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SURVIVING AND THRIVING IN TURBULENT TIMES

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Even before the pandemic forced us all online, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) were having to respond to pressures that affected research, teaching, and even institutional organisation. The economic crisis and high levels of unemployment have forced HEIs to incorporate new forms of teaching and learning, and to enhance how HE can help citizens prepare themselves for an evolving labour market. This might involve, for example, the integration of microcredentials into existing courses or the recognition of prior learning. Moreover, the ongoing existential threat of climate change necessitates a transition to a greener economy, which HEIs must also support (Royo *et al.*, 2021). Hence, there are current and future issues that need to be tackled by University Lifelong Learning (ULLL) or University Continuing Education (UCE) in its different forms. This second volume of the European Journal of University Lifelong Learning (EJULL) addresses some of these issues and focuses on *Contemporary Issues in University Lifelong Learning* in this special edition on the eucen ULLL Open Fora 2021 (eucen, no date).

eucen ULLL OPEN FORA

The eucen ULLL Open Fora is a series of short activities that takes place over the course of one month, highlighting four hot topics in each of the four weeks. eucen started this during the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, in November 2020, when all in-person activities had been cancelled. The ULLL Open Fora provide a stage for short presentations and focused in-depth discussions, each week starting with a master class - an introduction to the topic by a well-known expert from academia, policy, or business sharing his or her insights. After short presentations on each subsequent day, the week concludes with a panel discussion on the week's topic with key stakeholders and presenters. A collection of papers based on the eucen ULLL Open Fora 2020 has already been published in the former eucen *eJournal of University Lifelong Learning* (eucen, 2020).

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN UNIVERSITY LIFELONG LEARNING

The eucen ULLL Open Fora 2021 *Contemporary Issues in University Lifelong Learning* focused on four topics that were explored for their potential contributions to ULLL as well as vice versa, the reciprocal impact of ULLL on the topics. The topic *professionalisation in adult and lifelong learning* placed both adult educators and adult learning at universities at the forefront and explored ways in which professionalisation could be further promoted,

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signalling challenges of quality development in the field. The second week's topic, *transitions towards new learning strategies*, focused on learning strategies being implemented in order to deal with global and systemic changes and to achieve long-term sustainability goals. Week three explored the topic of *designing flexible learning for adults* and was based on current trends for flexibility and criterion-based learning, all within the framework of the growing dialogue between ULLL and professional contexts. The final week focused on *diversity and inclusion in higher education*, starting from the assumption of existing inequalities in access and examining different HE systems and societies in which they function, including how obstacles to participation are experienced differently by different groups.

THE (HIDDEN) ROLE OF COVID-19

Our editorial on this EJULL starts with the final discussion, in which a panel of moderators of the Open Fora reflected on the topics and on "how does this all fit?" (eucen, 2021). They discussed outstanding, puzzling or troubling insights, what learning could be gained for universities and for university lifelong learning and, finally, what needs to be done.

Overall, all topics were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Although not an explicit topic, the pandemic affected (and continues to affect) our professional lives in ULLL, in research, in management, and in teaching and learning. The pandemic found its way into *Contemporary Issues* – be it as a magnifying glass or as a catalyst (Käpplinger and Lichte, 2020), as disruption (García-Morales, Garrido-Moreno and Martín-Rojas, 2021), or as veiling other important issues.

Covid-19 and the topic of health outshone other topics relevant for dealing with our future(s) and with *new learning strategies* that need our attention as individuals, as institutions and as societies: The issue of climate change, the issue of migration, and reflexivity – all of them important for developing a sense of resilience. These topics are also key in developing ULLL that contributes to sustainable, democratic and inclusive societies.

As regards *professionalisation in adult and lifelong learning,* the pandemic acted as a magnifying glass, demonstrating an urgent need for more professionalisation of adult educators, including enhanced digital skills needed for adult educators in this challenging world.

The pandemic also served as catalyst for thinking outside the box when it came to the *design of flexible learning* for adult learners and looking at ways to facilitate this in more depth by integrating different perspectives. At the same time, it also helped highlight the blind spot that exists with respect to quality assurance, as there are (still) no universally applicable quality assurance systems in place for online learning and open educational resources.

Last but not least, with regard to *diversity and inclusion,* the pandemic cast its shadow on existing inequalities. Despite well-established policies in many countries to encourage participation in higher education, access still reflects deep social inequalities, which the pandemic has both exposed further and exacerbated.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Taking these reflections as a starting point, the discussion focussed on the learnings for universities and on their roles and responsibilities with regard to the different issues.

One important insight that emerged is the potential and responsibility of each and every individual at the university - every single person matters in achieving change. Still, the influence of institutional policies on how universities deal with diversity and inclusion cannot be underestimated. Furthermore, universities need to reclaim their autonomy in again becoming leaders in co-creation and taking risks with new learning strategies. This, in turn, leads to a third component: the dialogue that is needed between universities and the outer world, between researchers and practitioners, and between institutions and individuals. Flexibility is needed in order to design pathways and offers that are scalable and efficient/profitable, yet continue to meet the ongoing needs of learners of different ages, forms of employment, and developmental tasks, making learning available to all. This brings us to a broader task with regard to the societal and public role of universities: Providing equitable access to science and scientifically led knowledge construction and representing as well as demonstrating social sensitivity and solidarity with those who are in difficult situations.

FOUR CLAIMS

What are the main messages of the eucen ULLL Open Fora 2021? Furthermore, what needs to be done? The call to action can be encapsulated in four claims made by the panellists in the final discussion that affect university lifelong learning at its heart and that are reflected in the contributions of this volume of the journal:

- Writing lifelong learning into the current development of the curriculum while valuing what students bring with them.
- Making learning a transformational experience for our students and being campaigners for lifelong learning within our institutions.
- Supporting critical thinking and reflection – and making the university a place to be by cultivating a culture of lifelong learning within.
- And last, but not least: Keeping the human touch, resilience and some craziness to achieve change within our institutions.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND CONTENT

Our journal aims to reflect the diversity of our members and our readership and their various perspectives on ULLL, be they managerial-, research, or practice-based. Therefore, we include *research papers* that draw on theoretical debates or empirical research, contextualized within current national and international policy debate, developing the theoretical base of the field or report on significant research done. Contributions showing and illustrating *innovative practice or short papers* provide another perspective. They offer a closer look at certain practices, approaches or projects that are either in progress or have been completed, and critically reflect upon their impact within the university or beyond. And finally, we include *discussion papers*, presenting informed opinion and reflection on new trends, current research or policy developments within or connected to ULLL. We are, therefore, delighted to have in this issue a small, fine selection of seven articles: three research papers, one short paper, two innovative practice articles and one discussion paper. They are connected by the different perspectives and experiences they offer: from university actors and the professions, from companies and practitioners as well as from adult learners. They draw on manifold methodologies, from international surveys to longitudinal life course enquiry, merging climate-fiction with future studies methodologies and combining auto-ethnographic approaches with critical race theory. Crucially, they also highlight the role of emotion.

Picking up on the topic of resilience and the need for developing scenarios for sustainable futures(s), especially in urban environments, the short paper of *Christine Roussat and Valentina Carbone* explores sustainable development from a perspective of climate-fiction. In their explorative research, the writers bring theory and fiction into dialogue and provide the readers with a novel methodology to examine alternative future scenarios in the age of climate change.

The next two articles focus on the role of professionalisation in adult learning in higher education. *Vanessa Beu and Regina Egetenmeyer* examine the topic of international collaboration in higher education from a perspective of professionalisation in adult education. While presenting a specific approach in their innovative practice piece, the writers identify both the affordances that contribute to and the underpinning causes that hinder HEIs from achieving their internationalisation goals.

Taking a closer look at adult learners in higher education, *Elise Glass's discussion paper* explores the role of educational programmes in HE as a distinct means of professionalisation of practitioners. The paper focusses on reflective practice in degree programmes in the field of education. She invites us to reflect on what practitioners actually learn in these programmes and how this learning may differ from other forms of professionalisation.

The connection between professional context and university lifelong learning is discussed in the following two research articles. *Jane Wormald* examines enablers and restrictors in navigating careers in England, through partaking in university continuing education. The author brings attention to the lived experiences of adult learners in UCE through a longitudinal life course enquiry. With this narrative approach, we come to understand the delicate balance between investing in professional development, managing daily life and making ends meet financially. Keeping with the topic of professionalisation, *Alfredo Soeiro, Karel de Wever and Dirk Bochar* explore practices in continuous professional development in the engineering profession. Harvesting data from a survey conducted with members of the community of the federation of engineering professional organizations (FEANI), the authors portray the needs and practices of the engineering community, and analyse attainment of different forms of continuous professional development for a more robust and effective university lifelong learning delivery.

Diversity and inclusion are reflected in this volume with two articles. In their innovative practice piece, *Carme Royo and Timo Halttunen* study inclusion in universities through the perspectives of ethnicity, gender and socio-economic background. Based on experiences of a European development project, they reflect on the importance of aligning dissemination and mainstreaming activities in projects to institutional strategies on equality, inclusion and non-discrimination for social impact. In keeping with analysis on individual accounts about participating in education, *Lilian Nwanze-Akobo* reflects in her auto-ethnographic research paper on two contrasting experiences in creating critically inclusive classrooms. The author argues that techniques used in the classrooms by educators can serve either to facilitate inclusion or further deepen the disadvantage and systemic exclusion experienced by non-traditional students. With this paper, the writer contributes to the salient discourses of inclusion and diversity in education.

Our *Journal* concludes with three questions by *Timo Halttunen* to *Karen Ferreira-Meyers* and *Maureen Andrade*, where they discuss the topic of drivers for flexibility in ULLL. Presenting two different settings, one from Africa, and the other from the United States, the discussants explore experiences of universities in transition to hybrid and online learning due to the global pandemic. These realities provide us with an interesting viewpoint to understand how different HEIs across the world were able to develop instructional plans for staff development and uptake online learning during these unexpected circumstances.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of our journal and that it is stimulating and inspiring for you – as the work on this edition was for us. We thank all our authors for their insightful contributions and all our reviewers for their support in making these articles shine even more brightly.

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NEW YORK CITY IN THE ANTHROPOCENE: LEARNING FROM FICTION

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ABSTRACT

This essay presents research based on the intuition that a work of fiction (in this case, *Odds Against Tomorrow,* by Nathaniel Rich) can enrich the theoretical perspective on climate change in management sciences. We propose the relevance of apocalyptic fiction to decipher the reactions of different social groups to the events of the Anthropocene, and the modalities of collective action that result from them. We challenge, with the help of a qualitative coding methodology, the text of the post-apocalyptic fictional book with Hoffman and Devereaux-Jennings' (2018) Anthropocene archetypes. This ongoing research is based on an original methodology and produces creative writing; its results enrich the theory of archetypes of the Anthropocene and reinforce its performativity.

RESEARCH IN A NEW GEOLOGICAL ERA

Environmental conditions on Earth continue to deteriorate, as shown by various official reports (IPCC, International Panel for Climate Change, for example) which scientists use to try to alert the populations and their governance. These new conditions are now labelled as the Anthropocene. The word was first used by the Physics Nobel Prize winner Josep Crutzen, who defines it as an age where human dominance of biological, chemical and geological processes on Earth is an undeniable reality. The term is currently being debated by the International Society for Stratigraphy, which has not yet decided if Anthropocene will replace the label of Holocene, the current geological area which began around the end of the last glacial period. Anthropocene thus defines Earth's most recent geologic time period as being human-influenced, or anthropogenic, based on overwhelming global evidence that atmospheric, geologic, hydrologic, and other earth system processes are altered by humans.

For researchers in management sciences, taking an interest in the notion of the Anthropocene and its consequences on institutions and companies can foster new approaches to the issue, notably because our economic systems are closely related to climate change and resources extinction. In the research presented here, we cross-reference a founding academic production on the “Archetypes of the Anthropocene” (Hoffman and Devereaux-Jennings, 2018) with a work of fiction, Nathaniel Rich's post-apocalyptic novel *Odds Against Tomorrow*. This book appeared to us to be a powerful tool for amplifying and resonating the work of Hoffman and Devereaux-Jennings (2018), who propose a political-institutional vision of the Anthropocene society. Rich’s dystopian, fictional work – imagining

the submersion of New York City – can be qualified as climate-fiction and allows us to shake up theoretical archetypes by contrasting them with a catastrophic event.

