

Connecting, Collaborating, Creating & Reflecting: Globalizing Teacher Education to Enhance Teaching and Learning (An FLC Project for EDU407 Students)

Brief Project Description:

This project will be implemented in EDU407. This is an undergraduate computer literacy course for education majors that, for a number of structural and historical reasons doesn't have a clear focus! ☹ It has an upper level course number but qualifies for Salem's basic level computer literacy competency! Almost of the students have early childhood or elementary education concentrations. But alas, the class is bifurcated in that about 60% of the students are juniors and seniors who for one reason or another are not eligible for student teaching and the remaining 40% of the students are sophomores and freshmen who have only had one or two other education courses. It's an interesting mix!

I am going to be using *Flattening Classrooms, Engaging Minds* by Julie Lindsay and Vick Davis with my class for the Spring semester. What I plan to do is to connect with a teacher education program someplace, ideally outside of the U.S.A., and have the EDU407 students collaboratively explore teacher training programs, pre-K-12 teaching practices, and career options for educators in both locales and then create some sort of presentation to be posted on the web. If I am unable to link up with another teacher education program, I will have my students form groups and pick different countries and use various library and online sources to gather information that will be put on the web. I also intend to use members of my FLC as expert advisors to give comments and feedback to the students regarding their work. This will give students an opportunity to interact with faculty in a non-grading context.

My focus is to broaden the students' horizons both career-wise and geographically since many of them will probably never qualify to be licensed teachers in Massachusetts and most of them have never been outside of New England. Thus, one could say that my case the primary goal in flattening my course in order to engage the students' minds!

While I am proposing this particular plan, I expect and indeed hope that it will be modified and refined when I actually begin collaborating with a faculty member at another institution. For example, given timing and resources, students in each class may take only a subset of tasks rather than each class doing the entire set of activities that I have outlined below.

Rationale for this Project:

“We believe effective use of technology can build bridges between classrooms, nations, and humankind, and that 21st century skills harness not only the power of technology but the power of people. We need this connection for the future of our planet. It is no longer an option. Students are the greatest textbook ever written for one another and will be travelers on this bridge.” (Lindsay and Davis, 2013, p. 2). NOTE: Many of the ideas for this project come directly from *the book by Lindsay and Davis* and their work on the “flat classroom”. The url for the organization's website is: <http://flatclassrooms.ning.com/>

Assumptions for this Project:

- High school students in the U.S. are underprepared to collaborate (Lindsay and Davis, 2013)
- Learning is a social process (Hargadon, (2009)
- Sharing ideas and skills unlocks unlimited student potential (Williams, 2009)
- Classroom teachers have to learn 21st century skills in order to be effective 21st century teachers.

Resources at Salem State University:

The EDU407 students will have access to the School of Education's computer lab, aka, the Classroom for Technology Enhanced Pedagogy (CTEP) which contains Windows computers, a SmartBoard™, iPad tablets and Flip video cameras which can be used for this project.

Pre-Service Teachers Giving a Lesson to Other Pre-Service Teachers using iPads	Pre-Service Teachers Working Together Using iPads
	

Project Objectives:

- For Pre-Service Elementary & Early Childhood Teachers
 - SSU students will use technology to present a picture of educational practice in the United States
 - SSU students will have a better understanding of educational practice in the collaborating students' country
 - SSU students will have a better idea of career options both in Massachusetts and in the collaborating students' country
 - SSU students will collaborate with students in another country to produce a comparison of the teacher training programs at each university
- Objectives for Me
 - I will learn how to work with one or more faculty in another country to implement a collaborative website for students in both our countries

Major Activities – Spring 2013:

- Make arrangements with a University in another country for students to collaborate on a technology-based educational awareness project.
- SSU EDU407 students will:
 - learn how to make a website and set one up;

- Learn how to use a wiki and use it for collaboration;
- Work in teams to make a clear explanation of educational practice and similar career opportunities in the U.S. and post the product on the website; The product will include text, images, links to detailed information resources, possibly video, and a complete reference list. (Teams from the other country will prepare a similar product and post it on the same website as the Salem students;) and
- Using SKYPE, GoogleDocs, and other web 2.0 tools, work in teams with students from the other country to develop a comparison of teacher training programs in both countries and post the product on the website.

