



## Social Authoring of Online Courses: Introduction to Psychology

The Monterey Institute for Technology and Education (MITE) is collaborating with leading colleges to develop online courses using a “social authoring” approach. The project blends the strengths and expertise of the team members to create high-quality online courses for use in higher education, Advanced Placement and high school. First to be developed in this unique project will be an Introductory Psychology course. The collaboration for this project will be managed through the NROC Network, an online learning community.

NROC Network Members have the option to participate in social authoring projects to develop comprehensive, high-quality courses for use by Network members. The NROC social authoring model consists of subject matter experts (SMEs) who work in teams to develop a comprehensive set of online materials for teaching and learning. The academic subject matter teams collaborate with instructional designer, graphic artists, and engineers from NROC to develop media-rich, effective teaching materials.

SME's are recruited to join one of three different author teams, depending on their experience, availability, and type of content they wish to contribute. The NROC editorial, design, and technical development team will work with each authoring group to plan the syllabus, table of contents, and approach. Once the teams start producing manuscripts, the NROC team will manage media and technical development.

Authoring teams work together in an online community to plan and share work. The project is guided by the *NROC Development Guidelines*, which provide definitions for the effective implementation of learning styles, design, navigation, media, assessment, interactivity, accessibility and support.

Three different *author* teams focus on the following areas of course development:

1. *Core Authors* write the text and narration for the course. Each lessons of the course is designed around learning objectives, major and sub-topics, vocabulary and examples. Core Authors help visualize the live video, animation, and graphics that support the presentation.
2. *Contributing Authors* develop activities, assessments, and assignments. This includes discussion questions, group projects, practice problems, virtual labs, quizzes, simulations, and assessment questions.
3. *Supporting Authors* review and fact check the work of the Core and Contributing authors, and suggest supplemental resources, such as readings or web sites that provide additional applications, real world examples, or research materials.

### Core Author Team

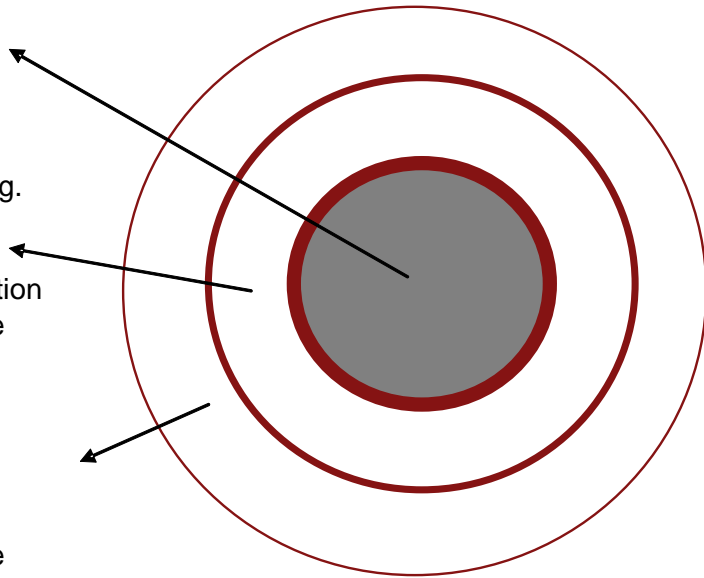
- Create lesson content
- Shared author credit
- Lifetime right to use\* course within your institution

### Contributing Authors

- Contributing select parts, e.g. activities, assessments, discussions
- Contributing author recognition
- Lifetime right to use\* course within your institution

### Supporting Authors

- Critique, review, add small content contributions
- Collaborator recognition
- Lifetime right to use\* course within your institution



\* Perpetual rights to *Introduction to Psychology* version(s) 1.x

## The Model Details

The general guidelines below describe how the authoring roles might be distributed among the team of subject matter experts. Project management of authoring and multimedia development is the responsibility of the expert team at NROC.

