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Experiential learning in webcasting for peace through tourism

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to report on a project to develop cultural awareness and knowledge of the tourism profession; and to bring the team of students to Amman, Jordan to facilitate the first ever-global webcast of a conference. Within the international experience itself, the major components of the overall project involved grant writing, technological hands-on training, international student presentations, and the production of a professional videotape. The possibility of gaining such access had been made possible through the Undergraduate Research/ Experiential Learning Grant (UREL Grant) offered by the College of Education at UNI, which provided the ideal avenue for undergraduate and graduate students to seize this extraordinary opportunity.

The significance of the project was multi-faceted. The project required UNI students to learn skills that would be both practical and meaningful in their future professions. This paper will describe the current research available that supports the need and benefits of international experiences and experiential learning to the student.

A Graduate Project

Submitted to the Division of Educational Technology

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Master of Arts

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by

Courtlandt Butts

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This project by: Courtlandt Butts

Titled: Experiential Learning in Webcasting for Peace through Tourism

has been approved as meting the research requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts.

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to report on a project to develop cultural awareness and knowledge of the tourism profession; and to bring the team of students to Amman, Jordan to facilitate the first ever-global wabcast of a conference. Within the international experience itself, the major components of the overall project involved grant writing, technological hands-on training, international student presentations, and the production of a professional videotape. The possibility of gaining such access had been made possible through the Undergraduate Research/ Experiential Learning Grant (UREL Grant) offered by the College of Education at UNI, which provided the ideal avenue for undergraduate and graduate students to seize the this extraordinary opportunity.

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Introduction

Worlds away in Amman, Jordan, a historical event, over ten years in the making, emerged that provided a vast array of opportunities and benefits with specific regard to international travel/exposure, scholastic, and hands-on technical experience. The event was the First Global Summit on Peace through Tourism, November 5-11, 2000, under the patronage of King Abdulla II and sponsored primarily by American Express. Lou D'Amore the founder and President of the International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT) believed there was a positive and functional link between peace, social stability, and tourism (cited in Marcel, 2000). The summit hosted hundreds of representatives in the travel and tourism industries from over 60 countries. Marcel cited D'Amore, "We should see what the world's largest industry can do to help bring about a better world" (p. 32).

The rest of the world needed to be informed of this occasion. Broadcast television seemed to be the obvious solution, but even though a mega corporation like American Express would sponsor this event the solution could have cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Dr. Terri McDonald, professor at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI), suggested that this significant event be broadcast over the Internet for a fraction of the cost of a live television broadcast.

The ultimate purpose of the project was to develop cultural awareness and knowledge of the tourism profession; and to bring the team of students to Amman, Jordan to facilitate the first ever-global wabcast of the summit. Within the international experience itself, the major components of the overall project involved grant writing, technological hands-on training, international student presentations, and the production of

a professional videotape. The possibility of gaining such access had been made possible through the Undergraduate Research/ Experiential Learning Grant (UREL Grant) offered by the College of Education at UNI, which provided the ideal avenue for undergraduate and graduate students to seize the this extraordinary opportunity.

The significance of the project was multi-faceted. The project required UNI students to learn skills that would be both practical and meaningful in their future professions. This paper will describe the current research available that supports the need and benefits of international experiences and experiential education opportunities that are accessible for graduate and undergraduate students.

<div align="center">Review of Literature</div>

International Experience

According to a recent memorandum from the White House, the policy on international education by the Federal Government was committed to enhancing programs at U. S. institutions that build international partnerships and expertise, as well as advancing new technologies that aid the spread of knowledge throughout the world. Further, the Secretaries of State and Education support the efforts of and encourage students and institutions to become involved in international travel experiences (White House, 2000). However, because of a host of obstacles that included high costs, fears of travel, and stereotyping, the accessibility of the international experience and its benefits were relatively limited for students of higher education across the country.

The obstacles that have plagued international travel are still there but they are being relieved as the United States government indirectly provides opportunities to reduce the limitations. In this particular case, more funds had been made more available

by the U. S. government to institutions of higher learning, thereby creating the opportunity provided by the Undergraduate/Graduate Research/ Experiential Learning (UREL) grant. Though the funds were not used exclusively for international projects, the webcast team was able to benefit because the project still met the criterion outlined in the grant. These guidelines for awards included the following: (a) emphasis of project on undergraduate research, experiential learning or a combination of the two; (b) one undergraduate student or group of undergraduate and/or graduate students may apply with supervising UNI faculty member; (c) funds were to be used project related costs and student stipends if applicable.

An important benefit of gained during an international experience was the opportunity to dispel of any erroneous stereotypes that may be present in the minds of those whose knowledge of a particular place around the world was strictly academic. The ones who had made the international journey could have served as so-called cultural mediators (Brislin, 1981). In her review of the research, Wilson's (1993) model, The Impact of the International Experience, the cultural mediator gained a global perspective and develop self and relationships. Subsequently, substantive knowledge and perceptual understanding were the components that made up the global perspective. Personal growth and interpersonal connections were the components of the development of self and relationships. With these concepts internalized by the person, more accurate and authentic information can be brought back to the host nation, dispelling any stereotypes or at least articulating a clearer picture of the origins of current stereotypes.

According to Wilson (1993) substantive knowledge came in the from of a variety of specific information, that included the learning of a new language, the art of Van

Goethe, or the geography of a particular country. Case's (1991) model of the global

perspective also included matters dealing with national and international security and

what the future holds based on the outcomes of these matters. The later parts of the

definition for substantive knowledge especially applied to project since the conference

promoted world peace, thereby addressing the security of all nations.

Perceptual understanding was a concept described by Wilson (1993), as a

subsequent component of the global experience with regard to the international

experience. According to Case (1991), the following characteristics were attributes to the

global perspective, including open-mindedness (one has a world view uncommonly

shared with the masses), anticipation of complexity, and resistance to stereotyping,

inclination to empathize, and non-chauvinism. The author testified to a number of

findings in the research that relate to this concept. There were many accounts where the

students changed their attitudes toward people, in a way that individualized the people

instead of stereotyping them. Also, the research indicated that exchange students

displayed an increase in critical thinking with respect to the way people of other

nationalities think, over students who have never traveled abroad. Last, there was an

account where a student was no longer shy of black skinned people and positively dealt

with her own racism after a study tour of Africa.

According to the model, another subsequent component of the development of

self and relationships was personal growth. Basically, the student went through stages of

first equilibrium through disequilibria and then towards new equilibrium (Kauffmann,

Martin, and Weaver 1992). Adler (1975) gave a more specific description of this so-

called transitional experience in his model by starting from the encounter with the other

culture to disintegration and then to reintegration to autonomy and finally to independence. In Adler's (1975) model during the disintegration stage, depression and withdrawal may result from the impact of cultural differences. Next, the reintegration stage occurs where a person who was angry, frustrated, rebelling, but assertive rejects differences. Onto autonomy when differences and similarities were legitimized and one becomes confident and empathic. Finally, the student gets to the independence stage when differences and similarities are valued, significant and understood and the person exercised choice and responsibility. This was a transitional period that takes place during the international experience where cognitive growth was paralleled with other expanding aspects of personality as the student engages a new environment. According to Kauffmann et. al. (1992), the students involved in the international experience ultimately achieved a level of autonomy, which was evident in their positive changes in self-confidence and feelings of independence.

The last component that rounds out Wilson's (1993) model of the impact of the international experience was the development of interpersonal connections. Kauffmann et. al. (1992) more accurately describes this component as "belonging" where connections to individuals and the community were built on the students' respective paths to autonomy and independence. Wilson (1993) went on to cite numerous accounts in the research that described the benefits of making those connections. For example, Hawes and Kealey (1979) listed an increase in communication skills that lead to: flexibility and respect towards the ideas of others; listening and accurate perception of the needs of others; trust; friendliness and sensitivity of cultural differences.

When the international travelers internalized components of Wilson's (1993) impact of the international experience model, these people had the potential for becoming cultural mediators. Though the research showed that not all persons with an international experience would serve as mediators who build bridges between cultures, Bochner (1981) described the typical characteristics of such individuals as world-minded, self-confident and adaptable. The author writes further, "Above all else the successful mediator must be in tuned with in the satisfactions and dissatisfactions, the joy and the pain of those with whom he or she may be working" (Bochner, 1981, 244).

The research indicated importance of an international experience to the business sector of the world. For example, Desruisseaux (1997) stated:

...businesses find experience gained through international travel to be of substantial value in the workforce. But it's also a reflection the fact that the commercial industry was attaching more importance to language training and experience in a foreign culture as part of the preparation for employment, and that idea was getting more visibility. (p. 1)

The global community required more students to accept the challenge of gaining a worldview. The strength of the U.S. dollar and a stronger economy was attributed to the substantial increase of students enrolling in international programs. In any case, the needs of the world were progressively being met with the expansion of international opportunities for students.

Experiential Education

Dewey explained the concept of the nature experience. "An ounce of experience is better than a ton of theory simply because it is only in experience that any theory has

vital and verifiable significance" (Dewey, 1938 p. 1). The author's definition of

experience was made up of active and passive elements. The former was simply the

physical act of trying, while the later was described as the undergoing or enduring the

term of the experiment or research. The physical act lead to consequences that the person

had to undergo or suffer. The connection between these two phases determined the

significance and fruitfulness of the experience.

Evans (1994) defined experiential learning as "the knowledge and skills acquired

through life and work experience and study which are not formally attested through any

educational or professional certification" (p.276). The concept of experiential education

was noted as extremely simple. People learned by doing. Though the concept was simple

the author observed the controversy surrounding the topic. He explained that since the

beginning of nineteenth century educators, leaders of commerce and the government had

mistakenly taken the view that any significant learning had to take place in a formal

institution with formal measures of assessment. The assessment of prior experiential

learning had no foundation in the eyes of the leaders, thereby making experiential

learning a mute point.

This point of view was challenged when members of the academic, commercial

and political community began to notice the current pedagogy, notably rigid and

repetitive with mechanical tasks was proving to be ineffective. Funds and resources were

being poured into universal instruction and public schools, presumably to empower

people to become competent citizens who contributed to the economic growth of the

country as well as participate in the political activities of a democracy. John Dewey

(1938) was one of the pioneers of education whose philosophy was inline with this stated

function of the educational system and began to propagate the fact that learning by doing was an essential supplement to more abstract forms of learning (Evans 1994). The research showed that in more modern times Dewey's work and the work of other influential educators and officials who followed his ideas shaped the current pedagogy of institutes of higher learning to some degree.

Bruce (1993) conducted research which, showed companies simply preferred and hired college graduates who had experiential education opportunities as part of their curriculum, especially in technical fields of study. Reportedly, the companies conveyed a great deal of appreciation for students who have actually had the opportunity to successfully put the theory into practice and not just be equipped with rote classroom knowledge. This grew from the realization on the part of the companies and schools that classroom theory alone was inadequate in regard to preparing students for advantageous entry-level positions. Further, students involved in some sort of co-op, assistantship or internship during the course of their studies reportedly had a better understanding of the demands of the work environment and the responsibility that came with the job.

Government policy had recently encouraged an increase in the participation rate in all forms of post-secondary education. This initiative in turn, encouraged post-secondary institutions to offer broadened capabilities of learning within current programs as well as offer new types of learning that may reach an otherwise untapped pool of potential students. Experiential learning contributed to the augmentation of both government and post-secondary institutions.

The Project

The First Global Summit on Peace through Tourism

Louis J. D'Amore founded the IIPT in 1986, which was the official United Nations year of peace. It was a not for profit organization dedicated to the promotion of benevolent ideals and practices within the tourism and travel industry that encouraged international understanding and cooperation, an improved quality of environment, and the preservation of heritage (D'Amore, 2002). The founder believed that these practice of the organization the made world a more peaceful and sustainable place.

Since its inception, the organization had brought together world leaders in the travel and tourism industry as well as leaders of sectors concerning culture, development, and environment. This was done through small seminars, round table discussions, and local conferences. Between the smaller gatherings IIPT hosted three Global Conferences in Vancouver (1988), Montreal (1994), and Glasgow (1999). The succession of the series of gatherings and global conferences afforded the foundations for the First Global Summit on Peace through Tourism held in Amman, Jordan, November 2000.

