



Flexible Learning Project Completion Report

Report Completion Date: (2015/04/16)

1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

1.1. General Information

Project Name: 2013FL1_ARTS_Burk

Principal Investigator: Stefania Burk

Team Members (Table 1.1) - (Please fill in the following table)

Table 1.1 - Roles and Responsibilities of the Project Team

Individual	Title/Affiliation	Responsibilities
Stefania Burk	Senior Instructor, Asian Studies	Instructor/course developer
Ken Bryant	Associate Professor, Asian Studies	Instructor/course developer
Roselynn Verwood	CTLT	Pedagogy/curriculum consultation
Lucas Wright	CTLT	Tech/Connect consultation

Project Initiation Date: July 2013	Project Completion Date: December 2013
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1.2. Project Summary - Asia 222 and 223 were two new team-taught courses offered through Asian Studies starting in Sep 2013. Asia 222 aimed to deepen students’ knowledge of at least two Asian cultures (e.g., India and Japan). The course design project’s goal was to integrate learning experiences that involved intercultural exchange and inquiry into the way students engaged with the course materials and one another through group work (collaborative testing), group projects, and self-/peer-evaluation assessments. Support for developing specific aspects of Asia 222, in particular, was required.

1.3. Student Impact (Table 1.2) - Please fill in the following table for the period of time when your project was active. [Note: Adapt this section to the context of your project if this table does not capture the nature of it].

Table 1.2 - Student Impact

Course	Section	Enrollment	Term	Type of Implementation (pilot, full transformation, use of online resource, etc.)
ASIA 222		39[2013]/41[2014]	1	Piloted collaborative testing, group project/gallery/self & peer-evaluation,
ASIA 223		8[2013]/8[2014]	1	Piloted intensive peer-evaluation and writing blogs



2. PRODUCTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

2.1. Products and Achievements - Please update the project products and achievements as necessary and indicate the corresponding implementation date [Examples: 10 online interactive lecture modules (SEPT-DEC 2013); A fully flipped course (JAN-APR 2014); Piloted two-stage midterms and final exam (SEPT-DEC 2013)]. Also please indicate the current location of such products [Examples: Department website, Connect, shared workspace, etc.].

Table 2.1 – Products and Achievements

Product(s)/Achievement(s):	Implementation Date:	Location:
The development of a course shell in Connect that includes blog, discussion board, and group functionality for submission and display of student work.	September 2013	Connect
The development of course learning assessments in the form of six sets of individual and group quizzes that provide learners with the opportunity to assess their learning and to teach and learn from each other	September 2013	Classroom
The development of self-reflective assignments and collaborative group projects & on-line "gallery"	September 2013	Connect
Minimal support (in the form of UBC blogs, Connect surveys, etc.) & training and set-up for the development of Asia 223 which will complement Asia 222, and which will be offered in September 2013	September 2013	Connect

2.2. Item(s) not Met - Please list all of the intended project products and achievements that were not attained and the reason(s) for this.

Table 2.2 – Item(s) not met

Item(s) Not Met:	Reason:
The development of approximately three to five videos of the instructors interviewing each other and posing questions to each other about their different perspectives on foundational texts from India and Japan.	Instructor health issues/timing



3. PROJECT SUPPORT – *Please provide feedback on the support you received during the life of your project, as applicable. Did the received support meet your needs and expectations? What can you recommend to improve the support process?*

Dr. Bryant and I received excellent support from both Lucas and Roselynn. They not only worked well together and complemented one another in terms of their areas of expertise, but they were flexible in dealing with our needs, (lack of) expertise, time schedules, etc. Due to some extended travel schedules and health issues, we weren't able to pursue all of the technical support Lucas was set to provide—especially vis-à-vis producing videos to be provided to students prior to in-class meetings. Even if we hadn't encountered the obstacles we did, however, I think Dr. Bryant and I would have only ventured minimally into that arena due to the fact that the course already presented us with so many *new* aspects: team-teaching, new course materials that each of us needed to familiarize ourselves with, producing course materials, and focusing on the group-work aspect of the course.

Roselynn's feedback on the syllabus and how to align our course activities with stated course objectives was particularly helpful. We had so many ideas and initially were trying to do much (too many activities and assignments); she helped us refine the syllabus and think about why and how best to use group activities, self- & peer-evaluation without making the course too demanding or confusing for students. I am sure the syllabus was measurably improved by her many iterations of feedback.

