INTERDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION FOR GLOBAL STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

The authors brought together their two disciplines, pooled their approaches, and modified them to simulate a real world environment in order to teach the subject matter through teamwork and interdisciplinary learning. Over two semesters, an International Marketing class and an International Management class worked on related tasks to be coordinated and negotiated. Students experienced their subject and assignments in relation to other disciplines and learned about the necessity of integration of multidisciplinary business functions along with the type of teamwork necessary to address global challenges. Equally important was the challenge to develop realistic recommendations for a new product or service somewhere else in the world. In preparation for their careers in business, students gained a practice-oriented educational experience across courses using different media such as in class and online. The authors provide a detailed guide for the processes that may be followed for possible future applications.

Keywords: Interdisciplinary, Integrative education, Faculty collaboration, Global strategy, Marketing, Management, Online pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

Succeeding among multidisciplinary teams in solving real world problems and innovative solutions has not only been challenging but is now required for survival for business school graduates. While teamwork has been intertwined with the business school curricula around the globe for decades, providing thorough training within one field such as accounting, finance, marketing, human resources, information technology, or operations is usually the focus of higher education business programs. However, the fast changing global environment has forced organizations to develop integrative tools and cross-functional problem-solving teams to sustain competitive advantage. Recognizing this trend, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International), the highest ranking accreditation body for business schools around the world, has asked business schools to become a global business school (eNewsline, 2011). Forming a special task force, the AACSB has now placed its focus on helping business schools understand the need for educating students in the frameworks and paradigms that could

allow them to ask the right questions in unfamiliar business and global contexts. The need for adequately trained faculty for teaching students how to succeed in such 'foreign' situations has now been brought to the forefront (eNewsline, 2011).

Preparing the student for a career has always been a primary goal of educators of higher education. Reacting to the criticism that graduates are being prepared with a silo mentality or for stand-alone disciplines (Horsley, 2009), business schools have begun experimenting with courses or even whole new programs that simulate the real world. In the past decade, a handful of pedagogical articles have discussed the results of such experiments: one involved students across schools such as graphic design and marketing (Johansen, Scaff, &Hargis, 2009), one attempted to develop an integrated project management course with a real family-owned firm (Haretneian, Schelenger, & Fredrickson, 2001), while other experiments put students from Master of Science in Accounting and MBA programs in collaboration (Kruck & Teer, 2009). While business strategy and policy capstone courses within undergraduate programs devote a whole semester to learning and applying all areas of business into integrated strategic plans, coverage of international business concepts sometimes have to be limited and creative projects are often impossible due to time constraints. In another attempt to break the traditional business pedagogy that emphasizes a single discipline rather than a collection of disciplines, this paper investigates enhancing education through collaborative learning, product development, and interdisciplinary project teams. Specifically, the originality of this study is reflected in an effort to combine faculty expertise in marketing and international management in two different courses over different semesters to teach the process for developing an innovative global strategic plan. The methodologies described herein have the potential to inform a range of disciplines on collaborative work within the classroom setting.

RELATED LITERATURE

With the ever-expanding world of information, we must foster lifelong learning skills in students (Speck, 2002; Sibley, 2008). Innovation in an academic setting that blends fields of business such as marketing, finance, human resource (HR), legal and public relations is this project's focus. Technical advancements, specialized jargon, and shorter product life cycles have called for simultaneous work on related tasks to be coordinated and negotiated. The organization and team leadership need to foster a climate that allows for openness, risk taking, effective communication and conflict resolution in an environment that feels safe (Edmondson, 2009). The current focus and need for successful entrepreneurship requires the business student to be well groomed for a career in business commercialization. New business innovations and ventures need entrepreneurial thought, action, leadership, design thinking, and team building (Boni et al., 2009).

Business leaders inherently know that the competitive environment existing in the world today requires collaboration throughout the organization. Company-wide and inter and intra unit collaborative efforts can improve the results with "disciplinary collaboration." Examples include: assess when-and when not-to pursue collaboration across units to achieve goals; identify and overcome the barriers to collaboration; get people to buy into the larger picture even when they own only a small piece of it; be a "T –shaped Manager"; collaborating across divisions

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while still working deeply in your own unit; create networks across the organization that are not large but nimble and effective (Hansen, 2009).

