

Part 1: Abstract

The primary goal of this project is to provide professional development that ensures faculty, staff, and students in the Arizona State Education System engage in discourse regarding the implications of delivering a learner-centered, multicultural viewpoint through online course development in an effort to promote student learning and lifelong achievement. The TECH Share Project at the Institute for Future Work Force Development (IFWFD), Faculty Development, and Center for Teaching and Enhanced Learning (CTEL) at Northern Arizona University (NAU) join in their combined 25 years' experience to organize a one and a half day conference entitled, "Respecting Diversity in Distance Higher Education: A Multicultural Curriculum and Diversity Conference" to be held June 5 and 6, 2003 at NAU.

The overall conference objectives are 1) to increase awareness in faculty, staff, and students on the significance of delivering learner-centered, culturally responsive curriculum in a distance education context, 2) to increase student retention in the Arizona Education System, and 3) to provide knowledge of our current resources.

The expected results and outcomes will include a comprehensive assessment and evaluation program, a mentoring program, and the dissemination of a conference anthology. To achieve the latter results, the conference will model an adult life long learner-centered environment (LCE) by 1) encouraging personal faculty and learner discourse, 2) coaching participants through group activities and project-based learning, 3) articulating their findings through presentation, and 4) reflecting and exploring through round table discussions and a mentoring program.

Part 2: Identification of Need

Since 2001, the new federal statistics show dramatic changes in Arizona demographics. We expect to see a significant change in the demography of our schools and post-secondary institutions. The number of ethnically diverse learners will not only increase but in some areas of our State they will become the majority. In a very short period of time, the Arizona State Education System will face a culturally challenging situation.

Policy-makers, legislators, and governors continually make decisions regarding a variety of educational improvement plans. With increased budget cuts, the Arizona Education System struggles with class size reduction, faculty training, and educational resources. By bringing together the combined experience of three faculty development departments at NAU, we invite all of Arizona University System members to promote awareness between faculty, staff, K-12 teachers, community members, and students on how to change their teaching practices toward a more cooperative, learner-centered approach. Supporting the LCE initiative this professional development conference will use distance education and multimedia as the venue so participants understand why the creation of learner-centered, culturally responsive curriculum leads to higher student retention and achievement.

NAU alone delivers over 900 distance education courses with approximately 300 web-based courses, and roughly 600 IITV and combined technology distance education courses. Statewide students with ethnic minority backgrounds (excluding international students) make up more than 30% of the NAU Statewide Academic Program, and between 30% and 40% of the total students at University of Arizona and Arizona State University, respectively.

The TECH Share Project at the IFWFD, Faculty Development, and CTET at NAU request funding to sponsor a one and a half day conference entitled, "Respecting Diversity in Distance Higher Education: A Multicultural Curriculum and Diversity Conference" to be held on June 5 and 6, 2003. The conference morning session will host a guest speaker followed by

several presentations aimed at defining the demographics of cultural differences in the Arizona State Education System online learning environment and why it is important that we create technology-based, culturally responsive curriculum. Poster interactions will engage participants on the intersection of culture, technology, and learning in an effort to reveal existing culturally responsive projects in the Arizona State Education System. The afternoon session will host a plenary speaker who will discuss future trends of the integration of multicultural curriculum with interactive learning technologies and distance education. The second day will consist of two Round Table Discussions (adult-learners and peer – to – peer) hosted by Faculty and University Students. During conference preparation a mentoring program will be implemented that will orient participants to understand the benefits of multicultural web-based learning strategies in an effort to improve instruction, and ultimately change the university culture. To summarize and disseminate the work and continue the discourse started, a project anthology will provide a published directory of project descriptions, primary contacts, and other available resources on multicultural curriculum and learner-centered training.

