

“Whooping It Up in the Arts and Sciences Through Distance Education”
(Whoop It Up)
ESEA Title II Part D

Educational Needs and Area of Focus

During the 2003-04 school year, the Tri-Valley Distance Education Consortium (TVDEC) which consists of 34 schools, 3 ESUs, and 2 colleges participated in an ESEA Title II Part D grant entitled “Syncing It All Together”. The goal for that project was ‘To extend the digital curriculum in and out of the classroom through multiple delivery methods - both synchronous and asynchronous.’

The “Syncing It All Together” grant enabled TVDEC schools to built the foundation for introducing both synchronous and asynchronous instructional practices and resources which opened new horizons for students in our rural mid-western communities.

As the “Syncing It All Together” grant provided schools with technology to enhance and/or expand their synchronous teleconferencing classrooms and asynchronous eLearning course management programming that moved both teachers and students toward an asynchronous digital curriculum, it is now time to “Whoop It Up” as we seek to move on and beyond those services by providing these students with synchronous and asynchronous curriculum opportunities in the areas of arts and sciences.

‘Whoop It Up’ project is an opportunity to work toward the goal **“To create and share enrichment lessons in the arts and sciences through partnerships with area institutions.”**

The objectives for the ‘Whoop It Up’ project are:

- Partnerships with area organizations will enhance educational experiences for students in the arts and sciences.
- Students will share in a series of arts and science lessons with other students from local, regional, and national teleconferencing sites.
- Students will participate in arts and science partners events supported through both synchronous and asynchronous instruction.

The Museum of Nebraska Art (MONA) and the University of Nebraska Kearney (UNK) have been valuable partners in the early stages of synchronous and asynchronous

programming. In 2002-03 and 2003-04, MONA has developed and presented arts lessons tied to creative writing over distance education to TVDEC students. UNK has supported both MONA and TVDEC in assisting in the technical connections necessary to present such lessons. These lessons created a blue print for the creation and presentation of discipline based activities offered by MONA to TVDEC schools.

This blueprint will serve as a model as MONA, UNK, TVDEC and a new partner the Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust will create and present a series of science lessons complimented by the Audubon arts series located at MONA. This series of arts and science lessons will be presented over the TVDEC teleconferencing network to local, regional, and national educational centers.

Technology Needs

Technology Review - TVDEC has provided two way distance education connectivity to its 34 member schools since 1999. In 2002, TVDEC was connected via a gateway to over 100 K-20 institutions in the Southeast Distance Learning Consortium in southeastern Nebraska. In 2003, the TVDEC network was upgraded to a digital IP network which provides the consortium with the teleconferencing medium allowing connectivity to sites throughout the United States and the world.

In July of 2004, a new technology connection Internet 2 (I2) was made available to the TVDEC member schools, UNK, and MONA. This high speed teleconferencing network provides connectivity between our area schools and I2 K-20 partners both nationally and internationally.

The 'Syncing It All Together' enabled TVDEC member schools to expand their synchronous connectivity by enhancing the existing technology and adding portable systems enabling the system to be flexible in terms of location and time of use . UNK has been able to provide the internet link to MONA allowing them to share lessons to TVDEC schools. During the past two years, UNK has also loaned the necessary CODEC presentation equipment to MONA allowing them to broadcast over the TVDEC network from the museum site.

Since hardware technology needs for TVDEC schools was addressed in the 'Syncing It All Together grant,' no funds for hardware are being requested in this grant

application for TVDEC schools.

Technology Needs - As MONA has previously developed language arts lessons and plans to continue connecting the arts to sciences as well as other disciplines, it is important for them to have the necessary CODEC technology to initiate such presentations.

UNK is working with the Platte Rive Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust to improve internet connectivity which will allow them to share the wildlife management and research activities to TVDEC schools as well as other regional and national venues over the I2 network. As UNK will assist the Platte River Whooping Crane Wildlife Center in connecting to the University internet network, it is the intent of the grant to provide a presentation CODEC system that will allow for teleconferencing to the TVDEC network and beyond.

The presentation equipment needed to do such presentations at both MONA and the Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust includes a CODEC, an LCD projector, camera, audio equipment, and a portable cart.

Technology Software Needs - Asynchronous eLearning course management software will be used in designing and sharing the distance education courses for the arts and science lessons. The 'Syncing It All Together' grant provided eLearning licenses during the past year and to date, half of the TVDEC schools have been provided training and are using the course management program in both distance education and regular education classes.

As this project will refer viewers to this program and because this past year was the first opportunity for schools to have access to eLearning program, it is important that schools expand the teacher pool that is involved with the eLearning program. The grant request seeks to provide funds for a partial license contribution through the grant with the school assuming the remaining cost. This buy-in by schools will speed up their responsibility in taking over the implementation as well as future budgeting for purchase of the eLearning course management program.

Qualification as High Poverty/High Technology Need

Of the 34 members of the Tri-Valley Distance Education Consortium, 22 schools satisfy the high needs definition. Participating schools who qualify within the 15% formula

include Alma (17.88%), Cedar Rapids (17.89%), Cozad (17.26%), Elba (27.31%), Elm Creek (15.28%), Elwood (15%), Franklin (19.94%), Fullerton (19.27%), Gothenburg (15.69%), Greeley-Wolbach (22.84%), Lexington (38.89%), Litchfield (16.08%), North Loup Scotia (24.01%), Ord (15.72%), Overton (29.52%), Palmer (22.03%), Ravenna (19.57%), Shelton (18.54%), Spalding (25.79%), St. Edward (27.01%), St. Paul (16.45%), Sumner-Eddyville-Miller (29.41%). Private schools within the TVDEC area have been made aware of the project and may elect to participate in the project. Certificates with original signatures from participating and private schools will be located at ESU 10.

Expected Student Learning Outcomes and/or Staff Development Outcomes

The Tri-Valley Distance Education Consortium has two major student based goals -

- to increase learning opportunities
- to invigorate curricular programs

Through the distance education network, TVDEC has gradually been able to increase learning offerings that are not available to students in all districts, and to invigorate curriculum programs by providing enrichment lessons to K-12 students.

The 'Whooping It Up' project will seek to accomplish the following student outcomes. Students will

- be exposed to the richness of arts and science resources that available in central Nebraska.
- experience arts and science lessons that serve to complement each curricular area.
- increase their understanding of remote learning supported by synchronous and asynchronous technology.

Teacher outcomes from the 'Whooping It Up' project include

- increased understanding of synchronous technology as teachers seek to create and present or receive lessons over the distance education network.
- increased understanding of the asynchronous technology tools as teachers use eLearning program to develop, present, and followup their distance education lesson.

- increased technology skills as teachers use multimedia equipment in support of their distance education lesson.
- increased understanding and communication between partnering agencies, TVDEC member schools, and the internet 2 community.

Implementation and Management

The “Whooping It Up for the Arts and Sciences Through Distance Education” project will begin with a planning meeting in January, 2005 and conclude with a series of teacher generated arts and science lessons over distance education in September 2005.

Phase I - As part of the pre-activity portion of the grant, the ‘Whoop It Up’ team will hold a meetings to establish lesson time lines and project responsibilities. The planning sessions will take place in January 2005.

Phase II - During February and March 2005, a series of teleconferencing lessons will be presented to participating schools. The arts and science lessons will be presented by specialists from MONA and Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust. The lessons will be targeted at students in grades 3 - 12. The arts and science lessons will seek to complement each other as they will focus on nature and wildlife. Teachers whose students will be involved in the teleconference will participate in a one-hour pre-lesson training. This pre-lesson will introduce the teacher to the upcoming lesson, how to prepare their students for the lesson, and a brief overview of the distance education technology.

Phase III - In March and April, 2005, schools participating in the teleconferencing lessons will have the opportunity to participate in a field trip experience at MONA and/or the Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust.

Phase IV - In March 2005, 20 teachers from the Tri-Valley Distance Education Consortium (TVDEC) will participate in a one-day orientation meeting at Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust center. This orientation will initiate the planning process for teachers as they develop a series of arts and science lessons to be presented over distance education during September of 2005.

Phase V - In February of 2005, the ‘Whoop It Up’ team will apply to present an arts and science lesson to the international teleconferencing program, Megaconference Jr. If

accepted, the team will present at the conference in May 2005.

Phase VI - In June 2005, 20 teachers will participate in a three day arts and science lesson creation workshop.

Phase VII - In September 2005, a series of six arts and science lessons will be presented via distance education to TVDEC students. The lessons developed as part of the summer 'Whoop It Up' teacher program will be targeted at students in grades 3-12.

A chart for the plan of operation (Appendix A) can be seen following the budget proposal.

Evaluation Plan

In addition to planning, training, and scheduling events, the project team will serve as evaluators for the project. The project team will consist of John Stritt, project director, Graci Gillming, Jason Everett, and Robert Hays, technology trainers at ESU 10 and 11. Partnering agencies will assist in the planning and implementation of the grant. Team members from partnering agencies include John Horvath, University of Nebraska - Kearney telecommunications director; Mike Webb, director of Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust center; and Sue Reiber, director of education at the Museum of Nebraska Art.

The evaluation team is responsible for planning all evaluation activities, analysis of project data, and reporting evaluation data to project management and grant agency.

Dissemination Plan

Sharing about the 'Whoop It Up' project will be accomplished at the consortium, regional, state, and national level. The sharing of this program will be accomplished in the following ways.

TVDEC Consortium Level - The 'Whoop It Up' project will first be introduced to administrative and curriculum teams at ESU 10 and 11 meetings. In addition to sharing the goals of the project, interested teachers in the arts and sciences will be encouraged to apply for the summer fellowship program sponsored as part of the project.

Regional and State Level - The 'Whoop It Up' project team and participating teachers will be encouraged to present project outcomes at statewide technology conferences such as NATS, NATA, NETA, MII, and NDLA. The project director will share the project with other statewide distance education consortium directors, invite other consortium directors to participate in some of the synchronous activities that emphasize the technology for instruction, and use the Tri-Valley web site and the 'Whoop It Up' elearning site as sites for lessons plans, digital pictures, and streaming video. Partnering agencies will also be encouraged to share about the project within their respective working communities.

National Level - As TVDEC schools are SEGP members to Internet 2 through the University of Nebraska, the 'Whoop It Up' project has the opportunity to share about Nebraska arts and sciences to the national and even the international community.

Partnership Plan

Through the combined efforts of the Tri-Valley Distance Education Consortium, the University of Nebraska- Kearney, the Museum of Nebraska Art, and Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust center, a model will be created on how different agencies can combine their expertise to create virtual and real time experience for students in our area and through technology beyond the borders of Nebraska and even the United states.

Benefits that will be realized because of this partnership will include:

- increased understanding of distance education technology
- increased educational opportunities for regional, state, national, and

international students supported by distance education

- an improved partnership between all participants which will further the use of both synchronous and asynchronous instruction.
- CODEC availability and improved internet access at all partner sites will increase the opportunity for sustaining educational programs to K-12 students beyond the life of the grant.