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Transatlantic Tutoring: The Pittsburgh - Clermont-Ferrand Collaboration

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Transatlantic Tutoring

The Pittsburgh - Clermont-Ferrand Experience

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CALICO 2011

Overview

- The premise
 - The participants
 - Students in French Online 1 at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.
 - Students in a Masters program for teachers of French as a foreign language at the Université Blaise Pascal in Clermont-Ferrand, France
 - Sequence
 - Examples
 - Results and conclusions
-

The Premise

- Learners of French (FOL) as a foreign language will benefit from:
 - Exposure to additional native/advanced speakers of the target language
 - Designed and unexpected intercultural experience during conversational exchanges
 - Reflection on the exchanges and personal learning strategies
 - French teacher trainees (MA) will benefit from:
 - Exposure to technology-enhanced/ distance teaching contexts
 - Analyzing on-line instructional courseware
 - Interacting with culturally-situated learners of French and reflecting on that interaction
-

Masters in FLE (MA)

- Profile
 - Group of 13 women between 22 and 32
 - Mostly French as a mother tongue (except for 4: Portuguese, Spanish and Russian)
 - Previous experience of asynchronous online tutoring for half of them ; Uneven personal use / mastery of CMC tools
 - Objectives
 - Pre-service teachers
 - Project is part of a training for synchronous tutoring
 - Situated learning + reflexive approach
 - Specific tools used (Skype, Facebook, Moodle)
-

French Learners(FOL)

- Profile
 - 15 (2 drop out) : 12 women , 3 men between 20 and 27
 - Individuals, not a group
 - Diverse student population: Asian and Asian-heritage students ; Multilingualism common
 - Objectives
 - French as elective course
 - Blended instructional format
 - Weekly class meeting oriented toward communication
 - Weekly conversation meeting with peer tutor [insertion point for new tutoring experience]
 - Media-intensive interactive online courseware
-

Breaking the ice

23 September
0-1am (Fr) & 6-7pm (Pit)



Video-Conference

- Time difference issues
 - MA: 16
 - FOL : 8
 - 2 by 2 presentations
 - Important for setting up the MA community
-



skype + email 

1: End-Sept. 2: Mid-Oct. 3: 2nd-Nov. 4: End-Nov.

