INTRODUCTION

This is an evaluation of the four on-line courses that were a component of the wider *Erasmus Plus IN2IT* project.

Following a summary of the evaluation methodology, the report considers the rationale offered for developing these courses and delivering them on-line - and the implications for this evaluation. Consideration is then given to those elements of the project which can be considered collectively. This is followed by a brief presentation of data from the four courses. While comments are observations are offered throughout, conclusions and recommendations are offered in closing.

METHOD

The evaluation took place between July and September 2018. It was undertaken by Dr Neil Sparnon, based in the United Kingdom. Dr Sparnon had no previous involvement with the *IN2IT* project but offered extensive experience in the development and delivery of on-line courses in the global context. His Curriculum Vitae is available on request.

The evaluation had three components:

- a review of programme and course documentation - the *IN2IT* website, the four course syllabi, course content, student feedback and review documentation;
- interaction with course content via the learning management system (LMS);
- 30-45 minute interviews with two teachers and two students.

DOCUMENTATION

The documentation provided comprised:

- the *IN2IT* website;
- the syllabi for the four courses;
- access to the learning management system to enable interaction with course content;
- the results of student feedback surveys conducted on-line and, where available, statistical and summative analysis.

An initial review of this documentation suggested the principal lines of enquiry and forms the overarching structure of this report. They also informed the structure and conduct of the interviews that followed.

The written comments of staff and students are quoted extensively in this report. For the sake of clarity, some spelling and grammatical corrections have been made. Every attempt has been made to retain the original voice of the respondent. When this was unclear, the quote is used in its unedited form.

INTERACTION WITH THE LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS) AND COURSE CONTENT

Access was given to the *IN2IT* learning management system via ID and password. From there it was possible to enrol as a dummy student onto courses. This enabled interaction with the course content and structure.

INTERVIEWS

Four interviews of 30-45 minutes were conducted, two with students and two with teachers. Given the nature of the collaborative partnership, one student and teacher was selected from Israel and one from Europe. The interviews were conducted via *Skype* and were structured along the principal lines of enquiry emerging from the initial review of documentation.

THE ROLE OF THE ON-LINE COURSES IN THE WIDER CONTEXT OF THE *IN2IT PROJECT*

The objectives of the *IN2IT* project were to 'develop and implement an innovative technological infrastructure for the purpose of advancing internationalization in higher education, and thereby to expand the practical applications of internationalization in Israeli academic colleges, to strengthen the capacities for teaching, learning, research, and training, and to improve the quality and positioning of Israeli funded academic higher education colleges.' In terms of the specific objectives for those who take part, the project 'aims to boost skills and employability.'

In all, fourteen colleges participated in the *IN2IT* project – seven from Israel and seven from Europe. They were:

- Al Qasemi College of Education;
- Beit Berl College;
- Brunel University, London;
- Kaye Academic College of Education;

- Kingston University, London;

- Ludwigsburg University of Education;

- ORT Braude College;

- Politecnico di Milano;

- Sapir Academic College;

- Tel Aviv-Yaffo Academic College;

- Tel-Hai College;

- Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore;

- Universite Montpelier;

- Warsaw University of Technology.

One of the principal mechanisms through which the project sought to deliver these objectives was the development and delivery of four on-line courses. These courses were:

- *Embracing Diversity;*
- *English for Internationalisation Purposes;*
- *Essential Skills;*
- *Global Entrepreneurship.*

IN2IT documentation indicated that the purpose of these courses was 'to develop international collaboration' – the wider assumption being that the 'Internationalisation of HEIs contributes to the development of students' skills and employability in the 21st century.' While they adhered to the wider objectives of the project, the courses were developed in isolation. The project did not establish a group to develop explicit learning objectives for the project as a whole, or set out which courses would be responsible for their development.

While the choice of courses, and their constituent modules, was governed to some extent by considerations around how to prepare students for their future workplace - in particular the development of soft skills and communication - it was also influenced by the expertise and experience which each partner brought to the partnership. For example it was clear that for international courses, English would be the language of instruction and that an English course would be needed. Similarly the preponderance of business related academics involved in the project led naturally to the inclusion of course on global entrepreneurship.

The result is that the delivery and evaluation of the courses cannot be considered as part of a coherent, project-wide, curriculum *per se*. While they share many common features - most noticeably, in three cases at least, the learning management system, there is considerable diversity in a range of features

- course design, pedagogy, support, academic and student feedback as well as course evaluation methods. The student profiles also varied considerably between courses – all had students from three countries (*Global Entrepreneurship*: Israel, UK, France; *Embracing Diversity*: Israel, Germany, Italy; *English for Internationalization Purposes*: Israel, Poland, Italy; *Essential Skills*: Israel, Poland, UK). Understandably therefore, the experience of internationalization amongst staff and students varied considerably, and this is reflected in the feedback of the respective courses.

Critically, the methods for collecting student feedback varied: some students were surveyed at the outset, middle and conclusion of the course, others only at the end. In some cases, summary analysis of the course was provided in the form of a written report, in others only raw data and a PowerPoint presentation were available. While there was some overlap in the nature of the questions asked, there were noticeable differences both in the questions and the way they were formulated - some used multiple choice others offered more opportunities for students to write free text. Perhaps most importantly, students were not invited to comment directly on the wider context of the *IN2IT* project. Such questions when they did appear tended to be implicit rather explicit – for example students on the *Global Entrepreneurship* course were invited to indicate the extent to which, at the conclusion of the course, they were more comfortable working in international teams. However this question was posed only within the context of the course. Moreover, it did not appear in this form, or at this point, in feedback from the other three courses.

