



Customized Story-Centered Online Masters Degree Programs

Socratic Arts can help your university or college increase your master's degree enrollment and tuition revenue through a comprehensive set of services, including:

- Cost-effectively transforming your existing programs into online distance learning, reaching out to new student populations beyond your current geographic reach or who need the flexibility provided by elearning.
- Instantly extending your current catalog of master's degree offerings by enabling you to offer new degree programs that we have developed with other universities.
- Developing new master's program to serve the workforce development needs of your corporate partners.

Developed by Socratic Arts' founder and elearning visionary Roger Schank, the SCC approach can help your institution build extremely effective yet reasonably priced e-learning programs. The SCC represents a dramatic departure from traditional master degree curriculums. It is learning-by-doing based, rather than lecture- and test-based. In fact, there are no classes, no courses, and no tests. Students learn by working together on projects that are part of a larger story in which they are playing a role. Help is offered by professors and by expert mentors on a just-in-time basis.

Many organizations are currently seeking e-learning training solutions that are effective, yet inexpensive. The problem is that most inexpensive e-learning solutions are no more effective than books. They simply present information, rather than providing students meaningful learning activities. The most effective way to teach new skills is to put learners in the kinds of situations in which they need to use those skills, and to provide mentors (who are expert practitioners) who help learners when they need it. Learners come to understand when, why, and how they should use target skills on the job. They receive key lessons just-in-time, meaning when they want to know the information, when it will make the most sense to them, and in such a way that learners will be most likely to remember the information later when they need it in their work. E-learning can offer such realistic, experienced-based training, but until now, it did not come at a cost-effective price. The SCC approach to elearning curriculum design addresses this need.

The idea behind the SCC is that a good curriculum should consist of a story in which students play a key role. These roles are selected to be ones that the graduate of such a program might actually do in real life or might need to know about (because he or she will manage or collaborate with someone who performs that role.) Students, working in groups, are given detailed information about the simulated company they are working for together with detailed and authentic projects. Supporting materials and resources are available and faculty and online

mentors are available to answer questions and point students in the right direction on an as-needed basis.

The effect of the SCC model is that as students work through the story to achieve the missions the story puts forth, they learn the critical skills they need to successfully accomplish their tasks. The SCC implements true learning-by-doing across an entire curriculum, not just within the scope of a single course. In fact, the SCC entails the elimination of courses per se, in favor of an integrated curriculum that tells a meaningful story that the student is likely to engage in again after graduation.

An SCC can be delivered entirely online, in person, or as a blended solution. Student teams can meet as a group face-to-face or using the latest online collaboration tools. Similarly, interactions with mentors and faculty can take place in person or via synchronous or asynchronous online tools. The approach used is determined by the specific needs of the curriculum, and the geographic proximity of students, mentors, and faculty advisors.

The technology platform for online delivery of SCC masters programs consists of custom-developed and best-of-breed online learning and collaboration tools. Student groups use virtual team workspaces (e.g. intranets.com) to collaborate on projects and share team documents. Synchronous collaboration tools (e.g., Interwise, Netmeeting) allow for multi-way audio and video conferencing for group discussions and interactions with mentors, shared whiteboard for brainstorming sessions, and screen sharing for demos and group presentations. Scheduled weekly deliverables throughout the program help keep students moving forward and allow mentors to track student progress.

Instantly Expand Your Offerings

Socratic Arts is currently working with one a leading university in the information technology and computer science fields to develop several new and innovative online master's degree programs in the following areas:

- Data Mining
- Electronic Commerce
- Entertainment Technology
- Information Networking
- Information Security

If your institution would like to offer these programs, or others we are developing with our other partners, Socratic Arts would be pleased to assist with the details and implementation.

In addition, Socratic Arts can help you partner with private-sector firms to develop customized versions of these or other masters programs specifically tailored to their employees, bringing your institution's expertise to help address mission-critical workforce development needs. Think of the benefit to your corporate partners by enabling their employees to get master's degrees from your institution that enhance the skills needed by the company without leaving the office.

Corporations seeking to bring in the world-class expertise offered by your institution can partner with you to create customized versions of master's degree programs tailored to their workforce development needs. This offering provides four distinct advantages unavailable through other e-learning providers:

- Content is provided by your faculty experts and can include the latest results from their research.
- Employees receive full-fledged Masters degrees upon successful completion of the program. Very few providers of customized corporate training offer masters degrees.
- The innovative story-centered curriculum methodology focuses employee learning on real-world tasks in realistic business contexts, providing improved retention and the ability to apply what is learned directly to the workplace.
- Employees complete a final project that directly addresses a current need at their own company. The final project is supervised by company mentors and your faculty, bringing the benefit of both practical and intellectual expertise to bear directly on real-world business problems at the sponsoring organization.

For more information about Socratic Arts' new online master's degree services and customization opportunities, contact:

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