

COIL Institute for Globally Networked Learning in the Humanities

Course Development and Implementation Case Study

5. Canada - USA: Political Science & Youth Culture

Abstract

“Canada? America? What’s the difference?”

These three questions, posted to a social media site known as StoryTimed, initiated a five-week collaboration that took place in May-June 2012 between students in Himanee Gupta-Carlson’s Digital Storytelling course through SUNY Empire State College and Janni Aragon’s Youth Politics seminar at the University of Victoria. The students differed in age, mode of learning, and national affiliation. In an effort to explore difference and build community with each other, the students discussed shared readings and other learning materials with each other and created a story together on StoryTimed.

The students communicated not only in StoryTimed but also via e-mail and a series of live chat mechanisms such as Facebook, Google, and Today’s Meet.

The collaboration in some ways answered the questions posed at the start of StoryTimed: The differences between Canada and America are bigger, broader, and perhaps more subtle than one might easily discern, and engagement with those differences is likely to provoke discomfort among participants.

The narrative and attached case study document the collaboration from Aragon and Gupta-Carlson’s perspective. We look forward to the COIL community’s thoughts on our endeavors.

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Section 1: General Course Information

1. Courses

Course Title	Institution(s)	Discipline	Academic Level
Digital Storytelling and Youth Politics	Empire State College and University of Victoria	Communications, Arts, Political Science, Hip-Hop Studies	Advanced undergraduate

2. The team

Team Member #1	
Name:	Himanee Gupta-Carlson
Role on Team:	Faculty
Institution:	Empire State College
Position at Institution:	Assistant Professor
Department and/or Program:	Center for Distance Learning
Team Member #2	
Name:	Janni Aragon
Role on Team:	Faculty
Institution:	University of Victoria
Position at Institution:	Senior Instructor/Assistant Teaching Professor
Department and/or Program:	Political Science
Team Member #3	
Name:	Hui-Ya (Laura) Chuang
Role on Team:	Instructional Designer
Institution:	Empire State College
Position at Institution:	Curriculum and Instructional Designer
Department and/or Program:	Center for Distance Learning

4. When?

March-June 2012 at Empire State College; May-June 2012 at University of Victoria

5. Number of students enrolled from each institution

ESC: 15; U-Vic: 25

6. Is this typical for classes of this type?

The size was typical

The size was typical; Dr. Aragon chose to use a seminar course instead of a lecture class in order to more

closely approximate the average class sizes of ESC.

Section 2: Issues of Language

8. Language(s) of instruction at each institution
English
9. Primary language of most students in each class
English
10. Language of the course collaboration
The collaboration was entirely in English.
11. Language fluency
All of the ESC and UVIC students were fluent in English. Many of the UVIC students also speak French; however their fluency varies from fully bi-lingual to elementary proficiency.
12. Language proficiency difference
The difference in language skills was not something that either the students or the fellows noted.

Section 3: Curricular Information

13. Online or blended?
<p>The ESC course was fully online, with blended opportunities created through synchronous social media tools such as Facebook Live Chat, Google Chat, Today's Meet, e-mail, and StoryTimed</p> <p>The U-Vic course was face-to-face, with blended opportunities created through the tools noted above. In addition, the U-Vic students maintained blogs that were specifically about the collaborated learning activities, and shared readings.</p>
14. Duration
Five weeks
15. Class work or discussion related to their collaboration before and/or after the actual collaboration period
<p>The ESC students were enrolled in Digital Storytelling, and had a longer semester (15 weeks) than the U-Vic students (7 weeks). Dr. Gupta-Carlson prepared them for the collaboration beforehand by having them create a story in VoiceThread on the experience of being a stranger. She also introduced them to the concept of hip-hop as a storytelling and community building experience by having them visit hip-hop related sites, and storyboard an imagined digital story based on the individuals profiled in her article "Planet B-Girl." After the collaboration, the students were asked to share insights on the experience with each other via a discussion forum and one-on-one with the instructor via a written assessment. They also were given the option of creating the fifth of their five story projects on the collaboration.</p> <p>The U-Vic students were enrolled in Youth Politics, and had a seven-week semester that began at the approximate mid-point of the ESC semester. They spent the first week and a half of their semester reading from one of the main texts used by the Digital Storytelling students, and visiting and analyzing the same web sites that the ESC students were making virtual field trips to. The students engaged in a real-time face-to-face discussion about the collaboration during one of their regular meeting times with Dr. Aragon.</p>

