
ANNEX 8**Draft Synthesis Papers prepared by the theme-specific Task Forces****MOBILITY AND CO-OPERATION:
THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS AND OF
THE LABOUR MARKET****1. INTRODUCTION**

Multilingual and multicultural competence are widely discussed issues in today's integrating Europe, both in the context of educational policies and as prerequisites for mobility and co-operation among both students and professionals. On the one hand, more advanced and versatile language and communication skills and a more profound accommodation and understanding of cultures have become an integral part of professional expertise and know-how. On the other hand, more concern is expressed for the potential conflicts between the maintenance of the national languages and cultures and the development of a European identity. The pressures pertaining to the enhancement of integration, while at the same time promoting cultural and linguistic diversity as part of our common European heritage, fall heavily on the educational sector of European countries, and, as regards preparation for the future labour market, on Higher Education (hereafter also, HE) in particular. Addressing these concerns requires conscious attention from both institutions and individuals engaged in the process.

Student (and staff) mobility can be seen as an important element in the creation of an integrated Europe. It is an essential aspect of education towards European citizenship, because experiencing other cultures and languages provides a basis for understanding European diversity and for building the multifaceted competence needed when moving and working freely within the expanded community. In addition, both the study context and the labour market context are increasingly characterised by virtual mobility and local internationalisation, which also requires new communication and learning skills to be developed at home. In practice, then, preparation for operating in an integrated Europe means that students should become proficient in other Community languages, gain more insight into their own and other cultures for both academic and employment purposes, and develop the intercultural skills and learning skills needed in these endeavours. Pursuing these aims is one of the major issues in education, and special measures should be taken to ensure that all EU languages are treated equally in this respect (White Paper 1995, Mackiewicz 1999).

In order to meet these challenges, several action programmes and policies have been introduced by the European Union. Through this support e.g. the volume of student mobility has increased significantly over the last decade. The outcomes of these efforts, however, have not always been what might have been expected. Various surveys on the mobility experience indicate that the target figures set for Higher Education institutions (HEIs) have not been achieved (particularly in the non-language subject areas) and that the proportion of students going to states whose languages are among the less widely used and taught (LWULT) languages is still very small when compared to areas with some 'major' language. Furthermore, a more disconcerting indication is the fact that the results in the areas of language proficiency and cultural awareness development and in academic achievement are still frequently disappointing. In other words, in addition to often only modest academic achievement, it seems that students also do not always make enough progress in learning the language of the host institution and country and that their tolerance and respect for cultural diversity does not always grow

through the mobility experience. Yet, these are among the key aims of both the programmes and of the students themselves. Despite possible personal development in other areas, there is clearly still room for improvement in optimising the mobility experience in this respect.

One effective way of improving linguistic, academic and professional achievement of mobile individuals is by adequate preparation. It seems that it is particularly the issue of linguistic and intercultural preparation of students (and staff) that requires much more attention – a fact also established by the surveys. Ideally speaking, education and preparation for mobility should start at school level already, in the form of providing opportunities for foreign language learning and education towards internationalism and cultural diversity. Development of lifelong learning skills, i.e. independent learning methods and use of ICT for language learning purposes, should also start at this level and be promoted throughout the educational career of the individual. Since actual mobility, however, usually starts after basic education and since understanding the European dimension requires a certain level of maturity in the individuals, HE institutions have a more prominent role and responsibility in preparing their students for an integrated and mobile Europe.

It is with these issues and this spirit in mind that the following key question has been identified for this section of the synthesis report:

What kind of linguistic and intercultural education and training should be available for higher education students in order to maximise the benefits of the mobility experience and to promote future co-operation?

Exploring this question means that we will be reflecting upon various actions and measures through which these objectives can be achieved. It means taking into account **various target groups** (i.e., students, teachers, employees, and employers/the labour market); **various needs, skills, and competencies** (i.e., linguistic, cultural, intercultural, and professional); **various environments of mobility** (i.e., physical and virtual); **various pedagogical practices, disciplines/fields, and learning skills**; and **various value systems**. Thus, educating students for mobility and the future international labour market is not a simple matter of foreign language teaching in the conventional sense, but an endeavour which requires awareness and development of many kinds of skills related to study and work performance in multilingual and multicultural contexts, whether at home or in some other country. These skills are often called *intercultural competence*, and generally refer to **the management of international communication contacts between individuals in social, academic, and professional contexts**. The terms cross-cultural and multicultural, then, refer more to societies and communities. The requirement of an intercultural competence naturally also applies to Higher Education staff preparing their students for future professional life. They, too, must have the opportunity to continuously update their knowledge and skills in order to be able to promote a similar learning approach in their students.

The *notion of mobility* is here seen as a wider concept than just physical movement, because that often only involves a small section of the population. Virtual mobility – in other words, travelling and communicating with other people and cultures via electronic networks – on the other hand, is more and more available for practically everybody and offers both a learning environment and an interaction and co-operation channel for individuals from all over the world. Therefore, it is also necessary to consider what this potential for mobility involves in terms of language, communication, and cultural competence development. Yet another aspect of mobility is local internationalisation, which, e.g. through incoming exchange students and staff, provides opportunities for contact between languages and cultures. The social inclusion and integration of these groups in the home university and work contexts can also offer an important and authentic learning environment for the development of linguistic and intercultural skills, as well as contribute to the quality of teaching of non-mobile students. The key issue is for both Higher Education staff and students to learn to make use of these open environments so that the new professional labour force may continue - and knows how - to develop their skills throughout their careers and lives.

