Lucrecia Keim (coord.)
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Internationalization and Intercultural Competence in Higher Education: Quality and Innovation

Horizontes Universidad

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Summary

PART II: INTERNATIONALIZATION AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE: BEST TEACHING PRACTICES

Foreword

The exponential growth of international mobility (Eurostat, 2020) and Internationalization at Home has triggered concerns about how higher education students can be trained to make the most of their intercultural experience both abroad and at home, on how they can best achieve global and intercultural competence (Messelink, Van Maele, and Spencer-Oatey, 2015; Savicki, 2020). Collaboration between International Office staff and academics (Garcés and O'Dowd, 2020), professional competencies (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars, 2020; Hofstede *et al*., 2005), English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) (Studer, 2018 and in this volume) as well as instruction in other additional languages (de Wit and Altbach 2020), students' agency (Reid and Garson 2017), collaborative online learning (Dooly and O'Dowd 2018) and interdisciplinary course programs (Cai and Sankaran, 2015; Deardorff and Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017) have come to the fore in recent years as opportunities for enhancing intercultural competence and internationalization. In addition, as individuals, we are increasingly called upon to adapt or question local norms and look beyond our immediate fields of specialization or knowledge in order to consider an expanding and diverse global influence. The present publication aims to present specific initiatives on how internationalization and intercultural training has been handled in higher education by focussing on the multiple processes and agents involved. We do so by bringing together a series of researchers and practitioners who presented their work

in this field at the Symposium *Internationalisation and Intercultural Competence in Higher Education: Quality and Innovation* held at the University of Vic-Central University of Catalonia (UVic-UCC) in March 2021. Although the majority of contributions have emerged from the Spanish Higher Education context, we believe that the topics addressed will resonate worldwide with higher education institutions, professional practice and 21st century society serving as a potential catalyst for social transformation. We believe that this volume is innovative as it contributes to the construction and definition of comprehensive and sustainable internationalization and emphasizes the need for interdisciplinary, transversal and hybrid learning.

The volume is divided into two sections: In the first one we have compiled contributions which shed light on systemic, conceptual or programme features around internationalization and global and intercultural competence in higher education. In the second one the authors present concrete teaching experiences of internationalization and intercultural competence learning and highlight different questions: interdisciplinary work, digitalization, collaborative online learning and project learning.

In Chapter 1 Studer shows how English Medium Instruction (EMI) can contribute to the development of students' competences in the global market if there is a conceptual expansion of the EMI didactic model to include sociocultural competence. This expansion implies the understanding of the English language in its full dimensions beyond its instrumental value as a lingua franca and adds a new research field in "Internationalization of the Curriculum" (IoC) contexts.

In Chapter 2 Romano and Orefice focus on the strategic contribution of international mobility to the development of "cultural humility attitudes" in lecturers and students: "In a multicultural world where power imbalances exist, cultural humility is a process of openness, self-awareness, and incorporating self-reflection and critique after willingly interacting with diverse individuals". Three outgoing mobility experiences, one with students, another with healthcare practitioners and the third one with faculty members in the healthcare field (FORwARD Project) and grounded on this conceptual framework, are presented. The authors conclude with a reflection on how to design a transdisciplinary and transnational curriculum in higher education institutions.

Internationalization also means the coexistence of diverse stakeholders in the institutional frame of higher education. In chapter 3 Montiel Alafont's text looks at diversity management in universities and stresses the mismatches that produce the direct transposition of diversity management models originally designed for social or business organisations into the university context. In the author's words:" While discrimination in multicultural societies is mainly driven by the essentialisation of social identities, internationalisation in higher education leads to fuzziness of identities." Therefore, Montiel presents some proposals on how to mitigate this mismatch and handle diversity management more effectively in higher education.

Giving voice to implicated agents of internationalisation is in our view essential to designing institutional policies. In the Chapter 4 Pinyana, Keim and Vancells examine the results of a survey among lecturers at UVic-UCC about their perceptions of the role of intercultural competence in international classes (mainly EMI) at that university. The main conclusions are that the participants of the survey are aware of the importance of intercultural competence but most of them do not have enough knowledge of intercultural pedagogy skills.

The fifth chapter by Keim *et al.*, shows how the internationalization strategy of the aforementioned university has evolved in the last 20 years and the factors that have led to this development are analysed. In the chapter the authors stress the importance of giving voice to all agents implicated in the internationalization of higher education institutions and how results of such surveys or focus groups influence the design of a comprehensive internationalisation strategy. Out of all actions initiated by the university community, the authors present three in more detail: intercultural training, collaborative online projects (COIL) and the institutional recognition for students and staff with active involvement in internationalization via badges or certificates.

In Chapter 6, the first one from the second book section on teaching experiences, Fernández-Villanueva focusses on contributions from interactional linguistics for meaningful learning of intercultural competence. As Fernández-Villanueva and Studer put it, it is essential to look at language as communication in international classrooms. Fernández-Villanueva presents

first her theoretical approach to interactional intercultural communicative competence and then she explains the learning challenges and opportunities of analysing intercultural encounters with a sociopragmatic approach. She finally illustrates her proposals with some examples from academic German classrooms.

In Chapter 7 Panadès presents a specific teaching experience grounded on transversal intercultural training. The project pivots around the participation of students, buddies and staff from the International Office. Panadès' experience with Business German students may easily be adapted to other teaching contexts and shows how peer learning is especially significant in acquiring global and intercultural competence.

In the last three chapters COIL project experiences are presented. In Chapter 8 Ferreira-Lopes, Bezanilla and Elexpuru-Albizuri present a model of project-based learning for the development of intercultural competence in Higher Education through international virtual mobility. The model has been developed in the context of business studies, but the authors claim its feasibility for other higher education contexts. The guidelines outlined in the model offer novice teachers who wish to work in this way in their classes a valuable pathway.

In Chapter 9 Qian Zhang presents a COIL project between groups of engineering students in Spain (UVic-UCC) and Finland (Häme University of Applied Sciences -HAMK). In her paper she focusses on practical implementation: the task, the team working skills and the assessment tools during the project.

Finally, in Chapter 10, readers have the opportunity to find out more about a COIL project in Health Sciences. De los Cobos and Romero (Spain) and Schmaus and Spittler (Germany) present the results of their joint learning-teaching COIL project in the field of E-Health. The authors focus on the potential of their project to incentivise the collaborative work of future health and ICT (information and communication technology) professionals at the same level.

The book concludes by advocating sustainable internationalization through an interdisciplinary approach to intercultural competence training which is integrated into the curriculum. By embedding COIL within and across course programmes, participants who would otherwise be unable to take part in interna-

tional exchanges are included. This respect for diversity, as well as active and reflective engagement in international communication with an emphasis on students' own experiences are fundamental elements of this pedagogical approach.

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PART I: QUALITY AND INNOVATION IN INTERNATIONALIZATION

Chapter 1

Re-visiting English-medium instruction in the light of comprehensive internationalization – A case for sociocultural competence

Patrick Studer

1. Introduction

The shift in the internationalization focus from mobility to the curriculum and learning outcomes (De Wit *et al.* 2015: 29) presents higher education institutions (HEIs) with considerable challenges. They are called upon to develop learning environments that offer opportunities to "engage students with internationally informed research and cultural and linguistic diversity" so that students can "purposefully develop the international and intercultural perspectives as global professionals and citizens" (Leask 2009: 209). In this article, I review the particular role of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) as a site for developing sociocultural competences in *all* students (e.g. Beelen and Leask 2011: 2). I particularly focus on EMI in the context of a "more inclusive and less elitist" (De Wit *et al.* 2015: 29) and more sustainable (e.g. Lopez *et al.* 2016; Båge, Gaunt & Valcke 2021) vision of internationalization. The article seeks to present a case for re-assessing the place of EMI within the internationalization of higher education. Highlighting current trends in policy and research, I will, in the first part, introduce *relevant* conceptual anchor points which describe where internationalization and EMI currently converge and diverge. In the second part, I offer an updated EMI teacher competence framework that acknowledges and integrates sociocultural competence as a facet of teacher training and a potential graduate attribute EMI teachers should actively develop.

2. EMI and Internationalization: A dysfunctional marriage

In a recent position paper, Studer & Smit (2021) argued that English was systematically sidelined in internationalization policy and research. For example, De Wit (2013: 29) draws attention to the negative effects of teaching through English, criticizing the limited vision of internationalization it represents, fearing a decline in quality due to insufficient language competences of the teachers and a decreasing focus on linguistic diversity. While I will not analyse in detail the language topoi behind De Wit's position, such criticism of EMI is typically made against the backdrop of urgent calls for internationalization not only to become more inclusive, but also more sustainable, equal and, ultimately, more ethical (De Wit and Leask 2019; De Wit and Altbach 2020: 29). Internationalization of the future, authors argue, requires in-depth and intelligent engagement by HEIs (e.g. De Wit 2013; Rumbley 2020), which involves critical reflection on how internationalization can "enhance the quality of education and research *for all* students and staff, and (...) make a *meaningful contribution to society*" (De Wit *et al*. 2015: 29, italics mine). This departure from traditional, market-driven, rationales of internationalization has, more recently, been termed "conscientious internationalization" (Ledger and Kawalilak 2020). Internationalization, therefore, it can be argued (Studer and Smit 2021: 132), is in the process of emancipating itself from its own roots and practices, seeking to re-define its potential and broadening its remit. This emancipation process is an important step towards innovation in that it involves a critical review of traditional approaches to internationalization and a re-definition of its place in education. Unfortunately, EMI is typically not seen as an instrument which contributes to this process.

In fact, it takes little research to find out that, while practiced widely, EMI has come under constant fire. At the core of EMI lies the concept of language change from whatever the local language(s) may be to English, and herein also lies the problem. As the foremost international lingua franca and language of wider communication (Berns 2012), English is seen as a tool for efficient communication and exchange *across* cultural and linguistic

boundaries. This 'melting-pot' interpretation of communication in international contexts, however, is increasingly perceived as a threat to the idea of linguistic and cultural diversity. In the literature, concepts such as Englishization (Gabriëls and Wilkinson 2021) or linguistic imperialism (Phillipson 1992), have emerged to express the tension the spread of English across all domains of society has created. In a recent study (Studer 2021), I demonstrated that the discussion surrounding English in internationalization policy was not only sidelined but actively appropriated to divert its focus away from English. English, in EU policy, was relegated to a basic element of literacy and, as a result, a "post-English scenario" was outlined which centred on the idea that languages other than English should be the object of further and personal development (Studer 2021: 20-21).

Treating a language as a basic skill rather than a complex medium of communication has wide-ranging consequences: It ignores the sociocultural dimension of language use, that is, "when and how identities are interactively invoked by sociocultural actors" (Kroskrity 1993: 222) and how interactants craft their "semiotic resources into identity claims for presentation to others" (Bauman 2000: 1). This post-English sentiment, therefore, fails to recognize that speakers of English as a language of wider communication *do* make claims about themselves as members of specific (Anglophone) cultures, of global society or inter- and transnational communities, and that harnessing this reality may be more productive than resisting it. Moreover, this post-English vision trivializes mastery of English while romanticizing mastery of other, less widely used languages, which are seen as appropriate objects of study for cultural and personal gain. Proclaiming a post-English scenario, therefore, both polarizes and iconizes the use of foreign languages and reinforces a traditional perspective of one community–one language, while brushing aside the idea of cultural and linguistic hybridity within and between languages (cf. for example, Kroskrity 1993: 2009).

This view of English, and EMI, is surprising, considering an impressive body of research in applied linguistics which centres on English language use in multilingual classroom settings and which has highlighted the complexity, challenges and opportunities involved in the use of a foreign medium for effective content and foreign language learning. Unlike internationalization

policy and research, and unlike the perception of many education stakeholders, this body of research recognizes that teaching through a medium also means teaching the medium itself, therefore establishing a connection of language to broader communication and discourse skills, language-sensitive teaching and (language) didactics. But even if applied linguistics recognizes the impact the change of language has on education (cf., for example, the comprehensive concept of English-Medium Education in Dafouz and Smit 2020), there still is little recognition that changing the medium also impacts the classroom *culture and identity* of speakers.

In response to this, I would like to underline that a new language comes with a new semiotic system, which impacts thinking, speaking and acting, and which provides a unique opportunity for speakers to make new identity claims to others in their disciplinary context. By thematizing the perceptions of everyone participating in the EMI experience about the effect of the language change, students can engage in a discussion about cultural membership. A precondition for this experience, of course, is critical engagement with English by re-conceptualizing it as a language in a sociocultural sense, that is, as a medium associated with cultural values, status and worldviews. Only then are we able to position ourselves *vis-à-vis* the views and values English represents, and critical reflection on our use of the language as well as intercultural learning through English can take place. Unfortunately, current internationalization policy and research stands in the way of a more holistic view of English language use in academia, one that would contribute to the objectives of making students and staff interculturally capable global citizens (Albrow 1997).

One approach to internationalization of higher education that seems susceptible to a more holistic vision of integrating language into teaching is the Internationalization of the Curriculum (IoC, cf. Leask 2015). IoC, much like EMI, is conceptualized as a framework which focuses on teachers as the "primary architects of the curriculum" (Leask & Bridge 2013: 80). IoC also rests on a vision that encompasses all teaching and learning; a goal it shares with other approaches such as Comprehensive Internationalization (Hudzik 2011) or Internationalization at Home (Beelen and Jones 2015):

> Internationalisation of the curriculum is the process of incorporating international, intercultural and global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a program of study (De Wit & Leask 2015: xii).

IoC, in this sense, is "(...) best thought of as a construct, or way of thinking about curricula and teaching/learning, rather than a set of prescribed practices" (Green & Whitsed 2015: 4). In other words, IoC stimulates systematic reflection on teaching and learning against the backdrop of particular themes that relate to the "international and intercultural requirements of professional practice and citizenship and the systematic development and assessment of intercultural and international knowledge, skills, and attitudes across the program" (Leask 2015: 28-29). English as an international language of wider communication undoubtedly constitutes one of the themes to which Leask (2015) is referring. And as the reflection stimulated by IoC involves looking at these themes "through the lens of dominant paradigms" (Leask 2015: 29), we are invited to think about the values and worldviews the English language represents for students as members of an international community. I will, in the following section, think about how this can be done in EMI by discussing the possibility of integrating sociocultural competence into an EMI teacher competence framework.

3. Extending EMI teacher competence: Building international and intercultural competence

In an earlier study (Studer 2018), I presented an EMI teacher competence framework that challenged the narrow focus on general language ability according to the Common European Framework of Reference (originally, Council of Europe 2001, cf. also Bachman 1990). This EMI competence framework, in addition to language abilities, included broader communicative-didactic competence areas for teacher development. It was intended as a reference construct underlying EMI teaching competence assessments and EMI support intervention programs, i.e.,

support for teachers struggling to implement EMI in their courses. The original EMI competence framework describes different degrees of attention to, and integration of, language in content teaching, ranging from treating language as a basic tool for instruction, in the sense of English as a basic skill, to the full and systematic integration of English into the course structure, lesson planning, delivery and assessment in Leask's (2015) comprehensive sense.

The EMI teacher competence framework can be seen as a reference for teachers involved in the delivery of EMI, as well as for teacher trainers, education planners and developers planning to introduce EMI. Essentially, the framework stimulates a joint reflective process along the following questions:

1. Which impact does the change to EMI have on the individual teacher / the program as a whole?
2. Which impact does the change to EMI have on students?
3. Which competences can students develop with respect to the change of language within a course / program that are relevant to academic and professional practice?
4. How can the individual teacher aid the development of these competences?

The underlying aims of this framework, as well as the questions guiding reflection about EMI, can be understood in two ways: Firstly, it encourages systematic thinking about the level of integration of language as an element of regular course / program content that impacts planning, delivery and assessment. Secondly, it focuses on competences of teachers required for the successful integration of language into a course / program. The resulting competence framework consists of six competence dimensions (Studer 2018: 33), which essentially represent four steps of complexity of English language integration into content teaching:

1. Language Competence: No attention to language other than for the purpose of mutual comprehensibility;
2. Monologic Competence: Attention to the appropriate use of English for the purpose of engaging in discipline-specific monologic speech genres (e.g. lectures, presentations);

3. Dialogic Competence: Attention to the appropriate use of English for the purpose of engaging students in dialogic speech settings (e.g. discussion, moderation, Q&A);
4. Communicative-Didactic Competence: Attention to the creation of a language-sensitive communicative environment and the appropriate use of techniques to facilitate English competence development in students (e.g. lexical consolidation exercises, graded student presentations in English).

The four steps can also be seen as progression on a continuum from content teaching without attention to language to the Integration of Content and Language (ICL, cf. Wilkinson and Zegers 2008; Wilkinson 2013) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL, cf. Dalton-Puffer 2007). In previous publications, I represented these steps graphically as steps on a staircase, where each step up means greater complexity in terms of integration of language into the communicative and didactic settings of higher education. We can also represent these steps as a diagram with language competence in its core and the outer dimensions adding to the competence profile of the teacher:

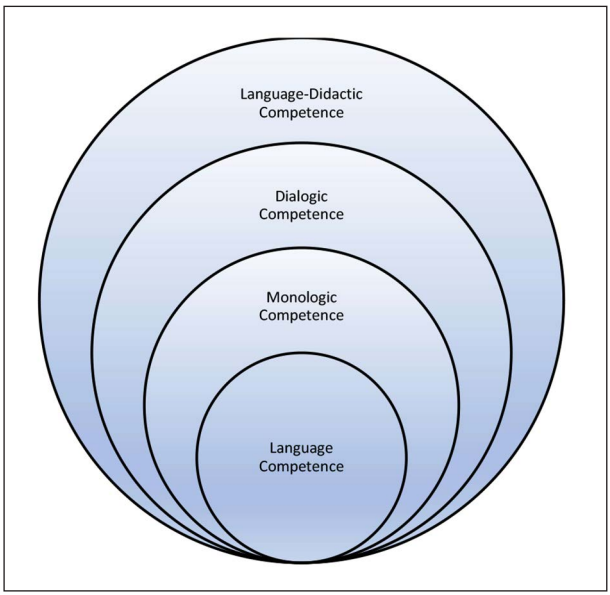

Figure 1. EMI Competence Dimensions

While these competence dimensions are broad and prompt critical reflection about language in teaching that may lead to adaptations in teaching practice (cf. Donald Schön's 1983, 1987 reflective practitioner), they focus strongly on the interface between foreign language use and effective, learner-centred, content teaching. They do not, however, capture the competence needed to engage in further reflection on the role of language in society in the process of developing the students' intercultural and international competences. This, I would like to argue, is a missed opportunity to combine EMI with international and intercultural awareness and skills training. Using a language that is not one's first language triggers our knowledge and builds awareness about the impact of language on how we perceive the world around us and how we use it to effectively express what we want to say. In other words, it triggers our awareness of linguistic relativity (Whorf 2012), that is, the semiotic resources we have at our disposal in a language and which we intuitively activate for effective language use. This semiotic inventory, of course, differs from language to language. By using a language that is not our first language, we can, for example, engage in reflection about questions of idiomaticity in our own language, in the language of the discipline, and in English, the international language of wider communication. If we exploit this potential systematically, we contribute to building intercultural competence.

Intercultural competence is crucially communicative in nature and involves language use in its core. Deardorff (2006: 247, italics mine) appropriately defines intercultural competence as "the ability to *communicate effectively and appropriately* in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes." Similarly, Freeman *et al*. (2009: 13, italics mine) define intercultural competence as "(a) dynamic, ongoing, interactive self-reflective learning process that transforms attitudes, skills and knowledge *for effective communication and interaction* across cultures and contexts." The two quotes from Deardorff (2006) and Freeman *et al*. (2009) also show that effective communication in intercultural situations is interconnected with attitudes, skills and knowledge a person possesses in relation to how communication takes place in different cultures and contexts. EMI, therefore, touches on both culture and communicative contexts. EMI, however, can only contribute to building intercultural competence if

it draws attention to its own ideological fabric by tapping the attitudes towards cultural differences of the actors involved in this experience (Bennett 1993). EMI teachers and students, therefore, need to reflect on their ethnocentricity, particularly their Eurocentric worldview (Hobson 2012), so they can address questions relating to the ideological impact of EMI on intercultural communication in their classroom, discipline and professional practice. EMI can thereby be seen as a facet of intercultural communicative competence rather than a threat to it. Seeing EMI through this lens raises new questions that may be given systematic attention in the classroom. Such questions may include:

- Which role does the use of language play in sociocultural identity construction of students, teachers and future professionals?
- In which communicative situations and activities is it appropriate to use English as an international language in academia and professional life? When could it be considered inappropriate or even offensive?
- Which forms of English exist and how do these forms link to appropriate language use in international settings?
- How do we use English in culturally diverse and sensitive academic and professional situations?

In addressing questions like the above, teachers and students can engage in joint reflections about language as an element of identity and an instrument of social power in ideologically contended communicative spaces. They can also, more practically, develop communicative strategies in situations where they do or do not speak the language(s) of the cultural others they engage with. And, finally, students can develop an awareness of when, in their domain of study and professional life, they can use culturally less specific language (e.g. in a presentation, a written report) and when a communicative situation requires greater attention to the cultural connotations and nuances of language. This last point, as argued earlier, would require the re-enculturation and reinstatement of English as a proper language, much in the sense of Shohamy's (2006) "organism".

Whereas, in the past, English as a foreign language in higher education was traditionally taught through literary and cultural

achievements of Anglophone societies, English language preparation in the past decades has more radically moved from culture to domain- and purpose-specific teaching (e.g. Hutchinson & Waters 2010). Moreover, there has been a growing consensus in research of the "fundamental roles" of English for Academic Purposes and English for Specific Purposes in EMI (McKinley and Rose 2022). Postulating, as I do in this article, that we might need to take a step back and re-connect English to its different cultures may sound like regression to some. I would like to counter this impression by emphasizing that deculturating a foreign language for instrumental use does a disservice to intercultural learning as students are not sensitized to how intercultural communication in academia and professional life *through English* works. I am not proposing that students engage in classical English studies, but I believe that EMI would offer a unique opportunity for students to reflect on their position within Kachru's circles (1985). This might entail attention to English as a lingua franca of the international community as well as to English as a native language.

Engaging in critical reflection as outlined above would undoubtedly contribute to building an ethnorelative worldview (Bennett 1998: 7ff, also in relation to Whorf 2012), a critical assessment of the ideological foundations of internationalization and an awareness as well as competence with respect to English language use in internationalized study and work contexts. Underlining the cultural implications of EMI, therefore, would facilitate reflections in two directions: By understanding language use as culture-specific, students not only appreciate how culture is encoded in language but also how English as the language of the international community serves as the glue to building a global mindset, a culture that understands everyone as part of a "single world society, a global society" (Albrow 1990: 9). Belonging to a specific culture *and* to a global culture at one and the same time is not mutually exclusive; they are two sides of the same coin. In other words, using English in EMI in a critical and self-reflective way can lay the foundation for the development of global citizenship with its many facets (Dower 2003; Oxley and Morris 2013).

In conclusion of this section, I would like to propose a conceptual expansion of EMI by adding an additional layer to the

competence framework outlined above (Studer 2018). I will term this new layer *sociocultural competence* to reflect the assumption that the introduction of EMI is consistent with the aim of developing global citizenship and international skills that are based on intercultural competence. Sociocultural competence, in Figure 2 below, appropriately comes at the outside of the circles as it adds another layer of complexity to the integration of language into content teaching. While building intercultural competence through EMI may involve developing skills and techniques, it also builds knowledge around the impact of language in culture and society. If we accept this as an attractive proposal, research attention should be paid to providing insight into how students build their disciplinary and professional identities around foreign language use and particularly around international languages of wider communication such as English. Research may also be conducted into questions relating to domain- and culture-specific habitus in using English in higher education and in professional life. Case-study research would need to report on the success of local initiatives to integrate the intercultural dimension of EMI into formal and informal study curricula.