Given this diversity, this report pieces together data from the four courses to identify specific cross-cutting themes. Though imprecise, there is sufficient commonality to draw some tentative conclusions. On the other hand the sections devoted to the specific courses are little more than a re-presentation of the data presented elsewhere and do not include comment or commentary.

CROSS-COURSE THEMES

COURSE DESIGN

While the courses drew largely on existing expertise and course materials within the partnership, several courses appear to have been developed, or redeveloped, explicitly for this project. Moreover this development appears to have been a shared undertaking. The *English for Internationalization Purposes* course for example, was developed by a team from Kaye, Sapir, Al-Qasemi, Tel-Aviv-Yaffo Colleges, Universita Cattolica and Warsaw University of Technology, while the *Essential Skills* course was developed by ORT Braude, Brunel University London, Beit Berl, Tel Hai, and Sapir.

Course design was largely a bottom-up process. The process for designing *English for Internationalization Purposes* for example was described as bringing together a diverse team, each of whom had ideas around what might be included – text, questions, exercises. While there was some consensuses around the kinds of activities which might be undertaken – 'Lots of interaction, lots of teamwork' - and a focus on communicating effectively over being grammatically accurate - the detailed learning outcomes and syllabus emerged from a lengthy process of 'discussion, analysis, meetings, Skyping... hours and hours spent working together, listening to each other.' Though time-consuming, this process was described as being hugely beneficial. The team was able to learn from their different approaches and perspectives both in terms of teaching English, and the pedagogy of doing so on-line. 'What was created was created as a result of this mutual learning '...something more than the sum of its parts.' No single element that existed before the course was created could have been used without adaptation. However 'every single module developed for the course, could be used in the classroom subsequently.'

Different courses chose to share the design load between academic teams differently. The *Embracing Diversity* course for example allocated the different modules of the course to specific partners who were largely responsible for their development of course materials and delivery. The result was that student experiences varied, with each student choosing a selection of modules rather than completing the whole course. Other courses, for example *Essential Skills*, drew on the expertise of participants more equally.

Clearly there are advantages in sharing the responsibility for course development in terms of enhancing the international experience of academic staff. Apart from the simple act of communication between different partners, collaboration highlights both commonly held assumptions and different approaches to course design and content which themselves emerge from different cultural contexts and perspectives. Successful collaboration however, is dependent on clarity at the outset in terms of the overarching structure and the roles that specific partners are expected to play. A good example of just this kind of approach emerged from the *Embracing Diversity* course which drew praise from one of the other partners for its approach to learning design

> *'...the learning theory behind the MOOC validates the content and activity and gives the MOOC a solid structure.' Moreover '...it is crucial for the Diversity team to follow POLIMI's learning theory, design and format in delivering the course. The standards that POLIMI has set are outstanding and should be followed when the actual course is delivered.'*

A point that emerged in discussion was the extent to which course design considered the on-line environment. This was the first experience of teaching on-line of several of the faculty who designed *English for Internationalization Purposes* for example and *Global Entrepreneurship*. Though they were familiar with the *Moodle* platform from other applications, it was necessary to familiarise themselves further with the platform as the course content was developed.

Feedback also indicated that faculty attempted to use the learning platform to facilitate group working during the design process. Results were mixed, with a clear preference for face-to-face working. On-line meetings worked well on a one-to-one basis but were less effective when they involved multiple participants. In the latter case, it was commonplace for faculty to wait until scheduled project meetings when proximity enabled a considerable volume of work to be completed quickly and successfully.

Given this level of unfamiliarity with the learning management system and more generally, with on-line learning, it is perhaps unsurprising that the pedagogy adopted was largely based on classroom models that were translated into an on-line environment. Pedagogy that has emerged specifically for on-line course design and delivery – for example, Gilly Salmon's five stage model of e-moderation, Conrad and Donaldson's four levels of engagement [1] and Hoostein's four pairs of shoes model – do not seem to have been considered at the outset. This is not to suggest that the *IN2IT* courses do not contain many example of good on-line pedagogical practice - they do. However, the feedback from staff and students suggest that this good practice emerged over the period of design and delivery, rather than being factored into the design process at the outset.

For example, in *English for Internationalization Purposes*, it was apparent at the in the first week that this was the first experience of on-line learning for the majority of registered students. As such, several of the tasks set – for example the production of a PowerPoint presentation with an audio commentary – were beyond their initial capabilities. Staff feedback from Kingston University on the *Embracing Diversity* course praised the use of on-line discussions, but noted that few went beyond a few posts and that it was necessary for the moderator actively to engage to facilitate further inputs. Feedback suggests that the use of automated systems to mark quizzes embedded in the course will be significantly reduced in future iterations of these courses.

On-line courses regularly encounter such problems. Indeed one of the most common misconceptions around on-line learning is that the level of support is reduced, thereby allowing for the considerable

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[1] Conrad R, Donaldson J. Engaging the On-line Learner: Activities and Resources for Creative Instruction. San Francisco, California: John Wiley & Sons, Inc; 2004.

increases in staff-to-student ratios that were evident in the earliest MOOCs. Experience with on-line learning has suggested that, if anything, the reverse is true. Not only do students continue to need the academic input of their teachers and the academic and social support of their peers, but also assistance with technical matters that are largely absent in the conventional classroom. As such, course design should reflect these needs. The use of unfamiliar software and applications should be minimised, and where they are utilised, support – in the form of on-line materials, sometimes supplemented by on-line and often on-site personal assistance – should be provided.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS)

IN2IT used an instance of *Moodle* to provide a central interface for all staff and students. Three of the four courses used *Moodle* for course delivery in addition to student, academic and administrative staff details. *Moodle* appears to have been supplemented with a variety of different communication applications. The *IN2IT Moodle* homepage contains guidance for using *Skype* and *Google* hangouts to facilitate face-to-face meetings. Feedback from students indicated that use was also made of *Zoom* video conference software and at least one course, *Essential Skills*, made extensive use of *WhatsApp* for text based communications between staff and students.

