



Leveraging on cultural diversity to design higher education programs

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As part of the Enhance! IDM project, the purpose of this thesis was to create a framework for higher education program leaders and teaching staff to develop their intercultural knowledge in order to understand the expectations of a culturally diverse student audience and use appropriate tools to design education programs that provide high quality, inclusive for learning opportunities for all. The theoretical part discussed three different subjects. Firstly, it provided different definitions of culture as well as an overview on the most acknowledged theories in the cross-cultural study landscape. Secondly, it delved into theories on service quality, which in academia is widely referred to as a key driver to foster competitive advantage and thus as a very important subject that organisations need to understand in order to deliver user-centred solutions. Thirdly, this report pulled together different theories illustrating design thinking as a creative problem-solving process whose iterative and collaborative nature is to develop innovative, user-centred solutions for their users. To conclude the analysis, the above-mentioned theories were summarised into a conceptual framework that was named “The cultural diversity design framework”. Following the theoretical section, the approach used to address the case study drew from the service design discipline to outline a three-phase process and define a selection of methods that were utilized to investigate the research questions. Among these, an online survey, user journey and qualitative interviews, personas, co-creation were utilised. The synthesis and analysis of the findings gathered in the first phase of the process resulted in the identification of two cultural clusters, that acted as the foundation to create personas, and of patterns among service expectations. These patterns were then rephrased and summarised into 6 key insights, or focus points, that served as the basis for the Enhance! IDM co-creation workshop that followed. The four most promising ideas generated during the workshop were then synthesized, refined, and delivered to the Enhance! IDM team which will leverage on them to define the content of the toolbox by March 2020. By opening a new discussion on the relation among the three presented theories and proposing a framework that puts them into a system, this report gives its contribution to the academic debate. The author argues that by exploring different methodologies or adapting the framework to industry-specific studies, future research should focus on deepening the analysis on the relation among these theories.

Keywords: culture, service expectations, design thinking, diversity

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1 Introduction

In recent years, the globalization of markets has contributed to the internationalization of higher education, thus acting as a driver to innovate learning and teaching policies and practices (Morgan, Houghton 2011) in order for education programs to suit the needs of an ever-growing audience of diverse students.

With the rapid development of knowledge and technology playing an important role in lowering barriers to education and favouring its access to a growing number of students, factors like greater mobility, distance learning and internationalization have been fostering the growth of diversity in learning environments, thus contributing to igniting a deep transformation of the current landscape of higher education.

Indeed, in the context where students are becoming increasingly diverse, the number of personal demands for educational services is growing. Many diversity issues have been identified as impacting the progress and outcome of studies and the students' learning experiences. Such factors may concern different national/ethnic/cultural/ linguistic backgrounds, different levels of maturity or their prior study experience, different learning styles and strategies, disabilities, commuting and distance learning, challenging life situations, or bringing along different disciplinary/institutional/functional learning cultures. On the other hand, the challenging part of offering education programs to a diverse audience concerns the fact that attention should not be paid to developing a universal approach to education but rather to ensuring that, whatever the backdrop of the institution providing education, students coming from different contexts and cultural backgrounds can find an appropriate meaning in its approach (Knight, 2015).

As an evidence that the matter has nowadays become of undeniable relevance at a European - if not global - scale, the promotion of inclusion and diversity in higher education has been emerging as a key point on many European countries' national strategies as well as on the agenda of European institutions like the European Higher Education area (EHEA). For example, the Yerevan Communiqué (2015) declares that it is among the shared goals and common commitment of all member countries to join efforts towards broadening and democratizing access to higher education as well as ensuring that the composition of the student body corresponds to the societal distribution.

While the higher education sector is demonstrating an emerging need to respond fast to this rapid transformation, rising interest is being shown to whether it will be capable of grasping an array of different needs and designing programs that give equal learning opportunities to local as well as international students by leveraging on diversity as an asset. Indeed, what we might argue is that international students enrol in programs with expectations that are highly

influenced by their previous experiences and cultural backgrounds, and when service perception don't equal expectations this gap might result in lower engagement or even drop-outs.

In this context, several questions are emerging: how might higher education institutions identify cultural differences while avoiding stereotyping and stigmatisation? How might they best prepare to meet needs and expectations of an increasingly diverse audience of students? As the area in which this debate needs to take place is now larger than ever before, the following research will look for answers to these questions.

1.1 Delimitations to this research

In order to be relevant a research needs to set a focus, define its structure and leverage on appropriate methods. Before delving into the content of this report, it is worth mentioning that there are numerous angles from which a research on inclusion and diversity could be addressed. For instance, in framing the scope one could touch upon aspects like gender, age, culture and language, sexual orientation, physical and cognitive ability and socio-economic background, only to name a few. Thus, to cover such a broad topic is too ambitious for the purpose of this investigation. This thesis rather wants to serve as a starting point for a wider research and thus will primarily focus on the topic of inclusion and diversity from a cultural perspective. Other aspects such as the above-mentioned will only be touched upon briefly.

Similarly, due to scoping reasons, the service design process in this thesis will not be explored in its full extension. Taking Brown and Katz's framework as an example (2009), according to which successful design outcome lays at the intersection of what is desirable from the users' perspective, what is technically feasible, and what is commercially viable for the organisation (Brown and Katz, 2009), the boundaries of this thesis will be limited to developing a few concept ideas which are desirable to the target users; its technical feasibility and other business-related aspects concerning the service concept's financial sustainability or market-fit will be left out of scope. Thus, by focusing on the phases of discover, define, design and deliver (Design Council, 2019) the service design process in this thesis will provide deep understanding about students with various cultural backgrounds and add insights on the context in which their learning experience takes place.

Despite this report aims at initiating a discussion around a delimited subject by only leveraging on the initial phases of the innovation process, it is not excluded that it may trigger the interest in later extending the scope to other areas relative to the broader topic and to a further development of the service concept.

1.2 Aim of the thesis

The objectives of this thesis are twofold. On one hand, it aims at identifying cultural differences among students based on the values they identify with. On the other, it aims at understanding how cultural differences influence student expectations in relation to learning experiences.

By keeping this aim as a backbone, the research addresses the following specific questions as illustrated in Figure 1.

- AIM**
1. How might we identify different cultural identities within a student group?
 2. How do different cultural identities influence the expectations of higher education students on their learning experience?



PURPOSE

Creating a framework for program leaders to develop their intercultural knowledge in order to design inclusive learning opportunities for students with different cultural identities.

Figure 1: Aim and purpose of this thesis

Although the focus is purposely on identifying cultural identities within a student group and understanding how they influence expectations on learning experiences, the insights emerged from conducting research on a student level will be used to design a toolbox targeted at higher education program leaders, teaching staff and the administrative support organization. Thus, the purpose of this thesis is to create a framework for the strategic decision makers in this ecosystem to develop their intercultural knowledge in order to understand the needs of a culturally diverse audience as well as use appropriate tools to design education programs that provide inclusive learning opportunities to students identifying with any culture.

1.3 Structure of this report

This thesis report consists of a theoretical and empirical part based on a case study.

Following this chapter, which outlines the thesis background and scope, Chapter 2 provides a background to the project on which the case study is based on, its key target users and the approach that was chosen to address the research. The theoretical part begins in Chapter 3 and consists in three main pillars: a section dedicated to exploring a definition of culture; one that introduces different theories on service quality in order to learn from literature about the correlation between culture and service expectations; one that introduces design thinking as a methodology develop user-centred innovations. In this Chapter, cross-cultural theories such as the Schwartz's Theory of basic values (2012) will be introduced as they are leading the study in this report. The theoretical part continues in Chapter 4, which presents the design thinking process and introduces a compilation of the most appropriate tools and methods for the purpose of this research. The empirical part of this report is then presented in Chapter 5, 6, and 7, introducing the results of the process followed in the case study development. These are ultimately discussed in Chapter 8, which debates on how they relate to the aim of the thesis before concluding with suggesting directions for further research.

2 Case study: IDM Toolbox

Enhanced Programme Leadership for Inclusion and Diversity Management in Higher Education or "Enhance IDM!" is a project funded by the Erasmus+ KA2 Programme to raise awareness among players of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) on the importance of Inclusion and Diversity Management (IDM), enhance their corresponding competences and implement means to ensure sustainability of taken measures. Driven by a consortium of European universities, it runs for 33 months starting on 01.09.2017 and ending on 31.05.2020.

The consortium consists of four partners:

1. University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria (Austria) brings in core values of inter-functional teamwork as well as means to facilitate cooperation among team members with conflicting interests.
2. Birmingham City University (UK) brings in extensive working knowledge in demographic diversity, particularly disabilities, ethnical/religious/ linguistic background, age, social mobility.
3. Technische Hochschule Köln (Germany) addresses extensive working knowledge in disciplinary diversity due to their wide range of differing disciplines and their numerous interdisciplinary projects.
4. Laurea University of Applied Sciences (Finland) has a specially designed a teaching model called "Learning by Developing" which allows flexible and appreciative ways for studying. Laurea University is thus well suited to address the segment of cognitive diversity.

The objectives of Enhance IDM! are twofold. Enhance IDM!'s primary aim is to enhance inclusion and diversity management competences among programme leaders (PLs), teaching staff and the administrative support across the organization; however, it also targets students and hopes to generate a positive impact on their study conditions, ultimately reducing drop-outs and enhancing graduate employability.

In the course of the project, five outputs were and will be generated:

1. A survey to measure programme leaders' position towards inclusion and diversity management and explore their approaches and methods.
2. Multimedia resources and video material on IDM common scenarios in higher education, for example, holding fair admission interviews or dealing with dyslexic students.
3. A blended-learning training-programme for PLs to focus on raising awareness as well as the development of concrete measures to be applied in study programmes consisting of a workshop (face-to-face meeting) and an e-learning component.
4. A public IDM toolbox with practical IDM methods and tools.
5. An online self-assessment to measure individual awareness, general attitudes and competences/skills in dealing with student diversity.

Despite these five outputs are produced as a collaborative effort by the consortium mentioned above, Laurea University's primary focus concerns point 4: the development of an "IDM Toolbox" with tailor-made methods and tools to support higher education PLs and staff to deal with inclusion and diversity challenges.

The Toolbox is defined as a service entity consisting of a collection of self-standing tools, methods, information and multimedia content to focus on the following strategic areas:

- Curriculum design
- Curriculum delivery
- Assessment & feedback
- Learning enhancement
- Staff engagement

The materials and tools (to be incorporated in the Enhance IDM! toolbox) should be easily accessible to support PL and the staff to better meet the challenges related to inclusion and diversity in their daily working routine for the benefit of all students and their study programme.

2.1 Target group

The “official” target group for Enhance IDM! are programme leaders (PLs) since they have a central role within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). They are the main decision-makers, they regulate access to their programmes, they are responsible for the curricula design and they also act as supervisors to other teaching and administrative staff. Moreover, PLs dispose of formal as well as informal power to find strong support for the implementation of inclusion-sensitive practices at an institutional level. As their goal is to attract a stable, if not growing, number of students, they have great interest in communicating effective IDM strategies to their faculty for the benefit of all involved stakeholders (module coordinators, teachers, tutor teachers, special teachers, students and administrative staff).

The stakeholders in charge of curriculum implementation, content and delivery may vary across each organisation’s consortium. At Laurea University it is not much PLs or Development Managers, as they are called, who are involved in these activities, but rather the module coordinators and teachers. In addition to having a certain degree of autonomy and freedom, module coordinators and teachers at Laurea University are responsible for creating the course content and are the closest touchpoint to the students in the classroom. This is the reason why they are also considered an important stakeholder in this project.

The secondary target group for this project is students. Due to the decision to delimitate the research scope around cultural diversity and inclusion, the secondary audience concerns students of any cultural background who are currently enrolled in the second or third year of an international higher education study program at Laurea University of Applied Sciences.

2.2 Research design: from top-down to bottom-up

The development of this project lays its foundation on two core research studies, that ran simultaneously: one was aimed at understanding the current landscape of inclusion and diversity strategies and identifying the needs of Laurea University staff with regards to implementing practices in this domain. This research branch focused on interviewing educational decision-makers and front-stage stakeholders in the service delivery at Laurea University and was run by Margarida Da Marça.

The other one, conducted by the author of this thesis, aimed at identifying cultural differences in a student group at Laurea University, and at investigating the influence of cultural values on service expectations and the assessment of the quality of a learning experience. Both studies were conducted locally at Laurea University of Applied Sciences and included stakeholders specifically concerned with international programs.

Figure 2 illustrates the process followed in this project and how the two independent re-research studies eventually converged to leverage on findings from both sides and design one IDM toolkit.

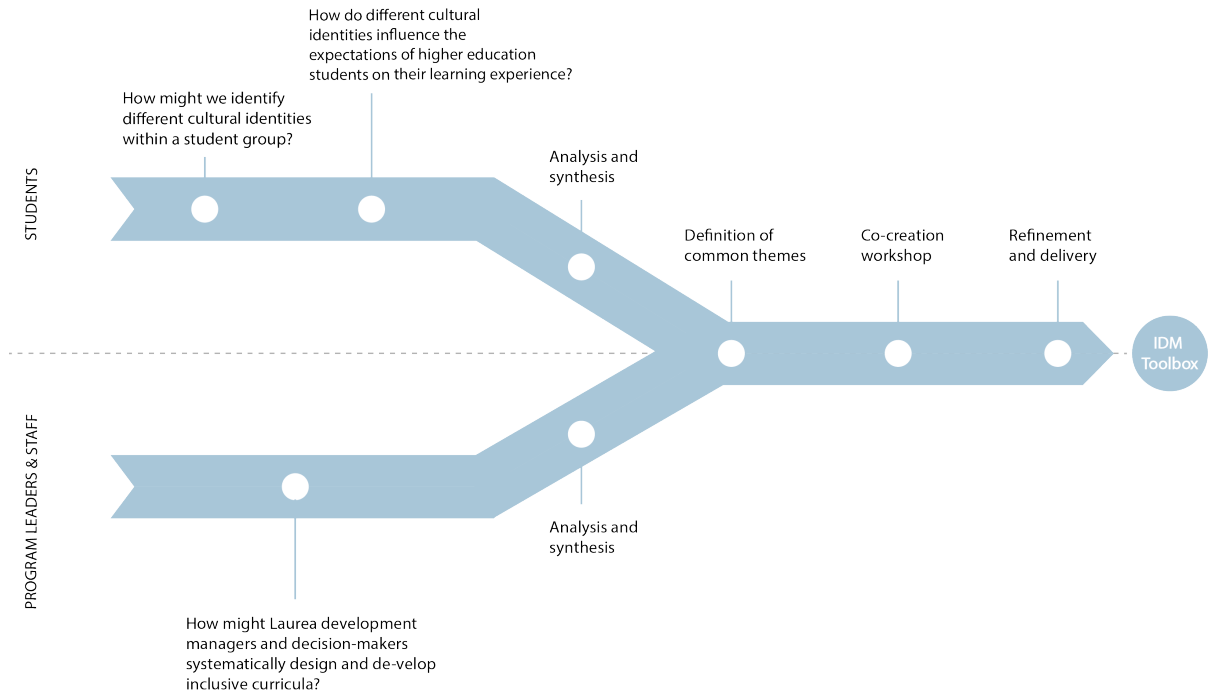


Figure 2: The process followed in this project

3 The role of culture on the evaluation of service quality

The first chapters introduced the background and key concepts of this report. This chapter reviews different theories in academic literature with the aim of creating a theoretical framework that acts as a foundation for the project work that follows. The most relevant perspectives this theoretical framework draws from are three: the first one provides a definition of culture and its influence on consumers' evaluation of services; the second explores the notions of service expectations and perception to provide a definition of service quality; the third one describes design thinking as a methodology to develop user-centred product or service solutions. Together, these three theories are considered as the theoretical basis for the development of the thesis project and are further elaborated by the author in a framework called "The cultural diversity design framework".

