

COIL Institute for Globally Networked Learning in the Humanities Course Development and Implementation Case Study

18. Romania – UK – USA: Political Science & Public Administration

Abstract

We launched our GNLC as Transatlantic Public Administration & Policy (TRANSPUB), which was team taught by six faculty from four universities in three countries (US, UK, Romania). Our course as “live” from October 22-December 13. It included two modules based on readings, thinking questions, and discussions. Our third module was a “hands-on” applied problem involving contracting out of a call-center from a local authority in the UK. Students were divided into groups at the beginning of the GNLC and worked in these groups in all three Modules throughout the GNLC. Our GNLC experience suffered mainly from diffusion of leadership, but our Atlantis grant afforded us the opportunity to meet in person on several occasions to develop this course. The teaching team and the students had to flexible and innovative. We plan to teach this course again in Fall 2013, but it has not yet been determined whether all four institutions will be involved.

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Section 1: General Course Information

1. Courses

Course Title	Institution(s)	Discipline	Academic Level
Transatlantic Public Administration and Policy	SUNY Buffalo State, SUNY Cortland, Manchester Metropolitan University (UK), Babeş-Bolyai University (Romania)	Political Science	undergraduate (at Buffalo State, Cortland, BBU & MMU)
Transatlantic Public Administration and Policy	SUNY Buffalo State	Public Administration (graduate students - PAD prefix)	graduate at Buffalo State. Buffalo State graduate students are matriculated in the MPA program.

2. The team

Team Member #1	
Name:	Natalia Cuglesan
Role on Team:	Faculty
Institution:	Babeş-Bolyai Universiyu
Position at Institution:	Lecturer
Department and/or Program:	Department of International Studies and Contemporary History
Team Member #2	
Name:	Beth Burns
Role on Team:	Instructional Designer
Institution:	SUNY Buffalo State
Position at Institution:	Instructional Designer
Department and/or Program:	Instructional Resources
Team Member #3	
Name:	Laurie Buonanno
Role on Team:	Faculty
Institution:	SUNY Buffalo State
Position at Institution:	Professor, Director of Graduate Studies (Public Administration)
Department and/or Program:	Political Science/Public Administration
Team Member #5	

Name:	Keith Henderson
Role on Team:	Faculty
Institution:	SUNY Buffalo State
Position at Institution:	Professor & Coordinator of Government Track, MPA
Department and/or Program:	Political Science/Public Administration
Team Member #5	
Name:	Henry Steck
Role on Team:	Faculty
Institution:	SUNY Cortland
Position at Institution:	Professor
Department and/or Program:	Political Science
Team Member #6	
Name:	Lee Ann Grace
Role on Team:	International Programs
Institution:	SUNY Buffalo State
Position at Institution:	Professor, Assistant Dean of International Education (recently retired from the deanship)
Department and/or Program:	Department of Modern Languages & Literature
Team Member #7	
Name:	Frank Carr
Role on Team:	Faculty
Institution:	Manchester Metropolitan University
Position at Institution:	Politics Section Head and Leader for Public Services
Department and/or Program:	Politics, Public Services
Team Member #8	
Name:	Annabel Kiernan
Role on Team:	Faculty
Institution:	Manchester Metropolitan University
Position at Institution:	Principal Lecturer, Faculty Teaching and Learning Fellow
Department and/or Program:	Politics, Public Services
3. When?	
Fall 2012	

4. Number of students enrolled from each institution

- 7 undergraduate students(UBB);

- 4 undergraduate students (SUNY Cortland--three were MMU students on exchange to SUNY Cortland under our US Department of Education Atlantis grant) and one was a SUNY Cortland student selected as an Atlantis fellow to study at MMU,;

- 0 from MMU (MMU recruited students for this course, but non registered), ;

- 7 undergraduates from SUNY Buffalo State (three of Buffalo State students were from BBU on Atlantis exchange and three had been awarded scholarships to go to BBU in Spring 2013. Only one of the undergraduate students was not an Atlantis fellow);

-5 graduate students (MPA) from Buffalo State.

Total enrolled:

18 undergraduate students (politics/public administration)

5 graduate students (MPA)

5. Is this typical for classes of this type?

We run some small seminars at Buffalo State for new and experimental courses. We're not pressured to attract 12-15 students (the desirable range for undergraduate seminars) for experimental and topics courses. Five graduate students is fairly typical for an experimental course as well.

This was taught as an independent study. Dr. Steck met with the students once per week and other instruction was online in the GNLC on ANGEL.

Section 2: Issues of Language

6. Language(s) of instruction at each institution
English at all institutions except Babeş-Bolyai University (Romania, German, Hungarian, English)
7. Primary language of most students in each class
English with Romanian for BBU.
8. Language of the course collaboration
English
9. Language fluency
All of the students were very fluent in English.
10. Language proficiency difference
This was never an issue in our course.

