

# the SPOTLIGHT

**CETL**  
Center for Excellence  
In Teaching and Learning

## Highlights from the Fall 2016 Reading Group

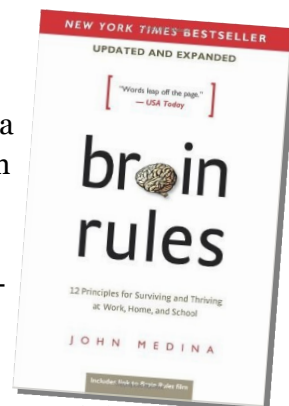
By Jill Gontkovic

Our fall reading group has been a great success featuring the book *Brain Rules* by John Medina. With diverse attendance from varying University departments, the discussions have been overflowing with valuable input. As the book title suggests, Medina categorizes his chapters into 'rules' which we have been discussing each week. From memory to sensory integration to sleep and beyond, the book highlights what's REALLY going on inside this command center of an organ. At times, the rules build upon previous chapters as well as uncovering new, fascinating facts about our brains and their function.

Through our discussion groups, we have uncovered how different our individual brains can behave and perform within the parameters of the twelve 'brain rules.' The groups frequently consist of factual discussion, laughter, and often brows furrowed with inquisition as we expose the weekly chapter's findings. *Brain Rules* is certainly written by a molecular scientist but NOT for scientists only. Reading group members found it to be very easy to take in. And while our groups were comprised of faculty and staff alike, the focus of the dis-

cussion had a lot to do with REAL life applications of the specific rules.

So, while the author exposed the inner workings of the brain, we collectively ask the question every week: "How does the affect our teaching as well as our learning?" Twelve chapters in this book are enough to know that as teachers and as learners, the relationship is multi-faceted and dynamic. We discussed how the differences and similarities in our brains can affect our ability to learn and even more-so, how we teach. In a teaching atmosphere where we cannot always customize the learning environment for each individual student, it can be helpful to the instructor who best understands the way the brain works. Students should be encouraged to know their own intricacies in regards to learning, and as instructors we can enable success in the classroom with knowledgeable design and conscious teaching overall.



See what is in "The Spotlight" this month in the CETL newsletter. We enjoy sharing teaching resources, tech tips, Blackboard advice, and offering a schedule of workshops and events.

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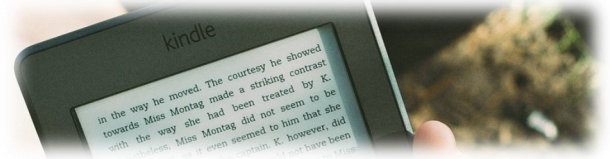
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The mission of the CETL is

- to promote excellence in teaching,
- to assist in the pedagogical and professional development of Saint Francis University faculty, and
- to encourage the integration of appropriate technology to enhance teaching and learning.

## Open Source Textbooks: Benefits for You AND Your Students



By Misti Smith

As textbook prices continue to rise and publishers remain unbending on allowing instructors to segment or pick and choose content, the movement towards lower cost, open-source resources, including textbooks, is on the rise.

While the jump to open-source texts might be daunting, you can start by using them as a supplement to the textbook(s) you are already using. Here are a few good reasons why you might consider taking open-source textbooks seriously:

1. **Cost** - Cost is the most obvious, but not necessarily the most important benefit of using open-source textbooks. As the chart shows, textbook cost has gone up 102% while recreational book cost has actually gone down around 1.5%! The College Board estimates that students pay on average \$1,298 a year in textbooks. The trickle down effect of students paying less (possibly

