

**Project Name**

Tools of Engagement Project (TOEP): On-demand Discovery Learning Professional Development (Phase 2)

**Principal Investigator** Roberta (Robin) Sullivan

**Campus** Buffalo, University at

**Year of Project** 2013

**Tier** Tier Three

**Project Team**

- Cherie van Putten, Binghamton University
- Beth Burns, Buffalo State College
- Susan Jaworski, Buffalo State College
- Dr. Shufang Shi, SUNY Cortland
- Nathan Whitley-Grassi, Empire State College
- Dr. Kathleen Gradel, SUNY Fredonia
- Dr. Michael Jabot, SUNY Fredonia
- Cindi Tysick, University at Buffalo
- Lisa Miles Raposo, State University of New York Center for Professional Development (SUNY CPD)

**Overview Summary**

Faculty development to support use of cloud based learning software and processes.

**Outcomes Summary**

TOEP is now available SUNY-wide, a Scale-Up success story - see [project site](#) or contact the SUNY Center for Professional Development. Registration can be done [here](#).

**Project Abstract**

The Tools of Engagement Project (TOEP): On-demand Discovery Learning Professional Development

<http://www.suny.edu/toep>) is a body of online activities encouraging faculty to explore emerging technologies through self-paced resource access, meshed with structured discovery learning. It gives faculty a focused venue for expanding tech-infused pedagogy. IITG Round 1 funding enabled mobilization of the website as an on-demand professional development (PD) model, involving 125 participants from 5 collaborating campuses: Binghamton, Buffalo State, Cortland, Fredonia, and the University at Buffalo. The initial PD model is an inaugural learning object in the SUNY Learning Commons, replicable through its Creative Commons license.

Round 2 funding will further test its viability as a sustainable SUNY resource. This proposal extends the original TOEP work to a collaboration with Empire State College (previously funded under IITG to reach 135 ESC participants). ESC Round 1 modules will be incorporated into the TOEP website. Since both projects have met and exceeded Round 1 IITG objectives (see the Assessment and Timeline sections), the merged model aims to serve a total of nine campuses, reaching at least. Whitley-Grassi and Sullivan will team as Co-PIs. This application represents a combined effort of two previously-funded projects, with TOEP taking the lead in this new proposal. SUNY CPD will partner, assisting in extending this on-demand (PD) model system-wide. In Round 2, a total of nine campuses will be involved, and no fewer than 350 faculty and staff are projected as participants; added to the current record of 260 participants in Round 1, the merged two-year effort will result in a grand total of 610 participants.

What is the TOEP Professional Development Model, and What Is Its Relevance?

As stated in the project's JETS publication (Sullivan, Burns, Gradel, Shi, Tysick, & van Putten, in press): "Traditionally, faculty development offerings play a mostly supportive, reactive role in the continuing education of faculty members (Fletcher and Patrick, 1998). It is often difficult for faculty to schedule PD into their already busy teaching schedules (Hahn, 2012). Recent research has shown that having a mentoring or collaborative component is important as faculty learn to integrate new concepts into their teaching practice (Hahn, 2012; Devlin-Scherer, 2013). Developing and offering PD for faculty is a challenge on many fronts, including appealing to a wide range of needs, dealing with limited faculty time availability, physical/campus location barriers, and limited training staff. TOEP on-demand cloud-based facilitation format is a viable and dynamic alternative to traditional workshop-based PD. TOEP addresses these barriers by enabling large numbers of faculty to participate at their own pace. The cloud-based platform is readily available and easily modifiable, serving as a sustainable, efficient PD model.

The TOEP toolbox continually evolves and covers a wide range of established and cutting-edge online tools relevant to today's faculty. Sections of the site are dedicated to topics such as blogs, wikis, social bookmarking, photo sharing, audio/video, presentation tools, and other collaborative applications. All sections follow a parallel format. Core information about the tool area/topic is summarized using rich media content with embedded links to online materials designed to extend understanding. Discovery Resources link the user to the tools, and curated exemplars including tutorials and other resources. A Discovery Exercise then provides an opportunity to apply new knowledge through hands-on activities. Each area then concludes with a research bibliography section titled, "What does the research say?" After exploring and interacting with the content,

participants embed a link to the product of their learning experience and post a reflection within their individual blogs. These blogs are viewable by all participants and describe faculty experiences. Participants are encouraged to read and comment on one another's blogs."

Source: Sullivan, R., Burns, B., Gradel, K., Shi, S., Tysick, C., van Putten, C. (In press). Tools of Engagement Project (TOEP): On-demand Discovery Learning Professional Development. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, 41(3).

