Application Details

Manage Application: Textbook Transformation Grant

Award Cycle:	Round 3
Internal Submission Deadline:	Sunday, May 31, 2015

Application Title:	137
Submitter First Name:	Tamara
Submitter Last Name:	Powell
Submitter Title:	Dr.
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Submitter Phone Number:	470-578-2911
Submitter Campus Role:	Proposal Investigator (Primary or additional)
Applicant First Name:	Tamara
Applicant Last Name:	Powell
Co-Applicant Name(s):	Jonathan Arnett, Monique Logan, Cassandra Race
Applicant Email Address:	tpowel25@kennesaw.edu
Applicant Phone Number:	(470)578-2911
Primary Appointment Title:	Director, Kennesaw State University College of Humanities and Social Sciences Office of Distance Education and Associate Professor of English
Institution Name(s):	Kennesaw State University--Kennesaw Campus

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

Dr. Tamara Powell, Director, Kennesaw State University College of Humanities and Social Sciences Office of Distance Education and Associate Professor of English, Kennesaw State University, tpowel25@kennesaw.edu;

Dr. Jonathan Arnett, Assistant Professor of English, English Department, Kennesaw State University—Kennesaw Campus, earnett@kennesaw.edu

Dr. Monique Logan, Lecturer, Digital Writing and Media Arts Department, Kennesaw State University—Marietta Campus, mlogan15@kennesaw.edu

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Ms. Tiffani Reardon, Instructional Designer, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Kennesaw State University, treardo2@kennesaw.edu

Mr. Lance Linimon, Closed Captioner, linimon@me.com

Mr. James Monroe, Student Worker, College of Humanities and Social Sciences Office of Distance Education, Kennesaw State University, krm0540@students.kennesaw.edu

Sponsor (Name, Title, Department, Institution):

Dr. Laura Palmer, Chair, Digital Writing and Media Arts (DWMA) Department, Kennesaw State University, Marietta Campus

Dr. H. William Rice, Chair, English Department, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw Campus

Proposal Title:	137

Course Names, Course Numbers and Semesters Offered:

TCOM 2010: Technical Writing; WRIT 3140: Introduction to Technical Writing (soon to be Workplace Writing). These courses are/will be offered every semester into the foreseeable future.

Final Semester of Instruction:	Spring 2017
Average Number of Students per Course Section:	20-50 (generally 27)
Number of Course Sections Affected by Implementation in Academic Year:	21
Total Number of Students Affected by Implementation in Academic Year:	525

List the original course materials for students (including title, whether optional or required, & cost for each item):	For Logan, Powell, and Race's courses: Markel, Technical Communication, required, $115.99 For Arnett's courses: Graves and Graves, A Strategic Guide to Technical Communication, required, $49.95
Proposal Categories:	No-Cost-to-Students Learning Materials
Requested Amount of Funding:	$30,000
Original per Student Cost:	For Logan, Powell, and Race's course: $115.99; for Arnett's course: $49.95
Post-Proposal Projected Student Cost:	$0
Projected Per Student Savings:	$115.99 for Logan Powell and Race's course; $49.95 for Arnett's course
Plan for Hosting Materials:	Other

Project Goals:

The proposed project involves transforming two currently existing electronic texts into a free, high-quality, interactive, multimedia textbook for the TCOM 2010 and WRIT 3140 courses at Kennesaw State University.

In order to achieve this overarching goal, we intend to:

-create a textbook that satisfies both student and faculty requirements

-develop and incorporate materials that make the textbook desirable for both students and faculty members

-provide material that serves the distinct focus of each course

-make the textbook readily available for adoption and use

-encourage the textbook's adoption and use in onsite, hybrid, and online versions of the courses

-and as a result, we believe we can increase student retention, progression, graduation, and employment rates.

Per student, we will save $115.99 for Logan, Powell, and Race's courses and $49.95 for Arnett's courses.

Total yearly savings for students in Logan, Powell, and Race's courses, estimating 445 students per year, is $51,615.55.

Total yearly savings for students in Arnett's courses, estimating 80 students per year, is $3996.00.