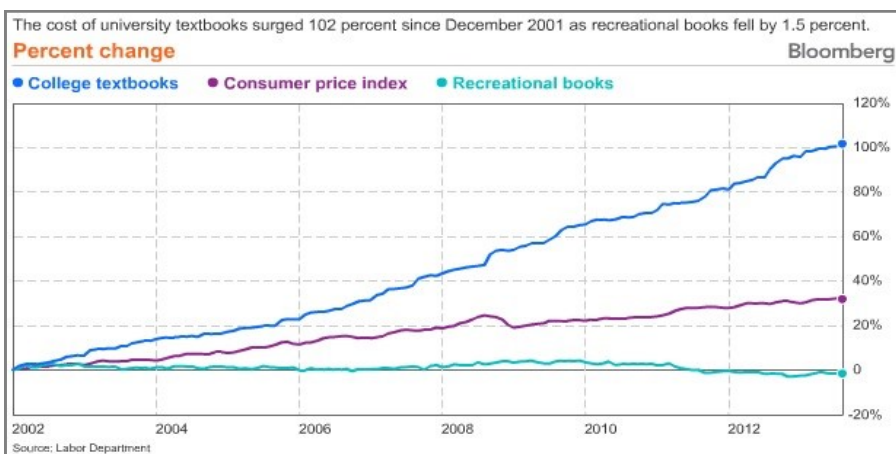
hundreds less) on textbooks means that they will be more financially secure students, possibly not having to work outside of class to afford high textbook costs, or may choose to take more credits if it is more affordable.

2. **Flexibility** - Open source resources are typically available in a variety of formats and from numerous locations, making it easy to access the materials. Also, unlike publisher e-books, open source texts can be segmented, changed and used as needed. Instructors can pull together various open texts to create their own custom textbook.
3. **Relevance** - The publishing timelines for textbooks can be over a year or longer from the time of writing/updating until it hits the shelf. Open resources can be updated quickly by the instructor themselves or from user feedback to author.

So where can you find open source textbooks? One of the fastest growing open textbook resource is called Open Textbook Library at <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/>. This resource has a searchable catalog of peer-reviewed, complete textbooks that are open licensed. Open Stax, <https://openstax.org/>, is another non-profit resource that provides free access to peer-reviewed texts. Both sites and all materials on them use a Creative Commons Attribution Only license which means the materials are available to reuse, remix and share as much as you like.

Getting started with open source textbooks could be as simple as just replacing a chapter in your current textbook that you dislike with one from an open source title. And because of the open nature you can use only what you want and freely share it with students.

Textbook publishing has seen excessive cost increases and a lack of relevance when it comes to how we share information in the digital age. Many colleges and instructors are getting behind the open publishing movement to promote access, affordability, and student success through the use of open textbooks. Perhaps you can benefit from these valuable resources, too!



## Students Applaud the Move to Electronic Portfolios

By Jordynn Kish & Theresa Wilson

This semester, education students have ditched their heavy three-inch student teaching binder portfolios and embraced the change to electronic portfolios. Student teachers are required to provide evidence that they have effectively delivered instruction that mirrors the competencies of Charlotte Danielson's framework for teaching, which the education department strongly supports. The framework covers several areas of teaching including planning and preparation, the classroom environment, instruction, and professional development. Students are required to share an artifact and rationale for each domain and subdomain in the framework and explain how each competency is met. In past semesters, student teachers compiled their work from the time spent in their field placements into a large, heavy binder that was presented at the end of their student teaching experience.

This semester the Education Department consulted with the CETL to discuss portfolio options and ultimately decided to make the switch from the binders to Digication, the ePortfolio platform already in use in many areas of the university, optional. Under the guidance of the new student teaching coordinator, Dr. Melissa Peppetti, an experienced K-12 administrator, students quickly understood the benefits of creating



an electronic portfolio. Compared to physical portfolios, ePortfolios are easier to maintain and update, have a better visual display, reduce paper, and make sharing more accessible. Dr. Peppetti says that ePortfolios are easier for prospective employers to review because candidates can simply send a weblink to access the ePortfolio or include the link on their resume.

When students were given the choice between creating a binder or an e-portfolio, **100%** of the class chose to use Digication. A progress check last week allowed students to share the current version of their ePortfolios, to receive feedback from Dr. Peppetti, CETL Director Ms. Wilson, and their peers, and to acquire additional tips and resources. Results thus far are overwhelmingly positive and the Education Department plans to make ePortfolios a requirement beginning with Spring 2017.

### A Facelift for Digication!

Digication recently announced a redesign of its interface and a suite of new features that will make creating professional-looking ePortfolios a snap! New features include flexible layouts, enhanced text editing, video and audio-capture, drag and drop uploads, and the ability for inline display of Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files.

The new Digication will be piloted with select groups during Spring and Summer 2017 and rolled out to the entire campus for Fall 2017. Existing ePortfolios in the Classic design will be viewable as long as browser support is available.

### Preview new Digication

<http://tinyurl.com/zk8zd77>

### New Digication FAQ

<https://support.digication.com/hc/en-us/articles/231581868>





## 10 Useful Google Chrome Extensions

By Briana Keith

Chrome extensions are small programs you can use to customize your browser. They make useful tools faster to access. When you sign in to Chrome with your Google account all of your bookmarks and extensions are saved and can be accessed from other computers with Chrome. Here are 10 of the best Chrome extensions:

### 1 Bookmark Manager



Bookmark websites with one click.

### 2 Save to Drive



Save web content directly to Google Drive.

### 3 Move It



Stay active with reminders to move. Set your time interval from 5 to 55 minutes and an exercise will pop up.

### 4 Goo.gl URL Shortener



Make web-links easier to type and share.

### 5 Adobe Acrobat PDF



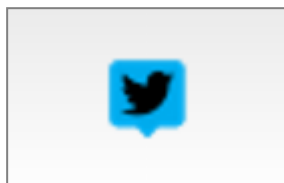
Convert a web page to an Adobe PDF file.

### 6 Pinterest Save Button



Save items from the Web directly to Pinterest.

### 7 TweetDeck by Twitter



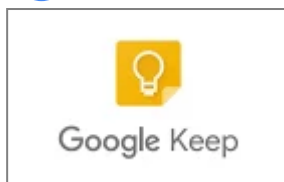
Use Tweet Deck to customize your newsfeed.

### 8 Google Calendar Checker



Get desktop notifications for meetings without opening the Calendar.

### 9 Google Keep



Add notes, lists, and photos.

### 10 Extensify



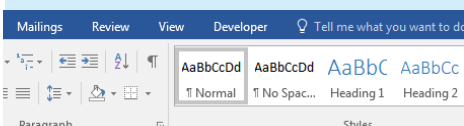
Don't run too many extensions at the same time. Quickly turn extensions on and off. This is a must-have.

## What's New in Office 2016

By Briana Keith

### Tell Me

Find what you need faster with the Tell Me search bar located in the middle of the ribbon on the top. Search graph or header and Office will provide a quick link.

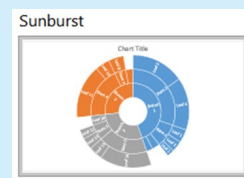
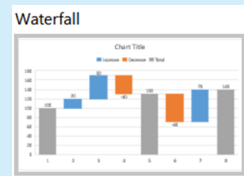


### Smart Lookup

Powered by Bing, this feature provides definitions for words and related articles. Highlight a word or phrase. Right click. Select Smart Lookup.

### New Chart Types

- Treemap
- Waterfall
- Pareto
- Histogram
- Box and Whisker
- Sunburst



### Insert Online Video

Adding YouTube videos within your PowerPoints and Documents is easier than ever with the built in search feature under Insert > Online Video.

For video tutorials and training, visit Atomic Learning and search for Office 2016.

# LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

## Canvas Selected as New Learning Management System for SFU

By Theresa Wilson



In November, Saint Francis University committed to a 5-year agreement with the edtech company Instructure to license its Canvas Learning Management System (LMS). Canvas, first introduced in 2010, is currently the fastest growing LMS in the education marketplace and is used by more than 1,600 institutions around the world. Known for its user-friendly environment, Canvas features a clean, modern interface, ubiquitous integration of audio and video, robust mobile capabilities, and a variety of notification options which include multiple e-mail accounts and text messaging. Because Canvas is a cloud-based system, updates will be pushed out seamlessly on a pre-announced schedule, meaning that there will be no downtime needed in order to take advantage of new capabilities. Canvas also has a solid reputation for quality customer-service and maintains an active user-community from which suggestions for product improvement are frequently drawn.



