

Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium

Strategic Plan



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For the past ten years, the CTDLC has offered its services and support to help educators in and out of Connecticut meet the ever increasing demands of developing and delivering effective e-learning opportunities for students. We have been immersed in an environment of constant change and challenge, as new technologies emerge, existing technologies morph, and new pedagogies are tested and refined. It has been an exciting time for our organization. To stay current and to provide our members and clients with the support and services they want and need, we chose to embark on a strategic planning process to define our focus and our goals and to ensure our efficacy and efficiency in the years ahead.

The process we adopted for this task is called Appreciative Inquiry (AI), and it is based on two assumptions: First, “Every organization has something that works right – things that give it life when it is most alive, effective, successful, and connected in healthy ways to its stakeholders and communities”^[1]. This is the “Appreciative” part. And second, recognizing that the best way to discover what works right is by asking, in a systematic way, as many people as possible about their experiences with the CTDLC. This is the “Inquiry” part. (You can find more information about AI at <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/>.)

So we interviewed over seventy of our internal and external stakeholders who thoughtfully shared their experiences and their hopes for CTDLC’s future. The culmination of this dynamic process, our Appreciative Inquiry Summit, brought together over eighty faculty, administrators, staff, and board members to discuss, explore, and engage in examining the data that emerged from these interviews. Held on May 2nd at Central CT State University, and guided by our talented consultants Brenda Kaulback and Rosemary Talmadge, it was an exciting day for the CTDLC, as all who attended participated in a series of creative discussions and activities designed to encourage the discovery of innovative ideas and prospects for our future endeavors.

Since then, the staff at the CTDLC, using the energy and guidance that came out of the entire AI process and working collectively across departmental functions and responsibilities, has developed this Strategic Plan. You will find the goals, objectives, and strategies that will inform our work over the next three to five years, and will allow us to continue to meet the needs of our membership effectively, collaboratively, and innovatively.

As we move forward with implementation, CTDLC’s managers will put in place an action plan for these goals, strategies and objectives, detailing the steps we will take as an organization to work within our stated timeline and to meet each benchmark.

^[1]Cooperrider, David L; Whitney, Diana; and Stavros, Jacqueline M., *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook: The First in a Series of AI Workbooks for Leaders of Change*, Lakeshore Communications, 2003, Pages XVII – XIX.

CTDLC STRATEGIC PLAN Strategies and Objectives

GOAL # 1

CTDLC will be a premier resource for educational technology, utilizing existing infrastructure and capitalizing on new technologies to support our customers' ability to achieve excellence in eLearning service and delivery.

Objectives:

1. *The CTDLC will purposefully utilize existing code to develop and market new products in response to new and emerging markets.*

| STRATEGY | Time Line | Benchmark |
|---|-----------|---|
| Seek new business opportunities using our existing code library. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a business plan – costs/timelines/competitors/resources | 2010 | List of feasible business opportunities |
| Explore and develop workforce and K-12 ePortfolios | 2010 | Scope Completed |
| Create a simplified portfolio platform for Career Development (STEM grant). | 2010 | Developed for STEM purposes |
| Develop eTutoring platform for use as a Mentoring tool (STEM grant). | 2010 | Developed for STEM purposes |

2. *The CTDLC will develop and market Strategic consulting to institutions, organizations, and state agencies. The consulting will focus on maturing their online curriculum, program, and tool selection fit with an emphasis on using and maintaining our products and services.*

| STRATEGY | | |
|---|------|---|
| Create Strategic Technology Committee to review policies and best practices. | 2010 | Develop a methodology for evaluation |
| Evaluate new programmatic technologies for adoption into CTDLC programming practices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendor demos • Business opportunities • Partnerships Examples of all of the above: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ iTunesU ○ Echo 360 ○ LMS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants – Davis | 2012 | Will result in \$200,000 annual income |
| Develop methods for evaluating web development products in terms of our mission, market staff time, and other resources. | 2010 | Methodology for appropriate business planning |
| Explore CTDLC's role in promoting 21 st century skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore partnership with <i>The Partnership for 21st Century Skills</i>. | 2010 | Make decision to join or not |