ODDS AGAINST TOMORROW

The term climate-fiction, abbreviated as "Cli-Fi", first entered into the vernacular in April 2013 on National Public Radio (Washington D.C.) during a segment defining novels and movies that deal with human-induced climate change. Over recent years, there have been a number of literary works dealing with climate change; some were located in New York City (NYC), a popular backdrop for Cli-Fi. The central position of the Big Apple in fiction in general (from films like *Breakfast at Tiffany's* to *Godzilla*, *Night in the Museum* and so many others, for example) may be due to the symbolic power of the city, often considered the centre of the occidental world and a symbol of the American dream. The increasing amount of Cli-Fi fiction set in Manhattan also, however, likely reveals the city's very high vulnerability. The New York City Panel of Climate Change (2017) thus identifies a variety of risks. Among them are three highly likely risks that could lead to a global submersion: rising sea levels, increased flooding, and more frequent and intense storm events. Moreover, NYC is now structurally vulnerable to flooding: sea levels in its port have increased by nearly half a meter, hurricanes in the area have a one out of five probability of reaching the city (a figure that was 1 out of 100 at the beginning of the twentieth century), and soils artificialization and destruction of wetlands through lands reclaimed from the sea (Hoboken, for example) encourage runoff. Finally, despite increasing awareness on the part of authorities and the implementation of adaptation efforts, NYC's infrastructure (as regards sewage disposal, in particular) is ageing.

It is not surprising, therefore, that America's writers and imagemakers have pictured New York's annihilation in a stunning range of ways. "No city has been more often destroyed on paper, film, or canvas; and no city's destruction has been more often watched and read about than New York's," wrote Max Page in his 2008 book *The City's End* "and destruction of the environment is one of the most persistent of themes." Several novels (for example New-York 2140 from Kim Stanley Robinson, 2017) have explored the ways climate change could drastically damage the city's landscape. We chose to work with *Odds Against Tomorrow* (Rich, 2018) because, while reading it, we discovered that it matches perfectly with one of the main works from organizational science on the Anthropocene, namely the archetypes of the Anthropocene from Hoffman and Devereaux-Jennings (2018).

THE ARCHETYPES OF THE ANTHROPOCENE

Several papers from Hoffman and Devereaux-Jennings, rooted in institutional theory and organizational studies, explore the emergence of a new social reality, the Anthropocene society (Hoffman and Devereaux-Jennings, 2011, 2015). One of their main publications, from 2018, proposes a political and institutional vision of the Anthropocene society focusing on human (social, economic, political…) systems. Together, these systems constitute the past and present causes of the earth's deterioration and its consequences, and may themselves give rise to their own adaptation/mitigation (Seidl *et al*., 2013). Hoffman and Deveraux-Jennings (2018) thus envision the Anthropocene society as characterised by the existence of four archetypes: collapsed systems, market rules, technology-fix and cultural re-enlightenment providing a relevant reading of the different normative frameworks, and logics of action and political dynamics at work in the Anthropocene society. Collapsed systems define people or organizations who think that nothing can be done and thus prefer to resign themselves or rush into overconsumption. Market rules and technology-fix can be described as hybrid positions with a moderate consciousness of the Anthropocene. In these two archetypes, people and organizations want to preserve the current lifestyle - either by relying on the market (green growth) or on technology (geoengineering initiatives) - deeply believing

that corporate innovation and technology can save the world and the capitalistic way of life. While these three narratives somehow defend the pursuit of existing economic mechanisms, the final archetype, cultural re-enlightenment, explicitly challenges these assumptions. It supports the design of a new world, profoundly changing the human way of life towards more reflection and spirituality, in redefined systems characterized by economic sobriety or de-growth.

BRINGING THEORY AND FICTION INTO DIALOGUE

Our methodology developed an exploratory coding grid based on Hoffman and Devereaux-Jennings' archetypes, including the main variables they identified. We have isolated 10 criteria: awareness of environmental issues, dominant behaviours, justification of the logics at work, regulation, risks, dominant organizations, counter-powers, faith in science and technology, man-nature relationship, and vision of the future. This grid – the result of deductive reasoning – was completed during the coding, with two categories emerging from the fictional work: victims and symbolic objects. As we coded, we also found elements of text that revealed interfaces between the archetypes. In total, we coded the 306 pages of the book using these 13 criteria, in an abductive loop. This work of crossing between the fictional text and the theoretical production gave rise to two types of results. On the one hand, we told four different versions of the novel in the form of short stories (see below), each of which is representative of one of the archetypes in terms of the characters involved and their vision of events.

Excerpt from short story no. 2
Illustration of the "business as usual" archetype
Finally, it's raining. The newspaper displays photographs of ecstatic New Yorkers, actors from Broadway musicals dancing in Times Square, traders twirling in the rain, the markets rise nearly six points thanks to a massive surge in agribusiness. Clients are calling, Charnoble says, they want meetings, and meetings mean more money. An obscene sneer slides across his face like a water stain. This may be our first live disaster, we'll never get another chance like this.

On the other hand, the research resulted in a number of contributions to the work on the archetypes of the Anthropocene.

Firstly, fiction embodies the studied theoretical contributions. We compare Hoffman and Devereaux-Jennings' archetypes (2018) with extreme events, which requires significant work in filtering and interpreting the various normative frameworks and logics of action at work, acting as cultural anomalies (Hoffman and Devereaux-Jennings, 2011). Our work recomposes and contrasts worlds appearing either as an exacerbation of the Capitalocene society[1] (Moore, 2016), aiming to regulate the ecosystems' dysfunctions via market rules or disruptive technological innovation, or as heterogeneous, complex collectives where the relationships between self, between individuals, and between self and territory are new. In a second step, our work moves beyond simply embodying the archetypes and also aims to interface them. While Hoffman and Devereaux-Jennings (2018) present the four archetypes as a typology, the fictional material allows us to highlight the interfaces between the different types. Our work thus renders the archetypes sensitive and complex, features both men and women navigating the heart of the archetypes, and suggests that if the Anthropocene is systemic, men's response can be just as systemic, traversing and connecting several archetypes depending on events, encounters, and phases of awareness. Finally, the

[1] Some authors prefer to name the Anthropocene the 'Capitalocene' in order to highlight the fact that the earth's degradation has not been caused by all of humanity, but more precisely by its capitalistic activities (cf. Moore 2016).

research hierarchizes the archetypes by confirming the inanity of the collapsed vision and reinforcing the prevalence of the paradigms that dominate current society, i.e., the postures based on the simple reduction of negative externalities and the provision of solutions by the market or technology. In the hierarchical reading proposed by the fictional work, the archetype of cultural enlightenment is naturally valued. In a more interesting way, Rich's novel also shows its risks and possible drifts.

Our work thus follows in the footsteps of Volkmann (2001), who demonstrates that fictionalization gives the theory a performative character. Our approach claims that apocalyptic fiction has relevance to deciphering the reactions of different social groups to the events of the Anthropocene and the resulting modalities of collective action. Following the example of de Cock et al. (2021) or Mackay (2021), we argue that in order to face planetary challenges, and climatic ones in particular, we must use the realm of imagination to broaden our reflections on human and societal organization of the future.

EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF POSSIBLE FUTURES

In showing the existence of heterogeneous archetypes, their respective strength and their possible coexistence, we are more able to break with a linear and univocal reading of our future and pose possible futures, which may be useful in the present. Combining academic constructs and fictional reading seems likely to increase the scope of the theory, in particular through the use of emotions.

Our work certainly creates stories and gives life to characters, in turn provoking affect for the reader. The representation of all our options - from the most frugal to the most techno-optimistic – allows our readers here the means to project themselves into possible futures that can frighten or delight. Several researchers have empirically demonstrated that both positive emotions such as hope, as well as negative ones, such as fear (Meijnders *et al.* 2001, Filho *et al.*, 2017), are effective in motivating people to adopt pro-environmental behaviours (Nabi *et al.*, 2018). The converging point in the literature that addresses climate change and emotions is that emotions of any kind matter (Morris *et al.,* 2019). Several studies have examined how these two conflicting types of emotions can coexist and be effective: from feelings of responsibility and guilt to pride and anger. Furthermore, the purely scientific register used in the proliferation of reports (IPCC or IPBES[2], among others) on the rapid deterioration of natural ecosystems does not really 'speak' to individuals; narratives, on the other hand, which are structured as stories, may facilitate experiential processing, increasing affective engagement and emotional arousal, which is known to serve as an impetus for action (Morris *et al.*, 2019). Whether building on positive or negative emotions, they seem to represent a real point of leverage, capable of activating dynamics of change and individual and collective action.

TO BE CONTINUED?

As mentioned before, the research that we quickly sum up here serves as a complement to the theoretical work of Hoffman and Devereaux-Jennings (2018), embodying, interfacing, and prioritizing the archetypes of the Anthropocene and helping to emphasize the importance of emotions for climate change awareness. However, this creative work with Rich's fiction also afforded us the opportunity to develop a playful methodology for imagining alternatives, avoiding the linearity common to theorizations and representations of utopian and dystopian futures (Kallis and March, 2015). In this way, we hope that this type of production can

[2] The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services.

encourage individual - and even collective – action. We can imagine two ways to continue that kind of work.

First of all, fiction could be used in workshops with firms' managers or policy makers to figure out the possible future of cities. ONU states that in 2050, 70% of the worldwide population will live in an urban environment. Mobilising the theatre of the city and its possible dystopian futures to raise awareness of the climate transition may thus be a good intuition.

For their part, cities around the world are building their resilience by opting for ambitious transition programs. Stockholm, for example, started its transition very early on, becoming the first European city to be granted the Green Capital Award in 2010. The city implemented urban tolls to encourage the use of public transport, introduced a carbon tax on greenhouse gas emissions that has been in place since 1991 and never been contested; public transport uses biofuels such as ethanol, biodiesel, HVO - from oils - or biogas; the latter are local and produced on site using the capital's wastewater. On the other side of the world, the so-called "Model City of Latin America", Curitiba (Brazil) has been committed to an environmental policy since the 1980s. It sorts 70% of its waste, thanks to an ingenious exchange system: waste for baskets of vegetables, and the city has planted more than one million trees along its highways. The designed future of green cities can thus also provide us with positive visions, and engage us beyond the dystopian horizon of apocalyptic fictions. We would be close here to the *Solarpunk* movement, which wishes to reinject positive affects into our imaginations in order to re-enchant the future of our threatened world and its vulnerable cities. In concrete terms, the use of fiction could be developed within the framework of the Global Network of Learning Cities[3], which promotes the practice of lifelong learning, particularly in the context of the sustainable development objectives.

Using fiction to awaken to climate change and to shape possible paths to a better world could obviously be done through teaching. Experiences of that kind are flourishing. In France for example, ESCP Business School has developed a 30-hour design-fiction course. Here fictions of the possible futures are not only used but created by the students themselves. The course, focusing on a special theme each year (for example, the fate of the oceans) is structured in three phases. The first phase is about exploration and leads to frame the prospective question that the students will work with. The second phase deals with the formulation of the challenges to address, the definition of scenarios and possible 'worlds' to incorporate in scenario-building. The third and final phase consists of prototyping and creating fictional artefacts (Carbone et al., 2021). These kind of tools - either using existing fictions or elaborating fictional material – could be deployed in the particular context of lifelong learning education as the role of continuing education in raising awareness of sustainable development has long been debated (Blewitt 2004, Kearney and Zuber-Skerrit, 2012).

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PEDAGOGICAL PROFESSIONALISATION THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION – LEARNING BEYOND PRACTICE

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***Keywords**: academic professionalisation, education, reflective practitioner*

ABSTRACT

This discussion paper outlines potential learning outcomes of degree programmes in education with respect to the professionalisation of educational practitioners. A knowledge-centred approach to pedagogical professionalisation is supplemented by considerations on academic professionalisation in general. Finally, both perspectives are integrated, discussing curricular implications and resulting research desiderata.

