

**MUNI 4.0: Integrating international teleconferences into EAP courses: Preparing students for real-life professional situations**

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**Oral Presentation**

In 2018 Parma University Language Centre (Italy) and the Humanities and Arts Department of the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology engaged in an experimental joint programme aimed at involving EAP students in delivering presentations to an unfamiliar foreign audience on a topic relevant to their academic and professional interests. The main goal of the project was to bring language acquisition close to real-life situations and let the students explore the benefits and challenges of intercultural communication.

The topic chosen for the project was Driverless cars: The transport of tomorrow? Students were initially required to prepare for their presentations by exploring and personalising the topic, so at to be able to explain their position to a group which they had had no previous contact with or information about. Through the active involvement of the students in a realistic implementation of their prospective professional use of language, language learning became a holistic experience, in which they integrated an essentially 'traditional' approach to language learning, whose main focus lies in vocabulary and macro-skills, with a pragmatic approach, to address the so-called '21st-century skills' (specifically critical thinking, communication, collaboration and digital literacy).

In preparing for the teleconference students had to search for relevant material for their presentations, negotiate its appropriateness with their research partners, prepare slides, critique each other's contributions, and jointly work on revisions. The situations above, which students are likely to encounter in their professional lives, helped develop their confidence, and the whole learning experience bore both emotional and social implications.

This paper offers an insight into the challenges and issues which arose, and ideas for improving the learning experience. We will describe the preparation carried out by the teachers at both universities, and the guided and autonomous work carried out by students to research material, produce visuals and commentaries, and deal with questions from their foreign counterparts. A post-conference survey triggered the students' self-reflection in relation to learning and personal development. The survey was also valuable for the teachers as regards reassessment of teaching strategies and preparation for future joint projects.

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**Anila Scott-Monkhouse** teaches English as L2 at Parma University (Italy). Her interests lie in assessing learners' needs within and outside the classroom, and task-based learning through Gardner's multiple intelligences theory.