**Timothy Riccardo Pointer s427 New Zealand Journal - First language - English.**

As many of the other group members have already said, the GEE experience (well for Team 44 anyway) was excellent! We started off fairly slow as I was unable to make contact with the group for the first three days! The Columbians said they couldn’t get on to GEE basecamp, the Americans said they got the emails but didn’t know they had to reply and various other problems. Once we ironed out the kinks of working in a global virtual team, such as letting people know your received an email!!, we were in full swing and everyone who made communication was participating. We lost the Bangladeshies due to unknown reasons, so we had to make do with five members.

Some great points were that the team work extremely well as individuals. All members went away and knew what they had to do; they would ask if they had any queeries and all handed in the work that was required of them. Team 44’s members were also very friendly, there were a lot of smilie faces in emails and “hahas” which I can only guess is a good sign. I think we all had fun as well.

Some not so great points were the time zone barriers. Almost all members were on opposite time zones, so if I sent something around mid day, I would not get responses until 3am… which meant when I woke up! There was also one very opinionated member who questioned almost everything! There was a positive to this though; it made our idea water tight and even future proof because we had to think about it so hard! Every cloud I guess…

Our main form of communicate was through the GEE base camp and also email. We tried skype… twice and it did not really work for our group. One reason was the timezone differences, I was on there at 4 in the morning trying to have a team meeting when people had connection issues and others just gave up! So we quickly decided that group meetings weren’t required and email will suffice. Which it did. We ended up explaining concepts, ideas and thoughts more in emails due to the fact we knew we would get a reply in 12 – 24 hours, so the more we could explain the better!

We learnt so much about cultural differences between members and how this can affect the group in class I was completely prepared for all the problems that can happen and how to cover come them. Surprisingly, we had absolutely none of these issues at all. I think this came down to the fact that all the members belong to another culture, a shared culture of university and education. All members knew that we needed to submit a 6 page report and knew what had to be done, and we did it.

As a leader I learnt to ask questions and get members to ask more questions. I involved all members every step of the way. This gave the group a positive feel and members shared their ideas more freely.

This has been a very positive experience for me and I have gained skills in organisation and team management. For this challenge I had to make decisions, I was the leader and with this responsibility I grew and my skills in this area increased. I now feel confident leading a team in the future, virtual or not.
Also, the concept we came up with could actually work and change the lives of millions of people. I appreciated the opportunity to be able to think outside the box and work on a project like this. It’s not often a group of University students from all corners of the globe think up an idea that could change the world!