

GLOBAL ENGLISH CORNER

International conversations through Elluminate & WordPress



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AIMS

- Support international students in developing spoken English language skills in extracurricular activities.



AIMS

- Encourage the uptake of technologies to improve the student experience for students in China learning English and undertaking VU degrees in English.
- Use technology to emphasise the societal aspects of learning – especially language learning.
- Explore how business students in Melbourne could provide peer support to business students in China.

FUNDING

VU International T&L Grants

Collaborative projects funded to improve curriculum, pedagogy of programs and quality of student experience

VU teaching &
support staff

VU partner institute staff

Malaysia

China

Hong
Kong

METHODOLOGY

- 3 partner universities in China:
 - Sichuan University, Chengdu
 - Henan University, Kaifeng
 - Liaoning University, Shenyang



METHODOLOGY

- Pair of student peers in Melbourne (1 international student from China & 1 domestic student).
- Student peers conducted 4 different one-hour, semi-structured conversations with groups of 8 students offshore that were supervised by a teacher in China over an 8 week period.

Cassandra Yap

METHODOLOGY

- Chinese English teachers provided constructive and detailed feedback after each weekly Elluminate session via email.
- Chinese students and VU peers posted comments/responses to the Blog during the week before each Elluminate session.
- An online survey was administered via the Global English Corner Blog and email.

TECHNOLOGY

Global English Corner

Just another WordPress.com site

Home Henan University Liaoning University Sichuan University Using Elluminate VU Team

Welcome

Posted on February 17, 2011 by Icurran64

27

EMAIL SUBSCRIPTION
You are subscribed to this blog
(mango)

This project is an extension of a pilot program run in 2010 with local and international students in the Faculty of Business and Law. The "Global English Corner" program offers international students the opportunity to improve their English skills and learn about Australian culture and transition issues. This projects aims to extend the support given to International students by offering the chance to participate in the "Have a Chat" program via the internet using Elluminate. Program participants include students and staff from:

- Victoria University, Melbourne Australia
- Sichuan University, Chengdu China
- Liaoning University, Shen Yang China
- Henan University, Henan China

Play the video below to hear about individual learning experiences, friendships made and in general the fun had during the 2010 "Have a Chat" onshore pilot program.

- ["Have a Chat" 2010 highlights](#)

Elluminate Live! - GLOBAL HAVE A CHAT

File Session View Tools Window Help

Participants

- Participant#10 (Moderator)
- Participant#4 (Moderator)
- Participant#6 (Moderator)
- Participant#8 (Moderator)
- Participant#2
- Participant#5
- Participant#7
- Participant#9

Whiteboard - Main Room (Scaled 154%)

Slide

Follow Moderator

Zhengzhou Hui Mian (tewed noodle with soup and meat)

Chat

Show All

Joined on 24 March 2011 at 7:31 PM

Moderator (Participant#9): this is my ppt

Moderator (Participant#6): Thanks, Lisa

Moderator (Participant#8): maybe you can show it

Moderator (Participant#9): □□□□□□

Moderator (Participant#4): Quentin□□□□

Moderator (Participant#6): If you have prepared a PPT, could you please send us the PPT and we will upload it for you.

Moderator (Participant#6): Give people good education, which cultivates them to be more kind people.

Moderator (Participant#10): hahaha

Send to This Room

Audio - Multiple Talkers

OutP2

In session for 51 minutes.

