

**ESTABLISHING AND EVALUATING A DISTANCE
MASTER OF EDUCATION PROGRAM**

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Dedication

This project is dedicated to the educators that will benefit from continued professional development and to my family, especially my wife, for the support they provided throughout this process.

Abstract

The purpose of this project is twofold. First, it was to establish if there was a need for a Master of Education program in School District 59 in British Columbia. If so, then to evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery model of the program after delivery of the first course. Following establishment of a cohort with The University of Lethbridge, where students use a combination of on-site instruction and computer-assisted instruction to complete the program requirements for a Master of Education, monitoring of the program development began. This development of the program took place over a fifteen-month period from October 1998 to January 2000 and had three distinct stages. Firstly, a needs assessment determined that there was support for establishing a cohort amongst the professionals of School District 59. Secondly, negotiations between School District 59 and The University of Lethbridge determined the parameters of a partnership. Thirdly, an evaluation of the program was conducted following completion of the first course delivered on-site. The evaluation of the first course confirmed that the model for delivery was very effective. The program is still ongoing at the time of this project completion and so further evaluation is pending.

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Chapter I

Background

These are times where technology and knowledge are expanding and evolving rapidly. Educators are faced with the responsibility of producing students who can compete on the global market. They face the challenges of lack of funding, inadequate technology, classroom integration of people with special needs and classrooms with multiple and diverse learning needs. The 1999 on-line edition of the British Columbia *Manual of School Law* states that school districts must "...make available an education program to all persons of school age..." and teachers must "...design, supervise and assess the educational programs provided to individuals and groups of students." This straight forward assessment of the school district's and teachers' responsibilities is deceptively austere as further clarified by Butt, Steel, Beermann, Chow, Bryant, Enns, Gibbs, Hatt & Smith (1995). They describe the importance of professional development in the ever changing and challenging world of education.

Clearly professional development is necessary for practicing teachers when new curriculum content is prescribed to enable our children and society to keep pace with an ever increasing explosion of knowledge. Teachers understanding and being able to deliver new curriculum content using their usual teaching skills and strategies is not sufficient, however. New content, skills, and intellectual processes often require new teaching/learning strategies. Most importantly, increases in student learning have been shown to be more effectively attained using specific teaching skills and strategies. Regardless, therefore, of changes in curriculum content, improving teaching/learning effectiveness should be a core focus for efforts at professional development. (p. 6-7)

Education is not a stagnant profession. Knowledge, skills, and technology change constantly and it is the obligation of all educators to keep up with these changes.

Remote districts, those not within an easy commute of a major centre, may experience unique challenges in their attempt to provide quality education. There is a limited pool of applicants in isolated districts and finding those qualified for postings of special responsibility to support classroom teachers is challenging. Both new teaching recruits and

veteran teachers may be keen and interested but they do not have the qualifications to fill specialty areas such as special education, student support services, counselling, and administration. As a result, in many remote districts, professionals are often hired to specialty positions with the understanding that they will obtain predetermined qualifications for said positions. Unfortunately, there are many barriers to postgraduate education for professionals in these districts. The most apparent being the lack of proximity to accredited institutions providing these programs. Many major institutions require a one-year residency. This not only requires a leave of absence from work but also leaving home and family to live in another city for at least one year. Another consideration is cost for travel and living expenses.

The solution for many school districts in this situation is to invest in the training of individuals requiring them to facilitate for groups within that district. There are, however, limitations as to what can be provided locally as professional development for university credit. As a result school districts must become more creative and seek out an accredited partner with whom to establish a working relationship for meeting the professional development needs within that district.

This project will explore one partnership between a school district and a university to provide a Master of Education program. In particular it will focus on the development of a University of Lethbridge M.Ed. cohort within the School District 59 of Northern British Columbia.

Chapter 2

Needs Assessment

School District 59 has long recognized the need to meet the challenges of obtaining a postgraduate education for the district's teachers and has been seeking to establish a successful university partnership for many years. However, it could be costly to enter into such a project without definitive support from those it would be designed for. A well thought out needs assessment will not only determine the desire and need for professional development but also help guide the development of the cohort. Flanders (1980), as quoted by Butt et al. (1995), states that if teachers are going to participate in their own professional development, activities need to be designed that address the teachers' needs, concerns, personal agendas and ideas for their own professional growth. The research questions posed by this needs assessment were: What are the professional needs of the teachers in the Peace River area?, and Will professionals engage in a masters program if it is brought closer to their geographic location?

A consideration when designing the needs assessment was the large geographic area to which it was to be delivered including two British Columbia school districts and neighboring Alberta schools. Therefore, it needed to be highly cost effective. In addition, with only one researcher compiling the data it needed to be self administered and easy to analyze.

Choosing a format for the questionnaire was the next step. It was decided to use a horizontal layout with two to three category choices. The advantages according to Neuman (1997) of using closed questions are that they are easier to answer, easier to compare responses, and have fewer irrelevant or confusing answers.

When choosing a particular questionnaire format there are pro's and con's. An advantage for School District 59 was low cost of distribution as they handle their own mail and the other school districts agreed to assist in distribution. Some of the disadvantages of

this method of assessment are: suggesting ideas, non-interested respondents answering anyway, frustration from respondent because desired answer is not a choice, misinterpretation of question going unnoticed, making mistakes on survey and possibly forcing people to make choices they would not make in the real world (Neuman, 1997). As always with a survey that is mailed out, and not administered face-to-face, there is the possibility of a low return rate. Neuman (1997) states that “a response rate of 10 to 50 percent is common for a mail survey” (p. 247).

The assessment tool was kept succinct to help increase the chances of it being returned as well as to make analysis easier. The first two questions indicated whether the respondent was currently enrolled in postgraduate education or whether they had plans to be. The third question asked respondents to indicate what professional graduate areas they were interested in. The respondents were then given the opportunity to request further information on the possibility of registering for a program in Dawson Creek (see Appendix A).

A pilot test of the survey was completed prior to mass distribution. No concerns were raised and therefore, the survey was not altered. Packages of surveys including a covering letter were sent to the administrators for each of the schools listed (see Appendix B). They were sent out using school board mail in School District 59 and Canada Post for School District 60 and the Alberta school districts.

As is common for mail surveys, the overall response rate was fairly low, 27%. The highest response rate was from School District 59, 37% (see table 2.1 for a breakdown of responses by district). Of the surveys returned, 165 indicated that they would be interested in the possibility of registering for a postgraduate program. School District 59 and The University of Lethbridge felt that this response was indicative of support for a Master of Education program.

Table 2.1 - Response to Needs Assessment Survey by School District

	Number of surveys distributed	Number Returned	Number Request Further info.
School District 59 (Dawson Creek & area)	566	210 (37%)	105
School District 60 (Fort St. John and area)	414	33 (8%)	17
Alberta	670	204 (30%)	43
Total	1650	447 (27%)	165

The survey asked what areas of focus would respondents like to see offered in a postgraduate program. Counselling, curriculum development, leadership and student support services were the areas of interest most frequently chosen (see table 2.2 for a complete breakdown of responses). Other areas suggested included: First Nations support/career preparation, teaching a second language, social studies, coaching, language arts, information technology integration, speech and language pathology, education psychology, assessment, business administration, neurology, history, music, visual arts, accounting and computers. This information became very helpful for both parties when planning the path that the program would take.

Table 2.2 - Response to Question #3: What post graduate areas listed below are of interest to you?

Graduate area	Number of Positive respondents
Counselling	69 (21%)
Curriculum Development	55 (17%)
Leadership	50 (15%)
Student Support Services	48 (15%)
Alternate Programs	27 (8%)
Library	21 (7%)
Math/Science	5 (2%)
Technology	4 (2%)
23 Others	44 (13%)
Total	323 (100%)

The information gathered from the needs assessment provided support for the establishment of a partnership between The University of Lethbridge and School District 59. In addition, it was the earliest consultation with the teachers/administrators which allowed them some input into the path the program would take, thereby allowing them to direct their own professional development.

Following submission of this information to the School District, they began negotiating with The University of Lethbridge for the establishment of a partnership to deliver a Master of Education program.