Total savings per year estimate is $55,611.55.

Statement of Transformation:

This project will combine and transform an online technical writing textbook called Online Technical Writing by Dr. David McMurrey (https://www.prismnet.com/~hcexres/textbook/acctoc.html) and two sections of an ebook entitled Why Brilliant People Believe Nonsense by Mr. Steve Miller (ebook, not yet published) and into a new, online textbook. This new textbook will be used in the Digital Writing and Media Arts (DWMA) Department's TCOM 2010: Technical Writing and the English Department's WRIT 3140: Introduction to Technical Writing (soon to be Workplace Writing) courses.

The TCOM 2010 course offered by DWMA focuses more on technical aspects of technical communication, for example, writing instructions and technical reports. The WRIT 3140 course offered by English has generally focused more on applied aspects of workplace writing such as business correspondence. However, there is overlap in the courses, and faculty teaching both sections have used common textbooks. Therefore, it is logical that these two courses could make use of this open resource. This textbook could also be used to teach courses in business writing and communication.

Adapting Existing Texts

The McMurrey text covers many of the basic concepts in technical and business writing, and it provides solid, basic examples of these concepts. However, this text needs more interconnections among its various parts, would benefit from an expanded discussion of business communication modalities, and focuses almost exclusively on engineering applications. We will expand the book's focus beyond engineering, expand its discussion of business writing, and both reorganize and link up its contents; we will also write chapters on

topics this book does not address: ethics, usability, collaboration, project management, web-based training, technical editing, and basic HTML.

The Miller text contains excellent explanations of using graphs and data to draw conclusions. We will incorporate and adapt this material.

Dr. McMurrey and Mr. Miller have given us permission to transform their works as needed for honorariums of $200 and $150, respectively.

Creating New Multimedia Content

The proposed transformation project will involve creating videos and interactive multimedia content.

Videos will address and demonstrate concepts such as working with a subject matter expert (SME), managing project creep, running a usability test, and designing successful training experiences. Mr. Miller has also agreed to make a video segment for the transformed textbook. We will also add videos from expert technical communicators, such as Ms. Dawn Davenport, Technical Writing Team Leader at Elsevier Atlanta; Mr. Bill Randall, Senior Technical Writer at Pellerin Milnor New Orleans; Chadwick Lyles, Instructional Designer/Technical Writer at Monitronics Dallas; David Merchant, Technical Communication Instructor at Louisiana Tech University; and others.

Other new multimedia content will include interactive activities to assist students in engaging with the content in a risk-free way, including quizzes, puzzles, games, matching activities, and reflective activities. The team aspires to have textbook resources that rival publisher offerings.

Publishing the New Textbook

We will work with an instructional designer and a student assistant to put the materials into EPUB 3 format in SoftChalk, with a printable PDF option. At that point, the textbook will be tested for usability, and the videos will be closed-captioned. The online version will be hosted

on the KSU College of Humanities and Social Sciences Office of Distance Education server. The link will be accessible to anyone in the world.

Using and Evaluating the New Textbook

We will pilot the new textbook in TCOM 2010 and WRIT 3140 courses in Summer 2016. Students in our courses will gain access via a link provided in D2L Brightspace, and this link will also be freely available to anyone in the world who wishes to use the textbook. The book will be in html, which means it can be used with or without a learning management system, and it will be learning management system agnostic.

We will gain IRB approval for a survey of student satisfaction, and we will gather data including student satisfaction rates, pass/fail rates, withdrawal rates, success rates, and completion rates both before and after implementing the transformed textbook.

Primary stakeholders affected by the textbook transformation are students and faculty.

Secondary stakeholders are the departments that teach the TCOM 2010 and WRIT 3140 courses (DWMA and English, respectively) and the various departments that contribute students who take these courses.

Students

Students will benefit in three ways. They will be more likely to obtain the transformed textbook and its accompanying materials, they are more likely to read the course textbook, and they will likely be more satisfied with the course.

