CONNECT: Intercultural Learning Network 4 Europe

Scientific evaluation of face to face curriculum, online curriculum and Experience Map

(Final report)

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1. Introduction

Connect 2.0 is a cross-sectoral three-year (2015-2018) Erasmus+ funded project that has developed a programme to support participants from both higher and youth education in getting the most out of their stay abroad, intensively but not exclusively focussing on intercultural learning. The main goal of this programme is to augment the experience of international exchange with a reflective learning process that enables participants to incorporate newly-acquired knowledge and skills into the set of competencies they use in everyday life. Thus, the programme helps participants to become global citizens.

Two central innovations of Connect are the systematic use of an interactive constructivist didactical approach (Cfr. Reich 2007, Bolten 2015) and the conception of an all-round programme that comprises participants' support and learning opportunities before, during and after the international exchange process. The former requires the involvement of advisors and mentors, to enable and foster interaction among participants. The latter entails the combination of face-to-face with online training, in order to ensure the continuation of support and learning opportunities during mobility phases.

According to the above defined goal and the mentioned innovations, Connect has developed and tested, in two pilot runs, the following learning tools:

1. Advisors training

A face-to-face train-the-trainer curriculum, specifically designed to qualify staff from institutions involved in international exchange to deliver intercultural training and support within the Connect programme, and in general to manage all materials and tools generated in the project.

2. Pre-departure training

A face-to-face training curriculum for the preparation of participants before mobility, tailor-made to meet the needs of the target groups (students and youth in general). This part of the programme focuses on cultural awareness, intercultural interaction and dealing with foreign cultures. It also provides

learning opportunities with the participation of former generations of exchange participants.

3.   Online modules

A modular web-based training curriculum especially conceived for participants of mobility programmes. Delivered via an e-learning platform, its online character allows enrolled participants to make use of it autonomously at any of the key stages: before and after, but particularly during the stay abroad. The online modules' content encompasses intercultural motivation, intercultural communication, coping with uncertainty, integrating and sharing intercultural experiences and preparing to return. They entail didactical but also experiential and interactive learning activities.

4.   Experience Map

A peer-to-peer network for programme participants and involved institutions. Within the Experience Map, institutions can post official information about themselves and their location. Programme participants can also share information and exchange experiences, as well as comment on existing posts. Its asynchronic character enables delocalised, intergenerational exchange. This is also the most open tool, as the platform provides different types of user profiles: programme participants (termed 'creators') receive an editor profile, whereas other visitors of the platform (i.e., users) can also benefit from the generated knowledge with a non-editor profile.

5.   Re-entry training

A face-to-face training curriculum for the reintegration of programme participants in their home environment after the exchange. This part of the programme focuses on the following subjects: reflection on intercultural experiences; the conscious integration of intercultural competence into participants' own CVs and its application in everyday life; and supporting others on their intercultural journey.

6.   Mentors training

A face-to-face training curriculum for programme participants committed to becoming facilitators and networkers. Its central goal is to prepare a number of

experienced participants to motivate later generations to take part in international mobility (with special focus on European exchange), to provide guidance to those participants, and to become part of the network themselves. The main points of attention are: multiplying, mentoring, project management and communication.

These six project outputs are the subject of the present scientific evaluation. The main objective of the evaluation is to ascertain their quality, paying particular attention to the innovative aspects of the project. This means that the quality has to be analysed from the following perspectives:

– The accessibility and the usefulness of curricula and devices for the participants
– The didactical rigour of training materials
– The openness, variety and flexibility of the curriculum to meet different target groups, as well as its possibilities of growth after project completion in terms of sustainability
– The perspectives of long-term implementation for institutions of higher and youth education.

In order to meet these challenges, and also taking into account that, being a pilot programme with a voluntary status in all involved institutions, fluctuation in programme participation and the return of evaluations are high, the consortium decided to base the evaluation methodology on the following two principles:

1. Combination of quantitative (surveys) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews with experts) techniques. .
2. Multiperspectivity: Each of the six project outputs was evaluated by its target group (programme participants, advisors, mentors), by project internal experts with a heuristic understanding of the whole curriculum (advisors), and by external experts in didactics and interculturality.

The specific evaluation methodology will be described in detail in chapter 2 of this document.

A secondary goal of the evaluation could not be reached. It was intended to gain insight into the learning process of the programme participants by comparing their perspectives on intercultural situations before and after mobility. The different levels of participation in the pre-departure and re-entry trainings, and consequently the imbalance in their levels of response, prevent any possibility of comparison so far. Nevertheless, this

aspect of the evaluation is not dismissed but only postponed, as a wider implementation of Connect throughout Europe after project completion, with a continued evaluation, would probably provide the necessary balance of data in the long run[1].

Anticipating the most relevant findings of the present evaluation, which will be detailed in the next chapters, it is worth stressing the following reflections:

- The curriculum has reached a high level of maturity. There is of course always room for improvement, but it is completely operative in terms of the attainability of learning outcomes. The technical devices (e-learning platform, online modules, Experience Map) are stable and fulfil their purpose. While improvements can always be made, interactive, delocalised and mobile learning is guaranteed.

- The advantage of accessing international exchange experiences with a reflective perspective and benefiting from professional facilitation and advice is perceived both by participants and advisors.

- The highest level of reflection upon one's own and others' intercultural experiences can best be reached through peer-to-peer dialog, exchange, discussion and collaboration. These activities receive consistently high ratings (and if missing, they are the most demanded).

- In the process of generating content and conceptualising didactics the working group has tried to define the target group as specifically as possible. However, in the application it will still be necessary to select and adapt learning goals and training materials, taking into account that

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[1] Some of the project results were presented in a special issue of the international journal "German as a Foreign Language" (GFL) published as GFL 1/2018 (http://www.gfl-journal.de/Issue_1_2018.php) with the general title "Erasmus+: Potential für Lehre und Forschung". The issue has been edited by consortium member Claus Ehrhardt (University of Urbino). It is a direct result of the discussions in the working groups of the project and covers many aspects of Connect, aiming at a broad view on the reality, the potential, but also the problems of Erasmus programmes. The contributions deal with topics like culture shock in abroad study periods, methods aiming at the enhancement of abroad study periods, differences in didactic cultures and the impact of the programs on "smaller" European languages. Consortium members contributed three papers:
- „Erasmus+: Potential für Lehre und Forschung. Zur Einleitung in den Themenschwerpunkt". Claus Ehrhardt, Urbino (pages 1-14).
- ."..Die Deutschen sind irgendwie anders…" Folgen des Kulturschocks für die kulturelle Identität von polnischen ERASMUS-Studierenden: Ergebnisse einer qualitativen Studie". Sebastian Chudak und Maciej Mackiewicz, Poznań (pages 35-67).
- "„Things I would have liked to known before" – How to Enhance the Erasmus Experience". Gisela Holfter und Maria Rieger, Limerick (pages 68-81).

methods and timing must also be selected and adapted, taking into account both advisors' capabilities and participants' specific characteristics and needs.

In light of these findings it becomes evident that Connect must be understood as an open, flexible, participatory and continuously growing programme. Therefore, supporting its sustainability is a priority.

2. Methodology

The scientific evaluation of the Connect programme aims to address five questions concerning the objectives of the programme as defined in the application:

1. Which elements of the learning programme are best accepted and seen as especially important by the participants?
2. Which elements of the learning programme, particularly regarding the face-to-face and the online curricula, are most valued by external consultants?
3. Do the concept, objectives, training and learning materials respond to quality standards in the field?
4. Do the different parts of Connect motivate participants to engage in intercultural learning?
5. Do the different parts of Connect enrich the experience of the international stay for the participants?

An empirical mixed method approach was applied using the following instruments for data collection:

a. Survey using questionnaires (distributed after face-to-face-training sessions and online on the platform for the online curriculum, see appendices 1-5 to this document)
b. Expert interviews with a selected number of participants
c. Quantitative data collection of participants' activities on the online platform (online modules and Experience Map)
d. Expert interviews with advisors
e. Critical assessment by external consultants

A) Questionnaires were distributed on paper directly after the face-to-face training sessions (or in some cases a week after them); participants were also invited to fill them in online, particularly during the second pilot run.

After the advisors' and the mentors' trainings, participants answered a questionnaire with 14 questions using a 5-point Likert-type scale, following a range from '1= I fully agree' to '5 = I do not agree at all.' The questions are mainly related to their satisfaction with the received training and perceived overall usefulness.

The questionnaires distributed to the participants after the pre-departure and re-entry training are divided into four sections:

1. Overall satisfaction with the training, including questions related to intercultural learning.

2. Usefulness of different parts of the training (preparing to stay abroad and intercultural acting).

3. Self-perception of intercultural acting competence.

4. Multiple choice questions where participants must choose an appropriate way of acting in intercultural situations.

In sections 1-3, 5-point Likert-scale questions – from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) – are used. In section 4, multiple choice questions give four options. Although participants answered all the questions in the returned questionnaires and descriptive statistics were completed with all the answers, only the answers from the first two sections have been finally analysed. The scarcity of returned re-entry questionnaires makes a statistical comparison between pre-departure and after re-entry answers not viable.

A third questionnaire was distributed amongst participants in order to collect their perceptions of the online curriculum and the Experience Map. This questionnaire was answered online during their stay abroad or just after re-entry. The questions are related to overall satisfaction with the environment and the materials, usefulness of the different modules and the Experience Map, as well as attractiveness and usability issues. In this questionnaire 5-point Likert-scale questions from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) are used.

All the questionnaires also include open answers, with which participants express their perceptions and impressions in general terms, and to make possible suggestions for improvement.

What do you consider to be positive and/or negative aspects of this preparation within the Connect project? Why?

You can use keywords. Please try to be clear and respond honestly and completely.

•Positive aspects: _____

•Criticism and suggestions for improvement: _____

Content analysis was applied and inter-rater reliability was measured during the process of coding and categorising.

B) Expert Interviews with participants and advisors

With a selected number of participants and advisors we conducted expert interviews (see interviews guidelines in appendices 6 and 7). The overall aim of the interviews was to deepen the perceptions and insights of participants on the one hand, and to give voice to a part of the involved advisors on the other. The interviews included questions on each of the parts of the programme. Interviews were recorded but not literally transcribed. Instead, some consortium members wrote summaries, which were then qualitatively analysed, applying content analysis. Inter-rater reliability was measured during the process of coding and categorising.

C) Quantitative data on participants' activity on the learning platform and the Experience Map were collected using Moodle's counter for registrations and delivery of activities so as the web counter for visits and posting activity on the Experience Map.

D) In order to receive impartial and robust feedback by impartial experts in the field we approached two external consultants to evaluate our project. Their brief was to evaluate the following aspects:

1. Confirmation of the alignment of

- the developed learning goals,
- the didactic concept and
- the materials

with quality standards in the field in terms of didactics and usability.

2. Evaluation of the relevance for project participants and for future participants
3. Possible shortcomings and improvement suggestions.

We were fortunate to obtain the agreement of Ms. Nadine Binder at the University of Bremen and Prof. Dr. Jean Müller Jacquier (Bayreuth).

Finally, all results and evaluations have been triangulated and discussed to give answers to the initial questions and draw conclusions on the quality of the programme, considering the points of view and perspectives of all implied agents in the evaluation.

3. Analysis and results

3.1. Advisors' training

The advisors' training took place at the University of Poznan in June 2016. The total number of participants was 13, including participants from all participating institutions. It is worth saying that at the time of the training, access to the online platform was not yet possible. However, the pedagogic concept of the programme and the pre-departure training curriculum were already prepared. The structure of the online curriculum was also available.

The main aim of the advisors' training was to introduce a first group of trainers to the concept and dynamics of the Connect programme (see the full description of the programme in the manual for advisors' training).

The questionnaire was answered by all participants giving a return of 100%. The analysis of the results of the closed answers in the questionnaire (Table 1) shows that the participants' average satisfaction with the training stands at M = 2.4, with 1 being the highest and 5 the lowest score on a range from 1 (I fully agree) to 5 (I do not agree at all). The best-rated aspects of the training were the structure (M = 2, Mo = 1), the materials (M = 2.2) and the trainers' competence (M = 2.2.). The expectations regarding the usefulness of the training to prepare the advisors to deliver the Connect pre-departure training were not fully met (M = 2.9, Mo = 3).

Statements	Mean (SD)[2]	Mode
The training met my expectations.	2.6 (1)	2
After the workshop I feel well prepared for delivering an intercultural training to university students.	2.8 (1.1)	3
I have learned more about intercultural competence throughout this seminar.	2.5 (0.8)	2
I have an accurate knowledge about the Connect 2.0 curriculum and about what students need to know in order to work efficiently on the E-learning platform and with the experience map.	2.9 (1)	3
My didactics abilities have increased through the workshop.	2.5 (0.9)	2
We had enough time to test training methods in a practical way.	2.8 (1)	2
I know how to relate the face-to-face programme to the online programme.	2.8 (1.2)	3
The workshop was well structured and organised.	2.0	1

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[2] SD = Standard deviation

	(1.6)	
There was sufficient time for the individual exercises.	2.3 (1.3)	2
The material provided for the training was helpful and sufficient.	2.2 (1)	2
The facilities used for the training were suitable.	2.3 (1.5)	1
The trainers were knowledgeable and competent.	2.2 (1.6)	1
There was enough time for participation and interaction.	2.1 (1.4)	1
Questions raised by the participants were answered appropriately.	1.9 (1.3)	1
Average	**2.4**	

Table 1. Advisors' Training Questionnaire Answers

The qualitative content analysis of the open answers shows that more than half of the positive perceptions are related to the usefulness of the training in sharing and exchanging experiences with other trainers (n = 7) and in helping them familiarise with additional or diverse training skills (n = 8). One advisor writes "Positive aspects: Exchange with colleagues. Inputs of training exercises/activities and refreshing knowledge of known exercises. Some more insight into Connect 2.0 project".

The negative comments or suggestions for improvement can be grouped around the perception of the training being too short to get acquainted with Connect materials and the platform (n = 4) or to discuss the contents of Connect materials (n = 2). On the other hand, a third of the participants perceived the time devoted to going through training method inventories as too long. Approximately half of the participants mentioned that their expectations were not met regarding the level of content on intercultural issues, as they had expected a deeper and more complex engagement with those subjects (n = 3), and other participants mentioned they had expected to get training on the use of the online tools (n = 3). These are examples of comments in this line:

> "I wish there was much more time spent for getting to know how to use tools, or going through the whole on-line part and time for questions and answers in a group, discussing with them. I still feel not very prepared for face-to-face training, and probably I need more time for debriefing all of that."

> "The introduction and "Trainer type inventory" were not so helpful. Maybe some deeper learning would be good and useful. In my opinion this module is already known and there is no need to introduce it."

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Even so, a third of the positive comments refer to the evaluation of the practical aspects of the organisation (n = 5), the organisers' competencies (n = 4) or the group atmosphere (n = 4). Single participants acknowledged the usefulness of designing their own future pre-departure training: *"the session 'design your training' was really useful"*.