Moodle is a well established and widely used learning management system and it appears that the *IN2IT Project* utilised its functionality fully. All four courses used a variety of media - *PowerPoint* presentations, documents and video – all of which appear to have been prepared explicitly for these courses. The courses also made full use of the embedded discussion boards, on-line surveys, grading and reporting functionality. Apart from the occasional problems with formatting and spacing, the presentation of these materials was generally excellent.

Staff and student feedback on the use of the learning management system, and the material presented through it, was largely positive. For example, of the 38 students who completed the final survey of the *English for Internationalization Purposes* course, when responding to 'Rate the user friendliness of the learning sessions', only 4 found it 'quite confusing' or 'very confusing' with 11 rating it 'very friendly.' When asked 'How clear did you find the instructions?' all 38 responded that they were either 'clear' or 'very clear.' Similarly, the 138 students who completed the final survey for *Global Entrepreneurship*, gave an average rating (out of 5) of 3.79 to the 'video and slide deck lectures', 3.39 to the 'interactive forums' and 3.4 to the 'quizzes and exercises.' 29 students completed the final survey of the *Essential Skills* course. 21 indicated that the 'Instructions were clear for each task.' Written responses to the *Essential Skills* course were more nuanced. When invited to suggest how the course could be improved, students responded that 'the website (could be) more user-friendly, and

the tasks more clear - 'use more understandable instructions', '(use) Instructions that are easier to follow'. On the other hand, it emerged from discussion that in the *Global Entrepreneurship* course it had been necessary constantly to scroll through multiple pages to access the last point reached - there was no place holder. This was described as an inconvenience more than a hindrance.

When offering feedback on the *Embracing Diversity* course, Kingston University indicated that 'The user interface of the MOOC is easy to navigate and the structure is clear.' and that the 'production quality of the learning materials was excellent and professional.'

Problems with the learning management system appear to have been relatively standard for on-line courses – password access and account settings as well as some problems with browser compatibility. Some students mentioned that the diversity of communication options, particularly outside the *Moodle* platform, was confusing and led to missed messages and meetings. On the other hand, some students requested that mobile phone numbers be made available to facilitate direct conversations. For example – 'is difficult to answer this question in "yes" or "no". I think the materials were very interesting but the task(s) were not always very clear and especially got complicated in the team work and problem solving', 'it was well structured but often the tasks were not clear and the page is very difficult to navigate.'

In discussion with faculty, two particular issues emerged around the use of the learning management system. The first was registration – in the case of *English for Internationalization Purposes*, to facilitate teamwork and interaction, students were placed in groups of three or four with at least one member being from a European partner. This proved to be impractical to support through the LMS and was described as '...a mess – it took ages.' Ultimately, groups were created manually and tracked using an Excel spreadsheet. A similar problem affected the *Global Entrepreneurship* course. Secondly, issues around confidentiality meant that students were not allowed to view each others' personal email and mobile numbers via the LMS. This proved to be a considerable barrier to communication and in some cases made delivery of the course problematic.

Both of these problems are commonplace. Solutions include the use of groups within courses to which specific student and staff are allocated. *Moodle* (and other LMS platforms such as *Blackboard*) does have this functionality[2]. The second issue is usually addressed through the creation of an institutional email address which is then used for all academic related matters and which students are required to monitor. In a collaborative partnership like *IN2IT* the use of institutional emails of the various

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[2] Grouping for Student Groups

academic partners would have been an option. An alternative would have been the creation of an *IN2IT* domain to serve a similar purpose.

ACADEMIC TEAMS

All the courses used academic teams which drew on expertise from across the partnership. For example the *English for Internationalisation Purposes* used a team from Kaye College, UCSC, Sapir College, Warsaw University of Technology, Tel-Aviv Yaffo and Al-Qasemi College. The team for *Embracing Diversity* was drawn from Kaye Academic College of Education, Beit Berl Academic College Politecnico di Milano, Ludwigsburg University of Education, Al-Qasemi College of Education and Kingston University. As is common in on-line programmes, the teams comprised a mixture of academic faculty and PhD students, supplemented in some cases by practitioners in the field. This diversity amongst academic teams is good practice and is to be commended.

The operation of the teams appears to have varied between courses. Some involved considerable consultation amongst the academic team to discuss issues around how to approach course content and to facilitate discussion and student engagement as well as marking standards. This does not appear to have occurred in all instances however. In the *Embracing Diversity* course, feedback from Kingston University stressed the need for monthly meetings and that they should be conducted via *Skype*.

The conduct of academic teams to ensure consistency is one of the key challenges of on-line delivery - particularly when students from the same institution are placed in different groups on the same course. Differences in approach in terms of pedagogy and feedback are quickly identified and can lead to problems if they ultimately result in different marking standards.

Student feedback on the academic teams was largely positive - though there were exceptions. For example The *English for Internationalization Purposes* course invited students to respond to 'When did you think your teachers were good teachers?' Comments included 'All the time'. 'Always', ' When they gave me important tips connected with different issues', ' When they gave me a lot of advice to understand my mistakes'. By contrast, only 1 of the 38 responses given was negative 'Didn't think they were good.'

