

International Virtual Exchange Conference

October 25-26

2019

Tacoma, WA

Conference Proceedings





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Introduction



Photo by Joe Ziolkowski

The inaugural International Virtual Exchange Conference (IVEC) was held in Tacoma, Washington, U.S.A. on October 25 and 26, 2019. Over 360 participants – practitioners, administrators, policy makers and students – from 30 countries attended nearly 90 sessions held over the two days. The conference was hosted by the University of Washington Bothell and Tacoma campuses and organized by a planning

committee representing the State University of New York (SUNY) COIL Center, DePaul University, Drexel University, East Carolina University, and UniCollaboration.

Map showing IVEC attendees' country of origin.



Virtual exchange (also known as Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), Globally Networked Learning, or Telecollaboration) extends authentic opportunities for intercultural and transnational learning to students within the curriculum of college and university classrooms. Through co-developed and co-taught modules, virtual exchange supports the development of 21st-century workforce skills and provides opportunities for applied learning experiences.

IVEC builds on the successful track records of two other well-established events. The SUNY COIL Center in New York has been hosting their COIL Conference since 2007, attracting a growing number of participants from around the world. UniCollaboration, the European telecollaboration consortium, has hosted a bi-annual conference since 2014, bringing together practitioners from across the continent.

As the field of virtual exchange grows, a small group of institutional representatives began talking about the possibility of a single, annual international conference that would become the premiere gathering for the field. The first such attempt was the Global Learning conference in 2017, hosted by DePaul University in Chicago, in partnership with the SUNY COIL Center in New York. IVEC builds on the Chicago conference with a larger group of organizing institutions and a more clear name and branding. As we move forward,



IVEC Planning Committee. Photo by Natalia Dyba

the aim is to evolve into an even more globally representative organization that hosts an annual International Virtual Exchange Conference in a different world region each year.

Thank you to everyone – planning committee, sponsors, volunteers and participants – who made the inaugural International Virtual Exchange Conference a success!

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The photos found within the conference proceedings were publicly posted via Twitter, under the hashtag #IVEC2019, or via the upload photo function on the Whova Event app for the conference. They represent attendees' experience of the conference and are provided to better assist in explanation of the overall happenings of the event.

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For more information about IVEC 2019 and upcoming IVEC conferences, visit iveconference.org. To contact the conference organizers, email info@iveconference.org.

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Photo by Mary Risner, @LangForCareersPhoto

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Assessing Impact Through Research

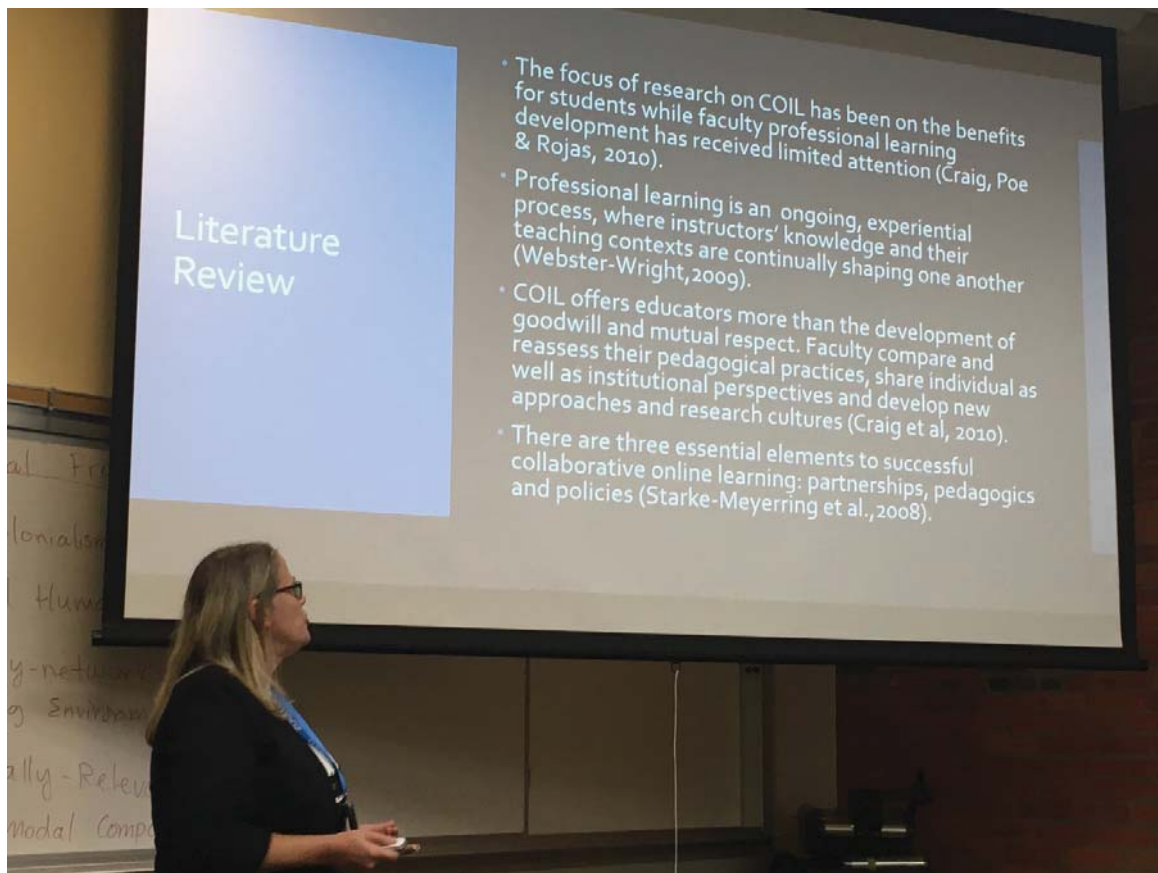


Photo by Natalia Dyba



The Impact of Virtual Exchange on Students' Intercultural Competence and new Skills Acquisition

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Abstract

In 2013 DePaul University developed and implemented an institution-wide virtual exchange (VE) initiative, branded as Global Learning Experience (GLE), leveraging innovative institutional structural synergies, a formalized faculty development program, and financial support of participating instructors. As a way to assess the success of the implemented GLE projects, a student survey was introduced in Fall 2015. The same survey has been administered to every GLE class since then. This presentation focused on results from 685 student responses from 92 courses over 12 terms. The survey instrument is managed quarterly by the office of Global Engagement. First, the relevant student information is obtained from each instructor during weeks 7-8 of each of our 10-week terms. The data from all GLE courses is then compiled, the surveys are set up in Qualtrics, and a personalized link is distributed to students via email during weeks 8-9, with reminders sent during weeks 10 and 11 (finals week). About 2 weeks after the end of each term, the surveys are closed, the data (collected anonymously) is carefully organized and shared with the faculty member for formative assessment purposes.

Keywords: Impact of VE, Assessment, Research

1 Introduction

The survey instrument distributed to students consists of 12 topical questions, 1 summative question, 3 open-ended questions, and 3 demographic questions. This presentation focused on the results of the 12 topical questions and the summative one.

2 Questions

The 12 topical questions are:

- 1. The GLE component of this course introduced me to a new outlook and new ways of thinking about how I relate to the world;*
- 2. The GLE component of this course has made/will make me change the way I act;*
- 3. The GLE component of this course changed my perception of another culture or country;*
- 4. The GLE component of this course provided skills and knowledge that I will use in the future.*
- 5. Through the GLE component of this course I made connections with international students that I will maintain beyond this course;*
- 6. This GLE will affect my career/career choices;*
- 7. I felt prepared for the cultural aspects of the collaboration with faculty and students at the partner institution;*
- 8. I felt prepared for the technology demands of the GLE component of this course;*
- 9. The technology chosen felt appropriate for the needs of the experience;*
- 10. I would recommend a course with a GLE component to other students;*
- 11. I would choose a course that included a GLE component over a course that did not;*
- 12. This GLE increased my interest in further opportunities for international cultural exchanges such as study abroad.*

The summative question is:

- 13. Overall, at the end of the GLE component of this course I felt:*

(Delighted, Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Somewhat satisfied, Not at all satisfied).

3 Assessment

The 12 topical questions were all presented as statements, with a 5-point Likert scale of agreement (Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree), and can be described as belonging to four different broad categories in increasing level of cognitive impact: a first group of questions that address student perception of logistical and practical aspects of the experience (Q7, Q8, Q9); a second group that targets perception of changes in elementary intercultural competence (Q1, Q3, Q12); a third group that aims at measuring perceptions of more complex behavioral changes and/or learning outcomes (Q2, Q4, Q5, Q6); and finally a group of questions asking for summative perceptions on the entire experience (Q10, Q11, Q13). Interesting trends emerged from the analysis of the collected data. Students indicated very positive perceptions on the logistical aspects of the experience, positive perceptions on elementary intercultural communication gains, and positive perceptions of their acquisition of new useful skills. Students were divided on the summative perceptions of the experiences and reported neutral or slightly negative perceptions on actual behavioral changes. Of interest was the finding that over 75% of students said they would recommend a course with GLE component to other students, whereas more than 50% of students were hesitant to take another GLE course themselves.

We are currently automating the GLE assessment process by incorporating the survey questions into the university's official online teaching evaluation system. We are also exploring other assessment tools for virtual exchange and hope to be able to include partner students' responses in the future. We also collect data from instructors, via an instrument that mirrors the students' one. Preliminary analysis shows that instructors reports extremely positive perception of their experience of teaching a virtual exchange course, recognizing that they grew pedagogically and interculturally.

Determining the Value of Virtual Exchange

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Abstract

There is considerable research on the value and impact of traditional study abroad programs, but there is little to no research on the medium and long-term impact of involvement in a virtual exchange. For many students, participation in a virtual exchange will be their only international learning opportunity during the course of their studies. Research supports the impact of this first international experience (McKeown, 2009), making it imperative these experiences are intentionally designed to align with outcomes that create the intended value. Over the last seven years, the presenters have practiced and done research related to virtual exchange experiences, building upon the Value Creation Framework (Wenger, Trayner and de Laat, 2011), collecting feedback from students in the USA, Latin America, the Middle East and Europe. They proposed a broader adoption of this framework to design and assess the long-term impact of virtual exchange experiences and promoted building a broad collaborative database on the impact and value of virtual exchange experiences. Participants found the Value Creation Framework to be useful and potentially a good tool for longitudinal research on virtual exchange.

Keywords: Value, Impact, Wenger, Assess, Research, Virtual Exchange

1 Introduction

There is considerable research on the value and impact of traditional study abroad programs, but there is little to no research on the medium and long-term impact of involvement in a virtual exchange. For many students, participation in a virtual exchange will be their only international learning opportunity during the course of their studies. Research supports the impact of this first international experience (McKeown, 2009), making it imperative these experiences are intentionally designed to align with outcomes that create the intended value. Over the last seven years, the presenters have practiced and done research related to virtual exchange experiences, building upon the Value Creation Framework (Wenger, Trayner and de Laat, 2011), collecting feedback from students in the USA, Latin America, the Middle East and Europe. They propose a broader adoption of this framework to design and assess virtual exchange experiences. The long-term goal would be to start building a broad collaborative database on the impact and value of virtual exchange experiences.

2 The Value Creation Framework

The Value Creation Framework was developed to assess and promote value creation through social learning (communities and networks), which is how virtual exchange experiences are designed. Donald Kirkpatrick (in Wenger, Trayner, and de Latt, 2011) developed four cycles called *Reaction*, *Learning*, *Behaviors*, and *Results*. These cycles were later adapted by Wenger, Trayner, and de Latt, along with the addition of a fifth cycle (*Reframing value*) that addresses the work of communities and networks. The five cycles in the Value Creation Framework (Wenger, Trayner, and de Latt) are:

- *Immediate value* – Activities and interactions as having intrinsic value. Participants may solve problems, answer questions, or just have fun. It can be measured by things like level of participation, level of engagement, quality of the interactions and networking or connections made.
- *Potential value* – Knowledge capital or resources that are acquired and may be useful in the future. This cycle involves new learning or understanding, relationships built and resources acquired.
- *Applied value* – Changes in practice. Using the knowledge or ideas acquired through participation in the activity. It can be as simple as re-using some of the materials created and extend to change or innovation in practices.
- *Realized value* – Performance improvement. Better ability to achieve something or a change in how something is measured.
- *Reframing value* – Redefining success. A change in the definition, criteria and metrics of what matters.

These cycles do not necessarily develop sequentially (although there may be a causal relationship), and value may be created in more than one cycle during the same activity or experience. Value can be created for different types of stakeholders, as well: personal value for the participants, value created for the learning community or group, value affecting the instructors or facilitators, or institutional value.

By the end of the session, participants were able to:

- Describe the Value Creation Framework proposed by Etienne Wenger, Trayner and de Laat, (2011)
- Apply the Value Creation Framework in the design and assessment of virtual exchange experiences;
- Adapt some of the learning activities and assessment questions identified for each of the value cycles for use in their own virtual exchange activities;
- Develop assessment questions to determine the value of virtual exchange activities and experiences;
- Establish a framework to determine the medium- and long-term impact of the virtual exchange experiences;
- Envision a broad-based collaborative research effort.

3 Discussion

In this session, the researchers reviewed the Value Creation Framework. They then divided the participants into small groups (one for each of the cycles of the value framework) to:

1. Formulate at least one question or identify at least one measurable objective to determine the short, medium and long-term impact of the value created by the virtual exchange experience for their assigned cycle, and identify the stakeholders who benefit from that value (students, instructors, institutions, or other);

2. Identify virtual exchange learning activities that would contribute to creating value related to the assigned cycle, as well as measurable objectives related to determining the value created by those activities.

The participants consolidated into four groups, reviewing cycles one – four. There was not enough time for the small groups to complete the tasks, so each group chose which tasks and stakeholders to focus. Upon completing their work in small groups, they reported to the larger group, sharing the following results and reflections:

Cycle One: Immediate value – This group focused on value for students with possible learning activities to promote value in this cycle. They proposed an icebreaker activity with a photo. To measure the impact of this activity they would measure the level of excitement as evidenced by activity, like number of posts. They would follow this activity with a discussion of stereotypes associated with people from the participating countries. They noted it is difficult to measure if students are having fun or level of reflection. This group felt the Value Creation Framework creates reflection on how to design activities and can help add structure in planning and building collaborations.

Cycle Two: Potential value – This group also focused on value for students and designed an Icebreaker activity. They proposed participants upload a video to build knowledge about people and other places. They thought this contributed to potential value as it helped build learning capital and stimulated intention to learn and openness to future collaboration activities; another potential value is the tech skills learned through participation in virtual exchange activities. Badges for the learning also become usable capital. They had trouble thinking of assessment questions, but would invite student reflection on the virtual exchange experience and how it can be applied in jobs and applications.

Cycle Three: Applied value – This group suggested applied value could be measured by observing if students can use the insights gained from the Virtual Exchange experience in another situation, either in academic or future employment situations. At an institutional level, results in this cycle could have impact at a curricular level. The group found the term “value” to be vague and undefined. They reflected on how the application of Bloom’s taxonomy in these cycles can help to better envision how to interpret them in an academic context.

Cycle Four: Realized value – This group interpreted realized value to be tangible, measurable results and student outcomes. This could be a change in way of thinking about things, for example, pre vs. post collaboration changes in whether students read international news, and recognizing international standards for good news sources around the world. They considered reflective journals important for measuring this cycle. They noted that it may be difficult to identify the impact of virtual exchange experiences from that of other academic activities; it is important to define what distinguishes VE experiences

4 Conclusion

Before the end of the session, participants discussed the importance of longitudinal studies on the value and impact of virtual exchange and how to collaborate on research in the future. They shared contact information to continue the discussion. People interested in participating or further information can add their contact information and find the worksheets and other materials used during the session at <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1WSzuHBQiv3ScV9ovqu3hNGE03Zg8Exnn>; or can contact the presenters at: Lorette.Calix@esc.edu or lpcalix@gmail.com; Patrice_torcivia@gse.harvard.edu

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Understanding the Impact of Collaborative Online International Learning on Employability: a Stakeholder Comparison

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Abstract

Emerging pedagogical theory identifies a growing need for innovative, student-centered, experiential approaches to learning within a context of rapidly evolving conversational media, the commodification of education and changing perceptions of the academy and lifelong learning. This paper presented an overview of a PhD project which will investigate the value of Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) as an innovative pedagogical approach and its possible impact on graduate employability, from the perspective of students, curriculum leaders and employers. The research paradigm is interpretivist and an inductive approach will be used to generate a phenomenological epistemology of COIL strategies within universities. Primary qualitative data collection will involve a series of in-depth interviews with students, curriculum leaders and employers in four different countries, and will seek to develop a new conceptual model for COIL programmes within Higher Education which will address the need for future ready graduates in a rapidly transforming employment market.

Keywords: collaborative online international learning; globalization, technological change, experiential learning; graduate employability

1 Introduction

Neoliberalism could be described as the dominant but invisible ideology underpinning western democracies (Curtis, 2016). Key features include the supremacy of the market, economic globalization, meritocratic principles, commodification of all forms of labour (including education), postmodern consumer capitalism, hyper-normalization and results oriented managerialism as a governing framework (Monbiot, 2016; Curtis, 2016; Harvey, 2005; Klein, 2006; Mirowski, 2013; Davies, 2014; Brown, 2015; Peck, 2010). Meritocratic principles embedded within this ideology suggest that if you work hard you are rewarded, however McNamee and Miller (2004) argue that higher education “is not governed by strict principles of meritocracy, but instead, reflects, legitimizes, and reproduces class inequalities.” Neoliberal concepts such as these have been applied to students within academic studies however further research is needed to examine how this philosophical paradigm relates to the specific learning and teaching strategies adopted by universities and the implications for graduate employability.

2 Communication’s new Frontiers

The multitude of communication channels available to organisations and their stakeholders requires an integration of communication strategies. Many of the channels enable multi-way conversation and according to Capozzi and Zipfel, this “new climate requires organisations to engage in a two-way dialogue with their constituencies” (2012: 336). This point is reinforced by Groysberg and Slind who argue, “Traditional corporate communication must give way to a process that is more dynamic and more sophisticated. Most important, that process must be conversational” (2012: 77). Within an era of digitised, conversational communication active stakeholder engagement is regarded by industry and academia as a pre-requisite for organisational success (Galilee et al, 2011; Mitchell, 1997; Welch and Jackson, 2007). To achieve this goal universities might be expected to employ the most effective range of multi-way communication channels to facilitate fast, meaningful, borderless and democratic discussion and collaboration online as part of their learning and teaching strategies.

3 Proposed Idea

To remain competitive in a dynamic and uncertain global environment employer need graduates who have knowledge, competency, creativity, confidence, flexibility and resilience which is future proof. It is therefore incumbent on Higher Education to deliver new pedagogies which will deliver these graduate attributes with programmes that focus on experiential learning, problem solving, soft skill development, interdisciplinarity and digital literacy (SUNY COIL Center, 2019; Deardorff, 2009; Essig 2013; Tucker et al, 2013). Innovative, borderless education initiatives such as COIL can enhance students’ employability and career capital through pioneering educational innovation and strong links to the real world of work. Experiential learning commonly takes place through home-based initiatives such as live client projects, work experience opportunities, industry led workshops, site visits and mentoring, however COIL pedagogy which is linked to the emerging field of Globally Networked Learning (GNL) takes the principle of experiential learning onto a world stage.

4 Proposed Research Questions

The core research questions which underpin this project include:

- How are universities engaging with emerging pedagogical theory in the field of borderless experiential learning and how far have their learning and teaching strategies evolved to reflect this?
- How do different stakeholder perceptions of borderless experiential learning influence the adoption, design, delivery and evaluation of COIL projects within universities?
- What impact do COIL projects have on graduate attributes and employability?

5 Proposed Research Objective

The ontology for the proposed research is subjective because it will involve multiple realities which exist within the minds of the stakeholder participants. Consequently, an interpretivist paradigm, which assumes that human experience and understanding of the world is socially constructed, will underpin the research, because COIL and borderless experiential learning is likely to be perceived in a myriad of ways by the participants. The subjective, dynamic relationship between the researcher and the participants also corresponds with an interpretivist paradigm (Kierkegaard, 1846; Packer, 2010; Roulston, 2010; Lapan, 2012).

