

CROSSING ALL BORDERS IN ONE SEMESTER: CO-TEACHING, INVOLVING STUDENTS IN A COLLABORATIVE CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH, AND COMBINING GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Although extant literatures on co-teaching, combining students from various levels, and incorporating real-world research projects make the case for these methods, two important gaps remain in the understanding and application of such methods: (a) the processes through which these methods are planned and implemented are yet to be researched; and (b) the integrative effects of using all of these methods within the same course/semester are unknown. This paper reports on a collaborative teaching and learning experience that resulted from combining activities across two doctoral seminars, across students from different levels (doctoral, MBA and undergraduate), and across two universities each from a different country. By documenting the processes involved in the development of the experience, challenges and constraints faced by various stakeholders, and potential benefits and outcomes, this research provides a behind-the-scenes look at, and practical guidelines for, planning and implementing such teaching and learning experiences.

Key Words: *Co-teaching, Research Project, Student Mix, Process, Benefits, Challenges Crossing All Borders in One Semester: Co-Teaching, Involving Students in a Collaborative Cross-Cultural Research, and Combining Graduate and Undergraduate Education.*

INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the twenty-first century, business schools witnessed a burgeoning concern about student deficiency in several necessary skills including team-building, critical thinking, oral and written communication, scenario planning, global perspective, cross-functional training, and real-world applications (Fish et al. 1998; Lundstrom and White 1997). Three promising methods considered at various institutions were co-teaching, real-world research projects, and mixed courses (Austin 2001; Chulkov and Kim 2009; Granitz and Hugstad 2004).

The first method, co-teaching, occurs when two or more instructors attend all of the sessions of a certain class throughout the semester and instruct the class together (Austin 2001; Murawski and Dieker 2008) and is seldom practiced or researched in the context of colleges and universities (Kennedy, Lawton, and Walker 2001; Kluth and Straut 2003). Real-world research projects occur when an instructor requires students to go beyond hypothetical or textbook cases and work on real-world issues facing real-world organizations. They also remain an under-researched area in marketing education (Anagnop-

oulos 2006; Laver 2006). Mixed courses, occur when a certain course contains and combines both graduate and undergraduate students and education. They are on the rise for a variety of reasons, especially due to budgetary and campus size limitations (Chulkov and Kim 2009). Except some anecdotal observations regarding its potential benefits and challenges, there is a dearth of research on this method. This paper presents a collaborative teaching and learning experience that employed the above three methods.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Co-Teaching

Co-teaching is often affiliated with the inclusive teaching method, which also includes the consultant model and the teaming or collaborative model (Austin 2001). Co-teaching is defined as “a service delivery option designed to address the needs of students in an inclusive classroom by having a general education teacher and a special service provider” (Murawski and Dieker 2008, p. 40). Co-teaching is an excellent choice where classroom,

campus size, and other capacity-related factors place grueling constraints on effective education and provides several benefits for both instructors and students. For instance, Barber et al. (2001) argue that instructors teaching together often learn each other's techniques and feel the pressure to keep abreast with theories and methods. Some of the benefits include developing classroom and course management skills, learning to adapt, attaining personal and professional growth, and enjoying student satisfaction (Austin 2001; Kluth and Straut 2003). Benefits for students include gaining hands-on experience, receiving greater attention from instructors, observing more than one point of view, developing closer professional relationship with instructors, achieving better academic performance, and building strong networks with classmates during and after the course (Austin 2001; Barber et al. 2001). Co-teaching requires instructors to plan and organize the course together, distribute and delegate tasks, identify and leverage strengths and weaknesses, portray a sense of equality and respect inside and outside the classroom, learn from feedback, and be flexible (Murawski and Dieker 2008; Austin 2001).

REAL-WORLD RESEARCH PROJECTS

Incorporating real-world research projects can effectively address growing concerns about student deficiency in several necessary skills including team-building, critical thinking, oral and written communication, scenario planning, global perspective, cross-functional training, and real-world applications (Fish et al. 1998; Lamb, Shipp, and Moncrief 1995; Lundstrom and White 1997). The literature suggests that when a real-world research project is incorporated as a central component of a course, students obtain a broader and deeper exposure to and retention of information, self fulfillment, bonding with community, interpersonal skills, and satisfaction with the learning process (Kennedy et al. 2001). Yilgor and Yilgor (2008) argue that early involvement of undergraduates in research projects enhances their education, personalities, and career decisions. First-hand experience with real-world research projects addresses the concern that students are familiar with many concepts and theories, but lack practical, work-related skills (Davis, Misra, and Van Auken 2002). Instructors grow an appreciation for project leadership skills, such as personnel and time management, deadline enforcement, (sub)cultural considerations, and cross-disciplinary collaboration (Anagnopoulos 2006).

