

15 The Use of a Task-Based Online Forum in Language Teaching: Learning Practices and Outcomes

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Abstract

This chapter investigates students' reported patterns of use and perceived outcomes of an online intercultural exchange. It is hoped that the study will inform our understanding of the students' language learning process on an online discussion forum and consequently will help us maximise the educational potential of computer-mediated communication (CMC). It first considers the pedagogical benefits of CMC, paying particular attention to the specificity of an asynchronous CMC environment and the role of task-based language learning. It then briefly presents an online collaborative task integrated in a larger project which promotes a three phase approach and which has been carried out for five years. Drawing on qualitative data collected from a cohort of approximately 25 Irish undergraduate students after a six-week online experience with their French partners, it examines students' self-reported coping strategies when faced with challenges of a technical, cross-cultural and personal nature. It also explores students' perceived learning outcomes, namely building cultural knowledge, fostering critical thinking, improving language accuracy and encouraging further study. In light of these findings, it argues that a meaningful and 'authentic' learning task is essential to allow 'real life' online exchange to take place and to engage students in their own learning.

Keywords: computer-mediated communication, task-based learning, intercultural interactions, authentic use of language.

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1. Introduction

For the past decade online discussion forums have been gaining popularity in educational settings. As part of the current interest in Web 2.0 tools for language teaching, online discussion boards have become a common component in both distance and blended¹ courses in higher education (Cummings, Bonk, & Jacobs, 2002). When students are provided with an appropriate induction and support programme, these virtual platforms are perceived as easy to use (Lockley & Promnitz-Hayashi, 2012) and can offer an electronic environment that is accessible to participants who are otherwise separated by physical distance. In most language courses, the purpose of introducing an element of online discussion is to enable a collaborative construction of knowledge. Previous research on the use of CMC in language teaching has shown that when learners write in a foreign language, task design plays a fundamental role in fostering this collaboration (Kuteeva, 2007). Thus, in order to help maximise the educational outcomes of a task-based online discussion forum in foreign language learning, this study investigates students' patterns of learning and behaviour outside their classroom setting. More specifically, the following research questions are addressed: what kind of challenges do students encounter in this new learning environment and what coping strategies do they develop? What are the perceived learning benefits of task-based online interactions? What factors seem to influence the success of computer-mediated communication in university teaching?

This chapter first presents an online discussion forum task which is integrated in an undergraduate business and language course at the University of Limerick (UL). In doing so, it explains a number of pedagogical choices that were made to accommodate students' learning needs and practices in a virtual learning environment. Drawing on qualitative data collected from a cohort of approximately 25 Irish students throughout their six-week experience of CMC with their French partners, the paper then examines students' self-reported coping strategies and explores students' perceived learning outcomes. In the light of our

1. Blended courses consist of a combination of online and face-to-face tuition.

empirical findings, we make some recommendations about factors that should be considered when designing and implementing an on-line discussion forum.

2. Online discussion forums: theoretical background

2.1. The use of technology to mediate communication in second language acquisition

With the increasing use of CMC, new learning environments are emerging that generate meaningful interactions amongst learners and encourage students' strong involvement in the language learning process (Sotillo, 2000). Among these online learning platforms, the discussion forum offers a shared space in which students can exchange information, negotiate ideas, and construct knowledge in an interactive way. The asynchronous or 'delayed' nature of the discussion allows time for critical thinking (Kol & Schcolnik, 2008) and deeper learning (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000) as it enables students to make connections with past learning and to understand new concepts.

In language courses, CMC is considered an innovative way to expand students' use of a second language and improve students' reading and writing skills while exchanging messages (Little & Ushioda, 1998). Online forums generally provide a framework for text or topic discussion through the target language. Such activity requires students to organise their thoughts, challenge others' views, and take linguistic risks. Researchers in second language acquisition (SLA) put forward the argument that by facilitating the combination of two main language functions, namely interaction and reflection, CMC can promote language learning (Blake, 2000) as "students need to stretch their linguistic resources in order to meet the demands of real communication in a social context" (Ortega, 1997, p. 83).

Some recent studies on text-based CMC interactions have found that specific task design and implementation account for differences in quantitative and qualitative language production (for a comprehensive review, see Ortega, 2009)

whereas the mode of communication – under synchronous (e.g., chat rooms and video conferences) or asynchronous conditions (e.g., emails and discussion forums) – plays a minor role on language output (Brandl, 2012).

2.2. The role of task-based teaching in eliciting learner interaction

There is a general consensus among SLA researchers that task-based language teaching (TBLT) provides learners with opportunities to produce the target language in meaningful context, as it moves away from the traditional approach which focuses on the language per se, to a more communicative approach which encourages ‘real’ interaction between learners (Ellis, 2003). Proponents of collaborative learning stress that a task should be goal-oriented, should have more than one possible outcome and should allow learners to interact with one another over information beyond their repertoires (Pellettieri, 2000) – that is to say, beyond their current level of knowledge of the target language and culture – to ensure that students are actively involved in the process.

The effectiveness of task-based CMC, both synchronous and asynchronous, as a tool for second language teaching has been widely examined (e.g., Blake, 2000; Lee, 2002). While there is no conclusive evidence that interactive negotiation leads to language acquisition, it is widely accepted that this type of interaction among L2 learners is beneficial for L2 development. Smith (2004) illustrates the positive effects of task-based computer-mediated negotiated interaction on second language acquisition. These include: an *increased participation* among students, an *increased quantity* and *heightened quality* of learner output, an *increased attention* to linguistic form, and an *increased willingness* to take risks with their second language (my emphasis).

In such linguistically rich interactions – including some with native speakers (NS) of the target language – technology mediated contexts offer unexplored multi-dimensional perspectives to task-based activities and call for new teaching-learning practices that extend beyond the familiar ‘classroom boundaries’ (O’Dowd & Waire, 2009). New multifaceted and less predictable

patterns of communication may ensue and in turn, prompt teachers to adopt a more flexible approach to the implementation process of the task (Dooly, 2011). Ultimately these new contextual parameters may lead both researchers and practitioners to deconstruct the traditional roles of teacher and learner (Thomas & Reinders, 2010).

3. Methodological overview

3.1. Project outline

The online discussion forum is integrated in a larger project which promotes a three-phased approach. Language learners have to select a current French socio-political issue of their choice, retrieve information on the topic from online newspapers and magazines, and analyse it with a view to producing a piece of work demonstrating a thorough understanding of the topic. This individual project aims to broaden students' knowledge of Francophone current affairs, to deepen their awareness of the target culture and to advance their competence in the target language (see Appendix 1 for the project outline).

The CMC task starts mid-way through the project (week 6 of a 12-week course) and runs for 4 to 6 weeks depending on the group dynamic. Each L2 learner submits his/her assignment online and is paired with a native speaker who has expressed an interest in his/her topic. Students then have to engage in debate with their respective partners. In addition, at the end of the project, they have to reflect and report on their learning experience.

3.2. Participants' profile

A total of 24 Irish undergraduate students and 12 native speakers of French participated in the project. The Irish students (15 female and 9 male students) were between 21 and 22 years of age and were enrolled on a fourth year undergraduate business and French course; the French module represents 1/5 of their programme and four contact hours per week. All Irish students had

taken part in a collaborative blog the previous year. The native speakers (NS) were recruited among UL Erasmus and French postgraduate students (2/3) and among French colleagues and fellow-researchers (1/3); they were based either in Ireland or in their country of origin (metropolitan France or French overseas departments). Their voluntary participation was solicited through an email invitation. Their age ranged from 20 to 50. The majority of them were unknown to the learners or their real identity was kept from the learners (in the case of current tutors in the institution for example). They accepted to interact with two Irish students and were asked to post a minimum of three messages (per partnership) over the course of their exchanges. Their involvement was not rewarded in any way.

3.3. Task description

The discussion forum was set-up on the learning management system (LMS) of the institution for their specific module. In this case, the LMS is called *Sulis* and is powered by Sakai. Prior to the start of the exchanges, a discussion thread was created for each topic to facilitate both students and native speakers' assignment and not to burden participants with irrelevant information (see [Figure 1](#) below for the list of topics).

Students were given a 20 minute training session on how to use the forum whereas the native speakers were sent written instructions (including their username and password if needed). The asynchronous communication task was open and non prescriptive, the only clear requirements being that the learners' target language (French) be used at all times in the exchanges and that a minimum of three messages be posted by each participant over the course of the online task with no constraint of frequency.

