

COIL Institute for Globally Networked Learning in the Humanities Course Development and Implementation Case Study

6. Croatia - USA: Rhetoric and Composition

Abstract

We designed the writing tasks of this course with the intention that students would begin to see language difference as a resource rather than simply a barrier to making meaning in intercultural communication. At the same time, we hoped that through the experience of globally networked learning, students would recognize those moments when they, or their instructors, privileged one form of language use over others. So far, our experience teaching these two globally networked courses demonstrates that the discussion board, in isolation, clearly tends towards the sort of sterile exchange that is reflected in the term "Pleasantville." For that reason, opportunities to re-examine and question cultural attitudes are not taken unless we make structural efforts to foster risk taking.

Clearly, students see the online forum as a place to present their public self. Even when students from one class- or peer group may not shy away from direct peer-to-peer confrontation in writing, students outside of that group tend to avoid risking confrontation; at least in the context of low-stakes, online discussion. Although serious, sometimes controversial, issues of cultural and language difference were written about by students in the Café Bar, other students seemed to avoid the more contentious issues in favor of "safer" issues, unless they felt comfortable or safe with one another.

In the context of high-stakes collaboration on writing, however, students seemed more willing to engage directly in issues of difference. We witnessed potential for conflict and misunderstanding when students collaborate on written assignments in which they may not share the same underlying assumptions about authorship, and authority. Unless structured carefully, these interactions have the potential to strengthen, rather than correct, the kinds of stereotypes of other cultures that we hoped our course would address.

The issue for us as instructors is how to facilitate more substantive responses to cultural and language difference, through the structure of assignments, our own responses to students' written texts, and expanding class discussion. With so many original posts produced in each class, the number of discussions that raised such issues was overwhelming and we missed numerous opportunities for exploring relevant issues within and between each section. By taking a more deliberate role in managing the discussions, and then creating roles for different kinds of response, we believe we can provide students opportunities to learn from one another and also gain a deeper understanding of the issues such collaboration brings into the foreground. For example, after every student introduces themselves in their "Welcome to my world" post, we could form the students into four different groups for the "Cross Cultural Resume." While the first group might post an initial response to the prompt, a second group of students could provide a thoughtful common to the original post. The third group could respond in a shorter post with the final group of students working to relate the ensuing discussion to course readings and/or in-class discussions. Regardless of what roles the different student groups may play, asking students to do more than simply respond to two of their peer's posts would likely do a lot to

help us all think more deeply and learn more about negotiating meaning from positions of cultural and linguistic difference.

While it is comparatively easier and safer to write directly about cultural issues in the informal context of an online discussion, it is quite another matter to negotiate meaning across cultural and language when they surface unexpectedly during other course tasks like peer review and collaborative writing. Given the aims of our course, moments of tension or conflict when working collaboratively on a project are pivotal for the learning of the course. For this reason, working with students to do meaningful reflection on these issues within online discussions will certainly help students negotiate their difference when working together to produce writing.

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Section 1: General Course Information

1. Courses

Course Title	Institution(s)	Discipline	Academic Level
Writing Seminar	ACMT	Rhetoric and Composition	sophomore
Writing Seminar	RIT	Rhetoric and Composition	First Year

2. The team

Team Member #1	
Name:	David Martins
Role on Team:	Faculty
Institution:	RIT
Position at Institution:	University Writing Program Director & Associate Professor
Department and/or Program:	University Writing Program/English
Team Member #2	
Name:	Rebecca Charry
Role on Team:	international programs faculty
Institution:	ACMT
Position at Institution:	full time instructor (senior lecturer)
Department and/or Program:	English
Team Member #3	
Name:	Michael Starenko
Role on Team:	Instructional Designer
Institution:	RIT
Position at Institution:	Instructional Design Researcher and Consultant
Department and/or Program:	Innovative Learning Institute

3. When?

Spring Quarter AY2011/12, Fall Quarter AY2012/13

4. Number of students enrolled from each institution

ACMT enrollment: Spring-18 Fall-16

RIT enrollment: Spring-16 ; Fall-6

5. Is this typical for classes of this type?

Both sections at RIT were smaller than is typical, the fall term in particular. Typical enrollment in for “Writing Seminar”/“First Year Writing” is 21.

ACMT enrollments were typical size. At ACMT, the Spring course was designated an “Honors” section. Students were invited to enroll based on A or B grades in the prerequisite Basic Writing course. The fall quarter course at ACMT was not an honors section.

Section 2: Issues of Language

6. Language(s) of instruction at each institution
English is the language of instruction at both institutions
7. Primary language of most students in each class
RIT students are predominantly, but not exclusively, native speakers of English (some international students were enrolled in the course) ACMT students are predominantly foreign speakers of English (one or two native speakers in the group)
8. Language of the course collaboration
Croatian words or short phrases were used spontaneously in a few rare occasions (online discussion posts) by ACMT students. English explanations were given for some of them.
9. Language fluency
ACMT students' English skills range from nearly fluent to intermediate. English language is always a challenge/barrier for a few ACMT students in every course, particularly in formal writing, and academic reading. However, they are fully accustomed to conducting their academic work in English.
10. Language proficiency difference
Differences in English language skill turned out to be less of a barrier than we (particularly Rebecca) expected. Neither the students, nor the instructors, seemed to find language skills a significant barrier to collaboration. While language differences were noticed, and commented on, by students, and informally addressed by instructors, we did not feel that it interfered with the collaboration. Particularly, we did not sense a power or prestige differential between the two groups, based on English skill.

Section 3: Curricular Information

11. Online or blended?

Both iterations of the course were offered in a blended (or hybrid) format the combined face-to face and scheduled asynchronous online interaction and synchronous peer-review sessions; the first iteration also held three synchronous whole-class online meetings. During the first iteration of the course, the sections at RIT and ACMT met fully face-to-face, respectively, with mostly asynchronous but some synchronous online interactions between the RIT and ACMT sections scheduled throughout the term. Realizing that students needed more experience, instruction and reflection on online learning, we designed a more fully blended format (that is, some classroom time was replaced by online interaction). During the fall term, for example, Martins assigned online activities/instruction in place of the one of the two weekly class meetings during 4 out of the 10 weeks.

12. Duration

Our collaboration was spread throughout the ten-week term. Nearly every week students in the two sections participated in the Cafe' Bar discussion forums, conducted synchronous peer review, and collaborated on writing tasks.

13. Class work or discussion related to their collaboration before and/or after the actual collaboration period

While there may have been some informal, student-to-student interaction after the conclusion of each course, not formal work or discussion was assigned before or after either iteration of the course.

Section 4: Asynchronous Technologies Used

14. Tools
First during the spring term of 2012, and again during the subsequent fall term, two sections of the required first-year writing course offered by RIT and ACMT were electronically linked using a shared learning technology, myCourses (Desire2Learn).
15. Server location
RIT and ACMT share a common general education and program curriculum, as well as an enterprise-wide LMS, namely D2L.
16. Technical problems
Generally speaking, we did not experience significant technical problems with our LMS.
17. Frequency of use
We did not use our LMS for class-to-class asynchronous communication. Apart from completing the asynchronous online assignments, students were not asked to log in to myCourses on any particular days or any particular number of times per week.
18. Informal communication
The online “Cafe Bar” assignments were designed for “low-stakes writing” (a.k.a. informal online interaction).
19. Re-use
Yes.

Section 5: Synchronous Technologies Used

20. Tools
In the spring 2012 iteration we conducted one class-to-class session during Week 2 using Adobe Connect, an RIT-supported technology, and one session at the end of the class using Skype, which RIT does not official support. In the middle of this class we did attempt to conduct synchronous bibliographic instruction using RIT's "Access Grid" (a.k.a. Internet2), which is intended mostly for research communication. Alas, attempting to stream instruction from RIT's Wallace Center librarians with students at RIT and ACMT participating actively proved fruitless. For the one-to-one interviews and peer review sessions, students could use any synchronous technology they wanted to use, though the majority used Skype.
21. Server location
See question 22.
22. Technical problems
Yes. Due to limited bandwidth and design issues, Adobe Connect did not work well for class-to-class sessions (it's designed for use by individuals sitting in front of their own computers). We did have better success with Skype for class-to-class sessions, perhaps due to the fact that Skype has more servers world-wide than Adobe Connect. The limitations of both technologies restrict spoken communication to turn-taking or speaking one after the other.
23. Frequency of use
See question 22.
24. Informal communication
Students may have used Skype on their own, but we have no evidence of such interaction. In the fall quarter, most student interaction occurred through traditional email, particularly for the interview assignments.
25. Re-use
Because class-to-class online synchronous communication largely failed in the first iteration of the course, we made no attempt to use the mode of communication in the second iteration. In addition, we did not see much educational benefit in using class-to-class online synchronous communication. For these reasons, we will likely not use class-to-class online synchronous communication in future iterations of this course. We will, however, continue to use Skype (or similar) for one-to-one interviews and peer-review sessions.

