

Strategies for bridging cross-cultural barriers for international students' success in American asynchronous on-line degree programmes

V. Chukhlomin*

e-mail: Valeri.Chukhlomin@esc.edu

A. Deshpande*

e-mail: Anant.Deshpande@esc.edu

B. Chandra*

e-mail: Bidhan.Chandra@esc.edu

*Department of Business, Management and Economics
State University of New York – Empire State College
New York, United States

Abstract

The increasing popularity and acceptance of asynchronous on-line programmes has led to an increase in cross-border international collaboration and partnerships between American and international institutions of higher learning to offer on-line dual degree programmes for international students. However, the success of these partnerships depends on the ability of the international students to understand and navigate the many cultural differences between the two systems, and for American institutions to provide assistance. As an institution initiating and participating in such international programmes, the Center for Distance Learning (CDL) at State University of New York (SUNY) Empire State College, New York, United States (US), has sought to accommodate and assist international students studying at remote US universities from their home countries. To this end, the CDL formed an international distance learning group charged with fostering inter-institutional collaboration. One effort of this group was the development of Bridging, Bilingual, Bicultural ('3B') courses that use Web 2.0 tools, such as wikis, blogs, videoconferencing, lecture capture, asynchronous discussions, and virtual worlds. This article presents three retrospective case studies and discusses how the '3B' model has been used successfully to assist international students to acculturate to distance learning.

Keywords: international partnerships, cultural differences, virtual acculturation, impact of technology and e-learning, learning style differences, technology based blended distance and open learning, action research

INTRODUCTION

Empire State College is the only non-traditional college in the State University of New York (SUNY) system. It is a non-traditional college as most students enrolled

at the college are adults aged between 25 and 55 years old who are working. The college is designed to help learners create individualised degree programmes which suit their academic and professional goals. Its Center for Distance Learning (CDL), a founding member of the Sloan Consortium (Sloan-C), is a national and international leader in online learning. In order to promote and coordinate global on-line learning, the CDL formed an international distance learning group charged with fostering inter-institutional collaboration, including identifying potential partner institutions, advising, and leading joint projects. Since 1998, this faculty-driven group has been involved in a series of projects with Russian and other non-Western universities aimed at developing undergraduate double degree programmes in the curricular field of business administration. Under the terms of these international collaboration projects, international students studying at their home institutions have an option to obtain an undergraduate degree from SUNY by taking online courses at the CDL in addition to those required for their home qualification (Chukhlomin 2010a and 2010b). They can obtain an undergraduate SUNY degree by completing a combination of online courses at the CDL and courses offered at their home institution. This article describes a particular approach named the Bridging, Bilingual, Bicultural ('3B') framework that uses bridging bilingual bicultural courses as a breakthrough strategy to accommodate ('acculturate') participating Russian students in the American learning environment. This model can also be applied successfully to partnerships with other non-Russian universities.

The article begins with a brief review of acculturation in a virtual context, followed by a discussion on the methodology used and continues with a retrospective case analysis of an early experiment with international distance learning. This is followed by a discussion on strategies to alleviate barriers to international online learning. Then, the authors retrospectively analyse two additional cases to fine tune their conceptual framework and describe interventions attempted in the fourth case. To conclude, the authors provide their conclusions, limitations of the research and recommendations for future research.

ACCULTURATION IN A VIRTUAL CONTEXT

The increase in diversity in the online classroom has resulted in a need to develop culturally responsive pedagogies to help on-line learners acclimatise to the complexity of the virtual learning environment (Gollnick and Chinn 2002). Foreign international students exposed to their first virtual experience react with high stress (Kyungbin, Daehoon, Eun-Jun and Armstrong 2010), so such virtual acculturation is important. Acculturation, has been defined as 'those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous firsthand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups' (Redfield, Linton and Herskovits 1936, 149). At the education level, as pointed out by many researchers, acculturation is also the acquisition and adoption process which occurs when two cultural groups come into close contact as in the case of a

college and society setting (Flores and Clark 2004). Although many viewpoints of acculturation carry the assumption that it is bi-directional (and this approach could have been used), the authors found it more useful to conceptualise acculturation as processes by which immigrant groups assimilate into a dominant culture (Silverstein and Xuan 1999, 189). For instance, a study by Chen, Unger, Cruz and Johnson (1999, 332) considers acculturation as a process by which an ethnic minority group takes on the norms, values and culture of the mainstream group. This perspective enabled the authors to focus on their efforts to acclimatise students to the norms, values, and culture built into American on-line degree programmes through the '3B' initiative.

