End-of-Year Report for Instructional Grants 2007-2008
Center for Teaching Effectiveness
General Education Initiative
IT-User Services

Faculty Name(s) and Department(s):   Monika Shafi and Carolyn Bitzer
                                          Women's Studies Program

Grant Project Title: Student Multimedia Design Projects: Going Abroad

1. Did you complete your project as planned? What changes and
   modification to the original project did you have to make, if any?

   Yes. The original project was completed as planned with some minor
   logistical and expense adjustments. Here is a brief project synopsis.

   While spending one month studying abroad in India, during the winter
   session 2008, eleven University of Delaware students created short, academic
   podcasts. Students, who had little or no previous technological experience,
   produced themed, issue-driven, two-to-five minute video documentaries using
   instructional-grant-funded equipment and multimedia training. This
   unprecedented media design opportunity provided students opportunities to
   gather primary evidence daily by video-recording speakers and site visits, to draft
   and revise storyboards, and project their final films for an audience that included
   Indian journalists.

Students taping speakers at various places in Maharashtra, India: the Tata Institute of Social Science, Alochana, and a Masum village health program site.

2. What concrete results have you, your students, and your
   department seen from your project? Please give specific examples
   of what has worked well and what needs further refinement.

The documentary film/podcast assignment not only enhanced student engagement and learning, but also revolutionized the study abroad experience. The project motivated students to move beyond the typical tourist photo gathering and Facebook uploads to think critically about which images, words, and audio could best describe important issues. Students worked collaboratively and built on each other's strengths and insights. The undergraduates' awareness of the presence of audiences for their work, both in India and in the U.S., motivated students to capture good footage, make constant connections, and write well.

The required local expert feedback sessions fostered an unparalleled academic interchange and offered benefits which extended beyond enriching the learning process. Students heard feedback like, "The music isn't consistent with a Hindu temple." Or, "your group highlighted an important topic in a balanced manner." Other comments addressed style issues or story sequencing. These production process enhanced students' cutting-edge technology skills, higher-order thinking, cultural sensitivity, and understanding. Producing video in near real time, 10,000 miles from home, required both project management and problem solving skills. Students lugged the equipment and laptops in their carry on bags, gathered and archived data daily, designed their projects, and worked around blackouts, converter issues, recording challenges, time differences, jet lag, and limited computer time.

If predictions about online resume profiles come true, students can insert their multimedia designs into future electronic academic portfolios. With an easy upload, students can illustrate their global scholarly experience and technological abilities to prospective employers. Instead of scrambling at the last minute to put something together for the job market, students have a polished, ready production to distribute. Since filmmaking reinforces presentation, supporting evidence, and expert testimony, students may transfer these skills to prepare or revamp their online resumes.

The podcast, along with a separate blog assignment, improved students' writing "for an audience" skills. On most days, two or three students wrote weekly reflective blogs and posted them to a specially designed and customized password-protected website. Students sent copies of their blogs to a restricted email list of eighty family members and friends.

This study abroad filmmaking project, initiated through the Women's Studies Interdisciplinary Program, developed the writing, cross cultural exchange, and filmmaking skills of the undergraduate women participants. The students developed a high comfort level with sophisticated technology. This experience countered the cultural norms which discourage women from becoming tech-savvy and helps prepare them for technology-focused careers. The multimedia documentary project can be easily replicated by other study abroad faculty.

Students working collaboratively, preparing voice-overs, meeting with an Indian feminist magazine editor.

3. How have you assessed student-learning resulting from this project? Give specific examples and attach supporting documentation (e.g. products of student work, writing samples, tests).

Multiple assessments provide layered direct and indirect feedback on this pilot. Student learning can be observed by viewing a few selected student podcasts and blog entries. The University of Delaware's Office of Educational Assessment prepared a detailed India Study Abroad Assessment report based on independent pre-trip and post-trip online student surveys. The Indian journalists enjoyed their new role as advisors, as opposed to lecturers, and appreciated the students' efforts.

The outcomes indicated multiple benefits including highly significant content learning and filmmaking skills development (p<= .05). The podcast project became an indispensable component of the study abroad experience. One student explained:

It was constantly on my mind. Every time we went somewhere, I was thinking about the experience critically, deciding what might be useful, how it fit into the lens of our project. On the other trips, the assignments did not utilize the environment to such a high degree. The essays I wrote did not necessitate being in the host country as much as the video I created in India did. I could not have produced my podcast without the backdrop of the country.

Several students described the impact of creating something to share and how the multimedia project process motivated and influenced them. The podcast

assignment pushed them more than previous UD study abroad trip essay assignments. One student stated:

> I got a lot out of working in a small group to create a video product. So much discussion and thought went into which clip we should use to illustrate our point and which might not be as effective. It was a challenge to decide … [how to] capture the 'big picture.' Each member of our group had a different background and approach to the material, which made for interesting dialogue and in my opinion, a better product....

Another student looked forward to using the documentary for her online academic portfolio:

> I'm so glad that we created the podcasts; I've been able to show my family and friends a very tangible and interesting example of what I learned, and now I can use it in a portfolio or something in the future. I really appreciate the opportunity.

From a feminist pedagogical perspective, the podcasts achieved many Women's Studies' program objectives. Students were able to illuminate nonwestern feminist efforts, discuss issues with in-country scholars, amplify women's voices, collaborate, produce knowledge, and overcome historic inequities in technology design and in documentary films. The project, therefore, was particularly helpful in promoting the aims of Women's Studies discipline.
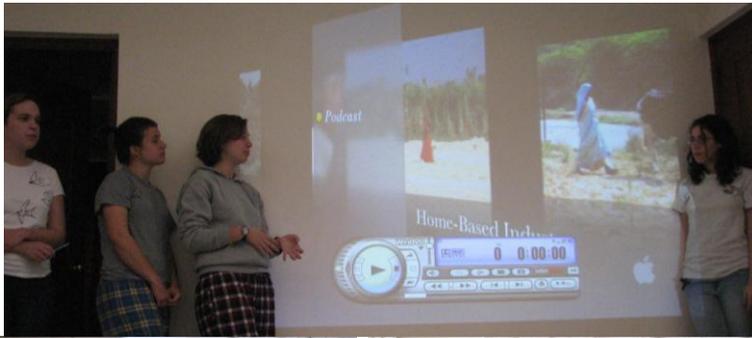
Students presenting their final documentaries to
Indian journalists.

4. Would you consider your project a success? Please elaborate.

Absolutely, the project's benefits exceeded my expectations. The student filmmaking experience, while studying abroad, enhanced student learning. The documentaries, the Office of Assessment findings, and expert responses highlight the intensive learning opportunities in primary evidence gathering, collaboration, and professional input. Presenting to audiences, at home and abroad, encouraged students to polish their work. The podcast project became central to the study abroad experience and fostered repeated academic exchanges with scholars abroad. Students made connections between lecturers, highlighted multiple perspectives, and have an example of their emerging multimedia design talent for potential employers. These media projects have the potential to transform the study abroad experience across the University.

Students used their personal digital cameras to secure additional images or short video clips. Three or four students were assigned to groups based on their various technological, analytical, and writing skills. Within the first week, each group prepared a storyboard and collected video, pictures, and sound. Students found free online background music or created music using GarageBand. By the second week, the students completed the first batch of films and presented them to each other. Through email, the SMDC effectively provided technology support for students.

5. What would you do differently if you could do the project again?

By the end of the study abroad month, students captured forty-five hours of primary data from Indian experts on mini DV tapes and produced 11 podcasts. To give students an opportunity to continue to build on their new documentary skills and to create an archive of the primary data footage collected in India, I would set up a spring semester independent study course, or stipends for students, They could revisit the lectures and either upgrade or prepare new podcasts. Because of time limitations, students were unable to incorporate all the speakers. Expert testimony on feminist filmmaking, humanist cartoon production, religious discrimination, and globalization was videoed and will likely be unused in the existing mini digital tape format.