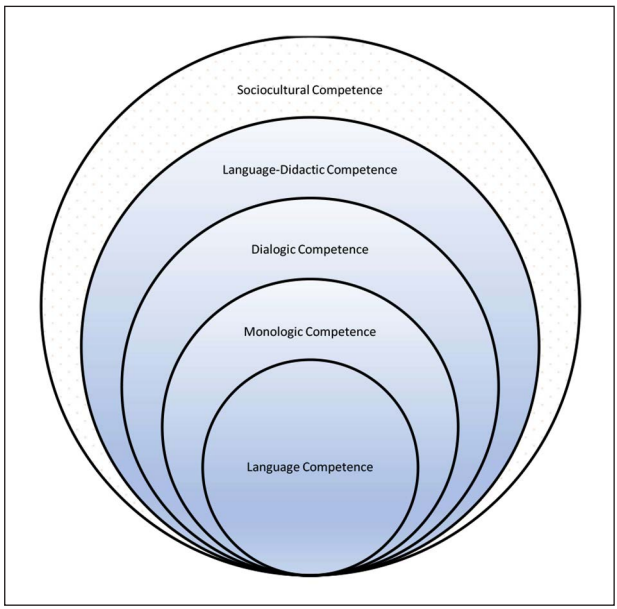

Figure 2. Conceptual expansion of EMI Competence

4. Conclusion

In this article, I revisited an EMI competence framework I developed earlier (Studer 2018) and reviewed its validity against emerging trends in the internationalization of higher education in research and policy. The article revealed that in order for EMI to address the growing demand for intercultural competence in the context of building global citizenship, it will need to reconceptualize the function of language in EMI and integrate the sociocultural impact of the change of medium. The narrow perception of English in higher education as a basic skill and emphasis on English for specific purposes, however, prevents a conceptual expansion that would allow EMI to become a site and platform for intercultural learning. A conceptual expansion of EMI would raise a number of questions, both theoretical and practical in nature, as to the learning objectives that can realistically be pursued in EMI, how to integrate intercultural learning into EMI programs and who should carry out the training. The present article did not set out to offer practical solutions but to invite readers to think about how EMI can contribute to an interculturally rich and language-sensitive internationalized classroom experience.

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CHAPTER 2

Internationalization as strategic leverage for innovation in Higher Education

ALESSANDRA ROMANO
CARLO OREFICE

1. Internationalization and Intercultural Competences in Higher Education[1]

This chapter explores systems of activities and organizational devices to support internationalization in Higher Education and professional contexts. Our thesis is that internationalization, and specifically international mobility, is strategic leverage for innovation in Higher Education and for supporting the development of attitudes of cultural humility in teachers and students. Accordingly, we present three experiences of outgoing mobility carried out in the framework of the three-year project FORwARD (*Training, Research and Development of "community-based" strategies to support practices of living together in multi-ethnic contexts*) (MUR 85901) managed by the Department of Education at the University of Siena (Italy). They are promising examples of processes able to sustain the development of intercultural competences in students,

1. This contribution is fruit of collaboration between the two authors. For reasons of scientific responsibility, we would like to state that Alessandra Romano is the author of sections 1, 2 (2.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.3), 3, while Carlo Orefice is the author of sections 2.1.2 and 4.

The experiences herein reported are financially supported by the FORwARD Project (MUR ID 85901). The Scientific Head of the FORwARD Project is Prof. Loretta Fabbri, University of Siena. The two authors belong to the Scientific Board of the FORwARD Project and are Coordinators of the training courses described in this chapter.

faculty, teachers, and professionals belonging to healthcare organizations. The final paragraph reflects on how to design a transdisciplinary and transnational curriculum in higher education.

The demand for global education defines one of the challenges that European universities are facing (Pucciarelli and Kaplan, 2018). The presence of students from all parts of the world is a trait that has long characterized the university system. Recent decades have been marked by an effort to improving the international relevance of university degrees through mobility, aimed at promoting contacts and relationships with other countries, habits and cultures. European funded programmes specifically support international mobility, both outgoing and incoming, to train future professionals capable of living and working in a globalized world.

However, internationalization mobility –study abroad programme– does not necessarily lead to the development of multiculturalism and intercultural competences in both students and faculty. Research shows that international experiences can even lead to an increase in ethnocentric attitudes and less willingness to interact with cultural 'others' (Jackson and Oguro, 2017; Torlone, Capaccioli and Benalla, 2020) if not adequately designed and supported.

International mobility might be a strategic means for innovation only if the university pays particular attention to it, recognizing its galvanizing effect on the multicultural processes that characterize social and community development from the local to the national and international level.

2. The Forward Project

2.1. Description

The present contribution draws on the framework offered by the three-year research project called FORwARD (Training, Research and Development of "community-based" strategies to support practices of living together in multi-ethnic contexts) (MUR ID 85901) organized by the Department of Education at the University of Siena (Italy). The FORwARD project is funded by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR,

Italian Ministry of University and Research)[2]. It is promoted by the University of Siena (Italy) in partnership with the Al-Quaraouiyine University (Fès), the Al Akhawayn University (Ifrane), and University for Foreigners of Siena - International University (Italy). The FORwARD project aims to identify the theoretical perspectives and frameworks that help to gain a better understanding of the phenomena of cultural and ideological radicalization, and to establish what kind of interventions are most effective in building practices of inclusion in multiethnic communities (Fabbri and Romano, 2021; Melacarne, 2021). The FORwARD activities seek to address the following research questions:

1. How can we recognize, unpack and challenge culturally assimilated representations regarding radicalization and multiethnicity?
2. What practices and methods of interventions are effective in preventing radicalization processes in multiculturally dense communities?
3. How can we design and validate training methodologies and instruments to manage cultural pluralism in social and organizational contexts?
4. How can we promote an international community of research composed of researchers and experts interested in sharing practices of multicultural diversity management in multiethnic contexts (Romano and Kramlich, 2020)?

Aligned with those questions, the FORwARD project traverses three routes that belong to the same transformative path:

a) the collaborative construction of a network composed of experts, researchers and professionals, coming from international contexts, in order to facilitate the circulation of multimethodological perspectives on the different experiences of pluralism, theoretical frameworks, repertoires of well-established and promising innovative practices;
b) the co-design and implementation of training courses addressed to professionals to provide them with work in multiethnic contexts;

2. More information at: https://www.forwardproject.unisi.it/

c) the development of an institutional curriculum for the three-year degree in Education Sciences at the University of Siena with professional teaching modules including Pedagogy of De-radicalization, Psychology of Radicalism, Sociology of Migration, Psychology of Multicultural Processes, European Immigration Law, among others.

The training course, directed at healthcare practitioners and professionals, teachers, faculty, security professionals, provided the construction of participatory and collaborative settings through the adoption of active development methodologies and methods for learning from the experience (Marsick and Neaman, 2018; Romano, 2020; Orefice, 2021). This set of methodologies were useful for helping practitioners and professionals to validate their practices, starting from those situations that they perceive as critical challenges in a highly multicultural context.

The aims were to combine the "transforming intercultural education" practice in terms of innovative training and research programmes promoted by different international institutions. This combination would facilitate and give support to the construction of repertories of practices that are helpful to manage cultural pluralism in social contexts and institutions, such as healthcare organizations, schools and higher education systems, which are increasingly affected by multiethnic populations.

2.2. The FORwARD Project's internationalization activities

Against this backdrop of the FORwARD project, we would like to offer a brief overview of the internationalization activities carried out within the Project. We make suggestions from studies carried out with those non-ordinary experiences of multicultural exchanges.

We refer to three experiences of intensive higher education mobility programmes at the University of Siena, respectively with:

1. eighteen students of the Bachelor's Degree in Education Sciences;
2. six practitioners of healthcare systems and hospitals, such as doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and social workers;

3. three faculty members with a background in Adult Education and Teaching and Learning Methods.

The sub-sections describe the three experiences of mobility in higher education in more detail.

2.2.1. The Bachelor's Degree in Education Sciences

The first mobility programme involved 18 students at the bachelor level (Education Sciences, University of Siena). Eighteen students aged between 23 and 45 from the University of Siena (F=16; M=2) took part in short-term mobility at Al Akhawayn University (AUI) for two weeks. They attended different learning activities for a total of 36 credits. They were in the second and third year of the Education Sciences Degree (Torlone, Capaccioli, and Benalla, 2020).

The short-term study programme was on preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) and radicalization in the Maghreb and Sahel regions, which face multilevel transnational security challenges, being among the African regions that are affected by the threats of violent extremism and terrorism. These challenges require a stabilization and development strategy, which includes preventing and countering violent extremism and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) planning.

The challenge of this step was to support students in their ongoing sense-making process and transformation of their meaning perspectives through their intensive mobility experience. The mobility had the following aims for the learners:

- to encounter future potential employers;
- to enlarge personal and professional networks;
- to learn more on professional topics that are relevant for their future professions.

Students benefited from the whole mobility value proposition designed as a set of actions that contribute to the development of awareness, skills, knowledge, attitudes, behaviours in students and faculty so that they become "more internationally knowledgeable and interculturally skilled" (Zha, 2003, p. 250).

2.2.2. The healthcare system and hospital practitioners

The second mobility experience concerns some activities related to a professional training course (six credits) entitled "*Soft skills for multicultural health contexts. Methods and techniques*" held between October 2019 and February 2020. The training course provided an experience of outgoing mobility carried out at Universitat de Vic - Universitat Central de Catalunya (Spain) on the issues of cross-cultural competence for health care. On that occasion, six students (nurses, physiotherapists, professional educators), accompanied by the authors of this contribution, made an intensive week of visits to the Hospital Universitari de Vic (Consorci Hospitalari de Vic), the Hospital General de Vic and the Vic Sud Primary Health Care Center, carrying out participant observations in a series of departments (mental health, gynecology, obstetrics, pediatrics, general medicine) and meeting Spanish colleagues to exchange knowledge and professional practices and discuss together dilemmas and critical incidents. The aim was to understand the type of multicultural skills that healthcare contexts increasingly need.

The mobility of professionals and practitioners was characterized as an extended and distributed setting for reflecting on their consolidated practices, dysfunctional routines and taken-for-granted theories-in-use (Romano, 2020; Orefice, 2021). The exchange and the confrontation with unfamiliar practices, protocols and systems of actions supported professionals to decentralize from their perspectives and to reconfigure their theories and practices. This result underlined how much the same training and professional development should be considered not as decontextualized processes that introduce new knowledge and skills within individual repertoires but rethought as processes of negotiating new knowledge and skills within communities that evolve through "shared learning stories" (Wenger, 1998).

In the face of a growing multi-ethnic and multi-cultural diversification of healthcare contexts, there is a demand for professionals with a fundamental and urgent relational capacity that arises, as we have seen, as a transversal competence with respect to the specific technical skills possessed, but also a need to reframe the traditional health operator (subject) - patient (object) relationship even more. For the professionals, ultimately, to test the different know-how in clinical and educational practice, it could

coincide with the production of a new meta-cultural approach where the negotiation (even of the implicit and explicit models that these professionals have) is brought into the open and constitutes one of the cornerstones of the type of care provided (Bruzzone, and Musi, 2007; Orefice, 2020; Zannini, 2015).

2.2.3. The faculty members

The third mobility experience concerns the outgoing mobility of three faculty members in the field of Adult Education and Teaching and Learning Methods at Tbilisi State University (Georgia). During the short-term mobility, the faculty members carried out systematic peer observations with Georgian University colleagues and interviewed apical figures of governance. The mobility programme was organized as an intensive set of research, training and professional development. The three faculty members had the opportunity to meet Delegates of the Georgian Ministry of Education, who explained to them how and to what extent the Georgian government was increasing the number of incoming visiting teachers, especially from Italy and Europe, to sustain processes of innovation in their schools. International mobility was leverage, in that case, to favour the circulation of know-how and effective practices among people from different countries, with a specific goal of sustaining developmental social, cultural, and economic processes.

During the short-term visit, the three faculty members also had some teaching activities on active learning, syllabus construction, and the professionalization of PhD programmes with a local community of 30 professors and teachers interested in participating in settings of international exchange to engage in excellence in innovation and teaching. "Outsider" experts and "insider" native professors established themselves as transdisciplinary and problem-based "learning communities". They shared knowledge on topics and problems of multiculturalism, and agreed that it required to be addressed according to multiple methodological angles and theoretical-conceptual perspectives, and with respect to "situated" negotiations (Akins and Akerson, 2002).

3. Transformative learning perspectives to multicultural education. Cultural humility and cultural safety

The conceptual framework that constitutes the backdrop of our argumentations is nurtured by the growing breadth of eclectic contributions on multiculturalism within the field of adult education, including radicalization studies in today's young generation (Amiraux and Fabbri, 2020 Kosrokhavar, 2017) and transformative learning theory (Mezirow and Taylor, 2011). Transformative learning theory supports intercultural learning theory by providing details of the conditions needed for a cross-cultural experience to shift learners' thoughts, feelings, and actions (Dirkx, 2012). Transformative learning is a deep, structural shift in basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions (Mezirow, 2011): it is a shift in consciousness so intense that it permanently alters one's way of life. The shift includes understanding one's self, one's self-location, one's relationships with others, and one's relationship with the physical world (Mezirow, 2011). Three of Mezirow's (2011) phases - a disorienting dilemma, critical reflection, and rational discourse - may explain the dilemmas and the transformations that participants in our experiences of mobility go through when entering a different culture that implies a greater understanding of cultural awareness.

Cross-national mobility can change learners' beliefs by providing a disorienting dilemma, a perplexing experience – through which and on which a reflection is needed through rational discourse (Mezirow and Taylor, 2011). Critical reflection is essential to establish a new habit of thought when living in different cultures (Mezirow and Taylor, 2011). Self-reflection can result in a dramatic re-orientation of oneself and may cause dramatic changes in orientation to the event, which frees the learner – but also the teachers and the faculty members - from previous frames of reference and paradigms (Kramlich and Romano, 2020). Practitioners and faculty members themselves need to be transformed to perform as agent of transformation and contact in multiethnic organizations.

In this regard, our focus is specifically on teaching and learning in higher education with cultural awareness and sensitivity.

Teaching and learning with cultural awareness involves the need for teachers and professors to self-examine their hidden biases and assumptions, which are not easily revealed or known (Brookfield, 2017). The pathway to this necessary self-reflection can start by assuming the posture of cultural humility (Kramlich, and Romano, 2020). This happens as the teacher/faculty acknowledges the impossibility of knowing or understanding another culture and lays aside the power of cultural competency by asking questions and showing both the desire and importance of learning directly from the marginalized. Part of this practice includes a teacher/faculty member willing to acknowledge both hidden racism or prejudice as it is revealed either inwardly or by students.

Cross-cultural training, cultural intelligence, and cultural mapping can be used as one-off training to make educators, faculty members and teachers feel that they have met the standards to engage appropriately with culture. But cultural competence cannot be achieved. Training, workshops, and certificates are not sufficient; rather, a different approach – deeper and critical – must be taken (Kramlich and Romano, 2020). This approach is an ongoing attitudinal shift of posture, not a method or a competency as these imply achievement and often completion: it is based on cultural humility (Kramlich and Romano, 2020). In a multicultural world where power imbalances exist, cultural humility is a process of openness, self-awareness, and incorporating self-reflection and critique after willingly interacting with diverse individuals. The concept of cultural humility considers the fluidity of culture and challenges individuals, schools and university institutions to address inequalities (Kramlich and Romano, 2020). Cultural humility is an approach for redressing power imbalances in teacher-student and student-student relationships by incorporating critical self-evaluation and recognizing that cultural differences lie not (only) within foreign students but within classroom interactions and relationships. Cultural humility is advocated, indeed, as an approach for the professional development of teachers in an effort to counter professional Eurocentrism, ethnocentrism, and intellectual colonialism. The goal of achieving cultural competence implies a sense of expertise or a skill that can be mastered, while the notion of cultural humility suggests a more flexible and humble

endpoint (Yeager and Bauer-Wu, 2013). In addition, cultural humility enables and makes practical cultural safety (Williams, 1999): cultural safety is the practical condition to set an environment that is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe/creative for people; where people feel accepted and recognized, but also stimulated to learn with critical and creative thinking.

4. Concluding note: towards a transdisciplinary curriculum

The experiences related to mobility of university students and teachers highlight the growing need to design new training strategies within current university contexts, which are increasingly heterogeneous and multicultural. Offering young students international learning experiences, creating connections between different fields and disciplines, going beyond the mere transmission of content, therefore appears essential to give them not so much the possibility of tracing/establishing links between different topics, themes or problems while remaining within a single disciplinary field of subjects, but to develop a true transdisciplinary approach to complex problems to which multiculturalism refers (Nicolescu, 2012).

In fact, in order to respond adequately to the new educational challenges and to the urgencies posed by the contemporary world, as well as to meet the needs of a university that wants to think in a truly innovative and inclusive manner, it is necessary to favour the construction of a transdisciplinary curriculum where the division between the different scientific disciplines is surpassed and on which the idea of the university is rooted, understood as the "discovery of something new"; that is, a place to search for possible connections and integrations between different knowledge (Broersma, 2014). In this direction, the international training experiences promoted allowed a double acquisition. On the one hand, the teachers were able to contribute to a revision of their way of conceiving their educational intervention (with reference both to the structuring of teaching and to the levels and subject areas involved), responding more effectively to the educational problems posed to universities by our

multicultural societies. And on the other hand, the students acquired methodologies, tools and strategies to be supported in the construction of their professionalism.

In conclusion, the conceptual background in which this reflection is placed allows us to highlight a series of important elements that seem to us to represent the point of convergence of some current lines of research / intervention around which the FORwARD Project is working. In particular:

- the relevance, according to a socio-constructivist conception of learning, of the processes of active knowledge processing by teachers and students as a function not only of the knowledge objectives, but also of the context and the dialogic relationship between the different actors (Mezirow and Taylor, 2011);
- the need to deal with the current condition of complexity of knowledge, characterized by a growing interconnection of disciplinary areas and the simultaneous risk of a progressive fragmentation and obsolescence of knowledge (Orefice, 2016);
- the awareness, starting from the current crisis of the linear positivist explanatory model (Orefice, 2020), of the effectiveness of multiple and differentiated reflection strategies, not only within the different subjects but also across them;
- the growing importance of the role of cooperation and intra- and inter-group dialogue in the development of educational processes that distinguish the learning experience of university "communities of practice" (Wenger, 1998);
- the evolution of the role of the university teacher from a repository of specialist knowledge to an expert able to individually promote the formation of metacognitive skills and self-assessment by students (Fabbri and Romano, 2018);
- the role given to students as "novices" capable of actively contributing to the construction of knowledge and the consolidation of the knowledge community according to processes of progressive participation and legitimation (Fabbri and Romano, 2018).

Assuming all these considerations are an epistemological premise for international research and training leading to a substantial paradigm shift, marking the passage from the formal representa-

tion with which internationalization activity is traditionally conceived to a more attentive vision of construction of knowledge as a cultural process, in which the situated and negotiated dimensions of learning acquire particular importance.

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Chapter 3

Diversity, management and identity politics – A critical view from a fuzzy-culture perspective

Francisco Javier Montiel Alafont

1. Introduction

Engagement with diversity, equity and discrimination in organizations developed differently regarding time and focus on both sides of the Atlantic. In the USA, it can be traced back to the 1980s, when equal employment opportunity and affirmative action policies were in vogue. Although gender was a topic as well, those policies aimed mainly to ban discrimination against ethnic or racial minorities, especially the African-American population (cfr. McDonald 2010: 2-3). In contrast, the European debate on discrimination was primarily raised by feminist movements during the same time, leading to the first gender equality policies (e.g. in German public institutions) in the late 1980s (cfr. Blome *et al*. 2013: 97), whereas ethnic and cultural diversity only started playing a role in diversity perspectives during the second half of the 1990s, when companies massively undertook processes of internationalization and integration "problems" of a rising migrant population within societies became evident (cfr. Wrench 2007: 27-28).

Looking at the specific case of universities, a similar gap can be observed. North American universities have been introducing extensive programmes for attention to diversity since the 1990s. In contrast, the German University Framework Act, (*Hochschulrahmengesetz*) in its seventh amendment of 2005, provided specific protection in terms of equity for people affected by gender

discrimination, family concerns (e.g. students with children), challenging life situations (e.g. disability) and mobility (foreign students) (cfr. Vedder 2006: 131). This not only means that the internal cultural diversity of its own population was not in focus, but also that the partial interest in acknowledging cultural or ethnic (but more specifically national) belonging was driven by the ongoing internationalization of higher education since the beginning of the 21st century.

When considering diversity management specifically, a mismatching becomes apparent. A social or organizational instrument that was developed for dealing with the discrimination of specific social identities based on power inequalities within multicultural (an in other ways diversified) societies is now applied in universities to support internationalization processes related to the glocalization[1] of students, lecturers, researchers and curricula. While discrimination in multicultural societies is mainly driven by the essentialization of social identities, internationalization in higher education leads to fuzziness of identities. In this vein, Oztugurt (2017) criticizes the lack of global perspective in common practices of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), assuming that they should have "a broader compass rather than a narrow scope», as internationalization "addresses both the local/national and global concerns within a dynamic structure and reach" (Oztugurt 2017: 85). In regards to higher education institutions, he concludes:

> [They] are simultaneously embedded in global and national context (sic), which may convey different competitive and institutional pressures. There is a correlation with the national and local concerns and needs, but they do not necessarily intersect with global concerns and needs as they are currently articulated. Internationalization is multi-approach relationship [sic] and is fluid. Local and national concerns are strongly connected to global intersectionality. (Oztugurt 2017: 85)

1. According to Robertson (1994) "the concept of globalisation has involved the simultaneity and the inter-penetration of what are conventionally called the global and the local, or - in more general vein - the universal and the particular" (Robertson 1994: 38).

Consequently, this article aims to collect scholars' criticism on mainstream diversity management practice, as well as proposals to recentre it from a fuzzy-culture perspective with a view to formulate suggestions for dealing with diversity in a way that better fits the glocal scope of higher education.

2. Diversity management: definition, evolution and criticism

When examining the concept of diversity management, it is the notion of *management* that most commonly awakes suspicion, due to its vagueness on the one hand and to its mercantilist or political connotation on the other. Wrench (2015), for instance, defines diversity management as:

> [...] an organizational strategy which emphasizes the need to recognize ethnic, cultural, gender and other differences between groups of employees and clients and make practical allowances for these in organizational policies. The 'main message' of the approach is that organizations must see the human diversity within them as a strength rather than as a problem. (Wrench 2015: 254)

But at the same time, he points to the arbitrariness of its practice and to the lack of definition of instruments and outputs: "The problem is that diversity management in practice can mean many things. It can be little more than a desire to celebrate cultural diversity, or it can incorporate the full range of previous equal employment opportunities and affirmative action measures" (Wrench 2015: 260).

The political and economic aspects of diversity management are well represented in the turning points of its evolution as described by Lorbiecki and Jack (2000). They consider the starting point in the late 1980s a *demographic turn*, as companies realized the new heterogeneity of the workforce, with women and members of minority ethnic groups emerging, and started reconsidering the identity of their future managers (cfr. Lorbiecki and Jack 2000: 20). At the beginning of 1990s, a *political turn* followed when the new-right thinking, which had arisen during Reagan's

presidency, discovered diversity management's inclusive approach as an attractive alternative to the more radical affirmative action movement (cfr. Lorbiecki and Jack 2000: 20). An *economic turn* became apparent in the mid 1990s, giving rise to what later has been called the *business case for diversity*. It consists in the belief that initiatives for social justice and inclusion will improve the organization's productivity and performance (cfr. Lorbiecki and Jack 2000: 21). Finally, the *critical turn* is described as outbursts of antagonism or resentment (e.g. male backlash, white rage, political correctness) resulting from diversity initiatives having failed to provide more equality among workforce members (cfr. Lorbiecki and Jack 2000: 22).

In conclusion, the instrumentalization of diversity has been a serious allegation against diversity management practices since the beginning. On the one hand, companies are at risk of being seen as manipulators of diversity in order to achieve social legitimacy. On the other hand, the political establishment may be making use of diversity policies in order to hide its attempt to keep power and maintain existing inequalities behind the idea of acknowledging the radical individuality of everyone. As Gotsis and Kortezi (2015) put it:

> Rather than posing a threat to the status quo by inaugurating a process of organizational change, diversity management is more likely to maintain and reproduce power and social influence asymmetries insofar as diversity strategies appear to be disentangled from moral and humanistic discourses that might be critical in challenging basic neo-liberal underpinnings of the business case. (Gotsis and Kortezi 2015: 46)

In their list of identified critical points on practitioner versions of diversity management, Lorbiecki and Jack (2000) reflect similarly on the aspects of essentialist identity politics, mechanisms of power control, and the potential to keep discrimination hidden. They refer to the risk of considering diversity something that can be managed and, consequently, of creating a cleavage between those who manage diversity and the diverse group to be managed. Furthermore, they refer to claims that debates on diversity actually deal with the adverse effects of a diversity that can neither be avoided nor accepted (cfr. Lorbiecki and Jack 2000: 23).

