

Intercultural Discussions

Using Smartphones

...



Valeria Belmonti, HT Project Coordinator
Center for Integrated Language Communities

COIL Conference. April 25, 2016

CENTER FOR INTEGRATED LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES

- National Language Resource Center, US Department of Education, Title VI
- Hosted at The Graduate Center/City University of New York
- Heritage Telecollaboration Project
 - Team: CUNY Faculty, Partner Faculty, Instructional Technologist, Research Assistants
 - Objective: to design, pilot and publish telecollaborative modules for existing Spanish and Mandarin undergraduate courses

SOME OF THE FRAMEWORKS AND PROJECTS
THAT HAVE INSPIRED OUR DESIGN

TELECOLLABORATIVE TASK-BASED APPROACH

INFORMATIVE/ PREPARATORY PRE-TASK

Familiarize students with tools, activity and learning goals. Anticipatory readings and resources. Introduce new vocabulary for topics. Discuss own cultural perspectives. Make assumptions and identify questions about partners' cultural perspectives. Ice-breaker activity with partners.

COMMUNICATIVE/ COMPARATIVE TASK

Communication and discussion of topic and subtopics with partners using technology.

REFLECTIVE POST-TASK

Create final reports, presentations, intercultural reflections.
Create with partners final presentations, digital report (website, video, online document).
Teacher's observations. Students' feedback

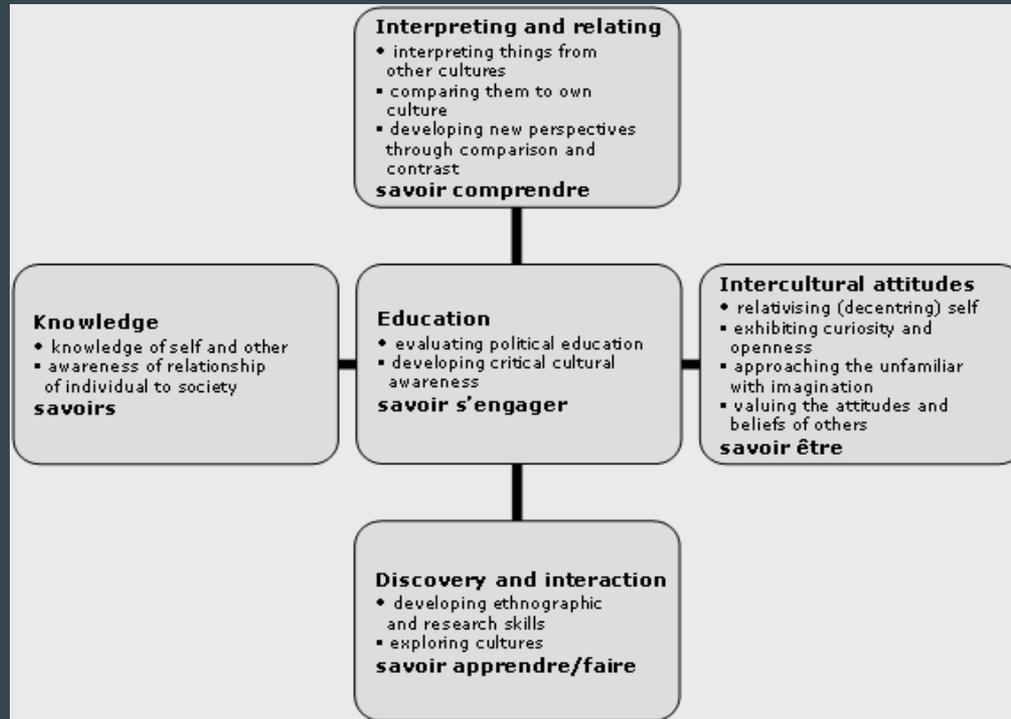
ADAPTED FROM:

Guth, S., & Helm, F. (2012). Developing multiliteracies in ELT through Telecollaboration. *ELT Journal*, 66(1), 42-51.

Mueller-Hartmann, A. (2007). 'Teacher role in telecollaboration: setting up and managing exchanges' in O'Dowd, R. (2007). *Online intercultural exchange: an introduction for foreign language teachers*. Clevedon; Buffalo: Multilingual Matters.

