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Problem Statement

- Undergraduate & graduate students in U.S. and Mexico lack intercultural competence (Bank, 2001; Byram 1997).
  - Knowledge and Skills

- Despite the growing interest in higher education to creating global citizen, there is a lack of literature related to the influences of cross-cultural interaction on the participants’ cultural awareness.
Research Purpose

- This study examined the cross-cultural online interaction experiences between the U.S. and Mexican students.
Research Questions

1. What learners think about cross-cultural online interaction?
2. What were the self-reported changes in regards to cultural awareness that occurred during cross-cultural online interaction?
Theoretical Framework

- social constructivism
- collaborative learning
- technology
Participants

- 6 U.S. and 3 Mexican participants took a one month summer online course on Multicultural Perspectives on Technology.
- U.S graduate students were from Southern public university.
- Mexican undergraduate students were south-easter university.
Context

- Blackboard (LMS)
  - Wimba (Synchronous)
  - Discussion board (Asynchronous)
- Videoconference (Interpreter: Mexican instructor)
- Reading assignment -> online discussion
Class assignment

- Photo stories
  - 1) short narrated self-introduction
  - 2) introduction about their own culture

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rC5pdAEcvlg

- Collaborative project
  - create a product like a lesson plan that promoted cultural awareness in the field of your choosing.
Research Method

- Survey (1)
- Semi-structured online interviews (1-2)
- Online observation (11)
- Documents (2 x photo stories, collaborative project, reflection paper)
An inductive analysis approach to identify meaningful themes and patterns from the data collected.
Results

- Lack of cross-cultural interaction
  - Only 3 out of 9 clearly stated their circle of friends were diverse.

- Change in perspectives
  - 4 participants has changed their perspectives in relation to either US or Mexican culture.
  - Other participants had prior experiences with roommates, friends or co-workers either from Mexico or the United States and thought that the class reinforced their perspectives about these cultures.
Results continue

- Increase their cultural awareness (photo stories and class discussions)
  - more than half of the participants thought that the course and the interaction with people from another culture have increased their cultural awareness.
  - The participants enjoyed creating and viewing other classmates’ photo stories which provided them with a better understanding of their classmates and culture.
Results continue

- Identifying similar and difference between culture.
  - family, nationalism, food, religion and music (photo stories)
  - US and Mexican realized that they had more alike than different because they valued the same things.
Every student expressed positive response to the cross-cultural online interaction and the overall online course.

- Cultural understanding
- Communication and cooperation skills (they would be able to work with people from other culture)
- Potential tools the students can use in their class and/or for collaboration.
Challenges

- Language Barrier
  - Google Translator
- Time Zone
Conclusion

- All students valued the experience of interacting with students from another country and enjoyed the online course very much.
- The online tools such as Wimba and photo stories used in this course were successful in promoting cross-cultural interaction.
future study & recommendation

- Incorporate another country into the study (Mexico, Brazil, US)
- Focus more on the local aspect of the culture
  - Education
  - Context
  - Lifestyle
  - Society
- Another suggested tool for communication: Babelwithme