

Bonus Episode 2 Transcript

Audio file

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Transcript

Speaker 1

Welcome to bonus episode #2 everybody in this episode. We're talking about creating OER materials and some of the lessons learned. And our first question goes to the group, the world civilization. One course was created as part of a Department of Education grant secured by LOUIS. The Louisiana Library network, I understand that you all work together to create this course. Would you kindly introduce yourselves and explain each of your role?

Speaker 2

My name is Lise Namikas, our professor at Baton Rouge Community College, and I've been an instructor in Louisiana for 15 years teaching and. You know for. The last eight at my home College in Baton Rouge. My role in this project was to serve as a content expert. And so I worked with the other faculty members, and we looked at the available materials and decided, you know, what we could use and remix and what we needed to produce to ultimately end up with. Materials for a course in world history from the textbook, then to some of the supplements and ancillary materials.

Speaker 3

And again, my name is Chresancio Jackson. I am an instructor here in Louisiana Delta Community College. I have been teaching, I believe it is now. 12 years here in the state of Louisiana and I've been here in Louisiana Delta full time for about, I guess, about 7-8 years now. And I teach all histories. Here we also it was an adult American history world. History was in history. I actually was a little bit an outsider of this group. I was not a part. Rural civilization, one cohort with you all. I was actually in the American history, one with another cohort with LOUIS Library. So I kind of joined in a little bit later, so I'm getting a chance to get a a be a part of this great group as well. But I have enjoyed it thus far and like I've said it earlier. Intros I really do like this, particularly our project, and I hope it can be something. That we can move forward with. On at even a. Higher level going forward.

Speaker 4

My name is Chris Gilson. I'm an associate professor of history at Northwestern State University. I've been teaching in Louisiana for about 8 years now, and I serve like Lise as a content expert, particularly for European history. Late medieval, early modern Renaissance history. Been my primary component of participating in this project, but it's this world history so. We're all having a we all have an opportunity to contribute to a wide variety of different subjects. As we've worked our way through this, I was a part of the original textbook project and then again a part of this podcast project because it was a natural outgrowth of that, that first project that. Once the textbook was in place, providing ancillary materials is so critical to encouraging course adoption by faculty and utilization by students. So I'm excited about what we've accomplished and look forward to seeing what happens next.

Speaker 5

Hi again everyone. My name is Amelia Brister. I am the director of Library and learning resources at Louisiana Delta Community College. My role on this project was to be the librarian cohort leader and what that entailed was scheduling meetings, checking the Creative Commons, licensing help, set deadlines, keep the project on track. And work as the liaison between the group for the World SIV project and LOUIS, who actually wrote and. Managed the first.

Speaker 1

Tell us a little bit about creating the course, writing the textbook, piloting the course in just about two years. I mean, it sounds very overwhelming, but can any of you begin to tell us or take us through the process?

Speaker 5

Well, I'll start with that, LOUIS. Our Louisiana Library network, which is our consortium that connects all of our academic libraries and the state Louisiana set up the overall project. They wrote the grant that was funded through the Department of Education. I believe it was a 2.1 million dollar grant so it was a very large project. They provided the workspace, the Moodle module course Shell. They set up professional development for library cohort leaders. We learned about project management, best practices, Creative Commons licensing, and then they built out the team. They put out a call for participant. And interested parties applied and then were connected with us, the librarians who led these small cohorts. I believe some groups had six members, some had four. It really depended on who applied and how many they had for each of those subject areas. So my job was to help everybody by, you know, kind of managing the project.

Speaker 1

Talk about what it was like revising an existing textbook, creating the course, and then adding and creating H5P activities to the textbook, which, by the way for the audience, we would like that to be defined. What exactly is an H5P activity?

Speaker 2

Well, I can say a few words on just writing the textbook first and then maybe moving into the H5P a little bit after that. But I thought right rewriting remixing the textbook was just a great experience. One thing that, you know, I guess, is probably the nature of who we are is in that it's a collection of people getting together, usually over a short time, you know, to work intensively to put together this. Material and that's. Probably true with the original material that we started out with. And it's definitely true for us. So I think as we look at the original material, there were some differences between the chapters that we noticed and just, you know, looking back at the map. Cereal and it's kind of rewarding for. Us to kind of come in and try to. Make it a little bit more uniform with. Our own, you know, our own interest. So it's another overlay that's, you know. Creating a little bit. More uniformity than was there in the first place. And I'm sure somebody will come, you know, group. Will come back behind us and do the same thing, I mean. It's just I think it's a you. Know just a continuous process. So it was, I think you know for me just a great experience in terms of looking at a larger work and working with other people to create. An enhanced project enhanced product, I mean, we started out with something that was good and I the first

group around, you know. Gave us that. Really good start. So we're able to come around afterwards and, you know, with our own strengths, you know, get to know other faculty. In Louisiana and. And figure out where our strengths. Are and just kind of. Focused in on those. And produce something. That's just even the level better for our student.

Speaker 4

I'd like to echo what Lise said about having really good materials to start with. We were really well positioned in this project. Thanks to the materials that came out of University of North Georgia, they were great OER materials to start with. What we needed to do was find a way to make them. More accessible in an electronic format to find a way. To make them more accessible and multiple for multiple users in terms of whether they're using cell phones or tablets or whatever, they may be accessing the materials with, and we also wanted to incorporate more interactivity into the textbook experience. Including some quizzes at the end of chapters and along the way that students could interact with in a live. Rapid feedback, type of format and that's what H5P activities really allow you to do. I mean, in many cases it's as simple as just including a multiple choice quiz or a matching quiz. At the end of a section or at the end of a chapter. But there are or more advanced versions of H5P tools. That I think we'll see added to versions of this textbook in the future. As other people remix what we've done or as we. Make changes ourselves to what to what's been done. That's one of the great things about OER materials is that once that OER material is out there and that license is clearly stated that someone else can reuse it to remix it, then any faculty member could take that and remix it for themselves and. I think really one of the exciting things about this is that it it's not the kind of top down process that using a textbook always has been in the past, that there's only one set of voices that are deciding exactly what should be taught or how it should be taught. This really gave us an opportunity to have a lot of different voices. With a lot of different backgrounds involved in developing this and still recognizing that someone else using it after it after us can. Do the same thing with it, and I think that's freeing in a way as far as the process of creating the course. Really, it was a social process because we were all interacting every couple of weeks, building off of each other's strengths and learning from the challenges that each person was facing along the way. And I think that's. One of the benefits of this, and I think it's one of the reasons that the course that we created is so complete is because we were all building off of of everyone else. And I think it's really fantastic what we achieved as a group and I think that shows in, in the course that was created.

Speaker 3

Quite off until in the beginning weeks of classes. You know, we have textbooks that are written by certain people and they focus on certain material cause that they are the author and that's one of the things that we were able to do with the coat. Words is that we were able to really focus on things that really had a lot of reference to people in our region and our Community that would help them understand a little bit more and that's something we often aren't able to do with the regular textbooks, not publishers, right. That's the aspect that I really enjoyed about helping to write. We are for Louisiana students and that I really think that would be a great asset for them as well.

Speaker 1

Professor Jackson, let's continue with you. What motivated you to take part in this particular OER creation opportunity?

Speaker 3

As I said earlier. Parts is that you know, being able to have access to the textbook on the first day was. Such a great thing for me. You know, I still, as I have said before and the division chair and we still have some areas in my division of liberal arts that don't have access to OER. And so this was an opportunity to ensure that. At least in this history part, we could have OER that our students can use because in those other areas where we don't have an OER, I still see that barrier that exists. Is that many students just can't afford textbooks in our area, you know, even though we still have other buyers that may stop them from though we are because of Internet connectivity. But just having it is a great asset for them because they don't get behind in their studies. You know, tuition is paid, but they still need. And so I really wanted to see a way that we could get students access to textbooks on 1st day and they wouldn't have to come out of pocket for them. So I'm really a big fan of them. You know, even in this kind of side note with that you know, one thing I have seen out of it is that OER's, you know, and we said you can use PDF versions, but at some point you do need some access to some type of Internet connectivity broadband. So I even with this cohort, I've also been. Appointed to one of the bar back committees in my area to ensure that our students have it as well. We just have to do everything that we can these days to ensure that students just have connectivity, have access to all the tools that need to really succeed. And I know especially us here in north Louisiana and Louisiana Delta, we often lack that in both of these tools will help us and really help our students as well.