The research therefore seeks to understand if and why different social constructs of borderless experiential learning exist, how they relate to employability, and the implications for COIL strategies within universities. A

phenomenological epistemology will be produced by studying the perceptions of key stakeholders and expanding existing knowledge of borderless experiential learning. The stakeholder sample will include students, curriculum leaders and employers in four countries where the researcher has previously conducted COIL projects. All the data collection will take place during 2019-2020 to enable a focused analysis of stakeholder perceptions during a specific moment in time.

It is hoped this research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge relating to international collaboration in teaching and research; intercultural knowledge and understanding; more effective borderless course design and delivery; and the nurturing of graduates with a more adaptable, solution focussed mind and skill set matched to the needs of the 21st century workplace.

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Professional Learning Experience Through Coil: A Faculty Perspective

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Abstract

Collaborative online international learning (COIL) is not reserved for students, but rather can positively impact instructors through the exchange with colleagues from diverse institutions, backgrounds, pedagogies and practices. Instructors thereby gain global understanding which they can impart to their students and use to help facilitate intercultural curricula at their institutions. Creating global network learning environments (GLEs) means intense collaboration and agreement on assignments, deadlines, assessment and learning outcomes, which in turn force instructors to reevaluate their own values and methods of work. The following paper describes a COIL project involving instructors from four universities in the USA and Europe and the challenges they faced creating a common team culture. While overcoming technological, institutional and cultural differences, these instructors increased their own professional learning experience.

Keywords: collaborative online international learning; virtual teams; professional learning

1 Introduction

While most educators agree that internationalization is an important goal in the education of graduates, most institutions fail to establish it in a consistent, concerted effort across the board. Despite proclamations to the contrary, efforts at internationalization at university campuses have been instead “piece-meal and reactive, rather than coherent and holistic” (Leask and Bridge, 2013, p. 80). Internationalization is often compartmentalized under the auspices of international offices or centers for global experience. While sending students abroad is an important contribution towards encouraging global thinking amongst graduates, and the numbers of students attending a foreign university are rising (UNESCO 2014), nevertheless, only a handful of privileged students are able to take advantage of this opportunity. Efforts to incorporate global topics into curricula are sporadic and dependent on individual faculty members and chairs of departments, who may (or may not) recognize the value of intercultural experience. At the same time, the efficacy of these efforts may vary based on the level of staff experience and insight (Harrison, 2015). In worst case, attempts at internationalization could actually result in the opposite of what was intended – lack of understanding and desire to work with people of another culture.

In recent years there has been increased attention drawn to the need for internationalizing the curricula of higher education institutions (Leask & Carroll 2011; Leask & Bridge, 2013). In this context, educators must agree on the international learning outcomes required for graduates to be successful in a global workplace. Furthermore, a systematic approach is required with clear learning outcomes and the development of “authentic tasks that are structured in such a way that they cannot be successfully completed without a meaningful exchange of cultural information” (Leask 2009, p. 211). Leask and Bridge (2013) assert that “an important part of the process of internationalization is inviting, accommodating and nurturing new rationales, alternative paradigms and interpretations, providing a more open curriculum space than that offered by traditional Western approaches” (p. 97). This intercultural curricular approach should go beyond the classroom and encompass all university activities both on and off campus (Leask 2009). Instructors should function as facilitators for intercultural understanding and mutual respect between students of different cultures (Dunne, 2011).

The assumption in this approach to internationalization of institutions is that instructors have had considerable international exposure as well as possess intercultural competencies themselves. However, even instructors who have taken part in staff mobility opportunities do not necessarily possess an understanding of how to implement internationalization in their home contexts. According to Leask and Carroll (2011), high quality staff development training may be essential for instructors in order to establish and assess internationalization efforts effectively at their institutions.

While the internationalization of higher learning is not only the responsibility of instructors but must involve a concerted effort of all university stakeholders, there exist high expectations on faculty to be global educators and facilitators of change. Not only do they have to acknowledge the importance of global understanding for themselves and their students, but they may also have to reflect on their own (*mis*)perceptions and alter their behavior accordingly. At the same time, instructors are expected to guide their students through the same perceptual and behavioral transformations that they themselves may be going through. Introducing internationalization into classrooms requires new approaches to teaching, acquiring new skills, collaborating with external and internal partners as well as creating new global network learning environments (Agnew & Kahn, 2014). Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) projects are helpful in achieving these goals while offering instructors the opportunity to develop as global educators.

2 Literature Review

There has been a modest amount of work written about collaborative virtual learning of instructors (Schwartz, Weiss & Wiley, 2018). This is despite the fact that COIL projects, also called global network learning environments (GNLEs), are an increasing reality in higher education today, motivated by instructors’ desire to prepare students for a global workplace (Starke-Meyerring, 2007). GNLEs provide an important environment for a shared learning experience among professionals. According to Webster-Wright (2009), professional learning is an ongoing, interactive and complex process in which instructors’ knowledge impacts their teaching contexts and is constantly being impacted by them in turn. The collaboration between instructors in the designing, carrying out and evaluation of a virtual project facilitates a shared team culture (Starke-Meyerring & Andrews, 2006). Instructors interact with their diverse cultures, notions of pedagogy as well as share

knowledge and learn about each other's institutional constraints, thus increasing their own professional knowledge landscapes and impacting those of their colleagues (Bégin-Caouette, Khoo & Afridi 2015). The fundamental character of GNLEs forms the basis for professional learning among instructors: they are a grassroots initiative as opposed to a top-down administrative decree, and importance is placed on shared leadership rather than dominance by one instructor. Moreover, an emphasis is on relationship building and trust. Finally, the instructors share a common vision and are in agreement on approaches and practices (Starke-Meyerring, 2008). While collaborating with each other to link their classrooms, instructors do not only advocate global learning but also fulfill their responsibility as global educators to continually develop their own skills and the way they view their own work, guiding their students through transformation while transforming themselves (Agnew & Kahn, 2014).

3 Methodology

The authors described their COIL project carried out in the fall of 2018. During the course of the project, the authors experienced the professional development thus far described. The authors utilized an autoethnographic approach, in which data was collected through personal experience, collective narratives, interactive interviewing and experiential analysis (Ellis & Bochner, in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 733-768). Through illustrating their experiences, the authors hoped to encourage other faculty to incorporate COIL projects into their own curricula and by doing so, thereby advance the goal of internationalization at their institutions.

3.1 The Project

The six-week virtual teams project involved four universities in the USA, Germany, Scotland and Portugal. This COIL project began as a grassroots collaboration between two American instructors, one of which taught at a German university. The Portuguese and Scottish instructors joined the cross-cultural project involving undergraduate and graduate students of varying ages, ethnic backgrounds and disciplines. Approximately 60 students were put into ten heterogeneous groups of 5-6 students. They were given the task of analyzing the online presence of an international company and making recommendations on how to improve the cultural appropriateness and effectivity of the companies' presence on social media. Their recommendations were presented digitally as collaborative Prezi presentations. In addition, students were asked to reflect on the project experience in short, individual reports.

3.2 Challenges and benefits of the project

Before the project began, the instructors met virtually and communicated through email and the collaborative platform SLACK over several weeks. They tested out the software and platforms which the students were expected to use such as POWTOON and ZOOM as well as prepared demonstrations of the technology for the classroom. This included showing recordings with glitches in order to illustrate the instructors' experiences and make the project more tangible for students.

The instructors made sure to synchronize the assignment, the deadlines and the expectations across all courses. During the project, the instructors met regularly on ZOOM, shared feedback and provided each other with advice. They had access to all the students' SLACK workspaces, and while they agreed not to monitor the students on a regular basis, they were able to share information on students' participation. Final grades on the collaborative presentations were determined via a virtual grading session.

Throughout the project, the instructors stayed in regular contact with each other so that meetings became a habit; they shared personal information, and they developed close, personal relationships. Despite a potential language dominance of three native English speakers, there was mutual respect shown towards each other. Each instructor contributed their particular strengths to the team. One instructor's expertise in developing assessment criteria was utilized to create a common assessment rubric for the presentations and paper. As two members were interested in research, the instructors carried out project surveys to measure the development of intercultural competency among students and published their research (Swartz et al., forthcoming).

4 Reporting the Experiences of the COIL Project

While all four instructors shared a common understanding that a collaborative online international project would be beneficial to their students, they carried out the project within their courses but outside of any direct

institutional support. In fact, one of the instructors faced opposition from department heads and had to convince them of the importance of the project for student learning. Since their learning management systems were incompatible, the instructors resorted to open source programs, and taught themselves as well as guided each other through the use of the technology. The assignment as well as benchmarks and expectations for the project were developed out of trial and error from previous experiences and feedback from students. The differences in semester schedules and holidays presented the instructors with a large obstacle. Moreover, deviations in curricula and workloads needed to be factored into the project. For these reasons, the instructors found themselves working around the individual constraints of each member of the team in order to realize the project. Finally, changes in the data protection regulations in the European countries required the use of consent forms in order to exchange emails among students. The ethics boards of the Anglo-American institutions needed to be involved for the collection of data for research purposes.

5 Conclusion

COIL projects are time-consuming. They require instructors to acquire new skills as well as show understanding for the restrictions on as well as priorities of their colleagues. At the same time, the challenges that these instructors faced when engaging in this COIL project contributed to their professional development. As Herrington (2008) points out, instructors involved in a virtual collaboration must readjust their thinking if they are to identify both failure and success. Articulating one's own pedagogics to another's diverging set of values, teaching alongside other colleagues, sharing materials and knowledge, and agreeing on standards and grading rubrics, the authors had to leave their comfort zones. By flipping the classroom and empowering students – some of who are not one's own- as well as colleagues to take command of the course content and learning outcomes, the instructors gave up control and embraced the ambiguity of the project. Once the instructors were able to do exactly that, they could sit back and enjoy the fun, an essential element to the success of a collaborative online project (Starke-Meyerring & Andrews, 2006).

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An Investigation into how Rapport is Managed in an Online Intercultural Exchange

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Abstract

The rapid upsurge in online communication has resulted in ever increasing opportunities for online, intercultural encounters. Consequently, there is a need for research that explores the potential impact of culture in an online setting. Lewis and O'Dowd (2016) conducted a review of telecollaboration research and concluded the majority of research was based in a Western context. This project was a response to calls for greater cultural diversity to be represented in telecollaboration research. This study explored how rapport was managed in an online, intercultural exchange between 25 students attending a university in England and 21 South Korean students. The dataset of 20,379 words generated during the semester-long virtual exchange was examined for patterns pertaining to cultural manifestations in paralinguistic features, and the influence of communicative acts on the inclusion of paralinguistic features. Much research has focused on the functions of paralinguistic features yet the role the communicative act has on the integration of these features in communication strategies is not clear.

As this project examined potential cultural manifestations online, it adhered to a culturally relativist perspective, so an inductive approach to the analysis of the data was used. The data was thematically analysed for communicative acts and paralinguistic features. The data analysis revealed the use of culturally specific paralinguistic features, with the emergence of a feature that to the best of my knowledge, has not been recorded in previous virtual exchange research. In addition, the data revealed patterns pertaining to differences in the inclusion rates of paralinguistic features in a variety of communicative acts.

The findings from this study contribute to knowledge of how culture can manifest online. These findings provide valuable insight into online communication, while raising questions related to other potential manifestations of culture yet to be documented in research.

Keywords: telecollaboration, virtual exchanges, intercultural encounters, paralinguistic features, cultural diversity

1 Introduction

The management of online relationships and use of paralinguistic features as part of communicative strategies is an important area of investigation as there are ever-increasing opportunities for intercultural encounters online (ITU Publications, 2018). According to a 2018 statistical report published by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), rates of internet usage increased dramatically around the world from 2005 to 2018. The report indicates that in 2018 there were 3.9 billion people using the internet, in comparison with the one billion reported in 2005. Viewed in relation to the percentage of the population, that is an increase from 15.8% of the population in 2005 to 51.2% in 2018. People are spending more and more time online, with online interactions being an integral part of everyday life for many people (ITU Publications, 2018; PEW, 2018). It is vital to investigate how relationships are cultivated and maintained as statistical trends suggest that online communication will become an ever-increasing part of everyday life.

Digital literacy is an essential skill for navigating through a rapidly globalizing, online world (ITU Publications, 2018). The European Commission funded *The Digital Competences Framework* which highlights five pillars of digital literacy: data and information, communication and collaboration, content creation, safety and problem-solving (Vuorikari et al., 2016). The ability to successfully communicate and collaborate online is a key component of digital literacy, and one that is becoming increasingly important in this connected world. The importance of promoting digital literacy skills is also reflected in South Korean educational policy, with a stated focus towards 'training creative minds through converging education and ICT' (Korean Ministry of Education (MOE) and Korea Education and Research Information Service (KERIS), 2014, p. 12). The ITU (2018) found that digital skills are linked to higher economic and social wellbeing at the level of individuals, with a dynamic and competitive economy highlighted at the national level. Thus, digital literacy is a necessary skill to be able to participate fully and successfully in society.

2 Virtual Exchange, Paralinguistic Features, and Research

To achieve educational goals and fulfil policy mandates, practitioners are harnessing the connectivity of the Internet to organize virtual exchanges. Virtual exchanges offer a number of benefits that can facilitate the development of the key skills necessary to successfully participate online. Firstly, they provide linguistic opportunities outside of the classroom context for language learners, allowing them to practice communicating in a range of settings. Secondly, they provide opportunities for collaborative cultural exchanges, raising awareness of cultural diversity. The cultural components of language are frequently neglected or superficially referenced in textbooks (Dervin, 2010), so these exchanges provide students with the opportunity to increase their cultural awareness. As many linguists will agree, intercultural competence is a key component of communication skills (Dervin, 2010; Byram et al., 2002). These exchanges place the student in a central role, as the participants' co-construct knowledge, learning about culture with and from each other. Thirdly, they provide practice of the communication strategies that can be used when interacting with diverse partners online.

The provenance of this research study was a professional need I saw within my university context, in South Korea. As an Assistant Language Professor at a South Korean university, I am constantly seeking opportunities for my students to gain authentic communicative experience outside of the classroom setting. This spurred my interest in online, intercultural exchanges. These exchanges provide linguistic practice, empower students to learn intercultural skills collaboratively, and provide valuable practice to facilitate the development of digital literacy skills. It is imperative to teach students the strategies and skills needed to communicate successfully with diverse interlocutors outside of the classroom setting. As more and more communication is now happening online, it is essential for teachers to prepare their students for this type of communication.

Paralinguistic features are used pervasively in digital discourse (Herring and Androutsopoulos, 2015), therefore they play a pivotal role in online communication skills. One of the aims of this research was to identify how paralinguistic features are used as part of communication strategies, so that students can be taught non-linguistic ways to manage their online interactions. This is particularly important for individuals communicating in an addition language that isn't their first language (henceforth L2), who may not possess the linguistic ability to add nuance through language-based strategies.

Scholars have called for research into digital discourse that incorporates greater linguistic and cultural diversity in order to reflect the myriad experiences of Internet users (Lewis and O'Dowd, 2016; Locher et al., 2015; Herring et al., 2013). This research project was a response to these calls as it included insights from a relatively

under-researched demographic in online exchanges, South Koreans. It is hoped that this research project can add to the growing diversity of cultural perspectives evidenced in academic research pertaining to online communication. In order for educators to be able to fulfil educational mandates and create programs that support the development of digital literacy skills, there needs to be greater understanding of cultural diversity online, communication norms, and strategies that can facilitate harmonious interactions. With this in mind, the two research questions of this study are focused on providing insight into the following areas.

- What cross cultural differences, if any, were apparent in the use of paralinguistic features?
- How were paralinguistic features used in online communication to manage rapport?

3 Methodology

The semester-long course was conducted between two universities, with a cohort of 21 South Korean students who were studying at a large, private university in South Korea (henceforth YU) partnered with 25 students who were attending a large university in England (henceforth CU). The online intercultural exchange spanned two months, from the start of October to the end of November, 2015. The online exchange had three educational tasks that were created to foster a sense of collaboration, cultural awareness and reflection. These three tasks were undertaken as a form of blended learning, as in-class scaffolding, discussion and support facilitated the online component. The students were placed into small, mixed groups of between 4-5 YU-CU students. There were 11 groups in total and each group had a designated, password protected forum space, hosted by the university in England. The students were also given the option to communicate in an alternative platform of their choice. As much as possible I wanted to collect naturalistic data and try to minimize the influence of the researcher (myself) on the data. Incorporating flexibility into the design helped produce richer data, as students were not limited to a prescribed, monitored method of communication. This enabled potential access to a wider range of sources, selected according to students' personal preference, through which to investigate the complex phenomenon of online communication. Seven of the eleven groups opted to communicate in text format via 4 instant messaging platforms (Skype, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Kakao Talk).

The data from the forums was screen captured, and the students voluntarily submitted documentation of their communication in the alternative platforms. The 11 groups generated a total word count of 20,379. The dataset of 20,379 was inductively analyzed for paralinguistic features and communicative acts. This project generated data that was quantifiable but also relied upon qualitative methods to paint a more fine-grained picture. To gain greater understanding of the role that paralinguistic features played in the management of rapport it was important to analyze examples from the data using qualitative methods. Qualitative sequential discourse analysis focuses on both the sender and the receiver to analyze the message, as it deconstructs the sender's message and how the recipient responds. Darics (2013) proposes that this emic analytic approach can provide an interpretive framework for how paralinguistic features are used in a specific context. The focus is on contextually situating the features to determine their connection to the communicative act. The receivers' reactions to the communicative acts are analyzed to infer their judgements concerning the message. This focus on both the sender and the receiver to analyze the message is in keeping with the ontological and epistemological foundations of this research.

3 Alternative Communication Platforms and Communication Level

A combined dataset of 20,379 words was analysed for the YU-CU grouped section of the project. Chart 1 shows the combined word count for each group.

Group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Forum	496	564	1,308	1507	560	757	1,995	924	62	924	1,636
Other	1,559	1224	0	565	0	408	0	0	3108	1,175	1,607
Total Word Count	2,055	1,788	1,308	2,072	560	1,165	1,995	924	3,170	2,099	3,243

Chart 1: Combined corpus of data for each group.

Upon combining the data from the forums and alternative platforms, it becomes obvious that the groups that opted for an alternative method of communication generally created higher total word counts and communicated more. The four groups (numbers 3, 5, 7 and 8) that communicated only via the forum occupied the lower rankings of word count, ranking in 8th, 11th, 9th and 10th places respectively. A pattern emerged in all four groups; they focused on the educational tasks and after completing task 3, communication abruptly ended. The communicative focus tended to be on completing the educational objectives, with less relationally oriented pursuits.

The students in this project had a number of practical reasons that spurred their decision to change platforms. The ease and convenience of alternative platforms was the most frequently cited reason. Students also selected the alternative platforms based on relationally oriented goals. The students considered the context, their interactional goals, and then selected a platform that would meet their needs. Some example screenshots from the data (with identifying features obscured) that highlight the students' preferences can be found below in Figure 1.

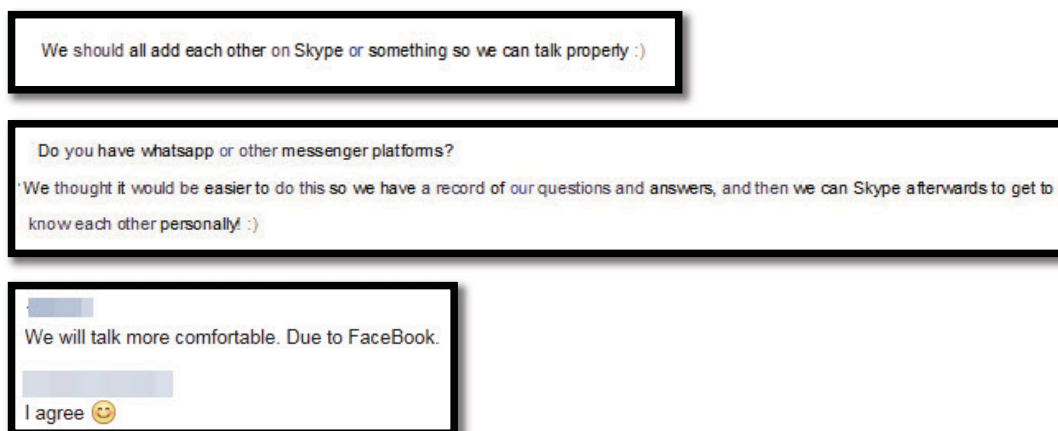


Figure 1: References to alternative platforms.

