Wednesday June 19 Call Notes

Sakai Teaching and Learning Group

Notes from our Community Call

6-19-13

Participants (13):

- Josh Baron - Marist College; Chairman of the Board, Apereo Foundatoin
- Neal Caidin - Sakai CLE Community Coordinator, Apereo Foundation
  Marilyn Dispensa - Ithaca College
- Jim Forney – St. Lawrence University Sakai Administrator
- Will Fox - Virginia Tech Graduate Assistant for ePortfolios
- Laura Gekeler - Systems Admin Professional, Office of Information Technologies, University of Notre Dame
- Robin Hill - University of Wyoming
- Salwa Khan - Texas State University
- Ken Romeo - Academic Tech Specialist the Stanford Language Center
- Janice Smith – Three Canoes LLC
- Teggin Summers - Assistant Director, ePortfolio Pedagogy, Virginia Tech, TWSIA awardee
- Lynn Ward - Business Analyst, Indiana University
- Michael Winkler – Director of IT for University Libraries, University of Pennsylvania
- Dan Yaffey, Virginia Tech Graduate Assistant for ePortfolios

Sharing of Comments on Open Apereo 2013

Marilyn Dispensa: Mary Jo (at Ithaca) has been exposed to Sakai. This is my first venture in Sakai. Mary Jo knows a lot about Sakai and want to find ways to share experiences and learn from others in the same position

Josh Baron: Sharing best practices, challenges, and solutions is what we have done. TWSIA started from a desire to share best practices

Robin Hill: Are you asking about policies and procedures? We have not discussed this topic directly in the past.

Janice Smith: The major thing I noticed at Open Apereo 2013 was that developers and teachers were talking to each other in a number of sessions. This development is a major way due to Josh. And I consider it to be well along a continuum to the miraculous.

Laura Gekeler: We so seldom ask faculty to explain to developers why would you want to do this? It is a question not often asked. There are so few technology resources for faculty. Faculty can be strongly motivated to approach developers. We are not going get anything done until faculty are heard.

Janice Smith: It is almost like having to learn another language and culture in order to visit another country. It is challenging to get developers and teachers to interact productively.

Laura Gekeler: I was very pleased to see this interaction. I tried to assist the program committee to make sure we had quality proposals from teaching and learning highlighted in the program.

Josh Baron: Regarding more collaboration, there have been a range of issues that were barriers to that kind of collaboration in the past. Some of barriers are no longer there. We have a real chance to engage at this point. There are culture and language differences, so we need to build up common terminology and trust between the groups. I am interested in exploring how we might do that from a very practical standpoint. What are some immediate things to do to allow some actual collaboration? What would be a starting point to lead us down the right path? We need to be very specific. Currently Sakai CLE decisions and planning are overseen by the TCC (Technical Coordination Committee). Neal Caidin is a liaison to that group. How could Teaching and Learning collaborate, support, and engage with the TCC? Many of the TCC members came to the Teaching and Learning group session at Open Apereo 2013. How could we be helpful to them, engage with them?

Mike Winkler: In the culture of the Kuali Foundation's OLE community, functional specialists drive the development of software. It sounds great, but where does the rubber meet the road? We need to get librarians to talk in specific functional ways that describe the features they need. We need to pressure them to describe what they need specifically enough so that specifications can be written and code developed. It doesn't just work by itself. You need to do training on both sides of table. How do you write a detailed enough set of specs to be clear and get what you want?

Robin Hill: The Sakai Learning Design Lenses have already been done and could be applied to the CLE. There could be some virtue in going back to see the features enumerated and see what is most prominent in people's minds.

Josh Baron: Two years ago, the Teaching and Learning group put together a year-long effort (among other activities) where a subgroup started with spreadsheet of all different capabilities in learning technologies. These were nontechnical descriptions of learning capabilities. It was a very experimental process. The group distilled the learning capabilities into seven design lenses with sub lenses or facets. This effort provided a tool to developers to peer through the eyes of a teaching and learning person. For example, one of the lenses was around Openness. When you look through that lens, sometimes you might want a discussion to be open or closed. Refer to the Sakai Confluence page (https://confluence.sakaiproject.org/display/PED/Sakai+Learning+Capabilities+v+1.0) for details. Coming out of the conference, people interested in this kind of tool can expand on that work and see where it might be used.

Robin Hill: I agree with Mike. We have to mediate and sustain efforts beyond the current level.

Mike Winkler: We have to be clear with each other about what we are saying. Time passed on our project and things suffered. Now we have recycled and we meet once a month to keep track of what is going on and how the environment has changed.

Laura Gekeler: Evangelists in 19th century went into the communities of indigenous people to teach them what to do. The indigenous people didn't know why they should embrace this new way. We need to find out from the developers what their language is and learn to speak it, instead of implying that faculty members are the great white hope.

Janice Smith: It takes both sides extending themselves to learn the ways and words of the other side.

Neal Caidin: I keep hearing a term in the TCC: unfunded mandate - meaning people come and put in a ticket for the future, but if there is no money and there are no developers coming with it, then how does their expectation come into being? Somehow a developer is going to make it happen. Developers are not a purely volunteer group. People work for institutions and vendors. It is not as simple as understanding that we all want to make Sakai better, but a challenge of knowing how to get the resources to make things happen. There is no development team sitting and waiting to make requirements happen. There is an interest in getting input to find out what the needs are but there is the other angle. These are opposing stress points.

Mike Winkler: This process often puts a development team in a really awkward position. You can't just say that it is a great idea and we should do it. You need to look at scope, time, etc., and struggle with saying no.

Ecosystem of Sakai that contains developers, students, faculty, support.

We need to understand how we go from teaching and learning needs to work that actually gets done by the developers.

In the past the institutions that worked on tools had most of the say in how those tools developed. How can we reflect more community involvement?

There are open and positive efforts to collaborate like with the Samigo team. How can we have more of these teams work together to talk about possible changes?

- · Faculty has a gap?
- · Do others share the gap?
- · Is it in a Jira or other documentation?
- · Do we agree this is a gap worth addressing?
- · How do we prioritize?
- · How do we escalate to TCC?

Josh says: TCC is resource limited.

Historically, there was a formal process for prioritizing issues but with limited resources it was frustrating for all.

Resources + scope + time balance is always an issue.

Instructional technologists should also look at short term needs vs long term.

How do we influence the road map for prioritizing changes?

If we are going to engage with collaboration with TCC part of that is going to help with resourcing.

What are some big picture things that would extend the longevity of Sakai in the future?

An example is lessons.

Josh proposes a possible model:

T & L have a vision for improvements

Try to get resources for that vision

Communicate to TCC

Neil says:

It would be beneficial for us to come up with a road map.

TCC may want to be engaged with T&L group.

We can't have an unfunded mandate and should be able to have a strategy for getting resources.

Next steps:

1. We need a lot of calls before there is clarity on what we want to work on.

2. Josh wants to plan several calls this summer to try to figure out what of the things we are talking about and what is the interest in topics. Perhaps a call every other week.

3. Josh will put out a follow-up email.

4. Encourages others