

# #OLLTogetherNow: Building In-person Community Amongst UNC Online EdD Students

EDUC 695 HOLD Capstone Presentation

Jillian Richmond

**PROPEL**  
the WORLD



# *Road Map*

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Organizational  
Profile &  
Placement

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# Organizational Profile & Placement

# UNC School of Education (SOE)

**#25 Ranked School of Education | 22 programs/certifications**



# UNC School of Education (SOE)

**Mission:** “UNC School of Education is committed to realizing the transformative power of education, and — in turn — is redefining what it means to educate. Education has the power to break down barriers, lift up individuals, and empower communities to rise and thrive. To that end, we *inspire educators to lead; to think creatively, act with passion, and strive toward equity for all.*”

**Vision:** “Propel the World”

**Values:**



# UNC SOE: Organizational Learning and Leadership (OLL)

**Doctoral Program (EdD) | 54 Credit Hour | Fully Online (Est. 2024)**

“Prepares students to create organizational cultures that welcome diverse perspectives, lead organizations toward equitable practice, and empower people within their organization to succeed.”

## **My Alignment:**

- Organizational & leadership focus
- Collaboration & innovative problem-solving
  - Human-centered change

# OLL Team



**Carrol L. Warren**  
Program Director,  
OLL; Clinical  
Assistant Professor



**Jillian Richmond**  
Special Events Manager, OLL  
HOLD Capstone Intern



**Bruna Ricciardi**  
Special Projects Manager, OLL  
HOLD Capstone Intern



**Patrick Turner**  
Program Support  
Specialist

# My Role & Capstone Goals



**Special Events Manager, OLL HOLD Capstone Intern**

**Planning & execution of Immersion Experience | In-person community-building**

## Immersion Experience

[i' mərZH(ə)n ik' spirēəns] *event*

An annual, optional in-person experience, allowing students who are earning their EdD-OLL degree to create valuable connections with UNC School of Education faculty, staff, and peers on the iconic UNC-Chapel Hill campus. Designed to provide students with a dynamic learning opportunity fostering community building, connecting students with program faculty, and serving as a platform for exploration, students will have the chance to build connections and network with colleagues.

# My Role & Capstone Goals

**Expectations:** Hybrid, 300 hours, weekly meetings

## **Deliverables:**

- \*Qualtrics Registration forms  
(students, faculty, and volunteers)
- \*Marketing (“Swag,” t-shirts, & ads)
- \*Event itself
  
- Volunteer recruitment framework
- Budget sheets & logistical data
- 2U Site (informational hub)

## **Responsibilities:**

- Student data collection
- Event stakeholder engagement & management
- Inclusive & accessible student facing-content

# Project Focus & Description

“How can an online doctoral-level program build community and belonging in an in-person context?”



How can OLL build “community and collaboration” & “demonstrate the true spirit of UNC’s School of Education,” in an in-person setting?

**Research to inform problem & potential solutions**

- Literature review
- OLL-specific data (from Qualtrics framework)

**Community-building prep & during event work:**

- “Swag” & t-shirts
- Catering & entertainment
- 2U site (informational hub)
- Volunteer coordination
- Scavenger hunt
- Fostering an inclusive environment



**Future Iterations:**

Provide feedback & data summary to improve upon 2026 Immersion Experience

**Evaluate:** How did the Immersion Experience affect a sense of in-person community amongst OLL students?

- Qualtrics exit survey
- First-hand observations

## PROJECT FOCUS &amp; DESCRIPTION

# Literature Informing The Problem



Building a community in a hybrid doctoral PhD program provides essential support for students completing their degree

Rice, M.L., Beavers, B., McNeill, L. *et al.* The Cohort Experience in a Hybrid Instructional Technology Ph.D. Program. *TechTrends* 66, 710–720 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-022-00745-6>



In a college setting, courses/activities structured around peer tutoring, active learning, & collaboration can strengthen community & bolster voluntary peer-to-peer meetings outside of class settings.

Larkin, T.L. (2020). Student Engagement Through Community Building. In: Auer, M., Hortsch, H., Sethakul, P. (eds) The Impact of the 4th Industrial Revolution on Engineering Education. ICL 2019. Advances in Intelligent Systems and Computing, vol 1134. Springer, Cham. [https://doi-org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1007/978-3-030-40274-7\\_50](https://doi-org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1007/978-3-030-40274-7_50)



Rituals, ceremonies, & myths, are important symbolic tools in the leadership and culture-making of an organization.

Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2017). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership* (6th ed.). John Wiley & Sons.

# OLL-Specific Data













## Collection Methods:

- Qualtrics Registration Form
- Introduction Student Webinar (Zoom)
- Qualtrics Continued Suggestion Form
- Individual communication with students about questions, suggestions, & preferences

PROJECT FOCUS & DESCRIPTION

# Methods: Qualtrics

## Gathering logistical data for event planning | Creating feedback mechanisms

Project name <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	Status	Responses	Type	Owner	Last modified	Creation date
★  SOE Faculty & Staff / Conference Guests Registration Form	Closed	35	Survey	Me	Apr 21, 2025	Mar 5, 2025
★  Registration/RSVP Form: OLL Immersion Experience	Active	118	Survey	Me	Apr 15, 2025	Feb 12, 2025
★  OLL Volunteer Sign-Up Sheet	Closed	44	Survey	Me	Apr 16, 2025	Feb 17, 2025
☆  Introduction Survey	New	—	Survey	Bruna Ricciardi	Feb 20, 2025	Jan 23, 2025
★  HOLD Post-Immersion Survey	Active	54	Survey	Patrick Turner	Apr 19, 2025	Apr 19, 2025
☆  EdD-OLL Orientation	Active	129	Survey	Carrol Warren	Jan 23, 2025	May 9, 2024
★  DO NOT USE OLL Immersion Experience Registration/RSVP Form	New	—	Survey	Me	Feb 12, 2025	Feb 12, 2025
★  Continued Suggestion Form: OLL Immersion Experience	Active	26	Survey	Me	Apr 8, 2025	Jan 27, 2025
★  2025 OLL Immersion Experience Post-Event Survey	New	—	Survey	Me	Apr 19, 2025	Apr 15, 2025
★  (Personal?Draft) OLL Immersion Experience Registration/RSVP Form	New	—	Survey	Me	Feb 13, 2025	Jan 17, 2025
★  (EOY Improved)OLL Immersion Experience Registration/RSVP Form	New	—	Survey	Me	Mar 26, 2025	Feb 13, 2025
★  (EOY Improved) Continued Suggestion Form: OLL Immersion Experience	New	—	Survey	Me	Feb 17, 2025	Feb 7, 2025

< 1 of 1 >

**Link: Improvement Science (EDUC 472)**

# Methods: Qualtrics

Gathering logistical data for event planning | Creating feedback mechanisms

**91%**

Of registered OLL students wanted to network with faculty at the event

**92%**

Of registered OLL students wanted to network with peers at the event

**3.82**

Average # of friends before Immersion Experience

**11.20**

Average # of acquaintances before Immersion Experience

# OLL-Specific Data Takeaway:

Capstone efforts should focus on  
peer-to-peer & student-to-faculty  
community-building

# Methods: Marketing

## Creating visual markers of community

### Tasks & Objectives:

- SOE aligned t-shirt & swag design
- Student feedback & analogous inspiration
- Marketing meetings, approval, & guidance
- SOE aligned advertisements

**Link: Formal Culture (EDUC 357)**



PROJECT FOCUS & DESCRIPTION

Primary Palette

See [Web Alternative Colors](#) below for more guidance.



**Carolina Blue**  
 PMS 542  
 CMYK 60, 19, 1, 4  
 Hex #4B9CD3  
 RGB 75, 156, 211  
 Digital Links #007FAE



**Navy**  
 PMS 2767  
 CMYK 100, 90, 10, 77  
 Hex #13294B  
 RGB 19, 41, 75

**You're Invited!**

We are so glad you will be joining us for the 2025 Inaugural OLL Immersion Experience!

**April 17- April 19**

Date	Location & Time	Dress Code	Programming
Thursday, April 17	William & Ida Friday Center (6:00PM - 7:30PM)	Business Casual	Welcome + Network Social + H'ordeuvres
Friday, April 18	Peabody Hall (9:00AM - 5:00PM)	School spirit! Dress comfortable (headshots today too)	Breakfast + Info Sessions + Lunch + A Day of Carolina Traditions
Saturday, April 19	William & Ida Friday Center (9:00AM-12:00PM)	Comfort wear	Breakfast + Closing Activities

Item Image	Who Recieves	Brand Logo	Base Color	Logo Color	Cost Per item	Quantity	Total Costs	Reasoning for Item
	OLL	SOE & OLL	Navy	Carolina Blue	\$ 12.69	150	\$ 1,903.50	Working professionals sometimes like to wear fun socks at the office!