Section 4: Asynchronous Technologies Used

16. Tools
We used StoryTimed and e-mail. Students worked with both tools throughout the collaboration. It is difficult to measure percentage time, but we would estimate that about 30-40 percent of the collaboration took place via these venues. Some students also used Facebook instant messaging, and others used emails.
17. Server location
Students used e-mails with which they had registered at their respective institutions. StoryTimed is cloud-based.
18. Technical problems
The only challenge we encountered was that StoryTimed required a “friending” process and would only allow for one administrator. Therefore, the process of students sending friend-requests to a single instructor and then the instructor’s task of accepting the friend requests and adding students to the specific story group was a little slow.
19. Frequency of use
Students were expected to make a minimum of three contributions to StoryTimed over what was initially a three-week period that we extended to five weeks, for the reasons cited above. Students were expected to hold at least two conversations with partners at the other institution. They were asked to use some specific questions related to shared readings and web sites but also were strongly encouraged to converse in an open-ended fashion with a goal of getting to know one another.
20. Informal communication
E-mail ended up being an effective tool for some students to engage informally. We didn’t create the venue; they made use of it themselves.
21. Re-use
Yes, and we would consider other tools, as well.

Section 5: Synchronous Technologies Used

22. Tools
<p>We encouraged students to connect synchronously with each other via tools of their choice. We recommended Today's Meet, Facebook Chat, Google Chat, and Twitter as possibilities but encouraged them to find their own venues.</p> <p>We also encouraged students to use Skype or to use the telephone. We really wanted them to take their initiative in finding out what tools would be most communicable for them.</p>
23. Server location
<p>Everything we used synchronously was cloud-based.</p>
24. Technical problems
<p>The main problems that we encountered related to unfamiliarity with the tools (particularly on the part of ESC students), and reluctance on the part of some students to engage in audio exchanges via telephone or skype. Because of a requirement to provide written documentation of their conversation, the students generally preferred text-based tools that allowed them to save scripts of their conversations.</p>
25. Frequency of use
<p>We did not engage students in a classroom to classroom level synchronously because the mode of learning for students enrolled in ESC's Center for Distance Learning is asynchronous. It would have been virtually impossible -- and against the spirit of the asynchronous learning -- to require the ESC students to be in a shared space all at the same time.</p>
26. Informal communication
<p>Again, some students took advantage of the tools to converse with each other informally.</p>
27. Re-use
<p>Yes.</p>

Section 6: Assessment Information

28. How?
<p>Dr. Aragon assessed the course via conversations with the students, feedback during the last seminar, then a review of the Course Experience Survey statistics, as well as the qualitative comments. Overall, the UVIC students enjoyed the collaboration; however, repeatedly many noted that they would prefer to work with other Political Science students.</p> <p>Dr. Gupta-Carlson assessed the course via conversations with the students, a final written assessment that students submitted at the end of the semester, and through a review of her Student Assessment of Learning Experiences results (SALE). Students pointed to challenges they encountered in trying to arrange conversation times and modes with the UVIC students but generally enjoyed the collaboration. They offered insights and suggestions for improvement in their final written assessment but did not comment on the collaboration in the SALE survey.</p>
29. Common assessment rubric
<p>We discussed the possibility of a common rubric in several of our course-planning conversations, and ultimately decided that the differences in our institutional culture, learning modes of our students, and the content of the courses themselves were such that it would be best for each of us to assess our students individually. We both based our assessment on the collaborated activities on the degree to which students participated.</p>
30. Assessment outcomes
<p>See above</p>
31. Peer assessment
<p>No, the students did not assess one another's work. However, there was lots of conversations in Dr. Aragon's seminar about the efficacy of the Storytimed assignments and the online interactions with the American students. If anything, this attempt to internationalize the curriculum was met with some resistance by the UVIC students merely due to the other students being from a US based institution. This presented them an interesting opportunity to work with American students and some were excited and others were cautious because they had to work with American students!</p> <p>The students in Dr. Gupta-Carlson's course were interested in the opportunity to work with Canadian students, and shared in conversations on discussion forums and in e-mails with the instructor that they were surprised to encounter a negative view of Americans on the part of Canadians. Many expressed that the perspective made them more aware of how Americans and America might be perceived by others abroad.</p>
32. Charter or guidelines for student interaction
<p>Dr. Aragon's students were instructed that shared respect was key to establishing trust and engaging in conversation between the two student groups.</p> <p>Dr. Gupta-Carlson's students were encouraged to see differences between themselves and their</p>