All in all, participants showed a high degree of satisfaction with the content and the organisation of the training. They also ranked the atmosphere and the usefulness of the materials highly, even if mixed opinions were given on the length of the modules. Almost half of the participants (n = 5) would have liked a more hands-on contact with the platform.

The Connect Consortium members/trainers who conducted the training shared with participants the perceptions about the positive and committed atmosphere, and the excellent practical organisation provided by the host institution. Connect trainers felt that participants really appreciated the interactive learning approach, which included the opportunity to design 30-minute training sessions (in pairs) that were subsequently tested and evaluated by the whole group. The fact that the online-learning platform and Experience Map could not be tried, since they were not yet available, was considered a drawback. The trainers themselves expressed some concern regarding how well the participants could apprehend the Connect 2.0 elements, due to the lack of time to go over them during the training. They considered that support from the project consortium as well as peer support would be needed. A proposal to open a discussion group on Moodle (on the Glocal Campus) for the advisors training participants was considered. This discussion group was seen as a possible venue for sharing, learning and offering peer support to Connect 2.0. trainers.

In fact, there was a space on the Glocal Campus to satisfy this need. The section was finally not used by the advisors, who possibly opted to contact the Connect project members at their home institutions face to face. This room could be a good place where future advisors could share their own materials and experiences after finishing the project. Incidentally, webinar(s) can also be organised if the advisors feel a need for more online support.

3.2. Face-to-face training, online curriculum and Experience Map

3.2.1. Summary of project participants

During the implementation of our programme, 218 participants from 8 different European institutions took part in the pre-departure training. The total number of registrations on the Experience Map was 180, and for the learning rooms of the online modules, 157. The participants' involvement differed between the different pilot runs, the different parts of the programme (face-to-face pre-departure and re-entry training, online modules and Experience Map) and the different institutions. For instance, of the total number of 157 participants with creator status[3], 59 actively posted entries on the Experience Map. The overall figures in the graphics below show that the programme has been satisfactorily accepted by the participants.
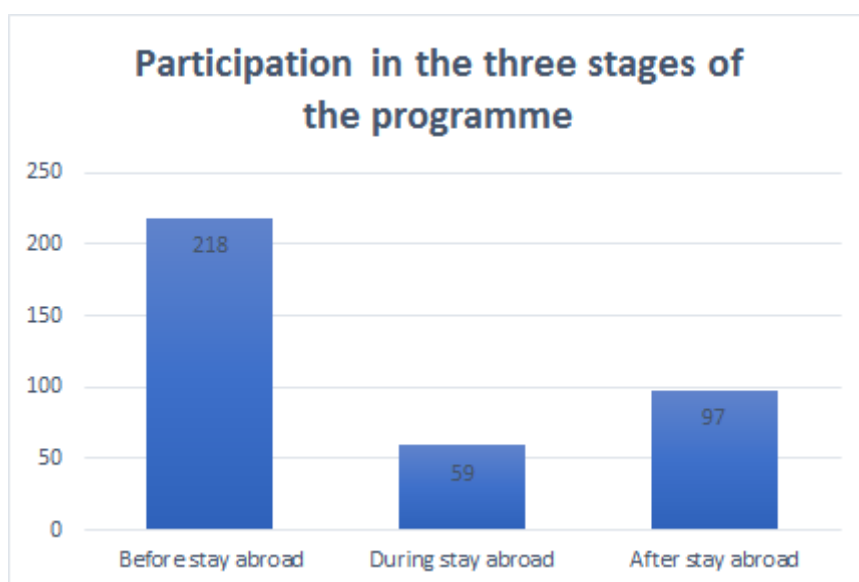
Graphic 1. Participation in the three stages of the programme

Participants were informed about the training/project by the international offices via email, social media, information meetings, in classroom settings and printed flyers. In some cases, parts such as the face-to-face pre-departure training were integrated into the curriculum of existing learning modules, whereas participants at some other institutions voluntarily took part in the training as an extracurricular activity.

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[3] The Glocal Campus allows the configuration of different user profiles. Users not belonging to the participant institutions can receive a basic account with no editing rights, whereas members of the participant institutions can be 'creators,' with the right to post on the Experience Map.

The highest number of returned questionnaires (116 participants, 53,2%) corresponds to the pre-departure training. All of them were filled in by students, 70% of them being female; 80% of the participants in the survey were enrolled in their 2nd to 4th Semester during the project lifetime, their mean age being 21; 51% affirmed having some previous international experience. The total number of host institutions, according to the information given by participants in the evaluated questionnaires, was 86.

As the re-entry training was less visited, or could not take place during the pilot run of the training due to the later re-entry date of involved participants, the total number of returned questionnaires for this part was only 19 (19,6%).

Of these participants, 157 had creator status on the Experience Map and 59 published at least one entry; 156 had access to the Online Modules. In spite of this, the total number of returned questionnaires for the evaluation of the online curriculum was 12 (20% of 59 active creators).

3.2.2.   Analysis of participants' perceptions of the face-to-face trainings

From the total number of 218 participants in the pre-departure training sessions, 116 participants handed in the questionnaire (53,2%). As the questionnaires that participants filled out after their training featured both Likert-scale and open answers, the former were analysed applying descriptive statistics, whereas the latter were analysed using qualitative content analysis, which entailed a categorisation of the open answers by three different researchers. Even though the raters had not been trained beforehand for this particular qualitative analysis, inter-rater reliability ranged from Kappa = 0.67 (substantial agreement) to 0.83 (almost perfect agreement).

Results are reported for each workshop (pre-departure and re-entry) and organised in three sections:

- Overall satisfaction with the workshop
- Participant*s' perception of their intercultural learning*
- Satisfaction/usefulness of specific parts of the training

The final part of the results describes participants' suggestions for improvement of both workshops.

3.2.2.1. Pre-departure training

Overall satisfaction with the workshop

More than 100 participants responded to the three questions related to their perception on the workshop in general. As it can be seen in table 2 more than 65% of the participants who answered the satisfaction questionnaire confirmed that the workshop had met their expectations (Strongly agree = 23.2%, Agree = 42.9%). Only 1.8% showed their disagreement and 30.4% remained neutral.

The open answers corroborate these findings. Nearly a quarter of the participants consider the pre-departure training as a good preparation. Some others qualify it as informative or interesting. The following comments by a student from Haaga-Helia and by a student from Limerick illustrate these views:

> "It was good to prepare for the upcoming exchange program. Even though I travel a lot and I know it takes time to adjust to a new culture, I still feel it was nice to hear more about the cultural differences".

> "It prepares you for the do's and don'ts when going abroad. It gives you good advice as to what to expect when you leave. It helps you to prepare for the worst (e.g. homesickness, mental health, etc.)".

N=116	NA[4]		Strongly agree 1		Agree 2		Neutral 3		Disagree 4		Strongly disagree 5		Mean (SD)[5]	Mode
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
The workshop met my expectations.	2	1.8	26	23.2	48	42.9	34	30.4	2	1.8	0	0	2 (0.8)	2
The workshop was well structured and organized.	2	1.8	37	33	44	39.3	24	21.4	5	4.5	0	0	1.9 (0.8)	2
The trainer(s) was (were) competent.	2	1.8	52	54	45	46.8	10	9	2	1.8	0	0	1.6 (0.7)	1

Table 2. Overall satisfaction with the pre-departure training

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[4] NA = Not answered

[5] SD = Standard deviation

In the same way, more than 80% of the respondents considered that the workshop was well structured and organised (Strongly agree = 33%, agree = 39.3%). Although none of them considered that the workshop had to be restructured or reorganised, a few participants (4.5%) felt that it needed some improvement and 21.4% were non-committal.

In the open answers, three participants mention the good structure of the training. It is also regarded as a good support for participants. For example, a student from Porto mentioned "This project helps and supports students abroad".

The same trend can be seen with the participants' views of the trainers in charge of the workshop. The vast majority of the participants (Strongly agree = 54%, agree = 46.8%) concur that they are competent. Such perception can also be seen on the open answers, where some participants not only praise the good atmosphere, but also the proactive approach of the training. This shows that the trainers' job was successful. The following comment by a student in Limerick illustrates this perception: "proactive approach; useful links given".

In terms of training dynamics, in the open answers some participants reinforced their perception that the tasks carried out in the training were satisfactory and varied. Finally, it is worth mentioning that some participants considered that the training provided a favourable environment to practice their English skills.

Participants' perception of their intercultural learning

Regarding the participants' perception of their own intercultural learning, the results obtained through the quantitative analysis show a positive perception. Participants considered the preparation received to be worthwhile and felt well prepared to cope with situations where people with different cultural backgrounds interact. (Strongly agree = 22.3%, agree = 48.2%). Only one student (0.9%) strongly disagreed with this statement and 2 (1.8%) explicitly disagreed, whereas 25% were neutral.

In terms of perceived gains in intercultural competence, more than 80% of the participants recognised that the workshop increased their intercultural competence (Strongly agree = 24.1%, agree = 58%) and that it was useful for their stay abroad (Strongly agree=19.6%, agree = 61.6%).

N= 116	NA		Strongly agree 1		Agree 2		Neutral 3		Disagree 4		Strongly disagree 5		Mean (SD)	Mode
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
After this preparation workshop, I feel well prepared to meet people from different cultural backgrounds.	2	1.8	25	22.3	54	48.2	28	25	2	1.8	1	0.9	2 (0.8)	2
I have learned more about intercultural competence throughout this workshop.	3	2.7	27	24.1	65	58	10	8.9	6	5.4	1	0.9	1.9 (0.8)	2
What I have learned will be useful for my stay abroad.	3	2.7	22	19.6	69	61.6	17	15.2	1	0.9	0	0	1.9 (0.7)	2

Table 3. participants' perceptions of intercultural learning

Participants' comments in the open answers related to this question were categorized and grouped according to four dimensions of learning:

- learning through sharing,
- personal competence development,
- skills for dealing with specific cultures and
- professional competence.

The results of the analysis show firstly that there is a group of comments where participants refer to **learning through sharing** experiences or prior knowledge. In this line, a quarter of the participants value the networking opportunities, and the possibility of sharing experiences and information offered by the training. The training is deemed as a common meeting point for participants to give and receive information related to their exchange. For instance, a student from Haaga-Helia mentions as positive: "networking with other students, learn about own and other cultures". Other participants appreciate that the workshop allowed them to share expectations and fears, to get to know people who are in the same situation as them, to know what others think about their future host university, or to share opinions and knowledge and engage with the Erasmus programme. Those comments reveal the type of information shared during the training.

Secondly, another group of comments refers to the dimension of **development of personal competence.** A third of all participants' comments can be labelled under the category of "awareness raising":

> "I think I will pay attention to different things abroad after thinking about the intercultural things beforehand. I will analyse my own behaviour also more and think about the cultural aspects more deeply during the stay and after. I can also express my intercultural competencies better" (Haaga-Helia participant).

Other labels that narrow the meaning of this broad category are: "to be aware of cultural differences"; " to be aware of the need of language skills"; "to be aware of expectations about stay abroad"; " to be aware of the opportunity to experience a different culture"; "to be aware of own personality"; "to be aware of the need to avoiding prejudices/stereotypes"; "to have more insight"; "the training helps open mind and to be more tolerant"; "the training helps to get more confidence"; "understanding cultural perspectives"; "the training helps to reduce stress"; "to be able to ask questions". All of these categories show that participants acknowledge that the training is beneficial to be aware of their attitudes in relation to intercultural action.

For example, one student at Karlshochschule says: "It was good to begin thinking about what experience we have, what we might need help with, and what we can expect.*"*

More than a third of participants express as a positive aspect of the training **having learned or reflected on specific topics**. We categorized these answers with labels like "reflection"; "learning more about host institution, country and culture"; "learning about other cultures/differences between cultures/adaptation"; "knowing more about stereotypes"; "learning independence"; "learning how to deal with stereotypes"; "learning how to behave"; "learning how to deal with homesickness"; "learning how to face people in intercultural situations"; "learning how to find useful info".

For instance, one student from the University of Vic says: "We know more about stereotypes and other cultures. We have learned from and listened to fellow students. We are more prepared to carry on this project."

Finally, some participants focused on the development of **professional competence from an attitudinal point of view**, with particular reference to their future role as mentors. One example of a participant's answer in this regard is: "know how to deal, work with people as a mentor, and take responsibility".

Workshop usefulness

N = 21	NA		Very useful 1		Quite useful 2		useful 3		Less useful 4		Not useful at all 5		Mean (SD)	Mode
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Unit 1: (Self-)awareness / perception	1	4,8	10	47,6	8	38,1	2	9,5	0	0	0	0	1.6 (0.6)	1
Unit 2: Intercultural acting	0	0	10	47.6	8	38.1	2	9.5	1	4.8	0	0	1.7 (0.8)	1
Unit 3: Culture specific	0	0	7	33.3	4	19	6	28.6	2	9.5	2	9.5	2.4 (1.3)	1
Unit 4: Narrative and media: learning to share knowledge	0	0	8	38.1	8	38.1	5	23.8	0	0	0	0	1.8 (0.7)	1

Table 4.Workshop usefulness

When participants were asked to evaluate specific parts of the workshop, most of them appreciated the part dealing with self-awareness and perception, which 47,6% of the participants who responded considered "very useful". The second part, on "intercultural acting", was also highly rated by nearly half of the respondents. The other two remaining parts, on "specific cultures" and "Narrative and media", were considered "very useful" by 33.3% and 38.1% of the participants, respectively.

In the open answers, participants do not mention specific parts of the training as more useful than others, but some of them explicitly mention the usefulness of working with the Experience Map and getting acquainted with skills for working with it or the online modules.

The suggestions for improvement or criticism on the training give insight into aspects of the training's structure or content that are worth reconsideration after the pilot phase. One criticism of the training, expressed by around 10% of the participants, who defined themselves as international experienced students, is that it was "boring", "repetitive" or "too general" because some or most of the contents were already known. Another group of participants (10%) expected "to get more information about the host institution and country". A third group of comments refer to the future work on the programme. A few participants, particularly from the first pilot run, considered the information "confusing" or "vague". For instance, one student from the University of Vic says, "Since it's a new program I feel kind of lost and don't know how it is going to be even that it might change as time goes on".

Finally some participants experienced the training as "too long", "too theory loaded", or "lacking space for debate". Some others suggest to include more real-life examples or more diversity of trainers or international voices and to spread more information about the contents of the training in advance. This student's voice summarizes the perceptions of this group of participants: "(I suggest) discussions rather than PowerPoint".

In sum, participants of the pre-departure training sessions held at the different European institutions involved in the programme highly value this part of the programme and consider it useful. Moreover, they perceive gains in intercultural learning. This said, they consider as most useful the parts of the training devoted to awareness and perception with regards to intercultural acting.