As to the undifferentiated inclusive approach of diversity management in practice, the same authors collect three critical arguments. The first one is that a radical interpretation of the fact that everyone is different dissolves the basis for the recognition of disadvantages of certain social groups, which in turn renders discrimination invisible (cfr. Lorbiecki and Jack 2000: 24). A second dilemma is the inclination of diversity management towards essentializing identities[2] in order to be able to make diversity identifiable and manageable. This makes it difficult to elaborate on multiple identities, creating a scenario where people are more likely to be passive subjects of top-down policies (cfr. Lorbiecki and Jack 2000: 26). Finally, diversity management can also be seen as a futile attempt to depoliticize conflicts among social groups by focusing on individual differences rather than on power inequalities (cfr. Lorbiecki and Jack 2000: 27).

In summary, together with the suspicions of interested manipulation (management), the struggles of the diversity management concept revolve around the risk of using a perspective that fosters cultural essentialism and is unable to expose existing power inequalities. A closer look at the multiculturalism debate and at the fuzzy understanding of culture is necessary in order to generate new and more suitable approaches.

3. Multiculturalism, interculturality and fuzziness

To be immersed within a multicultural society can be seen as a central trigger for an organization to implement diversity management measures. However, how a society should arrange its own multiculturality is a question that has led to an intense debate over recent decades. Stokke and Lybæk (2016) have defined the different positions best, distinguishing between liberal state multiculturalism, interculturalism and critical multiculturalism.

Liberal state multiculturalism, as characterized by these authors, celebrates culture and ethnic diversity, recognizes group identities, grants minorities a voice in decision-making processes

2. The typical classification of diversity dimensions is mainly based on a dominant common origin (e.g. place of birth, ethnicity) or experience (e.g. gender, religion, sexual orientation).

and strives for group differentiated rights (cfr. Stokke and Lybæk 2016: 2-3). Therefore, a strong connection with the principles of mainstream diversity management can be recognized. The criticism expressed against this approach is also very similar: multiculturalism is ethnocentric, essentializes culture and promotes cultural relativism. Its focus on cultural differences hinders integration and social cohesion and ends up in segregation (cfr. Stokke and Lybæk 2016: 3).

Since 2008 the European Union promotes intercultural dialogue as an alternative to multiculturalism. Major traits of interculturalism are its emphasis on openness, respect, tolerance, participation and self-reflection; its aim to generate individual commitment to the group and to its common values; and its aspiration to a culturally hybrid society (cfr. Stokke and Lybæk 2016: 4). Interculturalism as a state policy was suggested as a formula to overcome the shortcomings of liberal state multiculturalism. Nevertheless, it has also been the object of criticism itself: it is also liberal (due to the individual focus), it presupposes equality and neglects asymmetric power relations and arguments from a majority position, being an instrument of nation-building. Besides, integration is not the only possible outcome of intercultural dynamics (cfr. Stokke and Lybæk 2016: 5; 11-12).

Finally, Stokke and Lybæk (2016) stress the specificity of critical multiculturalism. Even though it assumes most of the principles of interculturalism, it emphasizes the distinction of a multiculturalism *from above* and a multiculturalism *from below*, defines multiculturalism in terms of dialogue and negotiations between minority mobilization, majority responses and state policy, and focuses on change and transformation of mainstream societies (cfr. Stokke and Lybæk 2016: 5; 9-10).

Leaving aside the question of labelling it as *multi-* or *inter-*, it seems evident that a non-essentialist intercultural approach can be an appropriate foundation for recentring diversity management, as long as power asymmetries are thematized, dialogue and negotiation are considered suitable ongoing dynamics and the focus is set on reciprocity relationships with potential for social transformation. Indeed, the cornerstone of such a foundation must be a non-essentialist perspective on culture as the multi-relational concept formulated by Bolten (2015) and known as *fuzzy culture*.

Fuzzy culture describes culture as a multi-layered, open field in which every individual establishes differently intensive relationships of reciprocity to a number of lifeworld structures (communities or collectives). Such relationships have a certain degree of conventionalization due to partially shared stocks of common knowledge among the collectives, but they are also responsible for a networking dynamic between both individuals and collectives[3] that are able to generate polyvalence and cohesion simultaneously (cfr. Bolten 2015: 50-51). As Bolten (2015) stresses:

> Culture is not about either assigning an element to or excluding it from a set, but rather about modelling the degrees of membership or networking of elements to a set. In this sense, cultural boundaries appear increasingly blurred –or "fuzzy" in the sense of polyvalent logic– from such a perspective. Accordingly, such a "fuzzy culture" is to be understood more relationally than substance-oriented: It is primarily defined by the intensity with which actors relate to it. (Bolten 2015: 50)[4]

The *fuzzy-culture* concept offers obvious advantages in regard to a reconsidered diversity management practice. Focusing on relationality rather than on substance, it avoids cultural essentialism. The notion of *collective* allows it to keep the normally used dimensions (gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, ability, etc.) visible, but also to make them permeable. Its open and polyvalent networking approach grants the possibility of elaborating on multiple identities. Reciprocity delivers the basis for dealing with diversity in terms of dialogue and negotiation. The networking dynamic means *per se* ongoing social transformation and the notion of cohesion harmonizes well with the aims of integration and hybridization. Can *fuzzy-culture* provide an answer to the struggles with power and hegemony? For this, the concept of *management* must be challenged.

3. For an extensive theory of collectives cfr. Hansen (2009).
4. Translated by the author.

4. Intercultural process moderation

Asymmetric power relationships emanate from constructed perceptions of minorities and majorities within fixed dual structures of hegemony and submission. Thus, hegemonic and supposedly homogeneous majorities have the power to manage submissive diverse minorities. From a fuzzy and polyvalent perspective, this picture changes radically as the boundary lines between majorities and minorities get blurry; they do not disappear, but rather become positional:

> Depending on the perspective from which the participants are viewed, and depending on whether one rather takes a micro or a macro-perspective, someone can count among majorities and minorities at the same time and in changing positions. (Bolten 2010: 3)[5]

Accordingly, a fuzzy-(inter)culture-oriented understanding of diversity aims to liquefy structural diversity. Once diversity is conceived as a process, it becomes evident that the possibilities of controlling and managing it are very limited, for its underlying dynamic is one driven by individuals themselves recognizing and negotiating possible compatibilities of different perceptions, interests and skills (cfr. Bolten 2011: 9). Understanding diversity as an emergent and self-dynamic process leads Bolten (2011) to critically consider the use of the term *management*, if it is to be defined as goal-oriented control. Without insisting on a specific label, he suggests understanding (fuzzy) diversity management in terms of intercultural process moderation, since its nature is rather one of an open-end process of coordination of implied people with a view to find and formulate common goals as well as proper ways to achieve them (cfr. Bolten 2011: 9).

5. Translated by the author. A short example could be helpful to make this point understandable. In the aftermath of the 2020 Oscar nominations, US media discussed implicit racial discrimination as only two people of colour were nominated. One of them happened to be the Spanish actor Antonio Banderas. The consideration of Banderas as a person of colour created a certain polemic among the local media and a genuine backlash in the Spanish press as from a European and specifically Spanish perspective Banderas cannot be perceived as belonging to any racial or ethnic minority. Not the specific traits of the actor, but rather the frame of reference, and eventually his particular sympathy for a certain community were what made him be part of a Hispanic minority and a white majority at the same time (cfr. Benavides 2020).

Bolten (2011) continues with the specification of two conditions for obtaining a fruitful intercultural diversity moderation. The first is intercultural dialogue, defined as "the conscious and goal-oriented active exchange of knowledge and experience between the actors and the different collectives or cultures they belong to" (Bolten 2011: 11)[6]. Furthermore, intercultural dialogue in an organization presupposes the existence of free accessible systems of communication and knowledge management. The second condition is related to the engagement of so-called *connectors* as agents who activate reciprocity relationships, learning processes, knowledge exchange, collaboration and trust within the network at the micro and macrolevels. They identify cohesion potentials and give rise to emergent processes with the long-term aim of generating organizational intercultural diversity competence (cfr. Bolten 2011: 11-12).[7]

Fuzzy diversity management as intercultural process moderation can probably not prevent an organization from situations of power inequality and hegemonic behaviour, but it can make them visible and deliver the organizational tools for reverting them. Furthermore, its openness and wide scope is able to integrate the inner perspective (organizational diversity as a result of the inherent diversity of the society in which the organization is immersed in) with the outer perspective (organizational diversity as a result of its internationalization process), making it especially suitable for fostering the internationalization process of higher education institutions.

6. Translated by the author.

7. Organizational intercultural diversity competence is embedded in the organizational culture in the best case scenario, so that it belongs to its basic assumptions, not necessarily requiring a high level of formalization. Müller *et al*. (2017) collected a number of *case histories* in diversity management practices, one of which is a good example of this: the *Badische Staatstheater Karlsruhe*. It is a small organization of 146 people from 40 different countries. It has only a minimal instance of formalized diversity management (One employee representative for equal opportunities and antidiscrimination) and no official diversity statement. Nevertheless, it presents a high degree of sensitivity towards diversity (connected with a collective consciousness about its importance in the cultural market) and an organizational behaviour free of diversity taboos. Its organizational culture emphasizes internal cohesion, solidarity, equality and diversity as normality (cfr. Müller *et al*., 2017: 95).

5. Some proposals for diversity management practice in internationalizing higher education institutions

To sum up, a small number of practical considerations can be suggested for the specific case of higher education institutions in the process of internationalization.

The first refers to the most common measures of diversity management practice in universities:[8] normative diversity policies (e.g. access quotas for student groups considered disadvantaged) and institutionally managed events (e.g. intercultural day, antidiscrimination workshops) can, at their best, raise awareness about diversity issues, but they do not ensure inclusive organizational behaviour. At their worst, they can perpetuate cultural essentialization.

A second and highly relevant reflection concerns the scope of implementation: essentialist and hegemonic approaches can only be avoided through cultural embeddedness of diversity practices.[9] This implies that diversity management cannot be an extracurricular offer to the academic community. On the contrary, it needs the emergent participation of all members of such a complex community (students, lecturers and researchers, non-academic personnel, partners, etc.) in the holistic impregnation of all academic activities with fuzzy diversity perspectives. In this context, a diversity approach is especially relevant in the conception and development of learning objectives, curricular contents and didactic models, for this area is responsible for the most relevant struggles of universities with diversity. As Heuchemer (2017) emphasizes:

> The diversity of the students contrasts with the desired learning outcomes, which express the skills and competencies the students should have at the end of their studies. Even if the learning outcomes are uniformly defined for all students, the learning of involved individuals takes place very differently. Most universities see

8. Normally ascribed to the discrimination and fairness and the access and legitimacy paradigms according to Ely and Thomas (2001: 261)

9. This observation and the following ones can be seen as belonging to the integration and learning paradigm according to Ely and Thomas (2001: 261).

> these dynamic learning requirements and movements as a challenge, sometimes even as a threat to the academic level, and when dealing with the diversity relevant to learning, they tend to behave as a "homosocial" or monocultural organization. (Heuchemer 2017: 20)[10]

Furthermore, Heuchemer (2017) sees a direct connection between diversity management practices in universities and the general learning objective of global citizenship as professional qualification for future graduates (cfr. Heuchemer 2017: 24).

Third, the need for a moderated intercultural diversity dialogue for the generation of a diversity sensitive organizational culture is emphasized. It mainly implies an appropriate representation of students at all decision levels and governance bodies of academic life, with special attention placed on preventing the segregation of international students, researchers and partners as *guests* or *visitors*. Besides, the consideration of academic and scientific personnel as simple service deliverers represents a frequent mistake that can delegitimate any attempt at dialogue.

Such a moderated intercultural diversity dialogue within the organization's social network can only be generated using a decentralized mediation practice provided by *connectors*. This is the fourth consideration. A decentralized moderation fosters the chances of freely addressing emergent diversity issues and counteracts attempts at hegemonic *cancelling*, either from a structural majority or a minority perspective claiming political correctness.

Fifth, diversity moderation needs to apply a fuzzy identity policy in the formal organization. This involves, among other aspects, consciously renouncing the practice of framing of students and employees as well as elaborating on polyvalent perspectives and multiple identities.

Finally, the intrinsic openness of moderation processes entails the acknowledgement that diversity management aims must be communally and glocally negotiated. The top-down and global formulation of diversity goals by the organization's leaders is futile due to a lack of collective legitimation.

These are only some practical suggestions derived from a conceptual recentring of diversity management in higher education

10. Translated by the author.

organizations from a fuzzy culture perspective. Empirical studies of their validity are difficult due to the current state of the art in the field, where mainstream diversity management practices are dominant, but they would be desirable and worthwhile.

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Chapter 4

Intercultural competence in the international classroom – The lecturers' perception

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1. Introduction

In the last decades the internationalisation of higher education institutions (HEI) has triggered a gradual introduction of courses or programmes in foreign languages, especially English. Even though the primary goals of HEI are increasing mobility, the production of teaching or research materials in English, and ultimately improving the employability of graduates as well as to increase their institutional presence in the international student market (Coleman, 2004, p. 4, cited in Coleman, 2006), internationalisation also presents an array of challenges. For example, HEIs must adapt their own language policies (Shohamy, 2013); students must adapt to living in an intercultural environment and cope with a new academic style (Tatzl, 2011), which may affect their participation in class (Knapp, 2011) or lead to increased anxiety and even reduced motivation (Inbar-Lourie and Donitsa-Schmidt, 2013). Teachers also must address the issues that arise when teaching in a language other than their own, such as increased workload (Vinke, Snippe and Jochems, 1998), or the possible reduction in content that often occurs in this situation (Coleman and Costa, 2010). All of them, however, must assume responsibility for their linguistic (Cots, 2013; Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2011; Studer, in this volume) and intercultural competence (Klaassen and De Graaff, 2001).

It is precisely the intercultural issue in relation to teachers that is the main concern in this study. As the number of international students increases, so does cultural diversity. Therefore, mastering intercultural competence is essential for the teacher to feel at ease in the international classroom. This study presents the analysis of the results of a questionnaire administered to teachers of international students at the University of Vic-Central University of Catalonia (UVic-UCC) with the aim of finding out their perceptions on intercultural competence, check whether their conceptions are independent of the teachers' field of knowledge and, finally, find out whether previous international experience modifies them.

2. Theoretical framework

Intercultural competence has been conceptualised in a variety of ways in the last 50 years. While all the models that attempt to describe it seem to agree that 'intercultural competence' refers to a set of cognitive sub-competences, attitudes and skills that are activated to interact appropriately and effectively in intercultural situations, in the models there are differences in how these sub-competences are interrelated or activated in intercultural interaction.

According to Spitzberg and Changnon (2009), there has been a shift from models developed from a structural point of view and characterised by lists of sub-competences (empathy, flexibility, language skills, encyclopaedic knowledge etc.) to models focusing on the complexity of intercultural competence development. Fantini's (1995) or Byram's (1997) models stress the importance of intercultural interaction as well as the need for mutual co-orientation during intercultural interaction, while Auernheimer's (2008) emphasises the relevance of social interrelations and how they reflect power asymmetries, collective experiences, prejudices and differences in the cultural, or in the communities' scripts. Other models focus on the phases of intercultural competence development, like Deardorff's (2006), which postulates that internal attitudinal change precedes external behavioural change. That is, concrete experiences can lead to changes in attitude and skills that will, in turn, lead to changes

in subsequent actions. Another model, Bolten's (2015), posits that intercultural competence is polyvalent, relational and relative. In other words, it is a processual and changing competence that enables us to decide reflexively which skills or knowledge must be activated in different contexts with different interlocutors. For example, in the university context, teachers with highly developed intercultural competence should be able to make decisions on possible adaptations in their verbal, para-verbal and non-verbal discourse or on how they show empathy, as well as be able to be flexible, tolerant of ambiguity and be able to distance themselves from acquired habits and roles. Most importantly, these teachers should make these decisions synergistically and interdependently with the students. Hence, they should be very attentive to the interaction in the classroom as it is unlikely that the students consistently react in the same way.

Within this framework, the objectives of the present study are threefold: To gauge the level of teachers' awareness of their own intercultural competence. To explore whether teacher perceptions are affected by their own field of knowledge and, to investigate whether their self-reported previous international experience modulates their perceptions of their present intercultural competence.

3. Method

Data was collected using an online questionnaire which aimed at finding out the perceptions of UVic-UCC teaching staff. After piloting the questionnaire with a sample of 12 teachers from different subject areas and experts in the subject or social sciences, the final version included a first part in which the focus was their experience with international students, the languages they use when teaching, their field of knowledge and the subjects they teach. This was followed by a second section that contained 29 5-point Likert-type scale statements, where 1 was not in agreement and 5 was complete agreement, divided into three large groups corresponding to three dimensions: attitudes, knowledge and skills in the field of intercultural competence. Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient stood at .881, which is an adequate reliability for this type of instrument.

Although the questionnaire was sent to 87 teachers including both permanent and associate lecturers who were involved in teaching, or had already taught, international students, only 53 of them (61%) completed it. The participants' teaching fields encompassed subjects related to social sciences (37.7%), life sciences and technology (28.3%), and humanities (34%). The majority (88.7%) had previous experience with international students. Concerning the languages used for teaching, 84.9% used several languages (Catalan, Spanish and a foreign language) depending on the subject they taught, while the remaining 15.1% only use one language, generally English, except 1.9% of them who use French only.

4. Results

4.1. Teachers' perceptions

Teachers' perceptions of their intercultural competence will be described in three dimensions: attitudes, knowledge and skills. The sum of the percentage of the results for the options "agree" and "strongly agree" (values 4 and 5 respectively on the Likert scale) for each of the items in the questionnaire will be reported. However, percentages for all the options of the Likert scale can be seen in the figures.

As far as *attitudes* is concerned, the median resulting from grouping all the items in this dimension is the highest of all the three dimensions (4.4) suggesting that teachers have a positive attitude towards intercultural issues. Practically all the participants (94.2%) agree that knowledge of their own cultural background and sensitivity towards it are relevant. While 88.7% believe that this background influences them in their daily practice as teachers and 83% recognise that they are aware of their own limits in terms of intercultural knowledge and experience, only 66% feel comfortable with cultural differences in the classroom, and just over a half of them (58.5%) consider it irrelevant to know in advance if they have international students in their classrooms.

In the area of *Knowledge*, the total median taking into consideration all the items in this dimension stands at 3.5. Responses

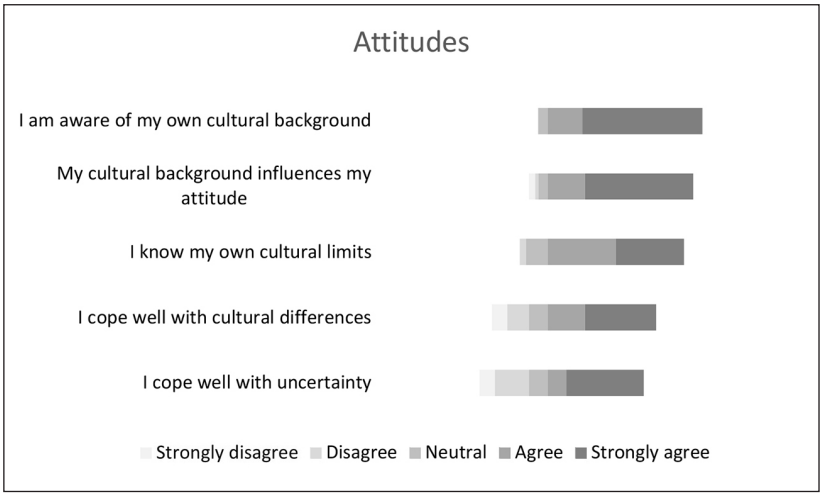

Figure 1. Attitudes

related to this dimension are presented in three different subsections: teachers' knowledge of their own values and cultural references, knowledge of the students' culture, and knowledge of teaching strategies.

As far as knowledge of their own values and cultural references is concerned, three quarters of teachers (75.5%) express that they

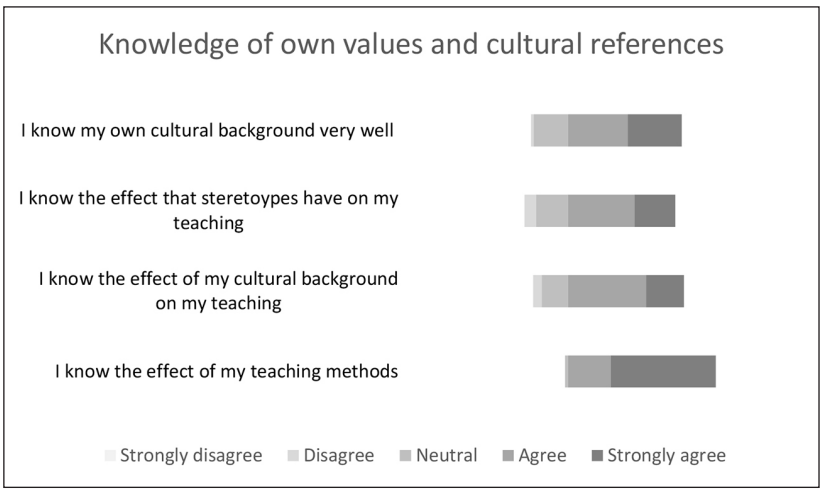

Figure 2. Knowledge of own values and cultural references

are aware of their own cultural background and 76.9 % admit that it affects them personally and professionally, as well as influencing their own verbal and non-verbal language on academic discourse. Similarly, 71.2% mention being aware of the effect that stereotypes can have on the practice of their profession. Almost all the teachers surveyed (98.1%) believe that their teaching style can have an influence on the learning process of students.

The second aspect within *knowledge* refers to students' culture. The results of the survey shows that most teachers (80.8%) recognise that cultural differences may influence the way students interpret their teaching practices. However, we can observe that even though teachers admit to have knowledge of the cultural background of their home students, only 17% of them report having a good knowledge of the cultural and historical context of international students and only 39.2% acknowledge knowing about aspects related to the social, economic and political situation that may affect their international students, their families and their community. Furthermore, less than half (46.2%) can identify the characteristics of verbal and non-verbal language specific to the cultural background of their students.

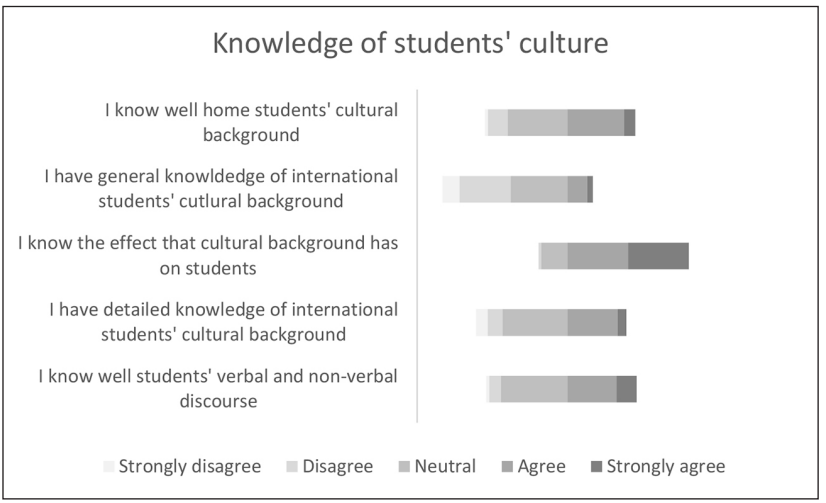

Figure 3. Knowledge of students' culture

Finally, the third division in the knowledge domain refers to teaching strategies. Only 40.4% agree that their teaching practice

may conflict with the values of other cultural contexts, but only 20.8% of them acknowledge that they are familiar with appropriate pedagogy for intercultural contexts. As far as assessment is concerned, more than half of the teachers (67.3%) are aware that the perception of assessment instruments may differ according to the educational culture of each student, but less than half of the teachers (46.2%) know how to apply procedures to ensure that assessment is not affected by such cultural or linguistic differences.