The summit consisted of three plenary sessions and eight concurrent sessions, which featured Ministers of Tourism from various countries, CEO's of international corporations and banks related to the travel industry, and Ambassadors from the United Nations. The summit also hosted social functions, including luncheons, receptions, and banquets at exotic locations such as the Movenpick Resort at the Dead Sea. It also hosted special events including a Benefit Peace Concert at the hotel of the summit and Spiritual Gathering at Bethany Beyond the Jordan that included a cultural ceremony and historical account of the significance of the region.

Bethany Beyond the Jordan was also the site of a historical event in the making. It had been established as an International Peace Park for the Global Peace Parks Project, "…as an expression of our dedication to 'Building a Culture of Peace' for all humanity" (D'Amore, 2002). On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of the new millennium Peace Poles and seedlings were planted by every participating country within their respective time zones. The significance of the day, time and hour of the dedication was to rededicate a mission of peace as recognized by the Treaty of Versailles that was signed at the end of World War I at the same time during the year of 1918. This display of global unity generated feelings of hope and inspiration that served as a catalyst by which Wilson's (1993) development of interpersonal connections was shared with all attendees of the event.

Before the summit, leading international experts conducted workshops on various types of tourism. Also, what IIPT referred as Global Network Meetings were held, in which the international experts engaged in interactive discussions about their specific fields, that increased their substantial knowledge as expressed by Wilson (1993). For example, experts in Ecotourism (nature based tourism) or Rural tourism gathered according to their respective fields of expertise and shared relative information specific to their countries.

Last, the summit hosted the International Student Forum, in which, university students from around the world presented papers and projects related to tourism, technology, culture, and other such travel related topics. Presentations were 45 minutes in length and were often represented by teams of students from their respective universities. The audience primarily consisted of the international students, their sponsors and

qualified local journalists and international editors. This forum provided an opportunity for the students and attendees to develop perceptual understanding according to Wilson's (1993) model.

The Webcast Team

Webcasting is the facilitation of a process that involves the encoding and decoding of audio and/or video signals that are transferred from one location to another or to multiple locations. For example, someone using a video camera to tape a guest lecturer could have that image (audio/video signal) received by the camera sent to a computer connected to the Internet. This computer would send that signal to another computer called a server, which would transfer the signal to any other computer that requested to view the lecturer.

This particular project involved a team of trained individuals to manipulate the various technologies involved in completing in such a task. Two University of Northern Iowa professors involved a team of students in a project to the Middle East to broadcast this global summit for several purposes, which included, the acquisition of practical technical skills and knowledge. This particular aim of the UNI professors satisfied the needs of the commercial industry as stated in the research by Desurisseaux (2000) and Bruce (1993). The skills and knowledge required to produce a webcast were learned by practicing the task in an informal setting, which adhered to Evans' (1994) research and Dewey's (1938) philosophy on experiential education

Also, the UNI professors intended for the students to enhance their appreciation for an international experience as well as afford an opportunity for academic growth. These particular aims of the professors were best described in Wilson's (1993) model of

the impact of the international experience with the ultimate goal of cultivating cultural mediators as described by Bochner (1981). Because of the cross-curricular nature of the project, the professors intended for the students to exchange knowledge from their respective disciplines of technology and tourism.

One of the university professors was an expert in tourism. The webcast team originally was supposed to be comprised of the university's webcasting expert, one graduate student, two undergraduate students and one UNI professor. The team had planned on training with the UNI webcast expert so that all could be competent in using the technology once they arrived in Amman, Jordan.

Unfortunately, the university's webcast expert was unable to travel with the rest of the team. This brought great concern to the group. Now there would be no one to instruct the team members once the team was across the ocean. It was then decided that the graduate student would play the role of the expert and a second student would be chosen to make the international journey.

Although experienced in telecommunications, the graduate student had never before facilitated a webcast. He had however, possessed the characteristics of a cultural mediator as outlined by Bochner (1981) within Wilson's (1993) model including, "patience, goodwill, a sense of humor, and above all a basic respect and caring for persons -empathy- which one communicates…" (Bochner, 1981, 297).