Canadian counterparts as opportunities to learn from each other.

33. Attrition

The UVIC course had no attrition during the collaboration with ESC.

Two ESC students withdrew from the course before the collaboration, and one additional student withdrew in the early phases of the collaboration. The reasons for the withdrawals were unrelated to the collaboration.

34. Is this typical for similar classes at your institution

No, this was an atypical exercise for the UVIC cohort and for Dr. Aragon. The cross-border collaboration also was atypical for ESC students and Dr. Gupta-Carlson.

Section 7: Institutional Support

36. Types of support
<p>Dr. Aragon had a letter of support from Associate Dean Michael Webb, Social Science Faculty with the initial application. However, aside from this letter there was no support of any kind from UVIC or from COIL.</p> <p>Dr. Gupta-Carlson received support from then Associate Dean Janet Shideler, Center for Distance Learning, and then Provost Meg Benke. She negotiated a change in her teaching schedule with CDL Dean Thomas Mackey who encouraged her to consider developing the collaboration through the Digital Storytelling course, rather than creating a new course from scratch (which is an expensive and time-consuming process for ESC.)</p>
37. Engagement with the international programs office
<p>UVIC has an Associate Vice President of International Affairs since Fall 2012. To Dr. Aragon's knowledge he has not been in contact with ESC.</p> <p>ESC is extensively engaged with international programs, and works closely with SUNY COIL. To Dr. Gupta-Carlson's knowledge, there is no contact between ESC and UVIC at the international programs level.</p>
38. Importance given to globally networked learning
<p>UVIC is definitely moving forward with internationalizing the campus in terms of student population and the curriculum.</p> <p>ESC considers its relationship with COIL an important component of its internationalization efforts.</p>
39. Commitment
<p>This was the first collaboration between Drs. Gupta-Carlson and Aragon.</p>
40. Future iterations
<p>Dr. Aragon will not teach the Youth Politics seminar during the 2013-14 school year.</p> <p>Dr. Gupta-Carlson taught Digital Storytelling in September 2012 and is currently teaching it. She and her ESC colleague, Dr. Sheila Aird, have adapted and built upon many of the collaborated activities that Dr. Gupta-Carlson and Dr. Aragon developed, and have used these activities to team-teach within and across sections of the Digital Storytelling course in the ESC system.</p>
41. New globally networked courses
<p>Yes, this course was referred to at the UVIC Senate's Learning and Teaching committee, as Dr. Aragon sits on the committee.</p> <p>Dr. Gupta-Carlson has been offering a US History Since 1865 course to students at Nanjing University in China, via ESC's international programs, and has floated possibilities of creating networked courses with</p>

instructors in India. She is unlikely to aggressively pursue these initiatives in the short-term future, however, because of other scholarly commitments.

42. Response of chairs, deans, provosts or other administrators to the possibility of expanding this pilot course(s) into a broader program of globally networked courses

Dr. Aragon has had conversations with the Director of the Learning and Teaching Centre and others administrators about the course and they want to implement more collaborative courses and MOOCs.

Dr. Gupta-Carlson has received favorable response from her dean for her efforts, but expansion of the course into a broader globally networked initiative does not seem likely at this point.

43. Institutional commitment to further developing globally networked courses

For UVIC this will have to be pursued as a faculty led initiative and then hopefully supported by Chairs, Deans, and other administrators. The situation is similar at ESC.

