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Intercultural Competence at Work

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SISÄLLYS

PREFACE

This publication gathers papers presented at the Internationalization Event and Symposium "Intercultural Competence at Work", which took place in Seinäjoki, Finland on 19 November 2020. The event concluded the project PROMINENCE: Promoting mindful encounters through intercultural competence and experience, a joint effort between seven European universities to promote the development of intercultural competences among students, teachers and employers. The participating universities were the University of Debrecen from Hungary, Aschaffenburg University of Applied Sciences from Germany, Université Savoie Mont Blanc from France, University of Economics in Varna from Bulgaria, University of Economics in Bratislava from Slovakia, University of Economics in Katowice from Poland and Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences from Finland. The project was co-founded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

The arrangements of the symposium were affected by the pandemic situation in Europe, for which reason a virtual, online event was decided on. The suggested topic areas included:

- Different worlds, different languages: Getting to grips with cultural diversity
- Managing and leading in different cultures
- Practicing cultural and emotional intelligence across cultures
- Intercultural negotiations and the global mindset
- Processes and strategies for initiating, maintaining, and furthering global mindset
- Theories and practical applications related to the field of intercultural communication, competency development, and education
- Taking it to the street: the application of best practices.

The writers were free to choose between a theoretical or practical approach or introduce a case study. Consequently, this issue contains papers dealing with topics ranging from discussions on interculturalism and global mindset to pedagogic implementations of courses in multilingual and intercultural environments. The PROMINENCE project with its premises and impact is discussed in the first paper by Prof. Troy Wiwczaroski, who acted as the coordinator of the project and as a member of the editorial board that has read and assessed all papers. The other members of the editorial board are Dr. Ildikó Némethová from University of Economics in Bratislava and Dr. Päivö Laine from Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences. Many thanks go to all authors, editorial board members and to Ms Kaija-Liisa Kivimäki, Senior Lecturer, and Ms Marjo Arola, Team Leader of the International Office, for the arrangements of the symposium.

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THE PROMINENCE PROJECT: SIGNPOSTS AND WAYS AHEAD FOR EDUCATING BUSINESS STUDENTS

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This paper discusses the possible impacts of ERASMUS+ KA203 - Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education project No. 2017-1-HU01-KA203-035918, known as PROMINENCE (Promoting mindful encounters through intercultural competence and experience), on educating business students in higher education programs. The duration of the project was originally foreseen as running from 1 September 2017 - 30 August 2020, but due to the complications related to the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the project was allowed to run through 31 December 2020.

The project partnership is, as follows: University of Debrecen/Hungary (Coordinating Partner), Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences/Finland, University of Economics in Bratislava/Slovakia, Aschaffenburg University of Applied Sciences/Germany, University of Economics in Varna/Bulgaria, University of Economics in Katowice/Poland, and Université Savoie Mont Blanc/France.

The PROMINENCE project arose from a set of ideas shared by Dr. Päivö Laine, of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences, who originally approached several of his partners from previous international projects. It is to Dr. Laine, our esteemed colleague, to whom we dedicate this project closing conference and to whom we dedicate the resulting publication. Returning to our history in brief, the project consortium was completed when Dr. Ildikó

Némethová, from the University of Economics in Bratislava, with whom I had been working for several years on various teaching projects, contacted me in late 2015, asking my university to join the existing partnership and to serve as project coordinator. We first applied unsuccessfully in March 2016, but our tenacity and willingness to persevere led us to rejoin our efforts and redesign the project proposal, which was submitted in March 2017 and approved for funding that summer. The rest is history.

The project application that became the PROMINENCE project we have worked together to complete is based on the conviction that intercultural learning and training programmes, through transnational cooperation between students, teachers, and SMEs, are an accessible way to enhance transversal capabilities and intercultural competences. PROMINENCE aims to develop a holistic process of learning, teaching, and training through the integration of the cognitive (knowledge-based), metacognitive (perception-based), motivational (emotion-based), and behavioural capabilities (verbal and non-verbal) of intercultural competence. This project took a transnational approach which strives to ensure the development of an authentic resource pool of transversal capabilities and facilitates an enhanced level of cultural awareness.

The key output of the project is the PROMINENCE Interactive Interface (https://www.prominenceproject.eu/) - the interactive on-line learning platform we used to develop a versatile pool of resources to deliver insights into culture-specific interactions in diverse contexts, together with an online curriculum, resource materials, assessment tools, and an E-book combined with pedagogical reinforcement materials in the form of an e-booklet, as a learning tool to help target groups to reinforce cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioural capabilities of intercultural competence.

Student participants learned to negotiate a shared meaning based on culture-bound differences and develop all-inclusive intercultural competences. Like them, PROMINENCE aims to help business students learn how to evaluate intercultural competencies important for succeeding in the global context. These competences will embrace those core skills which are a prerequisite for individuals to lead, strategize, organize and implement strategy in a global and intercultural context.

In June 2019, I was honoured to be invited to travel to Europe's oldest university, Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna, Italy, to give a paper and participate in a round table consisting of ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership project coordinators from across Europe on the contribution of higher education institutions (HEIs) to promoting democracy and intercultural dialogue, as part of the celebrations of the XXth anniversary of the Bologna Declaration. I spoke at length about what our partnership was striving to achieve through our cooperation in the PROMINENCE project, and discussed with my fellow project coordinators what we were trying to change through our strategic partnerships and projects work. The results of our discussions pointed to several commonalities:

- lifelong learning remains a problem in many disadvantaged communities in Europe
- lifelong learning is something HEIs can assist with, but often only do so through pay courses, e.g. distance learning courses, evening courses, vocational programmes
- HEIs need to foster collaboration with local businesses, community partners and social enterprises. HEIs often utilise such contacts to enhance specific facets of formal educational activities or as resources for research studies, but otherwise, many HEIs remain academic spaces seemingly closed to 'outsiders'

- HEIs therefore need to clarify their roles within the communities they operate, as well as society at large, in order to promote and support them
- HEIs need to better promote interdisciplinary programmes, involving experts from outside academia to help educators to energise the classroom experience by providing students with real life examples of how e.g. activities in an economic sector are performed, how individuals from different work backgrounds not only may see the same problem differently, but even talk about it using different jargon, and need to actually learn to cooperate and compromise
- HEIs need to support the continuous improvement of pedagogical methodologies which can best utilise the ever-expanding range of IT and Cloud-based technologies that learners expect educators to be capable of employing in classrooms (the COVID-19 crisis driving universities to rely on online e-learning to be able to complete the Spring 2020 academic semester only makes this need clearer)
- HEIs need to release findings, studies and intellectual outputs as open sources to allow access to society as a whole, thereby allowing wider engagement between the academic and practitioner communities. (Compare Lukics et al. 2014.)

As the educators and researchers making up the project partnership, we understand that the 21st century is one in which higher education institutions must provide teachers trained and able to provide modern, IT-based and/or enhanced pedagogical tools, materials and solutions to their students. While the activities and intellectual outcomes created through PROMINENCE seek to assist our partnered universities in meeting this need, we as experienced teachers also understand that it is the human factor that must stand at the heart of our efforts. What makes us human includes the ability to communicate, to discuss, to share ideas, to explore possibilities, to agree and even to disagree. Yet, in the

world of business, which remains our greater goal, the ways one chooses to communicate - or chooses not to - are decisive. This realization is, of course, nothing new.

As one example, changes in foreign language education methodology demonstrate how (higher) education has put the focus on interpersonal communication, rather than focusing on pattern practice and error avoidance to teach students how to actually communicate with native speakers of the target foreign language, rather than how to regurgitate chosen passages of text to perfection. In 1972, Savignon coined the term **communicative competence** and encouraged colleagues to move away from stressing rote learning and to focus on teaching learners to interact through L2 with each other, there have been numerous movements within ESL to devise the ideal classroom for **communicative language teaching** (CLT). In 1975, Van Ek provided language teaching with a roadmap for development which emphasized learner needs. This roadmap, in turn, was further specified by a perceived need to empower the individual learner, by focusing teaching on **learner choice**. (Candlin 1978) What Savignon had proposed as the necessity to develop **coping strategies towards communicative competence** in the learner, came to be augmented by Canale and Swain (1980) to become a need to teach **strategic competence**, through which the learner might achieve a level of L2 knowledge, which would prepare him/her for active, proper and successful interaction with native speakers of L2, by further providing the learner with **grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence** and finally **discourse competence**. (This final pillar is found in Canale 1983) Thus, we have enjoyed four distinct, yet dynamically interacting, pillars upon which to build sensible and right L2 programs for our students for what is soon to be half a century.

Similar to the need for L2 skills, today's workplace demands non-cognitive and 'soft' skills, such as interpersonal skills, persistence and communication skills. Soft skills are often dismissed as being secondary in many research areas of the economic sciences

except for management science or studies in the field of human resource management, probably as a result of bias due to the comparatively easier measurement of cognitive skills (Heckman & Rubinstein 2001; Heckman, Krueger & Friedman 2003). In reaction to this bias, other studies argued that cognitive and non-cognitive factors actually both matter in weighing one job candidate over another (Brunello & Schlotter 2011). While such skills cannot always be measured in any objective manner (or only with unfeasible expenditure of effort and cost), the literature does discuss them quantifiably in terms of how well an employee puts them to use. What the literature points to is what commonly is called competence. The term 'competence' is often used to indicate the combination of knowledge, skills and behaviour needed to improve on the job performance of an employee. In terms of competence, in any case in which an employee is on possession of exactly the right combination of knowledge, skills and behaviour to obtain the expected level of performance on the job, one may consider that employee to be competent. The term competence stresses the need to be able to utilize a combination of skills and characteristics, in order to become and stay competent at work. While it is true that any employee is in possession of a wide range of characteristics, it is also true that some of these will weaken and others will strengthen that employee's performance on any given day or in a specific situation. An employee's strong characteristics might be able to compensate for that employee's weak ones, but not always. For management, the ability of an employee to grow into a job over time or to meet – and even exceed - the requirements of a job over time, poses a challenge to which management must be able to react. For management to be capable of adjusting the competences of any employee to meet new targets or to qualify that employee for a new position within the organization, management must provide some kind of training or learning opportunity. Failure to develop the workforce in a company is a failure of management.

Research tells us that employee competencies encompass those talents, skills and capabilities that contribute to multi-factor productivity gains and which are necessary for the sustainable economic growth and development of an organization (Hartog, 2001; Sianesi & Van Reenen, 2003). However, it must be noted that research is not uniform as to how to classify competencies. Heijke, Meng & Ramaekers (2002) distinguish three groups of competencies: those acquired in school and are then used in the workplace; those acquired in school, which assist workers to gain new competencies on-the-job; and those acquired mainly in a working context. Kellermann (2007) classifies competencies into five groups: academic, general-academic, scientific-operative, personal-professional, social-reflexive, and physiological-handicraft. Earlier, Bunk (1994) collected these competencies into four distinct groups: specialized, methodological, participative and socio-individual. Other classifications are added depending on the data available (Allen & Van der Velden 2001). Thus, there is no general agreement about competency classifications, and economic theory does not provide any clear categorization.

Organizational competencies refer to the ability to work under pressure, to work independently and with attention to detail. Specialized competencies require an ability to carry out activities and tasks responsibly and competently and presume that the specialized individual possesses the required knowledge and skills to successfully do so. Methodological competencies include the ability to react to problems appropriately, using prescribed procedures and being able to find functional solutions to problems, based on experience. Generic competencies may be applied in many different contexts. Such competencies include critical thinking skills, as well as (in)formal communication skills. Participative competencies include those involving planning, accepting tasks in a positive manner, decision-making and even the willingness to assume responsibilities. Team-oriented behaviour and interpersonal empathy belong to the sphere of

socio-emotional competencies. All these fall under the purview of soft skills training.

Our current students, as well as our graduates, are faced with a global business culture which sets out as one condition of their employability that they involve themselves in continuous self-learning and the acquisition of new skills (Torrington, Hall & Taylor 2008). Soft skills include the ability to successfully work in a group or a team, as well as choosing to be positively receptive to work-related changes. Additionally, intercultural communicative competence is required as a basis for using soft skills in a multicultural work environment. Intercultural communicative competence may be considered a transformative process which consists of dialogical reflection and establishing a connection between cultures. (Compare Baranova, Kobicheva & Tokareva 2020; Penbeck, Yurdakul & Cerit 2009.) It comes therefore as no surprise that soft skills are often a key factor for Human Resource managers when deciding between two candidates for a position (Van Dam 2004).

Erasmus+ is already committed to soft skills development in the EU. Data published by the European Commission in 2019 reveals that Erasmus+ programmes are having a substantial impact on competence development at HEIs, both in terms of competences relevant to employment such as adaptability, critical thinking, communication skills or foreign language skills (p. 181). In 2014, the European Commission published its Erasmus Impact Study, for which a method of measurement was developed, based on the memo-facts ©. Memo-facts © consist of a scale of measurements predetermined and ordered by the European Commission, which 'explicitly examine employability-related skills and their improvement through studying abroad'. The resulting memo © methodology was created by CHE Consult to assist universities to stimulate student "personal growth, to measure effects of interventions and experience such as international mobility or to select staff fitting the institution's needs" (Klicnikova 2014).

Particularly significant is that some researchers have equated these memo © factors to soft skills themselves in a number of studies (Humburg, Velden & Verhagen 2013; European Commission 2014).

What is meant by the term employability? Employability is a complex concept. Yorke (2006) also defined employability as a concept which is defined as being much more complex than simply a collection of core or key skills. Not only are each individual job applicant's personal characteristics, hard and soft skills, attitudes towards work - how, when, with whom and for what financial and benefit package remuneration - all taken into consideration by the potential employer, but the factors the applicant mentions as his/her personal motivation in seeking the job in question also come into play. Hofstede (2009) sees multiple factors influencing individual experience and social organisation which may have impacts on employability. Still other factors, including emotional maturity, interpersonal and intercultural communication skills have also been identified in several studies over the last decade on employability (Hagar & Hodkinson 2009; David, Janiak & Wasmer 2010; Brunello & Schlotter 2011; Hinchcliffe & Jolly 2011; Richter & Wiwczaroski 2018). Equally important are numerous external factors unaffected directly by formal education, including national labour market regulations, local, regional and national demography, the structure/-s of the relevant economy/-ies and the overall economic situation (Council of the European Union 2012).

While studies published in the areas of human resource management and management science tend to define employability in terms of skills, there is no agreement on the precise definition or description of the skills that make one 'employable'. (Compare discussions in Oliver 2015; Tymon 2013.) Pegg et al. (2012) discuss how the Council of Europe define employability as a combination of factors which enable individuals to

- advance towards and/or enter employment,
- stay in employment and
- progress throughout their careers.

This combination consists of achievements, skills, understandings and personal attributes, which when combined, make freshly graduated students more attractive on the job market.

Within the PROMINENCE project, the key output, the PROMINENCE Interactive Interface, was developed by taking into account the signposts we can readily see in academic publications, interviews with individuals active across economic sectors and undertakings, official statistics, as well as what our students and graduates are communicating to us about their perceived and actual needs. The ways ahead for educating business students are clear. A survey conducted by the European Commission between 2017 - 2019 resulted in the following findings: Students included in Erasmus+ activities reported improvement in those competences they felt were necessary to find employment, with nine out of ten students claiming that they had become more adaptable to different environments and cultures, were more able to effectively collaborate with others from different cultures, and even felt more confident about their communication and problem-solving skills. (European Comission 2019b 2019.)

Going forward, I would like to return to the results of my discussions with diverse colleagues in Bologna in 2019: we need to disseminate our Interactive Interface in such a way that we provide our students with the ability to use the virtual tools we created to improve their competences in the areas of leadership development, interpersonal and intercultural communication, international business meetings and negotiations, thereby also strengthening their English L2 skills for improved marketability towards their future employment. We also need to reach out to local businesses, including SMEs, and offer these tools to them

and their employees, in order that their businesses might grow and contribute to the local economies we seek to impact. What we cannot do is pretend that our Interactive Interface can survive over time in its present state. It is my hope, as our project closes, that each of us who have worked together will take what we have created and use it as a baseline from which new, improved tools will emerge, so that PROMINENCE can remain relevant and useful for self-study, in the classroom, in training rooms at businesses and via the Internet for colleagues to use in developing their own project outputs. It is my hope that the strategic partnership we formed and won funding for in 2017 will continue to assist us to bring European education together, even as we face the impacts of COVID-19, the prevalent divisions clouding over European politics, and the struggle to grow Europe vis-à-vis the challenges of economic competition from China, India, the United States, the Arabian Peninsula, Russia and elsewhere. Only through cooperation and mindfulness of each other will we successfully help our graduates to become PROMINENT in their chosen professions.

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PROMINENCE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF GLOBAL MINDSET

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1 INTRODUCTION

The PROMINENCE project funded by Erasmus + KA2 (2017-1-HU01-KA203-035918) has developed an interactive online course based on a four-tiered model of learning and training through an iterative mechanism of experience-acquisition, reflective observations, conceptual interpretations, and active engagement in situations characterised by cultural diversity. This interactive online course aims to facilitate the development of a global mindset which reflects cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioural capabilities through the promotion of active experimentation in intercultural settings.

This interactive online course provides a comprehensive guide to the key areas in the field of intercultural communication. The design of the interactive online course ensures that, through key theoretical concepts in the e-book, the development of a two-level structure with a special focus on the reality of cultural diversity through national models of cultures and the reality of cultural diversity through organisational models of cultures is realised, through key questions and tasks, integrating understandings of the topics and concepts that give learners the opportunity to

think, discuss, engage in tasks, draw on their own experience, reflect, research, and critically read key materials.

Each topic has an introductory section, in which the key terms and concepts that map the field of the topic are introduced, including activities and reflective tasks designed to establish key understandings and terminology appropriate to the topic. The core sections provide open-ended, student-centred activities and tasks designed to promote the application of new knowledge. There are also extensive suggestions for further reading. The interactive online course is aimed at individual (academic or business) learners or learners in a class who are motivated to develop a global mindset that should characterise individuals working across cultures.

The global mindset has become a significant long-term competitive advantage for companies competing in the global arena. Cultural differences are connected with divergent ways of addressing situations in different parts of the world. To lead a multicultural global workforce effectively, companies need leaders with global mindsets. One of the dimensions of a global mindset is culture. Dekker (2013) notes that the global intercultural mindset addresses attitudes towards the cultural aspects of globalisation and represents a specific dimension of the broader global mindset concept. The global intercultural mindset refers to an awareness of cultural diversity, and ability to incorporate knowledge of other cultural values, a heightened understanding of intercultural interactions, and an enhanced knowledge of inspiring followers from other cultures.

The cultural perspective considers a global mindset from the context of cultural diversity inherent in the process of globalisation. Leaders are increasingly faced with the challenge of prevailing over domestic short-sightedness and an ethnocentric mindset, expanding across cultural boundaries, collaborating with em-

ployees from many countries, and handling culturally divergent interorganisational relationships. The cultural perspective suggests that the way to manage these challenges is to conquer an ethnocentric mindset and harvest a global mindset, which includes cultural self-awareness, openness to and understanding of other cultures, and selective integration of distant values and practices.

2 FROM ETHOCENTRISM TO COSMOPOLITANSIM

A global leader with a global mindset embraces differences and has achieved a state of ethnorelativity. The developmental model of intercultural sensitivity by Milton Bennett (1993) provides a way of identifying the personal change in individuals as they move from being ethnocentric to ethnorelative. The model has three stages of ethnocentrism (denial of difference, defence against difference, and minimisation of difference) and three stages of ethnorelativism (acceptance of difference, adaptation to difference, and integration of difference).

Signs of ethnocentrism can be seen in behaviour that is scornful of other cultures, is prejudicial towards certain groups, and displays racial attitudes. Denial is due to ignorance of cultures different than one's own. Defence recognises difference and sees it as hostile. Minimisation assumes that individuals can understand each other once they get past relatively superficial cultural differences. This is a transition stage that helps an individual prepare for greater recognition of cultural differences. The stage of ethnorelativism requires a significant other-culture experience. Acceptance tends to demonstrate respect for behavioural differences and an understanding that all behaviour appears in a cultural context. Adaptation enables the individual to flex his

worldviews. An integrated individual no longer identifies purely with one culture but is able to function among cultures, and is able to assess situations contextually. Yoshikawa (1987) claims that such an individual is in a state of vigorous inbetweenness. A global leader with a global mindset must reach the stage of integration of difference.

