

THINKING OTHERWISE: HOW GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES TRANSFORM EDUCATION

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How the ITEC Group Emerged

(Internationalizing the Teacher Education Curriculum)

- Started with an idea but little experience of global networking
- Participated in COIL Conference 2012 as SUNY grantees
- Received Geneseo Curriculum Development Grant 2013
- Previous international experience of group members (but these had only a small digital element) For example:
 - Student teaching exchange with the University of Exeter
 - Student teaching program in Ghana
 - Fulbright year in Jordan and sabbatical year in the West Bank, Palestinian Territories

Framing Our Approach

- One of our first readings: Lori Hansen. (2010). Global citizenship, global health, and the the internationalization of curriculum: A study of transformative potential. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 14 (1), 70-88.
- Why did we like this article?
 - Examines reforming curricula to foster **engaged, global citizenship** and **personal transformation**
 - Counters the notions of “American exceptionalism” (the U.S. does it better) and intellectual tourism, and suggests that activities should be guided through networks or partnerships by **principles of mutuality and reciprocity**
 - Critiques the goal of internationalizing the curriculum as being to train students how to reap profits for international corporations
 - The goal is developing understanding of diversity through **intercultural communication** and **connecting local and global issues**

ITEC Goals

- To **increase our students' knowledge and awareness** of education and culture in other countries
- To **allow college students to “think otherwise”**
 - We broaden our perspectives by understanding other cultures through intellectual and academic dialogue, cooperation, and critical analysis with college students and educators in other places
- To **initiate exchanges** in which all participants learn something
- To **implement the College and SOE mission** to “internationalize the curriculum” by infusing international elements into new or existing courses

How Does COIL Help ITEC Reach Its Goals?

- Travel is expensive; global networking is inexpensive
- Students can connect through familiar social media (Facebook, Skype, web-based video sharing)
- Modules or activities can be worked into existing or new courses
 - Describe modules/activities
 - Can be any length
- Create an opportunity for international, collaborative learning that would not otherwise exist

How to Start

- The biggest hurdle can be finding contacts or partners
- Identify and read **research** from scholars at the university with whom you would like to work
 - Contact them by email
 - Be persistent
 - Project has to have something in it for everyone
- Discuss networking with people from a potential partnership site at **conferences**
- **Direct contact** and conversations with partners in their settings are valuable. For example:
 - Sabbatical or Fulbright work, Study Abroad contacts, or Working with a professor from your university who is teaching abroad
- Examine the **COIL Contacts List** to find contacts

Integrating the Module or Activity into a Course

- Have students do some research on the partner country
- Share information about education in the partner country with students
- Lay the groundwork for cultural interactions while still teaching the course content: It's a balancing act

Context Matters

- Develop an interest in the country or region; develop knowledge and background.
 - “It is one thing to travel to another country and see their culture but communicating with them through the web via pictures adds another dimension to it. . . The Finnish students already have posted pictures that are filled with different ways to show diversity and it will be fascinating to see the rest of the images!” ~ Student Participant
- Begin the process of recognizing your own perspectives and influences
- How do we encourage engagement when the impulse is to turn away for different reasons? (Finland, Ghana, and the Middle East)
 - Students felt “shy” in the Skype encounters with people in Jordan. They described themselves as ignorant about about the Middle East. Typical remarks were: “I never knew that!” “I’m worried that I might say something insulting.”

ITEC Activities and Projects

- Meetings
- Planning Matrix (categories)
- Library Workshops: Using digital tools and equipment (e.g., using Skype in classrooms with webcams and external microphones)
- Dialogue, Flexibility, and Negotiation: Pathways and pace may vary
- A Project Experiment and Reflection (Meeting with experts and students, but then what?)
- Other ITEC Projects

Digital Communication Tools

- These can be quite simple
 - **Synchronous**
 - Video Chats: Skype (benefits and some of the pitfalls too, e.g. time differences; bad connections)
 - **Asynchronous**
 - Email communication
 - Facebook or other social media
 - Digital Storytelling (e.g., using a web-based tool that facilitates international collaboration and communication between teachers and classrooms)
 - **Mutual projects** (e.g., club activities or curriculum projects)
- **Other:** VoiceThread, Animoto, PowerPoint slideshow or poster sharing, wikis, blogs, podcasts, iMovie creation and sharing (e.g., via Vimeo), KidNet

Privacy and Possible Ethical Issues

- Preserve **anonymity** of students' contributions as much as possible. However, some of the forms of digital communication are not private.
 - Private Group Facebook page
- Raise **sensitivity** to issues of **cultural differences**
- Give participants **guidelines for the interactions**
- Use the **IRB** process and informed consent at your university for collaborative research
- Each project weighted and **graded by the “home” professor**

How Will We Know if We are Going in the Right Direction?

- ITEC Group can serve as a space for its members to deliberate about their ideas and challenges
- Road signs ITEC members might use:
 - Ongoing **informal assessment** and adjustments
 - Records and analysis of **discussions**
 - Analysis of **assignments**
 - Analysis of **shared projects**
 - Focus group **interviews**
 - Assessment tools such as a **validated instrument** that measures global understanding or cultural competence

ITEC Group Projects: Under Construction

