



**Casting the Net of Virtual Education:
A Distance Education Plan Proposal
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Presented by:

Melissa Ennis & Marty Link

**Graduate Students from the
Master of Science in Instructional Technology Program
at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington**

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Overview

Miller-Motte Technical College (MMTC) serves a diverse population of students who live in and around Wilmington, North Carolina. Their vision for the future is to serve students who live in remote areas, and to assist those individuals who do not have the resources or time to travel to a central place to attend classes. MMTC offers a variety of programs including Associate of Applied Science degrees, which all require a series of core courses. The core basic studies courses identified as appropriate for asynchronous distance learning, among other more specialized courses, will be developed for online learning. These courses will also be offered in the classroom setting for those who prefer a traditional learning environment.

The administration at MMTC has already taken the appropriate steps to obtain approval from the University Of North Carolina Board Of Governors to offer distance education courses. In addition, they are currently offering one online course in Document Processing and several others which are web enhanced. These courses were implemented by individual faculty members who have taken the initiative to begin learning about distance education with the goal of implementing a system-wide change which would support online courses. The system that will be affected by this internally initiated technology change will include all current and future faculty, staff and students at MMTC.

Purpose

The purpose of this technology plan is to develop an implementation strategy to facilitate the transition of all appropriate courses to an online format. Currently, thirty-two courses have been identified for potential online delivery. This plan will be based, in part, on a resource analysis that will include information about the school's existing infrastructure. This plan will also serve to establish a Change Management Team which will be responsible for a variety of necessary tasks including planning, staff development, technology support, implementation and evaluation.

Funding

The sources of funding for this implementation will include existing funds within the organization, private contributors and may also include granting agencies such as Progress Energy, who have previously shown support to privately owned schools such as Miller-Motte.

Change Model

The theoretical model that will be used to guide the development of this technology plan is the model of Scientific Laws to Change Management by Roger Dickout. In general this model outlines specific laws which are fundamentally related to Quantum Physics. Specifically, this model relates to the process of change which serves to maintain homeostasis in nature. Included within this change management theory are the Law of Constituent Balance, the Law of Leverage, the Law of Momentum, the Law of Feedback and Adjustment, and the Law of Leadership. The Law of Constituent Balance is the basis for the question, "Why change?" It seeks to address the key stakeholders involved in the change. Dickout states that a winning equilibrium formula must be present in order to stop any chaotic imbalance or power struggle within the change (See Figure 1).

The Law of Leverage examines the levers, whether it is economic levers, organizational levers or performance levers. Here maximizing the results will determine what changes must be made. The Law of Momentum serves to make certain that the change agent implements new tools that will ensure that the momentum of change keeps moving in the organization. The Law of Feedback and Adjustment guides the implementation of pre and post assessments necessary to assess any concerns of the stakeholders and any new behaviors of the organization. The final law described within this model is the Law of Leadership, in which the administration is seen as necessary to implement and maintain the systematic change.

Miller-Motte Technical College has experienced exponential growth in the recent years and is preparing for even more success in their programs. The administration is searching for an answer to their increasing enrollment rates which they are struggling to support. The rise in enrollment has made the organization question how they are going to meet the needs of their students. They have decided that asynchronous distant education is a viable option to meet basic instructional needs of their students. MMTC needs a technology change management plan that will incorporate the necessary systematic and systemic changes to maintain change throughout the organization (See Figure 2).

The Law of Constituent Balance addresses the importance of equality among the stakeholders. Students at MMTC are one group of stakeholders that can benefit from the aspects of distance learning in a variety of ways including the flexibility of the instruction fitting into their schedules and the ability to expand their learning styles. Faculty members will have to incorporate training and the overall fit of the change in instruction delivery. The administration will help lead the change throughout the organization by appointment of appropriate staff to committees.

