

## UniCollaboration > Conference on TeleCollaboration (TC) and Virtual Exchange (VE)

Krakow 25-27 April – Nikolien van Lidth de Jeude

### WS 1 Designing tasks for successful virtual exchanges

*Usual phases in a TC project*

Preparatory phase

Reflection

Information exchange > comparison and analysis > product creation

*Do's*

-Info exchange: make sure you design the info exchange, not only introducing > make them commit to each other in this stage. Discuss education system, way of working, etc.

-Comparison & analyses: cultural comparison, work field comparison, word association

-product creation: make them create something together, not separate products that are put together later.

Experiences: 1 to 1 collaboration in language learning

- Russian students learning French were connected to Canadian students learning Russian. This was a written collaboration. They had to make a profile from themselves and share this. A Russian version of Facebook was used. The first two weeks were about learning Russian and 3<sup>rd</sup> week in French. The Russian students were more advanced in French.
- The product creation was a type of research on a specific topic that the buddies did together. The product was a presentation. Also, all the personal info was used for group discussion.
- Brazilian students were connected to various country students. Using skype or **zoom.us**, about 8 weeks. Tasks: the students are randomly paired and introduced through e-mail. The first online meeting they share personal info, ½ in both languages (Portuguese & English). The product creation can be f.e. an application letter or essay and the 'partner' gives feedback on the language and the use of the language. Optionally, the feedback is discussed through skype as well.
- An alternative assignment is to write a text collaboratively.
- VS & Japan: students have to make a promotional video on each other. VS students on 'why to study Japanese' and Japanese on 'why study abroad'. The experience here was that conflict solving didn't occur. So if the process didn't result in a good result, nobody said something. So it is very important to design how to deal with this during the process. For example: have them take some kind of 'persona', someone that is not them, who is asked to reflect.

End of project is a personal reflection on the process, e.g. "what went well, what didn't". Students can also be asked to write a portfolio or reflective journal through the whole process, they write about their findings and development. (share for example through Google docs/drive, Mahara, dropbox). Also padlet can be used.

Idea

Have students from the home class discuss their portfolio's / reflections together in the end and everyone presents 1 thing that stands out in class. This ensures participation better and makes the teacher task of 'checking' the portfolio's smaller.

H5P tools are free tools to use, this is an open source. And moodle is used.

Training in this area: EVOLVE > 6 weeks online training (EU funded), starts in Autumn  
EVE (E+ Virtual Exchange) > next training starts end of May

### **Key Note**

Reasons and use of virtual exchange – specifically E+ Virtual Exchange

- Telecollaboration helps to listen effectively and to learn about effective problem solving
- eTwinning is for inclusive education
- the [INTENT](#) project is for raising greater awareness of telecollaboration
- For a meaningful cross cultural experience
- It is a tool which can equip learners to participate together in a globalized world
- Self- and global awareness, critical thinking, sharing perspectives, language & communication skills, media and digital literacy

### **WS To become a global citizen through telecollaboration – research**

Project VS & Korea connected (pairs & group sessions)

Google chatting – weekly topic was given – each makes a reflective journal – 11 weeks

Difficulties with for example being a ‘Korean’ American > they felt both nationalities as their full nationality. The telecollaboration process made them more confident in being both / being able to get along in both languages / cultures. And that a native American also can have a hard time with f.e. interpreting or writing in their native language (grammar).

#### Result

Good experience to have other than a traditional classroom setting.

What made them a more ‘global citizen’ after the project? > through teaching and practicing (all participants took both roles) they developed a lot: language, leading, feedback, critical thinking, broaden perspectives, etc. They also learned about perspectives on their own and the others culture.

### **WS COIL**

Groups connected – 6 weeks – US & Middle East

Both parties had to make a video on their own region or a social topic and combine it somehow.

They worked in big groups as well as small groups, sometimes 1 on 1.

Working on ‘common’ problems > sometimes surprisingly not a problem in one place and a big problem in the other. (in their perceptions and according to what they were used to).

Food tasting > try each other’s’ food. US students asked Middle East students... what is US food??

What do you see as US food?

Subjects discussed: Politics, authors, arts & music, human rights, etc.

Some kept a journal. All got a certificate.

#### Technology

They used google hangout, skype, facebook (messenger), blackboard. They tried to let the students figure out what to use in which case. The trick is not to take things too seriously (or: be flexible).

Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn’t.

Icebreaker > share photos from their personal lives. Aim is not only getting to know each other but to become comfortable in connecting technically. Then role of partnership and when & where to meet.