Section 3: Curricular Information

11. Online or blended?
<p>BBU-fully online</p> <p>SUNY Cortland - a one hour session/week</p> <p>SUNY Buffalo State - undergraduate section met Tuesdays for one hour and twenty minutes, the rest online. Uniquely, several of the students met because we ran an Atlantis Cohort experience in Buffalo in early October in which the Cortland/MMU and Buffalo State/BBU students in the GNLC course met for a three -day event funded by our Atlantis grant. The event included one-day meeting government officials in the City of Buffalo and Erie County, trip to Niagara Falls, Day two-EU graduate conference at University at Buffalo, SUNY, and Day Three, leadership & creativity workshop for Atlantis students. Substantial bonding took place during this event, which likely earned goodwill and tolerance for the problems we were experiencing teaching the GNLC portion of the course.</p> <p>SUNY Buffalo State - graduate section met online completely, although on occasion the graduate students would drop into the f2f Tuesday session. (one of the graduate students participated in the cohort experience because he had been my GA the previous semester and had helped out on Atlantis)</p>
12. Duration
<p>The actual GNLC portion of the course lasted just six weeks, due to the late start and Thanksgiving vacation. We had planned the GNLC as four modules taking place over eight weeks, but there was a great deal of confusion as to who was responsible for what portions of the course, when they should post their materials, what materials SHOULD be posted, and who SHOULD manage the discussion boards for those modules. Because there were so many actors and moving parts of this initiative, our project suffered from “leadership diffusion,” which we will explore in the narrative section of this case study.</p> <p>It was also expected that Module 3 (which was originally Module 4) would take place throughout the entire eight weeks. This is because Module 4 was planned as the capstone simulation. The idea was that the students would learn about a public administration dilemma/challenge facing both US and European public administration (contracting out of public services) and then develop their own outsourcing plan. We did accomplish the simulation (discussed later in this case study), but on a rather uncomfortably tight time schedule. The content Modules 1-3 were supposed to be two weeks long with Module 4 eight weeks.</p> <p>ACTUAL GNLC SCHEDULE:</p> <p>Module 1-October 22-November 3</p> <p>Module 2-November 4-November 17</p> <p>Module 3-November 18-December 13 (capstone simulation)</p>
13. Class work or discussion related to their collaboration before and/or after the actual collaboration period
<p>Buffalo State - the class met and worked for 8 weeks prior to GNLC start.</p>

Cortland - the class met and worked for 4 weeks prior to GNLC start. Also, Cortland students were entered into Buffalo State's ANGEL course (that was not part of the GNLC). I think it caused more confusion than helped. The purpose was so that Dr. Steck and the students could download readings.

BBU - the students in this class were located in different faculties at BBU and some were at graduate programmes outside of Romania; therefore, it was difficult to bring students together prior to the course.

Section 4: Asynchronous Technologies Used

14. Tools

The team elected to use Buffalo State's ANGEL instance to offer Transatlantic Public Administration. This offered the advantages of faculty familiarity with the LMS and offering help desk services to all course participants. Each of the non-Buffalo State students were created a guest account within the LMS.

LMS choice was problematic:

There was a great deal of confusion and non-response in the months leading up to the decision to utilize Buffalo State's LMS. Dr. Buonanno did not want to use her system because she had the sense that it would place additional burdens on her and Buffalo State. She thought that it would be best to use Atlantis funds to build our own site on Moodle. Unfortunately, no one in the team seemed to have the skills or the desire to build a site from scratch. There is now talk--if we teach this course again in the fall (Buffalo State is reserving judgement until after this case study and COIL institute whether to participate)--of MMU taking responsibility by hiring a graduate student to build a site on Moodle. It is unclear at this time, however, whether MMU would use its LMS (which is Moodle) or would house on Moodle's free hosting.

Buonanno felt strongly that part of the the COIL training should be to offer a Moodle template to facilitate the building of a GNLC. In this way, no institution (and therefore, an extra burden is placed on that faculty member) has to be responsible for the LMS. She also thinks it complicates ownership and branding.

FACEBOOK

Dr. Natalia Cuglesan (BBU) created a Facebook site prior to the fall semester, which proved to be very helpful in bringing everyone together into the ANGEL course housed on Buffalo State entitled "Transatlantic Public Policy Course" <http://www.facebook.com/groups/474925389206869/>. It turned out to be very, very active - the team leaders (we will discuss the team project later in this case study) used Facebook heavily as a means to get in touch with their group members.

VIMEO

Dr. Buonanno purchased a one-year subscription to VIMEO for the team to post an instructional video for the capstone simulation. The students also posted their "pitches" to VIMEO.

