

# How to facilitate your online exchange...

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A telecollaboration project can seem overwhelming at first – for you as a teacher and your colleague who jointly plan, organize, and implement the online exchange, but as well for your students who may not be used to this mode of working and who may initially look at such an exchange only in terms of higher workload. There are a number of best practices that may help you engage in such an exchange effectively:

## Best practices

### Project preparation (teachers):

- ✓ Joint planning of activities by the teachers.
- ✓ Joint schedule for all partners, teachers and pupils, visible on the LMS.
- ✓ Continuous communication among the teachers to meet deadlines and adjust the schedule if necessary.
- ✓ Collaboration tools used to plan the project and stay in touch throughout the project.

### Collaboration among pupils:

- ✓ Joint analysis of research data.
- ✓ Brainstorming and collaborative choice of interview questions.
- ✓ Finalization of the project in the form of a collaborative product (website, magazine, video, blog, etc.) to showcase the learner texts by all the partner classes.

### Dissemination:

- ✓ All partners participate in the competition and apply for labels/certificates (if possible).
- ✓ Publication of key products online to share the process and outcomes of the project.

*Adapted from: eTwinning (2017). [How to develop the European and international dimension of your school.](#)*

This handout outlines basic practices and tasks that help you to get your telecollaborative project participation for the **U.S. Embassy Election Project** started. Some activities are adapted from the project curriculum, others are taken from the following published telecollaboration manuals and task databases:

## Key resources to get you started:

**UNICollaboration** (online virtual exchange in Higher Ed., <https://www.unicollaboration.org/>)

Task database: <https://www.unicollaboration.org/index.php/tasks-databank/>

**TILA** (Telecollaboration for Intercultural Language Acquisition, [www.tilaproject.eu/](http://www.tilaproject.eu/))

Task database (<http://www.tilaproject.eu/moodle/course/view.php?id=85>)

Best Practice Report (<http://www.tilaproject.eu/moodle/mod/page/view.php?id=1429>)

Planning checklist (<http://www.tilaproject.eu/moodle/course/view.php?id=81>)

**EVALUATE** (Evaluating & Upscaling Telecollaborative Teacher Ed., <http://www.evaluateproject.eu/>)

Telecollaboration training manual EN: <http://bit.ly/EVALUATE-en>

Telecollaboration training manual DE: <http://bit.ly/EVALUATE-de>

*More resources are provided at the end of the document.*

## I. Launching your telecollaborative exchange

The following two questionnaires will help you prepare your exchange with a transatlantic colleague. Remember that a telecollaborative project is first and foremost an exercise in intercultural communication and collaboration – not just for your students, but for you and your colleague, too. It is vital that you communicate as much as possible about your cultural and institutional contexts early on before the actual planning of the joint project participation. It has been recommended that a trustful and effective teacher collaboration requires regular communication, for example a weekly email update or Skype conversation.

### Getting to know your partner teacher

Complete the second column of this chart with your own information. Then, interview your partner teacher and find out his/her answers. What cultural or institutional or personal differences do you notice?

	You	Your partner teacher
<i>Describe your cultural experiences – where have you lived, worked and travelled to during your life?</i>		
<i>Describe your educational background: What did you study?</i>		
<i>What courses or subjects do you teach at your institution?</i>		
<i>What other professional responsibilities do you have apart from teaching?</i>		
<i>What are your teaching interests?</i>		
<i>When are your teaching hours? When do you arrive at and leave your school? What lunch break do you have?</i>		
<i>How comfortable are you communicating online for professional purposes? How often do you check your email on a normal working day?</i>		
<i>What other online communication tools do you use – e.g. Skype? WhatsApp? (Share your contacts in the tools you use, e.g. your Skype name.) When is the best time to write or call you about the exchange?</i>		
<i>What languages do you speak? What level would you say you have in each one?</i>		

## Getting to know your partner teacher's institutional culture

Complete the second column of this chart with your own information. Then, interview your partner teacher and find out his/her answers. What cultural or institutional or personal differences do you notice? Could any of these differences cause problems or misunderstandings during the exchange?

