



**Global Citizenship: Best Practices across the Nation Workshop
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Session IV: Technology Issues

Summary prepared by
Kristine C. Mayer and Katie Noderer, edited by Nicole Ashley Nigro

Advisor
Prof. Sudhakar Neti, Mechanical Engineering & Mechanics

The purpose of Session IV of Lehigh University's Global Citizenship Best Practices Workshop on March 31, 2006 was to bring participants from distinguished universities together to discuss their strategies for using technology to "internationalize" the experience of their students. Invited guests were asked to consider how they use technology to enrich the classroom experience and to improve international study. They were all invited to contribute their experiences and describe various technological tools and opportunities they have found to enrich globally focused curricula. The session was moderated by Bruce Hargreaves of Lehigh University. The panel consisted of Barbara Rowe and Nancy Ruther of Yale University and Brian Winchester of Indiana University, and they each shared their respective technological tools and suggestions.

Barbara Rowe, the Associate Dean and Director of International Education and Fellowship Program at Yale University revealed her innovative use of technology; primarily two web tools that promote international admissions. With help from Nancy Ruther, the Associate Director in the Yale Center of International and Area Studies, Rowe explained that Yale students were facing problems locating all the research funding possibilities. Opportunities were not well organized and pockets of money remained untapped within the system. Various departments were also contributing to this problem by trying to reserve and protect money for specific programs or particular colleges.

Rowe decided the best way to solve this problem was to create a database which centralized all of the information on program funding which would be easy to use and beneficial to both staff and students.

In order to create the database, Rowe spent a year collaborating with various students and departments in order to develop a web tool that would best meet their needs. Rowe also needed to seek funding for the program and engaged in comparison shopping in order to find the best value. She was able to garner the \$90,000 necessary by highlighting the benefits of a program that would centralize data, and could also serve to foster Yale's alumni-student relationships and networking opportunities. This web tool not only shows all program funds, but also allows students to maintain a profile so they can keep track of deadlines and information. To address departmental concerns about reserving funds for specific programs or purposes, the database shows various eligibility requirements and will still only be used as the department desires. From the administrative perspective, the database is a crucial tool to keep track of who is abroad with Yale funding, as well as to run an overlap process to see if certain people are receiving too much funding, while others are not getting enough.

Aside from the funding database, Rowe launched a second web tool which is dedicated to language study in Asia. The program is an e-assisted planning tool which centralizes all the information on courses, departments, faculty, online opportunities, study abroad programs, campus activities, and career advice related to East Asia. Similar to the problem encountered with Yale's funds, academic opportunities were scattered around the university system. The information, although available, was so hard to find that many students were missing out on significant educational opportunities. This tool allows students to formulate a study plan, which they can then take to their academic advisers. Students are very enthusiastic about this new system, and one student said, "If I'd had this tool as a freshman, I'd be a year ahead," which speaks to the program's effectiveness. Rutherford commented that since this web tool was so effective in consolidating information on Asia, in two years the program will be expanded to include other world regions.

As interest in these web tools spreads, they will evolve and increase in popularity. The spread of this technology will allow students and departments increased and more

efficient access to the information that they need. Students will not miss out on opportunities and funds simply because they cannot find them. Centralization also allows administrators to evaluate areas that lack resources, which helps launch new programs. These two tools were born with generous donations and they are thriving thanks to updating and maintenance by a knowledgeable staff member.

Brian Winchester, the director of the Center for Study of Global Change at Indiana University, Bloomington, shared with other workshop participants his vision to effectively bring students and faculty from all over the world together in the most time and cost effective way. With funds from a Title VI grant, he was able to purchase the necessary interactive video equipment to launch his program.

Winchester began using conventional (point-to-point) connections and technology, and as his idea developed, the process became more complicated with interaction between multiple sites using multiple links. Although he notes that not all of the connections were perfect, he emphasizes that they were particularly amazing. Very recently, not long before the workshop, he was able to set up a live conversation between university students in Cairo, Copenhagen, and Bloomington so that the students could discuss the recent controversy over the Danish Muhammad cartoons. Although the students had dissenting opinions, they talked for two hours and remained respectful.

Through trouble shooting and experience Winchester has learned how to deal with the potential technological problems. He recommends that before any actual tele-conference, a practice link be set up first to make sure equipment is set up and working properly. He also emphasized the importance of having contact telephone numbers for each site to work through unexpected problems during the conference. This will get the system operating swiftly with minimal interruption. Some times, even the lack of equipment may not be a complete roadblock. Winchester cited Uganda as an example. He wanted to link his students to Uganda, and although the specific Uganda site did not have the necessary equipment, they were able to go to the World Bank. Universities that do not have the necessary tools can pay to use those that belong to various private companies or US Embassies nearby. Because this can be expensive, universities will often partner with other universities that have the equipment. It is not hard to convince other universities to join in, as the educational value is tremendous.

In order to work with the cameras and microphones, that participants may not be used to, a set of protocols must be established to keep conversations structured and orderly. Either voice activated microphones which put the speakers face on screen can be used or a split-screen set up. With some practice, participants can learn various technological details such as which colors look the best on screen and how best to operate cameras to avoid talking heads. Although the concept of talking to a camera may not feel natural at first, Winchester claims that “the miles melt and it’s like we’re in the same room.” Once participants feel comfortable in front of the camera the environment is just like a class discussion, except that the dialogue can cross oceans. Although they had to wake up early due to the inconvenience of time zones, Bloomington students were so engrossed in the Global Poverty course that they engaged in with Swedish students, that between debates of their simulation, they were calling and emailing in order to negotiate. Enthusiasm is so great that students in Bloomington now generate and run their own case scenarios and link with other students around the world every few weeks.

Winchester noted that as technology continues to advance, the cost of video conferencing paraphernalia is dropping drastically. Some universities already have the money or are already sitting on the technology that they need and just not putting it to use. It is surprising that this great opportunity to learn is being passed up by so many. Winchester feels that this technology helps accomplish his goal to expand access to information, expose students to multiple international viewpoints and perspectives in order to confront global issues. He calls this phenomenon “global stewardship.” Winchester summons workshop participants to partake in this excellent communication technology in order to enrich the lives of their students. Based on past successes it is easy to gain support and eager participants. On a side note, however, he does caution against getting “swept up in the glitz.” He urges universities to have a plan first, and make the necessary contacts. Starting with the basic conventional connections is less complicated, and therefore the margin for error is smaller. Just as Winchester did in Bloomington, it is best to start with the basics and then evolve into using more complicates systems.

Aside from internationalizing education stateside, technology also plays a new role in study abroad. Winchester sited a few instances in which video conferences were

used as a means for students abroad to check back in with their home institutions. In order to keep track of their students abroad, Worcester Polytechnic Institute provides students with laptops and cellular telephones so they can be contacted in the event of an emergency situation. They pay for this technology through endowments and fees built into the program. The increased security that results from being able to be in quick contact with students eases the minds of parents and administrators.

Technology is a vital component of modern education, and can be used to serve global aims. Whether it is used to help students find opportunities to go abroad, talk to other students around the world, or keep in touch while abroad, technology is an integral part of internationalizing student experiences wherever they are. Through this workshop, participants were able to highlight their successful uses of new technology to benefit internationalization of education and offer others in the workshop troubleshooting and other advice in the hope that technology will continue to improve global citizenship and related educational objectives.