Bridging the gaps between ESP Content and Interaction with Telecollaborative Debates

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RESEARCH AIM: To encourage English for Especific Purposes (ESP) learners to build and communicate new knowledge in their field, Engineering, through the telecollaborative debate.

BACKGROUND: Learners not only investigated the topic, used ESP and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), but developed a number of non-linguistic skills, such as information literacy, which is the ability to process and allocate information appropriately to serve the purpose of presenting a convincing evidence-based argumentation (Belz 2002; O'Dowd 2018).

METHOD:
- Qualitative/Quantitative research with surveys.
- Conducted within the framework of telecollaborative debate (collaborative learning + communicative skills + ICT/CALL/MALL tools) in different stages of the project: investigation, exchange, discussion, planning and structuring the online event.
- Participants: ESP students of 2 Spanish universities: ULPGC in Gran Canaria and UPV in Valencia.

RESULTS: The debate was an experiential, telecollaborative task that developed autonomous and collaborative learning, built ESP knowledge, and fostered the improvement of students' communicative skills in English with the support of adequate ICT + CALL + MALL tools and specific lexis.

CONCLUSIONS: The telecollaborative debate provided students with the interactive context to improve scientific research abilities and ESP content building skills to present, argue, refute and express their positions. Students developed communicative strategies in the foreign language, conveyed through the telecollaborative debate (O'Dowd 2018).

REFERENCES:

Belz, Julie A. 2002. "Social dimensions of telecollaborative foreign language study." *Language Learning & Technology,* 6(1): 60-81.

O'Dowd, Robert. 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

The Learner