A critical analysis of the effects of a videoconferencing project on pupils' learning about culture and language

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of introducing video recording and videoconferencing technology to a year 9 French class in a Suffolk upper school. Pupils participated in audiovisual contact with pupils in the same year in a French school via a live video link, and the effects of this contact on pupils' perceptions of culture and language learning were analysed following questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations. The results showed a notable increase in pupils' interest in people from other cultures and pupils demonstrated a sophisticated awareness of their own language learning and of the difficulty of live communication. Although problems were encountered with regards to whole-class involvement, privacy and the quality of the technology available, the project also resulted in an improvement in motivation with many pupils eager to increase the amount of contact they had with French people of their own age.

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Introduction

> 'La relation à l'autre ... nous indique la part la plus haute, la plus honorable, la plus enrichissante de nous-mêmes. Que tombent les murs.'
>
> (Glissant & Chamoiseau, 2007 : 25)

This is an exciting but frustrating time for modern foreign language (MFL) teaching and learning. The European Union is expanding as boundaries between countries are growing weaker, while continuing advances in technology are beginning to allow for meaningful communication to take place between people in different countries without crossing borders or even leaving one's home. Although some of this technology has been available for some time, only recently has it made its way into the secondary MFL classroom in the United Kingdom. Furthermore, at a time in which foreign exchange trips have become more difficult to arrange due to heightened security concerns and protracted criminal checks, technology has offered a solution to one of the fundamental challenges to language learning: how can practitioners make languages relevant to learners inside and outside the classroom? Writing for the Council of Europe, Byram (1997: 19) stresses the point that exchanges are "one of the most important means of developing intercultural competence" and that technology can help pupils "engage with otherness, even though it may be distant in space."

The recent advances in technology provide a wide array of opportunities for communication which, from my observations in a range of schools, are seldom fully being seized. With a data projector and internet connection in most classrooms, it seemed clear to me that these resources should be used to aid learning. It is with this challenge in mind that I decided to undertake an action research project to discover how videoconferencing between year 9 pupils in England and their counterparts in *quatrième* in France could improve learning. This took the form of a series of preparatory video recordings in class leading up to a live

videoconferencing link with a French school during a lesson. I concentrate on pupils' interest in culture as this was an aspect of the curriculum which seemed in need of reinforcing, given the fact that there was no exchange trip in place. Any resulting changes in motivation were also then analysed in conjunction with pupils' understanding of language learning as a more general concept. I chose, therefore, to focus the study on the following research questions:

Research Questions	Data (in order of importance)
Which types of cultural awareness and understanding can be developed through audiovisual contact with native French speakers?	Questionnaires Group interview Classroom observation
To what extent can such a project affect pupils' understanding of language learning?	Group interview Questionnaires Classroom observation
What other outcomes result from the project, inside and outside the classroom?	Questionnaires Classroom observation Group interview

As a trainee teacher in my second professional placement, I believe strongly that learning languages serves a real and important purpose and that learners should be aware of their relevance, for not only can languages promote communication between individuals, but between those from different countries and cultures. If language learners do not perceive any genuine communication between cultures to take place, however, how are they to understand the relevance of the languages they are studying? It is for this reason that I decided to offer pupils the chance to take part in live interaction with their peers in France, using technology as a medium to facilitate authentic communication in the absence of an exchange visit.

I will begin by reviewing the literature which surrounds this project. As very few studies have been published about the effects of live videoconferencing within a UK secondary MFL classroom, I have had to look further afield to studies about its use in higher education as well as discussions of other types of computer mediated communication (CMC) such as email exchanges, blogs and instant messaging software. Of course, as this project focuses primarily

on pupils' learning of culture and their motivation, I have also consulted a broader range of literature in these areas, although little of this is presented with explicit reference to digital technology. This will be looked at in light of recent developments in policy documents from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the national strategies from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) in conjunction with European guidance from the Council of Europe. I will then give an overview of the methodology I decided to follow having read the relevant literature, highlighting my chosen data collection methods and how the intervention was put into place on a practical and pedagogical level. I will discuss the limitations of this methodology as well as suggesting its benefits in terms of the implications for the validity of the project. Following on from this, I will present, analyse and discuss the data thematically with regards to the research questions and how this fits in with the existing literature. Finally, I will offer a tentative conclusion including suggestions of how this project could be improved, in addition to its place in the wider context of MFL teaching and learning and the prospect of future study in this area.

It is important to state from the outset that the aim of this project was not to impart cultural *knowledge* to the pupils concerned; the goal was rather to encourage *interest* in culture, and more specifically in *people* from a foreign country, as well as providing opportunities for intercultural communication and reflection within an MFL context. Whether or not this intervention had any impact on pupils' intercultural awareness in its broadest sense will be discussed later on. Clearly, any conclusions drawn from this research project can only be considered as tentative due to the small scale and relatively narrow scope of the research undertaken. While the modern language teaching community may find some of the outcomes of this study interesting, the results presented here should be considered in the context in which they are found and I stress that any wider statements, although carefully considered, may be speculative and cannot be taken as conclusive evidence. This said; I believe that the project offers an interesting insight into this group of pupils' perceptions of their own learning of language and culture, as well as investigating the practicalities and educational benefits of introducing innovative audiovisual technology within the MFL classroom.

Literature review

> "If students emerge with a sense that culture is *here* as well as *there*, if they begin to recognize the differences that reside within self and home and can respect rather than fear the unfamiliar, they will have crossed an important educational threshold."

> (Knutson, 2006: 605)

Policy perspectives

The Department for children, schools and families (DCSF) offers guidance on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) as part of the KS3 framework for languages. They suggest that teachers should use ICT to improve pupils' "communication in writing and speaking", "cultural awareness of the target language countries and communities" and "communication with people from target-language countries and communities." (http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/194445, accessed 6th April 2010) This guidance, along with the national curriculum programme of study (NC PoS) which includes encouraging the use of "live or recorded audio and video resources" for "accessing and communicating information in the target language" (QCA, 2007) provided part of my motivation for pursuing this project. I will now attempt to show how this fits in with the relevant literature published in this area of study.

The emergence and continuing development of new technologies

There are numerous papers published in the last decade which consider the impact of new technologies on language learning. Before referring to them, however, it is first necessary to clarify certain terms which will be common throughout this study. One which is occasionally disputed is Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC). Defined by Susan Herring (1996: 1), CMC is "communication that takes place between human beings via the instrumentality of computers." Although a variety of terms are used to describe the different types of CMC (Evans, 2009; Lamy & Hampel, 2007), the specific reference to communication makes CMC a convenient term to use for the remainder of this study.

