

Proposal to: Charles R. Duke, Dean, Reich College of Education
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Subject: SALT Proposal: The RCOE Doctoral Program and Potential Delivery Systems

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Abstract:

The authors propose the creation of a community of learners comprised of faculty, students, and practitioners associated with the Doctoral Program with the goal of strategically addressing the role of instructional technology in the doctoral program. The community will focus initially on the creation of an online version of the EDL 7099 Professional Seminar - to be offered during the 2003-2004 school year. Working within the framework of Edl 7099 Professional Seminar, the proposed project will address technological and pedagogical gaps hindering the development of the current doctoral program course offerings.

Rationale

The rationale for this proposal is three-fold. First, the program is faced with the dilemma of having a successful on-campus program and a demanding clientele knocking on its off-campus door. Second, the Professional Seminar is floundering in search of a mode of delivery satisfactory to students and its purpose. Finally, graduates of the program increasingly will be entering educational institutions that demand a more advanced and sophisticated understanding of the confluence of teaching, learning, and technology in educational settings. It is incumbent upon the Doctoral Program to provide opportunities for its students to experience successful applications of learning technologies as both teachers and learners.

Problem

In a recent AOL member survey, 63% said they had a high interest in taking a course online. With more than 30 million members, that is approximately 19 million people interested in learning online. Postsecondary institutions across the U.S. are heeding the call. Consider the following:

Postsecondary enrollments are skyrocketing – and the growth is online.

The U.S. Department of Education predicts new college enrollment records will be set every year during the first decade of the 21st century -- reaching 17.7 million students by 2011. According to the NCES report *Distance Education at Postsecondary Education Institutions: 1997-98*, half of all post-secondary institutions in the U.S. offered nearly 60,000 distance-based courses to nearly 2 million college students in 1997-1998. More recently, the Pew Internet and American Life project suggests that by 2001 more than 5 million adults had taken an online course for credit.

Postsecondary coursework in education, in particular, is moving online.

About 8 of every 10 distance-based courses are offered by public 2- or 4-year institutions. Of those postsecondary institutions that offer distance-based courses, nearly one-third offer programs in education. Unlike other fields, distance-based coursework in education is more likely to be offered at the graduate level (40% graduate v. 19% undergraduate). Video- and Internet-based technologies are the most prevalent teaching and learning tools that form these emerging environments. Interestingly, while the usage rate of video-based technologies remained steady between 1995-96 and 1997-98, Internet-based learning technology usage *tripled*. A recent study by research firm Market Data Retrieval suggests that, by 2000-2001, the number of colleges and universities offering distance learning programs had risen to 70%.

NC Community Colleges have embraced the instructional role of the Internet.

In North Carolina, community colleges are playing a significant role in moving course experiences online. Community colleges across the state are sharing courses and models of instruction through the Common Virtual Course Library – a template- and competency-based repository of course resources and experiences. In NC Community Colleges, nearly 50,000 students enrolled in Internet-based courses in 2001-2002, according to the NCCCS report *A Matter of Facts*. An additional 25,000 enrolled in video-based courses. Distance-based courses accounted for nearly 1 out of every 3 community college degree-seeking enrollments in a NC community college last year.

NC K-12 schools are not far behind.

According to SREB, approximately 50,000 K-12 students were enrolled in about 30 online virtual high schools across the country. In 2002, the State Board of Education in North Carolina received – but did not act upon – the first application for an online charter school to serve NC K-12 students. Meanwhile, the Concord Consortium has been offering online coursework to NC high schoolers via the Virtual High School since the Fall of 1999.

Guiding Questions

The activities of this proposal will help the doctoral faculty address the following questions:

1. When -- and especially, how -- should the professional seminar be offered?
2. How can the professional seminar serve as a model for developing future distance-based course experiences within the doctoral program?

3. What are the pros and cons of developing distance-based experiences for upcoming doctoral cohorts?
4. What is the best configuration for delivering distance-based courses within the doctoral program?
5. What technological knowledge and skills are essential for graduates of the doctoral program and how can these be developed within the doctoral program?

The Doctoral Program is well-suited to investigating these questions in a manner most beneficial to the college as a whole. Since faculty from all RCOE departments are involved in the Doctoral Program, the proposed project results will inform faculty and administrators across the college who are grappling with faculty and technological needs associated with distance learning. The results may lead to long range projections and greater faculty interdisciplinary and collaborative commitment.

Objectives:

The long range purpose of this proposal is to develop a combination of face-to-face, off campus and technological delivery systems for the Doctoral Program. The short range purposes are to develop a collaborative team of faculty, students and practitioners to assess the technological needs of the doctoral program by expanding the framework of the professional seminar during the 2003-2004 school year into a collaborative, “state of the art”, experimental seminar.

Comment: Do we really mean anything here other than online based delivery?

Description of Project:

The Professional seminar, comprised of fifteen students taking the course for one credit each semester, and other students, faculty and practitioners, will provide the framework for proposing research in, discussing, and evaluating the benefits, drawbacks, and characteristics of particular academic delivery systems tailored for the doctoral program. Each of six seminars, totaling 30 hours over the course of two semesters, will be conducted by a different team of four participants – faculty, students, practitioners – that will present in one of six modes: on-campus, off-campus at the Hickory Center, online using Internet technologies only, online using teleconferencing only, online using both Internet and teleconferencing, and “blended” – combining online and face-to-face instruction.

The professional seminar will continue as a topics-based course. Typical topics include:

- a. The administrators role in technology development and pedagogy
- b. Diversity issues in and around technology and a doctoral seminar
- c. The Doctoral Program conceptual framework
- d. The Doctoral Dissertation
- e. Open session
- f. Evaluation and recommendations

The teams will be self-selected from among the enrolled students, volunteer students, faculty and practitioners for a total of 25 participants. Each team will design and present a seminar based on readings shared by all, and technological awareness and knowledge. Each seminar will consist of presentations, discussion, recommendations and an evaluation. An assessment of student and faculty knowledge, skills, and affects regarding distance-based teaching and learning will serve as a primary measure for the project. At the end of the year a report synthesizing the collective experience of the seminar development teams and the participants will be prepared as a written/web-based document. The report will serve as the impetus for continued consideration of the success factors necessary for delivering the Doctoral Program online and will be shared at appropriate professional conferences, as identified by project participants.

Outcomes and Assessment:

Specific products from the project:

- a. recommendations for the organization of future Professional Seminars;
- b. recommendations for the purpose, recruitment policies, and delivery of the Doctoral Program on and off campus.

Evaluation of the project will be conducted by the Doctoral Program Policy Committee and presented to the Dean of RCOE.

Dissemination & Sharing Plan:

The following agencies will receive the results of the Professional Seminar:

- 1. The Dean of RCOE
- 2. The Doctoral Program Policy Committee
- 3. The Doctoral Faculty of the College
- 4. The RCOE Alliance with Community Colleges
- 5. Partnership with public schools
- 6. Professional conferences

Budget:

Six Seminar lunches (25)	\$1500.00
Travel – ten seminar volunteer participants:	1300.00
Technology: tapes	200.00
Publication of reports:	200.00
Total:	\$3200.00

Sustainability:

The recommendations for the EdI 7099 Professional Seminar will be instituted for future seminars and will include the continuance of collaboration between faculty, students and

practitioners. The project will provide the questions and answers necessary to evaluate ways and means of maintaining a quality on campus program. The project also will provide the questions and answers necessary to evaluate ways and means of initiating an off campus doctoral program.

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