Lessons from a Statewide Online Teaching Credential Program:
Challenges and Best Practices

This best practices session is designed to present the issues and applications for online learning and teaching that were encountered by a statewide teacher preparation program for those interested in a non-traditional teaching credential program. It will focus on how online teacher training may serve as a tool to respond to changes in students and curriculum for the nation’s schools. This credential program was originally designed for those already teaching without credentials, but it now also serves those interested in traditional student teaching. The curriculum, specially designed to integrate theory and practice around activities and organized study, recognizes the importance of the school site as a significant teacher preparation environment. No regular university classes are required during the 16-month program. The four-stage integrated curriculum is primarily online, but students must attend five mandatory Saturday seminars.

The presenters, both members of the original authoring team of the program’s curriculum, will demonstrate the program Website to illustrate the online teaching, communication, and assessment strategies that support the integrated curriculum. They will address the following issues:
- Assessment in an online environment;
- Creating communities of learners in an online learning environment;
- Asynchronous learning;
- Creating an innovative curriculum for the changing skills of online teacher and school professional candidates,
- Overcoming the digital divide in their region;
- Responding to student, business, state, and professional mandates; and
- Preparing teachers for diverse classrooms.