Mixed Courses

In mixed education, research indicates that whereas graduate students enjoy greater initiative, willingness to participate, autonomy, and goal orientation, undergraduates demand more attention, supervision, and "authoritative teaching style" (Haiyan 2009; Rao, Arcury, and

Quandt 2004). These differences sometimes offset process and outcome advantages potent in mixed courses. For example, Etzkorn, Weisskop, and Gholston (2004) focus on a mixed computer science class and find that: (a) for undergraduates who often work full-time and study part-time, performance in the mixed elective course compares to that in their core courses; (b) for full-time, mostly international, graduates who invest ample time preparing, performance is not different from that of their undergraduate classmates; (c) on the average, undergraduates and graduates receive comparable grades; and (d) relative to graduates, undergraduates experience greater unfairness and disadvantage. Another study (Chulkov and Kim 2009), which focuses on mixed MIS courses, provides strong support for a net positive impact of mixed courses; the adversarial effects are found to be outweighed by benefits such as increased communication and managerial skills in addition to improved content recognition and retention.

METHOD

The Qualitative Research Methods (QRM) seminar studied and presented here not only combined grade-seeking MBA and doctoral students, but utilized input and contribution from students in an undergraduate course. This mixed QRM seminar was co-taught by two designated instructors and multiple guest speakers.

The QR involved an international research collaboration sponsored by two universities, one from the United States and the other from Mexico. The USA team consisted of 24 students (9 doctoral, 2 MBA, and 13 undergraduate), the two professors co-teaching the seminar, and two other professors who routinely conduct QR. In addition, the team invited and involved four internationally recognized QR experts who provided further training, with an eye on the specific project in hand. The Mexican team included three marketing professors and two graduate assistants. To maintain participant privacy, we will use pseudonyms throughout (see Table 1 for participant profile).

The aim was to give students a hands-on experience with QR as well as address a series of substantive research questions at the intersection of two areas of inquiry: globalization and consumer behavior. All of the students served as research personnel, and contributed to the objectives of the QR project in different capacities. While everyone else was busy working on the QR project, the MBA students were studying the research team to conduct a qualitative investigation of the processes and outcomes of the endeavor. They employed multiple methods and techniques for qualitative data collection and analysis, especially participant observation during the course and in-depth interviews with key informants (i.e., members and affiliates of the QR) subsequently. They attended all of the class meetings and took on different roles: (a) received education and training on QR alongside the

TABLE 1 PARTICIPANT PROFILE		
Participant	Role	Sex
Amy	QR Expert	F
Adam	Doctoral Student	M
Brian	Doctoral Student	M
Dolores	QR Expert	F
David	QR Expert	M
Elaine	Doctoral Student	F
Edward	Doctoral Student	M
Fred	Instructor	M
Helen	Doctoral Student	F
Joshua	Doctoral Student	M
Jane	QR Expert	F
Jonathan	Doctoral Student	M
Mark	Instructor	M
Nancy	MBA Student	F
Nadia	MBA Student	F
Paula	College administrator	F
Stan	Doctoral Student	M
Solomon	Doctoral Student	M
Ted	college administrator	M

doctoral students; (b) participated in a variety of class activities to get a feel for the specific topic of the QR project, which was cross border consumption; (c) immersed themselves in the pedagogical and scientific culture of QR; and (d) conducted participant observation without the doctoral student's knowledge of their motivation. The QRM seminar was organized in conjunction with the Markets & Globalization (M&G) seminar, which (a) was co-taught by the same two professors and (b) provided the conceptual foundation for the research questions that the doctoral students chose to investigate. All of the doctoral students in the M&G seminar were also students in the QRM seminar. On the Mexican side, the research team was not particularly linked to a class project, but consisted of a group of colleagues who had a specific interest in studying cross-border consumption.

FINDINGS

The Process

As a process, the focal collaborative teaching and learning experience consists of three stages: idea generation, planning and preparation, and implementation (see Figure 1). It should be noted that the decisions to co-teach the two seminars and to incorporate a real-world QR preceded the decision to combine graduates and undergraduates in one course.

Idea Generation

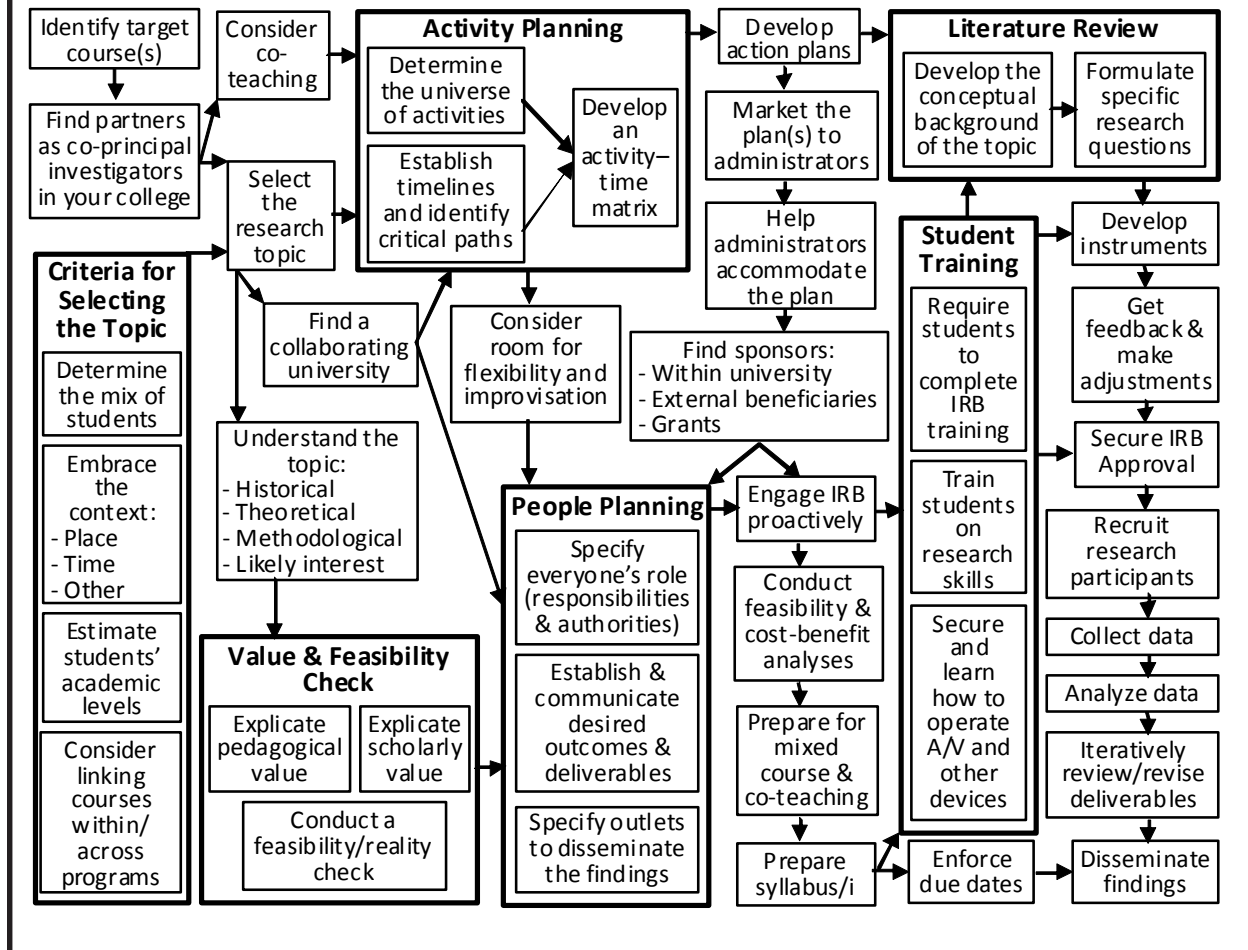
Interviews with the instructors, Fred and Mark, indicate that they considered five criteria when seeking an appropriate topic for their QR project. To them, the ideal topic would represent (a) an important yet under-explored area in consumer research; (b) a natural bridge between the subject matters of the two doctoral seminars they were assigned to instruct, namely the QRM seminar and the M&G seminar; (c) an issue of interest to their Mexican partners; (d) a locally feasible data-collection exercise for the students; and (e) a topic of everyday relevance and socioeconomic significance for the local communities and authorities. The locations of the two universities were a decisive factor that could satisfy at least items c, d, and e above. Given the five criteria and the proximity of the two universities to the Texas-Mexico border, cross-border consumption emerged as the topic of choice upon considering several other topics. Fred felt that the "context of where we are," was crucial because QR is about "being in direct contact with the people you study." The students would have the opportunity to experience the complex relations and manifestations of globalization that they were required to study first-hand, right where they resided and attended school. Mark reasoned, "instead of having to travel in order to collect interview and observation data, they [i.e., the students] would have the convenience of just looking within their own shopping malls, restaurants, and hospitals."

