

Chapter IV

Data Analysis

Introduction

This Chapter will present the analysis of data gathered from various sources. This can be classified into three categories, namely: information from written documents (e-mails, correspondence, meeting notes and the Memorandum of Understanding signed by both universities), researcher's personal observations and team members' experience. Data for the first two categories were gathered through a micro-monitoring of the process whereby the researcher closely monitored and collected all the written documents and also notes from personal involvement as a participant in the project. Data from the team members' experience were collected through a series of interviews.

As indicated in Chapter III, all the data was presented in two different voices: the voice of "reporter" and the voice of "analyst". The role of the reporter offered a chronology of events and descriptions. The role of analyst was to interpret the meaning of the reporter's descriptive portion. The interpretation process of the analyst drew, in varying degrees, from the data presented by the reporter, related literature, and the analyst's own professional experience and judgment. The voices, which engaged in a dialogue with each other, provided a format for presentation and analysis of the data.

Since this research is a case study of a process, most of the data were presented in a chronological manner from the beginning of the process to the completion of the developmental phase. These data were analyzed and presented according the research questions. Accordingly, the research questions provide a framework for structuring the chapter.

For the first question, the data addressed the process involved in developing an on-line course. These include the phases involved and the important tasks and events for each phase.

For question two, the data addressed the challenges faced during the process of developing the on-line course. The challenges include cultural differences, communication, development in technology, expertise, institution's procedures,

regulation and managerial practices, geographical location and time, and financial factors.

Research Question 1:

What is involved in the process of developing and designing an on-line course involving two different countries?

A review and analysis of the data collected from the monitoring process and interviews, suggested the emergence of three major phases:

Initiation

Pre-Development

Developing and Co-designing the Curriculum

This categorization derived from a process of listing and clustering. All the tasks and activities involved in this project have been listed in a chronological manner. This list was regrouped based on the nature of the tasks and the time it happened. Similar and closely interrelated tasks were clustered together. Finally this process resulted in the designation of three major categories named on the basis of the major activities reflected within each category. (Further explanation of this analysis process and the examples of the listing is in Appendix C).

The **initiation phase** extended from the first visit, which catalyzed this collaboration effort until the actual project started. The initiation phase mainly involved the background, the interest, and early negotiation. The **pre-development** phase began from the date that both parties agreed to work on the project. This includes all the preparation work such as exchange documents, legal matters, and developing a proper communication system. The **development phase** started when the actual development and design work began.

Initiation

Reporter:

This project was catalyzed from a study tour to one of the Asian countries from USA during Winter Break in December 1997 to January 1998. The study tour consisted of faculty and students from the “US University” and several other universities in the

United States of America. Each university independently planned this study tour as a part of a course on International Adult Education/Learning. One of the sites visited on the study tour was an old and leading university in the country (will address as “Asian University” after this). The discussion that took place during the visit included several mutual interests in the area of Adult Learning. One of the interests that emerged from that discussion was a mutual interest in exploring the philosophical bases of adult developmental and learning and in exploring similarities and differences between Eastern and Western perspectives.

One of the team members interviewed, who was also a team leader and had a prior relationship with that university, stated that this collaboration effort derived from the discussion between two parties during the visits. Both parties had a mutual interest in developing this relationship; however, the “Asian University” showed deep and proactive interest even at the beginning of the relationship. The team leader from “US University” stated that the group from the “Asian University” was very interested in developing collaboration. They were very enthusiastic and had waited for hours to receive the study group from the States. The study group, which was supposed to be there in the morning, was very late due to a train delay. They only reached the University in the afternoon. She stated:

We arrived there. There was a whole round table of people over there that had gathered to meet us. There were faculty members, from a variety of different schools, not just Adult Learning, Adult education and Adult Development. They were from Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology, from Anthropology all seated around the round table...and we met with them.

(Interview No. 1)

The deep interest from the “Asian University” was also evidenced clearly when they took immediate action after the meeting to initiate a further step to start the collaboration effort. In fact they took the initiative by sending an e-mail immediately after the meeting. The head of team from the “US University” stated:

“...So I arrived back into the office. I believe it was some where around 10 or 11 January 1998. When I came into the office, of course, the first thing I had to check was my e-mail. Well, to my surprise, what did I see

there? I saw an e-mail from the University of XXXXXX expressing very very intense interest in collaborating with us. Actually the note had been written right after my departure from XXXXXX (The city where the “Asian University” located), but while we were still in XXXXX (the Asian country) at that time. (Interview No. 1)

One of the earliest e-mail sent to the “US University” by the team leader from the “Asian University” explicitly indicated their deep interest in collaboration:

I am pleased to interact with you on behalf of the core group of the “Asian University”. I am confident that two core groups’ productive and interactive work will result in a concrete proposal. If you may be able to shortlist your areas of interest and your outline for exchange and research collaboration, I will present the same to my group.

There was not enough clear evidence to indicate what really made the “Asian University” very interested in this collaboration effort. According to the team leader from the “US University,” this may be because they already had an agenda or interest to reach out before the visit. That is why they were really prepared for it. She explained:

I can speculate on some of them. I think when we arrived they were already interested in reaching out. When they heard that we were coming, I think they probably had some discussion with each other. I don’t know that for sure. As I remember, as I reflect on the meeting we had with them, they expended quite an effort to get many of their faculty members there. There was a big huge round table. For them not only to take to take time from their busy day, but to wait five or more hours for our train which was delayed in arriving was quite significant. We were supposed to arrive there early morning, and it was 2.00 o’clock in the afternoon by the time we arrived. For them to still be sitting there waiting for us...This shows extreme interest. (Interview No. 1)

She also speculated that the interest also may have arisen from their interest in the related field that had been discussed especially philosophy and psychology. She said:

Then we did start discussing things with each other. I thought antennae went up and interest increased when we started to talk philosophy. Then

finally during the personal interaction I had with them afterwards in which they expressed interest in the area of my research, I just really thought...this is not going to be the last time I talk with them. This is not going to be the last time we converse and this is not going to be the last time that I see them. I just knew that we would continue. I just did not anticipate how quickly they would respond. (Interview No. 1)

An interview conducted with the head of the “Asian University” team revealed other reasons they were really interested in this effort. One of the reasons was quite similar with the one put forth by the “US University” team leader: that is, interest in the further development of the field or subject matter. They were interested in developing the Adult Education program, which had already existed for 20 years. The “Asian University’s” team leader stated:

The interest evinced in this project was basically the subject matter, which is related to the field of specialization. Basically, the Department had offered the Masters Degree on this related subject from 1977- 1997 – a period of two decades. (Interview No. 4)

The interest also had arisen from the hope that this particular collaboration effort would open further relationship with universities and scholars in the States. This will be an excellent opportunity for them to continue the relationship that they already developed in the past. The team leaders added:

Besides this, well-known adult educators such as Roby Kidd, James Draper, Glen Eyford, Paul Fordam, Richard Hunt, and Alan Rogers had been visiting professors over a period of time, and it can be truly said that they contributed largely to the international dimension of the course.

(Interview No. 4)

Interest in this collaborative effort also derived from the impact of Information Technology. The development of Information Technology creates opportunities for developing on-line learning. On-line learning could be a new medium to further develop the field by involving a larger community. The head of team from the “Asian University” indicated this:

Being aware of the advantages of the new Information Technology, we could make a further study of the subject on Adult Learning and Development, which was to be based on comparative setting.

(Interview No. 4)

Analyst:

The evidence above seems to indicate s that both of the teams had prior interest in looking for such a collaborative effort from the visits. The group from “Asian University” was really prepared to gain some benefit from the visits. Similarly the group from the “US University” also had something in their minds even though there was no specific agenda which had been set for the discussion. As indicated by the head of the “US University” team: “We did not have a specific agenda. The purpose to meet was so we could learn about them and they could learn about us.” However, she did have an interest in exploring further one of her research areas: transpersonal psychology. This interest dragged her into an informal conversation with colleagues from the “Asian University” even beyond the formal meeting. She explained:

After we left most of the people returned to the bus. But I stayed back and had a meaningful dialogue with members, Dr. XXXXX, and particularly, Dr. YYYYY. Both of them were extremely interested in pursuing this discussion further. And I became intensively involved in this dialogue because of my involvement with the transpersonal orientation and I was saying to them that we can learn so much from them because the transpersonal perspective actually provided a balance understanding between Western and Eastern perspectives on human development of which Adult Development is a part. (Interview No. 4)

People collaborate for different reasons. As indicated in the literature (Abramson, Bird & Stenett, 1966, p.191; Neil, 1981, p.141, and Moran, 1993, p.4.), some of the reasons for collaboration are economically and financially motivated or profit oriented and for cost beneficial, whereas other reasons are intellectually motivated and for professional development. None of the interests here were economically or financially oriented. This is something unique about this project. All these data show most of the reasons or interests in this project are intellectual development and culturally oriented.

Reporter:

The “US University” and the “Asian University” on-line course on Adult Learning and Development – East and West is an outcome from the study visits. However, it is not the only outcome; it is a small portion of a larger collaboration effort that has been agreed upon by both parties.