The data was analyzed and coded for the paralinguistic features that were used to imbue the online discourse with emotional tone and nuance. Of the total word count of 20,379, paralinguistic features accounted for 855 items. Paralinguistic features were by far the most commonly coded category, being used to varying degrees by every student. Paralinguistic features were found in 75% of all communicative turns, which highlights how pervasively they were used during the exchange. Paralinguistic features were used more frequently in the alternative platforms than in the forums. The combined total of paralinguistic features used in the forums was 324, and the total for the combined alternative platforms was 531. There were 207 more paralinguistic features coded in the alternative platform sources than in the forum data sources. This difference becomes even more pronounced when factoring in the word count, as the alternative data sources had 1,087 fewer words than the forum sources. Overall, the groups that communicated in the alternative platforms communicated more and engaged in more relationally oriented discussion (not pertaining to educational tasks), and included more paralinguistic features in their online communication.

4 Paralinguistic Features and Korean Students

Chart 2 shows the paralinguistic features that were coded in the dataset for this project. The inductive coding

of the data revealed a paralinguistic feature, the tilde ~, that to the best of my knowledge had not been reported in previous research related to virtual exchanges. Tildes were the third most frequently used feature, being used solely by the South Korean students. Interestingly, tildes are not used as a diacritical marker in Korean (Hangul) but they are used in online communication. The use of tildes was widespread among the South Korean students, with 13 of the 21 students using them, and they were found in 8 of the 11 YU-CU grouped interactions. Tildes were used by both male and female students; on 24 occasions they were used by male students and 33 by females. The Korean students used tildes repeatedly without concern about whether they would convey the intended meaning. This suggests that the students were unaware of the cultural specificity of this paralinguistic feature.

Paralinguistic feature	Frequency
Exclamation marks!	314
Multiple exclamation marks!!!	44
Emoticons	217
Emojis	144
Tilde ~	50
Multiple tildes ~~	7
Multiple full stops	55
Multiple question marks ????	24

Chart 2: Coded paralinguistic features in YU-CU grouped interactions

Upon examination of the data, it became apparent that tildes fulfilled a number of functions. They were used to create a positive emotional tone, to heighten the emotional valence of a message, to diffuse awkward situations, to restore harmony, and to mitigate potentially face-threatening acts. This paralinguistic feature played an important role in the Korean students' online communicative strategies. However, the South Korean students' apparent lack of awareness of the cultural specificity of this feature meant that they used tildes in nuanced ways which would decrease the efficacy of their communication, as their partners would have difficulty deciphering the intention from the linguistic context. Examples of tildes being used in a variety of contexts can be found below, in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Examples of Tildes from the dataset

After tildes emerged as a paralinguistic feature, I endeavored to discover as much information as possible about their use. Unfortunately, it proved difficult to find academic references to this feature, so I will provide an account based on resources available, including blog posts, Korean language tutorials, and reports. Tildes are now commonly used in South Korea as a paralinguistic feature in online, informal written communication, particularly in short message service (SMS) communications and on social media (90 Day Korean blogger, 2017; Jeon and Cukor-Avila, 2015; Jones and Hafner, 2012; Moon, n.d). Tildes are most commonly used at the

end of a sentence as an intonation marker to illustrate an elongating of the word to make it appear friendlier and more positive (90 Day Korean blogger, 2017; Jeon and Cukor-Avila, 2015; Chun, 2014; Jones and Hafner, 2012). The fluctuation and elongation of the intonation of a spoken word, which tildes represent online, evokes a specific cultural association in South Korea (90 Day Korean blogger, 2017; Jeon and Cukor-Avila, 2015, p. 90; Moon, n.d). This elongation is associated with a nasalization in speech that is characteristic of a childlike pattern (90 Day Korean blogger, 2017; Eom and Hong, 2015; Jeon and Cukor-Avila, 2015; Moon, n.d). This speech pattern is a form of aegyo (Hangul:애교). Aegyo means to act and speak in a childlike, cute, winsome manner (Puzar and Hong, 2018).

A tentative conclusion drawn from this data is that tildes are the written representation of this socio-cultural prosodic feature, and may be used to transfer some aspects of aegyo to an online setting. Exaggerated intonation and changes in pitch are the hallmarks of aegyo, so a tilde is used to represent this intonation online (90 Day Korean blogger, 2017; Jeon and Cukor-Avila, 2015; Moon, n.d). It acts as a marker for sweetness, and also to diffuse any possible negativity. Therefore, it plays an important role in the management of rapport for South Koreans in an online setting. However, as it is a culturally specific paralinguistic feature, its nuanced use would not be understood by individuals who do not share this specific cultural frame of reference. These tentative conclusions should be treated with caution as this relatively new cultural phenomenon requires more research to understand the complexities of this social behavior.

Emoticon Type	Positive horizontal emoticon		Positive vertical emoticon		Negative horizontal emoticon			Negative vertical emoticon		
Example	:)	:')	^^	>_<	:(	:-(	:'(	ㅍㅍㅍ	T.T	T-T
Description	Expresses happiness and positive emotions.		Expresses happiness and positive emotions. Only used by the Korean students.		Expresses sadness/regret/upset.			Expresses sadness/regret/upset. Only used by the Korean students.		
Frequency	195		9		7			6		

Chart 3: Examples of emoticons and their descriptions.

In addition to the use of tildes, there were cultural manifestations in the depiction of emoticons, as seen in Chart 3. As previously noted in research, vertical style emoticons are used in N.E. Asia (Park et al., 2013). My findings support this cultural manifestation in the display of emoticons, as the 15 instances of vertical style emoticons were used exclusively by the South Korean students.

Overall, however, the Korean students chose to use horizontal style emoticons instead of the vertical style typically favoured in South Korea (Park et al., 2013). The Korean students in this project may have had enough prior exposure to the conventionalized norm of using horizontal emoticons when communicating in English, so they could adapt accordingly. The vertical style emoticons were used by 8 of the 21 Korean students, but they were used infrequently, with even these students favouring the horizontal style instead. An example from the data (figure 3) lends some support to the hypothesis that the students were aware of cultural differences regarding emoticons. In this example, a Korean student used a negative vertical emoticon, explicitly explained the meaning and offered a ‘cultural’ translation, providing the horizontal equivalent. This student was aware of the cultural specificity of the emoticon and adapted accordingly. This same Korean student used another culturally specific paralinguistic feature (tilde ~) on nine occasions during their interactions with their partner. They did not offer a cultural translation of this feature, which suggests that they were unaware of its cultural specificity.

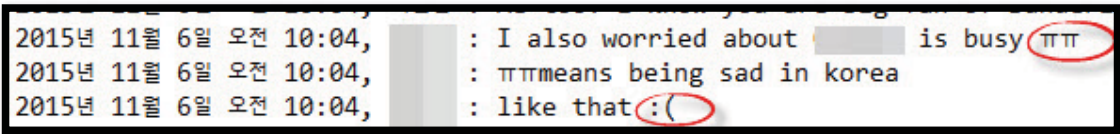


Figure 3: A Korean student providing a cultural translation of an emoticon.

The South Korean students in this study attuned to demonstrable differences in the depictions of emoticons, but failed to notice their partners' lack of use of tildes. This observation has implications for pedagogical practice, as it suggests that students have a potential blind spot. Language learners often focus on observable patterns and learn by focusing on details, but may not attune to the absence of a particular behaviour. This attention bias can result in useful information being overlooked. It is important for educators to be aware of this potential blind spot, as students need to develop strategies that will help them identify culturally specific aspects of communication, and this involves noticing behaviours both present and missing.

In addition to analyzing the data for manifestations of culture in paralinguistic features, this project was also focused on exploring how paralinguistic features are used in communicative acts, to determine if there are non-linguistic strategies that can facilitate online communication. Examination of the data revealed interesting patterns pertaining to the use of paralinguistic features in communicative acts. This information is pertinent to other educators as students can be taught non-linguistic strategies to help manage rapport in an online setting. Teaching students' strategies to use paralinguistic features to manage these encounters can decrease the stress associated with intercultural communication, particularly for those communicating in an L2.

5 Implications of Paralinguistic Features

Overall, the data revealed that paralinguistic features were used to create a warm, friendly, sociable atmosphere. Paralinguistic features were included in 57.7% of greetings and 68.1% of farewells. These acts help set the tone of a message, with paralinguistic features frequently being used to indicate friendliness. In addition, paralinguistic features were included in 70.8% of positive reactions to partners' utterances. The inclusion of paralinguistic features can enhance relational alignment by adding a friendly, intimate tone (Kaye et al., 2016). A positive response to an utterance can help to promote relational alignment as people like to feel valued by others. Online communication that is relationally oriented can benefit from the inclusion of paralinguistic features, as these features help to set the emotional tone and can signal intimacy and informality.

The data from this project revealed that paralinguistic features can also act as a substitute for linguistic indirectness. The analysis revealed that 32.6% of indirect requests included paralinguistic features in comparison to 63.3% of direct requests. This same pattern was evidenced in criticism, with 87.5% of overt criticism including paralinguistic features in comparison to the 42.9% evidenced in linguistically mitigated criticism. Educators should teach students alternative strategies that can be used in lieu of linguistic strategies. This is particularly important for beginner and intermediate level ESL students as these students may lack the language proficiency to add linguistic nuance. Paralinguistic features represent an alternative strategy that can be used to manage online communication as a substitute for linguistic nuance or mitigation. For example, if the temporal or linguistic demands of online communication result in a student having to write a direct request, they can pair this with a politeness marker, such as please, and include a paralinguistic feature to mitigate the potential threat associated with such directness.

Communicative acts that are typically associated with potential disharmony, such as corrections, criticism and coercion, require linguistic or non-linguistic management (or both) to minimize the potential threat to harmony. In this project, these acts included high rates of paralinguistic features, particularly those acts that were not linguistically mitigated. The findings showed that corrections had high rates of paralinguistic features, with 86.7% of all acts including one or more paralinguistic feature. The paralinguistic features softened the correction, acting like a linguistic hedge to minimize the potential threat. The communicative act of coercion had the highest inclusion rate, with 95.7% including paralinguistic features. Coercive requests typically stressed looming deadlines, an obligation, or offered appreciation in advance that made non-compliance difficult. Closer examination revealed that this communicative act was carefully constructed to invoke a change. Coercive requests relied on linguistic and paralinguistic nuance to attempt to achieve a desired communicative goal. Coercion can potentially threaten the equitable balance of an online relationship, and therefore needs to be approached carefully, to ensure harmony is maintained. Overall, the analysis revealed that paralinguistic features were used to manage relational harmony in communicative acts that could potentially threaten to disrupt harmony online.

6 Ending Thoughts and Recommendations

- Paralinguistic features aren't universal; there is cultural variation in paralinguistic features.
- Students may be unaware of online cultural diversity, and the manifestation of culture in their use of paralinguistic features. Practitioners should integrate awareness building activities into classroom practice, particularly activities that can raise students' awareness of the importance of recognizing patterns evidenced in communication and also the absence of features/behaviours.
- Paralinguistic features are used prolifically, so it is an essential skill to use these features appropriately in order to successfully communicate in an online environment.
- Students, particularly those communicating in an L2, can be taught some strategies to help them manage online interactions when temporal or linguistic demands prove stressful.
 - Paralinguistic features can create a warm, sociable atmosphere. By including paralinguistic features in greetings and farewells the student can help set a friendly tone.
 - Students can include paralinguistic features in positive reactions to their partners' utterances to help promote relational alignment.
 - In instances where the utterance is quite direct or potentially threatens harmony then the student should include paralinguistic features to mitigate this threat.
 - Paralinguistic features are a good addition to utterances that focus on restoring harmony (responding to an apology etc.).

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Pedagogy and Practice

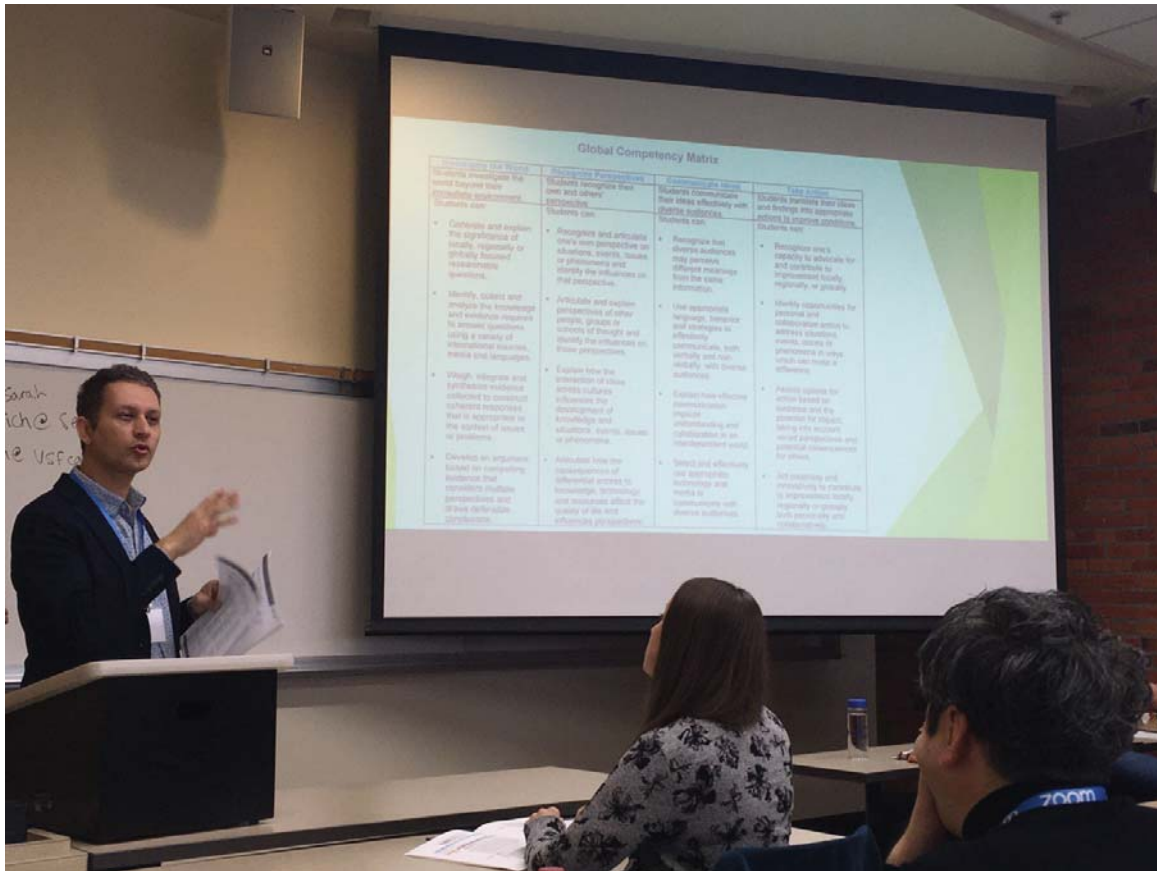


Photo by Natalia Dyba

Communicating in Writing	Recognizing Perspectives	Communicating in Speech	Using Language
Students investigate the world beyond their immediate environment. Students can:	Students recognize their own and others' perspectives. Students can:	Students communicate their ideas effectively with diverse audiences. Students can:	Students explore how ideas and feelings are appropriate subject to context, audience, students can:
• Describe and explain the significance of locally, regionally or globally focused phenomena, events, or perspectives. • Identify, select and evaluate the knowledge and evidence required to answer questions using a variety of appropriate sources, media and languages. • Weigh, integrate and synthesize evidence collected to construct coherent responses that is appropriate to the context of issues or problems. • Develop an argument based on compelling evidence that synthesizes multiple perspectives and drive effective applications.	• Recognize and articulate their own perspective on situations, events, issues or phenomena and identify the influences on that perspective. • Articulate and explain perspectives of other people, groups or society of thought and identify the influences on their perspectives. • Explain how the transmission of ideas across cultures influences the development of knowledge and education, social issues or phenomena. • Articulate how the transmission of different sources of knowledge, information and resources affect the quality of the and effective applications.	• Recognize how diverse audiences may perceive different messages from the same information. • Use appropriate language, register and strategies to effectively communicate, both verbally and non-verbally, with diverse audiences. • Express how effective communication requires understanding and collaboration in an interconnected world. • Select and effectively use appropriate knowledge and media to communicate with diverse audiences.	• Recognize one's capacity to advocate for and contribute to improvement locally, regionally, or globally. • Identify opportunities for personal and collaborative action to address students, events, issues or phenomena in ways which can make a difference. • Present options for action based on evidence and the analysis of impact, along with relevant social perspectives and potential consequences for others. • Set priorities and responsibility to contribute to improvement locally, regionally or globally with personal and collaborative.

Training for Virtual Exchange

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Abstract

Teaching in the global virtual exchange (GVE) environment often leads people to assume that they possess and develop skills and abilities connected with intercultural communication. It is believed that by cooperating with international partners instructors will learn through experience how to work globally and develop intercultural skills. However, this is not always the case. The Global Understanding project of East Carolina University illustrates the need for instructors to be trained in intercultural competencies. This presentation will demonstrate some of the false assumptions regarding the belief that working globally teaches intercultural skills and how a program of training was designed and delivered to raise competencies and enhance the instructors' intercultural abilities.

Keywords: global understanding project, intercultural competencies, intercultural skills, training, virtual exchange

1 Introduction

As the field of global virtual exchange (GVE) has expanded in recent years, many manuals and guides have been produced to help faculty become acquainted to the methodology. The most well-known are the COIL guides produced by the SUNY network (Faculty Guide for COIL course development, v.1.4); however, there are others available which either use the COIL as a basis or build their own structure. The majority of these guides provide a step-by-step approach to the “What” of creating a global virtual exchange (GVE). They refer to considerations which should be paid attention to when building a partnership and incorporating into the classroom structure. The SUNY COIL guide, for example, explains that faculty should consider issues of time, language, course content, assessment, technology, expectations and administrative issues. The University of Washington Bothell’s (Academic Connections Worldwide - COIL Initiative, 2019) online COIL guide adds power imbalances such as language and academic level to the considerations.

The guides are a good foundation for anyone wanting to start in the field and cover much of the structural considerations necessary in building a GVE course. However, the guides pay little attention to an essential part of the GVE methodology – intercultural awareness and communication which can be considered the be the “How” of GVE. Although instructors acknowledge the importance and relevance of intercultural outcomes through working in the GVE modality, the development of intercultural skills is often a side outcome of the GVE process. The focus of the training guides and workshops preparing instructors for GVE is often on content exchange and discussion of material relevant to the instructor’s course. The building of intercultural skills, which is central to the GVE methodology, is often ignored or taken for granted. Students engaging in this modality need to utilize their intercultural skills from the get-go – working with overseas partners, dealing with time zone differences, language issues and other cultural approaches to the materials being discussed. Therefore, there needs to be support not only on what is GVE but also how to deliver GVE in a successful manner.

The often-held assumption is that instructors who will be attracted to being involved in a GVE program will have a global outlook and have the abilities to work interculturally. It is supposed that these instructors know how to build intercultural skills and should be able to help their students through the processes of working globally. After all, the GVE instructor has to be willing to share part of their course with a partner and negotiate how the content overlaps as well as adjusting ensure that the connections are beneficial to student learning outcomes.

In established GVE centers, there is recognition that instructors in need intercultural training in order to successfully deliver a program in this modality. In the Global Understanding (GU) program, part of the Global Partners in Education (GPE) consortium at East Carolina University (ECU), we also recognize this need and are implementing a system wide online training program which will deliver three stages of professional development for all instructors (Global Partners in Education, 2019). The training will reach instructors in over 40 institutions in more than 20 countries worldwide ensuring that all those involved in delivering the program have access to training.

