

## IITG Mid Year Project Report : Entry # 201

### Name of Principle Investigator:

Trudi Jacobson and Tom Mackey

### IITG Project Title (truncated)

2014-UA-Jacobson-Designing Innovative Online Learning: Integrating a Coursera MOOC with Open SUNY Badging

### 1) Please consider the original timeline and deliverable targets. How is your project progressing compared with the original estimates?

We did not offer our Coursera MOOC last October as planned. Rather, today (February 2, 2015) is the first day of Metaliteracy: Empowering Yourself in a Connected World (<https://www.coursera.org/course/metaliteracy>), and we have approximately 3,000 students enrolled. We have spent a great deal of time planning it, in order to present a quality course. It will last 10 weeks, and has a strong peer assessment component. Because Coursera's platform did not allow us to provide a badging experience, we are also developing a Canvas MOOC, Empowering Yourself as a Digital Citizen, which will start March 23 and which will lead to a digital badge.

We are working with Sam Abramovich of the University of Buffalo on the research component for the grant. Working together with the grant team, he has developed a survey that will assess student motivations in connection with the course.

We are behind on developing the SLC community for those interested in badging, but hope to turn our attention to it mid spring, once other things slow down. The time it took to develop the Coursera MOOC was far more than expected.

### 2) How is spending progressing when compared with the original budget estimates? (You may also choose to detail issues regarding access to funds in the next three questions).

Things are going well and the flexibility to move funds from category to category, with approval, is very helpful. We have reallocated the waived \$3,000 Coursera fee to personnel funds, and much of the extra awarded funds have gone towards unanticipated online software costs (e.g. programs for creating promotional materials and animated instructional videos).

### 3) Please provide feedback regarding your experience with the project execution, in particular any issues or roadblocks you've encountered that may have been unexpected.

Our biggest hurdle was the impossibility of combining the badges with the Coursera platform. Initial information from them indicated that it was possible, though this was incorrect. However, given the large enrollment we've gotten, it is just as well it wouldn't work. We used much of the content from the badging system, and because we have designed the course with peer assessment, we feel that students will still have the experience of getting feedback and review of the quest-like assignments they will be submitting.

### 4) What are your positive observations or pleasant surprises about your team's interaction or project process that might be helpful to other PI's?

Having a team with various strengths has led to an outstanding experience. Also, I know that there has been concern evinced in the review process of requesting funds for a project manager, but I can't emphasize strongly enough that if a project is conceived largely, and if it is to be accomplished well, this extra expenditure can make all the difference. Our half-time project manager is keeping everything on track (the delayed submission of this form is my fault, not hers).

We also found that having access to professional video production was important for this project.

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we appreciate very much that Lisa Stepnens hooked us up with a researcher, as that piece of our work has the potential to be ground-breaking, based on the literature review and the lack of any research with the focus ours is taking.

**5) Please describe any challenges you've encountered working with your project team that you've found solutions for that might be helpful to other PI's.**

Thinking big and outside the box helped when the team was divided on going with the Coursera MOOC (no badges, and yet that was what our proposal promised) and Canvas (we also promised a Coursera MOOC, and Canvas won't reach as many learners). We compromised--we'll offer both. But that was only possible because team members respected each others' views and were willing to work extra hard to offer both. It is hard to know ahead of time how team members will react to this kind of stress, though.