The cultural perspective of a global mindset uses Perlmutter's (1969) revolutionary trilateral typology of predominant states of mind: ethnocentric or home-country orientation, polycentric or host-country orientation, and geocentric or world orientation. Leaders with a geocentric orientation or global mindset display universalistic, supranational approaches, deemphasising the importance of cultural contrast and nationality when making decisions. Adler and Bartholomew's (1992) relate the geocentric orientation to the occurrence of a transnational leader who has a global perspective characterised by knowledge and acknowledgement for diverse cultures.

A geocentric orientation or global mindset with a cultural perspective is closely associated with cosmopolitanism. Hannerz (1996) identifies cosmopolitanism as eagerness to link with openness towards diverse cultural experiences, and search for diversity rather than uniformity. Even though cosmopolitans are often travellers by nature, it is not travel that conceptualises cosmopolitanism, it is mindset. Levy et al. (2007) refer to cosmopolitanism as a state of mind that is focused on the other, and is depicted by ardour to explore and learn from others' meaning systems.

One of the ways to advance a sense of awareness in the global environment is by accepting a cosmopolitan view. Collins (2014) refers to cosmopolitanism as the ability of a leader to feel at home in any country across the globe. Cosmopolitan global leaders enhance their multicultural awareness through inquisitiveness,

geniality, interpersonal interactions, and interest in global assignments. Cosmopolitanism is a set of intellectual capabilities in adapting and transforming divergent meanings and different forms of orientations into a widely acceptable global standard. Training programmes on cultural and emotional intelligence greatly contribute towards creating a deep sense of awareness and sensitivity to cultural differences in the global environment.

2.1 Awareness and sensitivity through cultural and emotional intelligence

Earley and Ang (2003) refer to cultural intelligence as the ability to adapt to diverse environments. Cultural intelligence has four critical components: cognition, metacognition, motivation, and behaviour. Metacognitive strategies are particularly relevant in developing a global mindset. The model of global mindset development predicts that higher levels of cognitive complexity, mediated by positive global psychological capital, will induce individuals to attain awareness of their own mental models, and incorporate the information from likely contradictory paradigms. Kelemen, Frost & Weaver (2000) claim that metacognitive abilities differ across time and task and they are not stable across settings. Metacognitive ability is not a general capacity; thus, it may be considered state-like, situation-specific and developable. Andersen and Bergdolt (2017) note that a global mindset and cultural intelligence allow leaders to decode complex cross-cultural situations and think outside narrow cultural boundaries when interacting cross-culturally.

Cumberland et al. (2016) provide a fourfold classification of pragmatic approaches that contribute to the development of a global mindset and cultural intelligence. First, self-awareness training helps individuals become more aware of their cultural biases. This pragmatic approach leads to multicultural effectiveness, propagates a being dimension of human experience, and

recognises individual uniqueness. Didactic training tends to be informative and enables individuals to understand cultural topics and viewpoints to enhance cognitive skills. Experiential activities allow individuals to gain global experience by working in teams with culturally diverse others. Immersion is perceived as an efficacious experience in modelling the capabilities of global leaders and fostering a global mindset.

Observing behaviour is closely related to the regulation of emotions, since behaviour is the natural result of thoughts and feelings. When global leaders are able to construct awareness of their emotions and understand their own biases and emotional triggers, they have a better chance of acting from an informed rather than spontaneous frame of mind. The four domains of emotional intelligence, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management, demonstrate a significant set of skills for vibrant global leadership with a global mindset. These domains are intertwined with a zestful relationship among them. Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee (2002) note that emotional intelligence has to do with one's emotions (affective domain) and thinking (cognitive domain) and the interaction between the two. Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive and express emotions, and to use emotions to promote thinking, to understand and reason with emotions, and to effectively manage emotions within oneself and in relationship with others.

Shankman, Allen & Haber-Curran (2015) have developed the model of emotionally intelligent leadership which involves three facets of development: conscientiousness of self, conscientiousness of others, and conscientiousness of context. This model includes 19 capacities that supply individuals with knowledge, skills, perspectives, and attitudes to attain coveted outcomes. Conscientiousness of the self includes emotional self-perception, emotional self-control, authenticity, healthy self-esteem, flexibility, optimism, initiative and achievement. Conscientiousness

of others refers to displaying empathy, inspiring others, coaching others, capitalising on difference, developing relationships, building teams, demonstrating citizenship, managing conflict, and facilitating change. Conscientiousness of context relates to analysing the group and assessing the environment.

3 BUILDING BLOCKS OF GLOBAL MINDSET

Mendenhall et al. (2008) note that traits that contribute to the formation of a global mindset represent interpersonal capabilities through the principles of the self-construction theory. Traits such as extroversion, agreeableness, emotional stability, conscientiousness affect the external environment of a leader, whereas openness as a trait provokes a self-construction way of thinking by a state of commitment to change. This state of commitment allows leaders to differentiate and recognise multiple cultures, and consequently, develop the interpersonal capability to conciliate between tensions created by diversity (Levy et al. 2007). Caligiuri (2000) highlights that this state of commitment can be triggered by intercultural training or developmental experience.

Behavioural skills or competencies such as cross-cultural communication, interpersonal skills, valuing people, empowering others, and teaming skills are focused on managing people and interpersonal relationships and greatly contribute to the emergence of a global mindset. Mendenhall et al. (2008) note that cross-cultural communication entails high levels of mindfulness, this is a conscious awareness of contextual, cultural, and individual differences, and the way in which these differences influence how messages are encoded, transmitted, received, and interpreted, as well as the reciprocal feedback process. Furthermore, cross-cultural communication involves (a) general cultural

awareness of cultural differences of others and awareness of one's own cultural influences; and (b) cognitive and behavioural skills such as the ability to speak the other individual's language, skills at negotiating across cultures, and the ability to study general communication skills in culturally appropriate ways. Interpersonal skills demonstrate a wide spectrum of predispositional, attitudinal, cognitive, motivational, and behavioural dimensions. Interpersonal skills are classified into emotional intelligence (sensitivity, interpersonal management, self-awareness) and relationship management skills (managing relationships). Valuing people as a skill entails three dimensions: respect for people and their differences; understanding others and their emotions; and creating and building trusting relationships. Empowering others leads to vitalising others by enhancing their sense of self-efficacy. This entails coaching skills, understanding how to pass on authority in culturally acceptable ways, and the ability to support others in their professional and personal development. Teaming skills are associated with the ability to work productively in multicultural teams.

Cognitive capabilities that contribute to the emergence of a global mindset include cognitive flexibility and intellectual intelligence, global knowledge, and business acumen. Cognitive flexibility is the ability to perceive divergent perspectives, to switch between groups, and transfer between groups. Leaders who have cognitive flexibility are capable of integrating different thinking strategies and mental frameworks into their planning, decision making, and work management. Brake (1997) describes business acumen as the inclination to switch perspectives between local and global, and the ability to utilise adequate professional knowledge to acquire favourable results in the business.

3.1 Global mindset inventory

Levy et al. (2007) argue that conceptualisations of the global mindset can be understood via three categories based upon the

attention given to culture and cultural diversity, cognition, and global complexities. Attention given to culture emphasises cultural diversity and highlights the global mindset as a switch from an ethnocentric mindset to develop an understanding of other cultures through a critical incorporation of values and practices of culturally diverse others. Cognition and global complexities refer to globalisation, highlighting the development of cognitive abilities to help leaders distinguish between and integrate across cultures and pay attention to global issues.

Javidan et al. (2006) from the Thunderbird School of Global Management define the global mindset as the capability to affect others from diverse cultures, which consists of three capitals: intellectual, psychological, and social. These capitals involve knowledge, behaviours, and attributes. Intellectual capital indicates the cognitive side and refers to the leader's knowledge of the global environment: global business savvy, cosmopolitan outlook, cognitive complexity. The psychological capital represents the affective aspect which allows a leader to leverage his intellectual capital: passion for diversity, quest for adventure, self-assurance. The social capital entails the behavioural aspect displaying the individual's ability to function in a way that would develop trusting relationships with culturally diverse individuals: intercultural empathy, interpersonal impact, diplomacy.

Identifying the attributes and elements of the global mindset is an important step in developing global leadership. Once the indispensable individual qualities are identified, then approaches can be construed to help leaders take steps that would enhance those attributes and promote their effectiveness as a global leader. A strong profile of a global mindset is a predictor of success in global leadership positions. An effective way to improve a global leader's effectiveness is by focusing on his global mindset profile and by enhancing its nine elements. Any endeavour at developing global leadership needs to find a way to help leaders go through a process of double-loop learning where they dis-

card a few things, obtain many new things, and are able to move from a unicultural mental map to a multicultural mental map that would allow them to identify the effective methods to affect people from diverse cultures. Developing global leadership also means improving a leader's self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief about his capabilities to exercise control over events that affects him.

The Global Mindset Inventory can be used to assess a leader's level of global mindset to help him identify his strengths and areas that need to be developed. It is also a way of benchmarking and comparing a leader's profile with other global leaders. It can also be used as a post-assessment level of global mindset.

Beechler and Javidan's (2007) work has tried to integrate global mindset and global leadership. They argue that cognitive complexity is a necessary but not sufficient requirement for effective global leaders and outline three basic attributes of global mindset: intellectual (or knowledge), psychological, and social. Javidan (2008) explains that global leaders with a plethora of knowledge are aware of different competitors, competitive strategies, understand the industry and diverse economic and political systems, and able to identify business opportunities globally. Global leaders with psychological capital have high self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience to attain success. Those with social capital are connected to a large network of relationships. They are able to build mutually trusting relationships with individuals from other cultures. Beechler and Javidan (2007) explain that these attributes can be developed consciously, over a period of time.

4 CONCLUSION

Leading international projects or multicultural teams demands the ability to comprehend cultural differences between employees

and team members, as well as the manifold business cultures that exist across the world. Global leaders need to adopt a global mindset that allows them to flex their natural leadership styles and adjust their customary behaviours to the culture and context they are working in. A leader with a global mindset is able to effectively lead across borders, serving a multitude of diverse stakeholders in a continuously developing, unsteady, complex and ambivalent environment.

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THE CULTURE FACTOR: LESSONS FROM A CONTRIBUTION TO COIL: SOCIAL INTERACTION IN COVID-19 TIMES – A GERMAN UNIVERSITY PERSPECTIVE

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1 INTRODUCTION

The following article builds and reflects on the online contribution to the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) initiative of Coventry University, provided jointly by both authors in the summer break 2020, as an integral part of the dissemination strategy for our Erasmus+ strategic partnership project PROMINENCE. For their contribution, both authors adopted the approach of looking at how Germans react in the current pandemic and relating this to relevant cultural theories. Recent examples were selected to illustrate cultural findings and references were made where suitable to relevant elements of the PROMINENCE platform throughout.

With the launch of this global initiative and the creation of an open-Moodle platform, the global experience team of Coventry University (Centre for Global Engagement 2020) facilitated the sharing of ideas and views, explored cultural differences and encouraged debate on current global affairs, such as on the pan-

demic - going beyond the so-called Online International learning (OIL) only strategy (Villar-Onrubia & Brinder 2016; Taylor 2016). OIL has been referred to as an innovative teaching paradigm that facilitates intercultural competence via meaningful online discussions between higher education practitioners and students in distant locations (de Wit 2013). Coventry University refers to COIL as virtual mobility experiences that are embedded into the formal curriculum and provide students with an opportunity to interact with fellow-students at partner universities. The virtual mobility scheme of Coventry University, in the form of COIL projects, involve online interactions between Coventry University students and peers at non-UK universities, so they can work together on subject-specific learning tasks or activities while developing key competences of global graduates such as intercultural competence and (digital) communicative skills.

The practice of COIL can open new learning horizons, and staff in higher education can hereby also support students to develop their intercultural competences, including effective communication online in settings where English is used as the shared means of online communication (Orsini-Jones et al. 2017). Virtual mobility initiatives are one of the most flexible, versatile and inclusive approaches in the provision of international experience opportunities. Given that at most universities only a small fraction of students can benefit from forms of academic mobility that involve travelling abroad, Internet-based intercultural interactions prove to be instrumental in widening participation in international experience. This model can also be seen within a wider model for progression in international experience and contributing to Internationalisation at Home Initiatives.

As stated on Coventry University's website for COIL, there are four key elements that define any COIL project (cf. Centre for Global Engagement 2020):

1. It involves a cross-border collaboration or interaction with people from different backgrounds and cultures.

2. Students must engage in some sort of online interaction, whether it is asynchronous or synchronous.

3. It must be driven by a set of internationalised learning outcomes aimed at developing global perspectives and/or fostering students' intercultural competences.

4. There must be a reflective component that helps students think critically about such interactions.

The benefits of COIL are manifold, with participants being given the opportunity

- to interact, engage and collaborate with peers they would have not otherwise have the chance to work with.
- share understanding of one another's societies, ways of living, and perspectives to develop valuable intercultural skills and mutual understanding.
- observe, listen and learn about differences in communication style, non-verbal cues and body language; increasing their intercultural communication capacity for understanding and managing interactions in diverse, complex and novel scenarios
- experience, interact and gain insight into cultural differences in human relationships, behaviour and communication that are relevant to their discipline; enhancing their ability to effectively manage and appropriately respond to diverse opinions, beliefs and values that might be different to their own.
- develop digital skills that are key to life in the 21st century, especially those that will enable them to participate in teamwork involving networks of geographically-dispersed professionals.

While some COIL Projects take place in 'real-time' so that students from different countries are communicating and interacting 'live' simultaneously, initiatives can also take place 'asynchronously,' which means students from each country can interact and work together at different times. This may be helpful when time differences between countries are not manageable or complementary to schedules (Centre for Global Engagement 2020).

COIL activity or project leaders can select the type of activities and tools and exploit a wide range of online resources, such as blogs, social media, video-conferencing and video-sharing platforms. COIL initiatives can vary in duration and format and the possibilities are endless and can be decided by the respective course leader. Some COIL projects involve 'live' interaction for no more than one hour which was the format adopted by both authors for their contribution to the COIL initiative.

2 OUR COIL RATIONALE

The objective of this COIL initiative conforms completely with the overall objectives of the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership Project PROMINENCE, namely to embed internationalisation into the curriculum of the institutions involved in order to promote intercultural competence or Cultural Intelligence (or Cultural Quotient, QC) among students and staff. In times when our international collaboration and teaching modes have been reduced to virtual formats only due to the ongoing pandemic, COIL has proved fit for purpose as collaborative learning, teaching and interacting pedagogic instrument that can enhance collaborative learning and student experiences across cultures. In the following article, some key aspects will be illustrated and lessons learned relating to our COIL participation will be presented.

As contributors to one of the COIL Initiatives in the summer term 2020 "Global Conversations – In Conversation with….," the

contribution both authors were delivering focused on looking at Germany and Germans in the recent and current pandemic through some cultural lens using selected cultural approaches and theories (some of which would be referenced also on the PROMINENCE website and respective e-book chapters and interactive websites accordingly). By drawing on some selected cultural approaches, the aim was to shed some light on the topic and confront participants from different cultures with these observations and findings and discuss them with the aim to create meaningful interactive learning.

Culture serves as an orientation system for a group/society. According to Thomas (1996, 112) culture standards are based on the definition of culture as an "universal orientation system typical for a society, organisation or group...It influences the way in which its members perceive, think, value and act, and thus defines their membership within the society. Culture as an orientation system lays out and offers a mode of behaviour for the individuals who feel that they belong to this society, and on this basis creates the prerequisites necessary to develop a distinctly perceptible form of dealing with one's environment (ibid.) The historic background is important especially in our example of Germans and German society with its profound impact on culture and norms.

An individual's cultural background is the major deciding factor determining how cultural standards and cultural traits are understood and interpreted. Cultural standards are socially shared and accepted norms and values that are used by the individuals living within a particular culture to evaluate the behaviour of each other (Schroll-Machl 2008, 26). Although this approach is not uncontested, given that reality is much more complex, culture can be ONE deciding factor in the so-called triangle of culture (individual/the context/situation/culture see also Schroll-Machl 2008) and helps gain a better understanding of cross-cultural characteristics and differences.

3 CULTURE IN CONTEXT

3.1 Germans and the pandemic

For the COIL initiative of looking at Germans in the pandemic through the cultural lens, German Chancellor Angela Merkel's speech on 18 March 2020 was selected as one example of political stewardship and leadership in COVID-19 times to analyse certain German cultural communication characteristics such as direct communication style and low context: In a once-of-a-kind televised nationwide address – her speech came one day after Germany instituted restrictive measures in an attempt to curb COVID-19 inflicted transmission - Merkel called on German citizens to recognize the gravity posed by the coronavirus and play their part and help to slow its spread (https://www.dw.com/en/merkel-coronavirus-is-germanys-greatest-challenge-since-world-war-ii/a-52830797). Merkel emphasised each individual's responsibility and that citizens respect the (social distancing and hygiene-related) rules while reassuring suitable social and economic responsibility of the state, in return. Based on the model of the culture triangle, the constellation of the individual, the situation/context and culture (cf. for example Schroll-Machl 2008, 31) were analysed: The Chancellor was appealing to those living in Germany with clear, direct words, while showing empathy and support and referring to her own personal past which interwoven with Germany's recent history of reunification. The strong appeal character of the Chancellor's address can also be analysed with reference to Germany's federal political system and organisation with the chancellor and the respective federal minister having a coordinating role in the area of public health only while the executive powers in this area reside with the chiefs of governments of the German states. Chancellor Merkel was at the time praised both at home and abroad for delivering this speech with calm reassurance, clear-eyed realism, as well as for her rigor in

collating information and honesty adding even more credibility with her scientific academic background (e.g. Miller 2020).

3.2 Tight/loose cultures and the pandemic

Another culture approach introduced to illustrate selected "laws of culture" (Gelfand 2020) was used to identify cultural elements of Germans in the pandemic, based on empirical findings of the US cross-cultural psychologist Michele Gelfand, a pioneering researcher on tightness-looseness (T/L) theory. All cultures have social norms - rules for acceptable behaviour - that are the "glue that holds groups together; they give us our identity, and they help us coordinate in unprecedented ways". (Gelfand 2018, 3). Whereas tight cultures have strong social norms and little tolerance for deviance, loose cultures have weak social norms and are highly permissive. The former are rule makers; the latter, rule breakers, which is also the title of her book that expands on her empirical research carried out in 33 countries and published in 2011 (Gelfand 2011). Cultures vary in the strength of their social norms along a so- called tight-loose continuum, with profound effects on behaviour. What Gelfand and colleagues documented in their research is that the degree of threat that cultures face from the outside world has greatly determined the way they evolve to be relatively tight cultures at one end of the continuum, loose cultures or something in between. Gelfand and colleagues discovered that cultures that experienced collective external threats (e.g. political, natural disasters) in the past had stricter rules and punishments compared to cultures with looser rules.

Adapted to the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, Gelfand's findings seem to suggest that countries that have experienced crises and disasters such as pandemics before and as a result lean tight, such as Singapore and South Korea, have been successfully slowing the spread of the coronavirus through disciplined coordination and ready compliance by their citizens, whereas

cultures such as the US, with no organised response and resistance to restrictions and a clear preference for individual choice and freedom, had more loose responses in the early days of the pandemic.

What appears to replicate according to Gelfand and colleagues in her latest research findings is the tightness effect on cases and deaths per capita - with loose cultures really struggling (relating to data of 16th October in a paper that is currently under revision at the Lancet Planetary Health). Cultural differences also play a role with regard to the degree of acceptance of tight measures, i.e. loose cultures tend to find it harder overall compared to tighter cultures to sacrifice their freedom and indulgence, i.e. constraining measures. While both individuals and governments are in principle capable of tightening or loosening depending on the context, every individual as member of a given culture tends to have a default preference regarding rule making or rule breaking. (There is also an individual test on T/L preferences available as so called T/L mindset quiz on Michele Gelfand's website www.michelegelfand.com).

Gelfand calls for a so-called Tight/Loose (T/L) Dance," with tightening of the rules when needed, but also a loosening up again if the situation allows for it, to enable acceptance of the constraining measures in society and creativity and the ability to alternate between the two to respond efficiently and effectively as "T/L ambidexterity" (Gelfand 2020).

3.3 Nonverbal communication aspects

"One cannot not communicate" (Watzlawik, Beavin Bavelas & Jackson 1967). The famous quote by the Austrian psychologist and philosopher Paul Watzlawik powerfully demonstrates that - whatever we do with every form of behaviour - we communicate and in fact interact.

Selected examples of non-verbal communication (cf. chapter 1.5 of PROMINENCE) and their potential impact in the context of the present pandemic discussed. One was the so-called "7-38-55" communication rule (Mehrabian 1972), which stresses the dominance of facial expressions and gestures over words and potential implications and challenges for communicating across cultures in times of pandemic when needing to wear masks or being reduced to online formats of communication only.

According to Hall (1966) space helps regulate intimacy in social situations by controlling sensory exposure. The classical so called proxemic theory classifies interpersonal distance into four categories, each of which reflects a different relationship between individual. According to Hall's theory, cultural norms are the most important factors to describe the preferred social distance. The four distance zones are as follows (Hall 1966, 114 ff):

- Intimate distance, involving direct contact, such as that of lovemaking, comforting, protecting, and playing football or wrestling.
- Personal distance, ranging from 1 to 4 feet. At arm's length, subjects of personal interest can be discussed while physical contact, such as holding hands or hitting the other person in the nose, is still possible.
- Social distance, ranging from 4 to 12 feet. At this distance, more formal business and social discourse takes place.
- Public distance, ranging from 12 to 25 feet or more. No physical contact and very little direct eye contact (Both the personal and social distance zones are affected by the current social distancing practice situated between one and two meters (3.28 – 6.56 feet) for all degrees and kinds of social relationships that we follow in the current pandemic for protective reasons and help contain the spreading of the virus.

However, what happens to proxemics tied to culture in the present pandemic when we are all across the globe currently learning to unlearn the usual distance to close friends and relatives including members of more collectivist societies and bigger families that are used to interacting very closely and by touching each other more than other cultures by comparison (cf. Sorokowska et al. 2017)? The rules of social interaction are ingrained in our respective societies and cultures that we unconsciously follow. They are however being and have to be redefined in the current pandemic to practice social distancing rules in the efforts to contain the virus and curb infection rates.

It is argued that proxemic cues will enable people to understand whether or not you would like any physical contact with them and authors such as Jane Adams (2020) have recently looked into paradigm changes on some ways of social interaction resulting from the pandemic.

The handshake is arguably one of the most common and deeply ingrained ways in our society of greeting people in the world. As non-verbal form of communication and symbolic act (cf. Beavin Bavelas & Chovil 2006), the handshake has existed in some form or another for thousands of years, for example the depiction of the handshake between King Shalmaneser III of Assyria and a Babylonian ruler found on a ninth-century BC relief (Gelfand 2018, 13). One of the theories suggest that the handshake may have originated in ancient Greece in as a gesture designed to show a new acquaintance that you weren't concealing any weapons. In our world today, it continues to have a communicative function as a form of greeting with possible variations across cultures: In German business, for example, the partner's hand is usually shaken energetically but not too tightly, with people engaging in the greeting process exchange a direct eye contact (Kavalchuk 2012). The handshake as hand gesture symbolises good faith, sincerity and authenticity here and intentions and agreements

are made effective by the ritual gesture in the form of an open weaponless hand stretched out toward one another, grasping each other in a mutual handshake.

How do we interact in a way that keeps us safe during the pandemic without this symbolic act so deeply ingrained in our society and with the absence of normal, other nonverbal cues leading to potential misinterpretation? In the early days of the outbreak, Dr. Sylvie Briand, the World Health Organization's director of pandemics, endorsed a variety of greetings as a substitute to the handshake, including bumping elbows, waving and bowing with palms together in the Thai "wai" or Indian "namaste" and other form of greetings went viral such as the Wuhan shake with feet touching.

It is true that some gestures are so deeply rooted and ingrained in society that it may be hard to replace them. However, these times may require a new choreography for our way of interacting and communicating. And admittedly our perceptions have already begun to shift adapting to the current situation, for example, when we watch films (all produced before social distancing times 2020), it feels hard to avoid shudders of worry in reaction to crowded scenes in bars what demonstrates that our brains have started to accept the new normal of distant social practices (cf. Stokel-Walker 2020).

And caveats of analysing non-verbal communication apply however. In Hall's view "NVC (Non-Verbal Communication) must always be read in context; in fact they are often a prominent part of the context in which the verbal part of the message is set2 (Hall 76, 81). Some nonverbal acts are an intrinsic part of langue used in face to face dialogue (Beavin Bavelas & Chovil 2006, 110).

3.4 Hofstede's cultural dimensions in the light of the German response

In the course of the pandemic, it has become clear that culture provides as well guidance for making sense of a completely new and threatening situation and influences the choice of our coping strategies. Germany is among the lower power distant countries (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010, 59), and it is a decentralised country where federal state governments play an important role in decision taking at the level of the federal states. However, at the beginning of the pandemic, the federal government under the leadership of the grand coalition in Berlin decided on the first drastic restrictions on public life. After the initial shock, the Germans recollected their sense of decentralisation and lower power distance and the governments of the federal states established themselves as opponents to Merkel's uniform approach for whole Germany. Even local and city governments started using more varied and more flexible approaches in fighting the pandemic. Centralised decision-making, which is uncommon for cultures with a low power distance as the German culture, had to give way to decentralised decision-making.

The German society is very individualistic. The strong tendency of self-actualisation can be seen in the fact that political decisions have to carefully balance the need to safeguard people's health on the one side and their individual right to enjoy life in form of gatherings, family parties and holidays. In this regard, the Germans seem to be unable to agree: there is still strong love for rules as on Hofstede's indulgence versus restraint scale, the German score is very much on the "restrained" side (Hofstede et al. 2010, 277 - 280). However, resistance to the stark measures such as contact restrictions, social distancing and wearing masks reflect that at least a part of the society has a certain tendency to indulgence and thus weaker controls. This and a move from a very task-based to a more relationships-based culture might be

parts of a paradigm shift that started some time ago and have been boosted by the ultimate challenge of the corona pandemic.

3.5 The Germans' trust in objectivism

The German culture standard of objectivism, established by Schroll-Machl (2008, 45), can be used to explain the people's reactions during the crisis. Although she refers to the business context when she claims that "(b)eing objective is a highly esteemed characteristic of German professionalism" (ibid., 47), this is also true in the process of information exchange and opinion building during the pandemic. Germans thrive to understand a problem on an objective level and want to learn about all facts that then serve as a basis for decision-making. This might be why one special source for information on COVID-19 has become extremely popular amongst the Germans: epidemiologists and virologists. The German trust in experts (cf. Schroll-Machl 2008, 52) is especially reflected in the sustained interest of large parts of the population in the Coronavirus Update podcast with Dr. Christian Drosten. The long format of this podcast, which is packed with detailed scientific information, is quite a challenge - even for the German listeners who are used to a high degree of fact-orientation. However, the need for this information by large parts of the people is still tangible and represents a contrast to the more emotion-driven followers of conspiracy theories.

3.6 New words in new contexts

The languages we speak are an aspect of our culture. COVID-19 brought along a lot of new words and redefined the meaning of others. (cf. Thorne 2020.) This is needed to understand and exchange ideas about the new challenges. In this process, corona coinages started to travel from one language to the other. Somewhere needed to describe technicalities of the new situation like "lockdown" which is now commonly used in German. Others like "coronaspeck" and "hamsterkaufing", which went from German

to English, reflect the human tendency to deploy humour even in difficult situations.

Ka-boom ("**Wumms**") refers in onomatopoetic terms - i.e. a vocal imitation of the sound associated with it through the naming of something – to the great sense of determination displayed by the German Federal Minister for Finance Olaf Scholz to help Germany's economy get out of the economic crisis and **whatever it takes** using a bazooka (Magill 2020) - an allusion to the famous quote by then ECB president Draghi to overcome the financial crisis ("Within our mandate the ECB is ready whatever it takes" (Draghi 2020).

4 THE PANDEMIC AND UNIVERSITY LIFE – VIEWS FROM TH ASCHAFFENBURG

The pandemic has affected lives including student and university life around the world in unprecedented ways. This disruption affecting student life and international university collaboration has been analysed in many different forms and aspects on national and international scale such as undertaken by DAAD, the European Student Union or the Global Student Survey undertaken by the University of Ljubljana to name but a few (a number of interesting studies can be accessed through the DAAD website https://www.daad.de).

University life was disrupted by COVID-19 just days before the start of the summer semester at Aschaffenburg University of Applied Sciences. Students, who were used to a mixture of in-person lectures and practical seminars including partner and team work, had to change the way they study from one day to the next and manage their learning processes much more independently. In a small survey in one of the intercultural courses, the students' answer to the question about the biggest worry during the corona

pandemic was that they found it difficult to motivate themselves to study. Being asked what they missed most during the corona semester they answered "being open with friends", which means that the way they kept contact with each other did not provide the same directness as meeting personally. Besides becoming aware of how much in our daily lives is determined by culture such as the way we greet each other, the profound insight that even for a task-based culture as the German, what counts most are personal relationships, is a most remarkable consequence from the traumatic event of the corona crisis. This might continue to shape the German culture even beyond the pandemic.

While most students tend to see new opportunities and advantages such as flexibility arising from remote teaching only, they do not prefer online teaching to face-to-face teaching mode only (= 2/3 of the students questioned in the Faculty of Business Administration and Law TH Aschaffenburg June 2020 cf. Wissel 2020) – key challenges such as self-management and missing social interaction with peers but also missing out on informal encounters at university with lecturers and other university staff was mentioned.

New formats of teaching and interacting have emerged also for international collaboration as this contribution seeks to illustrate. And recent surveys (e.g. Kercher & Plasa 2020; Marinoni, van't Land & Jensen 2020) have not only confirmed the great potential and usefulness of virtual mobility and hybrid forms of teaching but it looks like they are here to stay.

5 LESSONS LEARNED

Despite limitations of cultural approaches, pitfalls and even stereotyping as a first approximation, it was shown in the COIL contribution that the latter can be used to analyse and understand cross-cultural differences in a given situation better while seeking

to explore and determine the influence of culture. Choosing the topic of the ongoing pandemic and Germans and their reactions is a situation all participants could identify and relate to as all have all been affected by the pandemic around the globe (albeit to differing degrees). This can be a motivating access for students to help familiarise themselves with cultural theories while trying to reflect one's own and other behaviour and norms through the cultural lens. This bridge building function was used to engage more in virtual collaborations with international partners here also with a view to disseminating the intercultural tools and theories on the PROMINENCE website.

While it has been shown that personal relationships are vital for our students in COVID-19 times, this can also be said for international networks and the area of internationalisation: If collaborations between universities are in essence relationships between networks of individuals, then interpersonal links are crucial with individuals acting as agents on behalf of institutions to maintain and develop international relationships across cultures. In this context new forms and formats of international collaboration such as COIL have been introduced as an alternative means to stay in contact in the meantime.

As Fernando Léon Garcia, President-Elect of International Association of University Presidents underlined (2020), "My ultimate hope is that once global travel does bounce back, high-quality e-mobility programmes will help us augment in-person immersion experiences, while enhancing approaches to internationalisation at home. Together, they can help us develop a far more holistic approach to internationalisation".

For us the COIL initiative has proven a sound collaborative instrument in COVID-19 times to continue and develop successful partners and relationships relations across cultures while getting the chance to gaining new insights and share ideas.

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STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION IN UNCERTAIN TIMES – LESSONS FROM AN EU ONLINE SIMULATION NEGOTIATION EXERCISE

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1 INTRODUCTION

The ongoing COVID-19 crisis has been impacting international education in unprecedented ways. For the current student generation, mostly millennials and members of Generation Z, the crisis represents the biggest disruption they have faced so far (Sneader & Singal 2020). How can we use this opportunity to bring people together around the globe and seek to shape a broader, more resilient international education?

Understanding international education in a broader sense has implications for the design and implementation of our teaching and study abroad/exchange programmes, as we should be redirecting our efforts on fundamental questions such as **what we teach** and **how students learn**, rather than getting lost in binary thinking on the benefits and perils of online vs face-to-face education. What we need to ensure in the end is to prepare our future graduates to live and succeed in a globalised world and (inter)act competently and mindfully across cultures. The past

few months have illustrated more than ever the need to look at international education in broader terms and support the learning of our students in this way.

2 INTERNATIONALISATION AS PATHWAY FOR GLOBAL LEARNING

Embracing a wider vision of international education has also **ramifications on the role of internationalisation in our HEIs**. Internationalisation has often been misconceived in terms of study abroad and international student enrolment as the only and fullest extent of internationalisation, but internationalisation goes way beyond that in that it makes a fundamental commitment to preparing our future graduates to be globally competent (cf. Harvey & Deardoff 2020). Internationalisation can thus provide us with a pathway that enables universities and higher education institutions (HEIS) to make **global learning as one of their key organising principles**.

Global Engagement of HEIs also highlighted by the authors of the latest IAU Global Survey Report (Marinoni, van't Land & Jensen 2020, 40) who hope that "the perceived importance of international collaboration in order to develop joint solutions to the current and future crisis will increase in the short, medium and long term....The global higher education community has a major role to play at many different levels, including by setting the example to follow."

In order to be able to promote engagement with strategic partnerships and good practice examples of international cooperation on learning to approach and solve problems together including community partners abroad, internationalisation needs to be embedded into our HEI mission and vision. This applies to all

levels - from the micro-level of teaching via embedding international education into our institutional endeavours to societal outreach ("third mission") - including relevant (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals) SDG goals into HEI's curricula and missions (cf. also ASEMME7 2019; Burgos 2020). Topics, such as the Green Deal, as well as the current pandemic COVID-19 and their societal implications do matter to most of our students and can help motivate them to engage in and commit to learning activities related to these topics in face-to-face or virtual or hybrid learning environments.

Creating a **conducive framework for effective learning** and enabling them to co-create learning opportunities can help to avoid an input-focused model of education and instead embrace a vision according to which teaching and research is fundamentally about **creating (societal) impact through knowledge** (Ghantous 2020) .

Missions should also encompass a variety of ways of learning for our future **graduates to be acting competently and mindfully across borders and cultures**. This includes providing students opportunities and encourage them to critically reflect preconceived ideas and stereotypes and counter all forms of ethnic or racial discrimination. The latter educational objective cannot be overstated in times of ongoing incidents of racial and ethnic discrimination around the globe - not exempting the international student community in Europe in the recent pandemic (cf. ESN 2020, 21).

One way of helping gain a **deeper understanding of cultural conflicts in COVID-19 times** can be Michele Gelfand's cultural approach grounded on her research relating to the basis of a fundamental intercultural conflict which is rooted in the tension between personal liberties and societal constraint (Gelfand 2018). By understanding the roots of liberties and constraints and these tight vs loose cultures, Gelfand argues that we can

better understand and explore productive ways to deal with cultural conflicts. Empathy is a key attribute in this context to help combat intergroup hostility and this is also in line with socio-constructivist approaches of intercultural learning (cf. Bennett 2013). According to Gelfand, empathy and the ability to learn to switch perspectives can be encouraged and facilitated also by way of virtual interaction: Gelfand reports of successful learning by students of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds in conflicting remote regions after having being assigned to read each other's diary entries online on a regular basis and to listen to each other's stories online, taking the time to try and understand the other's situation and perspective.

3 INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND EFFECTIVE, PERSONALISED LEARNING

It is claimed that at least 50 % of our HEI students' learning happens **through interaction** with other students and contextual aspects outside the classroom (e.g. Ryan & Deci 2017). While online programmes can provide a formative intellectual experience, it can be hard to offer the **intense immersion in knowledge**, experience and the broader life learning skills and cross-cultural encounters in the host country language and environment that face-to-face international higher education can provide. While for some HEIs, **virtual study abroad programmes will be** "here to stay" (Lashbrook 2020), others have in the pandemic COVID-19 adopted the policy not to support any form of virtual mobility if no face-to-face mobility was possible (cf. Ross 2020).

While it can certainly be claimed that "face-to-face teaching is here to stay" (Ross 2020), it is also true that many online degree programmes that were designed in a way as to ensure online delivery from the start are operating extremely successfully around the globe.

Is such a "binary choice" between online and face-to-face formats of delivery of learning however needed or reasonable (cf. van Roojen 2020) - or can we not focus our attention instead on **how** students learn and taking into account the **diversity of learning styles and requirements** of our students?

A Spring 2020 conducted DAAD survey among almost 170 HEI in the early days of the pandemic COVID-19 suggests that with an (at the time) expected initial decline in physical mobility in the coming semesters an increase in **new concepts for virtual mobility as well as hybrid teaching** is expected (Kercher & Plasa 2020, 29). "Integrated Virtual Learning" (van Roojen 2020) could here be one way to approach students' needs in the next normal, delivering **simultaneously virtually and on** campus in real time so that students that are in class can also participate virtually in the learning process. This choice will allow students greater flexibility while having the potential to enrich their individual and collaborative learning experience. By overcoming this binary choice, we can create a much wider spectrum of opportunities ranging from conventional face-to-face classroom teaching to fully online delivery of courses giving those who are actually at the heart of the learning process a choice in a manner that best suits them and their learning and lifestyle needs – our students.

Creating more interaction through online opportunities is not new and has even before we had to revert to pure online teaching in the past semester due to the COVID-19 instilled crisis. Guest lecturers from our partner universities in Southeast Asia have long highlighted their hybrid usage of using **mobile devices and social media simultaneously** in face-to-face classes teaching to both create overall more interaction but also to motivate especially shyer students to participate in class in alternative ways (also by sending them encouraging messages and emoticons). These learning formats are no substitutes but can complement each other to address and motivate more students.

Embracing a diversity of different learning formats and forms, tools and delivery modes means more investment and resources at the start, but it succeeds in addressing the different learning styles, preconditions and expectations of our students. For **study abroad/exchanges, virtual mobility** elements can also be integrated into the curriculum of orientation phases as well as serve as element in the design of international programmes to inform and motivate future outgoing students seeking to attach students emotionally to a real physical mobility experience at a later stage.

While cultural face-to-face immersion will continue to be a challenge in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic crisis, online international programmes in a digital environments can also be used to provide opportunities for interaction among students, while helping us to think of how we can enhance the quality of our programmes and teaching. Elements as COIL (cf. article Angress & Krausse in this publication) and the one described could be explored and analysed more as with accompanying educational research and help contribute to diversify internationalisation at home and may be an element in a more encompassing approach towards internationalisation.

How can we **foster personalised intercultural learning and deepen interaction** and collaboration in times of remote learning? As Kong from Singapore Management University highlights the importance of synchronous interaction in online learning: "Really what the students are looking for, what they really learn from is that interaction with somebody else on screen" (cf. Ross 2020). Encouraging interaction among students is also one of the key recommendations of the report by the European Student Network based on a survey undertaken in spring 2020, during the early phase of the COVID-19 pandemic in Europe (ESN 2020).

Evaluations on Erasmus and related studies pertaining to study abroad programmes as well as international assignments have

confirmed that one of the key success factors of real immersion on the way to intercultural competence (Bennett 2013) is the **quality of interaction** with representatives of the host population. For ESN online classes "are not a proper substitute for a physical mobility experience" ...and the real "Erasmus experience" is unlikely to be the same" (ESN 2020, 24) when reduced in a sudden to remote formats of learning. However it is acknowledged that we need to reflect and test new ways to enhanced mindful encounters online for a diverse student body with learning activities that encourage interaction among students.

The Erasmus' strategic partnership project PROMINENCE can provide - along with other tools of intercultural learning – a basic learning structure and sound board to test and stimulate forms of interaction among students across cultures in times when teaching and learning has been or is being reduced to online formats only. These were designed and used by the author to explore and test with the support of colleagues new ways of learning in an online environment and it is this spirit that the author would like to share some lessons in the hope to further stimulate debate and exchange of experience on collaboration practices regarding teaching and research across borders in this area.

4 CULTURAL LEARNING THROUGH ONLINE FORMS OF INTERACTION? LESSONS FROM AN EU COUNCIL MEETING SIMULATION

Simulations of international negotiations or meetings are an important instrument to supply students with new skills and competences required by **responsible citizens in our interconnected global world** confronted with challenging disrupting times.

In the following an example of an EU simulated negotiation exercise replicating an EU Council meeting will be shared. This simulation exercise was designed and conducted by the author and carried out with colleagues and took place in the summer term as a pure online simulation exercise with regular and international guest students from TH Aschaffenburg joining and collaborating in cross-cultural delegation roles assigned to them. The agenda of the Council Meeting was the EU exploring common ways forward to combat the current COVID-19 crisis inflicting societies in the EU - and beyond.

4.1 Rationale

EU Simulations can help develop knowledge about the institutional system of the EU or negotiation theories. An EU Simulated Negotiations can be a good didactic tool for developing group identity also in a remote learning setting and make students more aware of the institutional dynamics of the EU, while paying attention to the potential impact of culture in the dynamics of the setting.

The EU is a particularly suitable field of study for negotiation theories and simulations are powerful in acquainting participants with a negotiation logic and process and can be a suitable instrument to teach how the EU actually works (Brunazzo & Settembri 2014). In addition to gaining some knowledge and practical insights on the EU, the simulation is also considered here as a suitable didactic tool to foster intercultural competence with students working in cross-cultural virtual teams and acting out an assigned role of a national delegation or EU institution representative. The aim was to facilitate cross-cultural learning in an interactive, participative and motivating way in an online environment. In line with current socio-constructivist (intercultural) learning approaches (cf. Bennett 2013), this EU simulation interaction seeks to build on the social dimension of knowledge with the meanings and purposes and behaviours as socially constructions.

The simulated negotiation was seeking - in a very simplified and reduced form - to replicate a meeting of the heads of states and governments of the EU (European Council) chaired by the EU Council president and with the participation of the European Commission and selected partner countries, such as Taiwan and South Korea, to share experience. The aim of the meeting was to find a way forward to steer the EU out of the present COVID-19 crisis.

The topic – identifying a possible way forward to overcome the pandemic situation in Europe and beyond in the present COVID-19 pandemic – was sufficiently accessible and designed to mobilise and motivate students. In fact, the topic of the simulated EU Council meeting served also as link for the students to the real situation of the ongoing pandemic and seeking to understand also by way of research and in their assigned roles how it affects countries in Europe and to demonstrate specific positions and interests of potential actors while search for a common path forward.

One of the very characteristic features of EU negotiation is that they are repeated and rather formalised negotiations. Hence besides a simplified and reduced format, additional limitations apply such time span, complexity and other elements the more as real negotiations are always embedded in a specific context that cannot be reproduced in a simulation with factors that may in fact have an impact on the outcome in real life, but will not be explored further here (cf. Brunazzo & Settembri 2014, 3).

4.2 Preparation and putting it to practice

The exercise of the EU simulated negotiation included the preparation, implementation and follow-up with assigned roles in cross-cultural teams. At least 12 - 15 students are required for a simulation to reproduce realistic dynamics and the simulation took place with more than 20 students in cross-cultural delegation tandems adopting allocated roles. Interaction was

facilitated above all via the online formal and informal meeting rounds of the delegations with students presenting and listening to each other assigned roles and positions, trying to understand the other position. At the time, most inbound students enrolled had either returned to their home countries or were staying in student dorms participating in virtual classes as the only possible way of instruction in these months. For the EU simulation carried out at TH Aschaffenburg in the spring term 2020, students of our Master's International Management (enrolled in International Law and International Competencies) were teamed up each with international students to represent either a national or a EU delegation. The working language was English as in the courses/programmes the students were enrolled for and the simulation formed an integral part of the courses offered in the Faculty of Business Administration and Law at TH Aschaffenburg but did not contribute per se to the general assessment of the students. However, an individual reflection note on lessons learned was required in which cultural approaches and dimensions could be reflected with regard to the individual negotiation scenario and the delegation/country participants were assigned to represent in the two-day simulation in cross-cultural teams (cf. PROMINENCE 2020; van Nispen 2017).

A simulated negotiation replicating a two day meeting of the European Council (cf. Wessels 2017; Prinz 2015) was designed with a selected number of heads of states and governments chaired by the president of the European Council including also the participation of the European Commission president and a number of selected partner countries invited as guests for this special EU Council meeting. Taiwan and South Korea were partner countries invited to discuss and share experience in the ongoing pandemic (with incoming students from our partner countries forming a delegation with one regular student from TH Aschaffenburg).

The simulation was designed in a way as to be conducted over two days online and included three formal negotiation rounds in

the plenary with all parties partaking as well as several informal rounds of delegations. Whereas the lecturers of the course were moderating the formal sessions the informal sessions were facilitated by tutors and student assistants. The first day was ended with an online networking event in the evening with two EU experts (formerly European Commission DG Education and Culture and ECB) joining. The aim of the delegations in the formal and informal rounds of negotiation seeking to replicate in very simplified terms an EU Council meeting was to discuss a first proposal and agree on a final version on a way forward to overcome the COVID-19 related crisis in Europe that could be adopted by all members present in the simulation. The students were expected to generate a debate by exchanging possible arguments based on accessible information so that students could prepare themselves in a given rather tight time frame. Latest developments were accessible on the official EU/Consilium website that served as main references to prepare for the delegations' positions relating to political and cultural factors also based on preselected parameters. As preparatory assignments, students were asked to prepare and deliver in cross-cultural delegations' video statements and online presentations on their positions.

Both the preparatory and debriefing assignments included questions pertaining to cultural approaches by Erin Meyer (2015) and Michele Gelfand (2018) encountered in class with the latter proving particularly suitable for analysing cultural default preferences regarding (acceptance/refusal) social norms (acceptance/refusal) and the former for communication patterns in a multicultural environment.

In the debriefing session, the importance of informal arenas in such formal meetings were highlighted as well as the role of personalities on the outcome. In contrast to previous face-to-face simulation exercises the dynamics of discussions and forming (informal) alliances was very limited and hence one key aspect of the negotiation process missing but this was explained and

formed part of the lessons learned regarding contextual factors impacting on a negotiation /meeting even in a highly formalised setting. Comparing the achieved outcomes of the simulated meeting with real ongoing meetings and tuning in to a live conference of the ECB was part of the exercise - in the student EU Council conclusions, sustainability and education figured high on the agenda of priorities endorsed by all. Another element to facilitate interaction was the creation of an online networking opportunity with (former/active) EU representatives on the ground (cf. on the argument to develop and integrate social networking activities in online learning activities only if they are with an educational purpose otherwise they would be useless (cf. Burgos 2020, 36).

The focus in the joint feedback session following the actual rounds of negotiation was on group dynamics during the negotiation rounds experienced. Lessons learned regarding negotiating across cultures in a specific EU setting were reserved for individual written statements based on selected guiding questions relating to identified learning outcomes of the class. Besides literature on EU integration and institutions, relevant cultural theories and approaches served as reference (relevant chapters of Prominence website; van Nispen 2017).

4.3 Lessons learned

The limitations of online formats of these meeting became obvious and were in fact mirrored in real life with the EU seeking to return as soon as the situation allowed for it to face-to-face meetings especially for strategic and controversial topics such as the next EU budgetary framework. Despite the limited and simplified online framework for this negotiation, simulation online interaction among the students including tutors assigned to facilitate debates in breakout sessions, based on guiding questions were highly appreciated by a great majority in illustrated by student feedback (both online in the feedback session and via anonymously questionnaire).

Although this online setting has been far from perfect and is highly resource and time intensive it was possible to put this scenario into practice thanks to a dedicated team of colleagues and tutors. In the future, virtual formats of intercultural learning, such as this one, can be used to seek enhance cross-cultural understanding through an action oriented and reflective experience.

In line with Gelfand's cultural approach, this EU simulation provided a framework by remote that is conducive to facilitating students' listening and learning from each other and trying to understand each other's respective (assigned) roles and positions in the simulation on a topic to which all could relate.

In addition to further adjusting and improving the setting, this experience could also stimulate research on intercultural competence and effective usage of English as a lingua franca for this kind of setting (in line with the CEFR and in particular the latest revised compendium and approach it is based on e.g. relating to elements such as pluricultural repertoire or mediation (cf. Council of Europe 2018).

From a (moderately) constructivist learning psychology point of view (cf. Mandl & Kopp 2006) knowledge cannot be acquired by way of instruction passed on from one to another but needs to be actively and independently acquired by the learner in an action-oriented learning context. Learning is here characterised as an actively construed, emotional process and above all self-direct process embedded in a given social context and situation. Applied to a blended-learning environment this means that the focus should be on student learning as an essentially autonomous process that can be supported, motivated and enhanced through a teacher as mentor alternating their role between respective active and reactive forms of teaching thus creating a **balance of instruction and construction**. As international educators, we will need to rethink our teaching practices by way of becoming more like moderators of learning processes, allowing for co-

construction through our learners and facilitate (virtual or real) interaction among students.

5 EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND A WIDER NOTION OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Remote teaching is not an approach or pedagogy on its own right but can be informed and shaped by different educational-philosophical and pedagogical underpinnings. It would be a fallacy to assume that giving students access to and instruction via technology would per se lead to an instruction resulting into the realisation of learning outcomes. (cf. also Holzkamp 2004; Teräs 2020).

An appropriate educational technology is key to address successfully various learning types and styles and through methodology a teacher becomes learning designer with a comprehensive rationale and input whereas the learner takes over the main responsibility for his own learning process (cf. Burgos 2020).

Apart from identified critical issues, such as data usage and student surveillance, there has been hardly any time in the last few months to reflect on the deeper social, educational and societal ramifications of digital learning i.e. the possible impact our technological choices created on micro-level teaching, meso-level HEI organisation or wider societal macro-level. What is needed in the future here is to stimulate **educational research on new problems recently raised and emerging by education technology** (Teräs 2020).

Internationalisation has had a history of recovery after some recent global crisis but the next normal will be different from

anything experienced before and can only be achieved through enhanced intercultural awareness and international cooperation. If we succeed in promoting global, diverse student perspectives and learning in our international education and design principles for a more democratic and emancipatory digitalisation of education (cf. Teräs 2020) we can enhance international education.

One key benefit of internationalisation is "enhanced international cooperation" (International Association of Universities (IAU) 2019). If we want to strengthen international education shaped by a vision of public good and human growth and inspire holistic learning instilled with a participative culture we can also seek to use and integrate technology in a way as to connect people around the globe to engage to discuss and learn and tackle common problems together. This could also start a wider cross-cultural societal dialogue about the purpose(s) of education and the kind of society/-ies we want to develop with and in a post COVID-19 world. It is now the moment to reach out and embrace learning in a holistic way. Now is the chance to **rethink and strengthen international education and internationalisation**.

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PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES FOR INITIATING, MAINTAINING, AND FURTHERING GLOBAL MINDSET: THE TOTAL IMMERSION WEEK AS AN INNOVATIVE TOOL FOR FOSTERING A GLOBAL MINDSET

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and current situation

It remains to be seen if and when the extent of international student mobility and the attitudes of all stakeholders towards such mobility will again reach their pre-COVID-19 levels, as travelling and studying abroad have become more uncertain than ever before due to the traumatic lockdown experience in most European countries. In addition, the pandemic has also sped up worldwide sustainability considerations, meaning that even when travelling

will be 'safe' again once a vaccination against the coronavirus is available, in particular long-haul flights might not be as socially desired, approved and affordable as they were in previous years.

For these reasons, HE institutions must change their outlook towards post-pandemic internationalisation. On the one hand, universities will need to motivate their students to go out again at all by offering a 'safe' option[1] and, on the other hand, this alternative will need to take sustainability demands into account – a factor that will gain much more momentum in the future with even more environmentally-conscious student generations following. Therefore, it is not unlikely that short-term mobilities within Europe (and not to overseas destinations) will be on the rise in the years to come.

One possible inter-European concept the Language Centre of Aschaffenburg University of Applied Sciences (UAS) has developed in this regard, is the concept of 'Total Immersion Weeks (TIWs)'© that will be outlined in this article.

1.2 Benefits of short-time mobilities

Stolz & Feiler (2018) emphasize that, especially in times of international globalisation, (even domestic) excursions convey regional competence and a sense of proportion in assessing economic and social developments on earth.

Certainly, it could be argued that this stance linked with the degree of digitalisation and the lessons learned during the 2020 digital spring term would make all kinds of physical mobility obsolete by just focusing on COIL (collaborative online international learning). However, it is obvious that there is a clear consensus that

[1] 'Safe' in this context does not only refer to health, but also to personal safety. According to Coelen & Nairn (2017, 254), the latter often is a major concern of female students in particular, making them opt for intercampus or grand tour mobilities (i.e. options similar to TIW-like short-term mobility) instead of a whole exchange semester or year.

'meeting' virtually will never be able to completely replace the full physical experience of spending time abroad and diving into a foreign culture with all five senses being involved.

To solve this dilemma, HE institutions should envisage a combination of 'real' mobility and 'remote' mobility. This synergy allows students to really 'feel' a stay abroad and to improve their digital competencies simultaneously - both enhancing their cross-cultural knowhow; all of the latter are skills highly sought for by present-day employers (European Commission 2017; Mulholland 2013).

Even before the spread of COVID-19, there has been wide - though neglected - scientific evidence from foreign language didactics and exchange research on the increase in intercultural competence (and other so-called transferrable 'soft skills') through well-designed short-term mobilities with concrete learning outcomes. In addition, it has been acknowledged that "(...) intercultural skills such as curiosity, work ethics, and leadership are unaffected by the length of international experience" (Farrugia & Sanger 2017; Selby 2018) and that even though "(...) mobile students sometimes adopt a touristic role, this is rarely superficial 'sightseeing' (Selby 2018).

Taking these findings into account, it should be the motivation of the organisers of short-term mobilities like the TIWs not to attract and produce mere tourists, but sojourners who are willing to immerse with a foreign culture and benefit from it – personality-wise and skills-wise:

> The experience of the sojourner is one of comparisons, of what is the same or different but compatible, but also of conflicts and incompatible contrasts. (...) Where the tourist remains essentially unchanged, the sojourner has the opportunity to learn and be educated, acquiring the capacity to critique and improve their own and others' conditions (Byram 1997, 1 - 2).

Thus, shorter stays abroad can be an important building block for the development of intercultural competences and a global mindset, provided they are characterised by an action-oriented and not only a passive touristy approach.

2 DESIGN OF SHORT-TERM MOBILITIES

2.1 General considerations

A number of graduates nowadays take up employment with companies which are generally highly export-oriented. However, the majority of students bring along very different prerequisites and interests with regard to foreign languages and intercultural skills. This is also true for Aschaffenburg UAS, although the university cooperates with almost 100 universities across the globe. In the academic year 2018/19, 180 students went abroad; the university itself hosted 123 exchange students (Aschaffenburg UAS 2019, 38). According to recent benchmarking data (DAAD & AvH & HRK 2018), Aschaffenburg UAS has been able to maintain its position among the top small German universities of applied sciences in terms of mobility and double degree programmes.

Aschaffenburg UAS is geographically located in the thriving Rhine-Main region where a great number of international companies are headquartered. For this reason, in addition to technical competence, language skills are indispensable for the future careers of the students from Aschaffenburg and also included in the university development plan. This is in line with Hettiger (2018), who argues in his recent publication on language policies at German universities that the role of languages for scientific thinking and personality development is very often underestimated.

As surveys among students enrolled at Aschaffenburg UAS have shown, however, the regional rooting of many students is a major

obstacle to mobility. Moreover, the usually non-academic parental homes (proportion: approx. 70 %) lack knowledge of the added value of stays abroad. Since this is a dilemma adding up with the above-mentioned safety and sustainability considerations, new paths need to be forged.

One promising approach could be the concept of the 'Total Immersion Weeks (TIWs)'© – short-term mobilities to (currently) four European partner universities of Aschaffenburg UAS in Finland, France, Spain and Sweden, intending to reduce inhibitions and encourage students to spend time abroad. At the same time, students, who cannot or do not wish to spend a longer period of time in a foreign country, are given the opportunity to gain international experience. Ideally, students in their second or third semester are targeted; during the TIW, they complete a subject-specific English-language course (i.e. business or technical English, with heterogeneous language skills being considered), a taster language course in the respective national tongue and a socio-cultural accompanying programme with company visits and, last but not least, the formation of language tandems for a more long-term perspective and effect (cf. 2.2). According to Hund & Bueno (2015, 66), such a teaching experience enhances students' gains in perspective taking and helping others – both being prerequisites on the path towards cross-cultural empathy. Ideally, the tandem partners will pay a counter visit to the Aschaffenburg campus since having the experience of a host and that of a sojourner has proven to be more beneficial that just one of the two (Lackström 2012, 111).

At Aschaffenburg UAS, these mobilities will first be integrated into the practice-related intensive blocked courses for teaching key qualifications, which are customary at universities of applied sciences in the German federal state of Bavaria, and are credited accordingly. With the help of a systematic, obligatory preparation, follow-up work, evaluation as well as accompanying

scientific research (cf. 2.3), the TIWs of Aschaffenburg UAS strive for a competence-oriented design of their teaching format and at the same time successively build up didactic knowledge about teaching and learning scenarios with an international dimension. The learning scheme of the TIWs thus clearly contributes to the internationalisation of the university.

With the TIW concept, Aschaffenburg UAS also sets a decidedly European accent. The establishment of TIWs as a joint teaching programme with the partner universities and their participation in its evaluation and accompanying research represents an important moment of consolidation and network expansion of existing partnerships.

Furthermore, the idea of the TIW makes an important contribution both to strengthening the students' professional language competence in English and to enhancing multilingualism. The confrontation with other languages (French, Spanish, Finnish and Swedish to start with) intends to encourage students to expand their knowledge in these languages as well or to learn a new language. For the students of the partner universities, this would be the German language when attending a TIW in Aschaffenburg. In addition, mediation skills are to be specifically trained and promoted in accordance with the revised CEFR (Council of Europe 2018).

2.2 Contents, characteristics and outcomes of the TIW

The TIWs are aimed at making the most of the fact that "(...) travel is integral to the 'out of class experiences' of students, particularly interactions with local people" (Langley & Breese 2005; Selby 2018). Accordingly, the content taught during the TIWs will partly be subject-specific but will also contain 'culture-specific' elements. Depending on the 'specialisation' of the hosting uni-

versity, it will be possible to set a different subject focus which is not available at Aschaffenburg UAS.

Apart from that, the use of English as a foreign language in subject-related contexts abroad does not only promote general language skills but also mediation skills in accordance with the revised CEFR. Taster courses in the local language as well as immersion in the culture of the respective host country are intended to arouse interest in refreshing or learning other foreign languages (cf. 2.1).

Intending to offer this innovative teaching and learning format on a regular basis, the university addresses four major goals. First, it aims to open up new target groups for stays abroad and to establish new teaching and learning forms. Consequently, TIWs abroad for students from Aschaffenburg or partner universities in Aschaffenburg will be arranged. The setup includes visits to a different partner university every year and counter-visits about six months later.

Second, the TIW concept specifically supports the development of language and intercultural skills as well as mediation competence (cf. 2.1), both among German for foreign students.

Third, the programme includes targeted, digitally supported preparation and follow-up activities. Their results are to be incorporated into the evaluation and accompanying scientific research and implemented by the end of the 2021 summer semester (cf. 2.3). Aschaffenburg UAS and its partners will collect feedback on the increase in participants' competence and their motivation to go abroad after the TIW experience or to participate in internationalisation@home activities. At the same time, the results will provide an opportunity to further develop the quality of the internationalisation measures at Aschaffenburg UAS, but also at the participating universities abroad.

Lastly, the TIW concept offers Aschaffenburg UAS the opportunity to consolidate its network with long-standing partners in France, Spain, Sweden and Finland, especially since some of the participating foreign universities also have ERASMUS+ agreements with each other. Regular contacts within the framework of the TIW, online community exchanges and the final conference will also contribute to an intensified mutual exchange on all levels. In the medium term, the TIW will be made available to all students of Aschaffenburg UAS as an elective module, thus accounting for sustainability demands within the university (and beyond, if adopted by other HE institutions).

2.3 Quality assurance and evaluation of the TIW

The evaluation and accompanying scientific research should provide short-term insights into the effectiveness of the measures. They will be implemented for the first time after the first TIW (end of summer semester 2021). In the medium term, the Aschaffenburg UAS hopes to draw conclusions on how to adequately target students for completing stays abroad, which, even if based on a rather small data pool, are equally interesting for the partner institutions.

Digitally supported pre- and post-processing formats ensuring the quality of the TIW project will be designed and applied. To begin with, an online course will be developed for the country- and culture-specific briefing of German and foreign students. Once proven, these materials can also be used to prepare for long-term mobility in incoming or outgoing settings.

Within the framework of an online survey, students will also be asked to provide information on their sociodemographic background and previous experience abroad during their school years, as these are considered important factors in their willingness to be mobile.

Research by CHE (Key, Milatova & Horstmann 2017, 17) indicates that students with non-academic backgrounds are more insecure about possible costs of a stay abroad and have less information on study abroad programmes and scholarships as well as on possible benefits. Key et. al. (2017, 8) point out that students with an academic background have advantages due to more travel experiences in foreign countries, which decrease the feeling of insecurity when being abroad.

At the same time, the so-called Social Survey carried out by the Deutsches Studentenwerk, the German Association of Student Services Organisations (Isserstedt & Schnitzer 2005, 64) found out that there is a connection between previous stays abroad and student mobility during studies in HE.

Furthermore, all TIW participants will complete the International Readiness Check©, a software-based, empirically based test to determine intercultural competence levels, once before and once after their sojourn abroad, in order to assess the expansion of existing intercultural competences.

During the follow-up phase, TIW attendees are expected to evaluate and reflect on their stay with the help of a more qualitative online questionnaire in the sense of a learning diary. This approach goes hand in hand with the aim to collect as much authentic impression from the situation abroad (Fellmann 2015, 167) as well the assessment of the stay. According to Fellmann (2015, 186), learning diaries have become an important tool for research on learning processes, learning achievements and learning difficulties.

The conclusions drawn from this diary will be used for the qualitative development of the TIWs and will enhance applications funding for future TIWs and stays abroad in general, including academic publications.

Aschaffenburg UAS already looks into the international affinity and experience of newly enrolled students as part of the annual survey among first semester students. In the annual graduate survey, it also asks for feedback on any stays abroad, including advice and support, and asks why no stays abroad were undertaken during the course of study.

3 RESUME

The TIW project ties in with already existing concepts of internationalisation at Aschaffenburg UAS and at the same time enables a quality-oriented approach. The concept of the TIWs does not simply aim at increasing sheer mobility numbers, but specifically promotes internal university reflection and, in particular, the didactic development of teaching and learning formats with an international dimension. This is also in line with the evaluation of internationalisation measures anchored in the current agreement on the university's objectives for 2019 - 2022 (Aschaffenburg UAS & StMK 2019, 6).

In summary, the TIWs can be seen as a modern and even more adventurous form of the so-called 'outdoor education' – not only taking students to nearby forests and national parks as an alternative to cognitive learning in the lecture room (von Au 2016) as a "primary learning location" (Baar & Schönknecht 2018, 16), but to the "secondary learning location" (ibid.) of the 'wildlife park' of a foreign culture in order to develop a global mindset – personally and socially. Hereby, it should not be forgotten that – like all successful excursions – the TIWs need to be action- as well as practice-oriented (Lößner 2011, 159) and to offer a 'guided' adventure with "reflective processes (...) explicitly prompted" (Tarchi, Surian & Daiute 2018, 73) to ensure the desired outcomes – especially with regard to increased intercultural sensitivity (cf. 1.2 & 2.2). Nevertheless, the TIW experience should still have some

traces of an adventure: "After all, what's the point of travelling halfway around the world, if students don't get to experience the place?" (Selby 2018).

Concluding, Coleman's approach towards study abroad in favour of "researching whole people and whole lives" (2013, 17) and Selby's (2018) standpoint on short-term mobilities in particular should be kept in mind:

> It matters less what we call it, and more what kind of experience we facilitate for our students. This implies taking a holistic approach to the experiences that we provide, taking a holistic view of the people that we are trying to benefit, and valuing the culture and the landscape of the destination.

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INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE AT WORK: INTERCULTURAL MINDSET THROUGH SHORT-TERM MOBILITY

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1 INTRODUCTION

Languages and, in particular, intercultural competences are important soft skills on the job market and, thus, a key to personal and professional mobility. Higher education policy makers encourage students to gain intercultural experiences abroad, for example through ERASMUS+.

Beside the number of mobile students, the variety of learning environments has increased as well during the past few decades. Different options within study abroad contexts vary considerably in duration, intended learning outcomes and degree of structure. They include study semesters or internships in a foreign country as well as study programmes with facultative or obligatory double or joint degrees. These examples also provide a large variety of topics for research in this field. Coleman (2013, 43 - 44) names no fewer than 20 parameters for study abroad research with approximately 100 parameter settings.

Short-term mobility projects – such as the Intensive Programmes as part of the PROMINENCE network, for instance, summer

schools or excursions – form a special type of learning environment within this system. They offer low-threshold possibilities to go to a foreign country for those students who are not able or willing to go for a longer time due to financial and/or personal reasons. This is particularly important for students from non-academic backgrounds, who have more concerns and less information on both costs and added value as well as scholarships, as research conducted by CHE (Key, Milatova & Horstmann 2017, 17) found out.

Short-term programmes are one of the three locations which Byram (1997, 64) mentions for acquiring intercultural competence: "the classroom, the pedagogically structured experience outside the classroom, [and] the independent experience." Planning and implementation as well as pre- and post-activities require special attention from the educator, though, to avoid mere tourism. The paper provides both a definition and didactic analysis of short-term programmes. Evaluation results from two PROMINENCE Intensive Programmes in Bratislava and Aschaffenburg illustrate how short-term mobility can enhance intercultural competence and initiate further interest in going abroad.

2 SHORT-TERM PROGRAMMES - CHARACTERISTICS

Byram (1997, 66) clearly assigns the transmission of factual knowledge but also the reflection of intercultural encounters to the classroom. The pedagogically structured experience outside the classroom, also referred to by Byram (1997, 68) as 'field work', may be "a short visit organised by a teacher for a group of learners, who continue to work as a class with their teacher." [This may also be a] "longer-term period of residence organised for and by an individual learner who has limited or no contact with the teacher or other learners."

Research on educational settings (Baar & Schönknecht 2018, 11) considers such locations as so-called extramural locations of learning (in the case of schools "außerschulische Lernorte", 'learning locations out of school'). Their potential lies within their relationship with the 'real world', which is too much reduced in density for didactic reasons in the classroom. Yet, it is necessary to leave the school or higher education institution to comprehend the complexity of the outside world and to apply competences from the classroom to reality.

Byram (1997, 68) emphasizes the reciprocity between 'field work' and the classroom. In addition to that, he considers independent learning as a part of life-long-learning, which may go hand in hand with both classroom experiences and fieldwork. However, Byram (1997, 69) points out that "it will be effective only, if learners are able to continue to reflect upon as well as develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes, as a consequence of previous trainings".

Short-term programmes for students in higher education are part of the larger concept of youth exchange, which according to Thomas (2007, 657) comprises any kind of organised meeting of young people from different nations, aged between 12 and 26 years. The encounter can be bilateral or multilateral; it might take place in any home country of the participants or in another country. No matter what the didactic concept or the structure may be, the exchange of thoughts, opinions, ideas, attitudes, emotions etc. is essential for all youth exchange as Thomas (2007, 638) specifies:

> In diesem Sinne ist interkulturelle Jugendbegegnung ohne Austausch von Gedanken, Meinungen, Ideen, Einstellungen, Gefühlen etc. nicht vorstellbar. ('In this respect, intercultural youth exchange is not conceivable without the exchange of thoughts, opinions, ideas, attitudes, feelings, etc.')

Fellmann (2015, 86) refers to a large variety of features for such programmes on school level, which can be found in higher education as well, though. She mentions mutual visits between two institutions, project weeks or multinational work camps. Students may be hosted by families or live in hotels, and the encounter may include face-to-face meetings as well as virtual encounters such as chats or video conferences. Communication can take place in any language, which may have the role of the first, second or foreign language for the participants with English usually serving as a lingua franca. In fact, the possibilities seem to be unlimited. The main requirement for Fellmann (2015, 86), however, is to adapt the design of the encounter to the needs of the partners:

> Letztlich ist die Bandbreite der Möglichkeiten unerschöpflich. Sie muss an die individuellen Erfordernisse der Partnerinnen und Partner angepasst werden." ('In the end, the range of possibilities is unlimited. It must be adapted to the individual requirements of the partners.')

Fellmann (2015, 90) also cites results from exchange research, which indicate, though, that the mere encounter does not automatically lead to an increase in intercultural competence and that all encounters need special frameworks in order to enhance intercultural learning and augmented expertise.

The main didactic difference between fieldwork and independent experience is the degree of regulation by the instructor. As far as the design of short-term programmes is concerned, it is closely linked to the **excursion**, which is a common educational locator especially in both school and university subjects such as biology and geography, but which may also serve as a setting for foreign languages and intercultural competence.

Stolz and Feiler (2018, 25) divide excursions in several methodological types. These might differ considerably in the degree of self-regulation of the learning process from commanded to

self-determined. Learners may have an active or passive role. And the theories, which are applied, may be cognitivistic or constructivistic. There might be frontal instruction or group and pair work as well. The intended learning outcomes vary from fixed content to a self-determined knowledge construction.

Stolz and Feiler (2018, 25 - 41) mention four excursion types (comp. Figure 1):

- the so-called mystery tour ("Fahrt ins Blaue"), is the "classic" excursion with a group of learners and their instructor visiting a castle, for instance, with frontal instruction.
- the problem-oriented, topic-bound field trip ("problem-orientierte Überblicksexkursion"), which is characterised by a clearly defined question or problem, which the learners are supposed to work on during the excursion.
- the activity-oriented working field-trip ("handlungsorientierte Arbeitsexkursion"), where learners are assigned a task, which they have to solve in small groups or in pairs, e.g. a survey
- the self-regulated investigation or search ("konstruktivistische Arbeitsexkursion"), which consists of a rather open learning process without pre-set learning outcomes, focusing on reflexion of the experience.

Stolz and Feiler (2018, 27) point out that there is no panacea for excursions, and that excursion types might be chosen according to place, reason for the excursion as well as the specific subject, the size of the group and the intended learning outcomes. Therefore, there might be considerable differences between excursions designed for biology students and those meant for language students. They also emphasize the possibility to combine several excursion methods, which depends, of course, on the age of the participants and the destination (Stolz & Feiler

2018, 42). An important factor is the methodology applied in the excursion. As Figure 1 indicates, there is a clear relationship between the degree of self-regulation required from the learner, the classroom formats as well as the possibility for independent knowledge construction.

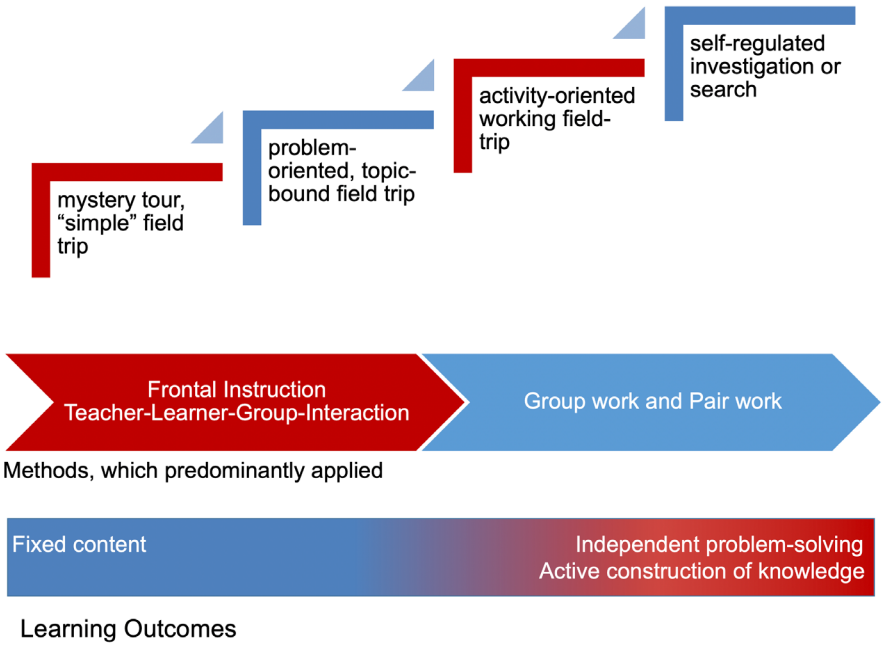

Figure 1. Excursion types: methods and learning outcomes (Stoltz & Feiler 2018, 27, translated by Kraus).

3 SETTING OF PROMINENCE INTENSIVE PROGRAMMES

The aim of the PROMINENCE project was the development of online material on intercultural competence. This material was tested in two one-week Intensive Programmes, which took place at the University of Bratislava in March 2018 as well as at Aschaffenburg University of Applied Sciences in April 2019. Both Intensive Programmes had clear learning outcomes and students were assigned preparation tasks in advance, such as

a video and interviews with companies. The programmes consisted of lectures, group work, and excursions including a social programme, and were, as already mentioned in accordance with Stolz & Feiler (2018, 42) a combination of various excursion types. Further information is available on the project web page (cf. Prominence 2020).

The questionnaire was set up before the first Intensive Programme in Bratislava. It was composed of both closed and open questions (cf. Schnell, Hil & Esser 2008, 325 - 345). The country where the student's degree was pursued as well as previous experiences abroad were inquired with multiple-choice questions. The impact of the Intensive Programme was encountered with a five-point Likert scale. The final question was an open reflection question, which the students had to answer with a few sentences.

At the end of the week, all participants were asked to give feedback on the content and organisation of the programme itself as well as on their intercultural experiences and on further impact on their mindset and future. The participation in the survey had both a feedback and a reflective function for the Intensive Programme. As far as the intercultural mindset is concerned, the questionnaire included the following inquiries:

- What is the impact of the Intensive Programme on the participants' intercultural competence?
- What is the impact of the Intensive Programme on the participants' perception of their personal future?
- Does the Intensive Programme encourage them to spend time abroad, even in one of the countries of the participating universities (item added in 2019)?
- What is the correlation of the results with previous experiences abroad in educational contexts (multiple answers possible)?
- How do participants summarise their experience in Bratislava, respectively Aschaffenburg?

There were 42 participants in each Intensive Programme in Bratislava and Aschaffenburg with a supposedly even distribution between the seven participating higher education institutions in Bulgaria, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. All students were enrolled in programmes with an affiliation to business economics and had completed at least one year of studies. Questions on personal information were limited to the country of study and to previous experiences in a foreign country; they did not inquire about age or gender. The questionnaires were filled in at the end of each Intensive Programme.

4 IMPACT OF PROMINENCE INTENSIVE PROGRAMMES

72 students participated in the survey, which corresponds to a response rate of 88.1 %. It is unknown why eight students did apparently not participate in the survey. Some participants might have left the first Intensive Programme in Bratislava earlier due to illness (cf. Schnell, Hil & Esser 2008, 311). As numbers are low, no specific reference to the country of the home university will be made when discussing the data, except for some quotations from the qualitative data. Overall 56.76 % of all participants had spent time abroad in educational contexts before.[1]

All participants reported progress in intercultural competence as Figure 2 depicts. At least 80 % agreed with all statements. Especially more open-mindedness and curiosity were important benefits for them with a clear progress rate. This applies to the acceptance of cultural differences and to the perception of this difference as 'only different' as well. The transmission of knowledge was successful as well, but apparently the socio-emotional

[1] 31.08 % (n = 23) had participated in educational projects, such as Euro Week, 16.22 % (n = 12) had spent at least one semester with studies abroad. 10.81 % (n = 8) mentioned internships abroad, work and travel or even a high school year. 1.35 % (n = 1) had attended a summer school before.

impact was more important. Nobody mentioned any complete disagreement with the items presented in the questionnaire.

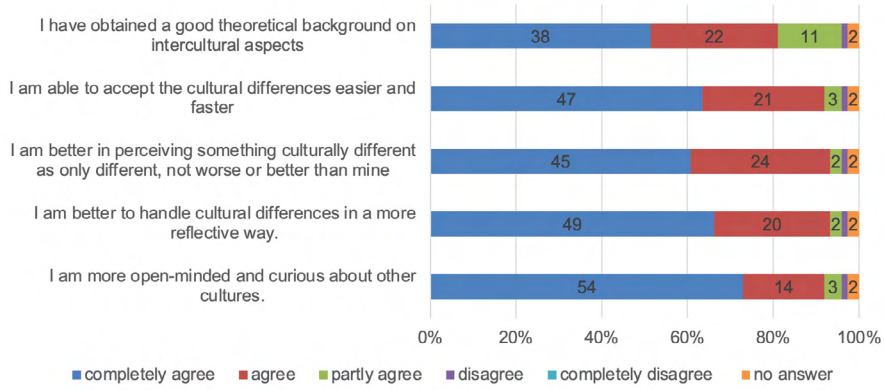

Figure 2. Impact of the intensive programme on intercultural competence, n = 74.

However, there are interesting connections of the results with the participants' previous experiences abroad, as Table 1 shows. More students without previous experience abroad reported progress in theoretic knowledge than students who had already had that experience. Earlier stays abroad might have included special training and information on intercultural theory and research. Another explanation could be that the group with foreign experience was able to apply the Intensive Programme content to more concrete personal memories and, therefore, did not perceive the content as completely new. The same applies to the ability to handle cultural differences in a more reflective way. Yet the greatest impact can be observed in the open-mindedness: even though all participants reported considerable increase, yet those who were abroad for the first time perceived a more significant impact.

Table 1. Impact on intercultural competence. Proportion of participants with/without previous experience abroad, who "completely agreed" or "completely agreed and agreed" with the statements.

	With previous experience abroad		Without previous experience abroad	
	completely agree	completely agree and agree	completely agree	completely agree and agree
Theoretic background on intercultural aspects	52.38 %	76.19 %	50.00 %	87.50 %
Acceptance of cultural differences	64.29 %	92.86 %	62.50 %	90.63 %
Perception of cultural differences as only different	59.52 %	92.86 %	62.50 %	93.75 %
Ability to handle cultural differences in a reflective way	61.90 %	90.48 %	71.88 %	96.88 %
Increase in open-mindedness	69.05 %	90.48 %	78.13 %	93.75 %

In contrast to clear progress in intercultural competence, the picture of the impact on the personal future is mixed, which might be because most students were apparently quite advanced in their studies.

The learning format 'short-term programme' apparently convinced the participants, as 71.62 % agreed to attend another summer school or Intensive Programme. For longer stays, interest rates are lower: about half of them could imagine spending a semester abroad or in the country of the project partner, respectively the partner university; the latter concerns only the attendees of the Intensive Programme in Aschaffenburg. Internationalisation at home-activities seem to provide low-threshold settings for intercultural experience, especially as there is no need for a longer period of absence from home. More than 80 % of the participants reported immediate use as well as value and importance of the acquired skills for the future with a special appraisal of the impact on their future career, which shows the working-life orientation of the Intensive Programmes, but also the significance of intercultural competence for employability.

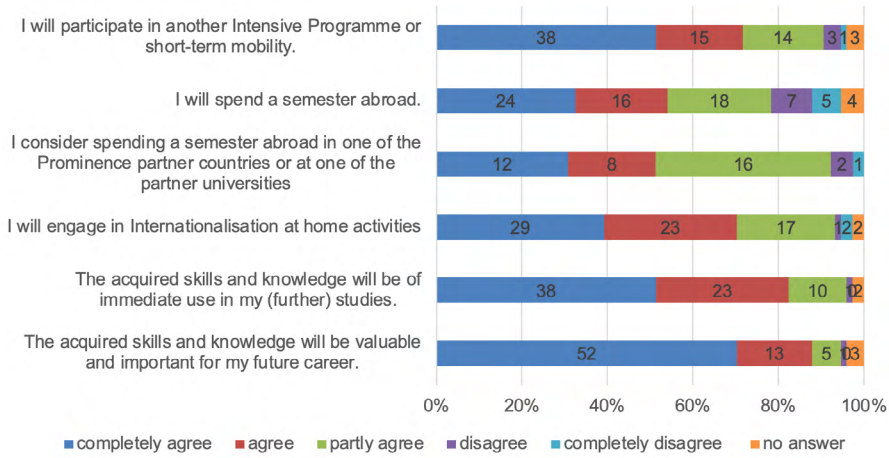

Figure 3. Impact of the Intensive Programme on personal future (n = 74, except for the statement on spending time in a PROMINENCE partner country, where n =39).

When comparing results in connection with previous experiences abroad, no significant differences appear for the statements on a future semester abroad in general or in a partner country of the PROMINENCE project, which might be connected to the level of

studies as mentioned before. As far as short-term programmes are concerned, students with foreign experiences were obviously 'set on fire', as nearly 80 % would participate in another summer school or something similar in contrast to 'only' 62.5 % of students who had not been abroad. One reason might be that the first group realised how much easier they could organise a short stay abroad, in contrast to a semester or even a year abroad, which demand more efforts not only for displacement but also for searching housing or adapting more thoroughly to a new environment.

Motivation for engagement in internationalisation at home-activities was also higher among students with experience abroad (73.81 % agreed) than among those without (65.63 % agreed). Obviously, the first group remembers hospitality from previous stays abroad, as in most programmes, no matter whether they offer studies or internships, there is a buddy or mentoring system for foreign guests. At least in Aschaffenburg, many of the buddies for foreign students have spent time abroad themselves. As far as the immediate use of the skills acquired during the Intensive Programme is concerned, students with foreign experiences have apparently more possibilities to apply these skills quickly, as 61.9 % of them completely agreed in contrast to 37.5 % of the non-mobile students. Considering the impact for their personal future, more non-mobile students saw benefits (93.75 % agreed) than mobile students (83.33 % agreed). Obviously, they saw their first education-oriented experience abroad as a clear benefit and as a chance to gain experiences which they would not have had otherwise.

Table 2. Impact on personal future. Proportion of participants with/without previous experience abroad, who "completely agreed" or "completely agreed and agreed" with the statements.

	With previous experience abroad		Without previous experience abroad	
	completely agree	completely agree and agree	completely agree	completely agree and agree
Participation in another Intensive Programme or short-term mobility	59.52 %	78.57 %	40.63 %	62.50 %
Spending a semester abroad	30.95 %	54.76 %	34.38 %	53.13 %
Spending a semester abroad in one of the Prominence partner countries/at one of the partner universities"	36.84 %	52.63 %	23.81 %	47.62 %
Engagement in internationalisation at home activities	45.24 %	73.81 %	31.25 %	65.63 %
Immediate use in (further) studies	61.90 %	85.71 %	37.50 %	78.13 %
Value and importance for future career	71.43 %	83.33 %	68.75 %	93.75 %

Answers to the last question in the questionnaire, an open-ended question, summarize the experiences during the Intensive Programmes. Most answers represented the experience "as a great

time"; yet some statements had a reflective content. They referred to the idea of difference and similarity:[1]

> "Intensive programme showed me that everyone is the same" (Poland, no previous stay abroad).

> "In this way I learned that although we are from different countries, people are not so different at all" (Finland, no previous stay abroad).

> "The experience I had in Bratislava was really surprising for me. I've learned a lot from the other countries' cultures" (Bulgaria, no previous stay abroad).

During the Intensive Programme, one person evidently realised that the acquisition of intercultural competence is an on-going process, and that one cannot say one has got intercultural competence after one stay abroad. Different cultural environments might require different or even new competences.

> "This IP taught me how to react [to] different cultures I have spent one semester on Erasmus, so intercultural communication wasn't a new thing for me, but here I experienced that there will be always cultures we need to learn about"(Hungary, previous stay abroad).

One student even mentioned the social dimension of Intensive Programmes for less well-off students, who can gain intercultural competences abroad despite lack of funds:

> "This program is really the best way to learn about other countries and their people, if you can't afford taking semesters abroad" (Hungary, no previous stay abroad).

The last two statements concern obvious pre-set assumptions on places. Apparently, these students had obviously had different

[1] Language mistakes were corrected carefully in order not to distort the answer.

expectations on the location, especially concerning the atmosphere and the climate:

> "I had an excellent time in Bratislava. I was very surprised, when I arrived, because it's actually a beautiful city" (Germany, no previous experience abroad).

> "It's really interesting to discover the other cultures and to work with the! Aschaffenburg University was a great place to discover! (It seems Italia :)" (France, previous experience abroad).

5 CONCLUSION

The results in this contribution show that a well-planned concept for short-term programmes has got an impact on the participants' intercultural competences, at least from their own point of view. The didactic mix of several excursion types was certainly beneficial, and the clear learning outcomes for each Intensive Programme were an important prerequisite for the success, as they created the overall setting.

Previous experiences abroad may influence impact on both intercultural competence and the future; apparently, students without prior stays abroad profit more for their future, as they have obtained competences, which they need when entering the job market.

The questionnaire used for the evaluation of the Intensive Programmes can be considered as a pilot for further research in this field, although the main aim of the project was to design material and test it. The impact on the participating students is, of course, an important result, but serves in this case mainly as a proof for the quality of the material designed.

Still, short-term programmes should be considered as another educational setting abroad (cf. Link 2020 in this volume). In times of crises, which affect the world, they are not only an important tool for motivating young people to study abroad, but eventually easier to perform than longer stays and can be easily carried out with modern communication tools. When planning other short-term projects, a holistic approach is certainly the most beneficial and should take the social dimension and previous experiences abroad into consideration. The use of the mother tongue for reflection might lead to more profound results, though. A follow-up could include data on later mobility and on involvement in internationalisation at home.

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"GERMANS HAVE SO MANY BEHAVIOURS DIFFERENT FROM COLOMBIANS, THAT'S AN ENRICHING EXPERIENCE" - STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE OTHER IN A TELECOLLABORATIVE PROJECT

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1 INTRODUCTION

Telecollaboration or virtual exchange refers to groups of learners who, under the guidance of educators and facilitators and as a part of their curriculum, engage in intercultural interaction and collaboration with partners from different cultural backgrounds (O'Dowd 2018). One-to-one video-conferencing is one of the methods of carrying out these exchanges. Virtual exchange projects have been conducted for a long time. The first virtual exchange took place in the late 1980s (Helm 2018). Much research has been carried out over the past 20 years on the different aspects of telecollaboration. For instance, a recent large-scale study having over 1,000 participants focused on the impact of telecollaboration on student teachers and teacher trainers (EVALUATE 2019).

An advantage of telecollaboration is the opportunity it affords the participating learners to "negotiate each other's understandings of the other's culture and their own in ways that would be almost impossible without the technology" (González-Lloret 2020, 71). Telecollaborative projects can help students realise that their international partners are individuals and that they do not always show national characteristics and, hence, cultural generalisation is not possible (Avgousti 2018).

The ability to collaborate is an essential skill in the 21st century (Partnership for 21st Century Skills 2008), which can be developed when students participate in virtual exchange projects. Other future-ready skills necessary in the 21st century are teamwork and leadership, and these include competencies such as communication, responsibility and conflict resolution (Pellegrino & Hilton 2013), all of which can also be honed with telecollaborative projects. Moreover, technology-mediated and task-based language learning can facilitate the acquisition of language competence (fluency, accuracy and complexity), appropriateness (intercultural understanding) and the skills regarding digital and electronic communication, all of which are necessary to succeed in a multilingual globalised society (González-Lloret 2020). This is another advantage of virtual exchange projects as they are often task-based.

Other positive effects of telecollaboration include students' exploration and revision of their preconceptions about the other's culture along with a reflection on their own culture (Avgousti 2018). For instance, students from one culture might make value judgements about other cultures if the approaches of the two cultures differ considerably. Germans, for instance, are often perceived and described as being direct (Bryant, 2018) as they tend to focus on the agenda during meetings and do not engage much in any small talk (Schmitz 2019). So, class discussions with German students can help students belonging to cultures where

directness and limited small talk is less common reflect on their cultural differences and see the Germans in a value-free way.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The data for this project were gathered using questionnaires having open-ended questions from two different cohorts over two different terms. Students from a German university and a Colombian university participated in this telecollaboration project spanning six weeks in the summer term 2019 and the winter term 2019 - 20. Of the total 54 student participants in the project, 31 participated during the summer term and 23 during the winter term. Although a majority of the participants were either German or Colombian, the project also included two South Korean students and a French student living in Germany either for a regular study programme or an exchange programme. The average age of the Colombian students was 19.4 years, whereas that of the German students was 23 years.

Most of the participants had been studying English since they were 6 to 10 years of age and their level ranged from B2 to C1. Further, while many of them were majoring in international business administration, the others were majoring in cultural management, international business, automotive systems, or mechanical engineering.

For the project, the students worked with their counterparts either in pairs or in groups of three, depending on their availability. Some tasks required the students to work independently. All the tasks served as the foundation for their final assignment in the sixth week. The students met via a video conferencing tool of their choice, recorded each session and uploaded the recordings in an assignment folder (either on the Google drive or on the university's learning management system). The students' participation

in these virtual exchanges was over and above their regular classroom participation and assignments and both participation and the final presentation counted towards determining the students' final grades. In addition to the feedback from the lecturers on their final assessments, these students also received feedback from their peers- on their final assignments.

Before the start of the project, many of the students had not explicitly reflected on their own culture and on how it might influence any sort of in-person or virtual (international) collaboration. Consequently, they were briefly introduced to different aspects of cross-cultural communication where the focus was on Geert Hofstede and his cultural dimensions.[1] Other related concepts such as those proposed by Frans Trompenaars (Mulder 2015) were also discussed.

Hofstede has conducted comprehensive comparative intercultural research studies about the cultural influence on workplace behaviour.1 The series of student assignments under this project that closed with the students' presentations revolved around the German and Colombian cultures and took into account Hofstede's cultural dimensions. For instance, the members of the first group had to provide and compare the examples from the cultures of their respective members with reference to Hofstede's dimensions. To determine whether there is a cultural difference concerning, say, power distance, they either compared organograms of organisations or where applicable, reflected on their own experiences from the corporate world.

A more business-oriented approach was chosen for the second group. Its members had to think of a product (say, coffee beans)

[1] Hofstede's research resulted in determining four cultural dimensions: collectivism vs individualism, power distance, masculinity vs femininity and uncertainty avoidance. Later, two more dimensions were added: long-term orientation and indulgence.(See Hofstede's website: https://geerthofstede.com/culture-geert-hofstede-gert-jan-hofstede/6d-model-of-national-culture/)

that they would export to another country with a cultural background considerably different from their own. These students were then required to develop a marketing strategy for their chosen product. This exercise aimed at encouraging the students to think of ways to market a product to a specific target group, say, a population with a high index pertaining to indulgence. By choosing the product and the place to sell it, they were required to demonstrate their ability to apply Hofstede's dimensions to their business considerations.

3 FINDINGS OF THE PROJECT

The students drew differing conclusions from their telecollaboration experience. Some students (over-)generalised their experiences, for instance, a Columbian student pointed out, **"I think the project helped us to realise that foreign people are not too formal and strict like we think"**. Similarly, another student generalised by saying, **"People from other countries tend to be shy"**. References such as "foreign people" and "people from other countries", meant that their statements were not culture-specific and they also conveyed a "we - they" dichotomy (Ladegaard 2011). One possible reason for this reference to foreigners in general terms could be that, in general, the Columbian students involved in the project had not travelled (widely) and had not had much contact with people outside of Colombia. In fact, one student had commented in her questionnaire that this was the first time that she talked to somebody from abroad. Some students commented on the perceived differences between the cultures, for example, saying, **"We interacted with people who have different ways to see life"**. A Colombian student concluded, **"Germans have so many behaviours different from Colombians (that's an enriching experience)."** A German student stated, **"It was mind-blowing to see how different our cultures and countries are".**

A German and a Colombian each were equally disappointed vis-à-vis the level commitment from the other side. They felt that while they were well prepared for the assignments during their meetings, their respective counterparts from the other culture were not. However, both of them did appreciate each other's opinions. One German student was sceptical about **"being able to build a strong bond, through ZOOM, with a total stranger from another cultural background in a short time. But it worked"**. One Colombian student felt her experience confirmed what she had learnt. She stated, **"My learning experience was impacted in the way I realised the German culture was as I studied in my major."** The experience led other students to query their expectations, for instance, **The Columbians were much more relaxed than I had expected**.

These experiences and the class discussions encouraged the students to reflect on their own culture. One German student stated, **"I am more aware of the fact that nothing always can work like the "German" way"**. Another one concluded, **"Compromise is a valuable option when dealing with other cultures, particularly when facing major problems"**. One Colombian went as far as stating, **"When dealing with someone of another culture you have to be very careful and try not to hurt any feelings"**. This is linked to the fear of not guarding the counterpart's face[1].

Some students commented on the different kinds of learning opportunities that the telecollaborative project offered. For instance, one student stressed the advantages of the project over more traditional ways of discussing culture by stating that **"the learning experience was more dynamic because we have different opinions with really different points of view"**. Another student stated: **"I learned more about a different culture than I would have learned, if we had just discussed it in class"**. One student

[1] "Face" can be defined as "an image of self, delineated in terms of approved social attributes." (Goffman, 1967, p. 5)

described the experience as "**a chance for self-improvement in dealing with other cultures"**. Another student saw the benefit for their future career and remarked that **"it was a perfect way to learn about communication situations for our job later on, because it was comparable to real situations"**.

4 CONCLUSION AND ITS PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The qualitative analysis deriving from this project shows that the students' experiences differed considerably, which explains the different conclusions they drew with regard to the similarities and differences between the two cultures. The class discussions about their experiences enabled them to compare and challenge their own perceptions and those of the other students in a safe environment.

Caluianu (2019) argues that meeting students from other cultures triggers cultural awareness, but deeper cross-cultural understanding can only occur if students, along with their teachers, attend to it. A good way to raise students' cultural self-awareness and their intercultural awareness, is to analyse relevant parts of their in-class conversations had during their telecollaborative projects This can be done either by studying excerpts from the recordings or transcripts of these conversations (O'Dowd & Lewis 2016). By looking at their discursive practices, for example, students may become more aware of the differences in discursive practices they are likely to encounter in our globalized world (Oskoz & Gimeno-Sanz 2019).

The role of teachers accompanying virtual exchanges has been examined, for instance, with regard to preparing and guiding students before or during their online collaboration (O'Dowd,

Sauro & Spector-Cohen 2019). O'Dowd and Dooly (2020) point out that it is only with the teachers' help that cultural rich points can facilitate the development of intercultural interaction skills. Relevant research available at present has not addressed the potential influence of teachers' subjective views on students. Some of the comments from the students in our project suggest that students might adopt their teachers' views and get influenced by teachers' comments. An example of this is the following statement by a Colombian student: **"this [project] changed my expectation because during the last semesters the professor told me that German people are punctual, but a girl wasn't punctual sometimes."**

Virtual exchange projects, vis-a-vis any subject, will be valuable in supporting the students concerned to develop the skills and empathy which are required in a global society (Zahn 2020). This holds true especially during a pandemic such as COVID-19, where travel restrictions, among other things, make intercultural encounters more difficult. It is likely that in the future, in certain situations imposed on us due to pandemics of this kind, or due to climate change, a greater number of future employees will be working online rather than in-person with different cultures. Therefore, universities need to prepare their students, more than ever before, for such encounters by organising virtual exchange projects during their study programmes and, thus, ensure that the students develop cultural self-awareness and intercultural awareness.

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APPENDIX 1. Activities in the winter term 2019/20.

Week	Topic	Activity
Week 1	Topic: Getting to know each other Mode: Synchronous	Students work together via DFNConf or Zoom. Pre-surveys conducted and demographics determined.
Week 2	Topic: Lingua franca summary and discussion Mode: Synchronous	Before meeting up, students read an article in their first language. Suggestions included the following. In German: https://www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/schule/fremdsprachen-globales-englisch-ist-eine-grundfaehigkeit-wie-autofahren-a-544335.html https://blog.tuv.com/ausser-kontrolle-englisch-als-lingua-franca-in-unternehmen/ Optional: https://de.motionpoint.com/blog/is-english-still-the-lingua-franca-of-the-internet/ Click on "Datei-Download": https://www.bibb.de/veroeffentlichungen/de/bwp/show/6851 In Spanish: http://elestimulo.com/blog/el-espanol-se-consolida-como-segunda-lengua-franca-internacional/ https://cvc.cervantes.es/obref/congresos/sevilla/comunicacion/ponenc_tamaron.htm https://www.uv.mx/prensa/general/idioma-espanol-en-condiciones-para-ser-usado-como-lengua-franca/ During the meeting, students summarize the article(s) read and discuss the topic(s)
Week 3	Topic: Cultural dimension Mode: Asynchronous and synchronous	Students first do the self-assessment questionnaire (Mapping Your Cultural Orientation): https://www.uwb.edu/getattachment/globalinitiatives/resources/intercultural-competence-tool-kit/Mapping-Your-Cultural-Orientation.pdf Students then meet their partners and have a discussion about their differences (e.g., low- or high-context culture, monochronic or polychronic culture, individualistic or collectivistic, egalitarian or hierarchical, etc.) In class, students report about their partner(s). Students go to the link below, look up their own culture, and compare it with their definitions from week 2. Students then discuss with their partner the similarities and differences between their two cultures. In the discussion, students consider how the cultures could work together in virtual teams in a business situation (Could the teams succeed? Why or why not? What would some of the difficulties be? What would a successful team protocol be?) https://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/
Week 4	Topic: Project ABC Foods, Inc. Mode: Asynchronous and synchronous	ABC Foods, Inc., headquartered in the U.K., is looking to export and launch some of its food products into a location on the Asian or African continent. The chief executive officer (CEO) wants each team to decide on the products and the city to target, as well as determine how it plans to market the products to the culture. Each team has two weeks to make these decisions and present its project ideas to the CEO. Teams work with their international partners to plan the presentations.
Week 5	Topic: Project ABC Foods, Inc. Mode: Asynchronous	Students work individually to plan their part of the presentations.
Week 6	Topic: Project ABC Foods, Inc. Mode: Asynchronous and synchronous	Peer- and self-evaluations are made. Each class watches the presentations and offers feedback, which then is sent to group members (scan if necessary). Individual reflections also are turned in. Post-survey is conducted.

THE KiVAKO PROJECT: THE NEXT STEP FROM LANGUAGE FLUENCY TO CULTURAL FLUENCY

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1 BACKGROUND OF THE KIVAKO PROJECT

Throughout the past years, language learning in Finland has become more one-dimensional. At the same time, the globalization of the working world has been growing. Working life has become more and more language intensive. Many situations at work are multilingual and multicultural. Even though the communication language, the lingua franca, is in many cases English, the need for speakers of other languages still exists. According to the Finnish national language education policy, the primary objective in the country will be to enhance language proficiency, national linguistic diversity and the internationalization of Finns (Pyykkö, 2017, 13).

Also, employers and employer representatives in Finland emphasize the need for diverse language and cultural skills. The Confederation of Finnish Industries and the Union for Finnish Business School Graduates have expressed their concerns about narrow language skills of the younger population in Finland. The organisations have repeatedly published statements according to which versatile language skills and knowledge of culture are vital for Finnish export industry (Varttala & Puranen 2020).

In the year 2017, an investigation into the state of Finnish language reserve, language levels and development needs was set up by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. In the investigation, several suggestions were made to improve the situation concerning the Finnish language reserve (Pyykkö, 2017, 11). One of the concrete results of the investigation was the KiVAKO project (2018 - 2021) launched by higher education teachers. The project was funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture.

This article deals with the goals and contents of language courses produced in the KiVAKO project and discusses the needs to take intercultural competences into account also in the context of language courses below level B2 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

2 AIMS OF THE KIVAKO PROJECT

KiVAKO is a higher education development project funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. The name KiVAKO stands for "Strengthening the language reserve at higher education institutions" (Jakkula & Pilke 2020). Language reserve refers to citizens' language proficiency in its entirety at the national level: citizens' language skills, language proficiency produced by the formal education system and the planning of language instruction (Pyykkö 2017, 13).

The project aims to improve the availability of foreign language learning paths at Finnish higher education institutions through national collaboration. Digital pedagogics are utilized from the Common European Framework of Reference level A1 to level C1. The project's target languages are so-called less commonly studied foreign languages in Finland, i.e. other than Finnish, English and Swedish (KiVAKO-hanke 2020).

During the project (2018 - 2021), over 100 language professionals from 25 higher education institutions have joined forces to develop and produce online language courses in Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Estonian, German, Japanese, Chinese, Korean and sign language. Also, online tandem learning, eTandem, is included (Varttala & Puranen 2020). Not only single courses will be developed but also open-access study paths from one CEFR level to the other. Later on, the online courses will be offered nationwide to students in higher education.

In the following, contents of KiVAKO language courses and some aspects of intercultural competence and language learning will be discussed. The analysis is based on the German courses developed in the project. The question is: How should KiVAKO courses be further developed in the future after the extensive basic work in content development of the online courses has been finished? Should the language-oriented approach of KiVAKO courses be extended to include also elements of intercultural competences?

3 INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

To learn a new language, the learner needs to learn and memorize vocabulary, grammar and phrases for various communicative situations. However, effective language learning is more complex than an exercise of recalling rules and vocabulary. It can be seen as a complex, social practice (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013, 14). This is why the KiVAKO courses will now be observed in Liddicoat's and Scarino's (2013) framework of intercultural language learning. Its foundation lies in the following basic principles: active construction, making connections, social interaction, reflection, and responsibility.

The principle of **active construction** is based on the fact that language learners create their knowledge and understanding

both about the culture they are learning and their own culture. They have to acquire abilities how to discover cultural differences, how to reflect on and deal with intercultural issues and develop solutions to them.

Making connections means in intercultural language learning that students should make connections between their own linguistic and cultural framework and the new target language and culture which they face in the teaching and learning context. This happens by comparing and contrasting.

The principle of **social interaction** refers to the fact that language and culture are learned through communication with others. Learning is an interactive process and interaction is the purpose and goal of language learning at the same time.

Reflection is a key part of intercultural language learning. It is necessary for students to reflect on experiences of difference. Also, consequences of the chosen communicative behaviour should be reflected in the light of new knowledge.

Finally, students should learn that they have a **responsibility** for making communication successful by being fair, understanding and respectful towards other participants in the communication situation (Wu & Marek 2018; Liddicoat 2004.)

When comparing the contents and pedagogical approaches of the KiVAKO online courses in German on levels A1 - B1 in accordance with Liddicoat's and Scarino's five principles, some elements can be identified which may support intercultural language learning to some extent. Right at the beginning of the project, there was a mutual understanding among project participants that KiVAKO online courses are not courses in which students go through the material on their own, answer some multiple-choice quizzes and finally take a written exam. The courses force students to interact and communicate with each other and teachers.

The KiVAKO course material and exercises contain topics, which show differences between the student's own culture and the target cultures. Sometimes these cultural phenomena will be explained. Some cultural information may be ignored. This is a typical approach also in language text books which concentrate on teaching a certain language in the first place. For the matter of active construction, students should be helped to notice the differences themselves and reflect on the nature and the impact of the phenomena in question. Teachers should allow differences in students' interpretations (Liddicoat 2004).

Making connections requires that learners first become aware of their own cultures. Then, they will be able to make connections between their existing cultures and languages and the new cultural phenomena. In the KiVAKO courses, connection making could be reinforced by activating students to verbalize and reflect phenomena which appear in the course material.

Reflection and responsibility are the least visible elements in KiVAKO courses because the ultimate goal of the course is to teach languages. However, consequences of a certain communicative behaviour, for example, could be possible to deal with as early as CERF levels A1 and A2. This should go hand in hand with awareness of respectful and fair communication.

Social interaction is the strongest feature of the KIVAKO online courses. On all the levels, there are several assignments, which require interaction with other students. Interaction with others was, however, not what some pilot students expected from an online course. In the first pilot feedbacks, there were some negative comments on spoken dialogue exercises. These remarks show that the courses brought some novelties to online language learning. Even though at the beginning some students were prejudiced against online communicative exercises in pairs, many finally realized that the communicative online approach was rewarding.

As one pilot course participants wrote: "The only bad thing is that I'd like to have more [these kinds of courses/exercises]." Another student wrote: "The exercises were versatile and fun. Especially making a discussion video was a fun and a different kind of an exercise" (KiVAKO project's student feedback, 2019 - 2020). The social interaction approaches of the KiVAKO language courses could be easily applied also for dealing with intercultural issues.

4 INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN A MULTILINGUAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

There are several definitions of intercultural competence. According to Nardon (2010, 9), "intercultural competence is more than cultural knowledge; it is the ability to behave in ways that facilitate understanding – regardless of how much knowledge we have of a certain culture." For Liddicoat and Scarino (2013, 24) "intercultural competence means being aware that cultures are relative. That is, being aware that there is no one "normal" way of doing things, but that all behaviours are culturally ¬ variable."

The attendants of the KiVAKO language courses will be students who soon access work life. Not only do they need business, technological and environmental knowledge but they also need the ability to work in multilingual and multicultural networks, share knowledge and communicate in international teams. To be successful in an international work environment, good language skills and knowledge of different market areas and cultures are also necessary. (Ala-Louko 2017.)

Intercultural interaction may have many benefits not only to individuals but also to organizations and companies. People with various backgrounds, knowledge and perspectives can build innovative and creative teams. They teach each other about the

world. People in multinational and multicultural teams also learn more about themselves, and about why they think about things in the way they do. Nevertheless, there can be some challenges before teams like this start to be productive. People have pre-conceived notions about how individuals should behave or what kind of behaviour is acceptable. "The same diversity that brings in new perspectives also increases opportunities for conflict, disagreements, and misunderstanding. Getting things done often takes longer than anticipated, as we need to work through many different ideas and decision-making styles" (Nardon 2010, 5).

In their work environments, employees may also use several languages: their mother tongue in communication with colleagues, English as a lingua franca in e.g. documentation, e-mails or meetings and a third language when communicating informally with clients and building relationships (Räisänen & Karjalainen 2018). Against the background of language intensive work-life and multicultural teamwork, it is clear that language courses already on CERF level A would benefit from an approach in which intercultural issues has been taken into account – even though speakers would not be very fluent in the target language. The awareness of possible communication challenges could help the language users to understand why it sometimes may be difficult to get the message through or make things happen.

5 CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE OF LANGUAGE CLASSES

This article was written during the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring 2020. During that time, everybody who did not need to go to their workplaces started to work from home. Teachers were suddenly forced to implement their teaching online. Meetings were arranged online. Coffee breaks took place online.

The future will show whether and how the world of work evolves after the virus epidemic. Will business travelling be reduced for good? Will distant work become more normal and acceptable? Will a greater number of work related communication take place via electronic devices and applications instead of face-to-face contacts? Should this occur, its influence must be anticipated in planning language and communication curricula. For professions in which international encounters are key activities, students will urgently need more profound skills in how to succeed in multicultural online communication situations and how to interact in a professional manner despite cultural differences.

If we look even further into the future, at some point, we have to face the question whether language classes will exist in the form as they are today. The next decades are very likely to witness well-functioning translation tools which translate even complicated written and spoken messages in almost any language grammatically correctly. This would mean that the character of language classes will transform into something different. Although artificial intelligence would help us to communicate with speakers of different languages, different values and ways of thinking still cause conflicts and misunderstandings. Therefore, intercultural competences will still be needed. Computers will very probably not be able to handle conflicts with roots in cultural issues.

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UNDERSTANDING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE: FROM CONCEPTUAL AND CURRICULAR OBJECTS TO COMPETENCE ACTIONS OF TEACHERS AND SOCIAL WORKERS WORKING WITH MIGRANT CHILDREN

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1 INTRODUCTION

Movement is intrinsic to the globe. In recent years, Europe has witnessed increasing flows of people migrating from one country to another both voluntarily and when forced to do so. Migration is touching numbers of children as we write, and this has – and should have – serious consequences for educational models and social protection practices. Teaching, learning and providing protection have evolved from closed to open processes, which demand greater organisational skills and new models. The European Commission (2017) recommends that (1) the education system is made more responsive to the changing nature of basic

skills required in the modern world, e.g. the growing importance of ICT technologies and multilingualism; (2) the teaching force turns modern technologies into an asset, learns how to operate in a multicultural environment; (3) schools become more participatory by getting parents, the local community and other stakeholders more closely involved.

As shown in various national, international as well as more local endeavors (see e.g. Sirius PERAE 2018), intercultural education is considered extraordinarily important in Europe, but not widely practiced (Janta & Harte 2016). With respect to the recommendations by EC, the current research and innovation project **Children Hybrid Integration: Learning Dialogue as a Way of Upgrading Policies of Participation**[1] (Child-up 2019 - 2022) project aims: (1) to provide schools, social services, reception centres, education and mediation agencies, as well as policy makers, with knowledge about dialogic methods that can support professionals working with children, thus (2) combining innovation with well-proven traditions and flexible quality standards, and (3) enhancing the understanding of how to contribute to excellent participative learning and integration as well as high quality education and protection.

The project involves partners from seven EU countries, Finland among them. In this article, we investigate different multicultural professional contexts, everyday working places. As Child-up is interested in how to enhance the active participation of children with a migration background, we look into the role of professionals in supporting this as shown in literature and a central education policy document, the National Core Curriculum of Basic Education (2014, henceforth NCCBE). To understand how multiculturalism is interpreted by professionals and what kind of sensitivity and interaction are needed when working in such

[1] The project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no 822400.

contexts, especially with children, we use the notion of intercultural competence.

In literature, intercultural competence is at times divided into different factors that professionals must possess and manage in the contexts of intercultural interaction, for instance skills, actions, sensitivity, communication, and/or cultural intelligence (see e.g. Arasaratnam & Doerfe 2005; Segura-Robles & Parra-Gonzalez 2019). In other words, the notion of multicultural contexts refers to the co-presence and/or interaction of people with different cultural backgrounds, and 'intercultural competence' points to the skills of mediating and interacting in multicultural contexts. When it comes to teachers and social workers working with children, they must adapt these skills into their educational and pedagogical approaches, applied autonomously by individual teachers in Finland. Social workers working within schools with pupils, or with clients with a migration background in organizations co-operating with schools, are facing the need of intercultural competence as part of their profession as well. However, they, too are autonomous agents in acquiring and using the competence. Co-operating with one another in school contexts, both teachers and social workers are expected to follow the principles of the national core curricula.

NCCBE (2014) points out key objectives that pupils must meet at the end of basic education. They include, among other goals, growing as culturally competent citizens who value, respect and understand cultural diversity while constructing their own cultural identities by being active participants in their own cultures and communities. Despite this, there are no national requirements or recommendations on what teachers or social workers should know or manage from the perspective of intercultural competence.

In this article, we describe the role and meaning of intercultural competence in the contexts of education and social work

in Finland. The article centres on three key actors: a) teachers, b) NCCBE, and c) social work in supporting pupils in need of additional guidance, including (but not limited to) pupils with a migrant background.

2 TEACHERS AND MULTICULTURALISM IN SCHOOLS

In Finland, the literature on intercultural training and multicultural pedagogic practices dates only as far as the turn of the 21st century. Back then, teachers' multicultural professionalism was seen to include knowledge about how migrant students' background affect their learning and interaction, as well as knowledge about learning difficulties and mental health problems (Talib 1999). Matinheikki-Kokko (1999) stressed the importance of experience for teachers to achieve a personal touch on diversity. Soon, this personal touch was turning inwards: for example, Paavola and Talib (2005, 80) emphasized teachers' need to engage in personal thought processes and growth while working in a multicultural context to act consciously and succeed in building intercultural competence.

More recent writing around teachers' intercultural competence and education in multicultural contexts stresses sensitivity towards language and culture, and to diversity within these in situated contexts and in individual encounters (e.g. Malinen 2019; Paksuniemi et al. 2019; Pollari & Koppinen 2011). Rissanen (2019) underlines the contextual nature of competence by preferring the plural term intercultural competences. Jokikokko (2005) has shown how teachers themselves also interpret intercultural competence as different ways of orienting: these include (1) an ethical orientation including values, interpersonal characteristics and basic orientation towards other people and the world; (2) efficiency orientation including organizational skills and ability to

act in various roles and situations; and (3) pedagogical orientation including intercultural pedagogical competences.

For the aims of the Child-up project, Paavola's (2018) findings are especially relevant. In her study on two pre-schools in the Helsinki region, she shows that both teachers and parents perceive teachers' intercultural competence as one factor contributing to top-quality pre-school teaching. We wish to add there is no reason why this correlation should not apply in other educational stages. In Paavola's data, teachers' intercultural competence was linked with

- positive attitude towards diversity
- motivation to participate in further education
- commitment to shared values
- experience of membership in a community characterised by diversity
- seamless co-operation among team members
- dynamic nature of education and adapting to pupils' needs and skills
  and
- managerial support.

Although Paavola's research was carried out in pre-primary level, it surely has linkages to good-quality teaching in more advanced levels (see Virta, Räsänen & Tuittu 2011). The following section describes the role of multiculturalism in Finnish school curricula, which shows that quality teaching, as described above, at least partly follows from careful and insightful curricular work.

3 MULTICULTURALISM IN THE CURRICULUM

The Finnish NCCBE (2014) is very explicit in taking a stance on pupils' cultural competence and cultural identity construction throughout the document, including value base, mission, transversal competencies and subject-specific aims. In other words, the document norm obligates teachers and social workers who work with pupils to foster pupils' skills and growth as culturally competent and active participants and as world citizens in diverse multicultural contexts. Understanding that teachers and social workers are facing both the everyday need and the NCCBE requirements, it is relevant to view their intercultural competence through what is described as the perspective of pupils' aims in NCCBE. Therefore, even though it is a norm-setting document, the competence objectives are not self-evident for the teachers' nor the social workers' professional acquirements in schools. If they are objectives of education, they must also be considered competencies of the educators.

The values of NCCBE include several points explicitly refer to cultural competence:

- Cultural diversity is seen as richness in the context of education.
- Teaching enhances pupils' own cultural identity and their growth as active participants in their own cultures in their own communities.
- Education enhances pupils' interest towards other cultures and strengthens pupils' receptiveness towards cultural diversity.
- School is seen as a context that consists of people with diverse backgrounds.

- Learning takes place in co-operation with and crossing the boundaries of different languages, cultures, religions and life philosophies and respects them in all interaction. (NCCBE, 2014, 15 - 16.)

The cultural mission of the core curriculum is to foster multifarious cultural competence of pupils and to support their cultural identity and cultural capital construction. Teaching aims at increasing the understanding of cultural diversity and at helping pupils to outline different cultures in time from history to present day and the future as a continuum in which everyone can act as agents (ibid., 18). Importantly, the curriculum emphasizes supporting every pupil's cultural identity in many ways; pupils need guidance in their growth towards knowing, recognizing and respecting everyone's right for their own language and culture in Finnish society (ibid., 86).

In addition to the value base and the mission, there are several objectives concerning cultural competence for the pupils to master, for teacher to teach and for the social worker to value. They are described both in the subject-specific objectives for pupils of different ages and as transversal competencies that transcend the lines between different subjects.

One of the transversal competencies, labelled cultural competence, interaction and expression, aims at educating pupils for facing the world as diverse from cultural, linguistic, religious and philosophical perspectives, and views life in general as multidimensional. The aim here is to enhance pupils' competence to meet and respect human rights also from different cultural aspects. It fosters understanding of cultural diversity as a resource and of the interlinkages and influences of cultures, religions and different philosophies in society and in everyday life. Teaching should consistently aim at increasing respect and trust among people and societies. (ibid., 21, 100.)

As to subject-specific objectives, NCCBE mentions cultural competencies especially in connection with L1 language (mother tongue) and literature, L2 language (first foreign language), religion and philosophy of life, visual arts and environmental education.

Although the Finnish education system lays great emphasis on the national curricular framework, some of the aims are decided upon at the local level, in education provider-specific curriculum (NCCBE 2014, 88 for the cultural aspects). This means that even though the national core curriculum presents the values and mission of basic education, the decision as to how to manage them is made in a regional or local curriculum and eventually by individual teachers. Here, also different acts play a role for organizing major structural and practical efforts for supporting migrants and language minorities.

Applying the national curriculum, then, is a process at different levels, which may lead to emphasizing some aims and aspects of the national core curriculum over others. Thus, cultural competence is an issue that may also be addressed with different volume in different regions or even in different schools or classrooms. From the perspective of promoting children's participation and growth towards awareness of and respect for cultural diversity, cultural competence needs conscious attention at different levels of decision-making, from interpreting the national core curriculum at the local level to the classroom practices implemented by an individual teacher and interpreted as intercultural competencies by pupils, parents, and outsiders.

All in all, NCCBE objectives call for various intercultural competencies among teachers and social workers (see the next section) who work in educational contexts with children from culturally diverse backgrounds. With respect to Paavola's (2018) findings presented at the end of section 2, we see intercultural

competence as a meta-skill. This leads to a critical question: to what extent is it possible to teach cultural competence for the pupils if the teacher feels his/her own intercultural competence is insufficient or, what is more, if s/he is not interested in cultures and/or interaction in the first place?

4 SOCIAL WORKERS WITH MULTICULTURAL CLIENTS

Social work in Finland was perhaps quicker than education to respond to multiculturalism. It was, after all, social workers who were first faced with immigrants transporting to Finland for humanitarian reasons in the 1970s and again in the early 1990s (see e.g. Turtiainen 2016). In today's Finland, ethnic and cultural diversity, multilingualism and pluralism among the clients of social work is all but exceptional. However, as Metteri et al. (2016) point out, Finnish social workers have seldom received multicultural training and it is still not well established as a field in social work education. They also show there is an international debate on what multicultural education should exactly include. They themselves argue for a holistic take on social workers' intercultural learning in their everyday practice where, first, the values and ethics of social work are taken seriously; second, the customers are allowed to speak out (about their perceptions and interpretations); third, working in close co-operation with interpreters and using plain language is a norm; and, four, 'general knowledge' about a foreign culture, which in itself is alright, does not overrule the interaction with the individual client.

Aligning with Metteri et al., Katisko (2016) equates the ethics and principles of social work with those of intercultural competence: respect for difference, and promotion of equality and human rights. More specifically, Katisko emphasizes that the "bedrock

of client-based social work is the interactional relationship between the social worker and the client. For this reason, one part of intercultural competence is the ability to communicate with a client from a different cultural background in a way that fosters trust and respect within the client."

This ability to communicate to foster trust and respect is helpful in all types of interaction. In the context of social work with migrants, Anis (2017, 328) argues this necessitates cultural sensitivity – social worker´s consciousness of his/her own values and attitudes on the one hand, and ability to recognize and understand the possibly different kinds of values and cultural meanings of their clients on the other, as these are reflected in and contribute to interaction. Anis reminds that a sensitive social worker also sees diversity between clients and is aware of the everyday challenges that may occur in a new country.

Anis (ibid.) emphasizes that social workers need to understand what it means for individuals and families to move from one country to another. It is crucial to understand the processes that belong to arriving in a new country, cultural contradictions that may rise, and client's individual life situation upon arrival. The material conditions and multiple power dimensions are also part of clients´ life in the new home country. The social worker should have competence to understand and analyze all these different aspects.

There is thus more to social work with immigrants than knowledge about the laws that guide and frame migrants´ lives in their new home country (for example, in Finland, Act (L 17.6.2011/ 746) as well as the fact that all minors in Finland are subjected to Child Welfare Act independent of their background). However, having this knowledge is crucial to implement social work in an ideal way (Satka 2007). As it happens, idealism often escapes reality, which is why reflexivity, evaluation of one's actions by oneself

and colleagues and other practitioners, is highly important in the profession of social workers.

As to social work among migrant children, a social worker is a professional who may support children to overcome difficult situations that may take place in school (see Zechner & Tiilikka 2020, 72) or elsewhere. Here, social workers' knowledge about the Finnish social and health service system is vital to guide the clients towards receiving the support needed from among public or private services or third-sector organizations. The challenge is that sufficient support services for migrant children and their families are not available in all parts of Finland (see Anis 2017, 330).

In their review of the development of intercultural sensitivity in Finnish educational contexts, Holm, Kuusisto and Rissanen et al. (2019) point out that, although official documents have acknowledged multiculturalism as an underlying value in teaching for years, its' practical implementation remains insufficient. As argued by Anis above (see also Pösö 2015), the same holds true in the context of social work in Finland.

5 TOWARDS INTERCULTURAL MULTIPROFESSIONALISM THROUGH REFLEXIVITY

In Finland, education is guaranteed for all regardless of gender, social class or place of residence, with the aim of producing well-being and equality. The role of teachers and social workers is significant in providing education and support for all, following the premises of inclusion. The need for specific intercultural competence and cultural mediation in teaching and social work in school and other educational contexts, is self-evident.

If intercultural competence is a meta-skill that fosters teachers' and social workers' intercultural competence in the contexts of education and social work among children with a migration background, it is worth making the professionals' reflections about it visible and valued for professional and identity development. There are some openings with respect to reflexivity and intercultural competence, such as viewing the concept of reflexivity in intercultural education as a mechanism which mediates between intercultural experiences and individual behaviour among students (Blair 2020). As a concept, reflexivity has a long-term history both in teacher training and social work education in Finland (see e.g. Jyrkiäinen & Jyrkiäinen 2020; Satka 2007) and increasingly focuses on these aspects of professional development.

We suggest multi-professional discussions about intercultural competence in co-operation with teachers and social workers in order to strengthen the understanding of pupils' daily life and the objectives of NCCBE. This may be useful during teacher training and social work education, but importantly also in in-service training targeted at both professions.

Future directions in Child-up research include increasing understanding about professionals' intercultural competencies through analysing a noteworthy set of interview data in combination with the findings of an earlier, quantitative research phase. By way of conclusion, we point out that training for intercultural competence ('multicultural training') is not equally available in all study programmes or professions, but there are differences for example between teachers, social workers and interpreters. This should be addressed in more detail, as they all need the skills in working with the same clients.

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VISUALIZING CULTURAL EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE LITERATURE: A BIBLIOMETRIC REVIEW 2001 – 2020

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1 INTRODUCTION

A review sums up the popular definition of emotional intelligence as an ability to 'manage emotion in oneself and others' (Kanesan & Fauzan 2019). On the other hand, Earley and Mosakowski (2004) defined cultural intelligence as "an outsider's seemingly natural ability to interpret someone's unfamiliar and ambiguous gestures the way that person's compatriots would". The commonality of the two definitions is intelligence, which indicates an ability to absorb and make application of knowledge and skills.

