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AN EVALUATION OF THE VIRTUAL HIGH SCHOOL AFTER TWO YEARS OF OPERATION Appendices B, C, D, E and F

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Appendix B

Case Study Summaries

THE VIRTUAL HIGH SCHOOL AT ALLEN HIGH SCHOOL, ALLEN, TEXAS: SCHOOL YEAR 1998-99

Allen High School: The Context

The move to the new campus, AHS 2000, is scheduled for this summer, and the 1999-2000 school year will open there. Every classroom will have 48 Internet drops, the school will issue laptops to students for approximately 14 “laptop-saturated classes,” and the local community college will co-locate specific courses with the high school. In addition, AHS will offer for credit to its students approximately 100 Web-based courses that other accredited colleges administer. VHS is only one of many distance learning courses in the AHS course catalogue.

Key VHS Staff at This Site

Cynthia Costilla and Pam Martin remain the VHS teachers at Allen. Staci Kalmbacher is the site coordinator. Ted Moore is no longer the administrator for secondary education—Penni Jones took over that position in addition to her existing role as the district instructional technology coordinator.

Role of the Site Coordinator

The site coordinator role was critical in the first year of operation for several reasons: the network capacity issues in fall 1997 created frustration among the students; Allen’s school year is different from that of VHS, which had participants concerned about grading; and expectations about workload and self-discipline required of students were yet to be established. Technical and logistical concerns have diminished, so the role of the site coordinator has evolved to include more long-term planning functions, setting overall expectations of participants, and program coordination. I’ve become a spokesperson for on-line learning and have taken on the role to encourage more such programs.”

Overall, Staci continues to spend 25-30% of her time, on average, on VHS. However, there are wide fluctuations between registration and grading periods. Grading is a function that Staci would like to be standardized. Currently, teachers do keep the grades in the same place in the courseroom (most often they are locked anyway), and not every teacher keeps a running average or grade for her students. Therefore, when she needs a mid-course grade for activities at Allen, they are not easily available.

Sustainability of the VHS Project at Allen

Allen has committed itself to on-line learning as a viable and advantageous alternative to traditional high school organization. In that respect, the VHS concept should continue to have a receptive environment in Allen. Certainly the technological infrastructure is in place, and student appreciation for electives that otherwise would not be available to them is high. Allen has installed a server that has the LearningSpace software, which will offer many benefits in terms of teacher training, student screening, and course offerings to other students in Texas.

The advantage of VHS is that the courses are available to students free of charge, whereas the other on-line courses have course fees. One long-term challenge to the sustainability of the VHS concept is its higher cost to the district: 20 students to 1 teacher plus, at minimum, 1 period of an administrator's time. Over the long term, they may not be able to maintain that level of investment per course. Teacher resources may also become a critical factor of sustainability, given the fact that many VHS teachers continue to invest a significant amount of their own time and effort to offer high-quality courses.

VHS Courses Offered by Allen High School

Earth 2525: A Time Traveler's Guide to Planet Earth

Earth 2525 is a future studies, honors-level course, proposing to students to imagine the Earth in roughly 525 years and to predict what the legacies will be of some of today's cultural touchstones and most urgent problems. The concerns cover the arts, communications and the media, law and order, medicine and health, politics and the global community, recreation and entertainment, travel and transportation, science, technology, and industry.

The writing prompts are quite broad, but provoke students to independently research, organize, and formulate arguments, and to marshal evidence from readings. For example, "X-Files" assignments ask students to "identify the important moments in history, the touchstones you discovered, and the significant people, places, ideas, and events that tie the present with the past," and to "take the threads or trends of [module topic] and take them into the future."

Explorando Culturas Hispanas a Traves del Internet

This course has been modified since its inception, but as its title advertises, remains a region-by-region exploration of various aspects of Spanish culture. The modifications

have been minor, mostly changing and improving activities. Cynthia Costilla feels more efficient at managing the logistics of teaching on-line. She consistently spends 10 hours per week at home, on average, in addition to the daily block period the school has allocated for her VHS responsibilities. Cynthia is as enthusiastic about her VHS course as she was when she first started the project.

The course specifies certain readings and links for each region, and activities are diverse. Cynthia emphasizes individual attention for her students in this course and has had more time for in-depth responses to students. Student-to-student interaction on the substance of the course, on the other hand, remains difficult, but Cynthia feels that it has improved. She has tried a variety of structured activities that embed student-to-student interaction and allocated a significant percentage of the total course grade to participation. Collaborative assignments have yielded mixed results, and Cynthia is still reluctant to require much group work on important projects.

VHS Students at Allen High School

Approximately 42 different students in grades 10 to 12 took VHS courses at Allen this school year. Most select courses for both fall and winter semesters; although, because they did not reach their maximum allotment of 40 students, a few new students started VHS in the winter semester.

Student Experiences

We interviewed five Allen students currently taking VHS courses, three of whom were in their second year of VHS. Between first and second semesters combined, these five students had taken Eastern and Western Thought: A Comparison, Computer Programming, Music Appreciation, Webquest, Oceanography, and Project Sail.

Students work on VHS in the Live Wire, a multipurpose computer lab, which has a full-time manager and is open before and after school and on the weekends. Students have one period per day that is designated for VHS.

Students we interviewed had much more realistic expectations of the self-discipline needed to complete VHS courses and through word of mouth, understood that the workload in a VHS course is typically equivalent to that of a regular class at Allen. Students enumerated several main benefits from taking VHS courses. The greatest benefit they cited was the opportunity to take courses that they would not otherwise be able to take.

Students reported enjoying VHS courses and learning valuable and interesting content. The degree to which students feel connected to VHS classmates and interact with them on substantive issues or socially varies according to the course structure, the subject matter, and the personality of the students. In general, almost all students indicated that they preferred more interaction than less and recognized its contribution to their learning.

Approval of VHS Courses

The agreement negotiated with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) basically states that if the district assures TEA of the quality of a VHS course, and the course description matches the description of an approved TEA course, it can be offered for credit at Allen. In 1998-99, only two courses were not offered for credit: Sailing and Folklore. It will be important to track the percentage of courses that can be offered for credit as VHS courses proliferate and the options become more and more wide-ranging.

Summary and Conclusions

One the whole, participants were very positive about their VHS experience this year. The on-line offerings are growing at Allen HS, and there is high interest among the administration to continue VHS. Accessibility for non-fee-based on-line courses such as VHS is an important priority. Limitations to the sustainability of the VHS program include its cost-effectiveness and teacher availability and interest beyond the two who are already involved.

Allen's VHS course activities continue to be refined, and teachers report improved management skills in a virtual environment. Student-to-student interactions are still challenging, with course structure having a heavy impact on the nature of the interactions.

Students are relying more on their VHS teacher rather than the site coordinator when they have issues concerning their courses. The site coordinator's role in setting the right expectations and helping students be successful in VHS courses remains important.

THE VIRTUAL HIGH SCHOOL AT HUDSON HIGH SCHOOL, HUDSON, MASSACHUSETTS: SCHOOL YEAR 1998-99

Hudson High School: The Context

The town of Hudson is situated in Middlesex County, 28 miles west of Boston. Hudson's current population is over 18,000. In recent years, families making up the community of Hudson have placed more emphasis on education than they have in the past. During the past 6 years, between 85% and 92% of Hudson High School (HHS) graduates have continued on to some form of higher education.

Hudson Public High School currently has an enrollment of 819 students (grades 8-12). In the 1997-98 school year, the enrollment was 759 students, who were about 1.1% African American, 1.8% Asian, 3.6% Hispanic, and 93.5% White.

HHS has a large bilingual population (30%), mostly Portuguese. For non-English speakers, HHS offers Transitional Bilingual Education and ESL programs. In addition to a large number of traditional honors and advanced courses, HHS also offers dual enrollment (part-time college attendance) and a strong extracurricular activities program.

Key VHS Staff at This Site

John Stapelfeld is the principal of Hudson High School, and he has been involved with VHS since its inception. According to Stapelfeld, VHS has helped significantly in expanding curriculum choices, and he noted, "From the very beginning, the Virtual High School had its pluses and minuses, but overall, there have been more pluses than minuses." He also believes that with the spectacular growth of VHS, some size-related problems were bound to occur. Nonetheless, the problems this year have been different from the start-up problems of last school year. The VHS schedule's not coinciding with that of many schools, and subsequent student downtime, is a chief concern with Stapelfeld.

Gabriel Cruz, the VHS site coordinator, is also the school's ESL teacher. He manages to spend a great deal of his time in the VHS computer lab assisting students or following up with calls from VHS teachers. Cruz stated two benefits of students' enrolling in a VHS course: "The Virtual High School experience prepares students for college course work by having them work independently and develop essential technology skills."

Hudson's Interaction with VHS Staff

All VHS staff at Hudson had positive comments about the effectiveness of the VHS staff at Concord. Although some concerns still need to be addressed (e.g., staggered school calendars), for the most part, the operation of VHS has run far more smoothly than last year. Because Hudson High School is among the initial VHS sites and is near the Concord Consortium, a number of visitations by other school districts are scheduled throughout the school year. Stapelfeld states that the attention by other schools and school districts is welcome and has not proved to be an impediment.

While the technical staff at VHS received praise from all Hudson staff for their assistance, the administrative VHS staff still have some issues to resolve. Currently, the accountability of students for VHS work is in the hands of the VHS teacher until the point where students do not respond to prompts or reminders. The VHS teacher then contacts the student's site coordinator, who is expected to take steps from there. In some instances, intervention by VHS staff might have proven useful.

Teachers are also responsible for sending and receiving textbooks and materials used in VHS courses. Once the course is over, books and materials are supposed to be returned for redistribution in the next semester. When materials are not returned, teachers do not have the type of leverage with VHS students that they do with students in their classrooms. In other instances, VHS teachers have not responded to Gabriel Cruz. From his comments and those of the teachers at Hudson, the VHS administrative staff is perceived as the highest authority to handle accountability issues.

Sustainability of the VHS Project at Hudson

Given the prominence of Hudson High School within the membership of VHS sites, it seems unlikely that the school would jettison VHS if the national program continues to operate within Massachusetts. Stapelfeld believed that VHS at Hudson could be supported completely with internal funds, if necessary. Currently, Massachusetts has set a goal to incorporate VHS into all public schools within 5 years.

VHS Courses Offered by Hudson High School

AP Statistics

The two VHS courses offered at HHS are awarded full credit. Karen Deavers teaches AP Statistics, currently the only AP-level course in VHS. Twenty-one students

registered for this two-credit, college-level course, which runs a full year. Unlike in previous semesters, all students were required to take the AP statistics exam this year.

Deavers is also teaching a non-VHS AP statistics course at Hudson High School. When asked to compare students in the regular AP course and the virtual AP statistics course, she answered that students in her regular AP course appeared more prepared and showed less variability in content knowledge than VHS students. Deavers mentioned that VHS students performing poorly need to ask more questions to get the VHS teacher to focus on problem areas.

In a comparison with a regular course, Deavers stated that teacher workloads depend on how much effort a teacher is willing to put into the course. Both VHS teachers at Hudson said that they had seen VHS courses where the teacher was absent for many days without notice or did not respond to students' questions in a timely manner. Deavers stated that her AP Statistics course provided her with a minimum of 10 e-mails daily, many of which did not require a response.

Astronomy

Twenty students enrolled in Astronomy: Stars and the Cosmos, taught by Peggy Collins. In this introduction to stellar astronomy, students study how stars work and the life cycles of stars, and then extend this knowledge to star clusters and galaxies. The course is designated as honors and has a recommended prerequisite of high school physics. Students were evaluated on weekly contributions to discussions, reading assignments, homework, some activities and observations, weekly quizzes, a midterm, and a final. Collins noted, "My expectations for students are high; this is a true Honors level course. I expect them to log on daily, to check the CourseRoom for any announcements, and to hand in all their work on time."

VHS Students at Hudson High School

From the cadre of students who expressed an interest in taking Virtual High School courses, the assistant principal, guidance counselor, and Virtual High School site coordinator select students based on their chances of success in the VHS course. Potential VHS students, through the regular guidance counselor advisement process, are made aware of the additional freedoms and corresponding responsibilities of enrolling in a netcourse. "Students in VHS courses have more freedom than in the classroom. They

feel that it's a privilege," Cruz explains. In the 1998-99 school year, over 60 students had shown an interest in the 40 available slots for VHS courses.

All students at Hudson High School have Internet access and must follow the widely posted Internet use policy. The Virtual High School computer lab houses nine computer stations, three PCs and six Macintoshes. The Virtual High School students are scheduled to take their netcourse during one of the four blocks during the day.

During the first year of the VHS implementation (1997-98), VHS course grades were reported on the students' transcripts but were not calculated into their grade point average or class rank. In the 1998-99 school year, grades from VHS courses were also calculated into the students' grade point average and class rank. This change came about because students were not taking the netcourses seriously.

Student Experiences

Several students taking VHS courses were interviewed. All offered positive remarks about their courses. Students were particularly enthusiastic about having a greater variety of courses offered to them through VHS. There was mixed review on the orientation on LearningSpace at the beginning of the course, however. One student found it tedious, while another found it helpful in learning how to work the software.

