



InterAct Handbook - Articles

[back to startpage](#)
[back to articles](#)

External Evaluation for Interact

Aase Steinmetz, A.S. Consult

Developing New Basic Skills at the Workplace through Internet-based Problem Solving Role Play

Background

The project has had four phases comprising two simulations for Health and Care and two for Tourism. Each simulation consisted of five steps and participants and teachers have been asked to fill in three evaluation forms:

- when the simulation started
- "mid-term"
- at the end of the simulation

All below-mentioned information – facts and figures – have derived from these evaluation sheets.

I found that the teachers in the project have shown considerable responsibility and commitment. Their engagement by far surpasses what would normally be expected in a teaching situation. Below a couple of very saying opinions from some teachers:

"I appreciate the dedication of the four participants because they had to stay for almost the whole day (until 7) at the Clinic because they had either to work later or to attend English classes.

I would like to comment that I enjoyed the simulations with them and with the rest of the groups works."

"I recommend this learning method to be promoted and used in the future. I think it has a tremendously wide range of potential applications. It is very flexible, it promotes communication and teamwork."

The following comment from a participant is very typical for what has happened in the INTERACT project.

"I think this has been motivating and we have had a lot of fun. We have had many discussions and I have learned a lot about how to use the computer. We have laughed a lot."

INTERACT - Tourism

As can be seen below from the teacher evaluations, the teachers find that the INTERACT model has lived up to expectations, and they are open to adapting the model for further collaboration. The teachers confirm that the participants have learned how to:

- use and work on an internet platform
- prepare a PowerPoint presentation
- communicate internationally
- negotiate
- work in teams and profit from each other's strong points

Some participants have had difficulties in getting time off for attending all classes. The employer is an important factor. In order for the participant to get the full value of attending the course it is imperative that the employer joins the project whole heartedly.

Comparison between teacher evaluation step 1 and step 5.

The questions were graded on a scale from 1 (very little) to 7 (very much) and they were:

Teachers – step 1

1. Before taking part in step 1:

a. how interested do you think they are in participating in this activity?

Grades: 7- 6-6-5-5

b. how much do you think they expect to learn in terms of basic skills and language command?

Grades: 6-6-6-5-4

c. how difficult do you think it will be for them to work in the Telsi platform?

Grades: 3-3-3-2-2

d. how difficult do you think it will be for them to combine this activity with their other obligations?

Grades: 6-4-3-3-3

e. how used are the participants to Internet-based learning?

Grades: 4-4-3-2-2

f. how experienced are the participants in your group in the use of computers?

Grades: 5-4-4-4-4

g. how interested do you think they are in the international co-operation involved?

Grades: 7-7-6-6-6

After – step 5 (three teachers report)

2. After having observed the work of the participants in your group during the whole simulation period...

a. how much do you think they have learned during the 5 weeks?

Grades: 6 – 6 – 5

Comments: Various tips and tricks on how to use the Internet. They have all adapted to using TELSI, but I don't know if this will be of use in a working environment. Some participants had never communicated with people from other countries, some had never created Power Point presentations before etc., and none had previously worked on an online platform

b. have the activities lived up to your expectations?

Grades: 6 – 6 - 6

Comments: Especially the increase in international communication and negotiation as a result of the adaptation of the script prior to the simulations.

c. how motivated are you for using Internet-based simulations for learning purposes in the future?

Grades: 6 – 6 - 7

Comments: We have been doing Cybermarket for several years now (an experienced teacher in using simulations as a teaching method).

I am open to collaborating with various partners in identifying target groups, needs and scripts based on the InterAct model.

d. how difficult do you think it was for them to work in the Telsi platform?

Grades: 1 – 2 - 3

Comments: They soon got used to it, but they still have certain doubts when uploading photos and downloading the evaluation sheets, for example.

They very quickly understood the principles of the online platform.

e. how difficult do you think it was for them to combine this activity with their other obligations?

Grades: 4 – 2 – 1

Comments: 2 participants are not working at the moment, another is the librarian and has been working close to the library physically, and the 4th member of the group is a more mature student without a complete workload of classes. Two participants missed one session through illness. There was some skipping classes at the university in the case of the student participants

Other comments

There has been a good atmosphere and they have helped each other a lot.

Susana has been recycling her English. Elena has the lowest level of English, but has had plenty of support from the others. It was also good for her to see that you don't need a spectacular level to be able to communicate successfully, as many of the emails are full of errors but perfectly comprehensible. They have all enjoyed the international communication.