### **WS Self-assessment and Soft Skills Development through Telecollaboration – a teacher experience**

Skype – tasks with social themes – language development.

32 participants > 16 Spanish and 16 British

First: introduce yourself – compare Educational systems – read and discuss articles – discuss work life and habits, employability & social habits – Meaning of words and expressions.

Set specific tasks! Important that the participants really connect. Contact moments 1 hour > ½ hour in both languages.

Assessment: different multiple choice questionnaires – self assessment. Also questions on the tools used and what the experience was. Some open questions > what did you find surprising, give reasons for specific choices.

### **WS When more is less: unexpected challenges and benefits of TC (focus on writing)**

6 Japanese students & 30 from the Rumanian partner. Was okay for Japan, less nice for Rumania.

They did presentations on student life online and the Japanese had to write an essay on the Rumanian presentations and vice versa. Later got questionnaires and had to write articles on that. They worked on writing skills (English), critical thinking, critical commenting on the partners articles. Really on this last point (critical feedback on the foreign peer) they developed greatly. They were not used to do that before. They worked with Zoom, okay but sometimes freezes, but better than Skype. Someone in the audience mentions **Discord** as an option.

#### Conclusions:

Closer and more frequent contact not necessarily better

Superior equipment not always helpful

Institutional involvement – necessary

Benefits for the teacher

### **WS Flop, failing, fantastic > 8 years' experience**

From pain to pleasure:

At the start > too much, too many, too soon. Task prep too short, little clarity about process, summer semester didn't work. Dissatisfaction by teachers on results, too little time to discuss things and too much chasing no-shows. Students liked the partner, but technical problems and time issue (US / EU). Failing > Structural difficulties: semester timing and course goals. Task design: too ambitious, no connection to course, cultural misunderstandings.

Teachers > felt rushed for time, assignments linked to TC: what to do with no-shows?, cultural bridging not always done.

Students > good: the student life topic. Bad: work load too high, cultural misunderstandings.

Learning from flops and fails > Topics (linked to course) set before class with partners. Times and expectations listed. Goals clearly stated.

Cultural clarity > cultural sensitivity training, open discussions, feedback & discussion about student papers on culture.

Deal with problems, they will exist.

Fantastic > blogversity & culture: Collages, word clouds (US word cloud on Germans and Germans on themselves as well! Difference?? And v.v.)

Topics, schedules and expectations are discussed.

Cultural clarity, design clarity (set before hand, tested on tutors, class feedback, etc.). Still things will always also flop. E.g.: my partner student was hard to read, cultural understanding did not grow but stereotyped even more, ...

Topic is VERY important, people you deal with are VERY important.

## **WS Improving Professional Development for Virtual Exchange > 5 years' experience**

DePaul University

GLE ("Global Learning Experience") > their abbreviation for all types of virtual exchange. They work a lot with first generation students. Those students feel going abroad is something for the rich few.

This presentation is about getting other faculties to come along in the GLE projects. They get some funding for joining. First they get the training for it for free, then if they are going to implement it, they get funding for that, up to 5 times. They have to do certain things for that: reflect, evaluate, etc. To get faculties to join, they mail, organize events & drinks, etc.

Tools: Voice thread > free version to try out > an online system where you see yourself, others & text. Zoom video conferencing, google docs, google drive.

