

Computer Technology in Developing Intercultural Competence

Marcin Kleban

4.1. Introduction

A massive number of contacts between people located all over the globe require attainment of the skills of developing intercultural understanding, tolerance and sensitivity towards cultural differences. We need to learn to live in the globalized world. It is a world where others, members of various communities, including those representing a different-than-ours system of values and beliefs, live beside us. This is also a world where our more and more frequent sojourns or travels lead us to interactions with members of these communities.

For these reasons, the readiness to face the challenges of meeting others emerges as an elementary skill which every global citizen needs to develop. This requirement concerns both all of those people whose professions, and often private curiosity, lead them to visit more or less distant corners of the globe and those who interact with immigrants in their home countries. Intercultural communication skills are perceived as essential by Dervin (2010: 23), who states that “Intercultural competence, which is the expected outcome of the insertion of interculturality in language learning and teaching, is a vital competence in our contemporary world, especially (but not exclusively) for specialists involved in mediating between people (diplomats, language teachers, consultants, journalists, translators...).”

In the globalized world, where the only way to co-exist peacefully is to have respect for the different values and perspectives, there is an urging need to establish a fair dialogue between our own and other cultures. The prerequisite for such a dialogue is the possession of a common set of tools which enable communication. In this context, it seems that the English language as the contemporary lingua franca, and also computer technology which facilitate distance communication, are well predestined to function as conduits in intercultural dialogues.

Whereas the role of English as a lingua franca was described by Anna Nizegorodcew in much further detail in chapter 2 of this volume, the current chapter focuses on the latter of the communication tools mentioned above, discussing the roles and functions of computer technology in sustaining a dialogue between members of various communities. Additionally, an overview of the current practices in this field and of the research related to information and communication technology (ICT) and intercultural competence is provided. Throughout the chapter the terms computer/ICT technology-mediated exchanges are used interchange-

ably to refer to the same idea of distance encounters between members of two or more communities who maintain contacts through the medium of computer technology.

The chapter also discusses the affordances and problems related to using ICT in intercultural projects. Additionally, a short analysis of the role of the tutor in organizing intercultural exchanges mediated by computer technology is discussed.

In order to illustrate the ideas presented here I outline as an example a Polish – Ukrainian ICT-mediated intercultural project. Having described the project, some conclusions concerning the use of ICT in such contexts are formulated. The main part of the chapter finishes with a short discussion of the future directions for the development of intercultural distance exchange projects. Finally, a set of questions and tasks are suggested. Their aim is to encourage conscious reflection on the issues described in this chapter.

4.2. The Role of Computer Technology in Facilitating the Development of Intercultural Competence

Before I set to elucidate the role of computer technology in developing intercultural competence it seems fitting to clarify the notion of intercultural competence. The model of intercultural competence that has been adopted for the purposes of this chapter is described by Michael Byram in his seminal book *Teaching and learning intercultural communicative competence* (1997). The model comprises two basic elements: (1) the notion of communicative competence, that is the language knowledge and skills with the related competences concerning language use and (2) the knowledge, attitudes and skills related to intercultural understanding. Byram (1997) lists the following components of intercultural competence:

- curious and open attitude towards other cultures as well as one's own
- knowledge of perspectives, products and practices of societal and individual interaction
- skills of interpreting and relating involving the ability to interpret and compare documents or events from one's own and another culture
- skills of discovery and interaction: ability to acquire new knowledge of culture, ability to operate new knowledge
- critical cultural awareness: ability to critically evaluate perspectives, products and practices of other cultures and one's own.

It needs to be stressed that the notion of intercultural competence refers not only to the awareness, knowledge and skills of learning about other cultures but also to the desire and need to explore and understand the motives and attitudes underpinning one's own culture. The ability to analytically approach one's own cultural background and to discover the beliefs underlying one's attitudes, knowledge and

perspectives may be seen as a prerequisite for understanding other cultures. The realization that “we perceive the world through culturally conditioned cognitive categories” (Durocher 2007: 147) may potentially lead to the formation of attitudes of tolerance and understanding towards otherness.