Feedback from the *Essential Skills* course was mixed with students utilising the free-form text boxes to respond more fully. Responses to the invitation to name three things that they enjoyed about the courses included 'course developers were available and responded promptly when I had some questions.' On the other hand, when invited to respond to 'In your opinion was the course well

organized and structured' responses amongst those who responded 'no' (8 comments from 29 answers) included 'The support of the staff was poor. It took too long to receive an answer; 3 times I never received an answer. It felt like there was no "adult in charge" of this course', 'The concept was interesting but lack of communication with the lecturers was problematic (for instance, we had no idea a group member enrolled from the course)', 'We didn't get feedback after every assignment so I didn't know what should I improve next', 'I didn't get a number of emails about starting a new task. We didn't get evaluation of our works during the semester, so we couldn't understand if everything right, and couldn't improve our marks because we get them only at the end of the course.'

Feedback from faculty indicated that academic teams operated through a mixture of regular informal and informal communication. Urgent matters would be handled informally through *WhatsApp* and telephone conversations. More formal matters, in particular those that affected all students equally such as extensions, would be handled via emails which also acted as the formal record. Once a decision had been taken by the academic team, students would be formally notified via a group email. This is consistent with best practice in the field and is commended.

STUDENT GROUPS

The opportunity to create groups comprising students drawn from across the partnership was one of the most exciting aspects of the *IN2IT* project. This is fully supported by feedback from the courses. The *Global Entrepreneurship* course for example found that 135 of the 180 students who completed the pre-course survey expected to encounter 'nationally/culturally different styles of decision making and problem-solving'. 130 of the 158 students who completed the post-course survey said that they had done so. Similarly, when invited to respond to the statement 'On a scale from 1-5, did you enjoy working in an international group? (1 - Not really, 5 - Very much)', students on the *English for Internationalization* course provided 13 ratings of '5', 11 of '4' and 6 of '3'. Only 8 students responded negatively.

The exception to this was the *Embracing Diversity* course. While students were encouraged to interact through the forum to share information and experiences in the introductory module, they were not required to work in teams or groups for the remainder of the course. While this enabled students to be self-reliant and to manage and monitor their own progress through the course, one student indicated that this was a 'missed opportunity' to meet students in other institutions and countries. Similarly there was little interaction between students and faculty at any of the partner institutions. The majority of modules concluded with an on-line quiz that provided a grade immediately, while

responses to more open questions received no response until the final grade was awarded at the conclusion of the course.

Two issues emerged clearly from the feedback. The first was the composition of the groups. Israeli colleges comprised 50% of the *IN2IT* project, but collectively they enrolled considerably more students than those from the other countries. The consequence was that groups sometimes comprised largely, or indeed exclusively, Israeli students. Obviously, this minimized the potential for cross-cultural interactions.

Feedback from some students expressed frustration at this limitation. Students on the *Essential Skills* course for example were invited to consider 'To what extent has this course enabled you to develop awareness and sensitivity of cultural differences?' One response was 'Just a little bit. Most of my group was Israeli as well and the other two students I only know from our *WhatsApp* group. I did learned some things about them but it was (not) so significant as to raise awareness and sensitivity to cultural differences (the other course, *Embracing Diversity*, did raise these!)'. Another replied 'As my team was from one country - this question is irrelevant', a third ' Not at all, my group was almost all-Israeli.'

The second point to emerge was the different levels of commitment between students in different countries and institutions. The extent to which these courses were compulsory elements of academic programs and offered academic credit was left to the discretion of each partner. The impression that emerges from the feedback therefore, perhaps compounded by the high proportion of feedback from Israeli students, is that they were sometimes frustrated by the level of commitment of students in other countries. Negative experiences that emerged from the *Global Entrepreneurship* course for example included 'Demotivated teammates that contributed nothing', 'Lack of participate of some students in the group', 'member's irresponsibility, last-minute motivation', 'Lack of team members motivation and commitment.' A prompt on the same survey inviting students to consider whether they had encountered 'Free-riding (some persons in a team do not contribute to the teamwork to their full potential, or undermine the team working process)' resulted in 41 ratings of '5', 41 ratings of '4', 35 of '3', 20 of '2' and 21 of '1'. Feedback on the *English for Internationalization purposes* included 'Didn't like the group - members were not serious and I didn't have the others emails so it made it hard to contact them.'

This diversity in terms of the commitment levels of students from different departments is largely explained by two factors. First, these courses included students at different stages in their education - specifically, they included Masters and Doctoral level students in addition to undergraduates. Second, partners differed in the extent to which they offered academic credit for completion of the

courses and/or the extent to which they were part of a wider programme of studies. As a general rule, colleges in Israel tended to offer credit - indeed in some instances considered the courses compulsory - those in Europe did so to a lesser degree.

These issues should not be overstated however - the overwhelming impression from the feedback is that students found their involvement with those in other countries to be both enjoyable and beneficial. Other responses on the *Essential Skills* course for example included 'It helped me to be aware to my teammates opinions and to respect and accept them', 'I've found it really easy to work and cooperate with other people even if we are from different cultures... it was like we study in the same college. We learn from each other about the holidays in each culture' and '...I already knew some cultural biases, but in this course, I also studied new approaches and even practiced them in communications with the team!', 'I learned that every culture is unique and especially the individuals in it. I saw that especially in the teamwork module. Some chose personal things and others cultural things that represent them so I could learn more about their culture and the personal views and beliefs', 'It gave insight to different cultures through my group-mates, and helped to connect with the different backgrounds and cultures on a personal level.'

Students who participated in the *Global Entrepreneurship* course were similarly enthusiastic. Invited to indicate what they enjoyed about the course their comments included 'Getting to know and work with other people', 'Getting to know people from different places', 'Getting to know students from other universities', 'Getting to work with people from different fields',' I enjoyed the most to work with students around the world',' I enjoyed the whole idea of international hackathon.'