Chapter 3

Partnerships Between Educational Institutions and School Districts

Reasons for partnerships

The Council of Ministers of Education (1995) studied 28 partnerships in distance education and their subsequent report outlined reasons why a partnership between a educational institution and school district may be formed. Such reasons included:

- to make use of existing infrastructure;
- to share expertise (telecommunications, teaching, instructional design, curriculum development, educational applications of technologies, management);
- to administer programs;
- to coordinate the equipping of sites;
- to obtain or standardize content (materials, programming);
- to obtain accreditation;
- to enhance access to programming;
- to provide student support services; and
- to further initiatives in the area of distance education and technology through coordination and concerted development. (p.12)

Universities are further driven to outside partnerships by the increasingly competitive market for university students. According to Maul (1998), educational institutions, specifically universities, need to be providing more opportunities for potential clients/students such as, being able to enroll in classes that are off campus and easily accessible, either through electronics or proximity. By making their M.Ed. program available, affordable and flexible, The University of Lethbridge has been able to draw a significant portion of their population from professional communities, such as School District 59. They are meeting the needs of the professional client (Maul, 1998).

Principles of successful partnerships

The Council of Ministers of Education (1995), outlines seven basic principles which they have identified as predictors of successful partnerships: 1) communication;

2) trust, respect, flexibility; 3) benefits to each partner; 4) planning; 5) management; 6) clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and 7) funding. Further literature concurs with these principles. Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) cite the four principles of respect, relevance, reciprocity and responsibility as necessary for a 'win-win' partnership.

Reasons partnerships fail

Partnerships do not come without the possibility of negative consequences. The idea of having an outside organization, like The University of Lethbridge, be responsible for a significant portion of professional development creates the possibility of the University exerting too much authority. It is essential that an equally weighted collegial partnership is negotiated to help ensure the long term success of the partnership. According to Butt et al. (1995),

the need for collegial, rather than hierarchical, relationships among insiders and outsiders are clear. Where horizontal relationships were fostered, outsiders were able to apprehend the everyday reality teachers experience and adapt their innovative doctrines and conceptions accordingly; teachers could also share outsiders' dreams and reflect on their approach to practice. Through this process a healthy blurring of the roles of insider/outsider could occur--a type of role liberation. (p. 32-33)

Thus, building partnerships requires continuous effort from all parties to ensure that it continues in a forward direction. There needs to be a sense of valued respect, and inherent gain for both sides if the relationship is to be successful.

The importance of these principles can be outlined by School District 59's unsuccessful attempts to establish a partnership with other post-secondary institutions. The primary obstacle in these cases was a lack of mutual respect and flexibility. These universities were unwilling to alter their programs to make them more suitable for School District 59 professionals. Another concern was the high cost of providing their program. In these situations the parties were unable to communicate in a manner that allowed both sides to feel

they had something to gain from the partnership (CMEC, 1995) and negotiations ended.

Building a Partnership Between The University of Lethbridge and School District 59

The CMEC (1995) found that "...consultation with stakeholders on issues such as learner needs, and students services is essential to ensure...support for the partnership" (p. 37). Consultation through face-to-face communication formed the foundation of the partnership between The University of Lethbridge and School District 59. Once the needs assessment had determined support for the endeavor The University of Lethbridge sent two representatives to School District 59. These representatives were able to experience some of the culture of a northern district as well as meet some of the key personnel who would be involved in the process. In addition, they did a tour of the three major communities in the District and met with teachers/administrators who had expressed an interest in one of the graduate programs via the needs assessment questionnaire.

Following the visit of The University of Lethbridge representatives to School District 59, a presentation was made to the School Board to bring the Trustees up to date with what was being proposed and also to get their approval. This presentation served two major functions. First and most importantly, there was a request to have the School Board and the Superintendent commit to endorsing The University of Lethbridge as a valuable partner in professional development. Second, the Superintendent was committed to endorsing a proposal to the University Curriculum Committee for acceptance of local professional development courses being used for credit towards completing the requirements of the M.Ed. degree. The response from the Board was very positive.

The Superintendent committed to paying for the off-campus delivery fee for administrative officers, while the Peace River South Teachers Association supported teachers by providing funds for professional development to help reduce costs. In addition, the Superintendent provided release time for teachers and administrators as well as providing

funds for meals during class time. The program was supported by the School Board and Superintendent by passing policy that made it a requirement for administrative officers and teachers in positions of special responsibility to have a Master's degree in the area specific to the job requirements.

As planning continued, the partners began to design and propose suggestions for what the final program would look like. The CMEC (1995) stress that, "front-end planning is critical" (p. 34). It allows for smooth running of the program with little need for interference from either party. The next step was to design the program and outline each party's responsibilities. To that end School District 59 sent representatives to Lethbridge to meet with University personnel and instructors. Items that were discussed included, timetable, acceptance of local professional development for university credit, travel costs for instructors, and application procedures.

The timetable was a challenge in coordinating professor availability and sequence of course delivery. The experience of The University of Lethbridge with previous cohorts was helpful in planning the course timetable. The program timetable, which would require three years for the completion, was adopted by The University of Lethbridge and School District 59 (see Appendix C). In planning which focus areas would be offered the needs assessment survey was able to provide guidance as to what areas were of most interest. The School District wanted to ensure that its primary objective of training personnel in key positions was met. To that end the focus area of curriculum development was dropped as it was not essential to the School District at this time. The focus areas of leadership, student support services and counselling were chosen.

One of the topics for discussion was the School Districts' advisement to the Master of Education Admissions Committee. There were a number of applications from teachers and administrators from School District 59 along with neighboring districts. The total number of

applications was 27. As was mentioned earlier, School District 59 was faced with a challenge of finding qualified personnel to fill positions of special responsibility. It was their intent to fill the 20 seats (the maximum that the University would allow) with qualified applicants from the District. School District 59 representatives prioritized their own employees that had applied in order of those that needed to meet specific requirements as part of their job to those that were interested, but not required to be working towards a Master's degree. This did create some controversy. School District 59 had personnel that needed to be enrolled in this program, however, did not meet the requirements of acceptance established by The University of Lethbridge. The policies and procedures of the Admissions Committee within The University of Lethbridge was not within the Districts' circle of influence, and as a result, it created problems for some School District 59 applicants. Specifically, well respected professionals were refused entry to the program, even with strong letters of recommendation and support from the Superintendent. Eventually, a cohort of 20 students was created, leaving some very respected professionals to look elsewhere for qualifications required by their job.

The final topic for discussion negotiated between the School District and the University was the travel costs for the instructors travelling to Dawson Creek from Lethbridge. The most efficient and cost effective method of travel was by air. It was agreed that the university instructors would arrange their own flights and accommodations. The university covered its costs based on a \$250.00 off campus delivery fee charged to each student, over and above their regular tuition and course fees. This still was much more reasonably priced than the cost projected by the British Columbia institutions the School District approached about offering an off-campus masters of education in Dawson Creek.

Once the final student roster was in place, the next item for negotiation was submitting locally developed courses for credit in the Master's program being delivered in

Dawson Creek. Proposals were submitted to The University of Lethbridge and are still pending approval by the Curriculum Committee (see Appendix D). The University was able to provide criteria for acceptable professional development courses, which was necessary in the writing of proposals.

A start date of January 2000 was mutually agreed upon and a site for delivery established. One of the older elementary schools in Dawson Creek has been converted to the District Resource Center and a Teacher Technology Center that is regularly used for professional development. As a result, the newest technology was made available to the University instructors for delivery of courses.

Chapter 4

Program Evaluation

Introduction

Professional development has three key principles,

[f]irst, teachers should be involved in planning their own learning experiences... Second, they need to be linked to a larger 'learning community'... Third, professional development must be better balanced between meeting the needs of individual teachers and advancing the organizational goals of their schools and districts. (Education Week 1999)

In addition to these key principles, Little (1994) discusses that professional development is changing, and has to change, in order to meet the demands of educational reform that are taking place across the profession. Therefore, the professional development that teachers engage in must be current, relevant and continuous. The partnership with The University of Lethbridge will help teachers of School District 59 to achieve these principles of professional development and deal with some of the changes in education that the District is faced with.

The Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) has supported this direction in professional development as well. According to Corcoran (1995) professional development needs to 1) focus on supportive opportunities, 2) support school-wide improvement, 3) allow for teachers to have more access to their colleagues for sharing and support, 4) provide extra professional development for teachers that serve vulnerable students, and 5) support professional development with targeted funds.