Another important element of the intercultural competence model is the knowledge of the practices, products and processes characterizing cultures. The framework of the Three Ps’ (Tang 2006) is advocated, for example, by the *Standards for foreign language learning in the 21st century* (1999), a document shaping foreign language education system in the USA. Tang (2006) explains that the cultural perspectives include the popular beliefs, values, attitudes and the assumptions held by members of a particular community. The products include the categories of both tangible culture, for example works of art, material products and intangible culture, for example stories, tales or rituals. Cultural practices include the patterns of behaviour accepted by a given community.

However, the possession of the knowledge of products, practices and perspectives is not enough to develop intercultural competence. Byram stresses that learners need to be able to interpret and compare the perspectives, products and practices of other cultures with those of their own. People need to be able to discover, interpret and use the knowledge while interacting with members of other cultures.

4.3. ICT in Intercultural Exchanges

Equipped with the power to cross borders and render many economic and political barriers irrelevant, computer technology tools seem especially predestined to build bridges between cultures and their members. In fact, cross-cultural dialogue thrives in the Internet where class distinctions, economic status or nationality matter little. The anonymity afforded by the Internet provides more equality. In this sense the Internet provides a truly democratic space where intercultural interactions can flourish.

The omnipresence and ubiquitous use of ICT lead to developing the hypothesis that people brought up in digital age possess, as it were, a natural ability to use the technology. Mark Prensky (2001) uses the term “digital natives” to describe the generation born into the world of computers as opposed to the “digital immigrants” who strive to adjust to the world of the new technologies. Within his view, learning with computers is much more natural and conceptually closer to the young generation than learning with the traditional tools. However, there are also dissenting voices. For example, Bayne and Ross (2007) criticize Prensky’s idea arguing that the generation gap has little to do with digital literacy. Yet, whether we subscribe to Prensky’s view or disagree with it, it is undeniable that the world is becoming more and more dependent on digital technology and in this respect education is no exception.

Despite the burgeoning use of ICT, our understanding of the impact which computer technology can have in formal pedagogical contexts still needs to be a subject of research. The most frequently adopted perspectives in current research on ICT in education are those associated with the socio-constructivist epistemological positions. For example, computers are perceived as mediating tools within human activity systems. They facilitate interactions in communities of practice focused around sets of common interests and they function as dialogue enablers between people and cultures.

One of the basic tenets of the activity theory (cf. Engeström 1999) is that in the process of knowledge development humans use artefacts which mediate between the individual and the knowledge. These artefacts include physical tools, signs, language and the roles that others take in the learning process. From this, it follows that digital technologies can act as mediating tools in the activity of developing intercultural understanding.

The concept of communities of practice put forward by Lave and Wenger (1991) is underpinned by the idea that learning is a consequence of participation in communities consisting of both experts and novices where the more knowledgeable others act as skills and knowledge facilitators. Any learning is situated in a particular social context as communities are founded around a particular set of common interests. It can be claimed that such communities are formed on the Internet, too. Because of the often culturally diverse nature of online communities a dialogue established in such communities may serve not only the purpose of facilitating the development of specific knowledge but it may also become a catalyst in the process of developing intercultural understanding.

The notion of dialogue is central to the theory proposed by Bakhtin (1986). His notion of dialogism stresses the dialogic nature of relations between people, texts, and between people and cultures. Interpreting Bakhtin's ideas, Gurevich (1992: 90) observes that for him dialogue is universal communication. Dialogue is the basic principle not only of culture but also of individual human existence. Bakhtin (1986) and also Kramsch (1993) see knowledge (including culture-related knowledge) and meaning as being constructed when interaction and dialogue with others lead to a taking-on of new perspectives. Various forms of computer-mediated communication may be seen as conducive to the emergence of such interactions.

In order to better understand the role of computer technology in facilitating the development of intercultural competence we need to critically examine the affordances provided by ICT. The research to date which examined the use of computer technology in developing intercultural competence identified advantages as well as problems. Nevertheless, as Byram and Feng (2004: 914) observe: "The potential of the Internet for virtual ethnography seems obvious but has not yet been fully explored."