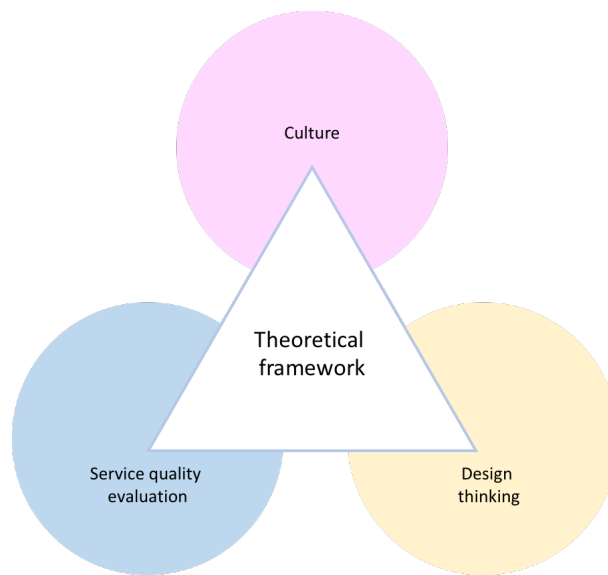


Figure 3: The theoretical framework in this thesis

3.1 Promoting cultural diversity to design inclusive education experiences

With student populations becoming increasingly diverse all over the world and internationalisation being recognised as a key driver to foster changes in educational policies and practices (Morgan, Houghton 2011), increasing attention is being paid by higher education institutions to the potential of multicultural diversity and inclusion in order to stay in line with the overall goal to provide students with the technical, human and thinking skills required in a complex, multi-faceted society (Hurtado, 2001) and promote equal success among all of them (Morgan, Houghton 2011). Recent research (Banks 2010; Gay 2010; Lucas and Villegas 2013) claims that culture has central importance in achieving inclusion and diversity in education and it is increasingly urgent for teachers and program leaders to develop the appropriate competences to understand it, starting from developing the right knowledge, expertise, and stances (Gay 2010; Lucas and Villegas 2013). Growing interest on this topic is not only on the agenda to challenge discrimination and achieve greater educational democracy: among the benefits that have been brought about as deriving from it, Morgan and Houghton (2011) claim that it contributes to enhancing the quality of education and improves student performance and engagement.

Despite the transformation process towards inclusion and diversity holds program leaders accountable for the adaptation of their institution policies, the other side of the coin concerns implementing strategies to stimulate cultural competences in students too. As Acquah and Commins suggest (2017), this encompasses the design of engaging learning opportunities that offer hands-on cultural experiences, a learning environment where students can contemplate

and debate on their own identity as well as that of others, and a safe space for such an exchange to happen.

Providing students with the opportunity to reflect on themselves with a critical eye is pointed out as particularly important also by Banks (2010) and Gay (2010), who argue that it facilitates the analysis of their own ethnic fabric and the understanding of the history of their culture. However, this activity is important for students as well as for teachers, who might not be aware of their students' cultural constructs.

As these theories suggest, creating the premises for all stakeholders (teachers, students, staff, etc) to understand the needs and perspectives of different students hence emerges as a key component to designing diverse and inclusive education programs. This perspective lays its foundation on the acknowledgement that, irrespective of how their past experiences impacted their identity and how their approach to learning is influenced by certain circumstances, every student deserves to experience quality education (Morgan, Houghton 2011) and should be seen as an individual rather than emerging as different. A holistic approach to inclusive curriculum design thus emerges as fundamental to eliminate barriers to discrimination, deter stigmatisation and rather benefit from diversity by seeing it as an asset.

In the course of this study, inclusive curriculum design will be referred to as the sum of nine key components (Morgan and Houghton, 2011) that should be taken into account to ensure that all students have equal access and means to achieve success in education: aims, objectives, learning outcomes, academic and competences standards, syllabus, teaching methods, learning activities, assessment and feedback, teaching and learning materials.

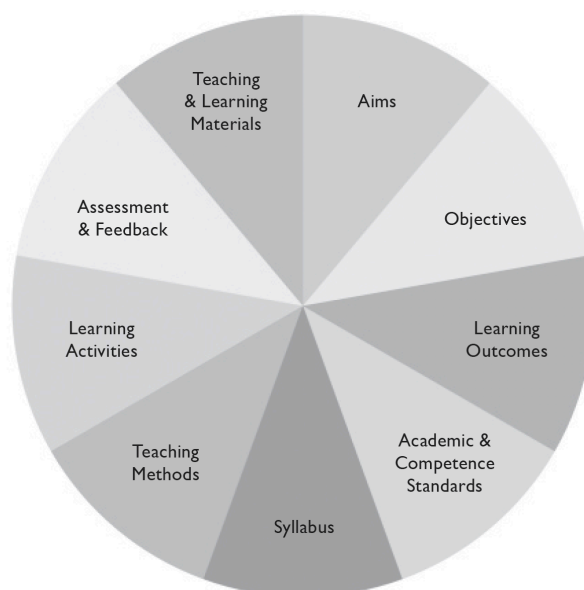


Figure 4: Elements of curriculum design by Morgan and Houghton (2011)

In the attempt to define a theoretical framework that will be used as a foundation for the research that follows, the next paragraph will discuss some of the most relevant theories on culture, others on the service expectations and the evaluation of service quality, and finally introduce design thinking.

3.2 A definition of culture

Despite several theories have attempted to explore a definition of culture, its nature as a multidimensional construct makes it difficult to frame, just like it is for personalities or lifestyles (Donthu and Yoo, 1998, p.179). However, culture can be understood as a collective phenomenon that distinguishes people of one group from those of another, and more specifically as a set of shared values, assumptions and beliefs that are learnt through membership in a group, and that influence members' attitudes and behaviours (Chatman & Cha, 2003). In other words, it could be defined as the "collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from those of another" (Hofstede, 1991, p.4). While difficult to observe and measure, knowing and understanding cultural differences is a relevant matter in business. The reason why so many researchers have placed much importance to investigating it both in general and in relation to business lies in the fact that a lack of understanding may lead to wrong assumptions, lower efficiency and quality of communications among team members (Leung, Bhagat, Buchan, Erez & Gibson, 2005).

One of the first and most referenced researcher who dedicated his investigations on culture is Hofstede (1980, 1984, 1991), whose work on cultural dimensions is regarded as a key reference in the field of cross-cultural studies. Based on extensive research, Hofstede's efforts converged into five dimensions of national cultures (1980): Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism/Collectivism, Masculinity/Femininity, Long/Short Term Orientation.

Despite its importance in cross-cultural studies, since this theory was first elaborated factors like migrations, technologies, and globalisation (among others) contributed to raising some criticism that forced to reconsider the notion of culture and its relation to nations. What these critiques suggest is that culture and nations are not to be taken as synonyms (Kanousi, 2005), and that different measure should rather be taken to study culture. Before this debate would start, Hofstede himself (1980) had admitted that when the cultural heterogeneity within a country is vast, the great variations and expectations related to the national character make it inappropriate to refer to these two terms as synonyms.

A more recent theory which gained ground in cross-cultural studies is Schwartz's theory of basic values (2012) which lies on the premises that individual and cultural elements are to be analysed separately. In this theory, individual dimensions are to be understood as psychological dynamics of a person in their daily life, whereas cultural dimensions imply the actions and constructs a person enacts to express goals in social interactions (Schwartz, 2012). In Schwartz's view, culture is a combination of beliefs, practices, meanings, symbols and values shared by individuals in a society (Schwartz, 2006). According to his theories, values play a central role in the definition of culture, and they are used to identify cultural cohorts, societies, and individuals, to monitor change over time, and to better understand the motivational foundations of people's attitudes and behaviours. (Schwartz, 2012).

Schwartz's extensive studies on values range from theories that study their key features (1992), to more recent ones analysing their underlying motivations (2012). The latter, which is known as "Theory of basic values" builds on the motivations behind different values to define 10 universal human values (2012).

This theory identifies ten basic human values that are recognized across cultures:

1. Self-direction - values defining our ambitions and goals in life.
2. Stimulation - values that drive aspirations and accomplishments
3. Hedonism - values revolving around self-gratification and pleasure
4. Achievement - values driving personal success and attainment
5. Power - values that are based on control, self-enhancement and status.
6. Security- values that concern safety and self-control.
7. Conformity - values that define the adherence to societal constructs and norms.
8. Tradition - values based on respect, adherence to customs and culture, and commitment.
9. Benevolence - values that are based on preserving harmony and balance between the self and others.
10. Universalism - values that imply tolerance and general acknowledgement of the nature of things that surround us.

Based on the analysis of their underlying motivations, these ten values were then clustered into four domains:

1. Self-direction: domain that concerns openness to change and flexibility.
2. Self-transcendence: domain that encompasses universalism
3. Conservation: domain based on traditional values

4. Self-enhancement: domain ruled by self-enhancement

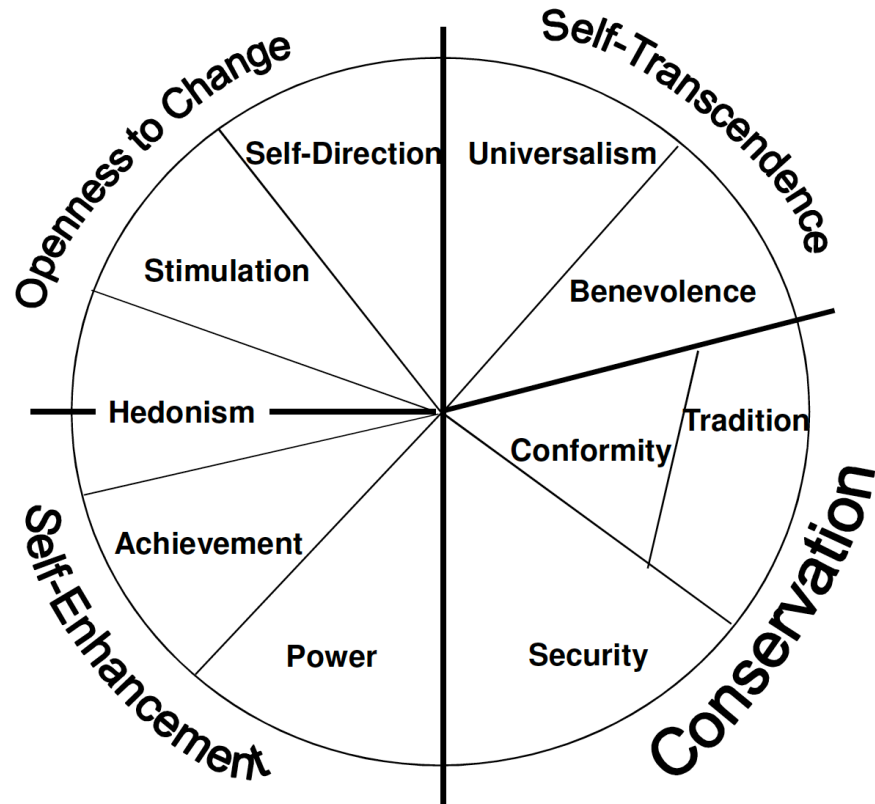


Figure 5: A visual representation of Schwartz's Theory of values (2012)

What this framework suggests is that the closer the values are one another, the stronger is the similarity in their underlying motivations. On the other hand, the more distant they are, the stronger is the opposition among these (Schwartz, 2012). The Theory of Basic Human Values is widely recognised as important because it helps understanding values and their variations across cultures, without necessarily defining cultures as nations. This acquires particular relevance considering that values explain behaviours (Beatty, 2005) and that understanding them, as well as their underlying motivations, can help better engaging with an international audience.

This theory will be referred to as the leading cultural theory in the development work for this thesis, not only because it is acknowledged as one of the strongest and most recent in the field of cross-cultural studies, but also because it provides a universal value framework that allows to identify cultural differences beyond national stereotypes.

3.3 Service quality and expectations

In today's world of globalized markets higher education, like any other service, is pushed towards commercial competition, resulting in institutions being under pressure to ensure that the education they provide meets adequate quality standards. In this context, research in service marketing (Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996) has identified service quality as a strategic driver to ensure success and provide competitive advantage. According to the research conducted in this domain, service quality is seen as generating positive effects such as stimulating ongoing sales, fostering word of mouth, increasing loyalty and providing strategic differentiation of the offerings (Adbullah 2006).

Since it emerged as a promising approach to study in the service sector, many researchers were dedicated to exploring ways to measure it with the ultimate goal of supporting providers in improving the quality of their service offering. However, the qualitative nature of its construct makes it challenging to define and measure (Adbullah 2006), resulting in the rising of a debate on how to best define this approach and which methods are most effective. Among the first ones who made an attempt to define service quality there are Lewis and Booms (1983, p.100) who refer to it as "the measure of how well the service level delivered matches customer expectations". Similarly, Berry et al. (1985, p. 46) convene that customer perceptions of service quality result from the comparison of expectations one had before experiencing the service, and their actual impression of the service during their experience.

More theories in the service literature recognize that people's expectations are a key point of reference to determine the quality of a firm's offering. Among these, Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml (1993, p.2) define service expectations as "beliefs about service delivery that function as standards or reference points against which performance is judged" and categorize them into three types: desired service (what a customer hopes to experience), adequate service (what is found acceptable) and predicted service (what a customer believes the service experience will be). Service expectations are thus defined as the difference between desired and adequate service, known as "Zone of tolerance" (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry 1991, p. 42). Previously, the same authors had argued that "customers compare perceptions to expectations when judging a firm's value", thus putting the emphasis on expectations as the "prerequisite to deliver superior service" (1991, p.1). The most recognized definition on service quality has thus consolidated itself into the subtraction of perceptions from expectations (P-E). This theory is also known as "gap theory" (Gronroos, 1982).

Gronroos model was later further elaborated by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985), who created a new model based on the measurement of the gap between perceived service and

expected service in order to measure service quality. This model identifies five gaps that need to be measured to determine service quality:

1. Gap 1: The gap between the expectations of consumers and the perception of management of the customers' expectations
2. Gap 2: The gap between the perception of management of consumers' expectations and service quality specifications
3. Gap 3: The gap between service quality specifications and the service provided
4. Gap 4: The gap between the service provided and external communications to the consumer
5. Gap 5: The gap between consumers' expectations and their perception of the service.

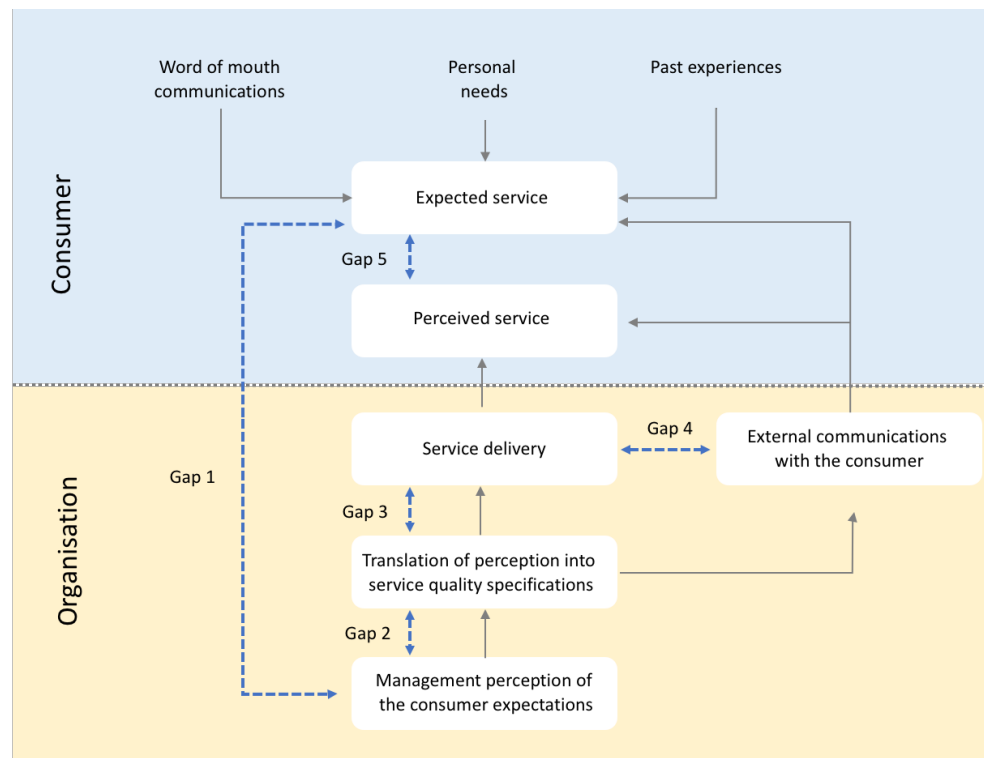


Figure 6: The gap theory defining service quality, adapted from Parasuraman et al. (1985)

These theories laid the foundation for the development of more recent theories on service quality, whose efforts were directed towards further expanding the previous theories (for example, about determining service quality dimensions) or applying them on industry-specific cases (for instance, about determining specific measurements criteria for the retail industry). However, as no significant recent academic findings seem to go in contrast with the above-

mentioned frameworks, the review of this literature landscape is considered sufficient to move onto defining the next theme for the purpose of this report: the influence of culture in evaluating service quality.

3.4 Cultural influence on the evaluation of service quality

With the intention of demonstrating a strong connection between culture and the assessment of a service, the relationship between these two has been examined by a number of studies (Donthu and Yoo, 1998; Mattila, 1999; Furrer et al. 2000) arguing that various cultural groups evaluate service quality in a different way (Furrer et al. 2000).

