**Creative Cross-cultural Connections: Facebook as a Third Space for International Collaborations**

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**Abstract**

As industries are increasingly globalized, our students’ future workplaces require facility with cross-cultural collaboration, yet curricula often remain situated within the home culture. This chapter presents a qualitative case study on a collaborative project between students in London, Hong Kong and Singapore. An overview of the process is given drawing on the experiences of the teachers and students involved, informing a discussion around the issues inherent in the internationalization of the curriculum. Tutors created a shared private Facebook group to connect London College of Fashion students with students at City University Hong Kong and LASALLE College of the Arts Singapore. Students worked on separate but aligned briefs that mirror contemporary working patterns and allowed co-creation of educational experiences beyond the geographic and time constraints of working internationally, specifically addressing issues around global and local communications. The Facebook platform was used separately and collaboratively to support students’ learning and the digitally mediated collaboration allowed for flexibility in when and how education took place, providing a third space for co-creation of learning: a global classroom.

This is indeed a special idea which can act as an exchange of ideas (without actually going on an exchange program) on a virtual platform which could be translated into concrete ideas in researches and essays (global classroom student participant)

This chapter presents a case study of a collaborative online international project developed between university tutors in London, Hong Kong and Singapore. It explores the motivation behind an initial pilot collaboration - a global classroom between London and Hong Kong - and how that pilot informed a subsequent triangular collaboration with Singapore as a third partner. The pilot global classroom was run as an exploratory collaboration, and a case study methodology was adopted to record and analyze the experience for this and the subsequent extended collaboration (Yin, 2003). The initiative aimed to foster exchange of students’ social and cultural knowledge to drive learning in an inclusive environment (Ryan & Hellmundt, 2005) using a blended pedagogical approach; the international collaboration was only one aspect of the course delivery, which was offered in addition to physical lectures, seminars and tutorials. The authors’ aims aligned with each institutions’ mission to provide creative education that fosters globally aware, technically competent young professionals, and failure to deliver on the learning outcomes for the collaboration would likely prejudice future initiatives, so student feedback was collected in each location. In total nearly 300 students participated in the two global classrooms and the case study provides an overview of the process; outlining the successes and challenges.

The authors engaged in extended online discussions before running a pilot initiative by introducing the collaboration into one assignment in their respective courses in Popular Culture (30 students) and Advertising (35 students) (CityU HK) and Fashion Forecasting and Brand Development (35 students LCF) in Semester A of 2013-14. Along with a content analysis of the group page and online activities, the impact of this project on teaching and learning was monitored and analysed throughout using evaluative student feedback based on individual and team-based Wiki-style multi-modal self-reflections through summative student feedback forms, in addition to questionnaires, focus groups and interviews with individual students, as well as the tutors’ observations and reflections. Following a thorough review of the pilot, the second global classroom ran in Semester B 2014-15 with 40 CityU students from the Fashion Communication course, 93 LCF Fashion Branding students and added an additional partner with 48 students taking a course in Fashion Media and Industries at LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore. Feedback was collected from each partner involved in the second iteration and is reported on below. The tangible outcomes identified from all cohorts include: enhancement of professional and critical thinking skills; collaborative competencies; intercultural awareness and accommodation; communication competencies; independent learning skills; activated innovation and creativity through the use of appropriate technology in blended educational spaces.

**Context: Millennial Students in a Globalised System**

With 340 million Twitter tweets daily and over one billion people on Facebook, the changes that social networks have made to our everyday lives are so evident that they can no longer be ignored or dismissed by universities as they structure communication, learning and access to knowledge. Social media engagement is part of students’ lives; digital platforms are the source of informal education linking individuals with shared interests, but digital social networks have not been part of many formal educational experiences (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2008; Schuller & Watson, 2009).

Education theory shows that close interactions between faculty and students improve students’ critical thinking, knowledge acquisition, analytic competencies and intellectual development and furthermore that peer-to peer interaction is a predictor of student attainment (Junco, 2012). Students learn best when they are intrinsically motivated with personal agency and active involvement in their learning (Collins & Amabile, 1999; Csikszentmihalyi, 1999).