Assessing Outcomes:

Pre and Post Data Collection

- Knowledge of Educational Practices and other career opportunities in the U.S.
- Knowledge of Educational Practices and other career opportunities in another country
- Ability to use a wiki, to build a website, and collaborate using asynchronous communication tools
- Attitudes towards collaborative work in general
- Attitudes towards collaborative work over the internet

In terms of looking at the impact of the project, I will be comparing the detail and accuracy between the pre and post items. I will also be looking at the content of those items which are only post items. I will also be looking at the quality of the student work and the feedback from the expert advisors.

A copy of the pre and post assessment is in Appendix A. A parallel set of items will be offered to the professor at the collaborating university and both sets may be revised based on discussion with the other professor.

Some Potential Difficulties:

- Not being able to set up a relationship with another University
- SSU students being unable to communicate with students who do not speak English
- Time zone differences making real-time conferencing difficult
- Not enough class time to cover all of the activities
- May be unable to obtain IRB approval or informed consent from students

Selected References:

- Hargadon, S. (2010) Educational Networking. *Multi-Media and Internet@Schools*, 17(2), 11-16.
- Lindsay, J. & Davis, V. (2013) *Flattening Classrooms Engaging Minds: Move to Global Collaboration One Step at a Time*. Boston: Pearson.
- Williams, S. (2009) *The Impact of Collaborative, Scaffolded Learning in K-12 schools: A Meta-Analysis*. Los Angeles: The Metrii Group.

Appendix #1: Pre and Post Survey Items

- 1) Imagine you are talking to a student from XYZ country who was thinking about coming to Salem State to become a teacher.
 - a) What would you say are the most important characteristics of the teacher preparation program here at Salem State? **(Pre & Post item)**
 - b) What is the most challenging part of the teacher preparation program here at Salem State? **(Pre & Post item)**
 - c) What do parents look for in a teacher for their child here in Massachusetts? **(Pre & Post item)**
 - d) What are some other education related jobs that this student could get if she/he decided not to become a public school teacher? **(Pre & Post item)**
- 2) How familiar are you with the teacher preparation requirements in XYZ country. **(Pre & Post item)**
 Very Familiar Somewhat Familiar Not Familiar
- 3) Based on what you know about XYZ country,
 - a) What do parents there look for in a teacher for their child? **(Pre & Post item)**
 - b) Would you like to be a teacher in XYZ country? Why or why not? **(Pre & Post item)**
 - c) What are some other education related jobs for students in XYZ country if she/he decided not to become a public school teacher? **(Pre & Post item)**
- 4) What do you hope to learn from this activity? **(Pre item only)**
- 5) Would you recommend this project to other education students? **(Post item only)**
 Yes No Not Sure
Please explain your answer
- 6) What, if anything, did you learn about technology from this activity? **(Post item only)**
- 7) What, if anything, did you learn about teacher training here at Salem State? **(Post item only)**
- 8) What, if anything, did you learn about teacher training in XYZ country? **(Post item only)**
- 9) How would you describe the process of working with students at ABC university? **(Post item only)**
- 10) Would you want to work collaboratively with someone on the internet in the future? **(Post item only)**
 Yes No Not Sure
Please explain your answer
- 11) Has your general opinion about working collaboratively with someone changed as a result of this project? **(Post item only)**
 Yes, much more positive Yes, more positive Yes, but more negative
 Yes, but much more negative No Not Sure
Please explain your answer
- 12) What could be done to improve this activity next year? **(Post item only)**

Appendix #2:
Informed Consent Form – Salem State Students

**SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)
Connecting, Collaborating, Creating & Reflecting:
Globalizing teacher education to enhance teaching and learning**

I, _____ agree to participate in the evaluation of the Connecting, Collaborating, Creating & Reflecting project being conducted by Dr. Allan Shwedel of Salem State University and Professor ABC of XYZ University. I understand this project is designed to improve the quality of the teacher training here at Salem State and possibly elsewhere.