Overall a very successful team. Attendances were not satisfactory...but those who did attend enjoyed the experience a great deal. All had a chance to speak and write English before the others as well as a chance to be

'facilitator' for a while.

Response from participants

When looking at the evaluation sheets from the participants it is quite obvious that

- the interest for joining this activity was high
- expectations were high as far as learning is concerned for
 - language learning
 - computer skills
 - working in an international context

To begin with there is some reservation as to the use of an internet-based platform, but there is a noticeable change in "the very little" group from 71% to 93%.

A comparison of the participants' answers to the evaluation sheets for step 1 and step 5 looks as shown below:

a. how interested are you in participating in this activity?								
	Very much						Very little	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Total		6	8	3				17
%		82		18				

b. how much do you expect to learn?								
	Very much						Very little	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Total	6	6	5					17
%	100							
Response after step 5								
Total	3	7	4					14
%	100							

c. how used are you to Internet-based learning?								
	Very much						Very little	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Total	1	4	5	3	3	1		17
%	59		17		24			

d. how used are you to the use of computers?								
	Very much						Very little	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Total		6	6	2	2	1		17
%	70		12		18			

e. how difficult do you think it will be for you to work in the Telsi platform?								
	Very much						Very little	

	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Total				5	4	6	2	17
%				29	71			
Response after step 5								
Total				1	4	4	5	14
%				7	93			

f. how interested are you in co-operating with colleagues in other countries within this project?								
	Very much						Very little	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Total	7	6	3			1		17
%	94			6				
Response after step 5								
Total	4	5	5					14
%	100							

g. how difficult do you think it will be to continue this activity with your job obligations?								
	Very much						Very little	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Total		1	3	2	3	4	4	17
%	23			12	65			
Response after step 5								
Total			3		1	4	6	14
%	32			79				

Health and Care 2

The teachers mention that as a whole the participants have

- improved their level of English - including spelling and grammar
- gained self-confidence from working internationally
- discovered that working in teams demands organization
- become knowledgeable as far as ICT is concerned

Teacher evaluations – comparison between step 1 and step 5

After having observed the work of the participants in your group during the whole simulation period...

a. how much do you think they have learned during the 5 weeks?								
	Very much						Very little	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Total		3	1					4
%	100							

Some of them have learned more than others. The participants were not on the same level considering ICT and the English language skills

I am not sure about the depth of the learning. As many do not have access to Internet or a computer on a daily basis they will not be able to practice the activities learned.

They practiced their English quite a lot and improved their spelling, they learned how to get organized better,

they learned how to create PowerPoint Presentations, they found out about other cultures.

b. have the activities lived up to your expectations?								
	Very much						Very little	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Total		3	1					4
%	100							

The tasks have been very interesting in this round.

The workload was too much for this level of group. ICT meant that we had to sacrifice certain activities to fulfil the script, e.g. we saw a lack of international communication due to the sheer number of theories and myths to discuss as a group.

I found the negotiation and the PPT days especially instructive and useful

c. how motivated are you for using Internet-based simulations for learning purposes in the future?								
	Very much						Very little	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Total	2	1		1				4
%	75			25				

I'm not sure of the value of interacting in my work as a nurse.

This platform is very good. With a few adjustments it could be even better. I like the flexibility of the scripts, which enables the tutor to concentrate on certain activities.

Provided I am involved in the design phase and that the new simulations fit the actual needs of the participants

d. how difficult do you think it was for them to work in the Telsi platform?								
	Very much						Very little	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Total		1		1		2		4
%	25			25	50			

I think all of them managed well.

The actual editing of the structure of TELSI was far too complex for a basic IT level class. This meant that certain activities were confusing.

They got the idea pretty easily, though sometimes forgot various specific procedures

e. how difficult do you think it was for them to combine this activity with their other obligations?								
	Very much						Very little	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Total	1				1	1	1	4
%	25			75				

They all get free to participate, and they were replaced.

They were paid to be there.