	You	Your partner teacher
<i>How big is the institution where your class is studying? And what about the faculty/ department where you work?</i>		
<i>Approximately how many students do you usually have in your classes?</i>		
<i>Are your classrooms equipped with a computer? Do students have Wi-Fi? Do you encourage students to use their laptops or mobiles in your classes?</i>		
<i>When does your semester begin and end? When do exams take place?</i>		
<i>Are there any holiday breaks during the semester of your exchange?</i>		
<i>How often will you meet the class which is participating in the telecollaborative exchange? Do you already have an idea of the timetable? If so, what is it?</i>		
<i>What do you usually do in this course? What are the main course objectives and content areas? What languages are used in the course?</i>		
<i>Describe the students that usually participate in the course: How old are they? What is their level in foreign languages? Do they have any experience in doing projects like this one? How would you describe their level of digital literacy?</i>		
<i>Having compared your institutional cultures, do you foresee any problems or misunderstandings that could arise due to the differences?</i>		

Adapted from: EVALUATE training manual. (<http://bit.ly/EVALUATE-en>)

Establishing a sense of trust between both teachers (and their classes) is part and parcel of a successful telecollaborative exchange. One possible method of achieving this is to draw up a memorandum of understanding between both teachers. Whether you and your colleague will adopt this approach and level of formality and what aspects you will cover in such a document is up to you and not set in stone. A handy template like the one below may be useful to launch your cooperation and achieve clarity over your expectations, goals, and planned procedures for each other as well for other involved stakeholders (students, parents, school administration).

## A telecollaborative memorandum of understanding

**TEACHER GER (SCHOOL GER)** and **TEACHER U.S. (SCHOOL U.S.)** agree to carry out a virtual exchange in the context of the **U.S. Embassy Election Project** involving the following classes: **CLASS DETAILS GER (SUBJECT, GRADE)** and **CLASS DETAILS U.S. (SUBJECT, GRADE)**.

Both colleagues agree on the following:

- The exchange will last from ..... until .....
- Students will do the following tasks:  
**ADD PROPOSED TASKS HERE**  
...
- And use the following communication tools during the exchange:  
**PROPOSED COMMUNICATION TOOLS** and the **Teach About U.S. Moodle platform**.
- The exchange project will / will not be compulsory
- Students at **SCHOOL GER** will spend ... hours per week on project and the project will/will not be assessed.
- Students at **SCHOOL U.S.** will spend ... hours per week on project and the project will/will not be assessed.

We plan / envision the following results and outcomes to arise from this joint project participation:

### **ADD DESIRED RESULTS AND OUTCOMES**

**TEACHER GER** and **TEACHER U.S.** agree to communicate any changes in the program and commitments to the exchange to one another as soon as they arise. We also agree to commit to the project for its full duration. We commit to provide each other with regular updates on the project implementation and emerging issues and challenges.

Signatures / Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

(To sign, scan and email to one another)

*Adapted from: UNICollaboration.org*

Regular communication between you and your tandem colleague is key to facilitate an effective project collaboration and an enjoyable and equitable work relationship between both sides. Make it a habit to update each other weekly on the progress of the project, your students' behavior and experiences, and any emerging issues.

### **Checklist for the weekly check-in:**

- ✓ Are your students on time with their current task?
- ✓ Have any students mentioned to you any potential problems or issues in their online interactions?
- ✓ Have any students mentioned that their partners aren't participating? If so, what international working group are they in?
- ✓ Do you have any upcoming holidays or exams which might mean that students do not participate in their forums? When do you expect them to be 'back online'?
- ✓ Have you used the exchange for any classwork this week? If so, tell your partner teacher briefly what you did and what the outcomes were.

*Adapted from: EVALUATE training manual. (<http://bit.ly/EVALUATE-en>)*

## II. Sample tasks and task sequences

### Progressive Exchange Model for telecollaborative tasks

Multiple task taxonomies for telecollaborative exchanges have been put forth in the pedagogic and research literature. The most widely accepted model is the so-called Progressive Exchange Model by Robert O'Dowd and Paige Ware (2009). It consists of three overall categories that learners in both countries are expected to progressively traverse: (1) information exchange, (2) comparing and analyzing cultural practices, and (3) collaborating on a joint product. This prototypical sequence can be easily applied to the joint project work for the **U.S. Embassy Election Project**. The three task categories are defined as follows by the authors:

"The first category, *information exchange tasks*, involves learners providing their telecollaborative partners with information about their personal biographies, local schools or towns or aspects of their home cultures. These tasks can function as an introductory activity for two groups of learners who are not yet familiar with each other, but they can also form part of a more in-depth ethnographical study that learners are carrying out about an aspect of the target culture. Tasks in this category may generally be seen as 'monologic' as there is usually little negotiation of meaning (neither cultural nor linguistic) between the interlocutors; however, when these tasks take the form of ethnographic interviews a great deal of cultural sensitivity and the intercultural skills of discovery and interaction [...] are required.