The emotional intelligence literature is advancing in different research domains, and its impacts on and application to real-life situations are remarkable. Fifteen years ago, emotional intelligence as a concept from organizational and psychology research was a controversial issue among scholars, and their argument was based on lack of requirement to be categorized among other intelligence as its inspiration emanates between cognition, emotion and insufficient existing measures. For long, there was a divided opinion about emotional intelligence, but surprisingly, despite the prolonged divided views, publication, citation and readership of emotional intelligence is increasing.

In 2019 alone, various researchers have studied emotional intelligence in the context of training (Mattingly & Kraiger 2019), gender and team (Dunaway 2019), venture performance (Ingram et al. 2019), conflict management and job performance (Aqqad et al. 2019).

Some authors concentrate on child training and mobile phone addiction (Sun, Liu & Yu 2019). Sport and decision-making (Vaughan, Laborde & McConville 2019), workplace behaviour (Makkar & Basu 2019), aggressive behaviour (Pérez-Fuentes et al. 2019), collaboration (Cole, Cox & Stavros 2019), cyberbullying (Martínez-Monteagudo et al. 2019a), stress management (Rezvani & Khosravi 2019) and medical education (Roth et al. 2019).

Other scholars also focused on tourism (Tsaur & Ku 2019), sustainable development (Di Fabio & Saklofske 2019), emotional intelligence profiles and stress in secondary education teachers (Martínez-Monteagudo et al. 2019b) and classroom discipline management (Valente, Monteiro & Lourenço 2019). The earlier literature portrays emotional intelligence as a multidisciplinary research domain. This bibliometric review intends to answer the following research question: What is the effect of emotional intelligence centrality on cross-cultural, sustainability, cross-cultural adjustment and creative performance?

2 BIBLIOMETRIC METHODOLOGY

This study takes a cue from Zupic and Čater (2015) for the bibliometric method and showcases an updated workflow in Figure 1. The study reviewed relevant literature through a database of Web of Science as a quality repository of academic intellectual work. This study employed the keyword of 'cultural emotional intelligence', and it generated 502 academic works, which consist of journals, book chapters, and conference proceedings.

This study reduced the papers the Web of Science search engine displayed to 375 articles. Besides, the author examined the titles of the papers, abstracts, and excluded the articles that are not relevant and streamlined the articles to 130. This bibliometric review presents a network analysis of the emotional intelligence research domain utilizing VOSviewer software (Van Eck & Waltman 2013) for bibliometric data mapping for the articles published from 2001 to 2020.

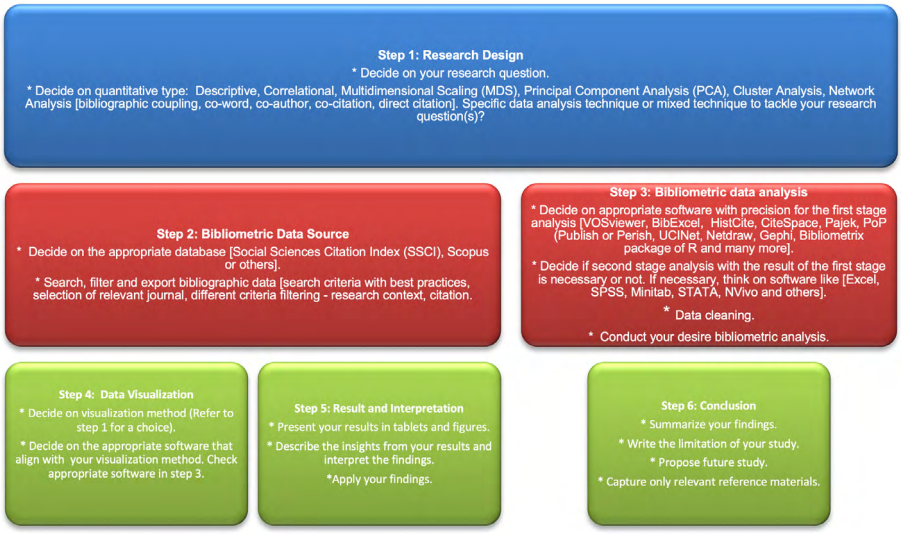

Figure 1. Bibliometric methods and systematic workflow.

This quantitative approach offers an analytic framework to explore the structure of emotional intelligence literature and interconnections of items with various attributes, keywords, co-citation and coupling maps. The result of keywords co-occurrence analysis reveals four interrelated clusters: 'cross-cultural', 'cross-cultural adjustment,' 'sustainability', and 'creative performance'. In contrast, the bibliometric coupling analysis of countries shows the effectiveness of the United States of America and the United Kingdom in the field of emotional intelligence. The productivity of the USA is consistent with the study of Bagheria, Kosnina and Besharatb (2013). The research presents the mapping and network visualization of the emotional intelligence field and shows the clusters and the missing gaps.

3 BIBLIOMETRIC RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This bibliometric study generates an exciting insight for researchers and practicing managers through the bibliometric review of Web of Science Journals, Articles, Authors and Institutions in the area of emotional intelligence. Figure 2 shows four distinct clusters of emotional intelligence in the bibliometric review. Cluster one depicts cross-cultural phenomenon to emotional intelligence, creative performance in cluster two, sustainability in cluster three and cross-cultural adjustment in cluster four. The result shows the multidisciplinary impact of emotional intelligence and the centrality of emotional intelligence to the four clusters.

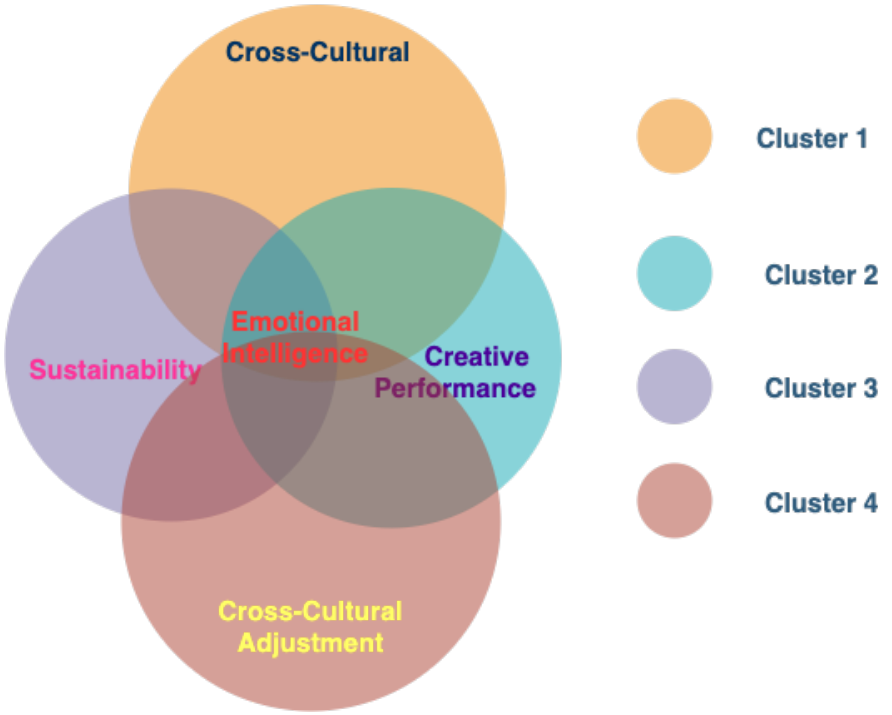

Figure 2. Bibliometric Clustering of Emotional Intelligence Literature.

3.1 Authors, institutions and countries productivity

Figures 4, 5, and 6 show the exceptional performance of countries, institutions and authors. This bibliometric assessment covers the years 2001 to 2020. There are not many publication activities in the years 2001 and 2002. The trend from 2003 to 2019 is curvilinear, and 2019 had the highest record while 2020 is still in progress - this metric is based on the assessment criteria on the frequence of citations in the Web of Science corpus. Petrides and Furnham emerged as the most productive authors with Trait emotional intelligence article published in the European Journal of Personality in 2003. These authors had 453 citations to their credit as at the time of this study with 25.17 average per year. The next most productive authors are Imai and Gelfand and published with organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes seven years later with 130 citations and 11.82 average per year. There is a high margin between the productivity of the first authors and the second.

Regarding the country-specific productivity in the context of cultural, emotional intelligence, the United States of America (USA) led other countries with close collaboration with the UK and others like Australia, France, Finland, Israel and Scotland forming one cluster. Spain led another cluster with a strong network with the People's Republic of China, Japan and Croatia. Another cluster shows South Korea with Belgium, the Netherlands, India, Lithuania and Poland. Malaysia with Iran also depicts another cluster, while Germany connects with Italy and Turkey. For easy identification, each cluster demarcates with a unique colour. The remarkable thing about Figure 4 is the interconnectedness of all the countries. Figure 5 shows the connectivity of institutions. Eleven institutions were represented. Eight institutions were closely connected, and the other three institutions connected with a margin.

Table 1. Selected top journals and the highly cited articles in cultural emotional intelligence (2001 - 2020).

Outlet	TC	AIS	RIF (2019)	Categories	PFI/ Year
European Journal of Personality	453	2.334	3.910	Psychology, Social	6
Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes	130	1.907	2.304	Psychology, social, applied, management	6
Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin	104	1.865	2.970	Psychology, social	12
Journal of Social Issues	97	1.138	2.483	Social Issues	4
International Journal of Nursing Practice	87	0.363	1.133	Nursing	6
Human Development	83	1.071	1.893	Psychology, Developmental	6
Personality and Individual Differences	70	0.822	2.311	Psychology, Social	16
Psicothema	66	0.560	2.632	Psychology, Multidisciplinary	4
Emotion	66	1.693	3.177	Psychology, Experimental	8
International Journal of Psychology	63	0.678	1.255	Psychology, Multidisciplinary	8

TC: Total citation; AIS: Article Influence Score; RIF: Recent impactor factor; PFI: Publication Frequency Issues

3.2 Impact of highly cited articles on cultural emotional intelligence

Table 1 gives an overview of the total citation, article influence score, recent impact factor and publication frequency issues. Citation analysis makes it possible to ascertain the importance of the author's document and a viable means of the tenure review process. It is also useful for the assessment of the breakthrough of journal titles in publications based on a specific discipline and the author's relationship. The total of the 130 articles citations accounts for 2,145 with 16.5 average citations per item and h-index 23. This metrics shows the visibility of cultural, emotional intelligence. As a single item, the European Journal of Personality had 3.910 recent impact factor, 2.334 article influence score, psychology and social category and producing six publication frequency issues per year.

Interestingly, Personality and Individual Differences had a fair recent impact factor (2.311), low influence score for articles, psychology and social category and high publication frequency issues (16) per year. Also, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin had a fair recent impact factor, average article influence score, psychology and social category with 12 publication frequency issues per year. European Journal of Personality had the highest article influence score.

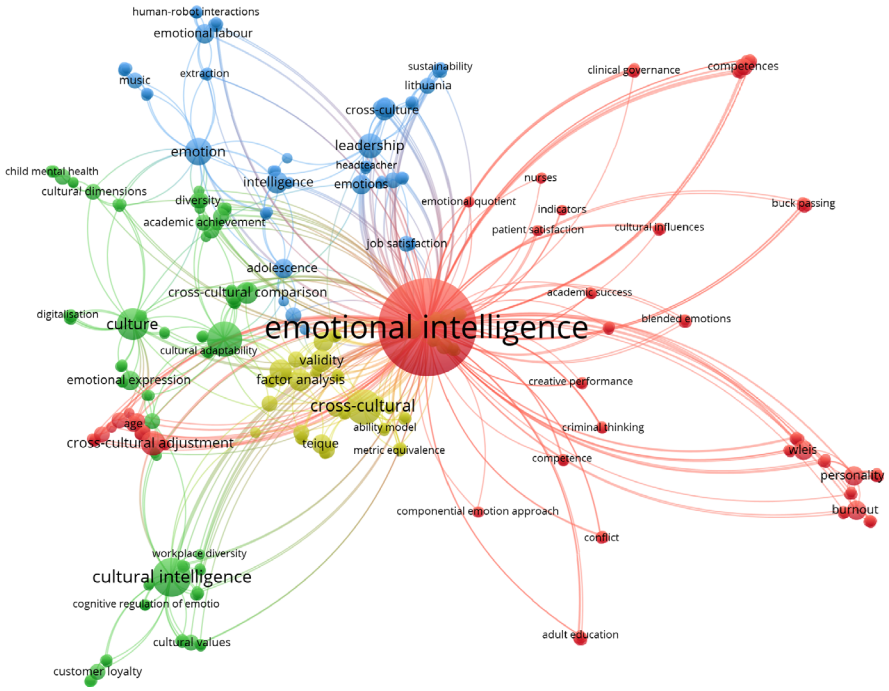

Figure 3. Frequency of authors keywords.

Figure 3 shows the frequency of authors' keywords. A similar analysis (Fahimnia, Sarkis & Davarzani 2015) conducted reveals four clusters with emotional intelligence as a central theme. The emotional intelligence cluster entwines with emotional quotient, competences, cultural influences, creative performance, conflict, componential emotion and many more. Cross-cultural is central in the second cluster with linkages of emotion, leadership, intelligence, music, cross-cultural, sustainability and others. Cultural adaptability dominates the third cluster with cultural intelligence, cultural values, cross-cultural comparison, diversity, cultural dimensions, digitalization, emotional expression and others while cross-cultural had the most significant node in cluster four with ability model, metric equivalence and others. The interwoven character of the keywords used makes the four clusters to be unique as the other three clusters directly or indirectly connect with emotional intelligence and establish the centrality of emotional intelligence to culture and other emerging themes.

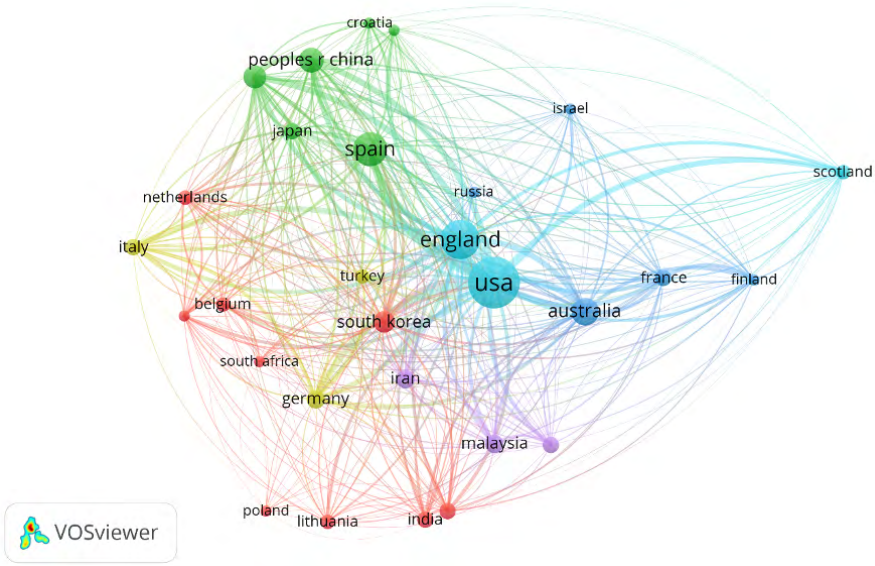

Figure 4. Co-authorship network of the top countries in cultural emotional intelligence.

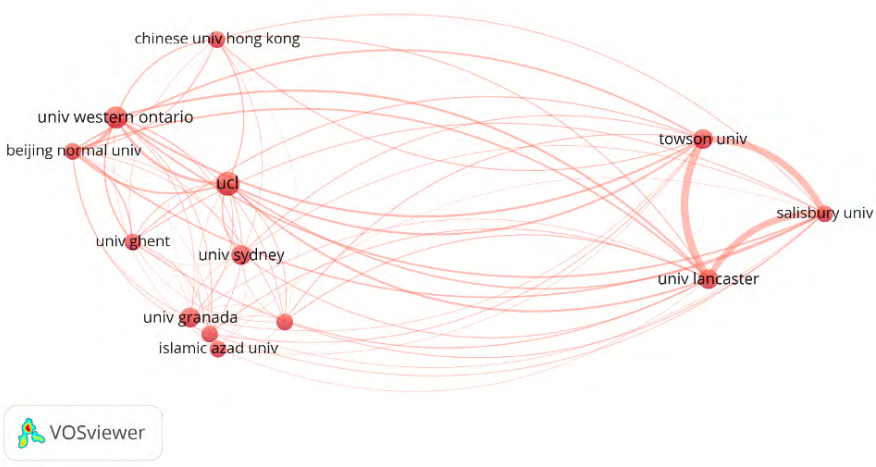

Figure 5. Co-authorship network of the top institutions in cultural emotional intelligence.

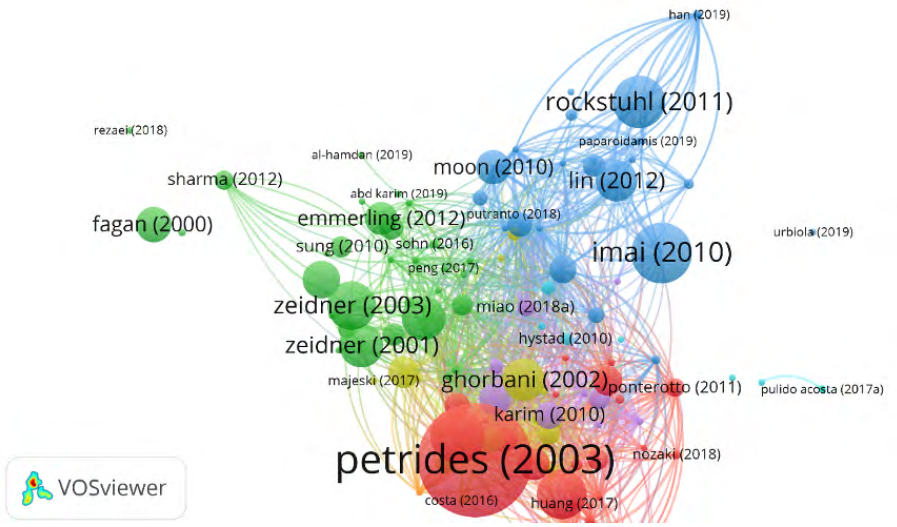

Figure 6. Co-authorship network of the productive authors in cultural emotional intelligence.

4 CULTURAL EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Earlier study sees the potential of bibliometric methods and considers that its advancement complements meta-analysis and qualitative structured literature for scientific literature evaluation (Zupic & Čater 2015). This study delved into cultural, emotional intelligence literature and unveiled the centrality and interconnectivity of emotional intelligence with cross-cultural, sustainability, creative performance and cross-cultural adjustment as a unified research domain.

This result is in tandem with previous literature. For example, in 2009 the study of Lillis and Tian (2009) shows the impact of emotional intelligence on the performance level of gender and recommends to the managers to enhance organizational awareness of emotions that dwells in other diverse cultures. Likewise, Rangarajan, Jayamala and Lakshmi (2014) established the in-

fluence of emotional intelligence on business sustainability of entrepreneurs while Mwangi (2014) focused on the influence of emotional intelligence on employee engagement sustainability of a public universities setting. The study of Darvishmotevali, Altinay and De Vita (2018) discovered ambiguity in emotional intelligence and employee creativity research and to bridge the gap; they examined the relationship of emotional intelligence and creative performance. They found that emotional intelligence positively influences frontline employees' creative performance with the moderating role of environmental uncertainty. Contrary to this result, in the study of Gabel, Dolan and Cerdin (2005), there was no correlation between emotional intelligence and cultural adjustment. However, Koveshnikov, Wechtler and Dejoux (2014) gives insight on the role of emotional intelligence and gender on expatriate's cross-cultural adjustment.

In conclusion, the study established the importance of emotional intelligence literature and the centrality of emotional intelligence to cross-cultural communication, sustainability, creative performance and cross-cultural adjustment. This study will help the researchers to discover publications, institutions and country gaps. For example, Africa is not visible in the country mapping of cultural, emotional intelligence. Future researchers can take advantage of this gap and contribute to cultural, emotional intelligence research field. This study also displays an updated version of bibliometric methods, and this will be a handy tool for future researchers.

5 LIMITATION OF BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS AND PROPOSAL FOR FUTURE STUDY

This study data extraction is limited to 130 documents despite the significance of the study. Future researchers should take

this study further and endeavour to gather more samples and probably compare between different academic databases apart from the web of science. The result will reveal the position of emotional intelligence research domain in different academic search engines and show the productivity of different academic research engines.

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