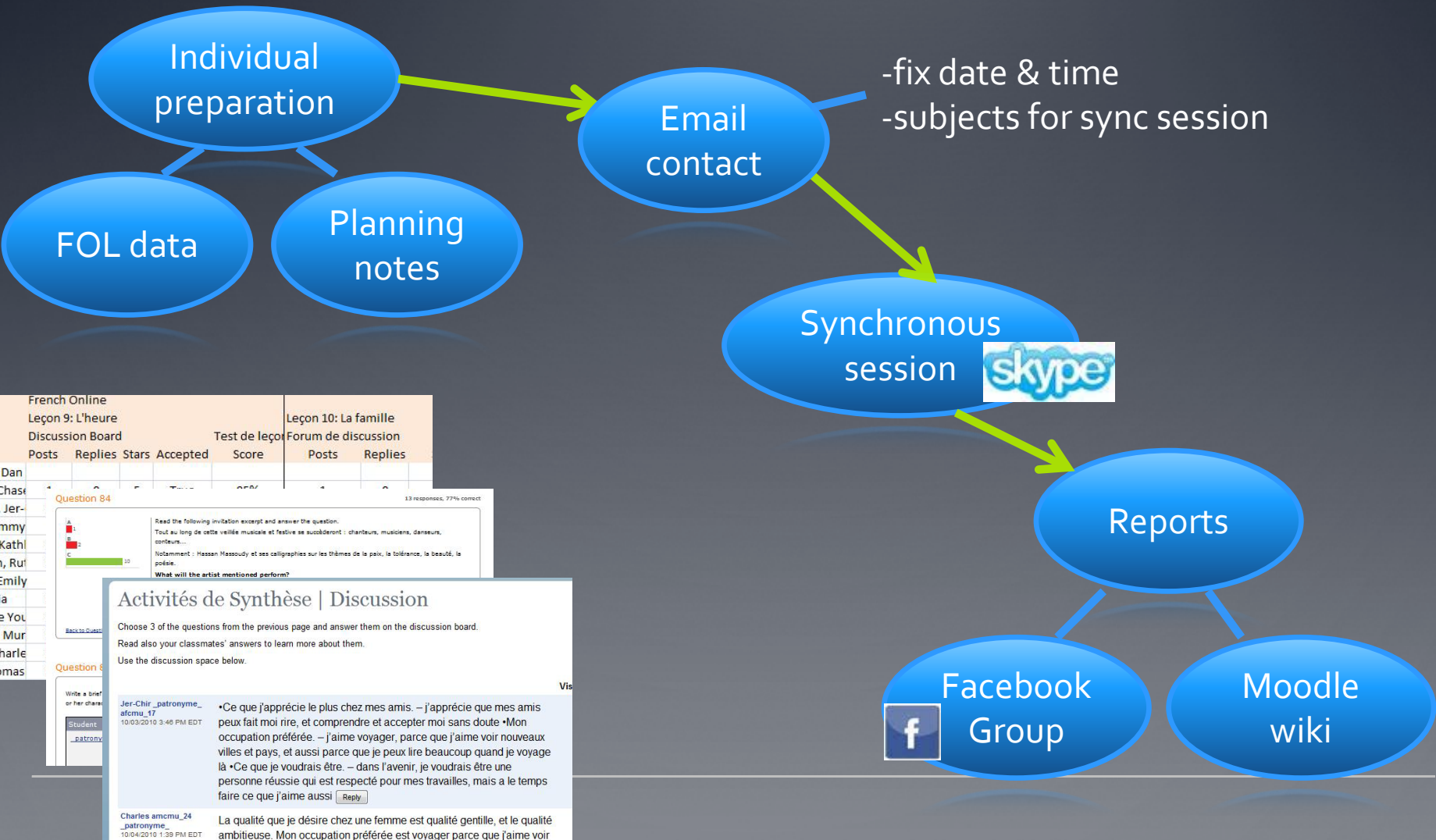
Tandem

FOL

MA



Synchronous activity (MA side)



French Online
Leçon 9: L'heure
Discussion Board
Posts Replies Stars Accepted Score

Leçon 10: La famille
Test de leçon Forum de discussion
Posts Replies

Question 84
13 responses, 77% correct

Read the following invitation excerpt and answer the question:
Tout au long de cette veillée musicale et festive se succéderont : chanteurs, musiciens, danseurs, conteurs...
Notamment : Hassan Massoudy et ses calligraphies sur les thèmes de la paix, la tolérance, la beauté, la poésie.
What will the artist mentioned perform?

Activités de Synthèse | Discussion
Choose 3 of the questions from the previous page and answer them on the discussion board.
Read also your classmates' answers to learn more about them.
Use the discussion space below.

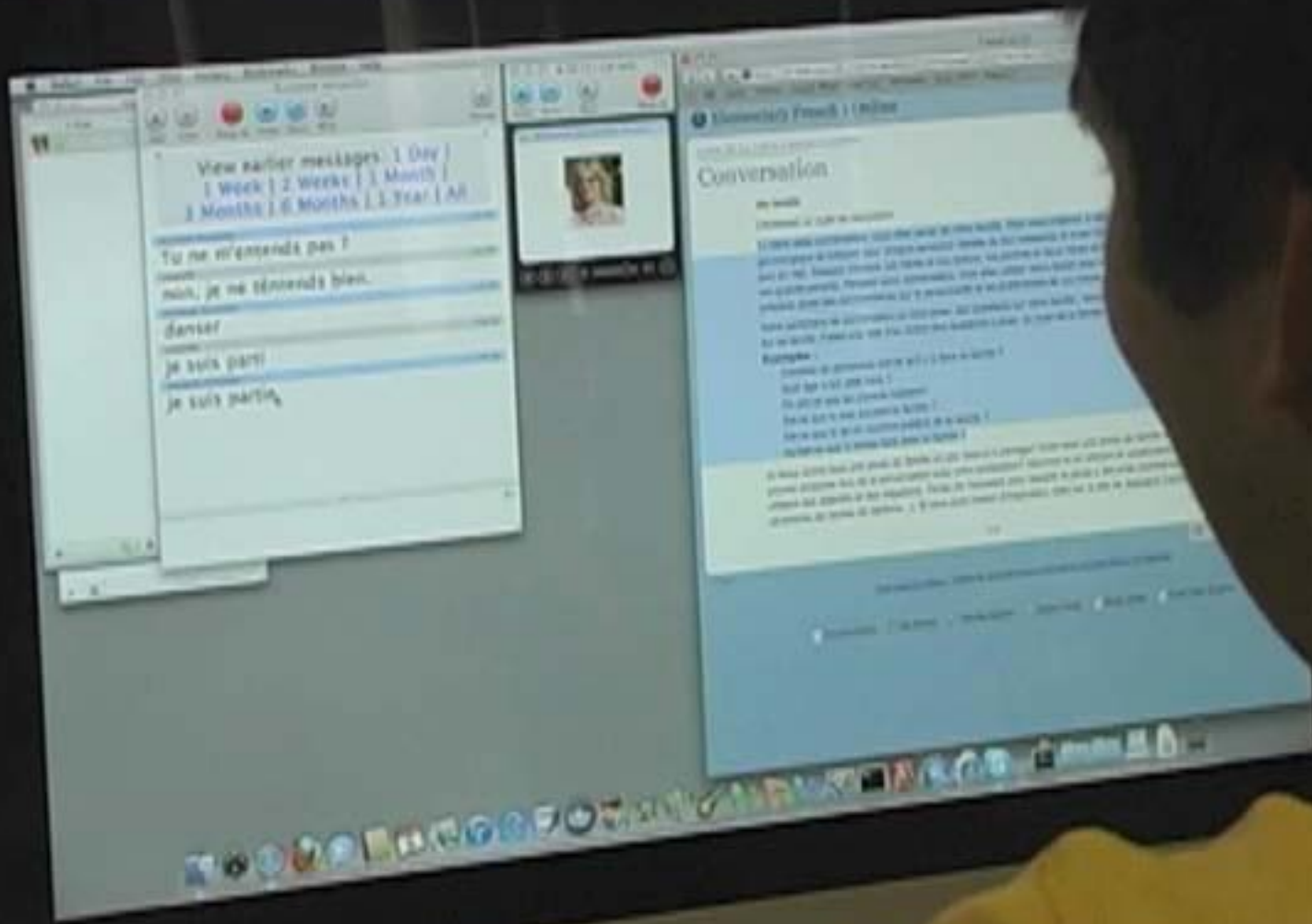
Jer-Chir_patronyme_...
10/03/2010 3:46 PM EDT
•Ce que j'apprécie le plus chez mes amis. – j'apprécie que mes amis
peux fait moi rire, et comprendre et accepter moi sans doute •Mon
occupation préférée. – j'aime voyager, parce que j'aime voir nouveaux
villes et pays, et aussi parce que je peux lire beaucoup quand je voyage
là •Ce que je voudrais être. – dans l'avenir, je voudrais être une
personne réussie qui est respecté pour mes travaux, mais a le temps
faire ce que j'aime aussi Reply