Human beings are exposed to cultural patterns and views which help them to classify and interpret the world. Based on the recognition theory, in order for an individual to develop a sense of identity in a work group it is important that he or she seeks psychological affiliation, and develops a perception of equality and respect (Lee and Heidegren 2002). Acculturation helps individuals to achieve this. In an online context, international learners come from specific cultural backgrounds and have their own perception about the foreign culture and learning in a foreign host institution environment. The literature has often emphasised the importance of identification with the background culture and its impact on educational outcome attainment in addition to enhancing the individual's self esteem and well-being (Phinney 1990; Rumbaut 1994). Particularly in an online context researchers have reported high stress among foreign international students exposed to their first virtual experience (Kyungbin et al. 2010).

METHODOLOGY

The current study used two qualitative methods (Denzin and Lincoln 2011), namely: retrospective case study analysis (Yin 2012; Merriam 1988) and action research (Dana and Yendol-Silva 2003; Little 2012; Zuber-Skerritt 1992). Retrospective case analysis (Yin 2012) was used to find out about 'how', 'what' and 'why' research issues; namely: how international online courses were conducted by the CDL in the past; what the most pertinent problems were; and why those were happening. Then, action research was used to guide the authors as practitioners. According to Little (2012, 70), teachers use action research

to systematically reflect on their practice and make changes to their instruction based on careful analysis of current classroom performance of their students. As teachers continue to teach, implement new methods and resources, and reflect on the results, the goal is to improve student learning.

For retrospective case analysis, the authors selected three cases based on their access to information as practitioners. In all cases international students were placed in classes designed with domestic American students in mind. To derive conclusions about barriers to international online learning, the authors drew on the literature

on virtual acculturation, their historical records and fieldnotes, and also published results of their prior research.

To alleviate barriers and to design more accommodating learning experiences for international distance learners, the authors drew on the literature on acculturation and came up with a model that they called the '3B framework' where 3B stands for 'Bridging, Bilingual, Bicultural'[courses]. This model is used to inform the development of a 3B course and action research methodology is employed to guide pedagogical interventions. Action research is a cyclical process (Zuber-Skerritt 1992) in that it begins with identifying a classroom problem, then continues with developing and implementing an action plan, followed by collecting and analysing data, and then sharing the results and developing corrective interventions. In the current article the authors report on the results of the first part of their action plan.

INTERNATIONAL ONLINE LEARNING: EXPERIMENTS AND PROBLEMS

The first retrospective case study was one of the earliest experiments carried out between Lebanese and American management students back in 1999 when the current day web-based communication tools were unavailable (Chandra 2000). The goals of this international cross-cultural experiment were to create an opportunity for American and Lebanese students to work virtually with each other in international teams; to foster the idea of an on-line learning community; to create an opportunity for sharing experiential learning in a cross-cultural setting; and to create a prototype of an on-line learning experiment transcending geographical and cultural boundaries so that the lessons learnt from it would foster effective international learning opportunities.

The Lebanese and American students were enrolled separately in one International Cross-cultural Management (ICCM) course that was taught in a residency-based format, utilising distance learning methods in-between residencies and providing a blended learning experience for the students. These long face-to-face meetings per semester were supplemented by virtual interactions beyond the F2F format to support the students. Three residencies per semester were held for the American students in Saratoga Springs, New York, and two residencies in Nicosia, Cyprus, for the Lebanese students. During the Fall 1999 term, 18 students from each country group were persuaded to form international cross-cultural teams and work together on a comparative management class project. Students on both sides were eager and willing to participate in this project because they saw this as a unique opportunity to gain practical international cross-cultural knowledge rather than just text book knowledge. The two cohorts would never meet face-to-face, but would work together virtually through e-mail and other available Internet tools. In the absence of any web-based video tools at that time, recorded video clips of team activities were shared with each other. All of this would encourage acculturation with each other in a virtual space.

