

Virtual Exchange with UES

Presentation for Global Classroom Seminar
Dr. Satarupa Das
April 26, 2019

Project Overview

- ▶ **Title: Understanding the economy of El Salvador with focus on some institutions such as credit and security.**
- ▶ **Goal: Integration of a virtual classroom at a foreign university with a semester long Econ201 Macroeconomics class**

Associated Competency and Learning Outcomes

- ▶ **Emphasis on the Integration of the project with the course**
- ▶ **AACU Competency - Understanding Global Systems**
 - ▶ Benchmark 1: Identifies the basic role of some global and local institutions, ideas, and processes in the human and natural worlds.
 - ▶ Milestone 2: Examines the historical and contemporary roles, interconnections, and differential effects of human organizations and actions on global systems within the human and the natural worlds.
- ▶ **Econ201 Course Outcome that were aligned to this project:**
 - ▶ 1. Identify the factors of economic growth for both developed and developing countries.
 - ▶ 2. Examine globalization and its impact on the economy.
- ▶ **Global Learning Outcome:**
- ▶ Examine the role of local institutions such as credit and security in the economic growth of El Salvador

Partner University and Professor

- ▶ Partner University is University of El Salvador
- ▶ Partner Professor: Prof. Claudia Vides de Guzman
- ▶ Bio: Claudia Vides de Guzmán was born in San Jose Las Flores, Chalatenango, El Salvador. Chalatenango is one of the 14 departments of El Salvador and one of the departments that was harshly struck by the civil war. Due to the war her family left the town and migrated to other places in El Salvador. They were also forced to leave the country and migrate to the United States due to the severe economic situation during the war. They lived in the U.S. there for almost 7 years, then decided to return to El Salvador. Prof. Guzman graduated from the University of El Salvador with a B.A in English Teaching. And then, she received a Masters from a Master's program in Didactics in a compact program that the University of El Salvador held with the University of Alcalá de Henares, Madrid, Spain. She is currently working at the University of El Salvador, in the Foreign Languages Department. She is teaching undergraduates who want to become English teachers. She also coordinated the Master's program from which she graduated. She is currently teaching Didactics and courses aimed at developing students' linguistic competences in the English Language.

Layers of Planning

- ▶ Proper integration of this project to the course was a complex task
- ▶ Required a lot of energy, time commitment and planning
- ▶ Planning involved
 - ▶ Setting expectations with the students on Day 1
 - ▶ Setting expectations with the partner at UES
 - ▶ Planning on the content and how and where to place it in the course
 - ▶ Planning regarding assignments
 - ▶ Planning on student involvement
 - ▶ Planning on virtual exchange
 - ▶ Planning on post-exchange discussion

Planning for Global Classroom

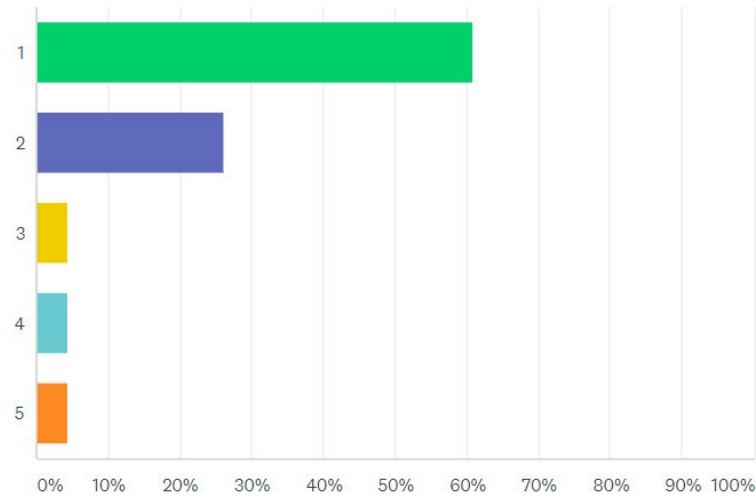
- ▶ Statement in the Syllabus:
Written Assignment: This assignment will be based on the macroeconomic theme of El Salvador. Students will learn about the economy of El Salvador, submit assignments on it and will interact with students of the University of El Salvador. Several short assignments will make 30 points of Written Assignment. Some parts of this assignment will require students to reflect and synthesize knowledge.
- ▶ Feb 14, 2019: Students were given a survey on EL Salvador - the idea was to get an understanding regarding student knowledge of El Salvador and its economy