Evaluating a professional development program should produce results that are useful to stakeholders, indicating the degree to which the program has met the objectives or goals (Ramlow, 1996). The primary goal of the partnership between The University of Lethbridge and School District 59 was to offer a professional development program that would facilitate the attainment of a Master's degree in education, wherein addressing the needs specific to the

District. According to Ramlow (1996), evaluation of programs should be done carefully, ensuring that the results are reflective of the program being evaluated. She also maintains that there needs to be attention paid to the impact of program evaluation so that it is reported in ways that encourage follow-through by stakeholders, thereby increasing the likelihood that evaluation will continue.

Instrument

Using an open-ended survey was the method chosen to collect the data for the program evaluation (see Appendix E). According to Fink and Kosecoff (1978) “[t]he purpose of an effectiveness evaluation is to appraise a program’s overall impact and to determine the consistency with which it produces certain outcomes” (p. 1). Similarly, the purpose of conducting a program evaluation of the partnership between The University of Lethbridge and School District 59 is to pave the way for future professional development partnerships with the best possible learning situation for teachers. It is hoped that with post-secondary involvement in professional development, teachers will be motivated to continue the lifelong learning process. The evaluation of the first such professional development venture in School District 59 has many possible implications for future endeavors.

Sample

When the first course began there were twenty-one cohort members. Two were from School District 60 and the remaining nineteen were from School District 59. When the survey was administered the two members from District 60 were absent. The two from District 59 were late and chose not to participate in the evaluation. The final sample group was made up of three administrators, three counsellors, one local union president, and the remaining ten were either classroom teachers or learning assistance teachers.

Administration of the Instrument

Although it is hoped a valid assessment of the program will include an evaluation at the beginning of the program and then again at the end, due to the researcher's program needs and a view that confirmation of the program direction would be helpful early in the partnership, the necessity of an early program evaluation was determined.

On the last day of the first course cohort members were given an informed consent explaining the purpose of the evaluation tool (see Appendix F). It was emphasized that participation was voluntary and confidential. Following the signature of the consent form, cohort members were given the survey. There were twelve questions on the evaluation itself that related to such aspects as amount of face-to-face contact, availability of the instructor, class schedule, etc. Most respondents completed the survey in approximately twenty minutes. The responses were placed in a sealed envelope to ensure confidentiality and given to a confidential secretary to compile the data.

Analysis of instrument

The decision to use an open-ended survey as a vehicle to evaluate the program after the completion of the first course was based on reviewing current literature. According to Frary (1996) how you set up a questionnaire affects the kind of data. He offers suggestions to avoid common errors, which, when developing the survey were helpful. They included designing questions that are brief and concise, combining categories and asking respondents to provide both positive and negative feedback. Neuman (1997) would also contend that the use of open-ended questions can permit an unlimited number of possible answers (p. 241).

Limitations of Instrument

One of the challenges that faced the program evaluation was using the information collected to predict the success of the cohort. Due to the fact that only one course was

evaluated, there will be low predictive validity (Fink & Kosecoff, 1978). Ideally, if there was to be a program evaluation at the completion of the cohort with high correlation of responses to the first evaluation, then this would produce high predictive validity.

Selecting the sample group in this program evaluation was restricted to only one cohort and as a result forces the recognition that there is the strong possibility of a sample bias. According to Helberg (1996), one of the challenges in performing program evaluation is in achieving a representative sample. This group of School District 59 employees were not chosen at random, and this limitation may compromise the validity of the data (Neuman, 1997). Neuman (1997) also suggests that comparing program evaluations from other cohorts may produce more valid results. The unique needs of a northern school district may not be similar to those of a district in southern British Columbia and comparing the data may not be possible if there were a sample with which to compare.

Analysis of Qualitative Data

What will follow is evidence that the cohort that has been established with The University of Lethbridge and School District 59 has met the suggested characteristics of a successful professional development program and will act as a foundational framework from which other districts may draw upon for establishing their own relationship with post secondary institutions.

The data from the survey were analyzed using the Council of Ministers of Education (1995) principles for successful partnerships. Questions have been placed into the categories where there are data to support that the principles have been met.

Communication

1) Has the amount of face-to-face contact you have had with the instructor during this course been helpful? Please comment as to why or why not.

The goal of question one was to find out what impact the amount of face-to-face time with the instructor had on the learning process. All but two of the seventeen participants responded favorably to having an instructor present for instruction and assistance. The decision to bring an instructor to Dawson Creek for face-to-face contact was well received. “Lots of face-to-face contact helpful. It has been a blessing.” “Instructor made self available, willing to meet with students individually as requested.” “There is no better contact than face-to-face, was totally helpful.” “Just enough to get you started and then available again for follow up.” “face-to-face was very helpful.” “Brings more personal interaction among instructor/student.” Participants enjoyed having the opportunity to meet with the instructor before and after class to discuss concerns, ideas, etc. One comment that has interesting implications for future courses is the following; having the instructor present was helpful to, “develop cohesiveness and sense of support between/for each other in cohort. Would not have been possible with on-line course.” As there are plans to proceed with on-line course delivery models, this comment motivates the importance of further evaluation in the future. Certainly, fifteen of the participating students in the cohort have found the availability and communication with the instructor to be a significant part of the delivery model for the course content.

2) Has the amount of time between scheduled face-to-face contact with your instructor been sufficient? Please comment as to why or why not.

The purpose of question number two was to find out if the participants felt that the amount of time between sessions was sufficient to support the learning model. Knowing that teachers do not want to be treated as passive learners, the more active the engagement the more positive the response to learning. The cohort participants varied somewhat on this question. Considering that all but one of the participants are still actively involved in daily education of students, many felt that the two-week break was sufficient. One month breaks

caused some concern for being able to engage in a conversation with the instructor to clear up issues or questions. Many also found the varied amount of time between scheduled classes to be a comfortable transition. The class started with two weeks between classes then evolved to be one month. One comment that sums this up is, “great to start with every two weeks, trained to be back in school, then extend it to every four weeks allowed for more reflection time to work.” Because the comments made were varied, to get a real impression of the culture of the cohort see the survey results in Appendix G.

Trust, Respect, Flexibility

3) Please comment on the availability of the instructor -

a) during scheduled class time in Dawson Creek

b) in between scheduled class time in Dawson Creek

Question three had two parts. Part A was to provide feedback on the availability of the instructor while in Dawson Creek. All surveys with the exception of one, felt that the instructors arrival a day before class began made her extremely accessible for discussion. One comment that summarizes the overall results would be, “very accommodating.” Part B of question three was gathering data on the availability between classes. The overwhelming response was that e-mail was very sufficient when face-to-face contact was not possible. The impact of the electronic communication has once again significantly impacted on the seamless boundaries of education.

10) Have you ever enrolled in and attended courses at a campus away from your family? If yes please explain, if any, the differences between the delivery of the course you are currently enrolled in and one(s) that you may have enrolled in away from home.

Question ten asked about any previous courses that students may have enrolled in away from their home. Of the eleven responses given, seven felt that this was a much more relaxed and enjoyable way of doing University level courses. Others saw being on campus

easier to focus on studies. This is evidence of the varied levels of individual learning styles and what works for some people may not work for others. Having the flexibility, however, was able to accommodate individual needs.

12) If you have any additional comments you would like to make regarding this particular delivery model for obtaining a masters degree, please feel free to do so.

Question twelve was an opportunity for participants to provide any additional comments regarding the program. Eight people gave feedback such as, “thank you for doing this!” Again the responses were all positive. Participants were also asked to give recommendations for consideration in developing future courses. The visitation schedule seemed to be the most common aspect of the cohort that was commented on. “Offered every two weeks.” “3 week schedule rather than 2-2-4-4.” “Perhaps less time between sessions. One month too long.” Other recommendations included, “more options in course selection.” This was set up based on the needs of the district, individual professionals are always going to want a program that is unique to their needs, however this is not achievable for everyone. Another recommendation was, “more information on all aspects before registration.” This is in reference to the University registration procedure, an aspect which is not within the districts control or the purpose of this project. All this considered, however, the principle of flexibility is certainly worth further investigation for addressing some of the concerns raised here.

Benefits to Each Partner

4) Was receiving the course in Dawson Creek suitable to your needs as a post-graduate student? Please provide details as to why or why not.

Question four focuses on the courses being offered in Dawson Creek meeting the needs of the post-graduate student. Fifteen of the seventeen felt that this particular delivery model was appropriate to their needs. The biggest factor for people was not having to travel

great distances. Two surveys returned reserved comment at this point due to the fact that this is only one of many courses that will be delivered in such a fashion.