The second task type, *comparison and analysis tasks*, can be more demanding since it requires learners not only to exchange information, but also to go a step further and carry out comparisons or critical analyses of cultural products from both cultures (e.g. books, surveys, films, newspaper articles). These analyses or comparisons can have a cultural focus [...] and/or a linguistic focus [...]. These tasks generally require learners to provide their partners with explanations of the linguistic meaning or cultural significance of certain cultural products or practices and then to engage in dialogue in order to establish similarities or differences between the two cultures.

The final task type, *collaborative tasks*, requires learners not only to exchange and compare information but also to work together to produce a joint product or conclusion. This may come in the form of an essay or presentation, or it may involve co-producing a linguistic translation or cultural adaptation of a text from the [first to the second language or culture]. These types of activities usually involve a great deal of coordination and planning but they also bring about substantial amounts of negotiation of meaning both on linguistic and cultural levels as learners strive to reach agreement on their final product."

*O'Dowd, Robert; Ware, Paige (2009): Critical Issues in Telecollaborative Task Design. In: Computer Assisted Language Learning 22 (2), S. 173-188. DOI: 10.1080/09588220902778369.*

## 1. Information exchange

### Getting to know your partners

Please introduce yourself to the project participants. Let us know about yourself, your family, where you live, your favorite things to do and hobbies, music you listen to, or anything else you would like to share. Consider including photos, links, etc. Feel free to respond to each other's posts if you read something interesting or want to learn more. Be polite and open-minded.

**Tech note:** This task can be done in the [Course Forum](#) without further preparations. Alternatively, you can create a [Padlet](https://padlet.com/) (<https://padlet.com/>) for this task, where all student posts are collected on a single page and which allows them to add photos or links to their introduction.

### More icebreakers...

**Create your Moodle profile:** Ask students to complete their Moodle profile to the extent they themselves want. Discuss that their profile is how their American peers will get into contact with them. They can add photos, text, short videos, information about their hobbies and interests, etc. Completing the online profile enhanced the participants' social presence in the Moodle course and social cohesion in the course tandem.

**True or false?** Ask students to create a short profile of themselves, e.g. as a post to their personal blog in Moodle or in a Padlet. This may include photos and other multimedia content. Each student should include three true and three false facts about themselves. Then, have them post a link to their profile to a shared forum. Students interview each other and note down which facts they believe are true and which are false.

**Tell me about your home:**

**Recording a soundscape or sound postcard:** Ask students to record a certain location or setting in their hometown (e.g. using the Audacity software or any sound recording app for smartphones). They can share the soundscape with their U.S. peers and have them guess the location/surroundings. Or they can write a short paragraph (up to 150 words), add a photo and exchange this object as a sound postcard (e.g. using MS PowerPoint).

**The means of transport in my town:** Ask students to research the available means of transport in their community

**All the rage:** Ask students to create a questionnaire on social and cultural highlights in their community, e.g. on hit songs, top fashions, coolest gadgets, fun things to do locally or top places to go with friends, funny lingo etc. Have them exchange their questionnaires and answer them. Students should then analyze for commonalities and differences.

*More such activities for different language proficiency levels and topics can be found online in the UNICollaboration and TILA task databases (see resources).*



## Impressions at school, home, and in the community

Let's now take a closer look at our everyday lives on both sides of the Atlantic. To do this, you will document and share some impressions in your hometowns.

You will look at three different contexts: at school, at home, and in the community. Pick one of the aspects from each category and document a typical or interesting example that you came across – consider writing a short comment, taking a photo, recording a short video or GIF, etc. This may look something like a Facebook or Instagram post, a Snapchat story or short YouTube video. Feel free to add your own ideas if they are not listed below.

Make a short post to the Padlet wall. Feel free to comment on each other's posts. What differences or similarities do you notice? What surprises you?

### **At home** (pick one)

- Rules of the home
- Traditions
- Celebrations
- Allowance/Housekeeping
- Dinner table discussions
- Religion
- Neighborhood
- Sustainability
- ...

### **At school** (pick one)

- Dress code
- Detention
- Graduation
- Courses
- Education system
- Low-income alternatives
- ...

### **In the community** (pick one)

- Getting around town
- Local newspaper
- Sports
- Monuments
- Recycling
- Church, mosque, religious temple ...
- Role of local officials
- ...

**Tech note:** In Moodle, this could be done using the glossary module where students enter their topic as the **Concept** and their post as the **Definition** of the glossary entry; the three contexts can be defined as **Categories** which the students have to select for their post. A much easier solution and one that allows for seamless integration of multimodal content is to simply create a Padlet wall, allow visitors to post content, and forward the link to your students. ([www.padlet.com](http://www.padlet.com))

## Developing team spirit: A joint Skype session

*You will be working with your new partner class on the **U.S. Embassy Election** project in the next few lessons. Your common goal is to create an action plan that promotes justice in both your communities. But first, you need to become a team!*

Prepare a joint skype interview with your partner class:

- First, agree on a date and time – mind the time difference.
- Make sure you have the necessary technical equipment available and ready: a webcam, microphone, and stable internet connection; maybe also a big screen or projector.
- Prepare an interesting opening question that you would like to ask the other class (this can be based on your previous forum discussion). This will set the mood for the session.
- Prepare questions about the partner class's school and town.
- Do a test run before the Skype session and check that everything is working.
- Move chairs and tables, if necessary.
- Determine how you will begin the Skype session – will there be a class speaker? How will you greet each other?
- Take turns with the other class asking questions. Speakers should introduce themselves.
- Find a team name for your class tandem. This can be creative, funny, a mix of both languages – you decide. Maybe also determine a group motto and a logo.
- Summarize the main points discussed and decided upon in the Skype interview.

**Tech note:** As mentioned in the checklist, this task requires a **video conferencing software** (e.g., Skype), **technical equipment** (projector, webcam, microphone – a tablet or laptop might be sufficient, but maybe an external microphone is necessary), and a **stable internet/Wi-Fi connection**. Check with your tech administrator if there are any obstacles to this in your school setting.

This first phase of the exchange is a good opportunity to monitor your students' telecollaborative dialogs and identify any technical, linguistic, or especially intercultural challenges and issues, in order to make adjustments to the project implementation early on.

## What bothers me most

*Let's pause and reflect for a moment after the first exchange(s) with your partner class. Online collaboration is not without effort and can be a quite challenging task. Problems may arise – this is normal – but in order to make this cooperation run smoothly, such issues must be addressed.*

1. Are there any issues that bother you in terms of online collaboration? Something that didn't quite work out but can be changed going forward?
2. Post any such issues anonymously to the glossary. / Write any such issues on a slip of paper and give them to your course's appointed writer (a volunteer) who will type them into the glossary. Be honest, but polite!
3. Review the issues posted by your fellow students and provide constructive feedback or suggest a solution in the comments section for 2 to 3 issues.

**Tech note:** In Moodle, this requires a glossary. When creating the glossary, in the section **Appearance** set the **display mode** to **Full without author** so that students' posts remain anonymous. In the section **Entries**, set **Allow comments on entries** to **Yes** so students can post their suggestions.

*Adapted from: Kurek, Malgorzata; Müller-Hartmann, Andreas (2019): The Formative Role of Teaching Presence in Blended Virtual Exchange. In: Language Learning & Technology 23 (3), p. 52–73 (p. 60).*

## Determining rules for online conduct

In this project, you communicate with your peers in another country online. As you probably know from social media, online forums, email communication, and texting, this can be tricky at times, especially when you communicate with people you have not yet met in person and who come from different countries and cultures. What are the rules we should apply in this context?

Go back to the “What bothers me most” task and review the problems and issues posted there. Formulate rules that can be derived from these cases in order to facilitate a telecollaborative exchange. Discuss them with a partner or small group.

Review some netiquette lists (e.g., see below) and collect rules that could be adapted to facilitate your participation in the **U.S. Embassy Election Project**. Choose the five rules that are most important to you. Compare with a partner or small group. Can you produce a top 5 list that all of you are satisfied with?

### Online netiquette rules:

- eTwinning | Code of Conduct: <https://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/code-of-conduct.htm>
- Studienkreis | Netiquette – Regeln und Tipps für mehr Höflichkeit im Internet: <https://www.studienkreis.de/infothek/journal/netiquette/> (in German)
- Online Study Australia | 14 Great Tips for Student Netiquette: <https://onlinestudyaustralia.com/netiquette-rules-guidelines-students/>

**Tech note:** *There are numerous such lists available online. The goal is to adapt those rules to your specific project and to keep this list manageable and comprehensible for all participants. Once the rules or “Dos and Dont’s” are determined, they can be posted to the top of your course as a constant reminder and reference going forward.*

## 2. Comparing and analyzing cultural practices

### Exchanging videos and questionnaires

For this task, you will form a mixed group with three students from each course, i.e. six students overall per group.

#### 1. Introducing yourselves in a video

Together with your local group members, record a one-minute video in which you introduce yourselves to your transatlantic partners. Tell them a bit about yourselves: your names and age, where you live, what you do for fun, any sports or hobbies you like.

- Think about where to record the video: in your classroom, the school yard, at home, ...
- Include one interesting or funny fact about each of you
- Include a question you'd like to ask your transatlantic partners

Post your video to your group forum.

Comment on your transatlantic partners' video – do you have anything in common? Is there any surprising fact about them? Did they ask you a question?

#### 2. Exchanging questionnaires

**Preparation:** Prepare a short questionnaire of up to ten questions about politics for your transatlantic partners. For example, you can include questions about at what age it is legal to drive, drink, or sign up for the military. You can also ask them about something you have heard about Americans/Germans. Be creative, but polite. You may share your questionnaire with another group in your class first to get feedback on your language and the questions.

**Exchange:** Exchange your questionnaires with your transatlantic partners and answer their questionnaires. You can post your answers to the group forum. If you like, you can post additional photos, links, or anything else if it illustrates your answers.

**Analysis:** Together with your transatlantic partners, take a look at all the answers. Can you find three things that students from both sides have in common? And what are the three biggest differences?

**Report:** Report your findings back to class: With your local group partners, prepare a two-minute presentation in which you introduce your transatlantic partners and tell your classmates about the questionnaire results.

## Fake news challenge

Now that you have learned about the challenge of recognizing fake news, take a look at **your own community**. Imagine you are an investigative journalist, blogger or an engaged citizen:

**1. Plan it!** Your guiding question should be: **What are challenges that your community (family, friends, school, town/city) faces concerning the module topic?** Or are there any best practices that you could share? You may brainstorm some issues and then decide on one to re-search in more detail.

**2. Do it!** Plan your investigation carefully, and carry it out. It may help to make a **research plan** before you begin (see below). These are some possible approaches and methods you can apply:

- Conduct a **questionnaire survey** among your classmates, your sports team, your school, your community.
- Do a **(self-) experiment**, for example avoid using a specific product or change your habits for a period of time.
- Do an **interview**, for example with experts (e.g. journalists, local politicians, etc.).
- Think of **other creative ways** to identify and visualize the impact of a sustainability challenge in your community.

**3. Document and share it!** Document your approach and findings well, e.g. in a short Ppt. presentation, a poster, a news report text, or a photo diary. **Upload it into the course Project Journal** and comment on other groups' uploads.

**4. Present it! Present your work in class** (roughly 10 minutes) and compare your findings.

**Need some help?** Here are some suggestions for further things to research:

- Ask customers at a local store or other people in the street about their general habits concerning reading the news and researching the facts. Write a newspaper article or a post for your school's blog, etc.
- Count the number of articles/statements on a social media platform that include fake news. Then interview some users about their social media habits and their resources for learning about current events. Produce a post for your school's blog, a poster, or a presentation.
- Create a checklist with all of the information readers should know in order to prevent spreading fake news.
- Interview locals (school administration, police officers, news reporters, etc.) about the effects of fake news in their/your community.