As previously mentioned, the Irish students had to post their project work on the discussion forum and start the exchange by asking their partner a (controversial) question on their chosen topic. Participants were free to express their views and opinions and the dialogue was not restricted to the topic selected. In the closing stages of the project, the Irish students were asked to give their overall

impression of the online exchange experience and explain whether or not they had changed their views on the topic after their interactions with a native speaker. It is important to note that even though the teacher involved in the project had full access to students' postings, she never directly intervened in the exchanges. Any communication with the participants (technical support, gentle reminders, etc.) was carried out via email (see Figure 2 for an email sample).

Figure 1. Topics of discussion (snapshot of the virtual platform)

The screenshot shows a web interface for a discussion forum. On the left is a sidebar with navigation links like 'Calendar', 'Discussion Messages', 'COURSE TOOLS', and 'SITE MANAGEMENT'. The main area is titled 'Discussion' and contains a table of discussion topics.

Discussions	Topics	Messages	Last Message
Liste de sujets			
Sarkozy et les Français	1	9	04-23-2009 11:00:09 MARIE LOSSOWSKI
Le nouveau président des Etats-Unis et l'Europe	1	7	04-21-2009 15:29:18 LEANNE MCNAMARA
L'offensive israélienne à Gaza	1	6	04-21-2009 17:42:47 NACISE METADJER
"Les jeunes boivent plus qu'ils fument"	1	9	04-25-2009 14:10:44 REBECCA COLLINS
Sarkozy face aux enseignants-chercheurs en France	1	11	04-23-2009 20:15:04 Christian FR
La pauvreté/ Les mal-logés en France	1	9	04-23-2009 14:46:19 LOUISE EGLESTON
Sarkozy et la présidence de l'UE	1	10	04-21-2009 19:32:13 SARAH FROST
La France et les changements climatiques	1	9	04-24-2009 22:23:53 GRACE DOWLING
La crise économique en Irlande	1	8	04-28-2009 23:58:43 YVONNE HARTY
Citroën essaie de profiter de la crise	1	9	04-22-2009 22:44:30 EOLIN NICHAMON
La France et les OCM	1	9	04-27-2009 16:18:06

Figure 2. Student-teacher communication (email sample)

From : Marie-Therese.Batardiere	Sent : 24 March 2009 15:15
To : ULStudent:LOUISE XXXX	Subject : Forum de discussion FR4928
<i>Bonjour Louise, Nous avons recherché et trouvé une autre correspondante pour toi. Mais tu dois encore patienter car elle ne pourra se connecter que demain. Merci de ta compréhension. Marie-Thérèse</i>	
Fro : ULStudent:LOUISE XXXX	Sent : 24 March 2009 15:04
To : Marie-Therese.Batardiere	Subject : Forum de discussion FR4928
<i>Chere Marie-Therese, Je suis sur Sulis regulierement mais je n'ai reçu aucun réponse sur le site. Je comprends que je dois finir les échanges en semaine 10. Est ce-que vous pouvez m'aider? Merci, Louise.</i>	

3.4. Pedagogical changes made to the overall project

This type of project has been running for the last five consecutive years. The researcher has been guided by the methodological principles of action research which promote the development of understanding and the improvement of practice through the cyclical process of action and reflection (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). To inform further action, students were required to fill in a feedback questionnaire at the end of their learning experience. Analysis from the data collected during the first two years of the project led subsequently to a series of changes to the next cohort of students' project work (the one presented here):

- **Timing of the online exchange:** the exchange used to take place at the latter end of the project (the last four weeks), but is now introduced mid-way through the project in order to extend the period of interactions with the foreign partner and to give students more time for reflection.
- **Simplification of the analytical task:** the first task of the overall project has been shortened to ensure that students are ready to post it on the forum at an earlier date and engage more actively in the discussion forum task.
- **Choice of topics:** students used to have to write about a town or a region where they had sojourned during their Erasmus experience. This made the pairing with a native speaker more difficult (i.e., the necessity to find a NS who knew the town/ region picked by the L2 learner). In addition, the choice of a current French socio-political issue was deemed more controversial and should spark a debate between exchange partners.
- **Adoption to a new platform:** previously, we had used Internet classroom assistant (ICA), commonly referred to as *Nicenet* but this time, the discussion forum feature available in the learning management system of our university was used as students are familiar with this platform (i.e., they visit it on a daily basis for other courses). It was thought that this change might impact on their level of participation.

- **Reflection task:** students were asked to reflect and report on the exchange with the native speaker as part of their overall project. This evaluation task was seen not only a valuable source of feedback for the teacher/action researcher, but also as a retrospective task for the students on the relevance (or lack of thereof) of an online experience to their campus-based language study.

