

Bonus Episode 1 Transcript

Audio file

[Bonus Episode #1 1.mp3](#)

Transcript

Speaker 1

Welcome everybody to episode one of our bonus episodes featuring the wonderful talents of Lisa Namikas, Christopher Gilson, Chresancio Jackson, and our leader, Amelia Brister. Welcome to this bonus podcast. Today, we're gonna talk about best practices. Using OER and materials in the classroom and first, though, we want to start off by introducing exactly what it is that we're after with this project. And so I'm going to throw it to Amelia. Can you give us a little history of how this project came to be and what we're actually trying to accomplish?

Speaker 2

So this podcast is created through a grant that myself and Emily Frank worked on. Emily Frank is one of our partners with Lewis, which is our consortium here in Louisiana. And the Louisiana Board of Regents e-learning Innovation Grants program. We're looking for projects and submissions to their grant, and we submitted learn with podcast creating podcast lectures to enhance school enrollment. Students engagement with history to be embedded. Into the world history course that Lisa and Chris. This and I worked on together, so that's kind of the history of why we started putting these podcasts together. And from my experience, it's been a lot of fun. I hope the others can say the same.

Speaker 1

Speaking of that, we do want to introduce the guests, Professor Amicus. Please tell us a little bit about yourself and what college you represent.

Speaker 3

So my name is Lisa DeMarcus. I have been. Oh gosh, and teaching for. Say 15 / 15 years now. Most of those years. In Louisiana, starting out as an. Adjunct and then finding my home. At Baton Rouge community. Which I will. Work and read primarily in, you know, post-Cold War or Post World War Two history. I love writing about Africa and I love. Teaching world history.

Speaker 1

And to Miss Brister's question, how fun has it been for you to work on this project?

Speaker 3

Well, this project has been a lot of fun, you know. The podcasting is something that I never dreamed I would be doing so quickly after, you know, working on the textbook, but it just fits in so well. I'm so thrilled with. It I think it's going to enhance the course beyond measure, just having that audio connection with the students, it's.

Speaker 1

Professor Gilson, please introduce yourself and tell us your thoughts on the project.

Speaker 4

My name is Doctor Chris Gilson. I'm an associate professor of history at Northwestern State University, Louisiana, and I've been teaching for an issue for about 8 years now, and my main area of interest, research and reading is late. Evil history, Renaissance history, early modern history. So this class fits in really nicely with the material that I work on in research as well as what I'm interested in teaching and what I do teach.

Speaker 1

Professor Jackson, same question. Who are you and what has your experience been thus far with this project?

Speaker 5

Like he said, my name is Chresancio Jackson. I am an instructor of history here at Louisiana Delta, and I also started as an adjunct with many of the students here in the state of Louisiana. I worked at Grambling State University and I recently got a full time position here at Louisiana Delta Community College, and now I'm also the division chair of the Arts. So I've been pretty much all over the place and that also since I have. Been an adjunct and been all over the place. I've talked just about all of the histories that I've offered at most of the community colleges here in the state of Louisiana. So I have talked to American history. I've talked to Louisiana history. I've also taught world history versus civilization one and two. So I'm pretty much following the place I wish I could.

Speaker 1

Get a focus.

Speaker 5

And we are such a small school so. I'm only one of. Two history instruct history. It kind of prevents me from really focused on one particular area, but I also did the OER from news libraries for the American history, American history one. And so I love that experience. And so when Amelia Brewster came, came and asked me about getting on board with the podcast. I was just playing. I thought this is what we need to do, just to keep it going. I am a big fan of ORS and I hope that we can really hopefully use them more in the state of Louisiana cause they do save. The students, quite a bit of money and I know it's great having access on first day of class to be able to go ahead and start reading and lecturing and doing assignments we need to do versus waiting till that purchases something maybe 2-3 four weeks later. So I love the old our projects and I hope we get hopefully. Get this to be something that we can really spread throughout the state even more.

Speaker 1

Thank you so much all of you professors and Miss Bristow. We're gonna throw it back to you because the first question out of the gate was, what is this project about? But you didn't get a chance to introduce yourself as you introduce yourself, though. Tell us exactly what our OR.

