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Collaboration in eTextbook Publishing: A Case Study

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Abstract

The need for a tailored textbook for a distance class of PhD nursing students led to a collaboration between a College of Nursing faculty member and librarians from academic and health sciences libraries. The partnership incorporated new and existing library services in the “Research with Diverse Populations” class. Librarians provided curriculum support services and facilitated the creation of an eTextbook authored by class members. The *Research with Diverse Populations* eTextbookⁱ (aka eBook, <http://www.rdp.lib.utah.edu>) was designed to be openly accessible and structured to expand as future students make additional contributions. The audience for the eBook extends beyond the course participants to a broader audience of clinicians and researchers working with vulnerable populations. The eBook collaboration is an innovative and unique approach to addressing the needs of a faculty member. It is anticipated that the collaborative process will inspire similar projects in the future.

Keywords: eBook; Nursing; Alternative publishing

Introduction

A College of Nursing professor searching for materials for her “Research with Diverse Populations” distance class had been unable to locate a published resource with a directly applicable focus that was also peer-reviewed and permanently accessible. During a serendipitous conversation between the professor and a Digital Initiatives Librarian, the idea for a collaboration to create and publish an eTextbook (eBook) addressing the professor’s need was conceived.

For the professor, having her students create an eBook was a novel idea. However, for the librarian, the idea was not so far-fetched. A campus survey conducted in 2010 had indicated growing interest in library-led publishing services.² As a result, her library had, for several years, been exploring and developing [scholarly publishing services](#). To address additional curriculum support needs, the project expanded to include a Teaching and Learning Librarian and an Interprofessional Education Librarian from the university’s health sciences library, and the

course Teaching Assistant (TA). This team from the College of Nursing and two campus libraries managed all aspects of supporting the curriculum and producing the eBook. The team met several times before the semester began to define the course and eBook requirements and divided into two subgroups: one focusing on course support and the second on constructing the eBook. While each subgroup undertook very specific tasks, they often referred back to the whole group with questions and for feedback.

Curriculum Support

Students were asked to identify vulnerable populations that they were interested in, and determine best practices for working with those groups. Librarians provided beneficial literature and research support to students as they investigated the needs and challenges of their chosen populations. The work students created about their specific populations became individual contributions to the eBook.



