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Short version (104 words)

Transatlantic Tutoring : The Pittsburgh – Clermont-Ferrand Collaboration

In fall 2010, Blaise-Pascal University in Clermont-Ferrand, France and Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania pooled resources in the interest of programs at both institutions. On the French side were teachers-in-training seeking experience using on-line communication tools and exploring pedagogical implications. On the U.S. side were undergraduate students enrolled in the French Online course created at CMU. The organizational architecture was to insert the Clermont interlocutors into an existing system of conversational practice meetings in the French Online blended design, using Skype technology.

This presentation will consist of multimedia documentation and reactions from students and instructors, illustrating the challenges and benefits of the arrangement.

Long version (225 words <>)

Transatlantic Tutoring : The Pittsburgh – Clermont-Ferrand Collaboration

In the fall of 2010, Blaise-Pascal University in Clermont-Ferrand, France and Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in the U.S. decided to pool resources in the interest of programs at both institutions. On the French side were Masters-level teachers-in-training looking for experience using on-line communication tools and exploring pedagogical implications. On the U.S. side were undergraduate students of beginning French enrolled in the French Online course created at CMU. After a group videoconference, teacher-in-training/student partnerships were established for four Skype sessions during the course of the semester. The organizational architecture was to insert the French interlocutors into an existing system of individual conversational practice meetings in the French Online blended delivery design. Student reactions to the Skype-based interactions were shared on a Facebook site on the Clermont side, with intervention by the Pittsburgh instructor, and in a Blackboard site in Pittsburgh.

This presentation will consist of audio, video and text documentation from these exchanges and subsequent reactions from all concerned, in an attempt to illustrate the challenges and benefits of the arrangement, which on the surface presented greater potential benefits than traditional tandem exchanges. Variables that proved to be important included the diversity of cultural and educational background on both sides, the now-conventional time-zone challenges, and technical issues related to Skype video and audio connections.

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