I can only speak from this experience, however, I found the support to be excellent and the knowledge and strategies gained can and have been implemented in other courses and shared with colleagues. In other words, it is not only the specific course/project that benefits from this kind of consultation. The ideas and feedback can be generalized and inform other courses/projects. Also, working with this team was particularly useful in our case. Dr. Bryant was more interested in and adept at the technology side; whereas, my own interests had more to do with pedagogy and course design. Lucas and Roselynn were able to work both individually and together with us as needed. If I have one word of caution, it is that for first-timers in such a process, the wide range of possibilities (both in terms of tech and design) can be overwhelming. It is important, I think, to stay focused on a few innovations/project components—both for the success of the project and also for student learning. Too many new things in a new course/project can at times dilute the success/effectiveness of the individual components. The key, then, is to have—as we did—an initial meeting or two that simply presents but then narrows down the points of particular need for development and consultation. Certainly, it was useful to be introduced to a wider range of options than was necessary. This knowledge lingers and can be returned to in future projects. Establishing working relationships with experts in CTLT has also been an invaluable resource in the two years since our meetings ended. These projects should be (even if small, as was ours) an excellent way to draw in new faculty, who are not yet well-versed in all of the course design, pedagogy, and technology resources available.

4. PROJECT EVALUATION

4.1. Project Outcomes (Table 5.1) - *Please list the intended outcomes or benefits of the project for students, TAs and/or instructors. Also include the indicators used to guide your evaluation, and what constitutes your project's success.*

Table 5.1 – Evaluation and Indicators



<p>Intended Outcomes (e.g., increased active in-class participation)</p>	<p>Indicator(s) (e.g., number of students participating in class; quality of the interventions)</p>	<p>What constitutes “success”? (e.g., larger numbers of students participating in class; greater integration of content in their comments/questions; 10% attendance increase)</p>
<p>1. Increased active in-class participation</p>	<p>Collaborative testing (bi-weekly) increased class discussion significantly as well as improved student – student discussion/debate.</p>	<p>Sense of camaraderie increased after initial hesitation at new testing format; greater sense of “belonging” to the class (attendance, support, etc.); stronger students helped others while simultaneously improving their own understanding (as shown in quantitative data).</p>
	<p>Post-test discussions enlivened by group dynamic established in groups and earlier in-group discussion (with no faculty intervention). Groups became invested in supporting their choices.</p>	<p>Attendance may have improved (certainly so on test days); but can’t absolutely link to collaborative testing (or any testing)</p> <p>Provides better review of material and applications by having multiple ways (during collaborative test within group; after test between groups) to approach materials and recall important elements and common errors, etc.</p>
<p>2. Collaborative work among diverse student groups to increase “perspective taking” and intercultural understanding.</p>	<p>Teacher-selected groups (via an entry survey that determined linguistic, cultural, academic, and other background/experience) worked well to form groups that included male and female students; domestic and international students; Arts and students from other faculties; and various kinds of expertise in South vs. East Asian studies, etc.) allowed students to teach other students and to bring their own knowledge (linguistic/cultural/academic) to the classroom work.</p>	<p>Students could become “experts” (I know the Japan stuff better/ I get the religion stuff / I am interested in the gender aspect, etc.) and could share this knowledge/perspective while benefitting from the knowledge in other areas of their peers.</p> <p>Their work could illustrate what they were able to do in the first solo test vs. the second post-discussion re-take of the test.</p> <p>Final group projects similarly asked students to negotiate their intersecting areas of interest to come up with a multi-media project that investigated how the course materials (which focused on ancient foundational literary and religious texts) might shed light on intercultural experience in our world today (e.g. “yoga” culture in Vancouver; food/culture in restaurants; Asian-inspired clothing [kimono vs. sari]; temple culture, etc.)</p>



		<p>Students then had to divvy tasks and skills. I.e., not every student had to be involved in the written report aspect or the on-line blog/video design, etc. Collaborative work, time management, etc.</p> <p>For example, I found that group members were more eager to help one another and recognize the various / diverse skills of each member. So, a non-native speaker of English may have been more open to asking group-mates to check their work, since they had had an opportunity to “shine” as the one who had conducted interviews with community members in their native language; or the “hi-tech” member of the group was willing to help others build their part of the presentation, etc.</p>
<p>3. Reflective assessment of learning</p>	<p>Students had to compose self- and peer-evaluations for group members vis-à-vis both the 6 collaborative tests and group project. The vast majority did this with incredible candidness and articulated the strengths and weaknesses of themselves and their peers.</p>	<p>This helped them see the strengths and weaknesses of the group work and how it improved their studying. Some didn’t enjoy the experience (group project especially) but were given a chance to articulate this and reflect on <i>why</i> they don’t think it worked for them, etc.</p>
	<p>Students also “graded” the projects of other groups. Students came up with the evaluation criteria of this portion of the grade (whereas, students also were marked by the instructors with other criteria).</p>	<p>Students took the process of coming up with grading criteria seriously and learned that this kind of evaluation is inevitably somewhat objective and determined by one’s own interests/knowledge. Great pedagogical lesson!</p> <p>We were able to show them the “spread” of their evaluations and our own and have an interesting discussion about “value” and evaluation. We were also able to discuss the difference in the criteria/expectations of instructors vs. peers/students.</p>

