evaluate a suite of accessibility tools. Our goal is to secure better tools that can help faculty create and update materials that comply with accessibility standards.

We look forward to supporting you this fall, so please let us know how we can help. Visit our website at [odl.fsu.edu](http://odl.fsu.edu) or find us on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).

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## IN THE NEWS

### Courses Offer Quality Training, Canvas Help

Whether you're designing an online course or seeking the basics on getting started in Canvas, the Office of Distance Learning has resources for you.

#### Quality Course Design



To ensure instructors have access to training and resources to enhance their online courses, we've developed the FSU Online Quality Design Course in Canvas.

In this course, you'll get access to live and recorded training webinars facilitated by the ODL instructional development faculty. These course design sessions will lead you through the process of developing and delivering a quality online course. To refresh your knowledge of tools and technologies, participate in our skill-building training sessions. The course also provides a variety of resources, including the Quality Matters rubric, a student engagement PowerPoint presentation, and DIY video best practices.

To access this course, click the [self-enroll link](#). If you have any questions, please contact John Braswell at [jbraswell@campus.fsu.edu](mailto:jbraswell@campus.fsu.edu).

## Canvas Basics



The Canvas Instructor/Staff Orientation course is our basic training for new Canvas users. The self-paced course describes how to get started in Canvas, including profile setup, navigation, and notification preferences. You'll learn how to add content to your course, such as files, announcements, assignments, and discussion boards. You'll also find helpful resources and ways to reach out for Canvas support.

To learn more about Canvas basics, you can access the course by clicking the [self-enroll link](#). For Canvas resources, check out our [knowledge base](#). For questions about using Canvas, call [850-644-8004](tel:850-644-8004), email [canvas@fsu.edu](mailto:canvas@fsu.edu), or [submit a ticket](#) to ODL Technical Support.

## ODL Course Shell Updated in Commons



The ODL Master Shell in Canvas Commons has recently received a refresh. Now titled **ODL Quality Course Shell**, it is intended to help instructors get started building quality online courses, in particular courses that align with the standards of the Quality Matters (QM) rubric. The research-backed rubric is used by the university to gauge quality in online courses.

The shell includes several templates that will help your course achieve quality. The start here page, syllabus, and module overview page include sections that will help you incorporate standards of the QM rubric into your course. You'll find instructions on importing the shell into your course in our [support article](#).

## Check out Libraries' eTextbook Program

By [Lindsey Wharton](#), FSU Extended Campus & Distance Services Librarian

FSU Libraries' [new eTextbook program](#) identifies currently available eBook titles assigned as required course materials. Instructors and students are able to [search by course code, instructor, or book title](#) to see if required course materials are available online through the Libraries. Since its implementation, this project has identified 848 total titles in Spring 2021 and 343 titles in Summer 2021 available through the Libraries' existing licenses. In these two semesters, the total potential student savings is \$1,941,369.

**COVID-19 UPDATE**  
For more information about services and operations [visit our COVID-19 News page.](#)

 **Curbside and In-Library  
Pick Up Now Available**

SEARCH & FIND SERVICES & RESEARCH ABOUT THE LIBRARIES MATERIALS & BORROWING HELP & SUPPORT

Home >> eTextbooks for Students

## eTextbooks for Students

In order to support student success and equitable access to information, FSU Libraries identifies titles currently available as eBooks and assigned as textbooks and course materials. Simply search by book title, instructor's last name, or course code to see if your text is among those purchased by the Libraries. If you encounter any problems, please fill out our [eTextbook Access Form](#)

### Instructors

Need more information about eTextbooks for Your Course? Learn more about how to adopt and access at [eTextbook Information](#).