The structure of GU leads students involved in the program to build transferable intercultural skills. Over the course of one semester, students work with partners in small synchronous video and chat groups in up to 3 different countries. The program is student driven allowing the students freedom to explore the multi-disciplinary topics on College Life, Family Life, Meaning of Life and Stereotypes, with their partners in any manner they see fit. This puts more emphasis on the need for students to learn how to mediate, collaborate and communicate effectively with the culturally diverse partner students.

Instructors act as facilitators and although there is a content learning component, instructors cannot predict what will be discussed in the classes. The instructor guides the students and has to be flexible in managing the classroom interaction. The focus is on helping the students to process and understand the content of the discussions rather than steer the conversation in a certain direction. Therefore, there is a need for the instructors to be able to work with the students on their intercultural skills and support students in building appropriate communication management for working in the GVE environment.

2 Global Understanding Core

The GU “Core” is the what document of the program. It establishes the requirements and minimum expectations of all partners participating in GU and sets out the course goals and structure. At present, all

partners are expected to be familiar with Core and follow it in planning and running their course. This is where the traditional training of the GU program has focused to ensure that there is adherence to standards across the partnership. However, the training has largely ignored the intercultural communication needs of instructors and students. As such, the new training program is designed to increase student outcomes by focusing on and supporting pedagogical development in intercultural communication.

In the spring semester of 2019, a face-to-face pilot training program was developed to bring the initial ideas of improving instructor awareness of intercultural skills to the instructors at East Carolina University. Based on classroom observation, participant observation and feedback from partners, the training program was constructed to focus intercultural skills and needs in three main areas:

- Cultural intelligence
- Reflections
- Classroom management
- Teamwork and collaboration

These four areas were identified as key to the successful delivery and strengthening of the overall GU program quality. It was felt that although working on intercultural skills was the central aspect of the training it could not be the only focus. Therefore, the idea was to show how the concepts of cultural intelligence related to the practices of the instructors and students. The inclusion of reflection was based on feedback from students concerning the challenges in dealing the uncertainty of working in different cultural situations. For many GU students, this is the first program or opportunity they have to work with others outside their home country.

Classroom management was also seen as key part of the training as it was deemed important that the instructor's demonstrated their best intercultural practices to show by example how to work in this environment. Finally, the need to talk about teamwork and collaboration was to illustrate that awareness and sensitivity to the needs of your partners is essential in ensuring this modality is successful.

Through 5 two-hour meetings over the semester, the instructors met and participated in a workshop on each of the above areas with a feedback session for the final meeting. The training materials were designed to be applicable in a face-to-face setting as well as to be adaptable to an online environment. No materials were given to be read outside of the meetings as the training was designed not to be time consuming and to build on existing knowledge and understanding rather than engage in conceptual ideas of intercultural communication. The following is a description of the aim and activities undertaken in each of the trainings.

3 Cultural Intelligence

The training for cultural intelligence used the CQ scale (Dyne, Ang, & Koh, 2008). As the scale is known and has been part of the student evaluation for GU over the past several years, the aim of the training was to reinforce to the instructors an understanding of the skills that CQ evaluates and the aims of the GU program. The scale analyses skills in four areas: Drive (motivational), Action (behavioral), Strategy (metacognitive) and Knowledge (cognitive). Cultural intelligence is "defined as the ability to function effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity" (Ang & Dyne, 2008, p. 3). By raising instructor awareness of CQ the aim was to this definition and work to highlight that the cognitive, metacognitive, behavioral and motivational skills are equally important

The format of the training utilized a board game structure with the participants asked to decide to which CQ dimension 16 statements belonged. The statements were taken from the CQ self-assessment questionnaire and there were an equal number for each category. Not surprisingly, the majority of statements were believed to be Knowledge with very few seen to be part of the Strategy or Drive dimensions. Discussion of the statements led the participants to see the different skills being evaluated and which are necessary as part of CQ.

Overall, the training led to the recognition of soft skills and that developing intercultural skills is a process as well as an acceptable outcome: A learner gains Knowledge which leads to increased Drive to discover more and then requires Action to do so and Strategy to achieve the goal of gaining more cultural knowledge. Most importantly, the training led to a clearer understanding of Knowledge and the different types of knowledge – cognitive and metacognitive – that are part of cultural intelligence. The GU program leads to the building of

transferable soft skills as students transition through the three partners in the semester.

4 Reflections

The second part of the training program aimed to help instructors work on the evaluation of the CQ skills. Apart from the pre and post course surveys, which evaluate the students' CQ, there is a requirement in the GU program that each student completes some form of reflective exercise after each link. Approaching the reflection from an intercultural perspective, the purpose is for the learner to consider the different situations they faced and their strategy for working towards a successful outcome. Reflections focus more on the metacognitive aspects, exploring challenges and difficulties.

There is no one correct way of doing a reflective work and the instructors presented several different ways in which a reflection can be done. Some instructors create a questionnaire for students to complete asking them specific questions about what happened in the online activity that day. Other instructors ask students to collate material and create an ethnography to characterize the culture they have partnered with. Several also used online discussion boards for students to post comments and thoughts.

Two models of reflection were presented in the training: the DEAL model (Ash & Clayton, 2009) and the INCA portfolio approach (Byram, Kuhlmann, & Muller-Jacquier, 2009). The Describe, Examine and Articulate Learning model uses guided questions in the manner of some instructor's approaches. These questions are aimed to ask the learner to describe objectively the situation, examine the skills the used in working on the situation and then explain their overall experience. Through completing this type of activity, learners can ask what was going on, what they did and what happened to see the interconnected nature of the activity.

The INCA model, developed by Michael Byram et al., comes complete with an assessment rubric and observational model for the instructor to work alongside the learner in the classroom. This approach requires the use of recorded materials from the videoconferences to help the student decipher their actions and behavior. Furthermore, the combination of teacher observation and student reflection allows the comparison of note leading to an understand of how they reacted to certain situations. INCA also encourages dialogue through exploration of areas of disagreement between student to instructor and student to student. This leads to a good discussion board or weekly debriefing class.

The training focus was to understand that the aim of the reflection was to allow the student space in which to explore their development of cultural skills and understanding. Intercultural skills are built through the mindful reflection of behavior in a given situation and then the understanding of how that situation can be explored using different responses. Instead of seeing progress as a continuum, such as the IDI scale, the training introduced the idea of the Intercultural Pendulum. Learners should not be afraid of the 'swing' of developing their skills and accept that different factors influence whether they are capable of working through the situations they meet on any given day. The importance was to consider reflections as part the learner's own ongoing dialogue concerning their progress and development and the role of the instructor as a mentor in this situation.

5 Classroom Management

The training on classroom management used several scenarios that are part of the GU program environment. These scenarios concerned four aspects of the GU environment that point to the type of methodology and approach necessary. The first scenario concerned Effective Participation with the situation of a group of students with different communication styles. The second scenario concerned Conversations and a situation where a student ignored their partner's questions to lead the conversation in a different direction.

The third scenario focused on a Taboo Topic and dealing with situations that could be culturally sensitive or create a potential conflict not only with partners but also among the students in class. The final topic illustrated a challenge instructors face relating to Teacher Intervention in discussions.

Each scenario was presented to a group of instructors who worked together discussing the key points of the situation and sharing experience to work out possible outcomes. As the situations were based on actual events, the conversations allowed instructors to examine their own responses and hear from colleagues about issues that were faced in the GU classroom. It is important to understand that in this training there were no

right or wrong approaches, allowing instructors to explore the consequence of their action or inaction during discussions in a hypothetical environment. When giving feedback the groups were able to listen to each other's approaches, see where they shared commonalities and investigate the different methods in dealing with the situations.

This worked to build a shared understanding of the methodological approaches needed in this type of modality. Instructors are used to being in control of the direction of conversation and acting more as a moderator leading conversation in a direction with a clear learning goal. The GU modality, as it is peer led, leads to situations where conversations take directions that are not foreseen. In such situations, instructors often struggle with whether to redirect conversations to focus on certain goals they have in mind. The GU model emphasizes the importance of students building rapport through conversation as well as the freedom of exploring a topic without set goals and parameters. In such a manner, students are allowed to build their intercultural skills.

6 Teamwork and Collaboration

In a similar manner to the idea of the scenarios, the training on teamwork and collaboration was aimed at helping instructors understand the need for their flexibility when working with others. Although the GU model does provide local time for instructors to work on their own college curriculum requirements, most of the time when linking is based on a shared understanding of an interdisciplinary model. This means that although the ECU class might be classed as Sociology, Ethnic Studies or Political Science the partners the students are linking with will probably not be majoring or studying these subjects in their institution. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that the links do not become focused on subject requirements and remain peer led discussions. The training model was aimed to raise awareness of this and explain the areas for cooperation between instructors.

The first aspect was to consider the different Teams involved in the GU program. The Core Team is comprised of the Instructor and their Tech Support as these two people work together to ensure that the pedagogical and technical requirements of the class run smoothly. The second team is the Class Team which comprises of the Core Team and the Students working together to deliver the activities in the link. The third team was the Link Team which comprises both partner's teams working together. It was important to show that both sides involved in the program have to go through the same processes in setting up their class, working alongside the technical support staff and involving students in order to be successful.

This visualization allowed the second aspect of collaboration to be seen in action as a successful outcome only occurs when all the teams are working together. As was said before, instructors are used to having only to worry about their own course delivery and structure. Working in GU requires you to be more aware of your reliance on your partner and your relationship with them to produce a successful outcome. It was necessary in the training to illustrate that the considerations that the instructors are making for their class are often mirrored by their partner.

7 Training Outcomes and Evaluation

The training highlighted the need for work on overall best practices and the sharing of activity in the GU program. Although each faculty member of GU was given a stipend for attending the initial training, since then there has been increased cooperation among the instructors with regular monthly meetings to share ideas and problems. The elevated level of teamwork has been a successful outcome and there is more engagement with the instructors in the GU program.

One of the outcomes has been an overall awareness of the needs of partners and the necessity to cooperate with other instructors to create a successful class. There is a heightened recognition of partner needs and their curriculum requirements as well as their flexibility. An illustration of this is with class timings and adjustments to make links work after changes to Daylight Saving Time. Biannually, the change to DST or end of DST causes issues as many partners do not adjust to DST and this moves classes out of sync. As a centrally managed program, classes are assigned times and the expectation has been for the non-DST country to adjust to the DST country. However, as instructors are now more aware, just as classes in ECU are scheduled and difficult to move our partners often face the same restrictions. This has led to more negotiations and flexibility with some ECU classes adjusting to start slightly earlier to maintain links and connections.

Another outcome has been that instructors are working harder to motivate their students and encourage them to work with their partners. The instructors are more aware of the skill set needed and can offer students guidance and support in building rapport in the class, which leads to greater communication outside of class. For example, when working with partners where technology might be a challenge, there is an awareness that the technology is as much a challenge for them as it is for us. Understanding this has not led to a decrease in motivation and often students will explore other means of communication to overcome the barrier. This is often shown in the reports from partners which comment on the successful rapport that was built when working with the ECU groups. There is now higher interaction and one-to-one communication between the students from the different countries when linking.

The final and perhaps most important outcome has been the recognition and increased understanding of the intercultural skills students need to build. There is greater guidance to aid students in creating approaches needed to work in culturally diverse situations. In situations where language has been a problem, solutions have been found to encourage communication and maintain the rapport. In one class, students combined the use of an online messenger tool with videoconference to ensure that the questions being asked were clear and that the answers being given were understood. The building of successful strategies to overcome the issues illustrates the development of cultural skills and emphasizes the students desire to achieve a successful outcome in the links.

8 Conclusions

The main conclusion to be drawn from this training program is that although the instructors had been involved in the delivery of a GVE program for several years and had extensive experience they still benefited from the work on intercultural skills and methodology. In beginning the training, the trainer assumed that much of the planned work would cover areas already understood, implemented and used in the instructors' teaching practice. However, the training highlighted the need for a structured program to instruct on the fundamentals of intercultural communication. It also focused the trainer's understanding of the need to reinforce that soft skills can be considered as part of the course outcomes and not as by-products of the interaction.

Moreover, the outcomes of the training point to the fact that practice in the field of GVE requires a degree of understanding of intercultural communication. Not only are the instructors working in an intercultural environment, but the students look to the instructors for the guidance and support that they need in dealing with cultural diversity in this setting. Regardless of experience in the classroom or work with overseas colleagues, conceptualizing intercultural skills and the development of those skills is challenging. Instructors are used to focusing on measurable data for their assessments of student knowledge. The development of students' intercultural skills and their application in the classroom is harder to assess and often more difficult to notice.

It is now the plan of the GPE organization to roll out the training to instructors globally in an online training format. The three-level training program will first cover the basic "What" manual of the GU program – the Core – before expanding to illustrate best practices (the "How"), drawing on methodology used across the partnership network. The best practices will be inherently and tacitly intercultural by design, with the purpose of the methodology to support instructors in helping with the development of intercultural skills in the classroom. A third phase of specific intercultural training (the "Why") will also be rolled out to allow instructors to access more theoretical background and understand some of the concepts behind the best practice goals and ideas. Level one first best-practice training in "How to deliver GU" is required before an instructor can enter the classroom. Training in the manner described above will provide a framework for instructors to understand the different aspects of intercultural communication and become more aware of how these skills produce positive outcomes in the classroom environment.

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Transnational Education and Community Health Collaboratory (TEACH Colab) – From the West Coast (US) to Waterford (Ireland)

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Abstract

TEACH Colab (Transnational Education and Community Health Collaboratory) is a COIL global teaching project which connects faculty, staff and students across institutions (the University of Washington Bothell, Institute of Technology, Carlow, and Waterford Institute of Technology) in two countries (US and Ireland). It enables students to examine health-related issues through a cross-cultural and trans-disciplinary lens and encourages collaborative global reflection. Critically, this is achieved without requiring students to travel abroad; by implementing virtual exchange with international partners students get to examine module content as part of the global teaching curriculum in areas such as social determinants of health, community connectedness, health literacy and equality. This has enabled students to apply communication skills that foster meaningful connection with others from different regions of the world, and develop self-awareness and an appreciation for cultural diversity, as opposed to ethnocentrism. In 2019, 3 vocational traineeships with international community partners will deepen this learning.

Keywords: cultural diversity, global reflection, health, teach colab, virtual exchange

1 Introduction

HealthConnect, funded by the Government of Ireland HEA Mobility Programme (2017-18), was established in 2017 as a global teaching project between staff at Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT), Institute of Technology Carlow (ITC) and the University of Washington Bothell (UWB). It sought to examine specific and pertinent health-related issues through a cross-cultural lens and encourage collaborative efforts in addressing these issues in a global way. In 2019, the project expanded to work across disciplines beyond the traditional health realm and outside the third level sector to engage community health partners as active teachers and learners in the partnership. To reflect this new emphasis the title of the project was revised to TEACH Colab (Transnational Education and Community Health Collaboratory).

2 Innovative Curriculum

To date, HealthConnect and now TEACH Colab has enabled the first steps towards an innovative internationalized curriculum in the areas of the social determinants of health, community connectedness, health literacy and equality that was developed collaboratively between all partners. Exposing students to this curriculum offers them an opportunity to examine a specific subject or module content through a cross-cultural or global – and often interdisciplinary – lens, working collaboratively to address globally relevant issues. Ultimately, it deepens global engagement of students in the classroom without requiring travel abroad, by implementing virtual exchange with international partners. Virtual exchange encompasses co-teaching and assessment along with providing opportunities (via sharing blogs and padlet contributions) for students to interact and share knowledge and learning experiences. These opportunities enable students apply communication skills that help build rapport with others from different regions of the world, and develop self-awareness and an appreciation for cultural diversity, as opposed to ethnocentrism. Currently this is applied to 4 modules with a further 3 modules planned for 2020.

In addition to the virtual exchange, mobility opportunities to Ireland and the US will be provided for students (n=2 from Ireland; n=1 from the US) in 2020. Students will work with community partners in addition to engaging in learning opportunities at the host institution.

3 Implications and Relationships

Real and sustainable relationships have been established between the Irish and US partners in 6 site visits and 22 Zoom planning meetings from 2017-19. In 2020, capacity building in the areas of Digital Story Telling and Pedagogy will be delivered in Ireland by US partners to enhance virtual learning opportunities for students in the future. While plans to formally evaluate the collaboration are underway, significant gains have been made to date that include co-teaching of content and linking students via online co-assessments. The limitations identified by the team that are being addressed are the capacity of staff and students to use COIL technologies available as well as the practical limitations of a) time zone differences that impede synchronous teaching and b) differences in semester schedules that limits the overlap of modules for co-teaching and assessment.

The initial first steps of the TEACH Colab project detailed here have provided significant learnings for the team. These lessons that have informed the strategic direction for 2020 in the areas of capacity building and student exchange which, is hoped, will lay the foundation for a promising journey ahead.

Internationalization at Home and Virtual Team Collaboration Meet Global Challenges: A Practical Approach to International Business

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Abstract

As the effects of Internationalization at Home (IaH) experiences are only beginning to be understood, academic research is necessary to better comprehend the impact of such activities on students' skills and competencies. This will help develop proper teaching practices that optimize the process, results and effort required to better equip students with the desired global skills.

In this paper, we have described our intercultural virtual exchange experience (IVEX) planning process as well as the challenges faced throughout the execution of the activities. The research method applied to measure and track the predicted results have also been described, and the results from the experimental measures were analyzed to understand the effects of virtual exchange over student's cultural competency (CQ). A considerable amount of practical learning was derived from this experience and can prove to be useful to others attempting to replicate such activity with their students. Therefore, we have integrated this knowledge into a framework, added practical advice and divided the same into sequential steps which outline the critical aspects of implementing virtual international collaboration.

Strategic planning aspects have been discussed that need to be considered when planning a virtual project teamwork collaboration project. Using a case study format, the same project was mirrored with business school students in the US and the University in Brazil where students learned about globalization while experiencing the practical communication dimensions as they work together for a period of ten weeks in each round. In this project, students in both countries worked in multicultural teams on a four-phase project for ten weeks in which they analyzed international markets for a company's internationalization.

We have discussed how our well-coordinated, carefully crafted IaH activity with special attention to pedagogy and cultural differences provided the students in both universities the opportunity to learn about going global. It also enabled them to experience the challenges faced in developing intercultural competency and to gain practical experience without leaving "home."

Keywords: Internationalization at Home (IaH), Intercultural Virtual Exchange (IVEX), Global Collaboration, Global Learning Experience (GLE), Multicultural Teamwork, Cultural Competence (CQ).

1 The underlying realities and the global challenges

Global collaboration is a driver of innovation and scientific discovery but simultaneously presents numerous challenges related to a range of styles of communication as well as diverse decision-making patterns and creates possible conflicts in multicultural environments. Therefore, developing students' intercultural competencies would enhance their global skills as well as broaden their employability and career prospects. Furthermore, considering the fact that many academic, business, and political issues cannot be resolved on a one city/country basis, we should be able to equip students with the tools to collaborate and respond to a variety of problems, experiences and solutions possible across language and culture barriers globally.

With the rise in globalization, mastering intercultural virtual collaboration skills has increasingly become relevant for success across borders irrespective of whether a professional is pursuing a global career track or prefers working within the confines of their country. The need to be able to communicate and work with and deliver results in projects across cultures, borders, and time zones has become undeniable. Moreover, in business interactions, academic activities as well as political environments, the increasing need to work in intercultural and virtual teams across borders and cultures to make joint decisions and/or solve problems has increased exponentially in the past few years.

The underlying reality is that many teams attempting to work across cultures are unsuccessful due to lack of experience and low cultural intelligence and competence and at best produce mediocre results. As students graduate and move on to higher institutions, they will probably need to compete with a global talent that might be better attuned to intercultural collaboration. Therefore, our aim is to help develop skills, provide them with an experience that mimics many collaboration projects across borders and cultures, and guide them to learn, practice, and acquire CQ.

As the effects of IaH coupled with intercultural virtual team collaboration experiences are only beginning to be understood, academic research is required to better comprehend the impacts of such activities over students' skills and competencies as well as to help develop proper teaching practices that optimize the process, results, and effort essential for the classroom and beyond.