A very long discussion had taken place before both of the groups reached the decision to develop the on-line course as an initial move in their collaborative effort. This was explained clearly by the head of team from the “US University”:

We dialoged back and forth – in terms of what their interest might be – and talked about long range as well as short-range interests. Long range was clearly to have exchanges, faculty, as well as student exchanges; and also to engage in research with us. We realized that it would take a long time to get to that point. We also realized we had a mutual interest in philosophy, we had mutual interest in the transpersonal orientation, and it would be wonderful if we could develop some learning experience, some course from here. We exchanged syllabi, we exchanged catalogues, we reviewed each other’s materials, we came up with the idea – What could we do at a distance? If we couldn’t do the exchange right now, what could we do at a distance. So, we came up with an idea that we could jointly put together a learning experience, it could be a course, and we could contribute the best of our worlds. The best of our world what we have mutually in common which was our degree program in Adult Learning, Adult Development and Adult Education. That’s how this idea first came about in term of developing an on-line learning experience which would be entitled Adult Learning and Development – East and West. (Interview No. 1)

Analyst:

Deciding upon the on-line course as an initial endeavor in the collaboration effort was carefully made by taking several aspects into consideration. There might be several reasons why the on-line learning was chosen. First, the rapid development in Information

Technology throughout the world gives great opportunities for effectively communicating from a distance. Information Technology not only can be used as a means to disseminate the learning experience, but it also can be an effective medium, for co-designing and developing the course from a distance. Second, when involving distance and geographical issues, an on-line course would be the fastest and cheapest way compared to other face-to-face experiences.

Reporter:

The initiation phase ended when both parties confirmed to begin the endeavor seriously. This was initiated from the first e-mail sent by the “Asian University”, confirming the readiness to explore a serious collaboration effort. The e-mail stated:

I am pleased to interact with you on behalf of the core group of the University of XXXXXX. I am confident that the two-core group’s productive and interactive work will result in concrete proposals. If you make a short list of areas of interest and your outline on areas for exchange and research collaboration, I will present the same to my group.

A response from the “US University” to that e-mail made the vision clear for both parties officially engaged in exploring the collaboration. The e-mail stated:

“How delightful to hear from you! I have just returned to the USA this week and immediately had to start the new semester. So, this will be a short reply to be followed by a longer one later, once I have had the opportunity to dialogue with the “core group” from the USA. I must tell you though how meaningful I felt that our meeting was in XXXXXX. I only lament that we were all so exhausted and that we had such a short time with you. I personally would have loved to have spent days with you. As you know, my interest and research/writing in the transpersonal orientation and transpersonal adult development is quite compatible with some XXXXX philosophies. I think together we could quite meaningfully address and articulate adult development from the complementarity of Eastern and Western perspectives which also may aid our adult education colleagues in other countries around other world.”

This proposal was well accepted by the counterpart from the “Asian University”. An e-mail was sent on March 15, 1998 by the head of the “Asian University” team to confirm their acceptance. The e-mail stated:

Your proposal that as a preliminary step development of on-line courses may be started and developed will be an interesting proposal for us.

The “Asian University” was really pleased with the on-line learning project proposal. Their involvement was not only at faculty or departmental level. In fact, it affected the whole university when the universities’ high level officials showed their interest in this project. An e-mail sent by the head of the “Asian University” team indicated this concern:

I am happy to indicate that our vice-chancellor instructed me to convey his decision to establish a collaborative relationship with the “US University” and are especially interested in working with Dr BBBBBBBBB in a productive and meaningful way in projects that will be beneficial to the academics and learning communities all over the world.

Analyst:

It seems to me that the initiation phase was very short and it happened very fast. The whole phase of initiation took only approximately three months. There were not many “official” activities involved. The initial visit was in December 1997 and the last e-mail that indicated the agreement of both parties was in the middle of March 1998. It is amazing that within a short period of time both parties with different backgrounds could come to an agreement for such a meaningful collaboration effort. This is something unique about this project. It is different from many other collaboration efforts where normally the initiation phase involves several official and formal pre-collaboration activities. Dhanarajan & Guiton’s studies (1993) and Lines & Clarke’s studies (1996) reported the initiation or pre-collaboration phase involves several activities such as conducting need assessments, establishing formal relationships, establishing a commitment for budget and resources and site visits. Even though their studies did not mention the actual time allocation for this phase, the amount of activities indicates that a longer time period was needed.

Reporter:

The head of the “US University” team in several meetings mentioned the uniqueness of this project. She did say that this collaboration effort involved two different cultures and this is the first experience for both parties embarking on such a collaborative endeavor. To make it reality and minimize possible hindrances, it is very important to keep it simple at the beginning phase. She also mentioned that this is the reason why at the beginning the “US University” started this project without affiliating it as a department’s official project. In her interview she stated:

It is very important not to get too rigid and not to get goal-oriented right away. It is important not to put too many constraints on it. So we felt an informal approach would be the best way, because once you start attached to a department we start attaching with an official name, and then people expect you to develop a time line. People expect you to develop a strategic plan and things of that nature. We thought very strongly that we have people that really want to work with us and more important than anything else was the relationship that we wanted to establish. We already knew they wanted to work with us. We didn’t have to sell this. What was going to be very important was the relationship even if incrementally it took time to respect their culture, their time line, and to respect their sense of time too. (Interview No. 1)

Analyst:

It is very important to realize that collaborating with other countries is not an easy task. Understanding their culture and their unique situation is very important. Misconception or misunderstanding of the different situation could cost failure. In this project it was a right move when the “US University” at the beginning did not impose the strategic plan or any other plan that is too rigid and demanding. This kind of move would not allow the time for exploring and understanding each other.

Pre-Development Phase

Several major tasks evolved in this phase. For the purpose of reporting they are listed as follows. However, it is important to realize that these tasks did not occur in a chronological order. Some of them overlapped, some of happened in sequence, and some tasks also happened concurrently.

1. Negotiating and exploring the possibilities
2. Proposing the actual project
3. Seeking financial resources
4. Organizing the team
5. Exchanging syllabi and documents
6. Setting the communication method
7. Drafting and signing the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)
8. Visiting the Counterpart University
9. Conducting Initial training for the team members
10. Technical Preparation
- 11.

Negotiating and exploring the possibilities

Reporter:

As reported earlier, the collaboration effort started immediately after the visits. The first activity in this phase is related to the end of the initiation phase: negotiating and exploring the possibilities between and within the two groups. As indicated above an e-mail sent by the head of team from the “Asian University” was an official beginning of the project. The e-mail suggested starting the collaboration effort by dialoguing the possibilities. The “US University” endorsed this through the e-mail sent to the “Asian University”.

Proposing the actual project

Reporter:

The following task was proposing the actual project. The “US University” took a lead in exploring the possibilities and finally came up with a proposal of developing an on-line course within the area of Adult Learning and Development. This proposal was

forwarded to the group from “Asian University” for their opinion. The e-mail sent by the “US University” indicated:

Since the focus of this program is on the development of on-line courses, it seems ideally suited to our initial endeavors. I am proposing the development between our universities of a computer-conference type course entitled Adult Development & Learning: Eastern and Western perspective.

(E-mail 3/2/1998)

The “Asian University” accepted the proposal through e-mail sent by the team leader, which stated:

Your proposal that as a preliminary step development of on-line course may be started and developed will be an interesting proposal for us.

(E-mail 3/15/1998)

Analyst:

This shows that the proposal came from the “US University” and not mutual understanding.

Reporter:

No, they did have mutual discussion back and forth as indicated by the team leader from the “US University”. In fact they pointed out this as one of the possibilities during the visit.

Seeking financial resources

Reporter:

Seeking financial resources was one of the important tasks during this phase. Both groups realized that to start this project some financial aid was needed. The team from “US University” applied for a mini grant from the University. Later the application was approved, and a small amount was granted for this project in July 1999.

Analyst:

At this stage, only the “US University” initiated the financial resources. There was no evidence that the “Asian University” had allocated any financial aid for this project.

Organizing the team

Reporter:

The next task was to establish the team. The “US University” and the “Asian University” identified four people including the team leader. The four people from “the Asian University” were one Professor of Psychology, one Professor of Education, one Professor of Communication and one Professor of Sociology. (E-mail 8/23/00)

The leader of the “US University” team was a Professor in Adult Learning whereas the other three-team members were seasoned professionals, all educators of adults, but also Ph.D. students. The “US University” had taken a further step by assigning a special role to each team member. The tasks were: reviewing the related literature, micro-monitoring the process, and seeking for external funding (E-mail 7/14/1998).

Analyst:

Appointing personnel at this stage is usual and common in any collaborative project. Personnel from both sides have to get together work in a team for further development of the project. This is the similarity of this project with other projects that reported by Dhanarajan & Guinton (1993) and Lines & Clarke (1996).

It is also important to note that at this stage, in both teams no technical expert was assigned. Does that mean that a technical expert is not important or, are they going to hire or outsource the technical work?

Reporter:

Yes, at this stage no one on the teams was from a technical background. However, in later development, when the actual technical work started, both sides had invited technical experts onto their team. In addition, the head of the “US University” team had discussed with the Information Service Director at a branch campus related to the possibilities of getting their help in developing the on-line course (E-mail 7/8/1998 – No.7 - and meeting notes 7/7/1998).

Exchanging the syllabi and documents

Reporter:

Immediately after the team was set up, the next task was the exchange of documents such as syllabi, prospecti and other materials. This was mentioned in the e-mail sent to the “Asian University.”

Right now we would need to start exchanging syllabi and current material used in such a course in our respective universities.

(E-mail 5/7/1998)

Following this suggestion, the “Asian University” had sent an e-mail promising the syllabi. The e-mail stated:

The syllabi and curriculum of the various departments of the school of development studies will be e-mailed to you along with the e-mail addresses of the faculty members. Kindly wait for my e-mail that I promised to send to you during the third week of July.

(E-mail 7/14/1998)

There was a communication delay at this stage. The syllabi promised on the third week of July did not arrive. To clarify the situation, one of the team members had sent an e-mail, which stated:

Hope you are well, and we wish you a successful school year. Your last communiqué stated that you would be forwarding a syllabus of the school of Development Studies. Are you sending this through an e-mail attachment? Or will you be posting it to this University? I ask this, as it did not accompany your last e-mail. This is just to let you know that it has not arrived, as yet. We are looking forward to seeing the syllabi and will contact you as soon as it arrives. If you e-mail to me, I will be sure to share this information with my colleagues.