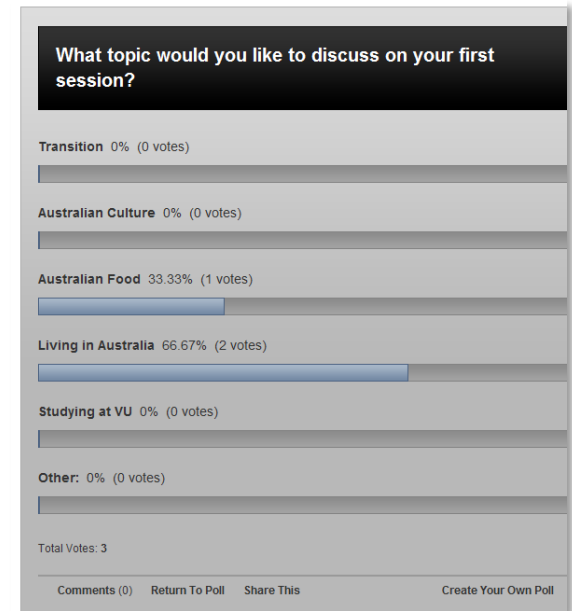
TECHNOLOGY

- Elluminate functions used:
 - Emoticons
 - Audio
 - Video
 - Txt chat
 - Share documents, images
 - Web tours
 - Collaborative whiteboard



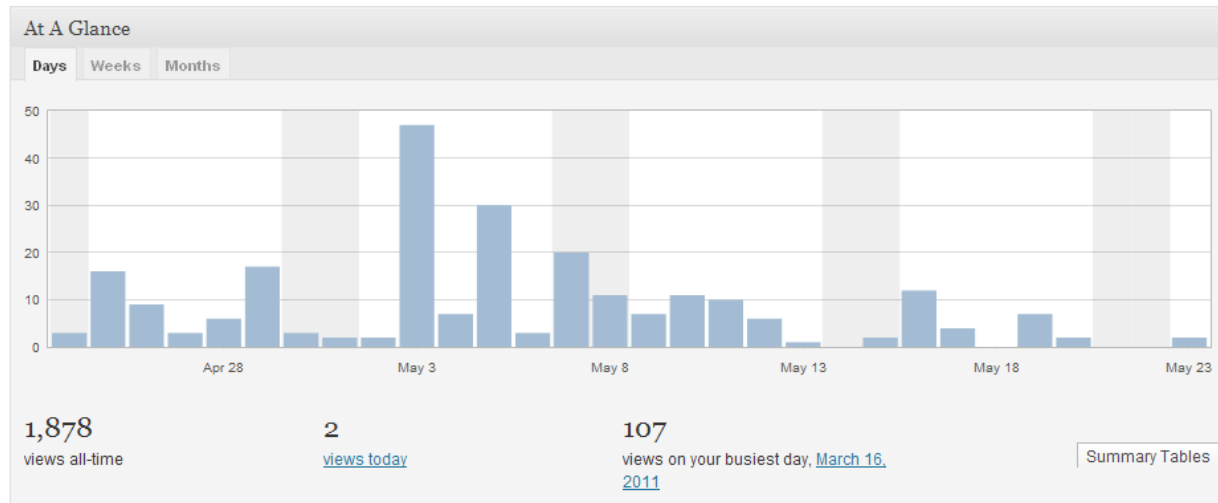
TECHNOLOGY

- Global English Corner blog:
 - Gave each partner a space for students to post comments before and after weekly sessions.
 - Ran polls to gauge what students in China would like to discuss. Enabling peers in Melbourne time to prepare.



TECHNOLOGY

- The blog offers a useful statistics function. In just 3 weeks, with 30 students in the program, there were over 1800 visits to the site, 79 comments made and Henan University students were the most active users of the offshore cohort.



LEARNING ENGLISH IN CHINA

- The English Corner
- English proficiency
 - Vital for Chinese students who intend to study in an English-language degree either in China or in an English-speaking country.
 - Important to enhance global employability prospects.
 - Quality of Australian qualifications.

LEARNING ENGLISH IN CHINA

- Elluminate's capacity to capture the social language learning evident in English Corner phenomena makes this technological approach a sustainable and affordable language support option for Australian Universities.
- Elluminate's added feature of recording programs provides learners with an additional resource.

INTERNATIONALISING THE CURRICULUM

- Global English Corner provides a way to ‘promote interaction between students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds’ (Arkoudis et al., 2010)



*Students at
Sichuan
University
participating in
a presentation.*

EQUIVALENCE

- All students at VU in Melbourne can access:
 - Language and learning support services.
 - Individual appointments with Learning Support academics.
 - Attend academic skills workshops.
 - Attend peer support sessions for some subjects.

