

Grant Outcome Report: Renew Washington Online Facilitation & Peer Learning

Updated December 29th to reflect 4th quarter activities.

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Project Goals and Results Summary

Background & Rationale

The goal of the peer learning component of the Renew Washington project was for staff to learn how to facilitate online peer learning and to more effectively implement projects/programs in libraries around the state through peer learning and for 17 sub-grantees (referred to subsequently as “grantees”) to experience peer learning as an enhancement to their Renew Washington work and to consider the ongoing application of peer learning.

The project was entirely voluntary. Peer learning was not part of the grant tender nor grant agreements and the peer learning work was initiated AFTER the grantees had developed and submitted their plans. The premise was to INVITE people into the experience, not force them. It is estimated that this “offer” was made available to 33 staff members from 17 libraries and all of the Washington State Library staff.

Project planning was done collaboratively with the core team of Carolyn Petersen, Karen Goettling, Jennifer Fenton and Jeremy Stroud. The consultation approach was to work collaboratively, get as much grantee and staff input as was practical, to debrief and learn from every activity and use that learning to improve subsequent activities.

Early in the project the core team surveyed Washington State Library staff to ascertain what they were interested in learning and applying. The grantees were surveyed as part of the GMMB communications survey identifying monthly meetings to share what they were doing and sharing resources on a website as their top two requests. Additionally there was some interest in a email list for ongoing communications and a place online to share work stories. There was little interest in co-creating/writing resources together.

PLEASE RATE YOUR INTEREST IN THE FOLLOWING OPPORTUNITIES

1=not interested to 5=very interested

	1	2	3	4	5
Monthly teleconference or web meeting to share grant program updates	20%	0%	20%	40%	20%
A place to share stories of work (i.e. WSL blog)	20%	20%	20%	40%	0%
A place to co-write or share resources (i.e. wiki or Google doc)	40%	0%	60%	0%	0%
An email listserve for grantees	0%	0%	80%	20%	0%
Share resources on Renew Washington website	0%	0%	50%	25%	25%

The main challenges the

grantees called out included:

- Continued funding concerns.
- Project growth and complexity.
- Meeting the project time lines.
- Lack of time.

Objectives

The following objectives emerged from the planning process and a work plan was developed (the work plan can be seen [here](#).)

1. Building Understanding of Peer Learning and Online Facilitation Skills With Staff

There were two main audiences for peer learning in this project, the Washington State Library (WSL) staff, particularly the core members, and the grantees themselves. The staff would help reach both the grantees and other Washington state library staff through their ongoing projects and participation in library related networks across the state. The three forms of evaluating this work was event debrief after each session, core team reflections, and a final survey which had a 57% participation rate. There is insufficient data on follow up and it is recommended that we re-survey in December when staff will have had more time to use peer learning. Note also that two people are administrative and won't have direct applicability with the wider Washington library community.

The following are the primary staff activities and results. Outcomes are summarized later in the report.

- **Hosting and Facilitating Introductory Peer Learning Sessions** - Early conversations surfaced the issue that people were not always familiar with the term “peer learning” and having a range of practices to incorporate it into their work. The first face-to-face meeting focused on building a shared understanding that peer learning is learning with and from each other, to practice some face-to-face peer learning facilitation methods and to introduce the idea that online tools can give us access to each other for peer learning even when travel is prohibitive. The first meeting generated positive feedback and request for follow up on online facilitation (April).

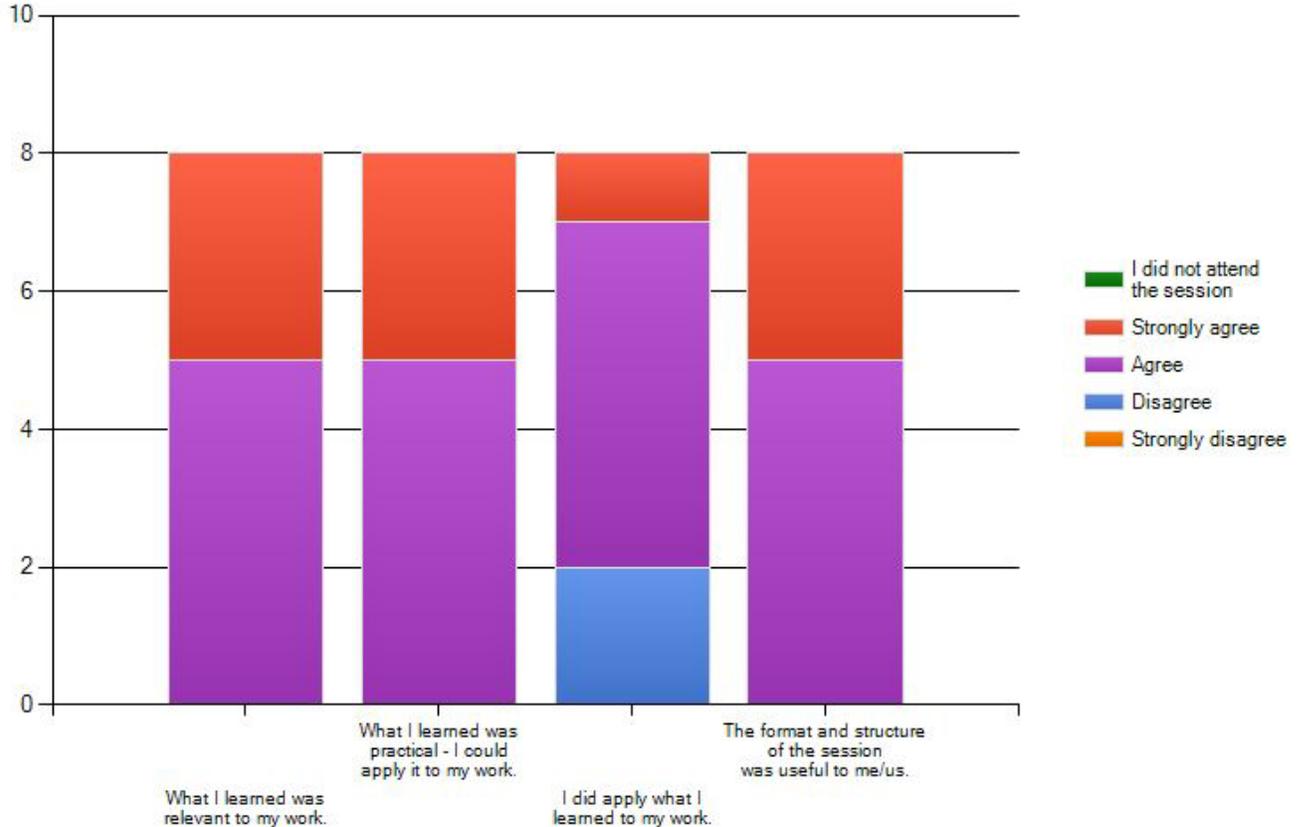
" Thank you for a grand workshop. Everyone said it was great! Most said it was the best that they had participated in. One of our administrative staff, who normally is not enthusiastic about such events, was very complementary and asked if we could have you back. You made an impression. Most seemed excited to investigate how to incorporate peer learning into their work with libraries."

