Using Video Podcasts to Enhance International Student Collaboration in Biosystems Engineering

Thomas P. Curran¹, Richard S. Gates², Francesco Gentile³, Durelle Scott⁴, Francisco Ayuga⁵, Demetres Briassoulis⁶ and Chenming Zhang⁷

¹University College Dublin, ²University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, ³University of Bari, ⁴Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, ⁵Universidad Politecnica de Madrid, ⁶Agricultural University of Athens

What was investigated?
Students in six courses/modules/classes in five TABE.NET (www.ucd.ie/tabe) partner institutions (UIUC, VT, UCD, UPM and UNIBA) were asked to create a video with technical content for an international peer audience and to assess and provide feedback for videos created by international peers. Students were surveyed to evaluate the learning experience.

Results and conclusions
A total of 74 videos were compiled by student groups across a range of topics in Biosystems Engineering from micro wind turbines to farm buildings. Videos were uploaded to YouTube and peer assessment was provided in the comments section under each clip. Students indicated that the video podcast collaboration was a positive experience and the vast majority felt they had improved their communication skills. The activity also led to a slight increase in the percentage of people who wanted to develop their language skills further. The students found it interesting but challenging to evaluate other students’ work.

Acknowledgements
The present work has been carried out in the framework of the TABE.NET (Trans-Atlantic Biosystems Engineering Curriculum and Mobility) project funded by FIPSE and the Education, Audiovisual, and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) through the EU-US Atlantis Program. Thanks to Prof. Giovanni Russo (UNIBA) and all staff and students in the study.