NC-NET News

ISSUE FOCUS:
Technology Bootcamps

Technology Bootcamps: Adding to Your Toolbox

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Most instructors today are adept at using word processing and presentation software, and are able to research on the Internet, but what about other technology tools designed to improve the teaching and learning experience? Dozens of North Carolina community college faculty are availing themselves of a hidden jewel in NC-NET's arsenal of online training, the NC-NET Academy's *Technology Bootcamps,* to expand their technology "toolbox."

NC-NET offers three *Technology Bootcamp* courses. Although there is no requirement to take them in the sequence (I, II, III), it is a somewhat natural progression. In *Bootcamp I*, faculty "amp up" their everyday PowerPoint presentations, and explore the potential of social networking and podcasting for their classroom deliveries. *Bootcamp II* considers alternatives like Prezi, LiveBinders and wikispaces, Google docs and Hangouts, and much more. How do we cover all these materials in just six weeks?! At the end of the course, that's exactly what the participants frequently ask, too! One of our secrets is that NC-NET courses engage a diverse group of instructors through a collaborative and cross-discipline discussion atmosphere. Not only does each participant complete several beginner-level projects with new tools and strategies, but they experience the fruits of others doing likewise, and discovering tips and traps along the way. This rapidly builds everyone's experience base!

In the latest addition to NC-NET, *Bootcamp III*, the focus is on video, since we all know that relying on paper handouts is so "yesterday." In the first week, participants are surprised to find the large number of quality online educational videos freely available for their own subject area.
As participants work over the span of six weeks

with powerful video creation tools to create a 5-10 minute lesson for their subject area, one of the first creative actions the course challenges them to do is to create a 30-second introduction video. Most participants had not recorded a video before—let alone shared one! So, the first step was to create a YouTube account. After a few practice runs, each participant tapped the red video record button on their smart phone and took off with "Hi! My name is…" Before you could say "Lights! Camera! Action!" they had created their first video, uploaded it to YouTube, and shared the link with the rest of the class. By the end of a few days we all knew what each other looked like, sounded like, where we lived, and we felt like we'd been working together for several weeks.

But what came next was a game changer for almost everyone. Using a little-advertised feature of YouTube, with just a couple clicks, everyone was able to tap the power of YouTube's much-improved speech-to-text engine to automatically add text captions to their introduction video. Of course, speech-to-text is never perfect, and needs a little editing help, but you can imagine the relief of the participating instructors when they discovered how easy it was to surmount a big hurdle in preparing videos to include in instructional materials: the closed-captioning required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Armed with this new knowledge and a host of other new tools, the consensus among participants was something like, "Wow! I am so inspired to start using these tools to better reach *all* of my students!"

If your technology toolbox is looking a bit sparse, join the NC-NET Academy team for one of our *Technology Bootcamps* in 2017-18. Visit the Academy web page this summer for the lineup of courses planned for the fall.

Don't miss May's Resources of the Month, focused on technology!

A publication of the North Carolina Network for Excellence in Teaching (NC-NET) • www.nc-net.info