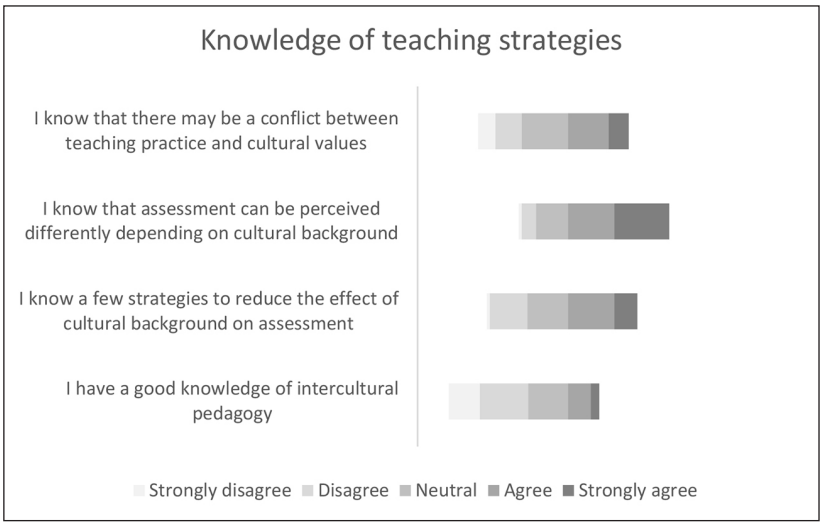

Figure 4. Knowledge of teaching strategies

The third dimension in teachers' perception is *skills*. The grouped median in this dimension is 3.6, showing that teachers seem to be fairly competent in terms of intercultural skills. More than three quarters of the teachers consider that they do listen to international students when they talk about issues related to their culture (80.8%), but only half of them (55.8%) accept that they discuss aspects related to these cultures with their students. 77.4% of respondents intend to improve their intercultural competence on a personal level, but to a lesser extent in the educational setting (52.8%) and are even less involved in events to promote interaction with international students outside the classroom (30.8%). Almost three quarters of the survey participants (76%) admit to giving explanations to students about the

techniques used in the classroom and, at the same time, more than half of them (64%) admit to adapting academic discourse to students' cultural and linguistic characteristics, although they find it more difficult to adapt their non-verbal language (49%). Finally, less than half of the respondents (49%) modify their teaching practice when teaching in a language other than their mother tongue. Nearly the same percentage indicate that they use specific teaching strategies in the intercultural classroom (45.1%) and consider themselves able to identify the motivation of a conflict in the classroom. Specifically, whether the interpretation of certain actions may be influenced by stereotypes or prejudices (49%).

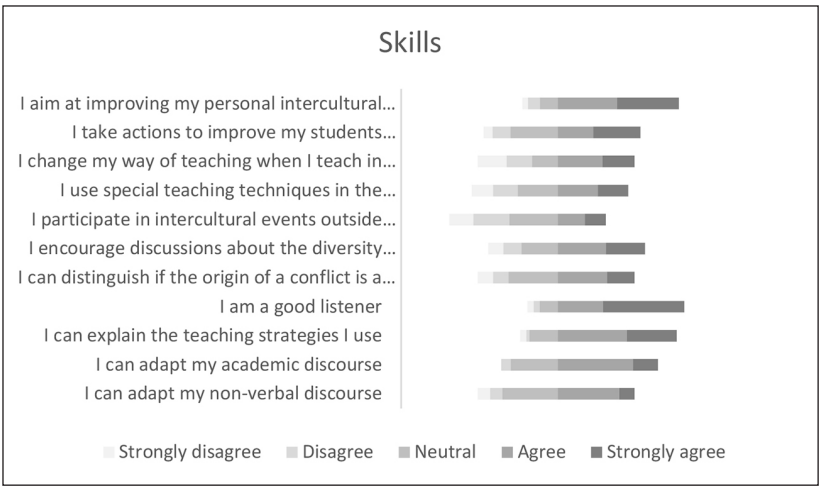

Figure 5. Intercultural skills

4.2. Area of knowledge and perception of intercultural competence

The goal of the second research question was to see whether there is any relationship between the perception of intercultural competence and the participants' area of knowledge (Social Sciences, Life Sciences and Technology, and Human Sciences).

A Kruskall-Wallis test provided a significant difference in "Knowledge of students' verbal and non-verbal discourse" (p=.009), and "Knowledge of strategies to reduce the effect of cultural background on assessment" (p=.040). Life Sciences and

Technology teachers have a lower mean in these two items, implying that their knowledge is probably minor than teachers of Social Sciences or Humanities. There was no significant difference in any other item or when the three dimensions were analysed as a whole.

Table 1. Means of items 14 and 17 by area of knowledge.

	Item 14 *Knowledge of students' verbal and non-verbal discourse*	Item 17 *Knowledge of strategies to reduce the effect of cultural background on assessment*
Social Sciences	**33.84**	**31.29**
Life Sciences and Technology	**19.20**	**18.73**
Humanities	**24.83**	**27.61**

4.3. Self-reported international experience and perception of intercultural competence

The third research question aimed at investigating whether the perception of intercultural competence varies according to teachers' previous international experience. Teachers self-identified as experienced if they had already taught international students (N=47. 88.7%), and inexperienced if they had not (N=6, 11.3%).

A Mann-Whitney U test showed that there was a significant difference (U = 248,5, p = 0.001) between skills of the experienced and inexperienced teachers. The median score in the skills dimension for the experienced group stood at 3.6 whereas that of the non-experienced group was 2.6 suggesting that the non-experienced group did not have as fine-tuned intercultural skills as those teachers who had international competence. No notable differences were found in attitudes or knowledge.

5. Discussion

The overall analysis of the results shows that teachers are aware and have a positive view of intercultural competence, which is an assessment shared by Sercu (2006). However, with the three dimensions that have been analysed in mind -attitudes, knowl-

edge and skills- a number of considerations about teacher perceptions stand out.

Firstly, the high values observed in both the domains of attitudes and knowledge of one's own cultural references indicate a favourable view towards these two domains. In particular, it seems that these teachers are aware of the extent of their own cultural background and the influence it has on their performance in the intercultural classroom, while at the same time they acknowledge that certain aspects, such as stereotypes, affect their practice. Teekens (2000, p. 31) corroborates this description of the 'international classroom' teacher by highlighting the value these teachers place on their own cultural awareness and their concern to broaden it. Deardorff (2006) considers that self-knowledge and awareness of the influence of one's own cultural background are prerequisites to be able to listen and show empathy in intercultural interactions and to be open to start internal transformation. These internal processes are essential before making external changes in intercultural interactions.

Secondly, although the teachers in the present study are aware of the cultural differences intrinsic to the multicultural classroom, they are more uncertain about the students' cultures. This may be a cause of concern as the influence of the interactions between members of different cultures on the development of the international classroom is often unpredictable. In particular, non-verbal language is one of the issues that tends to raise insecurity, as the skills involved in this type of discourse are more difficult to observe than those of verbal discourse. For example, as non-verbal discourse is spontaneous and emotionally marked (Matsumoto, Hee Young and LeRoux 2007), being aware of its use or be able to consciously change or adapt it while interacting in a multicultural context requires prior practice.

Thirdly, in terms of pedagogical aspects, these teachers are aware that their own teaching style may influence individual pupils differently. Following Auernheimer (2008) contextual factors and cultural scripts, that is teachers' prior experiences, beliefs and teaching habits may have an impact on intercultural interaction. It is worth noting that the item *I know the effects of my teaching methods* has the highest percentage in the knowledge dimension, which seems to suggest that teachers attach importance to pedagogical aspects, or at least, are aware of the effect

that their teaching style may have on students. However, a large number of teachers express ignorance about culturally sensitive teaching practices. In fact, the item *I have a good knowledge of intercultural pedagogy* results in the lowest score in the whole questionnaire. Even so, the responses to the item *I use special teaching techniques in the intercultural classroom* seem to indicate that, in some cases, some adaptation takes place in the intercultural classroom. In this vein Teekens (2000) argues that teaching multicultural groups draws on personal or family experiences and previous international experiences rather than on knowledge of intercultural pedagogy. In other words, teachers may not always have the background in intercultural pedagogy to systematically and consciously activate specific intercultural techniques.

Fourthly, the teachers surveyed do not perceive intercultural pedagogy as a compulsory element in their classes. In fact, less than half of the teachers surveyed believe that it is not essential to change teaching practice by changing the language of instruction. Similarly, in Dafouz, Núñez, Sancho and Foran's (2007) study on the perceptions of Spanish teachers who teach in English, they reported that it was not necessary to change the assessment system depending on the language of instruction. This perception contrasts with the opinion of authors like Gress and Ilon (2009), who state that teaching styles vary according to cultures, customs and history (p. 190) or Klaasnen *et al*. (2001), Björkman (2010) and Hellekjaer (2010) who agree that there is a need for international teachers to use methodologies appropriate to the multicultural environment.

Fifthly, a large proportion of the teachers involved in this study demonstrate a strong willingness to engage in activities that help them develop their intercultural competence, but only slightly more than a half are willing to act to improve it. Björkman (2010) also alludes to the difficulty of motivating teachers to engage in intercultural-specific training.

Finally, looking at the questionnaire items separately, we found a significant difference between interculturally experienced and inexperienced teachers in terms of intercultural skills. The latter seem to use fewer teaching techniques and minimise discussions on aspects related to the different cultures in the classroom. In addition, inexperienced teachers seem to take less action to improve their intercultural competence and would be

less able to adapt their non-verbal language than experts. However, within the group of teachers surveyed, belonging to different subject areas does not have a significant impact on their attitudes, knowledge and skills towards interculturality.

Although the results of the study are restricted to a single university, these considerations may be relevant for other similar institutions or for further research.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, teachers seem to be open to teaching in intercultural classrooms, they seem to be aware that their own cultural background can influence how international students perceive their teaching activity. Whereas their own field of knowledge does not seem to affect their perceptions, their intercultural experience does have an effect especially in intercultural skills. Hence, training that involves reflective practice in situations and contexts similar to those in which they teach seems advisable, as debate and discussion would be encouraged, and last but not least, such practice could be adapted to the constant evolution of intercultural competence and learning theories. Dervin (2010) states: "Intercultural competence is not permanent, 'for life', and its practice and learning never end" (p. 168).

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Chapter 5

Fostering global and intercultural competence at a medium-sized university

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Àngels Pinyana
Àngel Raluy

1. Introduction

The University of Vic-Central University of Catalonia (from here on UVic) is a medium-sized university in Spain founded in 1997 as a private institution under public supervision. It re-established higher education in the city of Vic dating back to the literary studies of the XVI century. From its very beginnings UVic has developed international relations with other higher education institutions (HEIs) and placed an emphasis on foreign language learning and student mobility. These first directions were developed in line with the general trend in higher education contexts towards internationalisation strategies focused on the challenges of increasing worldwide intercultural communication. The internationalisation of the curriculum, and more particularly, the development of global and intercultural competence appears to be paramount to preparing undergraduates to act in an integrated world system (Pinto, 2018). Nevertheless, somehow initiatives in higher education are struggling to adjust their pace and courses that promote global and intercultural competence still remain uncommon (Sit, Mak and Neill, 2017). It is no easy feat for universities to address this challenge l*et al*one make it fit to the

unique characteristics of their own local contexts, and conflicting interests in a highly diversified academic community often mean that intercultural competence is undervalued. In this paper we aim to present UVic's comprehensive internationalisation strategy, as well as three selective initiatives that have emerged from its implementation: intercultural training, collaborative online international learning (COIL) and a proposal for a Certificate of Global Studies, as an example of a university working to enhance the status of intercultural and global competence. These initiatives have been developed under the influence of partner universities and current trends, and although they are not unique in themselves, by describing the underlying processes, we hope they may provide useful guidelines to other policymakers in HEIs aiming to work in similar directions.

2. Theoretical remarks

The complex and fuzzy nature of so-called *global and intercultural competence* is well-known and has been widely discussed. Indeed, there is still debate around the terminology[1] that is used to refer to the sum of attitudes, values, knowledge and skills that allow an efficient and respectful interrelation between persons with different cultural backgrounds enabling them to negotiate understanding in both local and global interactions (Arasaratnam-Smith 2017; Bolten, 2015; Byram, 1997; Deardorff 2006; Fernández-Villanueva, in this volume; Montiel Alafont, in this volume; OECD, 2018). In this paper we understand global competence as an umbrella term that includes intercultural competence. In line with the scholars cited above, we believe that its acquisition is a lifelong process that implies both questioning and adapting to local norms while considering them globally. With reference to higher education, Deardorff (2006:259) states:

> Intercultural competence is a complex construct that involves more than one component. For example, knowledge or language does not guarantee intercultural competence. Thus, internationalization

1. This debate includes the use of the singular term "competence" instead of the plural "competences" or the more professional one "competencies" (see Deardorff 2006).

strategies need to address the development of the components of intercultural competence in a variety of ways (i.e., course work, study abroad, on-campus interaction with students from different cultural backgrounds, etc.) as well as the actual process for acquiring intercultural competence, including necessary cognitive skills.

Complexity and challenges of acquiring global and intercultural competence have been overlooked by the educational community in the past. Too much focus seems to have been placed on just practical aspects of international mobility. Nonetheless, according to Byram (1997) and Deardorff (2006) successful intercultural training in higher education has to consider affective and cognitive factors. The affective dimension refers to attitudes, motivation, curiosity, self-awareness, management of uncertainty and flexibility, among others, whereas the cognitive dimension includes knowledge of cultural patterns, worldviews, social practices and perceptions such as critical thinking. More recently, other authors such as Aba (2015) have highlighted the importance of the behavioral dimension, defined as the ability to empathise, build relationships and resolve cultural conflicts to enhance mobility in higher education. Furthermore, intercultural training is crucial before, during and after an international exchange in order to effectively learn from the intercultural experience (Gopal, 2011). So, in order to achieve positive learning results when acquiring global and intercultural competence, in addition to needing time, it is necessary to learn to observe oneself reflectively and be aware of one's own *Gestalt* (Bardhan, 2016). It may seem obvious, but it has to be stated, that training should take into account the special demands and collective *Gestalts* of all the different agents involved in internationalisation at higher education. A positive example of such training is one developed by the Systemic University Change Towards Internationalisation (SUCTI) project at Universitat Rovira i Virgili in Spain, unique in addressing administrative staff, whose needs are often overlooked. As for students, the length of an international exchange is frequently limited in time, making in-depth involvement in learning processes more difficult. Working on global and intercultural competence, therefore, at all study levels and as a cross-disciplinary competence, and appreciating potential learning opportunities of internationalisation at home would mitigate this.

3. Comprehensive internationalisation strategy

Any innovation in higher education is unthinkable without a global strategy that implicates all involved agents. In the case of internationalisation this means taking into account the perspectives of university management, the lecturers, students and administrative staff in a comprehensive strategy.

Except for the mobility programmes, which were institutionalised through a Mobility Office, most of the first international initiatives at UVic resulted from individual initiatives. In 2008 an action plan was drawn up aimed at building an inclusive and coordinated internationalisation strategy, which would not only impact on the quality of education and research but also equip both domestic and foreign students with knowledge and skills to work in an international and multicultural context.

Besides setting a clear institutional stance on internationalisation, this first action plan set up the basic structure and organisation for its objectives to be achieved. It is worth mentioning that the plan included, among other measures, the expansion of the Mobility Office into an International Relations Office, the opening of an Internationalisation Unit in each faculty, the creation of a Language Service in charge of serving the language requirements of the institution, such as the creation of a multilingual website, a translation service, and several training workshops in languages and global and intercultural competence for teaching and administrative staff and for incoming and outgoing students.

This embryonic period of internationalisation was strengthened by the first UVic Strategic Internationalisation Plan (2011-2016), including a first Internationalisation Plan which built on previous objectives and highlighted the fact that all parts of the university community (management and human resources, teaching, research and administration) should incorporate an international outlook in their organisational procedures.

The plan focussed on six main areas: international projection of the institution, mobility and exchange, international students' recruitment, international academic collaboration, internationalisation at home (Nilsson, 2003) and research. Each of these areas was assessed by a series of numerical indicators updated yearly and analysed both by an Internationalisation Committee

and the University Board of Management. Rankings and analysis of growth rate over a number of years are two of the usual measures which are used to quantitatively assess the degree of success of these plans. In the last ten years the increase in the number of international activities and staff involvement with international collaborations has been huge, the number of incoming and outgoing students has grown, the number of subjects with English as a medium of instruction (EMI) has increased, an international perspective has been gradually incorporated in the students' curriculum and, consequently, there has been an impressive rise in the ranking position of the University.

Ten years after the first Internationalisation Plan, the University collected accurate quantitative information on its impact on the institution as a whole, but not on the real qualitative impact in the various sectors of the university: How did the university community experience and perceive the internationalisation process? How did the Internationalisation Plan impact on everyday procedures in the various departments? How did students actually feel in a multicultural English-taught classroom? How did the teaching staff experience the increase of foreign students in the classrooms? What changes did they introduce in the curriculum to cope with cultural and language diversity? Did university members have the feeling that they were sufficiently trained for the challenge? The assessment of how teaching, research and administrative staff had experienced working together with colleagues from all over the world and how local students interacted with foreign students was considered crucial in order to adjust, modify or update the policies established through the Internationalisation Plan. Besides, numerical performance indicators together with a formal and methodologically structured qualitative assessment of the internationalisation policies would be a powerful tool to measure international performance and to provide a useful launching platform for a new Internationalisation Plan.

Qualitative research can take many forms and in the case of Uvic, a focus group methodology was chosen as a way to gauge the real impact of its internationalisation plans. For the purpose of the research, fourteen focus groups were created as shown in Table 1, each one consisting of 10-12 people. The members were selected based on their professional background, levels of inter-

national experience, gender, seniority and level of studies, in order to account, as far as possible, for the diversity in perspectives among the participants.

Table 1. Focus group participants

No. of focus groups	Participants
2	University management
3	Faculty members
3	Administrative staff
3	Undergraduates
2	Postgraduates
1	PhD students

The focus group sessions allowed the University 1) to find out the actual knowledge participants had of the institutional international plans; 2) to discuss the perception they individually had of how the internationalisation process had impacted on their work prospects and even on their personal growth; 3) to encourage critical reflection on the need for intercultural skills; 4) to spot the main problems or limitations of the strategy to reach all levels of the university community; 5) to gather suggestions for improvement.

Findings from these focus group discussions presented the University's international performance from a different perspective compared to the numerical performance indicators. It highlighted the impact on people's daily work, staff training needs to deal with the increasing number of foreign students, the various degrees of motivation, students' growing awareness of the relevance of foreign language and intercultural skills acquisition or the feeling that institutionalised internationalisation was an opportunity for growth, but also, in some cases, the feeling of annoyance, even of frustration with the difficulties associated with becoming more international. All the members in the focus groups were clearly aware of the benefits they could obtain from the internationalisation policies set by the University, but some of them admitted some personal and contextual shortcomings which limited their capacities to fully develop an international profile.

In some courses where the language of instruction was English, a number of lecturers observed that the cultural codes of students had an impact on their methodological expectations and communication patterns. Some lecturers expected the University to provide more intensive training to improve their intercultural competence and manage classes more successfully. Besides, teachers observed how reluctant local students were to work together with foreign students. Local students felt they had a more limited proficiency in English which discouraged them from interacting with foreign students and lecturers. Students also stressed that a limited knowledge of English (the lingua franca in most mobility programmes) and a fear of direct exposure to a new culture undermined their wishes to enrol in a mobility programme.

Theoretically, a comprehensive internationalisation strategy includes all the areas of the University, but the focus groups showed that some administrative staff did not consider internationalisation as positive, but an added complexity in their working lives. Areas such as the University Secretary, infrastructures and community services like sports, cultural activities or accommodation recognised their lack of intercultural skills when interacting with international students.

Another relevant point that emerged was that of recognition. This was the case, for instance, with the COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) projects which require a lot of extra preparation time for lecturers but are not recognised in terms of teaching hours. There was also a feeling among both lecturers and students that student participation in international activities (mobility, intercultural workshops, COIL projects) should be reflected in some way in their academic records.

4. Intercultural training, COIL and certification of competences

Three recent initiatives at UVic aim to respond to the needs detected from the focus group research in keeping with the Internationalisation Plan. The initiatives, at different stages of planning or implementation, mark the university's commitment to inter-

nationalisation: intercultural workshops, COIL projects and the Certificate of Global Studies, an add-on certificate in the pipeline for recognising students and staff's global and intercultural development.

Some key pedagogical issues were considered in the design and implementation of these three initiatives. In order to facilitate experience-based reflective learning, intercultural training closely considers various elements and phases: experiences, reflection, interaction and conceptualisation. A positive emphasis on methodologies that reinforce experience-based learning and learners' agency, by attaching value not only to the results but also to individual and group learning processes, face-to-face or virtual interaction among peers and more expert individuals, coupled with time for individual and group reflection processes constitute a fruitful learning pathway. The training programmes and the educational platform in which they are integrated aim to enable virtual interaction among current participants and those of previous years to facilitate interactive learning among those with different levels of expertise and encourage learning in a more autonomous, self-managed way. Mentoring sections or the use of certain self-evaluation criteria, which would not only offer guidelines to participants, but also help them to relate their experiences with new acquired skills have still to be developed in order to help participants to focus their reflection.

4.1. The Intercultural Workshop

The intercultural workshop was developed within the framework of an Erasmus+ Project called *Connect. Intercultural Learning Network 4 Europe* (2015-2018). This initiative was carried out by a European Consortium of 10 partners, and it aimed to create an innovative intercultural learning scenario that consisted of an e-learning platform and training for outgoing Erasmus participants before, during and after their sojourn abroad. Figure 1 describes the stages of the workshop:

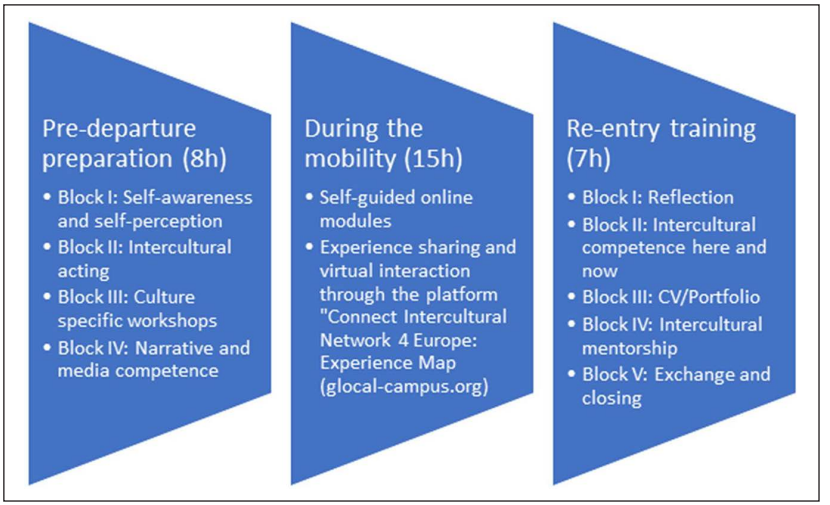

Figure 1. Stages of the Intercultural Workshop

The intercultural workshop proved an enriching addition for mobility students to capitalise on their international exchanges. Indeed, students valued the training prior to their sojourn highly because it had helped them familiarize with ideas, techniques and resources that were key to their cultural integration. Additionally, they appreciated the experience sharing with other outgoing students that took place upon their return as a way to compare cultural viewpoints. However, what about the remaining majority of students who could not contemplate an international exchange for one reason or another? As part of UVic's internationalisation-at-home strategy, special attention was given to COIL.

4.2. COIL projects

Growing numbers of educators from a range of disciplines in higher education have incorporated COIL into their degree programmes (see Moore and Simon, 2015; O'Dowd, 2018; Rubin, 2016) and since 2020 the COVID pandemic and resulting restrictions on travel have accelerated interest in this alternative to physical mobility. As barely 5% of students in the EU are able to go abroad during their studies, COIL has great potential as a more inclusive internationalization approach, engaging all stu-

dents in intercultural communication as well as developing digital skills, teamwork and professional skills.