*This task cycle can be done in a tandem format with students in both countries carrying out the same research steps in their respective communities and finally comparing their findings.*

## Exchanging local news stories about elections

*In this task, you will share and discuss a news story about elections with your transatlantic team members. They will also share one from their hometown or region with you.*

**Research:** Together with your local partners, find an interesting news story that has to do with elections from your hometown or region. Think of something in regard to politics or the elections that may have happened recently – new legislation, a protest, newly elected officials, upcoming referendums, or important issues in your town. Find a newspaper article or news video about this story. (Alternatively, you may go online to the homepages of your local newspapers or TV stations and check for relevant stories.)

**Analysis and mediation:** Try to summarize the story for your partners, especially if it is written in a language they do not understand. Your summary should not exceed 200 words. Remember that you should not translate word for word, but rather focus on the most important aspects. Some words or concepts will have to be explained and cannot simply be translated (e.g. words referring to German culture, brand names).

**Discussion and reflection:** Discuss the story in the forum. Are there any particular differences or similarities between your regions? What can both sides (you and your transatlantic partners) learn from each other?

**Tech note:** *You may have to prepare a list of suggested local news media as a starting point for your students. This task can be done in a group forum in Moodle. Alternatively, students may use a Padlet or Glogster for the presentation of their news story and add multimodal content.*

*From the U.S. Embassy Election Project curriculum.*

### 3. Collaboration on a joint product

#### Election project

Design, plan, conduct, and document your course's election project and upload it into the DATABASE: Ballot box & competition in the Virtual Town Hall to take part in the competition.

For your prediction, consider the competition criteria. Your product should:

1. be in English or bilingual (German and English);
2. Focus on your state (for example, its culture, socioeconomic factors, demographics, local media, etc.) or ideally apply the unique perspective of the citizens in your state;
3. Reference your research findings;
4. Be submitted on behalf of your whole course (multiple entries per course are not possible)
5. Be submitted on time via Moodle (see DATABASE: Ballot box & competition in the Virtual Town Hall).

**Tech note:** *As an introduction, students can brainstorm possible ideas for their product in their mixed telecollaboration group forum or in class. The class project should be relevant to and feasible for both collaboration partners. Agree on a shared presentation format and medium and what each collaboration partner is going to contribute. Use the available communication and collaboration tools in the Moodle platform, e.g. forum and chat, and any other tools available online.*

*From the U.S. Embassy Election Project curriculum.*

### III. Assessment and reflection

#### Online exchange portfolio

##### What is a portfolio?

A portfolio is a collection of your work that represents your development as a writer, language user, and intercultural communicator over time. The aim of a portfolio is to show how you have developed and how you have reflected on this process. You should not necessarily place your best work in your portfolio, but the work that most clearly represents your development.

##### What should your exchange portfolio contain?

Your portfolio should show proof that you have developed as a foreign language and culture learner during your online exchange and that you have also reflected on the learning process. To do that, you should include some of the following things:

1. An example of a post you wrote to your partner where you tried out new vocabulary and/or grammatical structures or ones which you do not usually use. Explain which are the new structures and vocabulary and how you felt about trying out new language.
2. A dialogue which shows a post you wrote which has some mistakes you made in English and then the answer from your partner where he or she corrects you. Explain whether you think your partner corrected you in a useful way or not. What did you learn from the corrections?
3. An example of a message from your partner where you learned new vocabulary or where you noticed how a certain grammatical structure works.
4. An extract which demonstrates something you learned about the foreign culture or where you realize something new about your own culture.
5. An extract from your exchange where you and your partner had a misunderstanding or disagreement. Discuss what you learned from this breakdown of communication and how you resolved the situation.
6. Your reflections on what you learned about communicating and working in an online environment.

