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TEL as a pathway to intercultural learning and global competence in ELT

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As a Brazilian English teacher and teacher educator, I believe that preparing future English teachers in Brazil and other countries in the Global South is an increasingly complex and demanding task. At the same time, it holds deeply transformative potential given today's technology-driven and interconnected diverse educational landscape. In this scenario, Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) can play an outstanding part. Among the variety of aspects within TEL brought together in this special issue, initiatives such as Collaborative Online International Learning and Virtual Exchange (COIL/VE) have emerged as a powerful mechanism. It provides teacher educators with a way to develop a more critical and globally competent approach to English Language Teaching (ELT) in which technology facilitates the access to foreign partners for collaboration. As Hackett et al. (2024) described, the methodology brings educators from diverse backgrounds together in the collaborative task of co-designing and co-facilitating online interactive activities and the borderless co-creation of knowledge.

In the referred context, where international mobility is still highly selective and unequal, COIL/VE, is an essential strategy for Internationalization at Home (IaH) which consists of intentionally integrating international dimensions into the curriculum for all students (Beelen & Jones, 2015). This way, it serves as a tool for empowering pre-service teachers to engage with the world from where they are. When purposefully designed, international collaboration projects, which rely on TEL to

promote intercultural exchange, surpass the mere provision of contextualized linguistic practice by creating new spaces for perspective-taking and for educators to redefine what language education is.

In many traditional models of ELT preparation, there is a tendency to prioritize language proficiency and methodological training. While these remain important, there is also the need for a broader vision that situates ELT within a critical, intercultural, and socially-aware framework. Through technology-enhanced collaborations beyond borders, pre-service teachers can be inspired to see their role further than transmitters of linguistic content, realizing they are critical mediators of meaning in a multilingual and multicultural world where language can empower or marginalize individuals.

This reframing allows teacher educators to move beyond a purely functional approach to English and to instigate reflections on questions such as: What does it mean to teach English in the Global South, where the language has strong associations with socioeconomic (lack of) opportunity and political power? How do teachers help their students navigate a world where English is both a tool for connection and a symbol of inequality?

TEL can support this critical reflection by functioning as a bridge, connecting the undergraduate students across borders and developing their awareness of the sociocultural dimensions of communication. Technology enables dialogue and if educators make intentional pedagogical choices about how, why, and with whom they connect and collaborate, COIL/VE can encourage pre-service teachers to consider how cultural beliefs, values, and worldviews are embedded in language. Such approach can open new pathways for

future teachers to engage in understanding someone else's perspective across cultures, one of the cornerstones of global competence.

This emphasis on global competence, which is defined as multi-faceted and involves cognitive, socioemotional and civic characteristics (OECD/Asia Society, 2018), is particularly relevant in countries such as Brazil where ELT models and materials are still often imported from dominant contexts. Educating globally competent future teachers is compelling them to reflect on their own positionalities and the positionalities of others taking ELT into perspective. As, in this context, internationalization of teacher education is often constrained by limited funding, linguistic barriers, and geographic distance, TEL, and particularly COIL/VE, offer an accessible alternative to traditional mobility as a pedagogical innovation that situates local knowledge within a broader global context. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that without critical design, TEL projects can risk reproducing North–South hierarchies by privileging imported models and marginalising local knowledges. These reflections build directly on our contribution in this issue (Wright Fields & Hübner, 2025), showing how COIL/VE can be leveraged in ELT teacher preparation to foster global competence.

As this special issue highlights, the junction of ELT and TEL is a space of innovation and a site of possibilities. Concerning English teacher education specifically, as we explored in the article, TEL has the potential to provide resources and opportunities which promote meaningful intercultural dialogue, linguistic learning, and the preparation of more globally competent teachers (Wright Fields & Hübner, 2025).



About the author

Jancileidi Hübner is a Brazilian teacher educator at the Institute of Humanities, Science, Education, and Creativity at *Universidade de Passo Fundo* (UPF), Brazil. She is also an English teacher at the Language Center of *Universidade Regional Integrada do Alto Uruguai e das Missões* (URI) in Erechim. Her two decades of experience teaching English to Brazilian students have equipped her with practical knowledge which informs her work in teacher education. She holds a Master's degree in Linguistic Studies and has specialized in the intersection of language, technology, and education. Her research and practice focus on the affordances of technology in the context of critical language teaching and internationalization at home. She is interested in global education and cross-cultural communication and has facilitated Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) projects for pre-service teachers and secondary students. She has shared her work at various conferences, including the Brazilian Association of International Education (FAUBAI) and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE).

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