

## Symposium

# Intercultural e-learning: Experiences of research in a Sino-UK context

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This Symposium presents some of the research of members of the eChina-UK programme. The programme is funded in the UK by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, and its purpose is to bring about cultural awareness and good pedagogic practice between teachers and higher education institutions in the UK and China. Collaboration between UK and China teachers and researchers is a key feature of the programme.

Keywords: e-learning, cultural awareness, inter-cultural e-learning, teachers' development.

## Overview

One of the goals of the eChina-UK Programme as a whole is to develop understandings in both countries of cultural change and exchange in e-learning pedagogy. In Phase One of the project, higher education institutions in the UK and in China collaborated in the development of Masters level courses to be delivered to school teachers in China via e-learning technologies. Some of the outcomes of this Phase of the programme can be viewed at <http://www.echinaprogramme.org/>

In Phase Two of the programme, we are building on what we learned in Phase One about collaborative course development and intercultural pedagogic practice and exchange, and extending that in various ways.

The four papers that make up this Symposium present intercultural understandings from a variety of Sino-UK perspectives viz a case study analysis of the participatory design of an online course in tutor training; the application of activity theory to tutors perceptions of e-learning; an examination of collaboration for inter-cultural e-learning; and an examination of Chinese higher education teachers' conceptions of e-learning.

The purpose of the Symposium is to take the opportunity to discuss our work with conference delegates, and engage in explorations of the meaning of intercultural e-learning and pedagogy. We are also interested in discussing with participants issues relating to carrying out research in different cultural settings, and the problems (ethical and methodological) in doing this effectively. The examples here are from a Sino-UK perspective, but we imagine that conference delegates will be in a position to discuss other examples of intercultural e-learning in the Symposium, and we will run the Symposium in a way that allows that to happen, and in ways that actively engage participants.

The four papers are:

**Collaboration for inter-cultural e-learning: a Sino-UK case study**

Sheena Banks, School of Education, University of Sheffield, UK

**An activity theory approach to the exploration of tutors' perceptions of effective online pedagogy**

Gordon Joyes, School of Education, University of Nottingham, UK

**Chinese Higher Education Teachers' Conceptions of e-Learning**

David McConnell and Jianhua Zhao, Department of Educational Research, Lancaster University, UK

**A Participatory Design Approach to the Development of Online Tutor Training Materials - A case study from China**

Chen, Zehang, School of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Beijing Normal University, China

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