NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)- The future for effective international learning opportunities?

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Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)

- Online digital technology and social media promotes distant teaching and learning, and knowledge exchange between students from different countries
- Learning is achieved through social construction (Vygotsky, 1978, Cochrane et al., 2013)
- Promotes equal opportunities and access to a larger number of students
- Become proficient in intercultural exchanges and using technologies to communicate in geographically distributed networks of people
- Not time bound:
  - The dialogue can continue over an extended period of time, especially if there are large time differences between the two countries (Lee & Markay, 2014)

Intercultural competence

- Defined as 'the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes' (Deardorff, 2006)
- Goals of intercultural competence (Vilar-Onrubia & Rajpal, 2016)
  - Respect
    - 'valuing of others'
  - Self-awareness/identity
    - 'understanding the lens through which we each view the world'
  - Seeing from other perspectives/world views
    - 'both how these perspectives are similar and different'

Aims

- To build intercultural competence among Psychology students through collaborative online international learning
- To create a collaborative learning community where the students co-construct meaning using task-based activities
- To build a social media community of practice (CoP) of Psychology teaching staff at the collaborating academic institutions interested in transforming pedagogy

Method

- Psychology teaching staff at NTU and University of Madras formed a social media community of practice (CoP) (Cochrane et al., 2013)
  - Considerable overlap in curriculum between British and Indian Psychology courses
  - The topic for discussion was family dynamics
  - A website was created on PbWorks to guide students on preparing for the OIL session, and to set the agenda for the OIL session

Website on Agenda for the OIL session

Welcome to the Nottingham Trent University Psychology Online International Learning (OIL) forum

Thank you for joining this activity!

The aim of this session is to build your knowledge of psychology from a global perspective. An international curriculum allows 'all students to prepare them for living and working in an internationalised, multicultural world' (Clifford, 2009). In this session, you will exchange knowledge about family communication with an English or Indian student who you are paired with. A family is 'a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder), related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together'. Consider how you might understand how two diverse cultures, England and India, differ in their family communication. The session aims to increase your global awareness of psychology. We hope you will enjoy this session. We hope that this social exchange will create new opportunities and international friends for you.

This is an activity being organised by Dr Preethi Premkumar, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, U.K. If you have any questions about this activity, please contact me on preethi.premkumar@ntu.ac.uk.

As a 'thank you', we would like to use your discussions as a source of evidence for a possible publication in an academic journal. And so, we may contact you to ask whether you want to be a co-author of that article.

Respecting and valuing each others' views is at the heart of shared understanding

Preparation for the Online International Learning (OIL) session

Do the following activities BEFORE you attend the session:

1. Create a Skype account: https://login.skype.com/login
2. Create a Wikispaces account: http://www.wikispaces.com
   i. Confirm your email account
      a. Check your junk email, Subject title 'Please confirm your email address'
      b. Click on the link in the email, beginning https://www.wikispaces.com/
   ii. Accept invitation to 'Familycommunication1'
      a. Check your junk email for this invitation
      b. Check your email for subject titled 'You have been invited to the

Wikispaces to promote student discussion

familycommunication1.wikispaces.com

> Familycommunication1 | Search | 0 | PreethiPremkumar | My Wikis | Help | Sign Out

