

Chapter 5

Design, Development, and Delivery of Global Learning Experiences: Challenges and Implications to Practice

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ABSTRACT

This chapter describes the virtual team experience of participants from the United States and the Philippines. The virtual teams designed an online learning experience plan and developed and delivered an online module prototype to K-12 Filipino learners. The chapter discusses the challenges from the beginning to the end of the collaboration experience between the two groups. Finally, it discusses implications to practice for those planning to implement similar collaboration activities at a distance.

INTRODUCTION

In this day and age of globalization and technology advancement, educators need to keep up with the changing pedagogy, social trends, and educational applications to be current and relevant in promoting globally connected learning. The Association of American Colleges and Universities (2014) defines global learning as “a critical analysis of and an engagement with complex, interdependent global systems and legacies” (n.p.). Menten (2011) stated that as students become curious and ask questions about the world, they will understand the differences and similarities between cultures. Global learning teaches students to “investigate the world, recognize perspectives, communicate ideas, and take action” (Project Zero, 2016, n.p.). Lindsey (2016) argues for taking advantage of technologies while breaking down the

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barriers of socio-governmental structures to facilitate learners' access to a deeper level of understanding and meaning-making.

An opportunity to collaborate at a distance presented itself to two faculty members located in different parts of the world – the United States and the Philippines. The collaboration generated several questions that the paper would explore and address. What happens when a group of graduate students forms a virtual team expected to design, develop, and implement an educational experience across a distance traversing the Pacific Ocean? What roles emerge as team members plan and execute the project? What are the challenges identified resulting from the collaboration between team members? How can the team experience be redesigned for the future? This chapter describes global learning and collaboration experiences with technology from two cohorts of graduate students separated by almost 9,000 miles and a 12-hour time difference.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Global learning connects students to the world (Kaiser, 2015). However, educational experience includes much more than connecting students to the world around them. Educators must make this connection happen and highlight the benefits of collaboration beyond the familiar because of the importance of developing marketable skills. For example, the U.S. government fills thousands of positions annually, seeking individuals with skills and abilities to work beyond its borders requiring foreign language proficiency (Barker 2000). Further, many businesses created jobs performed remotely and outsourced to applicants from other countries with diverse experiences (Lindsay & Davis, 2013). The current employment scenario demands American students engage in cross-cultural and international affairs as part of their schooling.

Engaging in global education benefits educators by making the world a classroom and its teachers, forming learning reciprocity (Kaiser, 2015). Global learning involves meaningful relationships resulting in mutually beneficial partnerships. For this connection to happen, every one providing such international learning experiences must leverage technology and innovation. Tuzel and Hobbs (2017) came to similar conclusions given their research activities focusing on American and Turkish students using social media, leading to meaningful partnerships and collaborative activities. As part of the study design, they allowed the students to share their culture without constraints or inhibition. This lack of defined structures gave the two student groups real opportunities to identify commonalities and asymmetries among themselves.

Designing global learning experiences involved reading about other people's hardships in textbooks or watching news programs, movies or documentaries. Also, the knowledge-building events require more authenticity than listening from someone speaking about life in a war zone or disaster area from a technology application such as Zoom and Skype. Students must develop cultural understanding and empathy to expand their problem-solving skills and find solutions to peers' situations from other countries.

Global learning is connecting with and learning from others beyond the four walls of the classrooms. The experience allows students to collaborate with people who have different experiences than their own. As a cross-cultural learning experience, global learning aims to broaden one's perspective and challenge stereotypes. Lindsay and Davis (2013) stated that global learning goals focus on increasing knowledge, eliminating barriers, and creating authentic audiences. Lindsay (2016) also wrote that becoming a globally connected learner goes beyond information gathering and requires responding and sharing to expand new knowledge and skills and push it forward. Thus, students must learn about their peers and situations and become skilled in sharing their new knowledge.

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