In addition to these advantages, cross-border consumption seemed like a natural fit between the two seminars. The purpose of the M&G seminar is to understand the concepts of 'the market' and "globalization," discover the history of their development in current thought, and identify further potential developments in these two areas of research. The QRM seminar familiarizes students with historical, theoretical, methodological, and technical foundations of QR and enables them to learn by practicing them. With cross-border consumption as the overall research topic, the students could use their understanding of the materials in the M&G seminar to develop specific research questions, and then utilize their training in the QRM seminar to participate in the project and find empirical responses to their questions. The project as well as the two seminars were co-instructed and co-directed by Fred and Mark. This arrangement gave the students access to the collective knowledge of the instructors and the guest scholars. While everyone contributed to the construction of the same data set, each doctoral student focused and wrote a paper on a different aspect of cross-border consumption.

Planning and Preparation

Interviews with Tom and Paula, college administrators, reveals the foremost challenge facing QR

FIGURE 1
THE PROCESS OF THE COLLABORATIVE TEACHING
AND LEARNING EXPERIENCE



projects that require integration across graduate and undergraduate programs and across specific graduate courses: the bureaucratic and rigid structure of the university. Paula discussed how “integrated courses,” where two professors co-instruct two courses, are often incompatible with the university’s policies and procedures, and cause organizational ambiguity and stress. She clarified that such innovative pedagogical and research styles are much desired and needed “within the [business] disciplines,” but indicated that instructors who “co-teach” one or more courses run the risk of being remunerated for only half of their instruction time and efforts. This issue was also raised by Tom. He supported co-teaching, but warned that “selling this style of teaching to higher administrative bodies can be a difficult task.” In addition to bureaucratic obstacles, lack of financial and other resources can threaten the existence and quality of QR projects undertaken at universities. After some deliberation, Tom pledged a carefully determined degree of financial and nonfinancial support.

Following a green light from Tom, the instructors proceeded to prepare as detailed an action plan as feasible prior to the beginning of the target semester. Although the instructors were confident that a high level of personal and professional trust existed among them, Mark indicated that they deliberately paid extensive attention to details because “innovative ideas that challenge existing pedagogical and research norms [were] disliked and avoided by most, if not all, universities.” After weighing possible scenarios, the instructors agreed to (a) entrust the principal responsibility of and credit for the QRM seminar to Mark and designate the M&G seminar and the ensuing credit to Fred; and (b) require each instructor to prepare for, attend, and contribute to both seminars as if he had equal responsibility in both of the seminars. They went with co-teaching hoping that it would enhance student learning experiences and outcomes and increase scholastic synergy. Thus, each strived to contribute maximally to each seminar while each maintaining “leadership” in his designated seminar. For example, the instructors contrib-

uted extensive commentary and materials for each of the syllabi and consulted with one another whenever some modification was deemed necessary in either of the syllabi. Such iterative conception and design of syllabi is representative of how they conceived and implemented a majority of other components of the plan. As a benefit of this cooperative approach, the instructors and other stakeholders did not face challenges that would be unduly difficult to overcome.

Another issue further complicating preparation for the project was obtaining approval for the research from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Since much of this information could not be known or prepared without the students, the application for IRB had to wait until almost one third of the target semester had elapsed. IRB gave the impression that it would take about 10 days to issue the approval, but delays hindered the ability to begin the project at the planned time. It was apparent that students would need more time beyond the semester to work on their individual papers.

Implementation

The students had to learn the concepts and theories, and practice and master the methodological skills within one semester. Many of the students expressed a need for more time to really grasp the presented concepts and theories and obtain the required skills. More time would have also helped the students to develop a better understanding of the subject matter (i.e., cross-border consumption), which would in turn enrich their contribution during research question formulation, instrument development, data collection, analysis, and reporting. They generally felt that the seminars were compressed, delivering an overwhelming amount of learning and application in an epigrammatic time bracket. The students confirmed that the claim made in the QRM syllabus was true:

This seminar is demanding and challenging. It will stretch you to your limits. On the flip side, it is a space for first-hand learning and an opportunity for developing creative and analytical research skills. With the right attitude and hard work, we will make it a valuable and fun experience.

Since most of the doctoral students were in their first semester, they had little, if any, previous exposure to doctoral lifestyle, coursework and research in general. Trying hard to catch up and adapt to the new environment (i.e., the border town) and three seminars required in their first semester, doctoral students were additionally required to learn QR techniques by actually performing them. They were not allowed to engage in data collection for the main project until they had completed IRB training and studied and practiced the techniques satisfactorily.