"... I wanted to chip in that I thought Nancy did an outstanding job. What I assumed was going to be a ho-hum standard training was very insightful and turned out to have several lessons that I plan on incorporating into my work. Her teaching style was quite effective and engaging, which was much appreciated! Thank you so much for coordinating this. Well done!"

The team identified the following as additional potential learning areas:

- Online meeting facilitation (see <http://virtualmeetingcoach.com/2010/02/25/how-can-we-use-virtual-meeting-tools-to-do-a-better-job-of-informal-learning-support/> for an example)
- Online facilitation in general
- Working with diversity online (all kinds)
- How to evolve/develop a Community of Practice in online environment
- How to learn about others online, ie. learning style, etc.
- How to facilitate discussion lists, forums, etc.
- How to facilitate advisory consultations online
- Participation and engagement online in general

We had a day long session on February 23rd with Nancy White where we learned about peer learning and some ways to foster peer learning in our work. Please rank how helpful this session was for you in terms of your use of peer learning to implement your projects or work more effectively.



- Hosting Online Facilitation Workshop With Staff** - The second staff event was an online workshop on facilitating online meetings. The workshop was both didactic and experiential. Twelve people participated. From this and other project related experiences, all of the core team continue to expand their online repertoire, one other staff person has worked with the consultant directly to design an online learning experience and another reported to be in the planning stages. In each case, the work included new options for reaching people via the online environment. The four core team members plus five other WSL staff members attended some or all of the grantee peer learning sessions and reported the content and experiences were relevant, applicable to their work and in a useful format. The following images represent what the participants wanted out of the training in black text and their key learning added at the end in purple. This is another example of making peer learning visible to the group, not just the conveners or project manager.

Break up sessions more

Incorp. async aspects

Offer practice in advance

Play w/ tool

7 minute chunks feedback

Facilitating using online tools. Engagement

Ahniwa
Engagement
Feeling of community
peer mentorship

Evan
training interaction

Will
advisory mtg
replace F2F

Leanna
support coworkers

Diane

Step back & think about whole meeting

carolyn
similar - trainings, remote, people across digital divide

Welcome! Write your name beneath a chair and get comfortable!
Key: black, mtg goal
purple: next steps

interactive pieces

Jeremy
tips and tricks for producing

Small meeting/brainstorming

More fun w/ interaction, color

Kirsten
w/rural librarians
Comfortable for less techies

Experiment w/ feedback

Martha
Advisory Cmmt
Comfortable
Youth Svc Coords. (PLA P2P)

Karen
Peer learning
Support grantees

nancy
LEARN!

Jennifer
new ideas
reach less tech comfortable fun

- Creation of a Base Library of Peer Learning Tools (Wiki <http://wiki.sos.wa.gov/PeerLearning/>)** - There was an early assumption that it would be useful to have a flexible, easily editable library of peer learning methods and tools as a resource for both staff and grantees. The existing WSL wiki was used to create a section on peer learning which was populated with a range of materials, including customization of the “This is Me” online identity workbook (<http://bit.ly/bvFjiK>) created by the University of Reading in the UK (<http://thisisme.reading.ac.uk/>), summaries of key concepts and links to resources. To facilitate “sense-making” of the material, “learning paths” were created. The wiki link was shared with staff and later with grantees, but the web statistics (114 accesses to the main page, 74 to the learning paths as of September 15, 2010) suggest limited access. The tool itself was challenging for the consultant to edit (who is very experienced with online tools) suggesting that even if people had time and interest in contributing to the wiki, the interface might be a significant barrier.

Washington Secretary of State Wikis Home

Peer Learning Welcome Guest • Login

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Modified on 2010/06/15 15:00 by Nancy White
Categorized as *Uncategorized* RSS

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Welcome to the Peer Learning Wiki

Purpose of this resource

Librarians have been doing peer learning since the first library opened it's doors. Learning happens between librarians, between patrons, community members and organizations. Today this is still happening within the library buildings and BEYOND! With web based tools, we have more possibilities. These tools have expanded what it means to "be together" to learn with and from each other.

This web resource is a collection of basic materials about peer learning. There are explanations, links and resources about peer learning, how to facilitate peer learning, and how to use online tools for peer learning. The resources can be used in a wide variety of situations with, within and between libraries, patrons and communities.

How to use this wiki

The resources have been organized both on individual wiki pages as Peer Learning Resources, and in a series of "learning paths." You will see that some of them are complete, some are just started and some don't exist yet. That is because this is an evolving, collaborative resource.

The learning paths can be thought of as "mini-lessons" or thematic collections within the overall site. The learning paths and resources are flexible elements that you can use in many ways. We have identified some specific learning paths but you can also create your own. You can dip in and out of the site to get information, ideas and resources whenever and however you wish. (to see another example of this sort of format see <http://c4lpt.co.uk/140Learning/index.html> - which also has some great resources we can use. Note, Jane has copyrighted those materials, so we can either link or ask for permission. I know Jane so the latter is a possibility -NW.)

We suggest you start with our quick "overview" learning path that gives you a sampling of the major areas of the site.

Learning Paths

- [Quick Overview Learning Path](#)
- [Learning Path #1: What is Peer Learning?](#)
- [Learning Path #2: Why use Peer Learning?](#)

Principle 7



from NAP Learning and Understanding

Darren Kuropatwa on Flickr with Creative Commons License

- **Coaching Core Team** - Perhaps the most significant activity, both in terms of time devoted and results obtained is the close collaboration and peer coaching between the four core WSL staff members and the consultant. We treated the project as both a learning experience, a set of work and a small community of practice intended to shift from broadcast of information to sharing of knowledge, facilitation of participation and interaction and being aware of our own learning. A significant capture of what was learned can be found in the Appendix - the core team reflections. Changes reported focused both on skills and approach to work that includes a greater facility with peer learning.

As Karen wrote:

“Our core team received the biggest benefit because we were able to work one-on-one with the peer learning consultant, to hear her explain the processes, to have her remind us of the issues, to see and hear firsthand how she handled situations and outline what and why she dealt with them, to have her provide alternative methods to handle situations, to critique our efforts, and to provide enthusiastic support to our own efforts at learning the techniques.”

- **Consulting With WSL Staff on Individual Projects** - To date the consultant has worked individually with two staff members, one to consider how to do online library board training and one on designing online training for the “What’s the BIG Idea?” children's math and science program. There was additional time allocated for this in the fourth quarter of 2010 with the contract extension. The primary user of this additional consulting time was Carolyn Petersen working on her remote training of library Washington State Library “Renew Washington” Peer Learning Evaluation

volunteer leadership, including coaching on online meeting approaches and use of PowerPoint.

- **Hosting Web Camera (cam) Skills Session With Staff** - When polled, the grantees were not interested in the use of web cams in live meetings, but the WSL staff was, so a session was held in August. This was a logical extension of the deepening skills with Elluminate and a strong sense that people want to know they are talking to ‘real people’ which can be enhanced with the selective use of visuals. This sessions suggests that there is applicability of very focused peer learning sessions.