3.2.2.2. Re-entry training (Questionnaire results)

Workshop satisfaction

N=19	Strongly agree 1		Agree 2		Neutral 3		Disagree 4		Strongly disagree 5		Mean (SD)	Mode
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
The workshop met my expectations.	5	26.3	7	36.8	2	10.5	3	15.8	2	10.5	2.4 (1.3)	2
The workshop was well structured and organized.	7	36.8	6	31.6	2	10.5	2	10.5	2	10.5	2.2 (1.3)	1
The trainer(s) was (were) competent.	8	42.1	7	36.8	1	5.3	2	10.5	1	5.3	2 (1.2)	1

Table 5. Overall satisfaction with re-entry Training

Nineteen participants responded to the satisfaction questionnaire after the re-entry workshop. More than 60% of them agreed that this particular workshop had met their expectations (Strongly agree = 26.3%, agree = 36.8%), whereas around 25% had a different outlook. 10% were neutral. The percentages were similar for the organisation and structure of the workshop. However, when focusing on the trainers' competency, participants agreement was higher (Strongly agree = 42.1%, agree = 36.8%).

The participants' open answers corroborate these findings. Nearly half of the participants highly value the re-entry training as they acknowledge the "good discussions", "good preparation of the training" and "interesting contents".

Perception of intercultural learning

N=19	Strongly agree 1		Agree 2		Neutral 3		Disagree 4		Strongly disagree 5		Mean (SD)	Mode
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
After this workshop I am aware of my intercultural skills and how to apply them in my daily environment.	5	26.3	7	36.8	1	5.3	5	26.3	1	5.3	2.4 (1.3)	2
I have learned how to support younger students who are at the beginning of their intercultural experience.	5	26.3	7	36.8	3	15.8	2	10.5	2	10.5	2.4 (1.3)	2
What I have learned will be useful for me in my future academic path as well as when starting my professional career.	7	36.8	4	21.1	2	10.5	5	26.3	1	5.3	2.4 (1.3)	1

Table 6. Perception of intercultural learning

As far as the intercultural learning is concerned in the re-entry workshop, participants seem to agree (Strongly agree = 26.3%, agree = 36.8%) that they are aware of their intercultural skills and deem themselves competent to apply such skills not only in their lives but also in their future academic path or during their professional careers.

In terms of the benefits for their future as intercultural mentors, more than 60% (Strongly agree = 26.3%, agree = 36.8%) affirm that they have learned how to assist other participants who are initiating their intercultural experience.

In the same way as with the pre-departure training, the open answers given by the participants were categorised according to three dimensions of learning in this case:

- learning through experience sharing,
- personal competence development and
- personal knowledge acquisition.

A first group of categories refers to **learning through sharing experiences**. Nearly 75% of the comments mention that a benefit of the re-entry training was sharing experiences. Another group of participants makes comments related to the dimension of **development of personal competence.** Among these comments we find a few participants who appreciate the opportunity to reflect on the change and also to apply knowledge to different scenarios. Finally, a third group of comments refers to the **knowledge gains on the personal level**, where participants express as a positive aspect of the training having learnt or reflected on specific topics, particularly

"cosmopolitanism", "megatrends", "finding out what it is required before and after exchange", and "the concept of emotional rollercoaster".

Workshop usefulness

N= 17	Very useful 1		Quite useful 2		useful 3		Less useful 4		Not useful at all 5		Mean (SD)	Mode
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Unit 1: Reflection	3	17.6	4	23.5	5	29.4	3	17.6	2	11.8	2.8 (1.2)	3
Unit 2: Intercultural competence here and now	5	29.4	5	29.4	2	11.8	2	11.8	3	17.6	2.5 (1.5)	1
Unit 3: Adding Your New Skills to Your CV	7	41.2	4	23.5	3	17.6	1	5.9	2	11.8	2.2 (1.3)	1
Unit 4: Passing on your experiences. What now?	3	17.6	7	41.2	3	17.6	2	11.8	2	11.8	2.5 (1.2)	2

Table 7. Re-Entry workshop usefulness

Seventeen participants responded to the satisfaction questionnaire about the different parts of the re-entry workshop. Unit 3 (Adding Your New Skills to Your CV) seems to be the most useful, as attested by more than 60% of the respondents (Strongly agree = 41.2%. agree = 23.5%); 58% of the participants regarded both unit 2 (Intercultural competence here and now) and unit 4 (Passing on your experiences. What now?) as "useful" or "very useful", although unit 2 rates higher in "very useful". Finally, Unit 1 (Reflection), seems to be the least valued in terms of usefulness as can be seen by the Mode (Mo = 3).

The open answers confirm the perception that unit 3, CV training, is perceived as the most useful. Moreover, the training seems to awake in some participants the interest to widen their methodological and professional competence in the field of intercultural training. For example, some participants say that the training helped them to "Think about how to improve KarlsBuddies" or how to improve the Mentors' Training at their institution.

The suggestions for improvement or criticism of the training give insight into aspects of the training's structure or content that are worth reconsideration after the pilot phase. Some participants experienced the training as too theory-loaded or intense, or too long. Finally, some single participants suggest making the platform more attractive.

3.2.3. Analysis of participants' activity on the online platform

In order to measure the quantitative results of the project, we collected data on the learning platform and the website. First of all, we created an overview of all the data that could be collected from the learning platform and that we could use to analyse the participants' activity. During the Skype meetings of the working group, and during the last project meeting in Urbino, we filtered the data step by step and decided which of them we wanted to collect in detail to use for the analysis. The data collected are the state of the art on 29th August 2018. Please notice that the figures presented here are part of a quantitative analysis and do not focus at all on the quality of the content produced by students.

Firstly, 91 universities from 29 countries are registered on the Experience Map; this means that students going abroad can publish their posts on the Experience Map if they go to one of these 91 universities. Each registered university gets a pin as soon as a first post was published about it. The majority of the registered universities got a pin: there are 82 pins on the Experience Map. During the project, 157 creators registered. Creators get access to the online modules and they have the right to publish posts on the Map.

In a second part, we will analyse the data collected on the platform level in greater depth. There were 192 accounts registered on the platform, from students and teaching staff who wanted to have access to Connect. From these 192 accounts, access to the Experience Map was unlocked for 180 of them, and access to the Online Modules for 156. The 156 accounts with access to the Online Modules all have access to the Experience Map as well, while another 24 accounts have access to the Experience Map only. These are mainly students who wanted to have a first look, but did not want to become creators.

The platform's online modules for students consist of 5 learning modules dealing with different topics. In these online modules we offer 27 activities in total. We have a large range of activities: for example, students need to read texts, watch videos, work with embedded content (content created with authoring tools and then uploaded as a ready-to-use package on the platform), and be active in the forum or upload their assessment. This variety of tasks is useful for making students comfortable with several learning

tools, and helps to improve their capabilities to learn online. Students were very active and most of them went through all the Online Modules.

Then we will go forward and analyse the data available about the Experience Map. From the beginning of the project, there were 42.700 views of the Experience Map. This figure cannot distinguish between repeat visitors and new visitors to the website. The number of views sharply increased during the pilot phases of the project, and in these phases always at the beginning of the semester, before students went abroad. From June 2018 the number of views also increased thanks to the Connect Launch Event in Karlsruhe. Most of the 42.700 visits were made either via guest accounts or directly on the website, as the simple visitors do not have the right to publish posts. On the internal platform, the Experience Map was unlocked for 180 accounts, as we already mentioned; 157 of these 180 accounts became creator accounts, in the sense that they were upgraded to creator status and allowed to publish posts on the Experience Map. In fact, only 59 creators of the 157 registered were actively participating in posting information and experiences on the Experience Map. Each creator posted between 1 and 71 posts (the students that published 71 posts was the most active participant we had); 9 creators only posted links in the category Links and Material, with each of them posting between 1 and 22 posts about useful links. A further 35 creators only wrote experiences and provided no links; each of these creators published between 1 and 60 posts (this group included the same active student as mentioned before). To finish with, 15 creators published both links and experiences.

Then we will briefly draw a quantitative analysis of the posts. Until the end of the project, 379 posts were published in total on the Experience Map. These posts are divided in the different categories: in the category Institution/University there were 134 posts; in the category City, there were 179, and in the category Intercultural Challenges there were 66 posts published. If we want to distinguish the posts in another way, we can also say that 82 posts were about Links and Material and 297 about Experiences. This shows, in a way, that the project was able to motivate students to share their experiences, which is definitively a positive point.

3.2.4. Participants' perceptions of the Online Curriculum

This section analyses the responses given by the participants who answered the questionnaire about the e-learning platform in general, and the Experience Map and the online curriculum in particular. The total number of returned questionnaires was 12, with participants from 4 out of all institutions involved.

a. Online platform as a whole

N = 12	NA		Strongly agree 1		Agree 2		Neutral 3		Disagree 4		Strongly disagree 5		Mean (SD)	Mode
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Overall the quality of the platform meets my expectations.	0	0	1	8.3	7	58.3	0	0	4	33.3	0	0	2.6 (1.1)	2
In my opinion, the online platform is easily accessible.	0	0	2	16.7	5	41.7	2	16.7	3	25	0	0	2.5 (1.1)	2
In my opinion, the online platform is convenient to use and user-friendly.	0	0	2	16.7	4	33.3	4	33.3	1	8.3	1	8.3	2.6 (1.2)	2
The site offers the option to send questions to the webmaster.	1	8.3	1	8.3	1	8.3	7	63.6	0	0	2	18.2	3.1 (1.1)	3
The platform, as a whole, is well structured and organized.	0	0	1	8.3	6	50	2	16.7	3	25	0	0	2.6 (1)	2
I can use both the space of the online modules and the experience map in an interactive way.	1	8.3	1	8.3	5	45.5	2	18.2	2	18.2	1	9.1	2.7 (1.2)	2
The activities I performed on the platform changed my ideas about and/or attitudes towards intercultural experiences.	1	8.3	2	18.2	6	54.5	1	8.3	1	8.3	1	8.3	2.4 (1.2)	2
I would recommend the Connect 2.0 Online activities to a friend who will be going on a semester abroad.	0	0	4	33.3	6	50	2	16.7	0	0	0	0	1.8 (0.7)	2

Table 8. Platform questionnaire. Q1. Evaluation of online modules and experience map as a whole

Table 8 above shows the participants' overall perceptions about the platform and the online modules as a whole. In general the results of the questionnaire show a positive opinion towards the platform, as more than 60% of the respondents found that it met their expectations, and over 50% considered that it was accessible and user-friendly. In terms of its structure and organisation, as well as with the opportunities for interaction within the platform, the results continue with the same trend (over 50% of agreement). Conversely, when asked about the communication with the webmaster, the respondents' opinion just reaches 20% of agreement.

Regarding the intercultural learning facilitated through the platform, the participants' perception is slightly higher, since over 70% agree that the activities carried out when using the platform were conductive to changing their own ideas or attitudes towards intercultural experiences. In addition, more than 80% of the respondents would recommend the platform to other participants who were going on a stay abroad.

In the open answers the participants' overall opinion is that the modules have helped them maximize benefits from their stay abroad by giving them good insight on intercultural communication tools. An example can be seen in the following quote:

> "Activities which made me research about the country and culture I am in i.e. the question about what make me feel uncertainty made me think about and realize differences I would have not realized otherwise."

However, one student asserts that technical issues prevented them from using the full potential of the platform, and therefore it is difficult for them to state their opinion about it: "I had so many technical problems and they took so much time that it's difficult even evaluate the useful/meaningful points [of the platform]".

b. Experience Map

A first version of the Experience Map was tested in a pilot run by participants at the University of Limerick in 2016. This early review of the Experience Map was done as part of an optional assignment within a module of Travel Literature in 2016 at the University of Limerick. Fourteen students chose to write an Erasmus guide according to the categories of the Experience Map. Four of these were international students from the US or on Erasmus, and ten were returning students who had been on Erasmus the previous year. Of the subsequent fourteen assessments, nine were deemed to be sufficiently in-depth to be of use as pilot studies, and, after obtaining permission from each student, were sent on to the project partners at the Friedrich Schiller Universität Jena, who were responsible for the development of the Experience Map. The reports on the draft outline served furthermore as a strong endorsement of the CONNECT project – both in the form of reflective and very perceptive engagement with the task at hand, and in the form of explicit statements that they really enjoyed doing the practical project, found it useful and that they were convinced the CONNECT project would

make a real different to the Erasmus experience of future generations. For example, it was seen as:

> "[…] an excellent way to inform outgoing Erasmus students about what life in their host cities will be like. Theoretically, previous Erasmus reports are available to students, but unfortunately, they are usually made available after Erasmus choices have been made, which means that it can be harder for a student to make an informed decision. I think that all of the available headings are very practical and useful, especially the headings about searching for accommodation and intercultural differences in academic and social settings, as they are often aspects of Erasmus which one does not consider until one is in the host city." [University of Limerick student 1]

Other comments included: "The experience map has a lot of potential to become the first port of call for prospective students looking for information on various universities throughout the world" [University of Limerick student 2] and

> "the Experience Map offers a comprehensive written document surrounding the town, university and the individual's tips and advice. Therefore, the initial concept surrounding the Experience Map is positive in its intention and objective at first glance, with its underlying objective to reassure and aid students." [University of Limerick student 4]

Overall, the feedback from students was very positive, but there were also critical remarks which did inform slight changes to the set-up of the Experience Map – specific sub-categories such as "Best practices to transfer" were dispensed with, while on the other hand, the importance of language learning was further emphasised in the pre-departure training and it now has got its own entry on the Experience Map.

Once all consortium participants at the subsequent pilot runs had access to the Experience Map, they were invited to fill the questionnaire described in chapter 2. Table 9 reflects the respondents' perception of the Experience Map (n = 20% of 59 active creators). In general terms, their overall perception seems to be less positive than the one of the platform as a whole. In this way, 25% of the respondents agree that it is accessible and user friendly whereas the remaining 50% of them appears to find it more difficult to browse. More than 40% consider that the information and the links are

updated and relevant for their experience abroad, even if 25% of the participants state that sometimes those pieces of information are not directly related to their destination. In addition, just over 40% are neutral towards the accuracy of the links. Around the same percentage and similar non-committal opinion can be seen regarding both the posting of entries and the uploading of audio-visual materials. Lastly, nearly 60% of the respondents consider that sharing their experience has been very fruitful, and roughly the same percentage think that reading about other participants' experiences has helped them enhance their stay abroad.

N = 12	NA		Strongly agree 1		Agree 2		Neutral 3		Disagree 4		Strongly disagree 5		Mean (SD)	Mode
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
The experience map is easily accessible.	0	0	3	25	3	33.33	2	16.67	1	8.33	2	16.67	2.58 (1.44)	2
The experience map is convenient to use and user-friendly.	0	0	3	25	3	25	3	25	2	16.67	1	8.33	2.58 (1.31)	1
The official links and practical information have been very useful for my experience during my stay abroad.	5	41.67	0	0	4	33.33	2	16.67	1	8.33	0	0	3.00 (1.41)	2
The practical information provided from the experience map is accurate and the links are up-to-date.	4	33.33	0	0	5	41.67	2	16.67	1	8.33	0	0	2.89 (1.36)	2
In case I want to find information about specific places, I can easily find them as the structure is clear.	1	8.33	2	16.67	5	41.67	1	8.33	2	16.67	1	8.33	2.55 (1.29)	2
Posting entries by myself was easy and categories were easy to find.	2	16.67	4	33.33	2	16.67	3	25	1	8.33	0	0	2.10 (1.1)	1
Uploading audio-visual material was easy.	5	41.67	2	16.67	2	16.67	3	25	0	0	0	0	2.63 (1.6)	3
Learning about the experiences of other students has been very helpful to me.	1	8.33	1	8.33	6	50	3	25	1	8.33	0	0	2.36 (0.81)	2
I have been able to share my experiences with other students.	2	16.67	4	33.33	4	33.33	0	0	1	8.33	1	8.33	2.10 (1.37)	1

Table 9. Platform questionnaire. Q2. Evaluation of aspects of the experience map.