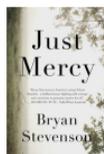
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This eTextbook program aligns with the Libraries' and university's goals of reducing barriers to information and student success. Here is a message of support from a student whose textbook was identified as currently licensed by the Libraries:

*It's well known that textbooks can be an onerous additional cost for those pursuing any degree, so it was a welcome and extremely helpful surprise when my professor announced that the library had added an electronic version of the course textbook. This happened two semesters in a row, and the savings across those semesters was close to \$200 just for two classes. The ease of access is also a huge benefit that I was very grateful for.*

Library-licensed material is a central aspect of any open and affordable initiative in that it solves one common criticism of Open Educational Resources (OER): the limited amount of material for higher-level coursework. FSU Libraries eResources expand the amount of materials available for higher-level coursework and complements other OER materials. Furthermore, this program provides a crucial opportunity to support student success by ensuring equitable access to teaching and learning materials. We look forward to growing our eTextbook program as part of our larger affordability initiative to reduce barriers to information access and reduce the cost of higher education. If you are interested in adopting a library-licensed or open eBook to replace your traditional textbook, please reach out to [Lindsey Wharton](#) or [learn more at our eTextbook Information for Instructors](#).

## ODL Awarded Technology Funding

The Office of Distance Learning (ODL) has been awarded funding from the FSU Student Technology Fee Advisory Committee for accessibility software evaluation, video technologies, and an extension of our current PlayPosit pilot.

The annual Student Technology Fee proposals give departments a chance to obtain funding for instructional technology projects. For the 2020–2021 award cycle, the committee awarded \$1.365 million to proposals for instructional technology-enhancing projects.

## Accessibility Software Evaluation



The Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) and ODL have been working to find the best ways to empower university faculty and staff to remediate their course materials, making the material accessible and compliant with university policy and federal and state law. Jointly, the OAS and ODL have been granted funding to create a pilot program evaluating [CommonLook PDF](#), [CommonLook Office](#), and [Abby FineReader](#) as a suite of remediation tools.

After the year-long pilot, the tools will be reviewed and the results documented. If the tools support course material remediation, they will be recommended to university colleges and departments. Using better tools, faculty and staff can save time updating existing course materials and learn how to create new materials that comply with accessibility standards. For questions about the pilot, please contact [Dr. John L. Crow](#).

## Video Technologies

The ODL media production team has been awarded funding to acquire video technologies, including 4K cameras, a 4K document camera, and an Action/360 camera.



Videos are an important component of the online learning environment. Incorporating videos in online courses provides an engaging and effective learning experience and can improve student learning and retention.

By using the new camera technologies, the media team can help instructors create interactive videos to fully engage students. The technologies will also help with on-location shooting, and the document camera will be beneficial for STEM classes and labs.

## PlayPosit Pilot Extension

ODL was awarded funding that will allow for a yearlong extension of our pilot for the interactive video tool PlayPosit. PlayPosit focuses on creating an engaging video experience for students. You can personalize learning pathways, embed simulations, and build threaded discussion boards into your



instructional videos. You can also use PlayPosit to provide dynamic video content in both an asynchronous, self-paced course or in a synchronous course meeting. Recent features include Activity Feed for easy learner tracking, Free Response Feedback for custom feedback

directly attached to the learner's response, and My Interactions for easy access to previously built bulbs (i.e., interactive videos). The extended pilot will provide professional development, certification, and credentialing features. For simple steps on using the PlayPosit platform, you can view this [short video](#).

### How to Participate

The initial pilot of PlayPosit generated positive feedback from instructors, and we look forward to working with you during the extended pilot. If you or your colleagues are interested in participating or have questions about PlayPosit training, please contact Liying Miao at [lmiao@campus.fsu.edu](mailto:lmiao@campus.fsu.edu). ODL technical support specialists and PlayPosit account managers will provide technical assistance.

# Alternative Textbook Grants Available

By [Camille Thomas](#), FSU Scholarly Communication Librarian, and [Lindsey Wharton](#), FSU Extended Campus & Distance Services Librarian

Textbook affordability initiatives aim to reduce or eliminate the cost of required textbooks and course materials for students. These initiatives not only save students money but also support student success. [Research has shown](#) that students provided with free course materials at the beginning of a class perform better academically than those who do not receive such materials.

FSU Libraries offer Alternative Textbook Grants (ten \$1,000 grants available) to support FSU instructors in replacing commercial textbooks with little-to-no-cost materials with flexible copyright licenses.

Thanks to a partnership with International Programs, an additional 10 grants of \$1,000 will be available



for faculty who teach at FSU's international study centers. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the academic year. You can read more or apply for a grant at [Alternative Textbook Grants](#).

