

**Cross-cultural transfer of learning materials for a
Journalism course at a Higher Education Institution**

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by**

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SUMMARY

This study reflects on an outreach initiative between two differing tertiary cultures established on different continents. The aim is to develop an understanding of what happens when a prestigious American university and a South African Higher Education Institution meet around a computer-mediated situation. Various inter-relating aspects such as cooperation and cooperative learning, educational technology, Higher Educational Institutions, globalisation, the international Digital Divide, cultural diversity, commonalities, cultural differences, an international learning programme, and power relations in international partnerships are explored. The effect of technology on education is that information is no longer restricted to a single geographical setting, instead it has expanded and became a dynamic international driving force. Increasing educational needs compel Higher Education Institutions to provide in these needs and to adapt to a more flexible learning style. Globalisation causes the world to get smaller, compressed, interconnected and resulted in a world that is in effect *flat*. Information communication technologies are changing the world. On the one hand the Internet promotes communication and freedom but on the other hand causes uneven development all over the globe. The Digital Divide pertains to the divide between the global well-resourced learners and the local under-resourced learners. Cultural differences between nations and organisations can be interpreted against the background of different models of cultural dimensions. The focus of the study is to explore the effect of commonalities and cultural differences on cooperative learning at organisational level. Power relations between international partners were challenging and resulted in conflict and differences of opinion.

The project started with the University of Pretoria's visit to Stanford University in November 2004. The preparation, organisation and planning phases continued through 2005. The ELISA project was intended as a three-year intervention from 2006 through 2008. The first year was supposed to be a pilot phase to gather and provide information for use in the second and third years. This study pertains to the pilot phase which started in February 2006 until June 2006. It was successfully completed and achieved a 93% success rate. However, in September 2006 Stanford unexpectedly informed the South African partners that the project would be discontinued due to several reasons. Their objections related to the lack of visible progress regarding content scheduling, media production, course logistics, and research practicalities. Although there were accommodating personalities among the project leaders on both sides interpersonal conflict between the remaining project leaders developed. The partners on both sides could not generate sufficient commonality regarding the need to continue. The situation was worsened by the fact that the initial rationale for the project lacked shared motivation among the project leaders on both sides. It is suggested that more research be conducted to explore possible differences of opinion and undercurrents among project leaders throughout the project, and to scrutinize the initial rationale as well as curriculum issues in good time, and to investigate the role of

power relations between international partners that are funded by international grants, and the effect of these power relations on the learning experiences of the students involved.

Key words: cooperation, cooperative learning, educational technology, Higher Education Institutions, globalisation, Digital Divide, cultural diversity, educational needs, commonalities, contextualization, power relations.



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List of Abbreviations

ADDIE	Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation
ADSL	Asymmetrical Digital Subscriber Line
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
AMD	Advanced Micro Devices
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation
ATM	Automatic teller machine
AU	Africa Union
AWF	African Wildlife Foundation
CAI	Computer Assisted Instruction
CESP	Center for Environmental Science and Policy
CD-ROM	Compact Disc Read Only Memory
CT	Communication technology
CTC	Communication Technology Center
DVD	Digital video disc
ELISA	E-learning Initiative in South Africa
FDI	Foreign direct investment
FET	Further education and training
FISAC	Fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation
FSI	Freeman Spogli Institute
FSIIS	Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies
GDP	Gross domestic product
GMT	Greenwich Mean Time
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IBM	International Business Machines
ICASA	Independent Communications Authority of South Africa
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDL	International Distance Learning
IDV	Individualism
IP	Internet Provider
ISDN	Integrated services digital network
IT	Information telecommunication
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
IWS	Internet World Stats
KFC	Kentucky Fried Chicken
LTO	Long Term Orientation
MAS	Masculinity
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDA	Personal digital assistant
PDI	Power Distance Index
ROI	Return on investment
SANLS	South African National Language Service
SCIL	Stanford Center for Innovations in Learning
SD	Sustainable development
SNO	Second national operator
SSA	Sub-Sahara Africa
STHC	Scientific and technical human capital
SU	Stanford University
SUIOP	Stanford University International Outreach Program
TNO	Third national operator
TUT	Tshwane University of Technology
UP	University of Pretoria
UAI	Uncertainty Avoidance Index
UK	United Kingdom
UL	University of Limpopo
UNAIDS	The joint United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS
UNEP	United National Environment Programme
UNESCO/COL	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UP	University of Pretoria
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
USA	United States of America
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WEF	World Economic Forum
WiFi	Wireless Fidelity
WRI	World Resources Institute