

October is an action-packed month at DFI 🎉! Now that the school year is in full swing and you've gotten to know your students, it's a great time to try something new in your teaching, and we have plenty to help you do just that.

First up is a [special Masterclass webinar](#) featuring guest speakers from [Perusall](#). Faculty will get an inside look at Perusall's newest features, learn how to integrate the tool into their teaching, and have the chance to ask questions directly.

If you've been wondering **how to encourage more collaboration in your classroom**, our Instructional Guide on group work is for you. It's packed with practical strategies for building group work into your classroom community, so take a look and see what might fit your class.

Beyond the Masterclass, we have a **full lineup of workshops and events** this month, all listed below. And be sure to scroll to the bottom for the latest in our **Who's Who at DFI series**, where we're featuring our **amazing Instructional Designer, Randal Manago**.

Thank you for reading, and we hope you have a wonderful October!

What's new?

1. Masterclass Webinar: Deep Dive into Perusall

Tuesday, October 20th, 2026: 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Online Via Zoom

Join the Perusall team for this one-hour DFI Masterclass and discover how to create engaging social annotation activities in your Canvas course. Learn how to set up your Perusall course and explore a variety of new and enhanced features, including Assignment Checkpoints, Course Context, Discussion Summaries, Required Replies and Comments, AI features in Perusall, Advanced Integrity Settings, and more. You will also experience the platform from a student's perspective through a hands-on sandbox activity. Whether you are new to Perusall or looking to enhance your current use, this session will provide practical tips and strategies to help you get started.

[Register Now!](#)

2. Instructional Guide: Group Work Strategies

Group work is a powerful way to promote active learning, build community, and strengthen students' decision-making skills, and many of these strategies work just as well online or in hybrid settings as they do in person.

Our [Group Work Strategies Guide](#) is packed with **ready-to-use ideas**, including classic techniques like:

- Think-Pair-Share
- Jigsaw

Discussion formats like:

- Structured debates
- Hot seat discussions

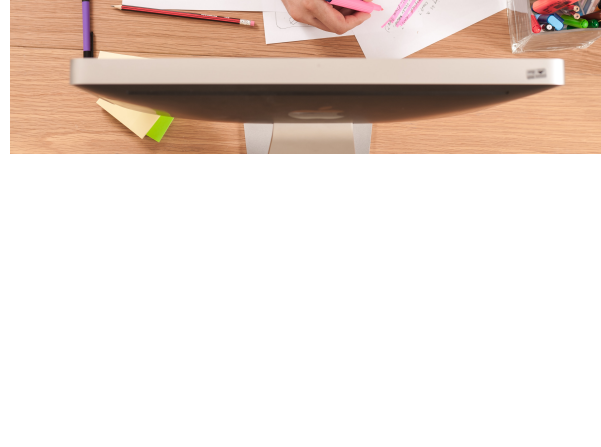
Tips for supporting more introverted students, and practical ways to assess group work fairly with rubrics and peer evaluations.

You'll also find a list of free tools to help you assign roles, build rubrics, and collaborate in real time.

Want help bringing one of these strategies into your course? [Reach out to DFI](#), as we're always happy to talk through ideas!

[Check out the Instructional Guide!](#)

Upcoming Faculty PD



Alx CoLab: Brainstorming

Wednesday, October 7th, 2026: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Online via Zoom

Can AI make you more creative, or just make everyone's ideas look the same? Join Alx CoLab for a hands-on workshop on brainstorming with AI. We'll start with what good idea-generation looks like without AI, then experiment with ways to turn Gemini, TC's approved AI tool into a genuine thinking partner. Have a problem worth solving ready. All TC students and faculty welcome.

Alx CoLab is a workshop series where TC community members come together to explore, test, and think critically about AI in teaching and learning. Each session is a hands-on, interactive workshop featuring one specific use of Generative AI, where participants are invited to actively try things live, share how we already collaborate with AI in our own work, and develop AI literacy together.

[Register](#)

Click by Click: Don't Start from Scratch - Canvas Templates That Save Time

Monday, October 21st, 2026: 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM

Online via Zoom

Building a course from the ground up doesn't have to be overwhelming. Join us for the first session in our Click by Click series, designed to help you quickly set up a clean, professional, and accessible Canvas site without starting from scratch. In this 30-minute session, you will learn about the different levels of Teachers College Canvas templates, ranging from the universal template to customized learning spaces. You'll learn how to import them step-by-step, update your course front page, and customize key elements. Whether you are a new instructor, a TA, or an experienced faculty member looking to save time, you'll walk away with actionable steps to streamline your course setup.

[Register](#)



Groovin' Griot Season 3 Launch Party

Friday, October 23rd, 2026: 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Smith Learning Theater, Russell Hall, 4th Floor

Come celebrate the launch of Season 3 of Groovin' Griot! Enjoy listening stations to catch up on Season 2, a talkback session with GG hosts, opportunities to connect with others, and movement activations. Register to secure your spot, and we look forward to seeing you on October 23rd.

[Register](#)

Who's Who At DFI

This month, we are spotlighting our **Instructional Designer, Randal Manago**.

Check out Randal's answers below to learn more about him and the incredible work he does to support our community year-round.



How long have you been at TC and DFI? What brought you here?

I graduated with my Master's in Instructional Technology and Media from Teachers College in 2024 and officially joined DFI as an Instructional Designer in 2025. My time as a student at TC was so rewarding that I knew I wanted to stick around and keep growing my career in a place I already loved.

What is your main focus or area of expertise at DFI, and what is one project you're currently working on that you're really energized about?

My main focus is designing courses for TC Academy, where we create accessible professional development and non-degree programs for educators and leaders. Lately, I'm really energized by finding ways to bring engaging, gamified experiences into Canvas. I love designing accessible activities that turn the traditional student experience into something much more interactive and fun.

How can faculty best collaborate with you, or what is one DFI resource you wish more people knew about?

The best collaborations happen when faculty are excited to reinvent their Canvas courses and step outside of traditional, linear design thinking. I absolutely love helping instructors reimagine how students experience their content! As for a DFI resource that I really wish more people knew about is our media studio. It's an amazing space where faculty can use high-quality equipment and get expert guidance to create multimodal lectures and projects that truly elevate their courses. Just make sure to book your appointment ahead of time!

Outside of your work at DFI, what is a hobby, book, or personal pursuit keeping you inspired lately?

Outside of work, I spend a lot of my free time hunting down vintage mid-century modern and brutalist furniture. I'm also really into collecting niche fragrances. I love learning about the designer and the creative process of creating their pieces, which keep me inspired creatively in my personal life.



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