One clear advantage of such technology is the provision of opportunities for participating in intercultural encounters which would otherwise be either difficult or impossible to arrange, due to a number of practical, economic or political barriers. A good example of such distance interactions are those educational projects which involved computer-mediated cooperation between learners from two continents. Belz and Müller-Hartmann (2003) discuss a project in which students from Germany engaged in exchanges with a group of Americans studying in a US college. Another case is described by Jauregi and Bañados (2008) who organized a project which involved students from the Netherlands and Chile. Yet another intercontinental exchange is described by Levy (2007) who analyses computer-mediated interactions between learners from Australia and Brazil. Furstenberg et al. (2001) describe the beginning of the MIT's Cultural project initiated as a French – American exchange, which subsequently evolved into a large-scale interactive project aiming at bringing together students from higher education institutions across the globe.

Another advantage of computer technology is that online dialogue achieves a permanent status, in the sense that it fructifies in the creation of a number of digital objects which can be subject to further interpretation, analysis, discussion and transformation. In this sense, computer-mediated interactions are less ephemeral than oral dialogue, and easier to disseminate and process than the printed word. They become mediating artefacts facilitating intercultural understanding.

In this context, the already mentioned Cultura project serves as a good example as well. With the help of tools available within this environment students can ask questions, provide answers, upload resources such as films, texts or photos and engage in discussions associated with these objects. Another advantage of such a digital resource is that learners are not constrained by the limitations of the traditional classroom where they work within the given time and space.

This argument can be used to provide rationale for e-mail exchange projects. Such exchanges have been described by O'Dowd (2003), who demonstrates how such technology can help students to communicate with members of another culture. Apart from the positive experiences, the study showed that these interactions may also lead to misunderstandings and the strengthening of negative stereotypes held about the other culture.

Yet another advantage of applying computer technology for developing intercultural competence stems from the networked character of online exchanges. Communication in digital spaces brings together individuals from a diverse range of cultures and nationalities. Such interactions, more often than not, go beyond the boundaries of traditional face-to-face conversations in that they provide a space for a multivoiced dialogue which may potentially lead to generating new insights and perspectives. This argument is supported by Belz and Müller-Hartmann (2003: 84) who stress that their experience with telecollaborative encounters allowed them

“to appreciate and better understand our situated dialogue ‘through the eyes of the other.’”

Finally, computer technology-mediated intercultural exchanges may contribute to the development of learners’ communicative competence and the development of language skills. This happens when learners practice their linguistic skills while writing, speaking, reading or listening to the language used in communication with others. One example of language learning observed during an intercultural project is given by Wylie (2010) who reports on the positive gains in the writing skills of her Polish learners of English taking part in an electronic correspondence project with a group of British students.

Apart from the positive value provided by ICT there are also a number of problems related to the application of technology to intercultural interactions. For example, one of the constraints of computer-mediated intercultural projects is the availability as well as the reliability of the current technology. Limited access to the indispensable resources may easily demotivate learners and make contacts with their partners difficult. Belz and Müller-Hartmann’s study (2003) points to such issues in reference to the interactions between American and German university students. The authors noticed that, in comparison with their German colleagues, the American students had better access to reliable computer technology. For this reason, the digital tools in this distance exchange project provided an added value in one case and created problems in the other. Jauregi and Bañados (2008) noticed that their group of students from the Netherlands and Chile became frustrated with the problems they experienced while communicating through video technology. The students reported that the technical issues had a negative impact on their satisfaction with this telecollaboration project. Similar problems with technology were also reported by Ware (2005).

Also, students’ different motivations may become an issue. Belz and Müller-Hartmann (2003) report that in their aforementioned transatlantic telecollaboration project both groups displayed different motivations. These motivations were related to the differences in the pedagogical scripts, or class procedures, adopted by the two partner institutions on both sides of the Atlantic. Whereas the German students were motivated by the mere participation in the project which was compulsory within the particular course, the Americans were required to write an assignment in which they reported on the project’s outcomes. In effect, most of the planned joined report was completed largely by the Americans who had a strong incentive to finish the written work.

