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I. Introduction

New technologies for instructional delivery are being implemented in institutions of higher education at a rapid rate. Consider the fact that as early as 1995 one third of the institutions in the U.S. was offering courses by Distance Education (DE) and that another one fourth was in the planning stage for such implementation (The Institute for Higher Education Policy, 1998, Student Aid for Distance Learners). By the year 2000, 68% of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) member institutions was delivering instruction using some type of DE technology. And, although there is some disagreement concerning the place of DE in the preparation of school leaders, the results of the study discussed herein make it clear that the escalation of DE programming in the preparation of students in Educational Administration programs is inevitable.

Yet, prior to this study, the specific status of DE in the preparation of school leaders in Educational Administration was generally unknown; neither the existence of DE programs nor the specific activities of faculty personnel in this area had been clearly identified. The primary purposes of this study were to: (1) determine the status of DE programs and practices in Educational Administration, and (2) to identify those institutions and faculty personnel that appeared to be taking leadership roles in DE in UCEA

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institutions. All 60 Educational Administration UCEA-member departments were included in the study; the 46 departments that responded included 41 that were active in some way with DE program delivery and five that reported they had no DE program activities.

The study instrument was developed through a review of current literature; content validity was judged by the Advisory Committee of the UCEA Program Center for Preparation Programs and by four other national university faculty personnel who were recognized for their work in the area of DE. The preliminary study instrument was piloted in 15 non-member UCEA institutions; their suggestions and clarifications were incorporated into the instrument's final design.

II. The Study Findings

DE Technologies Being Utilized

Educational Administration department chairs in the 41 UCEA member institutions were asked several questions designed to determine the DE technologies that had been implemented in their preparation programs and ways in which these technologies were being delivered. Eleven different DE technologies were reported by the chairs as ones presently being utilized in their preparation programs for school leaders. Table 1 shows the leading DE technologies reported; 63% reported the use of Web-based computer communication, 49% was utilizing e-mail courses; 37% live or taped TV courses; 32% closed circuit TV; and 20% videotape technology. Beyond the DE technologies listed in Table 1, no notably different ones were reported. It should be noted that course delivery solely by DE methods was quite limited, that is, only 15% of the participants reported that some courses were being delivered by DE technologies only. The large majority of courses was being delivered through a combination of DE technologies and traditional, face-to-face instructional methods.

Instructional Delivery by DE Methods vs. Traditional Methods

Instructional delivery by DE methods often is perceived to be so different from traditional delivery methods that major differences in course content, course requirements, course evaluation procedures, and course completion time are logical assumptions. Yet the similarities between these two instructional methods proved to be much greater than their differences. In regard to course content differences, for example, only 20% of the participating chairs reported

Table 1. Type of Distance Technologies Utilized		
Type of Technology Utilized	*# of Responses*	*% Responses*
Web-based Internet	27	63%
E-courses	20	49%
TV Courses	16	37%
Closed Circuit TV	13	32%
Videotape Technology	8	20%
Conference Audio Communication	6	15%
Telephone	6	15%
U.S. Mail	6	15%
Satellite Courses	4	10%
Traditional Correspondence Courses	1	3%
CD ROM Courses	1	3%

that the content of DE courses was different than the same course taught by traditional methods. Similar statistics were revealed for course requirements, student evaluation procedures and, somewhat surprisingly, for course completion time; approximately 80% of the chairs reported "no difference" between the two delivery methods in regard to each of these three provisions. Two comments by study participants serve to summarize the views of chairs concerning differences between the two delivery methods. One chair noted that *the only thing that changes is the mode of delivery, all expectations remain the same."* Another commented that, *"distance education courses are developed to enhance learning and increase course availability. The same level of quality is expected for teaching and student performance."*

Educational Administration Courses Being Taught Through DE Technology

What courses are being taught through DE technology? Study results indicated that virtually every educational administration course commonly offered in preparation programs was being taught through DE methods by one or more of the university programs. Department chairs listed 80 different course titles that were or had been delivered through DE methods by UCEA member institutions. School Law, Administrative Leadership, Personnel Administration, Supervision and Instructional Leadership led the course listings. School Law, for example, had been taught through DE methods by 18 of the 41 participating preparation programs. However, less common courses such as Introduction to Site-Based Management, Grant Writing, Team Building, Conflict Management and Administration for Teachers also were being offered through DE.