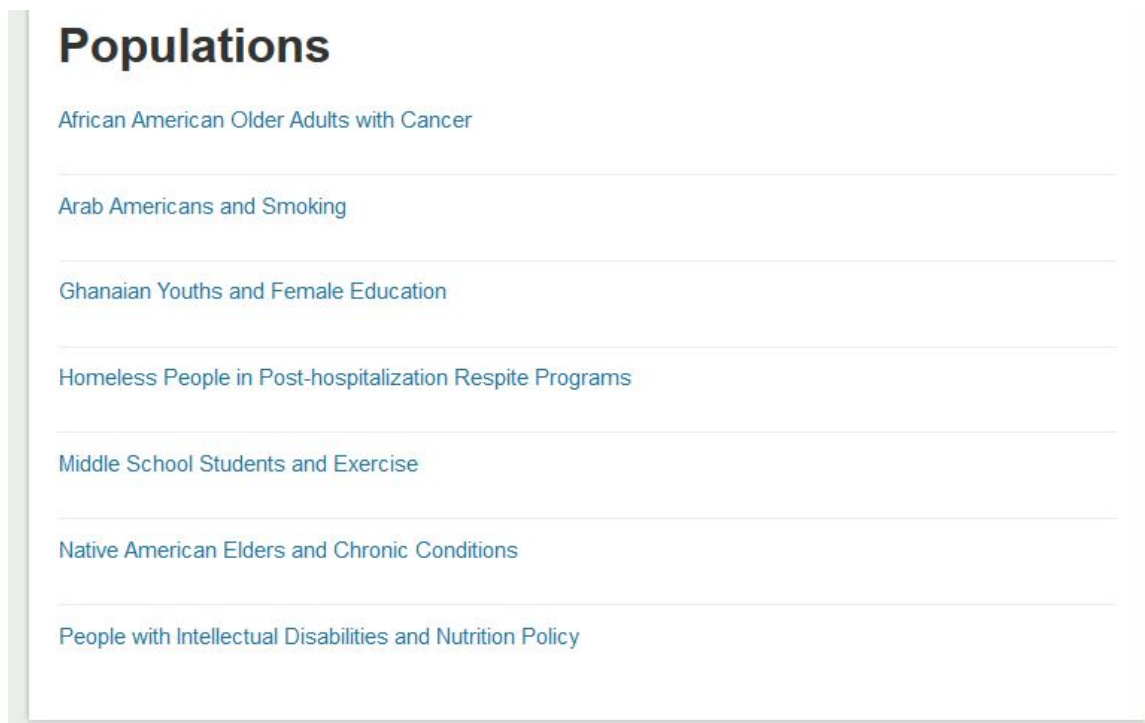


Fig. 1 Vulnerable populations researched by students

During the second week of class, librarians were invited to the "virtual" classroom for an orientation to library resources and to answer student questions about the research process. Students were directed to a research guide for [Evidence-based Nursing](#), which had been updated by the librarians to accommodate the needs of this class. As related resources were identified, they were given to the professor who shared them with the class through Canvas, the learning management system used at the university. Librarians also assisted with issues related to accessing full text articles, remote access, embargo periods, and interlibrary loans.

eBook Development

WordPress had been installed on library servers in 2010 to support the publication of scholarly works that incorporated audio, video and other multimedia. While WordPress is a well-known and popular blogging platform, its customizations can easily be adjusted to support an eBook structure. Given the flexible infrastructure of WordPress and its adaptability in addressing the needs of previous publishing projects, the team

opted to use it as the software medium for hosting the eBook.

A workflow was implemented that would manage the transfer of eBook content out of Canvas and into WordPress. The TA acted as content editor for the eBook, first formatting the content in Canvas and then migrating it in sections to a series of WordPress pages. The pages became the 'chapters' of the eBook. The diagram, Fig. 2, depicts the infrastructure for the collaborative teams, the support networks, and workflow schematics for content development and transfer.

Among the assignments, students had to create an audio recording where they were asked to reflect upon the relationship they have to their chosen population. Some students additionally chose to create video essays. In order to support incorporating and embedding the audio and video content in the eBook, several WordPress plugins were installed. The WordPress [Plugin Directory](#) contains hundreds of plugins written by developers, and includes their ratings and reviews by WordPress users. Using the directory as a resource, two plugins, Compact WP

