

THE GLOCAL CLASSROOM

SHARING THE COMDEV EXPERIENCE

Timor-Leste – Challenges of a New State in the Asian Century
Flinders University, Australia, 24–25 November 2014



MALMÖ UNIVERSITY

What is The Glocal Classroom?

The **Glocal Classroom** is a collaboration between the universities of Malmö, Sweden, Flinders, Australia, Guelph, Canada, and Stellenbosch, South Africa.

The aim of the project is to **bridge the existing gap between web-based learning, often understood as distance learning, and conventional forms of education on campus**, by exploring innovative ways to combine the two. This will be achieved through a world **series of live-streamed seminars** hosted by the participating universities.

Seminar at Flinders University

• The fourth and last seminar in the series took place **24–26 November 2014** and was arranged by **Flinders University**.

• The theme of the two-day long event was **“Timor-Leste: Challenges of a New State in The Asian Century,”** and explored a range of issues affecting Timor-Leste, the youngest state in Asia, within a context of rapid economic growth and social transformation in the Asian region.

• In this document you will find **reflections and interviews from the seminar**.



Watch the **recorded streams** from the seminar here:

<http://glocalclassroom.wordpress.com/video/past-seminars/>

Watch **photos** from the seminar and workshop here:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/119937113@N07/sets/>

Event Summary: “The Technique Really Enabled Things”

The fourth, and last seminar in the Glocal Classroom seminar series challenged students, teachers and tech staff to think outside of the box. The aim of the project to “focus on user level” and “try innovative forms of web-based pedagogy” was put up to the test. Combining elements from the previous seminars, Flinders University managed to create a unique and truly glocal experience.

“I think it has been terrific! It seemed to me that the students were really engaged. Regarding the tech and learning elements it’s been really interesting to see how you can stretch how people interact with it. The technique really enabled things today,” said Colin Carati, Acting Director of the Centre for Educational ICT at Flinders University, and one of the responsible for the planning of the seminar.

Oscar Hemer, coordinator of the Communication for Development (ComDev) master at Malmö University, and the Project Leader of the Glocal Classroom agrees.



where on-campus and online students worked together in small groups on an international crisis scenario designed by Maryanne Kelton, Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Flinders University. The students acted as counsellors to the government of Timor-Leste, whose part was played by a group of Timorese civil servants who happened to be in Adelaide on an English training course.

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“I’m really impressed!”

“I see a progression here that I find really interesting. We managed to challenge the different systems at our universities, collaborate, incorporate tech staff in the educational content, and share course material. I’m really impressed!”

The seminar was part of an academic topic, open to students at Flinders University and the ComDev master at Malmö University. Furthermore, anyone with an interest in the theme was welcome to follow the seminar on-site or online. Everything was live-streamed, and on-campus and distance students, academic staff and international guest speakers all participated in the intensive in real time.

Simulating an International Crisis Scenario
 The first day offered a series of presentations on Timor-Leste, with experts presenting on-site or calling in via Skype. The second day took the form of an interactive workshop, or simulation,

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“We wanted to get interaction between online students and on-campus students”

Antonio Días, one of the members of the Timorese delegation, was happy to take part in the seminar.

”We deal with the problems of Timor-Leste everyday, but this is something different. An international seminar on Timor-Leste like this one is very interesting for us. It’s important for us to see Timor-Leste from another perspective.”

Challenging the Time-Zones

Throughout the day, new information was continuously added, through for example press releases and briefings, changing the scenario. The simulation was particularly challenging since each group had an online participant from Malmö University who was participating via Skype in real time, and hence, had to struggle with the time difference. A scenario which is not too unlikely to be seen in today's international work environment.

The staff at the ComDev master live-stream in-situ seminars to distance students on a regular basis. Interactivity is secured through multiple camera environments, Skype calls, monitored chat rooms and low-tech channels that suit the needs of the students. But the simulation was something new.

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“The students were very committed to their groups, and that for me was the first side of success”

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“This was the first time on the ComDev programme that a simulation was applied as a pedagogical tool, and we were all overwhelmed by its potential, even though the 10 hour time difference complicated the interaction between students online and in situ,” said Oscar Hemer.

Interaction between Students

Susanne Schech, Professor in the School of International Studies at Flinders University, has been involved in the Glocal Classroom project from the start, and had an important role in the planning of the seminar. She immediately thought about a simulation for this event. “We wanted to get interaction between online students and on-campus students. That's something I've been concerned about in my



own work for many years. This was a good opportunity to see if it's actually possible to bring the online students more closely into a direct collaboration with on-campus students,” she said.