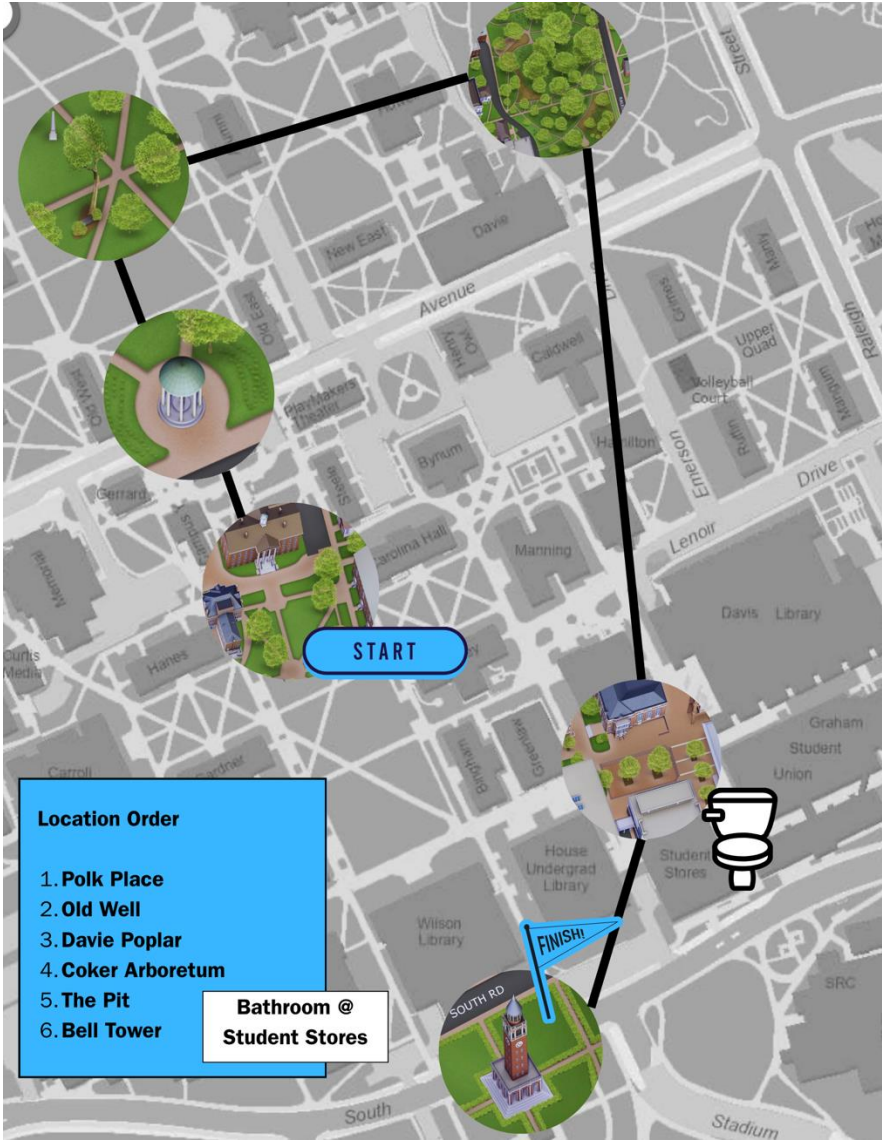
# Methods: Scavenger Hunt Framework

**Creating collaborative & competitive team-building activity**

## **Tasks & Objectives:**

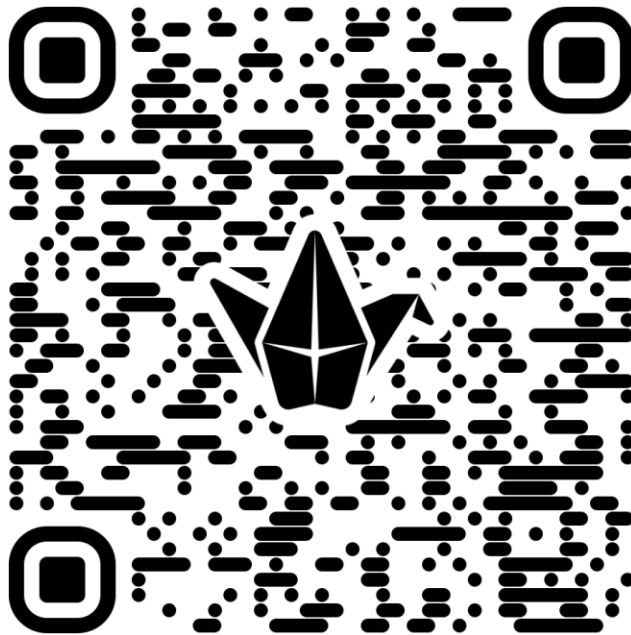
- Research team-based competition
- Divide cohorts evenly into teams
- Design maps & checklist
- Create informational slides
- Create collaborative way to share photos

**Link: Formal Culture & Informal Culture (EDUC 357)**



PROJECT FOCUS & DESCRIPTION

QR Code for Padlet:



**OLL Campus Tour Scavenger Hunt  
Team Selfie Checklist**

- The Old Well (15 pts)**
- Davie Poplar (15 pts)**
- Coker Arboretum (10 pts)**
- The Pit (15pts)**
- The Bell Tower (15pts)**
- Polk Pace (15pts)**
- “U” item (non-UNC logo) (5 pts)**
- “N” item (non-UNC logo) (5 pts)**
- “C” item (non-UNC logo) (5 pts)**

**Upload photos: <https://padlet.com/2025oll/campussearch>**

# Methods: Immersion Experience

Fostering a sense of community through individual interactions & programming

## Registration Facts:

- 86 OLL students
- 4 OLL Immersion Staff
- 2 HOLD guests
- 22 Volunteers
- 13 SOE Faculty/ Guest Speakers

