

CASE STUDY:

Plurilingual inspired virtual exchange project in 2 rural school setting



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Alexandra Delgado is a students teacher, finishing the degree in elementary education with a focus on teaching English as a foreign language.

Andrea Kratzer is a secondary school teacher of English and French that is currently a university lecturer working on her PhD.

A VE was conducted in 2023 between Andrea's pupils in Täferrot, Germany and Alexandra's internship students in Teruel, Spain.

OBJECTIVES

- Explore innovative teaching methods with an online community of practice.
- Transform the teaching experience in rural schools.
- Increase students' engagement and mediation within EFL by providing them with a transformative experience beyond the boundaries of a traditional classroom.

CONTEXT

- Rural areas in both Spanish and German schools.
- Involved primary school children aged 7-11 → Spanish school had a multigrade classroom
- Target language: English, with the students at an A1 level.
- Plurilingual focus, adding depth to the language learning experience.

CHALLENGES

Students:

- Facing and dealing a completely different way of learning and mediating with English compared to the one they were used to.

Teachers:

- Learning to be flexible with the creation, preparation and timing of the activities.
- Constant, clear and direct communication between the teachers (expressing ourselves and listening actively).
- Learning how to negotiate and collaborate.

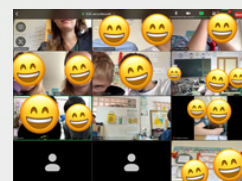
BENEFITS

Students:

- Improvement of their communicative competence regarding EFL.
- Less insecurities and fears when interacting with the target language. So, it boosted students' confidence.
- They were more engaged, motivated and excited to learn the language.
- Learning about different cultures.

Teachers:

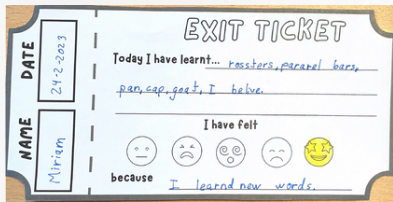
- Getting to know another educational system.
- Building strong connections.
- Participating in the project opened up unexpected opportunities (e.g. attending conferences together).
- Learning about different cultures.
- Gaining insights on using technology.
- Experiencing a Virtual Community of Support for rural school teachers.



ASSESSMENT AS A KEY TOOL DURING THE VE

In order to help students regulate and evaluate their learning as well as to assess the whole project and how they felt, different evaluation tools were created. Evaluation has been used as another means of learning and reflection. The learners' ability to self-regulate and recognise the concepts, thoughts, opinions, etc. that they were developing throughout the sessions was a key goal of the evaluation during this project.

This assessment has also taught us a lot about the kids' emotions, viewpoints, and ideas regarding the various activities, interactions... It has given us the opportunity to consider and critique the numerous activities and lessons the students were engaging in. This will help us to improve in our next virtual exchange. It has also highlighted for us that teachers should also learn and exercise critical thinking.



ITEMS	3	2	1
KNOWLEDGE OF THE CONTENT LEARN	I HAVE READ UNDERSTOOD AND LEARNED ALL THE CONTENT SHARED IN THE SESSIONS	I HAVE READ UNDERSTOOD AND LEARNED MOST OF THE CONTENT SHARED IN THE SESSIONS	I HAVEN'T LEARNED ANYTHING DURING THE SESSIONS
EFFORT MADE DURING THE SESSIONS	I HAVE TRIED TO DO MY BEST ALMOST ALL THE SESSIONS, BUT SOMETIMES I WAS NOT IN THE MOOD	I HAVE TRIED TO DO MY BEST ALMOST ALL THE SESSIONS, BUT SOMETIMES I WAS NOT IN THE MOOD	I HAVEN'T TRIED MY BEST IN ANY SESSION, I DON'T WANT TO PUT EFFORT
PARTICIPATION	I HAVE PARTICIPATED IN ALL THE SESSIONS, BUT SOMETIMES I WAS NOT INTERESTED	I HAVE PARTICIPATED DURING THE SESSIONS, BUT SOMETIMES I WAS NOT INTERESTED	I HAVEN'T ALWAYS PARTICIPATED DURING THE SESSIONS AND I HAVEN'T BEEN INTERESTED BEFORE
USE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE	I NEED TO SPEAK IN ENGLISH IN EVERY LESSON	I NEED TO SPEAK IN ENGLISH IN EVERY LESSON	I DON'T TRY TO SPEAK IN ENGLISH BECAUSE I DON'T SPEAK IN SPANISH

SESSIONS AND MATERIALS

Planning and introduction

- Getting to know each other
- Both teachers met online several times before, during and after the virtual exchange
- Discussion and negotiation of possible topics and ideas

Implementation

- Presentation of the partner teacher through a video. In it the teachers used some expressions in their native language.
- Preparation and recording videos for the other school showing the different spaces in our school.
- Watching the other school video(s) while answering questions and comparing.
- Students introduction through Padlet and Task Card (in this task we allowed them to use concrete expressions or typical words of their mother tongue). Also, they had to write what came to their mind when they thought of the other country (stereotypes that students had unconsciously internalised were captured here for further discussion).
- Reading our partners introduction and writing down questions we would like to ask them in the live session.
- Last session via zoom: oral interaction within both classrooms and individual discussions between students about their classes and lives in rural areas.

Wrap up

In order to wrap up the entire exchange, each teacher completed a final assessment survey and shared with partners, parents and the school community, the various perspectives, insights, feelings, etc. that the V.E. produced on students during those months.