(E-mail 8/28/1998)

Analyst:

This is one of the communication challenges. Communicating with developing countries is a big challenge and it is important to very careful in seeking clarification for such situations. The above e-mail was a diplomatic way to ask for clarification. No one

knew what the situation was in that country and how the project team members might perceive the USA's reaction. In fact, in one of the "US University" team meetings this issue was raised and discussed. Many speculations about the delay had been discussed (Meeting notes:8/26/1998). Finally a decision was made to send the above e-mail by a team member and not the team leader. If the "US University" had imposed a time line and strategic plan in this project, there may have been two consequences. First, the project may have been much smoother and faster. Second, it may have ended at this stage. If both sides could have met the challenge of an imposed of timeline, it may have been a successful story. On the other hand, if they could not meet the challenge a sense of failure could have been equally probable. However, according to the "US University" team leader, understanding each other and not imposing the timeline are among the reasons why this project sustains for almost more than two years (interview with the "US University" team leader).

Reporter:

Finally the syllabi arrived in an attachment file through an e-mail. The "US University" team reviewed and discussed the syllabi in a meeting on October 3rd 1998. A set of syllabi and other course materials from the "US University" were also sent to the "Asian University" through mail. The meeting also discussed the possible topics and key concepts for the proposed on-line course. After the meeting, an e-mail was sent to the "Asian University," suggesting some of the possibilities and views from the "US University." The e-mail stated:

Greetings! We spent Saturday becoming familiar with your syllabi and with the University of XXXXXX. We are making progress with regard to our project.....

Our relevant syllabi should be reaching you this week. In fact, you may have already received them. We have dialogued with key technological individuals here and all resonate to the same theme: Keep the conceptualization of the course simple and manageable at the beginning. It can be augmented as we progress further in our working dialogues with each other. Heeding that advice, this is what we would like to suggest for starters:

Exposition of the three key concepts: adult, development and learning.

What are the ranges of descriptions and definitions..from narrow to broad.

We would suggest starting with a look at the philosophical foundations of the concepts and explore the commonalties which both “Eastern” and “Western” philosophical orientation share (i.e. the commonalties inherent in the human condition). From there we could proceed to an examination of the uniqueness of each orientation (East and West) and perhaps even focus on some specific philosophers and philosophies. We would suggest that for our project “Eastern” be confined to XXXXX (the Asian country) at this point and would rely on you in terms of which philosophers/philosophies you might recommend (e.g. ssssss???? perhaps). This could be enough for a starter module which we could then pilot between the universities. (E-mail 7/7/1998)

Analyst:

At this point it seems that the “US University” is still leading the project by suggesting the possible key concepts and topics besides taking responsibilities in other areas including technology.

Setting the communication method

Reporter:

An effective two-way communication is very important in this collaboration effort. For this purpose, development of a listserv was suggested at this pre-development phase. In fact, one of the earlier e-mail sent by the “US University” had mentioned the idea of developing the listserv. It stated:

So, our next step in developing and piloting this course would be to first set up a listserv for discussion purposes. Toward that end we will need the correct e-mail addresses for all your colleagues who wish to participate in the design and development phase. I would hope that we could begin that

as soon as late August 1998. So, we should start verifying e-mail addresses now.

(E-mail 8/7/1998)

The “Asian University” responded on 7/14/1998 and promised the e-mail addresses would be sent during the third week of July. The e-mail also indicated the reason for the delay in responding to the “US University’s” e-mail.

I am in receipt of your e-mail sent on 7/09/1998. I left on the 6th and came back to XXXXXX on 13th night. The university re-opened after summer vacation on 1st July. We are planning to have a meeting of the school of development studies. After the meeting and after ascertaining the interest of the faculty I will furnish you the e-mail addresses. In principle we are highly pleased to collaborate with you.

Analyst:

This shows that the “Asian University” was still very enthusiastic about the project. May be the multiple roles of the team leader and team members made them very busy and sometimes it takes a longer time to respond and participate. The same scenarios happened in the “US University,” where some times meetings had to be canceled because some of the team members were involved in other tasks and responsibilities (Researcher’s notes). All the project team members were volunteers and had other major job responsibilities and some of them were also pursuing graduate study. This may be one of the disadvantages of doing this project as informal and on a voluntary basis.

Reporter:

On August 23, another e-mail sent by the “Asian University”, nominating five team members (including the team leader) and their areas of interest. However no e-mail addresses were given. But the author did mention providing the e-mail address in the next e-mail.

I will be coordinating the on-line program both at the advisory and operational level. In my next mail I will provide the e-mail addresses of all the persons involved.”

(E-mail 8/23/1998)

Finally the “Asian University” did send the team member’s e-mail addresses but only for three of them. There were no e-mail addresses given for the other two members.

Later, on October 7, the “US University” sent another e-mail for the same reason. The e-mail stated:

“In order to begin dialogues between our two teams we will need to have everyone’s e-mail address. We will take responsibility for setting up the listserv teams, and, shortly thereafter, we will all be able to communicate with each other (asynchronously) with the use of one e-mail address.

If you would kindly provide information for these two colleagues (especially their e-mails), then we could proceed to establish the listserv.

There was no response to this e-mail until the end of year. The proposed list was not established at this stage.

Analyst:

There might have been some problem about having the e-mail addresses for the other two members, or maybe they were not comfortable sharing their information. In fact, this was revealed later when one of the team members from the “US University” visited the “Asian University,” she found that the two of them actually did not have access to Internet at the University. The other three members were doing that from their own computer at home. (Report from the team member who visited the “Asian University”)

Reporter:

Finally, as it ended up the listserv was not used as an option. This was not because of the-mail address issue but based on advice given by the University’s computer support staff. According to that advice, it would be better to create a discussion board through the web site because every one could focus on the specific discussion in a separate site. With the listserv people would be using their e-mail, and could be lost in the vast number of e-mails received every day.

Following this exchange, a discussion board was established using the “US University’s” server.

Drafting and signing the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)

Reporter:

Another important task at this pre-development phase was drafting and signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The head of “US University” team indicated three reasons why the MOU was important:

1. For “ownership” purposes
2. For support from the greater university community
3. For a more wide collaboration agenda

Analyst:

This is something different from the franchising approach as indicated in Line & Clarke’s studies (1996). Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in franchising is more on legal binding and business purposes. The MOA is very specific and it indicates every detailed aspect of implementation including the financial commitment and other events. Thus, the purpose of a MOA in franchising is to provide legal binding and specific guidelines in implementing the project.

Reporter:

A quite long process was involved in drafting and signing the MOU. The “US University” team leader explained the detailed process in her interview:

We decided that we could contact the Director of International Education at the University, which we did. He and I actually had a long-standing professional relationship. We had known each other for 20 years.

He helped us understand, in fact he guided us in this process in terms of what we could do to establish a MOU that would be signed and that would protect all of us. He educated us in terms of what could be done, in terms of developing a memorandum. And that memorandum would represent an understanding between the two universities. It would be between both universities – the teams as well as the large universities themselves.

So we have the template from which we worked. The University is at the cutting edge track nowadays, and starting to give strong support for international projects. When I first came here, it was not as internationally

oriented. The University now has certain policies written that encourage this. So we are timely.

So we provided the MOU. We clearly indicated what the “Asian University’s” hope and visions were, what our mutual hope and visions were.

I sent this MOU for review to XXXXXX (The Asian University). Before we sent it to our President we wanted to make sure that the teams from both universities were in agreement. XXXX was in agreement. The Asian University team reviewed the document and they were quite happy with what was on paper.

Then we got the agreement from them to be able to go ahead and bring it to our President. Our president signed it, then we express-mailed the original and copies to XXXXX. Their Vice Chancellor who is the counterpart of our president signed it and the MOU became official.

(Interview No. 1)

Upon receiving the draft of MOU, the “Asian University” reviewed and responded with a concern regarding financial commitment. The e-mail stated:

I am in receipt of your e-mail. I wish to introduce my Vice-Chancellor. He is Professor VVVVVV. He is the Principal Executive Officer holding the highest position in the University. He is definitely comparable to that of the President of an American university.

For the time being, as far as the wording in the MOU are concerned, the document may be signed keeping the wording intact without any modification. We can add suitable clauses to cover the developments as and when new developments take place.

My vice-chancellor’s major concern was that any financial commitment on behalf of the University of XXXXX would be subjected to the clearance from various universities. You have rightly indicated that the finance arrangements are left with the respective universities.

(E-mail 12/10/1998)

Reporter:

The response from the Asian University was discussed in one of the US team meetings. The meeting acknowledged the issue on financial matters that was raised by the “Asian University,” and it was decided not to make any financial commitment in the MOU.

The draft of the MOU was sent to the President through the Director of International Program in December 1998. It was signed by the President of the “US University” on December 18, 1998 and sent to the “Asian University” by courier. The “Asian University’s” Vice Chancellor signed the document on January 18th 1999 and sent it back to the “US University” on January 22nd 1999.

Analyst:

It seems that the financial issue became one of the concerns in the MOU. As a government agency, financial commitment involved government procedures. It was a good move to not include any financial commitment at this stage.

It is also important to notice that the “US University” was very fair in drafting and proposing the MOU. Even though the MOU was drafted by the “US University,” an equal opportunity had been given to the “Asian University” to share their concerns before both parties finally signed the agreement. This showed the element of two-way collaboration and not just an implementation from one site, which normally occurs in a franchising type collaboration (Lines & Clarke, 1996)).

Reporter:

The Memorandum of Understanding signed by both parties provides a general framework and includes long-term and short-term engagements. The on-line learning is only one of the short-term projects. The MOU includes the following cooperative approaches: (See Appendix D for a copy of the MOU.)

1. Exchange of undergraduate and graduate students
2. Exchange of faculty members
3. Exchange of research personnel
4. Technical assistance and/or training
5. Exchange of scholarly and pedagogical materials
6. Joint research

7. Other cooperative effort sets forth in separate Implementing Agreements

Analyst:

The project's MOU actually includes a wide range of activities, which is in general, can be seen as an effort to internationalize higher education. Some of the approaches suggested in the MOU are similar to the model of internationalization of Higher Education proposed by Viers (1998) and Carlton (1997). The table below displays the approaches in the MOU compared to the other two models in internationalizing the higher education described in the literature. In the long term, this MOU could be viewed as a part of each respective university's internationalization process.

Table 1:

Internationalizing Higher Education: Areas of Focus

<i>Vier (1998)</i>	<i>Carlton (1997)</i>	<i>Approaches in the MOU</i>
<i>Mission and leadership</i>	<i>International curricula</i>	<i>Student exchange</i>
<i>Curriculum</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Faculty exchange</i>
<i>Faculty</i>		<i>Research personnel</i>
<i>Study abroad</i>	<i>Student exchange</i>	<i>exchange</i>
<i>International student</i>		
<i>Outreach</i>	<i>International students</i>	<i>Technical assistance and/or</i>
<i>International development</i>		<i>Training</i>
	<i>Faculty exchange</i>	<i>Materials exchange</i>
	<i>Informal and distance</i>	<i>Join research</i>
	<i>learning technology</i>	<i>Other cooperative efforts</i>
	<i>Collaboration with external</i>	
	<i>International constituents</i>	
	<i>International research and</i>	
	<i>Development</i>	

While similarities are evident between the MOU and guiding models of internationalization {e.g. Viers (1998) and Carlton (1997)} there is a major difference between this MOU and the memorandum of agreement (MOA) normally signed in a franchising project. As indicated by Lines & Clarke (1996), the memorandum of agreement is a legal contract and it is more likely an implementing agreement. The MOA in franchising normally covered all the following aspects:

- 1. Clear statement of purpose and definition and interpretation of terms used*
- 2. The rights and obligations of both parties*
- 3. Details of the financial agreement*
- 4. Details of the administrative arrangement*
- 5. Academic issues*
- 6. Other matters such as provision of library, computer services accommodation, etc.*
- 7. Control issues including matters such as termination of agreement, applicable laws, and confidentiality*

The MOU is a general guideline or framework for short-term and long-term programs. There is a clear statement of purpose, but there are no details of financial agreement and administrative arrangements. Regarding the financial or funding arrangement it is clearly stated that:

The financial and/or funding consideration shall become the subject of specific discussion and agreement within the framework of a separate Implementing Agreement negotiated at the College/Departmental level. No financial commitment whatever on the part of either signatory to this document is intended or implied. (MOU)

It also clearly indicated the autonomy of both the institutions involved in the project and stated that one would not imposing upon the other.

Such Memoranda of Understanding are not intended to be legally binding documents. Rather, they are meant to describe the nature and cooperative intentions of those institutions involved, and to suggest guidelines for cooperation. Nothing, therefore, shall diminish the full autonomy of either

*institution, nor may any constraints be imposed by either upon the other.
(MOU)*

Visiting the counterpart university

Reporter:

At this stage one of the team members from the US happened to be visiting the country and took the opportunity to meet the team from the “Asian Country.” The potential of this visit had been discussed in a US team meeting in December 1998. It was determined that such a visit would be important, especially to clarify some of the issues and to maintain the collaboration effort. Following this decision an e-mail was sent to the “Asian University” team:

I am writing to let you know that I will be travelling to XXXXX in late January. My colleagues and I are hoping that you and your team might have some available time to meet during the week of January 25th. I was wondering if January 29th and 30th would be a possibility. I have to be in FFFFFFFF the evening of Jan. 30th. Please let me know, at your earliest convenience, if these dates are acceptable. If not I can travel anytime between January 25th and January 29th. My accommodation has been arranged, and I only need to know if and when you and your team can meet. We are very excited about presenting you with an overview of our endeavors, thus far. Awaiting your reply, and best wishes.

This e-mail was sent on December 21st 1998 and an immediate response was received on the next day, dated December 22nd 1998. In fact it could be on same day because of the time difference. The e-mail stated:

“In response to your e-mail, I am happy to inform you that January 29th of 1999 will be suitable for our meeting. Since you have to be in FFFF on 30th, it will be better to conduct the meeting on 29th itself. We, the members of the school of Development Studies, will be eager to hear from you the details related to our project.

Analyst:

It was a very fast response from the “Asian University”. In previous situations it had taken a much longer time to get their response. This might have been because they really valued the face-to-face meeting, it could have been a courtesy related to accepting visitors, or it might have been due to other reasons. Perhaps it was also indicative of an improvement in commitment. Look at the way the “Asian University” team addressed this project in the above e-mail as “our project.” This might have had some significant meaning. They addressed the feeling of belonging. Anyhow, this was a good way to keep the momentum and motivation. A visit during or in the middle of the project was beneficial for both sides even though it involved extra financial commitment.

Conducting training for team members

Reporter:

The next task in the pre-development phase was preparing the team members for the on-line teaching and learning experience. A meeting of the US team members in February 1999 assessed the needs for this training. The US team member, who met the “Asian University” team during her visit to their country, suggested that the team members from the “Asian University” also might need this training.

The technical expert from the US team suggested that all team members from both sides attend the on-line training session conducted by her for her organization. She is a Director of Distance Education for another major research university and a doctoral graduate from the “US University.” Following this offer, an e-mail was sent to the “Asian University” to offer this opportunity, and they responded by nominating 7 participants to join the training. All the team members from the US also joined the training. In an interview, the Technical Expert from the US team explained the training in detail:

We provided training which I think helped them to conceptualized what it means to be on-line. We helped them to understand not only what it means to teach on-line but how to succeed in the virtual classroom. Seven members from the XXXXXX University participated in the training.

The training is a five-week course which teaches faculty how to teach on-line. There were two foci for on-line course delivery: course development

for the on-line environment and teaching in an on-line environment. The first two weeks of class the faculty members participate from a student's perspective. They answer assignments, they do research, dialogue together, answering questions as students in the class, and they analyze the faculty members' behavior. Hopefully, they are going to adopt the model and the techniques they saw work in their training class. Then we create a transition. They move from student member's to a faculty member's perspective. In the fourth and fifth week the participants have a practice class to work in developing their own module for on-line teaching. They design their own classroom.

The idea behind the training is not only the technical aspect - that they get to use the conference and the software, but also the pedagogical aspect – to think about the exercises, assignments, presenting materials on-line etc. The training focused on both, the technical aspects as well as the pedagogical aspects. (Interview No. 2)

Analyst:

The training was successful. The researcher as one of the participants in the training found that it was a very useful training especially for the beginner. Since the team members from “Asian University” did not have much experience in this area, this training will help them in developing the collaborative on-line learning. This is a collaborative effort and both sides need to be involved in developing and facilitating the learning experience.

Reporter:

In a feedback response, the team leader from the “Asian University” indicated that the training was very useful other than some technical problems that they faced during the training sessions. The feedback from the “Asian University” regarding the training was received through e-mail: The e-mail indicated:

Some feedback from the training: The first problem in this course was the crashing of the server on the second day. The majority of members informed us that they were not provided with an ID and password and hence they were unable to log in. However, I got the e-mail from a few of

the participants. Though they are keen to participate, since it is the summer vacation some are not able to participate.

The second major problem was the virus attack on the 25th. The systems in my residence and the office were affected. I was able to reformat and restart the system in my residence.

About the course: Though I have not participated, on a few occasions, I logged in and browsed the program content. Though the program is easy to follow, it is demanding in terms of time. The most positive element is the conference. I feel that is the strongest and most influencing part of the learning experience.

Analyst:

This shows there is no doubt about the usefulness of the training. However, they did have some technical problems. This indicated that the technical aspect should be given major concern in this project. This is one of the challenges that will be discussed further under research question two. Regarding the training being time consuming, it is a good experience for them.

Reporter:

The technical expert from the “US University” decided to invite them to the second training session.

Analyst:

This should provide them further experience since in the first session, some of them did not have the opportunity to participate effectively.

Technical preparation

Reporter:

Technical preparation was another important task in the pre-development phase. Since this on-line learning highly involved computer conferencing, the computer system was very important. For the “US University,” this was not a big problem. The latest system with appropriate speed and technology was in place. The University has a computer lab and a Local Area Network.

The only problem faced by the US University was the lack of technical support from the University's personnel. The number of technical support staff is very small and they only managed to give partial help.

This was discussed in several meetings and one of the decisions to overcome this problem was to bring a technical expert on the team. This is how the technical expert came in to join the team in the middle of the project.

To ensure that the Counterpart University had the system in place, the US team leader tried to explore their readiness, in fact, from the beginning of the project. One of the very first e-mails sent to the "Asian University" on March 7th 1998 indicated:

Finally, we would need to know what kind of computer and communication technology and capacity you have at XXXXX." I will be meeting with our technical expert in a few weeks to learn more about the specific questions I should be asking you, but any information you could supply for now would be helpful.

(E-mail 5/7/ 1998)

There was no response to this specific question in any of their e-mails until December 1998. In an e-mail sent by the "Asian University" on December 9, 1998, the team leader explained that they were in the process of implementing university-wide internet connectivity. The e-mail stated:

I am pleased to note that from your side pro-active strategies are going on. We are also in the process of implementing the university wide Internet connectivity. Our Internet and Intranet will become operational within the next three month. Up to that time, I will be using my own e-mail and operating from my residence most of the time.

