**2-day Workshop for Online Learning Coordinators – DRAFT Plan** *(last updated 04/15/19)*

**Brief description**

This workshop has been designed to support counselors, teachers, teacher assistants and administrators who oversee and support students enrolled in online courses through AccelerateU – what we call “Online Learning Coordinators” (OLCs). The main goal of the course is to develop understandings and practices that will help OLCs better support the students assigned to them. Participants will learn about key elements of AccelerateU, affordances and challenges of online learning, common needs of online learners, and best practices to support those needs. This will be achieved through a combination of “experiences as online learners”, readings, hearing from experienced OLCs and students who took online courses, and discussion to synthesize all the previous elements. Participants will also develop the foundations of a professional learning community that will continue to support each other, by sharing experiences and engaging together in follow-up professional learning opportunities. The combined online and face-to-face activities will be equivalent to a time commitment correspondent to two full days.

**Essential Question: *How can OLCs best support students’ online learning and success?***

**Additional related questions:**

* *What are the online learning opportunities offered to students in your district? What does it take to access them?*
* *Why may the students you are serving be taking these online courses?*
* *How is online learning similar to/different from traditional learning?*
* *What kind of support do students taking online courses need?*
* *What should be the expectations and responsibilities of an online learning coordinator (OLC)?*
* *What are best practices for OLCs?*
* *What do OLCs need in order to be successful?*
* *What district-level structures and resources are also needed to support the success of students taking online courses?*

**Learning Goals and Desired Results**

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| ***Goals*** | ***Desired Results*** |
| 1. Gain a better understanding of students’ experience when taking online courses, and potential needs | 1a.Participants will know about key affordances and limitations of online education  1b. Participants will know the diverse motivations and goals that the students they serve may have for taking online courses  1c. Participants will know key elements of the courses and system used by their students to take online courses through AccellerateU  1d. Participants will come to appreciate the potential value (and challenges) of engaging in the online courses their students will be taking  1e. Participants will know what are some common needs of students taking online courses |
| 1. Gain a better understanding and ownership of their role as online learning coordinator | 2a. Participants will know how different districts have defined the position and responsibilities of OCLs  2b. Participants will know what other structures and resources different districts have put in place around online courses  2c. Participants will be able to co-construct a list of roles/expectations and responsibilities to be played by OCLs  2d. Participants will gain confidence in their capacity to play the role of OCL |
| 1. Start to develop a repertoire of best practices for online learning coordinator | 3a. Participants will know about some “success stories” (i.e., situations where most HS students taking online courses successfully complete them) and what contributed to that success  3b. Participants will be able to identify a few best practice they could use to support students taking online courses  3c. Participants will be able to identify some strategies to develop a culture that is supportive to students’ success when taking online courses  3d. Participants will be able to identify some specific resources/ support they may need and develop strategies to secure them  3e. Participants will develop a plan to begin to put into practice some of the best practices they identified |
| 1. Develop the foundations for a professional learning community | 4a. Participants will know about other OLCs’ experiences and expertise  4b. Participants will come to appreciate other OLCs as potential resources  4c. Participants will be able to develop personal connections with other OLCs in the group  4d. Participants will know about the grant and related forthcoming PL opportunities |

**Assessments**

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| ***Assessment brief description:*** | ***Rationale*** | ***Key results measured*** |
| ***Eliciting prior knowledge:*** As part of the preliminary assignment, participants will be asked to share key questions, goals and expertise they have about their role as OLC | *To have a baseline to evaluate growth over the duration of the grant + have participants do some valuable preliminary reflections* | *n/a* |
| ***Informal/on-going****:*   * Information gleaned from participants’ engagement in discussions and activities (both online and in class); * Participants’ use of the “system” in their online experience | *Given the nature of this PD, we are not in a position to measure the acquisition of knowledge or skills, but the activities participants will engage in will provide a lot of valuable information about their level of engagement and awareness* | *Potentially all* |
| ***Reflective Journal:***  Have each participant articulate key take-aways from the workshop, and articulate a plan for how they are going to implement what they have learned over the forthcoming school year | *This will be important to enable each participant to draw implications for their practice after the PD – and also make some concrete commitments* |  |
| ***Workshop evaluation post-survey:***  Have a series of questions (agreed upon with evaluators) to both evaluate participants’ satisfaction with the workshop - and maybe also include a few questions to get information about a selection of desired results. | *This will help us evaluate the level of satisfaction with the PD, and also gather some valuable information about their perceptions of what they learned from the PD* | *To be identified* |