O'Dowd, R. & Waire, P. (2009). Critical issues in telecollaborative task design. *Computer-Assisted Language Learning*, 22(2), 173-188.

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE: BYRAM'S *SAVOIRS*



http://www.sdutsj.edus.si/ScriptaManent/2010_5_1,2/_wp_generated/wp48aae721.png

Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Byram, M. (2002). *Developing an intercultural dimension in language teaching. Report for the Council of Europe*.

Schenker, T. (2012). Intercultural Competence and Cultural Learning through Telecollaboration. *CALICO Journal*, 29(3), 449-470.

CULTURA-INSPIRED ACTIVITIES



www.cultura.mit.edu

Furstenberg, G. (2004). Using Communications Tools to Foster Cross-Cultural Understanding. NFLRC Symposium.

Furstenberg, G. (2010). Making Culture the Core of the Language Class: Can It Be Done? *The Modern Language Journal*, 94(2), 329–332.

D-I-E APPROACH TO INTERCULTURAL DEBRIEFING

**Describe, Interpret,
Evaluate**

Nam, K.-A., & Condon, J. (2010). The DIE is cast: The continuing evolution of intercultural communication's favorite classroom exercise.

International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 34(1), 81-87.

Intercultural Communication Institute. (n/a). Description, interpretation, and evaluation. Retrieved from www.intercultural.org

TELECOLLABORATIVE MOBILE EXCHANGE:
PROJECTS FOR HERITAGE CHINESE

OUR COLLABORATIONS



TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTED

- Free App
- Individual and group chat
- Users can exchange text, images & video clips
- Chats allow for asynchronous/synchronous modes of communication
- Users can also access and send messages from the web interface but need to have the app installed on a smartphone



OUR MODEL

- Students are put into small groups and connected on WeChat group chats set up by the instructors;
- WeChat group chats include both instructors;
- Students are required to exchange messages outside class time as homework;
- Students are required to exchange a minimum number of messages in L2;
- Resources in pre-task phase include material in L1 but discussions in class are done in L2;
- Guiding questions and sub-topics for the written conversations include questions suggested by the instructors as well as questions suggested by the students during pre-task brainstorming in class;
- Students periodically report and discuss in class the information exchanged with partners;
- Students complete a final oral and written presentation about cultural and linguistic findings from the discussions carried on with partners;
- Final written essays can include paragraphs in English to discuss intercultural learning.

SAMPLE MODULE: Urban Life

EXAMPLES FOR PRE-TASK RESOURCES



Comparison of real estate markets:
Prices, spaces, rent vs. buy



Analysis of gym and health facilities and
practices in NYC and Beijing



Analysis of modern urban architecture and
influence of foreign architects in NYC and Beijing

CULTURA-INSPIRED IMAGE ACTIVITIES: Subway, Markets, Parks

CULTURA-INSPIRED WORD ASSOCIATION: Hometown, The Forbidden City, The Big Apple

Documentary: [Cycle of Change - Beijing, my old home](#)

Articles: [Landmarking Urban Changes in NYC](#)

[Beijing City Festivals](#)

[New York City Festivals](#)

**BRAINSTORM IN CLASS
QUESTIONS FOR PARTNERS
THAT INTEREST STUDENTS**



Comparison of bike usage in NYC and Beijing:
motivations, bike paths, CitiBike phenomenon in NY

SAMPLE GUIDELINES FOR REPORTS

(Aligned with Byram's Savoirs)

Similarities and differences between Beijing and New York. (KNOWLEDGE)

Things that you have learned from your partner that you were not familiar with, that interested you or surprised you and about which you asked or looked for more information. Vice-versa. (DISCOVERY)

Point of views, aspects and perceptions of urban life perceived by you and you partners as different because they are culturally determined. (CULTURAL AWARENESS)

Did you encounter any language or cultural barriers during the exchange? Was there any misunderstanding and how was it solved?