Date	Focus	Attendees	Recording & Notes URLs	Results
February 23	Introduction to Peer learning	14 plus Nancy	No recording Notes: http://bit.ly/aMIExL	75% report putting peer learning to work in their library projects. (n=8)
April 29	Facilitating online meetings	12 staff plus Nancy	http://bit.ly/cBBF9N NOTES: http://bit.ly/bdxphG	Specific future learning topics identified and participants reported increased ease w/ Elluminate and new ideas for use.
August 24	Using web-cams for web meetings	14 staff and grantees plus Nancy	http://bit.ly/as2d6Y NOTES: http://bit.ly/9sr4xz	Identified some key practices. Reminded about addressing “demand” side of training.

- **Capacity building at annual December staff retreat.** On December 17th at the annual staff retreat we used a 2 hour section to apply peer learning approaches to planning for the upcoming Broadband work which will require everyone to contribute directly or indirectly. Four sub teams were created to address four areas of work including: technical issues, training, impact on other staff work and working with diverse constituencies. Each subgroup identified what might need to be done, who would need to be involved and who could help. These conversations then led into the second part of the morning led by Colleen Jackson on time planning. Notes were provided for follow up at the staff January meeting.

The informal feedback on the morning was positive. “Everyone loved your training at the retreat and several people requested an encore. The support staff (several of them) said that this was the first staff meeting where they felt valued and heard. They said they appreciated having presenters that met their needs since often the retreats are not very relevant to their work. ”

2. Facilitating Peer Learning With Renew Washington Grantees

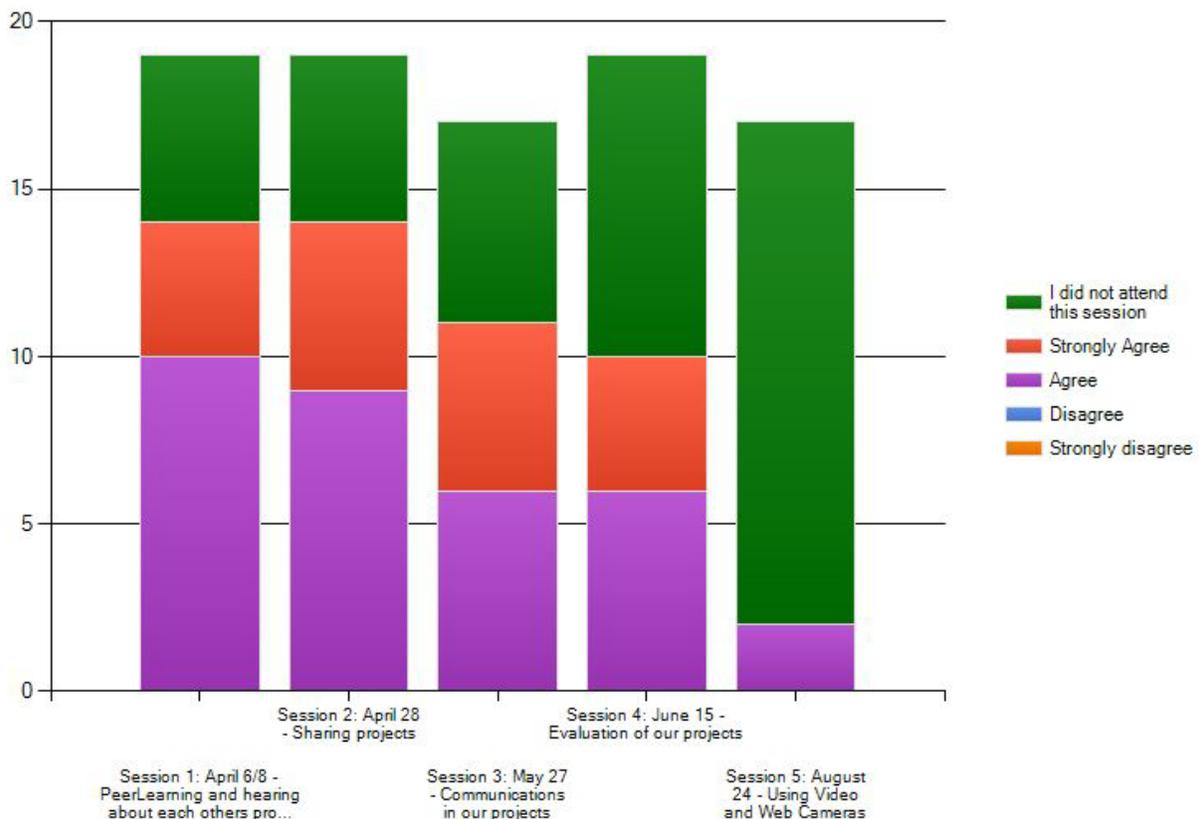
The second audience for the peer learning project were the grantees. Our assumption was that simply talking about peer learning would have little value and that DOING peer learning would help make the value visible and the practices accessible. The goal was to USE peer learning to support their Renew Washington work, rather than simply advocating for peer learning. Knowing that grantees had little time, travel budget or freedom, all of the activities were designed to be online.

The two forms of evaluating this work included event mini-evaluations followed by core team debrief after each session, and a final survey with respondents from all 17 participating libraries. We don’t have a full baseline number of all the grantee staff exposed to the project, so the full N of this survey is not known, as we both sent direct survey links and posted the URL on the grantee mailing list. Of the 32 people directly invited to take the survey, 21 responded which suggests an estimated 66% rate. The full survey results are available [here](#).

The following are the primary grantee activities and results. Outcomes are summarized later in the report.

- Hosting a Web meeting Series Using Peer Learning Approach To Support Grantee Project - Implementation (Elluminate platform archives at <http://www.sos.wa.gov/library/libraries/projects/renewwashington/archives.aspx>)** - From the grantee assessment results we focused on synchronous web meetings. The consultants past experience suggested that when something is on a calendar, people make more specific choices about participation. While “on your own time” asynchronous interaction theoretically provides more flexibility, people tend to prioritize these activities lower because they can be done “later” which is often “never” in a time poor environment. This is particularly true when people don’t know or understand the value of an offering and there is no mandate for participation as in this case. Six 60-90 minute sessions were offered, with the first focus selected by the organizers, and the rest selected based on participate feedback and suggestions. In other words, they drove the agenda as an intentional peer-learning design. Grantees were asked to lead sections by talking about their work related to the topic of the month. A subset of grantees attended multiple meetings and created a sense of continuity, while others dropped in for one or two. In all 32 different people attended with a total of 64 attendees across the meetings. Note the final meeting request was for at least one person per grant to attend. From both the “end of session” mini evaluations and the final survey, participants expressed that they found the sessions of value, tangibly shared their own learnings and gained from others’ learnings and found some applicability of peer learning in their work. That is, WHEN they had time to attend! 93% said the sessions added value to their work. 90% said they gained something of value from others and 85% felt they contributed something, giving some indication of PEER to PEER value, vs. unidirectional value.

