FEATURED PROJECT : GLOBAL CLASSROOM

GLOBALclassroom

INTEGRATED APPROACHES TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE

The Global Classroom project organizes and delivers lectures and readings for a master's level, sustainable development course simultaneously taught at a dozen universities around the world. Conceived as a new distributed learning curriculum by the Earth Institute's Commission on Education for International Development Professionals and CCNMTL, the Global Classroom project engages diverse bodies of students in a live discussion with a Commissioner lector about some of the world's foremost issues in sustainable development.

Global Classroom is offered at Columbia University through the course, "Integrated Approaches to Sustainable Development Practice," which students may take for credit at the School of International and Public Affairs. John McArthur, associate director, Center for Globalization and Sustainable Development at Columbia University, and Jeffrey Sachs, Quetelet Professor of Sustainable Development and professor of Health Policy and Management and director of the Earth Institute, are co-chairs of the course.
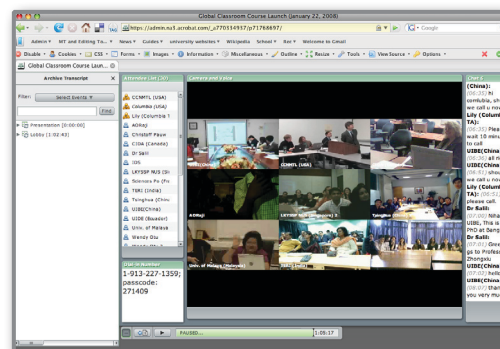
Throughout the semester, local course facilitators and instructors draw on common syllabi and videotaped lectures, reading assignments, and other resources available through a "super site" course management system developed by CCNMTL. To enhance collaboration and information sharing, students listen to videotaped lectures outside of class, and use class time to engage with lectors in an online seminar. Students and instructors are also provided with a Web-based environment, including an online forum, to encourage cross-institutional discussion and collaborative assignments.

"The idea is simple yet profound," said Sachs. "By integrating taped lectures and live Web-based discussions, the classes bring together students in a dozen universities around the world, to help forge a new discipline of sustainable development. The span of schools is phenomenal, reaching beyond the Unites States to include campuses in Europe, Africa, South America, South Asia, and East Asia. The Global Classroom provides the opportunity for expert lecturers and diverse bodies of students to hold a real-time discussion on the world's foremost problems of sustainable development so that together they, and we, can brainstorm on solutions."

Sustainable development is a worldwide responsibility and through online meeting rooms, video, live chat, and discussion boards, the Global Classroom project provides a truly global academic setting

Project partner, Jeffrey Sachs, gives a lecture for the Global Classroom project.

The Global Classroom Web interface allows students from around the world to interact online.

where students in a dozen universities can learn and explore the relationship across core fields of study in agriculture and nutrition; economics; environment and climate science; management; policy, anthropology and social studies; public health; technology and engineering. In 2008, students and instructors from institutes of higher learning in the Unites States, the United Kingdom, China, India, Singapore, France, Ethiopia, Ecuador, Nigeria, and Malaysia participated in the Global Classroom project.

Global Classroom is the flagship project of CCNMTL's Global Learning initiative, a strategic effort that mobilizes the power of new media technology to expand collaboration among the world's educational community.

For more information please visit http://ccnmtl.columbia.edu or email ccnmtl@columbia.edu