INTRODUCTION

In the course of the massification of Higher Education (HE), an increasing number of students enters their studies with diverse life experience, turning universities into important places of adult education. While some of these students pursue their studies primarily out of personal interest or the goal of personal development, another predominant motivation for studying is the drive for professional development. From this perspective, University Lifelong Learning can be highlighted not only as a (special) form of adult learning, but also as a distinct means of the professionalisation of practitioners.

Professionalisation is a central topic in the field of education, embracing both social-institutional facets such as the development of regulation frameworks and individual facets, like the biographical formation of knowledge, orientations, motives and practices (Helsper, 2021). In bridging both sides, the role of thematically relevant degree programmes (i.e., BA Education Studies, MA of Educational Sciences) in professionalising practitioners deserves special attention: What is the added value of these study programmes with regard to learning outcomes? Or – to put it more plainly – *What do educational practitioners actually learn in thematically related degree programmes beyond practice?*

This paper will argue that degree programmes in the field of education are central to the professionalisation of educational practitioners. First, the concept of pedagogical professionalisation will be defined, drawing on a knowledge-centred approach that highlights the importance of academic knowledge. Second, general learning objectives of HE in the context of professionalisation are discussed. Finally, both perspectives are integrated, discussing curricular implications and resulting research desiderata.

PEDAGOGICAL PROFESSIONALISATION

Pedagogical professionalisation is a broad field, as neither the concrete borders of pedagogical tasks and activities nor their organisational framing can be clearly defined (Nittel, 2011). Professionalisation as a process can be viewed not only from a social-institutional or individual perspective, but also with respect to different issues (i.e., power relations, structure of actions; Helsper, 2021). In the context of research, a knowledge-based approach to pedagogical professionalism is helpful as it differentiates forms of knowledge that underpin professional actions.

Oevermann (1996, p. 80) points out the inherent tension of pedagogical actions between individual and societal interests, which, in light of "increasing social differentiation and rationalisation require an academic-critical foundation." Consequently, a central focus of professional pedagogical actions then becomes the “methodologically explicit review of validity questions and claims under the regulative idea of truth" (Oevermann, 1996, p. 88). Dewe, Ferchhoff and Radtke (1992) describe professional knowledge as an “independent realm between practical knowledge, with which it shares the permanent pressure to make decisions, and systematic academic knowledge, which is subject to an increased pressure to justify itself" (Dewe, Ferchhoff and Radtke, 1992, p. 81). This concept of pedagogical professional knowledge has recently been further elaborated by Helsper (2021). He distinguishes pedagogical professional knowledge as academically based knowledge to justify decisions, critical reflective knowledge and reconstructive, diagnostic knowledge, which should be developed by the "formation of a researching-reflective epistemological-critical attitude" (Helsper, 2021, pp. 136-138).

With regard to the function of academic knowledge in the context of professionalisation, Dewe (2002) points out that "it limits the options for actions and at the same time serves as a contouring foil [...]. In this sense, the academically (trained) practitioner is distinguished from the everyday practitioners […] by reflective knowledge that allows him to know what he is doing" (Dewe, 2002, p. 25). This relates to Schön’s concept of the “reflective practitioner” where reflection on action - the highest level of reflexivity - describes the reflection on past actions to “elicit and criticize the tacit understandings that have been formed around the repetitive experiences of a specialized practice” (Schön, 1983, p. 61).

However, the function of academic knowledge in this context requires further elaboration. As Cendon (2020, p. 238) points out, being a reflective practitioner may serve as an entry point into the studies, but the reflection borne out of relating one’s studies to one’s professional activities goes far beyond.

ACADEMIC PROFESSIONALISATION

The Dublin Descriptors for the European Higher Education Area may serve as a good overview with respect to the overarching learning objectives of European university degrees, linking academic learning outcomes to the professional sphere. For a Bachelor`s degree for instance, students are supposed to “apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation”, embracing competencies in devising and sustaining arguments, solving problems and gathering and interpreting data to inform judgements that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues (European Higher Education Area and Bologna Process, 2016). The Framework for Higher Qualifications in Germany explicitly refers to on an “‘academic self-image’, which is defined

as the ‘academic professionalism’ of graduates” (KMK, 2017, p. 4), when introducing the B.A. and M.A. degree framework.

The term academic professionalisation addresses professional development in an academic setting that differs from other forms of professionalisation in the working environment or non-academic professional trainings, covering structural (curricular), societal and personal aspects (Schüßler & Egetenmeyer, 2018). Barnett (1992, p. 186) points out that professional education is “a particularly complex form of higher education, having to satisfy a large number of educational objectives”, as professional practice “is itself a complex of possibilities” varying between clients and the concrete working field (Barnett, 1992, p. 188). Moreover, since “professional activity is an extraordinary amalgam of mind and body, of thought and action, of knowing and doing, […] professional education - if it is to be worthy of its object - should reflect that complexity and interwovenness” (Barnett, 1992, p. 190). Barnett then delineates four spheres of critical ability in the professional context, framing them as four domains of the professional educational curriculum. Higher Education is tasked with fostering the student`s critical ability in all four interdependent domains:

Cognitive domain	a)	Core knowledge	b)	Contextual knowledge
Professional domain	c)	Professional action	d)	Professional values

Table 1. Domains of the professional educational curriculum (Barnett, 1992, p. 187)

In a more recent publication, Barnett (2015) widens this approach by developing a “Curriculum for Critical Being”. Interestingly, the four levels of criticality in the domains “knowledge”, “self” and “world” and the bond to the professional sphere are inversely linked: The higher the level of criticality, the lower the connection to the professional sphere and vice versa. The lowest level of criticality, “critical skills”, is actually very closely related to the professional sphere: it is about “discipline-specific critical thinking skills” with regard to the domain of knowledge, “self-monitoring to given standards and norms” regarding the self and “problem-solving (means-end instrumentalism)” in the domain of the world (Barnett, 2015, p. 64). The second level, “reflexivity”, seems to cover central aspects of professionalism such as “self-reflection (reflection on one’s own projects)” and “reflective practice (‘metacompetence’, ‘adaptability’, ‘flexibility’)” (Barnett, 2015, p. 64).

SYNTHESIS AND OUTLOOK

Looking at the depicted approaches together, the study of education/educational science combines pedagogical and academic professionalisation, which can thus be justifiably viewed as a prerequisite for successful professionalisation in the field of education. Merely being a reflective practitioner may not be sufficient to remain competent in a complex educational situation in view of the special responsibility in educational settings and the complexity of the field as such. Rather than knowing exactly what do to by drawing on formulaic knowledge, pedagogical professionalism is characterised more by a broad (academic) knowledge base that serves as an orientation in complex professional settings. When integrated with the primary goal of HE – becoming a critical being (Barnett, 1997, 2015) – academic pedagogical professionalisation can be described as the development of a critical attitude regarding:

- (professional) knowledge (i.e., one’s own professional experience and its limits),
- the self (own attitudes and routines)

- and the world (especially the structural framing of the workplace and the societal framing of educational problems).

As demonstrated, academic professionalisation cannot be sufficiently explored without considering structural aspects, such as concrete curricula (Barnett, 1992; Schüßler & Egetenmeyer, 2018). In turn, the curricular framing is context-dependent, especially on a national level (i.e., DfGE, 2004 for Germany). With respect to core knowledge, educational study programmes have a speciality that renders them quite unique in the context of "becoming a critical being": as the studies essentially address just these topics in a professional context, professional and personal development are inextricably linked to each other. However, it is not only the core but also context knowledge that is relevant for an academic professional curriculum, embracing both liberal and operational contextual disciplines, offering a wider understanding of the professional practice itself *and* multidisciplinary, operative skills (Barnett, 1992). In contrast to these content considerations, the concept of basic methodological training within study programmes may also have a notable effect on professionalisation within the sphere of knowledge critique, as the (re-/de-) construction of knowledge is central in academic writing and research.

If we regard learning processes as bridging both the outlined desired learning outcomes (academic pedagogical professionalisation) and the input (the curricular frame), the concept of reflective learning in the context of HE (Cendon, 2016; 2020) merits further attention.

In particular, the relation between (theoretical and/or academic) knowledge and reflective learning could benefit from further clarification. Hereby, greater elaboration could be offered on what differentiates HE from other learning contexts where professional development is fostered. Finally, core topics of pedagogical knowledge and of related context knowledge must be concretised from the perspective of the learner, especially within the context of HE.

The research work that frames this paper will tackle these questions through a qualitative approach. While these results are pending, it may be worth doing some self-assessment as an adult educator and/or lecturer based on the approaches presented – what about our own knowledge and skills? To what extent do we reflect ourselves, our knowledge basis and our actions in the context of a learning society? Hopefully, the professionalisation of adult educators in HE will also benefit from the upcoming research.

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INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR PROFESSIONALISATION IN ADULT EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The movement towards an increasingly globalised world goes hand in hand with the growing importance of international collaboration among higher education institutions. In this paper, we outline how international collaborations can contribute to professionalisation in adult education from a theoretical and practical perspective. As an international university collaboration, the ERASMUS+ strategic partnership 'International and Comparative Studies for Students and Practitioners in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning (INTALL; 2018-2021) contributes to the professionalisation of adult education. By engaging in various forms of international collaboration (e.g., student mobility, joint research activities, joint curricula), students can broaden and reflect on their perspectives and contribute to international scientific discourse. Furthermore, international collaborations help students refine their language skills, intercultural skills, and international knowledge. Limitations to international collaborations include the need for financial resources and the need for a high level of commitment on the part of the higher education institutions. On the student side, financial means as well as temporal and mobile flexibility are needed. Shifts in the opportunities and limitations may result from the COVID-19 pandemic.

INTRODUCTION

The field of adult education is characterised by a variety of institutional structures, employment situations, fields of activities, learning contexts and providers (Breitschwerdt and Egetenmeyer, in press). Due to this diversity and complexity in combination with societal change (e.g., digitalisation, globalisation, COVID-19), adult educators are confronted with transformed and new requirements that must be taken into account with respect to professionalism in adult education (Schreiber-Barsch and Stang, 2021). Specifically, the emergence of an increasingly interconnected, globalised world (Jones, 2017, p. 22) highlights the need for internationalisation in adult education. This means that adult education as an academic discipline must prepare students for these developments in study programmes (Schüßler and Egetenmeyer, 2018, p. 1085). Therefore, international collaborations between higher education institutions have become essential (Jones, 2017; Knight, 2004).

This paper focusses on international collaborations in higher education institutions as a contribution to the professionalisation of (future) adult educators. First, we provide a rough definition of the term international collaborations between higher education institutions and

explain how they can contribute to professionalisation in adult education. Second, we analyse the contributions to professionalisation based on a concrete example: the ERASMUS+ strategic partnership INTALL.[4] Finally, the last chapter discusses the opportunities and limitations of international collaboration with regard to professionalisation in adult education.

INTERNATIONALISATION AND PROFESSIONALISATION

Internationalisation can be understood as a process of "increasing connectivity, collaboration and mutual influence beyond cultural and national borders" (Schmidt-Lauff and Egetenmeyer, 2015, p. 272). This includes the alignment of higher education with demands and challenges associated with the external environment (Knight, 2004, 9 f.).

International collaboration in higher education institutions

In recent decades, the variety of international collaboration among European universities has grown. As a result, "joint international activities are less unique but more acknowledged and requested than a decade ago" (Egetenmeyer, 2017, p. 131). In Europe, this change was, on the one, hand spurred by the development of mobility programmes carried out as part of the ERASMUS programme (Wit, Deca and Hunter, 2015, p. 5). On the other hand, the Bologna Process has contributed to the internationalisation of higher education institutions (Schüßler and Egetenmeyer, 2018, p. 1072). This process has led to learning agreements, credit systems (ECTS) and module structures, integrating mobilities and credit transfer policies in university degree programmes. International collaboration can thus take many forms, including student and teaching mobility, scholarships, joint research activities, strategic partnerships, double/joint degrees, language learning, joint curricula development, and the like (European Parliament, 2015; Knight, 2004; Wit, Deca and Hunter, 2015).