7) Was it a benefit to working with colleagues from the same school district? Please provide details as to why or why not.

Question seven was seeking to find out what participants thought about working with colleagues from the same school district. The comments were overwhelmingly positive.

“Really made the comfort level conducive to many discussions and the information that was shared could be applied to District initiatives.” Another common response was welcoming the ability to work with colleagues on projects.

Planning

6) If you could change the way this course was provided, what suggestions would you have?

Question six was looking for suggestions in the way the course could have been delivered. Fourteen responses were offered, two of which offered to change nothing. An assumption that I will be making is that if no suggestions were offered then participants were satisfied with the current model. Other suggestions included everything from making available more course options, to more time with instructor. Comparing these suggestions with those that will be gathered at the end of the course will be a more valid indication of what changes could be made for future partnerships. This information may be helpful to plan future courses in School District 59. See Appendix G for a more detailed suggestions for changes.

Clearly Defined Roles

8) Was the University, (other than the instructor) helpful throughout the course? ie; in getting resources, providing support etc.

Question eight inquired about the role of The University of Lethbridge in helping to

disseminate information and respond to inquiries. Of the seventeen surveys completed, fifteen responded to this question. The responses were very positive, indicating that one person in particular from The University of Lethbridge was very supportive and available through e-mail. The office administrator that is referred to has made a very positive impact on setting up a distance course. There are many hidden bureaucratic loop holes to maneuver through when trying to get twenty students registered in the program. The Office Administrator has certainly been a big asset to the program.

9) Was the School District helpful throughout the course? ie; in providing support etc.

Question nine is similar to the previous, the difference is the role of the School District in helping throughout the course. A common response was the significance of the food offered. The opportunity to sit down over a meal and discuss project ideas and meet with the instructor was a part of the culture that helped to create a positive atmosphere. “Lunch and supper,” were identified as one of the most positive aspects of the course. “Linda was great, thanks for the food,” “[m]eals appreciated,” “[m]eals... helpful.”

Funding

5) What were some of the positive aspects of having the course being delivered in School District 59?

Question five was asking participants what they thought were some of the more positive aspects of the cohort being offered locally. Again the results varied widely, depending on the individuals situation in family and work. One common response, however, was the opportunity to work closely with colleagues from the same district. One of the significant factors to the success of the program from the respondents’ point of view was the cost. Many also felt that this was a more cost effective way to pursue a Master’s degree. For example, respondents commented in such ways as, “You bet! This is a treat.” “Yes, I could stay home, did not have to travel.” “Cheaper living.” “...cost kept down.” “Extremely

helpful, less expensive.” “Convenient, less expensive, materials and tech support available...” The financial support participants received from either the local union or the Superintendent also contributed to making the costs manageable. “...I could stay home, did not have to travel.” “...[i]f it were not offered this way, I would not have taken it.” “Very suitable to meeting my needs. Would have had second thoughts if not offered here in Dawson Creek.”

11) Why did you enroll in the Masters program offered in partnership between The University of Lethbridge and School District 59?

Question eleven asked why participants enrolled in the program being offered within the district. All seventeen surveys had a response offered. Although some participants were required to enroll as part of their job requirements, others saw it as a great opportunity. “Wonderful opportunity, minimal risk, probably could not have been made any more accessible, opportunity to use professional development as electives, don’t have to relocate in the summer, courses applicable to my needs.” This summarizes the overall feeling towards the program.

Meeting the Objective

Based on the seven principles and the survey results, it is clear that the initial course has met the objective of delivering a Master of Education program to School District 59 as evidenced by the following feedback, “if it were not offered this way, I would not have taken it,” “I am thankful I can complete my degree here and maintain my current teaching position,” and “very suitable to meeting my needs. Would have had second thoughts if not offered here in Dawson Creek.” Other participants have family commitments and therefore traveling for the summer to work on a Masters Degree is not conducive to their needs, “I have had a career and family, in no position to leave during the school year, done enough through correspondence.” Another stated that this was, “extremely helpful, less expensive, fit family schedules. Allowing me to work on my masters instead of waiting till family is older.”

Finally, “at this stage in my life I would not be able to pursue masters degree unless it was brought to Dawson Creek. It has eased financial and time constraint burden of getting masters degree at a university.”

District Support

The success of the remainder of the program will, in large part, rely on continued support from the School District Board Administration. Participants are aware of such support and made a point of commenting on its importance. “School District 59 showing support, easier on pocketbook, appreciate food, know others taking class, can network, dialogue, needs of district being met, instructors becoming familiar with our situation here in North.” “Very satisfied with what support I got.” “I am glad they decided to support this program.” By supporting this cohort, School District 59 has chosen to value what teachers and administrators are engaged in for professional development. The District has enabled professionals to meet the job requirements outlined.

As indicated by the participants, the initial feeling regarding the program has been very positive and with the support of the school district to pursue this partnership it has become a very practical delivery model for School District 59. “Very realistic model, takes into account people are working. This gives them the opportunity to do so. There is nothing magical about doing a course on campus! Learning and quality education can happen anywhere!” One participant commented, “delivery model is very accommodating, sure has made course or program economical for us.”

Chapter 5

Summary and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of the project was to establish if there was a need for a Master's of Education program and to confirm the early direction of the program through evaluation provided to participants following the first course. Long before this project began, administrators in School District 59 had been working on the issue of providing post secondary education to its staff in leadership roles. They, therefore, had an idea of what needs had to be met by the program before it began. The initial needs assessment, done for the entire Peace River area, provided positive reinforcement for the anticipated direction. In fact, the results from all the areas around the Peace River area were similar to those of School District 59. The needs assessment also proved that there was enough local support for the District to concentrate solely on the needs of its own staff, and leave the other districts to find their own direction for professional development.

The results of the needs assessment and the evaluation of the first course confirmed the chosen direction of the partnership between The University of Lethbridge and School District 59 was indeed beneficial for both. The front end planning and coordination of each partners' vision has paid great dividends towards the establishment of a Master's of Education program in Dawson Creek. When taking into consideration the the isolated location and the very specific professional development needs of School District 59, this program has been deemed extremely successful by program participants.

Recommendations

As mentioned earlier, the evaluation that has been done is only representative of the first course of the Dawson Creek-University of Lethbridge M.Ed. cohort partnership.

The recommendations for future programs and even changes to the existing program are going to be made based on further gathering of data. The information provided by the participants in the cohort is invaluable to the future recommendations. Their views regarding the program is the only source of information to this point, however, other evaluations will be additionally valuable in the future.

Based on the results gathered to date, it could be concluded that, certain characteristics have made this initial course successful. It is strongly recommended, therefore, that these aspects be considered when planning a program such as this for off campus delivery. The aspects that are being referred to are: 1) opportunity for face-to-face contact, 2) instructor availability for guidance and collaboration, 3) support from the district, with finances, food, and technology, and 4) finally, the costs to the cohort members. Overwhelmingly, participants responded positively to the program because it was offered in their geographic area. Very few would have made the commitment or journey to Lethbridge for a postgraduate degree. The University of Lethbridge has, as outlined earlier by the seven guiding principles, demonstrated overwhelming flexibility in program design. Instructors are willing to travel, courses are offered on-line, students can transfer other accredited courses through the Western Dean's Agreement, and School District 59 can provide its own professional development, (which meets University criteria) for credit. There is not enough positive praise that can be given to The University of Lethbridge for its demonstrated willingness to bring graduate level courses to centres that have limited access to post-secondary education institutions. The program, though not complete, has a very promising beginning. Dialogue has been on-going between School District 59 and The University of Lethbridge and as a result the program has never been, nor do I believe it ever will be, static.

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Appendix A

Needs Assessment Survey

Establishing a Post Graduate Program in the Peace River Area:
A Survey of Interests

Please circle the most appropriate answer

1) Are you currently enrolled in course(s) accredited with a University?

Yes No

2) Do you plan on attending a University for completion of a Masters Degree or equivalent fifth year in the next 12 months?

Yes No Don't Know

3) What post graduate area(s) listed below are of interest to you?

Leadership	Counselling	Student Support-Learning Assistance
Library	Curriculum Development	Alternate Programs
Adult Education		

Others _____

Thank-you for taking time to complete this survey, please return it to your administrator by February 12, 1999.

Please indicate, with a signature below, if you are interested in finding out more information about the Peace River South/University of Lethbridge professional development program.

