

Transnational Teaching – Results and Experiences from the Virtual Transnational Linguistic Project (ViTraLiP)



Student testimonial: “I like the course in general, especially the idea of international cooperation. It provides us with an enriching experiment to exchange with each other. It was really great!”

The Project

The Virtual Transnational Linguistic Project (ViTraLiP) as part of the IVAC 2023 programme, funded by the DAAD, took place from March 2023 to December 2023. The goal of the international, co-operative teaching project between the University of Cologne and the University Paris Cité was the collaborative development of interdisciplinary linguistic projects and the presentation of virtual student projects in the field of experimental phonetics. Its topic was the interface between language production, perception and its cognitive processing with a focus on multimodality. The main part of the project consisted of a virtual joint seminar from October until December 2023, as well as two in person exchange trips in June and in December (Kick-Off- and End-of-Project-Meeting).

18 students from the 1-subject MA Linguistics and the 2-subject MA Linguistics and Phonetics in Cologne and 16 students from the Language Sciences MA programme in Paris participated in the Joint Seminar. 7 students from Cologne participated in the exchange trip for the Kick-Off-Meeting in Paris in June 2023 and 14 students from Paris participated in the exchange trip for the End-of-Project-Meeting to Cologne in December 2023. From October until December the virtual joint seminar, supervised by Prof. Doris Mücke (University of Cologne) and Prof. Hiyon Yoo (University Paris Cité), took place. Details on the contents and activities of the project can be found under

“Project News” on the project website (<https://portal.uni-koeln.de/international/uoc-global/eduventure/eduventure-cologne-ivac/ivac-2023>).

This final report is supposed to highlight the advantages of virtual transnational teaching, to give an insight into which tools can be used and which skills both students and lecturers can improve upon. We also want to present the learning concepts used and evaluate whether these were adequate for a virtual setting, and to give an overview on which obstacles we came across.

Main Project Results

Throughout the project, two exchange trips (Kick-Off- and End-of-Project-Meeting) were successfully executed. According to the conclusive survey, all students said the virtual seminar was their first virtual exchange within an academic setting, and 88% of students said the in-person exchange was their first in-person exchange within an academic setting. We therefore consider the project to have made a successful contribution to providing equal opportunities to students who might otherwise not been able to partake in such an exchange. One of the students commented on the conclusive survey: “It was a truly enjoyable exchange, particularly the in-person interaction. I had the opportunity to visit the lab of another university, even in a different country. To my surprise, the specialization of Cologne's phonetics lab perfectly aligns with my interests. Thank you very much!”

13 (out of 18) students from Cologne and 15 (out of 16) students from Paris (82% of total amount of students) have successfully completed the course and handed in their 1-page project proposal, which they worked on in groups throughout the semester. 89% of students successfully formed transnational groups (consisting of both German and French students) to work on these projects together. Others ended up doing solo projects. Nevertheless, all work completed by the participants were shared amongst each other in an in person presentation format, allowing those who haven't had a collaborative project to exchange different academic prospects within the field of experimental phonetics.

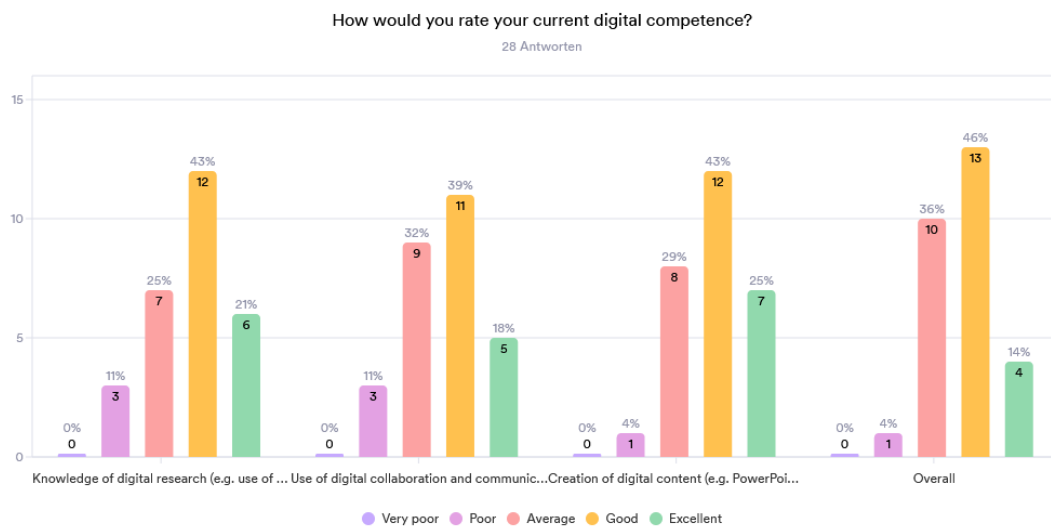
Online Learning and Digital Competence

The tools used in the course were Zoom (for virtual seminar sessions) and EduLabs (for the distribution of course contents and for digital communication between students as well as lecturers and students). When it comes to Zoom, 95% strongly agree or agree that it facilitated the transnational exchange in general. 94% strongly agree or agree that it facilitated collaborative learning and teaching. 79% strongly agree or agree that it facilitated reaching the learning objectives of the course. And finally, 94% strongly or agree that Zoom was easy to use. When it comes to EduLabs, 89% strongly agree or agree that it facilitated the transnational exchange in general. 95% strongly