<http://vimeo.com/52697687> (GNLC team introduced to students and Professor Carr provides background and instruction for the simulation.)

15. Server location

Buffalo State provided the LMS. Students interacted on discussion boards.

Vimeo-purchased by Dr. Buonanno, but it may be covered in the Atlantis grant. It was only about \$60/year.

16. Technical problems

Vimeo was a bit of a learning curve because we wanted to keep the channel private (otherwise we

would have used YouTube). The main problem was trying to get the passwords to the students. Also, because one of us actually “owns” the channel, it means that the “owner” (Dr. Buonanno) has to manage the site.

17. Frequency of use

There were three GNLC modules (down from an original plan of four modules:

1. Leadership in Transatlantic Public Administration (Module Leaders: Carr & Henderson--the original modules were “leadership/Carr and Henderson/Transatlantic Public Administration--but we started the GNLC too late)
2. Brussels & Washington (Module Leaders: Buonanno, Cuglesan, Steck)
3. Case Study: Contracting Out & Simulation (Kiernan)

Originally, this last module was planned to take place over the entire 7-8 weeks of the GNLC. In the end, we ran it from November 18 through our final exam week in SUNY (December 13 when the videos were posted to Vimeo).

18. Informal communication

ANGEL-we created team discussion boards for each of the five teams consisting of 4-5 students (red, blue, purple, green yellow, indigo). Each faculty member and graduate student was assigned to a color team to act as a mentor.

19. Re-use

I would use Facebook, Vimeo, but not ANGEL. I would advocate for Moodle or another LMS that is not connected to the campus.

Section 5: Synchronous Technologies Used

20. Tools
<p>Video (posted to VIMEO) for Module 3</p> <p>Team leaders set up Skype meetings, but how many students participated in these (they reported difficulty in getting all of the students together for a Skype meeting at one time). But we think that this module DOES work for teamwork--it's just that we threw this at the students with little time for them to schedule their meetings, learn the topic (outsourcing), and prepare their pitch.</p> <p>We had planned to use web-casting for the expert consultancy phase, but instead used an asynchronous discussion board. It worked out well, but we would likely use webcasting if we teach this course again in Fall 2013.</p>
21. Server location
<p>Not provided by participating institutions.</p>
22. Technical problems
<p>Well some of us hated oovoo, even if we liked the price. It often froze and put all sorts of cookies on our machines. We could use some training on Flash, which seemed to work well with COIL meetings.</p>
23. Frequency of use
<p>Again, we just don't know how many of the students actually participated in their skype team meetings.</p>
24. Informal communication
<p>We left this up to them. Obviously, however, they needed to engage with one another in more than Facebook and email because they were preparing a team project together. We will explain the details of the team project in the essay (below).</p>
25. Re-use
<p>We would use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• LMS-Open Source• Vimeo for our introduction to the students and for them to post their video pitches• Webcasting software (which type, we don't know)• Flash or Skype for team meetings. We tested out oovoo and experience problems--we were loaded with pop-ups and it just didn't work well. We never quite figured out Flash. How students managed with Skype was by two students sitting in front of the computer in Buffalo and the other two in Romania. When they had three sites-Cortland, I have no idea how they manage without paying for three-way.

Section 6: Assessment Information

26. How?

First, it should be noted that we did not assess intercultural awareness. We're not even certain that this is one of our goals in this course if "intercultural awareness" is taken broadly. Our goal is for American and European students to study and explore the challenges of management in the public sector together. Because we are facing similar challenges, we think it's useful for future public managers on both sides of the Atlantic to explore these issues together. Along the way, we hope that they are learning more about how each approaches these challenges, and, also are forging professional relationships on which they can draw in their careers.

Two sets of assessments:

1. Pre-GNLC
2. GNLC

GNLC assessments:

UNDERGRADUATE

1. Discussion Board Commentary and Response (which were based on thinking questions which the faculty managers for their modules drafted and posted).
2. Simulation (assessments consisted of four parts and were submitted by each team-see narrative)
 - a. Submitting questions to the expert consultant to assist in their presentation to the Fulchester Council (ANGEL discussion board)
 - b. An Executive Summary of their pitch (ANGEL digital dropbox)
 - c. Power Point Presentation (ANGEL digital dropbox)
 - d. A video pitch posted to Vimeo (public)--the pitch had to use the Power Point presentation

GRADUATE

1. Discussion board mentoring posts (same as faculty)
2. Outside experts - each wrote a paper and posted to ANGEL discussing the pros and cons of contracting out public services

27. Common assessment rubric

Discussion Board (Thinking Questions)

We agreed on a discussion post rubric. We used the SUNY Learning Network rubric.

