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SLIC : Second Life as A Collaborative Tool For Graduate Teacher Training and Developing Intercultural Communicative Competences

Abstract : (106 mots)

SLIC (Second Life InterCultuel) was a collaboration between undergraduate students of French at Carnegie Mellon University and Masters students of FLE using ICT from Université Blaise Pascal. The project's intent was to extend the intercultural communicative competences of the undergraduates and of the graduate students as well as the teaching experiences of the latter using the synthetic world Second Life (SL). By interacting with each other in SL, students on both sides of the project collaborated in SL, where they were able to exchange cultural information on themes linked to the undergraduate course in asynchronous document exchanges via Moodle and during synchronous online meetings in SL.

Description : (298 mots)

In fall 2011, the SLIC (Second Life Intercultuel) project grew from the research objective of analyzing the affordances of synthetic worlds such as Second Life (SL) for the development of intercultural communicative competences in a foreign language teaching and learning context. 21 advanced level undergraduate students of French enrolled in the *Introduction to French Culture* course at Carnegie Mellon University (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), worked in the synthetic world, SL, with 14 Masters degree students from the Université Blaise Pascal (Clermont-Ferrand, France). The undergraduate students attended an orientation in SL given by the project coordinator prior to meetings 1-5; additionally, the coordinator trained and coordinated the graduate students in the use of SL and teaching online.

Preparing to teach French as a foreign language (FLE) using ICT tools, the Masters students were charged with leading discussion groups of 2-3 undergraduates in a total of five synchronous 1.5 hour meetings, encouraging the undergraduates to participate actively and produce advanced level language by discussing cultural similarities and differences on themes linked to the undergraduate course. At the end of each meeting, each group had to produce a document (mindmap, text, pictures...) which synthesized the content of the exchange. During meeting 5, the graduate students guided their students in developing a group project by reflecting on their experiences and new intercultural knowledge. This final product was the culmination and representation of the semester's work.

This presentation will describe the pedagogical scenario of this project, including the difficulties of insuring undergraduate participation and assessment of that participation. In addition, we will discuss, based on the analyses of data collected from all students involved (questionnaires, SL video recordings, chat, reflective reports...), the benefits and challenges

that synthetic worlds can offer for the development of intercultural communicative competences of undergraduate learners of French and future teachers.

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