COIL is a term which describes a form of virtual exchange or "pedagogically-structured online collaborative learning between groups of learners in different cultural contexts or geographical locations" (O'Dowd, 2018: 3). The same or similar concepts are also known as telecollaboration, virtual exchange, e-tandem, global virtual teams, global networked learning environments or online exchange, and include a range of different approaches or methodologies. In the classroom COIL involves groups of learners working online on a common collaborative task with other learners from one or more other HEIs or companies. The collaborative project, related to the course content and the objectives at each of the collaborating institutions, is designed and developed jointly by all parties involved. It could mean students work together to discuss course materials, solve a problem or create a product. A project can be set up between students within the same discipline or may be cross-disciplinary.

At UVic teaching staff have been involved in online projects for many years and under their own personal initiatives. However, until very recently no specific institutional attention was given to them. In 2020, in line with the new Internationalisation Plan (2019-2023), benchmarking, piloting and monitoring the implementation of projects began with the formation of a multidisciplinary COIL focus group including members from different faculties and services with expertise in International Relations, ICTs, Teaching Innovation and Intercultural Competences.

The COIL focus group first collected survey information to gain an understanding of the state of the art of COIL at UVic, external benchmarks (University of Coventry and Universitat Rovira i Virgili) with experience in COIL were consulted and some group members undertook basic training for trainers (Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange Training).

The main work of the COIL focus group consisted of drawing up institutional guidelines for projects which included, how COIL would be recognised institutionally, technical and teaching support available, step-by-step instructions for participants new to COIL and examples of best practices and resources. New projects were piloted and monitored and a website was prepared to promote ongoing projects and receive proposals. All these

measures have been essential in promoting COIL as a form of internationalisation at home for both students and staff.

4.3. The Certificate of Global Studies

Participation and active involvement in intercultural and global learning experiences must be recognised by the institution to ensure their success and continuity. Badges or certificates are possible ways to visualize this competence in students and staff's CVs. With this aim in mind, UVic is planning for a Certificate of Global Studies (CGS), an add-on certificate for students proving they have taken steps to acquire intercultural competences while studying at the university. It is inspired by the certificate with the same name developed at Bern University of Applied Sciences (Ali-Lawson and Bürki, 2018). To obtain the CGS, students will need to compile a personal portfolio during their degree with which they show that they have undertaken a series of actions to develop their intercultural competence. The portfolio is worth a total of 100 points which are acquired by gaining competencies in four areas: Intercultural Knowledge (30 points), Intercultural Activities & Engagement (30 points), Language (20 points), and Final Reflection Report (20 points):

4.3.1. Intercultural Knowledge

To obtain the 30 points in this section, students have two options to choose from, either to provide evidence of having passed subjects that focus on intercultural issues or to write their final undergraduate project on an intercultural topic and/or participate in the aforementioned Intercultural Workshop (30 hours) showing evidence of additional self- learning with the online learning modules (30 hours) developed by the project *Connect. Intercultural Learning Network 4 Europe*.

4.3.2. Intercultural Activities & Engagement

In this section students must prove that they have taken part in activities that promote intercultural competences by choosing from the following:

- Study Semester Abroad (at least one semester), 30 points.
- Summer School Abroad (at least 60 hours), 15 points.

- Short Stay Programme at a university abroad (at least one week), 10 points.
- International Mentor at UVIC (at least one semester), 10 points.
- Participation in a COIL project (at least one semester), 10 points.
- International Internships, work in an international job abroad, cooperation abroad. 10 points if the stay is under a month, 20 points for stays between 1 and two months, 30 points for stays over three months.
- Engagement in projects for immigrants/refugees such as charities or community programmes (20 h), 5 points per semester.

4.3.3. Languages

Students can obtain the 20 points in this section by fulfilling one of the following requirements:

- official Level C1 certificate of 1 foreign language
- self-declaration of Level C1 of 2 foreign languages
- official Level B2 certificate of 2 foreign languages
- official Level B2 certificate of 1 foreign language and prove of having taken a minimum of 18 ECTS in another foreign language

4.3.4. Final Reflection Report

The last step to obtain the CGS is for the students to write a Final Reflection Report, in which students should articulate the improvement they perceive they made while engaging in the intercultural and global learning experiences. It should be considered an overall summary of their experience connected with their personal reflection.

The International Relations Office and academic management staff will liaise to manage this CGS for students and the next step is to develop a corresponding certificate for academic staff as an incentive to develop their intercultural competence.

5. Conclusion

Placing global and intercultural competence on the agenda in higher education is no easy task but intercultural training and COIL projects are concrete steps universities can take towards

making this happen. In the case of UVic a top-down approach led by the university's comprehensive internationalisation strategy has endorsed and facilitated the implementation of such initiatives. However, involving all sectors of the university community to express their attitudes and opinions towards increasing internationalisation leads to more inclusive and realistic strategy development compared to what can be gleaned from purely numerical performance indicators. Without this close examination and grassroots research, the global and intercultural competence needs of the university community cannot be gauged, which could lead to serious mismatches between theory and practice in local contexts. Finally, providing certification, although fraught with challenges in terms of university resources (Ali-Lawson and Bürki, 2018), brings multiple benefits and is particularly valuable as a key incentive for students and staff, opening up further avenues for developing global and intercultural competence, but most importantly, making the concepts of global and intercultural competence more tangible in higher education, more difficult to ignore and therefore easier for HEIs to commit to.

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PART II: INTERNATIONALIZATION AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE: BEST TEACHING PRACTICES

Chapter 6

Discursive, pragmatic and interactional aspects of intercultural competence – Contributions from interactional linguistics for meaningful learning

Marta Fernández-Villanueva

1. Introduction

From an intercultural studies perspective, we assume that interacting successfully with people from different cultures involves specific knowledge, skills and attitudes. Nevertheless, most of them are merely related to effective communicative usage, since communication does not only involve *transmission of information* but also *management of social relations* (Locher, 2013; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). People's use of language can clearly influence interpersonal reactions and relations, and different cultures may have different conventions as to what is appropriate behaviour in what contexts. Actually, we cannot directly apply *cultural dos and don'ts* in any interactional context, they need a fine-tuning in context according to the specific communicative event and the expected social roles, topics and interactional intentions at play.

Interactional sociolinguistics researches specifically that *play*: how we dynamically adjust our behaviour in communication identifying and co-ordinating some multimodal hints. Merged with intercultural pragmatic approaches, it offers a powerful theoretical and methodological research frame and improves our understanding of intercultural competence materialized in discourse practices.

How can intercultural competence be researched in specific intercultural interactions in higher education (HE)? How can

this research approach improve intercultural experiences of HE members and lead to meaningful learning and development of their intercultural competence? To address these questions, first some relevant assumptions of interactional approaches about language will be introduced, in order to re-define intercultural competence as effective intercultural interactional communicative competence (IICC), sensitive to cultural variation and regularities. Then some challenges and opportunities in analysing intercultural encounters in HE from a sociopragmatic interactional approach will be pointed out, in terms of multigroup membership, relevant intercultural scenarios in HE, data type and research focus on discursive, interactional, sociopragmatic or strategic levels. This will be illustrated with some examples that can be used to train *intercultural noticing* in Higher Education and foster IICC with three different kind of data: recordings of naturally occurring interactions in relevant intercultural HE scenarios, cultural artifacts and self-reported critical incidents elicited through interviews (developed in the InCriT- Project).[1] The chapter will close with some final remarks on the contributions of sociopragmatic interactional approaches, especially to refine indicators of intercultural pragmatic development related to *noticing* multimodal discursive and pragmatic devices to renegotiate meaning in intercultural encounters. Some pedagogical implications will also be drawn as these approaches contribute to metapragmatic awareness and therefore towards meaningful intercultural learning in HE.

2. Assumptions of interactional linguistics

Following Couper-Kuhlen and Selting (2018:541) we can describe language as a form of social behaviour, an inherently interactional activity observable in social encounters, existing therefore not just in the mind of its users but linguistically materialized in their communication with others, displayed along with other resources, of a visual, acoustic or haptic nature, in a

1. Incidentes Críticos en la Comunicación Transcultural Alemán-Español-Catalán (Critical Incidents in German-Spanish-Catalan Transcultural Communication) (FFI2015-70864-P), funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation.

semiotic ecology for communicative purposes. Communication is therefore *embodied, situated, partner-oriented* and *multimodal*, characteristics also emphasized nowadays in learning: learning as an embodied, situated, plan-oriented and multimodal practice since an important part is conveyed through communicative interactional activity.

In contrast to an abstract, universal-grammar-notion of competence, interactional approaches follow the ethnographic exploration of communicative competence in context that includes communicative form and function in integral relation to each other. Such a language notion encompasses three assumptions: *indexicality*, *accountability* and *reflexivity*, based on regularities in language use: Firstly, in interactions we display different multimodal devices to give our interlocutors some hints (*indexicalities*) regarding how to interpret what we mean in the specific interactional context. Secondly, in language use we produce specific disclosure and reason clauses used especially to deliver *accounts* for something we have just done or just said, after or even before the accountable action (as anticipatory accounts according to Schegloff, 2007). Finally, the property of reflexivity bases on the fact that:

> changes in an understanding of an event's context will evoke some **shift or elaboration** of a person's grasp of the focal event and vice versa. When it is employed in a temporally **dynamic context**, which is a characteristic of all situations of social action and interaction (...), [it] forms the **basis for temporally updated shared understandings** of actions and events among the participants. (Heritage, 2009: 302 elaborating on Garfinkel 1963, 1967)

Reflexivity is the key concept for language, communication and cultural awareness, these are intertwined and can be developed precisely focusing on noticing indexicalities, interpreting accounts and formulating reflections. Byram connects explicitly the language and cultural awareness:

> (...) a person's conscious attention to language or culture and, importantly, their engagement with these, (...) first in the social context, and second, (...) in their own lives. (...) But it it is more than paying attention. It also involves analysis of, and learning about, language and culture, and crucially the relationship between the

two. In other words, someone who is 'aware' of 'language and culture' and the language-culture nexus is able to reflect on this nexus as it exists in society and in their own selves. (Byram, 2012: 6)

This interactional language notion aligns with a cognitive-communicative approach to foreign language teaching as elaborated in the CEFR communicative competence model (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages CERF 2001, 2020) comprising several components in three areas: *linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences*. The first includes lexical, phonological, syntactical knowledge and skills and other dimensions of language as a system. The second embraces the value of variation and refers to the sociocultural conditions of language use, through its sensitivity to social conventions, even though participants may often be unaware of their influence. The last is concerned with "the functional use of linguistic and non-linguistic resources to produce speech acts, drawing on scenarios or scripts of interactional exchanges. Furthermore, it also concerns the mastery of discourse, cohesion and coherence, the identification of text types and forms, irony, and parody" (CERF, 2001: 13). The Companion Volume updates and extends the main communicative language activities from the receptive and productive ones to the interaction and mediation activities and strategies (CERF, 2020: 70ff.). All these are performed in embodied, situated, partner-oriented multimodal interactions fostering a context sensitivity related to specific communicative events and culturally shaped social roles and identities in communities of speech and practice.

In this expanded model and from interactional approaches, interaction can be seen as a kind of umbrella that articulates and intertwines the different components in order to cope with regularities and variation within language and cultures. The latter should be understood not just in the traditional sense of high national culture but also in the broader sense that encompasses values, beliefs and behaviors shared by a social group from a specific (predominantly monolingual) country. Therefore, even interactional competent monolinguals can transfer their interactional competence to improve their intercultural communication while communicating in their first language with members of other linguistic or cultural groups. This is because from a variationist perspective, monolingual speakers who had acquired just

one language system still manage a rich repertoire of sociolects developed in their social interactions in different contexts. As a result, an interactional competent language user can quickly transfer these abilities to develop an intercultural competence while interacting with people from other cultures because of his/her context sensitiveness related to specific communicative events and culturally-shaped social roles in communities of speech and practice.

In conclusion, interactional competence involves always the mobilization of linguistic and cultural in-group-knowledge and communicative skills attuned to the context through sociopragmatic awareness to recognize regularities and notice hints to reinterpret variation. This cannot be achieved without an open attitude in order to be prepared to negotiate meaning in the interaction mobilizing the appropriate communicative strategies. Therefore such an interactional approach is especially useful to foster the intercultural competence in HE.

2.1. Interactional Intercultural Communicative Competence (IICC)

In the literature, many terms have been proposed to address the phenomena concerned: intercultural sensitivity, international competence, cross-cultural awareness, transcultural communication and intercultural competence, to mention just a few. In recent decades, an array of models have been proposed from different research areas, such as social psychology, international business management or linguistics, mostly with focus on a generalized ability to function effectively across cultures, within three specific areas: establishing and maintaining relationships; communicating with minimal loss or distortion; and collaborating to accomplish tasks of mutual interest or need. Despite different terms and models, there is consensus that knowledge, skills and attitudes are involved together with their underlying beliefs and values to build up that specific competence. Leung, Ang and Tan (2014) pointed to the increasing sophistication of these models over the years, trying to capture and explain the structural relationships between these three main areas and components related to individual traits, dynamic group behaviors and performances. They also argued for a more contextualized

notion of intercultural competence, what they called *in situ competences*. For instance, not just knowing about the importance of rapport management or relationship building in certain cultures before getting down to business, but "identify[ing] the appropriate moments to initiate business discussion in a specific Asian culture and orchestrate events that give rise to such moments" (Leung, Ang and Tan, 2014:511). Interactional sociolinguistic approaches focus precisely on describing and explaining what makes a moment *appropriate*, relying upon the regularities and variation of the communicative situation within a specific cultural group with its own conventions in terms of discourse and pragmatic devices to convey communicative intentions. Discursive conversational approaches focus precisely on describing and explaining how and why discourse types such as business discussions are organized the way they are, the importance of sequentiality, repairs and projections and how turn-taking can be used strategically to know whether a topic introduction or shift can be negotiated or not. The *noticing* of cultural words and activation of cultural scripts, on the one hand, can trigger assumptions and expectations and, on the other hand, facework and rapport management will help to "give rise to such moments" and negotiate the dynamic outcomes of the interaction according to the interactional purposes at play.

Aligned with needs and from an interactional apprach, Spencer-Oatey and Franklin propose this definition of IICC:

> The competence to communicate verbally and non-verbally and behave effectively and appropriately with people from other cultural groups and also handle the psychological demands and dynamic outcomes that result from such interchanges. (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009: 51-52)

Such a competence cannot be achieved merely through a description of fine-granular regularities, which would produce an infinite list of contextualized *dos and don'ts*, but through an attuned development of socio-pragmatic and strategic competencies, to perceive and dynamically interpret indexicalities and accounts in the sequentially materialized interaction to negotiate meaning in (pro-)active or reactive communicative moves. The ability to intertwine linguistic competences with discursive and

socio-pragmatic ones can only be achieved in communicative practice. Thus interactional research should be carried out in context-situated social encounters in order to identify shared *regularities* and describe and interpret *variation* between cultural groups, know better how they relate to each other and use these results to foster that IICC.

2.2. Describing regularities and explaining variation between and within cultural groups

Interactional linguistics allows the combination of etic and emic perspectives, which complement each other. On the one hand, etic frames allow the comparison of cultural groups behaviours, so that regularities can be identified and multimodal indexicalities described. On the other hand, emic frames allow us to understand and explain the variation within cultural groups regarding accounts and reflexivity in the interaction. With this combined approach, it is possible to avoid some risks of traditional intercultural studies, such as an excessive essentialism and reductionism, inappropriate stereotyping and over-generalizations on the basis of minimal evidence.

But beyond essentialism and stereotyping, who can be regarded as belonging to a cultural group? From an interactional sociolinguistic point of view, it should be anyone who shares a pattern of behavioral regularities in social encounters within specific contexts, materialized in his/her multimodal communication with others, because this approach does not rely on a restrictive notion of national culture, but on a notion of communities of speech and practice, as we have mentioned. Based on these considerations, challenges and opportunities for analyzing intercultural encounters within HE's members will be briefly discussed in the next section.

3. Analysing intercultural encounters in HE from an interactional approach

Three main areas will be addressed related to participants and interactional events, data type and research foci. They will also

be presented and discussed, using examples from different research projects.

3.1. Intercultural groups in HE: challenges and opportunities

A variety of cultural groups can be identified in HE according to regularities of their interactional practices, conforming communicative repertoires with patterns of behaviour within the specific *communities of practice* at play related to

- teaching and learning,
- research and innovation or
- administrative and organizational activities.

Nevertheless, there is also variation within these groups, for example between novice and experienced teachers, or between undergraduate and postgraduate students, international students such as incomers or outgoers, but also among different "academic tribes" (Becher, 1989) with apparently distinctive epistemological stances that shape not just research practices but also assumptions and values about cooperation or competition, teamwork etc. Nevertheless, within the "tribes" we find again as much diversity and variation, for example, regarding educational ideologies or gender, to mention just a few (Trowler, Murray and Bamberg, 2011).

The challenge is therefore twofold. On the one hand to cope with multigroup membership in HE, since individuals belong at the same time to different groups, which implies that they have to do more varied types of academic and administrative work and therefore master a greater repertoire of conventions. On the other hand, to cope with the institutional variation among universities that can differ in assumed values of public services or economic enterprises, in a research-orientation or more teaching-orientation, and in established practices and procedures, for example related to standardization of learning assessment, formative feedback, types of in and out-class activities or grading.

This complexity is a challenge, but also offers plenty of opportunities to develop a *critical* cultural awareness in Byram's (2012) sense. Let's now look at some examples of these opportunities for interactional analysis in intercultural encounters in HE

to illustrate the different foci we can take on discursive, sociolinguistic or pragmatic components, selecting relevant scenarios to analyze and describe these intercultural practices and explore ways to foster a critical cultural awareness.

3.2. Observation of natural occurring data

Ideally, we should use naturally occurring data of face-to-face interactions with members of the different cultural groups in HE, gathered through participant or non-participant observation and videorecorded to facilitate the multimodal analysis in different steps.

Scenarios, in which intercultural encounters can be more easily videorecorded, are academic events such as conferences, symposiums, roundtables and peer-seminars, where international researchers meet. Also some teaching-learning events such as lectures or small seminars, where national and international students and teachers participate. Tutorials, teamwork sessions with national/international students, where student-student or student-teacher interaction take place, are also to be considered, although technically more complicated.

Other appropriate scenarios are open days, informative counselling sessions for mobility students, as well as administrative and paperwork encounters at the International/Admission Office.

There are also some other relevant scenarios such as organizational and administrative encounters to launch international cooperation projects or joint programmes where different kinds of tasks, decision-making or problem-solving processes are involved and can be culturally challenging in terms of establishing and maintaining relations, communicative styles and negotiating meaning. Last but not least, scenarios of conflict mediation, arbitration or negotiation encounters may be considered.

These kind of data can be analysed to identify indexicalities of relevant intercultural mismatches and accounts related to reactions and expectations in order to establish a diagnosis and to design intervention with intercultural training purposes (for incomers, outgoers and 'buddy-students', administrative or academic staff).

Unfortunately, it is not so easy to obtain permission to record or even observe interactional encounters, and data protection

should always be assured. Logically, the more sensitive the interaction, the more difficult it is to be granted access to record or even observe, therefore a second option is to use cultural artefacts as data.

3.3. Observation using cultural artefacts

An alternative to naturally occurring data is authentic audiovisual material close to the specific interactional context concerned, not created for didactic or research purposes, but for cultural consume. Sequences from movies or documentaries, broadcasted interviews and interactional social media posts can be taken into consideration. We present here the analysis of a sequence as an example, from the first film by Elena Martin "Julia ist" (2017). The novice director and actress was herself an Erasmus student in Berlin and directed her first movie based on her own experiences. The film is performed by herself and some of the acquaintances she made during her stay in Berlin. The fact that there was no script and the actors performed improvising under the director's indications mobilizing their own experiences recreates quite closely some intercultural encounters. The material was edited selecting relevant interactional sequences from a future outgoer student's perspective:

- the first day of the seminar at the university
- an argument with her Catalan boyfriend
- a scene where Julia is flirting in a club
- an argument with her German boyfriend
- a conversation with the first and second roommate
- a conversation during a students' teamwork session

Each sequence was transcribed and analyzed to identify intercultural mismatches at linguistic, socio-pragmatic and interactional level. In the sequence "Seminar at the university: Julia's first day", for example, three interactions take place in 2'02'' between the German lecturer and a German student, between the Catalan student and another German student and between the German lecturer and the Catalan student. Results were found regarding:

- Noticing cultural words (such as *Seminar, Referat* =oral presentation / written assignment) that trigger different assumptions (here of communicative genres related to course and assignment types with a specific discursive structure and turn-taking organization related to assumed cultural teacher and student roles) and the need for meaning negotiation.
- Discursive-interactional non-verbal devices such as indexicalities of culturally appropriate turn-taking organization: Gestures, eye contact, body orientation for turn-taking, turn overlap or rejection of parallel conversation (when Julia tries to interact with the student seated next to her while the lecturer is talking), as well as repair, stance and footing or the use of artifacts (hand out, folders, tea cup).
- Pragmatic-interactional patterns: question and answer and feedback, claim and justification, request and refusal, instruction followed by oral interaction or writing activity (take notes).
- Strategic choices: conventional indirectness, hedging, teasing and anticipatory accounts, for example:

  Haben Sie uns noch was mitzuteilen? Do you have something to share? [to Júlia, while taking folders, papers and tea cup to leave]

  Ahm, nein, ah ja, ich bin, ich bin (.) Erasmusstudentin (.) *ich komme (.) ich komme aus Barcelona* (...) ahm no ah yes I am I am (.) Erasmus student I come (.) I come from Barcelona

This kind of analysis and results can be used for students' intercultural training[2]. Video clips, transcriptions inserted after a contextual description, with a selection of frames and a few guide-questions as in a case study are powerful materials for awareness diagnosis or to start a reflection on different ways of achieving understanding, managing rapport and fostering intercultural metapragmatic awareness. After visualizing the scenes, students can share perceptions and then train observation, focussing their analysis on the identification, description and interpretation of linguistic, paralinguistic, nonlinguistic and socio-

2. Projecte d'innovació docent: Tutories de Comunicació Intercultural, Universitat de Barcelona

linguistic indexicalities and accounts, being more aware of the mobilized cultural preconceptions.

3.4. Reported intercultural critical incidents

Another possibility is to elicit self-reports of authentic critical incidents through reflective semi-structured interviews of people with a high degree of interaction with members of the other culture[3]. This produces narratives, based on frequently occurring, mostly task-related encounters, in which the interactional partners reacted in an unexpected way. Critical incidents are very useful because they concentrate on the most problematic aspects of specific interactions that are potentially difficult to cope with. They can have a successful or an unsuccessful outcome, and they can be analyzed from an etic and emic perspective, exploring indexicalities, accounts and reflections on noticing linguistic and discursive devices or emotional reactions. Also the use of strategies to check shared understandings of the event and to elaborate on that can be analyzed.

Ins Wort fallen: In die Unterhaltung "platzen" (Irruption into an ongoing conversation) is an example of that kind of elicited narrative, where a German student at the University of Barcelona reports about a critical intercultural interaction that took place outside the classroom with another student from Barcelona, who joined the conversation while she was talking, interrupting her.

From this interview, some sequences were analysed following prompts to foster stances, footing and accounts such as: Can you briefly describe the situation? Where and when did this happen? Who was there? What did everyone say exactly? Let's try to reproduce the verbatim wording. How did you react? Can you describe your feelings? And your behaviour? Why do you think you reacted like this?

After the analysis and having in mind a pedagogical intervention with outgoers students, following sequences were edited and stored in the UB repository ready to be used (image 1):

1. *In die Unterhaltung "platzen"* (01:33) Burst into conversation
2. *Die Reaktion* (01:29) Reactions

3. Interview protocols were developed for the InCriT-Project.

3. *"Unsere Regeln"* (00:46) Our rules
4. *Bekanntschaftsgrad & Kontext* (00:47) Acquaintance and context
5. *Initiierende bzw. reaktive Direktheit* (00:43) initiating or reactive directness
6. *Wild geschimpft* (00:45) Scolded strongly

They are especially appropriate to raise sociocultural awareness as case studies, stimulus for discussion groups or even as examples of how to foster accountability and reflexivity in a conversational way among students.

