Chapter 33
Using the International Negotiation Modules Project (INMP) to Build a Learning Community

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ABSTRACT

This chapter profiles a program that uses online simulation to internationalize the community college curriculum. For the past two decades the International Negotiation Modules Project (INMP) has had a particular effect on the construction of knowledge for community college students who often need non-traditional approaches to learning for their success. Through active learning and collaborative work on cross-disciplinary concepts, the simulation enhances overall student comprehension. In the process, the INMP helps to build a cohesive learning community that begins with student teams, continues with classroom learning, and transcends to multi-college classroom dialogue. This chapter explores how unique interactions inherent in INMP reinforce student engagement that, in turn, enhances overall student success.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter profiles a program that uses on-line simulation to internationalize the community college curriculum. The International Negotiation Modules Project (INMP) uses the University of Maryland's International Communications and Negotiations Simulations (ICONS) computer-assisted simulation as a tool to enhance learning and teaching strategies about international issues and negotiation at the community college level. Implementation of INMP is successful in any community college because it individualizes instruction by using the core curriculum of the individual community college class and then adding to it a context in which the subject matter is taught using different pedagogical tools. Through active learning, the simulation not only enhances overall student comprehension, but helps to build a

cohesive learning community that begins with student teams, continues with classroom learning, and transcends to multi-college classroom dialogue. Student engagement is a key outcome of adopting the INMP into a community college class which, in turn, enhances overall student success.

INMP places the student in the role of decision maker representing different countries and who then negotiates with other students on real-world issues. In this process, students use knowledge learned from their class along with additional research on issues that are tangential to the class but are still specific to the simulation. The unconventional pairing of academic disciplines, the emphasis on all learning modalities, the non-traditional use of integrated technology, and the diverse student body all enhance the overall quality of the simulation. Small and large group work support the simulation by fostering critical thinking, collaborate group oriented projects, and various forms of communication. What results is a direct connection between subject material, pedagogy, and learner engagement. The INMP supports the premise that when students are directly engaged in their learning, they internalize a new vision of knowledge (Raby, Kaufman, & Raab, 2012). Through this simulation, the multi-use of communication styles serves to enhance understanding that impacts students in their personal and work environments that exist beyond the classroom.

The INMP is a demonstrated effect on the power of engaging students with their learning and illustrates that the task of internationalizing the curriculum not only can, but *should* be infused in all disciplines of the community college (Raby, 2006). The non-traditional pedagogy compliments the non-traditional student learner who attends the community college. Community college students bring to the classroom backgrounds and skills which enrich the simulation experience in ways not seen with traditional under-graduate populations (Torney-Purta & Pavlov, 1998; Raby, Kaufman & Raab, 2012). The simulation not only enhances in-class relationships, but also creates an on-line classroom community in which students communicate with students from other classes, other disciplines, other colleges, and other geographic locations. This chapter explores contexts in which student engagement in INMP helps to construct a learning community, which, in turn, creates an innovative approach to teaching and learning.

BACKGROUND

In 1995, Joyce Kaufman and Rosalind Latiner Raby adapted the University of Maryland ICONS project specifically for the community college environment (ICONS, 2013). Since its inception, over 135 classes in 60 community colleges have participated. The range of colleges include both rural and urban areas and even a community college in Northern Thailand. In total, more than 6,500 students have participated in the program. Student ethnicity varies with college location and many classes consist exclusively of low income students, students of color, and non-traditional students. Also, depending on the college, there can be a large percentage of first generation, immigrant, and international students. Most students concurrently take classes and work at least five hours a week, and the average age of students remain in late-twenties, which is the norm for community colleges (Raby, 2006).

When first developed, INMP was designed to be multi-institutional. Each year, there are a minimum of eight different colleges that participate. The multiple voices that come from students who live and work in various parts of the country add to the depth of on-line discussions. All the examples provided in this chapter come from evaluations from students and faculty who have participated in the INMP from 1998-2013. These stories represent a changing construct of the power of simulation over time.

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