2 Planning, designing, and crafting the global learning experience

To address some of these issues, two professors (the researchers presenting this work) teaching the same subject matter course in internationalization in different universities in different countries decided to develop an experimental research. This research was aimed to study how, through activity collaboration, intercultural teams can increase their communication and comfort level and be able to work together to solve problems and produce quality coursework, while overcoming culture and language barriers and successfully conduct research work and deliver their papers.

The planning process took three months and involved several virtual meetings between both professors. We first took the time to get to know each other's teaching philosophy, goals, and objectives of engaging in such collaboration, explored possible research avenues, and only then decided to move forward to the stage of planning with a preliminary understanding of creating a Global Learning Experience (GLE). We first synchronized our weekly lesson plans and agreed on project work for the course and the structure and frequency of the deliverables. We developed and used the same rubrics and grading points in both our courses and added a cultural comparison introduction for students so they can familiarize themselves with the cultural differences between Brazil and the US and how it may affect their initial interactions.

Students from both countries were separated into teams comprising two students from one university and two to four students from the US university. As in many universities in the US, some were foreign students and others were from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. However, the student ethnic and cultural make-up in the Brazilian university was more homogenous.

The first activity was for the students to introduce themselves to their team members by video, explore and agree on the best method of contact with each other, and select a company for which they would be planning an international expansion.

The next step was to agree on two countries for which the international expansion of the chosen company seemed feasible and the justification of their choices. Based on this framework, students had to perform an

analysis of the macro and microenvironments to identify the constraints for their internationalization strategy in each of the markets as well as a cultural assessment. Each step was documented and served as building block to compose the final paper. Additionally, students had to make a joint PowerPoint presentation summarizing their final project proposal.

These activities were purposely selected to essentially mimic a corporate project team in charge of gathering information for a global expansion initiative sharing work, responsibilities, and recommendations. The same involved a modular project approach that entailed four parts and many opportunities for the team to work in collaboration in a virtual environment. This process helped the team divide and re-assign work based on individual strengths and weaknesses as well as performance, while we could follow the improvement in product quality and delivery. Our research experiment assessed team progress and experience through a quantitative survey at the beginning of the course and another at the end as well as qualitative journals mid-course and at the end.

It is noteworthy that the framework does not actually convey any information that intuition might not generate naturally. There are, however, two important reasons why it is quite beneficial. The first is that it is the result of an empirical application of a virtual exchange experience after two rounds and was refined to include the critical aspects that can make such experience successful. The second aspect relies on the details within each step as presented in the following table.

Step	Critical issues
Find a partner	a. Secure institutional support b. Partner with someone with whom you share affinity c. Make your expectations clear d. Establish common goals e. Assure that both sides will benefit from the experience
Plan all joint activities	a. Define with clarity and details what will be expected from the students b. Produce a schedule with concrete deliverables c. Define and explain the expected outcomes and how students will be assessed d. Start the activity according to schedule
Keep communication flowing	a. Establish clear channels of communication b. Brief, propose and recommend to the students the relevant tools and modes to communicate with each other c. Send reminders to students for upcoming deadlines d. Establish the right time zone for the deadlines to avoid confusion e. Mediate, if necessary, when problems in particular teams arise
Measure outcomes	a. Define clear indicators to accompany the expected results f. Check if the goals and objectives are being accomplished
Feedback	a. Provide and receive feedback from the students g. Implement improvements for the next rounds

Table 1: Steps to implement a successful IVEX

According to Stier (2009), “in itself intercultural competence is multifaceted and complex, where certain skills probably cannot be obtained via higher education, but must result from exposure, first-hand experience and reflection.” Therefore, it was our primary goal to provide the experience that otherwise might not be attainable to the students. Using both quantitative and qualitative measures, we could learn about the students’ perception, attitude, as well as how practical deliverables have improved their team collaboration efforts and success with each step of the modular approach. Based on their reflections, we learned that as they spent more time collaborating and brainstorming, it became easier for them to communicate and understand the other side’s workstyle, expectations, limitations and strengths, as well as time constraints and intercultural factors.

As the effects of global virtual exchange experiences are still predominantly undocumented, such experiments remain necessary to understand the impacts of such activities over students’ acquisition of CQ, that is, skills and competencies to successfully increase their career preparedness and prospects in a global economy. The quantitative tool we used was the cross-cultural competence inventory. It is divided into six dimensions: (i) Willingness to Engage; (ii) Cognitive Flexibility & Openness; (iii) Emotional Regulation; (iv) Tolerance of Uncertainty; (v) Self-Efficacy; and (vi) Ethnocultural Empathy. Each of these dimensions is subdivided into variables according to the characteristics they describe. We tested each variable and found significant improvement in nine of them. For the other two variables, we found marginally significant results.

3 Preliminary conclusions

As the course proceeded, group communication improved in flow and rhythm as reflected in the students’ journals. Moreover, the surveys indicated an improvement in the perception, engagement, and understanding of interaction in an intercultural environment and, in general, in the comfort and willingness to engage. Overall, it is interesting that some of the competencies discussed in the literature are actually developed in students that go through virtual exchange activities in the same way as a regular exchange (Ross et al. 2009; Jarvenpaa and Leidner 1999). This provides quantitative evidence to support the idea that virtual exchange can, in many ways, develop cultural competence in a manner similar to a regular exchange. However, further research is required to help find and define other aspects of cultural competence that could be improved with virtual exchange as well as to understand other aspects of learnership that can be enhanced with such an experience.

In their pursuit to learn about global business and internationalization, the students also had an international virtual experience that sharpened their communication, problem-solving, presentation, writing and collaboration skills, making it easier for them to adapt to a real-life intercultural teamwork situation. Our learning outcomes are derived from the pedagogical strategy we utilized, that is, primary research collection work and reflections. We used the cross-cultural competence inventory in our research and tested each variable, finding significant improvement in nine of them. For the other two variables, we found marginally significant results. Furthermore, when combining the quantitative and qualitative data and information, we observed an increase in openness and flexibility. Based on the students’ ongoing project activities and their journaling information, we observed an increased willingness to explore. As they practiced skills required to collaborate, they became more mindful by experiencing different intercultural communication styles first-hand in terms of language, culture, modes of interaction, time difference, and more. It is possible that some of these skills and experiences could not have been acquired through the standard curriculum but through this ‘hands-on’ intercultural virtual exchange experience. A well-designed and implemented curriculum offered the path for students to learn, experience, acquire, reflect, and implement intercultural skills in real-time and in what might mirror an authentic and realistic collaboration experience. It also offered us, the facilitators and authors, the opportunity to learn, measure, and apply the most relevant, practical, and useful pedagogy.

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Language Learning and Cultural Exchange in Teletandem: The Case of UNESP and UW

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Abstract

The Teletandem Brasil Project, an initiative from São Paulo State University (UNESP), has been fostering virtual exchange for foreign language learning since 2007. The Araraquara campus of UNESP and the Seattle campus of the University of Washington have established a successful online cultural and linguistic exchange since 2015. This paper provides an overview of how the project is organized. It also focuses on the students' reactions and opinions about how the teletandem practice has helped them to develop both their language and intercultural skills. In addition, we will introduce the Matrix of Global Competence, which was created by a U.S. Task Force in 2011, and how it has been recently incorporated in the Teletandem practice of students at UNESP and the UW.

Keywords: Matrix of Global Competence, Portuguese, Teletandem, Virtual Exchange

1 Introduction

The present scenario of globalization and intercultural communication afforded by digital tools brings significant impact on the way we understand the relationship between language, communication, and society. It also impacts language learning, enabling interactions among people with different horizons of understanding, which may lead to the development of intercultural citizenship (Byram, 2014). Teletandem is a collaborative learning model based on tandem learning that makes use of video-conferencing tools, such as Skype, to put people in contact to learn foreign languages collaboratively. Each person in the partnership helps his/her partner to learn his/her native language or a language in which he or she is proficient in.

Tandem is the name given to those bikes that have two seats and two sets of pedals. It represents a metaphor for collaborative learning through the image of the two persons on such bike having to work collaboratively to ride it together. In the case of language learning, this collaborative work lies in the fact that each person in the partnership is both a foreign language learner and a mentor of his or her own language. According to O'Rourke (2007: 44), tandem learning represents a context where "learners can take control of and responsibility for their own learning", for it is based on autonomy. Originally, according to Vassallo and Telles (2006), the conception of in-tandem learning arose in Germany in the 1960s and was based on promoting partnerships for face-to face encounters between learners of foreign languages. The authors explain that it was only in the 1970s, in Spain, that the name Tandem was used, and that during the 1990s the systematization of the principles effectively occurred.

2 Brasil Project

Based on the theorization of tandem learning, Telles and Vassallo (2006) proposed the Teletandem Brasil Project, in which collaborative learning in tandem takes place through digital resources on the internet, such as Skype or other video-conferencing applications. The fundamental principles underlying a tandem/teletandem partnership are the principle of equality (or separation of languages), reciprocity, and autonomy. This narrative describes the Teletandem partnership between São Paulo State University (UNESP), Araraquara campus, and the Seattle campus of the University of Washington (UW). Since 2015, both institutions have developed this collaborative project with students interested in practicing English and Portuguese.

The teletandem sessions are scheduled during the times of the Portuguese classes at the University of Washington while Brazilian students from UNESP register for the virtual exchange as an extracurricular activity. Each Skype session is 50-minute long, from which 25 minutes are in Portuguese and the remaining 25 minutes in English. Students are paired up and they interact during 4 or 5 sessions per quarter. In general, participants can choose the topics for their conversation and in some of the courses there is a list of suggested topics or assigned readings and videos that both cohorts of students discuss during the Teletandem sessions. There is an effort to maintain the same partner in each interaction in order to promote relationship building in addition to the linguistic and cultural development. After each interaction, Brazilian students participate in a mediation session in Portuguese coordinated by a teaching assistant, in which they reflect on their experiences. The U.S. students reflect on their exchange during the next regular Portuguese class with their instructor's assistance. The reflections in beginning level Portuguese classes in the U.S. are conducted in English, while the discussions in the intermediate and advanced Portuguese classes are done in Portuguese. Students in Brazil receive a certificate of participation in the project, while the U.S. students participate as part of a regular language class and their written reflection and participation is worth 10% of their final grade for the Portuguese class.

3 Survey Findings

We have conducted several surveys over the past five years since the Teletandem Brasil Project has been established between the UW and UNESP. Overall, students are very satisfied with this virtual exchange and they highly recommend it. In the UNESP campus, many students participate in the Teletandem Brasil Project for several semesters, which shows their commitment to the program since their participation is part of an extra-curricular activity. The comment below is from a student in the São Paulo State University and it reflects the enthusiasm of many participants of the teletandem project in Brazil and in the United States:

The experience exceeded my expectations! Both because of the program itself, in relation to the resources and commitment of the teletandem team, as well as my interaction with my partner! I noticed a good evolution of my English and I believe that the colleague managed to articulate the

communication well in Portuguese. We help each other and established a good partnership. I believe the experiment was successful. I hope to repeat it! (UNESP Student – translated from Portuguese by the authors).

The example above shows that students are not only paying attention to their own language production, but also to that of their teletandem partners. There is a sense of collaboration among most participants, where the success of their partners is important as well and working in collaboration and learning from each other becomes the goal of a successful virtual exchange. The comment below from a first-year student taking Portuguese at the University of Washington is a good snapshot of the students' opinions about the Teletandem Brasil Project:

Overall, I find these exchanges really impactful and interesting. I learned a lot about Brazil from them and I shared my experiences with them as an immigrant living in America. I think the exchange was an interesting aspect of this class and I also think it will be interesting to have this exchange in person because it helped me learn Portuguese from someone else different from the instructor and I think that is very helpful, especially to someone like me who finds it challenging to articulate her thoughts in Portuguese (UW Student).

As in the example above, many of the comments from the students taking Portuguese reflect their desire to use the Portuguese language outside the classroom. In their opinion, the teletandem allows them to articulate ideas at their own pace in the additional language with someone around their age, which is normally the case in the interactions. Many students also commented on how this virtual exchange helped them to build up their confidence in the foreign language by realizing that they are able to convey a message in another language. Both Brazilian and U.S. students in the Teletandem Brasil Project have a range of levels in their target language, from beginning to advanced levels. Despite of how low their language skills are, the Teletandem is seen by the majority of the participants as a motivational factor to encourage them to improve their language abilities. Many students continued to communicate with their colleagues long after the Teletandem Project is over. In fact, students are encouraged by their language instructors to exchange their contacts and to continue in contact with their tandem partners. In addition to the linguistic development, students have a window to another culture through their international colleagues, learning about aspects of Brazil and the United States not always presented in textbooks and the perspective of others on current events, both in Brazil and in the United States. This has been one of the most enriching aspects of this virtual exchange for many participants.

4 Global Competence Matrix and the Brasil Project

More recently, since the Spring quarter of 2019, the teletandem project at the UW and UNESP has adopted the Global Competence Matrix as a tool used during the mediation sessions. The Global Competence Matrix was developed in 2011 by a U.S. Task Force on Global Competence with the support from the Council of Chief State School Officers' EdSteps Initiative & the Asia Society Partnership. Global competence is described by the Task Force as the following: "Global Competence is the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance" (Boix Mansilla & Jackson, 2011: xviii).

Having this concept in mind, the Global Competence Matrix is a tool that can be used in several educational settings. In the case of the Teletandem Brasil Project between UNESP and UW, the matrix is used as a way to make students think deeper about issues of relevance to them, which can involve social justice issues and current themes, such as political elections and Government reforms. Students try then to make connections with the issues in the matrix by presenting the topics to each other and articulating their perspectives. They also practice how to communicate ideas in a way that is both respectful and effective. Finally, students discuss possibilities of taking actions on issues that are important to them. Since we have been using the Global Competence Matrix, many issues of relevance to university students in Brazil and in the United States have risen, such as women's equality and anti-harassment movements, as the U.S. #Metoo movement and the Brazilian #Deixaetrabalhar. Another example of a relevant topic to students is the budget cuts in higher education in Brazil, which took place in the Spring quarter of 2019, during the time of the Teletandem interactions between UNESP and UW students.

INVESTIGATE THE WORLD	RECOGNIZE PERSPECTIVES	COMMUNICATE IDEAS	TAKE ACTION
Students investigate the world beyond their immediate environment	Students recognize their own and others' perspectives	Students communicate their ideas effectively with diverse audiences.	Students translate their ideas and findings into appropriate
Students: - Identify an issue, generate a question, and explain the significance of locally, regionally, or globally focused researchable questions. - Use a variety of languages domestically and international sources and media to identify and weigh relevant evidence to address a globally significant researchable question. - Analyze, integrate, and synthesize evidence collected to construct coherent responses to globally significant researchable questions. - Develop an argument based on compelling evidence that considers multiple perspectives and draws defensible conclusions.	Students: - Recognize and express their own perspective on situations, events, issues, or phenomena and identify the influences on that perspective. - Examine perspectives of other people, groups, or schools of thought and identify the influences on those perspectives. - Explain how cultural interactions influence situations, events, issues, or phenomena, including the development of knowledge. - Articulate how differential access to knowledge, technology, and resources affects quality of life and perspectives.	Students: - Recognize and express how diverse audiences may perceive different meanings from the same information and how that affects communication. - Listen to and communicate effectively with diverse people, using appropriate verbal and nonverbal behavior, languages, and strategies. - Select and use appropriate technology and media to communicate with diverse audiences. - Reflect on how effective communication affects understanding and collaboration in an interdependent world.	Students: - Identify and create opportunities for personal or collaborative action to address situations, events, issues, or phenomena in ways that improve conditions. - Assess options and plan actions based on evidence and the potential for impact, taking into account previous approaches, varied perspectives, and potential consequences. - Act, personally or collaboratively, in creative and ethical ways to contribute to improvement locally, regionally, or globally and assess the impact of the actions taken. - Reflect on their capacity to advocate for and contribute to improvement locally, regionally, or globally.

Chart 1: Main Global Competence Matrix, created by the 2011 U.S. Global Competence Task Force

5 Conclusion

Overall, the experience with the Teletandem Brasil Project between the São Paulo State University and the University of Washington has been successful in providing students in both institutions with an outlook into another culture and the possibility of practicing their language skills in a foreign language. As this virtual exchange takes its shape, the reflections are seen as an essential part of the learning process, for it supports participants to understand the sessions as going beyond chatting. The teletandem practice without reflection runs the risk of reinforcing stereotypes about culture and language rather than deconstructing them. In addition, using tools as the Global Competency Matrix can provide scaffolding for such reflections.

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Faculty Development in Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL):

Interdisciplinary Perspectives and Practices

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Abstract

This panel shares the experiences of an interdisciplinary faculty cohort at a U.S. university campus who have participated in a learning community (LC) on Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL). Participants focused on developing approaches and skills in fostering international learning through virtual platforms. . Goals of the panel include: 1. to explore funded LCs as a faculty development approach to develop skills and experiences in COIL; 2. to examine pedagogical innovations that emerged through the exchange on a series of different topics ranging from course design to partner cultivation and digital technologies; and 3. to address challenges the members of this LC have encountered in identifying and establishing partnerships, engineering COIL components into their teaching, and then to reflect on possible solutions. The panel seeks to engage the audience in discussion on the role and outcomes of structured professional development opportunities that focus on virtual learning and promote international exchange.

Keywords: Interdisciplinary, Learning Community, Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), virtual platforms, pedagogy, practice

1 Introductions

Chair: Say a brief word about yourself, your involvement with COIL and the Learning Community (LC)

Tang: I am a lecturer in Media and Communication Studies at the School of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences, University of Washington Bothell. I am a scholar of global communication and journalism, with prior professional experiences as a journalist for both TV and print media. The courses I have taught span across first year to senior undergraduate level including Introduction to Journalism, Critical Media Literacy, Global Digital Industries and Chinese Media and Society. My scholarship and teaching are by nature global and international as I am devoted to promoting a non-U.S. centric and globally minded curriculum. COIL comes as a natural connection to my teaching and pedagogical philosophy.

Al-Noori Response: Having originally come to the United States as an international student and in my current capacity as a faculty member on a very diverse campus, I have developed an awareness of the invaluable richness, understanding, and growth that emerges from collaboration across cultures. This awareness is also informed by recognition of the importance of reducing barriers to communication that result from stereotypes and lack of cultural understanding. COIL resonates with me as a platform from which to promote global understanding. The COIL LC supported this platform through the participation of faculty from interdisciplinary backgrounds that served as a model in which to practice communication across fields and disciplines and underscore the importance of different perspectives in COIL.

West: In the spring of 2020, I will teach my first COIL course with third-quarter freshmen. The course, Women's Empowerment: A Critical Media Justice Approach, seeks to offer a unique global learning experience in collaboration with an international university COIL partner along with the Women in the World Summit (WIWS) 2020 – a live/online journalistic platform that amplifies the unheard voices of global women on the front lines of change.

Integrating this three-day online summit (readily available within our respective time zones) provides a rich international and multicultural exchange. Through virtual class discussions, social media and active participation live and/or online with this global summit, students will engage up close and personal with powerful female role models whose personal stories illuminate the most pressing international issues. I hope testing out this trifecta of virtual learning might be a great start to sharing women's empowerment work and activism globally with place-bound students.

2 COIL Learning Community

Chair: What is one take-away that you've gained from being a part of the COIL Learning Community? What specific or unique benefits did you gain from the interdisciplinary nature of the Learning Community?

Tang: The one biggest take-away for me is to know that it takes a lot of courage and effort to get started with COIL, which I gained a lot of inspiration from our COIL coordinator and other learning community members. Especially as we were just starting to explore this field, I went through a lot of self-doubt and was not sure about course design or activity ideas. In these moments, the other members of the LC, who come from different disciplines, often can provide a fresh view from outside.

For me, there are two unique benefits of this interdisciplinary LC. The first one is the "peer pressure", in a positive way, that I get from my fellow colleagues. I am always amazed by how much wonderful work my colleagues are doing and I feel that I must also keep up with the good work that everyone else is doing. The second benefit is that there is a strong sense of community in this cohort. It feels like we are back to school time and we are buddies that study together and check our notes and assignments with each other. We are "fellow students" to help each other out.

