INTERNATIONALISING TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION. SUPPORTING PEER LEARNING

Gabriela Pleschová and Agnes Simon (eds.)

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

IMPACT

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CONTENTS

PART 2. INTERNATIONALISATION AND (PEER) ASSESSMENT

PART 3. VARIOUS APPROACHES TO INTERNATIONALISING THE CLASSES

PREFACE: INTERNATIONALISATION AND THE FUTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Peter Felten, Elon University

The great challenges facing our world–and our graduates–do not often conform to national boundaries. Climate change and sustainability. Peace and justice. Poverty and discrimination. Health and well-being. These–and many others that I did not list here–are international challenges that require both local and global action to address. For higher education to prepare our students to live, work, and thrive in the future, we need to internationalise our teaching and our curricula.

This book makes an important contribution to the scholarly literature on and the pedagogical practices of internationalising teaching in higher education. By centering peer learning in their analysis and case studies, these authors help us reimagine the roles that students can and should play in internationalising higher education.

Decades of research demonstrate that purposeful student peer-peer interactions can be one of the most effective approaches to teaching in higher education (e.g., Bovill 2020; Felten and Lambert 2020). These peer relationships enhance academic learning and also contribute to many other positive outcomes including student well-being, belonging, and persistence to graduation. Peers do this by supporting and challenging each other as they learn together. Near peers–such as students one or two years ahead in the same academic program–also can be influential inspirations and allies in the learning process.

These powerful peer relationships are most likely to develop when academic teachers intentionally design for them. We cannot simply rely on chance and spontaneity to derive the full benefits from peer learning. Instead, as the chapters in this book document, careful pedagogical planning and skillful teaching are essential for effective, high quality peer learning. This book also illustrates how assessments can deepen peer learning when they are aligned with academic goals and when they encourage meaningful collaboration among students. Academic teachers need to attend to the motivations, identities, cultures, and personalities of their students so that pedagogies build on students' strengths and promote purposeful learning (Eddy et al. 2015).

By doing this, academic teachers are not only helping students learn our disciplines, but we are also enabling them to develop the skills and mindsets necessary for life and work in the future. Our graduates will need to be able to collaborate with people who speak many languages and who come from differing cultural backgrounds. Higher education is a unique opportunity for students to learn to navigate international contexts and to work with diverse peers, but higher education only fulfills that role if academic teachers do what this book illustrates so well–systematically enact good practices to internationalise our teaching and curricula.

None of this is easy but done well peer learning can be transformational for students–and for internationalising teaching in higher education. This book provides invaluable guidance and case studies for all of us seeking to enhance and internationalise our students' learning.

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Peter Felten is professor of history, executive director of the Center for Engaged Learning, and assistant provost for teaching and learning at Elon University. During the 2022-2023 academic year, he has been named Fulbright Canada Distinguished Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, at Carleton University in Ottawa. Peter has published six books about undergraduate education He has served as president of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and also of the POD Network. He is on the advisory board of the National Survey of Student Engagement and is a fellow of the Gardner Institute, a foundation that works to advance equity, justice, and upward social mobility through higher education. **pfelten@elon.edu**

INTERNATIONALISING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Gabriela Pleschová, Comenius University in Bratislava

What students learn when studying in another country can have a dramatic effect on their personal and professional lives. It can markedly improve their communication and problem-solving skills and their ability to work in diverse teams and see issues from different perspectives. Even though all these competences are highly sought after in today's globalised world, students and teachers in Europe use the EU mobility schemes very unevenly. In 2016, the top four countries (France, Germany, Spain and Italy) sent more students abroad than the rest of Europe. Similarly, the top five receiving countries (Spain, Germany, UK, France and Italy) admitted more international students than all the other European countries together (European Commission 2017).

Specifically in Central Europe, a significant obstacle for universities' participation in EU mobility schemes is the limited number of foreign language programmes and courses on offer. For example, in 2017 even some of the largest universities in the region offered only a fraction of instruction in foreign languages: Masaryk University had 20 foreign language programmes, Comenius University 11, Jagiellonian University 12, and the University of Warsaw 24[1]. Although there was an observable trend of increasing numbers of foreign language programmes, the speed of this increase has been rather slow and is likely to remain so without targeted interventions, especially those aimed at enhancing the skills and confidence of teaching staff members.

In order to contribute to this desired change, in 2018 a consortium of institutions including Comenius University in Bratislava, Masaryk University, Central European University, Delft University of Technology, and the European Consortium of Political Research (ECPR) applied for funding for an international collaborative project. The project, 'Improving Academic Teaching and Internationalisation through Enhanced Competences of University Teachers' (IMPACT), was to be implemented at two of the largest universities in Central Europe—Masaryk University and Comenius University—well-situated to pass on their experience to other institutions of the region. The project's overall goal was to enhance internationalisation, which we understand as 'the integration of international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education' (Knight 2004). Approval of the proposal submitted to the Erasmus+ Strategic partnership scheme allowed the consortium implementing the IMPACT project in 2019-2022.

Contributions included in this book come from two sources. First, the IMPACT project partners announced and circulated a Europe-wide call for examples of good practice in internationalising student learning via the ECPR, one of the project partner institutions. Following the call, they se-

1 This information was obtained from the universities' websites in February 2017.

lected eight case studies from within various social science disciplines. These authors share their experiences of internationalisation in Western Europe, for example, at Lund University (Sweden), the University of Catania (Italy), the University of Coimbra (Portugal), and the University of Groningen (the Netherlands). Second, the book editors selected the best scholarship of learning and teaching (SOTL) papers from the teachers/participants of the two-year teaching development programme entitled 'Effective Teaching for Internationalisation', designed and implemented under the IMPACT project. The SOTL papers included in this book were substantially reworked for publication.

The variety of learning environments in which teachers strived to internationalise student learning demonstrates that internationalisation is relevant all across Europe and that individual teachers can articulate a range of well-thought responses about how to best cater to the needs of international students. This book embodies a diversity of experiences through the variety of the authors' disciplines, which include economics, ethnology, journalism, law, linguistics, medicine, museology, pedagogy, philosophy, political science, and sociology.

In order to serve as a source of inspiration for other teachers, each chapter starts with a description of a teaching challenge connected to internationalisation and the pedagogical method introduced to address the challenge. Then the authors present their courses, including information about the students and teacher(s). They outline their data collection and research methods and apply these to evaluate the outcomes of internationalised teaching on student learning. Each chapter concludes with a reflection on the replicability of the method or approach in other contexts and what can be done to enhance student learning further.

The teaching context

Before internationalising their classes, the teachers from Comenius University and Masaryk University, whose studies comprise a major part of this book, used a range of approaches to teaching international students. Sometimes, international students did not learn in one group together with home students, since some courses were offered in the local language and international students were assigned their own homework and consulted individually with the course teacher, as was, for example, the case for courses in psychology. Some international students studied with home students in one group but typically via listening to lectures, as was the case for courses in legal studies. Overall, lecturing was the predominant method of teaching/learning whereas active learning tasks were used only to a limited degree or not at all. Use of peer learning activities, where students learn by working in purposefully assigned groups that mix international and home students, was extremely rare.

As the chapters show, participants in the Effective Teaching for Internationalisation course made significant contributions to internationalisation at their universities, but they could not alter the context in which they taught. On one hand, in some fields—medicine (chapter by Repová), law

(Hron, Švedová), and economics (Čapek)—international and home students learn in two separate programmes and never meet because those in the English-language international programme pay a tuition fee whereas their peers who learn in the Slovak or Czech language study for free. Although internationalisation could theoretically capitalise on the diversity among international students via peer learning or other methods, it was not possible to bring students in the separate international and home degree programmes together. On the other hand, one teacher (Lešková), who was a doctoral student at the time, could not influence all aspects of student learning in her course because she only led the discussion seminar. Yet she made a valuable contribution that may serve as an inspiration for those working under similar limitations.

Another important contextual restriction was the COVID-19 pandemic, which unexpectedly changed the setting for all university teachers and students, including those in Bratislava and Brno. Even if teachers planned to teach their internationalised classes face-to-face, they had to rethink their class plans and start teaching online by venturing into using new tools of online education. Also, because of substantially reduced numbers of incoming exchange students, some teachers had no international students in their class, despite the programme facilitators' great efforts to recruit at least a few international students for each programme participant. These teachers then worked to implement in their courses the concept of internationalisation at home *(Beelen and Jones 2015)*, for example by internationalising the course curriculum. Overall, teachers had to adapt to constant uncertainty as online and face-to-face class formats switched depending on the phase of the pandemic. As the contributions in this book document, the teachers made the best of the challenging situation and transformed the restrictions stemming from the pandemic into benefits for student learning.

Effective Teaching for Internationalisation

Effective Teaching for Internationalisation is a joint educational development programme for teachers from Comenius University in Bratislava and Masaryk University in Brno. The programme aims to help participant teachers learn to design, facilitate and evaluate (under)graduate courses in ways that attend to the needs of international students and mixed groups of home and international students, and to improve teachers' capacity to advance internationalisation at home.

The programme has been stretched over two years to allow academics with numerous commitments to complete the course activities and assignments. In Semester 1, the participants attend a series of seven half-day workshops on issues related to the design, facilitation, and evaluation of internationalised courses. During the workshops, participants are introduced to the concept of peer learning and invited to trial and explore various strategies to facilitate peer learning in their classes. In Semester 2, participants design a plan for internationalising one course they teach for undergraduate or graduate students; for participating PhD students the task is to internationalise at least three class sessions. In addition, all participants devise a class plan and develop a research design to evaluate the outcomes of the new ways of teaching for student learning. In Semester 3, participants teach their courses according to the plan while collecting data on student learning. A peer observer attends at least one class session and discusses her/his observations with the teacher. Finally, in Semester 4, participants write a SOTL study or reflective paper, in which they report on the achievements and challenges stemming from internationalising their course.

While working on the course assignments, each participant is supported by a coach from among the session leaders. Coaches are professional educational developers working at the project partner institutions of IMPACT. The programme has been accredited by the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA), which provided a Supporting Learning award, and course graduates receive a certificate from SEDA upon graduation. Comenius University in Bratislava accredited the course locally, allowing participants who are PhD students to receive ECTS credits. More details about the programme design can be found in Pleschová (2020).

In 2020-2022, the first cohort of programme participants included 33 faculty members and doctoral students, of which 22 graduated from the course. The programme built upon experiences from earlier courses: 'Learning-centred and Reflective Teaching: From Theory to Good Practice', offered in 2016-2018 for faculty members and doctoral students from Masaryk University and the University of Economics in Bratislava (Pleschová and Simon 2018, 2021), and 'Innovating Teaching and Student Learning', which was attended by teachers from various universities in Slovakia between 2011-2013 (Pleschová and McAlpine 2016).

Working to internationalise their classes, the teachers used different approaches and their accounts of their efforts to support the learning of international and mixed groups of students vary. Many teachers engaged students in peer learning, both inside and outside the classroom, as, for example, Blaho, Výškrabková, and Ananyeva. They found creative ways of using pair and group work to that end (Uhrin, Vargová, Stanková). Other teachers chose to change the method of student assessment by introducing or strengthening peer assessment, including Misic and Carvalho et al. All of the authors offer stories specific for their willingness to innovate despite the barriers in each context, courage to introduce methods and approaches entirely new for their department or institution, and attention to detail when (re)designing their courses.

The book chapters are divided into three thematic groups. The first group includes case studies about introducing peer learning, the second group looks at (peer) assessment, and the third presents other approaches to internationalisation, for example through simulations (Droste et al., Irrera), collaborative online international learning (Havelková), use of films (Kolarić, Santoianni), and an expert interview assignment (Nowak). The concluding chapter summarises the lessons learnt while internationalising teaching and student learning.

Using this book

We hope that case studies of internationalising student learning will provide inspiration for teachers who are considering making their classes more international but are unsure where to start or what can be done within the limitations of their institutional teaching environment. All of the chapters in this book showcase what individual teachers can do to internationalise student learning with relatively little difficulty, typically by introducing one or more well-designed learning activities and changing the method of assessment. Moreover, teachers can see how changes that support internationalisation can be evaluated through scholarship of teaching and learning and how reflection can further advance teaching and student learning.

The book may also be of use for educational developers who support teachers while internationalising degree programmes, courses, and course sessions. Similarly, it may serve as a source of information for university administrators who support their institution's mission to internationalise education.

In addition to being published in this book, each chapter can be downloaded for free from the open-access website impactportal.eu. Both the portal and this book include the contact information for each author in order to facilitate potential collaboration. We hope that the contributions in this volume encourage more teachers to welcome international students in their courses and to prepare home students for living and working in a globalised world. This way, teachers not only support their institution in admitting more international students but also prepare their home and international students for future mobility, jobs outside their home country, and working in international teams.

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internationalisation at home, mobility

Gabriela Pleschová leads the Centre for Scholarship and Teaching in the Faculty of Arts at Comenius University in Bratislava where she also serves as an associate professor in the Department of Pedagogical Sciences and Andragogy. She is a graduate of Oxford University (2012, MSc. in Education) and the co-editor of the books *Teacher Development in Higher Education: Existing Programs, Program Impact, and Future Trends* (Routledge, 2013) and *Early Career Academics' Reflections on Learning to Teach in Central Europe* (SEDA, 2018). In 2019, she was awarded a Principal Fellowship from the AdvanceHE. **gabriela.pleschova@uniba.sk**

INTERNATIONAL DIVERSITY AS A COMPLETELY NEW EXPERIENCE

Radoslav Blaho, Comenius University in Bratislava

The teaching-learning challenge

The long-standing practice in the Department of Psychology at Comenius University has been to offer individual lessons for international students when they enrol in courses. Rather than attending classes with the local Slovak students, these Erasmus students were asked to prepare a presentation or read some materials to be discussed later with the lecturer. For several years few international students applied for my courses, so I did the same: I met them for individual tutoring session and offered them some study materials. They were to prepare and deliver a presentation during the tutoring session, which the two of us then discussed. While this was a convenient solution, it defeated the purpose of the Erasmus+ mobility scheme.

In the winter 2017 semester I decided to try something new and invited an international student from Holland to deliver her English-language presentation to the local Slovak students enrolled in the same course in their mother tongue. It was a presentation about euthanasia and its specifics in her homeland, which was then compared with information about the specifics in our country, presented by a local student. The presentations were followed by a lively discussion and students reported great interest in being able to share different perspectives, which challenged their critical thinking and moral reasoning.

After this lesson, I realized that, just as the literature suggests (Jibeen and Khan 2015; Kahn and Agnew 2017), it was much more meaningful to have local and international students learn together. Having no guidelines to follow due to lack of such practice in my department, the challenge was not only to have international students attend the course together with their Slovak peers, but also to internationalise my Moral Psychology course in such a way that both local and international students can benefit from sharing their own experiences, opinions and emotions or explore similar experiences in various cultural and social contexts.

For this purpose, I have changed how I run my classes and now rely heavily on peer learning, while I also adapted the learning outcomes to align with the new course format. In order to see how this newly designed course assists students in learning, in this chapter I investigate if the students of the internationalised course on moral psychology attained the course learning outcomes.

Pedagogical methods

The aim of my new teaching and learning design was to internationalise the course and make international perspectives central to the course including in the syllabus, my teaching style and classroom activities. To address these challenges, I relied on peer learning, where students learn from and with each other (Boud et al. 2013). It is an effective learning tool via sharing diverse knowledge, opinions and experiences, explaining ideas to others and developing skills in organising and planning learning activities, giving and receiving feedback, or by evaluating their own learning. There are many benefits reported for peer leaders, such as the acquisition of higher-level personal and professional skills, including empathy, decision making or teamwork skills, as well as reduced anxiety, greater sense of belonging, enhancing friendships and participating in the class (Keenan 2014). Thus, peer learning can be instrumental in enhancing intercultural awareness and building a learning community, where both local and international students share their diverse opinions and experiences. This internationalised course based on peer learning was designed to assist students in achieving the four learning outcomes of the course, which also serve as my hypotheses. Thus, I expect that by the end of the course students will be able to (H1) recognise and discuss various, including intercultural, perspectives on ethically difficult situations (i.e., moral dilemmas); (H2) reflect on their own and their classmates' opinions and emotions to ethically difficult situations; (H3) work effectively in mixed teams or groups of local and international students; and (H4) apply the approaches of moral psychology in real-life situations across different intercultural contexts.

The course, the students, and the lecturer

Moral Psychology is an elective course with weekly, 90-minute classes during the semester. I am the only lecturer and the number of students is limited to 30. The course is open for second- and third-year bachelor students, preferably psychology majors. The course introduces students to the psychological aspects of human morality as an interdisciplinary construct and encourages them to consider and discuss moral reasoning, emotionality, motivation and behaviour from various intercultural perspectives.

During the winter 2021 semester, when the innovations described below were applied and evaluated, the course was attended by 22 students. Four of them were international: two from Spain, one from Italy, and one from Montenegro. While the local students all majored in psychology, the international students came from other social science disciplines. There were eleven class sessions during the semester: for the first six the class met in person while, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the remaining five sessions were held online via MS Teams.

In the first session, the main goal was to have students experience what the course would be like. Therefore, after I provided the students with all the necessary information related to the course and the assessment criteria, I divided them into small groups. In the groups, they not only got to know each other but also discussed the first moral dilemma. In the next session, I gave a presentation that introduced moral dilemmas and their philosophical and neuroanatomical correlates, which served as a demonstration of how to structure their own presentations and meet the assessment criteria. The following eight sessions were devoted to team presentations by students. Each team had 75 minutes to introduce their topic and run an interactive exercise with discussion. I closed each session by adding my thoughts on the topic as well as words of appreciation and suggestions for the presenting team. After the class, students filled out a post-session feedback form online. During the final session of the course, the students started working on a final reflective essay allowing them to inquire about anything that was not clear.

The team presentation was the central activity of the course. While I included team presentations in earlier iterations of the course, now it was internationalised and combined with peer learning. Each student was expected to contribute to the presentation of their team and moderate the subsequent discussion actively. There were eight teams of two or three students. As there were only four international students in the class, four teams mixed local and international students and four had only local students. The inclusion of intercultural perspectives and interactive activities became mandatory parts of team presentations. During the first session, each team chose its presentation topic from a list of issues I had compiled for them (e.g., morality and emotions, moral motivation). Each presentation was required to include at least one moral dilemma to be resolved and three international perspectives (e.g., local, European, Anglo-American, Latin American, Asian, African etc.). Team presentations also had to combine presenting knowledge and empirical data with interactive activities, in which at least one moral dilemma was introduced and discussed, e.g., via online voting, quizzes, international case studies, role play, buzz groups, pyramids, crossovers, or breakout rooms. Each team had to share a handout for its presentation online at least two days before the session so that their peers could become familiar with the topic, too.

Each presentation was followed by students filling out a post-session feedback and reflection form, which combined peer assessment with self-reflection. While I have used this kind of assessment before, inspired by the peer learning and assessment approach, I augmented the earlier form with open-ended and multiple-choice questions. This way the presenting team received both summative and formative feedback, building middle- to high-level partnership among peers (Ní Bheoláin et al. 2020).

At the end of the course, the students wrote a final reflective essay, considering what they learned about the course topics, group dynamics, international diversity, and themselves while responding to various moral dilemmas.

Students were assessed based on three elements: (1) preparing and presenting the topic in the mixed teams (40%), (2) active participation either by joining the discussions and learning activities during the sessions or by filling out the post-session feedback and reflection form (30%; three points for each session or properly filled out form), and (3) the final reflective essay (30%).

Collected sources of data and methods

To evaluate the outcomes of my teaching innovation, I used a mixed research design relying on both qualitative and quantitative data. Specifically, to triangulate my data, I relied on five data sources from students, a colleague, and myself.

First, I utilised data from the students' post-session feedback and reflection form. It consisted of three parts. Firstly, students evaluated the presentation according to eight criteria focused on peer learning (overall approach to the topic, theoretical background, methodology, main findings, application, intercultural perspectives, promotion of interactivity, facilitating the discussion) using a five-point Likert scale, '1' being the best and '5' being worst. Secondly, students could offer written feedback to the presenting team on the main strengths of the presentation, areas for improvement, or any other comments and encouragements. The form concluded with reflection on the session in the form of five yes/no questions, as well as an opportunity to provide comments, ask questions or offer suggestions regarding the topic. The form was filled out by sixteen students on average for each presentation (minimum 13, maximum 21).

Second, the students' final reflective essays served as a good source of information about what they learnt about course topics, which topic they found the most interesting and why, the others in the group, about the international diversity and about themselves. At the end of this structured essay, they could also add any comments they had about the course, its structure or topics.

Third, a new anonymous student evaluation form was developed by Comenius University's Faculty of Arts, in which students could evaluate various aspects of the course, e.g., opportunities for discussion and other learning activities, encouraging atmosphere, clear communication, developing knowledge through problem solving, independent thinking or completing exercises and creativity, teamwork skills, providing learning materials etc. Unfortunately but not surprisingly, only three students filled out the form. Students in our institution tend not to fill out the student evaluation form (the return rate is usually 20% or less).

Fourth, my colleague from the department observed one of the online classes and not only filled out a classroom observation protocol that primarily focused on internationalisation and peer learning–the two issues central to the innovation presented here–but also met with me one-on-one to discuss his observations.

Finally, I kept a reflective journal throughout the semester. After each class, I wrote down all my personal observations, comments and ideas for the future and recorded what happened during the session in the terms of peer learning and internationalisation (e.g., activities presented by the students leading the class, amount of time devoted to peer learning, working in mixed groups, engaging non-presenting classmates, respecting other opinions etc.).

To analyse the quantitative data, I used descriptive statistics because of the small number of students (N=22) and the nature of my hypotheses. For analysing the qualitative data, I relied on content analysis.

Findings

The requirement to address at least three intercultural perspectives during team presentations tilted the balance toward meeting the expectation that students would recognise and discuss the intercultural aspects of moral issues (H1). The requirement was an important motivational factor and students appreciated it: on the anonymous student evaluation forms, two out of three students strongly agreed that the course had explored the issues in depth and in their post-session feedback forms students also evaluated fairly highly the intercultural aspects of the presentations, giving an average score for each class that varied from 3.77 to 4.8 (out of 5).

Yet, the first learning outcome was not fully achieved. As I noted in the reflective journal, each team included various perspectives in their handouts, but not all of them mentioned these during the presentation, usually because of a lack of time. Some students made the same observations in the post-session feedback and reflection forms. There were also differences in discussing these perspectives, depending on whether they were part of the activities offered by the presenting team (e.g., role play while presenting on morality and religion, where the audience was randomly divided into buzz groups according to the world religions and were supposed to answer from that religious perspective), or just mentioned in the presentation and not touched upon during the discussion. The students appreciated most when an international student built up the presentation as a case study from their country of origin and compared it with other countries, followed by an in-class discussion. Indeed, I found this model most inspirational for future iterations of the course.

To be able to reflect on their own as well as their peers' opinions and emotions when discussing moral dilemmas (H2), it was vital that students had enough opportunities and a supportive environment. Interactive activities during the session–i.e., discussions, the post-session feedback forms, and the final reflective essays–offered ample opportunities for expressing and responding to their own and others' opinions, and the students recognised this themselves. All three students who filled out the anonymous student evaluation form strongly agreed that there were enough opportunities for discussion and other learning activities: 'I appreciated the fact that each student had the opportunity to express their opinion and that this opinion will be respected by other students' and 'I appreciate the discussions during the lessons'. International students shared the same sentiment: 'I have learned that being an international student is not always something bad. When I was expressing my thoughts-feelings about a certain concept people were carefully listening to me'.

The previous remark also suggests an encouraging atmosphere. Most students said they felt respected and part of a learning community while discussing the issues: 'I really like the course dynamics', and 'So far I really like these lessons as I feel very welcomed, there is always nice atmosphere and everyone's opinions are respected'. International students felt the same way: 'To be honest, as a student from another country and on top of that a student from another faculty, I expected some difficulties, but there were none', and 'Being a foreign student I was quite afraid of not being able to integrate well in the class, but luckily that has not been the case'. Some students also realised that open and constructive discussions sometimes required a conscious effort: 'I have faced the challenges of being open to other opinions, because even though I try, I am still not perfect at it', and 'This course helped me to be more aware of my judgemental side. Even though I consider myself a pretty open and "free- spirited" person, my mind can be a little stubborn sometimes'. More importantly, students also recognised when someone broke this unspoken rule and complained about it.

As for actual student engagement, my reflective journal shows that approximately 60-80% of students joined the online interactive activities during the sessions and 15-45% joined the discussion during the face-to-face sessions. Students cited various reasons for not participating: lack of time or courage to express their own opinions due to the seriousness of the topic, having no opinion on a topic, or language difficulties.

Students were most likely to reflect on emotions regarding the course itself: on the post-session feedback forms, 99% of the time they said that they enjoyed the class activities and 92% of the students felt engaged in the sessions. As for the course content, while during the classes the students mostly shared the opinions supported by the research findings, in their feedback forms they also described more of their own feelings about the topics, for example: 'I really liked the topic. It was really up-to date, modern, relevant', or 'The topic was challenging and it was a hard question…'.

While the team and group work were unproblematic for all of the groups, testing hypothesis three (H3) about working in mixed teams of local and international students is limited by the experience of only the four teams that included international students and those random groups created during interactive in-class exercises that included international students. Neither I nor the observer noticed any complications with students working in the mixed teams for presentation. Approximately 63% of the students noted in their post-session feedback that they collaborated with the students of other nationality.

The effect of mixed teams and groups was seen differently among the students. On one hand, some students did not recognise any substantial impact, for example: 'I do not think that the international students in this course differed so significantly from us locals. Maybe it is because we all come from Europe and are shaped mostly by the Western culture'. On the other hand, both the local and international students mentioned several positive experiences of interaction in the post-session feedback forms and the final essays. The local students reflected on the manner of communication: 'I admire how they are not afraid to talk publicly. I loved when some of them decided to actually talk during discussion. This is really unusual for Slovaks and I would love it if we'd developed into a more talkative nation', and opinions affected by culture: 'I loved to see how the opinions of our foreign colleagues differed under the influence of their culture'. The international students described the willingness of the locals to help: 'My co-workers knew how to use the app and were always willing to show me how to use it', or differences in working process: 'The fact that I was forced to work with Slovak students has helped me to learn new ways of working that are not so common in Spain, but that from today I will start to incorporate into my work'.

The strongest effect of mixing local and international students occurred outside of class time. After the sessions I often saw the international students talking with the locals, and students found this experience just as important as classroom interaction: '...after class [...] we all waited outside for each other to talk a little bit more about the discussed topic. We had the chance to discuss it on a deeper level with our exchange students, as well as with each other, and to expand our thoughts a little bit further'. Another student emphasised the opportunity to get to know each other better and learn about different cultures: 'I remember that one time [name of student] and I stayed and talked for a little bit longer about everything that was going on in his head, about all the topics we had in class. It was quite interesting to hear his point of view since he studies law in Italy but is not Italian! He had a lot of new insight into everything, and I think it was valuable for me since I could learn a lot from that conversation alone'.

Similarly to the inclusion of three intercultural perspectives, applying the concepts of moral psychology in real-life situations in different intercultural contexts (H4) was mandatory for the team presentations. This was achieved at least by including a moral dilemma related to the topic that the audience could vote on. My research findings showed that applying the concepts in discussion worked out much better than the inclusion of international perspectives, however. It is clear from my reflective journal that these were the favourite parts of the presentations, with high potential for interaction in the group. Voting was conducted anonymously via online interactive tools (e.g., Slido, Kahoot, or Mentimeter), which supported confidentiality within the group and accelerated group dynamics. Voting was usually followed by plenary or small group discussion. Similarly, the student evaluation forms showed that all three students strongly agreed with the statement that the course developed their knowledge through problem solving, independent thinking or completing exercises.

The most notable application of moral dilemmas occurred when students considered their relevance to and consequences for their lives. One noted how it made them reconsider the manner of their decision making: 'I saw myself in situations when I really couldn't decide a few times, because the more "ethical" side of me felt like it was in contrast with my faith side and belief system'. Another mentioned the consistency (or lack thereof) of decisions: 'one thing I have faced is the aspect of consistency. As humans we try to be consistent with our previous ways of thinking, but I found this to be a burden. [...] Now I have come to conclusion that it is okay to change my mind when I realise later on that I have a different view'. Others focused on their emotions: 'I have explored a wide range of emotions that I can feel during moral dilemma solving. This definitely contributed to shaping my self-image and understanding myself more deeply'. And reflections on behaviour: 'I suddenly wondered about different outcomes of my actions [...] Before this course, I had never studied moral dilemmas or how to resolve them. I simply believed I would always know what to do'. Thus, they went far beyond simply learning about the discussed topics by learning about themselves.

Replicability in a different context

Internationalisation brings brand new perspectives to a topic. I find it to be a great asset in any course where local and international students come together to cooperate and share their experiences. It can also be applied in classes consisting only of local students by using literature from different intercultural backgrounds and discussing their specifics.

Peer learning adapted in the form of team presentations enhances the motivation of all the students in the class to join in the learning process, and requires academic skills to handle a topic, using research databases, and facilitating a peer discussion. Therefore, it is more relevant for advanced bachelor's or master's degree students. I believe that three to five students per team is the ideal number as larger groups likely decrease involvement in active learning tasks. I find it important to support students during the whole process of preparing and presenting a topic in a team, where a model presentation by a lecturer can be very useful in that it introduces students to the format, thereby reducing their anxiety of presenting.

Peer assessment after each session using the format of the post-session feedback form is a great asset for the lecturer to monitor the classroom atmosphere continuously and consider different perspectives in the final assessment. However, peer assessment is more suitable for those students who have prior experiences with academic assessment. In larger groups of more than twenty students I find the use of multiple-choice questions more effective because while open-ended questions are more suitable for formative feedback, they demand more time from the lecturer to read and process them.

Conclusions

The findings indicate that addressing the main teaching challenge of internationalising the course by inviting foreign students to regular lessons with the local students was successful. Including peer learning and redesigning assessment to match the new course structure greatly contributed to the attainment of the learning outcomes. Even if not all learning outcomes were achieved fully or to the same extent, the students showed notable progress in all four areas. The least progress was achieved in discussing various intercultural perspectives and it is important to explore how this aspect could be further strengthened in the future, for example giving it stronger emphasis in the instructions and during the class sessions, so that each member of the team would represent one of such perspectives. Nonetheless, the greatest achievement of the innovation went beyond the expected learning outcomes by creating a real learning community, where some of the local

and international students met after class and continued the discussion (Boud et al. 2013).
During the course, I also realised some limitations which I find important to consider and address in the future. Firstly, some of the local students were frustrated that the course was held in English and decided to drop the course. Unfortunately, the course description in the online information system failed to contain information that the language of the course was changed to English. I will remedy this from the next semester. Secondly, some students and I had occasional difficulties expressing our opinions due to imperfect language skills. In addition to working on improving the skills, it is very helpful to use online tools such as Slido during the sessions because they allow more time for formulating one's sentences and use of an online translator.
I also find statements posted in the post-session feedback to be both inspiring and instructive and would like to think about a way to share some of them with the class, while respecting confidentiality. Thirdly, the fact that all the international students were from different fields of study made it possible to build on prior and varying knowledge. However, compared to previous years, we did not explore the issues in the same depth. I would like to think about utilising the online learning platform more for sharing research papers and other materials which were not mentioned during the sessions both by the lecturer and the students, and also support the students to discuss them via chat.
When I reflect on the feedback from both the local and international students, I am convinced that the benefits that the changes based on peer learning and internationalisation brought greatly outweigh the costs. My experience was aptly summarised in a comment by one of the local students: 'Having international diversity in class was a completely new experience, and I think it was amazing!'.

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Summary

This chapter discusses internationalisation of the elective bachelor-level course Moral Psychology based on peer learning. The main teaching challenge was to make international perspectives central in the course, including the syllabus, methods of teaching style, and classroom activities. Therefore, I introduced peer learning and mixed local and international students in teams. Teams prepared a class-long presentations incorporating intercultural perspectives and interactive activities. They provided peer assessment that included both summative and formative feedback. Relying on student feedback and reflection, a colleague's observation of one of the classes, and my own reflective journal, this chapter shows how the new approach to teaching Moral Psychology helped students recognise and deliberate moral dilemmas while working both in teams and groups. The evidence suggests the students appreciated these changes: they said they felt welcomed, engaged, respected and challenged. More importantly, they created a real learning community, where local and international students met even after class.

Keywords

class atmosphere, (peer) assessment, student-led seminar

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Dr. Radoslav Blaho is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Psychology of the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava. His current research is on antisocial behaviour in the online environment and psychosocial attributes linked with cancer treatment and bone marrow transplantation. His academic interests include social and school psychology, moral psychology, psycho-oncology and psychotherapy. Recently he has also worked as a psychologist in the Bone Marrow Transplant Unit at the National Institute of Children's Diseases in Bratislava and has participated in psychotherapy training.
radoslav.blaho@uniba.sk

ENHANCING STUDENTS' MULTILINGUAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE THROUGH PEER LEARNING AND A REFLECTIVE LEARNING-BASED COURSE

Jana Výškrabková, Comenius University in Bratislava

The teaching-learning challenge

In today's globalised world, we often find ourselves in multilingual situations where we need to communicate with people speaking various languages. In these circumstances, English cannot always be used as a lingua franca. With this in mind, I introduced the course Multilingual Communication. Designing the course, I primarily worked with Blommaert's (2010, 8-9) notion of 'truncated' multilingualism: since we never know 'all' of a language, we always know only specific bits and pieces of it. The aim is not to speak many languages perfectly but to effectively communicate in a number of them, if we have to. This implies developing such skills as switching languages, language mediation, receptive skills in multiple languages, and intercomprehension.

In teaching this course, helping students gain mastery of many languages was not the ambition; it was more important to help students learn to effectively use all their language skills–their entire linguistic repertoire. At the same time, I aimed to provide home students with a multicultural experience without travelling. To achieve this, I introduced students to peer learning, which was foundational for the course. In this chapter, I evaluate whether the students in this course engaged in peer learning achieved the goals of (1) understanding and using theoretical concepts related to multilingualism and (2) communicating multilingually.

Pedagogical methods

Engaged in peer learning, students share their ideas, experiences, knowledge, and skills, thus enriching each other (Boud et al. 2013). Since the students attending Multilingual Communication came from different countries and cultures, sharing their (multi)linguistic and (multi)cultural experiences in discussions and reflections was a pre-condition for successful learning. Therefore, peer learning is particularly suitable for learning about the notions of multilingualism and multilingual communication, which have a number of definitions and understandings and are presumably influenced by cultural contexts.

Diversity and integration are both important for peer learning. Diversity relates to internationalisation and globalisation of education resulting in a multicultural student body. For teachers this implies the need to develop strategies and competencies that allow addressing diversity (Hille et al. 2016). Mutual assistance in peer learning stimulates development of intercultural competencies in such settings. On the other hand, integration leads to intellectual development, greater quality of effort, improved learning, and student success (Byl et al. 2015). Integration into the student community is particularly important for international students who typically arrive for one or two semesters, as greater integration impacts their success by increasing their engagement.

In this context, the concept of social presence is relevant since it concerns creating a classroom climate favourable for engagement. Since the course was initially planned as face-to-face but was taught first in a hybrid form and later fully online, social presence became relevant to supporting student engagement under these circumstances. According to White (2003), the absence of physical presence in the context of distance education means the loss of these stimuli, which support the interaction of the social and affective dimensions of education. That is why I consider it important to support the feeling of community and create a friendly atmosphere even in settings of remote teaching, following the social presence theory.

Another important concept is reflective learning. Students were expected to reflect on the course content and their learning experiences in learning logs. Moon's (2004, 82) definition of reflective learning emphasises a broad range of related mental processes: 'Reflection is applied to relatively complicated, ill-structured ideas for which there is not an obvious solution and is largely based on the further processing of knowledge and understanding that we already possess'. To support reflection, I introduced the assignment of learning logs. I assumed that awareness of one's own learning progress will foster student motivation to learn in this course. In this course, I also focused on acquiring and developing key competencies that students can apply in their studies and especially later in their professional lives. As Moon (2004) states, such (reflective and experiential) learning exceeds the scope of formal learning and in this way plays a key role in ongoing professional development.

The course, the students, and the lecturer

Multilingual Communication is an experiential, practice-based elective course. It aims to help students effectively use their own linguistic repertoire, which includes switching between languages, mediating between interlocutors who cannot understand each other, and intercomprehension skills. In order to achieve this, the course is open to students from all disciplines and from both bachelor and master's degree programmes, to home and international students. As a result of attending the course, students are expected to be able to (1) identify the factors that influence multilingual and multicultural communication; (2) recognise how one of these factors, culture, impacts interpretation of information and communication; (3) understand and use various concepts from multilingualism and multicultural communication; and (4) effectively communicate in multilingual and multicultural contexts using their own linguistic repertoire. Of these learning outcomes, this chapter investigates the third and fourth to limit the scope of this already multi-layered investigation.

Students learn through activities such as small group and plenary discussions, student presentations, persuasive speeches, creative writing assignments like multilingual poems, and games such as the false friends game, or classpanto, during which students are encouraged to use a mix of languages. There are two main languages of instruction, English and Slovak, so that everyone can understand what to do. Students can choose the language(s) they want to use during activities and are encouraged to switch languages and not be afraid to leave their comfort zone and use the languages they speak at lower levels.

The requirements for successfully completing the course are active participation, completing home assignments, and six in-class tasks. An important assignment is keeping a learning log. After each course session, students are asked to reflect in writing on issues related to the session topic, their own contributions and their learning process. Students are also asked to rate their ability to communicate in a multilingual and multicultural environment on a scale from 1 to 10 (poor to excellent) and reflect on how the class activities helped them develop key course competencies. Students can use multiple languages in their learning logs, with one condition: they are limited to those I can understand. These include all Slavic languages (which was important as many students come from Slavic countries), German, Italian and English. This offers students an opportunity to practice their weaker languages in writing and in this way gradually gain more self-confidence in spoken communication in class.

In the winter 2021 term, 14 students enrolled in the course. Even if my initial ambition was to bring home and international students closer together, the class was almost entirely taken by foreign students: 13 out of 14 students were international. Their countries of origin supported linguistic and cultural heterogeneity as they came from Slavic countries such as Serbia, Ukraine, and Russia (10 students), but there were also students from China (2), Turkey (1) and Morocco (1). Most studied philological disciplines or social sciences. Some of them were enrolled in degree programmes at Comenius University in Bratislava, and some were exchange programme students.

Collected sources of data and methods

I collected and analysed five types of data. Learning logs made up the most significant part of the data. When analysing the student self-ratings from the learning logs, I compared the score at the beginning of the semester, which indicated students' initial self-perception of their competences, with the end-of-the-course score rating for their later self-perception. I also looked at the scores after each course session, which reflected the students' views of how the course activities affected their multilingual communication skills. Content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative parts of the learning logs, in which students explained the rating and reflected on their learning.

Second, I drew from six assignments students completed either as homework or following in-class activities. These assignments evidenced whether students understood the studied concepts and were able to put them to use.

Third, I had an observation protocol from a colleague who observed my class. I asked the observer to focus on certain aspects of the class such as student engagement in activities (in particular

in a hybrid class), peer learning and achievement of learning outcomes. The assignments and observation protocol were analysed using content analysis.
The fourth was the teacher's diary, in which I wrote down comments and notes about how students handled the activities and whether they complied with my expectations or any unforeseen problems arose. The same method of analysis was used for the teacher's diary as for the observations protocol.
The last source of data was collected at the end of the semester. It was a student feedback form, in which students evaluated the opportunities the course provided them to develop competences, as well as their own learning progress. Descriptive statistics were used for analysing data from the form, which was completed by 13 out of 14 students.

Findings

Class atmosphere encouraging peer learning

Although not a learning outcome, it is important to establish if the classroom environment was supportive of peer learning. While teaching the Multilingual Communication course, one unpredictable yet significant challenge arose. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the course, initially planned to be taught in person, had to be offered first in a hybrid format because full-time home students attended it in person while exchange students who were not yet able to arrive in Slovakia joined online. Mid-semester, due to the deteriorating pandemic, classes moved entirely to the online space.
These aspects were central for the class atmosphere. It was important that students actively participated in learning activities and thus learned from each other. This was only possible if students had enough opportunities to contribute and if the class atmosphere encouraged them to do so. Results from the feedback forms suggested that the course succeeded in creating a class atmosphere that supported peer learning. Nine students stated on the form that they strongly agreed they had felt part of a learning community, three students agreed with the statement, and one had a neutral attitude. Also, ten students strongly agreed that they found class atmosphere encouraging for their learning and three students agreed with the statement.
Peer learning in the class sessions was one aspect that the observer was asked to pay attention to. The seminar at which the observer was present contained three peer learning tasks: more than 75% of the seminar was devoted to peer learning. The observer noticed a high level of student engagement in peer learning tasks, which aligned with my own observations and with the student feedback forms, where seven students strongly agreed and three students agreed that they actively participated in class. Two students expressed a neutral opinion, but these two also rated the class atmosphere encouraging for their learning,

Use of theoretical concepts

I assessed student ability to understand the meaning of concepts of multilingualism by students being able to define the concepts (using their own words) and put them to use in class activities and assignments. From the learning logs, I could see that students confronted their own definitions of concepts with those from academic literature, but also with the perceptions of other students, which they exchanged during in-class activities. The learning logs thus evidenced students' ability to compare different meanings of concepts associated with different cultures and language policies. As the semester progressed, the students' definitions became more complex. I did not notice any misunderstanding in the learning logs.