Members | Projects | Events | Engagement | Settings

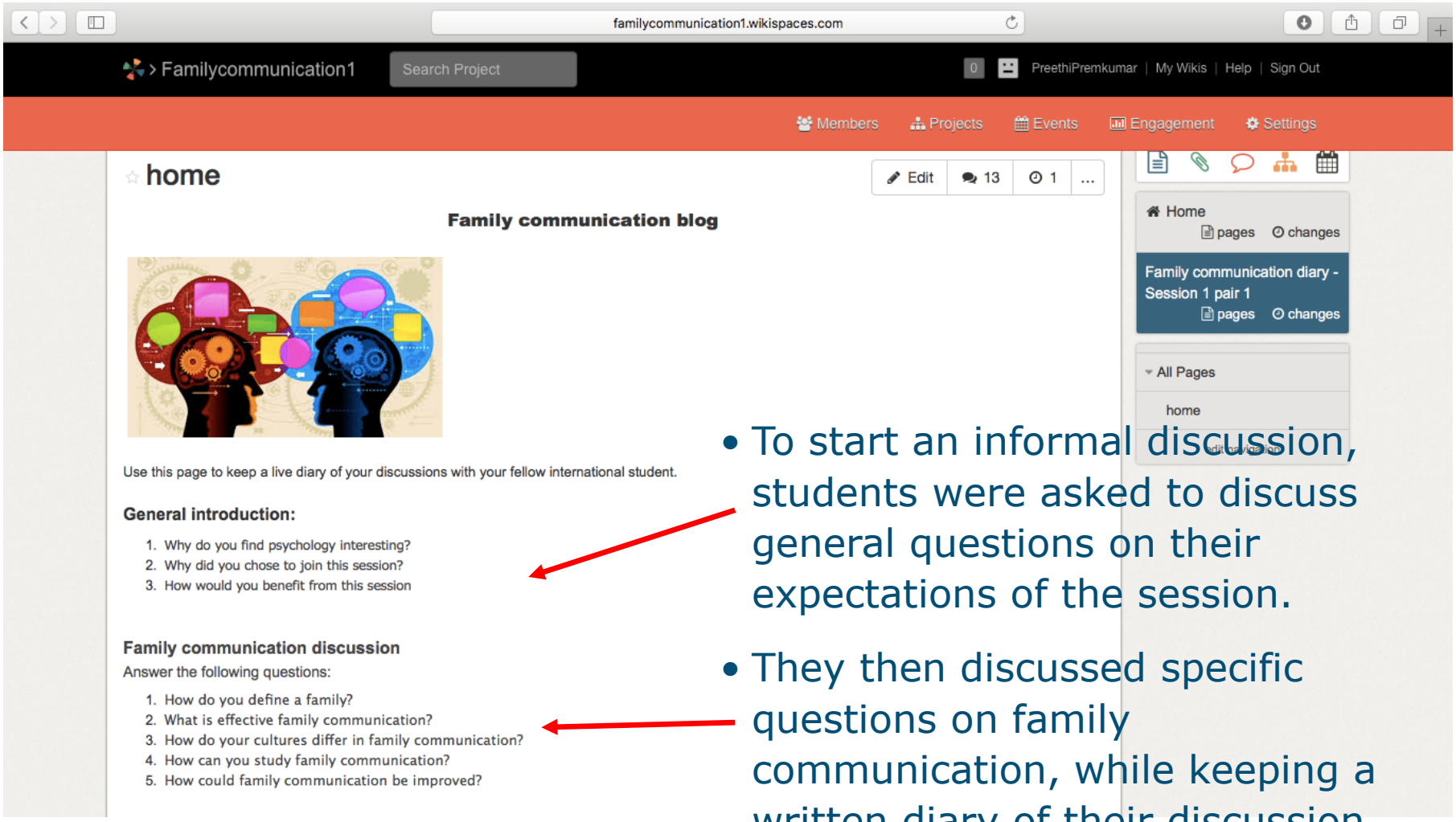
Family communication discussion board

Make notes as you have your discussion with your international buddy.
Answer the question, 'Discuss how do family members communicate with each other. What are the cultural differences in family communication?'
This is a free space to jog your memory of your discussion on family communication. It does not need to be formal. It is a space that you can return to when your team needs to prepare a final summary of your discussion.

