

Professional Development: Knowmia

I attended a professional development webinar to learn about a new technology my institution has adopted, TechSmith Knowmia (formerly TechSmith Relay). The webinar was entitled “Introduction to TechSmith Knowmia” and was led by a member of the Instructional Design and Development (IDD) team. Attendees received an introduction to Knowmia and its capabilities, learned about the Knowmia training resources, and participated in a tutorial for capturing a video in Knowmia and adding it to Blackboard, our Learning Management System.

It was exciting to learn about Knowmia, as it makes capturing videos and screencasts easy to do, allows for a streamlined storage library with Blackboard integration, and has an automated captioning feature that is fairly accurate – and allows for editing to fix the errors that do occur. It has additional interactive features, although these were only hinted at since the initial training was a quick introduction, with additional trainings planned for the future.

Knowmia has a wide range of support features for faculty members, tutors, and students. Professors can add captioned videos and screencasts to their online and hybrid classes to make their content more accessible and less text-heavy, while students can complete a wider variety of multimodal assignments. Most exciting for me was the potential of Knowmia for the Writing Center.

Whenever I encounter new online learning technology, my two immediate questions are how it can be used for tutor education and how it can be used to create resources for students using our online writing lab. Based on what I learned during this professional development experience, Knowmia will be helpful in both regards. Since it provides an easy

way to capture video and screencasts, there is unlimited potential for making orientation videos, mini lessons, interactive tutor training modules, and more. The fact that it generates decent captions with easy editing was a particular relief from an accessibility standpoint.

I was also intrigued by the potential Knowmia might have for piloting asynchronous online tutoring, something we have not tried up until now because of the challenges to do so while also maintaining a minimalist approach to peer tutoring. One idea I would like to experiment with would be to have tutors read through their tutees' papers as a screencast, providing the student the experience of having their paper read aloud; the tutor could then have a short, (admittedly one-sided) conversation at the end of the screencast where they made some general comments and provided a few questions for the student-writer to consider when revising the paper. This remains to be tested, though.

Based on the information I learned during the webinar's introduction to Knowmia, I am excited about its potential for faculty, students, and tutors alike. It aligns well with the OLI Principles and Tenets, as it highlights accessibility by including an easy-to-use captioning option; offers a multimodal option for teaching, tutoring, and assignment submission; and has a good resource library of training videos for all users to reference. In addition, the IDD team created a comprehensive plan for providing training on Knowmia to faculty, staff, and students, from live webinars and self-paced resources to one-on-one support and open office hours.

Having access to a product like Knowmia, which makes it much easier than before to create, store, and share video content while also highlighting accessibility, is encouraging. While I have been assessing what the Writing Center needs in order to diversify its services and increase its accessibility, a key issue has been what resources and support we would need in

that process. Since my institution adopted Knowmia, I am confident about being able to create quality content that is accessible and aligned with OLI principles.