The Law of Leverage will impact the systematic process by introducing fiduciary factors of funding. Grants and internal funding will need to be carefully evaluated to assess what monetary resources are available. The Law of Leverage also addresses the organizational changes that must be established in order to ensure that the change will benefit the organization as a whole. The Law of Momentum applies to the motivation and overall investment of the stakeholders to produce a synergy effect throughout the organization to keep change happening. The Law of Feedback and Adjustment is integral in any change within the organization. Miller-Motte will need to use feedback from their

stakeholders in order to continuously implement adjustments that will support this dynamic change.

The Law of Leadership is the investment of the Miller-Motte administrative stakeholders that will affect the change by establishing teams which will implement and evaluate the change. The administration must ensure that all representative stakeholders are included the change management process to facilitate their “buy in” and subsequently the effectiveness of the change. These scientific laws serve as an effective model for change within this system. The change in instructional delivery is already underway and is seen as a necessary and needed internal change that will affect the college as a whole and its learners. This model will guide the management team in effectively managing the change within the organization (See Figure 3).

Change Management Teams

Planning/Advisory Team	
Faculty	Joel Campbell, Donna Reavis, Mary Westbrook
Staff	Steve Rossiter, Meredith Kennedy
Students	Chris Morrison, Tracy Murray, Cheri Philips
Administration	Betty Deirstein
Media Resource Specialist	Steve Rossiter
Special Needs Advocate	Betty Deirstein
Staff Development Specialist	Rob Tripp, Ashley Wallace
Technical Support	Steve Rossiter

Implementation Team	
Faculty Members	Rob Tripp, Ashley Wallace
Support Specialists	Steve Rossiter, Jocat Conner

Evaluation Team	
Administration	Ruth Hodge
Faculty Members	Joel Campbell, Donna Reavis, Mary Westbrook
Support Specialists	Ashley Wallace, Jocat Conner

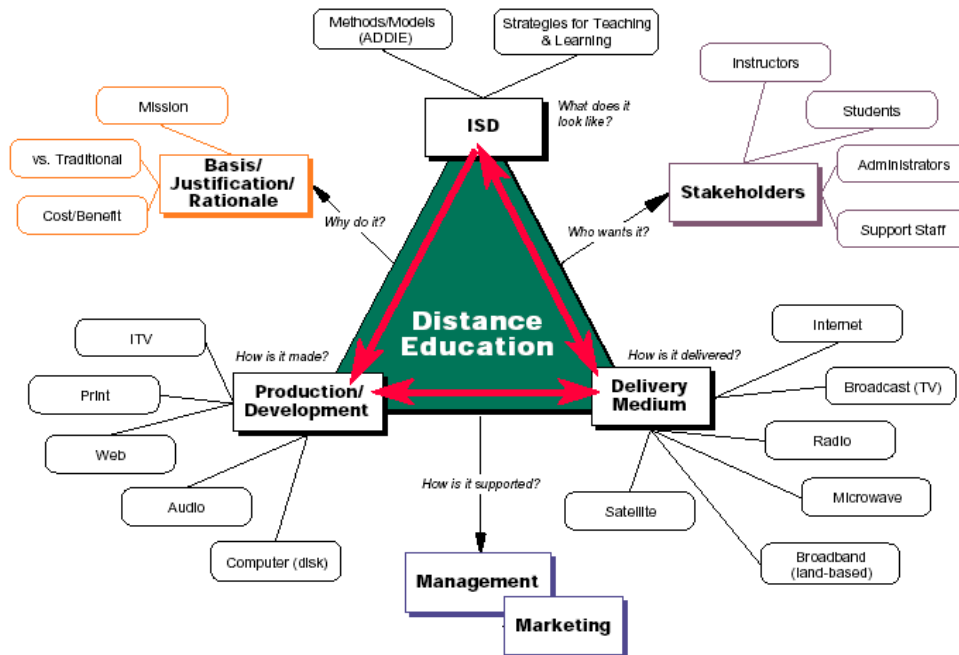


Figure 1: Concept Map of the Dimension of Distance Education
 Source: Hughes, A., McGriff, S.J., Oh, S., & Ryu, J. (2000). Redesign of the heart model instruction. p.11
<http://www.personal.psu.edu/faculty/s/j/sim256/portfolio/design/HeartModel.pdf>

