THE ROLE OF ONLINE APPROACHES AND MULTILINGUALISM IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHING

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HRK ADVANCE-
"Internationalisierung der Lehre“
IN HONOUR OF THE HOST COUNTRY – THIS MORNING WE TAKE A CRITICAL APPROACH TO INTERNATIONALISATION

Die Deutschen sind Meister der Selbstkritik. Dabei macht das Land es besser, als viele denken, sagt John Kampfner. Der Autor ist Brite und zeigt, wie sehr sich das Deutschland-Bild im Ausland in den letzten Jahren verändert hat. Die deutsche Politik...
MY PLAN FOR THIS MORNING

What do we mean when we talk about *internationalising teaching in Higher Education*?

What role do online approaches and foreign languages have to play?

What are the possible limitations of current approaches?
What do we mean by the internationalisation of Higher Education?

De Wit et al. (2015):
“Internationalization of higher education is the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society.”
THE DANGER OF ASSUMING “INTERCULTURALITY THROUGH OSMOSIS”

The assumption that by engaging in international mobility, receiving courses in a foreign language or following online courses offered by universities in other countries...

...students will inevitably develop intercultural competence, foreign language skills and become active global citizens.
Lauridsen (2020): “...internationalization is an intentional process. *It does not happen by osmosis*, for instance, by bringing a diverse group of students together in an EMI classroom” (p.208).

Byram (2019) “...we need an internationalist perspective on internationalisation, which is otherwise *no more than a set of organizational devices to create a superficial mixing of ideas, people and disciplines from various countries and academic traditions*” (2019).
Lauridsen (2020) “...if HE leadership teams want to offer an internationalized learning opportunity—and learning experience—to all students, the international and intercultural components of study programmes need to be written into their intended learning outcomes and graduate attributes. (p.221)”

“Internationalized curricula” (Leask 2009, 2015): “The incorporation of international, intercultural and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods, and support services of a program of study” (2009, p. 209).
THE CASE OF INTERNATIONALISATION AND STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMMES
What are the current rates of international student mobility in Europe?

### Outward degree and credit mobility of graduates, 2018 [%]

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In 2018, 13.5% of higher education graduates in the EU were mobile, meaning that they studied abroad, partly or entirely (Figure 55). Overall, 9.1% of the graduates had a temporary experience abroad, known as ‘credit mobility’, and 4.3% graduated in a country which was not the one where they received their upper secondary school diploma, known as ‘degree mobility’. Luxembourg, Cyprus, the Netherlands, Germany and Finland (in descending order) have the highest shares of outwardly mobile graduates.

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“International experience alone does not guarantee interculturality” (Jackson, 2020, p.449).

Sarah Richardson

*Cosmopolitan Learning for a Global Era* (2016):

“...the espoused benefits from [physical] mobility do not derive from the act of crossing borders but instead from two other factors.

First, the encounters that students have.

And second, the influence of their psychological make-up on how they respond to these encounters”
ANOTHER ISSUE: CAN PHYSICAL MOBILITY PROGRAMMES BE A FORM OF EXCLUSION IN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION?

“[m]obility tends to be socially exclusive, providing opportunities to elite students to enhance their distinctiveness from other students, but remaining inaccessible to many” (Richardson, 2016, p.53).
European Commission Report: “European Higher Education in the world”:

“...internationalisation should ensure that the large majority of learners who are not mobile... are nonetheless able to acquire the international skills required in a globalised world (2013:6)”

INCLUSIVENESS

The Erasmus+ programme sets inclusion as one of its horizontal objectives and the new mobility options were integrated in KA131 as novelties in the Erasmus+ 2021-20127 programme precisely in order to better accommodate the different needs and situations of a diverse student population. At its core, blended mobility creates new learning opportunities for people who could not participate in a mobility programme before, in particular, students from different backgrounds, including those with fewer opportunities.
“Innovation in Foreign Language Teaching”
An example of a Blended Intensive Programme

PHASE 1
ONLINE LECTURES & DISCUSSION WITH GUEST SPEAKERS

PHASE 2
ONLINE COLLABORATIVE GROUP WORK ON PROJECTS (Virtual Exchange)

PHASE 3
ON-CAMPUS GROUP WORK, CULTURAL EVENTS AND PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

3 ECTS credits – Students from Spain, Germany, Ireland, Finland, Italy and Lithuania.
STUDY ABROAD AS A PROCESS

• Pre-departure credit bearing courses – dealing with culture shock, coping mechanisms, culture learning strategies...

