

**Telecollaboration for Intercultural Language Acquisition**

**TILA**

**Checklist for organizing synchronous sessions**One of the greatest challenges of telecollaboration projects is the organization of synchronous sessions, as they are **time** dependent and all parties engaged have to respect schedules and be on time for the sessions.

**Tools** that can be used for synchronous sessions are chat platforms, videocommunication (Skype, Oovoo, Any Meeting, Big Blue Button) and virtual worlds (OpenSim). These tools are very motivating for students. The communication modes that these tools allow for are: textual chat and oral communication.

For oral communication tasks (using videocommunication or OpenSim), headsets with microphone should be used in order to make sure that there is no echo or background noise when talking. As for videocommunication a webcam will be necessary (most of laptops and modern computers have webcams integrated). Do not use wifi but a cable connection to internet.

**Preparing synchronous speaking encounters:**

Months before the sessions begin try to establish with the other school partner(s) collaborating in the project: the period in which you will carry out the project, quantity of synchronous sessions you want to organize, the frequency of those sessions, a suitable timetable for all parties to schedule telecollaboration activities, quantity of students participating at the same time at school (it will depend on the broadband connection to Internet; this will need to be tested before) activity time and interaction group format (2 to 4 students).

Example:

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| **Period project:** | November-December 2013 |
| **Quantity of schools participating:** | 2 |
| **Quantity of sessions:** | Three to Six sessions |
| **Frequency:** | Once a week |
| **Timetable:** | 1. Thursday from 9-12; or 2. Tuesday from 10-11 and Thursday from 15-17. |
| **Quantity of students participating at the same time:** | 5 to 8 (internet connection will need to be tested) |
| **Activity time** | 20-30 minutes per activity |
| **Interaction group format** | 2 (one learner per school) |

Start small in the pilots and keep on growing. Reserve a computer lab to carry out the tasks. Be aware that the whole class won’t be able to engage in oral synchronous communication at the same time (due to the broadband connection to Internet), that you will have to organize activity slots for X number of students that will be able to participate at the same time.

Share a digital calendar (Google or the virtual platform you might be using, like Moodle) so that scheduled sessions are clear to everybody.

The technique needs to be tested prior to every session in order to make sure that for instance the sound works properly.