_____, yes I am interested in the possibility of registering in a course in the Dawson Creek area.

Please send the information to the following school:

Address- _____

Phone Number- _____

Attention- Mr / Mrs / Ms _____

Appendix B

Administrator Cover Letter

School District No. 59 (Peace River South)**CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL****“Stepping Stone to the Future”**

Office of the Administration
Telephone (250)782-5288

10701 - 10th Street
Dawson Creek, BC
V1G 3V2

January 25, 1999

Fellow Administrator:

Here is the survey that I had discussed with you over the phone. Please feel free to call me if you have any concerns or questions.

Ideally I would like to have as many responses from your staff members as possible. This will give a more reliable count of the areas that may be of interest for your area.

Again the goal is to take the results and develop a program in cooperation with The University of Lethbridge to address the needs of our collective areas for filling specialty positions.

The University of Lethbridge has expressed a great willingness to work with us in developing the program. Information about the results and what the program will look like will be forthcoming at the conclusion of the study.

Please return the completed forms in the stamped, self addressed envelope by Feb. 19, 1999.

Thank you for taking time to assist in this process.

Brett Cooper
Vice Principal
Central Middle School

Appendix C

Cohort Timetable

Session	Admin	Student Support	Admin Thesis	Student S. Thesis
Spring 2000	5200	5200	5200	5200
SS I 2000	Intro 5400	Intro 5400	Intro 5400	Intro 5400
SS III 2000	5500 & PD	5500	5500 & PD	5500
Fall 2000	5300 & 5400	5300 & 5400	5300 & 5400	5300 & 5400
Spring 2001	5850 & (Dist. Fdn)	5850 & (Dist. Fdn)	5705 (Theory)	5705 (Theory)
SS I 2001	5704(Skills)	5704(Skills)	5704(Skills)	5704(Skills)
SS II 2001				
SS III 2001	5850 (Dist Fdn)		5850 (Dist Fdn)	
Fall 2001	5707 (Assessment) & 5850(Learn. Dis.)		5707(Assessment)or 5850(Learn. Dis.)	
Spring 2002	6000	6000	Thesis	Thesis
Fall 2002	Complete Program			
Flexible	4 Electives	2 Electives	No choice	1 Elective
Timing				
Total Credits	12	12	12	12

Appendix D

Curriculum Committee Proposals

School District No. 59 (Peace River South)

Our Vision

- Collaborating, outcomes oriented communities of learners
- Expanded learning opportunities for students
- Delivery models based on best knowledge and practice

Our Mission

. . . to enable each individual to realize his or her full personal potential

The organization and practice of School District 59 (Peace River South) is founded on the vision of people - staff, students, parents, community and other stake holders - collaborating to be learners focused on achieving specific, identified outcomes. From that vision, our mission was generated, and we have established the focus of providing an opportunity for all our people - students and employees - to realize their individualized personal potential.

It is expected that young people will have increased learning opportunities, and it is expected that those opportunities will be presented in an ever increasing variety of methods, strategies, and foci whereby the learning styles and capacities of each will be utilized and maximized.

To this end, the district has committed extensive resources in terms of personnel, facilities, materials, finances, and opportunities. The district expects that its employees will be striving for increased learning, for growth and development that increases and improves the ways in which we deliver programs.

The district expects that its employees will model - speak with actions as well as words - the concept of life long learning.

Such is the rationale for our present efforts to work closely and positively with The University of Lethbridge. Through this interaction, it is hoped that those within the district will find increased motivation to pursue learning, to participate in opportunities for acquiring new skills, new perceptions, new directions, and renewed commitment to offering our students the best that we can be.

Our association with The University of Lethbridge is perceived to offer educators an opportunity and an encouragement to participate in the professional development provided by the district in a manner that stresses the acquisition of skills and knowledge and sets the expectation that this learning will be internalized, digested, and become a functioning part of each teacher's output in the classroom. The university will grant units of credit to those people who choose to participate in professional development in a formalized manner as part of the program toward a graduate degree. The university will enroll those meeting the prerequisites who wish to upgrade their qualifications through both district professional development and course work required by the university toward completing a graduate degree program.

At this time, the district is requesting that The University of Lethbridge give consideration to granting credits for the professional development programs listed below:

1. School District 59 Foundation Program
2. Cognitive Coaching
3. Reading Recovery
4. Multiple Intelligences
5. The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

The proposed course outline for each of these programs when pursued for university

credit follows.

School District 59 Foundation Course

Course Overview:

The Foundation Course is composed of ten modules that are best comprehended and made functional by those who understand both the individuality and the interdependence of each upon the others. The ten components are:

1. District Vision, Philosophy, & History
2. Inclusion of Special Needs Children
3. Student Categories
4. Roles (and related jargon)
5. School Based Teams
6. Individualized Education Plans (I.E.P.'s)
7. Inter Ministry Activities
8. Outcomes Based Education Model
9. Site Based Management
10. Brain Research and Early Intervention

This course will require that participants understand the “intra” workings of each module and the role of each in fulfilling the district’s obligations to its clients. Further, it requires that participants understand the “inter” aspects of these modules and the desired effectiveness that is enhanced by the interactions between and among the learning that comes from each module.

Rationale:

The foundation course is intended to ground participants in “the way we do business” in this district. Though the concepts that this course will address are widely touted and are

part of good teacher training, the way they are melded into a unit - the synergy that is utilized in creating a package where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts - provides an opportunity for those who understand the big picture to draw greater rewards from their work experience as well as contribute more and with greater effectiveness to the well being of the youngsters served and the organization as a whole.

Outcomes:

1. District Vision, Philosophy, & History -

A. Participants will know the origin of the District Vision, how it was developed, and the importance of that focus in the present journey.

B. Participants will know the mission to which the district is committed; included will be the collective values encompassed in this mission and an expectation that each will be involved in defining personal values and noting their intersection - co missioning - with the district's mission.

RESOURCES: School District Policy Book & Ministry Principles

2. Inclusion of Special Needs Children

A. Participants will understand the philosophy of inclusion, alternate models that have been tried, and will be able to explain the ministry's and the district's position for present practices.

B. Participants will be knowledgeable of the district practice for assigning support staff and defining the roles, including the training, expected from these employees.

RESOURCES: School District Handbook & Ministry Manual of Policies and Procedures

3. Student Categories

A. Participants will understand and be able to explain the funding and reporting protocols for the various classifications of students.

4. Roles (and related jargon)

A. Participants will know the Ministry expectations regarding service to the various categories of special needs students.

B. Participants will understand the roles of Learning Assistance staff, Helping Teachers, Counselors, Teachers of the Hearing or Vision Impaired, and Speech and Language Pathologists.

5. School Based Teams

A. Participants will be able to put together a school based team relevant to a special needs student, organize the planning session, and generate an I.E.P. for that youngster.

B. Participants will know and be able to incorporate the support available from The Child Development Center, Helping Teachers, and Speech and Language personnel.

6. Individualized Education Plans (I.E.P.'s)

A. Participants will understand and be able to explain the need for I.E.P.'s for various categories of students.

B. Participants will have the skills for generating outcome based I.E.P.'s that are measurable and assist the teacher(s) in assessing (a) what has been learned, (b) what the next steps are in a student's program, (c) the fine tuning (or readjusting) of outcomes to reflect the reality of student growth.

RESOURCES: District IEP Format & Developmental Process

7. Inter Ministry Activities

Participants will know which agencies are available to provide assistance or support in the program of development for a student who is struggling or in need of support.

RESOURCES: Inter Ministry Protocols & B.C. Handbook re: Action on Child Abuse and Neglect.

8. Outcomes Based Education Model

A. Participants will understand the need and purpose of defining student growth in terms of achievable, measurable, relevant, useful, and demonstrative outcomes.

B. Participants will understand and be able to use rubrics whereby teachers, parents, and students will be focused on what needs to be learned and the measures or standards that will be utilized to define proficiency.

C. Participants will understand the need and value for outcome based plans; further, they will have the capability to produce outcome based plans that indicate standards of success, what needs to be learned, what skills need to be acquired, and how the skills and knowledge will be demonstrated to verify proficiency.

RESOURCES: Numerous District Developed Materials

9. Site Based Management

A. Participants will understand the philosophy of site based management.

B. Participants will be cognizant of Article 69 of the Teacher's Collective Agreement which establishes rights and responsibilities of a staff to contribute to the organization of a particular facility. Included in this outcome is a knowledge of teacher and administrator responsibility to fulfill the requirements of the Ministry of Education regarding allocation of funds.