The second graduate student was chosen following a discussion between the first graduate student and the project sponsoring UNI professor. He was a native of Hong Kong who was formally studying Youth & Leisure Service Administration at the University of Northern Iowa. Despite his formal discipline he was asked to join the

webcast team because technological expertise which, was informal in its' development as described by Evans' (1994) research of experiential learning.

The two undergraduate students had the most potential for growth with regard to the international experience and experiential learning. Their international experience was extremely limited, especially when compared to the experiences of the rest of the team. They studied tourism and were supposed to convey some of their knowledge to the graduate students about the basic theories developed within their respective disciplines. In turn, the graduate students would share technical knowledge and skills with them. The UNI tourism professor who actually let them self-select chose them. During one of his tourism classes he posed a question to all the students, which challenged these two students to assume roles in the team.

The forth member of the team was the sponsoring UNI technology professor. Her position at the UNI permitted her many opportunities to develop characteristics as outlined in Wilson's (1993) model of the impact of an international experience. She also served as a guide that sought to convey these characteristics to the students of the webcast team.

The team trained for a month prior to the departure date. This was a very enlightening and exciting experience because the technology was advanced and extended the knowledge and skills of the participants. The UNI webcast expert was very reassuring and kept assuring the team about the ease of the operation. So members of the webcast team met with the university expert sporadically but frequently, as conflicting schedules were an obstacle. Two team members met with university webcast expert and then it was

up to one of them to train the rest of the team with another series of frequent but, sporadic meetings.

Because of the depiction of the Middle East in the midst of the start of the Palestine/Israeli conflict by the media and fear of stereotypes, one of the undergraduate team members dropped out of the mission. Specifically, the fear was on the part of her immediate family who pressured her not to depart. The family of this writer was concerned and exerted great pressures as well but he chose to participate in the project.

The concept was fairly simple. The team used a digital camcorder (for maximum picture quality) that was connected to a local computer. The computer digitized the signal from the camcorder and then sent that signal via the Internet to UNI's streaming server where the signal was archived. The UNI webcast expert then assigned a URL- a web address to the incoming signal. This signal was placed as a link onto a web page. If anyone around the world wanted to view the webcast, they would simply go to the website of the International Institute for Peace through Tourism and click on the link highlighted for the conference.

Technology Used

The team used a Canon Ultura camcorder that connected to the computer with industrial grade RCA cables for both the audio and video signal. The cables plugged into the Osprey 500 capture card, which could take both analog and digital signals. The software that was used to manage the incoming signal was Real Producer from Real Networks. To view the webcast itself, the team as well as all users of the Internet needed to have Real Player software, available for free. The sending of the signal via the Internet required a high-speed connection. UNI used a T1 line, which was the one of the fastest

Internet connections accessible to the world. It had the capacity to transfer video, audio, and data signals via the Internet at data rates of 1.544Mbits per second. A T1 line actually consists of 24 individual channels, each of which supports 64Kbits per second.

To ensure conditions were optimal for the webcast, team members remained in constant contact via email and conference calls with a representative from United Nations Educational and Scientific Cultural Organization (UNESCO), an international company. He also made sure that there was a high speed Internet connection that the team could tap into for the webcast, serving as local tech support for the webcast team. He also served as a guide and host once the team arrived in Jordan.

The Grant

As the team was still at UNI preparing for the webcast, the second project on which they had to concentrate their efforts was to the write a grant to provide financial means for the team to travel abroad with the webcast equipment and fund lodging and meals. It also proved to be another experiential learning opportunity as described by Dewey (1938) and Evans (1994) within the overall project for the student members of the team.

The goals of the grant were designed to: (a) increase student involvement in research and experiential learning and, (b) facilitate learning and reflection by students through research and experiences that go beyond normal course requirements (University of Northern Iowa, 2001). The final report of the project consisted of a summary of the experience, a budget, and also any journals or other materials generated from the project.

Writing the grant was the beginning of the team building and scholastic efforts put forth by the webcast team. In order to have a successful experience, the webcast team

was forced to overcome the obstacles of new technology and environment through problem solving skills and team building. The guidelines of the grant required the students to list their objectives as part of the rationale for requesting the award. They are as follows:

1. Investigate the tourism industry and studied its effects on world peace.

2. Prepare for a career in the private sector by exposure to challenges and experiences sought by potential employers including diverse cultural immersion, problem solving, and team building.

3. Provide students a unique opportunity to participate in the Global Summit on Peace through tourism as international presenters.

4. Gain an international understanding that could be used to promote a peaceful awareness among peoples and societies.

5. Participate in the International Student Forum, which is one of the significant components of the Global Summit on Peace through Tourism.

6. Preserve a record of this field experience through a series of carefully attended, individual journals.

7. Present this information to appropriate faculty, student organizations, national and international organizations to further promote the cause of global peace through tourism.

The main components of the grant consisted of a one-page application and a two-page summary which, included information that described background, objectives, plan of action, and anticipated outcomes. Each team member shared research and ideas as they met for the preparation of the application. One UNI faculty served in the role of grant

application editor. The award of the grant was unknown until just prior to departure for Amman, Jordan.

Arrival in the Middle East

Upon arriving at the airport in Jordan, the team was met by a group from an organization called International Traders, who facilitated transportation from the airport to the student hotel and then on to the summit headquarters. The following day, the team met the key players of the first Global Summit on Peace through Tourism. The representative from UNESCO met the team at the airport and saw them to the hotel. The team met Lou D'Amore, the President and Founder of the IIPT as well as some of the other key planners of the conference including, members from the stage team and the audio and light expert.

The team and the UNESCO representative worked tirelessly to get the necessary adapters, cables, and other parts that were needed to facilitate the webcast. The team worked up to 16-hour days trying to maneuver around the constant changes being made to the location of the main stage that affected the audio input as well. The description of Wilson's (1993) personal growth component applied to the teams' experience during this time. It was also, during this time in Amman when the team felt the stages of the international experience as described by Adler (1975).

This time spent together brought together the webcasting team and the UNESCO representative to a new level of team membership; they became friends. The team had achieved a sense of "belonging" as described by Kauffmann et. al. (1992) within Wilson's (1993) model regarding the development of interpersonal connections. Further, the UNESCO representative took the team on a tour of Amman as well as the valleys of

mountainous Petra and other significant sites such as the acropolis and the Dead Sea. The team was even invited into the home of his parents, his home. So much was learned about the culture and the way people think in this region increasing the team's substantial knowledge within the global perspective component of Wilson's (1993) model.

After the days of setting up for the webcast, videotaping workshops and just before the main speakers of the conference, were the student presentations of the International Student Forum. Here the webcast team met students from over 12 different countries. Once the mission of the team was realized, they earned the respect and admiration of the other students. In the eyes of the international students, the conference was a mission of peace and international security, so the webcast team was perceived as the vessel through which the rest of the world would know of the efforts by all involved. With respect to the international students, Case's (1991) model of the global perspective regarding the substantial knowledge component was applicable.

As the team videotaped the opening sessions and then the subsequent plenary sessions, team members reported a sense of importance to be in the company of so many dignitaries and high post officials. There was also some tension because the team did not want to make any mistakes or at least, realistically make as few as possible. The presence of the team was more important than they realized but, as the subsequent sessions went on, people at the conference started to talk, and the presence of the webcasting team were a topic for many. This all brought about a feeling of global acceptance as described by Kauffmann et. al. (1992) congruently, the people involved were literally from all over the world.

At some point during the conference a member of the webcast team and a representative from the Bradford Group (The media company that marketed the summit) were charged with writing a script for the production of a professional video of the conference. The rest of the members of the webcast team were made responsible for the production of the video that involved the operation and coordination of technical people and a variety of production equipment (Zettl, 1998).

D'Amore, founder of IIPT requested that the video be of professional quality, as it was going to be used to inform and promote the summit aims and outcomes to corporate executives of American Express around the world. The production of the videotape was then an added responsibility for the webcast team. D'Amore required video footage of every component of the summit. This task included not only obtaining footage of the speakers that were webcasted live, but also shots of the workshops before the conference, special events, social functions and field trips. Under ideal circumstances the shot list (a list of scenes to be video taped that correspond with the dialogue of the script) would be developed from the script before the conference. This was not the case, which made the editing difficult in post-production (a process in which videographers select the best program pieces, enhance their picture and sound quality and then assemble the shots into a coherent whole (Zettl, 1998, p. 4)). The production of this video required work and resources that extended beyond current levels available. One of the team members had no experience operating a video camera. The members of the team no experience producing a video at that professional level. As described by Evans (1994) and Dewey (1938), the team learned by doing.

Return to the States

Coming home for the team was difficult because the interpersonal connections that were made had to be left behind. The team had achieved personal growth, according to Wilson (1993) going through stages of equilibrium and disequilibria (Kauffmann, Martin, and Weaver 1992). The UNI tourism professor encouraged a reflection session. The team had a five-hour drive back from Chicago to Cedar Falls and this reflection period also served as a way to pass the time of the trip and reinforced the experience in the minds of the team.

After the team arrived back to UNI there was still work to do related to the project. One of the requirements of the grant required each team member to submit a five-page report, summarizing the experience. There were also multiple presentations that had to be made, including one for all recipients of UREL grant. The presentations that were specific to this writer were for student and professional organizations, including the Minority Graduate Student Association, the International Student Association, and the National Association of Laboratory Schools.

The production of the video for American Express by the webcast team was stressful work that had taken a week to completely finish. Finally, the intentions of the conference officials were to have the sessions that were recorded stream from the IIPT web page. This meant using the same technology as streaming but the events were recorded and not live. The encoding of the tapes produced from recording the sessions of the conference was time consuming but this project never made it to full fruition. Recordings of the specific sessions were sent out to presenters and other patrons. Articles

were published about the success of the venture in several publications, e.g. Briefings, Waack (2000) and the local newspaper Jordan Times.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The goals of the project, were to develop cultural awareness and knowledge of the tourism profession and to bring the team of students to Amman, Jordan to facilitate the first ever-global webcast of the summit. These were successfully achieved. The substantial knowledge of the webcast team with respect to the tourism industry was augmented by the information shared during the summit. The networking opportunities were in alignment with respect to the summit, augmenting the team's global perspective and personal connections (Wilson, 1993).

For this writer, the hands-on training of facilitating a webcast and assisting in the production of a professional video augmented his technical knowledge and skills that will be used to improve existing production projects in his place of work. Companies prefer students with international work experience (Bruce 1993), thus one of the team members was offered many opportunities for an internship. She accepted one with national magazine.

This student has become more of a cultural mediator than he had ever been. The attributes outlined in the impact of the international experience model (Wilson, 1993) and the concept of the global perspective including open-mindedness, anticipation of complexity, resistance to stereotyping, inclination to empathize (Case, 1991) were positively internalized members of the webcast team. For example, the mass media usually depicted this region as one of struggle and that all the people had the mentality of

terrorists. This writer found that the people were kind and hospitable. Cultural awareness was especially noted as the mass media mentions King Abdulla or Jordan. This writer takes the time to listen and scrutinize the information being presented. There were accounts where the natives explained the struggle of the nations in the Middle East from their own perspective. This communication lead to flexibility and respect towards the ideas of others, trust, and sensitivity of cultural differences (Hawes & Kealey, 1979). A greater understanding of the people living in the region was achieved. The team served as cultural mediators with authentic knowledge and experience of a nation, which was conveyed at various presentations (Brislin, 1981).

Recommendations

With respect to the tasks that were specific to the work of the webcast team, a list of equipment, techniques and procedures that could have made the task more efficient and professional should be made. For example, portable lights were a necessity, as some of the rooms of the plenary sessions were not well lit. Making this list of what to be mindful of, would complete the learning experience.

With respect to future project development, it is the opinion of this writer that the UNI College of Education continues to sponsor UREL grant. The guidelines and requirements are practical. The grant provides experience in grant writing, opportunities for team collaboration, and professional development. It is paramount that educational programs need to have some type international opportunity as part of the curriculum. Ideally, the international component will have to incorporate some experiential learning where professional skills can be practiced and used for future employment. It is equally as important to foster an international component so that students have the opportunity to

develop cultural awareness and personal growth, which can potentially have a positive

impact on the global community.

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