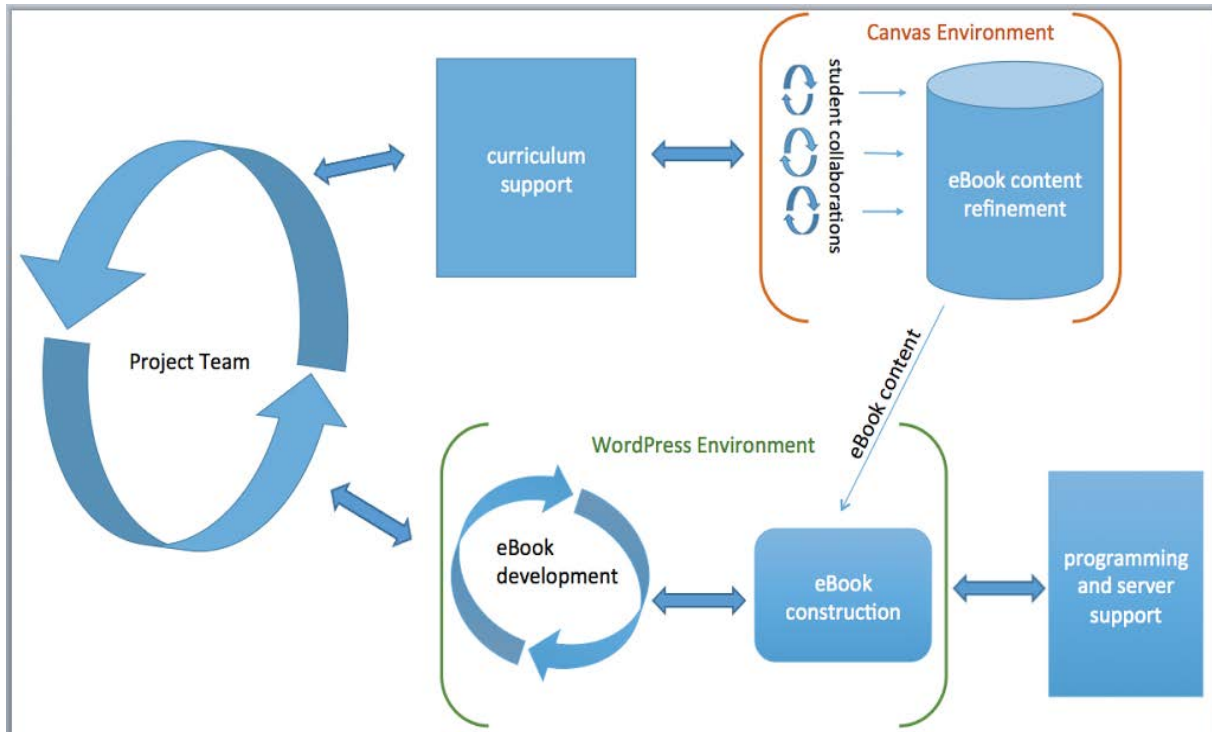


Fig. 2 Project workflow and content transfer schematic

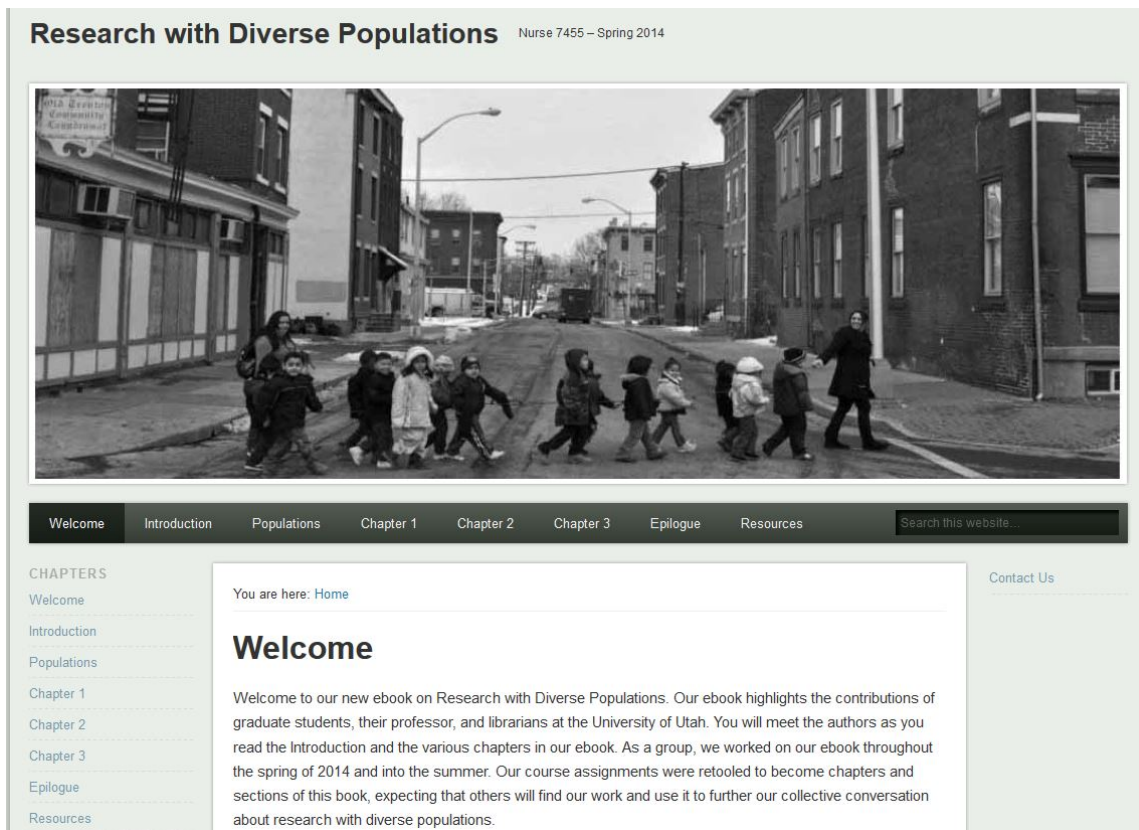


Fig. 3 eBook Home page

Wimmer, Morrow, & Weber: Collaboration in eTextbook Publishing

Audio Player and Nice YouTube Lite, were installed that would support the display and functionality of the multimedia files. [Compact WP Audio Player](#) is an HTML5+Flash hybrid based plugin used to embed mp3 audio files. [Nice YouTube Lite](#) is a plugin that enables embedding and playing videos added to YouTube.

With the student content in place, the faculty member added additional WordPress pages for a prologue, introduction and epilogue. Prior to the project's conclusion, the group reviewed the navigational profile of the eBook, and addressed issues related to labeling, repetition and way-finding. The end result was a navigational structure that was streamlined and simplified.

Copyright and Permissions

Throughout the project, questions arose related to copyright. The first instance was with regards to the rights of student authors. A Scholarly Communications and Copyright Librarian was consulted on various aspects of author copyright. She suggested the student authors sign a publishing agreement that would allow them to retain ownership of their work while permitting the library to publish it as part of a larger work. As a component of her library's publishing services, she had already developed a publishing agreement. The agreement allows authors to grant the library permissions that include the "nonexclusive, perpetual, worldwide, irrevocable right to reproduce, distribute, display, publish . . . provide access and transmit the Work . . . for any non-commercial purpose." The signed understanding allowed the library to publish and maintain the content, while ensuring the student authors retained the right to use their portion of the work in a separate work, such as a dissertation.