Starting from the acknowledgement of customers' physical, social, and psychological needs as determinants for expectations, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1993) suggest that these are highly influenced by a social and cultural context. In other words, as culture shapes behavioural patterns and attitudes, and thus the values, lifestyle and personality of people, Engel and Blackwell (1982) claim that it forges social interactions and thus every service whose delivery is highly dependent on the direct engagement with customers encompasses that social norms and cultural differences will play a key role in its evaluation (Bradley, 1995). Considering that interactions lie at the basis of every service encounter, Donthu and Yoo (1998) conclude that different cultural backgrounds might lead to different service expectations, thus affecting satisfaction and the perception of service quality (Kanousi, 2005). Other researchers (Mattila, 1999) further elaborated the concept by suggesting that a customer's cultural background impacts the hints that are chosen to evaluate a service, thus having a high influence on its overall assessment.

What all these theories have in common is the belief that the nature of service encounters is social, and thus suggest that the assessment of service encounters is influenced by customers' cultural backgrounds (Mattila, 1999).

3.5 Design thinking

Design thinking is a creative process based on the deep understanding of users in order to foster innovative product, service, or system solutions that meet real human needs. Its nature is non-linear, or iterative: this means that it does not follow a linear sequence of steps and implies that design teams often have to take some steps back and forth while developing an idea (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011). Another key principle of design thinking is that the process should not generate solutions that meet users' needs, but that also take into account a market and business perspective, and are technologically feasible (Brown, 2008). Become popular in the 90's, design thinking has gained ground not only in the design world but also (and now mostly) in the

business world as a methodology to solve wicked problems, meant as complex challenges that cannot be solved with one or more evident solutions and that require a deep understanding of the nature of the problem as well as the ecosystem of stakeholders connected to it. This suggests that in order to produce successful results, it does not only have to be iterative but also collaborative. In Bason's words, this approach could be described as "the intellectual and practical foundation of the co-creation process (that) guides collaboration across different disciplines" (2018, 172).

Although the foundation principles are the same, there are many ways the phases of a design thinking process could be defined. For instance, Stickdorn and Schneider (2011) frame them as Exploration, Creation, Reflection and Implementation, while the Stanford University d.school (2019) describes them as Empathize, Define, Ideate Prototype, and Test. One of the frameworks that has become popular the most is the one proposed in 2005 by the RED Design Council, known as Double Diamond, according to which the process breaks down into 4 phases: Discover, Define, Develop, Deliver as described in Figure 7 below.

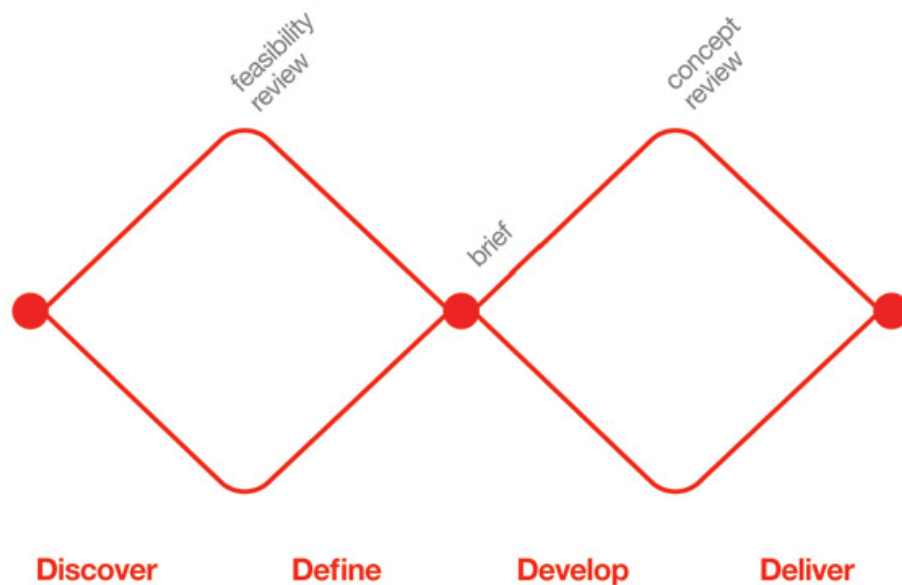


Figure 7: The Double Diamond framework by RED Design Council (2005)

This framework visualises the process as a double sequence of diverging phases, where the team of designers focuses on opening up to a variety of data sources or ideas, to converging phases, where they synthesize information and narrow down choices by prioritising quality (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 345 and 368-375).

The four phases could be described as follow:

- The Discover phase is about collecting insights about the the users by gaining empathy towards their needs and their environment, but also developing a deep understanding of the market landscape, the business, and the context related to the initial briefing (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011).
- The Define phase concerns the analysis and synthesis of previously collected information with the aim of redefining the initial briefing into a more focused problem statement based around the emerged insights from the Discover phase.
- The Design phase is about pulling together different stakeholders to generate a range of answers to the redefined problem statement and generate a variety of ideas around them.
- The Deliver phase concerns the selection of an idea and its quick development in a low-fidelity fashion, so that its core proposition can be tested with real users and their feedback can be integrated in the refinement of the idea until it's ready to be launched on the market.

3.6 Synthesis of theories

Drawing from the presented theories on culture, service quality, and design thinking, Figure 8 illustrates a framework that the author has elaborated as a synthesis of them. This conceptual framework is named "Cultural diversity design framework".

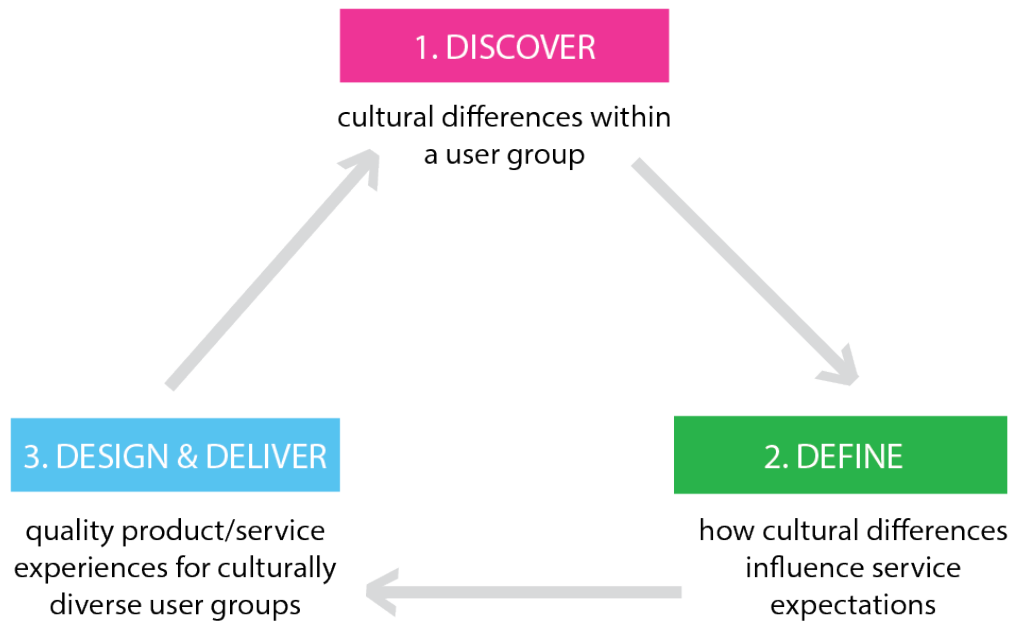


Figure 8: The cultural diversity design framework

The Cultural diversity design framework synthesises the theories on cultural values and their impact on the evaluation of service quality and integrates them with design thinking to show how they could be used as a reference in a process that aims at design for cultural diversities.

Inspired by the typical sequence of the design thinking process (Design Council, 2005) it articulates in 3 phases, represented in a circle to illustrate how their relation is characterised by an iterative nature: the Discover phase, aimed at identifying different cultural identities in a user group; the Define phase, which builds on the previous one to understand how these translate into service expectations; the Design and Develop phase, which leverages on these insights to shape product or service propositions that meet the expectations of a culturally diverse user group.

Its purpose is to define a conceptual framework that leverages on the understanding of different cultural identities in order to design product or service propositions that are not only user-centred but also resonate with the needs and expectations of a culturally diverse audience.

More specifically, by implying the involvement of both internal and external stakeholders in the process, this framework proposes a theoretical reference aimed at supporting organisations to better understand the expectations of a culturally diverse group of users (and thus reduce “Gap 1”, as described by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1985) in order to (re)design propositions that aim at bridging the gap between the value perceived by users and the one the

organisation is offering (and thus reduce “Gap 5”, as described by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1985).

Despite in the context of this thesis the Cultural diversity design framework is used to develop a project in the field of higher education, as its theoretical premises can be considered valid across industries it may as well be applied to other contexts and topics.

4 The design thinking process

This section introduces the service design process and methods that were utilized to investigate the research questions with the aim of supporting program leaders in the development of intercultural competences and, more specifically, in generating quality insights for the conceptualization of a toolkit that will be used to design and delivery of culturally inclusive and diverse higher education programs.

As the service design process varies according to each project’s scope, needs and objectives, (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011) the methodologies hereby used and their sequence were re-adapted to the context of this project, yet maintaining the iterative nature of a design process. The key phases of the process that the author identified are the following:

- **Discover:** identification of the right methodologies to adapt the theoretical framework on the project and collection of insights from both students and program leaders
- **Define:** definition of student profiles and focus points based on the research findings
- **Design and deliver:** co-creation and refinement of ideas for the IDM Toolkit based on user insights

Despite “Design” and “Deliver” are two distinct phases in the typical design thinking process, their combination into one is to be considered a deliberate choice of the author due to keeping the project development scope realistic within the available timeframe.

The figure below illustrates the phases and their order in the design process: the first step, consisting into the exploration of cultural values with the aim of identifying different cultural groups, is followed by a synthesis phase to further investigate on how these cultural differences translate into service expectations and make sense of the gained information to define student personas. Lastly, the process is concluded with a phase to co-create ideas around a selection of topics emerged from the previous phases, which are ultimately refined in order to be ready for delivery.

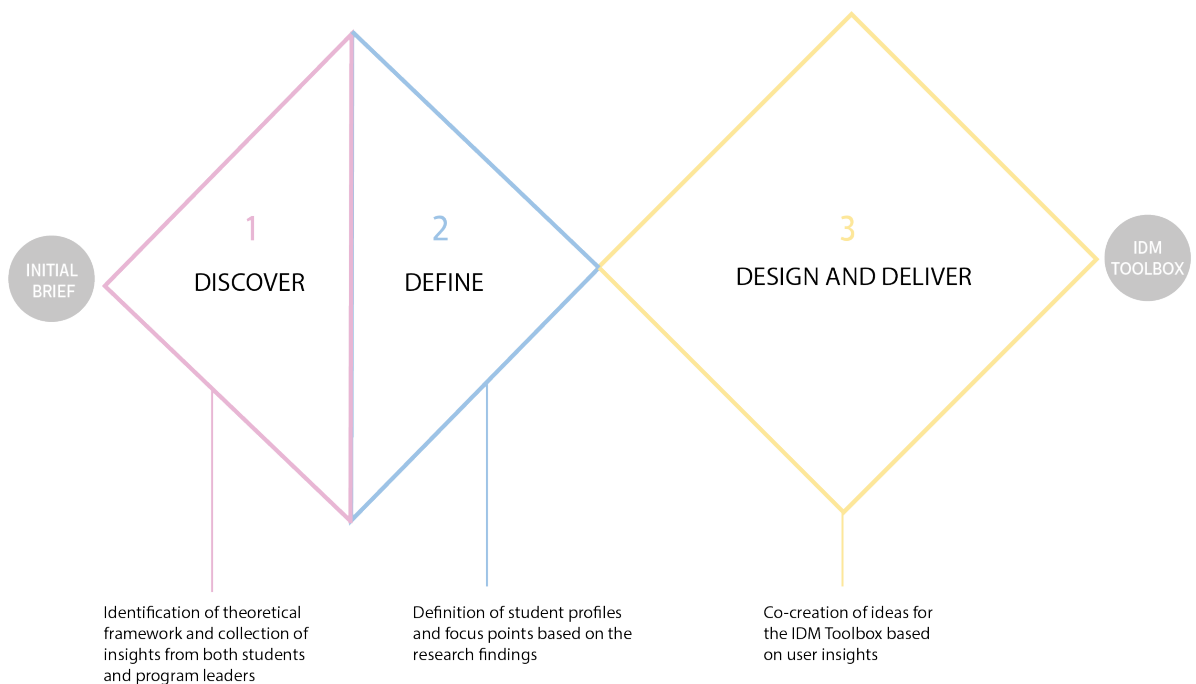


Figure 9: The design thinking process for this thesis

4.1 Discover

The first phase of the process requires a deep understanding of the initial design brief followed by the acquisition of data from different sources in order to gather insights on user needs and their context. As suggested by Stickdorn and Schneider (2011, p.127) this is crucial for ensuring that the design process produces successful results. As such, this phase is not about formulating solutions to the initial challenge, but rather is focused on understanding the it through a variety of methods. The following paragraphs illustrate the methods that were chosen to address the project work.

4.1.1 Online Survey

The online survey is a fast and easy approach to data collection. Utilised to gain either qualitative or quantitative information, or both, it is a method that helps understanding the attitudes, traits and attributes of a selected audience, which in this context is narrowed down to students with diverse nationalities and cultural backgrounds that are studying or have completed their studies in international higher education programs provided by Laurea University of Applied Sciences.

As explained by Andres (2012), the objective of surveys may be to extend learnings to a broader population or to be transferable. The same author describes that there is a multitude of approaches falling under the rubric of survey research, from face-to-face interviews to questionnaires, and as many ways to conduct an inquiry in the context of a survey. According to the nature of the investigation, questions may range from open-ended to multiple choice and standardized: when open-ended, questions are intended to let respondents freely express their opinions or experiences thus generating data that is not always predictable; in turn, when questions are closed participants choose from two or more pre-determined answers and the aggregated data is thus easier to interpret.

Among the advantages of choosing surveys to conduct research is that participants may feel more at ease in answering questions about sensitive topics, especially if anonymously. Other advantages lie in the fact that all respondents answer the same questions, thus helping the researcher making sense of answers (Brace, 2008), and that modern technologies allow researchers to disseminate their surveys online, thus making it easier to reach out to a broader and more varied audience (Wright, 2005).

On the other hand, using the right words and posing the questions in the right manner is of high importance, because if the survey is poorly designed respondents might not understand them, and there is a high risk of collecting low quality data (Brace 2008) if not false or no information at all (Andres, 2012).

When well framed, surveys have the power of producing rich findings. However, Polaine et al. (2013) criticize that statistics alone are not useful in a design process, because they do not provide information about the rationale behind the data collected. In other words, they provide an answer to the question but no insights on why that answer was given. For this reason, the rule of thumb is to take into account both quantitative and qualitative perspectives (Andres 2012) and thus always conducting surveys in combination with other methods in order to cross information and avoid drawing inaccurate conclusions.

For the purpose of this project, the main reason to use an online survey, like suggested by Wright (2005), concern the speed, ease and low cost of this methodology. Other reasons for conducting this survey digitally are due to geographical distance that separates the author from the selected target audience.

The online survey was conducted in September 2019. With the request to spread the survey link to their students, the author reached out to a selected list of 11 tutor teachers for Bachelor international programs, to the Enhance! IDM Project Leader, and to another teacher in her personal network who is currently teaching in international programs at Laurea University. Additionally, the survey was posted in 2 Facebook groups of Laurea University students with the hope to engage directly with them without any intermediation. By using this approach, the author was able to reach out to a variety of students with different cultural backgrounds, which was the prerequisite for the success of the survey itself. The survey was built up by using a digital form tool, Survey Hero, which allowed an easy collection and analysis of answers.

The survey asked students to state how well they identify themselves with 40 statements (on a scale from “Not at all like me” to “Very much like me”). These statements were inspired by a type of survey called Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ) based on Schwartz’s theory of values (Schwartz, 2012), which illustrates the following ten fundamental types of individual values: Self-direction, Stimulation, Hedonism, Achievement, Power, Security, Conformity, Tradition, Benevolence, Universalism. These values and their related clusters (as described in 3.2) served as a basis to adapt these 40 statements on the context of learning and educational settings. Each one of the ten individual values is reflected by 4 statements. By investigating on which emotions and motivation lie behind students’ approach to learning, these questions should help identify patterns in value clusters (while avoiding any stereotype or assumption) and find out which individual values are predominant, both on an individual basis and in general, other than hopefully revealing insights on how their point of view may influence their perception of learning quality. This information will serve as a starting point to further investigate student expectations and perception of the learning quality in their experience at Laurea University through in-depth interviews. Later, the findings from both the survey and the interview will contribute to the creation of student personas, as well as to feed the ideation phase where together with students and university staff we will co-create solutions around key topics emerged from interviews.