Taking the development of professional and field-specific knowledge and expertise largely for granted, i.e. as the intrinsic aim and responsibility of each educational institution, we will concentrate here on the *development of prerequisite language and intercultural communication skills for the purposes of mobility and co-operation within Europe*. The account to follow is divided into three main sections. First, some general observations and recommendations related to institutional approaches and policies are presented on the issues of expansion and enhancement of the mobility experience and co-operation in Higher Education. This is followed by an account of how both outgoing and incoming language and other students should be prepared for their mobility experience and what pedagogical implications are included in this. Thirdly, the intercultural communication development needs relating to work practice and work performance in an internationalised labour market are addressed. Finally, preparation of HE language teachers and their role in addressing mobility issues is described briefly, to be followed in the conclusion by a summarised checklist for development focuses for the purposes of mobility and co-operation in Higher Education. The survey findings used as reference come mainly from the surveys and seminars done within subgroup 8 of the TNP project.

In addition, there is a status quo report from Slovakia, which is one of the countries to become a member of the European Union in the near future. These countries have made a considerable effort in learning and teaching the languages of the Union, and the developments there are well worth looking into.

2. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS FOR PROMOTING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

CONCERNING INSTITUTIONAL ATMOSPHERE AND ATTITUDE

As was stated above, Higher Education in general, and language and communication teaching in particular, has a key role to play in the development of intercultural awareness and intercultural communication skills. The importance of developing these as a prerequisite for successful mobility has been stressed in various policy documents published by the European Commission and by the Council of Europe.

The significance of intercultural communication skills becomes obvious as soon as one realises that all communication is fundamentally intercultural in the sense that each participant engaged in an act of communication brings to it a specific repertoire of identities, positions and expectations formed through complex relationships with their own and other cultures. Here, culture is understood in the widest sense as an acquired or constructed pattern of values, beliefs, skills and knowledge, which shapes and is shaped by its participants. In this view, intercultural communication is closely connected with values and attitudes, and requires awareness, skills and knowledge which are distinct from, and additional to, those relating to linguistic competence. Consequently, it also builds on a range of disciplines drawn from many human and social sciences not directly related to language learning proper.

Recommendation

Higher Education policies should promote interculturalism as a cross-curriculum concept and create a generally favourable atmosphere for mobility and co-operation. They should furthermore contribute to both student and staff understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity and to their ability to cope with its demands and to enjoy its richness of experience.

In promoting knowledge of, and respect for, the varieties of culture within and beyond Europe, and in combating discrimination based on any forms of prejudice, Higher Education should stress the fact

that cultural differences should not be regarded as obstacles to communication, but as opportunities for mutual learning. Similarly, local internationalisation through mobile students and staff should be seen as a resource and not as a problem. Activities involving learners need to focus on the emergence and construction of bridges within the interactive context, rather than on the existence of cross-cultural differences. Preparation and support for mobility is relevant for the institutional community as a whole, and international involvement can be considered an integral part of the professional duties of today's academic staff.

CONCERNING CULTURAL AWARENESS BUILDING AND STAFF EXPERTISE

The cultural dimension of teaching in Higher Education involves developing the capacity to reflect upon and analyse one's own culture from an external perspective and understanding its relationship with other cultures. In this process learners can be seen as mediators between cultures, and teachers as 'professional' mediators between learners and foreign language cultures (see also Byram & Risager 1999). This view is by no means restricted to language teachers. Teachers of non-language disciplines, such as business and economics, social work and health, and information technology, are also teaching in fields that involve multilingual and intercultural communication. It is of vital importance that they also develop an awareness of intercultural issues and promote these in their teaching. Furthermore, should they be involved in giving instruction in a bilingual programme or in a language that is not the mother tongue of learners and/or teachers, they need to be able to analyse and assess the role of the second/foreign language in the learning and teaching of the discipline. To accomplish this, training in bilingual pedagogy and language learning for bi/multilingualism is a necessity.

<u>Recommendation</u>	Both language teachers and (non-language) subject teachers (non-native speakers) should have the opportunity to improve the practical and subject-specific use of the target language(s), as well as to have intensive contact with its culture, in order to develop their own multilingual and intercultural professional competence.
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Those who are engaged in developing awareness of the intercultural nature of communication, then, need to accept the objectives of

- combating attitudes which are resistant to diversity and difference;
- developing a more open and confident relationship to language;
- fostering a broader and more inclusive notion of personal identity; and
- encouraging respect for different cultures, especially those of minorities and non-dominant groups
- balancing between own language and culture and the aims of integration.

In addition to measures at the policy levels, then, a general social competence also needs to be developed at the individual level for the successful advance of both a multicultural and a multilingual society. The key question in this is how the individuals involved can be motivated to adapt their attitudes and actions towards reaching this aim. Awareness building for mobility should be started at secondary levels of education at the latest, i.e., when students begin planning their future careers. At those levels, students find it difficult to think in terms of mobility unless they are given training in the notion of the European dimension and the fact that they are members of a larger community characterised by cultural and linguistic diversity. Awareness of different cultures, including the students' own culture, then, increases mutual tolerance and respect, as well as the desire to acquire linguistic and communicative skills in other languages in an attempt to accomplish a fuller understanding of the working of other societies.