(E-mail 12/ 9/ 1998)

In an interview, the "Asian University" team leader acknowledged that technology was one of the major issues. He stated:

The only difficulty faced in this university is the technology, whereby sophisticated technology is not yet available. Most of the time, work is being done from home computers rather than the office, since home

computers are more effective, convenient and preferably better than the ones in the office. (Interview No. 4)

Analyst:

This indicated that the “Asian University” was still having a challenge in their computer network system. They had been struggling almost a year to develop the system. This project was an opportunity for them to speed up their computer system development.

Reporter:

It was expected that by March 1999, the computer system at the “Asian University” would be ready. There was no news on it, however, until April 1999. To clarify the situation, the “US University” team leader expressed this issue again in a diplomatic way in one of her e-mails:

How is the installation of your computer system progressing at the University? Sometimes that process is slower than anticipated. When appropriate, please let us know the details about your system, so we can work better with you.

(E-mail 4/29/1999)

In May, 1999 there was a good news from the “Asian University.” The team leader sent an e-mail explaining the status of the computer system and also a new opportunity that evolved in their community that would help the university. In his e-mail he stated:

I take this opportunity to inform you that our collaborative program is moving on. Our University’s campus-wide computerization is on and hopes to be finished soon.

Our effort to process model and micro-monitor the on-line course on Adult Learning and Development has resulted in a multiplier effect. I was able to prevail upon my senior Professor, and he has started an Internet Community College with two field populations for process modeling and micro-monitoring on-line courses for our state’s rural population.

In this context, I am to inform you that the XXXXXX (a telephone company) is likely to enter into agreement with the state government to set up one thousand community Internet centers during this year and 5000 such centers within the next four years. The projection shows a manpower requirement to the tune of one hundred fifty thousand people. These people have to be trained along with other modes of training through on-line courses. This exercise will be implemented by the Internet Community College and a newly proposed Internet Research unit. In addition to this a virtual XXXXXX Internet University that xxxxx speaking people around the globe can access is another pioneering work.

Analyst:

This was an excellent development. This was an unanticipated project result. Look what evolved from this collaboration effort. It has not only benefited this project, but also the future of the “Asian University.” The commitment from private sector and state government was really timely. There was another collaborative effort going to take place. This will be a great motivating factor for other organizations to explore this kind of endeavor.

Development Phase

Two major tasks were involved in this phase: developing the Web site and developing the curriculum. Both tasks were pursued simultaneously. Most of the time the processes overlapped and occurred concurrently. The development phase started with the effort of developing the web site and then was followed by curriculum design and development. Currently development of the Web site is almost completed, whereas the curriculum development is still in progress. For the purpose of this study the process of curriculum development was reported based on available data at this time.

Developing the Web site

Reporter:

The first serious discussion on shaping the Web site started in the meeting on March 23, 1999. This discussion and working session continued in the several following meetings. An official request to use the university's servers to set up the site was made. It was accepted and an e-mail was received by the "US University" team leader from the university's computer center. The e-mail indicated:

The xxxxxxxx Web site has been set up on the xxxxxx server. You are linked to this it through your xxxxxx account. When you log into the xxxxx domain, you are connected to your H: drive, under which is a directory called "www" and under that a directory called "xxxxxx". This is the xxxxxxxxxxxx site. So you need to save all xxxxxx html files in this directory.

(E-mail 4/5/1999)

Analyst:

This was a great opportunity where the "US University" had the system in place and could also provide the account and space for the Web site. This was something meaningful that the "US University" could share with its counterpart university. The constraints such as slow system and limited bandwidth, as indicated by one of the on-line learning Web site, <http://www.newpromise.com> (1998), is an issue here. The "US University" also upgraded some of the computers in their computer lab with a better system. (Researcher's note, 22nd February 2000)

Reporter:

Several thorough discussions took place to decide the format for the Web site. The main concern was that the project involved different countries and cultures. It was very important to create a Web site that really was meaningful and easy to follow by everyone coming from different backgrounds. One of the major decisions regarding this issue was the decision to create a more user friendly Web site by using graphics rather than limiting it to text only.

A graphic artist was hired to help in developing this site. (Thanks to a mini grant received from the US University which was used to compensate the artist's help). The team graphically conceptualized the design and the layout of the campus. The graphic

artist produced multiple iterations for the team review and revision. There were several e-mail communications between the team members and the graphic artist and among team members. In addition to the e-mail communication among the team members, discussion also took place during the team meetings. Finally, the home page was pictured as a university campus with five main buildings: the administration building, classroom, resource center and library, cultural center, and chat. The “US University” team leader explained this to her counterpart from the “Asian University” through an e-mail sent on April 7, 1999:

I trust that all is well with you and your team. At this end we are moving ahead carefully (so as to ensure quality) with technological matters for our joint project. We have found a graphic artist who will custom design our home page for the on-line course so as to pictorially represent a university campus which will read University of XXXXXX/YYYYYY. The “campus” will have 5 buildings: 1. Classroom, 2. Library/Resource Center, 3. Administrative Building, 4. Cultural Center (with information on both countries), 5. Lounge/Chat rooms. So, one would be able to “click” on the library, for example, to get bibliographies, reading materials, etc. Also, links would be available to material on the Web. (See appendix F for the narration describing each building.) (E-mail 4/7/1999)

Analyst:

It was an excellent idea. Using graphics could lead to better communications, especially when different backgrounds and cultures were involved. Furthermore, the home page was custom-designed, and some parts of the design used the counterpart country’s (Asian) architecture (e.g. cultural center building). As indicated by Collis & Remmers (1997) sensitivity to cultural differences is an important aspect in developing on-line learning between different countries. Among the suggested ways to address that issue was the use of visualization, and this project was a good example.

Reporter:

Drafting and developing the home page was not an easy task. It took almost four months to complete the home page. Since there was no help from the University’s personnel, besides the graphic artist, a part time web designer was hired. Again, for this

purpose the mini grant was used. The part time web designer helped the team further develop the home page by posting the narration and linking the Web site to other related sites. He also helped in linking the classroom building to a conferencing software which was provided by the “US University.” He worked with the staff from the University in coordinating and helping the team.

The most difficult part in developing the home page was linking with the conferencing software. New conferencing software was provided by the university, but it was operated from the main campus and not at the branch campus where this on-line learning project was initiated. The staff at the branch campus was not in charge of that software. This created some difficulties. One of the issues was either to use the server at branch campus or at the main campus. To resolve this problem, the officers in charge at the main campus were contacted and several e-mail communications between the team leader, the Web designer, and the officers took place. There were 13 e-mail discussions back and forth regarding this issue. This is one of the e-mails from the computer center to the team at the branch campus, during the communications, and it is indicative of the problem:

Actually we do not run CCCC (the new software) on our server here. CCCC is entirely a campus application, so if you wished to use it, you would need to move your Web site to the servers on campus, get accounts through them, etc. The information Web site for CCCCC on campus is XXXXXXXX.

If you wish to keep your Web site here on our server, then your technician would need to use the tools that we have in place to construct the components of the site. We are using XXXXXX for our threaded discussion server, XXXXXXXX for listserv, XXXXXX for our web server.

(E-mail 5/27/1999)

Finally the problem was resolved with assistance from the main campus. It ended up by using the server at the branch campus, but the link to the software provided from the campus.

Analyst:

I can't understand why it took so long to resolve the problem. If we in this developed country still had this problem, can you imagine how the developing country will be? However, it was a good experience. According to the researcher's note, the actual problem was not the software, but there were "organizational politics" going on in the campus. This is something that has to be tackled carefully. It is a lesson that, in projects which involve large organizations there are some glitches that should be addressed carefully.

Reporter:

Before finalizing the home page, an e-mail was sent to the "Asian University" to inform the team of the progress made and to identify some of the technical issues. The e-mail stated:

We have been very busy drafting our course home page. In a week or two, we will have sample screen for you to test. First, we will want your input regarding the screen content and design. Then we will ask your feedback regarding the page as it is displayed on the screen. Last, we will ask your assistance with respects to the screen download time. Each screen might or might not have a different download time depending upon the resolution. We don't have enough experience to know for sure.

As you are probably aware, different browsers have different screen resolution. We want to find the optimum screen setting for both XXXXXX and here. Here again, your input is paramount.

Do you know the pixel resolution you will use at the University?

Do you know the version of Netscape in use there?

Is there someone to whom we should be directing these questions? I wouldn't want to bother you with these type of questions if there is someone else who should be responding.

(E-mail 5/25/1999)

There was no response to the above e-mail. Finally the home page and the description was sent to the "Asian University" for their review.

Analyst:

This again shows the concern of two-way collaboration. Everything we did in US needed to be consulted upon with our counterpart at the “Asian University.” The problem might have been that they still had not upgraded their university’s computer system. . At that stage they also may not have has an expert who could help on this project. However, after the training conducted by the technical expert from the US, the “Asian University” had recommended that one of their staff who joined the on-line training be appointed to in charge of technical matters for them. This helped.

Reporter:

Even though the “Asian University” did not respond to the e-mail, they did access the Web site. The head of the team from the “Asian University” had posted his welcome message indicating that they were ready to dialogue.

Analyst:

Perhaps they were still accessing from their home since the computer system of the university was still being upgraded. That might explain why they didn’t respond to the e-mail, but access and respond to the Web site. This should not be a major concern as long as they could participate in the discussion. Also their hope to get a bigger commitment from other agencies in upgrading the system was still open. When the Internet Community College project is ready, there will be a great impact on this project. Again we have to think about the future and move on.

Curriculum development

Reporter:

The thinking involved and the discussion which has transpired on the curriculum content for the proposed on-line project started as soon as the project began in 1998. Informal brainstorming sessions took place in several US team meetings. However, the first formal and serious discussion on curriculum content started on Jun 15, 1999. At the meeting all the US team members brainstormed some of the topics that should be considered. The meeting suggested that for piloting purposes, the team focus on one module. This would be developed further for the actual course. The suggested module would discuss two main topics: (See appendix G for the draft.)