Mazur’s flipped classroom concept highlights the benefits of peer-to-peer instruction and confirmed the throwing open of the academy doors (Lambert, 2012). The rise in digital technologies should enable greater student autonomy and facilitate collaborative work with access to unlimited information, skill-development tutorials and subject-discipline networks with students as ‘active co-producers’ of knowledge where the learning process is a ‘participatory…, social (process) supportive of personal life goals and needs’ (McLoughlin & Lee, 2010:31; Ulbrich et al., 2011). But despite digital-native rhetoric and progress towards more student-centred classrooms, many students do not recognize their own cultural capital and their role as active participants in their education. Furthermore, higher education institutions often fail to translate students’ social media enthusiasm; institutions and individual faculty often remain resistant to crossing the boundary between academic and social spheres.

Although institutions often highlight the internationalization of the curriculum and the fostering of global graduates as key guiding policies, the practical means of how this internationalisation or globalisation may come about is often unclear. Putting to one side the argument that much internationalisation has focused on the recruitment of international students, it has been generally understood that physically travelling and studying in another country is the optimal method of building awareness of other cultures. In certain subject disciplines e.g. modern foreign languages, it is customary for students to spend extended periods abroad with the intention that immersion in another culture will enhance both language learning and cultural awareness. Students on non-language courses are often encouraged to study or work abroad or participate in field trips with the same aim, albeit with a recognition that the effect of the exposure is likely to be reduced. Recent approaches to internationalizing the curriculum have changed the focus from sojourners to the majority non-mobile students and seek to introduce an international dimension to teaching and learning or “internationalizing at home” utilising the affordances of digital technologies to facilitate virtual mobility or collaborative online international learning (COIL) (de Wit, 2013). Yet opportunities for working with peers in higher education institutions around the world are still limited for many students.

**The Case Study**

**The Partner Institutions**

City University Hong Kong (CityU) is a public research university founded in 1984 with a mission to  **‘nurture and develop the talents of students and to create applicable knowledge in order to support social and economic advancement’ (CityU, 2015).**CityU's overall objective is to deliver student learning in an engaged and global manner by utilizing digital technologies for pedagogical purposes to deliver educational content in a more dynamic and flexible way aligned with students' learning needs and enhance their digital competencies to prepare them for professional life. CityU’s Discovery Enriched Curriculum (DEC) aims to prepare globally aware, self-driven, technically competent and creative young professionals. CityU students are predominantly Hong Kong Chinese learning in a second language context, yet each class would on average have three to four exchange students for one semester typically from Europe, North America or Australia whose cultural perspective also added to the global classroom experience.

London College of Fashion (LCF) is a constituent college of the University of the Arts London, which is the largest art and design university in Europe and has approximately 36% non-UK students. LCF has recently been named as one of the top universities internationally for fashion education and one of the key strands of LCF’s policy is to internationalize the curriculum to “develop curriculum which is culturally diverse, enriched by strong and focused partnerships with peer institutions across the world” (unpublished Strategic Plan 2010-15). LCF has a higher proportion of non-UK students than the other colleges in the university, with students coming from all over the world to study in London, including a large number of students from South East Asia. LCF alumni work in all areas of the fashion industry worldwide.

LASALLE College of the Arts in Singapore is a leading tertiary institution in cutting edge contemporary arts and design education and practice. The college offers 30 undergraduate and post-graduate programs in art design, film, animation, fashion, dance, music, theatre, arts management, arts education, art therapy, and art history. Its faculty is led by a community of award-winning artists, designers, educators and researchers, and their practice-led research sets LASALLE apart as an international center of excellence. Critically acclaimed alumni form the core of the cultural and creative sectors in Singapore and increasingly internationally. With an emphasis on contemporary practice and research, our teaching philosophy emphasizes idea generation and new interpretations of creative disciplines. Students’ ideas and creativity will set them apart as they emerge as a reflective practitioner in the industry.