The Project partners request funding to support the program development, implementation, marketing, and evaluation portions of the project. The IFWFD, Faculty Development, and CTEL realize the value of fostering, mentoring, and supporting professional development for faculty and staff. Faculty and staff of the Arizona State Education System desperately need multicultural curriculum and diversity training in a distance education setting. Most important, the conference format represents an innovative adult learner-centered model. Each session will clearly define the goal and objectives of the conference using interactive learning strategies. Participants can move around the conference, talk with other participants, experience the poster interactions, and communicate with external experts on the field of study. Consequently, poster sessions will be selected based on their level of interactivity including group activities and project-based learning strategies.

The Round Table Discussions let the participants thoroughly define, review and critically explore the goal and objectives at hand. The round table structure is a method for the brainstorming of ideas. It is a useful format for newly formed groups because all participants contribute without needing to clarify their ideas. The overall format of the discussions will encourage interdependence and team building.

The mentoring program allows the participants to act rather than just listen. Mentors and apprentices will enter into a conversation that emphasizes active engagement in the learning process. Ultimately, participants are thinking about what they are doing as they do it. Modeling a learner-centered approach in the conference format conditions participants to play a role that will make learning an active and effective process. Bringing it all together, the project anthology will present project descriptions, barriers encountered, contact information, and tips for success thereby providing a reference for conference participants to continue their discussions and learning.

In summary, the project partners request funding to educate our faculty and staff on the importance of recognizing cultural backgrounds and differences and their effects on “learning styles, cognitive styles, and communication methods (DeTurk, Holley, Wong, Opitz 2001:1).” This conference would form the bridge between classroom diversity and learner-centered education. Consequently, this conference will produce a workforce of professionals able to effectively utilize diversity and self identity in classroom settings to create a sense of awareness that aids students with different learning, thinking, and communicating styles (DeTurk, Holley, Wong, Opitz 2001:3)

Part 3: Technical Needs

The IFWFD and our partnership with Faculty Development and CTCL will provide the business management, administration, equipment, software, and expertise necessary to organize and deliver the conference. Hardware and software used to develop the promotional materials and associated conference website include Photoshop 7.0, a JVC GR-DV500U MiniDV video camera, a Media 100 Digital Video Production Suite, a Sony FD90 Sony Mavica, Macromedia Flash MX, Quicktime 5.0, Adobe Acrobat 5.0, Dreamweaver MX, and Oracle 8. Information Technology Services at NAU will provide any technical support necessary during the secure online registration development process. Jeffrey Henrikson, Wettaw Building Manager, will provide the IT support during conference delivery. We would also like to bring in some nationally renowned speakers on the selected topics for presentation.

Part 4: Work Plan

Project Phases	Description	Schedule	Personnel	Estimated Task Hours
Theme Focus	Clearly define goals, objectives, and anticipated outcomes for ABOR-LCE Grant Proposal, facility and dining arrangements, registration and budget costs.	7/3/02 - 9/13/02 (10 weeks)	Linda Neff	80
			Sara Aleman	5
			Mauricio Rivera	5
			Admin. Assistant	20
Call for Presentations	Website Development -- graphic layout, theme, call for papers and poster, development of evaluation criteria	9/16/02 – 1/15/03 (5 weeks)	Linda Neff	35
			Mauricio Rivera	7
			Sara Aleman	5
Program Development	Paper and poster acceptance, scheduling, plenary speaker search, identify professors for mentoring program, Anthology Layout and Design, Program Development, Website Update and Online Registration, develop marketing strategy	10/21/02 - 3/14/03 (21 weeks)	Linda Neff	120
			Mauricio Rivera	30
			Sara Aleman	30
			Website Developer	120
			Communications Consultant (publications)	92
			Graphic Designer	80
Marketing	Advertise, promote, and distribute marketing materials via the internet, newspapers, receive registration, confirmation postcards, prepare receipts, maintain records	10/17/02- 6/6/03 (32 weeks)	Linda Neff	130
			Mauricio Rivera	5
			Sara Aleman	5
			Communications Consultant	20
			Business Manager	25
			Admin. Assistant	120
Implementation	Deliver and Host Conference on the NAU campus, interactive assessments	6/19/03 – 6/20/03 & length of time to publish an anthology	Linda Neff	20
			Mauricio Rivera	20
			Sara Aleman	20
			Student Workers	20
			Jeffrey Henrikson	24
Evaluation	Collect, analyze, and interpret evaluation criteria; develop a report with conference results – publish and disseminate with anthology	7/1/03 – 12/15/03 (27 weeks)	Linda Neff	108
			Mauricio Rivera	20
			Sara Aleman	20
			Communications Consultant	60
			Admin. Assistant	80
			Business Manager	30