Students often avoid purchasing textbooks because of the expense. Affordable Learning Georgia has determined that that over the past ten years, textbook prices have increased 82%, and prices continue to increase 6% every year ("About"), and the Institute for College Access & Success states that as of 2013, 69% of graduating college seniors owed an average of $28,400 in student loans ("Student Debt"). Accordingly, about 30% of students often forego

buying required texts for their courses, and students often resist purchasing "extra" items such as access codes for websites containing supplementary materials. However, because the transformed textbook we propose will be free to students, they will automatically have the book, and they will not incur any student loan debt. We estimate to save KSU students $55,611.55 per year.

Since the textbook will be free and available to KSU students via D2L Brightspace, it is therefore more likely that students will read the book and benefit from its contents. Research supports this conclusion; a 2012 research study involving online educational resources (OERs) at Virginia State found a 30-40% increase in GPA ("About"). Similarly, research suggests that OERs improve students' satisfaction, test scores, and ability to complete their courses of study (OER Research Hub).

Also relating to student satisfaction is the students' ability to access the transformed textbook in the medium of their choosing. The textbook will be available via both native web and PDF formats, so if students prefer to have either a purely online text or a print version, both options are easily available to them.

Faculty

Faculty will benefit from having access to a high-quality teaching resource that will be easily integrated into D2L Brightspace, has an update schedule based on faculty needs rather than a publisher's desire for profits, contains an instructors' resource section designed around the needs of technical communication/workplace writing/business communication instructors, and employs research-based best practices for course design.

Faculty will be able to integrate this textbook into any course by simply adding the URL to their learning management system, or emailing the link to students via email. Instructors will be able to choose whether to use the supplementary materials as external resources or within the D2L Brightspace or other learning management system frameworks.

Faculty will also be able to implement a textbook that has exactly the qualities they need without having to worry about publishers changing editions every 2–3 years, as has been the case. Although bleeding-edge technical- and business communication practices in industry are subject to rapid change, the concepts covered at the basic level of the target courses are fairly stable, and the transformed textbook's contents would not change so far as to warrant entirely

new textbook editions every few years. In addition, because the textbook's developers will be in-house members of KSU's DWMA and English departments, instructors at KSU, or anywhere, really, will be able to report problems and make requests for updates directly to the developers rather than to a publishing company.

Another benefit for faculty will be an "instructor's resource" section that contains sample documents, assignments, syllabi, and course schedules; these materials will assist faculty in successfully implementing the textbook into their own courses.

An added benefit that this textbook will bring to users is that it will be designed according to research-based best practices for distance education. Every member of the transformation team has been trained in Quality Matters standards. In fact, because KSU requires that Quality Matters (https://www.qualitymatters.org/) standards be met in every course offered online through the university, this textbook will be designed with those standards in mind so that TCOM 2010 and WRIT 3140 courses taught with this textbook will have a running start with regard to meeting QM standards.

Departments

Beyond the multiple sections taught by the four instructors who propose this project (Arnett, Logan, Powell, Race), the DWMA Department offers about 40 additional sections of TCOM 2010 per year, with about 27 students per section. This course is required by most of the engineering and computer science programs for ABET accreditation, and it is also an elective in Construction Management. In the English Department, WRIT 3140 has been a requirement for Computer Science majors, and it is an elective for Biology majors, Psychology majors, and Professional Writing minors. Both courses are always filled, and they will continue to be offered.

Southern Polytechnic State University and Kennesaw State University consolidated in January 2015. While the process was complicated and at times messy, specialists across both campuses (KSU-Marietta and KSU-Kennesaw) in the very practical, applied field of technical communication have forged a strong alliance.

This project is the first collaborative project across DWMA and English, and the technical communication specialists are excited at the prospect of working together on a collaborative writing project such great potential for broad, positive, practical impact.

Technical communication/technical writing/business writing courses are offered at many institutions across the USG and the nation. We plan to create a textbook with wide appeal for both seasoned technical communication instructors and new instructors looking for a textbook that comes with exercises, sample syllabi, and assignments.

