“Video-conferencing in studying health care economics in other countries”

Ashley Hodgson, St. Olaf College
International Health Economics Association Conference –
Teaching Health Economics Workshop
July 8, 2017

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Video-Pen-Pals:
Grant from Associated Colleges of the Midwest
ACM FaCE3 Grant Collaborator

Prof. Eric Carter, Macalester
Medical Geography
Studies health systems in Argentina, Costa Rica & Chile
Project Objectives

1) Foster and sustain conversation between my own students and their counterparts abroad about health care systems, considering different cultural or system perspectives.

2) Develop student interest and capacity to use video media to conduct academic exchange.

3) Enhance faculty skills to facilitate productive exchange with their counterparts in other countries and disciplines.

4) Foster interdisciplinary exchange among ACM faculty about health care and health care systems.
My own partners: Germany & Denmark
Faculty Partners Abroad

Dr. Katharina Fischer
Juniorprofessur für empirische Gesundheitsökonomik
Universität Duisburg-Essen

Marie Rask
Lecturer at Danish Institute for Study Abroad
Teaches Health Care Economics and Policy
My Health Care Economics Class

• Undergraduate students
• All levels: Freshmen – seniors, but mostly upper classmen
• Mixed majors – 50% economics majors, but also includes pre-meds, political science, nursing, sociology, etc.
• Some pursuing careers in the health care field. Many later decide to.
Partners

University of Duisberg-Essen

- Germany
- Graduate students
- Professor: German
- Pursuing careers in the health care field
- In-depth research project, and some relate to the U.S.

Danish Institute for Study Abroad

- Denmark
- Undergraduate students from the United States.
- Professor: Danish
- Studying abroad for one semester
- Many (but not all) pursuing careers in the health care field
German Partners at Universität Duisburg-Essen
How did we find partners?

1) St. Olaf network
French Professor posted to Facebook → Someone at the Danish Institute for Study Abroad contacted her

2) International conferences
EUHEA – European Health Economics Association Conference 2016 in Hamburg

3) International sabbatical
Eric spent a year in Costa Rica, Argentina & Chile.
Tips for Finding Collaborators

1) Email me!

2) Talk about the project with people. Random connections bring results!

3) Ask your colleagues in other departments (particularly language departments).

4) Ask your school’s study aboard office.
Assignment Structure

1) Readings on countries
2) Contact partners abroad & plan
3) Conversations
4) Written reflections
Assignment

• Conversations:
  – One conversation with young alumni in the field
  – Two video conversations with peer partners in Germany
  – Two video conversations with peer partners at the Danish Institute for Study Abroad

• Write a reflection after each conversation

• Spring 2016 we had a poster session at the end.
Work for me / Assignment

1) Assign students to **small groups** for the discussion. 2-3 St. Olaf students / 2-3 students abroad.

2) Students fill out a **worksheet** scheduling their meetings and preparing them.

3) I give students **discussion questions** to guide the conversations and sometimes video prompts.

4) When students conduct their meetings, they post a **reflection paper** on a Moodle Forum.
Worksheet: Logistics & Preparation for Video Conferencing
Health Care Economics & Policy:
St. Olaf College and the Danish Institute for Study Abroad
Fall 2016

1. What program will you be using? (circle or highlight one) Skype  Google Hangout

2. Give the dates and times that your team has agreed upon for your four conversations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time in U.S.</th>
<th>Time in Denmark</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 – Payment incentives &amp; comparing health care systems</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Sometime between Tues Oct 18 and Fri Oct 28</em></td>
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<td>#2 – Moral Hazard</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Sometime between Tues Nov 7 and Fri Nov 16</em></td>
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</table>

3. Tell one thing that you have learned about each person in the other class, based on your initial email exchanges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Something you learned about them</th>
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4. List three questions that you would like to ask your partners in the other class.
Discussion Questions

Video-Conversation #1: Payment Systems & System Structure

Videos to watch before the conversation:

Pay-for-performance (6 minutes):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6u96jL-8l8&list=PLkfBg8ML-gfI0HgOLZMPaHq_GrM86zFrJ&index=54

