

From the research ...

Reasons to communicate:

- To build relationships;
- To 'do business', for example, discussing teaching and assessment, marking together.

Key communication times:

- At the beginning of a semester;
- Around assessment – generally between Australian subject coordinators TNE partner counterpart(s);
- After assessment – generally between Australian 'Examinations Board' and TNE counterpart(s).

Challenges around communication:

- Time constraints
- Logistics

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"We did ... actually talk of having teleconferencing or even video conferencing here with my team and his team over there but the logistics were just too difficult, I mean the clashes, the timetable clashes".

Transnational partner academic

Communication media

- *Email* – of all available media, email is the most frequently used to communicate between Australian and TNE partner institution staff. Usually used asynchronously, email caters to the busy schedules of academics in the different countries which may be across different time zones. Additionally, "the issues also flow over and recorded in email" (TNE partner institution academic, University A). "We communicate by email during the teaching period. If there is disagreement I email and get quick feedback" (TNE partner institution academic, University B);
- *Telephone* – used sometimes, usually for urgent matters. Academic staff at one Australian institution says, "We use an IP telephone card. Very cheap. So that I can call all sessional staff to discuss any issues if I find it's urgent. If I find it more convenient, more efficient to talk" (Australian academic, University C). For information about telephone cards, see <http://www.telephonecards.com.au/>
- *Phone conference* – for example, to discuss 'wash up' from assessment - "Semester phone conference where we all get together and we look at the feedback from last semester and the things that we can do differently or improve" (Australian academic, University A);
- *Skype* – internet-based, synchronous voice and video communication, plus synchronous and asynchronous 'chat'. An offshore academic says, "It makes a lot of difference actually, just

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"We hear these disconnected voices over the telephone and some of us have never seen the people we worked with in some cases for four or five years I guess". Australian academic.

being able to see the facial expression” (TNE partner institution academic, University A). “(Skype is) much more effective than email” (Australian academic, University C) .See <http://www.skype.com/intl/en/home> for information about Skype. Impediments may include (1) available bandwidth, and (2) local permissions to use Skype on work computers.

- *Chat* – “The lecturer used the MSN (Windows Messenger) to communicate with me. So that’s another perfect channel, I think, to communicate with the lecturer” (TNE partner institution academic, University C). For information about Windows Messenger, see <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/windowsmessenger/default.mspx>
- *Facebook* – “occasional chat through Facebook” (Australian academic, University C).
- *Through Learner Management System* – for example, communications via a ‘staff folder’;
- *Through Virtual Classroom, e.g. CENTRA, Elluminate* – “Uses (Virtual Classroom software) to run a 2-hour session with offshore staff that all academics working in the unit contribute to” (Australian academic, University B);
- *Video conference* – picture quality issues, time lag issues
- *Face to face* – this form of communication is greatly valued by Australian and TNE partner institution academic staff. As well as Australian staff travelling to TNE partner institutions to teach, sometimes TNE partner institution staff travel to Australia - “We have schemes that allow some lecturers to go down from time to time or they’ll start to come up here and then we have a face to face sort of discussions” (TNE partner institution academic, University A). “The (subject coordinator) has come to the partner institution many times, meet at the university or over a meal and talk about the program e.g. textbook changes, discuss curriculum, assignments and the final exam.” (TNE partner institution academic, University B).



“I am trying to make sure she is totally au fei with the material, trying to have more regular contact. Trying to engage with her. Personal rather than impersonal”.
Australian academic

