

## **Over the Rainbow: Collaborative Video Project for Cross Cultural Learning**

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### **Research Background**

This action research is designed to enhance team building as well as language and cultural exchange between high school students from Japan and Hawaii who are participating in The Change Academy program (TCA). Studies have revealed that students gravitate to mix with people from their own community rather than communicating with others from different cultural backgrounds during their participation in short term exchange programs (Stepanovienė, 2011). This phenomenon can be explained by some intercultural communication issues, such as language difficulties, anxiety caused by the fear of speaking, as well as finding suitable conversation topic to keep conversations going. In order to provide a platform and opportunities for participants to interact with each other, a collaborative video project (CVP) was incorporated into TCA program to promote team building, communication skills, and intercultural competencies through project based learning.

Educators have long explored the potential of video production and digital storytelling projects as a pedagogical tool to engage learners (Bull & Kajder, 2004). The recent proliferation of video creation due to the readily available video cameras that come with mobile devices and the popularity of online video sharing platforms such as YouTube further allowed teachers to utilize such media tools in facilitating collaborative learning (Hafner & Miller, 2011). Video production can facilitate cooperative learning (Slavin, 1983), and the physical interaction with peers during video production can enhance social skills and develop a spirit of camaraderie as they work together to achieve common goal (Coughlin & Carey, 1987). The design of the instructional project is centered on these principles, aiming to promote collaboration, language and cultural exchange between the students participating in TCA.

### **Research Purpose**

This study intends to explore using CVP as a project based learning strategy to impact the amount of collaboration and conversations between students that do not share the same first language, and maximize the opportunity of language and cultural exchange during the international short term program TCA. The study is based on the following three main research questions:

1. How will CVP impact on team building and team collaboration between TCA participants?
2. How will CVP impact language and cultural exchange between TCA participants?
3. How will CVP impact learning with technology?

### **Research Design and Methods**

The 9th - 12th grade high school students from Japan and Hawaii were participating in the CVP and this research. The teams were instructed to shoot two one-take videos during the first 3 days of the exchange program. One CVP was to have participants to assume the roles of marketers to promote local Hawaii snacks to Japanese consumers, thus requiring them to plan their promotional video with the target audience and product in mind. The second CVP was to ask them to incorporate their learning and experiences from the first CVP, and to shoot a one-take promotion video of the camp site they were staying at, having to select their own target audience and length of video etc, and come up with rationale of why they have chosen to make the promotional video a certain way. The plan to shoot one-take videos is intentional so the project's focus would be on student planning, teamwork, cultural exchange and communication instead of the technology. The students collaborated to brainstorm, develop storyboards, write scripts, practice and shoot videos.

Attitudinal data were collected through a post workshop questionnaire to measure student's perceived amount of participation for the project, and degree of collaboration within the team. Self-perceived level of language and culture

sharing with team members from different country were also measured, as well as their perception about learning with technology.

## Results and Discussion

An evaluation designed specifically for this project was administered. 15 of out the 18 project participants have completed the survey fully. Data from the survey conducted post project are summarized in Table 1-3 (Appendix A). Participants comment regarding their thoughts on CVP can be found in Appendix B. In general, the project was well received by the participants. In terms of team collaboration, most participant indicated that they were able to participate as a team member as much as they wanted to during the CVP (T1), they learned more about teamwork (T2), have more confidence in collaborating with their peers (T3) and became more comfortable in speaking out about their ideas (T4) through their participation in the CVP.

In terms of the impact on language and cultural exchange, the survey shows a slightly less favorable result compared to learning about teamwork (Table 2). Nonetheless, the students indicated that CVP gave them more opportunities to speak with other students than they would usually have (E4), and that they would like to share their culture with people from a different culture more in the future (E7). They also felt that they have learned more about students from other cities and countries (E5), as well as gained confidence is communicating with people from a different culture (E6).

Students have also expressed their increase of interest in using technology for learning and education (L1) as well as enjoying using a smartphone for completing a project (L2) (Table 3).

## Conclusion

Few studies have investigated the benefits of CVP in enhancing collaboration and intercultural engagement. It was found that this type of collaborative project not only developed students' teamwork, leadership and time management skills, they also improved the cultural exchange experience, as well as growing students' interest in learning their project counterparts' language (Kimura, Kimura, Ho & Kubota, 2014). However, prior research is mostly limited to semester long classrooms, not short term exchange programs. Considering the exponential growth of international short term programs worldwide, and its significant positive impacts on students' intellectual and personal lives (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004), it is important to examine how technology can facilitate teamwork and cross-cultural communication between students from multiple cultural background, especially when they do not share the same first language.