5.2 Data Collection and Evaluation Methods - *Indicate your evaluation methods including who was responsible for the evaluation. Please describe the data collection strategies used, how the data was analyzed, and perceived limitations. Note: Please attach copies of data collection tools (e.g., surveys and interview protocols), any additional data or other relevant items.*



5.3 Evaluation Results/Findings - *Explain to what extent your intended project outcomes or benefits for students, TAs and or/instructors were achieved or not achieved. You are encouraged to include both graphical representations of data as well as scenarios or quotes to represent key themes.*

Evaluation to date was informal and anecdotal. Neither faculty member was trained in “research methods” of this sort. In the future, some guidance in this area would be helpful, especially for faculty in disciplines where educational research/data analysis is not common practice. (E.g., BREB procedures, data analysis resources/methods). So, obviously the lack of rigorous, research-informed frameworks and methodologies for evaluation of project is a major limitation in this case.

Having said that, as I graded quizzes, compared answers, and calculated grades, interesting sample data for improvement and future studies emerged. Unlike the vast majority of TBL (team based learning) or collaborative testing models I’ve been introduced to, we decided to have students take the quiz individually, submit, discuss with group, and re-take individually (vs. submit one “group quiz”). The reasoning for this has to do, primarily, with our discipline, literary studies, and our learning objective of having students improve their critical analysis skills. Quiz questions did not always have ONE correct answer and could be evaluated on depth and detail of response that might vary in perspective, persuasiveness, etc. Students therefore, had to come prepared to take the initial quiz and then could share answers, ask questions, compare answers and evidence, but would ultimately need to commit to an answer of their own. Would they be swayed by their peers? Teach their peers? A combination? Would final answers converge or would individual perspectives be maintained? Would stronger and weaker students benefit? By creating groups, using the entry survey (“Getting to Know You Survey”) we aimed to form diverse groups in terms of knowledge (students with expertise in East or South Asia), level (1st/2nd year students vs. 3rd/4th year students), domestic/international, Arts/Asia majors and students from other faculties, etc. We hoped this would increase diversity of expertise and perspectives that could enhance engagement with the materials and allow students to bring their diverse backgrounds/expertise to “the table.” Of course, we couldn’t tell from the survey, for the most part, who were the academically strong students, as most of the students were unknown to us. This led, in both iterations, to groups that had some imbalances: e.g., a group made up of one student with excellent study skills and engagement—who consistently did excellent 80%+ on the first solo quiz—with three students who were less engaged/confident with the course/materials—who might range from 30-60% on the first solo quiz—OR a group of four with remarkably equal first attempts at the quiz. Initial analysis of quiz results across 6 quizzes in two iterations of the course, suggest tentatively that *all* students improve. I.e., the excellent student might average 80% in his first attempts, but his second attempts rose to 85+%; whereas, his groupmates averaged 52% (43-54%) on the first take and all rose above 70% (72-79%) in the second re-takes. This suggests that the former student both helped his groupmates and that by teaching them or learning from them as well, he was able to improve/refine his own answers. Because this was a course that compared India and Japan, many students came with a leg up in one or the other area or a greater intrinsic interest in one or the other; in grading the quizzes, it became clear that in some groups, there were the India experts, the Japan experts, the religion experts, etc. and the discussion and collaboration that allowed them to share their knowledge improved class engagement and marks across the board. A typical group was one that had relatively equally matched students but with different backgrounds/expertise; here, for example, first attempts averaged 45-57%, and collaboratively they raised their individual retake averages between 60% and 80%.