In addition, students also were being served by DE technologies in ways other than course offerings. Student services, for example, were provided through DE by 60.9% of the Educational Administration programs. Student admission services, fieldwork projects, and student advisory committee meetings were other services being provided through DE methods. And, as one participant noted, "all department information is on the Web."

Special Contributions of DE Technologies

The significance of DE is vested in large part in the extent to which it makes educational opportunities more available to more students, more affordable to students and the extent to which it is reducing constraints for course taking for students. The large majority of the department chairs, 73.9%, believed that DE technologies indeed were making educational opportunities more available to more students. As one participant remarked, "We definitely have students in our program via DE who would not be there if on-campus courses were the only way to access us." Study data revealed that more out-of-state students plus more students from rural areas were taking advantage of DE courses.

The reduction of student commuting costs was largely responsible for the fact that 56% of the chairs reported that DE courses were making educational opportunities more affordable to students. However, specific cost factors related to DE programming had not been clearly identified in most educational administration programs. Table 2 reveals that only 16% of the chairs reported that cost factors related to DE programs had been clearly identified. Another 40% of the chairs reported that cost factors had been identified for some program provisions and 44% reported that such cost factors were yet to be determined.

Table 2. Extent Dollar Costs for DE Courses/ Programs Had Been Identified	
Cost Factor Identification	*% Response*
a. Cost factors have been clearly identified	16%
b. Cost factors have been identified to some extent	40%
c. Cost factors have not been clearly identified	44%

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In a related question, those chairs who indicated that DE costs had been clearly identified were asked to pin-point those DE factors that had been specifically "costed." Of the 23 chairs who had responded in this manner, 52.2% indicated that the factor, compensation for the instructor, had been clearly determined. Also, the factor, equipment costs, was reported as clearly costed by 52.2% of the participants and 43.9%, 34.9%, and 30.4% of the chairs indicated that costs had been calculated for related DE preparation costs, training costs, and purchase costs for course instructional materials respectively. However, the study data, along with comments by study participants, made it clear that DE program costs had not been determined specifically in the large majority of the preparation programs studied.

Technical Support for DE Programs

All but three of the department chairs reported that there was an infrastructure at their institutions for delivering DE programs. Approximately three fourths of the chairs indicated that a special unit at the university/college level existed to facilitate DE activities in Educational Administration as well as for other program units. The second most utilized operational procedure was one in which no special unit for facilitating DE activities existed, rather certain units or individuals within the institutional setting gave some service in this area.

Technical support for DE programming was viewed as "very adequate" or "moderately adequate" by 24.4% and 53.6% of the chairs respectively. Similar statistics were reported relative to the adequacy of instructional support available to faculty to help them implement Distance classes. Table 3 shows the responses of participants relative to the kinds of DE support not readily available at the present time.

Seven different kinds of DE support were listed for the chairs' consideration and they were asked to check each one that applied to their situation. Slightly more than half of the study participants was of the opinion that specific support for the development and delivery of DE courses was needed at their institutions at the present time. Each of the support entries was checked by more than one third of the respondents. Support for inservice training on DE methods and possibilities, for example, received a 42.4% response and three support factors related to money matters each received a response of 36.6%. In any case, the study findings pointed clearly to several areas for which faculty involved in DE programming needed special support in order to be more effective.