Click on the 'Family communication diary' link (**LOOK AT THE RIGHTHAND SIDE OF THIS PAGE**) ->
Use the page to enter the unique discussion page for you and your paired international student

All Pages
home
edit navigation

Questions for discussion

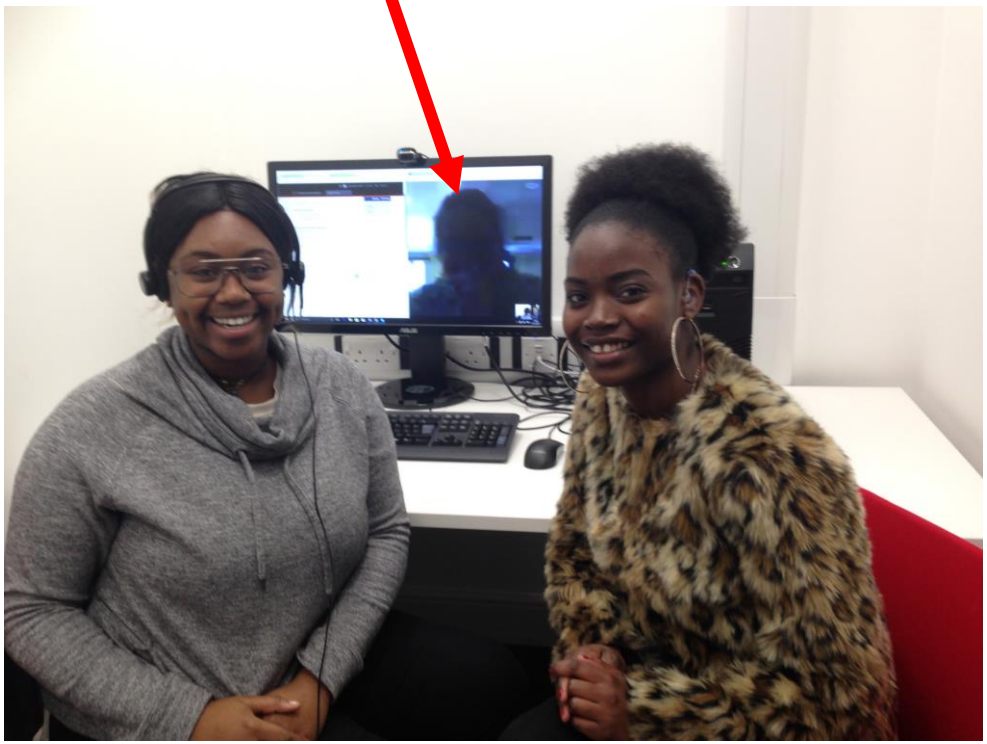


- To start an informal discussion, students were asked to discuss general questions on their expectations of the session.
- They then discussed specific questions on family communication, while keeping a written diary of their discussion

