

**“Is it SME?” Stories of Collaboration: Building Stronger Working Relationships between IDs and SMEs.
Online Learning Consortium – Educate & Reflect Session**

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John has worked in the Education and Training field for 17 years. Seven of those years has been as an Instructional Designer (ID). He is currently an ID with Concordia University Wisconsin in the Office of Continuing and Distance Education. He has designed online courses in a wide array of programs; working with faculty, adjunct, and other Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). He looks forward to sharing some of his experiences as we examine the collaborative relationship between IDs and SMEs.
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Top Ten Take-Aways: Tips for collaboration among instructional designers and subject matter experts:

1. Choose SMEs with care! Be honest about the time requirement and level of work involved in creating a high quality course.
2. Get to know your SME. Ever been a SME before? Has he or she ever taught a college course? Face-to-face and/or online? What is his or her work schedule and commitments to help know when and how to best work with him or her?
3. “Do-Re-Mi” – “Let’s start at the very beginning...” – A launch meeting at the beginning of a course revision where all parties are present. Ask questions, outline expectations, brainstorm.
4. Related to the above, identify the course outcomes and learning objectives. Department leaders may have already identified them, but verifying them with your expert may help to ensure they are relevant to the field.
5. Guide the SME to think about course material in multiple modalities. How can a f2f classroom activity be replicated in the online environment, or vice versa?
6. Express the importance of student resources in the course. They provide different perspectives of academic material to the field. Resources are especially important in online courses in which students don’t have the benefit of instructor lecture. It may even require SMEs create instructional videos.
7. Provide SMEs with models and samples to work from, both spoken examples and written models, templates, other online courses, etc.
8. Co-create a timeline with reachable goals to stay on track. For example: “is it doable for you to send us the content for Unit 1 by the end of the week?”
9. Regularly-scheduled check-ins help build relationships and clarify tasks and roles. We have found that phone or f2f is best. Check-ins could be between IDs or among multiple parties. John and Kate check in via phone or in-person every 1-2 weeks.
10. Upon completion of the course (all course modalities), be sure to thank them with a personal thank you note from the ID, department leadership, etc. A nominal gift such as a Starbucks gift card might be a nice touch.