With the open answers we can confirm that the general opinion about the Experience Map was that it was useful. One student states: "The experience map helped me to know about other universities". Another one states that "reading about accommodation

and transport, learning about intercultural experiences and gaining new perspectives" was helpful. This quote summarizes their mostly positive perception: "whole Experience Map was useful and I think it is a good idea".

c. Online Modules

Focusing on the online modules (table 10), we observe that although the participants' general opinion is neutral (33.3%), more than 50% agree or strongly agree that the content of the modules is relevant for their intercultural learning. Furthermore, the percentage of agreement is even higher (75%) when referring to the online modules being helpful and relevant for their stay abroad. In this line, over 50% state that they are ready to apply this new knowledge to their everyday life when they go back to their home countries.

N=12	NA		Strongly agree 1		Agree 2		Neutral 3		Disagree 4		Strongly disagree 5		Mean (SD)	Mode
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Overall the design of the online modules meets my expectations.	0	0	1	8.33	3	25	4	33.33	2	16.67	2	16.67	3.08 (1.24)	3
Overall the content of the modules is relevant for intercultural learning.	0	0	2	16.67	5	41.67	3	25	1	8.33	1	8.33	2.5 (1.17)	2
I find these modules are very helpful and relevant when living and studying abroad.	0	0	3	25	6	50	0	0	3	25	0	0	2.25 (1.14)	2
In my opinion, I can apply what I have learnt from the modules as a whole to my everyday life.	2	16.67	3	25	4	33.33	0	0	3	25	0	0	2.3 (1.25)	2

Table 10. Platform questionnaire. Q3a. Evaluation of online modules as a whole.

Once more the open answers reinforce the perceptions retrieved through the quantitative part of the questionnaire. They mention the specific modules that they found most relevant: "Module 3: Living stay abroad as an enrichment; Module 4: Sharing own experiences; Module 5: Coming home", or the precise activities that they thought more beneficial like "Case studies, story with quiz, link to intercultural storytelling website" or "One story movie".

As for the suggestions for improvement, some participants state that some parts of the modules were a bit redundant and not too connected to the needs of their experience abroad: "Not useful activities are the trainings about cultural differences and such things, because it was just a theory; it was well prepared, but not useful."

Some participants also say that some of the modules were not totally ready and that fact had a negative impact on their motivation. On the other side there are suggestions like this:

> "Maybe at some point students can prepare their own learning modules, depending on the knowledge they have already acquired throughout their lives."

In terms of the platform itself, some participants claim that some links did not work, and some exercises lacked appropriate feedback.

3.2.5. Expert interviews with participants

Seven interviews were conducted with willing participants from three different institutions. Six of them are female; 6 of them looked back at one-semester stay abroad, 1 of them at a two-semester stay abroad. Three of them are enrolled in Tourism studies, one of them in Biosciences, 1 of them in Language and Translation and 2 of them in Intercultural Business Studies. Interviewees were randomly recruited by consortium members and they volunteered to be interviewed.

We present the results of the evaluation of the interviews in two blocks. Firstly, we analyse the answers to the questions 1 and 2 of the guidelines (see Appendices), which reflect the participants' perception of learning development during their stay abroad and their perception of consciously having applied intercultural skills acquired through the Connect programme. In a second block, we present the answers that refer explicitly to those competencies learnt in different parts of the programme and/or the perception of usefulness of the contents of the programme.

Two of the interviewees mention either in an explicit or implicit way that they have developed confidence during their stay abroad, another two tolerance, and two more a capacity for teamwork. Single mentions regard the development of flexibility, self-

discipline, perseverance, and independence. This quote illustrates how one participant describes her experience:

> "I think everyone should go through this experience. You are travelling, using another language and you have to adapt to another culture that is different from yours and it needs a time but at the end everyone can handle it because it is not that hard. If you want to, you can do it. And this provides you with a lot of experience and skills because you live alone and you have to deal with and find solutions and have to solve problems and this makes you a more grown up person as you were before leaving".

Their statements about specific aspects of intercultural learning refer firstly to awareness raising at different levels. Three participants refer to aspects related to awareness of different communication styles, awareness of stereotyping and awareness of several perspectives or world views:

> "I'm aware of the importance to listen to other people's points of view".

> "I've learnt to include several perspectives".

Three participants stress that the training made them aware of important skills, particularly language skills such as being able to ask questions or being proactive; three interviewees also mention explicitly that they improved their host language skills.

Four interviewees consider relevant that they learnt about differences in academic systems and academic demands:

> "Know and understand that teaching and learning style works in another way which is different from own university but it was still difficult to follow this style ("new to me, felt unsure")."

> "And for the classes it is a little different if I compare the situation with my classes in Vic. Classes in Vic are longer than here. Here we have to work more at home than at the lectures. The assignments are also a little bit different too. In Vic you have assignments every two weeks and here you have only two assignments in the whole semester or only a last one."

Single statements refer to the fact that Connect helped them learn how to deal with uncertainty - for example, learning to perceive the Erasmus programme more as a chance than a difficulty. They reflect:

> "Online modules give good inputs and help reflecting stay abroad and share experiences."

One participant focused on learning out of experience as an enrichment:

> "Living the experience is different as filling in all the documents before you go abroad."

A few of them point out that some situations or aspects were easier than what they had previously expected. Two of them mention that their initial fear of differences in daily life was not confirmed, and five of them remark that it was easy to get to know friends. Single statements reflect the fact that they did not feel unsure and perceived empowerment when dealing with unexpected situations.

On the other hand, there were aspects which turned out to be more difficult to handle than they had previously expected. Examples of these challenges can be seen when two of the interviewees mention "getting to know locals", when two more participants refer to "working with other participants" and a further two note that they or their friends had to learn how to deal with an unknown health system.

In a second block, we present the answers that refer explicitly to those competencies aquired in different parts of the programme and/or the perception of usefulness of the contents of the programme.

Regarding the pre-departure training, all interviewees emphasise the learning potential of sharing experiences with other participants. Single mentions are made to the usefulness of discussions about culture shock, considerations about communication, development of self-awareness and learning about stereotypes.

> "For example the part where cultural issues and communication were discussed was interesting, sharing experiences with other students who went abroad was good."

About the work during the stay abroad with the online modules, two participants state that they learned "a lot" and reflected in more detail through the theory inputs. Two other participants consider the online modules 2 (Dealing with uncertainty), 3 (Experiencing stay abroad as enrichment) and 4 (Sharing experiences) to be particularly useful.

All interviewees consider the Experience Map useful because it is interesting to read about experiences of other participants, it is a peer-to-peer exchange among participants, and it offers the possibility to get in contact with participants who are/were in the same destination as they are. Two of the interviewees think it is worth checking the Experience Map before going abroad because it provides helpful information:

"When I did the activities of the online modules I didn't know much of the information that was in there. So I learned a lot. And then when I did the entries I realized that so many people have done entries and this could be very helpful for other people who wish to go abroad and live a new experience because in some way you help other people to make their life easier when they go to another country that you have been and they can rely on your experience and on your information to go to places or restaurants or do activities that you have already done and recommended. So, it is very useful."

The most consulted category on the Experience Map was "City" for two participants, but the other interviewees consulted "everything in general". These participants posted mostly on "University" (practical info) and "City" (practical info).

As for the re-entry training, two participants think it is "nice" to hear about other participants' experiences and having the "possibility to ask how other people got away from similar circumstances". One participant mentions explicitly that she learned "how employers see different competencies".

All interviewed participants would recommend the programme for outgoing friends. All of them would share their experiences with future outgoing participants and three of them would engage as a mentor.

Regarding the limitations or less useful aspects of the programme, participants refer to just a few aspects. Two of them would find it better to have more space for discussion during the pre-departure training, and one of them stresses that more information on practical issues was needed. On the other hand, one of them states that "culture specifics" are not that useful "because of the danger of creating stereotypes and general statements in the training" (FSU Jena 2). Only one of them found that the re-entry training was not that useful. Two of them explicitly mention that they perceived the module 1.2. (Key concepts) to be too long and going too deep into details. Finally, one

of them considers the official links on the Experience Map not that useful, and she would have liked to post more official links.

3.2.6. Analysis of advisors' perceptions

The advisors, who were actively involved in the programme, had the opportunity to get an expert insight into the whole development process of the project and the participants' perceptions and involvement. Therefore, we conducted expert interviews with five advisors from four different institutions to complete the participants' feedback. Two of them participated actively as advisors in only one type of training, while the others were involved in all training activities and pilot runs. As described above, the interview guidelines (see appendix 2) offered a structure of questions grouped around their overall perception of the whole programme, their evaluation of the single parts of the programme, and their suggestions for improvement. Content analysis by two different raters was applied in the interview summaries. Both raters participated in the categorizing process and the analysis.

All five interviewed advisors have the overall perception that the programme is interesting, useful and easy to implement. However, technical problems were challenging for them, especially during the first pilot run. For two of them, it was a bit unclear to what extent or how they should give support to participants during their stay abroad.

The single parts of the programme were evaluated in different ways, and not all interviews include answers to all questions.

Face-to-face curriculum

Pre-departure training

Two of the interviewed advisors mention that the training fits well into the whole structure of the programme, and other two consider the learning goals to be accurate.

The didactic guidelines are regarded as positive by two of the advisors. In two other cases the detailed version of the guidelines was not yet available when the training was offered.

All interviewed advisors acknowledge the quality of the materials, but three of them mention in an explicit way that they adapted the structure and contents to participants' needs. Therefore, they did a selection of the materials.

> "We had three (half-day) pre-departure face-to-face sessions, one re-entry face-to-face meeting (half-day). We have selected some materials, selection needed. I think timing worked well."

In three cases, there is a critical consideration on the length of the training. Although the training is planned to be delivered as a one-day training, three of the advisors came to the conclusion that there was actually not enough time to go through all contents and activities.

All interviewed advisors think that most participants perceived the training as useful. Two of them referred to the need expressed by some participants to get more information on host institutions, or to have time during the training to be redirected to host institutions (for instance, using the links on the Experience Map). One of the advisors explicitly points out that participants perceived the training as being too theory-loaded, although this advisor also noted that the interactive and diverse dynamic of the activities encouraged participants' engagement during the session.

Re-entry training

In the same way as with the pre-departure training, two of the interviewed advisors reported that the training fits well into the whole structure the programme, and other two state that the learning goals are accurate.

The didactic guidelines are positively evaluated by two of the advisors.

All interviewed advisors acknowledge the quality of the materials and define the training module 3 ("Adding your new skills to your CV"), particularly the part devoted to including intercultural competence as visible skills into the CV or online profile, as the highlight of the training. As was the case in the pre-departure training, four of the interviewed advisors indicated that they adapted the structure and contents to the participants' needs. Therefore, they did a selection of the materials:

> "The materials about working life connection (e.g. hidden competencies part) worked well."

All interviewed advisors have the impression that most participants perceived the training as useful. All of them make explicit mention of the difficulty for participants to commit to re-entry sessions. As a suggestion for improvement, one advisor proposes encouraging participants to keep in touch during their stay abroad and offering more than one day for the re-entry meeting:

> "I think it would be nice for the enrolled students belonging to the same university to have the possibility to stay in touch with each other and establish a dialogue in the community; then when they come back, they could compare what they were thinking before going and what they think afterwards. And it is this looking back that is most helpful with being aware of learning."

Online Curriculum

The advisors' interviews were conducted in April-May 2018. At that stage the final review of the Online Curriculum and Experience Map was not yet ready. This should be taken into consideration when going through the advisors' evaluation.

Learning Modules

Two of the interviewed advisors state that the modules fit well into the whole structure of contents of the programme, and another two consider the learning goals to be accurate. Three of them are of the opinion that the platform and contents are well-structured and well-organised, although one of the advisors observes that there is too much information and theory. For one of them there is enough information that allows autonomous work of participants, but four of them point out that during pre-departure training participants should have more time to get familiar with the platform, in order to reduce the risk of technical interferences during their stay abroad:

> "Guidance before they start is needed, some students also need support while studying (could also be related to technical problems that appeared)."

Four of the interviewed advisors state that they found navigation issues with the site. Two of them perceive the interface as user friendly and two of them do not: it could be more appealing.

Four of the five interviewed advisors believe that during the stay abroad, the presence of the advisor figure may be important to some participants, as some of them could appreciate feedback and additional advice.

Experience Map

Two of the interviewed advisors clearly state that the Experience Map fits well into the whole structure of contents of the programme.

The structure is considered to be useful for the purpose of the Experience Map. For four of the interviewed advisors, the interface should be more attractive, and two of them remark that navigation issues should be improved to enhance its usability and friendliness:

> "The overall visual appearance could be improved in my opinion. Also, there are too many buttons at the top (sorting buttons could be put all under one heading "sort"; in fact, there is a "search and sort" button on top of the individual ones). I don't see the sense in the "view single" button; I find it a bit awkward having to first press on a pin and then on one of the categories. I think people should be able to click on a pin and then be led to the city page. From there they should then be able to choose from the three categories."

During the pilot phase, one of the advisors perceived the need for more advice on participants' side, whereas others disagreed.

Two of the advisors suggest that the consortium should discuss how to handle stereotyping in the entries. One of the advisors believes that having the opportunity to make comments would enhance the dialogue in the community of users.

Finally, single suggestions for improvement were collected:

- Future advisors need more information on the programme.
- International offices should be informed in order to attract more participants at all stages of the stay-abroad process.
- Regular meetings of advisors to actualise contents could be useful.

3.2.7. Report of external consultants

Report on

CONNECT – Map of Experiences

Evaluator: Bernd Müller-Jacquier, Bayreuth University (Germany)

1. Introduction

The following is a short review of the ERASMUS-Project Connect. My objective is to give a feedback on the web presentations of the project from different perspectives: as a colleage (who knows how difficult are the details of structuring a web based instruction), as a researcher (who looks at the content) and as a student (pretending to pass a semester at a partner university and reading through the instructions).

2. CONNECT: objectives, structure, content, learning process

The objectives of the project are part of the project proposal and of the final report. Both are not subject of this report. This means that the relation between the objectives set and the outcome is only indirectly part of the examination.

3. Linguistic presentation

The way students are addressed directly by a narrator seems to be quite appealing. Tasks and exercises are formulated in a clear way.

But in comparison to other web based exercises, some of the evaluations of students' responses appear to be direct. Feedbacks like "no" or "not correct" (see below) could be interpreted as rude, at least not motivating.

A major problem is that members of the project group are non-native speakers of English (as myself, too). According to my level of knowledge, at least the following expressions have to be verified:
1.1
prepare for your study-trip abroad
Thanks for taking part
Thanks also, indeed, for making your thoughts available
Maybe you could, later, also help to prepare others for studying abroad, as a mentor
to be eager to face unusual things that you have never seen before, experiences you have yet to make, and to instil this curiosity in others
This is what you have to do: be hungry for new experiences
(presented as some kind of resume/consequence, but the "must" is not clearly the conclusion of what have been said above. This kind of pressure is repeated in "curiosity is the most important requirement. And it is not just there, you really have to _want_ to be curious. .. Also remember every now and again that you really want this :-)"
2.
if you take the time and really look, you will notice
You can maybe also download photos
We will remind you to do this again :-)
Both of them know a same foreign language

The better… the greater is their mutual supply of symbols
events that can happen by chance and without any foreseen causes… or not
happen.
Do you have also a story to tell?
How would you *clasify (sic!) this strategy within Brashers' repertoire?*
You have answered incorrectly. (TOO DIRECT!)
A. wants to throw a birthday party

These and some more expressions are strongly based on hidden German linguistic conventions: word meanings (especially so called "international" words), syntax (embedded relative clauses, listings…) or phraseologisms. The complete presentation has to be checked in the minutest details by skilled English native speakers and corrected before enabling public access![1]

4.   Web based course: Content and theories

Considering the fact that the course is web based, the phrasing of the intended learning goals make them look quite ambitious. Objectives like e.g.
- have trained yourself in suspending judgement, changing perspectives and developing empathy (Module 2)
- to interpret unusual or unfamiliar life experiences abroad as an enrichment (Module 3)
- be able to pass on experiences in an interculturally reflected and appropriate way (Module 4)
- will be able to deal with reverse culture shock (Module 5)

touch the identity, at least the character of a person. But the setting of the structured learning course with "easy" examples (students pick up a "contrast" explaining smaller and irritable differences between C1 and C2), questions and solutions (partially multiple choice) is partially in contrast to the challenging goals.

If (ever) one agrees that identities (see Module 3, lesson 2) "play a key role in intercultural communication", the explanations given are only one part of the story: especially in intercultural communication, identity is not "given". Co-participants engage in processes of identity negotiation. Therefore, students have to be sensitized to social (and cultural) categorizations which sometimes end up in "otherings".

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[1] Typing errors: key ompetence (manual, p. 8)

Also, I would like to check on the following theoretical inputs on the concept "communication":

○ B) Communication is comparable to a stimulus - response procedure: this means that we show our communication partner what we want from them with symbols (in the broadest sense). This is hopefully a reason for them to react in the way we desire.

● C) Communication is when at least two individuals aim their communicative actions towards each other reciprocally and furthermore, if they can also fulfill the general intention of their actions.

Bac Congratulations, this is correct. Send

Version (B) is correct according to Rudi Keller 1998.
Version (C) is quite difficult to understand (sentence construction), and the reasoning is not directly construed from what has been given as input (the often-critised "container-model" of communication where people have to share the same code). Especially in intercultural communication, inference is the most often used strategy of understanding signs.
The communication model presented is a very common one. Therefore, those students who studies linguistics on some kind of introductory level could easily get bored. There is little input to involve them, offering a deeper understanding of communication. E.g. it seems quite important to me that misunderstandings are treated in detail, offering hypothetical solutions and abstracting from the given situation. If not, the learners cannot distance themselves from their expectations and/or the given situations (the latter are in most cases not problems of talk-in-interaction but problems of social etiquette). And there has to be some kind of information about the fact that misunderstandings in interpersonal communication lead to consequences: adaptions, avoidances, denials, stereotypes. These consequences have to be part of the communication model, because the students should not only learn about common codes but also about the daily experience that codes are not shared and that each co-participant draws his/her conclusions from the way the other person is using linguistic exressions.

This leads to a last point: Phenomena in Culture2 are presented by the YouTube-students as distinctive features, anomalies, deviances from Culture1. There is no hint to the fact, that the corresponding expectancies (of students from Culture1) are also distinctive, deviant etc. from the other perspective. The exercises for categorizing the reported "*most significant things*" or "*biggest shocks*" into
- "time management",
- "communication conventions",
- "social habitus and routines", and
- "culture specifics"
are in fact a productive way of de-culturalization.

In general, the key concepts should be systematically complemented by looking at processes of intercultural communication: interactional processes of culturalization, of social categorization, or identity negotiation. The reason is not to give a more complete access to the theoretical basis of the project, but to initiate the students to processes they will find out and report on the Experience Map.

3

5. Describing Culture2, depicting Culture2-experiences

It seems to be quite difficult to describe "things" (as they are called in the presentations) in a foreign culture avoiding essentialists' views. This is true for the input as well as for the experiences to be transferred from student to student.

The "authentic" persons presented in the videos sharing their experiences ARE from Italy, Brazil etc. and provoke immediately Culture1-Culture2 comparisons. They report that THE people in Culture2 ARE kind, nice etc.… This kind of presenting cultural "characteristics" leave out personal, situational and other perspectives and pretend that "things" in Culture2 ARE like this or that (instead of: *appear to me like that* or *I experienced X as this/that*). When students from different cultural backgrounds study at the same place like Vico (Spain/Cataluña), the presentation could disclose different impressions on the same "things". This way, the students will be prepared to read different and sometimes contradictory descriptions and evaluations of the same location/people, and they are prepared for coming up with their own judgements. Moreover, they do not hesitate to bring in their own Culture2 experiences even if they realize that others reported on the same location in aquite different way.

The way students describe Culture2 is certainly a challenge for the cooperative construction of the Experience Map. It should be supervised/guides by the "External Consultant Connect" and/or the "proof-readers", and/or the listed members of the Connect project.

6. The Experience Map

The Experience Map represents the core result of the project. The Modules 1-5 somehow lead to perpetually re-create knowledge and experience transfers between students. The students can adopt different roles in using the Experience Map: reader, contributor/creator. The way they engage in the process of experience mapping influences directly the quality of the product. Therefore, the exercises in Modules 1-5 are determining for a good quality.

There are no entries yet. But given the efforts necessary to contribute to the Experience Map, one of the evaluations looks too "easy": *Did you like the article? Please vote* (x or thumbs up). This undifferentiated Facebook-strategy gives rise to general estimations and transfers the Experience Map outside the academia.

7. Pre-Departure/Re-Entry: training materials

Pre-Departure

The material is presented in an appealing way: short and clear inputs, a lot of illustrations, and a systematic approach to culture (using a convincing "dune" metaphor). In order not to incite the learners to come up with culturalizations, I would include systematically the linguistic barriers to deal with,

> Developing behaviour to communicate effectively and appropriately in a situation where people of different cultural (and linguistic; B.M.-J.) backgrounds come together. It also includes thought patterns and non-verbal behaviour even if this aspects are highlighted (see Boxer 2002 citation).

4

And I propose for questions concerning linguistic behaviour (e.g. indirectness, gaze, proxemics; or: a) Some cultures never ask the question 'why'. b) Some cultures rarely ask questions.) not to explain differences with reference to "culture" but to "speech community" or better: people from speech community X, Y...
Another linguistic topic: The problem category INTONATION cannot be characterized by
a) Intention and Interpretation
b) Rudeness
c) Stereotyping
but by loudness, pitch, word accent, intonation line...

In a similar way, other key notions appear to be underdetermined, like indirectness, formulaicity, cohesion/coherence, or metacommunication. Therefore, students can hardly follow advices like "be open minded/flexible".

The term metacommunication (with reference to Tyler 1978!) should be restricted to clarification repair talk (talking about a linguistic unit which was expressed before or framing expressions to be said) and not mixed with contextualization cues or nonverbal cues.

Concerning stereotypes (No 77f): the most important function is "stereotyping" as a cooperative (gossip)-talk (Nazarkiewicz) used for joking an other group coherence activities. These interactive functions are not mentioned.

The instructions and exercises concerning the topic narratives are very valuable. Some of the students will adopt the role of a narrator in the experience map, and (not only) for them, it is important to know how storytelling is structured.

Re-Entry

The module is very valuable. People change during a stay abroad, and they have to re-adjust consciously. And reporting experiences in a foreign country has to be structured, and the module gives a very good input.

One major competence the students have learned so far is guessing, interpreting, inferring from what they perceive. This is – to my opinion – much more than the classical competence called "tolerance" (whatever it means). Therefore, the answer to "what does being international (so far always: intercultural!? M-J.) mean?" (No 65) should contain inference strategies and also interactional strategies (which are more complex and adequate than "language skills"). Both areas were treated extensively in the programme.

Again, the topics are clearly structured and very well pictured, and the module should ensure the sustainability of the initiated learning processes.

8. Face-to-face training manual

This manual is elaborated for helping (student) trainers to facilitate outgoing and re-entry students. It is based on theories. But there is not enough space for explicitly connect the chosen theories to their applications and vice versa. Kolb's experimental learning circle e.g. not only applies for modelling a learning process but also to describe different (and maybe cultural specific) learning styles of individuals.

The chapters of the manual go along with the materials above. Therefore, I will not repeat my remarks here, except for some selected issues:

5

But concerning learning objectives, a last comment: They have to be in accordance to what in the end is "done" during the training. And– of course – they have to be operationalized. One (core) objective may not follow these criteria (p.25):
- *Be sensitive, detect and be prepared for*
  differences in pragmatic language use in target country;
- *Adequately interpret other people's behaviour;*
- *Use metacommunicational skills to explain own*
  perspective in an appropriate manner

Demands like "be sensitive/prepared" are as specific as e.g. mother's "pay attention, my kid!". Concerning the target country, they have been implemented in concrete actions (and therefore at this point, the demand seems to be a didactic regression).

The same is true for "adequately interpret" or "in an appropriate manner" as a learning strategy. Adequate to the actor? To the addressee? To the situation? And: who defines, what is adequate in an inter-cultural situation? – During the training, the trainees have already acquired that this kind of evaluation depends on (cultural) perspectives. Again, the criteria for an operationalization are missing.

The Barnga-game (p. 28) is quite powerful. The students have the opportunity to experience how they feel if rules are different. The reflection should include an enlargement of the given communication model: in intercultural communication, the effects of the difference is an important object of study, not only the detection of different conventions. This is to say, that games and other exercises could be systematically re-connected to the conceptual key notions.

The "*Where are you from?*"-exercise is interesting. But "stereotyping" is not the only issue here. The trainees have to understand the rules of intercultural fist-contact situations. There, the question functions as a resource for creating common ground. The way students do so, will influence the rest, that is how stereotypes and othering processes are evoked.

All in all, the learning process is well structured, and the many tables resume the topics in a way that is clearly arranged.

9. Conclusions

According to my experiences, it is important to stretch that the project came up with concrete results. The product is a web-based instruction, connected to the Experience Map in a coherent way. Doing so, the project group fulfilled the task given brilliantly.

The way the theoretical input is given represents a choice: Going deeper could render it "academic" in a negative sense. But a possible enlargement could have another positive influence on how students write up their experiences.

The construction of the Experience Map is the most important achievement of the CONNECT project. The information on the universities and the towns already in existence are invaluable for student visitors. The experience based part of the Map is made for a sustainable re-reflection of Culture2 experiences ("intercultural challenges") and requires a constant input of the doers (which is not part of the project). And it is made for expansion: many other universities can join it, use the experiences reported by theirs students and adjust their academic programmes or (intercultural) preparatory trainings.

The Map is a product meeting the demands in the actual academic world. It is made up in a way that it can document institutional, linguistic, and cultural experiences which would be lost in written reports and inaccessible to those who would like to get important information about their projected international studies.

All in all: Chapeau!

Bayreuth, July 2018

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External consultant report 2

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Scientific evaluation report: CONNECT

This report provides a summary of my evaluation of the project CONNECT addressing the following aspects:

1. Alignment of learning objectives, didactic concept, and materials with the quality standards in the field in terms of didactics and usability

2. Evaluation of the relevance for project participants and for future participants

3. Possible shortcomings and improvement suggestions

Aspect 1: Alignment of learning objectives, didactic concept, and materials with the quality standards in the field in terms of didactics and usability

The project aims (at the beginning) have mentioned that there are introductory and advanced modules. However, I cannot see that from the materials provided. It seems to me that there is one set of modules for all students and anyone who completed the full program can opt to become a mentor. I do not see a problem with this, but it might be important to clarify this for future participants.

Regarding the general aim to provide learning tools that motivate participants to engage in intercultural learning, promote reflection of and on intercultural experiences during their stay abroad, and enhance development of intercultural competence as specified in the learning aims for the sessions and modules, the manuals, slide sets, online modules and experience map support this.

Furthermore, the face-to-face modules and online modules are well-aligned with the didactic rhomb and Kolb's experiential learning cycle. By integrating videos, quizzes and prompts for reflection, the online modules manage to follow these didactic models to a sufficient extent. However, the learning objectives for the face-to-face modules often tend to be too broad or too many to be achieved in the rather short time frame. The learning goals stated on the slides often seem more realistic than the often extensive collection listed in the tables in the manual. I understand the effort to align learning objectives with the matrix that combines the multi-dimensional model of intercultural competence (distinguishing knowledge, skills, and attitudes) with Bolten's model. However, I do not think that each and every session has to fill as many boxes in the matrix as possible. Instead, I agree with Deardorff (2011, 2017) who suggested identifying a handful of goals per session to ensure focus and alignment. CONNECT is a rich program and all modules combined offer plenty of opportunities for students to strengthen relevant attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge across contexts of competence, including fostering their persona, methodological, social, and professional competence.

With regard to the general aims concerning usability and friendliness, I conclude the following:

The online platform and the various modules support the learning objectives and encourage reflection and interaction among users.

Furthermore, users get immediate feedback on many activities, such as quizzes. However, I do not agree that the feedback is always supporting their learning process. An example is module 2 (online) where students are supposed to do a quiz on different types of uncertainty management. However, even I found it difficult to always identify the correct answer as distinction between the types did not always seem clear-cut. This made me wonder what the purpose of the quiz is. If its purpose is to make sure that students stay attentive and engaged, tricky questions where the feedback often is "incorrect" might do the opposite and reduce students' motivation rather than increasing it. I find it easier to see how the feedback encourages students to stay engaged for questions that check whether students have attentively read a text or watched a video. However, for quiz questions on applying content it might be good to phrase the feedback more carefully as I assume the students participating in the program come from diverse study programs and for some most of the content might be completely new (e.g. those coming from natural sciences and engineering).

The graphic design of the platform generally supports legibility, with one exception: Module 1-2 requires the user to use a different platform. Accessing this platform turns out to be very challenging. I could not open it on my university computer because adobe flash had to be installed and I do not have admin rights, I tried to open it on my iPad but Apple devices do not support flash. I then tried to use my private laptop but Chrome does not open it. I then had to install a new browser to access it. Furthermore, I could not open the module on interculturality. When trying to open it, I get an error message. This is not user-friendly and I would assume that the majority of students will skip this entire section if they cannot easily access it. They might also wonder why they have to go to a different platform, especially because it seems to me the same content and activities could have easily been embedded into the platform used for all other modules.