Since the launch of the Alternative Textbook Program in 2017, the Libraries have awarded \$34,000 in grants to FSU instructors. Forty-one courses awarded the grant saved students approximately \$367,488 (a return on investment of almost 14:1) on course materials between 2016-2021. This is most likely an underestimate as this total assumes

each course only adopts Open Educational Resources (OER) materials for one class section even in the cases where instructors receiving the grant reported several. Additionally, grants for courses taught at our international study centers have saved students studying abroad up to \$44,956. This program has demonstrated significant impact in terms of savings to students and has served as an important vehicle for increasing faculty awareness of textbook affordability issues. Additionally, the program directly supports teaching and learning through:

**Positively impacting student success and engaged learning.** Twenty out of 28 instructors from [studies between 2015 and 2018](#) reported that learning outcomes improved with open textbooks. FSU Alternative Textbook Grant recipient Dr. Vanessa Dennen, Professor of Instructional Systems & Learning Technologies, recently [published results](#) from her customized OER project in which students offered positive feedback because the OER were customized to meet their needs and received accurate, relevant, and focused learning materials.

**Ensuring an affordable FSU education for all students regardless of socioeconomic status.** A groundbreaking study from the [University of Georgia](#) found that drop, fail, and withdrawal rates (DFW) decreased significantly for low income (Federal Pell Grant recipients) and part-time students when OER were used in courses. There was a 53.12% increase in average course grade and a 29.54% decrease in DFW rates for students who were not enrolled full-time. The average final grades of self-identified non-white students in the study were higher with OER and their DFW rates were lower.

**Allowing instructors to incorporate perspectives that prepare students to live and work in a diverse and global society.** OER support a diverse community of learners, including those with accessibility needs and multicultural perspectives and active student participation with materials. Sixty-four percent

of faculty members in [studies between 2015 and 2018](#) reported that using OER facilitated meeting diverse learners' needs and sixty-eight percent perceived greater student satisfaction with the learning experience when using OER.

If you are interested in applying for a grant, please visit [FSU Libraries Alternative Textbook Grants](#) or contact [Camille Thomas](#) with any questions.

## Testing & Scanning Services Update

The FSU Testing Center will support specialty exams, certification exams, and form scanning for Fall 2021.

### Proctored Testing Services

The Testing Center currently accommodates self-funded exams like the [College-Level Examination Program \(CLEP\)](#), [Test of Essential Academic Skills \(TEAS\)](#), [Modern Language Placement \(MLP\)](#), and Certiport certification exams. Certiport partners with software providers like Microsoft and Adobe to streamline the administration of their certification exams to students, staff, and instructors. This fall, we'll be offering exams for these certifications:

- [Microsoft Office Specialist](#) – This certification demonstrates mastery of Microsoft Office products and is ideal for office and IT professionals.
- [Adobe Certified Professional](#) – This certification demonstrates mastery of Adobe Creative Cloud software and essential knowledge for digital media careers.
- [Information Technology Specialist](#) – This certification targets IT candidates and includes topics like software development, networking and security, and coding.

**Certiport Fee Waivers!** Exam fees are waived for FSU faculty and salaried staff who take a Certiport exam in the Testing Center. Email us at [testing@fsu.edu](mailto:testing@fsu.edu) or call [850 644-3017](tel:8506443017) for more information. To learn more about Testing Center services, visit the [Proctored Testing](#) webpage.

### Scanning Services

The Testing Center continues to provide [optical mark-sense scanning services](#) to convert paper-based, multiple-choice exams and surveys into reliable, usable data. FSU instructors teaching courses or conducting non-funded research can order forms and request scanning services free of charge. Funded FSU projects and external clients pay a fee for forms and labor. See our [price list](#) for current rate information.



Instructors (or their designated runners) can drop scan jobs at the dropbox located inside the FSU Testing Center Monday-Friday, 8am-4pm. Scan jobs will likely take 3-5 business days to process. Instructors can use our online tracking system to view the final results and securely download exam data from any computer. You can adjust your test keys and reprocess exam reports in the system without having to rescan the exam. While you're welcome to pick up your scanned forms, you're not required to do so. We'll store the forms for one year before shredding.