“The students were very committed to their groups, and that for me was the first side of success. They seemed to have fun! It was also nice to see that we actually can do this at Flinders – offer more engaged learning – that we have the support for something like this.”

The Collaboration Continues

Although this was the last seminar in the Glocal Classroom series, it was also clear that it's hopefully the start of something new.

”Next year we intend to recreate the collaboration with Flinders in another Glocal Classroom experiment, the nature of which remains to be decided. One suggestion that came up at the debriefing after the conference was to do a similar case study on a small nation in the European margin. Like Denmark – or Sweden. Would there be a ComDev strategy to tackle the current Swedish deadlock – or the European crisis?” suggested Oscar Hemer. ■

..... STUDENT INTERVIEWS

WHEN I READ about the topic I was intrigued by the way it was going to be done – the simulation, the online thing – making it possible to integrate people from all over the world. It seemed especially relevant in relation to a topic like this one. It was interesting to have someone on the other side of the world in the room in the same time.

IT TOOK US some time to work out where to put the web-cam. It worked out well in the end; it's just not something you are used to.

I DID SOME webinars before, but nothing like this. I think I learned so much more compared to the lecture format. If you try to find a solution, you don't forget it."

– *Emma White, Master of Accounting, Flinders University*

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IT WAS THE first time for almost everyone to do group work with someone online. Sometimes it was hard for our onliner to interact. The chat really helped when the sound wasn't working very well.

– *Gregory Reynolds, International Studies, University of Adelaide*

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WITH REGARD TO the technology we had to make efforts to open up for the online participant in our group and include him. It wasn't difficult or so, but we had to be conscious about that.

OVERALL I THINK it worked very well with Skype – it's easy, I have an account of my own. It would have been great to have more than one student online though, to have a better balance.

THIS WAS MY FIRST time with a glocal classroom; it was a good experience!

— *Robyn Sleight, International Studies/Art, University of Adelaide*



Interview: “It’s not Creating something New, but Stretching how People Interact with the Technology”

Colin Carati and Susanne Schech, both from Flinders University, worked together in the planning of the Timor Leste Intensive. Colin is Acting Director at the Centre for Educational ICT, and Susanne is Director at the Centre for Development Studies.

How did you feel about the seminar?

Colin: “I think it has been terrific. I’m no content expert, but it seemed to me that a lot of what was discussed yesterday was very interesting. And it seemed to me that others, that are more familiar with the content, were engaged.

As far as the kind of technical and learning elements are concerned it has been really interesting and exciting to push the envelope. It’s not creating something new, but stretching how people interact with the technology. That’s confirmed today because you can see how it’s actually enabling the learning exercise.

We kind of compounded two things, one is the hypothetical, with its intensive and un-

structured features, which aren’t very common some places, but then also adding the extra technology layer into it, in terms of having students from Malmö and being able to simulate news clips developed on the fly. I think it’s just a fantastic approach to learning, and being able to do it because the technology is up to it – is critical. That is one thing that is absolutely crystal clear. I knew it all along, but every time we do this I understand it better and better, and that is: you need the people to make that happen.”

How come you decided to set up a hypothetical?

Susanne: “I knew that my colleagues Marianne Kelton and Verity Kingsmill had done these kind of hypotheticals before. I hadn’t actually seen them do it, or been part of it myself, but I thought it was a good opportunity to add a new dimension to the seminars that I have seen in this project throughout the year. We wanted to get interaction between online students and on-campus students, that’s something I’ve been concerned about in my own work for many

years. This was a good opportunity to see if it's actually possible to bring the online students more closely into a direct collaboration with on-campus students. And it's possible!

Colin: "Yes, it is, and it's critical to have that interactivity. It's easy to Skype or to stream or to interact online; we have been doing that in medicine for 10 plus years at Flinders. The problem is that the remote students get disconnected because they aren't directly involved. They can't ask questions, they can't interact easily."

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*"You need the people
to make that happen"*

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It's a sort of one-way transmission of information. And if you go to a video conference scenario, where you have talking heads bouncing questions back and forth, it has a limited appeal over a limited period of time, while the sort of things going on at the moment are much more flexible. We have done videoconferences between groups of students in the past, but it's not very interesting, students switch off very quickly. I'm hoping the students from Malmö tomorrow will say: 'I was up all night – but it was kind of interesting'!

