HUMAN ARCHITECTURE: JOURNAL OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE
A Publication of OKCIR: The Omar Khayyam Center for Integrative Research in Utopia, Mysticism, and Science (Utopystics)
ISSN: 1540-5699.

"Two Markets, Two Universities"

An Experimental, Cross-Cultural, and Cross-Institutional Course Using Online Educational Technologies

Edward J. Romar, Annamaria Sas, Irene Yukhananov, Alan Girelli and Teddy Hristov

University of Massachusetts Boston • University of Pannonia, Hungary • Boston University

edward.romar@umb.edu • sgam@sasnet.hu • irene.yukhananov@umb.edu
alan.girelli@umb.edu • teodora.hristov@umb.edu

Abstract: This paper discusses the development and implementation of a technology-based, cross-cultural and cross-institutional undergraduate marketing course titled "Two Markets, Two Universities," offered by the University of Massachusetts Boston and the University of Pannonia in Veszprem, Hungary. It outlines the course strategy, structure and results as well as the challenges in offering a cross-cultural and cross-institutional course to undergraduates.

I. INTRODUCTION

Developing curricula for today's business students can be daunting. Change seems to be at "warp speed," brought about by technological developments, innovation and globalization. Business schools are faced with the challenge of preparing students to confront this seemingly ever changing world. The College of Management at the University of Massachusetts Boston (UMass Boston) and the University of Pannonia in Veszprem, Hungary, added a new dimension to their business curriculum designed to make their students more competitive in the global business environment.

"Two Markets, Two Universities," an English Language course, used the latest course delivery technology to take business education and student exchange programs to a new level as a vehicle to introduce students to the global business environment. Using Blackboard Vista™, combined

Edward J. Romar received his PhD from the City University of New York. He joined the faculty of the UMass Boston College of Management in 1995. In 2009 he was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to teach Marketing at the University of Pannonia in Veszprem, Hungary. Prior to joining the faculty in the College of Management, he held various marketing positions at IBM. Since 2008, Dr. Romar has taught in the International Summer Program at Sungkyunkwan University in Seoul, Korea. **Annamaria Sas** is a doctoral candidate at the University of Gyor, Gyor, Hungry and teaches marketing in the Department of Applied Economics at the University of Pannonia in Veszprem, Hungary. **Irene Yukhananov** received her M.Ed. from the Graduate College of Education at UMass Boston, and M.S./B.S. degrees from Lomonosov Moscow State University in Geography and Environmental Studies. Currently Irene works as an Instructional Designer and e-Learning Consultant/Trainer at UMass Boston assisting faculty with technology integration into their teaching and research. **Alan Girelli** earned his Ph.D. in Composition and Rhetoric from the UMass Amherst, and an MFA in script writing from Emerson College in Boston. His research area is synchronous networked communications. He began teaching collaboration on LANS at Emerson College in 1986, pioneered use of ASPECTS™ at Brandeis University in 1991, and implemented NetMeeting™, Timbuktu™, and CUSeeMe™ in an synchronous course delivery tool suite at UMass Boston in 1997. Girelli is the Distance Learning Program Coordinator for University College Online at the UMass Boston. **Teodora Hristov** is an instructional designer at Boston University. She earned her Master of Education in Instructional Design at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, where she also worked as an instructional designer assistant. Teodora holds Master Degree in Pedagogy from St. Clement of Ohrid University of Sofia and Bachelor in Graphic Design from New Bulgarian University, Sofia, Bulgaria.

with bisynchronous and other collaborative technology, the course had students from UMass Boston and from the University of Pannonia in Veszprem, Hungary working *collaboratively* in an online course. The course was initiated by Dr. Edward Romar and was an outgrowth of his Spring 2009 Fulbright Scholarship teaching marketing at the University of Pannonia.

In the contemporary global business environment it is not unusual for business professionals to work in cross-cultural teams across several time zones. This is a managerial challenge and one in which workers must manage effectively if they are to meet their performance objectives. This challenge also provides opportunities for business schools to enhance their curricula to make their programs and graduates more competitive. Walker and Jeurissen suggest:

> The continuing trends toward globalization of business and cultural diversity within the work-place present challenges for the modern manager as well as opportunities for educators to address. For the delivery of business education the message is clear: managers of the future need to understand these trends in order to cope effectively with the pressures of the global marketplace. (2003, p. 113)

Similarly, Robyn Mackillop adds:

> A good online business course needs to be relevant to current industry business practices and rigorous in teaching students what the workplace will expect…Students must learn about business concepts, and skills such as interpersonal communications, critical thinking, decision making and problem solving. (2010, p. 49)

Furthermore, Barr and Tagg argue for a paradigm shift in favor of the creation of a learning environment in higher education:

> In the **Learning Paradigm …**, **a** college's purpose is not **to** transfer knowledge but **to** create environments and experiences that bring students **to** discover and construct knowledge **for** themselves, **to** make students members of communities of learners that make discoveries and solve problems. (1995, p 4, boldfaces in the original)

II. THE COURSE, "TWO MARKETS, TWO UNIVERSITIES"

Using marketing as the course content, the overarching goal of the "Two Markets, Two Universities" course was designed to stimulate a learning community and to simulate a global workplace environment. While the course implemented several pedagogies, the primary objective was a self-directed collaborative effort to learn about different cultures and business climates through the development of a marketing plan based upon real companies with a business objective to enter either the US or Hungarian markets. Students were divided into cross-cultural teams with the responsibility to prepare a marketing plan for one company and were instructed to act as members of a team from a prestigious consulting firm.

Edward Romar identified US companies looking to expand into the Hungarian market and willing to act as project case material through contact with the Small Business Development Center at UMass Boston and the Massachusetts Export Center, both funded by the United States Small Business Administration. A German firm was identified by yet2.com, a consulting firm specializing in open innovation, which acts as an intermediary facilitating

relationships between firms with new technology and firms seeking innovative technology.

Understanding partners is critical to any venture. This was especially true for this course, which was essentially a joint venture between two educational institutions. Oicott (2008) argues for the collaborating institutions to do "due diligence" in researching the operations of their partner organization prior to program launch if the collaborative venture is to succeed (p.29). The foundation for this course was laid during Dr. Romar's Fulbright Scholarship to the University of Pannonia. While there, Romar built relationships with the management of both the Faculty of Economics and International Programs. He also developed a good working relationship with Assistant Professor Annamaria Sas who would become his faculty partner in Hungary for the "Two Markets, Two Universities" course. In addition, he was approached about the possibility of a formal relationship with UMass Boston. This interest was communicated to the International Programs Office at UMass Boston and a formal memorandum of understanding between the two universities was executed. The College of Management, University College and the Instructional Design group at UMass Boston also supported the development of the course and agreed to provide resources.

Saito and Ishizuka (2005) contend that "understanding of the issues that learners might face using computers and flexibility in educator's practice appear to be key factors to a better learning and teaching environment (p. 151). Murphy (2009) maintains that time differences beyond a few hours create a critical managerial problem and suggests that in conditions of over a few hours only time, asynchronous communications should be used (p. 2). He also stated that "'cultural differences' are perhaps the most difficult and complex to address" (p. 1). Murphy concludes that the following are useful general guidelines for a successful online course:

1. Clearly state course goals and explain how assignments and assessment relate to those course goals.
2. Encourage an environment in which students feel comfortable communicating any questions or problems they have to the instructor.
3. Be flexible. Recognize that some aspects of the course as planned may need to be adjusted to meet unexpected needs or address unforeseen problems. (p. 8)

Prior to the start of the course, members of management from both universities relied on Blackboard Vista™ to collaborate. Faculty responsibilities were divided between the two universities with primary teaching responsibility handled UMass Boston which offered the course. The first meeting between the faculty professor and the instructional design team at UMass Boston occurred approximately six months before the beginning of the semester. Throughout that time, numerous design meetings took place in order to define online learning content, activities and evaluation methods. The design task involved transliterating a face-to-face classroom to the online environment and provides an example of an emerging process that is currently under continuing development at UMass Boston.