Participant recruitment proved to be difficult. Although 13 undergraduates in Paula's class helped

identify, communicate to, and recruit participants, and each participant was promised a Simon Mall gift card in exchange for their time, the team faced several challenges with interview time and place coordination, appointment cancellation by participants, audio and video equipment preparation, and, worse of all, unsuccessful interviewing resulting in re-interview and/or further recruitment. Almost none of the graduate students spoke Spanish or spoke it fluently. Since a majority of the participants were non-English speaking Mexican nationals, the use of interpreters during interviews was inevitable. The team decided to use Paula's bilingual undergraduates as interpreters for both pedagogical and financial reasons. These students were thus included in the project as a distinct category of research personnel. Despite its several benefits, the use of bilingual undergraduates instead of certified, professional interpreters can have adverse effects on the quality of the collected data. For instance, one of the students felt that his interpreter provided shorter-than-expected translations of participant responses during one of the interviews.

Challenges and Benefits

The case presented here involved (a) teaching students the epistemology, theories, methods, and techniques of QR in the classroom; (b) enabling students to develop QR skills and competencies in the semi-controlled, real-world space of the project; (c) empowering students to collect and analyze rich data that can address their individual research questions; (d) providing students with motivation and direction to create one or more research papers presentable and/or publishable at different academic outlets; (e) allowing graduates to cross the divide between seminars (especially when one is substantive and the other methodological), combine the knowledge and skills potential only at the intersection of different seminars, and write a single paper that satisfies the research components of both seminars; (f) facilitating pedagogical and research collaboration between/among instructors of different undergraduate and graduate courses; (g) exposing undergraduates to the idea and practice of QR as a component of their coursework; (h) helping a scientific community of practice address multiple aspects of an overarching research question; (i) allowing the local community where the project unfolds to find qualitatively derived answers to one or more of their substantive questions; (j) bringing undergraduate, MBA, and doctoral students in close, professional contact with one another to create academic curiosity in the former two groups and experience with research (personnel) for the latter group; and (k) creating an opportunity and space for research collaboration between multiple institutions/universities located in different countries. A summary of challenges and benefits is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS PER STAKEHOLDER

Stakeholder	Benefits			Challenges		
	Co-Teaching	QR	Mixed Course	Co-Teaching	QR	Mixed Course
Undergraduate Students	Real world simulation; novel academic experience	Non-conventional education; QR skills development	Exposure to higher levels; networking	Lack of a dominant figure; higher expectations	Lack of prior experience & QR skills; time/effort	Higher benchmarks; unfamiliar dynamics; low structure
MBA Students	Real world simulation; perspective multiplicity	Appreciation for depth; QR skills development	Exposure to higher level; pseudo-internship	Lack of a dominant figure; higher & lower expectations	MBA's broad base; lack of QR skills; time/effort	Lower & higher benchmarks; low structure
Doctoral Students	Perspective multiplicity; model for collegiality and modesty	Appreciation for QR; QR skills development	Research-team skills; linking theory to practice	Lack of a dominant figure; different sets of expectations	Quantitative bias; lack of QR skills; time/effort	Lower speed; repetition of concepts; practical focus
Instructors	Collegiality and modesty; personal SWOT; collaboration	Co-principal investigator skills; joint authorship	Research-team skills; collaboration among students	Ego, time & process management; performance evaluation	Time/ effort; joint data collection & analysis; coordination	Diversity of expectations; performance evaluation; motivation
University Administrators	New source of intrinsic motivation; quality enhancement	Knowledge production; new source of intrinsic motivation;	Multiparty satisfaction; interest in higher ed.; org. mission	Crediting instructors; required advocacy; assurance of learning	Required advocacy & (financial) support; assurance of learning	Countering conventions; required advocacy; assurance of learning
(International) Collaborating Institutions	Perspective multiplicity; quality enhancement	Co-principal investigator skills; joint authorship	Exposure to mixed education;	Communication & coordination	Time/ effort; joint data collection & analysis; coordination	Quality assurance; communication & coordination
Local Community	Quality human resources; better local education	Community-driven research topic	Quality human resources; interest in higher ed.	Countering conventions	Quantitative bias	Countering conventions
Academic Community	Exemplar of innovation in ed.; quality human resources	Appreciation for QR; knowledge production	Educational mission; enhanced image	Countering conventions	Quantitative bias	Less structure in business ed.; textbook provision

