

Inspiring Innovation  
Fostering Collaboration  
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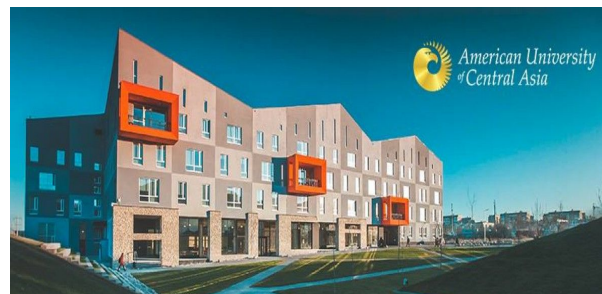
# AMICAL 2024

Virtual Conference  
27 May – 6 June 2024

## Unlocking the Power of Virtual Discussions to Achieve Composition Class Outcomes and Global Skills

Emilienne Akpan (AUN) and Ekaterina Galimova (AUCA)

30 May 2024



# Outline:

## Introduction

- Rationale
- Composition Course Outcomes
- Global Skills
- Structure of the Virtual Discussion
- Sample of Icebreakers (email, PadLet)
- Samples of Post-Discussion Student Activities
- Samples of Student Responses from Surveys
- References

## Conclusion

# Rationale

- The online discussions between the [American University of Nigeria \(AUN\)](#) and the [American University of Central Asia \(AUCA\)](#) started as a post-COVID-19 student-centered educational forum, connecting learners from our institutions on relatable topics beyond classroom instruction.
- These conversations encourage research and open communication to promote constructive and analytical discussions about current issues. Students also cultivate an appreciation for different values, beliefs, perspectives, and principles which reflect the individual backgrounds of the participants and play a crucial role in advancing the development of global skills.
- Subsequent semesters saw participation from [Parami University/Parami Institute of Undergraduate Studies \(PIUS\)](#). We have also had participants from the [American University of Afghanistan \(AUA\)](#) and [BRAC University in Bangladesh](#).

# Composition Course Learning Outcomes



**Critical Analysis:** Read and interpret texts critically, making informed judgments about arguments and ideas.



**Effective Writing:** Craft analytical and interpretive essays, organizing ideas clearly with coherent structure.



**Research and Synthesis:** Develop research questions, synthesize information from diverse sources, and use proper citation methods.



**Rhetorical Skills:** Adapt writing to different audiences and purposes using appropriate rhetorical patterns and strategies.



**Writing Process:** Apply all stages of the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing) effectively.



**Grammar and Mechanics:** Use correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling; construct well-formed sentences and paragraphs.



**Oral and Written Communication:** Communicate ideas clearly in both written and spoken formats, demonstrating effective argumentation and collaboration.

# Global Skills



Cultural Awareness and Competence



Communication Skills



Critical Thinking and Problem Solving



Collaboration and Teamwork



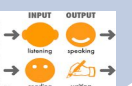
Adaptability and Flexibility



Leadership and Initiative



Ethical and Social Responsibility



Language Skills

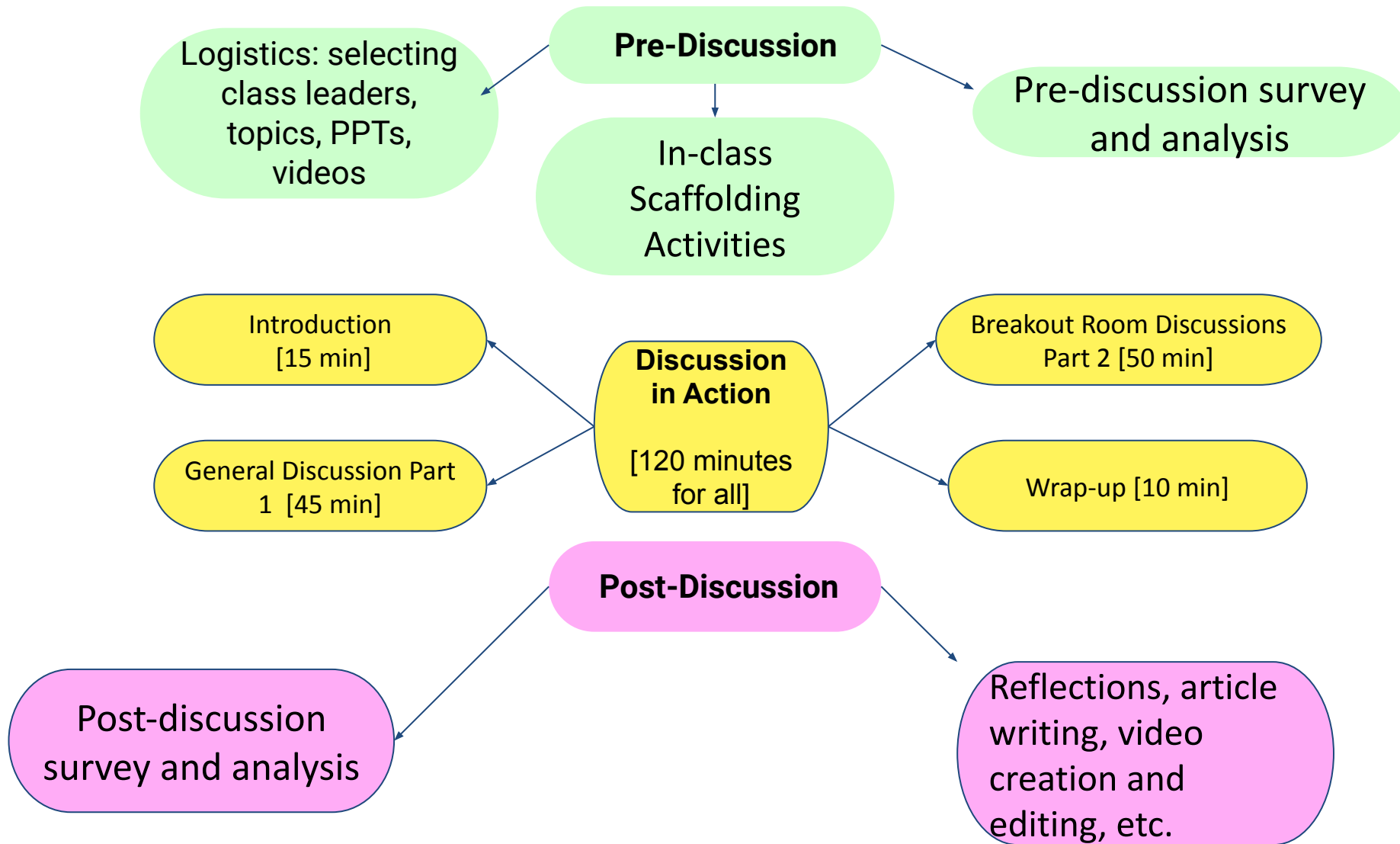
Which activity combines  
these outcomes

?

# Virtual Discussions

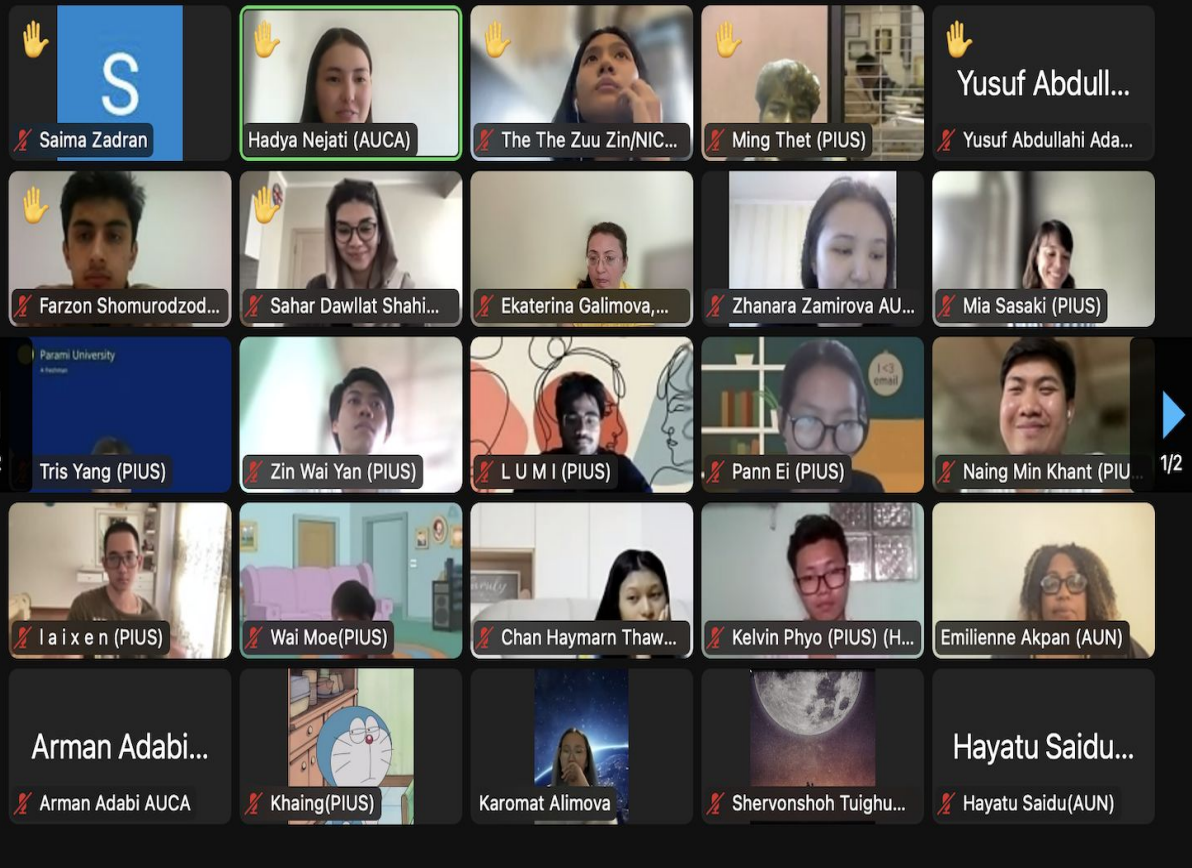


# Virtual Discussion Structure





# The Main Discussion - Part 1



- To begin the international virtual discussion between the universities, the hosts present themselves and their peers before playing promotional videos about their countries and universities.
- While the videos were taken from the main websites of both universities, students were also encouraged to create their own introductory videos.
- Before the virtual discussion, students were encouraged to set their short-term goals, take notes and ask pertinent questions for clarification of ideas/cultural contexts, further discussion or follow-up essays to get extra points.

# Breakout Room Discussions - Part 2

The image shows a Zoom breakout room with four participants in a 2x2 grid. The participants are Salome Bulus, Sexual Harassment Aiana 1, fatima.umar, and Faiza Abdul. Below the grid, the name 'Mustapha Abub...' is partially visible. To the right, a chat window displays a discussion in Russian. The chat messages are:

- 03:58 PM: 1. Why do many people who suffer from sexual harassment keep silent?
- 2. Are the citizens of Nigeria able to receive free protection of their rights, and what should be done for that?
- 04:10 PM: 3. What is the government's attitude to this problem? Is there enough focus on reducing harassment?
- Sharsheeva\_a@auca.kg
- 04:11 PM: If we can ask you some questions
- От fatima.umar кому Все: I said what do you think of culture and society believe and action on social harassment

At the bottom of the chat window, there is a Windows activation watermark: 'Активация Windows. Чтобы активировать Windows, перейдите в раздел "Параметры".'

(Sharsheeva, "Breakout Room (Sharsheeva)", 2021)

## Some Post-Discussion Activities

- At AUN, the class reflected on the experience and then wrote reflection papers to assess their note-taking, note-making, listening, paraphrasing, and academic writing skills. Select essays have been chosen for publication in *AUNthisWEEK*, the university's weekly newsletter.
- At AUCA, the faculty gave post-discussion options: participation in the online follow-up forum posted on the e-course; writing a 500-word argumentative/compare and contrast essay related to the international virtual event; writing a newspaper article for publication in the *AUCA NewStar* student newspaper; or producing a video about the event. (Rubrics and peer review forms to essay types and a self-assessment were provided)

# Post-Discussion Activities: AUCA and AUN Student Articles

## 10TH INTERNATIONAL VIRTUAL DISCUSSION

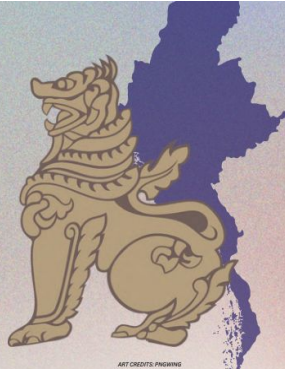
**M**y name is Isabek Sultan, and I had the privilege of participating in the 10th Virtual Discussion on April 20, where students from Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Myanmar, and Afghanistan came together to delve into the topic of Social Media as a Weapon of Destruction.

This event epitomized the essence of liberal arts education—fostering critical thinking and effective communication. The depth of our discussions was unparalleled, delving into core issues such as freedom of speech, its limits, the ensuing repercussions, and more. What struck me profoundly was the dialogue with students from Myanmar, who shed light on the oppression prevalent in their nation. Despite our diverse backgrounds in language and culture, we found common ground in our shared struggles and aspirations for a better world.

