

Integration of Polish-Chinese students' online tandem work into an academic course

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International cooperation is a contemporary challenge to tertiary education institutions. As an example of such cooperation a project undertaken by students of Institute of Applied Linguistics University of Warsaw and the School of English and International Studies, University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, China will be presented. It aimed at increasing students' intercultural competence and developing their linguistic confidence in speech. Moreover, they practiced teaching and managerial skills through hands-on experience in international cooperation. This aimed at encouraging them to initiate such cooperation in the future or participate in it willingly. The project involved 48 tandems working online for 10 weeks. Students communicated mainly in English, however some of them also learnt Chinese or Polish words. Both groups shared information on everyday students' lifestyles, culture, experiences, but also their hopes and future expectations. Polish students reports created a virtual guidebook presenting the Chinese university seen through the eyes of its students. On the one hand, personal perspectives make the project outcomes subjective which is an advantage or disadvantage depending on the readers' positions and expectations. On the other hand, the reports give unique insights into the students' lives at a distant university, hardly available even during a visit. Both groups of students were fascinated by the exchange "culture for culture" as they name it. They were able to identify many similarities and differences related to their age, family background, academic activities, culture, etc. The presentation will focus on the integration of the students' online tandem work into the course content. The project was awarded European Language Label 2013