RESOURCES: Collective Agreements with the PRSTA and BCGEU

10. Brain Research and Early Intervention

A. Participants will be knowledgeable of study and research in reference to improved brain utilization and addressing concerns at the earliest possible time which have been shown to be indicative of optimizing student learning.

B. Participants will be versed in the characteristics of FAE, ADD, & ADHD

with sound strategies for assisting these youngsters in the regular classroom.

Assignments:

The foundation established through this course is expected to provide the setting that will encourage and encompass all of the other learnings. Though this course may not always precede other components of the District Professional Development offerings, it is expected to become the catalyst that will optimize the potential benefits (of learning and practice) for the participant. Thus, skill outcomes become more important than knowledge outcomes, for skill outcomes are the effective utilization of knowledge.

1. Participants will demonstrate the potential for improved service to students made possible by understanding the 10 components and the interconnectiveness of each to the others.
2. One terms planning documents will be submitted to demonstrate the effective development of outcomes, assessment practices and demonstrations, standards (together with a performance rubric).
3. Participants will choose one of the ten components and prepare a demonstration regarding inservice to staff on the purpose and value of this component.

Cognitive Coaching

Course Overview:

Cognitive coaching is a way to understand how our thinking impacts our behaviors, and how our behaviors impact our relationships with others. Its focus is on being a person who is effective both independently and interdependently, and being an effective mediator or coach for the learning of others. It is both an *interpersonal skills* and *thinking processes* course. It provides participants with knowledge and skills to apply in both the professional and personal realms of their life. It provides strategies and frameworks to support long term personal growth.

The course is currently 35 hours, 5 days in the first learning year and 2 days in the second learning year.

Rationale:

Participants in this course are anticipated to become more knowledgeable of themselves and more capable of reflecting upon, understanding, acknowledging, and, where applicable, providing for the needs of others with whom they interact. From this study, participants have increased potential to:

1. become confident and competent individuals who are committed to lifelong self improvement and to supporting the learning journey of others.
2. have increased knowledge and skill levels regarding personal thinking skills, behaviors and practices, and to increase ability to mediate their own learning and the learning of others.
3. acquire focused awareness of the intricacies of language, the power of language and the effectiveness and conscious use of language.

Outcomes:

1. Participants will learn and be able to apply the five states of mind (craftsmanship, consciousness, efficacy, flexibility and interdependence) to their lives.
2. Participants will learn and apply the skills of effective mediation such as (a) utilizing open ended questioning, (b) using non judgmental language, (3) probing for inquiry and specificity, (4) paraphrasing, (5) applying pace and lead, and (6) defining goals.
3. Participants will learn and demonstrate the application of scaffolding frameworks such as planning and reflective conferences.
4. Participants will demonstrate skills in mediation / coaching skills with colleagues.

Assignments:

The demonstration tasks presented are intended to show that the participants have a “knowledge” understanding of the material and are able to put that knowledge into practice.

It is not sufficient to “know”; one must also be able to “do.”

1. Participants will demonstrate their understanding of the five states of mind (craftsmanship, consciousness, efficacy, flexibility and interdependence) giving evidence of how this knowledge might positively impact on the learning of students in the classroom. This demonstration can be provided in a written, spoken, or performed format. Utilization of multi media or modern technologies is encouraged.
2. Participants will provide a record of coaching / mediation activities utilized as a practice for developing skills in the areas of (a) open ended questioning, (b) non judgmental language, (3) probing for inquiry and specificity, (4) paraphrasing, (5)pace and lead, and (6) defining goals. The presentation should focus on the knowledge and skills acquired rather than the specific content of the sessions which might be confidential. This record can be presented in a verbal or written format. Note: All participants will maintain a regimen of coaching practice with a coaching partner and/or mentor for a full school year (or equivalent) during the time that they are involved in the training.

Readings:

Cognitive Coaching a Foundation for Renaissance Schools by Arthur L. Costa
and Robert R. Garmston, The Institute for Intelligent Behavior, Berkeley, California, 94708

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

Course Overview:

The 7 Habits Course is endorsed by the district as a means of equipping employees with proven, effective organization and planning skills. Becoming accomplished in the use of these habits is believed to impact and influence the lives, both personal and professional, of the participants. The course is presented following the processes and procedures of the Covey Institute and is based on The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey.

Rationale:

Participants in this course are guided to increase the extent by which they are in control of their own lives - The Private Victory - and become more capable of functioning in the society at large in a manner that encourages trust, understanding, personal fulfillment, and positive, respectful interactions with others - The Public Victory. Further, participants are guided to “care for self” whereby attending to one’s personal needs keeps one fit and able to contribute to the needs of the workplace. The district believes that this course will promote a principle-centered philosophy and an increased understanding of how to live by that philosophy; those who are on the journey from dependence through independence to interdependence are most likely to be effective and well equipped in the work expected by the school district - to positively impact on the lives of students.

Outcomes:

1. Participants will know the 7 habits - (1.) Be Proactive, (2.) Begin with the End in Mind, (3.) Put First Things First, (4.) Think “Win-Win” (5.) Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood, (6.) Synergize, and (7.) Sharpen the Saw - and be familiar with

the content related to each habit.

2. Participants will develop personal vision and mission statements that intersect with the district's mission and vision.
3. Participants will make regular use of the Planner, including the compass.
4. Participants will be conscious of and alert to maintaining a balance between production and production capability.

Assignments:

The demonstration tasks related to this course are again focused on “doing.” It is the position of the district that one needs to “know” in order to “do;” in addition, knowing and not doing is an indication of ineffective or incomplete learning. Those taking this course for credit are anticipated to be drawn into increased internalizing of the material; the tasks listed below make it necessary for successful participants to live the content.

1. Each participant will draft a personal vision and mission statement.
2. Participants will prepare a presentation on production/production capability that reflects the demands and expectations placed on educators by school board, community, and ministry of education. The presentation can be verbal, written, or employ technical media. A written summary of the content is required for those presenting in other than a written format. (Teams of up to three people can jointly do this task.)
3. Participants will present a report on, “How I can apply the 7 Habits material in my work setting.”
4. Active participation in class discussions and 3 - person teaching is expected.

Note 1: Attendance is critical for those wishing to comprehend and internalize the content and philosophy of this material. Credit cannot be given to those who have not regularly attended.

Note 2: The district is committed to offering this material at several settings over the

year. The format may vary from a set number of full days to an extended number of short sessions of 3 to five hours. Each presentation style will cover the full content.

Note 3: A participant who inadvertently misses a section or sections in one session may fulfill the attendance requirements by attending (with permission from the presenters) in an alternate session.

Readings:

Stephen R. Covey, Participant Manual and Application Workbook, Covey Leadership Center, copyright 1990

Steven R. Covey, The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, Simon and Schuster, copyright 1989

Multiple Intelligences

Course Overview:

Research over the last few years has caused educators to sharpen their focus regarding capabilities and talents of students. No longer is it enough to measure verbal linguistic and math abilities as the indicators of intelligence. The expansion of thinking to include music, art, kinesthetic, intra and inter personal has resulted in the need to reassess how people receive and process information. “What makes this information sensible?” . . . or, perhaps more significantly, “What makes this information important to me?” . . . “Why do I want or need to learn this?” This course is intent on generating a change in focus that will inspire participants to be knowledgeable of the different ways in which people demonstrate intelligence; from this knowledge, they will acquire and refine new strategies for facilitating learning among the students with whom they interact.

Rationale:

It is likely that most teachers and school administrators are in their profession because they, themselves, were successful in the school system of their day. Had they found school an oppressive and unrewarding experience, the probability of choosing that setting as one for a lifetime is unlikely.

Success in school in past times focused strongly on verbal/linguistic and math/science intelligences. Most of us who are in education today see education through glasses tinted by these intelligences. However, we have also struggled and continue to struggle with ways and means of teaching those who are unsuccessful in the traditional classroom. Multiple Intelligences offers school personnel new tools rather than “more of the same in increased doses” as a means of promoting student success. It offers us an opportunity to see the world of learning differently and to broaden our perspective as to what is learning, what is a

demonstration of learning, and what does success really look like. Through this broader perspective, educators have the opportunity to “see the light come on” for an ever increasing number of students and to find greater job satisfaction in the work we do as “success” increases because we are able to see it differently and measure it relative to each individual.