EQUIVALENCE

- International students in Faculty of Business and Law (FOBAL) can participate in:
 - centrally-delivered conversation classes to practise English.
 - FOBAL run Have a Chat sessions that aim to introduce international students to aspects of Australian culture and opportunities to practise English.
- Offshore students, ironically, have fewer dynamic language support options.

FINDINGS

- Elluminate provided a cost effective means of enabling international students to dynamically practice English.
- Technological challenges regularly occurred with noise problems and inconsistent internet connections.
- Finding a mutually suitable time was difficult due to students and teaching staff in China having very full timetables, in addition to a 2hr time difference, 3hrs with daylight savings.

FINDINGS

- All students participated in the project using Elluminate through speaking, texting, using the whiteboard, listening to others and sharing documents or pictures including PowerPoint presentations.
- Asked what they liked about Elluminate in open-ended responses, students wrote primarily about Elluminate's capacity to improve English through providing opportunities and reasons to practise.

FINDINGS

- Student comments included:
 - *It can improve our English speaking and also help ... to establish friendship.*
 - *It's a platform for me to speak English. It also broadens my eyesight and makes me know much about different culture and different lives.*
 - *It has improved my English speaking and ... I learned about many different cultures in Australia.*
 - *You can chat with people from the globe wherever they are.*

FINDINGS

- What students didn't like about Elluminate:
 - focused on technical issues rather than learning experience.
 - difficulties included slow internet speed, audio dropping out, feedback and background noise.
- Asked if they would like to use Elluminate more to speak to students in Australia the response was 100% affirmative.

FINDINGS

- Asked to comment on what they learnt from being involved in the project, the following key themes can be identified in students' responses:
 - Cultural knowledge
 - Confidence
 - Communication skills, including listening skills
 - Knowledge about university life in Australia.

FINDINGS

- Student comments included:
 - *We learnt how to communicate with people by trying to understand.*
 - *I learn more about foreign culture ... This is a good way to give me ... opportunities to speak English and make me know much about how to organise sentences in a short time to express myself.*
 - *I spoke a lot. I think I have gained a lot of self confidence.*

Participants

Participant#2 (<i>Away, Moderator</i>)		
Participant#4 (<i>Moderator</i>)		
Participant#5 (<i>Moderator</i>)		
Participant#10	1	
Participant#3	2	
Participant#6		
Participant#7		
Participant#8		
Participant#9		

Chat

Show All

Participant#10: □□□

Moderator (Participant#4): We don't know what causes the problem.

Participant#8: It doesn't matter.

Moderator (Participant#4): Brian, could you please pull out your headset connection line once you finish and plug it in again. Thank you!

Participant#9: ok~

Moderator (Participant#2): yes

Participant#9: hehe~~

Moderator (Participant#5): seafood platter

Web Tour - Google Image Result for http://australiaentertains.com.au/wp-content/SeafoodPlatter.jpg

The screenshot shows the Australia Entertains website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with "Home", "About Us", "Contact Us", "Blog", and "Menu". Below the header, there's a large banner for "Australia Entertains" featuring a photo of a seafood platter. The text "KATHRYN PORRITT FROM PINK FROST" is visible below the banner. On the left sidebar, there are several badges: "BLOG AS SEEN ON DELIGHTFUL BLOGS", "BEST OF THE BEST Alltop ★★★★★ ALL THE TOP STORIES", and "Top 100 Australian Women Bloggers". The main content area displays a large photo of a seafood platter with lobster, mussels, shrimp, and lemon wedges. To the right of the photo, there's a section titled "HOW TO CREATE YOUR VERY OWN EVENT MAGAZINE" which includes text about creating a wedding magazine and a link to "Decorating, Wedding Parasols, Wedding".

- Food was a popular topic.
- Chinese students were keen to learn about Australia's multicultural fare.
- The text also shows that students are working out technical problems at the same time.

File Session View Tools Window Help

Participants

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Participant#2 (Away, Moderator)									
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Show All

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Participant#9: ok~

Moderator (Participant#2): yes

Participant#9: hehe~~

Moderator (Participant#5): seafood platter

Participant#6: tacos~

Participant#3: vegemite!

Moderator (Participant#4): It is a spread.

Moderator (Participant#4): Salty

Send to This Room

Web Tour - Google Image Result for http://whatscookingamerica.net/History/Vegemite.jpg

History of Vegemite® - Vegemite Sandwich Recipe

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[Kraft Foods - Vegemite](#) Kraft Foods Introduce My First Vegemite. Formulated For Kids KraftBrands.com/Vegemite

[Think Like a Swapper](#) Lose Your Belly, Without Losing Out On The Things You LOVE swapiit.gov.au

[Electricity Bills Suck](#) Compare, Select & Save Up To \$386 Find The Cheapest Supplier Today ElectricityWizard.com.

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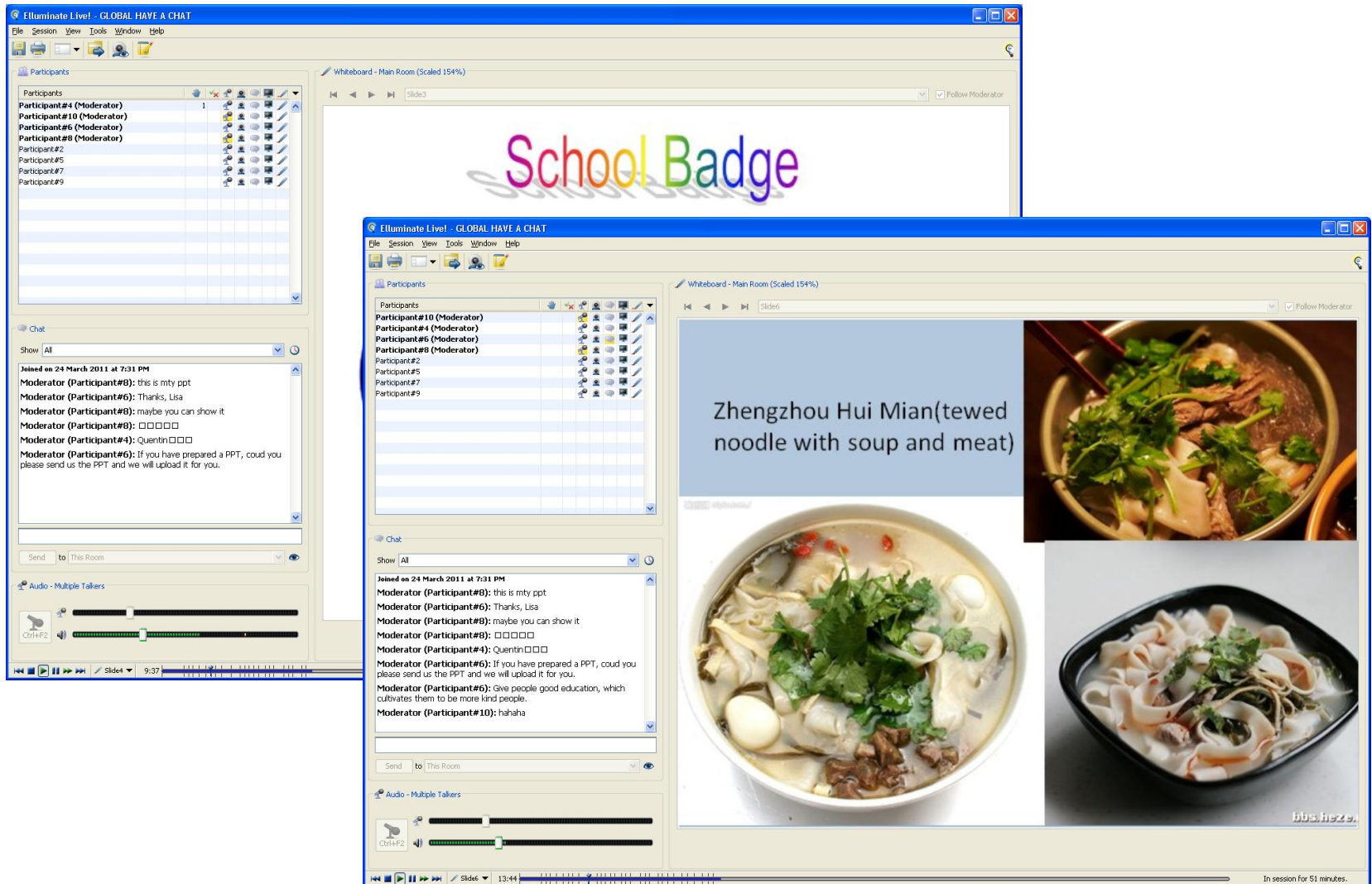
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What is Vegemite?