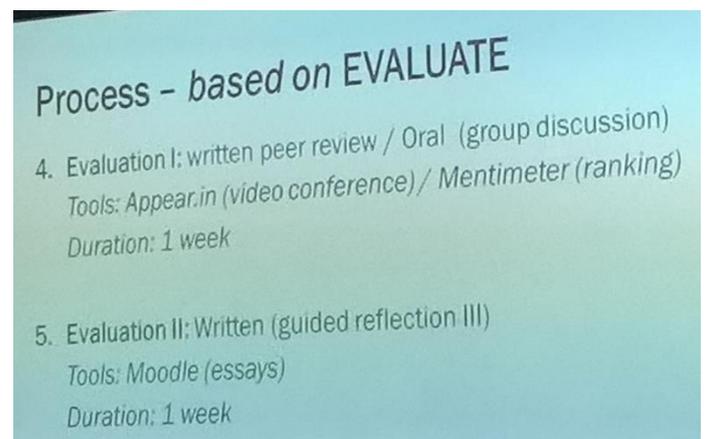
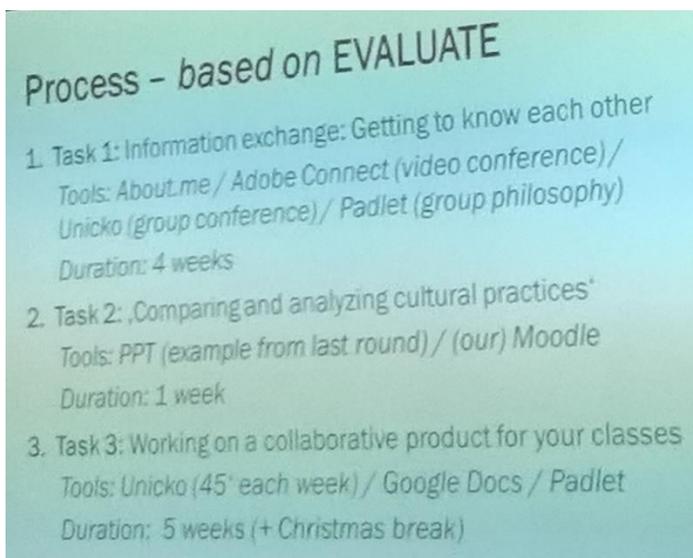
We try to include international guests as much as possible. Share real-world examples. Don't overwhelm participants.

## **WS TeleCollaboration 2.0**

It expands on traditional telecollaboration, by introducing new issues and approaches + new tools and opportunities.

EVALUATE: <http://www.evaluateproject.eu/> > European Policy experiment on telecollaboration.

Project: Germany & Israel, 10 weeks, the usual get to know each other – cultural connection – making a product together. Goeie tools: Mentimeter, Unicko & Appear In



## **WS Different ways to design TeleCollaborative projects – Brazil**

Bruno Lima > [Bruno.lima@ifrn.edu.br](mailto:Bruno.lima@ifrn.edu.br)

TC > The usage of tools for bridging geographical distance

Cultural bridging > putting yourself in the shoes of 'the other', in another 'time' 'space' 'area' etc., that all effects your social being.

First project: 1 Brazilian student and 4 US (or international) students. So the Brazilian was 'alone' and the other 'side' was a group. Brazil 'solved' this by integrating all activities in class. So questions and observations were shared amongst each other and with teacher. Also there were highschool students (Br) and University students (US). They 'solved' the language-level-barrier by contextualizing things more > more explanation with specific words and theories.

### *Methodological procedures > three project cycles*

#### **I.**

- Preparation > Participants randomly drew from volunteer students in each institution  
> Coordinators set aside some time to work 'etiquette rules' and how to deal with stereotypes
- Development > 10 week project  
> Interaction on exclusive Facebook group  
> New tasks for the students every week  
> Tasks were previously defined by the coordinators
- Bumps in road > Fading excitement: coordinators intervention through encouraging messages  
> Lack of participation: replacement of students

#### **II.**

- Preparation > Coordinators dedicated some time for the study of the circumstances of use of an e-mail message  
> There were cycles of simulated practice (e-mail exchange) among Brazilian students before the actual TC started
- Development > 6 week project  
> Interaction through e-mail exchange  
> Students were randomly separated in smaller groups, containing one Brazilian and 3 or 4 international (partner) students  
> Tasks were defined with the participation of students
- Bumps in road > Finding a partner  
> International students / academic style: texts were later contextualized with examples

#### **III.**

- Preparation > Planning took around 6 weeks and was made through e-mail exchange and skype meetings  
> Coordinators took turns to post the weekly tasks
- Development > 10 week project  
> Interaction took place on two secret Facebook groups  
> New tasks for the students every week  
> Tasks were previously defined by coordinators and students could give suggestions
- Bumps in road > Putting participating students 'on the same page'. Coordinators prepared a PPP with all the guidelines for the project  
> Students skipping tasks: Coordinators intervention and Facebook notifications helped solve the problem

The project evolved to 'the hemispheres connection 2017 2' > with HEI (and highschoools) spread over the world.