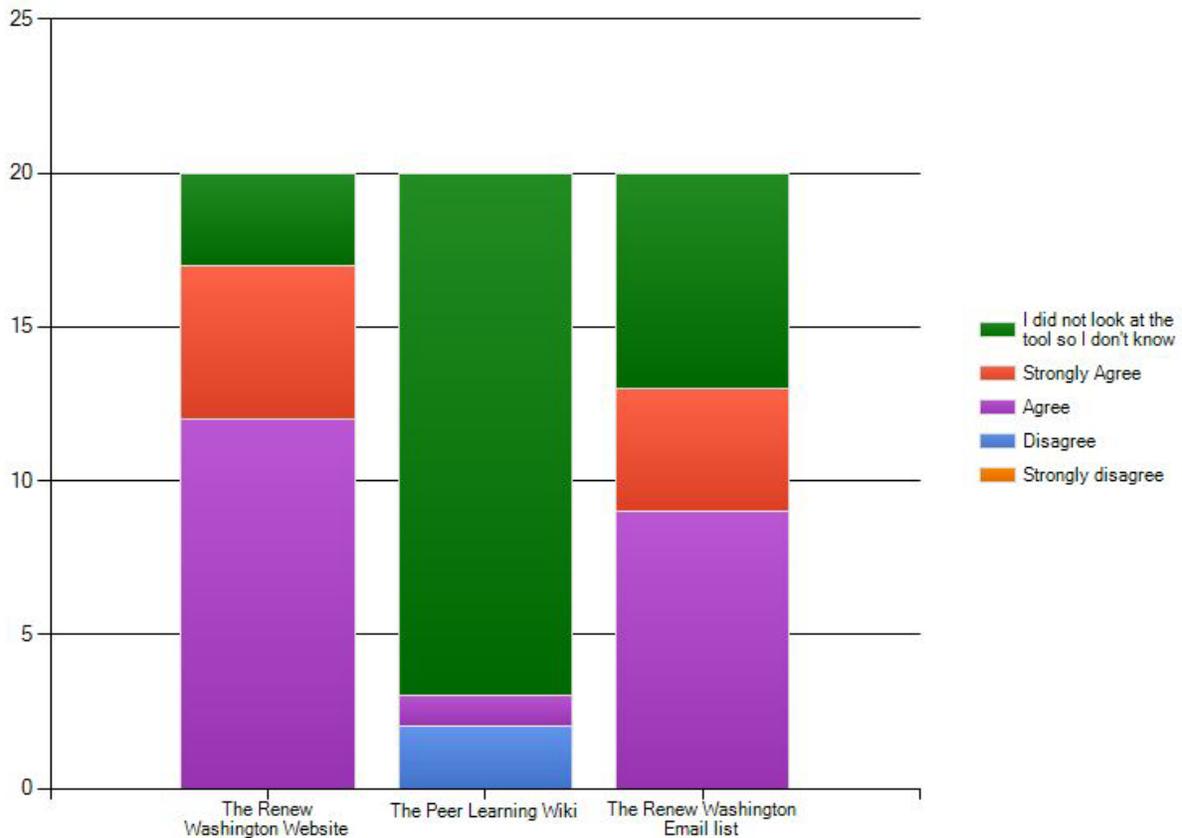
Participating (or viewing later) the web based Elluminate sessions helped me implement my project more effectively.



Date	Focus	Attendees	Recording & Notes URLs
April 6/8	Introduction to Peer Learning and each other	15 grantees and 5 core team	http://bit.ly/969Moc and http://bit.ly/ai7j0l Combined notes: http://bit.ly/dmzEBI
April 28	Sharing project stories and ideas	11 grantees plus 5 core team	http://bit.ly/aAgpFP and http://bit.ly/9Nufvq NOTES: http://bit.ly/cRBj16
May 27	Communications	4 plus core staff	http://bit.ly/cUn5AG and http://bit.ly/dpJxjx NOTES: http://bit.ly/apgYUy
June 15	Evaluation	12 plus 5 core team	http://bit.ly/cPIZnq and http://bit.ly/chc7zX NOTES: http://bit.ly/8XrPgD
August 24	Using web-cams for web meetings	9 staff and grantees plus 5 core team	http://bit.ly/as2d6Y NOTES: http://bit.ly/cX5eda
September 14	Lessons Learned from Renew Washington	18 plus 5 core team	http://bit.ly/brx4Nd NOTES: http://bit.ly/atpu34

- **Sharing Grantee Artifacts on Renew Washington Website** (<http://www.sos.wa.gov/library/libraries/projects/renewwashington/>) - The Renew Washington website was created before the peer learning project, but ideas for content to add to the site came from the grantees, mostly during the web meetings. The value noted was a centralized place to find things and the sharing of content.
- **Hosting Renew Washington Grantee Email list** - The email list was cited by survey participants as an easy way to stay in touch, but it was not heavily used by the participants. It was mostly broadcast messages from the core team.
- **Creation of a Base Library of Peer Learning Tools (Wiki <http://wiki.sos.wa.gov/PeerLearning/>)** - Beyond what was noted above about the wiki, we promoted the URL only in the first few meetings. When it became clear that the focus was on experiencing peer learning, vs “dissecting” the process, we stopped promoting the site. (May)

The following tools were useful in helping me implement my work:



3. Building Wider Awareness and Practice of Peer Learning in Washington Libraries

The initial focus for the wider Washington state library community was not as clear as the other objectives at the start of the project period. Once it became clearer, it was agreed that we'd start with WSL staff and grantees, then with unspent funds, ripple out to the wider community in the fall of 2010.

- Continue Coaching WSL Staff on Peer Learning/Online Approaches With Existing Projects** - As noted above, the consultant has worked directly with two staff members and the offer has been made to the rest of the team. Carolyn Petersen and Martha Shinnars were the two primary staff utilizing this service.
- A Web Meeting Series in the Fall of 2010 With Wider Library Audiences** - Two pairs of web meetings, one on "introduction to peer learning" and one on "online facilitation" were held in October and November. These attracted over 60 people, including some of the original grantees plus new participants who had heard about the event from staff in their library or announcements from related email lists. One participant wrote "Thank you for a great online session yesterday! (for Washington State Library) I was impressed with how you modeled what you explained and recommended for online collaboration. I particularly liked the claiming/naming of chairs. This may be a good icebreaker for the first meeting of our new WLA committee."
- Having Additional Face-to-Face Capacity Building Workshops With Staff and Other Library Folk** On November 4th as part of the Washington State Library Council's regular meeting, a 2 hour segment on peer learning was offered.

Activities Changed or Not Completed

- There was an expectation that there would be interest in basic resources on peer learning, interest in participants sharing and commenting on those resources, and thus the creation of the wiki. However, due to little interest in creating shared documents by the grantees, low interest and a difficult technology, this activity was stopped. The materials remain and may be a useful base at some future date. Instead, all the project documents are stored on the Renew Washington Website which is managed by a WSL staffer.
- There was not a clear understanding by the team at the outset that we should be concentrating some of our efforts outside of the grantees. Because there was sufficient left over funds, this has become a target for the grant extension in October - December 2010
- There was an expectation that WSL staff would use peer learning and want support and/or coaching from Nancy. The core team availed themselves of this but it was not until later that other staff members have actually taken up this offer. As noted, this offer is was extended through December 2010.
 - Martha Shinnors with the “What’s the Big Idea Project.”
 - Carolyn Petersen for her library board development trainings.
- Additional activities for October - December 2010 that were added include:
 - 2 sets of online peer learning events, one on Peer Learning (October 19th) and one on Facilitating Online Meetings (November 17th)
 - A 2 hour peer learning continuing education session at the Washington State Library Council meeting (November 4th)
 - A WSL staff retreat session on December 17th.

Table of Milestones

In addition to the description of objectives and activities above, here is a summary categorized by grant milestones.

