

## Learning evaluation scenario

Portuguese Partner

Nilza Costa

Rita Leal

Diogo Casanova

## Actors involved

We built this scenario focus on a context where there are students from different countries enrolled in a virtual mobility course. In this scenario it is possible to have one course running in the country A, given by a teacher from a country B with students from countries C, D and E.

## Settings

We built this learning evaluation scenario using an assessment methodology composed by five different dimensions (Individual Work, Group Work, Personal Learning Environment, Online Interactions and Inter-cultural relations). These five dimensions can live together but they can also be adopted for a specific unit a part from each other. It is possible for a teacher to choose just two or three dimensions according to his specific interest or even to give more importance to a specific dimension in comparison with others.

This scenario is built on two premises: The first premise is that it will be possible to develop this scenario without financial constrains of any kind. The only constrain we would have would be the obligation of each student and teacher to have a computer and an internet connection. We have tried to develop this scenario focusing on the use of open source and/or freeware tools in order to assure that there won't be financial problems due to the fact that we are facing different realities in each country. The second premise is that teachers would be in the same geographic distance from all the students. It would be a 100% online course and all students would start with the same conditions.

Other important aspect is that, in a virtual mobility course, we find the inter-cultural aspect very relevant (people from different backgrounds and cultures working together). Besides the normal course of class the relationships between students and the cultural and language knowledge that they will obtain when relating with their teacher and their colleagues should be evaluated. Taking this in mind the Inter-cultural dimension should be the only one compulsory to be evaluated, even though the percentage of this

dimension in the final grade could range depending on the assumption of the importance of this dimension for the specific class.

### ***The teacher role***

The teacher in this scenario will have a central and very important role of facilitating the knowledge acquisition. The teacher will present the five dimensions where students are being assessed and he/she will give some clues for the individual and group work.

## **Dimensions**

As said before there are five dimensions (figure 1) that can support learning evaluation and that, as we assume, can range depending on what each teacher or course requires. These dimensions are in fact models that can be used for developing learning strategies and assess the learning behaviour and outcomes that students achieve when facing several tasks appointed by the teacher. Students learn by doing their specific task and interacting with other students while the teachers facilitate, share, comment and tutor the process of knowledge construction.

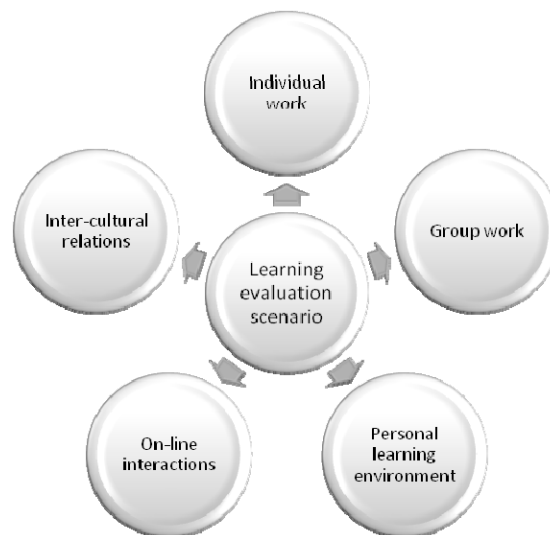


Figure 1: Learning evaluation scenario

The choice of these dimensions for assess learning will depend on the educational approaches from the teachers involved, the subject, the student workload, the specific goals and the timeline. As pointed out before we choose, for this scenario, a social constructivism educational approach based on the use of ICT and social networking to support and enhance the construction of knowledge. However if one decide to

design exams and deliverer them online it is also possible and it would be allocated on the individual work dimension.

## **Intention / purpose / (learning) outcome:**

In this scenario students will experience a Collaborative Work course that will run for one semester and that will have 8 ECTS workload. Students and teacher have one hour period per week to discuss their work and specific doubts online. These meetings can be done using Instant Messaging tools, Voip or video-conferencing. The instruction language will be English; however students are motivated to establish dialogs in other languages with their foreign colleagues due to the fact that there is a strong aim of enhancing intercultural understanding.

