IITG Mid Year Project Report : Entry # 178

Name of Principle Investigator:

valeri chukhlomin

IITG Project Title (truncated)

2014-ESC-Chukhlomin-iMOOC: A Multiuser Platform for International Students to Navigate U.S.-style Virtual Learning Environments

1) Please consider the original timeline and deliverable targets. How is your project progressing compared with the original estimates?

The project is developing in accordance with the original timeline:
- Course pilot was originally scheduled for March-May 2015;
- Indeed the course has been approved, is open for world-wide enrollments and is getting ready for the first run from March 23 to May 2, 2015 as planned.
At the same time, it was too optimistic to hope that all course development will be finished by the end of 2014. We realized that the materials originally prepared for deployment on Canvas, needed to be significantly redone for Coursera. Video production is taking more time than we anticipated.
As a result, we cancelled originally planned prepilots in Lebanon and have accordingly adjusted the assessment plan.

2) How is spending progressing when compared with the original budget estimates? (You may also choose to detail issues regarding access to funds in the next three questions).

Fortunately, we received a gift from Coursera ($3,000) that we used for hiring one more faculty on the team.
So far we haven't spent much in terms of other, non-personnel expenses

3) Please provide feedback regarding your experience with the project execution, in particular any issues or roadblocks you've encountered that may have been unexpected.

1) As it turns out, Coursera is very different from any other LMS; so, there is a significant learning curve. We realized that several ideas that we wanted to implement simply didn't work on Coursera. In a way, a previous experience with advanced LMS creates problems, not solutions, when it comes to Coursera.
2) Doing videos, writing scripts - all requires time to master
3) It's more work for instructional designer than we anticipated
4) I spent significantly more time than I expected on intra-campus communications and obtaining various permissions.
5) for an exploratory project, using a fixed budget structure is not helpful. I think that as a PI I should be able to decide on the budget re-allocation when needed. But - when I felt that I needed to make significant changes to the budget, i was told that it should be approved by the campus. It took me a month to find out that I couldn't make the change.

4) What are your positive observations or pleasant surprises about your team's interaction or project process that might would be helpful to other PI's?

It was a very good idea to hire a college (student services) professional to work as an assistant PI; particularly, to coordinate video production, write scripts, preview videos, provide advice to faculty.
Another pleasant surprise was to receive support from some college divisions like the College's office of government

relations. They help us tremendously - with designers creating logos, editors, public relations, working on the poster to invite students into the course in international locations.

5) Please describe any challenges you've encountered working with your project team that you've found solutions for that might be helpful to other PI's.

1) Faculty, instructional designer and video engineer - they all do the project work on top of their normal responsibilities. I wish that they really had a release time, may be 0.25.

2) PI work - I had no idea about how much time it would take. Oftentimes, it feels like a full time job. I think that it might be a good idea to have an associate PI.

3) Even with good technology, having team members in 3-4 different time zones creates problems