The results were collected into an excel sheet that helped gaining an overview on the total respondents’ answers. For each respondent, the survey answers were analysed by manually matching each answer to its corresponding value. Consequently, an average of all scores per value was calculated, in order to be able to identify which ones were prevailing.

Respondent	Nationality	POWER	ACHIEVEMEN	HEDONISM	STIMULATIO	SELF-DIRECTIO	UNIVERSALIS	BENEVOLENC	TRADITIO	CONFORMIT	SECURITY	
1	Vietnamese	score	2	4	6	5	5	6	4	1	1	4
			1	2	1	3	4	6	5	1	4	5
			1	4	4	5	5	5	6	3	4	5
				1			4	6	3	5	4	3
						3					3	
						6						
		average	1,333333333	2,75	3,666666667	4,333333333	4,5	5,333333333	4,5	2,5	3,25	4
2	Irish	score	1	4	3	4	6	6	6	5	6	5
			3	4	3	4	5	6	5	1	5	6
			4	5	3	2	6	5	5	1	6	6
				6			5	6	5	3	6	5
						6					4	
						3						
		average	2,666666667	4,75	3	3,333333333	5,5	5,333333333	5,25	2,5	5,75	5,2
3	Finnish	score	4	2	4	5	5	6	4	2	5	1
			4	2	4	4	5	4	5	1	6	4
			3	4	4	2	3	5	3	2	6	6
				2			4	6	3	4	6	6
						2					4	
						5						
		average	3,666666667	2,5	4	3,666666667	4,25	4,666666667	3,75	2,25	5,75	4,2

Figure 10: Section of the excel sheet that facilitated the analysis of quantitative data

After analysing answers and calculating score averages per respondent, the author calculated a total average of all respondents' scores per value to identify which one(s) were generally predominant.

In a second moment, the author tried the same exercise by grouping respondents per nationality to see if respondents with the same nationality showed adherence to the same values. Lastly, the top 3 values per respondent (in terms of score average) were highlighted and the analysis continued in order to spot potential patterns among these.

4.1.2 User Journey

User journeys are a technique used in design to visualise a service user's experience (Schneider & Stickdorn, 2010). In this methodology the experience, outlining each point of interaction between the user and the service provider (Schneider & Stickdorn, 2011) is portrayed from the user's perspective, thus leaving out any detail regarding how a service works (Segelström, 2010). Points of interaction, or touchpoints, may take place face-to-face or virtually and happen in a variety of different ways.

By portraying information into a visual representation, the purpose of a journey map is to turn intangible service encounters into tangible moments, so that it can be used as a strategic discussion tool, to engage in a conversation with either potential customers or stakeholders, or be

utilized to support a quick comparison between a service and its competitors (Schneider & Stickdorn, 2011).

A journey map is to be intended as a dynamic tool (Segelström, 2010) that may be used in various moments of the design process and can therefore be adjusted to different contexts. For this reason, it should be always referred to as a living document.

Although journey maps are typically based on personas to facilitate empathic engagement and generate real insights (Schneider & Stickdorn, 2011), for the purpose of this project the author decided to use journey maps before defining personas. Indeed, like Myron describes (2014, p.2), visualising a user journey can help connecting the dots and gain deeper insights about the customer, by developing a deeper understanding into the context and experience of a user (Miettinen and Koivisto, 2009).

In this project the journey map was used as a quick tool to gain an overview of the steps students go through when attending a higher education program, and then identify the key ones where they determine the learning quality of their education experience. It was thus used in preparatory phase before interviews in order to identify these moments and better focus the interview questions around them. Due to the necessity of keeping the investigation scope realistic within a certain timeframe, the author decided to narrow down the student journey scope to a course lifecycle, and thus focus on those moments from when students enrol in a course to when their work is graded and the course is concluded.

4.1.3 Qualitative interviews

Design for people implies developing a deep understanding of them as human beings. One of the most widespread methodologies to develop deep user insights draws from ethnography and is known as qualitative interviews.

Be them carried out with customers, employees, or any other stakeholder involved in the research question, interviews are used to better understand a certain group of people, their emotions, drivers, expectations and needs (Stickdorn, Lawrence, Hormess, Schneider, 2018), but also to identify new areas of opportunity and uncover unmet needs that people might have in a specific environment (Portigal, 2013).

Generating deep insights through interviews takes three main phases: preparing the ground, running the interview, and documenting information afterwards. As described by Stickdorn et al. (2018) before deep diving into the interview it is important to define a set of questions (the “why”, “what”, “how” etc.), followed by identifying, carefully screening and recruiting interviewees, and ultimately preparing the interview style: where is this going to take place? How to break the ice? How long is it going to take? What exercises might support the conversation? In this preparatory phase it is usually suggested to draft an interview field-guide (Portigal, 2013) that acts as a detailed plan to describe the flow of the interview.

The second phase consists into conducting the interview itself. Like Portigal (2013) suggests, some best practices that may be taken into account concern asking open questions, avoiding any form of judgement, actively listening, trying to build rapport with the interviewee, and documenting everything by using more than one technique (e.g. taking notes, recording audio, taking pictures, etc). In addition to trying to answer the main research questions, the main goal during this phase is making the user comfortable in order to build trust (Stickdorn, Lawrence, Hormess, Schneider, 2018) and unlock stories that reveal emotional details. The same authors (2018) highlight that a precondition to unveiling rich stories is to create a safe space, make sure the interviewers and the research topic are properly introduced, and not ignoring other details that might compromise the course of the interview.

Finally, a wrap-up phase needs to follow in order to make sure all the collected information is reported and organized. As suggested by Stickdorn et al. (2018), this phase should begin by sharing learnings among interviewers, and proceed by writing a summary of the key findings in combination to documenting all relevant information such as quotes, visual documentation and possible artefacts. This will significantly help organizing relevant data and preparing the research team to the following phase of data synthesis.

Schneider and Stickdorn (2011) highlight that results from qualitative interviews may be best obtained when these are contextual, meaning when the investigation takes place in the specific environment or context of the research. However, due to the geographical distance between the author and the interviewees, interviews in this project were conducted remotely by using Google Hangout.

The interview phase of this project took place between the end of September and the beginning of December 2019 and was aimed at engaging with a sample of survey respondents that identify

with different value clusters in order to further investigate how these values reflect in their expectations and perception of learning in their current education setting. Despite the timeframe allocated for this activity could have allowed to conduct a large sample of interviews, most of it was actually used to recruit participants. In fact, the inability to follow-up the survey with face-to-face interaction and the initial lookout for a very specific audience contributed to stretching the recruitment efforts in time, and ultimately resulted in the decision to expand the initial audience from bachelor students currently enrolled in an international program at Laurea University to both bachelor and master students.

The recruitment process ended with a selection of 5 respondents representing 4 nationalities (South Korea, Czech Republic, Finland and Germany) and enrolled in 3 different international programs at Laurea University (Safety, security and risk management, Service business management, Service innovation and design). In order to make sure that respondents would represent different value clusters, respondents were selected in a way that some (2) would identify themselves with one of the two value clusters emerged from the survey, and some (3) with the other.

The interview questions were built as the results of the student journey exercise, that highlighted 4 key moments in a course lifecycle where students determine the learning quality of their education experience. The final interview field guide was structured in 6 sections:

- Introduction
- 1st topic: Attending a lecture
- 2nd topic: Working in team and receiving guidance
- 3rd topic: Communicating with the lecturer
- 4th topic: Feedback and grading
- Wrap up and conclusions

Each interview lasted 1 hour and was documented by taking hand-written notes and by recording the audio. Figure 11 shows an example of the support material that was used during the interview to guide the interviewee across the different sections.

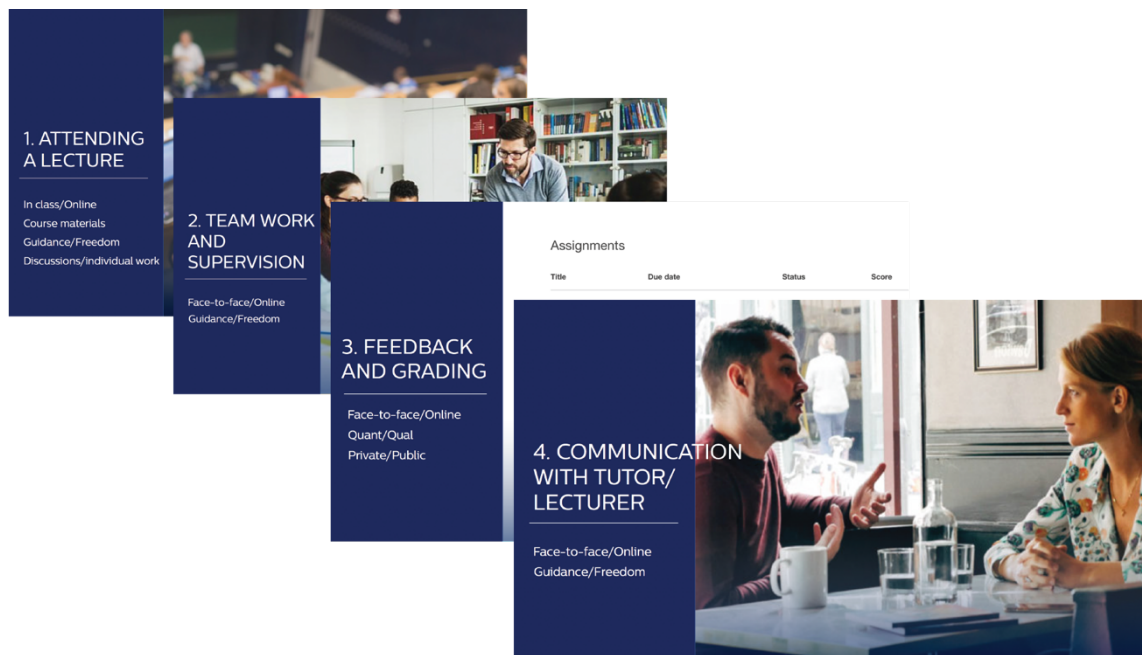


Figure 11: Support material to guide the interviewee across different topics

4.2 Define

The second phase of the design thinking process concerns the analysis of the information collected in the previous phase and its synthesis with the aim of reframing the initial design challenge based on user needs. As suggested by Stickdorn and Schneider (2011), visualising research findings greatly helps this analysis phase as it helps to make them tangible and it ultimately supports the identification of patterns. As there are many ways to do this, there are no predefined methodologies for conducting such analysis and synthesis. Thus, it is up to the designers to choose which ones are the most appropriate based on the challenge they are trying to tackle. The following paragraphs illustrate the methodologies used for the project work in this phase of the design process.

4.2.1 Research synthesis and focus points

As suggested by Ojasalo et al. (2014, cited in Fedy, 2019, p.27) data collection took place by following a process of four steps: preparing data (1), synthesising data (2), finding patterns (3) and performing a critical evaluation (4).

In the first place, after interviews were recorded and transcribed in real time with the help of a digital tool called Otter, the rough transcript of each interview audio was reviewed and edited to ensure consistency between the text and the audio recording.

Secondly, relevant information from each respondent were highlighted in the text and pasted into a table so that all findings could be analysed both per respondent (vertically) as well as per topic (horizontally). This was done by using a digital tool called Miro, which allowed to easily map information as well as colour-code insights and rearrange them if needed.

Interviewee 1 23	Interviewee 2 14	Interviewee 3 20	Interviewee 4 15	Interviewee 5 16	Focus points 10
<p>General 23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Korean student, moved to Laurea Enrolled because Expected to learn Expectations were not really met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Czech student in safety, security Moved to Finland Expectations on education Had high expectations on Laurea supporting Laurea facilitates connections for work Type something 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> German student, enrolled in a Expected a very open minded Would have expected more I expect Laurea to facilitate connections with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finnish student, enrolled in a Chose the international 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chose an Laurea should encourage Laurea tests commitment but Laurea is perceived as an Creating a safe space and a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laurea should facilitate Laurea is perceived as responsible to
<p>In class 29</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality and variety of courses taught in english Looking for more advanced electives Teachers don't own the subject. In Laurea teachers Teaching methods are not student-centered: teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type something 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I expect teachers to tell me A key aspect in learning is hearing Having someone explaining you the Very good to have freedom in how to Freedom/flexibility in the course assignment is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classes who are too theoretical are The most Outdated content is depressing. I I expect that the teachers are Type something 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of You need to be proactive, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of english Teachers don't own the subject: student Type something

Figure 12: Table to analyse interview data

As the whole mapping exercise was concluded, gaining a complete overview of all relevant data points allowed to move onto the third step, which consisted in analysing the findings both per topic and as a whole. Like Kananen (2013) describes, this phase requires to creatively interpret information in order to identify what it is really suggests.

Ultimately, the identified information patterns were color-coded and synthesised into 10 focus points. These were then rephrased, given a title, and mapped on a column on the right-hand side next to the topic they most relate to.

4.2.2 Personas

Personas is a tool representing fictional characters (Tschimmel, 2012), often used to empathise with users and understand their challenges. As opposed to marketing segmentation, personas seek to shift the attention from anagraphic data, rather leveraging qualitative insights to identify patterns and cluster users based on their needs, attributes and behavioural traits. Like Moritz (2005) points out, this perspective is essential in design to get a deep understanding of customers or end users, as well as make abstract information more personal and human (Tschimmel, 2012).

Usually based on in-depth research (Van Dijk et al., 2010, p. 178) personas may as well be built on assumptions but they should always be validated with the interest groups they portray. Personas should be developed by the design team or in the context of a workshop together with other (internal and/or external) stakeholders in order to facilitate strategic conversations about interest groups (Schneider, Stickdorn, 2011). In case they are developed during a workshop, personas should be later refined and visualized in order for all stakeholders to be able to use them as a reference in any step of the design process.

Similarly to other common service design tools, there isn't a standard format to make personas. However, usually personas combine visuals (pictures, sketches, etc) and text including the user's anagraphic information (name, location, age, etc) as well as their goals, needs, personality and other relevant information to the research topic. Whatever the visual representation they should be made in a way that enables all stakeholders involved in the process to engage with the content, in order to provide multiple perspectives (Schneider, Stickdorn, 2011) as well as develop a deep understanding of users and take informed decisions (Moritz, 2005).

In the context of this project, 2 student personas were created as a synthesis of the information emerged from both the surveys (what students value in a learning context) and interviews (how these values reflect into what students expect and need). Student personas were built in a way that they would capture the essence of each user type, and thus its content was structured as following:

- Title: one or two descriptive words summarizing the student profile

- Quote: representing the student type perspective or point of view
- Short description: a short bio to empathise with the student type background
- Key attributes: traits emerging from the student type's personality
- Drivers: aspects each student type may or may not value
- Needs: what each student type needs and expects in relation to their education experience
- Concerns: what each student type is worried about in relation to their education experience

Together with the 10 focus points emerged from the interview synthesis, these 2 student personas fed the next step of the project, where a co-creation workshop was organised. During this workshop participants used personas as a powerful tool to empathise with students while formulating ideas around focus points.

4.3 Develop and deliver

The third phase of this process is what Stickdorn and Schneider call a “generative stage” (2011, p.129), where allowing the exploration of a variety of solutions is a key aspect as it facilitates lateral thinking and avoids the risk of “odd” ideas. Once solutions are screened and refined, another important step in this part of the design process concerns their validation with users, and the iteration on the initial solution based on user feedback. The same authors (2011) point out the importance of involving all relevant stakeholders in this phase, in order to make sure that solutions are generated from different perspectives and are owned by all relevant parties. Indeed, many authors (Polaine et al. 2013; Tschimmel 2012) agree that service design is about designing together with people and not only for them, thus involving users in the design process through a method known as co-creation, or co-design.

Described by Stickdorn and Schneider (2011, p.197) as a “core aspect of the service design philosophy”, co-creation is a method that empowers participants, which can be users or other stakeholders who have relevant knowledge about the research topic (Stickdorn et al. 2018), to take part and be acknowledged in the design team (Visser, Stappers, Lugt & Sanders 2005) as experts (Tschimmel, 2012) and thus enables the development of user-centered product or service concepts in a collaborative and participatory fashion.

Often leveraged to bring different perspectives into the project development and potentially broaden insights collected during research, the benefits of co-creating services range from increasing creativity in the process, crafting better service propositions and potentially help designing more efficient processes, other than reducing potential mismatches between customers' needs and the service offering thus enabling the provision of an overall better experience

(Steen et al., 2011). Additionally, like Tschimmel (2012) points out, co-designing with users has the potential to increase their engagement and trigger in them a feeling of co-ownership which may increase their loyalty and pride towards the solution being designed.

Although co-creation may be used in a variety of different moments of the design process, Schneider and Stickdorn (2011) mention that it always has to be incorporated in a way that takes into account possible participation barriers, such as fear of saying the truth or disagreeing with a superior. These can be avoided by planning the co-creation session details upfront, defining the goals and producing materials in a way that set the boundaries of a discussion without limiting the participation of attendees (Schneider, Stickdorn, 2011).