III. DEVELOPING THE COURSE

In developing the overall layout and structure of an online course, UMass Boston designers follow best practices by implementing principles outlined by A.W. Chickering and S. C. Ehrmann (1996) in their article "Implementing the Seven Principles: Technology as Lever." Successful

instruction with the use of technology can be leveraged for adult learners when it:

1. Encourages contact between students and faculty.
2. Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students.
3. Encourages active learning.
4. Gives prompt feedback.
5. Emphasizes time on task.
6. Communicates high expectations.
7. Respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

The most challenging aspect of the course design was to structure and maintain a high level of learning activities based on team collaborative work. According to the recent Faculty Focus report titled "Student Collaboration in Online Classroom":

> Using team assignments in an online course is an excellent way to create community and improve learning, but it's not always easy. Student collaboration in the online classroom, like that in traditional face-to-face courses, requires careful course design, student preparation, and team management. Plus, a little extra creativity and perseverance.

Outlined below are the course design components, with discussions of the developmental process and course management.

A. Course Design - Pedagogy:

- Learning Materials:
  - Lectures (pre-recorded video presentations by Dr. Romar along with PowerPoint slides)
  - Textbook (two versions, The North American and European editions)
  - Articles provided online via the electronic library reserve system of University of Massachusetts Boston to which students from both universities have access.

- Group Collaboration:
  - Blackboard Vista™ discussions and platform for summary reports
  - Wimba Classroom™ live (and recorded) IP-based synchronous conferencing team meetings
  - Google Docs for teamwork progress documentation.

- Exams and Final Presentations:
  - Online mid- term and final exams
  - Marketing Plans presented by teams as a final project delivery in Wimba Classroom™ or via in-room video conferencing systems.

- Course Facilitation:
  - Blackboard Vista™ Q&A discussion section
  - Email
  - Wimba Classroom™ and in-person meetings with local instructors.

B. Course Design - Technology:

- Media Development: Designers prepared all media components for the course over the two months prior to the start of the semester. The media design tasks included the following:
  - Selecting and editing video lectures
  - Compiling all visual aids such as PowerPoint™ presentations, provided by faculty

- Locating and posting in the course site informational / marketing videos produced by each of the two universities
- Defining and creating all additional visual elements in the course including icons, color schemes, and photographic images
- Working with the instructor to create voice narration such as a welcome message and announcements / greetings
- Creating Gmail accounts for students
- Organizing learning environment in Blackboard Vista™ learning system and in Google Documents software to provide access to working files and a virtual space for group collaboration and results
- Designing the course structure: discussions, library services, developing assessments, defining assignments, aligning all lecture materials and learning activities, setting up dates and weekly sessions
- Setting up the Wimba Classrooms™ for synchronous meetings.

A. Lectures

Students in the course viewed pre-recorded lectures and read chapters of the textbook and articles on a weekly basis. These learning materials helped learners understand the process of project research and guided them in their group work developing a marketing plan.

Pre-recorded lectures (taped during a face-to-face classroom environment when Dr. Romar was first teaching in Hungary) included Romar's dialogue with students accompanied by corresponding PowerPoint™ slides used as visual aids. The original video segments were post-produced in Presio™—a software for creating web-based presentations by combining video, audio and images. These video lectures were aligned with the images made from the accompanying PPT slides to produce an enhanced, streaming video curriculum presentation. By design, segments of the original lecture recordings were 'chunked' into short segments, divided by topic and by session, subdividing each session in smaller video units for better absorption.