In order to fulfil its tasks related to the development of intercultural awareness and intercultural communication skills properly, Higher Education will have to give proper attention to the training of teachers and it will also have to set up and maintain in-service training programmes for teachers in order to update their skills regularly.

<u>Recommendation</u>	Institutions of Higher Education should establish initial and in-service training programmes which properly prepare both language and content teachers for their tasks of developing intercultural awareness and/or intercultural communication skills. Staff mobility and close co-operation among European HE institutions is crucial in this process.
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One of the measures to meet the needs in the area of intercultural communication is to make a sufficiently long stay abroad compulsory for language teachers in order to improve their fluency of target language use, as well as their cultural knowledge and intercultural professional competence. The training of language teachers should include specific provision for training in intercultural communication, not only in their native language but also in foreign languages. Acquired capacity for intercultural communication in the context of the working environment within which they are employed should be taken into account in the re-employment and/or promotion of language teachers.

There should also be systematic mobility opportunities and training for content teachers, because they can enhance the development of multilingualism e.g. through the bilingual teaching of their subjects. In addition, possibilities for acquiring teaching practice abroad should be explored and promoted, as well as participation in multinational projects and virtual programmes.

Native-speaker language teachers, particularly of English, are employed on the basis of their command of, and didactic skills in, their own language. However, not only their capacity to teach the language to foreigners, but also their active participation in the life of the institution and society where they are employed will be significantly enhanced by their understanding of, and skills in, the intercultural environment. Obviously such capacities should not be confused with or reduced to linguistic proficiency. Learning a foreign language is above all else a means of learning *otherness* - a key concept in intercultural communication.

CONCERNING EQUAL STATUS OF LANGUAGES

Diversification of linguistic competencies, which is one of the EU aims, presupposes that the maintenance and development of Less Widely Used and Taught Languages (LWULT) in all spheres (including sciences) should be guaranteed. In principle, then, the EU is rejecting the notion of a lingua franca for Europe. Therefore, irrespective of the possible role of English as a language of instruction – which is often necessary for mobility to become possible - there should be access to LWULT language programmes which allow the host language also to be learned, as well as training which aims at providing sufficient knowledge of the host country culture.

<u>Recommendation</u>	Students should have the opportunity to learn the language of the host institution and country to as advanced a level as possible. Measures should be taken to offer opportunities for maintaining and further improving these language skills after returning to home institution. Institutional co-operation, networking and development of distance and independent learning systems are required to achieve these aims.
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Issues related to LWULT languages were also addressed at the ECCLIPS conference held in 1996. One of the outcomes of the conference was a set of recommendations, still most valid:

	Linguistic and cultural preparation at an elementary or basic level should be a right of every exchange student, irrespective of the field of study. The preparation should mainly be organized in the host country at the beginning of the exchange period in order to assist adaptation to the new environment. In addition, elementary preparation by means of
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	<p>courses or self study at the home country should be strongly encouraged. Neglecting this stage has been found to lead to major problems, conflicts, and poor academic and social success. Cultural training should be incorporated in every part of the preparation at a sufficiently profound level. All preparation should be organized by recognized institutions and qualified teachers and accredited appropriately (see ECCLiPS Recommendations 1996).</p>
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The teaching of the LWULT languages spoken within EU through traditional curricula is extremely limited, and directly reflects their degree of perceived relationship to the more dominant languages. It is therefore all the more important to seek other means of retaining access to the rich diversity of ‘minority’ EU culture. Programmes developed specifically for autonomous learning can help to provide access to these languages, and consequently also to the cultures of these language groups. Access can also be enhanced by the more extensive use of language advisors. Such access, if it cannot guarantee parity of esteem, can at least help to maintain a minimal degree of balance in the power relationships pertaining to an intercultural context, and validate the cultural heritage of native speakers of minority languages.

CONCERNING VIRTUAL MOBILITY AND LOCAL INTERNATIONALIZATION

The expansion and development of new technologies and the presence of visiting students and staff at one’s home campus have in recent years brought about new concrete opportunities for developing intercultural communication skills outside regular classrooms. The fact that technology makes it possible to easily access an almost unlimited amount of information available on the Internet, to travel virtually to different parts of the world and come into communication contact with speakers of other languages and with colleagues and peers all over the world offers an unforeseen potential for also language and cultural learning. An effective use of this potential, however, presupposes new, independent learning skills and more pronounced learner responsibility. Similarly, new authentic language and cultural learning environments are offered by the fact that the immediate learning context at the home university has become multilingual and multicultural through mobile visiting students and staff. Both these developments have implications for educational practices and require new pedagogical skills from teachers, and new kinds of materials and learning tasks to be designed. Local internationalisation is further enhanced by homecoming mobile students and staff. Involving all mobile groups in the development of intercultural competence, and integrating new technologies more closely in HE language (both “major” and LWULT languages) and non-language instruction would promote the learning of skills which are increasingly becoming an essential part of general professional expertise in any field and which are considered essential for self-directed, and life-long, language learning.