Simulation Rubric

We didn't have a formal "rubric" with which we graded the four parts of the simulation. The faculty mentors for the simulation (Carr & Kiernan) sent a narrative assessment of the performance of the teams. Each of the faculty members emailed the others their rankings.

28. Peer assessment

We had planned to include student peer assessments, but given that we felt the students did not have enough time to work together (only four weeks versus eight), we repeatedly stressed to the students that this was a pilot project and that all of their peer assessments would be informal. (We talked with the students about the experience.)

29. Charter or guidelines for student interaction

DISCUSSION MODULES

COMMENTARY (300-350 words)

For each module your team has been assigned two of the six [thinking questions](#) to discuss. (See [Team Assignments](#).) Your team will compose one [commentary](#) discussing the two questions.

Each team leader is responsible for ensuring your team commentary is posted on time.

The questions should be interpreted broadly. Students should not “over” analyse the questions. They are “thinking” questions to help you think about the subject. Students should feel free to move beyond the question.

Faculty and students will read, reflect and engage

RESPONSES

Each member of the group must provide two responses in Modules 1 & 2. One response must be on the discussion board (conference) your group posted a commentary. The other must be on one of the other two discussion boards.

MECHANICS

How to Post to the Discussion Board

A "thread" is started each time you submit a discussion item. Each response (reply) to the original post is indented once - a response (reply) to a response (reply) is indented a second time - etc. This system of indents helps all of us to determine which responses go together. A threaded discussion is the web equivalent of a classroom discussion.

Descriptive Subject Line

Include a descriptive subject line.

Responding to the main item

To compose your response (reply) to a main discussion item you are reading, click on the "Reply" link located at the bottom of that page. (There are several options—reply, edit (which only works for posts you contributed—you can't edit others' posts), e-mail author (ANGEL course mail—it will stay in the system), and delete (again, only works for your own posts).

Responding to someone else's response

If you are reading someone else's response document, click on the "Reply" link located at the bottom of that page to respond to that response. Make sure that you respond on the document intended so that your contribution will line up in the threaded discussion in the right place.

Submitting your response

When you have completed your response, click the "Save" button at the bottom of the page.

Netiquette

As discussion is of a public nature, please observe proper "netiquette"—courteous and appropriate forms of communication and interaction over the Internet (in online discussions). This means no personal attacks, obscene language, or intolerant expression. All viewpoints should be respected.

30. Attrition

Only one student dropped out of the course and this was before the GNLC period started.

31. Is this typical for similar classes at your institution?

This was a carefully selected group for this pilot project. Not typical of the department undergraduate majors. Most of the students are Atlantis scholars (past and present).

Section 7: Institutional Support

32. Type of support

SUNY BUFFALO STATE

Financial

Laurie Buonanno wrote the COIL grant application. Admin was very supportive of our participation. There was an initial bump in the road when our Educational Technology support refused to sign on to Beth Burns supporting our work, but higher administration intervened so that Beth could participate. This seemed indicative of Buffalo State's eagerness to be involved in COIL's work.

Buffalo State admin financed the participation of Beth Burns, Laurie Buonanno, and Lee Ann Grace (travel and lodging) to attend the COIL International Studies Institute (Fall 2011). The EU side of the Atlantis grant financed Natalia Cuglesan's participation. Annabel Kiernan participated for part of the October 2011 COIL workshop via Skype.

The team met twice since the October 2011 workshop: March 2012 (Brussels) and October 2012 (Manchester). These meetings were financed by our Atlantis grants.

No admin has stepped up to the plate to finance our return to COIL so Beth Burns and I will need to use the Atlantis grant to participate in the COIL Capstone Institute. The EU side of the Atlantis grant is financing Frank Carr's participation in the COIL Capstone Institute. In defense of Buffalo State administration, however, spring budgets are very tight and Buonanno was late in asking for financial support.

Administrative

Buffalo State's administration has been supportive of our work with COIL, but I think it's fair to say that it has not been high on their agenda. I think we would need to demonstrate our completed course, admin would need to meet students who participated in the course, etc. Buonanno hasn't spent much time touting this course at Buffalo State and would not feel comfortable doing so without being sure that the team is able to iron out its differences and ensure that the second go round was an enjoyable and pleasant experience for all of the instructors and was not unduly burdensome on others.

Pedagogical

We haven't sought out a pedagogical support because Buonanno has been teaching online since 2001.

Technical

Our technical support for the course is at Buffalo State with Beth Burns. Buonanno found Beth to be very responsive in establishing a dedicated ANGEL site for the COIL course and providing access to the course for all of the faculty and students who are not affiliated with Buffalo State.

33. Engagement with the international programs office

Buffalo State:

The international education office is very engaged with us in terms of our Atlantis exchanges. This course, it must be remembered, is one piece in a larger project to establish a shared certificate/minor in transatlantic public administration and policy. The idea is for the COIL course to be the capstone in this

experience.