Particular mention should be made of the conferences that were held in Milan and London at the conclusion of the course. Several students attended to give feedback on their courses and the wider project. In discussion, this opportunity drew high praise, not only to meet their fellow students from other countries, but also to work together on a the preparation of a joint presentation to the conference.

THE COURSES

As indicated above, the courses themselves differed in terms of content, pedagogy, assessment and evaluation. In assessing their success therefore, three points are critical:

- First, members of the partnership differed in the extent to which the courses were compulsory and/or offered academic credit that contributed towards final awards. This had a number of implications, most noticeably the differing levels of engagement and motivation between

students in different institutions. As such, the ratio of students who successfully completed the course is not a particularly useful indicator of their success. For the record the statistics were:

English for Internationalization Purposes	90 students from 7 institutions
Global Entrepreneurship	164 students from 6 institutions
Embracing Diversity	125 students from 5 institutions.
Essential Skills	115 students from 7 institutions.

- Secondly, and related to the first point, the usual indicator of the extent to which faculty consider their students to have successful met the learning objectives of the course – academic grades – were not available on-line. Even if they were, each used a different system for grading. In some cases grades were given by each instructor to all students (from all the institutions) to the module he/she developed. In other courses, the development team decided on a set of criteria and each instructor gave the grades to his/her students (in the institution) since it was part of a bigger programme.

- Third, though all courses invited student feedback, this tended to be provided only by those who successfully completed the courses. As such the feedback is generally positive - particularly when students are invited to comment on the extent to which they have met the learning objectives.

This combination of factors means that feedback is available only from a minority of the students originally registered. Moreover, it means that this feedback is overwhelming positive and lacks the balance that input from those who either left, or failed, the courses would have provided.

The commentary that follows therefore is mainly a presentation of (somewhat uncontroversial) data for each course which presents the extent to which staff and students met the goals set out in the respective course syllabi.

ENGLISH FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION PURPOSES

TIMETABLE

- Unit 1: Getting Started – Introductions and registration in groups - 4/3/2018
- Unit 2: Meet your Group – Self-presentation skills - 11/3/2018
- Unit 3: Your Dream Job – Employment and self-agency - 18/3/2018

- Unit 4: Academic listening - 10/4/2018

- Unit 5: Academic reading - 17/4/2018

UNIT 6: GROUP PRESENTATIONS - 22/4/2018COURSE STRUCTURE

- Unit 1: Getting Started

- Unit 2: Meet your group

- Unit 3: Your dream job

- Unit 4: Academic listening

- Unit 5: Academic reading

- Unit 6: Academic presentations

ACADEMIC TEAM

- Dr. Doron Narkiss, Kaye College

- Dr. Costanza Peverati, UCSC

- Ms. Amit Marantz Gal, Sapir College

- Ms. Joanna Kozuchowska, Warsaw University of Technology

- Ms. Merav Pagis, The Academic College of Tel-Aviv Yaffo

- Dr. Ahmad Amar, Al-Qasemi College

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The *English for Internationalization Purposes* course is designed to enhance students' practical language skills for today's global professional and academic environment.'

COURSE FEEDBACK

38 students completed the post course feedback survey. They were asked 'Do you feel more confident in English as a result of the course?' The replies were:

Not confident at all – 4

Slightly more confident – 18

Yes – more confident – 2

A lot more confident - 6

TIMETABLE

- Registration ends – 8/11/17
- Team building ready – 15/11/17
- Hackathon launch – 24/11/17 at 9:30 UK time, 10:30 French time, 11:30 Israel time
- Hackathon in action – 24-26/11/17 (the hackathon will be supported on-line via the *Moodle*)
- Presentations submitted – Sunday night 26/11/17 at 22:00 UK time, 23:00 French time, midnight Israel time
- Mentors' feedback – by 3/12/17
- Students' feedback – by 7/12/17 (Students must submit their comments on the program, without it they will not be graded and they will not be considered to travel for the final event).

COURSE STRUCTURE

- Welcome
- Course Navigator
- What is global entrepreneurship
- The Hackathon
- How do we create great ideas?
- What is the challenge and what is your idea?
- Working in your international team
- Handing in the pitch
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Post course survey

ACADEMIC TEAM

- Dr. Martha Mador, Kingston University
- Prof. Eli Gimmon, Tel Hai College
- Dr. Vered Yiflach, Kaye Academic College of Education
- Dr. Moshe Shavit, ORT Braude College
- Mr. Ron Dvir, ORT Braude College
- Mrs. Anat Goldstein, Tel Aviv Yaffo Academic College
- Dr. Christine Marsal, University of Montpellier

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Learn the basics of entrepreneurship process in international context

Participate in an international team

- Innovate ideas for a better life in future cities
- For more information on the hackathon challenge please refer to: http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/cities/http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/cities/
- Participate in an on-line international hackathon
- Produce a team deliverable in the form of a presentation and a narrated pitch

At the end on the program students will understand important aspects of the entrepreneurship process in terms of what does entrepreneurship mean, ideation, innovation and problem solving, business models, marketing and outcomes. Basics of project management will be practiced. The students will experience work in international context with students and mentors from other countries and different cultures.'