In any case, like Trischler (2017) points out, the best approach to co-design concerns fostering collaboration, which needs to be facilitated in a way that all participants feel like they belong to a team and strive for the same purpose.

To leverage the power of this methodology, a half-day co-creation workshop was organised in this phase of the project with the aim of bringing together different stakeholders, presenting the results of the two research perspectives (program leaders and students), and co-creating ideas for the “Enhance! IDM toolbox content” based around 6 prioritised focus points that emerged as common themes between the two researches.

5 Discover: results

The first phase of the project work kicked-off after a preparatory phase that consisted in getting to know the Enhance! IDM project team at Laurea University and setting expectations on all sides. At this stage, a shared digital space among all project team members was created in order to facilitate the sharing of documents. Consequently, the author built on the theories that acted as a foundation for the theoretical framework to determine the most appropriate methods to explore the subject. These were identified as an online survey, a user journey map, and qualitative interviews whose results are reported in this chapter.

5.1.1 Survey

A first step into the development of the empirical work consisted in conducting a survey to collect quantitative information about students and investigate on their values connected to the learning and educational settings. The survey was filled out by a total number of 25 respondents representing 12 nationalities: Vietnam (2), Ireland (2), Finland (8), Czech Republic

(1), Germany (4), South Korea (1), Estonia (1), Italy (2), Nepal (1), Poland (1), Spain (1), The Netherlands (1).

In analysing the total average score per value type, Universalism emerged as the top value (4,77/6), immediately followed by Self-direction (4,47/6) and Security (4,4). Conformity (4,1/6), Benevolence (4,2/6), Stimulation (4,1/6) and Hedonism (4/6) then result as values of secondary importance, whereas Achievement (3,4/6), Tradition (2,4), and Power (2,5) emerged as the values that scored the lowest.

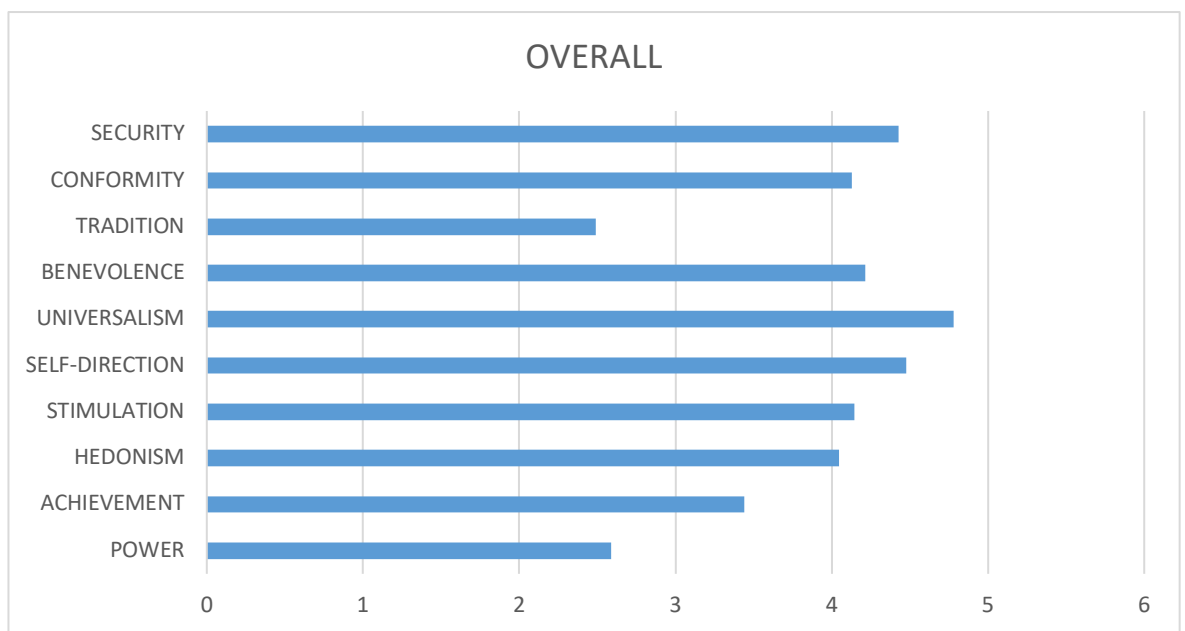


Figure 13: Total average score per value

A second exercise into the analysis of the survey results consisted in clustering answers by nationality to verify possible similarities. As a result of this exercise, no major differences in scores emerged between different nationalities. Although the limited sample of respondents does not allow to draw accurate conclusions, these results suggest that people with the same nationality have different values in relation to learning and the educational settings, and therefore, that we may assume that a certain set of values may not go hand in hand with a certain nationality.

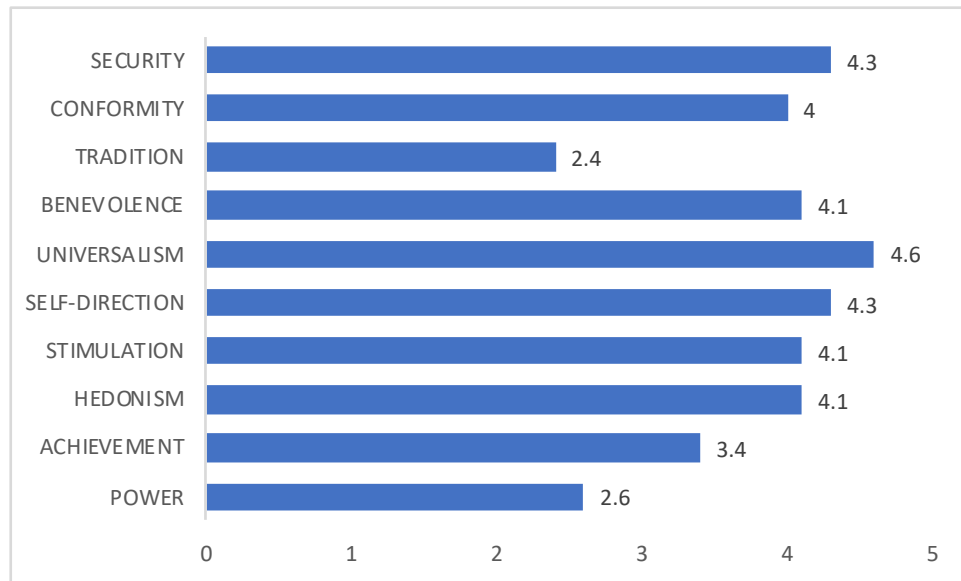


Figure 14: National average scores: Finland

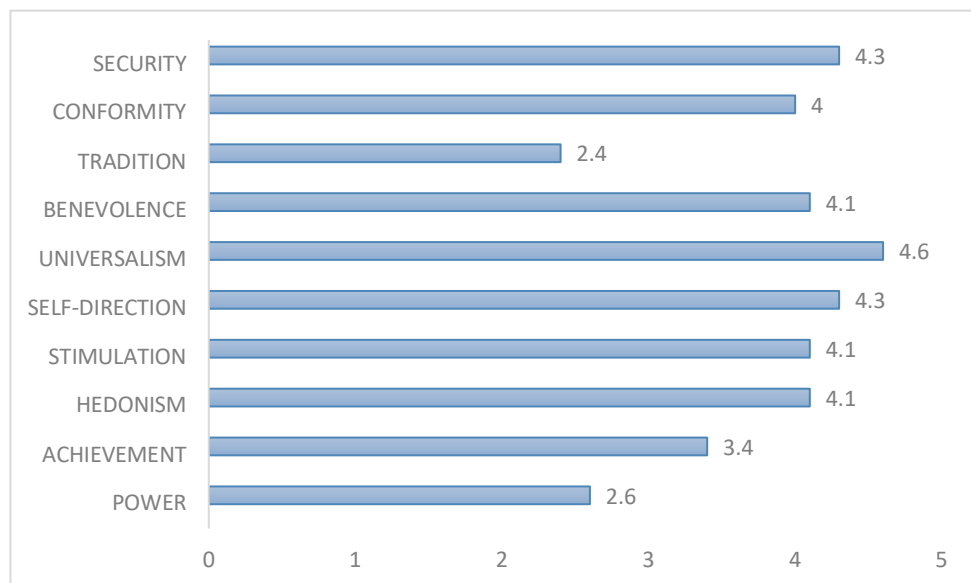


Figure 15: National average scores: Germany

A third exercise into the analysis of the survey results consisted in analysing the whole sample of respondents, irrespective of their nationality, by highlighting each respondent's top 3 values to see if any patterns would emerge.

Based on the results highlighted by these exercises, some observations can be made. While generally speaking all respondents seem to value Universalism and/or Self-direction the most,

Figure 16 shows how these two values emerge as the overlap of what appear as two main clusters of values: one leaning towards Stimulation and Hedonism (yellow and green boxes), that will be from now called “Self-steering cluster”; the other one around Benevolence, Conformity and Security (green and blue boxes), that will be from now be called “Protection cluster”.

Respondent	Nationality	POWER	ACHIEVEMENT	HEDONISM	STIMULATION	SELF-DIRECTION	UNIVERSALISM	BENEVOLENCE	TRADITION	CONFORMITY	SECURITY	
1	Vietnamese	2	1,33333333	2,75	3,66666667	4,33333333	4,5	5,33333333	4,5	2,5	3,25	4
2	Irish	2	2,66666667	4,75	3	3,33333333	5,5	5,33333333	5,25	2,5	5,75	5,2
3	Finnish	8	3,66666667	2,5	4	3,66666667	4,25	4,66666667	3,75	2,25	5,75	4,2
4	Czech	1	3	4,25	5	4,33333333	3,75	4,83333333	3,75	2,25	4,75	4,6
5	German	4	3,33333333	4	4	3,33333333	3,75	5,33333333	4,25	1,75	3,25	4,4
6	Finnish	1	1,66666667	2,5	2,66666667	3	3,75	5,83333333	4,75	2,5	5	5,2
7	South Korea	1	2,66666667	5,25	5,66666667	6	5,75	5,8	5,25	3,25	4	5
8	Irish	4	4	3	5,66666667	6	4,33333333	1,83333333	3,33333333	1	2,5	3,25
9	Estonian	1	3,33333333	3,5	3,66666667	3,66666667	4	4,33333333	5	2,75	3,5	4,2
10	Finnish	3	3,66666667	4	3,66666667	3,33333333	5	4,66666667	4,25	3	5,25	4,4
11	Finnish	1	1,66666667	2,6	2,5	3	3,75	5,83333333	4,75	2,5	5	5,2
12	Italian	2	2,66666667	3,75	5,33333333	5,33333333	5,25	4,83333333	3,75	2,75	3,5	5
13	Nepali	1	1,33333333	3,25	4,66666667	4,66666667	4,75	3,83333333	4	3	4	3
14	German	2	2,33333333	3,25	3,66666667	3,33333333	3	4,5	3,5	2,75	3,75	3,8
15	Finland	1	1,66666667	2,6	2,5	3	4	5,83333333	4,75	2,5	5	4,8
16	Finland	2	2,66666667	3,75	5	5,33333333	5,25	4,83333333	3,75	2,75	3,5	4,8
17	Vietnamese	3	3,33333333	3,5	3,66666667	3,66666667	4	4,66666667	5,25	2,75	3,5	4,2
18	Finnish	2	2,66666667	4,5	3	3,33333333	5,5	5,5	5,25	2,5	5,75	5,2
19	Italian	1	1,33333333	2,75	3,66666667	4,33333333	4,75	5,33333333	4	2,5	3,25	5,2
20	German	4	3	5,66666667	6	5,33333333	1,83333333	3,33333333	1	2,5	3,25	3,25
21	Polish	1	2,66666667	3,75	5,33333333	5,66666667	5,5	4,83333333	3,75	2,75	3,5	5
22	Spanish	1	2,33333333	3,25	3,66666667	3,33333333	3	4,5	3,75	2,75	4,25	3,6
23	Finnish	2	2,33333333	3,25	3,66666667	3,33333333	3	4,5	3,5	2,75	4,25	3,8
24	Dutch	1	2,66666667	3,75	5,33333333	5,33333333	5,25	4,83333333	3,75	2,75	3,5	5
25	German	1	1,66666667	2,6	2,5	3	4,75	5,83333333	4,25	2,5	5	4,4
			2,58666667	3,442	4,04666667	4,14666667	4,47666667	4,77666667	4,21666667	2,49	4,13	4,428

Figure 16: The two value clusters emerged from the survey analysis

The identification of these two value clusters served as a basis to select a sample of interview respondents representative of both, in order to collect further qualitative insights on how these values reflect on student expectations in the context of learning and experiencing higher education. Both these perspectives contributed to the definition to 2 student personas.

5.1.2 Student journey

Before moving on to collecting qualitative insights, a high-level student journey map was outlined with the purpose of better identifying topics to investigate during interviews.

This exercise, whose scope was narrowed-down to mapping the typical course lifecycle, helped highlighting four key moments in which students determine the quality of their learning experience, as highlighted in red in Figure 17: when they attend (online or offline) lectures, when working in teams and preparing for an assignment, when they communicate with their lecturers, and when they receive feedback and/or grading on their work.

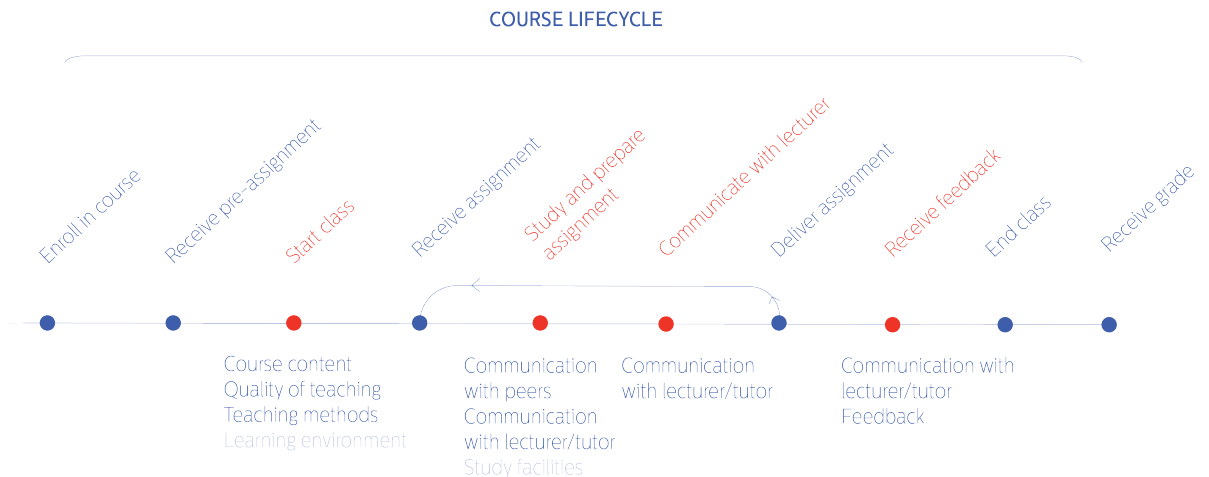


Figure 17: The student journey within a course lifecycle

These four moments, that represent the key moments when students determine whether the education experience meets their expectations and thus are identified as the most sensitive in the assessment of the learning quality, could be further elaborated based on a series of aspects that may influence their evaluation:

- Attending a lecture: whether is online or offline, when attending a lecture a student learning experience may vary according to the content being addressed (more or less thoroughly, more or less theoretically, etc), the way the content is conveyed (verbally, with the support of materials, in slides, etc), the ability of the lecturer to convey the content and engage with the audience, the teaching methods (participatory, top-down, etc), the learning environment (classroom set up, facilities) and so on.
- Teamwork and receiving guidance: in the context of studying in teams and preparing for an assignment, the quality, frequency and assurance in communicating with other peers (team members) and the lecturers (providing guidance) can have great influence on a student's ability to focus on work, stay engaged and motivated.
- Communicating with the lecturer: both when in class and in other moments throughout the course lifecycle, the level of availability, empathy, responsiveness, and assurance of a lecturer can greatly influence student engagement and the delivery of their work.
- Receiving feedback and/or grading: the quality, timeliness and thoroughness of feedback and/or grading on an assignment can have a great impact on the students' ability to reflect on the quality of their work, avoid making the same mistakes and understand how to improve in the future.

These key moments in the student journey across a course lifecycle, and their correspondent influential factors, were used as a baseline to define the content of the interview field-guide and gather qualitative insights on the students' expectations and perception of their learning quality in the context of the case study at Laurea University.

5.1.3 Students interviews

The second step into this research phase consisted in inviting a sample of students representing both clusters of values emerged from the analysis of the survey results (Self-steering cluster and Protection cluster, Figure 16) to provide more information about their experience as students in an international program at Laurea University. Firstly, this activity aimed at validating the assumption that students identifying with similar values have similar expectations in relation to a learning experience. Secondly, interviews had the goal to further investigate how different values translate in certain expectations and thus in the evaluation of the learning quality. This was done by guiding interviewees through a set of questions that focused on the four key moments within the course lifecycle where they determine whether their perception of education matches their expectations.

As a first result of these interview, most students expressed having high expectations on Laurea University, not only because it is a university of applied sciences, but also because the Finnish education system is renown worldwide for being at the forefront of innovation.

"I expected a very open-minded university and this was also my perception. This is good because it lowers the risks and pressure on students to fail or do something wrong."

Based on their experience, the general perception of all interviewees concerning Laurea University as a higher education institution is to be very open-minded. Study programs are perceived as flexible and the freedom students are given in deciding in what order they prefer to follow courses, as well as about the study pace, is generally appreciated. However, the two samples of interviewees showed a variation in their perception of the learning quality. Their answers are analysed below, per topic.

Learning in class

Irrespective of the value clusters, the interview results show that generally all respondents see the lecturer or teacher as someone whose role is to share knowledge about the subject they are responsible for.

"I expect teachers to tell me something about the content, not to give me a book to read."

This need is particularly felt by interviewees who belong to the Self-steering cluster, whose perception is to be often given too much freedom when it comes to acquiring new knowledge. In the context of learning a new subject, these respondents show a reactive tendency, thus shifting the main responsibility on the lecturer's side. This creates expectations that are not always met.

(R) "Teachers don't own the subject (...) and this feels like I am not learning much because I have to do everything on my own."

(R) "I expect that the teachers are expert in their domain and that they have the right skills to communicate them. These expectations were not always met."

On a different note, the respondent of the same cluster expressed the need to be given freedom in a later stage of the learning process, for instance concerning the interpretation of an assignment. In this context, these respondents would appreciate not being bound to one means of expression to return the assignment. Having the option to choose among different means (writing, role-playing, presenting, etc.) is perceived as an aspect that would increase creativity of expression, and thus the quality of learning. On the contrary, respondents reflecting the Protection cluster showed to value setting their expectations on what to return and how, thus suggesting a conformed tendency in their approach to learning.

"Freedom/flexibility in the course assignment is good but not too much otherwise there might be misunderstandings. It would be great to have a template to return the assignment because it would help knowing what to expect"

"I need to know the purpose/goals of the day so that I know what to expect"

Studying in teams and receiving guidance

For what concerns studying and preparing for an assignment, which concern aspects such as working individually and in teams and receiving guidance, results show that interviewees reflecting the Self-steering cluster expect the lecturer to be available throughout the whole assignment preparation and to reassure them on the work progress. In turn, the other respondents show to value more guidance and support for more practical aspects such as liaising with project partners (in the case of a case study project) or with external companies (in the case of study internship or post-graduation placement).

"I had high expectations on Laurea supporting all students with work placement. These expectations were not met because students are often left to their own means"

This suggests that the first see lecturers and the university staff as a role model to trust on content-related aspects, the second see them more as a key facilitator to trust on practical

and network-related aspects. Both play a very important role in the learning journey of students and have an influence their perception of its quality.

Communicating with lecturer

In relation to communicating with lecturers and tutors, all respondents show to value aspects such as reliability, availability, reassurance, and empathy. Generally speaking, students' perception of Laurea University is reflected in its staff body.

“Teachers and tutors are very open-minded and I feel very supported and encouraged by them. Sometimes I even share my personal stuff with them.”

Results of this part of the interviews show that the observations made in relation to guidance are hereby confirmed. If on one hand interviewees reflecting the Self-steering cluster expect communications with the lecturer to focus on the course content, the others find more important that these types of interactions focus on opening up new pathways and suggesting opportunities.

“A teacher should be available but also act as a mentor. Not only give marks but also suggest opportunities and open up pathways that the students didn't know about.”

Receiving feedback

In relation to learning from feedback, all respondents showed a similar point of view.

“It is important to have concrete, tangible feedback on your work while you're doing it and not just at the end.”

The key aspects for all interviewees in learning from feedback is to receive it in a qualitative form, in different moments of the study journey (as opposed to at the end). Another key expectation concerns consistency of the feedback from all lecturers and tutors.

Observations on results

The results summarised above suggest a few observations:

- the analysis of answers from students identifying with similar values show a pattern in their expectations related to learning. This suggests that values play a key role in shaping a student's point of view on how to evaluate the quality of their learning experience.
- as emerged from the survey, Self-direction is a strong value for both types of students. However, qualitative insights emerged from the interviews show how different student types interpret self-direction in a different way thus their service expectations in these

regards are not matching: if for students identifying with the Self-steering cluster it means having freedom of expression in interpreting assignments, for students identifying with the Protection cluster it means having freedom and flexibility in determining the study plan and pace.

This suggests that value clusters should be considered as a whole and thus they are particularly useful to understand the mindset of a group.

- In addition to the themes covered throughout the interviews, giving feedback on the course content and structure emerged in all interviews as another key activity students expect to be encouraged to contribute to, as it is perceived as playing an important role the improvement of the curriculum quality.

6 Define

The second phase of the design thinking process concerned the synthesis of research findings and their visualisation into concrete deliverables: a shortlist of key insights, or focus points, and the creation of two student profiles based on the information collected through the survey and the qualitative interviews. The results of these activities is illustrated in the paragraphs below.

6.1.1 Focus points

As a consequence of analysing interview findings and identifying patterns, these were analysed and synthesised into 9 focus points, that should be interpreted as key aspects where students feel like there could be an improvement in terms of diversity and inclusion and that may ultimately impact the quality of their learning experience.

The 9 identified focus points are described as follow:

1. Laurea University is perceived as responsible to facilitate connections to companies for both case study assignments and work placement. However, the perception is that international students are provided with less opportunities than Finnish students (or no opportunities at all).
2. Laurea is perceived by students as responsible to create a safe space for everyone to feel like they can open up, share, discuss, and have their expectations heard.
3. The availability and perception of quality of English-taught classes is lower than Finnish-taught classes.

4. Students' perception of teachers is that they often don't own their subject or are unable to communicate their expertise effectively. This leads students to being proactive in acquiring new knowledge on the subject independently rather than from the lecturer, and it may influence the learning quality of students with different attitudes and personalities. Especially for those who are not used to having to "figure things out themselves" this leads to frustrations and scarce engagement because they feel like they need a trusted point of reference to validate what they are learning.
5. Although students are encouraged to be proactive at Laurea, the availability and consistency of guidance throughout the whole education program is perceived as key to learning.
6. As some types of students receiving clear guidelines is an important learning experience factor, unclear assignment briefs (timing, purpose, tools, way of working) are perceived as one cause of student lower engagement.
7. Receiving feedback helps students feel appreciated and taken into account. However, feedback is perceived as not consistent and being it provided at the end often constitutes a barrier to continuous learning.
8. Students feel like communications with tutors and teachers should be informal and based on empathy in order for both parties to build trust and establish a safe space.
9. Laurea is generally perceived as an open-minded institution but students have the impression that it does not proactively and systematically seek feedback from the bottom up. However, giving and receiving feedback is mentioned by all students as key to increase the quality of learning, and thus is perceived as more effective when exchanged halfway through the course, and when is mandatory for all students.

6.1.2 Personas

The last step into this analysis phase was to synthesise the findings emerged from both the survey and the interviews in order to define student personas. Starting off from the 2 value clusters emerged from the survey and building on them with the qualitative information collected during interviews, 2 student personas were defined: the "Complying self-starter" (from the Protection cluster, the "Self-expressive learner", from the Self-steering cluster.

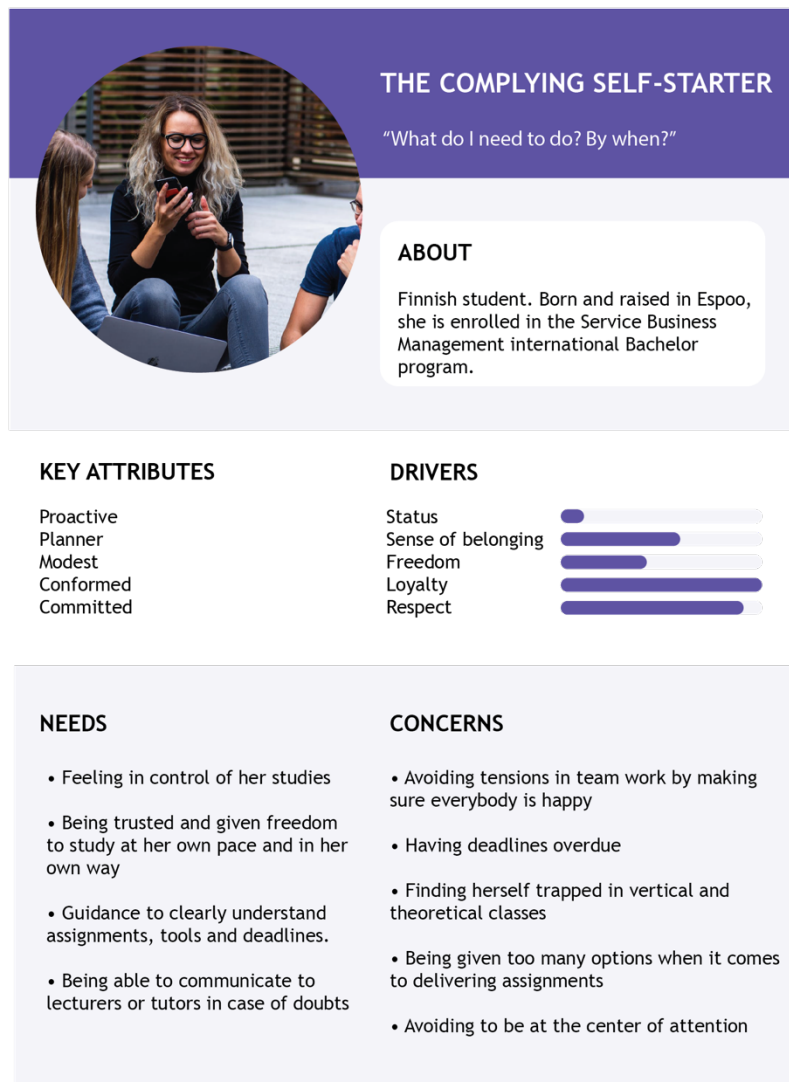


Figure 18: Persona 1, “The complying self-starter”

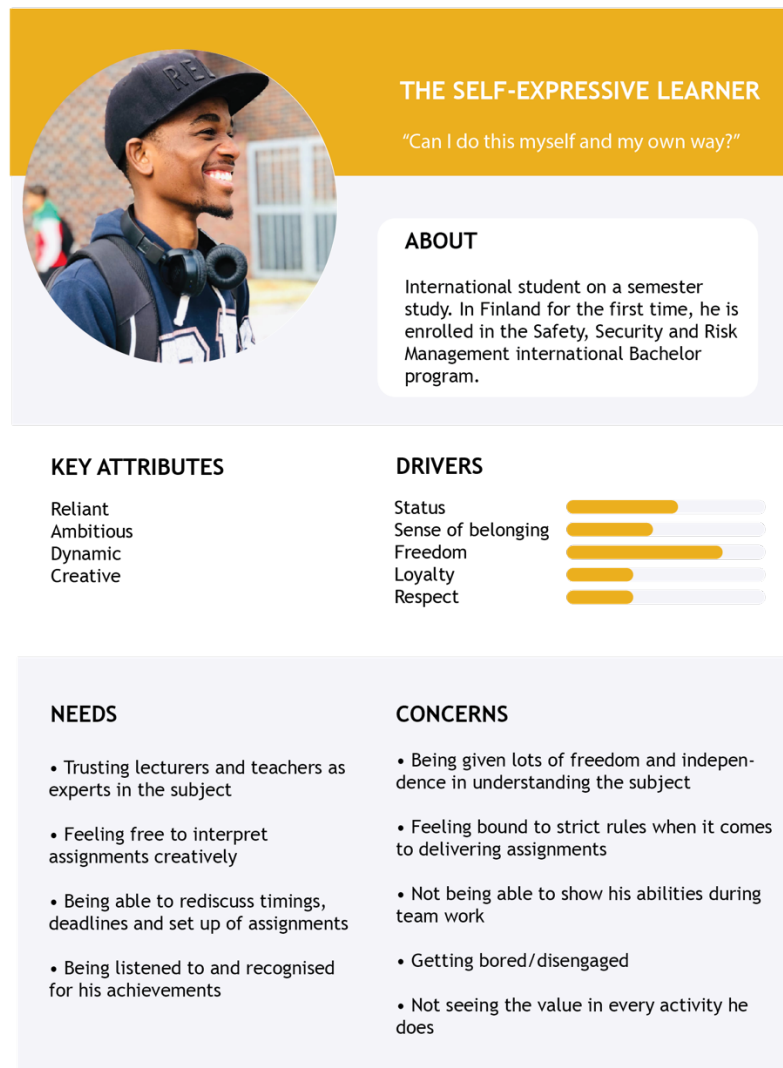


Figure 19: Persona 2, “The self-expressive learner”

6.1.3 Program Leaders and staff interviews

The Define phase concluded by mirroring the findings emerged from the investigation on students with those emerged from the research with Program Leaders and Laurea University staff with the aim of spotting common themes. Before presenting the common themes, this section summarises the key findings identified from the research conducted by Margarida Da Marça on Program Leaders and Laurea University Staff.

While students are the ones who experience the education service, Laurea University academic and coordination staff have a crucial role in the curriculum development. The goal of this study

conducted with Laurea University staff was to explore the inclusion and diversity practices currently in place, and the impact of ethnic and cultural diversity on Laurea University staff work practices. The research also aimed at finding out which inclusion and diversity areas Laurea University staff felt that they required support the most on. With these goals in mind, Da Marça interviewed a diverse group of Laurea University Staff stakeholders including development managers, teachers, module coordinators, tutor teachers, special teachers and a nurse.

Upon analysing the results of the interviews, Da Marça identified the following focus points:

- Tutor teachers are playing an important role in the support of and adaptation process of non-Finnish students
- Laurea staff is actively collecting students' course feedback and consider this as a relevant source of input from the students into the curriculum development. At the same time, students unit/course feedback collection was acknowledged by Laurea University staff as an area to improve and develop further.
- There is a general concern among Laurea University development staff to strengthen work placement opportunities in Finland for all students, and especially for students with a non-Finnish background. Apprenticeships and empowerment for a mobility window are among the activities promoted by Laurea University staff.
- Laurea University offers flexible learning paths for all students. Tutor teachers, and health professionals play an important position in helping students take decisions in their learning pathway. Concerns in this topic are related with maintaining high academic standards on both levels of competence and evaluation criteria.
- Laurea University has a number of "special needs" teachers that hold a range of additional skills to deal mostly with student learning and mental disabilities. Special teachers are concerned that with the current variety of challenges in Finnish higher education institutions, the special needs teacher should be more spread across all Laurea University staff body, meaning that all front stage actors dealing with students be trained on multicultural competences, special needs pedagogics as well as be prepared to respond to a diverse student body.

Collecting insights on the perspective of Laurea University decision-makers and staff turned out extremely helpful to understand the current inclusion and diversity strategies and challenges at Laurea University. These insights, together with those reflecting the experiences and expectations of students, acted as key pillars in order to move onto the next project phase.

7 Develop and deliver

If the Discover and Define phases aimed at collecting qualitative insights from different sources in order to be able to better understand the topic of this research and its users, the Develop and deliver phase leveraged on these findings to move on to formulating ideas around them and co-create solutions through the involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

7.1.1 Co-creating a toolbox to support Laurea staff in the creation of inclusive curricula

In the context of the Enhance! IDM project, initial design brief was to create a toolbox to support Laurea Staff to design more inclusive curricula for students with diverse cultural backgrounds. In order to ensure the success of this project, integrating the perspective of Laurea Staff to that of students was identified as fundamental. This is the reason why this phase of the thesis was developed in collaboration between the author (investigating students' perspective) and Margarida Da Marça (investigating Laurea Staff's perspective. Together, we analysed both researches outcomes and designed a co-creation workshop around "current inclusion and diversity themes" that emerged from the combination of both researches, in order to co-create ideas that would respond to both needs of Laurea staff and of students.

Inclusion and Diversity Themes across both research perspectives

The "Enhance! IDM Co-creation workshop" was organized with the aim of bringing together different stakeholders, presenting the results of the two research perspectives conducted by Da Marça and the author of this thesis, and co-creating ideas for the "Enhance! IDM toolbox content" based on 6 prioritised focus points that emerged as an overlap between the two research perspectives. In order to ensure the success of this methodology we carefully selected a panel of diverse participants that could bring solid knowledge to the discussion, either because they represented the target group or because they had direct interaction with them. These were representing the toolbox potential users, including tutor teachers, teachers, development managers, for a total number of 6 participants.

Posts



Figure 20: Post of Laureamko Leppävaara to help recruiting students

In addition, following the principle to balance the needs of end users, key participants, and the organisation (Stickdorn, 2018), we were able to recruit 3 students to integrate each group with the support of Laureamko, Laurea's student union. In order to facilitate a diverse distribution, participants were divided into 2 teams, where teams were composed by both Laurea stakeholders with different roles and one student each.

Workshop content and structure

A first step into the workshop design concerned overlapping the key findings of these two research-based perspectives. As a result of this activity, 6 common themes were identified and translated into the following "How Might We...?" questions:

1. HMW create a campus atmosphere where staff and all students feel welcome and safe and that encourages freedom of expression?
2. HMW systematically identify student individual needs and expectations in order to develop student-centred education programs?
3. HMW give opportunities to all students to provide feedback to the curriculum development and make sure it is taken into account?

4. How might we support students with different attitudes and personalities (proactive and reactive) to feel like they are supported in learning and to stay engaged throughout the whole duration of the class?
5. HMW formulate assignments in a way that all students relate and engage with the content?
6. HMW provide all students an exceptional and flexible curriculum offering so that they develop competences that match the current market demand?

These 6 common themes were presented at the beginning of the workshop and acted as the foundation for the co-creation session.

The workshop took place on January 10th at Laurea University in Leppavaara Campus between 10 am and 14 pm and was structured as described in Table 1.

Time	Activity	Description	Materials
10.00	Welcome and introduction	Facilitators welcome participants and introduce purpose of the workshop	Slides Name tags on the tables
10.15	Enhance Inclusion and Diversity Management project	Introduction of Enhance IDM project by Tarja Chydenius	Slides
10.20	Laurea Staff I&D focus points and personas	Research findings by Margarida da Marça	Slides
10.30	Students I&D focus points and personas	Research findings by Fiamma Degl'Innocenti	Slides
10.40	Introduce inclusion and diversity current themes	Presentation of research-based common topics by Margarida and Fiamma	Slides
10.50	Ideation for an I&D Toolbox (45min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (d)ice breaker (4min) • Individual ideation (7min) • Review ideas - (6min) • Trim down to one idea (5min) x 2 HMW Qs	3 dices + A4 printouts of 6 questions for each HMW Post its + sharpies + A4 sheets w/HMW Q's

11.35	Lunch break (45 min)		
12.30	Refine ideas and develop an I&D Toolbox around each topic (45 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energiser (4min) • Choose 1 idea per topic (10min) • Develop one tool per idea (30min) 	Tool Idea Canvas
13.45	Presentation and wrap-up (15min)	• Each team presents their tools	Bluetack

Table 1: Workshop schedule and activities

The workshop kicked-off with the facilitators welcoming the audience, presenting briefly the “Enhance IDM!” project and introducing themselves. As a next step, both facilitators presented the key findings from their research, Laurea university Staff and student personas, and introduced the 6 topics that emerged in common in the form of “How might we...?” questions. Each team was assigned 2 “How might we...?” questions to work on. Due to the last-minute cancellation of some participants, 2 of the 6 “How might we...?” questions had to be left aside.

In order for participants to start getting into an ideation mindset, sharing points of view about the topics, and building creative confidence, the first workshop activity was an ice-breaker. This was structured as a playful game to play in team, where each team had a dice and a list of numbered questions. After rolling the dice, participants in turn had to quickly answer the corresponding question on the list, all of which were related to the 2 “How might we...?” questions assigned to the team. By encouraging a quick exchange, the idea of this exercise was to trigger some initial ideas around the topics in a fast and spontaneous fashion.

For each “How might we...?” question, the list of questions attained to the following format:

1. What do you think about Laurea [THEME]?
2. What do you think the greatest value of [THEME]?
3. Tell us something related to [THEME].
4. Fill in the black: [THEME] is _____.
5. Share a history related with [THEME].
6. Share the best ways to [VERB] + [THEME].

After the ice-breaker, each team was given a set of personas (both from Laurea Staff and students) to read and keep as a reference in the upcoming exercise, and was guided through an ideation session in order to generate ideas on the assigned “How might we...?” questions. This session began with a first silent round where participants wrote down their ideas individually, followed by a sharing round in team. Lastly, teams built on the first ideation round by generating more ideas on the same topic. Before the break, teams repeated the same process (ice-breaker followed by ideation session), this time on the second “How might we...?” question.



Figure 21: Participants playing the ice-breaker game

After coming back from lunch, teams took some time to get an overview of the ideas they had previously generated, and then selected the most interesting or promising ones by dot-voting. Consequently, each team refined one idea per “How might we...?” question. For this exercise, an “Idea Canvas” was used as a prop to support participants in thinking about the key aspects behind their ideas and developing a strong narrative around them. The tool was structured in seven sections:

1. Title (what is the name of the tool?)
2. What is it about? (How could the tool purpose be best described?)
3. Who is its (internal) audience? (Who is going to be the main user of this tool?)

4. How does it provide value to its audience? (How is the main audience going to benefit from using the tool?)
5. Who is the right stakeholder to develop the tool? (Who should be responsible to develop and maintain the tool throughout the time? tutor teachers, lecturers, nurses, student counselor, etc.)
6. Type of media to convey this tool (How should the tool be developed to better engage with its audience? Video, text, guidelines, game, etc.).
7. Sketch your tool idea (How could this idea become tangible? Flyer, intranet advert, video teaser, etc.)

TITLE

WHO IS THE RIGHT STAKEHOLDER(S) TO DEVELOP THE TOOL?
(tutor teachers, lecturers, nurses, student counselor, etc.)

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

WHAT MEDIA SHOULD BE USED TO CONVEY THIS TOOL?
(video, text, guidelines, game, etc.)

WHO IS ITS (INTERNAL) AUDIENCE?

SKETCH YOUR TOOL IDEA

HOW DOES IT PROVIDE VALUE TO ITS AUDIENCE?

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Figure 22: The Idea Canvas template

Figures 23, 24, 25 and 26 illustrates the 4 toolbox ideas that teams generated during the workshop and described in the Idea Canvas, together with their related ideation question (How might we...?).

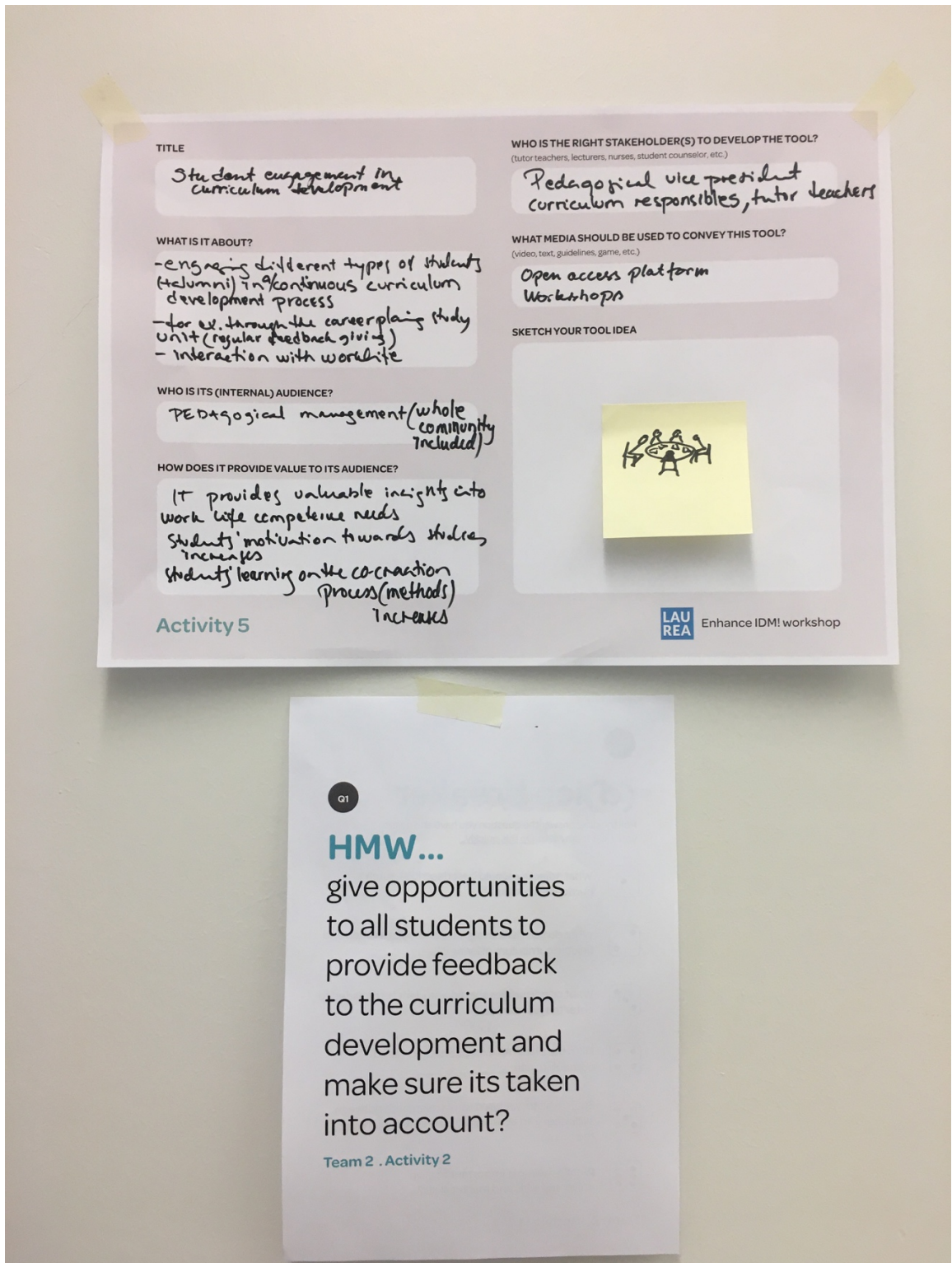


Figure 23: Idea 1, Student engagement in curriculum development

TITLE
Purposeful flexibility checklist

WHO IS THE RIGHT STAKEHOLDER(S) TO DEVELOP THE TOOL?
(tutor, teachers, lecturers, nurses, student counselor, etc.)
Pedagogical taskforce with student engagement

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?
• Offering flexibility in
- implementation
- assignments
- Pedagogical approaches based on a template

WHAT MEDIA SHOULD BE USED TO CONVEY THIS TOOL?
(video, text, guidelines, game, etc.)
Online checklist

WHO IS ITS (INTERNAL) AUDIENCE?
Students

HOW DOES IT PROVIDE VALUE TO ITS AUDIENCE?
- Takes into account different types of students & preferences
- Simplifies the teacher's planning process
- Ensures consistent quality

SKETCH YOUR TOOL IDEA

different styles taken into account (auditive etc.)

Implement
Assignment

Teamwork
Individual

Activity 5

LAU REA Enhance IDM! workshop

Q2

HMW...
support students with different attitudes and personalities (proactive and reactive) to feel like they are supported in learning and to stay engaged throughout the whole class?

