3 UniCollaboration plenary session: teaching across cultures, reaching across generations – virtual exchange and teacher education

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When Robert O'Dowd asked me to do this talk, these are the three things I told him I would do, and here they are.

I want to talk about how telecollaboration and virtual exchange has offered us this really creative space to animate as educators over the last 20 or 30 years.

Because the focus is on teacher education and because over the last ten years my focus has been on teacher education, I want to talk about some of the key takeaways that we can have and say that these are the things that make good practice in virtual exchanges.

Finally, I will bring along a new project that I am working on that I hope will tie together some of the themes that we are looking forward to in the future. Having been here for the last two and a half days, I realise many of you are thinking about the same types of themes.

I am going to start here with an homage to one of my amazing mentors, Claire Kramsch. We talked about this idea of an intercultural stance way back in about 2005. This was not a new idea, but what drew my attention when I was doing this retrospective was how analytical it was. It was just situated in the brain.

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So we had this de-centred perspective, logical, reflexive, with reasoning, and then it culminated in this kind of stance which made a lot of sense and was a really comfortable place to be. I am an academic; it is the life of the mind. I can remember Claire's voice saying she could teach it to me too.

Yet, in the early 2000's, we were also thinking about what that was. We were used to a world of face-to-face communication. In that same article we talked about computer mediated communication, (henceforth virtual exchange) but even then we were talking not just about the mind, but also about imagination, and how to close that gap in imagining the other, of embodying that kind of experience when you only have words on a screen.

Like word play, I started thinking that maybe it was not so static. Maybe it is not about a stance we take, an orientation, but maybe it is about the acts that we do. I would suggest that looking back over the last 20 to 30 years that one thing that unites us as virtual exchange researchers and teachers and teacher educators is that we want to act on the world. We choose to do more than stay within the guidelines of grammar and the guidelines of vocabulary. Every time we set up a virtual exchange project, we are making a promise that we will act to change the world and to change mindsets and to work harder to make this business of teaching foreign languages matter in a way that moves our collective goals of understanding and valuing difference.

In this talk I will draw a little on my own personal and professional trajectory and I would like you to do the same. If you get a little restless at some point and you need a brain break from my voice, there is a QR code on your table you can simply open up with your phone and type into a Padlet the year you did your first virtual exchange and telecollaboration, and what you hoped to get out of it.

I did my first one in 2001, and I very naively hoped my students would have the chance to have these deep intercultural conversations about current events in the media. I had a very specific focus and I was all about the written language because this was how it was going to be, and it would be asynchronous, and my

students were going to have time to think and process and dig deeper into the syntax. That was a long time ago.

The rest of the talk will be organised into three acts, loosely organising the last 30 years. We will talk about intercultural acts in the world and what we do as teachers, and I would characterise the period in the 1990's as a period of high anticipation, and I will tell you why in a minute.

The period between the turn of the century and around the time that social media really took off was a period of collective creativity among researchers and teacher educators, and I would characterise the last ten years as one of rising stakes. What is going to unite these three acts is looking backwards across two themes, because I would argue, and many have, that what we have here has been conceptualising and operationalising the intercultural for the last 30 plus years. A lot of these themes are not new themes, they are just re-packaged into new technologies, people, generations, and external pressures, but they have stayed with us. Also, themes as educators demonstrate how we have adapted to and shaped technologies. Both of these themes culminate in the acts that we take as teachers, because ultimately if we are going to generate the next generation of teachers who are going to want to do this work, we have to help them understand there is a movement forum in this space. I will also talk about what we designed and delivered in each of these acts.

Back in the 1990's, I fancied myself a European. I came here as a student and I lived in Europe for about six years. When I came, it was with the US Fulbright, and that was about two years before Erasmus started. It was a time of hopefulness. We were focused on multilingualism. I did my home language plus two and I went to Germany and learnt Spanish. I lived in Germany for three years and Spain for three years, so I was on my way to joining this movement. Politically, walls were coming down. It was a period of high anticipation. We were very excited about physical mobility. We were going to ratchet up those numbers of 3% of students that are studying abroad. We were going to get it to 20% and beyond. It was a really exciting time. Meanwhile, we were all coalescing around this model that came out about intercultural communicative competence that

Michael Byram and Genevieve Zarate were putting together (Byram & Zarate, 1994), and this became a common framework and a common language for a lot of us.

This is how we did it.

I did not own a computer as a graduate student; I would bicycle up to campus and have a key and go to the third floor and that would be where I would use a computer with a diskette.