As noted in my diary, students enrolled in the course with certain notions of multilingualism and multilingual communication, which were largely influenced by their previous experiences, knowledge and the cultural environment where they come from. The first differences appeared in the very first discussions addressing questions such as 'Who is multilingual? What is multilingualism?' Here, peer learning activities led students to share their diverse experiences, contrast them, discuss the often dissimilar perceptions of concepts, and seek possible alignment. Thanks to this, they were able to identify multiple perspectives and a wide range of possibilities for applying the concepts in practice. Later in the semester, when the observer attended the class, the students demonstrated the ability to discuss various aspects of the concepts and apply them in activities, which the observer emphasised in the protocol. She also highlighted the student initiative in helping their peers to understand the task and engage in the activity. Students explained to each other problematic phenomena, discussed concepts, and confronted different approaches.

The results from the student feedback form also indicate, albeit less explicitly, that the course helped them to embrace the concepts. For example, five students agreed and eight students strongly agreed that by the end of this course they developed a better understanding of the studied matter than they had at its beginning. When asked about applying the learned concepts in practice, five students strongly agreed that the course helped them to produce new ideas and original solutions to problems based on the acquired knowledge and skills. Another seven agreed with the statement and one had a neutral attitude.

Multilingual communication

At the beginning of the course, on the 1-10 scale students rated their ability to communicate in a multilingual and multicultural environment between 5 and 8 (average: 6.4). Those students who initially had more experience with the international environment, knew more languages, and had more opportunities to use them in communication, assessed their ability to communicate in a multilingual environment higher than their less experienced peers who spoke fewer languages. Students who used only one or two languages in communication or were in contact predominantly with people from nearby cultures were not so confident in using multiple languages and communicating effectively in multilingual environment. In all cases, the end-of-semester ratings rose by at least 1.5 points (average: 8.6), which signals a meaningful improvement in the ability to communicate multilingually (as measured by student self-perception).

In some learning logs, a temporary decrease in the value was evident, for example, after the polyglot dialogue, which is an interactional regime in which people strive to understand each other by communicating in two or more languages and use strong languages productively and weak ones receptively (Lenz and Berthele 2010). In this activity, I asked students to work in small groups and use English only when needed since English was a relatively strong language for all of them. Even if students considered the activity effective for developing their communication skills, they found it very demanding: after that class session, the self-rating of each student fell by two points or more. I noted student difficulties during this activity in the teacher's diary as well. The composition of the group in which the students performed the dialogue influenced how students used their weaker and stronger languages. While for some students it was easy, because the composition of the group enabled them to find the languages they used for communication relatively quickly, others had to find a compromise and use languages productively that were not their strongest.

Students demonstrated their ability to apply acquired theoretical knowledge in various activities, most notably in class games. For example, in multilingual Chinese whispers, which is an adaptation of a well-known children's game, students not only put to use the concept of receptive multilingualism but also applied switching languages in practice. When reflecting on this activity in their learning logs, students used such terms as attractive, exciting and interesting, which appeared in various variations in all the learning logs. The average rating of students' ability to communicate in the multilingual and multicultural environment during this session was 9.3 points out of 10, with individual scores being in the range of 8-10.

In their learning logs, ten students stated that through completing the activities they gradually increased their ability to communicate multilingually. In small group work, the effectiveness of the learning methods was closely related to whether the group was culturally and/or linguistically homogenous or heterogeneous. Later in the semester, I intentionally changed the group composition in order to make them more heterogeneous and help students learn more from group work. At the end of the semester, four students said that their ability to communicate in their initially weak languages improved.

In the assignments, students reflected on various aspects of multilingual communication, for example, receptive multilingualism, false friends, and the like. They also repeatedly pointed to the effectiveness of the classroom-based experience for building upon the assignments in real multilingual communication situations. Overall, 12 students said in the feedback form that the course had helped them to develop knowledge through problem solving, independent thinking, or completing exercises, whereas only one expressed a neutral attitude. What students thought about communicating multilingually is illustrated by an excerpt from a student learning log: 'During the activities, we practiced our (language and communicative) competencies, and we also learnt about each other's culture which helps us when it comes to future interaction'.

Replicability in a different context

Many of the students who attended this course were studying languages as their major, and for them the skill of using different languages can be an added value. Multilingual communication can also be included among the learning outcomes of more traditional language courses. In addition to 'basic' communication competence, students usually also acquire intercultural communication competence in such courses, which is indispensable for successful and effective communication if communication partners are from diverse cultures. This competence allows them to understand intercultural relations in the context of existing cultural dimensions and successfully solve various communication challenges.

Moreover, embracing multilingual communication elements through peer learning activities in language courses has the potential to build students' multilingual communication competence, such that all their language knowledge and skills are combined. What students learn when acquiring their first languages influences how they later learn other language(s). Through this knowledge, students can combine various components of this competence to achieve effective communication. These aspects could be, to a certain extent, included not only in language courses attended by international students but also in culturally homogeneous groups. This should help students to apply the acquired competencies in future multilingual and multicultural communication situations effectively.

Conclusions

The course Multilingual Communication aims to develop student communication skills and competencies in an internationalised environment. The multilingual and multicultural composition of the class in winter 2021 contributed to students achieving course outcomes through peer learning activities that simulated realistic multilingual situations. Analysis of data from five sources showed that students embraced theoretical concepts related to multilingualism and were able to apply them in a range of multilingual exercises. By completing these tasks, students demonstrated they were able to communicate multilingually. Student success in class activities and assignments was influenced by the class atmosphere. A productive learning atmosphere and heterogeneous class composition appear to have facilitated development of student competencies.

One aspect I would like to change when teaching this course again relates to the polyglot dialogue. I am considering adding a pre-activity that will help students feel more confident and engage in the dialogue. I may assign watching a video or listening to a recording of such dialogue and then have students identify the problems and barriers in communication and suggest how to address them. Strengthening student engagement this way could be instrumental to increasing their success during class activities, and thus an even more peer-learning-friendly atmosphere could further improve student learning.

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Summary

In this chapter, I present the course Multilingual Communication which is focused on the multilingual and multicultural aspects of communication and is offered to both home and international students. The concepts of peer learning and reflective learning came to the fore in the course design. The study focused on three main aspects: (1) class atmosphere encouraging peer learning, (2) use and application of theoretical concepts, and (3) multilingual communication–students' ability to communicate in simulated multilingual situations. Triangulation of data from five sources evidenced that the course was effective in supporting students to achieve the course's learning outcomes.

Keywords

class atmosphere, multilingualism, reflective learning

Dr. Jana Výškrabková obtained a double degree in History and Slovak Language and Literature from the Faculty of Arts at Comenius University in Bratislava, where she recently completed her PhD in Studia Academica Slovaca, the Centre for Slovak as a Foreign Language. During her studies, she participated in the Erasmus+ programme studying at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, and Jyväskylä University, Finland. She focuses on specific features of language teaching and learning in the online environment. She teaches Slovak as a foreign language and a course in multilingual communication.
jana.vyskrabkova@uniba.sk

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CONNECTING STUDENTS AND SHARING THEIR CROSS-CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCES THROUGH PEER LEARNING

Dominika Lešková, Comenius University in Bratislava

The teaching-learning challenge

Prior studies describe the problems that international students face when studying in a foreign country. As summarised by Pleschová (2020), these include language barriers, problems with adapting to a different culture and the integration into the community of home students. Home and international students often study in separate environments and do not often come into contact with each other, which further isolates international students. They thus have reduced chances to learn from the unique knowledge and experience of their peers.

While acting as a teaching assistant in the European Folklore and Folkloristics course offered at the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava during the COVID-19 pandemic, I noticed that the interaction among students, including among home and international students, was nearly absent. I identified this as the main obstacle to student learning.

Pedagogical method

My response to the teaching-learning challenge was to incorporate peer learning in the course seminars for which I am responsible. Peer learning is an educational practice that provides students with the opportunity to participate in a variety of learning activities, in which they can learn with and from their peers (Boud 2001). To encourage peer learning, I decided to redesign the key course assignment to center upon the delivery of student presentations.

As a student, I prepared presentations for many courses. These presentations were to be followed by discussions, but typically, it was a discussion between the presenter and the teacher. There was rarely time, opportunity or interest from peers to engage in these discussions. To change this, I strived to involve all students in the learning process. Each student had the task to prepare a presentation of one academic text related to one of the course topics. The texts presented at the seminar usually corresponded to the topic of the previous week's lecture. Early in the semester, students had to choose a text from the list of assigned reading, which included texts in English by authors from various European countries in which they describe problematic phenomena related to European Folklore. Students also had the opportunity to choose a text outside of the required reading list (a text in their mother tongue, or from another region or according to their own interest) if it was deemed academic and related to the subject matter of the course. Our aim was to encourage students to choose a text that they found appealing or to which they could apply their current knowledge. If they did not choose a text, they were assigned one.

We provided students with a verbal instruction on how to prepare their presentations and provided them with written guidelines in the syllabus. Presenters were required to raise one or more questions at the end of the presentation to stimulate class discussion. I challenged students to think of different types of questions. They could, for example, use a picture or a video as a trigger, they could come up with a list of multiple-choice questions, etc.

One seminar lasted 50 minutes, with two students usually presenting for 10 minutes each. In four seminars, after the student presentations, I introduced peer learning in the form of group work as previous studies from the region, albeit from different disciplines, have shown that in-class group work increases student participation (Awuah 2018) and leads to enhanced knowledge (Awuah 2018; Tkaczyk 2018). My aim was to connect home and international students and to create space for the sharing of their intercultural experiences, views and knowledge. I divided students into five groups each made up of home and international students. During the seminars, students worked in the same groups while discussing questions raised by a pre-assigned presenter. They typically had 15 minutes to complete this task. In the final part of the seminar, the groups presented the discussion outcomes and provided oral feedback to the presenter. In those seminars where students were not assigned any group work, students would discuss the questions after each presentation as a plenary.

Part of the group work consisted of each group completing a peer feedback form. Group members wrote down the question raised by the presenter and their collective response to it. The purpose of the form was also to find out if the presentation held their attention, if they heard and understood the presentation well, or if they thought the topic presented was helpful and informative in terms of learning about the European oral tradition. They answered three multiple-choice questions. In addition, the group members had the opportunity to comment on what they liked most about the presentation, what should be improved, or to ask the presenter a question.

In the remainder of this chapter, I evaluate if I succeeded in creating a safe learning environment for communication and knowledge sharing during the seminars, which is assumed to be a pre-condition to successful peer learning (Boud 2001). Second, I explore if peer learning enabled home and international students to establish connections among each other and share cross-cultural examples and knowledge.

The course, the students, and the lecturer

The course European Folklore and Folkloristics provides an overview of narrative folklore genres and selected genres in the oral tradition from different regions in Europe. Attention has been paid to the connections between the transmission of folklore and socio-political processes in Europe, and the related transformation of folklore motives in contemporary culture. Students are assessed based on the individual presentation of an academic text (50%) and a final test (50%). The course spans two semesters and is an elective course for undergraduate students of various degree programmes. The language of instruction is English. In the summer semester of 2021/2022, when the innovation was implemented, we started teaching online because of the

COVID-19 pandemic. After the fourth week, we switched to hybrid teaching. The course was attended by 25 students: 12 were home students and 13 international students from Ukraine (4), Russia (4), Serbia (2), Japan, Turkey and Sweden. Four of these international students joined the course online. Almost all students were from the Central European Studies programme, specifically from the first and second year of the undergraduate programme. Three students were from the Aesthetics programme, each from a different year of the undergraduate programme.
The team of course teachers was international as well. While I am Slovak, Tatiana Bužeková, the course leader, responsible for course lectures, is originally from Russia. She studied in Russia and Slovakia and taught at a university in the United States. As a lecturer, she is very attentive to the needs of international students and supported my efforts to innovate the course seminars.

Collected sources of data and methods
The data for evaluating the outcomes of this innovation originates from four sources. The opinions of students were very important for considering whether the innovation attained its aims. I collected student views via two research instruments. The first was an anonymous student evaluation form at the end of the semester that included open and closed questions and questions using a 5-point Likert scale where 5 indicated strong agreement and 1 strong disagreement. Out of 25 students, 12 completed the form; 8 were international and 4 were home students. The second research instrument was a peer feedback form. It was filled-out by group members during four seminars in which peer learning activities were introduced. I collected 23 forms.
Next, I invited a peer observer—a PhD student in ethnology from Slovenia—to one of my seminars. Because the observer was from a different country, she could put herself in the position of an international student. The observer's perspective was collected via a classroom observation protocol and a follow-up meeting.
My observations were recorded by means of a reflective journal. I wrote down my observations after each seminar. I focused on the questions raised by students at the end of their presentations - i.e., if the questions stimulated discussion and whether the questions prompted the students to share international views - the engagement of home and international students in group work and in the plenary discussion. The reflective journal also provided me with a space for my self-reflection on the outcomes of the innovation.
I used thematic analysis to analyse qualitative data from the student evaluation form, peer feedback form, the classroom observation protocol and my notes from the follow-up meeting and reflective journal. More specifically, I applied open coding when I grouped citation segments together that had a similar meaning. The data was collected and analysed by the ATLAS.ti software. In the case of the student evaluation form, I used in-vivo coding: based on segments from students' quotations I assigned a new code and linked together all responses with the same

meaning (Kusá 2021). I used descriptive statistics to process the quantitative data from the student evaluation and peer feedback forms.

Findings

Learning environment in seminars

From the student evaluation form, I learnt that students perceived seminars to be a safe place to express their opinions and share their experience and knowledge: the average rating for this question was 4.25 (out of 5). In the group of international students, the average rating was 4.13 and in the group of home students 4.5, which suggests that perceptions of the learning environment of international and home students were similar.

In the feedback form, one international student disagreed that the seminar was a safe place to express their own experiences and knowledge. This student also strongly disagreed with the statement that they enjoyed the seminar and said their group members 'were not interested in [the] discussion at all and I learned almost nothing new'. The student recommended organising seminars in a plenary instead of engaging students in group work.

The observer noticed that there were two students who appeared to feel uncomfortable with peer learning and did not interact with ease. My own observations aligned with that. I evidenced two international students to be less engaged in peer learning than other students. They did not speak English well, which was probably the reason for their lack of engagement. On the other hand, the observer highlighted a moment when an international student helped one of these less engaged international students to express their opinions in a discussion about a peer's presentation. According to the observer, the students tried to draw each other into the task. She emphasized this moment also because the students were from Russia and Ukraine, two countries at war at the time. She considered it a sign that the students felt safe in the seminar.

My own reflections noted in the journal suggested the same: that the seminar was a safe learning environment. During the entire summer semester, we did not encounter any conflicts or tensions. Mixed groups of home and international students worked together with no visible problems. The course leader seems to have contributed to this sense of safety: she spoke to the students about the war in Ukraine and shared our and Comenius University's official position declaring help and support for the students affected by the conflict. The seminars were mostly held in a pleasant atmosphere with students sharing their diverse views, experiences, and knowledge in their groups and plenary discussions. Only in one case, I observed a confrontation of opinions between a home and an international student. Finally, this too is an indication of a safe learning environment, where the expression of contradictory perspectives in front of peers is accepted.

Results of peer learning

In their evaluation forms, students acknowledged that their groups were made up of peers of diverse cultures, mother tongues and fields of study (score 4.33). They thought that the diversity of the group members enabled them to obtain new knowledge via class discussions, and/or gain new perspectives on the topics, even if the score (3.33) indicates that they did not consider their learning gain very high. A thematic analysis of the benefits students saw in peer learning revealed two main themes: (1) international students felt connected and (2) peer learning stimulated the sharing of opinions informed by students' diverse cultures. Home and international students referred to both types of benefits, where the first was mentioned more frequently (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Benefits of peer learning according to student' feedback

In the student evaluation form, six students answered an optional open question to detail what they had learned while engaged in peer learning. One student saw in peer learning an opportunity to meet new people. Two other students stated that they realised 'how diverse cultures can be' and had learnt new information from the presentations. Three students mentioned acquiring such transferable skills as teamwork, patience and presentation skills. This aligns with the themes from the thematic analysis presented above.

From the student evaluation forms it is also evident that 75% of the students thought the preparation for the presentation of an academic text was effective in acquiring knowledge relevant to the course while the follow-up discussion had value for approximately 40% of the students. In the peer feedback forms students indicated that the topics of the presentations were definitely (12), probably (7) and maybe (3) informative and helpful when learning about the European oral tradition.

The observer and I found that the topics of the student presentations were very diverse and included a lot of cross-cultural information and specific examples related to the course subject from different time periods, countries and regions. Students thus had plenty of opportunities to acquire diverse knowledge. The observer appreciated that the students could choose the topics of the presentations based on what interested them. As an example, the observer mentioned a presentation by a home student with an interest in video games who interpreted a text on gender and genre in video games closely related to the issue of folklore in popular culture. I noticed that students who had chosen an academic text based on their own interest and/or knowledge of the subject matter presented it significantly better. This had a positive effect on raising peer interest in the topic, which then stimulated lively discussion.

According to the observer, peer learning achieved its purpose because students worked together in mixed groups of home and international students, offered constructive criticism to each presenter, and exchanged opinions. This aligned with the results from the peer feedback form and the notes from my reflective journal. Peer learning activities stimulated discussions that helped students to learn about the European oral tradition. The questions raised by students at the end of their presentations played an important role in this. When the question was open and well formulated, it encouraged students to share diverse experiences and knowledge. For example, the question 'Do you think that diversity and representation in video games matter? If yes, why?' made students to talk about the diversity of archetypes and their representation not only in video games but also in other areas of popular culture. If the question was closed and/or did not ask students to explain their opinion, it rarely encouraged the sharing of knowledge. For example, the question 'Did you know who Mary Magdalene was? Have you seen the movie the Da Vinci Code?' barely resulted in any discussion. In this case, the groups briefly replied that they had heard of Mary Magdalene and had seen the film.

Peer learning was not only evident in group work but also in plenary discussions after the presenter posed questions to the audience. For example, the question 'Do you know any other terms for rusalki[1] or their features from your folk tales/traditions?' encouraged an international student to mention the Swedish term and how the creature is represented in Swedish oral tradition. How-

1 In Slavic folklore, the rusalka (plural: rusalki) is a female mythological being usually associated with water, death, and sexuality (Dynda 2017).

ever, apart from this student, no one else answered the question. I assume that if students would have worked in groups, more students would have joined the discussion as was the case in other classes when students were engaged in group work.

Replicability in a different context

I can see no major obstacles to introducing peer learning via group work in courses in a different discipline, class size or grade as this pedagogical method is relatively easy to design and calls for no additional costs. At the same time, I think this pedagogical method would be well applicable to a class without international students, too. Group members could search for information in full-text databases or open access resources for academic studies, books, etc. This would give students the skills that are essential for their studies. For example, the teacher can bring books and encyclopaedias related to the topic of the seminar to the class or take the students to the library where they can search for information. In this way, students would have the opportunity to search for information in academic literature that is directly related to the curriculum.

For those who think of trialling this pedagogical method in other courses, I would recommend drawing student attention to the content of presentations and to emphasize that the seminar is a place also to practice and improve students' presentation skills. This may help to learn also from those peers with less advanced presentation skills. Including guidelines for presentations in the syllabus, examples of well-prepared student presentations, and mixing more advanced and beginner presenters could help students to improve their presentation skills while attending the seminar.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I showed how peer activity built around student presentations resulted in a novel learning experience for the students of my European Folklore and Folkloristics class. The interaction among home and international students was instructive for their learning. As I demonstrated, a safe learning environment, which is a necessary precondition for a successful and positive peer experience, was ultimately achieved. Peer learning in the form of group work and plenary discussion in course seminars produced the sharing and exchanging of cross-cultural opinion, as evidenced by student and observer feedback and my reflective diary. However, only group work succeeded in establishing numerous connections between home and international students.

Despite the effectiveness of the innovation, I would make a few changes when teaching the course again. First, I would encourage students to choose an academic text for their presentation following their own interest and I would explain the benefits of this based on the experience from teaching this cohort. Second, in addition to sharing knowledge, I would emphasize skills development more strongly. There were notable differences in the quality of student presentations. Students will need to know how to prepare for and deliver their presentation effectively. Furthermore, students need scaffolding in formulating the questions for discussion as these are crucial in catalysing group discussions, and thus, peer learning. I would prepare detailed instructions, and if necessary, learning activities, and would demonstrate in an early seminar what a good presentation is with a follow-up discussion about good presentation practices. The above changes would support the learning of future students greatly.

Third, I would facilitate group discussions in several ways. The observer and I discussed the ways for helping the students who were less involved in peer learning. The observer suggested inviting students to contribute more frequently during the seminar, including calling them by name and asking other group members to draw them into the discussion. I am also thinking of assigning roles to individual group members such as note-taker, discussion moderator, and group spokesperson. They can switch roles during the semester. In addition, I am thinking of designing a short questionnaire specifically enquiring into student' perceptions of group work directly after its introduction or during the semester in order to monitor their experience more closely and be able to react to potential issues quickly. Finally, I would not use group work for the entire semester, or I might mix group members. When students worked in groups for the third class, I observed that the students' enthusiasm for group work and participation in discussion had decreased.

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Summary

This chapter discusses a peer learning activity used in the European Folklore and Folkloristics course for undergraduate students, designed to address the lack of interaction among home and international students. The key course assignment, a student presentation of an academic text related to one of the course topics was modified to include the requirement for students to raise questions at the end of presentations to stimulate class discussion. Discussions were conducted in small groups. The results from evaluating the outcomes of the new course design show that peer learning allowed home and international students to establish connections among each other and share their diverse views and knowledge.

Keywords
class atmosphere, group work, (peer) assessment, student presentations

Dominika Lešková received her Master's degree in ethnology and cultural anthropology from Comenius University in Bratislava, where she is currently continuing her doctoral studies at the Department of Ethnology at the Faculty of Arts. In her doctoral research, she focuses on interethnic relations in a locality in eastern Slovakia. She has been involved as a teaching assistant in the course European Folklore and Folkloristics.
dominika.leskova@uniba.sk

PEER LEARNING IN AN INTERNATIONALISED PATHOPHYSIOLOGY COURSE

Kristína Repová, Comenius University in Bratislava

The teaching-learning challenge

For a number of years, various student mobility programmes have opened the door for students to study abroad. That brings many positive experiences along with a range of challenges. The downsides typically include language barriers and cultural and academic differences to overcome. At the same time, interaction with peers and teachers of diverse cultural backgrounds contributes to students' personal and professional development and increases international awareness of global issues with the potential to connect institutions, research, and knowledge (Marinoni 2019).

Mobility can, however, only bring benefits to student learning if students do not learn isolated from their peers and if they are engaged instead of learning passively (Olivier et al. 2020). Assigning peer learning tasks to students combines these two pre-conditions. The literature on peer learning reveals that students are more engaged when learning as a group than when learning independently (Youngren 2021). Students in peer groups feel more comfortable and enjoy learning because of the lack of direct pressure from the teacher. Peer learning, moreover, fosters sharing of knowledge and ideas (Boud et al. 1999). The effectiveness of collaboration in peer groups rests on several pillars, including a sense of positive interdependence, meaning that students need to cooperate to achieve the learning goal (Scager et al. 2016). The learners have to be active, manage their learning and reflect on how they learn, and through sharing their learning experiences they develop communication skills that can increase their productivity in the future (Boud et al. 1999).

While teaching Pathophysiology to a culturally diverse group of medical students, I struggled with students not being engaged enough. Students also made little use of the diverse knowledge possessed as a group. I responded to this challenge by changing the seminar structure: I substantially increased the time devoted to peer learning activities, during which students were assigned to solve clinical case studies in small groups. In this study, I evaluate the outcomes of this teaching innovation.

Pedagogical method

During the innovated seminars in Pathophysiology, I used small group activities to facilitate peer learning. At the beginning of each seminar, using Slido, an app that allows group interaction, I asked an icebreaker question, for example: Which superpower would you like to have? This was to make the students ready to learn in their groups. Then I briefly introduced the class topic and characterised the epidemiology of the disease under study. Following this, students individually used Slido again and anonymously completed a quiz that checked comprehension of the pre-class reading and prepared them for learning in class. Subsequently, I delivered a 20-minute interactive mini-lecture explaining, for example, why iron deficiency leads to anaemia and may cause chest pain. During the mini-lecture, I repeatedly asked students questions to help them notice causal relationships between the origin, development, and treatment of a disease. Moreover, to prime students on what they can learn by considering information from different contexts, I pointed to variations in the distribution of diseases with a specific geographical or ethnic distribution.

I then assigned students to work in groups of three or four to solve a case study, which took 20–25 minutes. I chose a case study of a virtual patient that was suffering from a disease corresponding to the seminar's topic. For example, during the seminar on anaemias, I introduced a patient with general symptoms typical for anaemic syndrome who was also experiencing specific symptoms of iron deficiency (the aetiology of his anaemia). I added blood test results that should have guided the students to the correct diagnosis. The students were asked to deduce the cause of the patient's anaemia, explain its development, identify and interpret the patient's risk factors and clarify the pathomechanisms of the patient's symptoms. Next, students had to analyse the present abnormal findings and predict others they would expect to find. Finally, students were asked to propose further examinations to confirm the diagnosis and recommend a treatment.

This structure allowed students to integrate their knowledge from other subjects, the pre-class reading and the mini-lecture. Students were allowed to use any resources, including textbooks, pre-class material, their notes, and the internet. I made myself available by walking around the room, asking groups about their progress and offering to answer their questions. Afterwards, we reviewed the case together in a plenary. After a break, the quiz, mini-lecture, and group activity repeated again.

When designing this peer learning activity, I expected the students to become engaged in learning and to share and integrate their diverse knowledge to analyse the relationship between disorders of particular systems and their clinical manifestations. Based on the findings from the literature summarised above, I formulated two hypotheses: (H1) while completing peer learning tasks, students will be engaged, and (H2) when completing peer learning tasks, students will demonstrate the use of their diverse knowledge.

The course, the students, and the lecturer

In the winter 2021 semester, I taught two seminars of the Pathophysiology I course covering the topics of atherosclerosis (in week 7) and anaemic syndrome (in week 12). The course is offered by Faculty of Medicine at Comenius University in Bratislava. It is a compulsory course for General Medicine students in their 5th semester. The course is divided into lectures and seminars that address the same topics. The seminar lasts for three hours and meets once a week for a period of 12 weeks. Various teachers are responsible for teaching different lectures and seminars based on their expertise. The course was enrolled by 190 international students from Poland, Austria, Germany, Spain, Greece, Ukraine, Iran, Japan and other countries. For the seminars, they were divided into groups of 25 to 30 students. For two weeks, I taught all the groups. The language of instruction was English.

Collected sources of data and methods

To test the hypotheses, I collected quantitative and qualitative data. First, at the end of the semester, students completed a voluntary and anonymous feedback questionnaire online. The questions focused on student perceptions of the effectiveness of various teaching and learning methods in the Pathophysiology I course, including peer learning, and how engaged students felt when learning via the different methods. The questions used 5-point Likert scales, where the score 1 meant 'not at all' and the score 5 meant 'extremely'. Altogether, I collected questionnaires from 37 out of the 190 international students (19%) present in the two seminars I facilitated. The response rate was rather low, which is a common phenomenon when asking student opinions at my university, and the results might not reflect the views of all General Medicine students. It may be that the more active students joined the survey and shared their opinion. I used descriptive statistics to analyse the quantitative data from the questionnaires.

Second, I used the feedback forms completed by two colleagues who observed the seminars I led. Each observed a session on the same topic but in a different seminar group. In addition, I had an approximately hour-long conversation with each observer in which we exchanged our observations regarding peer learning.

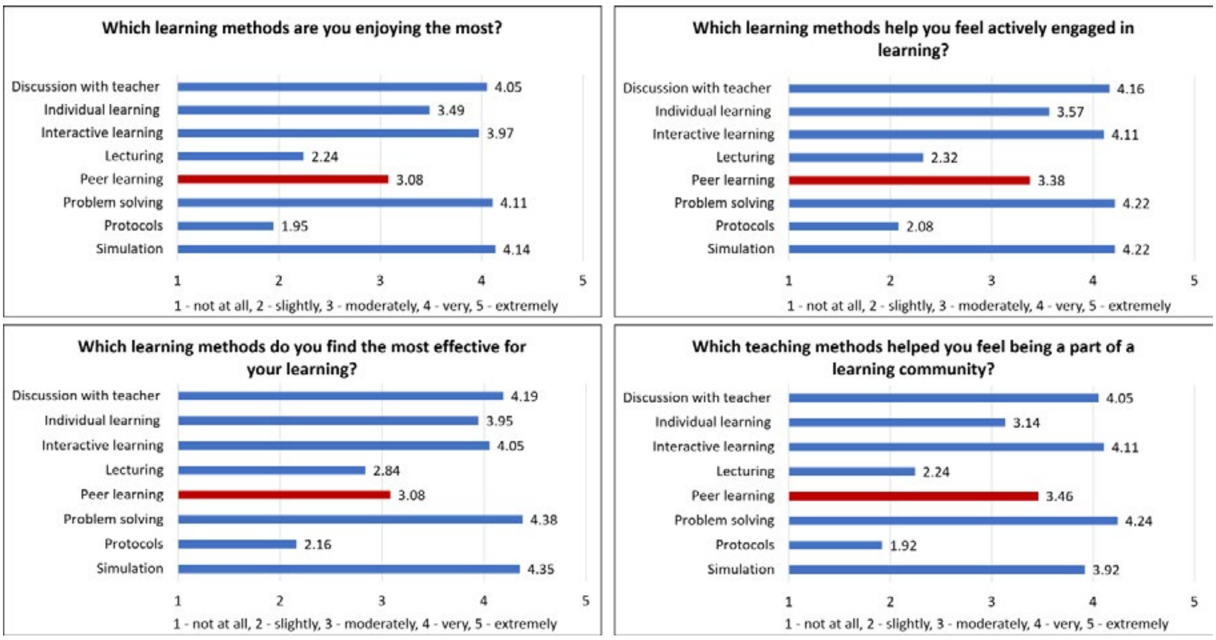
Third, another colleague interviewed two international students who attended the seminar she observed. Both students provided written consent before the interview. She chose the students because they were active in presenting the group work results. My colleague asked them about their perceptions of the effectiveness of the peer learning methods in that seminar session. The interview took 30 minutes, was completed online, and I used its full, anonymised transcript for the analysis. While the interview reveals how students who engaged most actively in peer learning perceived the tasks, their opinions cannot be considered representative of the 190 students. However, their answers do shed light on what features and characteristics of the activities appealed to the two students.

Finally, I wrote notes in a reflective diary after each seminar session I taught. The diary contained my own observations of student learning in class, focusing on peer learning, student engagement and students using diverse knowledge. I also noted what some students told me when I enquired about their preparedness for the seminar, together with some ideas on how to improve student learning in the future.

Findings

As for the hypothesis on the level of engagement (H1), I had assumed that students would enjoy peer learning activities, and perceive them as engaging and effective. However, the data collected from the student feedback questionnaires are mixed (Figure 1). On one hand, their answers suggest a moderate preference for peer learning when compared with seven other methods of teaching used during their studies. In this, the students only found frontal lecturing and protocols—which is a laboratory guide describing experimental procedures—less enjoyable, engaging and effective than peer learning activities. Peer learning did a little better when it came to making students feel part of a learning community: after problem-solving, interactive learning, teacher-led discussions, and simulations, it was chosen as the fifth most useful method in this regard. On the other hand, when looking at the absolute numbers the picture is more positive. Students reported in the feedback questionnaire a higher-than-average preference for peer learning. Their rating of peer learning was 3.08 for its effectiveness and enjoying learning, 3.38 for engagement and 3.46 for making students feel a part of a learning community. Thus, peer learning did consistently better than two methods that have been used for a long time at the Faculty of Medicine (lecturing and protocols), and the above-average scores for peer learning in all areas are encouraging for the future, especially since working in peer groups in seminars is still not common in the General Medicine degree programme. Students lacking experience with group work naturally have underdeveloped group work skills. If students get more opportunities to learn in groups, I expect they will become more skilled and appreciate the benefits of group work.

Figure 1. Student perceptions of eight different learning methods used in the General Medicine programme (N=37).



Several factors can explain why peer learning was not perceived to be even more engaging. First, the environment in certain groups, where some students did not want to discuss with their peers. I asked some of these students during the seminar why they preferred keeping silent, and they admitted they had not completed the pre-class reading and did not have sufficient knowledge to discuss the case. These students remained quiet to avoid embarrassment.

Observer 1 noticed a high level of student engagement during the peer learning exercises, though he said it was not higher compared to other parts of the class. According to the first observer, in peer learning tasks, the students easily interacted with each other and appeared comfortable. Those more active and better prepared students typically initiated discussion in their group. Observer 2 reported a medium level of student engagement during the peer learning exercises, but she said it was higher than for the other activities. According to her, the students interacted with each other without any hesitation and seemed comfortable learning in groups. Most students spontaneously joined the group work, even if one group had to be stimulated by the teacher to engage in group work.

These observations are supported by the student interviews and my reflective diary as well. In the interview, the students self-reported that during group work they felt 'involved in the discussion and also in the topic', while working in small groups created a 'discussing atmosphere'. Learning in groups was comfortable for them because students talked to peers they had already known for three years. They reported that the activity was 'fun and exciting'.

Data regarding their actual sharing of knowledge (H2) is less robust, but very encouraging. Students appreciated that in small groups, they could share their knowledge and experience from hospital placement, and they could practice problem-solving via discussion and note-sharing because 'everyone remembered different things'. Students considered this exchange of information 'helpful' and believed it improved knowledge retention: information 'stuck' in their minds. Overall, the two interviewed students believed peer learning via group work was effective for their learning.

I noted in my reflective diary that the students almost immediately started discussion when asked to work in a group. It was only interrupted when some students reviewed the notes they had prepared at home from the pre-class readings or the textbooks, but after comparing them with information from their peers, the students continued working on the assigned case. Indeed, checking and comparing was a crucial moment for sharing and augmenting their knowledge, as I noticed that they often discussed differences in detail and understanding and resolved these before applying the knowledge to the case. Some groups even initiated discussions with other groups. When certain groups finished earlier than others, I asked them additional questions or gave them hints, which helped to spark discussion. The plenary discussion offered another opportunity to share and combine knowledge and perspectives, this time across groups. Three times, however, it occurred that one student (always a different student) did not want to join the discussion with their peers and preferred solving the case study alone.

Replicability in a different context

This chapter showed that peer learning is an engaging method that encourages the sharing of students' diverse knowledge. It does not require any special equipment. This signals that peer learning via group work can be used in various courses with international students, and most probably also with home and mixed groups of students, no matter if these are large or small courses. To make this method effective, it is crucial to choose an in-class case study activity that will help to address most aspects of the problem being studied. In medicine, a patient case study should be characterised by typical risk factors (including age, gender or ethnicity). Symptoms guide the students toward the diagnosis, and at the same time students should be able to explain their development in regard to the disease. After considering the provided information, the students should deduce the correct diagnosis, interpret the laboratory and other examination results and recommend the principles of treatment.

Next, the assignment of students to groups needs to be purposeful. Ideally, each group should include more advanced along with less advanced students and students of various cultural backgrounds. This implies that the teacher must know the students beforehand, which may be challenging, especially in large courses, when a teacher facilitates only two or three course sessions. Also, a language barrier may obstruct group work as it often happens that in large courses enrolled by international students, several students do not speak the language well. Another critical aspect is allocating enough time for the peer learning activity. My experience from teaching this course revealed that each peer learning activity requires at least 30 minutes, including plenary discussion and debriefing. The teacher needs to be ready to assist the groups if they get stuck trying to solve their case. Finally, to make the method effective, the teacher needs to create a learning atmosphere in which students are not afraid to share their knowledge. This can be done, for example, by remembering and using student names, interacting with students as individuals, beginning the session with an icebreaker, arranging the seating in the classroom so that students can see each other's faces, appreciating student input and letting students know that mistakes should be seen as learning opportunities in this class. The goal is to create a safe place for questions, answers and discussion without any judgment by peers or teacher.

Conclusions

The aim of my innovation, peer learning via group work, was to engage students and invite them to share their diverse knowledge. The student feedback questionnaire results showed a higher-than-average appreciation of peer learning, and the student interview, peer observers' views and my own observations support the hypotheses: peer learning via group work made students engaged and encouraged sharing of diverse knowledge.

The main challenge I faced during my seminars was engaging those students who preferred working individually. Because they will need to collaborate with colleagues in their future practice, I believe they should start training this skill during their studies. In future classes, I am considering verbally encouraging these students to cooperate with their small group or allowing them to change groups if they do not feel comfortable enough working in a particular group.
I am also thinking of assigning students so that groups include more and less advanced students and those from various cultural backgrounds. Students from the same country tend to sit next to each other and to form a group with their compatriots. In the future, I will ask students at the beginning of the first class session to change places and form groups with peers from different countries. This way the sharing of knowledge across cultures would be supported more strongly.

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Summary

This chapter discusses the effects of peer learning via case study method in small groups on student engagement and their ability to use their diverse knowledge during seminars on Pathophysiology. To evaluate peer learning, I used a student feedback questionnaire, an interview with two students, feedback from two peer observers and my own observations. Student feedback collected from the questionnaire showed that students assigned a higher-than-average value to peer learning for engagement and learning as a community. The student interview, peer feedback, and my own observations signalled that the students were engaged during the peer learning sessions and shared their diverse knowledge. In conclusion, I can recommend peer learning via case studies solved in groups as an engaging method that encourages students to build upon each other's knowledge.

Keywords
case study method, diversity, group work, student engagement

Kristína Repová, Doctor of Medicine, is a Senior Assistant Professor at the Institute of Pathophysiology, Faculty of Medicine, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia. She completed her PhD in 2014 in normal and pathological physiology. Her research focuses on cardiovascular diseases, particularly hypertension, heart failure, novel trends in heart protection and cardiovascular drug-induced behavioural alterations. Her interests include innovations in teaching pathophysiology. **kristina.repova@uniba.sk**

TEACHING EVOLUTION VIA GROUP WORK. PEER LEARNING AS A TOOL TO ENGAGE STUDENTS AND HELP THEM TO ACHIEVE COURSE OUTCOMES

Michal Uhrin, Comenius University in Bratislava

The teaching-learning challenge

Encouraging students to be engaged learners presents one of the biggest pedagogical challenges to lecturers. Designing courses that offer opportunities for peer learning is another pedagogical challenge worthy of addressing in education at all levels. Using a mixed method analysis, I show that teaching anthropology through peer learning contributes to advanced learning by advancing and deepening the level of engagement related to the topic.

During my five years of studying at the Department of Ethnology and Museology from 2011 to 2016, I experienced two teaching and learning formats: lectures that are sometimes followed by discussions and seminars in which assigned readings were discussed and short assignment were to be handed in before class. Only a few courses included activities, such as group work or role-play that promoted peer learning. In other words, the courses did not sufficiently engage students and specifically did not encourage students to communicate and cooperate with their peers.

I have been working at the Department of Ethnology for two years in my capacity as an assistant professor. When I enrolled in the course Effective teaching for Internationalisation, I chose to internationalise the course Introduction to Evolutionary Anthropology, which is closest aligned to my scientific interests. Based on the experience from previous years, the major challenge I identified in the course was to increase the number of opportunities for peer learning. Following Boud (2001), I understand peer learning to be a learning strategy where students learn with and from each other without the immediate intervention of a teacher. In this chapter, I evaluate the outcomes of my innovation by exploring the following two questions: Does peer learning help students to become engaged learners? Does peer learning help students to achieve course learning outcomes?