• Intercultural mentoring during the stay abroad – online debriefing sessions to discuss observations, concerns and experiences...

• Re-entry phase – stimulate deeper reflection on the intercultural learning experience...
DOES ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION (EMI) CONTRIBUTE TO THE GOALS OF INTERNATIONALISATION?
Figure 4: Change of ETPs outside the Big Four Destinations

Growth of English-taught programmes

ETPs

0K

10K

20K

2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

+77%

2017-2021

Table 1: Growth by disciplines - Bachelor's programmes 2017-2021

The changing landscape of English-taught programmes

2021
“Overall, Germany has responded relatively enthusiastically to the challenge of internationalisation of education. This is evident, among others, comparatively (to EU average) high offers of programmes delivered via English at university level.

...After Sweden and the Netherlands, Germany is the third highest EMI provider (highest ratio population/EMI programmes)...

“...the German education system has embraced Englishization with remarkable speed. English dominance across all sectors and school types is seen as categorical (“muss nicht weiter begründet werden”-Quetz 2010, p172), with institutions and individual learners often viewing English skills as de rigour in an internationally competitive market.”
CHALLENGES TO EMI AS AN APPROACH FOR INTERNATIONALISING EDUCATION

- Bowles & Murphy (2020): “Clearly, teaching through English is a successful means of attracting international students and internationalizing at home, but it is problematic from several points of view…firstly, in terms of the quality of education…and secondly, in terms of the marginalization of other languages and cultures” (p.8)

- Gabriëls & Wilkinson (2020): “Opponents of the Englishization of higher education often stress that Dutch as an academic language is important for the preservation of the cultural heritage of the Netherlands” (p.54).

- Doiz, Lasagabaster, and Sierra (2013, 216) - Many students “do not have sufficient language skills for EMI courses”

- Airey (2011) students who receive instruction through English as a foreign language are less capable of describing concepts, of interacting successfully in lectures and of listening while taking notes

• Content and Language Integrated Learning: Opportunities and Challenges
  John O’Donoghue, Projektleitung „CLIL4ALL“, Sprachzentrum, Technische Hochschule Wildau
VIRTUAL APPROACHES TO INTERNATIONALISATION
In sum, the findings from this report and the global landscape lead to the conclusion that the future of student mobility will combine physical international experiences with digitally driven virtual opportunities that reach a wider range of students and build greater cross-cultural awareness and skills.
What is the difference between Virtual Exchange and Virtual Mobility? (Because there IS a difference!!)

What do you understand by the term Blended Mobility? And what is a BIP?
WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ‘VIRTUAL MOBILITY’?

Rajagopal et al. (2020): “...learners enrolled as students in one higher educational institute have the opportunity to follow a course at another higher educational institute in the online mode.”
The huge problem is that in traditional (physical) student mobility...the ultimate benefits in terms of competences don’t generally come from the formal curriculum...

...in so-called virtual mobility, there are no opportunities ‘outside the classroom’. While there are certainly good examples to the contrary, many online courses simply do not require collaboration or meaningful interaction between the students.”
Koris et al. (2021): "Host universities should consider ways to improve the experience of virtual mobility beyond formal educational courses. Virtual socio-cultural immersion programmes and out-of-classroom parallel sessions can be devoted to informing students about the special characteristics of the host culture, thus extending students' intercultural horizons" (p. 474).
Bringing the student perspective to the debate on mobility, virtual exchange & blended learning

Joint position paper by the European Students’ Union and the Erasmus Student Network

Although quite popular in most policy documents, ‘virtual mobility’ is an ambiguous and oxymoronic term. A mobility experience is by definition physical and not virtual; if no physical movement has taken place, there is no need to call it “mobility” at all.

Virtual learning and thus virtual exchanges cannot substitute face-to-face interaction and physical mobility that imply cultural immersion and first-hand experience of the everyday life of the host culture,

Therefore, when counting participants in international mobility, participants in virtual activities should not be counted as “mobile students” but as another category, and funding for these activities should not be taken from the budgets for student mobility.
WHAT IS VIRTUAL EXCHANGE?