The results of the action research shows positive impact in three areas in a short term program setting, including team collaboration, opportunity and willingness to participate in language and cultural exchange activities, as well as interest in learning with technology. Though more research is needed to explore how CVP could assist in team building and cross-cultural exchange experience during short term exchange programs, developers such as program coordinators and researchers may consider incorporating collaborative video projects as part of their curriculum.

## References

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## Appendix A

Table 1.

*CVP impact on team building and team collaboration*

Question	T1	T2	T3	T4
Mean	4.07	4.73	4.60	4.40

- T1-I was able to participate as a team member as much as I wanted to during the CVPs.
- T2-I learned more about teamwork when I participated in the Collaborative Video Project (CVP).
- T3-I have more confidence in collaborating with my peers.
- T4-I am more comfortable in speaking out about my ideas.

Table 2.

*CVP impact on language and cultural exchange*

Question	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8
Mean	3.93	3.47	3.67	4.60	4.07	4.00	4.67	3.87

- E1-I was able to communicate in my native tongue as much as I wanted to during the CVP.
- E2-I tried to use my second language (English or Japanese) to communicate as much as I wanted to during the CVP.
- E3-I was able to share my culture as much as I wanted to during the CVP.
- E4-CVP gave me more opportunities to speak with other students than I would usually have.
- E5-I learned more about students from other cities/countries.
- E6-I have more confidence in communicating with people from a different culture.
- E7-I would like to share my culture with people from a different culture more in the future.
- E8-I have more confidence in speaking a different language with people from a different culture/language.

Table 3.

*CVP impact on learning with technology*

Question	L1	L2
Mean	4.13	4.07

- L1-I am more interested in using technology for learning and education.
- L2-I enjoyed using a smartphone for completing a project.

## Appendix B

Short Question 1. What did you like most about participating in this project?

- Being able to collaborate with others though there was a language barrier. It was fun being able to make videos with other students and bring all our ideas together for our final product. Also it was a good way to bond with the other students.
- Communicating with each other team building activity.
- I liked the last part where we get to watch every group's video and share how we filmed it.
- I enjoyed filming and working with my friends.
- I loved working with other people and I hope to learn more about others.
- Even though we spoke different languages, we were able to communicate through gestures and enjoy having discussions with each other.
- Discussing and deciding how to distribute workload
- It was fun to create something with the collaboration of every one of us in the team
- To be able to communicate with team members
- To be able to come up with ideas with everyone
- It was super fun!

Short Question 2. What did you like least about participating in this project?

- We didn't know about it except for the day of.
- The restrictions in the actual product but I mean then it would be too easy right?
- I didn't like it when I made a mistake in the video and everyone had to shoot the same thing all over again.
- Reflection.
- Nothing.
- It was hard to come up with ideas.
- Sometimes it was difficult to communicate my own ideas.
- When I must get help with translating what I want to express, I wish I can say what I want to say with my own words.
- When only one person is doing the work.
- Nothing much.

Short Question 3. Do you think what you learned during this project will help you in the future? If so, please explain. If not, please explain.

- Yes I think it made me more confident when working with everyone.
- Yes because it has taught us how to work with others even though we may not speak the same language. It also gives us the opportunity to be creative. I have also learned that projects like this can be done with strangers because in the end they won't be such strangers anymore.
- Yes, because in required time we had to film a video without editing whether we knew each other or not, and it helped me understand that with the same goal, we can achieve anything as long as we communicate and cooperate.
- Yes because I can talk more to people.
- Yes I believe so. While we faced and overcame the challenges of language differences, collaboration, creativity as well as the limitation of creating a commercial of 30 seconds restriction, we were able to communicate our ideas and opinions and every team came up with amazing videos. I think it will help us in the future as it allows us to learn and understand how to work with people who do speak the same language or those who does not speak the same language as us. The process of collaboration and finishing a project helped us build "confidence" in working with each other.
- I would like to create a commercial for my own community.
- I think it will be beneficial to my future. I was able to learn how to communicate with people who I have first met.
- Yes I think so. We learned that it was difficult to plan and implement a project but was able to complete it.
- Yes I truly believe it will be helpful for my future. Learning how to use videos to introduce something to the audience is very useful and important.
- I think is useful because I was able to practice how to express my feelings and opinions to others.