3. *The CTDLC will target small and start up institutions/agencies/organizations for LMS ASP delivery systems including regular meetings with clients, defined usage reports, and growth projects.*

| STRATEGY | | |
|--|---------|--|
| Identify and develop expertise in new higher ed LMS specific applications for inclusion into CTDLC Applications. | Ongoing | Annual report of our expertise against national benchmarks (e.g. Educause/Horizon/Sloan) |
| Provide economies of scale leveraging the existing data center footprints surplus capacity to Higher Ed and K-12 participants. | Ongoing | \$25K annually |
| Evaluate a corporate training LMS option like CourseMill to replace WebMentor. | 2010 | Decision made to change or not– timeline and budget to go forward |
| Become a Moodle development and hosting shop. | 2010 | 3 Moodle Clients |
| Promote and market remote management of our LMS applications. | 2012 | \$240K annual |

4. *The CTDLC will support institutions’ piloting and adopting emerging technologies by negotiating contracts, writing grants, providing training (ID), programming, and IT support.*

| STRATEGY | | |
|--|---------|--|
| Identify and evaluate new technologies. Determine organizational/client readiness, and adoption plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WIMBA | Ongoing | Membership satisfaction – results in annual renewals |
| Providing “sandboxes” of appropriate new technologies (as specified by the strategic technology committee) for institutions to try. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • iTunes U • Moodle • Echo 360 | Ongoing | Membership satisfaction – results in annual renewals |
| Develop and Market Training the trainer (Best practices, methodologies, etc.). | 2012 | \$20K annually |

5. *The CTDLC will become an excellent value help desk service provider resulting in increased help desk clients.*

| STRATEGY | | |
|--|------|---|
| Transform our current help desk into a value service provider of academic helpdesk services which we can market under an SLA for a defined group of products/services. | 2012 | Increased internal-external satisfaction |
| Market the help desk including “overflow” help desk services for products we know well. | 2010 | 1 additional client using overflow method (helpdesk+) |

GOAL #2

The CTDLIC will be an active resource and effective communicator of best practices in eLearning for administrators, staff, and faculty, thereby enabling student success.

Objectives:

1. *The CTDLIC will develop a series of educational opportunities strategically situated for the variety of different needs of those we serve (faculty, administrators, distance learning coordinators, tutors, teachers) for all types of partners (schools, colleges and universities, state agencies, and non-profit agencies).*

| STRATEGY | Timeline | Benchmark |
|--|---|--|
| Become CEU "Certified" to develop and offer training in those markets identified as meeting client interest and need, (teaching on line, iTunes, ePortfolio, eTutoring – some facilitated; some self-paced) | 2009-app in 2009-2010 2010-11 2011-12 2012-13 | Accepted 30 teachers 75 teachers 100 teachers 150/annually |
| Plan and host Face to Face eLearning Event Series | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presidents Breakfast | Annual | 50+ Attendees |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • iTunes Kickoff | Done | Subsequent sign ups |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and Learning Conference (UCONN) • Annually | Sept 09 | 125 attendance |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eTutoring Workshops | Annual | 75 attend |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eTutoring SIG with NERCOMP | 2009-ongoing | Accepted |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ePortfolio event (face to face or webinar) | 2009-2010 | Create plan for addressing this need |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • iTunes Workshops/Training | 2009-2010 | 15 trainees |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLC Mentor/On Line Learning coordinators • Develop virtual self-paced refresher course | By 2012 2010-2011 | 100/annually completed |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions of new Initiatives | through 2012 | 1 annually |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIO Summit | Annual | 25/year |
| Develop a Webinar Series | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topical Webinars | By 2012 | Quarterly |