1. Introduction to background on Philosophical Foundation

2. Learning from East and Western Philosophies

From the West, the philosophers that were suggested were Socrates/Plato and Dewey. From the East it was suggested that the “Asian University” propose the philosophers that they thought appropriate.

Analyst:

This is the reason why we needed two-way collaboration. Even though we might have knowledge about Eastern philosophy, the “Asian University” team are the ones who are well versed in this area. Their input was very important in this process. They had to suggest and select the appropriate philosophers. In fact, this was the agreement between the two teams. The US team would provide the Western content and the Asian team would propose the Eastern content. In one of the communications, the “Asian University” team leader had committed to this by informing and proposing an individual who is an expert in a specific Eastern philosopher. An e-mail sent by the Asian team leader indicated this:

Ms. GGGG when she was here handed over a file containing the background materials. I have gone through the papers. I was able to identify some interesting concepts and philosophical points that will be relevant for transpersonal studies from the East. As and when the conferencing program (.e. software) is ready I will communicate to you. I have also identified a competent resource person (specialist in XXXX – name of the Eastern philosophers) formally the Professor and Head and currently Professor Emeritus, Department of Adult and Continuing Education XXXXX University. She will be happy to participate in our program.

(E-mail 5/5/1999)

Reporter:

After the first draft, several other meetings and brainstorming sessions were conducted to refine the US part of the content. The meetings were on July 7th, 1999, July 21st, 1999 and November 10th, 1999. A revised draft from the US team was ready in December 1999 (See appendix H for the draft).

Analyst:

Designing the curriculum is a process. It takes a while. It seems it took almost six months to finalize the draft from the US. This was just the beginning and the discussions

were within the US team. After this, will be the interesting part when discussions go beyond the boundary of the Western territory.

Reporter:

The draft from the US team with explanation was posted on the conference site (See Appendix I for the draft). An e-mail was sent to the “Asian University” informing them of the ID and password and explaining how to access the site. The e-mail stated:

“Greetings! I hope that you, your family, and colleagues are all well as we begin this transition to 2000. Our technical matters seem to be faring quite well now, so we should be able to proceed with our on-line dialogue as we begin to co-design our proposed course: Adult Development & Learning: East and West.

I would first like to congratulate and thank you for assembling such a meaningful team from XXXXXX. It truly appears that we should be able to progress quite nicely now. I would be most appreciative if you could kindly provide us with their e-mail addresses so that we can give them proper access to our home page.

Also do let us know how your navigation of the site is proceeding. We would be happy to answer any questions you might have. Also, would you like us to orient your team in terms of navigating the software or do you think that it is self-explanatory. I have added your name to the Staff Information section. Please review that section and add to it as you see fit

To access:

(Contains detailed explanation on how to access the site)

(E-mail 2/2/2000)

The e-mail was responded to and the “Asian University” had given the e-mail addresses with further explanation.

I thank you very much for your e-mails. The following are e-mail addressess:

cccccccccccccccccc

cccccccccccccccccc

The messages should be sent to xxxxxxx. This e-mail address will temporally store the message and the hardcopy of the message will be sent to them for reply and the reply will be e-mailed to you. This sort of interfacing is necessitated due to the slip in the schedule to implement the university-wide Internet. I am available in my present e-mail address.

Mrs IIIIII will assume the responsibility of uploading and coordinating the program. Recently she, along with other staff members of the Internet Community College, moved to a new location where the infrastructure and computers for organizing the on-line program will not be the problem. Please wait for her to send the address for further working arrangements.

I assure you that we will do our best to make the program s success.

(E-mail 2/8/2000)

Analyst:

At this stage, they were still struggling with the Internet. However, they were faring much better. The other two members gained access to e-mail, but have to go through storage that will delay the process. The team leader has Internet access at his home. Ms IIIIII (one of the team members who successfully completed the training conducted by US team technical expert) really benefited from the training. It looked like she was handling the technical matters. The Internet Community College was also progressing and this would lend a great impact to the on-line learning project. The Internet Community College actually resulted from this on-learning collaboration project.

Reporter:

Meanwhile the “Asian University” had discussed the curriculum content within their team. An e-mail was to the “US team” reporting the progress.

I am happy to inform you that the XXXXX team is psychologically ready to proceed further. I have informed Dr.RRRRRRR and Dr. JJJJJJJJ about your suggestion that SSSSSSS and AAAAAAA be the choice for Eastern philosophy. They are in agreement with you. As informed, Dr.RRRRRRR will deal with SSSSS philosophy and DR. JJJJJJ will deal with AAAAAA with a slant towards the psychoanalytical aspect.

I am in the process of circulating your papers sent through Ms GGGGG for favour of the faculty to finalise the framework. In the meanwhile, after going through your papers, I thought it fit to have a multi-threaded discussion among the members of the two teams on the following;

1. The meaning of transpersonal – East & West
2. The state of mind – the spectrum of human consciousness – personal ego versus self
3. Maslow's theory on the hierarchy of needs – the universality versus the flexibility in two different cultures
4. Pragmatic versus ideal aspect of ego – cutting of personal ego – implications for leading a materialistic life with a philosophical bent
5. The concept of learning and development from the XXXXX perspective dealing with the stages of adulthood and philosophy of time, pleasure, and work from the orthodox, heterodox and cultural view points

Whatever information that I can gather I will be happy to share with you and hope that any doubts of mind will be clarified by you.”
(E-mail 2/21/2000)

Analyst:

This was a great response. The word “psychologically ready” meant a lot. They were really ready to proceed. Besides struggling with various kinds of challenges, especially technology, they were ready to move further developing the curriculum. They also had discussions within the group and came out with a great suggestion. After this advance, a discussion that involved all team members from both sides would be conducted through conferencing. Now is the challenge of discussing from different perspectives through on-line technology. In collaboration, different parties come together with one common interest. The common interest in this project was designing a curriculum, which included two perspectives, a “collaborative” approach and not a “comparative” approach. A comparative approach would be just comparing two

different perspectives but a collaborative approach meant developing a curriculum from both perspectives that blends together.

This event will be very interesting. Unfortunately this study could not include the findings from this experience, since the discussions have not yet started. A recommendation for further study will be made in Chapter V.

Conclusion

Analyst:

Before moving further in discussing the challenges, it is important to address the positive aspect of this project. What sustained this project, beyond all the challenges and struggles?

This was something unique. It has been two years since this project was first launched in early 1998. According to the US team leader, the key for this success was the enthusiasm, motivation, and understanding. She said:

The easy part about it was receiving the enthusiastic communication from XXXXX knowing they really wanted to do this. We did not have to seek or try to convince anyone about anything. It just evolved as a very natural process; we knew their motivation was there. So, I would say the easier part was the motivation to continue. Because all of us were quite tied up with workloads and all of us were doing this as an extra – we almost had a tacit understanding here – mutual respect. We didn't get tired. The teams from both universities perceived each other as partners and equally motivated. If this takes a while, no one is pushing the others. We knew at a time months passed by, and we did not hear from them, and they did not hear from us. But we all knew that the motivation was there, the commitment was there – this was a tacit understanding.

(Interview No. 1)

Another team members from the “US University” stated:

What made this project well, I believe was the thorough good will and the degree to which everybody was involved and committed. In think both

sides wanted this. I thoroughly believed that the XXXXXX contingent wanted it very much. We all wanted this work to succeed.

(Interview No. 2)

The head of the “Asian University” described this as a new endeavor that they had never done before. He was very confident that this project would help their department and they were hoping for the success. He explained:

This project will help the Department to get oriented to the new vistas of Adult Learning such as on-line and collaborative learning, which will in turn help the Department to develop on-line programs for the beneficiaries from trade and industry as well as the rural areas.

...Hope this project will soon become a successful as well as a unique International program.

(Interview No. 4)

The success and sustainability of this project was really based on the commitment and motivation from both teams. Both teams consisted of people who were really interested in the project and they were working on a voluntary basis. There was no monetary reward. So this was another uniqueness of this project.

Research Question 2

What are the challenges faced during the process of developing and designing the on-line course?

Several challenges and opportunities were identified in the process of developing this on-line course. Data from interviews, e-mails, meeting notes and researcher's experience were analyzed through a coding process. A key word “challenges” was used in the coding process. From this process, a list of challenges was revealed. To further categorize these challenges, the specific guidelines from research questions were used. The categorizations are:

1. Communication and Cultural Differences
2. Development in Technology
3. Expertise (Technical and Curriculum)
4. Institutional procedures, regulation, and managerial practices

5. Geographical location and time.
6. Financial
7. Others

Communication and Cultural Challenges

Reporter:

Continuous communication was a very important activity in developing the on-line course. The progress of the project was heavily dependent on the effectiveness of communication between and within the groups. For this purpose, the “US University” had suggested the establishment of a listserv for the groups. This would have been an opportunity to work in distance and on-line. However, this opportunity in communication became a challenge at the early phase of the project. The “US University” had sent several e-mails to “Asian University” to get their team member’s e-mail addresses. In their response, only three forwarded their e-mail addresses. The other two were not mentioned. Even though the “US University” several time requested addresses, they never come through by the end of the 1998. Finally, when one of the team members from the “US University” visited the “Asian University, she found that most of the team members in the “Asian University” did not have their own e-mail addresses. The team leader who normally communicates with the “US University” was using e-mail from his home.

Analyst:

This was not only a challenge in communication. Of course this communication issue affected and slowed the process of developing the on-line course. However, there was another issue involved here – it is a cultural issue. Based on the researcher’s experience being from an Eastern culture, it is difficult to expose unreadiness when you first get in touch with other people. For them it is much better to keep quiet and try to fix the weakness as soon as possible. This is something different with the people in the West, where they are more open and straightforward.

