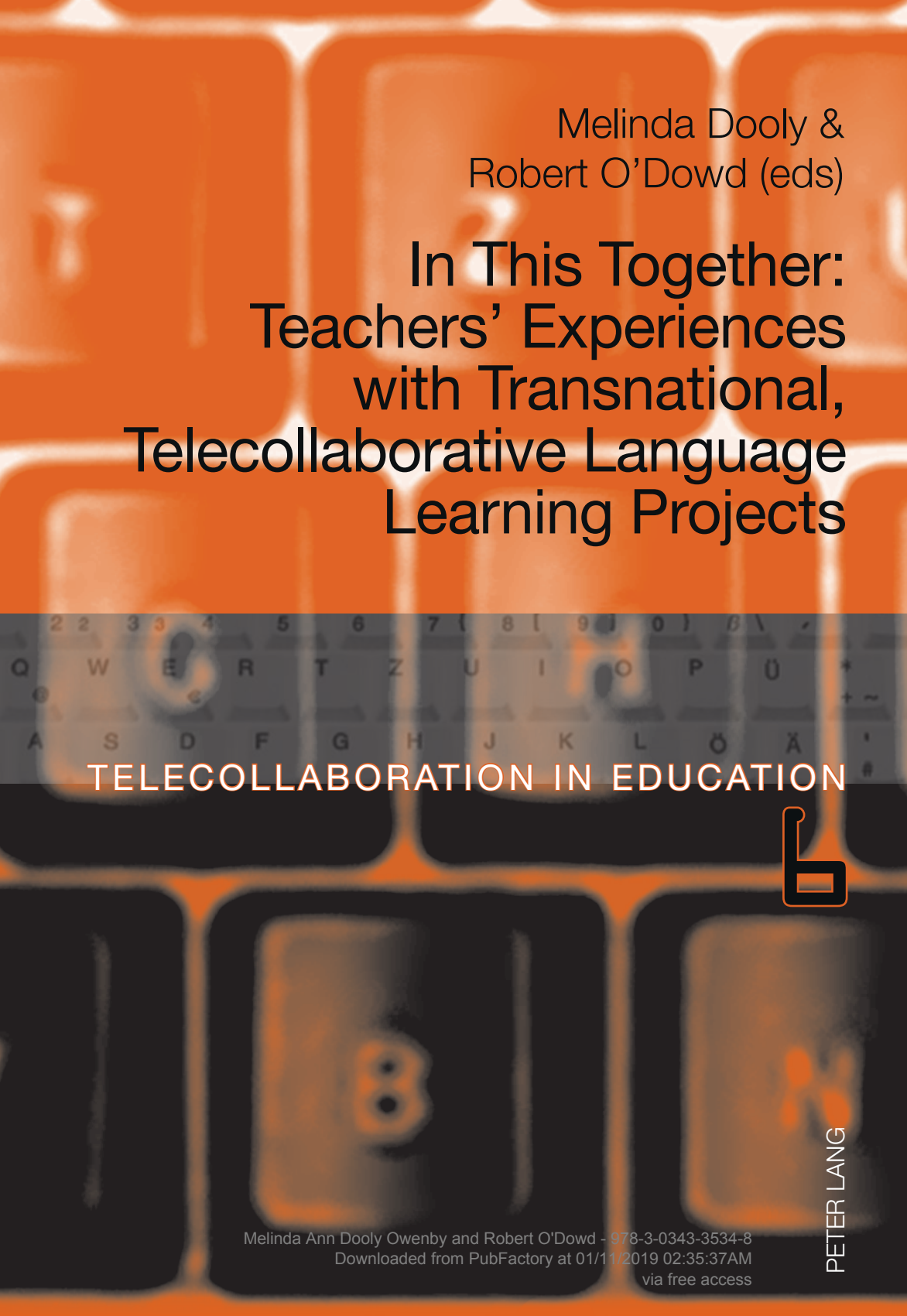


Melinda Dooly &
Robert O'Dowd (eds)

In This Together: Teachers' Experiences with Transnational, Telecollaborative Language Learning Projects

TELECOLLABORATION IN EDUCATION

6

PETER LANG

This book provides a nexus between research and practice through teachers' narratives of their experiences with telecollaboration. The book begins with a chapter outlining the pedagogical and theoretical underpinnings of telecollaboration (also known as Virtual Exchange), followed by eight chapters that explain telecollaborative project design, materials and activities as well as frank discussions of obstacles met and resolved during the project implementation. The projects described in the volume serve as excellent examples for any teacher or education stakeholder interested in setting up their own telecollaborative exchange.

In This Together: Teachers' Experiences with Transnational, Telecollaborative Language Learning Projects

TELECOLLABORATION IN EDUCATION

Vol. 6

Edited by
Melinda Dooly & Robert O'Dowd

PETER LANG
Bern · Berlin · Bruxelles · New York · Oxford · Warszawa · Wien

Melinda Dooly & Robert O'Dowd (eds)

In This Together: Teachers' Experiences with Transnational, Telecollaborative Language Learning Projects

PETER LANG
Bern · Berlin · Bruxelles · New York · Oxford · Warszawa · Wien

Bibliographic information published by die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available on the Internet at ‹http://dnb.d-nb.de›.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data: A catalogue record for this book is available from The British Library, Great Britain
Library of Congress Control Number: 2018946491

Spanish Ministry of Economy, Industry & Competitivity: Proyectos I+D del Programa Estatal de Fomento de la Investigación Científica y Técnica de Excelencia. KONECT project (Knowledge for Network-based
Grant number: EDU2013-43932-P); 2013–2017.

ISSN 1662-3037 pb. ISSN 2235-7599 eBook
ISBN 978-3-0343-3501-0 pb. ISBN 978-3-0343-3533-1 eBook
ISBN 978-3-0343-3534-8 ePub ISBN 978-3-0343-3535-5 Mobi
DOI 10.3726/b14311

This publication has been peer reviewed.

Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers, Bern 2018
Wabernstrasse 40, CH-3007 Bern, Switzerland
bern@peterlang.com, www.peterlang.com

Contents

Melinda Dooly & Robert O'dowd

Series Editors' Preface

This series is dedicated to promoting a wider understanding of the activity of telecollaboration in educational settings. Since the first book that was published in this series in 2010 (Guth & Helm), this practice has grown extensively and the ways in which online or digital exchanges are referred to, defined and applied to teaching vary greatly, depending on the context and content of the exchanges; so much so that we have taken some time in our introductory chapter of this volume to reflect on this.

From the first volume published in this series onwards, we have defined 'telecollaboration' as referring to the pedagogical processes and outcomes of engaging learners in different geographical locations in virtual contact together, mediated through the application of online communication tools such as e-mail, synchronous chat and threaded discussion as well as the tools of Web 2.0 such as wikis, blogs, social networking and 3D virtual worlds. The application of such activity may include different subject areas (e.g. Foreign Language Education, History, Science) as well as different educational contexts, including but not limited to primary, secondary, university and adult education. In our introductory chapter, we offer more extensive definitions of the word, as well as discussion of other terms that have been used recently, such as 'virtual exchange', 'teletandem' and 'online intercultural exchange' –all of which have salient reasons for being applied to the practice of intercultural exchanges between geographically distanced individuals or group, facilitated through communication media. However, in the end, we have opted in this volume to continue with the term 'telecollaboration' for various motives, not least of which is the long and well-documented history of telecollaborative research and practice in foreign language education.

And yet, despite a long tradition, telecollaboration is still not as predominant in educational practices as one might hope, particularly in primary and secondary education. This may be due to a dearth of examples and models of telecollaborative exchanges carried out by teachers. The case studies included here are written by teachers, who like so many

other educators around the world, are 'making do' with few resources, lots of imagination, combined with enthusiasm and interest for innovating their own teaching methodologies. With this in mind, our sixth book in the series highlights meaningful experiences in telecollaboration and virtual exchange, described by practicing teachers and teacher candidates who have empirical knowledge of designing, implementing and assessing innovative transglobal projects. These cases can serve current and future primary and secondary school teachers who wish to learn more about this type of language education approach. The chapters include descriptions of contextualized telecollaboration projects, focusing on challenges encountered before, during or after the telecollaborative exchange. The authors outline the solutions and strategies they found for these problems and even offer examples of materials they designed for the exchanges, as well as discussing the technological resources they found to be most useful.

The volume aims to provide a space for teachers' voices in the nexus between research and practice through their narratives of their own experiences. The content in this book applies to different levels of education and learner ages (from early childhood to early secondary school education) and gives refreshing insight into authentic experiences, including frank discussion by these practitioners of obstacles and difficulties that emerged during their exchanges. The teachers' voices sing throughout these case studies, demonstrating how research and practice on telecollaboration can be synthesized while making both the underlying theories and the practical steps for undertaking similar exchanges accessible to the busy teacher of today.

Melinda Dooly, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain
Robert O'Dowd, Universidad de León, Spain

4 March 2018

References

Guth, S., & Helm, F. (Eds.) (2010). *Telecollaboration 2.0: Language, literacy and intercultural learning in the 21st Century*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Acknowledgements

Our sincerest gratitude to all the authors/teachers who have agreed to contribute to this book. Their innovative work and enthusiasm for teaching is an inspiration to us all.

In the spirit of making their experiences accessible to teachers around the world, we have decided to make this book free open access. This would not have been possible without funding by the Spanish Ministry of Economy, Industry & Competitivity: Proyectos I+D del Programa Estatal de Fomento de la Investigación Científica y Técnica de Excelencia in the form of a grant for the KONECT project (Knowledge for Network-based Education, Cognition & Teaching). Grant number: EDU2013-43932-P); 2013–2017.

Melinda Dooly, Universitat Autònoma De Barcelona
& Robert O'dowd, Universidad De León

Chapter 1. Telecollaboration in the foreign language classroom: A review of its origins and its application to language teaching practice

Introduction

This volume looks at the application of pedagogically-structured online collaborative learning initiatives between groups of learners in different geographical locations. This type of exchange is commonly known in foreign language education as telecollaborative learning. Specifically, the chapters in this book outline language learning projects, designed and carried out by primary and secondary teachers, working telecollaboratively with partners from around the globe. The projects can serve as inspiring models for other teachers who are interesting in innovating their teaching practices, especially as these teachers very openly describe the challenges they faced and how they overcame them, as well as the many rewarding outcomes they (and their students) derived from the experiences. The authors/teachers are also very generous in sharing materials they have designed for their telecollaborative projects and even offer tips on how to avoid some of the possible pitfalls that they themselves encountered.

For many of us who have been involved in telecollaboration for some time now, it would have been difficult to predict how rapidly interest in telecollaborative language teaching and learning would rise in popularity around the world in the past few years. Just ten years ago it was difficult to find any mention of telecollaboration in journals, books or even online, with the exception of a few highly specialized sections of academic conferences or publications. For instance, when first writing

about our own telecollaborative experiences from the mid 2000's, it was a challenge to find 'fellow telecollaborators' to contribute to a book on innovative approaches to teaching and learning languages. When the book was published, there was only one other submission on telecollaboration (Sadler & Eröz, 2008) in addition to our own chapter (Dooly & Ellermann, 2008). For our guidebook on telecollaboration published the same year (Dooly, 2008), only nine online websites related to online exchanges could be identified. Now, only a decade later, a simple search engine produces hundreds of references, including very large associations that offer mass online exchanges for diverse profiles (class to class, individual to individual at primary, secondary and university levels). In terms of changes in education, this is very rapid indeed.

Despite its growing popularity, telecollaboration (or as it is recently often called 'virtual exchange') is not new to the world of education. Of course, the technology used for creating and supporting exchange practices between distanced partners has changed drastically in recent years, but the practice itself has been around for at least a century, if not more (depending on how you categorize it). As Kern (2013) points out, "School pen pal exchanges and even multimedia exchanges have existed since at least the 1920's when Célestin Freinet established the Modern School Movement in Europe" (Kern, 2013, p. 206). Dooly (2017) remarks that collaboration between geographically distanced classes has been documented as far back as the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Still, with the increased speed and access to communication tools, these exchanges have taken on a new veneer. O'Dowd (2013a) mentions the exchanges promoted by Mario Lodi in 1960s Italy (p. 125) and Sadler describes the PLATO project in the early 1970s (this volume). The 'renewed' interest, beginning in the 1960's and picking up speed is perhaps not that surprising since, socio-historically, the Lodi exchange coincides with an emergent general awareness of possible 'new horizons' in the 1960s. After all, this was the decade that the term "global village" was first used by McLuhan (1962 [2011]) and the first views of the planet Earth from space were made available to the general public (Gaudelli, 2003), all of which helped kindle a vision of a single, united world system (Gooding Oran, 2011). Of course, the use of computers to connect language learners across the globe did not really pick up momentum until several decades later, when personal computers (PCs) became more accessible in homes and schools. With this increased availability, some daring teachers

and researchers began to toy with the idea of 'opening up the classroom', leading to 'pockets' of innovative practice in telecollaboration around the world. Of these pioneers, certain names stand out, among these are Kern 1996; Brammerts 1996; and Johnson 1996 – all of whom have chapters in a seminal collection of papers edited by Mark Warschauer in that same year. This collection is frequently touted as "laying down key pedagogical foundations for subsequent research and practice in telecollaboration in language teaching and learning" (Dooly, 2017, p. 172).

However, as Kern points out

> the relationship between technology and language learning has never been as complex or interesting as it is today. The accelerating diffusion of digital media and wireless networks, together with the increased naturalization of EMC [electronically mediated communication], promises that technology-supported language learning will remain a critical area for teaching and research. (2013, p. 211)

This diffusion of communication technology has not only presented teachers with new resources and opportunities, it has, arguably, brought new responsibilities for educators. As hackneyed as it may seem to state (yet again) that the world is becoming increasingly interconnected, this point should not be underestimated because local and global interaction between individuals and institutions will shape future outcomes of society as a whole. Since the late 1990s, societies, cultures and people are no longer perceived as separate; they are all part of a globalized infrastructure, in what Bauman (1998) has described as global, fluid (Bauman, 1998) and Castells (2001) has termed the networked society; all leading to a 'postmodern globalization' (Jameson & Miyoshi, 1998). In his seminal work, Appadurai (1996) has tried to capture this new reality of geopolitical interactions in a model of 'transcultural flows', placing emphasis on multilateral movements, versus a model of unilateral flow from center to periphery. His model theorizes different domains of transcultural flows: ethnoscapes (involving flow of people); mediascapes (flow of information); technoscapes (flow of technology); financescapes (flows of finance); and ideoscapes (flow of ideology or ideas). The flow of all of these 'scapes' contributes to transnational communities (including, one might assume, online communities).

In today's society of 'transnationalism', it seems self-evident that teachers must consider carefully the implications of their teaching efforts, both locally and globally, and reflect on how to best prepare their students

for the future. It is becoming increasingly more common to hear of the need to educate future 'global citizens', although admittedly, what the term 'global citizen' –and how to prepare to be one- has been understood very differently across diverse education fields, and is controversial, to say the least (Dooly & Vallejo, 2018). Still, this controversy does not detract from the argument that the widespread access to and use of electronically mediated communication tools offers teachers key opportunities to introduce their students to an important learning process that includes interaction with geographically distributed partners. Moreover, this is arguably a scenario that is increasingly more common as social and professional arenas become more connected internationally and students who learn how to interact, from an early age, in electronically mediated environments will inevitably feel more comfortable in similar situations in the future.

We set forth in this book the notion that telecollaboration can productively support this learning environment and the role of the innovative teacher is a principal factor. "Language teachers stand at an important juncture between the global (intercultural and linguistic experiences for themselves and their students) and the local (socializing 'life experiences' in the school and community)" (Dooly, 2013, p. 238). The chapters in this book illustrate this point quite clearly as the classes engage with other classes around the world, in many cases to discuss, explore deeply and consider possible solutions to issues that will have a profound impact on the world in the near future. Topics include projects on the devastating effect of pollution and plastics in the ocean, EU policies on refugee status, intercultural understanding and in one case, a primary school class in Spain has worked in collaboration with refugees living in Mynamar. However, before advancing further explanation about the projects, we first outline key underlying assumptions of these exchanges, beginning with some consideration of the many different definitions that have been applied to telecollaboration.

So what is telecollaboration exactly?

As mentioned above, the notion of 'connecting' language learners in pedagogically structured interaction and collaboration seems to have proliferated in recent years and it is not unusual to see mention of telecollaboration

in conferences, articles, online blogs and online news outlets. There have been several book publications exclusively on the topic of telecollaborative learning (Belz & Thorne, 2006; Dooly, 2008; Guth & Helm, 2010; O'Dowd, 2006, 2007; O'Dowd & Lewis, 2016; Chapelle & Sauro, 2017) as well as two special editions of the journal *Language Learning & Technology* (volumes 7/2, edited by Julie Belz and 15/1, edited by Dorothy Chun and Irene Thompson). The European Commission has dedicated considerable funding to projects on telecollaboration (e.g. *Moderating Intercultural Collaboration and Language Learning*) (Dooly, 2008), *Intercultural Communication in Europe* (Kohn & Warth, 2011) and *Integrating Telecollaborative Networks in Higher Education* (O'Dowd, 2013b). There also have been chapters on telecollaboration in many of the recent overviews of foreign language methodology, including the *Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics* (2007), the *Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication* (Jackson, 2013) as well as reflections on its application to intercultural foreign language education in publications such as Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) and Corbett (2010). Finally, there are a growing number of platforms dedicated only to providing support for educators interested in this teaching practice, including UNICollaboration (www.unicollaboration.eu), eTwinning (www.etwinning.net and epals (http://www.epals.com/).

However, the abundance of references to online exchanges exacerbates the difficulty of deciding upon a single definition of telecollaboration. As O'Dowd (2013a, p. 124) points out, the use of the Internet to connect online language learners for different types of learning exchanges "has gone under many different names". These range from "virtual connections" (Warschauer 1996), "teletandem" (Telles 2009), "globally networked learning" (Starke-Meyerring & Wilson 2008) to the more generic term of "online interaction and exchange or OIE" (Dooly & O'Dowd 2012), to name just a few terms. It appears that the term *Virtual Exchange* is being used increasingly in a wide range of contexts. Not only is it the preferred term of educational organisations such as *Soliya* (https://www.soliya.net) and *Sharing Perspectives* (http://www.sharingperspectivesfoundation.com), but it is also the term being increasingly used by foundations, governmental and inter-governmental bodies such as the Stevens Initiative (http://stevensinitiative.org/), the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in the USA (http://eca.state.gov/gallery/virtual-exchange) and the European Commission (2016). However, for the sake of simplicity and cohesion, and reflecting the long tradition of *telecollaborative*

research in foreign language education, the authors in this book use the term telecollaboration to refer to their online collaborative initiatives. It is a term that is still widely used and accepted amongst academics and practitioners in the field of foreign language education.

One of the most widely referenced definitions of telecollaboration comes from Belz (2003), who defines the term as a "partnership in which internationally-dispersed learners in parallel language classes use Internet communication Tools" (emails, chats, forums) to support "social interaction, dialogue, debate, and intercultural exchange" (Belz 2003, p. 2). O'Dowd (2018) defines telecollaboration and Virtual Exchange as "the engagement of groups of learners in extended periods of online intercultural interaction and collaboration with partners from other cultural contexts or geographical locations as an integrated part of their educational programmes and under the guidance of educators and/or expert facilitators". Dooly (2017) provides a definition of the term that goes beyond education:

> the process of communicating and working together with other people or groups from different locations through online or digital communication tools (e.g., computers, tablets, cellphones) to co-produce a desired work output. Telecollaboration can be carried out in a variety of settings (classroom, home, workplace, laboratory) and can be synchronous or asynchronous. In education, telecollaboration combines all of these components with a focus on learning, social interaction, dialogue, intercultural exchange and communication all of which are especially important aspects of telecollaboration in language education. (pp. 169–170)

In what he calls 'online intercultural encounters', Kern (2013) highlights the cultural aspects of these exchanges. "An increasing trend in language teaching is the development of long-distance collaborations involving two or more classrooms, usually in different countries. Often referred to as telecollaboration, these international partnerships generally place an emphasis on culture in language use and learning" (p. 206).

It should be noted, however, that the focus on international partnerships for language education has also had its critics. Kramsch (2013) suggests that "[i]n the USA as in Europe, there is right now a push to de-institutionalize the teaching of foreign languages and cultures: sending the students abroad, pairing them up with native speakers and telecollaboration over the Internet have all transformed language study into skill training for the real world of the job market" (Kramsch, p. 313). This argument may be related to the apparent 'outsourcing' of telecollaboration

to large-scale platforms, enterprises and non-governmental organizations that provide telecollaborative[1] resources for worldwide exchanges (for substantial fees usually contracted by universities) that offer a 'complete package', from course design to communication tools, monitoring and assessment. The size and outreach of some of these organizations (many with government backing) may prompt some criticism in that they may promote somewhat top-down models of how to organize the exchanges. Also, oftentimes they are outsourced, therefore potentially releasing universities from accountability and they may be vulnerable to being overtaken by different political factions for 'soft-power' influencing.

So, as we have already seen, there are a dizzying number of definitions and settings that have been applied to this practice, and to add to the complexity, as Lamy and Goodfellow (2010) insist, any definition implicitly covers a wide range of pedagogical (and one might add sociopolitical) underpinnings. This is why we feel this book is timely. The term 'telecollaboration' has been used to describe many different types of online exchange, ranging from loosely guided language practice of the target language (e.g. online conversations in text or oral chat) to elaborately designed project-based collaborative exchanges. And as it has already been discussed, definitions of telecollaboration (or virtual exchange) have been applied to 'ready-made' telecollaborative models that include pre-selected curriculum, content, materials and tutors (see Lewis & O'Dowd, 2016 for an overview of these models). But for teachers who do not have the institutional backing or money to become involved in such programmes, a more 'home-grown' version may be the only alternative. Associations such as UNICollaboration[2] or EU projects such as EVALUATE[3] are working towards providing evidence-based pedagogical templates for this type of exchange. However, having teacher-tested examples is also extremely useful and many such models are provided in the chapters herein. But first, we turn to a second, quite common question concerning telecollaboration: is it a method, methodology, approach or merely a teaching activity?

1 Several large, worldwide organizations are now available. They provide entire holistic services, including the design of curriculum, in-house trained monitors and assessment criteria. They also widely promote the idea of what is most commonly called 'virtual exchange' as the way forward in education.

2 https://www.unicollaboration.org

3 http://www.evaluateproject.eu

Method, methodology, approach or practice?

The chapters in this book provide descriptions of telecollaborative experiences carried out by novice and experienced teachers alike. There are also two chapters outlining a telecollaborative exchange that was designed and implemented by student-teachers during their internships. This underscores the point that telecollaboration is becoming an object of study in some schools of education and, little by little, gaining a foothold in teacher education.

As teacher educators engaged in introducing student-teachers to the workings of telecollaboration, we have found that a question that is commonly posed quite early in a semester on telecollaboration in language education is whether it is a method, methodology, approach or a teaching practice? Actually, this is a rather profound question and cannot be answered with a generic, uni-dimensional response. There are a vast number of answers, many of them field-dependent. Even if we limit our answer to the field of educational science, the answers will vary. But for teachers interested in telecollaboration it is an important question as these terms will have bearing on both how one teaches and why one teaches a specific way.

In 1990, Richards defined classroom teaching methodology as "the activities, tasks and learning experiences selected by the teacher in order to achieve learning, and they are used within the teaching/learning process" (p. 11). Kumaravadivelu (2006) makes a distinction between "established methods [that are] conceptualised and constructed by experts in the field" (p. 84) and methodology, which is "what practicing teachers actually do in the classroom in order to achieve their stated or unstated teaching objectives" (p. 84).

Thornbury (2013, p. 185) defines methodology as "the how of teaching. But also implicated are the what, the why, and the who [all of which] will be influenced by their (implicit and explicit) theories of language and of learning". He then goes on to mention the many constraints these decisions may have, such as curricular and institutional demands, materials and technologies available, assessment and evaluation procedures, and so forth. He accounts for six domains that determine language teaching 'method': The nature of language; the nature of second language learning; goals and objectives in teaching; type of syllabus; roles (teachers, learners, materials); activities, techniques and procedures (p. 192). Like

Kumaravadivelu (2006), Thornbury points out that methods cannot be assumed to be 'unproblematic' nor are they 'stable phenomena' (p. 193) – what goes on in a classroom can generally be seen as stemming from the simultaneous overlapping of diverse "methodological persuasions" (Chaudron, 1988, p. 8) – methods are "imported", "customized and tailored to local conditions" –in other words, teachers do not follow methods, they 'appropriate' with "an approach that accords uniquely with their 'sense of plausibility' (Thornbury, 2013, p. 193).

In short, as it is apparent by this brief review of terminology, there does not seem to be a consensus. Moreover, often times the word 'approach' is studiously avoided in academic texts, however, perhaps it is the term that is most applicable to telecollaboration in the context of these chapters. Approach is generally understood as the way in which an individual applies quite explicitly defined principles of how something should be done – based on theoretical foundations (e.g. a socio-cultural learning theories). These principles might include the roles of teachers and learners, expected activities and outcomes, learning goals and how these are best attained, and so forth.

As demonstrated by the previous section on definitions of telecollaboration, this particular teaching practice does have specific features that distinguish it from other practices and therefore it can be categorized, minimally, as an approach. Telecollaboration involves engaging geographically distributed learners in some sort of interaction for a truly communicative purpose (ideally to co-construct knowledge of some sort). There are widely accepted learning theories underpinning the design and implementation of the exchanges (socio-cultural, interactional). However, the basis of the tasks and activities are sufficiently varied that it could be argued that telecollaboration is not an actual method although minimally it should be recognized as a growing instructional practice, based on a set of principles or ideas used to account for the learning that (should) take place through this practice. This assumption, in turn, brings us to yet another key question concerning telecollaboration in language education: What are the key underlying principles of language learning in telecollaborative approaches?

Evolution of language learning paradigms and telecollaborative environments

In her entry to *The Routledge Handbook of Applied Linguistics*, Larsen-Freeman poses three pairs of questions that will help identify key concepts in language learning and language education: 1) what is language? What is culture; 2) What is learning? Who are the learners?; 3) What is teaching? Who are the teachers? Larsen-Freeman points out that "languages have been taught and learned for centuries" (p. 155) and throughout this time, different features of the three key points (language and culture; learning and learner; teaching and teacher) have been focused as more influential at one time or the other and even within the same pairing of foci (e.g. learning and learner), "the questions have not always been accorded equal treatment" (p. 155). She then goes on to show how all of these features intersect so that when theories of language learning shift, this will inevitably affect language education and vice-versa.

Following Cook and Seidlhofer's (1995) categories of ways in which language (and subsequently language education) have been theorized, Larsen-Freeman underscores their two most contrastive perspectives: "language as a rule-governed discrete combinatory system" and "language as a social fact" (p. 157). It can be argued that these two contrastive views of language still hold strong on general perspectives regarding how language should be taught and in many cases are the two main pillars in the same course –contradictory as that may seem. As Larsen-Freeman points out, "many teachers teach their students both structures and how to communicate" (p. 158) and "many of the educational developments, both old and new, are widely practiced today" (p. 163). Moreover, these two contrastive points seem to have fused most significantly and at times, with some controversy, in the now widely-known 'communicative methodology'.

In his overview of language teaching methodologies, Thornbury (2013) separates 'communicative methodology' from 'communicative learning theory' (CLT). He is careful to point out that 'communicative methodology' covers a lot of ground – from a more 'radical' (cf. Allwright, 1979) or 'strong form' (cf. Prabhu, 1987) interpretation of communicative methodologies, with the major (and sometimes only) aim being communication in the process of learning, to a more 'creative compromise' that "interweave[s] several strands –grammatical, lexical and functional- into

one integrated course design" (p. 189). No matter which stance one takes on CLT, its impact on language education (in particular in the European Union), along with the publication of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR; 2001) has been extensive. CLT is one of the most widely accepted methods in foreign language teaching education and is usually taught in language education methods courses, in combination with socio-cultural, socio-constructivist learning theories.

This influence is also visible in most pedagogical approaches to telecollaborative activities: there has been a "shift towards social technologies […] constructivist principles promoting collaborative learning […] now focused more on communicative ability" (Thomas, Reinders, and Warschauer 2013, 6–7). "Given that telecollaboration is principally about communication, the move toward socioconstructivist underpinnings—which poses that learning takes place through social interaction—is quite comprehensible" (Dooly, p. 174). We have argued elsewhere that the growth in technological accessibility has inevitably contributed to an increase in telecollaboration in language learning but this is not sufficient to explain both its growing popularity and the widening acceptance of a telecollaborative language teaching approach through an interactional, socio-cultural perspective (Dooly & O'Dowd, 2012). There appear to be at least three other key factors: the widespread acceptance that intercultural awareness and intercultural and interpersonal communicative competence are extremely important for foreign language learning; the need for an interactive approach through cognitively challenging, meaningful use of language that goes beyond the classroom walls; and thirdly, the fact that language learners must gain combined skills of communicating in multiple language and through multiple modalities (Dooly & O'Dowd, 2012). (It should be noted that the latter notion has recently appeared under many different labels, ranging from new literacies, digital skills to trans-semiotic meaning-making).

At the same time, perhaps in accordance with the rapid advance of technology and increase in the number of examples of telecollaboratives practices, other language learning theories have been proposed as suitable frameworks for understanding the complexity of these learning environments. One theory known as 'distributed cognition' has become increasingly more prevalent in discussions regarding the fusion of technology with language learning. In this framework, knowledge is not seen

as being located in any given place (in particular it does not reside in an individual's mind). Instead, knowledge is considered to be made up of 'networks' of connections between multiple individuals, contexts, artifacts, socially constructed norms, and many other factors, both tangible and intangible. Knowledge is produced and shaped from multiple experiences (by many) and consists of sharing, creating, participating, and interacting with a knowing community—increasingly, these include online communities (Dooly, 2013). This also implies that knowledge is ever-expansive (dare we say infinite?) while simultaneously embedded in meaningful activities with others. For language learners engaged in telecollaboration, this implies interacting locally (e.g., with their classmates) and globally (e.g., online peers) and is closely related to the notions of combining 'learning in the wild' (Hutchins, 1995) with teaching and learning in the classroom (Hellermann, Thorne, Fodor, 2017). As Eskildsen and Majlesi (2018) state, "Not only is language learned through interaction, but it can also be difficult to ascertain where one ends and the other begins" (p. 3). It is important to highlight that this is a highly 'ecologically-comprehensive' and 'contextually-sensitive' learning theory. In this sense, learning and development involve human activity as an 'ensemble process' taking place in what might be called a brain-body world continuum (Spivey, 2007; Atkinson, 2011; cited in Thorne, 2018).

This brings us to yet another central question that traverses the chapters in this book: How can these learning theories be operationalized effectively in telecollaborative exchanges? More specifically, how can teachers (in state schools; in limited funded circumstances such as refugee camps or in restricted parameters of teaching internships) optimize the learning opportunities afforded through telecollaboration; and always in conjunction with local and national curriculum limitations? In many cases, this may mean they must teach languages through a transdisciplinary lens or it may mean (as in the case of telecollaboration in a refugee camp), adapting the exchange to very different learning objectives and age groups. In all of the cases illustrated here, telecollaboration was combined with a Project-Based Language Learning (PBLL) approach (Fried-Booth, 2002; Beckett & Slater, 2005; Stoller (2006).

Why project-based learning in telecollaborative language learning settings?

One of the principal challenges facing teachers' today is to help students develop new competences adapted to the 'knowledge society' –including a metacognitive understanding of the nature of knowledge as distributed, transformative and fluid while at the same time, promoting language learner agentivity (Eskildsen & Majlesi, 2018). This undoubtedly requires a profound reflection upon what it means to efficiently design learning events that fully integrate communication technology as part of a highly complex, experientially and contextually laminated learning process (Dooly, 2018). Moreover, apart from these 'loftier' ideals of the purpose of education, teachers 'in the trenches' are increasingly pressured to bring technology into their own teaching. And these expectations go beyond bringing technology into their classrooms in 'any old way'. As tools for electronically mediated miscommunication become more commonplace in schools, there is a growing call for technology-enhanced learning tasks and activities that allow the learners to deploy these resources *creatively* in ways that *resemble potentially authentic situations* in the 'real world' – including the use of *multiple* technological tools to interact with others for problem-solving, sharing of knowledge, collaborative and critical thinking and presentation and discussion of ideas.

Decades of studies demonstrate that these are key features related to Project-Based Learning (problem-solving, collaboration, teamwork, critical thinking). Project-Based Learning (PBL) is also suitable for providing an interdisciplinary framework, which is often the case of foreign language teaching as Content and Language Integrated Learning[4] (CLIL) grows in popularity and as telecollaboration expands into multidisciplinary approaches these elements are relevant to the learning process. According to BIE (2003), a PBL approach challenges learners to complete tasks that are cognitively, interpersonally and communicatively demanding and which lead to final output that have an impact on an audience outside the

4 Also commonly known as Content Based Instruction (CBI), English Across the Curriculum (EAC), and English as Medium of Instruction (EMI). However, these last two terms have been increasingly criticized for the monolingual focus on one language and other terms such as Foreign Language as a Medium of Education (FLAME) and Foreign Language Immersion Programmes (FLIP) are gaining wider acceptance.

school. These challenges can be tackled from multiple disciplines simultaneously, for instance learners, as seen in one of these cases, can be asked to engage with social issues from the lens of language, social studies and political science classes simultaneously (and in multiple languages).

Through telecollaboration learners will have opportunities for using the target language for an authentic purpose since they are addressing a wider audience than their colleagues in the classroom. Still, this is not merely a question of arranging for learners to 'talk' with each other in the target language. It is about working towards a 'final goal' of the project, thereby getting learners to 'do things' with language, rather than simply learning 'about' the language. Both PBLL and Technology-Enhanced Project-Based Language Learning (TEPBLL) are based upon the belief that language learning is stimulated when the teaching approach adopted in the classroom connects both content and target language to students' reality outside of the classroom – bringing us back to both the socio-cultural/socio-constructivist paradigms mentioned earlier as well as the notions of distributed cognition. TEPBLL –and in particular projects that use telecollaboration –can unite learners through 'networks' of connections between multiple individuals, contexts, artifacts so that the shared goals of the project ensure embedded learning in a 'brain-body world continuum' (Spivey, 2007) that goes far beyond the language classroom. In short, telecollaborative language learning projects are well-founded in current language education theories.

This brings us to the crux of this book. Telecollaboration is increasingly proclaimed by teachers, administrators, and by governmental and non-governmental organizations as a sound approach to interdisciplinary language teaching and learning. However, telecollaborative projects require teacher know-how to coherently sequence the activities (both in and out of class) in order to ensure appropriate meta-cognitive scaffolding. This implies designing effective, intricately meshed tasks (carried out collaboratively through both online and in-class activities) that lead to acquisition of identified content and language objectives.

Teachers around the world are required to use digital tools effectively and innovatively – not just to replicate with more 'bells and whistles'- the same teaching approaches they have used till now.

> [G]iven the rapid evolution of technologies and the fluidity of communicative environments, teachers face increasingly complex decisions related to teaching with technology. Success in technology-mediated projects has been repeatedly shown to depend largely on teachers' efforts in coordinating learners' activities, structuring

> language and content, and helping learners to reflect critically on language, culture and context. But keeping on top of project goals, activity/task design, technology interface, and the management of often complex logistical realities is challenging, and flexibility is a key asset. Teachers need to know how technology can constrain as well as enhance their students' language use and know when it is better not to use computers. (Kern, 2013, p. 210)

The narratives in this book can provide blueprints for other teachers who wish to follow in their footsteps, especially since planning, executing and assessing telecollaborative language learning projects can seem formidable for anyone considering going at it alone. The authors in this book had the good fortune to be in a situation where they could be supported by more experienced practitioners and researchers in their first telecollaborative endeavours (the cases displayed here are related to the research project KONECT[5]). The authors have drawn from their experiences to address many of the questions and issues that other teachers might have when considering whether and how to begin a telecollaborative language learning project.

What is in this book?

The chapters in this volume represent a 'bottom-up' approach to telecollaborative research, and provide valuable insight into how online intercultural exchanges are being implemented by educators in primary and secondary level.

5 The Knowledge for Network-based Education, Cognition & Teaching (KONECT) project aims to analyse data stemming from the design and implementation of telecollaborative, international projects with classrooms (primary school pupils and middle-school students) that have been matched with international partners. Based on conclusions drawn from the results of the analysis, the KONECT team has proposed specific measures for improving students' communicative and academic skills in order to better ensure their future participation in the 21st century knowledge society. Results from the evaluation and analysis of the projects serve for the conception of an educational reference model that has been piloted in workshops and in local teacher education programmes. The research project is funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy, Industry & Competitivity: Proyectos I+D del Programa Estatal de Fomento de la Investigación Científica y Técnica de Excelencia, Grant number: EDU2013-43932-P. https://www.konectproject.com

In the second chapter of this book, two student-teachers (finishing an undergraduate teacher education degree) first explain the motivations behind their decision to design and carry out telecollaboration between their internship classes. The young, soon-to-be teachers, inspired by examples of other successful telecollaborative projects and having experienced telecollaboration as part of their own teacher development (during which they had to design a 'hypothetical TEPBLL), took it on themselves to introduce the approach to the primary education school that were hosting them during their practice teaching. The two authors (Anaïs García-Martínez and Maria Gracia-Téllez) based their telecollaborative project on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in order to design an interdisciplinary project to teach primary education students about the different systems in the human body. This chapter is rich in its detail of how the materials were developed, along with very detailed accounts of the programming of the telecollaborative exchange which can inspire other teachers with ideas on how they can adapt similar materials and programmes to their own telecollaborative contexts.

The third chapter, written by Anna Morcilo Salas, is situated in a refugee camp in Myanmar. The circumstances of the telecollaborative project are quite unusual to most telecollaborative projects: the two groups involved were of very different ages (adults in Myanmar; primary education children in Spain) with vastly different day-to-day lives and circumstances. This telecollaborative project took a dual focus: principal anticipated learning outcomes for the European primary education class was to explore and improve their competences of working with and through electronically mediated communication, to raise intercultural and socio-political awareness and to improve their fluency and accuracy when using English as a foreign language. For their partners, who were mixed-ethnic adult groups in a Myanmar refugee camp taking courses in educational science, the learning outcomes were focused on both language gains (in English) as well as improving their content knowledge of materials development.

In their heuristic chapter, Maria Mont and Dolors Masats focus principally on 'tips and strategies' for other teachers who wish to try telecollaborative language learning projects. Following a somewhat briefer description of a two-year telecollaborative project with very young language learners (age 6 in the first year, age 7 in the second), the authors provide an annotated inventory of the key points to bear in mind

when planning, implementing and assessing a telecollaborative language learning project. They illustrate the items in their list with insights taken from their own experience of working in this type of learning environment.

In the fifth chapter, Alexandra Bonet Pueyo provides a very comprehensive outline of a telecollaborative project between her secondary school class in Spain with students of the same age and grade level in Sweden (13 to 14 year olds). The author discusses in length the pedagogical and contextual rationale for the decision to take part in the project, including the importance of administrative backing, before then describing the planning and implementation phases of the project. The project covered social and political domains, along with English as a foreign language learning goals by introducing a current sociopolitical topic of refugees in the European This chapter explains how Web 2.0 generation tools, which are normally devoted to promoting communication in social relationships (e.g. blogs, whatsapp) can be effectively integrated into a foreign language learning telecollaborative project while triggering their critical thinking; thereby helping moving them towards goals of becoming productive and skilled 21st Century citizens. The text not only focus on the strategies and methodology used while developing the tasks, but will also highlight the problems that arose while developing the experience and how these were dealt with.

The sixth chapter is written by two fairly novice teachers (now teaching in public schools). However at the time of the implementation of their project, Granada Bejarano Sánchez and Gerard Gímenez Manrique were also in their internship for their fourth year of an undergraduate degree in teacher education. In their case, the exchange involved two target languages (English and Catalan) and was based on bringing together two student populations which at first glance, are not that different, but in reality both have very dissimilar sociocultural and socioeconomic realities. During the project, the two groups of students produced three "main" products (videos that each group elaborated for the other class) that were instrumental to the development of the project, thus in this way, integrating the students as 'co-authors' in the telecollaborative project. The first video consisted of a brief presentation in which they introduced themselves to the other class, the second video included explanations of the main features of the different architectural spaces in the school and how they are used and in the final video, the two classes explain what makes the other school unique, based on what they have learnt from their telecollaborative partners.

A key feature of the project is that it allowed the young students to become 'teachers' to each other in their stronger L1, while at the same time, encouraging them to reach across social boundaries that they do not usually bridge in their everyday lives. The authors provide detailed descriptions of the planning, the materials and the implementation process. The chapter is unique in that it provides insight into the multiple challenges faced by pre-service teachers who are not only first-timers in a face-to-face classroom while taking on the added challenge of carrying out a telecollaborative exchange.

The next to last chapter is also written by student-teachers. The authors, Jennie Ingelsson and Anna Linder, were completing their MA degree in teaching at the time of writing the chapter. Based in Sweden, they were working with a partner school in New Zealand. Using the exchange as an excuse to engage the primary education students in reflection on their own and the partners' countries and culture, the project described in this chapter principally focused on developing students' writing competences in English (as a foreign language). The chapter provides a detailed analysis of the planning process and the many changes the initial programming underwent before its implementation, along with some explanations of adaptations that were immediately deemed necessary. The authors also discuss openly the challenges they faced as novices – in both teaching and telecollaboration and how they resolved the problems they encountered.

In the last chapter, Sara Bruun describes a telecollaborative project between a middle school in Sweden and one in Tanzania. After describing how the project came about (through an online meeting with other teachers), the author not only explains the key phases of the project –again based on a transdisciplinary science project regarding ocean water pollution and conservation- she also portrays the unexpected obstacles that arose when implementing the exchange. These range from differing sociocultural norms and expectations regarding the project execution phases to the inevitable challenges faced by schools with less economic and technological resources.

To conclude, we believe it is important to point out that the chapters in this volume are significant in two ways. First, the authors are working (or preparing to work) in pre-university education. Their experiences and their research come from the application of telecollaboration in classes of primary and secondary education around the globe. This differs to the large majority of publications on telecollaboration which are based on university-level exchanges. Although there has been a great deal of telecollaborative

activity in schools (see etwinning, for example), until now there has been a severe lack of research on its outcomes.

Second, we believe this volume is important as it presents an honest, 'warts and all' insight into how telecollaborative learning works and the challenges which educators meet when they engage in such initiatives. The authors in the following chapters are above all telecollaborative practitioners who wish to inform about the opportunities which telecollaboration offers their learners, but also about the institutional, pedagogical and practical barriers they had to overcome to engage their pupils in meaningful online intercultural collaboration.

If telecollaboration is to continue to grow as an educational practice, it will of course need the support of policy makers and researchers. But it will also need the contributions of reflective practitioners such as the ones featured in these chapters, providing insights into how telecollaboration can become an integral part of foreign language education.

References

Allwright, D. (1979). Language learning through communication practice. In C.J. Brumfit & K. Johnson (Eds.) *The communicative approach to language teaching* (pp. 167–182). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Atkinson, D. (2011). A sociocognitive approach to second language acquisition: How mind, body and world work together in learning. In D. Atkinson (Ed.) *Alternative approaches to second language acquisition* (pp. 167–180). New York: Routledge.

Bauman, Z. (1998). *Globalization: The human consequences*. Oxford, UK: Polity.

Beckett, G., & Slater, T. (2005). The project framework: A tool for language, content and skills integration. *ELT Journal*, 59(2), 108–116. doi: 10.1093/eltj/cci024.