125+ Total Attendees

## PROJECT FOCUS &amp; DESCRIPTION

# 3 Day Event Itinerary



**Thursday, April 17**

**Networking Social @ Friday Center**

Student Time: 6:00pm- 7:30pm  
OLL Staff Time: 4:50pm-8:15pm



**Friday, April 18**

**UNC Resources & Traditions @  
Peabody**

Student Time: 9:00am-5:00pm  
OLL Staff Time: 7:40am-6:30pm



**Saturday, April 19**

**Future Directions @ Friday Center**

Student Time: 9:00am-12:00pm  
OLL Staff Time: 7:50am- 12:30pm

**Link: Inclusive Leadership & Equity (EDUC 508) & Servant Leadership (EDUC 309)**

# #OLLTogetherNow



# Project Impact

PROJECT IMPACT

# Results

## Evaluating the Immersion Experience

**3.82**

Average # of friends  
before Immersion  
Experience

**11.20**

Average # of  
acquaintances before  
Immersion Experience

**10.53**

Average # of friends  
after Immersion  
Experience

**20.08**

Average # of  
acquaintances after  
Immersion Experience

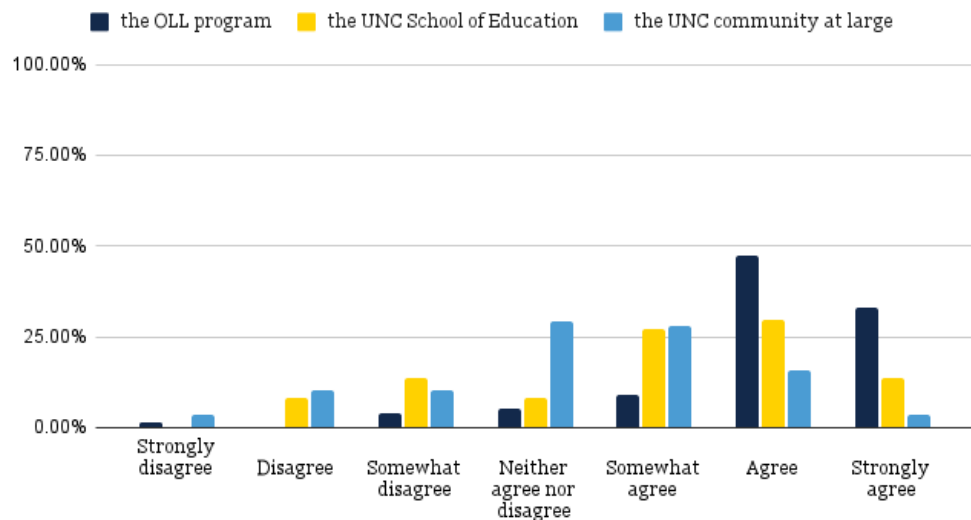
PROJECT IMPACT

# Results

## Evaluating the Immersion Experience

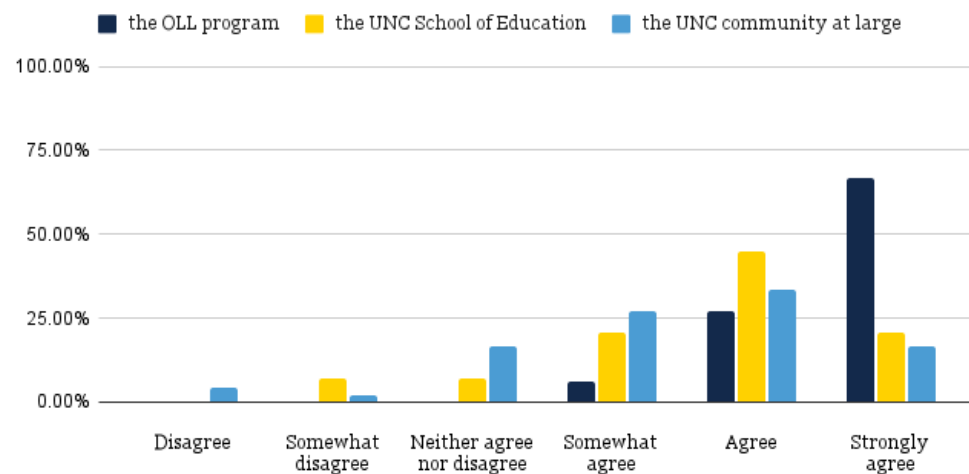
### Pre- Immersion

As an OLL student, I currently feel a sense of belonging in:



### Post- Immersion

As an OLL student, I currently feel a sense of belonging in:



PROJECT IMPACT

# Results

## Evaluating the Immersion Experience

**91%**

Of registered OLL students wanted to network with faculty at the event

**92%**

Of registered OLL students wanted to network with peers at the event

**100%**

Of post-event survey respondents agree or strongly agree the Immersion Experience achieved community-building