44. How to nurture the development of globally networked learning

Financial incentive and course release for planning and implementation.

Institutionally, ESC is moving forward with globally networked learning initiatives; however, Gupta-Carlson anticipates that her role in these endeavors will become more active, post-tenure. Her commitment to completing final revisions for a forthcoming book, development of a second book manuscript in 2013-14, and supervision of her courses as ESC transitions its LMS from Angel to Moodle are taking priority for the next 2-3 years.

Section 8: Reflections

45. Goals set
ESC: Communication, Global citizenry, Connections UVIC: Community building, Cross-national dialogue, Connections
46. Goals achieved
The students had to communicate with one another as part of the course(s) rubrics.
47. Most unique aspects for students
<p>The UVIC students felt like they already knew American by virtue of the cultural, economic and political hegemony of the US; however, interacting online with American students was a different experience for them. The Canadian students learned lots and some had their biases or stereotypes confirmed!</p> <p>The ESC students didn't actually feel like they knew much about Canadians, beyond biases or stereotypes they had picked up in cross-border encounters. They were surprised to discover some of the rationale and underlying feelings that had perhaps given rise to the stereotypes. Since ESC students generally are older than the conventionally aged college student, the experience of communicating with a peer group that was considerably younger than them also was eye-opening for them.</p>
48. Most successful aspect(s) from a pedagogical perspective
Drs. Gupta-Carlson and Aragon worked well in the planning and execution of the collaboration. Dr. Gupta-Carlson is extremely organized! Dr. Aragon is extremely efficient.
49. Most problematic aspect(s) from a pedagogical perspective
<p>The UVIC students were resistant on two counts: working with Americans, and working with non-Political Science students. They clearly held a bias that Political Science students are somehow the more intellectual students. This surprised Dr. Aragon as the seminar included strong students through struggling students.</p> <p>The ESC students did not immediately see the less-than-warm-and-fuzzy exchanges between themselves and their Canadian counterparts as insightful learning experiences, and tended to treat these encounters negatively when they occurred. It took some work on the part of Dr. Gupta-Carlson to help them consider how the exchanges might be contextualized as intercultural learning experiences.</p>
50. Changes for future iterations
In hindsight, Dr. Aragon realizes that her Pop Culture and Politics seminar would be a better fit to collaborate with Dr. Gupta-Carlson's Digital Storytelling course. Dr. Gupta-Carlson has developed a new course, Hip-Hop America: The Evolution of a Cultural Movement, since the collaboration, and believes this course partnered with Dr. Aragon's Pop Culture and Politics seminar would be a better fit for a future globally networked learning environment.

52. Technical support

Our team included an ESC instructional designer who attended the October 2011 COIL workshops with Dr. Gupta-Carlson and helped work out some of the initial technological possibilities for how the globally networked environment might be created. Most of the curriculum development work, however, was carried out by the two faculty members on the team.

53. International programs person

Our team did not have an international programs representative.

54. Time commitment

Dr. Aragon finds that putting together a new course normally takes forty hours and this course is no different; however, she and Dr. Gupta-Carlson kept in contact via email and phone. This was Dr. Gupta-Carlson's first major reconfiguration of online course content, and she found that the development was about the same amount that she experienced in creating her new course, Hip-Hop America, later in 2012. Because the online course content had to be much more rigorously structured than a face-to-face course, Dr. Gupta-Carlson appreciated how Dr. Aragon's adoption of course texts and other learning materials from Digital Storytelling into the Youth Politics course helped give the course shape.

55. Was it worth it?

Yes, it was worth it. The most insightful feedback was during class and from the students' evaluations. It was extremely interesting for Dr. Aragon to see how biased some of her Canadian students were about Americans. This provided ample opportunity for "teachable moments."

Dr. Gupta-Carlson found the feedback from both students insightful, and helpful in terms of understanding and dealing with cultural biases as well as issues of ageism. As noted above, Dr. Gupta-Carlson has continued to use the learning activities that she and Dr. Aragon developed, and feels that a similar iteration could be implemented without much difficulty when an appropriate occasion emerges.

Section 9: Course Collaboration Narrative

The students in Himanee Gupta-Carlson's fully-online Digital Storytelling course through Empire State College completed four shared activities with the students in Dr. Janni Aragon's Youth Politics course at University of Victoria. Three of the four activities consisted of teams of ESC and U-Vic students discussing shared readings and learning materials such as websites and videos related to hip-hop as community building and youth political activism via communicative modes of their choice. Many of the teams started their communications via e-mail but then switched over to such "live chat" modes as Facebook chat, Google chat, and Today's Meet. Gupta-Carlson's students shared observations about the communication via a discussion forum in our course Angel space and Aragon's students shared their observations via blogs. In many cases, students posted a transcript of their conversations. Aragon forwarded her student blog links to Gupta-Carlson so she was able to track the conversations from that end. Gupta-Carlson didn't have a good way of forwarding the discussion forums to Aragon but did copy and save the full forums for her to look more closely at what transpired on the ESC end.

The transcripts as well as the summarizations revealed a lot of friendly, intimate exchange between the students and fairly solid and frank discussions about the collaboration itself. Drs. Aragon and Gupta-Carlson are both trained as political scientists, with an emphasis on theory and the relationships between theory and practice. We believe that this background, coupled with our commitment to the dialogic and conversational nature of feminist pedagogical practices, instilled in us a desire to keep the format relatively open, inviting the students to talk about U.S.-Canadian relationships as an aspect of building community across borders. Aragon's students -- although studying Youth Politics -- were reading one of the Digital Storytelling texts used by Gupta-Carlson's Digital Storytelling students. Gupta-Carlson swapped out many of the usual Digital Storytelling web sites that students make "field trips" to with the sites on youth activism that formed much of her course content. We encouraged the students throughout both of our respective courses to keep on connecting three themes: building community through telling stories, hip-hop as a practice of both storytelling and community building, and activism as a mode of working toward shared goals.

Students responded to this connectivity in interesting ways. They shared in their one-on-one conversations that many of them knew little about the other country. Gupta-Carlson's students commented that they were surprised at how much US media had shaped Canadian public culture and many noted that they felt that media had fueled negative perceptions among Canadians of what Americans were like. Her students expressed surprise in some cases that the American students with whom they were communicating were "nice". The students in both courses had varying racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds and these identity categories also seemed to influence how they communicated with each other.

Gupta-Carlson's students tended to be older than "traditional" college age and often have been married, have children, and have worked for many years, while Aragon's students were more in the 20-21 year age range. Some of Gupta-Carlson's students noted these differences, with one observing that a 21-year-old and a 35-year-old who has been married and divorced are going to think differently about the world, without a doubt. The age differences between our two groups of students turned out to be perhaps the most significant point of differentiation, and produced teaching and learning moments for both of us. While Gupta-Carlson's students tended to be more understanding of the lives that younger adults live (perhaps as a result of experiencing these years of their lives already), Aragon's expressed a certain degree of impatience and frustration in having to work with older students, older students who were Americans and non-political science majors on top of that. That differences related to age would surface did not surprise us, as we were aware of the demographics of our two student populations.

What surprised us was the degree to which ageism became a factor in the students' relationships with one another. Both of us considered this issue a learning experience for us, and a teachable moment that we were able to deploy partially in our collaboration and more effectively in our future teachings.

We did have one project in which all students participated collectively, which was to create a story together in a social networking space called StoryTimed. We presented the dialogue that we hoped would ensue in the story after the concept of the hip-hop cipher, which uses a "call and response" mode of participation to stimulate open-ended dialogue in an effort among participants to express something new. StoryTimed got heated at times, in what both of us felt was a good way, though students in both classes expressed to us, the instructors, as well as to each other in their more intimate e-mail and chat conversations some discomfort with the flow.

Gupta-Carlson asked her students to assess the value, insights, and challenges of the collaboration -- as well as to suggest possible changes if we were to do it again. Most of Gupta-Carlson's students enjoyed the experiment though they pointed out that arranging meeting times with their Canadian counterparts and waiting for e-mail responses from each other added a great deal of challenge to the work. They demonstrated in their assessments a heightened awareness of the world beyond American borders and a willingness to stretch their learning further in that direction. Their comments also indicated to me that the connections between political activism, community building, storytelling, and hip-hop culture had clicked for them. Aragon's students responded less positively to the collaboration in their final assessments of the course, displaying again aspects of the ageism alluded to earlier. Aragon and Gupta-Carlson discussed the course outcomes in a two-hour telephone debriefing following the collaboration and again via e-mail exchanges in the ensuing months. Gupta-Carlson also consulted with one of her former ESC mentors, Janet Shideler (now Dean at Siena College), as to how to make sense of the varying assessments. Dr. Shideler suggested that differences in the culture of the two institutions might also have been factors in shaping the differing student responses to the collaboration as well as differences in the socio-political structures that inform higher education in the United States and Canada. Shideler's insights have helped Gupta-Carlson reflect more deeply on the sensitivities that might be provoked in putting students from two different environments into conversations with each other, and have given her much to ponder.

Both of us felt that we learned a great deal about what it means to collaborate as we worked over the months leading up to our actual course to devise ways of putting our students together. Both of our institutions place a high value on developing collaborative projects, and see collaboration as an important component to the internationalization of curricula. Both of us also as feminist scholars with a deep interest and passion for teach also view our work of research and teaching as aimed at encouraging collaboration. Perhaps what we gained the most from this experience was a deeper understanding of collaboration – collaboration intertwined with a mission of internationalization. Gupta-Carlson outlined a few lessons that she and Aragon learned in one of her course log reports to the COIL Commons. We reiterate them here:

1. Collaborating is creative, dynamic, and fun. It's sometimes stressful because we are both respectful of each other's space and work load and try not to impose too much expectation on the other, especially because we realize that both of us are on parallel career paths that nevertheless are different because of the institutions where we work, the disciplines into which we have found ourselves, and our own personal lives, needs, and aspirations. The up-side of that respect is that we are friends and colleagues, and when we are able to make time to converse, our discussions are energizing and lively. The challenge is that perhaps we do not always quickly communicate because we understand the huge work/life juggle that the other faces.

2. The best learning in a globally networked learning environment may be in modes that are simplest and easiest for students (and instructors) to grasp, especially when the instructor teaching philosophies are quite close. Working where I work and listening to others talk about skype, wikis, this tool, that tool, so on and so forth often left me feeling rather stressed that I was not incorporating enough technology into our collaboration. What has really ended up working best has been finding out that we can bridge differences in our respective curricula through shared readings and through what I think will be simple, shared communication modes: e-mails with documentation that make the most sense for each of us in our respective courses -- blogs for Aragon's students and discussion forums for Gupta-Carlson's students. Aragon initiated this step by adopting one of the texts used in the ESC Digital Storytelling course, an institutional constraint that Gupta-Carlson could not work around, for her course, where she has much more flexibility in terms of choosing what students read and study. That flexibility helped Gupta-Carlson see that if Aragon could teach Youth Politics through a Digital Storytelling text, she could teach Digital Storytelling through articles and web links to Youth Politics sites. Our common glue remained hip-hop, which is about the best glue that exists in our contemporary age.

3. Since Gupta-Carlson's course ran for 15 weeks (while Aragon's course was an intensive seven-week summer seminar), Gupta-Carlson tried to prepare her students to collaborate in advance. She replaced many of the "set" digital storytelling virtual field trip assignments with hip-hop oriented sites and retooled several story projects so that they were oriented toward getting students to reflect on what it means to be a "self", what it means to remember history of significance, and what it means to be in an encounter with a stranger. Students responded extremely well to these questions, which gave the community-building, autobiographical, and interactive premises that inform Digital Storytelling a stronger intellectual dimension for Gupta-Carlson. She felt that her students were engaged in discussion and self-reflection in ways that were stronger than any other student group I have worked with in the past. She also found that US students loved learning more about the history of hip-hop and using it as a vehicle to understand digital storytelling. Learning about hip-hop in a digital storytelling format also is internationalizing students in ways that she did not anticipate, and the approach educated me about the backgrounds and needs of her students in ways that she did not anticipate.

4. At the same time, both Gupta-Carlson and Aragon reached a final conclusion that while collaboration is a valuable endeavor, the process of collaborating does not erase power relationships and privilege, and often masks the presence of these factors in ways that ultimately can run the risk of being detrimental to the spirit of collaboration if they are not kept present and respected.

As stated in other sections of the case study, both Gupta-Carlson and Aragon have many other scholarly and college service commitments as pre-tenure faculty at their respective institutions. While both of us appreciated the opportunity to create such a unique teaching collaboration, we feel that we will not embark on such an ambitious activity again in the short-term. We have discussed putting our students together, however, for single short-term assignments tied to specific events that would hold international implications. Gupta-Carlson, for instance, traveled to Washington DC in January 2013 to attend the public inauguration of President Barack Obama. With an iPhone in hand, she communicated with educators, students, colleagues, and friends around the world via Facebook and Twitter. Among her followers was Aragon, who re-tweeted Gupta-Carlson's Twitter hashtag to her students and followed the posts on Facebook.

Gupta-Carlson also became involved with another, much more informal international collaboration at the same time that she was collaborating with Aragon via COIL. Ten Chinese students (also of more traditional college age than the typical ESC student) enrolled in a section of U.S. History Since 1865 that she oversees. She decided to teach the section and create a few collective activities that would bring a

consideration of events in China into the eras of U.S. history that the course was covering. She was happy to discover that these activities were relatively easy to create and had a wonderful impact on internationalizing the outlook of the American students and of acquainting the Chinese students more with America's rather checkered past. A new group of Chinese students have enrolled in the U.S. History Since 1865 course in ESC's March 2013 term, and Gupta-Carlson worked with the instructor assigned to that section to refine the previously created activities. The experience of working on both of these courses has encouraged Gupta-Carlson (as a fairly US-centric educator) to open her own curricula to a more global perspective and to seek out future opportunities to collaborate with faculty across borders when possible.

Section 10: Student Feedback

Please only collaborate with Political Science students. Negative UVIC

This was a great experience and I enjoyed it, even if I felt like a guniea pig! Positive UVIC

Please use different books. Negative UVIC

Working with the American students was better than I expected. Positive UVIC

Referring back to the collaboration segment, I realized, very early on, that I was not up to date with current world events. My partner was insightfully more political than I was, which I felt was frustrating more for her. Overall, I felt my personal experience was not beneficial because my partner was hesitant to open up to me, and when she did, she did not relate much. Most of my observations were founded on outside research. Negative ESC

Reflecting on the collaborative component with the UVic students offered additional global views on world events or even on our close distance relationship between the neighboring countries. My partner Alex was quick and responsive and demonstrated a keen understanding of political activism. His familiarity also underscored personal activism in Canadian politics helping to recall the current Toronto mayor and helping to elect alternative candidates. As email correspondence can become formal, the Today's Meet live web chat tool offered a much more casual tone.

Overall, both Alex and I have liberal based political philosophies so found agreement on much of the discussed topics. As the discussion led to music styles debating the hip hop narratives, I was pleased to offer a U.S. counter perception. As commercial hip-hop artists characterize a segment of the culture as vapid superficial consumers, these messages become telegraphed to the world. While this still resonates in a portion of the American psyche, the indie music message transmitting from the country's center is harvesting more of an evolution. Positive ESC

Regarding the collaboration between us and the University of Victoria students, there were three insights that I gained about how me and my partner (and more generally Americans and Canadians) perceive the United States, Canada, and the rest of the world, which were American and Canadians have the ability and resources to connect with other worlds effectively. Multiculturalism has the capability to transcend through common interests such as hip hop, politics, and personal interests. Lastly, we discovered through Storytimed that the Canadian American relations need to be strengthened through vital communications and dialogue. The most enlightening moments for me during the collaboration was realizing that America is a very conceited country who thinks too much of itself and often disguises its conceit through a false patriotism. The need for sensitivity and understanding was addressed through Storytimed briefly, but more actions need to be taken. Positive ESC

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