It is worth noting that researchers have been discussing the potential of CMC since as early as 1989 (Lamy & Hampel, 2007). Kramsch (1993) also predicted the promise of using multimedia as a tool for learning language and culture with a particular focus on its interactive nature. She suggests practical ways in which multimedia can enhance learning but

offers words of warning for teachers if its implementation is to be successful. She outlines teachers' responsibilities thus: "Never before have teachers so urgently needed to know what knowledge they want to transmit and for what purpose" (Kramsch, 1993: 201). In other words, technology is not enough to ensure successful learning on its own; the teacher must still provide carefully considered opportunities for learning but is now able to draw on a much wider and more accessible context than previously. It is important to note that Kramsch's (1993) work is the culmination of many years of research, and, although not an empirical study in its own right, it can be considered valuable due to the years of experience in the field of culture, context and language teaching and learning. When planning this project, therefore, it was crucial to consider the genuine learning objectives of introducing videoconferencing rather than expecting benefits to arise of their own accord.

More recently, studies have shown that the challenge of using computers and multimedia technology effectively remains an issue, whether cultural or language learning is the objective (Fisher, Evans & Esch, 2004; Kramsch, 1999; Mitchell, 2009). All seem to show that the wealth of information and opportunities technology provides offer little to the language learner unless they are presented in such a way that they can achieve their objective. Also, on a practical level, research has shown that live videoconferencing comes with its own set of problems not seen so often with other forms of CMC (Gläsmann, 2004). Nevertheless, since 2004 videoconferencing has approached the 'normalisation' described by Lamy and Hampel (2007), and it no longer appears to be the case – as Gläsmann (2004) suggested – that few schools have the capability of accommodating a whole-class video link. The next step, therefore, seems to be the development of strategies to ensure its successful and effective application.

Is CMC useful as a medium for developing intercultural understanding?

As my first research question outlines, one aim of this project was to ascertain which types of cultural understanding and awareness could be developed through audiovisual contact with native French speakers. Given the limited number of resources available in this specific area, I have consulted literature on the use of a range of CMC techniques to promote cultural awareness, as well as more general studies on the types of intercultural learning which can be nurtured through the study of MFL. In their empirical study of the use of an electronic

bulletin board by 152 pupils in four countries, Fisher et al (2004) confirm my fear that the majority of research on CMC focuses on higher and adult education programmes. This said, Michael Evans' (2009) edited volume entitled *Foreign Language Learning with Digital Technology* offers what he describes as "examples and descriptions of effective ways in which the technology can enhance language teaching and learning aims," (Evans, 2009: 2) some of which fall into the secondary education bracket. These are, given their date of publication, more up to date than many of the previous examples cited here.

It can be said to be both unfortunate and hugely motivating, however, that technology now seems to advance more quickly than research on it is published, but these studies do provide evidence of how a range of hardware and software can be used in an educational and specifically MFL context. In terms of cultural learning, many of Kramsch's (1993: 200-203) guidelines for using technology still apply; particularly pertinent to this study is the "global domain of cultural knowledge that has to be learned across different contexts" which is imposed when confronted with authentic language. The pervasive nature of culture and context in communication seem to be a persistent feature in Kramsch's work. Indeed, in an earlier work she describes communication as a "socialization process", highlighting her view that "the communication process is permeated by social and cultural attitudes, values and emotions" (Kramsch, 1983: 177).

It is important to note at this juncture that this research project intended to incorporate both asynchronous (videos recorded and sent between schools) and synchronous (live videoconferencing) CMC. In his review of a range of projects involving new technologies in language learning, Levy (2007: 116) offers a clear view of the difference between the two in terms of their pedagogical value. He suggests that where asynchronous exchanges give time for "reflection and representation of cultural understandings", synchronous communication promotes "active culture learning." (Toyoda & Harrison, 2002, as cited in Levy, 2007: 116) Indeed, the range of literature consulted describes and analyses an array of combinations of synchronous, asynchronous, one-to-one, one-to-many, written and spoken manifestations of CMC. Whereas Fisher et al (2004) suggest that CMC requires language learners to interact without paralinguistic clues, however, this assumes live video contact is not taking place. Although picture quality can become an obstacle to eliminating this problem, videoconferencing can be seen to go some way towards incorporating these clues (which form part of one's culture) into CMC. We can be enlightened to some extent about the

realities of introducing a videoconferencing project by Lamy and Hampel's (2007) discussion of O'Dowd's (2006) study involving American and German university students. His aim was to discover whether videoconferencing offered "a particular contribution to intercultural telecollaboration that ... e-mail and chat can not." (O'Dowd, 2006: 94, as cited in Lamy and Hampel, 2007: 142) The discussion concludes that, similarly to Kramsch (1993) suggested, lack of training and pedagogical thought and preparation precludes adequate learning from taking place. Having said this, they do propose that videoconferencing helps participants bond with their partners, teaching them about culture through body language while at the same time imposing pressure and lack of thinking time which some found difficult to deal with (Lamy and Hampel, 2007: 143). Asynchronous exchanges on the other hand afford this thinking time as well as the opportunity for identity to be established through language (Fisher et al, 2004), offering potentially greater language benefits than a highly pressurised live exchange.

Audiovisual contact and language learning

In their empirical study of asynchronous written CMC, Fisher et al (2004) report evidence of peer teaching between pupils in different countries. This shows an awareness of language as well as willingness to improve. Indeed, Meagher and Castaños (1996: 199) affirm that after using an electronic bulletin board as a CMC exchange between American and Mexican high school students, "the process helped develop higher-order thinking skills" as well as personalising the learning process and yielding "quality student output as well as commitment." As their study is of comparable size to the present study, however, one must be wary of any conclusions drawn, despite data being collected over a full school year. They cite pupils' ability to analyse their own culture critically in relation to the other and, as Kramsch (1993: 8) suggests, "cultural awareness must then be viewed both as enabling language proficiency and as being the outcome of reflection on language proficiency." In other words, if we are to take language and culture as inextricably linked, then so must *awareness* of language and culture.

Can cultural experiences through CMC affect motivation?