**FIGURE 1 SHOULD APPEAR ABOUT HERE**

**Fig. 1. Members of the global classroom Facebook group**

**Objectives**

The aims of the global classroom can be summarised by the objectives set for the initiative to:

1. Make explicit the connection between the theories and concepts encountered in the classroom and professional practice by integrating all aspects of the learning experience in relevant professional fields in online, globally-based project work.
2. Provide an opportunity for students to practice individual problem seeking and solving techniques within the collective setting resonant of the workplace as individuals interact with team members to deliver the project brief.
3. Promote self and peer evaluation according to professional requirements using accessible and student-centered technology platforms.
4. Enhance collaborative and cross-cultural communication skills through active team based communication with peers and industry experts in real time settings that will be of benefit in the professional workplace.
5. Establish a unique tailored learning experience that will enable second language learners to work at their own pace and identify and adapt learning materials as needed for the project.

The pilot study emerged from a professional encounter at an international education conference where one of the authors presented a paper on the academic use of social media. Through mediated collaborations, the authors intended to acknowledge and raise the co-creation of learning using digital channels. The authors intended to create a space for students in different geographic locations to participate in directed work about fashion brands and foster informal communications around these, but also to enable in-country market research in unfamiliar cultures by promoting and encouraging students’ participation outside of the set class tasks.

**FIGURE 2 SHOULD APPEAR ABOUT HERE**

**Fig. 2 Examples of student work posted by students in the global classroom group and the peer feedback received**

Although the specific educational benefits of the collaboration that were envisaged could not be guaranteed and the authors were a little unsure how students would respond to the initiative, the overwhelming motivation was that it would be a worthwhile learning experience for students and staff alike.

Although the authors do not wish to endorse notions of “student as consumer” we do teach within subject disciplines that include analysis of consumer behavior and marketing communications where the concept of engagement and co-creation are well researched. Consumer engagement defines the relationship between brands and consumers grounded on the concept of social engagement: ‘whereby the consumer formulates and maintains a self-awareness of his or her membership within the community… emphasizing the perceived similarities with other community members… identification means that the consumer agrees… with the community’s norms, traditions, rituals, and objectives and promotes its well-being’ (Algeshiemer et al., 2005:20). Such interactions between brands and consumers have been greatly facilitated by digital interactive technologies (Leboff, 2011); consumer interactions or ‘co-creation’ adding value to products and services as consumers’ skills enrich the meanings and performance of brands, products and/or services (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). The concept of co-creation as theorized in the business world aligns with constructivist understandings of teaching and learning whereby peer interaction and active learning is believed to empower students, adding value to their educational experiences. This understanding underscored the authors’ objectives to empower students through building subject-discipline networks or communities of practice (Wenger, 1998).

The authors share a research interest in cross-cultural marketing communications and through the initial collaboration set out to devise project briefs for the respective undergraduate students in London and Hong Kong that would explore how transnational brands are promoted and perceived in different markets. Through curriculum mapping the authors decided to run parallel but separate briefs between our cohorts in London and Hong Kong with the intention to enhance the learning experience and student engagement with the subject content with global classroom partners so as to broaden student networks, expand use of technologies, and enhance cross-cultural communication. It also fully exercised English language competencies as a *lingua franca* in a cross-cultural, collaborative setting given that the CityU students are predominantly Hong Kong Chinese who are learning in a second language context.

The question of how to share learning resources between cohorts and how to capture student discussions and responses led to the decision to run the global classroom project as an online collaboration. Initial discussions focused on the relative merits of using internal or external platforms. Both institutions had their own VLEs but due to issues of access and perceptions of low student engagement with these institutional platforms it was determined that the public platform Facebook, to which all students were accustomed and had easy access, would answer the project objectives to enable asynchronous individual and collaborative learning, in-class and private study and to keep a record of interactions to inform our research. The authors were enthusiastic about the potential benefits the collaborations might have for our students’ learning and their increased intercultural communication competence, however the authors were also cautious about not over-stretching our students particularly in terms of workload, and thus affecting the learning outcomes and/or deliverables. Each of the two iterations revealed generally positive student responses, which in the interests of brevity are reported together in the emergent themes below.

