

DISTANCE LEARNING

QEP Topic Miniplan #1 Distance Learning

QEP Topic Miniplan

Use the following format to submit your plan for a QEP topic. Please remember that miniplans will be subject to blind committee review, so do not include your name or identifying characteristics as part of your miniplan.

Topic:

1. Write a purpose statement for your topic proposal. **Sufficient instructor training in online pedagogy and technology will provide online instructors the opportunity for success in their online classes.**
2. Explain how this topic aligns with college mission. **This topic aligns with “Education [and] training... in a global economy” by offering instructors’ quality training in online teaching and thus, allows students the opportunity for increased successes in their online (global worldview) classes. This topic also aligns with “An environment that promotes job satisfaction and career development for faculty and staff” by ensuring that only instructors at COA are properly and sufficiently trained for online education before assigning them to online classes.**
3. State which of the four areas your miniplan addresses. **This miniplan addresses the “Distance Learning” category.**
4. Define any key terms. **Online pedagogy--the study of becoming a teacher in an online or digital capacity (whether asynchronous or synchronous) whereby acquisition of technological skills and learning of student demographic, communication, and expectations are mastered.**

Need:

1. Describe the need you see for implementing your proposal. **Institutions of higher education across the country, and certainly in North Eastern North Carolina, are merely offering technological or platform training to instructors before allowing them to teach in the online environment. Teaching online and face-to-face have little similarities meaning that instructors traditionally trained at a university are not at all prepared to teach online and supplemental platform training does not make up for the lack of pedagogical training available.**
2. Include any data you are aware of that supports the need to implement your proposal. **Until very recently, there have been no formal degree programs in place for teacher training in**

online pedagogy (Kennedy, 2005; Littlejohn, Falconer, & McGill, 2008; Savenye, Olina, & Niemczyk, 2001). Textbooks about teaching online, until recently, have reveled in this stereotype perpetuating the idea that if you can teach well F2F, you can teach well online. However, more recent scholarship is breaking away from this view by naming online teaching its own unique discipline (Littlejohn, Falconer, & McGill, 2008; Savenye, Olina, & Niemczyk, 2001; Kennedy, 2005; Liebein, 2000; Granić, Mifsud, & Ćukušić, 2009; Rovai, 2000; Maor, 2006; Cronjé, 2001, Cummings, Bonk, & Jacobs, 2002; Nachmias, 2002; Boettcher & Conrad, 2010; Palloff & Pratt, 2007)

Learning Outcomes: (SACSCOC defines learning as changes in knowledge, skills, behaviors and/or values.)

1. Identify possible student learning outcomes that your plan will address. **Student knowledge will undoubtedly increase if and when instructors are better prepared to navigate and operate successfully within the online classroom. Online instructors should also model appropriate technological and digital communication skills necessary in higher education and the workforce—this aspect of training will increase student communication skills and behavior, especially when operating within a digital medium.**
2. Define the group or groups of students that your plan will impact. **The students that will be impacted by this plan are all students of COA enrolled in online or hybrid courses.**

Activities:

1. Describe the activities that will/could be undertaken as part of your QEP topic. **As part of this QEP topic, online instructors should be mandated to take part in an online pedagogy training program PRIOR to teaching online for COA. Likewise, online instructors who have studied and understand the components of online pedagogy should be permitted to teach online and these courses should *not* be given to adjuncts solely to increase course offerings.**

Assessments/Outcomes:

1. Describe the hypothesized outcomes from your proposal. **Although this is a complicated mandatory training process, the instructors who complete this training will have a greater understanding of their role in the online classroom, which will lead to better teaching experiences for instructors and greater learning opportunities for students.**
2. Explain assessments that will be used to measure learning. **If records of students' grades in online classes have been measured up until this point, one could evaluate**

students' grades in instructors' courses that *have* taken an online pedagogy training and analyze any potential change in student grades.

Budget:

1. Estimate how much funding will be required to implement and sustain your proposal.
Little to no additional monetary funding would be required to implement and sustain this proposal, but significant organizational energy would be required.
2. Estimate how much organizational energy will be required to implement and sustain your proposal. For example:
 - a. Organizational enthusiasm- **Because this program would mandate instructor training prior to teaching online, instructors may feel slighted at first because they have already been teaching online (though inappropriately trained). Administrative personnel must be willing to thoroughly understand the components and necessity of this training in order to explain it and require it of their instructors.**
 - b. Staffing requirements—**An individual or multiple individuals with in-depth knowledge of online *pedagogy* (not technological training) must be asked to develop and execute these training programs.**
 - c. Departmental involvement—**Departments must be willing to invest time into one or more individuals who could be designated as “online faculty” whose main role in the department is to facilitate online courses.**

QEP Mini Plan #4

Topic: Distance Learning

Need: I feel that distance learning will provide many opportunities for COA and for potential new students, and current students in the surrounding area and abroad.

- The option for professors to teach online can allow for higher enrollment. Teaching online allows for more flexibility, which can mean time for extra classes, which means another 30 or so students can take an important class that they couldn't get in the classroom.
- Online classes can add diversity to a class because geographical barriers become obsolete. I've had classes with people from other states.
- If students live in a more rural area, or if their transportation situation is difficult or complicated, students don't have to drive to school, pay for/find parking, or pay for gas.
- Distance Learning can offer more opportunities for those that work full-time, or have hectic schedules that would not allow them to attend face to face.
- Students can opt to have asynchronous or synchronous.