## ***Learning outcomes***

At the end of the Course students should:

- Write collaboratively using online applications
- Exchange knowledge with their group of colleagues, enhancing their intercultural understanding of different cultural and social environments
- Design their Personal Learning Environment (PLE)
- Communicate in online synchronous and asynchronous way
- Write more fluent English

## **Processes / activities:**

In the first session the teacher will present the group task that students have to do in order to complete the course. This task will be to write a collaborative document/brochure about a country represented by a student in the class. However the members of the group cannot be natural from the country they are working on.

At the same time the teacher will present the assessment grid that will support the duration of the entire course. It is important to show how the assessment is going to be made in order to clarify students' doubts and questions.

For this specific course the assessment of the five dimensions will be the following:

- **Dimension 1 Group work** - writing a brochure about an European country (30%)
- **Dimension 2 Individual assignment** – writing a essay with no more than 5 pages on collaborative writing (20%)

- **Dimension 3 Online-interaction** – students' online participation on class Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and on virtual meetings with colleagues and with the teacher (20%)
- **Dimension 4 Inter-cultural** – students interest for inter-cultural activities outside the specific group work (15%)
- **Dimension 5 PLE** - design and development of a public Personal Learning Environment about the course subjects (15%)

The software we are going to use to support our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is the Facebook, a social network that allows teachers and students to interact publishing news and new ideas and thoughts, forum threads, comments and positive feedback (the I like button). The general questions about the course function have to be made on the class forum so everyone can access to the information. The use of e-mail is strongly discouraged. Announcements, learning materials and course information will be uploaded in the tool. However in a different scenario, if the teacher, students and/or institution don't feel open to show this kind of information online it is suggested Google Wave or NING, because both of these tools allow closing classroom walls.

The synchronous moments (between teacher-students and students-students) will be done using Google Wave because it also records all the conversation and inputs which gives the teacher the opportunity of assessing the quality of the interaction in group sessions (for instance who gives better inputs on work meetings). Therefore the teacher has to be involved/invited to all the waves (in Google Wave a new conversation is a wave).

### ***Dimension 1 Group work***

As previously said in this scenario the group work will be the writing of a brochure that promotes the culture, geography and history of a European country. The writing process can be done by using Wikis (Wetpaint, Wikispaces or PbWiki) or using open web oriented word processors (Google Docs, Zoho or Etherpad). It is important to use a tool that leaves trace of the specific work one student makes on the document.

The final presentation of the work can be made by using a text format (Myebook) a multimedia format (Animoto, Vuvox or Jing) or a Video format (Kaltura).

The assessment of this group work has four different dimensions:

- Content: Scientific quality + Originality + Capability of focusing on work objectives
- Self-evaluation: each student will fill a grid for his/her self assessment in this task

- Hetero-evaluation: Work quality + Group Work as a whole + evaluation of all the members' work inside the group
- Final Brochure

## ***Dimension 2 Individual work***

The individual work is important to understand the critical capability of the student to reflect on the subject that he/she learned during the course. Even though we name it as dimension 2 this work ends the learning evaluation phase and it consists on an essay that each student has to make, with no more than five pages, about collaborative writing and its application for their specific working life. In this scenario we encourage to use Blogs (Blogspot, Wordpress, Livejournal) to write this essay because it allows teachers to subscribe Blog Feeds and follow the students that are experiencing more difficulties. The assessment is done specifically on the quality of the essay (critical thinking + writing skills + references quality).