However, the scenario was different after almost a year of collaborating on the project. The “Asian University” team did mention that they had problems with the computer and the internet at the university that they were trying to fix. At this point, they were comfortable enough to share their situation with the counterpart university. This

was a very sensitive issue. The patience and understanding from the “US University” and the honesty and trust from “Asian University” sustained the project.

Reporter:

There was another communication issue. At the beginning of the project, the e-mail communication between the “US University” and the “Asian University” was quite slow. At that time the head of the “Asian University” was using the university’s e-mail. It took a long time to get a response from him. The head of the “US University” once called him using voice mail to find out the delay. The head of “Asian University” explained that the e-mail couldn’t be accessed directly. All the e-mail went to the storage at the server and then it was printed and sent as a hard copy to the receiver.

Analyst:

Of course that would delay the communication. It took time for them to get the hard copy. However, this was resolved when the head of the “Asian University” team had his own Internet access at home. Now, the other two Asian team members are still using the same method of receiving e-mail at the university.

Development in Technology

Development in technology was one of the major challenges. For the “Asian University” they were really struggling with this problem. The university does not yet have an updated computer system although they are working on it. The head of the “Asian University” admitted this as one of the major problems. He stated:

The only difficulty faced in XXXXXX is the technology, whereby sophisticated technology is not yet available. Most of the time, work is being done from home computer rather than the office, since home computers are more effective, convenient and preferably better than the one in the office.

(Interview No. 4)

Analyst:

The “Asian University” really faced a big challenge in the development of the technology. This has been described in quite detail in the first part of this chapter. This challenge did affect the progress of this project, especially at the beginning. Computer

technology, however, developed very fast. As described in the Web site, <http://www.newpromice.com> (1998) using the old technology system is one of the major constraints in on-line learning programs.

Expertise (Technical and Curriculum)

Reporter:

Expertise in the curriculum was not a challenge in this project. Both parties have expertise in the area of Adult Learning and Development. In addition, the “Asian University” also managed to identify expertise for the specific philosophers that they decided to include in the curriculum.

Regarding the technical expertise, it seems both parties are facing problems. At the beginning the “Asian University” did not have any technical expertise on their team. However, in the middle of the project, one of the team members was assigned to be in charge of the technical aspect. This team member attended the training offered by the expertise from the “US University”

The “US University” had to bring expertise from outside the university to join the team. In addition to this, they had to hire a graphic artist and web designer. The university could not be much help because of the shortage of technical support personnel.

Analyst:

This is an interesting phenomenon. This project was initiated by a group of scholars in Adult Learning and Development. Of course they do not have much of a problem in the curriculum area. But they started a good journey by selecting on-line learning even though they did not have extensive computer technology background.

This should be a great accomplishment for them. This also shows that technical expertise knowledge is not a must in developing on-line learning. With a basic knowledge of computers, they could hire people from outside or invite expertise onto their team. However, it is also very important to differentiate between the purely technical issue and the pedagogical issue related to the technical aspects. In this context, preparing and operating the Web page and the computer are technical aspects but designing the learning experience using the computer is a pedagogical issue. The experience in this pedagogical aspect is much more important for successfully designing effective learning

experience. For the technical preparation, technical experts can be hired, but the pedagogical aspect should be explored intensively by the team members. In this context, the training provided by the technical expert from US which included the pedagogical aspect was useful for the team members.

Reporter:

Working with technical people was also a challenge, especially within young technicians. The “US University” experienced some problems working with the web designer that they hired for this project. The technical expert from the “US University” expressed her frustration regarding this. In an e-mail to the team leader she stated:

I have the most difficult time with young techies. They just won't listen! How many times did I say “Please go look at it” (the xxx example). After two seconds of viewing the screen we came to resolution. Shheesh! He was blowing things out of proportion and describing java programming that was much too complicated for what we wanted. “Split screens.” There was no reason to do that. Just go look at the example and see how simply elegant the implementation is. KISS.

All that yada yada yada. Just stop talking and trying to impress everyone. Be still and really listen to the questions. You asked him if a mouse-over screen would take too long to load. His first response was no. Then he reversed himself and later said, yes it would. He wasn't listening to you. I truly believe had we continued to dialogue, he would have reversed himself yet again!

(Interview No. 2)

Analyst:

Working with people who are very highly “technically” oriented, normally one could face this kind of challenge. This illustrates the importance of human relations among the technical people. To get someone who has both technical expertise and human relations expertise is sometimes quite difficult. So, the team had to accommodate to this kind of situation.

Institutional Procedures

Reporter:

During this project the “Asian University” did not mention any problem with their institution’s regulations. However, it seems they may not have much problem with higher officials and the system. The process of signing the MOU went through smoothly without much concern.

For the “US University” the only problem was during the discussion to use the software for conferencing. The procedures were not clear, and the team had to spend much time to figure out this issue. Even though finally it was resolved, the time was wasted. The details about this issue were described in the first part of this chapter.

Analyst:

This was an administrative issue. It was quite disturbing that the team had to spent that much time on it.

Financial

Since a financial commitment was not made in the MOU, there was no discussion on financial issues with the “Asian University.” However, they exerted proactive efforts by seeking financial aid from other agencies. The effort is still in the progress.

On the US part, they started this project with a small mini grant. They used the funds for hiring a graphic artist and web designer. They really need further help in getting more funds for the project. The head of the “US University” in her interview admitted this and said a discussion with the University to get more funding is in process, as one effort to seek external funding.

There was a meeting with an official from the University in February, 2000. In the meeting, the official explained the possibility of getting funding for this project. Paper work was prepared and the effort is still in the process.

Analyst:

Actually there are many funding opportunities available for on-line learning projects. The US team in the beginning already assigned a team member to work on external funding. Again, maybe because of time constraints, the team member did not manage to work anything out.

Geographical Location and Time Differences

Reporter:

There was a time difference between the two countries. The Asian country is over ten hours ahead of the US. This was one of the concerns during the discussion on planning real chat session and telephone conferences. The conference would have to be set for either early in the morning or late at night. So far there have been no conference scheduled.

Analyst:

This is one of the of constraints, especially when using the chat session either in designing or piloting the on-line learning. This may be well limit the frequency of synchronized sessions.

Conclusion

This on-line learning project was a great experience for both groups. The detailed process described in this chapter shows that many events have taken place during the development process. Some of the experiences were very new for the team members and it was enriching. Commitment, motivation, and understanding were the main reasons for this project's sustainability. There were challenges but none of them extremely affected the project.

Chapter V

Summary and Recommendation

Summary

Collaboration in distance learning and higher education has been practiced for decades. The last ten years, however, has witnessed a substantial growth in collaboration in distance learning (Calvert, Evans & King, 1993). Studies have show that establishing collaboration involves several processes from the idea's inception to implementation. Studies also indicated collaboration between institutions provided benefit for both organizations involved.

However, in the literature the practice of collaboration in education especially in curriculum was mostly presented in the form of either franchising or twinning. In both instances one of the institutions provided the opportunity for the other institution to collaborate with it (Lines & Clarke, 1996). The form of collaboration merely refers to a one-way collaboration.

With the exception of the case study by Dhanarajan & Guiton (1993) on the sharing of learning materials among universities in three countries, little was written in the literature about two-way collaboration in actually co-designing the curriculum especially involving two different countries or cultures. This study filled that gap as an effort to explore the concept and practice of two-way collaboration involving different countries and cultures. This research was a case study on collaboration between two universities, one from the USA and the one from one of the Asian countries, involving the co-design of an on-line learning experience. Data were gathered from multiple resources, including interviews as well as the micro-monitoring process of team meetings, e-mails, and other communications.

Analysis of the data revealed three main phases: initiation, pre-development, and development. The initiation phase involved the process of mutual exploration between the two universities. Clearly, the key factor that motivated this collaboration was professional and intellectual development not a profit orientation or business purpose.

In the second phase, pre-development, major tasks were: negotiating and exploring, proposing the actual project, seeking financial resources, organizing the team, exchanging syllabi and documents, setting the communication method, drafting the Memorandum of Understanding and having it signed by the highest official of each university, visiting the counterpart university, conducting initial team member training, and technical preparation. E-mail correspondence was the major communication method used extensively during these two phases.

The development phase consisted of two major tasks: developing a custom-designed home page followed by developing the curriculum. The development of the home page was led by the United States university with review and corroboration from the “Asian University.” Curriculum development was a co-designing effort, in which both universities were equally involved in contributing to the course content’s foundation. Development and designing processes took place through an on-line conferencing method and via e-mail communications.

This study found that several issues challenged the process of developing the on-line learning experience. The major challenge was the technical aspect. The “Asian University,” which collaborated in this project, seemed to be facing problems in the development of the required technology. However, the challenges were beyond their control.

The other areas of challenges identified were issues of cultural differences, availability of expertise, institutional procedures, and financial and time differences. These challenges were minor and were addressed effectively without much impact to the project.

This collaboration effort was a pioneering project, which had lasted more than two years at the time of this report, and the development process is still in progress. Despite all the challenges the project was still sustainable. Reasons for this appeared to be the motivation, commitment, and understanding among the team members from both parties.

Reflection

The project chosen for this case study was a seminal effort between two countries different in culture, development, and time zone location. One represented the Western

developed country and the other represented one of the Eastern developing countries. The process of collaboration between the two institutions from two countries studied in this case has contributed to the research literature and the field of practice as discussed below.

This study extended the concept of collaboration in higher education identified in the literature. In general practice, collaboration in higher education referred to franchising and twinning where the profit and economic factor is an integral part of the decision to proceed or continue the project. This study deepened the concept of two-way collaboration because it involved two universities in two countries from different backgrounds co-designing, co-developing and piloting an on-line distance learning in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.

