



September 1, 2011

Dr. David Lavallee  
Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
State University of New York  
System Administration  
State University Plaza  
Albany, New York 12246

Dear Dr. Lavallee:

On behalf of the faculty at the University at Albany, I am pleased to transmit the attached proposal to establish and offer a graduate certificate program in Online Learning and Teaching.

The proposal has been fully considered and approved through our campus governance system. We are appreciative for anticipated efforts by staff in your Office of Program Review for the consideration and processing of this proposal. Should there be any technical questions or the need for additional materials, please have inquiries directed to Jonathan Bartow, Vice Dean for Graduate Education ([jbartow@uamail.albany.edu](mailto:jbartow@uamail.albany.edu)) at our campus. As always, we thank you for your on-going support.

Sincerely,

Susan D. Phillips  
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Enclosure

- c. Dean Kevin Williams, Graduate Studies
- Dean Robert Bangert-Drowns, School of Education
- Prof. Arthur Applebee, Chair, Dept. of Ed Theory & Practice
- Vice Dean Jon Bartow, Graduate Studies

University at Albany, SUNY  
School of Education  
Department of Educational Theory & Practice

**Certificate of Graduate Studies in Online Learning and Teaching (COLT) (15 credits)**

**Introduction**

The Department of Educational Theory and Practice proposes a new advanced certificate of graduate study beginning in the summer of 2011. This new program, the Certificate in Online Learning and Teaching (COLT) will be open to who would like to be trained to **develop curricula and teach in fully online and blended learning environments.**

The *Certificate in Online Learning and Teaching* may be awarded in conjunction with an academic major at the graduate level, or to students holding a BA or higher degree. This certificate shows a student's concentration in theory and practice of online and technology-mediated teaching and learning. All courses taken in the curriculum may be applied toward other general and specific graduation requirements. All courses counting toward the certificate must be completed with a grade of B- or better and with an over-all average of B.

**Rationale**

The Educational Theory and Practice Department offers an MS degree (30 credits) in CDIT (Curriculum Development and Instructional Technology) for students who wish to extend their expertise in curriculum and instructional design and in instructional technology. It is also useful for students wishing to prepare for leadership positions in government, social service, health-related fields, corporate training, and development of educational media products. The proposed certificate complements the intent of our MS in CDIT degree because it caters to students whose primary goal is to understand effective *online* curricular and instructional development and design. This includes educators in a variety of settings including public and private schools, higher education, and training sectors. (All courses in the proposed Certificate are applicable to the MS in CDIT.)

Additionally, the market for teacher/professional development in support of online learning and teaching continues to grow with online enrollments still expanding at more than ten times the rate of classroom enrollments in higher education. Online and virtual schooling is now also expanding rapidly into pre-college settings with virtual schools in 39 states. Together, in 2010, the state virtual schools saw an increase of nearly 40% in enrollments over the previous year. These growth rates are similar to those that occurred in the years in which online learning was initially introduced into higher education. New York State is now poised to develop virtual learning in pre-college settings. Clearly there is an opportunity for serving the needs of educators in both higher education and beyond with the proposed program.

Currently a number of other institutions offer similar graduate certificates including but not limited to the Penn State Certificate in Distance Education, Drexel's Online Teaching Certification, and the University of Wisconsin Madison Distance Education Certificate Program.

*The COLT Graduate Certificate Program* (15 credits) has been developed to meet the needs of students who pursue degrees in education and related fields and who teach or plan to work in public and private schools, administer online programs, support online faculty, develop online curriculum, or deliver online training in a wide variety of settings. The program is designed for students who wish to gain critical conceptual knowledge as well as advanced practical skills in how to develop curriculum, instruction and assessment in fully online and blended learning environments.

*Course structure:* All online courses in the COLT program are instructor led and cohort based. Students in these "anytime, anyplace" (asynchronous) online courses log in on a regular basis and interact with the instructor, classmates, and course materials throughout the duration of the class. Instructors are regularly available to answer questions, facilitate online discussion, and provide feedback."

## **Curriculum**

Course requirements (15 credits)

### **ETAP 529 Introduction to Distance Learning (3)**

Introduction to the methodology, history and technology of distance learning approaches to instruction. This course will examine the use of a variety of media including video, computers/Internet, and broadcast technologies that have been used in successful distance learning programs. The course will also review research on the effectiveness of distance learning.

### **ETAP 624 Teaching and Learning in Immersive Environments (3)**

This course is offered online through the Blackboard Learning System. This course explores a variety of 2D and 3D virtual worlds including those designed for children. Research and theory about games and simulations, their pedagogical, social, interpersonal, cultural, instructional, and technical implications.

### **ETAP640 Introduction to Online Teaching (3)**

Introduction to Online Teaching provides foundational knowledge and hands-on practice in developing fully online courses. A component of a series of courses in online teaching and learning this course introduces students to both theory and practice and requires that learners develop a significant online learning course or course module of instruction.

**AND**

### **ETAP 524 Integrating Technology Across the Curriculum (3)**

This course is designed to enable educators to use technology to enhance instruction within and across content areas. Theoretical and practical aspects of technology integration will be discussed. Students will develop a thematic unit reflecting State and national standards.

**OR**

### **ETAP 623 Systematic Design of Instruction (3)**

Promotes systematic, analytical approaches to curricular and instructional planning. Surveys contemporary theories of learning, instruction, and instructional design, and requires application of these theories to the preparation of educational materials. Although planning for classroom activities and presentations is discussed, primary focus is on design of materials that support independent learning.

**AND**

**ONE of the following:**

### **ETAP 655 Contemporary Patterns in Teaching (3)\***

Curriculum projects, advanced techniques, specialized equipment and media materials, examination of research findings in teaching academic disciplines. Implications for individualizing instruction. Prerequisite: Provisional certification or equivalent.

**\*topic in the student's subject area: language education, math and science education, or social studies**

### **ETAP 683 Seminar in Instructional Technology (3)**

Examination of topical issues and current research in instructional technology.

Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.

### **ETAP 695 Master's Internship in Educational Theory and Practice (2-6)**

Planned professional experience in a specialty area in Educational Theory and Practice.

Faculty guidance prior to registration, the student should prepare a proposal for approval by the instructor.

#### *Justification*

*The Certificate in Online Learning and Teaching* is an option for students who seek a flexible program of study to meet their career goals. Students who do not wish to pursue a full master's degree, who already have a master degree and/or teaching credentials, or who have career objectives in online education will find that this certificate program a good fit.

COLT certificate course requirements comprise a solid foundation in online teaching and learning broadly as well as in a subject area for practicing educators. For those outside of secondary education, the COLT internship option places students in mentored positions in higher education contexts. The COLT certificate provides focused specialization for those not seeking a full master's degree in CDIT.

The COLT certificate does not require the introduction of any new courses. The curriculum consists of courses that can be found in the graduate catalog and are currently offered by the Department of Educational Theory and Practice.

All courses in the *COLT Certificate Program* are offered at least once a year, the majority during the summer months to accommodate practicing teachers. Courses required for the COLT certificate are also requirements or can fulfill requirements for ETAP's MS in General Education, MS ETP, MS TESOL, and MS CDIT programs.

#### **Faculty credentials and course responsibilities**

The certificate program does not require any new faculty. The courses are taught by full time faculty and doctoral students under full time faculty supervision.

#### **Student Information**

##### *Admissions requirements*

Admissions requirements are the same as for the MS in CDIT Program. Students need to clearly indicate that they are applying for the *Certificate of Online Learning and Teaching Program*, and not for the full CDIT program.

International students need to submit TOEFL results of at least 250 (computer), 600 (paper) or 100 (new Internet-based).

Students in the COLT certificate program receive advisement services from the same faculty who advise students in the CDIT Master's program

##### *Switching from the COLT Certificate Program to MS in CDIT*

If a student decides to continue studies in the MS in CDIT program, he or she will need to formally apply to the master's program. On admission, credits taken for the COLT Certificate Program will be applied toward the master's degree.

**Resources**

The implementation of the program does not require new resources because it relies on courses that are already offered regularly in ETAP. There is no admissions cap for the certificate program.