All students involved in the virtual teams were unanimous as well as enthusiastic about their decision to conduct an international collaboration on this asynchronous

acculturation project. However, some practical challenges were perceived from both perspectives. One issue concerned differences in language fluency. The languages spoken by the Lebanese cohort of students consisted of Arabic, French and English, whereas most American students were fluent only in English with only two or three students having Spanish as their first language. A second issue was that the cultural differences between the cohorts led to differences in learning styles. The Lebanese students preferred to work in groups, whereas the American students were more individualistic. A third issue was that the cohorts differed in access to the Internet and their respective technological sophistication. And a fourth issue was that the time zone differences made it extremely difficult to communicate in real time.

Taking into consideration some of the practical issues on hand, it was decided that most of the communication would take place using e-mail exchanges. The team building work, including getting to know each other on a personal level, would be facilitated by the common instructor who would record video clips on both continents and share them with the other group during his visits for the face-to-face residency sessions with the students at each location. Each student team was assigned a group leader who communicated with his/her team members and the faculty, and coordinated all team efforts. Finally, six teams of six cross-national students in each team, three each from Lebanon and the US, participated actively, collaborated by using e-mail, pre-recorded video exchanges and some limited phone calls using Skype, and completed the research project successfully. At the end of the project, each team presented its findings to its own cohort group. Presentations from one cohort group were shared with the other cohort group through video tapes during residencies held in Albany, New York and Nicosia, Cyprus.

The students' verbal feedback and written self-evaluations were very positive and encouraging. Student comments and feedback after completion of the exercises were also encouraging. The results show that the benefits from this experiment outweighed the overall costs. It was felt that the experiment witnessed several problems in team building, faced some dysfunctional behaviour in a couple of teams, and had some serious communication bottlenecks from time to time. However, the students' sheer enthusiasm of participating in an international project with their own school students on another continent helped them to deal successfully with these challenges and resulted in an interesting, practical and meaningful learning experience.

This pioneering experiment which was carried out without the availability of modern day web-based communication tools more than 12 years ago demonstrated that a well-designed blended asynchronous on-line class room across intercultural boundaries can indeed work and can provide a rich learning environment by promoting active collaboration among students from different cultural backgrounds.

ON BARRIERS AND ALLEVIATING STRATEGIES

If bridging courses are designed adequately, they can help learners to assimilate successfully to a foreign educational culture and context. The literature has often

highlighted the importance of such courses for incoming international students and has called for research in this area (Peelo and Luxon 2007). Particularly, in an online context, this becomes extremely important for international learners who cannot actually 'see' and experience the host culture. The benefits of such courses are significant. For instance, such courses provide students with an opportunity to learn about the foreign country's educational setup and requirements. In addition, such courses provide students with cultural understanding of the host country's norms (Peelo and Luxon 2007). This is particularly important as participation in such courses provides international students with an opportunity to become assimilated into the host culture. Research also shows that it is beneficial to conduct the distance education bridging courses in the student's host country as opposed to the student's foreign country because support from the course provider in the host country is more readily available (Evans and Northcott 1999).

Another technique for bridging courses is blended learning which focuses on the purposeful mix of various media to enhance learning (Yoon and Lim 2007). For instance, the role and use of audio is important in such an approach as diverse learners respond well to guided instructions, conversations about the course and audio content material (Edirisingha, Rizzi, Nie and Rothwell 2007). The use of video conferencing has also been shown to minimise the anxiety levels in distance education learners and to promote learning (Israel, Knowlton, Griswold and Rowland 2009).

The literature has indicated that Web 2.0 tools, such as blogs, wikis, multimedia applications and social networking sites, have been widely used by academics to enhance educational activities and help promote future planning (Harstrone and Ajjan 2009; Maloney 2007; Prensky 2001). Based on the literature, as well as the results of an earlier SUNY Empire State College (ESC) project with Omsk State University (OSU) in Russia (see below), it was hypothesised that using bilingual bridge courses could be a powerful breakthrough strategy to better accommodate international, namely Russian, students in the American virtual learning environment (although the project was initially done with other non-Russian international students).