What are the Enhanced Components Planned in TOEP's Proposed Round 2?

Initial IITG funding provisioned 4 TOEP campuses (UB, Buff State, Cortland, and Fredonia). Binghamton joined the project, as a non-funded site. Multiple SUNY campuses have expressed interest in collaborating with TOEP and/or replicating the model. Round 2 funding will enable extension to 3 additional campuses, increasing the number of funded campuses to 9, more than doubling the originally anticipated scope of the project. New 7 campuses will be recruited based on commitments to build project supports in the form of formal mentoring/coaching.

In Round 2, the project will modify its structure, to facilitate project growth, and extend replicability testing. We will recruit teams (consisting of at least 3 faculty and/or staff members), to serve as TOEP Fellows, who will play a critical recruitment role on each campus. In addition, they will mentor by extending ongoing support to new participants through online forums/blogs sponsored by the project. This next "ring" of personalization is increasingly essential, to both "spread the word," and to assist the project's Steering Team in mentoring the growing participant pool. TOEP Fellows will also be asked to participate in campus and SUNY-wide outreach, to highlight instructional integration of one or more TOEP tools in practice. This is an essential next step, to provide real-life "success stories" of tool integration in SUNY-wide instruction. These "documentaries" will be captured through webinars, which will then be accessible on-demand through TOEP's website, as well as via CPD outreach. TOEP Fellows will also assist in evaluating the validity of resources, to ensure both the currency and relevance of project content.

TOEP's Round 2 will integrate Mozilla Open Badge Infrastructure and Badge Backpack, the badging system that has been researched through a Round 1 IITG-funded project coordinated by Burns (who jointly serves as a CO-PI on TOEP). TOEP integration will allow participants to track their learning. In addition, badging will be added as a component of TOEP's website; this will guide faculty through the process of adding badging to their courses. The team's goal is to extend practical experience and information, to aid in the deployment of badging across SUNY.

TOEP's Year 2 build-out will encompass the following primary revised components, building on both TOEP's and ESC's initial IITG experience:

- TOEP's implementation team will be expanded to incorporate ESC's 2012 project experience and leadership, as well as CPD as a partner.
- Recruitment and mobilization of teams from campuses beyond the original five TOEP institutions, in addition to

ESC, to continue to evaluate TOEP's system-wide relevance and functionality.

- Facilitation of within- and across-campus mentoring, via fellowships awarded to an identifiable network of TOEP

Fellows.

- Space-based campus - and cross-campus virtual - will be hosted, to showcase faculty integration of web-based

tools in their own practice. Virtual events will be available across collaborating campuses and as a webinar offerings through CPD, with archived sessions accessible via TOEP's website.

- Expansion of "content buckets" on the website will address increasingly diverse technology integration (e.g., curation, tools management, mobile device use); new "buckets" will not necessarily increase a faculty member's

commitment, but will instead allow for increased choice by participants.

- Campus staff with instructional support roles will be invited to participate and be eligible for incentives, to extend

our instructional focus.

- The piloted reflection blog format required of participants will be adapted to employ ESC's hybrid model, comprised of both a private forum and an open blog; this will facilitate participant choice.

- A badging structure will be used to acknowledge mastery, as participants use project tools.

How Does TOEP Address SUNY Needs & Goals?

TOEP addresses SUNY needs, goals, and initiatives as follows:

- TOEP tools complement SUNY-supported enterprise systems, offering ways for faculty to use engaging, relevant learning

environments facilitated by digital technologies.

- On-demand self-directed PD helps streamline costs and share best practices, per principles of SUNY Shared Services.

- Investigation of TOEP's utility is in line with current SUNY strategic initiatives, addressing two of the six big ideas outlined in

the Power of SUNY (Seamless Education Pipeline and SUNY and the World). Faculty cohorts include: early adopters of

innovative instructional technologies who will mentor faculty with less technical sophistication, faculty who provide training

for preservice teachers, and a cohort of faculty who regularly work with international constituents.

- SUNY has immediate goals to expand online and hybrid/blended learning to keep up with the changing higher education

landscape and ensure relevance to today's students. TOEP's commitment to a cadre of powerful

teaching/learning tools

addresses the increasing expectation of both instruction and learning to address transliteracy criteria. Further, these tools

have a close fit with instructional "toolboxes" for both online and blended coursework.

## Reports and Resources

- [Project website](#)
- [Video introducing TOEP](#)
- [Project outcomes report](#)
- [Mid-project report](#)

**Faculty Development**

- Faculty Digital Literacy
- Organizational Models of Faculty Support

**Instructional Technologies**

- Cloud-Based Teaching & Learning Environments