Chapter 2
Remote Observation of Graduate Interns
A Look at the Process Four Years Later

Teresa M. Petty
University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA

Tina L. Heafner
University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA

Richard Hartshorne
University of Central Florida, USA

ABSTRACT

The Remote Observation of Graduate Interns (ROGI) is a method crafted by researchers at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte that allows graduate interns completing their student teaching experience to be observed remotely. Initially developed as a teacher shortage solution, ROGI remains an active method of observing interns geographically removed from the university through a virtual, synchronous format. Since its inception, ROGI has progressed as a technological tool, and college policies have evolved to adopt its utility. Authors describe the components of ROGI, its implementation, and ways in which the process has changed over the first four years of use. They present research to articulate how technology-mediated processes introduced new ways of thinking about traditional approaches to teacher education and new challenges that accompanied this innovation. Authors conclude with recommendations for future research and how other researchers might embrace the potential of emerging technologies in preparing teacher educators.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2006, the state of North Carolina, like many other states across the U.S., was faced with a critical teacher shortage. This shortage was especially prevalent in high-need content areas across the state, such as mathematics, science, foreign language, middle grades, and special education. Certain geographic regions in the state also faced significant teacher shortages across the board, not just in the content areas that were considered high-need in other areas of the state. In response to this growing need to recruit more high quality teachers, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte's Department of Middle, Secondary, and K-12 Education, decided to open its teacher licensure program to anyone in the state pursuing a teaching license. While online courses had previously been utilized in teacher licensure programs prior to the decision to expand licensure opportunities, the program was limited to lateral entry teachers only. Lateral entry teachers are practicing teachers who have already achieved a Bachelor's degree and are concurrently teaching and taking courses to obtain a teaching license.

After careful consideration, the decision was made to offer a 100% online Graduate Certificate (licensure) program in middle grades and secondary education, addressing the teacher shortage in certain content areas while also providing outreach to areas of the state where teacher shortage was a growing concern. However, one logical barrier remained: how to facilitate a Graduate Student Teaching Internship online. The response was the creation of ROGI (the Remote Observation of Graduate Interns), a technology-mediated distance education observation process. In its inception, the project designers explored asynchronous evaluation tools (i.e. Adobe Premier) but found limitations in this delayed format. Thus, synchronous technological applications were sought to provide a replicable process that mirrored the observation experiences of being in the classroom. This chapter describes the evolutionary process of ROGI.

BACKGROUND

Initially, online offerings in the Graduate Certificate program were limited to lateral entry teachers. The rationale for offering online coursework to lateral entry teachers only was the supervision component required during the Graduate Student Teaching Internship. Supervision of lateral entry teachers took place formally in the schools through observations by administration and mentor teachers. For those interns who were not lateral entry teachers, supervision from the university was required. The intern was assigned a university supervisor who is responsible for observing the intern three times throughout the semester. It would, however, be problematic to supervise these individuals in their Graduate Internship. In putting together a 100% online program there was one missing component: how to offer a graduate internship in an online venue.

The faculty worked diligently to develop quality online courses that would be piloted and then implemented fully in fall 2007. The transition to a 100% online program, including the Graduate Student Teaching Internship, at first seemed like a doable task; however, design, development, and implementation of an online internship experience presented itself as a significant challenge. Thus, the dialogue shifted from whether or not to expand distance education to how to offer the Graduate Student Teaching Internship in an online environment. Much discussion surrounded a number of concerns: Could technology facilitate a teaching observation? If so, how could this be done most effectively? What tools would be necessary to facilitate the process? Will these technological applications be easy for university supervisors and graduate interns to use?

Literature Review

Impending changes within teacher education, whether motivated by national or state educational mandates, teacher shortages, shifting teacher

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