In this discussion with students from Myanmar, we delved into the profound ramifications of curtailed human rights in Myanmar, set against the backdrop of relentless political upheaval. The discourse was not merely academic but a soul-stirring exploration of the essence of freedom, both internal and external.

Our dialogue traversed continents, drawing parallels between the struggle for civil rights in the United States and the poignant realities unfolding in Myanmar. We grappled with the pivotal question: Is freedom an innate essence or a tangible manifestation in the external world? The insights gleaned were profound, illuminating the intricate interplay between personal liberties and societal constraints.

Consider, for instance, the Civil Rights Movement in America, where the fervor for internal freedom clashed against the stark realities of segregation laws. It became evident that while one may harbour boundless freedom within, the external landscape could remain obstinately restrictive, curtailing the liberty to traverse certain spaces under the ominous shadow of punitive measures. Yet, as history has shown, the unwavering pursuit of internal liberty eventually begets transformative shifts in the external realm.



ART CREDIT: PHOENIX

What stirred my soul most profoundly was the unwavering resolve of the Myanmar students, who, amidst adversity, exhibited a fervent dedication to dissecting the political fabric of their nation. Their impassioned pleas for change, coupled with astute proposals for pragmatic solutions, painted a vivid portrait of a generation poised to ascend to the highest echelons of leadership. It was not difficult to envision them shaping the future trajectory of their nation from positions of influence and authority, their voices resonating with the winds of change.

Participating in this event was a fulfilling experience. The convergence of students from various universities onto one platform to engage in such vital discussions felt groundbreaking. It underscores the power of technology in bridging geographical divides and fostering global dialogues.

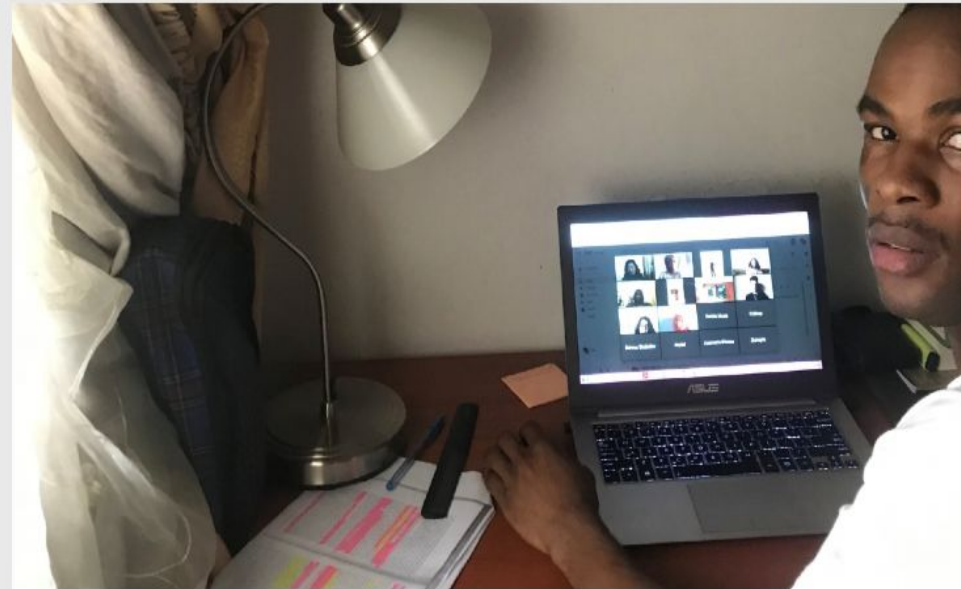
I wholeheartedly advocate for more such initiatives, urging fellow students not to miss out on these enriching opportunities. I am deeply indebted to each participant whose contributions have not only broadened my horizons but also nurtured the seeds of leadership within me, propelling me towards a greater understanding of our shared humanity. Participants' diverse perspectives, impassioned arguments, and thoughtful reflections have woven a tapestry of knowledge and wisdom, fostering a spirit of collaboration and mutual growth. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Ms. Ekaterina Galimova, whose exemplary guidance and unwavering commitment to fostering intellectual discourse have been instrumental in shaping this enlightening discussion.

IBL-120



## CONNECTION BETWEEN AUN AND AU CENTRAL ASIA

AUNThisWEEK | 29 April 2020



What a bright day on April 8, 2020. The lovely mango tree through my window was leafing arms to pray. Then my Writing 101 instructor, Ms. Emilienne Idorenyin Akpan, announced that she had finalized preparations for our online

Source:

<https://auca.kg/uploads/stock%20Aibike/New%20Star%20May%202024%20FI%20NAL.pdf>

Source:

<https://www.aun.edu.ng/index.php/news-events/news/connection-between-aun-and-au-central-asia>

# Post Breakout Room Discussion Activity: Video Project on Sexual Harassment



(Sharsheeva, Usupbaeva, & Giyoeva, "VideoProject on Sexual Harassment", 2021)

# Post-Discussion Survey 1

6. (For AUCA students only) What in-class writing activity did you find the most useful/helpful to get ready (overcome shyness, ask and answer questions) for the virtual discussion?

As you answer more you will learn more.

## Working in groups

13 responses

Mostly the FYS classes and English Composition writings were helpful

The in-class discussions helped me to prepare for the virtual discussion.

Write an argument and rebuttal of your peer's argument. That helped me to develop the idea of how debate works and what is the proper way to convey different opinion.

I find about 2-3 articles from JSTOR

Every discussion and activity that we have done during the class has been very helpful and useful for me personally.

Discussing the topic in class. And making debates on different prompts.

A lot of things 😊

Source:<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1wnSVTqBnLjnEQ9BvaTGH-dRu-txWqA6uUZ9kkFKrePU/edit#responses>

# Post-Discussion Survey 2

## (responses regarding breakout room conversations)

7. Do you think that after the main discussion, you will create a Breakout Room to lead in another topic and conduct interviews? Why?

I think yes, I will create. Breakout room to lead in another topic it depends on our conversation.

15 responses

After the main discussion, I might create a Breakout Room to talk about another topic and do interviews. It could be cool because Breakout Rooms let us dive into specific subjects, and interviews make things more personal and interesting. It's like extending the conversation in a smaller, more focused setting.

Yes I would love to, because I believe its really interesting and educational to be able to have these discussions, having to understand how people think and see things differently from me.

Yes

Yes.

I didn't think about this yet but i think so

Probably, it will be another positive activity. However, I have not had an opinion about this yet.

I think yes, because after participating I will have more experience and skills.

# Post-Discussion Survey 3

(responses about the impact of the virtual discussions)

11. Do you think these online discussions should be continued? Please explain your response in the space below.

15 responses

Yes. I be able to hear another people from different background, environment, country, and race point of view on the topic we are discussing.

Yes because a new knowledge is gained

Yes, I think online discussions should continue. It is because it gives us room to know about the problems our other peers have in their various countries and it also helps in boasting our knowledge concerning the topic at hand.

Yes. I would love to hear my fellow peers' opinions in other fields of discussion.

Yes, it is interesting to talk to other people from a different school to hear their opinions and it is a switch up from regular everyday classes.

Yes it should continue. Students will get to know about the opinions of their peer. Sharing and gaining knowledge from each other.

Yes they should

**Thank you for your active participation!**

Source:<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1a-mx1BOZZFIxOTXQr2Whkcz5BFtSPfrrbB2ufICdA7Y/edit#responses>

# Analysis of Post-Discussion Surveys

- Based on responses from surveys conducted at AUN, AUCA, and PIUS, we should continue our project and involve more schools.
- If you would like your students to be part of this initiative (credits earned for participation are determined by the instructor), please let us know.

# Faculty Collaboration Article

## Improving Communication Skills Through Virtual Discussions

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Emilienne Idorenyin Akpan, American University of Nigeria  
Mia Sasaki, Parami University

### Abstract

This article describes the structure and step-by-step procedure of the virtual discussion conducted between American Universities of Central Asia and Nigeria and Parami University in Myanmar. The article aims to offer multidisciplinary instructors interactive scaffolding activities designed, modified, and implemented to enhance written and oral communication and help students be better prepared for virtual discussions. From observation during the preparations and actual discussions, the scaffolding activities and the virtual discussion foster essential skills, such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity in students. The authors also provide a general evaluation of student performance based on the observations collected via Google Forms and the virtual discussion to demonstrate the effectiveness of the activities.

**Keywords:** Interactive activities, communication skills, virtual inter-university discussions (VIDS), virtual discussions (VIDS), structure, organization, and procedure of online events.

[Download the full article.](#)



**What should be done to avoid the following situation? [00:02:09]**





# Active Participation in Virtual Inter-University Discussions

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# Future Considerations

- Enhanced AMICAL community involvement
- Share findings from student presentations on Google Slides, Padlet or other suitable platform.
- Welcome ideas for a revised format of the Virtual Discussion
- Launch STUDENT AMICAL if approved and sponsored by AMICAL!



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спасибо 谢谢  
**GRACIAS** 谢谢

**THANK YOU**

ありがとうございました **MERCI**

**DANKE** धन्यवाद

شُكراً **OBRIGADO**