For the most part, the literature suggested that the most common purpose and interest in collaboration were motivated by economic factors or in some cases were profit oriented (Moran, 1993, Neil, 1981, Gray, 1985, Abramson, Bird, & Stenett, 1996). This study showed a difference from the above interpretation. The collaboration effort in this study was neither economically motivated nor profit-oriented. The main factors that motivated the two professional groups were intellectual and professional development. If profit had been the purpose, the project would not have been sustained for two years without any commitment for monetary return.

This study confirmed the recommendations made by Collin & Remmers (1997) about the importance of developing and using a site made especially for cross-cultural participation in on-line learning when involving different people with different backgrounds. It is a challenge to use standard learning materials for multi-cultural groups or learners. This case study indicated that cultural sensitivity is very vital when designing and developing such learning experiences.

The TeleScopia Project (Collin & Remmers, 1997, p.87) recommended that one of the ways to address the multi-cultural issue in on-line learning is the “use of visualization to replace or supplement text.” This case study confirmed the above recommendation. The case study revealed that the use of visuals in the form of a graphic campus home page that reflected the cultural differences was considered a great impact to the on-line learning.

In this study the nature of the initiation phase was different from that studied by Dhanarajan & Guiton (1993) and Lines & Clarke (1996). In those studies, the initiation phase involved extensive negotiations including needs assessment, formal relationships, and commitment for financial and other resources. In this study the initiation was very simple and based primarily on professional understanding without any needs analysis or legal binding activities. Commitments, which were more in the format of a “gentlemen’s agreement,” were only addressed after the initiation phase through the Memorandum of Understanding.

Another aspect where this study’s results differed from other recommendations was the nature and purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding. In franchising the MOA is as an implementation agreement which includes detailed aspects of implementation and financial commitment. The MOU for the collaboration in this study was not an implementation agreement. Rather, it took the format of long-term general guidelines.

This study also contributed to the literature by broadening and deepening the concept of internationalizing the curriculum. The concept of internationalizing the curriculum discussed (Englis, 1995, Wheeler, 1990, Lim, 1995,) in the practice (Umakosi, Meng, Meng & Liang, 1997) and in the literature usually refers to an infusing approach. The infusing approach (Harari, 1981) refers to the process of inserting existing materials and/or disciplines into the higher education curriculum without additional dialogue. Other approaches suggested were the comparative, issue-oriented, and civilization studies approaches. The main characteristic of all these approaches is adopting or adapting international elements into the curriculum.

This project went beyond the infusion approach to embrace a deeper concept of internationalizing the curriculum. In the co-designing process the curriculum itself was designed in a collaborative manner. Both parties contributed to the proposed on-line course’s content. Unlike infusion, this effort involved mutual inquiry from the beginning. Understanding and learning about each other through an open dialogue in the design process provided a more integrated international curriculum. This international and multi-cultural orientation applied not only to the content of the curriculum and the manner in which it was designed, but also to other aspects of the endeavor such as the establishment

of a cultural center, the homepage, availability of “chats” for co-design and dialogue purposes, etc.

In addition to deepening the concept of internationalizing the curriculum this study also confirmed some of the strategies in the internationalization of higher education. The concept of internationalization of higher education provided by Viers (1998) and Carlton (1997) suggested student exchanges and faculty exchanges among the components. In this study the Memorandum of Understanding also suggested these two components as part of a long-term strategy for internationalization.

Toward the Future

The results of this study suggested an emerging process framework, which will need more time for development and will be the focus of a follow up sequel. The process framework could be meaningful and useful for future practice and research. In developing such a process framework, the three phases involved in developing the on-line learning would be considered interrelated as they are not arranged in a completely chronological order. The phases were initiation, pre-development and development. The initiation phase merely involved the process of exploring the collaboration opportunity. The pre-development phase, focused on negotiation, proposing the project, searching financial resources, organizing the teams, exchanging syllabi, drafting and signing the MOU, visits, training and technical preparation. The development phase focused on the development of the curriculum and the Web site.

The three developmental phases were replete with multiple challenges, such as communication and cultural challenges, issues in the development of technology, expertise, institutional procedures, geographical location and time and financial. Some of these challenges have been resolved or addressed throughout the two-way collaboration effort. These challenges would be depicted in the form of challenge questions one would professionally ask during each phase.

Recommendation for the Field of Practice

Reflection on this study resulted in the following recommendations. However, it is important to state that these findings are not generalizable but are provided as guideposts.

1. This study has identified some of the challenges that evolved from the project. To address these challenges, for a similar project in the future, the following recommendations may be beneficial:
 - a. Technical issue

Since the technical issue was a major challenge, it is suggested to identify means and ways to improve the technical infrastructure from the beginning, in fact, prior to the collaboration.
 - b. Technical expertise was very important in this project. Bringing a technical expert into the team as early as possible is suggested. In addition, basic technical and on-line experience training for the team members would be helpful.
2. This project involved adults as learners and designers of the on-line learning. On-line learning is usually perceived more as a technical than as a human relations endeavor. Thus, observing the practice of adult learning principles in an on-line learning experience is recommended. Questions to raise include: to what extent could adult learning principles be implemented? What are the challenges? Operationally this project operated on the principle of mutual inquiry, which was a start in that direction.
3. Since this project resulted from a study tour, it is suggested to have more study abroad opportunities among adult learning students and professionals in order to explore other possibilities in collaboration.
4. To formalize the on-line learning course developed through this project, for the future, it is suggested to offer the course as an International Adult Learning course at universities. The two universities that initiated the project should pioneer this effort.

Recommendation for Further Research

This study was limited to the design and development of an on-line learning course between two different countries. The findings revealed from this study were also limited to the design phase. In fact, the process of development is still in progress, especially the co-design of the curriculum. It is suggested to further study the piloting and implementation of the on-line learning project. In addition, it also important to further monitor the co-design of the curriculum in order to accomplish the whole developmental phase.

Two countries involved in this study represented a developed Western country and a developing Eastern country. Different combinations and backgrounds of countries may have resulted in different findings. Further study of the following combinations are suggested:

Among Western countries (developed and developing)

Between developed Western country and developed Eastern country

Between developing Western countries and developed Eastern country

Among Eastern countries (developed and developing)

This collaboration involved countries in the same discipline or area of practice. If different countries could establish collaboration beyond all the challenges, it would be interesting to inquire about the possibilities of collaboration between different schools of thought in multiple disciplines. Some disciplines are extremely compartmentalized. For example in medicine: modern practice and traditional healing. Both areas have made significant contributions to human health, not necessarily in a complementary manner. Such collaboration might provide greater contributions for world health and understanding.

Insights

This research involved a cross-cultural context in which an on-line learning project between two different countries has been investigated. Being involved in this form of research was a unique experience. My background exposure to both cultures (born and brought up in Eastern culture and spent almost three an half years living in the western culture) helped me accomplish the task in much more meaningful manner.

Without having a reasonable understanding of both cultures, I would not have been able to explore the differences and cross-cultural issues that underline this study.

Actually, experiencing the cultural differences with regard to organizational and communication issues was especially germane. One of the findings from this study, which was about the e-mail issue, was a good example to address this statement. The finding indicated that the “Asian University” did not respond to the request for their e-mail addresses mainly because some of the team members did not have their own e-mail addresses at the university. The team leader that normally communicates with the “US University” team was using his own computer at home. However, the “Asian University” team did not explain the situation and this created misconception among the “US University” team members. Understanding different cultural perspectives was very crucial in this context. Based on researcher’s experience being from an Eastern culture, it is difficult to expose unreadiness when you first get in touch with other people. For them it is much better to keep silence and try to fix the weakness as soon as possible. This is something different with the Western people, where they are more open and straightforward.

From this experience, I became acutely aware that a cultural difference is not just a language difference. It goes beyond language and involves almost all aspects of life including the way of thinking, the way of learning, and the way of performing a task. To conduct research, which involves cross-cultural issues, it is important for the researcher to have a well-versed understanding of both cultures.

In addition to the cultural issues, the manner of presenting the data was equally meaningful. The data in the chapter IV were presented in two different voices: the voice of reporter and the voice of analyst. Through this data presenting technique, the researcher tried to invite the reader to look and understand the data from two different perspectives. This technique also provides an opportunity to the reader to understand the findings from a much broader and global perspective. From the reporter’s voice, the reader could see the chronological events and descriptions. Whereas the “analyst voice” invited the reader to interpret the meaning of the reporter’s descriptive portion.

For me, presenting the data in this manner was a great challenge. It was quite difficult to play two different roles back and forth at the same time. A very critical

minded and objective thinking was really needed in order to effectively and successfully present the data in this way. Despite the challenges, the researcher really enjoyed the experience and gained a new perspective in dealing with this type of data presentation. Reporting the data from the reporter's voice was straightforward task where the raw data was analyzed and reported descriptively in a chronological order. A very different approach was involved in reporting the analyst's voice. The analyst has to fully understand the reporter's voice and then try to explore and interpret the meaning beyond the descriptive portion. The interpretation process of the analyst drew, in varying degrees, from the data presented by the reporter and other sources, such as the related literature and the analyst's own professional experience and judgment. In this process, the researcher's experience especially the background knowledge in the field and the cultural experience was really helpful.

At some point in presenting the data, the voices engage in a dialogue with each other especially in further clarifying and discussing some of the issues. Creating such a dialogue also needs an intensive understanding of the data, the field, and the cultural issues, besides a creative way of writing.

It was the researcher's hope that in addition to the finding from this study, the manner of presenting the data and the cross-cultural issues that have been focused will be a meaningful contribution of this study and to research methodology.