Measurable Learning Outcomes for Intercultural Competence in Transnational Internships

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Agenda

• Competency Definition Models
  – POOL and POOL2Business

• Sample Assessment Model
  – Internship context

• Criteria and Constraints
  – SKILL2E

• Discussion
Why are intercultural skills *still* necessary?

- Although many students have been on European exchanges and / work placements often this alone does not ensure a competent development of intercultural skills.
The "Dark Side of Mobility"

- "Besides various positive impacts, examples for the "dark side of mobility" were mentioned by the participants as well. Living a short to medium period in another country with a culture very different to one's own cannot only lead to intercultural competences but also to the negative effect of confirming prejudices and stereotypes."

- Taken from the Final Report: *The Professional Value of ERASMUS Mobility*
DMIS - Ethnocentric Stages

- Developed by Milton J. Bennett
- Continuum of interculturally relevant stages with associated competencies
- Denial
  - inability to construe cultural differences
- Defense
  - recognition of difference but negative evaluation of variations from individual's own culture
- Minimization
  - recognition and acceptance of superficial differences but insisting all people are essentially the same.
DMIS- Ethnorelative Stages

- **Acceptance**
  - recognition and appreciation of cultural differences in behaviour/values
  - beginning ability to interpret phenomena within the context

- **Adaptation**
  - development of communication skills enabling intercultural communication
  - effective use of empathy to understand/be understood across cultural boundaries

- **Integration**
  - internalization of bicultural or multicultural frames of reference
  - having an identity marginal in any particular culture
  - seeing oneself “in process”
Terry Cross's Intercultural Competence Model

- Cultural Destructiveness
- Cultural Incapacity
- Cultural Blindness
- Cultural Pre-Competence
- Basic Cultural Competence
- Advanced Cultural Competence
POOL 1

- **POOL project objectives**
  - Identify factors impacting success of virtual project collaboration
  - Design training approaches /modules for preparing engineering students for global workplace

- **POOL questionnaire**
  - Participation: over 36 companies
  - Return rate: 150 questionnaires
Questionnaire Results

- Appreciation and awareness raising for diversity and multiculturalism
- Capacity to understand structures of cultural systems
- Develop oral and written communication skills
- Capacity to develop cultural self-reflexion in intercultural contexts
- Development of intercultural teamwork capacity
- Capacity for putting Intercultural knowledge into practice
- Ability to work in multicultural contexts
• Development of practical module

• Focus on findings to develop intercultural competency in a virtual environment

• Students work on (mostly virtual) transnational teams
POOL2Business

• Implementation of modules for professional development in international settings:
  – Effective team skills
  – Communication skills
  – Intercultural skills
Sample Assessment Model - mission (im-)possible??

- What does it mean for students to be intercultural competent?

- Is it possible to get competence in this field without experience abroad?

- Is it possible to verbalize and validate learning outcomes after the internship abroad?
Master Thesis Objective

• To verify the research statement that students experience a sustainable intercultural competence gain through a transnational European internship
Master Thesis General Context

• How to convince curriculum designers of relevance of internships ABROAD?

• How to define learning outcomes for students for their internship abroad?

• How to provide student reflections to companies as feedback?
Master Thesis Specific Context

- Framework of Skills and Skills2E
- Competency definition
- Dimensions based on Janet Bennett model
- "Learning rotation principle" by Darla K. Deardorff
- DRACOS model developed by Jonas Stier
Questionnaire Design

- Personal data
- Formal data regarding completed / planned internship
- “Can do statements” in 4 categories
  - attitudes
  - knowledge & understanding
  - internal impact (reflexion & empathy)
  - external effect (interaction & communication)
Method and Provisional Implementation

- Pretest among 17 students
- 11 already completed internship
- 6 in planning stage
- 3 male (2 dtv, 1 bwi)
- 14 female (2 bwi, 2dpm, 2 mma, 1 dtv, 1 bma)
- Follow-up with focus-group interviews
Challenges and Opportunities

- Too small sample
- Quantitative vs qualitative
- Validity of overall questionnaire design
- Stimulus for discussion on choice of assessment approach
Skill2E Project Proposal

- Main objective: validation of skills acquisition in transnational internships
- Based on Skills Project training model
- University-enterprise cooperation
- 6 countries – AT, ES, FI, RO, TR, UK
- 6 universities
- 4 active enterprises
- ~20 passive enterprise partners
Skills Project Training Model

Theoretical Framework
Hofstede’s 5 Cultural Dimensions

Transnational Placement

Concrete Experience

Grasping

Accommodating

Diverging

Converging

Transforming

Reflective Observation

Abstract Conceptualization

Active Experimentation

Heightened Awareness

Transfer to New Situations

Intercultural Diary (Blog)

Final Report

EAIE Madrid 2009
Aspects Missing / To Be Added

- Framework for individual development
  - DMIS
  - Intercultural competence as a process
  - Well tested as a valid model
- Company Input
  - Needs to be developed in project
- Assessment method to verify skills acquisition/gain
Assessment Objectives

• Providing a frame of reference for validation
• Securing common understanding of terminology
• Familiarization with terminology
• Enabling measuring and quality assurance
• Tailoring pre-departure training
Assessment Methods /Tools

- Questionnaire
- Participant observation
- Personal Interview
- Q Sorts
- Photo Voice
- Case Study
- Diaries /Journals
- …
Inventory Questionnaires > Profiles

- Intercultural Development Inventory (Hammer / M. Bennet)
  - Certification needed, fee
- Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (Kozai Group)
  - No certification needed, fee
- Cross-cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI)
  - No certification needed, fee
- ...

EAIE
Madrid
2009
Criteria

- No cultural bias
- Neutral and clear terminology
- Robust design
- Tested for social desirability
- Easily available
- User-friendly - Not too complicated
- Basis for training and further development
Constraints

- Limited time available
- Fee issue
- Validity across European cultures
- Language
Conclusions

- Complex issue – difficult to make right choice
- Clear objective for assessment deployment
- Based on specific situation and learner needs
- Involvement of all stakeholders crucial
- Integration into curricula and overall assessment
- Provision of clear descriptive terminology
- Springboard for facilitating development