Ware (2005) pointed to three types of tensions which she identified in the telecollaboration project between German and American students. The first tension concerned the different norms and expectations of the two groups, the second was associated with social and institutional norms and values, (e.g. the two partner groups displayed a different understanding of what counts as learning), and the third tension concerned logistic constraints such as time and workload investment. The

expectations and course requirements of the two institutions differed considerably and so did the motivations of the participating students. Ware suggests that in order to successfully deal with factors related to the tensions described above, a project's objectives and design need to be discussed thoroughly by all its participants.

The success or failure of a telecollaborative exchange may also depend on the establishment of personal bonds between the learners. Often, a personal sense of achievement is reached when such bonds are established. On the other hand, the absence of personal relationships leads to a sense of failure. O'Dowd (2003) found that in an e-mail exchange between English and Spanish students, those of the partners who managed to establish a good personal relationship were motivated to participate in the exchange and those who did not manage to do so lost the motivation and became disinterested in the project.

From this it follows that in planning a telecollaborative exchange tutors need to take steps to encourage mutual personal understanding between participating students. This could be achieved by, for example, pairing learners with similar personality traits or those with similar interests. This, in turn, requires careful preparation on the part of the project's coordinators. Quoting Meagher and Castaños (1996) who reported on their e-mail exchange between Mexican and US students, O'Dowd (2003) warns that lack of care in preparation of unstructured penpal exchanges, may lead to undesirable effects such as the strengthening of negative stereotypes and prejudices.

Computer-mediated communication may also suffer from the so-called "reduced bandwidth" problem. While communicating electronically people are not able to interpret body language, facial expressions, gestures or intonation. Despite various graphic solutions used in text computer-mediated communication, such as emoticons, face-to-face interactions have a clear advantage over digital technology in this respect. Wylie (2010) showed that the participants in her distance exchange project missed face-to-face contacts with their partners. Analysing the results of a Polish – British intercultural technology-mediated exchange project she reported that her Polish students wished to interact with their partners in a more tangible way. The author stresses that the group were especially motivated by sending and receiving parcels with cultural artefacts representing each culture.

The role of the teacher is important in such exchanges in that the tutor must act as a manager ready to carefully plan the project's aims and identify the proper tools ensuring the implementation of the plan. The tutor needs to consider how to deal with the constraints related to personal, institutional and technological factors. The role of the teacher in a telecollaborative exchange was discussed by Furstenberg et al. (2001). Their experience of the French – American computer-mediated project led them to formulate a number of conclusions regarding the role of the teacher in intercultural telecollaboration. Firstly, the authors state (p. 85) that "the role of the teacher is to accompany students through the analysis [...]." This may mean helping students to avoid the pitfalls of hasty interpretations, ethnocentric bias and jumping

to easy conclusions. The authors suggest that the tutor should challenge students' opinions, encourage critical analysis, inquire about their underlying patterns of thinking, and/or ask open-ended questions.

Commenting on the roles of the teacher, O'Dowd and Eberbach (2004) stress that for the successful development of intercultural projects tutors need to build relationships of trust. They add that teachers on all sides of an exchange need to reach an agreement on how the exchange should proceed. Also, they see a need for monitoring learners' progress, learning conditions and agreement on the requirements imposed on students.

Discussing the teaching roles in online telecollaboration O'Dowd (2007) identifies four roles of the tutor. According to O'Dowd the tutor need to act as an organizer, an intercultural partner, model and coach, source and resource. The role of the organizer involves establishing contacts with the partner institution, organizing the logistics as well as identifying the themes for the exchange. The organization and management part of a project requires that the teachers should act as intercultural partners who need to reach agreements and establish a personal relationship with each other. The tutor needs to act as a coach and model responsible for tasks such as training learners to conduct project-related research. Finally, the tutor must assist in providing students with access to various sources and resources, such as books or Internet sources, as well as help to interpret the dialogue with their partners.

4.4. Polish – Ukrainian Computer-Mediated Exchange Project

This part of the chapter describes a technology-mediated intercultural project aiming at connecting two communities of university level students from Poland and Ukraine. The general aims of this project include developing a bi-directional cultural understanding between the Poles and the Ukrainians. The initiative was geared towards the facilitation of an intercultural dialogue which, on the one hand, would result in an increased awareness of the partner country's culture and, on the other, would encourage reflection on one's own cultural background. Another set of the project's aims concerned the identification of the positive as well as the negative aspects and limitations of computer-mediated intercultural exchanges.

