

Composition, Digital Literacies, & Instructional Design: Creating Open Resources Together

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Introduction: Building Bridges

- Initial project goal
 - Collaboratively create a series of 5 modules with digital learning resources to support foundational instruction in English that would bridge the outcomes of the Composition Program, Digital Literacy Initiatives, and Pathways to General Education at Virginia Tech.
 - Collaboration between English Department, University Libraries, and Technology-enhanced Learning and Online Strategies.
- Shifting exigence, scope, and focus
 - In response to COVID-19, the focus tightened to creating module-based content to support virtual instruction that would be taking place in 2020-2021.



Pedagogies

- Shared pedagogical values
 - Trust in learners
 - Learner agency
 - Reflection and reflective writing
 - Active learning
- Shared approaches
 - Flexibility and transfer across assignments and courses
 - Approachability in tone, especially for video content
 - Emphasis on opportunities for asynchronous, platform-agnostic online engagement
 - Emphasis on student activities rather than presenter-based media



Programs

- Mapping across programmatic outcomes
 - English Department First-Year Writing Program Outcomes
 - University Libraries' Digital Literacy Outcomes
 - Pathways to General Education Outcomes
- Reimagining original plans due to COVID-19
 - The modules were originally intended to be used in a pilot program of hybrid writing classes in Fall 2020.
 - The first-year writing program went fully online in Fall 2020.
 - The videos and modules were offered to all first-year writing instructors - no pilot program.



Logistics

- Shared virtual workspaces using available tools: Zoom, Google Docs and Drive, and Canvas
- Regular full team meetings for feedback and consensus-building with smaller group work between sessions
- Leveraging varied and adjacent expertise throughout small group work
- Balance of synchronous and asynchronous work helped with a large team with varied schedules
- Using existing platforms to share finished content
 - [Learning object repository](#) and [YouTube channel](#)



Challenges

- Accessibility difficulties for online collaboration
- Equitable distribution of work based on individuals' compensation, workload, and contract duration
- Equitable distribution of work based on personal technology and constraints of homes as workspaces
- Limited software and hardware availability during a pandemic for digital content creation
- Fewer opportunities for mid-process feedback, usability testing, and pilot instructor recruitment



Futures

- Incorporating user feedback
 - We are continuing to solicit feedback from instructors who have used the modules in their classes.
- Promoting wider usage among instructors
 - We continue to encourage instructors to use these modules in their research and writing classes at VT.
- Producing new iterations of existing modules
 - We hope to be able to use the user feedback we collect to modify future iterations of these modules.
- Applying for future funding
 - We are pursuing future grants to continue promoting digital literacy at VT.



Takeaways

- Cross-departmental collaboration can offer valuable insights into shared goals and related outcomes.
- Working on creative projects asynchronously during a pandemic is challenging and requires flexibility and empathy.
- People who have never met in person can still form community and effective working relationships.
- There is always more to learn from fellow educators, and collaborating across departments, backgrounds, and experiences is so fruitful.
- Librarians are superheroes.



Presenters

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Special Thanks To:

- **Pathways: General Education at Virginia Tech**
- **Annual Pathways Grant Program**
- **University Libraries**
- **Teaching and Learning Engagement**
- **Digital Literacy Initiatives**
- **Instructional Content and Design**
- **Technology-Enhanced Learning and Online Strategies**
- **Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning**
- **Department of English**
- **Composition Program**
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- **Aaron Bond**, Senior Director, Professional Development Network
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- **André Jones, Jr.**, Instructor of First-Year Writing, Department of English
- **Holly Coombs**, Fiscal Technician, Department of English
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Slides available:

bit.ly/chep21bridges



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