**FIGURE 3 SHOULD APPEAR ABOUT HERE**

**Fig. 3 Examples of student work posted by students in the global classroom group and the peer feedback received**

The pilot launched in Semester A 2013-14 in the form of a private Facebook Group: the International Fashion Panel. The authors set up the Facebook group and administered the membership requests submitted by students in each location. 100 students in London and Hong Kong were involved in the pilot study and were introduced to the group’s shared online resources in asynchronous seminar sessions. Students worked on separate but aligned briefs that required them to analyse established fashion brands and propose an international brand extension; it was strongly suggested but not required that this would be into the markets represented by the partner colleges. Although there were minor differences in the project brief according to each partners’ institutional requirements they followed the same basic outline which included an explicit objective to consider markets beyond those that are homogenous or too similar to the home culture (Killick & Dean, 2013).

**FIGURE 4 SHOULD APPEAR ABOUT HERE**

**Fig. 4 An example of a private study assignment posted by a student prior to a seminar discussion on international fashion marketing**

As well as tutors posting relevant information and resources, students were directed to use the group prior to class to provide resources for later discussion e.g. to post marketing images and critiques of brand campaigns which they considered particularly innovative, controversial or problematic. Students were tasked with preparing local intelligence on their home market e.g. fashion hotspots, which they shared through the group. Students were thereby researching both their domestic market and the market they wished to enter. Students supplement secondary research sources by posting surveys and asking direct questions of their collaborators e.g. ‘Can any of the Hong Kong students tell me what the biggest cosmetic brands are in China?’ Students shared their draft work to garner peer feedback on work in progress, and posted completed reports which served as useful comparisons between different educational systems. The tutors did not physically deliver to the students in the partner cohort but their presence in the group did engender a sense of co-teaching. It enabled the input of shared resources, and the Hong Kong tutor prepared a presentation on marketing in Asia with local knowledge and current examples which was delivered by the tutor in London as a supplement to the curriculum.

**FIGURES 5&6 SHOULD APPEAR ABOUT HERE**

**Fig. 5 A student posts draft ideas about their project**

**Fig. 6 Files uploaded onto the global classroom Facebook group which acted as a learning resource for the group members**

As noted above, the authors had taken a cautious approach to the initial collaborative online international project, but the evidence from student and tutor feedback showed multiple complex learning outcomes had been achieved, many beyond our expectations. There was very little negative feedback on the global classroom, students having ‘voted with their mice’ and not participated when and where they did not find value in the collaboration, however the authors felt that the slow start to the collaborative work may have been due to their desire to frame the collaboration as an academic one and hence having consciously avoided forced online socialising. On reflection this was felt to have been an unnecessary caution and an icebreaker introduction activity was devised for the next iteration. The CityU tutor had previously used Facebook in an educational context so was confident of its facility, but reported that both the frequency of posts and the level of dedicated engagement surpassed their expectations. The LCF tutor had previously used blogging with students but had no experience – even personal – of using Facebook and was working in an environment that unofficially discouraged the use of external social media platforms, and although they reported the interaction was slow to get started they found the students’ enthusiasm and the quality of outcomes impressive.

**FIGURE 7 SHOULD APPEAR ABOUT HERE**

**Fig. 7 An alumni of the global classroom collaboration uses the group page to disseminate a questionnaire for their final dissertation**

An unexpected, but pleasing, outcome of the global classroom was that students from the first cohort remained members of the Facebook group after the duration of the formal collaboration and continued to use it informally to share relevant materials with classmates, and later to distribute surveys that supported academic courses they were undertaking which had no official link to the global classroom. This continued interaction, albeit at quite a low level, supported the sense that the authors were contributing to the establishment of a global community of practice. Following a review of the initial pilot study the authors felt confident to expand the scope of the collaboration and when a planned research trip to Singapore was arranged for Spring 2014, the London tutors invited the third partner college LASALLE College of the Arts Singapore to join the global classroom.