## ***Dimension 3 Online-interaction***

As we evaluate students' participation in a physical class in online environments it is important to evaluate students' participation and their contribution to class knowledge. Assessing online participation is crucial but it is also tricky. Quantity is important but it is not fundamental. Quality is crucial but its pertinence depends on the context and the previous and following interaction. Even the time when a certain statement is done can influence the quality of that statement. When assessing student online participation we have, first of all, to determine where this interaction is going to be made, determine where is going to be our "classroom". We have to choose a classroom that allows us to archive the interactions and their context (the previous and following interactions) in order to understand the reason and the feedback it obtained. Even if we don't individually consider a certain interaction with quality, we should consider it with some quality if it brings positive feedback from other students. There are several models to evaluate online interactions like the ones defended by Chan, Chow & Cheung (2004) or by Gunawardena, Lowe & Anderson (1998). However, for this scenario, we choose the model presented by Philips (2000):

Category	Description
E	Irrelevant, unhelpful
D	Demonstrates monitoring of discussion
C	Attempt at involvement, not grasping issues, does not progress debate
B	Good effort, demonstrates comprehension, progresses debate.
A	Excellent input, demonstrates strong comprehension, takes debate into new areas

**Table 1a** Categories of quality in online discussion messages.

Marks Allocated	Number and type of posts
6	2*A or 1*A and 4*B
5	1*A and 3*B
4	1*b and at least 3*C
3	At least 4*C
2	Any number of Ds
1	Any number of Es

Table 1b Marking criteria for online discussions based on the number and quality of each posting.

Figure 2 Model for evaluating online participation (Source: Phillips, 2000)

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### ***Dimension 4 Inter-cultural***

This dimension is important because of its direct relation with a specific Learning Outcome presented for this course “Students should Exchange knowledge with their group of colleagues, enhancing their intercultural understanding of different cultural and social environments”. Intercultural experiences allow the development of transversal competences, such as the acquisition of foreign languages and cultural and social knowledge. Therefore 10% of the final grade is allocated to inter-cultural exchange and the effort from each student to establish new knowledge and share cultural experiences. This assessment is done by evaluating online synchronous and asynchronous interactions related with this topic but also each student can evaluate their colleague giving 1, 2, 3 points depending on the next criteria: 1- if he/she didn't establish inter-cultural connection, 2- if he tried sometimes to establish inter-cultural connection, and 3- if he/she did establish always inter-cultural connections (3).

### ***Dimension 5 PLE***

Each student enrolled in this course is suggested to develop their own Personal Learning Environment where he can arrange the course teaching material, his findings and his communication tools. However, because it is important to disseminate knowledge and to promote both the course and the virtual mobility, each student will also have to design is own public personal environment, his public portfolio for the specific class. This will also be assessed by the teacher using, for the evaluation criteria, the quality of the resources and the originality. For this PLE we suggest the use of Netvibes, iGoogle or Pageflakes.

## Resume of evaluation activities

	Dimension 1 Group work		Dimension 2 Individual assignment		Dimension 3 Online-interaction		Dimension 4 Inter-cultural		Dimension 5 PLE	
	30%	R	20%	R	20%	R	15%	R	15%	R
Content	40%	T								
Self-evaluation	10%	S								
Hetero-evaluation	10%	S								
Final Brochure	40%	T								
Critical thinking			40%	T						
Writing capability			40%	T						
References quality			20%	T						
Online interaction - Philips evaluation grid (2000)					100%	T				
Online interaction Students evaluation (each student evaluates his colleague)							50%	T		
Quality of the resources							50%	S		
Originality									80%	T
									20%	T