Section 6: Assessment Information

26. How?						
Students were assessed on a variety of formal and informal writing assignments, as well as class participation/professionalism. Intercultural awareness played an important role in class discussions but was not directly assessed.						
27. Common assessment rubric						
<p>Yes. Several assignments were graded on a Credit/no credit/resubmit basis. This rubric was suggested by David, who had used it successfully in the past. This was a new assessment strategy for Rebecca.</p> <p>This rubric was used for smaller, less formal assignments which we saw as building blocks for larger assignments. In David’s words, students are “writing to learn” in these activities, and our goal was to reward active participation, and also to reduce student anxiety about grades. These smaller assignments included discussion board posts, profiles, participation in in-class peer review, and bibliographies, each worth a relatively small number of points. For these assignments, students who followed instructions and submitted thoughtful work on time, were given full credit (100% of point value). Students whose work showed a lack of effort or understanding of the assignment, were given a grade of Resubmit (50% credit) with the opportunity to revise and resubmit for full credit if they chose. Students who simply did not do the assignment received no credit.</p> <p>Larger assignments (final researched essays, academic “coming to terms” paper, final reflective essay, class participation/professionalism) were evaluated using a scoring guide that highlighted rhetorical awareness, genre conventions, and use of sources/texts.</p> <p>For example, the “coming to terms” assignment asked students to select a “text” and then analyze it by describing the author’s aims/goals for the text, summarizing the key/significant ideas used in the text, and articulating the uses and limits of the text. When assessed, the following scoring guide was used as the basis for peer response and classroom discussion of the students’ writing, and was then used by instructors to evaluate the essay (comments to the student writer have been included to show the use of the scoring guide):</p> <p>Scoring Guide Elements for “coming to terms” with an artifact/text described by Joseph Harris have served as the basis for peer response and our classroom discussions. All of this will now be the basis for my evaluation of your essay.</p> <p>Introduction – A strong introduction presents a brief overview of your essay by presenting relevant background/contextual information on the artifact and by highlighting the scope and organization of what is to follow.</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Needs Work</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">Effective</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: right;">Highly Effective</td> </tr> </table> <p style="color: purple;">In your first paragraph, [students name], you didn’t actually introduce your own essay. You set the stage by focusing on how parents don’t help their students prepare for life in higher education, but don’t introduce the issue that seems to be the focus of “over protective” parenting.</p> <p>Coming to Terms – A strong essay offers an explanation with evidence from the text for each element of this analysis: <i>defining</i> the author’s project, <i>noting</i> keywords or passages, <i>assessing</i> uses and limits. Be sure to quote from the text, using it for support for your claims.</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Needs Work</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">Effective</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: right;">Highly Effective</td> </tr> </table> <p style="color: purple;">In the body of your essay you have selected some interesting quotes and seem to have focused on</p>	Needs Work	Effective	Highly Effective	Needs Work	Effective	Highly Effective
Needs Work	Effective	Highly Effective				
Needs Work	Effective	Highly Effective				

Effective

Conclusion – A strong literacy narrative presents a clear understanding of literacy learned through the process of writing the narrative. In short, a strong conclusion answers the question: “So What?”

Needs Work

Effective

Highly Effective

Format/Mechanics/Process – A strong essay is essentially clear of error and follows MLA formatting guidelines.

Did you proofread?

You need a handbook

Are a proofreader?

Space is typically left to enable students and/or instructor to leave specific written comments on how author can revise to improve the draft.

In addition to this type of assignment-based assessment, we have also worked to evaluate our use of the online discussion board. A discussion of that evaluation is presented in question 30.

