Business Across Borders as Practiced via COIL

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Past research
Application in the classroom
Multi-National Business Growth

* Lowering of Trade Barriers
* The Internet and improved communications
* Changing demographics – more emerging nations

* *Many Business Employees will find themselves working in or with multi-national businesses*
Growth of Virtual Teams

- Facilitated by the Internet and collaboration technologies.
- Bridge time and space
- Can be very productive
  - 24 hour work schedule
  - Task-oriented
- Make use of talent located anywhere
- Can respond to local market and customer needs
- Cost effective (e.g., IBM 2007 study – saved more than $50 M)
- Performance easily assessed because interactions are electronically archived

*Virtual teams that are designed, managed, and implemented effectively can harness talent and knowledge from anywhere in the world to solve problems and complete work tasks on a 24/7 schedule.* (Berry, 2011)
Growth in Global Virtual Teams

87% participation in virtual teams
(33% in global virtual teams)
2012 Virtual Teams Survey with 3301 responses

94% participation in virtual teams
2014 Unify New Ways to Work Survey with 326 responses

Collaboration among organizations in the same industry occurs as often as competition.
(Morgan, 2006)
Virtual Team Success (RW3, 2012)

How Successful Is Your Virtual Team?

- Not successful: 1%
- Somewhat successful: 33%
- Successful: 54%
- Very successful: 12%
Some research claims that the use of virtual teams is expanding exponentially (Maznevski & Chudoba, 2000)

- Globalization
- Trend toward leaner, flatter organizations
- Ubiquitous access to information technology
Employees are thrown into virtual teams with little knowledge, training or experience – In the RW3 survey, only 16% reported receiving training on how to work on a virtual team

What’s missing? Wesner (2008) identified five necessary competencies:
- Organizational Knowledge
- Cross-cultural knowledge
- Work Content and Subject Matter Expertise
- Collaborative Technology Skills and Knowledge
- Collaborative work process skills and knowledge

Many studies focus on intercultural competence as the single most important attribute people on successful virtual teams have.
Collaboration is a “robust tool for getting things done, creating change and extending resources” (Nemiro, Beyerlein, Bradley, & Beyerlein, 2008).

For some businesses, the internal core competency of innovation has been replaced by expertise in collaboration with external stakeholders, allowing for the development of more competitive and differentiated products and service (Buytendijk, 2009).

Virtual teams are increasingly common in most organizations, and business communication is increasingly intercultural, horizontal, strategic, and change focused as well (Thomas, 2007).

Organizations that are unwilling or unable to use virtual teams may find themselves losing out in an increasingly competitive and rapidly changing global economic and social environment. (Berry, 2011)
Intercultural Competence

* Ability to **understand** meaning of intercultural interactions and to adapt one’s behavior to most efficiently and effectively respond in order to product **positive outcomes**.
* Partially personality based: Empathy, open-mindedness and emotional stability support intercultural competence.
* Partially learned through experience, critical reflection and practice addressing norms such as:
  * What is “good” or “bad”?
  * How should something be done?
  * What is correct behavior?
Establishing Multinational Virtual Teams Norms can be Difficult

Can be a long part of start-up before team can work effectively. Instructor should suggest a set of norms that the team can discuss and adapt to their needs.

* Will there be a team leader to help synchronize activities? What will the team leader be responsible for?
* Are there any holidays, important events, or competing milestones that will cause difficulties with schedule?
* How often will participants be expected to contribute?
* Will there be regular synchronous check-in meetings? If so, when and how often making sure that scheduling difficulties are shared by all?
* Where are questions posted? Who is responsible for answering questions?
* What artifacts will be produced and where?
* How will decisions be made?
* What is each person’s responsibilities?
* What time line will be followed?
Experience in Virtual Teams allows team members to learn what is effective and what is not:

- Understanding of the purpose and value of the team
- Making sure that all team members know what their purpose is
- Establishing accountability
- Frequent and continuous communication
**Understanding Time Visions (Saunders, 2004)**

- **Clock** – Time is linear and is a scarce commodity – View often held by US, Anglo-Saxon, Germanic and Scandinavian countries.
- **Event** – Time is cyclical, continuous and not scarce - There are phases through which every activity transitions governed by what occurs not a set schedule – Japan
- **Timeless** – Quick decisions should not be made - more time leads to better decisions – View of Hindu and Buddhist cultures
- **Harmonic** – Time is concrete and punctuality is important – China

With Clock vision, **schedule is all important** – in the other three, **flexibility and quality completion** of each task is more important – To blend, need frequent check-in events where schedule can be assessed and adjusted if necessary but with the deadline still met.
Example – “OK” Means “I’ll Try”

Let’s plan on having our students meet each other on Google Hangouts at 8:00 on February 8th. That would be 16:00 for you.

