Tasks and platforms, an overview

Sabela Melchor Couto - This talk will present a variety of task options ranging from minimal to maximum involvement and exploring different platforms (forums, chat applications, videoconferencing, etc.). A number of teachers who are currently participating in TILA will present some of these tasks, which they have put in practice in their classrooms, and will give useful tips for successful telecollaboration.

Practising spoken lingua franca communication in German through intercultural telecollaboration

Petra Hoffstaedter, Kurt Kohn, Helga Frömming - Educational standards for foreign language learning in secondary schools generally emphasize
the development of communicative competence as an overarching learning objective.

Communication in a foreign language can be conducted with native speakers or with other non-native speakers and thus has a natural intercultural dimension. Communication among non-native speakers that serves authentic communication purposes is referred to as lingua franca communication. In the context of our studies, lingua franca communication constitutes a relevant learning objective. At the same time, lingua franca communication among non-native peers is also chosen as a pedagogic condition for rendering the communicative exchange potentially more authentic and less anxiety -ridden.

In our presentation, we will showcase examples of spoken telecollaboration exchanges in German between pupils from France, the Netherlands and the UK. Our aim is to demonstrate the pedagogic potential of telecollaboration for spoken intercultural communication practice and to discuss some of the challenges involved in pedagogic implementation. Particular emphasis
will be given to the following issues:
- task design for spoken exchanges in the 3D virtual world of OpenSim and the videoconferencing environment BigBlueButton
- pedagogic evaluation based on feedback from pupils and teachers
- implementation problems and possible solutions

TILA Experience telecollaboration Nijmegen - Meliana

Begoña Clavel, Javier Soria, Elvira Verheijen - Our presentation will focus on describing the work carried out in the partnership Nijmegen-Meliana as part of the Spanish Cluster. The two schools collaborated during the academic year 2013-2014 (from January to May 2014), and also during the academic year 2014-2015 (from September to November 2014). In both cases they have carried out sessions in Spanish (the Dutch students study Spanish as a foreign language) and in English, in the tandem mode and they used Big Blue Button. The sessions were most of the time of the synchronous type.

The process of task elaboration, revision and implementation is essential in our project. We considered it important to carry out different tasks for each language so as to motivate the students and to avoid repeating the same tasks. Our tasks contain activities at A2/B1 level and we have chosen topics that could be motivating for them: my town, my school, my friends, free time, routines, hobbies, holidays, festivities and local customs, healthy lifestyle. These topics were chosen from a list that had been agreed in the first face-to-face project meeting that took place in Valencia in September 2013 and in the teacher training session that took place in Sagunt some days later. According to the secondary teachers' experience, the chosen topics were right for them and were designed to keep the conversation flowing.

Obviously, there were also some drawbacks in the experience mainly in the form of technical problems related to the internet connection and the quality of the sound. In some cases, we even found the situation where some pairs didn't have much to say to each other, but at a rule this was not the case. As a whole, we can describe the experience as satisfactory and highly motivating for them. The possibility of talking to a student of their own age from a different country, in our case from Holland or Spain, clearly a boosted motivation in their study of English and gave them the possibility of learning about each other's customs and points of views which have enriched them not only regarding acquiring a language but personally. The intercultural element of the telecollaboration is, in our opinion, a key element for our students and provides a first step for them to become European citizens.

Collaborative writing through telecollaboration

Linda Gijsen - During group work, students tend to divide up collaborative writing tasks and carry out parts of tasks individually, without interacting with fellow students on content, before they edit the sub-, and often heterogeneous, parts together into one, often incoherent piece. Telecollaborative projects have the potential to facilitate this interaction and collaboration and enhance intercultural language learning in a technology mediated setting. In an online intercultural exchange project 38 student-teachers of Boğaziçi University Istanbul (Turkey) and Fontys University of Applied Sciences Tilburg (the Netherlands) worked together in pairs in a blended learning environment to co-create a paper on foreign language education in Europe. The project was carried out in a Master Course on Didactics and led by a Dutch and a Turkish teacher-trainer. A task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach was used as the overall didactic principle and task design aimed at a monolingual product, a wiki in English, at the end of the project. The participants were student-teachers and C2 learners of English and did not know each other before joining the telecollaborative project. In this presentation the pedagogic potential of telecollaboration for co-creating a short paper in English and some of the challenges involved in pedagogical implementation will be discussed. Particular emphasis will be given to the following issues:
- wiki as a mode for collaborative writing
- task design to enhance language learning and intercultural communicative competence
- implementation challenges and possible solutions

Using TILA to the best with few resources

Martine Derivry, Laure Delbes - This presentation reports on two project partnerships between schools in France, England and the Netherlands. Intercultural awareness and language communication for students learning French and English were stimulated with only few resources, by using the text chat function of Moodle during class and following two modes of organisation.

Games in OpenSim

Bart Pardoel, Helen Myers, Nick Zwart & Kristi Jauregi - 3D virtual worlds offer rich opportunities to engage pupils in game activities while interacting in the target language with peers abroad. Three interactive games have been developed in OpenSim which include gamification elements, that are supposed to have a motivational added value for pupils. In these games pupils from a Dutch and an English secondary school collaborate together in three groups of four pupils. They carry out quizzes where they need to share punctual information with the other team members or carry out action together. They can earn points for their achievements, while the time they need to play the game is measured. In the end there is a winning group: the team with most points spending less time. All game activities are related to the German language and culture, which is the target language for both groups of pupils. During the presentation we will share the first experiences with this game project developed in the virtual world of OpenSim.