Whether these short-term improvements had a long-term, lasting impact on their learning is harder to gauge. Future use of this technique in classes could certainly try to dig deeper into this area. However, what was certainly clear, is that this activity improved class cohesion, discussion, participation, and student confidence to express themselves and their opinions. The material in this course is really quite “foreign” and difficult for students without much background, and a course like this could easily devolve into a lecture/knowledge transmission mode; we reduced the amount of material covered and lecture time to make time for these quizzes (which take more time than a traditional one-off quiz). Dr. Bryant and I also modeled the collaborative inquiry model in our teaching: one of us is an expert in India and one of us is an expert in Japan, and neither of us has any expertise in the other’s area. Our approaches/perspectives on history and literature also vary. Our “debates” modeled the kind of perspective taking and critical inquiry that was one of our core learning objectives, and which illustrated for students how things can “mean” differently depending on perspective but that there are fundamental critical skills and questions that are common to strong (if different) understanding, etc.

The “team” spirit grew and by the time students had to start planning their final projects they had a good sense of the working dynamic and strengths of group members, which they could use to design and execute more comparative final projects that allowed individual members to craft their contributions in meaningful ways. These projects were all multi-media (blogs, interactive surveys, interviews, videos) with accompanying essay. They were displayed on our Connect “gallery” and students peer-evaluated all the projects but their own into three categories: good, better, best. The criteria for the student evaluations were established via a group class discussion and were different (somewhat) from the criteria instructors used for evaluation. Instructor (15%) and student evaluation/marks (5%) were combined for the final project mark. This evaluation system—split teacher evaluation & student/peer evaluation—created the opportunity to discuss various issues related to the course material and learning objectives. Without compromising student privacy, we were able to share with the entire class the aggregate spread of their evaluations and samples of their comments. What was revealed to students is that while there would be (in both iterations of the course) one or two group projects that received the majority of “best” or “good” ratings, the majority of the projects—say 6 out of 10—received wildly divergent ratings: i.e., an even mix of “good,” “better,” and “best” rankings. This allowed us to talk about interpretation, perspective taking, subjectivity, and criteria of evaluation. This, of course, is relevant in any learning environment, but more specifically also related to course objectives around questioning assumptions vis-à-vis, for example, differing cultural, religious, and aesthetic norms.

Nevertheless, despite these positive impacts, student responses in the form of their self- and peer-group evaluations at the end of the term, did raise various lingering objections about unequal contributions of members, time management complications across a group, passive members, etc. For the most part, however, students claimed to enjoy the projects and the opportunity to apply course materials (ancient/foundational) to more contemporary contexts. Many claimed to have learned from their peers and to appreciate the various skills and background members brought to the project. For example, in one group, a relatively quiet student during group quizzes, who was not a native speaker of English, was able to conduct and translate interviews with community members in her native language. Group members were impressed by her active role in this way and believed that her contribution greatly enhanced the quality of their project.

The collaborative testing, with its short-term and immediate completion setting with individual effort assessed (and group contributions appreciated), tends not to receive these kinds of critiques in the self- and peer-evaluation. In other words, the collaborative testing appears to be seen as useful to virtually all students and to



improve student marks and learning; whereas, students seem to be less unanimous in their appreciation of group projects, where their marks truly depend on collaborative contributions and some students feel that the group mark penalizes the hardest worker and rewards the weakest. This became clear in our first offering of the course, so in the second iteration we created slightly more detailed guidelines for the final self- and peer-evaluation of group work and used the form to calculate 5% of the final mark. I.e., the student who was unanimously recognized as the “leader” or best contributor would receive a higher mark than the student who was unanimously seen as chronically absent or slow in completing project work. This helped mitigate feelings of unfairness and inspired students to be quite frank and open in their evaluations (which only instructors saw). We asked students to address their own and their peers’ contributions to the quizzes and project and to reflect on the effectiveness of each in enhancing their learning.

5.4 Expected Long-Term Impact – *If applicable, indicate the impact your project is expected to have in this and/or other courses beyond completion.*

Several of the aspects of this project (blogs, collaborative testing, group projects, self-/peer-evaluation) are easily transferable to other courses. I intend to use many in most of my other courses and know others are experimenting with similar activities.

I will use all or some of these in any of my small/medium-sized courses (20-50 students). I have not found a way to make most of these work for larger 100+ courses.

In addition, the experience gained will be shared with colleagues; and as Associate Graduate Advisor I also have begun incorporating this material (the activities, underlying pedagogy, Connect utility, etc.) with advanced graduate students, as part of their professional development and preparation for the job market.

