

Synchronous Versus Asynchronous Telecollaboration in Intercultural Communication

Authors : Vita Kalnberzina, Lauren Miller Anderson

Abstract : The aim of the paper is to report on the results of the telecollaboration project results carried out between the students of the University of Latvia, National Louis University in the US, and Austral University in Chili during the Intercultural Communication course. The objectives of the study are 1) to compare different forms of student telecollaboration and virtual exchange, 2) to collect and analyse the student feedback on the telecollaboration project, 3) to evaluate the products (films) produced during the telecollaboration project. The methods of research used are as follows: Survey of the student feedback after the project, video text analysis of the films produced by the students, and interview of the students participating in the project. We would like to compare the results of a three-year collaboration project, where we tried out synchronous telecollaboration and asynchronous collaboration. The different variables that were observed were the impact of the different time zones, different language proficiency levels of students, and different curricula developed for collaboration. The main findings suggest that the effort spent by students to organize meetings in different time zones and to get to know each other diminishes the quality of the product developed and thus reduces the students' feeling of accomplishment. Therefore, we would like to propose that asynchronous collaboration where the national teams work on a film project specifically developed by the students of one university for the students of another university ends up with a better quality film, which in its turn appeals more to the students of the other university and creates a deeper intercultural bond between the collaborating students.

Keywords : telecollaboration, intercultural communication, synchronous collaboration, asynchronous collaboration

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