Learning Outcomes: (SACSCOC defines learning as changes in knowledge, skills, behaviors and/or values.)

Activities:

1. Have students participate weekly in discussion boards
2. Create groups/teams to complete projects (Encouraging interaction with students, and teaching team building skills, which is needed in most careers.
3. Students will take quizzes, do case studies, end of chapter assignments, and a research/term paper

Assessments/Outcomes:

1. Students will be graded on participation.
2. Students will be required to cite references (APA style, MLA, or Chicago style)

Budget:

1. Professional development will be needed to ensure that faculty is properly trained in course management software.
2. COA should provide students and faculty with general information about the requirements and capabilities necessary to succeed in online courses.

3. COA should provide students and faculty with information about the technical and time requirements of every online course offered in a given semester."

Miniplan # 7

Topic: Distance Education and increasing student motivation in these courses

Need:

3. Higher withdraw rates in distance education courses at COA than face to face (I think).
4. Higher likelihood for people to commit to something once they develop an argument for it. (Caldini)

Learning Outcomes: (SACSCOC defines learning as changes in knowledge, skills, behaviors and/or values.)

3. Students will explain and understand why courses are needed for their future or required for their degree.
4. All student enrolled in distance education classes will be affected.

Activities:

1. First unit of all distance education courses need to focus on why students need this course.
2. First assignment (COA attendance assignment) then becomes having the student write in their own words, why they need the course, how it will benefit them (more than it is a requirement for their degree), and what they expect to learn including the amount of time they plan to devote to the course.
 - a. Grading rubric could be developed for instructors.
 - b. First place for instructors to provide feedback on student investment in the course, which will build relationship.
 - c. Self persuasion is most effective and student will be making a written commitment.

Assessments/Outcomes:

3. Students will learn the importance of the courses they are taking. Rubric will show growth across courses hopefully.
4. Increase in student retention and interaction in online courses.

Budget: I think that the budget needs to include:

1. Release time for instructors to develop good persuasive content for first lesson and grading time for first assignment. (1hour for every distance course).

QEP Miniplan #12

Topic: Distance Learning: Project-Based Learning

Project-Based Learning (PBL) aligns with the mission of College of The Albemarle in that it targets work force skills and methods of communication.

Need: This proposal encourages distance education instructors to embrace project-based learning. Through collaborative, multi-skill assignments, distance education instructors may recreate the team atmosphere of a classroom setting for online students.

According to Allen and Seaman, authors quoted in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, “Online enrollments have grown much faster than overall higher-education enrollments over the past few years.” As the number of students who register for online courses increases, so does the need for instructional methods to retain and engage these students.

Students who take courses online are generally independent learners. However, online learners often feel isolated. PBL creates a more collaborative type of atmosphere, boosting student-student interaction. When students interact with each other, they are more engaged in learning and learning communities. Students who are part of learning communities (both online and in the classroom) are found to be more engaged with the content of the course and with each other. Angelino, Williams, and Natvig, in the *Journal of Educators Online* quote A. Rovai:

“Research provides evidence that strong feelings of community may not only increase persistence in courses, but may also increase the flow of information among all learners, availability of support, commitment to group goals, cooperation among members and satisfaction with group efforts.”

In other words, when students work together, they become better learners.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will learn to collaborate with each other on a project using a variety of online communication methods.
2. Students will improve writing skills.
3. Students will learn research skills.
4. Students will learn revision skills.
5. Students will use critical thinking skills to create team roles, approaches to presentation, and research.

Activities (suggestions for a variety of course disciplines):

1. Students will collaborate on a project to present a particular course concept to the class. This project will incorporate text as well as multimedia for presentation online (webpage, video, PowerPoint, or others).
2. Students will collaborate on a research project for presentation to the class, for example, one particular way to make the campus more green.
3. Students will collaborate on a course case study to present to the class. Research findings and approaches to the specific case will be presented.

Assessment:

1. Students will demonstrate skills in workplace online communication methods; IM, discussion boards, Google docs, email, Skype, Elluminate, and other online meeting tools appropriate for the project.
2. Students will demonstrate collaboration skills; roles, team work, conflict management, and leadership.
3. Students will demonstrate writing skills presented in the project.
4. Students will demonstrate research skills by presenting properly documented information on the topic of the project.
5. Students will demonstrate revision skills in preparing the documents and presentation for the project.
6. Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills in working together to research, plan, and present the project.
7. Students will demonstrate knowledge of multimedia presentation methods.

A rubric assessing the specific skills used in the project will be created and used to evaluate student learning from the assignment.

Budget:

Professional development

Mini plan # 14

Distance Education, technical education, student preparedness and student ethics (Nettiquette) through a program we can call ECCO (Enhancing Courses and Communication Online). This is also a word spoof to represent three primary campuses: ECCO (Elizabeth City, Chowan, and the Outer Banks). It is also a play on Ecco the Dolphin as COA's mascot is the Dolphins. ☺