Team 2 . Activity 4

Figure 24: Idea 2, Purposeful flexibility checklist

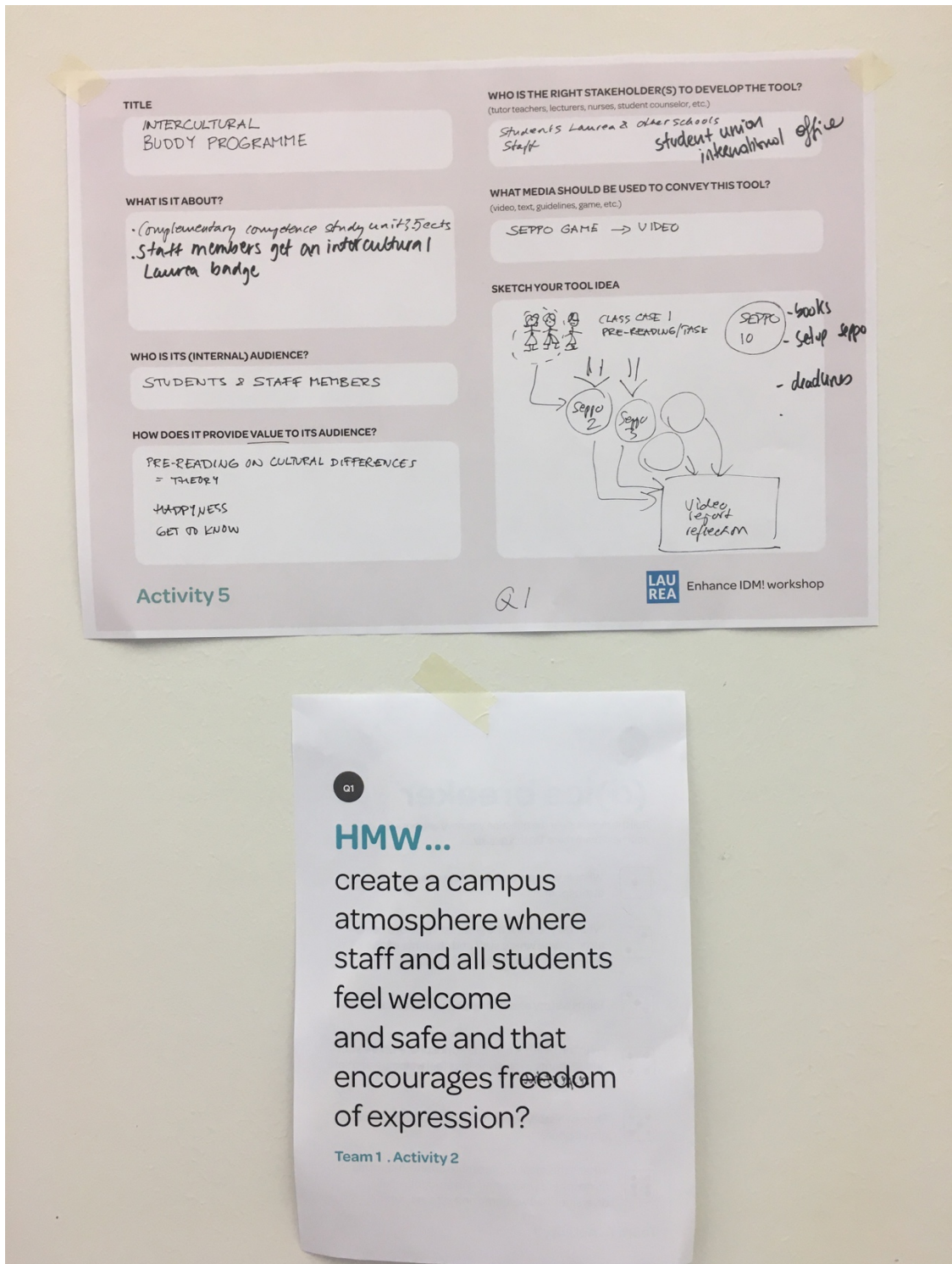


Figure 25: Idea 3, Intercultural buddy programme

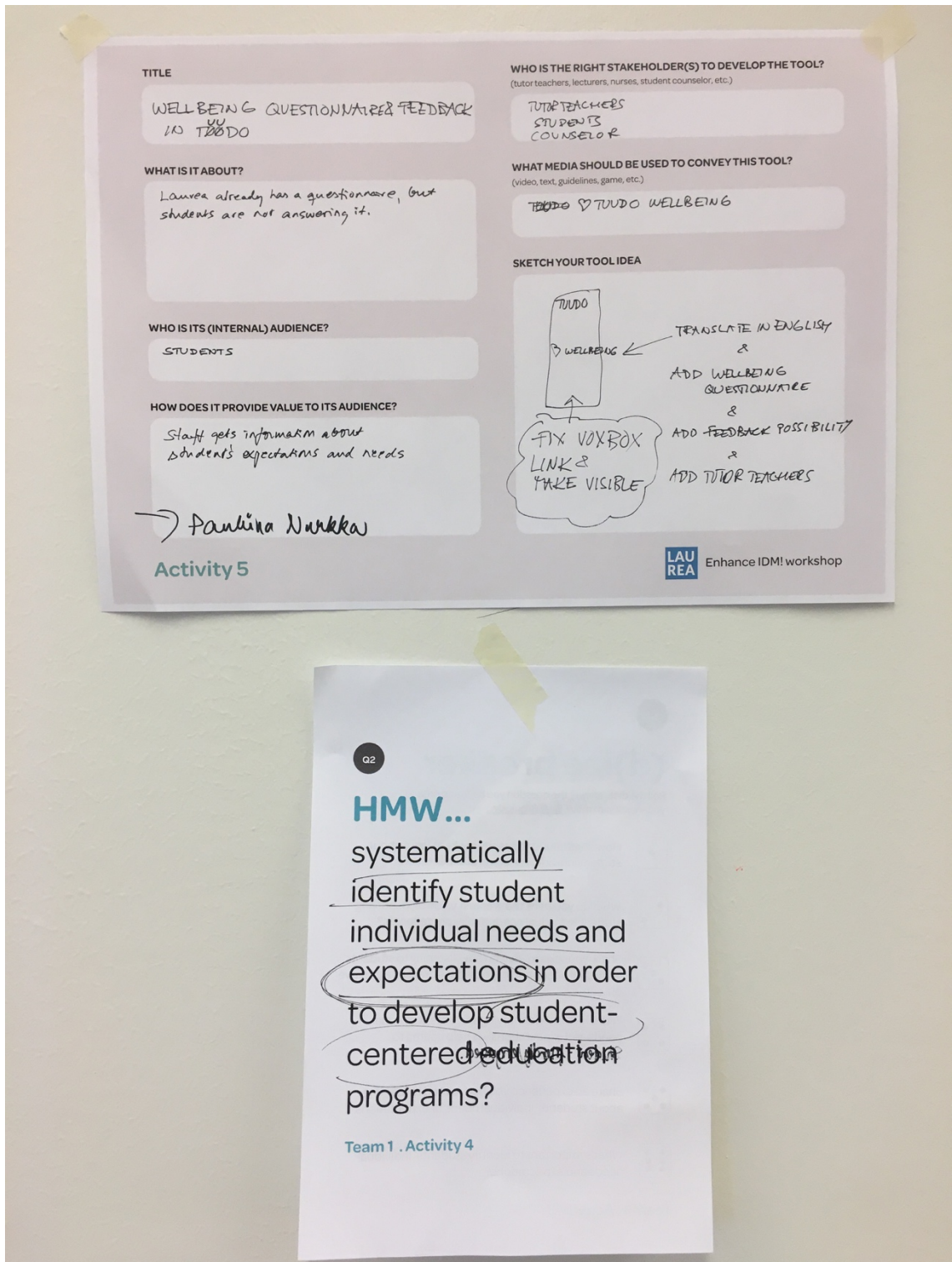


Figure 26: Idea 4, Wellbeing and feedback questionnaire in Tuudo

7.1.2 Refinement of the ideas

The delivery phase tied together the insights and the solutions gathered during the whole design process and focused on producing concrete deliverables that could be shared with the Enhance! IDM team. The deliverables consisted into four new tools that aim to respond to the challenges captured in the discovery and define phase. These four tools are described in short below.

1) Purposeful flexibility survey

HMW question: How might we support students with different attitudes and personalities (proactive and reactive) to feel like they are supported in learning and to stay engaged throughout the whole duration of the class?

Short description: This initiative consists in the creation of a survey to collect student points of view on the curriculum structure, the type of assignments and the learning environment based on a predefined template that follows standard quality guidelines. This survey will be made available to all students in the beginning of the academic year and the results will be shared with their teachers. Once teachers receive the results, they will have better knowledge of the diversity in their classroom, not just at an individual level but at a high-level, understanding their student preference patterns. This will help, guide and simplify the teachers curriculum planning process to ensure more student engagement throughout the class.

2) Intercultural buddy programme

HMW question: How might we create a campus atmosphere where staff and all students feel welcome and safe and that encourages freedom of expression?

Short description: This initiative consists of a complementary intercultural competence study learned through an educational game and made available for both Laurea students and staff. The idea is that both students and staff will collaborate in the course of the activities. To ensure great engagement, this competence could be setup online in a tool such as Seppo, an innovative tool for creating educational games. This competence will have a theoretic pre-reading material in intercultural competence in the beginning that will be followed by the task setup in Seppo with deadlines. At the end of the game the assignment is shared according to

the learners' preferences. This complementary study unit will be worth 3-5 ects for students and an honor badge to Laurea staff.

3) Student engagement in curriculum design

HMW question: How might we systematically identify student individual needs and expectations in order to develop student-centred education programs?

Short description: This initiative consists in the recruitment of a sample of students representing all diversities in the university campus, and their engagement to actively participate in the co-creation of study programs throughout the whole duration of the study journey. Students will apply on a volunteer basis and the shortlisted ones will be appointed to represent the student voice in internal discussions and activities concerning curriculum design. The purpose of this initiative is to co-design study programs by engaging with all stakeholders, in order for all voices to be represented in the conversation.

4) Student feedback questionnaire

HMW question: HMW give opportunities to all students to provide feedback to the curriculum development and make sure it is taken into account?

Description: This initiative consists in the redesign of an existing initiative which is partially unsuccessful. Currently, Laurea University has a "wellbeing questionnaire" available on its digital environment, but student participation is registered as low. By moving this questionnaire onto a dedicated section in Tuudo, the student app that acts as one of the main touchpoints between students and Laurea University, this questionnaire will be made more visible and accessible to all students. Additionally, by redesigning the questionnaire content and format based on gamification and inclusive design policies, more students will have the opportunity to provide their feedback (anonymously or not), and their answers will be reorganised into easy-to-ready stats that Laurea University can use as a baseline to improve its curricula.

8 Summary and conclusions

As part of the Enhance! IDM project, the purpose of this thesis was to create a framework for higher education program leaders, teaching staff and the administrative support organization to develop their intercultural knowledge in order to understand the expectations of a culturally

diverse student audience and use appropriate tools to design education programs that provide high quality, inclusive learning opportunities for all.

The theoretical part discussed three different subjects. Firstly, it provided different definitions of culture as well as an overview on the most acknowledged theories in the cross-cultural study landscape. For this purpose, the author decided to take Schwartz's Theory of basic values (2012) as the main reference both for creating a theoretical framework and for the empirical part of the project, as it provides a modern notion of culture that thinks beyond national borders and rather focuses on cross-country, universal values. Secondly, it delved into academic theories on service quality, which is widely referred to as a key driver to foster competitive advantage and thus as a very important subject that organisations need to understand in order to deliver user-centred solutions. What emerged as the red thread among the analysed theories is the recognition of people's expectations as a key element to determine the quality of a product or service proposition. As a result of the analysis of academic literature, the relation of culture and service quality has emerged as the subject of a few studies, whose findings have in common the recognition that culture influences the evaluation of service quality, and that this is particularly true in the case of services encompassing an social interaction between the provider and the customer. Thirdly, this report pulled together different theories illustrating design thinking as a creative problem-solving process whose iterative and collaborative nature is acknowledged both in the design and business worlds to develop innovative, user-centred solutions for their users.

Finally, the author summarised the above-mentioned theories into a conceptual framework that she called "The cultural diversity design framework". This synthesises the theories on cultural values and their impact on the evaluation of service quality and integrates them with design thinking to show how they could be used as a reference in a process that aims at designing for cultural diversities. This framework proposes a theoretical reference aimed at supporting organisations to better understand the expectations of a culturally diverse group of users in order to (re)design propositions that are better aligned with them. By building on Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry's Gap Theory (1985), this aim particularly focuses on reducing Gap 1 and Gap 5. As its theoretical premises can be considered valid across industries, The Cultural diversity design framework emerges as applicable to other contexts and topics other than to the subject of this report's case study.

Following the theoretical section, the author introduced the approach used to address the case study. This approach drew from the service design discipline to outline a three-phase process and define a selection of methods that were utilized to investigate the research questions. Among these, an online survey, a user journey and qualitative interviews with students were conducted with the aim of identifying different cultural clusters and study each group's expectations towards a higher education learning experience. The synthesis and analysis of the

findings gathered in this first phase of the process resulted in the identification of 2 cultural clusters: the Self-steering cluster (whose key values are Hedonism, Stimulation, Self-direction and Universalism), and the Protection cluster (whose key values are Self-direction, Universalism, Conformity and Security). These 2 value-based clusters showed an interesting overlap on Self-direction and Universalism. This was further explored during qualitative interviews and showed that the 2 groups interpret Self-direction differently and thus their service expectations in these regards are not matching. This suggested that value clusters should be considered as a whole and thus they are particularly useful to understand the mindset of a group.

In addition to analysing the results of qualitative interviews per cultural group (which helped understanding the relation between values and service expectations), findings were also processed in general with the aim of identifying patterns in service expectations across all students. These patterns were then rephrased and summarised into 6 key insights, or focus points, that served as the basis for the Enhance! IDM co-creation workshop that followed. This workshop acted as a key moment in the development of the project, as it brought an array of different stakeholders together and it created a space for discussion other than for developing ideas on the focus points emerged from research. The 4 most promising ideas generated during the workshop were then synthesized, refined, and delivered to the Enhance! IDM team which will leverage on them to define the content of the toolbox by March 2020.

By proposing a framework to develop cultural competences in an organisation that draws from three different theories that had previously not analysed altogether, this report adds to the academic debate as it opens a new discussion on the relation among these. In fact, despite the relation between culture and service quality evaluation has been subject of a few studies, the link of these two theories with design thinking remains relatively not investigated in the academic arena.

In addition to creating a theoretical framework, the results of the empirical work could be summarised into two key insights. On the one hand, a systematic and continuous user-centred approach is required to collect quality insights on the cultural diversity that characterises student groups, in order to really understand their needs and expectations. On the other, the creation of an infrastructure for all program leaders and internal staff to share their learnings and make sure these insights are reflected back in the program design is fundamental. In fact, one of the key insights from the co-creation workshop was that efforts in this direction are currently based on teachers' or program leaders' individual initiatives, thus suggesting that the lack of coordination and formal leadership eventually results in missing the opportunity to leverage on these insights to ensure a real improvement of study programs.

On a side note, a general observation should be made on the fact that despite this work did not touch upon other topics related to inclusion and diversity, what emerges from this study is that

designing learning experiences that are culturally sensitive and thus provide students with flexibility through a variety of options may have secondary positive effects on the inclusion of other “groups” of students (e.g. with learning disabilities) while avoiding the risk of stigmatization that design of tailored-made learning experience for these groups may entail.

To conclude, making efforts to gather insights about student needs and expectations starting from the understanding of cultural differences seems like a strategy that would create value for a wide range of parties in this ecosystem. Indeed, the development of intercultural competences and their application to the design of education programs would promote inclusion and diversity among students and increase their perception of the quality of their learning experience, with a fair assumption that positive effects on their engagement would follow. Hence, this seems beneficial not only for students but also for higher education institutions who continuously strive to maintain a high ratio between enrolled and graduate students. However, the recognition and formalisation into a mandate from higher education institutions seems like a fundamental prerequisite for this to happen.

8.1 Further research

Considering the ever-growing internalisation of products and service experiences, this subject definitely deserves further research. The author suggests three aspects that require further attention. In the first place, the limited range of tools and time available for the development of this thesis suggest that future research should focus on deepening the analysis on the relation among the three presented theories and on exploring different methodologies. Additionally, it might be interesting to investigate how the theoretical framework hereby presented may be adapted on specific industries. In the second place, the four concept ideas developed in the course of this project need to be prototyped, tested and iterated to make sure that they meet user needs and validate the assumptions. Lastly, another direction for future research could concern focusing on the investigation of biases, both from higher education institutions and from students, that may ultimately have an effect on their willingness to contribute to the implementation of cultural diversity policies into study programs.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Online survey statements

Appendix 2: Interview questions

Appendix 1: Online survey statements

1. Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to me. I like to learn new things in my own original way.
2. It is important to me that pursuing my studies leads to a highly-paid job. I want to have a lot of money and expensive things.
3. I think it is important that every person in the classroom is treated equally. I believe everyone should have equal opportunities in education.
4. It's very important to me to show my abilities. I want teachers and other students to admire what I do.
5. It is important to me to study in secure surroundings. I tend to avoid anything that might endanger my safety.
6. I think it is important to learn lots of different things in life. I always looks for new things to try.
7. I believe that people should do what they're told. I think students should follow rules at all times, even when no-one is watching.
8. It is important to me to listen to students who are different from me. Even when I disagree with them, I still wants to understand them.
9. I think it's important not to ask for more than what you have. I believe that students should be satisfied with what they have.
10. I seek every chance I can to have fun. It is important to me to seek pleasure through my study experience.
11. It is important to me to make my own decisions about what I. I like to be free to plan and to choose my own study plan and activities for myself.
12. It's very important to me to help other classmates or students. I want to care for their well-being.
13. Being very successful in my study path is important to me. I like to impress teachers and other students.
14. It is very important to me that my study environment is safe. I think the education institution must be on watch against threats from within and without.
15. I like to take risks. I am always looking for adventures and I often reinterpret my assignments my own way.
16. It is important to me always to behave properly. I want to avoid doing anything teachers or other students would say is wrong.
17. It is important to me to be in charge and tell others what to do. Especially in group assignments I want others to do what I say.
18. It is important to me to be loyal to my friends. I want to devote myself to other students who are close to me.

19. I strongly believe that education institutions should care for the environment. Looking after the environment is important to me.
20. Religious belief is important to me. I would never engage in learning or student activities that are not in line with my religious beliefs.
21. It is important to me that the university environment is organized and clean. I really do not like things to be a mess.
22. I think it's important to be interested in whatever subject is explained during lectures. I like to be curious and to try to understand all sorts of things.
23. I believe all students should live in harmony. Promoting peace among all students in the campus is important to me.
24. I think it is important to be ambitious. I want to show how capable I am.
25. I think it is best to study in traditional ways. It is important to me to keep up the customs I have learned.
26. Enjoying life's pleasures is important to me. I like to 'spoil' myself, in a study context too.
27. It is important to me to respond to the needs of other peers. I try to support those I know whenever I can.
28. I believe I should always show respect to my teachers, principals, and other people from university whose position is high. It is important to me to be obedient.
29. I want everyone to be treated justly, even students I don't know. It is important to me to protect the weak in society.
30. I like surprises. It is important to me to have an exciting study experience.
31. I try hard to avoid getting sick and miss classes. Staying healthy is very important to me.
32. Getting ahead in studies is important to me. I strive to do better than others
33. Forgiving peers or teachers who have hurt me is important to me. I try to see what is good in them and not to hold a grudge.
34. It is important to me to be independent in my assignments. I prefer to rely on myself than on others.
35. Studying in a stable institution is important to me. I am concerned that the social order is taken care of in all study environments.
36. It is important to me to be polite to other students and teachers all the time. I try to never disturb or irritate others.
37. I really want to enjoy life. Having a good time while studying is very important to me.
38. It is important to me to be humble and modest. I try not to draw attention to myself, for example in group assignments.

39. I always want to be the one who makes the decisions in team assignments. I like to be the leader.

40. It is important to me to adapt to nature and to fit into it. I believe that people should not have a negative impact on the environment.

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

Introduction

1. Please shortly introduce yourself (age, nationality, live in Finland since...)
2. When did you start this program?
3. Why did you choose to study in an international program in Finland?
4. What were your general expectations in relation to an international higher education program? (Based on your identity and your previous experiences)
5. What was your perception of it when you experienced it? Were your expectations met? If not, why?
6. Can you tell me about one moment you felt like your expectations were unmet? Why?
7. Can you tell me about one moment when your expectations were exceeded? Why?
8. What is important to you the most with regards to achieving your learning goals? Why?

Teaching and learning: service encounters

- In class or online lecture

- 1) In a lecture (either in class or online) what are your expectations in relation to the lecturer, to the facilities and to other factors that might influence your learning quality?
- 2) What was your perception while experiencing this international program?
- 3) Did you feel like lectures were developed in a way that provided you with equal opportunities to other students? Why?
- 4) In a lecture context, what could constitute a barrier to learning for you? Why?
- 5) What would your ideal lecture be like? Could you describe it?

• **Team work and supervision**

- 1) In the context of a team assignment what are your expectations in relation to the lecturer, to the facilities and to other factors that might influence your learning quality?
- 2) What was your perception while experiencing the international program?
- 3) Do you feel like the way team work and guidance is set up constitutes any barrier to learning? Why?

• **In person or online evaluation**

- 1) In the context of being evaluated (in person or online) on an assignment what are your expectations in relation to the lecturer, to the facilities and to other factors that might influence your learning quality?
- 2) What was your perception while experiencing the international program?
- 3) Did you ever feel like the way you are being evaluated constituted a barrier to learning? Why?

• **General student>lecturer (or tutor) communication**

- 1) In the context of communication with lecturers, tutors or other staff members, what are your expectations in relation to them, to the facilities and to other factors that might influence your learning quality?
- 2) What was your perception while experiencing the international program?
- 3) Did you ever feel like you had any barriers to learning? Why?
- 4) What could constitute a barrier to learning in relation to interacting with lecturers?

Conclusions

Generally speaking, did you ever feel excluded in your study journey? Did you ever feel like your learning opportunities did not equal other students?

Do you have any stories to share (concerning you or other students) where you felt like the education experience was not being inclusive?