In response to their rapidly changing external environments, organizations gradually adopted mechanisms to foster timely decision making processes and censure broad-based input. The continuum has ranged from integrative tools (e.g. liaisons) to multidiscipline problem-solving teams (e.g. cross-functional work teams), and to fully integrated team-based structures. Even with the latter, however, employees generally maintain an affinity with their functional background, remaining "experts" in their chosen field (Hartenian, Schellenger, & Frederickson, 2001).

Certainly, a place exists for business students trained as specialists in one particular functional area. However, we hear the business community calling for a new graduate; one who possesses a more interdisciplinary understanding of the organization. Business schools are beginning to address the concerns of employers that span a continuum from single classroom projects to the redesign of an entire curriculum (Hertenian, Schellenger, & Frederickson, 2001). Vance (2008) strongly recommends faculty (from different fields) collaboration for various reasons including examining one's own field from a fresh perspective and gaining new knowledge from relevant examples for the students. Therefore, literature support exists for new pedagogy involving collaboration among faculty across disciplines.

Hazen and Higby (2005) describe their experiences in co-teaching an interdisciplinary MBA issue-based course in diversity management and marketing over five summers. They list trust among the involved faculty members in co-teaching as one of the important factors. Administrative support for co-teaching, students' graduate level skills, reflective dialogue among the two faculty and students were also essential for a successful learning experience. Tchaicha and Davis (2005) experimented with an innovative and interdisciplinary approach through a short-term study abroad tour to teach the impact of culture on technology and business practices. Although the authors reported an overall positive outcome, they warned about the importance of advance planning in choosing the country and the appropriate logistics and support from faculty and administration for funding. The students in this study were also from an MBA level course. Yet in another study by Ducoffe et al. (2006), the authors implemented interdisciplinary and integrated elements in team-taught undergraduate courses with input from both students and alumni. Students evaluated the course more positively when the course was more integrated. These authors also speak of the scarcity of human and financial resources for designing effective fully integrated team-taught courses. They invited more research on analyzing costs and benefits of interdisciplinary team-teaching in undergraduate courses.

The other dimension of this inquiry is the usage of two different teaching media in the two courses, i.e. face-to-face and online. As globalization with enhanced technology has made project management through electronic communication an essential skill for managers, researchers of business education have delved into the arena of effective internet pedagogy commonly known as online education (Wang, 2009; Clarke & Clarke, 2009; Dede, 2008; O'Hara, 2007; Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005; Stacey, 1999; Hiltz, 1998).

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Some have critiqued higher education for not keeping up with the pace of the knowledge society as it exists in the present business world. Others have noted the necessity of a skill revolution in mastering the art of filtering through an ocean of quasi-accurate information available on the internet. According to Clarke and Clarke (2009), communications have become ubiquitous and instantaneous, and available software tools now allow for a range of creative and collaborative options that yield new patterns and results. Wang (2009) found that web-based tools were limited in communicative functions, while being useful for file storing and sharing of information. Group members in this researcher's study ended up communicating through other tools such as mobile phones, e-mails, and discussion forums. Wang (2009) suggested that in addition to a tool-rich environment, effective collaborative e-learning asks for a combination of text, spoken language, and visual expressions.

The above literature apparently supports the conjecture that business educators need to design pedagogy that enables students to develop these types of online collaborative skills.

Set against this backdrop, the need for more pedagogical research on interdisciplinary, collaborative simulated projects in business school classrooms is unquestionable. This paper describes an exploration of an interdisciplinary collaborative project by two business faculty that focused on three areas: 1) utilizing students in two different majors to provide input into one integrated global strategic plan over two semesters, 2) combining faculty and a practitioner's expertise in designing the project and guiding students and thus helping build a learning community; and 3) comparing face-to-face and online teaching and learning experiences in accomplishing complex and dynamic tasks in unfamiliar environments.

PHASE ONE WITH ONLY MANAGEMENT MAJORS

Initially, the management faculty used a culminating project assignment in an International Management course where management majors worked toward a strategic global business plan by choosing a product and a country after doing extensive research online. The management students wore different functional hats to accomplish this plan, such as general management, marketing/PR, legal/public relations, operations, and managerial accounting/finance.

During this phase, the total group size ranged from 16 to 20, while each sub-group was divided into departments consisting of 5 to 6 people. The students were given an opportunity to choose a department and select each department head. The professor provided several sub-deadlines for completion of each phase of the project in order to avoid delay and procrastination. The department heads were required to meet on a regular basis to make sure that everyone was working toward one overall goal. Originally, the course was only taught with a face-to-face meeting twice a week. Although the students felt challenged (from their comments) in coordinating large groups, the frequent face-to-face meetings helped. Among positive comments, students appreciated the rare opportunity to learn how departments other than management think and focus on their respective fields. Students also liked the aspect of the project that made them think about the whole company and make adjustments to each sub-group strategy. For example, the finance/managerial accounting group would notify the marketing group to cut down on advertising expense, in order to meet a desired profit level or the break-even point at a minimum.

In later semesters, the course was also offered through an online platform. Anticipating that the degree of challenge would increase manifold, the faculty formed maximum group sizes of 10 students. From written student comments, it was apparent that while students appreciated the opportunity to wear different hats and understand the need for integration of different functions within a business, managing groups of 10 was still challenging, especially in an asynchronous online environment.

After implementing this project in the International Management course for six consecutive semesters, comments and the faculty member's perception also revealed that management students would gain more real-world-like experience by working with other majors by tapping into their expertise. Although the management majors gained much knowledge by pretending to work in different business functions, this particular course content was still lacking the involvement of different majors such as marketing or finance, an interconnection that would happen in an actual global enterprise.

At this juncture, a marketing professor and the management professor decided to make this project more in line with the real-world. The International Marketing class did a marketing plan with two products and two country options. The intent here was that the marketing plans would be given to the International Management students in the next semester to work out the management areas such as general management, legal/human resources, and other functional areas.

A guide for the complete international strategic plan was provided to the marketing students so that they understood the ultimate goal of the project which was integrating all parts of a business, rather than just concentrating on the marketing part. The details required for the marketing plan were then provided as described in the next section, Phase Two.

PHASE TWO WITH MARKETING STUDENTS: FACULTY COLLABORATION

Initial preparation: The authors conducted in-depth research and discussion on the importance of collaboration in the workplace among all areas of business. Much time and planning went into designing a learning experience that would simulate a business environment where one department's decision affected the other departments. An ideal setting for such an environment would be to have the marketing students work on the international marketing plan and provide it to the management students over the same semester or have one course be team-taught by the marketing and the management faculty. However, time constraints and faculty union policies made it difficult to design such a course. The School of Business supported the research project by providing a course release for each faculty member. This collaboration would not be possible without such support. The two faculty members compromised and derived a practical solution as described below.

Initially, six students in an International Marketing class were chosen to work on a special interdisciplinary project that was two-fold as designed by the authors. The first part of the project was for the International Marketing students to develop a new product or a service idea in an overseas market and a full marketing plan. The second part of this project was to turn the

marketing class's thoroughly researched and well defined product/service marketing plan over to an International Management class that would explore the entire organizational activities around it in the following semester.

These six students were given the choice of remaining as one group with a single idea and plan or divide into two groups of three, each with its own separate idea and plan. The students chose to divide into two groups of three. They were to follow the written and verbal instructions provided by the faculty member (Exhibit A) assigned to the class, on the areas to develop. The students were urged to do extensive research and be able to justify and substantiate all of their choices.

The supporting instructor was introduced into the realm of the assignment as well as the business librarian and the university's entrepreneur in residence. The students met with each of these individuals. The collaboration among the marketing and the management faculty was a key component of this phase. The management faculty made herself available for the face-to-face marketing class as needed. During the semester, the students consulted with the management faculty at least four times.

Input from the practitioner, the Entrepreneur in Residence: During the second phase, the authors invited input and feedback from the School of Business Entrepreneur in Residence. They first consulted with the practitioner about the research project. There was an appeal to enhance this project with his insight which would be reflective of the current global strategic business world.

At this stage, the practitioner was asked to review the professor's instructions to the students and to offer comments on the first drafts prepared by the students. He was quite impressed with the quality and breadth of the two projects completed by the undergraduate students. In his opinion, the interdisciplinary idea of connecting the two courses (International Management and International Marketing) through an integrated project was an appropriate attempt to simulate the real world.

He suggested that some of the marketing students take the role of an advisory board (as in the real world) that could guide the International Management class next semester to overcome the challenge of marketing students not being there. Several students thought that this was a great idea and stepped up to be available because they wanted to see the results through. He also offered some excellent practical suggestions for determining the price of a brand new product that helped the students to think in a direction in a way that they would not have on their own.

The online file sharing tool that was set up for a discussion link for the 2 groups and 2 professors during the process was utilized for periodic surveys at the conclusion of each stage. For Phase Two, the International Marketing students who came up with new products and marketing plans were surveyed first.

Survey in Phase Two (marketing students): An 18-question survey regarding the Interdisciplinary Project was designed by the professors. The survey consisted of questions assessing the students' thoughts on various aspects of the project such as the experience of the

project itself, the role of faculty, the working group, and applicability to real world settings. Seven questions used a Likert scale (Low, Medium, High, Very High), five used a Likert scale and an open response box, and six used only an open response box. The survey was created through Survey Monkey (**online questionnaires**) and posted through the University's inter-web program for students to access. A total of six students responded, representing 100% participation by the two teams of three who participated in this project.

Analysis of the Survey: Simple frequency counts were computed to show the general trends of the class. While the survey used five different ratings, frequency counts were computed with recoded variables. The two high and very high variables were coded as high and the three other choices medium, low, and very low were coded as low. Recoding the survey choices this way allowed for easier interpretation of class preferences. Results of these data are shown below in Table 1.

Half of the respondents reported a high preference for this assignment. Their comments suggested that they felt this project was applicable to the "real world." The majority reported a medium degree of challenge in finding information. The respondents said that there was plenty of information but the difficulty was in finding it. Most reported that the direction or guidance from the faculty was very helpful.

In regards to the clarity of the assignment, one-third reported a medium level, one-third reported a high level, and one-third reported a very high level. Most respondents rated the informational support from the faculty on a medium to high level. The majority reported seeking help from the business librarian. The majority of responders rated the level of effective communication with faculty as high.
Most responders rated the effectiveness of communication among their group members to be high. The majority cited a high learning experience of the international arena from this project. Most respondents said they gained a high level of learning through this team work. In regards to the degree of the preference for working as a group, medium, high, and very high rankings were distributed equally. The majority reported positive aspects about working in a group as well as the challenges as in finding time to meet as a group. An equal number of respondents rated the degree of collaboration in the project as medium, high, and very high. Everyone reported that each team member had something to contribute. Most cited three members as the optimum number of students working together on this assignment.

Respondents had differing ideas about how to present this project as a marketing plan to other departments. Several cited that they would present the main concepts of the plan and the data with the expectation that revisions may made by other departments. Respondents also had various thoughts on what the challenges would be in turning this marketing plan over to another department. Most responses included concern over clarity. Students were apprehensive about the international management group's ability to fully comprehend their plan, understand their founding ideas, and reasoning for the plan's design. Everyone agreed that marketing input is important in an overall strategy.

They reported that the most valuable lessons learned about international business and marketing included communication, collaboration, time management, formulating a marketing plan, and the

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unique difficulties that can arise in international business. Some students did not have any suggestions for improving this process in the future. Others cited a more concrete outline, more time, and deadlines set up within the project to assist with time management.

PHASE THREE WITH MANAGEMENT MAJORS AND COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT

The International Management course was taught entirely online. The culminating project was worth 35% of the course's total assessment. Students were also responsible for other individual and group projects.   Therefore, sub-deadlines were integrated into the project process, such as for entry mode decision into the country of choice, any changes or modifications of the original marketing strategic plan input, a detailed outline, a draft, and then for the final submission. Excerpts from the guide are found in Exhibit B.

The students were provided with the two marketing plans, numerous web links, a librarian'scontact and blog source, examples from prior years' projects, power point summaries and applicable readings within one folder (virtually provided on Blackboard, the university web platform for online teaching). The instructor assigned one of the marketing plans to Group 1 and the second one to Group 2. Group 3 was given a choice between the two marketing plans. The goal here was to explore any variations in the quality of the final products between instructor-forced decisions versus student-directed choices.

