

Foreword

Telecollaboration Application in Foreign Language Classrooms is a very welcome addition to the field of Telecollaboration and provides a wide range of innovative and research-informed examples of how Telecollaboration can be integrated into the foreign language curriculum that includes contributions from both long-standing experts in the field and scholars who have embraced telecollaboration more recently. Chapter 1 sets the scene nicely with a helpful and systematic survey by Toscu, based in Turkey, of the research studies on telecollaboration in English as a Foreign/Second Language (EFL/ESL) published between 2003-2021.

The work in this collection illustrates that Telecollaboration is ‘coming of age’ and becoming mainstream in many educational contexts, possibly also due to the game-changing global education experience forced by the COVID-19 pandemic, that raised awareness of the potential of, and opportunities offered by, distant communication at a time in which physical mobility was not possible, and made synchronous communication online the norm for many educational institutions across the globe. However, despite the normalization (Bax, 2011) of remote communication brought about by the pandemic, many students still experience anxiety about engaging with Telecollaboration, as it can take them out of their comfort zone and push the boundaries of their expectations of a Higher Education experience (Orsini-Jones, Cerveró Carrascosa, & Zou, 2020). Chapter 2, an EFL study from Japan by Tsubota, Inagaki, Nozawa and Ishikawa, illustrates how it can be helpful to prepare students for a telecollaborative experience with pre-project activities aimed at lowering anxiety and enhancing their willingness to communicate. Also, as argued by Rezaeyan and Gimeno-Sanz in Chapter 6, the scaffolding and pedagogical mentoring role of the teacher is of fundamental importance for the purpose of enabling learning and effective communication. Rezaeyan and Gimeno-Sanz discuss evidence illustrating that systematic teacher-mentored collaborative pre-task planning (TMCP) before the tasks are carried out in telecollaborative settings can encourage ‘willingness to communicate’.

As pointed out by O’Dowd (2014 & 2022) and Sadler & Dooly (2022), Telecollaboration has a long history. Quoting Cummins and Sayers (1995, 119-136), O’Dowd states that its origin can be traced back to pre-Internet exchanges set up by Freinet in France in the 1920s and by Lodi in Italy in the 1960s (2014, p. 132). Sadler (Sadler & Dooly, p 246) reports on his first encounter with early features of Telecollaboration when he saw a peer on his computing science course in the USA engaging in a live chat with his father located in Sweden, an exchange made possible by the PLATO system in 1984. Sadler argues that some of the features of that ‘antique’ communication system are still used today in their contemporary equivalent versions, as at their heart, both then and now, was/is a drive towards the facilitation of communication and collaboration between geographically distant partners: at the heart of telecollaboration is cooperative communication (Sadler & Dooly, 2022, p. 245) and co-construction of knowledge. Tele-

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collaboration is an ideal approach to foreign language teaching and learning as it adheres to the core principles inherent to both communicative competence (Hymes, 1972) and intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997; O'Dowd & Dooly, 2020) and provides opportunities to develop transversal and professional competences (Orsini-Jones & Lee, 2018), as discussed in many chapters here (e.g. 8, 10, 11 and 13). In Chapter 11, for example, Rámila Díaz and Vinagre (both based in Spain) provide hard research evidence of how their students could cogently metareflect on the transversal competences acquired during their exchange. In other chapters, the focus is on the development of social justice awareness and the integration of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>) into the telecollaborative exchange. In Chapter 9, for example, Salomão (based in Brazil) and Viana da Silva (based in the United States) utilise telecollaboration for an exchange aimed at fostering emotional intelligence and global intercultural competence. Telecollaboration is also growing in popularity in the field of second language teacher education for both pre- and in-service teachers. In Chapter 14, Loizidou and Savlovská discuss online task design in asymmetrical telecollaboration action-oriented pedagogical scenarios for students on a French language teacher education course teaching learners of French as Language 2, while in Chapter 12, Vinanda reports on her interesting action-research case study carried out with young learners in Indonesia.

This collection also illustrates how, through Telecollaboration, innovative technological tools can be used to maximise the development and acquisition of a variety of competences in a holistic way (e.g. WhatsApp in Chapter 3 and Immersive Virtual Reality in Chapter 7) and help with a rethink of how to teach and learn languages for specific purposes (e.g. literature, Chapter 10 and Business English, Chapter 13). The *Framework for the goals of Telecollaboration 2.0* by Helm and Guth (2010, p. 74) is still current thirteen years from its publication in this respect, and lists the Telecollaboration goals that include online literacies, intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and foreign language learning, pragmatic knowledge included. The focus on the development of pragmatic (and cyberpragmatic) competence in Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 provides evidence of how Telecollaboration can enhance the awareness of pragmatic 'rules of engagement' for second language learning and teaching and help both learners and tutors with decoding intercultural understanding (and misunderstandings).

The attentive reader might have noticed that I have deliberately avoided mentioning that I would use Telecollaboration, Virtual Exchange (VE) and Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) interchangeably in this foreword, even if VE and COIL are used in many of the chapters, *en lieu* of or together with Telecollaboration. I would like to praise the editors for using the term 'Telecollaboration' in the title of this collection at a time in which it is becoming 'orphaned' by some of its 'historical parents', who are adopting VE (e.g. O'Dowd, 2022) or COIL-VE (Guth, in Rubin & Guth, 2022). Colpaert questions the choice of VE to replace Telecollaboration, and defines the latter as 'a dynamic subfield of CALL' (2020, p. 653). O'Dowd puts forward an articulate defence of his recent choice of terminology in view of Colpaert's comments and also explains that there are slight nuanced differences in the semantics here (O'Dowd, 2022, pp. 8-12). It is important however to exert caution when adopting/coining new terms, as, when this happens, the origins of a field might be diluted or lost in translation. There is the danger of losing sight of the fact that Telecollaboration was pioneered by language learners, teachers and researchers (e.g. Warschauer, 1996; Belz, 2002, 2003) before it was renamed VE and/or COIL, as documented in the chapters contained in this collection. Perhaps it is time to make some distinctions amongst these terms and agree that they are not synonyms after all, but that what they represent shares some core tenets. Conscious of intercultural sensitivities and decolonial perspectives emerging in the

field, it is also advisable to try and avoid rather unusual definitions, such as the recently published one reported below (Rubin, 2022, p. 9, *italics* stress as from original text):

Since similar activities have been given different names by varied practitioners, there has been significant confusion across the field, especially amongst those new to these practices. In analyzing these predominant definitions, virtual exchange is like the word sports, while COIL is like the word basketball. Sports is a broad field of activity, while basketball is a specific activity with rules. One cannot truly practice or develop training programs for sports, but one can do so for basketball.

I would like to conclude this foreword with a strong recommendation to read this collection to all those of us who are interested in language learning and teaching in the 21st Century, as it provides a unique insight into a variety of Telecollaboration themes and projects and illustrates many research-informed lessons learnt.

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