COURSE FEEDBACK

158 students completed the post course feedback survey. They were asked a eleven questions about what they had learned, that spoke to the learning objectives of the course. The replies were:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Ave
I understand the role entrepreneurs play in our society	0	2	4	21	31	50	50	5.73
I understand that there are different reasons why people start businesses (eg social entrepreneurs, profit making, independence)	0	1	4	15	25	45	68	5.98
I understand that some business ideas work and others don't	1	2	3	12	25	51	64	5.96
I am able to come up with new ideas	1	2	4	24	38	40	49	5.61
I am able to think outside the box		2	8	22	38	37	51	5.60
I am able to identify opportunities for new ways to conduct activities	1	2	8	27	37	46	37	5.42
I am able to deal with sudden changes and surprises		3	7	21	37	56	34	5.51
I am able to manage uncertainty in projects and processes	1	2	7	23	46	41	38	5.44
I am able to work under stress and pressure	2	3	8	25	29	46	45	5.49

I am confident working in international / culturally diverse teams		2	3	20	23	47	63	5.89
I am confident communicating my ideas	1		8	14	29	45	61	5.84

EMBRACING DIVERSITY

TIMETABLE

- 3 May - 20 July 2017

COURSE STRUCTURE

- Introduction to Embracing Diversity
- Introduce yourself
- Module 1 - Multiculturalism
- Module 2 - Disability, Accessibility and Universal Design for Learning
- Module 3 - Facial Appearance
- Module 4 - Gender and Sexual Orientation
- Summary - Embracing Diversity at your Doorstep

ACADEMIC TEAM

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- Orit Almog Phd., Head of the Faculty of Education Council and a lecturer at Beit Berl Academic college, Israel.
- Lea Jeager Phd., Lecturer at Beit Berl Academic college, Israel.
- Andrea Notarnicola, Diversity and Inclusion practitioner, Italy.
- Susanna Sancassani Prof., Managing Director, METID Politecnico di Milano, Italy
- Valeria Baudo, *IN2IT* Community Manager, Politecnico di Milano, Italy.
- Nicoletta Trentinaglia, *IN2IT* Project Manager, Politecnico di Milano, Italy.
- Steffen Schaal Prof., Phd., Ludwigsburg University of Education, Germany.
- Boaz Levtov Phd., Beit Berl Academic college, Israel.
- Nazeh Natur Phd., Al-Qasemi College of Education, Israel.
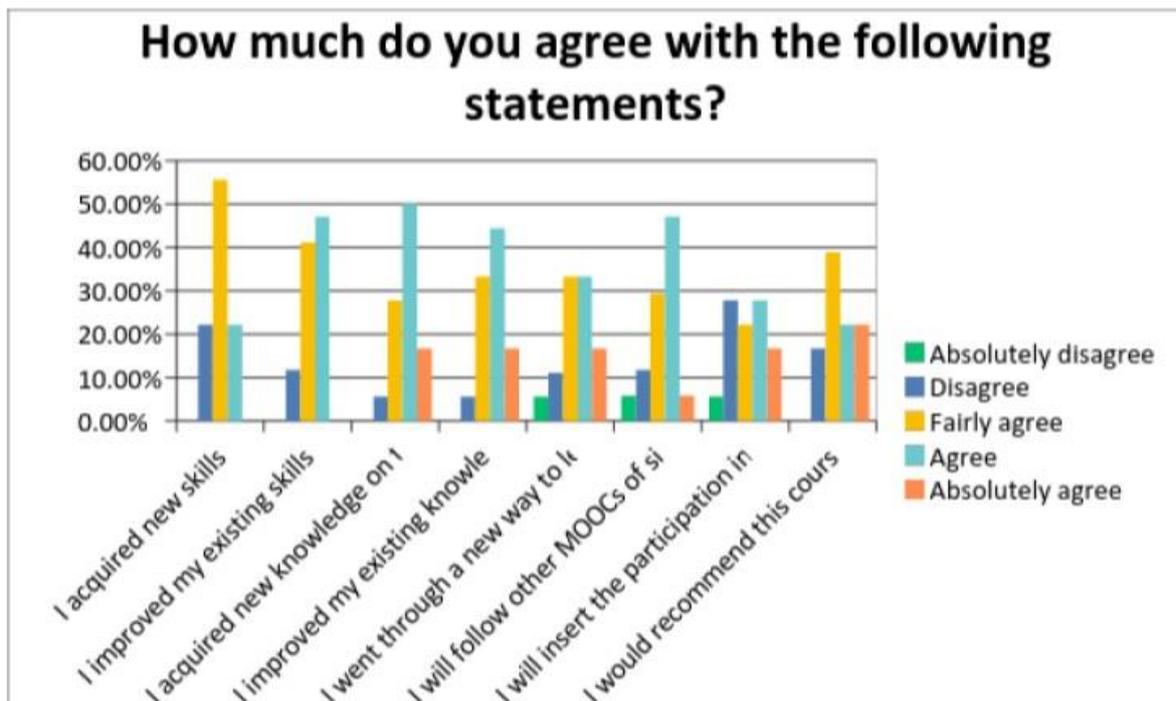- Suzan Orwell, Kingston University, England.
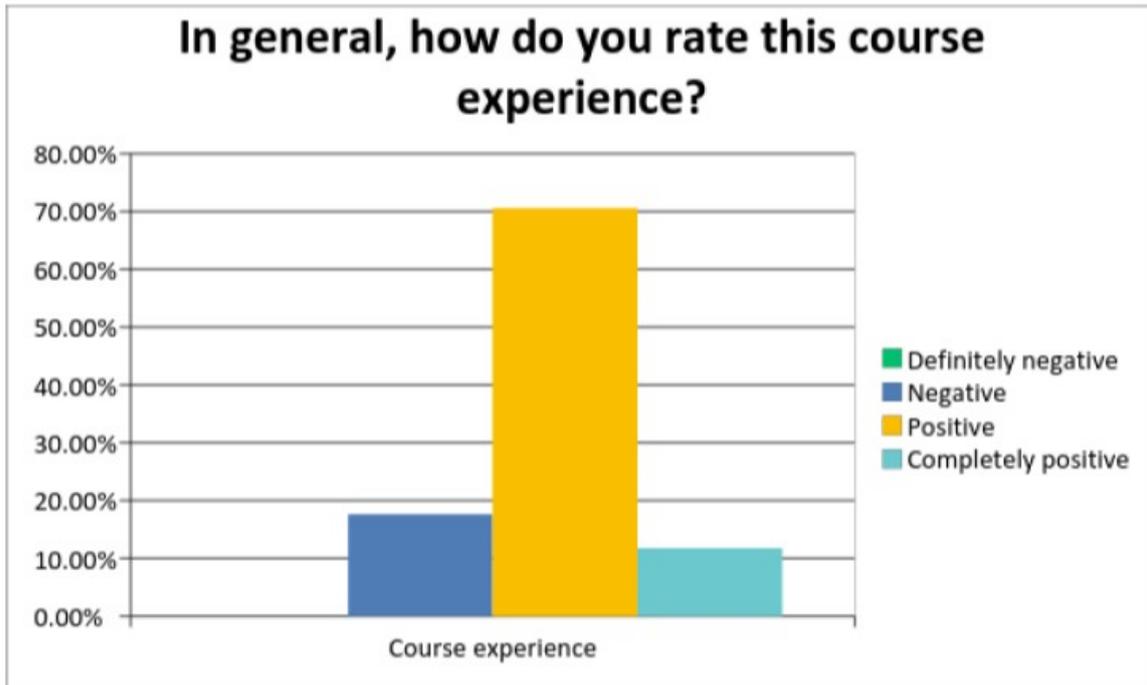
COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Students will be exposed to multiple aspects of diversity and realize the great opportunities in diverse societies.
2. Students will be able to identify stereotypes and other potential risks of diverse societies and also potential opportunities that diverse societies bear.
3. Students will be able to self-critique and evaluate own-self stereotypes in own geographical locations.
4. Students will learn to "embrace diversity" through a place based activity.'