IDENTIFYING BARRIERS: A PROJECT WITH OSU

A second retrospective case study to provide information about past experiences with international distance learning was the project with OSU. Since 1998, ESC has engaged in a double degree project with OSU, a large nationally accredited institution located in Russia (Chukhlomin 2010a and 2010b). To earn a SUNY bachelor's degree in business administration, students were allowed to transfer up to 96 credits towards the degree while obtaining the remaining 32 credits through international distance learning (IDL) at the CDL. Despite substantial organisational efforts undertaken by the OSU office, this initial programme design was found to be not feasible. OSU students were facing significant and sometimes insurmountable barriers to IDL that included: (1) organisational barriers; (2) communication barriers associated with language, culture, differences in academic systems, and learning

styles; (3) insufficient subject matter knowledge and skills; and (4) unfamiliarity with distance learning techniques. In addition, the ESC learning environment that had been designed primarily for American adult learners in mind was not perceived as 'friendly' by traditional college age Russian students.

To alleviate the barriers, the initial programme design had to be changed significantly. In particular, the following changes were implemented: (1) instead of advanced level courses, only lower level 'American' courses were first offered through IDL; (2) in addition to purely online classes, a blended learning approach was employed where SUNY Broome Community College faculties annually travelled to Russia to conduct face-to-face classes; (3) advanced level ESC courses were conducted on-site only, through an ESC unit located in Prague, Czech Republic, where OSU students were required to travel to complete the degree; and (4) additional courses taught in English by expatriate faculties were added to the OSU curriculum. In this largely redesigned form, the OSU programme has worked successfully since 2004, producing each year 10–12 graduates at the bachelor's level and 15–20 graduates at the associate's level.

RE-INVENTING INTERNATIONAL DISTANCE LEARNING: A PROJECT WITH TUSUR

The third retrospective case study to provide information about past experiences with international distance learning was the project with *Tomsk State University of Control Systems and Radioelectronics* (TUSUR), in Tomsk, Russia. In 2007, ESC engaged in a new project with TUSUR, which was interested in learning how to use virtual learning environments effectively in order to develop a wholly online double degree programme, without the need either for students, or professors, to travel internationally. For this project, TUSUR received funding from the Russian government. On the ESC side, the IDL group was interested in rejuvenating the design of its previous, IDL-based Russian project, this time in a Web 2.0 powered learning environment.

The joint project began with two small scale pilots where TUSUR students were placed in CDL online courses as non-matriculantes. In the first case, a student was repeatedly placed into several consecutive online courses. In the second case, two small groups of TUSUR students (5–6 students in each group) were placed into different sections of 'Marketing Management', a regular CDL course with 20–24 students in each section. All participating TUSUR students were volunteers, aged 19–20 years old, college students enrolled in information technology and engineering degree programmes at the home institution, and all native Russian speakers with a good command of English (TOEFL 550 and higher). Prior to the project, none of the TUSUR students had studied abroad either face-to-face, or online. The pilots were observed by TUSUR, and the results were shared with the IDL group (Chukhlomin 2009, 144). It was discovered that, similarly to the OSU case, the TUSUR students: (1) found it difficult to study without a face-to-face contact with the teacher; (2) were

used to a teacher-centred pedagogy; (3) were largely unfamiliar with the concepts and terminology used in advanced level CDL courses; and (4) were lacking some critically important skills, including English academic writing, communication skills, teamwork, and time management skills.

Also, they were found to be: (5) unfamiliar with the American online classroom, for example, they were reluctant to participate and inexperienced in debating things; (6) reluctant to communicate with CDL technical personnel and student services; (7) unused to using the information provided for students by the ESC student portal; and (8) unfamiliar with the contextual and background information built by American course developers and instructional designers into the design of CDL courses that had been developed with primarily domestic students and adult learners in mind. On the more positive side, it was also noticed that the TUSUR students very quickly learnt how to use the Angel learning management system (LMS), synchronous video tools, and other learning technologies.