In his summary of motivational strategies for MFL, Dörnyei (2001: 54) makes the clear point that "because languages are socially and culturally bound, their effective study requires a positive disposition towards everything the second language is associated with: its culture, its speakers, its influence." In order to encourage this, he suggests meetings with native speakers, school trips and exchanges and pen-friends and internet chat rooms. Of course, as already discussed, much of this can be achieved to some extent through CMC. Lamy and Hampel (2007) also suggest that learners can be motivated through CMC; writing for a real audience, incorporating their own interests into projects and authentic linguistic exchanges are all proposed as motivational factors. Of course it is hard to know how much of this is down to the use of new technology and how much is thanks to contact with another culture, but this will be discussed in greater detail later. Meagher and Castaños (1996: 199) also echo the points made above by stating that a "cultural confrontation" can personalise the learning process and that facing a *real* audience can improve student output as well as commitment.

These factors are certainly important when studying pupils' motivation, but Knutson (2006: 593-4) goes further in her proposal form curricular reform by suggesting that "motivation in culture learning and receptivity to a culture and its speakers will vary according to situation ... and communicative context." As with many of the key concepts in this study, "motivation and ... cultural stance are not fixed, or even stable, phenomena." (Knutson, 2006: 594) This could be perceived as a difficulty but, as we will see, their fluid and inherently unreliable nature go hand in hand with the *human* aspects of education and language learning and further reinforce the fact that this study cannot claim to draw universal conclusions on any of the subjects raised.

Research methodology

The introduction states that this study can be seen as an example of action research; as Nunan (1992) suggests in his review of research methodology in MFL, there is some discrepancy about the nature and definition of action research, although researchers seem to agree that two of the main principles centre on the fact the research is carried out by practitioners with a view to improving classroom practice and involves some sort of classroom intervention. This study seems to fulfil these two criteria, although it does not fully satisfy the seven steps of

action research suggested by (1992: 19); the "preliminary investigation" and "hypothesis" stages are notably lacking from this project.

Sampling

The planned intervention would involve a class of twenty six English-speaking Year 9 pupils in School A (in England) and twenty-four French-speaking *quatrième* pupils in Collège B (in France). Contact was made with the French class's English teacher, and both departments showed clear enthusiasm for the introduction of a project which would allow pupils to communicate beyond the classroom.

The class I decided to work with in School A was a top set in a school with a small MFL department, situated in a town with a far from international outlook. The pupils varied in their language ability, with end of key stage 3 (KS3) predictions ranging from level 3.8 to level 6.2. However, it was their enthusiasm and inquisitive nature I had observed in previous lessons which suggested to me that they would be suitable candidates to try out this new venture. Collège B had already been involved in a letter exchange with pupils in School A and, although this had largely fallen by the wayside, the prospect of a closer link between the two schools appealed to the staff in both language departments. They were more than willing to participate in this project and I owe a debt of gratitude to the Collège's English teacher for helping to iron out many of the technological and pedagogical issues which arose.

Ethical considerations

The prospective project was carefully considered in light of a range of ethical factors. Firstly, the safety of the pupils concerned had to be of the upmost importance, especially when contact was to be made over the internet. With this in mind, school policy was consulted, parents and guardians were asked for consent for their children to be filmed and were kept informed about how the project would progress. Any pupils who did not want to filmed were free to opt out of this part of the process, as will be discussed below, although they were still required to participate in classroom activities and were encouraged to peer-assess so that they would not miss out on the benefits of speaking practice and personalised language learning. Every part of the project was checked over by my school-based mentor and it was made clear that pupils would cover the essential aspects of the existing scheme of work.

Asynchronous CMC

The original plan for the project involved both asynchronous and synchronous CMC as stated in the previous section. The asynchronous exchange would take the form of individual videos prepared in French by pupils in School A on a range of topics and recorded by their peers using Flip Video© cameras. These would then be sent to Collège B using Flip Share© software and video replies would be sent in due course. This was intended to provide the thinking time discussed in the literature review (Fisher et al, 2004; Lamy and Hampel, 2007) and allow pupils to reflect on and discuss any points of interest arising from the videos. The ease of use of Flip Video© software also allow for videos to be viewed and projected immediately after recording, thereby encouraging reflective learning and self- and peer-assessment which are now so much a part of the National Curriculum (NC) (QCA, 2007) and the KS3 (Key Stage 3, i.e. 11-14 year olds) Framework (DCSF, 2009).

Unfortunately, several of the class in School A had opted out of being recorded on video, and either they or their parents were unwilling to change their minds. Also, privacy issues and lack of suitable equipment in Collège B further prevented pupils from taking part in this video exchange. Despite efforts to encourage pupils in Collège B to participate in this section of the project, the logistics and paperwork required to push it through provided an obstacle which would not be overcome in time.

Videos were still recorded in School A and the preparation, recording and evaluation process proved valuable to the project in terms of pupils' understanding of their own language learning. The initial topic of short autobiographies or *autoportraits* was chosen to engage pupils in the project. Following Dörnyei's (2001) advice that using pupils' own experiences to make language learning relevant can improve motivation, short videos concerning likes and dislikes, personality traits and future plans were recorded (or observed in the case of those who did not want to be recorded). These were then analysed in conjunction with the Intercultural Understanding strand of the NC Programme of Study (QCA, 2007). Questionnaires (see Appendix 1) were given to pupils after the first videos had been recorded. These questionnaires took the form of predominantly open questions, such as, "How do you think having contact with French people through lesson activities would impact on your learning?"; some yes or no questions; and a limited number presented in a 5 point Likert scale format. In order to answer the research questions above, this questionnaire was

designed to offer an initial insight into pupils' views on their own language learning, their awareness of its importance and the potential implications of contact with French native speakers. Factual information was also sought, allowing me to ascertain pupils' previous experiences of cross-cultural contact. This would inform future planning and provide evidence in changes in attitude between the start and the end of the project. Indeed, this questionnaire drew attention to pupils' desire to tell the French pupils about the weather in England, for example, and so this became the next area of interest for the next video. Throughout the video recording process, changes in pupils' individual and collective enthusiasm and motivation were observed, as well as differences in the quality of student output, and findings were noted down.