COURSE FEEDBACK

Institution	Registration	Completions	%
Kingston University	30	16	
LUE	8	4	
KC	4	3	
BBC	3	3	
POLIMI	9	5	
Total	54	31	57%

18 students completed the final questionnaire. They were invited to consider a range of questions related to the learning objectives of the course. Their replies were as follows:

In general, how do you rate this course experience?

Legend: Definitely negative, Negative, Positive, Completely positive

X-axis: Course experience

TIMETABLE

- 30 October and 26 January 2018

ACADEMIC TEAM

- Dr. Osnat Dagan, Beit Berl College
- Dr. Dvora Toledano-Kitai, ORT Braude College
- Mrs. Sharon Tidhar, ORT Braude College
- Dr. Miri Shacham, ORT Braude College
- Prof. Shira Hantman, Tel Hai College
- Mrs. Miriam Ben-Oz, Tel Hai College
- Mrs. Amanda Baker, Brunel University
- Mrs. Natalie Parnis, Brunel University
- Dr. Busayawan Lam, Brunel University
- Dr. Fiona Deney, Brunel University

DR. GIL BOZER, SAPIR ACADEMIC COLLEGECOURSE STRUCTURE

- F2F meetings

- Reflective Thinking

- Coaching Skills

- Team Work A

- Team Work B

- Personal Leadership

- Creative Thinking

- Problems Solving

- Presenting outcomes

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, the students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of main theories of essential skills introduced in the course.
2. Communicate and collaborate effectively in cross-cultural teams in an on-line environment.
3. Apply critical, creative and reflective thinking and problem solving skills for their own personal development through the creation of a leadership development portfolio.
4. Demonstrate awareness and sensitivity of cultural differences. '

COURSE FEEDBACK

29 students completed the final questionnaire. They were invited to consider a range of questions. some on a scale of 1-5. The statistical data presented in the report is incomplete, but is presented as fully as possible below.

		1	2	3	4	5
How clear was the description of the course, what you were expected to do and how you communicated with your teammates online?	If you attended Face 2 Face Meeting	0	1	2	16	10
	If you followed the instructions on-line	0	4	5	9	11
To what extent did you find each module easy to	Reflective Thinking	0	0	2	12	15
	Coaching Skills	1	1	3	8	13
	Team work	0	1	8	12	8

understand and follow (ie content videos, links etc)	Personal Leadership	0	0	5	4	20
	Problem Solving					
Were the instructions clear for each task clear?		0	5	3	18	3
How easy was it to perform the reflection after each module?		0	1	5	17	6
Did you find the use of each learning technology useful to achieve the learning outcomes of the course	Google Drawing	0	1	2	16	10
	Padlet					
	Liglio	5	1	9	11	3
	Personal Portfolio					
Were the team tasks interesting for you?		1	2	5	8	12

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The stated objectives of the *IN2IT* project were:

- to develop and implement an innovative technological infrastructure for the purpose of advancing internationalization in higher education, and thereby;
- to expand the practical applications of internationalization in Israeli academic colleges,
- to strengthen the capacities for teaching, learning, research, and training, and
- to improve the quality and positioning of Israeli funded academic higher education colleges.'

In terms of the specific objectives for those who take part, the project 'aims to boost skills and employability.'

Clearly *IN2IT* has developed an infrastructure that has strengthened academic and administrative networking and collaboration both within Israel and between Israeli institutions and those in multiple countries. This infrastructure ranges from simple interpersonal relations (on-line and in-person), through formal meetings and conferences, and international teams of students, faculty and administrators. It is also represented by the technological infrastructure that underpins the *IN2IT* website and the *Moodle* platform which hosted three of the four courses.

There can be little doubt that this objective has been successfully delivered. Both student and staff feedback stressed the breadth of this infrastructure and the extent to which they had enjoyed creating and delivering it. With few exceptions, students wrote of how they were more aware of other cultures

and perspectives, while faculty recounted how they had enjoyed learning about different approaches to course development and delivery. One faculty in particular noted that the academic team that had delivered one of the courses were now good friends.