The other thing is that this hypothetical approach is part of a rapidly increasing area of interest in education. Now we are able to do that on a global scale, using this kind of technology. That makes that idea of simulation much broader."

Did the hypothetical turn out as you had hoped?
Susanne: "The students were very engaged and committed to their groups. I think that's the first side of success for me! And the second is that they seemed to have fun! Smiling at the news flashes and so on."

Colin: "And they all stayed!"

Susanne: "I just saw them grab their lunch and head straight back to the room, where another briefing was waiting for them... I mean, that is a very real life experience!"

Colin: "They know it's a game, but it's a fun game! If you can get fun into education you have won, because people really engage with that fun component. I expect that they are quite dedicated students anyway, but when the music from ABC went on they immediately plugged in. We are all trained, listen up guys you are about to hear something important!"

Susanne: "It will be interesting to see the debriefing later on today, when all of the groups step out of their roles. Listen to their comments about how they experienced everything, while we get some feedback on the technical side, how that worked for them, and the more social communications, and the academic learning."

This seminar was the last seminar in a series of four in the Glocal Classroom project. What do you think has been the most important outcome of the project?

Susanne: "All the previous seminars were interesting in their own rights, but I think this one is the most specific to an academic learning context, and most student focused."

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*"I'm hoping the students
from Malmö tomorrow will
say: 'I was up all night – but
it was kind of interesting'!"*

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It was also nice to see that we actually can do this at Flinders, that there is support from different areas of the University to enable us to step into a future of more intensive and engaged learning. And I think we can offer some very nice programs in the future, based on this sort of collaboration."

Colin: “I absolutely agree. From a point of view of outcomes for Flinders there’s the reinforcement of the existing Malmö relationship. But the most important thing from my point of view is that we are showing what’s possible. And that’s going to give us a lot more leverage to changing the university’s perception of how it goes about business for the next five years.

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“This was a good opportunity to see if it’s actually possible to bring the online students more closely into a direct collaboration with on-campus students”

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We are about to release a new e-learning review that will highlight the need to do more of what we are doing here. We can’t do it in the same way, because this was a fairly specialized experiment in a sense, but the lessons we have learnt here will translate into other things. It’s really helping when I’m talking to the guy who is redesigning the lecture capture system across the university, and saying, we need more flexible systems to allow this to happen. Showing what’s possible is a powerful way of doing that.”

Did the project change your mind about web-based learning?

Colin: “It doesn’t change it, it confirms for me that we actually need to get on with this. In Australia we are entering a very competitive environment, and we need an edge to attract students. The current e-learning platform of the university isn’t accelerating the e-learning agenda. There’s an increasing push for internationalisation, so to attract more international students we need to do better in engaging those students. Glocal classrooms like this can help us do this.”

Colin: “But we have to consider the technological challenges in reaching students, particularly in developing countries. We are lucky

that we can connect Malmö, Guelph, Stellenbosch and Flinders with good networks. When it comes to some of our off-shore teaching programs, where Flinders staff fly to partner universities in Asia to deliver intensive teaching blocs, particularly in developing countries, including Timor Leste, there is no significant network. And yet, these are regions where our conscience say that we should be engaging more, because they are our immediate neighbours to the north.”

Susanne: “When we were planning this event I actually made an attempt to connect with the university in Timor Leste, to see if we could get engagement from the students there. I wasn’t successful, I think partly because I did it too late. But that’s something we need to develop in the future. It was fortunate that we had a wonderful group of civil servants from Timor Leste here that helped us ground the Glocal Classroom in the real world. But I would not feel confident about putting something on about a country without any input from that country.” ■

A photograph showing two men in a recording studio. The man on the left is older, with glasses and a beard, wearing a light blue shirt and headphones. He is looking at a laptop. The man on the right is younger, wearing a grey shirt and a name tag, also looking at the laptop. A professional video camera on a tripod is positioned in front of them, with a microphone attached. The background shows soundproofing panels on the wall and windows.

Heard at the Conference

“I think it’s been very exciting and inspiring to be here. What we did today with the hypothetical is really something out of the ordinary. As a teacher you have to step out of the box. Being attentive to the onliners and including them in the process is for example very crucial.”