All these changes were implemented to stimulate the exchange between the L2 learners and the native speakers. In addition, a higher proportion of the overall project grade was allocated to the online task as it was considered central to their (inter)cultural language learning (see [Appendix 1](#) for details).

4. Data analysis and discussion of main findings

Figure 3. Online questionnaire (snapshot sample)

4. 8. What factors motivated you to post messages on Suli's? (please rate each element from 0 to 6)									
	0 (=not at all motivating)	1	2	3	4	5	6 (=very motivating)	Rating Average	Response Count
Compulsory as part of the internet project	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	6.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	18.8% (3)	25.0% (4)	50.0% (8)	6.13	16
Interesting to exchange ideas with another person	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	12.5% (2)	12.5% (2)	31.3% (5)	25.0% (4)	18.8% (3)	5.25	16
Authentic opportunity to communicate in French	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	6.3% (1)	6.3% (1)	31.3% (5)	25.0% (4)	31.3% (5)	5.69	16
Interesting to communicate with a French person	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	6.3% (1)	25.0% (4)	50.0% (8)	18.8% (3)	5.81	16
Useful to improve your French	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	6.3% (1)	25.0% (4)	6.3% (1)	18.8% (3)	43.8% (7)	5.69	16
Good way to get information about French culture	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	6.3% (1)	18.8% (3)	37.5% (6)	25.0% (4)	12.5% (2)	5.19	16
Good way to get information about your topic	0.0% (0)	6.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	25.0% (4)	12.5% (2)	25.0% (4)	31.3% (5)	5.44	16
Interesting to get the viewpoint of a French person	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	12.5% (2)	25.0% (4)	43.8% (7)	18.8% (3)	5.69	16
Interesting to know the point of view of your partner	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	12.5% (2)	12.5% (2)	25.0% (4)	37.5% (6)	12.5% (2)	5.25	16
Exciting to use new technologies to communicate with someone	18.8% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	50.0% (8)	12.5% (2)	18.8% (3)	0.0% (0)	3.94	16
Curious to get to know your partner	12.5% (2)	31.3% (5)	18.8% (3)	31.3% (5)	6.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.88	16

The data analysed in this study was obtained through student feedback collected from three sources: i) student comments on the exchange (as part of the overall project and completed by 21 out of 24 students), ii) student questionnaire (filled two weeks after the end of the project and completed by 16 out of 24 students; see [Figure 3](#) above), iii) student interview (to which 3 students agreed to take part as a follow-up from the questionnaire).

Both quantitative and qualitative data were examined with the aim to highlight salient patterns of behaviour adopted by students to complete the online task and to determine what they perceived as the benefits of the Franco-Irish online exchange.

4.1. Students' coping patterns of behaviour

While a majority of the students (62.6%) stated that they undoubtedly enjoyed the online discussion task, they underlined the fact that they found it quite challenging. The challenges – and the subsequent steps taken to circumvent them – can be broadly categorised as follows: technical, cross-cultural and personal ‘obstacles’.

A few technical glitches occurred at the onset of the project. These were mainly due to the complicated way of accessing the institution virtual learning environment (VLE) by the native speakers and the time delay for a few postings to appear on the forum. They consequently made the beginning of the exchange difficult for a few students. However, once the teacher (who could call for extra technical support during the project) was made aware of these problems by students, she intervened to solve them. Some students also complained that they did not receive any email alert when a new message was posted on their thread and had to log on the forum to check it. Unfortunately, their request has yet to be accommodated on the university virtual learning environment.

Regarding the cross-cultural collaborative process, there were particular challenges posed by the lack of interaction between dyad partners. From the Irish student perspective, the reason for their problems was twofold: a lack of queries

from the French partners (making it difficult to sustain a lively discussion) and a lack of responses to their questions (limiting the opportunity to get a ‘French viewpoint’). In both cases, students coped by adopting a new communication technique and learning approach; when faced with a lack of queries, they introduced a new claim to revive the discussion, and when confronted with a deficit of information, they researched the requested topic themselves.

For some students, the actual performance of the task posed a challenge. They had to overcome the anxiety to write to a French native speaker whom they did not know for a ‘real’ purpose. A few students stressed that they were self-conscious about their level of French and were afraid that their language ability would impede the depth of the discussion. Interestingly, they affirmed that their fear lessened with usage and with new learning strategies: they observed the native speakers’ argumentative style, picked up some useful vocabulary and expressions, read other threads of discussion to assess their own contribution, etc.