Pedagogical method

Prior to the innovation, I did not assign any tasks to students. Apart from facilitating brief discussions and inviting students to ask questions, I taught the course by means of lecturing. The innovation therefore entailed a fundamental redesign of the course. I introduced peer learning in the form of group work in class as well as during two out-of-class activities: a visit to the anthropological exhibition Man through Time and Space in the Natural History Museum and a visit to the Bratislava Zoo to observe the behaviour of apes and monkeys. Before each activity, students received a set of discussion questions via email. These questions referred to the essential ideas expressed in a particular video, article, or out-of-class activity. Discussion questions always used

the format of open-ended questions and were not graded. Their number ranged from five to eight, depending on the length and content of the activity. In four class sessions, students were first tasked with trying to answer these questions individually based on the reading of a text or the watching of a short video during class.
To illustrate, while watching a video, I encouraged students to take notes. Students then listened to my 15-minute mini-lecture and discussed the assigned questions within their group of peers; usually in groups of four. I acted as the facilitator of the discussion. Group work was then followed by a plenary discussion. Students who were relatively silent during the first three weeks of the semester were assigned the role of group speakers. I explained at the beginning of the activity why speakers are given this role. In other class sessions students started by discussing the questions in their groups without first thinking about these individually. The questions discussed in each class formed a corpus of approximately fifty questions. For the final exam, I selected eight questions from this corpus related to core concepts within the evolutionary social sciences. As the topics of the mini-lectures related to the themes of the Bachelor and Master theses of some of the students enrolled in the course, I repeatedly invited these students to comment on certain topics. I strived to always acknowledge student contributions to the discussion. I had observed that immediate feedback and encouragement had an effect on these students and that they would also be more engaged in any activities that followed. Creating a safe place for discussion and a judgment-free environment was one of the pre-conditions for student learning in all the courses that I taught.
During early group work, I allowed students to form their own groups. However, later I usually assigned groups in such a way that those students who proved themselves to be more active were evenly distributed with less active students in each group. This meant that students had the opportunity to work with different peers throughout the semester.
Upon visiting the museum, students were asked to walk through the exhibition halls in small groups and discuss what they observed in the different panels and displays. The subjects of the exhibition were anthropogenesis, primatology, and physical anthropology. The exposition mapped the evolutionary odyssey of homo sapiens and its ancestors. It contained interactive elements to raise the interest of visitors. Before the visit to the zoo, students were again pre-assigned questions. They were expected to observe the behaviour of primates (common chimpanzees and Borneo orangutans) and monkeys (both old- and new-world). I moved between groups and served as a facilitator of discussions for each group. If they had any questions, I readily answered these.

The course, the students, and the lecturer

The Introduction to Evolutionary Anthropology course was offered for the second time in the summer semester of the 2021/2022 academic year. The course was designed for Master's students in the Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology study programme. The course was offered in Slovak. Eleven students attended the course. Four of them were Master's students of the Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology programme, five studied Psychology (two at the Bachelor's and three at the Master's level) one Religious studies (Master's level) and one Sinology (Bachelor level).

Upon completing the course, students were expected to be able to define the foundational concepts for the study of human diversity and behaviour from an evolutionary perspective, describe the development of evolutionary theory and key terms and concepts in evolutionary social science and to discuss certain topics from an evolutionary anthropological perspective, including evolutionary theory in anthropology, controversies in evolutionary theory, primatology, anthropogenesis, and current trends in the evolutionary social sciences. Requirements for passing the course included the submission of a written assignment: the critical analysis of a scientific paper (50%) and the completion of a written exam (50%). For the written assignment, I allowed students to select their own topics, though I chose the paper.

Collected sources of data and methods

As an ethnographer and anthropologist, I use qualitative ethnographic research methods. An inherent part of this process is the writing of a field diary. Naturally, one of the sources of data for the evaluation of this innovation was the teacher's reflective diary. I took detailed notes after each lesson, recording details such as how many students participated in the activity, the interactions that took place between students during the activity, what specific forms of peer learning I observed and the spontaneous forms of student engagements I noticed.

Another source of data was peer observation by a PhD student from my department who observed the tenth class that was devoted to the topic of primatology and dealt with reflections on the visit to the zoo. The observer was provided with the class outline beforehand and we discussed the aims of the innovation. She completed an observation form during the class. After the class, the observer and I had a half-an-hour meeting to discuss her observations.

Additionally, I used an anonymous student feedback form where students expressed their opinions mostly using a Likert scale (1-5). The value of 5 expressed the highest level of agreement, whereas the value of 1 implied the lowest level of agreement. The final source of data came in the guise of the grades that were attained in the final exam. In the previous year, the exam took the form of closed-ended multiple choice questions whereas this time–in line with the purpose of the innovation–I used open-ended questions. Unfortunately, this did not allow for the comparing of student results.

For the student feedback form, I sought for patterns in student feedback and any responses that did not conform to those patterns. For other sources of data, I wrote a brief summary of what I learnt from these in relation to the two research questions while making notes of any specific moments during the course that supported or contradicted my expectations. I executed a content analysis to analyse student exams. In the following sections, I triangulate the data from all four sources.

Findings

Engagement

The observer appreciated the class structure that was composed of different activities, the contributions of all students in the discussions, and the opportunity for students to influence learning activities based on the topic of their interest. She rated the level of student engagement and peer learning medium to high in the case of group work and the subsequent discussion. According to her, students interacted with each other naturally and with ease. They tried to encourage each other to work on the assignment. While working in groups, they asked group members questions, verified the correctness of their answers, and asked fellow members for feedback and further input. She also stated that she felt that the students were used to working in groups in this course. She explicitly wrote: 'Students discussed a lot among themselves'.

The observer also appreciated that I emphasized that I was presenting my opinion, and it was the students' responsibility to formulate their own opinions based on what they had learnt in the course. The observer then noted that students valued the diversity in class in terms of students coming from various disciplines. An essential part of the class, according to the observer, was the debriefing after the activity itself which lasted for about twenty minutes. She also emphasized the inclusive class climate where students helped their peer who was not proficient in Slovak. According to her observations, the students created a learning community during the course. She believed that peer learning helped to accomplish the expected session- and course outcomes. She noted that students discussed the assigned questions referencing the concepts both within the context of evolutionary anthropology and their field of study.

Based on the data from my reflective diary, I concluded that as the semester progressed, I witnessed an increase in student engagement. From the third class onwards, it seemed that the discussions had a natural flow. I no longer needed to prompt the students. From the fifth class onward, there was an increase in the number of questions raised, additionally to the pre-assigned questions. Rather than me answering student questions, I encouraged their peers to respond. Two out of three times the question was answered by another student. By the end of the seventh class, all students had contributed to the plenary discussion at least twice and everyone had spontaneously asked at least one question. One student commented on this in class noting its interactive nature - claiming that this was one of the few courses where she felt that she could actively contribute to the course.

The eighth class was notable in terms of student engagement. One student spontaneously commented on the interactive nature of the classes observing that this was one of the few courses where she felt that she could actively partake in the course and where she always learnt something new from her colleagues. Other students expressed agreement with her evaluation. I encouraged the students to contribute to the course from the vantage point of their respective disciplines. Students of psychology presented fascinating pieces of knowledge such as Zimbart's and Milgram's experiments. Also, other students mentioned examples from their fields of study referring to various authors and their publications. These were often new to both their fellow students and myself.

The last class that discussed the visit to the zoo showcased how engagement and learning outcomes went hand in hand. I could observe students in all groups engaging in lively discussions. They provided each other with feedback on what they uncovered during their observations at the zoo. In one of the groups, they discussed, for example, what the term phenotype meant. In another, they jointly checked the accuracy of what they learnt about mating and social systems. They searched for additional online sources to provide more complex answers. I invited those previously less active students to respond to discussion questions. These students' responses were of a similar level of complexity as those of the more active students and indicated the achievement of the expected learning outcomes. During that class, each of these students who were typically silent at the beginning of the semester spontaneously asked one or more questions. Overall, I could observe peer learning in nine out of ten classes. There was no peer learning in the fourth lesson for which I had no activity prepared and I only lectured and students had an opportunity to ask questions.

In the anonymous student feedback questionnaire that was completed by all students, the students self-rated the level of their own engagement at 4.22 out of 5 (the highest possible value of agreement), which indicated that they perceived themselves as contributing in class very frequently. They believed that group work had helped them to maintain attention during class, as indicated by an average rating of 4.34 out of 5 and they indicated that they enjoyed the group work (4.73). Finally, they acknowledged the opportunity to be an active part of the learning process and not a passive recipient of lectures. One student expressed their opinion in the following way: 'The course was … cool, I learned considerably more from it than from any other course this year, and this was mainly due to the various activities and discussions'.

As for the achievement of course outcomes, students mentioned in the feedback questionnaire that the activities helped them to remember the content, and they got to know new perspectives from their classmates. To illustrate this, one student wrote: 'When one works on something or experiences it, I think the student remembers it better than if the student learns it solely by means of memorization'.

Learning outcomes

These student statements nicely illustrate the connection between engagement and learning outcomes. According to students, group work encouraged discussions with peers from other disciplines, and this allowed them to look at topics from new perspectives. The second most significant point identified was that the group activities helped students to better prepare for the course on a week-to-week basis. Students moreover appreciated the feedback that they exchanged during group work together with the opportunity to formulate and present their opinion on behalf of the group during plenary sessions. Group work was perceived as useful to maintain attention during class and served to increase their levels of interest in the curriculum. Some students reported that because of the group work they were not afraid to present their own opinion and felt more responsible and motivated to work on the pre-class assignments.

Students further pointed to the importance of linking mini-lectures with activities. The variety of activities, according to them, increased their motivation to attend the course and prepare for the course each week. The visit to the Zoo was believed to result in putting 'theoretical concepts into practice'. The most highly appreciated course components were the discussing of questions and the watching of videos; unanimously identified as effective by all eleven students. To summarise the students' points of view, because of peer learning, they did not regress into a humdrum routine, they looked forward to the classes and prepared for each activity.

The rating for having learnt new knowledge from classmates was 3.73, which indicated that students learnt some new knowledge from their classmates. The lower value compared to other measurements may be the result of several factors. Students might acquire less knowledge from their classmates, because four weeks out of ten, class sessions were held online due to Covid-19 restrictions. Also, students were not used to group work, and the notion of peer learning was new to them. As pointed out by Padrtová (2018) who introduced a similar innovation, diversions from previously experienced learning methods may be sometimes counterproductive to student motivation and learning. Finally, the result could also mean that students simply did not recognize the amount of peer learning that they experienced throughout the course. Other sources of data demonstrate clearly that peer learning took place.

The content analysis of the student exam answers that I had undertaken suggested that all students had achieved above-average results. They all answered the questions at a level that I rated as 80% or higher. Students described specific theoretical concepts with reference to the information they had learnt during the activities. They referred to their own observations in the zoo, their visit to the museum, and the activities associated with reading the texts and watching the videos. This indicated that peer learning had helped students to achieve the course learning outcomes.

Replicability in a different context

The type of innovation that I had executed could be applied to almost any course and in virtually any context. Nevertheless, there are a few issues that other teachers drew attention to in case of a similar innovation. First, in their feedback questionnaires, students were asked to describe a concept, theory or approach they found most interesting during the course. Students identified certain concepts and based on these I will modify the topics for the next academic year and increase or decrease the duration of certain activities. Although a student's interest is not the main criterion in selecting course topics, I suggest not to overlook it during the course design. Student interest helps to increase engagement in the learning process.

Second, in the case of group work, I recommend ensuring that students are divided into groups during the activities appropriately, considering their strengths and weaknesses as learners. This should be done as early in the semester as possible. Third, I advise not to strive to have each student contribute to class discussions with a similar frequency. I believe that we, as teachers, need to respect the diversity of students: an introverted student may engage in activities to a lesser degree than their extroverted colleague. Instead, we should look at whether the level of activity progressively increases for a student or not.

Fourth, based on student feedback, I also suppose that lectures should be maintained as one of the teaching and learning methods. Students indicated that lectures that are too lengthy do not allow for the maintaining of attention. I would only utilize these in the form of mini-lectures. Also, in case other teachers plan on including a museum visit or a similar activity, a short lecture or commentary on the exhibition seems appropriate prior to the actual exhibition.

Finally, the general thematic outline–i.e., the number of topics comprising the course–might need to be reduced in the case of similar innovations. After completing the first three class sessions, I came to the conclusion that almost half of the themes needed to be excluded in favour of group work and follow up discussions. The focus on fewer topics led to deeper learning.

Conclusions

Through my innovation, I aimed to help students to become more engaged during the course and better achieve their learning outcomes. This was to happen through peer learning, more specifically group work and plenary discussions. Based on the analysis of the data, I concluded that peer learning occurred in a meaningful and significant way during the course. In this course, peer learning helped students to become engaged learners and to achieve the learning outcomes. One of the unintended results of the innovation was that the students learned as a community.

My innovation had similar results to those by Awuah (2018) or Padrtová (2018). Awuah found that group work increased student participation in class and facilitated the achievement of learning outcomes. Padrtová suggested that active learning stimulated student interest in the curriculum, and thereby better promoted learning. According to Awuah, group work moreover improved students' abilities to communicate in a foreign language. In this course, the improvement of communication skills in Slovak occurred in the case of a student of Russian origin. Awuah also mentioned that student participation in his course promoted a focus on meaning and understanding of the curriculum rather than the passive reproduction of knowledge. I believe my innovation to have had a similar outcome, as evidenced by the students' responses in the final examination.

I believe that peer learning should be one of the most widely used methods in education in general. Studies into peer learning undertaken elsewhere confirmed the effectiveness of this method (Boud et al. 2001, Cornelius-White 2007; Din and Wheatley 2007). If students are encouraged to participate, there will likely be moments in which peer learning will be present in almost any social and cultural context. In the spirit of evolutionary theory, we can say that people are social animals and learning in collaboration with others and through others is natural for them (Boyd et al. 2011; Henrich 2016).

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Summary

In this chapter I described the innovation that was executed in the course 'Introduction to Evolutionary Anthropology'. Based on the experience in previous years, the major challenge I identified in the course was to increase the opportunities for peer learning. I evaluated the outcomes of my innovation by exploring the following two interconnected questions: does peer learning help students to become engaged learners and does peer learning help students to achieve the course learning outcomes? I introduced peer learning in the form of group work in class as well as during two out-of-class activities: museum visit and a visit to the Bratislava Zoo. Students had to complete a set of questions based on reading a text or watching a short video during class. Students then listened to a mini-lecture of about 15 minutes and discussed and compared their answers to the questions as a group. Based on the triangulation of four sources of data, I concluded that in this course, peer learning helped students to become engaged learners and achieve the learning outcomes.

Keywords
group work, student engagement

Michal Uhrin works as an Assistant Professor at the Department of Ethnology, Faculty of Arts of Comenius University. He has done ethnographic research on religion and cooperation in the Slovak rural environment and mating preferences in urban environments. He has published articles focused on the relationship between kinship, religion, and the various formats of cooperation. His research has been framed by theoretical concepts of evolutionary and cognitive anthropology, focusing on theories related to religion, cooperation, and rituals. **michal.uhrin@uniba.sk**

GROUP DEBATE: A WAY TO STEER THE DISCUSSION AND ENHANCE PEER LEARNING

Ekaterina Ananyeva, Charles University and Anglo-American University

Teaching-learning challenge

During my courses Russian foreign policy and Multilateral institutions and global governance I taught at Charles University and Anglo-American University I noticed three issues that needed to be addressed. First, students tended to form nation-based groups and were unwilling to mix. By staying within the nation-based group, they were limited in their views by prevailing visions and were not confronted by alternative points of view. This posed a problem of their integration into a broad student community.

Second, the difference in the learning style was apparent. For instance, the U.S. students tended to dig deeper into the subject, seek out alternative literature, and pose more questions than home students. Third, when it comes to home students (those enrolled on permanent basis), they typically felt that they did not have sufficient language skills or grasp of literature when compared with their American peers, they tended to underestimate their knowledge and competencies and felt shy to contribute in class activities. The main challenge I was confronted with was to engage all students in peer learning.

Pedagogical method

Based on my colleagues' and my own experience as a teacher and student, I decided to introduce an academic debate at the semester's end. In some courses, this activity takes place during the semester. My choice of timing for the debate was informed by a willingness to provide students with enough room for advancing their knowledge and formulating their view at their fullest.

A week before the academic debate, the students were divided into three groups based on their preference for one of the following statements: Russia is a rising, declining, or great power. Each group received the same three articles discussing the topic. Then, the students were encouraged to seek arguments in support of their statement in other sources. On the day of the academic debate, the students joined their respective teams. All were given 10 minutes to prepare their opening statements. This time was spent by the team members to formulate a common position, since typically students preferred to prepare for the debate individually. Another observation concerned students' preference to discuss arguments in class rather than arrange a team meeting prior to it.

After presentation of opening statements, each team was given five minutes to prepare their reactions to each other. Then, the debate commenced. As a lecturer I took on the role of a moderator and I also occasionally raised new issues that students had overlooked when preparing their statement (Beardsley 2011).

When trialling this method in the past, I randomly divided students into groups. However, this led to the situation when the students held opinions different from other group members. Feeling dissatisfied, they started to switch places with their colleagues. Therefore, in the next semester I decided to change the approach from random assignment to letting students decide on their group. Random assignment was kept only in case that the groups had a very disproportionate number of students.

The course, the students, and the teacher

I applied the method during my course on Russian foreign policy where the topics offered enough room for formulating and presenting one's opinion. The course was offered to B.A. students and was usually attended by a group of 15 individuals, out of whom some 40% were international students. Out of these, approximately 25% were U.S. students, another 20% - EU exchange students, and the rest—home students. All of them studied either International Relations or Politics and Societies.

In order to address the needs and diverse levels of previous student knowledge, I developed five main assessed tasks. First, there were very short essays at the beginning of each session. This assessment task aimed at motivating students to read and refer to the assigned literature when formulating their views on the current Russian foreign policy. Secondly, I introduced a test to monitor student progress. Because it was scheduled for the middle of the semester, I was still able to make necessary changes in the curriculum and provide additional guidance to underachieving students. These changes included a more involved guidance from my side for the final essay and advice on more robust engagement with literature and alternative sources to improve the quality of students' contributions in in-class discussions.

Thirdly, there was a classical assignment in the form of a final essay aimed at assessing students' overall knowledge gained during the course as well as their academic writing skills. Fourthly, participation in class discussions contributed to student grade as well. Fifthly, students were asked to write a summary of their group debate, in which they were expected to make use of all skills employed in the first three assessments. Overall, these assessed tasks provided students with opportunities to enhance their understanding of the topics as well as develop their rhetoric and argumentative skills. Engaging students in various assignment types, I was also hoping to give students an opportunity to identify their strongest skills and to enjoy learning in this course.

After trialling the debating method at the semester's end at Anglo-American University, I introduced it at the Charles University, where I taught the same course. There, the ratio between home and international students was lower: approximately 25% of the students were international. The group behaviour with such a small number of international students vis-à-vis a homogeneous group of home students (the rest being mostly Czech or Slovak) represents a classic case described by Pleschová (2020). Home students tend to be more active, while international ones are less engaged.

Being an international lecturer myself (born in Russia, having studied in Germany, and teaching in the Czech Republic), I know from my personal experience how important it is to have the motivation to contribute in class and to be heard. When teaching this course, I introduced a learning method that I used to favour as a student: using pre-class time to find various sources that offered different perspectives on the problem, prepare a statement and arguments that support or contradict it.

Collected sources of data and analytical method(s)

During the course on Russian foreign policy I taught at Anglo-American University and Charles University, I collected data via anonymous student feedback questionnaire surveys that are standardly used at both universities. The surveys included questions like perceived relevance and usefulness of course materials, fairness of assessment, etc. While the feedback questionnaire administered at Anglo-American University focused more on lecturer-student relations and communication, the survey at Charles University emphasized the organisational side of the course, for example by asking students to agree or disagree with a statement like: 'Tests, tasks and other duties were corrected and results communicated in a timely manner'. In both surveys, students could choose from four options that ranged from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Students' participation in the surveys was voluntary.

Aside from these surveys, I used peer feedback from the Dean of the School of International Relations at the Anglo-American University who observed one of my classes. This feedback consisted of assessment of various elements of my teaching and student learning: from my punctuality as a lecturer to my ability to maintain control over the class. Finally, I draw from my observations of how students learnt in class.

Findings

Student feedback collected via anonymous survey revealed their satisfaction with the group debate as a learning method. This feedback was overwhelmingly positive, ranging from 'really liked' to 'pretty interactive'. More than 93% (15 out of 16 students) of students at Anglo-American University who took the course in the winter term 2017, strongly agreed that 'the instructor encouraged discussion and questions'.

Students from Anglo-American University appreciated the method more than their peers from Charles University. Out of those eight students who completed the evaluation at Charles University in summer semester 2018/2019 (the course was attended by 23 students), 40% agreed that the course was 'very good' while another 40% called it 'good'.

Overall, students' feedback suggested that the method helped to achieve expected outcomes. As one student noted in his anonymous feedback: '[...] as you could see in the last seminar, we are able to discuss these topics and give our own opinions when it's approached in a good way (e.g., basically discussing a for-against statement)'. This comment was most encouraging and motivated me to use the method also in the future.

Comments from the peer observer did not focus on the final group debate, as the observer was present at one of the lectures in the middle of semester. The observer, however, positively noted my ability to engage students.

From my observations of student learning I noticed that academic debate at the end of the semester helped students motivated students to work with a broader list of literature, to better understand various topics covered in the course, they also saw how interlinked all the issues were. Students—especially those who did not participate much in the class discussion during the semester—got engaged and repeatedly contributed during the academic debate. I could see that this activity enabled those who felt insecure during in-class discussions to prepare their arguments beforehand and voice them publicly. It allowed me as the lecturer to assess learning outcomes in a complex way: material learned, student ability to identify alternative perspectives, formulate arguments and exchange them in class.

Thus, I believe that academic discussion at the end of semester can be best applied in classes, where students have similar pre-class knowledge (e.g., all are either master-level or bachelor-level). Based on the described experience, I would also advise motivating students to prepare for the discussion in groups rather than individually so that they could engage more in peer learning and practice their negotiation skills prior to the debate.

Replicability in a different context

After applying the method at two universities with different ratios of international students, it seems that it fits perfectly in various classrooms. It allows students to enhance their academic skills, including, for example, finding alternative perspectives on the problem, crafting arguments and preparing elaborated statements based on different sources. More importantly, the method helps to create a motivating atmosphere for home and international students to learn from each other.

I believe that the method is fully applicable in other courses. Ideally, the lecturer's role should be limited to guiding the debate (including preparing the topics and questions), facilitating it, or appointing an advanced student as a facilitator. Moreover, when teaching Multilateral institutions and global governance I learnt that one needs to consider prior theoretical knowledge that students might need. Students who miss such knowledge have major difficulty engaging in a debate. This was confirmed during the summer semester 2017, when the group consisted of M.A. and B.A. students. While the former could build upon their knowledge of theories of IR, the latter had not taken the course on theories and relied mainly on the assigned literature on Russian foreign policy, which substantially decreased the quality of their argumentation.

Conclusions

This contribution discussed a learning method that I developed for the course on Russian foreign policy: a group debate on three statements: Russia is a rising, declining, or great power. This method motivated students to formulate their own views on the problems studied in the course, it proved to be highly engaging and it encouraged peer learning among home and international students who previously tended to learn isolated from each other. Given that issues from Russian foreign policy tend to be highly debated among students as a result of what they learn from media, I would recommend the method for similar courses rather than for more theoretical courses.

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Summary

This contribution discusses a group debate as a learning method used on a course on Russian foreign policy. One of the main challenges that motivated me to develop this method was international and home students' heterogeneity in terms of their knowledge and learning strategies and lack of peer learning in this course.
The outcomes of this method were assessed via student feedback surveys, peer feedback and own observations of student learning. Collected data signalled that a group debate served well the student needs and helped them to achieve the intended course outcomes. Students appreciated the group debate, as it allowed them not only to voice their opinions but also to back up them with arguments rooted in literature. The method enhanced student ability to work in groups, encouraged students to use various literature sources that offered different perspectives on the studied problems, and helped them to structure their arguments. It fostered the sharing of students' views, and thus, engagement.

Keywords

group debate, international students, Russian foreign policy, student engagement

Ekaterina Ananyeva is a recent Ph.D. graduate with four years of teaching experience at Charles University, Anglo-American University and West Bohemian University. Before moving to the Czech Republic, she gained a truly international education, having studied in Germany and the United Kingdom. These experiences helped her to understand students' needs better, and thus, create and run more engaging classes. Her academic interests comprise multilateral institutions, Russian foreign policy, content and sentiment analyses. **ekaterina.ananyeva@aauni.edu**

INTRODUCING FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT: HELPING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ADAPT IN A LAW DEGREE PROGRAMME

Terézia Švedová, Comenius University in Bratislava

The teaching and learning challenge

This chapter evaluates the effectiveness of a two-step innovation of student assessment in a course on legal history. The course used to follow the traditional approach to assessment where the final exam accounted for 80% of the semester grade and the remaining 20% came from 'points for activity'. How those points could be earned was not clarified and since the course could be passed without these points, students were little motivated to pay attention in class and study during the semester. They then had a hard time studying everything in a rush before the final exam, which carried the risk of failing the course. In order to remedy the situation, I re-designed the assessment criteria and introduced formative assessment through weekly revision tests. The more balanced and varied assessment process, together with the new incentives to prepare continuously were intended to help students to pass the course and improve their overall learning experience.

Pedagogical methods

The innovation was informed by four pedagogical concepts. First, continuous assessment, which Le Grange and Reddy (1998) define as a judgement about the learners' performance made on an on-going basis or as an on-going measurement of the learning process through a variety of assessment tools. The purpose of continuous assessment, as opposed to the traditional—one-time, often written—assessment, is to enable the evaluation of a wider range of educational outcomes as well as to provide information about the learning process and the learner's development. The most significant benefit of continuous assessment is enhancing all aspects of the learning process (intended learning outcomes, instructions, resources, teaching methods, assessment etc.) to meet individual student needs (Le Grange and Reddy 1998).

Second, formative assessment, which has the potential to strengthen the effectiveness of continuous assessment, if carried out throughout the learning process and used to inform and influence learning (Le Grange and Reddy 1998). It allows the teacher to monitor student learning, comprehension and progress during the semester, and thus, to adjust the teaching process, flexibly react to the specific needs of students and give them feedback about their strengths and weaknesses (Schildkamp et al. 2020; Evans et al. 2014; Ozan and Kincal 2018). Formative assessment has been used to successfully resolve teaching challenges similar to those I faced. For example, Gachallová (2018) relied on formative assessment by using online quizzes to improve the learning and understanding of medical terminology. Inspired by such examples, I introduced both continuous and formative assessment to the course.

Third, student-centeredness puts the focus of the educational process on the students and their learning experiences. The teacher becomes a facilitator of the learning process while students are the ones responsible for their own learning (Dongl et al. 2019; Keiler 2018; Kaput 2018). Therefore, in-class activities were added to replace frontal lecturing, and how students could get credit for these was clarified. In addition, assignments requiring students to undertake their own research and develop critical thinking—rather than just passively absorbing information presented by the teacher—were also included.

Fourth and relatedly, constructive alignment assumes a teaching (learning) system where all aspects of teaching and assessment are in harmony and tuned to support high-level learning (Biggs 1996). This concept guided the reconstitution of the end-of-semester assessment criteria. The newly added weekly revision tests were aligned with the content and activities of all the previous course sessions, while the varied assessment methods were matched with the teaching methods (Biggs 1996; Loughlin et al. 2021; Hailikari et al. 2022).

Varied assessment

The redesigned assessment criteria prioritised continuous assessment, and thus, continuous (Table 1). Continuous assessment is spread throughout the semester and accounts for 70% of the final grade. It is divided into three components: (1) weekly revision tests, (2) student presentations on a selected topic that consists of conducting legal research, writing argumentation, writing pleading, and oral presentation, and (3) in-class activity. The remaining 30% is for the final exam: a case study and addressing questions discussed in class.

Table 1. The newly designed, varied assessment criteria for History of Private Law

Content		**Percentage of final assessment**
Continuous assessment	Weekly revision tests	10
	Legal research, written argumentation, written pleading and oral presentation with visual aids on a selected topic	40
	In-class activity	20
Final assessment	Oral exam (case study and oral discussion)	30

Weekly revision tests

Since the course was held online, the weekly revision tests were also administered online using Microsoft Forms, which allowed effectively providing feedback by uploading comments for each question. The tests were cumulative: Each test contained ten questions addressing the issues from previous class sessions. The tests started out with multiple/choice questions only, but during the semester the number of multiple-choice questions gradually decreased while the number of open-ended questions increased (Table 2). As for the open-ended questions, there were sometimes shorter case-study questions requiring students to read and interpret a legal text, e.g., an extract from materials covered in class.

Table 2. The ratio of closed and open-ended questions in the weekly revision tests

Week	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Closed vs open	10:0	9:1	8:2	7:3	6:4	5:5	4:6	3:7	2:8	1:9

Since the tests were intended to promote continuous learning and provide formative assessment, only pass/fail grades were provided. The tests counted toward the final grade and students had to score at least 60% on them, which was expected to motivate students to continuously study for the tests without overly stressing them. Students received one point for successfully passing each test (1% of their final grade). I provided individual feedback for students after each test, highlighting the strengths and areas for further improvement. Students could also ask questions after the test, and I brought up questions that gave trouble to most of them.

Based on the above revision of course assessment, I expect that *the weekly revision tests help students divide the workload evenly throughout the semester* (H_1); *the innovation helps students prepare for the final exam* (H_2); and *the innovation enhances the student learning experience* (H_3).

The course, the students, and the lecturer

In September 2019, I started my PhD studies at Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Law. During my first semester, I facilitated three sessions of the course History of Private Law and have continued to co-teach the course ever since. The course is taught to first-year international students studying in the English-language Master’s degree programme. It is a mandatory course in as much as students must take one legal history class. The class meets once a week during the thirteen-week semester. The composition of the class varies each year, and so far I have taught students from the USA, Spain, China, Switzerland, Russia, Ukraine, Georgia and Slovakia.

The innovation was implemented in the History of Private Law course in the winter 2021 semester and, because of the ongoing pandemic, the classes were held online. The intended learning outcomes of the course were to define selected legal institutes, to compare legal institutes in several legal systems, and to critically examine materials and legal sources to solve a legal problem. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the course was only attended by three students–from Russia, Ukraine and Georgia–and facilitated by three teachers.

Collected sources of data and methods

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the innovation, four different types of data were collected throughout the semester (Table 3). The first data source is an anonymous student feedback form designed specifically for this research. It consisted of ten questions asking about student perceptions of their preparation during the semester, comparison with other courses and overall opinion of the course. It was completed by all three students prior to the final exam.

Table 3. Data sources and assessment methods used to verify the hypotheses

Hypothesis	Data	Method of analysis
H_1	Grades (control and treatment groups)	Comparative quantitative analysis in matching design
H_2	Test results	Longitudinal, individual-level analysis
H_2	Feedback on tests	
$H_1 + H_2 + H_3$	Anonymous student feedback form	Qualitative analysis
$H_2 + H_3$	Classroom observations	
$H_2 + H_3$	Reflective teaching diary	

Second, the two colleagues with whom I co-taught the course observed one classroom session each and filled out an observation form with seven questions about issues like how they see student preparedness, improvement in knowledge and skills, and student engagement in or resistance to learning compared to when they taught them.

Third, I kept a reflective teacher's diary which recorded my observations about the same issues as the observers. Since these two sources are complimentary, I use them in parallel in the analysis.

Finally, I relied on data about student performance during the analysis. I used the students' grades on the weekly revision tests and final grades to evaluate their learning. Furthermore, to understand not only if the students did well on the final exam but also to evaluate their performance in comparative perspective, I used a matching design. Although data from the previous semesters were no longer available for this course, in the winter 2021 semester I taught the same course to second-year MA students enrolled in the Slovak-language version of the programme. That course had a similar design to that of the English-language History of Private Law course prior to the innovations, with one exception: the assessment ratio was 90:10 (not 80:20) in favour of the final exam. The exam was written and contained both practical as well as application questions. The course was attended by seven students. For the comparison I used the final grades as well as the grades received for each assessment type and item. In most cases I used actual data rather than descriptive statistics due to the small number of students.

Findings

Regarding H_1, I found that students spread their studying out during the semester more evenly. First, as Table 4 shows, students regularly showed up in class, not even using the three allowed absences. Only student C missed classes with revision tests, and hence, received no credit for those tests. Continuous attendance also meant continuous preparation and active participation during the classes. I noted in my diary—and the observers noted the same thing during their respective observations—that the students did seem to be prepared for each class: at the very least they did prepare for the initial brainstorming activity that took place at the beginning of each session.

Table 4. Test results of the treatment group in percentages. Grey areas mark unsuccessful attempts.

	Test number										Total points earned
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Student A	65%	70%	35%	65%	35%	40%	65%	50%	40%	50%	**4**
Student B	85%	75%	80%	85%	65%	85%	80%	60%	80%	85%	**10**
Student C	-	40%	-	65%	45%	65%	45%	40%	40%	50%	**2**

Secondly, they reacted to questions and even took the initiative to ask questions. The willingness to engage in discussion increased throughout the first few classes. When it comes to in-class activities and students' active participation, two students believed they were more attentive in class when compared to other courses and that this helped them prepare for the final exam. Only the third student noted she had a hard time actively participating in class since she had a part-time job.

It is notable, however, how much their previous knowledge determined the level of their engagement. Student B seemed to have the best knowledge base and was also the most engaged during discussion. Student A's level of knowledge varied based on the topic and while she always tried her best to engage, the quality of her contribution varied. Student C seemed to lack some basic knowledge and struggled a lot with learning in English and needed the most assistance. Her asking for re-formulation or repetition of questions not only signalled her language issues but also her willingness to engage.

Prior knowledge and language skills likely also influenced the test results. On the one hand, it is encouraging that the students reached at least 35% on the tests and that their performance did not decrease over time as the tests shifted from multiple choice to the more complex open-ended questions. Both my colleagues and I found that when referring to a certain concept discussed in previous classes, the students were familiar with them and did not need repetitive explanation. At the same time, as the semester went by, the students did not remember key information discussed earlier and it was clear they did not repeatedly revisit material from all of the previous class sessions.

On the other hand, the three students combined failed to achieve 60%—and thus receive credit—for more than one third of all their tests (see the cells highlighted in grey in Table 4). While Student B never failed a test, student A passed the threshold for credit only four times and student C only twice. In the feedback form, only one student—most likely student B—said that they prepared on a weekly basis for the tests. The other two students emphasised that they paid more attention during class rather than preparing for the test. This explains why they often performed worst on those open-ended questions that required in-depth knowledge.

The feedback from student A showed clearly that she struggled when more detailed information was necessary to answer the question and did best on multiple choice questions. The student apparently paid attention during in-class activities, since for her the least troublesome were topics covered in the week prior to the test. Also, when a certain knowledge gap was pointed out in the feedback and the issue was raised once again in a different test, the student did answer correctly next time even if the question occurred a few weeks later, with only one exception. As for student C, she did not study the materials thoroughly since she usually failed the questions requiring deeper knowledge (with a few exceptions when she achieved a higher percentage). At the same time, she did take my recommendations seriously, for example when I advised her to watch the recording of a course session that she missed the first time (test 2). She did so prior to test 4 and achieved one of the highest scores.

In addition to in-class activity and weekly revision tests, students wrote a research paper in several steps. This contributed to their continuous learning: their outstanding performance—they all received 39 out of the 40 points available on this assignment—was only possible with repeated in-depth engagement with the topic chosen for their paper (Table 5). All in all, students did study continuously throughout the semester, however, their engagement with the topic was not always as thorough as I wished.

Table 5: Treatment group student performance on assessment tasks during the semester in scores and percentages

	Weekly revision tests	**In-class activity**	**Research paper**	**Final exam**	**Total points**	**Letter grade**
Maximum points	**10**	**20**	**40**	**30**	**100**	
Student A	4 (40%)	19 (95%)	39 (97.5%)	28 (93.3%)	90	A
Student B	10 (100%)	20 (100%)	39 (97.5%)	29 (96.7%)	98	A
Student C	2 (20%)	17 (85%)	39 (97.5%)	28 (93.3%)	86	B
Assessment types	**Continuous assessment**			**Final assessment**	**Final grade**	

The innovation positively impacted student performance on the final exam (H_2). All three students did exceptionally well on the final exam achieving 93.3% or above (Table 5). More tellingly, they did much better than their Slovak peers in the control group. None of the Slovak students reached more than 90%, while five out of the seven students achieved less than 60% (Table 6). When comparing the average performance of the control and treatment groups on the final exam, the treatment group shows significantly (p=0.001) better score (94.43) compared to the control group (49.93) (see Table 7).
Although the in-class activity of most control group students was fairly high (70% or above), four students did noticeably worse on the final exam than they did during the continuous assessment, suggesting little connection between the two. When we look at the performance of the international students, their in-class activity and research paper grades were high compared to their final exam performance. Some disconnect exists between the treatment group's weekly revision test results and their final exam scores, but since the tests were primarily designed as a formative assessment instrument and the students did react positively to feedback as I described above, it is reasonable to conclude that the weekly revision tests had a positive impact on their performance just as did the varied assessment criteria.

Table 6: Control group student performance on assessment tasks during the semester in scores and percentages

	In-class activity	Final exam	Total points	Letter grade
Maximum Points	**10**	**90**	**100**	
Student D	10 (100%)	26 (28.9%)	36	FX
Student E	5 (50%)	45 (50%)	50	FX
Student F	7 (70%)	19 (21.1%)	26	FX
Student G	8 (80%)	75 (62.5%)	83	B
Student H	4 (40%)	49.5 (55%)	53.5	FX
Student I	9 (90%)	38 (42%)	47	FX
Student J	10 (100%)	81 (90%)	91	A
Assessment types	**Continuous assessment**	**Final assessment**	**Final grade**	

Student opinion supports this interpretation. All the students found the feedback provided after each test very useful either for the next revision tests or for the final exam. Two students said they felt better prepared for the final exam than in other courses due to the repetitive nature of the revision tests. The third student thought the effort she made to prepare for the final exam was comparable to those of other courses. In addition, the new assessment structure that put more emphasis on active learning proved valuable as all three students said the in-class activities helped them with their learning. Nonetheless, it is important to note that, based the available data, we can establish that the innovation as a whole helped student performance on the final exam, but it is not possible to discern the extent to which each element of the new assessment scheme contributed to student preparations for the final exam.

Table 7. Comparing the average performance of the treatment and control group students on the final exam

Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t-score	p-value
Control	7	49.93	22.82	5.115	0.001
Treatment	3	94.43	1.96		

Finally, the student learning experience noticeably improved (H_3). The students said that they found the course enjoyable. One student pointed out she felt comfortable thanks to the teachers' approach, the other students enjoyed the various activities and tasks. My colleagues and I observed that the students felt comfortable during classes and enjoyed the activities. None of the students thought the weekly revision tests were too much of a burden. They appreciated that the questions did not require lengthy answers and that the tests created an opportunity to revise the materials and earn points toward the final grade. The students did not enjoy the questions that referred to longer legal texts, the possibility of failing, and the fact that the test was administered early in the morning due to time zone differences. Overall, the current course design provided students with a positive learning experience.

Replicability in a different context

This innovation is suitable for any course (either humanities or branches of science) that lacks continuous preparation and for which a certain knowledge base is required, such as introductory-level courses. Based on the possibilities open to the teacher, the innovation can be adopted in full (both steps) or by just adding revision tests. Finally, the approach (testing on a weekly basis including open-ended questions and individualised feedback every week) is most suitable for courses with a small number of students where the teacher can provide individualised feedback. Specifically, the continuous assessment aspect of the course—weekly online revision tests—proved to be the key to improving student performance on the final exam. I will keep these in the future iterations of the course and will administer the tests online even when normal face-to-face teaching resumes because it makes providing feedback efficient. Since it was laborious to provide individualised written feedback for every student each week, I suggest either decreasing the frequency of the tests (e.g., twice a month) or decreasing the number of questions, e.g., to only five or six.

Conclusions

To sum up, the new, varied assessment methods with the weekly revision tests aided students in performing better both at the final exam and in the course in general and enhanced their learning experience. The weekly revision tests helped students divide their workload more evenly throughout the semester: although I would have preferred them to prepare for the tests more thoroughly, it seems that even a more modest level of continuous learning can help students succeed. The changes, however, cannot be solely attributed to my innovation in assessment. The course co-teachers changed other aspects of the course as well (see Hron's chapter in this volume), which makes it difficult to separate out the exact effect of each new feature. In the future, it would be useful to investigate what level of continuous learning is ideal in order not to overburden the students.

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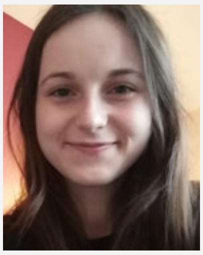
Summary
This chapter evaluates the introduction of continuous assessment into an introductory legal history course through formative—a series of weekly continuous tests with personalised feedback—and varied assessment while prioritising student-centred learning. The aim of the innovation was to help students to increase their in-class activity, divide their workload more evenly throughout the semester and, consequently, to prepare for the final exam. As a result of the innovation students were active in the classroom, paced their learning more evenly and achieved much higher grades on the final exam and in the course in general.

Keywords
continuous assessment, formative assessment, legal history, (peer) assessment



Terézia Švedová received her PhD in the theory and history of the state and law from Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Law. She is currently an assistant professor at the Department of Legal History and Comparative Law. She has been teaching History of Private Law, Comparative Private Law and Historical Introduction to Comparative Law for first-year international students enrolled in a new English-language master's programme at the Faculty of Law. She has also served as a supervisor in a clinical legal education programme using the principles of learning by doing. **terezia.cokynova@flaw.uniba.sk**

IMPACT

PEER LEARNING AND PEER FEEDBACK: HELPING STUDENTS OF LAW TO DEFINE AND COMPARE LEGAL INSTITUTIONS AND SOLVE LEGAL PROBLEMS

Igor Hron, Comenius University in Bratislava

The teaching-learning challenge

'History of Private Law' is a compulsory course within the Master's degree programme offered by the Faculty of Law at Comenius University in Bratislava. While the Slovak- and English-language programmes have recently been redesigned in accordance with recent trends in education, this course lagged behind. Students tended to perceive the course as a burden with little added value where the teacher authoritatively conveyed 'hard facts' to them. This is no surprise, as the course had been mostly taught in a teaching-centred way.

