

Success Strategies

Rolling Out DesignPLUS to Faculty

Introduction

Putting the powerful capabilities of DesignPLUS into the hands of faculty can greatly extend the value and impact of the tools, but doing it successfully requires thought and planning.

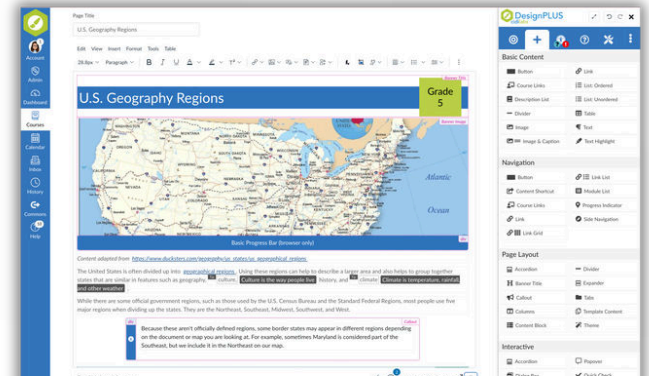
We recently gathered the Cidi Labs customer community to share tips, tricks and strategies for rolling out DesignPLUS to faculty at their institutions. The following five key strategies were distilled from the advice and wisdom of those who have paved the road to success:

Require or encourage basic training to gain access to the tools.

While it is possible to make DesignPLUS available to all Canvas course instructors, most institutions have decided to keep the tools off by default and only enable them for those who have received some basic training. The general consensus is that faculty are much more successful and have a better experience with the tools when they have a basic understanding of how the tools work and what they can be used for. Topics that are typically covered in the introductory, required training for faculty include:

- Launching the Design Tools sidebar
- Overview of the interface
- Working with Content Blocks
- Setting Themes
- Working with images
- Adjusting Colors

In order to accommodate as many participants as possible, most of these institutions are offering both synchronous training sessions (workshops) as well as asynchronous (online) options for their faculty. Providing a badge or certificate upon completion of this training, along with access to DesignPLUS, is often a helpful motivator to attend.



DesignPLUS is a set of tools that plug into Canvas and allow course designers to easily create more engaging and accessible courses for students. Over 650 educational institutions across K12 and Higher Ed have adopted the tools and instructional designers everywhere are using them to enhance and scale their Canvas course design practices.

KEY STRATEGIES:



Required Basic Training



Best Practices on Display



Peer Collaboration



Sustainable Support



Student Impact Focus



Showcase best practices to generate interest (and maybe a little FOMO)

One of the things that has worked very well for institutions who want to raise awareness of and interest in DesignPLUS is to use its many features to design a course that has broad visibility across the institution. For example, a required professional development course for faculty or a course that provides resources for online teaching. When faculty see the course (especially as a student), they typically notice how impactful the more polished design and other engaging elements are, and then express an interest in learning how they could make their Canvas course look like that. You might even say that a little FOMO (fear of missing out) goes a long way.



Foster peer collaboration and mentoring

Many of the institutions that have successfully rolled out DesignPLUS to faculty have done so with very limited staff to support that process. In order to augment their capacity to help faculty successfully use DesignPLUS, a successful strategy that many have employed is to identify some “super users” or early adopters who are willing to help in training and ongoing support for those who are new to the tools. Another important component of this strategy is to provide ways for faculty to collaborate with each other to problem solve and share best practices or examples in a peer to peer fashion.



Develop sustainable ongoing support

Another important factor to consider in rolling out DesignPLUS to faculty is how to provide ongoing support as usage of the tools grows. Many institutions have developed sustainable ways to provide this support, even with very little staff. Some of the common strategies include:

Provide an automated way for faculty to schedule an appointment. How does the saying go? A meeting is worth a thousand emails? Sometimes it’s a lot more efficient to set up a quick meeting to work through an issue, and using an appointment scheduling solution can take the busywork out of that and save time for support staff.

Set up office hours. Since providing this support is typically one of many responsibilities support staff might have, it can be helpful to set up specific blocks of time during which real-time support can be provided.

Record and reuse support assets. Chances are, the challenge one person is having is something others will be faced with as well, so taking the time to record on video or document in writing the solution or explanation can be time well spent if the asset is saved, indexed and reused when appropriate. Some institutions have even developed a habit of proactively recording short and informal videos addressing common questions or needs and sending them out to users on a regular cadence.

Engage the power users. As with training, it may be helpful to recruit some power users to help with ongoing support, especially within their departments to reduce the load on a central organization or person.



Always tie it back to the impact on student learning

Perhaps the most important and valuable strategy of all is to remember that at the core of any technology or tool use is the question of how it impacts students. While bells and whistles are certainly fun, it is important to relate all of our course design improvements back to the desired student learning outcomes. Reminding faculty that good visual design has a positive impact on student engagement can be an effective motivator for using tools that make it easy to incorporate these elements of good course design.

One way that some institutions have emphasized the connection between course design elements and impact on learning outcomes is to develop templates that address quality standards or rubric criteria that have been deemed important. In this way, the impact of the design is measurable and demonstrable. DesignPLUS templates make it easy for faculty to pull in these design elements that effectively embed the quality that impacts student learning. And when these tools make faculty members' life easier as well, that's just icing on the cake!

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

Focusing training efforts on the features and skills that are more likely to lead to quick success is a strategy that has worked well for many. Check out what other customers put in this category of "quick hits":

The collage illustrates various features of the DesignPLUS interface:

- Left Screenshot:** A course page titled "Tell All the Truth, But Tell It Slant": Creative Nonfiction. Annotations include:
 - banners:** Points to the header image.
 - navigation blocks:** Points to the sidebar menu.
 - buttons:** Points to the "Read the poems" button.
 - module lists:** Points to the list of weeks (Week 1 through Week 15).
- Middle Screenshot:** A "Welcome" page for "Intro to Instructional Design ID-101". Annotations include:
 - Banner Image:** Points to the main header image.
 - Content Block:** Points to a section titled "About This Course".
- Right Screenshot:** The DesignPLUS editor toolbar. Annotations include:
 - the undo button:** Points to the undo icon.
 - themes:** Points to the theme selection dropdown.

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