Navigation is generally logical, consistent, and efficient and users are informed on how to ask for help, both on the platform and during face-to-face sessions.

The experience map is a great idea that adds to quality of CONNECT. It encourages students to contribute to the program, share information and experiences, and will offer an increasingly rich resource for future participants. My only concern is how to deal with all the content that might come in as more and more students start joining and ensure quality and conciseness of information.

Aspect 2: Evaluation of the relevance for project participants and for future participants

CONNECT offers a highly relevant program for project participants and future participants, providing them with a range of face-to-face and online learning tools that foster their intercultural learning, promote reflection, and enhance development of intercultural competence (as specified in the specific learning objectives of the modules). Blending face-to-face sessions with online modules enables facilitating students' intercultural learning and meaning-making throughout their study abroad experience (including pre-departure and re-entry). The use of online modules makes the program feasible for a larger audience while the face-to-face sessions offer a wider range of learning activities that encourage interaction and sharing. The manuals are very detailed, therefore encouraging use at different institution across Europe. CONNECT also offers training for mentors and advisors which might be helpful for those who feel less confident in their facilitation skills. There is only one aspect that should be reviewed with a critical perspective concerning the heterogeneous target group of this program. Some students might not be enrolled in social sciences, media and communication studies or similar programs, but come from a natural science or engineering background. For the latter, the face-to-face and online modules on communication might be too challenging. For students who have never heard of any of these terms and concepts, the face-to-face session allocates too little time for guiding them through a lot of content. I see

a strong risk for students dropping out (i.e. not following the content actively) due to insufficient support when processing challenging content. Likewise, the online module 1-2 on communication has a lot of text and goes very much into depth. Some students might drop out and skip this part. Generally, this does not have to be a problem as it is difficult to make a program for students of all programs and levels. However, this is the first online module following the section that discusses being hungry for new experiences. I am worried this session is too challenging and might kill some students' appetite for more, leading them to skip the online modules altogether. As a researcher, I appreciate the depth and quality of the content provided in the communication session. As a facilitator and practitioner, I suggest a more pragmatic approach that finds a better compromise in terms of limiting the content to the important key points relevant for students who are just about to go abroad. This could be complemented with optional further reading for those eager to go more in depth. Another solution could be to integrate the core content and activities into the CONNECT platform and provide a link to the full course on the Adobe platform for those who wish to go more into depth.

Aspect 3: Possible shortcomings and improvement suggestions

The following sections provide specific comments on the manual for face-to-face trainings, the online modules, as well as more general observations on different aspects of the CONNECT project.

Manual for Connect Face-to-Face Trainings – General observations:

- Numbering of sections does not always make sense

- Oftentimes, the time allocated to activities seems very short – this left me wondering if there a recommended group size for the face-to-face trainings? Looking at the time, I think the session plans have been made for six to ten students in a group.

Comments on the manual:

Module	Section	Comment
Pre-departure Module 1	3.1.1.1. Learning objectives	Some of these learning objectives only apply if the advisor chooses the SWOT activity (i.e. knowledge: SWOT analysis, behavior: reflection on SWOT) The learning objective "decision-making processes in group work" does not fully align with the module. Though there is group work, it is not explicitly debriefed with regard to decision-making processes.
Pre-departure Module 2	3.1.2.2.1. Warm-up	10 minutes seems too short for the activity (depending on the group size)
Pre-departure Module 2	3.1.2.2.3./4. Barnga	It is unclear to me as a reader if the 20 minutes for the reflection on Barnga are part of the 60 minutes of Barnga stated under 3.1.2.2.3. or extra. If this is extra, in my experience Barnga does not take 60 minutes. Thus, this could be shortened and some extra time could be allocated to the warm-up and the reflection on Barnga (which often takes 30 minutes or more). Another aspect concerns the debriefing: if the discussion happened through posters, how does the group get back together for a shared debriefing/conclusion? I think from a didactic point of view, it would be good to have a joint closing of the activity. This could be added as a note for facilitators.

Pre-departure Module 2	3.1.2.2.5. Meta-communication	What does "target-language-specific groups" mean? Does it refer to target language as in host country language?
		It also remains unclear what is meant by the chart that students should share. Does it refer to the flipchart produced by the advisor in step 1?
		Generally this section seems very brief in relation to the many learning objectives related to it – maybe it is trying to achieve too much in too little time.
Pre-departure Module 3	3.1.3.3.8. How to go on …	Again, this seems too short for students to develop strategies and to debrief this module
Pre-departure Module 4	3.1.1.2.4. Narratives and media in the intercultural context states	This section states that students ideally should have read three pieces of literature in preparation. From experience, I would expect that the majority won't be doing this, especially because the bibliography does not clearly specify which pages to read for the two books.
Re-entry Module 1	3.2.1.2.1. What was my intercultural experience like?	20 minutes might be too short depending on group size
Re-entry Module 2	3.2.2.3.4. Mental games	I am not sure if this is the correct term, I am only familiar with the terms mental experiments or thought experiments.
		The debriefing gives a clear agenda of what students should come up with. It remains unclear what advisors are expected to do with the list of theories and authors mentioned. Some advisors might need more support in guiding the debriefing, maybe in the form of questions or ideas on which input to add. Generally I think debriefing should also remain open to students' own meaning-making which can then be complemented by input from the advisor.
Re-entry Module 3	3.2.3.2.2. International competencies	What is the difference between international and intercultural competencies? It also remains unclear how students are supposed to work on the questions – is it individually, in small groups or in the plenum?
Re-entry Module 3	3.2.3.2.3. Updating your CV	15 min for working on CV (and later for thinking about how to present oneself) might be too short for some students
Re-entry Module 4	3.1.1.4.1. Concept and role of a mentor	There seems to be no debriefing which leaves me wondering what happens with the results of their group work. There is no need for a debriefing but there should be some sort of acknowledgment of students' results.

Comments on the slide sets:

Module	Section	Comment
Pre-departure Unit 1		Learning goals are not stated (this is done for all subsequent units)
Pre-departure Unit 2	Slide 30 (in the full set)	The YouTube video (TedX Talk) is not referred to in the manual. When should the students watch it, given it is a 20 minute talk?

		Also 15 minutes for this section is too short for all the slides which are about 40 slides. Generally, it seems the slides are going very much in depth. Either this part needs much more time or it has to be shortened and kept at a more basic level, especially for students who are not familiar with linguistics and communication studies.
Pre-departure Unit 3	Slide 79 (in the full set)	Is there a sample solution for instructors using this table or is this the basis for the activity "reflection on stereotypes"? If so, why are prejudice, prototype and commonplace included in the table? I am afraid that makes the activity overly complex.
Pre-departure Unit 3	Slides on the jungle book activity	Later on, the slides state there are 30 minutes to prepare the jungle book and 30 minutes for the market place. According to the manual, there are 60 minutes in total but this time includes a brief plenary input. The manual also says "n/a" for material but there are PPT slides for this. The manual does not include the market place mentioned in the slides.
Re-entry Unit 1		Introduce yourself questions are too many for such a short activity – it will be hard for participants to focus and hard for advisors to prevent participants from speaking too long. I like the selection of activities, especially the menti survey and questions about the experience, but overall 20 minutes for all of this sharing is too short and risks that participants feel rushed and pressures already at the beginning of the training.
General comments	Slides are often too full of text and inconsistent in terms of formatting (e.g. capitalization or not, colors used, especially towards the end there are different shades of blue and there are too many colors on a slide)	

Comments on online modules:

- First section (3. Now it's your turn) stays "Now it is time to write a picture to yourself" – should be letter, not picture
- Technical issue: when I tried to look at module 2, lesson 1 again the system told me I am not allowed to retake the lesson – is this on purpose or a mistake?

3.3. Mentors' training

Two "Mentors' Trainings" have been offered and conducted throughout the project. The first pilot training was carried out at the University of Limerick in October 2017 with 25 participants, and a second one was done at InterCultur in Hamburg in April 2018 with 22 participants.

The main learning aims of the training are twofold: to be able to pass on one's own experiences to "peers" in a meaningful way, and to develop skills to motivate and support such "peers" to participate in European exchange programmes. Additionally, thematic events on the topic of Europe/EU and mobility are presented, as well as voluntary mentoring functions to foster the intercultural learning processes of current exchange participants (see full description of the programme in the manual for the mentors' training).

After each training session, participants filled in a questionnaire with a 99% return rate after the first training (23 returned questionnaires) and a 59% after the second one (13 returned questionnaires). Five items pertaining to overall satisfaction have been selected for analysis. Content analysis was applied with the open answers, and inter-rater reliability was measured during the process of coding and categorizing.

The results of the analysis of the closed answers from the first training session's questionnaire (Table 11) show that the participants' satisfaction average with the training is M = 1.7, 1 being the highest and 5 the lowest score on a range from 1 (I fully agree) to 5 (I do not agree at all). Participants gave good ratings in general, and in particular to the training structure (M = 1.3) and the materials (M = 1.5). Moreover, all analysed items indicate a positive evaluation.

As for the closed answers from the second training session's questionnaire, the results (Table 11) show that the participants' satisfaction average with the training stands at M = 2.7, 1 being the highest and 5 the lowest score on a range from 1 (I fully agree) to 5 (I do not agree at all). As with the first training, participants positively rated training structure (M = 2.3) and materials (M = 2.5). Based on answers given in the returned questionnaires, the training does not seem to have fully met the participants' expectations.

Questionnaire's affirmations	Mean 1st Pilot	Mean 2nd Pilot
The training met my expectations.	1.9	3.1
After the workshop I feel well prepared for developing and running projects under the topic of intercultural involvement.	1.9	2.7
I enhanced my project management skills for future activities	1.9	2.9

The training was well structured and organised.	1.3	2.3
The material provided for the training was helpful and sufficient.	1.5	2.5

Table 11. Results Mentors' Trainings

The content analysis of the open answers may give more details on the results. In both pilot runs, participants explicitly mention several parts of the content that they found useful or interesting. In the first pilot run, six participants particularly mention the content related to the EU and Erasmus+, and seven the aspects connected with project management. In the second pilot run, mentions of useful content are more widespread, and no particular interest for a special topic can be identified. In both pilot runs, nearly half of the participants highlight the skills that have been aquired. In the first pilot run, a quarter of participants refer to presentation skills and another quarter to project management skills. In the second pilot run, almost half of participants point out the presentation skills. One participant of the first training says:

> "I've got new skills to motivate people to take part of an exchange program. I am aware how exchange students can be really useful for an E. Program. I honestly recommend mentors give tools and tips for new Erasmus students."

In both pilot runs, almost half of participants stress the competence of the trainers and the active methodology. Moreover, more than a half of the participants appreciated the good atmosphere in the training and the space given for networking and sharing experiences. Another participant of the first training says:

> "What I most like about this training has been the manner of doing the activities. It has been plural, free, and really interactive. The theoretical part it has been interesting, because I have learned or taken into account matters that before I didn't. It has been a pleasure working with all the trainers and the colleagues as I have been able to get to know their cultures and we all share our thoughts."

As for criticism or suggestions for improvement, the most frequently mentioned one is the wish to have received more information prior to the training about the purpose and contents of the session, and the function and role of mentors. In the first pilot run, almost half of the participants mention this, and in the second pilot run it is a third. A participant of the second pilot training says:

"I think it might be better to know more about the training in advance. Maybe a pre-departure assignment or something...?"

As for missing contents, some participants refer to the need for more theory or deeper debriefing of contents related to project management or funding, and some others miss having more information on the Connect project. While in the first pilot run a third of participants perceived the training as too intense and wished to have more free pauses, snacks, coffee or free time, this was not the case in the second pilot run.

It is worth mentioning again that, unfortunately, the return rate in the second pilot run is 59%. So, participant answers in the first pilot run are possibly more reliable. In any case, it seems to be important for the future to work more on the dissemination of training materials and channels.

4. Discussion and conclusions

The data and results collected from different perspectives during the project show that the developed materials and the delivered trainings met the expectations of the pilot participants in the project, helped more than half of the participants to raise their awareness of intercultural acting, and in most cases enhanced their international stay. The reports of two external consultants confirm that both the training materials and the online learning environment correspond to quality standards in the field, and offer a full potential of learning opportunities in the area of intercultural competence for participants in international programmes. However, the analysis of the collected data shows some shortcomings in the programme that should be considered in further reviews. These general conclusions will be now discussed in more detail.

The project aimed to offer an answer to the needs of a growing community of participants in international exchanges and their home institutions. A vast number of studies show that participants who take part in intercultural training activities before departure experiment the stay-abroad experience as a positive one, but they are not always aware of the enrichment it may imply, especially at the personal level of intercultural learning (Cfr. Shaftel et al 2007; Behrnd and Porzelt 2012; Holmes et al 2015; Saw et al 2013). The academic discussions on the field of intercultural competence and intercultural learning increasingly focus on the time needed for the development of these competencies, and particularly their processual and interactional nature (Cfr. Deardorff 2007; Behrnd and Porzelt 2012; Friedman/Berthoin Antal 2005). Therefore, the project intended to develop materials that could be adapted to the characteristics of an array of learners' communities, before, during and after their stay abroad period, in order to support intercultural learning on the personal, social and professional dimensions. Finally, the project aimed to develop a tool that could support self-generated intercultural learning and foster an exchange of experiences between those learners in order to create an online space where intercultural experiences may be contrasted with others' experiences, or even relativized, thus offering the opportunity to negotiate diverse viewpoints (Bolten 2016; Holliday 2013).

The results of the evaluation regarding the face-to-face elements of the developed programme show that participants, advisors and external consultants value the usefulness and coherence of the project and its materials. Participants stress the

usefulness of having the opportunity to exchange expectations, fears and experiences before departure and after re-entry. Participating in the pre-departure workshop raised their awareness of the key features of intercultural acting and helped them to build their confidence and reduce anxiety. Participating in the re-entry workshop contributed to how they reflected upon their experience, to their getting acquainted with some key-features of re-entry processes, and specially to learning how to include the new acquired skills in their CVs, which indirectly involves a mindful integration of such competencies in their everyday lives. The external consultants appraise the coherence of the different parts of the programme and find that the materials generally support, albeit with some shortcomings, the general aims of the programme: to motivate participants to engage in intercultural learning, to promote reflection of and on intercultural experiences during stay abroad periods, and to enhance the development of intercultural experience. The interviewed advisors are aligned with this perception, and also with the evaluation of the structure and the materials of the face-to-face workshops.

