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Heidi A. Feller* (s-hfeller1@math.unl.edu), Avery Hall 203, Department of Mathematics, UNL, Lincoln, NE 68588. *Evolution of a Long Distance Education Course for In-Service Middle School Math Teachers*. Preliminary report.

Math in the Middle is a five-year, \$5 million grant awarded to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) by the NSF. NSF funding will enable UNL to develop a K-12/higher education partnership with the Lincoln Public Schools and rural Educational Service Units (ESUs). The Institute is a 25-month graduate program for middle school mathematics teachers.

One of the courses offered through Math in the Middle is Experimentation, Conjecture, and Reasoning. This is an online class that focuses on problem solving, reasoning, proof, and communicating mathematics. At least 90% of the course is offered in a distance learning format.

I will discuss the evolution of this course over the past three years, from its inception in Spring 2005 until the present. I will place particular emphasis on how various technologies have been incorporated into the course to improve communication between the students and instructors. These technologies include Blackboard, the internet discussion used at UNL and Breeze, an internet conferencing system, which allows participants to take part in a virtual meeting with instructors. Strengths and weaknesses of this approach to long-distance learning will also be addressed.

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