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Teacher Agency, Positioning, and Sensemaking in an International Virtual Exchange

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TITLE

Teacher Agency, Positioning, and Sensemaking in an International Virtual Ex

RELEVANT SIG

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

FORMAT

In-person interactive poster session

Short English description

KEYWORDS

computer supported collaborative learning (CSCL); EFL; virtual exchange; CALL

ABSTRACT

Computer supported collaborative learning (CSCL) refers to more than one student working together towards a learning objective using technology. CSCL research examines the relationship between technology, people, and their learning. One example of CSCL projects in language learning are virtual exchanges. A virtual exchange connects students and teachers across different cultures and geographic locations through technology. In the context of language education, virtual exchanges promote learner agency by giving them the opportunity to use the target language in authentic contexts. Also they can promote teacher agency by facilitating opportunities to work collaboratively with international partners to develop new teaching and learning experiences beyond the classroom. However, understanding the social aspects of collaboration through technology is underdeveloped in CSCL scholarship. This qualitative grounded theory case study examined teacher positioning and their agency within an international virtual exchange. The virtual exchange took place across seven higher education institutions in four countries (Israel, Italy, Japan and Poland). Data were collected through observation, documentation, lesson materials and interviews over one semester of the exchange. The findings indicate how teacher positioning informs teacher agency, sensemaking, and socially sensitive design decisions. A sociomaterial model of relational pedagogy is introduced as a possible framework to guide CSCL.

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