

Technology for Globalization and Education

AAC&U Annual Meeting

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Speakers

- Rebecca Frost Davis, Associate Director, NITLE Programs, rebecca.davis@nitle.org
- Michael Toler, Chief Program Officer, NITLE, michael.toler@nitle.org
- Michel Rocchi, Professor of Romance Languages, Director Language & Culture House Program, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Puget Sound, rocchi@ups.edu
- Alfons Teipen, Associate Professor, Department of Religion, Furman University, alfons.teipen@furman.edu (speaking remotely)

NITLE: www.nitle.org • 734-661-2301 • participate@nitle.org

Three Examples

- Intercampus Islam Course
- Intercampus Film discussion
- Language houses

Some Questions to Consider

- What are the advantages of using technology to promote a global perspective in education?
- What are the challenges of using technology this way?
- What are your concerns about using technology this way?
- How have you used technology to promote a global perspective in education?
- How might you implement the technologies and/or models described?
- Can you share or imagine other ways to use technology to promote global citizenship?

Perspectives on an Intercampus Film Discussion

Fazia Aitel, Claremont McKenna College

1. Using technology in the intercampus discussion made students feel more comfortable to speak and exchange because of its more neutral environment. They were not in class with a professor but on their own behind their screen. They told me they felt more comfortable to write what they thought. The fact that their messages were read by many students they did not know (including the 4 professors) motivated them to argue in an intelligent way, reading their posts several times before sending them.
2. The advantages were numerous. Some students who were never involved in class discussion happened to be quite argumentative in the intercampus discussion. We had good laughs about that. The discussion also provided much material for discussion in class, especially because students from other campuses did not read the same material and we realized that every student was discussing the film from a particular viewpoint.
3. One of the challenges was that some students did not read the articles that were required for the discussion. Others found that they were stuck with one topic to discuss while they wanted to answer and discuss other issues as well. They were frustrated by that.
4. Students were quite happy to have engaged in this new form of discussion. They thought that we should do that more often, with a better organization (about reading and topic discussions).

5. Students wanted to do this with another film. I agree. So if I were to do it again, I would do it with a different film and make sure all students read the same material and watch the movie at the same time (some students had seen the movie a while back, it made it difficult to recollect all the details..)

Isis Nusair, Denison University

Since our theme was crossing literal and metaphoric borders, globalization was a main focus of the discussion. That allowed us to contextualize the issues and draw on concrete examples of how that was illustrated in the film. The challenges were more technical as we needed more time (2 weeks instead of one) for discussion and elaboration.

Doug Davis, Haverford College (Emeritus)

1. How was technology used to promote globalization? Four geographically diverse classes -- college-level introductions to Islam in Pennsylvania and in Minnesota, media studies in New York, an adolescent psychology course in Pennsylvania, and high school-level media studies in Morocco -- viewed the French-Moroccan film "Le Grand Voyage" during a 48-hour period and participated for several days in a threaded asynchronous discussion of the ways the film illustrated (a) the meaning of pilgrimage, (b) the road trip as a metaphor for spiritual growth, and (c) parent-child identity issues. Each of the five instructors posed questions appropriate to their students' current coursework, and students in each class read and responded to discussion from other classes.
2. What were the advantages? The large and diverse group of students, and the wide range of faculty expertise, allowed a far richer and more varied discussion than would have been possible within the constraints of any one syllabus or setting. The written nature of the discussion fostered reflection, and the focused questions posed by each instructor guaranteed that discussion would not be derailed by student enthusiasm for one or another topic. The threaded discussion was archived and became the basis for future courses and a resource available to other instructors with other agendas.
3. What were the challenges? Participating faculty had to be at a moderate level of comfort and competence with the Internet tools, and a level of trust and familiarity with other instructors had been fostered by the participation of the American teachers in a summer seminar, without which they might have been less ready to commit the time and energy required. Students varied widely in their familiarity with the web discussion technology, and there were signs of unfamiliarity with the concepts and vocabulary of classes with different backgrounds and purpose. Students were well aware that their instructors were paying particular attention to their responses to those questions specific to their course.
4. Assess the results? I taught the course in adolescence, and I had participated in the NITLE workshop at which the exercise was planned. My students and I judged the experience a real success, and the conversations with Moroccan students (in which only my students participated) carried over into other discussion topics. I was delighted to have participated in the successful trial of this use of cross-setting technology and eager to see it applied to other topics. For someone interested in youth media in the Middle East this was a fine proof of concept. The reliance on an open-source tool -- Moodle -- and the exceptional online resource of the NITLE al-Musharaka website served me well as a proof of concept for 21st century teaching.
5. What would you differently next time? Put an exercise like this relatively early in the course, and plan to return to it later in the semester. Practice use of the tool among instructors and a few sample students beforehand, and assess the results via both threaded discussion and audio conversation. Try a similar exercise with student-produced audiovisual materials. Offer the option of working on discussion planning or materials production in collaboration with one or more students from a disparate setting. Use the best results of such a project in future semesters with new participants.