Meanwhile, the course has been completely redesigned for the 2021/2022 academic year; the learning outcomes have been formulated anew and peer learning and peer assessment activities have been introduced with the aim of improving students' competences through active learning that builds upon their diverse knowledge. This chapter evaluates the results of the new design, while answering three pertinent questions: (1) Did students engage in peer learning? (2) How did students perceive their peer learning experience? (3) Did peer assessment help to foster student learning?

Pedagogical methods

The redesigning of the History of Private Law course is rooted in the concepts of peer learning and peer feedback. While there is no universal definition of peer learning in the literature, it is usually understood as the utilisation of teaching and learning techniques, which encourage students to learn with and from each other while the teacher does not immediately intervene in the interaction among them (Boud et al. 1999). The students are placed at the centre of attention, as the acquisition of knowledge and skills is done through active help and support from their peers (Topping 2005). It has been found that by shifting roles and actively engaging students in the learning process, peer learning enhances the sharing of knowledge, ideas and experiences among students (Boud 2001). Moreover, it has been observed that in this setting, cooperation prevails over competition and students can think beyond their own perspectives and cultural contexts, thus respecting each other's diverse cultural backgrounds (Economides 2008).

Apart from these benefits, it has been reported that peer learning strategies enhance social interaction, collaboration (Stigmar 2016), as well as overall academic performance in the course (Crouch and Mazur 2001). The implementation of peer learning activities has additionally shown to further the development of transferable skills (McGarr and Clifford 2013). These are increasingly important in the context of legal education in today's inter-connected world, where providing efficient and reliable legal advice has become paramount and universities are expected to produce practice-ready graduates. In light of these fundamental global changes, the approach to legal education has been changing significantly. Modern legal courses place more emphasis on doing rather than thinking, represented by a focus on legal clinics and the furtherment of transferrable skills in beginner lawyers (Mavrova Heinrich 2015; Sullivan 2018). Therefore, the benefits stemming from peer learning are very pertinent to legal education (Keynes and Burns 2008). With these reported outcomes of peer learning in mind, new learning activities have been incorporated into the History of Private Law course.

The course, the students, and the lecturer

History of Private Law has been taught by three co-teachers; myself included. The course has been integrated into the first semester of the English-language Master's Degree in Law that is primarily marketed to international students. Upon completion of the redesigned course, students were expected to be able to define key legal institutions such as property, contract and tort, to compare legal institutions in various legal systems and to critically examine materials and legal sources to solve a legal problem. The class sessions focused on developing students' research and writing skills, argumentation, problem solving and presentation skills.

In 2021/2022, only three students enrolled in the degree programme, which was a very low number presumably also caused by the ongoing pandemic at the time. Nevertheless, the faculty decided to open the programme and these three international students from the Ukraine, Georgia and the Russian Federation enrolled in the course. All had already obtained a Bachelor's degree in law in their home countries. The low number of students was relevant primarily to the in-class activities, as they were not split into groups, but conducted the activities together.

Each class of the course started with brainstorming about the central topics of the class, such as about the notion of property and differences among jurisdictions in the students' countries of origin. Beyond these, the classes were enriched by using case studies, mind maps and comparison exercises. The three classes that I taught also differed in their composition, which is a relevant factor for the findings. The first session was devoted to the adoption and assimilation of Roman law in Western Europe and incorporated the lowest number of peer learning activities, comprised of brainstorming, approximately a 45-minutes interactive lecture and a cooperative activity with a debriefing. The second session focused on property law and was designed in a similar fashion; however, the lecture part was significantly reduced to approximately 20 minutes and it included two major peer learning activities. The last session was conducted without any lecture and consisted only of peer learning activities; ranging from ice-breaker discussions to more complex activities such as identifying essential elements of torts throughout history. In this regard, Miro—a digital collaborative whiteboard platform that enables participants to create sticky notes, mind maps, or road maps; thereby better facilitating the creation of ideas within the group—provided a flexible virtual space for the hosting of these activities, making the outcomes of students' work available for future use and feedback.

Another peer learning activity revolved around the semester-long task of each student writing a paper on a selected historical area of private law, extending the interactive environment beyond the time spend in class. Students produced three drafts of the paper before submitting the final version. The peer learning element consisted of randomly assigning the drafts among students to provide feedback to their peers with respect to the structure, sources and the logical cohesion of arguments.

The overall assessment of the students consisted of several parts: 10% was awarded for weekly revision tests, 20% for in-class activities, 40% for the written paper including peer feedback, 30% for the final oral exam, which was an open-book discussion. In total, the activities directly amounted to 60% of the final grade and indirectly contributed to students' preparedness for the final oral exam.

Collected sources of data and methods

For the purpose of this research, the student' perspective has been the main source of information. Student feedback was gathered at the end of the semester in the form of anonymous evaluation forms with open-ended questions focusing on the in-class activities that were performed during the semester. The questionnaire had been filled out after the students obtained their marks, and it could not have influenced their assessments, that is, the students did not feel a pressure to give positive feedback in order to receive a higher mark and *vice versa*.

Another valuable source of information was a semi-structured online focus group interview, which took place approximately three months after the course ended. In the interview, students were asked to reflect on the benefits and pitfalls when studying the history of private law and to elaborate on the differences as compared to their learning experiences in other courses such as the follow-up Comparative Private Law course that was set up in an identical manner to the History of Private Law course.

Data from students was augmented by means of three other sources. The first was their performance in the final exam. The second was the reflective diary I kept after each of the three class sessions that I taught and further supplemented with co-teacher observations from the sessions that I facilitated. The third source consisted of written and oral feedback provided by the colleague who visited the second session that I taught to observe my teaching and its impact on student learning.

The collected data has been analysed using qualitative research methods in order to arrive at general thematic patterns, primarily by comparing each dataset (Creswell 2014).

Findings

Peer learning

The classroom observation of the second session confirmed that students were actively engaged in peer learning tasks. The observer noted that in cases where students departed from the concepts covered, or answered incorrectly, I encouraged them to critically assess each other's views and find the correct answer. The observer also pointed out that the class activities always attained their aims when students were active and they visibly enjoyed the class, which she could observe in this particular course session. The observer assessed the level of student engagement during three peer learning exercises as 'high' and said that the students had interacted with each other with ease, even though they had primarily turned to the teacher during the discussions. Nevertheless, students appeared to feel comfortable while engaged in peer learning. The observer praised my ability to facilitate the discussion, encourage students to exchange information about how certain legal institutions are regulated within their jurisdictions without intervening in their discussions, but instead preparing a debriefing to drive to conclusions.

My own observations were similar. Students embraced peer learning activities especially in the classroom and engaged in lively exchanges. Often, they became so caught up in a discussion that they acceded the time I originally planned for the activity. They participated without reservation. However, the novelty of interactivity was very visible during the third session, which included only peer learning activities; students looked very exhausted by the end of the session. As for peer learning outside the classroom, students' attitudes toward giving and receiving feedback changed. The quality of feedback improved throughout the semester. As they became more comfortable with peer assessment by repeating the task of commenting on each other's drafts, their feedback progressively turned out to be more extensive and substantive.

Student perceptions of peer learning

As for the students' perceptions of peer learning, students said they had enjoyed peer learning because there were ample opportunities for all students to be engaged. Students were looking forward to the classes as they required attention and responsibility. They noted that as a result of being engaged in peer learning, there was less pressure from teachers. They felt confident and comfortable to ask questions during, but also after class. Digital tools, including Miro, demonstrated to students that studying law does not have to be boring: 'I didn't think history of law would be so much fun to learn', one student commented. Miro could be used also for self-study and students confirmed its continued use after the course ended.

Students recognised that course teachers cared about them and their learning and perceived this as an important driver of their motivation to engage in study. They valued our feedback, which included areas for future improvement. Students evaluated other courses to be rather disorganised when compared to this course. Students, however, expressed a preference for peer learning activities to always be combined with a lecture as they found being solely engaged in activities too tiring. Students preferred the arrangement where a short lecture introduces the concepts and peer learning activities follow.

Students moreover appreciated that in this course, a lot of attention was paid to student work and feedback; written assignments received three rounds of feedback and in the end the students felt they had been very productive; they deemed it one of the most productive courses in that semester. Teachers initially tried to assist students with peer feedback in the first round to provide students with an example of good practice. Afterwards, the students provided their feedback independently. In other courses, teachers did not seem to be very involved in the outcome of student learning. Having a rather uncommon 1:1 teacher to student ratio was most advantageous in achieving this.

The students' view of peer assessment was less favourable initially, but they came to embrace the idea as the benefits became apparent. One student noted that feedback may be seen as an insult in other cultures: she specifically pointed at the example of Georgia, her home country. Nevertheless, she considered peer feedback as 'half of the work, [as] sometimes the author is unable to identify and change the flaws'. All in all, students believed that peer interaction and peer feedback helped them to finalise the paper, which they viewed as the most difficult and comprehensive course assignment.

Student learning

Peer activities facilitated student learning as noted by students. In the focus group interview, students claimed these activities had helped them to concentrate on the content and remember more because they were learning by being engaged in activities rather than from listening to the lecturer. They felt that the activities performed during classes prepared them for their weekly revision tests and lowered their revision time for the final exam. Digital platforms such as Miro helped students in this regard, as students were able to access submitted peer learning assignments at any time. This was also reflected in the results of the final oral exam, where the students scored 28, 28 and 29 points out of 30.

This corresponds to my own observations about the overall achievement of the course outcomes. As I noted in my reflective diary, students had shown progressive improvement during the three sessions that I facilitated. During the first session, the students were active at the beginning of the class and interpreted the texts together. In the second session, the introductory peer learning part exceeded the time, as the discussion was very intense and the students came up with many ideas that were worthy of discussion. During the last activity – creating a mind map–engaged cooperation among the students was evident. In the third session, peer learning was noticeable throughout the whole session. The same also applied to the written papers in terms of the quality of the feedback that was provided. While in the beginning the students provided, more or less positive, general feedback, throughout the semester it gradually evolved to be more constructive and expressed several points with regard to comparative analyses such as: 'elaborate more on Ukrainian regulation', 'there should be controversies about age, same-sex marriage, civil marriages and partnerships', or feedback that facilitated good-quality comparisons of Justinian codification and current Russian law.

I observed that in all three sessions students broadened their perspectives: they could define the legal concepts and their nuances across different jurisdictions. This objective was attained as the students gradually became aware of the essential components of key legal concepts and they were able to better reflect on their country's jurisdiction. For instance, when dealing with the concepts of civil liability, one student mentioned key characteristics of the legal framework in Georgia and another student added her understanding of these concepts within the Ukrainian legal system. The broadening of perspective was visible also in the written papers, as initially the students tended only to describe a foreign legal system, or a specific institution, whereas in the final drafts, they were purposefully examining the similarities and differences, either in each chapter separately, or in a chapter at the very end of the paper.

Additionally, they were able to arrive at their own conclusions when evaluating the potential advantages and disadvantages of legal concepts, as for example in the third session, where they extrapolated the provided sources of law and autonomously identified the essential elements of the legal institutions under discussion.

Replicability in a different context

As shown by Rétiová (2018), peer learning and feedback methods may be well adopted in other disciplines, including courses that had previously faced low student participation and disengagement with course content. It seems especially effective in courses rich in facts where students are to learn complex concepts. Scaffolding students in learning to provide peer feedback may, however, prove difficult in larger classes, where the teacher may find it initially overwhelming to read and comment on student feedback until students can put the principles of effective feedback into practice. This may be overcome by allocating a separate time during the classes to present the best practices to all students at the same time.

This pitfall may also emerge with regards to facilitating a meaningful discussion and actively engaging the whole class. Keyes and Burns (2008) identified six or less as the optimal number of students in a group, which was the case in this course. However, when the number of participating students increases in the future, the most affected part could prove to be the initial ice-breaker discussion where time constrains will not allow everyone to express their views. In that scenario, students may be divided into groups of six or less.

Peer learning via group work may work as well in other settings when it is employed to enhance student understanding. For example, Awuah (2018), who similarly to this course assigned students to prepare mind maps, documented that active learning increased class participation and the quality of student learning and helped students to overcome their fear of communicating in a foreign language.

Conclusions

In summary, the findings revealed that students through enhanced engagement via peer learning attained the course learning outcomes: they were able to define the legal institutions as they developed through history and compare these across different jurisdictions, most importantly with their native jurisdictions. Students demonstrated that they could solve legal problems based on an analysis of materials and legal sources. Additionally, peer learning activities not only facilitated cooperation among students and gradually increased their in-class activity but also improved student performance.

Several conclusions can be drawn in terms of future iterations of the course. Firstly, the activities introduced during the classes may be used again in the future, with some adjustments. The ice-breaker discussions would possibly require a less strict time-frame, as it was sometimes upsetting to cut-off a productive discussion. Other elements worthy of future use are digital tools such as the Miro board. While they were utilised in the online format, their positive influence on learning; primarily the fact that students are able to review the activities at any time, makes them potentially useful also in a face-to-face setting. Furthermore, the class in which the students felt most comfortable was a class that was devoted to property law, where several activities took place following a short interactive lecture. Students originating from a background where frontal lecturing is predominant may feel uncomfortable with radical changes to this approach. They may feel lost if all the 'conventional forms' of learning are removed.

Finally, the innovation may potentially cause challenges within the scope of the entire Master's Degree programme, as the student expectations invoked by this course may not be satisfactorily met in other courses, which are being taught in a more traditional way of providing legal education. Therefore, increased cooperation with other teachers and departments at the Faculty of Law may be required to coordinate the courses across the degree programme to meet not only the course learning outcomes, but also the programme outcomes and most importantly to advocate for and promote student-centred learning.

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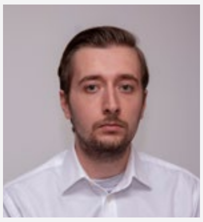
Summary

This chapter describes the incorporation of peer learning and peer feedback into the 'History of Private Law' course in order to address the long-lasting negative attitude of students towards the course and to help them attain the course learning outcomes. Peer learning and peer feedback activities implemented in and outside the classroom included ice-breaker discussions, cooperative mind maps, group work in Miro and a semester-long task of writing an academic paper to the drafts of which students provided feedback. Students and teachers alike concluded that peer learning activities and peer feedback helped students to improve their learning experience, including their cooperation with other students in legal matters, leaving them with a widened perspective and a comparative understanding of legal institutions.

Keywords
legal history, (peer) assessment



Igor Hron is a PhD candidate at the Department of Legal History and Comparative Law, Faculty of Law, Comenius University in Bratislava. His research focuses on comparative aspects of intellectual property and its historical roots. He has been involved in teaching courses such as History of Private Law, Private Comparative Law, and Legal Skills. Additionally, he coaches international moot court teams representing the Faculty abroad. **igor.hron@flaw.uniba.sk**

ASSESSMENT FLEXIBILITY AND STUDENT-LED CASE-TEACHING: ENHANCING LEARNING IN AN INTERNATIONAL CLASSROOM

Gorana Mišić, University of Glasgow

The teaching-learning challenge

The literature outlines the differences between 'western' and 'eastern' teaching practices and expectations in learning (Carroll and Ryan 2005; Chalmers and Volet 1997; Kingston and Forland 2008; Theodoridis 2015), as well as general differences in learning styles (see Cassidy 2004; Dunn et al. 2002). In the past seven years, some of the main challenges that I experienced when teaching public policy students in a diverse environment resonates with the findings of the above scholars. First, I have found that students have different learning styles and strengths and weaknesses. While these differences exist in homogenous classrooms, too, they affect students' performance and motivation in diverse environments much more.

Second, different academic traditions or teaching cultures from which the students come lead to challenges in performing certain assignments and participating in classroom interactions. In addition, students differ in their confidence to write, speak, and interact in English. Lastly, given the variation in their background, students engage with the course material to varying degrees in terms of relevance and applicability to their own context. This issue is further aggravated when, unlike students' background, the literature and examples are primarily 'western-based'.

Therefore, I designed the course Political Parties, Policy-Making and the Accountability Challenge in the Digital Age to address these challenges and increase student collaboration, motivation, and engagement, and subsequently learning. The course design emphasized two interrelated and transferrable elements: assessment flexibility and student-led case-study seminars. This chapter describes the design of these elements and analyses their impact on student motivation, engagement, and learning.

The course, the students, and the lecturer

In the Winter 2020 term, I taught the course Political Parties, Policy-Making and the Accountability Challenge in the Digital Age at Central European University (CEU), School of Public Policy. This was an elective, 4-ECTS-credit course offered for the first time to MA students in two programs: a one-year MA program in Public Policy and a two-year MA program in Public Administration. Since CEU is an international university, classrooms are highly diverse. Accordingly, this course was attended by 13 students from Africa, Asia, Australia, EU, Eastern Europe, Middle East, and North America. The learning objectives of the course were fourfold: (1) to equip the students to be able to analyse and discuss how political parties influence policy-making; (2) to identify and discuss challenges related to keeping political parties accountable; (3) to critically evaluate the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms related to political parties and policy-making, and propose solutions relevant to the context; and (4) to work collaboratively, provide peer feedback, and reflect on their own learning.

Pedagogical methods

Assessment flexibility

Even if the concept of different learning styles is often challenged and disputed in the literature (see Riener and Willingham 2010), students would have preferences on how they want the information to be presented to them and how they like to engage with it (Pashler et al. 2008). Every instructor can observe that some students are stronger in writing or reading, others in speaking or listening. Moreover, in an international classroom, students coming from different academic traditions and teaching cultures would have different expectations, behaviours, and skills (under)developed (Chalmers and Volet 1997; Hofstede 1986). It is not surprising to see native speakers and students who finished previous education in the 'west' to be more active and outspoken, as well as better in writing than the students who studied in the 'east'. To address these issues, and enhance motivation, engagement, and learning, the course design introduced choices in assessment.

Since this was a discussion-based course, embedded in the experiential learning paradigm, i.e., teaching with case studies and simulations, the syllabus specified assignment type and weight as follows:

- 15% Preparation: preparing the readings, short pre- and post- class assignments, peer-feedback to colleague's op-ed(s), and a simulation reflection
- 20-30% Participation: in-class and online discussions and group work, where students chose in this given range how much they want the participation to influence their final grade, and it had to make 50% together with the op-ed
- 20-30% Accountability challenge op-ed: 1000-1300 words long op-ed addressing a topic related to accountability and political parties, where students chose in this given range how much they want the op-ed to influence their final grade, and it had to make 50% together with the participation
- 35% Policy brief or a case study class : each student could choose between leading a case study seminar and writing a policy brief on a topic related to the course content.

The students were invited to shape their learning experience by choosing the weight that class participation and writing an op-ed will have in their final grade. Participation and op-ed were both mandatory requirements and together made up 50 per cent of the grade. Students could choose how much each will count for in their final grade in the range between 20 and 30 per cent. It was expected that students who (believe they) expressed themselves better verbally would choose a higher percentage for participation - and vice versa: students who have stronger writing skills would give more weight to the written assignment.

Second, students could also choose between leading a case study class with a colleague or writing a policy brief individually. In both assignments students were cognitively performing the same task: identifying and analysing an appropriate case, applying the theory, and proposing recommendations and implications for policy-making. This choice aimed at giving students an opportunity to perform the assignment they felt corresponded to their skills and learning styles more closely, and thus, at increasing ownership of learning and their motivation to engage with the course (see Aiken et al. 2016; Thibodeaux et al. 2019).

Student-led case-study seminars

To further address differences stemming from variations in academic traditions and teaching cultures, especially lack of engagement in class participation, the case study classes were fully student-led. Lack of engagement can be attributed to lack of preparation, but my past experience shows that more often than not, students do not engage due to lack of confidence, insecurity with English, and lack of previous experience in class participation (see Rocca 2010 for more about the reasons why students may not engage in class). Introducing student-led seminars was based on the assumption that students interact easier with peers. Moreover, student-led classes aimed at increasing the ownership and sharing the responsibility for learning, as well as at fostering peer-to-peer engagement (see Zepke and Leach 2010).

Since one of the main aims of the course was to critically evaluate the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms related to political parties and policy-making, and propose solutions relevant to the context, analysing diverse contexts was crucial. International classrooms are characterised by varying student interests, individual contexts and lives, as well as cultural backgrounds. This calls for acknowledging and integrating diversity in the course design to make course content more relevant to the students (Albrecht and Karabenick 2018), especially if the literature is primarily 'western' based. In this, having an international classroom is a valuable asset.

One of the distinctive features of the course was the design of the case study class, which was a student-led seminar. Whereas the syllabus set the theoretical framework and the suggested literature list for each class, students who signed up for a case study class were in charge of identifying an appropriate case (usually from their own country), as well as choosing and assigning the readings for their peers. Following the research on student motivation (Pintrich and Zusho 2002; Seifert 2004), this assignment was also expected to increase students' motivation by tailoring the course content towards their interests, creating the opportunity for them to discuss their own contexts and experiences with their peers, as well as to reflect on their views and arguments, and ultimately for enhancing the understanding of the studied frameworks and theories by applying them to familiar cases.

The students received detailed instruction for this assignment. It specified the following four steps for preparations: (1) individual study focusing on the assigned theoretical reading, (2) consultation with instructor, (3) individual and pair work preparing the case study and for the seminar leadership, and (4) feedback from the instructor on students' class preparations. During the student-led classes, the instructor took the role of the observer or participant. On average, students had 60 minutes for their case discussion, which included time needed to read the case in class and tasks they prepared for their peers. Students were assessed not on their discussion leadership alone, but rather on a combination of the quality of the preparation of the case and analytical framework and discussion management.

Finally, each student-led class was followed by a short meeting with student seminar leaders to reflect on the class, what went well or not so well, and why. At this point the students reflected together with the instructor on the plan they made, as well as on the main takeaways from discussions and contributions of their colleagues. This immediate feedback was meant to help students digest the new experience, recap the takeaways or express any frustrations. To the instructor, this further showed students' thinking and understanding of the topic and the material.

Collected sources of data and methods

After the course I collected student feedback through an anonymous questionnaire and a colleague, who was external to the class and students, conducted focus group discussions to understand better how the course worked for the students. Ten students filled in the questionnaire and six students signed up to participate in the focus group discussions.

The questionnaire was conceptualised as an additional course feedback of nine open questions. As opposed to the institutional course feedback, which was more generic, this questionnaire asked students about their motivation and engagement with different assignments and elements of the course. All students enrolled in the course gave consent to use their anonymous feedback for the purpose of research.

The students who signed up were invited to participate in focus groups. Focus group discussions were conducted in two groups of threes. The discussions lasted for approximately one hour and revolved around unpacking further some of the points made in the anonymous questionnaire, such as higher level of engagement as participants in a student-led seminar, learning from peers, and responsibility for learning of their peers in the role of seminar leader.

Findings

Assessment flexibility, as discussed above, was intended to give students an opportunity to co-design their learning experience, and thus, increase ownership of learning and their motivation to engage with the course. Some students recognised that even if the choice was not decisive for their final grade, being able to rely on their strength gave them confidence. They also considered it fair that, for instance, students who do not feel comfortable talking in class take a lower percentage for participation (Participant 2). My experience showed that choice did not affect the final grade (i.e., the grades would have been the same if they chose a different ratio in the given range), but it did affect students' motivation to work in the course.

It was expected that students who thought they were better in writing would choose a higher percentage for the op-ed assignment (and vice versa, higher percentage for participation if they thought their verbal skills are stronger). Student feedback showed that some of them indeed took assignments based on their strengths, but others wanted to work on their weaknesses and therefore took the assignments they considered more difficult. In both cases, the possibility to choose was motivating. Overall, considering the final grades and assignments, I did not observe lack of effort or lower quality of those assignments which students identified as being weaker at, and for which they chose lower weight in the overall grade.

The student-led seminar was designed not only to give students an opportunity to tailor the course content towards their interests, but also to increase the ownership and share the responsibility for learning, as well as to foster peer-to-peer engagement. Since the course was based on case teaching and the majority of students—nine out of 13—opted for the case study assignment (as opposed to writing a policy brief individually), in the feedback questionnaire students were asked to reflect on how engaged they felt during the peer-led seminars. They overwhelmingly reported increased learning and engagement both as seminar leaders and participants:

> I enjoyed working on the case study class as I was able to apply the theory to a specific case. Even more interesting was uncovering the mechanism in discussion with the class. In isolation I could only think of few pathways but with the class I was able to identify multiple mechanism through with media fixes political accountability. (Feedback 5)

> The interactive portions were the most useful and I especially appreciated hearing from my classmates about their experiences in their home countries. (Feedback 10)

Both the questionnaire and the focus group discussion revealed that the students considered this type of teaching strategy new and different and therefore more engaging and interesting. More importantly, they reported feeling responsible for their peers' success and learning: participating in the discussion and tasks during student-led seminars meant supporting peers in being successful in their assignment.

> I felt somehow more responsible to read and prepare to support a discussion that my peers were leading […] I felt a responsibility and, most importantly, was motivated to provide good class experience for my peers. (Feedback 6)

> I think one of the 'in the moment' reasons for staying engaged as your peers are leading the class is wanting to support them, wanting them to do well. You know, they are trying really hard, they worked really hard on this, so to sit silently and not engage with them is just kind of painfully awkward. That way of being a good classmate. I think my motivation a lot of the times was to be as engaged as possible so that those friendships would be okay and that after all their work they could feel they had done something well. (Participant 4)

Moreover, the students reported feeling more comfortable joining a peer-led discussion:

> For example, a lot of time when you are contributing to a class, you are a little conscious about saying the exact right thing or something of that sort, but when your peers are leading the class, you know that you all are coming from some sort of equal level of knowledge. So, I think that you are more comfortable sharing your opinions, because you know that the other person is on a similar note. (Participant 2)

Finally, some students described how they gained new insights while leading the case discussion–based on the contributions from their peers and different national contexts.

> I remember two comments, one from our peer from the US, she looked at the situation we were describing from the US perspective, and she looked from a completely different angle, suggesting topics that we hadn't thought about, but that perfectly fit into the case, and it was like a 'wow' moment as it actually showed how can someone's review work better. (Participant 1)

> I think I had a very narrow understanding of what is political and party corruption and how it works in post-soviet countries. When we looked at experiences from India, and the case was a big case of corruption and people went on the streets protesting, I saw the bigger scale, how big protests can be. […] That was quite revealing for me, because it was still a mechanism that exists in a country, it is quite efficient in terms of constraining parties from being corrupt… (Participant 3)

Replicability in a different context

Student-led seminar is a very different type of assignment from what students are used to do in class. In this sense, it requires a lot of time to help students prepare and it could be rather time consuming for a single instructor in a large classroom (e.g., larger than 20). Similarly, it would probably work less well with less experienced or younger students (i.e., early BA years) who may not have sufficient academic skills to prepare a case and facilitate a peer discussion.

However, for all instructors who have smaller classes with more advanced international students, this method can increase student motivation and engagement; it can give students the space to collaboratively explore their own contexts, to co-construct knowledge, and learn from each other. The method can work equally well in a less international classroom. Even if the students would come from the same context or country, they can still choose cases within that context based on their interest or familiarity, engage in collaborative exploration of their interests, and co-construction of knowledge. Regardless of the level of class internationalisation, detailed guidance, formative feedback, and clear instruction are crucial to make this model work.

Conclusions

This chapter discussed two elements of course design aimed at enhancing learning, motivation, and student engagement in an international classroom, namely the flexibility of assessment and student-led seminars. The findings show that the combination of these two distinctive course design elements, which in essence gave students the opportunity to shape their learning experience, increased students' motivation and engagement throughout the course. More specifically, choosing the type of the assignment (writing a policy brief vs. leading a seminar) and deciding on the weight of some assignments (participation and op-ed), students felt that they can express their strengths, which increased their motivation. Student-led seminar, which enabled the students to bring in their own cases and lead discussions, proved successful in increasing engagement and sharing responsibility for learning: students reported feeling responsible for their peers' learning and success, which motivated their preparation, participation, and overall engagement.

This teaching approach can be used also in less diverse environments, but might bring out the most of highly international classrooms as it addresses common challenges related to different learning styles, diverse backgrounds, and teaching and learning traditions. In both cases, giving students choice and the opportunity to shape their learning experience increases their involvement in learning, overall engagement, and ownership of learning.

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Summary
This chapter describes student-centred teaching strategies and their impact in a fully international MA course Political Parties, Policy-Making and The Accountability Challenge in the Digital Age, designed to address diversity challenges and increase student motivation, engagement, and consequently, learning. The chapter focuses on two interrelated and transferrable elements of course design: assessment flexibility and student-led case-study seminars. Students were engaged in the assessment design by being allowed to choose between assignment types and, with some limitations, the weight that a particular assignment will have in their overall grade. They could also select the case studies that were analysed and discussed in the student-led case study seminars. The student feedback and instructor observations show that such strategies

have a positive impact on student engagement and motivation, as well as on student ownership of learning.

Keywords
assessment flexibility, case-method teaching, motivation, (peer) assessment, student-led seminar

Gorana Mišić received her PhD in Public Policy from Central European University in 2018 and currently is a Learning Innovation Officer at the Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow. She is experienced in academic development, education management, teaching and research in the field of public policy, anti-corruption, and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. She taught PhD courses related to foundations in teaching in higher education, creating a teaching portfolio, facilitating discussions, and experiential learning. In Public Policy, Gorana has taught MA and BA courses related to policy process and analysis, accountability of political parties, corruption control, public management, critical inquiry and contemporary social problems, and comparative public budgeting.
Gorana.Misic@glasgow.ac.uk

EMBEDDING PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT IN CRITICAL INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE COURSE

Cláudia Pato Carvalho, University of Coimbra
Cristiano Gianolla, University of Coimbra
Manuela Guilherme, University of Coimbra

The teaching-learning challenge

The course Critical Intercultural Dialogue (CID) is based on a student-centred approach, which values student engagement and effective class participation. The methodological approach assumes that higher education may provide the ground for collaborative and critical learning. This space is characterised by reciprocal sharing of knowledge and a participatory approach to the study of intercultural dialogue, not only between teachers and students, but also among students. It does so by focusing on the understanding of cultures in different socio-political contexts.

CID was designed to elaborate on dialogic assessment, based on active student participation and autonomy, as ways to develop in a continuous learning process, embedded in a participatory, creative, and critical pedagogy, including peer and self-assessment as a formative process of self-improvement. In concrete terms, the challenge was to create assessment procedures that enhanced a holistic teaching and learning participatory approach for a broad range of international students. Furthermore, CID's assessment procedures aim to critically engage with different perceptions of hierarchy between teachers and students, which are sometimes subtle but, as we believe, always influence student learning.

Pedagogical method

Critical Intercultural Dialogue's pedagogy assumes that assessment is not merely a way for teachers to grade students (as requested by the educational system); it is also a central component of a dialogical approach to the teaching and learning process. This is especially valuable in relation to the international group of students who attend this course, in that they are strongly motivated to develop 'critical (inter)cultural awareness' (Guilherme and Menezes de Souza 2019). This also impacts the dialogical procedure and context of the entire teaching and learning evaluation process. The teaching and learning process proposed in CID aims to comprehensively expand the cooperation of students and professors, and to share responsibility about the assessment process, which entails active listening to each other (Freire 1970; 1998; Romão 2005)

Cognisant of the fact that we, as the three course lecturers, are full-time researchers whose teaching is a secondary activity, such a proposal of Freire's problem-posing praxis responds to CID's pedagogy because our teaching strategies are embedded in critical, dialogical and intercultural problem-posing activities that aim to instigate student engagement in research practice.

Following this line of thought, CID teachers and students have promoted interculturality as a critical dialogue, hence, as 'a permanent and active process of negotiation and interrelation, in which difference does not disappear' (Walsh 2018: 59).

At the beginning of the course, the students were requested to reflect on and contribute to the definition of the assessment criteria and to take them into account as they carried out coursework for each assessment component. CID's assessment is structured in a way that it is sequential throughout the course and is based on successive and complementary feedback, aimed at allowing students to develop ownership of the teaching and learning process, improve their engagement and contribute to the course development.

The students' first assignment was to choose one theme from a list provided to carry out a collaborative empirical study (group work). Presentations had to dialogue with the two preparatory readings of the respective lecture, provide contextual examples from the empirical case(s) selected by the group and further literature. Students were expected to show individual progression as well as the capacity to transform such progression into critical thinking through group collaboration (Collins and Delgado 2018; Risager 2013).

Presentations were followed by an open debate in the plenary where presenting students responded to questions and comments. The debate was opened to incorporate reflections on the assessment procedure and merits of the presenters. Students were also requested to make an individual presentation during the penultimate lecture of the course by choosing a keyword that the course had triggered them to analyse. Each student had 5 minutes to present the keyword and then a short, 5-minute debate followed. The keyword presentation could be related to the group presentation and final essay.

After each debate, the peer and self-assessment took place anonymously. Students were given 10 minutes to mark the presentation, using a form prepared for each session indicating the names of all the presenting students and a mark selector (scale 0-20). This form enabled both peer and self-assessment, as presenting students also assigned a mark for themselves. Before providing the link to the form, professors reminded students of the five assessment criteria, namely: dialogue with the topics of the lectures; quality of exposition, coherence, and capacity of synthesis; theoretical and empirical contribution; critical analytical contribution; and originality and innovation.

During the first and second cohort, CID assessment was divided into three interim assessment components: participation and engagement throughout the course (20%), oral presentation of group work and keywords (30%) and final essay (50%). Peer and self-assessment counted for 9% of the overall final mark, exclusively within the oral presentation of group work and keywords assessment. Therein, the marking breaks down as follows: self-assessment 15% (4.5% of the total mark) and peer assessment 15% (4.5% of the total mark). The remaining 70% for the participation and engagement assessment component (21% of the total mark) was provided by professors' assessment.

In the third cohort, the assessment was divided into two components: student participation and engagement (40%) and final essay (60%). Peer and self-assessment counted for 12% of the final mark within the student participation and engagement component, broken down as follows: self-assessment 15% (6% of the total mark), peer assessment 15% (6% of the total mark), with the remaining 70% (28% of the total mark) again attributed to professors' assessment. The increase of the weighting for peer and self-assessment was motivated by a positive experience with the method, with the objective to enhance it and expand student's ownership of the assessment.

The course, the students, and the teacher

Critical Intercultural Dialogue is an optional course offered in English and held in the spring semester (February to July) at the University of Coimbra (Portugal), School of Economics, within the framework of the Master's Programme in Sociology. It is divided into 14 three-hour, weekly lectures, granting 7.5 ECTS upon completion. Each lecture is divided into two parts, separated by a short interval of 10 minutes. The first part is led by a lecturer's presentation and each lecture is structured to be highly interactive, practice-based learning (i.e. adapting methods like small group activities, research-debates, role-playing, instant reports, note-sharing, micro-papers, etc.). The second part of the lecture is dedicated to student-led research activities or pre-assigned student group presentations and a final open debate.

The student population has been the following: 12 students studied on the course in the academic year 2018-2019, 16 students in 2019-2020 and 8 students in 2020-2021. In total, we have registered seven home and 29 international students. Due to the pandemic, the course was offered to the second cohort as an online course, while the third cohort started learning remotely and later changed to a mixed learning environment, where students could choose whether to participate online or in-person.

The course is led by three core lecturers (the co-authors of this text), two Portuguese and one Italian-Portuguese with backgrounds in Education, Philosophy, Sociology and Political Science and from different generations. Guest lecturers are invited for specific topics each year. Whereas only Master's students can attend the course among home students, both BA and MA mobility students are eligible to enrol. International students recurrently come from disciplines such as social sciences, management, and economics. The course was offered for the first time in the academic year 2018-2019 and has been redesigned each year, based on the class composition and the feedback received from previous students, in order to improve the quality of the teaching, learning process and the level of student participation.

Collected sources of data and methods

The experience of peer and self-assessment in the course Critical Intercultural Dialogue has been evaluated via student feedback from three cohorts. At the end of the course, students provided feedback in two distinct ways, firstly, through oral feedback during class debates about the course content and teaching methods, and immediately after, by filling in an online feedback form designed by the course teachers. All students were asked to anonymously rate the course content, pedagogy, and assessment procedures and to explain their choices. We analysed the student feedback and, from our own perspective as course coordinators, we summarise the key points which the students repeatedly expressed below.

Findings

What follows is an overview of the feedback given by students in the three editions of the course, focusing on how students perceived the peer and self-assessment process.

Students from the first cohort (2018-2019) appreciated that the course dealt with a diversity of topics (racism, prejudice, intolerance, minorities, among others) from different angles, taught by guest lecturers in articulation with the in-situ professors. The students' diverse backgrounds and, alongside the fact that the course includes a small/medium size group, provided excellent conditions for the course lecturers to make students feel included and that their opinion mattered for the course progression, as expressed through peer and self-assessment. This feeling was of paramount importance for positively impacting on student learning through continuous self-reflection, encouraging students' disposition for reflexive, critical self-assessment, whilst providing a comfortable environment for dialogical peer-assessment. Moreover, the students praised the pedagogical approach. As mentioned by one of the students: 'Since the course was based on participation and since it was possible to give feedback about the syllabus [...] I evaluate pedagogy methods and approach very high'. This showed the pedagogical value of interconnecting assessment procedures with student participation and learning.

The second cohort (2019-2020) enrolled on the course during the pandemic. Overall, and apart from the pandemic restrictions, students similarly praised the pedagogical approach and teaching methods, saying they broadened students' vision, improved their critical thinking skills and ability to see studied topics from different perspectives. Students also appreciated the fact that the lecturers did not introduce hierarchical relations with the students, which also resulted in students feeling more at ease and safer with peer and self- assessment. The guest speakers' expertise on such diverse topics as racism, migration, prejudice, gender, culture or interculturalism were believed to open student minds and broaden their knowledge. Students thought this made it easier for them to weigh multiple perspectives whilst assessing different performances.

The class rule to mix students from different nationalities in all in-class activities and the fact that one of the main pedagogical approaches was group and peer discussion, both with in-situ teachers and invited guests (surprisingly a new approach for many students), were highlighted by the students as contributing to the course success: 'I liked your pedagogical approach that you mixed people of different nationalities [...]. And I liked that there was peer-assessment so that we could evaluate each other!'

In general, students mentioned that their capacity for intercultural dialogue was improved due to self-assessment. Students demanded more regular opportunities throughout the course to contribute to assessment, so that there was time for improvement. In some cases, students felt challenged by marking colleagues' work during the peer-assessment process. Since students could join the course up until the fourth lecture, some students reported that the assessment method had not been sufficiently discussed with all the students at the beginning of the semester. Yet, in general, students said that their capacity for intercultural dialogue improved due to being engaged in self-assessment.

Student feedback from the third cohort (2020-2021) reveals an improvement in the course organisation. The non-hierarchical positioning of course teachers towards students was again appreciated, which we linked to our multiple efforts to encourage student participation. For some students this was a unique experience. 'It was a completely new experience for me–I am not used to discussing anything in the lectures, in most of the other courses throughout my school years I was more listening and just accepting the information and here I could immediately react and say my opinion'.

In addition, students again referred to the benefits of learning from peers with different cultural backgrounds, appreciated the opportunity to learn via informal and continuous dialogue and valued the class dynamics allowing everyone to participate and share their different points of view in a secure environment. For some students this was a unique opportunity to share their opinion in an international environment where they could freely decide if they wanted to engage in debate or not.

Replicability in a different context

The introduction of peer and self-assessment does not entail specific preconditions; it can be implemented in courses of different disciplines. It particularly fits courses that privilege a participatory approach and active engagement, and especially at an international level. The method may be improved by introducing a collective self-moderating mechanism, for example, a collective exercise through which students are requested to substantiate their assessment process with arguments that can convince their peers. This process of reflection on the assessment method would be another pedagogical component of the course. Such 'qualitative' implementation could lead students to engage with assessment more actively and responsibly, fostering professional relationships with their peers. It could fine-tune peer-learning opportunities for students by comparing the quality of their work with that of their colleagues.

Conclusions

This chapter discussed the use of peer and self-assessment when teaching a course on critical intercultural dialogue. It looked at student perceptions of being in the role of co-assessors of their peers' and their own work. Student feedback collected in the three editions of the course suggests that the inclusion of different learning themes, the synergies between course leaders and guest lecturers and the horizontal teaching approach (as opposed to the hierarchical), stimulated student participation and facilitated self and peer-assessment. Students valued opportunities for continuous self-reflection and critical approaches towards each other's work, their own work, and the course itself; ultimately broadening students' vision, which stemmed from the course pedagogy. They thought these factors had positive impacts on student learning, enabling a dialogical peer-assessment process. Students believed that the assessment procedures were directly interconnected with student participation and learning.

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Summary

This chapter analyses the pedagogical value of participatory student peer and self-assessment, as a form of critical pedagogy. It discusses feedback received from three cohorts of international students from 15 countries on the optional course Critical Intercultural Dialogue (CID), which is part of a master's programme on Sociology, offered at the Faculty of Economics at the University of Coimbra. Students' agency in the CID assessment process was expected to strengthen their commitment and participation in the course. Traditional assessment by professors was changed into three separate components, students were assessed by: (1) their teachers, (2) their peers and (3) themselves. Assuming that assessment is part of the teaching and learning process,

students could not be excluded from the critical and participatory approach, which guided the course pedagogy. Therefore, students were invited to be an active and complementary part of the assessment process through peer and self-assessment, which counted between 9% and 12% of the overall assessment. Students in their feedback appreciated this approach and noticed how the assessment criteria fitted the course pedagogy.

Keywords
critical pedagogy, peer assessment, self-assessment, student-centred learning

Cláudia Pato de Carvalho is a researcher at the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra. She conducts research in several national and international projects related to cultural practices and participation, cultural values and community participation through arts and culture. Her main interests are cultural participation, action-research and knowledge co-production. She teaches Critical Intercultural Dialogue and Applied Sociology. **claudiacarvalho@ces.uc.pt**

Cristiano Gianolla is a researcher at the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, principal investigator of the UNPOP project and co-coordinator of the research groups Inter-Thematic group on Migrations and Alice - Epistemologies of the South. He teaches Democratic Theories and Institutions, Critical Intercultural Dialogue and researches democratic processes, populism, emotions, narratives and postcolonialism. **cgianolla@ces.uc.pt**

Maria Manuela Guilherme is a senior researcher at the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra since 2002. She was awarded a PhD degree in Education by the University of Durham, UK (2000) and completed a 2-year postdoctoral programme at the University of S. Paulo (2016). She has coordinated several international projects funded by the European Commission, from whom she was also awarded a Marie Sklodowska-Curie research fellowship (2014-2017). **mariaguilherme@ces.uc.pt**

ADDRESSING THE PERCEPTION GAP: HELPING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TO SUCCEED IN THE LECTURE-ONLY MACROECONOMICS 2 COURSE

Jan Čapek, Masaryk University

Introduction

As Hussein and Schiffelbein (2020) show, international students face many difficulties when coming to study from different academic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. Although the difficulties are likely curriculum-wide (or even broader), this chapter focuses on internationalisation in a single course. The need for internationalisation in Macroeconomics 2 arose from students' feeling that there were few links between the course and the realities of their worlds/lives. In addition, many students were not satisfied with the course completion requirements, either.

Two innovations were implemented in the course in order to address the above challenges. One made explicit use of students' existing knowledge (Cosh 2000) by combining the course material with information about their home countries. The other ensured that assessment aided learning (Brown 2004) by introducing multiple and varied assessment methods. The chapter investigates if these changes improved student learning and satisfaction with the assessment methods. Although the teaching and learning literature predicts that the implemented changes would impact student learning and satisfaction positively, the analysis presented in this chapter uncovered a more complex situation. While the innovation did not result in an improvement in overall student performance compared to earlier years, students who studied continuously during the semester did perform better than their peers. The concluding section of the chapter considers the potential reasons for this outcome and recommends areas for future improvement.

The course, the students, and the lecturer

Macroeconomics 2 is taught at the Faculty of Economics and Administration at Masaryk University as part of the Finance and Business Management Master's programmes. The course is always taught in the spring semester and the innovation detailed below was implemented in spring 2021. Macroeconomics 2 is a foundational theoretical course, which is obligatory for all Master's students enrolled in the respective programmes. Students typically take the course in their first or second semester. The course is part of a self-financed, English-language programme offered to international students only. There were 44 students enrolled, mostly from African and Asian countries.

Macroeconomics 2 follows an international world-leading textbook (Mankiw 2019). The lecture slides are only slightly adapted versions of presentations supplied as instructor resources to the textbook. The course is regularly taught face to face, but needed to switch to online form due to COVID-19-related restrictions. A teaching assistant helped with providing feedback to students including holding consultations for the yearly project and its subsequent assessment. The course is scheduled for 12 or 13 weeks of teaching and, according to the study and examination regulations, the course must be completed with an exam and a grade. The course's original (pre-innovation) structure featured only one completion requirement, which was a written exam in the form of a multiple-choice test.

The teaching-learning challenge

Over the years of teaching, two teaching challenges linked to internationalisation emerged. First, not all students identified with the course completion requirements. They expressed dissatisfaction that the course concluded only with a written exam in the form of a test. Students' reactions indicated at least two reasons for the dissatisfaction. First, since there were no complementary completion requirements, everything depended on one test, which was stressful. Additionally, since there was no required work during the semester, some students deferred learning until the end of the semester, resulting in an unmanageable amount of study during the examination period.

Second, students felt that there were few macroeconomics links to the realities of their worlds/lives. Although the textbook contains many examples, they primarily focus on the US or are cast in a broader international context. The course evaluation forms and discussions with students indicated that (some) students did not see connections between Macroeconomics 2 and their life or their perspective of their world.

Both teaching challenges suggested the need for, in the words of Hussein and Schiffelbein (2020: 66), 'addressing the perception gap'. Students expected something different based on their earlier experiences and also found the topics and examples that the course covered distant from their realities. This frustrated them because 'international students are often stranded as they seek to earn high grades but lack the necessary academic, cultural, and linguistic skills to be successful' (Hussein and Schiffelbein 2020: 66).

Pedagogical method

To address students' issues formulated in the first teaching challenge, the revised completion requirements added two new forms of assessment: short weekly online quizzes and a project on a macroeconomic issue in the student's country. In the case of the weekly quizzes, students received summative feedback, in the form of points received for correct answers, and formative written feedback summarising and explaining the most problematic aspects of each quiz. The project featured two submissions with feedback: formative feedback for the first draft, and summative feedback–a grade–given after the final draft by the teaching assistant. In the new grading scheme, the final exam test made up only 50% of the grade, another 30% corresponded to the weekly online quizzes, and the final 20% was awarded for the project.

According to Wiliam and Thompson (2007), establishing where the learners are in their learning and what needs to be done to get them to achieve the course's learning goals are key processes in learning and teaching. Consequently, formative assessment can be conceptualised as providing feedback that moves learners forward, such as the comments the students received as their first feedback on their draft projects in Macroeconomics 2. Moreover, even the summative feedback for the weekly quizzes can be understood as formative assessment, that is, a formative use of summative tests: students learn about their knowledge during the semester, which allows them to adjust their study techniques to achieve better grades (e.g., Wiliam 2000). Hence, I expected that *introducing more complementary completion requirements during the semester would increase students' continuous work and effort and ultimately increase the course success rate, final exam scores, and grade average* (H1).

To address the second teaching challenge, the innovated course offered learning tools that guided students to consider macroeconomic issues in their countries. Knight (2003: 2) defines internationalisation as 'the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education'. Most often, as it is also the case in many other chapters of this volume, it is understood in practical terms as bringing international students to campus, mixing international and home students, or expanding the education of home students from the domestic perspective by adding foreign and/or international perspectives.

In Macroeconomics 2, international students were taught in isolation from home–that is, Czech–students, a condition which I had no authority to change, and learned with the help of an American textbook. This meant that it was a single foreign country's perspective–rather than that of the home country–that needed to be augmented with the experience and knowledge of students about their home country. Thus, international students had the opportunity to reflect on the theory being presented in class in the context of the economies they lived in by doing a short project on a macroeconomic issue in their home countries, expanding the American/international focus of the textbook. Additionally, the newly added online weekly quizzes featured open-ended questions on four occasions during the semester addressing the student's home country and linked to the topic covered in class. With 12 weeks per semester, this corresponds to roughly one open question every three weeks. The instructions explained that the response should be brief and apposite, limited to 500 characters. Therefore, I expected that *introducing cases from students' countries would improve the overall satisfaction with the course and identification with the course completion requirements* (H2).

Collected sources of data and methods

After the teaching was concluded, the teaching assistant collected two kinds of qualitative data. The first was the teaching assistant's feedback on student projects. The second type of data came from focus group interviews that the teaching assistant conducted about the applicability and usefulness of the knowledge gained during the course, the contribution of the knowledge to the overall understanding of the macroeconomic environment in the students' home countries, and the composition of the total grade. Twenty-nine students took part in one of the six three-to-six-member focus groups. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the focus group interviews were conducted online via MS Teams and, on average, they lasted for 26 minutes. In addition, qualitative information given in response to an open-ended question on the end-of-semester course evaluation form by ten students was used to enrich the evaluation of the innovation.

After the course ended, several types of quantitative data were collected. First, I looked at student performance measures in four different ways. (1) The results of the 14 weekly quizzes were utilised: there were ten multiple choice quizzes, as two out of twelve weeks were cancelled due to bank holidays or sickness, and the four open-question quizzes were treated as separate quizzes in the analysis. Thirty (out of 43, which is almost 70%) students participated in all weekly quizzes, and the number increases to 36 (over 83%) if we allow for two (out of 14) absences. (2) The final exam grades were based on a test. The test contained 24 multiple choice questions–each with four available options–which students had to answer in 36 minutes (1.5 minutes per question). The test was administered online because of COVID-19 restrictions, but unlike in 2020 the test bank questions were reworded so that they were not directly searchable on the Internet. To pass the test, the students needed to answer at least half of the questions correctly. (3) The grade average reports the mean of all the students' final grades. Letter grades were converted to numerical values in the following way: Excellent (A) = 6, Very good (B) = 5, Good (C) = 4, Satisfactory (D) = 3, Sufficient (E) = 2, and Failed (F) = 1. (4) Finally, the course success rate provided data on the ratio of students who passed the course.

Second, I used students' attendance records based on online video-watching logs. The data included the number of views and focused on the 18 topics of the videos rather than the ten class sessions. Some of the videos had been recorded in the previous semester, and for these, only additional views in the treatment semester were reported. For the new topics covered in the treatment semester, the data comprised the number of students streaming the lectures live and the number of students subsequently watching the recordings.

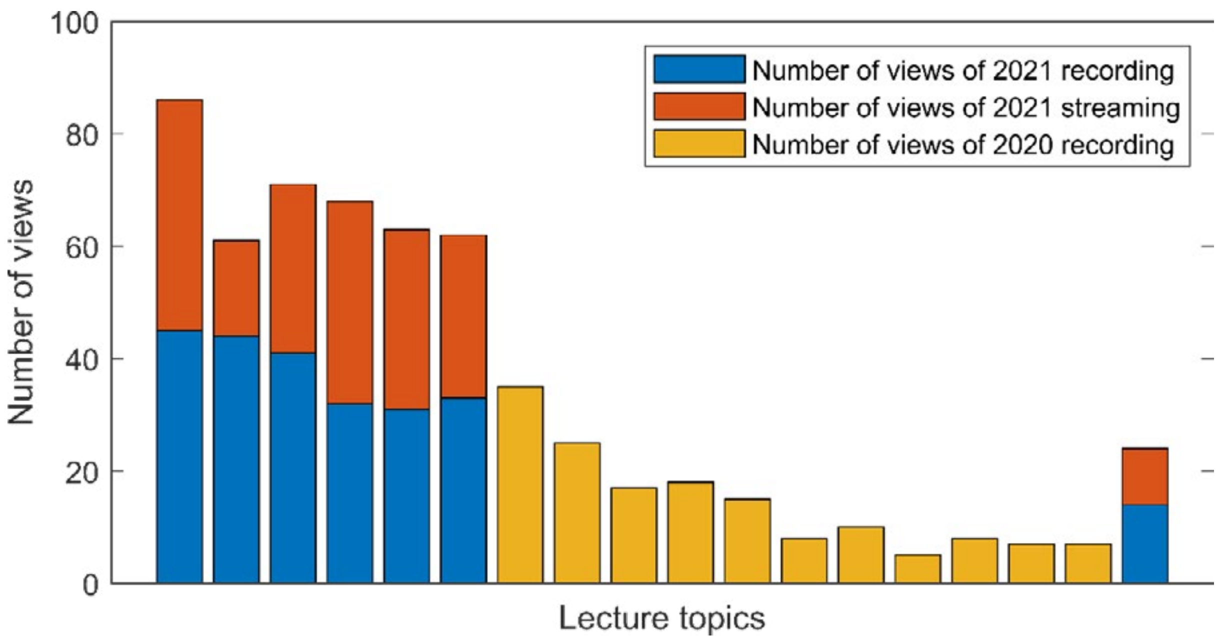
Third, I relied on quantitative data based on four relevant questions from Masaryk University's course evaluation form: Q1: The subject has an educational value for me, it enriches me; Q3: The teacher's explanation was always clear and comprehensible; Q4: The teacher always came to the class well prepared; and Q5: The teacher has clearly stated what knowledge and skills will be assessed. These were based on six-point Likert scale, where the score of six was the best and one was the worst. Nineteen students filled out the course evaluation form.

Finally, to make the comparison of improvement possible, I used all available corresponding data for all the above measures from the previous three runs of the course (2018, 2019, and 2020). I included information from 2018 and 2019 because the 2020 data was problematic for comparison. In 2020, the exam had to be changed to online format at short notice. Using the regular test bank for online assessment led to a very substantial increase in scores, probably related to the availability of correct answers online. Yet, for the sake of transparency, I decided not to exclude data from 2020.

Findings

There is only partial evidence in support of the hypothesis that more varied completion requirements compelled students to work harder during the semester and thus positively influenced their performance (H1). The little evidence that exists speaks to sustained efforts during the course rather than increasing performance. As I pointed out above, a notable portion (83%) of students missed no more than two quizzes. Similarly, regarding the project, about 79% of the students sent their papers for the first feedback, and about 25% asked for feedback a second time. As for attending the online lectures live or watching the recordings at home, the declining height of bars suggests that the level of participation and the number of views of the recordings decreased during the semester (Figure 1). Even more notably, on average, pre-recorded videos from 2020 were much less watched than those broadcast and recorded during the course. This anomaly in the trend may be best explained by one student's remark in the evaluation form: 'I personally don't prefer the self-study from tutor video'. It seems students favour real-time class sessions even when the course is delivered online.

Figure 1. Views of streamed or recorded lectures



When it comes to student performance as measured by grade average and success rate, there was no increase in the success rate or improvement in the grade average compared to previous years (Table 1). While 2020 is an outlier, there were slightly better results in the control year 2019 and no notable differences between 2021 and 2018. In 2019-2020, the grade averages were roughly at the Good (C) grade, while the years 2018 and 2021 had worse grade averages–approximately halfway between Good (C) and Satisfactory (D). The data show that except for the year 2020, with its irregularities, the course success rate was typically between 0.80 and 0.90. The fact that students' performance was not negatively affected by moving to online delivery is encouraging, but far from my expectations. However, it is precisely the differences in the methods of delivery that make comparison with earlier iterations of the course difficult.

Table 1. Course statistics

Year	2021 (treatment)	2020 (control)	2019 (control)	2018 (control)
Enrolled	44	54	26	37
Success rate	0.84	0.93	0.89	0.84
Grade average	3.63	4.14	4.03	3.63
Examination	Online	Online	In person	In person

Nonetheless, the results were closer to the expected outcomes when we look at the performance of the most active subgroups of students in 2021. There was a positive correlation between continuous preparation with a focus on internationalisation and both grade average and success rate. The subgroup of students who participated in all the quizzes had a grade average of 4.20, while the subgroup who handed in the project for feedback featured a grade average of 3.74. In both of the selected examples, the results were better than the overall average of 3.63 for the whole class. Similarly, active students had better course success rates than the class average. Students participating in all the quizzes had a course success rate of 0.97, while students who handed in their projects for feedback had an average course success rate of 0.85.
Concentrating on the final exam test as a separate part of the completion requirements, there were also notable differences in the performance of active students. Students participating in all the quizzes on average answered 64% of test questions correctly, while students who did not participate in all the quizzes had only 54% correct answers. On the other hand, the results for the final exam test were very similar for students who handed in their projects for feedback (60% correct answers) and those who did not (59% correct answers). These results show that the

innovation was fairly successful among those students who, as expected, studied continuously throughout the semester.

Nonetheless, the teaching assistant's observations regarding the student projects shed light not only on why the new approach to assessment might not have been as influential on student learning as suggested in the literature (Brown 2004: 85), but also revealed an unanticipated problem. On the positive side, the final versions of the projects were much more advanced than the initial ones. Around 20% of the projects were of high quality, 50% were adequate, and 30% were submitted probably just to get some points. The teaching assistant noticed that many projects were written in the same style and used the same models, so she carefully checked on the understanding of the models while consulting with the students. The most challenging part for the students was to make some logical interconnection between the models covered in the course and the project topic. This led the teaching assistant to estimate that at least 20% of the projects were written by third parties. Students who do not invest their time and work into completing such an assignment are unlikely to benefit from internationalisation and varied assessment exercises.

The results were similar when it came to the questions of students' satisfaction with the course and identification with the course completion requirements (H2). While the quantitative data was especially discouraging, there are several interesting takeaways from Table 2 showing students' responses to the questions on the evaluation form. First, the responses to questions 3–on the clarity of explanation by the teacher–and 4–on the teacher's preparedness–were mostly unchanged in the treatment period compared to earlier years, even after disregarding the year (2020) with irregularities. Second, the scores for the questions on the course's educational value to the students (Q1) and clarity of knowledge and skills tested in assessment exercises (Q5) were slightly lower in 2021 than the other years. An insightful comparison might be made to 2018 because the course success rate and the grade average in that year were quite similar to 2021. Even in this comparison, the students assessed after the innovation that the educational value of the course was lower and felt that the knowledge to be assessed was less clearly stated. It therefore seems that in the eyes of students more completion requirements carry the burden of less clear rules of what will be assessed and how. As for the educational value of the course, the quantitative data did not help answer why students perceived the innovated course as less valuable.

The qualitative data revealed that student attitudes toward the innovation were mixed. On the positive side, the teaching assistant felt that the students were quite open to comments and video consultations. During the focus group interviews, students said the semester-long project helped put the material into practice; especially the feedback was valuable to improve their work. Students also felt that the new constitution of the final grade was more student-friendly. They found it reasonable that the final score for the course consisted of grades for several components, and that there was a possibility of diversification and gradual accumulation of points.

Questions on the weekly quizzes helped consolidate/repeat the material passed on during the lectures, whereas the open questions were thought too basic and easy to search for answers on the Internet but also a good way to get points at the same time. Besides, the quizzes made students read the course material every week. Otherwise, they said they would have started studying only right before the exam.

Table 2. The results from the course evaluation form

Year	2021 (treatment)	2020 (control)	2019 (control)	2018 (control)
Enrolled	44	54	26	37
Responded	19	31	8	19
Q1	3.7	3.1	4.1	4.1
Q3	4	3.5	4	4
Q4	4.2	3.8	4.2	4.3
Q5	3.9	3.2	4.2	4

However, not all students appreciated the innovation. The following student response is quoted in full[1] to illustrate the difficulties in making students work continuously during the semester and internationalising the curriculum:

> This subject is hard and to make it harder on us it wasn't good approach. We are master students I am not bachelor anymore to be tested in this way or weekly reports or even the project was useless for me. From every class I understood 50% and less; how will I be able to put this in the project to use macroeconomic? This way of teaching needs to improve make it useful for once to the students let them love any economic subject.

Thus, the student felt that the innovations made the course harder to pass rather than being helpful for their learning and did not see weekly tests as appropriate to Master's level studies. Both sentiments showed his disapproval of the innovation.

Replicability in a different context

Even though this innovation focused on the needs of international students, the changes in as-

1 Similar to Felten and Lambert (2020: 9), we corrected capitalisation in several places to enhance the clarity of the text.

sessment methods presented in this chapter can be successfully applied to situations in which students face similar challenges. Continuous assessment could be beneficial to students regardless of their country of origin or the class composition. Changes related to internationalisation, and particularly the sharing of experiences between students, are more amenable to a classroom where at least some international students are present. However, careful preparations from the instructors–for example, by bringing in case studies from other countries–could successfully make up for the lack of foreigners in the student body. More widespread use of peer learning methods in the classroom utilising examples from several countries may also be a useful approach. While peer learning is more practical in smaller class sizes, it can be applied to classes this big successfully though with some trade-offs, most likely in the number or depth of concepts covered during classroom time. Nonetheless, it could be a beneficial extension of or alternative to the current innovation.

Conclusions

The present analysis has shown that continuous preparation based on internationalisation leads to higher level learning and uncovered a number of valuable insights. First, students prefer live delivery to pre-recorded lectures. Second, more varied completion requirements may make it less clear which knowledge and skills will be assessed, when students' previous learning experiences do not include such assessment methods. Third, the semester-long project, which carried the most burden for internationalisation in this innovation, needs changing because extending what students learnt in class and the textbook to include their home countries in a written paper was not motivating enough for many students. To make the assignment more effective, more interaction with and among students is necessary, including a shift toward seminars from a lecture-only course. Peer learning could be an avenue to that end, which would also allow for analysing the impact of engagement with peers–rather than engagement with the material–on student learning.

Finally, this analysis also revealed that the kind of innovations implemented in Macroeconomics 2 were not welcomed by all the students equally despite the fact that the changes were inspired by earlier students' wishes and complaints. In the future, it would be important to co-opt the kind of students who proved apprehensive toward the new methods of assessment and the different types of preparations required. It is necessary to influence student attitudes so that they focus on learning rather than just on passing the course. While putting an extra effort into explaining the assignment requirements could enhance student performance, for their learning to improve, students should embrace the idea that continuous learning is effective.

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Summary

The need for internationalisation in Macroeconomics 2 is related to earlier students' statements that there were not enough links between the course and the realities of their worlds/lives. In addition, many students were not satisfied with the course completion requirements. An innovation was implemented in the course to address these challenges: first, to internationalise the course curriculum, students were required to write a paper that combined their knowledge of their home country with the course material. Second, new and more varied assessment methods were introduced to encourage continuous learning. Using mixed methods of research, the chapter reveals that internationalisation and stress on continuous preparation did lead to higher level learning, but a small subset of students who resisted the changes failed to benefit from them. Similarly, many students appreciated the opportunity of the semester-long writing project to integrate the newly acquired knowledge with what they knew about the economies of their home countries, but quite a few of them avoided investing time and effort into the paper, and thus, their learning suffered. The chapter concludes by suggesting ways to encourage better learning outcomes, such as including peer learning and co-opting students to the new approach to assessment.

Keywords
continuous learning, economics, internationalising the curriculum, (peer) assessment

Jan Čapek is an associate Professor at the Faculty of Economics and Administration at Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic, where he teaches macroeconomics and international economics in Master's degree programmes. His research interests include macroeconomic policy evaluation and macroeconomic forecasting. He has been participating in several research projects funded by the Czech Science Foundation and has published in renowned international journals such as International Journal of Forecasting, Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics, and Oxford Economic Papers. **jan.capek@econ.muni.cz**

CRITIQUING LIKE A MASTER: DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING IN AN INTERNATIONALISED COURSE

Mária Stanková, Comenius University in Bratislava

The teaching-learning challenge

Even though I have been teaching literature and literary criticism at Comenius University in Bratislava (UNIBA) for nine years, I have been troubled with the fact that students who choose to sign up for these courses find them much less captivating than the subject would warrant. In particular, there seem to be four interconnected issues. First, students are simply not interested, probably because they do not see the use and the relevance of learning about literary criticism. Due to the influence of social media, the quality of criticism is melting away in various types of online outlets (Jokelainen 2013). Second, courses in literature tend to focus on the national literature of a country, which may seem too localised for students living in a globalised world. Third, the way students learn is not inspiring, either. Both teachers and students seem to prefer passive learning methods. Students' tendency to sit still and listen to their professor is less stressful than taking responsibility for active participation but it negatively affects their learning as literary criticism can be best learned by doing. Fourth, and relatedly, students' ability to think critically remains underdeveloped, but critical thinking is at the heart of good quality literary criticism.

I have decided to remedy this fourfold problem by designing a new course called 'Literary Criticism in the Era of Social Media', which built upon the concepts of internationalisation and active learning. By drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data from oral student feedback, the institutional student evaluation form, assessments of student work, a reflective teacher's journal and classroom observation, I argue that putting these two concepts into practice can lead to higher levels of engagement and enhanced critical thinking skills among students.

Pedagogical method

I chose to focus on both literary classics and social media in the course for two reasons: first, to help students understand the differences in quality between literary criticism and opinions expressed in social media, and second, to encourage their engagement. However, the main features of this newly designed course were internationalisation and active learning with stress on thinking, talking and writing freely and critically about literature.

I am committed to navigating students to acknowledge that we all are sometimes literary critics and that interpretation of culture, not only literature, is an important part of our lives. In the contemporary globalised world, culture is not only the cornerstone of literary studies but also key to internationalisation, that is, to 'the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education' (Knight 2003: 3). Literary criticism–including its methods and forms–is shared across cultures and the most important books of world literature are part of the globalised culture we live in. Furthermore, literature is often culturally determined, and thus, it is necessary to understand foreign cultures to write quality criticism of literary works. Literary criticism that moves away from the local (national) to the global (international) has greater potential for students to identify with, and thus, engage with more closely.

'Literary Criticism in the Era of Social Media' embraces a student-centred approach to learning putting students 'at the heart of the learning process' (Hoidn 2016: 440). To achieve this, active learning is essential. Of active learning methods, I chose peer learning, which 'emphasizes the sharing of experience of all participant students' (Gogus 2012: 2572), because it allows students to recognise the value of each other's perspectives while taking their first steps thinking, speaking, and writing about literature. While designing the course, I was working with the idea that the students would not be just criticising literary works, but would work as each other's critics and reviewers. Student-centred peer learning goes beyond enhancing student learning (e.g., Boud 2001; Cooper 2002; Topping 2006) by putting into practice the principles behind literary criticism that students must speak openly, express their opinions, and use arguments to explain their points.

I moved away from a heavy focus on lectures and toward active learning by flipping the classroom experience. Students were required to 'read material before coming to class, so that class time can be devoted to discussion, peer interactions, and time to assimilate and think' (Mazur 2009: 51). Accordingly, students were assigned one or two texts (between two and fifteen pages in length) to read at home before each class session, and thus, I could replace lecturing with such peer learning activities as discussions, student presentations, and group work. This hands-on approach is likely to make students more involved. Therefore, going into the course I expected that (H1) the combination of internationalisation and active learning, and specifically peer learning methods, would lead to higher levels of engagement among students.

Another purpose behind introducing these activities was to increase students' learning via developing their ability to think critically. Critical thinking is 'an active, intellectual process where the individual will observe, analyse and reflect on new knowledge and integrate it into their current understanding. Critical thinking can be applied in a variety of learning platforms such as reading, written work and discussions' (Thyer 2016: 1). Similarly to Simon (2018), I see critical thinking as challenging for university students. Therefore, I selected active learning exercises that I felt were best to support critical thinking and give students repeated opportunities to express their opinions either in spoken or written format. In addition, I ensured a classroom atmosphere in which students could freely speak their minds without feeling the need to bow to a higher authority on the subject. As a result, I expected that (H2) peer learning exercises would improve students' critical thinking skills.

The course, the students, and the lecturer

The new course, 'Literary Criticism in the Era of Social Media', was designed primarily for Bachelor's and Master's international students, but was also offered to home students in the Department of Journalism at the Faculty of Arts of UNIBA. The class met once a week for two hours during the thirteen weeks of the winter 2021 semester. The course was taught face-to-face during the first part of the semester, but after 8 November 2021, educational activities took place online via Microsoft Teams due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The change did not harm the course, and students were willing to discuss topics and remained active in the online environment. Unfortunately, because the pandemic drastically limited student mobility, there were only three students in the course, one international student from Italy and two home students from Slovakia. Each student was from a different discipline: journalism, marketing communication, and library and information studies.

After successfully completing the course, the students were to become familiar with the essentials of literature and literary criticism; to understand how to read, interpret, and analyse books; to be able to write book reviews; and to be aware of the differences between traditional and online media. Students were assessed on two critical essays (80%) and the level of their engagement during active learning exercises (20%). For the essays, students wrote two reviews of Sally Rooney's novel Normal People. One review was prepared for traditional media, e.g., a literary magazine, and the second for a social media platform like Instagram. Both reviews were evaluated from substantive (evaluation, presence of critical thinking, using arguments, ability to express point of view) and formal (language quality–grammar, stylistics and correct usage of literary terminology) aspects.

The classes had similar structure during the semester. At the beginning there was usually a short interactive mini-lecture (approximately 10 to 20 minutes) with Wooclap or Kahoot questions about the topic. These questions helped me to see if the students had read the assigned material and how they perceived the concepts. The greater part of every class was devoted to peer-learning activities (up to three per class) connected to the day's topic. Students either worked together as a team or alone and participated in such activities as information searching, working with social media, reading, writing, interpreting texts, discussing etc. I ended each class with a brief summary of the topic and told them what to expect in the next lesson.

As for the specific peer-learning activities and exercises, here I will describe three typical classroom assignments to illustrate the exercises I used to achieve the learning outcomes. The first was based on two interconnected activities about social networks to consider the importance of literary criticism in globalised culture. One exercise focused on so-called bookfluencers–i.e., influencers specialised in literature–and Instagram posts about books. Students had fifteen minutes to do research to find, characterise, and then present in class about two bookfluencers from their country and their activities. Then we discussed the findings and compared Slovak and

Italian bookfluencers. In the next exercise, students explored influencers (or persons they follow on Instagram) to find out how much of their content is focused on books. Once they presented on the literary-critical aspect of these Instagram accounts, the class had a lively discussion about the similarities and differences between various Instagram accounts based on their attentiveness to literature, the types of books and genres included, and the culturally rooted aspects of the views presented. The aim of this activity was to help students appreciate the importance of literary criticism in a globalised world and to identify similarities and differences across national cultures with the help of social networks, and thus learn about each other's cultures.

Second, since both the study and practice of literary criticism are strongly connected to critical thinking and the development of these skills was one of the key objectives of the course, students completed several exercises to develop their critical thinking. For example, they were asked to prepare a collaborative review of the first book of the Harry Potter saga. In accordance with the advice given in the reading material and my fifteen minute mini-lecture about how to analyse and interpret literary work, the students chose one aspect of Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone such as the plot/story, characters, space and time, or the narrator. In the next twenty minutes, each student prepared a bullet-point list based on the analytical aspect they chose. Finally, the students put the information together and collaborated to write a joint book review based on both their individual reading experiences and knowledge of literary theory. The Harry Potter series also served as an intercultural binder, since all the students knew the books quite well and considered them among their favourite books.

Lastly, by the end of the semester, the course focus shifted away from media and popular culture toward academic-level literary criticism. The final class examined the methods of literary criticism and was almost entirely dedicated to students individually and collectively evaluating five analytical approaches to literary criticism. Since by then they had a solid knowledge of and experience with literary criticism, it was reasonable to expect them in thirty minutes to individually determine the strengths and weaknesses of the reviewed methods, when and how the methods can be used, what findings the methods can show etc. Afterwards, the class discussed, compared, debated and augmented their findings. Finally, I closed the class—and the semester—with a brief summary of the most important takeaways from the course.

Sources of data and analytical methods

To test my hypotheses, I worked primarily with qualitative data, which I cross-checked with some quantitative measures. The low number of students made the large-scale use of quantitative data impossible, and the second hypothesis that investigates the quality of critical thinking almost exclusively required a qualitative approach based on in-depth analysis of student work. I used five different sources of data.

First, I relied on oral feedback from the students that was collected on three different occasions during the semester. On the first occasion, I asked about their reasons for choosing the course, on the second about their satisfaction with the course, and finally about their overall opinion about the whole semester. While these discussions took place at the end of three classes, students could be open and honest about their opinions as they knew these would not affect their grades but would help me improve the course in the future. I recorded their responses in writing.
Second, I kept a reflective teacher's journal throughout the semester. After every lesson, I took a few notes with special attention to the engagement of the students, their responses to the activities, their interest in the topics, and their questions.
Third, a colleague from the Department of Journalism came to visit the class on 25 November and provided feedback on both my and the students' activities. I used the observation form that the colleague filled out and the follow-up discussion regarding active learning and internationalisation.
Fourth, to discern progress in the students' critical thinking, I used the two critical essays the students wrote during the semester: their initial paper about their favourite book, which was a short, 500-word paper completed after the very first class, and the literary criticisms written for traditional media, as described above. Evaluating the two essays written at the beginning and end of the semester allowed me to trace any progress. This assignment not only revealed important information about how the students thought about literature, what they found important when writing reviews, and their level of critical thinking—which helped me tailor the rest of the semester to their needs—but also served as a starting point for my analysis.
I relied on two methods to evaluate whether or not students improved their critical thinking. First, I used four criteria based on the formal and substantive aspects of these works. These were: (1) clear and proper arguments; (2) use of literary terms; (3) interpretation rather than description of the reading experience; and (4) overall style, content, and quality of writing. The first two criteria considered the number of arguments and literary terms in the book reviews. Regarding the third criterion, I looked at the presence of evaluation of the book (yes/no), and for the last criterion I rated the texts from zero to ten points depending on the stylistics and content quality (zero was minimum, ten maximum).
In identifying the exact level of critical thinking, I relied on Plack et al.'s (2007) modified version of Bloom's taxonomy for the analysis of reflective—and other—writings. The taxonomy is presented in the three levels: (1) knowledge and comprehension (data gathering), (2) analysis (data analysis), and (3) synthesis and evaluation (conclusion drawing) (Plack et al. 2007: 287). I analysed the student essays by identifying critical thinking actions through the use of verbs associated with each level of critical thinking in the revised taxonomy. Afterwards, I counted the number of occurrences of each verb and added together the numbers within each category.

Finally, the newly designed student evaluation form of the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University, provided both qualitative and quantitative data. My students agreed to be part of the pilot testing and two of the three students did fill out the questionnaire. Of the 22 questions, I selected two open-ended and six quantitative questions relevant for this analysis. As for the open-ended questions, they asked students about what they most valued in the course and what they would like to change in the course. The quantitative questions asked students to express their opinions on five-point Likert scales (strongly disagree, agree, neutral, agree, strongly agree) regarding a series of statements about active learning, classroom atmosphere, their own learning experience and the activities during class sessions (for the exact questions, see Table 1). Because of the small number of respondents, I used their actual answers rather than measures of descriptive statistics.

Table 1. Statements in the student evaluation form used in this study.

There were enough opportunities for discussion and other learning activities.
There was an atmosphere, which I found encouraging for my learning.
This course has helped me to develop knowledge through problem solving, independent thinking or completing exercises.
This course has developed my creativity, which is an ability to produce new ideas and original solutions of problems based on acquired knowledge and skills.
I have contributed to the discussions or other learning activities.
By the end of this course, I developed a better understanding into the studied matter than I had at its beginning.

Findings

Teaching three students from two countries and from three different fields of study about literary criticism was challenging, but in this course, these conditions also benefited students' learning. In this, an open and friendly atmosphere was crucial. Both students who filled out the end of semester evaluation form strongly agreed that the course atmosphere was encouraging for learning. The observer thought that during the discussion I 'gave every student the space to express her/his thoughts [and…] also encouraged students to answer the questions'. Furthermore, peer learning was noted and appreciated by the observer and the students alike. The observer found that a large part—51-75%—of the observed class was dedicated to peer learning. She felt that students 'could learn something new from each other, through an exchange of ideas, participating in activities and working collaboratively during the class'. Meanwhile, the students strongly agreed that 'there were enough opportunities for discussion and other learning activities' and particularly appreciated the 'opportunity to practice what was learned' (student 1) and the 'practical approach [to] learning through exercises and discussions' (student 2).

Focusing on both social media and classical literary studies increased student interest, which is a prerequisite for high engagement level. One student praised how the course acknowledged the role of social media, and thus 'the addressing of actual problems that we need to face nowadays' (student 2). The observer found that 'The lesson was interesting and stimulating' and the students shared her opinion: in the survey, students strongly agreed that the course was stimulating as it developed their 'ability to produce new ideas and original solutions of problems based on acquired knowledge and skills'.

Thus, the level of class engagement was high, although with some variations. Students saw positively their classroom participation and either agreed or strongly agreed that they contributed to the discussions and other learning activities. My reflective journal shows that willingness to speak up in discussions was growing during the semester. In the first meeting students were still very shy. The turning point came in the third lesson as they became more confident to present their ideas in front the others. Another important point was the shift to online teaching after 8 November 2021. Despite the challenges of the online environment, the students stayed active and in the peer observation form my colleague stated that 'The students communicated with each other on the topic with ease and complemented each other's thoughts'.

My reflective diary indicates the engagement level varied depending on the topic and activity type. The students were less active when dealing with the more theoretical topics and more engaged with practical topics. They were very willing to work in groups and to be active in discussion, while their enthusiasm was lower during writing exercises. The responses to the questionnaire indicate that active learning methods were highly appreciated by students. My colleague agreed that the students' level of engagement was high during peer-learning activities, but during the other parts of the class as well. All in all, these provide support for the first hypothesis about student engagement.

The other hypothesis focused on critical thinking, which was evaluated by examining the students' writing for evidence of critical thinking skills. As Table 2 shows, students' literary essays improved in all four aspects. Although modestly, the number of arguments increased for each student from the first to the second paper. They also used more literary terms. The style and quality of their papers improved simultaneously, and in the case of student 3 rather notably. While two out of three students used descriptions rather than interpretations in their evaluation at the beginning of the semester, by the end of the course all three relied on interpretative evaluations, suggesting an improvement in critical thinking. Hence, all of the students were able to apply the knowledge they acquired during the semester, such as proper use of literary terms. Although high(er) quality book reviews necessitate higher levels of critical thinking skills, the above results only allow us to presume that the observed improvements in literary criticism resulted from enhancement of critical thinking.

Table 2. Evaluation of students' book reviews

	Student 1		**Student 2**		**Student 3**	
	Review 1	**Review 2**	**Review 1**	**Review 2**	**Review 1**	**Review 2**
Argumentation*	1	2	1	3	0	1
Use of literary terms*	2	4	1	3	0	2
Interpretative evaluation	-	+	+	+	-	+
Style and quality†	7	9	8	10	4	8

* Frequency of arguments or literary terms used
† 10-point scale

The level of critical thinking in students' book reviews was evaluated with the help of a modified version of Bloom's taxonomy (Plack et al. 2007), in which attention is limited to three—rather than six—levels of critical thinking: knowledge and compression, analysis, and synthesis and evaluation (Table 3, continued on next page). In general, all three students improved their thinking at each level from review 1 to review 2. Although the tendency to describe or state (level 1) facts or events about the reviewed books or literary approaches remained strong, the students also improved greatly in their analytical thinking (level 2). Most notably, the students did much better in synthesis and evaluation (level 3), which is of crucial importance for the genre of literary criticism. In fact, in the second review each student relied more often on skills of synthesis and evaluation than knowledge or comprehension or analysis, as opposed to the first review, when they did best in description. Thus, it is clear that the peer-learning methods developed critical thinking, which offers support for the second hypothesis.

Table 3. The levels of critical thinking in students' book reviews based on the frequency of occurrences of each action

	Student 1		Student 2		Student 3	
	Review 1	**Review 2**	**Review 1**	**Review 2**	**Review 1**	**Review 2**
Knowledge and Compre-hension	Describe 3 State 2 **Total 5**	Describe 6 State 3 **Total 9**	Describe 5 State 1 **Total 6**	Describe 7 State 3 **Total 10**	Describe 2 State 2 **Total 4**	Describe 4 State 2 **Total 6**
Analysis	Analyse 0 Question 1 Explore 1 **Total 2**	Analyse 2 Question 3 Explore 2 **Total 7**	Analyse 0 Question 1 Explore 1 **Total 2**	Analyse 2 Question 3 Explore 2 **Total 7**	Analyse 0 Question 0 Explore 1 **Total 1**	Analyse 3 Question 2 Explore 2 **Total 7**
Synthesis and Evaluation	Conclude 1 Hypothesize 0 Evaluate 3 **Total 4**	Conclude 6 Hypothesize 1 Evaluate 3 **Total 10**	Conclude 1 Hypothesize 0 Evaluate 5 **Total 6**	Conclude 3 Hypothesize 4 Evaluate 4 **Total 11**	Conclude 1 Hypothesize 0 Evaluate 1 **Total 2**	Conclude 3 Hypothesize 2 Evaluate 4 **Total 9**

Replicability in a different context

Incorporating social media into the teaching of literary criticism resulted in enhanced student learning. This is an approach to education that other fields in the social sciences and humanities could also benefit from. Teachers of sociology, economics, history, philosophy, archival studies, museum studies, or archaeology—disciplines often considered distant and disconnected from contemporary events and social media—could use the internet as an opportunity to teach, too. For example, exploring how a historical event, a sociological trend, an archaeological discovery or a philosophical approach is (mis)represented or (mis)used in the virtual world could be eye-opening for students. Similarly, students could learn to recognise how an event or fact is interpreted differently across various cultural or political contexts. The use of social media offers a chance for students to understand and cope with the fact that, despite the incontrovertible presentation of information in elementary or high school textbooks, often there are parallel truths. This would not only prepare them to be more open to other people's opinions, but would also be foundational for becoming critical thinkers in a global age.