Overall impressions:

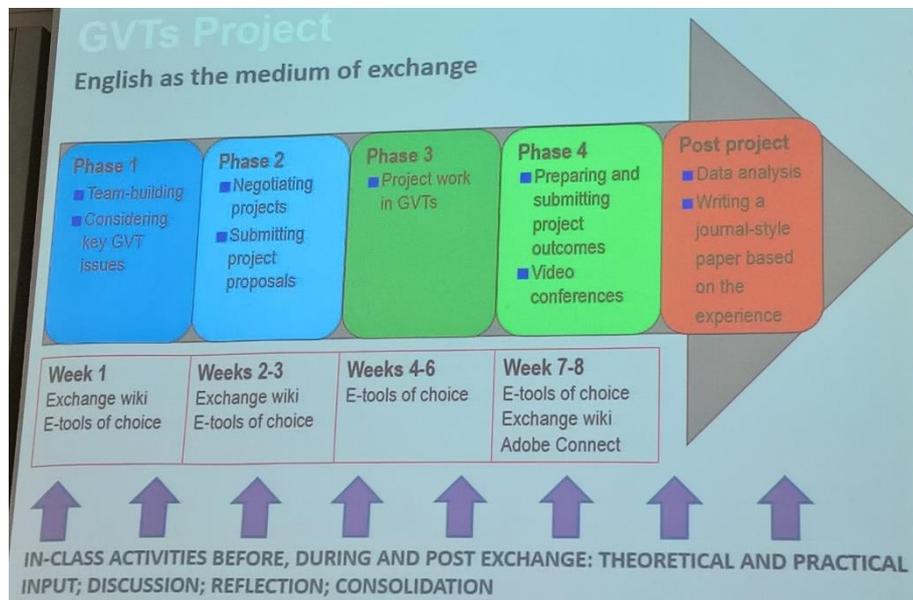
- Asynchronous interactions help teachers to cope with constraints such as time and, in less proficient classes, it gives students the chance to review, rethink and rewrite their texts.
- Collaborating with people you know tends to make it easier to start a project
- Students from IFRN (Brazil) seemed more comfortable interacting on Facebook
- Very important to provide room for reflection between the exchanges
- Participants learned the importance of being in a space between cultures, a third space that allowed them to interact and "to decenter from their linguistic and cultural world to consider their own situatedness from the perspective of another" (Menard Warwick *et al.* 2013: 966).

## WS The Global Virtual Team studies

Several students spread over the world, joining each other online in a 'global virtual team'. They will not meet in person. Aim to find out: How do you build trustful relationships, meet effectively, etc.?

> The important requirements are: leadership, team player, skillful use of (the right) technology and intercultural competence.

Project to practice this > 5 uni's (European), 142 participants, 31 inter-university diverse teams



Phases > team-building - negotiating - project work - working on project outcomes - data analysis

Emerging themes: trust, Leadership, Team member commitment / motivation, Impact of mediated communication

GVTs PROJECT	
<b>fGTM (Germany)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Female, 26 years</li> <li>German</li> <li>International Business</li> <li>Mandatory English (C1/2) and Spanish (C1)</li> <li>3<sup>rd</sup> semester of master's</li> </ul>	<b>fCTM (Czech Republic)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Female, 19 years</li> <li>French (Erasmus)</li> <li>Business and Economics</li> <li>Non-mandatory English (B2), some German</li> <li>3<sup>rd</sup> semester of bachelor</li> </ul>
<b>fITM (Ireland)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Female, 21 years</li> <li>Irish</li> <li>International Business</li> <li>Mandatory Spanish (C1), some German</li> <li>Final semester of bachelor</li> </ul>	<b>mITM (Ireland)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Male, 21 years</li> <li>Irish</li> <li>International Business</li> <li>Mandatory French (C1), some German</li> <li>Final semester of bachelor</li> </ul>

The participants evaluate themselves and each other on team roles during the project, so to make them aware of each other's 'piece' in the whole and the performance on that piece.

### WS Assessment within Virtual Exchange > student participation and engagement

Assessment is a driving factor for participation and engagement.

Biggs > student first looks at assessment task and then what he/she has to do in order to get there.

Experience: first year high dropout – course not compulsory

Second year less dropout, more video conferencing, already in ice-breaking phase (task 1), which helped in the bonding.

Task 2. 'retrieve information, compare & discuss topics related to current teaching issues in Europe'. Everyone participated in task 1, less in task 2.

