

Preparing Future Teacher Educators for International Leadership with Information Technology: A European - USA project

It is widely recognized that today information technology is playing a critical role in preparation of future educators and in higher education, with significant moves towards globalization. It is now clear that web-enhanced learning is going to become even more prominent in graduate course for educational technology, and new faculty need to be prepared to work in an international environment.

The speed with which these programs are being developed raises a question about the organization approach of these courses and study abroad, especially with degree programs that link international learning communities of educators and students. These programs, although able to address some challenges of the traditional approach to study abroad, such as students' isolation when aboard and recruitment, have yet to address challenges related to cultural diversity and language.

This paper will provide an overview of strategies for web-enhanced study abroad, which are being developed by a team of scholars and international programs administrators led by Niki Davis and Andrew Brown in the project 'International Leadership for Educational Technology'. As noted, this project provides opportunities to increase collaboration between graduate programs in educational technology, with student mobility and the creation of a joint certificate in inter-cultural awareness. In addition, this project will work to increase sensitivity, diversity and language in online teacher preparation programs. Organizational challenges that will be addressed include credit transferability, disparity in tuitions and fees, and recognition of courses and a shared certificate by the six participating universities. This project is in its initial stage and it remains to be seen how far the project team will be able to advance their cause. The universities already recognise the important accomplishment: that such a large and diverse group of scholars and administrators from several universities in Europe and US was able to agree on the main principles of the web-enhanced study abroad.

We hope that these strategies will prove to be of value in higher education more broadly. The dissemination of the ILET project provides a strategic overview of the ways in which it plans to influence education internationally.

- The project's web site will promote recruitment for the shared certificate, and the products of the project including exemplary student work, press, professional and academic publications on the curricula. The web site will be linked across partner institutions and registered with key search engines.
- Partnership with professional associations will bring the IET certificate into direct contact with over 2000 members in more than 50 countries. The intensive course within the SITE conference will be highly visible and also result in many presentations and academic papers. Conference notice boards and web sites will advertise recruitment information.
- The Universal Forum of Cultures Education Project in Barcelona in 2004 will provide a community platform for the ILET project to disseminate its 'service learning' across

digital and cultural divides on the web and in Barcelona in 2004 and so bring curricula to the attention of bodies including UNESCO and national agencies (Davis, 2001).

- The students themselves will provide the strongest dissemination as they move into strategic positions within higher and vocational education worldwide. It is notable that ISU, among others, welcomes more than 10 teacher educators from central and eastern Europe into its Curriculum and Instructional Technology program each year and leads a major technology and teacher educational reform project in the Ukraine. This paper provides a view of how the marriage of information technology and international education may be achieved, as proposed by Philson (1998). However, it suggests that there is more to do than to collaborate with colleagues and provide increased access to resources. In addition, we need to work to create learning communities that span cultures, languages and continents and in so doing support the conditions for world peace.

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