34. Importance given to globally networked learning

Buffalo State: Dr. Grace has been very supportive. She retired from the office prior to this course going “live,” but has remained very interested. We expect that she will be an advocate for COIL’s work with the new assistant dean of international education.

35. Commitment

At this point, it’s a singular commitment. I think that at Buffalo State, Beth and I would need to offer a workshop on our experience.

36. Future iterations

Buffalo State (Buonanno)

Whether to offer this course again is currently under discussion. The idea is to teach in Fall 2013. Buffalo State students have said that it should be taught again and that it is well worth pursuing this course. Buonanno was disappointed with the leadership in the course and so for her it was far from a satisfactory experience. She believes that there were several problems that worked against this being a smooth experience. Fortunately, some have resolved themselves:

1. Buonanno was the only member of the team who had ever taught an online course (RESOLVED!)
2. It sometimes seemed to her that some of the faculty did not realize the enormous amount of time it takes to plan, organize, post lectures, etc. to an online course (RESOLVED!);
3. Faculty had not been trained in managing discussion boards (Not quite there yet, but better than when we started);
4. There was a change in leadership in the Atlantis grant during this time period so that the US and Romanian team had to acquaint themselves with a new PI at MMU (Kiernan). There have been some “growing” pains in this regard and the team has not always worked well together (we’re still working on this);
5. No students at MMU registered for the course, which obviously put less (to no) pressure on Carr and Kiernan. They didn’t have to face students who registered for the course and were promised that they would be working with students from MMU and BBU. (RESOLVED-it’s now a required course at MMU);
6. Also, as a result of lack of enrollment, Carr and Kiernan arranged to count the three MMU students at SUNY Cortland as their students, which then required that Dr. Henry Steck (who had not been involved with the project) set up an independent study for the MMU students (and all of the attendant problems--it being off load, finding a time when all four could meet, etc., etc.);
7. This ties into an overall problem--that the COIL course requires a great deal of time and, therefore, dedication. Without a course release to compensate for this time, I’m afraid that the GNLC often took a back seat to my other many duties on campus. (Now that we have taught the course once, posted thinking questions, etc., it should not be as labor-intensive as an experience as in summer/fall 2012).

37. New globally networked courses

Buffalo State-at this point, we don't know. Our campus online committee--to which both Beth and I belong--has not acted on our presentation of the course (over a year ago). Also, the international education office has been understaffed and leadership has been in flux. A new assistant dean has been hired, but we do not know his priorities at this time.

38. Response of chairs, deans, provosts or other administrators to the possibility of expanding this pilot course(s) into a broader program of globally networked courses

The significant advantage we have had is that we combined this experience with a major US Department of Education grant. It has cost our administration very little other than their willingness to allow small enrollment courses to move forward.

Buonanno suspects what is needed is a presentation to the faculty to show them how this work was set up and operated. It is her feeling that this would be premature. The course needs to be taught one more time before she would consider presenting it to Buffalo State or reporting on it at a conference or to a journal. It is her understanding that Dr. Kiernan at MMU is presenting a paper on this course in March, although she has not seen a draft of this paper.

39. Institutional commitment to further developing globally networked courses

I think Buffalo State would be amenable to support GNLC, but they need a workable plan. Our course isn't "there" yet.

40. How to nurture the development of globally networked learning

Funding. Faculty will want course releases, travel funds, and a student assistant.

Section 8: Reflections

41. Goals set
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Students will demonstrate their ability to apply their understanding of different administrative cultures and political systems to a real world problem.2. Building an online course as a capstone in a planned course of study in transatlantic public administration & policy.3. Building linkages between Atlantis faculty and students.
42. Goals achieved
We seemed to achieve all three. We think our funding agencies will be pleased.
43. Most unique aspect for students
The simulation.
44. Most successful aspect(s) from a pedagogical perspective
Both aspects--discussion boards and simulation. The simulation was difficult, however, because the groups didn't always work well together. But the time was very compressed for the students to coordinate. The stronger leaders (very active on Facebook rallying the troops) ultimately produced the best proposals.
45. Most problematic aspect(s) from a pedagogical perspective
The diffusion of leadership and the complexity of our GNLC plan. It was sometimes simply overwhelming to contemplate. We had very much wanted a webcasting component, but without someone (we didn't have the graduate assistant we expected) acting as secretary, we never could figure out a real time when we could meet to pitch the proposals. Therefore, when we met in October 2012 in Manchester, we decided to have students shoot and post videos of their pitches and post to VIMEO.
46. Changes for future iterations
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Icebreaking for two weeks.2. Figure out the best method for computer telecommunications and train the students.3. Include "live" component of simulation--webcasting of pitches, live questioning of teams, voting.
47. Technical support
<p>I was very excited to work with the TPA team on this project. It offered many opportunities for collaboration and an expanded world view. I joined the team after it had been established and the grant had been awarded, so there was already a clear vision of how the course would be organized and conducted.</p> <p>One of the initial questions posed was the choice of learning management system for the course (whether open or proprietary). I discussed a few solutions with the team, but the team eventually</p>

decided on ANGEL since it was the most comfortable space for the lead instructors to design in. From a management perspective, using Buffalo State's ANGEL instance was different in the sense that users had to be manually created, added, and maintained, but this proved to be an easy task.

Additionally, the lead instructors of the course determined the progression, layout, functions, and design of the course based on their own extensive online teaching experience. I was able to suggest a few potential tools (ex: wikis, the potential for synchronous meetings and potential web 2.0 tools to facilitate such meetings, etc.).

Overall, the course appeared to run very smoothly and with very few technical difficulties. The instructors divided up the sequential modules between them, and once the process for uploading content was established, development went smoothly.

48. International programs person

N/A

49. Time commitment

Much more time involved in the GNLC, even more so because it was a new course. This was problematic, but in the end we began to appreciate the return on our investment.

50. Was it worth it?

It was a long, hard slog, but we think that we have a winning formula.

51. Unforeseen difficulties

The different length of the semesters and holidays.

Section 9: Course Collaboration Narrative

Introduction

Overall, as this case study will seek to show, our launch of a four-campus, cross-listed (undergraduate and graduate) transatlantic GNLC – Transatlantic Public Administration and Policy (TRANSPUB)– operated extremely well. We achieved our objectives and laid down solid foundations for the future. We experienced the usual bumps in the launching of a new and complex GNLC and we endured and survived the typical anxiety in the first year of a rather complex scheme for a GLNC. A team of dedicated faculty, IT administrator, and international program officer worked collaboratively in the partnership to meet our goal of creating a new course that enrolled students from four campuses. We credit our reasonably good working relationships to a set of agreed objectives, time line, and constant communication (via email/telephone and several face-to-face meetings) to our pre-existing relationships and need to meet the requirements of our external funding agencies (US Department of Education and the EU’s Education, Audiovisual & Cultural Agency). Specifically, our granting agencies require that we jointly create and launch a capstone course for our planned certificate/diplomas/minor in transatlantic public administration and policy.

Background

There are four universities involved in developing TRANSPUB. This consortium of European and American universities was established as a mobility project for the improvement of transatlantic undergraduate educational opportunities in public administration among the partner institutions. The European Consortium is comprised of two universities—Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) in the United Kingdom and Babeş-Bolyai University (BBU) in Romania. MMU is the lead university for the EU grant. The U.S. Consortium is comprised of two universities that belong to the State University of New York (SUNY) —SUNY Buffalo State C) and SUNY Cortland. Buffalo State is the lead institution of the US grant. The campus project directors are Professors Adrian Ivan (BBU), Annabel Kiernan (MMU), Laurie Buonanno (BSC), and Henry Steck (Cortland). During the course of this four-year grant, the EU PI, Professor Neill Nugent, retired from MMU and was replaced by Dr. Kiernan.

Timeline for TRANSPUB Development

April 2009

Atlantis grant submitted jointly to the US Department of Education and the EU’s EACA for a four-year grant (2009-2013).

July 2009

Notified that TRANSPUB consortium was awarded funding. Total funding of \$449,987. (FIPSE \$194,000; \$254,897 (Euro exchange in dollars at 2009 rates).

October 2009

Atlantis Project Directors’ Meeting in Boston where faculty met from the partner institutions-Natalia Cuglesan (BBU), Henry Steck (Cortland), Mary Maguire (Cortland), Frank Carr (MMU), Laurie Buonanno (Buffalo State), Keith Henderson (Buffalo State). We agreed to write an edited book and develop a course themed to the book entitled “Transatlantic Public Administration and Policy.”

However, after this initial meeting we became pre-occupied with the student exchanges. (The grant provides student fellowship of \$5000/€5000 apiece of 12 exchanges per year, three each from the four partner campuses.)

Work did proceed in identifying contributors for the book.

October 2010

Atlantis Project Directors' Meeting in Berlin

Natalia Cuglesan (BBU), Neill Nugent (MMU), and Laurie Buonanno (Buffalo State) attended. Natalia and Laurie attended a workshop that showcased various methods consortia used to facilitate communication among students. None of them had been able to persuade the students to take full advantage of the sites they developed—whether they were joint blogs, joint websites on WordPress, and social media. We walked away from the workshop realizing that bringing European and American students together required student control and management, not faculty direction. In other words, we had to build a worthwhile educational experience for them and find a platform that would be convenient for them to use. We reasoned that the students were already on Facebook and that the disappointing experience of other projects demonstrated that we needed to take TRANSPUB to the students on their own turf. Therefore, Natalia together with the first class of Atlantis students, Stefana Ignea, established a TRANSPUB facebook site. This site has seen increasingly heavy traffic, with many Atlantis alumni viewing photos, sharing experiences, etc. with current students on exchange.