Co-Teaching

Our research suggests that successful co-teaching can benefit various stakeholders. The direct, collaborative involvement of two or more instructors can result in synergistic handling of important pedagogical tasks such as determining objectives, translating the objectives into actionable plans, seeking and securing required resources, and coordinating and managing various components of the plan during execution (e.g., developing syllabi, preparing, lecturing, testing, grading, communicating). Co-teaching provides instructors with abundant opportunities for professional development. They have an associate from whom they can learn, derive motivation and encouragement, and receive minute and plentiful insights and pointers. Students gain many advantages, such as lower student-to-teacher ratios, multiplicity of instructional viewpoints (especially when instructors diverge on a certain issue), and opportunity to receive more than one set of comments on their oral and written contributions. Co-teaching is also a better simulation of work environments where an employee might have to work in teams and report to more than one individual. Mark believes that co-teaching can help “optimize or maximize student learning.” Differences between instructor opinions tend to generate discussion, which in turn allows the group to reach a richer, more nuanced understanding of focal issues. Undergraduates might find the experience to be different from what they are accustomed to and welcome the novelty of having two instructors. MBA students enjoy the added benefit of witnessing constructive intellectual debate between the instructors, and seeing how differences of opinion help generate ideas and elevate the discussion to a higher order. University administrators come to appreciate co-teaching because they witness an increase in intrinsic motivation among faculty and students, and improvement of educational and scholarly quality. Co-teaching can also benefit the local and academic communities by improving the quality of existing and prospective human resources and serving as an exemplar for innovation that could enhance the quality of education in general.

Co-teaching also engenders multiple challenges for the above stakeholders. Students who are accustomed to following a dominant figure in the classroom have to adjust the way they attend and contribute to the course. While undergraduates might face higher expectations from instructors, graduate students should buy into the different sets of expectations commensurate with the level of the students. MBA students, in particular, find themselves in the mid range and might sometimes get confused as to the appropriate level of effort required of them. Instructors feel the necessity to manage their ego as intellectual sharing unearths a diversity of perspectives and opinions. Each instructor feels charged with the responsibility to manage time and student learning which

often prove to be in conflict with his or her own planned course of action. In addition, the existence of two sets of evaluations of student performance sometimes requires extra dialogue and consensus between the two instructors. Challenges for university administrators are threefold. First, department chairs and deans may have to advocate the idea of co-teaching to upper-level administrators before it can be implemented. Second, since universities typically credit only one instructor for the instruction of a given course, a degree of organizational plasticity is required for the two instructors involved in co-teaching to be properly compensated. Third, administrators need to keep a close eye on the proposed co-teaching exercise to facilitate assurance of student learning. The challenge for collaborating institutions is the need to communicate and coordinate with more than one instructor.

Real-World Research Projects

Our findings showcase a specific QR project in one of its naturally occurring settings, namely doctoral seminars, where data collection and analysis is carried out by students as research personnel under the supervision of their instructors as principal investigators. The aim of the QR project was to enable students to have a first-hand experience with QR. Other aims included addressing one or more (local) community concerns and contributing to the existing body of knowledge. Undergraduates view their involvement as “a different kind of education” where students actively engage in experiential learning (i.e., learning by doing). MBA students whose education is characterized as a surface survey of a wide assortment of analytical and conceptual fields are forced to dig deeper and research the focal topic in great detail. Graduates grow an appreciation for QR and some, especially doctoral students, might utilize it in their future projects when so doing is warranted. Instructors assume two main benefits. First, they have the opportunity to serve as co-principal investigators managing a team of research personnel. Second, while respecting ethical and regulatory guidelines, they might be asked by students to continue working on resultant papers with the ultimate goal of co-authorship. University administrators benefit from the fact that QR usually results in the generation of plausible new knowledge. Moreover, they find QR as a new source of intrinsic motivation for instructors and students to strive for quality in the generation and sharing of new knowledge. When QR projects address a research question that has substantial and intriguing value for the local community, instructors and students can share the findings of the research with the local community in the form of presentations, workshops, and/or publication in local outlets. Two benefits accrue to the academic community. QR projects such as the present one tend to result in multiple presentations and/or publications, which can add to the visibility of and create momentum for QR in

scholarly outlets. Moreover, the insights generated through the project might serve as the beginning of addressing knowledge gaps in the pertinent academic field.

The foremost challenge that students face is the amount of time and effort demanded. Collecting and analyzing qualitative data (i.e., text in its broad sense) is more time consuming and effortful than collecting and analyzing quantitative data. Instructors face communication and coordination complexities when data is to be collected and analyzed by several of their students, along with instructors and students from a collaborating institution. Such complexities threaten the quality of the expected experience and outcomes. The challenge is even greater when instructors and students have differential levels of familiarity with QR and when the team includes undergraduate, MBA and doctoral students. Moreover, since administrators are charged with the responsibility to facilitate assurance of student learning, they might create more work and complexity by implementing certain mechanisms to monitor the pedagogical worth of the project and student experiences.

