

Connecting, Collaborating, Learning and Performing: Linking Language Students Internationally in Realistic Projects

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For nearly 20 years, the Trans-Atlantic & Pacific Project (TAPP) has connected over 30 universities in 18 countries on four continents, linking writing classes to usability testing and translation studies classes in international, multilingual, multicultural, multimodal collaborative projects. The TAPP spread rapidly during the era of globalization, allowing students to gain insights to each other's cultures and languages, as well as each other's work processes. It did so because, counter-intuitively, it allows teachers to design their own assignments without relying on institutional agreements, top-down administrators, grant funding, or additional equipment or technologies. Research emanating from students' joint projects reveals how effective TAPP collaborations are at fostering professional development by creating situations of real partners with real workplace concerns but in an environment of low stakes, which allow students to learn from their experimentation and mistakes. TAPP collaborations raise audience awareness, intercultural aptitude, language sensitivity, and writing effectiveness for both undergraduate and graduate students. International collaborations, such as those arranged through the TAPP network, are proving even more vital during the currently developing era that runs counter to globalization, as nationalists in many countries attempt to retract from international collaborations and connections.