The intercultural project in question took place in the academic year 2009/2010 and involved two groups of MA English philology students from the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland and Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian University in Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine. The Polish group consisted of 12 participants (9 Polish, 1 American, 1 Canadian and 1 Irish nationals), whereas 9 students actively participated on the Ukrainian part. The work of both groups was coordinated and supervised by the author of the current chapter.

While communicating through a social network (<http://iccpolandukraine.ning.com>) the two groups of students were to find out as much a possible about the

life, customs, interests or any other issues concerning the partner country. First, the students asked their partners questions which were to reflect their personal curiosity and interests. For this reason, the tutor did not influence the choice of the topics raised in these questions. In this sense, the distance exchange resembled everyday interactions between members of the two cultures. The questions were video-recorded and uploaded to the project's social network so as to be available to the whole community of exchange participants. Subsequently, the students were encouraged to watch the video-recorded questions and respond to them using either textual comments, videos or web links. Since both groups consisted of English philology students, English was used as the *lingua franca*.

As it turned out in the course of the project, the range of the topics raised in the questions asked by the students from both partner institutions concerned issues comprising such areas as: studying in the other country, attitudes of tutors towards students, national stereotypes, regional dialects, superstitions or national prejudices. Most students chose to answer them using short textual comments.

The next part of the project consisted of the students' presentations on the topics raised in selected questions prepared by groups of the participants in each country. These presentations elicited exploratory and research-based responses. They concentrated on presenting the home culture to the partner group, though the other aim of this part of the project was to explore and consider issues related to one's own culture. The presentations were uploaded to the social network where they were available to all project participants. The topics explored and researched by the students included: Polish prejudices towards other nationalities, the issue of tolerance, the issue of academic honesty among Polish students, tutors' attitude towards students, Ukrainians' attitudes towards foreign teachers and Ukrainian superstitions.

In order to evaluate the learning gains and aspects of the project's design the students were asked to answer questions related to these issues. While the specific evaluation of the learning outcomes are presented elsewhere (Kleban 2010), here the focus of the evaluation falls on the role of computer technology.

The analysis of the short evaluation questionnaire showed that 95% of the students expressed a generally positive attitude towards the technology used in this project. The computer technology was appreciated mainly because it facilitated contacts with the students from the partner country. Also, it provided a fast, convenient and (virtually) cost-free way of communicating, especially through the projects' social network.

The students highly valued the personalization of contacts through the video feature of the social network. This observation is in line with the findings made by Jauregi and Bañados (2008) who perceive video components as contributing positively to the success of distance exchange programmes. Additionally, computer technology allowed the project participants to engage in the "anytime, anywhere" type of communication. This meant that the discussions were not limited to a single

classroom, a single country or time of day. This flexibility allowed the project participants to manage their time resources freely.

On the other hand, the project identified several problems related to using computer technology in intercultural exchanges. One of them is the so-called “reduced bandwidth” issue. The students felt that despite the affordances offered by computer technologies, including the Internet, their digital interactions were mutually limited by the lack of physical contact. Computer-mediated communication, especially in its textual form, does not support communication forms based on gestures, body language or tone of voice which, in face-to-face contexts, are frequently employed for interpreting meanings.

Another problem concerned limited access to the Internet. Distance exchange projects require constant access to the Internet in and outside the classroom. It was especially the Ukrainian students that suffered from limited access. Problems with connection to the Internet were held responsible for the lower frequency and quantity of the Ukrainian students’ contributions to the discussion within the social network. Therefore, it can be concluded that restricted availability of technology constitutes a major obstacle to smooth cooperation.

The distance intercultural exchange project was considered, by some, as extra workload loosely related to the main subject of studies selected by the students. Prioritizing the commitments at their home institution, the participants had limited time for engaging in online interactions with the partner group. Therefore, if intercultural exchange distance projects are to be successful, they need to be better embedded in the institutional curricula. The integration of such initiatives into the programmes of university courses can help students better focus on the tasks and achieve more in terms of the learning outcomes.

