

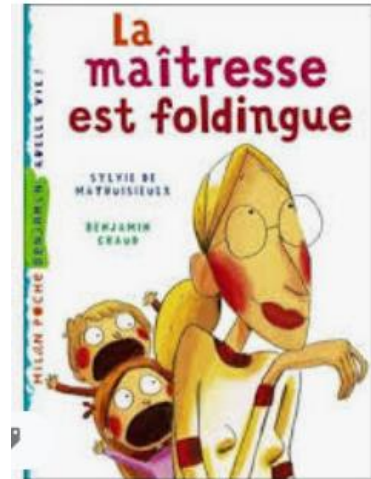
Insights into setting up and running virtual international collaboration projects

- ✓ *Why set up and run an international virtual collaboration?*
- ✓ *What do students get out of it? And the teacher?*
- ✓ *some web 2.0 tools I've used and why- some practical considerations*
- ✓ *possible difficulties - technology and culture - things to do and not to do*
- ✓ *How is it different from an online class?*

Why set up and run a virtual collaboration? What do the students get out of it?

For the students:

- ❖ *take the students « outside » the classroom*
- ❖ *real life experience in communicating across cultures: real life tasks, getting an insight into other cultures, other educational systems*
 - ➔ *becoming more open*
- ❖ *use English as a « lingua franca » with non native speakers :*
- ❖ *raise awareness about their own language difficulties ➔ what to improve*
- ❖ *Other mother tongue interferences ➔ impact on understanding each other (accent /vocabulary/grammar...)*
- ❖ *Make friends / get contacts for further studies or internships*



Why set up and run a virtual collaboration? What do the students get out of it?

- ❖ *More interest in class work*
- ❖ *skills taught can be tried out in a real context with the team members from abroad*
- ❖ *Teacher's objective? Focus on content or process ?*

content	Content & process	process
e.g. biology: learn about legal aspects and ethics in other countries	e.g. Compare and discuss differences between two approaches to laws and ethics and come to a compromise to propose one that would suit both	e.g. the outcome is less important than the communication process:analyse difficulties during meetings, discussions, self reflection...

Some of my projects

❖ *Email exchanges (beginning of 2000, before web 2.0)*

(**France:** Université Paris-Sud, Faculty of Sciences & **Finland** Högskolan på Åland/Åland University of Applied Sciences; <http://www.ha.ax>)

❖ *Let's blog over 10 years – comparing cultures, writing a blogpost & commenting later: producing a video or writing an article & commenting – **element of competition***

(**France:** Université Paris-Sud, Faculty of Sciences, Orsay; http://www.sciences.u-psud.fr/en/the_faculty.html,
Finland: Högskolan på Åland/Åland University of Applied Sciences; <http://www.ha.ax> and **Costa Rica:** Universidad Nacional, <https://www.una.ac.cr/> **Hungary:** Corvinus University of Budapest; <http://portal.uni-corvinus.hu/?id=44509> ,
Germany: Hochschule Stralsund / Stralsund University of Applied Sciences, School of Business Studies, International Management in the Baltic Sea Region study course; www.hochschule-stralsund.de)

❖ *European dialogue: comparing cultures – surveys in home countries- compare and present in graphical form & report writing with analysis*

(**Italy:** Franca Poppi, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia **Germany:** Regina Brautlacht, Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences BRSU, **Portugal:** Maria Lurdes Martins, School of Technology and Management, Polytechnic Institute of Viseu, **France** : Csilla Ducrocq, Paris Graduate School of Economics, Statistics and Finance ENSAE)

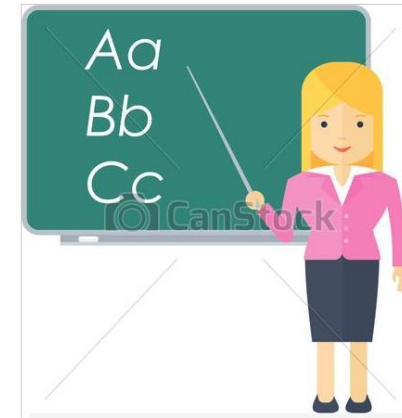
Some of my projects

- ❖ *Soliya* (www.soliya.net) – discussion of global issues – article- self reflection –oral presentation (American organisation, collaboration with the Middle East, Asia, Europe, U.S.A)
- ❖ *Let's talk* (EUGLOH U.Paris-Saclay-U.Szeged) – intercultural communication – English- History/Law teachers -> producing a video/text/game on culture together

Question: how much freedom do you give the students to decide on their own content for the exchanges?