B. Google Docs™

Google Docs™ is a free server-based, web-accessible system which enables end users to engage in real-time collaboration for the purpose of viewing and editing text-based documents, spreadsheets, presentations, drawings, and forms. Google Docs™ provides significant cross-compatibility with files created in office suite programs such as MS Word™, Excel™ and PowerPoint™. Files stored on the Google Docs™ server can be shared and edited simultaneously by any member of a working team who has a Gmail account and access to a designed server area. In the MKT 478 course, students were asked to create such accounts before the start of the course. During the semester, instructors can observe students' teamwork closely, since each entry in Google Doc™ is attributed to the account holder making the entry. Each working group in the marketing course used one working document and one presentation file for creating and demonstrating a final team product (a marketing plan). Google Docs™ also provided an efficient alternate to exchanging numerous files among group participants, saving time for both students and instructors. Use of this tool enhanced collaboration and

prevented confusion resulting from the production of different drafts of a working document bearing disparate file names. In addition, it helps manage breaks in work flow resulting from students using different versions of software and/or from students misplacing primary documents and reference materials.

C. Wimba Classroom™

Wimba Classroom™ is a commercial synchronous conferencing tool which supports voice over IP (VOIP) technology for real-time verbal communications, text chat, turn-taking and polling tools and other non-verbal iconography, application sharing, a collaborative whiteboard, slide presentation capabilities, and a session recording and playback function. UMass Boston's University College Online program grew out of a televised course broadcast department and, prior to the advent of online course delivery, adopted Internet-based synchronous conferencing systems to enhance distance education. Instructors within the current online program use synchronous conferencing to increase student-to-student and student-to-instructor interaction, and to build learning communities in ways not often associated with online coursework. Given the emphasis on project work in the "Two Markets, Two Universities" course, Wimba Classroom™ was used systemically to train students, to provide students with workspaces, to record outcomes of group work sessions, and to deliver and archive students' final course presentations. The challenges of working with synchronous conferencing tools involve relative immaturity of the technology. One sign of this immaturity is the rapid acquisition and merger of product developers within the marketplace, most recently exemplified by the Microsoft Inc. purchase of the most prominent freeware player in the marketplace, Skype™. The sophisticated feature sets of more fully developed tools such as Wimba Classroom™ come at a price; relatively steep learning curves for end users and frequent challenges in configuring computing equipment and networks (both of which result in high support costs.) However, as the results from student surveys from the "Two Markets, Two Universities" course suggest, synchronous conferencing (when well supported) can enhance online learning circumstances dramatically.

IV. SUMMARY OF COURSE DESIGN ELEMENTS

Content was presented as video lectures with a slide presentation component compiled in Presio™, and through articles provided via the UMass Boston online e-reserve system.

Assessments were in the form of objective midterm and final exams based upon course reading assignments as well as final presentation of each semester-long group project. The presentations were real-time video conferences originating from both Hungary and the US. In addition, teams were required to submit a written marketing plan for their respective companies. *Learning Activities* followed the learning objectives and were expressed in semester-long assignments: collaborative workcreation of a marketing plan for either a Hungarian or American company according to pre-defined guidelines. The marketing plans involved a detailed analysis of the groups' assigned firms' business opportunities in their particular markets. The plan consisted of an analysis of the firm's capabilities and opportunities, an identification and description of their markets, including size and segmentation as well as strategies to approach the market based upon market requirements and firm capabili-

ties. The class was grouped in teams by combining American and Hungarian students. Team members worked in web-based applications (using Google docs™) to support simultaneous communication, foster cooperation, and achieve results. Teams provided bi-weekly summary reports with a virtual (text-based) discussion forums in Blackboard Vista™.

Evaluations included an initial survey of learner readiness administered at the beginning of the course to determine technological preparedness, motivational level, and demographics. A survey administered at end of the semester targeted learners' satisfaction with and assessment of their learning experiences.

Preparation included orientation and training provided to students prior to the start of the semester covering course technology and course expectations.

Logistics: ten undergraduate students were recruited from each university (20 students in total):

- Students were assigned to four groups with five students in each group
- Each group was required to develop a marketing plan for actual companies
- Each group was required to present a plan as a PowerPoint presentation and as a written paper.

V. STUDENTS' OBSERVATIONS: SUMMARY DATA-ENTRY AND EXIT SURVEYS

Data collected from both surveys identified key factors for effective individual and team work-students' personal, technological and academic preparation. NOTE: Questionnaires were submitted anonymously.