considered as much a part of the Australian culture as kangaroos and the Holden. It is an Australian obsession that is a unique and loved symbol of the nation. A Vegemite sandwich to an Australian is the equivalent of a peanut butter and jelly sandwich to an American kid - but the taste is QUITE different!

Vegemite is one of several yeast extract spreads sold in Australia. It is made from leftover brewers' yeast extract (a by-product of beer manufacture) and various vegetable and spice additives. It is very dark reddish-brown, almost black, in color, and one of the richest sources known of Vitamin B. It's thick like

The iconic product of Vegemite was one of the Australian food items sent to China as part of the project. One student said it tasted like Chinese medicine.



Students also presented on Chinese culture, cuisine and University life in China.

VIEWS FROM SICHUAN

- Sichuan University's facilitator is a 'foreign teacher' who has lived in China for 10 years and speaks Mandarin.
- This teacher noted in the first session:
 - *'Students had their first culture shock – that not all Australians are blonde haired, blue-eyed – they carried on asking me about hair colour for 5 minutes afterwards'.*
 - *'It was the first time [they got] to talk to another country and would never forget it.'*

VIEWS FROM HENAN

- Teachers in China reported that students' attitudes to the project are positive and that topics of discussion are relevant.
- Teachers noted:
 - *'Our students liked the debate about whether it is good to go abroad to study'.*
 - *I did enjoy every minute of students' ppt presentation around cultural issues, ranging from Henan University, Henan Cuisine, Henan Opera to Hometowns (Zhengzhou, Xinyang, Yichang).*

VIEWS FROM LIAONING

- Teaching staff reported improved interactions with each session as technological issues were ironed out.
- Teachers noted:
 - *‘All of the students are interested in talking about the differences between Australian Uni and Chines Uni.’*

CHALLENGES

- VU Peers and students and staff in China initially needed support to get online and use Elluminate. After a couple of sessions students and staff were able to troubleshoot and work out problems.
- Elluminate is reasonably intuitive.
- All sessions went ahead as scheduled.

CHALLENGES

- Peers in Melbourne needed more explicit instruction concerning the politics of language (Phillipson 1988 cited in Pennycook 1994).
- Assumed power evident in the role of peer.
- Peers sometimes took the lead in conversations in a way that limited the voices of students in China.

CHALLENGES

- Sessions weren't recorded:
 - Student permission required.
 - Training around confidentiality and other ethical considerations is needed.
- The “Global English Corner” Blog created a permanent artefact.
 - Melbourne Bloggers were asked to write formally and carefully.
 - Casual comments like ‘Hey you guys ...’ and spelling errors from students in Melbourne were noted and deemed inappropriate.
 - It's hoped that well written Blogs will improve all students' written English.

CONCLUSION

- Self-directed, synchronous learning support vital to student success.
- Combination of synchronous and asynchronous communication enables students to experience both the pressure of real time discussion and the social benefits of a conversation.

CONCLUSION

- Global English Corner:
 - Offers a rich and generally reliable forum for developing language skills, global awareness and intercultural skills.
 - Needs to sit alongside other resources and programs.
 - Can support the transition of students.
- Elluminate has the capacity to profoundly impact on students learning and confidence

CONCLUSION

- Despite some technical glitches & slow internet connections at some offshore locations, *Global English Corner* participants – staff and students – have regarded the pilot as a great success.
- As the teacher in Sichuan observed, the ability of students to see, hear, talk and simply interact is ‘great for breaking down cultural barriers and [students’] preconceptions’ – both in China & Melbourne.