28. Assessment outcomes

The scoring guides described above facilitated student revision of essays, and were not used to evaluate the cohort as a whole. Although a typical Writing Seminar focuses primarily on issues of rhetoric, composition and research, increased intercultural awareness was added as a goal of our globally linked version of the course. Included among the student learning outcomes normally listed on course syllabi, our learning outcomes indicated that students would directly address issues of language difference and the varied sources of discursive resources:

- Students will recognize, analyze and synthesize cross-cultural and cross-linguistic differences, and use those differences as available means for producing meaning in writing, speaking, reading, and listening.
- Students will identify and analyze a range of influences – social, linguistic, cultural, technological and national – that have shaped them as writers, students, and individuals.

Adding these learning outcomes was based on our belief that by directly engaging with one another in writing, students would have to negotiate meaning with each other in academic discourse. In the process, reified notions of the homogeneity of language and academic discourse could be challenged directly and indirectly. We are in the early stages of a project to evaluate the student writing as a means to understanding the effectiveness of our class activities for achieving these outcomes.

We have completed an initial assessment of our use of the discussion board. A summary of that assessment and its outcomes follows:

During the first iteration of the course, only one of the six discussion topics posted to the Café Bar directly prompted reflection on issues of cross cultural communication. After introducing themselves in a post entitled, “Welcome to My World” in the first week, students were asked in the second week to share their “cross cultural resume,” detailing their previous contact and experience with “various cultures and languages other than your own, perhaps related to your family background, travel, friendships or reading.” None of the other discussion topics prompted reflection on issues of culture directly, but rather offered students the opportunity to get to know each other better by sharing photos, recommending music videos or books, or describing hobbies. We expected that issues of cultural and language difference would surface as a result of these conversations, but we were more concerned that these low-stakes

interactions establish a tone that would provide students familiarity with one another so that they would feel comfortable working with one another on the more academic writing tasks.

To encourage open communication, discussion posts were assessed, as described in question 29 above, on a credit/no credit/resubmit scheme. Students who submitted thoughtful posts according to announced deadlines and followed instructions typically received full credit no matter what they wrote. The table below shows the students' high level of participation in the discussion forum, the difference in numbers of original posts relative to the number of students enrolled in the course, the posting activity of both classes and instructors (see Table 1).

Welcome to my world (2012)	Cross-Cultural Resume (spring)	Welcome to my world (2012)	Cross-Cultural Resume (2012)
ACMT - 18 students RIT – 16 Students		ACMT - 16 students RIT – 6 students	
33 Original posts	31 Original Posts	22 Original Posts	22 Original Posts
1 non response (ACMT)	7 no responses (2-RIT, 5-ACMT)	0 no response	0 no response
105 Posts (total) ACMT – 58; RIT – 47	79 Posts (total) ACMT – 51; RIT – 28	111 Posts (total) ACMT – 68; RIT – 43	81 Posts (total) ACMT – 51; RIT – 30
22 instructor responses	3 instructor responses	29 instructor responses	5 instructor responses

Table 1. Student and instructor participation in online discussion forum.

In the first round of Café Bar discussions, while some students chose noncontroversial topics, such as summer vacations, others in both sections showed an immediate interest in issues of social justice. One female student shared an image of the men's rugby team that she played on, describing her experience being a woman playing a stereotypically male sport at a traditionally male-dominated institution. While this student also commented on the overall percentage of female students at RIT, and noted the small number of women enrolled in her section of Writing Seminar, another student in Dubrovnik responded with stories of her own experiences as a woman in male-dominated martial arts practice. A third student, from RIT, described his experience as a member of an ethnic minority overcoming disadvantages in high school and now college.

According to self-characterizations, many students in the spring section came to the course with a relatively high level of awareness of "cultural difference," and seemed to value cross cultural experience for its own sake. When given an opportunity to introduce themselves to the group, or to take a photo of a text from their everyday lives, several students also spontaneously chose to address issues of social justice and demonstrated knowledge of, and

interest in, the wider world around them. In addition to the issues regarding diversity in US higher education, one student, for example, wrote about a controversial gay pride parade that had been held in Split, Croatia. Demonstrating a general interest in promoting equality, justice, and tolerance other students wrote about female participation in college athletics, environmentalism, homelessness, consumerism, and humanitarian responses to the earthquake in Japan.