Conclusions

This chapter showed how peer learning combined with internationalisation facilitated classroom engagement and developed students' critical thinking. I found that turning to social media and popular contemporary literature when teaching about literary criticism was beneficial for student learning, and thus demonstrated that teaching traditional university majors in isolation from the virtual world is counterproductive. Students need to understand how what they learn is relevant for their lives to be able to excel in disciplines that are more distant from their daily experience. Peer learning in an internationalised classroom can substantially contribute to the success of such an approach.

There are still some important issues to explore in the future. First, this study is based on a small number of cases (n=3). More data is needed to ascertain that the findings herein can be generalised. It would be also intriguing to see if the teaching approach presented here can work just as well when there are 12-20 students enrolled in the course. Second, there is much to learn about the specific benefits of using ICT tools (e.g., Wooclap and Kahoot) in teaching and learning processes (Bijsmans 2020; Oulaich 2020), and, similarly, the use of social networks and its effect on students (Manca and Ranieri 2016; Evans 2013). Encouraged by the results presented in this chapter, I plan to explore these issues further in future iterations of this course and in my other courses as well.

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Summary
This chapter discusses the internationalisation of the elective course 'Literary Criticism in the Era of Social Media' offered for both international and home students in the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava. The course was based on peer learning methods and incorporated social media and contemporary popular literature into the curriculum in order to increase student engagement and improve students' critical thinking skills to address low student interest in literature in general and specifically in literary criticism. Relying on student opinions and course work, a colleague's classroom observation, and my own reflective journal, this chapter shows how this innovative new course helped students to improve their classroom engagement and critical thinking skills.

Keywords
Bloom's Taxonomy, critical thinking, literary criticism, social media, student engagement

Mária Stanková is an Associate Professor in the Department of Journalism at Comenius University in Bratislava. Her primary research focus is on literary criticism, media linguistic and cultural journalism. As a teacher, she lectures about semiotics of media, semantics and pragmatics, and stylistics. She is also a proof-reader, writer, and occasional translator.
maria.stankova@uniba.sk

PEER LEARNING ACTIVITIES THAT ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION: MAPS, MUSEUM PROFILING, AND TREASURE HUNT

Lenka Vargová, Comenius University in Bratislava

Teaching-learning challenge

Since its inception, European Museums and World Heritage Sites has been a course that relies heavily on student contribution. However, the engagement level has not been as high as I expected. First, home students seem to not travel enough around Europe or when they travel, they do not visit museums. The presence of international students can remedy this issue, if they are willing to share their experiences. Second, students—home and international alike—lack sufficient motivation to prepare for and participate in class even if one third of their final grade comes from the combination of homework and in-classroom contribution. Therefore, I decided to redesign the course by introducing peer learning, strengthening internationalisation and fostering relationships between students of different origins. In this chapter I show that peer learning activities can help raise the levels of student interest in and engagement with the course content.

The course, the students, and the lecturer

European Museums and World Heritage Sites is offered in the Department of Archive Studies and Museology at the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava. The course was originally designed for Museology and Cultural Heritage students (MA level) to help them feel more secure in using English in their field. It has, moreover, been offered for students in the Central European Studies programme (BA level) and so far, they have formed the majority of students. It was first introduced in the Winter 2019 semester, for a mixture of home and international students.

The course covers different European countries each week, focusing on their museums and heritage sites. Course learning outcomes include students becoming familiar with different types of European museums and heritage sites, explaining the development of the museum phenomenon in Europe, defining the term 'museum', and improving student attitudes toward museums in general. Assessment has been based on two presentations delivered during the semester (10 points each), in-class contribution and homework (10 points).

In the Winter 2021 semester, sixteen students signed up for the course, twelve of them from Central European Studies and four Erasmus+ students. The class was comprised of five home students and eleven international students including seven from Ukraine, two from China, and two from Singapore. Of the eleven class sessions, six were held face-to-face and five classes were online. Some adaptations were necessary when we switched from in-person to online teaching.

Pedagogical method

In line with the student-centred approach to teaching, I view learning as an active process in which students should actively participate (McLeod 2019), and thus be closely involved in the process of the construction of their own knowledge (University of Waterloo 2022). Classroom interaction is among the most used instructional strategies. Discussion is a great tool that we can use to facilitate learning, but it is still not the norm in every classroom (Howard 2015). The understanding of effective teaching and how it ties to student engagement is constantly evolving as well, even more so now when there is an ever-bigger push toward online teaching due to the outbreak of the pandemic (Barkley 2010).

While I made discussion an important part of this course from the beginning, I have come to realise that discussion needs to be more focused and structured. Therefore, in 2021 I introduced a set of new activities: a map exercise, museum profile, and treasure hunt, which combined peer learning and internationalisation to improve student participation. Peer learning was selected because of its potential to promote a safe, open environment where everyone can participate and share their opinions (Barkley 2010).

During the introductory class, I divided students into groups, provided each group with a map and asked them to mark their home country and the countries of Europe they have visited. This was followed by a group discussion about the visited countries and student experiences there, as well as about the countries they would like to visit. We worked with the maps during the first two classes, so that everyone had a chance to participate. The maps served as an icebreaker and also a reference point for me when we talked about a particular country during later classes: it showed me which (if any) students had visited each country and I could call on them to comment. Of the newly introduced activities, I relied on the map the most, referring to it in every class.

The museum profile activity was based on the 'I like... museums' initiative and the use of visitor profiles to help personalise a museum visit (Simon 2010). Each student got a card on which they filled out their (general) interests and the type(s) of museums they enjoy visiting. Then they discussed the responses in pairs. When the activity was used in the first class, it aimed at helping students to get to know each other, find their voice and stimulate their curiosity. Seeing students' interest in weird museums (Tibballs 2016), I modified this activity and asked students to suggest an unusual museum their peer might find appealing based on their interests. This was to show students that there are museums of all kinds and no matter what you feel passionate about, there is probably a museum that addresses your interests.

For the treasure hunt, I used an online interactive tool called Flippity that allows students to create their own scavenger hunts ('Make your own virtual breakout' 2022). As a reflection on past lessons, students had to answer ten conceptual questions about museums and heritage sites and add their own opinions about the museums covered (Vargová 2021). Using random assignment to groups of three via the Microsoft Teams breakout rooms function, students had to search online for clues to a series of riddles concerning the museums and heritage sites of a particular region and discuss the assigned questions. The activity was used once and only online to reinforce earlier knowledge and reflect.

The above activities made internationalisation, that is, 'the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education' (Knight 2004), more explicit in the course. Internationalisation has always been a feature of this course by focusing on museums around Europe and incorporating the experiences of all, including international, students. The new, more structured peer learning activities put an even stronger emphasis on students' diverse experiences. This also allowed international students to feel more comfortable to contribute to class activities even when their travel experience was limited. Often simply talking about museums and world heritage sites in their home country was enough for them to meaningfully contribute and connect with their peers.

When introducing the three peer learning activities, I expected that students would (H1) consider the class content and new activities appealing and beneficial for their learning, and (H2) become more active during the classes compared to students who took the same course in the previous academic year; and finally that (H3) the level of engagement would be equally high among home and international students.

Sources of data and methods

As for the data collection instruments, I used five sources. First, students filled out an anonymous minute-paper after every second face-to-face class (three in total, with 36 responses). I used survey cards with questions about what the students found appealing, what they took away from the session, what they would like to hear more about in the future, and whether or not they found anything irrelevant. I asked them to focus on two areas: the main activity and content of the class. When we switched to remote teaching, I prepared an online version of the form using Padlet, though I only ever received two answers there.

Second, I kept a teacher's diary in which I listed my expectations about how each class will go and how the students will behave with regard to the activities before each class. After each class I evaluated my expectations based on my observations during class and made other notes that I deemed relevant. I again focused on the categories of content and activity. The entries were usually approximately half a page and often took the form of bullet points.

Third, I tracked the level of student engagement during peer learning activities, and participation in the discussions about selected countries. I could analyse the level of participation from a comparative perspective as there was similar data available from the previous semester, which I used when evaluating the second hypothesis.

Fourth, peer observation of one of my online classes was conducted by a colleague from my department, who—as a PhD student—took the class the first year it was offered. Therefore, she was able to compare the class pre- and post-innovation. She filled out a classroom observation sheet, writing comments during the class, and we met afterwards to compare her observations with my perception of the class.

Finally, I used results from two versions of the end-of-semester student evaluation form. The university's standard eight-question survey asks students to express their opinion on the course and suggest improvements, which can help the teacher identify problematic areas and improve the course. However, the standard evaluation form is generally underused by students, as was the case in this course: only seven students completed it. This semester, my course was also part of a pilot study aiming to design a new, more comprehensive evaluation form with 22 questions. This new form was more fitting for my purposes as it paid more attention to engagement and peer learning. Five students completed this form. As both surveys were anonymous, it is not possible for me to tell whether or not the two questionnaires were filled out by the same students.

I used mixed methods of analysis, where most of the comparisons between this and earlier iterations of the course were measured qualitatively. For yes/no and multiple-choice questions in the surveys and the classroom observation form I used descriptive statistics.

Findings

As for the student perceptions of the course and peer learning activities, my expectations were confirmed (H1). Based on the answers from the minute-papers, students unanimously found the classes appealing. There was not a single comment in the section where they were asked to identify irrelevant information. Out of the 38 responses, only four expressed the need for further clarification of certain points, asking about the selection process of the presented museums, if the museums also offered virtual tours, or wanting to know more about some museums. The students mainly described what sort of information they found exciting, which gave me insight into what to pay more attention to in future classes.

The students expressed increased interest in unusual museums such as the Museum of Icelandic Witchcraft and Sorcery, the Dog Collar Museum (UK), and the Beijing Museum of Tap Water (seven responses). They wanted to learn more about the history of the discussed museums and/or their collections (six responses) and said that the classes had inspired them to want to visit the museums or heritage sites (eight responses). This is most encouraging, as it meets one of the course learning outcomes. Also, the pilot end of semester survey responses suggested that the course helped broaden student horizons when it comes to museums and that it offered enough opportunities for contributing to learning activities (five responses strongly agree/agree). The students also felt engaged in class (five responses strongly agree/agree) and felt part of a learning community (four responses strongly agree/agree). When asked for suggestions, two students expressed the opinion that even more activities could be introduced. As for the regular survey, both respondents found the course appealing and would recommend it to others.

Student engagement was also found to be higher than in the previous year (H2). Students were more active in the discussions. Although the composition of the student body was different—slightly more students took the class in 2021 (n=16) than in 2020 (n=13) and in 2021 the ratio of international to home students was higher than in the previous year (11:5 and 7:6, respectively)—valid comparisons are still possible. Nine out of thirteen students (69%) contributed in 2020 at least once, with twenty-one recorded instances of student activity. In 2021, both numbers were higher: fourteen out of sixteen students (87%) contributed in class at least once, with twenty-seven recorded instances of student activity.

While a similar comparison with the previous academic year is not possible regarding peer learning given that all such activities were newly introduced, making the 2021 course naturally more interactive in this respect, it is possible to look at student engagement in the innovated course. The observer noted that between 26%-50% of the class session consisted of peer learning activities. She found that the level of engagement during these activities was medium, which was higher than during other activities. Indeed, I made a note in my diary that students were most active during the peer learning activities or when specifically called upon, and rarely asked questions or commented on their own. Most of the student activity happened when we began discussing a new country and before we delved into particular museums. Occasionally they volunteered to share information without prompting if the discussed locations triggered their memory. For example, when we talked about Venice as a cultural heritage location, one of the students shared her carnival experience there.

However, there were discernible differences between the levels of engagement in the various activities. It is clear from my teaching diary that the map caught the students' attention from the beginning and they would not have minded spending even more time on it. One response from the feedback form even stated that 'we should have more activities like the first one'. Of the peer learning activities, the map was received most favourably and it turned out to be the most useful in the long run.

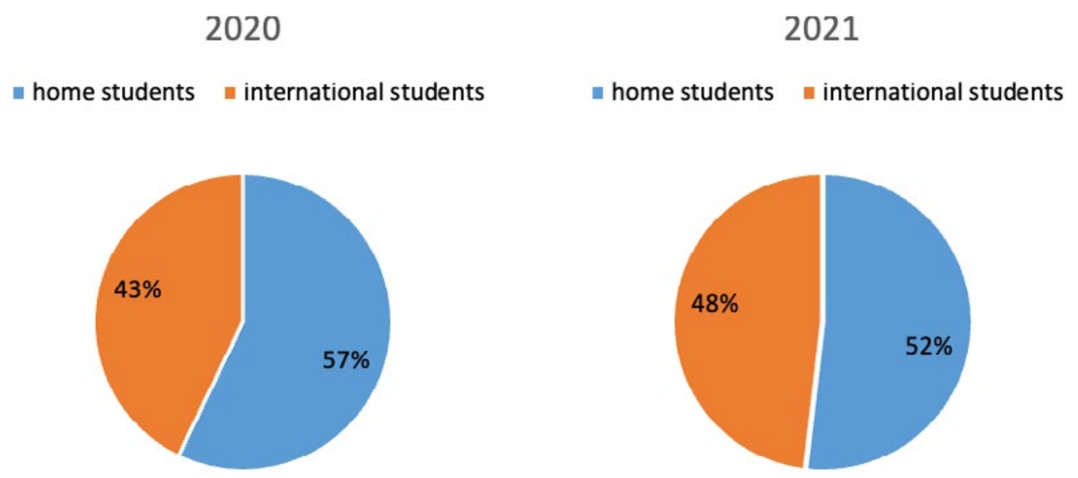
Working with museum profiles encountered less enthusiasm from students initially: when given the choice between working with these profiles or researching weird museums, they chose the latter. Nonetheless, it resulted in lively discussions in the end, too. The modified iterations of this activity garnered better responses from the students. All in all, the museum profile exercise strengthened the overall idea that 'museums are for everyone' by piquing their interest in new, unusual museums. Therefore, the activity has potential as a peer learning tool, it just needs a more careful design.

The treasure hunt elicited mixed reactions, which was, at least partially, due to the level of interaction between the members of each group. In some cases, it helped spark discussion, but some groups worked in silence treating it more like an individual task. This was corroborated by the peer observer who suggested that the online nature of the class might have been responsible for this. However, I have found that this exercise not only helped with engaging students and reviewing important course content, but also encouraged students to search for additional information on their own.

Home and international students' classroom activity was slightly more balanced in 2021 than in 2020. In 2020, five out of six (83%) home students participated at least once, while only four out of seven (57%) international students did the same. However, in 2021 all five (100%) home students and nine out of eleven (82%) international students were active, reducing the gap between the two groups from 26% to 18%.

The difference between the two groups in the frequency of average contributions in class during online teaching was much smaller in both 2020 and 2021 but still favoured home students slightly. The shrinking of the gap from 2020 to 2021 meant the home and international students' levels of contribution were close to equal in this regard. In 2020, twelve out of the twenty-one recorded instances of student activity were by home students (57%) and nine by international students (43%). In 2021, both figures were higher: fourteen out of twenty-seven instances were of home student activity (52%) and thirteen of international student activity (48%) (see Figure 1). Therefore, support for H3 is mixed. While the gap between home and international students closed, perhaps due to a more explicit consideration of internationalisation, the contributions of home and international students were not in parity in all respects.

Figure 1. Comparison of frequency of activity of home and international students during online class sessions



Replicability in a different context

The peer learning activities used in this course can be used in other contexts as well, only with slight modifications to fit with the content of the course. They can be particularly effective in courses that enrol students from disciplines close in topic or approach to museology, such as archaeology, anthropology, international relations, history, sociology, and even geography, and that mix students from a variety of fields. Making use of students' personal experiences brings the somewhat distant material closer to their own lives, which is a viable method especially in those disciplines that seem detached from the digital age of the 21st century. All three activities described in this chapter can be adjusted easily. For example, many online resources offer tips on how to incorporate maps—which proved to be the most popular and effective activity—into courses (cf. 'Digital mapping…' 2022; 'Interactive maps for the classroom' 2022; 'Virtual field trip apps and websites' 2022).

Conclusions

All in all, the results confirm two out of my three hypotheses. The students thought the course was appealing and found the new peer learning activities engaging, especially when they were properly stimulated. The students gained a foundational understanding of the typology of museums and cultural heritage, as well as tips for interesting locations to visit. Regarding internationalisation, they could also talk to students from different countries. The data also point to an increase in student activity when compared with the previous academic year. This is at least partially a result of the newly introduced activities. The expectation that home and international students would be equally active did not receive full support; although engagement was about equal during the online classes, home students tended to participate more often in discussions than their international peers when the full length of the course is taken into account. I find this intriguing and worth exploring more in the future as there is a good potential for further internationalisation and perhaps identifying a difference in internationalising face-to-face and online courses.

As for the newly implemented peer learning activities, the use of the map proved to be the most successful and I will definitely keep using it in the future. I believe the other two activities have their value as well, but the design needs to be improved and adapted to better suit the class. I have already been able to incorporate some of the student feedback into my classes, for example by introducing digital content from selected museums and pointing out innovative programmes they offer to visitors. I hope that these changes will further increase student engagement in future iterations of the course.

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Summary

This chapter evaluates the redesign of the non-compulsory European Museums and World Heritage Sites course that aimed to encourage student participation among both home and international students via introduction of peer learning activities. The new course design was informed by the concepts of active learning, peer learning, and internationalisation, and introduced maps, museum profiling and a treasure hunt as classroom activities. The results show that peer learning activities increased student engagement during classes and boosted student interest in the topics, including heightened motivation to visit museums.

Keywords

group work, museology, student engagement

Lenka Vargová works as Assistant Professor at the Department of Archive studies and Museology at Faculty of Arts at Comenius University in Bratislava, where she also earned her PhD. degree in Museology and Cultural Heritage. In her research, she focuses mainly on the topics of museum education and interactive elements in museums and galleries, but also on material culture and daily life in the 20th century, primarily the topic of housing and household equipment. **lenka.vargova@uniba.sk**

TEACHING ABOUT LEGAL AID IN AN INTERNATIONALISED COURSE

Mária Havelková, Comenius University in Bratislava

The teaching-learning challenge

Access to legal aid represents a way of preventing social-economic discrimination and contributes to social justice and equality before the law. However, the publicly funded civil legal aid system in Slovakia is underfunded and ossified. In the last decade, we can observe substantial cuts in legal funding (see Flynn and Hodgson 2017; Hammerslev and Rønning 2018; Moore and Newbury 2017) and an expanding justice gap worldwide (Legal Services Corporation 2017). Accessibility of legal services for people with no sufficient means to pay for a lawyer is dependent on the goodwill of lawyers to provide their services on a pro bono basis.

Lawyers play an essential role not only in the process of access to justice, but the legal profession enjoys more prominence in all three branches of government than any other occupation (Rhode 2015: 46). Law graduates become attorneys, prosecutors, judges but also civil servants, policymakers and politicians. Therefore, law students have to be aware of the role of their profession in ensuring justice. Future lawyers should be encouraged to understand inequality in society and become acquainted with the pro bono culture and the right to legal aid. Despite the above, the right to legal aid is absent in law school curricula in different parts of the world (Rhode 2015: 58), as well as at the Faculty of Law, Comenius University (UNIBA) in Slovakia. Students who do not select clinical courses—that is, practical course with live clients—may become lawyers without learning about the inaccessibility of legal services and the legal profession's responsibility for providing legal aid.

Furthermore, while the number of international students studying at the Faculty of Law is rising, the number of English-language courses is limited. Because of the domestic focus of administrative law, it has been overlooked as an area for internationalisation. Due to the rather limited pro bono tradition in Slovakia, most of the available teaching materials are foreign. Furthermore, courses taught at the Faculty of Law are often focused on a specific area of law or a particular legal issue with limited attention to soft skills development, even though understanding the principles of and need for pro bono practice is necessary to equip students with the competences to provide legal aid. These conditions offered an excellent opportunity to introduce the new English-language course Legal Aid Studies into the curriculum. This course, built on the principles of internationalisation and student-centred and self-regulated learning, has the potential to provide a quality learning experience for a mixed group of domestic and international students when it comes to studying about legal aid.

The main aim of this chapter is to determine whether learning about the right to legal aid in an internationalised environment via peer and self-regulated learning methods raises students' interest in and sensitivity to providing legal aid. The rest of the chapter describes and evaluates student learning in the internationalised Legal Aid Studies course.

Pedagogical method

Internationalisation is implemented in two ways in this course. First, internationalising the curriculum was important to provide the most meaningful learning experience for students. The right to legal aid is analysed from a European—rather than a national—perspective, and students learn about different legal aid systems. Assigned material was written by authors from America, Asia, Australia and northern Europe.

Second, internationalisation unquestionably affects academic culture (Benitez 2019: 11) and can contribute to substantial progress in learning. Peer learning—that is, students learning with and from one another (Boud et al. 2013)—offers the best opportunity for an international body of students to share their knowledge, compare legal cultures and traditions and shed light on different local perspectives on the issues of legal aid. Therefore, in this course, students often worked in groups to complete peer exercises during the in-class portion of the class. They moreover offered peer feedback via peer review of presentations. Evidence suggests that peer review exercises are associated with increased student confidence, improved critical thinking skills (Liu 2020), and a better understanding of the relevant subject matter (Dickson et al. 2018). Students have been found to engage more deeply with comments received from their classmates than from a teacher (Nicol and McCallum 2020).

Self-regulated learning refers to 'the degree to which students can understand and control aspects of their thinking, motivation and behaviour during learning' which includes 'the setting of, and orientation towards, learning goals; the strategies used to achieve goals; the management of resources; the effort exerted; reactions to external feedback; the products' (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick 2006: 199). These are essential skills for lawyers to succeed in the profession and can be best learned through individual projects such as writing analytical essays and delivering presentations. Writing an essay and presenting results may not sound like a new approach. However, at our law school, the emphasis is on case studies, and the typical assessment is an oral exam. As a result, students get familiar with writing only when working on their final thesis and often struggle to present their own ideas and work with sources.

Pro bono can be described as a professional form of volunteering as it is unpaid work. A correlation between a culture of volunteering and lawyers engaging in pro bono seems logical. Therefore, in the first part of my chapter, I will look at this issue comparatively and expect that, *unlike in the United States, interest in volunteerism in general is low among legal students in Slovakia* (H1). However, volunteering is a learned behaviour and learning about it at school rather than by practice and tradition can build motivation to volunteer. Therefore, I expect that *learning about the right to legal aid based on the above principles of teaching and learning will positively impact student interest in providing pro bono legal services* (H2).

The course, the students, and the lecturer

Legal Aid Studies is an entirely new elective course that teaches students to recognise and explain the importance of the right to legal aid as a basic human right, to get to know the legal aid system in their home countries, compare different legal aid systems and identify their shortcomings. Due to the pandemic, the course was taught entirely online. The course was open for both home and visiting students in their second or third year of studies. Six students enrolled in the course–four from Slovakia, one from Ukraine and one from Romania. They were assessed on activity during classes (30%), essay writing (40%), essay presentation (20%) and peer exercise (10%). The reason for the low student enrolment was twofold. Firstly, due to the pandemic, the number of visiting students dropped dramatically. Secondly, home students are hesitant to attend courses with English-language instruction, as became clear during the enrolment process. Originally, 15 students signed up for the course. However, nine students dropped out when they learned that the language of instruction would be English. Five students fulfilled all the requirements and completed the course.

The twelve weeks of the course were divided into three segments. The first part consisted of four class sessions focused on explaining the right to legal aid as a basic human right, acquaintance with the Slovak system of civil legal aid and the systems of legal aid elsewhere. These included lectures interwoven with such student-centred, peer-learning methods as ice-breakers and group/pair work. For example, as an ice-breaker, all students were asked to introduce themselves and answer one question of their choice from a list of five questions. Students then repeated the name, country of origin and the previous student's answer. The purpose was to provide an opportunity for all students to speak up and illustrate the importance of listening to each other not only in the classroom but also in the courtroom during their future careers. As for pair work, an example of typical classroom tasks was when students were instructed to identify arguments in favour of or against mandatory pro bono. Subsequently, they discussed their arguments in pairs and defended their positions. The aim of the exercise was to illustrate that, as lawyers, they might need to support a position with which they personally disagree.

During the second part of the semester, students worked on their analytical essays individually for four weeks. This way, they had the opportunity to develop the capacity to regulate their own learning as a preparation for learning throughout their professional lives (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick 2006). Each student could select the topic of their essay according to their interest. They either focused on a legal aid system in a particular country (Canada and Finland) or a specific legal aid issue (social-economic aspects of legal aid, mandatory pro bono, eligibility criteria in the case law of the European Court of Human Rights). To support their writing, I provided them with a template, citation guide, grading rubric and offered consultations. In their essays, students used the knowledge acquired in class as a starting point, which they augmented with their own research.

In the last part of the semester, students presented their analytical essays during ten- minute PowerPoint presentations followed by five-minute discussions. An essential part of the essay presentations was a peer review activity during which students learned with and from each other without the immediate intervention of a teacher (Boud et al. 1999: 414). The students who did not present in a particular week were assigned two papers by their fellow classmates. Their task was to read the papers and write feedback using an assessment form, within which students were instructed to evaluate their structure and logic, writing style and citations. Additionally, they were asked to point out two strong aspects of each essay and one thing the author could improve, and to formulate two questions for the discussion.

Collected sources of data and methods

The primary source of data to evaluate my hypotheses comes from surveys. I used two questionnaires that I designed for these purposes and used descriptive statistics to analyse the results. To test the hypothesis about volunteering experience among law students at UNIBA in comparison to their American counterparts (H1), I prepared a questionnaire with five questions. In the survey, four statements focused on how often students practiced different types of volunteering with five options: 'never' (=1), 'once a year' (=2), 'several times a year' (=3), 'once a month' (=4) and 'twice a month or more often' (=5). Due to presumed differences in volunteering opportunities, the last question asked about their attitudes toward volunteering using a five-point Likert-scale where '1' stood for 'strongly disagree' and '5' for 'strongly agree'. The survey was distributed among the students in the Legal Aid Studies course at the start of the very first lecture. I measured the attitudes of second-year American law students in the last week of the Legal Ethics course at California Western School of Law when I lectured on the benefits of pro bono as a part of my Fulbright research stay in April 2022. Six students completed the survey in both courses.

Since, in the short term, it is impossible to know whether future lawyers will actually practice public interest law or do pro bono, I decided to focus on identifying a possible switch in students' attitudes between the beginning and the end of the course (H2). For this purpose, I used a pre-post survey design with four questions about various aspects of legal aid provision. The opening survey was distributed at the beginning of the very first class and was completed by six students. The closing survey was administered at the end of last class and four students filled it out. Students responded to statements on a five-point Likert-scale with options ranging from 'strongly disagree' (=1) to 'strongly agree' (=5).

Because the hypothesis does not merely refer to a change in attitude about pro bono legal activism but also the effect of teaching methods, I used two other types of data. The first source is the newly designed online end-of-semester evaluation form of the Faculty of Arts at UNIBA. The form was designed to assess peer leaning, and thus was ideal for my research. However, since only three students filled out the survey, I use their actual—though anonymised—responses rather than statistical measures. The second type of data comes from the classroom observation form developed by the Effective Teaching for Internationalisation Programme that I attended, and the follow-up discussion, which also greatly focused on peer learning. The observer visited my course during the second week of teaching.

As for self-regulated learning, I relied on my own observations and the quality of student papers and presentations. To see if the course helped them improve their writing skills, I compared the analytical essay they produced in the self-regulated learning phase of the course with the 300-word reflection they wrote after the second class on an assigned topic.

Findings

The first hypothesis about volunteerism among legal students in Slovakia and the United States was confirmed. Table 1 shows that the American students were more often involved in various prosocial actions and had a stronger belief that volunteering can be rewarding. For example, while the Slovak students donated goods or clothes only once a year (n=5) or never (n=1), the American students made donations several times a year (n=5) or monthly (n=1). Similarly, while all of the American law students did volunteer work at least once a year (n=3) or several times a year (n=3), most Slovak students never engaged in volunteer work (n=4), or did so only once a year (n=2). The differences between the two groups of students did not exist because one group felt more positively about volunteering: both groups found volunteering very gratifying. Nonetheless, American students (4.67 on a 5-point scale) thought volunteering was more enjoyable for them than did their UNIBA peers (4.17), most likely due to more, and more varied, experiences with volunteering. Hence the difference between the two groups in their attitudes toward volunteering must be due to other—i.e., cultural—factors.

Table 1. Volunteering experience among UNIBA and California Western School of Law students

	UNIBA (n=6)	**CWSL (n=6)**
I have made financial contributions to charitable, religious or non-profit organisations.	1.67	2.33
I have given money to a stranger.	2.33	3.00
I have donated goods or clothes to a charity, religious or other non-profit organisation.	1.84	3.17
I have done volunteer work for a charity, religious or other non-profit organisation.	1.60	2.50
Volunteering to help someone is very rewarding.	4.17	4.67

When it comes to peer learning, the evidence suggests that this approach fulfilled its role to influence student learning, and thus move attitudes in the desired direction. In their course evaluation forms, all three students strongly agreed that there were enough opportunities for peer learning, the learning atmosphere was encouraging, and that they felt part of a learning community (Table 2). They evaluated their own engagement as being high, too: all of the students either agreed or strongly agreed that they contributed to the learning activities. One student noted that 'the peer learning system was very interesting and uncommon. We were able to learn from each other'. The observer said that 'most students were engaged to participate' and evaluated the level of engagement as medium to high. She also noted that student engagement was higher during peer observation exercises—especially pair work—than in other parts of the class. She also emphasised that I showed awareness of the different backgrounds of the students, and encouraged me to further exploit the educational opportunities therein in the future.

Table 2. Responses from the student course evaluation forms

	Student 1	**Student 2**	**Student 3**
There were enough opportunities for discussion and other learning activities.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
There was an atmosphere, which I found encouraging for my learning.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I felt part of a learning community.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I contributed to the discussions or other learning activities.	Agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree

The self-regulated learning aspect of the course was dedicated to essay writing and preparing for the presentations. During this four-week period, students demonstrated their time management skills and sense of responsibility. Five students submitted their papers and peer feedback on time. Most students worked independently, while two students realised that they needed consultation to progress with their essay. The quality of the students' work also speaks to their mastering of self-regulated learning. However, in comparing the papers of the Slovak and international students, it is clear that the Slovak students initially had less experience with academic writing. When contrasting their later analytical essays with the short reflective papers they wrote early in the semester, I found that the Slovak students improved more notably than their international peers, especially when it came to the ability to build an argument, the depth of their reflections, and the proper use of citations.

The positive effects of peer learning and self-regulated learning created the conditions necessary to confirm the second hypothesis. Indeed, as Table 3 shows, in all areas the students shifted toward valuing volunteerism and pro bono work. The first two statements aimed to verify the students' sensitivity to the importance of access to justice for indigent members of society. In both cases, we can see higher sensitivity after completing the course: the students were less likely to think that helping people would make them abandon self-reliance for free riding and that people who cannot afford paying for legal services should be left to their own means.

The last two questions focused on student attitudes toward legal clinics and their approach to pro bono. In both cases, we can see students changing their perceptions. By the end of the course, their average opinion increased by 0.42 on a five-point scale regarding their willingness to learn more about providing legal assistance to people with financial difficulties. Similarly, compared to the beginning of the semester, the average interest among students to take up pro bono cases during their career increased by 0.77 point. Furthermore, the 4.6 average at the end of the semester suggests that most students felt very strongly about this.

Table 3. Pre-post survey results on the attitudes of students toward pro bono

	Pre survey (n=6)	**Post survey (n=4)**
Helping people does more harm than good because they come to rely on others and not themselves.	1.83	1.25
A person who does not have the means to pay a lawyer should represent himself.	1.33	1
If possible, I would like to select a practical course (such as Student Legal Counsel or NGO Clinic) to help people in material need.	3.83	4.25
I am planning to accept pro bono cases in my future career.	3.83	4.60

Replicability in a different context

Due to the pandemic, the Legal Aid Studies course, designed for face-to-face delivery for fifteen students, was attended by only six students and taught entirely online. As a result, several activities needed to be adjusted. For instance, according to the syllabus, students were supposed to analyse the legal aid systems of different countries in several groups. Instead, each student individually prepared an overview of one country, and during the following class, the students compared different countries as a group.

Returning to a face-to-face setting and a larger class size will likely be beneficial in that it will increase students' involvement and active participation. On the other hand, some aspects of the course will need to be adjusted. With six students, there were only two classes dedicated to presentations and peer-learning activity. A much larger group of students would require at least four classes or parallel presentations with more facilitators. This carries the risk that students will find classes monotonous, negatively affecting their interest in the discussion. To limit this risk, the topics of the analytical essays should be diverse, the time reserved for each presentation needs to be controlled scrupulously, and new ways to involve students in the presentations by their peers should be explored. Alternatively, presentations should be made in groups rather than in plenary sessions, mixing students of similar interest.

Conclusions

The main aim of the new Legal Aid Studies course was to spark interest among students in legal clinics and public interest law by educating them about the right to legal aid and pro bono. The course achieved its goals and underlined the importance of learning about legal aid and pro bono in a country with a very short history of volunteerism. Using non-traditional teaching methods such as peer learning, peer assessment and self-regulated learning while using other ways to internationalise the course helped to sensitise students to the issues of unrepresented people and make them more willing to enrol in a practical course that has a societal impact and accept pro bono cases in their future careers. I am thinking of conducting similar research using a larger sample of students and/or paying special attention to changes in student thinking as a result of the war in Ukraine. Because the arrival of refugees gave rise to a wave of solidarity and volunteering among people in Slovakia, it is important to explore whether or not the students' attitudes changed regarding volunteerism.

I also showed that, as expected, American law students engage more frequently in different volunteering activities than their Central and Eastern European peers. I feel that my students would benefit from more international experience and exchanging views with American law students. Therefore, I have decided to modify the syllabus and connect students through the Law Jaw project, using my well-established connections at the California Western School of Law. A Law Jaw session brings together two classes of students from different countries to talk about law-related and non-law-related topics online (for more about Law Jaw, see Heaven 2021). UNIBA students have a sufficient level of English proficiency, but they lack the confidence to speak and opportunities to practice the language, including legal terminology. Law Jaw is an effective platform to develop their communication skills and gain the necessary confidence, too.

Opening an entirely new course on a topic that has never been taught before was an exciting learning experience for me, too. Teaching in English and in an internationalised environment brought new challenges as well as opportunities for peer learning. The experience with the new methods of teaching while focusing on overlooked areas of legal education prompted me to consider teaching another neglected topic in Slovak legal education: gender, power and leadership in the legal profession. I plan using a similar course structure and peer exercises. I invite readers to adopt peer learning methods as well.

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IMPACT

Summary
This chapter investigates whether or not learning about the right to legal aid in an internationalised classroom via peer- and self-regulated learning raises students' interest in and recognition of providing legal aid. It evaluates legal students' attitudes to volunteer work and learning in the new Legal Aid Studies course introduced at Comenius University in Bratislava. Combining innovative teaching methods with internationalisation resulted in sensitising students to the needs of unrepresented people, including making them more willing to enrol in a course with a social impact and increasing their interest in taking on pro bono cases in their future legal careers.

Keywords
legal aid, (peer) assessment, self-regulated learning, student engagement

Mária Havelková earned her PhD in Administrative law from Comenius University in 2018. As a deputy director at the Institute for Clinical Legal Education, Maria leads practice-based courses such as the Student Legal Counsel or NGO Clinic. Since 2021, she has been a member of the Appeals Commission for Civil Matters at the Ministry of Justice (Slovakia). In 2022, she received a Fulbright scholarship for research and teaching at the California Western School of Law in San Diego where she studied the right to legal aid and ways to promote pro bono activities among young lawyers. **maria.havelkova@uniba.sk**

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BRIDGING DIFFERENCES THROUGH CLASSROOM SIMULATIONS: TEACHING GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE TO INTERNATIONAL AND INTERDISCIPLINARY PHD STUDENTS

Nils Droste, Lund University
Frederik Lassen, Politics of Nature
Ina Möller, Wageningen University
Jakob Raffn, Politics of Nature
Fariborz Zelli, Lund University

The challenge of teaching and learning across disciplines

The course Global Environmental Governance Today–Actors, Institutions, Complexity is an interdisciplinary PhD course and has welcomed participants from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds with equally varied prior knowledge on environmental governance practices and theories. Thus, every year, participants include students who are not familiar with international relations theories such as realism, institutionalism, or constructivism, as well as PhD candidates in political science who are entirely familiar with such theories and corresponding concepts. We aim to provide an inspiring course for all of them that provides them with new ideas and insights on global environmental governance with its key actors, institutions and processes.

Pedagogical method: Combining lectures, seminars and simulations

We have chosen a teaching approach where we combine three formats: information-intensive lectures, participatory seminars, and simulation exercises. The *lectures* are classical, frontal types of sessions in which the readers' theoretical and conceptual knowledge is offered in an accessible way for different disciplinary backgrounds and discussed with the participants. In the *seminars* we focus on the students' PhD projects and their links to questions of environmental governance. As our third element, the *simulation exercises* pursue an experiential learning approach (Brock and Cameron 1999). Here we elaborate on the design of two simulations: a gamified and alternative approach to negotiations inspired by Bruno Latour's Politics of Nature (2004) and Earth Summit type negotiations.

Politics of Nature–the board game

The aim of Politics of Nature (PoN) (Raffn and Lassen 2021) is to catalyze a reflection on current political systems by subjecting them to an alien take on politics; one inspired by Latour's eponymous book (2004). It is a game play in which players experience a different take on what exists politically (cf. Simon 2020). The players will have to become ambassadors of beings that normally only enter the political space as objects–not subjects. Not only to express yet another angle, but to clarify various stakes of those with and without voices in decision making, for example of non-humans and how they influence, depend on and need one another. PoN exists in the Pluriverse - a place where everything that can be imagined and attributed a name exists. It is an iterative political and community-building process shaped as a board game and can be–as we did in 2020 - augmented with a digital interface.

The four stages that comprise a round of PoN were quickly outlined. These are 1) identification and representation, 2) association, 3) ideation, and 4) resolution, with each stage being limited by a certain time and/or a predefined number of actions allowed to each participant. The Pluriverse expansion by *identification* of beings is iterative and mediated by the participants, who must become ambassadors of beings identified in stage 1, in order to articulate their associations with other beings later on. In stage 2, as the borders of PoN unfreeze, the ambassadors have a chance to move beings from the Pluriverse and on to PoN by providing a direct association with one or more beings already there (the being central to the theme starts on PoN).

On PoN, humans, animals, things and concepts are all denoted as *beings* and thereby treated ontologically equal. This is not to disregard the special abilities of humanity, hereunder its capacity to craft political speech and parliaments; however, such differences in attributes and capacities always emerge through their *associations* with other beings. Course participants are assigned into groups, each having one of the six *skill sets* required for upholding the customs and procedures of PoN. The six skill sets are the *Scientist* who ensures that everything said is followed by an empirical source. The *Politician* who ranks the identified beings in terms of their 'current endangerment' and their 'indispensability' in relation to the theme and must also look out for representatives considered legal or legitimate spokespersons for beings. The *Diplomat* keeps track of time and speaking order and generally ensures a civilized dialogue. The *Moralist* is constantly on the lookout for beings that have been forgotten in the discussion. The *Administrator* keeps the formal rules and makes sure things get to protocol. Finally, the *Artist* will have to make a visual mapping of the associations between beings on PoN offering an alternative lens of the network. At the start of each round skill sets are drawn anew, so that participants get to learn the different procedures and tenets, and their embedded power and influence gets reshuffled.

Each of the groups were then to carry out the following steps (see Raffn and Lassen 2021). The process is here exemplified with the case of an open-pit copper mine in the Eastern Andean Amazonas in Ecuador:

- *Stage 1: Taking into account.* Here participants identify the beings relevant to the theme. Let us say there are mestizo settlers, the Shuar indigenous people, the government represented by the mining ministry, the Chinese mining company, the water ecosystem that may be affected by the mining, and the poor of the country that may benefit from the tax income generated from selling the concessions and industry development. The participants then explore how they themselves are related to these beings to assign the best-equipped ambassadors to represent them.

- *Stage 2: Association, Ranking and Mapping.* Here players seek to move the beings from the pluriverse into the PoN collective. As mentioned earlier, they do so by providing a direct and empirically founded association with one or more beings already on PoN. The Moralist will add overlooked beings to the Horizon and the Artist will create a network of beings and associations. This allows visualisation and analysis of the emerging network-graph. The Politician then makes a ranking of the endangerment of the beings and a ranking of their indispensability. The other participants can attempt to influence the Politician to change the rankings. Ultimately, this is an exercise in explaining and debating choices - as the Politician has the final say. However, the power is only temporary as the skill sets are shuffled in the next round. The Artists in each group were then to provide a description and analysis of the network.
- *Stage 3: Scenarios for the future,* is a stage where desired futures and possible pathways of implementations are explored. It starts with understanding the fears and desires of beings. Then possible ideas accommodating these can be explored. When one or more of these have been turned into concise proposals outlining the vision, mission and anticipated actions, the players move on to Stage 4.
- *Stage 4: the Parliament of Things.* Here proposals are presented and discussed. It is explored how each proposal will affect the collective by asking each ambassador how the beings they represent will react to the actions proposed. Only if a proposal is assessed to compromise the existence of a being, can the ambassador object on its behalf. Proposals that come out favourable to the status quo are allowed to be implemented - if there are beings willing to perform it. When all proposals have been processed, the participants evaluate if they are ready to implement proposals.

