

Written Report regarding Alana Van Gundy-Yoder's CTL funded activity (Participation in the Crossroads Online Institute sponsored by FIPSE).

1. Goals of the project: The goal of this project was to engage in a national academic forum through blogs with the purpose of reflecting on personal teaching and pedagogy. This was a structured forum which resulted in the creation of a "poster tool" and an "evidence template."
2. Activities you and/or your team engaged in (e.g. how often did you meet, what did you do during the meetings).

This was an eight week project which took quite a bit of time. The following information chronicles our assignments each week:

**Week One:** We worked on navigating the blog format, getting familiar with the online structure and placed pictures/descriptions of our courses and background online.

**Week Two:** We wrote out our goals and intentions for student learning (this was also the first section of our poster) this week. We were provided an article (Randy Bass's *The Scholarship of Teaching: What's the Problem*) and were expected to dialogue with the seminar cohort about problems we see with our courses.

**Week Three:** The objective for this week was for participants to examine other poster projects (from prior participants) and examine other perspectives on teaching and learning. We were each provided two posters and we had to look at what we found interesting or problematic with their work (as applied to our particular course). Using the knowledge gained from this, we were able to fill out more of the sections in our poster.

**Week Four and Five:** This week we read an article that was titled *How Experts Differ from Novices* by Bransford, Brown and Cocking. This article pushed seminar participants into examining what we really expect from our student. For example, if I asked my students to turn in a paper, what would I expect from someone who I would consider a "novice" in my subject and what would I consider an "expert." The topics discussed in this article provided us with the knowledge to fill out our "evidence template." This template consisted of two columns, one for a novice learner and one for an expert learner. It allowed us to categorize and examine the expectations on our students.

**Week Six:** In Week Six we determined what we thought were the best possible strategies to gather and interpret evidence of student learning. We read a case study provided by Curt Bennett and then reflected on our questions about student learning.

**Week Seven:** This week we watched a set of three videos that discussed the concept of cognitive apprenticeship. Throughout these videos, they shift faculty thinking from what students know to what students can do with what they know. The videos discussed terms of modeling, scaffolding and coaching which might help our students

learn better. We used this information to fill out the remaining part of our poster tools.

**Week Eight:** This was a wrap up week where we examined everyone's poster tools and blogged a critique of a partner's poster. We then were expected to revise our posters and provide feedback through an evaluation.

3. Formal or informal evidence that your project met its goals.

It is difficult for me to explain what our poster tool and evidence tool were, but the purpose of these tools were essentially to critically analyze what we expect from our students and how to make sure we design our course around getting our expectations/better the student learning process. The poster tool is essentially a project plan which includes space for the following: course information, background to the project, goals (skills or competencies do we want students to learn/experience), project influence, evidence template/questions, how do we want to restructure activity/course to see evidence of student work and then the last box consists of examples of student evidence, which we are expected to provide after implementing our activity. So, the evidence would be that I did create my own poster tool (which I am now using for all of my courses but it is too large to include in this report) and my own evidence template, which is included at the end of this report.

Copy of  
Evidence Template

Alana Yoder

**Evidence Template**

Some strategies for approaching this template:

For the "novice" category, think about a typical student's behavior in an introductory course:

What would the student tend to do when they are in this activity?

How would you know that they "got it"?

For the "expert" category, think about how a faculty colleague (or perhaps you) would approach the same task -- or ask a colleague to *show* you how she would approach the activity. Just as with the student, think about questions including:

What would your expert colleague tend to do when they are in this activity?

How would you know that your colleague "got it"?

This template aims to help you be clear and specific in your answers to those questions.

**What strategies or processes is one most likely to use in the learning activity chosen?**

**Accomplished (Expert)**

An expert would be able to connect what they are learning to real life experience. They would learn and absorb the new knowledge and apply that to existing knowledge.

**Novice**

A novice would simply be looking for the "right" answer instead of realizing that there may not be a right answer.

**On what features of the problem or situation will one most likely focus?**

**Accomplished (Expert)**

An expert will look for underlying meaning, application and substance so they will look beyond words. They will examine theoretical implications and reciprocity in other fields/circumstances. Therefore, what they will focus on will not be concrete but it will be more likely to be abstract and systems based.

**Novice**

A novice would be focusing on the obvious. In an assignment or a reading, they would be looking at what is visually or auditorially presented to them, and would not "think outside the box."

**What is one likely to consider while attempting to solve the problem or complete the learning situation?**

**Accomplished (Expert)**

An expert would be likely to consider life experience and learning experience. Experts learn in ways that they have perfected, or have become comfortable with. Therefore they are more likely to attempt to solve problems in a way that is familiar to them and have previously been successful for

**Novice**

I believe novices might also learn in a way they are used to, but they will not be as flexible as an expert. For example, students in an intro course may be looking for a way to give their teacher the right answer and they will examine the project or assignment from a way that has previously

problems in a way that is familiar to them and have previously been successful for them. While this is good in their specialized field or area, it may result in an inability to accrue new information outside of their comfort zone.

answer and they will examine the project or assignment from a way that has previously gotten them high grades. They will be using life and learning experience but in a much simpler or straightforward way because of the lack (comparatively) of experiences.

**What sort of support would the person need to complete the activity?**

#### **Accomplished (Expert)**

The expert would need little external support and approval so they would be approaching the activity from a viewpoint of personal satisfaction and not the satisfaction of figuring out the problem for others. For example, an expert would be motivated to figure out the assignment or problem because they were curious about solving it, and not because they wanted to give someone the "right" answer.

#### **Novice**

In my opinion, a novice would work better in a group and need the support of friends or peers. They are more likely to do things better on a basis that allows them to come to a consensus versus an expert who is approaching the problem from an individual approach.

**From the processes you have outlined here, what actions or behaviors would you accept as evidence that this person has reached your learning goal?**

#### **Accomplished (Expert)**

The ability to become more curious about the subject, apply what they have learned to other disciplines and the ability to pose meaningful and substantive questions- the problem is...this is not necessarily measurable!

#### **Novice**

I suppose this would be their grade. They would probably work hard at giving me the "right" answer and not look any farther than that i.e. not apply what they have learned.