In the Café Bar prompt entitled, “Cross Cultural Resume,” students in both groups discussed their family roots and significant life experiences with different cultures and languages, including Ghana, Vietnam, Korea, Spain, Germany, inner-city Rochester, and New York City. Even with all of the attention on broad-based linguistic and cultural experiences, five of the 16 students in the Rochester class identified themselves as not having much cross-cultural experience and/or identified themselves as somewhat impoverished in this regard. These were students whose experience was limited to brief vacations or foreign language study in high school or who felt estranged from immigrant family roots over generations. When writing about his limited experience one student wrote: “I cannot honestly say that I'm a particularly culturally knowledgeable person [...] Which is actually kind of sad.” Other students wrote about their cross-cultural as “not much to say,” it was the “bare minimum,” that they were “sheltered culturally,” or of their “unfortunate” lack of experience. There seemed to be a general consensus, however, that cross-cultural awareness and experience was to be desired, and that students could only benefit from such experiences.

Based on our experiences during the spring term, we decided that the issues being raised in the Café Bar were too generative to leave as informal writing meant primarily to improve the relationship among the students in the class. For that reason, we altered the Café Bar prompts to address specifically the issues raised in course readings. Because we didn't alter our own approach to responding to the posts, we again observe numerous missed opportunities to bring the discussions occurring in the Café Bar into broader class discussion.

The fall offering of the course started out similarly to the spring, with *icebreaker activities* meant to acquaint the two groups that included creating and exchanging introductory videos of each group, which students seemed to enjoy. Participation in the first café bar discussion was high, with students posting photos and commenting extensively (see Table 1). There were 22 original postings, and each student was required to respond to two postings. Because the numbers of students in each class were so different – 16 at ACMT and only 6 at RIT – the participation of the instructors were also high. Roje Charry and Martins, for example, wrote a combined 29 responses to student posts.

Generally speaking, as the examples above demonstrate, we saw that some students in both sections came to the course with an already established interest in cross-cultural issues, and felt free to express opinions which could be considered provocative. Their posts seemed to invite the kind of larger discussion that could have helped students investigate and even question some of their own cultural values. However, these potentially provocative ideas were rarely responded to in the online environment. Rather than provoking useful discussion, the online forum tended towards what we have come to think of as “Pleasantville.” The silence in

response to these posts suggests that students seemed reluctant to offend, disagree, or rebut, instead focusing on creating an atmosphere of polite civility. We understand this to be the result of students' concern about presentation of self in a public forum to their peers and their teachers; that is, especially in these discussion posts early in the class, students are presenting their best selves, engaging in polite conversation and demonstrating to their teachers that they can effectively complete the assigned tasks which require response to issues raised by their peers. While there is clearly some risk avoidance within the written posts, students in both sections openly expressed interest in some of the more substantial issues addressed above. The issue for us as the instructors is how to facilitate more substantive reflection on such topics through the structure of assignments, our own responses to discussion posts, and class discussion.

A more complete analysis can be found in Roje Charry, Rebecca, and David S. Martins "High Quality (Transnational) Learning Environments: Promoting Authentic Intercultural Dialogue on Social Justice Issues On-line." In *Globalizing On-line: Telecollaborations, Internationalization, and Social Justice*. Eds. Nataly Tcherepashenets (State University of New York, Empire State College) and Florence Lojacono (Universidad de Las Palmas, Gran Canaria, Spain).

29. Peer assessment

We did schedule a number of peer review sessions in the course, both within each section and across the globally linked sessions. Students did not grade each other, but simply offered feedback and suggestions. It was during one of these peer feedback sessions, in the fall quarter, that we encountered the most significant conflict/misunderstanding/difficulty. Looking back, we realized that part of the problem was our instructions for the assignment, and a big difference in student expectation for the purpose and type of feedback that was expected of them. (See section 10 for more details).

Peer review was a new concept for most of the ACMT students. They welcomed the idea in general, but many said at the end of the course that it was not very useful. They expressed a strong preference for feedback from the instructor on their drafts, rather than from their peers, particularly when their peer review partner was randomly assigned, either within their own section or from the RIT section.

30. Charter or guidelines for student interaction

We did not develop any guidelines for students interaction. Though because of our experiences, it may be something we explore in the future. The form or scope of such a guideline, however, is an open question. We did spend time in class talking about providing peer feedback, especially after a somewhat dramatic experience during the second time we taught the class:

As part of the assignment sequence meant to help students identify and analyze the range of influences that have shaped their own development as writers, students, and individuals, students interviewed each other and wrote "literacy profiles" of two classmates. Because of the disparity in class sizes, each RIT student interviewed and profiled one ACMT student, and small groups of ACMT students interviewed one RIT student. In-class discussion identified the challenges of such group interviews, with particular attention to the difficulties of online, asynchronous interview conducted over email. Students were encouraged to "get to know each

other” before the conducting the actual interview, using live chat or Skype to discuss hobbies or other low risk topics. They were also encouraged to follow up on written answers to questions before writing their final drafts. However, in practice, students completed this interview process on their own, outside of class, without synchronous communication, and without direct instructor supervision or oversight.