Earth Summit simulation

The goal of the session is to teach students the diversity of stakeholders in global environmental negotiations and the legitimacy of their interests, using the tool of empathy to understand different stakeholders' interests and enable negotiations in consensus-based decision making. Furthermore, an intended side lesson is to better capture the power of rules in these negotiations, for example, who is allowed to vote, who has the right to speak and intervene, and when this is the case. We start the session by outlining the setting with a practical example. In the 2020 and 2019 versions of the course it was forest fires and biodiversity conservation, previously it was a reform of the United Nations (UN) and climate change negotiations. We use techniques from Model UN (Engel et al. 2017), and Open Space (Owen 2008), among others. In what follows, we describe a typical but somewhat artificial outline, as we generalize across class-specific settings, which varies over the years.

- *Setting the stage by outlining the goal of the simulation:* We task the students with formulating a joint statement on which they can all agree. We prepare them that they will most likely fail. This is in part expectation management, but it is also a transparency aspect of the Brechtchian 'epic theatre' that makes the students aware that this is a game and distances themselves personally a bit from it (Brecht 1961). This allows them to both immerge into actor perspectives and interactions *and* critically reflect on the simulation and the actor's role–a distance, which has been shown to facilitate learning (Squire and Jenkins 2003).

- *Behind the veil preparation by making-up actor roles*: We have prepared actor cards, which are based on real-life actors in international environmental policy making ranging from politicians, to business leaders, and civil society actors. Students are invited assigned one of these actors and are given time to acquaint themselves with 'their' actor. This allows each student to develop ownership and start immersion.
- *Let the herd roam free and play, then reign them in far too soon*: We open the forum. We only have few formal rules (as the main lesson in this workshop is on actor perspectives, not on institutional negotiations). Nonetheless, there is a chair whom the actors elect to impose a more formal feeling. While this could also be a student, so far the group has elected teachers to the role. This is partly intended and has the benefit that the students thereby legitimized the chair (aka the teacher). By legitimising the teacher in the role of the chair, they have given up part of their authority and set someone in power to decide upon speaking times, etc. We normally reflect briefly on this passing-by lesson in the end of the session.
- *Actors/students are invited to issue a brief statement of their interests*. Following this, there is an informal break-out time where actors can meet, ally, and strategize with whomever they want. By now, it is possible that not all are entirely aware that nation states are, in the end, the ones deciding the outcome of the negotiations. Across these various steps, the teacher acts as timekeeper and coordinator of the workshop phases. We employ this power to keep up a certain pressure to get to a joint outcome. Time is constantly running out: the first announcement on remaining times comes, for instance, already barely five minutes into the forum session. Next, participants are reminded that the goal is a joint statement. Once the time is indeed over, we reconvene. This mix of pressure and engagement seeks to simulate an atmosphere similar to real-world diplomacy: enjoying the adrenaline rush of negotiations while feeling time restrictions throughout.
- *The difficult task to find agreements*: We ask the students whether they have drafted a statement. They may or may not yet one or several, often sketchy, inconsistent or contradictory proposals with no one knowing how to proceed. We display their proposal(s) as a live document, possibly together with one that we as teachers (or any other chairperson) have drafted in the meantime. We have ten minutes left to agree on wording and start haggling over formulations. Most likely there is no proper agreement, and if so, it is very general leaving room for interpretations. We then end the simulation and step out again.
- *Stepping out of the roles:* Here, the goal is to give students a somewhat disillusioning reality

check regarding the power and efficacy of international negotiations in order for them to contemplate how the current state of affairs could be structurally reformed. In this, we intentionally balance between reality (what these summits can do) and feasibility (trying not to destroy motivations and optimism for continued institution building).

- *Reflect on what just happened*: We have a 5-minute session to reflect on what the students experienced. They tend to be a bit exhausted, but have normally developed quite some insight on the practices of international environmental diplomacy. Among others, the difficulty (or impossibility) in finding a common position among a variety of transnational actors with very different yet legitimate interests in a formal international diplomatic setting.

The course, the students, and the lecturers

The course Global Environmental Governance Today–Actors, Institutions, Complexity aims at providing students with an improved understanding of policy making and transnational diplomacy for environmental protection. It is a 1-week, 35 hrs PhD student course offered by the ClimBECo graduate school (Climate, Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in a changing world) at Lund University, Sweden. In recent years, class sizes roughly oscillated between 12 and 20 students. We mainly have international students, largely based at European universities. Most of them tend to be social science students, mainly political science, but we always have an interdisciplinary setting, ranging from Earth and Environmental Sciences to Philosophy.

The course has been offered since 2013, and has been continuously developed, method, and content-wise. The assessment is based on a final essay where students apply global environmental governance concepts or methods to a question of their own choosing. They are encouraged to closely relate this to their own PhD research. There are only pass/fail grades. While not part of the grade, active participation of students in the course is strongly encouraged.

Collected sources of data and analytical methods

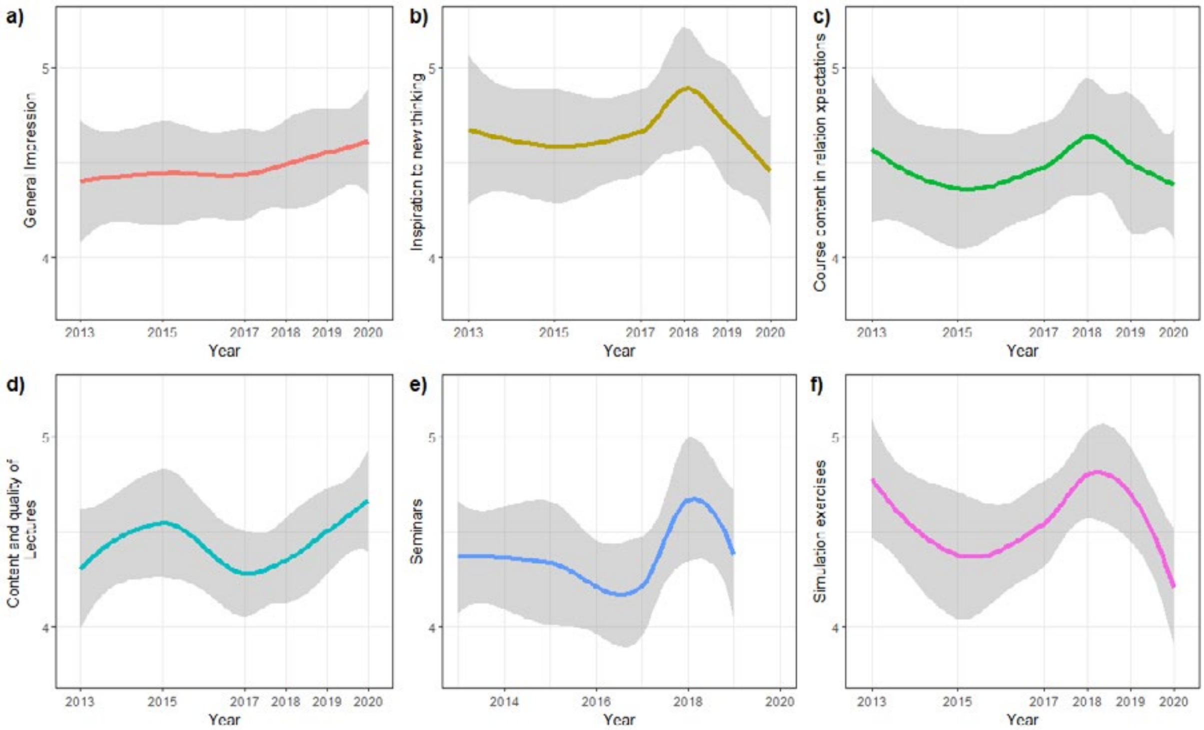
Our major source of student evaluations are feedback sheets from each year the course was held (2013, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020). The sheets ask 10-11 questions with an answer on a 5-point Likert scale, and an open, qualitative answer field. Furthermore, there were final discussions, often with the use of Mentimeter to gather additional information from oral statements and interactive data collection. The data we gather from the replies is read into R, to plot the descriptive statistics, and into NVivo to sort through the qualitative data. We thereby analyse the course evaluations through mixed methods, both quantitatively and content-wise. The latter type of feedback was read and discussed among the authors of this article to derive further interpretations and conclusions, which are reasoned out below. Furthermore, we considered some of the joint reflections we received in the final course session where we had asked the students what went well and what they would advise for improving the course.

Findings

Generally speaking, we can draw five lessons from our course experience, the first two from quantitative data, and the second three from a qualitative interpretation of the feedback:

I. The overall impression that students had of the course developed, on average, with a positive trend (see Figure 1, panel a). The perceived quality of lectures (Figure 1, panel d) is highly correlated with the overall impression scores (Figure 1, panel a) with a correlation coefficient of 0.65, 74 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 2.226e-10–a much higher correlation than with the seminars (Figure 1, panel e) or the simulations (Figure 1, panel f). This shows that the content and quality of lectures played an important part for the perceived overall quality of the course.

Figure 1. Scores from a selected set of questions from the course evaluation sheets over time.



II. The inspirational outcome the students took from the course (Figure 1, panel b) and the performance of the course in relation to expectations (Figure 1, panel c), however, exhibit patterns that rather resemble the development of the quality of seminars (Figure 1, panel e) and the simulation exercises (Figure 1, panel f). This may indicate that the simulation exercises and applied seminars have been rather unexpected elements for the students and that it is these simulations and seminars that make the course both perform beyond expectations and inspire to new thinking.

III. From the qualitative feedback we gather that these experiential learning aspects of international diplomacy and an inclusive approach to policy simulations make the course very well suited for an international student group from diverse backgrounds (see Figure 2, for a word cloud of the general impression from the feedback sheets). This corroborates the quantitative findings in the sense that our diverse set of participants through the years have perceived the simulations and seminars as a very inspiring and fun learning exercise.

Figure 2. Word cloud about what the participants said about the course.

IV. There are also lessons learnt for the design and the implementation of the simulation exercises. The analysis of the qualitative feedback suggested that course participants perceived one factor as crucial: the quality of the information provided before the simulation, as time is always very short in the actual classroom exercise. Experiences with the online version of the course particularly underlined this. Given the ambition and intensity of the course, we can imagine that a perceived lack of information, especially in an online format, may create a feeling of being somewhat overwhelmed, which in turn would hamper a successful learning experience. Thus, up front provision of preparatory material can help students strive in a challenging learning environment.

V. And lastly, we can draw a lesson about the relation of course elements to one another. In general, the combination of theoretical lectures and applied elements such as seminars and simulations has been highly appreciated. However, whenever multiple applied aspects are featured in the same course, such as a UN-simulation and the PoN game, our experience is that it is crucial to not only keep the different teaching elements well connected but also to keep them sufficiently different from one another. This gives students the opportunity to experience topics from different angles.

Replicability in a different context

The general approach to simulations should, by our reasoning, be applicable in different settings. Possibly the complexity of decision-making processes simulated would have to be reduced a bit for Bachelor students and to a lesser extent for Master students. Through the years, we mostly had international students, often with some background in Western type of educational systems, but not exclusively so. Therefore, we would reason that it should also possible to adapt a simulation of international environmental politics negotiations in other cultural contexts and with high likelihood across OECD countries. Mainly however, we would argue that simple, but strict rules and guidelines that structure the activities and at the same time provide enough room for creativity from the students to come up with innovative solutions, in principle allow for replicability independent of education and cultural background.

Conclusions

In this contribution, we presented our approach of using simulations for teaching an interdisciplinary and international group of PhD students about key concepts, theories, and practices of international environmental governance. It is, in our view, the overall mixture of information-intensive lectures, with applied seminars and simulation exercises that makes this a successful and highly scoring course. The simulations as an intentionally challenging exercise help students understand why international negotiations sometimes move so slowly and seem to reach so little. We furthermore place an emphasis on empathy for the ones represented in international diplomacy, also showing how understanding different stakeholders' perspectives can lead to improved and productive negotiation outcomes. This helps building bridges between different perspectives, nations, humans, and non-humans. However, it also provides an experience to the limits of those representations within the current governance system. Overall, the combination of different elements such as theory heavy lectures with more applied and different experiential learning exercises in seminars and simulations provides for a stimulating learning environment.

For future versions of the course, we shall work on improving the guidelines provided before the simulations such that students feel better prepared–and integrated from the start. We see global environmental problems determined by problems of human interaction both in the way that they originate and in the way they are addressed. Teaching students about such challenges in a realistic way is a somewhat frustrating but, as the experience from leading a course on global environmental governance shows, rewarding and empowering way to meet these challenges.

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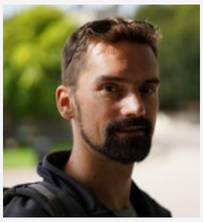
Summary

This chapter discusses the use of simulations of international negotiations of environmental politics (and beyond) for a PhD course on global environmental governance. We present the intended learning outcomes and the specific outline of two simulation exercises: Politics of Nature and Earth Summit. Following this, we analyse data from the course evaluations. Notwithstanding the generally very positive assessments from the participants, we find that providing a high-quality information package up front is a factor that may well improve student experience of the simulations.

Keywords

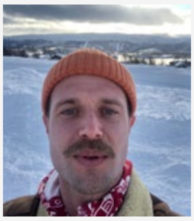
environmental governance, experiential learning, global governance, politics of nature, simulations



Nils Droste is an associate senior lecturer in environmental politics at the Department for Political Science, deputy theme leader in the strategic research area on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in a Changing Climate (BECC), and fellow at the Center for Innovation Research (CIRCLE) at Lund University. His research focusses on multi-level government, land use policies, conservation on private and public lands, and green economy transitions. He is a methodological pluralist and enjoys teaching. **nils.droste@svet.lu.se**

Ina Möller is a political scientist and postdoctoral researcher at the Environmental Policy Group of Wageningen University, the Netherlands. She specializes in environmental governance and complex systems, focusing on the social dynamics between climate science and policy making. Her research focuses on emergence of climate geoengineering as a new type of solution towards climate change, and the mechanisms by which it transformed from a taboo into a global governance object. **ina.moller@wur.nl**

Jakob Raffn is a systems tinker and action-philosopher. He holds a BSc and MSc from the University of Copenhagen, and a PhD from Aarhus University. Here, the focus on tinkering with societies' operating systems led him to academically develop, test and report on Politics of Nature. His current focus is on creating the next digital version of PoN and set up laboratories where new modalities of co-existence can emerge. Favorite PoN skill sets: Artist and Administrator. **jakob.raffn@politicsofnature.org**



Frederik Lassen is a liquid artivist, set designer and mobilizer. He is a curator for immersive content for international festivals and a creative producer of virtual reality experiences. He holds an MSc from the IT University of Copenhagen where the interest in tech and philosophy ignited, and he is a former professional football player deeply fascinated by performing arts. Favorite PoN skill sets: Diplomat and Moralist. **frederik.lassen@politicsofnature.org**

Fariborz Zelli is an associate Professor at the Department of Political Science at Lund University. His major research interests include global environmental governance (in particular on climate change, biodiversity and forestry), the growing complexity among international institutions, and environmental peacebuilding. His book publications include Governing the Climate-Energy Nexus, Environmental Politics and Governance in the, the Encyclopaedia of Global Environmental Governance and Politics, a special issue of Global Environmental Politics on institutional fragmentation, and Global Climate Governance Beyond 2012. **fariborz.zelli@svet.lu.se**

THE GAME OF PEACE MODEL: PLAYING WITH CONFLICT RESOLUTION DYNAMICS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COURSES

Daniela Irrera, University of Catania

The teaching-learning challenge

As a professor of International Relations, I have always struggled to convince students that war, peace and negotiation are tangible problems that affect our daily lives rather than immaterial phenomena. My students have been multinational individuals from different countries with varied cultural and educational backgrounds. This diversity has both added a richness to and placed a constraint on their learning. They have typically lacked background knowledge about international conflicts, perhaps except for those who have experienced such in their region, and have been unable to assess the regional or global impact conflicts can have. Further, they have struggled to identify various internal and external actors involved in these conflicts. The theories and concepts of international relations were too abstract for the learners and they did not know how to apply them to explain the conflicts. Their personal values and previous educational and life experiences acted as barriers for understanding controversial concepts like fanaticism, religion or ideology, especially when they came from the conflict areas under study. These could even sometimes be sources of division among them.

Pedagogical method

To address these challenges, I have developed Game of Peace, a role-based learning method that requires students to employ conflict resolution and negotiation dynamics to manage a conflict. In terms of roles, it includes all the factions involved in a civil war: actors that may have a stake in a resolution or territorial and political settlements, and a third party (mediator) who is entrusted with the task of facilitating negotiations and helping the actors to come to a political agreement to be signed by all parties.

Game of Peace goes through a series of well-defined phases and strictly adheres to the four essential components of effective simulations (Irrera 2020) inspired by Ben-Yehuda et al. (2015: 13): 1) *platform*, the setting where students interact; 2) *boundaries*, the set of spatial and temporal elements that make the contents more vivid; 3) *interactions*, the simulation developments and their scheduled and unintended outcomes; and 4) *study efficiency*, preparation so that the core functions can be replicated in different contexts. Game of Peace uses a traditional face-to-face platform. Students interact in the classroom, in separate groups or during collective sessions where they draft documents, supported by videos, pictures or other materials. In principle, they do not need to meet or communicate in a virtual space. Virtual simulations can, however, allow wider participation, enable the participation of students who cannot physically join a course (including international students) and may be used to involve groups from different universities and countries.

The identification of clear boundaries is an essential preliminary step that allows students to set the context for their work. Game of Peace refers to a specific and real conflict and requires that the geographical setting, the timeline of the crisis and the local, regional and international actors are well defined in the initial scenario. All interactions happen in a pre-determined number of sessions, even though a certain level of self-regulation is possible during the simulation, which is necessary to stimulate students' initiative. The students are observed and their performance, ability to properly play the assigned roles and their capacity to smoothly interact are evaluated. The achievement of learning outcomes is mainly assured through the debriefing and follow-up phases at the end of the planned sessions. Debriefing allows students to reflect deeper on their experiences and to evaluate their performance critically. It helps the instructor to evaluate the impact of the simulation on students' learning and to think about how to revise the simulation in the future.

While designing Game of Peace rounds, I employed various contemporary conflicts, such as those in Darfur, Syria, Donbass and Afghanistan, depending on the group of students involved, on their level of preparation, and their cultural background, and political, religious or social sensitivity. The design of the initial scenario is the first step and it usually follows the real timeline and developments of the conflict. Whatever crisis has been chosen, the policy objective is always to achieve a sustainable peace settlement and a power-sharing agreement. This is to be reached by negotiation facilitated by an external mediator who chairs a formal peace conference to end the violence. This is usually an actor representing the European Union or the United Nations, depending on the conflict; however, a diplomat or other neutral party can perform this role, too. After the scenario is defined, roles need to be assigned. Students are split into groups corresponding to major political actors and are asked to play leading roles within them, such as the head of state, the opposition leader, minister of defense or foreign affairs. Then, each group starts preparing its policy plan which will drive its performance during the simulation. Those students who play the role of diplomatic mediators have a particularly delicate part to play. Given that they should hold dialogues with all parties and convince them to negotiate, they receive special instructions and are subject to fewer constraints. As mediators, they are expected to be creative and interact with everyone. Following receipt of the instructions, each group starts collecting information on the position of each faction to identify those conditions that will allow negotiations and facilitate common aims. Then, specific details of a settlement, such as division of the contested territory, the structure of a new government, the management of side issues (human rights violations, refugees, decommissioning, etc.) are drawn up. Finally, and having verified the commitment to sign an agreement, the mediator prepares the final peace conference.

The course, the students, and the teacher

As Erasmus coordinator in my department, I highly value the exchange of students and faculty members. I am responsible for Erasmus mobility exchanges and try to benefit from staff mobility each year, to contribute to the learning of students from other universities and to improve my skills. The Game of Peace was developed primarily for students enrolled in my global civil society course within the MA programme in Global Politics and Euromediterranean Relations (GLOPEM) at the University of Catania. The first attempts, using fictional conflicts and employing a small group of participants (15–20), later developed into more sophisticated versions, benefiting from student feedback.

Table 1. Game of Peace schedule

Time	Instructor	Students
One week prior to the simulation	Prepares the political scenario, list of groups and roles, instructions, readings and websites for students to consult are distributed.	Groups study the background of the conflict, analyse the scenario and the assigned roles, identify their values and goals and prepare a policy plan accordingly.
First day of simulation (2 hours)	Makes room arrangements. Observes all interactions without interfering.	Groups interact informally; the mediator can informally approach all groups.
Second day of simulation (2 hours)	Moves around all rooms to check that students follow the rules and instructions.	Groups interact more frequently, both formally and informally; the mediator can informally approach all groups.
Third day of simulation (2 hours)	Prepares the official conference. Attends the conference without interfering.	Representatives of all groups are invited to join a formal conference chaired by the mediator, to present the initial positions and to interact. The conference ends with the signing of an official agreement or without an agreement.

I replicated the method in the following years and even started to include it in my International Relations course within the BA programme in history, politics and international relations, where students numbers are higher (usually about 50). I have met different student populations and become acquainted with cultural, political and religious differences. Scenarios have been changed, according to student suggestions, to reduce conflicts among the students (which have sometimes occurred) and valorise multicultural exchanges. Fictional conflicts have been replaced by real contemporary conflicts. As presented in Table 1, the model is now regularly used in my undergraduate and postgraduate courses at the University of Catania, but I have also started to export it through my teaching experiences abroad. In 2017, I taught a global civil society course at the Institute of International Studies in Barcelona as part of the Erasmus Mundus Programme, and since 2017, I have regularly taught political violence and terrorism as a visiting professor at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. Students who have experienced Game of Peace so far have come from different continents and have been enrolled on both BA and MA programmes, although they all share a common background in international relations.

Collected sources of data and methods

I assess the outcomes of the simulation as a method using the survey results, which involve all the students who have joined the simulations listed in Table 2, including the last virtual sessions in the academic years 2019/2020 and 2020/2021. One week after the collective sessions, I usually email an anonymous questionnaire to everyone and collect answers on Google Drive. Questions allow respondents to express opinions and make suggestions, and students usually do not miss the chance to share their ideas and experiences. The questionnaire is moderately long and includes questions about various aspects of the simulation, the roles the students played, the perception of the other party, etc. Here, I have only selected two specific factors common to all rounds and useful for understanding learning advancement: 1) sensitivity to fanaticism and to what extent it represents a constraint, and 2) student perception of their learning experience through Game of Peace.

Table 2. Game of Peace as used in various courses

Course	University	Level	Topic	No. of Students	% of international students
Global Civil Society	University of Catania	MA	Conflict in Syria	19	40
Global Civil Society	University of Catania	MA	Conflict in Donbass	13	40
International Politics	University of Catania	BA	Conflict in Darfur	50	10
International Politics	University of Catania	BA	Conflict in Syria	21	15

Global Civil Society	Institute of International Studies in Barcelona	MA	Conflict in Syria	18	60
Political Violence and Terrorism	OSCE Academy, Bishkek	MA	Fighting against ISIS	30	80

Findings

One of the positive effects of simulations is that they help students to better understand controversial aspects of international relations conflicts, such as fanaticism. When it comes to the role they have been assigned, the immediate reaction of students is trying to reduce the impact of political fanaticism. Consequently, as displayed in Table 3, the majority of students reduced it to neutral (40.6%). In terms of their opponents, the perception is different, particularly for actors that are considered highly fanatical (40.6%), such as the pro-Russia parties in Donbass, the Taliban in Afghanistan, or the official government in Syria. In contrast, actors that are usually depicted as weaker in the eyes of the public, such as the Ukrainian government or the Kurdish movement, are perceived as neutral (40.6%) or less fanatical (9.3%). Students, even if they understood their actor as fanatic, did not want to act that fanatically as real actors probably behave.

Table 3. Perception of fanaticism

Question	**1 (very low) %**	**2 (low) %**	**3 (neutral) %**	**4 (high) %**	**5 (very high) %**
How do you rank the actor you represented in terms of fanaticism?	6.25	15.6	40.6	15.6	18.7
How do you rank your adversary in terms of fanaticism?	-	9.3	40.6	40.6	12.5

After simulations, students realize that IR theories and concepts are 'real' tools that can contribute to the management of most urgent problems affecting the daily lives of millions of people. This is useful to them beyond the academic environment. IR students need to prepare themselves to act as the leaders of tomorrow. Until I involved them in Game of Peace, only a few students had experienced a simulation in the classroom or on a virtual platform, as can be seen from Table 5 (9.3%). Therefore, their expectations and levels of excitement were relatively high and this influenced their satisfaction. The majority enjoyed the simulation and were very happy (46.8%) or quite happy (34.3%) with their own performance during the sessions. Almost everyone said that they had experienced some kind of frustration, mainly because of a limited capacity to embody the assigned actor or a lack of leadership (18.5%). Percentages increased when it came to the evaluation of their learning outcomes. The majority of participants (79%) believed that Game of Peace was a good example of a 'learning by doing' process and that it helped them to improve their international relations knowledge, as well as their negotiating skills. A few respondents, however, were not fully satisfied, due to friction with other participants or difficulties during interactions (9.3%)

Table 4. Perceptions of student performance, their ability to negotiate and to properly apply international relations theories

Question	1 (Strongly disagree) %	2 (Disagree) %	3 (Neutral) %	4 (Agree) %	5 (Strongly agree) %
I have previously experienced a simulation	71.8	6.2	12.5	9.3	
I am satisfied with my own performance	-	-	18.5	34.3	46.8
The simulation has been a learning experience	-	-	9.3	12.5	79.0

Table 5. Perceived likelihood of joining another simulation and recommending it to fellow students

Question	Yes %	Maybe %	No %
Are you interested in joining another simulation?	81.2	3.2	15.6
Would you recommend this experience to other students?	96.8	3.2	0.0

Whereas the majority of students considered Game of Peace a useful tool that could be repeated (81.2%) and recommended to other students enrolled in an international relations course (96.8%), a small group was cautious and preferred traditional front-led lectures (3.2%). These students tended to be shy, lacking experience with working in teams, and less ready to widely interact with others. In some cases, these students did not want to express their political or religious opinions or their ideas about some specific conflicts.

My observations of student learning suggest that Game of Peace achieves its planned outcomes. It has proved to be a very useful tool in all my international studies courses and has allowed students from all levels and contexts to benefit. Selecting the theory that is best suited to the initial scenario, preparing a policy plan, adhering to the actors' approaches and playing that role provide students with robust knowledge of international relations concepts. By playing Game of Peace at the end of the course, students can more easily apply what they have already learnt. All simulated conflicts include several non-state actors, such as terrorists, self-determination movements, insurgents, and local civil society organisations, NGOs or private companies that may be part of the resolution, which allows students to understand the conflict in its complexity. Although the outcomes depend on the number of students and the course goals, differences in their backgrounds and preferences are not perceived as a constraint, but rather as a source of richness.

In the classroom or a virtual environment, involving few or many international students, Game of Peace is a challenging and exciting experience, one which has been positively evaluated by students from different cultures and backgrounds. Although students are aware they are playing a game, as soon as the simulation starts, they take it very seriously and are completely committed to the goal. Additionally, the time for negotiation is never enough and the most common complaint is that even a week would not be enough. In the end, students feel more confident, skilled and ready to act. Being engaged in this simulation, students learn to recognise that negotiating with counterparts, mitigating the effects of fanaticism, and achieving an agreement are extremely difficult.

Replicability in a different context

By focusing on the necessary modifications, Game of Peace can be employed in almost any BA or MA course in international studies, whether in Europe or overseas. The model can be applied to different policy fields, involving a combination of various methodologies and approaches. It does not necessarily require technological resources and can easily be used in a virtual environment, requiring a higher level of sophistication. After using it in different courses, countries and student populations, and gathering feedback and suggestions, I maintain that the challenge of teaching lies in stimulating students' curiosity, their learning abilities and soft skills.

Conclusions

Game of Peace is a learning method based on negotiation and conflict resolution and, therefore, specifically designed for students enrolled in international studies courses. I have developed the simulation as a traditional face-to-face, theory-driven and role-based model. However, the same method can be easily adapted to a virtual platform or, depending on the circumstances, can also be conducted in a blended format. The results of several rounds of Game of Peace, tested on different multicultural groups of students in different countries and using various contemporary civil conflicts, demonstrate that it can be used in all BA and MA international relations programmes, with larger or smaller numbers of participants, and produce good results. In pushing students to interact, although this may challenge them, this simulation has so far contributed to reducing the impact of differences among the students.

As with similar active learning tools, Game of Peace creates the right combination of study, empirical experiments, individual reflections and teamwork. From the study of the initial scenario to the final peace conference, students become more committed to recognising the empirical relevance of international relations theories, identifying and developing soft skills they previously were not aware of. I can, therefore, only recommend simulation as an essential tool for teaching and learning international relations in the 21st century.

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Summary

This chapter discusses the use of simulations as an active learning tool and is based on an assessment of Game of Peace, a negotiation model I developed for students of my BA and MA courses on international relations and global civil society at the University of Catania. In this simulation, students take on the roles of different factions involved in a civil war or of the international mediator that has intervened to bring peace and stability to the country. The initial scenario involves actors and conflict dynamics with reference to real contemporary conflicts. The Game of Peace method is presented with its main steps, roles the actors undertake and expectations for how they should act. The different phases as well as the materials used, the requirements and the expected outcomes are described. Students' feedback is assessed to show the potential use of Game of Peace in various international studies courses and with different student populations.

Keywords

conflicts, international relations, mediation, negotiation, power-sharing, simulation, states

Daniela Irrera is Associate Professor of International Relations at the Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Catania, where she serves as Erasmus coordinator, deputy Director for Internationalisation and Research, and vice-coordinator of the PhD program in Political Sciences. She is Visiting Professor of Political Violence and Terrorism at the OSCE Academy, Bishkek. She is member of the ECPR Executive Committee and also a chair of the ECPR standing group International Relations. **dirrera@unict.it**

POLITICS, MEMORY AND FILM IN THE CLASSROOM

Tamara Kolarić, Dublin City University

The teaching-learning challenge

I taught the Screening the '90s: Politics, Memory and Film in the Post-Yugoslav Countries course during the 2019/2020 academic year at Bard College Berlin, a liberal arts university in Germany, where I was then working as a lecturer in political science. I was asked to design an advanced course in Politics, which would also be cross-listed with the Ethics and Politics major, and would appeal to both the humanities and social sciences track students, many of whom were visiting students interested in film. I proposed a course, which would acquaint the students with the essential facts, debates and disagreements around the breakup of Yugoslavia and its aftermath during the 1990s and up to the present day.

The course needed to appeal to students across study tracks and with very different interests. Some of my students would have knowledge on the post-Yugoslav region (or be from the region), others not; some would have a disciplinary background in politics/social sciences, others not–which had to be taken into account in both teaching and evaluation design to allow everyone to feel engaged and empowered to learn. Students from second to fourth year of BA studies were eligible to take the course, so I had to find a way to explain the sometimes difficult, multi-faceted concepts without making it banal or repetitive to the older students, also to ensure that all students would feel invited to actively participate in the course.

While the course was on former Yugoslavia, the concepts and approaches we would study were transferable. My aim was for the students to be able to use the conceptual toolkit to unpack their own countries or areas of interest–while avoiding 'Balkanism' (Todorova 1997). I dreaded the students perceiving the area of the former Yugoslavia as somehow 'exotic', as this discursive frame often led to representing the area as a 'powder keg' and the conflicts as resulting from eternal ethnic hatreds. Instead, I wanted them to approach such interpretations–some of which we would read and watch together–with a critical eye, having gained a sense of the area through the disciplinary prism of power, nationalism, interest and manipulation.

Pedagogical method

Anticipating the diverse and international composition of my classroom, I decided that teaching with film was a good fit. To use film as a method in a political science classroom is not a novel practice. Engert and Spencer's pessimistic claim that in political science 'the idea of using movies as a pedagogical tool has remained at the margin' (Engert and Spencer 2009: 83) has since been challenged through film and politics courses offered at many universities. However, while literature does exist on teaching with film (e.g., Krukones 1989; Valeriano 2013), in designing the course I wasn't guided by insights on film as a pedagogical tool, but by my research expertise, having written my dissertation on collective memory and film in post-Yugoslav Croatia. I also knew from my frequent use of film examples in other (methods, comparative politics) courses I taught that students respond to the practice well.

In this particular case, I expected films to bring the area closer to the students, encouraging interest and engagement; to help foster a culture of participation, including for students who would come without prior knowledge or would feel wary of interacting in class for other reasons. I also assumed films would serve as an aid for discussing complex concepts and sometimes challenging topics and materials. Films would also be part of the course content, enabling the class to explore the connection between political events, their mediatisation and memory in the region.

During the 14 weeks of the semester, we screened 11 films, nine from the former Yugoslav countries (Croatia, North Macedonia, Serbia) and one from Romania. Films were acquired through library DVD purchases and–because it was difficult to find many released on DVD with subtitles–the generosity of authors and producers, who I have reached out to explaining the course idea and who often responded extremely positively, granting us temporary viewing links or downloadable copies. In one case, because the film was relatively new (2015), I purchased the one-time screening rights from the distributor. All but one (documentary) were feature fiction films. This was supplemented by short films or segments screened during the regular sessions. Pre-movie, students were given instructions on what to pay special attention to during the screening.

The course combined interactive lectures, film screenings and post-screening discussions. The lectures introduced the weekly topics through a structured presentation, or a roundtable discussion guided by a set of questions/prompts. Each week's film was then analysed during the discussion session. One to two readings were assigned for both weekly sessions (not for the screenings). They included works by historians, political scientists and international relations scholars, memory scholars, legal scholars and peace activists, literature and film scholars, and also web pages, court transcripts, journal articles and reports.

Student assignments included presentation in pairs, position papers and a reflection paper. Following a consultation/literature recommendation session, each pair had to assign a reading to their classmates and present on one post-Yugoslav country, introducing the class to what they thought they needed to know (prompt questions were provided). The exercise was meant to help students develop knowledge on the region, gain insight into how narratives are created, train argument-building and presentation skills, and to encourage interaction and collaboration. Position papers were introduced to encourage students' thinking about the topics covered, while giving me insight into their understanding and progress. The film reflection paper invited students to engage in-depth with a film they enjoyed, catering to the skills of the more humanities-interested students.

The course, the students, and the teacher

I taught the course during the Spring semester 2019/2020. The class was small and diverse, with ten second-to-fourth year students from Bosnia (one), Eritrea (one), France (one), India (one), Serbia/Kosovo (one) and the United States (five). I was the sole teacher and had no teaching assistant. As expected, students came with different levels of disciplinary and area knowledge. The course met twice a week for seminar sessions (90 minutes, Mondays and Wednesdays), and on Tuesday evenings for film screenings.

Thematically, the course was divided into four parts. In the first part, we studied the history of the region and of the Yugoslav breakup and covered the concepts needed to analyse what had happened. We also talked about the creation of national(ist) narratives and the role of the political leaderships and media in the process. In the second part, we introduced the theories of collective memory, and talked about how the events of the 1990s became remembered as useful past, and about the role different actors–domestic and foreign–played in memory-making. The third part was dedicated to discussing characters crucial to or left out from the narrative: soldiers/veterans, women, national minorities. We talked about the role films play(ed) in creating national memory narrative(s), and unpacked some conceptual tools used to study them (e.g., trauma). Finally, in the last part of the course we talked about how memory evolved (or didn't) and why that might matter.

In terms of learning outcomes, I expected that upon completing the course, the students will be able to:

- explain the events surrounding the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s and critically contrast their differing interpretations by historians and political scientists
- explain the role cinema can play in the processes of nation-building and national memory, and critically assess the role it played in the post-Yugoslav context
- explain and apply in analysis the concepts of collective and cultural memory
- learn and practice applying key terms of political science such as power or nationalism.

As secondary goals, I expected my students to practice their writing and speaking skills, argument building and delivery, as well as to experience learning together and from each other.

The assignments were weighted as follows: 20% for class attendance and participation; 20% for the presentation (10% presentation + 10% submitted reading); 10% for the film reflection paper; 50% for the five position papers (5x10%).

Collected sources of data and methods

I evaluated the course outcomes by reflecting on three sources: student feedback collected through a form designed and administered by the university, completed by nine out of the ten students; my class observations as lecturer; and evaluation of students' assignments.

Findings

My first expectation was that films were a good way to increase engagement. This was partially corroborated through standardized course reviews, which provided data on overall course engagement but didn't include questions related specifically to the film component of the class. All but one student (neutral) felt strongly engaged or engaged by the course–a success considering that due to the pandemic we had to do a large part of the course online. All but one (neutral) agreed or strongly agreed that the course prompted discussions also outside of the classroom. One student explicitly said that the course was 'very engaging and interesting', while another mentioned that the lecturer managed to 'engage the students with the matter'; a third comment simply stated that 'both the course and instructor were great!'.

I also expected that integrating film into the course design would make the course more inviting for the diverse, international student group; this was also somewhat confirmed by the evaluations, addressing the course in general. One student stated that they 'loved' being in the class, adding that '[w]hile the topic of the course was extremely broad and at times incredibly intimidating (partly because lack of previous knowledge on the subject)' the instructor managed to create an 'inclusive environment'. Another referred to a 'comfortable atmosphere where we feel free to ask [...] questions when we wanted'.

With regard to learning, all surveyed students agreed that the course was challenging. Yet almost all strongly agreed (one agreed) they had acquired new knowledge. One student wrote about enjoying the film component as an integral part of the course–giving some weight to my expectation that films assisted in learning complex materials:

> I enjoyed having different aspects of the course: history, politics, and film. Having films visualized the topics discussed and gave an insight to them and showed us how the director's narrative is shaped and what they want to portray with it. The course also provided a lot of history, which I found really great. Overall, I now understand more about the difficult questions about Yugoslavia, identity, and the layers of the war, which always bothered me.

My classroom observations paint a richer, albeit a more subjective picture. For one, they reinforced my expectation that using film would boost engagement. Prior to the classes moving online, the students attended the screenings regularly; while late screening times prevented us from debating a film right after the screening, a discussion usually emerged as we were leaving the premises. They seemed engaged by the films, which provoked laughter, anger, thoughtfulness. Students sometimes express the desire to learn more about topics observed on film, or to watch additional films.

I observed that using film as a class component helped make the course more inviting, too. While some students were more active in class than others, no one was unwilling to participate. The film discussions seemed inviting especially for students with an arts/humanities background, who were sometimes a bit shy to speak in sessions focusing on the more conceptual, historical or explicitly political readings. The inclusion of a film reflection paper among the assessment methods enabled the film- and art-focused students in class to excel at a particular evaluation component, with some even watching additional films for their papers.

Films opened up complex concepts. For example, making a connection between a Romanian black-and-white western about Roma slavery and the concept of cultural memory was not easy. But this allowed us to explore the concept and the film in detail, which made the discussions more dynamic and the learning process more active.

Finally, watching films was meant to primarily foster learning, and my observations offer some confirmation that it did. Connections between the readings and the films were not always immediately obvious to the students, especially during the early course weeks. But as the course progressed, their insights became more interesting and more refined: they asked relevant questions, started making connections between the films' narratives, aesthetics and ethics, and often surpassed my expectations. Films fostered a particular kind of understanding. For example, seeing the differing representations of how the war started in Serbian and Croatian films made the students observe the differences in national narratives and of the power the media have in shaping them in a way that was more accessible than the assigned readings on the topic. This enabled moving from information absorption to being able to explain and critically contrast different narratives.

Watching films together inspired the students to make connections beyond that of the Yugoslav context, successfully applying what we discussed. An in-class screening of Jean-Gabriel Périot's short film about the liberation of Paris during WWII and the humiliation of French women accused of sleeping with the Nazi soldiers was an invitation for the French student to talk about their history education and its role in creating their 'Frenchness', leading the class to consider the relationship between education and national narratives in a new way. This also made the diversity of the classroom an advantage, as it became an integral part of the course. Finally, as the students developed their analytical disciplinary toolkit, films helped steer them away from seeing the former Yugoslavia as an exotic place of eternal ethnic hatreds, as they depicted the region as in many ways similar to their home countries.

I could observe student progress also through class discussions. Discussing one of the last films we watched, Kristijan Milić's Broj 55 (2014), the students were more critical of the film than I was when I initially saw it, analysing how it draws on nationalist 1990s tropes and dehumanizes the enemy.

Finally, the relationship between film and learning was obvious in the students' papers. The different depictions of the conflict in Croatia in two films and the related course discussion reminded my Indian student of the India-Pakistan partition, and they ended up writing an excellent position paper utilising the knowledge of collective memory. One student wrote an analysis of a film on war crimes, tying it back to the historical materials we covered, as well as to Arendt's (1964) concept of 'banality of evil' that we had covered in class. My impression was that films helped foster a deeper engagement with the readings and made critical application of the concepts to different contexts easier.