Belz, J. A. 2003. From the special issue editor. *Language Learning & Technology, 7*(29), 2–5. Accessed July 14, 2013. http://llt.msu.edu/vol7num2/speced.html

Belz, J. A., & Thorne, S. L. (Eds.) (2006). *Internet-mediated intercultural foreign language education. Annual volume of the American association of university supervisors and coordinators*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Brammerts, H. (1996). Language learning in tandem using the internet." In M. Warschauer (Ed.) *Telecollaboration in foreign language learning* (pp. 121–130). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.

Buck Institute for Education (BIE). (2003). *Introduction to project based learning*. Retrieved from http://bie.org/images/uploads/general/20fa7d42c216e2ec171a212e97fd4a9e.pdf

Castells, M. (2001). *The internet galaxy*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Chaudron, C. (1988). *Second language classrooms: Research on teaching and learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chapelle, C.A. (Ed.) (2007). *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics*. Chicester, UK: John Wiley & Sons.

Chapelle, C.A. & Sauro, S. (Eds.) *The handbook of technology in second language teaching and learning*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

Cook, G., & Seidlhofer, B. (Eds.) (1995). *Principle and practice in applied linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Corbett, J. (2010). *Intercultural language activities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Council of Europe (COE). (2001). *Common european framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR)*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Dooly, M. (2018). "I do which the question": Students' innovative use of technology resources in the language classroom. *Language Learning & Technology, 22*(1), 184–217. Available http://www.lltjournal.org/item/3024

Dooly, M. (2017). Telecollaboration. In C. Chapelle & S. Sauro (Eds.) *The handbook of technology in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 169–183). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

Dooly, M. (2013) Speaking like a 'glocal': Using computer-mediated communication in language teacher education to promote network learning. In S. Ben Said & L. Jun Zhang (Eds.) *Language teachers and teaching: Global perspectives, local initiatives* (pp. 237–255). NY: Taylor & Francis/Routledge.

Dooly, M. (Ed.) (2008). *Telecollaborative language learning. A guidebook to moderating intercultural collaboration online*. New York & Bern: Peter Lang.

Dooly, M. & Ellermann, C. (2008). Engaging young learners in online intercultural learning. The MICaLL project. In M. Dooly & D. Eastment (Eds.) *'How we're going about it'. Teachers' voices on innovative approaches to teaching and learning languages* (pp. 187–197). Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Dooly, M., & O'Dowd, R. (2012). Researching online interaction and exchange in foreign language education: Introduction to the volume." In M. Dooly & R. O'Dowd (Eds.) *Researching online foreign language interaction and exchange. Theories, methods and challenges* (pp. 11–41). Bern/Vienna: Peter Lang.

Dooly, M., & Vallejo, C. (2018). Bridging across languages and cultures in everyday lives: an expanding role for critical intercultural communication. *Language and Intercultural Communication, 18*(1), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2017.1400508

Eskildsen, S. W., & Majlesi, A. R. (2018). Learnables and teachables in second language talk: Advancing a social reconceptualization of central SLA tenets. Introduction to the special issue. *The Modern Language Journal, 102*, 3–10. doi:10.1111/modl.12462

Fried-Booth, D. (2002). *Project work*. (2nd ed.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Gaudelli, W. (2003). *World class: Teaching and learning in global times*. Mahwah, NJ: Laurence Erlbaum.

Gooding Oran, H. (2011). *Teaching for global learning through telecollaboration: A case study of K-12 educators' conceptualizations and practices about global education*. Unpublished PhD dissertation, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA: DigitalCommons@ KennesawStateUniversity.

Guth, S., & Helm, F. (Eds.) (2010). *Telecollaboration 2.0: Language, literacy and intercultural learning in the 21st Century.* Bern: Peter Lang.

Jackson, J. (Ed.). (2012). *The Routledge handbook of language and intercultural communication*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Jameson, F., & Miyoshi, M. (Eds.) (1998). *The cultures of globalization*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Johnson, L. C. (1996). The keypal connection. In M. Warschauer (Ed.) *Telecollaboration in foreign language learning* (pp. 131–142). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'I Press.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006). *Understanding language teaching. From method to postmethod*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Lamy, M.N., & Goodfellow, R. (2010). Telecollaboration and learning 2.0. In S. Guth & F. Helm (Eds.) *Telecollaboration 2.0. Language, literacies and intercultural learning in the 21st century* (pp. 107–138). Vienna/ Bern: Peter Lang.

Kern, R. (2013). Technology in language learning. In J. Simpson (Ed.) *The Routledge handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 200–214). London & New York: Routledge.

Kern, R. (1996). Computer-mediated communication: Using e-mail exchanges to explore personal histories in two cultures. In M. Warschauer (Ed.) *Telecollaboration in foreign language learning* (pp. 105–120). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.

Kohn, K., & Warth, C. (2011). *Web collaboration for intercultural language learning*. Münster: MV-Wissenschaft.

Kramsch, C. (2013). Language and culture. In J. Simpson (Ed.) *The Routledge handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 305–317). London & New York: Routledge.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2013). Key concepts in language learning and language education. In J. Simpson (Ed.) *The Routledge handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 155–170). London & New York: Routledge.

Lewis, T., & O'Dowd, R. (Eds.) (2016). *Online intercultural exchange: Policy, pedagogy, practice*. Routledge: New York.

Liddicoat, A.J., & Scarino, A. (2013). Intercultural language teaching and learning. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

McLuhan, M. (1962/2011). *The Gutenberg galaxy*, 15th ed. Toronto/ London: University of Toronto Press.

O'Dowd, R. (2018). From telecollaboration to virtual exchange and the role of UNICollaboration: An overview of where we stand today. *Journal of Virtual Exchange, 1*(1), 1–23. [online journal]. Available at http://journal.unicollaboration.org/article/view/877

O'Dowd, R. (2013a). Telecollaboration and CALL. In M. Thomas, H. Reinders, & M. Warschauer (Eds.) *Contemporary computer-assisted language learning* (pp. 123–139). London/Sydney: Bloomsbury.

O'Dowd, R. (2013b). Telecollaborative networks in University higher education: Overcoming barriers to integration. *Internet and Higher Education*. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2013.02.001

O'Dowd, R. (Ed.) (2007). *Online intercultural exchange. An introduction for foreign language teachers*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

O'Dowd, R. (Ed.) (2006). *Telecollaboration and the development of intercultural communicative competence*. Berlin: Langenscheidt.

Hellermann, J., Thorne, S. L., & Fodor, P. (2017). Mobile reading as social and embodied practice. *Classroom Discourse, 8*(2), 99–121.

Hutchins, E. (1995). How a cockpit remembers its speeds. *Cognitive Science, 19*(3), 265–288. 10.1207/s15516709cog1903_1

Prabhu, N.S. (1987). *Second language pedagogy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Richards, J. (1990). *The language teaching matrix*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Sadler, R., & Eröz, B. (2008). Getting the message: Training language teachers in the theoretical and practical applications of forums. In M. Dooly & D. Eastment (Eds.) '*How we're going about it'. Teachers' voices on innovative approaches to teaching and learning languages* (pp. 177–186). Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Spivey, M. (2007). *The continuity of mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Starke-Meyerring, D., & Wilson, M. (2008). *Designing globally networked learning environments: Visionary partnerships, policies, and pedagogies*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Stoller, F. (2006). Establishing a theoretical foundation for project-based learning in second and foreign language contexts. In G. Beckett & P. Chamness Miller (Eds.), *Project-based second and foreign language education. Past, present and future* (pp. 19–40). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Telles, J. A. (Ed.) (2009). *Teletandem: Um contexto virtual, autônomo e colaborativo para aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras no século XXI*. Campinas: Pontes Editores.

Thomas, M., Reinders, H., & Warschauer, M. (2013). Contemporary computer-assisted language learning: The role of media and incremental change. In M. Thomas, H. Reinders, & M. Warschauer (Eds.) *Contemporary computer-assisted language learning* (pp. 1–12). London/ Sydney: Bloomsbury.

Thornbury, S. (2013). Language teaching methodology. In J. Simpson (Ed.) *The Routledge handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 185–199). London & New York: Routledge.

Thorne, S.L. (2018). Multimodality and embodied action: The potential and controversial extension of actor-network/new materialism approaches to sequential analysis. Plenary talk. *Why Conversation Analysis (CA) in the era of big data? KONECT 3-day seminar,* Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Barcelona, 6–8 February 2018.

Warschauer, M. (Ed.) (1996). *Telecollaboration in foreign language learning*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Second Language Teaching and Curriculum Center.

Anaïs García-Martínez and Maria Gracia-Téllez
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Chapter 2. A telecollaborative science project: Searching for new ways to make language learning authentic

Introduction

As our imminent graduation from teacher education draws near, we reflect on our recent experience in carrying out a telecollaborative project in our teaching internship (called 'practicum' at our university) during our final year of our degree. Four years back we took our first step in devoting our lives to what we feel is one of the most significant fields of inquiry in our society: education. For us, it is the most rewarding profession by far, but also one calling for a great deal of responsibility and time. It seems to us that innovative and excellent teaching requires a passion for teaching that implies dedication of considerable time, energy and spirit. It is with this in mind that we decided to take on the daunting task of designing and carrying out a telecollaborative project with our classes. However, as it has been stated, it is important to bear in mind that we are not yet practicing teachers, but in our final year of our teacher education degree. The project we have designed and implemented has been for our internship that we carried out as part of the specialization in English as a Foreign Language.

We begin by outlining the relevance this type of teaching approach can have on language education, not least of which is the importance for today's teachers to be constantly engaged in a process of lifelong renovation, learning and formation. Parallel to this our society on the whole is moving towards what is regarded by many experts as the 'information society', where information of any nature, alongside its dissemination and use have become the axis of human activity. Within this scenario, the function of language, on the same plane with communication technologies, have become indispensable requirements to develop citizens capable of

seeking, analysing and sharing information and ideas, competences which according to Trilling and Fadel (2009) all students should acquire in order to succeed in the 'information society'.

Thus, as future language teachers we understand and embrace the urgency of constantly updating our methods to equip our students with the necessary communication tools for today's emerging social needs. We feel it would be pointless to teach a foreign language to new generations if we neglected the importance of teaching them how to adapt to new ways of interaction, and showing them how to integrate a wide spectrum of semiotic resources including technologies, as a key means of communicating in everyday practices.

Another issue deserving special consideration in the teaching of a language is the methodology teachers use to present core content knowledge to their students. According to the article 62 of the Spanish Organic Law (2/2006), at the end of A levels, most Spanish learners have a command of English (as a foreign language) equivalent to an A2 level – a measure that is defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2001) as one of the lowest. Few will dispute the claim that such low results are in all probability due to a general lack of innovative approaches to teaching languages prevailing in Spain; currently most foreign language teaching approaches are chiefly focused on aspects of accuracy, such as grammar and spelling; much less emphasis is placed on learning to actually *use* the target foreign language. Our assumption is that it is no coincidence that when implementing a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, where the focal point is on meaningful communication and practice rather than on the mastery of structures, the results of foreign language learners increase prominently.

According to Richards (2006), CLT is a set of principles for language teaching that aim at the teaching of *communicative competence,* which is understood as being more complex than mere *grammatical competence*. While language learners in a classroom employing a grammar-based instruction would be primarily asked to mechanically practice the four linguistic abilities (speaking, listening, reading and writing), a lesson in line with CLT principles would be based on aiding learners to command all features of language, not only grammatical aspects, including aspects of using the language fluently and appropriately in the different modalities (writing, speaking, etc.) in real communicative contexts. As Richards (2006) explains it, these abovementioned features of language involve the development of (1) sociolinguistic competence, or the ability

to adapt one's language to different contexts of communication (e.g.: using a specific register to address to a determined group of participants); (2) discursive competence, or knowing how to both comprehend and produce different types of texts (e.g.: scientific, instructive, advertising, letters…); and (3) strategic competence, or the ability to overcome linguistic barriers despite having limitations in the language knowledge to make oneself understood (e.g.: using communication strategies such as code-switching, gestures, body language, etc. to maintain a conversation).

As we felt certain that we wanted our teaching lessons to promote and motivate our students in purposeful language learning, we tried to take into consideration the core assumptions of CLT, as listed by Richards (2006). These ten core assumptions of current CLT are:

1. Second language learning is facilitated when learners are engaged in interaction and meaningful communication.
2. Effective classroom learning tasks and exercises provide opportunities for students to negotiate meaning, expand their language resources, notice how language is used, and take part in meaningful interpersonal exchange.
3. Meaningful communication results from students processing content that is relevant, purposeful, interesting, and engaging.
4. Communication is a holistic process that often calls upon the use of several language skills or modalities.
5. Language learning is facilitated both by activities that involve inductive or discovery learning of underlying rules of language use and organization, as well as by those involving language analysis and reflection.
6. Language learning is a gradual process that involves creative use of language, and trial and error. Although errors are normal products of learning, the ultimate goal of learning is to be able to use the new language both accurately and fluently.
7. Learners develop their own routes to language learning, progress at different rates, and have different needs and motivations for language learning.
8. Successful language learning involves the use of effective learning and communication strategies.
9. The role of the teacher in the language classroom is that of a facilitator, who creates a classroom climate conducive to language learning and provides opportunities for students to use and practice the language and to reflect on language use and language learning.
10. The classroom is a community where learners learn through collaboration and sharing.

A second, and perhaps more important element of our final decision to design a telecollaborative project for our teaching internship is the notion that one of the most effective approaches which allows the foreign language teacher to bring the main CLT principles into the classroom is the implementation of Project-Based Language Learning approach (PBLL; cf. Markham, 2011; Dooly & Masats, 2011; Dooly, 2016). In our view, the potential of the PBLL approach resides in the fact that communicative activities can be easily contextualized and meaningful for the learners, given that the entire project is first presented in the form of a driving question that requires students to investigate and communicate among themselves and this is sustained during the entire period of the project as they work together to produce final output that answers the initial question. This premise can then be amplified when the project involves other language learners outside of the immediate classroom (Dooly, 2008, 2017).

Within this framework, the classroom becomes a social setting for interaction amongst the students. In this pedagogical approach, group work tasks allow students to collaborate and interact together to jointly achieve specific goals that will help them arrive, little by little, to the solution of the driving question. It seems to us that this approach is highly appropriate and an effective means to help students to develop the competencies required in a 21st century society, where, above all, they will need to strengthen their problem-solving skills, as well as the ability to work together and think flexibly and creatively.

Additionally, as we have already mentioned earlier, the need for students to acquire technologically enriched communicative skills are patent. Thus, on these grounds, we contemplated the promising benefits of implementing a Technology- Enhanced Project- Based Language Learning (TEPBLL) approach and came to the conclusion that we did not want to finish our degree without seeing for ourselves how this method worked in practice. If designing and implementing a TEPBLL would be a feasible means of adapting our lessons to our ever-changing environment, we really wanted to jump at the chance of experiencing it first-hand. In this manner, we took the risks of testing something completely unfamiliar to us in order to take advantage of all the above-mentioned prominent features that can help bridge the gap between technology and teaching whilst providing a context for developing fluency skills. And despite the difficulties and challenges this has posed for us, in the end, we felt that doing so –which included a long process of trial and error- could be an

important lesson for acquiring the ability to innovate; which must be a lifelong pursuit for all teachers to guarantee quality education. Thus, we asked ourselves, why not start by acting accordingly and converting our internships into a teaching laboratory?

It should be noted that our proposal adopted a dual-focused educational approach in which a foreign language has been used for learning both the language and specific content. We think that this is a propitious way to make students learn a foreign language because it offers similar conditions to those underlying the process of acquisition of the children's mother tongue, where there is a greater focus on understanding the message than on its formal characteristics.

As it has been previously mentioned, the use of technology in our project should not be forgotten. As language teachers our main goal is to teach students to communicate and this fact includes providing learners with as many pragmatic tools as possible to both understand and make themselves understood in a foreign language. At this point, we cannot neglect the role that technology plays in our current society, which is why we wanted to adapt our teaching practice to the digital age. Moreover, it entails a high degree of creativity to design tasks in which students feel they are using the language in a natural manner. Thus, using telecollaboration to communicate with students from a foreign school is a sublime idea that enables teachers to get rid of superficial activities and build situations through which students can experience this sense of naturalness and give more value to the learning of English. This is one of the reasons why we have created a Technology-Enhanced Project-Based Language Learning (TEPBLL) lessons that integrate technology in several ways to promote both language and content learning (cf. Dooly, 2017).

The context of the project: Features of the participant schools and students

In order to frame the context in which our teaching sequence has been implemented, we provide an outline of each of the schools (herein called School A and School B), focusing in detail on each of the target groups. Located in a neighbourhood of Barcelona, School A is a state school

which takes in children from three different neighbourhoods. According to the data extracted from Idescat (2015), School A is set in a district with a medium-low income level, and a level of university studies of the general population below the average. This is an important issue as it underscores the high percentage of school failure or dropout directly or indirectly related to the challenges faced by the school's public to carry out higher studies. This, in turn, is most likely bound to be related to the poor economic resources of the inhabitants of the area, where the income per capita is notably below the average of Barcelona.

The classroom in School where the teaching sequence was developed hosted 3rd year students of Primary Education. This target group was composed of twenty-five eight and nine-year old students; twelve girls and thirteen boys, so it was a rather balanced group with regards to gender. Roughly about 3% of the pupils were children of immigrants, but the majority quite born in Spain, and were Spanish speakers. Nonetheless, although it can be utterly difficult for teachers to make use of a language that is not practiced by the students at home (only about 10% of the children in this class are Catalan speakers), the vehicular language of the school is the Catalan, as it is the language of use and communication in everyday life in Catalunya and it will bring students more opportunities in the labour and social world.

About 10% of the students pertained to ethnic minorities and marginalized sectors, such as gypsies. In general, the children come from working class or lower middle-class families, with low economic and sociocultural status. As we saw it, bringing innovative methodologies to the classroom to engage those students who do not possess the cultural capital to succeed in education was crucial to help them escape from social determinism and start conceiving their social mobility in the near future as a reachable aspiration.

As regards English as a foreign language, it is the language chosen by the educational authorities of the district (as opposed to the other majority options of French or German), however students in School A still have a great deal of difficulties to follow the pace of the lessons due to their poor command of this language. Moreover, there is one student in the class who has been diagnosed with special educational needs and has an Individual Plan (IP), along with five students that present learning difficulties (but do not have IPs), so the entire project has been designed to include these students as well.

School B is located in Mollet del Vallès, a city which belongs to Vallès Oriental, a region of the metropolitan area of Barcelona. It is a two-form entry school, which involves Pre and Primary Education levels, and which has a well-documented experience in innovative language teaching, including the use of technologies. The teaching sequence was implemented in the class of 4th grade, which comprises twenty-two students who are between nine and ten years old; ten girls and twelve boys. Most of the students were born in Barcelona and currently live in Mollet (Idescat, 2015). There were three students who had been born in different countries: Morocco, Colombia and Ecuador.

Of those born in Barcelona, just five of them have Catalan as their mother tongue. The school is located in a region in which more than half of the population is not able to write in Catalan, as it is not their home or family language. However, none of the students (including those who were not born in Spain) had difficulties at the time for understanding Catalan or Spanish, and they were fluent in both languages. Regarding any special educational needs of the students, there was one child who was a year older than all his peers, and who was following an IP. Accordingly, the teaching sequence was also adapted to facilitate his understanding, including the design of several materials attending to different learning styles thus providing a great variety of activities.

As a particular characteristic of School B, it is relevant to highlight that Science and Arts and Crafts use a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) methodology. In these cases, the teachers use the FL (English) to teach the core content, and the language is practised, above all, through projects (in order to develop group cohesion and autonomy). Through this methodology students can start to acquire all the content-obligatory language (Escobar, 2012) that is required to carry out the project.

The design of our project

In this section, we offer a picture of the teaching unit we designed to implement in our teaching internship. The project consisted of six sessions planned to be carried out in two different schools and at two different grade levels. As previously outlined, the importance of thinking of a

driving question was primordial. In our case, the driving question was: *How do we move and why?* As noted above, the question was chosen to promote the learning of the different body systems that we use to move whilst providing our learners with an authentic context for communication in English (as a foreign language). With this in mind, the entire project was specifically designed to be implemented by two different group classes (third grade and fourth grade) from two different schools (Schools A and B), working in parallel with each other.

As with any educational project planning, our departure point was to first decide on a final outcome that would push our students to answer the question of the teaching unit. We eventually chose a video as our final output. In the video, both schools would be asked to put in common different knowledge that they had acquired during the various tasks carried out during the project. They would then upload the video to *YouTube* so it could be added to the school blogs. Additionally, and also as part of the final result, a website has been created in which we have written everything we have been doing daily in order to involve the entire community in the two groups' learning process. Finally, as part of our planning, we decided that the students from each school would take part in what is commonly known as jigsaw puzzle tasks: each group was missing part of the information related to the body system related to movement, thus promoting the need for the groups to talk and interact with each other in order to discover 'the whole picture'.

In this particular case, it was decided that the students in one school (in our case School A) would explore the skeletal system and the other school (School B) would become young 'experts' in the muscular system. This implied that the learners would have to exchange their information to obtain a complete image of the functions and components of the different body systems in order to be able to create the final video explaining how humans move and why. However, we still had to decide on how this exchange of information could take place given that these schools were at different locations. Finally, it was decided that the project would include asynchronous telecollaboration through which the students from both schools would communicate and work together. The main tasks to be carried out would be to create different videos to teach their online classmates informative content related either to the skeletal or the muscular system, depending on the school.

In the following section, we provide a description of the backbone of our teaching unit.

Session 1

The teaching unit was first introduced by a video in in the FL (English) from the teacher of the parallel school. Thus, in the video shown to School A, the teacher from School B introduced herself and explained the project to the students: they had been selected to collaborate with another school, School B, to study the human body's system of movement. In the video, the teacher explained that School A would become experts in bones and School B would become experts in muscles. In order to get the whole picture of the two systems and how they worked together in the human body, they would have to exchange information and thus be able to create a final video. This video would be uploaded to YouTube and shared with the parents from both schools through the school blog, to make families participants of their children's learning. Equally, the video presented to School B featured the teacher from School A, explaining the same content to the other school but the other way around (students from School B would be experts in the muscular system and would have to exchange information with the experts of the skeletal system and so forth).

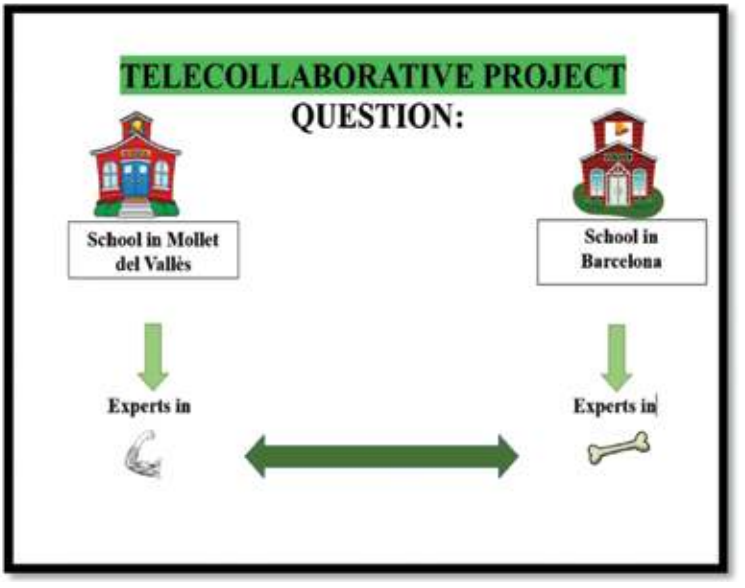


Figure 1. Chart outlining the collaboration between the groups (auxiliary visual aide)

The next step consisted of the showing and discussing in detail a big calendar with small envelopes containing the objectives of each lesson. This helped ensure that the students would always know what was expected from them.

Figure 2. Calendar of main objectives of the telecollaborative project

Next, we prepared an activity to check the students' understanding of the video presented, since it was crucial that they understood the purpose of the project from the very beginning. We invested a great deal of time in

assuring that our students understood the key points of the project. To do so, we filled in a visual mural with both groups that answered the following questions:

- *How many days will this project last?*
- *What schools are going to collaborate?*
- *What are we going to study?*
- *And the other school?*
- *What are the questions that guide this project?*
- *What do we have to create at the end of the project?*

Different students came up to add to the correspondent tags to the mural. After that, we passed a soft ball around to those students who did not participate, asking each one a random question about the mural. Finally, the mural was posted permanently on the walls of both classrooms so they could be checked regularly during the whole project.

Because it is very important at the beginning of telecollaborative projects to allow time for the partners to get to know each other (Dooly, 2008), the next part of session 1 consisted creating a video to introduce themselves as a class to each other. In the case of School A, students had to complete the gaps of some sentences in groups, research their meaning in case they had any doubts, then practice their sentences. Then, they had to record themselves saying their corresponding sentence.

In the case of School B, students had more command of English, so they were asked to construct four sentences in English by themselves. The groups had to be experts in either:

- Greeting the other class
- Stating their grade
- Stating which is the name of their school
- Stating what they will be experts in

Figure 3. Chart of sentences to be recorded in School A

Before recording in School B, the teacher walked around the classroom, observing the different groups and correcting pronunciation mistakes. The students then pooled their knowledge by writing their final decisions on what each 'expert group' would say on the blackboard (e.g. *"Experts in*

greeting, how will we greet them?" and so forth). The first session ended by recording the videos, which were then sent to the partner schools.

It is important to note that as future teachers, something that concerned us was the assessment process. So we decided that in this session the evaluation criteria would be based on how the students answered the teacher's question when they were tossed the ball during the discussion time (this way we ensured that every student participated and understood the main ideas of the project) and on the correct completion of the mural, along with the students' willingness to participate.

Session 2

As well as in the first session, in the second one, both schools followed the same procedure. The first thing that we did was to recap the project to make sure that our students remembered what the project was about. This was done through the review of the mural that had been already filled in during the previous session.

The next step was the completion of a 'What Do I Know" chart, in which students, individually, had to write what they knew about the human motor system. We insisted on making them understand that knowing nothing was not a problem, since this was only a diagnostic assessment so that they and the teacher would see their progress.

Next, it was the time to get to know the other school by watching the introductory video that the other school had created. Students were very engaged and willing to ask questions, so we let them participate, thus supporting their communicative abilities.

As previously mentioned, getting students to know what is expected from them is essential to achieve the learning goals. For this reason, after watching the video, we read the objective of the day: "To recognize different human systems". Then, we went deeper into the topic of different human systems and their functions through different analogies. Most of the students did not even know the meaning of "human system", so we compared our human systems with the operation of a bicycle: *like a bicycle, our body is composed of different parts that work together to accomplish different tasks. In a bicycle, for example, there are tires which work in*

coordination to move the bicycle; there are brakes which are needed to stop the bicycle; or the pedals, which work together to push the bicycle. The same thing happens in our body: we have different parts, our organs, which work "in groups" to carry out related tasks. Today, we will see 4 of these systems.

Following this, we posted images on the chalkboard of the four different human systems with their names below and asked the students to describe the functions of each system. To do so, four chairs were placed in front of the class; each one below a flashcard of a different human system and five volunteers came to represent the function of each system. For instance, the first chair was placed below the flashcard of the digestive system, so we gave to the first student a blender with lots of peas inside and explained that the peas represented the food in our stomach. Then, the student was asked to whip the peas, as if the blender was our digestive system. This way, the students could observe that the function of the digestive system consisted in breaking food into small pieces. Each system was explored graphically and empirically during the class (we will not detail all four systems in this chapter, due to need for brevity).

Briefly, to summarize, the respiratory system was represented with balloons and the nervous system was depicted through commands on a computer. The fourth chair was the most important as it represented the two systems under study in the project: the muscular system and the skeletal system. Both classes came to the conclusion that these systems worked like one system, called the locomotor system. We represented its function with a bicycle, which has different pieces that allow its movement, like our muscles and bones. So, students rapidly saw the function of our locomotor system: to allow movement. To check for understanding of the first part of the session, students in groups of five were given flashcard of one of the human systems and a worksheet to be completed. Finally, to complete these part of the 'discovery', the students were made to understand that all the systems work together, not in isolation. This was done through a discussion of the different systems that went into eating an apple (muscular – biting; respiratory – breathing; nervous – commands to bite; digestive and so forth).

To finish the session, we proceeded to do the recording in groups for the telecollaborative part of the project. First of all, we distributed the students in heterogeneous groups where they were each assigned a role,

which would rotate every lesson. This way we ensured that everyone had the chance to experience different roles and develop different skills.

The roles were the following:

- A spokesperson (in charge of verbalising the script)
- A technician (in charge of recording)
- A writer (in charge of writing the script)
- An international person: (in charge of encouraging, helping or making sure that all members try to use English, for example by checking a dictionary for unknown words)

Figure 4. Distribution of roles for making telecollaborative video

Once the roles were distributed, each group recorded themselves regarding what they had learnt. This task was scaffolded with support pictures (see figure 5).

Figure 5. Visual scaffolding for video recording for telecollaborative partners

During this session, the assessment criteria were based on the answers students gave to the incomplete text and their videos. Moreover, as a diagnostic assessment was also implemented, the teacher gathered the evidence and students were also aware of the previous knowledge they had.

Session 3

In this session, every school worked on its speciality: the functions of the skeletal system were studied by School A students, while School B focused on the functions of the muscular system. As in the previous lesson, students were given a recap of the previous session. This was through a viewing of the video made by their telecollaborative partners. Next, guided by the 'daily' objectives envelop in the calendar, the two groups began their individualized work on each assigned human system. As with the previous session, this was done through highly empirical work of exploring how the systems worked. For instance, in School A, in order to better understand how the skeletal system functioned, students used hangers (to discover the bone system) and eggs (to relate to outer protection of the skull), and a 'Frankenstein role play' wherein they had no fluid joints.

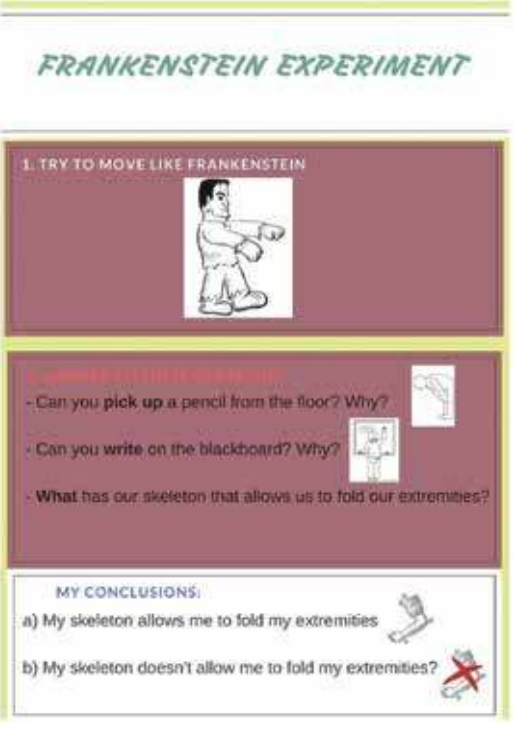


Figure 6. Example of experiment flashcard

These activities were carried out in groups, conclusions drawn and discussed and then a video for the partner school was produced.

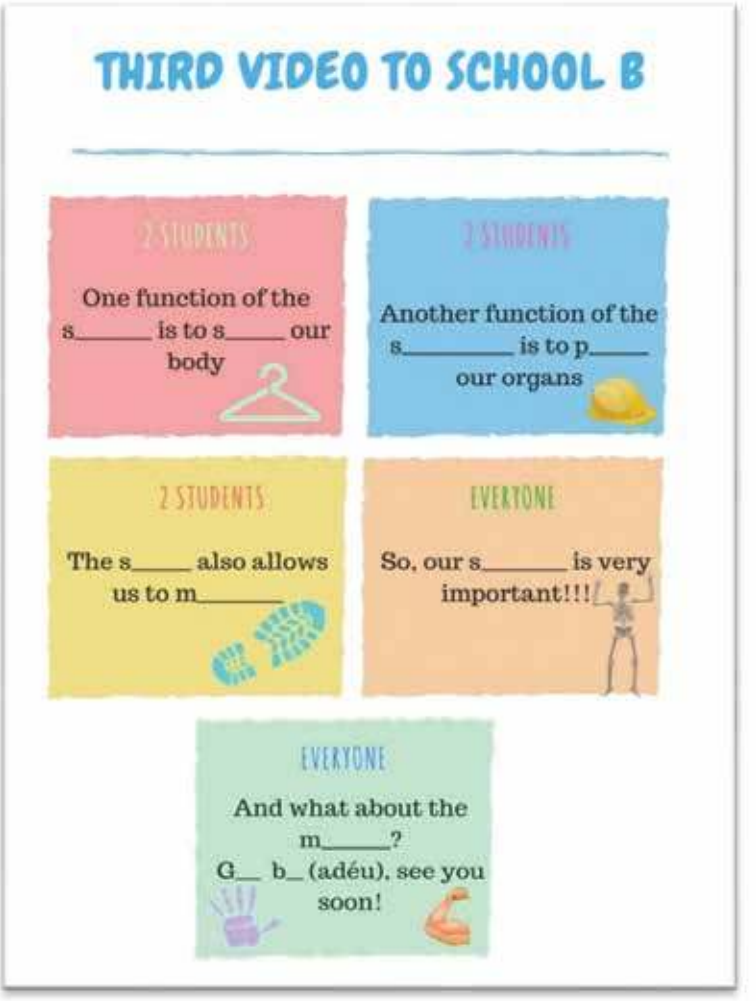


Figure 7. Scaffolding for telecollaboration video recording

School B also carried out experiments to 'discover' the different systems as can be seen in figure 8. This was followed by a recording for the partner class, although in this case, students were given more autonomy regarding the content of the video (see figure 9).

Figure 8. Instructions for group experiment School B

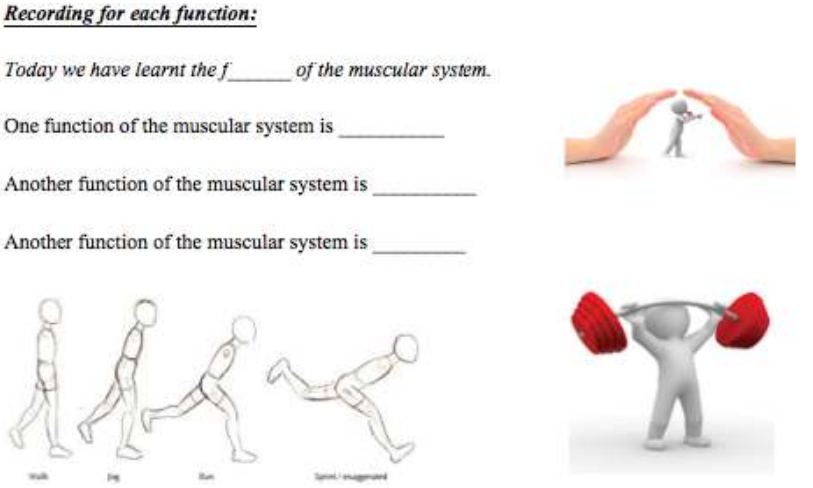


Figure 9. Instructions for recording video School B

Session 4

As in the previous lessons, the videos made for the telecollaborative project played a key role in either recapping the previous session (watching their own videos) or in setting up a listening exercise for preparing the students to learn about the partner class' system. To do this, the students were given a sheet of paper and asked to jot down the three functions of the muscular system that they were about to see in the video from School B. The teacher played the video twice to ensure that everyone got the functions and then the group discussed them and make sure they had understood everything completely. The students then drew that both the skeletal and the muscular system have similar functions, given that they work in parallel and constitute the locomotor system.

The process for creating the next video in school A was based more on games and songs than 'experiments'. For instance, to find out more about the role of bones for the human body, the students were introduced to the song "Dem Bones", which they listened to (and followed along while signalling the bones mentioned in the song) and then they learnt

parts of the song. Next, the students had to put together a 'bone puzzle' (see figure 10). The names of the bones were quickly reviewed through an adapted version of 'Simon Says' in which students had to signal the parts of their bodies where specific bones were located if given the order (e.g. 'Simon says to touch your skull').

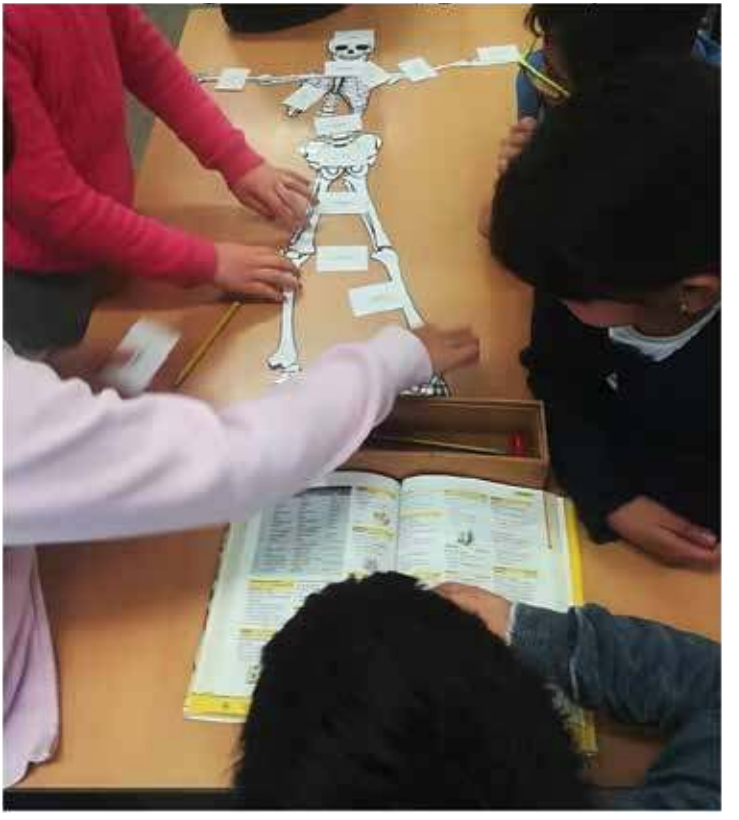


Figure 10. Bone puzzle

The video for the telecollaborative partner featured the class singing 'Dem Bones' for their partners. School B, which was studying the muscular system, explored their topic through flashcards and a memory game. The students played in teams as they tried to label the different muscles in the body. This was followed by the writing and practicing of the video script describing the location and names of the human muscles selected for the students to learn.

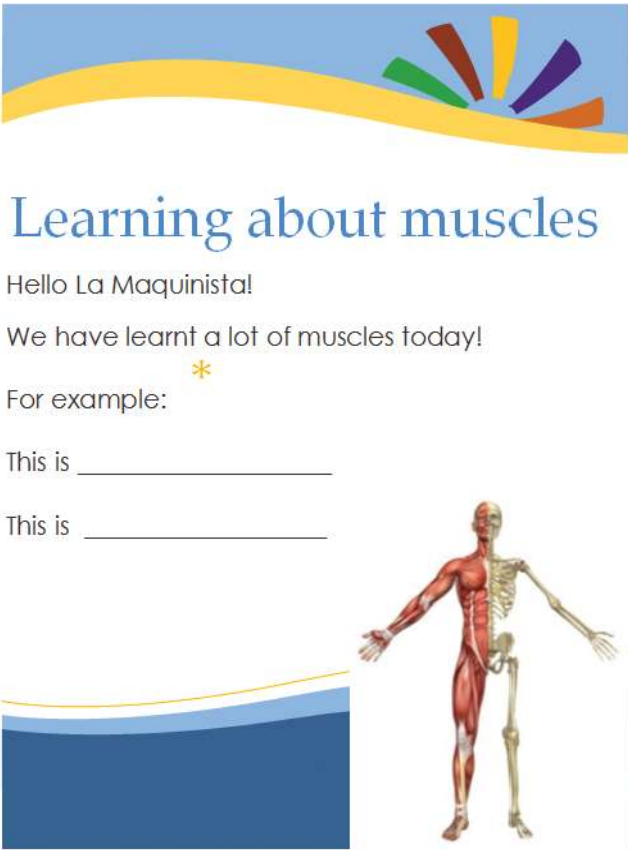


Figure 11. Scaffolding for video about muscles

Session 5

In this session, both schools followed the same procedure, beginning the lesson by watching the video from their telecollaboration partners. Again, once the videos had been watched, a student read the objective for the lesson. For this session it was "To reflect on what we have been studying". In other words, this was the session in which students had to do a final summary including all the concepts tackled during the whole project.

This was done by first recapping everything they had been doing, using the 'pass the ball' strategy so that everyone had a turn to answer key questions such as "*What is one function of the muscular system? Where are the biceps located? What is one function of the skeletal system? Where is the skull located?"*

This round of summary discussion was followed by a contest in which students had to write their answers on small chalkboards every time the teachers showed them a card. Finally, after group summaries, reflection and discussion, the students had to individually complete following worksheets as final assessment. These were gathered and discussed as a group.

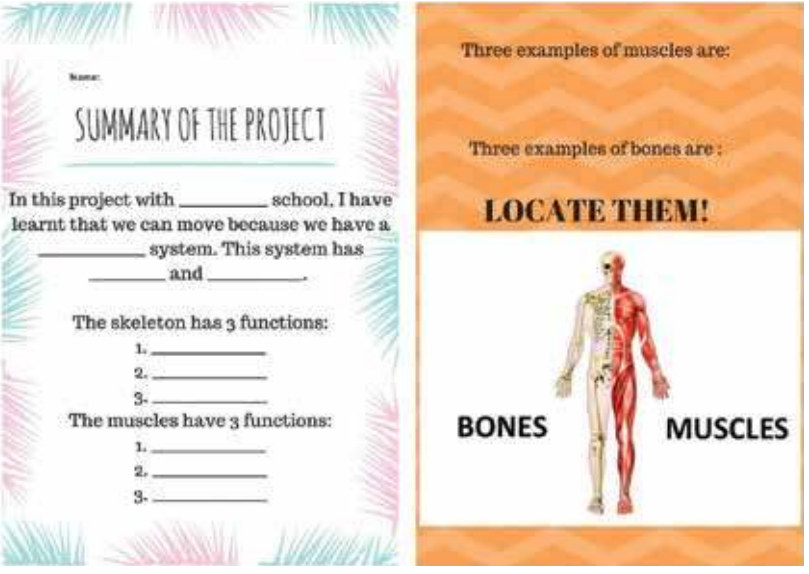


Figure 12. Final assessment worksheets

For the videos of this session, the students recorded themselves answering the question "How do we move and why?". To do so, they could use the support of a transcript the teachers provided as scaffolding, but the teachers also let them express themselves in their mother tongue, since they wanted to see their level of acquisition of the contents. In this session, the teachers evaluated the ability for students to recognise and select the appropriate words for a specific sentence (through the worksheets). Moreover, the oral competence was also assessed, and the teachers could see students' progress and compare it with the first diagnostic assessment.

Session 6

Before this session, the partner teachers edited a video that combined the answers from the students of School A and School B in order to show the roundup video to them in the last session. The video was uploaded to Internet so the students could view it in class. To finalize the project, students did a self-assessment activity in which they had to reflect about what they had learnt through the project, and possible modifications they would make to the project, including what they liked most and something they really did not like because, as future teachers we feel that we need to be open to criticism in order to improve our own teaching practices and to learn from our mistakes.

Figure 13. Self-assessment questionnaire

Challenges

We hope that by having shared our project with our readers, it will serve to motivate other language teachers to incorporate telecollaboration in their lessons. Although we began the project with lots of fears and insecurities due to our lack of experience both in teaching and in telecollaborative practices, we can now assert that our project has been totally successful. It is for this reason that we want to encourage other teachers who do not have previous knowledge or who are unsure about applying this methodology to their own practices to be brave and do it since it provides the students an authentic purpose for communication which we think is very difficult to deliver through other language teaching resources.