From the above reflexions we can contend that, when faced with a new task, students had to learn to overcome new challenges. In doing so, they developed a new set of learning and communicative strategies and consequently new patterns of behaviour.

4.2. Students’ perceived benefits of the online discussion task

In their feedback, students identified the various benefits drawn from their participation to the online exchange. These benefits were grouped into four main areas, namely building cultural knowledge, fostering critical thinking, improving language accuracy and encouraging further study; in each of the four areas several students’ comments are included to illustrate their views.

Students first stated that they had become *more knowledgeable on their selected topic*. In the comments section of the project, over two thirds of the students said that they had vastly improved their understanding of the current issue studied. Moreover, 68.8% of the questionnaire respondents selected ‘to get information

on the topic' as one of the main benefits of the exchange, while another 68.8% added that their 'interest in the topic increased during the exchange'. They particularly valued having access to a different (sometimes new) viewpoint on the topic, especially from a French native speaker as they believed that it gave them an 'authentic' socio-cultural perspective.

Student S: C'était inestimable aussi d'avoir l'occasion d'apprendre la perspective française¹ (Reflection task).

Student Y: As my French partner expressed her ideas it encouraged me to find out more about the subject (Questionnaire).

Student F: It [the exchange] gave a more realistic account rather than reading about it in a newspaper (Questionnaire).

Moreover, students explained that they had become *more assertive about expressing opinions*. In the questionnaire, the majority of the respondents (75.1%) declared that the exchange often challenged their initial beliefs. They mentioned in their comments that they found the discussion demanding because they had to present a clear line of reasoning and integrate the others' viewpoints in their argument. It would seem that the exchange provided them with a platform for critical thinking.

Student A: La discussion a vraiment contesté la validité de mes opinions préconçue² (Reflection task).

Student R: Good to get a French persons perspective. Provoked debate (Questionnaire).

Student J: Once you had made-up your own mind on the topic, it was good having the other side of things (Interview).

1. English translation: It was also invaluable to get a French perspective.

2. English Translation: The discussion has really challenged my preconceived views.

When questioned on the linguistic value of the exchange, students claimed that they had become *more fluent and accurate in the target language*. All the students who filled up the questionnaire said that they paid more attention than usual to their French and in the reflection task, many of them referred to the linguistic gains of the exchange. They particularly highlighted the amount of writing produced, the access to authentic language – vocabulary related to their topic, expressions and phrases, sentence structure, etc. – as well as their substantial efforts to produce better French than usual in order to be understood by their partner.

Student K: ...très avantageux pour moi parce qu'il aide mon niveau de vocabulaire¹ (Reflection task).

Student F: I learned about sentence structure, etc. from partner's postings (Questionnaire).

Student L: ...idioms and things like that that I read from my partner [...] I used them in other areas as well, like in my exams and orals (Interview).

Lastly, one third of the students indicated that the discussion forum had made them *more autonomous and more responsible for their own learning* thus, more inclined to take initiatives to carry out extra work, either by reading other dyads' postings, or by undertaking extra research on the topic. This extra work always came as a strategy to compensate for a deficit such as a lack of information provided by their partner, a lack of knowledge on their behalf to produce a valid argument, or as previously pointed to, a lack of appropriate vocabulary or expressions.

Student N: J'ai reçu seulement une réponse mais ça m'a poussé de faire plus de recherche indépendant² (Reflection task).

1. English translation: [...] very beneficial for me because it helps enrich my vocabulary.

2. English translation: I received only one reply but it pushed me to do more independent research.

Student M: I did a lot of research on the topic to get new ideas and I followed regularly the French news (Questionnaire).

Student R: It motivated me to work harder and read further (Interview).

These findings would seem to suggest that, for some students, the incomprehension or frustration experienced with online intercultural communication motivated them to become more autonomous in their learning.

5. Implications

In this chapter, we set out to identify the challenges posed by virtual exchanges on a discussion forum and the ways students chose to tackle them. It was found that when faced with ‘obstacles’ of a technical, cross-cultural and personal nature, students responded positively and resorted to a new range of communication and learning strategies. We then sought to examine the perceived learning outcomes of a task-based discussion forum. Four main benefits were highlighted by the students, namely, building cultural knowledge, fostering critical thinking, improving language accuracy and encouraging further study. Finally, regarding the potential factors influencing the online task educational outcomes, we posit that, on the strength of students’ positive perceptions of, and attitudes towards asynchronous CMC, the authenticity and complexity of an online task are paramount to the degree of students’ enthusiasm and commitment to task.

This goal (i.e., to create a challenging authentic task) was achieved by taking the following steps: at the onset of the project, by allowing students to select and research their own topics of interest rather than working from a teacher-determined list of topics; by involving students in a cognitively challenging real-world activity; later on, by inviting ‘real people’ into the virtual classroom to assist students’ inquiry; and finally, by encouraging students to take more responsibility for their learning (Hanna & de Nooy, 2003, 2009).

Furthermore, in terms of course design, our results bear out that a combination of factors such as, the integration and careful structuring of the online task, the clarity of the marking criteria (see [Appendix 1](#)) and the ease of participation, can affect favourably students' involvement in the task. It is worthy of note that in the retrospective interviews, these business students stressed that they gave prime importance to their online language exchange (O'Dowd, 2010).

6. Limitations and conclusion

The findings presented in this paper are to be taken cautiously due to the relatively small number of participants (24), the nature of the data (i.e., the study is based on self-reported perceptions of students), and given the context in which the asynchronous online communication took place (i.e., the participants were university students, quite motivated, with an intermediate to high level of French); results should therefore be regarded as indicative only of patterns that might be found with other L2 learners working in a CMC environment. Indeed, a replication of our study with a larger number of subjects coming from a more varied array of backgrounds would certainly contribute to understanding the extent of the role of native speakers (as opposed to interactions between non-native speakers of the target language) in an online discussion forum.

Nonetheless, the present study adds to a growing body of research on the added value of CMC on students' intercultural and language development. It underlines the benefits of a well-designed and fully integrated online forum as a learning space where undergraduate students can acquire a range of transferable skills as well as improve their linguistic and intercultural competence. Indeed, it shows that the Irish students were not deterred by challenges which paved the way to the completion of the online project but, instead, took on a proactive and constructive role in the online forum.

Another notable side finding of this study was the quasi-invisible role of the teacher during the online task (as perceived by the students). Indeed, her role

which was decisive in the design and implementation of the task, became less active – and more ‘responsive’ – during the actual performance of the task as student peers shared the ‘teaching presence’ online (Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, & Archer, 2001) with her. Students’ *teaching behaviour* was evidenced in their on-line contributions (postings); the peers’ assistance was usually given in the forms of scaffolding and feedback (Ab Jalil & Rahman, 2010).

This latter finding emphasises the role of human agency in a mediated (online) environment and supports the view that the key to successful use of technology in language teaching lies not in hardware or software but in “humanware” (Warschauer & Meskill, 2000, p. 307).

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Project outline

FR4928 Recherche sur la presse française via Internet 30%

1. REGARDS SUR L'ACTUALITE

Semaines de 2 à 5 / Travail individuel / 15%

-Vous rechercherez plusieurs articles traitant d'un même sujet d'actualité et tirés de journaux/ magazines de différentes tendances – *Le Monde, Le Figaro, Libération, l'Express, la Croix, le Nouvel Observateur, etc.*, les lirez, et les référencerez.

-Vous sélectionnerez un seul de ces articles pour l'analyser.

-Vous rapporterez succinctement l'information/ les faits (75 mots environ / 5%)

-Vous analyserez – sous forme de commentaire – certaines prises de position du journaliste (2 au minimum/ 250 mots environ / 10%)

2. ECHANGES D'OPINION SUR L'ACTUALITE /3 contributions minimum/

Semaines de 6 à 10 / Travail en tandem avec un(e) francophone sur SULIS / 10%

-Vous mettrez votre commentaire sur le forum de discussion

-Vous choisirez l'un des points controversés que vous aurez abordés pour en discuter avec votre correspondant(e) et, pour lancer la discussion, vous soumettrez une question qui sera postée sur le forum, à la suite de votre commentaire.

-Vous lirez les réactions –à vos affirmations- de votre partenaire.

-Vous défendrez vos arguments et en avancerez de nouveaux.

3. AUTRE PERSPECTIVE SUR L'ACTUALITE

Semaines 11 & 12 / Travail individuel / 5%

Suite à vos interactions – en ligne – avec un(e) francophone, vous expliquerez, d'une part, si et de quelle façon, votre regard/ perspective sur la question d'actualité étudiée, a changé (150 mots environ) et d'autre part, vous évalueriez la valeur (ajoutée) de l'échange en ligne.



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