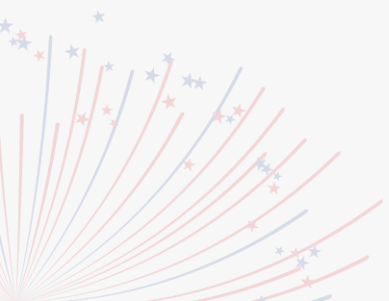


Words' exchange:
an ice-breaking approach to foster
meaningful intercultural exchanges
among students

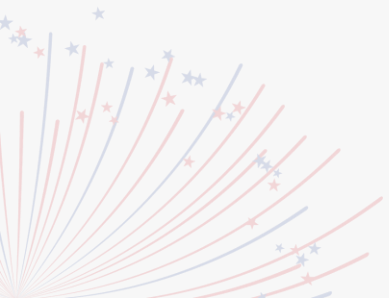
Dr. Elena Forasacco



What a Global Fellows Programme is?

Teaching and learning perspective:

- 5-days professional development programme
- Focus on intercultural and interdisciplinary collaboration
- Developed with international partners
- 39 students work in interdisciplinary and intercultural groups to develop a project proposal

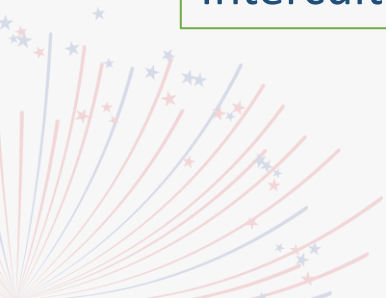
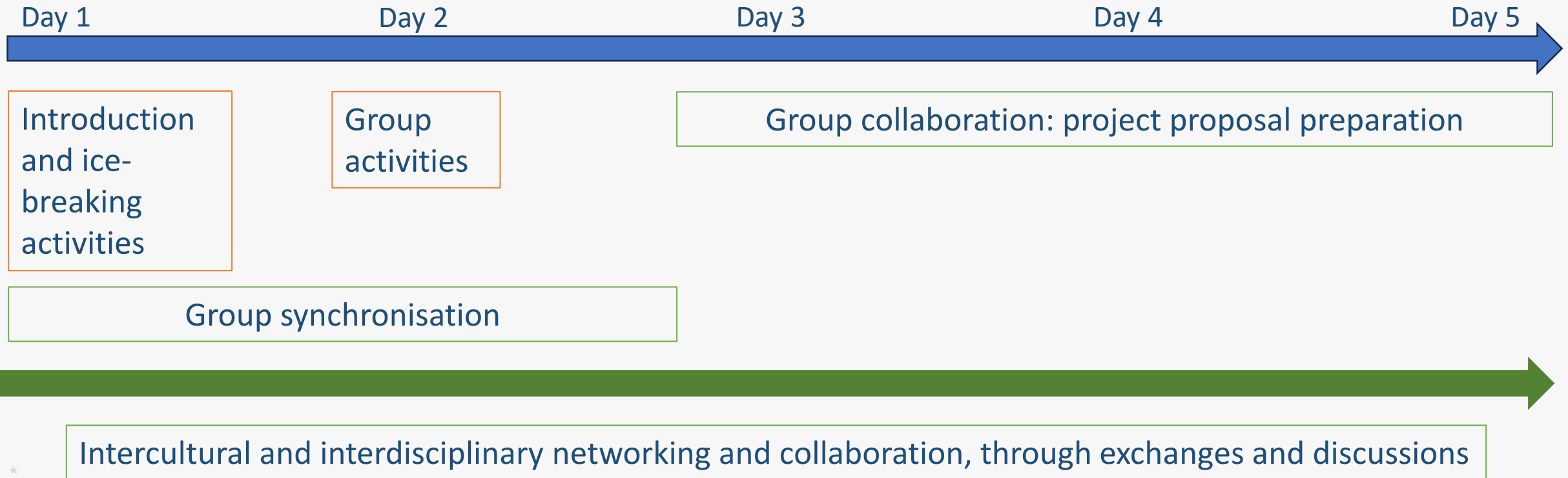


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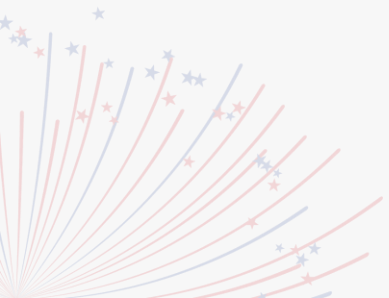


How does a Global Fellows Programme work?