Table 5.2 – Expected Long-Term Impact

Course(s)	Number of Sections	Annual Enrollment
ASIA 200-level courses in the department (future)	2-4/year	Unclear. This is part of our new major renewal project; 200-level courses will become the new lower-level pre-requisite courses for upper-level study. So, maybe 60-150 students / year?
My own literature courses: ASIA 454, 455, 464 and others	2/year	Each course averages between 25-50 students

5.5 Dissemination – *Please provide a list of scholarly activities (e.g., publications, presentations, invited talks, etc.) in which you or anyone from your team have referred this Flexible Learning project. Include any dissemination activities you intend to accomplish in the future.*



I have already informally shared much of this experience with colleagues. The following talks/presentations all incorporated observations derived from this flexible learning project:

- 2013W T2 “What Inspires Excellent Teaching?” Presentation and Roundtable Discussion, sponsored by CTLT “Celebrating Teaching for New Faculty”, April 30, 2014.
- 2013W T2 “Using *Creative* Projects to teach *Critical Skills*” Poster presentation for the inaugural Teaching Showcase (UBC Instructor Network Learning Enhancement), April 10, 2014.
- 2013W T2 “Shaking up the Syllabus: Observations on Experiential Learning and other Student-led Pedagogies” Presentation for the Center for Japanese Research (CJR/UBC) Lunchtime Lecture Series, Feb. 5, 2014.

This coming year I plan to write up an article and/or present at external venues in regards to the use of collaborative testing in the humanities classroom.

5. DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS – *Reflect on the broader implications of the project. Indicate instances where your project has impacted courses or individuals not identified in your proposal. Include any recommendations you have for future Flexible Learning project leads.*

I included this in some of the paragraphs above. I think collaboration between CTLT and faculty is invaluable and think that the more “flexible” these kinds of collaborations can be the more of an impact they’ll have on a wider range of teaching faculty. “Low-stakes” (in terms of money required, hours required, etc.) grants/projects can, I think, have as much merit and impact as large ones do. Faculty *do* take what they gain into other courses and to their colleagues. In some ways, I don’t think ours hit as many of the blended/flexible/learning technologies hot buttons as other projects do; however, as far as improving student learning and re-thinking what it means to have student-led learning this project went a long way to improving my practice. One of the benefits of this program is that faculty get one-on-one guidance and input/feedback. This is time and cost intensive but may have better outcomes than workshops, which don’t always directly address faculty needs or are not conveniently scheduled, etc. This kind of focused work in a timely fashion can have a quicker and more profound effect.

5.1. Teaching Practices – *Please indicate if your teaching practices have changed as a result of your Flexible Learning project. If so, in what ways? Do you see these changes as sustainable over time? If not, why do you think that is the case?*

I think I answered some of this above as well. I have certainly begun incorporating more group work, self- & peer-evaluation, and other activities that allow student diversity and perspectives to be better integrated into the course and will continue to do so. As Chair of our Undergraduate Committee, I also encourage colleagues (in their course proposals, at meetings, etc.) to consider the benefits of such practices and how they align with and support our Program Outcomes.



These kinds of changes are easily sustainable. And what's more, the FL project helped me build better connections to CTLT, which provides an excellent entry point for any future innovation or questions I'd like to explore related to the ones initiated in this project. I think some faculty (myself included prior to this project) find difficult to access and take advantage of the resources provided by CTLT. There's simply so much one *could* or *should* be doing to improve teaching that it seems overwhelming and time consuming to venture in. A short targeted project and collaborative consultation really helps faculty overcome initial resistance (Dr. Bryant would agree and he was very resistant!) and experience success/improvement that can inspire future development.

5.2. Student Involvement in FL team – *Were there any undergraduate or graduate students involved in the development and/or evaluation of your FL project? Please describe their contributions and overall experiences as part of your Flexible Learning team.*

We didn't involve students in the development of the project. However, their self- and peer-evaluation narratives at the end of the term provided excellent qualitative feedback that can be used to improve future implementation and to persuade colleagues of the effectiveness of these kinds of teaching activities. In addition, I have had many informal meetings with students (those who loved the course and those who had difficulties) and gained a great deal of anecdotal evidence that I can reflect on when I implement these activities in future courses.

6. PROJECT SUSTAINMENT – *Please describe the sustainment strategy for the project components. How will this be sustained and potentially expanded (e.g., over the next five years). What challenges do you foresee for achieving the expected long-term impacts listed above?*

As noted above, this particular project is very easy to sustain and will likely inspire continued experimentation and improvement. The challenges that I can imagine are ones of changing technology (e.g., new LMS, external blog sites, technology that must be mastered by me!) and time constraints (to learn and design new activities). However, I'm optimistic that these kinds of active, student-led activities that encourage the exchange of knowledge and a diversity of perspectives will become more common and will also allow students to take to them more quickly, if instructors adequately explain their rationale and how they integrate with the learning objectives and course materials.