ACE week COIL events

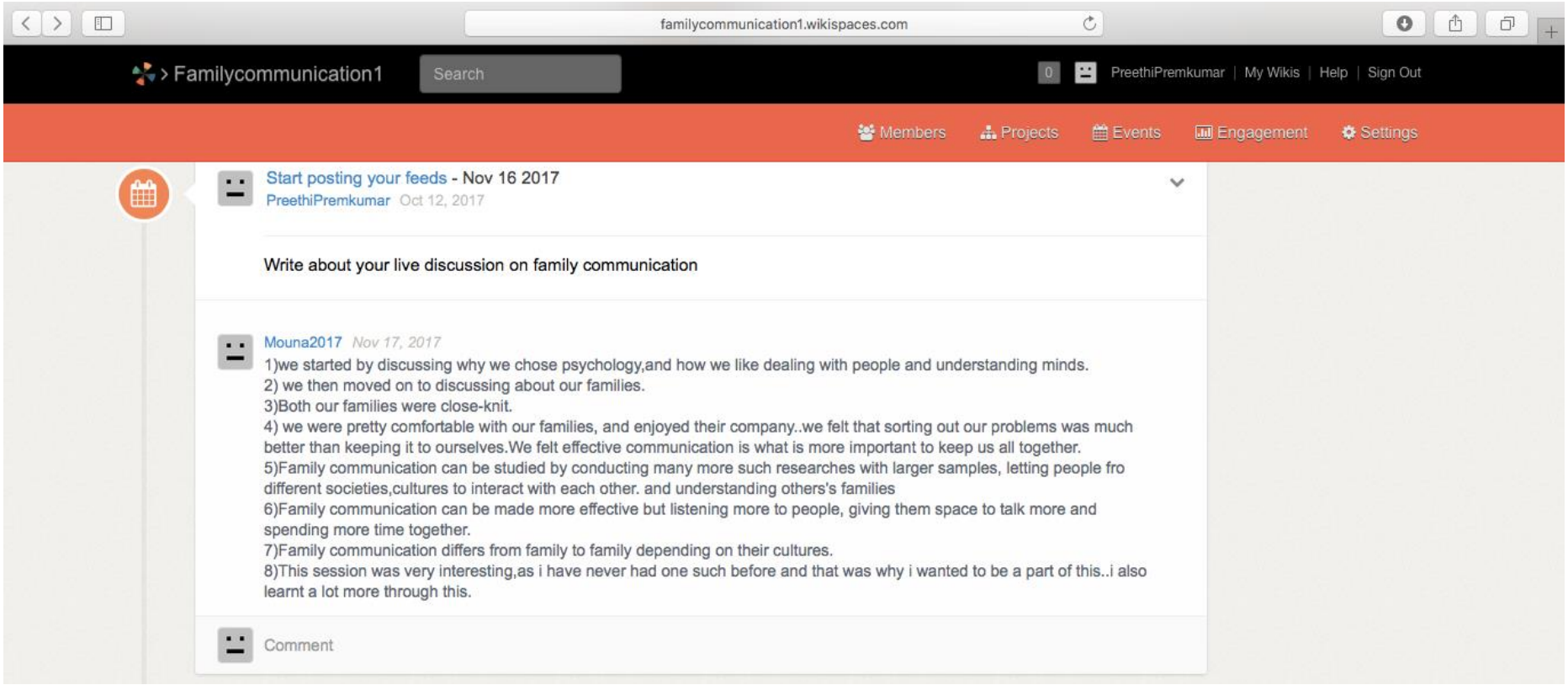
- Two COIL events were held during ACE week in 2017
- Each session lasted two hours
- Five NTU psychology students and five Stella Maris College (University of Madras, India) psychology students signed up to the events
- Each NTU student was paired with an SMC student