Activity/Milestone/Deliverable: PEER LEARNING	Date Completed	Comments
Activity/Milestone 1-e: Identify and contract with peer learning experts	02/06/2010	Nancy White of Full Circle Associates was retained as the expert.
Activity/Milestone 1-f: Train State Library staff in facilitating peer learning	02/23/2010 and 04/29/2010	A face to face training was offered February 23rd in Olympia for 14 staff members. A follow up session was offered December 17th at the annual staff retreat.
Activity/Milestone 1-g: Establish venue through which subgrantees will engage in peer learning	04/08/2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Elluminate was identified as the synchronous meeting platform ● The Renew Washington site was identified as a “home base” for sharing project information, resources and Elluminate recording links

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wiki was identified as a place for creating base peer learning resources and a possible location for creation of shared artifacts.
Activity/Milestone 1-h: Facilitate peer learning among subgrantees	04/08/2010-08/24/2010	<p>Six peer learning sessions were held in April (2), May, June, August and September on the following topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is peer learning and sharing about our projects (15 participants+5 core WSL staff) 2. More sharing of projects (based on participant demand) (11 participants+) 3. Communications about our projects (4 participants+) 4. Evaluation of our projects (12 participants+) 5. Using video for meetings and training (9 participants+) 6. Reflection on the project and closure. (18 participants+) <p>2 additional peer learning sets of sessions were offered to the wider library community in October and November reaching 60 people.</p>
Activity/Milestone 1-i: Develop and conduct evaluation of peer learning	09/30/2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer coaching and debrief with WSL staff after every peer learning event. • Pre-project interest survey and post project evaluation survey of subgrantees • Meeting participation statistics • Post project evaluation survey with WSL staff • Reflective review Elluminate session with grantees • Collection of meeting participation and web statistics • Core team reflection session (Elluminate) and personal written reflections • Analysis of data and qualitative materials (this report) • Reflection on how the data informs the grant extension through December 2010 (this report)

Summary Results, Lessons and Evaluation Data

At the final reflection session with grantees, we concluded the meeting with a “just three words” round, asking each person to write just three words that sum up their Renew Washington experience. This was not about the “peer learning” per se, but about the full project. The words give a glimpse into the experience. While there were challenges, the experience appears to be positive. While each library has their own Renew Washington impact assessment which addresses how they served their communities, it is our job to explore how we served the grantees.



Results - Impact

For the peer learning part of Renew Washington considering impact is challenging. We can gather data about a general understanding of “peer learning” and its perceived value which was high. We can measure self reported application of peer learning by staff and grantees in their work. However, we have no baseline from which to compare, nor could we create one because people do peer learning all the time.

There are four key combined outcome and impact questions:

1. How did grant help staff learn peer learning techniques online and apply them (impact)?
2. How did we incorporate peer learning with 17 libraries (outcome) and how did that impact their work (impact)?
3. How did we use peer learning to spread the word about success of Renew WA and encourage other libraries to develop programs? How successful with replicating project ideas? How many additional services added as a result of peer learning?
4. Overall, how successful were we in bringing peer learning to the overall library community and for what impact?

Staff & Grantees

The shift we are noticing is the increased capacity in WSL staff to design and deploy online events that structure to enable peer learning. This is seen most strongly in the core WSL team as evidenced by their reflective statements (Appendix). It is too soon to be able to measure that in action, particularly since the first staff survey revealed almost no direct application nor data about libraries reached. We may not reach that point

by December. This is a voluntary approach and these need to be fostered over time. But we are still in the stage of outcomes and we cannot measure impact with staff. Yet!

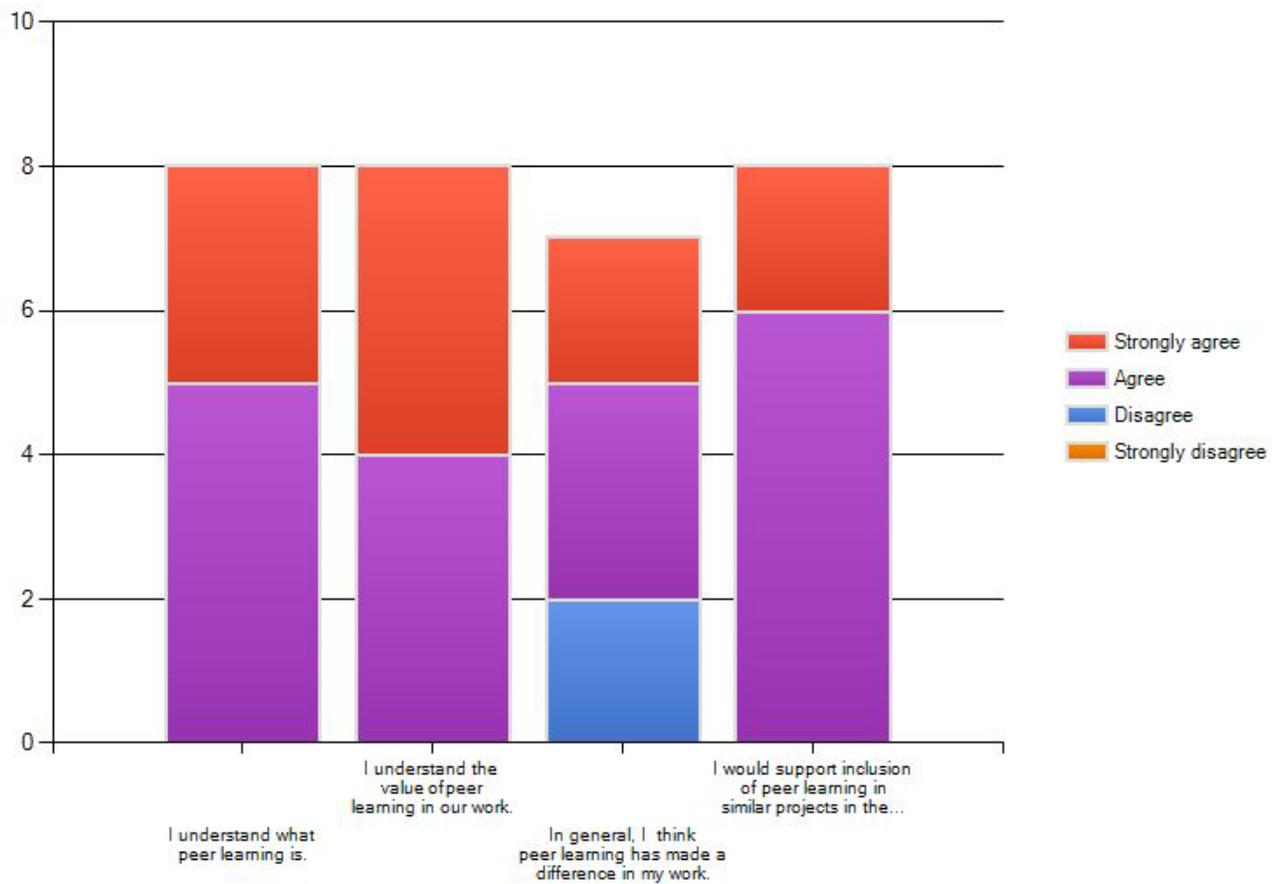
The qualitative self-report of the grantees, both within the web meeting sessions and the evaluation survey indicate they are learning with and from each other. But did it impact their Renew Washington work? It was not part of their evaluation plans. (See their evaluation plans [here](#).) Some self-reported doing something different or making specific choices based on what they learned. We don't know if it changed their overall practice or approach to embrace more peer learning. And we don't have measurement of impact on the performance of their grant work. From anecdotes there are indicators the peer learning added skills, capacity and thus value.