It is our experience (admittedly based on anecdotal observation) that English in both School A and School B is a subject that many of the students detest, perhaps due to a sense of lack of authenticity that characterizes English lessons in Spanish schools. This may contribute to the students feeling it is a pointless and difficult language to master. This is probably one of the underlying reasons that when we first introduced the project to our students and they realized it would be in English, we both noticed a feeling of frustration in their faces. However, this did not surprise us, given that we had in mind that it could easily happened. For this reason, we tried to motivate them saying that they would change their conceptions towards English during the development of the project, since we had designed highly visual elements which would surely help them to understand the concepts, regardless of their English level, as well as new technologies that would engage them a lot.

And we were not wrong. The fact of designing hands-on experiences, including technologies in every lesson and, above all, collaborating with children from another school made our students forget their initial displeasure and made them use English without even noticing it. Through the evidences we were collected daily, we have been able to see that our students learnt a good deal of both English and content related to the human body, while having fun learning! It has delighted us how our students were willing to continue with the work the next session, how they used the dictionaries without being asked to do it to look up new words to use in their videos, and how they arrived to our classes saying "I have a new idea when we record, we can act as if we were at the cinema…" or " Can we do a trip to visit the other school?" Another example was when students were

watching the other's school video. We were also inspired by their response to seeing other students working with them; they really felt the need to work with their partners and to know more about the subject matter in order to finish the project. Even the shy students who usually refrain from participating were willing to talk and share their ideas with the rest of the class. These little details are the ones which make us feel proud of our time and dedication to this project.

Of course, it cannot be denied that some challenges have arisen during the implementation of such an innovative project. One of our biggest fears regarded using the cameras. We were not sure if students would treat the gadgets appropriately or if they would just touch everything and lose the focus of the task. In the first session, we had some problems with the cameras, since all the students wanted to record themselves and they got sidetracked a bit from the purpose of the activity. This made us lose a lot of time, but luckily we could finish all the activities planned. At the beginning of the next session we reflected on this issue with our students, who realized that the most important thing was not to record, but to have time to practice their speech to be able to send it to the other school. Luckily, in the next sessions students were so engaged in the tasks that they did not feel the need to find amusement elsewhere, a fact which made us proud of our activities design.

Another fear was the level of noise that typically occurs in this type of lesson. In the first session, it was a bit difficult to keep the rest of the class quiet while a group was recording, since this was something new and really engaging for them. However, and from the first session on, this problem was reduced as we made them see the result: lots of students were talking behind them, so the recording was not clear enough for their partners to understand it. They immediately saw that there was a real reason for them to be quiet and thereafter the recordings increasingly more accurate.

Another challenge we experienced was the roles distribution. Neither one of us had much experience with managing group work in a class before and much less with assigned roles, so we were not sure about the reaction the students' would have. In the first sessions it was a bit complicated for students to understand that everyone would end up performing each role. So they all wanted to be "technicians" from the very beginning and it was not easy to try to calm them down. In the following sessions, as they saw that the roles were rotating, this problem disappeared.

Added to that, it should not be forgotten that the implementation of such an approach calls for a good deal of preliminary preparation and planning, since teachers face the dual challenge of covering both communicative

and disciplinary competencies. This goes hand in hand with the next hurdle we would like to raise, which focuses on the risk of trivializing either the subject matter or the foreign language in an attempt to ensure that all the students understand and acquire everything. As we see it, breaking down large amounts of information into smaller tasks due to the students' lower command of English can be greatly beneficial to aid them to understand tasks, but lowering down significant levels of the subject matter can give room to underachievement of basic knowledge. It seemed to us that the solution to this issue could be found through the careful design of scaffolding, which provides children the necessary assistance to bridge the gap between what they cannot do without help and what they can do autonomously. The use of authentic materials, visual organisers, substitution tables and word banks, the diagrammatic representation of information, understanding through seeing, or responding through doing are outstanding resources that we have used to offer students this additional support that they undoubtedly needed to understand others and to make themselves understood in a foreign language. Presenting the tasks in an attractive way for children, through games or interactive activities has also been fundamental to counterbalance the cognitive demands that entails giving a lesson in a foreign language. In fact, learning by playing games involves further engagement in cognitive learning and is also an exceptional way of making everyone participate, so this is something we are very proud of as regards our project design and materials.

Finally, arranging our schedules was something difficult too. Doing this project entailed a good deal of coordination between both schools, since we needed each other's videos to complete our information during the different sessions. This was very stressful at first, since we had to ensure we implemented the lessons the same days. In fact, we first planned to do a synchronous telecollaboration in the fifth session but it became impossible because we could not coincide in time. However, in the end we were able to create a sense of group cohesion with only asynchronous exchanges.

After having implemented the teaching sequence, we both agree that we are flooded with a feeling of pride and satisfaction. Yes, we have done it! At the beginning, when we decided to jump into this project, we felt quite nervous and afraid of failure. However, the support we gave each other constantly, the time we have devoted to making the most of the experience and all our combined effort have yielded outstanding results.

Despite the abovementioned challenges, what cannot be denied is how satisfied we feel now. After having implemented this teaching unit,

we have definitely come to the conclusion that the activities that language teachers must promote need to be communicative, contextualized and meaningful for the learners. Telecollaboration can involve investigation and discussion between different groups of learners in order to produce a final product that aims to answer the question of the project, thereby promoting collaboration and interaction, while making the most of 'authentic' communicative opportunities.

What is more, this type of 'digital' communication is precisely one of the skills presently required for the future working force, so, why not let them start now?

References

Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Dooly, M. (Ed.) (2008). *Telecollaborative language learning: A guidebook to moderating intercultural collaboration online*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Dooly, M. (2017). Telecollaboration. In C.A. Chapelle & S. Sauro (Eds.) *The handbook of technology and second language teaching and learning* (pp. 169–183). Hoboken (NJ): John Willey & Sons.

Dooly, M. (2016). Proyectos didácticos para aprender lenguas. In D. Masats & L. Nussbaum (Eds.) *Enseñanza y aprendizaje de las lenguas extranjeras en educación secundaria obligatoria* (pp. 169–193). Madrid: Síntesis.

Dooly, M., & Masats, D. (2011) Closing the loop between theory and praxis: New models in EFL teaching. *ELT Journal, 65*(1), 42–51.

Escobar, C. (2012). Content-rich language learning in context- rich classrooms. *APAC, 74*, 39–47

Idescat. *Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya*. Pàgina principal. Retrieved October 15, 2017. Retrieved 10 January 2018 from https://www.idescat.cat/

Markham, T. (2011). Project based learning. *Teacher Librarian, 39*(2), 38–42

Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative language teaching today*. New York: Cambridge University Press

Spanish Organic Law (2/2006), de 3 de mayo, de Educación.

Trilling, B., & Fadel, C. (2009). *21st century skills learning for life in our times*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Anna Morcilo Salas
Freelance primary education teacher

Chapter 3. Are we really that different? A telecollaborative project between refugee students from Myanmar and a primary school in Sabadell (Spain)

This chapter describes a telecollaborative project between a school set up for refugees in Myanmar and a primary education centre in a country in Europe. Based on the diagnosis of the learner needs of the refugee students, the project was designed to promote digital and language competences among students at both partner schools, with the added incentive of fostering the European students understanding of the reality of refugees in Myanmar. Firstly, I outline the underlying reasons for deciding to set up and carry out a telecollaborative project in the rather unusual circumstances of a refugee school. Next I describe how the partnership was set up. Because the pupils from the school in Myanmar were adult learners who were taking educational courses, the project took on a two-pronged focus, with the European students learning about communication technology, intercultural and social aspects and practicing their use of English as a foreign language while the Myanmar students not only telecollaborated with the primary education students, they also worked directly with the project teachers to design materials and provide feedback as part of their courses in educational science.

The design and implementation of the project endeavoured to keep the students' needs and individual profiles in mind as much as possible. The two groups were very different in ages, (oral) language competences in the target language and technology skills. These differences presented both challenges and opportunities for a multidimensional international project. The design and implementation of project are described in detail below.

Why a telecollaborative project?

The idea of the telecollaborative project arose from various needs. Firstly, the necessity to train students in the use of technologies, secondly the need to learn a foreign language through authentic, purposeful communication with others and finally the urgency to make the situation of refugees visible to children around the world as a means of breaking down stereotypes that are far too prevalent in many Western societies. These needs derive from the very particular context of the schools taking part in the project: a primary school in Sabadell (which will be referred throughout the chapter as School Peacock) and the migrant school (which will be referred as School Meerkat) where I was teaching, located at the border between Thailand and Burma. As Sauro and Chapelle (2017) point out, there is a definite "need for a better grasp of cultural, social, and political issues, perhaps in part through developing transdisciplinary projects for student learning" (p. 462).

The context of Meerkat School was complex. It was a boarding school located in Thailand, on the border with Myanmar. It had around 40 students, all of them migrants or refugees from different ethnic groups and parts of Burma, so they had different mother tongues. The pupils were between 17 and 23 years old and their educational and socioeconomic backgrounds were diverse. A few students came from big cities and had good economic means however the majority of the students had dropped out of primary education because they had had to flee Burma due to military problems. Some students had had to quit school and start working at very early ages to support their families economically. In most of the cases the students' families were living in Myanmar but they were continuously encouraging their children to travel to Thailand to continue their education in order to increase their chances of a better future, although this was at a high economic cost for the family.

Thus, the objective of Meerkat School was to train these young adults during one year in the necessary skills to apply to a higher education institution, either international universities or local migrant schools with social insertion projects. The curriculum of the school covered 6 core subjects; Maths, Science, English, Social Studies, History and Computers, and also offered complementary subjects such as problem solving, vocational studies (sports, teacher training and hospitality), health, Burmese Issues and

Music. Also, the school provided an additional opportunity of a second year of studies for students who wanted to become teachers. Candidates for this programme could apply after finishing their first year in the school. All the subjects of the school were taught in English by foreign teachers, with the exception of health and Burmese Issues, which were taught in Burmese by migrant teachers.

Due to the widely different experiences of schooling among all the students, the levels of English at the start of the school year varied significantly from one student to another, so the students were grouped homogeneously according to their scores in a test held at the beginning of the first term. The group that participated in the telecollaborative project was the English Elementary class, with 16 students who had a level equivalent to the A2 of the European Common Framework of Reference (COE, 2001). They had all learned English in Myanmar during their prior years of schooling, mostly following a textbook-based approach and using Burmese as the language of instruction. This inevitably led a very poor development of the students' listening and speaking skills before arriving at Meerkat School. The exceptions were students who had had foreign teachers in their refugee camps for periods between one and three years, with whom they had spoken English. This more advanced group represented around a third of the group of 16 students participating in the project.

Once in the school, as previously mentioned, most of the subjects taught in the school were in English, which boosted the oral skills of the students' development at a fast pace. Moreover, in order to improve their skills even faster, the student council had agreed to apply a 24-hour English policy in the school, with a punishment for those students who would not follow the rules of only using English. This decision was taken by the student president, independently from the teachers' opinions, and, although it benefitted the oral skills of the students, at the same time it created a bigger gap between written and oral competences in English of most of students. As a result, the students were able to understand and produce oral texts with great fluency, at times using quite advanced vocabulary, yet they struggled in writing, often making basic grammatical mistakes.

Regarding 2.0 technologies, contrary to some portrayals of the country, there is access to digital technology in Myanmar and platforms such as Facebook were certainly popular amongst the students. However, their exposure to 2.0 tools in a school context had been minimal or non-existent. Therefore, the students were unfamiliar with the keyboard, and in contrast

to their skills with cell phones, they lacked other basic digital skills such as using search engines or sending emails. Based on the above, the need to enhance the use of technologies among the students was established as a priority in the school, especially since some of them wanted to pursue further education and apply to international universities in the near future, where a high level of digital competence would be a basic entry requirement, which is in line with the worldwide skills identified by Chun, Kern, and Smith (2016) in their recent overview of principles for technology and language teaching and learning, including ways of dealing with new texts and genres supported by digital communication technologies.

Finally, it seemed relevant to try to bring to a fore the situation of refugees for children in Europe, especially since news of the Syrian crisis and, more recently the Rohingya crisis, appear often in the media. Moreover, also due to mass media, the students at Meerkat school held an overly idealistic view of Western society and their opinions, too, were based on stereotypes. So the project aimed to break down stereotypes from both sides.

With all of the above in mind, starting a telecollaboration project seemed a perfectly suitable way to provide a meaningful context for the students to use new technologies and work on their written English skills (Dooly, 2008, 2010, 2017; Dooly & O'Dowd, 2012). What's more, communication beyond the classroom walls would provide the opportunity to bring different cultures together and raise awareness about the differences and similarities between students around the world, regardless of their context (Dooly, 2016; O'Dowd, 2006, 2007, 2016). Moreover, having studied a course on approaches to telecollaborative language learning during my teacher education degree[1], I felt that I had the basic understanding required to take on this challenge.

In order to give the learners an active role from the very beginning of the process, they were involved in making the decision whether to start a virtual-exchange project, which they all found to be an excellent idea. The main objectives were decided within the group, with orientation from the teacher, and the pupils were provided with examples of other telecollaborative projects, so as to ensure the class understood the project as a truly beneficial learning opportunity.

1 This is reference to the course Technology-Infused Language Teaching, a telecollaborative course with co-teaching between Dr. Melinda Dooly (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) and Dr. Randall Sadler (University of Illinois Urbana Champaign). Both are members of the KONECT project. See Sadler & Dooly (2016).

Finding a fellow school

The next step after the students agreed on participating in a virtual-exchange was finding a partner school for the project. Ideally, the students would have similar ages and would all be learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This would provide a context where students would have shared interests and could construct knowledge together. As I am originally from Sabadell, Spain (a small town approximately 25 kilometres outside of Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain), I contacted some schools and teachers that I personally knew or had worked with in this town. I explained the context of Meerkat School and the initial idea. The project had to be designed and implemented in less than 3 months, which was the period of time I would be teaching at Meerkat. Therefore, I felt it was important to start the project with a teacher and a group of students who were accustomed to project-based and competence-based teaching and learning.

At Meerkat School, we had no flexibility regarding time, since I was going to teach there for only one term. That made the search for a partner school significantly more complicated. Nevertheless, there was a primary school (Peacock), which had included in their year planning for the English subject a virtual exchange. Hence, the teachers and administrators were looking for a partner and were flexible regarding the scheduling and open to planning a project collaboratively, under the 'umbrella' topic of "comparing daily routines". This seemed like an appropriate topic to approach the reality of refugee and migrant students from a perspective that young students could understand and make sense of and give a realistic view of the daily life in Western society.

Equally important in setting up the details of partnership was to compare linguistic and technological objectives to ensure the project would promote shared knowledge construction and be equally challenging for both groups of students. The linguistic aims of the target language of Peacock School for the project was based on practice of the present simple verb conjugation, which was congruent with the grammatical structures that Meerkat School was interested in improving. On the other hand, technologically speaking, Peacock students, although younger, had a better command of digital tools, which potentially, for the Meerkat students, could be challenging.

After going over these points and exchanging views of our different ideas of how the project should be, and having set some common ground, we, the partner teachers, felt that a collaborative project seemed plausible. The students in Meerkat School were informed about the fellow school and the possible direction of the exchange and were asked for confirmation that they were still interested in going forward. Once again, it seemed important to involve the students in the decision-making process since they were adults who had their own conception of the education they wanted. Ensuring a positive attitude towards the project was considered essential for its success, so I tried to involve them in the planning process as much as possible.

Project design and materials production

"Same same but different" was designed from a socio-constructivist approach of language learning, which is an approach to teaching and learning languages that places interaction between individuals as the pivotal point of knowledge construction. Having established socio-constructivism as the perimeter for the pedagogical approach, this implied that the main goal of the project was to provide an appropriate context and final product for which the students would have to interact amongst them. Additionally, because of the telecollaborative component of the project, the use of technology was key to the interaction. Incidentally, interaction in the project was focused on promoting both face-to-face and online collaboration between students, always supervised by the teachers. Additionally, collaborative skills would be explicitly taught during the development of the project.

In order to design the activities and materials, the teacher from Peacock School and I were in contact several times a week for a period of three weeks. Synchronous communication through chats or video-conference was impossible due to time difference between the countries. Thus, the planning was done through emails and shared documents, working collaboratively at a distance. This telecollaboration during the designing process highlighted the difficulties of the time difference to work together, which guided our choice of effective communication tools for the students' project. After exchanging ideas and resources, Padlet and Google drive were chosen to be the main tools for the exchange. Despite the impossibility of synchronous communication, we wanted the project to work all

of the productive (speaking, writing) and receptive communication skills (listening, reading). Thus, since video-conferencing was not an option, activities such as oral presentations, discussions and video exchanges were planned in order to include an oral component in the project.

Due to the different language level of the students from both schools, the in-class materials to set the grammar and vocabulary background for the project were different for both groups telecollaborating. Every teacher was in charge of developing materials for their own class, adapting them to their students' level and necessities. Still, both teachers agreed that a priority for the project design would be to 'hand over' a portion of the responsibility of learning to the students (promoting learner autonomy) while, we, as teachers, would take the responsibility of guiding and providing support whenever necessary.

In the case of Peacock School, the materials introduced the students to the grammar rules for using the present simple tense in English and were created by the teacher. However, at Meerkat School, the students were given the responsibility of producing their own in-class resources, in order to make them more authentic. The starting point was a brainstorming with the whole group about how to define and explain the present simple tense, think of some examples and outlining the basic rules of use. Once the students had brought up everything they knew about present simple, they were asked to create a small summary including the most relevant information and examples to help them during the project. They could do it individually or in small groups, according to their preferences, and they had to group with people who had a similar learning style. The school had been working on multiple intelligences in various subjects, and the students were learning to produce summaries, studying materials and final assessments in different ways in order to enhance creativity and promote authentic and individualized materials. Thus, working in synchrony with other subjects, we decided to create our own present simple tense auxiliary materials, based on multiple intelligences. The results were very diverse, ranging from mindmaps, to summaries to even a small song with rhymes. These materials created by each individual or group of students were designed to be available during the telecollaboration with Peacock School. They also served to help the students of Meerkat remember and use the present simple tense correctly themselves while helping their telecollaborative partners in their learning.

It should be noted that the idea of Meerkat students guiding the language acquisition process of Peacock students arose after some discussion with my telecollaborative colleague about which materials needed to be created and used for the project. We were already aware that due to the

difference in language levels between both schools it would be difficult to plan activities that could create equal opportunities for learning for both groups. It just so happened that the Meerkat students had teaching training as part of their education and would be carrying out an internship at a primary school during the term when the telecollaborative project would be implemented and English was amongst the subjects they would teach. This was ideal as it opened up an opportunity for transdisciplinarity; Meerkat students could give feedback and monitor the Peacock students' acquirement and use of the present simple tense rules during their exchanges, while working together with the Peacock students to create the final product.

That created a parallel objective for the students at Myanmar; they would be telecollaborating with the students at Peacock with creating the final product of the project and answering the initial question of the project, while at the same time working with the teacher at Peacock by providing formative assessment during the project and gathering information on the students' common mistakes in order to guide future decisions on what to work in class. Although this created an additional layer of complexity to the project, this double telecollaboration would give an extra motivation to the students at Meerkat, who could see the project not only from the student perspective but also from a teacher perspective, thus contributing to their teaching training subject. Because the project objectives are quite complex, a graph is provided below (figure 1) that outlines the structure of the telecollaboration between the Meerkat students and the Peacock School.

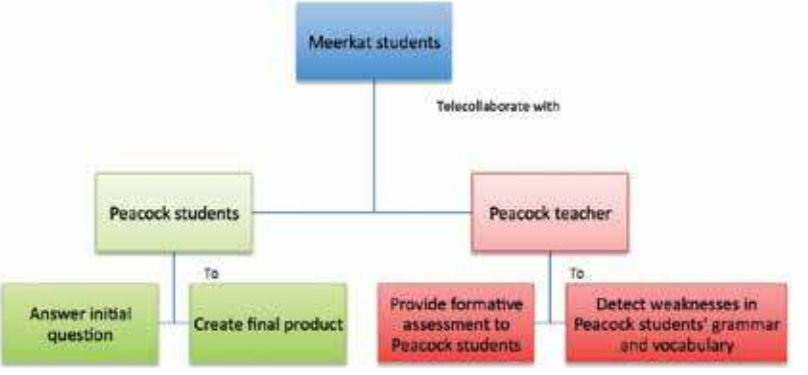


Fig. 1: Graph of the telecollaboration between Meerkat and Peacock schools

The double telecollaboration that the students at Meerkat would take part in implied creating two final products as well. On the one hand, they

would collaborate in creating a presentation comparing the daily life of the students within the same working group (mixed Peacock and Meerkat), and on the other hand they would make an analysis of the most common mistakes the students at Peacock made when writing or speaking English, to give to the Peacock School's teacher. In the spirit of transdisciplinarity, the Meerkat students would also analyse their own mistakes and these would be added to the sampling of common errors and could be used in the subject of teaching training to work on foreign language education.

In summary, the final work plan looked like this:

Table 1. Outline of the main activities per each partner

Meerkat School	*Peacock School*
Activity 1: Introduction videos: done with the whole group	
Activity 2: Debate about similarities and differences: done with the whole group	Activity 2: Debate about similarities and differences: done with the whole group
Activity 3: Message exchange through Padlet	
Activity 4: Assessment of Padlet and ICT skills	
Activity 5: Role-play on assertiveness and feedback	
Activity 6: Add comments to the Google Slides	Activity 6: Create the slides of the presentation
Activity 7: Analysis of mistakes when using English from Peacock and Meerkat students'.	Activity 7: Oral presentations about the virtual peers
Activity 8: Final debate to answer initial question "Same same, or different?	
Activity 9: Final self-assessment rubric	
Activity 10: Goodbye video	

Project implementation

Introductory video

This was the initial activity of the project and its main goal was to create a successful and motivating first contact between students from both schools, in order to emotionally engage them in the project. The two groups were enthusiastic about the notion of a Skype session, where they could see

each other however, since that was impossible due to the time difference, a video seemed the most suitable option.

To create the video the learners decided how and what to include in the video by brainstorming on the main cultural and personal aspects that they should explain to their peers in order to give a realistic view of their lives in school. My fellow teacher and I, each with our own groups, guided the decision making in order to meet the goals of the activity. Once the students decided which sequences the video would have and in which order would they be, the recording of the video and audio started. For the audio, the main foci were pronunciation and articulation, since the learners from both groups had different accents and it was important to make themselves understandable to their partners. With this, they were made aware of their strengths and weaknesses in their oral skills, thereby promoting metacognition, linguistic meta-reflection, communicative strategies and developing the so-called 'learning to learn' competence.

Fig. 2: Image from the introductory video by Meerkat School2

Ideally, the students would have edited the video themselves as part of the technological skills development of the project. However, the computers of Meerkat School did not allow video editing and, on the other hand, we considered it was beyond the students' Zone of Proximal Development. Hence, as teachers, we recorded and edited the videos, which we showed to the students of our own schools and then exchanged them with the partner class.

2 The author has received consent from all the individuals represented in the image to reproduce the images for this publication.

"Same same or different?" debate

After watching the video, students engaged in a debate about the differences and similarities between both schools. I, as the teacher, was the mediator of the debate and asked questions intended to promote reflection such as why the students at Peacock School had included the different rooms of their school and why they had considered it relevant to do so. During the discussion some students showed surprise from the size of the Peacock School and the amount of classrooms it had. Others asked about a room with food pictures on the walls, which was the dining room, and were very surprised to see that the Peacock School had a special room to eat. On the other hand, some people in the class noted how well and clearly the primary pupils could speak, and wondered why.

All in all, the videos served to awaken the students' curiosity about each other and they felt the need to ask more about what they had seen, in order to understand the lifestyle of their virtual friends. The debate also provided a space for cultural and linguistic discussion. In the Meerkat School, we talked about language acquisition and how the age of coming in contact with a language for a first time affects the way it is learned. This was further discussed in their teaching training lessons as a transdisciplinary activity. The debate closed by introducing the students to the main question of the project "are we the same or different?" The opinions were diverse, but the class conclusion was that, at that point, there were more differences than similarities between both groups. They also highlighted the need to know more to make a final statement, which opened room for the continuation of the project.

First message

For the next step, students of Meerkat School wrote a group message to their virtual partners, thanking them for the video. The platform used to exchange messages was Padlet, that way no individual email accounts were required and all students could access it.

Fig. 3: Images from the Padlet students used to exchange messages.

The message from the students at Meerkat School had a slightly religious tone ("God bless you") and was written in a register which was different from what students at Peacock School were used to. I wrote an email to my fellow teacher pointing out the cultural load of the language and the need to not change how students had expressed themselves, since it was part of their personality and it could only enrich the exchange. Thus, we agreed to approach the cultural impact of the language to bring deeper understanding.

Discovering the groups for the project

As a response to our message, students from Peacock School sent greeting messages back to us. However, in this case they were not written and addressed to the whole group but they were written by two students from Peacock to one or two students at Meerkat. This messages would start a small conversation in groups of 3 or 4 students, which would be the groups for the project.

The students at Meerkat did not remember the names and faces from the video and, thus, a guessing game started. They all read their messages and the names of the students who had sent them. Since the names were mostly Spanish, it was hard to know whether the author was a boy or a girl. They were asked to guess the gender of their e-pals and, afterwads, we watched the video to check whether their intuition was right or wrong. In

addition, since some names were repeated they had to guess which Paula, for example, was writing them.

Once they had identified their telecollaborative partners and checked whether they were right or wrong with their guesses, the video was played again so the students could focus now on listening to the information their partners had shared in it, such as favourite places in the school, favourite colours or subjects. They could then use this information to send their responses to the messages.

Writing to their e-pals

With the information they gathered from the video, Meerkat School pupils wrote a reply asking for more information about their virtual pals' hobbies, routines or any other question aimed to gather information in order to critically analyze whether the learners from both schools were similar or different. The instructions to write the message were to use short sentences with simple grammar that would be understandable by the primary students. When writing the messages, the students at Meerkat School used the materials they created before the project about present simple tense rules based on multiple intelligences. Once they had their message, before sending it to their virtual peers, Meerkat students were asked to show and read each other's messages in order to give in-class feedback on language and style and improve them if needed. With this, the students not only revised their work but they were made aware of their own learning process, once again promoting metacognition and learning-to-learn competence development. During the exchange of feedback, I gave advice and feedback on how to be constructive on their suggestions for improvement, thus carefully guiding the cooperative work.

Exchanging information with the groups

The students of Peacock School gave their answers and sent questions of their own in return, in order to do their research about the daily routines of the students from Myanmar. In their replies, the pupils from Meerkat School were encouraged to give Peacock learners feedback about their language in order to help them improve. All the conversations were shared

in the Padlet, so everybody could read all the messages and get a broader view of the exchange and help avoid potential stereotypes or biased opinions due to a lack of information.

Fig. 4: Images from the Padlet after the students' information exchange

During the whole process, the teacher at Peacock School and I collaborated at all time to adapt the pace of the project or the activities to the students' necessities. When designing the project, we did not know how much the information exchange phase of the project would last, but we agreed on keeping it flexible and asking the students in order to ensure learning was happening. The time between messages was rather long due to unanticipated events or time hiccups, yet after some weeks we could consider this phase closed and moved on to the next one.

Self-assessment of ICT skills

From this point on, the project continued without Padlet and thus, before starting any other activity, we considered it important to do a self-assessment activity for the students to reflect on their ICT competence and make them aware of their own learning. The students at Meerkat used a rubric, showed below, while the students at Peacock did the assessment orally.

The students had used rubrics before in the subject to assess oral presentations of themselves and their peers, and they had been rather demanding. So, to avoid excessive criticism, they were asked to be honest and admit when they could do something perfectly well instead of focusing

on the small things that could be improved. The result was generally quite positive (with a few notable exceptions due to individual circumstances). In general, the students acknowledged improvement on their ICT skills and showed enjoyment.

Using Padlet

	4. Genius	3. Proficient	2. Apprentice	1. Beginner
Use of padlet:	I know how to access the Padlet	I know how to access the Padlet but sometimes I need to try more than once.	Sometimes I don't remember how to access the Padlet.	I always need help to access the Padlet.
Writing new notes:	I know how to add a new note on the padlet	I sometimes need help adding a new note on padlet	I usually need help when adding a new note on padlet	I don't know how to add a new note on padlet yet.
Commenting on existing notes:	I can find other's notes and add my comments without problem.	I can find other's notes and add my comments, although sometimes they are not saved and I need to type again.	Sometimes, I struggle to find other's notes and add my comments. Usually they are not saved and I need to type again or ask for help.	I need help to find other's notes and add my comments.
Editing your comments:	I know how to edit my comments to change my text or correct any mistakes.	I normally know how to edit my comments to change my text or correct any mistakes, although sometimes I need a bit of time to remember.	Sometimes I know how to edit my comments, but I need to ask for help quite often.	I don't know how to edit comments yet, I always need help.
Enjoying Padlet?:	I like working with Padlet.	I normally like working with Padlet although I also like working with my notebook.	I like working with Padlet, but I prefer working with a notebook or paper.	I don't like working with Padlet.

Comments:

Fig. 5: Rubric used in Meerkat School to assess students' progress with Padlet

Working on assertiveness to give feedback

To help their virtual peers to prepare the oral presentations comparing the daily routines of students in the Thai-Myanmar border and Spain, the learners at Meerkat had to insert comments on the work of their mates, giving them feedback. This activity worked on a wide set of skills, from linguistic, ICT to cooperative competences. The students had to provide Peacock's pupils with critically constructive feedback, so a classroom activity was prepared in order to explicitly work assertiveness and giving

feedback sensitively. First, we started a discussion defining the concept of 'assertive' and its importance for group work. Although the topic was quite abstract, the students could understand it fairly fast and could brainstorm strategies to ensure an assertive attitude. They were also able to discern the difference between positiveness, negativity and assertiveness. During the conversation with the whole group, I provided some questions and acted as the "devil's advocate" to engage in deep reflection.

After, the students participated in some role-play in pairs about some common conflicts that routinely arise during teamwork. The students were asked to approach the conflicts from a negative, positive and assertive way and discuss which emotions arose from each of the scenarios. I walked around the class observing and asking the students questions when I considered it necessary to check their understanding of how to be assertive.

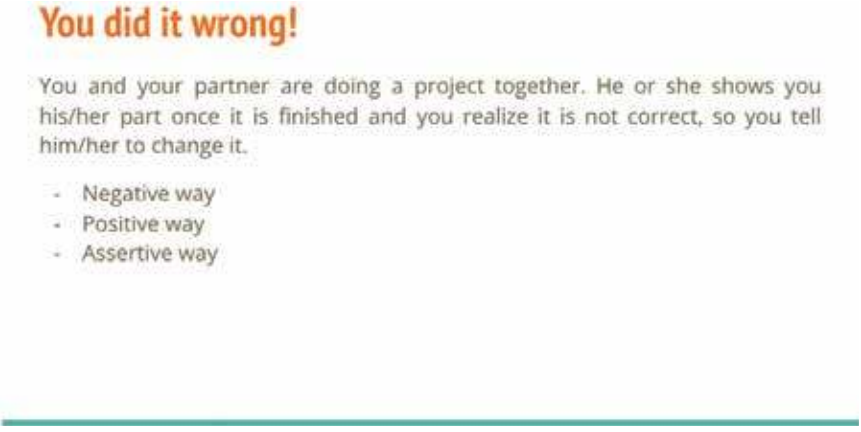


Fig. 6: One of the role-play situations presented in Meerkat School

Preparing the presentations

The platform to prepare the slides of the presentations was Google Drive. Since not all the students had Google accounts, to allow access to everyone without forcing them to open a personal account, the link to a private folder was shared, where the students of each group created a Google Slides presentation. The design of the presentation was the responsibility of the students from the Peacock School. However, students at Meerkat School could access the documents and add comments as feedback for

improvement. The students at Peacock School would then make the necessary changes to complete the presentations.

Peacock School's learners had previous experiences using the Google Drive, so no preparatory lessons were necessary. However, for the Meerkat students this was their first introduction to Gmail and Google accounts in their computer lessons. Once again, in the spirit of transdisciplinary competences, the Google drive unit plan for ICT class was approached through English as well, by introducing the students to Google Slides and the process of inserting comments in the documents.

Next, the students were given time to manipulate Google Slides and become familiar with inserting comments and editing them. I answered questions and guided them whenever the students requested help. Some of them were able to find the way to insert comments on their own while some others needed constant interaction with the teacher. I felt that giving space to the students would increase their confidence with technology for those who needed no help. At the same time, it would give me opportunities to provide more individualized attention to those students who needed more guidance.

After having worked on the technological and cooperative aspects of the activity, it was time for the students to comment on their virtual peers' work.

Fig. 7: Two students from Meerkat School adding comments to their colleagues' presentations

During this phase of the project, 16 students were using the computers with Google Drive at the same time, and we soon discovered the Internet of the school could not support these. The pages were extremely slow to load and students had to wait a long time to open and edit the documents, which created frustration amongst the learners. To overcome this, students

agreed on taking turns and working on the presentations, one at a time, so only one computer would be using the Internet. That was a solution for the Internet speed, yet it caused a delay in the schedule. The students of Peacock School had a date for the oral presentations before the end of the term, which could not be postponed. As a result, some of the comments and feedback arrived after the day of the presentations, which discouraged the students at Meerkat School.

Nonetheless, this situation opened room for another discussion; is it too late to learn when the presentation/exam has passed? The learners had different opinions, which they exchanged during an engaging whole group debate. I acted as a mediator, asking questions to promote reflection, until the group arrived to a final conclusion: the feedback was not too late because their virtual peers still had to learn and continue improving.

Analysing the mistakes from Peacock and Meerkat students

In this step of the project, Meerkat School learners started developing their final product; the comparative analysis of mistakes when speaking English, compiled from output of both the Peacock and Meerkat students. Data were collected from the dialogues in Padlet as well as the presentations and comments. Students had been reflecting on the mistakes of their peers (virtual or in class) through the co-assessment activities. Now, with all the information, they were asked to work in pairs and try to compare their data and classify the types of mistakes under the criteria that they chose. Next, they joined in groups of 4 and repeated the same process. Finally, they were asked to regroup in teams of 4, mixing with people from all the other groups, making sure that they were not working with the same people again. In those groups, they again compared information. After all the groupings, students had seen all the classifications from the other groups, so we started working with the whole class. The pupils organized the types of mistakes on the board, classified them in common or not common from both schools and suggested an explanation for the underlying cause of the mistakes. They put all of this information in a document that was then shared with the teacher at Peacock School as well as the teacher of the subject of teacher education so he could also use them in his lessons.

MISTAKES WHEN USING ENGLISH

Types of mistakes	[redacted]	[redacted] *School*	
Spelling	- football - breckfast - faborite - i am (without capital)	- dormatary - chanell - faivourate	- Both schools make this mistakes - P school students make them more often - Some words are difficult for both schools - Maybe we make this mistakes because English doesn't sound like it is spelled (is not phonetic)
Grammar	Confusing he/she	_____	- Maybe it is because in Spanish he/she is the same word or almost the same
	Writing 3rd person of present simple without s - Go instead of goes - Have instead of has Writing 1st person of present simple with s - Has instead of have	_____	- Different in both schools - Maybe because the primary students need to practice more
	_____	Confusing is and are	- Different in both schools - In Myanmar there is no difference between is and are, it is the same word.
	To have 9 years old		- Different in both schools

Fig. 8: Image of page one of the final product from Meerkat School

Final debate "Same same, or different?" and self-assessment

To end the project, the students engaged in a whole group dialog to revisit the initial question: are the students in both schools similar? ("Same same, or different?"). The conclusion was that, after learning more about their lives as students, they realized there were more similarities than they had expected at the beginning of the project. They were glad to have learned about the education in other countries through young students, and made a very positive balance of the experience. Finally, they were given a self-assessment rubric to analyze the development of their skills after the project as well as to share their feelings about it.

Same same or different? Final reflections

Name:

	4. Genius	3. Proficient	2. Apprentice	1. Beginner
Linguistic skills:	I am sure my English has improved after this project. I understand present simple and can use it without making mistakes.	I have the feeling my English has improved after this project. I understand present simple and can use it without almost making mistakes.	I think my English might have improved after this project. I understand present simple and can use it making small mistakes.	I don't think that my English has improved after this project. I'm not sure I understand present simple and I make some important mistakes when using it.
Cultural undestanding:	I understand our virtual peers' context way more and I have a better idea of how live is in Spain as a young student. I think this exchange has enriched my experience and I have a better informed opinion.	I understand our virtual peers' context a bit more and I have a better idea of how live is in Spain as a young student. I think this exchange has enriched my experience and my opinion is more objective, but I would still need to know more.	I'm not sure I understand our virtual peers' context or how live as a young student in Spain is. My opinion has not changed much from the beginning the project until now.	I still don't understand our virtual peers' context or how live as a young student in Spain is. My opinion has not changed at all from the beginning of the project until now.
Technological skills:	I am sure I have improved my skills with the computer. I feel way more comfortable and I am looking forward to using technology again in class.	I think I have improved my skills with the computer. I feel a bit more comfortable and I want to use technology again in class to continue improving.	I am not sure if I have improved my skills. I still feel insecure sometimes and I'm a little bit afraid of using technology again in class.	I don't think I have improved. I am insecure and afraid of using technology in class. I hope we won't use it in class any more.
Cooperative skills:	I understand why assertiveness is important in group work. I understand the difference between positive, negative and assertive feedback. I can give assertive and constructive feedback.	I think I understand better why assertiveness is important in group work. I understand the difference between positive, negative and assertive feedback. I am better at giving assertive and constructive feedback but I can still improve.	I'm not sure I understand why assertiveness is important in group work. The difference between positive, negative and assertive feedback is not yet 100% clear to me. I struggle to give assertive and constructive feedback but ll feel I'm improving.	I don't understand why assertiveness is important in group work yet. The difference between positive, negative and assertive feedback is not yet clear to me. I struggle to give assertive and constructive feedback.
Would you like to participate in another virtual exchange?:	Definitely!	Most probably	Maybe	Not really

Any thoughts?

Fig. 9: Image of final rubric for Meerkat School

Due to the lack of time, there was no time to exchange any farewell videos, which would have been a nice closing to the project.

Challenges

When planning the project, possible challenges were predicted in order to anticipate responses. However, there were difficulties which were not foreseen, which I suppose is the product of a lack of experience in the field of telecollaborative projects. The first challenge we encountered, which had an effect during the whole implementation of the project, was communication. I was aware of its utmost importance for the success of the project, having read articles about telecollaboration and experiences of teachers. However, I underestimated to what extent it was essential. I believe that the aforementioned impossibility for synchronous communication between the teachers made it difficult to build empathy and the feeling of shared responsibility for each other's part of the project. Communication during the implementation of the project never stopped, in order to ensure its continuity and to make decisions about the following steps. Nonetheless, the unforeseen events that caused delays in the timing were justified after they had happened rather than warned in advance.

We had agreed to be flexible, knowing there would be some unexpected delays. Thus, there was no problem in sharing the adjournment of some activities without prevision. Still, in the long term, that produced a significant delay in the project. That might have been a result of a lack of the sense of shared responsibility that comes from empathy between the teachers. The fact that all communication between the teachers happened through asynchronous messages might have had a negative effect on the empathy and boundary necessaries for the project. The conclusions after reflecting, once the project was finished, were that a more personal way of communication, such as video-calls or even videos, might have enhanced this empathy, emotionally engaging the teachers, in a similar way to what was done with the students by exchanging introductory videos.

Nonetheless, the delay accumulated during the implementation of the project was not only due to communication issues between the teachers, but to technology-related problems as well. As explained in the previous section of the chapter, during the implementation of the project, we realized that the Wi-Fi network at the Meerkat School simply could not support all the students using Google Drive at the same time. The connection was very slow and it was impossible to work in class with all the students together, since the pages did not load. The solution of working with the computers

one student at a time, made the continuation of the project possible yet delayed the implementation of the following steps. This inevitably affected the last activities of the project, such as the feedback of the presentation or the final video, which could not be carried out in the end, and created the need for new activities, such as the debate "is it too late to learn when the presentation/exam has passed?", in order to ensure the motivation of the students would not decrease.

The poor Internet connection of the school was not only an obstacle to use Google Drive, but sometimes to simply use the computers in class. On one occasion, students had to write messages to their e-pals and realized that day the Internet was not working well. At that point, the students were already engaged in the activity and had started thinking about what to write. Therefore, as a solution, everyone took a piece of paper where they wrote their messages. The notes were collected and typed by the teacher at home in order to not cause another delay to the project. The solution was not ideal, yet it was aimed to not discourage the students from participating in the project due to connectivity issues and, hence, it seemed appropriate for that one moment to salvage the situation. Gonzalez and St. Louis (2013) have documented very thoroughly the many challenges that the use of technology in 'low-tech contexts' can bring. However, as they have also pointed out, "there are many ways in which these obstacles can be overcome" (p. 237) and this project demonstrates exactly that point.

It was acknowledge that students at the Meerkat School had very little experience working with technologies, which was one of the reasons to start a telecollaborative exchange. Nonetheless, there was no awareness to what extent that affected their relationship with computers and 2.0 tools. When introducing new platforms, the students seemed absolutely overwhelmed, and needed more time than expected in order to familiarize themselves with the tools. Thanks to the self-assessment rubrics, information was gathered on how the students experienced their interaction with technologies and which were their strengths and weaknesses in their opinion. Having worked with primary students the previous year, my experience when introducing new applications and web pages was that students could become familiar and comfortable with them fairly easily and could use them with just a bit of practice. What I assumed about the students at Meerkat School was that they would be able to easily understand how Padlet worked, since it has a simple format and they were very used to posting in Facebook, which has a much more complicated structure.

However, I did not realize that Facebook was one of the only 2.0 tools the students had ever used, and their proficiency in its use was a result of many hours using it rather than a good level of ICT competences. Thus, the time devoted in class to become familiar with and understand the platforms did not seem to be enough for all of the students to feel comfortable using ICT, and further practice would have been ideal. The resolution of this challenge is that, if starting a project with the same group or students with similar technological backgrounds, more time would need to be devoted to understanding and using ICT in order to ensure that all participants meet the objectives on the technology field.

Finally, the most difficult challenge to overcome for me was related to the methodology of the project. The educational background of the learners at Meerkat School was diverse, yet they all had a traditional approach to education in common. Being used to teacher-centred methods based on memorization, they had to adapt to a more student-centred approach of Meerkat School, where critical thinking and creativity were strongly enhanced in all the subjects and activities. Luckily the project was carried out during the second term of the school year and, thus, the students had gone through the most important part of the adaptation process. During this time, they showed a significant improvement in confidence and participation in class, carrying out the main roles of teacher with more comfort. Nonetheless, although it seemed that they shared the importance of understanding rather than memorizing to learn, they never came to believe the constructivist approach to learning to be effective. During the implementation of the project, some students expressed their concern of not learning enough because some much time in class was devoted to projects and activities rather than "actual" teaching. Others were asked to name something that they had learned and their answer was "nothing".

At that point, the project was at the stage of exchanging messages between both schools, which was in the middle of the process. Realizing that students did not seem to see the project as a learning opportunity was considered the most significant critical incident of the implementation. It was essential that the students were aware of their learning since they were the main agents of the knowledge construction process, and had the responsibility to monitor it. On the other hand, one of the core competencies to develop through the project was learning to learn. A positive attitude from the students towards the project was necessary for them to take profit of all its learning opportunities.

