

ISSUES OF STUDENT ASSESSMENT IN INTERNATIONAL TELECOLLABORATIVE PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

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The current wide availability of social media makes it possible to have project-based collaborative learning among students across distances and in different countries. The benefits of such technology-mediated collaborative learning (i.e., telecollaborative learning) have been well-discussed in the literature of 21st century skills and generic skills. Communication and collaboration skills are essential competences to acquire today, and so is intercultural competence and cultural awareness. Although the importance of fostering such skills and competences has been discussed in various literature, rarely discussed is the actual method to assess such skills and competences. There are many issues that need to be considered with regards to student assessment in project-based collaborative learning, especially if that is conducted by involving more than one class/institution. In this paper, the authors' observations and the results of trials and errors in the ongoing joint class project, which connects students in Japan and students in Hungary are shared. In the joint class project, students who enrolled in Introduction to Media Communication at Kanda University of International Studies, Japan, and students who enrolled in Japanese Studies at Karoli Gaspar University, Hungary, form small groups (a group usually consisting of two or three Japanese students and one or two Hungarian students) and collaborate to create a presentation on a topic of their selection, which intends to compare and contrast the Japanese and the Hungarian culture and society. The final products of the student-centered international collaborative project are online presentation slides on VoiceThread with audio narration to explain each slide. For the goal of creating such a presentation, students brainstorm, discuss, exchange information, and collaborate among group members. There are many aspects in the project that have the potentials for assessing individual students' performance as well as group performance. The instructors assessed student performance in the project in the following three constructs: (1) the level of participation of the student in the project manifested in the number of online postings and based on the observation of the instructors, (2) the quality of the final product evaluated by the instructor as well as by the peer students, and (3) the depth of reflection articulated in the essay assigned at the end of the project. The paper reviews these methods of assessment and discusses issues of consideration.