For information on the test analyses and reports we offer, please see our [Form Scanning](#) page, and contact us at [850 644-3017](tel:8506443017) or [odl-at@campus.fsu.edu](mailto:odl-at@campus.fsu.edu) with any questions.



## On Location

Need help with on-location media? The ODL media production team can meet you on location to shoot video for your online course. In this shot at Food Glorious Food, owners Kevin Stout and Susan Turner (left to right) chat with Dr. Kim Harris of the FSU Dedman College of Hospitality for her course, HFT3806: Introduction to Food and Beverage Management. For information on coordinating video shoots, contact Media Production Administrator D.D. Garbarino at [dgarbarino@fsu.edu](mailto:dgarbarino@fsu.edu).

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## CANVAS FYI



## Training Sessions Continue on Zoom

The Office of Distance Learning continues to offer online workshops via Zoom for the fall semester. The sessions can help you enhance your course by adding elements of quality design. You can access training on any of our quality-related sessions:

- **Quality Online Teaching: The Big Picture.** Identify the general standards of the Quality Matters rubric.
- **Organize Your Course for Student Success.** Organize your course using module-level objectives that are aligned with class materials, activities, and assessments.
- **Make Learning Inclusive with Universal design.** Learn about the principles of universal design and how to make your course materials accessible.

- **Engage Learners with Online Activities.** Become familiar with strategies like content engagement, instructional videos, group work, and best practices for discussions.
- **Make the Most of Assignments, Rubrics, and Gradebook.** Learn how to set up different types of assignments, including Turnitin, media, and peer review.
- **Stay Present with Canvas Communication Tools.** Use tools like Canvas announcements, discussions, intro videos, and emails to communicate with your students.
- **Teaching Online: Approaches to Pedagogy and Course Design.** Develop activities, assignments, and assessments for the online environment.

In addition to our quality series, we provide skill-building webinars that highlight tools such as Ally, Kaltura, and Zoom as well as remote proctoring and online library services.

## Registration Coming Soon

We'll have the Fall 2021 webinar schedule posted on our [Training & Workshops](#) page in mid-August, so check back then to sign up. If you would like immediate assistance, you can register for a [one-on-one consultation](#) via Zoom. Interested in setting up departmental training? Contact John Braswell at [jbraswell@campus.fsu.edu](mailto:jbraswell@campus.fsu.edu).

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## TOOLS & TECHNOLOGY

### Ensure Syllabus Contains Updated Policies

As a reminder for the fall term, instructors should [make sure their Design Tools syllabus contains up-to-date university policies](#). In particular, if your course includes proctored exams using Honorlock, you'll need to update the Proctored Exams policy block in your syllabus. Because this block will not update automatically, you must manually delete and reinsert it to retrieve the updated proctoring policy.

To determine if your syllabus contains outdated proctoring information, review the block titled *Proctored Exams*. If *FSU Testing Center* is mentioned in this section, you have the old block, which will need updating. For information on updating the proctored exams policy for your current or upcoming course, please see our [support article](#). For questions, reach out to our technical support team at [850-644-8004](tel:850-644-8004) or [canvas@fsu.edu](mailto:canvas@fsu.edu).

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## ODDS & ENDS

### Finance and Travel Forms

FSU departments using their distance learning designated accounts for budget expenditure requests and travel authorization should use the following forms:

- [Expenditure request form](#)
- [Travel authorization form](#)

If you have questions about these forms or any fiscal-related matters, contact Assistant Director of Finance Dr. Laurita Jones at [lmjones@campus.fsu.edu](mailto:lmjones@campus.fsu.edu).

## Conferences and Events

- [OLC Accelerate 2021](#), September 20-24, 2021. Register now for the virtual version of this annual conference on online, blended, and digital learning.
  - [OLC Accelerate 2021](#), October 5-8, 2021, Washington, DC. Register now for the onsite version of this annual conference on online, blended, and digital learning.
  - [InstructureCon Online](#), October 7, 2021. This annual Canvas conference will be held virtually.
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Office of Distance Learning

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