– *Kathrine Winkelhorn, Project Coordinator, The Glocal Classroom, Malmö University*

“I’m here to see what comes out of this in terms of collaboration between international colleagues and students. I’m interested in how these intensives might run and how the technology can be used in this context; particularly to break down some of those barriers between staff and students internationally.”

– *Seth Nicholls, Curriculum Developer, Centre for Educational ICT, Flinders University*

Interview: A Theoretical Perspective on the Challenge of Connecting Different Spaces

The Glocal Classroom project has from the beginning had a very practical approach, with a focus on the realization of content sharing through modern technologies, and sharing of best practices. It is, however, in this context, impossible to ignore the pedagogical dimension.

What pedagogical purpose does the technology, and the learning experiences it opens up for, serve? Pedagogical questions have, for natural reasons, been brought into the project with rising frequency. As a result we decided to contact Marie Leijon, Senior Lecturer and Educational Developer at the Faculty of Education and Society at Malmö University. We asked her if she would be interested in taking on an observing role in the project, in order to deepen the pedagogical understanding of the many processes of the online learning experience.

Marie's research stems from pedagogy and focuses on the seminar room as a starting point for exploring links between space, action and learning. The room as a pedagogical space in higher education is relatively unexplored. Hence, the involvement of Marie in the project has been very valuable. The below interview was made during the seminar at Flinders University in November 2014.

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“What happens when you connect different spaces?”
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What is your role in the project?

“My role as a researcher is to look at the physical and virtual spaces from a pedagogical and theoretical point of view. What happens when you connect different spaces? How does it affect the learning experience? These are



questions I'm particularly interested in learning more about. There's not just a physical and a virtual space, there are multiple different spaces that you need to take into consideration. I'm also here to see how we can develop pedagogical methods, and encourage new ways of working within the university.”

Have you felt about the seminar?

“I think the pedagogical idea is very interesting. Being able to pull off a pedagogical collaboration like this, on international level, is quite unique. I'm happy to see that it works, but I also think that you can develop some aspects.”

Could you give some examples?

“I think you can connect the different spaces even better. I noticed that the virtual students actually have access to more spaces in comparison with the on-campus students. On the other hand the virtual students are limited with regard to interactivity. They can only ask questions through the facilitator. They ask a question and receive an answer. If you are on-campus, questions more often evolve into discussions. It's also interesting to see who gets to ask their question first; most of the time it's on-campus students. The virtual students tend to be let in at the end. “

What improvements do you think could be made?

“On a general note I think it would be great if you somehow could improve the visibility of the virtual students in the physical room, and perhaps prepare the speakers better. Day two was very interesting from a pedagogical point of view, which is normally the case as soon as some kind of student activity is involved. Day one I’m thinking you could have worked more with the presentations, for example flip the classroom and give discussions more time, and having the lecturer interact more with the students.”

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“The room as a pedagogical space in higher education is relatively unexplored”

Did you make any other interesting observations during the seminar?

“What has become clearer to me is the big number of rooms that actually are generated. And the workshop format produces even more hybrids. For example some of the students stayed in the group room and watched the press conference that was going on in the room next door online, while some of the group members left the room to take part in the press conference in the physical room. It takes very organic forms. I can identify the different



rooms, but so far I can’t draw any conclusions of how we can understand this on a theoretical level. I’m not there yet.

I have also been looking at the role of the facilitator. The relation between student and facilitator becomes very important in this context. He or she is more than a technician, he or she controls the contact between virtual student and students on-campus; controls the “gaze” of the virtual student. There’s an important power relation to be taken in consideration there.”

What did you think about the physical space of the seminar?

“I really like how it’s constructed. It’s very open and welcoming, which makes it easy for anyone to drop by and see what’s going on. I would like to see more spaces like that.”

What do you see for the future?

“I hope to continue in the project! It’s very relevant for my research, and tags into the work we do at Teacher Education. I do see some problems with the technical side of it. Often times I think the technique limits the possibilities of the physical space. It’s difficult to for example switch between different forms, for example between a presentation to a group seminar, and it does limit the possibilities of moving around in the physical room.

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“They are really good at working with interactivity and team teaching at the ComDev master”

It’s a challenge that involves questions of where we want to take the pedagogy of the physical room. But overall I think they are really good at working with interactivity and team teaching at the ComDev master, and it would be very exciting to see their pedagogy being used in other teaching contexts. I’m looking forward to exploring this further!” ■



A big thank you to Flinders University for a fantastic event!

– The Malmö University Team

www.glocalclassroom.wordpress.com

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