<p><u>Recommendation</u></p>	<p>Development of the prerequisite skills for making effective use of new learning environments and virtual mobility opportunities for language and intercultural communication skills development should constitute an integral element of preparation for mobility. Networking and co-operation to diversify particularly LWULT language provision should be systematically increased.</p>
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CONCERNING LANGUAGE STUDIES IN NON-LANGUAGE DISCIPLINES

Effective preparation for both student mobility and professional mobility presupposes informed decisions on language curriculum contents and focuses. Although good general and intercultural communication skills in the target language are naturally important, they need to be complemented by the development of discipline-based and professionally oriented language skills in order to serve the purposes of mobility. In the case of LWULT languages and shorter periods of mobility, this often also

means that the students' skills in the language of instruction – mostly English - need to be developed in addition to the host language. In these cases, academic language skills are needed for study purposes, whereas host language skills are needed for survival and for social purposes to enable smooth integration in the new community.

<u>Recommendation</u>	In general, linguistic and intercultural preparation for mobility should be tailored to meet the needs of both academic study across the disciplines and the labour market across professions. This requires continuous dialogue and co-operation between individuals, departments, institutions, and the labour market.
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As the supply of qualified applicants is so high in the labour market, employers are often not willing to provide language training, but select employees who already have the skills requested. Developing these professional skills is the responsibility of educational institutions. It is already the case that in high level international recruiting, three qualities are seen as essential in successful candidates: intellectual capacities, interpersonal abilities (in different cultural environments) and multilingualism. In addition, good communicative competence in the mother tongue is a definite necessity, since it is the foundation for all foreign and intercultural language competence. Students should develop their ability to shift easily between languages in order to have the situational flexibility and adaptability required by a multicultural study and work environment.

<u>Recommendation</u>	Concrete measures are needed to integrate intercultural communication and discipline-specific and professionally oriented language and communication studies as integral and credited elements in all non-language degree programmes and curricula in Higher Education. In this way, education in intercultural communication becomes available to all learners and multilingualism becomes an attractive aim for all students.
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One general obstacle preventing many students from pursuing multilingualism during their university study is the fact that in many cases language and communication studies are not credited, or even acknowledged, as legitimate components of their study programmes in non-language disciplines. This situation cannot be very motivating for students, nor is it very useful in the long run, if one considers the idea of a mobile Europe and a free labour market. A great deal of effort has already been devoted to develop common and comparable frameworks for language proficiency assessments (e.g. Common European Framework, DIALANG) to facilitate student and workforce mobility. Adopting and developing commonly accepted criteria through institutional and professional co-operation for language and intercultural communication studies should make it possible to evaluate the worth of these studies for mobility, in HE degrees and for future professional life.

3. LINGUISTIC AND INTERCULTURAL PREPARATION FOR STUDENT MOBILITY

In addition to the general promotion of cultural understanding and intercultural competence in Higher Education, there are also specific steps that need to be taken to make the mobility experience of students and professionals as rewarding and successful as possible. The survey carried out in European Higher Education institutions identified several areas where this preparation can, and should, be enhanced. The findings of the survey indicate certain general trends and practices, taken here as a case in point, rather than as a full account of the situation in HE institutions. Since there are no official policies regarding linguistic and intercultural preparation, great differences can be expected between countries and even between institutions within one country.

As was stated in the introduction, there has been a significant increase in student mobility during

Socrates 1 in particular. The distribution of students to various European countries, however, has been quite uneven. In the 1998-99 survey carried out by subgroup 8 of the TNP in the area of languages showed that although the total number of outgoing and incoming students was relatively balanced (i.e. 9240 and 8 775, respectively), the four most popular countries (U.K., France, Germany and Spain) for outgoing students covered about half of all European countries taking part in the Erasmus programme. The same countries, but in a different order, as well as Italy, then, were the most common home countries of incoming students in 43% of the cases. Approximately one fifth of all these students were language students. In about half of the responding institutions instruction was given in the native language of the country, but a combination of some other language (usually English) and the local language was used in 40% of the cases. Linguistic and intercultural preparation of students studying through a foreign language was considered very important (58%) or important (39%). In the cases where linguistic preparation was provided it concentrated on developing general fluency and the cultural element was integrated with language. There was less emphasis on study skills and discipline-specific language, particularly as regards incoming students. Most courses were optional for students. Language proficiency was not used as a criterion for participation at all in 18% and only implicitly in 41% of the cases, which may explain some of the problems in academic achievement in subject studies that the students have had.

Thus, **the general opinion expressed in the student mobility surveys was that all students undertaking periods of residence abroad as an integral part of a university programme of study receive appropriate preparation for the academic and cultural experience to which they are committed.** According to the respondents, linguistic and intercultural preparation for mobility allows smoother adaptation to and integration in the new culture and academic and social community, facilitates establishment of valuable personal contacts, and increases one's understanding of own and other cultures, as well as possible conflicts of value. Preparation and training, however, was according to the respondents not provided for 43% of the outgoing students. The situation was better in the case of incoming students in that only one fifth did not receive this kind training. In addition to language and communication skills, the respondents suggested that this preparation should include a component which addresses students' attitudes towards the relationship between their view of self, that is, their personal identities, and their national culture of origin. It also needs to include specific information on the teaching and learning methods of the host country, the examination system and the expectations of staff. Differences and similarities with the home institution also need to be pointed out.