Transformation Action Plan:

We will develop specific tasks for each member of the development team. Major tasks to complete in this phase include selecting material to adapt from the existing Online Technical Writing and Why Brilliant People Believe Nonsense sources, identifying new materials that need to be created, and inviting SMEs to create guest lectures.

Phase 2: Content Creation

We will develop new materials (e.g., chapters on ethics, usability, and collaboration; sample documents and assignments) to incorporate into the transformed textbook, as well as record videos of guest lectures.

Phase 3: Publication

We will port the entire set of existing and new materials into SoftChalk EPUB 3 and PDF formats and publish the textbook to the web. It will be hosted by the Office of Distance Education, which is part of the KSU College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

In addition, we will publish a separate section of instructor resources that can only be accessed by faculty members.

Phase 4: Implementation

We will pilot-test the transformed textbook during a Summer semester and then roll out a full-scale test during a Fall semester.

Phase 5: Evaluation

We will collect data, evaluate the project's success, and write a report for the granting agency.

Phase 6: Revisions and Updates

As needed, we will alter and improve the transformed textbook, and we will continue to do so as long as the textbook is in use.

We understand that the grant ends in Spring 2017, but it is a part of our discipline as well as our teaching strategy to use an iterative process for evaluating our teaching materials and course designs and to revise them in order to improve student outcomes. For this reason, we will continue to revise the textbook even after the grant ends.

Quantitative & Qualitative Measures: The textbook transformation process can be evaluated according to several metrics:
students' textbook use rates
student success rates
class retention rates
students' reported satisfaction
Textbook Use Rates
The textbook used in the Logan, Powell, and Race courses lists for $115.99, and the textbook used in the Arnett courses lists for $49.95; we suspect that a significant number of students would attempt to get by without purchasing the books. We will survey students and determine how many students used the free, online textbook versus to the number who would have purchased the traditional textbooks.
Success and Retention Rates
Current TCOM 2010/WRIT 3140 courses already have an 81% retention rate. Given the research data that supports the role of OERs improving student retention and success, we suspect that we will see even greater retention and student success in courses with the open resource.
Arnett and Powell are teaching WRIT 3140 in Summer 2015. Arnett is teaching WRIT 3140 in Fall 2015 and Spring 2016. Logan and Race are teaching TCOM 2010 in Fall 2015 and Spring 2016. The faculty will keep a record of average grades and DFW delta rates in these courses for baselines to compare to data from the Summer 2016 and Fall 2016 offerings that will use the transformed textbook.
Student Satisfaction
We will seek IRB approval to survey students regarding elements of student satisfaction with the textbook including ease of use, accessibility, and helpfulness with regard to achieving learning objectives. The survey will also seek qualitative student feedback and suggestions for improvement. After the pilot, the team will discuss revisions to be made and implemented.
The team will then collect the same data from the summer iterations of the courses for comparison.

Timeline:

Attend Kick-Off Meeting.

Arnett, Logan, Powell, Race, Reardon

July 13, 2015-July 13, 2015

Review Online Technical Writing contents. Select chapters to include (with credit to McMurrey and Miller). Decide upon logical order.

Arnett, Logan, Powell, Race

August 1, 2015-August 15, 2015

Write Fall 2015 status report

Arnett, Logan, Powell, Race

December 1, 2015-December 17, 2015

Identify chapters and resources that need to be created. Divide up according to specialty. Write chapters and create resources.

Arnett, Logan, Powell, Race

August 15, 2015-January 15, 2016

Identify SMEs who might guest lecture for small segments to be included in the textbook. Set up times to film those segments.

Arnett, Logan, Powell, Race

August 15, 2015-November 1, 2015

Film segments.

Reardon and Monroe

August 15, 2015-November 1, 2015

Move the contents into SoftChalk.

Reardon and Monroe

January 15, 2016-April 15, 2016

Create interactive activities based on textbook content.

Arnett, Linimon, Logan, Powell, Race, Monroe

January 15, 2016-April 15, 2016

Prepare video elements for closed captioning. Run the WAV toolbar to identify any accessibility issues with the content.