Looking back, is there anything that you would have expressed or responded to differently? (INTERPRETING, INTERACTION)

→ Students are required to use excerpts from the WeChat exchange to support their claims ←

DATA COLLECTED FROM FIRST PILOT:

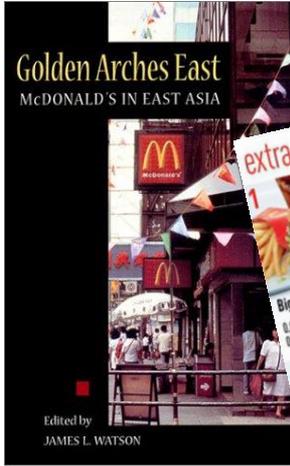
- Transcripts of chats
- Recording of oral presentations
- Students' essays

A first analysis of the data collected from the first pilot reveals that students extended the sub-topics analyzed with partners. Sample additional topics that were discussed by students:

- Standards of beauty in China and in the US (when discussing gym/sport practices)
- Food preferences as culturally determined (when discussing markets, restaurants)
- Practice of Islam in China (when exchanging biographical information)
- Relationships (when discussing safety in urban areas)

SAMPLE MODULE: McDonald's

EXAMPLES FOR PRE-TASK RESOURCES



Comparison of websites and menus



Documentary: [McDonald's in China](#)

Excerpts from [Golden Arches East](#) and [Fast Food Nation](#)

Comparison of magazine advertisements and street bulletin boards

[Comparison of TV Commercials](#)

Articles:

[China's changing eating habits](#)

[Will fast food be the death of us?](#)

[Fast Food and Obesity](#)



SAMPLE GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THE CHATS

Do you and your partner eat fast food often?

Which chain is your and their favorite?

Is fast food consumption popular in the US? In China?

Who is the typical target consumer in the US? In China?

With whom do you go to McDonald's? For which occasions?

Do you consume fast food for special occasions?

Do you consume fast food as a snack or a full meal?

Do you and your partners think that food is representative of a culture?

Is McDonald's a symbol of American culture? In the US? In China?

How does globalization impact food as symbol of culture?

Have you ever thought of the correlation between fast food and food price equity?

Is that the case in the US? Is that the case in China?

For the TV ads from the opposite country, would you say that the images/videos/text would express the same meaning in your country?

Which ad does/does not persuade you and your partners, and why?

Do you take health into consideration when choosing food?

Do you read the nutritional information of the food you eat?

Does flavor weigh more than health in your and your partners' choices of food?

Are there any healthy fast food chains in the US and China, and do you and your partners eat there?

Which foods do you and your partner consider healthy?

Are Chinese and American young people careful about what they eat? Do they follow special diets? Do they exercise often? Is it about health or beauty?

Guiding questions proposed by the instructors aim to deepen the analysis of the content covered in the pre-task phase and to obtain partners' perspectives on the content.

In class, students are asked to propose additional questions on sub-topics of interest to them.

Pre-task resources should be selected and used by the instructor to connect the original topic to additional subjects interesting for intercultural analysis.

In the case of McDonald's, the resources suggested would facilitate connections to subjects such as:

- Teenager employment (from *Fast Food Nation*)
- Marketing trends and persuasive strategies for the consumer markets in the two countries (from the analysis of commercials and advertisements)
- Nutrition, food trends, healthy diets, obesity (from the analysis of the readings)
- Local celebrations (from the analysis of McDonald's websites and menus for special events)

BENEFITS OF INTERCULTURAL MOBILE EXCHANGE

- ENRICH THE MATERIAL COVERED IN THE TEXTBOOK AND IN THE CLASSROOM WITH ONGOING DISCUSSIONS THAT STUDENTS CONDUCT OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM
- EXPAND THE CULTURAL THEMES OF THE TEXTBOOK. CULTURE VS. INTERCULTURAL LEARNING.
- LEARN MORE ABOUT AMERICAN CULTURE AND CHINESE-AMERICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH INTERACTIONS AND REFLECTIONS WITH PEERS IN CHINA
- PRACTICE AND LEARN CHINESE LANGUAGE SKILLS, INFORMAL/FORMAL LANGUAGE USE
- USE TECHNOLOGY FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES