OLL K-12 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL—2007-2008

ADMINISTRATORS OF ONLINE APPLICATIONS

This protocol is for use with administrators. Ideally, you will have sixty minutes for this interview.

Introduction
The following is a suggested introduction. When you begin the interview, make these points, but use your own words for a more personal introduction.

> You may know that we are working on a project sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education to look at characteristics associated with prevalent types of online learning and identify promising practices that are associated with improved student achievement. One of our priorities in this project is to learn more from you about *the features and capabilities of your online offering, as well as how the application is implemented and administered at your school.*
>
> We want you to know that this project does not evaluate you or your school; we are looking to learn from your experiences to identify promising practices in online learning.
>
> Before we start, I need to have you review and sign this consent form. [AFTER THE RESPONDENT REVIEWS CONSENT FORM] Do you have any questions before we get started?

Curriculum Design
Features of curriculum (subject matter / grade level, synch / asynch, pedagogical approach, strategies for maximizing student access, technologies used, hardware / bandwidth)

1. What is the goal of this online program (curriculum goals, etc.)?

2. Please describe the curriculum design features of this online program. (e.g., synchronous v asynchronous; technologies used).

3. What assumptions were made in the design of this online program? What did reality show in this regard?

4. What features of the curriculum are unique in this program, as compared with programs with similar educational intention? Why?

5. What makes this online program successful, from the curriculum design perspective?,

6. If you were to redesign this online program, what features of the curriculum would you change? Why?

7. What means (e.g., forum, email, chat, voice chat, video conferences…) are used to support online interaction between facilitators, students and/or facilitators and students? What are the facilitators and student responses to these forms of communication (do students like chatting, video, etc.)? What do you think is the right combination of these tools?

Type / frequency of interaction between facilitators, facilitators and students, among students

8. Please describe the type / frequency of interaction between facilitators, facilitators and students, and among students in this online program.

9. Does the program promote face-to-face interaction between facilitators, students, and / or facilitators and students? When? Why? Does it add value to the program? If there is no face-to-face interaction, why not? Is there any advantage or disadvantage to a purely online model?

10. If there is some kind of blending (online / onsite) from the interaction perspective, how is that mix? Does it add value to the program?

Curriculum Development Process

11. What is the structure of a typical curriculum module, or unit, of this online program? How many weeks does it take to a participant to study a typical module?

12. Have you been involved in curriculum development or in curriculum evaluation processes for this online program? What was your role? Did you find that your ideas were taken into consideration?

Financing Model

13. Is the program localized or customized to meet specific requirements? If yes, how is the development paid for?

14. What are the up front and ongoing costs of implementation for the developer (tech installation and maintenance, training and support, etc.) and the customer (stipends, release time, substitutes, instructor training, program coordination, matriculation fees)?

15. Is the implementation usually paid for by the customer (district, school or individual), a grant, or other third party? If paid by LEA, from what budget(s)? Does the site absorb all costs? Do students incur any costs?

16. Can / does this program scale to reach all who need it? What are the challenges or barriers to sustainability and scalability?

Quality Assurances

17. Do you have a process or metric for assessing the quality of the program's curriculum? Pedagogy? Assessments? Please describe.

18. How did your site select / evaluate this and other online programs? Do students and / or instructors fill out course evaluations? Please describe.

19. Do you have criteria and / or ways to assess the quality of instruction? Please describe.

20. How does your program evaluate students in terms of: participation, completion and retention rates, formative and / or final assessments, learning outcomes, transfer of learning to classroom instruction?

Instructor Recruitment and Pay

21. Please describe how instructors are selected.

22. Are instructors paid or otherwise compensated?

23. Are there specific knowledge, skills, and competencies that candidate instructors must have to be selected?

24. Please describe the content, length, and structure of the training instructors receive.

25. How many instructors, facilitators, moderators and other staff conduct a typical course? What kind of interaction is promoted between instructors (formal / informal, periodic every *x* days)? Please describe.

Enrollment Process and Policies

26. Who is eligible for this online program? Does it help recruiting candidates? Please describe any eligibility requirements associated participation.

27. How do students find out about the online program? How do students enroll in the online program? Do students decide to enroll themselves or are they selected or nominated? Do students enroll as individuals, in teams, or either?

28. Describe the demographics of the current participant cohort (e.g., gender, race, geographic location, grade, subject, level of experience with technology, etc.) What major challenges for the effective implementation of the project relate to the demographics? Why?

29. What is the maximum number of students per section in this online program? What is the recommended instructor: student ratio? If less / more than the ideal ratio of students are enrolled, how does this affect the online program?

User Services and Support

30. What academic support services were designed specially for this online program? (e.g., program orientation, time management, online technology support, on the Web FAQ, virtual study groups, online facilitation, peer mentoring, peer coaching, etc.)

31. What types of technical support, if any, do you provide to the instructors / students? Do you consider this a cost-effective service?

32. Do you offer any additional supports for teachers or for students? (e.g., financial incentives, peer groups)?

Facilitators/Barriers

33. What barriers / facilitators of teachers' participation were considered in the design of the online program?

34. Is access to technology and / or technology fluency by participating teachers considered a facilitator or a barrier in the implementation of this online program? Why?

35. Are there time requirements (e.g., X number of hours per week), interaction requirements (e.g., online / onsite synchronous activities), technology requirements (e.g., the use of X browser or software) for effective participation in the online program? Which requirements facilitate the process and which become barriers for participation?

36. What is the most significant barrier for participation in this program? What could be done in order to overcome it?

37. Does the program promote / give support to virtual study groups, online learning communities or other networking strategies for overcoming participation barriers from the part of participants?

38. What role do online tutors / facilitators play concerning barriers for student participation?

39. What barriers may online tutors have in their facilitation role? Comment on situational, technological, pedagogical or other types of barriers for facilitating online learning by the students.

Strengths and Weaknesses

40. What are the benefits, if any, of taking this online program for students? For instructors? For the site?

41. What kind of changes in student learning have you seen with this online program?

42. What are some of the costs or drawbacks of taking this online program for students? For Instructors? For the site?

43. What are some of the challenges your site has experienced in providing this online program?

44. How would you compare the quality, flexibility, effectiveness of the online program with similar face-to-face programs?

Instructor Background and Characteristics

45. Was this online TDP designed for students and facilitators with another day job? Does this matter in this program? Why?

46. What is the ideal expertise / knowledge an instructor should have to teach this online program? What are the minimal requirements for an instructor?

47. How much time should an instructor spend preparing for this online program? How much time does an instructor spend weekly on online program delivery / interaction with students?

48. What do you think are the characteristics of a good online instructor? Can you suggest particular instructors as examples?

Closing

49. Is there anything else you would like to add about your school's efforts to implement this online learning application?

> **Before you leave, be sure to ask for data on student outcomes and for copies of documentation or reports on student achievement.**