For some participants (who were phoned and asked about themes of their work during the simulation) it was more difficult than for others, who found it really easy to combine it, maybe depending on their co-workers attitude. In general it was not too difficult.

they didn't seem to have a problem with that at all

Response from participants

When looking at the evaluation sheets from the participants it is quite obvious that

- the interest for joining this activity was high
- expectations were high as far as learning is concerned
- Participants expected working on the platform would be difficult but it proved that they found this was not the

case

· Working collaboratively scores higher

Work obligations seemed to cause less difficulties than expected (this might not be the case seen from the teachers' side)

How much do you expect to learn?								
	Very much						Very little	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Total	11	7	4		1			23
%	96			4				

After having worked with you group during the whole simulation period . . . How much have you learned during the 5 weeks?								
	Very much						Very little	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Total	7	4	5	1	1			18
%	88			6				

Have the activities lived up to your expectations?								
	Very much						Very little	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Total	5	6	6		1			18
%	94			6				

How interested are you in co-operating with colleagues in other countries within this project?								
	Very much						Very little	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Total	10	5	6	1	1			23
%	92			4			4	
Response after step 5								
Total	10	2	4	2				18
%	89			11				

How difficult do you think it will be for you to work in the Telsi platform?								
	Very much						Very little	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Total			3	11	4	1	4	23
%	13			48		39		
Response after step 5								
Total			3	6	4	1	4	18
%	17			33		50		

How difficult do you think it will be to continue this activity with your job obligations?								

	Very much						Very little	
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Total	1	1	4	4	2	5	6	23
%	26		17		57			
Response after step 5								
Total		1	1	4	2	3	7	18
%	11		22		67			

Focus Points

Below are the ratings of importance given by the participants prior to the simulation and what they have actually experienced. Some of the participants found at the end of the simulation that all 5 areas were equally important for them.

Expectations (5 being the highest)						Results					
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
Use of the Internet	10	2	-	3	7	10	2	3	2	7	
Command of the English language	4	3	5	3	7	3	2	4	4	10	
Communicative skills in general	2	10	1	6	2	-	6	3	3	12	
Team-work	-	1	8	9	5	3	3	4	6	9	
Internationalisation	4	3	5	4	7	1	2	6	7	8	
Total	22	19	19	25	28	17	17	20	22	46	

The figures are self-explanatory. It is obvious that the participants have gained a lot from being part of the simulation.

The figures do not add up because some of the participants did not fill in all questions or only partly.

A summing-up of the teacher comments to the focus points:

- Use of the Internet
 - I am a keen supporter of these simulations on the net
- Command of the English Language
 - By working on the platform, participants have also done a lot of progress with their English, computer and communication skills
- Communicative skills in general
 - It has been a rewarding process for the participants because the competences they train are so complex, from group dynamics and negotiations to presentations in English
- Team-work
 - Delighted to see how in such a short time a group of individuals has managed to turn into a coherent and cohesive team
- Internationalization
 - I think it is an interesting activity, and it is suitable for the globalization policy

Conclusion

No doubt participants have enjoyed being part of the project. Negative statements are hard to find, one, though.

"It wasn't difficult at all, but the other countries didn't work at the same time as us, so the chatting wasn't as funny as expected."

Below is a selection of very positive comments:

- I am really enjoying the project so far, and I'm excited of things to come.
- I am highly motivated to keep on participating in this activity because I'm learning new things about using the computer
- I have learned things I did not know I could do.
- I've learned that lifestyles in the other countries are very different from ours in Norway
- I hope this will help me in my job.
- I met new interesting people, learned some more about computer & internet.
- All the time I was practising my English.
- I am happy I could experience this.
- I have learned many things about using computers.
- I have learned to cooperate with other people on internet.
- Greater awareness of the difference and similarity of the countries when we think about children, food and life styles.
- It's a pity that now it's all over.
- What I am glad to say is that after all we think in the same way although we live in different countries.

A very important teacher comment that shows progress in group behaviour

- The group is developing into a good unit. They are growing in confidence and beginning to discuss the topics in a more animated manner. At first I would have to motivate and initiate the conversation now they are working as a self-contained unit.

Personal comment

I was lucky enough to be present at one of the negotiation phases and experienced the energy, the dedication, and the commitment from the teacher and participants. I observed the teacher and noted the importance of being well prepared for the task so that time is not wasted on downloading and photocopying. When having given the instructions the teacher role changed. The teacher became the facilitator and shepherd seeing to it that the work was progressing and deadlines met with.

The participants were eager to defend their own suggestions and they fought with toe and nail to promote their own viewpoints. They laughed a lot and enjoyed the hard and very intensive work, using dictionaries, grammars and the internet to find the information they wanted. They had a good time while learning new skills.

I have a long experience in working with simulations; this new angle of applying the method to the work place seems to work beautifully. Congratulations to the whole INTERACT team.



top

[back to startpage](#)

[back to articles](#)