

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

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a collaborative teaching and learning experience that resulted from combining activities across two doctoral seminars, across students from different levels (doctoral, MBA and undergraduate), and across two universities each from a different country. Using a qualitative empirical approach, the paper provides insight into (a) managing students as research personnel in Collaborative, Cross-Cultural, Qualitative Research (C³QR) projects; (b) involving students from different levels in the course and/or project; and (c) co-teaching seminars. By documenting the processes involved in the practice of C³QR, challenges and constraints that the stakeholders face and results they produce, this research provides a behind-the-scenes look at, and practical guidelines for, C³QR projects in which graduate and undergraduate students serve as research personnel.

In summary, the reviewed literature suggests that (a) research projects can elevate the quality of education at both graduate and undergraduate programs provided its challenges are recognized and dealt with proactively and (b) course hybridization and co-teaching provide added benefits while simultaneously creating new challenges. Although the reviewed literature establishes the case for these methods, its preoccupation with delineating pros and cons has come at the expense of creating blueprints and guidelines for successful implementation of the methods. As a result, academicians continue to be reluctant to experiment with and adopt them. The present study seeks to address this important gap by documenting the processes and outcomes of a research project undertaken within a co-taught hybrid course.

The instructors realized that a culture of traditional academics was in clash with a culture they tried to implement; that of collaborative scholarship beyond

the usual two- or three-researcher efforts. In the physical sciences, broad collaborative research projects are more frequent than has been the case in the social and business disciplines. It seems that limitations based in traditions of credit allocation, tenure and promotion evaluations and the like inhibit collaborative research to a great extent.

There have been some attempts at developing collaborative research in consumer research, such as the example of the Consumer Odyssey, yet the resulting reports or publications have followed the 'one or few authors' tradition. New attempts at collaborative research should take into consideration the above-mentioned limitations. Unfortunately, the impositions from the traditional culture of the academy thwart such initiatives.