### Core Author Assignments

Courses developed for NROC are organized in a consistent structure; Unit, Chapter, Lesson, Topic. Each Lesson is composed of two to four topics and scripting requires approximately 10 hours. On average, a semester is made up of 26 Lessons. A core author team is made up of two to four authors who divide the writing up by chapters or units. The content needed for a Lesson includes:

- Topic outline
- learning objectives
- narrative text
- examples
- multimedia conceptualization and feedback

For multimedia development, authors provide sketches, graphics, descriptions of video, photos, and illustrations. When possible, public domain sources are identified. Any media already developed by the author can be included. There is a small budget for creating and acquiring original media. With a three-author team, each author will average approximately 90 hours developing their share of the course. Assignments do not have to be equal. Each team can be slightly different depending on the author group and what they bring to the project. A previously developed text-based course, for example, could serve as the collaborative course outline and initial script.

**Bottom line:** Core Authors spend 65 – 130 hours developing the course, depending on the size and composition of their author team.

## Contributing Author Assignments

To develop a multi-modal learning experience, there will be a variety of activity and assessment types at the Lesson, Chapter, Unit, and Topic levels depending on the subject. Each type of activity will have a grading/assessment rubric to guide students and instructors on what makes for a successful learning outcome.

Contributing author assignment include the following examples,

- Key terms and their definitions sit at the Chapter level and might include from 10-25 terms. Each set of key terms require approximately one hour to write, therefore an author might spend 25-30 hours writing these for one semester of lessons. Discussion questions with suggested approaches for facilitating the discussion may require 30 minutes to an hour each to write for each chapter.
- Worked problem examples and self-quiz problem sets can take an hour for each lesson. So, depending on the number and distribution of writing assignments, an author may spend approximately 15 – 30 hours to write example and self-quiz problems for a one-semester course.
- Writing assignments may be appropriate, or even required, for some types of courses and may require 30 minutes to an hour to create, including identifying potential outside resource suggestions for students to pursue.
- Lab activities for web labs and virtual labs, may take an hour or two each to create. These labs may include a list of common items students can gather in their home, a lab kit they may need to purchase from a supplier or their school, references to online open source simulated labs, or detailed descriptions of a lab simulation to be built by the Network. Lab activities are placed at the Chapter or Unit level and therefore four to six may be created, with any number of questions to answer depending on the subject.
- Group projects can be in many forms and are particular to the subject. Wherever possible, it is good to set up assignments that students work in teams to complete. These can take the form of research project based on web-based sources, peer reviewing short writing assignments, peer checking and correcting (with explanations) of worked problems, creating a timeline or presentation to share with other teams online, etc. Group projects are placed at the Unit level as options for instructors to assign, and may require one to two hours each to create. Therefore an author writing a project for each Unit may commit to 6-10 hours of work.
- Text-correlation tables are very useful for students and instructors to map the online course contents to three to five commonly used textbooks. This provides students with extra learning resources, as well as allowing instructors the choice of text to use for supplemental reading or assignments. Creating these tables can take about 10-15 hours.

**Bottom line:** Contributing Authors will choose assignments ranging from 15-50 hours.

## Supporting Author Assignments

Every collaboratively developed course needs a group of reviewers that read the Core and Contributing Author's work to give feedback, fact check and possibly suggest additional outside resources and links to supplement the existing Lesson content or activities. Each Chapter might take two to three hours to review. Each Supporting Author (who could also be a Core or Contributing Author) might review a set of Chapters or multiple Units to ensure consistency and compatibility between the sections.

**Bottom line:** A Review and Support Team author can choose assignments ranging from 10-50 hours, depending on the number of Lessons reviewed.

## Project Timeline

The initial social authoring project will commence with an author-planning meeting (in person or virtually). Ongoing project management, check-ins, discussions sharing, and delivering and reviewing manuscripts will take place synchronously and asynchronously through the NROC Network's online community. This collaborative, social authoring model provides considerable flexibility for authors to manage the assignments around other commitments. We anticipate the authoring process to stretch out over one year, with regular delivery milestones beginning in the first month of the project. Our goal is to assemble and efficiently manage a well-balanced, multi-faceted authoring team, and to distribute the workload among peers who are interested in a new model of scholarly authorship.

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