Faculty considering this type of project should be aware of several challenges and adaptations. Pre-trip student training and equipment coordination takes significant preparation time. Students needed one computer per three students and should be informed about overall project demands before trip acceptance. Although students shared their personal laptops, this expectation could pose problems. Limited time and equipment does impact the quality of the productions. Students spent a significant amount of time (about 15-20 hours) producing their podcasts. Because of the public nature of the projects, students felt more pressure over the assignments. It is simpler to have students living "unplugged" in a youth hostel for the majority of the time abroad. Taking equipment abroad poses more security responsibilities and may exacerbate "wealthy American" stereotypes. Some logistical solutions evolved while abroad. For the podcast projects, each day, two students signed up to record both video and audio for the entire group. Producing weekly podcasts proved to be too ambitious, and two podcasts (one produced by each group, and later, one produced individually or in pairs) was possible.

6. How will the project continue beyond the grant phase?

New resources are available for study abroad faculty interested in constructing similar assignments. The study abroad faculty director instructional resource web page (designed by Debbie Jeffers) includes sample syllabi, assignments, grading rubrics (created by Dorry Ross, Writing Consultant), several student storyboards and final documentaries, a technological wiki resource page, and surveys. The pretrip training series agendas provide student orientation details. The laptop and digital equipment purchased or borrowed, as part of this pilot grant, can be used by other UD study abroad faculty directors. Please contact Bryce Spence or Paul Hyde for details. In addition, links to the project have been created at the Student Multimedia Design Center and the Women's Studies websites.

Carolyn Bitzer presented the project's impact and the available faculty resources in the following local and national forums:
- The Lilly-East Conference on College and University Teaching, *Action! Using Student Video Documentary Projects to Enhance Learning* (April 2008, UD);
- The National Women's Studies Association Annual Meeting, *U.S. Students Blog and Podcast While Studying Abroad in India: Resisting or Replicating Hegemonies in a WS Program*, for panel *Zoom In and Out: Traversing*

Hegemonic Research and Teaching Boundaries About/Within India with U.S. Students (June 2008, Cincinnati);

- The Geis Research on Women Conference (April 2008, UD); and
- The UD Summer Faculty Institute (June 2008, UD)
- The UD Center for International Studies staff (August, 2008).

7. Budget *List the budget items that you have expended so far in the spaces provided. PLEASE NOTE grant funds must be expended by June 30, 2008. In other words, all encumbered costs must clear the grant budget account by June 30, 2008.*

ITEM	AMOUNT REQUESTED	DEPT/COLLEGE actual and in-kind funds	EXPLANATION/JUSTIFICATION
TOTAL of Budget Items	$18,800		
Faculty summer S-contract	4,500 (2007) 2,000 (2007) 4,500 (2008) 2,000 (2008)		*Faculty summer total amount by rank including appropriate fringe benefits (8% no summer retirement) or (37% summer retirement) may not exceed $4,750 Asst; $5,410 Assoc; $6,300 Full Professor.*
Graduate stipend			
Graduate stipend fringe 4%			
Graduate student non-contract (no fringe), or undergraduate student misc wage (no fringe)			
Consultant non-UD S-contract			
Consultant non-UD S-contract fringe 8%			
Equipment (itemize/detail)	3,305.39		
Software (itemize/detail)		SMDC	
Supplies & Books (itemize/detail)			

Conferences & Travel (itemize/detail)			
Other (itemize/detail)	550 (2007) 300 (2008)		Only one student hired each semester to offset fringe expenses
Sustainability costs			Costs to be covered to sustain course and maintain equipment and software once grant funds are expended.
Pending support from other source(s)			
Prior grant(s) (2000-2006)			
Fringe Benefits	1,040		

Acknowledgements