Assessing Utilities (6 minutes):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UeKQ7kBc33w&list=PLkfBg8ML-gfI0HgOLZMPaHq_GrM86zFrJ&index=35

Cost-Effectiveness in Payment (an opinion video from Healthcare Triage) (6 minutes):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSBaEz10sQk&list=PLkfBg8ML-gfI0HgOLZMPaHq_GrM86zFrJ&index=34

Discussion Questions:

- In the country you are studying, what are common ways of paying doctors – distinguish between GP’s and hospital employed doctors? Consider any of the following that is relevant:
  - Fee-for-service
  - Prospective payment
  - Capitation

- What impact does the type of payment have on the health care system and the care provided especially with focus on the relationship between doctors and patients, quality of care, health care expenditures.

- How are pay-for-performance schemes used in the country you are studying? What are the problems and benefits of such payment systems?

- What should pay-for-performance schemes pay for? Consider any of the following:
• In the country you are studying, what are common ways of paying doctors – distinguish between GP’s and hospital employed doctors? Consider: fee-for-service, prospective payment and capitation.

• How are pay-for-performance schemes used in the country you are studying? What are the problems and benefits of such payment systems?

• What should pay-for-performance schemes pay for? Consider any of the following:

  – Outcomes (fewer deaths, better blood sugar control for diabetic patients, shorter hospital stays, etc)
  – Adherence to guidelines (giving mammograms; giving aspirin to chest pain patients; etc)
  – Usage (how many tests do you order? Are you an outlier?)
  – Cost of treating patients (Should doctors spending more to treat their patients be paid less?)
• If your group was designing a payment system for a government health insurance plan (such as Medicare or Medicaid in the U.S.), how would you choose to pay doctors and hospitals?

• How do you judge the effectiveness of a pay-for-performance system?

• Should governments and/or insurers pay doctors and hospitals more for treatments that are considered to be cost-effective?

• How does culture play into a population’s willingness to account for cost-effectiveness in payment schemes?

• How does culture shape the payment structure of a health care system?
What worked and what did not?

**Worked pretty well:**
- Reflection papers
- Prepared discussion questions
- Coaching students in improvising to manage the conversation and technical difficulties

**Did not work:**
- Student technology assistant
- Poster session
Barriers and Issues

• Scheduling time can be difficult.
• The technology can be fickle, particularly when someone has a bad internet connections.
• There is wide variation in students’ ability to lead a conversation. Some students “ran out of” questions early in the conversation.
One Solution: Students Join Other Teams
Google Chat Helps with Technology Problems
Skyping with Alumni to Practice Technology
Skills Leading a Meeting
Student comments: Meaning

“Reading about the differences only goes so far, it's very beneficial to hear how the differences play out in everyday life from people who experience it firsthand.”

“[It was beneficial...] Gaining insight from people my age who have studied another country in depth. They explained the situation better than just reading an article would have taught me.”

“Explaining various class concepts helped solidify them for my own understanding.”

“It was honestly helpful mainly insofar as I got some understanding of how the American healthcare system looks from the outside, and how a national culture can shape healthcare policy and systems.”

“It allowed me to synthesize info from the class. It was like a case study of a new healthcare system!”
Students Get Anecdotes
Student comments: Constructive

“Have us submit our reflections to partners, and vice-versa.”

“Possibly do a class-wide video conference.”

“I'd say the hardest part for us was finding a time that worked for all members of both groups... maybe find 3 set times that work for the German/Danish students as a whole... and then allowing students to pick one of the 3 times that works with them?”

Some students said smaller groups (more intimacy) / some students said larger groups (because of scheduling)
Benefits for Me

• I am learning about new health care systems.
• Engaged students.
• Connects me more closely to the health system issues that people in those countries consider to be paramount. (Future research?)
• It is easier than I thought it would be.
• Gaining connections with faculty abroad in case I am ever able to take students abroad?
Thinking forward toward Bringing Students on Study Abroad Trips

2026

Photo credit: Oertherdb
Contact Me If Interested

I will keep a list and put people in contact with each other.

I work at St. Olaf College, the college of Golden Girl Rose Nylund (played by Betty White)