**90%**

Of post-event survey respondents agree or strongly agree the Immersion Experience achieved familiarity with faculty

## PROJECT IMPACT

**After having attended the Immersion Experience, how would you describe your sense of community within the program?**

“I feel **more a part of UNC** and more connected with my cohort.”

“Participation in the program has helped me build sustainable relationships both personally and professionally. I feel **included, respected, and appreciated** for who I am as a person.”

“This was an amazing experience and one that **I didn't want to end!** I feel a **true connection** to my cohort, faculty and the program!”



# Discussion & Sustainability

## Lasting Framework:

- Volunteer structures
- Advertisement & merch templates
- Established feedback channels
- Point of reference for future iterations
- EOY updated documents & forms



# Sustainability: Community- Building within the Broader SOE

# Reflection

# Takeaways

Small teams can be mighty!

Begin EARLY, and plan deeply (and still know not everything will be go according to plan)

Community-building starts at home & with humility

Ask questions, & ask experts



# *THANK YOUs!*

DR. CARROL WARREN & PATRICK TURNER

BRUNA RICCARDI

DR. JEMELIA DAVIS & COLE SMITH

OLL STUDENTS

MORGAN ELLIS

SARAH ROWE & CHASE COLEMAN

HALEY ERNST

SYDNEY HEEDEN

ALL IMMERSION VOLUNTEERS, ESPECIALLY: EMMA CLOTHIER, CHARITY DEBREW, PRIYANNA TABON, TERESA OUTLAW, & HALEY (AGAIN!); DR. TERRI LEE (PHOTOGRAPHY)

IMMERSION PARTNERS: BRANDWEIN'S, MED DELI, CH SPORTSWEAR, & BRANDIT

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MOM, DAD, DANIELLE, GABE, & CHRIS

HOLD COHORT & FRIENDS, PAST AND PRESENT

# Questions?