Replicability in a different context

While I do think film works best as both a teaching method and part of the course content, teaching political science with film should be broadly applicable. An advantage to using film as a teaching method, aside from those listed above, is that it is not particularly costly or difficult to organise; all that is needed is a room with screening equipment and films (with subtitles). In classes including visually impaired students, reaching out to see how their needs can be accommodated is advised. One disadvantage is that the method is time-consuming: for the instructor, it takes time to find films and readings that complement them; joint screenings mean that the instructor and students will have to dedicate approximately two extra hours a week to the course. Finally, because teaching with film requires the whole class to engage in dialogue to elaborate how films and other class materials relate, it may be best suited for a small class size.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I described the course design for my BA course Screening the 90s: Politics, Memory and Film in the Post-Yugoslav Countries, taught at Bard College Berlin. The course was designed with the aim of teaching students about the breakup and aftermath of the former Yugoslavia, primarily through the prism of political science and memory studies. Films were used as a method to help increase engagement, encourage participation of all students in a diverse, international group, as well as foster critical discussion of learning materials and overall learning (while avoiding 'Balkanisation' of the '90s conflicts). Upon evaluation, I find that the course was successful in terms of achieving its learning objectives, at least partially due to the specific design.

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Summary

The aim of the course Screening the 90s: Politics, Memory and Film in the Post-Yugoslav Countries was twofold: to acquaint the students with the basic facts, debates and disagreements around the breakup of Yugoslavia and its aftermath, and to explore the role that media representation played in remembering the events and their consequences. To achieve this aim, I used feature fiction films as both a teaching method–to foster student engagement and participation, encourage learning and avoid 'Balkanising' the region–and a part of the course content (films as discursive and memory artefacts). I combined them with cross-disciplinary literature, individual and in-pair assignments for further engagement, skills development and evaluation. Integrating film into course design as both a teaching method and a part of the course content was found useful when working with international student groups without much prior knowledge, fostering engagement and student participation while also assisting in achieving the course learning goals.

Keywords

film and politics, memory studies, political science, teaching with film

Tamara Kolarić is an Assistant Professor in Social Sciences with the School of Applied Languages and Intercultural Studies, Dublin City University. She taught the course Screening the 90s: Politics, Memory and Film in the Post-Yugoslav Countries at Bard College Berlin, where she was the Global Teaching Fellow for the 2019/2020 academic year.
tamara.kolaric@gmail.com

POST-ITS, CARDS AND SHORT FILMS: LEARNING FROM INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Alessandra Santoianni, University of Vienna

Teaching-learning challenge

Whether they are international or not, students differ in how they learn. Andreotti (2012: 240) argues how practitioners must educate a diversity of learner types in 'complex educational environments, where a number of different variables and perspectives need to be considered'. Such perspectives can include international students with knowledge and experiences acquired in (educational) contexts other than the one in which a university course may be provided. Therefore, in my course covering inclusive citizenship education, I strive to offer space to students to express their own experiences and knowledge about course topics, especially if these experiences are related to their country of origin. Additionally, I aim to design and facilitate the course in a way that these personal perspectives serve as a catalyst for student learning.

Pedagogical method

Reflections from this teaching challenge are translated into different methods that I use when teaching a course at the University of Vienna, Austria. This study presents three methods that I have found relevant when supporting the learning of international students and the concerns of student-centred citizenship education in general. Student experiences and ideas can be the start and end point of inclusive citizenship education. In this way, as advocated by Kleinschmidt and Lange (2021), students are at the centre of the didactical approach of the discipline.

The first method is introduced at the start of the course. Here, I ask students what they expect to learn and why they chose to take the course. Students are invited to write their answers anonymously on a post-it note and to stick them onto the whiteboard. I then read the post-its and, where possible, cluster them into different themes. Some of the post-its are also specifically selected and discussed with the students. When performed in a face-to-face setting, I simply use a whiteboard and paper post-it notes. In an online learning environment, I use Jamboard, a type of a virtual whiteboard, but any collaborative writing tool can be used.

The second method is also implemented at the beginning of the course. It is inspired by photo-elicitation due to its heuristic potential and capacity to enrich knowledge about other people's lives, opinions, and knowledge (Lapenta 2011). Starting with a deck of picture cards from a popular board game called Dixit, I ask students to individually pick a card that best represents to them the term 'inclusion'. I then invite students to share this idea with the rest of the class. While the implementation of this method has differed slightly from semester to semester due to adaptations required for online teaching, the virtual dimension has not represented an obstacle as the activity can be performed with a scanned version of the cards. Moreover, any deck of cards

or photographs coherent with the content of the course can be used. Ideally, the cards should contain abstract illustrations with good evocative power.
The final method typically comes around mid-course, when I encourage students to share their personal perspectives through short films. Indeed, the use of film is no novelty in the field of didactics of citizenship education (Riß 2016). The themes explored by the films are related to the content of the course. As a first step, I extract photos from the short film and distribute them to the students. I then ask the students to team up in pairs to discuss what the topic of the film could be. In an online environment, I send these photos via e-mail before the class and the activity of self-reflection takes place individually. After watching the film, I ask students to explore their perceptions about the film (through a scene, sound or sentence that struck them) and later to discuss the content of the film in plenary. I then discuss with the students their experience of learning through film, allowing them to share insights from their own previous learning experiences. This facilitates a discussion of the differences between the school systems of local and international students.

The course, the students, and the lecturer

I have taught the seminar Inclusive Citizenship Education for three semesters (Winter 2019/2020, Summer 2019/2020 and Winter 2020/2021) to three different cohorts of pre-service upper secondary school teachers. The first was in a face-to-face setting, the other two were online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The seminar is a part of a module of the Bachelor's 'Teacher Training Programme'. Students enrol in the programme to become teachers of different disciplines. The module in which the seminar is offered concerns inclusive schooling, addressing educational barriers and opportunities in the school system, origin-related inequalities, and migration. Due to the transversal nature of this module, and to its position in the general curriculum, the students enrolled in the seminar specialise in a range of different subjects, including History, German, English, and Sports, amongst others.
The three courses welcomed 58 students in total (20 on average each semester). Around one fourth (15) were Erasmus or international students enrolled in their Bachelor degree in Austria. International students were of both European and non-European origin. Erasmus students were only present during the 2019 winter semester, presumably due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this study, I define international students as those participating in an exchange programme (e.g., Erasmus+) or students who received their prior education in a country other than Austria. Students with a migration history who had already studied in Austria during their primary or lower secondary education are not counted as international students in this study.
In terms of learning objectives, I identified two key areas: knowledge acquisition about inclusive citizenship education (the content dimension) and development of teaching abilities through Project-based Learning and films (the pedagogical dimension). The latter was translated in terms

of learning objectives as communication skills (ability to convey evidence-based ideas and own points of view in discussions) and methodological skills (capacity to identify multiple perspectives and reflecting on the plurality of students' needs and interests in teaching).

The courses were held in English and were worth 5 ECTS credits. The final grade was based on three components: active participation (30%), classroom presentation (30%) and a final essay (40%). While the first two components are related to both content knowledge and methodological skills, the last one is intended primarily to assess content knowledge.

I give the course as a sole teacher. I am an early-career international scholar teaching at an Austrian university. My Higher Education took place in three European countries (Italy, France, and The Netherlands). Before starting my teaching experience in Higher Education, I participated in several intra-European mobilities as an education professional. These experiences contributed to the development of my teaching approach as I was able to experience what it means to be an international student and teacher in a foreign country. This helped me to build a context-based perspective about what teaching and learning mean in different countries.

Collected sources of data and research methods

When analysing the data, I used qualitative content analysis. Schreier (2014) underlines that qualitative content analysis reduces data, it is systematic, and it is flexible. In my work, I proceeded by looking at the complete data set and selected only the information concerning learning and the relations with the country of origin. This allowed me to focus on the data about student learning and experiences.

My research questions were the following: How much space did I offer to students to express their own experiences and knowledge about the course topics, especially if these experiences related to their country of origin? How did these personal perspectives impact student learning? To answer the first research question, I used my class notes and observations collected during classes and two different student feedback forms. One form I created and circulated in mid-semester, while the other form is an official survey designed by my institution that students completed at the end of the course. These forms had both open and closed questions. To answer the second research question, I consulted my class notes and the students' essays.

Findings

The first question relates to the space offered to students to share their experiences and knowledge about the course topics. By space, I refer to my didactical choices and choices of methods described above. The data showed that 86% of the 2019 Winter cohort, 67% of the 2020 Summer cohort and 94% of the 2020 Winter cohort either agreed or strongly agreed that the methods and didactical approach were appropriate to the content of the course and relevant to a discipline such as inclusive citizenship education. The relatively lower percentage of the second cohort is assumed to be result of the shift of the course to an online setting at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. As further explained in the open questions of feedback forms, students valued learning from real-life experiences, whether they were their own experiences or those of other students. They also valued learning from how things worked in other countries. As shared by one student: 'I feel like I learn a lot from listening to other students' experiences in discussions' (Student, mid-term evaluation, 2020 summer cohort).

Another finding concerns students' learning needs. Through my class observations and notes (especially from the post-it note or card elicitation methods) I could see that students were aware of and able to express their learning needs in English (which was not their native language). This allowed me to assess whether they articulated the needs in relation to their country of origin and status as an international student. I noticed that the ability to express and articulate learning needs differed. However, one limitation is that the anonymity of post-it notes did not allow differentiation between the answers of international students and those reported by their home peers. Nevertheless, it still enabled me to understand how students perceived their learning and use these insights when facilitating the class sessions. Students appreciated this, saying:

> She took into consideration our needs and interests and formed the lessons accordingly' (Student from the 2020 Winter cohort).

> The feedback we gave about halfway through was immediately incorporated in the e-learning methods [...] I really appreciated [...] the amount of space given for discussion and further pursuit of individual interests within the course topics' (Student from the 2020 Summer cohort).

Finally, I found that the short films encouraged students to exchange ideas about different practices that are found in different countries. For example, the students discussed different rights valued in different countries, such as voting rights as well as the right to hold multiple nationalities. These discussions brought an added value to the class.
Listening to peers' perspectives was not only useful for students but for myself as well. This allowed me to better understand their ideas about the course concepts, and in turn, provide more specific feedback while assessing student essays.
This leads me to my second research question concerning the impact of students' perspectives on learning. While evaluating student essays, I assessed how they explained content and methods. This included whether they used their country of origin to clarify their points of view or whether they used it as a case for their essay, when they were given the freedom to do so. As described above, the learning objectives of the course included pedagogical knowledge (knowledge of meth-

ods and didactics) and content knowledge (related to inclusive citizenship education). While only two international students chose their country of origin as a case study, five students used their country of origin in the arguments of their essays. These references were used in a comparative perspective and in one case they related to personal experiences in education systems different than the Austrian one. In these cases, it allowed the students to describe the studied concepts more fully. As this teaching approach is rooted in student-centeredness, it is key that students can also relate studied concepts with their own social and cultural environments. This is a practice that I wish to encourage, especially when teaching international students.

Replicability in a different context

While I consider that the methods and the teaching approach can be adopted for different contexts, the possibility of scaling and replicating them depends on different factors. Firstly, the goals and needs of the teacher and the issues they identify in their courses should be considered. Secondly, this teaching concept and the methods presented are conceived in a specific subject-didactic context, the one of (inclusive) citizenship education. Therefore, the content and subject of the course have to be considered. Thirdly, before implementing these methods, the teacher should start with a self-reflection of their own beliefs about teaching, learning and where does one stand in the teacher-student continuum. Namely, whether teacher-centred or student-centred approaches as described in Print (2012) are preferred and for which purposes. Lastly, additional training about the use of films in teaching would be beneficial.

Here, I would also like to acknowledge the limitations of my findings. One of them concerns the essay as a source of data. While this dataset was used to answer the second research question, the essay was not specifically designed to assess the experience of international students, but rather the course learning objectives. Secondly, one of the assumptions I started with was that I considered students in their heterogeneity beside their international background. I hypothesised that international students did benefit from the methods. However, the collected data did not allow the inference that international students benefitted more of the methods than the rest of the class.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I asked how much space in classes students had to express their own experiences and knowledge about topics, especially if these related to their country of origin. Additionally, I asked how these personal perspectives impacted student learning. To answer these questions, I evaluated the learning of students from my course Inclusive Citizenship Education where I used three intertwined methods: sharing of student motivations and expectations; card elicitation and students viewing short films followed by experience sharing. These methods were found useful because they activated prior student experiences and knowledge that was then used by international students in learning the content of the course.

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Summary

International student learning can be stimulated by bringing their own perspectives into the learning process. In this study, I describe how I implemented this idea in a course on inclusive citizenship education. I asked myself how much space students had in that class to express their own experiences and knowledge about topics, especially if these related to their country of origin. Moreover, I was interested in understanding how these personal perspectives impacted student learning. When teaching the course, I adopted a student-centred approach and designed three different methods: students shared their expectations and motivations on anonymous post-it notes, card elicitation and use of short films. This didactical approach and choice of methods are appropriate and relevant to the discipline of inclusive citizenship education because they have at their core students' experiences and ideas. In particular, they allow the consideration of students' learning needs, and give students the chance to explore their interests by relating their learning to their country of origin and their international perspectives.

Keywords

citizenship education, internationalisation, student-centred learning, teaching with film

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Alessandra Santoianni is a PhD candidate and teacher at the University of Vienna. Her research interests include civic and citizenship education, inclusion/exclusion dynamics in education, teachers' beliefs, citizenship, and political participation. She is coordinating different Erasmus+ funded projects. Before her current position she worked as a project manager and youth worker in Grenoble at CEMEA, a progressive education movement. **alessandra.santoianni@univie.ac.at**

CALLING BRUSSELS: REVISITING AN INNOVATIVE INTERVIEW ASSIGNMENT

Tobias Nowak, University of Groningen

The teaching-learning challenge

Three years ago, I introduced an interview assignment, which I baptized The Calling Brussels Project, into one of my introductory courses to the political system of the European Union (EU). It was one of several assignments that made up the final grade. I repeated this project with some small adjustments twice so that it has now been completed three times. The aim of the innovation is to connect what students learned from my lectures, the textbook, their own presentations and their research papers to real people and organisations.

To me, the challenge was not so much the skills of my students, in which I have the highest confidence, but to create a project, which students find appealing and useful, one that can be completed within eight weeks with no travel budget. My international students often come with different skill-sets: from their foundational academic skills to their command of the English language. This assignment takes this as an asset. It builds upon students' diverse knowledge and skills through peer learning with an expectation that making students practice their team work, communication and organisational skills under a semi-realistic research setting proves useful in all kinds of situations no matter where their career will take them. At the same time, students are to be inspired to want to find out more about the topic than textbooks provide. The project seems to achieve most of it and offers space for modification to address further student needs.

Pedagogical method

Video interviewing and video-conferencing as a teaching method has been discussed in the literature (Lo Iacono et al. 2016), so have interviews as unusual assignments (Pleschová 2007; Kenyon 2017), active and collaborate learning (Arvaja and Häkkinen 2010), team work and peer learning (Boud 2013; Lueg and Lueg 2014). However, I did not consciously connect my idea to any specific pedagogical method other than common sense and experience when I started to design the project. The idea was rather simple: I wanted to make the EU a less abstract organisation for students and at the same time make them practice essential interview, writing and communication skills. An excursion to Brussels might have done the trick but would have created other organisational issues that I wanted to avoid. Inspired by the Bologna goals of internationalisation and digitalisation, at least in retrospect, I came up with a cross-border video-interview project for my mixed group of international and home students.

As part of this assignment, students had to interview a person involved in political and/or legal matters of the EU. All interviewees were recruited by me before the course started, including European Commission and Council officials, practicing lawyers dealing with EU law, an ex-deputy minister of justice of a prospective member state, and interest group representatives. Andrew

Zuidema, my teaching assistant paid by the University's teaching grant that I had received for introducing this project, helped me out in the first year. We shared our experience in an article, which came in the form of teaching instructions on how to replicate this project (Nowak and Zuidema 2019).

I first provided a short one-page manual to the students that laid out the purpose, expectations and schedule of the project and contained information on how to conduct semi-structured narrative interviews.[1] In both years, the project followed the plan from the manual quite closely, except for some of the too ambitious deadlines that could not be kept due to the unruly nature of interviewing. Students conducted the interviews as a team of two to three students. To avoid long discussions, students were assigned their interviewees via lots. Each student took a slip of paper with the name of their interviewee. Those with the same name were grouped together as a team. To make students more enthusiastic about the interview, the interview and interview reports made up twenty-five percent of their final grade. Giving no grade for this important element of the course would most likely have devalued it in the eyes of the students (Friedland 2002, 171). Students had to get in touch with their interviewee and engage with them in a professional manner to request a 30 minutes video-interview within the following six weeks. The students were supposed to read the texts from Adams (2015) and McCammon (2017) as preparation for their interview guide and the interview. So, after having been assigned an interviewee and a team member by chance, students were ready to collect background information on their interviewee and formulate interview guidelines with fields of interest and questions to use for their interview. They then arranged the interview date by contacting their interviewee by email and conducted the interview via a video conferencing tool of their own or their interviewees' choice.

Corona, which hit us in the last weeks of the second run, did not impact the interviews in any substantial manner. The remaining ones that fell into this time were all carried out as planned. It was as if this project anticipated the rise of video-conferencing. As soon as the interview was done, the students orally shared their findings and experiences with the rest of the class in a rather informal manner. At the end of the course, students handed in a structured written report on the content of the interview and a reflective paper describing preparation, the interview itself, team-work, possible improvements etc.

The course, the students, and the lecturer

I introduced this assignment into a first-year course at the University College Groningen entitled Policy-Making in the European Union, which is classified as a political science and law course. In addition to the interview assignment, students are assessed for individually written minutes of a

1 https://www.rug.nl/research/portal/nl/publications/calling-brussels-student-manual-for-an-innovative-teaching-project(8832a956-a3f7-41cf-9b7c-5b7be78b6040).html.

course meeting and oral presentation of these minutes, for a research paper written with a peer student (a different one than the interview partner), and presentation of this research paper. We meet four hours per week for eight weeks, followed by an exam period, in which the students finalize their papers and reports instead of undertaking an exam.
Students receive 5 ECTS for the course. Expected course learning outcomes include to be able to describe and explain the historical course of EU integration including the enlargement process, treaties and specific policy fields; to describe, compare, apply and evaluate different theories of European integration and governance; to analyze political systems with the help of the theories; to describe and explain policy making in the EU in a range of different policy fields; to practice writing academic papers, presenting and defending them in class; and to practice semi-structured narrative interviews. Students hopefully improve all kinds of other skills, like language, social, technical, writing, and presenting skills and, gain more academic confidence.
Around 20 students take this course each year. As the group was bigger the second time around, I had to assign three students for one interview. It also meant that I had to secure more interviewees for the second run. The group taking this course is made up to equal parts of international students and home students but the international orientation of the home students is quite obvious from their language skills and often international educational experience. All but three so far were (ex-)citizens of the EU, including the English native speakers. Approximately eight nationalities have been represented. They usually live in the same student house and are in their early twenties and for most of them, this is their first undergraduate degree programme. Students from different disciplines take this course, so they can either be more oriented towards the social or natural sciences or the humanities. This makes this class international and interdisciplinary.
I like to imagine that my experience as an international student–in my junior high school time and as an Erasmus student–has helped me to better understand the issues international students face but also made me see their uniqueness as something benefitting all. International students in this course are still a relatively homogenous group educated in western societies. The interdisciplinary nature of the group is a bigger challenge as it requires designing a practical assignment useful for students beyond political science, in which they practice and learn as a team, achieve the planned learning outcomes and build self-confidence. My own academic background taught me that the transfer of skills, insights, methods and good practices from one field to another can be very rewarding.

Collected sources of data and methods

When evaluating the outcomes of this innovation, I considered several sources of data. First, students wrote preparatory documents for the interview, reflection reports and content reports and gave a short presentation of their findings and experiences, which were used to evaluate what they have learned. I also talked to each team in an informal setting as, for example, during the break, to see if they were on the right track or if there was anything they found problematic. Moreover, both years the course as a whole were evaluated by the students in an online evaluation form and I asked the interviewees how they thought the interviews went. Finally, I relied on my own observations of student learning.

Findings

The documents students had to prepare before the interview, especially the different drafts of the interview guidelines, together with the content reports from the interviews, showed engagement with the topic and with it an increase in knowledge of how the EU works. One shortcoming that these documents helped me to identify was that the topics of the research papers were not necessarily connected to the field of expertise of the interviewee and were written parallel with but disconnected from the interview assignment. Unfortunately, I do not see how the findings from the interviews could be used better for the research paper. The relatively short time frame and me, not wanting to rely too much on the interviews for the final grade as they are so unpredictable, kept me from integrating the interviews into the research paper assignment.

For their reflection reports the students were asked to critically reflect on the work process, teamwork and skills acquired and suggest improvements for the interview assignment. Not surprisingly, as this was not an anonymous report, all students appreciated the practical nature of this project, how it improved their skills of conducting an interview, and how it made them find out more about the EU. In these reports, students also reflected in a surprisingly open manner on their own organisational skills and how to enhance them for the future. The written reports basically repeated what students had reported orally in class in a more structured manner.

The anonymous course evaluations contained some more points that students considered as shortcomings. One student pointed out that not all interviewees worked for the EU and that this was a little strange for a course on policy making in the EU. However, this was done on purpose to show the network of organisations connected to the EU. I now address this point more explicitly when introducing the interview assignment. Another point of critique concerned the assignment of the interviewees by lot. One student would have liked to interview someone he knew and who was apparently working for the EU. Others would have liked to pick an interviewee from my list based on the policy field that interested them the most. However, for educational (exploring the unknown) and organisational reasons (time), I see no reason to change the procedure.

Student evaluations also contained two points, which I considered more seriously. First, students would have appreciated more guidance when writing the reports. The guidelines that I provide are rather short indeed. I did address this issue in the second run, stressing that students are free to present their findings in a way they see fit but that I will provide feedback on drafts so they know they proceed as expected. Such an approach makes writing more challenging for the

students and also more interesting for me to read.
Second, one student suggested that the academic level of this assignment could be raised by a more structured and comparative approach. True, the connection between the interviews is not always clear. Student teams work with their own interview guidelines and do not all necessarily explore the same issues, even if they all cover the same points (background of the interviewee, position in the organisational structure, daily routine of the interviewee). Taking over the suggestion would make this a much bigger project than it was meant to be, including developing a research question, more precise interview guidelines, instructions for a common comparative report and more.
Feedback from the interviewees above all included praise for the seriousness that the students demonstrated, signs of enjoying the conversation and helping students to learn something meaningful. I also book it as a success that all interviewees from the first year agreed to be interviewed again last year and this year.
Overall, students managed to arrange and conduct an interview with a policy or legal expert in a very short time. By teaming students up they could benefit from each other's strengths and compensate for each other's weaknesses, and thus improve their skills and knowledge by learning from each other. While team work improved the quality of the material students handed in, it did not free me from my responsibility to share my knowledge with them: giving feedback on all of their drafts, including emails, topics, interview design, etc. Letting students present their experiences and findings in class, added another element of peer learning. The interview assignment resulted in the students seriously researching the topics they had to address in the interview, and engaging with the EU in a very focused way. Students often displayed their specialist knowledge in discussions in class, at least when encouraged to do so.

Replicability in a different context

For a course of around twenty students this kind of assignment works well. It does demand some organisation and supervision from the lecturer, both of which will become more challenging with bigger courses, the recruiting of a sufficient number of interviewees might then become a major challenge. To some degree this might be compensated by larger student teams, but more than three per team seems ill advised. A lesser problem should be the transferal to other political systems and other fields of the social sciences. If the assignment is set up as a part of a course, not a course in itself, it can easily be integrated into an existing course.
The third run was done in the second semester of 2020/21 with only minor changes. For example, more attention was be paid to privacy issues in empirical research and what this means for the use of interview data in general and in this course in particular. Based on my observations, the assignment is a good element of the course and worth the time and effort. Nevertheless, the overall scores this course received in student evaluations before and after I introduced this

assignment, although being rather high, are disappointingly similar. Students' praise for the practical nature of the assignment that now showed up in the qualitative part of the anonymous evaluations did not seem to impact the quantitative part in the way I had wished. In general, the smaller the group of students and the longer the course, the easier it is to replicate this kind of assignment.

Conclusions

Overall, the Calling Brussels interview assignment is appealing for the students and definitely interesting for me as their teacher. It appears a useful tool for improving students' academic, language and social skills and, last but not least, it can be completed in eight weeks with no extra financial cost. I might be the one who decided to introduce this assignment to the course, but it is the mix of students from different countries and disciplines that contributes the most, together with the international group of interviewees, to achieving the course learning outcomes. Without these students, their pre-course skills and their enthusiasm, none of this would work. That it is Corona-proof, although just by coincidence, is of course a big bonus in times like this.

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Summary
In order for students to have a first-hand experience with field research, I introduced a practical component to one of my introductory courses to the European Union (EU). Teams of two to three students are interviewing EU policy and legal experts. In semi-structured narrative video-interviews students are invited to learn more about the position of their interviewee in the organisation, the interviewee's career background, the policy topics the interviewee works on and her or his daily work routines. Students share and discus their findings and experiences with their peers so that they also learn something from the interviews that they had not conducted themselves. The assignment helps students apply foundational qualitative research skills, get a better idea of the organisation and of the people who bring it all to life. It creates a memorable experience by completing an activity that students originally find challenging.

Keywords
active learning, digitalisation, EU politics, internationalisation, interviews, video-conferencing

Tobias Nowak is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the Faculty of Law and at the University College of the University of Groningen, the Netherlands. He studied sociology, political science and law in Germany and the Netherlands. He has been teaching courses on EU politics and international relations to international and home students for several years. He has received the Fellowship for Innovative Teaching grant from the University of Groningen for the Calling Brussels project. When not teaching or publishing about this teaching project, he does research on political decision-making in the EU and on the application of EU law in the courts of the member states. **t.nowak@rug.nl**

INTERNATIONALISATION AND INNOVATIVE TEACHING AS THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN CENTRAL EUROPE AND BEYOND

Agnes Simon, Comenius University in Bratislava

The importance of internationalisation

Our world has been expanding since the Middle Ages and globalisation has never been as far reaching as today. Yet, the trend where nations periodically open themselves up to the international community only to withdraw and focus on themselves remains. Nationalism, protectionism and xenophobia are still very real and the turbulent times of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russo-Ukrainian War and the resulting economic crisis are expected to bolster isolationist forces. Withdrawing completely from the world no longer seems reasonable and continued contacts between nations and cultures can serve as a mitigating force, which is a key principle behind the Erasmus+ mobility schemes.

Citizens who are educated to be open to multiple perspectives, world views, and truths, and who communicate with people from other cultures are less likely to give in to isolationism and animosity fuelled by political forces. Despite the tumultuous events, the context of internationalisation in European higher education has changed little since the inception of the idea of the IMPACT project in 2018. Under the Erasmus+ scheme, the top four countries (France, Germany, Spain and Italy) continue sending more students abroad, and the top five receiving countries (Spain, Germany, UK, France and Italy) host more students than all the other member states of the European Union combined (Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture 2022a, 2022b).

The internationalisation of higher education assumes a willingness on behalf of a country's leadership to create a favourable legal framework, educational policies and other conditions. The role of the university leadership in facilitating internationalisation is also crucial through implementing the relevant procedures and creating a teaching and learning environment accommodating the needs of international students while encouraging its own students to study abroad. International mobility in Central Europe—and particularly Slovakia and the Czech Republic, where participants in the Effective Teaching for Internationalisation programme came from—is uneven. Poland and, compared to its population, the Czech Republic do well: they are currently the 7th and 10th most active countries in sending their students abroad and rank 6th and 10th in hosting the largest number of international students annually within the European Union (Table 1). They are also net receivers in student mobility just like Hungary. On the other hand, Hungary is the 18th and 15th and Slovakia is the 20th and 23rd, respectively, in sending their students to foreign universities and hosting international students. Slovakia is the only net sender among the Visegrád countries, suggesting that it is not as attractive for foreign students as the other countries in the region.

Table 1. Mobility of higher education students in Central Europe and each country's ranking among the 27 European Union member states plus the United Kingdom

Country	Student mobility								Difference of outgoing and incoming student mobility			
	Outgoing				Incoming							
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Czech Republic	5868 10th	5467 10th	5378 10th	5826 10th	7654 15th	8251 15th	7815 15th	8078 15th	-1786	-2784	-2437	-2252
Hungary	2850 16th	2922 16th	2873 16th	2532 18th	4469 15th	4631 15th	4773 15th	4977 15th	-1619	-1709	-1900	-2445
Poland	10036 5th	10006 5th	9729 7th	9044 7th	13942 6th	14421 6th	14920 6th	15606 6th	-3906	-4415	-5191	-6562
Slovakia	2397 18th	2588 18th	2244 19th	1834 20th	1481 22nd	1505 22nd	1669 22nd	1614 23rd	916	1083	575	220

Net senders are highlighted in grey.
Source: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture 2022a, 2022b

There are many reasons why a particular country or a university is chosen by international students, not all of which can be influenced by governmental or university policymakers—e.g., attachment between minorities and their home country, historical heritage, popular tourist attractions, pleasant weather—but the quality of education, as the example of the Czech Republic shows, together with a highly supportive learning environment can be strong motivating factors for foreign students. This has been a cornerstone of our project: in addition to expanding the number of courses that foreign students can enrol in, the IMPACT project also emphasised the development of the teaching skills of our participants (Pleschová 2020). These two are closely connected: the persisting habit among professors to lecture frontally neither takes into account the learning needs of international students, including the fact that they are used to learning differently, nor utilises classroom diversity to enhance the learning of all students.

The primary motivation behind the IMPACT project was to create a more supportive learning environment for incoming international students. Yet, as the chapters in Internationalising Teaching in Higher Education document, the project has benefitted local students just as much as their international peers (Pleschová and Simon 2022). Thus, even though the teachers in this book sometimes worked in an indifferent, minimally supportive, and constraining environment, where lack of funding, governmental and university policies set strict limits on what teachers can do, they made remarkable advances in expanding student horizons.

Internationalising teaching practices

In practice, internationalisation is most often a bottom-up, rather than a top-down, process in which educators and students take centre stage (Knight 2004). University teachers have considerable freedom in deciding what they teach and how, which is crucial for academic development courses that focus on individual teachers to succeed (Pleschová and Simon 2018). As the main outcome of the IMPACT project, the number of courses available for international students at Masaryk University (MUNI) but especially at Comenius University in Bratislava (UNIBA) has increased: there are twenty-four newly developed or significantly redesigned courses—five at MUNI and nineteen at UNIBA—that were internationalised and now available in English. The courses are in a variety of fields—psychology, sociology, history, political science, economics, pedagogy, media studies, literature, linguistics, law, medicine, ethnography—and are hosted by their respective departments.

The IMPACT project was designed to enhance student learning through changing teachers' attitudes and teaching practice. The chapters of this volume authored by the graduates of the Effective Teaching for Internationalisation programme show how changing the old mindsets can visibly aid student learning. Some fields of study—like medicine—tend to consider themselves global by nature, and thus ignore the potentials that learning from other cultures can offer students. Other disciplines perceive themselves as heavily nationally oriented—e.g., legal studies, history or literature—with little imagination of how they could connect to the world. The authors of this book have shown that there are no programmes that are too local or overly global for internationalisation.

My hope, as a project team member, is that changes in curricula and the mindset of teachers are only beginning. I trust that the graduates of the Effective Teaching for Internationalisation course and those who internationalised a course on their own initiative will continue internationalising other courses they teach. A few of them have already expressed such intentions. I also consider it vital that these teachers find colleagues at their institutions who are similarly passionate about teaching and willing to provide the best learning experience for international students. Continued pedagogical conversations with fellow participants and departmental and other colleagues can spark interest and willingness to join their colleagues at home, resulting in a university-wide cultural change in education (Roxå and Mårtensson 2013; Pleschová et al. 2021).

Most importantly, the chapters of this volume have the potential to reach and assist a much larger group of university teachers in their efforts to internationalise their students' learning. From this perspective, the 'replicability in a different context' section of each chapter is of crucial importance. They offer good starting points for those who are considering introducing some of the methods or approaches presented in the book into their own teaching, but feel that their subject, students, or environment do not immediately yield to internationalisation in general, or to the approach they were intrigued by in particular.

Too often, educators are willing to discard otherwise promising and beneficial approaches and focus on the difficulties of adaptation rather than concentrating on the potential adjustments that can work. I encourage educators to prioritise the 'how to make it work' over the 'why it cannot work'. Sometimes a few small adjustments are enough to introduce a method in a new setting, while in other cases a more thorough redesign of an intervention is necessary. The authors of this volume demonstrate that internationalisation, often combined with peer learning, works in many educational systems, including in Central Europe, Italy, Sweden, Germany and Portugal. The contributions solicited through the European Consortium for Political Science showcase that university teachers from all of Europe face similar challenges in terms of internationalisation and innovative teaching and that these can be overcome. I wish that many of the readers will find inspiration in the cases of internationalisation presented in this book.

The COVID-19 pandemic was as much of a challenge as a blessing in disguise for the authors and this book as well. Every teacher who internationalised their course during the pandemic faced difficulties in implementing their teaching design and was forced to adapt their planned innovations to the actual teaching and learning environment. In this, the teachers made this volume richer. If not for the pandemic, all of the classes would have likely been taught face-to-face and there would be no evidence of how internationalisation works in the virtual classroom. It is unlikely that any teacher would consider internationalising a course without the physical presence of international students through implementing internationalisation at home (Beelen and Jones 2015). Consequently, the authors of this book became the best examples of adapting a teaching design to a different context.

Changing mindsets

Often the authors have learnt as much from internationalising their course as their students, which underlines the importance of professional development for educators. Regularly taking courses in academic development and further immersion in educational literature are logical and relatively simple first steps. Beyond this, participating in staff mobility can have tremendous benefits, too. Going abroad and connecting with like-minded individuals can keep up one's motivation, broaden one's attitude, and enhance one's teaching skills.

The Erasmus+ higher education staff mobility scheme offers great opportunities that are exploited to varying degrees in Central Europe. University staff do recognise the opportunity particularly in Hungary and the Czech Republic and both countries are net senders (Table 2). Poland and Slovakia rank fairly high regarding the number of their staff visiting foreign institutions. However, they tend to host more foreign staff than they send abroad and their ranking in receiving international staff is very low—currently Poland is 24th and Slovakia is 27th—among the 27 EU member states and Britain. This can hardly be explained by the size of the country's population, the number of university staff or the fact that the official statistics combine both research and teaching visits. Positive personal experience from international mobility can strengthen the commitment of university teachers to internationalisation.

Table 2. Mobility of higher education staff in Central Europe and each country's ranking among the 27 European Union member states plus the United Kingdom

Country	**Staff mobility**								**Difference of outgoing and incoming staff mobility**			
	Outgoing				**Incoming**							
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Czech Republic	3312 7th	3787 7th	4580 5th	2536 4th	3422 5th	3723 6th	3842 7th	2063 8th	-110	64	738	473
Hungary	2746 9th	2892 10th	3277 9th	1901 5th	2197 15th	2617 16th	2360 15th	1311 14th	549	275	917	590
Poland	2351 10th	3035 9th	2702 11th	1286 12th	3829 19th	4540 21st	5003 21st	2169 24th	-1478	-1505	-2301	-883
Slovakia	1834 14th	2281 13th	2494 13th	1208 14th	2286 26th	2288 27th	2314 27th	1450 27th	-452	-7	180	-242

Net senders are highlighted in grey.
Source: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture 2022a, 2022b

Successful internationalisation also assumes changing the mindset not only of teachers but also of students. Several of the Effective Teaching for Internationalisation programme participants, including those whose scholarship of teaching and learning study is included in this volume, were disappointed by local students' lack of interest or courage, often stemming from poor language skills or low confidence, to attend a course in English or another foreign language. Yet, while not all students can participate in student mobility, everyone can benefit from learning from incoming international staff and students, provided that they are willing to engage. It is encouraging to see that our authors show how those local students who took up the challenge almost always saw the benefit of cross-cultural interactions.

For the next generations of university students to enjoy the benefits of global citizenship, the local education system should prepare them not only through learning English and other languages at a high level but also by becoming confident learners in general. This assumes learners who are willing to take risks in their own education. This volume shows that when students become responsible for their own learning as a result of student-centred educational approaches, peer learning and internationalisation, they benefit from university education to the fullest.

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Agnes Simon is a political scientist who works as an educational developer in the Center for Scholarship and Teaching (CPP) at Comenius University in Bratislava. She is passionate about teaching and committed to the skills development of higher education teachers and researchers. She focuses on curriculum development, the scholarship of teaching and learning, mentoring, and academic writing in English. She has co-edited the book *Early Career Academics' Reflections on Learning to Teach in Central Europe* (2018).
agnes.simon@uniba.sk

KEY CONCEPTS RELATED TO INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Diversity in higher education

Diversity in higher education refers to the situation where students, teachers and other staff members come from various backgrounds: socioeconomic, ethnic, cultural, religious, etc. Diversity is believed to enrich the educational experience, promote personal growth and enhance the university's functioning in general (ACE 2012; Claeys-Kulik, Ekman Jørgensen and Stöber, 2019: 18).

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Group debate

Group debate is a learning and teaching method where groups of students debate a question that is prepared outside of the classroom. Although the format of the debates can differ, for example, the time allocated for each speaker can vary from one debate to another, they are similar in their purpose: two teams advocate opposing opinions to try to present the most feasible and compelling arguments. Debates are usually an effective tool to enhance interaction and student ownership of learning. There are different debate formats, such as parliamentary debates, the Mace debate and the Australasia debate, which are popular at universities and high schools. In these debates, the best student teams continue on to participate in international competitions. Examples of debates are described by Oros (2008) and Boeckelman et al. (2008).

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Oros, A.L. (2007) 'Let's debate: Active learning encourages student participation and critical thinking', *Journal of Political Science Education* 3:3, pp. 293-311.

Internationalisation at home

Internationalisation at home is the purposeful integration of the international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for every student who studies within a domestic learning environment. It includes a set of instruments and activities that are introduced to enhance students' international and intercultural competences (Beelen and Jones, 2015).

Reference

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Internationalisation of higher education

The internationalisation of higher education allows for the inclusion of an international, intercultural and/or global dimension into the curriculum and teaching and learning process (Knight, 2004) in order to improve the quality of education and research for all students, instructors and staff members (de Wit et al., 2015).

References

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Learning from interviewing

Learning from interviewing is an active learning method where students are tasked with the assignment of interviewing one or more person(s), typically (an) expert(s) in the field, and reflect on this experience either orally or in writing. Students' roles are usually complex and also include the preparation for the interview by researching the topic, designing a list of interview questions and scheduling the interview. Students learn both by improving their factual knowledge related to the topic at hand and via the process of interviewing in itself. One example of an interview assignment is presented by Pleschová (2007).

Reference

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Peer assessment

Peer assessment refers to an arrangement where other equal-status learners 'consider and specify the level, value, or quality of a product or performance' (Topping, 2009: 20). These can include writing and oral assignments, portfolios, tests, etc. Peer assessment can be both formative, where students provide and receive feedback based on the strengths and weaknesses of their work, and summative, where the instructor and students decide collectively on what grade their peer receives (Topping, 2009: 20).

References

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Peer learning

Peer learning is an educational practice that allows students to learn by explaining their ideas to classmates and by contributing to activities in which they can learn from fellow students (peers). Peers are other individuals who do not occupy a role as a teacher or expert; they possess the status of fellow learners and are accepted as such. Peer learning encompasses a range of different learning activities (Boud, 2002). As an example, students can be asked first to think individually about the answer to a conceptual question and then try to convince another student of the correctness of their own response (Crouch and Mazur, 2001).

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Self-assessment

Self-assessment is a process where students collect information on their own performance and compare it to explicitly stated criteria or standards. Andrade and Valtcheva (2009) argue that self-assessment must be formative: students identifying strengths and weaknesses in their own work for the purpose of enhancing via the revising that work is an integral part of self-assessment.

Reference

Andrade, H. and Valtcheva, A. (2009) 'Promoting learning and achievement through self-assessment', *Theory into Practice* 48:1, pp. 12-19.

Simulation

Simulation is a pedagogical method where students learn via the recreation of a real-word situation and the students' role is to explore key elements of that situation (Usherwood, 2015). This helps students to gain a deeper understanding of institutions, processes and human behaviour. Students can experience similar constraints and motivations that real actors have and this mirroring of real-life situations excites students and improves their engagement (Boyer and Smith, 2015: 315-316).

References

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Teaching with film

Teaching with film denotes an approach where students are invited to learn from films instead of/besides typically assigned preparatory materials such as articles and books. These can include documentaries and/or fiction. Films do not serve primarily as sources of information; instead, students are encouraged to reflect on different perspectives that are communicated through the film, to compare/contrast these viewpoints, and to apply theoretical approaches to films. Learning and teaching with film usually increases student engagement in class and can help students to develop a fuller and more complex understanding of the issues under study (Kuzma and Haney, 2001).

Reference

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