Al-Noori: Being part of the COIL Learning Community (LC) provided the structural framework, space, and resources needed to begin developing a COIL course. In addition, the support and constructive feedback that derived from discussions promoted the development of ideas and approaches that I was considering for my course. Importantly, the LC allowed me to formulate more defined objectives for engaging in a COIL course by

having me articulate them to other members of the LC. Participation in the COIL LC allowed members to develop an understanding of the technologies needed to support the collaboration and establish a partnership, along with an appreciation for a variety of logistical and other considerations that need to be addressed when engaging virtually with other countries.

West: The LC cohort I have been privileged to work with during this two-year process has brought about a collective and interdisciplinary experience that will continue to deepen my perspectives and pedagogy in the integration of diversity in the classroom and collaboration across cultures.

We would not have made the strides we did and had the fun that transpired from our work together without the support and needed structure that was built in from day one under the superb leadership of Natalia Dyba, Director of Global Initiatives at UWB. Under her gentle guidance our LC cohort, composed of three women Lecturers at UWB and an experienced Professor in global education came together to form a collegial group focused on planning for campus-wide efforts to celebrate and give voice to students from diverse cultural backgrounds through virtual education.

The one key take-away for me that led to the success of our COIL LC was the use of a COIL Canvas site set up by Natalia. We all utilized our Canvas site throughout the year to access sample COIL courses and syllabi to review and learn from. Additionally, Natalia posted evidence-based articles and relevant literature on the success of COIL course implementation and asked each of us to post a virtual introduction that was helpful in supporting each other's work and ideas. We signed a COIL *Responsibilities of Learning Community Facilitator & Participants* contract at our first meeting together that kept us on track with expectations and LC engagement. Finally, Natalia shared with us potential COIL international partners we could explore if needed and engaged us with local partners to advance our COIL preparation. Throughout the year we met in person or through zoom to share our COIL course ideas, explore needed technology tools and support from our Teaching and Learning Center, and design global-centric curriculum and syllabi. We were elated to learn the 2019 *International Virtual Exchange Collaboration Conference* (IVEC) would be held locally this year, much to our advantage, so we unanimously elected to serve on a panel and share our COIL LC experiences at UWB

3 COIL, Learning Communities and Faculty Responsibilities

Chair: How did your work with the Learning Community integrate into other parts of your job as a faculty member? Did the Learning Community lead to other kinds of partnerships for you outside of COIL, either with members of the LC, COIL partners, or others?

Tang: The work in this learning community is directly connected to my teaching endeavors, as I am a strong advocate for a globally minded, non-U.S. centric curriculum. In my Introduction to Journalism class, I bring global practitioners through virtual exchange to my class. My former colleagues and friends, who are still working in the field, talk to my students about their work experiences from Bloomberg's headquarters in London, *The New York Times'* Shanghai office, and Al Jazeera's DC newsroom, etc. Students learn extraordinarily about global journalism from these interactions.

In terms of other aspects of my work outside the classroom, three opportunities arise. First, Salwa and I have found shared interests and passion for supporting international students on our campus. As both of us came to this country first as an international student, we share understandings for the experience of being an international student. We are both working on providing strong support for international students on our campus. Secondly, I have developed a close relationship with the Office of Global Initiatives and work together with Director Natalia Dyba in promoting cross-cultural competence workshops and materials on our campus. Last but not least, a simple but important element is personal well-being. Through this LC, we became good friends, instead of just being colleagues, and we have fostered a strong sense of community. This is much needed in a workspace -- that you know you and your co-workers have each other's backs.

Al-Noori: My work with the LC integrates with other parts of my job on numerous campus and community levels and complements my role in a variety of capacities (committee and board member) that revolve around diversity, equity, and inclusion in STEM and beyond, work with issues related to international students and faculty, as well as in an advisory capacity for student clubs focused on integration and globalization service

efforts on our campus and beyond. My participation in the LC has led to my involvement in other initiatives and development of other partnerships, including co-facilitating a new LC with Natalia Dyba on “Engaging Perspectives of Culturally Diverse Students to Enrich Learning”.

West: Our collective work as COIL LC has inspired me to work more collaboratively with faculty in an interdisciplinary way on campus and outside of the academy. This journey has led me to reach out to more global and local partners who we might want to invite to campus to speak in our classrooms and in building more thoughtful and responsive curriculum that seeks to integrate theory with hands-on experiential learning and activism. I hope to keep in touch with our LC cohort going forth and perhaps co-teach a COIL course after we learn what works or doesn't from this venture with COIL.

4 Advice for beginning a Learning Community

Chair: What advice would you have for someone seeking to start a similar Learning Community on their campus?

Tang: Don't be shy. Don't be afraid. It is OK to come into the field of COIL with no prior knowledge. We've all just got to start from somewhere. Just roll up your sleeves and get started, and keep trying.

Al-Noori: As much as possible, try to establish a LC that is interdisciplinary and takes advantage of having other participants involved that can provide constructive and multi-perspective feedback and input supportive of development and implementation of ideas and approaches.

You will get more out of joining or establishing a COIL Learning Community than you give. It will open your eyes to the richness of our complex world and the impact of bringing critical learning experiences to the classroom with new opportunities to explore. Being a part of a Learning Community has expanded my interdisciplinary work with colleagues at UWB and my COIL partners that I might not otherwise have had.

To make your first COIL undertaking less daunting, get to know your Global Studies/Initiatives Director and the Teaching and Learning Center faculty and staff on your campus. They are an invaluable resource and key to the successful implementation of your COIL course. The icing on the cake for our LC was having the IVEC scheduled locally after our first year together as a cohort. It provided us the opportunity to engage with and learn from the experts in COIL and first timers to COIL. During our panel discussion we offered to share our resources establishing our COIL LC structure and the planning and courses that emanated from our time together. If you would like to learn more, please contact us through emails.

Strategy and Policy



Photo by Gianmario Besana, @GianmarioBesana



From Strategy to Implementation Through Sustainable Partnerships:

The Case of UNESP and DePaul University

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Rosi León is the Director of Virtual Exchange and Online Learning at DePaul University. In this capacity she provides management and support for various aspects of DePaul's virtual exchange (VE) initiative across ten Colleges. In particular, she manages all VE faculty grants and data reporting, as well as the full project assessment process, managed quarterly, in addition to facilitating the process of matching DePaul faculty with international counterparts. A native of Bulgaria, and fluent in Spanish, she holds a Master in Bilingual-Bicultural education.

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Abstract

Increasingly, higher education institutions (HIEs) are recognizing the importance of global learning and internationalization of curricula. Effective partnerships between HIEs are helping to build the path for preparing students to be world citizens through projects of virtual exchange (VE). In this presentation, we aim to display a successful partnership between UNESP (Brazil) and DePaul University (USA), by addressing the history of VE at both institutions, the development of the academic relation between both universities, the role of the coordinators and teacher training to foster and support VE activities, examples of courses implemented and the ones are planned for the near future. We intend to facilitate interactive discussion and to engage the participants in reflecting on the importance of managing virtual exchange at both course level and institutional level in an integrated way between the HIEs involved.

Keywords: Institutional Approaches, Sustainable Partnerships, Strategic Decisions

1 Introduction

Higher education institutions are increasingly recognizing the importance of global learning and internationalization of curricula. In their efforts to internationalize their campuses, institutions are adopting Virtual Exchange (VE) as an effective, affordable, and scalable strategy. Nonetheless, in many instances VE projects are started at institutions by individual interested instructors, and often remain localized in particular departments or units within the universities where the engaged parties reside. On the other hand, institutional implementations of VE initiatives require an initial strategic decision involving leadership. Leaders in charge of internationalization of universities need to engage in campus wide conversations that raise visibility of virtual exchange as part of the larger internationalization strategy. They also need to build internal alliances that provide resources, human and financial, ensure academic legitimacy of the initiative within existing structures, and guarantee sustainability of the initiative.

2 Setting up Virtual Exchange Initiatives

DePaul University in Chicago, USA, and São Paulo State University (UNESP) in São Paulo, Brazil, both successfully implemented university-wide virtual exchange initiatives and established an institutional partnership based on virtual exchange collaborations. In both institutions the initial strategic phase was led by their Senior International Officer.

DePaul University launched their VE initiative in 2013, as a response to a call from the institutional strategic plan, Vision 2018, for a faculty development initiative around global learning. After a few staff members attended a COIL conference at the SUNY COIL center in 2012, the DePaul team created an internal professional development workshop to introduce faculty to the virtual exchange pedagogy. In Fall 2013 the Global Learning Experience (GLE) initiative was launched with an on-campus event with Jon Rubin. At DePaul, the following stakeholders are involved in running and supporting GLE: the Center for Teaching and Learning, that runs the faculty development workshop, supplies instructional designers who support the faculty and provides support for the use of the Learning Management System; the Global Engagement division, that provides visible leadership, funding, support to create partnerships, logistic coordination, communication and management of the assessment process; the Comprehensive Internationalization Committee that provides quality assurance and faculty governance; the office of Information Services that take care of security and network access, and provides the development and support of dedicated classrooms. As far as resources are concerned, human resources consist of the Associate Provost for Global Engagement, the Director of VE, the CTL team (4 dedicated staff members plus 10 instructional designers) and a few student workers. Infrastructure resources consist of an institution-wide deployment of Zoom, a set of GLE kits to utilize normal classrooms for synchronous meetings, and dedicated rooms with special equipment. Financial resources include grants for faculty with approved VE projects and support for instructors' participation at conferences.

UNESP launched their VE initiative in 2018, as part of the Global Talent development component of a comprehensive strategic plan for internationalization. Virtual mobility is indeed explicitly mentioned as a strategy for Internationalization at Home within the larger plan. UNESP first established contact with Jon Rubin in 2015 and started considering implementing a VE initiative. In 2016 the notion of Brazilian Virtual Exchange (BraVE) was born as part of the FAUBAI conference. In 2017, GianMario Besana conducted a workshop for the leadership of the university to plan the implementation of BraVE at UNESP. Finally BraVE was fully launched in 2018. At UNESP, the following stakeholders are involved in running and supporting GLE: the Internationalization Office, that provides general coordination, visible leadership, funding, and partnerships management; the Vice-Presidency for Undergraduate Studies, that provides institutional support, interaction with academic bodies, and contributes to the dissemination of information about BraVE, the Center for Teaching and Learning, that is in conversation with the BraVE team in order to establish a formal cooperation.

3 Virtual Exchange Coordinators

In order for institutional approaches to VE to be sustainable and successful, a crucial role is played by what is traditionally defined as the “coordinator” of the initiative. This individual plays the critical role of matchmaker and overseer, providing information and initial exposure to the initiative for instructors at their home institutions, assisting instructors in finding partners, maintaining communication with the coordinators at partner institutions, ensuring that all institutional processes are followed, and, in some cases, implementing

assessment of the projects. The coordinator role at DePaul is fulfilled by the Director of Virtual Exchange who is a full-time staff member, responsible for all the functions described above. The Director manages all promotion, marketing, and communication related to the program. She conducts info sessions on GLE both for an internal audience of prospective faculty participants and for international audiences of prospective partners; she facilitates the creation of new partnerships, and tracks development and scheduling of all GLE projects. The Director also administers the financial aspects of the program, managing the grants awarded to instructors with successful proposals. The main challenges of this role are currently linked to the significant growth of the initiative at DePaul. Managing the high volume of requests for partners is a complex task. The Director of VE oversees also the proper labeling of GLE courses in the student information system, process that presents unique challenges related to the unpredictability of scheduling and offering of GLE courses.

The coordinator of the BRaVE Program at UNESP is a full-time Professor, who has a long experience in virtual exchange through her practice and research in a former project at her HEI, the Teletandem Brasil (www.teletandembrasil.org). Within the context of BRaVE, she is in charge of the program marketing and communications with both the International Office and the Vice-presidency for undergraduate studies. She manages the registration of faculty in online development courses as well as tracks their participation and helps them with possible difficulties they might find for completing it successfully. She is also in charge of finding and matching partners for UNESP's professors and tracking the projects from planning to implementation.

Some of the challenges she has in her context involve promoting the BRaVE Program in 34 campuses spread in 24 cities in the State of São Paulo. She has been relying on videoconferencing tools to promote meetings for professors who have already developed courses with virtual exchange to share their experiences with newcomers. Another important issue that VE brings about concerns the language chosen for the exchanges. Most of the experiences have been done in English so far and specific strategies have been created to deal with language difficulties, such as group work, use of translation apps, depending on the group of students and kind of activities proposed. Another possibility has been the search for Portuguese and Spanish-speaking countries interested in developing VE in the BRaVE Program for dealing with language constraints. Nevertheless, language has not been seen as an impediment for the development of the program. It has been used as an opportunity for the development of language and communication skills for the students.

UNESP is one of the first to work in the VE field in Brazil, along with FATEC (Centro Paula Souza) and UFPE (Federal University of Pernambuco). The BraVE Program is an opportunity for internationalization at home, which means that more students have access to discussing ideas and projects with different interlocutors from distinct realities and contexts.

Student Voices



Photo by Joe Ziolkowski



What Has This Done for Me? Qualitative Student Reflections on Intercultural Experiential Learning

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Belem Barbosa received her PhD in Business and Management Studies - specialization in Marketing and Strategy from the University of Porto, Portugal. She is Adjunct Professor at the University of Aveiro, being currently programme director of the MSc in Marketing. She is a member of GOVCOPP, the Research Unit on Governance, Competitiveness and Public Policy. Her research interests lie primarily in the area of consumer behavior, including word-of-mouth communication, internet marketing and sustainability marketing. She is also interested in internationalization of higher education, including mobility and internationalization at home.

Abstract

This project incorporates globalisation, technological progress, intercultural and inter-disciplinary experiential learning using real life clients to prepare graduates for the future workplace. Intercultural competence is possessing the necessary attitudes and reflective behavioural skills and using these to behave effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations. This understanding can facilitate success in achieving goals set out for cross-cultural interaction in a business context. Experiential learning through a collaborative project across cultures exposes students to differences in a real-life situation. By stumbling over intercultural blocks and emerging unscathed, students begin to appreciate the ambiguity inherent to multicultural interactions. This paper presented the qualitative findings from a collaborative online international learning project between four countries which took place in autumn 2018. It assessed the impact of the project on the students who participated through their own vivid reflections and testimony, and identified the key challenges and potential solutions associated with these constructs.

Keywords: collaborative online international learning; experiential learning; intercultural sensitivity; reflective behavioral skills, qualitative perceptions

1 Introduction

This project can be categorised as Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) which is part of the emerging field of Globally Networked Learning (GNL). GNL promotes intercultural competence and the attitudes and reflective behavioural skills which are vital for a globalised economy (SUNY COIL Center, 2019; Deardorff, 2009; Tucker et al, 2013). The future workplace will also need employees who are innovators and disruptors if Capitalism is replaced by Talentism (IMF, 2017). Essig (2013) suggests that heterogenous groups can provide fertile ground for entrepreneurial thinking. The highly heterogenous nature of COIL projects positions them well to encourage new ways of looking at the world and promote creative problem solving through experiential learning. COIL projects enable innovative, cost-effective, internationalisation strategies for any educational discipline, level or context because they embrace emerging cloud-based communication and learning technologies (SUNY Center for COIL, 2019). Students acquire the skills, confidence and mindset that will help them to navigate the work based technological challenges of the fourth industrial revolution.

Instructors in four countries (the USA, Scotland, Germany and Portugal) created a 6-week, cross-cultural, virtual teams' project designed to address these needs in the autumn of 2017. The project was repeated in 2018 based on learning from the first. Conducted with students in university business programs whose courses ranged from organizational communication and multicultural teamwork to social media communication and public relations, the project aimed to improve English language skills, working with non-native English language speakers, intercultural competencies, use of digital channels in cross-border communication and team project management skills.

2 Evaluation Methodology

In order to determine whether students increased their intercultural competency through this project, instructors had their students complete an online intercultural sensitivity survey based on the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale created by Guo-Ming Chen and William J. Starosta for the University of Rhode Island (2000). At the end of the project, students were asked to complete the survey again but this time the research included additional qualitative survey questions and a more in-depth de-briefing exercise concerning their personal feelings towards the project, what they found most difficult, their satisfaction with the project, and what they would do differently next time. In addition, they were asked to rate the activity and evaluate both their own and their team members, both at home and abroad, concerning commitment and active participation. These qualitative reflections and what they reveal about the impact of the project, were the focus of this paper and have not been published before. The conference presentation included video testimonials from some of the participating students which helped to inform the research.

3 Impact

The research demonstrated that there were more positive than negative constructs among the qualitative reflections of the participants, however in some cases the things that students viewed as positives were also viewed as negatives e.g. stepping outside the "comfort zone" and using new technology. Students perceived trying something new as a simultaneously exciting and scary prospect. Differences in geography, culture, age, experience, personality, motivation were challenging but interesting and gave a fresh perspective. They found it beneficial to learn new virtual communication applications e.g. Slack, Zoom, Prezi, Powtoon and said they would use these online tools more confidently in future as well as being more open to trying new software. Where the team bonded in a friendly, supportive and safe environment they enjoyed the experience more and were sorry when it came to an end. Many teams functioned better as time went on and familiarity with the context, challenges, tools and personalities grew. Clear leadership, time management, roles and expectations were pre-requisites for success and if positive outcomes were achieved, the fear of working with people from different countries online was reduced. Students believed the project inspired creativity, innovation and thinking outside the box, and felt they had learned a lot about themselves and others. They believed COIL projects are relevant and highly beneficial practice for future employment in the global, digital era and should be more common in the curriculum. Intercultural projects were found to help with tolerance and respect and to greatly improve communication knowledge and competency. Effective communication was seen to be central to the success of an intercultural project.

Conversely there were a number of negative outcomes which the project tutors will seek to address in future including challenges with time differences, IT reliability, conflicting study, work and personal schedules, varying levels of motivation and language barriers. Students proposed that more clear, consistent instructions

and guidance across all the programmes would help to overcome some of these barriers. Additional software and communication demonstrations in video format, longer lead in-times and more time to socialize at the start would help the teams to bond. A more reliable technological infrastructure, connectivity, and not having to pay for extras were also cited as project enablers.

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Person to Person Peacebuilding and Intercultural Communication: Perspectives from a Virtual Exchange

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Prior to her Ed.D. studies, Didem Ekici worked for nine years as an English as a Foreign Language teacher with ethnically and linguistically diverse students in different regions of Turkey. She was awarded the European Union grant for a Lifelong Learning (Comenius) project for intercultural exchange, and she also worked for the “Let’s Go To School, Girls!” UNICEF campaign. She serves as a teaching assistant in the International and Multicultural Education Program at the University of San Francisco and as coordinating director of a non-profit peacebuilding organization, Pax Populi-Applied Ethics, which aims to build peace through online education. Her research interests are language teaching and technology, intercultural competence, and teacher training for diversity, peacebuilding, and global citizenship.

Amy Jo Minett is an Associate Professor of English/Graduate TESOL at Salem State University in Salem, Massachusetts. Her TESOL career began as a Peace Corps Volunteer at a Teacher’s Training College in Eger, Hungary. Since that time, she has worked as a teacher educator and English teacher in Romania, Serbia, the U.S., China, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Her teaching and research have focused on context-appropriate curriculum and program development, peacebuilding, and the role of English language teaching in transition, conflict, and post-conflict countries.