As for the shortcomings or weak points, all results point to the length of some parts. In some cases, the time needed to reflect and to present all the content to participants is too long, or the planned time in the manuals does not seem to fit to the participants' real needs. However, it must be said that the materials and modules are designed as a coherent but open repertory that must be selected and adapted by the facilitators (advisors) to the needs and special characteristics of any local learners' community. It seems to be obvious that linguistics students may not need to go into the details of communication processes, whereas students in more scientific or technological areas probably need more time to get familiar with this content. The evaluation of participants and that by the consultants, regarding the depth of the presented contents, are quite different: participants point to the fact that some parts of the trainings were too theory-loaded, whereas the external consultants refer to some shortcomings of theory. As Müller Jacquier argues, it is possibly not about introducing more content, but about introducing activities or debriefings that allow deeper exploration of that content, so that participants are really challenged to increase their awareness of the complexity and the processual, interactional nature of interculturality. Secondly, there is no coincidence in the evaluation of interviewed advisors and external consultants regarding the consistency between the formulation of the learning aims in the manual, and the presented input and didactic activities. The interviewed advisors seem to consider the

definition of learning goals as accurate, but the external consultants regard them as too ambitious when comparing the formulation of the aims with the developed materials.

Considering these valuable comments, the authors may introduce some changes into the formulation of the learning aims so that they are more realistic, and advisors should be aware of the didactic challenges of a one-day training and select those materials and activities that best suit their learners' needs. Future participants in the workshops should include in their applications their background in terms of previous international experiences and participation in intercultural trainings, so that different level groups may be created, or inner group differentiation may be considered when delivering the training sessions.

Regarding the online component of the programme, the evaluation results of the online modules are not positive throughout, whereas the Experience Map is highly valued by all participants. It must be taken into account that the return rate of questionnaires with the participants' perceptions of the online component of the programme is low (20% of all active participants). Nevertheless, 70% of the responding participants state that the activities done on the platform were conducive to changing their ideas or attitudes towards intercultural experiences, and more than 80% would recommend the online activities to other participants. The external consultants appraise that the programme offers an online component that allows access to the educational programme for a larger audience, and offers opportunities to continue working on content and intercultural experiences during participants' stay abroad. Even so, they emphasise some major shortcomings at different levels (linguistic, contents and usability) that will be discussed in the next paragraph. The interviewed advisors highlight the appropriateness of its structure and the correct organisation of the modules. As said above, the usefulness of the Experience Map is highly valued by all groups who participated in the evaluation. Participants seem to agree that it is a tool that covers an existing need and may develop into a very rich resource. As it is an instrument designed for self-generated learning, it depends on the input of the users. Therefore, at this early stage most participants could not really interact with other participants staying at the same place, or with those who had been at the same place in the past. Some advisors, and one of the consultants, are concerned about the future dynamic of the Map, especially regarding ways to deal with stereotyping entries and ensuring quality and conciseness of information. Although the authors have already introduced some tools like search functions or like-dislike

symbols, and participants will be required to sign an honour pledge when becoming creators, the evaluators consider other mechanisms should be introduced. Nevertheless, decentralisation and the consequent loss of control by the institution is a general issue in all 2.0 environments (meaning C2C Networks).

There are some major shortcomings detected by the external evaluators in some of the online modules that deserve more detailed discussion. Certainly, the development of online materials for independent intercultural learning by heterogeneous learners' groups is a challenge. It is worth mentioning that all modules are structured following the reflective learning cycle of Kolb and the constructivist approach by Bolten (2015). Anyhow, some of the hints introduced to push participants from uninformed to informed practice might need revision. In this sense, the feedback given to some closed activities in particular might have to be reviewed. Indeed, taking into consideration that learners will not necessarily discuss their understanding or contrast diverse interpretations in groups, some parts of the authentic material (e.g. videos in the module 3 presenting participants' experiences) could lead to misleading interpretations that are not aligned with the learning aims of the programme. The interactional, processual nature of identities, and of intercultural communication in general, should be clearly outlined. External evaluators also comment on the scientific approach adopted to introduce the content, and stress the need to complement them with other perspectives. Taking into account the fact that intercultural communication and intercultural competence are still rather controversial concepts across several disciplines, another possible future task in the further development of online modules would be to add multiple academic and theoretical perspectives to the central topics already addressed. An important factor highlighted by participants and advisors is the density of content, which can be more or less appropriate, depending on the grade of expertise and interest of the participants. To meet this aspect, a future development of the online modules could be the construction of several learning itineraries within the modules' content, in order to allow different levels of depth in the knowledge acquisition.

Finally, in the results there are several references to linguistic and usability shortcomings that have already been reviewed in the final version of the materials.

In conclusion, as already stated in the introduction, CONNECT offers a structure and a curriculum that allows both flexible and participatory handling. It will grow thanks to

the participation of all agents involved in international mobility: users, advisors and institutions.

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Evaluation: Face to Face Training for pre-departure

Study Program: _____

Semester you are
currently enrolled in: _____

Home University: _____

Partner University: _____

Gender: _____

Age: _____

Previous Intercultural Experience:

What kind of previous intercultural experience (e.g. internship or work & travel)
have you had ***in which city/cities and country/countries***?

1) **What do you consider to be positive aspects of this preparation
   within the Connect 2.0 project? Why?**
   *You can use keywords. Please try to be clear and respond honestly and
   completely.*

Positive aspects:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2) What do you consider to be negative aspects of this preparation within the Connect 2.0 project? Why?
You can use keywords. Please try to be clear and respond honestly and completely.

Criticism and suggestions for improvement:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3) Please evaluate the following aspects of the workshop.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The workshop met my expectations.					
After this preparation workshop, I feel well prepared to meet people from different cultural backgrounds.					
I have learned more about intercultural competence throughout this workshop.					
What I have learned will be useful for my stay abroad.					
The workshop was well structured and organized.					
The trainer(s) was (were) competent.					

4) Evaluate every unit of the workshop regarding how meaningful and useful they seem to be for you.

	Very useful	Quite useful	Useful	Less useful	Not use-ful at all
Unit 1: (Self-)awareness / perception					
Unit 2: Intercultural acting					
Unit 3: Culture specific					
Unit 4: Narrative and media: learning to share knowledge					

5) **Evaluate the following statements referred to your own way of thinking and acting.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am aware of the importance of preparing for a lecture, e.g. reading the recommended bibliography in advance, especially for classes taught in a foreign language.					
Before getting in contact with people with a different cultural background, I always try to find reliable information about that culture.					
If required, I can change my behaviour in order to make it compatible with the usual way of doing things in another culture.					
In my opinion, every encounter with a foreign culture is an opportunity to learn something new.					
When confronted with an intercultural conflict, I always look for pragmatic solutions that provide people the opportunity to understand each other.					
When meeting people who are unfamiliar with my culture, I always try to make my behaviour understandable for them.					
I try to benefit as much as possible from my classes regardless of the lecturer's teaching style.					
I do my best to avoid feeling uncomfortable or judging people's actions so long I'm not sure about their motives for acting in that way.					

6) **Imagine yourself in the following situations and choose your most likely reaction. Please choose only one answer for every situation.**

1. Your semester abroad at a partner university started two months ago but you and the other exchange students didn't receive any information about the examination schedule so far. However, you need this information to book your flights back home and arrange short trips to other cities. What would you do?

Things may be different here. I am flexible and keep on waiting – eventually we will get the exam schedule.	○
I go to the international office and complain about the lack of organization.	○
Probably there are some reasons for this lack of information. First, I ask fellow students about these	○

reasons. Afterwards, I go to the International office, explain my situation and ask for support.	
This seems to be the normal situation at this university. I try to observe how the regular full-time students cope with this problem and I just do the same.	○

2. At the partner university, some local students indicate that your conduct inside the classroom may be perceived as rude and impolite. You want to know what exactly might disturb the others but they answer only vaguely. How do you proceed?

I do nothing. My classmates may have this perception because of our different cultural background, but I prefer to proceed with my learning style.	○
I know that I am not as fluent in the local language as I wish to be. So I ask another local student who speaks my language to support me in engaging in a more trustful and sincere conversation with the students who called it to my attention.	○
There could be different reasons for this situation. I try to gather as much information as possible about similar incidents. In addition, I talk to locals who are familiar with my culture.	○
I am aware that the way a lecture is carried out and the role of the students during the class can be very different here compared to my home university. Therefore, I try to adapt to the behaviour of local students in the classroom.	○

3. Lectures at your host university have started. You assumed that you can continue with your studies on the level you had reached at your home university. However, the academic standards (e.g. scientific theories, models of analysis) differ from the ones back home. What do you do?

I am aware of and accept the fact that in every culture different academic standards are used. I try to contribute with my acquired knowledge during the lectures.	○
It is a good opportunity to reflect on my knowledge of academic standards and learning outcomes – this could be a benefit for me.	○
Other countries, other standards! I accept that you can interpret a phenomenon in different ways.	○
The lectures' contents are rather outdated. I have to accept this for the time being; however I put the focus on the facts I learned at home. This is beneficial for my future career.	○

4. You are supposed to deliver a paper written in team. The other team members have a different attitude towards team work than the one you are used to. How do you act?

I show them how teamwork has to be done. After all we want to get a good grade for our paper.	○
I am open for suggestions and criticism from their side, in order to adapt to the local understanding of team work.	○
I know that I am used to just one possible way of working in a team – this might not even be the best one. I try to keep an open mind and learn from the other team members.	○
My perception of team work is different compared to my class mates from other cultures. Nevertheless, I help them to adapt to my concept of team work that is more efficient. That way, the others can learn from me.	○

Information for evaluators

Initial part

Demographic information

1st and 2nd group of questions

Open question thought to get a general feedback on the training as well as specific suggestions. Being at the beginning of the questionnaire, participants are less prone to leave it blank.

3rd group of questions

Quality of the training. The questions cover the aspects of:

- Usefulness of the training: 1, 2
- Meaningfulness of contents: 3, 4
- Organization: 5, 6.

4th group of questions

Quality of every single unit of the training in terms of perceived usefulness.

5th group of questions

Self-assessment of the four areas of intercultural competence

- Strategic: 2, 5
- Social: 3, 6
- Professional / Technical: 1,7
- Individual: 4, 8

6th group of questions

Mini-critical incidents for hetero-assessment of the four areas of intercultural competence:

- 1 = Strategic
- 2 = Social
- 3 = professional technical
- 4 = individual

Possible answers: 1 = no reflexion, 2 = reflexion without changes in behaviour or attitude, 3 = reflexion with changes in behaviour, 4 = reflexion with changes in behaviour and attitude.

- Question 1: 2, 1, 4, 3
- Question 2: 1, 2, 4, 3
- Question 3: 3, 4, 2, 1
- Question 4: 1, 3, 4, 2

Evaluation: Connect 2.0 Platform

(Online modules and experience map)

Study Program: _____

Semester you are
currently enrolled in: _____

Home University: _____

Partner University: _____

Gender: _____

Age: _____

1) Please, evaluate the following aspects of the online platform (online modules and experience map) as a whole.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Overall the quality of the platform meets my expectations.					
In my opinion, the online platform is easily accessible.					
In my opinion, the online platform is convenient to use and user-friendly.					
The site offers the option to send questions to the webmaster.					
The platform, as a whole, is well structured and organized.					
I can use both the space of the online modules and the experience map in an interactive way.					
The activities I performed on the platform changed my ideas about and/or attitudes towards intercultural experiences.					
I would recommend the Connect 2.0 Online activities to a friend who will be going on a semester abroad.					

2) Please, evaluate the following aspects of the experience map.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
In my opinion, the experience map is easily accessible.						
In my opinion, the experience map is convenient to use and user-friendly.						
The official links and practical information have been very useful for my experience during my stay abroad.						
The practical information provided from the experience map is accurate and the links are up-to-date.						
In case I want to find information about specific places, I can easily find them as the structure is clear.						
Posting entries by myself was easy and categories were easy to find.						
Uploading audiovisual material was easy.						
Learning about the experiences of other students has been very helpful to me.						
I have been able to share my experiences with other students.						

3) Please, evaluate the following aspects of the online modules.

3a) Please, evaluate the online modules as a whole.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
Overall the design of the online modules meets my expectations.						
Overall the content of the modules is relevant for intercultural learning.						
I find these modules are very helpful and relevant when living and studying abroad.						
In my opinion, I can apply what I have learnt from the modules as a whole to my everyday life.						

3b) Please, evaluate the different modules separately.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
The content of this module is very well prepared and thought through.						
Module 1: Hungry for New Experiences & Key Concepts						
Module 2: Coping with Uncertain Situations						
Module 3: Living Stay Abroad as Enrichment						
Module 4: Sharing Own Experiences						
Module 5: Coming Home. Thinking Back and Moving Forward.						
This module is very well structured and organized.						
Module 1: Hungry for New Experiences & Key Concepts						
Module 2: Coping with Uncertain Situations						
Module 3: Living Stay Abroad as Enrichment						
Module 4: Sharing Own Experiences						
Module 5: Coming Home. Thinking Back and Moving Forward.						
In my opinion, the activities and tasks are appropriate in the context of the learning programme.						
Module 1: Hungry for New Experiences & Key Concepts						
Module 2: Coping with Uncertain Situations						
Module 3: Living Stay Abroad as Enrichment						
Module 4: Sharing Own Experiences						
Module 5: Coming Home. Thinking Back and Moving Forward.						
I find this module is very helpful and relevant when living and studying abroad.						
Module 1: Hungry for New Experiences & Key Concepts						
Module 2: Coping with Uncertain Situations						
Module 3: Living Stay Abroad as Enrichment						
Module 4: Sharing Own Experiences						
Module 5: Coming Home. Thinking Back and Moving Forward.						

4) General feedback about the activities on the platform.

Activities on the module modules

How would you evaluate the amount of time you spent on each of the following activities while completing the Online modules?	Too high	High	Adequate	Low	Too low	No answer
Reading						
Watching film/video						

	Too high	High	Adequate	Low	Too low	No answer
Individual work (posting, filming, recording etc.)						
Other?	*Please specify:*					

Activities on the experience map

How would you evaluate the amount of time you spent on each of the following activities while working on the experience map?	Too high	High	Adequate	Low	Too low	No answer
Reading						
Watching film/video						
Individual work (posting, filming, recording etc.)						
Other?	*Please specify:*					

Please list the activities on the platform (online modules and experience map) that were most useful / meaningful for you (max. 3).

Please list the activities on the platform (online modules and experience map) that were not useful / meaningful to you (max. 3).

Was there anything that you felt was lacking or should be improved?

Evaluation: Face to Face Re-entry Training

Study Program: _____

Semester you are
currently enrolled in: _____

Home University: _____

Partner University: _____

Gender: _____

Age: _____

Duration of the stay
(number of semesters):

1) What do you consider to be the most positive aspects of this re-entry workshop within the Connect 2.0 project and why?
You can use keywords. Please try to be clear and respond honestly and completely.

What did you like about the workshop?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2) What do you consider to be the most negative aspects of this re-entry workshop within the Connect 2.0 project and why?
You can use keywords. Please try to be clear and respond honestly and completely.

What did you not like about the workshop? Do you have suggestions for improvement?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3) Please, evaluate the following aspects of the workshop.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The workshop met my expectations.					
After this workshop I am aware of my intercultural skills and how to apply them in my daily environment.					
I have learned how to support younger students who are at the beginning of their intercultural experience.					
What I have learned will be useful for me in my future academic path as well as when starting my professional career.					
The workshop was well structured and organized.					
The trainer(s) was (were) competent.					