Professionalisation in the field of adult education

The complexity and the changes in the practice field of adult education require an ongoing professionalisation of adult educators. According to Gieseke (2018), this means establishing and expanding basic disciplinary and scientific knowledge, enabling educators to act in a reflective and individual manner. This necessitates informed transfer between academic knowledge and individual practice situations. Both individually and against the backdrop of societal conditions, professionals have to act in situation-specific and person-related ways, with their actions embedded in the respective context. (Schreiber-Barsch and Stang, 2021, p. 78) Egetenmeyer, Breitschwerdt and Lechner (2019) refer to organisational, institutional and social contexts that influence professional actions.

The basis for the professional development of adult educators can be found in "academic professionalisation", which occupies a mediating position between theory and practice to give students both scientific knowledge and practical experiences. Following Schüßler and Egetenmeyer (2018, p. 1072), at its core, the term "academic professionalisation" embraces a structural and a subjective perspective. This means that the term focusses on both the diverse qualification possibilities in higher education institutions in adult and continuing education (structural perspective) and on individual professionalisation in the course of these academic qualification possibilities and the opportunities for developing competences (subjective perspective). From this, it follows that professionalisation is also embedded in different contexts and processes. This means that the societal context, institutional structures, and the individual professional biography must all be be taken into account.

[4] INTALL is run under the ERASMUS+ programme. It is a partnership between eight European universities and two practice institutions. For more information, see: https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/intall/home/

ERASMUS+ STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP INTALL – A CONTRIBUTION TO PROFESSIONALISATION

The ERASMUS+ strategic partnership INTALL (2018-2021) created international collaboration between eight European universities (Florence, Hamburg, Lisbon, Padua, Pécs, Ljubljana, Dublin, Würzburg) and two practice institutions (DVV, EAEA). It responds to internationalisation in the practice field of adult education (Staab *et al.*, 2020) and at universities (Varghese, 2017). Supporting the professionalisation of students and practitioners, INTALL is designed to build a bridge between the academic and practice sector. To this end, a joint module was developed, which forms the core of the partnership, aiming to contribute to internationalisation and professionalisation in the field. Moreover, INTALL developed several forms of international collaboration, which refer to the abovementioned discussion on internationalisation in higher education.

INTALL is designed for master's and doctoral students studying adult education and for practitioners working in the practice field from all over the world. Therefore, the partnership developed a joint module for teaching students and practitioners together. A blended-learning methodology was created, which serves as the core and is used in the preparatory phase. All participants are prepared on campus or online from November to January for their two-week participation in the Adult Education Academy in Würzburg, Germany. Students, practitioners, and teachers are supported through various funding opportunities (e.g., travel allowances) to travel to Germany in an effort to promote student and teaching mobility within higher education institutions. Additionally, as communication is conducted entirely in English, the mobility contributes to participants' language learning.

The Academy is divided into sessions on European and international policies and strategies as well as on Paulo Freire's theories on adult education (Week 1) and a comparison performed in small groups (Week 2). In addition, the joint module includes an online follow-up, which gives doctoral students and practitioners the possibility to co-publish their comparative results of the second week in an academic paper with the (co-)moderators of their group. The group moderators are professors from different international universities who bring their research expertise to the comparative group work and the joint publications, thereby contributing to joint research activities. Furthermore, through the development of a joint recognition model, students and practitioners can receive a graded formal university certificate, which is recognised for their study programme.

Due to COVID-19, the 2021 Adult Education Academy was conducted in a virtual format, for which an online methodology was developed. Besides using online tools such as digital pinboards or query tools during lectures and group works in week 1, participants were instructed in capturing the process and the results of their comparative group work in week 2 on an ePortfolio platform. This helped students and practitioners acquire and enhance their digital knowledge and skills.

To teach students and practitioners together during and beyond the joint module, a joint learning community for international teaching and learning settings was developed. The teaching methods outlined above are accessible via the INTALL website[5] and the LinkedIn "Professional Network for Adult Education and Lifelong Learning".[6] This is supplemented by "Guidelines on teachers practices: A guide for instructors and practitioners to innovate practices in higher education and adult learning" (Fedeli and Tino, 2020). Thereby, INTALL helps further develop international competencies among teaching staff in adult education and to support faculties in higher education to implement active teaching practices in international settings.

[5] https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/intall/home/
[6] https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8445381/

A portfolio method was developed and included in the joint module. It provides information on career fields, skills needed on the labour market, the job application process, and online stories about the professional pathways of colleagues from the field of adult education practice. One the one hand, this gives students an insight into adult education as a career field and into the skills required on the international labour market; on the other hand, it gives them the opportunity to develop their own portfolio for entering the labour market. Instructions for university teachers on how to support students by equipping them with skills can be found in the “Didactical guide on employability: A Guide for Teachers to support Master’s and PhD students preparing for successful future work in the field of adult Learning and Education” (Boffo and Tomei, 2020).

Based on the joint module, a digital learning environment (INTALL@home) was developed. It is a fully open access environment consisting of online tutorials, reading and video materials from research and practice, interactive online groups, and online self-tests. INTALL@home offers an open learning opportunity for non-mobile students and practitioners interested in comparative adult education, thereby supporting professionalisation in the field in a cost-neutral way. Additionally, adult educators can use the materials as a tool for teaching international and comparative studies at their universities.

DISCUSSION

The movement towards an increasingly globalised world is accompanied by changing demands on the professionalisation of (future) adult educators. These demands are reinforced by the internationalisation of higher education institutions. INTALL provides an answer to these demands by offering international collaboration and a teaching methodology focussing on international and comparative adult education. Through questions for thought and discussion, (future) adult educators are encouraged to transfer theory to practice, which can be considered the essence of professionalism.

Internationalisation is a continuous process that varies by local, national, regional, and global context. This refers to the opportunities and limits of international collaboration from a structural and subjective perspective. Opportunities can be found in international study programmes, such as summer/winter schools, exchange programmes, or international internships). These forms of international collaboration give students the opportunity to gain intercultural skills and international knowledge, which can be seen as important aspects in the professionalisation of (future) adult educators (Staab and Egetenmeyer, 2019, p. 280). Furthermore, joint research activities between higher education institutions can help students expand their views and contribute to international scientific discourse by publishing joint papers. Publications in English boost international references in adult education.

However, international collaboration between higher education institutions also has certain limitations. These include the challenge to provide sufficient financial resources and administrative and bureaucratic challenges (Marinoni, 2019). Egetenmeyer (2017) also pointed out that the commitment of the universities involved is essential for making administrative and committee work more easy. For instance, technical equipment and services at the universities may influence teaching and research. Furthermore, international study programmes require students who have the opportunity to travel. Both aspects are related to the need for financial resources and flexibility. Students with low financial means and non-mobile students unable to attend face-to-face programmes for a variety of reasons (e.g., family and work commitments, health problems) may be excluded from international study opportunities.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, higher education institutions have been called upon to build or expand their online and distance learning offerings (Chan, Bista

and Allen, 2022, p. 3). This includes the 2021 Adult Education Academy described above, which had to be developed for virtual implementation in a short amount of time. On the one hand, virtual implementation meant an increased didactical development effort for the (co-)moderators and organisational effort for the organisers; on the other hand, the virtual format provides an opportunity for internationalisation in higher education without traveling. Video conferences and learning management systems help students unable to participate in a synchronous way to attend remotely (Chan, Bista and Allen, 2022, p. 3). The teaching and learning materials developed for and during the 2021 Adult Education Academy were made openly accessible and hence can be used as role models and information tools for implementing online formats. Making the material accessible, especially the recordings of each daily session, was necessary because of the time differences between the participants (e.g., Brasil, India, Russia), which are difficult to overcome in synchronous virtual formats. Furthermore, some participants had neither access to a stable internet connection nor to a device allowing full attendance. As a result, several participants participated via their smartphones, which limited their ability to participate in group work and use online tools. Increased facilitation during group work and when using online tools, as recommended by the evaluation, can keep participants from being (partially) excluded. It was observed that both the technical equipment and the digital skills of students can have a key influence on their participation (Chan, Bista and Allen, 2022, p. 4–5).

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic means constant change for higher education institutions and adult education. Stable international collaborations in higher education support professionalisation and internationalisation. The ERASMUS+ strategic partnership INTALL (2018-2021) contributes to both professionalisation in adult education and to internationalisation in higher education, although it is important to keep in mind that international collaborations have their limitations. As illustrated by the example of the virtual 2021 Adult Education Academy, the lack of financial resources is the biggest challenge on both the university and the student side. While the coronavirus pandemic can partially address this challenge, new barriers are emerging (e.g., technical equipment, new teaching styles, digital skills).

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ENABLERS AND RESTRICTORS IN NAVIGATING CAREERS IN EDUCATION IN ENGLAND. THE ROLE OF POLICY IN SUPPORTING ASPIRATIONS TO BECOME A TEACHER.

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ABSTRACT

This research article examines how some mature students can recognise and navigate educational opportunities in University Continuing Education, despite the instability and transience of educational policy and the significant individual, societal and political challenges that must be navigated to succeed. It extrapolates findings from eight individual life stories, focusing on part-time pathways for teaching assistants becoming fully qualified teachers.

This longitudinal life course enquiry includes a series of semi-structured interviews over a period of four years, which are paralleled with educational policy. Bourdieuian-based 'Careership theory' (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997) analyses the multi-dimensional influences of structure, agency, and culture in relation to their educational 'horizons for action' (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997). The study identifies that unstable routes to reach teacher status are disproportionately experienced by those who have not accessed higher education as a young person and that the effect of short-lived educational policies creates instability for mature students embarking on non-traditional routes. Enablers and restrictors to success for the participants in the study were centred around the balance between cost and risk, guidance and access to educational career structures, and acknowledgement that disruptive life events affect people at different times in their learning lives. Common to all participants is evidence of a strong desire to be active contributors to society and the impact of the positive influence of supportive others. The findings from this study support organisation of flexible, alternative routes in University Continuing Education that are accessible across the life course.

INTRODUCTION

Increased knowledge about experiences of educational career routes is particularly pertinent at the current juncture, where there is a predicted shortage of teachers for the future (Sibieta, 2020), alongside growing concerns for the continued well-being and retention of existing staff, an issue also faced across Europe (OECD, 2019; EACEA, 2018). Whilst the government in England will offer financial incentives by 2022 (Sibieta, 2020), there is not enough exploration of how to expose untapped potential (Bovill *et al.*, 2019) and provide

effective support for lifelong learning across the workforce. The current situation is clear – the supply of teachers in England is not meeting the demand (Coughlan, 2018), with severe shortage predicted.

This longitudinal, life course study exposes the enablers and restrictors in life that real people experience, whilst emphasising the need to be cognisant of enabling 'horizons for action' (Hodkinson, 2008) in educational contexts. The study aimed to discover how to broaden access to teacher training courses across the life course, whilst challenging the assumption that career progression is unproblematically linear, as has been hitherto assumed in policy making. A central concern of this study was a quest to understand how typically transient government policies interjected for short-term gain are maintaining a hold on assumptions which directly affect those on non-normative routes pursuing a career through University Continuing Education. Routes for non-traditional, mid-career students to access teacher training are limited by a range of circumstances. This life course research interrogates the social, political, economic, geographic, cultural and historical influences on eight female teaching assistants (TAs) in their pursuit to achieve qualified teacher status. TA refers to classroom support for a particular teacher, though the definition of the role is inconsistent; TAs are mostly on term-time or casual contracts and 90% of part-time TAs in England are female (Office for Statistics, 2022).

The study focusses specifically on the learning lives and educational experiences of eight female TAs accessing entry level higher education as mature students, some with few qualifications, between 2006 and 2010 in England through to becoming teachers between 2012 and 2018. The time under observation was one of unprecedented government involvement, intervention and change in education in England, some of which aided this pathway, and some of which changed so rapidly that plans were seriously disrupted. The study aimed to give specific insight to how courses, with lifelong accessibility, could be organised for the effective support of career changers, whilst benefiting society. This demanded knowledge that transcended numerical data to seek evidence from lived pathways that are not experienced the way policy makers appear to assume. The study aimed to unveil the influences across their educational life course that affected their ability to never-the-less achieve their current employment position.