Wrongly, it had been assumed that since they agreed with the methodology of the school, they would feel comfortable with project-based learning. Nonetheless, it seemed that their preconceptions of learning were quite opposed to this approach and they did not see competence-based learning as "actual" learning, because they could not list all the concepts they had acquired at the end of the project. To overcome their apprehensions, students were given an explanation of competences, since they were adults whose cognitive level allowed the understanding of such abstract concepts. Moreover, since they were learning how to be teachers, it was considered a relevant topic to approach. I explicitly shared the target objectives and competences for the project and asked the students to reflect on their personal process towards their achievement. That had a positive effect on them and helped change their view of the project as not "enough" learning to a "different" way of learning.

Reflections after the project

Starting a telecollaborative project was challenging from the beginning, yet it has been incredibly rewarding for both the students and myself. Communication beyond the classroom walls has brought the learners closer to a reality that they believed so far from them. Some of the students noted that, before the virtual exchange with the students in Spain, they had very idealistic views of education and the life in Western cultures because the only source of information they had ever had was the media.

Some aspects of the culture they liked and others created some debate. One of the students noted how, after the project, he considered it important to teach English to young children from his community from very early ages, so they could speak as well as his virtual-mates. Regarding extra-curricular activities, the opinions were diverse; some of the students at Meerkat School appreciated the opportunities for education that those provided, since it was something they would have dreamt of as kids. Some others wondered whether such young students would suffer from stress, not having free time to play with their friends. But what all the opinions had in common was that the experience had been absolutely culturally enriching and had helped them approach and better understand Western

people. In their own words they felt they 'had seen very little of the world outside Myanmar' and the project helped them break many of the stereotypes they had acquired over the years due to the mass media.

Concerning the language learning, the students highlighted their improvement in their oral skills after the project. Having to speak in a video for people whose accent is different from theirs encouraged them to put extra effort on articulation and pronunciation, and made them more aware of areas that they needed to improve. Furthermore, listening to the pupils at Peacock School made the Meerkat School learners want to speak better and clearer, just like the young boys and girls they were telecollaborating with, and helped them become more aware of their oral skills. This was surprising, due to the fact the project was not focused on oral competences. Yet, it was what the students underlined as one of the main language improvements resulting from the project.

In regards to grammar skills, students agreed that they were now more aware of their grammar mistakes after engaging in the process of detecting their own and other's errors in usage. They admitted to having improved with the use of the present simple tense, despite not seeing it absolutely necessary at the beginning of the project, and added that they now desired to learn more complex structures and advanced vocabulary in the future.

The Meerkat School had an uncommon context, in which English was the vehicular language due to students and teachers having different mother tongues. Hence, the project was one amongst other meaningful opportunities to use English for real communicative purposes. That contrasts with other schools, in which telecollaborative projects are carried out to provide a context for significant communication. Nevertheless, the students reviewed the experience of being in contact with other English learners as very positive, since they only spoke English with the teachers and with each other. That, according to them, added some pressure to speaking, owing to the fact that they wanted to show proficiency and were afraid of making mistakes. In their opinion, the project had helped them feel more confident when speaking English, having been able to help their virtual peers with their skills.

Finally, concerning the technological competence, the students acknowledged an improvement in their attitude towards ICT in class. The problems with the Internet could sometimes be frustrating, but the learners highlighted the excitement of working on a document with people thanks to the Internet. They compared the experience to Facebook; they

were using the Internet to communicate with the people who were far away from them now, the difference being that it was in school and technology was used to learn.

As a teacher, I consider the experience a success in the sense that the students' attitude towards new platforms changed. After the project, students seemed more confident ICT users, and they showed a general improvement in their ability to use technology. In the end, the lack of good computers or the bad Internet connection, which sometimes discouraged the group, was not a big enough obstacle to impede learning. Having taken the plunge of using technology frequently and with the purpose of communicating with others encouraged the pupils to use it more, and helped them realize its importance for their professional careers. They now consider the ICT competence as essential for their development as future professionals because they have experienced its advantages.

Additionally, the project has been the perfect excuse to polish small but important mistakes, which were common amongst the group when speaking or writing. Although that meant targeting the language of the project to a lower level than the one the learners usually worked, it seemed important to consolidate the basic aspects of language use before moving on to more complex linguistic structures and vocabulary. This resulted in speakers who are much more aware of their mistakes now and often correct each other spontaneously in class. Also, being able to contribute through the project to the other subject of teacher education was a very nice supplement. The students were not used to transdisciplinarity due to frequent change of teachers in the school, as most of them volunteers, thus making it difficult to set up transdisciplinary projects in the school curriculum. Finally, on a cultural level, the exchange was brilliant for breaking stereotypes and bringing the reality of western countries to the students from a credible point of view.

Because of all of this, I would, without a doubt, engage in another telecollaborative program in a developing country. I have experienced first hand how this type of experience can make a difference. Even though the resources are not always available, sooner or later they will be, and these students will be ready and competent to use them.

After this very positive experience, having overcome the challenges we have encountered more or less successfully, I take some important lessons with me, which I will apply to my next projects. Firstly, I will explicitly follow the progress made towards meeting the set objectives, together

with the students, in order to make them aware of their learning and avoid situations in which they feel they are not learning enough. Additionally, if working with a group with a similar background to the one from Meerkat School that has participated in "Same same, or different?", I will devote more time to explaining and showing the benefits of group work and project-based learning, making them participate in activities and small sequences based on these methodologies in order to have some experience before engaging in a bigger project, such as a virtual exchange.

In conclusion, this telecollaborative project has been very rewarding and a great opportunity to learn, for both students and me. Yet, most importantly, I believe it has been the chance for these refugee students to have a voice that can be heard from far away.

References

Chun, D. M., Kern, R., & Smith, B. (2016). Technology use, language teaching, and language learning, *The Modern Language Journal, 100* (Supplement 2016), 64–80.

Council of Europe (COE). (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR)*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Dooly, M. (2017). Telecollaboration. In C. Chapelle & S. Sauro (Eds.) *The handbook of technology in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 169–183). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

Dooly, M. (2016). 'Please remove your avatar from my personal space': Competences of the telecollaboratively efficient person. In T. Lewis & R. O'Dowd (Eds.) *Online intercultural exchange: Policy, pedagogy, practice* (pp. 192–208). NY/London: Routledge.

Dooly, M. (2010) The teacher 2.0. In S. Guth & F. Helm (eds) *Telecollaboration 2.0: Language, literacies and intercultural learning in the 21st Century* (pp. 277–303). Bern: Peter Lang.

Dooly, M. (Ed.) (2008). *Telecollaborative language learning. A guidebook to moderating intercultural collaboration online*. New York & Bern: Peter Lang.

Dooly, M., & O'Dowd, R. (2012). Researching online interaction and exchange in foreign language education: Introduction to the volume." In M. Dooly & R. O'Dowd (Eds.) *Researching online foreign language interaction and exchange. Theories, methods and challenges* (pp. 11–41). Bern/Vienna: Peter Lang.

Gonzalez, D., & St. Louis, R. (2013). CALL in low-tech contexts. In M. Thomas, H. Reinders & M. Warschauer (Eds.) Contemporary computer-assisted language learning (pp. 217–241). London/Sydney: Bloomsbury.

O'Dowd, R. (2016). Learning from the past and looking to the future of online intercultural exchange. In R. O'Dowd & T. Lewis (Eds.) *Online intercultural exchange: Policy, pedagogy, practice* (pp. 273–293). New York: Routledge.

O'Dowd, R. (Ed.) (2007). *Online intercultural exchange. An introduction for foreign language teachers*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

O'Dowd, R. (Ed.) (2006). *Telecollaboration and the development of intercultural communicative competence*. Berlin: Langenscheidt.

Sadler, R., & Dooly, M. (2016). Twelve years of telecollaboration: What we've learnt. ELT-J, 70(4), 401–413.

Sauro, S., & Chapelle, C.A. (2017). Toward langua-technocultural competence. In C.A. Chapelle & S. Sauro (Eds.) *The handbook of technology in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 459–472). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

Maria Mont and Dolors Masats
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

Chapter 4. Tips and suggestions to implement telecollaborative projects with young learners

Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to provide teachers who are about to embark on the adventure of carrying out telecollaborative projects that involve young, beginner language learners with tips for guaranteeing success. As advocates and experienced teachers in the development of telecollaborative projects in the foreign language classrooms, we will provide tips for educators who want to learn from our adventures.

Most curricula around the world reveal there has been a shift in how learning is conceptualized today. Recommendations go from promoting teacher-centred to student-centred practices and to adopting a content-based input approach to a competence-based output approach. Competence-based curricula put forward innovative proposals such as the integration of content, linguistic and ICT education. Being competent means possessing the ability to put into play the resources necessary to solve the problematic situations one may encounter as a citizen in a 'wired society' (Dooly & Masats, in press).

Increasingly, this conceptual change entails the adoption of project-based syllabi at school, as it encourages learners to take an active role in their own learning process and to learn how to collaborate successfully with others in order to solve real world challenges. Problem solving tasks require students' development of their mastery of linguistic, interpersonal, intercultural and cognitive abilities necessary for their participation in meaningful social practices. Moreover, it can be argued that Project-Based Learning (PBL) is an ideal tool teachers have at their disposal to get their students to "connect the dots" between content, language use,

the construction of knowledge and the development of 21st century skills (Dooly, Masats & Mont, 2012).

PBL is not a new methodology or a new phenomenon in the field of language learning, in fact it is was popular at the beginning of the 20th century thanks to the work of John Dewey. Yet, until recent years, it was often met with scepticism, especially by novice teachers. The Buck Institute of Education (BIE, 2003:4) defines PBL as a "systematic teaching method that engages students in learning knowledge and skills through an extended inquired process, structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and tasks". Almost a decade later, Patton (2012) claims 'project-based learning' refers to students designing, planning, and carrying out an extended project that produces a publicly-exhibited output or final product (a video clip, a digital magazine, a poster, a marketing campaign, an e-book, etc.). Projects that are structured through goal-oriented tasks offer a great opportunity to integrate learning as a social practice (collaborating, co-constructing knowledge, communicating, developing critical and creative thinking, etc.) and as a means to favour the development of life skills (leadership, social skills, initiative and flexibility), while learners develop linguistic competences, audiovisual competences, digital competences and the competences linked to the acquisition of knowledge related to specific areas of study (Masats, Dooly & Costa, 2009; Dooly & Masats, 2011; Dooly, 2016).

However, its adoption in the foreign language class presents the challenge of finding a context in which the use of the target language among learners is a *sine qua non* condition. Here is where telecollaborative projects, also referred to as Virtual Exchanges or Online Intercultural Exchanges, can come into play (Dooly, 2008; 2015; 2017; O'Dowd, 2016; Sadler & Dooly, 2016). When a project is developed in joint collaboration by groups of students who do not share the same language, opportunities for using the common target language become real. Dooly (2017) defines telecollaboration in education as the use of computer and/or digital communication tools to promote learning through social interaction and collaboration, thus moving the learning process beyond the physical boundaries of the classroom. As telecollaboration involves interaction between students from different places, telecollaborative projects are very powerful tools for the development of students' intercultural competence. Students have a chance to see the world from someone else's perspective and this can be done even with primary students with limited communicative abilities in the target language.

In the following section, we will briefly describe two telecollaborative projects, carried out in the English class, during two school years with a group of 6/8-year olds. Following that, we will list the steps teachers should follow to design a successful telecollaborative project. While doing so, we will identify the main challenges we encountered along the processes of designing, implementing and evaluating the two described projects and we will present and reflect upon the solutions we adopted.

The first project, *Travelling through Arts*, aimed at getting students to recognize the work of two painters, be able to reproduce one of their paintings and create a narrative in the format of an e-book based on a fictional encounter between the two artists in the various scenarios depicted in their work. The second project, *Healthy Habits*, made use of various avatars on Second Life to illustrate unhealthy behaviours (watching too much tv, not having showers often, eating junk food, playing video games for too long), as an excuse to set learners the challenge of adopting the role of scientists who had to observe and analyse the behaviour of these avatars and produce a scientific video report with suggestions to modify the observed behaviours.The telecollaborative partner schools changed between year one and year two, and design of the projects were very different in nature. However, the English teacher in Catalonia and her students were the same, so the tips provided in the second part of the article are supported by the experience gained by them.

General overview of two real life classroom projects carried out by two groups of young learners of English

The projects we will briefly present here were addressed to two groups of students from a public school in Mollet del Vallès, Catalonia, during two consecutive school years. The same group of students in Mollet del Vallès was involved in both of the projects described here during two consecutive years. As first graders, they were involved, together with a second grade class from a school in Toronto, Canada, in a project entitled *Travelling through Arts*. As second graders, they joined a second grade class from a school in Vienna, Austria, to take part in a project named *Healthy Habits*. Both projects were interdisciplinary, since they related topics

across subjects and presented the students with the demand of learning to work in groups, both face to face in their physical classroom, but also in virtual environments or through video chats. As we will see, the projects always presented students with an enquiry, whose resolution posed them the challenge of creating together a tangible final product and occasionally other sub-products.

Fig. 1. One of the groups[1] involved in the project and the scientist avatars in the second project

In the following sections we will shortly describe the two projects, paying special attention to the demands teachers had to confront and how they met them.

Travelling through Arts. Year 1

Travelling through Arts was a four-week project designed to achieve unity in cross-curricular classroom practices. The proposal involved four subjects (Arts & Crafts, English, ICT and Social Science) and aimed at getting children to appreciate art through the work of two local painters, Joan Abelló and Rob Gonçalves. The project allowed learners to compare two artistic styles and created the context for combining project-based learning with Web 2.0 (for instance, students had to locate the works of each artist displayed in a virtual gallery in Second Life). In the case of the Catalan groups, children could also experiment the technique deployed by the local artist and created a reproduction of one of his paintings.

1 The authors have received written consent from all the participants for their images to be reproduced and published in this chapter.

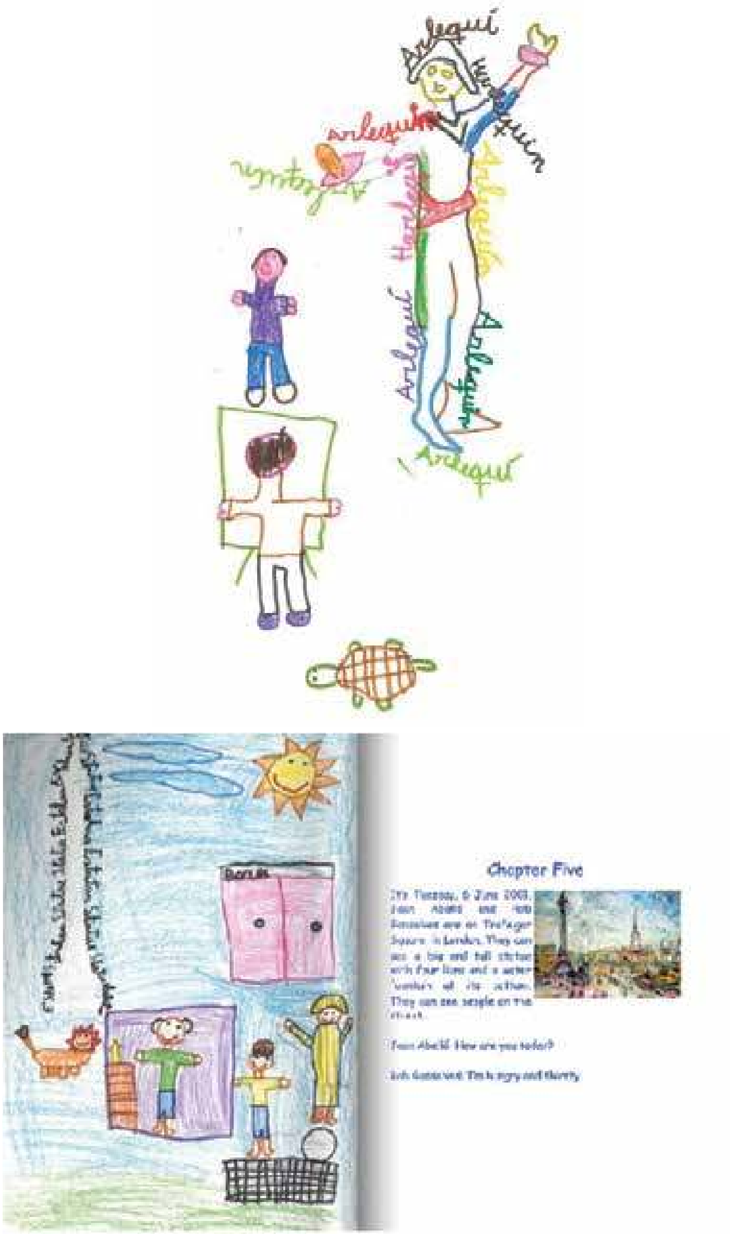


Fig. 2. Student output and page from final e-book

The final product of this international project was an eBook based upon the fictional friendship between the two target local artists. It is important to notice that communication among students was carried out asynchronously, through the exchange of emails and videos.

Bearing in mind that our students' ages and school levels were very different our learning outcomes and objectives were also different. For Catalan teachers, the main goal was for the students to learn through English about Arts. The Canadian partners were interested in helping their children learn how to write and read while communicating with other children across the world. Because both curricula requirements had to be met, the resulting product was a written text.

The children from Mollet del Vallès did not have the same linguistic level, students were provided with a significant amount of language support (e.g. the beginning of the sentences of each chapter were given to them and they added their own ideas, based on the vocabulary they had studied). The texts then had to be completed and edited by the Canadian children. Because they were taking part in the project through their 'Language Arts' class, they had to be creative and expand on the simple texts they got from their partners. Additionally, the students from Mollet del Vallès, who studied the local artist Joan Abello's painting technique, reproduced one of his works of art, which now decorates the school's main hall.

Inevitably, the resulting book is the sum of all the students' contributions, but not a collaborative text. However, thanks to their participation in this project, students improved their literacy and digital skills, while they expanded their knowledge of their immediate local environment and developed their intercultural competence.

Healthy Habits. Year 2

Healthy Habits was a ten-week project designed upon the premise that language practice and knowledge acquisition are part and parcel of the same process. Learning can be understood as the transformation of information into knowledge through social actions which take place about and through language (Dooly, Mont, & Masats, 2014).

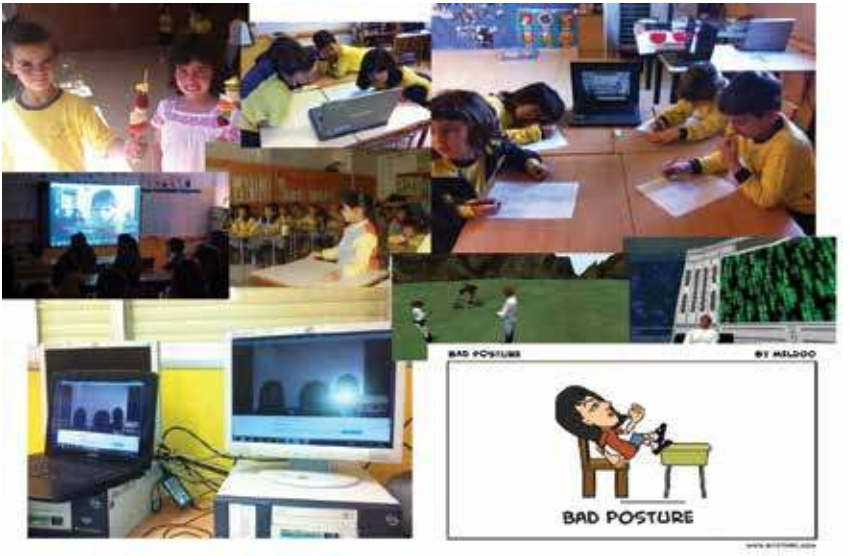


Fig. 3. Examples of the multiple activities from the project, year 2

Healthy Habits combined in-class teaching strategies (role-playing, dialogic use of common resources such as flashcards, posters, worksheets, online games) with technological resources. Through the use of 'machinima' (short video-clips made in Virtual Worlds), students were asked to 'help' two scientists (in the form of avatars) observe the unhealthy behaviour of three 'subject avatars' (Gameboy Gary, Hungry Helga and Smelly Susan) to explore the cause and effect of their actions with the objective to create a scientific video report, addressed to the two avatar scientists, with suggestions on how to modify and improve the habits of the three subjects[2].

Authentic purposeful communication and collaboration were enhanced through video-conferences (synchronous exchanges) between the two classes in order to exchange information about the three case studies and produce the video report.

2 For more detailed information about this project please visit: http://pagines.uab.cat/pads/en/content/healthy-habits

Fig. 4. Students taking part in video-conference

The addressees of the report, the two avatar scientists, followed the suggestions given by the Austrian and Catalan children and some days after the receiving the video, they gave children feedback on the positive impact their suggestions had had on the lifestyles of the studied subjects.

The success of these two real examples demonstrates that it is possible to carry out telecollaborative projects using a foreign language with young learners as young as six year of age. Was it worthwhile? The answer is absolutely. But, was it easy? Of course, it was not. The following section is specially dedicated to those teachers who want to embark on a similar rewarding and challenging experience. We will address them directly when giving them tips and suggestions so as to be persuasive and inspiring. In the next section, basing our formatting on ideas and tips from other authors previously cited (cf. BIE, 2003; Dooly, 2008; Dooly & Masats, 2011; Patton, 2012), we have pulled together key features of implementing telecollaborative projects and illustrated them with samples from our project.

Designing telecollaborative projects step by step: Tips for teachers

The recommendations below, which stem from the experiences gained through the planning, implementation and evaluation of the two projects we just described, are organized as chronological phases you should follow when planning a telecollaborative project. Whether you are a primary school teacher like us or you are working at a higher educational stage, we trust these tips will be useful. Bear in mind that careful planning is the key to success but flexibility to face challenges is equally important. Thus, do not worry, as we have already faced some difficulties in our projects, we can anticipate them and give you some suggestions to overcome them.

Getting started

If you are interested in embarking on this adventure, first you need to be aware of your own motivations. Detect your main interests and reflect upon which teaching methods you like best. Here is where the initial project spark comes from.

It is very positive if you know with which students you would like to start a telecollaborative project. That will help you out in the later stages. Nevertheless, we must say that in our projects, this "choice" was not such, since the first graders were the oldest students we had at that moment and this is why we chose them (our other students were just in kindergarten). The important thing was that we were really interested in changing our own teaching methodology and we were open to experiment using new methods and tasks in class.

Maybe when you take the decision to embark on a telecollaborative project, you do not have a clear idea in mind regarding the contents or the main objectives you want to attain, but that is not a problem. What really matters is that you are excited about the idea of setting up a project. Obviously, you will need way more than just motivation to carry out a telecollaborative project, but in this stage, if you feel excitement and are

eager to learn, this is more than enough. We can assure you that at the very end of the project, all your efforts are going to be compensated.

Finding a partner. Choose a solid team.

Now that you feel prepared to start, bear in mind that in order to have collaboration it is obvious that you need to start thinking about who your partner/s will be. Choosing a solid team with teachers whom you can share teaching goals will almost guarantee success from the very beginning. This is one of the most important challenges we encountered at the first stage in both projects.

This phase can be long or short depending on how lucky you are and on how many contacts, or possibilities of making contacts, you have. Be open to asking other teachers if they have friends abroad who are also teachers. That could be a nice beginning. If you do not have any contact in mind, there are platforms where you can easily find other teachers like you searching for international partners. As an example, you can visit www.etwinning.net.

Our suggestion is that you try to keep it simple at the beginning. Just one partner school is more than enough. Of course, you can also do telecollaborative projects with several schools, but this latter option, as there would be more people involved, this may result in more difficulties in the processes of planning, agreeing, setting up the calendar, etc.

From the very beginning we suggest you to share your enthusiasm, pedagogical views and prior expectations. Once you find someone to work with, share your goals, main ideas, your school context and see if you have the perfect match. If not, try again until you feel comfortable working with that teacher. This process should not be done in a rush, as it is extremely important you choose the right partner to set up and run a telecollaborative project together.

Choosing a partner can be very risky. We are all very enthusiastic at the beginning of a project. But sometimes uncertainty undermines determination and some teachers may abandon projects or not fulfill their responsibilities. Then, telecollaboration is impossible. If you feel you need to formalize the duties and responsibilities of both partners, you can negotiate a kind of contract that makes it clear what you expect from each other.

Making sure the students are a good match

If you are an English teacher like us, you would probably love to set up a virtual exchange with a school from an English speaking country. However we must say that this is not always a positive aspect. Sometimes children who have English as a mother tongue get bored when making the effort to understand kids whose English is not that good and your kids might get frustrated trying to understand and make themselves understood. For example, when our students were listening to the video produced by the Canadian children they had a hard time trying to understand the video because the Canadian students spoke too fast for them. And of course, they were not used to the Canadian accent. However, the Catalan and Austrian kids had a similar command of English, since the target language was foreign for all of them. That is why, in the second project, our students felt more comfortable and more communicative. Of course, this is just an anecdote, but what you need to understand is that non native students can also help others learn English.

It is true that a native "source" is always great to learn the language from but virtual exchanges with non natives using English is a very good practice for the outside world. Today English is mostly used as a *lingua franca* by non native speakers to communicate to other non native speakers all around the world. So be open to establishing a partnership with a group of non native speakers with whom you share the same target language. Make sure they are not from your own country. Some schools set up telecollaboration projects with other local schools. This can be a good idea if the students do not realize that the language of communication is NOT a foreign language. Otherwise they may may not feel the need to use the foreign language is authentic. If you are teaching English as a foreign language, we suggest you find a colleague in the same situation and create a telecollaborative project where the need to use the target language is purposeful.

Brainstorming the first project ideas: think small!

Once you have decided who your partner will be, you should share your ideas. Start by thinking small, as we did on our first project, *Travelling through Art*. It was just a four-week project based on asynchronous

communication (using emails and videos without any direct real time interaction) whose final product (an eBook) was created by students but digitized by teachers themselves. It may seem too simple but believe us, getting started is not going to be that easy. We suggest that you plan clear and simple activities together with your partner for your first project: the chances for success are higher.

What will probably happen is that once you have started, you will find that the project requires extra tasks and perhaps even a time extension. You and your partner may be so motivated and inspired that you will want to plan extra tasks after analyzing the reaction of your students and their interesting debates in class. That is possible if you were not too ambitious from the start. Remember that you also need time to adapt to a new methodology and that also requires time and slow work. We didn't have much practice in implementing student-centered activities before embarking on these projects. And although we were able to adapt, we would recommend gaining some prior experience in using activities to promote learners' autonomy and teamwork before setting up a telecollaborative project. This expertise is not a requirement, but could be very valuable later on.

Communicating with your partner

Once you and your partner have agreed on the main topic of the project, it is time to establish an easy and direct way of communicating. We had very little communication with the Canadian teachers in our first project, as a consequence of the time difference between our countries. This often made feel like we were working alone. Not knowing promptly whether the others are following the agreements or not can cause a lot of stress. That is is why during *Healthy Habits*, our second project, we chose to change partners and work with a teacher located in Europe, who was willing to have weekly contact with us not only to design the project but also to keep track of how things were going while implementing the project at both schools.

This communication is vital in a telecollaborative project. So, we recommend investing the time you need to choose the correct partner, do not rush and make sure both of you are willing to keep in touch often, not just in the creative phase but also during the implementation and evaluation of the project.

Using social media

Suggesting you should use social media to conduct a telecollaborative project may seem evident as social media is the basis of collaboration. However, social media also provides a fantastic and 'funtastic' way of keeping in touch with your partners. At the time we planned our projects we did not use many types of social media; mostly just fora, emails and exchanging videos. Only years later, the Austrian teacher and one of us kept in touch through Facebook and WhatsApp. This helped us to see each other several times, continue sharing educational ideas and materials and we even visited our schools.

Fig. 5. The two telecollaborative partners meeting face-to-face

In our opinion a telecollaborative exchange cannot work properly without coordination and regular communication between partners (first teachers and then students). Keep this in mind when planning your own project.

Planning the project goals and milestones

Now that you have established a direct channel of communication with your partner, you are ready to start planning together what you would like to do

with your students and for how long. Be aware that most of the times you will not have much freedom in choosing the topic of your project. Probably, there will be external factors that will influence your decisions (the time period when your telecollaboration is going to happen, the common points in the two curricula, students' characteristics, etc.), but that is ok. The only thing you need is to be inspired, know your students well and see what could work the best for them and could fit your country's curricula.

Establishing SMART goals

Together with your partner double check that your main project objectives are all SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-related). If you only focus on designing motivating activities but do not have a clear overall purpose in mind, you will easily and unwillingly lose sense of what you are doing and why. Knowing exactly what you want to achieve with your students is the first and most important step of all.

Getting inspired

At the time we created the projects, we did not have a great range of examples to get inspiration from. Today, telecollaborative projects are well known in educational contexts and surfing through the web can inspire you (O'Dowd & Lewis, 2016). Do not miss this opportunity. As soon as you know what you want to teach together (main content, tasks and SMART objectives) you need to explore the Internet. Probably there will be lots of amazing ideas there for you to pick up, copy or adapt to your own needs. Take your time to read some teachers' fora, they will show you many interesting reflections coming from real experiences. Most likely this will help you oversee problems that due to your lack of expertise you would not be able to anticipate at this stage.

As teachers, we tend to be a kind of "superheroes and superheroines", doing everything by ourselves over and over again, but we believe this

is a mistake. Sharing with other teachers is a great way of learning and improving our daily teaching. You can even try to join a teaching groups in your area to keep updated and have easy access to good ready-to-use materials. In our projects we did not use this because we had a group of university teachers monitoring and providing help. But if you do not have access to this type of help, approach others you think might be resourceful (IT experts, members of the local community, other teachers).

Deciding the main project outcomes

Using the SMART goals, we have defined before, create a list of tasks that need to be done to ensure the project goals will be met. Specify when and how you will carry out each task. This will be your first draft, the "skeleton" of your project, or in other words, the project's pathway. Always keep in mind the project's end and the final product children will create. For example, when in our first project we decided the final outcome would be an eBook with stories of the two artists around the world, it was clear to us that our students needed to know which countries their artists visited and where they were located on the globe and how you could travel there, which landmarks they represented in their paintings, how to describe the paintings, etc. So some of the activities we planned were designed to meet these needs.

Fig. 6. The paintings from the virtual art gallery

In our second project, since our students were helping scientists to improve some people's lifestyles (the avatars), they had to learn lots of vocabulary about daily habits, adverbs of frequency and to even state hypothesis in English. Due to this fact, several linguistic activities were created before-

hand in order to support the language students would need later on in the interaction with their Austrian friends.

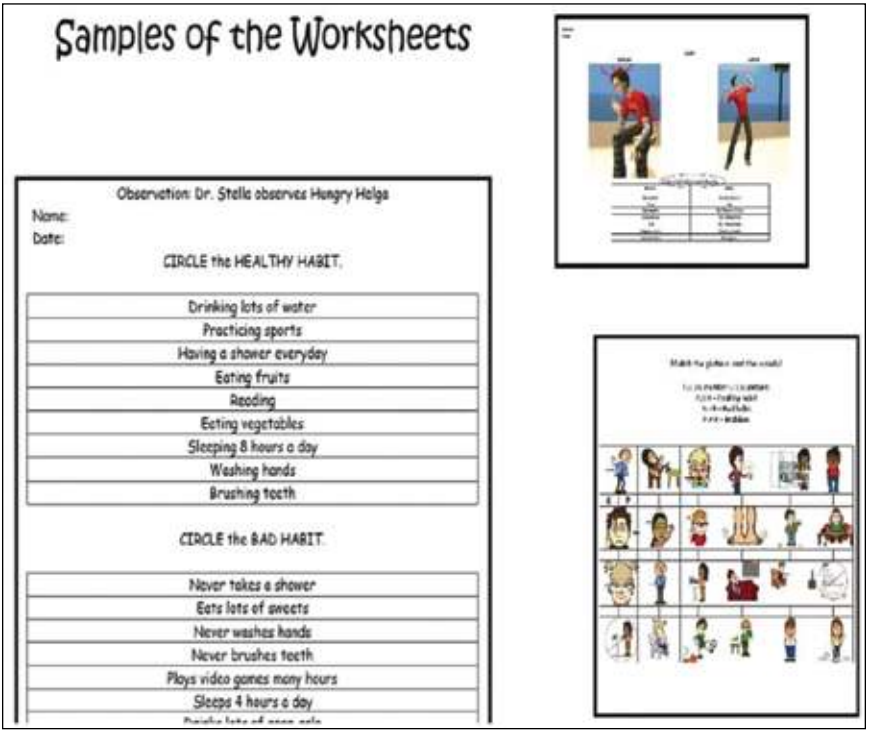


Fig. 7. Samples of scaffolding materials

The main outcomes are always closely related to the objectives. Make sure you have several moments to check them during the implementation phase, too. Probably, the need to add extra activities or eliminate others will arise during the project. Be ready to be flexible! Even if you have a very well planned and carefully timed project, be open minded to adapting classroom tasks at any stage, if that is necessary. This will ensure success and guarantee learning.

Do not try to do everything on your own. First of all you have a partner onboard, and both can search for additional support to help you out (families, city hall, other teachers from school, IT experts…). Create a good team and all your efforts together will result in amazing rewards both for your students and for yourselves too. As it is said: "practice what you preach!".

Keeping the final product in mind from the very beginning

Perhaps the first thing you need to decide together with your partner is what your students will create at the very end thanks to their telecollaborative work. Once you have decided the project's final outcome or product, you can start planning backwards. Visualize what your students will be doing on the last very session and reflect upon what they should have done previously to get there. This is a very well-known technique that helps teachers create tasks that are specifically connected to their main project's objective.

Agreeing on which the final product will be and on the context in which that product is necessary is the first step to guarantee your project will be purposeful. A project is meaningful if it fulfills two criteria. First, students must perceive it as an important task for them to be involved in. Second, a meaningful project always fulfills an educational, social and personal purpose. Make sure your project meets them all. Bear in mind that the final product of your project (which could be a performance, an artwork, a debate, a theatre play, a news programme,…) should always give your students the feeling that what they do matters.

Posing a driving question for your project

If teachers start telecollaborative projects presenting an important inquiry, students will easily understand that they have to do some research in order to learn how to answer it. Besides, if teachers plan carefully this driving question, students will find interesting discoveries together with their partners from abroad. As Larmer and Mergendoller (2010, p. 35) state

> A good driving question captures the heart of the project in clear, compelling language.The question should be provocative, open-ended, complex, and linked to the core of what you want students to learn. It could be abstract (When is war justified?); concrete (Is our water safe to drink?); or focused on solving a problem.

The driving question in *Travelling through Art* (What would have happened if Joan Abelló and Rob Gonsalves had travelled the world together?) was not made explicit from the very beginning but it was revealed to the

students just before starting the process of writing the eBook. The teachers, however, always had it in mind and this is why when students started to plan their stories, they had enough information to decide where the two painters would travel to (the cities or landscapes depicted in their works), how they would travel there (students had learnt about means of transports) and what they would visit in each place (students were familiar with the paintings and the landmarks represented in them). In *Healthy Habits*, the driving question was: How can we help Smelly Susan, Gameboy Gary and Hungry Helga have a healthier lifestyle? This is what students had to investigate in order to be able to change the avatar's unhealthy behaviour.

As you can see, in these examples good driving questions cannot be answered with just the help of a book or the Internet. A good question will probably raise many other questions that students will have to answer in order to be ready to fulfill the project's' objective and create, at the same time, the final outcome (an ebook in the case of the first project and a scientific video-report in the case of the second). The driving questions gave students both a purpose and a challenge and connected them to the real world.

Arranging tasks in different stages

Once you have the final product in mind it is time to list the activities or the tasks that will lead your students there and to arrange them in different stages. Each stage should have a clear objective (for instance, presentation of the project, getting to know our friends from abroad, planning together, creating the final product, delivering the final product, etc). We would recommend you to create a timeline since it is a clean and concise visual representation of the main project's events. This tool will help you to assign tasks to different time spans and see the overall plan easily. Besides, take into consideration that collaborative tasks usually increase in difficulty.

In both of our projects we started planning months before the implementation time. This is our advice. Plan ahead. Time is limited and telecollaborative projects cannot be improvised. Invest the amount of time you need to achieve a careful planning of each stage before starting the project. Good planning is a part of good doing.

Bear in mind that a telecollaborative project does not mean that only one language is used. There are many examples of telecollaborative projects where the students may be using only one language (e.g. a lingua franca such as English) or two languages (each partner may as a language mentor for the other); or multilingual exchanges where many languages are used to access information. Talk about that once your project skeleton is ready and, if you opt for a multilingual project, assign a language to each of the tasks planned.

Determining your role as a teacher in a telecollaborative project

In traditional classrooms the teacher is the information giver and students are the recipients of the information the teacher shares. Be ready to change this if you want to take part in a telecollaborative project as telecollaboration promotes the construction of shared knowledge among all the participants involved. Students take the responsibility of searching and transforming information and teachers guide them through this process or scaffold their learning. This is why it is very important to plan with your partner which will be your roles in each tasks.

As learners take an active role during the whole project, they need to communicate very often with their partners. During all stages, teachers have a very important role in order to prepare learners for their virtual interaction. Communication among students can be asynchronous or synchronous. In either case the teacher's role is essential. In both of our projects our role was very active since young learners needed a lot of linguistic and cognitive support but also guidance on how to work with others.

Teachers usually embark on telecollaborative projects with students who have a relatively good command of English with the thought that communication with students from abroad will be relatively easier. We strongly believe that age or aptitude should never be the only factors that determine your group choice. We would like to say that we were impressed with our young students, who barely knew how to read or write in their L1 when they were presented with the demand of writing an eBook in an L2 and succeeded! When faced with the challenge of communicating with other students in English, as this was the only shared language, our young

learners were very creative and made hypothesis about the target language. Catalan and Spanish was not needed at all. Most of the times they ended up with invented words or structures, but other times their guesses were right. In either case, they proved to possess good communication skills even for their early age and on putting it into play, they went beyond what the curriculum stated they should learn during grade one and two.

Promoting 21st Century skills

In a good project students build skills valuable for today's world, such as critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, leadership, initiative, flexibility, etc. Pay special attention to these aspects and create a way of assessing them along the project.

Cooperating and collaborating with students from a different country implies the use of digital tools for communication and for producing the products. Therefore, this type of projects also favour the development of digital and audiovisual competences. When planning the project, it is very important to reach a consensus regarding which tools are going to be used to for each task. For instance, to communicate synchronously with Austria we chose Skype and observed that these chats were one of our students' favourite tasks (in spite of being one of the most linguistically and cognitively demanding activities).

Giving students' voice & choice

If you allow your students to be responsible and take decisions, they will be more motivated to participate in your project. Students should be allowed to make some choices about the products to be created, how they want to work, and how they would use their time. Since our students were very young, teachers had to decide most of the tasks in advance. However, learners still had voice and choice. For instance they decided they wanted to visit the museum of the artist from their town, Joan Abelló, they also

chose how they were going to present themselves to the partners (through a video with still images they selected themselves, using Moodle to write about their likes and hobbies) and decided which suggestions they would like to give to the unhealthy avatars.

Plan a final event

Purposeful projects have a target addressee other than just students' classmates or their teacher. When learners have a real audience, they become more engaged and work harder. They also care more about the quality of their final product because they are presenting it to somebody. It is highly advisable to include a final event in the project's plan, that is, a session devoted to presenting the final product and the conclusions to the addressee.

When implementing our projects, we did not take this step into account and we missed a great opportunity for closing the telecollaborative projects properly. In *Traveling through Art* we could have sent the ebook to a literary website. In the case of *Healthy Habits*, students could have uploaded their scientific video-report on youtube (always with permission from parents) in order to help people with similar unhealthy behaviours as the three avatars.

Select digital tools

Using new technology in the classroom is a must nowadays, not only to communicate but also to present, search for information or to produce a product. In order to guarantee success, you first need to become familiar with the tools you and your partner have decided to use during the project and check for yourself their affordances and drawbacks. For instance, it took us several weeks to decide which eBook software we were going to use. In the end, we decided that we, teachers, would edit the book because the software available at that point was not user friendly for kids. Today there is a wide variety of digital tools for creating stories targeted to very

young learners such as Storybird, Smilebox, StoryJumper or similar ones. If we were to do the project again, we would make use of one of these tools so as to give children the opportunity to edit their own books.

Be prepared to face technical problems

Telecollaborative projects rely on the use of technology. Learners need to be in contact online to work together, but communication breakdowns due to technical failures are not as rare as one would wish. When using technology, be ready to face technical problems and have a plan B in your pocket. Either you and your partner have an alternative communicative tool to the one planned (for example, you may decide to use Skype but have messenger installed on the computers just in case Skype is not working properly the day the two classes were expected to meet online) or agree beforehand that if problems occur, common tasks will be postponed.

In our case, we opted for this second option and we had fillers (optional or alternative activities) ready in case the planned activities that required internet connection or digital tools could not be done on the day they were scheduled. Remember, though, that a good telecollaborative project should link what happens in the virtual exchange with what happens in the face to face classroom. Fillers may well suit the project's goals if they are carefully chosen by the two partners.

Plan the language your students will need to use

Do not fill up your project with lots of tasks, digital tools or group activities if you do not have plenty of time to invest on planning the type of language and linguistic support learners will need from you. As teachers we need to be very well aware of the kind of language our students will need to be able to carry out tasks in collaboration with their partners.

Linguistic preparation does not necessarily be tackled through teacher-centered activities. You can design tasks in which students need to discover

how language works. To test their progress or to give them opportunities to play with language at their own pace, you can make use of software designed for such purpose (for instance, JClic, Quizzizz, Quizlet, Kahoot, Plickers, Socrative, etc.). Take as much time as you need or have in order to give all the linguistic support your students may need. This is a very important step. In our Healthy Habits project we spent 3 one-hour-sessions to prepare students to take part in a 20-minute video call with our Austrian partners.

Make the most of the cultural exchange

As we have already said, our projects were designed to promote quality contact among students so that they could develop their foreign language skills and intercultural communicative competence. There are three main types of tasks to promote cultural awareness: information exchange tasks, comparative tasks and collaborative tasks.

The first group of tasks are those in which students need to provide their friends from abroad with personal information such as their own biography, a description of their school, local town or city, main cultural traditions, etc. They are very suitable at the beginning of your project, since it is very important for your students to know who they will be working together with later on.

The second group of tasks required learners not only to exchange information but also to go one step further, make comparisons and pay attention to the similarities and differences between the two cultures (differences in school subjects, timetables, hobbies…).

Group Students Intentionally

Your project plan requires you to state which tasks must be done in groups and which one individually or in pairs**.** Together with your partner think carefully about the activities you will do and which type of interaction they will be required. Use this information to establish how you will group

your students. When creating teams for a project never do random grouping. Students groupings may have an impact on the project's success or failure. Do not improvise groups, especially if it is your first project.

We would just suggest that you do not segregate your students according to supposed abilities, achievements or aptitudes. Segregation seriously weakens telecollaboration.

Decide what to assess and by whom

Assessment is always challenging and in telecollaborative projects this is not an exception. One of the agreements you and your partner need to reach refers to what will be assessed and by whom. Ideally, the addressee of the student's final output should give them feedback on the work done. In our first project, the addressee was not clear. If the eBook had been aimed at a particular group of readers, they could have provided them with comments based on their reading experience. We changed this in our second project.

In *Healthy Habits*, the students were preparing the video-report for two scientists who adopted the form of avatars. The teachers were obviously controlling those avatars but the students were taking part in a simulation, the addressee was clear and the feedback too. The two avatars followed the students suggestions on how to modify the behaviour of the three subjects under study and told the children what had happened. As the subjects were avatars, the kids could also observe the impact of their suggestions on the evolution of the subjects' lifestyle and health.