Part 5: Key Personnel

Linda Neff (Phone: 928-523-1761 Email: Linda.Neff@nau.edu) will serve as the Co-Principal Investigator on the Diversity Conference Project. Dr. Jerry Cox, Institute Director will serve as an Administrative Co-PI for the Institute. She has designed, implemented, managed, and documented technological applications in a variety of educational and research oriented settings for the past 13 years. The past five years she has dedicated her technical expertise and 11 years of team management skills to distance education and the development of culturally responsive, interactive, multimedia curriculum delivered at both the university and K-12 level environments. Using the web, multimedia, commercial software, and other resources in support of teaching and learning, she works effectively with and trains instructional design professionals, faculty, and multimedia students in the creation and application of new pedagogical technologies. Drawing on her anthropological background (M.A. Anthropology) and work experience with the Yucatec Maya, Navajo, Zuni, and Hopi people as well as for the consortium of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, she brings a unique multi-cultural perspective to the Diversity Conference Project.

Sara Aleman (Phone: 928-523-3886 Email: Sara.Aleman@nau.edu) earned her Ph.D. from Brandeis University and has worked extensively in the development and implementation of diversity training for such large groups as the Maricopa Community College system to small not-for-profit organizations. In addition, she has been a trainer for many years and is currently the director of the Faculty Development Program at NAU. As a social worker and gerontologist, she brings to this project a wealth of knowledge on rural and urban issues. She has delivered web classes, taught "older" students, delivered a university-house course and has delivered many classes via TV. Currently, the major thrust of her work is focused on working with other professors in revising their syllabi to include more learner centered educational models.

Mauricio Quijano-Rivera (Phone: 928-523-0954 Email: Mauricio.Quijano@nau.edu) completed his Master's Degree in Educational Technology in 1989 from Laval University in Quebec City. His extensive involvement and award recognition in distance education, new technology, and community development is demonstrated in a variety of different projects in Canada, the United States, and other countries. He spent the past 15 years presenting and teaching educational technology seminars, workshops, and courses to Canadian, Latin American, and North American faculty, staff, and professionals. Working and traveling around Canada and other countries has given him a holistic view on distance education and new technology applications in education. He continues his involvement on international distance education projects in Canada and Latino American countries.

Part 6: Expected Results and Outcomes

The expected results and outcomes of the Diversity Conference include a comprehensive assessment and evaluation program, a mentoring program, and the dissemination of a conference anthology. Conference evaluation plays a vital role in measuring the overall success of the conference, anthology, and mentoring program. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine the effectiveness of the conference interaction and continuation of the mentoring program. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected pre- and post-conference implementation. The formative evaluation plan will consist of a questionnaire participants will fill out during online conference registration. The questionnaire will be aimed at identifying the level of understanding participants currently have regarding diversity and "the development of identity and how these identities form, and influence other identities (DeTurk, Holley, Wong, Opitz 2001:2)."

During conference poster presentations, we will have interactive educational assessments that will collect data as well as help the participant identify and overcome their cultural biases in a classroom setting. A post conference questionnaire will be delivered immediately after the round table discussions in an effort to evaluate the degree of participant engagement, input, and participation as well as the knowledge and understanding gained by attending the conference.