The central research questions were therefore focussed on how TAs negotiate a career route to teacher status, particularly in how they sustained this route over time, and in the factors that enable or restrict TAs' agency throughout their career path.

After the identification of the participants, the following section justifies a life course methodology and describes the novel methods used to elicit the data and in analysis using Careership theory (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997). This is followed by the process of thematic analysis (Clark and Braun, 2017; Braun and Clarke, 2021) that includes visual representations of the data. The findings are then presented in terms of enablers and restrictors, with key themes emerging in time and timing, mitigating the structural affordances in facilitators to enable progress, and the importance of recognition (Honneth, 1995). The paper concludes with insights that alert policy makers to the importance of understanding individuals' socio-cultural and agentic challenges when supporting non-traditional teacher training routes and the importance of accessible structural frameworks for this to happen.

Participants

The participants were known to the researcher through their initial part-time studies at university, as they worked as TAs in schools in the north of England. They responded to a call for an interview at a date after their teacher training was completed and they were in employment. The TAs began work as a result of the 2003-6 workforce re-modelling initiative

(DfES, 2002), which encouraged schools to use TAs to support some aspects of teaching under the 'upskilling' agenda. This policy enabled six of the eight participants in this study to acquire TA posts. Their careers prior to their TA posts were varied and included roles that were unsatisfying, or where they had reached a limit in promotion prospects. None had official careers advice, and all began in schools with voluntary work to fit around family life, with six of the eight having their own young children. Seven of the TAs began their higher education programmes through the new opportunities that arose to upskill their qualifications once in post. They all began HE studies on a Foundation Degree (FD) course (level 5), then topped-up this qualification with a BA (Hons) (level 6), and then continued on to teacher training. However, the original two teaching programmes that they had studied to reach abruptly ended in 2011 and 2012. Funding for FDs and BA (Hons) was initially available, but became increasingly difficult to access as they progressed in their studies. This situation was compounded by the significant fee rise in 2011. These participants had to adopt durability and assess finances as they frequently re-negotiated their career paths to fit with changing policy-based requirements and diminishing options.

Life course approach

Life course narrative approaches are employed to hear real voices telling us about the worlds people experience, seeing future possibilities, communicating and being more widely aware, more democratic (Plummer, 2013). They are often used to better understand humanity and change. Life histories explore how learning is felt, expressed and how it has shaped our identities at a particular place and time (Bathmaker and Harnett, 2010); all of these are pertinent to this study. Plummer suggests that all stories are "patterned through cultures of inequalities" (2013, p. 8), but they are not equally heard, and findings often project beyond the stories and reveal other socially textured narratives (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

This study calls attention to the silent or tacit influences on these women's career progression in educational environments with the ability to connect individual accounts with self-awareness and broader social, political and cultural practices. Bruner's (1996) suggestion that researchers ask questions within narrative-based research to explore how local labour, education and training markets are structured is needed to understand the social, economic and political forces that constitute learning. This approach encompassed the understanding that personal narratives include public as well as private issues that occur in the context of a period of time and are experienced irrevocably in relation to social structures and power relations (Bathmaker and Harnett, 2010 after Wright Mills, 1959).

Giele and Elder's (1998) influential work on methods of life course research developed a design that bridged the relationship between macro and micro social relations and orders, compatible with this study's approach. Elder (1994) had identified four factors that determine the shape of the individual life course: historical time and geographic location, social ties to others, linked lives, personal control and variations in timing. Giele (1995) identified four elements that run parallel to Elder's themes, described as: cultural background, social integration, human agency and timing of lives.
By interrogating these elements through my research questions, I was able to get closer to examining and potentially connecting the micro, meso and macro influences on these TAs.

Longitudinal research exploring TAs' careers is sparse to non-existent. Most of the literature on the career progression of TAs in the UK was written at the height of provision for FDs during the 2000s, as higher education institutes built their programmes and were frequently concerned with transitions between FDs and top-up Honours degrees and the value of the outcomes for stakeholders (Penketh and Goddard, 2008; Dunne *et al.*, 2008; Woolhouse *et al.*, 2009). A more recent paper (Bovill *et al.*, 2019) has revived a line of thought suggesting that the 'talent' that lies in TAs is an 'untapped resource' (p. 4) that could be activated if clear

routes were made that also fit with the lives of women. This view highlights an interest and current gap in our need to learn from life experiences that influence access to and success in study for part-time students, including TAs.

Careership theory

Employing Careership theory (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997) as a framework for analysis offered a lens to expose how decisions made by individuals are enabled and restricted by relational forces in a field and, thereby, affect an individual's horizons for action (Hodkinson, 2008). The external environment and individual embodied positions and dispositions can be influenced in many ways. The possible horizons for action at any given time are highly influenced by the context: the school, college, workplace and higher education; the geographical location, social status and qualifications; and economic status.

Careership theory was intended as a thinking tool that encourages exploration of the social, structural and agential influences on career progression. This study has also used a strong temporal lens to understand how these influences work over time. Whilst not directly using a Bourdieuian lens, it is relevant to note that Bourdieu's concepts of field (social arenas of action that are coded and where one's relative position is continually in flux), habitus (tacit codes of behaviour, shared dispositions and patterns of action in a specific context) and capital (valued, symbolic exchange) underpin the Careership model (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997; Hodkinson, 2008), which was used as a tool for analysis of data. A hitherto undertheorised aspect of Careership that Hodkinson brought to the fore in 2008 was the concept of 'horizons for action'. Careership theory was now defined as having three overlapping dimensions:

- the embodied positions and dispositions of individuals
- the relations between forces in a field and the field in which it occurs
- the life course on longitudinal pathways

METHODOLOGY

To enable qualitative exploration of the relationships between effects of policy, society and in participants' 'horizons for action' (Hodkinson, 2008), this research is compatible with life course theory in its study of social structures, social change and in individual action through life events. Inevitably relational aspects of time, agency, linked lives and social context, which are argued to be dynamics in life, ought not be ignored in any social science study (Giele and Elder, 1998).

In this study, the participants' responses were collected in narrative reflections in three semi-structured interviews across four years. The first two interviews were in the first year of the study and the third after four years.

Data collection: interviews using graphic elicitation

The first semi-structured one-hour interviews were enriched through the application of a low-directed, participant-led mapping technique, which was re-visited in the second interview. This method employed a drawing technique where the participants created their own timelines (x axis) on a large piece of paper noting key educational and life events, which were paralleled by a subjective self-assessed satisfaction curve rating (y axis). Verbal explanation of the illustration encouraged expression of personal insights that were recorded and transcribed. Key life transitions and associated feelings were noted by all participants

both in their narratives and in their hand-drawn timeline graphics.

Data analysis: graphic timeline/satisfaction diagrams

Key nodes from each of the timeline/satisfaction diagrams were identified and logged on an excel spreadsheet by date for events: birth, pre-school, infant school, junior school, high school, post-16, work, work in educational contexts, college, university, teacher training, and teacher status, so they could be collectively viewed and compared.

This illuminated the complexity of affective responses at different times. It also drew attention to the sharp dip at high school for all the participants and the high satisfaction at the point of becoming a teacher. The frequently used descriptor of 'trajectory' in life course routes and careers is "not […] a free trajectory, but rather follows a path whose twists and turns are a result of complex interactions between a 'minded self' and an environment" (Clausen in Giele and Elder, 1998, p. 196). *Figure 2* shows unproblematic beginning and end points of these participants post school education and reaching teacher status, whereas the experiences between these points are in fact complex and experienced differently at different times in their lives, dependent on structural and individual circumstances. The collective graphic representations show the antonym of an assumed normative career 'trajectory' in all cases (*Figure 1*).

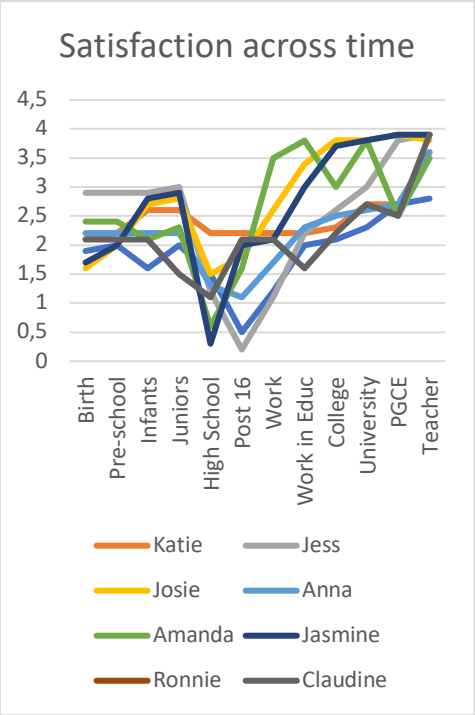

Figure 1. Detailed satisfaction across time.

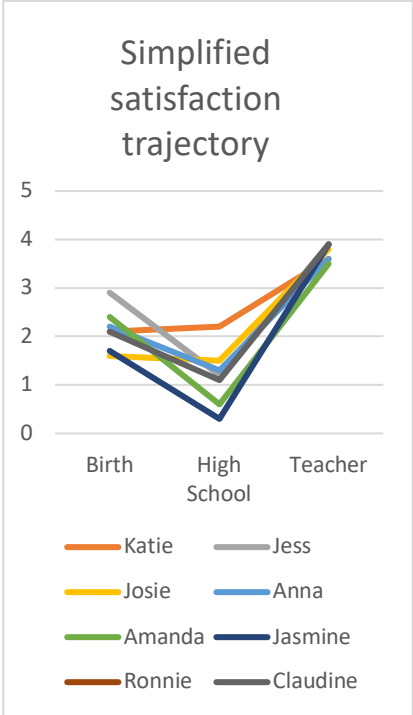

Figure 2. Simplified satisfaction trajectories.

Data analysis: mapping of policy

From 1993 onwards, change in educational policy in England was immense. By mapping policy to the participants' educational timelines, it illuminated how policy affected their horizons for action in significant ways. *Figure 3* is a simplified insight to the mapping of policy to the participants' educational experiences.

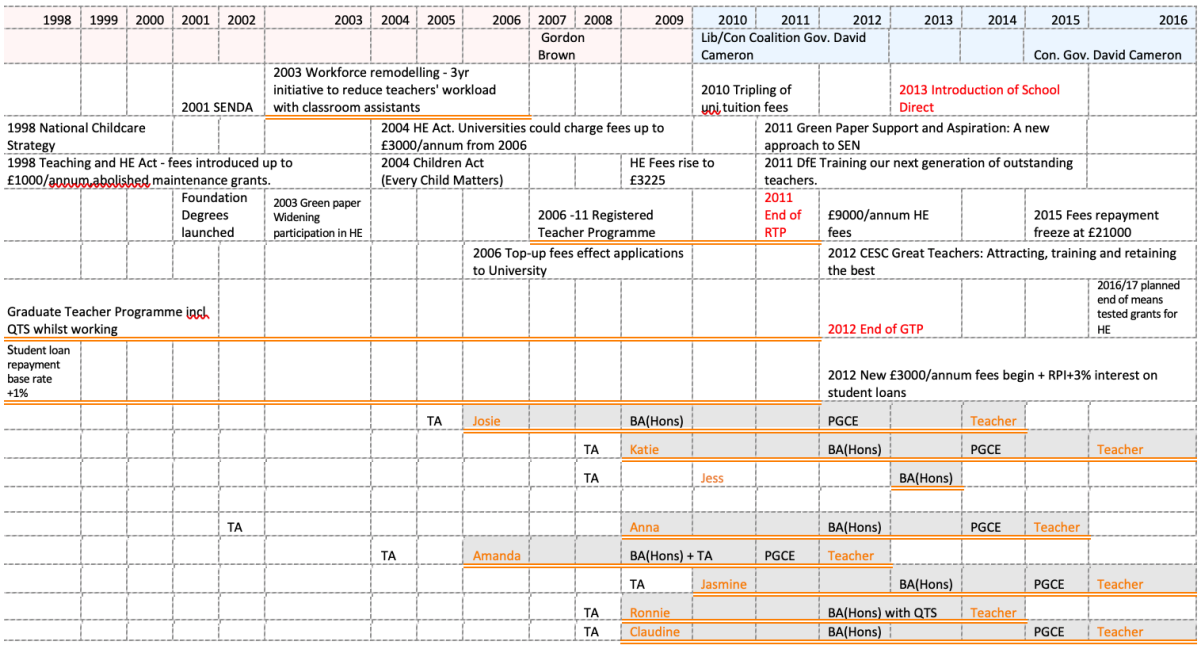

Figure 3. Career timelines of participants paralleled with only most relevant educational policy (1998 - 2018)

Thematic analysis

Braun and Clarke's (2021) seven step guide to analysis includes the process of data immersion, coding the data using NVivo to organise the data to meaningful groupings (themes), using graphic representations of data, reviewing, refining and defining themes, reaching a point of saturation in data, and finding relationships between themes. Clarke and Braun (2017) also confirm that key themes are not necessarily found where there are most occurrences across the data set, as may be the case in semantic analysis. The themes can be identified in the findings below.