Outcomes:

1. Participants will understand and be conversant regarding the eight identified intelligences; further, they will be cognizant of the potential for more intelligences to be identified.
2. Participants will be knowledgeable regarding strategies (instructional methods) to use in the classroom to facilitate students’ learning in manners that reflect their strengths. Not all students need to be doing the same thing in the same way at the same time to acquire knowledge and skills.
3. Participants will be equipped to develop demonstration tasks (different assessment tools to measure the same learning) that permit students to display their learning in a manner that reflects their strength.
4. Participants will be equipped to assist their students in identifying and understanding their personal intellectual makeup.

Assignments:

1. Participants will prepare one term’s planning documents to reflect outcomes, learning activities, and demonstration tasks that provide for students to utilize whichever of the known intelligences best suits their means of learning.
2. At the end of the term, each participant will submit a report analyzing the effectiveness of the efforts and suggest revisions that will be made for the next venture.

Appendix E

Program Evaluation Survey

Evaluation of Delivery Model for Course provided by University of Lethbridge in cooperation with School District 59**Brett Cooper**

As the first of your University of Lethbridge courses comes to a close, I would like to gather your opinions and thoughts about the course delivery model. Please keep in mind I don't want an evaluation of the course content or teaching style of the instructor, rather I am seeking information about the effectiveness of the delivery of the course.

- 1) Has the amount of face-to-face contact you have had with the instructor during this course been helpful? Please comment as to why or why not.
- 2) Has the amount of time between scheduled face-to-face contact with your instructor been sufficient? Please comment as to why or why not.
- 3) Please comment on the availability of the instructor -
 - a) during scheduled class time in Dawson Creek
 - b) in between scheduled class time in Dawson Creek
- 4) Was receiving the course in Dawson Creek suitable to your needs as a post graduate student? Please provide details as to why or why not.
- 5) What were some of the positive aspects of having the course being delivered in School District 59?
- 6) If you could change the way this course was provided, what suggestions would you have?
- 7) Was it a benefit to working with colleagues from the same school district? Please provide details as to why or why not.
- 8) Was the University, (other than the instructor) helpful throughout the course? ie; in getting

resources, providing support etc.

9) Was the School District helpful throughout the course? ie; in providing support etc.

10) Have you ever enrolled in and attended courses at a campus away from your family? If yes please explain, if any, the differences between the delivery of the course you are currently enrolled in and one(s) that you may have enrolled in away from home.

11) Why did you enroll in the masters program offered in partnership between The University of Lethbridge and School District 59?

12) If you have any additional comments you would like to make regarding this particular delivery model for obtaining a masters degree, please feel free to do so.

Appendix F

Informed Consent

Participant Rights

Evaluation of Course Delivery Model

As you are aware, the course you are enrolled in, offered in partnership between The University of Lethbridge and School District 59, is unique to our District. As a graduate student myself, I was very interested in watching this partnership develop and also in evaluating the effectiveness of the courses being delivered off campus.

Before I can ask for your participation in a evaluation of the course delivery model, I need to inform you of your rights.

- 1) You may inquire about this research at any time,
- 2) your assistance in this study is very much appreciated. If you have any questions please feel free to call me at 782-5288. Also feel free to contact the supervisor of my study, Dr. Rick Mrazek at, 403-329-2452, or you may also contact the chair of the Faculty of Education Human Subject Research Committee, Dr. Richard Butt at 403-329-2434,
- 3) you may withdraw from the survey at any time without prejudice,
- 4) the information you provide will be confidential. There is no request for names on the survey, as a matter of fact, I would request that you do not put your name on the survey.
- 5) Finally, I need your consent to use the information you give me for my final project. If you would please sign the informed consent that has been provided indicating that you, a) have been informed, and b) that you agree to let me use your feedback on the survey.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Informed Consent Approval

I have been informed of my rights regarding the nature of the research that is being conducted by Brett Cooper for the completion of his final project as part of the requirements for Graduate Studies in Education at The University of Lethbridge.

By signing this consent, I give Brett Cooper, University of Lethbridge Graduate Student, permission to use the information I have provided on the survey questionnaire to complete his research.

Name : _____
(please print)

Signature : _____

Appendix G

Program Evaluation Survey Results

1) Has the amount of face-to-face contact you have had with the instructor during this course been helpful? Please comment as to why or why not.

- Lots of face-to-face contact helpful. It has been a blessing.
- Instructor made self available, willing to meet with students individually as requested.
- Willing to meet night before scheduled class to discuss concerns.
- Sufficient, e-mail was helpful for crisis moments.
- There is no better contact than face-to-face, was totally helpful.
- Yes, just enough to get you started and then available again for follow up.
- face-to-face was very helpful.
- Brings more personal interaction among instructor/student.
- Available and willing to discuss topics.
- Sufficient instruction time to awaken curiosity about subject matter.
- Totally beneficial
- Great face-to-face contact.
- Appreciate the time instructor has made available to students prior to and after classes.
- Yes it has been. Had opportunity to meet in the evening as well.
- Very much so. Helped to develop cohesiveness and sense of support between/for each other in cohort. Would not have been possible with on line course.

2) Has the amount of time between scheduled face-to-face contact with your instructor been sufficient? Please comment as to why or why not.

- Preferred every two weeks. One month apart makes it difficult to stay focused on class.
- Has been sufficient, considering participants are still actively involved in daily role of education.
- Every two weeks is preferable for continuity. Large gaps in between sessions, where face-to-face contact would have cleared things up better.
- Time between classes has been good. Has allowed for reflection and time to complete assignments.
- Yes, has met my needs as a learner.
- Yes, sufficient time.
- Yes, time to complete readings and assignments and prepare for next class.
- Yes, enough time to do what was expected and was a nice breather.
- First sessions, more pressure to accomplish goals, one month more time to reflect etc.
- Every two weeks was preferred over four week break.
- Yes, when it was every four weeks, when two, it was rushed to everything done.
- Yes.
- Great to start with every two weeks, trained to be back in school, then extend it to every four weeks allowed for more reflection and time to work.
- Every two weeks was adequate. Long breaks made it too easy to get out of practice. Two week interval was great.

- Yes, I preferred the once a month meetings over the every other weekend ones. More time for readings and preparation.
- At first seemed too rushed, but in hindsight it was probably good that way to get into mood.

3) Please comment on the availability of the instructor -

a) during scheduled class time in Dawson Creek

- Always.
- Very available
- Great, wonder woman
- Always willing to meet with students
- 100%
- Difficult to get time to talk to her, everyone seemed to want to meet with her.
- Was available each Friday after session, many opportunities during sessions.
- Fine
- Always easy to get hold of.
- Very available
- Sufficient, very accommodating, willing to assist, answer questions etc.
- Good
- Willing to talk at all times. Will ask how things are going and more.
- Always available, willing to meet during the day Friday, made it difficult because people were teaching. Saturday or Sunday would have been better.
- Very accommodating
- Her office time on Thursday evenings and Friday mornings made possible

extra discussion time one on one if needed.

- Always very approachable before class, after and during break times.

b) in between scheduled class time in Dawson Creek

- Easily accessible by e-mail. Had her phone number if I needed.

- I felt I could always use e-mail if I had questions.

- e-mail contact made in reasonable amount of time.

- Very prompt in answering e-mails. Encouraging to process

- e-mail response excellent, answers questions promptly.

- e-mails returned promptly.

- On line very available, good communication, informative.

- Answers e-mails readily.

- Been ok.

- e-mail is great.

- Available by phone and e-mail.

- e-mail works just fine.

- Did not apply

- Felt I could as to see instructor anytime.

- Available by e-mail. Excellent support from admin assistant at

University of Lethbridge.

- Available before and after classes, and by e-mail.

- e-mail, telephone, excellent.

4) Was receiving the course in Dawson Creek suitable to your needs as a post graduate student? Please provide details as to why or why not.

- You bet! This is a treat. Having classmates near by has been wonderful.

- Yes, I could stay home, did not have to travel.