Planning for Global Classroom

- Pre-encounter Survey - some questions and responses

The civil war in El Salvador

Answered: 23 Skipped: 0

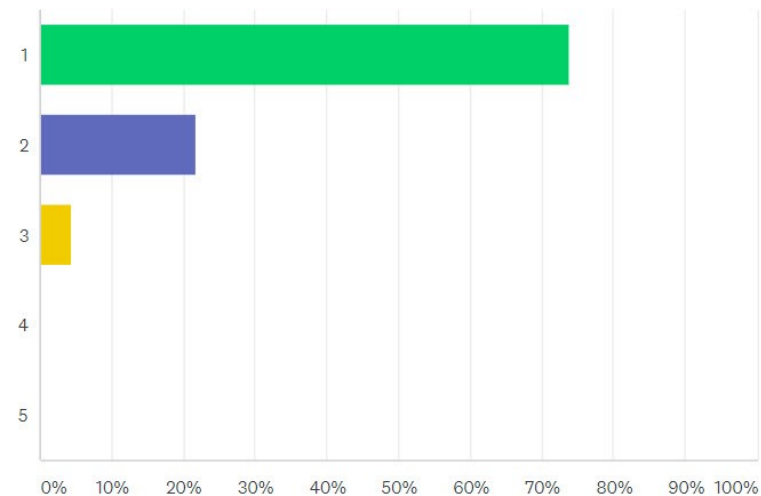


Planning for Global Classroom

Pre-encounter Survey - some questions and responses

What do you know about the economy of El Salvador (agriculture, industry, size of GDP, monetary system)?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 0

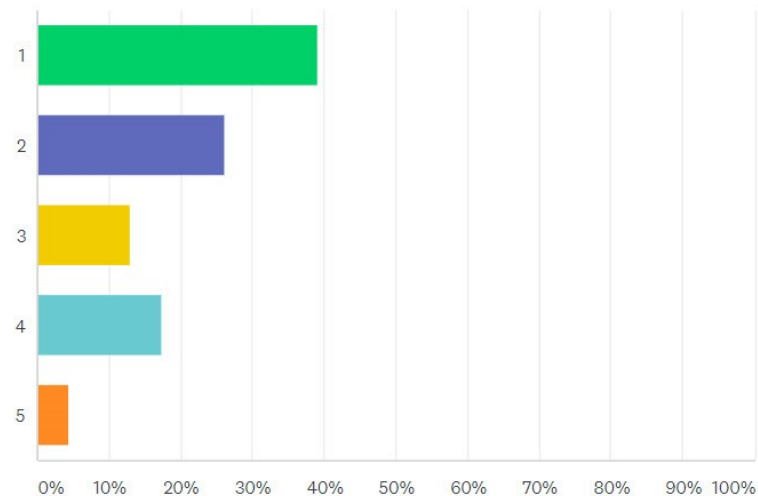


Planning for Global Classroom

Pre-encounter Survey - some questions and responses

What do you know about Salvadoran culture (food, music, festivals, traditions, way of life, etc.)

Answered: 23 Skipped: 0



Planning Global Classroom

Content aspect

- ▶ Feb 14, 2019:
 - ▶ Presentation on Institutions - I created a one page handout explaining the meaning of institutions, what some institutions are and their roles
 - ▶ Presentation on The Economy of El Salvador. This is given after the survey results were collected This presentation included the UNHDR on El Salvador. Students were shown data on El Salvador based on this site.

Planning on Global Classroom

Content aspect

- ▶ Feb 19, 2019: Students were given a short paper on Why are some countries rich and others poor? <https://research.stlouisfed.org/publications/page1-econ/2017/09/01/why-are-some-countries-rich-and-others-poor>
- ▶ This article was discussed in class on March 5, 2019 This article will be a background article on understanding about economic growth in any country including EL Salvador.
- ▶ Three more article have been identified for this section : Ingredients of Economic growth, New York Times articles, article on Microloan, The Economist article
- ▶ Student assignments: critical analysis of an article, reflection on one of the category of data in UNHDR regarding El Salvador. Compare it to another country of your choice.

Planning on Global Classroom

- Student involvement aspect

- ▶ Students posted their introduction
- ▶ Students planned on what questions to ask
- ▶ I culled questions from the initial survey and created broad categories of questions. Students were then requested to work in groups and modify and sharpen those questions
- ▶ Finally, a set of questions were prepared on various categories
- ▶ I divided students into groups and each group had two or three questions from which they were to ask students in El Salvador.