Thematic analysis: Careership theory

Analysis of the interview transcripts and researcher- and participant-led visual representations were examined through the lens of Careership theory (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997; Hodkinson, 2008). In this case:

- Positioning in broad structural fields (recorded in timelines and interview)
- Embodied influence of the individual to their choices (from ideogram/graphic representation and interview)
- Acknowledging that not all decisions are planned or determined by identifying 'horizons for action' that change over time.

By employing these techniques, attention was also brought to temporal influences. For instance, the end of two teacher training programmes in 2011 and 2012 disrupted career plans until the introduction of 'School Direct', another teacher training programme in 2013. Entry qualifications to teacher training also changed after the participants began their HE courses.

FINDINGS: ENABLERS AND RESTRICTORS

By paralleling the participants' narratives alongside the structural and embodied contexts in which they were experienced, the accounts were pervaded by continual reference to their need to balance opportunities and risks. Each of the TAs referred to the effects of studying in their personal and familial lives. There was also a tense cost-benefit relationship between investing in longer-term career opportunities through higher education and that of 'managing it', 'finding that balance', being constantly 'on the brink' financially or exasperation in thinking that there must be 'easier ways [to make a living]'. A continual offsetting of significant personal monetary outlay and corresponding investment in time was seen through the data as necessary for the TAs to even attempt to achieve their career aims. For this, they needed significant support from others.

Effect of time

Career change decisions were affected by changes in family life and a need for employment that fitted in with that, so their choices were not technically rational career decision-making in a traditional sense. They realised they had potential and sought personal development through a desire to learn. Some were restricted geographically as to where they could go so that they remained available for school runs and childcare. The narratives reflected Colley's (2007) attention to the dimension of time in understanding women's lives in career transitions, following the proposition that women's time is used differently to men's and is experienced in "engendered and enacted social practices" (p. 427) that need to be noticed and recorded in life course histories. By focusing on the way that past and current experiences and positionings alongside future aspirations affect development over time, career routes were noted as decidedly non-linear. The women's lives, regardless of whether they had children or influences from their cultural background, were expected to include also being the main caregiver in the family; this included extended family. This unspoken expectation had a significant effect on the way time was experienced by these women.

Concurrently, in the advent of a competitive, neo-liberal society across the lifespan of these participants, there resulted in what Bryson (2007) noted as 'time squeeze' for women, for example, with longer and more complex routes of travel to and from work. 'Trip chaining' (Criado Perez, 2019) is multitasking on journeys, for example, visits to relatives, food and essential shopping or picking children up on the way to or from work, tasks that are often taken up by women in the household and squeezed into non-work hours. However, these participants have all recognised that they had *some* timely support when it was needed from family members that enabled them to pursue their careers and they also acknowledged an impossibility for those that do not have this support network.

The 'right time' for the participants to turn to education depended on their familial or social context and/or the strength of their own emotional fortitude, health or maturity and was dependent on key life challenges or enablers. Importantly, these were also entirely co-dependent on the political influence that enabled or hindered their access to HE. They were affected by the myriad of policy change that had to be adapted to and navigated over this time (*Figure 3*) as well as their familial responsibilities. The social, historical and chronological influences significantly affected their horizons for action, but these challenges remain atypical in terms of normative descriptors of careers trajectories, on which policy is based.

Some common challenges centred around having to be constantly alert to risk factors: the length of time to acquire qualifications, stability and perceived value of courses, financial sustenance and work/life balance issues, as well as expected financial gain, personal satisfaction and meeting of affective needs. Long-term investment was both emotionally and

financially huge. Where these participants were able to succeed was when there was acknowledgement of their value, contribution and potential; this acknowledgement significantly supported their tenacity to reach their goal. Their horizons for action were evidenced to shift across time with the varying influences in their positioning in the field, through their changing dispositions (embodied and social) and through their growing understanding and knowledge of the field and self. As the TAs spent a significant amount of time in their schools, they also assumed the cultural capital valued in that field over time.

Mitigating the structural

For several of the participants there was the promise of an in-service, government-initiated teacher training course, which was abruptly withdrawn in 2011; the effect of this cessation caused great anxiety at the time. Their route had to be re-negotiated, which meant another two years of part-time study, adding to cost/time effects. This second route also ended in 2012. There was, for several months, considerable concern that they had been left stranded before a new progression route was launched in 2013. One participant reflected on her long-term plan: 'it was all very planned out, but I had to work with what I was given ...the end goal was there.' These participants had to adopt durability as they frequently re-negotiated their career paths to fit with changing policy-based requirements and diminishing options.

Government increasingly expected learners to be able to invest individually in their own education. This, thereby, both individualized and closed opportunity for those without the social or economic capital on which to trade. These participants experienced the volatile education and training markets of the 2000s from which they needed to make decisions around economic, social and structural influences that affected their livelihood. The high cost/high risk of career change has previously been confirmed as “risky business […] [where] everything becomes an individual responsibility” (Reay, 2003, p. 312) and is a gendered experience where dual households continue to be divided when making pragmatic decisions based on social norms about where familial responsibilities fall. This is certainly seen in the narratives of these women. All were co-workers or significant contributors to the family income, and those with children then assumed the main care-giver role as well.

Facilitators in enabling

Enablers fell largely into affective and social domains. Affective influences such as being valued, wanting to realise self-sufficiency, confidence and their desire to contribute to home and society were strong elements in all narratives. Friends, family, teachers and supporters in the workplace were also influential in helping to navigate their road to teacher status. The influence of family ‘know-how’ of higher education and corresponding parental assiduousness in their own approach to careers encouraged the TAs.

The participants’ well-being and confidence were closely linked to the quality of the relationships they experienced in different learning communities. At school, this was identified in supportive teachers noticing or taking interest. The maths teacher of one of the participants had seen her potential when she was asked to leave before GCSEs to have her baby; he stepped in with another teacher to home tutor her in maths and English, and she quoted him saying, ‘there’s no way that I’m letting her leave school without any qualifications at all, it’s not happening’; the framing of the quote suggests that this was an important declaration to receive and confirmed to her that she was important enough for attention. The juxtaposition of a valued human response and the system that rejected her non-normative positioning was significant.

Each participant gave examples that emphasised the importance of being valued and being believed in. Examples from school days came from teachers who stepped in to support. A

former tutor took one participant under her wing, ‘she just cared, she cared about me, I enjoyed being with her’. Her aunt and uncle tutored her in English and maths when she had missed a lot of school; these were the only General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSEs) she achieved at the age of 16.

Later, from their voluntary beginnings of supporting in school through to their TA work, university and teacher training programmes, their confidence was gradually re-established and they purposely place value on attitudes to educational justice issues in their own work.

One participant’s uncle was a head teacher and told her:

> *“you’d be a brilliant teacher and I was like don’t be so ridiculous. But actually, him saying that to me, who was a head teacher… because I’d had a lot of doubt from my teachers in my Primary Education. Whereas none of them believed me in all this and to tell me that …”.*

Perhaps as an additional counterbalance to structures of inequality, three participants had head teachers who supported their careers, where they could, in advisory, practical and appreciative capacities. This included direction and advice on progression, mentoring and their support through HE; none received formal careers advice. However, the changes in education are so rapid that advice offered also shifted from one year to the next. Head teachers moved schools, academies implemented different regimes, and their support depended on the direction of the school leader whilst they were in office or until governmental change; their narratives corroborated this complexity. Non-normative routes were and are complex and leave mature part-time students vulnerable to political tides.

Recognition

Study in HE enabled these participants to develop the three necessary levels of recognition as proposed by Honneth (1995): those of self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem. The realisation of increased self-confidence is seen in this study through both supportive familial and work-based relationships along with receiving increased acknowledgement of respect in educational work environments. The ability to replicate such respect to others in their charge is evident in the way the participants, as teachers, work with their TAs.

However, earlier poor experiences in school hold strong and were exemplified for one participant, whose parents were first generation immigrants. Her experiences at school pulled the rug from under her in terms of confidence because of the severely detrimental way English was wrongly assumed to be her second language. Withdrawing a university application solved the problem and allowed her to close the door on this unsettling time. This decision was not due to lack of aspiration, but rather the effect of unsettling assumptions by others placed on difference with avoidance tactics.

Avoidance of failure was common to all the participants. One participant said she became non-committal about career options. Another participant associated commitment as being tied closely with potential failure and that it would be a representation of herself. That is, others’ perceptions of her position did not necessarily relate to how she saw herself. Avoidance activity seemed to be a reaction to this misinterpretation or categorization. The responses from all the participants suggested there was a lack of positive recognition during their high school years. Through the lens of recognition theory (Honneth, 1995), individuals develop a sense of self and self-worth by recognising, and being recognised, by others. Where there are conditions for ‘misrecognition’, it can give rise to resistance. The participants spoke of their scaled responses from subtle to less-than-subtle actions of emotional and practical withdrawal in some aspects of school, but also of frustration in their subsequent work lives after time had passed. The decision to return to education could be seen as a

response to their un- or misrecognised potential and represent the shift that Fraser (2003) discussed in the struggle to find place and recognition through accessible institutional patterns. Fraser recognised that there are psychological- and identity-led causes to misrecognition, but that they are not unrelated to the effects of maldistribution of equality. The narratives here align with this proposition. Opportunities in support roles in educational spaces were the start of the search for status, whether initially intentional or not. What followed was the determination to make others notice their contribution in order to get nearer to needs that were not yet recognised. These became apparent with being recognised initially as able practitioners and highly valued in the workplace.

Common to each participant was a similarity in their espoused values in relation to life and work. Having initially rejected an academic route, each came to a point when they reached a glass ceiling both financially and intellectually in their jobs and they searched for more meaning in their work lives. One participant spoke of higher education ‘opening her mind’, her beliefs changed, she questioned more and became more confident as she began to understand societal challenges. This included further personal disorientation when she realised that she was also part of the system and ultimately recognised the constraints of the job. Another participant said that the more she understood, the more ethical her practice became. At first, she would just replicate teaching, but then began to create meaning and purpose in the activities planned. She appears to be comfortable in her field and can now make a difference in a way that upholds her ethical values.

Each participant described their route as requiring discipline. Managing family life, work and study was very challenging, but was enabled by time management and through proactive family support mechanisms, mostly from parents. All participants had significant family support once they embarked on their ambition to be a class teacher. They each saw the route they took as the only pragmatic way to eventually reach their end goal.

Supporting careers in teaching

These participants represent the most robust in their field, those with some capital upon which to draw. And yet, the picture still shows structural inequities in access to educational careers and additional challenges in navigating continuing higher education as mature, part-time students with a lot to offer society. It suggests that those with the most enabling factors coming together in a timely fashion can succeed, but inevitably this will favour some more than others. One participant’s son tellingly reflected that 'there must be easier ways to make money than that' after seeing mum with her head in her hands.

Once off the standard normative pathways, career routes are less well accepted, much more complex, take longer and are controlled by the socio-political context. The paths taken here resembled negotiations of off-piste routes that were not supported or predictable. Accessing these paths required the assignment of durable personal characteristics with emotional and financial support over time. For those that did navigate their way, one important advantage was identified in negotiating the long transition to teacher status, and that was the benefits of acclimatisation over time. Whilst they had all felt impatient at times throughout the process, they reported a strong sense of belonging to and crafts(wo)manship in their places of work as a result of having worked in school/educational contexts whilst they studied.