Because of the time difference, Charry was able to alert Martins to a situation in which one of the RIT students responded negatively to the profile written about her. Martins was then able to spend half that morning’s class period discussing this particular peer review and ways of making peer review more productive. As a result of the early intervention, the student was able to revise her comments and the other five students in the class who had not yet responded to the profile written about them were primed to respond in potentially more productive ways. It is impossible to know how they would have responded without the class discussion on the first student’s response. However, because the initial response occurred, the class was able to focus on meaningful cultural and language differences, and begin altering their own discursive resources for negotiating meaning in writing.

At ACMT, during the class meeting immediately following this exchange of online feedback, students were noticeably upset. As class began, one student volunteered casually, “It’s funny that in a class that is supposed to make us more friends with the Rochester students, it ended up making us not like them.” Sensing the tension, Charry asked students to write down their general reactions to the feedback they had received from their RIT classmates. This feedback was intended for the instructor only, and students were told it would not be shared with the Rochester group. While students whose profiles had received only minor fact checking corrections seemed to feel that the process had been “good” or “easy enough,” students who received extensive feedback beyond fact checking from their peers were dissatisfied and felt that their own creative process and even authority to write the paper had been undermined, and that the RIT students were just “too sensitive.” In the next class discussion the students at ACMT were encouraged to think about whether they had actually misunderstood or misrepresented their RIT classmates, or whether issues of language difference had been at work. As a group, they seemed to resist self-criticism and continued to blame the RIT students for being too sensitive.

Charry and Martins discussed ways to address the situation in class, so presented each class with a Café Bar prompt on the topic of “authority in writing.” Students were asked to respond to a course reading by sharing a story about a writing experience that drew attention to the factors they believe led to a sense of authority, and that sense affected what they did to complete the writing task. The one post that focused on the peer review of the profiles, and that raised issues of authority in writing, the scope and nature of feedback, and ideas about the role of dialogue, was not responded to by any of the RIT students. One ACMT classmate did respond, but simply voiced general support. After a rather dramatic and somewhat difficult asynchronous confrontation, students seemed to return to “Pleasantville.”

31. Attrition

Only one RIT student dropped out of the Spring 2012 offering of the course.

32. Is this typical for similar classes at your institution?

ACMT and RIT dropout (withdrawal) rate was typical for this course.

Section 7: Institutional Support

33. Type of support
As stated earlier in this case study, RIT and ACMT share a significant amount of infrastructure: curriculum, calendar, online resources and course management platform. The institutional mission of RIT and its relationship with ACMT fully supported the activities of the Institute process, even to the point the for Martins, all the activities were made part of his “plan of work.” That plan of work then served as the basis of his annual merit and tenure reviews. Starenko supported the project as part of his regular duties as an instructional designer. The situation was somewhat different for Charry....
34. Engagement with international programs office
Last year, in the midst of the Institute’s activities, RIT created an office of International Education and Global Programs and hired an Associate Provost-level position to head the office. That individual has been aware of our activities, and as he has worked to coordinate all International efforts on campus, Martins has been included in numerous discussions for ongoing development of curriculum and assessment.
35. Importance given to globally networked learning
Yes. Internationalization is a high priority at RIT, and the office of International Education and Global Programs has seen our experience with globally networked learning as important to ongoing discussion. Additionally, RIT has just this year created an “Innovative Learning Institute” focused on fostering innovative online learning strategies, such as GNLEs. Starenko is an instructional designer in the ILI.
36. Commitment
The interests are great, and there is strong institutional commitment. Although a clear plan to develop globally networked initiatives has not been articulated, many different efforts on campus are focused in this direction.
37. Future iterations
The course has been offered twice, and we have plans to offer the RIT/ACMT course again Fall 2013.
38. New globally networked courses
The possibility of additional sections at other branch locations are being explored. RIT has degree-granting relationships with a number of institutions.
39. Response of deans, chairs, provosts or other administrators to the possibility of expanding this pilot course(s) into a broader program of globally networked courses
The response has been incredibly strong and invested. However, the enormity of changes on our campus has produced a situation where Martins is not yet clear on how RIT will continue to develop globally networked classes in a sustainable way. But he has no doubt it will continue to be developed. Other faculty have also begun to write grant proposal and identify development opportunities related to globally networked learning.