April 2011

Buffalo State hosts the first formal consortium meeting. Attendance- Neill Nugent, Annabel Kiernan, Natalia Cuglesan, Keith Henderson, Laurie Buonanno, Henry Steck, Zenon Wasyliv (external evaluator). We agreed to launch the online TRANSPUB course in Fall 2012.

Annabel and Keith agreed to be team leaders for this project.

Laurie also engaged a faculty member from DePaul University who was involved in two Atlantis grants to share his ideas for linked our Atlantis scholars through social media and other technologies. He taught a session on any number of techniques, including ways to improve the productivity of the team (google docs, dropbox, wordpress). He did not, however, have experience working with an Open Source LMS. So on that point we were back to square 1. Where to host this course?

In the course of this consortium meeting we discovered that only Laurie had taught an online course. (She has been teaching online since 2001) She relayed her experience in attempting to team-teach the government and policy of the European Union through a cross-national experience (MMU) along with three SUNY schools. She had written a grant (2003) with the European Commission to provide stipends to two faculty members at MMU to teach and bring students into the course. While the professors wrote lectures for the course, they did not interact with the students and did not bring any of their students into the course. The American students were very disappointed as we had promised them that they would have the opportunity to discuss the EU with British students on the course discussion boards. She said it would be best if everyone received training from COIL so as to avoid the replication of the previous experience. All agreed that she should write this grant and that they would pencil in the COIL workshop dates in the event that we were awarded this grant.

Summer 2011

It was very difficult to persuade faculty members of the TRANSPUB team to post to the COIL Commons about the pre-Institute readings. Beth Burns (IT) and Lee Ann Grace (International Education) from Buffalo State posted and perhaps one or two faculty members eventually posted. There was some vague suggestion that they were confused about our (COIL and my, as grant writer) expectations.

October 2011

TRANSPUB team participates in COIL workshop. Keith Henderson, Lee Ann Grace, Laurie Buonanno, Beth Burns (all from Buffalo State), Natalia Cuglesan (BBU). Frank Carr and Annabel Kiernan were unable to attend. Annabel skyped into some sessions, including one of the team's working sessions.

At the COIL workshop, we agreed to an 8-week shared course, agreed on the modules, and in a major breakthrough, agreed on a capstone simulation. We proposed "outsourcing" in the UK because Prime Minister David Cameron had made this new policy a centerpiece of the Conservative Party. We knew that Annabel (who was unable to Skype into that particular session) would be interested in this simulation because this is an area in which she had special expertise. It would also be a good simulation for American students because outsourcing is the normal way of "doing business" in local/county government where private-public partnerships for the delivery of services are the rule rather than the exception. Romanian students, too, would benefit from learning the costs and benefits of outsourcing because this notion of public management has now reached into Central and Eastern Europe. It seemed an excellent simulation to have our students work on a realistic issue that they themselves might be involved in whether they elected to have careers in the non-profit or public sectors and at any level-local, state, regional, or federal/national.

We laid out a very complex simulation that would involve webcasting. In the end, we didn't webcast, but did manage a simulation with video.

April 2012

Several members of the team met in Brussels for the annual Atlantis Project Director's Meeting: Frank Carr, Annabel Kiernan, Laurie Buonanno, Natalia Cuglesan, and Lee Ann Grace. We focused most of our discussion on TRANSPUB GNLC and gave a presentation about how we envisaged the course. There was a great deal of interest in the audience and it seemed everyone wanted to develop a GNCL in their consortia, but didn't have the faintest idea how to start.

PROBLEM WITH SELECTING LMS: We had still not yet agreed to a LMS. Laurie was reluctant to build the site on Buffalo State's ANGEL because she thought with so many partners, it made more sense for the team to build its own site with an Open Access system such as Moodle. Beth Burns did not support Moodle because Buffalo State is an ANGEL campus. What to do? In the end, Laurie and Beth had to agree to Buffalo State's ANGEL because again, we were running out of time and had to move forward.

Suggestion: COIL provide a Moodle site/template for GNLCs.

We learned at this meeting that no students had signed up for TRANSPUB at MMU. Annabel and Frank toyed with the idea of bringing students in from another course (leadership), but we all realized that this was not desirable. Annabel and Frank decided to try one more push to interest students in the course.