OK. That would be good.

Not sure I will be here that day.

Not sure we can get technology to work by then.
Working Around Cultural Norm Differences

- Encourage critical thinking on what members have “taken for granted”.
- Encourage analyzing different perspectives.
- Low and High Context Communications Culture – Understanding why one may take offense with what is said by the other.
  - In low context communications, communications are more direct and specific.
  - In high context communications, communications are more formal and indirect.
Working Around Communication Style Differences

- Make time to build rapport.
- Discussion about Ground Rules
- Discussion around deadlines and dates and difficulties that will ensure with changing them.
- Simplify what will be done.
- Plan for extra time.
- Use polls for decision management
Team members should be prepared to take Trust-Affirming Actions:

- Meeting deadlines
- Participating
- Communicating
  - 38% of those surveyed on “unsuccessful” teams reported few team interactions (Unify, 2014)
  - 86% of those on “successful” teams reported regular interactions (Unify, 2014)

Trust is also built when people are experienced working in virtual teams and have been successful and know what makes a team successful.
Technology Enables Collaboration

- Web conferencing for virtual meetings
- Chat and whiteboards
- Shared workspaces, wikis and blogs
- Polling to facilitate decision making
- Formal education is needed in the class room
Working in an Asynchronous Manner Can Cause Frustration

* No immediate answer to questions.
* No immediate feedback.
* No verbal and nonverbal clues to meaning.
* Local work priorities may interfere

BUT with shared workspaces and collaborative technology **HAS BIG ADVANTAGES**

* Time to really review and add to what the team has already done.
* Easy roll-back allows for trying out different ideas.
* Version control and central location of group work ensures everyone is working off the same material.
* Asynchronous communication provides a constant opportunity to *talk* through problems, share perspectives, get feedback, and answer questions that arise among team members without waiting for scheduled meetings (Hinds & Weisband, 2003)

Instructor needs to emphasize the positives, give advice for support of scheduling with many milestones, and positively encourage participation.
Bartel-Radic Study (2006) showed that the *existence of global teams* is the most important contributor in organization to the development of intercultural competence. Other international experiences had very little impact.

*Our Goal* – Globally Networked Active Learning - Give every *Georgian Court School of Business student* an opportunity to participate in several globally-networked experiences.
Part 1
Form a Partnership

Part 2
Pre-collaboration work

Part 3
Student collaboration

Part 4
Final review and reflection
Part 1: Form a Partnership

* How to locate a partner?
* Can be difficult
* Similar courses
* Matching expectations
* Organization/Timeline essential
Part 1: Form a Partnership

* Robert Letovsky: Adjunct UNICAES: Universidad Católica de El Salvador

* Profesor at Saint Michaels University
Part 2 - Pre-collaboration

* Prepare students
* Understand cultural and communication norms
* Discuss challenges (time zone difference, technology, translation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday Nov 17th</td>
<td>1: Select group</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2: Select company</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3: Pre-interview survey</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4: Sign-up sheet (laptop)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5: Group work time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday Nov 19th</td>
<td>1: Group work time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday Nov 24th</td>
<td>1: Group work time</td>
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<td>2: Get approval from Dr. Elmore</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3: Conduct a sample skype call</td>
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<td>Nov 24th-Dec 8th:</td>
<td>1: Conduct Skype Call</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2: Work on PowerPoints</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday Dec 8th</td>
<td>Class time to work on PowerPoints</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday Dec 15th: 6:30-8:30pm</td>
<td>Presentation in the COIL room</td>
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<td>Tuesday Dec 16th-Friday Dec 19th</td>
<td>Post project survey</td>
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Part 2 - Pre-collaboration