The integrated assessments and evaluation will be published in the anthology in an effort to encourage others to learn from our productive endeavors as well as our mistakes. The mentoring program will be periodically reviewed, evaluated, and necessary changes made to continue the program's effectiveness.

Faculty and staff will share and develop their newly found skills that will be reflected in classrooms at all of Arizona's Education Institutions. The impact of culturally responsive, interactive technologies integrated in web-based learning on student achievement will impact roughly 30-40% of Arizona's Higher Education students who come from an ethnic minority background. The conference will facilitate a cooperative learning or learner-centered environment. But more importantly, faculty and staff will be culturally aware resulting in higher student retention, an increased desire to learn, a positive classroom experience, sense of self, and overall school climate (Baker, Gearhart, and Herman 1994; Harel 1990; Harel and Papert 1991; Kulik 1994; Mann, Shakeshaft, Becker, and Kottkamp 1999; Sivin-Kachala 1998; Scardamalia and Bereiter 1996; Wenglinsky 1998).

REFERENCES

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- Wenglinsky, H. (1998). Does it compute? The relationship between educational technology and student achievement in mathematics. Educational Testing Service Policy Information Center

BUDGET REQUEST

Proposer: (University and Unit) Linda S. Neff

Project Title: Respecting Diversity in Distance Higher Education: A Multicultural Curriculum and Diversity Conference

Proposer Contact (name, title, email and phone): Linda S. Neff, Technology and Curriculum Development Coordinatory, Linda.Neff@nau.edu, 928-523-1761

FUNCTION	AMOUNT REQUESTED	INSTITUTIONAL CONTRIBUTION*	EXTERNAL SUPPORT* (Note Source)
1. Personnel:			
Key (Faculty, Administration)	14,752		
Technical	480	1900	
Graduate			
Support (Clerical, Graduate)	997	2820	
Fringe Benefits (ERE)	4758	1586	
TOTAL PERSONNEL COSTS	20,987	6306	
2. Professional and Outside Services	3080		
3. Staff Travel	2487		
4. Participant Support	2850		
5. Communication	5027		
6. Materials & Supplies	5462		
7. Other Operating Expenditures	+(+ 3625)Conference Revenues		
8. Indirect Costs		7757	
9. TOTAL COSTS	36,268		

* All proposals must include a commitment of matching dollars in cash or kind. Matches must cover at least 25% of the annual budget. Match sources may include the institutional contribution, external support, or a combination. **Indirect and overhead costs may be included as part of the institutional match, but may not be included in the amount requested.**

Detailed Budget

Key Personnel		
Linda Neff	8052	
Sara Aleman	3582	
Mauricio Quijano-Rivera	2118	
Administrative Support	2477	
(Institute Co-Principal Investigator, Business Manager, IT Support)		
ERE	4758	
Key Personnel Total:		20,987
Professional and Outside Services		
Communication Consultant	3080	
(marketing, direct mail piece, program, and anthology layout and edit)		
Professional and Outside Service Total:		3,080
Travel		
Meals	354	
Accommodations	603	
Air Flight	1050	
Transportation	480	
Travel Total:		2,487
Participant Support		
Presenter Honorariums	2000	
Poster Award (1 st Place)	500	
Poster Award (2 nd Place)	250	
Poster Award (3 rd Place)	100	
Total Participant Support:		2,850
Communication		
Direct Mail Piece	3000	
Conference Program	214	
Anthology	689	
Postage	1124	
Total Communication:		5,027
Materials and Supplies		
Telephone, Copying, Signage, Building Rental, Parking Permits, Credit Card Costs,	2770	
Name Tags		
Breakfast and Daytime Refreshments	2692	
Total Materials and Supplies:		5,462
Total Expenses		39,893
Expected Revenues:		3,625
Total Requested Funds:		36,268
Matching Funds		
Institutional Contribution (Indirect Costs)	7757	
Institute for Future Work Force Development Administrative,		
Graphic Design, and Website Development Support	6306	
Total Matching Funds:		14,063