- Time is always an issue. Felt course could have gone on longer to meet my needs.
- Yes, if it were not offered this way, I would not have taken it.
- Not exactly, I am pursuing this type of masters program only because it is offered locally.
- Yes, live here.
- Yes, I could work and stay at home.
- Yes, can continue with regular responsibilities. Cheaper living.
- Yes, I am thankful I can complete my degree here and maintain my current teaching position.
- I do not know yet as I have not taken all of the courses.
- Very suitable to meeting my needs. Would have had second thoughts if not offered here in Dawson Creek. Don't want courses online.
- I am not certain as it is too early to answer this.
- Yes
- Yes, access, cost kept down, less hassles. Not sure, we'll see about availability of materials as time goes on.
- Yes, I have had a career and family, in no position to leave during the school year, done enough through correspondence.
- Extremely helpful, less expensive, fit family schedules. Allowing me to work on my masters instead of waiting till family is older.
- Yes, at this stage in my life I would not be able to pursue masters degree unless it was brought to Dawson Creek. It has eased financial and time constraint burden of getting masters degree at a university.

5) What were some of the positive aspects of having the course being delivered in School District 59?

- Save money, able to work with people in same region, not spending time traveling, employer support, not having to fight technology break downs.
- Availability of colleagues, no necessity to travel, less expensive and time savings, less stress in not having to be away from family, more convenient, enjoy discussion with people I know.
- No housing arrangement necessary.
- School District 59 showing support, easier on pocketbook, appreciate food, know others taking class, can network, dialogue, needs of district being met, instructors becoming familiar with our situation here in North.
- Got to work with colleagues, large population to bounce ideas off of, district supports this kind of project, food, lowering costs and help with resources etc.
- Connection with cohort members, opportunity to develop ideas together and support each other when we meet at work, ideas considered and used in work situations, family life not disrupted.
- Local, economical, resources to share, support
- Close to home, less expensive, study with colleagues with whom I work.
- Local, no travel, working with colleagues, opportunity for future courses/projects to examine and contribute to practices here.
- Culture of district is reflected by group.
- Being able to study here where I live, working with colleagues.
- At home, cost, face-to-face contact, cohort group to share issues and concerns.

- Lunch and supper, program set up, paying off campus fees by district.
- Support from other professionals, did not have to leave town, reduced costs.
- Nice to know some of your classmates, friendly atmosphere, easy to get into group work.
- Convenient, less expensive, materials and tech support available, support from teachers in class as well as district, dinner and lunch.

6) If you could change the way this course was provided, what suggestions would you have?

- I liked it.
- Longer period of time, more concrete info, expectations better laid out.
- Nothing
- More options in course selection.
- More time to schedule appointments with instructor.
- Offered every two weeks.
- More information regarding expectations for projects etc.
- More information on all aspects before registration.
- More options regarding courses related to teaching areas.
- 3 week schedule rather than 2-2-4-4.
- More counselling courses, courses offered in middle of summer rather than end of August and early September, stress on new school year.
- More in summer less in school year.
- Registration information from admission could have been tailored to meet the needs of the cohort.
- Perhaps less time between sessions. One month too long.

7) Was it a benefit to working with colleagues from the same school district? Please provide details as to why or why not.

- It was nice to have people familiar with district expectations and to talk to about course concepts etc.
- I felt at ease doing presentations and in discussions with people I know.
- Yes for the most part, at times it seemed as if there were hidden agendas.
- Yes a benefit, able to dialogue with School District 59 people.
- Yes, it was beneficial, valuable feedback from peers.
- Yes, group is open minded and supportive, if group not as collegial might have been difficult, having individual from Fort St. John gave different perspective, nice.
- Yes, benefit to work with colleagues, share ideas experiences, work together on projects.
- Yes we will work together again in other areas.
- Yes, they are available to bounce ideas off of
- Yes, prior relationships, work together with more connections
- It was a benefit to work together at common sites. Some might feel uncomfortable about sharing stories they work with every day.
- Yes, we have similar background to base discussions on.
- Yes, support.
- Yes, as we could all talk the same language. Had built in support systems.
- Yes, shared experiences, help available, support, feeling of belonging.
- Easier to work together, less time to explain local issues.
- Yes, groups effective and supportive, sharing ideas, ups and downs, laughter, getting to know other people better.

8) Was the University, (other than the instructor) helpful throughout the course? ie; in getting resources, providing support etc.

- Very much so. Lisa was wonderful.
- Lisa is a wonder.
- Lisa was excellent, admissions were poor, mailed info poor, still haven't received all information.
- Yes, always receiving information regarding registration etc.
- Lots and lots of e-mail, probably too much.
- Yes
- Registration was a challenge at times. System was not cooperating.
- Yes, available, articles brought by instructor.
- Queries answered quickly.
- Good support
- It would have been good to have inservice on library support early.
- Lisa and graduate office, excellent.
- Lisa is great at giving answers.
- Effort on their part to understand the unique situation.
- Education office helpful.

9) Was the School District helpful throughout the course? ie; in providing support etc.

- Yes, provided location, food, support from resource center.
- Linda was great, thanks for the food.
- Meals appreciated.
- Yes, meals, information sessions.
- Yes, Bill and Marlene gave help and more.
- Very satisfied with what support I got.

- Supportive.
- Appreciate being fed, assistance with registration helpful.
- Impressed with the development of cohort, frustrated with what local pd courses.
- Yes, location, meals, materials etc.
- Resource center staff very helpful. Bill was also helpful in clarifying program information.
- Yes, offered to let us use professional development courses to gain credit.
- Meals and room helpful. Not helpful in dealing with problems, “It was the universities fault,” was a common phrase.
- I am glad they decided to support this program.
- Very helpful, Bill, Ann Dean and others for providing recommendation letters, Brett for the idea.

10) Have you ever enrolled in and attended courses at a campus away from your family? If yes please explain, if any, the differences between the delivery of the course you are currently enrolled in and one(s) that you may have enrolled in away from home.

- Not the same level of support in other course, harder to assimilate.
- I prefer to be at home.
- Yes, feeling of isolation and alone. More relaxed at home.
- Yes, I appreciate costs associated, at home much more affordable and family friendly.
- Yes, it is easier to focus and get work done when you don't have other responsibilities.
- Yes, face-to-face add additional access to resources as opposed to correspondence-yuk.

- Yes, less sacrifice this way, less stress.
- Yes, I have enjoyed the opportunity to be more independent in my studies with this degree.
- Yes, this one spread out over longer period of time, longer sessions.

Other course work I did, I did not have full time job.

- Yes, less formative work in previous experience. Attendance was not as crucial in previous experience as it is with this one.
- Yes, classes were shorter, library access was easier on campus.

11) Why did you enroll in the masters program offered in partnership between the University of Lethbridge and School District 59?

- Wonderful opportunity, minimal risk, probably could not have been made any more accessible, opportunity to use professional development as electives, don't have to relocate in the summer, courses applicable to my needs.
- Super opportunity, had been applying to other opportunities as well.
- As an administrator I wanted to improve my theory base. I have heard favorable things about the program and I felt there was a certain amount of spoken and unspoken pressure to be involved.
- Access, met my needs, could tailor to my work.
- Because it is the least painful way to get my masters. Other institutions would not allow for distance ed courses. Cheaper, could work and go to school, requirement of my position.
- Timing of this opportunity was right for me, did not have to sacrifice family time.
- Was part of assignment agreement when accepted new role in district.

- It was important to my own professional development, it was the easiest way and least expensive way to do it.
- It was local, flexible, nice to be able to work with a cohort.
- Opportunity to do study without sacrificing home life, less costly.
- Opportunity for new learning and job related.
- It would be difficult to leave family to attend university in summer, also wanted to be part of group working on something together rather than a distance program.
- Did not want to take courses online or away from home.
- Wanted more of a knowledge base to become a better teacher.
- Because it was offered at home, job related, was ready to begin.
- Because it was being offered here and I had heard good things about The University of Lethbridge. ie, meeting students needs.
- Wanted to continue to learn new things, not get stale, keep pathways open, better help children.

12) If you have any additional comments you would like to make regarding this particular delivery model for obtaining a masters degree, please feel free to do so.

- Great to have Cynthia here to break the ice!
- Very realistic model, takes into account people are working. This gives them the opportunity to do so. “There is nothing magical about doing a course on campus! Learning and quality education can happen anywhere!”
- Very accommodating
- More counselling courses offered.
- It would be interesting to complete this study after completing other courses. I wonder if my/our opinions would change.

- Delivery model is very accommodating, sure has made course or program economical for us.
- I am very appreciative of having this opportunity in my home town.
- Thank you for doing this!