Horizons for action

Participants recognised that their social support networks along with the attribute of self-efficacy and their economic context (whilst still challenging) enabled them to manage this route; they also recognised that those with less capital in these areas would not. One spoke of how she was able to ride the crest of a wave of policy, hitting opportunity at the right time,

whereas her colleague one year later hit financial blocks when fees policy changed; their professional lives have become very different.

Successive governments can now be seen as having eroded previously valued professional employment through its increasing de-professionalisation and attendant declining relational salaries, disrupting the lived experience that was not as 'respected and stable' as their parents had believed. There are complex relationships between educational expansion and inequality and between class, ethnicity and gender; inequalities have been reduced but are still substantial (Thompson, 2019). Furthermore, those with stronger positioning in a field are still best placed to take advantage of opportunities.

The life course paradigm encompassed understandings of changing conditions relative to age and across time. Life stages (for instance, the traditional order of pairing, marriage, childbearing, life span) are increasingly regarded in atypical patterns and can happen earlier or later than traditional social norms or expectations (Elder and Giele, 2009; Milesi, 2010). These were clearly identifiable through this study in examples such as early pregnancy, family unrest, unexpected personal tragedy, hospitalisation and economic circumstance. This complexity supports Hodkinson et al.'s suggestion (2006) that careers policy is often based on 'folk' theories that suppose careers do not extend beyond the particulars of an outdated, historically traditional, and normative privilege.

DISCUSSION

Political distrust in the teaching profession in England is endemic. Belief in and value of the status of educators would enable the positive advantages of recognition to flourish. Conversely, misrecognition of individuals' educational value or potential can engender avoidance tactics or highlight a poor sense of representation by others and towards self. Findings indicate interrelationships in temporal, agentic, cultural and structural dimensions in the participants' ever-changing contexts. Consistencies were seen in socio-cultural dimensions, particularly through recognition, by managers, peers and family. Methodologically speaking, there are possible limitations in the visual representation process as a result of potential researcher inaccuracy in interpreting the collected data and the relatively small sample of the whole TA population. The data collected was limited to those who had become teachers but does not include the experiences of those who did not, nor the experience of male TAs.

The narratives in this study showed intrinsic links that associated policy, agentic influences and socio-cultural impacts in multi-layered ways. It was significant that the relationships between structural, agentic and cultural domains changed over time for each individual, so the balance between opportunity and restriction see-sawed according to the relative positioning of those influences at any particular time. Relative to normative career routes to teaching, the alternative routes of these participants proved possible, but unremittingly precarious.

What has emerged with this group of TAs, in their path to becoming teachers, is the significance of time and timing on that route, particularly in relation to effects in the following broad areas:

- Support mechanisms from family, the workplace or significant others (socio-cultural)
- Negotiating static social structures alongside gendered cultural expectations (socio-cultural and agentic)
- Relationship between failure and success and sense of worthiness and esteem (social and agentic)

- Policy change: admittance and restriction (structural)

The first three of these areas were needed to navigate the fourth. This appeared to be made eventually possible through submersion (over years) in the relative fields of practice. Should government wish to attract teachers, there needs to be flexible access for those in mid-career to access University Continuing Education.

This study proposes a methodological model to collect and analyse narratives that intersect within social and structural fields and demonstrates how these affected the participants differently as the socially constructed relationships changed over time. The mapping of their narratives highlighted change in fields across time that influenced their positioning and thereby agency in the field. As Bourdieu recognised, those with stronger positioning within a field are likely to have greater positive influences, and those in weaker positioning are less likely to be able to navigate a similar path. For these participants, an alternative 'second chance' route was found, which in a previous decade would not have been possible. Still, access and success on the route can be seen to be much more challenging for those with less socio-economic and cultural capital on which to traverse this ever-shifting terrain. These participants demonstrate how the potential to participate meaningfully, whether in or out of education, has been and arguably still is screened out very early on for many.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed complex transitions in post-higher education, in both family and work roles, along with accepting temporarily low paid or short-term work contracts to fit with other gendered responsibilities and the job market. Over time, the participants realised the higher-profile jobs they wanted, but with evidence of the necessity of prolonged negotiation and sustained tenacity in the process. The dimension of time in which the action occurs was needed to understand possibilities (horizons for action) and to recognise social actions, interactions, and inequalities (Colley, 2007). The complex negotiations in accessing opportunities in these participants' career routes clearly showed how their navigation towards teacher status was dependent on many structural as well as social factors and atypical of a direct career 'trajectory' upon which corresponding policy is based.

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ENGINEERING PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT AND CPD

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ABSTRACT

Engineers are professionals who have intense and continuous lifelong learning (LLL) activities regulated by professional organizations, by employers and by official agencies. This ongoing professional development is required due to the obsolescence of competences and the need to face new challenges. In most cases, however, the dialogue between LLL providers and users of the required continuing professional development (CPD) training is not structured. This article presents an analysis of a CPD survey among the engineering community of the federation of engineering professional organizations (FEANI) with respect to identifying methods and approaches of improving communication between LLL providers and engineers seeking CPD opportunities. Results are presented and discussed and conclusions are provided that propose content for a dialogue between LLL providers and users of CPD, such as engineers and employers.

CONTEXT DESCRIPTION

This article presents the needs of LLL for engineers based on a survey of professionals who possess the EUR ING (European Engineer) certificate issued by FEANI (FEANI, 2022). The EUR ING is a certificate delivered by FEANI as a guarantee of competence for professional engineers, and it can facilitate the movement of practicing engineers. FEANI, founded in 1951, is a federation of professional engineers that unites national engineering associations from 35 European countries and represents the interests of over 3.5 million professional engineers in Europe. The General Secretariat, who manages the activities of the federation, has been located in Brussels since late 1997. FEANI aims to facilitate the mutual recognition of engineering qualifications in Europe and to strengthen the position, role and responsibility of engineers in society.

The article aims to identify current practices of engineers and of employers in terms of depth of topics addressed, time spent in CPD activities, forms of CPD and the involvement of LLL providers. The role of university LLL providers, like those that are eucen members, was also one of the objectives of the survey done with this group of engineers. EUR ING certified engineers constitute a population of engineers with relevant professional experience and with involvement in improving this performance through education and training. This article also provides insights and opportunities for University lifelong learning (ULLL) providers to establish bridges with the professional engineering sector in order to provide the requisite training for such an important sector of society, particularly in the sustainable and digital

sectors. The authors are convinced there is a gap between the ULLL providers´ activities and the training needs of the engineering sector.

Firstly, the FEANI policy affirms that there is an ongoing need for CPD of engineers in Europe (FEANI, 2015). CPD is necessary for engineers in order to enhance their ability to adapt to emerging changes in technology and to remain permanently employable during his/her entire career. Does this also hold true, however, in practice? Does the individual engineer feel that CPD is needed for their career? Does the employer hold the same attitude? How much time is spent on CPD? What is required and who is paying for it? In order to evaluate these general formulated questions, FEANI organised a survey amongst their EUR ING's certificate owners.

CPD is considered to be the acquisition of knowledge, experience and skills and the development of professional and personal qualities. It embraces both the acquisition of new capabilities to broaden competence and the enhancement of existing capabilities to keep abreast of evolving technology and its application (UNESCO, 2021). CPD is essential for the maintenance of high professional standards and enhances the employability and mobility of individual engineers. It assists career progression and strengthens professional satisfaction. CPD benefits society and is of crucial importance in sustaining the competitiveness of European industry in the global market (Markkula, 1995).

CPD is the responsibility of the individual and requires the cooperation, encouragement and support of employers and professional and academic institutions as CPD providers. In some countries, professional engineering organisations require mandatory periodic CPD to maintain one's engineering status. Therefore, to be most effective, engineering CPD has to be planned and related to specific objectives. A personal development plan needs to be periodically updated with respect to competences. The CPD plan can include a variety of forms, including mentoring and the sharing of knowledge and expertise. This is one of the areas where LLL providers can cooperate with professional engineering organizations to provide guidelines for engineers.

These guidelines could potentially address inclusion of the promotion of CPD as an important element of the engineering mission and the establishment of a CPD policy that highlights the key role of qualified professional engineers for the development of the economy and society. Cooperation between the LLL providers and professional engineering organizations could address the encouragement of all stakeholders to invest in CPD for engineers, and define quality standards in CPD as well as innovative practices in learning (Fredriksson, 2021). Other topics include the support of individual engineers in their personal CPD definition, publicising good practices in CPD and supporting initiatives on competence recognition, mobility, employability and accreditation of education.

A second aspect of possible cooperation between engineering professional bodies and LLL providers might address the identification of training needs resulting from innovation developments among academic institutions in cooperation with engineering companies. Relevant innovations are a result of industry requests, and respective training to implement those developments could then be defined and planned jointly as a form of LLL provision. A third aspect could address the recording and accreditation by academic institutions of CPD achievements by engineers in terms of their professional personal development plans. To help assess the situation, FEANI has conducted an extensive survey of their members' CPD activities.

SURVEY OF CPD FOR ENGINEERS

Continuing Professional Development is an ongoing need for engineers in Europe. It is a requirement of life-long-learning of professional engineers at all levels to maintain proficiency. Prior to the pandemic, the European Monitoring Committee (EMC) of FEANI decided to organise a survey amongst engineers who received the EUR ING certificate during the last 10 years. From 1980 until just recently, over 32,000 European engineers have listed in the EUR ING register. A 10-year time frame was chosen for the survey to have a relevant period in which not only technology, but also the mindset of professionals all over the world, has changed significantly. Simply having a higher education degree is no longer enough to have and keep a satisfying job. Over the course of 10 years, LLL ought to have become part of one's professional life.

According to FEANI policy, CPD is the acquisition of knowledge, experience and skills as well as the development of personal qualities. It contains both the acquisition of new skills to broaden competence and the enhancement of existing competences to keep abreast of evolving engineering developments. CPD enables the employability and mobility of individual engineers. It enhances their career in the fast-moving world of technology and strengthens their professional satisfaction and well-being (Fredriksson, 2021).

Engineering competence is of interest to engineers' present and future employers. Therefore, one must keep an eye on what happens in one's field of technology to prepare in advance for change. Similarly, one must learn to live with a certain amount of uncertainty as it is very difficult to know which competences will be useful five years from now (WEF, 2018). In addition to technical competence, competence in the areas of knowledge, skills and attitudes are also important for working life. Updating competences and improving performance are minimum requirements for an engineer to maintain their position and employment. As such, engineers must invest in CPD for their careers to progress, whether through vertical or horizontal mobility.

There are many ways an engineer can continue to develop their professional competences. To name but a few: on the job learning and training, attending training courses, seminars or conferences, studying for another complementary degree, e-learning, writing articles in magazines and scientific periodicals or joining expert groups of technical organisations. Sharing experience and knowledge with colleagues is also an important way of learning. It is also often a requirement for many engineers since today's projects can be complicated and multi-faceted and next to impossible to manage alone (Dutta, 2012).

DESCRIPTION OF SURVEY

The approach to the survey was to design two different questionnaires: one for engineers and a second for employers of engineers. Both consisted of some general information to start with, followed by several questions specifically related to CPD. A number of questions were identical; however, the second part of the questionnaire was oriented more towards the target group.

The questionnaires were designed to gain a better understanding of what already exists in the workplace, to identify the barriers to training and development for engineers and to get an overview of what is happening in different countries across Europe. The responses were, of course, confidential and the results were aggregated for reporting and feedback purposes.

The survey was conducted online. The National Monitoring Committee of each member country was asked to mail an introduction letter to their EUR ING's and their employers with the link to the respective survey. The mailing took place in April and the survey was available

during the month of May. As usual, a delay in the administrative procedure was taken into account, so access to the survey was actually closed mid-June. Most of the responses were received between May and June with a peak response rate by the end of May.

Relevant responses

The responses were statistically valid. During recent years, around 500 new EUR ING's certificates have been awarded each year. Assuming around 5000 engineers received the EUR ING title over the last 10 years, more than 13%, or precisely 674 of individual engineers and 108 of their employers, took the time to answer. The responses per country varied due to their own contexts and engineering culture. Ten or more responses were received from engineers living or working in the following countries: UK (343), Ireland (66), Spain (53), Austria (18), Malta (17), USA (17), Canada (14), Germany (12), Romania (11), Croatia (10) and Slovakia (10). More than half of the respondents came from the UK and Ireland, but analysing the answers resulted in no significant difference compared with the others. For that reason, the data has been processed as a single group.