A term to describe the different ways that learners are engaged in online intercultural interaction and collaboration with partners from other cultural contexts or geographical locations, as an integrated part of course work and under the guidance of educators (O’Dowd, 2023).
Digitale Internationalität

DAAD unterstützt virtuelle Hochschulkooperationen

Pressemitteilung vom 24.08.2021

Der Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst (DAAD) fördert ab heute 60 neue Projekte zur virtuellen Hochschulzusammenarbeit im Programm „International Virtual Academic Collaboration (IVAC)“. Die Projekte an 46 Hochschulen werden bis Ende 2022 aus Mitteln des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF) finanziert. In einer ersten Ausschreibung waren bereits 61 grenzüberschreitende digitale Hochschulkollaborationen gefördert worden.
HOW IS VIRTUAL EXCHANGE BEING USED IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION?

- Virtual Exchange as a tool for preparing students for study abroad programmes (*pre-mobility*)
- Virtual Exchange as part of a *Blended Mobility* programme
- Virtual Exchange as an integrated part of course work (*Class to Class Exchange* – COIL, telecollaboration etc.)
IMPACT OF VIRTUAL EXCHANGE ON TEACHERS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

• **Networking opportunities:** “We’ve set up an official cooperation agreement between our two institutions. And I’m taking my class to Israel [the country of the VE partner] in May so they will meet each other face to face... I disseminated this project in our institution and now there are other colleagues who are interested in collaborating with the Israelis. ...I couldn’t have imagined this three years ago.”

• **Intercultural development:** “…[VE] means putting yourself in the position of the other, giving in at times, being more open and more aware of how other institutions work. So this collaborative work has been very enriching for me because it helped me to see other points of view and other ways of working. And it also enriched the subject, adding dimensions that weren’t there before.”

• **Professional Development:** “It motivated me to personalise my courses more. As I saw that the students responded and participated so much with their partners, this pushed me to create more interactive activities for the rest of my courses and teaching as well. Until now I had done more traditional methods.”
Student Learning Outcomes in Virtual Exchange

- **Language development was regularly linked to pushing learners’ out of their ‘comfort zone’**: “This virtual exchange enhances my communication skills. When we have a discussion about our project, I need to push my English communication skills to have a great discussion with my partners.”

- **Developing confidence in language use**: “I’ve learned to overcome my fear of not being understood by the people from different countries. I tried to formulate my utterances as clearly as possible, and it worked. At first I was scared, but then not really. Our communication was great!”

- **Transversal skills**: “The fact of working with people from other countries prepares us for the future problems that we may have. That is to say, we learnt how to face problems of timing or agreement. I have also learnt that we have to understand and respect other people’s thoughts.”
But again, contact does not ensure intercultural learning - What do you notice about these Spanish students’ reactions when asked about cultural difference?

- Student 1: “...It has been such an exciting experience because we have learned English while we have known a different culture. To my mind, we aren’t too different, both of us like sports, music and spending time with our friends.”

- Student 2: “I have realized that my partner and I aren’t so different, in fact, we have similar hobbies and ways to spend our free time. Like I have said, the main differences I see between her country and mine are the timetable and the weather.”

‘Minimisation of difference’ (Bennett, 1993)
“Producing something together is the most important part of the whole project. It’s a hands on activity and they have to generate something and this is where they realise cultural differences, how people go about things and how they deal with it”.

Teacher from the EVALUATE Impact Report 2019: p.77

- Tell your partner about your favourite places to go out at night in your hometown.
- Post an image to the forum that exemplifies to your partners an aspect of their daily routine.
- Compared to...
- Work with your international partners to create a document called “Making the European Union more relevant for young people”. The final documents will be submitted to your representatives in the European Parliament.
- Work together with your international partners to design a video proposing a solution to an environmental problem on your two campus. Once your videos are ready, they will be published by both Universities in their social networks.
• (1) Students use a variety of languages (including their first languages) to do the tasks (= the plurilingual focus);
• (2) They engage with perspectives different from their own by interacting with their international peers and engaging in collaborative work (= the intercultural focus);
• (3) Students take action in their communities (= the democratically active citizen focus);
• (4) They develop a sense of togetherness which stimulates them to create openings for empathy, solidarity and hope arising from their engagement with the (= the internationalist focus).
To conclude:

1. Achieving intercultural contact (through mobility, EMI courses, virtual interaction) does not guarantee intercultural development.

2. If internationalisation activities are to support foreign language learning, intercultural development etc., ICC frameworks should be integrated into curricular objectives, learning outcomes, structured pedagogical approaches and careful task design.

3. The question whether VE could replace study abroad programmes is a false debate which should be avoided as it deviates attention from more helpful and relevant questions: How can VE complement and enhance physical mobility programmes? What can VE offer universities’ IaH programmes?
• **VIELEN DANK!**

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Bibliography and collection of links and resources on VE available from this Google doc.