Assessing the achievement of the project's goals by receiving feedback on the quality of the final product may occasionally not be enough. Assessment is institutionalized and assessment requirements may change from one educational context to another. Therefore, it is important to negotiate what will be assessed together and what will be assessed by each teacher. In either case, assessment criteria and procedures should be clear from the start and students should know them before they start the process.

Choose the assessment tool you want to use and involve students in its design

Students need guidance to elaborate the project's outcomes and also need to be informed on how they will be assessed. Rubrics can accomplish this double folded objective as they have proved to be powerful tools for revision and evaluation. As teachers, we should invest time creating or searching for good rubrics as they can provide guidance for students along the whole process. Alternatively, students can be engaged in the process of creating a rubric if the objective is to make them reflect upon the characteristics of the product they need to produce. In either case, students take the responsibility of checking and assessing what they produce and how they do it. Good guidance leads to high/quality products.

Fig. 8. Self-assessment rubric

In our first project, our self/evaluation rubrics were written in Catalan. That was a mistake we corrected in the second year. We should not ask students to switch language to assess their learning. As teachers we need to find simple and visual assessment tools. Rubrics do not need to be complex evaluation tools.

Concluding remarks

In this article we have argued in favour of introducing telecollaborative projects in the language classrooms as a means to contextualise learning and provide students with meaningful opportunities to co-construct linguistic and content-based knowledge while developing cognitive, communicative, digital, social, interpersonal and intercultural skills. To illustrate our viewpoint, we have briefly described two projects that, using Dooly & Sadler's (2016, p. 55) words, "embraced the premise that telecollaboration—even with beginning learners—can provide fundamental opportunities for communicative exchanges which are key to long-term language learning". As learning is a social practice, telecollaborative projects must ensure language is used purposefully and that students learn by doing and by communicating with peers to gain and transform information into knowledge and to agree on the steps to follow to attain a shared objective.

This chapter addresses teachers interested in adopting this methodology in their classrooms with the objective of giving them hints on how to set up a telecollaborative project. Underlying the list of steps to follow lies the believe that telecollaboration is not possible if one is not eager to spend time on searching for a partner, on scheduling virtual online meetings with him/her to plan together, on setting SMART goals, on deciding on the project's outcomes, on posing interesting driving questions, on arranging a variety of structured tasks, on choosing appropriate digital tools, on preparing students for collaboration and on celebrating success. Planning and assessing are two complex tasks on which the project's success or failure relies on. By making reference to the two described projects, we have tried to guide teachers along the challenging process of planning a telecollaborative project.

Telecollaborative projects are demanding for teachers as they need to change their traditional role of knowledge transmitter to become a facilitator who gives the floor to their students. Yet, in order to guarantee students can be responsible for their own learning, teachers need to plan sensitive projects, anticipate the challenges students will probably face and foresee possible solutions or activate scaffolding mechanisms. Based on the experience of having planned and implemented several projects, two of which were presented here, we will also make teachers aware of all these challenges and will try to prove that embarking on such an experience is nothing but rewarding for both teachers and students alike.

The article concludes that true collaboration, especially when participant teachers and learners come from different cultural and educational backgrounds, demands teachers to embark on a process of negotiating common contents, designing different types of modes to communicate and gain knowledge, selecting or creating a wide range of common resources and tasks, agreeing on shared assessment criteria and tools, and being willing to reach consensus between colleagues and to respect the decisions taken, even when it is necessary to alter plans to solve unexpected problems. Yet, we are positive about the results and rewards and encourage teachers to set up similar virtual exchanges, even with very young learners.

And this is all. Have fun when planning your first telecollaborative project!

References

Buck Institute for Education (BIE). (2003). *Introduction to project based learning*. Retrieved from http://bie.org/images/uploads/general/20fa7d42c216e2ec171a212e97fd4a9e.pdf

Bosch, D., González, N., & Casas, M. (2005). Las competencias comunicativas en la formación democrática de los jóvenes: describir, explicar, justificar, interpretar y argumentar. *Enseñanza de las Ciencias Sociales, 4*, 39–52.

Caballero de Rodas, B., & Masats, D. (1999). Les llengües estrangeres com a vehicle d'aprenentatges escolars. *Perspectiva Escolar, 232*, 19–25.

Dooly, M. (2007). Choosing the appropriate communication tools for an on-line exchange. In R. O'Dowd (Ed.). *Online intercultural exchange. Language and intercultural communication education guides series* (pp. 213–234). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Dooly, M. (ed.) (2008). *Telecollaborative language learning. Moderating intercultural collaboration and language learning. A guidebook to moderating intercultural collaboration online.* Bern: Peter Lang.

Dooly, M. (2010). Obrim l'aula per internacionalitzar l'escola. *Perspectiva Escolar, 347*, 61–66.

Dooly, M. (2015). Networked classrooms and networked minds: Language teaching in a brave new world. In C. J. Jenks & P. Seedhouse (Eds.) *International perspectives on the ELT classroom* (pp. 84–109). Houndsmills, Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Dooly, M. (2016). Proyectos didácticos para aprender lenguas. In D. Masats & L. Nussbaum (Ed.), Enseñanza y aprendizaje de las lenguas extranjeras en educación secundaria obligatoria (pp.169–193). Madrid: Síntesis.

Dooly, M. (2017). Telecollaboration. In C.A. Chapelle and S. Sauro (Eds.) *The handbook of technology and second language teaching and learning* (pp. 169–183). Hoboken (NJ): John Willey & Sons.

Dooly, M., & Eastment, D. (Eds.). (2008). *How we're going about it. Teachers' voices on innovative approaches to teaching and learning languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Dooly, M., & Masats, D. (2011) Closing the loop between theory and praxis: New models in EFL teaching. *ELT Journal, 65*(1), 42–51.

Dooly, M., & Masats, D. (tbp 2019). 'What do you zinc about the project'? Examples of language learning through technology-enhanced project-based language learning. In B. Gulbahar & S. Tammy (Eds.). Theory, research, and models of technology-infused project-based language learning and teaching: Focusing on form and function. Oxford: Routledge.

Dooly, M., & Sadler, R. (2016). Becoming little scientists: Technologically-enhanced project-based language learning. *Language Learning & Technology, 20*(1), 54–78. Retrieved from: http://llt.msu.edu/issues/february2016/doolysadler.pdf

Dooly, M., Masats, D., & Mont, M. (2012). 'Snoopy, go left!': Real activities of young language learners in virtual worlds. Paper presented at APAC ELT Convention 2012: Solid learning for liquid times, Universitat de Barcelona, Catalunya. Presentation available at: http://pagines.uab.cat/pads/sites/pagines.uab.cat.pads/files/APAC_PRESENTATION%202012fv.pdf

Dooly, M., Mont, M., & Masats, D. (2014). Becoming little scientists: A case study of technologically-enhanced project-based language learning. APAC-ELT Journal, 78, 34–40. Retrieved from: http://www.apac.es/publications/documents/magazine78.pdf

Gómez, I., Jorba, J., & Prat, A. (1997). L'ús de la llengua en situació d'aprenentatge des de les àrees curriculars. *Articles, 3*, 79–90.

Jorba, J., Gómez, I., & Prat, À. (1998). *Parlar i escriure per aprendre. Ús de la llengua en situació d'ensenyament-aprenentatge de lesàrees curriculars*. Bellaterra: ICE UAB.

Larmer, J., & Mergendoller, J. R. (2010). Seven essentials for project-based learning. *Educational Leadership, 68*(1), 34–37.

Marbà, A., & Márquez, C. (2007). Leer ciencias para aprender ciencias: reflexiones y propuestas. *Aula de innovación educativa, 165*, 54–57.

Masats, D., Dooly, M. & Costa, X. (2009). Exploring the potential of language learning through video making. In L. Gómez Chova, D. Martí Belenguer & I. Candel Torres (Eds.). *Proceedings of EDULEARN09 Conference* (p. 341–352). Valencia: IATED.

Muñoz, C., & Nussbaum, L. (1997). Les Enjeux Linguistiques dans l'Éducation en Espagne, *Aile, 10*, 5–20.

Noguerol, A. (2008). El tratamiento integrado de las lenguas en el marco europeo. *Textos de didáctica de la lengua y la literatura, 47*, 10–19.

O'Dowd, R. (2016). Emerging trends and new directions in telecollaborative learning. *Calico Journal, 33*(3), 291–310.

O'Dowd, R., & Lewis T. (2016). *Online intercultural exchange: policy, pedagogy, practice.* Oxen & New York: Routledge.

Patton, A. (2012). *Work that matters. The teacher's guide to project-based learning*. London: Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Retrieved from: http://www.innovationunit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Work-That-Matters-Teachers-Guide-to-Project-based-Learning.pdf

Prat, A. (2006). Aprender ciencias sociales y lenguaje de manera integrada: Una experiencia en la formación inicial de maestros. *Enseñanza de las Ciencias Sociales: Revista de Investigación, 5*, 135–145.

Prat, A., & Márquez, C. (2005). Leer en clase de ciencias. *Enseñanza de las Ciencias: revista de investigación y experiencias didácticas, 23*(3), 431–440.

Sadler, R., & Dooly, M. (2016). Twelve years of telecollaboration: what we have learnt. *ELT Journal, 70*(4), 401–413.

Alexandra Bonet Pueyo
IES Torre del Palau (Terrassa)

Chapter 5. Making a difference: Reflecting on a telecollaborative project aimed at social change

How many times have we heard it said that our students are digital natives? As teachers we are witness everyday to the reality of our present-day society where young adults increasingly rely on and demonstrate their 'scientific know how'. And we also see that no matter what religion, gender or social class, most teenagers have readily immersed themselves into this high-tech world.

But we must not forget the key role education has in guiding and supporting our youth so they can use technologies efficiently and responsibly. Arguably, one of the first steps for building a better society is ensuring that its youngest members walk into the adult world with the knowledge and skills necessary to attain well-being, on a personal and professional level. This implies that educators must make sure that students acquire appropriate values, and learn commitment and responsibility to society when using digital tools.

Inevitably, most of the young learners sitting in our classrooms nowadays will find themselves working in an increasingly connected, globalized world. Preparing for the future challenges they will face in their lives as the world becomes more and more interlinked must be a high priority for teachers everywhere. Problems such as poverty, migration and climate change will require solutions at both local and global levels and it will be collaborative thinking, collective strategizing and working together –often facilitated through technology- which will most certainly be key solutions to many of the challenges facing society, both now and in the future.

Aware of these demands on education, the teachers in our school -which is located in Terrassa, Spain (a city near Barcelona in the Catalonia region)- are always eager to innovate our practices to ensure that we are bestowing on our students the widest array of possibilities to improve their knowledge and 21st century skills. In particular, our school places great

emphasis on technology through various avenues. Projects implemented in the school might be as diverse as an American presidential campaign for "President's day" in year 9, mobile app development in year 10 or a musical performance in year 12. The underlying premise of this approach to educating our youth is to ensure that students have acquired the necessary abilities underscored by Wagner (2008) in his work report entitled *The Global Achievement Gap.* These are: critical thinking and problem solving; collaboration across networks and leading by influence; agility and adaptability; initiative and entrepreneurialism; effective oral and written communication; accessing and analyzing information; and curiosity and imagination.

Many, if not all of the above objectives, had already been taken into consideration when the syllabuses were developed in our school. We like to consider our school as the 'central nervous system' where all students can learn autonomously while generating knowledge together. Our goal is to help them acquire the necessary content knowledge to become responsible citizens while working and sharing our thoughts and opinions to help them develop their own critical thinking. Still, as it has already been mentioned, we are always keen to try out new ideas and approaches and that is why, when we were offered the opportunity to take part in a telecollaborative project with another school in Europe, Torre del Palau embarked on the venture enthusiastically.

Why telecollaboration?

Not only the English department at our school, but also the school management felt that taking part in a telecollaborative project would be beneficial for the 12 year old students who would be participating. It is commonly believed that giving teenagers access to the culture and language they are studying as a second language increases their intrinsic motivation as it gives them the opportunity to focus on other realities beyond the classroom. As Castello (2015) mentions, the L2 learner needs to identify with the target language culture – this identification may be linked to their progress and success in learning that language.

However it was not merely the opportunity to be exposed to and to practice the use of the target (foreign) language (and its culture) that prompted the teachers and school administrators to participate. The fact that the students would be involved in Project-Based Learning (PBL) was also relevant to the decision to form a part of the telecollaborative team. According to Thomas (2000), PBL offers key features for supporting deep, transformative learning since, by nature, "projects are complex tasks, based on challenging questions or problems". This implies that students will be involved in "problem-solving, decision making, or investigative activities" (p. 2).

Locally, our high school has a good reputation for its technology-based and project-based curriculum. In particular, the teachers feel that appropriate use of technology can help empower students. As Warshauer (1996) points out, teachers can boost learners' motivation when dealing with computer work, not only because of the empowerment and enhancement of learning opportunities, but also because their electronic communication widens and can be integrated in regular class goals and achievements. However, despite the regular use of technology in our classrooms, the notion of technology-enhanced, project-based language learning through telecollaboration is not well-known within the Catalonian context. Both the Swedish and Spanish teachers were eager to see how their students would interact, create and evolve thanks to their common work and effort.

Planning: Diagnosing possible obstacles

Telecollaboration opens a whole new range of possibilities for teaching and learning, in particular in language education because it obliges both the teachers and the students to engage in intercultural sharing and global communication. Often times this may be the first contact that young students have with individuals who are not part of their immediate community or their interaction may be limited to rather indirect, short-term exchanges, facilitated through adults (e.g. holidays). Thus, this project was of special interest to the teachers involved as it included a more direct, personal engagement with distanced partners that was needs-driven (they had to work together to complete their assigned tasks).

The idea of this project came about thanks to Maria Mont and Melinda Dooly, both of whom work at the Department of Language, Literature and Social Science Teaching Department (Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona). The exchange was part of the larger research project called Knowledge for Network-based Education, Cognition and Teaching (KONECT-EDU2013-43932-P)[1]. With the goal of finding ways to help our students improve their communicative and academic skills to ensure their responsible participation in today's society, we began to work together with our Swedish partner to devise an attractive project that would allow our students to work together on a project that would have social impact.

As a preliminary step, first meetings were set up between Melinda Dooly and the whole English department of the Catalan School in order to introduce the general idea to all of the teaching staff and to ensure administrative support for the elaboration and implementation of the project. Some possible themes for the project were lobbed in the first gatherings, resulting in an array of ideas such as 'dystopic literature', 'future careers, and how to prepare for them' and 'our lives in the near future'. A meeting was also set up with the head of studies and the school principal to discuss the research parameters and research ethics and to obtain informed, comprehensive consent from the school administration, the teaching staff, the parents and the students. However, it was not until the Swedish teacher (Sara Bruun) paid a visit to Catalonia in October of 2015 that final decisions were made and the project began to take shape. During the time the news had been widely focused on the plight of Syrian refugees and it was decided that this would be a central focus point of the project.

Similar to cooking a dish from a good recipe, all the ingredients of the telecollaboration program had to be prepared and 'set out on the tabletop' to be added to the dish before the 'real cooking' of the project could begin. Those first meetings with Dr Dooly and Sara Brunn were the 'ingredients selection and preparation' sessions for the project that then became the springboard to make sure the project would be successful.

One of the 'ingredients' had already been set out prior to the meetings. The two secondary teachers had already shared key information concerning the language level of their respective learners, learning goals, course objectives and general course outlines. It was clear that students' level of

1 www.konectproject.com

the target language in Furutorpkolann was higher than the level required in Spain however this was not considered to be a barrier to designing and implementing a successful telecollaborative project. During the 3-day meeting, which was hosted at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, the topic, the learning activities, and some materials were selected and designed. During the discussions it soon became apparent that five important issues had to be resolved: the lack of overlap in schedules (implying that synchronous meetings would be difficult), the difference between the two groups regarding their command of English, the difference in amount of class time devoted to teaching English in each country, different class ratios and dissimilar course requirements.

In order to overcome the first barrier, the teachers decided that it would be best to prepare and send videos with presentations prepared by the students. These messages would serve as introductions and at other times would form part of input from each other regarding different assigned tasks, all of which would eventually lead to the final project output. At the same time, the teachers were aware that a telecollaborative project lasting over several weeks that relied only on asynchronous communication ran the risk of losing students' interest. So in order integrate face-to-face communication and boost motivation, it was decided to have a smaller subgroup of volunteers (called 'Junior Researchers') who would meet outside of class to discuss issues that arose in the project, to reflect on what the students were doing and learning, to exchange opinions about the project and then to report back to their classmates what had been discussed synchronously with their telecollaborative partners.

Despite the different levels of command and comfort with using English among the students involved in the enterprise, everyone agreed that the right course of action was to support and really promote its use whenever possible. For the Swedish teacher, reading was a key skill that she wanted to focus on, whereas for the Spanish class, oral skills were predominant in the course. So, the first idea, which came up at the very early stages of the project, was to read a novel that dealt with the issue of seeking refuge from war and to use this as the basis for the rest of the collaboration. However, that was deemed too difficult for the Spanish students so web articles about the Syrian crisis were chosen because, while these texts include some technical or low-frequency vocabulary, the length is much more manageable. Likewise, the teachers decided that the listening input should include native-level English sources so news clips and short

documentaries were also added to the list of resources. And of course, the students were getting 'target language' input from each other – which is not always recognized by foreign language teachers as an important asset to telecollaborative projects when in fact it is a genuine 'simulacra' of the real world they will be inhabiting where transnational workplaces are usually made up of 'non-native' English speakers.

> Within the context of key knowledge instruction, **students must also learn the essential skills for success in today's world, such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration.** When a school or district builds on this foundation, combining the entire Framework with the necessary support systems—standards, assessments, curriculum and instruction,professional development and learning environments—students are more engaged in the learning process and graduate better prepared to thrive in today's global economy. (Partnership 21st Century Learning, 2015, p. 9; bold letters added by author)

Next, the teachers discussed the differences in number of hours that it would be possible to devote to the activities in the project on each side of the partnership. On the one hand, Spanish students attended English lessons for 5 hours a week. Three of them are dedicated to regular classes, whilst the other two were part of an elective subject in the syllabus. On the other hand, Swedish students only receive 2 hours of English per week in their school. This was immediately sorted out by assigning the 2 hours of the elective classes as the working space for the project in the Spanish school.

Another issue that was detected during the initial meeting was the difference in number of students in the partner classes. There were 27 students in Sweden versus 15 in the Spanish class. Again, this was fairly easy to resolve by setting up larger working groups in the Spanish class so that the international working groups were made up of five students total (3 Spanish, 2 Swedish). This also provided additional group support to the Spanish groups who felt less confident in their target language use.

Finally, because the Swedish partnership would be carrying out the project during all of the hours that would normally be dedicated to 'regular' foreign language class, the Swedish teacher needed follow a quite strict teaching plan that included the 4 language acquisition skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Since the project was going to be carried out in the elective part of the English classes in the Catalan school it was not a problem for the teacher to adapt to the Swedish course requirements and both teachers agreed to design the activities to ensure all the

skills were presented and practices in a balanced fashion. Having worked out the possible pitfalls regarding schedule, course needs, student profile and calendar, we were now ready to begin planning the activities and sessions of our project.

Finalizing the plans: 'How to make a difference' comes to life

Having settled possible points of contention, we now turned to giving an overall outline to the project. First we needed to set the number of sessions we would devote to the project that we had decided to call "How to make a difference". Despite the fact that we were 'first-timers', we decided to embark on a 12-week project that would take the entire semester. We felt that it was the minimum amount of time needed for such a complex topic and we really wanted our students to have time to comprehend the different aspects of a social situation that is quite alien to many of them.

We also wanted them to create a final output that could have a social impact on their local communities so it was agreed that the students would work together to create a blog that covered several aspects of the 'Syrian crisis' – from explaining to the public how refugees are categorized and assigned asylum to providing tips and ideas how everyday citizens can be involved in local campaigns to provide aide. The main idea, however, was to raise public awareness that the situation should not be seen as 'isolated' from the local community; as members of the European Union citizens from Spain and Sweden should consider these situations as part of their own daily lives. Thus the final project was a *Wordpress* titled *How to make a difference*[2].

Having agreed upon a final output, it was important to identify the objectives we would both seek as teachers of the two separate classes. Eventually we settled on the following:

2 The final product can be seen here: https://howtomakeadifference2016.wordpress.com/

- Improvement of linguistic competence in the target language (English).
- Interacting through the four main communicative skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.
- Practicing and improving communicative skills through technology (21st century competences).
- Development of intercultural competences.
- Development of the ability to work in teams (project and collaborative work).

Next, we designed the activities (main tasks and subtasks that lead up to the final product and decide their sequencing. It was decided that the first activities would be individual and group introductions between the partners. These were done differently in each country. Students from Sweden sent videos about themselves and their hometown. Students in Catalonia programmed short games using the programme Scratch to share with their partners[3]. These were followed up by a group video of the whole group welcoming their Swedish partners.

Because the project started just before Christmas, the partner groups exchanged informational videos about how this holiday is celebrated in each country. In the case of the Catalan students, a video about traditions that are not very well-known outside Catalonia was created. Moreover, the Catalan students decided to mail traditional Christmas food from their country so the Swedish students could enjoy "turró", (a special Christmas nougat), before their winter break.

The roadmap: How to make a difference

The project was divided into eight main blocks of activities that served as orientation for both groups to work together towards the final product. However, some flexibility in the planning was needed in order to allow for any local contingencies and to ensure space and time for extra sessions or activities that each local partner might require. The eight main blocks were:

3 This was done in conjunction with the technology teacher, Cristobal Peralbo.

1. To take a close look at the term 'refugee': look at how has it been defined and used in different texts and contexts, discuss what the students understand when they hear this word. Finally, the students should work in their online partner groups to come up with their own definition of the word which would be added to the blog for raising public awareness of the discourse surrounding the topic.
2. To create a first draft of a manifest: After reading and discussing 'prompting' texts, the students discuss the main content to be included in a manifest they would write on the behalf of the refugee community. Each group creates three to five sentences to complete the phrase "We deserve …".
3. To discover more about refugee life: Students view documentary information about the typical travelling that a refugee might have to do before arriving to a refugee camp (travelling by foot, lorries, boats). Students are encouraged to fully understand the distances covered, what the conditions are like both on their way and once at refugee camps, what happens once an individual or family is in a camp and what the status of asylum requires. This exploration is supported by videos and reading in English about the life and conditions of EU refugees. Students create commentary messages for their partners about their opinions regarding what they have discovered.
4. To promote understanding of both sides of an argument: Both groups are introduced to argumentative text writing. They are then required to compose two texts that represent both sides (for and against) of the situation of providing asylum for political refugees.
5. To gain deeper insight into the causes: Students are provided with articles that outline the history of the conflicts, dating from the beginning of the conflict till 2015. This activity focuses on reading comprehension and provides arguments for finalizing the essays.
6. To create a campaign for public awareness: Starting from the slogan 'Keep calm and poke on', students work in groups to create succinct 'tips' for the local community regarding small efforts everyone can do to contribute to helping families in refugee camps across the European Union. Having raised public awareness that it is not just a 'distant' problem, this activity focuses creating 'pokes' (a term commonly used with Facebook and therefore familiar to the students) to prod the community's activism. Ideas range from donating books and sleeping bags to inviting refugee families to one's own home.

7. To report on the situation: Students are asked to be 'journalists' and show the world what they have learnt about the conflict (causes consequences, what can be done).
8. To write and post a manifest: Student groups edit and finalize their sections of the manifest. These are recorded and shared on the blog and the partners provide feedback.

Due to differences in the class calendar, the final sessions (wrap-up and revision) for each group were slightly different. In the Spanish class, the students created a Prezi to reflect on their learning. In Sweden, students used Augmented Reality glasses to watch a 3D film called *The Displaced,* produced by the NY Times. As each individual watched it, they had to dictate to the rest of the class what they were watching. The rest of the class took notes of what they were learning and feeling as they listened to the experiences narrated in the film. All of the reflection materials from both countries were posted in the blog so the learners could check out their partners' productions.

In terms of assessing, both teachers agreed that exams were not needed. Formative assessment and self-evaluation tools were used instead, along with assessment of group and individual products stemming from different sub-tasks throughout the course of the project.

One final synchronous meeting was held between the classes (the Swedish teacher switched her class schedule with another teacher for the day) and the partners exchanged their farewells via Skype.

The Junior Researchers

As mentioned previously, four students from each country volunteered to be group leaders or 'Junior Researchers'. Apart from the other project tasks these students also had the responsibility of maintain regular contact with the other country's Junior Researchers (through social media, outside of class hours) in order to record and document the development of the work done within the project (see figure 1). These were students who had quite high command of the target language and felt comfortable using it. The role of Junior Researchers provided them with an added incentive to practice the target language and kept them motivated when they finished their tasks more quickly than others.

Fig. 1. Junior researchers hold videoconference after class

In Spain, the sessions that were held outside the class were supervised by a PhD student from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Because the Junior Researchers were tasked with informing their counterparts about what was going on in the project on their end, the Spanish teacher provided them with form they could use to ask their colleagues about their impressions regarding the different activities such as what they had enjoyed, what technology they had used and their opinions of the topics that had been discussed. General impressions from both groups were then recorded in a shared google document.

The implementation of the project

Despite having been designed by the teachers from each country together, when it came to the actual implementation, adjustments were often made locally and *in situ*. "Language acquisition is fostered if it occurs in a context that is supportive and motivating, communicative and referential, developmentally appropriate, and feedback rich" (Kagan, 1995, p. 2). Taking the individual contexts into account, there were implicit differences to the ways in which the sub-tasks for producing some of the output were carried out. For example, the Swedish students were given more autonomy when writing their essays than the Spanish class because the Swedish group was more used to doing this type of lesson. For the Spanish students this was a new format and therefore they were instructed more on essay structures, possible sentences and pieces of information to include in their productions.

However, all activities were designed with the final aim of setting up and sustaining a collaborative learning process, integrating the five key features presented by Liang (2002) which are the following: positive interdependence, individual accountability, quality group processing, explicit teaching of small group skills and teaching of social skills.

In the next section, how some of the sub-tasks were carried out is described in more detail.

Taking a close look at the term 'refugee'

During this task cycle, students had to reach an agreement on how they would define the word 'refugee'. In order to scaffold their understanding of the term, two tools were used: *Kahoot* and *Quizlet.* Kahoot is an online platform that allows teachers to create learning games in different formats (e.g multiple choice questions, open-ended questions, etc.). The students can answer the questions on their own devices (computers or cellphones) in the class while the questions are displayed on a shared screen (e.g. whiteboard). This tool encourages rapid, individual participation to answering questions and is often used as a 'mini-race' among the students. Similarly, Quizlet allows teachers to create interactive online questions. It is especially suitable for working on definitions since it allows teachers to create online flashcards.

Kahoot was used to introduce to potential vocabulary that could be used to write their definitions (e.g 'home', 'safety', 'freedom'). Quizlet was used to highlight and review key words the students had chosen for their definition and to ensure that everyone understood completely their meanings. Some examples of the vocabulary items are 'family', 'religion', and 'conflict', to name a few.

The definitions written by the Spanish students were submitted to the Swedish students, who then edited them and finally a vote was taken (using the platform *menti.com)*, to choose the definition that would be used for the project blog.

Creating a manifest

As part of the objective of raising students' awareness about the causes of refugee situations, this exercise was set up to help students understand the link between social and political situations and consequences that affect

everyone. They were also required to look more closely at the needs of refugees. This reflection was sparked pictures and a quote from the book ***Once*** by Morris Gleitzman "Everybody deserves to have something good in their life. At least once". Using the beginning from the sentence, the Spanish students completed it by saying 'Everybody deserves …" in order to come up with the first draft of the manifest.

This list was sent to Sweden for editing and additions. The vocabulary (key words) that were drawn out during the discussions were displayed in a *Wordcloud* and uploaded in the blog.

These were just the first steps of the manifest. Some weeks later, and after the compilation of more information about the conflict, recordings of the definite manifest were made and uploaded in the *Wordpress*.

Fig. 2. Students begin work on manifest

Discovering more about refugee life

In order to understand more deeply the situation in Syria and what was happening with the country's inhabitants who were migrating to other countries nearby, two videos, produced by Hans Rosling and published in *Youtube* were presented to the students. These were a) Why Boat Refugees Don't Fly! – Factpod #16 and b) Where Are the Syrian Refugees? – Factpod #17

Both videos were uploaded into *Zaption*[4]. This app allowed teachers to prepare multiple choice and open questions for learners to answer while watching the film. The learners could stop and listen to the information as many times as they liked and complete the activity at their own pace. After the students had viewed and understood the videos, they were expected to compile group comments on a document shared with their Swedish partners. The final goal of the videos and the class work were to make sure students could understand –and hopefully empathize with -the travails the Syrian people were undergoing. Our premise was that the more knowledge children gained about the problem, the more effective their final message would be.

Understanding both sides of an argument

This exercise was exceptionally potent for bringing up some issues and discussion amongst the learners. The final product was a 'For and Against' essay (seeking a balanced argument) about whether the refugees should be given political asylum or not. The Spanish students were given this statement: "Giving asylum to Syrian refugees is not only humanitarian but wise". Discuss.

Because the twelve-year old Spanish students had never faced this type of essay-writing, it was necessary to provide them with prompters such as how to use connectors, transitions, conjunctions and other similar syntax. The Swedish teacher decided to give a more open topic for her learners to develop. Some of the titles they came up with were: 'Refugees' and their future'; 'Refugees: I don't want more refugees in Sweden'; 'Refugees: Sweden can take some more'.

Due to the different levels of experience in writing in the target language, this activity was addressed differently between the two classes. The Spanish students were provided with more parameters for the structure expected in the essay whereas the Swedish students were given more leeway because the teacher was interested in seeing what her learners were capable of developing on their own, with minimal guidelines.

The final essays were published online and posted in the common blog to help further educate the general public about different positions concerning the political and social situation of the refugees.

4 This tool was closed down in June of 2016. However, *Edpuzzle* has taken its place. This is a similar tool which is very useful when it comes to improving listening skills.

Gaining deeper insight into the causes

The teachers were concerned that the students should be exposed to authentic information about the difficulties refugees were encountering so they could truly understand the reality of what their lives are like. This was done through careful selection of news articles to be read and discussed by the learners. Again, this was a challenge for the Spanish students as the level required for understanding articles from international media is quite high. So texts from BBC reports were mixed with more student-aimed texts to clarify a bit more the tragic situation in Syria in particular and in the Middle East in general. Most of these came from http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/ which offers news from around the world in a more straightforward language. The page also provides exercises and other activities to complement the articles and which can be used by teachers.

The chosen articles were:

- *Syria protest getting bigger* (14th April 2011)
- *1 million Syrian child refugees* (24th August, 2013)
- *U.N."very sorry" as Syria talks end in failure* (18th February, 2014)
- *Germany and Austria welcome refugees* (8th September, 2015)

After the students had read the articles and carried out some comprehension prepared for each text, the students were introduced to a game, based on ordering the content of the texts and which was posted on the blog.

Creating a campaign for public awareness

The next task cycle aimed to raise the students' own reflection by first getting them to focus on their feelings. After reflecting on how they would feel in a similar situation, the learners had to propose suggestions for the public in regards to actions that could be taken for improving the refugees' situation. The students then recorded their ideas as 'public pokes' and posted them on the blog, thus not only sharing their ideas with their partners but also with the world. The Swedish students also created online posters, with text and images, which depicted their ideas on how to help and support refugees.

The results of the recordings and the posters can be viewed in the final blog.

Reporting on the situation

This sub-task was anticipated as an opportunity for the students to learn about and practice writing factual, informative texts. However, due to lack of time, this part of the project was left out.

Writing and posting the manifest

This final activity was designed to be the culmination of the learning process and an opportunity for the students to display their collective understanding of the topic. As a sub-task to this activity, the main words from task two were voted on and then these words were put into visual mind-maps through the tool called *Visuwords.* This served as a visual prompt for new ideas to create the manifest.

The final thoughts of the two groups were collected differently in each group. The Spanish students recorded their manifest ('we believe that all refugees have the right to …") and send these statements to their Swedish partners. Initially, the plan stipulated that these would then be edited by the Swedish students and then they would add their own thoughts. However, we were running out of time as the semester was finishing and so the recordings were uploaded directly into the blog. The Spanish students created audio files through *Soundcloud* while the Swedish students filmed short video clips and posted them in *Youtube* and then linked these to the project blog.

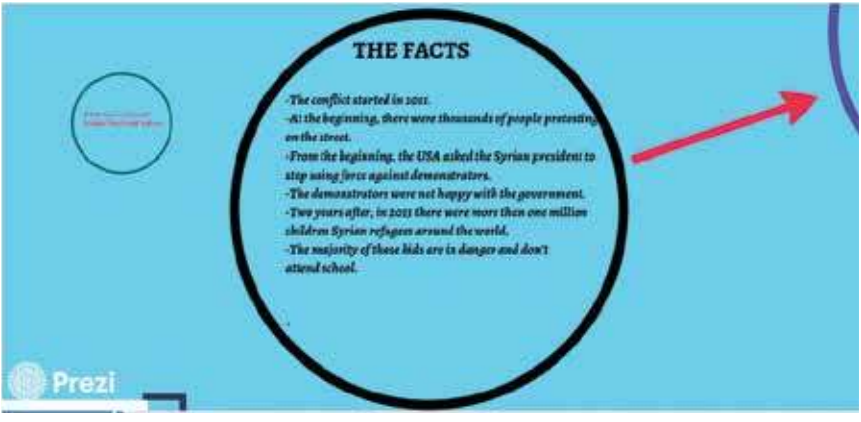


Fig. 3. Students' final presentation about what they have learnt

Assessment

A final reflection activity was given to the students that had not been part of the initial planning of the '*How to make a difference'* project. However it was deemed necessary to check their overall gains and the knowledge acquired throughout the process. It was also important to see if what had been laid out by the teachers and researchers had been a success or a failure. Therefore, we asked our students to verbalize what they had learned from the project. Each teacher developed the activity differently. In Sweden, the students posted their answers on a Padlet. In Spain, the students were given four topics to elaborate in groups which they then added to a Prezi presentation. The four topics were about a) the 'pokes' and the manifest; b) the current situation of the Syrian refugees; c) the historical facts related to the refugee crisis of 2015; d) specific vocabulary related to the project. Additionally, the PhD student interviewed and recorded the students discussing what they liked and disliked about the project.

The students were not asked to sit an exam during any part of the project. The outcomes of the sub-tasks and main tasks provided sufficient evidence to evaluate their writing, reading, speaking and listening skills. Thus, formative evaluation was used to check the students' progress. Improvement over time, as seen in the group work and individual work were supplemented by recordings taken during class and the forms collected by the Junior Researchers.

During the planning, there was some discussion about using the same rubric for evaluation in each activity, but it was finally decided that each teacher would assess their students according to the best approach for each school and class. However, looking at the documentation and output that was derived from the project in comparison to the established objectives, clearly the project provided learning opportunities for the students. Let's look at each of these more closely.

Improvement of linguistic competence in the target language (English): For the Spanish students the opportunity to interact with students whose level of English was higher was a challenge that they were able to overcome and which had an impact on their confidence in using the target language (in particular in the spoken mode). Swedish learners had the opportunity to improve their writing skills (and general knowledge of the target language) by editing and correcting texts. Moreover, the difference in the general command of the

target language promoted an almost intangible aspect of communication that is key to its use: Whilst the Spanish learners had to make an effort to ensure they were understood, the Swedish students had to make sure they understood their partners' interventions, thereby promoting the linguistic meta-reflection that is so necessary for intercultural communication.

Interacting through the four main communicative skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking: As it has been outlined in the activities, all of the skills were integrated into the different tasks –at times they were focused principally only on one but they were often integrated in a highly complex way (e.g. watching a video while reading the sub-titles and writing answers into another text).

> This (technology networking) will also help the students become better prepared to face likely work conditions when they begin their professional lives, including the use of communication technology with other professionals across the globe. In today's globalized world, the use of computer-mediated communication technologies to engage in either real-time (synchronous) or asynchronous communication among team members separated by great geographic distances is commonplace. (Dooly, 2010, p. 2)

Practicing and improving their communicative skills through technology (21st century competences): Without a doubt, most students nowadays are high-tech but that does not necessarily translate into knowing how to efficiently use new technology in a learning context. The project introduced the students to a new use of social media (Facebook, Instagram, wikis) and apps (blogs, podcasting…) for social purposes (creating social impact) as well as a tool for collaborative work.

Development of intercultural competences: It was our reasoning that because the students had the opportunity to use their second language in real communicative settings; their interest for the language (as both object of study and as a communicative tool) would increase. Moreover, through the use of the target language as a means of getting to know and work with other learners from another they would broaden their knowledge other cultures and traditions. The tasks helped them engage in discussion about different traditions (e.g. how they celebrate Christmas – similarities and differences) as well as more mundane aspects of their class work, their schools and their lifestyles outside of the classroom. Moreover, helping students to broaden their knowledge of the world by discussing present-day topics with teenagers from different cultures was also an important asset.

Development of the ability to work in teams (project and collaborative work): Quite often teachers are aware of the need for helping their students develop the ability to work collaboratively (often cited as one of the most important competences for the 21st century) but do not realize that simply carrying out group work in class does not necessarily enable learners to be able to carry out this type of work beyond the classroom. Teachers are usually quite adapt at leading their learners to work collaboratively within the classroom but they must also learn to collaborate with others outside of their local community – individuals who may not have the same understanding of social and cultural norms, of how tasks should be carried out to complete work, etc. Helping them to learn to work with others who are outside their immediate circle has been important for this project.

Some key take-way points from the experience

The fact that most of the tasks led to output that was published in the project blog implied that the learners were using the language creatively and for an authentic purpose, especially as they knew that the blog was open to any reader. Furthermore, asking the teenagers to share their created materials with each other nudged them to be careful with what they publish; they tried to be more accurate in the way the communicate, for instance, so they were sure they were getting their ideas across and also to put forth 'their best face'.

Also, we observed that the more they learnt and the more they used the target language to communicate with each other, the easier they found it to accomplish increasingly more complex tasks. And of course, because the final output had an authentic purpose of convincing others outside of their classes to be more aware of the situation of refugees in the European Union, were more motivated to carry out the activities.

> There is no denying that achievements and motivation are closely correlated. According to the correlation between motivation and English achievement for senior high school students was very high ($p < .01$). Hsu (1998) also argued that there was a high correlation between motivation and final grades for junior high school students. In similar vein, Huang (1990) pointed out that students with high motivation tended to have a better English achievement than students with low motivation. (Liang, 2002, p. 65)

On a more individual level, as a first-time teacher working on a telecollaborative project, six key points emerged as time went by.

The first one is having the objectives very clear in mind. In our case the aims were specified and a consensus was reached before the project started. This helped us to identify and design the activities that would be needed to ensure the acquisition of these competences.

Secondly, it soon became apparent that the development of collaborative teamwork is not limited to the students. Usually teachers work in isolation and are solely responsible for the development of the syllabus, the design of the activities and the preparation of materials. Sharing materials and goals with people outside my school was new for me and the sense of accountability that accompanied this teamwork was intimidating. I must admit that the sense of letting go (of at least half) of the control of what would take place and sharing this responsibility with someone who was working in a faraway country was very difficult to cope with at first.

Through reflection I came to understand that this uneasiness comes first from the fact that we teachers have our own ways of doing things and we feel comfortable with 'our way'. Opening up our classroom to others may mean that we sometimes feel criticized when a colleague claims he or she would reach a goal differently. However, it is important to bear in mind that each cultural environment has a different impact on how objectives, task development and learning are interpreted and that means that we may not 'understand' or even agree with some of the teaching techniques of our teacher partners. As a consequence, fluid communication is absolutely essential when embarking on such a project.

It is also important to realize that the most relevant learning that can take place through these projects must be communication. Allowing students to articulate their ideas and feelings and that this must not be 'shoved aside' just to complete the tasks as they are written down in the work plan. Teachers must be aware that the original plans can be changed and they must be ready to adjust.

> Inevitably, then, the Teacher 2.0 must be able to not only design effective telecollaborative tasks, but be able to monitor and assess the learner interaction (in the classroom and online) in order to optimize the task-as-process. (Dooly, 2010, p. 17)

Another point to bear in mind when dealing with this type of projects is knowing that problems might (and probably will) arise during the implementation and sorting things out might become complicated. For instance,

despite the fact that regular lesson schedules, school trips and holidays during the planned working period were taken into consideration when designing the project, we still could not finish all the tasks we had planned. This can be frustrating and teachers may conclude that the project did not reach a proper closure if things are not completed as they were stipulated at the beginning. As I've indicated before, being flexible and willing to adapt are crucial for the success of any project. As long as the teacher understands that even if the project activities are shortened or even aborted, learning will always be present.

A further key point that materialized was the fact that cultural differences emerge –not just between the students but also between the partner teachers. While these differences may not seem to be important at first, but the way two such different countries work might shock the partners and, inevitably the project risks ending up cluttered like a bric-a-brac stall in a flea market. The partner teachers must never lose sight of the fact that the objective is learning how to work together. Highlighting what each partner country will contribute to the other and what each can learn from the other can help with this. All the teachers involved must be willing to learn from each other and to widen their minds. Acting as models, likewise, students will take advantage from exposure to new ways of teaching and different points of views.

The sixth and final point that stands out for me is the fact that through a telecollaborative project with a clear social goal, we were able to bring the world into the classroom. With *How to make a Difference,* the refugees were humanized, they became equals whom had to be taken into consideration while the students were doing their lessons. Twice a week, they were not empty faces from the news –faces that one could avoid by switching off the TV channel. While not always easy –and definitely not always 'comfortable' material to with- this tellecollaborative project forced teachers, researchers and learners to face a crude reality and to try to do something about the problem at hand by involving our students and triggering their critical thinking in order to guide their actions towards improving the world they are living in. It also forced the 'adults' (the teachers and researchers) to try to have a social impact through our everyday our jobs. Being able to do this requires that teachers think out of the box. It also implies risk – above all that mistakes can be made. And mistakes were made and hard work was needed. However, errors must be seen as an opportunity to develop our teaching skills not as a reason to give up. And

when 12 and 13 year old students can stand up and claim they know how the world must be, that the world must be different from the one that exists, one knows a good job has been done.

References

Castello, D. (2015). *First language acquisition and classroom language learning: Similarities and differences*. Retrieved 13 December 2017 from http://www.academia.edu/19715371/First_Language_Acquisition_and_Classroom_Language_Learning_-_Similarities_and_Differences

Dooly, M. (2010). Teacher 2.0. In S. Guth & F. Helms (Eds) *Telecollaboration 2.0: Language, Literacies and Intercultural Learning in the 21st Century* (pp. 277–303). Bern/Vienna: Peter Lang.

Kagan, S. (1995). *We can talk: Cooperative learning in the elementary ESL classroom.* Retrieved from: https://www.ericdigests.org/1996-1/talk.htm [Accessed 17 Jan. 2018].

Liang, T, (2002). *Implementing cooperative Learning in EFL teaching: Process and Effects*, Taipei, Taiwan: The Graduate Institute of English, National Taiwan Normal University.

The Partnership for 21st Century Learning. (2015). *Framework for 21st century learning*. Retrieved 21 September 2017 from http://www.p21.org/our-work/p21-framework

Thomas, J.W. (2000). *A review of research on project based learning.* California, USA: The Autodesk Foundation. Retreived 18 September 2017 from http://www.bobpearlman.org/BestPractices/PBL_Research.pdf

Wagner, T. (2008). *The global achievement gap: Why even our best schools don't teach the new survival skills our children need–And what we can do about it*. New York: Basic Books.

Warschauer, M. (Ed.) (1996). *Telecollaboration in foreign language learning*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Second Language Teaching and Curriculum Center.