LASALLE had been involved in another online collaborative project the preceding semester preceding and this experience was useful both in terms of the planning and also with regard to collecting feedback from students involved in two different collaborative projects. Curriculum mapping resulted in a close match between courses and for the second iteration of the collaborative project; it was feasible to run the project between London, Hong Kong and Singapore. With confidence established in the platform and process, all three partners decided to increase the depth of collaboration. Pedagogic aims for the global classroom were clarified to students from the outset as well as adding some more contact points and tightening up the specifics of the project timeline and deliverables. The second iteration was designed to produce more student-generated content and co-creation. The LASALLE tutor summed up their motivation for joining the global classroom thus:

Our unwritten (till now) program ethos is to be “Asia-centric” with an international outlook’. We want graduates to be sensitive and well versed with the issues pertinent to development of the fashion industry in Singapore and the region, and also to be aware of the global nature of fashion business.

This notion of capitalizing on students’ social and cultural knowledge to drive learning chimed well with each of the partners, as did the desire to engage students in their subject discipline at a global and local level. Initially, the students were given an icebreaker task asking them to introduce themselves and to share three places in the world that they would like to live and three companies for which they aspire to work. This task was undertaken “live” in seminars and followed up by an individual post to the group. This task served to kick off the global classroom with a low risk social interaction and also had the multiple benefit of the mindset of the student participants in a global frame, while at the same time enabling them to identify themselves and outline their career plans, which established stakeholdership in the group and also highlighted their commonalities given their shared demography. Students enjoyed reading these introductory posts and finding similarities and differences between the cohorts:

Whilst reading the introductory posts from the international students it was interesting to see what brands they aspired to work for, some instantly recognisable and some not. This was a good indicator of what brands are popular within that segment and I was surprised at how many did not mention some of the big luxury fashion houses that were present on the UK posts.

It has also helped me understand my peers at LCF and I was surprised by how many said they were interested in working for fashion magazines as this is something I have thought of in the past.

Overall, in terms of the outcomes of the global classroom experience, taking into consideration the students’ experience from their actual online activity, course reflections, questionnaires and in-class interviews, the experience was a highly positive one in terms of teaching and learning for all of the parties involved as evidenced in these typical representative student responses:

This was a truly great opportunity for me to understand how British fashion students perceive the everyday fashion brands that many people wear on the street globally and exchange my views with them.

Having the link to the international fashion panel was such a useful tool for brand research; it was great to be able to get real up-to-date feedback rather than online statistics.

We got useful feedback from the Hong Kong and LCF students, they willingly shared information regarding their fashion culture with us.

The generic critical competencies gained throughout the process of online engagement between the globally-based students were apparent; having to articulate ideas to a global audience raised the requirement to engage more deeply with the subject matter and think carefully about how those ideas were expressed:

The exchange motivates me to produce work of a higher standard.

This has stimulated my critical thinking even more. …I have to think about why I have such a decision, and explain it... This also makes me think deeper on everything.

To be able to see their work, and being able to compare ours was also helpful to critique our own work. We may not know much about the brands that they have chosen, therefore we are learning from the work that they have produced and it makes us think from that perspective when writing and editing our own.

Many students commented that the assignment had enabled them to reassess their assumptions in a broader way since they were being provided with multiple sources of information and opinions:

We were able to view the working style and creative processes by other colleges.

…the importance of cultural differences within the market place is one of the lessons I will take with me for a long time… this term has been very beneficial in terms of me developing my understanding of international business, an essential skill for my future development… (LCF student)

I have learned a lot from the LCF International Fashion Panel Facebook site because of several reasons: 1) The content is so rich and it is based on different aspects of the industry so I have learned so much from others 2) I am able to know the cross-cultural opinions from different kinds of students… 3) We can have detailed collaborative discussions using words and images.

Yet this was not just about acquiring knowledge for its own sake, and neither was it bound by the confines of the course syllabus, as many participants noted that they valued the potential to apply this knowledge to their own lives and to their future careers:

Most importantly, I can learn and obtain a lot of information about the marketing strategies in the fashion industry. I can apply them to other industries as well. After all I learn that marketing is listening that requires me to listen to the environment.

The global assignment and the choice of a social media site to engage the various student groups proved to be a very effective and responsive medium for facilitating collaborative work. Students described the Facebook group as “user-friendly” and “interactive”.

To my surprise the Facebook site is very active and there are always people posting.

How people on the IFP interacted surprised me as they were active and responsive. Once I posted my moodboard for my assignment and someone commented on it within five minutes. She pointed out its weaknesses so I improved it

I have learned how useful it is to interact with other students from other countries and how easy it is to communicate. It is a good way to communicate with social media and interesting to see everyone’s different views and opinions.

I’m always online and on Facebook so this is the perfect way for me to do an assignment as it fits so well with what I’m doing every day and it takes no effort to check into the International Fashion Panel.

**Summary**

When compiling the feedback on the two iterations of the global classroom, the researchers conclude that the experience was successful beyond initial hopes and more than achieved the stated objectives. Students commented that the group enabled them to learn more about local business and gain exposure to international industry. In addition to achieving the specific discipline objectives, a standout finding was the transformational way students had used the global classroom as a self-reflexive space where they can explore but their own and other’s cultures and function as intercultural citizens (Byram, 2008), see their home culture as others might see it, and acknowledge their own cultural capital:

**Not only did I learn the relationship between fashion and brand management and how media, marketing and cultural practices affect fashion communication, positioning and promotion, but also appreciating the cultural similarities and differences of Hong Kong, London and Singapore.**

The experience is eye-opening as students from London and Singapore are experts of their own cities and their posts and comments are insightful, which just can’t be replaced by performing Google search.

What I really understood from the panel was intercultural communication and support… I discovered the beauty of people from two cultures working together voluntarily and giving assistance to each other when necessary.

Having an international group page was really good as we could share ideas and personally, Asian culture always brings me lots of interest. I hope there are more chances for home students to know more about other cultures and studies.

**Key Benefits of the Collaboration**

**Tutors’ feedback:**

* Enhancement of professional and critical thinking skills
* Demonstration of collaborative competencies
* Increase in intercultural awareness and accommodation
* Independent learning skills and enhanced cultural capital (students developed local and international expertise)
* Demonstration of innovation and creativity
* Enhancement of (digital) communication skills

**Students’ feedback:**

* Ease of access/use was crucial; preference for Facebook
* Appreciated regular posting of articles by tutors
* Appreciated constructive feedback on work from overseas students
* Gained insights into other cultures and ways of working/learning
* Exploration made fun
* Motivation to do better because work was viewed by overseas peers

**Challenges of the Collaboration**

Undoubtedly, despite the overwhelmingly positive feedback from students in both iterations of the global classroom, challenges were encountered in this global teaching and learning experience. The main issues that emerged included cultural differences, time differences and varying institutional calendars and the administrative managerial realities of running this type of course. There was an initial hesitation for some students to sign up to Facebook and to communicate with strangers on social media but once the first posts were added, the collaboration quickly gained momentum. Because participation was not universal, that meant there was a risk that not all students would receive the same quality feedback.

Inevitably issues arose from the time difference between Asia and Europe and additionally each institution’s differing academic calendars, nevertheless this mismatch does replicate the realities of the global workplace and reminds students that not all places, countries or cultures operate in the same way and hence personal work strategies have to be implemented to accommodate such differences. The administration of the global classroom suffered from the same time factors as above which also translated into extra workload for tutors who had to be mindful of participating and facilitating the collaboration. One unexpected bonus resulting from the tutors’ participation was how posting relevant articles modelled the desired collaborative behaviour and contributed to a sense of community with students commenting:

With articles that teachers are posting, students are able to see what teachers are interested in and also what they are following.

**FIGURE 8 SHOULD APPEAR ABOUT HERE**

**Fig. 8 Example of a tutor posting relevant resources in the global classroom International Fashion Panel group**

**Closing Comments**

With our privileged position as academic gatekeepers we should challenge ourselves as to why we want to teach something, justify what the use is to students, and determine how to deliver our desired learning outcomes (Rogers, 1991). The need for fostering inclusive pedagogies and collaborative working practices across cultures is paramount as higher education institutions worldwide welcome more international students and faculty. The number of links higher education institutions have with peer institutions around the world has been used as a measure of their increased internationalisation, but without embedding the practices of reflective learning, international collaborative projects run the risk of failing to impact participants’ curiosity and cultural understandings (Byram, 2009). Social media can expand the classroom beyond its physical site into a virtual world with potential for students to work collaboratively across borders (Harris & Rea, 2009; Richardson, 2006). Globalisation is a key feature of 21st century industry and being an effective team player is a highly valued skill in the global marketplace (McLean & Ransom, 2005), but merely focusing on delivering the requirements of a globalised workplace can be criticised as a reductive motivation for internationalising the curriculum and denies the benefits for *all* students (and faculty) of developing a global outlook and an informed and critical global outlook (Killick, 2014). Thus universities can no longer operate without reference to the global environment (Brown, 2015) and have a responsibility in facilitating collaborative cross-cultural encounters that enable the exploration of disciplines in different locations. With these challenges in mind the authors advise fellow academics considering implementing collaborative cross-cultural learning initiatives to get started, to embrace the process and learn from the first iteration making improvements in subsequent ones.

In the case study discussed, participants combined familiarity and excitement through Facebook-mediated learning opportunities that allowed them to shape their learning experiences together. The assignment required students to share market information multi-modally in written English supplemented with images and this fostered cultural awareness of the differences and similarities of doing global business when working with multi-cultural partners in other geographic locations. That the networking took place through web-based applications and fostered online collaboration between the different partners demonstrated a clear representation of the digital habitats (Wenger, White & Smith, 2009) we now inhabit. Collaboration with students and user (whether alumni or student) generated content are amongst the concepts explored through this project that set out to expand the boundaries of the classroom and provide a clear representation of the concept of communities of practice within a new environment, one within which the student experiences a discursive shift from traditional approaches to one where their subjective view and agency becomes a legitimate part of knowledge enquiry through critical engagement in an interpretative community (Peirson-Smith, Miller and Chik, 2014)

The structure of the collaborative project is important but not dependent on the use of specific technologies, as some parties might believe. Technology provides new spaces for collaboration and interaction to occur, but successful educational outcomes still require specific and clear learning objectives and timelines. The key to setting up and managing a global classroom of this nature relies on a combination of the motivation amongst the tutors to make it work by being prepared to take a contained risk and being adaptive ensuring that the assignment is viable although it may evolve in unexpected, yet beneficial directions. In this case the global classroom operated where different cultures met (social-academic and international) and co-constructed their knowledge in a third collaborative inclusive space

What I really understood was intercultural communication and support… I discovered the beauty of people from two cultures working together voluntarily and giving assistance to each other when necessary.

Examples of co-creation of learning facilitated via the collaborative Facebook group:

* Facebook’s “sharing” feature made it easy for tutors to post relevant articles from a variety of international and cross-disciplinary sources which were used to introduce theory, fashion information and relevant data sources;
* Students could post responses to private study tasks that informed subsequent seminar discussions;

The authors created a series of brand boards illustrating the 4Ps of marketing as practiced by a selection of brands which target our students’ age range and demography. The boards were uploaded to a Facebook album, and students worked in small groups during their seminars responding to the prompts and summarising discussions in the comments section below each image thus recording those discussions for peers and tutors to respond to:

* Students could respond to tutor-set polls asking which specific topics they would like an industry guest speaker to respond to;
* Students could post links to surveys for their peers to complete regarding target customer behaviour and the feasibility of their business plan proposals;
* Students could ask their classmates and international peers’ opinions and conduct direct in-country market intelligence research.

**TABLE 1 SHOULD APPEAR ABOUT HERE**

**Table 1: Examples of peer feedback on work posted to the global classroom Facebook group**

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