Speaker 4

I was motivated to take part in this project from the very first notification that I saw about saw of it, and I didn't see that notification until rather. Late, maybe only a day before the applications were due and so I raced to put something together. I think sitting outside during some quarantine period of time, I don't know and. I was excited about it because I've been using OER materials off and on during my time at an issue and students do well with. Students are more enthusiastic about the class. They start the class with a lower stress level and a greater openness to doing the work that you're assigning for them. And because of that, they finish the class more successfully and they end up giving higher evaluations. Quite frankly for classes. That have OER materials. So those are all good reasons for the students, for the faculty, the challenge often is institutional, and institutions have a tendency to make big decisions about textbooks. That don't allow for a lot of innovation. And so when I saw this project advertised by the state and encouraged by the institutions, I wanted to make sure that I was a part of it because I wanted to make sure that it that it stuck, that it lasted because similar opportunities. Don't pop up very often and they can be crushed by market concerns and questions about contracts and profitability and all of those kind of things can crush this kind of innovation. And so I wanted to make sure that I was driving it rather than watching it die.

Speaker 2

I think what motivated me primarily was the. Opportunity to be involved in creating. A textbook for world history that. You know, I really felt comfortable I could use. And would want to use. I think I. You know, in all honesty, I struggled in the past a little bit. There were some talk at manage Community College about trying. We, ours and especially in world history for some reason they just weren't something that I felt would resonate with our students what was online. Or and what? Had existed previously, and so when this opportunity came around that and I think just my experience with. Really becoming committed to access and. You know, serving students who don't necessarily have the means to

buy the expensive textbooks that you know I'm. Was comfortable with using. You know, I thought we could. I could blend both of these together and, you know, help create something that, you know would really work for a history class. And you know that I would really be happy to advocate for and to promote.

Speaker 1

What was the most challenging part of creating this course?

Speaker 2

I think I would have to say the work rewriting the textbook you know when it came down to it, there was a lot of preparation so that when each faculty member went ahead and did their rewriting. We knew what we were doing. We were going to be consistent with each other. We had, like Chresancio said, we our cohort as well. We put a lot of emphasis on. You know more inclusivity and. The city we had that all kind of worked out and managed and then when it came down to the actual writing, I think that was most challenging because I mean, you're writing a textbook.

Speaker

I mean it's.

Speaker 2

Just and you know, I was working myself on 3 chapters and.

Speaker 5

That's a lot of work.

Speaker 2

So when we, you know, was actually starting to sit down and do it, I kind of I. Had the tools, I knew what I needed to do. But you know it, it took some time. And you know, that was that was the biggest. Challenge I think from my point of view. I I enjoy it. I love writing, so it was OK but. It was a challenge.

Speaker 1

For the other professors on the call. Was time the most challenging part, or were there other, even more daunting challenges in creating the course?

Speaker 4

Starting is always difficult on something of this size and magnitude significance, so forth. Just taking the first step to start editing the first chapter and then to start editing each individual chapter after that. But once you start moving in that direction. Yeah, I think it started to go a little bit, a little bit more easily. So starting is one challenge and then another challenge. And just and, you know, being comfortable editing materials that other people have worked on, just the whole notion of remixing and reusing is kind of, I mean it's kind of a foreign concept in in the in the way we approach academic academia today. I mean the. Idea of using other people's work seems really uncomfortable at at first, but the whole purpose of doing that is to allow us to develop these materials that students can access. For free and we know that

others are going to do the same thing with what we've done. And so developing some comfort with that type of that type of work is is a challenge. And then honestly dealing with images and Creative Commons licensing for images was. Probably the other challenge because. Even in an OER textbook, you will sometimes find that there are images that either the original author did not or not necessarily textbook of your material of any kind that the original author did not actually have the proper permission to use. That you may have to try and find something similar to replace it with. You may find that they had specific permission from the original copyright holder to use that in an OER text, and whether or not that license transfers to the next person is, it can be a little unclear. And so in in the cases where I encountered something like that, I was always. Very careful to find images, maps, supporting materials, whatever. That maybe that I felt confident had the appropriate Creative Commons licensing, and Amelia and the LOUIS staff were in critical resources and in that.