**Key Learning activities:**

**Overview**

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| ***Preliminary Assignment***  *(in the “system”) (~ 1 hr)* | ***1st F2F session*** *(~5-6) (including lunch)* | ***Intermediate Assignment***  *(in the “system”) (~4 hrs)* | ***2nd F2F session*** *(~4 hrs) (no lunch)* |
| 1. *(Only if needed)* Online tutorial on how to use the “system” 2. Online introductions *(10’)* 3. Pre-Journal *(10’)* 4. Information gathering task *(20’)* 5. Pre-readings *(including choices) (20’)* | 1. F2F introductions *(30’)* 2. About the grant *(30’)* 3. Reflections on “experience as online learners” in the Preliminary Assignment *(20-30’)* 4. Session on online learning *(30’)* 5. Sharing districts’ practices for OLCs *(45’+)*   LUNCH   1. Review and discussion of recorded student interviews *(45’)* 2. F2F introduction to AccelerateU system and available online courses (as a student) (30’) 3. Closing & introduction of assignment *(15’)* | 1. Experience an online course in the system *(at least 2 hrs)* 2. Zoom session to “touch base” and trouble-shoot *(30’)* 3. Review of AccelerateU online courses (30’) 4. Readings *(~45’)* 5. Journal entry *(15’)* | 1. Reflections on “experience as learner” in the online course *(30’)* 2. Introduction to AccelerateU features for OLCs (30’) 3. Discussion: Potential students’ challenges and strategies to address them *(45’)* 4. Panel of experienced OLCs *(60’)* 5. Developing shared expectations and commitments for the OLC role *(45’)* 6. Next step for the professional learning community *(15’)*   ***Post****:*   1. Reflective journal (including a personal action plan) *(20-30’)* |

***Preliminary Assignment (setting up a special “course” in AccelerateU for the East and West group, respectively):***

*(Requiring ~1 hour altogether)*

*NOTE: an email should be sent as each participant registers, with a link to the Tutorial and brief description of the tasks and their deadlines*

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| ***Activity brief description:*** | ***Rationale*** | ***Goals (key results) addressed*** |
| 1. *(only for those new to AccelerateU)* **Online tutorial on how to use AccelerateU as a student** *(link to be provided in the preliminary email)* | *For participants who are not familiar with the “system”, this will enable them to get on the system and do the assignment.*  *Also showing how online allows for differentiation* | ***1c*** |
| 1. **Online introductions** *(~10’)**(shared through a discussion board* - *due at least a week before the workshop date)* In a “discussion board” (so everyone can read it) submit a post with the following information:  * Name * School & district * Title/ main function * Key assigned responsibilities as OLC *(include also % effort devoted to this role and how many students you are likely to be supporting in a given year)* * *(for current OLCs)* Briefly describe your previous/ current experiences as OLC * *(optional)* Prior experiences as online learner and/or online teacher   *(Due before the workshop)* Read other participants’ posts | *To have participants’ experience how one can begin to build an online learning community – and also provide information about other participants that may allow them to make more personal connection with individuals based on their situation.*  *This information will also be very valuable for the workshop facilitators in terms of knowing their audience* | *4a; 4c* |
| 1. **Pre-Journal** *(~10’) (private - due before the workshop))***:** Articulate:  * Your goals as an OLC next year, and how you would measure your success * Key questions/challenges you have about your role as OLC * Your goals and expectations for this PD * *(for current OLCs)* Strategies/ practices you have used with success in supporting students’ online learning | *Having participants articulate their goals will help with motivation and engagement in the PD.*  *This information will also be very valuable for the workshop facilitators in terms of knowing their audience and who to tap to for potential contributions* | *[preliminary for 2d + 3e]* |
| 1. **Information gathering task** *(~20’)**(due before the workshop)***:** Work with other participants from your district (if any) to gather the information about how your district has structured and supports online courses opportunities for students; during the first day of the workshop you will be asked to share this information, which should include at least:  * What is your district’s vision for online courses * How students are assigned to take online courses (and why) * What structures are in place to supports students taking online courses * How your district has conceived the role of OLC (i.e., what expectations and responsibilities have been communicated to you for your role) * Who usually plays the OLC role | *This information will be the base for a sharing session in Day 1 – this assignment will ensure each participants comes prepared.*  *When shared, it will also help the facilitators know more about the contextual elements that may affect each participants’ performance as OLC* | *[preliminary for 2a, 2b, 3d + 4b]* |
| 1. **Pre-Readings** *(~20’) (made available through links in the “system” – Due before the workshop)***:** Focus on online education   STILL TO BE DETERMINED *(making sure we give some choices):*   * *(maybe) short article about the continuing growth of online offerings in higher education* * *(maybe) short article about the variety of formats and goals for online education* | *These readings are intended to inform discussions in Day 1 about the affordances and limitations of online learning + similarities/differences between online and F2F learning, and give a sense of why it is important to give opportunities to HS students to take online courses* | *1a* |

***First F2F session:***

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| **Welcome and overview of agenda** *(5’) (Mike/ Heather?)* |  |  |
| 1. **F2F introductions** *(30’) (Raffaella/Dave)* **–** ask each participant to share an “instance when they helped someone else with a task they had difficulty with – whether or not related to technology – and what was memorable about that experience” *(alternative: if all participants have already played the role of OLC, ask more specifically to share a memorable story when they helped a student who had trouble in an online course – whether because it was successful OR because it failed)* | *This is intended to develop the learning community, building on the online introductions by “putting faces to names”, while also adding a new dimension by sharing a personal “story”. The information shared will be used to make the point that everyone already has more knowledge and experience about how to support online students than they may think – and that there is expertise in other OLCs that we want to tap as a community.* | *3a, 4a, 4c,* |
| 1. **About the grant *(30’)*** *(Mike) –* this should include:  * Motivation for the grant – include sharing evidence that OLCs can make a difference * Describe key grant activities related to OLCs * Emphasize goal of creating a professional learning community for OLCs – starting with this 2-day PD | *To inform participants of the bigger picture and how this PD fits in it – and provide motivation for engaging in it* | *4d* |
| 1. **Reflection on their “experience as online learners” in the Preliminary Assignment** *(30’) (Raffaella)* **–** Focus in particular on:  * How it felt to do something online without having met anyone 🡪 *beginning to identity affordances and challenges they experienced* * What helped/ hindered their learning? 🡪 *highlight the role of the online introductions to develop an online learning community; the importance of clear directions for independent work; identify and address any technical challenge they may have encountered; experiences of using the Tutorial* | *We will build on all the preliminary assignments, but on separate sessions. We will start with gathering their impressions about what a fully-online course may “feel like” as you start it* | *1a, 1c, 1d* |
| 1. **Session on online learning** *(30’?)**(Raffaella and Dave) – building on the readings and the previous activity; maybe include a brief presentation and/or show Active Learner video as a prompt for a discussion on why it is valuable for students to become used to learn online* | *This session should expand on the reflections on their own experience as learners to provide a better understanding of (a) why online learning is gaining importance in today’s world, and (b) what are unique affordances and challenges of online learning* | *1a* |
| 1. **Sharing district practices for OLCs** *(45+’): (frame the session in terms of the value of learning from each other + developing a PL community)* Have each district share:  * What kind of students, and why, take online courses in their district * What structures are in place to support online students * What are the expectations for OLCs   *(someone will need to record this sharing –as a basis for creating a compilation in Day 2)* | *This activity will provide valuable information to the group as they will work in Day 2 on identifying best practices to support HS students’ online learning – both for OLCs and for districts.*  *It may also contribute to the development of the professional learning community – although this may be less so if participants come in two separate groups (in that case, we will need to figure out a way to share the information gathered across the two groups)* | *2a, 2b, 4a, 4b, 4c* |
| 1. **Review and discussion of recorded student interviews** *(Heather):* Show excerpts of recorded interviews with students who have taken courses online; lead a discussion to identify coming online students’ challenges and needs. | *This session will bring the students’ perspective and experience of online learning – and their needs – front stage.*  *Ask students in advance to be prepared to share:*   * *What courses they took and why* * *What challenges they encountered* * *What helped or hindered their learning* | *1b, 1d, 1e* |
| 1. **F2F introduction to AccelerateU system and available online courses (as a student)** *(30’)**(Heather) – Heather will deliver the same F2F introduction to AccelerateU she gives students new to the system + introduction to whatever additional features OLCs may need to know for their role* | *This session should provide sufficient training for OLCs to engage as learners in one of the courses for the Main Online Assignment (see below)* | *1c* |
| 1. **Closing & introduction of assignment** *(??):*  * Brief synthesis of what learned/achieved * Introduce online assignment |  |  |

