

NICKY – DMAC STORY

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FACILITATOR: What DMAC experience stands out to you the most?

NICKY:

Well, I remember being very impacted, and this is one of the first... I was engaged but I remember being grabbed at this one activity that we did fairly early, maybe day two. It was strictly audio and I believe a prior DMAC participant had focused her project on the conversations that took place in a nail salon among the staff who were largely, if not solely, Vietnamese and the student, or the participant of DMAC, just recorded with the permission of the staff of this nail salon, the conversations in Vietnamese that the employees were having, and I was fascinated because, again, it was just audio so the focus of concentration, you know we weren't both watching and listening, we were just really solely intent on listening and, of course, we couldn't understand the conversation but what became so engaging to me was the awareness of the presence of culture and how we communicate and how that forms a place and how that forms a communication and I just remember really, that was probably one of my most vivid memories of the different activities that we did there. I also great engagement with, I did much, much more listening than talking as a participant in DMAC, which was a little unusual for me but I remember being so taken by the group discussion and the level of knowledge and hands-on experience that it seemed people had coming into DMAC already. Many of them had participated before and were returning or many, even if it was their first time were already doing such neat things in their classrooms with technology that I remember initially being a little intimidated by that but then inspired, you know, as I would hear these things.

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FACILITATOR: You talk about people who had come to DMAC on more than one occasion.

NICKY:

Yes.

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FACILITATOR: Now, you yourself weren't a blank slate either so, what kind of expertise did you bring to DMAC?

NICKY: I think this wouldn't count as what we'd think of as expertise but, one thing I've always had is a very open mind, I guess in relation to my teaching. We all have those areas that we're comfortable in but I've always kind of been ready to try anything, especially if I felt that it was something that would benefit students. Now, again, I had taught primary Composition at Wright State but I had not attended CWIC at that time, I hadn't done a lot to implement technology. I hadn't implemented multimodal projects, for example, and this would have been in the 90's. When I came to U.D., I was hired to teach primarily professional communication so I had heard about some of the multimodal projects that some of my peers at U.D. were doing but hadn't yet found ways to implement those into professional writing course and so, while I didn't have the expertise of doing multimodal work, I certainly went to DMAC with a hugely open mind about how I possibly could and I think that's probably the strongest thing I went in with.

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FACILITATOR: Tell us a story about your DMAC experience.

NICKY: And this goes back to what I had said a little earlier about hearing the group discussion and feeling a little intimidated, you know, by feeling like, "Oh, my goodness, these people have really come with a lot more hands on experience than I've had". When we were working on our individual projects, as much as I was enjoying it, it was hard not to look at my peers in the lab when we were doing our individual work and feel like, "Oh, my goodness, they're so much farther ahead of me", you know, "They have so much more. They're doing such cooler things than I'm doing". The twelve days was pretty intense, I remember, and I remember being up late a few of those nights working on the project, trying to get a good idea and I remember approaching Scott DeWitt at the time (I think it's DeWitt, if I'm remembering that correctly) and I was, I'm embarrassed to say, on the verge of tears feeling the pressure of the deadline for this project and wanting to be farther along than I was and I remember asking him, "Scott, I have a question for you. Has anyone ever cried at DMAC before?" and he laughed and he said, "You know, I don't know if this is a good thing or a bad thing but I can tell you that quite a few people have cried at DMAC before" and that made me feel a lot better. Now, he may have just been telling me that to make me feel better but,

again, the pressure because I think I wanted to do well. Because my individual project involved technology from an earlier generation, I was looking at my mom and videotaped my mom actually typing on an IBM Selectric typewriter and taking shorthand. I videotaped her doing both of those things and then just was trying to do a look at how in her time, being an administrative secretary, that was state-of-the-art technology and then coming to now, and because I think it had involved my mom, I so wanted to do justice to this project but I remember that story so well of asking Scott that question. He was very comforting, very helpful and it kind of calmed me down a little bit that whatever my project ends up being is so much more than I would have done had I not attended DMAC, you know, regardless of what other people were doing and it allowed me to really reflect and take somewhat of a historical perspective and so that was very helpful.

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FACILITATOR: What did you learn through your DMAC project?

NICKY: Interestingly, because that project, I focused on my mom's professional experience in the Aerospace industry as an executive administrative support person starting back in the 50's. So, we're dealing with an IBM Selectric which was quite advanced at that time and, you know, shorthand which, of course, was a way to communicate or to be able to be communicated to very efficiently, you know, very quickly. The shorthand also reflected a time when high-level executives did not do their own writing, they verbalized their messages and, you know, other people like my mom, for example, it was their responsibility to capture that. Now that I'm teaching courses that primarily focus on workplace communication, that project allowed me to reflect in a way and to ideally provide somewhat of a historical background to students. I don't spend a lot of time on the history of technology or anything like that but one thing I do try to impart to students is the importance of being able to flex and to be able to meet workplace standards related to technology, different forms of communication and be able to assess on the spot what the best mode of communication is for a given message, not always defaulting to email, for example. So, I wouldn't have known this at the time but that, you know, kind of historical focus that that take-away took

kind of laid a foundation for me about that, about how far we've come and the necessity of developing skills as we continue to go, you know, to be able to function most efficiently and effectively in a given workplace.

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