Global North/South Telecollaboration

Bill Guariento: william.guariento@northumbria.ac.uk

Abeer Abuzayed: aabuzayed1@students.iugaza.edu.ps

Dr Nazmi al Masri: nmasri@iugaza.edu.ps

Anna Rolinska: a.rolinska@gsa.ac.uk

(Professor Wilson Mandala: wmandala@must.ac.mw)

Previous ELTRA presentation

- "ELT Research across fracture lines: Themes and methods for difficult times and under travel constraints" (17th June)
- Elizabeth Erling & Maria Grazia Imperiale talked about cross-border projects in challenging circumstances:
  - Technical challenges
  - Reciprocal responsibilities
  - Issues of power imbalance
  - The value of time and patience in order to build relationships of trust
  - The need to take risks
  - The joy of opening windows to other cultures!
- We will build on similar themes (with a geographical overlap) today:

Challenges facing Higher Education in UK

- Increasingly market-led - access depends on ability to pay
- Does this affect content? Shor et al. (2017:4) talk of "subjugated knowledges" and "disqualified discourses"
- Especially true within Engineering? (Morrissey, 2015)

Internationalisation is growing. Should be good, but:

- Many countries / regions virtually unrepresented
- Not much intercultural contact ("Exchange without encounters", Otten, 2003:15)

Telecollaboration as a solution?

"... bringing together groups of learners from different cultural contexts for extended periods of online intercultural collaboration and interaction. This is done as an integrated part of the students' educational programmes and under the guidance of educators or expert facilitators."

O'Dowd and O'Rourke (2019: 1)

But telecollaboration is almost always Global North to Global North (Helm, 2015: 204)

There are two interesting exceptions that link Global North & Global South, and that challenge 'disqualified discourses':

1: *Soliya*….but caters mainly for Arts & Humanities students

2: *Engineers Without Borders*….but no 'end-user' in Global South

Why not....?

- Link Engineers in the Global North and Global South?

- Work together to look for responses to engineering challenges?

↓

...the English for Academic Study Telecollaboration (EAST) project

Non-UK engineers, hoping to enter a course at the University of Glasgow	+	Masters-level engineering students at the Islamic University of Gaza

The EAST project

Every summer since 2015, Engineering students from the Islamic University of Gaza (Palestine) have suggested engineering challenges facing Gaza to peers at the University of Glasgow (Scotland).

In 2019, twelve Engineering students from the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST), also participated in the EAST Project.

They then telecollaborate (Skype / Whatsapp / Facebook…) in small teams for 5 weeks to try to find <u>context-appropriate</u> responses.

In Week 5:

- they jointly deliver a presentation
- the Glasgow-based students hand in a 1,500-word essay.

If the Glasgow-based students pass the pre-sessional English course, they can matriculate.

Who are the Glasgow-based students?

- Not Scottish….
- Not British….
- They are 'pre-sessional' students, i.e. they have to improve their English in order to access their University of Glasgow course
  - China
  - Saudi Arabia
  - Brazil
  - Indonesia….Thailand….Kazakhstan….

Sample projects:

- Generating electricity for wastewater treatment
- Water drainage and sea pollution in Gaza
- Toxicity of pesticides in Gaza
- Groundwater salinity in Gaza
- Road traffic and effects on the environment
- Development of Arabic OCR

What do the Glasgow-based students gain?

- English language practice
- Enhanced content-knowledge
- Problem-solving
- Team-working
- Enhanced digital literacies
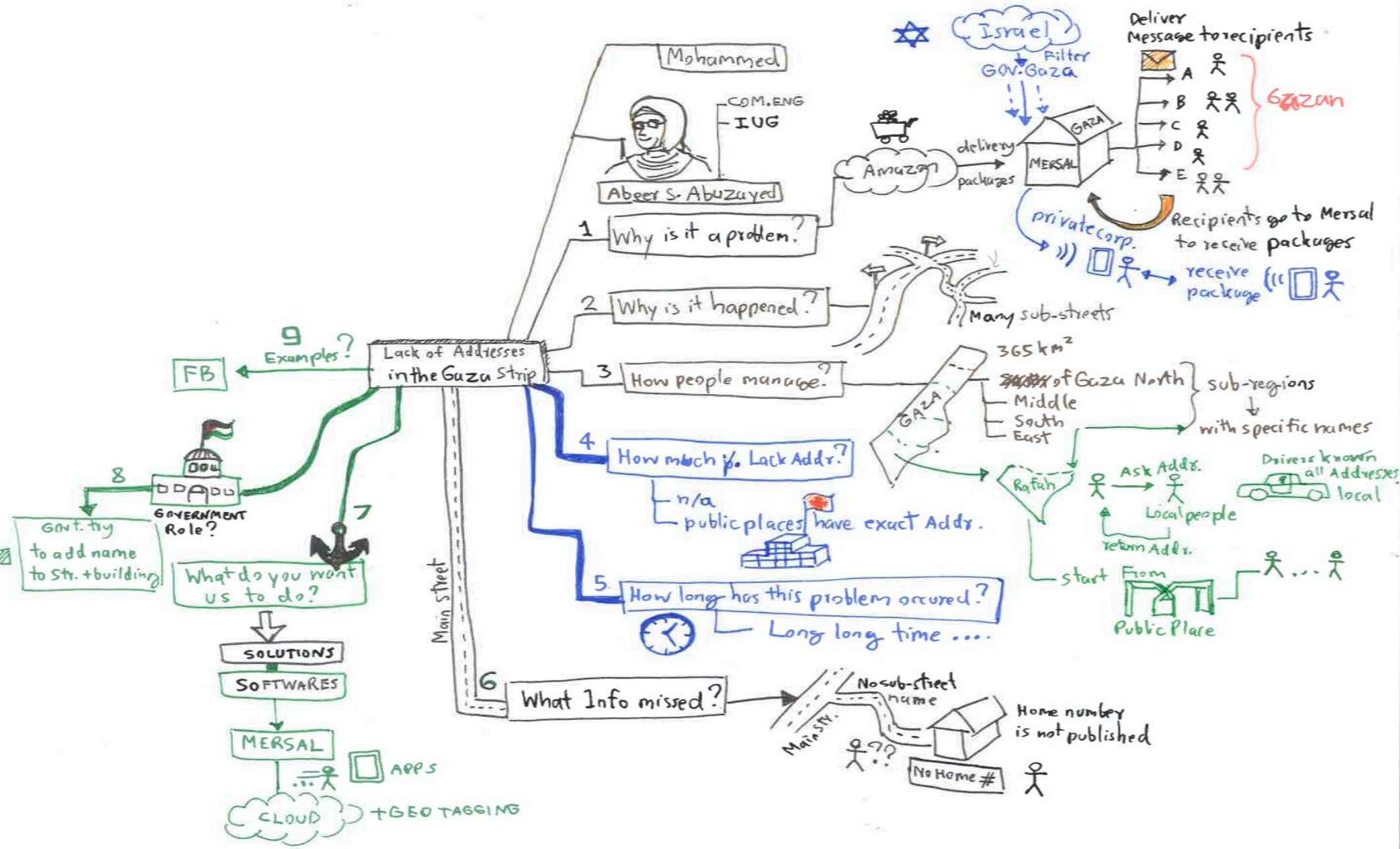- Access to their Masters course!

(….the Gazan students gain demonstrably less. A dilemma for course-organisers….)

What do the Glasgow-based students gain?

- A cognitive challenge: 'pluriliteracies' (Coyle, 2015)

- A cultural challenge….
  - *'Since we have different culture background, sometimes I just afraid I will offense their religion without attention'* (Glasgow: 2019)

  …..overcome <u>inductively</u> (Bikowski, 2011)

  - *'It is my honour that can work with Arabians together, which is I never try it before. And they are very nice people and fill with passion'* (Glasgow: 2019)

What do the Glasgow-based students gain?

- Knowledge of real-world issues. This may mean facing up to "disturbing dialogues" (Kumaravadivelu, 2008: 181):

    - *'I just knew that there were wars in Gaza, but I didn't know to what extent they influence in daily life of the people there'* (Glasgow: 2016)
    - *'This kind of project will aware you that what is happening around us'* (Glasgow: 2016)

- In short, many students will encounter Shor et al's 'subjugated knowledges', learning about the injustices facing the Global South:

    ....for example, let's look at a project: 'The lack of addresses in Gaza':

Mohammed

Abeer S. Abuzayed
- COM.ENG
- IUG

Israel
Filter
Gov. Gaza

Deliver Message to recipients
→ A
→ B
→ C
→ D
→ E
Gazan

Amazon
delivery
packages
MERSAL
GAZA

private corp.
Recipients go to Mersal to receive packages
receive package

Lack of Addresses in the Gaza Strip

9 Examples?   FB

1 Why is it a problem?

2 Why is it happened?
Many sub-streets

3 How people manage.

365 km²
- of Gaza North   sub-regions
- Middle
- South
- East
with specific names

8 Government Role?

4 How much %. Lack Addr.?
- n/a
- public places have exact Addr.

Rafah   Ask Addr.
Local people
return Addr.
start from
Public Place
Drivers known all Addresses local

Destroyed!
the Whole AREA!

Govt. try to add name to Str. + building

What do you want us to do?

7

Main street

5 How long has this problem occured?
- Long long time ....

6 What Info missed?
No sub-street name
Main Str.
Home number is not published
No Home #

SOLUTIONS

SOFTWARES

MERSAL   APPS

CLOUD   + GEO TAGGING

Abeer

Beyond EAST: virtual crossing borders for building ICC

3 key Qs inspired by EAST

1. How can virtual mobility & telecollaboration in TEFL/TESOL contribute in building **intercultural communicative competence** (ICC) in an increasingly globalised society?

2. How can the ICC of English language student teacher best be improved through North-South telecollaboration?

3. How can the bridges of ICC developed by EAST partners (UK, Palestine & Malawi) be widened & sustained (thro answering the 2 Qs above?

Beyond EAST: virtual crossing borders for building ICC

What & Why ICC for English language students?

- **ICC:** "the ability to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language" (Byram 1997: 71)

- **Importance**: enables student-teachers (practice teachers) & students to become more competent in terms of culture knowledge and interactions. Growing virtual globalisation & migratory movements highlight the need to integrate interculturality in TEFL programs.

Beyond EAST : virtual crossing borders for building ICC

EAST Participants to be varied

to promote intercultural and linguistic competence among student teachers in

- **UK:** British native speakers: ELT & English language students & teacher educators
- **Palestine & Malawi:** undergraduate & postgraduate English language pre & in-service teachers

Beyond EAST: virtual crossing borders for building ICC

Sample ICC topics & competences

Telecollaboration combined with language learning develops student teacher's ICC through:

1. promoting skills and strategies for developing inter-cultural awareness leading to ICC for global citizenship.

2. fostering intercultural interactions and discussion leading to self-awareness, openness, and transformation.

3. Promoting reading, researching and discussing intercultural aspects related to ICC in UK, Palestine & Malawi

Beyond EAST: virtual crossing borders for building ICC

What key communication skills can all participants gain?

1. knowledge & awareness of the native culture and other cultures

2. fluency in communication skills through virtual language interaction and practice

3. Team-working and persuasion skills

4. Enhanced digital literacies in a fast developing area

5. Presenting skills of most salient emerging themes related to ICC: miscommunication, misconceptions, appropriateness, identity, teaching and learning, and academic success.

Professor Wilson Mandala: Malawi University of Science & Technology

Having participated in the EAST Project in 2019, Malawian Engineering and Biomedical Sciences students would like to:

- continue collaborating with their counterparts in UK to investigate possible solutions to Malawian specific Engineering and Biomedical problems.

- explore long-term North-South student exchange programme.

- facilitate Gaza-Malawi collaborative approach to Engineering solutions to local shared problems.

- conduct joint Engineering and Biomedical research projects of common interest.

- work on joint innovations aimed at solving local Malawian problems.