***Main Online Assignment (using the “system” that hosts the online courses, and with multiple due-dates):***

*(Requiring ~4 hours)*

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| ***Activity brief description:*** | ***Rationale*** | ***Key results addressed*** |
| 1. **Experience an online course in the system** *(time/scope to be defined – but at least 2 hrs):*  * Choose a course among a selection we provide * Do a first set of modules in the course as if they were the student *(we need to decide how much makes sense)* * Preview the entire course to get a sense of what it involves (as you would do if you had to support a student taking it) | *We believe that “experiencing as a learner” what their students will experience when taking a course will be very powerful to ground a follow-up discussion (in Day 2) of affordances and challenges of online learning, students’ needs, and ways to support them. To make this experience more authentic, it would be best if each OLC chooses a course on a content they are not familiar with – so it is a true learning experience for them.* | ***1c, 1d*** |
| 1. **Zoom session to touch base and trouble-shoot** *(30’)**(Dave + Heather) (schedule 2 sessions during the week of May 27 for each group, of which participants will choose one)*  * Have each participant say their name and the course they have been working on * Ask participants about their experience with the course * Ask if they encountered any specific challenge – if so, address it * Ask if they have any questions about other parts of the online assignment * If there is time, also ask participants to share “tips” they may have for others about how to successfully work through the course | *We want participants to experience as learners the value of Zoom session (as well as how easy is it to set up for them!), as we believe that this will provide them with a tool to support students – especially if the students is not physically in the same school* | *3b* |
| 1. **Review available AcceleratedU courses** *(time/scope still to be defined)* | *The goal of this task is to enable OLCs to develop strategies to efficiently understand the essence of the courses their assigned students will be taking, and get a better sense of AccelerateU courses* | *1c* |
| 1. **Readings** *(time/scope still to be defined)* **–** focus on research/ best practicesto support HS students taking online courses*(still to be decided)* | *These readings need to be selected to complement the “experiences as learners” and enrich the discussion in Day 2 by bringing some additional ideas + theoretical lenses* | *3b, 3c, 3d* |
| 1. **Journal** *(private) (~20’)***:** Articulate (knowing that you will be asked to share some of this in the next F2F session):  * Key take-aways from your experience of doing the online course * What you learned about potential needs and challenges of students taking online courses * Ideas about strategies to support online students – based on the personal experience of engaging in the online course, as well as past experiences as OLC * Your current ideas about what should be the key roles and responsibilities for OLCs | *This will provide a “pre-thinking” opportunity that is likely to enrich the sharing in Day 2.*  *Done as a “private journal”, as the students the OLCs will be supporting are not be doing much in terms of interactive online activities* | *3b, 3c, 3d* |