Granada Bejarano Sánchez and Gerard Giménez Manrique
Freelance primary education teachers

Chapter 6: What makes our schools unique? A telecollaborative experience from the perspective of two 'new-comers'

Introduction

In this chapter, you will read about a telecollaborative project that was designed by two (relatively inexperienced) pre-service teachers. The virtual exchange project was designed and implemented during an internship in our fourth of final year of studies and right before for completing all the courses for a bachelor's degree in primary education, with a minor in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. We studied for the degree at the Faculty of Education Sciences, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

The two schools involved, both located in the region of Barcelona, presented two very different contexts and therefore gave meaning to the project and inspired its design. It is important to bear in mind that Catalunya is a multilingual region, with both Spanish and Catalan as official languages and Catalan as the principal language of instruction in states schools. For the project, one of the sites was a private International school with a specific program of immersion in English (the school's lingua franca). The students came from different backgrounds and it was a very rich school in terms of multiculturalism. On the other side, the other partner class was in a public state school, known for its innovative approaches to teaching. Most of the students had Spanish as their mother tongue, a reflection of the linguistic profile of the neighbourhood where the school is located. Even though both schools developed their curriculum through projects, their pedagogical approaches were significantly different as well as the day-to-day teaching practices in the classrooms.

Regarding the target groups, the project was implemented in the classes of Year 2 in the international school (herein called Queen Mary

School) and Year 3 in the Catalan school (we will call it School Vailet). Although there was only one year of difference between the two groups, the students were at different developmental stages and this was taken into consideration during the implementation; we created activities for the 3rd graders that allowed them to go deeper into some aspects of the content knowledge presented.

In the rest of this chapter we provide more detailed information and visual examples of the project whose principal feature is asynchronous telecollaboration. The project, entitled 'What makes our school unique?' dealt with a linguistic exchange between both schools in which the different L1[1] (English for Queen Mary School and Catalan for School Vailet) were used. Thus, for Queen Mary School the target language to be practiced was Catalan (which was the second language for some of the students but a foreign language for most of the class population) and English (as a foreign languages) was the target language for Vailet School. The main aim of the exchange was to provide the students with opportunities for purposeful interaction to improve their respective target language levels. In order to do so, the project revolved around the exploring and explaining the different areas and zones of the schools parts in order to discover what makes each school unique and different.

Rationale

First of all, it should be mentioned that the idea of implementing a telecollaborative project in our final internship was conceived after taking the subject TEPBLL[2], a course in the fourth year of our studies and compulsory for completing the minor. In this course, we ourselves were involved in telecollaboration with a partner university in the United States and the course content was focused on the use of technology and virtual exchange for promoting language education. Through that, we were exposed to this

1 We use L1 to stand for the lingua franca of the school.

2 Technology Enhanced Project Based Language Learning, taught by Dr. Melinda Dooly at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and Dr. Randall Sadler, at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign. Both are members of the KONECT research team. See Sadler & Dooly, 2016.

approach empirically and felt that we had sufficiently comprehended it to give it a go on our own. During that course, both authors of this chapter had the chance to work together in the design of a telecollaborative project as one of their assignments and decided to challenge themselves once more, but this time, the project would be implemented in an authentic context (using telecollaboration in a teaching unit for school internship is not required; it was an additional feature that we decided to add on our own initiative). Still, we want to acknowledge that this idea would not have occurred to us if there had not been a propitious context which promoted this type of innovative thinking.

Luckily for us, it all went hand in hand: there was a great opportunity to implement a telecollaborative project because we were working in two schools with very different linguistic features and different commands of two potential target languages. Also, we had the concept fresh in our minds, we were motivated to do it, and we shared the belief that it was the perfect occasion to try it out while being supervised by a mentor and having the support of expertise teachers.

Moreover, it should be mentioned that besides our willingness, there existed other reasons that made the notion seem like a perfect option. Just to name the main ones, both schools presented a low level of L2/L3 and in some cases, a lack of motivation was identified throughout our observations. We thought there was a need to look for a project that was both appealing meaningful to the students. By this, we mean that there needed to be a clear reason to take part in the project and that there were some clear objectives that the pupils understood and shared. Last but not least, the technology was scarcely used as part of the process of foreign language acquisition. Through this telecollaborative project, both language and technology could be introduced in accessible and enjoyable ways that really aided and supported the students' learning.

The project description

The main idea of the project can be summarized as the following: two different schools connected by one common project. Both schools are located in the Barcelona region but, more concretely, one can be found in

the municipality of Barberà del Vallès while the other one is in in the city of Barcelona; so, we were working in two quite different contexts. Also, as previously mentioned, the mother tongues present in each school were not the same. On the one hand, one of the school presented a multilingual environment due to the hosting of children with lots of different origins and with English as its lingua franca. On the other hand, the second class was mainly composed of Spanish speakers but with Catalan as its lingua franca as it could be seen in the following table.

Pupils in Vailet School had a high command of the Catalan language due to the importance given by the school to teaching this language, supported by an immersion program, however, in general the school has poor attainment levels for English as a foreign language. In Queen Mary School it was the opposite: the students tended to have an exceptionally good command of English but a very low level of Catalan (except the few students with this language as their mother tongue which on average was 1 or 2 students per class).

Table 1. Main features of partner classes' population

Vailet School	**Queen Mary School**
Location: Barberà del Vallès (town outside of Barcelona city)	**Location:** city of Barcelona
Number of students: 26 students.	**Number of students:** 18 students.
Students' mother tongue: mainly Spanish	**Students' mother tongue:** very diverse (Spanish, Catalan, Chinese, Arabic, Russian, English…)
Languages present in the school: L1 (language of instruction): Catalan L2: English Classes of Spanish are taken in accordance with the Catalan curriculum (approximately 2 hours per week)	**Languages present in the school:** L1 (language of instruction and L1 of many of the students): English L2: Spanish (3 hours/week) L3: Catalan (1 hour/week)

Once the context had been carefully observed, an exchange was proposed as a real and meaningful project to motivate the students while learning a foreign language. Moreover, these great amount of differences that the schools presented was seen as an advantage throughout the project because it could be used to help the students learn from each other and see that both schools are unique and special.

To succeed in our planning, we took as basis the main theoretical pillars for telecollaboration and project design as outlined by Dooly (2008; 2016) as well as issues of formative assessment as proposed by Sanmarti (2010). We were aware that designing a telecollaborative project there are many variables that must be taken into consideration simultaneously and that there is a strong need to have solid planning that is founded on a good theoretical framework. Because both schools already implemented project-based teaching, the application of technology-enhanced project based language learning seemed suitable. However, at the same time we were aware that we were introducing two new variables into the mix: the use of technological resources (not frequent in the classes) and collaborative learning between two schools.

On top of that, the project would allow us to establish links between different languages and help reduce the gap that is often marked in the bilingual society of the two schools (some communities are more Spanish-oriented, others are more Catalan-oriented). The project itself presented a bilingual essence: throughout it, pupils acted as 'models' or 'referees' in the L1 of their school and worked on it for some tasks, but they also needed to learn and develop their L2/L3 with the help of their telecollaborative mates.

Moreover, it is important to point out that the project not only consisted of moments in which virtual exchange took place, it also implied many other steps carried out during the in-class lessons. For example, gamification was used to work with the needed vocabulary and to present and practice specific language structures or formulaic chunks so the students were 'led' to the needed language in a fun and dynamic way. Also, because the project included collaborative learning, the class worked together in order to define what makes their school unique and to learn about the other school. To do so, smaller groups were organized in which each member held a different self-chosen role to keep throughout the project. It was our opinion that the pupils were at the right stage to get the idea of working together and become aware that they do not need to be competitive with each other in an inclusive environment. These collaborative groups could also help support students with special needs, accompanied with the proper scaffolding in each activity.

Another principal characteristic of this project would be the criticality of the assessment process. Making students active and reflective when evaluating their productions and looking for ways to improve (in self and others) was an established aim from the very beginning. With this, students could

gain awareness of the importance of assessment. The infograph (figure 1) provides a visual summary of the outstanding features of the telecollaborative project.

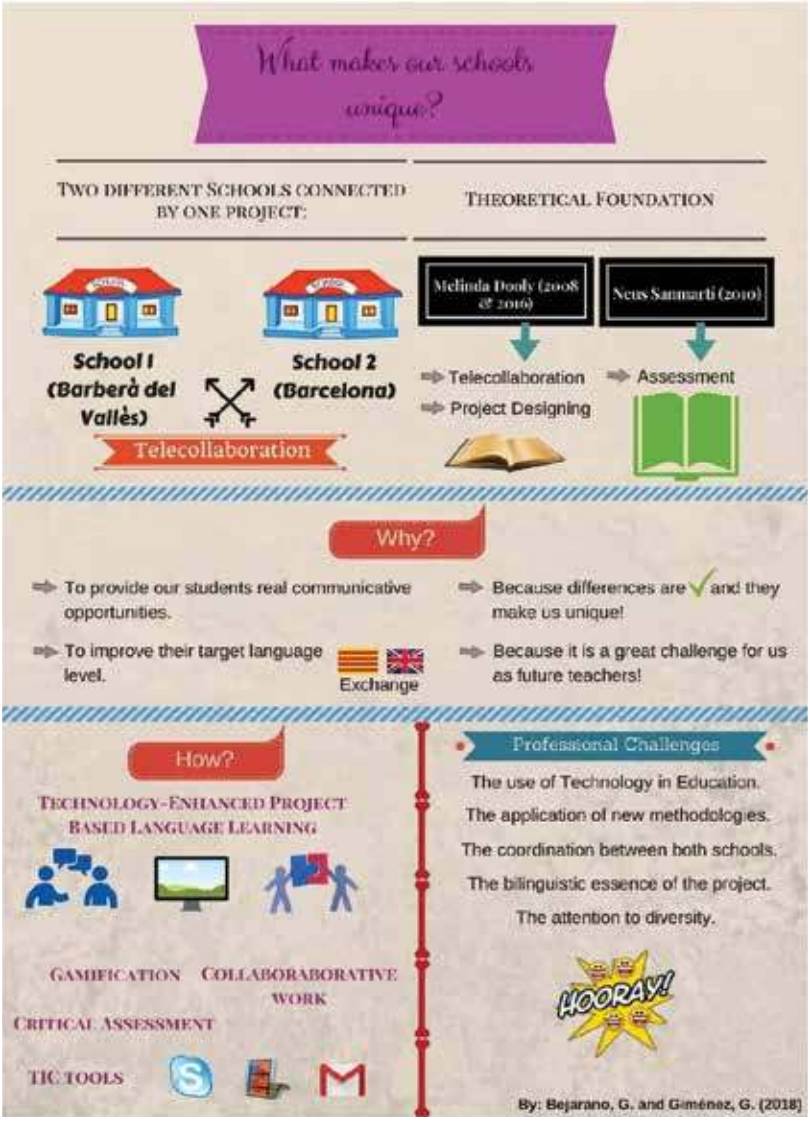


Figure 1. Main features of the telecollaborative project design

Facing the big challenge of getting started

After reading the project's description, you may guess that the project itself was a great challenge. If it is already difficult for student-teachers to design a teaching sequence and implement it, the task becomes even more complicated when facing a telecollaborative project. As a teacher involved in telecollaboration, you not only have to consider the subject you will be teaching, your objectives, the materials you will use and which is the best teaching approach, but you must also be completely in harmony with another class that belongs to a completely different context. While co-teaching or co-designing is considered as enriching or beneficial, as two heads together always think better than one, it is admittedly harder to structure and schedule since both teachers need to be on the same wavelength. For this, meetings between the two teachers were constantly required.

Furthermore, we challenged ourselves by setting out to do a widely ambitious project that not only included dealing with telecollaboration but at the same time working in collaborative groups, completing self and peer-assessment tasks, scaffolding special needs, … all these goals within a very tight agenda and almost no experience as teachers. However, with all goals well-set, great communication between us and a plan B in our pockets, the challenge ended up successfully accomplished.

The Planning Process

As you can see in the next infograph (figure 2), the authors were very careful to map the different steps to follow when planning this telecollaborative project. As these projects are really complex, many considerations should be taken into account as reflected in the infograph. This infograph was designed by our telecollaborative group (involving both Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona students and University of Illinois Urbana Champaign students during our fourth year course on Technology-Enhanced Project Based Language Learning).

Figure 2. Guide for planning telecollaborative projects

Moreover, before outlining our project, it should be highlighted that the planning process did not occur in a linear way but it was a cyclical process, which required us to go back and forth several times to ensure that everything matched and was meaningful enough for the students. Furthermore, sometimes we had to select some activities over others as it was a very time-limited project. So, despite using the 'map' we had designed in our TEPBLL course as a kind of guide to plan the project, it has to be recognized that some of the steps were not taken in the exact order, as every telecollaborative project requires different planning. However, the guide provides a good outline of what should go into a telecollaborative project, so we use the guide's sections to explain our own planning process, with examples based on our personal experiences teaching this project.

Gather/review background information

Our first step is actually related to the second section in the infograph and refers to choosing the main topic. It was first was proposed by a teacher from the Vailet School. At the beginning of the internship, this teacher requested that the teaching unit be about the different areas of the school (theatre, playground, classroom…). However, this initial idea was remodeled a bit in order to make it more meaningful for the students. This was done by introducing the telecollaboration, so, through the use of the 'target' vocabulary (canteen, music conservatory, etc.) the students had to present each school to their telecollaborative partners, to spot the main differences between both schools and see how these differences are the items that make each of their schools unique.

After settling on the main topic or driving question, the gathering of the background information was started. As it was expected, the schools did not have any experience in doing this kind of projects, but administration and teachers in both centres were open to learn and experiment with this new methodology. The students' prior knowledge was also limited. As it has been explained above, their foreign language level was low (that was the main motivation to start this linguistic exchange) and they had not been taught the vocabulary necessary to describe the school vocabulary before. Furthermore, the students were really young and they did not really know

how to read, write and speak properly in their second language, so, it was deemed necessary that the project and its activities be simple in order to let them learn, enjoy and not feel frustrated.

As to the available technology in the schools, some differences were detected in that area as well. Queen Mary School had more technological facilities than the public state school, as all their classrooms were technologically well equipped. Still, the target group involved in this project did not use them a lot due to their young age (according to the school ideology). That meant we needed to find some technological resources that suited both schools possibilities and which were also easy for the students to use as, at their age, they had used few technologies in their school lessons. Finally, it was decided to use the following technological resources (they will be explained in depth in the Section 3 describing the project implementation).

Table 2. List of technology resources and how they were used

Technological Resources				
Resource	**Main use**	**Link**		
Linoit	Virtual corkboard for doing the brainstorming.	http://en.linoit.com/ Windows Movie Maker	For editing the outcomes' videos.	
Youtube	For uploading the videos in order to watch them in class.	https://www.youtube.com/		
Kahoot	For doing the Quizzes (assessment).	https://kahoot.it/#/ Canva	For doing the farewell 'virtual' gifts.	https://www.canva.com/

Finally, the project's time frame had to be decided. As it was done during a teacher education internship, it was supposed to last for only one month (four weeks) but as it also was a complex project, it was quite difficult to achieve this timeframe. So, it was decided to talk with the schools' and university mentors to negotiation an extension of the project for two more weeks. So, in the end a six weeks project was designed and implemented.

Pre-planning

Due to the nature of the project (executed within the parameters of a teacher education internship), the pre-planning was shorter than it might be in a 'regular' classroom because some of the decisions that should be taken here (the partner, the main topic…) were already decided during prior steps.

Thus, having the topic, the partner, the technologies and, also, some activities in mind, we moved on to see which competences, goals and contents the project was going to focus on. At this stage the desired outputs were sketched (according to the infograph in figure 2 they should be decided in the third section), and it was not easy as there were lots of aspects to consider at once and they needed to be studied in a very limited time frame. Videos as final output (examples are given in the "Implementation process" section below) were chosen because both schools wanted the project to focus principally on oral language production. Consequently, when establishing each goal, how to assess this project (assessment criteria) had to be thought and which assessment tools were going to be used. For doing that, the Catalan Curriculum and the competences outlined there were constantly kept in mind and the teachers tried to adapt the goals, contents and criteria to these statements. So, at the end, the project's main goals, contents and assessment criteria were the following:

Table 3. Goals and assessment criteria

General Goals
Students will be able to…
1.– Improve their communicative skills in L1 and L2/L3 through real interaction.
2.– Work collaboratively in a group to achieve a common goal.
3.– Exchange information with another group of students in their target language with an authentic communicative purpose.
4.– Establish common points between two different schools and cultures.
5.– Name and describe the main areas of their schools in English and in Catalan in a real and meaningful context.
6.– Assess critically their partners' outputs, the other group members, themselves and the project.

General Contents
1.– Specific lexicon related to areas of a school and general features related to buildings and locations. 2.– Present simple verb tense in English and Catalan. 4.– Communicative, interactive and intercultural skills. 5.– ICT and Technological resources.
Assessment Criteria
1.– Actively participates in the whole and small groups activities. 2.– Collaborates with group; assumes assigned roles and acts accordingly. 3.– Contributes to achievement of project goals. 4.– Uses effective communicative strategies to make themselves understood by others in the target language. 5.– Uses effective listening strategies to understand simple oral and audiovisual messages. 6.– Applies critical thinking in order reflect on new discoveries during the project development.

Formal planning

Once the general outline was determined, it was the moment to start with the formal planning, that is the scheduling of what was going to be carried out in the classes during the project. First of all, the final outcomes were decided: three videos. In the first one each school would make a presentation in their L1 (an icebreaking activity), the other two would be done in their L2 (target language): one video would be a presentation of each school, showing images and narrating descriptions of each area and the last one would show the items that make each school unique and different from the others.

Having decided the outcomes, the sequencing of the activities' sequence was started. An initial brainstorming session for thinking of all the possible activities was done and once selected, these were sequenced in the project's structure according to the natural process of communication. What we mean by this, it that first the project had to be presented to the learners, next the collaborative groups were set up, then the students got to know the vocabulary through "bridging activities" that were necessary for completing the intended final output. Having outlined the sequence and planning of the activities, we then considered the specific vocabulary and

language elements that the students were going to need for each activity and diagnosed potential 'trouble' areas and created scaffolding materials to ensure that the learners would have enough resources to complete the different activities.. Assessment activities and materials were also created during this stage. We designed continuous and formative assessment, with assessment activities for almost every session in the project. The assessment activities were diverse enough to include, self-assessment, peer-assessment and also some teacher-centered assessment.

Finally, it is important to point that the project planning included a 'back-up' plan; alternative activities were designed for moments that, potentially, might be problematic as we already knew the most probable limitations (most of them related to technology). Also, it has to be highlighted that, as this project used continuous and formative assessment, it was easy to detect which were the students' concrete needs, their difficulties and interests and adapt the activities to them in order to let the kids benefit the most from this project. However, while it is necessary to have a back-up plan for such a complex project, it is also important to be flexible and ready to adapt the planned activities while it is being implemented in order to adapt it to our students and their immediate needs.

The time has come: The implementation process

The project was implemented between April and May 2017 for a duration of six weeks in total and comprising 8 sessions of 1 hour each: three of them in the L1 of the school and the other 5 in the L2/L3, though sometimes plurilingualism or translanguaging were employed (for more information regarding these concepts see Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010; García, Lin & May, 2017).

Below, you can find a summary chart that reflects how the project was structured and shows the activities undertaken in each session. Note that the activities underlined were those that involved the use of virtual exchange. As you can see, there is an average of three activities per session. It was important not to plan too many activities, as these might take longer than expected. Moreover, note that not all the activities are telecollaborative. In between the virtual exchange sessions it was necessary to

work on the vocabulary, grammar and content knowledge that would be used later on. Moreover, this project required interdependence between the schools as each group-class would be creating videos, sending them to their telecollaborative partners and later on providing feedback about their partners' use of their target language. The sequencing of the activities are summarized in the chart below.

Table 4. Summary of planned sessions and activities

Week 1	**Session 1** Students' L1	Motivational Introductory Video Project presentation and magic hat/ tie dynamic Communicative strategies net dynamic. Presentation of video.
	Session 2 Students' L2/L3	Other school's presentation video display.
		Kahoot! About the presentation video.
		Collaborative groups' creation dynamic.
Week 2	**Session 3** Students' L2/L3	"Schools' Video" presentation. Vocabulary acquisition activity: Memory.
		Vocabulary Centers Activities.
Week 3	**Session 4** Students' L2/L3	Vocabulary refresh activity: Flashcards.
		Brainstorming about the video's elements in *Linoit* and groups' distribution.
		Start preparing the videos' contents.
Week 4	**Session 5** Students' L2/L3	Continue with the video preparation, rehearsal and videos' recording. In parallel, extra activities and games for the groups who are waiting.
Week 5	**Session 6** Students' L1 and L2/L3	Other school's video display.
		Provide feedback about the video with rubrics.
		Spot similarities and singularities activity.
	Session 7 Students' L2/L3	See own school video + other school's feedback. Create a reflective video about the other school "What makes them unique?". In parallel create a "thanks" gift for the other school.
Week 6	**Session 8** Students' L1 and L2/L3	Display the other school's reflective video and read the gift.
		Peer and Self-Assessment.
		"What makes us unique" and "What have we learnt?" Assembly.

Development of the sessions

In this following section a brief description of each session is provided, accompanied by some examples so that the reader can better understand how the project was carried out.

– Session 1: To start with the project, there was a need to find a unifying thread that made sense, motivated the students and made the project meaningful. For this, an introductory video was created prior to be initiation of the project by the student-teachers. In the video, the teachers requested help from their pupils, claiming that they were unable to find by themselves what makes their schools unique. Even though the first session was implemented in the L1, the video was bilingual in order to prime the students with the the idea of the linguistic exchange.[3] After showing the video, each student-teacher devoted some time to describing the project and the goals so their pupils could understand what they would be working for. Moreover, an important element during the whole project was introduced: the magic tie or hat (depending on the school). In this project the student-teachers were both teaching L1 and L2/L3 to the students. As this was a problem for one of the schools because they associated "one face to one language" a 'magic' element was introduced so each time the teacher wearing the 'magic' hat or the tie the (target) L2/L3 (English or Catalan) would be used. After this, there was a short activity in which the whole group reflected about the different communicative strategies that they could need throughout the project. For this, a 'human' net was created using a wool ball (the students toss the wool ball to each other, give an idea and then toss the ball to another student, eventually weaving a 'human' net. Finally, the first session ended with the creation of a very simple presentation video in the L1 of the students in order to establish a first contact between the schools and break the ice in front of the camera. The students were instructed to bear in mind that their partner schools did not comprehend their L1 as well as they did, exposing them to a simple, but important intercultural feature of communication strategies.

3 The video can be viewed in the following link: https://www.youtube.comwatch?v=9Y3uqfZUs0U&t=1s

– Session 2: The second session started by watching the other school's video. Taking advantage of the difference in languages, student-teachers played a Kahoot game afterwards which served as an additional reinforcement of newly presented vocabulary in the target languages. Once this was done, the students were assigned their collaborative groups, decided the roles they would take on, signed 'contracts' (as the one in the following picture) and began thinking about their assigned role in the group.

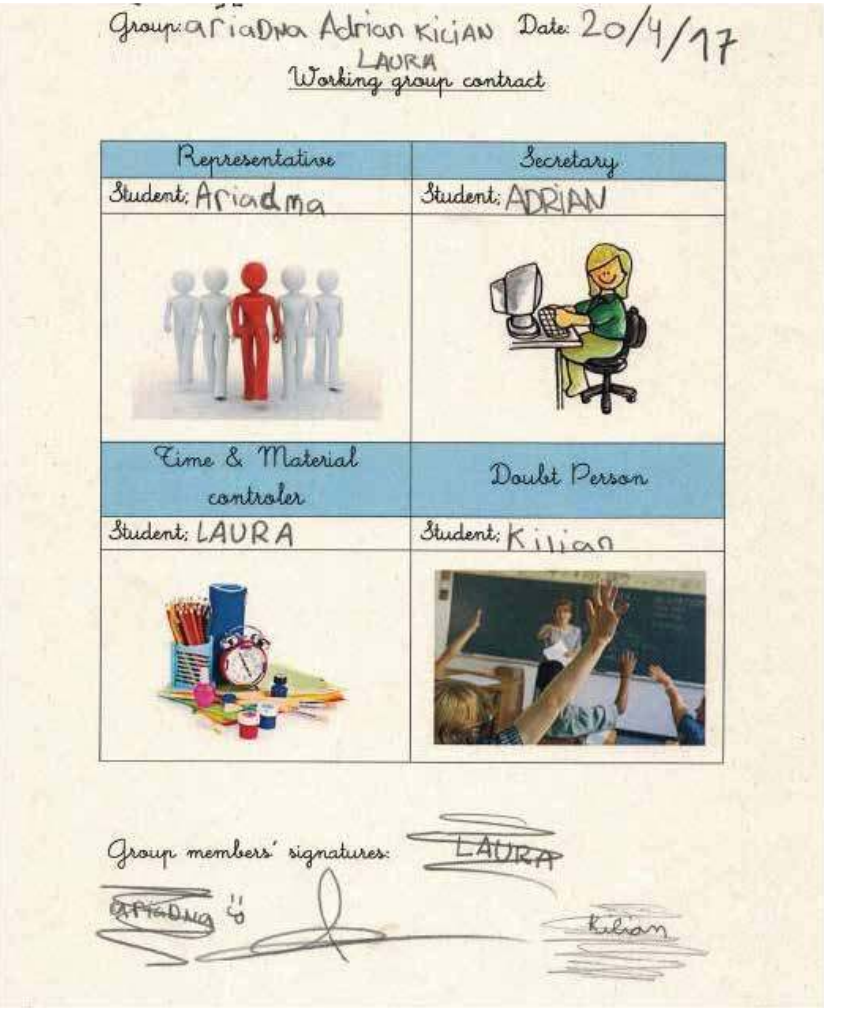


Figure 3. Example of a role assignment contract

– Session 3: This session was carried out in the target language. The session began by introducing the students to the idea of what they would be doing long term (one of the main outputs): a video that would describe the different areas of their school, using the language they were studying (English or Catalan). To do so, vocabulary needed to be previously introduced so some 'mini activity centres' or corners with different activities/games (memory game, domino, riddles and movement games) were created for the different collaborative groups.

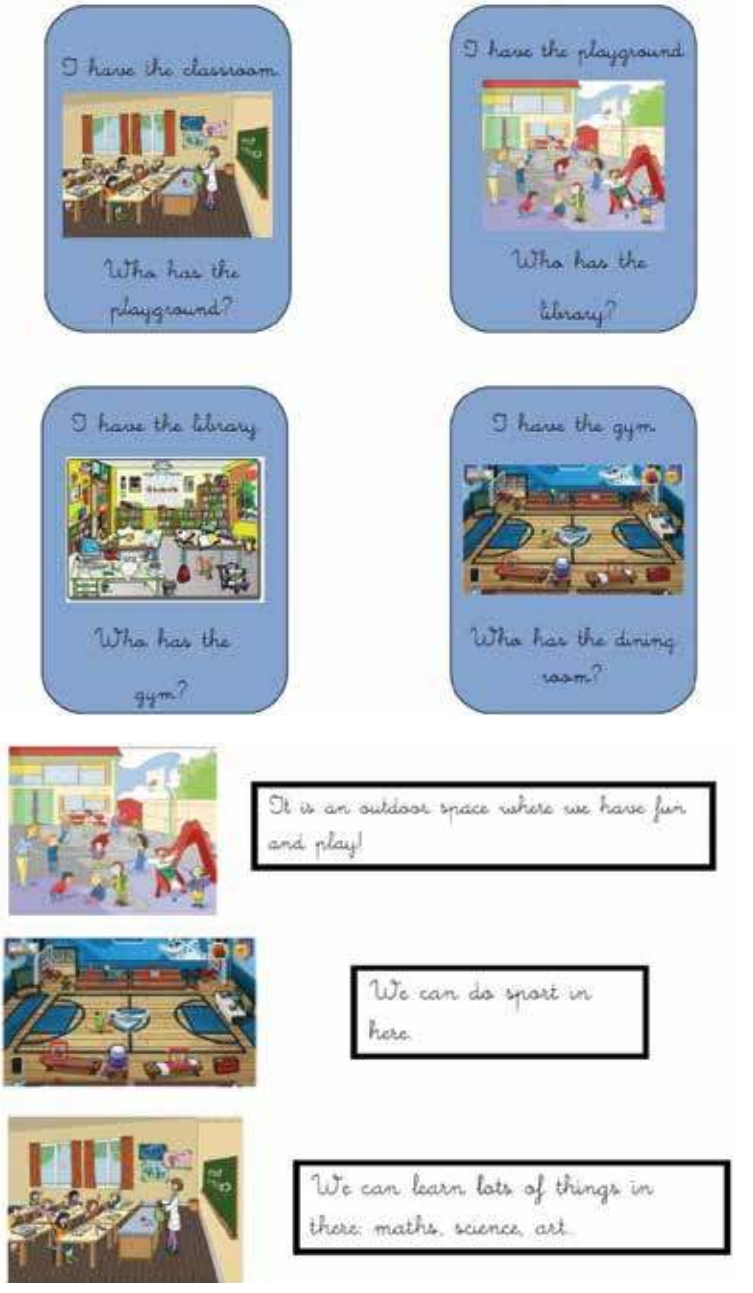


Figure 4. Example of flashcards used for memory game, domino and riddles

– Session 4: Since the vocabulary taught in the previous session had not been reviewed for a week, a quick 'refresher' activity was needed. Following that, most of the time was devoted to plan the descriptive video. To do so, the students brainstormed all together, with the aid of Linoit, a virtual corkboard where you can tag and save ideas (see figure 8). Finally the chosen contents were distributed between the groups so they could start preparing their performance or video narrative. To do this, scaffolding materials were provided to help them construct grammatically correct sentences.

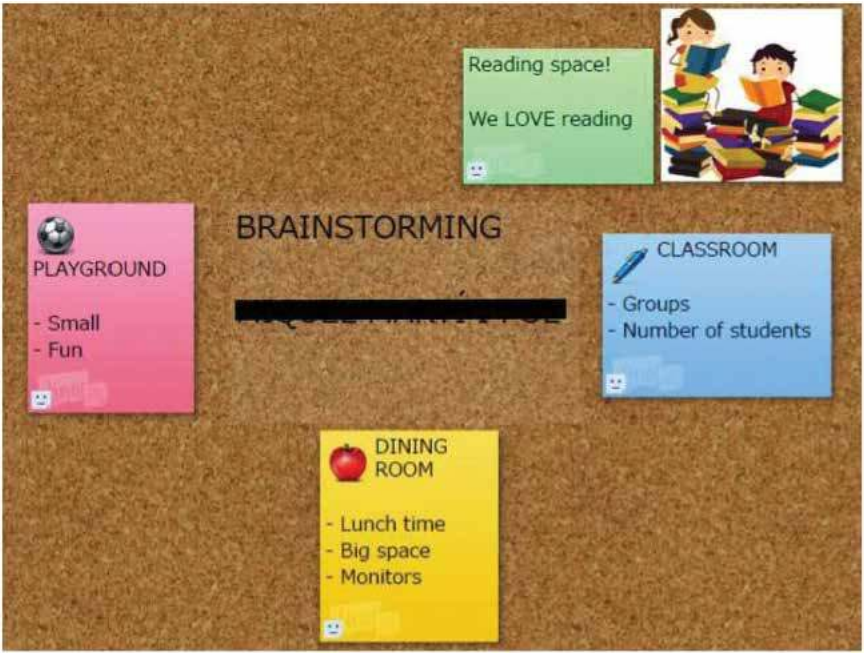
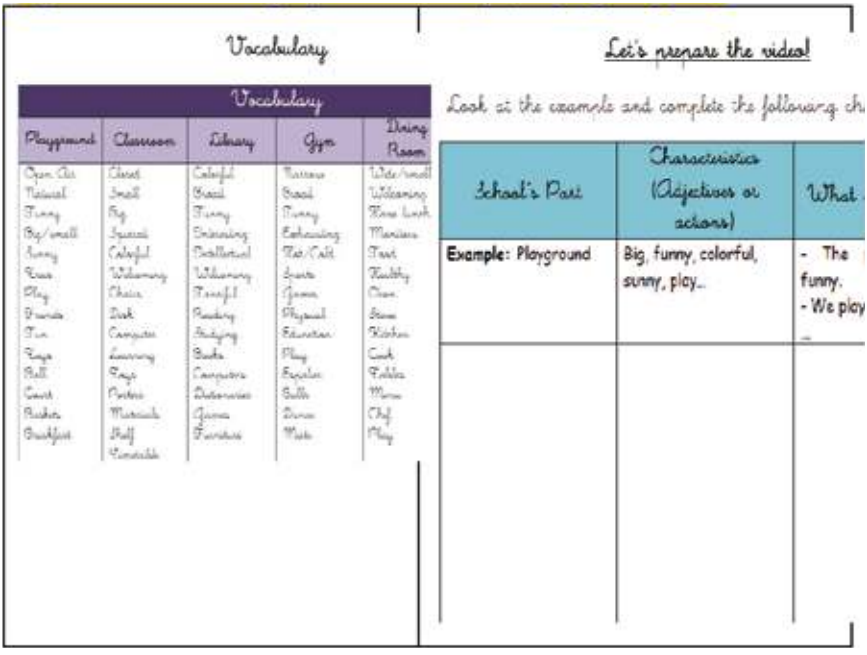


Figure 5. *Linoit* Example



Figures 6 & 7. Video preparation activity (language support)

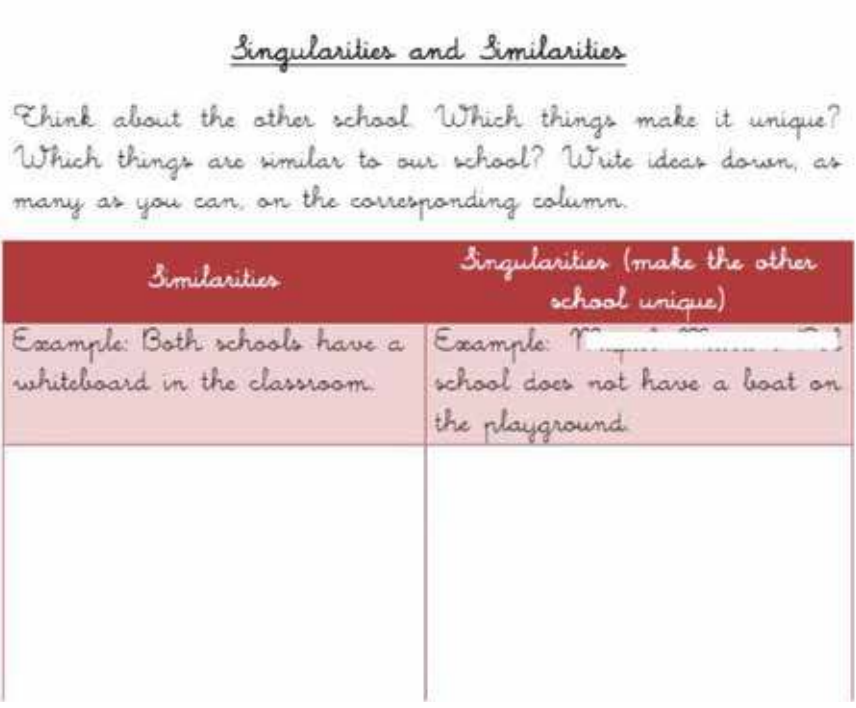
– Session 5: The session was fully devoted to preparing the video in the collaborative groups, rehearsing and filming. As all the groups had a different working pace, some complementary activities (a word search and a crossword) were brought inf for those who finished faster.
– Session 6: The session started with the viewing of the other school's video (previously edited by the student-teachers). Following that, some assessment rubrics were given to the collaborative groups to evaluate the other class' performance. The grid was read out loud and doubts about vocabulary and the required activity were discussed and clarified. The students had to critically evaluate their partner's videos and then there was an activity (also in telecollaborative groups) to spot differences between both schools.

Group: **Date:**

Video Assessment

Names of the members: **EVALUATION CRITERIA**	 **Good job!**	 **So so...**	 **Could improve**
Fluency (Not too fast nor too slow)			
Were sentences correct?			
Were the descriptions adequate?			
Clarity (We were able to understand the message)			
Images			
Other comments (originality...)			

Figure 8. Peer-assessment rubric



Singularities and Similarities

Think about the other school. Which things make it unique? Which things are similar to our school? Write ideas down, as many as you can, on the corresponding column.

Similarities	Singularities (make the other school unique)
Example: Both schools have a whiteboard in the classroom.	Example: [illegible] school does not have a boat on the playground.

Figure 9. Spot the differences activity

– Session 7: As in the previous session, the video from the other school was shown again. However, in this session there was time to watch the own production and listen to the feedback that the student-teachers had collected from the telecollaborative peers. Once this was completed, it was time to create another video, this time with more reflection in which the students could explain to the other school what makes them unique and what they had enjoyed learning about the other school. When the different collaborative groups had finished their intervention, they could work on a "thank you" virtual gift for the other school.

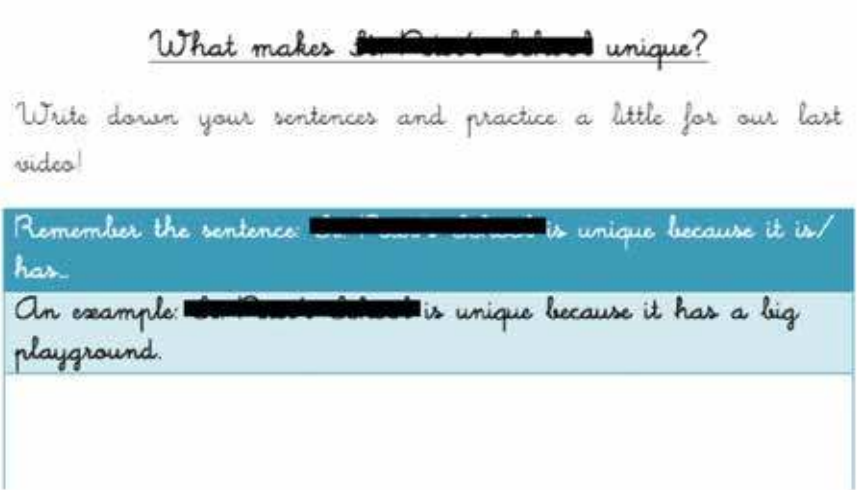
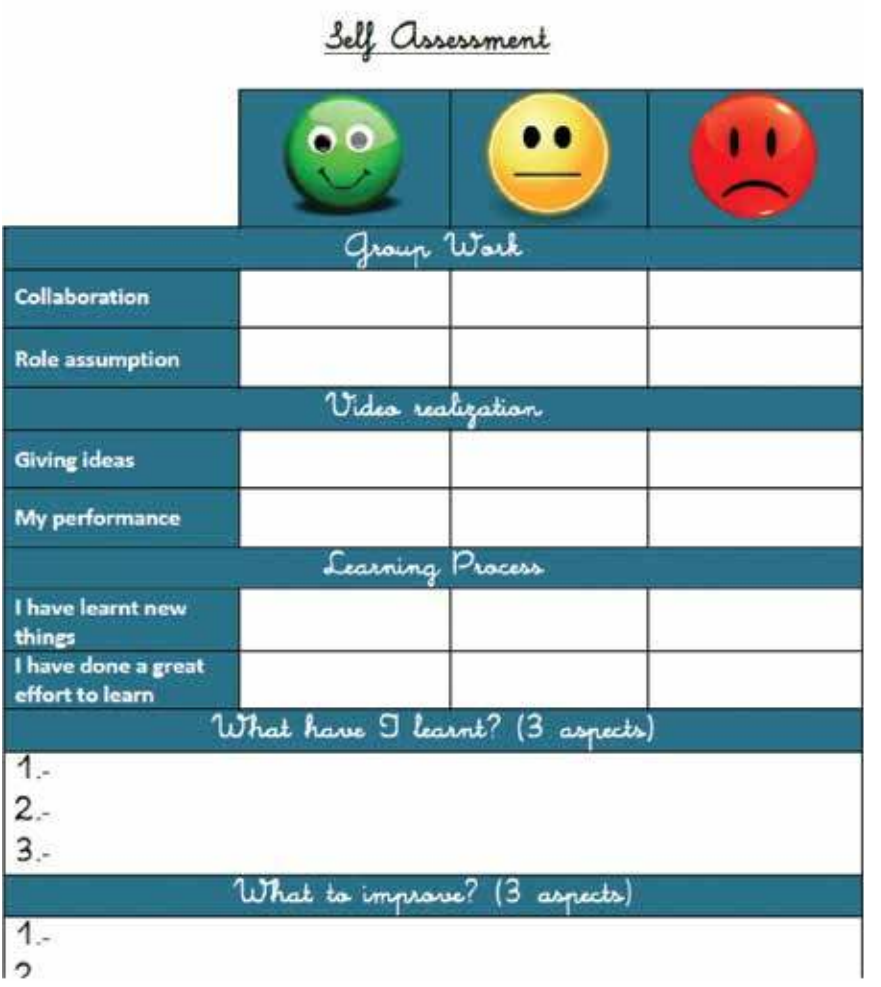


Figure 10. Video preparation worksheet

– Session 8: The first thing done during the last session was to view the other school's reflective video to see what the other school had enjoyed about their video. After that, the gift from the other school was brought in and shown by the student-teachers (who had met previously to exchange them). Then the students completed peer and self-assessment rubrics, thereby assessing both their mates' performances in the collaborative groups as well as their own implication in the project. The project was finalized with a whole group activity: a group discussion about what had been learnt through the project and which activities or points they had enjoyed or disliked. Every single student participated.



Self Assessment

Group Work			
Collaboration			
Role assumption			
Video realization			
Giving ideas			
My performance			
Learning Process			
I have learnt new things			
I have done a great effort to learn			
What have I learnt? (3 aspects)			
1.- 2.- 3.-			
What to improve? (3 aspects)			
1.- 2.			

Figure 11. Self-assessment rubric

Peer Assessment

			
Representative			
Name:			
Direct the group			
Group Unit			
Secretary			
Name:			
Guide Conversations			
Write Agreements			
Time & Material Controler			
Name:			
Control the time			
Care the material			
Doubt Person			
Name:			
Ask Questions			
Ask Doubts			
Comments			

Figure 12. Peer-assessment rubric

Telecollaborative project outcomes

Despite being a short project, it can be said that it was also a very productive one. As it has been explained and described above, there were three main output which were the videos that each class elaborated for the other school. These were essential for the development of the project.

Table 4. Main output

Main Output
Video 1: Brief presentation to introduce ourselves to the other class.
Video 2: Characteristics of the different spaces in our school.
Video 3: *What makes the other school unique?*

Moreover, there were other things the students produced which can be labeled as "auxiliary products". These correspond to the different worksheets the students completed which were necessary to produce the final output (the videos). In order to identify exactly how much the students had learnt throughout the project, a look was taken at the previously planned SWBAT[4] of each session. All in all, to provide a general overview, we have found that the students have learnt/ developed three principle aspects:

1– Content: The areas of the school in their L2/L3 and some basic language structures, in particular, descriptive terms related to buildings, places, etc.
2– Communicative skills:
   – Presenting something to a group that has a different L1, which requires the use of communicative strategies in order to make themselves understood.
   – Sharing ideas in a very basic debate in order to reach a group consensus.
   – Applying new vocabulary in authentic interaction.
   – Planning an oral text according to their needs and interests through the use of the presented language cues (e.g. present simple tense).
3– Learning to learn:
   – Learning to work cooperatively.

4 SWBAT stands for *Students will be able to…*

- Selecting the most important information about a real situation.
- Providing group feedback (what is feedback, why is important to provide it, how we should provide it, etc.).
- Self-awareness: learning about themselves by accepting and recognizing which aspects of their L2 they still need to improve or work on.
- Valuing and appreciating feedback received from others.
- Critically assessing both their own performance and the performance of the other members of their collaborative group.
- Expressing their feelings throughout the teaching sequence.