Summary and Conclusions

In general, there is a great deal of enthusiasm about VHS at HHS. One observation was the overwhelming percentage of new computers and only a few older models. It seems that over the 3 years that VHS has been operating at HHS, the influx of new equipment has positioned HHS as a technologically updated school. VHS, as part of the Hudson Public Schools, has offered much exposure to HHS. Overall, parent and community support for VHS has been strong because it offers a greatly expanded set of course offerings. That is expected to continue with the expansion of VHS (over 110 courses being offered in the 1999-2000 school year) and the continued refining of accountability and administrative procedures.

THE VIRTUAL HIGH SCHOOL AT MIRAMONTE HIGH SCHOOL, ORINDA, CALIFORNIA: SCHOOL YEAR 1998-99

Miramonte High School: The Context

Key VHS Staff at This Site

There has been no change in staff for the VHS program at Miramonte during the past year. Terry Haugen continues to teach the Russian, Soviet, and Post-Soviet Studies course. Cheryl Davis continues to serve as the site coordinator. Joanne Haukland, the Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, continues to chair a group of VHS site coordinators and teachers from the four participating Acalanes Union high schools. As principal of Miramonte, Dennis Regalado remains minimally involved in VHS and continues his support.

Everyone that we talked to was very positive about the program. Participants consistently mentioned that many of the problems with the technology and the administrative procedures experienced last year had been ironed out. The primary purpose of VHS at Miramonte and Acalanes Union, more generally, continues to be the same: to provide students with a range of college-oriented electives that the school and district could not otherwise offer.

Joanne Haukland noted that, while it is much improved, LearningSpace is still too difficult for students to use easily, and it requires a long learning curve. Terry Haugen mentioned that the assessment portion of LearningSpace still needs improvement. Beyond this, she mentioned that she was pleased with the fact that Lotus was listening to the VHS teachers; many of the suggested improvements have been implemented.

VHS Course and Teacher Quality

Miramonte and Acalanes Union administrators continue to feel that the quality of VHS courses is generally high, although there have been some exceptions. Cheryl Davis expressed concern about two particular courses that resulted in negative experiences for Miramonte students. She said that the Electric Vehicle Technology course had little work put on the Web site for students, and the teacher was not responding to student communications on a regular basis. VHS canceled the course, but the cancellation put one of Miramonte's students in a very tough spot. After exploring a variety of options, the student enrolled in a different VHS course. In another course, the teacher was often

sick and not very responsive, according to Cheryl. The teacher did not respond to repeated inquiries about a grading issue. Ultimately, a VHS staff member handled the situation.

Our respondents felt that a variety of indicators could be used to establish the quality of courses for students, counselors, and administrators. For each course, VHS could list the national or state standards that were addressed by the course. Another possibility mentioned was to have the courses reviewed by a committee of college faculty.

Our respondents also felt that the responsibility for the quality of teachers was up to individual high schools. Nonetheless, there were suggestions about how VHS might assure teacher quality. For example, Cheryl Davis felt that a VHS-appointed department head for each curricular area could monitor courses and assure the quality of the content and the teaching. Cheryl felt that it would help if the VHS program had a specific set of procedures and standards that could specify the expectations related to teacher responsiveness and the level of course discussion, for example.

Role of the Site Coordinator

Miramonte made a major change in the way it structured the VHS program by requiring all VHS students to meet at the same time. All of the students met during seventh period, the “extra” period that seniors usually skipped. This has increased the efficiency of the program and made it easier for the coordinator to monitor students. Cheryl felt that the site coordinator’s role was becoming so routine that, if necessary, she could rotate out of the coordinator’s position and others could take over without hurting the program. With the current arrangement, she felt that she might be able to monitor up to 40 students. Cheryl felt that a VHS department head would make the coordinator’s job easier by reducing the inordinate amount of time that coordinators have had to spend on dealing with a few problem courses.

Miramonte’s Interaction with VHS Staff

Joanne Haukland felt that the VHS staff had gotten much better at communicating with VHS teachers and students. However, she felt they needed to get better at communicating information to the school districts. As Concord’s ultimate customers, the districts have to deal with many constraints related to course and teacher scheduling, use of resources, and so on. It is important for the VHS staff to check with district

administrators on matters related to these issues. Otherwise, there were only positive comments made about the support provided by VHS staff.

Sustainability of the VHS Project at Miramonte

Teachers and administrators generally felt that Miramonte and Acalanes Union plan to continue and perhaps expand their participation in the VHS program. It is clear from the Acalanes periodic review process so far that the need to offer a wide range of elective courses is important, and VHS helps meet this need.

Joanne Haukland said that there will be a major review of the program and a formal decision about continued participation next year. VHS might become part of a portfolio of elective opportunities offered in collaboration with the local colleges. VHS has the advantages of offering a wider range of courses tailored to high school students and does not require students to pay tuition; however, they do not give college credit.

Ultimately, according to Joanne, sustainability will depend a lot on being able to make the numbers work, on being able to justify participation within the normal enrollment structure for courses. Mr. Regalado expects that the number of students taking VHS courses and the number that the coordinator can handle will continue to grow.

Currently, the program relies a lot on the VHS teachers, who are very interested and dedicated. Joanne said that teacher commitment is always important to the success of a program, but VHS may require a level that is not sustainable. However, both Terry Haugen and Cheryl Davis felt that things were becoming more routine.

Approval of VHS Courses

A continuing issue for Miramonte and Acalanes Union, more generally, is that not all VHS courses meet the University of California A-F requirements. This reduces the interest that their students have for these courses, since such a high number of students want to go to good colleges. It would be easier to prepare new VHS courses for review by the UC, Joanne Haukland contended, if the VHS program would provide a detailed statement about the academic difficulty, activities, and prerequisites for each course.

VHS Courses Offered by Miramonte High School

Russian, Soviet, and Post-Soviet Studies

Terry Haugen is pleased with her VHS experience and with what she has accomplished with her course. She said that she had given several presentations on her course at Stanford and at teacher conferences.

From the beginning, Terry had it in mind that she would include students and teachers from the Ukraine in her course. This proved to be difficult because of the need to have passwords for each participant in the course. Terry is enthusiastic and has made progress with this new development, but as of yet there has not been a lot of participation.

An analysis of materials in the Media Center of LearningSpace indicates that the course focuses on the history of Russia from the 12th century through the Cold War up to the breakup of the Soviet Union and the establishment of the new republics. Materials in the Media Center include brief surveys, text readings, images, maps, film clips that Terry has entered, and pointers to other Web sites. At one point, Terry tied the course into the “Cold War” series on CNN. Students attending schools in our case studies who had taken the course reported that there was a lot of work but that they learned a lot.

Student Experiences

Six Miramonte students were interviewed who were taking courses examined by other case studies. One student was taking Terry’s Russian Studies course, one was taking AP Statistics, one had taken Earth 2525, and three either were taking or had taken Music Appreciation. Students overall were positive about the program and would recommend it to others. Most often, students said they liked the VHS program because of the wide choice of courses and the flexibility of being able to work at home. For the most part, the students said that discussion and interaction with other students was not a central part of the VHS experience.

Summary and Conclusions

While Miramonte’s experience last year was “a most painful and time-consuming experience” (to use Joanne Haukland’s words at the time), this year ran much more smoothly. Administrators, teachers, and students are all happy with the program, primarily because it allows the school to offer courses it would not otherwise be able to offer. There is a general feeling that the courses are of high quality and the students are learning, although both administrators and teachers had good suggestions for how the

program might improve quality and communicate that to various audiences. Site coordinators and teachers reported increased efficiency and estimated being able to do their jobs well with more students than they were currently handling. This is crucial because the continuation of the VHS program at Miramonte and Acalanes High School District will depend a lot on “making the numbers work.”

THE VIRTUAL HIGH SCHOOL AT WESTBOROUGH HIGH SCHOOL, WESTBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS: SCHOOL YEAR 1998-99

Westborough High School: The Context

There have been no major changes in the school or the district since last year. In particular, the key participants in the Virtual High School in Westborough remain the same, from the superintendent to the two VHS teachers.

The Virtual High School received a grant from the state of Massachusetts to spread the word about VHS to more schools in the state. On occasion, this so-called Lighthouse grant has paid for Westborough's VHS teachers to do presentations at other schools and for substitutes to cover their regular classes for them.¹

Role of the Site Coordinator

Paul Vital, Westborough's VHS coordinator, is a conscientious computer teacher who is highly respected by the principal and the superintendent. Paul sees the VHS students frequently and has useful suggestions and observations to make regarding the operation of VHS.

Westborough's Interaction with VHS Staff

All Westborough staff involved with VHS think that the program has worked more smoothly this year than last year. The central VHS staff has been "very supportive." Some changes were implemented to reduce coordinators' time spent on administration, for example, by providing students' grades to coordinators in an Excel format, not as text.

The coordinator and the teachers at Westborough nonetheless articulated concerns about a number of issues. Chief among these was the issue of assigning students' grades. In one instance, a Westborough student whose grades were A and B- for individual grading periods received an overall course grade of C+. Another concern was that the drop period of just 1 week for VHS courses seemed too short, given that no instruction took place during the first week (which was devoted to a unit about LearningSpace). The policies and procedures regarding submission of late work, academic warnings, grade changes, and withdrawing from or adding VHS courses were other challenging issues.

¹ This grant is just one expression of interest in VHS on the part of the state department of education. Talks are under way with the state regarding a statewide version of VHS. It is conceivable that funding from Massachusetts will replace federal funds at the end of the Challenge Grant.

In response to these concerns, the VHS central staff is now providing official, written warnings if students are at risk of failing a VHS course. Parents are required to sign these. The warnings have been a big help, according to the coordinator, though some students who received warnings nevertheless still procrastinated for weeks and yet later caught up and earned As.

Another issue of concern was uneven course quality and dropped courses. More than one coordinator was forced to scramble to provide students with credits they needed when a VHS course (Electric Vehicle Technology) was cancelled because of its low quality.

As VHS scales up next year to something like 100 courses and 90 schools, grading, the control of course quality, and the possibility of courses being dropped in mid-semester will continue to be significant concerns. According to central VHS staff, a greater effort will be made to be sure that the course materials and assignments are largely in place before a course is allowed to open for enrollment.

Sustainability of the VHS Project at Westborough

Westborough's principal, Maureen Zolubos, was optimistic about the prospects of continuing VHS after the federal grant expires (September 2001). "Whenever I talk about VHS, people want to know more," she stated. Also, the Westborough school district is sufficiently well funded that she believes it would not be difficult to fund the local portion of VHS costs after the Challenge Grant is over. "We can afford it," she said—but she added that good quality control with respect to participating teachers and their courses will continue to be critical.

Paul Vital was less certain about the sustainability of VHS. From a staffing perspective, he estimates that VHS enrollments cost more than twice as much per student as regular course enrollments. Therefore, considering the potential costs after the grant is completed, Mr. Vital said, "VHS might be expendable."

VHS Courses Offered by Westborough High School

Westborough continues to offer two semester-long VHS courses, offered in both the fall and the spring of 1998-99: Music Appreciation and Composition, taught by David Jost, and the Bioethics Symposium, taught by Tracy Reynolds. A few facts about participation in each of these courses during the fall semester are shown in the following

table. It is clear that there is a very wide range of participation by different students in each of these VHS courses.

**Table B-1:
FALL 1998 DATA FOR WESTBOROUGH'S VHS COURSES***

Course	No. of Students	No. of Items in Schedule	Discussion Topics	No. of Postings (in Discussions)	Postings by Student (Range)
Music	13	70	38	675	16 - 80
Bioethics	14	140	45	approx. 1,500	7 - 180

- Item counts are estimates. The total numbers of postings (in Discussions) include contributions made by the teachers and the students.

Music Appreciation and Composition

David Jost is finding that it takes him less time this year to teach a virtual course than it did last year. Still, he reports spending about 15 hours per week on the virtual course, compared with about half that time for a regular course.

Mr. Jost says that in addition to learning a lot about technical matters from his VHS experience, he is also transferring to his regular classes some of what he has learned about teaching in VHS. "I'll do more writing in regular classes now," he said. And he explained that, "After teaching VHS, I feel that as a teacher in a regular classroom we give the kids too much. We explain what they've just read, for example."

The principal of the school noted that there has been a strong interest by the media in the on-line Music course. The January 4, 1999, issue of *U.S. News and World Report* contained an article about Mr. Jost. The program *Good Morning, America* has also been in touch with him about a possible TV appearance.

Although Mr. Jost is more comfortable with LearningSpace this year than he was last year, he nevertheless offered a number of suggestions for improvements to the LearningSpace software. His suggestions included: adding a synchronous communication function, making it easier to view student postings (regardless of where they are located on-line) and to identify students, and improving the assessment function.

Bioethics

This year, Tracy Reynolds is teaching the Bioethics Symposium by herself, in contrast to last year, when she team-taught with two other teachers. Technically, Ms. Reynolds believes that VHS is working more smoothly this year than last. She has also learned how to use the medium more effectively. Her expectations changed, in that she is

now more accepting of the fact that it is very difficult for students to engage in a lot of teamwork on-line. This latter point is one of the reasons that she plans to remove the word “symposium” from the course title. The term “symposium” implies to her more group work than she believes is feasible or that students may expect will take place.

Ms. Reynolds still spends more time teaching a virtual course than a face-to-face course. One reason that she is willing to do so is that her knowledge of technology has increased so much because of her participation in VHS.

Students at Westborough High School

Westborough is accumulating a total of 58 VHS credits during this academic year. These 58 credits are being earned by a total of 41 different students: 17 enrolled for both semesters, and 24 enrolled for one semester. Of the students enrolled in VHS, four were reported to be Asian-American and none were African-American or Hispanic.

We interviewed five students enrolled in VHS courses, and most of the comments made by them about VHS were positive. The two main attractions mentioned by the students were the chance to enroll in courses that would not otherwise be available to them and the flexibility of scheduling their own time. Still, a number of problems concerning VHS were noted. These included some difficulty using LearningSpace and distractions while working on VHS at school. In certain courses, students noted problems involving the small amount of student-to-student discussion, slow teacher response time, and unclear course requirements.

Summary and Conclusions

Operation of the Virtual High School at Westborough has in many respects become routinized. Compared with the first year, there are fewer crises with the central server and other technologies. Workable procedures are in place to enroll students, help them while they are taking VHS courses, warn them if they fall behind, and report their grades to the participating schools on schedule. There is a lot of enthusiasm for VHS on the part of all the participants at Westborough.

Of course, there are still a number of issues that need attention by VHS central staff. Some of those identified as needing more attention are: increasing control over course quality, uniform grading, and a clearer schedule for making up overdue work.

Based on the data gathered at Westborough, it appears that the biggest challenge facing VHS will be to continue to improve its operation (as it clearly did this year) while at the same time scaling up to include many more schools, courses, and students.

Appendix C

1999 Surveys of School Districts Participating in Virtual High School

1999 Survey of School Districts Participating in Virtual High School: Superintendent Questionnaire

Questions? Please contact:

*Kathy Valdés, (650) 859-4974
e-mail kvaldes@unix.sri.com*

Please use the enclosed envelope to return the completed survey to:

Survey of School Districts Participating in Virtual High School
Superintendent Questionnaire
SRI International
333 Ravenswood Avenue, BS158
Menlo Park, CA 94025-3493

NOTICE

Please read all questions and instructions carefully. Answer the questions by checking the appropriate box or writing in the answer if requested to do so. It is important to limit yourself to one response for questions that direct you to “check one.”

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Section A: Experience with VHS

A1. Focusing especially on this semester, please indicate your overall level of satisfaction with the Virtual High School project, to date. *(Please check one box.)*

- ₁ Very satisfied
- ₂ Somewhat satisfied
- ₃ Not very satisfied
- ₄ Not at all satisfied

A1a. What aspects of VHS are satisfactory or unsatisfactory?

A2. Was (were) the VHS course(s) that **your** school district offered different from traditional courses?

- ₁ Yes
- ₀ No

A3. In general, how satisfied are you with the quality of the VHS course(s) that **your** school district offers? *(If your district offers one VHS course, please check a code from 1 to 5; otherwise check a code from 1 to 6.)*

- ₁ Very satisfied
- ₂ Somewhat satisfied
- ₃ Not very satisfied
- ₄ Not at all satisfied
- ₅ I do not know enough about the courses to be sure
- ₆ It varies; I am satisfied with some VHS courses but not with others

A4. In general, how satisfied are you with the quality of the VHS courses offered by **other** districts? *(Please check one box.)*

- ₁ Very satisfied
- ₂ Somewhat satisfied
- ₃ Not very satisfied
- ₄ Not at all satisfied
- ₅ I do not know enough about the courses to be sure

A5. As a result of your participation in the VHS project, was (were) your participating **teacher(s)** able to teach courses that your district otherwise would not have been able to offer?

₁ Yes

₀ No ➔ *If no, please skip to Question A6.*

A5a. How important would you say these courses are to your school district? (*Please check one box.*)

₁ Very important

₂ Somewhat important

₃ Not very important

₄ Not at all important

A6. Through VHS, were any of the participating **students** in your district able to take courses that they otherwise would not have been able to take?

₁ Yes

₀ No ➔ *If no, please skip to Question A7.*

A6a. In general, how important would you say these courses are to your district? (*Please check one box.*)

₁ Very important

₂ Somewhat important

₃ Not very important

₄ Not at all important

A7. Please indicate which of the following occurred in your district as a result of participating in the VHS project.

A7a. As a result of participating in VHS, the participating **teacher(s)**: *(Please check all that apply.)*

- 1 Taught fewer courses outside his/her area of certification.
- 2 Acquired new technological skills
- 3 Acquired new subject matter knowledge
- 4 Acquired new teaching or assessment skills
- 5 Used new teaching or assessment approaches in their other courses
- 6 Had access to and took advantage of technological, subject matter, or pedagogical experts that he/she/they otherwise would not have been able to access
- 7 Had the opportunity to collaborate and/or network with teachers from other schools and districts
- 8 Benefited in other ways *(Please specify.)* _____
- 9 None of the above
- 10 Don't know how teachers benefited from participating in VHS

A7b. As a result of participating in VHS, the participating **students**: *(Please check all that apply.)*

- 1 Took fewer courses that were taught by teachers teaching outside of their areas of expertise
- 2 Had the opportunity to use hardware or software that they would not have used otherwise
- 3 Acquired new technological skills
- 4 Engaged in new kinds of pedagogical activities or produced new kinds of products
- 5 Had access to and took advantage of technological, subject matter, or pedagogical experts that they otherwise would not have been able to access
- 6 Benefited in other ways *(Please specify.)* _____
- 7 None of the above
- 8 Don't know how students benefited from participating in VHS

A7c. Did your community at large benefit from your district's participation in VHS?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Section B: Implementation of the VHS Project

B1. Was your school district able to implement the VHS netcourse(s) in the way that you had planned before the current school year began?

- Yes ➡ *If yes, please skip to Question B2.*
- No

B1a. What changes were made to the plans for implementation of the VHS project?

B2. To enroll a student in a VHS netcourse requires that both a VHS teacher *and* a VHS coordinator be paid. Do you feel that these additional resources used for students to take a VHS netcourse were justified and acceptable? (*Please check one box.*)

- No
- Yes
- Not sure

B2a. Why or why not?

B3. Did your participation in VHS help you to obtain new or added resources for your school, such as more or better computers?

- Yes
- No

Section C: Decision to Continue Participating in VHS

C1. Is your school board involved in monitoring the progress of the VHS project or the decision to continue to participate?

- ₁ Yes
- ₀ No ➔ *If no, please skip to Question C2.*

C1a. What has the school board’s response been to your experience with the project, so far?
(Please check one box.)

- ₁ Very positive and/or supportive
- ₂ Somewhat positive and/or supportive
- ₃ Not very positive and/or supportive
- ₄ Not at all positive and/or supportive

C2. Schools offering VHS courses typically have a teacher and a coordinator who are each released from teaching one section of a regular course so that they can work on VHS. In return, the school can enroll up to 20 students in VHS courses. If your district had to pay for the time of **both** a coordinator and a teacher, without receiving support from the VHS grant, do you think it would continue to be part of VHS? (Please check only one box.)

- ₁ Yes, definitely
- ₂ Yes, probably
- ₃ No, probably not
- ₄ Not sure

C3. Which of the following factors, if any, are likely to be significant barriers to continuing your participation in the Virtual High School **after** the federal grant is over? (Please check all that apply.)

- ₁ The cost
- ₂ Insufficient student interest in taking virtual courses
- ₃ Lack of interest or time on the part of teachers
- ₄ Insufficient support from the school board or the community
- ₅ There are no significant barriers

C4. Suppose that your state department of education decided to support a type of Virtual High School that would serve students and schools only within the state. If you could choose between them, and the costs were the same, would you prefer an approach focused on schools within the state or the approach of the current Virtual High School, which operates nationally, across state lines? *(Please check only one box.)*

- ₁ A virtual school serving only my state would be more attractive
- ₂ A national school would be more attractive
- ₃ Both would be equally attractive
- ₄ Not sure

C5. Thinking about their grade levels, abilities, and aspirations, are the students from your district who are involved in VHS the types of students you think should be involved in VHS? *(Please check all that apply.)*

- ₃ Yes, these are the types of students who can benefit most
- ₂ No, there are too many students now in VHS who ought not to be there
- ₁ There are considerably more students who could benefit from VHS than those currently involved

1999 Survey of School Districts Participating in Virtual High School: Principal Questionnaire

Questions? Please contact:

*Kathy Valdés, (650) 859-4974
e-mail kvaldes@unix.sri.com*

Please use the enclosed envelope to return the completed survey to:

Survey of School Districts Participating in Virtual High School
Principal Questionnaire
SRI International
333 Ravenswood Avenue, BS158
Menlo Park, CA 94025-3493

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Section A: Experience with VHS

A1. Focusing especially on this semester, please indicate your overall level of satisfaction with the Virtual High School project, to date. *(Please check one box.)*

- 1 Very satisfied
- 2 Somewhat satisfied
- 3 Not very satisfied
- 4 Not at all satisfied

A1a. What aspects of VHS are satisfactory or unsatisfactory?

A2. Was (were) the VHS course(s) that were offered by teachers at **your** school different from traditional courses?

- 1 Yes
- 0 No

A3. In general, how satisfied are you with the quality of the VHS course(s) offered by the teacher(s) at **your** school? *(Please check one box.)*

- 1 Very satisfied
- 2 Somewhat satisfied
- 3 Not very satisfied
- 4 Not at all satisfied

A4. In general, how satisfied are you with the quality of the VHS courses offered by **other** schools? *(Please check one box.)*

- 1 Very satisfied
- 2 Somewhat satisfied
- 3 Not very satisfied
- 4 Not at all satisfied

A5. How do the backgrounds of the students at your school who are enrolled in VHS compare with those of students enrolled in more traditional courses? *(Please check one box on each line.)*

	Extent students enrolled in VHS differ from other students					
	A lot more	More	About the same	Less	A lot less	Don't know
Students enrolled in VHS netcourses:						
A5a. Drop out from school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A5b. Come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (for example, receiving AFDC or free/reduced-price lunch)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A5c. Are limited English speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A5d. Are a member of a racial or ethnic minority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A5e. Are enrolled in a college preparatory program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A6. As a result of your school's participation in the VHS project, was (were) your participating teacher(s) able to teach courses that your school otherwise would not have been able to offer?

- Yes
 No ➔ *If no, please skip to Question A7.*

A6a. How important would you say these courses are to your school? *(Please check one box.)*

- Very important
 Somewhat important
 Not very important
 Not at all important

A7. Through VHS, were any of the participating students able to take one or more courses that they otherwise would not have been able to take at your school?

- Yes
 No ➔ *If no, please skip to Question A8.*

A7a. In general, how important would you say these courses are to your school? (*Please check one box.*)

- 1 Very important
- 2 Somewhat important
- 3 Not very important
- 4 Not at all important

A8. Please indicate which of the following occurred at your school as a result of participating in the VHS project.

A8a. As a result of participating in VHS, the participating **teacher(s)**: (*Please check all that apply.*)

- 1 Taught fewer courses outside of his/her area(s) of certification
- 2 Acquired new technological skills
- 3 Acquired new subject matter knowledge
- 4 Acquired new teaching or assessment skills
- 5 Used new teaching or assessment approaches in their other courses
- 6 Had access to and took advantage of technological, subject matter, or pedagogical experts that he/she/they otherwise would not have been able to access
- 7 Had the opportunity to collaborate and/or network with teachers from other schools and districts
- 8 Benefited in other ways (*Please specify.*) _____

- 9 None of the above
- 10 Don't know how teachers benefited from participating in VHS

A8b. As a result of participating in VHS, the participating **students**: *(Please check all that apply.)*

- ₁ Took fewer courses that were taught by teachers teaching outside of their areas of expertise
- ₂ Had the opportunity to use hardware or software that they would not have used otherwise
- ₃ Acquired new technological skills
- ₄ Engaged in new kinds of pedagogical activities or produced new kinds of products
- ₅ Had access to and took advantage of technological, subject matter, or pedagogical experts that they otherwise would not have been able to access
- ₆ Benefited in other ways *(Please specify.)* _____
- ₇ None of the above
- ₈ Don't know how students benefited from participating in VHS

A8c. As a result of participating in VHS, were people other than teachers and students (such as parents, corporate mentors, or scientists) able to participate in the education of students at your school?

- ₁ Yes
- ₀ No
- ₈ Don't know

A8d. Did your community at large benefit from your school's participation in VHS?

- ₁ Yes
- ₀ No

Section B: Implementation of the VHS Project

B1. Was your school able to implement the VHS netcourse(s) in the way that you had planned before the current school year began?

- ₁ Yes ➡ *If yes, please skip to Question B2.*
- ₀ No

B1a. How satisfied were you with the results of these changes? *(Please check one box.)*

- 1 Very satisfied
- 2 Somewhat satisfied
- 3 Not very satisfied
- 4 Not at all satisfied

B2. To enroll a student in a VHS netcourse requires that both a VHS teacher *and* a VHS coordinator be paid. Do you feel that these additional resources used for students to take a VHS netcourse were justified and acceptable? *(Please check only one box.)*

- 1 No
- 2 Yes
- 3 Not sure

B2a. Why or why not? _____

B3. Did your participation in VHS help you to obtain new or added resources for your school, such as more or better computers?

- 1 Yes
- 0 No

Section C: Resources Required for Implementing VHS

C1. Did **your** involvement in the VHS project this year require about the same, more, or less of your time than you anticipated? *(Please check one box.)*

- 1 A lot more time
- 2 More time
- 3 About the same
- 4 Less time
- 5 A lot less time

C2. Did the **coordinator's** involvement in the VHS project this year require about the same, more, or less time than you anticipated? (*Please check one box.*)

- A lot more time
- More time
- About the same
- Less time
- A lot less time

C3. Did your school have to obtain new computers in order to participate in the VHS program?