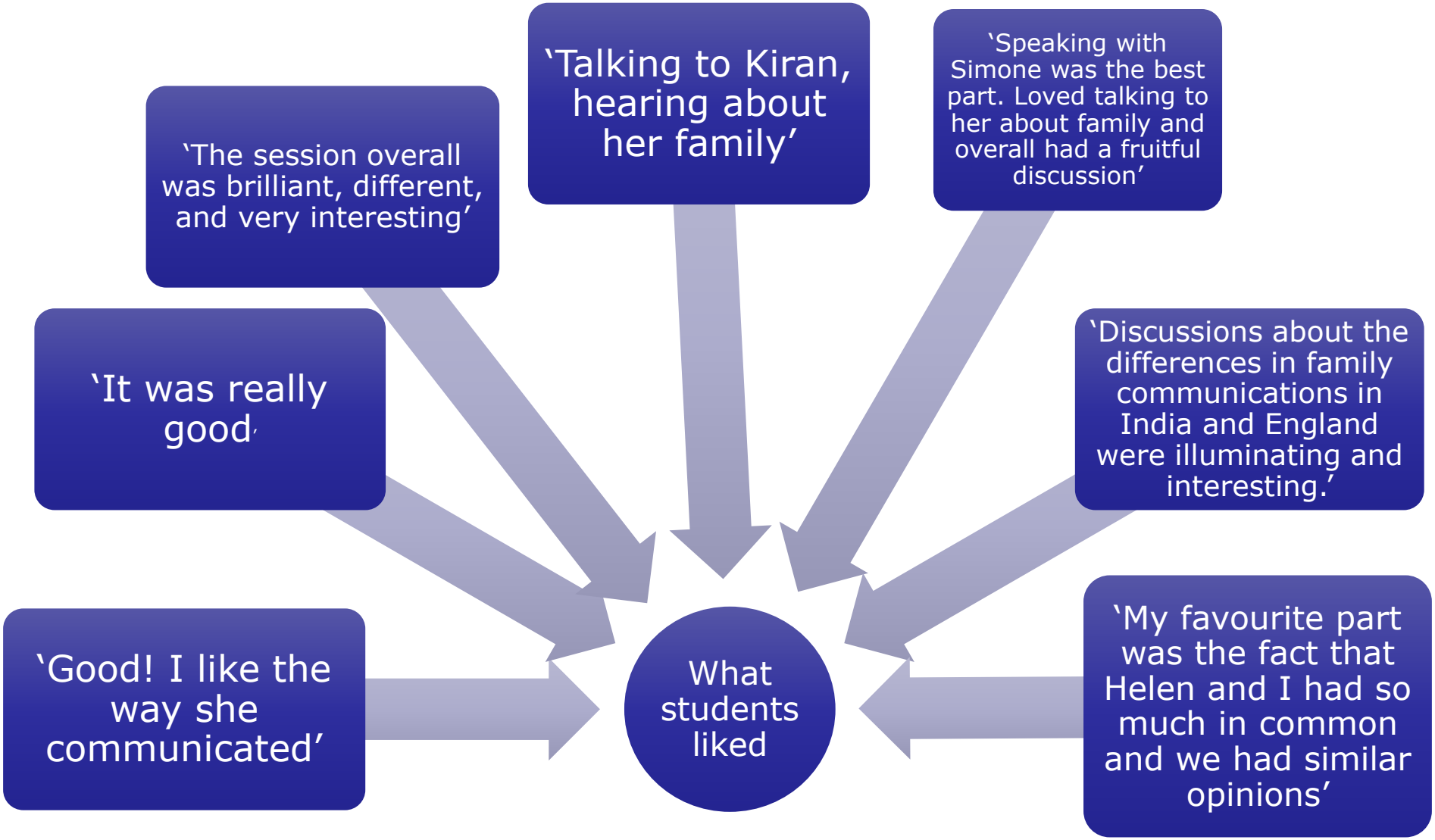
Student from Stella Maris College, India