As part of my participation in this project, I understand that I will be asked to work with students at XYZ University on a project related to teacher training. In addition, I will be asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire both before and after I participate in the project. I also understand that photographs or video may be taken of me and shown in publications and presentations. I also understand that my actual work will be publicly viewable on the web and that this work will NOT be anonymous. I also understand that both my work and comments from my professor and other faculty may be shared in research publications and presentations to faculty and other educators.

I understand that I will not be paid for my participation in this project and furthermore that I may not receive any direct benefit from my participation in this study.

I understand my participation in this study is completely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time from this study while still being able to take part in the actual course related activities for which I will be receiving a grade. I also understand that some people may find it troubling to participate in some or all of the activities required and I may decline to participate in any portions with which I feel uncomfortable, for example, the videotaping.

I understand that my name or identity will not be used in written reports of the findings of this evaluation study. However, since my work will be available on the web and I may be photographed or videotaped, I understand that presentations and links to my work may reveal my identity. If I do not want my identity revealed in any of the videos or photos, I will notify Dr. Shwedel in writing within 30 days of the end of the semester to refrain from showing any pictorial, video or audio segments that include me or identify me by name. The information provided to Dr. Shwedel will be kept confidential with the exception of information that must be reported under Massachusetts law.

I have read and understand this information about this evaluation study. My signatures on be;pw indicate my intention to either participate or decline to participate in each component of this evaluation study. I understand that I will be offered a copy of this form to keep.

(1) Pre and Post Questionnaires

I agree to participate: _____ Date: _____

I do not want to participate: _____ Date: _____

(3) Photographing or Videotaping of activities

I agree to participate: _____ Date: _____

(If I do agree to participate, I know that I can notify Dr. Shwedel within 30 days of the end of the semester to discard or hide my image on those portions of the video where I appear.)

I do not want to participate: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix #3:
Informed Consent Form – Students from a University or College Other Than Salem State

SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)
Connecting, Collaborating, Creating & Reflecting:
Globalizing teacher education to enhance teaching and learning

I, _____ agree to participate in the evaluation of the Connecting, Collaborating, Creating & Reflecting project being conducted by Dr. Allan Shwedel of Salem State University and Professor ABC of XYZ University. I understand this project is designed to improve the quality of the teacher training here, at Salem State University and possibly elsewhere.

As part of my participation in this project, I understand that I will be asked to work with students at Salem State on a project related to teacher training. In addition, I will be asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire both before and after I participate in the project. I also understand that photographs or video may be taken of me and shown in publications and presentations. I also understand that my actual work will be publicly viewable on the web and that this work will NOT be anonymous. I also understand that both my work and comments from my professor and other faculty may be shared in research publications and presentations to faculty and other educators.

I understand that I will not be paid for my participation in this project and furthermore that I may not receive any direct benefit from my participation in this study.

I understand my participation in this study is completely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time from this study while still being able to take part in the actual course related activities for which I will be receiving a grade. I also understand that some people may find it troubling to participate in some or all of the activities required and I may decline to participate in any portions with which I feel uncomfortable, for example, the videotaping.

I understand that my name or identity will not be used in written reports of the findings of this evaluation study. However, since my work will be available on the web and I may be photographed or videotaped, I understand that presentations and links to my work may reveal my identity. If I do not want my identity revealed in any of the videos or photos, I will notify Dr. Shwedel in writing within 30 days of the end of the semester to refrain from showing any pictorial, video or audio segments that include me or identify me by name. The information provided to Dr. Shwedel will be kept confidential with the exception of information that must be reported under Massachusetts law or the laws of XYZ.

I have read and understand this information about this evaluation study. My signatures on below indicate my intention to either participate or decline to participate in each component of this evaluation study. I understand that I will be offered a copy of this form to keep.

(1) Pre and Post Questionnaires

I agree to participate: _____ Date: _____

I do not want to participate: _____ Date: _____

(3) Photographing or Videotaping of activities

I agree to participate: _____ Date: _____

(If I do agree to participate, I know that I can notify Dr. Shwedel within 30 days of the end of the semester to discard or hide my image on those portions of the video where I appear.)

I do not want to participate: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Signature _____

Date _____