Speaker 5

Well, I will say that as the librarian cohort leader, it was, it was always a challenge for me. I was really worried about meeting deadlines and I was thinking about it from this high level. I'm part of this \$2 million project for LOUIS and. I don't want to let anybody down so. I remember I think it was may ish of last year when I was I was kind of getting stressed that, you know, some things had not been finished. And I'll never forget. Lise and Chris were very like supportive and understanding and they said, hey, we create these all the time. It's going to be fun. It's going to be we're going to finish this project and you know it, it wrapped up and everything went well. And you know, we're here today talking about how. Successful it was. But I remember in the moment it was quite stressful. But I had a great team and I think that's really important. Anytime you're building OER projects is to have a terrific team. So thank you guys for being my team.

Speaker 1

What advice would you give to new instructors just starting out in their career about creating course materials? Would you recommend they create these materials as OER materials? Why or why?

Speaker 4

Not it really depends on your institution. It's important that you don't. Do a lot of work that isn't going to be usable long term. You have to pace yourself and think carefully about how much time you have and and what the best use of your time is. I think probably the best way to approach that would be to try to create as many materials as you can. Can adjust for whether you're using textbooks or whether you're using OER materials, so if you're recording lectures, if you're doing podcasts, if you're creating quizzes or writing assignments, try to do them in a way that you can adjust to things that you can't control. And then at any point that you can drive your institution, your department. Fellow faculty towards you using OER, then by all means do that, but try to create the most flexibility for yourself and when you're creating, writing assignments and reading assignments, that's where you really have the ability to use a lot of OER materials that you can to create assignments that you can use in classes. No matter what decisions about the textbook may be made, whether you control it or not.

Speaker 5

I love that answer. I would add that if you are new to OER's and it if it really intrigues you and you really want to be a a creator of OER to get started, I would recommend that you be a Co-creator or sign on to a

project similar to the LOUIS project to get experience. With a group that's already deep into that area into that expertise so that you can. Have that guidance and then maybe move forward solo if that's how you choose to go. But having the team when I first got into the OER arena it, it was so important because I could bounce my questions off of other librarians across the state. So I think having that team is really.

Speaker 3

And pretty much like Amelia said. You know, I I. Wouldn't recommend this for someone else just getting started. You know, you you really doing it all by yourself? You really need to be with a cohort or a team to kind of help. Cuz I really enjoy and as I said earlier, being a part of the Greek that they're able to bounce ideas off each other. I don't think that and I like that idea, Sir. Doing it and you're just getting out. You're really still trying to figure out your whole teaching. Your way of teaching and then also trying. To write out who we. Are that might be. Pretty much overwhelmed with for a new person coming into the field. I would think it would be a great opportunity, but doing alone would probably be just too much. You should probably get rid of full work on that. Really more likely, especially because this probably goes forward, we'll have more. Institutions, scholars, University, that are going to probably adopt it on their own because it's such a great asset to that institution. So I would say get with your division sharing indeed. And maybe you could do it with a group of people at your institution versus.

Speaker 2

Yeah, you know what, I. Would add is that if you are interested. Starting out in your career teaching, you know to just try throwing out a few assignments or, you know, maybe. You know, whole chapter, but you know, maybe some kind of introductions to chapters or something like that is to just test the waters and see, you know, where, you know, you might like to concentrate your energies and efforts, you know, just there's many different websites you could use or, you know, like the canvas Commons. You know, just to. Play around with small things before.

Speaker 1

We talked about great challenges in creating the course. Now let's talk about your biggest successes with the project, starting with Professor Jackson, what do you feel has been your greatest success in working with this project?

Speaker 3

I would probably say one of my greatest successes, and as I said, this border was as I teach so many different areas of. History and here at Louisiana Delta Community College that I really don't get a chance to focus on one particular area as much like my cohorts. And on this as well, so I was able to really with American history and also world civilization, get a chance to really focus on them and to kind of enhance my expertise on. And so that was one of my greatest things that I really got a. Chance to go in? Depth and I've been able to do in my. Really in my. 12 years teaching around here as much as I've been. And so that was my greatest thing about it. You know, I got into it for the students, but I got a. Chance to enjoy it as well. You know, because I didn't have to kind of bounce around like I usually have done for the past several years and gotta say it's to get in more civilization got a chance to really go into banking history, just like I did. You know, when I was in my graduate study so that. Was a great. You know, we get into really understand the material as we kind of. Mixed it up for the for there we are. All right, well, there's

always having uh. Able to gain access to material that we could share with the students is is a a good part as well, but it was secondary somewhat as well.

Speaker 1

This is what we're talking about right here. Success stories, Professor Namikas.

Speaker 2

I think you know. I'd have a couple of things to say on success stories I piloted. The course, once we had it all put. Together, and that was a great success I enjoyed. That a lot. I thought that the students responded really well to, you know, the materials that we had presented. I felt the materials were fresh because they were new to me, so I felt like I had a new energy teaching. So I think you know just from you. Know both angles. But especially if you know for the students, I think that they just came together. In a way that you know they. Really learned well from it and I was, you know, really proud of them on the by the time we got to the final exam and I could see some of that. So you know, count that as you know, a huge success. I think just in terms of creating the class, seeing how other people put materials together and how other instructors taught. And it was refreshing for me also, because it's nothing I you know, really didn't pay attention to, honestly. Got my own world. Machine teaching so. How classes need to be put together? Especially we our classes need to be put together in a way that all instructors can use them. I think really enhanced my own ability to. Create an OER's and then the third. Thing I would add is just creating the. Podcast has been so much fun. I find that really rewarding. It's something that I've always wanted to do, that I've worked online for so long. And a lot of it. Has you know I? Think in the early days we did audio. PowerPoints, but then that kind of fell by the wayside and it all became a little bit more textual. And then now we're going back to the audio again and I'm just really, I mean it's always been missing for me, you know in those intervening years. And so to add more audio back in is something that. You know, I I love being a. Part of that I think it's so important for the students and. For history, you know, that's where I think the excitement about history can, you know, really be infectious for the students. You know, we can convince them that history is meaningful and it's impactful and important. So those are the three areas I would.

Speaker 1

Professor Gilson. Success.

Speaker 4

I think probably. The most notable success, or the most obvious success for me, just as I was completing final grades for courses this semester, is the fact that I saw a noticeable decline in in DFW rates and students that were failing or withdrawing from the course. And particularly a decline in in students. Who you we always see students that participate for a few weeks and then start to do less and less and then at some point just stop participating completely. And I I didn't really see that this semester and I was really excited to see that because I could draw comparisons between the last spring and this spring between classes of very. Very similar I guess you could say student makeup perhaps or similar collegiate classes. They were directly comparable from one year to another and I saw an improvement in student performance and I thought that was absolutely what the purpose of this this project was to accomplish. And then on top of that? I saw in in my dual enrollment classes, in particular a lot of engagement with the course and I could tell that through course evaluations at the end of the semester with students

expressing appreciation for having access to the textbook from day one and not having to pay for the textbook and. Having a textbook that felt complete, that felt detailed and I could see that in the comments that I received back on the course and that's a really important consideration because there is so. There is so much variety in the way dual enrollment classes are organized across the state, and students access to textbooks, whether it's provided by their school or whether they have to go and try and track it down for themselves or pay for it themselves, there's. Historically been a lot of inequality in the way that textbooks are accessible for dual enrollment students in in this class. That wasn't an issue in the same way. Obviously broadband and Internet accessibility, those are still things that have to be dealt with in in the future and I'm happy to hear that we have somebody on our. On our in our group that's participating in that right now, but at least in terms of the textbook itself, I think we're addressing that challenge and I think students are noticing that. And I can tell that in, in their reactions to evaluation questions.

Speaker 1

Miss Brister, can you celebrate any successes?

Speaker 5

Well, OK, so I've already set it. My biggest success is that we finished the. Project from my side, but I will say that getting to meet instructors from all across the state was a really great opportunity for me and seeing how they. Seek information how they research some of the questions they had. Really helped me as a librarian, understand how I could be more valuable on our campus for our institution. So I would say professional development was really valuable for me from this project and of course. Getting to work with all of you and then roll that work over into the podcast was just an added bonus. This podcast episode has been produced under a CC by NCND license. All episodes in this series are made possible through the efforts of Lise and Minka's Christopher Gilson, Chresancio Jackson, and Ryan Pierce and Amelia Brister. Thank you for listening.