Charles amcmu_24
10/04/2010 1:39 PM EDT
La qualité que je désire chez une femme est qualité gentille, et le qualité
ambitieuse. Mon occupation préférée est voyager parce que j'aime voir

(Usual ?) tandem difficulties

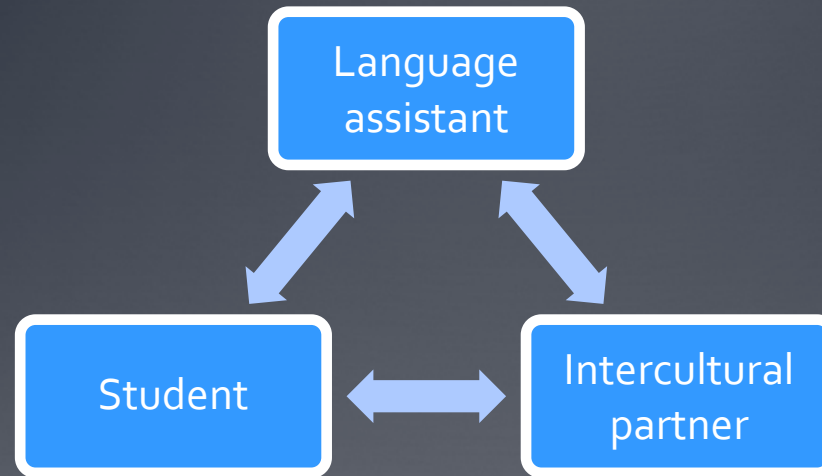
- Rare exact correspondence between the number of learners on each side (manage drop out)
 - Important time zone difference (6 hours)
 - Different schedules in each curriculum
 - FOL started and finished their semester before MA
 - MA had not enough time for the initial Skype training
 - Unbalanced situation
 - FOL followed their own curriculum ; French as an elective
 - MA had to adapt to this situation where they were not the primary teacher and where they expected cultural exchanges
-



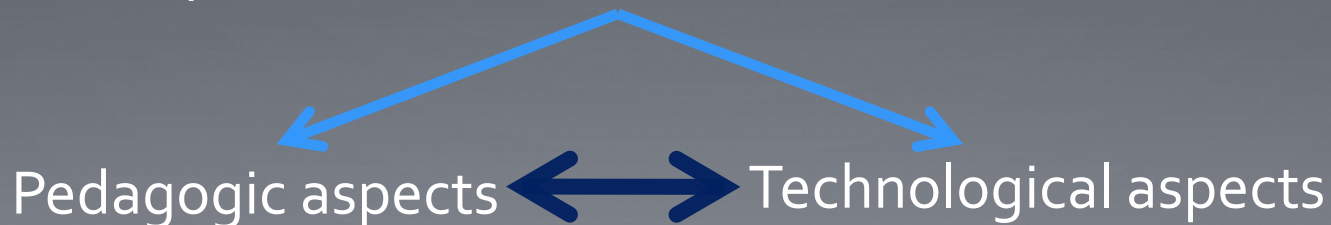


Roles, positioning and representations– MA students

Roles



Aspects of difficulties for MA students



Pre-representation about being a teacher or a student

- Stereotypes of pre-service teachers in the French system
 - Teacher has got freedom in her/his preparation
 - Language assistant in secondary school: devalued
 - Clear expectations about what to do
 - If I am a teacher, I cannot be evaluated
- No experience in distance teaching as a Teaching Assistant

*"Il me paraît nécessaire d'être clair dès le départ sur les rôles et les attentes envers les participants. A savoir si un groupe adopte une **position d'enseigner** " La position que l'on occupait, en tant que « teaching assistant » était assez mesurée ou difficile à délimiter, dans la mesure où nous n'avions ni le rôle ni le statut du professeur, mais que nous devions quand même les faire travailler leur [Marie, re français » [Annabelle, reflex. Report]*

Evolution of perceptions / events

Situation 2

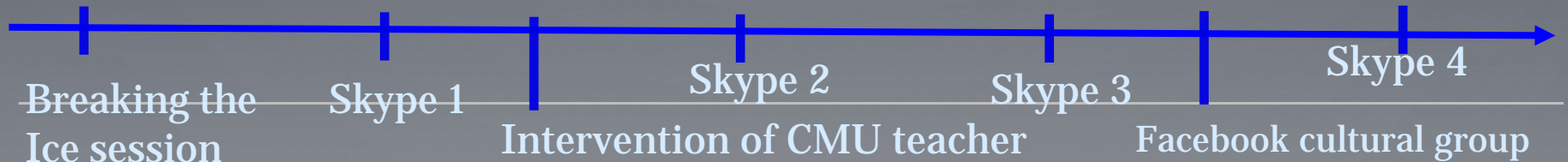
Cf. integrative profile

Situation 1 (prototypical)

Less participation of Fol than expected ?
'it is my failure' 'FOL not interested with sharing cultures and values'
Rely on video & audio
Expectations of clear instructions or resent lack of freedom

Meeting delayed ?
Facebook does not work
Less interactions than expected
Planning difficult to follow
Lost in the use of modalities

Willing to meet my partner
Stress



Breaking the
Ice session

Skype 1

Intervention of CMU teacher

Skype 2

Skype 3

Facebook cultural group

Skype 4

Integrative MA profile

- Control expectations, accept uncertainty / fuzziness during the first steps
 - Rely on preparation (negotiated)
 - Develop flexibility: seize every occasion for informal exchanges or linguistic ones
 - Understand different roles of modalities
 - **Video**: not essential for verbal constraint, once social confidence established and if FOL feel confident enough
 - **Oral**: accept silences, check with other modalities their reasons ; control my speed , linguistic difficulties
 - **Textchat**: support (vocabulary, recast), correction without oral interruptions, check (tiredness, comprehension, etc.)
 - Try to discover and understand reasons for lack of participation (exam, work overload, ...)
-

Overall opinion on the project - MA students

- 100 % of the students ready to repeat the experience
- Training: positive change of the opinion on CMC tools via the project (82 %)
- Language learning: importance of the communicative goals for 11 students out of 13
- Cultural aspects: contribution of the project seen as insignificant or inexistant (77%)

(Collected in the post-questionnaires)

In-process FOL comments 1/2

- “I wish we could have made better progress and that the time difference wasn't so inconvenient.”
 - “It's been fun talking to Céline. We've talked about her life and my life. We used the conversation page in the lesson as a guide to start off the conversations and then we keep talking and she helps me say things in a better way. Our conversation lasted about an hour this time.”
 - “Again, it would have been nice to know what we were going to talk about ahead of time. Also, I preferred when the conversation was more informal, with general questions about topics we'd recently covered. I've felt like the last few conversations were more like interviews, with the pre-planned list of questions.”
-

In-process FOL comments 2/2

- “Although I liked the experience, I felt that I liked working with Prof Jones and Cate better... I think Skype was just too remote of a forum and the personal meetings with them during the week are more helpful, especially when so much of the work is done online.”
 - “My conversation with Marie (my French partner) was great! We talked about movies and our families and cooking. She's so nice and I really enjoyed getting to talk to her. I'm beginning to understand her a lot better also when she talks faster..”
 - “This week our discussion focused on our families. Our discussion was very interesting and by sticking to the lesson plan, we were able to have a more productive discussion.”
 - “I will miss these meetings now even though at times it was a stress to prepare for meetings. Overall, it was a great program.”
-

Overall opinion on the project - FOL students

- Generally positive response after MA students emphasized oral communication
 - Some question whether additional technical challenges are worth the effort
 - Most wanted alignment with lesson goals as point of departure
 - Many found the interpersonal component enriching
-

Questions?