3.1. Language students

Students specialising in modern languages form a core group in the Erasmus/Lingua programmes, and they are also the main constituency from which language teachers and language professionals will be drawn. Consequently their programmes of study are of strategic importance in developing the multilingual and multicultural Europe to which we aspire.

<u>Recommendation</u>	Development of intercultural awareness and of intercultural communication skills should be the core of any language programme.
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It is a legitimate expectation that students specialising in languages should graduate with advanced skills and knowledge relevant to the language, culture and society of the countries where their chosen language is spoken. While it is possible to achieve advanced linguistic skills and knowledge of the culture and society without visiting a country where the language is spoken, both aspects are significantly improved by extended visits. In the case of intercultural skills and knowledge, it is not possible to achieve an advanced level of competence without first-hand experience of interacting with the social and cultural environment.

Recommendation

Stays abroad are of vital importance for the development of intercultural competence. Students specialising in languages should therefore be strongly encouraged to spend time in a country where their target language is spoken. Adequate support forms should be established to enable this.

Since many language students will in the future become language teachers, they should also become particularly familiar with using new learning environments for language learning purposes and with the learning skills required for their efficient use. Increasingly also, all students are encouraged or obliged to spend a period in a country where the target language is spoken. This mobility would seem to be an important part of breaking down barriers and encouraging intercultural awareness. Virtual mobility offers a good opportunity for authentic preparation for actual physical mobility, but requires guidance expertise from the teaching staff and readiness for self-directed learning from the students. Virtual mobility can be defined as not only the replacement, but also the enhancement of real mobility. It can improve intercultural competence before, during and after a period of real mobility. In the language learning context, virtual does not necessarily mean "not real", as real communication between learners and between learners and teachers can be computer-mediated. Thus during a period of mobility, web-based environments can provide, in addition to practical information on accommodation, registration etc., the means by which students can develop their intercultural competence. In the context of the development of intercultural competence, the roles of virtual and real mobility are not distinct, but closely intertwined, and the intercultural activity - namely the learner's reflection on the other culture under the guidance of the home institution - can essentially be a computer-mediated activity.

Recommendation

Virtual mobility should be stimulated as an enhancement of real mobility. Institutions of Higher Education should see it as their task to create appropriate facilities for virtual mobility. Language students, in particular, should become familiar with the use of virtual mobility opportunities for language learning purposes.

3.2. Students of non-language disciplines

Students of non-language disciplines are often less prepared for the new linguistic and cultural context of the host country than language students. Some go through difficult adjustment periods until they acquire the appropriate styles and are able to interpret and cope with new behaviours. If awareness of and skills in managing the new situations are not addressed at any point, there is a danger that potentially negative cultural attitudes also affect language and cultural learning motivation in a negative way.

Living abroad also means becoming an integrated member in a new community, which implies the ability to communicate both inside and outside the educational context. When the local language is one of the less widely used and taught languages, the students often encounter it for the first time when in the host country. Experience has shown that *learning the local language enhances the students' cultural and personal development*. Often, the **great benefit of the exchange lies in this multicultural growth**, which can be more significant than the acquisition of discipline-related new knowledge. Thus, the issue of teaching and learning the LWULT languages will have to be approached perhaps at the European level. New technologies can be used to prepare self-access courses or to provide learning materials on the Internet for independent learning. The utilisation of **virtual mobility opportunities** is equally important for students of non-language disciplines as it is for language students, although its focus might be different.

Recommendation

Students who go on exchange visits should be made aware of the cultural and linguistic diversity expected in the host country before they initiate their study period. Intercultural skills should be developed in both the sending and the receiving institution. Access should also be provided to the host language, if the students have no previous skills in it.

For the vast majority of learners, it is not realistic or desirable for a language teacher to maintain the aim of producing native (or near-native) competence. Instead, what is required is teaching which will enable the learners to function effectively in contexts where other languages and cultures are in play and to develop their skills for continuous and self-directed language learning. However, being able to express similar content belonging to identical or near-identical discourse genres in two different languages does have a positive impact on cultural competence and professional identity. Therefore, it is important that the competence pursued in the foreign (second foreign) language should be neither too shallow nor too restricted.

As regards **academic language skills**, it is evident that as students embark on their exchange period abroad a *new academic discourse* has to be learned since different countries have different discourses and discourses reflect cultures. Exchange students are exposed to a great variety of cultural differences in the target language that they only discover when they are in their exchange period; for instance, style of lectures, teacher-student and student-student interactions in class, style of essays, and style of reports. When confronted with these differences, students have to learn to make adjustments through a process of guess and trial, not always successful. Failure to observe the differences in academic cultures often has a negative effect on the discipline scores and final grades of the students.

Naturally also *discipline-specific language skills* have to be mastered, including special terminology (vocabulary meanings in the discipline), special register (syntactic usage, text organization, metalanguage, etc.), style of textbooks, style of scientific articles and discipline-specific discourse in general. If students have not received the right preparation before they take the discipline courses, the learning load is so heavy that many find it insurmountable.

Although it is generally believed that exchange students need to master the specific register of their degree discipline, *general language skills* should not be neglected. When students have to use the language in formal settings, especially in oral presentations or in writing, great deficiencies become apparent. These deficiencies are not necessarily related to the specific register of the discipline being studied but pertain to the general linguistic requirements of formal communication contexts, e.g. syntactic rules and suprasentential devices that hold the text together and make the text coherent.

Besides the specific needs for mobility, all higher education students need a *good reading command of the language of communication in the scientific world* in order to have access to information in the degree disciplines and *to be able to critically evaluate what they are reading*.

Recommendation

Exchange students should be provided both by the sending and the receiving institutions with courses which stress intercultural differences in academic discourse and discipline-specific language skills (languages for professional purposes). General language and communication skills should not be neglected either. In addition, comparable terms of reference should be used by the institutions to assess language skills and the progress in language proficiency should be appropriately acknowledged.

The exchange students' success or failure is often conditioned by the knowledge or lack of knowledge they have about the system in the host institution, since there are many different cultural approaches to learning and since the norms, values and expectations of teachers and learners can vary considerably

from country to country. Learning and teaching strategies, as well as the beliefs of what is considered good work, can also diverge considerably. Besides institutional specificity, there is evidence to suggest that difficulties encountered during periods of residence abroad are not so much caused by lack of essential information as by these underlying features. For example, there is more emphasis on independent work and out of class communication between students in some systems, whereas in others there is more emphasis on other pedagogical practices such as regular class attendance or dependence on teachers and on acquisition of facts. Also, there is more emphasis on student choice and autonomy in some countries than in others. Students might have to be quite expert at note-taking or, perhaps, in very proficient in library skills and information technology, depending on the academic culture of the country. Approaches to marking papers and to examination success and failure also differ from university to university. Some preparation for this academic diversity is necessary to help students, because it would enhance completion rates and make exchanges a fruitful source of growth in personality and outlook. In this sense, pedagogies which address this issue should be seen not as alternatives to the provision of key information and situational or conversational strategies but as complementary to them and as part of an integrated programme of study.

Recommendation

Exchange students should be familiarised with and trained in the different study skills or learning skills required in the host culture. Briefing and debriefing students in this respect should be an integral part of the mobility experience.

Students in new academic contexts are likely to find new pedagogical approaches to the teaching both of the discipline and of the new language. Accommodating these new pedagogies and teaching methods often presents a challenge to the student's learning style. Inability to modify learning skills could bring about unsuccessful results since learning styles are ingrained in cultural patterns and experiences. Awareness of this factor is part of the preparation for exchange students, and the teachers providing this should be professionally qualified in this area.

Recommendation

Academic advisers should be provided for all outgoing and incoming students. Pre-service and in-service training tailored for these purposes should be provided. HE staff teaching multilingual and multicultural groups need specific training in e.g. management of these groups in instruction, as well as in the pedagogy of teaching through a foreign language if they are involved in that. Continuous assessment and co-operation are necessary.

4. Preparation for work practice abroad and the future labour market

Since both students and staff are increasingly encouraged to carry out work practice periods abroad, the issues involving linguistic and intercultural preparation for these contexts also need to be addressed in Higher Education. Performing in the workplace involves an ability to handle new cultural situations which means having a good communicative and intercultural competence. This was confirmed in a workshop held in Madrid between academics and representatives of the international business sector. It was agreed that that intercultural competence should be the core of any language programme that aims to train students for international contexts.

Recommendation

The curricula of language and intercultural training for the future labour market should be based on the real needs of workplace communication and aim at developing intercultural communication competence. This aim requires a continuous dialogue between institutions and employers in designing course contents and in assessing success in the workplace.

Taking a trainee position or a job outside one's country – or increasingly also in one's home country – often means that the workplace does not only represent the local culture, but is also international in its operations and contacts. In addition to globalisation, a wider access to foreign language documentation has made the need for foreign language mastery even more acute in professional circles. For this reason, *language and intercultural communication courses offered in the degrees of non-language disciplines should also aim at making students feel confident in their workplace*. In other words, the curriculum and syllabus of such courses should not ignore the labour market perspective.

Furthermore, although individual company needs are difficult to define since they vary from company to company and from region to region, Higher Education institutions are still in a position to make some predictions or detect some specific areas where language and intercultural training are needed. Systematic needs surveys among employers and employees, as well as access to documented information on the international labour market in general can provide appropriate *foundations for informed decisions to be made about the curricular contents in different fields*.

Recommendation

Higher Education institutions should be made aware of the language and intercultural needs of their students and of the labour market. They should be encouraged to include linguistic and intercultural preparation as part of their institutional policy. Resources should be allocated to guarantee that the infrastructure and the programmes meet the requirements of modern language teaching.

Being competent in at least one foreign language is in most countries considered a required component of the cultural and intellectual background of a university graduate. However, performing in a foreign language within a company, firm or institution demands a number of other skills, capacities and strategies which are specific to the work situation. Graduates who take jobs or hold positions in international contexts often have to be able

- to perform in international meetings
- to write reports
- to do presentations
- to attend business meetings and social gatherings
- to be able to negotiate and solve conflicts
- to make or receive phone calls
- to project the image of their workplace
- to observe the rules of appropriate behaviour in complex situations.

All these areas require sound knowledge of the intercultural perspective in communication. Building skills for the workplace also requires more tailored pedagogical practices. A task-oriented approach with role-plays, simulations and problem-solving activities is recommended by the survey respondents so that students are given the opportunity to perform in real situations. A modular course structure allows more flexibility and, most important, permits students to make their own choices guided by the perception they have of their needs and learning preferences. Course structures and contents need to be modularised and tailored in order to provide for the flexibility needed in this area.

The survey carried out by TNP Subproject 8 in a number of companies of the different countries of the European Union provided interesting results in terms of language and intercultural skills needed

according to employers. There was naturally considerable variation across countries, but in general, English was the language that employers gave priority to over the other European languages for their business relations, followed by French and German. However, there are already signs that indicate that *the real competitive edge of future professionals* will be their *multilingual competence*, and not only their English competence. In addition, *sound mother tongue communication skills* were also considered essential. Although the language of communication in international corporations and workplaces might be English, the *knowledge of the local language* was also clearly emphasised, because it is often this language which is needed for marketing and for building social, personal, and professional contacts. The same points were expressed in the workshop that Subproject 8 arranged in Madrid, bringing together academics and representatives of international companies and organisations.

In the survey of employers' views, reading and writing skills, E-mail and fax communication were given a particularly high score (reading, 65%; writing, 67%), followed by reading of specialized journals (64%). Relating to the oral skills, the highest score was registered for communication skills for telephone communication (73%), closely followed (71%) by language needs for overseas travel and for presentation of the company (63%) and presentation of the company products. Hosting visitors and negotiating came slightly behind with 61% and 60% respectively.

Higher Education institutions have traditionally been responsible for the intellectual preparation of students and for their training for the labour market, but the flow of information about the workplace needs has not been very fluent. In the highly chronological and dynamic society in which we live, students and academics should become aware of the changing needs of the professional world - knowledge, skills, abilities, strategies - which involves a change of mentality of tertiary level education institutions. One of those needs is language learning for the professional world. At present Higher Education institutions do not cater for the urgent language and intercultural communication needs of potential professionals. It has to be assumed that, if the market or carefully planned policies do not activate the necessary changes of these institutions, only money will buy that training - language training in our case. This has already been initiated by private institutions, which is likely to cause an imbalance in society and the end result will be a society with wider social differences in the future. The prosperous market for language courses in countries where language training is not present as a discipline in non-linguistic degrees is an indicator of this imbalance. Those who can afford it look for training in private language schools. This cannot be seen as a desirable trend in the long run.

Recommendation

A permanent forum should be set up, bringing together academics and administrators from Higher Education institutions, public and private sector employers, and employees' organisations, in order to ensure realistic training for professional life in an integrated Europe with a single labour market.

5. Higher Education language teachers preparing non-language students for mobility

The language teaching profession for students of other disciplines involves a high degree of expertise in various areas. Due to the demands of the profession, language teachers should have appropriate qualifications and further opportunities to fully develop in their profession. In this respect, however, the situation in the European context does not always comply with these requirements. Teachers of languages for students of non-linguistic degrees often have little opportunity or hope for career development within the Higher Education establishment or support for personal professional development within its framework. To ensure the quality of the outcome, however, all *language teaching to these students should be done by professionally trained teachers with satisfactory and permanent work conditions*. These prerequisites are not always met in the European HE context. Teachers of languages for students of non-linguistic degrees often have no hope for career development within the Higher Education establishment nor an established status as academic staff.

Without an established status as academic staff their involvement in research in the field is also quite restricted. Furthermore, as was already stated, language studies carry little weight in the overall context of degree courses, and serious development of intercultural communication or discipline-specific language skills does not, in general, seem to be structurally or systematically provided in European universities. The general tendency seems to be – for obvious reasons – that LWULT countries (e.g. Finland with a compulsory foreign language requirements in all degrees) have more developed approaches in this respect. Lack of recognition of professionally oriented language studies and unfavourable work conditions may hinder mobility and have a negative effect on Higher Education graduates when confronted with the European labour market.

Recommendation

Higher Education language teachers who are involved in teaching students of non-language disciplines should be professionally qualified and have a status that enables further professional and career development.

Due to the status of language studies in non-language disciplines in Higher Education, perhaps, systematic teacher training for languages for academic and professional purposes is also rare. Yet, the teaching towards the competencies needed by students of other disciplines requires new theoretical and pedagogical skills, as well as more expanded language and communication skills than general language teaching. Universities and Higher Education institutions offer some courses in Applied Linguistics or English for Specific Purposes, but the contents and requirements of these courses are not sufficient to become a good language teacher for students of other disciplines. The specific areas in which these teachers need training are:

- adult learning strategies
- discipline-specific discourses
- workplace communication
- intercultural communication skills
- cultural content
- learner- and learning-oriented pedagogy
- skills to develop materials for specific purposes
- pedagogical ability to use new technologies and new learning environments
- distance learning methodology
- ability to conduct needs analysis in the labour market and among learners
- language and content integrated pedagogy, and
- skills to do action research and development.

There is considerable diversity in the qualifications, training and status of language teachers for students of other disciplines in Higher Education throughout the EU, ranging from university professors or lecturers and professional language teachers with tenure to teachers often without qualifications in the professional area who are given limited work contracts or are paid by the hour. Recruitment criteria should include possession of a university degree, native or near-native language competence, professional training as a teacher and experience in, or willingness to take part in, curriculum development and production of materials. In addition, European-level programmes for professional development should be established, for instance in modular formats, to enhance dissemination of information and expertise in the field.

Recommendation

Both pre-service and in-service training tailored for teaching academic language and intercultural communication skills should be available to ensure the quality of training for international study and labour market purposes. Recruitment should also be made on the basis of language and pedagogical qualifications.

According to the surveys conducted, there is great variation regarding the infrastructures of providing language studies for specific intercultural and professional purposes. Studies are organised most often by language centres (52% of respondents) or by more established language departments (37%), the key criterion often being the academic status of teachers, rather than some pedagogical factor. Language studies for students of other disciplines are optional in 90% of the cases reported, and do not usually concern all disciplines. An exception is Sweden, where (in most cases) optional language studies are offered by language departments to students of all degrees, whereas Finland, which has had compulsory foreign language requirements in all degrees for over 25 years, has language centres at all universities to cater for the discipline-based language instruction required from all students. In Spain the Department of Applied Language of the Technical University in Madrid has succeeded in establishing a large department that offers language courses integrated in the degrees of all the centres in this large university – despite general reservations for this type of teaching in university environments in the country. The most common reason for not organising such courses, according to the survey, was lack of funding and time. However, regardless of the infrastructure, what remains obvious on the basis of the institutional and labour market surveys is the fact that training students in intercultural issues for the student and labour mobility is becoming more and more crucial and requires a highly professional approach by Higher Education institutions.

Specific-purpose language and intercultural communication training for students of other disciplines is not yet a widely accepted and valued academic discipline within tertiary level education. This is not only indicated by its status but also by the modest amount of research and research evidence available at the university level. Since language learning and teaching for specific purposes is a recently emergent field of study, the research tradition is also recent. Also, the methodologies and approaches taken in the discipline are different from more traditional language studies. Yet, the relationship of research and teaching is needed in order to evaluate learning and pedagogical practices and to conduct analyses in different content areas so that the most appropriate teaching approach can be applied. In fact, the integration of research and teaching appears vital if language study is to be optimised. Any innovation should be observed, analysed and measured. The effect of new learning materials and environments need to be empirically studied. Processes and strategies used by students under those conditions can only be identified through focussed research, thus allowing the learning experience to be optimised.

<p><u>Recommendation</u></p>	<p>Joint European efforts should be taken to increase research and action research information in the field. Efficient co-operation networks should be established between institutions, e.g. for teacher exchange and curriculum development, as well as for “best practice” dissemination.</p>
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As regards mobility experience, further research is also required into students’ attitudes, outlooks and personalities before undertaking residence abroad, and into changes which take place during and after a period of residence abroad. Not enough is known about students’ attitudes towards themselves and their home cultures, or towards other cultures with which they may interact during periods of residence abroad. Further research is also required on which to base the development of new and more effective approaches to residence abroad within the curriculum. ***Briefing and debriefing students and staff on the mobility experience should be done systematically, and jointly agreed assessment criteria should be developed.*** After all, encouraging and preparing students for study and professional mobility not only contributes to the personal development and competitive edge of the individual in the labour market, but also to the general advancement of multilingualism and multiculturalism in Europe.

6. SUMMARY OF FUTURE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOCUSES

As a conclusion the following summarised list of future research and development focuses is presented to provide for further enhancement of the quality of the mobility experience:

- Institutional policy building for an overall promotion of mobility and linguistic and cultural diversity and equality as valuable resources and learning opportunities across curricula, across disciplines, and across the institutional community;
- Systematic efforts for the social inclusion of mobile students and staff;
- Tailoring of linguistic and intercultural preparation of students to meet the needs of both the academic study and the labour market contexts;
- Tailored staff development in intercultural issues and for mobility, e.g. in multilingual and multicultural group management and foreign-language-medium instruction;
- Development of sufficient academic language skills and local language proficiency (particularly LWULT languages);
- Provision of opportunities to gain basic knowledge of host country culture and of the academic culture of the host institution;
- Development of learning skills (for academic purposes, ICT, life-long language learning);
- Utilisation of new authentic learning environments and technologies for teaching and learning (physical and virtual mobility; distance delivery of LWULT languages, etc.);
- Acknowledgement of language studies in the form of credits as part of non-linguistic degrees and promotion of multilingualism;
- Use of reliable and jointly agreed assessment systems for language and for mobility;
- Systematic assessment of mobility experiences for curriculum and quality development;
- Continuous dialogue with the international labour market for curriculum tailoring;
- Increase of relevant action research and research information on how to build multilingual and intercultural communication competence for academic professions
- Overall efforts to remove practical obstacles (funding, lack of facilities and qualified staff etc.) to increased student, staff, and professional mobility;
- Overall increase of co-operation between individuals and institutions to jointly agree on and address mobility issues for an integrated Europe.

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