- Research El Salvador and select company
- Asynchronous Communication: Email
- Establish common time for Skype call
Part 3 - Student collaboration
Part 4– Final Review and Reflection

• **Synchronous** session
• Purpose – share results both of the project and of working together
• All students present
• Reflect on their own experience
• Hear successes and pitfalls
• Brings closure to the project
• Showcases both universities as equal partners, and allows for an open discussion of what went well and what could be improved
http://youtu.be/HX0vrf0O4YI
Research

Pre-Survey

Post-Survey

Compare expectations, gauge previously knowledge, evaluate learning

Discover areas for improvement
Survey Results

Pre-Interview Survey

My current knowledge of business practices in El Salvador

- Very knowledgeable: 10%
- Moderate knowledge: 5%
- Neutral: 20%
- Low knowledge: 25%
- No knowledge: 40%

Answered: 29  Skipped: 0

Post Project Reflection

AFTER this project, my current knowledge of business practices in El Salvador

- Very knowledgeable: 30%
- Moderate knowledge: 50%
- Neutral: 10%
- Low knowledge: 5%
- No current knowledge: 5%

Answered: 12  Skipped: 0
Survey Results

Pre-Interview Survey

My current knowledge of the company my team selected business practices in El Salvador:

- Very knowledgeable: 29
- Moderate knowledge: 0
- Neutral: 0
- Low knowledge: 0
- No knowledge: 0

Answered: 29  Skipped: 0

Post Project Reflection

AFTER the project, my knowledge of the company my team selected business practices in El Salvador:

- Very knowledgeable: 12
- Moderate knowledge: 0
- Neutral: 0
- Low knowledge: 0
- No current knowledge: 0

Answered: 12  Skipped: 0
Current knowledge of selected company’s business practices in the USA
**Survey Results**

**I believe that knowledge I learned in this project could be helpful to my future career**

- **Strongly Agree**
- **Agree**
- **Neutral**
- **Disagree**
- **Strongly Disagree**

Answered: 12  Skipped: 0

**Creo saber que este proyecto puede ser útil en mi futura carrera**

- **Totalmente de acuerdo**
- **estar de acuerdo**
- **neutral**
- **no estar de acuerdo**
- **fuerte desacuerdo**

Answered: 3  Skipped: 0
Areas for Improvement

* Language Barrier

RE: Business Across Borders Marketing Project

Elmore, Ashley

To: Sandrielis Mendoza [sandrielis_mendoza@yahoo.com], Hunt, Miriam; williamantoniogodoy@gmail.com, sofia_garcia1987@hotmail.com
Cc: Feehey, Colleen; Murphy, Colleen; Vargas, Ivan; Whinn, Alice; Liccon, Elena; Joseph, Danielle
Attachments: Business_Across_Borders_P-1.docx (81 KB) (Open as Web Page)

We are looking forward to learning about Pantene in your country! Could you please email us by Sunday December 7th with information?

We have all of the answers to the questions ready for you. They are attached!

Sincerely,
Dr. Ashley Elmore

Hola estudiantes en El Salvador,

Estamos con ganas de aprender acerca de Pantene para su país. ¿Podría por favor enviarnos un correo electrónico antes del 7 de diciembre?

Tenemos todas las respuestas a las preguntas listas para usted. Ellos están unidos!

Atentamente,
Dr. Ashley Elmore
Areas for Improvement

* Secure a translator

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9gXnCX4fs0
Survey Results

Pre-Interview Survey

Language barriers will be an obstacle in this project

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Answered: 29  Skipped: 0

Post Project Reflection

Language barriers WERE an obstacle

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Answered: 12  Skipped: 0
What is needed?

* A high tech room like our ICC is useful but…. Not necessary.
* Video or Audio conference - Google Hangouts, Skype or other conferencing technology
* A space for posting information accessible by all involved in the COIL component (Blackboard Learn, website, etc.)
* Shared workspace for students (Google Drive)
* An idea that enhances what you are teaching
* A partner to collaborate with who is flexible and can work with you through issues liking timing.
Discovery consists NOT in seeking new lands but in SEEING with NEW eyes.

- Marcel Proust