- Yes
- No

C4. Did your school have to install computer networks and/or obtain new computer software in order to participate in the VHS program?

- Yes
- No

C5. Which of the following posed barriers to successfully participating in the VHS program? (*Check all that apply.*)

- Lack of computers
- Lack of other computer hardware (such as upgrades to computers, printers, etc.)
- Need to expand or update computer network facilities
- Lack of new/updated software
- Lack of space
- Inadequate staff training for using computer hardware, software, and networking facilities
- Other (*Please specify.*) _____
- None of the above; there were no significant barriers to participating in VHS

Section D: Future Participation in VHS

D1. Schools offering VHS courses typically have a teacher and a coordinator who are each released from teaching one section of a regular course so that they can work on VHS. In return, the school can enroll up to 20 students in VHS courses. If your school had to pay for the time of **both** a coordinator and a teacher, without receiving support from the VHS grant, do you think it would continue to be part of VHS? *(Please check only one box.)*

- ₁ Yes, definitely
- ₂ Yes, probably
- ₃ No, probably not
- ₄ Not sure

D2. Thinking about their grade levels, abilities, and aspirations, are the students from your school who are involved in VHS the types of students you think should be involved in VHS? *(Please check all that apply.)*

- ₃ Yes, these are the types of students who can benefit most
- ₂ No, there are too many students now in VHS who ought not to be there
- ₁ There are considerably more students who could benefit from VHS than those currently involved

D3. Which of the following factors, if any, are likely to be significant barriers to continuing your participation in the Virtual High School **after** the federal grant is over? *(Please check all that apply.)*

- ₁ The cost
- ₂ Insufficient student interest in taking virtual courses
- ₃ Lack of interest or time on the part of teachers
- ₄ Insufficient support from the school board or the community
- ₅ There are no significant barriers

D4. Suppose that your state department of education decided to support a type of Virtual High School that would serve students and schools only within the state. If you could choose between them, and the costs were the same, would you prefer an approach focused on schools within the state or the approach of the current Virtual High School, which operates nationally, across state lines? *(Please check only one box.)*

- 1 A virtual school serving only my state would be more attractive
- 2 A national school would be more attractive
- 3 Both would be equally attractive
- 4 Not sure

Section E: Other Comments

E1. Do you have any other thoughts that you would like to share with us about the VHS project or your participation in it?

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Principal Questionnaire
SRI International
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Menlo Park, CA 94025-3493

1999 Survey of School Districts Participating in Virtual High School: Project Coordinator Questionnaire

Questions? Please contact:

*Kathy Valdés, (650) 859-4974
e-mail kvaldes@unix.sri.com*

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Section A: Coordinator's Experiences with VHS

A1. Focusing especially on this semester, please indicate your overall level of satisfaction with the Virtual High School project, to date: *(Please check one box.)*

- ₁ Very satisfied
- ₂ Somewhat satisfied
- ₃ Not very satisfied
- ₄ Not at all satisfied

A1a. What aspects of VHS are satisfactory or unsatisfactory?

A2. Was (were) the VHS course(s) that **your school** offered different from traditional courses?

- ₁ Yes
- ₀ No

A3. In general, how satisfied are you with the quality of the VHS course (or courses) that **your** school offers? *(If your school offers one VHS course, please check a code from 1 to 4; otherwise check a code from 1 to 5.)*

- ₁ Very satisfied
- ₂ Somewhat satisfied
- ₃ Not very satisfied
- ₄ Not at all satisfied
- ₅ It varies; I am satisfied with some VHS courses but not with others

A4. Overall, are you satisfied with the quality of the VHS courses offered by **other** schools? *(Please check one box.)*

- ₁ Very satisfied
- ₂ Somewhat satisfied
- ₃ Not very satisfied
- ₄ Not at all satisfied

A4a. Why or why not?

A5. Given your experience this past year, do you believe the role of the coordinator is an important one that should be continued? *(Please check one box.)*

- ₁ Yes
- ₂ Yes, but with some changes
- ₃ No

A6. How much time did your involvement in the VHS project require this year, compared to the time needed to teach one section of a regular (face-to-face) course? *(Please check one box.)*

- ₁ VHS required a lot more time
- ₂ More time
- ₃ About the same
- ₄ Less time
- ₅ A lot less time

A7. Do you believe that the role of VHS coordinator would change significantly if the number of VHS students at your school were to grow considerably?

- ₁ Yes
- ₀ No

A8. Do you believe that the role of VHS coordinator would change significantly if the number of courses offered by VHS were to increase considerably?

- ₁ Yes
- ₀ No

A9. Do you believe that the position of VHS site coordinator will continue at your school after supplemental funding from the VHS project is discontinued (two years from now)?

- ₁ Yes
- ₀ No

A10. To what degree do you feel that the on-line Site Coordinator Orientation offered by VHS this year was effective in preparing you to: *(Please check one box on each line.)*

		Extent to which it was effective:			
		Very	Somewhat	Not very	Not at all
a.	Use technology well, including LearningSpace.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄
b.	Work more effectively as a VHS coordinator.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄

Section B: Teachers' Experiences with VHS

B1. As a result of your participation in the VHS project, was (were) your participating **teacher(s)** able to teach courses that your school otherwise would not have been able to offer?

- ₁ Yes
₀ No ➔ *If no, please skip to Question B2.*

B1a. How important would you say these courses are to your school? (*Please check one box*)

- ₁ Very important
₂ Somewhat important
₃ Not very important
₄ Not at all important

B2. As a result of participating in VHS, the participating teacher(s): (*Please check all that apply.*)

- ₁ Teach fewer courses outside their area(s) of certification
₂ Acquired new technological skills
₃ Acquired new subject matter knowledge
₄ Acquired new teaching or assessment skills
₅ Used new teaching or assessment approaches in their other courses
₆ Had access to and took advantage of technological, subject matter, or pedagogical experts that he/she/they otherwise would not have been able to access
₇ Had the opportunity to collaborate and/or network with teachers from other schools and districts
₈ Benefited in other ways (*Please specify.*) _____
₉ Had no significant benefits
₁₀ Don't know how teachers benefited from participating in VHS

Section C: Students' Experiences with VHS

C1. Through VHS, were any of the participating **students** in your school able to take one or more courses that they otherwise would not have been able to take?

- ₁ Yes
₀ No ➔ *If no, please skip to Question C2.*

C1a. How important would you say this course is (or these courses are) to your school? (If all your VHS students take only one—i.e., the same—VHS course, please check a code from 1 to 4; otherwise check a code from 1 to 5.)

- ₁ Very important
- ₂ Somewhat important
- ₃ Not very important
- ₄ Not at all important
- ₅ It varies; some VHS courses that students were enrolled in were important to the school and others were not

C2. As a result of participating in VHS, the participating **students**: (Please check all that apply.)

- ₁ Took fewer courses that were taught by teachers teaching outside of their areas of expertise
- ₂ Are better prepared to work independently
- ₃ Acquired new technological skills
- ₄ Engaged in new kinds of pedagogical activities or produced new kinds of products
- ₅ Had access to and took advantage of technological or subject matter experts (besides the VHS teacher) that they otherwise would not have been able to access
- ₆ Benefited in other ways (Please specify.) _____
- ₇ Had no significant benefits
- ₈ Don't know how students benefited from participating in VHS

C3. Between the first and second semesters, how did the number of VHS students change at your school?

- ₀ Stayed about the same
- ₁ Increased a lot ➡ If so, why? _____
- ₂ Decreased a lot ➡ If so, why? _____

C4. During the second semester, how would you characterize the VHS students' problems with the Internet and LearningSpace technologies?

- ₁ Very few students had problems, and/or system problems occurred infrequently
- ₂ A moderate number of students experienced problems, and/or system problems occurred moderately often
- ₃ A large number of students experienced problems, and/or system problems occurred often

Section D: School's Experiences with VHS

D1. As a result of participating in VHS, were people other than teachers and students (such as parents, corporate mentors, or scientists) able to participate in the education of your students?

- ₁ Yes
- ₀ No

D2. Did your community at large benefit from your school's participation in VHS?

- ₁ Yes
- ₀ No

Section E: Students Enrolled in VHS

E1. Do students at your school who are enrolled in VHS represent the full range of socioeconomic backgrounds present in your school?

- ₁ Yes
- ₀ No ➔ *If no, please skip to Question E1b.*

E1a. If a wide range of students are enrolled in VHS courses, would you say that completions and success are equally distributed across this range? (*Please check one box.*)

- ₁ Yes ➔ *If yes, please skip to Question E2.*
- ₀ No

E1b. If students do not come from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds, how would you characterize the socioeconomic backgrounds of the students in your school who are enrolled in VHS courses? *(Please check one box.)*

- 1 Most are from an economically disadvantaged background (for example, receiving AFDC or free/reduced-price lunch)
- 2 Most are from a relatively affluent background
- 3 Other *(Please specify.)* _____

E2. How would you characterize the academic history of the students in your school who are enrolled in VHS courses? *(Please check one box.)*

In the past, most students had:

- 1 Poor academic performance
- 2 Average academic performance
- 3 Above-average academic performance
- 4 High/exceptional academic performance
- 5 A wide range of prior academic success
- 6 Other *(Please specify.)* _____

E3. For VHS students in your school, how do their experiences in VHS courses compare with their experiences in regular courses? *(Please check one box on each line.)*

	Extent students' experiences in VHS differ from experiences in regular courses				
	A lot more	More	About the same	Less	A lot less
E3a. Time spent studying	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
E3b. Amount learned	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
E3c. Number of missing assignments	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
E3d. Course completion	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
E3e. Receive high grades	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
E3f. Interact with their teacher	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
E3g. Interact with other students	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

E4. Are the students at your school who are enrolled in VHS courses different from the students who are enrolled only in regular courses? *(Please check one box on each line.)*

	Extent students enrolled in VHS differ from other students in the school				
	A lot more	More	About the same	Less	A lot less
Students enrolled in VHS netcourses:					
E4a. Drop out from school	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
E4b. Come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (for example, receiving AFDC or free/reduced-price lunch)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
E4c. Are limited English speaking	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
E4d. Are members of a racial or ethnic minority	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
E4e. Are enrolled in a college preparatory program	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

E5. Thinking about their grade levels, abilities, and aspirations, are the students from your school who are involved in VHS the kinds of students you think should be involved in VHS? *(Please check all that apply.)*

- Yes, these are the types of students who can benefit most
- No, there are too many students now in VHS who ought not to be there
- There are considerably more students who could benefit from VHS than those who are currently involved

Section F: Implementation of the VHS Project

F1. How many computers were available for use by students and teachers involved in the VHS project at your school? Optimally, how many computers were required for use by VHS participants for the project to work well?

Available for use by VHS participants: _____
Number of computers

Required for use by VHS participants: _____
Number of computers

F2. Was your school able to implement the VHS netcourse(s) in the way that you had planned before the current school year began?

- Yes *If yes, please skip to Question F3.*
- No

F2a. What changes were made to the plans for implementation of the VHS project?

F3. To enroll a student in a VHS netcourse requires that both a VHS teacher *and* a VHS coordinator be paid. Do you feel that these additional resources used for students to take a VHS netcourse were justified and acceptable? (*Please check only one box.*)

- No
- Yes
- Not sure

F3a. Why or why not?

F4. What would you suggest that the VHS central staff, or the people at your school, do differently next year to improve VHS?

Thank you for completing this survey. Please use the enclosed envelope and return the survey to:

Survey of School Districts Participating in Virtual High School
Project Coordinator Questionnaire
SRI International
333 Ravenswood Avenue, BS158
Menlo Park, CA 94025-3493

1999 Survey of Teachers Participating in Virtual High School

Questions? Please contact:

*Kathy Valdés, (650) 859-4974
e-mail kvaldes@unix.sri.com*

Please use the enclosed envelope to return the completed survey to:

Survey of Virtual High School Teachers
SRI International
333 Ravenswood Avenue, BS158
Menlo Park, CA 94025-3493

NOTICE

Please read all questions and instructions carefully. Answer the questions by checking the appropriate box or writing in the answer if requested to do so. It is important to limit yourself to one response for questions that direct you to “check one box.”

Your participation in this survey is voluntary, and you may choose not to reply to any question. We ask, however, that you fully and accurately complete this survey. All answers will be used for statistical purposes only.

Section A: Classroom Characteristics and Practice

A1. During your most recent **full week** of teaching, how many separate classes (or sections) did you teach at this school (**not** counting VHS classes)?

Please do not include homeroom periods, study halls, or classes taught at any other school.

If you teach two or more classes of the same subject (e.g., algebra I) to different groups of students at this school, count them as separate classes.

Example: If you teach chemistry to two classes of students and physics to two classes of students, you would report four classes. Or if you teach drama to one class of students at this school and English IV to three classes of students at another school, you would report one class.

Classes or sections: _____
number

A2. Not including your VHS class, what was the average class size of the sections you taught?

Average class size: _____
number of students

A3. Focusing **especially on this semester**, please indicate your overall level of satisfaction with the Virtual High School Project, to date: (*Please check one box.*)

- ₁ Very satisfied
- ₂ Somewhat satisfied
- ₃ Not very satisfied
- ₄ Not at all satisfied

A3a. What aspects of VHS are most satisfactory? Most unsatisfactory?

A4. How satisfied are you with both the in-house and the VHS courses that you teach at this school? (On each line, please check one box for each type of course.)

	Regular courses				VHS course			
	Very	Some- what	Not very	Not at all	Very	Some- what	Not very	Not at all
In general, how satisfied are you with the:								
a. Quality of courses you teach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Amount of flexibility you have in teaching the courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Amount that students learn in the courses you teach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Extent to which students are able to grasp the concepts being taught in your courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Extent to which you are able to communicate individually with students enrolled in your courses when necessary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Ability of students to work independently in your courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Ability of students to use technology in your courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Extent to which students improve their attitude about the subject matter in the courses you teach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Extent to which students actively engage in the subject matter of the courses you teach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Level of challenge and rigor of the courses you teach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A5. Please answer the following questions about the VHS class that you taught this semester.

a. Please write the name of the VHS course you taught this semester:	_____
b. Is this an honors or an advanced placement course (or section)?	_____ VHS course
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
c. How many students are enrolled in the class?	_____
	number of students
Approximately what percentage of students are: (Please give your best estimate.)	
d. Females	_____ %
e. Approximately how many students dropped out of this course or section after the first week that the class met?	_____
	number of students who dropped out
Of those students who dropped out after the first week of class, how many were:	
f. Males	_____
	number of males
g. Females	_____
	number of females

A6. When planning or teaching your courses, to what extent did you use the following kinds of expertise? (On each line, please check one box for each type of course.)

	Regular courses				VHS course			
	A lot	Some	Not much	Not at all	A lot	Some	Not much	Not at all
To what extent did you use:								
a. Subject matter experts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Expert materials and other resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Experts in curriculum or teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Technical experts in the use of technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A7. To what extent has your interaction with other teachers increased or decreased as a result of participating in the VHS project? *(Please check one box on each line.)*

	Increased a lot	Increased somewhat	No change	Decreased somewhat	Decreased a lot
a. Interaction with teachers in your own school	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Interaction with teachers in other schools	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

A8. During the current academic year, which of the following approaches or techniques have you used in any of the regular or VHS courses that you teach? *(Please check all that apply for each type of course.)*

Approaches and techniques used:	Type of course	
	Regular	VHS
a. Inquiry-based projects that engage students in the in-depth study of significant concepts and principles	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Cooperative learning approaches where students collaborate on projects and assignments	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
c. Connecting school learning with work experience or real-world situations	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
d. Portfolio assessment	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
e. Performance-based assessment activities or materials that measure knowledge, reasoning, collaboration, and self-reflection	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
f. The generation of reports and other products that students share electronically with the community or other audiences	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>

A9. During the current academic year, to what extent did you have any of the following kinds of people collaborate with you in teaching your courses or working with your students? (*On each line, please check one box for each type of course.*)

I collaborated with:	Extent collaborated in							
	Regular courses				VHS course			
	A lot	Some	Not much	Not at all	A lot	Some	Not much	Not at all
a. Other teachers	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Parents	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
c. Corporate staff	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
d. Scientists	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
e. College students	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
f. Senior citizens	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>

Section B: Implementing Courses

B1. Since the beginning of this school year, how extensively have you revised your netcourse?

- 1 A lot more than a regular course
- 2 More than a regular course
- 3 About the same as a regular course
- 4 Less than a regular course
- 5 A lot less than a regular course

B2. Focusing on the **second semester**, were you able to implement your netcourse in the way that you planned when you began the semester?

₁ Yes ➔ *Please skip to question B3.*

₀ No

B2a. What changes did you make to the plans for implementing your VHS course in the second semester and why?

B3. As compared with a regular course, did this year's VHS netcourse require more or less time and effort to teach and manage? (*Please check one box.*)

₁ A lot more than a regular course

₂ More than a regular course

₃ About the same as a regular course ➔ *Please skip to Question C1.*

₄ Less than a regular course ➔ *Please skip to Question C1.*

₅ A lot less than a regular course ➔ *Please skip to Question C1.*

B3a. Do you feel that the additional time and effort needed to teach and manage the VHS netcourse(s) were justified and acceptable?

₁ Yes

₂ No

B3b. Why or why not? _____

Section C: VHS Netcourse Participation and Teacher Support

C1. To what degree do you feel that the Professional Development Netcourse (TLC) was effective in preparing you to: *(Please check one box on each line.)*

		Extent to which it was effective:			
		Very	Somewhat	Not very	Not at all
a.	Plan and implement a VHS netcourse of your own.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
b.	Use technology in teaching.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>

C2. Please indicate which of the following occurred as a result of participating in the VHS project. As a result of participating in VHS, did you: *(Please check all that apply.)*

- 1 Teach fewer courses outside your area(s) of certification?
- 2 Acquire new technological skills?
- 3 Acquire new subject matter knowledge?
- 4 Increase existing subject matter knowledge?
- 5 Acquire new teaching or assessment skills?
- 6 Use new teaching or assessment approaches in your other courses?
- 7 Have access to and take advantage of technological, subject matter, or pedagogical experts that you otherwise would not have been able to access?
- 8 Have the opportunity to collaborate with teachers from other schools and districts?
- 9 Prepare a course you had not taught before?
- 10 Benefit in other ways *(Please specify.)* _____

- 11 None of the above

C3. Since your involvement in VHS, what types of support have you received for in-service education or professional development in your **main** teaching assignment field? (*Please check all that apply.*)

	Support received since VHS
a. Released time from teaching	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Scheduled time (i.e., time built into your schedule for professional development)	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
c. Travel and/or per diem expenses	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
d. Tuition and/or fees	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
e. Professional growth credits	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
f. Assistance from technical experts in your main teaching assignment field	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
g. Assistance from technical experts in another teaching assignment field	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
h. Assistance from technical experts in the use of technology	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
i. None of the above	9 <input type="checkbox"/>

C4. Given your experience this past year, do you believe that the role of the VHS coordinator is an important one that should be continued? (*Please check one box.*)

- 1 Yes
- 2 Yes, but with some changes
- 3 No

C4a. Why, why not, or with what changes?

**1999 Survey of Teachers
Participating in Virtual High School
Supplement for Teachers Entering the
Program in the 1998-99 School Year**

Questions? Please contact:

*Kathy Valdés, (650) 859-4974
e-mail kvaldes@unix.sri.com*

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Teacher Training

1. What academic degrees do you hold? For each degree you hold, please indicate your major field of study and the year that you received your degree. *(Please check one response for each type of degree. If yes, indicate major field of study and year degree received. For field of study, please write the name of your major field of study and enter the corresponding 2-digit code found on page 3.)*

	(check one) <u>Yes</u> <u>No</u>	➡ (If yes, please indicate field of study and degree year)		
	Do you have this degree?	What was your major field of study?		What year did you receive your degree?
a. Do you have a bachelor's degree?	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/>	code	primary major	year
b. Did you have a second major field of study?	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/>	code	second major	
c. Did you have a minor field of study?	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/>	code	minor	
d. Do you have any other type of degree?	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/>	➡ (If no, please skip to question 2)		
What other degrees have you earned?				
e. An associate degree	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/>	code	major	year
f. A master's degree	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/>	code	major	year
g. A second master's degree	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/>	code	major	year
h. An educational specialist or professional diploma (at least one year beyond master's level)	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/>	code	major	year
i. A doctorate or first professional degree	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/>	code	major	year

2. Do you have a teaching certificate in this state for your main and other teaching assignment fields? (Please one box for each teaching assignment.)

Yes No Not applicable

Teaching assignment:

- a. Main
- b. Other

Teaching Experience

3. Have you worked as a **full-time** elementary or secondary teacher in **public** schools?

- Yes
- No ➔ Please skip to Question 4

- 3a. How many years have you worked as a **full-time** elementary or secondary teacher in **public** schools? (Please include the current school year. Record whole years, not fractions or months. If less than 4 months, enter "0".)

Number of years worked full-time: _____
years

4. Have you worked as a **part-time** elementary or secondary teacher in **public** schools?

- Yes
- No ➔ Please skip to Question 5

- 4a. How many years have you worked as a **part-time** elementary or secondary teacher in **public** schools? (Please include the current school year. Record whole years, not fractions or months. If less than 4 months, enter "0".)

Number of years worked part-time: _____
years

Background Information

5. Are you of Hispanic origin?

- Yes
- No

6. What is your race? *(Please check one box)*

- 1 American Indian/Alaska Native (Aleut, Alaska Indian, Yupik, Inupiat)
- 1 *If you answered American Indian/Alaska Native, please check if you are enrolled in a state or federally recognized tribe.*

- 2 Asian/Pacific Islander (Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Hawaiian, Guamanian, Samoan, other Asian)
- 3 African American/Black
- 4 White/Caucasian
- 5 Other *(Please specify.)* _____

7. Are you male or female?

- 1 Male
- 2 Female

8. What year were you born?

Year of birth: _____
year

Major and Minor Field of Study Codes for Question 1

EDUCATION FIELDS

General education

- 01 Pre-elementary/early childhood education
- 03 Elementary education
- 04 Secondary education

Subject area education

- 07 Agricultural education
- 11 Art education
- 13 Bilingual education
- 15 Business, commerce, and distributive education
- 89 Cross-cultural education
- 22 English education
- 23 English as a second language
- 24 Foreign languages education
- 29 Home economics education
- 88 Indian education (Native American)
- 30 Industrial arts, vocational and technical, trade and industry education
- 34 Mathematics education
- 38 Music education
- 40 Physical education/health education
- 43 Reading education
- 45 Religious education
- 46 Science education
- 48 Social studies/social sciences education

Special education

- 67 Special education, general
- 68 Emotionally disturbed
- 69 Mentally retarded
- 70 Speech/language impaired
- 71 Deaf and hard of hearing
- 72 Visually handicapped
- 73 Orthopedically impaired
- 74 Mildly handicapped
- 75 Severely handicapped
- 76 Specific learning

- disabilities
- 77 Other special education
- Other education**
- 78 Curriculum and instruction
- 79 Educational administration
- 80 Educational psychology
- 81 Counseling and guidance
- 82 Other education
- GENERAL FIELDS**
- 06 Agriculture and natural resources
- 86 American Indian studies (Native American)
- 87 Other area and ethnic studies
- 08 Architecture and environmental design
- 10 Art, fine and applied
- 14 Business and management
- 16 Communications and journalism
- 17 Computer and information sciences
- 19 Drama, theater
- 20 Engineering
- 21 English (literature, letters, speech, classics)
- 25 General studies
- 27 Health professions and occupations
- 28 Home economics
- 85 Humanities
- 31 Law
- 32 Library science
- 33 Mathematics
- 35 Military science
- 36 Multi/interdisciplinary studies
- 37 Music
- 39 Philosophy
- 41 Psychology
- 42 Public affairs and services
- 44 Religion/theology
- Foreign languages**
- 51 French
- 52 German
- 53 Latin

- 54 Russian
- 55 Spanish
- 56 Other foreign languages
- Natural sciences**
- 57 Biology/life science
- 58 Chemistry
- 59 Geology/earth science
- 60 Physics
- 61 Other natural sciences
- Social sciences**
- 62 Economics
- 63 History
- 64 Political science and government
- 65 Sociology
- 66 Other social sciences
- 84 **All others**

Appendix D

Teachers Learning Conference (TLC) Evaluation Criteria

New TLC Evaluation

Created By: Storie Frost on 05/24/99 at 09:27 PM

Course:

Overall:

Complete: Yes No

TLC Evaluation Criteria

[Organization of General Content](#)

[Overview of Course Expectations and Policies](#)

[Learning Activities](#)

[Channels for Feedback, Communication, and Assessment](#)

[Proper Use of Notes and LearningSpace](#)

[Layout and Presentation](#)

[Clear Technical and Navigational Instructions](#)

[Clear Learning Activity Instructions](#)

[Course Tips](#)

Appropriateness of Content

Indicator	
Course materials and learning activities are matched to the knowledge and skill levels of students in the grades specified for the course. We expect this because students can only have a successful learning experience (a VHS priority) if they are capable of working with the course materials and if the course activities are realistically within their reach.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
The course material and learning activities match the course description. We expect this because students make important subject matter and scheduling decisions based on the descriptions they find in the VHS Catalog. If there is an inconsistency between the information students receive in advance and what they find when they enter a course, the implications for their educational experience can be severe.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
The course material progresses from the familiar to the new, from the simple to the complex, from the general to the detailed, and from lower order to higher order skills and knowledge. We highly recommend this because decades of learning theory research have shown that these are the patterns in which people learn. An exception to this pattern effectively can be used if adopting the discovery (Socratic) method.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A

Organization of General Content

Indicator	
The first two weeks of the course are devoted largely to class orientation, get-acquainted activities, and light course content. We expect this in all courses because students will be taking the orientation, learning their way around, and possibly adding courses up to one week after the start of school.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Each week's activities require roughly five to seven hours of course content work. We expect this because a direct correlation has been established between time-on-task and mastery of content. Five to seven hours of course content work will work out to roughly seven to ten student working hours including the time needed to start a computer, access the Internet, open the course, click links, etc.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Long reading activities are assigned from print materials rather than from the computer. We highly recommend this because research has shown that comprehension and retention is far superior when a large quantity of text material is presented on the printed page, rather than on screen. Also, it can be a strain on the eyes to screen-read long documents. Send lengthy materials to students in media kits.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Readings or activities from materials that will be shipped are not assigned within the first two weeks of the course. We expect this in all courses that provide materials to students because it will take at least two weeks for class lists to settle, and for materials to be shipped and to finally arrive in each student's hands.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Schedule Module	
Weekly overview documents are created as the first Schedule document every week. We highly recommend this so you can introduce the main concepts, state the learning objectives, and generally list the activities to be completed in a week.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Each Schedule document that is not an overview contains information on one and only one activity, particularly when the learning activity involves a CourseRoom assignment. We highly recommend this as a way to keep the individual assignment instructions separate and clear to students.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
MediaCenter module	
The MediaCenter contains content-rich resource materials. We expect that you will provide content-rich materials and/or links to such materials (e.g. multimedia files, quality website link collections) because it is a high priority of VHS that students be engaged with the best of resources and that they learn how to access high quality material on the Internet.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
The MediaCenter contains reference documents helpful to students' functioning within the course. We expect that you will use the MediaCenter as a place to provide reference documents (e.g. technical instructions that students will need repeatedly, sample written assignments or labs, a course-specific glossary of terms) because the MediaCenter is the LearningSpace equivalent of bookshelves or a student library. You will be doing students a	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A

--

Comments

Overview of Course Expectations and Policies

Indicator	
A welcome and teacher introduction document appears first and includes a general overview of the course and overall learning goals. We highly recommend this as a friendly way to simulate a "first class meeting" in a physical classroom. You have an opportunity to give the first impression of your choosing.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Documents stating teacher expectations for student behavior and general course policies are included (e.g. minimum log in pattern; list of things to do or check at each log in; quality of work; description of inappropriate behavior and consequences). We expect this in all courses , so that all students understand what behavior is expected from them and what is unacceptable in the course.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
A syllabus for the entire course is provided in a week-by-week format with dates listed for submission of major projects or papers, and for important tests/assessments. We highly recommend this so that all students have a clear sense of what the course entails from the outset. We suggest that the document be placed in the MediaCenter and that it be accessed via a MediaCenter link from its <Start Here> Schedule document so that students can revisit this important information as necessary during the semester.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
A grading policy is provided including categories (e.g., discussion participation, quizzes, tests, written work, team & individual projects); how categories/assignments are weighted; how to pass; how to make an A; rules for late work; etc. We expect grading policies to be clearly stated at the beginning of every course so that all students have an opportunity to understand how they can achieve a good grade. We suggest that the document be placed in the MediaCenter and that it be accessed via a MediaCenter link from its <Start Here> Schedule document so that students can revisit this important information as necessary during the semester.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
A plan for communication is described with guidance for how students may ask different kinds of questions (technical, content-related, assignment-related, non-course-related); how to deal with emergencies; when to use the site coordinator. We expect this in all courses because these lines of communication with teacher and peers are essential to the interactions that distinguish a VHS NetCourse from the isolation of a correspondence course.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
A survey is used to gather key information from each student: schedule they're on, type of and how much access to computer/connection, any special needs, etc. We highly recommend this so that you will have crucial information about each of your students to use in planning and adjusting future weeks' activities.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
If materials are mailed to students, a detailed inventory list is included with instructions for students to contact their site coordinator and teacher, if materials are not received. We expect this to ensure that all students in your course have the same materials with which to work and that they receive them in a timely fashion.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A

Comments

Learning Activities

Indicator	
Ice-breaker activities are provided during the first two weeks of the course. We highly recommend this because making personal connections will help ease students' feelings of separation, and help them feel part of a community in your course.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
The profiles module is used for at least one student get-acquainted activity. We highly recommend you assign an activity in which students post their hobbies, favorite bands, an image to represent themselves, etc. so that they will start to develop a sense of community and get to know others in the class with similar interests.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
There is a statement of learning objectives for each activity assigned. We highly recommend this because research has shown that students get involved in the activity more fully and that they reach higher levels of mastery when they understand why they are doing what they are doing. A possible exception to this "rule" is the use of the inquiry (Socratic) method to promote exploration and discovery learning.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Web-based resources are used when appropriate and students are guided in assessing the validity of such resources. We highly recommend that you take advantage of the online medium of the NetCourse to introduce students to the vast Internet resources available to them.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Off-line learning activities are integrated into the course appropriately. We highly recommend that you balance online work with off-line work because not everything can be experienced through computers and because students' learning styles will inevitably vary. By providing various modes of engagement with course material you will enhance learning potential for your students. Examples include sending students out into the community or local library to make observations, interview experts, or conduct research.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
A companion discussion thread is provided for learning activities. We highly recommend this so that students have a place to describe what they encountered or learned, and to discuss issues with which they might agree or disagree.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
The course includes a balanced mixture of individual and group learning activities. We expect this because individual work provides students opportunities for focus, concentration, and individual responsibility for learning; and group work provides students opportunities for broadening perspectives, integrating knowledge in new ways, and developing collaboration skills and strategies.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Learning activities are designed to provide teacher (and/or peer) reviews of student works-in-progress. For example, a teacher might instruct students to turn in a first draft of a Work Assignment marked "request for review," so that the teacher can then review the drafts, providing comments for students to address in subsequent drafts. We expect all	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor

teachers to structure some assignments in this way, because it is beneficial for students to receive feedback on in-progress work, and to learn to improve their work in several stages using this feedback.

N/A

Comments

Channels for Feedback, Communication, and Assessment

Indicator	
A technical questions Discussion topic is started and its use is suggested repeatedly. We highly recommend this so that students' technical questions can be found by you quickly and immediately and you can promptly assist.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
A content or assignment questions Discussion topic is started and its use is suggested repeatedly. We highly recommend this so that content-related questions are kept separate from other questions and so that students will receive prompt clarification about course material and activities. This public area may also serve multiple students who have similar questions.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
A non-course-related discussion topic is started. We highly recommend this so that students can get to know each other and develop a sense of a community within the course. It will also help keep the other discussion threads focused on course work.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Instructions for alternative methods for contacting the teacher in an emergency or technical failure are given. We suggest you do this so that students can communicate with you in emergencies, but in general we expect that all communications take place inside the LearningSpace CourseRoom.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Students are reminded in advance of upcoming assessments. We expect this in all courses because VHS students are on so many different schedules. It's imperative that students contact you in advance for any coursework or assessments you might assign while they're away. You can assist students with the high degree of planning and self-regulation required for their success by providing early warnings and reminders of assessments.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Self-assessments are provided to help students prepare for graded assessments. We highly recommend the use of self-assessments to help students review and reflect on their own progress with course material.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Assessments are included that are appropriate to the subject matter, are based on stated learning objectives and will clearly indicate student mastery. We expect all teachers to provide some form of ongoing and timely graded assessments to allow students to measure their progress in the course.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
The CourseRoom Discussion feature is used as a method of drawing students into active participation with their peers and with the concepts in the course as much as possible. We	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair

expect all VHS courses to engage students in inquiry-based learning and discussion with their classmates under the guidance of teachers who will raise the level and broaden the scope of debate.

- Fair
- Poor
- N/A

Comments

Proper Use of LearningSpace Features

Indicator	
Welcome screen	
The LearningSpace welcome screen features are used to their fullest. We highly recommend that you use the welcome screen tools that allow students to see the week's assignments, due dates, and important announcements each time they come to class. We also suggest that you use the small LearningSpace icons because they load faster; and that you use two columns in order to display assignments and announcements higher up on the screen where they are easiest for students to find.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Schedule module	
Approximately a half-dozen Schedule document type icons are consistently used to categorize Schedule document types. We suggest you use these because they give students a quick overview of what's expected each week. If you use Schedule icons, we highly recommend you use no more than six or so, because too many will be confusing and difficult for students to recall.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
The meaning of each Schedule document type icon is explained in the <Start Here> section or in a MC doc. We highly recommend this because it provides students a quick reference for decoding the meaning of icons until they have memorized them, and enables them to find different assignment types quickly and easily.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Each week's documents are grouped under a single week title. We highly recommend this grouping because weekly school schedules are a familiar time framework for most students. Keeping a single week title is important because multiple week titles for the same week will lead to confusion. You may find it helpful within a given week grouping to name documents as "Week X: Title of Document."	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Each week has its own descriptive title instead of just "Week X." We highly recommend this because a descriptive phrase or title can communicate meaningfully the theme of the week at a single glance. By such naming you will also help students go back easily to previous material for review.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Each Schedule document has a relevant title that describes the activity the students will be doing or the content contained in the document. We highly recommend this because it makes it possible for students to locate material and instructions for their work as they move around in your course during a given week or later for review.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A

<p>The "Advanced Options" features are used in Schedule documents. We highly recommend you use these options because it is a great help to students when you include due dates for all assignments that are due. You can also help make their next steps clear by displaying the "Join Discussion" and "Begin/Resume Assignment" buttons when needed, and by hiding those same buttons when not needed.</p>	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
<p>Hotlinks are used instead of plain, typed-out URLs when referring students to resources on the Internet. We highly recommend this because it will be easier for students to navigate to web pages you wish them to visit. This is a courtesy that will be appreciated especially by students who have slow connections to the Internet or who have modest typing skills.</p>	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
<p>MediaCenter links are used within Schedule documents. We highly recommend you use this simple feature instead of sending students to the MediaCenter to find the right document. One click is better than two.</p>	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
<p>MediaCenter module</p>	
<p>Three or four MediaCenter document type icons are used consistently to indicate what is contained in the document. We suggest you use these because they give students help when they are searching for important resources you have provided.</p>	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
<p>The meaning of MediaCenter document type icons is explained (possibly in a reference document in the MC). We highly recommend this because it provides students a quick reference for decoding the meaning of icons until they have memorized them.</p>	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
<p>MediaCenter document titles begin with "Week X: ____". We suggest this because MediaCenter documents are automatically sorted alphabetically and if titles begin with week numbers, LearningSpace puts the documents in chronological order. That will make them easier for students to find.</p>	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
<p>The titles of MediaCenter documents include a name that communicates what is contained. We highly recommend this because it will make it much easier for students to find resources you've provided.</p>	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
<p>CourseRoom module</p>	
<p>Appropriate choices are made for implementing learning activities either as a CourseRoom Discussion or a CourseRoom Work Assignment. We expect this in all courses. It is essential that teachers understand the difference between discussion assignments and work assignments and that teachers assign all activities properly and clearly using one or the other. The alternative is random location of student postings and great difficulty for the teacher trying to find and grade participation and work.</p>	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
<p>Discussions</p>	
<p>Students are cautioned never to use the "Start Discussion" button, and that button is never provided in a Schedule document. We highly recommend this because in our experience the CourseRoom quickly becomes confusing and disorganized when students are allowed to start new discussions. CourseRoom Discussion is a feature that requires structuring from the teacher to be useful and productive for students.</p>	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A

<p>For each discussion thread to be used an open-ended main topic is started by the teacher. We highly recommend this as the way to seed discussion because you can provide both the mechanical starting point (Main Topic under which students will make Comments) and the conceptual starting point, i.e. a provocative question or statement the will elicit student responses.</p>	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
<p>The "Join Discussion" button is shown in any Schedule document that introduces a learning activity involving a CourseRoom Discussion. We suggest that you use this feature because it makes it easier for students to find and post in the right thread.</p>	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
<p>CourseRoom document titles include the week number and words that convey something about what is contained in the document. We highly recommend this to avoid confusing students, especially if you will be repeating similar discussions from week to week (Journal Entries, Weekly Discussions, etc.)</p>	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
<p>Work Assignments</p>	
<p>When a group or individual learning activity will generate a written product (e.g. a list of facts, a summary of a reading, a lab report, a term paper), the Work Assignment feature is used to collect the work. We highly recommend this because the Work Assignment feature makes it easy for you to track, review, and assess assignments and to return grades on them in a manner that is clear and well-organized for your students.</p>	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
<p>All CourseRoom Work Assignments will be started by students; the teacher never begins a Work Assignment. We expect this in all courses. Assignments are for students only. It is very confusing if teachers put instructions or resource materials into a Work Assignment document. Instructions and resources belong in the Schedule and MediaCenter where they can be accessed by all students as they go through the process of preparing for and entering their work, each in his or her own Work Assignment document.</p>	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
<p>The "Begin/Resume Assignment" button is shown in any Schedule document that introduces a learning activity involving a CourseRoom Work Assignment. We highly recommend this for several reasons. It makes it easier for you to instruct your students on how to begin and possibly return to their work, and the Schedule title is automatically placed in the correct field. This results in all Work Assignments being categorized correctly in the Assignments view of the CourseRoom. This will help you and your students find Work Assignments quickly and easily.</p>	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
<p>Profile module</p>	
<p>The teacher's personal profile is filled out, including an image or graphical representation. We highly recommend this because it gives students a sense of you as a "real" teacher and it helps them get to know you in the absence of face-to-face communications.</p>	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A

Comments

Layout and Presentation

Indicator	
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Text	
Consistent text/layout style is apparent. We highly recommend this because our experience has shown that students benefit from order and consistency in an online environment much as they do when material is presented elsewhere in a consistent pattern. If they can easily find and readily read their instructions for an activity or the list of definitions of new terms, students can spend their time more productively doing the activity you assign.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Headers are used to begin main sections of text. You might consider using color and larger size fonts (between 12 and 18 point) for your headers. Whatever style you choose, we highly recommend you be consistent. You can help your students more readily grasp what you want them to do by being consistent.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
The use of all caps is avoided. We highly recommend this because text in all caps is interpreted as yelling in the online environment and research has shown that visually decoding mixed case text (as found in virtually all body text in print) is much faster and easier.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Underlining is reserved for hotlinks only. We highly recommend this because underlined text is normally associated with a link in the online environment, and students may think you've included broken links if underlined words aren't "hot." This can be very confusing.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
The use of italics for anything longer than a three to five word phrase is avoided. We highly recommend this because the slant, elaborateness, and fineness of the italics style makes it very difficult to read on a computer screen, especially in long passages. You might consider using this style sparingly to provide emphasis.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
The bulk of regular text is displayed in 10-point font. We highly recommend this because 12-point fonts are often displayed as bold over the web. Lots of bold text is difficult to read. It takes up more space and results in a longer document that students must scroll through. We suggest you reserve bold or 12-point fonts and above just for occasional emphasis in your documents.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Bulleted or numbered lists are used instead of paragraphs when the content includes a series of concepts or items. We highly recommend this not only because dense blocks of text are difficult to read online, but also because of the clarity of expression a list can provide. When students return to the material for reference or review the presence of a list will help them find the important information they are looking for.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Tables are used to organize small blocks of text and graphics. We suggest this because tables allow you to add white space, making it easier for students to read the document online. A well designed table can communicate a great deal of information clearly, economically and memorably.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Very long blocks of text are avoided and white space is added between moderate-length paragraphs. We highly recommend this because white space visually breaks up the page making it easier to read and to absorb the material.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
All spelling and grammar is checked in all documents. We expect teachers to model high standards for their students. You will be applying a language standard to students' postings; it will help motivate them to aspire to it if you maintain or supersede the same standard.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A

Documents are checked for unwanted line breaks that interfere with text wrapping to fit any size window. We highly recommend you check all your course pages over the web, so that you can see where there may be unwanted line breaks that make your text wrap strangely. This often occurs when material is copied and pasted into a Notes document. Disjointed display of information can cause readers confusion.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Graphics	
Graphics are used but not overused in the course. We highly recommend moderate use of colorful, interesting graphics to enhance the general appearance of documents; too many or too active graphics, however, can distract students from the content you wish to convey.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Graphics are used to represent, complement, or clarify subject matter. We highly recommend this as a way to aid the many students who are visually-oriented learners. Similar to tables, a well-designed chart or diagram can communicate a great deal of information clearly, economically and memorably.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
"Web-friendly" graphics are used. We highly recommend you use small file sizes, browser-safe colors, web-safe .gifs or .jpps, etc. so that your graphics load quickly, appear the way you want them to, and don't cause frustration for students.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Animation, Video, and Audio	
Animations are used sparingly and only when relevant to the course material. We highly recommend this as animated graphics can take a long time to download; can be visually distracting to students; and can be processor-hungry on the student end.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Video and audio are included as enhancements only when relevant; proper compression is used, file size is kept small, and companion text is supplied. We highly recommend this to accommodate variations and limitations among students' connectivity. We also expect that you will include links and/or download info. for required plugins to facilitate students' access.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A

Comments

Clear Technical and Navigational Instructions

Indicator	
Many technical and navigational details are included in the first two to three weeks of the course. We expect all teachers to include clear instructions so that students are not confused and quickly become comfortable working in the LearningSpace environment. Students who learn how to use features and databases correctly can concentrate on the course subject matter.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A

Graphics of appropriate icons and buttons are used in technical instructions the first few times a procedure is described. We highly recommend this as a way to acclimate students to the LearningSpace user interface when they are beginning to build their skills. Later, when students grow more familiar with LearningSpace, verbal references to icons will be appropriate.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Correct technical terms are used and buttons are identified by name when not using graphical representation. We expect all teachers to understand and use correct technical terms when describing LearningSpace; students need clear and consistent instructions to master LearningSpace quickly.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
1-2-3 numbering, rather than body text, is used to give technical instructions. We highly recommend this as a way to make technical instructions stand out from other text and to indicate sequential steps. It is very important that students can easily find and follow all your instructions.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Instructions are included for both Mac and PC, if needed. We expect all VHS courses to be dual platform, that is, accessible to students on both Macs and PCs, unless it is impossible because of certain software that the course is relying on.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Instructions are included for both Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator browsers, if needed. We expect this in all courses because students are allowed to use either browser for a VHS course.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
When tested in a browser over the web, technical instructions match the procedure exactly. We expect that you will test your instructions from a student's point of view, to ensure that they are clear and correct. Keep in mind that things can appear differently over the web than they do in Notes.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
When instructions involve more than a few steps, students are advised to print the page. We highly recommend this because students can then move around in the course as needed with their instructions readily available for reference. You will help reduce errors and confusion for your students.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
When sent to a different module or document, students are given a description of where they're going, what they'll see, what they should do there, and what they should do next. This is expected because it will help students move through your presentation and their work quickly and efficiently.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
The difference between CourseRoom Discussion threads and CourseRoom Work Assignments (and their comments) is explained and reiterated, the first few times any CourseRoom activity is assigned. This is expected because understanding the difference between these two activities is essential for a student's success in your course; and if students place comments or work in the wrong place you will have a hard time finding them.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Very specific and detailed instructions are given when assigning group learning activities, and ample time is allowed to complete the work. This is expected because engaging in group activities in a NetCourse requires close coordination and very specific sequencing of steps by team members. If you provide the time and attention needed to make the first group assignment successful, it will be easier to provide similar successes subsequently.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A

In explaining how to participate in a CourseRoom Discussion the following details are included:

- How to go to the CourseRoom and find the Discussion view
- How to find and read the Main Topic you've created
- How to read fellow students' posts
- How to use the "comment" button
- What to put in the "subject" field, if needed
- How to save and close
- How to locate and verify a posting after saving it

- Excellent
- Fair
- Poor
- N/A

This is expected because participating in discussions will most likely be required by you, and specific instructions for your students will help them to succeed at it.

In explaining how to create a Work Assignment the following details are included:

- How to use the Begin/Resume Assignment button
- How to assure students are working on the correct assignment
- What to put in the "status" field
- A reminder that the "submit" status makes postings uneditable
- How to compose anything more than a paragraph in a word processor, save it, and copy / paste into the details box
- How to save and close
- A warning that students must click the "OK" button on the window that pops up next
- How to locate and verify a posting after saving

- Excellent
- Fair
- Poor
- N/A

This is expected because submitting Work Assignments will most likely be required by you, and specific instructions for your students will help them to succeed at it.

Comments

Clear Learning Activity Instructions

Indicator	
Students are asked to practice new techniques (like CourseRoom postings and group work) on non-graded exercises before using the techniques for graded work. We highly recommend that you introduce features and functions during early get-acquainted activities that you will rely on later for content-rich learning activities.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
The level of student contribution that is required, (e.g., one comment, two comments to peer comments, four paragraphs) is stated for each learning activity. We highly recommend this because research has shown that students perform better when they are certain of what is expected of them. When you give students their grades later, they will better understand the grades they receive.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
The first few times students are asked to moderate a CourseRoom Discussion they are told exactly what is expected of them. We highly recommend this because, though students have engaged in face-to-face classroom discussions, they may not have done so in this medium. If you give them clear guidance on acceptable content and protocol, you will soon have students who can manage their discussions well and independently.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Each time students are asked to begin a CourseRoom Work Assignment they are given a full description of the steps and stages they will have to perform before they submit the completed work. We highly recommend that you clarify what content and what format you want students to use to enter work into a Work Assignment. We expect you to inform students of what "status" to select at successive stages of development of their work. You might consider how you can take advantage of the stages of a Work Assignment to help you monitor and guide students' efforts.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
When students are asked to do an activity on the Internet, a detailed explanation of what to read or do on that page is given. We expect this because most resources on the Internet contain multiple links and options. Without guidance students could devote a lot of time searching for what to do or read, or doing the wrong activity or reading the wrong material.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
When a computer-based activity involves more than a few screens of text, students are advised to print the material for reading. We expect this because research has shown that comprehension and retention is far superior when a large quantity of text material is presented on the printed page, rather than on screen. Also, it can be a strain on the eyes to screen-read long documents.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A
Additional resources (i.e. optional readings) are provided for those who want to go beyond required work. We highly recommend this because you will inevitably be teaching students with a range of capabilities and those students who can extend their reach may be able to add to their own and their peers' learning. Research has shown that peer contributions can increase attention and motivation in other students.	<input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> N/A

Comments

Course Tips

You may wish to wait until the second week of class to mail out any materials; your class list will change during the first week, when we allow new students to add and drop courses.

Don't forget to verify that all your hotlinks work when you first create them and again before the document is due to open.

We suggest you set a friendly, positive tone right from the beginning of the course, to encourage engaged, active learning and an atmosphere in which students feel comfortable communicating with you and their classmates. You might consider using humor where appropriate to set students at ease and help them get a sense of your personality.

You should routinely view all course documents over the web both during design and before opening new assignments, to verify what students will see and experience. You'll be surprised to see how differently things can look over the web than from within Notes. This includes font colors, sizes, and styles; line breaks and white spaces; indentations and margins; color of graphics and LearningSpace buttons, etc.

Consider including repeating, regular features and assignments for students each week. For example, you might create a feature article of the week, weekly journal entry assignments, end-of-the-week summaries, etc., to give the course some consistency from week to week.

If you create private Discussion topics for each student, you should remind students to use these private threads only for questions or messages that are of a highly private nature. We recommend using private discussion threads because they allow a place for all students to contact you privately, and they keep a record of all your private communications in one place. However, teachers should be on guard never to use these private threads as a place to discuss technical problems, clarify assignments, or otherwise conduct general conversations with students, as these topics are best discussed and shared in threads open to all students.

We very strongly encourage all teachers to use the Assessment Manager to grade students, and to post grades in student portfolios. We would like all teachers to post grades in the Portfolios so that grade formats and locations are consistent VHS-wide. This will greatly reduce the time needed for students, site coordinators, and VHS administrators to locate and interpret grades whenever they need them, and will help you organize all grade information in one place, easily sortable by student. We realize that some VHS teachers aren't using this AM feature, because its functionality wasn't in place in the first LearningSpace release, but we ask you to consider trying it. If you have any questions about using the Assessment Manager, VHS technical staff will be happy to assist you.

You should encourage students to check their portfolios for grades at appropriate times. We expect all teachers to notify students when new grades have been added to portfolios, because it is essential that a student know his or her grade and understand why he or she has that grade at any time during the course. Individual students and their schools need to be aware of the student's standing.

We suggest you lock future weeks' documents in the Schedule, MediaCenter and CourseRoom by choosing "private to Instructor" in the "For" field. This will keep all students working together on the same activities, and allows you to make last-minute changes to upcoming weeks if necessary.

Final Course Comments

[Private Comments](#)

Submit

Appendix E

NetCourse Evaluation Board Standards

Instructional Standards

Critical Attribute I: Course Description/Schedule

Standard: Virtual High School NetCourses are clear in their description of learning objectives, and assignments in the schedule area are structured to require consistent efforts from students throughout the term.

To what extent are the following indicators evident in this NetCourse? Circle the most appropriate response. A ‘0’ indicates the indicator is Not Evident at all, a ‘4’ indicates the indicator is ‘Highly Evident, etc.						
		Not Evident	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Clearly Evident	
Highly Indicator Evident	Example					
1.1 The Course Description is understandable to students and parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The description includes specific examples of issues that are covered in the course, in order to deepen student and parent understanding. 	0	1	2	3	4
1.2 The schedule includes a clear listing of assignments to be undertaken by the student.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All assignments should be clearly listed with expected due dates. 	0	1	2	3	4

NetCourse Evaluation Standards

<p>1.3 The schedule includes both online and offline activities; such as lab experiments and long term projects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Course materials may include readings, textbook, handouts or materials for experiments. These materials are incorporated into student assignments. 	0	1	2	3	4
<p>1.4 The schedule includes a statement of expectation that students must be involved in online discussion groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every posting a student makes is an opportunity to assess student work. This must be made clear for the students. 	0	1	2	3	4
<p>1.5 The schedule includes student performance indicators that are linked to the performance objectives listed for the course.</p>		0	1	2	3	4

Critical Attribute II: NetCourse Content

Standard: VHS NetCourses are developed and clearly matched to the performance objectives outlined in the National Models for each given content area. Interdisciplinary Objectives are encouraged.

To what extent are the following indicators evident in this NetCourse? Circle the most appropriate response. A "0" indicates the indicator is Not Evident at all. A "4" indicates the indicator is "Highly Evident, etc.						
Highly Evident	Example	Not Evident	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Clearly Evident	
2.1	The Performance Objectives for each NetCourse are clearly stated.	0	1	2	3	4
2.2	The Performance Objective for each NetCourse are clearly matched to the National Model for the corresponding content area(s).	0	1	2	3	4
2.3	The Performance Objectives for each NetCourse are grade level appropriate for the intended student population.	0	1	2	3	4
2.4	The Performance Indicators are clearly matched to the listed Performance Objectives.	0	1	2	3	4

Critical Attribute III: NetCourse Characteristics

Standard: VHS NetCourses will maintain high levels of engaged learning and focus on the development of critical thinking skills. Every course should be an opportunity for the student to master a limited number of concepts in depth, rather than many concepts at a minimal level.

To what extent are the following indicators evident in this NetCourse? Circle the most appropriate response. A ‘0’ indicates the indicator is Not Evident at all. A ‘4’ indicates the indicator is ‘Highly Evident, etc.						
Highly Indicator Evident	Examples	Not	Somewhat	Clearly		
		Evident	Evident	Evident	Evident	Evident
3.1 Each NetCourse facilitates engaged learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are responsible for their learning. • The tasks are authentic, challenging and multidisciplinary. • The coursework requires interaction. • Assessment is performance based, ongoing and equitable. 	0	1	2	3	4

<p>3.2 Each NetCourse requires student/student and student/teacher communication and collaboration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion areas are clearly used for communications between the students and teacher. • Students are required to post questions and respond to the comments and questions of other students. • Students are grouped in teams or small groups. • There is an appropriate forum in place for effective student/teacher communication. 	0	1	2	3	4
<p>3.3 The NetCourse facilitates learning of course content. (Knowledge)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are asked to observe and recall information. • Students will master the subject matter and know major ideas. 	0	1	2	3	4
<p>3.4 The NetCourse requires students to apply critical thinking skills. (Comprehension)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are expected to summarize, describe, interpret, contrast, predict, associate, estimate, differentiate, discuss and extend ideas. 	0	1	2	3	4
<p>3.5 The NetCourse requires students to demonstrate higher order thinking. (Application)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will apply knowledge. • Students will use methods and concepts in new situations. • Students will solve problems using new skills and knowledge. 	0	1	2	3	4

NetCourse Evaluation Standards

<p>3.6 The NetCourse facilitates the development of problem solving skills. (Analysis)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are asked to find patterns and/or organize parts. • Students will recognize hidden meanings. • Students are asked to perform tasks which require them to analyze, separate, order, explain, compare, connect, classify, etc. 	0	1	2	3	4
<p>3.7 The NetCourse requires the development of research skills. (Synthesis)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will use old ideas to create new ones. • Students will make conjectures and hypotheses and relate knowledge from several areas. • Students will generalize from given facts. • Students will predict and draw conclusions. • Students are asked to combine, integrate, modify, substitute, plan, create, design, compose, formulate, etc. 	0	1	2	3	4

<p>3.8 The NetCourse requires students to function at the evaluation level. (Evaluation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will compare and discriminate between ideas. • Students will assess the value of theories and presentations. • Students will verify the value of evidence. • Students will recognize subjectivity. • Students are asked to assess, decide, rank, grade, test, measure, convince, select, judge, discriminate, support, conclude, compare, etc. 	<p>0</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>3.9 The NetCourse effectively uses multimedia as well as text based presentation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student instructional activities include some of the following: video clips, video tapes, website visits, listen to CD's, etc. 	<p>0</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>

Critical Attribute IV: Assessment and Student Portfolios

Standard: VHS NetCourses clearly describe how student performance will be assessed. VHS teacher maintains current assessment results that are accessible to students.

To what extent are the following indicators evident in this NetCourse? Circle the most appropriate response. A ‘0’ indicates the indicator is Not Evident at all. A ‘4’ indicates the indicator is ‘Highly Evident, etc.						
Highly Evident	Examples	Not	Somewhat	Clearly		
		Evident	Evident	Evident	Evident	Evident
4.1 Weights of various assignments are clear to students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student portfolio lists all required assignments and the weights assigned to each assignment 	0	1	2	3	4
4.2 Student Portfolios are up-to-date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can see the status of submitted work in the Student Portfolio Teachers respond in a timely manner to inquiries about student grades 	0	1	2	3	4
4.3 Students are given criteria (rubrics) related to the performance indicators of the NetCourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scoring rubric is made available so that all assessment criteria are available to the student 	0	1	2	3	4

NetCourse Evaluation Standards

<p>4.4 Students will be assessed by several different methods over the duration of the NetCourse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses and contributions to discussion groups • Completion of online assignments • Submissions to portfolios • Special projects (presentations) • Tests and quizzes 	<p>0</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>
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Critical Attribute V: NetCourse Communications

Standard: VHS NetCourses are structured to encourage frequent communications in the CourseRoom.

To what extent are the following indicators evident in this NetCourse? Circle the most appropriate response. A "0" indicates the indicator is Not Evident at all. A "4" indicates the indicator is "Highly Evident, etc.						
Highly Indicator Evident	Examples	Not	Somewhat	Clearly		
		Evident	Evident	Evident	Evident	Evident
5.1 Teachers will have a frequent presence online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers will respond to student discussions, providing feedback and direction Teachers will start new discussion topics in the CourseRoom to encourage new student learning Teachers are in the CourseRoom every day, responding to student work 	0	1	2	3	4
5.2 Teachers will use appropriate communication and feedback strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers will moderate their online voice Teachers will work with students to learn how to use appropriate online voices, including using emoticons, font and color styles 	0	1	2	3	4

Critical Attribute VI: NetCourse Pedagogy

Standard: VHS NetCourses are structured to foster community-building within the NetCourse. VHS NetCourses use innovative instructional strategies to facilitate online learning.

To what extent are the following indicators evident in this NetCourse? Circle the most appropriate response. A "0" indicates the indicator is Not Evident at all. A "4" indicates the indicator is "Highly Evident, etc.						
Highly Evident Indicator	Examples	Not Evident	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Clearly Evident	
		0	1	2	3	4
6.1 Teachers will work to build a virtual learning community among the students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers will design team-based assignments Teachers will foster team-building communications among students 	0	1	2	3	4
6.2 The NetCourse will help equip students with strategies for evaluating the quality and authenticity of materials used in the NetCourse (ie web-based materials)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	0	1	2	3	4
6.3 Teachers will provide a variety of activities for diverse students and adjust materials and expectations according to individual student needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	0	1	2	3	4

NetCourse Evaluation Standards

6.4 Teachers must have expertise in the subject matter of the course	•	0	1	2	3	4
6.5 Teachers will be well equipped to teach in an online environment (e.g., they will understand the nature and the application of a variety of multimedia strategies)	•	0	1	2	3	4
6.6 Teachers provide timely feedback to students which will help them to understand what is needed to improve their work (e.g. an essay should be returned with more than just a grade)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers respond in a timely manner to student discussion postings • Teachers provide constructive feedback to student work • Teachers use private communications to students where appropriate 	0	1	2	3	4

Operational Standards

NOTE: These standards will not be used to evaluate VHS NetCourses. These standards are intended for the use of participating school administration when evaluating their participation in VHS.

Critical Attribute I: School Staff

Standard: Participating Virtual High Schools will dedicate appropriate personnel resources to assure the successful participation of students and teachers in the Virtual High School.

To what extent are the following indicators evident? Circle the most appropriate response. A ‘0’ indicates the indicator is Not Evident at all. A ‘4’ indicates the indicator is ‘Highly Evident, etc.						
		Not Evident	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Clearly Evident	
Highly Indicator Evident	Examples					
1.1 Site Coordinator is available .2 FTE to perform site coordinator duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School administration has relieved VHS Site Coordinator of other duties .2FTE 	0	1	2	3	4
1.2 Site Coordinator has participated in and successfully completed Site Coordinator Orientation (SCO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Coordinator has received Certificate of Completion of SCO • Site Coordinator demonstrates understanding of roles and responsibilities through SCO CourseRoom discussion 	0	1	2	3	4

NetCourse Evaluation Standards

1.3 VHS teacher is available .2FTE to teach VHS NetCourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School administration has relieved VHS teacher of other teaching duties .2FTE 	0	1	2	3	4
1.4 VHS teacher has participated in and successfully completed Teachers Learning Conference (TLC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher has received Certificate of Completion of TLC Teacher's VHS NetCourse has been evaluated as ready for inclusion in VHS Course Catalog 	0	1	2	3	4
1.5 Guidance staff are aware of and support student registration into VHS NetCourses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance staff have read VHS Guidance Handbook Guidance staff and VHS Site Coordinator have developed recruiting plan to recruit, register and support VHS students 	0	1	2	3	4

Critical Attribute II: School Technology Resources

Standard: Participating Virtual High Schools will dedicate appropriate technology resources to assure the successful participation of students and teachers in the Virtual High School.

To what extent are the following indicators evident? Circle the most appropriate response. A "0" indicates the indicator is Not Evident at all. A "4" indicates the indicator is "Highly Evident, etc.						
Highly Evident Indicator	Examples	Not Evident	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Clearly Evident	
		0	1	2	3	4
2.1 Adequate Internet access is available to VHS teachers and students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet access is available on a consistent and adequate basis School Internet access is available evenings to support VHS students in their coursework preparation 	0	1	2	3	4
2.2 Adequate computers are available for VHS students and teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site Coordinator has scheduled daily access to computers for VHS students Computers for use by VHS students meet performance standards outlined in VHS Participation Guidelines 	0	1	2	3	4

Critical Attribute III: School Infrastructure

Standard: Participating Virtual High Schools will provide an appropriate support structure to assure the successful participation of students and teachers in the Virtual High School.

To what extent are the following indicators evident? Circle the most appropriate response. A ‘0’ indicates the indicator is Not Evident at all. A ‘4’ indicates the indicator is ‘Highly Evident, etc.							
Highly Evident	Indicator	Examples	Not	Somewhat	Clearly		
			Evident	Evident	Evident	Evident	
3.1	All participants in VHS, including students, teachers, school staff, parents and community members, receive timely communications about the Virtual High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about VHS is included in school publications Site Coordinator presents information about VHS at parent, and community meetings Site Coordinator maintains frequent communications with VHS teachers and students 	0	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX F

Expert Panel Standards for Course Quality

Detailed Assessment – To what extent are the following indicators evident in this NetCourse?

Circle the most appropriate response. "1" indicates the standard is "Not Evident," a "4" indicates the standard is "Exemplary," etc.

Standard	Not Evident 1	Somewhat Evident 2	Clearly Evident 3	Exemplary 4	Not Applicable 0	Example
Curriculum/Content						
1. The course facilitates learning about important information, skills, and major ideas from multiple viewpoints.	1	2	3	4	0	Major facts and ideas are taught.
2. The course models and emphasizes skills, tools, abilities, values and habits of mind in the field being studied.	1	2	3	4	0	E.g., in a history course students might learn to use primary sources, timelines, and to judge events in historical context.
3. The course provides a considered treatment of breadth and depth.	1	2	3	4	0	Students will learn both a general understanding of the discipline as well as greater depth of comprehension about selected ideas and issues within the subject.
4. The course is designed so that students demonstrate comprehension of important ideas.	1	2	3	4	0	Describing, summarizing, interpreting, discussing, or extending fact and ideas presented in the course.
5. The course is designed to infuse critical thinking and problem solving.	1	2	3	4	0	Students apply new knowledge, analyze new situations, relate knowledge from several areas, create new ideas from old ones, etc.
6. The materials, activities, and assignments are well matched to the capabilities of students in the grade level(s); prerequisites are specified.	1	2	3	4	0	The difficulty level indicated in the course catalog matches the actual nature of the required work.
7. The course description is accurate and understandable to prospective students and other interested parties.	1	2	3	4	0	The course catalog description is accurate and complete.
8. Any controversial issues or materials are treated in a responsible manner.	1	2	3	4	0	Teachers don't confuse fact, theory, and opinion. Reasonable alternative viewpoints are not discouraged.
<i>Strengths/Weaknesses/Comments</i>						

Standard	Not Evident 1	Somewhat Evident 2	Clearly Evident 3	Exemplary 4	Not Applicable 0	Example
Pedagogy						
9. The course encourages an active approach to learning the subject, including interaction with the teacher and with other students.	1	2	3	4	0	Students are asked to do more than complete assignments and submit them to the teacher.
10. The course helps students make effective use of the medium.	1	2	3	4	0	The teacher is interacting on-line frequently; students are expected to be "present" frequently.
11. The course integrates multiple methods of instruction.	1	2	3	4	0	E.g., assigned reading, discussions, simulation, laboratories, assigned writing, critiques, peer review, presentations.
12. The course orchestrates discourse and collaboration among students within an environment in which multiple viewpoints/values are acknowledged and critically analyzed.	1	2	3	4	0	Students are encouraged to be active course participants, some assignments encourage collaboration, the teacher uses his or her "voice" appropriately, students feel safe expressing their opinions.
<i>Strengths/Weaknesses/Comments</i>						

Standard	Not Evident 1	Somewhat Evident 2	Clearly Evident 3	Exemplary 4	Not Applicable 0	Example
Course Design						
13. The course is structured in such a way that organization of course and use of medium are adequately explained and accommodating to needs of students.	1	2	3	4	0	Instructions take into account varied levels of familiarity with the technology.
14. All required course materials are made available to students.	1	2	3	4	0	Materials are sent to students or are made available to them on the web.
15. The course schedule includes a listing of high quality assignments that relate well to course objectives and activities.	1	2	3	4	0	Assignments are clearly listed with expected due dates.
16. The structure of the course encourages regular feedback.	1	2	3	4	0	Students receive feedback on their work regularly.
17. The teacher clearly identifies performance objectives for students that will be used to assess their work in the course.	1	2	3	4	0	It is made clear what constitutes success and how grades will be assigned.
<i>Strengths/Weaknesses/Comments</i>						

Standard	Not Evident 1	Somewhat Evident 2	Clearly Evident 3	Exemplary 4	Not Applicable 0	Example
Assessment of Students' Work						
18. Assessments are made based on multiple indicators, which reflect multiple dimensions of students' learning.	1	2	3	4	0	Grades are based on more than a handful of assignments.
19. The course appropriately guides students toward reflection their own learning.	1	2	3	4	0	Students are asked to evaluate their work.
<i>Strengths/Weaknesses/Comments</i>						