

CROSS-NATIONAL MARKETING LEARNING ACTIVITY USING THE BLACKBOARD WEB SOFTWARE PLATFORM

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of a cross-national marketing learning activity using the Blackboard web software platform. The joint global exercise was designed for business and marketing undergraduate students to better understand the marketing process in other countries, to analyze a cyber marketing case study in conjunction with business students from other countries, and to share marketing knowledge and resources with business students from other countries. Integrated into the curriculum since 1997, United States and Slovak Republic marketing and business college students have collaborated on case studies, business plans, and marketing plans. A six-step approach is introduced to illustrate the international learning activity and to assist marketing educators in developing international web-based learning activities. The article also offers insight into the implementation and assessment of Blackboard to facilitate the international learning activity.

INTERNATIONALIZING THE CURRICULUM VIA BLACKBOARD.COM

Step 1 - Purpose of the International Learning Activity

The overall purpose of the international project for the U.S. and Slovak students was to better understand the marketing process in another country, to analyze a cyber marketing case study in conjunction with business students from another country, to share marketing knowledge and resources with business students from another country, and to learn or enhance their Internet navigation skills.

Step 2 - Analysis of the Learning Activity

Students of Central Washington University (CWU) in Washington state, experiencing a free market economy, collaborated with students of City University (CU) in the Slovak Republic, Central Europe. The Slovak students, experiencing developmental stages of establishing capitalism and a free market economy within their country, provided a unique perspective on the development and implementation of capitalism to the CWU students. Alternatively, the CWU students provided qualified insights about their developed, capitalistic market-driven society.

Step 3 - Design of the Learning Activity

Online education relies on powerful, customizable, and easy to use systems. While bringing curriculum online is still a critical component of online learning, the Internet offers tremendous potential for enhancing academic programs and communities beyond the walls of the classroom or campus. Most important to this project was creating a cyber environment that facilitated easy communication, active dialogue, and clear outcomes and expectations. Blackboard went beyond the instructors' expectations by providing a web-based program that featured a user-friendly discussion board where students could asynchronously communicate with each other about course assignments and a virtual chat room where faculty and students had real time discussions. Visit: <http://Courses.cwu.edu:8080/courses/ME467-RL/> (Username: MEAROCKS Password: MARKETING)

Step 4 - Development of the Learning Activity

The students were randomly assigned into groups of two to three students and matched with a counterpart group from the other country. The instructors took digital pictures of the groups and posted them on the website utilizing the Blackboard area, allowing each group to visually see who they were collaborating with in the other country.

Step 5 - Implementation of the Learning Activity

Weekly, instructors evaluated and scored the students participation in the discussion board, evaluated and scored students assessment of the case study, and worked with students having technical difficulties.

Step 6 - Assessment of the Learning Activity

To bestow the importance of this international learning activity, both instructors included the activity in their overall course assessment. This project was designed to supplement other assessments including examinations, quizzes, and projects. Fully participating in the activity, each student receives 10 percent towards their final class grade. The students' ability to successfully use the web technology demonstrated that students from both countries were able to easily and quickly adapt and utilize the user interface guided by pictures and clear descriptions of functions.