



## CWEST Information Sheet for IWCA Workshop, 2009 CCCC

Allen Brizee: [hbrizee@purdue.edu](mailto:hbrizee@purdue.edu)

Jaclyn Wells: [wellsj@purdue.edu](mailto:wellsj@purdue.edu)

Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, USA

Purdue OWL Engagement: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/engagement/>

The Community Writing and Education Station (CWEST) is a literacy project partnering the Purdue Writing Lab and its OWL with local adult basic education organizations: the Lafayette Adult Resource Academy (LARA) and WorkOne. We are working in close collaboration with our community partners to develop online literacy resources housed on the Purdue OWL:

- For LARA – GED preparation materials for the writing section
- For LARA – ESL skills development materials
- For WorkOne – Job search and basic workplace writing materials (cover letters, résumés)

The CWEST is sustainable, participatory, and empirical. What does that mean?

What is sustainable in regards to engagement?

- Able to survive the ‘sling and arrows’ of engagement projects
  - Outlast start up funding
  - Flexible enough to adjust to change and the unstable nature of engagement projects
  - Remain accessible for stakeholders
  - Outlive start up developers

What is participatory in regards to engagement?

- Recognizes expertise of community partners
- Develops *collaboratively* and in a step-by-step method where partners are involved at *every* design stage

What is empirical in regards to engagement?

- Work integrates critical research to develop, measure, assess project
  - Interviews to determine partner needs and expectations
  - Interviews and observations to help develop resources
  - Usability testing to measure resources and obtain partner feedback
  - Methods of assessment to measure outcomes and results

The CWEST is sustainable, participatory, and empirical because:

- Sustainable (influenced by Simmons and Grabill)
  - CWEST launched in 2007 and is ongoing
  - CWEST is housed on the Purdue OWL (outlast start up)
  - CWEST work is integrated with the Writing Lab, OWL *missions* of engagement
  - CWEST has been flexible enough to survive challenges
- Participatory (influenced by Pelle Ehn)
  - We recognize, value, and integrate partner expertise
  - We use interviews to determine partner needs, expectations
  - We collaborate closely with partners at every step of the design process
- Empirical (influenced by Sullivan and Porter)
  - We conduct interviews and observations
  - We conduct usability tests
  - We will obtain feedback on student samples of cover letters and résumés from possible employers

As a final note, although technology—OWLs specifically—form a useful tool for engagement, technology cannot be the only channel of interaction. We have spent *a lot* of time on site at LARA and WorkOne collaborating with them.