Similarly, *IN2IT* has been successful in expanding the practical applications of internationalization in Israeli colleges. Engagement in the partnership is a form of internationalization in itself, but the learning implicit in the design and delivery of courses is equally important. Several faculty indicated that this was their first experience of on-line teaching and learning. The same applied to a significant proportion of students. That these experiences took place in the wider context of international courses means that not only has the capacity to work on-line been enhanced, but awareness of the issues around developing and delivering courses that offer an international experience for those at home, and abroad, are now better understood and appreciated.

As a consequence, the third objective – to strengthen the capacities for teaching, learning, research, and training – has also been delivered successfully. The ability of faculty to develop and deliver courses on-line and in an international context has been enhanced; the ability of students to study and learn, similarly. Those engaged in research have not only encountered new teaching and learning approaches, but now have access to wider fields of study and a network of staff and students with whom to explore them. Those engaged in training now have a greater depth of experience on which to draw.

The final two objectives – 'to improve the quality and positioning of Israeli funded academic higher education colleges' and 'In terms of the specific objectives for those who take part, the project aims to boost skills and employability' are similar. They are however, harder to evaluate as they represent outcomes rather than objectives. While it is possible to demonstrate that student and staff skills have been improved, and the capacities of their institutions enhanced by participation in the *IN2IT* project, the extent to which this will affect the quality and positioning of Israeli higher education can only be assessed over a period longer than either the project, or indeed this review, will allow. The same applies to the employability of students. Any improvements in the performance of the sector, or in the employability of individuals, will be affected by other factors - political, economic and environmental - which lie outside of the scope of this project. Ultimately, the long term outcomes of projects like *IN2IT* are dependent on the choices of the individuals who participated, within the wider context of the circumstances with which they are faced.

An assumption of the *Erasmus Plus* programme is that its projects should ultimately lead to sustainable outcomes. There is every sign that this is the case. Both *English for Internationalisation Purposes* and

Global Entrepreneurship have been offered since the initial pilot. The courses themselves continue to be developed and enhanced. The partnerships that were forged during the project not only continue, but to grow.

While the objectives of the *IN2IT* project have been largely delivered, staff and students have taken the opportunity both to identify areas in which it was less successful and to indicate how it might be improved in future. Issues range from the macro – the management of curriculum design, development and delivery - through the operation of the learning management system, academic teams and student groups, course assessment, to micro issues such as the timing of course delivery and the administration of student data. In a similar vein, the recommendations that follow pick up several of these issues and offer suggestions as to how they might be addressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. While one of the stated aims of the *IN2IT* project was to enhance the skills and employability of students, there was no single document which set out exactly which skills should be enhanced. Discussions with faculty suggested that there was consensus around the concepts of soft skills and communications but equally these concepts were described as 'vague and fuzzy.' This meant that while the courses did develop skills and expertise, collectively they did so in an uncoordinated way – there were areas of overlap; there may have been areas that were omitted. Similarly feedback from faculty suggested that it would have useful to meet others involved in the process of course design and delivery - 'we could have learned a great deal from each other.'

   To enhance the coordination in future, it is recommended that:

   A representative academic committee with responsibility for coordinating its constituent courses be established. Its purpose should be to:

   - *develop coordinated learning outcomes;*
   - *Specify which learning outcomes should be developed by which course;*
   - *Oversee the process of course design and development;*
   - *Consider, advise, and approve syllabi prepared by the academics responsible for each course;*
   - *provide a forum for mutual learning between the different courses.*

2.   Each course developed different approaches to student feedback both in terms of method and content. None of the course feedback forms directly addressed the learning outcomes of the wider project. Feedback from staff was not routinely collected.

It is recommended that:

- *The approach to student feedback on each course in terms of form and timing should be standardised;*
- *Students should be invited to comment not only on the learning objectives for the individual course, but also on the extent to which they have met the learning outcomes of the wider project;*
- *A standardised mechanism to collect staff feedback on each course should be developed. This mechanism should also embrace course objectives and project outcomes.*

3.   In terms of the course design, while the courses contain many examples of good practice, they would be strengthened through further familiarity with the pedagogy for on-line learning that has been developed over the last 30 years. Solutions to some of the issues that arose – for example, the need to provide pro-active moderation to ensure students engage fully in on-line discussions; weaknesses of automatically marked quizzes and the need to provide on-line and, on occasion, on-site support to students when asking them to use unfamiliar systems and/or software – are well established in the literature.

Feedback indicated clearly that this was the first experience of on-line course development and delivery for many of those involved. Though the outcomes were ultimately successful, the learning curve might have been shorter and less steep.

It is recommended that consideration be given to engaging those with appropriate experience and expertise in on-line learning to provide a baseline of training. This would be particularly useful in the early stages of course design.

4.   Student feedback indicated clearly that the level of engagement between those in different institutions varied considerably. This was the result of recruiting students at different stages of their education and of varied practices amongst the partners in the extent to which they offered credit and/or the courses were compulsory.

To ensure greater consistency of experience between students at different partner institutions, it is recommended that guidelines are developed on:

- *the likely student profile to guide recruitment;*
- *expectations in terms of student workload.*

If possible, partners should develop a common approach to the award of academic credit.

In closing, as with all projects of this nature, there were areas that can and should addressed in future iterations through appropriate application of the recommendations above. However, in terms of the objectives of the *IN2IT* project, it has been successful: feedback from staff and students is overwhelmingly positive; the courses continue to be enhanced and offered; the partnerships forged amongst staff and students, continue to grow.

I commend all those involved.