Encouraging Early Literacy
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Topic

Selection
I didn't want to be doing too many things at the same time: trying to learn a new topic, trying to do research on something, and then also trying to learn the technology. Since my love is early literacy, that's what I wanted to do.

Sourcing Content
I didn't want to be creating content, I knew I wanted to be focused on learning Storyline so I took existing content that I had already from a very reliable source. I had an article written by Saroj Ghoting, that could be used for multiple purposes, and I'd already had people asking for this content in a different format or one that was a little more fun, so I decided that would be an easy way to fulfill the obligations of the workshop – to do something that I already had in hand, do something that I love doing and have that motivate me to get into the technology.

Course Design Process

I wanted to create something that someone could do in one setting. Children's librarians are crazy busy, so I wanted something they could literally sit down and do in a short amount of time, the nitty-gritty part of early literacy. Saroj had already condensed her book content and put it into an article so I didn't feel like I could cut it down any more. I created slides from her article, and added links to zerotothree.org to find more information or material on sing, talk, read, write or play.

For the design and layout, Mike Taylor (Storyline consultant) gave us that first picture/slide, which allowed us to frame everything together and then I found the leaf colors slides that also framed it. I wanted to use color, as Every Child Ready to Read's sing, talk, read, write, play, are all different colors so I wanted to make a connection between ECRR2 with their color scheme and this presentation. So, Mike giving us that art work, really sparked the presentation. You know, everyone who starts the course says, "oh, it is pretty," which really helps to relax someone, that this is going to be a fun experience.

For the interactive parts, I wanted this to be used by staff that might not know a lot about early literacy. If you go and tell a person at the library a definite Yes or No, they may get angry/defensive (and that will keep learning from happening) or they're going to get discouraged. I wanted to treat [the assessment] more as a passive, kind of a fun way of doing it; plus, when you're working with early literacy, there's no black and white answer of right or wrong; it's a soft-skill. So, I thought the learning needed to be checked with a soft touch.

The other thing that I liked was the ability to put markers on the slides to send users over to more information [outside of the course]. That allowed me to have 2 different levels of the course –one level for staff to use directly but also something that a coordinator for children's services could use and really go into depth.

I wondered afterward if I should have created something at the beginning to help the user navigate the course – "this is what you're going to be doing, these are markers and what they mean…" I loved my

introduction, and it seemed like that navigation information would have jarred people a little bit and I really wanted this to be as clean of a presentation as possible.

Working with SMEs
The key part was getting Saroj's blessing on this, which she so graciously did, and then I sat down with her and went over the content. I sent it to her when I was first doing this and she said, "It needs more pictures," which was absolutely correct. And then I sat down with her again, after I had finished the project and she was very, very happy with it. So, I was happy with that.

Technical Development in Storyline

Because I already had the content, it was more about learning how to work with the software, learning what I could do with it. Learning the buttons and states, editing, layering, was at first the hardest part to get around. I just had to *learn* how to do that, but once I did, then I could go back and say, okay, now how can I make this a little better.

I liked some of the features in Storyline, like being able to link to different websites. I liked that it looked enough like a PowerPoint presentation that people weren't overwhelmed with it and that you can have that choice in there. When I was working on another course on play, my colleague had a PowerPoint with slide after slide, and when I was putting it into Storyline, we set it up so they could go in different directions, and follow different paths but always come back and cover the same material. Her comment was, "this is fun, this is really neat." It put things into a more of an organized way to explain her topic which was quite encompassing.

Storyline Lessons Learned
I have to be honest, I got to a point where, ohhh, I didn't want to do anything else to the course, even if I could, because I just reached my saturation point and I want to go onto something else.

The thing that I felt was really good, you gave us a framework early one for keeping the same color scheme, keeping the same font throughout the whole thing; even though those were trivial things compared to the content, thinking about those things ahead of time was really helpful. It was also really good to see some examples of what it *could* be.

Reflections & Recommendations

Training Institute Curriculum and Training
Well, I'm just glad that you offered this Training Institute – I would not have picked up Storyline on my own and it's making a difference. I'm working with people who are with different parts of the state or country, so we do a lot of working over the phone and making changes while we're talking… Storyline does it for me! I'm really grateful that you offered the training and that it included a copy of Storyline and those books and the images!

I really liked that I was able to have that private session with Mike. I had enough done so it was very, very helpful that he could actually show me and walk me through my course draft. He was showing me states and editing and radio buttons and typing in captions, etc, that I would not have figured out on my own. So, that was key to getting the project done.
Seeing all those final projects at the very end, I was just blown away, what people did with it, just pretty much everything people had done! They did some things that I wouldn't have thought of myself, it was really good to see. I was just blown away!

I have to say that that the book *Design for How People Learn* (Julie Dirksen) was fantastic –a wonderful book to pick out. It made me rethink, and I then took one of my old courses (introduction to Moodle), and I redid that course. Then when our Outreach and Publications Department said they wanted to start doing online training, I just pulled out all of the handouts from the Institute, especially the different approaches to online learning, and because it had OCLC/WebJunction and Infopeople on it, it wasn't just me talking. I met with them and said, these are different things you need to think about, adults learn differently than children; and these are educators, some of them are elementary or high school educators. So, I was able to say, these are the things you need to consider, that it's not just a 20-minute process, that a physical presentation is different than an online presentation and you need to go through these steps. It helped them understand that it's not just taking a face-to-face training and putting it online, that this is a different way of learning and needs to be put into a different format. So that was very, very helpful, that I didn't have to think about creating that.

I'm excited about online learning now. Not only that you can share it across state lines, but unlike a face-to-face presentation, which kind of disappears, with online, you can go back and watch it again; you see different things each time you watch it. One person has trouble going to a conference and just listening to people talk – but online learning lets you do a little, think about it, do a little more. The people who have been taking my online course, they touch on a lot of things they like about online learning –do it any time, in my jammies, connect with different people, etc. Being able to connect with different people across the country or the world, you really get a great perspective that you just don't get face to face.

Barriers
The online sessions were sometimes a bit frustrating for me because I couldn't do some of the interactive things logging in on my iPad. But, on the other hand, I could connect from my iPad in a remote area, which was really good! It was interesting that the sessions weren't just a "stare at your screen, listen to everyone talk" webinar, but did keep us paying attention to things, which was great.

Recommendations
I kind of wish we had our topics flushed out before we got to Seattle -- and maybe even an idea of how we were going to flush it out already in a PowerPoint presentation.

I need books; I do better if I have the print instructions by my side while I'm looking at the computer screen. I don't do well with videos, so for me it was better having a book in front of me, rather than the online tutorials. I really liked having the Dirksen book ahead of time, and I wished I'd had the Articulate book (there are 2 out, they probably aren't the same version now); they do go through some of the basics that you have to think about.

Future Plans
I am already using Storyline for new projects and revamping past trainings.

I'm also working with Jaime Ball, AZ State Library; we're both on a committee with IMLS on measuring the success of IMLS grants and putting out some new criteria and way of reporting. We thought it might be helpful to use Storyline modules help with training for IMLS. another thing we'll be using Storyline for is the new IMLS Guidelines – that's going to be a huge thing that people are going to need to understand.

Oh, and, this is kind of cool, Saroj was doing another training, and she wanted to use my Encouraging Early Literacy course as an introduction for a course she was working on for something else.