

*Learning from Experience:
Developing Portraits of Practice
Part I*

A. Learning Community (LC) Title

Constructing a Podcast Library for Student Writers in Northwest Ohio
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B. Community Curator(s). Who has prepared Part I of this Portrait on behalf of your LC? What date was it completed?

Barbara Toth and Jeremy Schnieder—Preparers 1 March 2008—Date of Completion
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C. Abstract (75 Words or less) *if it has changed*

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D. Learning Community Members, Units, Roles. List your community members, their units or disciplines and roles, *if they have changed*. Who has been added, deleted?

Core members	Unit/Discipline	Contributions
Anthony Edgington, University of Toledo	Has replaced Barbara Schneider University of Toledo	

Associate Members	Unit/Discipline	Contributions

E. **Background & Context.** Briefly describe your Learning Community Project and the context within which you undertake it. What do you intend to achieve? What technologies are you using and how? What desired ending(s) would you like for the story of your LC and its project? What types of institutional support do you have? What types of support would you like?

Describe LC and Context
This OLN project has been about incorporating new technologies to reach and support a wider audience of student writers. It has increased cooperation and collaboration between and among writing centers across Northwest Ohio.

What Do You Intend to Achieve?
-An exemplary and useful podcast library easily accessible by student writers
-A greater sense of community among writing centers in Northwest Ohio

What Technologies Are You Using and How?
The new technologies being used include sound editors such as Audacity, flash-based PowerPoints such as SnapKast and Articulate, and Second Life.

Desired Endings
-An exemplary and useful library of 25+ podcasts
-A stronger community among Northwest Ohio writing center staff and a basis for future collaboration and sharing
-Increased knowledge of and experience with educational technology
-Publication of this project in various forums

- a greater voice for tutor and writing center administration

Not only will the podcasts be housed on the web for students to access, an extremely pleasant experience has developed as two OLN learning communities have brought their ideas together allowing for podcasts constructed by this community to be housed in second life, which is part of another learning community.

Two sources of support stand out—

-Anthony Fontana and Bonnie Mitchell, also OLN grant participants, have helped to construct a second life writing center at which site the podcasts will also be housed.

-Members of the CTLT have also been extremely helpful in sharing equipment, providing know-how, expediting grant monies, and encouraging creative imaginings

Desired support

-Several computers that accommodate second life

F. Description of Your Early Work, Planning and Preparations.

Describe the preliminary work of the learning community as you prepare for your community project and for attending your Region's Learning Institute (March 14, 2008). What were the key components in your planning and preparation for your LC (Roles? Methods? Timelines? Coordinating schedules?)? What were key issues and concerns, and how did you sort them out? What were the key successes and what impacts have they had? Are there any vignettes that illustrate these?

Early Preparation

Attended the OLN Kick-off at BGSU with other members of the LC; Continued communication through Google groups, email, telephone, and in person contacts.

Toward the end of making sure that each participant was comfortable with Audacity, the sound editor, Barb Toth phoned Lynda Hoffman; met Christine Reichert in person at Lourdes College and Nicole Diederich at the University of

Findlay; and emailed Anthony Edgington at University of Toledo, Barbara Schneider's replacement.

Mid-preparation

On 23 November 2009, all OLN LC members met at the BGSU Writing Center. The goals of this meeting included understanding the academic/writing needs of respective institutions and then basing future action on the understanding. Based on the academic needs of the respective institutions, each LC participant chooses a set of topics to develop into Snapkasts. Each participant commits to constructing 5 podcasts, which will result in a minimum of 25 podcasts at the end of this grant cycle. A sample Snapkast, constructed by the BGSU participants, was presented at this meeting as an example and point of reference for other participants. Participants left the meeting with an established agenda of topics to address and a sense of direction.

Samples of Snapkast drafts continue to be shared among participants through googledocs for feedback and revision. Various members of the group correspond with each other.

Future Preparation

- The next meeting is scheduled to meet at Lourdes College.
- Participation in the Teaching/ Learning Fair on March 14

G. **Community Building and Project Development.** Describe early phases of building your community and developing your collaborative project. What key challenges and problems do you face and how do you handle them? What did they - or will they - lead to? What successes have you enjoyed to date? Are there any vignettes of potential consequence or impacts that you can share? What resources are you using to support community building and how are they making a difference?

Early Phase

In short, the early phase consisted of NW Ohio Writing Centers coming together virtually and in person in various configurations;—many joint proposals have come forth as a result and WC staffs are now more familiar with each other.

Logistical Challenges

- Bringing together extremely busy people

-Finding time to construct the podcasts or coordinate the construction of podcasts

Pedagogical Challenges

- Constructing podcasts that are rhetorical and descriptive not prescriptive
- Constructing a podcast library that meets a standard of excellence
- Creating a unified podcast library

Successes

- Stronger community and more collaboration among writing center staff in Northwest Ohio, resulting in an East Central Writing Center Association Conference presentation in April
- More shared technology being used to support students in Northwest Ohio
- Greater knowledge of educational technology among grant participants and the students they work with
- Publication opportunities for students at institutions participating in this LC
- BGSU OLN podcast grant contingency collaborated with BGSU OLN second life grant contingency resulting

Community Resources

- ECWCA Conference
- Press releases
- CTLT laptop
- Collaboration with Anthony Fontana and Bonnie Mitchell and members of the CTLT staff

H. **Planning Your Assessment Strategies.** How will you evaluate your work/successes? How will you assess member learning, (including technology learning)? your community's growth over the year? student learning or change connected with your project? Both formative (this Portrait is part of this) and summative methods should be used.

Current

There has been a wonderful assessment practice that has emerged within the community: Part of the partnership has been in the way that the WC people have helped each other by viewing and discussing podcasts as part of production assessment (formative)

Future

When the podcasts are housed and utilized, surveys will be

developed (summative)

Student Learning

Tutor technology learning will be measured through new knowledge acquired through the script writing process. As the podcasts are being produced, student participants are also being helped not only as they develop their skills through productions, but as they take those skills into the tutorials. Here is one comment from a University of Findlay student participant:

The podcast was good, the only thing that I didn't like was that the program wouldn' t let you edit, so you had to be perfect all in one go. That took a WHILE for me, but otherwise it wasn't that hard and I hope it helps some people! I think the podcast is a smart idea because some people don't make it to the writing center but they still need some help-so I would continue doing it!

This is the end of Part I
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[Submit Part I to nwlcenter@bgsu.edu]