*Source: O'Dowd, Robert (2010): Issues in the Assessment of Online Interaction and Exchange. In: Sarah Guth und Francesca Helm (Hg.): Telecollaboration 2.0. Language, Literacies and Intercultural Learning in the 21st Century. Workshop of the Eurocall Special Interest Group in Computer-Mediated Communication. Bern: Peter Lang (Telecollaboration in education, 1), p. 337–358.*

## Integrating the intercultural online exchange in your classes

*It goes without saying that students want to see the effort they put into an exchange with their transatlantic partners matters in class and that it is not more work to be done 'on top' of their regular class work. Integrating these exchanges can ensure that the student remain motivated and that your course benefits from this real-life component.*

1. **Include the telecollaborative exchange in your syllabus** and state how it relates to the course objectives.
2. **Make time in your class for students to discuss or work on aspects of their exchange and receive guidance and feedback from you or their peers.** Set aside time for these tasks to be completed and use learner products (mini-presentations, videos, posts) as launchpads for discussions.
3. **Observe the online discussions carefully and discuss interesting or sensitive conversations in class.** Of course, talk to the students involved first, seek their permission to share an insight or discussion extract in class, explain that conclusions drawn from their case can help all students in class facilitate their online exchanges. If necessary, anonymize the extract before sharing it. Make paper copies of relevant discussion extracts or vignettes, or project them to the classroom wall.
4. Alternatively, **ask your students to identify themselves critical or significant events from their discussions or messages** that they would like to report to the rest of the class.
5. If possible, **allow students to engage in the online exchanges during their actual class time.** However, in light of the time difference between Germany and the U.S. this may be difficult to facilitate.
6. Make the online exchange part of **assessment**, for instance using a portfolio approach as outlined below.

*Adapted from: EVALUATE training manual. (<http://bit.ly/EVALUATE-en>)*

## Telecollaboration checklist

### STEP 1: Finding a partner

- Contact the Teach About U.S. (Joannis Kaliampos, [joannis.kaliampos@leuphana.de](mailto:joannis.kaliampos@leuphana.de) or Sarah Taylor for Baden-Württemberg, [Sarah.Taylor@dai-tuebingen.de](mailto:Sarah.Taylor@dai-tuebingen.de)) to look for a potential partner; if you are a teacher in the U.S., contact the Transatlantic Outreach Program ([top@goethe.de](mailto:top@goethe.de)).
- Make sure that age and proficiency level of both groups match
- If you plan to use synchronous telecollaboration, you need a partner class with matching class hours or you need to be able to arrange online session outside regular class hours

### STEP 2: Establishing common ground

- Meet with your partner teacher (e.g. in Moodle, Skype, or email) and discuss your pedagogic objectives and approach, your expectations and time frames (use the questionnaires in the manual)
- Compare syllabi and decide on topics that fit and are suitable for authentic intercultural communication
- Agree on the telecollaboration tools you would like to use, check access and reliability. Synchronous oral/video communication from the computer lab may not be possible for all pupils



simultaneously - clarify alternative scenarios, e.g. a multi-modal combination of oral (e.g. Skype) and written (chat or forum) as well as working from home

### **STEP 3: Developing tasks**

- ✓ Specify linguistic, communicative and intercultural learning objectives
- ✓ Develop the main task together with your partner teacher and decide which telecollaboration tools you want to use (for the **U.S. Embassy Election Project**, this is going to be the final task to develop a prediction of your state's electoral votes in the upcoming election )
- ✓ If your pupils are meeting the partner class for the first time, start with an ice-breaker activity to enable them to get to know each other (see suggested tasks)
- ✓ Specify preparatory tasks: each teacher has to decide how he/she wants to prepare his/her pupils for the main telecollaboration session
- ✓ Specify the main telecollaboration tasks (i.e. those tasks in which both learner groups will directly interact with each other)
- ✓ Specify follow-up activities for securing learning outcomes, e.g. presentation and discussion in class, collaborative report and assessment (wiki), individual portfolio

### **STEP 4: Before the telecollaborative exchange**

- ✓ Establish a netiquette for the telecollaboration exchanges paying attention to different netiquette requirements for videoconference, chat and forum
- ✓ To get ready for the telecollaboration task, help your pupils to explore the topic and to acquire useful words and phrases
- ✓ Help your pupils to become aware of the value of openness and empathy for successful intercultural communication
- ✓ Prepare them for helping each other and learning from each other
- ✓ Make sure your pupils are sufficiently familiar with the telecollaboration tool
- ✓ Find out whether some pupils in your class are already well acquainted with the tools and can help their classmates
- ✓ Give pupils precise instructions for the telecollaboration exchange (e.g. prepare worksheets)
- ✓ When using Moodle or Skype, check access and functions again before your online session
- ✓ Agree with your partner teacher on a plan B in case the technology fails

### **STEP 5: During the telecollaborative exchange**

- ✓ When telecollaborating in the computer lab, support your pupils during the exchange in particular with regard to linguistic-communicative and/or technical problems
- ✓ When using a tool for synchronous oral communication, have a plan B ready in case there are technical problems, e.g. be prepared to switch to a written chat or forum

### **STEP 6: After the telecollaborative exchange**

- ✓ If necessary, secure learning results in a follow-up activity (in particular after a synchronous telecollaboration task)
- ✓ Use reflective sessions on the exchange and learning diaries to get and give feedback on linguistic-communicative, intercultural or technical problems or achievements
- ✓ Use a portfolio approach for assessment and feedback

Adapted from: TILA Best Practice Report. (<http://www.tilaproject.eu/moodle/mod/page/view.php?id=1429>)

#### IV. Further links and resources:

### Introductory research literature

Dooly Owenby, M., & O'Dowd, R. (Eds.) (2018). *Telecollaboration in education: vol. 6. In This Together: Teachers' Experiences with Transnational, Telecollaborative Language Learning Projects*. Bern: Peter Lang. Retrieved from <https://www.peterlang.com/view/title/67965>  
<https://doi.org/10.3726/b14311> (open access)

Guth, S., & Helm, F. (Eds.) (2010). *Telecollaboration 2.0: Language, Literacies and Intercultural Learning in the 21st Century*. Workshop of the EuroCALL Special Interest Group in Computer-Mediated Communication. Bern: Peter Lang.

Jager, S., Kurek, M., & O'Rourke, B. (Eds.) (2016). *New Directions in Telecollaborative Research and Practice: Selected Papers from the Second Conference on Telecollaboration in Higher Education* (Vol. 28). Dublin: Research-publishing.net. <https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2016.telecol-lab2016.9781908416414> (open access)

Kurek, M., & Müller-Hartmann, A. (2017). Task Design for Telecollaborative Exchanges: In Search of New Criteria. *System*, 64, 7–20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2016.12.004>

O'Dowd, R. (2018). From telecollaboration to virtual exchange: state-of-the-art and the role of UNICollaboration in moving forward. *Journal of Virtual Exchange*, 1, 1–23.  
<https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2018.jve.1> (open access)

O'Dowd, R., & Ware, P. (2009). Critical Issues in Telecollaborative Task Design. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 22(2), 173–188. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588220902778369>

### Teaching Guides, manuals, best practices (all are open access):

Hofstaedter, P., & Kohn, K. (2015). Telecollaboration for Intercultural Communication and Foreign Language Learning: Best Practice Report. Retrieved from [http://www.tilaproject.eu/moodle/pluginfile.php/2607/mod\\_page/content/31/TILA%20Best%20Practice%20report.pdf](http://www.tilaproject.eu/moodle/pluginfile.php/2607/mod_page/content/31/TILA%20Best%20Practice%20report.pdf)

Kammermöns, E., & Zeidler, B. (2010). *eTwinning-Praxishandbuch für Lehrkräfte* (6th edition). Bonn: Schulen ans Netz e.V. Nationale Koordinierungsstelle eTwinning. Retrieved from [https://bildung-rp.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/bildung-rp.de/medienbildung/etwinning/Handbuecher/Praxis-handbuch\\_6Auflage.pdf](https://bildung-rp.de/fileadmin/user_upload/bildung-rp.de/medienbildung/etwinning/Handbuecher/Praxis-handbuch_6Auflage.pdf)

Müller-Hartmann, A., & O'Dowd, R. (2017). A Training Manual on Telecollaboration for Teacher Trainers. Retrieved from [https://www.evaluateproject.eu/evlt-data/uploads/2017/09/Training-Manual\\_EVALUATE.pdf](https://www.evaluateproject.eu/evlt-data/uploads/2017/09/Training-Manual_EVALUATE.pdf)

UNICollaboration. UNICollaboration Task Database. Retrieved from <https://www.unicollaboration.org/index.php/tasks-databank/>

### Websites (selection):

eTwinning: <https://www.etwinning.net/>

Intercultural learning – Methodenbox: <http://intercultural-learning.eu/de/methodenbox/>

Internet safety: <https://www.betterinternetforkids.eu/>

Netiquette: <https://www.netplanet.org/netiquette/>