It seems that limited access to the Internet coupled with the fact that the project was not fully embedded in institutional curricula were the main reasons for the relatively infrequent direct interactions between the students from the partner groups. This observation is in line with findings made by Ware (2005) who reported on technical and organizational issues in his ICT-mediated distance project.

Referring to the roles of the tutor in ICT exchanges listed by O’Dowd (2007) and mentioned earlier in this chapter, the tutor in this Polish – Ukrainian project acted mainly as the organizer. The tutor was responsible for establishing contact between the two groups of students. The task was facilitated by the possibility to meet both groups face-to-face. The Polish group was easier to coordinate since the tutor met the group during regular classes while the Ukrainian students were met once during a short visit only.

The second role performed by the tutor was that of the coach. This role involved training students in research techniques and providing suggestions concerning the sources useful for preparation of the final presentations. It needs to be stressed, however, that the coaching role was limited to discussing the general research framework and that the students displayed a high degree of autonomy.

The face-to-face encounters between the teacher and the students were important for at least two reasons. First, they gave the tutor an opportunity to establish good rapport with the group which had positive consequences in developing a mutual trust relationship necessary for the success of the collaboration. Second, they helped to clarify the project's objectives, the expected outcomes and research procedures.

Finally, it can be concluded that ICT-mediated distance exchange projects need to be closely coordinated on all sides involved in its preparation. O'Dowd and Eberbach (2004) claim that in order to ensure smooth collaboration all participating institutions must appoint coordinating tutors who should be able to collaborate. Despite the best efforts to coordinate the project by a single tutor it was only the Polish group that had regular contacts with the project tutor. This also influenced the frequency of contacts between the groups of the students.

The design and planning of ICT-mediated intercultural projects are also constrained by institutional conditions. Students' time and the amount of effort required of them need to be taken into account. Such projects need to be fitted into university curricula so that they form an integral part of the project participants' main course of studies.

4.5. Conclusion

Computer technology tools offer a number of affordances which help to bring people together and in consequence, develop their intercultural competence. These technologies facilitate the sharing of opinions, thoughts and digitally developed cultural artefacts. They support efforts aimed at initiating and sustaining a dialogue between members of various cultures. Such a dialogue is also possible thanks to such distance exchange projects as the Polish – Ukrainian initiative described in this chapter.

The advantages of employing computer technology in such projects include overcoming time and space limitations and sharing thoughts and resources. However, the success of such initiatives hinges upon the provision of appropriate technical and institutional conditions. It is also important to build good personal relationships between students and tutors.

The future may see an even more intensive and widespread use of computer technology in promoting intercultural understanding. One possible advance might be related to the expansion of mobile technologies which facilitate documentation of everyday culture. It might also be expected that textual resources will be, at least partially, replaced or supplemented by multimedia.

The future may also see more classes taught online in real time. With proper organization on technical and institutional levels students from Poland, Ukraine or other countries may benefit from mutual participation in real time classes through

the medium of computer technology. If this becomes a reality then intercultural understanding will be greatly facilitated.

QUESTIONS AND TASKS

1. How do you understand the claim that “we perceive the world through culturally conditioned cognitive categories”? Provide some examples.
2. Would you agree with the statement that “any learning is situated in a particular social context”? Why or why not?
3. What is your opinion on the distinction between “digital natives” and “digital immigrants”?
4. What, in your opinion, is the potential of the Internet for virtual ethnography?
5. Reflect on the role of computer technology in facilitating dialogue and interaction between various cultures.
6. In what ways, in your opinion, can computer technology promote the development of intercultural competence?
7. What forms of technology-mediated intercultural communication would you find the most convenient: social network, video chats, audio chats, text chats or other? Why?
8. Looking back at the research presented in this article, think of the potential affordances and limitations of computer technology for facilitating intercultural telecollaboration.
9. What is the role of the English language in distance collaboration projects involving students from two or more non-English speaking countries?
10. In small groups, think of the issues that need to be taken into account while planning your own intercultural telecollaboration project. What would you consider as essential preparation? What would be the learning outcomes? What potential problems would you expect? How could you evaluate your project? Discuss your ideas with another group.