Abstract

The presenters have each been substantially involved in work which bridges peacebuilding with teaching and intercultural communication through international virtual exchange. In this presentation, we shared the voices of participants in a project which brought together pre-service teachers of English as an Additional Language (EAL), in the United States, and adult learners of English, in Afghanistan. Informed by the work of Broome and Collier (2012), who argue that researchers in the field of intercultural communication should step into the disciplinary arena of peacebuilding, our data analysis is organized around three distinct but interconnected dimensions: the personal, the relational, and the structural (Broome & Collier, 2012; Lederach, 1998, 2003). Lederach and his co-authors (2007) describe these dimensions as sites of inexorable change as a result of social conflict. Conflict transformation scholars, practitioners, and peacebuilders thus often organize their research around these dimensions in order to find evidence of and opportunities for positive or preferred change—that is, less conflict, more peace (Lederach, Neufeldt, & Culbertson, 2007). In our presentation, we looked to the voices of the tutors and Afghan learners, how they talk about themselves, each other, and their worlds, for examples of the potential of international virtual exchange to shed critical light on how person to person peacebuilding intersects with and is embedded in intercultural communication. Our analysis presented the profound personal transformations participants describe; participants’ descriptions of the close

relationships and alliances they build; and ultimately, how participants re-imagine and rescript their societies and worlds.

Keywords: International Virtual Exchange, Peacebuilding, TESOL, Afghanistan, Service learning, Culturally responsive teaching

1 Introduction

As teacher educators and language instructors, the presenters have each been substantially involved in work which bridges peacebuilding with English language teaching and intercultural communication through international virtual exchange. In this presentation, we shared the voices of participants in a project which brought together pre-service teachers of English as an Additional Language (EAL), in the United States, and adult learners of English, in Afghanistan. Through the voices of these participants, our presentation explored the potential of international virtual exchange to shed critical light on how person to person peacebuilding intersects with and is embedded in intercultural communication.

The virtual exchange project we described was the result of a conversation between two of the presenters. Didem serves as the Director of Coordination for Pax Populi Academy, a US-based non-profit organization which focuses on peace in Afghanistan through education, primarily through synchronous English language tutoring. Pax Populi Academy works with volunteers based at four schools in the Afghan provinces of Mazar-e-Sharif, Kabul, Kandahar, and Herat. Sarah wanted to provide students in a graduate course on teaching grammar with opportunities to put their theoretical knowledge into practice. Pax Populi needed tutors; the graduate students needed experience and so the project began.

To date, the graduate course has been taught six times and at two different universities. In total, 72 tutors and 72 learners of English have taken part in the project. The tutors have ranged in age from 22-58 and had varying levels of teaching experience. The group has included native speakers of Arabic, Chinese, English, Korean, Mongolian, Polish, Tibetan, and Ukrainian. When they participated in the project, some tutors were living outside of what they considered to be their “home countries”; none had lived in or traveled to Afghanistan. The graduate students were each paired with English learner and engaged in ten 90-minute synchronous meetings. As part of their coursework, tutors submitted six written reflections.

2 Project Focus Shift

Since the collaboration began in 2014, we have been analyzing the graduate students’ reflections. Initially, our focus was on the challenges of teaching grammar and on working with technology, particularly in contexts in which internet connections and access to electricity are often unpredictable. As we continued to gather data, our attention turned to participants’ descriptions of their interactions with and perceptions of their Afghan counterparts. Drawing on Goodman’s (2019) model of Cultural Competency for Social Justice, we found evidence of: self-awareness, understanding and valuing others, knowledge of societal inequities, and interacting effectively with diverse people and diverse contexts. When we presented our work at the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) conference in 2017, we shared our disappointment that we lacked evidence of the final element of Goodman’s framework “fostering equity and inclusion.” Moreover, we were keenly aware of the limitations of our work which focused exclusively on the perspectives of the US-based graduate students. Throughout this project, the safety of the Afghan learners has been our preeminent concern, and we had not yet established a way to encrypt our data.

Our third presenter, Amy Jo Minett joined the project in 2018. Drawing on her experience working in and writing about Afghanistan, she established protocols for safe-guarding data gathered from Afghan-based participants. As a result, our data now includes transcripts of interviews Amy has conducted with 25 of the US-based tutors and 25 Afghan learners.

As our data sources have also shifted, so has the lens through which we are examining the data. In our current work, we look to the voices of the tutors and Afghan learners, how they talk about themselves, each other, and their worlds, to explore the following question:

How do participants’ discursive constructions of personal transformations; social relationships and social identities; and large-scale social and structural change evidence peacebuilding and developing intercultural communication in the context of virtual exchange?

We heed a call from Broome and Collier (2012), who argue that researchers in the field of intercultural communication should step into the disciplinary arena of peacebuilding in order to forward its study and

practice. Our data analysis is organized around three distinct but interconnected dimensions: the personal, the relational, and the structural (Broome & Collier, 2012; Lederach, 1998, 2003). Lederach (2007) and his co-authors describe these dimensions--in addition to a cultural dimension--as sites of inexorable change as a result of social conflict: conflict transformation scholars, practitioners, and peacebuilders thus often organize their research around these dimensions in order to find evidence of and opportunities for positive or preferred change--that is, less conflict, more peace (Lederach, Neufeldt, & Culbertson, 2007). Broome and Collier (2012) go on to locate these dimensions within the larger dynamic contexts of culture and communication.

In our presentation, we shared the perspectives of four tutors whose experiences offered evidence of profound personal transformations; participants' descriptions of the close relationships and alliances they built; and ultimately, how participants re-imagined their societies and worlds, fostering the types of equity and inclusion envisioned by Goodman (2019).

We began with an example of profound personal transformation on the part of a tutor who, like her Afghan counterpart, was a speaker of English as an additional language.

I had fears with working with someone from Afghanistan. It was not about the student personally, but rather the culture. I was unsure how accepted he would be working with an American student. He began asking me questions about where I lived and what college I attended. I was fearful to answer these questions and did not give him specifics. In my last session, I learned that his life was in danger for being able to speak English and having previous experience with the US Army. He said he lived in a safe city that was far away from political wars we hear on the tv. I was upset that I had judged him and learned that he is just like me, a human! (N, Journal 5)

As she acknowledges her initial fears, the tutor refers not to a specific person but, as she puts it, a "culture". In her reference to "political wars we hear on tv", we see a glimmer of what she might have heard about Afghanistan before engaging in the virtual exchange. Rather than allay her uncertainty and strengthen their connection, questions from her Afghan counterpart appear to make her even more frightened. However, as she learns more about him and the danger he has faced, we see a profound shift. "I was upset that I had judged him," she shares, noting the similarities she sees between her interlocutor and herself. No longer writing of him as an abstract representation of an unknown culture, she describes him emphatically as "a human!"

The tutors' reflections offer numerous examples of change at the relational level as tutors learn more about themselves and their online partners. In the following excerpt, we see evidence of the alliance that developed between a tutor who grew up in Ukraine and her Afghan interlocutor:

Oh, I forgot to mention. Fahim was talking about his background and continued his speech with some information about their war. . . As he started, I supported him. I was talking about the war in my country that begun in 2014 and is still going on. We understood each other's pain and wished that our countries will very soon become independent from all the warriors and there will be no war. I tried to support him and be optimistic. (A, Journal 3)

Though she points first to "their war", the tutor repeatedly notes that she offered Fahim support. "We understood each other's pain," she writes. Her use of the pronouns "we" and "our" reflect a shared experience with conflict and hope for positive change.

Finally, in excerpts like the one below, we see evidence of tutors' growing awareness of structural inequities: The reliability of the internet connection and inability to be right next to the person I was teaching were also worrisome. These are still things that are concerning to me and often interrupt the sessions. This has been an eye-opening experience on many levels. Education is taken for granted by those who have such quick and direct access to it. Anahita is willing to walk through the war-torn streets of Afghanistan to sit at a computer and learn from someone halfway across the world. It is a humbling experience. (emphasis added) (C, Journal 5)

As she describes her experience as “eye-opening”, the tutor shares her newly acquired perspectives regarding access to education and resources such as technology. Her description serves as a reminder of the daily violence with which some of the project participants live. In her words too, we see the powerful potential of virtual exchange. Computers, and other forms of technology, make it possible to learn from, about, and with “someone halfway around the world.”

3 Conclusion

In this virtual exchange project, we see numerous examples of profound change. Nonetheless, we closed our presentation with the following evidence of the resistance that can take place as participants undergo new experiences and encounter new perspectives.

I really knew nothing about Rumi, so we talked about him... it could easily be seen that I guess he is the bestseller poet in the US and when I heard that...Well I didn't know that. When Ahmad told me that, I'm like ahh...I don't think so. Then I went and researched...oh my god he's right! (T, interview)

The tutor wrestles with the notion that a poet from Afghanistan, and someone she has never heard of, could be a “bestseller” in the US. More importantly perhaps, her reflections offer several instances in which she is unwilling or unable to see learner she is working with as a reliable source.

I asked him if his 14-year-old sister would be able to walk out on the street and he said yes I'm not sure if that is exactly true, but I did not press the issue. (T, interview)

Not only does she not believe what has been said, but she chooses not to engage in the type of discussion that might lead to change in her understanding of the topic and her relationship with her interlocutor.

While we must acknowledge that change is neither simple nor inevitable, our data offers significant evidence of transformation at the personal, relational, and structural level. Analyses of the perceptions of participants in collaborations like this one between US-based tutors and Afghan-based learners can shed critical light on how person to person peacebuilding intersects with and is embedded in intercultural communication. Finally, as it leverages technology to bring together people who might otherwise never have had the opportunity to interact, International Virtual Exchange can create “spaces” in which such communication and, therefore, such peacebuilding can take place.

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Tools and Technologies



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Penn State Beaver's EDGE Program: Adapting the Association of American Colleges & Universities' (AAC&U) Global Learning VALUE Rubric to Evaluate International Virtual Exchange Outcomes

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Tiffany MacQuarrie, assistant teaching professor of English at Penn State Beaver, was awarded a Penn State global faculty fellowship. She will EDGE courses with the Arava Institute in Israel and the Seifullin Agrotechnical University in Kazakhstan in 2019. MacQuarrie thrills at the challenge of merging 21st-century learning practices with global strategies to best equip and prepare our students to live and work in a global society.

Daniel W. Smith, assistant teaching professor of business, has taught at Penn State Beaver for twelve years. He worked as a Management Consultant for Touché Ross & Co. and at LCI International Telecommunications as a New Business Development Manager and Product Marketing Manager. His education includes both a BS and MS degree from Carnegie Mellon University. He EDGED “Project Management for Business” with The Hague University of Applied Sciences fall 2017.

Abstract

Global learning outcomes for lesser-resourced students lie at the heart of Penn State Beaver's Experiential Digital Global Engagement (EDGE) effort. Students who participate in EDGE learn how to interact with people of differing backgrounds and to work with them on projects, over a distance, developing digital skills as they do so. These are all important competencies both personally and professionally in the 21st century. Faculty members begin EDGE collaborations by adapting outcomes from the AAC&U global learning VALUE rubric to design course objectives. Using examples from two EDGED courses taught in 2017-2019, we will 1.) explain the strategic pedagogical content of the EDGE effort at Penn State, 2.) explore the process of identifying and adapting AAC&U global learning VALUE rubric elements, and 3.) show student and instructor-reported learning outcomes from the two classes.

Keywords: Assessment, global learning outcomes, experiential digital global engagement, chemistry, business

1 Introduction

The participating institutions are The Pennsylvania State University, Beaver Campus in The United States of America collaborating with two international partners: The University of Split in Croatia and The Hague University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. While Croatian is the native language at Split and Dutch is the native language at the Hague University, all communications were done in English.

Penn State consists of 24 campuses across Pennsylvania; 19 of these educate lesser-resourced undergraduates. Penn State Beaver, enrolling just under 700 students, is one of Penn State's residential Commonwealth Campuses located approximately twenty minutes from the Pittsburgh International Airport and forty minutes outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Students can choose to complete any of the eight baccalaureate degrees at the campus or begin the first two years of 275 other baccalaureate degrees offered at the University (<https://beaver.psu.edu/admissions>).

The University of Split in Croatia enrolls approximately 25,000 students in undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate programs and offer 79 undergraduate programs (<https://www.unist.hr/en/about/facts-and-figures>). The Hague University of Applied Sciences located "in the Randstad metropolitan region in the west of the Netherlands" offers 65 bachelor's degrees and 27 master's and professional degrees (www.thehagueuniversity.com/study-choice). Although Dutch is the native language in the Netherlands, all courses at THUAS are conducted in English, as English is the primary language spoken at THUAS. Students from Penn State Beaver participating in the EDGE collaboration with the University of Split were second-semester sophomores majoring in science. Twelve students from the University of Split participated each semester. Penn State Beaver had twelve students in the spring of 2018 and ten students the spring of 2019.

Students from Penn State Beaver participating in the EDGE collaboration with The Hague University of Applied Sciences were first-semester seniors majoring in business management. Twenty-four students from THUAS and twenty-four students from Penn State Beaver participated in the fall semester of 2017.

2 Objectives

At Penn State, we are using the term "Experiential Digital Global Engagement" (EDGE) instead of the State University of New York's more widely known Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) for our Virtual International Exchange Program to emphasize its connection to two of Penn State's strategic priorities: "transforming education and driving digital innovation" ("Strategic Priorities," 2016). Additionally, in 2018, it was recommended by the Penn State Senate Committee on Global Programs that the following terms and their definitions be used when determining progress toward Penn State's strategic plan (University Faculty Senate, 2018):

Global awareness is being aware that we are part of a global community and that different countries and cultures have different perspectives, languages, values and expectations. It implies a worldview that goes beyond immediate and personal experience. Global awareness is the first step in developing global competency, intercultural competency and global citizenship.

Global literacy goes one step further. It incorporates global awareness but it also includes an understanding of global-scale issues. For example, global climate change, ocean pollution, conflict and migration, or the global economy. In addition, global literacy involves an understanding of how the global interacts with the local.

Global competency builds on global literacy by developing the skills necessary to function in a global society. It involves the ability to communicate across cultural barriers, to work on complex questions and develop solutions that are culturally appropriate. This anticipates careers where our students are likely to work in multicultural teams that are continuously reconfigured for different projects in different parts of the world—it does not assume in-

depth knowledge of any particular culture or language. Building global competency requires interaction across cultures.

Intercultural competency describes the ‘appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent affective, cognitive, and behavioral orientations to the world’ (Spitzberg, B. H., & Chagnon, G. (2009). Like global competency, intercultural competency requires interaction across cultures.

Citizenship carries with it a certain degree of responsibility. For our purposes, the concept of *global citizenship* evolves from our land-grant tradition and involves taking an active role in using global and intercultural skills to enhance the wellbeing of the community—recognizing that the community extends from the local to the global. A global citizen always thinks globally, while acting locally.

Penn State’s EDGE collaborations align perfectly with Penn State’s strategic plan as they fulfill all of these assessments.

Providing access to global learning lies at the heart of Penn State Beaver’s Experiential Digital Global Engagement (EDGE) effort. Students at Penn State’s Commonwealth Campuses often have less opportunity to engage with global learning than their University Park (Penn State’s largest campus location) counterparts. Through EDGED collaborative projects, our students learn how to interact with people of differing backgrounds and to work with them on projects, over a distance, developing digital skills as they do so. These are all important competencies both personally and professionally in the twenty-first century.

3 Project design

Penn State’s EDGE was identified as a strategic priority in Penn State Beaver’s 2017 strategic plan. Penn State Beaver Chancellor Jenifer Cushman introduced the effort, which is now driven by an EDGE team comprised of 27 faculty and other University administration from 14 of the 19 undergraduate Penn State campuses. The campus received a Penn State Global Collaboration Development grant to establish an EDGE partnership with the University of Split, Croatia, a strategic Penn State partner. In the Summer 2017, a delegation of three from the University of Split visited Penn State Beaver, and a delegation of three faculty from Penn State Beaver visited the University of Split. The resulting collaboration was Assistant Teaching Professor of Chemistry, Claudia Tanaskovic’s pilot EDGE course CHEM 213 Organic Chemistry taught in the spring 2018 (and again spring 2019).

At the initial planning stages of EDGEing a course, we encourage faculty to use backward curriculum design: adapt one or more global learning outcomes (GLO) from the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) global learning rubric to their course (<https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics>), include the GLOs in their syllabus, and then (with their partner) identify an EDGED activity that would produce assessable work that would meet that GLO.

3.1 Penn State Beaver’s pre-pilot EDGE collaboration

Our pre-pilot EDGE collaboration was initiated by Penn State Beaver Chancellor Jenifer Cushman. While traveling to Split in the summer 2017, Cushman visited The Hague University of Applied Sciences (THUAS), an early adaptor of COIL for the region. Through a Penn State Transformational Travel Grant, Assistant Teaching Professor of Business, Daniel Smith, along with two other Penn State business faculty traveled to THUAS in the summer of 2018.

Penn State’s Project Management course is an introductory course designed to develop an understanding of basic concepts of project management as well as the skills needed to accomplish project objectives. It provides in-depth coverage of project planning, scheduling, cost estimating and control. Both the role of project team leader as well as team member is examined with an eye towards building both project

management and leadership skills.

The course consisted of primarily seniors from Penn State Beaver working with second-year students from THUAS. Penn State Beaver and THUAS both had twenty-four students participating in the project. Professor Smith pulled from the “perspective taking” line of the AAC&U global learning rubric for the global learning objective (GLO) that he put into his syllabus.

Course Objectives: Learn how to plan, lead, organize and control projects from a project manager’s perspective within two or more cultural contexts

In this project students participated in an online digital learning experience designed to give them a transformative academic experience. By engaging in project-based learning, students develop cultural competency, enhance communication, cooperation, and communication skills, as well as gain real-world management consulting experience. In addition, students enhance their managerial skills by planning, leading, organizing and controlling a project.

This course met the Penn State Beaver strategic objectives of “impact the world, engage in digital learning, expose students to diverse cultures and create a collaborative, transformative learning experience” (“2017-2019 Strategic Plan”). Finally, the course enhanced the quality and scope of the academic program by giving students exposure to a unique digital learning experience. This project-based course was also unique in that it met several AAC&U high-impact practices such as “collaborative assignments and projects” and “diversity/global learning” (“High impact practices,” 2009).

In September of 2017, Professors’ Daniel W. Smith and Alexander Levinson met via Zoom to design their EDGE project. Envisioned as an international consulting project, students from Penn State Beaver and The Hague University of Applied Sciences (THUAS) formed teams of six persons (three from Penn State Beaver and three from THUAS) in order to evaluate the admissions process at each respective university. Penn State Beaver students evaluated the THUAS admissions process and students from THUAS evaluated the Penn State Beaver admissions process. A subject matter expert (SME) from each university was identified to help explain the admissions process to each project team. Each team prepared a business process analysis and conducted a technology usage analysis. In addition, each team researched each university’s website in order to understand more about the admissions process. Finally, students interviewed each other to develop a better understanding of their respective admissions processes.

Planning for the project took twelve weeks. The actual project duration was three weeks. Initially, students communicated via Facebook and What’s App. Once personal relationships were established, students began to communicate via the Zoom videoconference technology and began to focus more on their actual consulting project. It appears that students placed more emphasis on building social relationships first, before they began to build business relationships and solve business problems.

3.2 Penn State Beaver’s Pilot EDGE Collaboration

The course is designed to give students an introductory organic chemistry laboratory experience. The class consisted of primarily sophomores from Penn State Beaver working with second-year students from the University of Split. Professor Tanaskovic pulled from milestone two of the “perspective taking” line of AAC&U’s global learning rubric for the global learning objective (GLO) she put into her syllabus. (Milestone 2 from the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)(2009): “Identifies and explains multiple perspectives (such as cultural, disciplinary, and ethical) when exploring subjects within natural and human systems.”)

Course objective: Identify the role and the impact of the chemical industry in your local region as compared to at least one other region of the world.

Tanaskovic moved from identifying the GLO to working with her partner to develop EDGE activities that would satisfy the GLO. Penn State’s Organic Chemistry students communicated with students at the University of Split, Croatia through a 4-week EDGED module. They focused their EDGE collaboration on student pairs making soap in the lab as they talked with one another via What’s App.

They also explored EDGE's interdisciplinary potential:

- Soap essences were distilled by students in PSU's BIO 120 "Plants, Places, and People."
- Soap molds were created by students in PSU's ART 30, "Introduction to Sculpture" class.
- Soap packaging was created by PSU's ART 10 "Introduction to Visual Studies" students.

To achieve the GLO, students also researched and presented on chemistry in industry in Beaver County and in the Split region.

4 Project evaluation

Both collaborative projects involved a formal graded assignment that included a presentation as one of the deliverables. Students in Tanaskovic's Organic Chemistry class were assessed on course content through lab reports and presentations.

Self-reported outcomes resulted from a survey administered to students before and after their EDGE collaboration; it showed both an increase in knowledge of the global reach of their subject area and a better familiarity with intercultural communication and distance technologies.

Here are student comments from each institution:

"Using different technologies to connect with the students from Split was a learning experience that was important for determining the best way to communicate across great distances and cultural and language barriers. Overall, I think it is very important for Universities to cooperate and exchange information, cultures, and viewpoints to increase acceptance and unity among cultures and academic fields. " --Mariah Mack – Penn State
"Connecting the University of Split and Penn State Beaver through Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) was a nice experience because ... [it] gave me the opportunity to find out what would happen in the future at conferences, through programs that allow you to communicate with the videocall and forced me to communicate in a foreign language, which I do not use every day. " --Kristina Kelek – Split

For Project Management's international consulting project, students were required to prepare two final deliverables: a final assessment written report and a final oral presentation. The final report included the following business analytic tools: a business process flow diagram (diagraming the admissions department process flow), a SWOT analysis (identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by each admissions department), BCG Matrix (identifying rising stars, cash cows, question marks and dogs) capability assessment maturity model (identifying capabilities and operational maturity levels of each department), and competitive analysis matrix (examining local competing universities). In addition, the students presented their findings to each respective university and prepared a technology assessment for each school, provided best practices, and made recommendations.

Students from each university reported that this project helped improve their global perspective and enabled them to develop improved cultural competencies. Although English is spoken in all courses at THUAS, students at THUAS reported that this project also helped them improve their English-speaking skills, as well as gain a better understanding of each other's culture. As Professor Smith noted, student engagement happened immediately as students began talking with one another via What's App and Facebook even before the assignment details were completely explained. The professor recommended that students communicate via Zoom videoconferencing; however, students immediately communicated using social media platforms. The role of the professor progress quickly from leader of the project to facilitator. Once initiated, students from Project Management worked in a very focused, sniper-like fashion to complete their assignments. Students loved the international aspects of the project, as well as the opportunity to apply their project management skills and business analytic tools in a digital setting.

In contrast, students from the chemistry collaboration were a bit more reserved in communicating with one another. The instructor had to allow two weeks for students to make contact with their partners. Additionally, the professor had to remind the students frequently that the project was a graded assignment to encourage participation.

Like any project, there were numerous challenges. The first of which was the communication barrier. Although all participating students speak English, for many students English is not their native language. Thus, language differences were an obstacle. In addition, each university resided in a different time zone, thus making it difficult to schedule meetings during normal business hours. One additional challenge regarding time difference is that daylight savings time occurs earlier in the United States than in Europe. Thankfully Professor Tanaskovic has family that lives in a region of the world close to Croatia, so she was aware of the change. Conflicting academic calendars also made the project challenging. (For example, the EDGE collaboration in Project Management went from week 10 to week 13 on the Penn State Beaver academic calendar; however, for THUAS the project went from week 1 to week 4.) Holidays also presented scheduling issues. At Penn State Beaver, the campus is closed for the Thanksgiving week, while in the Netherlands Thanksgiving is not even celebrated.

In addition to scheduling issues, technology is also a major challenge, in terms of both staffing and support. The final presentation with THUAS was completed via Polycom in order to accommodate two universities and nearly fifty students in a mass video conference. Naturally, there were numerous technical issues setting up a Polycom communication bridge between the two universities. In addition, the THUAS-assigned technology support person was on vacation during the final presentation date, further complicating the project. Upon reflection, Murphy's Law comes to mind when offering recommendations ("if anything can go wrong, it will"). Professor Dan Smith employs what he affectionately dubs "Smith's Law" in response to his own observations and experience: Murphy was an optimist. When engaging in any type of online international learning project, it is certainly best to plan well in advance (Smith and Levinson planned nine weeks ahead of time.), develop a clear communication plan with your faculty partner, and test all technology before scheduled interactions. In addition, make sure that technology staffing, preparation and planning are done well in advance. (Technology planning began nine weeks prior to the initial project start date and still technical issues occurred.) In fact, pilot testing should be done several times before the final presentation in order to identify all possible problem areas. Finally, it is important that both EDGE partners are flexible and are able to adjust to the ever-changing conditions of the EDGE project. Professor Tanaskovic also adds that it is important to communicate often and be organized.

5 Acknowledgements

Dr. Jenifer Cushman, Chancellor of Penn State Beaver, who introduced the EDGE program to Penn State Beaver and has championed it throughout the Penn State community. Assistant Teaching Professor of Chemistry, Claudia Tanaskovic, who conducted Penn State Beaver's EDGE pilot in 2018.

6 Conclusion

We have identified several advantages to our approach of using AAC&U's Global Learning Outcomes VALUE Rubric:

- Enables faculty members to identify a goal easily that they could adapt for their syllabus
- Makes the faculty members START with the learning goals, NOT the EDGE exercise or the technology
- Provides consistency so that we can compare/ discuss student learning to ensure an "apples to apples" comparison
- Builds from benchmark to milestone to capstone in each line, as EDGE becomes integrated into programs rather than just courses.

The differences in student motivation and engagement in both EDGE collaborations prompt further questions to explore in the future. As we continue with future collaborations, it will be intriguing to determine what role the following variables play in student motivation and engagement:

- Semester standing of the participating students
- Intended major and the traditional characteristics of students in that major
- Culture's communication style (low-context vs. high-context) of participating students
- Age of participants
- Experience of participants.

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Choosing the Best Technology for Your COIL Project

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Abstract

This workshop used the TPACK (Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge) framework to explore how to incorporate emerging educational technologies into international and distance education. Participants gained knowledge on educational technology competencies and concepts with relevance for globalization and development. Topic-Oriented Open Learning (TOOL) platforms for technology was introduced as they can be integrated into a variety of COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) projects and disciplines. Technology must multitask as educators need to simultaneously present, engage learners, and use the platform to teach topical material as well as cultivate a global presence for partnering institutes. This hands-on session included the use of WhatsApp, various LMS, Google Classroom, E-portfolios, video conferencing, Video production software, and storyboarding. This presentation discussed the incorporation of educational technology through the lens of virtual learning environments and the need for best practices in educational technology for COIL projects.

Keywords: COIL, Educational Technology, Technology, Virtual Learning Environments, SUNY

1 Introduction

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) is a global learning initiative through SUNY (State University of New York). This initiative offers a teaching methodology that facilitates learners' global awareness and cross-cultural communication through interactive online practices. COIL faculty in any discipline can connect their courses with those courses abroad in an effort to use multimodal multimedia digital tools that may include videos and discussion boards. Additional technology has been implemented for individualized projects.

2 Importance of E-Learning and Technology

Global learning scholar Doreen Starke-Meyerring underscores the importance of assisting "mutual inquiry and collaboration in globally networked learning environments (GNLEs), that is learning environments that rest on robust partnerships extending across institutional, linguistic, national, or other boundaries in order to facilitate faculty and student participation in the shaping of an emerging global and social economic order" (2008). This form of active global learning networks aided in learners developing those skills necessary to communicate effectively on a global level in an ethical and responsible manner. The use of educational technology afforded learners the opportunity to employ multiples technologies to achieve this objective.

According to Miller and Wu (2018), "this aspect of authentic texts, combined with pictures and other semiotic devices, makes the Internet a highly motivating resource for learners. New technologies, especially mobile technology, are being used in educational context worldwide as they offer personalized, location-free, cheap, authentic, deep and synchronous learning experiences" (p. 1). This allows second language learners the use of educational technology to bridge both the language and cultural divide. Presently, Higher Education institutes have both embraced and encouraged e-learning throughout their campuses. E-learning allows individual learning to continue their education in a variety of modalities that are tech-supportive. As the demand for e-learning increases, the gravity of e-learning resource demands on institute of Higher Education rapidly grows. COIL's mission is that of educational professional development of online college courses. These collaborative courses provide cross-cultural experiential learning opportunities and deepening of their cultural awareness and perception. Active engagement between both partners and learners is vital for collaborative success.

Newer educational technology advances have provided learners with more authentic learning environments that foster autonomy and active learning responses (Miller & Wu, 2016). Littlewood's emphasis on willingness or the employment of both motivation and confidence. Post COIL project self-reflective analysis allows learners the ability to actively think about their experiences and educational outcomes.

Miller and Wu (2016) have found that tertiary learning in the STEM fields contextualizes a more lecture-centered learning experience that a large-scale survey in the USA was found to discover more than 50% of STEM courses were taught using this 'conventional lecturing' pedagogical format (p. 2). Conversely, Coyle (2007) suggested a framework for pedagogical advances using the content-based learning (CBL) format. This framework for COIL project management includes the 4C or development of learner content, communication, cognition, and culture. This format encourages learners' abilities to develop their knowledge base. Content needs to be sustained throughout the course partnership and therefore the choice of the content material should motivate learners to delve deeper into the topical material. Communication between learner partners is paramount in that the lexico-grammatical components need to be explored and emphasis placed on the ability to effectively interconnect using clear instructions and linguistically comprehensive assignments.

3 E-Learning Technological Tools

The inclusion of educational technologies into the COIL project enables learners to choose the most appropriate tool for their project. These tools are outlined in the graphic below:



Figure 1. Gurr, T. Educational Technology

These options provide learners and educators alike with multiple formats for presenting their projects based upon their learning styles and their technological capabilities. The use of educational technology provides a forum for flexibility in learning styles and adaption of open-minded educational options. The COIL project demonstrated used both a Padlet site and a traditional LMS (Learning Management Site) that enabled students from both partner countries to contribute without the home institutes imposing restrictions based on SSO (Single Sign On) systems. The LMS screenshot below depicts the course landing pages for the COIL project discussed during the presentation.



Figure 2. Simon – Social Business



Figure 3. Simon – Social Business

The Padlet site below depicts the discourse between learners in the COIL project between SUNY Nassau Community College and UFPE - Universidade Federal de Pernambuco in the BRaVE (Brazilian Virtual Exchange) COIL Project. Learners were able to exchange ideas on Social Business over the course of four weeks and then began a six-week journey on their project to design a sustainable Social Business.



Figure 4. Padlet

4 Importance of Technology within Education, COIL

A fundamental criticism in today's education includes the misconception of educational technology literacy. The adoption of technology within one's courses profoundly differs from that of being technologically literate. To this degree, technological literacy speaks to the appropriate choosing of technology for the platform

needed as well as the proper incorporation of that said technology in the COIL projects. The COIL project and presentation focused on the *TPACK* or *technological pedagogical content knowledge* ideals. Leu and Kinzer (2011 cited by Davies, 2011) defined *information and communication technology literacy* as focusing on the "...ability to gather, organize, analyze, and report information using technology" (p. 46). Mishra and Koehler's (2006) terminology of *technological pedagogical content knowledge* further described educator who demonstrate technology literacy at what Davies defined as the phronesis level. This level of awareness is rooted in the fundamental question of why the technology is being used in a specific situation. The presentation spoke to those tenets as participants discussed the most appropriate options for educational technology in COIL projects and the incorporation of those technologies to assist the project not drive the project.

Internationalization and digitalization of education allow for the incorporation of virtual mobility through the lens of collaborative online learning environments. By integrating technology into these COIL experiences, we as educators can stop teaching on the perimeter of the learning globe and transcend the divide between distance and conventional education (Bruhn, 2017; Guri-Rosenblit, 2014).

As defined by Stošić (2015),

Educational technology is a systematic and organized process of applying modern technology to improve the quality of education (efficiency, optimal, true, etc.). It is a systematic way of conceptualizing the execution and evaluation of the educational process, i.e. learning and teaching and help with the application of modern educational teaching techniques (p. 111).

Educational technology has no single definition and is rooted in the approach of the technological aspects not necessarily the pedagogical approach that the technology is enumerated for in the learning process. The author further proports that "...the application of educational technology requires knowledge from several areas: pedagogy, psychology, didactics, computer sciences, informatics..." (p. 111). Based on these delineations, the field can be broadened into several domains for practice as: technology for tutorial purposes and educating learners, technology as a tool for education, and technology as a tool for deeper learning (Stošić, 2015; Simon, 2015).

There is value, if not serious research on notion of educational technological influences on learners' cognitive load and cognitive processes (Kaufman, 2004; Lee et al., 2008; Simon, 2015). As educators, we must place emphasis on the value of technological tools and applications within the realm of education, the acquisition of knowledge (Simon, 2015), and the overall impact that these tools may have on learners. Stošić (2015) suggested five areas that technology may influence the acquisition of knowledge: (1) the value of the software program, (2) the ability to engage learners, (3) the ease of use, (4) the ability to create and foster interactivity within the software and user, and (5) the possibility that the software can monitor learner progress.

Research studies in recent years note a high degree of impact on online learners being taught via a constructivist approach to knowledge acquisition. This involves the employment of collaboration and communication. Learning is a socially motivated (Vygotsky, 1978) progression by which learners expound upon an understanding of acquired knowledge via interactions with others. Jonassen et al. (1995) postulated that "constructivists believe that our personal world is constructed in our minds and that these personal constructions define our personal realities...Meaning making, according to constructivists is the goal of learning processes, it requires articulation and reflection on what we know" (p. 11). Appreciation of constructivist framework in COIL projects leads to the development of educational courses and therefore coursework that requires learners to coalesce to discuss, learn, and communicate to distribute knowledge through an entire community of practice.

This may be accomplished via a virtual learning group as an instructional technique to foster a collaborate learning community. Collaborative virtual learning groupwork has enabled learners to improve upon their shared experiences. Virtual learning groups have significant potential for learning collaboration, cooperation, team-building, and co-construction of knowledge platforms. Furthermore, experiences in these virtual learning groups requires commitment from all participants in the group and interaction in a virtual space of the online learning environment. Learners who participate are required to work collaboratively in an increased time commitment and develop new strategies to interact and maintain effective communication.

Pedagogically, the development of a successful online learning environments and virtual learning groups is not well documented, even as the number of online courses or web-enhanced courses continues to soar.

5 Conclusion

This COIL project was based on the constructivist epistemology and focused on fostering learners' construction of a knowledge base in Social Business and Sustainability. Learners were invited to explore their own beliefs and values on the topic using a variety of technology and the value added toward the educational process. Participants were encouraged to explore through multiple opportunities in the form of activity, discourse, and self-reflection as they engaged in the online learning environment. The expectation of the project was that the virtual learning environment groups would be collaborating to develop a new understanding of the role that Social Business and Sustainability played in International Education. The specific learning outcomes of the COIL course project included the development of skill sets to work collaboratively and effectively in an online learning environment, explore beliefs about sustainability both locally and globally, and to identify benefits and challenges of group teamwork in an international educational setting.

Educational technology provides an application for learners to progress independently while still collaborating in an effort to master topical course materials, determine best practices in their course space work, and provides a repetitive nature to facilitate deeper understanding and comprehension of information that is not sufficiently evident to provide feedback of learning. Interactive multimedia content provides that feedback and is more advantageous in a modern learning environment (Stošić, 2015).

Educational technology in addition to Instructional Systems Designs (ISD), have often presumed that iconic representations are advantageous when employing kinetic rather than static graphics (de Koning, Tabbers, Rikers, & Paas, 2007). Instructional approaches based on active discovery and problem-based learning using digital games is becoming more commonplace in today's educational forum. Opportunities to alternatively assess learning and evaluate comprehension in a digital learning environment are supportive from both a theoretical (O'Brien, Lawless, & Schrader, 2010) perspective and an empirical research perspective (Hasler, Kersten, & Sweller, 2007). From the perspective of both Instructional Systems Design (ISD) and educational research, the importance of game taxonomy identification in accordance with education affordances, lends themselves toward the instructing of cognitive skills.

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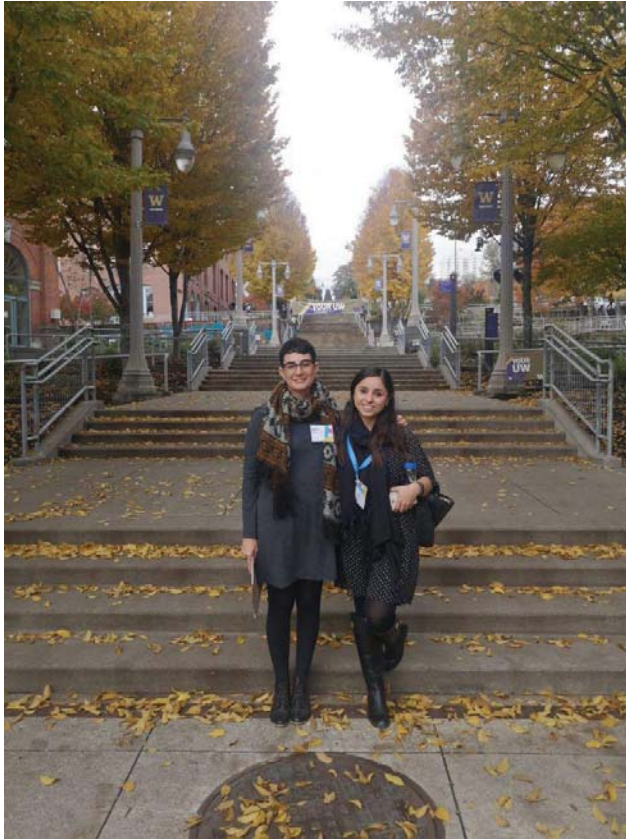


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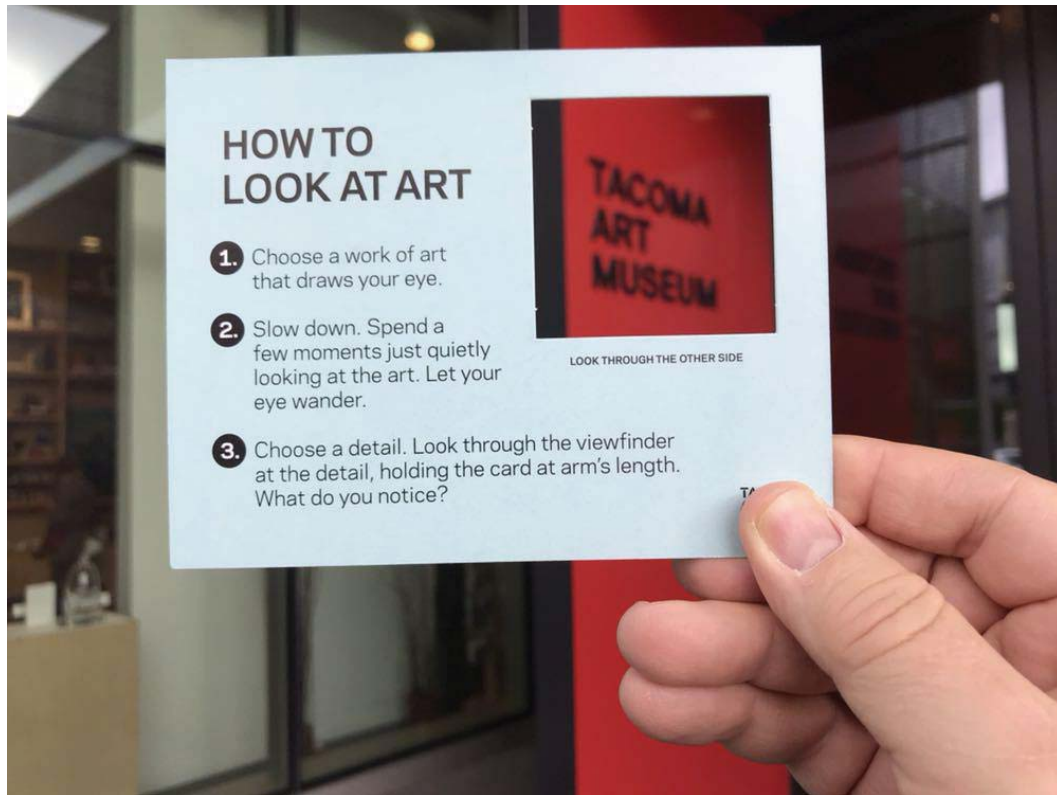


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