

Faculty First Grant Report – 2017

Redesigning Online Lectures for a High-Demand Course: Making them Accessible and Student Focused

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Project Overview and Course Overview

This Faculty First Grant project redesigned online lectures for a high-demand course: English 295, Writing in the Workplace. I have taught English 295 as a hybrid course and fully online in the past. The English Department offers many sections of this course each semester; they always fill and have waitlists because the course meets requirements for many different majors. English 295 will continue to be offered online and with a Graduate Teaching Assistant to accommodate more students.

My English 295 lectures were in Adobe Captivate and used for hybrid and fully online courses. The Faculty First Grant enabled me to work with OIT to find the best program to replace the prohibitively expensive Captivate, to update the lectures, and to include closed captions on the lectures. To ensure the lectures were in a program that would not need an expensive subscription or purchased updates, we chose to create PowerPoint videos and upload them to YouTube. The lectures were updated to a modern design and shorter segments. Because they are on YouTube, they are also accessible on mobile devices. The new lectures with closed captioning will be implemented in English 295 online in the fall of 2017, reaching about 110 students from different disciplines and colleges within the university in one semester.

Semesters the course has been and/or will be taught

In addition to using the new online lectures in English 295 online this fall, I will use them in the spring of 2018 and in many semesters following. The PowerPoint and YouTube method of delivery, along with the shorter segments, will enable me to adapt and rerecord parts of the lectures as the course adapts to changes in workplace writing and in the student population. This project will be used for many more semesters.

Number of students affected

Because this project will be used for a high-demand class and for a long time, hundreds of students will access the redesigned lectures for English 295. This fall, about 110 students will take the course, and I expect to have that many students in the spring, too. I will continue to teach this course in one or both semesters each year. In semesters when a GTA teaches with

me, 110 students can be enrolled. In semesters when I teach alone, about 50 students can be enrolled. In just the coming academic year, over 200 students will be affected by this project.

Project outcomes and products

This project was a success. The lectures were completed early and ready for students this fall. Iryna Loboda oversaw the project, guiding the team and suggesting course design and implementation ideas. Jaewoo Do used my twelve long lectures in Captivate to design two or three shorter PowerPoint segments (5-15 minutes each) for every lecture; he ensured the design met accessibility needs and guided students through the lectures clearly. Anne Skutnik created transcripts of the long lectures, which I used as scripts for the new lectures parts; she also offered suggestions about different delivery and recording methods, created banners for Canvas, and assisted with some online instruction ideas. I recorded the PowerPoint and audio using Zoom and the Yeti microphone, edited the video with iMovie, posted the finished lecture parts to YouTube, and edited the automatically-generated closed captions. Lecture 1, Part 1 can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cyJAROBoTU>.

Once the parts of the twelve lectures were on YouTube, Iryna Loboda and Rachel Stanley worked with me to explain different ways to use the iPad Pro to create short explanatory videos. Rachel helped me to get the Ipevo app to create videos of my notations and markups on the screen with the Apple pencil. These short videos will be integrated into the course throughout the semester as additional explanations as students work on their assignments. I will create those explanatory videos each semester as needed and create a new introductory video of myself each semester.

Student Evaluation

While assessment will continue for each semester I teach English 295, the initial evaluation of this project will occur throughout the fall 2017 semester. First, I can evaluate the technology as soon as the class begins. The number of emails and student problems with the technology will indicate whether they can access the YouTube lectures through Canvas. Second, I'll be able to evaluate the students' retention of and interaction with the material through Canvas: quizzes, uploaded assignments, and Canvas records of student access. The quizzes will evaluate how well students remember what the lectures discuss, and the assignments will evaluate how well the students can apply the information from the lectures. If the grades for the students drop significantly from previous semesters in which I have taught the class, then I will need to rework the lectures to discover what platforms will best meet the students' needs. Last, I will get students' feedback from the course evaluations, which I should be able to access mid-December. Given the anonymity of these evaluations, the students will feel comfortable

responding to open-ended questions about course delivery. I will be able to continue these assessment practices in every semester the course is taught.

Project benefits for the department and UT

This project has enabled the English Department to reach more students without compromising the integrity of the course, and it has enabled UT to increase online instruction, reaching more students and becoming more competitive on its path to a top-tier institution.

Conclusion

Overall, this project was a great success. Jaewoo Do's PowerPoints are clear and accessible; Anne Skutnik's audio, image, and course design ideas were easy to use and integrate; Rachel Stanley's assistance with the iPad setup was helpful; and Iryna Loboda's oversight, suggestions, and guidance were invaluable. I look forward to implementing the lectures this semester and would love to work with these people and the many wonderful staff at OIT in the future.