Importantly, in both pilot cases the TUSUR office that was closely observing the project requested a blended learning intervention and considered it as ‘critically needed’. In the first case, the students were unable to figure out on their own how to participate effectively in discussions and how to write assignments ‘in the American way’. This was important as the students needed this to complete the course requirements successfully. In the second case, discussions between Russian and American students participating in the course failed; the Russian students felt lost and insufficiently instructed, and they perceived the examples provided in the text and the topics suggested for discussions as ‘too foreign’. The TUSUR office and the IDL team were able to arrange a blended learning intervention that was made by bilingual and bicultural faculties who travelled physically to Tomsk and conducted brief face-to-face ‘crash’ courses aimed at explaining to the Russian students: (1) how American education works; (2) what expected learning behaviours are; (3) and how to write assignments, participate in discussions, conduct research in virtual libraries and present results. In both cases, the results of the intervention were very positive. In the first case, the students eventually successfully completed the required coursework for the bachelor’s degree. In the second case, all participating Russian students were able to complete the course successfully.

ADJUSTING LEARNING STYLE: AN ACTION PLAN

Based on the results of the abovementioned pilot projects, a course of action for both partner institutions was suggested, including curricular adjustments (for TUSUR) and faculty training in cross-cultural delivery (for ESC). It was also suggested that, in accordance with the literature on acculturation (Peelo and Luxon 2007), prior to taking regular CDL courses, TUSUR students should learn about the American education system and adjust their learning style by engaging in a breakthrough learning activity. Examples of such breakthrough learning activities may include: (1) a study abroad experience in the US or other English-speaking country; (2) a

blended learning intervention; and (3) a bridging online course. In the last example, it was hypothesised that learning about American education and learning style adjustment could also be achieved by means of remote education and training conducted by bilingual and bicultural faculties, with the use of Web 2.0 tools ('virtual acculturation'). This approach is referred to as the '3B Framework' where 3B is an abbreviation for Bridging, Bilingual and Bicultural (courses).

THE 3B FRAMEWORK IN THE CONTEXT OF A MENTORING INSTITUTION

As a mentoring institution, ESC requires that all undergraduate students take at least four semester credits of educational planning. The educational planning courses help adult learners to customise their individual degree programmes in accordance with both their unique circumstances and the ESC guidelines. For international distance learners, a new educational planning study was developed under the title 'International eLearning Skills for Russian Programs'. This study was intended to serve as a bridging online course aimed at providing remotely located, Russian-speaking students with a smooth way to transition into the American virtual learning environment. The object of the study was to address the most pertinent knowledge/skill gaps that novice students were found to have typically, including but not limited to: (1) understanding American culture and the American educational system; (2) navigating the College systems and virtual learning environments; (3) recognising and solving typical problems; and (4) learning about best practices and survival techniques. The course includes original materials written by Russian-speaking bilingual and bicultural faculties. It was designed for either blended learning, or completely online delivery. In addition, it could be supplemented by on-site tutorials conducted by local or/and expatriate faculties.

INTERNATIONAL ELEARNING SKILLS FOR RUSSIAN PROGRAMMES

In 2008, a group of eight Russian students sponsored by TUSUR took a pilot version of the course, and since then the course has been regularly offered by ESC for its March and November terms. In 2008–2009, TUSUR sponsored a group of 10 professors to take the course as a faculty development initiative. As a result, TUSUR was able to later develop a similar course of its own designed as a prerequisite study for students intended to enrol into ESC courses. In 2009 and 2010, the course template was used by the SUNY Research Foundation to conduct professional development sessions for groups of Russian-speaking educators sponsored by the Open Society Institute. In 2010–2011, a group of students and a faculty member from another Siberian university, located in Novosibirsk, completed the course successfully.

The length of the course was eight weeks. During this time, students learnt how to use the ANGEL Learning Management System, the College website, the virtual library, and the web-conferencing tool 'Elluminate'. They also read about American education, classroom structure, the differences in learning and teaching

styles between Russia and the US, and expected behaviours in an 'American' online setting. By the end of the course, students learnt how to: (1) register for online courses independently; (2) make necessary arrangements for transferring credits and ordering textbooks; (3) use appropriate technology and the helpdesk; (4) use the virtual library and style guides; (5) access the ESC-owned island in 'Second Life'; (6) master ESC-specific tools like 'Degree Planner'; (7) develop the first draft of their individual degree plan and write a Rationale Essay; (8) use 'Smarthinking' and peer tutoring support; and (9) use wikis and e-portfolios. In addition, students were introduced to academic writing and virtual career planning resources. Even more importantly, they were expected to be able to develop (or, at least, create awareness of) critically important skills, such as communication skills, time management, self-guidance.

While participating students reported that they achieved 'a better understanding of the American system', the ultimate outcome of the course is expected to be seen in their future online studies. Some students suggested that the course should be made accessible for them at a later stage when they 'would really need it'. In the future, the international distance learning group is considering developing a train-the-trainer initiative with interested Russian universities.

LIMITATIONS

The study lacks generalisability in terms of the research participants' demographics. For example, most participants discussed in the study came from Lebanon and Russia which cannot represent the whole diversity of international students. Also most TUSUR students who participated were the traditional age for students (19–20 years). This is a limitation as other interesting insights can be obtained by further investigating a sample with more non-traditional students. One of the major limitations of the study is that it considers acculturation as a one-way process. This view on acculturation based on the literature (Chen et al. 1999; Silverstein and Xuan 1999) as discussed previously can be a bit restrictive and this is something the authors agree with completely. They adopted this notion nonetheless as it provided more focus in terms of giving them an opportunity to understand and explore the challenges presented solely to the international students enrolling in on-line asynchronous courses with host culture students. This is certainly a limitation and it must be said that there will be potentially interesting implications from the host student standpoint and an institutional standpoint if acculturation is considered a two-way process and implications are studied both from both the international student and host student standpoint. In addition, as pointed out by Zhang and Kenny (2010), during asynchronous discussions participants normally have to wait in order to obtain a response to their postings. This communication delay can create anxiety and nervousness.

Another limitation of the study is that it does not take into consideration the familiarity level of the Russian students to western culture and how this impacts the

student participation in the course and, more importantly, how this will impact their perceptions about future course completions. Another limitation of the study is the fact that it does not explicitly consider power dynamics that are prevalent between American and international students. This is important given the fact that language of communication and country of origin creates power statuses and impacts student interactions and performance (Jon 2012). It will be interesting to investigate how the international students cope with power dynamics in an online environment with American students. As pointed out by Jon (2012), little is known in this area and this makes it an area for future research. Another potential limitation of the study is that it does not pay attention to what happens to the performance of host American **students** when they interact with Russian **students in online** classrooms (Foster 2012). For instance, does the performance of the native student improves or diminish?

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on educational experimentations done successfully at ESC, the article concludes that individual faculty or institutions engaged in international asynchronous on-line courses should begin with the assumption that 'one size does not fit all' if the students in the online courses come from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds. Genuine efforts must be made to understand the differences and steps must be taken to re-design the content and the pedagogy to address the differences. The case studies described in the article provided the authors with an opportunity to understand the challenges faced by international students in enrolling for on-line asynchronous courses with American students. In future, their goal will be to replicate the study in other international contexts to understand the fuller extent of the cross-cultural challenges in global adaptation of American-style online education.

Some future research considerations may deal with the appropriate uses of web-based communication technologies, and any concerns about the extent to which any cross-border cultural differences between two or more international student populations might impact on the objectives and goals, as well as the entire learning process, in the international project. The cultural dimensions which may need serious exploration are the: hierarchy levels between students and faculty belonging to different cultural systems; self-directed or interdependent learning styles of students; need for different levels of formative and summative evaluations on student work; and different levels of written and spoken English language proficiencies. In addition, as a direction for future research, the researchers will aim to investigate the impact of bridging online course on the overall success of international students in terms of future programmatic course completions and student retention. Another area for future research will be a follow up to the case studies discussed in the article that will be carried out to further explore the implications on both the American and international students. In future it will also be interesting to investigate the extent of challenges experienced by lecturers who teach for the first time in such settings.