REFERENCES

- Bakhtin**, M.M. (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays*. Trans. by Vern W. McGee. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Bayne**, S. and **Ross**, J. (2007). “The ‘digital native’ and ‘digital immigrant’: A dangerous opposition.” In: *Proceedings of the annual conference of the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE)*. University of Edinburgh.

- Belz, J.** and **Müller-Hartmann, A.** (2003). "Teachers as intercultural learners: Negotiating German-American telcollaboration along the institutional fault line." *The Modern Language Journal*, 87 (i), pp. 71–89.
- Byram, M.** (1997). *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Byram, M.** and **Feng, A.** (2004). "Culture and language learning: Teaching research and scholarship." *Language Teaching*, 37 (3), pp. 149–168.
- Dervin, F.** (2010). "Assessing intercultural competence in Language Learning and Teaching: A critical review of current efforts." In: F. Dervin and E. Suomela-Salmi (Eds.). *New approaches to assessing language and (inter) cultural competences in higher education*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Durocher, D.** (2007). "Teaching sensitivity to cultural difference in the first-year foreign language classroom." *Foreign Language Annals*, 40, pp. 143–160.
- Engeström, Y.** (1999). "Activity theory and individual and social transformation." In: Y. Engeström, R. Miettinen and R.-L. Punamaki (Eds.). *Perspectives on activity theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 19–38.
- Furstenberg, G., Levet, S., English, K.** and **Maillet, K.** (2001). "Giving a virtual voice to the silent language of culture: The Cultura project." *Language Learning and Technology*, 5 (1), pp. 55–102.
- Gurevich, P.S.** (1992). "Problema 'Drugogo' v filosofskoi antropologii Bakhtina' [The problem of "Other" in Bakhtin's philosophical anthropology]. In: L. Gogotishvili and P. Gurevich (Eds.). *Bakhtin kak filosof*. Moscow: Nauka, pp. 83–96.
- Jauregi, K.** and **Bañados, E.** (2008). "Virtual interaction through web-based communication. A step towards enriching and internationalizing language learning programmes." *ReCALL*, 20 (2), pp. 183–207.
- Kleban, M.** (2010). "Deepening the awareness of one's cultural background in a distance intercultural exchange project." A paper delivered at the 22nd International Conference on Foreign/Second Language Acquisition, Szczyrk, Poland, 27–29 May 2010.
- Kramsch, C.** (1993). *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lave, J.** and **Wenger E.** (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Levy, M.** (2007). "Culture, culture learning and new technologies: Towards a pedagogical framework." *Language Learning & Technology*, 11 (2), pp. 104–127.
- Meagher, M.** and **Castaños, F.** (1996). "Perceptions of American culture: The impact of an electronically mediated cultural exchange program on Mexican high school students." In: S. Herring (Ed.). *Computer mediated communication. Linguistic, social and cross-cultural perspectives*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 187–201.

- O'Dowd, R.** (2003). "Understanding 'the other side': intercultural learning in a Spanish-English email exchange." *Language Learning & Technology*, 7 (2), pp. 118-144.
- O'Dowd, R.** (2007). "Evaluating the outcomes of online intercultural exchange." *ELT Journal*, 61 (2), pp. 144-152.
- O'Dowd, R.** and **Eberbach, K.** (2004). "Guides on the side? Tasks and challenges for teachers in telecollaborative projects." *ReCALL*, 16 (1), pp. 129-144.
- Prensky, M.** (2001). "Digital natives, digital immigrants." *On the Horizon*, 9 (5).
- Standards for foreign language learning in the 21st century** (1999). Lawrence, KS: Allen Press.
- Tang, Y.** (2006). "Beyond behavior: Goals of cultural learning in the second language classroom." *The Modern Language Journal*, 90, pp. 86-99.
- Ware, P.** (2005). "'Missed' communication in online communication: Tensions in a German-American telecollaboration." *Language Learning & Technology*, 9 (2), pp. 64-89.
- Wylie, M.** (2010). *An online cross-cultural project in EFL instruction*. Unpublished MA Thesis. Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński.