Global Learning through International Student Exchange
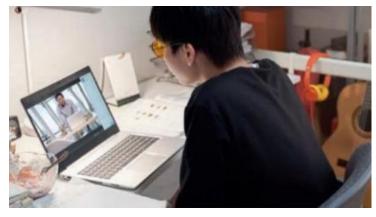
Institution Information

- South Eastern Regional College (SERC)

- Further and Higher Education College

- Based across the South East of Northern Ireland, with campuses in Bangor, Downpatrick, Lisburn and Newtownards

- www.serc.ac.uk

Practices Identified

- Promoting global learning and developing students inter-cultural competencies

- Developing global partnerships between staff and students to exchange knowledge and enhance learning and teaching

- Created a 'virtual' student exchange programme for Travel and Tourism students to learn from international peers

Practice Description

In light of the pandemic and restrictions around travel, the Hospitality, Management Tourism and Languages faculty developed a student virtual exchange programme through its existing partnership with the Toyama National Institute of Technology in Japan. The programme was developed with the aim of creating a virtual environment to allow students to further their soft skills, enhance their employability prospects, and increase their understanding of the globalised nature of the industry.

20 students studying Travel and Tourism Level 3 participated in a knowledge exchange with peers in Japan by delivering video presentations on information about their respective country and its culture. Presentations from SERC students included subtitles which were directly translated into Japanese. Following this, students met virtually via zoom to discuss and ask questions. SERC students noted that possible language barriers were largely overcome, and felt they had learnt more about another culture and gained an international perspective of the travel and tourism economy.

By participating in an international student exchange, students had the opportunity to develop some intercultural awareness, understanding, and communication skills. Moreover, a digital platform provided a space for a greater number of students to learn from international peers than a traditional Erasmus exchange programme can accommodate. Further SERC good practice case studies can be accessed here