40. Institutional commitment to further developing globally networked courses

Very committed.

41. How to nurture the development of globally networked learning

We think the key to nurturing GNLEs at RIT would be for upper management to include such courses as a “normal” mode of teaching and learning at the Institute. Online and blended courses are already achieved that status, and the “flipped classroom model” is not far behind. We think the same could/should happen with GNLEs.

Section 8: Reflections

42. Goals set

- Design a course that focuses primarily on issues of writing competence, but that would also address issues of language difference and the varied sources of discursive resources:
 - Students will recognize, analyze and synthesize cross-cultural and cross-linguistic differences, and use those differences as available means for producing meaning in writing, speaking, reading, and listening.
 - Students will identify and analyze a range of influences – social, linguistic, cultural, technological and national – that have shaped them as writers, students, and individuals.
- Develop online writing pedagogies that engage students with literacy practices important in higher education
- Collaborate with colleagues at two affiliated campuses to deliver effective writing instruction
- Broaden individual teaching practices using online, collaborative modalities
- Create an exciting, new experience for students

43. Goals achieved

Generally, goals were achieved. Personally, I feel that my teaching has been challenged and invigorated, students have experienced a unique learning environment, and everyone involved has learned. (Rebecca) I feel very positive about this teaching experience. Although we are still working on charting a course somewhere between “my way or the highway” and “pleasantville,” this experience has definitely improved and invigorated my teaching.

44. Most unique aspect for students

The opportunity to collaborate with students from “somewhere else” on assigned writing tasks.

45. Most successful aspect(s) from a pedagogical perspective

Creating some dynamic interaction among students in two sections of first-year writing. Also, the Cafe Bar encouraged students to write and share sincere opinions and ideas, without grade pressure. I think the cafe bar environment succeeded in motivating students to do more thoughtful writing and commenting.

46. Most problematic aspect(s) from a pedagogical perspective

When the assigned writing tasks produced challenging moments for negotiating meaning across language and cultural difference that they were designed to produce, I did not feel entirely prepared to adequately and effectively respond to the situation. Rebecca -- I too felt unprepared to respond to some of the moments of tension. It is not clear whether the issue was true cultural differences, or simply individual personalities, or even the way that we wrote the assignments.

47. Changes for future iterations

Some ideas for changing the course have already been piloted in Charry's recent section that was not taught in collaboration with an RIT section. Charry added numerous multimodal elements, including videos, photos, and songs. Students, for example, practiced "coming to terms" with a recent New York Times column by Roger Cohen on "oversharing" in social media, and then on the songs "Mother, Mother" by Tracy Bonham and "One of Us" by Joan Osborne. Using these songs to talk about ambiguity, close reading, and interpretation added a new level of excitement in the class.

Charry also emphasized coming to terms, and allowed students numerous opportunities for ungraded practice and teamwork in preparation for the graded individual paper. In addition, she eliminated the interviews and profile assignments, instead focusing much more on autobiography, and replaced journal article readings with multiple examples of multimodal literacy autobiographies. Finally, she reduced the number of Café Bar posts to only 4, which allows more time to students and instructors to reflect and comment on the discussion, and to integrate those online discussions into face-to-face class discussion.

All of these changes will be incorporated into the third globally networked version of the course.

48. Technical support

While Starenko feels regret about the technological and pedagogical failure of the class-to-class synchronous online component, he feels good about the design and positive effect of the Café Bar discussions. All in all, he thinks that his role in this project was similar to his role in scores of other projects involving online and/or blended course design. Because Martins and Charry copied Starenko on their voluminous email correspondence, he was able to discern three themes in the course design and "delivery" processes:

1. Challenge of "team teaching" a course designed and previously taught by one of the two instructors
2. Difficulty of assessing the educational benefits of asynchronous compared to synchronous communication modes and technologies
3. The various impact of different instructional/linguistic environments (I.e., ACMT students working online in one computer lab, whereas Rochester students working online in their individual rooms)

49. International programs person

From Starenko's perspective, the first iteration took relatively more time to develop and support on account of the class-to-class synchronous online sessions. Conversely, the second iteration took much less time because the course was already developed it did not include any class-to-class synchronous online sessions. The Café Bar synchronous discussion assignments took only a little more time to

develop compared to a “typical” blended course, which usually have one asynchronous online discussion assignment per week. The development of “the course,” which was 80-90% “traditional” in format (that is a blend of collaborative class time and independent reading and writing time), was a completely different matter.