We have not finished the work of using peer learning to spread the word about Renew Washington. In fact, this is an area for more focused, intentional work. There are plans to increase peer learning capacity, but this is not directed specifically at expanding Renew Washington. It will support progress towards the fourth area of bringing, or more accurately, enhancing peer learning into the overall library community, particularly from an online perspective through skill building and role modeling.

So the question of "what next" becomes relevant. How do we build on the skills gained and attitudes cultivated going forward? Looking at the support for inclusion of peer learning going forward, there is interest. So including prompts or suggestions for peer learning in work planning, grant tenders and grant agreements may be an area for consideration.

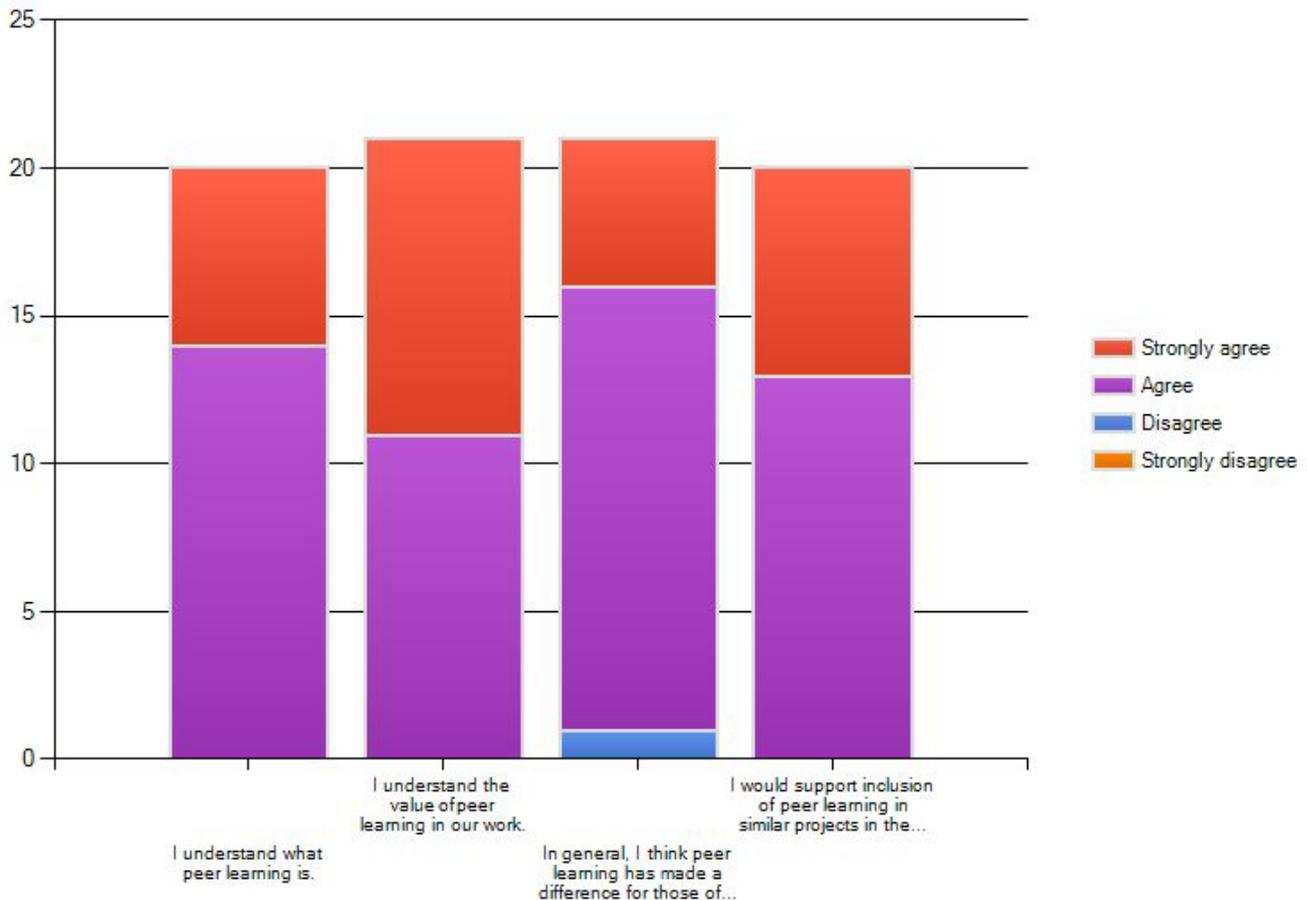
Staff feedback on their understanding and applicability of peer learning

We'd like to start by getting a sense of your current understanding of peer learning and its value in our work.



Grantee feedback on their understanding and applicability of peer learning

We'd like to start by getting a sense of your current understanding of peer learning and its value in our work.



Challenges and Lessons Learned

From the core team review and the evaluation surveys, here are some key challenges and lessons. We have combined them because, like most things, we learn the most from the challenging bits!

In the grant plan, three risks were identified:

- Subgrantees will choose not to participate.
- Subgrantees will not benefit from peer learning experiences
- WSL staff will not practice facilitation of peer learning and will lose knowledge

These challenges are present and realistic. That said, the project was successful in overcoming much of these barriers.

- Staff and grantees see value in and want to know what their colleagues are doing and to learn from them. In other words, in theory, peer learning is embraced once we all know we are talking about “learning with and from each other.” Jargon can be a barrier!
- Value needs to be specific, rather than “knowing and learning is good,” to provide buy in and dedication of time and attention. Tying these efforts to real work matters. Some staff and grantees could make that connection, but it would be good to design more specifically to link the project with specific work.

