

Teaching and Learning Multiliteracies through Online Communication in Multiple Modes



General Information

This task sequence will allow student teachers to develop media competence and design tasks for telecollaborative learning environments. The task sequence is made up of four tasks or steps. Students should work in international teams with 1-2 students representing the different institutions in each team. After a getting-to-know task (Task 1) they explore different online tools to develop their e-literacy skills (Task 2) before they develop teaching competences using these tools. To make students aware of the various aspects and the potential of multimodality they are then asked to analyze a website looking at issues such as content, communication modes and targeted user groups (Task 3). Based on their acquired competences the pre-service teachers then design a collaborative learning task for their future learners which focuses on developing learners' multimodal competence as well as intercultural communicative competence (Task 4) by using the tools they have used in Task 2.

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Target Group:	Language teachers and/or teacher trainees
Language of task instruction:	English
Language Level:	B2/ C1
Topic:	Teacher training, digital literacy
Estimated Duration:	5 – 10 sessions
Tags:	e-literacy, teacher training
Languages & Competences	Intercultural skills, online communication skills, teaching skills, media literacy

Objectives

Learners will...

- develop e-literacy skills working with different tools (e.g. blog, wiki, forum) on a moodle learning platform
- develop online teaching skills by designing, initiating, working on and evaluating tasks
- develop tasks to foster intercultural communicative competence on the basis of web 2.0 tools
- learn to engage in negotiations with learners from other cultures, handling possible intercultural conflicts in the process

Tasks

Getting to know each other

In this task students post short introductory messages to a Moodle forum. They introduce themselves to their partners by presenting their teaching background, their technology-in-teaching experience as well as their expectations about the participation in the exchange.

Task 1: E-Literacy: Exploring online tools:

This task has been designed around the concept of e-literacy skills that is the skills needed for efficient use of online tools. The students work in international groups, choose one of the pre-selected tools (e.g. a blog, wiki, ning, a forum) and analyze it on the basis of two sets of guiding questions. Moreover, a list of competences by M. Pegrum (2009) is attached for reference. Students' reactions are then posted in a respective forum (or recorded) and commented upon by their partners.

The instructors preselect various communication tools (e.g. wiki, forum discussions, a tool for videoconferencing, asynchronous tool for video recording - e.g. [Flipgrid](#)). The students use the following guiding questions to discuss their potential for meaning making:

1. Have you already used the chosen tool yourself
 - a. in private contexts? If yes, explain briefly.
 - b. in teaching contexts? If yes, explain briefly.
2. In what way(s) does this tool allow you to have access to, understand and interpret texts, sound, images, etc. from users of other cultures?
3. In what way does this tool allow you to communicate information about your own cultural context(s), presenting your ideas, thoughts and personal identity?
4. In the process of "negotiation of meaning" learners assist one another in order to achieve mutual understanding. In which way(s) does this tool support this process?
5. Which one of the communication modes (written, visual, oral, aural) provided by the tool facilitate points 2 to 4 in the most efficient way? Why?
6. How can this tool be combined with other tools to extend the possibilities of creating a space for online exchange and collaboration?
7. In what ways have other teachers you know used this tool? Where can you find support from fellow teachers or mentors on the Internet?
8. How do you define your role as a teacher with regard to implementing this tool in your teaching? How is this different from face-to-face teaching?

Task 2.3: E-Literacy Skills

Task instructions:

Please respond to at least to two other contributions:

- one in your own Forum and
- one in another Forum

commenting on the choice of tool by the other groups. Your response should be substantive in that you need to keep in mind the same evaluation criteria you used for your own choice of tool.

1. Do you agree with the other groups' evaluation? Why or why not?
2. How could you use this tool to promote the development of multiliteracy skills in your own teaching practice?

Task 2: Website analysis

Students investigate pre-selected websites in light of Halliday's social semiotic framework, taking into account three major features of context:

- FIELD: what is happening
- TENOR: who is taking part
- MODE: the role of language and other semiotic features

All the websites pre-selected for the task should be rich in various modalities and are targeted at a multicultural audience. For example:

<http://www.study-in-germany.de/> - a website with information and tips for international students and researchers interested in studying in Germany. A lot of information about different aspects of living in Germany

The task has been divided into three steps corresponding to each of the three context features and comprising of a set of guiding questions to enable the participants to have a closer look at a website of their choice

Task instructions:

FIELD:

In your teams, please agree on one of the following websites which is of interest to you and which informs you about the topic in more than one way (i.e. not only written text). Examine and evaluate the resource you have chosen by addressing the following questions (you can split up the work in the group):

- *What is the site about?*
- *What activities are provided?*
- *What can you say in terms of reliability of the website? How did you arrive at your judgement?*
- *Are there any cultural values and beliefs embedded in the materials presented? If so, what are these? Give a brief description, please.*

TENOR:

