

COLLABORATION IN ONLINE STUDIOS – NEXUS LEARNING GRANT

1 Project Abstract

By its nature, online collaboration is different from collaboration in on-campus courses, because it often occurs asynchronously, at a distance, and requires the use of relatively complex digital communication technologies. To date, the targets for the amount and quality of collaboration in the online design studios at PhilaU have not been met. The purpose of this project is to: Assess more deeply previous on-line studio results, Evaluate models for on-line collaboration especially from the professional disciplines, Design and develop new pedagogical approaches; and Test those new approaches in upcoming online studios. This project will achieve several outcomes: Improve learning in on-line design studios; Provide concrete examples of on-line collaboration options for the any hybrid or online course with high levels of collaboration; and lead to opportunities for publication.

2 Explanation of how the Project Advances Nexus Learning

This project addresses several of the Nexus Learning Grant priorities which include collaboration, active learning, real world learning and engagement. It will include the design of an online course (SDNx-621) to increase levels and quality of collaboration using a “backward redesign” approach. The result of the research can serve as a model for courses offered in any program or college, hybrid or online, that contain studio-based approaches that require high levels of collaboration.

The project personnel have published research on the topic of online education, online studios and have taught online studios requiring high levels of collaboration (SDNx-602, SDNx-611, SDNx-607). In addition to this, the project team is familiar with past relevant Nexus Learning Grants, specifically those completed by Kim Douglas (collaboration in on-campus studios) and Craig Griffen (online studios).

3 Specific Project Goals and Learning Outcomes

Project Goal:

- Increase the amount of collaboration in online studios
- Improve the quality of collaboration in online studio courses
- Understand the obstacles to higher levels of collaboration in existing online studio courses
- Discover and develop new online collaboration studio techniques
- Revise SDNx-621 Ecological Design Studio with a particular focus on the learning outcome that includes collaborative work, learning how to work in teams and learning from professional scenarios.
- Provide for all hybrid and online studio courses (or portions similar to studio) options for increasing and improving collaborative work.
- Assess the performance of the course revision

Project Learning Outcomes:

- *Asses* previous on-line studio collaboration pedagogies more deeply than in the past.
- *Evaluate* online studio techniques for other institutions, from recently discovered MOOC based studios, and especially from the professional disciplines
- *Design* and develop new pedagogical approaches for on-line collaboration using the “backward redesign” approach
- *Test* new approaches in upcoming on-line studio offerings

4 Description of Activities and Timeframe

Summer 2015

Activity 1: Assess the performance of past online studio offerings at Philau

The PIs for the project have both created and taught online studios for PhilaU. A specific assessment will be developed and completed to determine the level and quality of collaboration in these studios. This will include a survey of students who participated on the on-line studios in the past.

Activity 2: Leverage Previous Nexus Research and Others

Learn from the work of Kim Douglas and Craig Griffen and further study online studio offerings at other institutions and MOOC based studios and extract best practices.

Activity 3: Redesign online studio with feedback gathered from Activities 1 and 2

Based upon the assessment of past online studio performance and the discovery of new collaboration best practices, the project team will revise the existing course.

Fall 2015

Activity 4: Pre-survey Students

Before students take the revised course, they will complete a pre-survey to establish a benchmark of their attitude and expectations for collaboration. The specific content of the surveys are not yet determined at the time of writing this proposal.

Activity 5: Offer the revised Studio

The students will take the revised studio.

Activity 6: Post-survey Students

Students will complete the same survey they completed before the course.

Spring 2016

Activity 8: Analyze assessment results

The results of the pre- and post-surveys will be analyzed for significant changes pertaining to levels of and attitudes towards collaboration.

Activity 9: Disseminate Results

The findings will be submitted as a Report to The Learning Center. Furthermore, other opportunities to disseminate the findings will be located, and corresponding papers will be written. On-campus seminars will be offered during Teaching and Learning week.

Summer-Fall 2016

Activity 10: Submit paper(s) for publication

The findings will be submitted for publication.

5 Project Assessment

The project assessment is embedded in the process indicated above. It includes a Pre-survey of the students (before the revised course is offered) to establish a baseline of their attitude and expectations for collaboration. After the course is completed, a Post-survey will be conducted, where the students will complete the same survey they completed before the course. The results of the pre- and post-surveys will be analyzed for significant changes pertaining to levels of and attitudes towards collaboration.

6 Documentation and Dissemination

Besides the Final Nexus Report, the team will submit a paper for publication. Likely places of publication include ACSA, ARCC, and the Journal of Sustainability Education.

7 Project Personnel

Robert Fryer, PI – will take the lead in the redesign of the course, creating the surveys, and analyze the results. Will collaborate with the writing of the final report and publication submissions.

Rob Fleming, Co-PI – will take the lead in gathering information about outside pedagogical options in academia and industry, and assist in the course and survey and analyzing results. Will collaborate with the writing of the final report and publication submissions.

Student – will assist the PI and Co-PI with gathering research information, pedagogical options, survey and data analysis.

8 Budget Narrative and Worksheet

- The budget will support the PI, Co-PI and student to identify and analyze the obstacles to higher levels of collaboration in existing online studio courses
- The budget will support the Co-PI and student to discover and develop new online collaboration studio techniques from industry and academia
- The budget will support the PI, Co-PI and student with revising SDNx-621 Ecological Design Studio with a particular focus on the learning outcome that includes collaborative work, learning how to work in teams and learning from professional scenarios.
- The budget will support the PI and student in efforts to generalize the results for all hybrid and online studio courses (or portions similar to studio) options for increasing and improving collaborative work.
- The budget will support the PI and student to assess of the performance of the course revision

9 Attachments