

**Request for Proposals for Innovations in Uses of Technology in Instruction
2007 – 2008**

Title of Project

Bringing social issues into science-based on-line master's programs: a course on gender, development and globalization

Introduction

The project, Strengthening Agricultural and Environmental Capacities through Distance Education (SAEC-DE), links international distance education with locally relevant research for agricultural development and environmental protection at diverse sites around the developing world. SAEC-DE is a collaborative effort of the University of Florida's Institute for Food and Agricultural Science (IFAS), two centers of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) and the Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), and their partners. SAEC-DE is developing and strengthening locally relevant MSc and PhD programs through team teaching, faculty exchange, and joint course development and enhancement, and uses many of the courses developed by the Soil and Water Science faculty for the distance education portion of the project. <http://international.ifas.ufl.edu/distancededucation/SAECDE.htm>.

The participants in the pilot project have commented that they would like to have a course that gives them some background in social, cultural, and political issues because that is the milieu in which they are working. They cannot simply take a technological approach to solving the complex issues in their countries. Therefore, since 2005, we have been working on the content of a course on gender, development and globalization (GDG) with the specific intent of delivering it through distance education. Initially, the course would be offered to the SAEC-DE students.

The GDG course provides a perspective on the gendered impacts of the development agenda and the globalization of economies, questioning how these components of world and national politics are related to gendered inequalities. Throughout the course, students are exposed to a variety of economic, political, legal and environmental issues that cross with gendered inequalities. GDG has been taught as a graduate seminar and an undergraduate course in the Women's Studies department and, as such, has a rich background of materials available. Additionally, a graduate student has worked on the course for over a year to develop modules and readings that would be available on the internet. The course content, therefore, is almost completed.

The Interdisciplinary Working Water Group (IWWG) is developing a meta-curriculum dealing with people and watersheds. The intent of the meta-curriculum is to make a significant amount of material available, including case studies, simulations, and research results that can be drawn upon by instructors developing specific courses. Modules of the GDG course could be made available to the IWWG meta-curriculum project.

Project Goals

To provide a distance education course, probably on both CD-ROM (for students who have poor connectivity) and on-line, to scientists working in developing countries on water, environment, and agriculture issues.

Improvements to learning

Students currently accessing UF's distance education master's programs in Soil and Water Science have asked specifically for a course dealing with social issues to enable them to make better research and management decisions in their countries.

Innovation

The innovation is this course. We are not aware of any currently available with this content.

Student audience reached

Initially, it will be those taking UF distance education master's courses from CALS or Engineering, graduate students in Women's Studies and other departments, and possibly students on study abroad programs.

Portability

We have experimented with a small module (now defunct) with similar content on the IFAS International Programs website and observed that it was used frequently. We are intending to put the course on CD-ROM due to low connectivity in the developing countries. The content is easily portable. As noted above, some of the modules could be used in the IWWG meta-curriculum.

Potential for reducing costs

The course content has been developed. No new equipment is required to develop and continue to support the course.

Assessment

Learning objectives:

1. Understand key concepts and issues related to gender, development, and globalization fields.
2. Discuss and critically examine the evolution of concepts of gender, development, and globalization and their underlying assumptions.
3. Comprehend the impacts of international development agenda and globalization on the lives of women and men in different political and social contexts.
4. Identify and analyze the different approaches, institutions, and gender policies established to empower women in Third World countries.
5. Understand and discuss how factors such as global economy, policy implementation, and management of natural resources intersect and affect gender relations.
6. Comprehend why gender inequality affects the opportunities and benefits that women can obtain from development programs and the globalized economy.
7. Recognize the international legal framework that pertains to women's human rights.

Assessments will consist of pre- and post-tests and assessment tools available through WebCT. Even with a CD-ROM course, students will be able to submit quizzes and assignments via email.

Sustainability

This course would become the first distance education course offered through Women's Studies and could be made available to our partner institutions in other countries, e.g., University of Dar es Salaam. It would be easy to maintain and update because the undergraduate version of the GDG course is taught on campus every year by Women's Studies faculty.