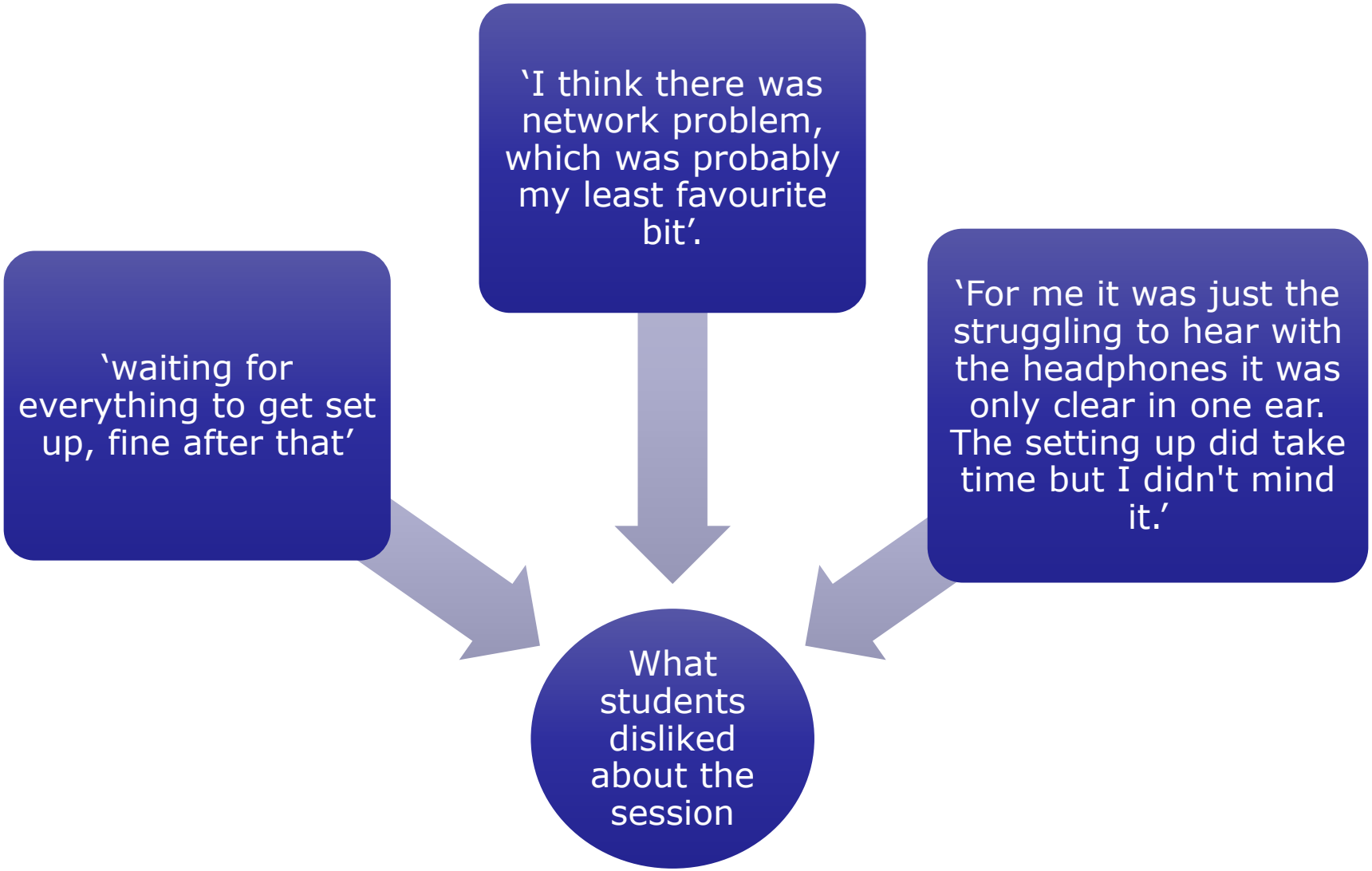


ACE week COIL events

- Student registered to the Wikispaces account
- Student pairs assigned to chat spaces within the Wikispace
- Students maintained a written diary of their online communication




'The session overall was brilliant, different, and very interesting'
'Talking to Kiran, hearing about her family'
'Speaking with Simone was the best part. Loved talking to her about family and overall had a fruitful discussion'
'It was really good'
'Discussions about the differences in family communications in India and England were illuminating and interesting.'
'Good! I like the way she communicated'
What students liked
'My favourite part was the fact that Helen and I had so much in common and we had similar opinions'


'I think there was network problem, which was probably my least favourite bit'.
'waiting for everything to get set up, fine after that'
'For me it was just the struggling to hear with the headphones it was only clear in one ear. The setting up did take time but I didn't mind it.'
What students disliked about the session

Challenges to virtual intercultural exchange

- Formative or summative assessment (Villar-Onrubia & Rajpal, 2016)
  - Formative – less likely to engage, other priorities may take over
  - When COIL activities were perceived as 'bolt-on' exercises by students, the activities were viewed as 'additional work'.
    - Need to align to summative assessment
- Access to certain online services (e.g. Facebook, Google Docs) may be limited in certain countries (e.g. China)

Challenges to virtual intercultural exchange

- Requirements (Vilar-Onrubia & Rajpal, 2016)
  - Students must engage in some sort of online dialogic interaction with international peers on discipline content
  - Collaborative activities must be informed by internationalised learning outcomes
  - A reflective component (e.g. essay, focus group) that helps students make explicit the learning resulting from engaging in such intercultural encounters.
    - Demonstrate critical thinking
- Develop criteria to summatively assess the student activity in the online exchange

Questions for Discussion

- Does it seem worthwhile to put into practice on your courses?
- What modules could it be included in with your courses? Can it be added on or part of an existing module?
- What are the implications for assessment? What type of summative assessment is amenable with this type of teaching and learning approach?
- How else do you envisage the online international learning activity taking place?
- What kinds of online resources might you need to make this happen?

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