

VIRTUAL TEAMING IN TRI-LATERAL WEB-BASED CLASSES: TECHNIQUES AND PROBLEMS IN TRI-LATERAL COURSES

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ABSTRACT

A panel discussion on the trails and tribulations of establishing virtual-teaming in web-based courses. The panelists will discuss their experiences with using virtual teams in web-based classes, especially classes with a cross-cultural dimension. Tri-lateral courses are web-based classes which simultaneously take place at universities in the US, Canada, and Mexico. Within these classes, virtual teams, consisting of members from each country, are established for case analyses, Internet group discussions, and video-conferenced presentations. The session will consist of short presentations by the panelists of their virtual-teaming projects followed by an open dialogue focusing on the issues of virtual-teaming in web-based classes.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Web-based Instruction and Virtual Teams

Web-based education and training programs are becoming widely offered at education institutions and companies today. The new electronic learning, or e-learning, systems employed by these programs may also be used by work teams at organizations for facilitating creative energy in a virtual context to increase team performance. Various features such as discussion boards, virtual classrooms, digital drop boxes, task lists, calendars, and other features of the e-learning systems can help teams work and communicate more efficiently. The panel explores potential features and strategies for team leaders and members to innovatively enhance team management and increase performance using e-learning systems as a support tool. Tri-lateral courses, which are web-based classes which simultaneously take place at universities in the US, Canada, and Mexico, are discussed including the use of the Internet wherein multi-country teams complete case analyses, Internet group discussions, and video-conferenced presentations.

Panel Discussion Topics

The panelists will address both the techniques used in establishing the trilateral classes and the problems encountered in establishing virtual teams including the following contexts: 1) the conversion of a class on diversity and multicultural communication to meet the requirements for the tri-lateral traveling professor program (Discussion leader: Rebecca Gatlin-Watts); 2) the development of a web-based class in Strategic Management for the spring semester 2004 (Discussion leader: Michael J. Rubach); and 3) the development of virtual-teaming projects for non-mobile students as parts of other cases in global environment of business, business communication, and/or international business (Discussion leader: Rebecca Gatlin-Watts).