TLI Grant Report

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2015

# Introduction

Two years ago I developed and ran online ENGL 015: Rhetoric and Composition for 2013/2014 but meaningful participation and successful attainment of learning objectives was elusive. Some students (a minority) performed well on weekly assignments and essays but most students did not, especially as the semester progressed. Source use, development of the essays, workshops, and group activities did not go as planned. Students seemed unengaged in the course material. Looking at the structure of that class, I believe that it lacked interactivity and a sense of community, largely due to the amount of individual writing and reading assignments in the course. I believe the course was too text based for both the instructor and students. The previous model and resulting student performance were so frustrating that I did not offer the online class again in 2014/2015, choosing to return to face to face ENGL 015 classes and reevaluate the online course. I feel an online version has value, but not in the form I had previously used. I wanted to work on creating more meaningful group interactions and teacher to student interactions, in addition to developing and presenting course material in a variety of mediums.

# Project Design

## May 1 progress

1. I completed and passed OL 1000: Welcome to World Campus
2. I completed and passed OL 1800: Accessibility
3. I completed and passed OL 1900: Prove It!
4. I enrolled in the May session of OL 2000:
5. I created a master class copy of the previous version of ENGL 15 online in ANGEL
6. I spoke with Terry Baker about his use of Turn It In and Peer Mark
7. I researched Grammerly with the help of Mary Ann Mengel, and decided it is a better fit for use in ENGL 004 classes.
8. I completed the YouSeeU pilot in my ENGL 202D WEB, and I had ideas for how to use it in the ENGL 15.
9. I ordered my fall textbook for ENGL 15.
10. The section of ENGL 15 WEB was added to the fall schedule last month and, as of May 1, already had 12 students enrolled (50%).

## June 1 progress

1. I completed and passed OL 2000:
2. I enrolled in the June session of OL 2700: Online Presence
3. I signed up for a Turn It In account.
4. I downloaded Screen Cast O Matic onto my laptop in preparation for the short lecture/ notes/ presentations I planned to make for each chapter notes
5. I completed the YouSeeU pilot in my ENGL 202D, wrote a report for the grant, and I reviewed activities for its use in the ENGL 15
6. I completed the syllabus for the web class
7. I completed the update of existing assignments and folders and content in the web class
8. I added Amy Roche and Mary Ann Mengel as course editors to the web class

## July 1 progress

1. I completed and passed OL 2700.
2. I completed all OL coursework and received the Certification of Online Teaching through the World Campus.
3. I converted my chapter notes to prezi.
4. I created YouSeeU activities and sent them to Mary Ann, who set up the page for the ENGL 15 class.
5. I gave access permission to Erik Lawson, the intern, who worked on accessibility in the online class.
6. I created a welcome announcement for the class, which will be posted prior to the first day of class.
7. I reviewed my notes from the OL classes and tested how to run a whodunit report.

## August 10 progress

1. I recorded my videos for each chapter notes.
2. I used Screen Cast-O-Matic to create a screen within screen video recording of my prezi and lecture.
3. I posted all videos to my YouTube channel.
4. I created links to all videos in ANGEL.
5. After consultation with Amy, I created a syllabus quiz.

## August 25 progress

1. With frequent help from Mary Ann and Amy, I figured out turn it in and peer

mark for draft workshops and created those in ANGEL.

2. Class has full enrollment of 24 students.

## October 8 progress

1. After consultation with Amy, I created a mid-semester survey and added it to the Week 8 (Oct 16) folder. Amy and I met and discussed the results in early November.

# Learning Outcomes

All tables provided by the Center for Learning and Teaching based on the survey administered in the online class. During mid-semester of Fall 2015, students in the online course were surveyed about the various topics of both the online course method and the instructor’s teaching style. Focusing on the questions asked in regards to the online course method, the following tables summarize the responses.

ENGL 15: n = 15; mid-semester enrollment = 24;

## Table 1. Student satisfaction with online components

| Response | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Not Applicable |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Syllabus and assignment schedule are valuable. | 66.7% | 33% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Required reading/texts are valuable. | 13.3% | 53.3% | 33.3% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| OWL and PSU istudy Modules are valuable. | 20% | 20% | 46.7% | 6.7% | 0% | 6.7% |
| Mini Lecture / Prezi Screencasts are valuable. | 60% | 26.7% | 13.3% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Essay development assignments (workplan, annotated bibliography, revising logs) are valuable. | 46.7% | 46.7% | 6.7% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Discussion Forums (written and video) to post responses / talk with fellow students are valuable. | 6.7% | 6.7% | 60% | 13.3% | 13.3% | 0% |
| Individual Writing Assignments (article analysis, writing prompts) are valuable. | 13.3% | 73.3% | 6.7% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

As identified in Table 1, the majority of students found all of the online components valuable or neutral while the minority of students found them less valuable.