What are the key challenges?

- Time: only 5 days
- Environment: create a safe space
- Interactions: facilitate exchanges in this intercultural and interdisciplinary environment
- **Languages**: increase empathy and embrace differences

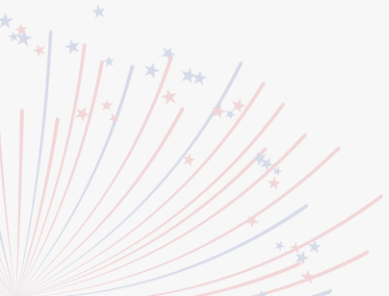


What were our first solutions?

Introductions and ice-breaking activities

- Online event for first introductions
- Day 1 morning: in-person introductions and networking
 - definition of principles for collaboration (in groups)
 - from individuals' competencies to group competencies (in groups)

... but languages...



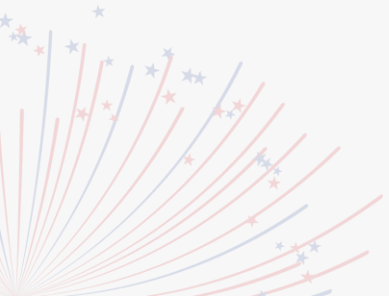
What were our first solutions?

Videos to watch about interdisciplinary and intercultural collaboration

Introductions and ice-breaking activities

- Online event for first introductions
- Day 1 morning: in-person introductions and networking
 - definition of principles for collaboration (in groups)
 - from individuals' competencies to group competencies (in groups)

... but languages...



What is our latest solution?

Videos to watch about interdisciplinary and intercultural collaboration

Introductions and **new ice-breaking activity** designed to remove language barriers

*“When there are non-native English speakers, these students might need time to reflect before talking. **Teachers need to normalise silence.** [...] This normalisation can be added to the “Introduction to the course and expectations”: appreciate differences and give time”.*

Increase the understanding of languages

Student-centered activity

Non-patronising approach

**Words’ exchange –
Normalise the silence**



Words' exchange – Normalise the silence: rationale

Taking the shoes = **Perspective taking**

It involves:

1. seeing the perspective of the other person
2. understanding the reason and motivation behind that perspective
3. appreciating the different perspective

Understand the others' feelings, motives and thoughts through visuo-spatial activities

Words' exchange – Normalise the silence: design

The book is on the table because I am reading it

1. Each student translates it their spoken languages or dialects (no formal style)
2. They explain the structure (and alphabet) of the translated phrase

Key point: effective introduction with examples

Learning



- Different structure, organisation and alphabet
- Differences between formal and informal style (also for English)
- Need of silence as reflection time

What did it happen?

我差点摔了 చుక్క
我差点摔了 VO

पह पुस्तक मीज पर है, क्योंकि मैं उसे पढ़ रहा हूँ।
నను పుస్తకం మీజ పైన ఉంది, కావున అది పఠించు పైనున్నది.

The book is on the table
because I am reading it.

Dagaare: Nisore na agann aleso aga a table su.

Twi: Merekan booku no ero nti; na eda table no su.

한글: 이 책은 탁자 위에 있다

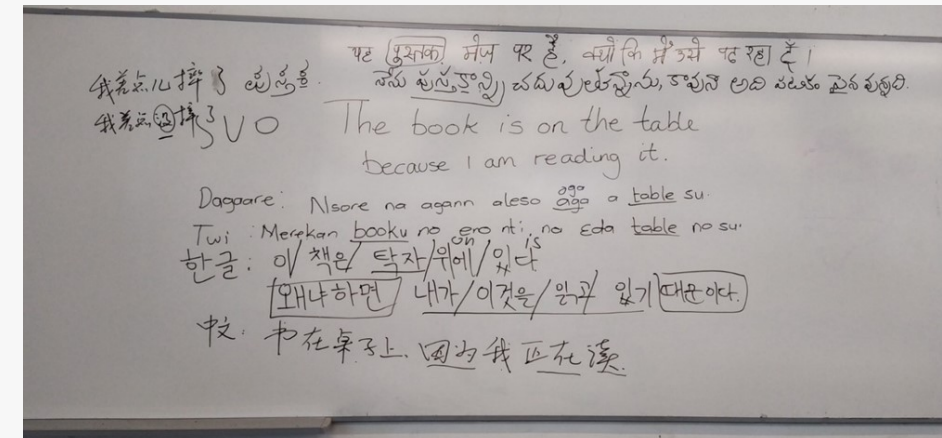
왜냐하면 내가 이것을 읽고 있기 때문이다.

中文: 书在桌子上, 因为我正在读.

What did it happen? Teachers' perspectives

We observed all students

- engaged in the activity
- felt comfortable because they were the “subject experts”
- felt proud of their origins
- discovered new features in their languages through the eyes of their colleagues
- very chatty within a couple of hours
- had fun 😊



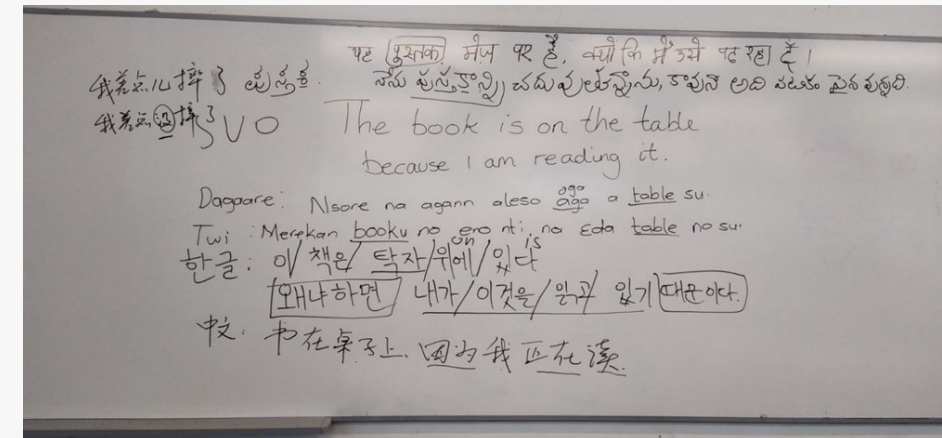
What did it happen? Students' perspectives

“When **people** come together from **different backgrounds**, different institutions, different **languages**, and even different **accents** from the same language, it it, it's **not easy to break the ice** and to to to merge together and feeling comfortable towards each other. But I believe all **these transitional activities** did manage successively in a in a **very good manner to break and to melt the ice totally**”

“And we ended up, **by the end of the first day**, some **being some kind of friends or colleagues**, and we felt like we knew each other for a long time”

“**Surprisingly** it was... Kind of for me... “**I can see like different languages required sometime more effort than I thought it should be**”... so so... I understand like some people might be struggling, especially to speak English because they are not native speaker”

“It's a **safe environment to be who you** are so long as that environment, safe space is there such that **I don't have to question myself before I actually talk**. [...] That creates a very safe environment where **everyone actively engages** in this in this course which actually has a benefit”



Our learning and future steps

The activity works

- student-centered
- students owned the activity
- authentic
- sense of belonging (also in Laura Bulmer poster)
- different (fun) approach to languages

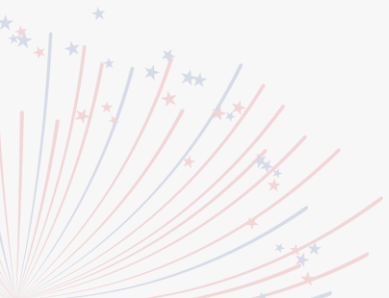


Future

Introduce a “speaking” ice-breaking activity

Our take home message

- “Taking the shoes of others” is not difficult to achieve
- This activity set the mood for the week: more understanding, empathy and patience
- This activity might work even better for longer courses



Thank you for taking my perspective!