- *Who are the intended participants/users of the site*
- *Is the site intended for individual use, pairs or groups of people?*
- *How interactive is the site, i.e. does it mainly provide information, or, is there an opportunity to contribute to the site(s) (can you rate the sites, leave a comment, upload images or pictures, etc.)*
- *What is the user's status (passive viewer/reader, actively engaging in an activity, a mix of both, etc.)?*

MODE:

Please, take a closer look at the various communication modes/channels available on the website you have chosen:

- *spoken mode (code – including languages and language varieties, vocabulary, syntax, voice and pronunciation, nonverbal signals)*
- *written mode (code – including languages and language varieties vocabulary, syntax, paragraphing, i.e. rhetorical structure, punctuation, etc.)*
- *image mode (photo, drawing, diagram, graph, logo, layout, colour three-dimensional representations, etc.)*
- *gestural mode (gestures, sign language, dance)*

Which modes are represented on your chosen site and which functions do they have?

Task 3: Designing a collaborative learning task

Working in collaborative teams, students design a task involving the use of any of the tools they already know. The focus is on creating an activity which will allow their future students to engage in intercultural learning with a partner group. The students provide different versions of the task so that each of the group members can focus on something relevant to their background. The students organize their tasks according to the structure provided in instructions.

Task Instructions:

In your collaborative teams design a task which involves the use of any of the tools you have looked at in Task 2 and which allows your respective (future) learners to engage in intercultural learning with a partner group (e.g. in the context of a telecollaborative exchange such as the one you are engaged in yourselves right now!)

If you have different learner groups (ESP, EFL, EAP or ESL) make sure that you possibly provide different versions of your task so that each group can focus on something relevant to their course program. Please, organize your task in the following way:

1) Context

What kind of learners do you teach (age, course program, level of multimodal literacy)?

2) Purpose

What can learners do that they couldn't do before after they will have done your task concerning intercultural learning and developing

3) Procedure

The activities your learners engage in when doing the task. Please, formulate the task(s) for your learners.

4) Outcome (product)

What kind of product does your task (e.g. a list, a written text, a discussion)?

You should post your task to your group forum by (date).

Pedagogy & Instructions

An overview of the task sequence:

Task 1: Getting to know each other

Task type: INFORMATION EXCHANGE – Authoring Cultural Autobiographies

Description:

In this task the students are asked to post short introductory messages to a respective Moodle forum. They are expected to introduce themselves and present their teaching background, technology-in-teaching experience as well as state their expectations about the participation in the exchange.

Suggested resources

The instructor encourages the participants to react to each other's posts.

Task 2: E-literacy: Exploring online tools

Task type: COMPARISON ANALYSIS – Analysing cultural products

Description:

Students get to know online tools and reflect about their use in teaching foreign languages. They focus on the analysis of e-literacy skills in relation to a previously selected tool. The tools suggested include a wiki, a social bookmarking tool, a blog, a ning, a chat, and a forum. The students are expected to work in multicultural groups and have to

1 decide on one tool to be analysed and discussed in a forum

2 answer a questionnaire about competences tools help develop

3 answer a set of guiding questions on using the tool in foreign language teaching

4 comment on postings by other groups in the forum

Task 3: Halliday- based analysis of multimodal resources

Task type: COMPARISON ANALYSIS – Analysing cultural products

Description: In this part of the exchange students investigate pre-selected websites in the light of Halliday's social semiotic framework through a set of guiding questions, taking into account three major features of context:

FIELD: what is happening

TENOR: who is taking part

MODE: the role of language and other semiotic features

All the websites pre-selected for the task are rich in various modalities and are targeted at a multicultural audience.

Suggested resources

Task support in form of a model analysis of a similar website.

Task 4: Designing a collaborative learning task

Task type: COLLABORATIVE TASKS – Product Creation, e.g. a website or newspaper article

Description:

In their collaborative teams pre-service teachers design a multimodal task involving the use of any of the tools they have looked at in Task 2. The focus is on creating an activity which would allow their future learners to develop multimodal competence and to engage in intercultural learning with a partner group.

Evaluations & Comments

Criteria for Completion:

Each of the partners used their own assessments criteria. In general, assessment involved formative and summative assessment procedures. Students in the U.S. were formatively assessed, including participation in the online forum, multimodal task creation, making up 45 % of the grade. Students in Germany were summatively assessed on the basis of a portfolio which required students commenting on multimodal task creation, communication in a multimodal blended learning environment and on their professional development through collaboration with international partners making up 100 % of the grade. Students in Poland, for whom it had been the first experience of a telecollaborative exchange were assessed on the basis of their participation in forum discussions and final task production, both making up to 100% of the grade. Since U.K. participants were university tutors they were not assessed.

Peer-assessment: In task 4 students posted feedback on the task designed by at least one other participant group.

Source: This task sequence has been retrieved from [UNICollaboration Task database](#)