Image 1. Data repository for pedagogical interventions

Through these very short inputs on video some discursive, pragmatic and interactional activities of the interlocutors can be observed and analyzed by the students, specifically with a focus on:

- Stance: the way the speaker positions herself with respect to an interlocutor concerning knowledge/necessity/desirability as epistemic stance: what I know and how I know; or through an affective stance: what my mood, my attitude, feeling or emotion is, and how intense it is (discomfort, irritation)
- Accounts on used discursive-interactional devices related to turn-taking, turn overlap, repair and footing experience
- Pragmatic-interactional patterns such as reproach and responses, claim and justification, request and responses

- Strategic choices regarding initial and reactive directness, sequentially and topicality regarding cultural-linguistic politeness.

The expressed reflection on stance, sequentiality and topicality can be interpreted as an indicator of (intercultural) metapragmatic awareness.

4. Final remarks and pedagogical implications

An interactional sociocultural approach supports meaningful learning and fosters IICC development because in language use we find materialized to some extent reflections and constructions of different conceptualizations of the physical and social world, embedded in the lexicon, in syntactic constructions, in discourse patterns, in genres, in pragmatic realizations and in strategic choices. IICC is closely related not only to the acquisition of rules for behaviour in the sense of *do and don't*, but to the acquisition of concepts which mediate decision-making in social interaction, leading to *noticing* hints and *tuning* conventions, expectations and reactions in context among a specific community of practice, in our case HE members. IICC development is based especially on the achievement of a critical sociopragmatic interactional awareness of one's own and other cultures.

The kind of interactional analysis presented fosters the ability to detect (in-) appropriate language use and to verbalize the social meanings of language use. Most importantly, it incorporates a multilingual and multicultural perspective, avoiding the risk of a hegemonic one-way-perspective, because it recognizes diversity as a fundamental trait of human beings. Moreover, it assumes that we are all lifelong *learners* on communication matters, particularly in a (technological) global dynamically connected world, who will need to engage with interlocutors of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds in constant transformation and with a high degree of variation. As a result, we have to be socioculturally aware and prepared for a dynamic, multilingual communication, continuously attuned, informed by diverse assumptions on appropriate language use (Leung and Scarino 2016), as an active process of meaning construction by interlocutors rather than a process of internalizing restricted notions of others' cultural norms.

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Chapter 7

Making intercultural competence meaningful in the classroom and in international mobility programmes

Marta Panadés

1. Introduction

The reported teaching practice is framed in a pioneering pilot project implemented at the Economics and Business Faculty of the University of Barcelona during the 2018-19 and 2019-20 academic years. This teaching action ran parallel to the development of the pilot project during the first year (2018-19), while during the second year changes were included resulting from the first implementation.

The pilot project *Intercultural Communication Mentoring for Exchange Students at the Economics and Business Faculty*, funded by the Vice-Rectorship of Teaching and Academic Organization and Quality of the University of Barcelona, consists in developing intercultural communication training for the international office staff, international tutors, outgoing students and local 'buddies' at the Economics and Business Faculty. From this experience, it is worth noting that for the first time, specific training in intercultural competence was provided for the participants, both for staff and for international academic tutors, outgoing students and mentoring students in the 'Buddy-Program'. Furthermore, the implementation of this pilot project also led to the involvement for the following academic years of one last stakeholder, the students of the Master in International Business at the same faculty, where the group is made up of students from different cultural backgrounds.

For the pilot project training, supporting material and resources were used from both the InCriT-Research project[1] (Incidentes Críticos en la Comunicación Transcultural Alemán-Catalán-Español), funded by the Ministry of Education and Science of Spain, and from the European project *Connect 2.0 - Intercultural Learning Network 4 Europe* https://weconnecteurope.eu/project-results/, and content was revised and adapted to fit this new context: students, teachers and staff at the Economics and Business Faculty. The background of the teaching action proposal presented in this article is based on three main objectives:

- how the intercultural dimension is taught in the compulsory course *Second Foreign Language for Business II - German* with 6 ECTS points in the degree of International Business (IB, henceforth), where undergraduate students need to be trained with an international approach and therefore be competent in terms of interculturality;
- how to create intercultural sensitive content by and for peers and for the institution; and
- how teaching innovation in the classroom can be used to promote international mobility programmes.

For these goals, a collaborative environment has been created among three different realities:

- the practical reality of the classroom;
- the students' immediate environment in the faculty itself; and
- the students' future reality as Erasmus outgoing students or international trainees.

The degree of IB is a demanding degree taught entirely in English. It focuses on the economy and the business world and aims to raise intercultural awareness and to develop intercultural skills among its graduates, as they will be working in international settings (Deardoff, 2006). Nevertheless, in practice, the foreign language syllabus to date has been orientated to acquire linguistic knowledge rather than intercultural competencies, which have been left as something to be learned implicitly, for instance dur-

1. Project number FFI2015-70864-P.

ing international academic exchanges or traineeships in the countries where the foreign language is spoken. By contrast, there are still very few international traineeship opportunities, so it is desirable to encourage international mobility and the development of intercultural awareness and skills through new actions.

In order to respond to the growing demand for acquiring intercultural skills and boosting international exchange, different initiatives have been promoted by the German Studies Section at the faculty, one of them being the initiative in the classroom illustrated in this article, and the other the aforementioned pilot project to develop intercultural competence.

2. Context: classroom research in second foreign language for business II - German

The teaching innovation action was implemented in the compulsory course Second Foreign Language for Business II – German in the IB degree programme, where students develop language skills corresponding to level A1+. It is spread over the second semester, and the focus of the course is both on the acquisition of the linguistic contents based on German for specific purposes (business) and of the competence contents and on the full-scale implementation of this teaching innovation plan. The course has 6 ECTS points with 60 teaching contact hours (4 hours a week for 15 weeks), 40 hours of tutored and directed work and 50 hours of autonomous learning. The course involves around 30 second-year undergraduates per academic year, and for the teaching-action one teacher-researcher, one researcher and two staff members of the international office participate.

The course components are articulated on the basis of a project to create virtual guides for outgoing mobility students and places a strong emphasis on reflective and collaborative activities related to one's own experiences, as we shall see below. By its very nature, the implementation of teaching-learning activities based on reflection and cooperation demands a high level of commitment from both the teachers and students. The teach-

ing approach adopted is student-centred, with a strong emphasis on developing communicative and linguistic skills. It follows an action-research approach (Burns, 2010; Feldmeier, 2014), in which grammatical and lexical components are chosen from the course syllabus to be redesigned for the classroom-research as interactional scenes in four thematic settings: *The new faculty*, *Accommodation*, *Leisure in the new city* and *Traineeship*, to be adapted to promote intercultural understanding as a core element for cooperation and collaboration. Those contents are redesigned to promote interculturality and the course plan is based on the project-based-learning teaching methodology (PBL) (Valero-García, 2012; Guisasola and Garmendia, 2014; Du and Han, 2016). This involves the use of a framework with intercultural settings linked narratively to collaboratively create a meaningful and original end product in the target language (Alcantud *et al.*, 2014; Roy and Schlemminger, 2014): a virtual guide for international mobility students, suitable to be published on the International Relations Office (IRO, henceforth) site. As a support tool for the guides, a virtual site has been created by the teaching staff, where students publish the final outcome of their guides:

Image 1. Screenshot of the site with the virtual guides created by the students. As of September 10, 2021

Each thematic setting has been divided into two interactional scenes: pre-departure scene and, during the stay, simulated scene. The aim of the scenes listed below is to pose concrete

problems related to the students' reality e.g. budget, choice of faculty, choice of city, type of accommodation, etc. The sequencing starts with the scene *Choice of host university*, followed by *Orientation and academic life in the new faculty* (setting 1, *The new faculty*); *Search for accommodation and sharing a flat* (setting 2, *Accommodation*); *Exploring the new neighbourhood* and *Sightseeing in the city* (setting 3, *Leisure in the new city*); and ends with the *Search for traineeship in companies* and *Job interview* (setting 4, *Traineeship*).

In this regard, the project aims to enable students to feel the international world and to handle and interact in different situations: to simulate an internationalization experience; to make them virtually explore the context by examining potential intercultural mismatches; to select the most relevant information in German and thus to design a virtual guide by peers and for peers with a similar language level, useful for future potential international outgoing mobility students. The different teaching-activities in each interactional scene comprised information-search or problem-solving tasks using the linguistic resources and intercultural hints previously introduced in in-class activities. The content variety in the virtual guides created by groups was used to reflect on different ways of preparing a mobility experience, initially within the group and then as a whole class. This gave the students opportunities to raise intercultural awareness and stresses the importance of developing intercultural communication skills.

For the learning activities of the four settings, the teaching staff and researchers have designed previous scaffolding using materials collected from the IRO related to host universities, such us free places, useful links or rankings. For some faculties, even information on students' experiences and feedback are also published on IRO's website. These materials from IRO have been combined with case studies adapted from the modules of the project *Connect 2.0 - Intercultural Learning Network 4* Europe and from its Experience-Map platform, where experiences and expectations of exchange students participating in the project are shared. All these materials were used, adapted or re-elaborated to create the ensuing learning activities.

3. Design of the activities

To reflect on the applicability of the linguistic content they have learned, different activities have been designed in order to create a context close to the future students' reality. For each activity, the students' input has mainly taken the form of immediate feedback when discussing specific situations and solutions, and regularly weekly or biweekly when related to linguistic skills (proofreading), giving both face-to-face and written feedback. In addition to the IRO resources used for the development of the ensuing activities, two members of the international office staff were involved in the design of the virtual guides and in the double assessment of the students' final oral presentations of their guides. The international office staff assessed the quality of information in the dimensions of *usefulness*, *intercultural sensitivity* and *originality* in relation to the four syllabus topics, while teaching staff assessed language and intercultural learning achievement. The conception, purposes and development of the activities are summarized as follows.

3.1. Setting 1: The new faculty

As for the first setting, *The new faculty*, the following activities regarding pre-departure scenes promote previous reflection and make students aware of their own point of view. Each of them is individually assigned a short questionnaire with specific questions on different issues, such as:

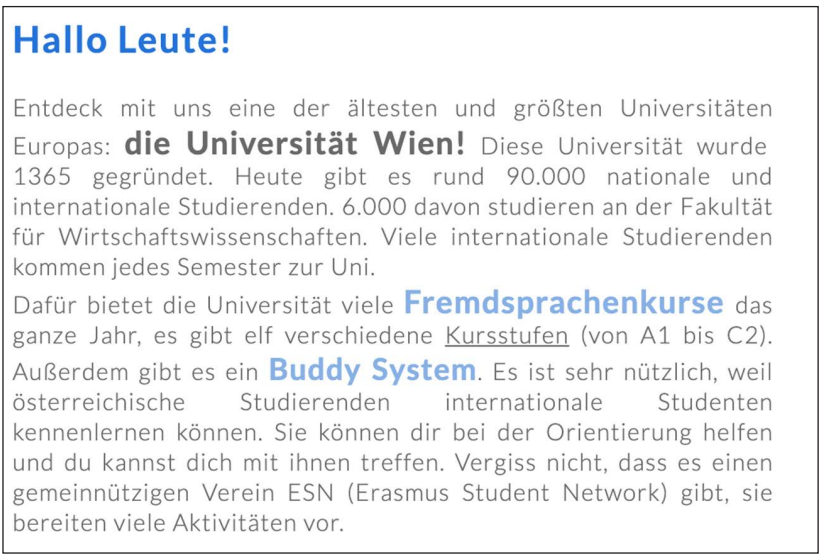
- How would you like your stay abroad to be?
- Are you interested in an international stay or/and in an international traineeship?
- Are you interested in the local language and culture?
- Are you interested in a top-ten ranked university?

With regards to the latter questions of this scene, where students need to individually make a choice about their host faculty, they are asked about how important the following items are for them: university ranking, course offer (by language, by contents), learning methodologies, location of the university or way of life in the host city.

	INNS	WIEN	VIEN	WNEU	AACH	BAMB	BERL	DRES	FREI	HEID	KARL	MÜNC	MÜNS	PADE	REUT	TÜBI	ZÜRI
Ranking																	
Englisch																	
Grösse Uni																	
Methodologien																	
Pflichtfach																	
Wahlfach																	
Evaluation																	
Immatrikulation																	
ECTS																	
IRO																	
Buddy-Programm																	
Mensa																	
Bibliothek																	
Sporthalle																	
Sprachkurse																	
Mietpreise																	
Verkehrsmittel																	
Gute Lage																	
Grösse Stadt																	
Lebensstil																	
Kultur																	
Praktikum																	

Image 2. Table to select services and facilities in every host university

In a second stage after the individual activities, groups are created on the basis of the matching in the selection of the host university. The students then study their questions in groups and familiarize themselves with the information about their selected university, so that afterwards they can write a descriptive text including the services and facilities offered by the new faculty (university canteen, copy shop, library...):



Hallo Leute!

Entdeck mit uns eine der ältesten und größten Universitäten Europas: **die Universität Wien!** Diese Universität wurde 1365 gegründet. Heute gibt es rund 90.000 nationale und internationale Studierenden. 6.000 davon studieren an der Fakultät für Wirtschaftswissenschaften. Viele internationale Studierenden kommen jedes Semester zur Uni.

Dafür bietet die Universität viele **Fremdsprachenkurse** das ganze Jahr, es gibt elf verschiedene Kursstufen (von A1 bis C2). Außerdem gibt es ein **Buddy System**. Es ist sehr nützlich, weil österreichische Studierenden internationale Studenten kennenlernen können. Sie können dir bei der Orientierung helfen und du kannst dich mit ihnen treffen. Vergiss nicht, dass es einen gemeinnützigen Verein ESN (Erasmus Student Network) gibt, sie bereiten viele Aktivitäten vor.

Image 3. Example of a text about the new faculty

This activity focuses on how to engage in local activities inside and outside the host faculty, which enriches learning opportunities and allows students to identify characteristics of academic and organizational life. Emphasis is placed on the search for information about the 'Buddy-Program', as it can be essential, especially for the first days of the academic exchange, e.g., for the registration process. This content component has been retrieved from experiences in the pilot project about intercultural communication mentoring for outgoing students and from the Experience-Map platform mentioned above. As an example, the following text illustrates the enrolment at the new faculty:

> [...] but the worst thing was that I felt completely lost. So much time spent on choosing the courses to find that there was no guarantee

that I could take part in any of them! The whole situation was very frustrating and the amount of paperwork and nonsensical bureaucracy enraged me.

As time was running out, I decided to sort things out before the classes began. I emailed some of the professors of the courses I wanted to be part of but most of them did not know what the procedure was. That is when I decided to contact the International Office of the university but also to enrol in a mentor program, where I would receive help from a student from the university. Both of them helped me to sort everything out (enrolment, professors, time limits, etc.) and get an answer, as well as giving me some advice. They told me to enrol in as many courses as I [...] (ExperienceMap, 2021)

In the next step, we move into a recurring activity in each setting: students make a word cloud containing the most frequent words found in the texts explored on the internet. Word clouds are aimed at facilitating the learning of a specific vocabulary in this case related to the semantic field *faculty*:

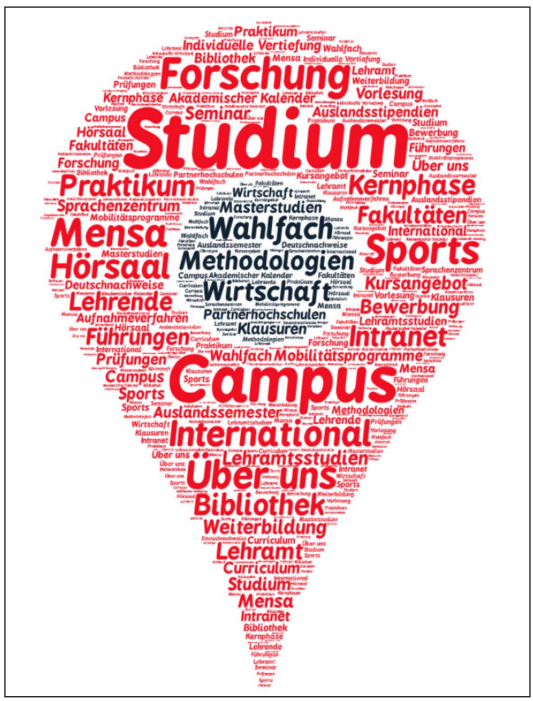


Image 4. Example of a word cloud about the semantic field *Faculty*

The next activity is a simulation with intercultural interaction regarding problems of working in international groups, retrieved from Connect modules and whose content is also part of the students' experiences discussed on the Experience-Map platform. In this reading activity, students are challenged to put themselves in the role of outgoing students learning and living in a different culture with different points of view and attitudes. This activity is complemented by scenes from the film *Júlia ist* (Martin, 2017), where the students are again placed in a simulated academic role, that of a young Catalan as an Erasmus student in Berlin. For both activities, students are asked to focus on various intercultural issues which emerged in both situations, in order to raise awareness of critical intercultural incidents related to their future academic situation. There is then a group discussion comparing notes and exchanging opinions and ideas, and the activity ends with feedback, including suggestions for improvement and change, so that the students become sensitized to real problems outgoing students may have and begin to establish a critical view towards their own attitude.

3.2. Setting 2: Accommodation

As for the second setting *Accommodation,* the first activity promotes previous reflection on the student's own profile and decision-making. This activity is also carried out with a questionnaire, where students must decide their choice of accommodation (flat-sharing or dormitory), which price, independence or socialization and international or local environment.

For further writing activities related to the topic *Accommodation*, we ask students to explore information regarding price, location or relevant features both on the local IRO website and on the IRO host university website (those links are provided by the teaching staff). The links are related to the interest and reality of the students themselves as outgoers. As a final step, we also encourage students to select keywords that summarize the content of each link, thus facilitating information previewing. At the end, they are asked to prepare a written report on their findings.

3.3. Setting 3: Leisure in the new city

To avoid overgeneralization and stereotyping, with the scene *Exploring the neighbourhood* in the setting 3, students have the opportunity to zoom in on the host culture and observe specific realities. The students first explore individually the definition of the German term *Kiez*[2] and then share the information in a plenary virtual chat and are encouraged to help each other in seeking out a complete definition of the term.

Students are also required to write a pre-reflection group exercise describing their home *Kiez* in Barcelona/Catalonia, to publish it in a wiki format and to include information such as the location and means of transport, services, facilities and leisure offer, opening hours, shops, interesting links and photographs of their home *Kiez*. They are required to imagine that the target readers are incoming students at the University of Barcelona (UB) and aim to facilitate their adaptation if they were to live in their home *Kiez*.

The second part of the activity consists in writing a similar parallel text, in this case about the *Kiez* in the host city where the students' dormitories or flat-sharing are located. Similar situations are also presented and handled in the Connect modules, where students express their purpose of living in, not visiting, the host city.

As in the other settings, students are asked to make a word cloud with the most common abbreviations and terms, in this case from the semantic field *Kiez* (my neighbourhood).

Following the same procedure as in the other settings, students make a selection of the explored links on city neighbourhood and means of transport that may be of interest to future exchange students, e.g. recommended means of transport, prices, routes dormitory-faculty, and summarize them with keywords.

3.4. Setting 4: The international traineeship

In the last setting, the students are projected into their future professional world. It starts with a group activity, where students

2. This term refers to a city neighbourhood defined by its social fabric, location, particular features or its history.

explore the economic area where their host university is located. Each group is given a list of selected links by the teaching staff to facilitate their findings. The students then explore the main economic sectors, the main companies, products and so on and then write a brief report with relevant information. The aim of this activity is to make future outgoing UB students aware of the sectors in which they are most likely to find traineeships in the area of their host university.

The second part of this last activity consists in exploring and selecting the most prominent links related to the search and offer of a traineeship. The students are again given materials and resources previously selected by the teaching staff to provide them with better guidance. These materials come from both the IRO and the Traineeship Office at the Economics and Business Faculty, as well as from other sources such as state agencies in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The activities conclude with a final report required of each group, which should include the most relevant information found about traineeships. This text is used as an introduction to the links mentioned previously, and it highlights information such as average salary, type and volume of the offer, location of the traineeship places, required skills and so forth.

4. Concluding remarks

From this experience, it is worth noting the first-time collaboration between the Business German language course and the IRO had a direct impact on the classroom. Moreover, the IRO materials, together with those directly retrieved from real exchange students' experiences published in the Connect modules and the Experience-Map, have been used to design the activities aimed at achieving linguistic content and competencies. In addition, as a result of the class-activity outcomes, new materials have been created that are at the disposal of the IRO for the international mobility programmes.

The experience implementing the project after two years with two different groups of students is encouraging in terms of, first, achievement of the required linguistic skills and professional competencies such as complex task management, teamwork, in-

tercultural skills (Panadés and Fernández-Villanueva, 2020) and creativity, due to the use of multimedia tools and the need to create an original product; and second, of having bridged the gap between course contents and the competencies necessary to perform in the working world. Furthermore, the activities aim to equip the students with new insights into the construction of their own competence to cope with uncertainty and complex situations in international settings. Nowadays, higher education faces the challenge of providing students with autonomy and the ability to manage their own professional development.

As we have seen, a good proportion of the activities provide students with a way to identify problems on the basis of reflection, with the purpose of raising awareness of their needs and difficulties, and of motivating them to seek solutions to meet these needs and resolve possible intercultural incidents. At the same time, the proposed activities are related to students' interests and their immediate and future reality as outgoing exchange students or international trainees, which results in an increasing interest in international mobility. A questionnaire among the participants in the 2018-19 academic year was carried out with satisfactory results, considering that they rated it the second most liked element (Panadés and Fernández-Villanueva, 2020).

In other words, students who attend the course Second Foreign Language for Business II – German develop intercultural awareness and are more confident about their future international academic or traineeship stay. This experience leads us to believe that a language course designed not only for linguistic purposes but also related to the students' immediate reality is an accurate and motivational proposal to enhance the course's development. In this regard, it is worth noting that the implementation of the project has made it possible to explicitly introduce the teaching and learning of intercultural skills by means of collaborative and reflective learning for peers and for the institution, while improving the quality of teaching (Panadés and Fernández-Villanueva, 2019) and boosting international mobility, encouraging students to undertake an international traineeship.

Finally, for further research we suggest carrying out an analysis of the possible impact of the teaching innovation action either on the students attending the course or on exchange stu-

dents from other business language courses. Additionally, a potential action research on different foreign languages with specific purposes would provide insights into further contrastive studies among a wide language spectrum. In conclusion, we can state that the proposed teaching action reinforces competencies that are in great demand in the professional world; promotes teamwork and participation of the student by proposing collaborative teaching/learning activities framed in a project through which they can meet the objectives set in the course *Second Foreign Language for Business II - German* and helps students to become competent in the target language and able to continue autonomous and independent learning.

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Chapter 8

Intercultural virtual collaboration in perspective – Overall conclusions and developments from two international inter-university collaborations

Luana Ferreira-Lopes
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Iciar Elexpuru-Albizuri

1. Introduction

Intercultural competence has become an essential tool to navigate everyday life in increasingly diverse communities and workplaces. Universities have been expanding efforts to offer their students the opportunity to develop such competence, not only through physical mobility, but also by including the development of it in their curricula, through active, collaborative and reflective practices. By adopting such approaches and pedagogical strategies to the development of students' intercultural competence, universities have been aiming to establish what has been called by experts in the field as "Internationalization at home" (Knight, 2004; Wachter, 2003).

In this context, technology has been key. Digital tools have not only allowed institutions to recruit students from all over the world to their online courses, but have also provided teachers with the opportunity to enrich the learning experience in their everyday classes with digital resources and with the possibility of having global interconnectedness from within the limits of classroom walls.

Intercultural virtual collaboration (IVC) has been employed by teachers and institutions to connect students from different

locations to develop different kinds of learning outcomes. The practice can be found in literature under a vast array of labels (O'Dowd, 2018): Telecollaboration (Guth, Helm and O'Dowd, 2012), Online Intercultural Exchange (O'Dowd and Lewis, 2016); Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) (Guth and Rubin, 2015); Networked Learning (McConnell, Hodgson and Dirckinck-Holmfeld, 2011); Global Virtual Teams (GVT) (Taras *et al.*, 2013) and probably others. According to O'Dowd and Dooly (2020), "all definitions intend to highlight both the medium (virtual, online, digital, distance, global, networked) and the underlying purpose (exchange, intercultural, collaboration, learning)" (p. 362).

Having emerged at the turn of the millennium (Helm and Guth, 2010), IVC has been shown to achieve different pedagogical goals (like intercultural competence development, language-learning and digital literacies) and, since 2020, in face of the extraordinary circumstances imposed by the COVID-19 epidemic, it has even been seen as a tool "to offer students an international and intercultural experience today when mobility is not actually possible, and to prepare students for quality mobility experiences in the future" (Helm, 2020).

Still, disregarding its pedagogical potential, IVC is currently quite far from becoming an established practice in Higher Education given the complexity involved in its implementation:

> What sets it apart from other online approaches is precisely what makes starting and scaling new programs complex. Whether they are classroom-based or peer-to-peer conversations, meaningful experiences require intentional facilitation and authentic tasks. They also have components to help students prepare, work together, and then debrief after a project. And if the goal is to foster the same kinds of serendipitous experiences that come from in-person international learning, all these tasks - preparation, facilitation, collaboration, and reflection - must be more intentional. (NAFSA, n.d.)

For this reason, there is a need for sharing evidence of applied models and tools that can be replicated by IVC practitioners (Crossman and Bordia, 2012; Ferreira-Lopes and Van Rompay-Bartels, 2020; Helm, 2015) and that can inform policy makers on the ways ICV can be successfully integrated into university

curricula (Garcés and O'Dowd, 2020). Considering this, this chapter presents overall conclusions about the implementation of a task sequence teaching-learning strategy for the development of intercultural competence in Higher Education through intercultural virtual collaboration with the final objective of facilitating the work of teachers when integrating IVC into Higher Education studies.

Before we finally reach such conclusions, in the next section we will briefly discuss the use of tasks in virtual collaborative environments and describe the main characteristics of the task-sequence analysed.

2. A task sequence proposal for intercultural virtual collaboration

Finding its roots in language teaching, the task-based approach to education has been evolving for the last 30 years. Drawing its theoretical foundations from classical educational philosophies such as social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1962) and 'learning by doing' (Dewey, 1938), the task-based approach primes experience, interactions and authenticity

Skehan (1998) defines the four main characteristics of a task as being: (a) exchange of meaning is primary; (b) there should be a common goal to be achieved; (c) the outcome in sight is whether the learners were able or not to achieve such an objective; and (d) the task performed should resemble real-world situations. Other definitions of task also emphasize the role of teachers in structuring and sequencing interactions, as well as on regulating them (Lee, 2000).

According to Lai and Li (2011), "the introduction of technology into this equation enlarges the number of venues and resources for task performance" (p. 501). In the computer-mediated context, they define tasks as "holistic activities in which learners make use of their language and (cross-)cultural and communicative resources to achieve some nonlinguistic outcome through stretching their linguistic, (cross-)cultural, internet-based communication, and digital literacy skills" (p. 501). By using technology to connect students from different locations, intercultur-

al virtual collaboration breaks the limitations imposed by physical separateness and allows for real-life interaction between different cultures, carrying with it the potential to enhance the authenticity of tasks that aim to develop intercultural and linguistic competences. As Woo *et al.* (2007) explain,

> Before the widespread diffusion of computers and Internet technologies, it was much more difficult—and in some situations even impossible—for instructors or instructional designers to use authentic activities in real-life settings because of the limitations of the subject matter, time and finances, and practical constraints and risks of physically moving students to fields of practice. With the development of web technology, such limitations have eased. (p. 37)

However, in complex environments such as those involved in intercultural virtual collaboration, different variables (pedagogy, technology, language and culture) interplay and, with this, task-design assumes a pivotal role (Kurek and Müller-Hartmann, 2017). In this regard, Kurek (2015) defends that "the greater the complexity of a learning environment, the more learning opportunities it may generate, if only learners' activity is framed with adequate tasks" (p. 17).

In terms of instructional design, the typology of tasks identified by the seminal work of O'Dowd and Ware (2009) has been widely used by intercultural virtual collaboration researchers and practitioners. Such authors synthesized the variety of tasks used in telecollaboration into three main categories: the first category is composed of (1) information exchange tasks. These tasks usually require little negotiation and consist of partners introducing themselves to each other by providing information about their own cultures and interests. The second type of tasks is (2) comparison and analysis of cultures and demands a little more from students by asking them to make a critical analysis of cultural products (e.g. newspapers, magazines, books, etc.) and finding similarities and differences between them. The last category is (3) collaborative tasks, which require students to go further in collaboration by requesting them to produce a joint product or conclusion together. After analysing a number of studies that fall under each of the categories mentioned, O'Dowd and Ware (2009) concluded that combining different types of

tasks in a sequence can expose students to different aspects of intercultural communication and allow educators to set diverse learning objectives in an online exchange.

By having the typology of O'Dowd and Ware (2009) as a main reference and based on other previous literature in the field of telecollaboration, in her doctoral work Ferreira-Lopes (2021) proposes a detailed task sequence (Figure 1) for the development of intercultural competence through intercultural virtual collaboration. The sequence is composed of four tasks, each of them followed by reflection exercises. The full proposal of the referred sequence can be found in Ferreira-Lopes, Bezanilla and

Figure 1. Task-sequence proposed by Ferreira-Lopes, Bezanilla and Elexpuru (2018)

Elexpuru (2018). In this publication, the authors describe how the sequence was built in a way that the notion of community/group is gradually constructed between members, with tasks growing from the preliminary exchange of personal information to more intense and demanding forms of collaboration. They also provide considerations to support teachers in the pre-implementation set-up process and suggest the use of user-friendly technology tools, as well as of a multi-method assessment strategy (with different types of assessment tools) to better capture students' intercultural competence development.

In order to analyse the effect of the proposed task sequence in students' development of intercultural competence and to explore how much students enjoy participating in each task, the referred task sequence was implemented in two different IVC projects. First, in 2016, a pilot implementation was carried out in a master programme involving universities from two different countries (Spain and France). Then, in 2017, another implementation took place in a project involving undergraduate Business students from Spain and undergraduate Business students from Holland. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected from such implementation through pre-posttests, after-task questionnaires and a final satisfaction survey.

3. Overall conclusions and developments

The task sequence previously presented proved to be operationalizable in practice as it was implemented in two different Business courses at different academic levels (in undergraduate studies and in a master programme) and with partnerships involving different institutions and countries. The experience in both implementations showed that having a 'pre-packaged' and concrete pedagogical strategy at hand facilitated discussions and allowed agreements between collaborating universities and teachers to depart from a more advanced stage (Ferreira-Lopes *et al.*, 2019).

An analysis of the results of the second implementation also showed that, according to students' perceptions (Ferreira-Lopes, Elexpuru and Bezanilla, 2021), the most developed intercultural competence indicators across the sequence related to developing a positive attitude towards intercultural relationships and to de-

veloping skills to work in diverse teams. Other indicators that students reported to have been very much developed by the sequence were related to intercultural knowledge, intercultural awareness, intercultural relationship building and intercultural teamwork[1]. In addition, results revealed that a vast majority of students very much enjoyed participating in all the tasks from the sequence and nearly all students would recommend the telecollaborative project to be implemented again with new students. When asked about what they most liked about the project, students mostly reported their excitement with the opportunity of working in intercultural teams, of gaining cultural knowledge and highlighted the real-life application of the project. On the other hand, workload, some aspects of instructional design (specific tasks, task length and instructions), and misunderstandings in the group were the issues that students least liked about the sequence (Ferreira-Lopes and Van Rompay-Bartels, 2020).

As it demonstrated to be applicable in practice, well-perceived by students and effective in developing different intercultural competence building blocks and configurations, the task sequence proposed proved to facilitate the integration of intercultural virtual collaboration into the university curriculum and became a sustainable and integral part of both the master programme in which the pilot took place and in the two undergraduate courses involved in the final implementation. As such, it has been successively applied in the programmes referred to in the academic years that followed the first implementations. In the case of the IVC project involving Spain and Holland, the high satisfaction of all those involved with the initiative caused

1. The study adopted the Erasmus Mundus Intercultural Competence model (EMIC, 2015) to serve as a reference for the definition, development and measurement of intercultural competence in the Higher Education context. The EMIC model defends that intercultural competence is a multidimensional concept composed of building blocks (knowledge, awareness, attitudes and skills), supporting capacities (emotional intelligence and critical reflection), a meta-capacity (developing intercultural competence) and three interrelated competence configurations or sub-competences (intercultural teamwork, intercultural conflict management and intercultural relationship building). In order to better suit EMIC to the online work that takes place in intercultural virtual collaborative environments, the doctoral research also proposed the addition of a new configuration (intercultural virtual teamwork) and four related indicators to the original composition of the model.

the project to collaborate in different ways since its first implementation:

- *Increase in the number of participating students*: in the Netherlands, the number of participating students increased in the implementation that followed the first project, allowing groups to have a better balance of members from both locations;
- *Adaptation/replication of the task sequence in other IVC projects*: the task sequence proposed herein was adapted and used by the Dutch teacher in another similar exchange held in partnership with a university in the United States;
- *Integration of a new partner*: in the implementation that took place in the academic term of September 2020-January 2021, a third university from South America was integrated into the project, enriching it with another cultural perspective;
- *Broadening the concept of intercultural competence*: also in the implementation of 2020, teachers decided to start to incorporate some principles of global citizenship (Byram, 2008; Council of Europe, 2016) into the project by inviting students to discuss in the intercultural virtual groups, as part of the final assignment, how the COVID situation has been addressed by governments in the countries represented in the group and to reflect on how such approaches have impacted everyday life and businesses in such places. Although the task does not reach a deep level of active engagement in society – which is the ultimate goal of global citizenship (O'Dowd, 2019) – it does aim at "encouraging learners to engage with themes which are of social and political relevance in both partners' societies" (p. 11).

Future projects could go deeper into and beyond these aspects, showing in what ways the task sequence proposed in this work can evolve and exploring the implications that such developments might have on students' intercultural competence and satisfaction. Especially with regards to approaching the concept of global citizenship, there is a lot of room for improving the collaborative tasks of the sequence in order to engage students in intercultural dialogical and critical processes that might lead them to actively take part in societal issues.

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CHAPTER 9

Internationalization at home – Joint study project between Spanish and Finnish engineering students

QIAN ZHANG

1. Introduction

This paper describes the experience of a joint study project between groups of engineering students at the University of Vic-Central University of Catalonia (UVic-UCC) in Spain and Häme University of Applied Sciences (HAMK) in Finland during the spring semester of the 2020 academic year and the autumn semester of the 2020-2021 academic year. The project was planned and conducted together by three English educators from both universities and a subject matter teacher from HAMK. The assessment of the students was conducted by their own lecturers. As meetings were organized independently by the students as self-study tasks, most of the communications took place at their homes, especially after the Covid-19 breakout in February 2020. Thus, the goals of the project were to develop students' teamwork and project work skills as well as their multicultural awareness and communication skills. This paper reflects on the extent to which these goals were achieved and provides recommendations for setting up COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) projects.

2. Joint study project overview

This international joint study project for engineering students was first proposed in 2019 by Niina Valtaranta from Häme Uni-

versity of Applied Sciences (HAMK) to Qian Zhang from the Faculty of Science and Technology at The University of Vic-Central University of Catalonia (UVic-UCC). It was finally mainly conducted by Niina Valtaranta (HAMK) and Qian Zhang (Uvic), with the support of Susan Heikkilä (HAMK) as the project manager.

The goals of this joint study project were as follows:

1. to familiarize meeting practice, documentation and terminology,
2. to acquire the skills of preparing and delivering an effective presentation related to the engineering field through peer assessment and feedback,
3. to develop engineering students' teamwork and project work skills,
4. to raise engineering students' multicultural awareness and communication skills,
5. to strengthen engineering students' language skills, in this case in English.

Due to complications of course planning, the project was not carried out until February 2020. Between January 2019 and February 2020, the two lecturers communicated about the project planning via emails, including a visit by the HAMK lecturer to Uvic Granollers in February 2020 to give the automotive engineering students a guest lecture, introducing the joint study project, which kicked the project off.

Two sets of joint study projects were conducted between 2020 and 2021. From February to June 2020, the project was implemented in the subject 'engineering communication skills', and it included first-year automotive engineering degree students from Uvic and second-year engineering students from module 8 HAMK. The topic was 'Circular economy –recycling, recovery and reprocessing of materials.' From September 2020 to February 2021, the project involved first-year engineering students from both universities. The students were given an ILO (International Labour Office) list of 39 industries, from which they chose one industry to research on the use of robotics.

3. Communication between the educators

How we communicated
As mentioned above, communication between the educators (Qian Zhang, Niina Valtaranta) was made mainly via emails. Zoom conferences were carried out before each implementation to plan it and also after each implementation to discuss feedback and possible improvements.

Feedback and self-reflections on communication
The combination of these two ways of communicating worked very well, although emails did not work as well as video conferences as the communication was not instantaneous.

Recommendations for communication
More short video conferences between educators are recommended regarding this matter, together with the support of emails on Moodle. It was felt that the communication via emails on Moodle were not instantaneous, which prolonged the time for decision-making situations. If more short video conferences were carried out, some decisions can be made instantly during the meetings instead of sending emails back and forth. However, arranging the meeting time for both lecturers could be an issue, even though they are more efficient.

4. Topics

Two different topics were used in these two sets of project implementations:

- From February to June 2020, the topic applied was 'Circular economy –recycling, recovery and reprocessing of materials.' Students were asked to look at these global issues from the perspectives of 1) significance at an individual, societal and global level; 2) significance in the students' own field of study: automation and electrical engineering, mechatronics engineering, etc. Students then were asked to make development proposals on how to proceed towards a more sustainable environment.

- From September 2020 to February 2021, the students were given the ILO[1] list of industries, from which they chose one industry to research on the use of robotics.

4.1. Feedback and self-reflection

Most of the students showed great interest in the topic of 'Circular economy –recycling, recovery and reprocessing of materials', and they focused on this matter in their daily lives. For this reason, as we could see from their presentations, their projects were not as focused on their industries as we expected. Many of the presentations were fairly simple and short, except a few groups who delivered very thorough and professional work studying this matter within their chosen industries. This topic is very easy to address for first-year students, and also for educators with no prior experience in international projects

Most of the students also showed great interest in the second topic of examining robotics use, yet with a different attitude from the previous project on the circular economy as this topic seemed more specific to what they were studying and relatively more difficult. As we saw from their final presentations, they had done more thorough research on specific industries and had delivered more professional and comprehensive work.

4.2. Recommendations

Both topics mentioned above worked remarkably well. The first topic was relatively easy to use for the first-year students, but the second topic was more specialized and related to the students' degree and interests, and it was thus more beneficial as an educational project, especially for mechatronic engineering students.

5. Activities

The activities implemented were slightly different for these two sets of projects.

1. International Labour Office

For the February to June 2020 project, the activities students were asked to carry out were as follows:

1. Have a kick-off meeting of the project during week one. They were given emails of their partners from the other university and started communicating via emails. Then they had to agree on a platform to conduct this first meeting, to get to know each other.
2. Make an introduction video of the teams. Students were asked to record an introduction video to show their teams from their university, presenting their studying environment, their interests, and so on.
3. Virtual team meetings on the chosen platform. Students then decided on a platform to use to carry out regular meetings, discussing the project content, making project plans, dividing work, etc. Students were asked to record at least two of these meetings to submit to their teacher for monitoring and possible evaluation.
4. Article reading. Two articles supporting the project were given to students to read, and tasks were given to each of them to complete. The articles were: "What do engineers need to learn about sustainable development?" (University of Cambridge, 2006); "4R guide: Reduce Reuse Recycle Recover" (Skanska, 2012). Students were asked to read these two articles and then were required to answer comprehension questions to submit the tasks.
5. Intermediate project plan presentations were made and monitored by the educator in HAMK, but not in UVic due to difficulties in course planning timeline.
6. Final project presentations. All the teams gave their final project presentations online explaining their research on this matter. Each team was required to give a presentation of ten to fifteen minutes and then answer peers and educators' questions. Each member of the team was required to speak for a relatively equal amount of time. Teams which could not attend the final presentation day were asked to send a recorded presentation on the same day.
7. Peer assessments were made by other groups during the presentations. Students were given this tool to evaluate the other teams' presentations. This tool was developed by Niina Valtaranta (HAMK).

Peer Assessment of Presentation

1. *What did the presenters do especially well?*

2. *Was there something that they could still practise or do differently?*

Circle the number that best describes your opinion of the presentation (1 = I fully agree, 5 = I completely disagree)

	I fully agree				I completely disagree
1. Visuals supported the presentation well.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The presentation was informative.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The structure was well planned.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The opening was effective.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The conclusion was good.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The presentation was delivered clearly.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The volume was high enough.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Presenters answered the questions well.	1	2	3	4	5

Figure 1. Peer assessment of presentation

For the September 2020 to February 2021 project, as the topic was different, the activities and tasks were slightly different too. Instead of being given articles to read, students had to choose one industry and do their research. They were asked to examine robotics in connection with the industry chosen, with these proposed questions: What applications are used? To what extent does the industry use robotics? Are there any new applications and trends? What are the advantages and disadvantages of using robotics there?

5.1. Feedback and self-reflections

1. The kick-off meeting is usually done quite efficiently, as students are excited to meet their partners from the other university. There could be awkward silences at times as it is the first meeting, and it is online. However, the objective to get to know their partners briefly is usually completed during this first meeting.
2. Making a team introduction video has proved to be a relatively difficult task to carry out. Teams from both sides should decide how they want the introduction video to be and what each member does and says. It is also the first task that should be done as a team. Some decisions should be made as a team, and work should be divided. Most of the teams delivered the task with delays, some with good quality of a video, others not so good.
3. Virtual team meetings on the chosen platform are one of the most important activities for this project. Most of the communications for the project happen during these meetings, and a lot of skills required for this project, such as language skills, discussion skills, communication skills and project planning skills, are practised during them. From the meeting videos students submitted, we could see two major obstacles: a) it seems to be difficult to organize a meeting with all the team members due to group size, team members' timetable and motivation; b) meetings seem to be long with low efficiency due to punctuality issues of the meeting members, lack of meeting planning and lack of communication skills. Despite these obstacles, most meetings succeeded in reaching their goals and completed the tasks. It can be seen very clearly in the final presentations if those meetings were effective or not. Furthermore, having to submit two recorded meetings pushed the students to plan these meetings well and conduct them efficiently.
4. Article reading was only implemented in the first project. In general, it is a great method to introduce the topic to the students and broaden their view and knowledge related to the matter. Tasks were simple but moderately time-consuming, which also helped students to learn the vocabulary related to the topic.

5. Final project presentations are the harvest, which educators look forward to and the students feel nervous about as it is the final presentation of their three-month-long projects. One of the most challenging tasks for the educators in this project is to organize the presentation day. As the number and size of the groups are large, the educators need to have a complete plan and considerably tight schedule, otherwise the presentation time could be prolonged without control. Another factor to consider, and one that at times is an obstacle, is finding a date and time that suits both the students and educators. Despite all these challenges, this is still considered the favourite activity of the project, as the results are seen and the presentations are interesting.
6. Peer assessments are not included in the official evaluations; instead, they work more as self-reflections for the observers and a different perspective for the educators. It can frequently be seen that the peers are at times stricter than the educators.

5.2. Recommendations

All seven activities are highly recommended as they work together towards the final goal of the project. However, some changes could be made in the future projects:

1. As mentioned above, delays of delivery for the team introduction video task have been observed, thus a deadline and delay penalty are suggested.
2. Requiring students to provide at least two meeting videos is an excellent way to monitor students' work, although there could be technological problems involved. Some teams may not know how to record the meeting, or they might not find the recordings afterwards. Another issue is the platform to share with the educators. From the experiences of these two sets of projects, a tutorial on how to record a meeting should be provided by the educators, either directly in class or a recorded tutorial in the video. As for the platform to share, WeTransfer has proved to be the one most used by the students. However, other better sharing methods are to be explored.
3. As the large number and size of the groups is unavoidable, final presentation time can be as long as three to four hours. It is

undoubtedly a challenge for educators to observe and evaluate for such a long time, and also for the students to stay engaged. Therefore, two separate presentation days are recommended.

6. Evaluation

Evaluation system

HAMK and Uvic implemented this project in their course with different evaluation systems:

- For HAMK, peer assessment of the project outcome of another team was made straight after each presentation, which were assessed orally by their teachers on site and individually as oral exams afterwards.
- For Uvic, two different systems were used for the two sets of projects. For the February to June 2020 project with the automotive engineering degree, it comprised ten percent of the whole course evaluation system. Two recorded meetings from each team were required to be submitted and then evaluated by the educator. The final presentations were not evaluated. However, for the September 2020 to February 2021 project with the mechatronic engineering degree, it comprised fifteen percent of the course, the recorded meetings were not evaluated, and the final presentations were evaluated.

We have implemented these two different evaluation systems for these two sets of projects for various reasons. For the automotive engineering course, there was an extra project already included in the course, which is an interdisciplinary and transversal project called PBL (project-based learning), which comprised fifteen percent of the evaluation system and also required a final presentation in English. The final presentations of the PBL joint study project were not evaluated; instead, we only evaluated the recorded meetings to examine students' communications skills, meeting skills and language skills. No PBL was included for the mechatronic engineering course, so the final presentations were evaluated, which comprised fifteen percent of the course evaluation system.

6.1. Feedback and self-reflections

This joint study project had been done by Niina Valtaranta at HAMK before, and it has a relatively mature system compared to the project implementations at UVic. Therefore, these two evaluation methods at UVic were experimented to find the appropriate way to implement this project in various degrees in the future. Both had their own functions. Evaluating the recorded meetings focused more on observing communications skills, meeting skills and language skills, whereas evaluating the final presentations focused more on the final results with presentation skills and language skills.

6.2. Recommendations

Both systems are recommended, but the best option could be the combination of both evaluation methods. For instance, evaluating one recorded meeting and the final presentations.

In this way, all the skills required for this project are evaluated, the process of the project is monitored and included in the evaluation, and the final results are observed and evaluated.

7. Supporting technologies

7.1. Platforms

Emails on Moodle was the first platform both educators and students used to communicate. Via Moodle emails, students agreed on a platform to conduct video conferences. Four platforms were chosen: Zoom, Skype, Discord and Microsoft Teams. Zoom was the official platform for educators to communicate between themselves and the students. WeTransfer was used to submit recorded meeting videos by the students. Google drive was also used among students to share their project work. Moodle was used to share project materials by the educators. Mentimeter was used to collect students' feedback.

7.2. Feedback and self-reflections

All the platforms mentioned above had their functions and worked considerably well, either for information sharing or for direct communication. Although Zoom was the official platform for educators to use to communicate with the students, Discord was a very popular tool and chosen to be the communication platform to conduct video conferences by some of the teams.

7.3. Recommendations

All these platforms are highly recommended for this project. However, there is a feeling by the educators that more could be explored and applied in the future to facilitate this international project.

Another factor to consider is the democratic digital perspective (Beneyto-Seoane, M. and Collet-Sabé, J., 2020), since not all the students have the same facilities at home. As mentioned in the introduction, most of the communications of this project took place at students' homes, therefore the democratic digital perspective should be paid attention to.

We believe that with the educator's willingness to explore new platforms and to have a more democratic digital environment in the project, together with the help of the technology department of both universities, better platforms and technologies can be found and applied in this type of future international projects. As Beneyto-Seoane and Collet-Sabé (2020) state:

> ...that the democratic digital perspective promotes, on the one hand, the recognition of all members of the educational community in decision-making bodies. On the other hand, it encourages the generation of new digital spaces for participation that are more inclusive and less unequal.

8. Students' feedback

Students' feedback was collected after each set of projects had finished. Here is some of their feedback for both the spring and autumn projects.

8.1. Feedback for the spring project from February to June 2020

A nice change to teamwork compared to other courses. If I could think of something to improve, it would be nice if the students all came from the same field, and the task would be related to that.

I got some courage for the use of English. I learned that the English does not have to be perfect for the others to understand you. I feel like I have been left out of a lot of English because I have been afraid of making mistakes when speaking.

I learnt a lot in the project. You learn English by speaking it. There should be more speaking related tasks in English. That way the threshold for speaking would be lowered. Solving problems was the most useful part.