***Second F2F session:***

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| **Welcome and overview of agenda** *(5’) (Mike/ Heather?)* |  |  |
| 1. **Reflection on “experience as learner” in the online course** *(30’) (Raffaella):* **–** Focus in particular on:  * How it felt to work through the course materials independently * What challenges they encountered – and what they felt might support them * Their experience in the Zoom session – and how they think they may use Zoom as a tool to support their students * What an OLC needs to know about the online courses the assigned students are taking, and what could be effective strategies to gain that knowledge | *To build on their “experience as learner” in one of the HS online courses, and articulate major lessons learned from this experience* | *1d, 1e, 3b, 3d* |
| 1. **F2F introduction to features of AccelerateU for OLCs** *(30’)**(Heather) –* Heather will go over “teacher features” of AccelerateU that OLCs can use in support of their role | *To provide information about built-in tools and functions that will help OLCs monitor and support their students’ work* | *1c* |
| 1. **Discussion: Potential students’ challenges and strategies to address them** *(~45’) –* informed by the previous experiences as learners, their own past experiences as OLCs, readings and previous student panel *–* and with the goal of identifying:  * Common student challenges * A repertoire of strategies OLCs could use * What would it take to implement those strategies * What other conditions (not in the OLCs control) are also critical to students’ success in online courses   *(facilitators should create a list that could be referred to in the next activity)* | *To pull together and derive implications for practice of previous reflections + readings + what learned from the student panel* | *1e, 3b, 3c, 3d* |
| 1. **Panel of experienced OLCs** *(~60’)**(Mike/ Heather)* Have a group of experienced OLCs come to speak about their experience, with a focus on sharing what they have found effective to help students taking online courses; panelists should be instructed in advance to be prepared to share:  * A few specific stories of success and failure * What common students’ needs OLCs should be prepared to address * A few strategies/ practices they have found especially successful in their role as OLC   *Make sure there is time for questions and exchanges, where also some of the strategies identified in the previous activity are shard with these “experts” for their opinion* | *To learn from other practitioners who have been successful in the role – and also test/validate some of the conclusions reached at the end of the previous activity*  *It is important that this is a “live panel”, because of the interactions we hope to foster between participants and these expert OLCs – who can continue to be a resource to the group*  *NOTE: It would be best to have two separate panels of OLCs for each group – one with OLCs from the East Side and one with OLCs from the West side, as part of developing the professional learning community* | *3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 4a, 4b* |
| 1. **Developing shared expectations and commitments for the OLC role** *(45+)*  As a large group, first identify key functions that could be played by OLCs; then assign participants in small groups with the task of identifying key strategies for an assigned sub-set of these functions; then share with the whole group to come up with shared expectations for their OLC role.   If there is time, conclude this session with “pair work” where OLCs from the same district articulate a personal commitment to use a few specific new strategies/ functions the following school year | *To pull together and synthesize all that has been learning in this PD, and also gain a shared understanding and commitment to key expectations for the role of OLC as a professional learning community* | *2c, 3b-d* |
| 1. **Next steps for the professional learning community** *(Mike?) (15’) –* Revisit aspects of grant that will involve OLCs + communicate what could be next PL opportunities/ways for the group to continue to work together | *To foreshadow and prepare for next steps* | *4d* |

***Post Day 2:***

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| 1. **Post-Journal (including personal action plan:** Participants will be asked to write a final reflective journal about:  * Their main take-aways from the PD * Setting some goals for themselves as OLC for the next school year, including the identification of specific new strategies/actions they plan to implement | *To have each participant identify their learning from the PD, and also make some concrete commitments* | *2d, 3e* |
| ***Online evaluation survey:*** May include a few questions agreed upon with the evaluators to assess a sub-set of “key results” |  |  |