Advantages – more interest?

Drawbacks - can take time to decide, how to evaluate?



Setting up a virtual international collaboration

- ❖ *Finding partners: personal contacts, Internet , conferences, EUGLOH*
- ❖ *How many partners?-the more the merrier-but also more complicated*
- ❖ *Decide: content, number and frequency of exchanges, time slots: at a set time or students make the decision... -> universities' semester schedule, time zones...*
- ❖ *Which students to include (differences in level of English) and how to partner them*
- ❖ *Distribution of tasks between participating teachers –lots of video conferences - compromising*
- ❖ *Technical aspects –what is available, easy of use, familiarity with tools, technological set up of partner universities*

Some web 2.0 tools I've used and why

- ❖ *Before web 2.0: email, wims (survey), physical video conferencing room-advantages: everyone together, non verbal communication*
- ❖ *after web 2.0:*
- ❖ *Wordpress blog –publish articles, comment*
- ❖ *Facebook – as a « forum» students react fast, well known*
- ❖ *Google docs – guidelines, publish articles/videos, commenting, survey for feedback*
- ❖ *Skype, Messenger, Whatsapp – today more possibilities*
- ❖ *Give students a choice?*

Possible difficulties – technology and culture

Technology:

- ❖ *Tools - everyone knows how to use, as few as possible ->simplicity, accessibility*
- ❖ *How will the tools be shared (blog website, google docs belonging to a university, or not...)*
- ❖ *Avoid proprietary tools – lots of technical difficulties, no control*

Culture: conflicts are often exacerbated- « in group » vs « out group »

- ❖ *time: time zones, respecting deadlines*
- ❖ *different « group working » styles*
- ❖ *Respect for guidelines and understanding the tasks*
- ❖ *The teacher's role – how the teacher is seen by the students: as an equal/someone with authority?*
- ❖ *Different objectives for different teachers –subject matter taught/ students' level of English /content or process focused?*

Is virtual international collaboration the same as teaching an online class?

Online class:

- ❖ one teacher with his/her students
- ❖ tools can be the same
- ❖ No time zone constraints
- ❖ more like a traditional classroom set up
- ❖ Vary the activities to avoid screen fatigue

Cultural differences -examples of email exchanges (1)

Let's blog 2019 email from a Finnish student: Hello hello everyone!

We have the pleasure of being in the same group for the "Let's blog" project. For our video call sessions Liz and I have agreed to use the web service Jitsi Meet (<https://meet.jit.si>) instead of the intrusive and non-free Skype. Hopefully this will work for you as well. Jitsi can be run in the browser so there is no need to install anything on your device.

Reply from a French student: Actually skype is free... The instructions are to connect on Facebook or/and Skype. I guess I don't want to do it another way. I'm very sorry.

Cultural differences -examples of email exchanges (2)

Finnish student:

“Free software” means software that respects users' freedom and community. Roughly, it means that **the users have the freedom to run, copy, distribute, study, change and improve the software**. Thus, “free software” is a matter of liberty, not price. To understand the concept, you should think of “free” as in “free speech,” not as in “free beer”. We sometimes call it “libre software,” borrowing the French or Spanish word for “free” as in freedom, to show we do not mean the software is gratis.

A program is free software if the program's users have the four essential freedoms:

The freedom to run the program as you wish, for any purpose **(freedom 0)**.

The freedom to study how the program works, and change it so it does your computing as you wish **(freedom 1)**. Access to the source code is a precondition for this.

The freedom to redistribute copies so you can help others **(freedom 2)**.

The freedom to distribute copies of your modified versions to others (freedom 3). By doing this you can give the whole community a chance to benefit from your changes. Access to the source code is a precondition for this.

A program is free software if it gives users adequately all of these freedoms. Otherwise, it is nonfree. While we can distinguish various nonfree distribution schemes in terms of how far they fall short of being free, we consider them all equally unethical.

In other words, Skype and Facebook are not free. I do not have a Facebook account and refuse to install unethical software on my machine even if the teacher asks for it

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Let's blog Message transferred to me by the French student

.....I find it impolite to Respond with definitions ...

Cultural differences -examples of email exchanges (3)

European Dialogue -Email from a German student: Hello everybody,

I unfortunately have to inform you that apparently we misunderstood the survey goal/ or maybe it was just bad explained by the teacher/ by our teacher.

Anyway our teacher told us something completely new today.

The real task is the following:

- 1) we individually need to browse in the internet and check which surveys/ assignment of our topic-values in Europe- exist already.
- 2) Because our task is it and that is essential we have to come up with a CENTRAL QUESTION which we want to be asked by the survey.
- 3) That means (our teacher stated that really clearly) we have to find a new/ unique question which is related to values and based on this question we design questions to answer this question, so that we have a real outcome.

So what do you suggest guys, how you have been informed or explained by your assistences?

I would say, since we misinterpret the task [and our meeting yesterday was almost for nothing...:(] that we have to work on it quickly so we have by next week a CENTRAL QUESTION and a few days later relating questions.

Since it is really hard to bring everyone together we really should use a permanent cloud on gmail or hotmail and upload there things frequently. What do you say?

Please reply or help me guys with this, I am up for this task as much as you are, but when one leaves the others alone it is even more harder and we put already work in this, so let's do not give up and we will make it.....

European Dialogue Reply from the French student:

I do not really understand your point Alexander. If we need to use a survey which already exists, why do we need to design other questions?

Maybe I have misunderstood but our teacher told us we need to agree on about 20-25 questions. She did not refer to another survey which already exists.

I suggest that each team, except of course the German one, contacts his teacher to have more information. It took us more than two hours to agree on these questions so it would be better to be sure we do a wrong thing before looking for other questions.

Email from the French student to me , his teacher: Dear Madam,

Yestarday we did our second virtual meeting on Skype. It lasted two hours since the Portuguese had a very bad internet connexion and we had debated a lot for the questions. We eventually agreed on a survey. But, I have just received a mail from the German. He said something very strange: we had to choose a survey on the internet, choose a key question and then other questions. His teacher was very clear he said.

So I said it would be better to be sure before doing it. Please, can you read the mail of the German, I have sent it to you, and told Laura and me what we should do.

Cultural differences -examples of email exchanges (4)

Let's Blog 2019 French student to me, her teacher Madame,

Je vous contact à propos du projet en anglais. Je suis avec (name).. et une autre étudiante de Hongrie.

Nous devions être avec un étudiant de Finlande, ce garçon ne nous a jamais donné de nouvelles, nous n'avons jamais pu entrer en contact avec lui, nous avons seulement reçu un mail nous disant qu'il ne voulait pas participer.

Donc nous avons fait tous nos skype sans lui ainsi que la rédaction du blog.

Le problème est le suivant : il décidé de participer à la rédaction du blog ce matin, en rajoutant sa partie, après notre conclusion. Ce qui fait que notre article n'a plus aucun sens et qu'il est extrêmement long puisque nous n'avions pas prévu d'avoir une partie sur la Finlande.

Nous avons reçu un commentaire d'une professeure (je ne sais pas de quel pays) qui nous a dit que l'article était beaucoup trop long. Sauf qu'au début comme nous n'étions que 3 l'article avait une bonne taille.

J'espère que nous ne serons pas pénalisés par cela car au départ nous avons fait l'article correctement à 3