In an inaugural edition of information technology, just to remind you that this was in 1997, and Godwin-Jones reminded me that for some of us the first time we got onto the internet was in the early 1990's, but we were enterprising. We were really excited because suddenly we had these computer labs. Most of what we did was text-based; audio streaming was more and more available even though to watch a video you would have to download an entire programme onto your computer, so there was no streaming happening at all. In this time what we designed and delivered as language teachers with these high hopes and anticipation was a way to use technology to give us access to something outside of what was in a given textbook. We were able to ask questions about the target language culture not just a target language speaker. There were speakers, texts, and newspapers. We could give our students access to the world. There was this kind of starry-eyed enthusiasm about bringing people together. We looked at things like output and innovation – they went up. We looked at affect – it went up. We looked at autonomy and reciprocity, because there was already a lot of work going on in the European Union around tandem networks. We looked at participation – it went up. We looked at authenticity – we said that it went up but that has been very contested over the years. We did a lot of little studies and they coalesced around these findings.

To summarise the first act, we had a high anticipation for real intercultural interactions. Technology was basically a vehicle for contact at that point. It did not feel that complicated yet. It just felt really cool. Then the curriculum was focused upon exposure. Bring in cool stuff from other countries from other

cultures or from sub-cultures within the culture. Start to juxtapose. It was a nice time.

Then Act 2 happened, it was an even better time. Twenty years ago, we were doing a lot of our initial studies, and telecollaboration became a term. It was a time of creative collectivity.

So how did we operationalise and conceptualise the 'intercultural'? Many of us were drawing on Michael Byram's model still. If you are not that familiar with it, the model has five domains. Several of us were also looking at parts of the model, not the whole. We looked at how you could operationalise specific aspects of the model. How do you become realistic as a researcher? You cannot really capture intercultural competence, but you can capture something like the skills of interpreting, the skills of relating.

Julie Belz (2002, 2003) did a lot of early work, she kicked off attention to the language of how we enact our understandings of other cultures. Robert O'Dowd (2003, 2006) did a lot of really interesting work talking to students. He brought in the student voice and he helped us understand the situatedness of the individuals who were involved, and so a lot of his early writings had these wonderful bullet lists of things to think about and do. Now I think we see this thread that is coming out of UniCollaboration in the series of training books that have come out since. There is this persistent thread of needing to give concrete advice, taking the research, even when it is preliminary, and saying do this over that.

I looked at a lot of interactional aspects with Rob, with Claire, and with other people. I think my first piece was all about missed communication. I was drawing attention to what was happening: it was supposed to be really cool and yet my students were not going very deep. This early work was brutally honest about looking at what was not going well and why. It was a theme we have talked about; we are very honest as researchers among ourselves. The rest of this presentation is a pep-talk because I have come a long way from my missed communication days.

We were looking at the varieties of technologies. We were pretty much only doing asynchronous technology at that time, with text-based interactions. Robert tinkered around a bit with video-based conferencing, but we developed some things for teachers to use – the progressive exchange model. You will know this as information exchange analysis and collaboration which kicked off a whole generation of teachers learning to use a model that was staged out based on a developed technology that mostly O'Dowd and Ware (2009) put together.

Belz and Müller-Hartmann (2003) did a lot of work on the instructor's role and how that was changing. Steve Thorne (2006) helped us think about looking at the technologies outside of the classroom because we were so anchored in how we were going to do this in an institutional setting. Steve's Thorne (2003) early work on cultures of use and looking at how technologies are used outside the classroom is something that seeded the current generation of looking at how technologies are developing their own genres and developing their own expectations; how our students react to that in the classroom.

What we designed and delivered back then was often this model of taking some kind of cortex like they did with the cultural model where you would take questionnaires, internet-based resources, newspapers, films, literature, and different types from different cultures and languages, and juxtapose them. Then you would debrief in the classroom so there was a rhythm of back and forth between a binary culture, your culture/my culture, your culture/my culture. Then we would debrief that in multiple forms. I started taking it into secondary schools and even with students who are just 13 and 14 years old and would give them a song to talk about music; the task was always layered, for example giving your partner a song that you like and telling them why. Then telling them why your friends might or might not like that song and giving them a song that friends in your school like that you really hate and telling them why. So it is trying to help them de-centre and see themselves as being part of an ecosystem and making sure they are helped to understand the complexity of their lived experience. These kinds of tasks became really cool.

To summarise, Act 2 was a really exciting time and there was a major spike in research in and around telecollaboration. This period was characterised when we coalesced around certain core questions, certain core technologies, and it was exciting to be a part of that. We were looking at how to engage students more deeply, because early on we realised just enacting people is not enough. If you can count how many people are connected is fantastic, but as researchers we are committed to understanding what is taking place inside those thousands of connections. Then we started seeing that this is pretty multimodal now and highly mobile. That ushered in where we are now, where the stakes are rising.

I think I would like to twist a little bit and go back to my miscommunication. Here is where I am a little more critical and also more hopeful. I would suggest that in the last ten years, the way we have been conceptualising and operationalising "intercultural" is on this balancing pad between quantitative inquiry and qualitative inquiry. I am an academic, so I am going to stick with methodology. There are lots of ways in which we can describe the tensions here, but I would argue that neither is better than the other, that both need to be happening, even though it is really hard to develop an expertise in both, which means we have to work together and with the public and private sectors.

On the quantitative side, we want to skill up, but doing so requires money, and getting money requires showing people what works and measurable outcomes; there are policy implications if you do not. On the qualitative side, our field, as any field should be, in my opinion, has been characterised by case studies, and it is important to do and believe in that research and do it very well and very accurately. We have had very theoretically rich conversations on the qualitative side for perhaps 20, 30 years. We have always looked at the context, though when you have thousands and thousands of students, you cannot always look at the context and so there is an inherent tension; so we have looked at case studies. If the scale tips too far in one direction because you are worried about sustainability or funding streams, then it feels lopsided. If the scale tips in the other direction because you are so interested in these other cultures of youth, then entrepreneurs are going to ask how this is relevant. It is not that we should

not be doing any of this, we should, but we have to understand the implications and we have to make some tie-ins. If we do not understand this (the qualitative side), we are never going to get this (quantitative research approach) right. Working across these streams will be increasingly important.

I am going to give you two quick examples to show you how I believe researchers can tackle this idea with randomised controlled trials; the type of evidence that often works in the quantitative world. I am going to try to inspire you into thinking that this can be done at a micro as well as a macro level. It is a shift in how we approach our work.

This comes from a piece that I did with secondary school students and, in Texas, you cannot get anything done in my context if you do not have proof that your idea is more powerful for their learning than what they are getting from their state and their curriculum. We basically worked with about 50 13-year olds. They communicated using multimedia, movies, and blogs with a group of students who were in a bilingual school in Granada, Spain. At the end of that project, we had our treatment group and our control group (kids who were not in the project) and we gave them all a home-made researcher derived questionnaire which asked them some open-ended questions with the types of problems which would come up in communication with partners from another culture. It was a hypothetical partner in this question: imagine that your partner asks you about some US stereotypes, for example is it true all Texans are cowboys, what would you write? We tried to create these little cases of typical things and what we are interested in: do students who participated for 15 weeks in these intercultural exchanges with partners have a better sense of how one enacts those skills of interpreting and relating? We took all of these handwritten responses and typed them up to ensure they did not conflate with handwriting. We had four external raters who were blind to treatment or control who scored these on a rubric on a scale of one to five. I am going to spare you all the details, but the rough cut is that this is a typical 13-year old's response that scored high; "no, not all Texans are cowboys", thus refuting the response, "that is just a stereotype which means something is not true or not necessarily true", thus trying to re-situate and validate the comment, before finally honours are acknowledged; "they share

these stereotypes because some people are cowboys and the theme is common". Kind of sophisticated for a 13-year-old. You could get a high score, but you also have a 13-year-old who says: "No, not everyone's a cowboy", which we also scored, and we found a really large effect size of almost a whole standard deviation. Now that was a small case study, but it was a quantitative study, and I think that gave us the ammunition that we needed to keep going.

The second example is straight out of your EVALUATE project. Your team has pulled off the impossible, which is to take how we enact telecollaboration or virtual exchange and actually do something quantitative with it with a randomised controlled trial design; very exciting work. If you look at the language of what you were trying to do to maximise this, it is all about these metaphors of efficiency and of practices that characterise the quantitative side of the puzzle. It does not mean that we are not simultaneously over here doing the qualitative inquiry, but it is wonderful stuff in my humble opinion, if you want to be part of policy work. To do that you have to have some trade-offs. You had to plan someone else as a reliable instrument. You did not have the money to go and ask every single one of those children to respond to an intercultural discourse questionnaire and then hire four people to score every single one of those items. You looked at their intercultural competence before and after you looked at their digital competence and you had mixed results, but I would still characterise it as mostly positive.

There is not a lot said about adapting to technologies, and if you are really excited about this, this group in UniCollaboration has developed a series of books. The main take-away for me here is that the beauty of mobility and variety is also creating a new tension, because we are not tracking the same types of questions anymore. I think I worry a little bit that we are getting a little tech-centric.

This last book ("Screens and scenes: multimodal communication in online intercultural encounters") was put out not by the European team but by Kern and Develotte, 2018, and Kern wrote a lot of chapters. What is interesting to me about this book is a lot of our work has previously been on text-based and then more and more on multimodality. This last book looks specifically

on the affordances and the challenges of video-based collaboration and other multimodal collaborations.

The rest of the talk is to focus on what we are designing as teachers and teacher educators today. From the abstract that I sent around, this is the last bit where I am talking about what we are doing now and what I think might project towards the future. We have this tension between how we balance the quantitative with the qualitative, how we have conversations with ourselves, or how we translate those conversations to a different audience that actually cares about what we are doing, which is a really important thing to keep in mind. All this energy, all the work that we have been doing for 20 or 30 years, matters because we have a community that allows us to have a collective voice. By the same token, there is a tension that is far beyond virtual exchange but directly impacts it; a tension that goes between wanting to study foreign languages, and wanting a connection with people to result in commonalities and affirmations of who we are and to care about each other and let everything else just slide away. There is a reason we want to learn a language, beyond a business proposition; we are also really different people. Right now, I think our political training difference is now polar, and it is not a healthy difference, it does not lead to debate and dialogue, it polarises. I think we have a generation of young people in secondary schools who do not know what healthy dialogue is, who do not know what healthy difference is, and who are scared of difference because it is polarising and it is scary and angry. I think that as virtual exchange researchers, we are acting on the world. This is the one key thing that I think is going to characterise the next wave in what we do; it is finding a way to ensure that as we build community we do not gloss over why we are different, where we are different, and how that difference is simply borne out of historical, cultural, social, and linguistic differences, and you can explain it and learn about it.

Rick Kerr has this lovely quote that technology defeats distance, you can grab this app, WhatsApp, and you can do things that are unimaginable with technology, but it is also squishing out the beauty of being different from someone. The beauty of saying: "Wow, that is interesting, tell me more about why you think that". We have several of you in this room who have insisted over the last 15 years that we

have to have dialogical action; we have to go into those uncomfortable topics. We must, it is not just about contact. It is about learning, we are educators, and so bringing people together and helping them act on the world in positive ways is part of our job. So yes, it is a little political. If you study under Claire Kramsch it has got to be political. Now, if you study under Paige Ware, it has also got to be political. These types of changes that have happened over the last several years in technology have not necessarily changed our underlying beliefs about the intercultural, how we conceptualise and operationalise it. This shift in technology has acted on us in such a way that we have to be more reflective with our students and with our teachers who have to help them interpret the world around them. We have to know the history and we have to be politically engaged. It is a different type of call to action for us. It is not just about the contact, and I think we have seen in Barbara Moser-Mercer's work, her team acts on the world in very deep and interesting ways, and many of us in our own work are trying to move beyond just an exchange of communication.

Here are some ways in which you have all been doing this reflective and interpretive stance. Hot in the press coming up from Rob and Shannon and Elana is this lovely article (O'Dowd, Sauro, & Spector-Cohen, 2019) about pedagogical mentoring that talks about the role of the instructor and all things students freely exert into the classroom over each other. We also have work done where students become miniature ethnographers where they code some of the transcripts and they analyse those in class. Rick Kern talks about video conferences where students review what they did with each other and then they reflect on that. Rob has talked about not missing out on these rich points that happen outside of the online exchange and letting them happen in real time with the students in their face-to-face contacts, often overlooked in research. There is also Francesca Helm's work with facilitated dialogue (Helm, 2015; Helm, Guth, & Farrah, 2012). These are why people are asking more and more to up the ante and bring in more of these reflection and analytical points. We have learnt that even the very concept of virtual exchange, the very nature of language learning, how they construct tasks, are all culturally related. Nothing is neutral; they are coming from a place. They are coming from a position, from a particular perspective with a goal in mind.

There was a period when it was so exciting, I was a facilitator, I helped my students reach their goals, which I needed to learn, and I needed to help them find the right technology, the right partner. I would argue that that is all well and good, but that takes the teacher completely out of the picture. What about learning? What is wrong with the life of the mind? We have to be fellow analysts with them. We have to be fellow interpreters. We have to not be afraid that they might know more about the culture and language.

As teacher educators and as someone who is a teacher educator, I have been more and more mindful of some of the pulse in my state. I say state because education in the US is state mandated; if you want federal money, you have to do a few things, but for the most part, each state is different and so I can only act on my level. I am not so worried because I speak English. I learnt my other two languages (Spanish and German) in my European studies, so they are kind of broken now, but I still get by. Yet a lot of these conversations are just bewildering to me personally when we do not question English as the lingua franca. We are talking about these cool exchanges across different disciplines, really interesting exchanges with businesses, and all the time the assumed default is English. As someone who is a dominant English speaker, it is incumbent on me to be that much more cognisant about what this messaging is about, because with English as the assumed language we export a certain pedagogical style. As a teacher educator I think a lot about the pedagogical style and the assumptions we make about which is the right one, whose voice counts, and the power dynamics inside these virtual exchanges.

The current project that I am working on is asking how we support teachers as virtual exchange designers. We invite teachers who are going to set up exchanges and help them create creative spaces that have characterised our own work. We bring them in as co-thinkers and co-designers who are thoughtful about some of these themes. We help them see that they themselves are always coming from a speaking position and from an historical place, with assumptions and biopsies, and help them develop healthier relationships with other teachers. In working with my students when I have post-doctoral students in China, I realised that we and our big team with our big grant from the federal government focused on

English language learners, never stopping to ask anything about teaching. We just continued in a US context and I thought what a missed opportunity in our own home not to understand more about what a doctoral student could bring to our pedagogy from her context in China.

Trying to get at some kind of different stereotypical pedagogy, we brought in teachers from Taiwan and teachers from the US and took the three-phase approach where we got to know each other with an asynchronous tablet. Teachers collaborated and created a lesson plan together and shared the materials before doing a presentation. We had this interesting software we were trying to test at scale on about 200 teachers on whether they were getting better at teaching. It was a wholly different project, using a virtual reality platform to actually teach avatar children. It was cool not just to have them create a lesson plan but to co-create a lesson and then co-teach the lesson to actual kids – they are avatars so are they really real? – but that is what we did. We had the teachers act out the lessons because what you do and what you say you are going to do may be different. It was so interesting, and the whole point was that nobody got to be right. This was not us hoping anyone got better at teaching, this was about knowing what informed their pedagogical decisions.

Using Zoom, the group watched someone teach the lesson, went home, wrote their reflections, had time to process – because I like the asynchronous time to process – and then got back together in Zoom a week later and talked about what they saw and learnt together as teachers. They were asked for example, "what do you see? Describe what you see. How might values and assumptions inform what you just saw? How might these be situated in what you just saw"? While the other students were watching, the first student tagged out after ten minutes before the next student tagged in and presented their lesson plan, so you saw different pedagogical styles. After this they had a really elaborate protocol where they talked together for half an hour on Zoom about these interactions. Their job was to share, describe, interpret, and reflect. Here are some of those reflections.

Jane, from my perspective, described what I feel in the classroom every day. Our job is to entertain and have these gimmicks to make it fun. However, the

Taiwanese students thought she was great and lively, but Jane felt like she needed her gimmicks,that students in the US were more entitled, and she wondered if students in Taiwan were more respectful.

We saw a more stereotypical teaching approach, but there was an opportunity for her to take the conversation to a different space and ask another teacher in Taiwan who talked about trends changing and why there was still traditional teaching in Taiwan in other classes but there was pressure on English teachers to be like that. It opened up a new space for them to see each other as something other than caricatures of a teaching style.

Brandon's style of teaching, talking the entire time and not letting the students say anything, contrasted and juxtaposed with Jane's. They really dug into their differences and he explained his pedagogy as giving the students details and evoking their imagination, getting them ready and warmed up to hear English. He started by asking them a question and putting them on the spot, needing to evoke the text for them; to honour the text for them. There was this back and forth between Jane and Brandon where they were unpacking the why and how of what they did.

Another student in the project was so surprised because she did not ever think anyone would care or value how they teach in Taiwan. She would be asked what it was like there, and that changed her mind; her culture was also a precious culture. It was also a treasure, not a stereotype. That felt poignant to me, because if we are in 2019 and we have young teachers across the world who still feel that their pedagogical styles are not valued and not part of the game, then that is something we can work on in virtual exchange, the rarefaction of those stereotypes, instead taking on a questioning stance and letting people, teachers, talk about who they are, and why they do what they do.

So, my call to you is for continued action. I hope that you keep your anticipation high. It is really good work, important work. It is valuable, fun, and creative. Let us seek opportunities to collaborate with the creativity that characterised Act 2 where we worked together. We created this upwelling of research around

particular questions. We can meet these high stakes head on by both creating community and engaging with difference. As I began with Clare, so will I end with a quote from Clare; we want to do this because diversity can be non-committal and difference requires putting yourself on the line.

Q&A

Q1. Thank you so much, that was awesome. You suggested that you might like to talk a little bit more about – I am not sure if you were going to describe it as technological determinism – when you talked about appeasing and you wanted to expand on our focus on technology within virtual exchange.

Sometimes I wonder if when we talk about technology and apps, we are deflecting the argument and talking about what is easiest to talk about; instrumental things to solve when we need to be talking about the industry about how to solve its problems. It reminds me about when I was working with my teachers and they were bringing video clips of their teaching and I wanted to talk and wondered why a student would shut down on them. They would say it was because the principle had just come in or because of this or that, and I would ask what they were doing.

It is complicated yes, it also matters, but I would like to hear more about our end goal, because technology will always be new and developing. We saw that today. It is going to be a problem tomorrow. I do not know how to get beyond that question, although I do think it is going to require partnering more, because technologies are so constantly evolving, and having worked with secondary schools, I know exactly what they are talking about in terms of getting your research done. I think it is exciting that we have all of these technologies, but they also derail us because we get so focused on what we cannot do – because we do not have this, or we do not have that platform – when we should be thinking of a way to theorise what is happening inside the technology. When I said technocentric, it was more about maybe too much on the platform and not seeing similarities because it is exciting to get so granular. I like to take a couple of steps back and say these types of apps tend to elicit these types of themes, like

a typology piece. Some things do stay the same, so I wonder. You are the expert here so maybe offline you and I have to figure out what a message could be, but I tend to worry about the conversation tending to be more about the technology than about the learning. That theme came up in the round table discussion and I appreciate that it continues to come up in this conversation.

Following on from that, I think there are very useful conceptualisations of what you speak of, if you continue to do that in a very intense way. There's quite a lot of research from Australia looking at pedagogy, technology, and space, how one enables or makes possible or modifies, empowers, or enlarges the mutual relationship between the three. I think if you always have that triangulation in mind, you are avoiding the focus on just the technology and you are really becoming humbler. I think it allows you to re-balance the contribution that space, pedagogy, and technology are making; what you are trying to reach. I am happy to share research on that, I think it is a very good guideline to follow. I had it on one of my slides and I can share the slide. It was a very small element; it was not the focus of my talk, but I would be happy to share it.

Q3. I would be very interested to hear more about the intercultural questionnaire and what you found out with the data.

It is in CALL 2016 if you want to read about it. The gist of it is simple: it is a pen and paper 30/40-minute questionnaire which we developed based on pulling out instances where miscommunication had happened or where students were presenting themselves for the very first time. It has items such as: "you are meeting your partner for the first time, what are two opening questions that you can ask them?", to which some of the students would talk about names or how they were. Other students would ask what they hoped to learn by being in this with them, so even at just that very basic development level, when you look at Byram (1997), everything was an environment type model, a willingness to discover the skills of curiosity – how to even ask a question? If you want to discover something about someone, you do not say something like: "Are you glad to work with me in this exchange?", you would ask a more open-ended question. The idea being that these are teachable skills. I definitely have

a teacher educator US perspective that there are certain skills that you can teach because you have to.

Another example was a partner sending a picture of a kangaroo (because our partners were hypothetically Australian). In terms of the skills of discovery and interaction, we asked what they would write back to a picture with no context. Some kids would ask what was with the kangaroo, while others would write things like: "Oh I notice the kangaroo, I know that is a stereotype but why would you send me that picture? Do you have a lot of kangaroos?"; basically elaborating and showing an interest, the idea being that they can imagine someone on the other side of the world who might need a little more language to fill in the gap. We were pretty excited when we analysed the data on a five point scale and saw there are actual differences in the students who had participated. What was not good about the research was that the idea came to us during the project, so we did not have pre-data. We had a control group, but we did not have their pre-data. It could be that all 50 kids were just great in intercultural skills when they started the project, though highly unlikely. It was intense, and thank you for asking about it.

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