

After seeing and hearing what LATTICE is and how it all came about and works, my job is to talk about ways to transport its most essential elements to create a similar on-going group somewhere else. My title is The Portable LATTICE. The question is not whether to build something similar, but how best to proceed. After all, who can argue about the powerful and worthy results, including

Attitudes for understanding others' experience and viewpoints
Increased world knowledge, including self-awareness
Personal engagement with subjects belonging in the wider world

Probably all of your area studies centers and campus communities already have the necessary ingredients for a LATTICE group:

1. Teachers, administrators, librarians from surrounding schools and adjacent districts.
2. A variety of English-speaking foreign nationals willing to join the professional & social gatherings.
3. A suitable and convenient host site.
4. Sources of modest funding teacher release time; int'l student stipends.
5. Coordinators to put the piece together on the campus side, help with planning, funding and applying own experience as cultural broker during sessions between internationals and many-times monolingual and sometimes naively parochial attitudes.

But the key piece is one or more persons on the school side to facilitate matters: someone to connect the elements, to be the advocate who articulates the vision and nudges the thing along. In a word, the key to constituting a LATTICE group is identifying the "face" of LATTICE. For mid-Michigan this person originally was Sally McClintock, a teacher and then administrator who had just retired, but who had strong, living connections at school and was undaunted by the corridors of university.

This first LATTICE did not appear all at once, fully formed. So neither should you worry about launching a 60 person group to start with.

STEP ONE: Collect all the elements you will need

Key people at schools, at university: in area studies, education school, study abroad or student service.

Plan your planning team and divide up the roles.

Consider locations to host.

Draft announcements to three groups: potential teachers and their administrators, international students, possible sources of funding (or labor or other resources) –not to exclude possible private sources, too.

STEP TWO: Describe the LATTICE idea in person; perhaps showing the DVD, too

After gathering the needed elements (step one), and orienting everyone to this project (step 2), the next step will be to fine-tune the working design.

STEP THREE: Personalizing the world: build-in LATTICE core features

- ◆ Name ritual
- ◆ Long-term monthly gatherings of participants (8 per school year)
- ◆ Extended meeting time (4 hours)
- ◆ Food & socializing (with new foods & words, related stories and memories, methods)
- ◆ Mix of small group and whole group activity
- ◆ Topical or timely talk, flexible enough for personal interests & (prior) knowledge
- ◆ School life and community matters, as well as annual and personal life events
- ◆ Trust building and mutual respect as rapport grows; foster self-aware reflections
- ◆ Ongoing evaluation feedback: Two-minute learning survey

With a clear idea of who, where, what and how to initiate the project, you can define the size and produce a tentative list of topics and activities to incorporate. Think seminar: about 18 – 20 people to start with, half local educators and half international (graduate) students.

Finally there is the question of timelines. How much lead time is required? One suggestion is to begin inquiries and gathering the key elements in spring, then approaching administrators in earnest that fall. The first session begins in January and runs through May. The ‘culture’ that grows out of these experiences becomes the stock for newcomers to enter the next fall for the full year cycle. The pioneering members would continue through the full school year from that point, as well. Overlapping newcomers with veterans creates continuity.

In terms of time and money, when I interviewed Sally McClintock, she estimated 15-20 hours per week she used to spend on average when she did most start-up and subsequent work single-handedly. Now in its eleventh year and having expanded in participants the current leaders of LATTICE carry out a long list of functions:

- coordinate recruitment & membership
- edit electronic newsletters of announcements and opportunities twice weekly
- oversee web page and produce the memento yearbook of pictures, sessions, conclusions
- lead complex and essential planning
- facilitate the 8 monthly LATTICE sessions

Arguments to persuade each group of people involved will vary. International students may worry about time given up and the practical matter of transportation off campus each month. University administrators may question how this collaboration fits in to the university mission

and community responsibility. Local educators may be concerned with administrator approval or support, and the cost to cover their classrooms each month for a couple of hours.

In sum, the LATTICE structure and function has proven to be a powerful way to personalize the world for all sides concerned: teachers and their students and colleagues, the area studies centers, and the foreign students. Like other outreach projects, the pieces of the puzzle are present, but it takes some effort and resourcefulness to connect all the pieces and bring the project alive. This short paper outlines this issues and elements in that process and identifies the single most important element to identify in your circumstances: the facilitating counterpart who is connected to the school or schools, and who has the time and zeal to contribute –very likely without material compensation. In the case of the original LATTICE, this person had just retired and brought her vision into reality for all of here today.

In conclusion, start small and bear in mind the “active ingredients” that make LATTICE so very effective and the personal and professional level. Seek out a person similar to Sally McClintock to drive the project. And feel free to contact the people of LATTICE for advice and materials, including the documentation on the DVD-rom. With some luck, hard work and good will, you too will be Linking All-Types of Teachers in International Cross-cultural Education.