A semi-structured interview with a small group was also conducted after the first round of video recordings, with pupils selected on the basis of their answers to the initial questionnaire. Although questions were predetermined like in a fully structured interview (Nunan, 1992), the interview was allowed to deviate substantially depending on particular points of interest or views expressed by the interviewees (see Appendix 2). Group interviews were chosen partly because time did not allow for adequately in-depth interviews to take place with each of the three pupils selected, but also in the hope that a group situation would stimulate discussion between the pupils. Naturally, it is possible that pupils' answers influenced both by leading questions and non-verbal gestures by the interviewer, as well as by the other interviewees. Although every effort was made to minimise this, the reader should be aware that it was impossible to avoid external influences, and so the answers given should be read with this in mind.

Live videoconferencing – new territory for most

The second phase of this research involved setting up and launching a live videoconferencing activity in the classroom, with active audiovisual participation from pupils in School A and Collège B. It is important to note at this stage that this was to be an entirely new venture for both schools, so technological and pedagogical issues were prevalent throughout. Due to limitations in internet speeds and equipment in both schools (not to mention synchronising timetables) a lot of work had to be done to determine the most fruitful course of action with

regards to answering the research questions, in addition to the language learning needs of the pupils.

Skype© was eventually chosen as the most appropriate software for videoconferencing purposes. The bandwidth it takes up did not risk damaging speeds on the rest of the school network, while quality remains adequate if not spectacular. Other software such as VSee© may have been preferable thanks to lower bandwidth requirements and the presence of a recording function, but this was not possible again because of privacy restrictions.

Once timetabling concerns had been addressed, the link was then planned in collaboration with Collège B's teacher. A thirty minute slot was found in which the live link could function. In order to facilitate the initial exchanges, pupils from School A would ask questions to pupils in Collège B in French and attempt to understand their responses and the French pupils would ask questions in English for the English pupils to answer in English. As it happened, technical problems did not allow for adequate preparation time so interaction was not as well structured as it could have been, and the pedagogical aims were not fully achieved. What is more, Gläsmann (2004: 63) correctly states that "the concentration required to maintain a conversation on a visual, aural, oral and typewritten level can be immense, particularly if more than two people communicate with each other at any one time and in the target language, too." This will be discussed in greater detail alongside the data collected at the time and afterwards and solutions for future links will be proposed, with particular regard to whole-class involvement during the link.

After the live link, a final questionnaire was distributed (see Appendix 3), again focusing on open questions in order to give a more accurate representation about what pupils wanted to say (Nunan, 1992). Questions sought to establish pupils' initial perceptions of French people and of the impact of live audiovisual contact on their learning and motivation. Changes in attitude towards intercultural understanding and language learning and reasons for this were also made explicit, and pupils were invited to give their opinions about how the project could be improved.

Data analysis and discussion

I will now analyse the data collected in the form of questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations in order to answer the research questions outlined above. As I have already suggested, any data collected can be considered only as a small contribution to the research in the area of video as a medium for intercultural communication between school pupils. The data offered demonstrate the views of one class of 26 school pupils and, while these views are interesting and informative, the results of this project are limited by its scope as well as the nature of action research in which, when the researcher is also the class teacher, researcher bias and retrospection can inevitably influence findings (Gläsmann, 2004).

This said, some interesting trends were found, and these will be analysed thematically in terms of the research questions and their place in the existing literature. I shall attempt to approach each question individually, although none of the concepts can be seen as entirely isolated or rigidly definable and there will be some overlap between them. Once the data has been analysed, some tentative conclusions will be drawn and suggestions will be made for improvements to similar studies.

Method of analysis

Analysis of data resulting from a range of questioning techniques could be said to be problematic, especially when considering the answers to open questions. The results of the questionnaires were therefore collated and placed in a spreadsheet, with longer responses coded to one word answers. Common responses were then counted and noted down. Responses to questions presented in the Likert scale format were also placed in the spreadsheet and an average was taken of the results for each question. Of course, quantitative results for such a small sample cannot be considered statistically significant, although they do offer a clear insight into the thoughts of these pupils.

The group interview was transcribed in full and read through to identify patterns in pupils' comments. The sections in the interview which were particularly pertinent to this study can be found in Appendix 2. Time constraints did not allow for the interview to be coded and, besides, pupils' comments could be considered more valuable when presented in full. The most relevant section of the interview is highlighted, however, for convenience.

Which types of cultural awareness and understanding can be developed through audiovisual contact with native French speakers?

The project as a whole

Firstly, in order to take 'development' into account, a brief background of pupils' existing cross-cultural experience before intervention is necessary so that data can be analysed in reference to this starting point.

Of the 22 pupils who participated in the first questionnaire, 13 had been to France and 9 had not. This is slightly higher than in Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor's (1991) sample of 208 secondary school pupils in their study of pupils' attitudes towards foreign people. One must remember, however, that quantitative analysis of such a small sample cannot be considered statistically significant. Of these 13 pupils, all but three displayed a positive attitude towards their visit (despite two of them claiming never to have met a French person) and, of the 9 who had not been to France, 6 exhibited an interest in going to France. Interestingly, the two who had been to France without meeting a French person showed the most negative attitude towards their experience. Initial impressions of French people referred in large part to their competence in English, with many citing the difference in their accent. Difficulties in understanding French spoken by native speakers were also highlighted, with some mentioning the speed at which French people speak. Only one pupil said that he thought French people were "similar to us". It may be worth noting that in the final questionnaire, when asked for what they felt they learnt about French people during the link, this number had grown to five.

The pupils in School A showed an interest in the project from the start, once sample clips had been shown involving pupils from Laurent Cantet's (2008) film, *Entre les murs*, giving brief *autoportraits*. This was clear from my observations in class during which pupils gave an overwhelmingly positive response to the prospect of having contact with French people in class. This was backed up by the initial questionnaire, which revealed that ten pupils thought that it would have an impact on their learning, with some citing culture as a specific learning outcome, for example:

> "You see the culture and that might incourage [sic] you to take interes [sic]."

> (Pupil 3, Questionnaire 1)

> "It would give me a good oppurtunity [sic] to hear more about differences between us and the French."

> (Pupil 10, Questionnaire 1)

> "It helps you realise how similar the French are to us. It will give you 1st hand experience... In a classroom, you don't think of people living 'French' lives and speaking the language."

> (Pupil 14, Questionnaire 1)

This showed that pupils were aware of the potential benefits of project, and their interest was encouraging. It was clear during the video recording process that this interest grew stronger as the live link drew closer. When asked to research Collège B's website for homework, nearly all came back to school with questions and comments pertaining to life in France and in a French school.

At the time of the live link, pupils finally had the chance to ask the questions they had been thinking about since the start of the project. Unfortunately, some found the experience too overwhelming and could not think of these questions on the spot in English, let alone in French. Communication was at times hampered by picture and sound quality, as well as inadequate preparation on the part of both the pupils and me as their teacher, but by the end of the thirty minute slot, all but five pupils said in their questionnaire that they had learnt something about French people. I will now analyse the types of cultural awareness and understanding which resulted from the project as a whole.

As I suggested in my introduction, the aim of this action research project was not to impart cultural *knowledge* on the pupils involved, but rather to encourage interest and assess the intercultural competences developed during its course. A telling result from the second questionnaire was that 23 out of 26 pupils reported that they would be interested to find out more about French culture. It was clear in the classroom that when pupils were offered the chance to formulate questions entirely of their choice which they would eventually ask their French counterparts, all had an interest in some aspect of French life. Most were intrigued to find out how French pupils learn English, whereas some simply wanted to know about daily life, such as food, school, music and shopping. In any case it was clear that few had already

formed a concrete and coherent image of the realities of French life and had a desire to discover more.

The audiovisual element

Many of the results presented thus far, however, could just as well be the products of research into written or entirely asynchronous CMC. If the audiovisual element is brought to the fore, some interesting points for discussion come to light. As we saw earlier, videoconferencing can offer the paralinguistic clues more often encountered during face-to-face communication, but it can also offer cultural clues which would otherwise have gone amiss. For example, some pupils noticed that pupils in Collège B were not wearing uniform and were curious to find out whether this was normal. Also, many comments were made about the size of the French class. Their teacher subsequently explained that most of the teachers in Collège B were on strike, something that pupils in School A found strange and intriguing. These were relatively simple pieces of cultural information, but they seemed to incite in the pupils in both schools a level of interest in the others' culture which seemed completely new.

From pupils' comments immediately after the live link and indeed from the questionnaires which followed, accent was a definite talking point in the class. Many commented about how "cool" the French class sounded when they were speaking French. They were also surprised to find out how high their level of English was. This will be discussed more in relation to the second research question, but it is the audio if not the visual element to this project which made these observations possible. It was also telling that pupils commented on the need for respect when trying to communicate with the French pupils. During the live link some pupils were disruptive and noisy, possibly due to overexcitement, and during feedback afterwards it was made clear that other pupils recognised the fact that listening quietly and not laughing at others' mistakes would be desirable if the link happened again. It is once again important to note that it was only through live communication that this became a relevant issue. As Kramsch (1993: 48) states, "participants in the foreign language classroom create their own cultural context by shaping the conditions of enunciation/communication and the conditions of reception/interpretation of classroom discourse." It was clear from pupils that they were keen to create a cultural context for their classroom which was conducive to communication, and were able to identify the barriers which arose in the first exchange. This showed a depth

of reflection which I had not expected at the start of the project and this made me re-evaluate the meta-cognitive capabilities of the pupils in my class.

To what extent can such a project affect pupils' understanding of language learning?

As I stated earlier, the contexts of language learning and intercultural understanding cannot be entirely separated, not least given the evidence provided by the pupils in this project which shows awareness of the link between the two. This said, there are some issues pertaining specifically to language learning, which arose throughout the course of the study.

I have already mentioned that pupils expressed an interest in French pupils' learning of English. The evidence present in the questionnaires was further consolidated by the group interview (Appendix 2) which involved three pupils. All were keen to compare their learning of French with French pupils' learning of English, some based on their teaching/learning methods, and some based on the relative difficulty of learning the two languages. I wish to stress at this point that this section focuses on pupils' *understanding* of language learning, rather that their attitude towards it.

All three pupils showed a vague understanding of the concept of learning English as a foreign language, with one pupil commenting, "Our language isn't really phonetic; it's really difficult to spell." This reflection on others' learning of English seemed to develop into them contemplating their own learning of French. After the initial fear instilled by the video exchange project, pupils demonstrated that they could identify the potential difficulties as well as the benefits of live communication. One pupil suggested that "it'll be quite difficult because you'll have to think on the spot of what to say 'cause they could ask questions and you don't know what questions they're going to ask." It seemed to be the reality of communicating without thinking time which provided the most apprehension, something which is highlighted by Lamy and Hampel (2007). This then allowed further reflection on how pupils normally learn languages, including different techniques employed at different schools. Pupil B reported that "most of us learn to build sentences by writing it down and sort of working it out on paper but when you think of it in your head it might be quite hard," whereas pupil C highlighted the importance of grammar over the predominantly vocabulary-focused approach prevalent in the local middle schools. This seems to suggest that the project helped to develop higher-order thinking skills, as was found in Meagher and

Castaños' (1996) study. This went even further in an exchange between pupils B and C, who discussed the implications of speed when conversing with a non-native speaker (see highlighted section, Appendix 2). Not only did they point out that the French pupils would be speaking more quickly than they were used to, they realised that the same situation might be true the other way.

On a basic level, these pupils appear to have an understanding of the concept of Critical Language Awareness, as described by Blyth, 2009) in his discussion of the move from paper- to computer-based materials. Of course, it is unlikely that year 9 pupils would be able to articulate their understanding of language learning in such a detailed manner, but the concept of "critical reflection on the tension and interplay that exist in language learning between creative individual uses of language and conformity to institutionalized norms" (Train, 2003, as cited by Blyth, (2009: 191) appears to be present, at least in its early stages. Whereas the questionnaires did not allow for such in depth responses from the other pupils, it is clear that the vast majority were at least interested in this interplay by wanting to know how French pupils learn English. This is outlined by the fact that pupils rated their interest in how French pupils learn English as four out of five on average.

Unfortunately, this study did not last long enough to evaluate to what extent this critical awareness might have on language learning in terms of attainment, but it was apparent that motivation to learn improved, as did behaviour and class cohesion. These additional outcomes will now be discussed in relation to the literature and the evidence gathered during the project.

What other outcomes result from the project, inside and outside the classroom?

I suggested in the literature review that motivation could be improved as a result of a video exchange project. The evidence I collected seems to support this view for this particular group of pupils. Of the pupils who stated in the second questionnaire that their attitude towards learning French had changed as a result of the project, all but one noted a positive change, with some signalling a specific increase in their motivation to improve their French. Furthermore, over three quarters of the pupils thought that their French would improve as a result of the project. At this juncture, however, it is perhaps necessary to discuss the

outcomes of the project in two separate stages: the video recording stage and the videoconferencing stage.