Less complex copyright issues that were addressed included locating the owner of an image the team wanted to use in the eBook. [TinEye](#), a reverse image search engine, proved to be a valuable resource when it came to tracking down the owner. Additionally, publisher permissions were sought to include an article and podcast produced by the faculty member³ and ⁴, as supplementary material. Ultimately, all credits and permissions were recorded in the author ac-

knowledgments and general acknowledgment sections of the eBook. The copyright and permission issues the team tackled culminated into the final question of the appropriate copyright license for the eBook as a whole. Using the '[choose a license tool](#)', a [Creative Commons](#) licensing tool, a license was chosen that permits share-alike for non-commercial purposes.

| Marriott Library Publishing Agreement | |
|--|--|
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Fig. 4 Library Publishing Agreement

The Promotional Process

The team agreed that the success of the project and completion of the eBook warranted promotion. In order to disseminate news of the eBook, announcements were shared via emails and press releases by the College of Nursing, Eccles Health Sciences Library, J. Willard Marriott Library, Health Sciences Public Affairs, and the Patient Centered Research Methods Core of the Center for Clinical and Translational Science. The campus community was invited to attend a launch party held during fall semester celebrating the publication of the eBook. At the party, the nursing faculty, students, and librarians discussed the creation of the eBook. The student authors, who, in some cases, joined the event via live feed, shared their perspectives and experiences in participating in the project. The eBook and presentations were projected on large



screens for everyone to view. Members of several University departments live tweeted the event (see Twitter feeds for Library and Public Affairs for August 25).

As part of its LIFT (Library and Information Technology) series, the health sciences library plans to host a forum on the impact of collaboration and innovative scholarly publications. Using this work as a model, both libraries will encourage the development and use of alternative publication methods that can be more flexible and accessible than traditional models. This will provide a platform not only to publicize the newly created work, but also emphasize the kinds of services offered by the libraries that might otherwise go unnoticed by faculty and students.

Conclusion

As a result of the collaboration among faculty, students and librarians, the University now has an open access eBook that is digitally preserved and maintained on library servers. With the eBook's ability to expand, it is anticipated that future cohorts will continue to build upon the work. It is also anticipated that researchers and clinicians will find the content to be a useful resource in their fieldwork. For libraries, the project's workflow and collaborative teams can become a template for similar scholarly publishing projects in the future.

In exploring the impact of the project from a longitudinal view, the authors found it to be an example of one of the trends identified in the 2014 *Horizon Report*. The New Media Consortium (NMC), in coordination with Educause, publishes an annual report on emerging technology trends in higher education. In its latest report, NMC identified a shift from "students as consumers to students as creators."⁵ The NMC predicted this trend would become more prominent in the next three to five years.

The results of this transformative shift from student consumer to student creator should prove to be of value to students, faculty and librarians in different ways. Students take an active role in controlling their educational outcomes by creating learning objects. Faculty have the oppor-

tunity to examine and adjust the tools they currently use to help students understand and incorporate lesson materials. And librarians, for their part, contribute expertise, ideas, services, and tools that will help support this trend.⁶ Serving as a case study of the pedagogical implications of the shift, the *Research with Diverse Populations* eBook is an example of how this trend is already underway, and reveals the potential for librarians to serve as integral partners and collaborators in its development.

Endnotes

¹ Lauren Clark, ed., *Research with Diverse Populations* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Libraries, 2014), accessed September 8, 2014, <http://rdp.lib.utah.edu/>.

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³ Lauren Clark, "A Humanizing Gaze for Transcultural Nursing Research Will Tell the Story of Health Disparities," *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, 25(2): 122-128, accessed September 15, 2014, doi: [10.1177/1043659613515722](https://doi.org/10.1177/1043659613515722).

⁴ Lauren Clark, podcast interview by Norma Cuellar, *TCN* 25(2): 122, April 2014. <http://tcn.sagepub.com/site/misc/index/podcasts.xhtml>.

⁵ L. Johnson, et al., "Shift from Students as Consumers to Students as Creators," in *NMC Horizon Report: 2014 Higher Education Edition*, ed. L. Johnson, et al. (Austin, Texas: The New Media Consortium, 2014), 14-15, accessed September 8, 2014, <http://www.nmc.org/publications/2014-horizon-report-higher-ed>.

⁶ Charles Watkinson and Mamie Bittner, "Publishing Services a Major Growth Area for Academic Libraries, Suggests New Research Report," SPARC, accessed September 8, 2014, <http://www.sparc.arl.org/news-media/news/11-1101>.

