Best Laid Plans: Challenges and Opportunities at the Intersection of Globalization and Internationalization

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ABSTRACT

My journey on the way to teaching in UMD’s Study in England Programme began with an intensive effort to internationalize “Deciding What’s News,” a course I’ve taught for over a decade. The course was a natural fit for internationalization. The effort to find texts and topics was relatively simple, as was coming up with more internationalized course work. As I considered how to bring the whole package together, I thought the course was “good to go.” It turned out to be less than smooth sailing, as I’ll demonstrate on my poster. The poster will chart the course of this adventure, concluding with what I hope are transferable lessons. Frustrations abound, but so too did the unexpected and delightful discoveries.

BACKGROUND

- The University of Minnesota Duluth’s (UMD) Study in England Programme (SIE): “Quitting from UMD Alumni Magazine: The Director.” The SIE study in England programme was established in 1980.
- Students: Ten UMD faculty members have participated. Students study the UK for one academic year in Birmingham, the second largest city in England.
- The SIE moved to the University of Worcester (UW) in the fall of 2011. In addition to the Director, who had been a resident for one year, each semester a cohort of two UMD faculty members taught classes for both British and U.S. students (all together four UMD faculty members taught in England; see each semester).
- UW administration provided (the International Development Officer and an academic dean) selected two courses each for winter faculty to teach in the designated semester in residence.
- I was originally slated to teach two basic courses: International Communication and Public Speaking. I objected to substitute a more advanced course, “Deciding What’s News,” in lieu of Public Speaking, and the administrators agreed to my request.
- I was selected as part of the summer 2012 Internationalizing Teaching and Learning Cohort and chose to work on improving “Deciding What’s News” in anticipation of my fall 2012 semester in England.
- Following the Internationalizing Teaching and Learning workshop, I worked with an Information Technology consultant to build a Moodle for both courses, but focused more particularly on “Deciding What’s News”.
- Over the years I have taught “Deciding What’s News” I found and incorporated more and more films. By the spring of 2012, the films nearly overwhelmed the course. I didn’t want to eliminate the films, but also didn’t want the films to be the cornerstone of every class meeting.
- Anticipating my semester abroad, I recalled that the NTSC standards used here in the U.S. for television sets, whereas the PAL system is used in Europe, Australia, and Japan. Changes are not imperceptible, but are visible through the color bars. By adopting a PAL system, I could add films that are only available in the PAL system. There are no Region settings, since Region 1, Region 2, Region 4, and Region 6 cannot be played on players from other regions without either a region-changer or an area-specific decoder. I also learned that if the PAL system is in place, films can be downloaded online from Region 1, Region 2, Region 4, and Region 6. Region-encoded discs cannot be played on players from other regions without a region-changer or an area-specific decoder. Because of this, I decided to upload the films for the course to the Moodle so that the students could watch them on their own time and so that I wouldn’t have to take up valuable baggage space with DVDs.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will comprehend the history of the development of news media;
- Students will generate clear definitions of news and a sense of the role of journalism within democracies;
- Students will generate meanings of critically evaluating news messages by applying elements of news and news values to assessments of news stories;
- Students will assess current controversies associated with the news industry.

METHODS

- Internationalizing the Curriculum: I added new texts with more of an international focus.
- *SIE tuition$; *Summer Program in Journalism, Communication and Media Studies, Ben Lomond, London, U.K., 2011
- *International Cooperation Among Students

IMAGES FROM WORCESTER

RESULTS

What Worked:

- Students conducted interviews with five individuals (one had to be from another country) assessing their news usage and attitudes about news. Students generated a clearer sense for how people perceive and value news. Questions from the interview schedule generated responses about what people thought of as “news.”
- Students worked together in teams (mixed U.S. and U.K. composition) to produce (generally very good) comparisons of news coverage of U.S. and U.K. Scandals:
  - *Mike Dower Case* leading to the Leveson Report
  - *General Patraeus Case
  - *Jimmy Savile Case

What Didn’t Work:

- There was a problem getting the assigned books to the students.
- *UW used Blackboard, there was no on site support for Moodle.
- Some UK students failed to sign up for UMD access to Moodle.
- Some UK students failed to attend class on a regular basis.
- Some students had difficulty downloading videos. We had to spend some time in class on the videos, thereby defeating the purpose of having uploading them to Moodle.
- Some UK students failed to submit assignments.
- *UW has a “do-over” policy. This does not mesh with UMD policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Look for ways to engage students from different countries on projects which allow for an examination and comparison of different national values/expectations/norms.
- It’s probably not the best idea to use an online course management system in an institution which doesn’t support that system; find out what course management system is in place at the international institution and adjust accordingly.
- It’s hard to anticipate a clash of student policies between universities from different countries; ask about attendance, participation and grading policies, including re-takes.
- Get budget commitments in writing before finalizing the schedule.
- Getting to the international site well in advance of the beginning of term allows for troubleshooting, but doesn’t preclude all problems.