Planning on Virtual Change

Technology aspect - audio, video, conferencing software

- ▶ Several rounds of planning with Prof. Guzman
- ▶ Communication was difficult - skype, email, WhatsApp
- ▶ I ran a trial run with the IT staff here on Campus.
- ▶ Important to have plan B. I had plan A (skype) and plan B (GotoMeeting)
- ▶ Many thanks to Ken Nguyen, Tom Cook and David Darnell for IT help and Chris Cusic setting up the GotoMeeting account and providing me with videos to learn the usage.

The Virtual Exchange - finally!!

- ▶ Date of Exchange: Tuesday April 2, 2019
- ▶ Used GoToMeeting. Had to resort to plan B, 15 minutes before the session started.
- ▶ Audio issues: We had to go close to the microphone to speak. Audio coming from the UES side was a bit unclear.
- ▶ Video Issue: Their faces were not very clear to us.
- ▶ Questions need simpler language - What is the most rewarding aspect of your life in El Salvador? Reframe it to: What do you like about your life in El Salvador?
- ▶ Exchange went smoothly despite video a bit hazy and audio unclear.
- ▶ Because we could not use skype, video recording could not be made
- ▶ The GoToMeeting Audio recording could not be found by the IT personnel after the session was over.
- ▶ Thanks to Jeff Chuang for his kindness in taking the pictures of the session.
- ▶ In survey students requested better/more microphones and camera.

Response from Students

- ▶ Students enjoyed
- ▶ At the end, we had about 7-8 minutes debriefing
 - ▶ Students asked questions - issue of dollarization came up
 - ▶ Students were amazed at how UES students cannot stay outside beyond 6 or 7 pm
- ▶ Students were given a survey on the virtual exchange (part of assignment) - about half the class responded.
- ▶ 100% agreed that it was a valuable exchange and informative
- ▶ Almost all students wanted to see better/multiple camera and microphone at MC
- ▶ Survey question: How can this exchange be improved? One student response: “Only thing I would suggest is better technical support and better camera and mic so we can have conversation without interruptions and problems”.

Value of Virtual Exchange Project on Learning & Teaching

- ▶ Placed students in a global conversation - MC students gain first hand knowledge on crime, student life, jobs, wages from students in UES
- ▶ This project has an **experiential component**:
 - ▶ Learning taking place in a setting outside of the formal classroom
- ▶ This project also has a **reflective component**:
 - ▶ I should be grateful for what I have because the students in El Salvador have to live in a tough and dangerous community.
 - ▶ I learned that the students of El Salvador don't have the opportunities as U.S. students do. They have even more struggles and hardships than U.S. students have.
- ▶ **Downside**:
 - ▶ The project is time consuming. Needs careful planning on how to use class time and how to use other ways to cover material.



Go To Meeting session - MC students top screen, UES at the bottom screen



UES at bottom screen



Student group asked questions on earnings and wages







Some lighter moments



Debriefing at the end of the virtual exchange session

Additional Material:

Questions asked during exchange

Education Category

1. Tell us about your school system before you enter College. For example: How many years of education do you need before you enter College?
- ▶ 2. What are the processes of getting into UES?
- ▶ 3. How difficult or easy is life going to be after University education for you?
- ▶ 4. How do you pay for your university fees? Does your university provide any student loans/financial assistance?
- ▶ 5. Do you have international students at your University?
- ▶ 6. Do you need a certain amount of classes/courses to graduate?

Earnings/Wages Category

1. Do you have a job to sustain yourself, in addition to being in college?
2. Do you plan to work in ES? How much do you see yourself earning in the profession you are studying for?

Additional Material:

Questions asked during exchange

Crime/Safety Category

- ▶ 1. How safe is public transportation? How late do you feel safe being outside?
- ▶ 2. Do you trust your public safety officials?

Life Issue Category

1. What's the most rewarding part of life in El Salvador? What's the most challenging?
2. Describe your childhood in 5 words.

History/Politics Category

- ▶ 1. What do you think of your politicians?
- ▶ 2. What are the political parties in El Salvador? How are they elected?

The End

The right side of the slide features several overlapping, angular shapes in various shades of green, ranging from a light lime green to a dark forest green. These shapes are layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall composition is clean and modern.