- Karen “I’m not sure that anyone but the program managers of the Renew Washington projects really had time or energy to take on more sessions just for the sake of learning about peer learning. Connecting peer learning to a specific project means there is potentially more “buy in” to participate and contribute.”
 - Carolyn on who got the most value out of the work: “The core team because we had the most exposure and the most opportunity to practice what we were learning. Also the core team bought into the process and saw its value to our work.
- Grantees want to meet sponsor and funder expectations, so set the expectations and offers early in the process. The peer learning was added after the grant terms were written, creating a “yet another thing” challenge with people’s time and attention. This is a reality that is both a challenge and always a lesson to be learned. It is a good idea to consider this from the initial design phases rather than adding it in.
 - People are pressed for time to engage in peer learning, even knowing the value. Some have quietly reported a lack of support from their managers to take the time to do this, even online.
 - When you have time and opportunity to practice, you have a greater chance of application and impact. The core team’s self-report on the value of the project is a key indicator. The interest for further training from staff is a weaker indicator and there are not easy mechanisms to track application and outcomes.
 - Elluminate as a place or platform for peer learning is for the most part successful, but having good tech support for audio problems is critical. Not all libraries have broadband, nor all computers have headsets. These are important resources.
 - Projects can blossom on the knowledge and talent of the team. While there was some sense that the “consultant” comes in with the answers, this project demonstrated that it was both the internal knowledge, skill, talents and attitudes of the core team and the external resources of the consultant that mattered. Jennifer came in with existing web meeting skills and perspectives, dubbing her the “Elluminate” along with Jeremy who provided exceptional and critical tech support. Carolyn brought enthusiasm and role modeled taking the risk to practice “live in front of the group” and identifying specific areas to apply both peer learning and the online facilitation skills. Karen brought a strong offline facilitation sensibility and, as someone who self identified as less technically interested, role modeled both how to jump in and learn and represent the perspectives of the ‘less tech interested’ that existed in the group. This is important when others may be “over” enthusiastic about technology. The mix was terrific. The whole team was committed, organized and always delivered what they promised. That is not so common!
 - Show versus tell. Peer learning is about the engagement between people, not the lecture from the expert. While it was repeatedly tempting to set up a “training” mentality of “we’ll show you what and how to do this,” the team persistently worked to design for participation and engagement. This meant trying new things, risking failure of any one part (but not the whole) and asking people to go to this new place with them. Practices that helped support this included:
 - Involve grantees/peers. Each web meeting ended with a quick poll on future topics. Each meeting had a space designed for particular grantees to showcase their work and knowledge.
 - Debrief and, where possible, debrief in public. At the end of each Web meeting the core team debriefed the meeting - but never closed the space. Feedback from the few who “stuck around” provided insight to the team in a collegial and informal way.

- Create a shared space for resources, etc. Sharing forms, evaluation plans and other artifacts quickly makes knowledge and information available. Building the practice to share those artifacts and use them still can be developed further.
- Jennifer wrote: “This project has really reinforced how powerful peer learning can be and given me many tools to use in practicing peer learning with my peers. I am now comfortable using online tools for peer learning. I will be using the tools that Nancy shared in my future work with peer learning. I love that there are easy ways to engage people in peer learning.”

Post-Grant Plans

If these grant activities are to continue after the grant period how will they be sustained?

- State Library’s training consultant will continue doing Elluminate sessions and has added the principles into her own work.
- Principal consultant has adapted principles for her work with trustees and will continue.
- Children’s consultant has adapted principles to her work on a new project and will continue.
- State library will consider building in peer learning approaches to new grant efforts.

Other Sources of Project Support

If applicable, did the project receive the anticipated support as outlined in the proposal? Have there been any additional sources of support (e.g., in-kind gifts such as FTE’s)? Please refer to the chart below to assist in reporting this information.

- The library has not determined additional funding sources for peer learning.
- We’re more apt to collaborate with other groups to increase use of peer learning.

Appendices

Post Survey Data

Grantees:

(21 of 26 responded - 80.7%)

<http://bit.ly/9ffoEJ>

Staff:

(8 of 15 responded 53.3%)

<http://bit.ly/akuxYG>

Core Staff Reflections

The staff did a short reflection piece then a debrief Elluminate meeting on September 13th. Below the notes are the screen captures from the meeting.

Karen

How has this peer learning project impacted your personal skills around tools to facilitate distributed and face to face peer learning? What has changed in your practice as a result? What do you think you will do different going forward?

This effort introduced me to the use of online sessions for meetings. It helped me become more comfortable with using electronic tools, with talking online, using whiteboards, using slides online, and other online tools.

Even more important than learning tools, however, was learning to think of interchanges between people in a more inclusive way. Learning to think about how to include folks in answering questions, involving them in decisions, asking them to assist each other and us as facilitators, all were valuable. Even though I've had a great deal of facilitation training, it has all been in a face-to-face context, so this added a significantly new dimension.

I can now participate in online meetings with significantly more skill and with more comfort. I will no longer hesitate to take courses, talk, etc. online. If necessary I would consider organizing an online meeting where I would never have done that before. In future meetings, trainings, and other events, I will be more cognizant of the need for significant interaction and will be very careful to plan that interaction throughout the session.

What skills or practices have been most useful to you and why?

Learning how to use the online tools was certainly valuable and will increase my ability to work in the current economic environment where face-to-face meetings and training are almost nonexistent and unaffordable. Learning how to plan sessions with significant opportunities for peer learning and involvement was intriguing and extremely useful. Although it will take a lot longer to remember and to use all the techniques, it gave me a new perspective on how to facilitate meetings.

What has challenged you most about this project?

Because I'd been out of the work force for about two years and always have been unenthusiastic about the use of technology, dealing with the technology was the most challenging: getting used to doing three or four different things at a time (talking, watching the chat room, working on the white board, and paying attention to the needs of the participants all at once) and trying to remember and plan for use of all the techniques of including the participants (voting, writing on white board, chat, etc.) Adding the webcam increased the amount to keep track of as a facilitator.

Who do you think has gotten the most benefit out of this peer learning work? Why?

Our core team received the biggest benefit because we were able to work one-on-one with the peer learning consultant, to hear her explain the processes, to have her remind us of the issues, to see and hear firsthand how she handled situations and outline what and why she dealt with them, to have her provide alternative methods to handle situations, to critique our efforts, and to provide enthusiastic support to our own efforts at learning the techniques.

Did we include/invite the right people? If not, who should have been involved?

Although it was hard to get everyone together, it was important to include State Library staff. They are most in a position to use the facilitation techniques in numerous situations. Perhaps if I had realized sooner that part of our task was to reach the entire library community and I had more experience in online sessions, I would have started peer learning sessions for the whole library community sooner. The trainers in libraries around the state also could benefit from the training. I'm not sure that anyone but the program managers of the Renew Washington projects really had time or energy to take on more sessions just for the sake of learning about peer learning. Connecting peer learning to a specific project means there is potentially more "buy in" to participate and contribute.

If we were starting this again, what would you do differently? What would you do the same?

If we started again, I would be sure that involvement in the peer learning efforts was listed in the criteria for receiving a grant. If that was not possible, at the very least I would let the grant recipients know at the very beginning what peer learning is, why it's being included in the effort, how it could be helpful to them, and request their participation.

If there had been more time, I would have started at least one peer learning session early at the beginning of the grant cycle to get the libraries used to the process and thinking about how to share ideas back and forth.

I would still connect the peer learning to a specific project because people are more apt to take the time to participate because they can actually see that they could benefit from it. I would still be sure that State Library staff received training in peer learning but even more importantly facilitation of peer learning efforts.

Jennifer

How has this peer learning project impacted your personal skills around tools to facilitate distributed and face to face peer learning? What has changed in your practice as a result? What do you think you will do different going forward?

This project has really reinforced how powerful peer learning can be and given me many tools to use in practicing peer learning with my peers. I am now comfortable using online tools for peer learning. I will be using the tools that Nancy shared in my future work with peer learning. I love that there are easy ways to engage people in peer learning.

What skills or practices have been most useful to you and why?

The icebreaker with the chairs was so easy and so useful. I like the idea of engaging everyone right away in the online format and transferring it to the real world. The brainstorming tools and note-taking are also useful skills that I will be able to use to make peer learning more interactive and fun in the online world. I like these tools for their simplicity!

What has challenged you most about this project?

Finding the time to focus energy on peer learning among a million other tasks

Who do you think has gotten the most benefit out of this peer learning work? Why?