A. Summary Data From The Entry Survey

Results determined students' expectations and readiness to enroll in a course with four uncommon learning circumstances: participation by two universities (one American, one European), fully online communication, cross-cultural team work, collaboration with real companies.

The results showed:

- High level of motivation and interest
- Good technological preparation
- Desire for high academic achievement

B. Summary Data from the Exit Survey

The results are articulated in the following sub-categories:

- Achievements and Obstacles
- Technology
- Instructor Attentiveness
- Course Organization

Overall students rated personal traits such as being motivated, responsible, proactive, and team-oriented to be of high importance.

Students identified professional and academic goals and interests met through the course, including each of the following:

- Project based outcome-marketing plan development
- Skills improvement: critical, analytical thinking, team building, effective communication, language skills
- The opportunity to work with real companies
- The opportunity to work with international students and encounter a different culture

- The challenge of new experience
- Gaining practical experience on establishing stable international business relations
- Working on group projects which involve different points of view
- The opportunity to apply previously acquired skills to this course as a new, different environment
- The opportunity to work on group projects collaboratively
- Participation in an online course identified to be a challenge in itself and as an opportunity to learn in a new way.

Results determined students' anticipated and unanticipated achievements, obstacles perceived, and opinions reached regarding the course, their individual and group work, academic performance, their instructors' performances, course organization, technological and communication issues, and overall learning experience.

C. Achievements and Obstacles

- Students rated the experience to have been mostly positive even when encountering real life problems due to differences in time, culture, language barrier, work style differences, and personal preferences.
- Two students reported some difficulty with cultural differences. In the exit survey three students commented specifically about culture. One reported, that,"(t)he time difference was more an issue than cultural differences."A second remarked, "I have some friends from America and (to) tell you the truth, these cultures are relatively not as different as African or Asian would be." Another had a much longer comment on cultural issues: "Working with people from different cultures is very difficult, because we do not have only misunderstanding or language problems, but I think we all study the marketing itself a bit differently, and sometimes we do not understand the same in the same questions or tasks. The time difference is also a very big problem, because it is difficult to arrange the online meetings, because the time do not fit everybody most of the case. But all in all it was very instructive and we all gain a lot of experience to work with differenct people" [sic].
- Students rated working with real companies and with students from another university as a good learning practice involving real business situations.
- Asked about personally accomplished course objectives, students stated they believed they had achieved definite improvement, reflecting positively on the overall course goal: delivery of a quality learning experience. Students assessed themselves as having improved their critical thinking, language, communication, presentation, organization, and team- building skills through work collaboration.

D. Technology

- Students rated web-based media for communication (Blackboard Vista™, Wimba Classroom™, Google docs™) favorably and all media enhance collaboration on academic work among team members. Students suggested accentuating the use of synchronous communication; students would have preferred more live online meetings in group based projects believing this would have led to more effective results.
- Students stated good comfort level with technology-good overall computer literacy, Internet proficiency, good preparation for work with the UMass Boston course management system Blackboard Vista™ (online platform for learning delivery) and Wimba Class-

room™ – the virtual classroom software.

E. Instructor Attentiveness to Learning Needs

- Students rated communication with instructors as good and noted instructors provided timely support and guidance.

F. Course Organization

- Students indicated feeling comfortable with the course format and structure; identified challenges of international teamwork and difficulty in scheduling meetings due to the 6-hour time gap and work preferences.
- Students identified initial difficulties in developing team relationships due to lag in time and space; however, students indicated that good technological preparedness, help from facilitators and personal commitment affected further group collaboration positively in the online environment.
- Students suggested the following possible changes to the course:
    - making online meetings and reports mandatory
    - defining expectations for students more explicitly
    - setting interim deadlines for stages of accomplishment of the overall team project.
- Students indicated they definitely would recommend the course to others.

