SECTION I:

a. The project aimed at improving the language learning experience for both, Argentinean and foreign students. This would be achieved by making use of audio/visual technology including videoconferencing and language learning software.

b. Starting in April, the communication was established with the authorities of the “Escuela Media 207,” where the laboratory was going to be set up. However, the language lab could not be set up because of complications with timing that arose just before the project could be executed. Due to the outbreak of Influenza H1N1 (or Influenza A, in Spanish), the government of the Buenos Aires province mandated to shut down all schools (including the one hosting the project) to conduct sterilization of the buildings and attempt at reducing contagious contact among students.

During May a most part of June, research took place in order to find the best providers for equipment and labor needed to start setting up the classroom. From the side of the authorities of the school, a carpenter and an electrician were contacted and these offered preferential rates for the remodeling and prepping of the room. The authorities also attempted to seek further funding from the local government, but this was halted in late July because of winter break, and later on because of the Influenza H1N1 outbreak.

As per proposed timeframe, the initial work and set up of the laboratory was to take place in late July, taking advantage of the winter break which was providing the right time to engage in remodeling, construction, movement of furniture, and equipment set up while the school was on not on its full schedule.

The main beneficiaries of this project are to be students of foreign language not only in Argentina, but also abroad. Foreign language students at Escuela Media 207 will perceive their learning experience enhanced by being able to have access to online materials and language teaching software. Also, due to the availability of internet and videoconferencing capabilities, the experience of learning foreign languages will become more “tangible” by relating to native speakers of the language being learned. The same would be true for foreign students learning Spanish, who would be able to interact “face to face” with native speakers in Argentina.

The long-term impact is expected to be a better understanding among different cultures. Foreign language learning paired with the interaction with native speakers—and the collateral social experiences...
this brings along- would provide the means to achieve improved levels of knowledge and therefore understanding among students at key points in their academic lives.

Due to the nature of the project, once the lab is set up and the teachers are trained, it becomes self sustainable, for it would mainly be up to the professors and students to decide how much or how little they find suitable to establish connection with language teaching institutions abroad. Furthermore, the fact that the laboratory is to be set up at a public school provides with state funding for operating costs such as the wages of the teachers, Internet connection, and electricity.

SECTION II:

Most of the times I could find it rather hard to define peace; however, I can assure anybody that I could identify non-peaceful situations. Generally, peace would be a situation where interaction takes place between two or more individuals, groups, cultures, societies, or countries. Furthermore, this interaction is such that it satisfies the promotion of the goals of the parties involved – even though their goal might not be peaceful, having a common goal provides a peaceful interaction among themselves.

A lack of or proper communication and hence improper understanding usually trigger non-peaceful situations. Often times, communication itself can prove an issue due to language and cultural barriers. It is then that I believe in the importance of language learning as a means to reducing the number of non-peaceful interactions among individuals, societies, or nations.

The promotion of peace can be achieved by promoting better cultural and experience exchanges. Facilitating venues in which the younger generations can learn foreign languages and interface with other individuals from a different culture can serve as a bottom-up approach to achieving greater levels of world wide peace.

Giving a language student the possibility to use videoconferencing to improve his or her language skills has the potential to collateral-1y establish a deeper interest of that student for cultures he or she might have known little (and generally bias) or nothing about. This is a sort of hidden value added to language learning. Having attended a UWC, I believe effective communication is one of the key issues we still have to address. This project has only reinforced the way in which I see the world since I was a student at UWC-AC. One ought to put aside bias, prejudice, and stereotypes about other people to actually learn by interacting with them.
B. Photographs: