

Title of Session: EuroLang - Video Conferencing in the Time Project

Moderator: Phil Benz and Bee Dieu

Guest Speaker: Joe Sheik

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PhilB: Tonight's session of the Euro Language Teachers Forum features Joe Sheik presenting his work with video conferencing in the Time project.

PhilB: Well, perhaps we can ease into the beginning of the session. We usually begin with introductions.

PhilB: **** Everyone please introduce yourselves ****

BrigitteCa: Teach French & English in a vocational school in France

DavidEL: I am a teacher of computer science on the west coast of British Columbia. I am currently working on a Ph.D. in distributed learning at Simon Fraser University.

BeeD: Barbara Dieu teaches English at the Lycee Pasteur, a Franco-Brazilian school in Sao Paulo, Brazil and is also responsible for the Time Classroom Twinning activity in Time project

PhilB teaches English and does teacher training in EdTech integration in southern France.

JoeGst2 Surveys the room, says Hello all my name is Joe Sheik. I teach computer studies at an elementary school near London Ontario Canada

DavoodS: teaching EFL in Iran Doing my PhD Dissertation

PhilB: Super! That's everyone.

DavoodS: on program evaluation

PhilB: ***** Let's all listen to Joe for a bit, then we'll pelt him with questions. ****

DavoodS: also interested in CALL

JoeGst2: use soft objects when pelting please

BeeD giggles

PhilB: So, Joe, videoconferencing, eh?

JoeGst2: Thanks Phil for the prompt. Video Conferencing is one of many projects associated with UNESCO's Time Project

JoeGst2: I have been involved with The Time Project and the Video Conferencing activity since 1997

JoeGst2: in short. VC is just as the name implies. It allows students to create face to face dialogues surrounding any number of topics.

JoeGst2: Each year Time HQ sets a series of topics and questions that are in keeping with the annual theme set by the UN

JoeGst2: teachers and students survey the discussion topics and decide which they would like to form at VC group around

JoeGst2: A group of students then sets about researching that particular topic to learn all then can, and formulate informed opinions about the topic

JoeGst2: The students then decide HOW they wish to present their information and opinions within the VC forum

PhilB: Joe, I bet we're all wondering whether we need special equipment, a special sort of internet connection, and so on.

JoeGst2: ok

BeeD: How do you organize the groups, Joe and what is needed in order to have a videoconferencing at school?

JoeGst2: What do you need to get started?

JoeGst2: You need to have an internet camera...minimally one of those eyeball cameras

DebBl: Can you give us an idea what one of those might cost?

JoeGst2: You need to download microsoft netmeeting

JoeGst2: I have seen eye ball cameras cost as little as \$35.00 Canadian

JoeGst2: netmeeting is free to use and that is why most use it

PhilB: Just netmeeting and a webcam? That's amazing!

JoeGst2: that is all you need

JoeGst2: in the past we use to meet through netmeeting's many sites...

DebBl: Where is a good place to find partners to meet with?

BeeD: what about the firewall issue my technician keeps waving at me?

JoeGst2: as of last year my school board has invested in setting up a separate ILS server and we use that address to meet...creating a safe place for students to meet in

JoeGst2: The ILS server we use is outside of any firewall protection but since it is only known to time project participants it is relatively safe from hackers

JoeGst2: where is good to meet...if you sign on to the Time Project at www.timeproject.org you will join a community of VC participating schools and you will receive the emails, the addresses of other schools and the lessons plans...(ie discussion topics I spoke of earlier)

JoeGst2: The next big step is organization

JoeGst2: I have 23 students

JoeGst2: They form 5 total groups

JoeGst2: each group will be interested in at least 1 of the 3 topics

JoeGst2: I then email my partners (the addresses I mentioned that you get once you join)

JoeGst2: and I tell them which topics I have potential presentations for and I tell them when I will be in my classroom during Time project day. I post all times in GMT so that we can accurately co-ordinate a potential meeting

JoeGst2: we try to match groups that are discussing the same thing

JoeGst2: in this way we form a virtual classroom

JoeGst2: ie the class has studied the same topic and are now sharing presentations

JoeGst2: The key is the large number of emails to set up meetings

JoeGst2: once you have potential partners the KEY IS TO SET UP A PRACTICE SESSION

PhilB: Yes, a practice session sounds good.

JoeGst2: ie set up a time when you and your technician are trying to establish a connection with your potential partner and their technician

BeeD: what are the main problems you have faced until now?

JoeGst2: in that time you work out any problems

JoeGst2: problems with set up or with the project this year in particular?

BeeD: both

JoeGst2: heeee hee

JoeGst2: Sound seems to be a huge issue and in many cases there is no rhyme or reason to it

BeeD: too low?

JoeGst2: ie you may have a visual but if your sound card is not compatible with theirs you may [have] NO SOUND AT ALL

PhilB: . o O (Ouch!)

BeeD: awful!

JoeGst2: yes but if you discover this during a practice session there is time to fix the issue

JoeGst2: ie techie talks to other techie via email or phone and works out the bugs

PhilB: Yes, having a tech person on hand would make it a lot less stressful.

SusanneN: Joe, is there a homepage we could look at for the Time project?

BeeD: <http://www.timeproject.org>

SusanneN: ok

JoeGst2: Yes I would suggest you go to

<http://www.timeproject.org/activities/activities.html> and click on the left menu for video conferencing

JoeGst2: once in the video conferencing site I recommend you ignore the references to 2002 and simply read the rest as information items

BeeD: I found Joe's school participating last year!

JoeGst2: the site gives you a break down of the steps involved with each phase of a typical VC

BeeD: <http://www.timeproject.org/contributions/contributions2002/Canada3.htm>

JoeGst2: grateful smile to **BeeD**

JoeGst2: each VC runs 30 minutes

JeffC: Excellent site

JoeGst2: time to intro participants to one another, time for each side to make their presentation to one another, and time for question and answers from both sides

JoeGst2: I often run mock VC within my own school

JoeGst2: I set up a group in the library on a Video Camera and I run the feed of that camera to a classroom and TV

JeffC: Joe... any chance you will register here and create a room for the Time Project? That way... educators here could be pointed in that direction.

JoeGst2: I have the group practice its entire session via a TV to the class

DavidEL: In my local school district, there weren't enough students at a couple of our high schools who were interested in taking Japanese. They combined students in three schools and had one teacher instruct the course using videoconferencing.

BeeD: . o O (how interesting!)

JoeGst2: Jeff if someone could point me in the correct direction I would be happy to help in that manner

JeffC: I'll be glad to help you after this session is over Joe.

JoeGst2: Thanks Jeff

DavidEL: This looks really interesting Joe.

JoeGst2: I have found it fulfilling and very exciting over the many years David

JoeGst2: I have worked with senior secondary as well as senior elementary

DavidEL: Is the program expensive to run?

PhilB: Now what about the language angle - Joe, were your students always communicating in English, or were they also using language skills?

JoeGst2: each find something fascinating to learn and much to say during the conferences

JeffC: I don't want to deflect the conversation away from this excellent resource... but just wanted to throw out another site... that could be used in conjunction with the Time Project. It's <http://www.takingitglobal.org> It is a student run collaborative with students working together on an international level.

PhilB: Sounds cool, Jeff - if you use that site yourself, maybe you could present it here sometime?

JoeGst2: Aside from the webcam, netmeeting, and the time to invest in the partnerships it is not expensive at all

DavidEL: I use a web cam for a couple of my online courses now but it's taking me sometime to learn how to use it optimally

JoeGst2: The key is to develop a space that is right for VC

PhilB: Joe, I really like the idea of using room-to-room VC within your school to get students used to the sort of interaction necessary for their distance comms.

JoeGst2: enough light

SusanneN: Fine Jeff, let us look at this new site some other time, great inspiration for an upcoming session

JoeGst2: not many distractions for sound

BeeD: with a webcam you focus on one student or various Joe?

JoeGst2: Yes the training idea is one developed by Time HQ folks at Sintermeerten College.

JeffC: Yes... I don't want to distract from Time Project... another time.

JoeGst2: I set up seating for the 5 person team

JeffC: o O (Sintermeerteen... what a great name!)

JoeGst2: you want all of them to be seen

BeeD: Saint Martin, I guess

DavidEL: Is there a protocol for who talks when, etc.?

PhilB: bets there is more protocol on VC than here on Tapped In.

JoeGst2: Yes, procedures are found on the web site

DavidEL: Who initiates conversations and switches in topic?

JoeGst2: generally speaking each side says hello and asks who would like to start...

JoeGst2: then that side introduces all of their team....

PhilB: ***** Let's pause with further questions while Joe gets into the protocol issue

JoeGst2: either each person does it personally or the spokesperson for the team introduces their entire team

JoeGst2: then the other school does the same

JoeGst2: then the school that started goes into their presentation on the topic

JoeGst2: the receiving school listens and makes any notes, questions etc....

DavidEL: Are the sessions recorded and archived for later review?

JoeGst2: procedure then states that the school that presented listens and answers questions

JoeGst2: David we have tried for years to record both sides of the VC for future reference...while technically speaking each one should have worked...none for my part have

JoeGst2: I have a lovely collection of very one sided conversations

DavidEL: I'm sure that this is coming.

DavidEL: I know that a lot of the new Learner Management Software is starting to incorporate desktop videoconferencing tools.

JoeGst2: With the question and answer sessions....I have found each school to be very informal about procedures...while they are in place...many eager students want to present their side immediately after hearing someone else's presentations and then questions come at the end

JoeGst2: I hope so David

JoeGst2: Once each side has presented and each side has fielded specific questions about their presentation

PhilB: Can you easily broadcast to more than one site simultaneously? If so, both participants could also broadcast to a 3rd computer used to record both channels at once.

JoeGst2: there is time for an open Q&A...ie a class room discussion on the topic

JoeGst2: the idea being....each school has researched the same topic

JoeGst2: each school team has developed their own point of view

JoeGst2: each side has presented that view to the other

SusanneN: a creative solution, Phil

DavidEL: How about a follow-up threaded discussion? I think that would be an interesting adjunct to your sessions

JoeGst2: now the real learning begins as they dialogue and share concepts as if they were in the same classroom and in the true spirit of Time Project, they are

JoeGst2: they are both in their classroom at the same time (real time) sharing a lesson

DavidEL: Yes. A window to another world (culture).

BeeD: I wish I could do it this year!

JoeGst2: To follow David and Phil's discussion....my experiences using Netmeeting have not allowed for a third party.....but I would love to hear more if someone knows how that can be achieved with that software

JoeGst2: can you Bee?

BeeD: Our techie is not very helpful in these matters <g>

JoeGst2: Do you have a camera

JoeGst2: do you have net meeting

JoeGst2: you and I need to set up a practice time then

PhilB: It does sound like a really useful activity. Back to an earlier question though: Joe, were your students always communicating in their native language, English, or do they also use their language skills?

JoeGst2: Phil they use their native language of English

JoeGst2: their level of their second language French, is unfortunately so low say a grade 3 level, that they would be unable to communicate very well

BeeD: other participating schools were from Italy, Finland, Indonesia and the Netherlands...

DavidEL: Realtime language exchanges would probably present a problem with videoconferencing unless the level of second language were quite high.

PhilB: And what about your partners? I bet they are not all anglophones.

JoeGst2: We have found it useful to not only exchange email addresses with partners but phone numbers as well.

JoeGst2: I have often telephoned a partner in the middle of a set up practice session to work out the problems over the phone

BeeD: Joe has done some wonderful work with an Italian school...

SusanneN: yes, the telephone is an amazing tool!

JoeGst2: in that way we maximize our practice time in an effort to get a successful link during the practice session

SusanneN: we sometimes tend to forget that

JoeGst2: thanks Bee yes...our partners are in either English language schools like Bee has or they are in a senior language class like my friend Vanna in Italy

JoeGst2: Often the skill level of our partners is so high, even though we know English is not their first language, you could barely tell

JoeGst2: however as I have said, I teach in an elementary school, my students are 13-14 years old and they have only studied their second language for 3 to 4 years

JoeGst2: as a result they are limited to English only VC's

DavidEL: And rarely have an opportunity to use it I would guess Joe.

PhilB: Age 13-14 is hardly elementary school for most of us - more like Middle School (college in France)

JoeGst2: however English and French are the two official languages of the Time Project though wonderful work by people like Bee and others are striving for email twinning and VC in native languages

BeeD: I have 75 students participating in the twinning this year, Joe...how could I organize this?

JoeGst2: yes David you are correct

JoeGst2: Start small

JoeGst2: start with 1-5 groups of 5 students (ie one class)

JoeGst2: each of the 5 groups selects one of the 3 discussion topics

JoeGst2: they work on their responses...

BeeD: right...I will form 3 groups of 5 then...1 from each class

JoeGst2: you post to the VC team of schools that you have groups willing to discuss the topics

BeeD: I have net meeting...could I use a Sony digital camera instead of a webcam...I think I could borrow one from one of the students...

JoeGst2: for example I have groups for each of the topics

JoeGst2: setting up VC with me will ensure that each of your groups gets at least one chance to present their topic to another group who have chosen the same topic

PhilB: So there is still time for *any* of us to get into this twinning + VC project, is that right?

JoeGst2: OH YES

JoeGst2: as of today while we have a number of schools in many countries on board none have actually posted their schedule (ie the times they are available for VC) other than my school

DebbieKC: Website to use?

JoeGst2: to start go to the time project site <http://www.timeproject.org> and join the project

DebbieKC: Thanks

JoeGst2: then select Video Conferencing as one of the activities you wish to join

JoeGst2: there are many to choose from

DebbieKC: OK

JoeGst2: for example I run 3 activities each year simultaneously

DebbieKC: wow

BeeD shows Debbie the url to activities

BeeD: <http://www.timeproject.org/activities/activities.html>

DebbieKC: Thanks very much

JoeGst2: I have my students research the unite the nations research project

JoeGst2: during some down time in the research they check their twinning discussions

BeeD: We usually participate in various activities as well: unite the nations, twinning and design a clock are the most popular among us

JoeGst2: and at prescheduled times a VC team goes to our VC area and presents their topic to a partner school

SusanneN: too bad that I do not have a school to come up with. I'm just following this from the sideline because of my strong interest in two way communication. I have tried to encourage a teacher colleague in this last year but he said they were already too busy

JoeGst2: in this way I keep the whole group going throughout the 24 hours of the project....researching is the glue that binds....with pauses to check and respond to classroom twinning and to stop to present their VC

DebbieKC: I have to do an Internet project with a class and this sounds interesting

JoeGst2: I must urge that anyone interested in VC through Time Project follow these steps

JeffC: Joe... at this point I am without a school. I was Education Technology Specialist for the College of Education at Pacific University (and was laid off Monday). I am interested in joining however, and facilitating collaboration with schools and teachers that I support. Is it still possible to register without a school affiliation?

JoeGst2: 1) start connecting to your partners via email as soon as possible

JoeGst2: you can join Jeff however how would you work with schools on this?

JeffC: I am starting my own educational consultancy business (Sustained Online Support)... which will keep me in touch with educators... I still have many contacts.

JoeGst2: 2) set up as many practice sessions early on to establish a credible connection with your partner

JoeGst2: 3) establish a correct time GMT on time day that you will connect with your partner to form a VC

JoeGst2: 4) set up a VC with Time HQ...they are in their office the entire 24 hours...however they are not a school

JoeGst2: so your students can have the excitement of presenting a VC to Time HQ at any time that you do not have another one booked....they will get feed back from the adults who organize and run time.

PhilB: That's all super, Joe, it's been a really informative session. Can I hit "pause" for a moment and make some announcements?

JoeGst2 nods to **PhilB**

PhilB: Our time is rapidly drawing to a close, I'd like to warn you about next week's time change and announce our November calendar. There will be no session next Sunday, 26 October, the day when many of you will be setting your clocks back an hour. After the change, our regular meeting time will be 21 hours GMT (1PM PST, 4PM EST, 9PM UK time, 10PM Western Europe time) - so if you do set your clocks back in your area, the meeting time will not in fact change at all, except for the 23 Nov session which will be held 2 hours early.

PhilB: Here is our November line-up:

PhilB: 2 Nov - David Leblanc on online course building resources (2nd session)

PhilB: 9 Nov - Charlie Williams on his "parapal" site

PhilB: 16 Nov - Elaine with her Isreal-US joint writing project

PhilB: 23 Nov - Vance Stevens on the Virtual Resource Center (2 hours early)

PhilB: 30 Nov - (to be announced)

SusanneN: fine guests!

PhilB: Also, if anyone here can volunteer to help David on the 2nd of November, neither Bee nor I will be available that day.

DebbieKC: Thank you

PhilB: Joe, if you'd like to continue the discussion with anyone here, or if anyone has any final questions for Joe, go right ahead.

DebbieKC: Is there a fee involved?

SusanneN: not a good day for me Sunday 2 Nov, sorry Phil. I'm doing exams that week and need to get up very early

BeeD: No Debbie...this is free

JeffC: Joe... when you are ready... after answering questions... I can help you with setting up shop here.

PhilB: I'd really like to hear more sometime about this VC project, specifically how it impacts on students' motivation for internationally-oriented learning in the classroom.

DebbieKC: Great, I like the twinning idea a lot

DebbI: Thanks a lot, Joe. I'm going to check this out further...

DebbieKC: Oh, what are the age groups of classes that normally are involved in these projects?

BeeD: From 12 to 19 Debbie

DebbieKC: Thank you

BeeD: average

SusanneN: Now I will say goodbye from Denmark! Joe, this was a fine intro and description of the Time project.! bye for now.

BeeD hugs Sus good night

JoeGst2: as one of the coordinators for the VC please email me if you have questions or require help with this project. j.sheik@tvdsb.on.ca

DebbieKC: Thanks for that personal address

JoeGst2: I can assist you with lesson plans, addresses of other participants, help you coordinate as many VC as you can book and answer questions and concerns over VC

DavidEL: I'll pass this on to others in my district Joe. I can also see an application to some of our online learners.

JoeGst2: fantastic

JoeGst2: the more the merrier

PhilB: Thanks Joe, thanks, everyone, I've got to run off to another commitment. It's been a great session!

BeeD: Thanks Joe...this was very interesting...let's keep in touch...I'd really like to participate this year!

DebbieKC: Have a great weekend, thanks for all the information