VI. THE COURSE AS VIEWED BY US INSTRUCTOR, HUNGARIAN INSTRUCTOR, AND STUDENTS

The joint course "Two Markets, Two Universities" offered by the University of Pannonia, Hungary, and UMass Boston aimed at developing students' communication skills, real world business knowledge, and experience in a multicultural milieu. The course started in Fall 2010. Assistant Professor Annamaria Sas was chosen to work on the course with Dr. Edward Romar, a decision based on their strong working relationship.

Student recruitment was similar at both universities. Students were recruited at UMass Boston through a marketing campaign that was launched during spring registration and continued throughout the summer. Prospective students were asked to provide a resume and interviewed prior to registration. This method of student recruitment was implemented because of the experimental nature of the course. Students at UMass Boston were selected based on their previous completion of at least one marketing course, familiarity with Blackboard, and a willingness to participate in an experimental course with many unknowns. Ten UMass Boston students, five females and five males, were recruited for the course. Of these, six were from the United States and one each from Guatemala, Haiti, Italy, and Serbia. Ten Hungarian students were recruited, 2 females and 8 males.

Full-time Hungarian students were offered an on-line course for the first time, making the joint course with UMass Boston a challenge both for students and faculty. The course was successful for the most part and students and the institution obtained valuable experience. Of the four group projects, one was excellent. The other three were acceptable. Faculty and students analyzed the course after completion and developed a good understanding of the positive and negative aspects of the first iteration of a very complex course.

From the point of view of both the Hungarian and US instructors, initially the Hungarian students had some technical problems with Blackboard Vista™ and

Wimba Classroom™ technologies. These were solved as the students became more familiar with online pedagogy. After a while, work began in earnest, at which point students were confronted with the challenge of a language barrier despite Hungarian students having been selected (in part) for their strong English language skills. In addition, students experienced some difficulties communicating via the Internet as the only contact method. There were many misunderstandings and pronunciation problems in verbal communication. As the result of this, students preferred written communication, especially use of the discussion board where they could leave messages for each other and they didn't have to communicate in real time. This adaptive strategy was important, because the success of team work resided in communication. Members of the most successful team concluded that their work went well because they discussed problems, shared their opinions and, most importantly, the team leader distributed assignments. Every team member knew his or her responsibilities and deadlines and did not require very much direction or external help from the group or faculty. Of course, they needed feedback and suggestions from faculty but they were able to work independently. It seems that the main problem in the other groups was the lack of leadership, despite the fact that a team leader had been appointed at the beginning of the course. Members waited for information from companies instead of actively establishing communications. Group members waited for responsibilities to be distributed by leaders instead of taking individual responsibility. They couldn't meet deadlines and at the end lost their enthusiasm.

Despite problems, the Hungarian students perceived that the course improved their skills in field of marketing, cooperation, leadership and helped them to practice the English language. Similarly, UMass students reported the course was educational and worthwhile.

From a cultural perspective Hungarian students were reticent when dealing with the US Instructor. When the US instructor participated in student Wimba discussions Hungarian student participation ended unless a direct question was asked. This is similar to the US instructor's experience while teaching in Hungary in Spring 2009 and is consistent with Geert Hofstede's findings on power distance. UMass Boston students, including the non-US born students, were more vocal. This may be a function of the diversity found on campus where students are familiar with cultural and linguistic diversity.

How the experience was seen from a Hungarian teacher's point of view? First of all, it was a unique course because of online technology and multicultural teams. It was helpful that UMass Boston had excellent course materials and the educational methods (exams, papers, lecture presentation) were well defined. During the course it became clear that the Hungarian students didn't make the best of the opportunities, and, in the future, they would need more direction and control because of their lack of experience with the online learning-culture. Faculty also realized that students preferred written communications because of language problems, technical difficulties in case of Wimba Classroom™ usage, and the 6-hour time difference. Language problems and low self-confidence were the reasons why students did not used the office hours (Wimba) for a discussion with the instructors regarding their questions and concerns.