We did agree to the layout of each module as follows:

1. Readings
2. PowerPoint Lecture
3. Thinking/Discussion Questions
4. Discussion Board

This was great progress and turned out to be a very good template for our modules.

We were not in complete agreement as to the subject of each module and decided to continue to discuss via email and Skype.

We left Brussels promising to hold weekly Skype meetings. We did manage two or three Skype meetings, but we found it extremely difficult to bring all of us together at one time. Three time zones, three sites, and soon four when we realize (below) we needed to bring Cortland in to the mix. We tried OoVoo and found it very unsatisfactory. We never seemed to get around to learning Flash. Definitely a “diffusion of leadership” problem which plagued our four campus, six instructor project. Our project increasingly mirrored that of an anarchist syndicalist group. It seems hilarious in retrospect, but it was very, very uncomfortable situation at that time.

What we would have done differently: In retrospect, we should have selected a course leader from the UK and one from the US for a two-way Skype and then to relay dates, etc. to the other team members.

Spring 2012

Beth Burns creates a development site on ANGEL called “GNLC-TRANSPUB” and enters faculty into this site. There is some activity such as Annabel and Frank setting up the template for each module. There is some discussion as to how the simulation will operate.

Early Summer 2012

It was apparent that no MMU students would participate in the course. Annabel and Frank asked Henry Steck (Cortland) to have their three students (who would be at SUNY Cortland from August-December). Henry is old school in some respects (certainly not in all as he is an entrepreneurial academic) and did not use Cortland’s LMS. Unfortunately, Laurie was under an extremely tight deadline to finish her ms for a book and could not free herself to go to Cortland to work with Henry. Time was ticking away and the course was to launch October 1 with icebreaking exercises schedule for the end of September. Furthermore, Henry would be expected to learn an LMS, meet once a week with his students, and do his part managing discussions all off load.

We made little progress during the summer...

August 2012

Laurie begins teaching her course at Buffalo State as a cross-listed (undergraduate political science, graduate MPA) course entitled “Transatlantic Public Administration and Policy.”

Section 10: Student Feedback

We were very impressed by student discussion of the thinking questions and all four items required for the Fulchester Local Council simulation.

Buffalo State assessed the the undergraduate section. We don't do course evaluations for graduate students. Buonanno used the standard departmental course evaluation that we post to ANGEL for hybrid and online courses. Three students filled out the evaluation. We don't know who fills these out because we set ANGEL assessment to "anonymous."

Question #24 Please comment on course content, requirements, or any other aspect of the course.

Student #1:

The course was very challenging and quite fun. Collaborating with other students was a bit challenging, but I think that the other student's professors did not really communicate with their students

Student #2: Blank

Student #3: Excellent course!

Question #25: Please comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the Instructor.

Student #1: Dr. B knows her stuff.

Student #2: blank

Student #3: Great teacher, nothing to be improved.

Question #26: What changes would have improved the experience in this course for you?

Student #1: As the course continues to be offered to students, it will be perfected and difficulties can be addressed. It needs more time.

Student #2: Blank

Student #3: Blank

The next several questions dealt with the "cohort" experience (mentioned above). These were needed to report to the US Department of Education, which funded this part of the course.

Question 33 dealt with the GNLC-

This is a space for you to express yourself as to your experience with all aspects of the Fulchester Council simulation. What worked? What didn't work? What you liked? What you despised?

Student #1: Since I am new to EU policy, the course was really a great learning experience for me. Meeting with students from Cortland for the weekend conference was a whole lot of fun and should be repeated for future students. The course was practical and hands on and was helpful in teaching us professional skills needed for future employment. Collaborating was a bit tough, but only because I think other professors did not communicate correctly with their students, unless we just had a bunch of slackers on the other end. Overall, great course, I would absolutely recommend it to future students, and I would recommend that any Poli Sci student take courses with Dr. B.

Student #2: I believe that the simulation, still has some kinks to be worked out, but all in all it was an

excellent experience and I enjoyed it all a lot.

Student #3: It was difficult to correlate the opinions within my team. People think different. Secondly, it was harder than I expect to do the video because I supposed to do it based on what other members of my team wrote. And I wasn't completely satisfied with what they did.

Final Comments

We feel we have a lot to learn, but also have learned a lot. We don't think many college professors would have the guts to do what we did - but it should be recognized that we had a major grant that could fund our f2f meetings. Without the Atlantis grant, we could never have managed such a complex endeavor. And even then, there were times we thought we would fail. Reflecting on the experience, we're quite proud we saw this through.

The next challenge is that 30 students will be in this course from MMU in Fall 2012... We do not yet know how many students will enroll from Buffalo State or MMU. It's likely that Cortland will take a pass, although we hope that Cortland can be involved.

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