4) Evaluate every unit of the workshop regarding how meaningful and useful they seem to be for you.

	Very useful	Quite useful	Useful	Less useful	Not useful at all
Unit 1: Reflection					
Unit 2: Intercultural Competence Here And Now					
Unit 3: Adding Your New Skills To Your CV					
Unit 4: Passing On Your Experiences. What Now?					

5) Evaluate the following statements referred to your own way of thinking and acting.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am aware of the importance of preparing for a lecture, e.g. reading the recommended bibliography in advance, especially for classes taught in a foreign language.					
Before coming into contact with people with a different cultural background, I always try to find reliable information about that culture.					
If required, I can change my behaviour to be more compatible with the usual way of doing things in another culture.					
In my opinion, every encounter with a foreign culture is an opportunity to learn something new.					
When confronted with an intercultural conflict, I always look for pragmatic solutions that provide people the opportunity to understand each other.					
When meeting people who are unfamiliar with my culture, I always try to make my behaviour understandable for them.					
I try to benefit as much as possible from my classes regardless of the lecturer's teaching style.					
I do my best to avoid feeling uncomfortable or judging people's actions so long I'm not sure about their motives for acting in that way.					

6) Imagine yourself in the following situations and choose your most likely reaction. Please choose only one answer for every situation.

1. During your semester abroad you have to hand in all the assignments through the virtual learning platform of the host university. The system is apparently similar to the one at your home university, so, when assignments were explained, you thought you wouldn't get into trouble when submitting your papers. However, the deadline of your first assignment is in few days and you have already struggled for half an hour trying to upload it onto the platform. It looks as if you did not understand the logics of the platform after all and browsing in it was more complicated than you thought initially. What would you do now?

I recognize that the logic of the university's virtual campus can be different in each place but I don't have to deal with this in every single detail. I will ask a local student to upload the assignment for me.	○
The platform is simply not understandable for international students. I'll speak with the lecturer and ask for permission to send him the assignment by email.	○
I am aware that I have to understand the logic of the platform first. I will try to calm down, experiment a little bit more and, if I still need help, I will ask fellow students about possible reasons for my problems so that I will be able to browse in the platform in a more comfortable manner.	○
I don't really understand the organization of the content on this platform. I will send an email to the IT asking for a detailed description of the steps to follow in order to upload an assignment. If I follow these instructions exactly, I will manage to upload mine.	○

2. Since you arrived at the partner university you have been going out with other international students. Usually some students from the host university join the group as well, but somehow such events always end up with two separate groups (the international one and the local one). You are really interested in getting closer to local students. In fact, you have tried several times to invite locals to go out and do something together, but they didn't seem to be especially interested. How do you proceed?

I accept the frustration because one can't do anything else. I had already observed the same situation back home and I consider it is normal because international and local students do have a different approach due to their dissimilar conditions. International students have more similar experiences.	○
I can imagine that my way of making acquaintances can be different from the one of the local students, but I don't know to which extent. So, I ask a local student I know because he speaks my language to introduce me to his friends.	○
Social life is different in every culture and I am very interested in learning how people engage in friendship relationships around here. Therefore, I look for information, ask locals how social relationships are established here, try to understand how it works and try to find my way into this new environment.	○
I am aware that there are different ways of engaging in groups in every culture. Therefore, I try to find out how it is normally done here and imitate that behaviour.	○

3. Lectures at your host university have almost finished. You handed in the first essay a couple of weeks ago. You worked hard on it because the topic was very interesting and challenging. You showed your work to another international student from your home university and he/she did not see anything wrong. Nevertheless, when you get the evaluation you are extremely disappointed. You received a lower mark than expected and you don't understand the logic behind the lecturer's feedback at all. You are confused. You are sure that you would have received a better grade for the essay at home. What do you do?

I am aware of the fact that in every culture different academic standards are used, and I accept it. I will ask the lecturer for a tutorial session, so that he / she can explain to me what I should do exactly to get a good mark in the next essay.	○
It is a good opportunity to enhance my knowledge about academic standards and learning outcomes around the world and to reflect on the different points of view that they reveal – this enriches my international experience. So, when I see the opportunity, I engage in a dialog with the lecturer and other students about their expectations and performance.	○
Apparently in my host university lecturers use different criteria to evaluate students' performance than in my home university. As long as the same standard is used to evaluate all students, I just accept it.	○
Obviously, the lecturer has not read my essay attentively enough. If he/she had done so, he/she would have been able to appreciate the quality of my work. I will fill out a complaint. This low mark is very damaging for my future career.	○

4. You are in a working space at your dorm, attempting to read a complex article that you have to introduce in class tomorrow. At a neighbouring desk three local students doing team work are speaking so loudly that you cannot concentrate on your work. However, other local students working alone at other tables do not complain or look upset. How do you act?

I stand up and remind them that they shouldn't speak so loudly. They are in a working space together with other students.	○
I stand up and ask them in a respectful manner, if they would mind speaking a little more quietly. My perception of volume may be different from theirs. Nevertheless, I suggest to them to speak more quietly in order to be more efficient. They will probably become loud again in	○

a while, but at least I'll have tried to find a compromise.	
People around the world are used to different levels of environmental loudness. Those students probably have the impression that they are speaking in a normal volume. First I'll try to keep an open mind, relax and concentrate on my paper. If this doesn't work I'll approach them and ask them in a friendly manner to help me by lowering their volume a little bit.	○
I stand up and collect my papers. I know that many people here are not that sensitive to a loud environment. That's fine, but for me it's impossible to work under these conditions. I'll try to find a place where I may work alone.	○

Information for evaluators

Initial part

Demographic information

1st and 2nd group of questions

Open question thought to get a general feedback on the training as well as specific suggestions. Being at the beginning of the questionnaire, participants are less prone to leave it blank.

3rd group of questions

Quality of the training. The questions cover the aspects of:

- Usefulness of the training: 1, 2
- Meaningfulness of contents: 3, 4
- Organization: 5, 6.

4th group of questions

Quality of every single unit of the training in terms of perceived usefulness.

5th group of questions

Self-assessment of the four areas of intercultural competence

- Strategic: 2, 5
- Social: 3, 6
- Professional / Technical: 1,7
- Individual: 4, 8

6th group of questions

Mini-critical incidents for hetero-assessment of the four areas of intercultural competence:

- 1 = Strategic
- 2 = Social
- 3 = professional technical
- 4 = individual

Possible answers: 1 = no reflexion, 2 = reflexion without changes in behaviour or attitude, 3 = reflexion with changes in behaviour, 4 = reflexion with changes in behaviour and attitude.

- Question 1: 2, 1, 4, 3
- Question 2: 1, 2, 4, 3
- Question 3: 3, 4, 2, 1
- Question 4: 1, 3, 4, 2

Evaluation: Advisor's Training

Home University: _____

Position: _____

Department: _____

Gender: _____

Age: _____

1) What do you consider as positive / negative about your preparation as a Connect 2.0 advisor during this training and why?
You can use keywords. Please try to be clear and respond honestly and completely.

Positive aspects

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Criticism and suggestions for improvement

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2) **Please assess the following aspects of the workshop according to your own experience. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with a cross for each topic, following a range from *1= I fully agree* to *5 = I do not agree at all.***

1. The training met my expectations.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

2. After the workshop I feel well prepared for delivering an intercultural training to university students.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

3. I have learned more about intercultural competence throughout this seminar.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

4. I have an accurate knowledge about the Connect 2.0 curriculum and about what students need to know in order to work efficiently on the E-learning platform and with the experience map.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

5. My didactic abilities have increased through the workshop.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

6. We had enough time to test training methods in a practical way.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

7. I know how to relate the face-to-face programme to the online programme.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

8. The workshop was well structured and organised.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

9. There was sufficient time for the individual exercises.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

10. The material provided for the training was helpful and sufficient.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

11. The facilities used for the training were suitable.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

12. The trainers were knowledgeable and competent.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

13. There was enough time for participation and interaction.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

14. Questions raised by the participants were answered appropriately.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

Evaluation: Mentors' Training

Home University: _____

Studies: _____

Gender: _____

Age: _____

1) **What do you consider as positive / negative about your preparation as a Connect Mentor during this training and why?**
You can use keywords. Please try to be clear and respond honestly and completely.

Positive aspects

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Criticism and suggestions for improvement

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2) Please assess the following aspects of the workshop according to your own experience. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with a cross for each topic, following a range from *1= I fully agree* to *5 = I do not agree at all.*

1. The training met my expectations.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

2. After the workshop I feel well prepared for developing and running projects under the topic of intercultural involvement.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

3. I had a chance to exchange my (European) intercultural experience with the other participants.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

4. I was able to establish connections and get in touch with people in the Mentors community.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

5. My presentation abilities have increased through the workshop.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

6. I enhanced my project management skills for future activities.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

7. I learned more about European Identity and European politics

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

8. The training was well structured and organised.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

9. There was sufficient time for the individual exercises.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

10. The material provided for the training was helpful and sufficient.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

11. The facilities used for the training were suitable.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

12. The trainers were knowledgeable and competent.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

13. There was enough time for participation and interaction.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

14. A platform for free creativity and idea development was offered to participants.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

15. Questions raised by the participants were answered appropriately.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

Experts Interview: Students' interview questionnaire/ guidelines

1. General learning and impressions from the stay abroad
   (Goal: to get to know whether participants consider the experience valuable and successful and if they see any evolution, improvement, etc.)

   1.1. Looking back to your stay-abroad-experience, describe briefly your learning development during this time.
   1.2. Please highlight what you consider the most important things you have learned and whether you consider them useful for your future.

2. Contribution of Connect-learning to understand and evaluate situations and to develop responsive behaviour during stay abroad.
   (Goal: to get to know to which extent participants consciously made use of learning and skills from the programme and to which extent they integrated them into their intercultural competence as a maturity process.)

   2.1. Please mention two or three aspects or situations taking place during your stay abroad that you could master **more easily than you expected** in advance. Why were they easier?
   2.2. Do you think that information or skills acquired with the Connect-Programme were part of the reason why it was easy for you? Please, specify the ones …
      2.2.1….specifically from the pre-departure training?
      2.2.2…..specifically from the online modules?
      2.2.3….specifically from the experience map?

   2.3. Please mention two or three aspects or situations taking place during your stay abroad that **you couldn't master or only could master with more difficulties than expected** in advance. Please explain possible reasons.
   2.4. Do you think that information or skills acquired with the Connect-Programme were a basis for you for understanding and/or coping with these situations? Please, specify the ones …
      2.6.1….specifically from the pre-departure training?
      2.6.2…..specifically from the online modules?
      2.6.3….specifically from the experience map?

   2.5. Looking back to your stay abroad, explain shortly two or three situations **that now** you would handle differently.
   2.6. Why would you handle them differently?
   2.7. Do you think that information or skills acquired during the **Connect-Programme's re-entry training** provided a basis for rethinking your approach to the situation?

3. Assessing the Connect programme's usefulness (content and format)
   (Goal: to get to know the way how participants make sense of their learning experience through the programme)

   3.1. Looking at your participation in and use of the Connect Programme, can you give us an insight into which of the different parts (pre-departure, Experience Map, online modules, re-entry) you found particularly **useful** and why?

3.2. Looking at your participation in and use of the Connect Programme, can you give us an insight into which of the different parts (pre-departure, Experience Map, online modules, re-entry) you found particularly **useless** and why?

3.3. Looking back to the **pre-departure training**, what parts or aspects of the preparation were particularly **useful** for you and why?

3.4. Looking back to the **pre-departure training**, what parts or aspects of the preparation were **less useful** (or not useful at all) for you and why?

3.5. Looking back to the **online modules**, which modules or what parts of them were particularly **useful** for you and why?

3.6. Looking back to the **online modules**, which modules or what parts of them were **less useful** (or not useful at all) for you and why?

3.7. Looking back to the **experience map**, please explain what kind of information you more **frequently used** and why? (If necessary remember: city, university, intercultural challenge; and mention some important sub-topics, e.g. international office, public transportation, leisure topics like bars, etc.).

3.8. Looking back to the **experience map**, please explain what kind of information you more **frequently posted** and why? (If necessary remember: city, university, intercultural challenge; and mention some important sub-topics, e.g. international office, public transportation, leisure topics like bars, etc.).

3.9. Would you recommend the next generation of students going abroad from your university to use Connect and take part in the programme and why?

3.10. Would you engage as a Connect-mentor and why?

Thank you!

Expert interviews: Advisors' interview guideline

1. Please, give a short report on your activity as a Connect advisor the last two years: how many trainings and which ones have you conducted? How many participants were there? Which are your general feelings about the program as a whole?

Let's now go into details about the different parts of the programme:

    1.1 Pre-Departure training

    2.1.1. How would you evaluate/ comment on the learning goals of the training?

    2.1.2. How would you evaluate the structure and the timing of the training?

    2.1.3. How would you evaluate the training materials (PPTs, activities, …)

    2.1.4. Do you think you got enough didactic information through the didactic guidelines/ manual?

    2.1.5. Did you introduce changes in the delivered structure and/ or materials?

    2.1.6. How would you rate the students' perceptions and attitudes towards Connect?

    2.1.7. Does this part of the programme fit well with the other elements of the programme (online modules, experience map, re-entry training)?

2.2. Online-Modules

    2.2.1. How would you evaluate/ comment on the learning goals of the online-modules?

    2.1.2. How would you evaluate the structure of this part of the programme?

    2.1.3 How would you evaluate the usability and navigation facilities of the platform?

    2.1.4. How would you evaluate the materials (input, activities/ tasks, quizzes…)

    2.1.5. Do you think students get enough information on how to work in an autonomous way in the learning environment?

    2.1.6. Did you have to give students additional advice?

    2.1.6. How would you rate the students' perceptions and attitudes towards Connect?

    2.1.7. Does this part of the programme fit well with the other elements of the programme (pre-departure, experience map, re-entry training)?

2.3. Experience Map

    2.3.1. How would you evaluate/ comment the experience map as a whole?

    2.3.2. How would you evaluate the usability and navigation facilities of the experience map?

    2.3.3. How would you evaluate the foreseen structure (city, university, intercultural challenges and categories)?

    2.3.5. Do you think students get enough information on how to work in an autonomous way on the experience map?

    2.3.6. Did you have to give students additional advice?

    2.3.7. How would you rate the students' perceptions and attitudes towards the E-Map?

    2.3.8. Does this part of the programme fit well with the other elements of the programme (pre-departure, online modules, re-entry training)?

2.4. Re-Entry training

    2.4.1. How would you evaluate/ comment the learning goals of the training?

    2.4.2. How would you evaluate the structure of and time planned for the training?

    2.4.3. How would you evaluate the training materials (PPTs, activities, …)

    2.4.4. Do you think you got enough didactic information through the didactic guidelines/ manual?

    2.4.5. Did you introduce changes in the delivered structure and/ or materials?

    2.4.6. How would you rate the students' perceptions and attitudes towards Connect when looking back?

    2.4.7. Does this part of the programme fit well with the other elements of the programme (pre-departure training, online modules, experience map)?

    2. Do you have any other suggestions for improvement?

Thank you!