Reardon and Linimon

January 15, 2016-April 15, 2016

Race and Logan will create a sample syllabus for TCOM 2010. Arnett and Powell will create a sample syllabus for 3140. These syllabi will be used as the basis for the course redesigns. Because the textbook will be set up in a fashion to complement the way the courses are currently taught, the redesign strategies should be straightforward.

Arnett, Logan, Powell, Race

March 18, 2016-April 15, 2016

Proofread the transformed textbook, checking for correct grammar, spelling, and documentation. View the transformed textbook with an eye to adherence to best practices in document design.

Arnett, Logan, Powell, Race

April 15, 2016-May 2, 2016

Create the textbook as an EPUB 3. Make it accessible via the KSU CHSS ODE server. Put the

link on the CHSS ODE home page (http://ode.hss.kennesaw.edu/).

Reardon

May 2, 2016-May 2, 2016

Submit textbook satisfaction survey for students to IRB for IRB approval.

Arnett, Logan, Powell, Race

May 2, 2016-June 1, 2016

Perform usability testing, write usability report, make revisions.

Reardon and Monroe

May 2, 2016-May 9, 2016

Write Spring 2016 status report

Arnett, Logan, Powell, Race

May 2, 2016-May 12, 2016

Pilot textbook in Summer 2016 WRIT 3140 class.

Arnett and Powell

June 1, 2016-July 22, 2016

Survey students regarding experience with textbook.

Arnett and Powell

July 22, 2016-July 22, 2016

Collect data, including satisfaction rate, pass/fail rate, withdraw rate, success and completion rate for grant report.

Arnett and Powell

July 30, 2016-August 3, 2016

Write and submit grant report.

Arnett, Logan, Powell, Race

August 3, 2016-August 14, 2016

Launch next round of implementation and testing.

Arnett, Logan, Race

Fall 2016-Fall 2016

Budget:

Overload pay for Arnett

$5000

Overload pay for Logan

$5000

Overload pay for Powell

$5000

Overload pay for Race

$5000

Overload pay for Reardon

$5000

Compensation for Use of McMurrey's Materials

$200

Compensation for use of Miller's Materials

$150

Closed Captioning Costs

$1000

Travel to attend kick off meeting

$800

Student worker

$600

Travel to conference to publicize project, (for example, Society for Technical Communication Technical Communication Summit in 2016)

$1900

Honorariums for videos

$350

Total:

$30,000

Sustainability Plan:

As noted above, multiple sections of both courses are offered every semester, and they will continue to be offered into the foreseeable future.

It is easy to make revisions to the online text, and as such revisions are needed, every team member can add or update sections, add videos or other supplements and resources, or make other changes as needed. It will be a pleasure to break free from publishers' hold on courses. Currently, new editions come out that dictate changes to page numbers, chapter orders, etc. Rarely do new editions offer anything new in the way of content. Instructors using this textbook will be able to take control of the textbook and decide what new developments in technical communication warrant textbook updates, which will be made with the students and instructors in mind.

WORKS CITED

"About." ALG By-the-Numbers. Affordable Learning Georgia. August 2014. Web. http://www.affordablelearninggeorgia.org/about/numbers. 22 May 2015.

OER Research Hub. "OER Evidence Report 2013–2014: Building Understanding of Open Education." November 2014. https://oerresearchhub.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/oerrh-evidence-report-2014.pdf 27 May 2015.

"Student Debt and the Class of 2013." The Institute for College Access & Success. November 2014. Web. http://ticas.org/sites/default/files/legacy/fckfiles/pub/classof2013.pdf 27 May 2015.

Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook
Transformation Grant Committee
c/o Georgia Institute of Technology
Center for 21st Century Universities

May 27, 2015

Dear Grant Review Committee:

Re: **Kennesaw State University—Proposal to Transform Two Textbooks for Use in TCOM 2010 and WRIT 3140 Classes**

I am pleased to write this letter of support for the Kennesaw State University project to transform two existing textbooks, *Online Technical Writing* and *Why Brilliant People Believe Nonsense*, into an open access eBook for students in technical communication and professional writing programs.

The project team undertaking this proposal includes two members of my department (Digital Writing and Media Arts [DWMA]), Dr. Cassandra Race and Professor Monique Logan, as well as two members of the English Department, Dr. Tamara Powell and Dr. Jonathan Arnett. Each of the members on the team brings a specific expertise in technical and professional communication to the project.

As Lecturers in the DWMA department, Dr. Race and Professor Logan have taught our introductory technical communication course, *TCOM 2010: Technical Writing* for multiple years. They bring real-world student needs and teacher experience to this eBook project. Drs. Powell and Arnett have taught *WRIT 3140: Workplace Writing (Technical Writing)* and bring not only their experience in the classroom, but the theory and praxis of the field to this endeavor. Together, this project team is highly-suited to transform the existing texts into a leading-edge publication for students in Georgia and beyond.

DWMA delivers over fifty TCOM 2010 courses per year to the students in programs such as Engineering, Computer Science and Software Engineering, and Construction Management. Additionally, we serve our own BS in Technical Communication majors with this course. Without a doubt, we will have not only a need, but the resources necessary to sustain this project should it receive funding.

Dr. Laura A. Palmer

Chair, Digital Writing and Media Arts

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Kennesaw State UNIVERSITY

College of Humanities
and Social Sciences
Department of English

May 27, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I write in support of the application for an Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation grant put forward by Dr. Jonathan Arnett, Dr. Monique Logan, Dr. Cassandra Race, and Dr. Tammy Powell.

If funded, this grant will enable our faculty to create an open-source textbook for WRIT 3140. This open source text will enable the students who take WRIT 3140 to avoid the $115 cost of the textbook that is normally required for the course. Since the open source text will exist on the Internet, it will provide many dynamic features not available in a traditional textbook. Equally important, it will be sustainable indefinitely. Revisions to the text will not require a new edition (and a new expense for students), but rather revisions of the existing online text.

WRIT 3140 is one of the most popular courses we offer in the English Department. The students who take the course are not just English majors. Many of them come from disciplines throughout the university. Should this grant be funded, it will be of enormous benefit to our students. I completely support the grant application.

Sincerely,

H. William Rice, Ph. D.
Chair and Professor of English

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21 of 22

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May 29, 2015

RE: Letter of Support for Textbook Transformation Grant, No-Cost-to-Students Learning Materials

Dear Textbook Transformation Grant Committee:

It is my pleasure to write a letter in support of the proposal for "Free, Open, and Interactive Technical Communication Textbook" being submitted to the Textbook Transformation Grant, No-Cost-to Student Learning Materials, by Dr. Tamara Powell, Dr. Jonathan Arnett, Dr. Monique Logan, and Dr. Cassandra Race at Kennesaw State University.

As the Kennesaw State University Affordable Learning Librarian I have worked with Dr. Powell in the past on the KSU video*, Affordable Learning Georgia Library Resources: Kennesaw State University*. She and her fellow team members are highly qualified to combine and transform the online technical writing textbook called *Online Technical Writing* by Dr. David McMurrey and two sections of an eBook entitled *Why Brilliant People Believe Nonsense* by Mr. Steve Miller into a new, online textbook. They are all technology savvy, also. This new book can be used by two academic departments, English and the Digital Writing and Media Arts. The classes using this textbook are usually offered every semester so this would be a huge savings for the students.

Kennesaw State University (KSU) and Southern Polytechnic State University (SPSU) consolidated this past January into the new Kennesaw State University. The SPSU campus is now known as the KSU Marietta Campus. Dr. Powell has asked two Marietta Campus professors to be on her team. The awarding of this grant to this proposal would be a wonderful opportunity for the two campuses to collaborate together.

In conclusion, I fully support the proposal for the "Free, Open, and Interactive Technical Communication Textbook" submitted by Dr. Tamara Powell. Students will benefit by not having to purchase a book. Two academic departments can use the book. The teaming of the professors from the two new KSU campuses is an opportunity for collaboration and camaraderie. I would be happy to assist Dr. Powell and her associates with any research needs that the library can provide.

Sincerely,

Rita Spisak

Librarian, Library Instruction/Outreach

(470) 578-6188