Mixed Course

Undergraduate and MBA students benefit from exposure to relatively higher levels and more advanced programs in higher education in ways that demystify future educational possibilities and affords them a preview into those programs. One of the undergraduate students felt, “You never know; you might end up working under one of these grad students as your future supervisor. [In addition to] whatever it is that we did as a team last semester, it was an awesome networking opportunity for me.” MBA students take a slightly different standpoint; they regard the mixed course as a simulation of real-world work environment and feel they get to do a “pseudo internship” in an academic setting. Doctoral students perceive still different benefits. Having learnt that scientific projects often necessitate collaboration among researchers, doctoral students and instructors look forward to honing their collaboration and teamwork skills in the context of mixed courses. While working with undergraduate and MBA students, who repeatedly remind researchers of the practical side of theories and scientific endeavors, doctoral students and instructors are also encouraged to explore the links between theory and practice. Adam remembers, “Professors push [i.e., doctoral students] to think in abstract and theoretical ways, but we are also forced to see [things] in real and . . . practical ways; yeah, undergrads, MBAs and respondents, too, push you to have an eye on practicality.” Instructors also have the opportunity to experiment with and learn how to manage collaboration among a diverse set of individuals. University administrators benefit indirectly when various constituencies inside and outside the school exhibit

satisfaction and when undergraduate and MBA students show greater interest in proceeding to more advanced programs. Furthermore, administrators tend to view the mixing of students as an unorthodox, yet effective means that pushes and helps the institution to accomplish its mission and vision. Two benefits pertain to the local community: (a) as mixed education increases, the quality of human resources available to the local community might increase and (b) exposure to more advanced programs might motivate individuals to seek further education. Our interview data point to two possible benefits for the academic community: mixed education might indirectly enhance the image of marketing (or more generally business) as an academic major and a professional career; and the educational mission of the academic community might be better served with the incorporation of mixed education wherever appropriate.

Mixing students from various programs engenders several challenges. Although MBA students witness the existence and practice of both lower and higher expectations, the group most challenged by the unfamiliar dynamics of a mixed course is probably undergraduate students. Another challenge is the fact that mixed courses are usually characterized by lower degrees of structure (formality, preset regulations, rewards and punishment, performance measures, etc.) relative to other courses in students’ frame of reference. Doctoral students, on the other hand, might perceive a reduction in the speed with which the QR progresses, which they might attribute to the inclusion of undergraduate and MBA students and to the need for instructors to repeat the concepts and training episodes for those students. Although instructors do not agree with such perception and attribution, the perception is real and ought to be dealt with. A third challenge for doctoral students is the need to maintain a practical focus while engaging in a scientific research project. This challenge, if confronted successfully, can indeed comprise a benefit as noted earlier. Mixed courses that defy border walls built by educational traditions are a challenge not only to the university administrators but to the local community. By countering conventions, administrators take on the role of an organizational advocate for the proposal and might be later held accountable for such performance indicators as assurance of learning.

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTIONS

Through this collaborative teaching and learning experience, we have come to realize that a culture of traditional academics does not readily accommodate the educational experience we tried to create, which goes beyond the usual two- or three-researcher efforts. It seems that limitations based in traditions of credit allocation, tenure and promotion evaluations and the like inhibit collaborative research to a great extent. Despite numerous

challenges, we regard our experience as a step in business disciplines toward better appreciating and embracing the contemporary culture of information/knowledge production and communication. Increasingly, the most influential cultural and informational products, such as movies, television programs and more recently social media on the Internet, are based on collaborative efforts of large groups of people working together toward a common goal. On the other hand, especially in the social sciences and humanities, scholarship to produce and disseminate information has been largely limited to individual or small group – teams of two or three – efforts. In the physical and natural sciences, large-scale, team-based research activity has become more frequent. Still, in most, if not all, academic circles, traditional systems of assigning credit tend to favor individual or small-scale, team-based efforts. This limitation often results in partial (as opposed to comprehensive) insights into the focal phenomena. As social scientists find ways to develop large-scale, team-based collaborative works, they will be better positioned to produce broader and deeper understanding of the phenomena, increase their impact on local and global communities, and update their endeavors to keep abreast with contemporary trends.

There have been some attempts at developing and implementing collaborative projects in consumer research, such as the example of the Consumer Odyssey, yet the resulting reports or publications have still followed the “one or few authors” tradition. The key benefits of collaborative research are (a) to enable substantially wider and deeper understanding of issues under study through the involvement of a larger number of researchers who pool their time and resources together and investigate the focal issues in a more comprehensive manner, and (b) more knowledgeable research practices and insights thanks to varied expertise brought to the table by the different researchers. Unfortunately, the impositions from the traditional culture of the academy that reinforce more individual efforts thwart such benefits.

Implementation Issues

One of the challenges posed by this approach is the inadequate coverage of some sections of the interview protocol given the time limits encountered even in in-depth interviews. In our experience, no individual interview contained adequate information on all of the questions. Depending on who conducted the interview, different parts of the protocol were emphasized. This challenge could be addressed by allowing each group of two or three students to collaborate on a single research question/paper rather than expecting each student create a distinct paper. A collective protocol would thus be shorter and more practical. Alternatively, each team of students could create its own protocol rather than contribute to and utilize an overall protocol.

Our experience confirmed that since QR, ethnographic ones in particular, can be time-consuming and costly and require well-trained researchers, the instructors must pay particular attention to such key issues as securing IRB approval in a timely manner, training their students, balancing the amount of required readings against hands-on training on QR techniques, developing a plan for timely and effective participant recruitment and continuous supervision of students’ field work in order to make timely interventions to assure collection of rich text.

On the USA side, bilingual research was found to introduce special difficulties as partly indicated earlier. The results suggest that when a bilingual is given sufficient time to read and then translate the interviewees’ statements, the responses are better translated and meanings better presented in the second (i.e., English) language. Although the transcriptions provided complete translations of interviewees’ statements, the fact that the principal interviewers could not reflect on and appropriately react to each and every interviewee statement during the bilingual interviews did hurt the completeness of in-depth explorations in the moment. This problem was not a concern with the data contributed by the Mexican partners, who conducted the interviews entirely in the native language of both interviewees and interviewers.

Credit-seeking doctoral students perceived the QRM seminar as “overly crowded for a typical doctoral course.” They were concerned that the presence of MBA students and other doctoral students auditing the seminar left them with insufficient opportunity to ask questions and contribute to discussions. This implementation issue had never occurred to the instructors, and it was thanks to the interviews conducted by MBA students that the issue surfaced. Although the affected doctoral students had every right to demand ample opportunities for learning and clarification, the collaborative research and teaching experience would not be possible, or at least the same, without the presence of MBA students and auditing doctoral students. Instructors may be able to address this adverse situation by making themselves available to credit-seeking students beyond class time and during their “office hours.”

Working with(in) Constraints

The general consensus among the students and the instructors was that the project should have started earlier. Application for IRB approval should have been submitted either prior to or at the beginning of the semester. This would require having prospective students complete the training required by IRB before they enroll in the seminars and preparing tentative versions of research instruments such as interview protocol and recruitment fliers. It should be noted that when co-teaching is not successfully conceived and implemented, the foregoing benefits might not materialize or even some antagonistic consequences might

emerge to instructors' surprise (Horwich 1999). Therefore, like any other organizational initiative, co-teaching is desirable when done effectively.

Outcomes

Collaborative teaching and learning endeavors can endow us with desired outcomes beyond what traditional education and scholarship can produce. In this case, we are able to report multiple such outcomes. First, several of the seminar papers written by students in the QRM seminar, including one developed by the MBA students, were presented at academic conferences. These papers are based on the different research questions pursued by graduate students during the QRM and M&G seminars. They range across different aspects of cross-border consumption and pertinent conceptual issues that guide deeper understanding of such consumption (e.g., the shifting meanings of border, the changing notion of authenticity). A few of these papers were accepted by an international conference in South East Asia focused on the interplay of marketing and development. These papers delineated the relationship between cross-border consumption and (economic) development issues. Another paper on perceptions of authenticity among cross-border consumers spoke to an audience in Europe about why and how the notion of authenticity need to be redefined to better reflect consumption in contemporary society. Still another paper shared the experience and implications of collaborative research and teaching among an audience interested in marketing education. The project resulted in a few more other papers, which are yet to reach their target audience. A majority of these papers, already presented or not, are being improved and will be submitted for publication at appropriate journals. One of these papers is accepted for publication at a reputable marketing journal.

A second noteworthy outcome of this collaborative research and teaching experience, an outcome unanticipated by the instructors, is contribution to the community. Since a larger-than-usual number of researchers were involved in the project, and because of our primary focus on the motives that move consumers across the border from Mexico to the US and vice versa, the project got to be heard and sought after by the officials in nearby cities. These cities are very much interested in cross-border consumption since much of their livelihood depends on economic activity created by the flow of people and products across the border. The results from the research were presented to city officials, who used this initial contact as an opportunity to develop a continued contact with the instructors and their academic department. This dialogue has proved to be mutually beneficial for both the university and the cities, and the interactions between the two groups have increased gradually and are ongoing at the present time.

Related to the latter outcome, research based on large-scale collaboration between students, experts, and universities is more likely to pursue community concerns and take the form of action research. Thus, research efforts move from being a separate activity performed by a specialized group of academics closer to becoming a process of pedagogical and intellectual cross-fertilization in the form of a shared attention to research and education among different social actors and stakeholders. At a time when borderlines separating intellectuals from practitioners in modern society have grown bolder and darker – a time when effective dissemination of validated information is hampered by greater gaps of distrust—growth of informed exchanges among different social actors and stakeholders can be a major contribution afforded by collaborative research and teaching ventures.

ENDNOTE

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