Anna: The technical details of EAST

- Learning context and student needs as the main driver

- Human presence and contact
  - Student - student
  - Teacher - student(s)
  - Coordinator - coordinator

- Community building
  - get to know each other sessions - timetabled real time

- Technology choices
  - fit for purpose
  - less is more
  - familiarity is key

Ethical dilemmas

What can you do in just 5 weeks?	Constructing collaborative partnerships with overseas partners takes time, in order to build trust and to explore mutual needs (Koehn and Obamba, 2014)
More benefits / More immediate benefits to GN ss	Possibility of re-balancing in longer-term (funding bids/move from pre-sessional to in-sessional)
When a university permits a project such as EAST, is the project hacking the system, or is it being hacked *by* the system? (de Oliveira Andreotti et al., 2015)	”By demanding the end to all domination and by refusing to associate with the institutions of society and of political power, we try and cover over the mess of life, rather than working together to find ways of living together that will include, even embrace, the impossibilities.” (Phipps, 2007:149, talking specifically of power issues inherent in English language initiatives)

Some closing comments from Gaza:

- *I learned how to respect the cultures of others....before the project it wasn't a big thing, but when I dealt with others with each one has its own culture, my view of the subject really changed...'* (Gaza: 2016)
- *'If you ask me what is the most useful thing that you take it from this project i will certainly say the knowledge about cultures, its great thing to share your ideas and thoughts with other people'* (Gaza: 2016)
- *'you have just know them, also you can get a full of useful when you chat with them about their habits, thoughts, living and many thing relating to their lives not just talking about the education or college :)'* (Gaza: 2016)

Summary of benefits (Freire, 1996)

- Global North students learn about issues of social justice

- Gazan students have a 'witnessing'

- This is not 'banking' education….everyone involved takes a risk…and by doing so, grows

Further Reading

The British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes have just published a fuller discussion of the issues we have touched on today, within their Social Justice Special Interest Group:

- https://eap4socialjustice.net/2020/06/06/pre-sessional-english-language-courses-university-telecollaboration-as-a-driver-of-global-north-south-student-contact-for-engineers/

You can learn more about the EAST project here:

- Guariento, B., Rolinska, A. & Al-Masri, N. 2018 Constructive content-based feedback in EAP contexts: lessons from a cross-border engineering-related pre-sessional course, *Higher Education Research & Development*, 37:3, 514-532
- Rolinska, A., Guariento, B. & Al-Masri, N. 2018. English for Specific Academic Purposes: Student partnerships across borders, *ELT Research Papers 18/01*, British Council: London, UK

References

- Bikowski, D. 2011. Review of 'Online Intercultural Exchange: An Introduction for Foreign Language Teachers'. *Language Learning and Technology*, 15(1), 24-28.

- Byram, M. 1997. *Teaching and assessing intercultural competence.* Multilingual Matters: Clevedon, UK

- Coyle, D. 2015. Strengthening integrated learning: Towards a new era for pluriliteracies and intercultural learning. *Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning*, 8(2), 84-103

- Engineers without borders annual report. 2018. Retrieved from www.ewb-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/EWB-UK_Annual-Review_2017.pdf. Accessed 10/6/19

- Erling, E. 2018. (ed) *ELT Research across fracture lines: Themes and methods for difficult times and under travel constraints*, British Council: London, UK

- Freire, P. 1996. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, Penguin: London, UK

- Helm, F. 2015. The practices and challenges of telecollaboration in higher education in Europe. *Language Learning and Technology*, *19*(2), 197-217

- Kumaravadivelu, B. 2008. *Cultural globalisation and language education*, Yale University Press: Newhaven, CT

- Koehn, P.H. & Obamba, M.O. 2014. *The transnationally partnered university: Insights from research and sustainable development collaborations in Africa.* Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, UK

- Morrissey, J. 2015. Regimes of performance: practices of the normalised self in the neoliberal university. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 36:4, 614-634

- O'Dowd, R., & O'Rourke, B. 2019. New developments in virtual exchange for foreign language education. *Language Learning & Technology*, *23*(3), 1–7

- Otten, M. 2003. Intercultural learning & diversity. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 7*(1), 12-26

- Phipps, A. 2007. *Learning the Arts of Linguistic Survival: Languaging, Tourism, Life.* Multilingual Matters: Clevedon, UK

- Shor, I., Matusov, E., Marjanovic-Shane, A. & Cresswell, J. 2017. Dialogic & Critical Pedagogies: An Interview with Ira Shor. *Dialogic Pedagogy*, 5. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1147791.pdf Accessed 2/3/2020

- Soliya Program. Retrieved from https://www.soliya.net/programs/connect-program. Accessed 10/6/19