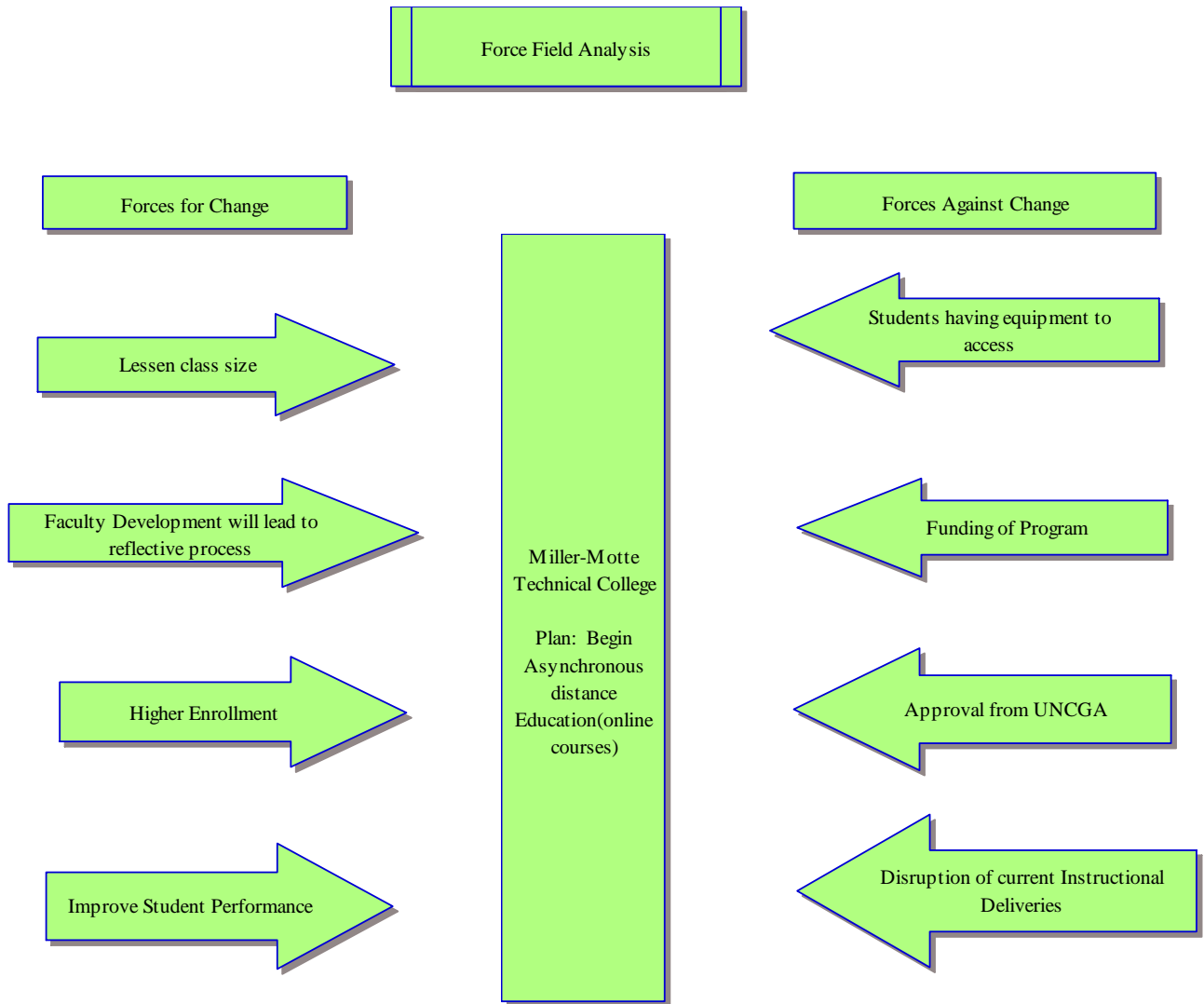


Figure 2: Force Field Change Analysis Model of Distance Education at Miller-Motte Technical College

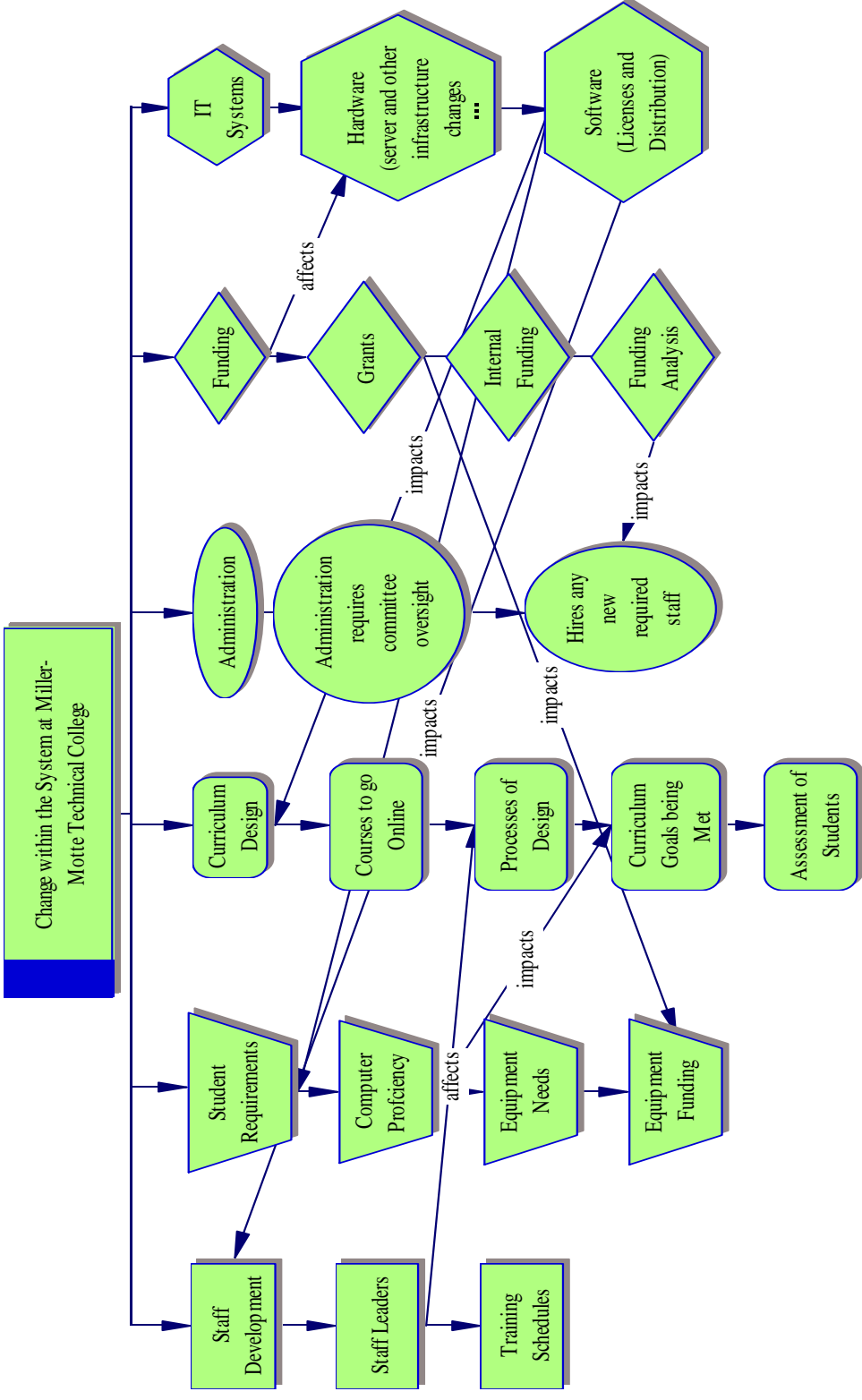


Figure 3: Systems Change Model for Distance Education Implementation Plan at Miller-Motte Technical College