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Virtual Exchange length: Do short exchanges have an impact?

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Virtual Exchanges (VEs) promote language acquisition and increase communication confidence, self-perceived communication competence (SPCC), digital literacy, cross-cultural understanding, collaboration skills, and intercultural competence. Current literature has yet to explore the effect of time spent on VE tasks and the complexity of those tasks as they relate to students' SPCC, communication anxiety, or self-efficacy. This presentation compares a long and short VE held a year apart with similar students. The first VE was an eight-week collaborative online international learning (COIL) project with students from Japan, Spain, and Türkiye. The second VE was less than three weeks with students from Japan and Korea. The COIL required English as a lingua franca to complete reports and a video on implementing SDGs at school. The shorter VE also used English as a lingua franca but required students to create two Flip videos and hold a short synchronous conversation. Students completed a pre- and post-VE survey containing Likert-type statements and open-ended questions. In both cases, students saw an increased self-efficacy and SPCC and a decrease in communication anxiety. However, the changes were more pronounced in the COIL project. These results highlight the value of VEs, even if they are short. VEs allow students to engage with student peers from other cultures and can change perceptions of language learning to one that is communicative rather than academic. Not all students benefitted equally from the VEs. This presentation will suggest task types and VE length based on student profiles.

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Keywords

COIL, Virtual Exchange, self-efficacy, communication competence, communication anxiety

Primary author: REMMERSWAAL, Robert (Prefectural University of Kumamoto)

Presenter: REMMERSWAAL, Robert (Prefectural University of Kumamoto)

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