Saint Francis faculty have been using an LMS since 2001, when WebCT was officially adopted campus-wide. In 2011, WebCT was re-branded as Blackboard CE8, after acquisition by that company. Two years later, a full migration to the Blackboard Learn platform was undertaken, and the institution has remained there since. That will change for the Summer 2017 semester, when all university courses which include an LMS-component will use Canvas.

Learning Management System in Use at SFU



With such a long LMS history, it is not surprising that over 90% (118/130) of the full-time faculty at Saint Francis have a Blackboard site for at least one course this semester. When lab instructors, adjuncts, and part-time faculty are added in, the total number of instructors on the system surpasses 250, and there are over 450 course sites on Blackboard for this semester alone. Obviously, the LMS has become a critical resource for the Saint Francis community. As such, the migration to a new LMS is an important and serious undertaking, requiring thoughtful planning and execution.

Although the nitty-gritty details of the Canvas Implementation Plan are still being developed, the major milestones have been identified and are presented at the end of this article. CETL and IT staff will work together with the Canvas team to add specifics and to carry out the plan over the next several months.

Communication will be an ongoing component of the plan, with regular updates published via this newsletter and other campus venues as we move forward. In the meantime, individuals are welcome to check out the YouTube video [What You Can Do with Canvas](#) for a quick introduction, and questions or concerns may always be directed to Theresa Wilson in the CETL at x2799 or [twilson@francis.edu](mailto:twilson@francis.edu).



### Canvas Implementation Plan – Major Milestones



# WORKSHOP SCHEDULE FOR FACULTY AND STAFF

## December 2016

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
12	13	14	15	16
10-11am	10-11am	10-11am	10-11am	10-11:30am
Some Simple Solutions for Project Management (CETL)	Communicate and Collaborate with Google Apps for Education (CETL)	Extend the Capabilities of Your Chrome Browser (CETL)	Winning the Data Management Battle with Advanced Excel Skills (CETL)	Fun Games to Refresh Your Customer Service Skills (CETL)

Date	Time	Workshop Title and Description
Mon Dec 12	10-11am	<b>Some Simple Solutions for Project Management</b> Do you juggle many projects and deadlines at a time? Learn how to better manage your workflow with a few different time management options. From Google tools to apps, you will find something to suit your personality.
Tues Dec 13	10-11am	<b>Communicate and Collaborate with Google Apps for Education</b> In this overview of Google Apps, you will learn about the variety of tools available in Google's productivity suite for businesses and schools. Review how to store files in Google drive and the unique sharing and collaboration features in Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides. See how easy it is to create an electronic RSVP form or survey using Google Forms. Participate in a Google Hangout with chat and video. <div>  </div>
Wed Dec 14	10-11am	<b>Extend the Capabilities of Your Chrome Browser</b>  Customize your Chrome browser with small programs called extensions. By adding extensions, you can increase functionality and simplicity. Some extensions we will look at are Save to Google Drive, LastPass, Readability and many more.
Thu Dec 15	10-11am	<b>Winning the Data Management Battle with Advanced Excel Skills</b> Working with numbers and text is a daily challenge for many. This workshop will provide attendees with hands-on experience and practical examples in using powerful Excel functionality to meet those challenges efficiently. Capabilities covered will include understanding and clearing common spreadsheet errors, working with multiple sheets, protecting data, using functions for manipulating textual data, and the super tools - PIVOT tables and LOOKUP functions.
Fri Dec 16	10-11:30am	<b>Fun Games to Refresh Your Customer Service Skills</b> Are you feeling drained or stressed? Join us for some games that will be a great way to refresh and re-energize. When staff members are busy, it is helpful to take a break and get together for some fun to stay connected and motivated. While you are having fun, the exercises will also help foster a sense of teamwork and review customer service skills.



Please let us know if you plan to attend. 1 day notice is appreciated.  
 Email [bkeith@francis.edu](mailto:bkeith@francis.edu) or [twilson@francis.edu](mailto:twilson@francis.edu) to register.