Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation Grants

Final Report for Mini-Grants

General Information

Date: 12/19/2018

Grant Round: 11

Grant Number: M24

Institution Name(s): Kennesaw State University

Team Members (Name, Title, Department, Institutions if different, and email address for each):

- Tiffani Reardon, Instructional Designer and Part-time Instructor of Technical Communication, College of Humanities and Social Sciences Office of Distance Education and Department of Technical Communication and Interactive Design, treardo2@kennesaw.edu
- Tamara Powell, Interim Executive Director of Technology Enhanced Learning and Professor of English, Distance Learning Center and Department of English, tpowel25@kennesaw.edu

Project Lead: Tiffani Reardon

Course Name(s) and Course Numbers: TCOM 2010 and WRIT 3140

Final Semester of Project: Fall 2018

If applicable to your project:

Average Number of Students Per Course Section: 25

Number of Course Sections Affected by Implementation of Revised Resources: 31

Total Number of Students Affected by Implementation of Revised Resources: 775

1. Project Narrative

In Round 3 of the Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation Grants, we had a team of 4 faculty and an instructional designer working together to compile, revise, and write a technical communication textbook for TCOM 2010: Technical Writing and WRIT 3140: Workplace Writing courses at Kennesaw State University. *Sexy Technical Communication* is now saving approximately 775 students an estimated $93,000 a year. With this mini-grant, one of the faculty, Tammy Powell, and the instructional designer, Tiffani Reardon, revises and updates the textbook for content, grammar, design, and accessibility. As a result of survey results from students requesting the option of a print version, our

student assistant, Jennifer Nguyen, was also creating a PDF version of the textbook to be uploaded to an online textbook website such as Amazon (not yet confirmed) as a low-cost print option.

The primary goals of this project were the following:

- improve the quality of the *Sexy Technical Communication* open online textbook
- create an optional, low-cost print format in order to meet student needs

The textbook is still the same book, but it has been moved to its own domain name, which forwards to the SoftChalk Cloud server. The textbook can be found at http://sexytechcom.com.

Overall, while the project hit some road bumps (explained in the "future plans" section), we are happy with how the edits have turned out. Looking at the text, the reader will notice a much smoother look to the textbook. We converted all chapters to the latest version of SoftChalk and resolved all accessibility issues. We have also worked to create consistent chapter objectives and consistent page breaks throughout chapters, which will help instructors with course planning and help students keep track of where they are in a chapter.

Perhaps the most exciting development since receiving this mini-grant is that Tiffani Reardon, who teaches technical writing with the textbook, created an online master course for all online TCOM 2010 courses at KSU using this textbook. While instructors have the choice to use this textbook or swap chapters out for the traditional Markel textbook, several instructors in the department who were previously using Markel have decided to switch to *Sexy Technical Communication* beginning spring 2019. This is a great start to expanding the use of our open online textbook—one that we are very excited about.

2. Materials Description (Textbook Introduction)

Sexy technical writing…we've got to be kidding, right? But no, we aren't. Good technical writing is powerful and clear and gets the job done. It brings people together and solves problems. Good technical writing purrs and hums like that BMW you plan to be driving someday. What's not *sexy* about that? On the other hand, poor technical writing skills may lead to a lifetime of asking people if they want fries with that…or worse, selling vacuum cleaners door to door. There's no need to ask what's not *sexy* about that!

WE – your textbook authors – are a team of dedicated writers, tech writing teachers, designers, artists and professionals who are absolutely passionate about technical writing. That's why we decided to create a text for you that we all loved, a text that would be free and always available to you. Now, that's *sexy*.

We hope you love what we have done as much as we have loved doing it…and notice…we haven't even asked for a donation!

3. Materials Links
http://sexytechcom.com

4. Future Plans

At this point in time, the textbook is still being revised. Because of unexpected job changes and other unexpected barriers that occurred during this project, some parts were delayed. However, the book will be complete and ready to go by January for the spring semester. We are spending the winter holiday finishing it up.

The PDF version of the textbook is also behind and will not be ready in time for spring semester. Our student assistant completed the base textbook, but was not able to incorporate the changes made to the online version because we were behind on time for those. Once the online text is finished, we will then continue working to finish up the PDF version so that we can get a low-cost print option in the works. This part of the project is still essential—we still get regular requests for a hard copy of the textbook.

The project team members are regularly presenting at conferences—in fact, Jonathan Arnett is an OER Research Fellow for his work with the textbook in his class. The team has also been invited to do a SoftChalk Innovators webinar on the textbook in spring.