Speaker 2

My name is Amelia Brewster. I work at Louisiana Delta Community College as the director of Library and Learning resources. And as I stated before, you know I got into the OER world through the Lewis library consortia, which connects all of our academic libraries across the state of Louisiana. And so their focus was OER materials and OER materials are freely and publicly available. Teaching, learning and resource research resources that reside in a public domain or have been released under intellectual Property License that permit their free use and repurposing. To others, it can be a textbook course material or a full course with modules, streaming videos, test software, or other tools. But the great thing about these materials is that they are free. And as Chresancio indicated, they are available to students day. One of the class which was one of the focuses of our Lewis project, we were trying to address the DFW. Rates in the state for our dual enrollment courses. So we feel like this podcast is actually going to address some of that retention that that we're trying to accomplish.

Speaker 1

So that's interesting. You talk about retention and it sounds like we're getting towards an accessibility question. So who is the best audience for all your materials?

Speaker 2

Well, I'm going to kind of lean on what I know. I would say the best audience would be instructors and students who don't want to spend a lot of money on textbooks and want to make it available to their students. Day one of class. However, I'm going to throw this question over to one of our instructors who worked on the project. Because they are in the classroom and they'll have a lot more information for us.

Speaker 4

The best audience for OER materials or. Students who are comfortable working with technology which a lot of our students obviously are today, and students who are looking for multiple ways to access their course materials. There's a lot of conversation today about mobile first design. And the fact that students are accessing our courses from from their phones, from tablets, from laptops, from traditional desktop computers, we don't really know. Going into a classroom, what our students are using to connect with us. So OER materials because of the purposeful way. That they're designed or intended to be accessible in a variety of different ways. So I think that's a core audience for these materials. And then just in general students, I would agree that are looking to save money on their course materials. I'll talk a little bit more about that in in another episode, I think, but it's it's really amazing to see how much money can be saved for the. By using these materials and I think that's an important consideration.

Speaker 5

You know, that's just kind of what you know, I said in my introduction, you know, just being able to have instructional material on the first day is. That said, you know you're not waiting and waiting for that student to say. And then also for the instructor side, the student doesn't have that excuse, but I I wasn't able to get my textbook, so I can't do this quiz, so it really takes out a lot of barriers during the first weeks of class. And I know. Having experience with, I know others here in our. Cohort have probably experienced, you know, some kids just aren't gonna bother build the entire semester so they can have they will use that excuse for the entire semester. And you know, at some point, you know, you have to give up on that one, but you just that takes out so many excuses of our students. So why they didn't

really participate in class and do the things that are needed. You know the only thing they can really say is that they didn't read the material.

Speaker 3

I was going to say too that, you know, we were talking about the. Best audience for? ORI think once OEM's become more established, like Chris said, once they become, you know, technologically sound and word gets out. I think what's going to be really exciting are the new students that we can draw into campus that you know potentially. Wouldn't even consider college because they know they can't access material, or they're just, you know, they're not able to afford it, but it's those students that we're gonna reach beyond, you know, just who's sitting in our classroom right now. You know where this force can go, you know, even worldwide is just some, you know, something? I think that you know. In the future it'll change and I'll like to see that greater access for everybody.

Speaker 1

Now, piggybacking off of those answers, how can instructors and course adopters ensure quality materials? In other words, what are some best practices in choosing OER materials or textbooks for a course?

Speaker 2

Now I'm shamelessly going to plug the value of librarians in this area because as librarians, we can help instructors find materials that are open or have those creative common licenses. And or quality, but I really am that was my shameless plug, so I'm going to throw this back to the instructors since they work with the intended audience for these materials and they have a better understanding of the actual materials for their, for their courses at Lisa. Would you like to answer Ryan's actual question?

Speaker 3

There. So there. Was really two parts to the question right one. How can we ensure quality materials and then best practices in choosing the materials? So I'd like to comment. On just choosing the quality materials, because I think that's something that. You know, I've noticed evolve. A lot over the past. 5 even 10 years, you know, got involved in creating online classes. You know 10. Over 10 years ago and just the materials available were so slim, you know that when we all started coming out, it was almost like there was just one to choose from or two to. Choose from and. These days, the whole idea of revising who we R's has really taken root and. I think has helped ensure the quality because unlike A published book, you can revise it. Now we are almost instantly you know or you know, at least it's their you know for revising whereas a print version through a publisher would take you know potentially two or three years and a whole lot more money involved and another whole printing. So in this sense. Revising what we have and keep continuing to revise and revise, I think it's producing some materials that really show some great quality and we have choice now.