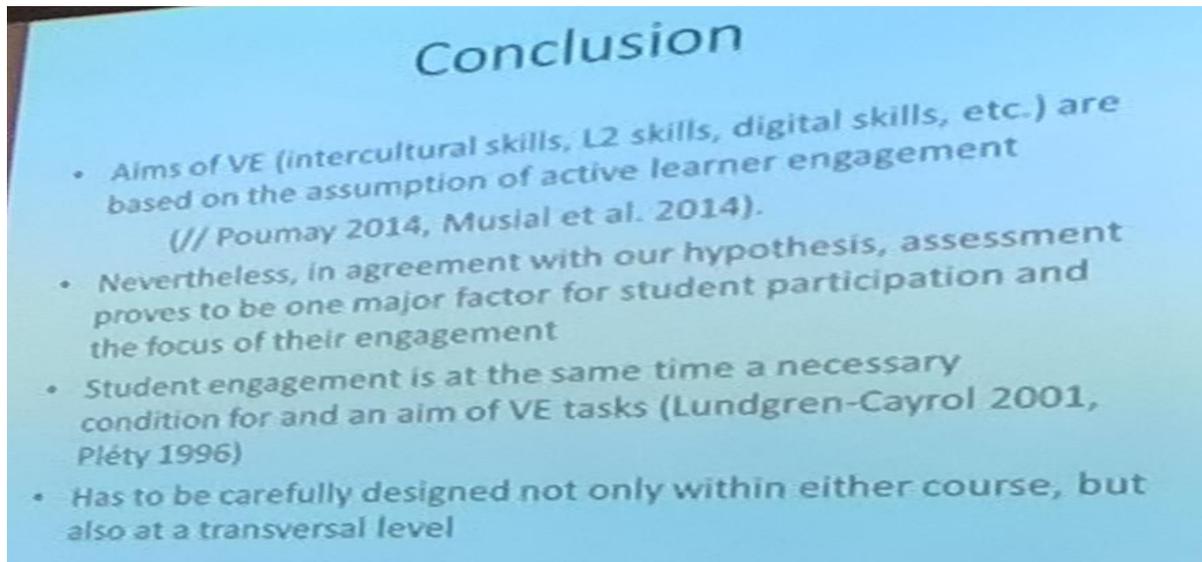
Task 3 was a collaborative task design activity. The assessed felt that the 'other' class was probably not assessed for it, because they were less involved they felt.

In the questionnaire some specifically answer 'yes I would have participated more actively if assessed' but some also said 'No, I already worked on it motivated'. Some felt it more as a task than as internal motivation, but that changed towards the end of the project.

There are **3 types of assessment that influence student engagement:**

1. Interest for the task and the usefulness (learn language, learn about country)
2. Feeling of being able to learn through the task
3. Perception of having a certain control over the task. Do you feel you have influence on it or not

Conclusion: yes, assessment has great influence on involvement.



### WS Gamifying Intercultural TC tasks for pre-mobility students

Ludology vs narratology > first is about 'playing' second is about 'the story'.

Sykes's (2018) **three** ideas for future work in this area: 1. Increased access to community-based games, 2. Meaningful incorporation of virtual reality, 3. Increased access to commercial games.

Sykes and Reinhardt (2012) highlighted **five** especially relevant features of games for language teaching and learning, each of which parallels **best practices in second language teaching and learning:**

1. Learner-directed goal orientation.
2. Opportunities for interaction with the game, through the game and around the game
3. Just-in-time individualized feedback
4. Relevant narrative and context, creation of meaningful experience
5. Motivation: powerful learning experiences in which players continually engage.

Use game set-up to make students complete their preparation for going abroad. E.g. the student can follow a 'path' with different 'exercises' (games) to prepare interculturally. They have to collect, create, research and find things.

Flip it > give the students a structure and have them design a game that prepares them.

Important part for getting students eager for preparing themselves is to communicate why it is a priority for them. So: clarify why the preparation makes their stay abroad / diploma / ... more valuable.

### **To conclude the conference**

#### **Do's**

- Design the information you want to exchange > Framework, prepare and evaluate!
- Comparison & analyses > e.g. cultural & work field comparison, word association
- Product creation > create and deliver a product together
- Assessment > stimulates participation and involvement
- What type of assessment stimulates the involvement of students most:
  - Interest in task and the usefulness
  - Feeling of learning from the task
  - Perception of having control over the task
- Reflection > during whole process (discuss expectations, what went right/needs attention, evaluate)

Undecided > experience depends on user and project:

- To decide what tools to use: beforehand or up to participants?
- Moments of contact: fixed moments or up to participants?
- Participation compulsory or voluntary?

#### **Digi-tools**

Tools mentioned these days: Zoom us – Skype - Moodle - Google Hangout / docs / drive - Discord - Voice thread – Mentimeter – Unicko - Appear – Facebook - Blackboard – Padlet

\*\*\*end\*\*\*