Constraints That Inhibit DE Quality

Twenty-three potential inhibitors of DE effectiveness were listed for the consideration of the study participants. Only two of the 23 entries received no response as inhibiting DE programming: federal regulatory requirements and the lack of eligible measures for student aid. The leading constraints relative to DE quality and the percent of response are shown in Table 4. As Table 4 reveals, factors that tended to inhibit quality program implementation were evidenced in several areas including: faculty, students, funding, graduate college and university definitions and restrictions, support services, and student services.

Table 3. Kinds of Support Needed by DE Faculty

Kinds of DE Support Needed	% Response
a. Support for the development of specific courses	58.5%
b. Support for the actual delivery of DE courses	51.2%
c. Support for the teaching of DE courses	43.9%
d. Support for inservice training: DE methods and possibilities	42.4%
e. Support for financing DE equipment purchases	36.6%
f. Support for the financing of courses, film, and so forth	36.6%
g. Support for the compensation of DE faculty	36.6%
h. Other kinds of support needed	9.8%

Table 4. Primary Inhibitors and Constraints to Quality DE Programs

Inhibitors or Constraints to DE Program Effectiveness	% Response
a. Lack of faculty interest	48.8%
b. Lack of needed funding	43.9%
c. Restrictive graduate college & university requirements	43.9%
d. Lack of a funded budget for DE programs	39.0%
e. Lack of adequate technical support	31.7%
f. Inability to provide quality services for DE students	31.7%
g. Price of attendance definitions	29.3%
h. Lack of general institutional support	29.3%
i. Lack of student interest	19.5%
j. Accounting practices that operate on a fiscal calendar year	12.9%
k. Definition of time or units of measurement	9.7%
l. Institutional definitions of an academic semester, week, etc.	9.7%
m. Institutional accountability relative to student performance	7.3%
n. Student counseling problems	7.3%
o. All other entries on the checklist	24.4%

Although it was evident that the large majority of participating chairs held positive views relative to DE programming, a few chairs expressed concerns relative to its viability in graduate programs. One chair, for example, was of the opinion that the lack of face-to-face student interaction violated the norms of professional practice regarding collaboration and teamwork. In the words of this participant, *"DE downplays the value-added university experience and is inappropriate for graduate education which requires learning in a community and is incompatible with certain instructional priorities for school leaders."* Another commented that, *"We have no DE courses in our program and likely never will."* One participant expressed a concern that DE might be just another one of the program changes that has detracted from the standards required by quality graduate programming and a quality university experience.

Program Evaluation Considerations

Relative to the success of DE technologies and student learning, approximately one fourth of the chairs expressed the opinion that no such evidence was available for making this judgment. However, another 36.6% of the chairs believed that there was "no difference" in student learning between those courses taught in the more traditional mode and those taught through DE methods. Although 14.6% viewed DE methods as resulting in "more successful" learning for students, 24.4% was of the opinion that DE methods resulted in "less successful" learning results. These study results loom significant for several reasons and point to the need for more in-depth, comprehensive evaluation studies of DE and its impact on student performance. Comments by the participants provided additional insight into the matter of student learning. One chair commented that, *"My colleagues believe that graduate education involves more than taking courses and learning facts. It involves a deeper learning which can occur only through relationships."* Another pointed out that, "Student persistence to graduate is roughly the same with or without traditional or DE programs; it depends on the faculty members." And another noted that, "Evaluation is more difficult in DE courses; all formats have strengths and weaknesses and all can be successful."

Web-based computer communication was viewed by 80.0% of the study participants as having the most promise for use in preparation programs in Educational Administration in the future. Web-based methods outdistanced each of the other DE technologies by a substantial margin. The second most popular DE technology,

television, was judged as most promising and appropriate by 41.5% of the chairs. E-courses, CD–ROM, satellite courses and conference audio communication each received support as the most promising DE technologies by less than 40.0% of the respondents.

Identification of Effective DE Programs

One of the stated purposes of this study was to identify educational administration programs and faculty personnel that appeared to be taking a leadership role in DE. Although it is not the purpose to identify all such programs here, four specific institutions that have developed impressive DE programs to date are mentioned for those persons who might wish to contact the participants of these programs for further information.

University of Kentucky
Department of Administration & Supervision
Lexington, KY
Contact persons:
James S. Rinehart, Department Chair
Susan J. Scollay, Director of Graduate Studies
Eddy Van Meter

Kansas State University
Department of Educational Administration & Leadership
Manhattan, KS
Contact persons:
David Thompson, Department Chair
Gerald Bailey
Trudy Salsberry
Robert Shoop
Kent Stewart
Al Wilson

University of Missouri-Columbia
Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies
Columbia, MO
Contact persons:
Irvin Cockriel, Department Chair
Dan Cockrell
George Peterson
Jay P. Scribner
Jerry Valentine

Purdue University
Department of Educational Foundations and Administration
West Lafayette, IN
Contact persons:
William D. McInerney, Department Chair
Marilyn Hirth

III. Study Summary

Data collected relative to this study provided the following findings:

1. Web-based computer communication was the leading technology being utilized for DE courses in Educational Administration programs in UCEA member institutions. E-courses, TV courses, videotape technology, and closed circuit TV were other leading DE methods utilized.

2. Eighty DE course titles were reported by the study participants with School Law, Administrative Leadership, Personnel Administration, Supervision, and Instructional Leadership leading the course listings. The large majority of DE courses, however, was being taught through a combination of DE and traditional classroom methods.

3. In the large majority of institutions, such factors as course content, course requirements, student evaluation procedures, and course completion time were the same as in traditional courses.

4. Most of the participating chairs was of the opinion that DE courses were making educational opportunities more available to more students, and about half believed that DE courses were also reducing the time constraints for course taking by students. About one third was of the view that DE also was making education more affordable for students by reducing such factors as commuting costs. The fact that DE technology was increasing program access to new student audiences and that 70% of the chairs reported that student demand for DE courses was at a "high" or "moderately high" level were significant findings with major implications for future DE programming in educational administration.

5. DE courses, without question, were being designed internally by individual faculty members or by faculty members who worked in teams. Commercial purchasing of courses was extremely limited.

6. DE efforts on the part of faculty were considered as adding to the workload of faculty and about 70% of the faculty, who were involved in DE instruction, did not receive additional compensation for such involvement.

7. DE implementation most often was the result of both faculty choice and some pressure from others to initiate such programs. More than one third of the chairs indicated that such implementation was strictly the choice of faculty personnel.

8. Loss of student enrollment, increases in credits from other programs, increases in student enrollment, and problems of territory were the leading problems resulting from competition in the delivery of DE courses. However, the competition for prime time slots for program delivery seemingly could become a greater problem within universities in the future.

9. Although the cost factors related to DE methods had been identified to some extent, many institutions had not clarified these costs or had done so only in a limited way.

10. Although some technical support for faculty for designing and delivering DE courses was available at most universities, such support continued to be a need in many cases. Support for the development of specific courses, support for course delivery, support for the teaching of DE courses, and support for inservice training relative to DE methods and possibilities were the leading areas of need as reported by the participating chairs.

11. Inhibitors or constraints to DE programming in Educational Administration programs were led by such factors as lack of faculty interest, lack of needed funding, restrictive Graduate College requirements, lack of a funded budget for DE programs, lack of adequate technical support, and the inability to provide quality services for DE students.

12. Study results made it clear that extended efforts must be made to evaluate the end results of DE programming, especially in relation to student learning. Although 36% of the study participants perceived "no difference" in student learning between traditional and DE courses, nearly one fourth was of the opinion that DE courses resulted in "less learning" for students.

13. Finally, although it was evident that some EDA programs were only in the initial stages of DE programming, DE methods were well established in the majority of preparation programs. On the basis of the evidence in this study, the escalation of DE programming in preparation programs for Educational Administration students appears inevitable and those departments preparing school administrators necessarily will have to become proficient in the use of DE technology for program delivery if they intend to be competitive and meet student needs.