8.2. Feedback for the autumn project from September 2020 to February 2021

Figure 2. Students' feedback for the autumn project from September 2020 to February 2021

As we can see in Figure 2, both positive and negative feedback was expressed. Students mostly felt that this joint study project was a good way to learn, and the content was interesting. They enjoyed the interaction with students from different cultural

backgrounds online. Their language skills improved throughout the project, and it was a different study experience compared to the traditional way of learning.

However, some negative feedback was received. Firstly, the communication between team members was poor, thus the experience was not pleasant. A lack of response or delayed replies from the team members of the other university caused a lot of tension and frustration. When one side of the team did not reply after a few emails or messages, the other side of the team were easily demotivated. Spanish students said that Finnish students were less enthusiastic, probably due to different cultural backgrounds. Secondly, the engineering fields that the team members were interested in were different. Even though they were engineering students from both universities, the specific field of engineering which they were interested in varied. Thirdly, the final presentation time was way too long, due to the amount of the students involved in the project. This problem remains to be discussed and solved in future projects.

9. Final reflections

The educators believe that no two projects are the same. It is not an easy way to teach as the workload is much more than traditional lecturing. For example, much more attention is paid to the students' problems and more communication between teacher and student is needed; more instant communication between teachers is required; and the ability to organize and mediate is also required. However, it is considered to be much more interesting and beneficial for the students, and the results are rewarding. The UVic and HAMK educators worked well together, and it was a pleasant experience on both sides.

Specific recommendations are made above. In general, the project was an educational experience both for the staff and students. Feedback from students included improved language skills, communication skills and project developing skills working in a multicultural context. With the reflections above, the project will be revised and conducted with new students in the future.

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Chapter 10

Joint approach to interdisciplinary teaching

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1. Introduction

The internationalization of education policies in higher education is one of the most significant forces affecting universities in the Western world today (Knight, 2015). In a European context, the Bologna Process (European University Association (EUA), 2016) represents the most systematic drive to date for increased international academic cooperation and mobility. However, few students have the chance or resources to engage in mobility opportunities (Wihlborg *et al.*, 2018). In fact, even though overall student numbers has substantially increased recently, the proportion of students studying in another country has remained almost constant at about 2% or only slightly more (Crowther *et al.*, 2017). Besides, in the context of the current pandemic, almost a quarter of students' mobility periods were cancelled (Gabriels and Benke-Aberg, 2020). Still, universities aim to contribute to society by fostering global citizens, as the development of a global mindset can foster inclusive attitudes (Andresen and Bergdolt, 2016). Consequently, Internationalization at Home (IaH) becomes crucial in the internationalization of higher education.

Collaborative learning is an educational approach to teaching and learning that involves groups of learners working together to solve a problem, complete a task or create a product (Brown and Lara, 2011). Collaboration is a promising mode of human en-

gagement that has become a twenty-first-century trend, and online collaboration has come to stay. Specifically, Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) is an umbrella term used to refer to the different ways in which groups of learners are engaged in online interaction and collaborate with partners from other cultural contexts or geographical locations as an integrated part of course work and under the guidance of educators (Jager *et al.*, 2020; O'Dowd, 2018).

In recent years, collaborative online learning and interdisciplinary course programmes have become the key to enhancing internationalization and intercultural competences (Cai and Sankaran, 2015; Deardorff and Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017). Hence, COIL became a notable opportunity to expand the scope and reach of physical exchange programmes, due to its inclusive and scalable character (EACEA and EU, 2020). Intercultural competences and skills development are outcomes of the COIL programmes (Jager *et al.*, 2020). Students as team players with common objectives (Creelman and Löwe, 2019) may reach higher achievement and greater productivity; more caring, supportive and committed relationships; greater psychological health, social competence and self-esteem (Laal and Ghodsi, 2012). Regarding the academic benefits, collaborative learning helps to: promote critical thinking skills; involve students actively in the learning process; improve classroom results; and achieve new problem-solving techniques (Laal and Ghodsi, 2012).

The primary uses of COIL mainly remain concentrated in the Arts and Humanities disciplines (Jager *et al.*, 2020). However, other fields like health sciences and engineering have been explored (Wihlborg *et al.*, 2018), and interdisciplinary courses have been successfully implemented (Albá-Duran and Gerdientje, 2019; Rui-Molina and Cuadrado-García, 2008).

2. Context

In June 2020, the University of Vic – Central University of Catalonia (UVic-UCC) in Spain and the Deggendorf Institute of Technology (DIT) in Germany started discussing the possibility of collaborating in a COIL activity. The two universities were committed to working on a course for preparing global citizens.

UVic-UCC participated with its Faculty of Health Sciences and Welfare and DIT with its Faculty European Campus Rottal-Inn and Faculty of Applied Health Sciences. UVic-UCC teaches Health Sciences bachelor degrees and DIT imparts Health Informatics bachelor degrees. Considering the importance of e-Health today, a collaboration within this domain was the goal. E-Health is as an emerging field of medical computing, which refers to the organization and delivery of health and information services through the Internet and related technologies (Eng, 2001). In a broader sense, the term characterizes not only technical development, but also a new way of working, an attitude and a commitment to global and networked thinking to improve local, regional and global health care through the use of information and communication technology (Pagilari *et al.*, 2005). Therefore, e-Health involves health professionals and ICT (information and communication technology) professionals at the same level and with a great need to work collaboratively.

Staff from both universities worked collaboratively for a full term (spring term year 2020) to design a COIL course for their students in the domain of e-Health: "Interdisciplinary e-Health Course". On the one hand, health science students would be able to assess the functional health status and the technological needs of users; and on the other hand, ICT students have the skills and knowledge needed to develop technological interventions. Thus, ICT and health science students working collaboratively would be able to acquire a deeper understanding of the healthcare perspective and the designs of technological interventions to address the problems in today's healthcare systems via an interdisciplinary educational setting (Kim, 2019).

The "Interdisciplinary e-Health Course" was integrated into the curricula as part of a subject in both universities. In the UVic-UCC, it was part of the "E-Health" elective subject (3 ECTS) of the last year in their Nursing and Physiotherapy bachelor's degrees. In the DIT, the "Interdisciplinary e-Health Course" was included in the "Collaborative Systems" (5 ECTS) from the Health Informatics bachelor's degree, a mandatory subject in the third year of study. The first edition of the course started in the spring term of 2021.

3. Objectives

The COIL was designed as a collaborative course with different teaching models, such as flipped classroom, debates or case studies. The main objective was to bring undergraduate students from different disciplines, in this case, health informatics, nursing and physiotherapy, together online, to work collaboratively on the task of elaborating a solution for a real-world problem in the context of health. The theoretical input was taught by teachers from both universities. The course should provide the students with a unique and fruitful environment for debating topics related to healthcare. The course engaged students in activities that develop not only their professional but also personal and social competences, such as collaborating with colleagues from different cultures, using digital tools for collaborating, negotiation skills, critical thinking and analytical skills.

4. Course Design

Online teaching was examined within the context of the two universities: UVic-UCC in Spain and DIT in Germany. The main goal of this experience as explained above was to share knowledge between two different countries and two different specialities (ICT and health sciences) in the field of e-Health. Furthermore, to equip the students with 21st century skills, which are valued in the world of work, such as problem solving, social and cross-cultural interaction, critical thinking, collaboration and digital literacy (Chu *et al.*, 2017).

Starting from the original content of the "E-Health" subject taught at UVic-UCC, gamification as well as the ethics and law content from the DIT, which was included in the "Collaborative Systems" subject, was introduced. The new content was reduced and adjusted to follow a logical path without the elimination of key concepts from the single subjects. The new English course "Interdisciplinary e-Health Course" was integrated into an existing accredited course.

Learning outcomes, the main topic, the tasks, the schedule and the online learning environment(s) were discussed virtually. The schedule proved to be the most challenging aspect of the

planning because the teaching periods invariably did not overlap. Once the project got started, the workflow was managed from the background by sending out instructions, deadline reminders and feedback. This arrangement was beneficial for the students as it made them concentrate on group work. The projects lasted for 8 weeks (4 February to 31 March 2021).

A total of 26 students took the "Interdisciplinary e-Health Course" via virtual teaching and were part of four study programmes, as indicated in Figure 1. Students participated in virtual lectures designed to support them in group projects that were presented at the end of the course. Students were intentionally divided into groups with at least one member from each faculty, and the total student population included students from nine different countries.

Deggendorf Institute of Technology	University of Vic- Central University of Catalonia
Program: Health Informatics (Faculty European Campus Rottal-Inn) n = (12)	Programs: Nursing & Physiotherapy (Faculty Health and Welfare Sciences n = (7)
Program: Health Informatics (Faculty Applied Health Sciences) n = (7)	

Figure 1. Background of Participating Students

The overall model of the "Interdisciplinary e-Health Course", as shown in Figure 2, was to bring students from different countries and cultures and from different knowledge backgrounds together in order to work on a common project. The theoretical background of e-Health, robotics, Electronic Health Record, serious games and ethics and law was taught with various models. Both students and lecturers benefitted from virtual exchange and knowledge transfer, and the students also learned how to work together in groups and to understand important aspects of digital health.

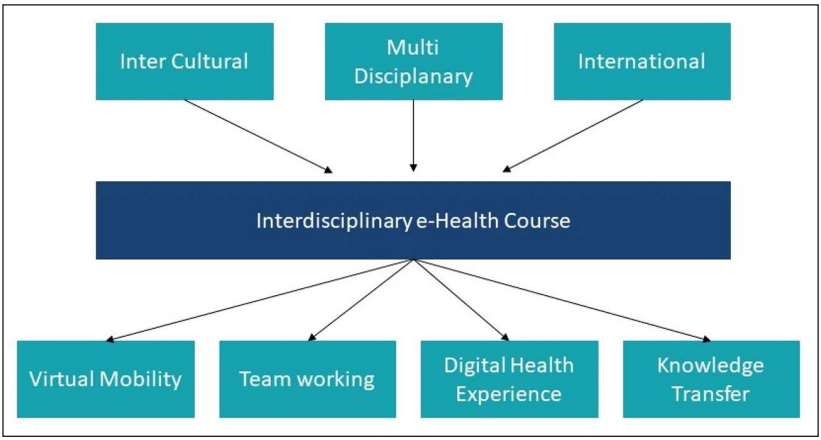

Figure. 2. Class model for "Interdisciplinary e-Health Course"

The "Interdisciplinary e-Health Course" lectures were taught virtually using a Moodle platform, a type of learning management system (LMS). Moodle was the central hub which hosted and communicated the different tools and content throughout the course. The online classroom methodology is seen in Figure 3:

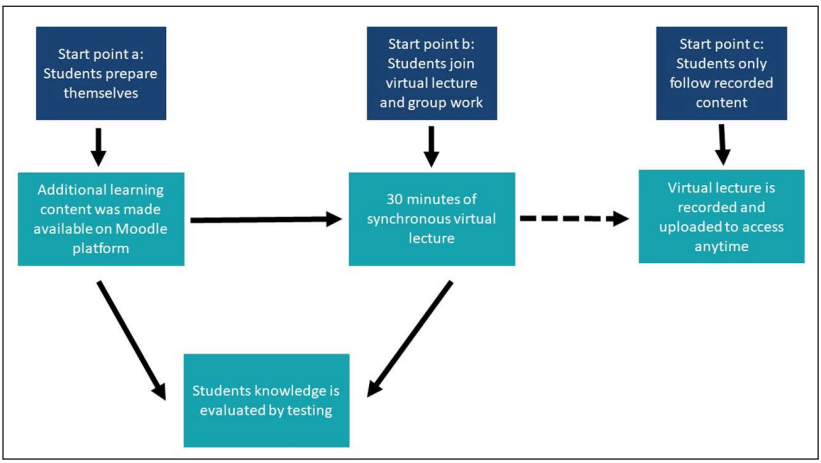

Figure. 3. Online Classroom Method

The synchronous Zoom lectures were each taught for approximately 30 minutes, and they adopted one of the following four forms: traditional lecture, watching a video followed by a classroom-wide review, group work followed by a whole class review

and teambuilding exercises. All the synchronous lectures and teambuilding exercises helped prepare students for the team work by taking into account international and interdisciplinary considerations. The additional content was made available on Moodle in the form of external videos or published articles. This content was selected based on the relevance to the topic and the perceived ease for the students to self-learn. Evaluation of the students' knowledge retention was carried out through an exam. The synchronous lessons were recorded for asynchronous teaching. There were three starting points where the students could join the course: a) the students prepared themselves by studying the additional learning content; b) the students joined the virtual lecture with included group work; or c) the students watched the recorded content. Regardless of the selected starting point, both additional learning content and recorded lectures were available to students at all times.

At the end of the course, the students worked together in international and interdisciplinary teams to develop a digital health solution proof-of-concept for users who had undergone hip replacement to reactivate their motor skills after surgery through the use of gamification or serious game. All presentations were shared in a final Zoom session.

5. Data Collection

To ensure the success of the initiative, students' and teachers' feedback was collected at the end of the "Interdisciplinary e-Health Course". First, an online survey (see Figure 4) was sent to all the students participating in the course at the end of the activities:

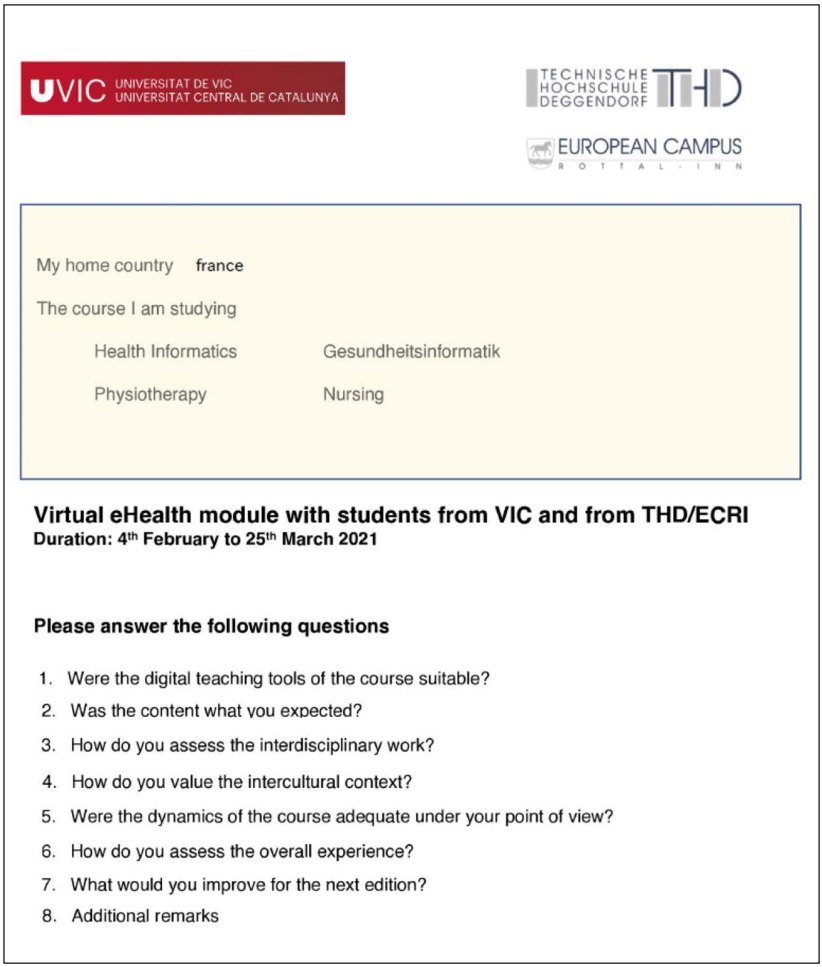

Figure 4. Online survey

Then, a debriefing session after the course with all teachers together served to acquire feedback regarding their experience.

6. Data analysis and results

Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the quantitative questions of the students' survey. An initial thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2012) was developed to get an impression of how the COIL was experienced by the students. Moreover, a SOAR

(strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results) analysis was used to debrief the teachers about their experience. SOAR is a strategic planning technique which helps to focus on positive results in business (Cole *et al.*, 2019).

6.1. Demographics

Countries of the students
The project comprised 26 students from two European universities. However, it included 17 European students (from France, Germany, Spain and Romania) and nine non-European (from Bangladesh, Kenia, Kosovo, Pakistan and Taiwan) students.

University degree of the students
A total of nineteen students participated in the course while taking the mandatory subject "Collaborative Systems" (5 ECTS) of the third year of the Health Informatics bachelor's degree (DIT), and twelve students were from the Faculty European Campus Rottal-Inn and seven from the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences. Three students participated in the project while taking the elective subject "E-Health" (3 ECTS) of their Nursing bachelor's degree (UVic-UCC), and four students while taking the same subject of their Physiotherapy bachelor's degree (UVic-UCC).

6.2. Student Survey

We received nine answers. With regard to the digital tools, six out of nine students reported that they were suitable. Despite this, only four students reported that the content of the course was what they expected.

The feedback of the survey's open questions may be summarized as follows:

- An experience with high value for future team work.
- Lack of communication and harmonization between group members from different countries.
- Interest in relationships between students from different countries.
- Language barriers when performing conflict resolution tasks.

- Lack of toleration between group members to accept the conclusions.
- The result of the final group work was very good.
- Difficulties getting to know each other.
- Language skills were improved.

In addition, students made suggestions to improve the course:

- Ensure that all the students will cooperate and perform some preliminary training around this shared task.
- Create groups of students with similar personal skills in order to have balanced groups.
- Improve the scheduling tasks.

6.3. Lecturers Evaluation

The lecturers' evaluation of the "Interdisciplinary e-Health Course" was conducted applying SOAR.

Strength
In a project with international students from two international universities challenges arise. Different knowledge backgrounds, different languages and different cultural backgrounds were managed well by the students. In the working groups, the differences became strengths as the achieved results were characterized by the different input from students during the final exam.

Opportunities
There were nine nationalities among the participants. Cooperation with so many students in a relatively small cohort (26 students) was seen in quite a few discussions in the working groups. The students of DIT (German, Sub-Sahara African, Asian and East European countries) and the students of UVic-UCC (Spanish and French) shared their cultural background knowledge.

Aspirations
This programme was developed between UVic-UCC and DIT for the first time. We saw the challenges when many students with different cultural backgrounds participate in such a course, but we also saw the positive outcome. The overall experience ena-

bled us to decide to continue the "Interdisciplinary e-Health Course" next academic year with students from UVic-UCC and DIT. Our goal is to invite another European university to participate in the course, so that the international character of this project will be intensified.

Results

The project was shaped by the experience of international students. Exams were held by both universities for all the students at the end of the teaching period. Twenty-nine students took part in the exams at the end of the course; all of the students passed. The students' experiences were gathered through a survey which was done online. Nine participated in the survey.

7. Discussion

The existing literature indicates that creating some small integration activities on the first day, mixing students from both centres is needed (EACEA and EU, 2020). Even though an introductory explanation of the course including the presentation of the participants was given, participants said it was not enough. In addition to this, they were not totally aware of the course contents. However, the digital environment was not viewed by the students as a problem, and the chosen tools were essentially viewed as the most appropriate. These findings are aligned with the literature, as improperly functioning technology may interfere with learning and engagement if students and teachers have to invest time and resources to simple content access (Restauri *et al.*, 2001).

Despite the Bologna Process, the two universities had their own idiosyncrasies concerning the schedule of their programmes. The schedule of the course was a challenge raised by the lecturers and students. Different countries at different moments in the academic calendar affected attitudes toward the tasks. These results are aligned with previous literature, which indicates that participants and staff should be equally committed and motivated (Háhn, 2019).

Students had difficulties working together. The course included students of nine nationalities with three different disciplines. Therefore, differences in cultural and professional skills created

teamwork conflicts. In addition, not all the students had the same language skills. However, as in previous COIL courses, students managed to solve these discrepancies by improving their intercultural competences and soft skills, as well as their language skills. In addition, in prior research into students working together cooperatively, higher productivity and greater productivity were reached and they showed an enhancement of classroom results (Laal and Ghodsi, 2012). In our study, probably heightened by the interdisciplinary approach, the outcomes of the final task were outstanding.

Finally, there is evidence in existing research that collaborative learning fosters committed relationships (Laal and Ghodsi, 2012). In our study, students showed interest in relations outside the course. Furthermore, the collaborative work between the staff opened a door to cooperation in future projects as we got to know each other and learnt to work together as a team.

8. Conclusions

The "Interdisciplinary e-Health Course" was the first interdisciplinary COIL experience in both universities. The inclusion of the different students' professional knowledge level boosted the groups to a new level. These kinds of interdisciplinary activities support the development of global citizen skills and the critical thinking and reasoning expected of future health professionals and ICT professionals when collectively solving global health care challenges.

Higher Education Internationalization is so much more than students' and teachers' mobility. IaH plays a major role in this context, and COIL courses are useful resources; they open innovative communication and learning contexts across nations and cultures. The strength of COIL courses as "an effective option to address challenges related to cultural awareness, intercultural collaboration and transversal/soft skills" (European Commission, 2017, p. 29) cannot be denied. Despite this, still more commitment at the institutional level is definitely required (Beelen and Leask, 2011).

Current debates on the economic and environmental cost of study abroad programmes, as well as the challenges to physical

mobility posed by global pandemics, have made COIL an attractive option for institutions of higher education as they search for sustainable and low-cost models of international learning, which will serve as an alternative or to complement physical mobility programmes (De Wit, 2016). However, it is not a cost-free activity.

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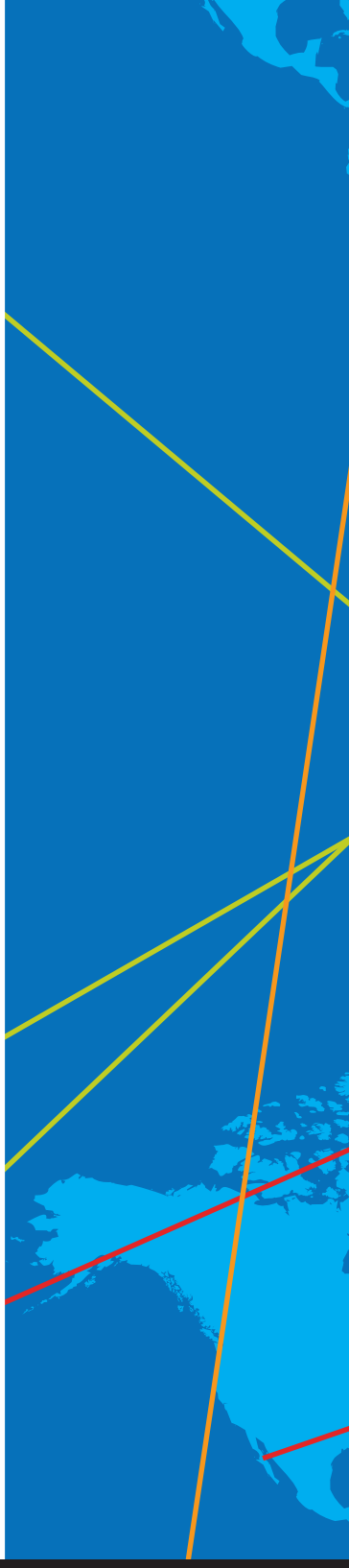
PART II: INTERNATIONALIZATION AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE: BEST TEACHING PRACTICES

Internationalization and Intercultural Competence in Higher Education: Quality and Innovation

This volume contributes to the construction and definition of comprehensive and sustainable internationalization and emphasizes the need for interdisciplinary, transversal and hybrid learning. The majority of contributions have emerged from the Spanish higher education context, but the topics addressed are believed to resonate worldwide with higher education institutions, professional practice and 21st century society. In the first part of the book, the chapter contributions shed light on systemic, conceptual or programme features related to internationalization and global and intercultural competence in higher education. In the second part the authors present concrete teaching experiences of internationalization and intercultural competence and highlight different questions related to interdisciplinary work, digitalization, collaborative online international learning (COIL) and project learning. By embedding COIL within and across course programmes, participants who would otherwise be unable to take part in international exchanges are included. This respect for diversity, as well as active and reflective engagement in international communication with an emphasis on students' own experiences are fundamental elements of this pedagogical approach. The book concludes by advocating sustainable internationalization through an interdisciplinary approach to intercultural competence training which is integrated into the curriculum.



Octaedro

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