Similarly, UMass students voiced as major obstacles the time difference in communication and difficulties in attending meetings. For example, one group did not begin to develop substantive project work until the very end of the course. Since UMass has offered online pedagogy for 10 years, all UMass students had taken at least

one online course. It seems, however, that they had difficulty in transferring this knowledge and experience to their Hungarian colleagues. In the next course offering we plan to work on group cohesion and online community development issues.

In evaluating final papers we think that all groups tackled obstacles and that their skills were improved a great deal in the field of multicultural team-work, marketing and management skills.

Regarding the future, we have some proposals based on our experiences:

- Pay more attention to students' motivation during the recruitment process; we need talented AND well-motivated students;
- Pay attention to monitoring group project progress through the development of a project;
- Conduct a videoconference at the beginning of the course to get to know all the students and teachers well;
- Provide more detailed expectations to students in terms of course requirements and use of technology;
- Make personal meetings with students mandatory and exert more control over the outcomes of these meetings, especially with the Hungarian students, at the beginning of the course.

VII. CONCLUSION

The first offering of the "Two Markets, Two Universities" course validated the concept of cross-cultural and cross-institutional courses. The technology performed well. Distance, time and cultural differences, while challenging, were manageable. In fact, these were the fundamental unknowns in the course. Team and project based marketing courses are not new. The innovation and challenge here was offering a technology based cross-cultural and cross-institutional one.

There is ample evidence that team building and class cohesion activities are essential to the success of online courses (Saito and Ishizuka, 2005; Nicol, Minty and Sinclair, 2003):

> Although the views of social theorists differ in important ways…, there is general agreement that interaction and dialogue are essential for productive learning and this is supported by a substantial body of empirical research…
>
> The social aspects of learning in online environments are inevitably different from those in face-to-face environments… (Nicol, Minty and Sinclair, p. 270.)

The course launch plan included student orientation and interaction in the course prior to the official class start, where students would have chat and voice tools available to get to know each other and develop familiarity with the course site. Unfortunately, due to a variety of issues around what was essentially a new product launch, the course was not available beforehand and students did not register in time to accomplish this. This will be a significant consideration in the next offering of this course.

There were many unknowns in the first offering of a course as complex as this one. We concluded that focusing on technology and course implementation was our best strategy given all the challenges. The course will be given in Fall 2011 as graduate course and possibly in the future in partnership with an East Asian university. We hope to gather more comparative sociological data at that time.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barr, Robert B. and John Tagg. 1997. From Teaching to Learning—a New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education. *Change*, 27: 12-27.

Chickering, Arthur and Stephen C. Ehrmann. 1996. Implementing the Seven Principles: Technology as Lever. *AAHE Bulletin*. October: 49(2): 3-6.

Chickering, Arthur and Stephen C. Ehrmann, http://www.tltgroup.org/programs/seven.html, accessed, 6/13/2011.

Geert Hofstede. Cultural Dimensions**.** http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_hungary.shtml. accessed, 6/12/2011.

Mackillop, Robyn. 2010. *Teaching Business.* Online. 85: 40-41.

Murphy, Tim. Meeting the Challenges of International Online Teaching, SIDLIT Conference Proceedings. pp. 1-9, 2009, http://scholarspace.jccc.edu/sidlit/27, 3/39/1, accessed, 6/12/2001.

Nicol, David J., Ian Minty and Christine Sinclair. 2003. The Social Dimensions of Online Learning. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*. 40: . 270-280.

Oicott, Don Jr. 2008. Going Global: Perils and Promises for Open and Distance Education. *Distance Learning*. 5: 25- 33.

Saito Ritsuko and Noriko Ishizuka. 2005, Practice of Online Chat Communities Between Two Countries and across Different Curricula. *Journal of Multimedia Aided Education Research,* 2: .151-158.

Special Report: Student Collaboration in Online Classroom, Faculty Focus, Magna Publications, http://www.facultyfocus.com/free-reports/student-collaboration-in-the-online-classroom/, accessed, 6/12//001.

Walker, Richard and Ronald Jeurissen. 2003, E-Based Solutions to Support Intercultural Business Ethics Instruction: An Exploratory Approach in Course Design and Delivery, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 48, pp. 113-126.