TABLE 1: RESULTS FROM MARKETING STUDENTS' SURVEY

Table 1

Frequencies for Marketing Students

Question	Rating	Frequency	Percent
Your degree of preference for this assignment with international strategies involved.	low	2	33.3
	high	4	66.7
Did you find information availability to be a challenge?	low	4	66.7
	high	2	33.3
Did you find direction or guidance from faculty helpful?	low	1	16.7
	high	5	83.3
How do you rate the clarity of the assignment?	low	2	33.3
	high	4	66.7
How do you rate informational support of the faculty of this assignment?	low	3	50.0
	high	3	50.0
Rate the effectiveness of communication with faculty.	high	6	100.0
Rate the effectiveness of communication with your group members.	low	1	16.7
	high	5	83.3
Rate your learning experience of the international arena from this assignment.	low	1	16.7
	high	5	83.3
Rate the learning you gained from this team work.	low	2	33.3
	high	4	66.7
How did you like working as a group?	low	2	33.3
	high	4	66.7
Do you feel that the process that you just went through was collaborative?	low	2	33.3
	high	4	66.7
What do you think is the optimum number of students working on an assignment such as this?	3	6	100.0

A guide for a pro-forma financial statement and break-even analysis was provided to students within Blackboard. This guide was designed to show students how each department needs to communicate approximate costs to the Finance department and how these costs affect the whole project and the bottom line or net income. The guide implied that an overall return on investment should be kept in mind. Once cost estimates from various departments were received and Finance would complete the first draft of the income statement, departments could be notified to reduce cost estimates.

Three groups were randomly formed with six students in each group. Based on feedback received in prior semesters and from the international marketing class, group sizes were reduced for this experiment. As three sub-departments (marketing/public relations, legal/human resources, finance) and the general management area needed to be formed, at least six individuals per project were deemed necessary.

The contact information for the marketing faculty and marketing students who volunteered to provide support were included within the guide (see Exhibit B). As mentioned in Phase Two, these advisory roles were suggested by the Entrepreneur in Residence.

The students were required to evaluate each peer on attitude, sharing of work, and contribution to the project so that non-participative individuals could not earn a higher group grade than they deserved. The peer evaluations were designed to have a significant influence on the final group grade for each student.

As part of a sub-deadline submission, each individual's responsibility within the group was delineated. In addition, an online discussion area for each group was made available so that the faculty member could monitor each student's active involvement or inactivity.

Results from Phase Three: While all three groups ultimately either expanded upon the product planning or changed the country choice, these decisions were more faculty-directed rather than student-initiated. Students had to justify any changes they made from the original marketing plan or even if they did not make any changes (which would be difficult to explain without being perceived as taking the 'easier route' since the plan was already done). From the discussion board conversations, it was apparent that the necessity for integration was not fully realized. The students thought that managerial accounting/finance decisions were to be made by that department only and the other departments did not have to be concerned. Only after an intervention from the faculty member were these misconceptions were cleared. This lack of communication could be attributed to the complexity of the project and the online venue. It should be noted here that repeated instructions, power point slides, and examples of integrated projects completed by students in prior semesters were made available to the students throughout the semester. Interestingly, the project completed by Group 3 (who could choose between the two plans) received the highest score. It appeared that this group 'took ownership' of their choice as compared to the other two groups who were assigned their product by the instructor.

The students of the online class did not make contact with the marketing professor although many overtures were made. Therefore, they did not have the same support of the non-lead management faculty as the face-to-face class. The students also did not contact the marketing

students although contacts were provided. From six responses received from the survey, it seems that the marketing plan provided sufficient information to the management students. The overall guide available from the management faculty was also deemed to be written with sufficient clarity. The advisory contact was optional for students. This could have resulted in students not wanting to spend the extra effort to contact others outside of their group. In future experiments, a part of the overall grade may be assigned to contacts and discussions with the advisors.

Survey analysis of Phase Three (management students): The same 18-question survey distributed to the marketing students in Phase Two was also distributed to the management students through Survey Monkey and posted through the University's inter-web program for students in order to maintain its anonymity. A total of fifteen students responded, representing 83.33% participation. Simple frequency counts were also used for this phase of the data analysis. The results of their preferences were also recoded into two different variables, one for high and one for low preferences. Results from these data are shown in Table 2. It appears that the majority of the students found the clarity of the assignment to be high, direction and guidance from faculty to be very helpful, and preferred the opportunity for doing this project involving international strategies. On the negative side, group size and group work or the inactivity of certain group members, lack of group communication, and degree of learning from group work received low ratings. Among the comments, the challenge of online communication among the group was mentioned most frequently.

TABLE 2: RESULTS FROM MANAGEMENT STUDENTS' SURVEY

Table 2

Frequency of responses of for International Management Students

Question	Rating Type	Frequency	Percentage
Your degree of preference for this assignment with international strategies involved.	high	10	66.7
Did you find information availability to be a challenge?	low	12	85.7
Did you find direction or guidance from faculty helpful?	high	14	93.3
How do you rate the clarity of the assignment?	high	11	73.3
How do you rate informational support of the faculty of this assignment?	high	13	92.9
Rate the effectiveness of communication with faculty.	high	12	80.0
Rate the effectiveness of communication with your group members.	low	9	60.0
	high	6	40.0
Rate your learning experience of the international arena from this assignment.	low	6	40.0
	high	9	60.0
Rate the learning you gained from this team work.	low	8	53.3
	high	7	46.7
How did you like working as a group?	low	11	73.3
	high	4	26.7
Do you feel that the process that you just went through was collaborative?	low	10	66.7
	high	5	33.3
What do you think is the optimum number of students working on an assignment such as this?	3	14	100.0
Contact information of the professor from the Marketing and students from her class was provided to you for consultation purposes. Did you contact any of them?	no	15	100.0

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

While this study was exploratory in nature, some post hoc questions were generated to suggest possible relationships that could be answered with future research. One observation was that the management students reported overall greater faculty communication and understanding of the assignment than the marketing class. While one of the reasons for the differences found in the ratings could be an artifact of the small sample size of the marketing class and the unbalanced comparison groups, it would be valuable to explore the differences between online versus face-to-face class communications in a future study with a larger, balanced sample.

An interesting finding came about when management students were asked about whether or not they had contacted the marketing professor or the marketing students for advice. None of the 15 respondents indicated that they had used the marketing professor or the marketing students as a resource for their project (Table 2).   The most common reason stated was that the management students did not find it necessary to contact the marketing students or professors. It could be that the marketing class provided adequate information and the management team was able to utilize the information effectively for their part of the project.   Alternatively, one may interpret that the need for communication was not a priority for the management students, because after they had allocated resources as they saw fit, they had no remaining resources toward collaboration with the marketing class.

This interdisciplinary study between two semesters needs to be repeated at least 2 or 3 times for a clearer and in-depth understanding of the obstacles and benefits of such innovative pedagogy. Future researchers may find it fruitful to direct the various groups in the marketing class to focus on one category of product or industry and one region of the world.

As an additional experiment, Phase Three with the management students could be held in a face-to-face class. Then, results from the same survey could be compared to see if there are any changes in students' perception of group communication.

Another scenario could be to have the marketing students and faculty form an advisory committee for the management students. There would be a requirement (with negative consequences in grades for not meeting) for meeting with this committee at least 3 times over the semester. The first meeting could be held at the beginning of the semester where the marketing students and faculty could explain their ideas and plan, followed by one at mid-semester for answering questions as needed. At the end of the semester, the marketing students and faculty would hear the revised and finalized plan from the management students and faculty.

In conclusion, the single most important aspect here is the need for administrative support. Innovative experiments such as the one mentioned in this paper require special funding, be it for a study abroad experience or a team-taught interdisciplinary course within the business school or one involving different schools (e.g., business and science or medicine or arts) and real organizations.

EXHIBIT A: EXCERPTS FROM THE GUIDE IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

Hello,
There is a lot of support for your research in the Research Suitcase on the Course Content Page of our class on WEbCT* and in the Student Support Suitcase. Please utilize them.
Below are a few web links that can be relevant and helpful. It will be important to conduct a significant amount of research. Do not hesitate to contact the Business Librarian. She will be developing a special blog posting for the special project involving international business and international marketing classes.
http:www.noblenet.org/ssc/business/http:www.executiveplanet.com/
http://www.globaledge.msu.edu
http://www.doingbusiness.org/economyrankings/
http://globaledge.msu.edu/ibrd/marketpot.asp

Your assignment is to come up with a particular product/service for a particular country. You will be expected to cover a variety of areas.

Below is a guide to significant areas to make your decision and to support it:
• Target Market
• Market Analysis
• Marketing Mix
• Sales Forecast by product type
• S.W.O.T. analysis
• Promotion Mix and expenses
• Public Relations ideas/costs
• Corporate Social Responsibility
• Cultural makeup
• Influences of religion, education, government, economics, climate, and logistics?
• Literacy rate, demographics
• Why this type of business?
• Why this type of country? Why to this location in the country?
• What processes did you follow? Surveys? Published results, interviews, periodicals?
• What sources would you use to utilize this process-any helpful information from the federal, state, or local governments?
• Who is your targeted audience or group of customers?
• What promotion medium or media? Why?
• Which pricing plan? Promotion plan?
• Industry?
• Competition?

 How to keep superior public relations with the host government?
• This project is an attempt to replicate the real world of managing in a global environment
• For a project of this depth, it is essential to give yourself mini deadlines so that the task

does not seem insurmountable. Each group or group leader should give me a status report each week.

EXHIBIT B: EXCERPTS FROM THE GUIDE IN INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT

This semester, your class is part of a unique interdisciplinary academic study. A Marketing Professor and I are involved in the study. Our goal is to explore how effective learning would be if we simulate the real world as much as possible. In this case, we asked her International Marketing students from the Spring semester to come up with an innovative product for a company to sell in the international market. They have two different products: Elastik and O2 Health (find these in the Culminating Project folder).

Group 1 will work with Elastik and **Group 2** with O2 Health. **Group 3** can choose either Elastik or O2 Health. As I said earlier, you have marketing plans for these available from the international marketing students. The marketing sub groups in groups 1, 2, and 3 will review and decide if and what changes are necessary to these marketing plans. The legal/HR, finance, and general management groups need to then come up with their plans. You need to decide how would you go about with the marketing plan – will you go to another location? Remember, this is a strategic plan. Any changes you make will need to be justified. The marketing professor (e-mail provided to students) is available for advice and background information on these products. In addition, two students from O2 Health are available in an advisory role (their contact information can be found at the end of the O2 Health project). I do request that you be conscious about their time and only utilize them as advisors, not to do any work for you.

Within each group (total of 6 members each), three sub-groups or departments need to be formed. Then a department manager needs to be selected who will form the general management group (three managers) and will be responsible for leading each department, meeting deadlines, and the Executive Summary. In addition, each group needs to have an editor who will be responsible for editing the paper for grammar, proofing, and making sure the paper reads like ONE paper (not fragmented).

This project is an attempt to replicate the real world of managing in a global environment. That means diversity, multicultural characteristics, wealth of talent and skills, larger sizes with sub groups, virtual communication, talented people with equal qualifications who would be a challenge in leading (they feel they know as much if not more than the leader). This becomes a learning process for meeting these challenges and accomplishing a common goal within a defined timeline. I refer to your earlier assigned article readings, "Managing Multicultural Teams" and "Eight Ways to Build Collaborative Teams."

For a comprehensive project of this nature, it is essential to give yourself mini deadlines so that the task does not seem insurmountable. In the attached pages, I have provided you with those deadlines. However, each group leader will have to provide more deadlines for smaller chunks within his/her group. I will also upload (soon) a power point guide that includes more details about the process and what should be included in each group project.

Assignment: Your task is to plan the establishment of a new business or a branch in a foreign country of your choice. You have been approved **10 million dollars** for this long-term investment. You must justify your choice in the context of theories/paradigms discussed in class. The case analyses selected for your assignment pointed out pitfalls and challenges MNCs faced and how they solved the problems. In this assignment, you (your group) have an opportunity to

make your own decisions after you have analyzed mistakes made by the MNCs we have studied. If you insist upon using a real company, please make sure to obtain appropriate authorization to share company information with the class.

Sub deadlines (you will lose points if you do not submit the pieces by these dates): **October 4** – Review Elastik and O2 Health and state and justify any changes in the product and/or country. All three groups need to identify the division of responsibilities within the group (who is doing what). Submit this to me under Culminating Project for your group.

October 15 – Selection of entry mode based on research.

November 5 – Final decisions for each sub-section plan (i.e., marketing/PR, legal/HR, finance)

December 3 – Sections due to group editor

December 10 – Final paper due. **And the completion of an anonymous survey on surveymonkey.com.**

Comments from students on reasons for not connecting with the marketing faculty and students

-I felt comfortable with all the work.

-I don't know why I did not, I probably should have.

-I'm not doing the park with marketing.

-I didn't see a need.

-Didn't find it necessary.

-No point to contact them. We picked a topic and wrote about it.

-Our group worked well together and we did not see the need to contact anyone.

-I didn't personally find a need to.

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