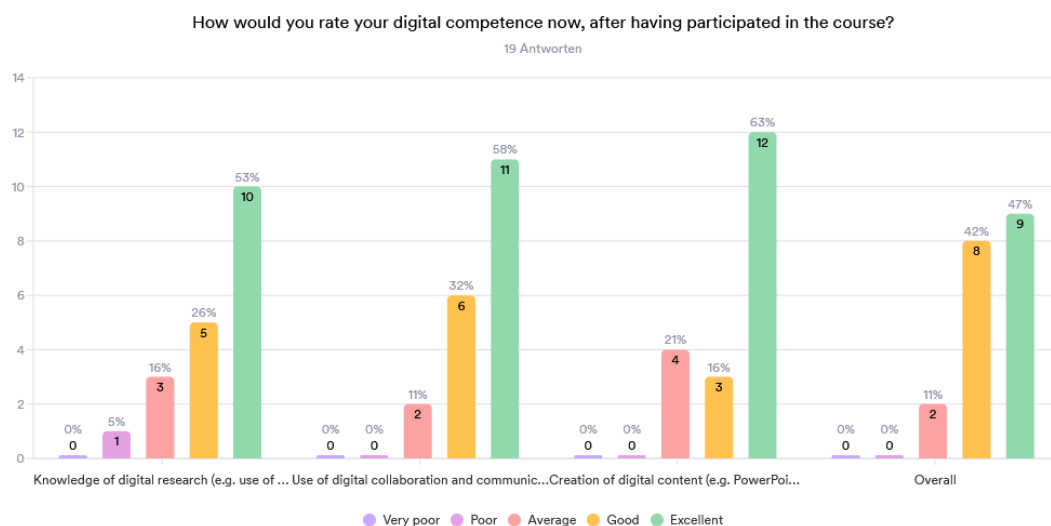
agree or agree that it facilitated collaborative learning and teaching. 94% strongly agree or agree that it facilitated reaching the learning objectives of the course. And finally, 90% strongly agree or agree that EduLabs was easy to use. Overall, we would recommend both Zoom and EduLabs for virtual, collaborative teaching.

We additionally evaluated various aspects of digital competence amongst all course participants. Comparing the initial survey (carried out at the beginning of the semester) to the conclusive survey (carried out at the end of the joint sessions) we see the following developments. We observe a clear increase in digital competence with 47% rating their overall competence as excellent in the conclusive survey as compared to 14% in the initial survey. As can be seen in the diagram below, the three specific areas of digital competence (knowledge of digital research, knowledge of digital collaboration and communication tools and creation of digital contents) evaluated in the survey show a clear increase in competence from before the course to after the course.

Initial survey:



Conclusive survey:



Model solutions regarding organisation and didactics

Various methods were used to structure the course and support the learning process. These were: weekly discussions of relevant literature; collaborative and digital preparation of a presentation regarding the weekly literature (discussion leaders); preparation of project proposals in transnational groups; in person presentation of project proposals during the End-of-Project-Meeting; and submission of term papers in the form of conference proceedings. When asked how much these methods assisted the learning experience when understanding different topics within the course, particularly the in-person presentations stood out as being helpful. Even the weekly discussions, the role as discussion leader, and preparation of project proposals, despite these methods being rated as neither helpful nor unhelpful by a few students. Regarding the in-person preparation, a student commented in the survey that “making presentations about project proposals indeed helped in writing project proposal”. Also, another student commented on the presentation and preparation of the literature that “it was nice to work in groups rather than individually because it helped us understand the literature better”. The rating of the submission of term papers in form of conference proceedings was below average which might be due to the fact that the term paper deadline was still in the future at the time of evaluation. All in all, another student commented that “I found it very exciting to get to know the perspectives and teachings of another university.”

There are a couple things that were mentioned both by students as well as the lecturers that should be kept in mind and improved upon next time. These can also be beneficial for other lecturers and universities trying to implement virtual, transnational teaching into their curriculum.

Lecturer: “I really enjoyed being two teachers, we could be complementary. I think we could have initiated more collaboration using more small groups, but I really liked teaching this class.”

Student: “I think it would be more beneficial to have clearer instructions for tasks we need to fulfill. Sometimes we can get a little bit lost without it.”

Student: “I would expect to have more teaching parts, for example, we might have a short introduction to the main subject to deal with next week at the end of each session, and then we go to the preparation of the presentation of the related papers. It would make it clearer and more structural.”

Student: “Maybe more time for the group projects.”

Student: “I think the only thing that could be improved is streamlining the differences between the two university semester systems and grading systems. There was a lot of confusion about timelines, due dates, what specifically was required to be

completed when, how they are graded. I think it just comes down to slightly different systems.”