REFERENCES

- Chandra, B. 1999. International cross-cultural online learning collaboration between Lebanese and American students. Available at: http://sloanconsortium.org/conference/proceedings/2000/ppt/00_chandra.ppt (accessed 29 October 2013).
- Chen, X., J. B. Unger, T. B. Cruz and C. A. Johnson. 1999. Smoking patterns of Asian-American youth in California and their relationship with acculturation. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 24(5): 321–328.
- Chukhlomin, V. 2009. How to prepare a world class specialist – revisited. *EKO: The Economy and Industrial Organization* June: 137–141. [In Russian]
- . 2010a. A laboratory of culture shock. *All About Mentoring* June (37): 47–50.
- . 2010b. *Delivering a SUNY degree in Siberia: What works and what doesn't from a host institution perspective: A case study*. London: *The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education*.
- Dana, N. F. and D. Yendol-Silva. 2003. *The reflective educator's guide to classroom research: Learning to teach and teaching to learn through practitioner inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Denzin, N. and Y. Lincoln, eds. 2011. *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Edirisingha, P., C. Rizzi, M. Nie and L. Rothwell. 2007. Podcasting to provide teaching and learning support for an undergraduate module on English language and communication. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education* 8(3): 87–107.
- Evans, T. and P. Northcott. 1999. Bridging courses by distance education for overseas-trained professionals migrating to Australia: Practical and viability issues. *Distance Education* 20(2): 205–219.
- Flores, B. B. and E. R. Clark. 2004. A critical examination of *normalistas'* self-conceptualization and teacher-efficacy. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 25(5): 230–257.
- Foster, G. 2012. The impact of international students on measured learning and standards in Australian higher education. *Economics of Education Review* 31(5): 587–600.
- Gollnick, D. M. and P. C. Chinn. 2002. *Multicultural education in a pluralistic society*. 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Israel, M., E. Knowlton, D. Griswold and A. Rowland. 2009. Applications of video-conferencing technology in special education teacher preparation. *Journal of Special Education Technology* 24(1): 15–25.
- Jon, J. 2012. Power dynamics with international students: From the perspective of domestic students in Korean higher education. *Higher Education* 64(4): 441–454.
- Kyungbin, K., H. Daehoon, B. Eun-Jun and S. Armstrong. 2010. Feelings of isolation and coping mechanism in online learning environments: A case study of Asian international students. *International Journal of Learning* 17(2): 343–355.
- Lee, J. and C. Heidegren. 2002. Anthropology, social theory, and politics: Axel Honneth's theory of recognition. *Inquiry* 45: 433–446.
- Little, M. E. 2012. Action research and response to intervention: Bridging the discourse divide. *Educational Forum* 76(1): 69–80.
- Maloney, E. 2007. What Web 2.0 can teach us about learning? *Chronicle of Higher Education* 25(18): 13–26.
- Merriam, S. B. 1988. *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. San

- Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Peelo, M. and T. Luxon. 2007. Designing embedded courses to support international students' cultural and academic adjustment in the UK. *Journal of Further & Higher Education* 31(1): 65–76.
- Phinney, S. 1990. Ethnic identity in adolescents and adults: Review of research. *Psychological Bulletin* 108(2): 499–514.
- Redfield, R., R. Linton and M. J. Herskovits. 1936. Memorandum for the study of acculturation. *American Anthropologist, New Series* 38(1): 149–152.
- Rumbaut, R. G. 1994. The crucible within: Ethnic identity, self-esteem, and segmented assimilation among children of immigrants. *International Migration Review* 28(4): 748–794.
- Silverstein, M. and C. Xuan. 1999. The impact of acculturation in Mexican American families on the quality of adult grandchild-grandparent relationships. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 61: 188–198.
- Yin, R. 2012. *Applications of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yoon, S. and D. Lim. 2007. Strategic blending: A conceptual framework to improve learning and performance. *International Journal on E-Learning* 6(3): 475–489.
- Zhang, Z. and R. F. Kenny. 2010. Learning in an online distance education course: Experiences of three international students. *International Review of Research in Open & Distance Learning* 11(1): 17–36.
- Zuber-Skerritt, O. 1992. *Action research in higher education: Examples and reflections*. London: Kogan Page.