Assessment

Assessment had a really important role throughout the whole project. As it has been shown in the previous sections of this chapter, it was quite a complex project and a great challenge for future teachers so evaluating each session was very useful in order to make small changes that were necessary to adapt to our students' needs. However, it is important to bear in mind that during the project development different kinds of assessment[5] were used:

- **Formative assessment:** This typology was used to assess both the students' and the student-teachers' performances. Focusing on the students, some individual and group observation grids were created to be completed throughout all the sessions in order to have an overview of each pupil's performance and group development during the whole project. On the other hand, the two in-practice teachers had a meeting after each session between them and also a little talk (if needed) with their school mentors in order to exchange impressions and to make the necessary changes in further sessions.
- **Student-initiated assessment:** The authors felt it was really important that the students actively participate during the assessment process because it could help them realize what they had learnt and how they were evolving during the sessions. This assessment typology was

5 Note that in order to design the assessment of the project the work by Santmartí (2010) was taken into consideration.

carried out at three different phases: in the telecollaborative exchanges (this will be explained further on), during the interaction with the teachers (they were asked for their opinion at certain times during the project) and at the end of the project when they were asked to complete a self-assessment and collaborative partners peer-assessment grid.

– **Teacher-initiated assessment:** Student-teachers wanted to ensure formative and continuous assessment throughout the project. In order to be as fair as possible when evaluating the students and not only consider the final products, different rubrics were created. In the case of assessment of 'on-the-spot' performance of different tasks or activities, the teachers assessed different aspects such as the language used by the learners and other aspects such as their use of images (semiotic strategies), information (thinking skills), clarity (communicative skills) and so on. The other rubrics considered more general aspects such as behaviours and attitudes.

Individual Observation Grid		
STUDENT	ITEMS	COMMENTS
	Motivation	
	Participation	
	Behaviour	
	Learning Process	
	Others	

Group Observation Grid		
Group	ITEMS	COMMENTS
1. Members:	Cooperation and Collaboration	
	Role Assumption	
	Motivation	
	Participation	
	Interventions	
	Others	

Video: Teacher Grid		
Assessed Group:		
EVALUATION CRITERIA	LEVEL (1-3)	COMMENTS
Fluency		
Structure of the sentences		
Concordance: Adjective + Space		
Clarity		
Message		
Images		
Other comments (originality, ...)		

Figure 13. Examples of different rubrics used for assessment

– **Telecollaborative assessment:** Since the telecollaborative exchange, involving the creation of videos for another school and providing their partners feedback, was a key component of the learning process, these activities were integrated into the assessment as well. This was done through simple rubrics where the students were able to write some comments to give feedback.
– **Final assessment:** At the end of the project, there was specific time allotted for a global/final assessment as a whole group. The teachers asked the students their impressions about the project and also asked them for feedback and suggestions for future improvements. A large individual assessment grid was created, based on Ioannou-Georgiou and Pavlos (2003) model that allows teachers to have a wide vision of each student development during the project based on the results from the other assessment instruments.

Items	Student:				
Attitudes	1	2	3	4	5
Shows interest in other cultures.					
Shows interest and enjoys the lessons.					
Pay attention in class (teacher and peers).					
Shows initiative.					
Shows willingness to collaborate and help classmates.					
Shows respect and is friendly with the partners.					
Learning and communication skills	1	2	3	4	5
Respect the classroom materials.					
Shows willingness to make guesses.					
Tries harder when encounters difficulties.					
Use communication strategies and gestures to enhance his/her communicative ability.					
Asks for help from teacher and/or classmates when facing difficulties.					
Listening	1	2	3	4	5
Understands spoke text even if it includes a few unknown words and structures.					
Understand the main idea of a short spoken text.					
Speaking	1	2	3	4	5
Speaks with acceptable pronunciation and intonation.					
Volunteers contributions to class.					
Initiates communication with teacher/classmates.					
Speaks with acceptable accuracy.					
Participates in pair and group work.					

Figure 14. Final Assessment Grid

Some final thoughts: challenges and tips

This chapter's main purpose has been to provide readers with a general overview of how we have implemented a small telecollaborative project. We have also tried to show that, even though these projects seem to be

really difficult to implement, not only is it possible, they have a significant impact on students' L2/L3 acquisition, making it a worthwhile endeavour. However, admittedly, setting up and implementing a telecollaborative project presents several challenges, which we outline below, followed by possible advice for facing them. We finish with some final conclusions about our experience.

Even though this project has been a great experience, during its implementation some challenges or difficulties had to be faced. First of all, it has to be highlighted once more that at the moment of implementing this project, we were future teachers and implementing a teaching sequence during our internship was in itself a great challenge. In addition, our decision to create a teaching sequence that integrated virtual exchange applying a new teaching approach (for us and also for the schools), so, the challenge was even bigger. Fortunately, both schools gave us a lot of support during the design and implementation of the project and as a consequence we can assert that both we and the teachers at the respective schools learned a lot during the project's implementation.

Another challenge lies in the fact that's sometimes it is difficult for teachers to create a project that is appropriate for the National Curriculum, the school's general teaching approach and the students' needs. So, it is an even greater challenge suiting the National Curriculum, two schools' approaches to teaching and learning (fortunately both were quite innovative and their methods were similar) and the students' needs. While this might seem formidable, we have to recognize that we learnt a lot about understanding and selecting criteria from different sources of impact on the teaching while designing teaching activities.

Implementing the same project at the same time in two different schools presented its own difficulties. It is really important that the two groups have almost the same work pace in order to finish the activities at the same time so the project could advance through the different stages. In addition, the project had to be finished within a stipulated period of time, adding even more pressure.

In the Catalunya region, the majority of the schools have more than one group in each grade and this was also our case. All the groups were supposed to learn the same content at the same time. Due to issues of time, an adaptation of this project had to be planned in order to be accommodate the other groups in the same grade (carrying out telecollaboration with more than one group in the same school would have been too complex.

This is not an ideal solution, but we did not have enough time to try to carry out the project across the board for all the groups.

As it could be seen during this chapter, this project involved two different language subjects, L1 and L2/L3. Because the target language for each school was different this brought a new layer of difficulty to the planning and implementation and it was also difficult to coordinate the use of each language because each school had different amount of hours dedicated to a language per week (one school allocated more hours to L2/L3 than the other).

Moreover, the project was implemented during the last term and we were a little bit limited by the teachers, as they also had to finish their teaching sequences already planned into the school curriculum. Added to the time limitations, it is important to note that both schools had very different timetables so the two groups were never doing the language lessons at the same time. This meant that the telecollaborative element had to be implemented asynchronously.

Finally, the last challenge to face was the language policy that each school had. One school did not mind if one teacher taught two different languages to the same group but the other school preferred to have a different teacher for each language. Our solution to that was to include our 'magical' tools (hat or tie), because, in our project, the teachers in each school developed 'mixed' sessions, sometimes in students' L1 and other times in their L2/L3.

Despite the challenges, we acquired many strategies and gained a lot of confidence as teachers, enough to feel that we can provide some advice for implementing telecollaborative projects to other teachers. They are based on our teaching experiences and also try to give some ways to overcome the challenges explained above.

First of all, the importance of the planning process should be highlighted. These planning of these projects has to be wide, flexible and must afford some space for change as students (their difficulties, needs, interests…) and timing can, at times, require teachers to change their plans. The planning presented in this chapter is the final one and includes all the changes done during the teaching process. To achieve the ideal project, it is really important that teachers dedicate a lot of time to the project's preparation. Telecollaborative projects are so complex they need to be revised several times before applying them in a school context and even then, changes will probably have to be made during the project implementation.

So, do not be bothered if every time you revise it you make some changes. Also, you should let other professionals give you their opinion about the project before you start.

Related to what it has been said in the previous tip, it is also very important to look ahead to try to prevent obstacles that may take place. As a consequence, a key point for your project is to have a Plan B for each session because many problems could take place during its development: one group may work slower than the other, technology may not work. It is imperative to know what to do in these cases and not transmit feelings of anxiety to students in such moments.

Coordination with the partner is really fundamental. You have to do 'the same thing' in two different schools, so it is essential to ensure that both know what to do in each session. We strongly recommend meeting (in person or telecollaboratively) before and after each session in order to revise what you have to done, share your impressions and discuss what is coming up next and any changes that need to be done due to the results of the last session.

You need to be aware that you are working in a school that has its own culture. So it is important that the projects are adapted to both schools' contexts and also to the class and students' learning rhythms (L2/L3 level, attention to diversity, fast-finishers …). At the same time, each partner teacher has to realize that he or she is also the teacher from the other group and should assume that responsibility. You really need to care about the results of the other group because you are developing the project together.

The kids have to be really motivated; it is a really complex project and also a challenge for them. They have to be engaged so teachers have to be careful that the activities and the materials are motivating, engaging and adapted to their characteristics. The activities have to be challenging enough for them to help them learn, motivating them take a step forward, but at the same time avoiding frustration. For this, the feedback that we can receive from them is really vital for adapting the project to their needs and interests.

Related to the motivation and avoiding students' frustration, it is essential to set solid, meaningful, attainable and realistic goals and contents. When starting a project, you might feel motivated and want to do many things with them. This is positive, but you have to keep in mind that our main goal as teachers is that they learn and doing a lot of activities with no or no coherence does not help their learning process. So, keep

in mind that less may be more and be sure that your project content and activities are appropriate to your contexts' requirement.

Another issue we consider that should not be left aside is that the project should be constantly shared with the students; they need to have an active role and they need to know what are they doing in each activity and why. Goals and contents should be explained and discussed with them. We believe that this can ensure that the project is much more meaningful for them and help avoid the frustration that has already been mentioned.

Games and role play are really good strategies for acquiring and practicing new vocabulary as preliminary tasks for the telecollaborative activities. These require planning but as said before, you should not plan too many activities. You do not want to be too ambitious. Students need their time to process new concepts, so we recommend that you let them play with the language and experience "freely" before moving on to the more complex activities that involve the telecollaborative interaction (e.g. producing or listening to a video).

Doing a synchronous telecollaborative project (e.g. using videoconferencing) is really attractive and, for sure, could seem more motivating for our students as they can maintain direct interaction with their partners. But we have to be aware that circumstances do not always let us do what we want or what we think would be 'better' for our students. So we recommend that you do not feel frustrated and do not try to make strange 'timetable puzzles'. The asynchronous option also provides good and meaningful learning for our students and it motivates them in a 'different' learning process; creating output that is aimed at an audience outside of the classroom is a very motivating way to 'break' routines in more traditionally focused language classrooms.

Finally, we have insisted a lot on the students' motivation and the importance that they enjoy themselves and have fun during these projects. We want to add and strongly emphasize that the teachers' motivation and enjoyment is also an important feature to keep in mind. You will have to work a lot and sometimes you may feel overwhelmed but remember that if one session is a mess, it opens up new doors to continue learning and to improve your project even more. Be brave, take risks and enjoy this incredible adventure with your students. For sure, at the end, you will be pleasantly and gratefully surprised with the results.

Final Considerations

As it can be deduced from this chapter, implementing this project was a wonderful experience. It allowed us to experiment with an innovative approach and gain new teaching knowledge as well as to present a new teaching method to two schools that have the desire to evolve and include new approaches to their teaching practices.

First of all, we have to assert that one of our most important motivations towards this project was also one of our biggest challenges. That is, we aimed to bring 'true and real interactive' opportunities to our lessons in order to let our students improve their L2/L3 level. Although it may seem that we did not achieve this since they were never in direct contact (for example via videoconference) but we consider that we interaction was accomplished through the video recording. This is supported by the results from the project results and also our students seemed to have had a great experience. We have no way of knowing if doing this project in a synchronous way would have been better, but we are pleased and proud of the results given that it was our first professional experience in this field. Despite that, we do not discard the future possibility of applying this same project, or a new one, using synchronous communication, as it would give us new perspectives about telecollaboration.

We also have learnt quite a lot about the use of technology in the classroom. For us, this aspect was quite new; we did not use technological resources in our lessons very often. After that experience, we feel we can declare that this methodology is a good way to get in contact with those resources and we even began to enjoy them (we were self-declared Luddites before our TEBPLL class) and now use them quite a lot in our daily lives. We also are thankful with our university mentors who helped us quite a lot in this particular field.

Another challenge was providing suitable attention to the diversity of our classrooms. We feel that we have managed to cope with different student profiles and learner needs quite well through the use of collaborative groups, with assigned roles. We highly recommend new teachers use this kind of activities in order to teach their students to collaborate. The students in our project enjoyed this approach and by the end of the project managed quite well when working in teams.

Of course it is not necessary to do a tandem language exchange to do a telecollaborative project. Some projects could be designed for groups

that share a target goal (e.g. French as a foreign language). However, we consider the bilingual essence of our project as one of its main strengths. Sharing two languages, despite their acquisition level, helped our students to find and integrate communicative strategies for making themselves understood by both L1 and L2 speakers.

We have to state that the best part of doing this project was the possibility to work in tandem. At the beginning, it might seem complicated that two teachers work collaboratively in the same project at the same time, but, for sure it was the best part of this experience. Working as a team is so rewarding because you can help each other in bad moments, you have more ideas to share and, for sure, the project is qualitatively enriched. Another great aspect about teamwork, and one of the most positive ones, is meeting new people and contexts. That aspect will expand your educative and social knowledge and, also, break so many stereotypes.

To sum up, we want to highlight, again, that we are really proud of our project and implementing it has been a wonderful experience. This feeling of joy was also shared with the teachers, schools and also the students who, at the end of the project, felt fortunate to have been given the opportunity to take part in this adventure. Finally, we do not want to close this chapter without encouraging our readers to take risks, be brave and take part in this kind of projects bearing in mind that sometimes, the most unbelievable experiences can become the best opportunities in your professional life.

References

Bejarano, G., & Giménez, G. (2017). *What makes our school unique*. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Y3uqfZUs0U

Canva. (-). Amazingly Simple Graphic Design Software-Canva. Retrieved from: https://www.canva.com/

Creese, A., & Blackledge, A. (2010). Translanguaging in the bilingual classroom: A pedagogy for teaching and learning. *The Modern Language Journal, 94*(1), 103–115.

Departament d'Ensenyament. (2009). *Currículum d'Educació Primària*. Retrieved from: http://xtec.gencat.cat/web/.content/alfresco/d/d/workspace/SpacesStore/0031/034fc257-4463-41ab-b7f5-dd33c9982b4f/curriculum_ep.pdf

Departament d'Ensenyament. (2015). *Competències Bàsiques de l'Àmbit de Llengua Estrangera*. Retrieved from: https://media.wix.com/ugd/13e331_86c4dc06593540e1bc4ba58fd285712c.pdf

Dooly, M. (2008). Idea Bank. In M. Dooly (Ed.). *Telecollaborative language learning: A guidebook to moderating intercultural collaboration online*. (pp.167–190). Peter Lang.

Dooly, M. (2010). Teacher 2.0. In S.Guth & F. Helm. (Eds.) Telecollaboration 2.0. Language, literacies, and interculural learning in the 21st Century (pp. 277–303). Bern: Peter Lang.

Dooly, M. (2016). *Telecollaboration*. In C. Chapelle & S. Sauro (eds.). *The handbook of technology in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 169–183). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

García, O., Lin, A. M. Y., & May, S. (2017). *Bilingual and multilingual education*. Springer International Publishing.

Infoteria Corporation. (2017). Lino *Sticky and photo sharing for you*. Retrieved from: http://en.linoit.com/

Ioannou-Georgiou, S., & Pavlos, P. (2003). *Assessing young learners*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kahoot! (2017). *Kahoot! Make learning awesome*. Retrieved from: https://getkahoot.com/?utm_name=controller_app&utm_source=web_app&utm_medium=link

Otsuji, E. & Pennycook, A. (2010). Metrolingualism: Fixity, fluidity and language in flux, *International Journal of Multilingualism, 7*(3), 240—254.

Sadler, R., & Dooly, M. (2016). Twelve years of telecollaboration: What we've learnt. *ELT-J, 70*(4), 401–413.

Sanmartí, N. (2010). *L'avaluació per millorar els aprenentatges de l'alumnat en el marc del Currículum per Competències*. Retrieved from: http://xtec.gencat.cat/web/.content/alfresco/d/d/workspace/SpacesStore/0024/fc53024f-626e-423b-877a-932148c56075/avaluar_per_aprendre.pdf

The Time Travellers. (2017). Design. In *Technology-enhanced project-based language learning database*. Retrieved from: http://tepbll-database.wikispaces.com/Design

Jennie Ingelsson and Anna Linder
Mälmo University

Chapter 7. Intercultural meetings in a Swedish – Kiwi e-mail exchange: Lessons Learnt

Introduction

During our four-year education of becoming primary teachers, at Malmö University we have come across various methods of teaching and learning. One of these has been through telecollaboration, a method which we took an interest in as a consequence of writing a research synthesis. After we analysed several studies on developing an intercultural understanding through telecollaboration we soon realised that most studies that have been carried out regarding this approach have been focused on older students. This inspired us to develop our own plan of conducting a telecollaborative study with young learners where an intercultural exchange would be our main focus.

As part of our teacher education programme, we take part in several teaching placements. This enabled us to find schools from Sweden who would be interested in taking part in our project. We are also able to conduct one month of teaching placement abroad, and this helped us set up a contact with an international school. Early on in our education we had already decided we were interested in carrying out our teaching placement in New Zealand our final year at the university –an event which took place at the same time we were writing our final dissertation for our degree paper. Knowing that we would be in New Zealand for a period of time and meeting all of the students opened up the possibility for a study where we could be involved in every part of the process of the telecollaboration. The process of setting up, planning and carrying out this project will be described in this chapter.

Context of the project

After some research, we were able to contact a rural school from New Zealand who was interested in taking part in our final project for our final dissertation paper required for finishing our degree. Inevitably, this required a long e-mail correspondence to set up and necessitated the intervention of staff and supervisors from Malmo University to back up our intentions and proposal. However, everything was finally established with a school in New Zealand that is located in the countryside of the South Island. We were invited to carry out our placement in a year 5 and 6 classroom.

However, after several e-mails we came to realize that the year 5 and 6 classroom held over 90 students! This required us to rethink our plan of one school in Sweden and one school in New Zealand –which is the typical configuration for telecollaborative projects (especially for newbies like ourselves). The number of students in New Zealand made it possible to involve more than one school in Sweden. Most classes in Sweden have about 25 students each so we realized that we would be able to involve four different classes. Also, the population in Sweden represents a vast variation of cultural backgrounds which we also wanted to be represented in the telecollaborative exchange with the students from New Zealand. Thus we decided upon two different city schools, with two classes in each school, who were interested in taking part in this project. They both matched our requirements of representing a vast variation of cultural backgrounds. We now had almost 200 students involved, all of whom were in the range of 9 to 13 years old.

In the end, from the time of beginning to write our research synthesis on telecollaboration, planning for our own project study and setting up our internship, making contacts and setting up timelines, almost a year had passed before we visited the first school to launch the telecollaborative project. But we were finally ready to begin! In the next section we will describe in more detail the planning phase of our project.

Planning

Conducting a telecollaborative project was not going to be easy and that was something we were prepared for when we set out to do this. The main concepts we had chosen for this project was culture. We were aware that 'culture' is a broad subject with a vast variation of different meanings. Culture describes more than just the origin of a person; culture includes accepted social norms concerning clothes, music, religion, food and much more.

So we first examined our groups of students individually, to be able to evaluate what their initial understanding of some of our concepts were. To achieve a desired prior understanding before our telecollaborative project a preparation lesson was created. It was based on creating a common understanding for culture and for the students to reflect on themselves and their surroundings. McKay (2002) claims that learning about culture is a social process and students need to gain an understanding of how their own culture influences their lives. In short, to be able to reflect on someone else's culture you need to know your own.

We chose to collect all the material on an accessible online platform that could be reached no matter where we were. Because we were not yet qualified teachers our options for platform had to be somewhere where you did not need an account connected to a school. We opted for Google Drive and from there we were able to create an array of different resources. Moreover, we were able to verify that all the schools involved were already using Chromebooks[1] in their daily teaching, so that made the choice of Google Drive that much more obvious. The students and teachers in the project were already used to the platform and had access to a full range of online tools through Google in their classrooms.

Due to the time difference of 12 hours between the countries we settled on an asynchronous approach (the use of emails), since the groups would not be able to meet at the same time. Also, this gives the students' a longer time to review and reply to the material (Dooly, 2008).

1 Chromebook is a laptop that is Internet-dependent that functions with Google Chrome Internet browser while the rest of its working components are Web apps (email, photos, documents), or apps that run while connected to a network. Rather than working with internal storage, everything is saved on the Web, allowing access to the saved content from any other computer. (See also Bruun, this book).

For the project we planned a pre-lesson, the email project itself and a follow-up lesson. The pre-lesson consisted of a video clip [2]defining culture, we also planned some questions based on the video clip to make sure all students understood what the concept of culture was. To stimulate their curiosity and ensure interest from the students, the final stage of our planning was for the students to create a mind map based on thoughts, prior knowledge and presumptions they had regarding their exchange country. The students should also create a presentation about their schools since the project consisted of two very different types of schools and where they are located. We decided to give them some choice concerning the modality of the presentation; it could be a video or a google presentation, but had to consist of text and pictures where the students showed their school buildings, classrooms, lunch area, recreation area, and gave a description either in audio or in text of what was presented.

For scaffolding we planned for the students to create personal mindmaps about themselves, their family, life and culture. This information could then be used in writing an email letter. To help them understand the basic structure of this genre of writing, we decided to provide them with a few questions they could answer in order to stimulate their thinking but also to add information that the students could reflect on. For example, we asked them if they liked to be inside or outside and why that was the case. We planned on creating a pair of questions for each email response as well as to strongly encourage the students to ask questions based on their responses and the mind map that was created.

For additional language scaffolding, we created some sentence starters for the Swedish students who were struggling with how to initiate an email in English. Examples are:

- I live in…
- My family consists of…
- I like to…
- In my spare time I…
- My favourite…

We also planned to give the students feedback on all their emails to provide a formative assessment on how they can move forward in their writing and to develop their ability of an intercultural understanding.

2 You can view the film clip here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o32l-_U6nGY

The follow-up lesson was planned as a way to tie up all the loose ends, and create closure and hopefully be able to answer the questions that was remaining. Also, for closure, we planned an activity where the students would be able to make changes on their mind-maps after their knowledge about the exchange country had grown. Finally, they would watch a presentation made by the students from the other side of the world and get a visual view of how it really looks.

The overall objective of the project was to help the students see the similarities and differences they might have with students on the other side of the world and hopefully with that knowledge and understanding be able to find similarities with people around them, even if they are from different parts of the globe and may have some cultural differences.

Implementation

Our first visits to the Swedish classrooms took place about a month prior to our departure for New Zealand. In every classroom we visited we had a conversation with the teacher first to adjust and modify our planning to be suited to the different settings in each classroom. Examples of some of the modifications included changing the mind-mapping from digital to paper, due to differences in digital knowledge with the students and furthermore for the time-limit we had in each classroom. Unfortunately, we did not have extra time to teach the students various digital learning tools so we had to accept these changes to our plans.

We also had to modify our initial plan of pairing up the learners in one-to-one partnerships because the teachers preferred that the younger students write in pairs due to their level of English as a second language. In the end, this proved to be the approach used for the New Zealand students as well; there were students who needed the extra support and were given the opportunity to write in pairs. Still, our main goal remained the same, that is to provide a connection to the word 'culture' and for the students to reflect upon themselves, their own culture as well as the country they would be in contact with.

During our preliminary discussions with the teachers involved we asked them to help prepare their students for email writing through lessons

on appropriate questions, chunks of words that may occur and how to start and end a letter. This was to optimize our visits to the schools and we could focus on starting the correspondence immediately. We also requested that the teachers be rather subtle in mentioning the country the students were going to correspond to since we wished to analyse any previous knowledge the students might have towards the other country in order to compare with their results following the correspondence.

Collecting their prior knowledge was done by placing the students in small groups and asking them to create mind-maps on anything they already knew about New Zealand and Sweden. As a means of scaffolding for this session we listed −with the students help− sub-subjects they might use in their mind-mapping. For example, the students created mind-maps that were centred around their school, nature, people, animals, transportation etc.

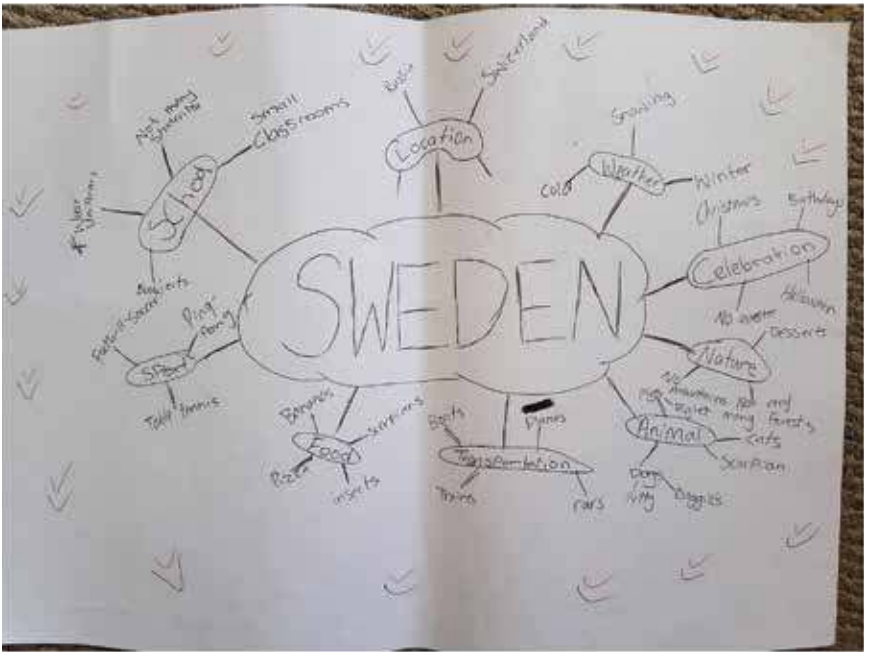


Figure 1. Students' mind-map before discussion

This session led to many questions about the different countries and the students were able to gather inspiration from each other's mind-maps to create questions to use in their emails.

After letting the students discuss and imagine how the countries would look like we moved on to the students' cultural understanding. To create an interest and an understanding of what the term 'culture' means we shared our YouTube clip and followed the viewing with group discussion, followed by whole class discussions to encourage the students to explore what culture means to them and what they would like to share about their own culture. Following the group and full classroom discussions, the students were asked to create individual mind-maps. As it will be recalled, they had already created mind-maps in groups earlier on; they were now able to create them on their own. Key to this second step, the new mind-maps had a personal focus as they included individual features such as family, interests, food, living space.

Figure 2. Mind-map following the discussion

As they finished their individual mind-maps, with the help of the teachers we connected the students, one by one, to different Google Documents. These documents served as the 'home platform' for each correspondence. During this activity we provided the students who needed help with the sentence starters mentioned earlier. Additionally, we quickly found that some of the

students required almost complete emails with only a few gaps to fill in so we had to swiftly improvise this extra scaffolding during the lesson.

Due to our time limitations, the students were only given the opportunity to write two emails each. For the first one the students were given instructions to share information about themselves, their families and how they live. For the following email the students were given instructions to share information about their upcoming winter/summer -holidays and to share some basic phrases in Swedish/Te Reo Maori. Of course, ideally the exchange would have been longer in order for there to be a more substantial progression in their learning.

After the start-up in Sweden we headed to New Zealand and implemented the same process in the classroom there. Interestingly, the first email response written by the students in New Zealand contained a lot of similar spelling and grammatical mistakes as the ones from Sweden. This experience highlighted for us the importance of feedback throughout the writing process. For instance, it was quite beneficial for all the students involved in New Zealand that we were present in the classroom to help with translations and cultural understandings because some of the Swedish students had incorporated a lot of Swedish words into their writing.

Finally, to sum up the students' experiences from the exchange, we once again put them in smaller groups to write a new mind-map of Sweden and New Zealand where they would add things they now knew about the country and their new peers. Despite the fact that it was a very short exchange of merely two emails and two responses to them, most students added things that had caught their interest. To follow up on the students' thoughts we used a full class discussion to highlight some of the ideas mentioned in the mind-maps. During this discussion the students were able to ask further questions and collaboratively – between their classmates, their teachers and ourselves- they could complete their train of thought about cultural differences and similarities.

Challenges

We acknowledge that in this telecollaborative exchange we had a privilege that is, unfortunately, very rare. We had the possibility of meeting every single student and teacher involved in the project. These meetings enabled

us to face the challenges head on and to deepen our own cultural understanding of different classroom organisations and teaching styles.

One of the first challenges we met early on in our planning was the number of students in each classroom. At the beginning, based on our understanding of classroom size in Sweden, we had planned for a one-on-one correspondence between classrooms, each with approximately 25 students in each class. After some correspondence back and forth we suddenly realised that the New Zealand school had over 90 students in the same classroom. Our first reaction was that this number of students was too much for our time limits, however, after some reflection we came to see it as a positive challenge. It allowed us to widen our range of students in Sweden and to represent the vast variation of population regarding cultural backgrounds.

This also helped us to realize that it can be a challenge to make oneself clear in email conversations, especially internationally (this is not just a problem for the young students!). This, in turn, led us to understand that opening up to the possibility of these misconceptions, which may appear on both sides of the conversations, implies that one is usually more willing to put an extra effort into understanding each other and making themselves understood. In retrospect we have come to believe that a lot of correspondence could have been reduced by using Skype as a mediating tool instead of email. This would have allowed us to discuss in more depth the decisions and explain why they had been made. This is important when setting up a telecollaborative project the opportunity of meeting all teachers face to face rarely occurs.

We knew that language use would be a challenge since we were planning telecollaboration between two classes, with one of them made up of native English speaking students. To make the difference seem as minimal as we could, we provided extra scaffolding for the Swedish students. However, despite our scaffolding we noticed with the language gap was a key element for misunderstanding whenever it occurred. The Swedish students had trouble understanding slang words and words that were specific to the country. For example, Kiwi is used to refer to the people from New Zealand and of course, the Swedish students associated it with a fruit! The students were asked to explain words such as activities and food as much as possible and they were encouraged to see how these words were often specific to their own context. This helped the students see that the problems were not because one class 'knew more language' than the other.

For instance, a New Zealand student might have as much difficulty understanding what the dish 'dolma' is as much as a Swedish student might struggle with the definition of the sport 'netball'.

Of course, some the challenges the students had were context-specific. Some Swedish students had difficulties reading the email in general and needed some assistance either from a peer or from a teacher. And some of the New Zealand students encountered problems due to the grammatical errors of some of the Swedish students' writing. After the first emails were sent we tried to prevent these misunderstandings in the second one because we had noticed that the students seemed to have used Google translate to get their message across, which often resulted in the sentence stating something completely different than what was intended. However, in general, we were able to overcome the language challenge with the help of the teachers and other students, in particular when reading and interpreting the emails.

Another challenge encountered throughout the project was related to the prior knowledge of students. Although we had the benefit of meeting all of the students involved during the project we had not met these students before we began our planning so we did not have an insight about their previous knowledge or individual needs. To anticipate problems with language, then, we provided sentence starters and during the implementation phase we changed the group formations to encourage peer collaboration.

A smaller problem –which is a mainstay of any teaching actually- was the writing of emails when some of the students were not able to write them due to illness or other obligations. This meant we had to add an extra correspondence to fast-finishing students who already had completed his or her email.

However, one of the more perplexing incidents we met was the actual writing of the emails and coordinating responses from the different classrooms. We had not set up different deadlines in our planning because we had assumed that there would be time to answer the emails as soon as one came in. We soon found out that this was not possible and therefore only two full correspondences (two emails per country partner) were completed before the end of term. We realize now that we should have been clearer in our planning and set up an instructive timeline that included deadlines. This would have been more efficient (although the collected correspondences were still sufficient to complete our dissertation study). Still, for next time we would not recommend placing the telecollaboration at end of term!

As we described above, the platform we used for our project was Google Drive. This proved to be the best option we had for our project because all the students and teachers had access and it did not require us to have access to a school account. Moreover, although the students were linked into different Google documents, the teachers could oversee all the conversations but the students could only access their own. The drawback with Google documents was that the document could be edited while the other student was still in the process of composing and editing the email. Thus, it is important for the teachers to give the students sufficient time to finish their letter and to revise it with them so they feel secure and content with it before it is sent. During our first trial with this exchange, several letters were accessed and read before the writer could make any editing changes based on given feedback. This was resolved by some of the students who they simply wrote and edited their email in a blank document before posting it. For our next telecollaborative project we have decided we will research and try more appropriate platforms for telecollaboration.

Outcomes

Both exchange countries had very limited knowledge regarding each other, and with creating a pre and post mind-map both the students and we, the teachers, got a visual example of the things they knew beforehand as well as what they learned from the exchange. From the mind-maps we have seen that the New Zealand students developed an understanding about the more common animals that can be found Sweden, from lions, pandas and turkeys to moose, reindeer and horse. And the Swedish students learned that although New Zealand is close to Australia they do not share much of their flora and fauna. Through the mind-map the students also got an opportunity to explore each other's school systems with their exchange partner. For instance, they found out that one school had school uniforms and a very modern learning environment while the other had free choice of clothes and a more traditional classroom setting. Finally, discussions regarding the geographical aspects of the countries, how they look, where they are located on the map also showed evidence that the students had learnt facts about their partner country.

As regards language gains, upon reading the emails we saw improvement in the language, both on the Swedish side as well as from the New Zealand partners. We even noticed that despite the Native-Speaker, Non-Native Speaker set-up there were some language errors that were similar between the two countries, such as punctuation and the use of capital letters. Still, it must be acknowledged that as far as gains in the target language, the Swedish students were perhaps able to improve their language use more due to the higher command of English that the New Zealand students had. Nonetheless, the New Zealand students also went through a language learning process while analysing sentences that were not always grammatically correct, as well as using a different language then normal to ensure they made themselves understood with their exchange peers. Some students even commented on this, indicating that they wrote differently to their exchange partner than when they wrote to another native speaker. This demonstrates that for the Native Speakers a process of linguistic meta-reflection was promoted through the telecollaboration (see also the chapter by Bonet).

From an academic perspective it can be argued that the students developed through their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD; Vygotsky, 1978) because they were learning from each other through their social interaction. Dialogue and actions became the resources that helped develop their thinking and problem solving skills. This occurred not only during the email writing and exchange but also through the conversations between students and teachers as well as between peers.

Additionally, we witnessed an increase in the students' self-awareness and social awareness. The two exchange countries were quite far from each other geographically but also quite diverse in population. Also their school profiles were quite distinct. One group belonged a quite homogenous rural school in New Zealand and another was a very heterogeneous inner city school in a big city. However, the discussion with the students and the content of the emails indicate that similarities, rather than differences, were more often highlighted by the students. For instance, two students found a point in common and discussed this in-depth – both of them helped out their dads after school. Students also found (and marvelled) over the connection that both countries had McDonalds and that pizza was a highly loved dinner option.

Both exchange countries reflected on how their neighbourhood looked and why things were done differently on each side of the world. Students discussed the idea of only living in flats versus living on farms. At one point this led to a heated discussion in New Zealand when one of the students

found out that her exchange partner did not like animals. After some analysis with her classmate she came to the conclusion that this might be because students who live in a small flat in the middle of a big city are not used to having animals around them whereas in their country this is quite common and they are more than used to having animals near them, from pets to barnyard animals.

As student- teachers it was interesting to see the development of the students, not just in their knowledge or intercultural understanding but also in their attitude towards the project. Before beginning the project (in the exercise aimed to solicit previous knowledge) some of the students had expressed some fears that their partners might not be 'a nice person' or some even that worried that they might be racist. The exchange helped eradicate these notions and enabled students to be more open minded about meeting people from other cultural backgrounds than themselves.

At the end of the project the feedback we received from the students indicated that many of the worries they had before the exchange had been proven wrong. The majority of the students indicated that the project was a success; that they had learned a lot of new things both regarding their exchange partner as well as aspects of the country where they were from. They also expressed that initial negative thoughts they had harboured at the start of the project had changed to more positive ones, that the exchange had been fun and interesting and that they were happy to have been able to participate in it. Their only regret was that project had been too short and that they wished there had been more and quicker responses.

Tips and recommendations

Arguably, a telecollaboration project must be seen as more than a 'getting to know each other' activity or a language exchange. It is an approach that has huge potential for learning and which can be applied across different subjects. We could have made this project wide by taking into consideration other content knowledge, such as the environment. The students could have discussed how different schools recycle or have a compost, or the exchange could have focused more on the geographical aspects of the exchange countries, for instance, what is similar and different in the flora and fauna.

We also found that it is essential to add in extra time for the project when planning. It will take longer than you as the teacher first anticipated. And as far as timing, if the teachers have a specific goal for the project, it is best to make a detailed lesson plan for both yourself and for the exchange school, including rough dates of when the emails should be sent out or other key events. All schools run on tight schedules and things change so if both schools have an approximate timeline to follow for these key events, the project will not slow down excessively due to sickness, field trips or other common school events if these have been anticipated to some degree beforehand.

When setting up a correspondence of this type, it is a good idea to have some questions that the students should ask or answer when they send the emails. Bear in mind, too, that sometimes the emails can get stuck in the 'getting to know each other' phase. Providing the student with some more in depth questions can help them progress from what their siblings are called to deeper, thought-provoking discussions. For example, the questions might be if they prefer to be indoors or outdoors and why; what is the best book they have ever read, what is their favourite season? Questions where the students have to not only express and opinion but to give an explanation for it can create good reflection for the exchange partner as well as for themselves. Why do the students answer the way they do? As we've seen in the small example about animals, the reason may be due to the country they live in or other aspects of their lives.

It is also important to take care when choosing the digital tools and platforms for the exchange. Pick a platform that you as a teacher are familiar with and which is not too advanced for the students to use. Ideally, use a platform where the students can work on their own and where they can edit their work without them having to worry who (other than the teacher) might read the content before they deem it to be finished. You might also consider using a platform with a chat function so they can talk with their partners in real time, if the opportunity arises. However, this might be a bit harder for the teacher to monitor if the chat is the base of the whole exchange project.

Finally, we suggest choosing a country where the students' linguistic levels match. A telecollaborative project between two English as a Second Language (ESL) versus two classes of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and a ESL will inevitably have different outcomes. We chose to have one non-native and one native English speaking class because they

were still quite similar in their language proficiency. The gap would probably have seemed greater if the classes were a year 8 native English collaborating with a year 8 non-native class. Arguably, those differences can occur just as well between two non-native classes.

This was our first attempt of a telecollaborative project, however, it will certainly not be our last. Experience within telecollaboration comes with practice and being able to modify and adapt to various situations. We encourage everyone to try this method of developing language skills and intercultural competence. Every teaching method used comes with challenges at first but also a lot of possibilities and telecollaboration promises a lot of learning opportunities that make it well worth the effort.

References

Dooly, M. (2008). *Telecollaborative language learning: a guidebook to moderating intercultural collaboration online*. Bern: Peter Lang.

McKay, S. (2002). *Teaching English as an international language: rethinking goals and approaches*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: the development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Sara Bruun
Furutorpskolan (Hässleholm, Sweden)

Chapter 8. Global goals: A virtual project with students from Sweden and Tanzania

Introduction

I am a language teacher at a secondary school in Sweden. The school where I work is located a few miles north of the third largest city in Sweden, Malmö and has about 600 students. Part of my workload is teaching English as a foreign language during two weekly 60-minute classes. The school I work at has always endeavoured to be innovative and to introduce technology into the everyday teaching and learning practices of the teachers and students. In particular, we have worked quite often with Chromebooks and we use Google Classroom[1].

In addition to the progressive environment of our school, as a teacher I feel the need to continuously try to combine authentic tasks, literature and digital tools in order to create subject matter that allows students to see a real purpose for engaging with the proposed activities. Along these lines, it is my belief that the use of digital tools helps open up the classroom towards the whole world, which is an essential part of the learning process

1 For those unfamiliar with these two technological tools, Chromebook is a rather recent (and economic) laptop that is Internet-dependent laptop that functions with Google Chrome Internet browser while the rest of its working components are Web apps (email, photos, documents), or apps that run while you're connected to a network. This everything to be saved on the Web so that content that is being worked on in the classroom can then be accessed from any other computer (from home, from a different classroom or even from a different computer in the same classroom). It has the added incentive that students can never use the excuse that the dog ate their homework! Google classroom is, as its name implies, an online learning environment that draws principally from the Google functions available virtually (e.g. google docs, forms, presentations, albums and portfolios) and which can be easily shared among users. (See also the chapter by Ingelsson and Linder in this book).

for today. One effective means of ensuring that students are gaining global knowledge of the interconnected world is to get them involved in collaborative and international projects. With social media platforms such as Skype (or any other online video conferencing tool) easily available in the classroom, students all over the globe are able to meet, speak, and work together in real time. Clearly digital tools can and should transform teaching and by using them wisely teachers can take their students far beyond textbooks and workbooks and vocabulary tests. This is precisely the premise that underlines the project I will describe in the rest of this chapter.

The project, entitled Global Goals, was a collaborative effort between my classes and a class from a school in Bagamoyo, Tanzania, located on the East African coast, a few miles north of Dar Es Salaam. In comparison to our school of approximately 600 students, their school has close to 1200 students. For the project itself, there were 28 14-year-old students in my class in Sweden and 28 students in Bagamoyo, ranging between the ages of 10 and 13. The aim of the project was to help the students learn about aspects of a sustainable future while working on their English as a foreign language. The project lasted for seven weeks and the lessons were integrated into the English and Social Science lessons of both schools. In the next section of this chapter I explain the background and planning that led up to this project.

Background

There are many different webpages where teachers can find a school to collaborate with. 'E-twinning' or 'Skype in the Classroom' are two of the more popular sites where you can easily find a partner to work with. However, I also use different Facebook groups to find school partners and it was this way that I found the school in Tanzania to work with. Specifically I found them in a group known as 'Mystery Skype', which is a type of subgroup of 'Skype in the Classroom' (more about this further on). Of course, it is very easy (and free) to get in touch with your future partner after having first met in a Facebook group. You can then move on to using the chat function in Messenger, or you can simply exchange contact details and can communicate through the Whatsapp platform.

In our case, the teacher in charge of international projects at the school in Tanzania, (her name is Grace) and I planned our project using Skype and Messenger. However, it is important to note that it can be a bit challenging at times to work with a school in Africa since the Internet connection is not always reliable and often comes and goes. For instance, I soon found out that if it rains there is no Internet nor electricity and it can take a few days before it is possible to connect with the partner school again. Moreover, our partner school only had one working computer so Grace had to use her private mobile phone as a wireless router to provide Internet access for the students' computers. Inevitably, these obstacles created tension, as customarily in Sweden we like to plan everything very thoroughly and with well-established parameters and schedules. We soon found out that this was not always possible when working with the partner school in Africa. This was an important lesson for both the teacher (myself) and the students. These challenges will be discussed in further detail in another section of the chapter.

It is worth noting that this exchange was not completely virtual –we were able to arrange a face-to-face meeting as well. This was possible through the Swedish Council for Higher Education, which is responsible for a number of different programmes that give stakeholders in the entire Swedish education sector – from pre-school, primary and secondary school, to higher education, vocational education and training and adult education – the opportunity to apply for project funding for international partnerships and exchange projects. (The Swedish Council for Higher Education. 2017) The aim is that these international activities will contribute to increasing the quality of education in Sweden. In May 2017 I applied and received funding so that a colleague, three of our students and I were able to visit the school in Bagamoyo, Tanzania in November 2017. In May 2018 Grace, her headmaster and 2 students will return the visit and join us in Sweden.