Speaker 4

I think that was really one of the purposes of this project and then the project that this developed out of the original textbook project, because this is locally organized and locally assembled, it's built by faculty at institutions in Louisiana, edited by faculty at institutions in Louisiana. All of the major available OER materials and selected a starting point that that we thought was appropriate. We looked at what was out

there and chose a point to start at and then made decisions about what to change or to improve before releasing it to for pilot. Purposes this year and ultimately. For public use in the future, that really was the point of this was to provide a local connection to these materials. So you're not just signing on to a website and hoping that someone in some other state has produced something that's useful, that's appropriate. That is complete. These are people that are in. In your own institutions, in many cases in your own towns that have looked at this and have built a course around this and who are using it, that you can contact and. OK, how is this working for you? What have you done to improve upon this? What have you? What are your thoughts about using this so that local connection I think helps ensure quality in a way that nameless, faceless website may not be able to.

Speaker 1

Our materials are free but they tend to be tethered to accessibility via online resources and not everybody has access to the. In it, is there a way to overcome or how do we overcome that barrier so that we can truly say that our materials are absolutely available and free to the general public and everybody who is interested.

Speaker 4

I think it's really interesting. In many cases it's going to come down to the librarians at each institution to help facilitate that kind of access. Everything that that we've. Built there is a way to publish it to PDF that can be saved onto a hard drive, whether it's textual or whether it's audio, whatever we've built as a part of this process, we can make that work, but in many cases it's going to take some communication with. Libraries and with the Lewis consortium to ensure that that can be done and that it can be accessed.

Speaker 2

Yes, that that is correct. We were very intentional on about making sure that everything could be published to a PDF and then. Making sure the students. Have you know? At our institution, they have flash drives available at the counter so that we can load their resources onto their flash drive and and basically have the textbook with them and not be dependent on Internet which in our area is very spotty.

Speaker 1

Thank you so much. Now it has been said things can be good, fast or cheap, but never can something be good, fast and cheap. Why do you think your materials can transcend this generality?

Speaker 2

Well, I'll circle back to what Lisa said earlier, although it does take a long time for like a group like ours to remix or completely create our materials. It's only a fraction of the amount of time that it takes for our publishing company to put this. That type of material out to students and we all know the publishing companies make a healthy profit from. That so I do think that in that way and because these materials are peer reviewed on several levels, we peer reviewed each others work before we actually put it into the course. And then we had others across the state, other instructors across the state peer review the materials. Before they were put out to students so. That gives you the quality. Fast in the amount of time that we put these out, I think we worked on the whole project for a year and a half, but the actual writing part. Took a year. And then, you know, they're free. So I do think that meets all of those elements.

Speaker 4

I think it's important to remember that while it may be cheap for students, there were costs at multiple other points down the line and so it's maybe just a. I don't know redistributing those costs to at different places along the development path up from the original sources that we used from several different institutions and OER. Providers an awful lot of work had gone into writing those materials before we ever started remixing editing. Then and utilizing those materials and then for us it was time consuming for us and for our institutions that encouraged us to participate in this and the state agencies that were responsible for setting up the applying for the federal grants and then using state. On these as appropriate, and and so forth to make this happen. So there are multiple points at which that that cost has been paid along the way. It's just not. The student at as the end user that's that's paying that price and I think that's that's good for the state. I think that's good for our institutions and good for the future, but it is important to remember that it was it was by no means cheap or free to the people working on it, even before we ever were involved in the process.

Speaker 1

I would argue the most valuable question throughout this entire episode. This bonus episode would boil down to something like this. From an instructor standpoint, if an instructor is thinking about using the materials that have been created, what do you want those instructors to understand about how to best use the podcast episodes in their courses and or consequently, what advice would you give the instructors? In using the course.

Speaker 3

Well, I think the podcasts really are a wonderful supplement to the textbook because they allow you to focus on a particular dimension that perhaps, you know, you have a particular interest in or. You can you have access to and you can. Just kind of highlight. Something you know in depth interesting for the student to kind of chew on a little bit more perhaps than just reading? You know, the textbook week after week after. Week so they really. Allow you know some engagement the student can listen. It's a different format, and that's also, you know, appreciated for students. They I think they like having different formats and classes, just one all the time really gets. Additive so the podcast can be an engaging way to, you know, draw a student in, get them to focus on. Perhaps you know a person or an event in a way that they might not have thought. About before and then. Leave them with some questions. And there's also that human dimension to it too. You know, you're talking to the student and you're. They're with them. As the podcast is playing, so they. You know, I think they appreciate that. As well and also you know when I'm creating my podcast, at least personally, one thing I did try to do and as Chris mentioned, this is trying to bring out the local connections that we have in our world history class. And so I really tried to find a local connection to what I. Was talking about. So I was able to do that in in many instances. And so I thought that just highlights where the student perhaps can. Go after the. Class is finished and continue to explore the world even here in Louisiana. You know they don't have to, you know. I guess just believe that they're isolated from the rest of the world. If they look around them, there's all sorts of connections to the global world that they could reach out to.

Speaker 5

And that's kind of what my same thinking is as well is that especially most of our students, you know we will always assign them chapters to read. But you know, it's often as I've been standing all alone, a struggle to really get them to go ahead and read it. So hopefully the podcast will kind of maybe entice them to read. It's given the engaging experience. And said, well, maybe I should read that chapter that my instructor assigned me to read. You know, I've heard so many great details and 10 bits from the podcast, and this might be something I really did enjoy. So that is what I'm hoping that I can use in my class and it's and hopefully we'll we'll see it being used throughout the state is that we see this person locally. In a podcast that it's probably maybe even your instructor might need to go ahead and read these chapters, and that may help the learning experience within that class for that.

Speaker 4

Everyone needs variety, and students need reinforcement from different types of materials for different approaches to learning. And just for as as you were saying, it's kind of an introduction into the textbook, sometimes it to get people interested in reading something, they need a window into it that. Maybe is in a different format? I know reading my course evaluations from just from this last semester. One of the regular comments that I saw was how much people appreciated the whatever YouTube videos or supplemental audio or visual materials that I was including that. I included because they were relatively close to what I was talking about for that subject matter, not because they were necessarily perfect for it, but the students loved it. And I think what's really exciting about this is that this is a an audio material. These are podcasts that are intended to go with. The textbook and so I'm hopeful that we'll see that same kind of enthusiasm returned in the.

Speaker 1

Future absolutely, Chris. This one is gonna come back your way. It's fitting that you answered that last question. We all know that as instructors, when implementing any new teaching resource or technology or what have you, trouble may brew and we heard that you had some struggles importing the course into your LMS. Can you tell us about what that experience was like and how you overcame it?

Speaker 4

Definitely overcame it. I've taught this material in. I've used these oer materials in five sections over 2 semesters now, and obviously the 2nd semester there really weren't any challenges. The challenge is always the first semester implementing something. And in this case, what really happened is that different institutions have different learning management systems, and even if they have the same learning management system, they might have a different version or iteration or release of that system. And so some of the the materials. When I went to import them into. My version of Moodle, which was an older version of Moodle than the one that the materials were developed in, at least for the entire course, is 1 unified file 1 unified. Upload it didn't upload. Perfectly into my learning management system, everything was there, the images were there, the documents were there, the text was there, the instructions were there, everything was there except for some of the the questions and the test bank. And So what I ended up having to do was. Take the but I ended up having to do was export the test questions. The test bank as a separate file and then upload those directly into the core shell and replaced those. I've talked to Lewis about that and I think they're working on finding solutions for that, so. Hopefully that won't be an issue for the future, but if it is, it's really just a matter of having Luis send

out or make available to test banks as a separate download to be. To be uploaded into the course and building your test or your quizzes from.

Speaker 1

There, thank you so much. As we wrap up bonus episode #1, are there any closing thoughts before we adjourn?

Speaker 5

I think one of my closing thoughts is that you know, I will if all instructors and even I guess even students that may encounter this podcast and want to use it, you know, not to be afraid of who we are. I think you would think great opportunity for us in the state, you know especially you know we often talk about the state of Louisiana and we don't have this. And don't have that. One of the things that you know most of our students K through 12 have had have has been free textbooks. So we always see that little, you know little thing when they get to the college setting like, oh, wait a minute. I gotta buy the books. And so now we can kind of give them a little bit more of what they've been used to for 10 through 12 and having a free textbook, even though it is electronic with. The ER and so. I really hope that this could be an opportunity for you. Instructors, professors here in college University said Louisiana to embrace it more because, you know, especially a lot of them. Professor instructors have been so useful. You know, you go to the bookstore, you buy your books. But our students aren't. So they're used to K through 12 free books. Even they go to private school. And so that has always been a divide between structured professors and their students. That they they expect you to have this textbook, but still, like I don't want to buy it, I don't have enough cash. And you know, I'd rather spend it on something else with your cell phone instead. So I think this could be a great tool to take out that divide. So I really will. Professors, instructors, division chairs, Deans, to really embrace this. Concept even more and I hope this opportunity. With the podcast. Really would help that.

Speaker 2

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