

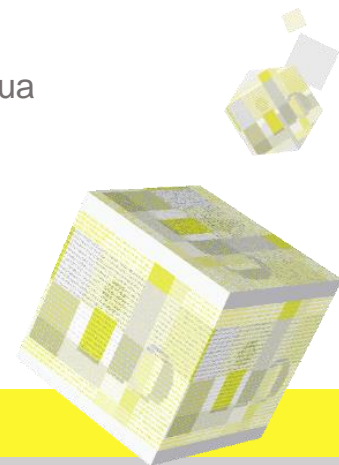
## International Students' Tutoring Experiences and Cultural Awareness in the Digital Learning Companion Project

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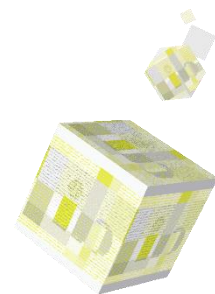
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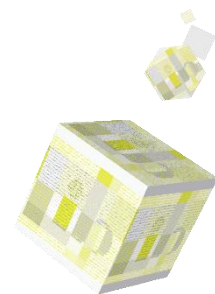


## Introduction



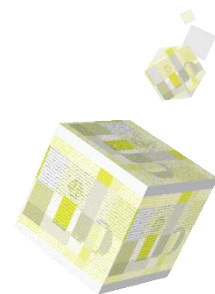
- This study implements the “Digital Learning Companion” project in which 39 rural elementary or junior high school students (tutees) in Taiwan are partnered with 39 international students (tutors) from various countries in the world
- The purpose of the project is for cultural exchange although it also provides an opportunity for the rural students to practice their English speaking skills in an authentic environment

## Introduction

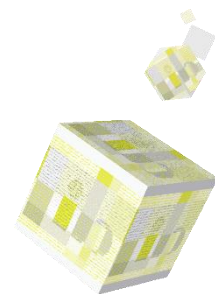


- Compared to college students or elementary school students in the city, rural school children are more disadvantaged
- For instance, rural students not just in Taiwan, but worldwide face challenges such as insufficient and ill-developed infrastructure like inadequate learning resources such as few qualified teachers and facilities
- Therefore, we hope that this project can have a social impact on the rural community as the international students could provide support to the rural students

## Methods

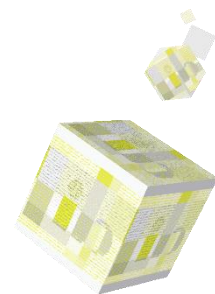


- The JoinNet online tutoring platform was used
- Project lasted 10 weeks
- The tutors and tutees exchanged cultural information based on the following topics: food, clothing, transportation, housing, entertainment, and famous scenery
- Tutors completed a reflection task at the end of the project. They reflected on their tutoring experiences and what they learnt about the culture of Taiwan from the exchange

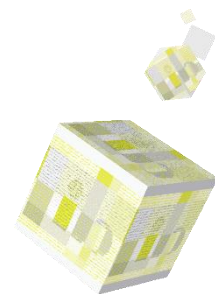


- Based on their reflections on their experiences, tutors reported a number of benefits and achievements including:
  - acquisition and improvement of teaching skills
  - language learning
  - cultural exchange
  - peer encouragement
  - helping tutees boost their confidence to speak English
  - developing friendships and relationships

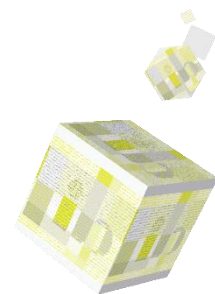
## Results



- Tutors learned some cultural aspects including:
  - similarities and differences between their cultures and the culture of Taiwan
  - way of life of the people of Taiwan
  - challenging of some stereotypes they had about some aspects of the culture of Taiwan
  - other cultural aspects other than the topics discussed for instance education



- The findings indicated that the tutors enjoyed the experience and learned online tutoring skills among other benefits
- This study demonstrates that online tutoring can help students and people from different countries to develop cultural awareness
- This study demonstrates that although we have other ways of learning about culture, we could leverage the advantages of the Internet and technology to shorten distance and costs to learn about the culture of a people

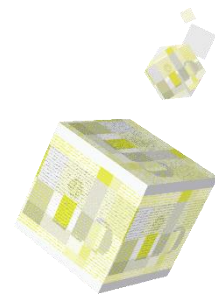


### Some pedagogical implications

- Since international students appreciated the opportunity given by the project to learn culture, universities and schools could incorporate such online tutoring projects especially for new international students to help them learn about and get exposed to the culture of the country they are studying in so that they can easily adapt to the culture.
- They could also use such projects for learning the local language
- For the local schools, the students could use this opportunity to get an exposure to other cultures around the world in the comfort of their country



# InSight



# The End