Video recording

It quickly became clear from the moment the idea of recording videos was introduced that pupils were keen to use language that was immediately relevant to them. Coupled with this, however, was the anxiety and lack of confidence which sometimes accompany speaking activities. Indeed, whereas half the pupils said they had enjoyed recording their videos, the other half indicated that it was hard and that it made them nervous. This was explained to some extent by the interview, in which the interviewees described differences in the amount of speaking practice pupils had received at middle school. Nevertheless, the fact that the language was placed in a personalised context had a noticeable influence on the amount of work pupils were prepared to do in the classroom. One pupil wrote in her questionnaire that having contact with French people would impact on her learning because "we can talk about normal things ... and it would be like talking to a friend but in another language." It is hard to know whether this motivation stemmed from working for a potentially real purpose (the live link), from using technology (Flip Video$^{©}$ cameras), or from being given more control over the content they were covering. More data would need to be collected in order to ascertain the origin of this very real improvement in motivation.

Videoconferencing

Once again, the improvement in motivation in the lessons leading up to and following the live link was evident for me as the teacher as well as for the pupils. It was interesting that pupils placed pressure on themselves to improve their speaking skills in order to be understood by their counterparts in Collège B. In the final questionnaire, the 14 pupils cited speaking as the most or second most important skill for language learning, and many placed improving their speaking skills as one of their targets for improving their intercultural understanding. As well as showing an acute awareness of their own language learning needs, this also appears to demonstrate the reality that languages had taken on as a result of live contact. In hindsight, a question on the initial questionnaire about the relative importance of different skills might have highlighted a quantitative change in attitudes, but observations of class activities

certainly showed a difference in attitude and approach to speaking. More telling perhaps are the reasons for pupils choosing speaking as the most important skills, including "so I can make myself understood", and "I want to be able to talk to French people." The reasons given reveal a desire to partake in genuine communication. It is also worth noting that several of these pupils were usually reluctant to speak in French before the start of the project.

It may also be worth considering some of the practical implications which came out of this project. For example, Kramsch's (1993: 202) suggestion that teachers must think about "how to give learners access to as large a context as possible, but at the same time help them constrain that context to make it meaningful" certainly rang true when evaluating the success of this project. Indeed, it was clear that the discourse between participants in the live video link was not structured enough to allow significant communication to take place. This was partly due to lack of adequate preparation as well as technological issues which meant that the link had to be set up with very little warning. Where pupils were eager to ask questions on a range of topics, their level of French often hindered their progress, and, from comments made in class especially after the first link, some were left feeling de-motivated. Also, more thought should have gone into the ways in which the rest of the class could participate while pairs came up to the camera to talk to the French pupils. This would have lessened some of the behaviour issues which arose as a result of pupils being unclear about what they were supposed to be doing. Although overly structured discourse could be seen to reduce the scope for "the situational authenticity that communicative language teaching prizes" (Lamy & Hampel, 2007: 139), I would suggest that some is necessary to allow for effective communication, especially in a limited time frame. Moreover, the concerns highlighted by Lamy and Hampel (2007) about the specific issues surrounding videoconferencing still appeared to be problematic in this project. Despite efforts to make the language context fit closely with the existing scheme of work, not enough thought went into the practical running of the live link, with carefully considered roles and objectives. These are issues which will be evaluated carefully when planning the next live video link.

Conclusion

We have seen over the course of this study some of the effects of a video exchange and videoconferencing project which were observed over the course of six weeks in one year 9 French class. Despite the limited scope of the research project and the small size of the sample, I believe that some interesting, albeit tentative, conclusions can be drawn, and that some pertinent questions can be asked about the realistic potential of new technology as a means to promote awareness of culture and language in the context of a secondary MFL classroom. I will also attempt to offer some suggestions as to how the preparation, intervention and data collection methods could be improved for future projects of a similar nature.

Firstly, the most striking outcome of the project from a teacher's point of view was its immediate impact on motivation. Fewer extrinsic rewards were required to encourage pupils to reach their objectives in lessons, as the idea of live communication seemed to provide enough of an incentive to improve their language. This came out in the questionnaires as in the interview, where pupils gave the impression that it 'mattered' more whether they got things right or wrong. More research would need to be done, however, to find out whether this was the result of a henceforth unfelt connection with another culture, the increased use of ICT, the personalised context, or even simply the fact that pupils were trying something new. It is possible, of course, that all of these were true.

If we consider the first research question, therefore, can we indeed discover which types of cultural awareness and understanding can be developed as a result of audiovisual contact with native French speakers? To answer this, it may be necessary to break the question down. To begin with, contact with native French speakers provided a challenge to pupils' existing ideas of what French people were like. As I explained earlier, few knew what to expect, either in terms of factual information learnt from the French pupils or, perhaps more importantly, their own reactions to having contact with people from another country. This was where the audiovisual element became a key factor; the classroom environment became less 'safe' and some reacted better than others to the direct connection with native French speakers of their own age. So, to answer the question, the questionnaires, interview and observations showed an increased awareness of another culture as well as a fervent interest in that culture among

this group of pupils. This goes some way to fulfilling the intercultural understanding strand of the NC (QCA, 2007), which states that pupils should appreciate "the richness and diversity of other cultures," recognise "that there are different ways of seeing the world" and develop "an international outlook."

The second research question specifically targets the development of pupils' understanding of language learning. We have seen that the questionnaires and the interview gave some evidence of pupils' understanding of language learning as a concept, and of where their strengths and weaknesses lay. Also, a substantial overlap was observed between intercultural communication and understanding of language learning; perceptions of pupils' accents on both sides and the interest in the way French pupils learnt English seemed to demonstrate an awareness of the wider issues surrounding language learning in a communicative context. To put it more simply, it was through a cultural experience that pupils became aware of their own learning of languages.

In terms of linguistic competence, there is little evidence presented here to show that any improvement was made. This is an area which would need to be considered more carefully in future projects of this type. Nonetheless, pupils' performance at the end of unit tests, which fell just after the first video link, showed all to be at least in line with their end of KS3 targets, with many exceeding them especially in the listening and speaking sections. Indeed, confidence in speaking appeared to show the greatest improvement. The evidence here appears to suggest that this was partly due to an increase in the motivation caused by speaking for a real audience. This said, however, when pupils were placed in the position of spokesperson for the group in front of the camera they often froze and were unable to formulate coherent sentences in the target language. At times, it was only once filming had stopped that speaking competence could be observed. Pupils suggested in the interview, in fact, that this problem could be resolved through practice and, perhaps, practice in one-on-one situations. This is certainly an area that should encourage further study, as the availability and quality of technology may well improve to such an extent that individual pupils are able to communicate with others in ICT suites in school via videoconferencing. If this is to be successful, however, the language learning and intercultural objectives must be more closely aligned.

This study in no way advocates replacing exchange trips with videoconferencing, but where exchanges are no longer possible, the evidence presented here and in the literature suggests that CMC can offer opportunities for communication in a variety of different ways, and that this communication can help establish a connection between cultures. This is certainly an area of my own teaching which I will pursue further and, by keeping abreast of the latest improvements in technology and research into its pedagogical value, I will attempt to ensure that it benefits pupils in terms of their language skills and cultural awareness. I also plan to combine videoconferencing with other types of CMC, as well as more traditional types of intercultural communication such as letters to pen-friends. What is important in language learning, however, is that contact with native speakers is made available to pupils throughout.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire 1

Circle ONE answer for numbered or yes/no questions
Give full answers for other questions
Answer honestly

1 = not at all 5 = absolutely

1. Have you ever been to France?	Yes			No		
2. If you answered "yes", did you enjoy it?	1	2	3	4	5	
3. If you answered "no", would you be interested in going to France?	1	2	3	4	5	
4. Have you ever met a French person?	Yes			No		

5. If you answered "yes", what did you think about them?

6. After seeing the video clips of French people of your age, what questions would you like to ask a French person?

7. What would you most like to tell a French person about life in England?

8. Have you chosen to continue studying a language in year 10?	Yes			No		

9. Why/why not?

10. In your opinion, is it useful to be able to speak languages in later life?	1	2	3	4	5

11. Why/why not?

12. Would you be interested to see how French students learn English?	1	2	3	4	5
13. Do you think they find it difficult?	1	2	3	4	5

14. Do you think having contact with French people through lesson activities would impact on your learning?

15. How?

16. Why do you think this might happen?

Appendix 2

Interview transcript

Interviewer: So, I saw from your questionnaire ... that it would be interesting to see how French people learn English. Why do you think that would be interesting?

Pupil A: I don't know ... I just think ... 'cause we learn French in a certain way, I think it would be interesting to find out how they learn English. Do they use the same method as us, or do they use a different method of learning?

Interviewer: For example, what other methods might they use?

Pupil A: So, like, if we do, if we, like watch videos in French, do they, like, meet up with people perhaps they know from England and all stuff like that?

Interviewer: Ok...

Pupil B: I want to know how far they are with English ... how much they know compared to what we know in French.

Interviewer: Yeah...

Pupil C: And how easy they find it to learn the language.

Pupil A: Yeah...

Interviewer: Do you think it's easier for them to learn English than us to learn French, or...

Pupil A: I think it's a little bit harder for them, because we have so much more in our language...

Pupil C: Our language isn't really phonetic; it's really difficult to spell...

Pupil B: It's meant to be the hardest language to learn...

Interviewer: In some ways, but then it's everywhere...

Pupil C: Yeah, cause they listen to a lot of English music, don't they?

Pupil A: I think it's harder for some people and easier for some other people and it's everybody's own opinion.

Interviewer: Ok, good, so do you think that French people are different from English people?

Pupil C: I don't think so at all because I've been to France loads of times and they're very similar people apart from they speak a different language and then eat different food and have some different cultures...

[...]

Interviewer: So do you think the culture does make a difference?

Pupil A: Erm, not a big difference, like if you wanted to make friends with a French person, I don't think it would interfere in a relationship or anything. I just think that that's, like, we might go out and eat fish and chips twice a week, and they might do something different. I just think it's interesting to find out what they do, and what we do...

Pupil B: I think they will be sort of a little bit different, like, what they naturally do, like, sort of, we have routines and they might have completely different routines...

[...]

Interviewer: So what are your first thoughts about speaking French live to French people in a classroom?

Pupil A: Scary!

Interviewer: Well, when I first introduced the idea to you, what did you think?

Pupil A: Interesting and different, because we done it once before at middle school, but we didn't really know a lot of French, and they didn't really know a lot of English, so we kind of spoke a little bit in our own language so the other person had to work it out, but at the same time we spoke in their language, so...

Interviewer: ...and did that work out quite well?

Pupil A: Erm, it sort of did, but then we didn't really know a lot of French and they didn't know a lot of English ... but I think it'll be interesting.

Pupil B: I think it'll be quite difficult because you'll have to think on the spot of what to say 'cause they could ask questions and you don't know what questions they're going to ask...

(others agree)

Pupil A: It's like when we're filming we can sort of prepare ourselves, but it could be any question in the world that they ask you...

Pupil B: It might not be a very smooth conversation...

Pupil C: I think it helps you though, because you're speaking to someone you don't really know, cause they might have a different sort of accent or something like that and it's much ... you gain a lot of experience from talking to a real French person rather than someone in the classroom.

Interviewer: Do you think it's important when learning French to be able to speak in an unprepared way?

Pupil A: I think it is better...

Pupil B: ...yeah, because someone's asking a question and if you've planned exactly what you'll say, you might not have planned for what they're asking you. You never know what they're going to ask.

Interviewer: So how do you think you'll actually feel when we've got it on the board, when you're live ... because it's going to happen next Tuesday...

Pupil A: Oh my God, that's well quick! I think it'll be quite interesting because then we haven't got ... cause in some situations you might not have forever to plan it. And I think it would be quite good cause then we can really revise and stuff, but I think it's going to be a bit nervous, ain't it...

Pupil B: It's hard because most of us learn to build sentences by writing it down and sort of working it out on paper but when you think of it in your head it might be quite hard.

Pupil A: And then you've got to put it together in your head and try to make it make sense...

Pupil B: I think you're going to have to wait a few seconds to think what you're going to say and then say it...

Interviewer: What do you think? (to Pupil C)

Pupil C: I think it'll be helpful, especially if we do it again we'll get more confident and we'll have more interesting conversations...

[...]

Interviewer: Have you all had experience of meeting French people?

Pupils A & B: No...

Interviewer: So it's a completely new experience for you...

Pupil A: I think it would be interesting to find out what they do outside school as well as inside, so like, what activities do they do...

Interviewer: And do you think it's probably the same, or...

Pupil A: No

Interviewer: Have you looked at the website? Was there anything that you found out that you thought was unexpected?

Pupil A: Well, one of it was about what they do in PE and like ... they learn how to ski and stuff like that, and that's really interesting cause we don't do anything like that.

Pupil B: I found a bit but I didn't really find anything unusual...

Pupil C: ... yeah, the same really, but I think that in France they do a lot more active stuff. They play a lot more sport don't they?

Interviewer: Well that's the kind of thing you can try to find out as well. Did you find it interesting researching stuff on your own, just looking at the website?

Pupil B: Yeah, cause we had to work out how to translate it ... there's a translation button on Google...

Interviewer: Did you use the translation button?

Pupil A: I tried with a dictionary then gave up and used the translation button... I think some bits are easy to work out but...

Pupil B: There's a lot of stuff we haven't learnt...

Interviewer: ...but did it make you want to find out or switch off and give up?

Pupil B: After while you get a bit fed up because it takes so long and you haven't got much time...

Interviewer: Do you find it tiring learning languages?

Pupil C: I do find it tiring but I find it helpful.

Pupil B: I do, but I find French a lot harder that German...

Pupil A: Yeah, cause at middle school we had a French teacher and she didn't really do a lot with us...

Pupil C: It was the same at our school. In French you learnt a lot of vocab but not how to form sentences, and we didn't do hardly any grammar... You get to a level where you can't really ... cause you don't really understand what you're saying.

Pupil A: It's like the past tense and all that ... we learn how to form the sentences...

Pupil B: In my school we only learnt one tense, the present tense, and we never really learnt how to form it or anything. We just copied down the vocab and that was it.

Pupil A: Copying, that's all we did... Now we can use full sentences and it's like, whoa, I can do things...

Interviewer: Did you do much speaking at middle school?

Pupil C: We did quite a bit. Our teacher had taught in schools and there was a lot about GCSEs and she gave us cue cards...

Interviewer: So how do you feel when you have to speak in French now?

Pupil A: I get more nervous because some people in the class really know how to do it and there are others who didn't really learn a lot at middle school and are now less confident with it.

Interviewer: So do you find speaking the most difficult?

All three: Yeah...

Pupil C: Because it's confidence as well as just knowing what to do...

Pupil B: I actually think I'm getting ahead of my writing.

Interviewer: Has all the speaking practice we've been doing this term helped your confidence in speaking at all? ... Or the idea of live conversations with the French people, has that motivated you to learn how to speak properly?

Pupil C: It has motivated me because I realise how important it is to know how to speak French really well.

Pupil B: I think it's one thing recording videos to send over to France, but I think it's sort of scary that we're going to be talking to them live, because when you're recording it if you mess up you can start again, but you can't if you're doing it live.

Interviewer: What about accent? Do you think it's important to have a good accent when speaking to a French person?

Pupil C: Yeah, and good pronunciation, because especially when they talk French back to you, it's very difficult to understand because they don't really notice that they're talking very quickly...

Pupil B: ... but we'll probably do the same when we speak to them in English. It's going to be really hard because we speak French slowly because we don't know it that well but if they speak to us in French they'll be whizzing through it and we'll only pick up basic words and not pick up much...

Interviewer: So do you think you'll make an effort in English to slow down?

Pupil B: Yeah, but we'll probably be saying it faster that we realise ... and we speak French with English accents and it's really hard to understand people speaking with French accents...

Interviewer: If the live conversation goes well, would you be interested in keeping one to one contact, or keeping contact with French people afterwards?

Pupil A: I think one to one's better because then you can make friends with them, rather than talking to different people every time.

Pupil B: I think I would but only through school.

Pupil A: I do ... I've got a pen pal that we got through middle school and I still talk to her ... I talk to her in French and she talks to me in English.

Interviewer: How does that work?

Pupil A: It works really well because we've known each other for so long we've got a relationship ... and if she makes a little mistake then I understand what she means and if I make a mistake she knows what I mean.

Interviewer: Did you find it difficult to establish a relationship?

Pupil A: No, because we wrote letters in the lesson and I don't think it was because we would send photos and because it was her birthday we sent her a present and she sent me one. I don't think it was harder just because of the language and because she's in France. I just think it's like making a friendship somewhere else.

Pupil C: I think with one on one the language will become a barrier in the end, but that could inspire you and motivate you to learn more so you can talk to them and make the conversation more interesting.

Interviewer: If you were going to talk to someone one to one, would you prefer to use MSN or would you rather do video if you had the capacity?

Pupil C: I would do it with typing because then you have longer...

Pupil B: Yeah, I think I'd do it by typing...

Pupil A: What I've found is that with MSN you have a webcam and you don't speak really, you just look. One time we did do a video call but because we'd known each other for so long if we did make a mistake we'd laugh about it, where I think if we'd done it straight away I don't think it would be that easy to do stuff like that. Now we've built up a friendship we just laugh about it. Like the other day, she made a mistake and we laughed and then I helped her do it.

Pupil B: I think if you're talking to a French person it will actually help our language because, I know it sounds silly, but you end up correcting each other.

Appendix 3

Questionnaire 2

Give full answers
Answer honestly

1. Did you enjoy the live link with the French school? Why / why not?	

2. What were your first thoughts when you saw the French students?

3. What do you feel you learnt about French people during the link?

	Yes	**No**
4. Are you interested to find out more about French culture?		

5. What would you like to find out? Are your questions different from the ones you wanted to ask before the link?

6. If you came up to the computer, how did you feel? If you didn't come to the computer, did you feel involved? If not, how could this be improved?

7. What would you do differently next time?

8. Has your attitude towards learning French changed since the start of this project? In what ways?

9. Do you think your French will improve as a result of this project?

10. What were your two targets for improving intercultural understanding? Why did you choose these?

Any other comments about this project? How could it be improved?

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Rank the following in order of importance for your learning of French:

Rank

Playing games	
Listening practice	
Grammar	
Reading practice	
Question forms	
Vocabulary	
Homework	
Speaking practice	
Learning about culture	
Writing practice	

Why did you choose your number 1?