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Teaching International Students in their Home Country: Challenges and Approaches

Carol Whitlock
Rochester Institute of Technology

Stanley Bissell
Rochester Institute of Technology

Barbra Cerio-Iocco
Rochester Institute of Technology

David Crumb
Rochester Institute of Technology

Richard Lagiewski
Rochester Institute of Technology

See next page for additional authors

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Authors

Carol Whitlock, Stanley Bissell, Barbra Cerio-Iocco, David Crumb, Richard Lagiewski, and Ed Steffens

The American College of Management and Technology in Dubrovnik, Croatia

Teaching International Students in their Home Country: Challenges and Approaches

Presenters

ACMT quarters	on-site	on line
Stan Bissel	5, some split	4
Barbra Cerio-Iocco	6	3
Dave Crumb	3	
Rick Lagiewski	6, some split	4
Ed Steffens	4, 1 split	¼ team
Carol Whitlock		5 + ¼ team

Dubrovnik Scenes

Dubrovnik Scenes

Dubrovnik Scenes

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Dubrovnik Scenes

Dubrovnik Scenes

The Old Town shopping area:

The Stradun

http://web.tzdubrovnik.hr/virtualtours.shtml#

ACMT Students

Historical Events Leading to The Development of ACMT

- Balkan War ended 1995
- Ron Brown, US Secretary of Commerce, Plane Crashes in Dubrovnik

History Continued

US Department of Education and the Ministry of Science and Technology of the Republic of Croatia approached RIT to develop tourism academic program:

Why?

• Croatia has 800 miles of coastline a vacation Mecca

• Young people leaving Croatia to live elsewhere

• Reputation of RIT's Hospitality and Tourism Program

Beginnings

- Signed contract July of 1997

- Housed in the Polytechnic of Dubrovnik

- Began with a 2 year AAS Degree

- Began offering a B.S. in 1999

- Both AAS and BS degrees are in Hotel Resort Management

Today

- ACMT is the only private, educational institution granting both American and Croatian degrees in Croatia

- Attracts students from around the world

- 700 students currently enrolled

- Cooperative education completed in the U.S. and Europe

Characteristics of Croatian Culture and ACMT Students

Croatian Culture

A. Why students choose ACMT – a new "brand" of college in the region; an American brand

B. Differences between ACMT and traditional European colleges – more interaction with professors

C. Daily life in Dubrovnik
   1. Transactions
   2. Lifestyle and work expectati
      a. Café society
   3. Cultural Pride

Course Management Challenges

A. Student Life revolves around ACMT - "Tribal Effect"

B. Class choices limited – same classmates in all courses

C. Class size – large!

D. Language and communication issues
   – finding Croatian examples

E. Facilities, resources, infrastructure
   – "Thriving on Chaos"

The Culture of "Helping"

And how that impacts on testing instruments

- Instruments are designed to show knowledge
- Students regard testing as a competition
- Competing in a social context is not valued
  - Only acceptable in sports context
  - To stand out among peers is a negative
- Croatian educational system sets up an "educator v. student" concept.

- ACMT seeks to immerse Croats in the American Education System
- Our values compete with the culture
  - Educational ranking - US
    - Everyone should have an "A" - Croatian
  - Rewarding those who excel
    - Punishing those who out-perform peers
  - Each student working independently for grade
    - Group working to help those who are less able

Methods to "Help"

- Cell phones
- Hand signals
- Crib sheets
- Sharing questions
- Looking at another's paper
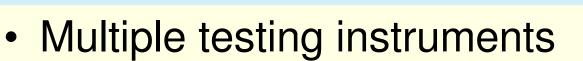- Copying from another source

- Handing off work in group projects
- Files on hard drive with test answers or questions
- Stealing copies of tests
- Printing graded test sheets
- "Group" work at computer

What's a Prof to do?

- Group projects
  - These meet with the cultural need of grouping
  - If professor selects group members, less likelihood of low contributors (slackers)
  - Allows comparative grades among groups – less inter-group sharing
  - Essential for some classes (40+ per section)

What's a Prof to do?

- ## Multiple testing instruments
  - ### Create 4 or more unique tests
    - Not an absolute solution but a good partial solution
    - Works well for those who do not subscribe to on-line testing
    - Considerable effort required to develop tests and to secure them prior to examination periods

What's a Prof to do?

- ## Use of distance technology
  - Question bank
  - Secure access
  - Depending on number of questions in bank, large number of unique tests
    - Requires some skill in understanding how system works
    - Is easily amended over time

R·I·T What's a Prof to do?
A C
M T

- **Difficulties include**
  - Finding adequate space for exam (limited number of computers available)
    - All computer testing must be monitored
    - Multiple on-off security needed
  - Viewing graded test outside of testing venue can be an issue
  - There is still the issue of "leaving files" on computers for future test takers

The Negotiation Throwaway

- What happens when:

  – Students are caught violating copyright laws?

  – Students are discovered with identical test answers?

  – Students receive a poor grade?

Conclusions

- Is the competitive model the best to use?
- Should we consider pass fail strategies?
- Is there an appropriate reward system for Croatia?
- What benefits accrue from a testing system which measures levels of achievement in a society where jobs are gotten through whom you know, not what you know?

Patterns of Teaching

Classes that are taught …

100% in Dubrovnik – Barb, Dave, Rick, Ed

100% online – Carol, Rick, Barb

By splitting time between Dubrovnik and online – Stan, Rick, Ed

By a team – 2 faculty online – Carol, Ed
2 faculty on site - Clint Wallington and Irv Metzger this spring quarter

Designing courses: IMHO
my adaptations for Croatian courses

- **Objectives** (obvious benefits for all but still rare)
  - Knowledge
    - e.g. "*list steps in recruiting*"
    - fairly easy for these academically-trained students
  - Skills
    - e.g. "*generate a job description* "
    - difficult because never seen, little exposure to artifacts of work
  - Attitudes
    - e.g. "*choose to hire without discrimination* "
    - may entail departure from or re-tuning of home-country cultural values
- **Text** (a big deal, at least they'll be book-knowledgeable)
  - My choice is photocopied collection of chapters and articles
  - Follows US copyright and affordable
  - Big (400p), everyone buys one, read entire book
  - All tests are open-book
- **Assignments and activities** (think 50 chatty teenagers in one classroom)
  - Clear directions, many examples
  - Designed for criterion-referenced grading (robot grading of ~180 submissions per assignment)
  - Many student excuses and special circumstances (altho not with online assignments)

On-line courses for Croatian students

1. Most ACMT student learning comes from:
   1. Reading the text (everything -assignments, discussion, tests - based on text)
   2. Preparing assignments (1 per wk) and projects (Hiring Plan, Training Design, How to do business in country X)
   3. Reading others' assignments (everything open, no drop box)
   4. Professor's Power Points and harangues
2. Tests – weeks 3, 6, and final (objective and essay)
   1. Traditional paper-based tests, proctored and mailed back to Roch.
   2. I'm waiting for valid, on-line testing, but for the time being . . . .
3. Needed enhancements
   1. Efficient discussion platform (threaded, fast)
   2. Dead-simple way to submit assignments
   3. Home-made streaming video of interviews
   4. Use surveys to gauge opinions
   5. Integrated assignments $\leftrightarrow$ grading $\leftrightarrow$ communication

Samples of online class materials and methods

Carol: Helping students accept online classes: Building a relationship with the students

Barb: Self-paced computer assisted instruction

Rick: ACMT students teamed with RIT students

Questions??