I know that I personally have benefited greatly from this work since it has helped me be more comfortable in facilitating online peer learning experiences. I hope that our customers have also benefited. I believe that the teamwork of our core group benefits all of us personally.

Did we include/invite the right people? If not, who should have been involved?

I think so, if there had been a way to get Leanna (admin support) more involved, she would have been a good support person to have on board. Having Jeremy get involved on the fringe was nice.

If we were starting this again, what would you do differently? What would you do the same?

I wish that more Library staff had been able to participate. Unfortunately, there is no way to force participation and everyone is pulled in a million directions.

Excellent project and thank you Nancy for being the perfect person to get the job done!

~j

Carolyn

How has this peer learning project impacted your personal skills around tools to facilitate distributed and face to face peer learning? What has changed in your practice as a result? What do you think you will do different going forward?

Participating in planning and doing all the online peer learning sessions has taken my skills from Zero to 45. I can't say that I'm at the top, but I feel comfortable with the tools and will not be afraid to try them out in an online environment.

While I have conducted trainings in the past I think the way I approach trainings in the future will be vastly different. I will plan for more back and forth, and think more about validating what's going on with the group. While these were practices I was aware of, I needed experience seeing them in practice for them to rise in my consciousness enough so that I'm likely to use them in the future.

What skills or practices have been most useful to you and why?

The remote peer to peer facilitation skills that I have learned will be extremely valuable. It will be many years before government agencies will have the money to send folks to face to face meetings. Learning to use Elluminate skillfully will strengthen the bonds that I will be able to build among remote tribal and rural libraries, a population that rarely has the funds to travel anywhere.

What has challenged you the most about the project?

There was some terms and practices that were unfamiliar to me. Once I wrapped my head around those, it stopped being scary.

Who do you think has gotten the most benefit out of this peer learning work? Why?

The core team because we had the most exposure and the most opportunity to practice what we were learning.

Also the core team bought into the process and saw its value to our work.

Did we include/invite the right people?

Yes, we did. **If not, who should have been involved?**

Given the parameters of the project I think we invited everyone who was initially impacted and then were later able to offer the opportunity to be involved to folks in the state who get the WSL updates.

Nancy

How has this peer learning project impacted your personal skills around tools to facilitate distributed and face to face peer learning? What has changed in your practice as a result? What do you think you will do different going forward?

On Elluminate, I got to learn how Jennifer and Jeremy use the platform and add to my repertoire.

I continue to see the critical importance of making the work USEFUL because people are too busy for the "nice to have, but not perceived as necessary" activities. Still need to tackle "what we can stop doing" that isn't adding value to have time to add what IS of value.

Differently --> be even more concrete in terms of getting people to put their "real work" on the table as a laboratory for the learning.

What has challenged you most about this project?

Finding where the project can add tangible value to people's work so they can make time to learn with and from peers.

Who do you think has gotten the most benefit out of this peer learning work? Why?

The core team because they had to "walk the talk" and practice multiple times --> which is how we learn!

Did we include/invite the right people? If not, who should have been involved?

My sense is the diversity of libraries and how they staff projects like this makes it hard to know who would be "the best person" to participate. Sometimes it is the people who can put the skills to work. Sometimes it is the leaders who can experience and learn there might be some different ways to achieve their libraries' goals and ways for their staff to work.

If we were starting this again, what would you do differently? What would you do the same?

Build the offering and potential expectations into the contracts and make sure the interactions helped people DO their grant work as well as reflect upon it. It could have been in three phases: planning, execution and evaluation.

Find a project each staff person was working on and offer to support a peer learning approach/aspect a little more explicitly.

Here is the screen shot of our shared note taking during our online review event:

What kind of impact do we think we've had? (awareness, practice, application in work? Was it worth it? Cost/benefit?)

- * greatest impact w/ core team.
- * put in a lot of effort, but not sure other folks got as much out of it.
- * core team bought into it right away. Have to bring in people long distance. To build
- * based on how we constructed it, it morphed into something different
- * helpful (but costly) to work directly w/ Nancy
- * if your job, like at Lib Dev, involves training, working with a variety of groups, not just your work mates, more consistent w/ peerlearning. Less applicable w/ people working individually with individual projects. Was advantageous to WSL staff more than individual managers. Unless something specific of value
- * we know P2P learning isvaluable, but grant was not written to reinforce working/learning together.
- * difference between collaboration and peer learning? Different, but can be very complementary
- * Will be interesting to see who shows up when we have a statewide audience. Who shows up. who will beinterested in thesubject, know we put it out there.
- * Still a confusing message this "peer learning" - is the term itself a barrier?
- * position in context of training. Whats in it for them. WALT training group- most familiar
- * Trainers, HR people more naturally intersted. How to market to managers who might really benefit. Rand might have a way. Send to supervisor, admin and managers group. Do a targetted message will be key.
- * tainers - to do their training
- * small libraries - tool for communicating, connecting at a distance
- * supervisors/managers -

For sessions in Oct and November



As we get closer to Oct and Nov weshould work on target audience, description and plan.

How will this work impact your work with the next set of grantees?

- * carolyn, half way through bring people to share ideas, see continuation topics. people wanted to hear what other people are doing. One in Feb and one at end.
- * This is new...
- * Before it was too expensive to get together. Elluminate makes new possibilities.
- * Think about future design of grant cycles, to include some kind of peer learning approach building it into a grant cycle
- * Evan - grant project manager has done this F2F. Evan (does he have an appointment w/ Nancy? No)
- * Martha is interested in remote learning. Carolyn for board training
- Importance of designing this into grant - feedback internally and to Gates
- * some of Martha's grants have collaboration built in. Related. Her mission is to bring together school libraries and youth services.
- * Some of Evan's grants - museum, preservation and library communities bringing them together.
- STAY AWARE!
- * Jennifer will use in work. Less involved w/ grantees. How might this impact "training" - getting people to spend time doing it is the hard part. Providing opportunities and where they take it
- * Autism - tried WebJunction web page or follow up webinars. Start w/ College of DuPage (??) Webcasts and then follow up w/ opportunity for discussion. People don't like WebJunction, so offer in Elluminate to discuss the training. May be hard enough to attend the teleconference.
- * Could you do a concurrent Elluminate as DuPage? Logistics nightmare. Maybe following week. Do with other states
- * Tension between understanding value of this and time to do it.
- * Hope: it was so hard to get out of the building. when we can do it online, synch and asynch (!!!) think that will encourage this more. As a manager, manager can let you off desk for 2 hours, not all day, \$50 and mileage. Ability to meet online in a subsidized format will help a lot
- * Are people doing this, forming natural communities and we just don't know about it. We are doing this in a formal way. Should we be looking at naturally emerging communities. Aniwa people who got together for beers, rotating locations, community of interest. Liked each other so

Report will be through August, with a "coda" to allow us to update in Dec after working more w/ staff.

N

I don't think there was quantifiable impact on grantees

- already awarded before the peer stuff started
- real value might be BEFORE they write their grants. Explore approaches. Take advantage of shared information. Once proposals are in, things are pretty fixed in order to get the grant
- three levels of impact
- strongest with WSL staff, but this may allow wider, longer term impact as both grant distributor, trainer, supporter of libraries. Modeling it out to communities. Longer term effect by "heavy impactors!"