The beginning of the project: Getting to know each other

This project started with the two schools doing a 'Mystery Skype'. However, before explaining what a Mystery Skype is, I will first describe 'Skype in the Classroom'. This programme was launched in December of 2010 and has quickly become a worldwide phenomenon for teachers and

students to contact and communicate with other classrooms around the globe. Teachers can use the platform to connect with other educators with similar interests, find lessons, meet and arrange guest speakers (e.g. book authors), and even take their classes on virtual field trips. Alongside 'Skype in the Classroom', educators can also participate in a 'Mystery Skype' game that promotes critical thinking, cultural awareness and geography skills. 'Mystery Skype' is basically a competition that can be arranged by a group of teachers who have joined 'Skype in the Classroom'. For the game, the participating classes have to try to discover where their partner school is located and the first to do so wins. Students are only allowed to ask 'yes or no' questions which are asked in tandem with other students who are working with a map and doing a google information search, based on the partners' answers.

The students may ask questions like: 'Do you live in Europe?' 'Do you live close to an ocean?' or 'Are there mountains where you live?' When a class gets an answer the students then carry out investigative work based on these answers: for example, if the students understand that the other class lives in Europe they use Google maps and circle where they think the class might be located. As the students ask questions and the game progresses, the circle gets smaller and the classes eventually try to guess where the other class is. In the case of small towns such as ours, before the game started the teachers decided which city was acceptable as a winning guess (one that can be more easily located on the map than a very small town).

In our case, the students from the school in Tanzania were the first to guess our location. After the game ended, the students started talking and asked each other different questions to learn about each others' schools, communities and countries and to get to know each other a bit more. For instance, my students were very interested to know how hot it was in Africa and if there were lions around the school. The Tanzanian students wanted to know if Sweden has snow on the ground all the year round so one of my students took the portable computer and went outside to show them that it was all green and sunny. In short, even in the first brief introduction phase, the students expanded their world knowledge and their cultural understanding of each other.

As the students talked on Skype it emerged that both classes were interested in taking care of the planet. The students in Tanzania told my students that if you live near Dar es Salaam it is impossible to swim in the

ocean because the beaches surrounding the city are covered with garbage and plastic. It is also impossible to walk out in the ocean to swim because the garbage spreads 5 to 10 metres in the water. Even the luxury hotels must deal with this problem. They have employees that try to clean the beaches every morning and evening, but the tourists still cannot go into the ocean to swim; they must stay by the pool. The Swedish students were upset to hear this and together with the students in Tanzania they decided that they wanted to learn more about the problems related to plastic pollution and what can be done to prevent it.

So, after some discussion, we (the teachers involved in the project) decided to develop our plans based on the 'global goal number 14': Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. The 'global goals' (also known as the sustainable development goals) are summaries or bullet points derived from the seventieth UN General Assembly in which an expansive and ambitious set of development goals were established with the intention of ending poverty in all its forms by 2030. These parameters succeed the previous 'Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)' of the United Nations in their initiative for advancing basic living standards in the world and addressing a range of issues, including armed conflict, climate change, and equality.

While we recognize that these development goals are open to some criticism such as being too broad and overly ambitious, we felt that they could be used to identify specific learning challenges for our students who must learn life skills for the problems that they will face as citizens of the future. Thus, we decided to focus on the two transversal aims of learning about 'life under water' and of course, to provide purposeful communication situations to help develop our students' skills in English (as a foreign language).

Once we had decided on a general topic, we then agreed that we wanted to raise public awareness in both countries about the problems of plastic pollution. Both schools retrieved lesson plans and materials to work with for the lessons from the webpage called 'The Worlds' Largest Lesson' which provides ready-made lesson plans that teachers can use straight away.

Finally, Grace and I decided that the theme needed to be like an umbrella, which for us meant that we had the same topic but we could add content that suits our own curriculum. We felt that made it is easier to plan and the classes could continue working even if there were no Internet connection.

It also implied that the classes did not have to do exactly the same activities during the lessons and in the event that a class fell behind (due to Internet breakdown, for instance) the students could catch up when the connection was working again. We planned the project in a shared Google document, but we also used Padlet.com, Skype and Messenger as well.

Classroom activities

As mentioned above, Grace and I planned our classroom work mostly via Messenger, but also via Skype. It was hard for her to plan since her class only had one working computer and even then she could never be sure if she would have reliable Internet connection. However Grace is a very resolute individual and she was determined to finish the project. She also was unwavering in her commitment to providing her students with as many opportunities to work with technology as possible. So the digital tools that we finally decided upon and were able to use in both countries were:

- Edpuzzle.com: This is a video platform for teachers and students where students can watch videos and answer questions. Teachers can follow what the students do from the teacher's account.
- Padlet.com: This is an online virtual "bulletin" board, where students and teachers can collaborate, reflect, share links and pictures, in a secure location.
- Flipgrid.com: This is a video discussion platform, where you can upload a film and a topic. People all over the world can join your discussions.
- Skype: This is a platform where you can make video and audio calls and exchange chat messages
- Messenger: This is the chat app that belongs to Facebook.
- Google document: This is an online tool for writing documents. Students and teachers can collaborate and work in real time.
- Wordpress.com. This is a blog portal.
- Instagram: This is an internet-based photo-sharing application and service that allows users to share pictures and videos.

- Imovie; This is a video editing software app available for Apple (Mac) users.
- Youtube: This is a video sharing website.
- Bookcreator.com: This is an online tool you can use to create E-books.

How these tools are integrated into the different learning activities are described in the general description of the planned tasks.

The first activities: Learning about the topic and learning about each other

To start off the learning activities, students in both countries began working on the chosen theme by watching a documentary film from *National Geographic* that related what happens in the oceans when humans throw plastic into them. The film was uploaded on Edpuzzle.com so the students in both countries could watch it and answer the questions that the teachers had created together.

After watching the film the students were divided into groups of four students – two from each country. The small groups of four worked together in Padlet.com, writing down their thoughts about the film and also adding information on what they were interested in learning more about after watching the film and working in Edpuzzle.

Padlet.com was chosen because of its many features that provide excellent affordances when executing an international project. For instance, it works as a digital pinboard where you can upload pictures, videos, audio files or add text messages. These different means of communication allowed the students to upload their ideas in different formats so that their partners could access them at any time.

This was extremely useful because the Internet connection was often poor for the students from Tanzania. This also meant that they were not able to upload as much content as the Swedish students, but on the whole the amount of work done by both sides was impressive. Both schools were able to read what had been written by everyone else and this stimulated a lot of creative thinking. In this way the students at both partner schools were prepared for discussion of their ideas before any of the planned Skype sessions.

This preparation was essential for the synchronous activities like video conferencing, especially given that some of the Tanzanian students only spoke Swahili and these students in particular struggled to be able to

communicate in English. All the students needed to be very well prepared to talk to each other so the teachers created support materials to scaffold their communication efforts. For instance, the students were given sentence prompters (e.g. the beginning of standard sentences; formulaic language chunks as reminders for conversational bits) to help them plan what they wanted to say during the Skype calls and of course the teachers intervened whenever students had evident difficulties in their communicative efforts.

After watching the videos, the next sessions of the project aimed to help the students in the partner classes get to know each other. This was not easy since it was a challenge to have a scheduled time with the school in Africa. For instance at one point the teachers had planned for the students to talk on Skype, but when the class from Sweden called there was no answer. A few hours later the class from Tanzania called and expressed surprise that the Swedish class had not waited for them to call. Clearly this was an example of cultural expectations and norms that often come to the fore when carrying out international telecollaborative projects. Although the students were not able to Skype as often as initially planned and desired there were a few times during the project when the classes managed to get in touch and this 'human factor' was a very important part of the whole learning process (as well as understanding and accepting different norms about timing and work schedules).

Moving forward: Getting ready to create a film together

During one session, the students discussed possible final product formats and content and agreed that they were interested in achieving three things: to create a film in Imovie, upload it to Youtube and disseminate it on Flipgrid and in other social media.

To decide the content for the Imovie, Skype was used in different ways; at times the students were able to talk together about different subjects and at other times they simply left written messages for each other. Sometimes the students also worked on Google documents to create the script for the movie about the need to stop polluting the oceans with plastic. In order to decide what should be included in the script of the film, the students gathered information about threats to the ocean from different web pages such as: digitalexplorer.com, National Geographic.com, ecokids.ca and worldwildlife.org. They then synthesized the information and posted the

most relevant points in the shared Padlet. Additionally, the Swedish students wrote a newspaper article about the problem of plastic pollution in the oceans and any possible solutions. The writing was stimulated through this prompting text[2]:

Yesterday you met a scientist and the research focus is #stopplasticpollution.

Imagine that you are a journalist and you make an interview with the scientist.

You are very interested in taking care of our planet and you write articles for the National Geographic and newspapers that buy your texts.

You have been on vacation and you found out that it was impossible to swim in the ocean. You found dead animals on the beach, covered in oil, and you also saw a lot of waste on the beach and in the ocean. You met the scientist at the hotel and you started talking.

You decide to write an article about the situation. When you write your article make sure you include the answers to the 5 W- questions:

- **Who** was involved?
- **What** happened?
- **Where** did it take place?
- **When** did it take place?
- **Why** did that happen?
- Some authors may want to add a sixth question, "how", to the list: **How** did it happen? (Bruun, 2017)

The students first wrote a text together in a Google document in small groups and then the groups exchanged texts to give each other feedback and help each other develop and improve their texts. They were given specific phrases to orient them on giving feedback (Annex 1). The students then got their texts back and re-wrote them. The final versions of the texts were published in the E-book which also served as reading material for the Tanzanian students.

It must be noted that corollary to the project, we detected a need to hold several discussions about what are reliable sources of information and how an Internet user knows whether a webpage can be trusted or not. After some discussion, it became apparent that Facebook was used by most of

2 Bruunsklassrum.blogspot.se

the students as a main source of information sources in both countries so an entire Skype session was dedicated to talking about whether everything shared on Facebook is reliable and verifiable information.

More importantly, students were given guidelines in order to know if a Facebook post was a reliable source for information or not. The guidelines were taken from easybib.com. According to this website, the main questions students should think about are:

- Who is providing the information?
- What do you know about the author and their credentials?
- Are they an expert?
- Can you find out more and contact them?
- Search for author or publisher in search engine. Has the author written several publications on the topic?
- Have other credible people referenced this source?
- Is the language free of emotion?
- Does the organization or author suggest there may be bias? Does bias make sense in relations to your argument?
- Is the purpose of the website to inform or to persuade towards a certain agenda?
- Are there ads? Are they trying to make money?
- When was the source last updated?
- Was it reproduced? If so, from where? Type a sentence in Google to verify.

Following the discussion about the guidelines the students went back to their Padlet posts and checked their sources one more time to make sure the information was reliable.

Next they began to write the film script. Using the facts that they learned from their different sources, the students worked collaboratively on the script in Google document. The writing process was done differently in each class. The students in Tanzania worked on the script together as a whole class, with considerable much guidance by their teacher whereas the Swedish students worked more autonomously, in groups of four. In both cases, whenever the students needed help with the teachers helped the students with grammar and vocabulary and when the Swedish team was in Bagamoyo, there was a special focus on practicing pronunciation, intonation and body language.

Most of the project was done together and online, but the final version of the manuscript and the recording and editing of the film was finalized during the Swedish team's visit to Tanzania[3].

The project was also documented in a blog called 'Global Goals'.[4] The task of documenting the entire process was distributed differently between the two partner schools. Given that the Tanzanian students had more limited access to the Internet, it was principally the Swedish students posting the documenting of the project process in the blog. But at the same time, these same blog posts, because they were written in English served as materials for reading practise for the Tanzanian partners. The Swedish students also created an E-book in Bookcreator.com. This book was written in Swedish during the Social Science lessons and compiled all the knowledge they had learned regarding poverty, starvation and the importance of having clean water[5].

What was assessed?

As with any project, teachers must assess how things are going and how much the students are learning. In our case, we decided to evaluate the students differently due to different curricula and learning objectives. Moreover, the sizes of the classes were very different. Teachers in Bagamoyo sometimes have 50 to 60 students in one class, which makes teaching and assessing specific areas of language use quite difficult. Thus, in terms of language learning, the Swedish students were assessed on: writing (a newspaper article about stopping plastic pollution), speaking (a debate in class and the Skype calls) whereas the students in Bagamoyo were assessed on reading (the newspaper article written by their partners), speaking (the Skype calls) and writing (the script).

3 Anyone interested in watching the film can view it here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IS3iBb4J1ko&feature=youtu.be

4 Global Goals: https://globalgoals1718.wordpress.com/

5 Global Goals – the book: https://read.bookcreator.com/h5AXqHfrv0fCKBja9lCdz4YcgDk1/S8zmi7C3Reevrlnka2EM-A

Problems that emerged and how they were resolved

A key incident that emerged was the challenge for the Swedish students to understand the extremely low economic level of the students in Bagamoyo. To facilitate their comprehension, a guest speaker from Kenya was invited to speak to the class through the Skype platform. The guest speaker belonged to the MEDF[6] Teaching Farm whose goal is to empower the farmers with the knowledge and training they need to make informed decisions about alternative horticulture and husbandry to the traditional farming they have been practising.

The guest speaker showed the class how they taught poor families to clean water just by using PET- bottles that were put in the sun. The water was heated, the germs disappeared and the water became drinkable. The lesson was an exceptional experience for the students and they learned a lot. They found it really unbelievable that there were no taps for drinking water and when the guest speaker told them that during the driest months people could not even take a shower the Swedish students almost fainted! The lesson truly raised their awareness of poverty in other parts of the world.

Other problems were related to the poor Internet connection in Tanzania. Admittedly, there is little than can be done about this situation except arm one's self with patience. Internet access inevitably returns with time. As it has been explained above, at times Grace was able to share her Internet connection from her private phone, which helped considerably, however, given that the teachers in Tanzania have very low salaries and buying data on a Sim card is expensive, Grace was understandably reluctant to spend her own money on this. While visiting the school I had the opportunity to speak with the district officer who is in charge of all the schools in the Bagamoyo area. During our conversation, I made the suggestion that if the municipality paid for a mobile phone with an Internet connection that could be shared, he would be able to promote the school as one of the in Tanzania. He seemed to be intrigued with the idea and indicated that he would take it into consideration.

6 MEDF is registered under the Kenyan Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development. They empower the farmers with the knowledge and training they need to make informed farming decision. The mission is to develop an economic farming model that provides for and nurtures a sustainable village life on 1/4 acre. (www.mitahatoedf.com)

Another challenge that we encountered was the fact that some of the students from Tanzania only understood Swahili. To provide them (and other students with less command of English in both countries), we provided them with sentence starters and other similar materials to scaffold their English comprehension. Additionally, an unexpected outcome of this situation was the initiative of the Swedish students to use Google Translate and try to learn words in Swahili. They were also creative in the communicative strategies: they combined English, gestures and some key words in Swahili to be able to communicate. Their strategies included the use of technology as a communicative strategy as well: they used Google translate on their phone (from Swedish or English to Swahili) and then showed the Tanzanian students their cellphone screen with the translated word via Skype.

Incompatible school calendars and timing were also problems. The Swedish students had classes scheduled two times a week and since a few of the booked Skype meetings and other tasks were cancelled because of different reasons, this disrupted the progress of planned classes. The reasons for cancellation were disparate: One day it was raining in Bagamoyo and the students were unable to make it to class (the roads were impassable). Another day the tide so many of the Tanzanian students had to help their families collect shells to sell and catch fish to eat. Again, we had to go with the flow and follow the African way of doing things. We had to postpone our plans and just relax, which was easier said than done at times, especially during our visit because we only had 5 days in Bagamoyo! As a teacher, once you are involved in a project like this, you learn a lot (not just the students). We found we had planned too much; there were so many things we wanted to do together but we when time ran out we had to accept that there was nothing more that could be done.

As with any international telecollaborative project, problems need to be solved. Luckily, my partner Grace in Bagamoyo is a problem solver and she understood the cultural and social differences and how they can affect the collaboration and we tried to make the best of it. Both classes learned a lot about differences and the need to compromise to be able to fulfill a project like this.

Tips and tricks for other teachers

My experience has shown me that a theme and project need to have a real underlying, social purpose in order to motivate the students. When they see that there is a reason for communicating in a foreign language with someone outside of their school, community and country, they are more motivated than when they only are reading a text in a textbook. However, the project must always have central theme that ensures students feel will truly have an impact on their learning. Additionally, the teacher must encourage them to understand they need to be interested in their future and this process of learning is one way to do that (Bruun, 2016).

I really recommend other teachers explore working around themes through telecollaboration. Working with classes in other countries can add important values to your teaching. Your students learn a lot and get a deeper understanding about the world around them. And nowadays, teaching English through different online tools is a relatively easy way to open your classroom towards the world. Today we have access to many digital tools for communicating and collaborating with other classes and countries. This is the basis of any good language pedagogy: In your classroom you need to focus on communication and to have real recipients of your information. As van Patten explains communication is ”the expression, interpretation and sometimes negotiation of meaning in a given context. What is more, communication is also purposeful” (Van Patten, 2017, p.3).

Van Patten also highlights the fact that you do not automatically have a communicative approach in your classroom just because you see and hear that the mouths of your students are moving (Van Patten, 2017, p. 14). He argues that teachers need to create tasks and themes that motivate their students to communicate and that digital tools can help teachers in this aspect. By using digital tools the voice of every student can more easily be heard and connecting with other classes all over the globe can be done.

In our project, digital tools were essential to be able to achieve our goals. We worked together virtually in Google document, Padlet, our blog and on Skype, among other tools. Arguably it might have been easier to work with a class in a country in Europe. When working with a school that is quite different culturally and socially, you really need to be patient and a problem solver, but it is my opinion that both teachers and students learn

more when they are thrust into the unfamiliar and discover that everything is not as easy going as it normally is.

The students need to discuss and apply critical thinking to be able to carry out the project and they learn that the world consists of a lot more than the school, municipality and country they live in. We, as language teachers need to focus on more than grammar and vocabulary. We need to give the students different perspectives of the world and an understanding of other cultures. By using digital tools you can easily give this to your students.

References

Bruun, S. (2017). Blog**.** http://bruunsklassrum.blogspot.se/

Bruun, S. (2016). *Klassrummet möter världen,* Gothia Fortbildning. Stockholm: Sweden.

Bruun, S. (2015). *Digitala arbetssätt i klassrummet – att våga ta språnget,* Gothia Fortbildning. Stockholm: Sweden.

ETwinning Är En Gemensam Samarbetsyta För Skolor i Europa . ETwinning – Startsida, Fetched 12 of December 2017 from: www.etwinning.net/sv/pub/index.htm

Global Goals. (2017). Retrieved 13 of December from https://globalgoals1718.wordpress.com/

Global Goals #stopplasticpollution . (2017) Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IS3iBb4J1ko&feature=youtu.be

MEDF Teaching Farm. (2017). (www.mitahatoedf.com)

The Swedish Council for Higher Education. (2017). Retrieved 13 of December 2017 from www.uhr.se

The World's Largest Lesson. (2017). Retrieved 13 of December 2017 from http://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/

UNDP. (2017) *Globala målen.se*. Retrieved 13 of December 2017 from http://www.globalamalen.se/

Van Patten, B. (2017). *While we're on the topic*. American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Alexandria, VA. USA.

Annex

Examples of materials

Stars

Variation and vocabulary

Your language is varied.
You vary your language well.
Your vocabulary is very varied.
Your language felt very much alive.
You have a varied language and don't repeat yourself.

Clarity and coherence

Your text has good flow.
It's easy to understand your text.
The content of your text was clear with good details.
The content was very clear.
Your text has a clear line of argument.
There was a clear line of argument in your text, making it easy to understand.
Your text is coherent and clear.
You reason with good arguments to support your point.

Adaption

Your writing is well adapted to your theme.
You adapt your language to different genres.
You adapt your text to the receiver and situation.
Grammar and spelling:
Good sentence structure and descriptions.
You write with good grammar.

Wishes

Variation and vocabulary

You could vary your vocabulary more.
You could use more difficult words and sentences.
Try to read more difficult text to learn how to write like that.
You need to expand your vocabulary.
Try to make your language come alive more.

Clarity and coherence

Your text could have better flow.
You could develop your reasoning more.
Try to make your text more coherent.
Next time you write a text, make sure it has a clear line of argument.
You can work with clarifying your text.

Adaption

You could adapt your language more to your theme.
You can think about adapting your text to the receiver and situation.
You should try to adapt the language to your genre.
You could adapt your language more to the purpose.

Grammar and spelling

You can improve the grammar in your text.
You need to improve the sentence structure.
There are some spelling mistakes, read through your text once more to find them.
Think about what tense you use (verbs). (Bruun, 2015)

Randall William Sadler
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Chapter 9. Afterword: Looking back and looking forward: What is the future of telecollaboration?

Introduction

The basic premise of telecollaboration is defined by the word itself: *Tele*, meaning distant, and *collaboration*; working together at a distance. Many of the definitions of this term also put *culture* in the center of such collaboration. However, as shown in this volume, and discussed in the first chapter by Dooly and O'Dowd, the wide diversity of what telecollaboration may include makes it surprisingly difficult to define it in a 'one meaning only' way. While this author is not *quite* old enough to have been involved in the earliest days of telecollaboration described by Kern (cited in Chapter 1 of this volume) in the form of the pen pal exchanges starting in the 1920s (Kern, 2013), I most certainly remember engaging in two sets of pen pal exchanges while taking Spanish in Junior High and High School from 1980 to 1984 in Spokane, Washington.

In that time period there were relatively few native speakers of Spanish in that city, and the big cultural event for the Spanish courses was our annual field trip to *El Sombrero* restaurant to experience Mexican food and attempt our orders with the owner of the restaurant using the polite form *Quisiera* (I would like) rather than *Quiero* (I want). The pen pal exchanges we engaged in with students in Mexico were slow due to need to rely on the US and Mexican postal systems. Though we did not yet have the term "snail mail," the wait of weeks between letters from our partners was, to say the least, frustrating. Nonetheless, the exchanges my classmates and I engaged in opened my eyes to new uses of the language beyond that of the textbook and gave me glimpses of a magnificent Mexican culture that Spokane, Washington was simply unable to provide at that time. Looking back, it is clear to me now that those were my first steps into the

professorial career I now enjoy and the research field, telecollaboration, that continues to provide me with rich opportunities for learning across the world.

Those early days of *traditional mail* telecollaborative exchange were revolutionized with the creation of computer networks; one of the best initial examples of this being the PLATO system, which gave users on the platform access to early forms of email, message boards (PLATO notes), and chat (Talkomatic) in the beginning of the 1970s (Dear, 2017). The explosion of research into the application of the modernized versions of these tools developed by PLATO, as applied to language learning and teaching, took off in the late 1990s and continues today. The new exchanges replaced snail mail with email (e.g., Fedderholdt, 2001; Gonglewski, Meloni, & Brant, 2001; González-Bueno, 1998; Greenfield, 2003), or Message Boards/Electronic Bulletin Boards (e.g., Benton, 1996; Chen, 2006; Savignon & Roithmeier, 2004), or MOOs (e.g., Shield, 2003; Schwienhorst, 2004) or with live chat (e.g., Chen, 1999; Chun, 2003; Ramzan & Saito, 1998). All of these technological innovations and research studies have led us to the telecollaboration projects presented in this volume.

Review of the Volume

As noted in the studies discussed immediately above, and as described in the chapters in this volume, all research and collaboration includes both highs and lows. All of these projects began with firm foundations based on previous literature and were well-designed, leading to largely positive results for the students and researchers. The *high points* in these studies provide both classroom teachers and future researchers with excellent models to follow in their own work, but the *lows* in these projects are perhaps even more important in that they can also teach us important lessons (and things to avoid) for the future.

To summarize the studies from this volume, in Chapter Two, Anaïs García-Martínez and Maria Gracia-Téllez presented their telecollaboration-supported science project that engaged third grade students from an economically disadvantaged area of Barcelona with a group of fourth grade students in a city just outside of Barcelona that is strongly focused on the use of technology in learning.

In Chapter Three, Morcilo Salas discussed her project linking a group of refugees at a school in Thailand with a school in Spain. As noted, the refugee group was diverse in terms of ethnicity, age, and the region of Myanmar from which they came, while the school in Spain located near Barcelona was more traditional in nature. The goal, as noted by the authors, was to "train these young adults during one year in the necessary skills to apply to a higher education institution, either international universities or local migrant schools with social insertion projects" (Salas, this volume).

Maria Mont and Dolors Masats provide *Tips and Suggestions to Implement Telecollaborative Projects with Young Learners* in Chapter Four based on their extensive experience in this area. By closely examining two linked projects, the first *Travelling through the Arts* and the second focused on *Healthy Habits* the authors are able to provide a number of concrete suggestions for those considering telecollaborative projects in the future.

In Chapter Five Alexandra Bonet Pueyo connects students from her school in Terrassa, Spain to students in a class in Sweden. After extensive discussion, their telecollaboration focused on the critical issue of the Syrian refugee crisis. In addition to students examining the background of this problem, they also worked together to create a *manifest* on this issue.

Granada Bejarano Sánchez and Gerard Giménez Manrique bring the perspective of telecollaborative *newbies* to the volume as they describe their project connecting two schools in the Catalunya region of Spain in Chapter Six. One of the participating institutions was a private international school and the second a public school. Their project was developed while taking a course focused on developing telecollaborative projects jointly taught by a university in Barcelona and Urbana-Champaign in the U.S. (see Sadler & Dooly, 2016).

Jennie Ingelsson and Anna Linder fill Chapter Seven with a description of their telecollaborative project between students in Sweden and New Zealand. In their email exchanges they focused on the concept of *culture* in order to discover how the cultures represented by these two countries were similar and/or different.

The last research study in this volume (Chapter Eight) consists of a telecollaborative project created by Sara Brunn undertaken between students in Tanzania and her school in Sweden in which they explored the issue of sustainability in their English and Social Science courses. In this case, the topic of focus developed organically based on the early discussions their students engaged in.

Lessons Learned

As noted above, telecollaborative projects are, in my experience, *always* a learning process for both the students involved in them and for their teachers as well. They are also filled with sometimes painful lessons for the researcher. The seven studies that comprise this volume are all wonderful examples of the benefits of telecollaboration and their victories and challenges present lessons for those interested in their own projects. While all of these chapters discuss these lessons, and particularly the *Tips and Suggestions* contribution by Mont and Masats, the key takeaways discussed below are essential in all such projects. Ignore them at your own peril!

Be ready for the workload and (hopefully) like your partner

As mentioned numerous times in the previous chapters, it is almost certain that you will spend more time in the planning and implementation of a project than initially estimated. Working with someone you like will make this process much smoother, and should your friendship survive the telecollaboration, you'll confirm that this is a friend indeed. While we often discuss the need for students to get to know each other prior to digging into the *meat* of a telecollaborative project, it is equally (and perhaps even more) important that the teachers involved spend time getting acquainted since they will be working together for *many* hours. It is always easier to be flexible and understanding with a friend in comparison to a stranger.

Sánchez and Giménez Manrique (this volume) summarize this issue of the importance of a partner when they say that "coordination with the partner is really fundamental." Ideally, as noted by Salas in Chapter Three, communication between partners should take place synchronously rather than via email. Based on my own telecollaboration over the past 15 years (see Sadler & Dooly, 2016), I very much agree with both of these recommendations. Assume that for each hour of time spent in the classroom on such a project that you will have to spend many more in the planning and implementation processes.

Additional explanation on this issue is provided by Bonet Pueyo (this volume): "Usually teachers work in isolation and are solely responsible for the development of the syllabus, the design of the activities and the

preparation of materials. Sharing materials and goals with people outside my school was new for me and the sense of accountability that accompanied this teamwork was intimidating." While we often focus on the role of the students in telecollaboration, the role of the teacher, and especially in the planning and implementation processes is absolutely critical.

None of this should scare teachers off from engaging in this very rewarding activity. Instead, it means that those interested should begin their planning long ahead of the projected implementation. It is also very important to note that the second time is always easier!

Don't neglect the needs (analysis)

Sometimes telecollaborative projects occur because a researcher designed a project and then seeks out participating teachers to implement it. Don't do this, *unless* the researcher agrees to work in close collaboration with the teachers and students. The best telecollaboration is designed in partnership with the instructors that it will involve. If it is not possible to design the collaboration with the participating teachers from the very beginning, a very good compromise, as discussed by Ingelsson and Linder in Chapter Seven is to "…[have] a conversation with the teacher first to adjust and modify [your] planning to be suited to the different settings in each classroom." It is important to never forget that telecollaboration requires a great deal of effort for both the teachers and students involved, so it should be designed with *their* needs in mind.

The use of a needs analysis, even if informal, will not only help to set "solid, meaningful, attainable and realistic goals and contents" (Sánchez and Giménez Manrique, Chapter 6, this volume), but may also lead, as revealed in Bruun's project, a focus of interest to all the students involved—a focus on the environment for those students.

Expect the unexpected

In an interview for the New York Times, the World War II General and President of the United States Dwight D. Eisenhower said this about war: "Plans are useless, but planning is everything" (Blair, 1957). Though the stakes are admittedly much lower, the same may be said for telecollaboration.

Planning a telecollaborative project is, as discussed above, both challenging and time consuming and once the project begins it is likely that things will not go as expected.

Sometimes the surprise may be that the class a teacher is engaging with is not quite what they expected. Ingelsson and Linder discuss this in Chapter Seven of this book when the class that they expected would have 25 students instead had 90. Other times (see Bonet Pueyo, Chapter Five) it may be the case that despite careful planning it is simply impossible to accomplish all the intended activities. As she notes, "this can be frustrating and teachers may conclude that the project did not reach a proper closure if things are not completed as they were stipulated at the beginning."

The healthiest attitude is to assume that things will not always go as planned. Anyone who has spent time in a classroom will understand that this is often the case. The key to successful telecollaboration in this area is to remain flexible and, whenever possible, to have a back-up plan. If your telecollaboration partner is willing to work with you (see the points above), plans can always be changed and sometimes adaptations are essential for success.

Beware the zones and calendars

While I am a Professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (2.5 hours South of Chicago), my primary telecollaboration partner, Dr. Melinda Dooly, is a Professor at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in Spain. This means that our students normally have a seven-hour time difference when working together. In some cases (see Ingelsson and Linder, this volume) the time difference may be even greater (12 hours between Sweden and New Zealand). Cases of *extreme* time zones may preclude the possibility of class-to-class synchronous communication, but it does not necessarily negate the potential for this entirely. In the case of our Champaign-Barcelona telecollaboration we have our students, who are at the university level, post their schedules on a Doodle poll so that we can determine when groups of students might meet outside of our regular class time. This usually means that they meet with their partners earlier in the morning in the US or later at night in Spain. However, it is also vital to note that synchronous is not necessarily best. With lower-level student, asynchronous communication in the form of email, message board,

or social network interaction is often better because it gives the students time to think, compose their message, and fully understand the replies from their partners.

As noted by Brunn in Chapter Eight, "incompatible school calendars" can also be a challenge for telecollaboration. In our Champaign-Barcelona collaboration, which takes place each Spring semester, we have to consider the difference in the starts of term (Illinois 1–2 weeks earlier), the end dates (the US again 1–2 weeks earlier), vacations (Spring Break for Illinois, and a seemingly endless number of religious holidays in Spain), and required activities (a one-week student teaching experience Barcelona). This changes the possibility for 15-weeks of collaboration to something like 9–10. Such differences, once they are taken into account, are simply another part of the experience and such gaps may even be seen as valuable time when an instructor can work with his or her students for a week with a short break from the telecollaboration.

Pedagogy is key, technology is secondary—but choose your tools carefully!

Technology is both a key component of telecollaboration and one of the biggest potential pitfalls in the process. Make no assumptions regarding:

- Student access to technology
- School access to technology
- Student familiarity with tools that you may already be using on your own
- Student interest in tools that you yourself use.
- Internet access

Part of any needs analysis, as discussed above, should relate to issues of technology access and familiarity since issues/disasters in this area can be very detrimental to the process.

Salas (this volume) mentions that while Facebook was popular amongst student in Myanmar, use of such tools in the classroom environment was "minimal or non-existent." In that setting students were also unfamiliar with keyboard use as their main *computing* was via their cell phones. In contrast, based on my own experience, students in the U.S. may now consider Facebook to be something only used by their parents, and therefore extremely *uncool*.

In some settings (e.g., Bruun's project in this volume), internet connects may be either slow or sporadic, and computer access may also be limited. It is also the case that while some groups (again, see Bruun) may make successful use of a variety of tools during the telecollaboration (11 in that project), in other situations it may be the case that "when introducing new platforms, the students [may be] absolutely overwhelmed, and [need] more time than expected in order to familiarize themselves with the tools" (Salas, Chapter 3, this volume). The key is to not let an overabundance of tools distract from the goals and pedagogical grounding of the process. An adequate needs analysis and extensive discussion with the telecollaboration partner will ensure the right fit in this regard. Importantly, as noted by Ingelsson and Linden in Chapter Seven, don't forget that the teacher must also be familiar with the tools that will be used. They, after all, are the ones who will need to explain them to the students.

Conclusion

While this chapter has made it clear that engaging in telecollaboration requires a great deal of planning and work on the part of the participating teachers, I hope that the potential benefits are also clear. As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, telecollaboration has the potential to offer rich experiences for both the students and teachers involved and can, quite literally, open the world to them. It is an unfortunate and sad fact that the world we live in today is one that is full of conflicts based on regions, religions, access to resources, and many other factors. As educators, one of our goals should be to encourage our students to attain a better sense of 'the other', and telecollaborative exchanges are one of our best tools to do so. By connecting with individuals from across the world and getting to know them and their cultures they may shift from 'others' to friends. Consider the difference that might make for our future.

The projects described in the volume are all excellent examples to inspire teachers to get started on this process. It is my hope that they will inspire you to begin the journey as well.

References

Benton, R. (1996). Making the medium the message: Using an electronic bulletin board system for promoting and revitalizing Maori. In M. Warschauer (Ed.) *Telecollaboration in foreign language learning: Proceedings of the Hawai'i symposium* (pp. 187–204). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press

Chen, C. L. (2006). *Cross cultural collaboration via Message Board for cultural understanding and language learning*. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Chen, L. (1999). How can local interactive on-line discussion assist culturally diverse students in learning? *Journal of educational technology systems, 28*(1), 33–42.

Chun, H. (2003). The viability of computer mediated communication in the Korean secondary EFL classroom. *Asian EFL Journal*, *5*.

Dear, B. (2017). *The friendly orange glow: The untold story of the PLATO System and the dawn of cyberculture*. New York: Pantheon.

Blair, W. (1957, November 15). President Draws Planning Moral: Recalls Army Days to Show Value of Preparedness in Time of Crisis. *The New York Times*, p. 4, Column 3.

Fedderholdt, K. (2001). An email exchange project between non-native speakers of English. *ELT Journal, 55*(3), 273–280.

Gonglewski, M., Meloni, C., & Brant, J. (2001). Using e-mail in foreign language teaching: Rationale and suggestions. *The Internet TESL journal, 7*(3).

Greenfield, R. (2003). Collaborative e-mail exchange for teaching secondary ESL: A case study in Hong Kong. *Language Learning & Technology, 7*(1), 46–70.

González-Bueno, M. (1998). The effects of electronic mail on Spanish L2 discourse. *Language Learning & Technology 1*(2), 55–70.

Kern, R. (2013). Technology in language learning. In J. Simpson (Ed.) *The Routledge handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 200–214). London & New York: Routledge.

Ramzan, Y. & Saito, R. (1998). Computer-mediated communication in foreign language learning: A case study of the student of Japanese. *Australasian society for computers in learning in tertiary Education,* 585-592.

Sadler, R. & Dooly, M. (2016). Twelve years of Telecollaboration: What we have learnt. *ELT Journal, 70*(4), 401–413.

Savignon, S. & Roithmeier, W. (2004). Computer-mediated communication: Texts and strategies. *CALICO Journal, 21*(2), 265–289.

Schwienhorst, K. (2004). Native-speaker/non-native-speaker discourse in the MOO: Topic negotiation and initiation in a synchronous text-based environment. *Computer Assisted Language Learning, 17*(1), 35–50.

Shield, L. (2003). MOO as a language learning tool. In U. Felix (Ed.) *Language Learning online: Towards best practice*. (pp. 97–122). Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger.

About the authors

Granada Bejarano Sánchez is recently graduated from the teacher education programme at the Faculty of Education, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, having specialized in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).

Alexandra Bonet Pueyo currently works in INS Torre del Palau, a state school in Catalonia, Spain. She has been working as an SLA teacher for about 20 years, most of them in the state system. She has recently participated as a teacher trainer in LAB(tred)17.

Sara Bruun is an English and German language teacher in grades 6–9 at Furutorpsskolan in Hässleholm, Sweden. She has also been invited to give lectures at different universities and education centres on digital learning. Her class projects have won national awards along with teaching awards. In 2016 she was awarded the Royal Vittoria Academy Prize for Honorable Teacher Education. And in 2017 she won the Teacher Prize in IT & Digitalization. Additionally she has written two books: *Digital Workstations in the Classroom: Daring to Leap* and *Classroom meets the world: Authentic, Thematic and Digital*.

Dr. Melinda Dooly is senior lecturer and researcher at the School of Education, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. She has investigated and published widely on issues related to teacher education and language education mediated through technology. She is lead researcher of a Spanish Ministry funded project on 21st century competences in education (KONECT). She has taught in different countries worldwide, including an honorary lectureship at the Institute of Education University College London. She is co-editor, along with Dr. Robert O'Dowd, of the book series entitled: *Telecollaboration in Education*.

Anaïs García-Martínez is a student teacher in her last year of the Primary Teacher Education at the Faculty of Education, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. She spent one semester in Belfast to improve her language and

intercultural skills, and she is currently finishing her degree, with a minor in English Language Teaching and working as a foreign language teacher, for both children and adults.

Gerard Giménez Manrique is recently graduated from the teacher education programme at the Faculty of Education, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, having specialized in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).

Maria Gracia-Téllez is a trainee teacher finishing up her last year of a her undergraduate degree in Primary Teacher Education, with a minor in English Teaching for Primary Education at Faculty of Education, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Currently, she is teaching English in a private language school to both children and youth in Barcelona. She also has experience working with adults with functional diversity and with children as a playtime coordinator.

Jennie Ingelsson is an undergraduate student at Malmö University in Sweden, studying for her Bachelor in Primary Education. She expects to graduate in June 2018. She has taken an interest in intercultural meetings through her teaching practicum placement at a multicultural primary school in a highly segregated part of Malmö. She sees telecollaboration as a way to build bridges between cultures even within the same country.

Anna Linder is an undergraduate student at Malmö University in Sweden, studying for her Bachelor in Primary Education. She expects to graduate in June 2018. She has previous telecollaborative experience working with Malmö University's buddy program and organising and meeting with students from across the globe. During her third year at the university she completed an exchange semester at Australian Catholic University in Brisbane, expanding her intercultural competence even further.

Dr. Dolors Masats Viladoms is a teacher-trainer and researcher at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and a consultor for the Ministry of Education and Culture of Andorra in the design of a project-based cross disciplinary curriculum. As a member of GREIP (Research Centre for Plurilingual Teaching & Interaction) she leads or participates in numerous classroom-based national and international research projects in the field of

discourse analysis applied to language learning in multilingual and multicultural milieus.

Maria Mont is a primary education teacher with many years of experience working with early childhood and primary education students in a state school in Spain. She also works as an associate professor at the Faculty of Education, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain. She is a member of GREIP (Research Centre for Plurilingual Teaching & Interaction) at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

Anna Morcilo Salas is a primary education teacher. She graduated from with a Primary Education Degree from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in 2016. Her degree was in the English-medium courses and she also took a minor in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) during the last year of her studies. After graduating, Anna worked as an English and music teacher for kindergarten students for one year, after which she moved to the Thai-Myanmar border to teach migrant and refugee students from Myanmar.

Dr. Robert O'Dowd is senior lecturer and researcher for English as a Foreign Language and Applied Linguistics at the University of León, Spain. He has taught at universities in Ireland, Germany and Spain and has published widely on the application of collaborative online learning in university education. His most recent publication is the co-edited volume Online Intercultural Exchange Policy, Pedagogy, Practice for Routledge. He recently coordinated INTENT – an award-winning project financed by the European Commission aimed at promoting Virtual Exchange in European Higher Education and is currently the lead researcher on the European Commission's Erasmus plus KA3 project Evaluating and Upscaling Telecollaborative Teacher Education (EVALUATE). He is also president of the UNICollaboration academic organization for telecollaboration and virtual exchange (www.unicollaboration.org).

Dr. Randall Sadler is an Associate Professor of Linguistics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he teaches courses on telecollaboration and language learning, virtual worlds and language learning and the teaching of L2 reading and writing. He is also the Director of the Illinois Teaching English as a Second Language and ESL Programs. His

main research area is on the role of technology in language learning, with a particular focus on how CMC and Virtual Worlds may be used to enhance that process. He has published in these areas in journals including the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *CALICO Journal*, *ReCALL*, *Language Learning & Technology, Computers & Education, ELT,* and in numerous edited volumes. His latest book, *Virtual Worlds, Telecollaboration, and Language Learning: From Theory to Practice* is published by Peter Lang. He is also the co-owner of the EduNation Islands, which are located in the Virtual World of Second Life, where he may often be found in the guise of his avatar Randall Renoir.

TELECOLLABORATION IN EDUCATION

Edited by
Melinda Dooly & Robert O'Dowd

The series' focus is on the pedagogical processes and outcomes of engaging learners in different geographical locations in virtual contact and collaboration together. This contact can take place through the application of online communication tools such as e-mail, synchronous chat and threaded discussion as well as the tools of Web 2.0: like wikis, blogs, and online publishing. The series is also particularly interested in innovative teaching practices involving telecollaboration that integrate the use of newly emerging forms of Internet tools such as social networking or 3D virtual worlds.

A major aim is to reflect the diversity of research and practice in this area of knowledge, providing a space for transversal dialogue among teachers and teacher trainers, administrators, researchers, and educators working in different subject areas as well as various areas of education.

Telecollaboration in Education deals with the application of such activity in different subject areas (e.g. Foreign Languages, History, Science) and in different educational contexts, including but not limited to primary, secondary, university and adult education. Publications within the series include scholarly monographs and collected papers editions as well as cutting-edge projects that exemplify good practice in the application of distanced collaborative efforts. Training manuals for educators in the organisation and application of telecollaboration are also a possible type of publication within the series. Language of publication is English.

Vol. 1 Sarah Guth & Francesca Helm (eds)
Telecollaboration 2.0. Language, Literacies and Intercultural Learning in the 21st Century.
2010. ISBN 978-3-03943-0440-5

Vol. 2 Randall Sadler
Virtual Worlds for Language Learning. From Theory to Practice.
2012. ISBN 978-3-0343-0573-0

Vol. 3 Melinda Dooly & Robert O'Dowd (eds)
Researching Online Foreign Language Interaction and Exchange.
2012. ISBN 978-3-0343-1155-7

Vol. 4 Nataly Tcherepashenets (ed.)
Globalizing On-line: Telecollaboration, Internationalization, and Social Justice.
2015. ISBN 978-3-0343-1520-3

Vol. 5 Claudia Grümpel & Analía Cuadrado Rey (eds)
A Plurilingual Corpus on Telecollaboration in Third Languages
2018. ISBN 978-3-0343-2792-3

Vol. 6 Melinda Dooly & Robert O'Dowd (eds)
In This Together: Teachers' Experiences with Transnational, Telecollabo rative Language Learning Projects
2018. ISBN 978-3-0343-3501-0