## Table 2. Students’ perception of active learning in the online format

| Response | This course requires the students to be active participants in the teaching and learning process. |
| --- | --- |
| Always | 40% |
| Very Often | 26.7% |
| Often | 20% |
| Occasionally | 13.3% |
| Rarely or Never | 0% |

## Table 3. Students’ perception of the workload in the online format

| Response | This course is a 3-credit, 3 contact hour Penn State course. The workload in this course, relative to comparable courses (face-to-face, hybrid, or online), is: |
| --- | --- |
| Very Light | 0% |
| Light | 0% |
| About the Same | 53.3% |
| Heavy | 33.3% |
| Very Heavy | 13.3% |

## Table 4. Students’ perception of the pace in the online format

| Response | This course is a 3-credit, 3 contact hour Penn State course. The pace in this course, relative to comparable courses (face-to-face, hybrid, or online), is: |
| --- | --- |
| Too Slow | 0% |
| Slow | 0% |
| About the Same | 66.7% |
| Fast | 26.7% |
| Too Fast | 6.7% |

## Table 5. Students’ perception of the course difficulty in the online format

| Response | This course is a 3-credit, 3 contact hour Penn State course. The difficulty of this course, relative to comparable courses (face-to-face, hybrid, or online), is: |
| --- | --- |
| Very Easy | 0% |
| Easy | 6.7^ |
| About the Same | 73.3% |
| Hard | 20% |
| Very Hard | 0% |

Tables 2,3,4, and 5 all demonstrate that students’ perception of the online class is very similar to their expectations for participation, workload, difficulty, and pace in face to face classes.

# Discussion

The video responses and student feedback introduced a new media literacy element to the online class that had been missing, and provided students with a new take away skill that they might not be learning in other classes, especially those that meet face to face. The video assignments can successfully replace some of the written group activities and individual activities. The skills that students learn by creating the videos and giving feedback are useful and timely skills needed by today’s college graduates.

My plan is to run the course exactly the same in the spring 2016 semester and then evaluate possible changes, with one exception. Due to the number of problems the students and I had with with Turnitin’s Peermark, I will not be using that function at all. I will still use the originality check offered through Turnitin. The draft workshops will be set in ANGEL’s group discussions in teams. In the fall 2016 semester, I would like to make YouSeeU a bigger part of the discussion groups and I plan to evaluate the existing video links to find more current topics or possibly more relevant ones, and ones that already meet accessibility requirements. I have not yet received the SRTE results from the fall semester so I can’t speak yet as to quantitative data from students as related to their perception of the class at the end of the semester. Some things will also have to be updated in the very near future as Canvas replaces ANGEL.

# Scholarly Outcomes

Although I do not have any published material related to my work with online education, I am cited as a resource by my division head, and have met individually with faculty from CAS, ENGL, and PW about the structure and creation of the online classes. I also run a workshop on assessing student writing every spring as a part of the Writing Across the Curriculum committee, and many of the strategies I use as a part of my online classes are discussed.

# Recommendations

1. Consistency with due dates and types of assignments is very important especially if the class is made up of a majority of first year students. Not every student is good with time management, so consistency helps everyone with weekly workload expectations.
2. At the start of the semester, there should also be a bit of a buffer week with only small assignments due to help allow for students who add the class on the 10th day of the semester, so they can still get caught up with missed assignments. It also allows all the students to acclimate to the course environment.
3. According to PSU and the registrar, any student from any campus can take your online class during the regular academic year. Registration opens up to them about a week before classes start. This can be a major problem if you plan to have resources on reserve at the Thun library, buy the book at the bookstore, expect them to work in pairs or groups, come to your office hours, or expect them to use media commons or the one button studio, since those resources may not exist at their location. By request only, the registrar can limit the classes to Berks students only during the regular academic year.
4. Also, unless you want students to call you by your first name, alter your name as it appears in ANGEL so it only uses your first initial followed by your last name and include how you want to be addressed in an opening email or video so students know what to call you.

# Conclusion

The TLI grant and accompanying support from the CLT was extremely helpful. Without the grant, I would not have undertaken such a huge project on my own, especially one that involved so many different new programs and technologies. The online ENGL 15 class is the only one offered here at Berks, and I feel that it offers a rich, interactive experience for students who enroll in the class that is comparable to that of a face to face class (and that was missing from the previous version of the online class). Although I have not yet seen the SRTE scores from fall semester, I did receive the following unsolicited email from a student enrolled in the online class:

You received the following message in your Penn State ANGEL account. This mail message originated from FA 15 ENGL 015 WEB , Section 022: RHETORIC & COMP. If you wish to respond, please do so using the ANGEL mail utility.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **From:** | BINDER, JESSICA |
| **Subject:** | RE: end of semester notes |
| **To:** | DARENEAU, J. |

Prof. Dareneau,

I wanted to let you know that I've really enjoyed this class.  I appreciated your organization and clarity of expectations.  I look forward to taking more of your WEB classes in the future.

# Acknowledgements

Center for Learning and Teaching

Terry Baker

Tara Beecham