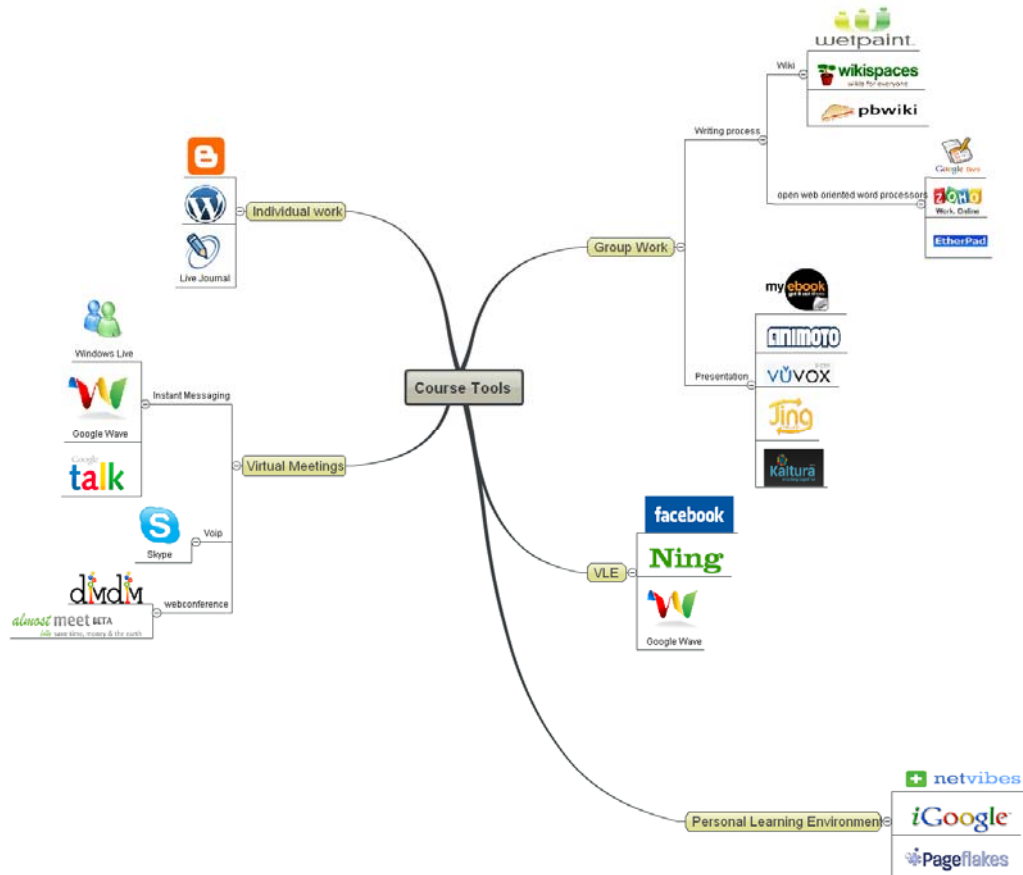
**caption**

responsible R  
student S  
teacher T

Figure 3 – Assessment grid

## Tools

To build this scenario we used several open source/freeware tools depending for each phase. We have tried to suggest more than one software for each phase of the course in order to give to students' different opportunities of working with each other, as can be seen in figure 2.



However it is also possible to allow students to search for their specific tool. The requisite is that specific software chosen by the student should answer to what the teacher is expecting. There is a list of open source software available [here](#) and [here](#).

## Self and hetero- evaluation

In several stages of the evaluation process students are asked to proceed to self evaluation (or using a specific grid or writing a critical essay). The objective of the individual essay is to have a critical report on the knowledge acquisition and its repercussion for students' further work. Students are also encouraged to assess their own work and their participation in the group work.

We also think it is important for students to develop a hetero-evaluation. Thus, students will be required to evaluate the work performed by their colleagues in the group work as well in the intercultural dimension (described above). In this way, students have the opportunity to learn with each other (critical friends) and with the teacher.

## Evidence of success

All the students can participate and give ideas to improve the results. The final assignment can also give important feedback on how this course was important for students and how it feel their expectations. If the Learning Outcomes we addressed are achieved we can assume that the course was successful. However the teacher is going to deliver, after the end of the course, a grid for course evaluation. It is important to deliver this grid after the students' final evaluation so it will not interfere in the students' judgment.

## References

- Chan, A., Chow, P., & Cheung, K. (2004). Student Participation Index: Student Assessment in Online Courses. In *Advances in Web-Based Learning – ICWL 2004* (Vol. 3143/2004, pp. 449-456). Heidelberg: Springer Berlin.
- Gunawardena, C. N., Lowe, C. A., & Anderson, T. (1998). *Transcript analysis of computer-mediated conferences as a tool for testing constructivist and social-constructivist learning theories*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference on Distance Teaching & Learning, Madison.
- Phillips, R (2000). *Facilitating online discussion for interactive multimedia project management*. Available online in <http://otis.scotcit.ac.uk/> (Access online on the 13 of September 2005).