2. The CTDLC will implement social and communication networks to allow members to share their expertise.

| STRATEGY | | |
|---|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| Best Practices Area on Website | 2010 | completed |
| Newsletter | Quarterly | Reach minimum audience of 1200 |
| Programmatic Listserves (ePortfolio; AVHS Mentors; ID; Help Desk; Membership; VLC; New Initiatives) | 2009-2010 | Evaluate membership list serve; |
| | 2010-2011 | Consider expanding to other programs |
| eTutoring.net – website to identify and promote options for delivery on online tutoring. | 2011-2012 | Secure grant Develop nationally |
| Discussion Boards (eTutoring) | 2012-2012 | Increase usage by 50% |
| Resource Repositories (eTutoring) | 2011-2012 | Increase usage by 50% |
| Facebook | 2011-2012 | Have 1,000 fans |
| Twitter | 2011-2012 | Have 1,000 followers |

3. The CTDLC will identify areas of expertise that require attention and action.

| STRATEGY | | |
|--|-----------|---|
| Develop a process to ensure that all CTDLC staff members have a solid knowledge of trends, tools and emerging technologies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departments will identify Trends and Ideas. • Departments will report on trends at full staff meetings. • Using the reports staff will identify actions around these new trends using the methods identified in Goal 3 | 2009-2010 | Have a clear process in place |
| | 2011-2012 | Annual events are current and relevant to our membership at all levels (Pres, CIO, faculty, etc.) |

GOAL # 3

The CTDLIC will provide a hub for collaboration, facilitating opportunities for partnerships among stakeholders in K-12, higher education, and the workforce.

Objectives:

1. *Create, support, and maintain eLearning collaborative partnerships.*

| STRATEGY | Timeline | Benchmark |
|--|----------|-----------------------------------|
| Grow and develop current collaborations (i.e. eTutoring) and new product collaborations (i.e. iTunes University). | 2012 | 2 more eTutor consortiums |
| | 2012 | 3 more ASP collaborations |
| Grow and develop new service (academic/K-12/service) collaborations | 2012 | 2 academic/service collaborations |
| Develop collaborative network of consultants for future work (workshops, development, etc.) | 2010 | Completed |
| Work with members to research and write grants to support eLearning initiatives. | 2012 | 2 grants received |
| Work with members to develop collaborative research opportunities. | 2012 | Receive 1 grant to support this |
| Work with other State of CT agencies supporting them in implementation and success of new and existing eLearning projects. <i>(note does this belong under collaboration or "new work.")</i> | 2012 | 4 new clients |

2. *Develop collaborations that foster growth and development of emerging and innovative practices in eLearning by leveraging our technology, skills, products, and services.*

| STRATEGY | | |
|---|----------------------|---|
| Develop a collaboration to identify strategies and eLearning technologies to reduce the number of students requiring remediation at community colleges. | 2010 2011 2012 | Committee formed Grant funding Pilot solution |
| Create a collaboration to explore the effective use of hybrid learning models for K-8. | 2010 | Identify plan of approach |

Goal # 4

The CTDLIC will create a comprehensive strategic marketing plan to expand its customer and revenue base 100% by 2012 as a result of extending its presence regionally and nationally.

Objectives:

1. *The CTDLIC will ensure that that current members, partners, and clients are aware of the range of our products and services and design a marketing plan to reach potential clients.*

| STRATEGY | | |
|--|-----------|--|
| The CTDLIC will redesign our website, creating a space that is flexible and adaptable over time, to better reflect our identity and technical skills, and to effectively market our services and products. | 2009 | Done |
| Hire an Account Executive. | 2011 | Position fill by 9/2011 |
| Develop an internal Marketing Team. | 2009 | In process, to be firmed up and documented |
| Develop a Marketing Plan by identifying which market to address for which individual product/service and determine the best means to reach them and the costs associated. | 2009 | Plan and allocation in 2010 budget |
| Actively cross market our programs and products across all CTDLIC departments. | 2010-2012 | Staff training Ongoing |

2. *The CTDLIC will develop a plan to increase the sales of our services and products.*

| STRATEGY | | |
|--|------|--|
| Develop and implement a methodology that utilizes return on investment data in project planning and allocation of resources. | 2010 | Methodology defined |
| | 2011 | Applied to project planning |
| | 2012 | Measure results of approach (allocation of resources aligned with ROI) |

3. *The CTDLIC's expertise will be recognized by presentations at conferences, publication of articles in journals, and webinars.*

| STRATEGY | | |
|---|---------|---|
| Identify staff to write & submit articles for targeted publications. | 2012 | 4 articles published |
| Staff will submit proposals and be selected to present at relevant conferences and workshops. | 2009-12 | 3 per year |
| Encourage inter-departmental collaboration on presentations. | 2012 | Of the 3 annual presentations, 1 will be an inter-departmental presentation |

4. *The CTDLIC will consider revising or adopting new branding, name, and membership.*

| STRATEGY | | |
|--|------|--|
| Explore options and cost for re-branding and or re-naming the organization to better represent our current and future products and services. | 2012 | Begin process of exploration: if and how |
| Consider a tiered membership to encourage usage of our services and products and to encourage others to join. | 2010 | Defined and marketed |
| Consider becoming a consortia of consortia and/or work with national consortia. Affiliate with NERCOMP and/or other regional groups. | 2011 | Develop and implement plan |
| | 2012 | 2 new partnerships |

Goal # 5

The CTDLIC work environment will actively encourage and support employees to exercise leadership, creativity, innovation, and open communication.

Objectives:

1. *The CTDLIC will develop and deliver a comprehensive new employee “introduction to the CTDLIC” defining all products, services, staff and infrastructure that support the mission and strategic goals of the organization.*

| STRATEGY | Timeline | Benchmark |
|---|----------|-----------|
| Develop a comprehensive interview process to ensure the best hires. | 2009 | Completed |
| Develop the orientation script/map. | 2009 | Completed |
| Develop a plan for mentoring of new employee by person out of department. | 2009 | Completed |
| Develop a student worker hiring, training, and evaluation process. | 2009 | Completed |

2. *The CTDLIC will promote intra-agency communication and teamwork to support projects, skill development, professional growth and cross-departmental involvement.*

| STRATEGY | Timeline | Benchmark |
|--|----------|---|
| Sharepoint will be effectively adopted and utilized for communication and information sharing across the agency and its departments. | 2010 | Strategy implemented that motivates and facilitates increased usage |
| Hold Bi-Monthly Staff Meetings & Idea Forums. | Ongoing | Meetings held and documented |
| Use organizational goals and objectives to identify training/education needs of CTDLIC staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share with department and organization new skills/learning | Annual | Reflected in the budget |
| All staff will identify and meet at least one professional development goal annually. | Annual | As reflected in staff evaluations |

| | | |
|---|----------------------|---|
| Recognize employees' completion of training and demonstration of new skills at appropriate staff meetings. | Annual | On agenda for each staff meeting |
| Identify internal opportunities for cross training. | 2010 | Skills assessment of staff |
| Encourage the creation of colleague training opportunities- Training by one employee to a small group of other employees for knowledge sharing and/or skill building. | 2012 | Greater efficiency and project cohesion; Measured using annual Appreciative Inquiry Review |
| Promote and plan cross department Team Building Exercises | At least once a year | Greater efficiency and project cohesion; Measured using annual Appreciative Inquiry Review |
| Develop in house sharing library. | 2009 | Sharepoint Library site created |

3. *The CTDL will provide opportunities to support staff development and to promote employee health and well being.*

| STRATEGY | | |
|--|---------|--|
| Yoga and other short exercise opportunities will be planned and provided by staff members as able throughout the year. | Ongoing | Survey of well being; Measured using annual Appreciative Inquiry Review |
| Create employee activity committee to plan and implement staff gatherings 2-3 times a year to promote a sense of community, support, and well being. | Ongoing | Survey of well being; Measured using annual Appreciative Inquiry Review |