

Transatlantic Tutoring : The Pittsburgh - Clermont-Ferrand Collaboration

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▶ **To cite this version:**

Christopher Jones, Thierry Chanier, Anne-Laure Foucher. Transatlantic Tutoring : The Pittsburgh - Clermont-Ferrand Collaboration. CALICO 2011, 28th Annual conference on Mediated Learning Communities, May 2011, Victoria, BC, Canada. edutice-00597121

HAL Id: edutice-00597121
https://edutice.hal.science/edutice-00597121

Submitted on 31 May 2011

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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, Pennsylania, U.S.A.
  - Students in a Masters program for teachers of French as a foreign language at the UniversitéBlaise 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 womenbetween 22 and 32
  - Mostly French as a mothertongue (except for 4: Portuguese, Spanishand Russian)
  - Previousexperience of asynchronous online tutoring for half of them ; Unevenpersonal use / mastery of CMC tools
- Objectives
  - Pre-service teachers
  - Project is part of a training for synchronoustutoring
    - Situatedlearning + reflexiveapproach
    - Specifictoolsused (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

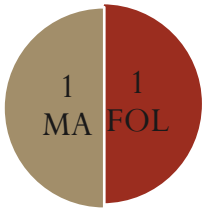
Breaking the ice

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



Tandem

+ email

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

FOL



Elementary French 1 Online

Leçon 6

La personnalité

FOL environment



Pittsburgh CMU Teacher

Face to face w1 Face to face w2 ...Face to face w10

Group on cultures

MA



Clermont UBP Teacher

Facebook group UBP

Week 1 W2 *10 weeks* W9 W10

Synchronous activity (MA side)

Individual preparation

FOL data

Planning notes

Email contact

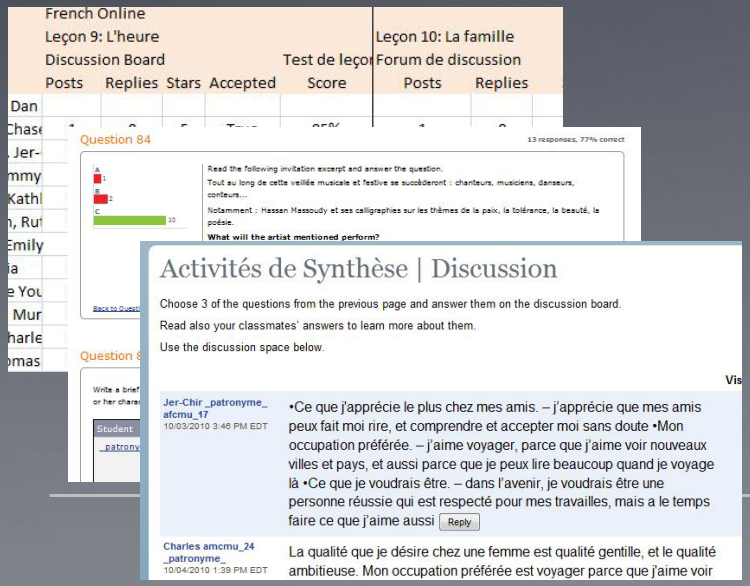
-fix date & time
-subjects for sync session

Synchronous session

Reports

Facebook Group

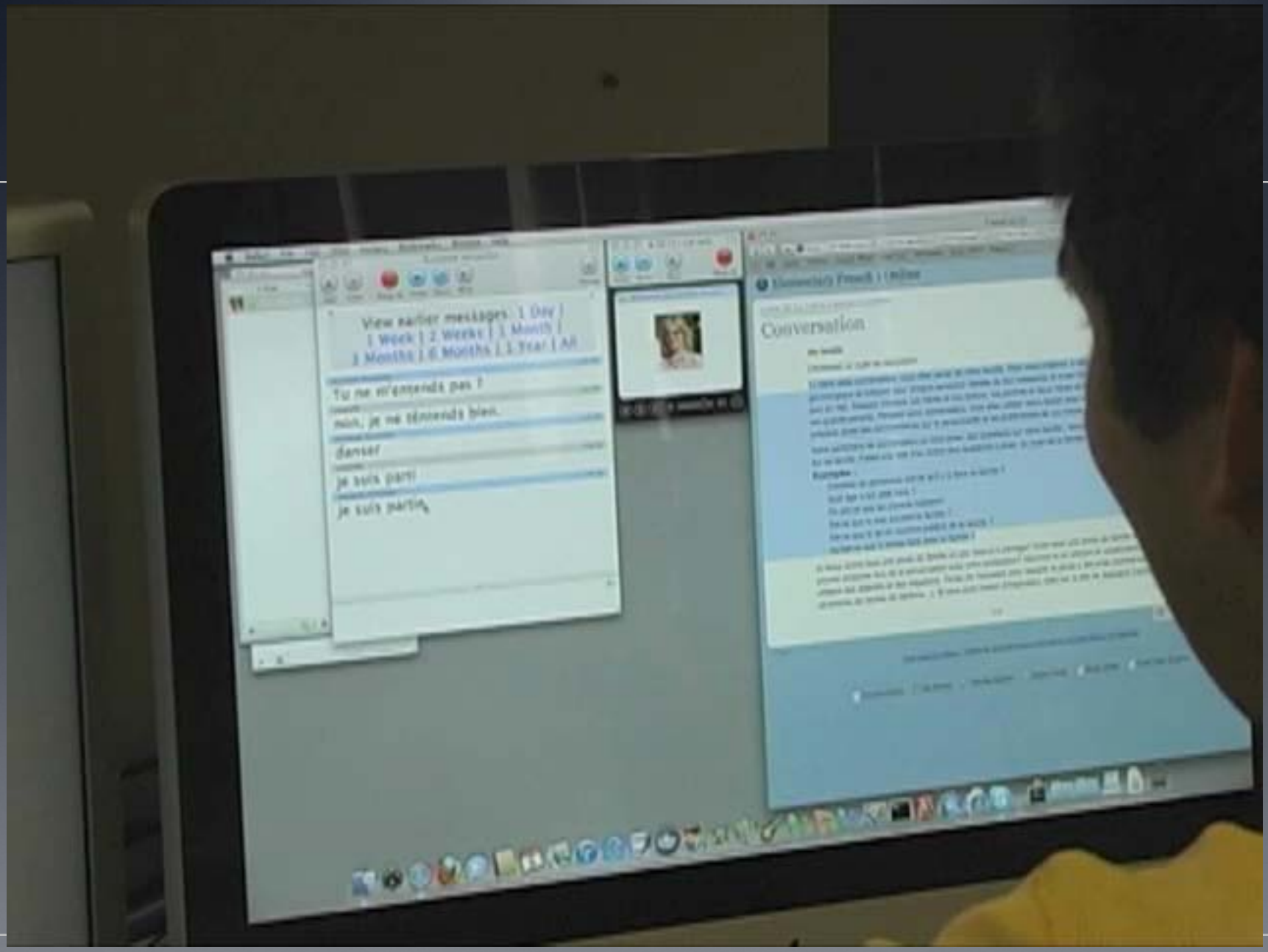
Moodle wiki



(Usual ?) tandem difficulties

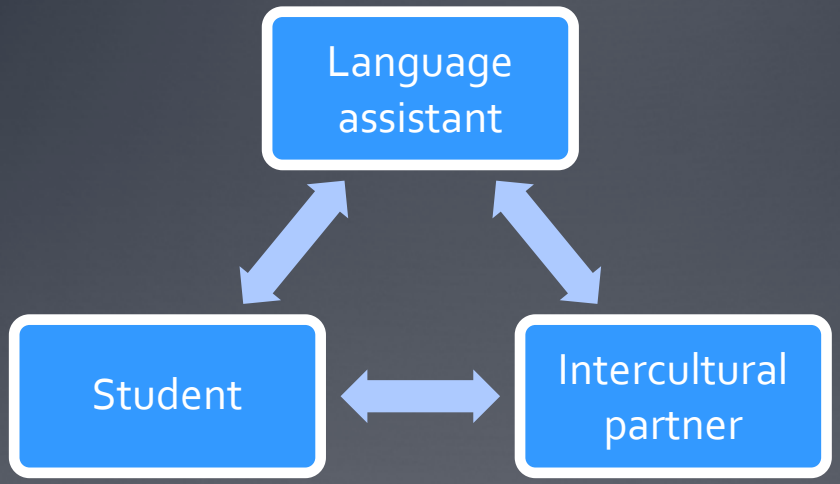
- Rare exact correspondence between the number of learners on each side (manage drop out)
- Important time zone difference (6 hours)
- Different schedules in each curriculum
  - FOL started and finished their semester before MA
  - MA had not enough time for the initial Skype training
- Unbalanced situation
  - 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




View earlier messages 1 Day | 1 Week | 2 Weeks | 1 Month | 3 Months | 6 Months | 1 Year | All
Tu ne m'entends pas ?
moi, je ne t'entends bien.
danser
je suis parti
je suis parti
Conversation

Roles, positioning and representations– MA students

Roles



Aspects of difficulties for MA students

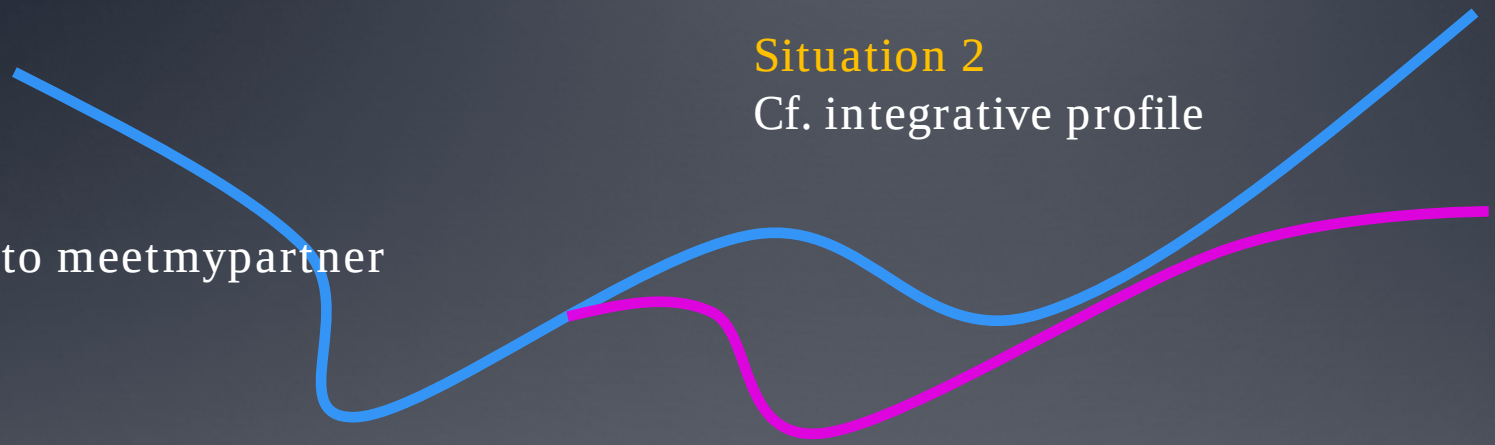
Pedagogic aspects ⟷ Technological aspects

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

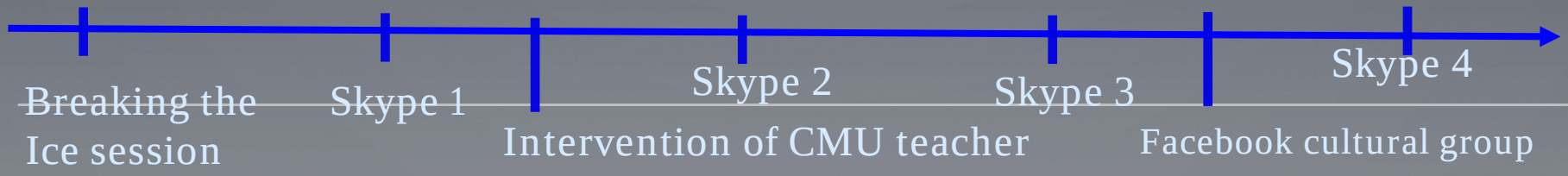
"*Il me paraît nécessaire d'être clair dès le départ sur les rôles et les attentes envers les participants. A savoir si un groupe adopte une* ***position d'enseigr*** " *La position que l'on occupait, en tant que « teaching assistant » était assez mesure ou difficile à délimiter, dans la mesure où nous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

Evolution of perceptions / events



Meeting delayed ?
Facebookdoes not work
Less interactions thanexpected
Planning difficult to follow
Lost in the use of modalities

Situation 1 (prototypical)
Less participation of Fol thanexpected ?
'itismyfailure' 'FOL not interestedwith sharing cultures and values'
Rely on video& audio
Expectations of clear instructions or resentlack of freedom



Integrative MA profile

- Control expectations, accept uncertainty / fuzziness during the first steps
- Rely on preparation (negotiated)
- Develop flexibility: size 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?