50. Was it worth it?

Starenko thinks that it will be much easier to support another iteration of the course because no class-to-class synchronous online communication will be used.

Section 9: Course Collaboration Narrative

We designed the writing tasks of this course with the intention that students would begin to see language difference as a resource rather than simply a barrier to making meaning in intercultural communication. At the same time, we hoped that through the experience of globally networked learning, students would recognize those moments when they, or their instructors, privileged one form of language use over others. So far, our experience teaching these two globally networked courses demonstrates that the discussion board, in isolation, clearly tends towards the sort of sterile exchange that is reflected in the term "Pleasantville." For that reason, opportunities to re-examine and question cultural attitudes are not taken unless we make structural efforts to foster risk taking.

Clearly, students see the online forum as a place to present their public self. Even when students from one class- or peer group may not shy away from direct peer-to-peer confrontation in writing, students outside of that group tend to avoid risking confrontation; at least in the context of low-stakes, online discussion. Although serious, sometimes controversial, issues of cultural and language difference were written about by students in the Café Bar, other students seemed to avoid the more contentious issues in favor of "safer" issues, unless they felt comfortable or safe with one another.

In the context of high-stakes collaboration on writing, however, students seemed more willing to engage directly in issues of difference. We witnessed potential for conflict and misunderstanding when students collaborate on written assignments in which they may not share the same underlying assumptions about authorship, and authority. Unless structured carefully, these interactions have the potential to strengthen, rather than correct, the kinds of stereotypes of other cultures that we hoped our course would address.

The issue for us as instructors is how to facilitate more substantive responses to cultural and language difference, through the structure of assignments, our own responses to students' written texts, and expanding class discussion. With so many original posts produced in each class, the number of discussions that raised such issues was overwhelming and we missed numerous opportunities for exploring relevant issues within and between each section. By taking a more deliberate role in managing the discussions, and then creating roles for different kinds of response, we believe we can provide students opportunities to learn from one another and also gain a deeper understanding of the issues such collaboration brings into the foreground. For example, after every student introduces themselves in their "Welcome to my world" post, we could form the students into four different groups for the "Cross Cultural Resume." While the first group might post an initial response to the prompt, a second group of students could provide a thoughtful comment to the original post. The third group could respond in a shorter post with the final group of students working to relate the ensuing discussion to course readings and/or in-class discussions. Regardless of what roles the different student groups may play, asking students to do more than simply respond to two of their peer's posts would likely do a lot to help us all think more deeply and learn more about negotiating meaning from positions of cultural and linguistic difference.

While it is comparatively easier and safer to write directly about cultural issues in the informal context of an online discussion, it is quite another matter to negotiate meaning across cultural and language when they surface unexpectedly during other course tasks like peer review and collaborative writing. Given the aims of our course, moments of tension or conflict when working collaboratively on a project are pivotal for the learning of the course. For this reason, working with students to do meaningful reflection on these issues within online discussions will certainly help students negotiate their difference when working together to produce writing.

Section 10: Student Feedback

FROM ACMT SPRING QUARTER GROUP: This course really was something new, because we actually got to communicate with another campus, though I think that it would have been a better experience if everyone had done everything in time, and not two weeks later.

This class was a totally new experience. At the beginning I had a feeling that it will be a stupid class not worth taking. Well I was wrong and I enjoyed every lecture. The discussion Cafe bar was excellent. Having a chance to share your writing, reading, music, experience, stories, literacy actually a part of your life with people that I have never met before was great. We made new friends. :) The peer review is an excellent idea because I had a chance to hear others opinion about my work and it helped me a lot to improve my writing as did this whole course. Thank you for allowing us to choose the construction of this class by this I mean the discussion topics. Maybe few more live video chat in the future would be great.

In ACMT fall quarter group, only 3 of 16 students completed evaluation and none left substantive comments.

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