Each company size is represented, with a small majority of companies comprising more than 250 employees compared with those between 1-250 employees, as can be seen in *Table 1*. The function of an engineer can be quite variable. A large number of the EUR ING respondents have a lead role within the company, as presented in *Table 2*. Responses came from engineers working in several branches of the industry, as shown in *Figure 1*. More than 50% of the reactions, including those of individual engineers (in blue) and the employers (in orange), came from the same top four branches: professional services, energy and utilities, the construction sector and the manufacturing industry.

Company size	
1 – 10	175
11 – 50	67
51 – 250	80
251 – 2000	131
2000+	209
Blank	12
total	674

Table 1. Company size

Job title	
Director - managing director - CEO	93
Manager	90
Consultant	63
Head of …	22
Project manager	24
Lecturer / professor	15
Architect	5
Engineer	28
Retired	61
Other	12
674	

Table 2. Function EUR ING Respondents

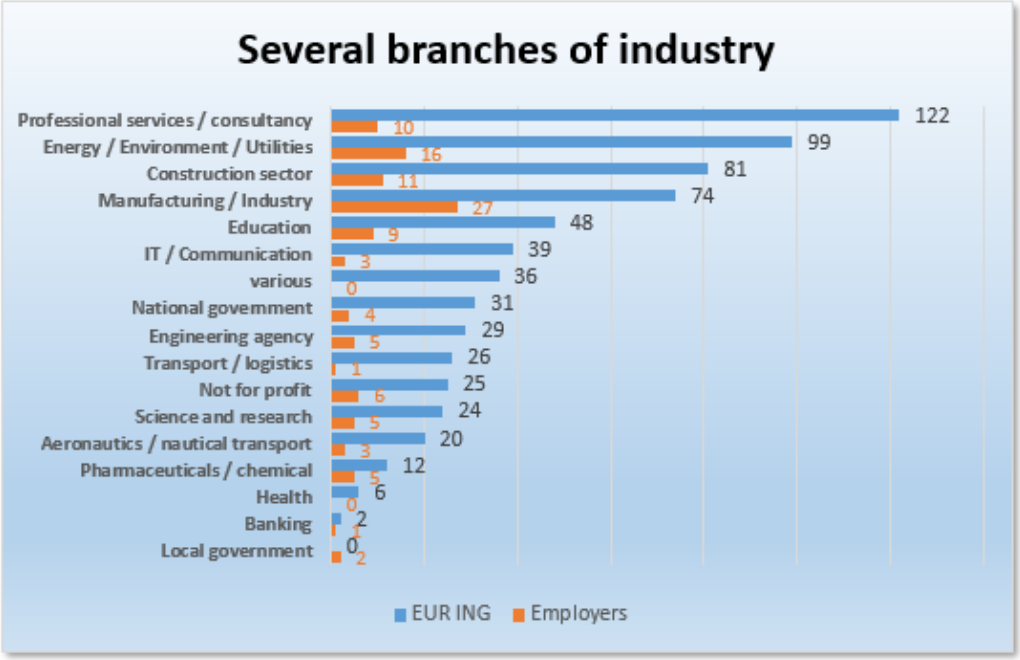

Figure 1. Respondents – individuals and employers - from several branches

Survey results for types and motivation

One of the most important questions asked was “what kind of CPD is most relevant for your future career as an engineer in your current company or elsewhere”. As can be observed in *Figure 2*, the subject with the highest score is “technical developments in the line of business”, followed closely by “regulations (CE, safety, environment,…) and “skills (leadership, coaching,…)”. Receiving an almost equivalent score are the topics “latest trends in technology and their applications”, “general management” and “project management”. The list closes with “business performance, finance, …” and “IT evolution in general”. The same question was posed in the survey for the individual engineer and for the employer. Of note is the fact that both employers and engineers have almost the same preferences, as shown in *Figure 2*.

Figure 2. Importance of CPD subjects for the employer

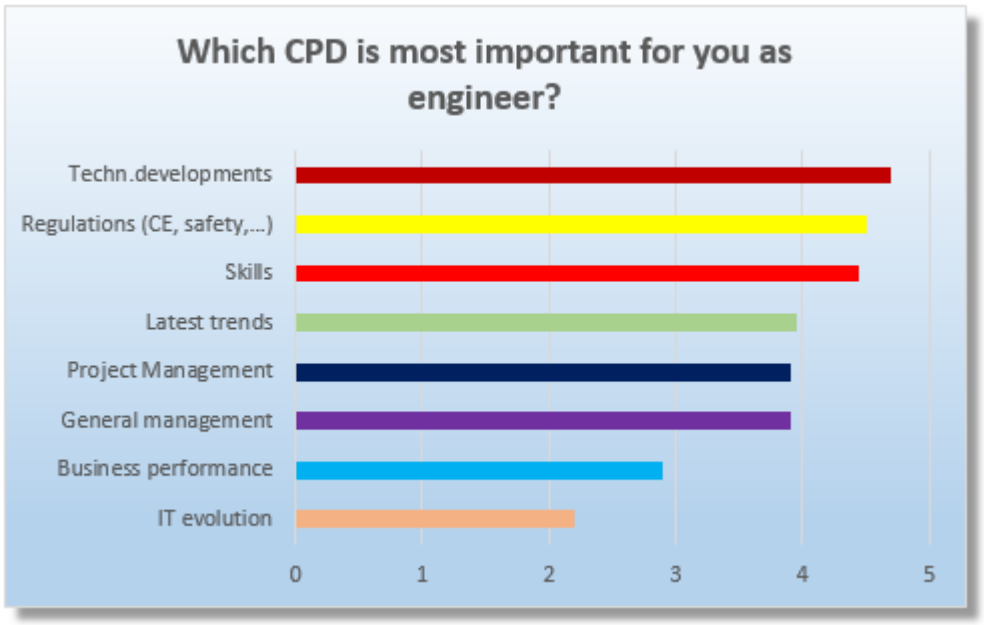

Figure 3. Importance of CPD subjects for engineers.

Another important question is what constitutes the types and modes of how CPD is applied. The list used in the questionnaire is based on a FEANI document called “credits for CPD” in which nine of the eleven items were listed as possible types of CPD to receive credit points. These credits are only an indicator of the commitment of the engineer to develop and to practice CPD for professional improvement. Credits are a numeric appreciation of the CPD activities and may contribute to the assurance of quality improvement of engineering practice. It is based on current practices by national engineers associations like Engineers Australia and Engineers Ireland.

An average of 40 credits per year is the minimum total of CPD for an engineer. In general, one credit is considered equivalent to one hour of participation in the CPD activity; however, there are maximum values for each type of CPD when calculating the yearly average, thus ensuring that CPD activity is diverse and has various types of activities.

The graph in *Figure 3* indicates how many times each mode and format of CPD was undertaken. As can be observed in this figure, “in company training” and “mentoring or tutoring other engineers” are the two most widely practiced forms of CPD. Although pursuing a “formal post graduate academic course” is not that highly valued by the employers, as shown in *Figure 4*, 82 engineers, or around 12% of total respondents, find it useful.

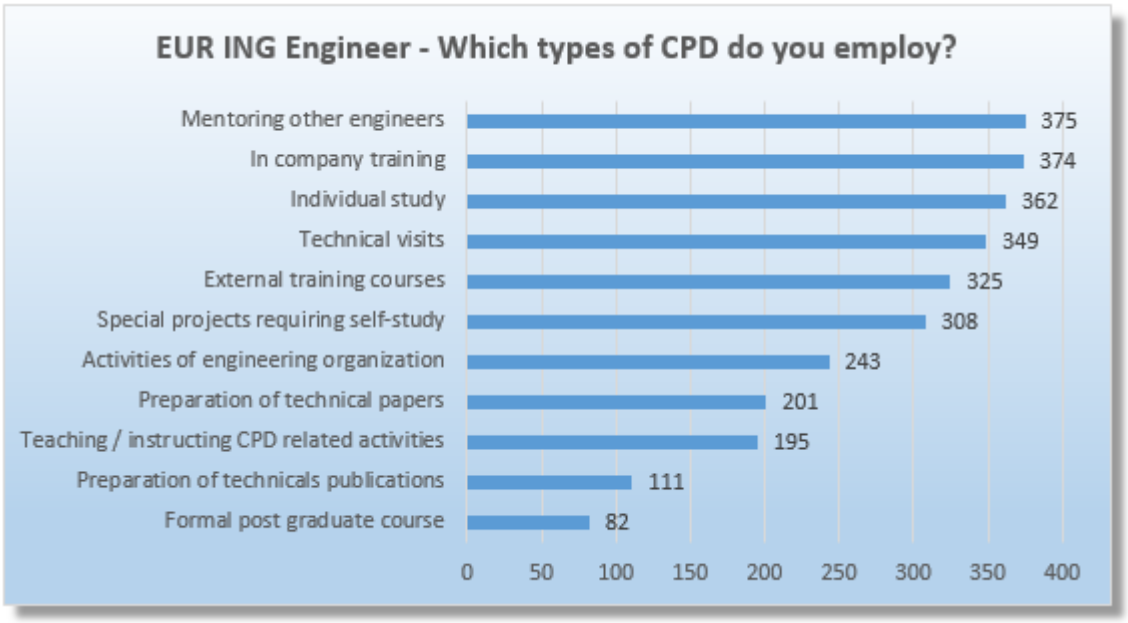

Figure 4. Types and format of CPD used by engineers.

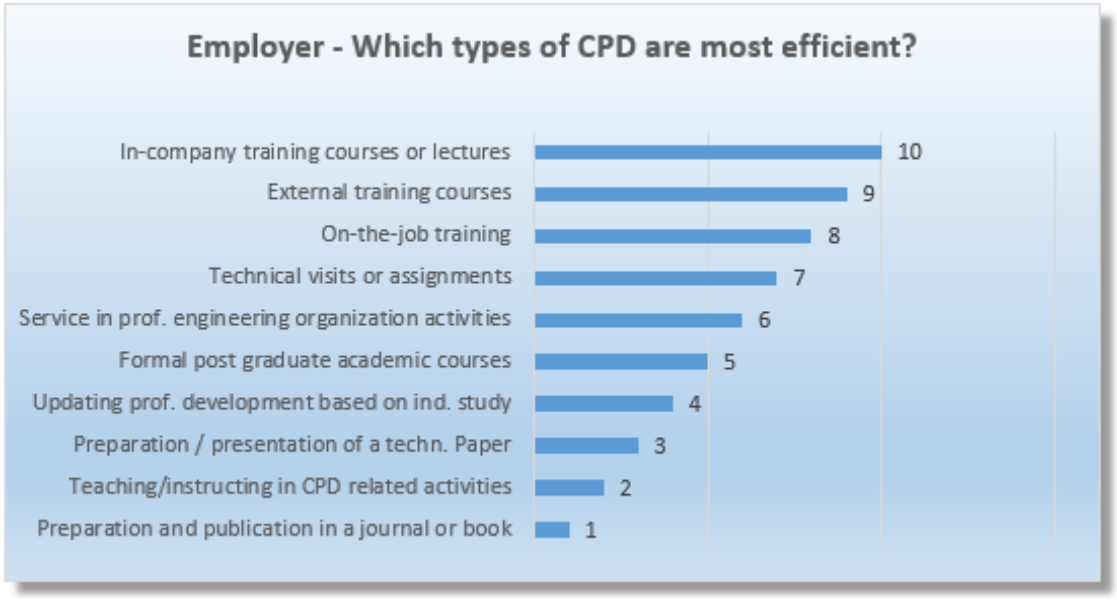

Figure 5. Most efficient types of CPD from employers' point of view

How do employers evaluate the different types of CPD? Employers were asked to rank the effectiveness of the different types of CPD in improving the professional knowledge, skills and attitudes of their engineers. The number 10 indicates the most likely to improve and 1 the least efficient form of CPD from the employers' point of view. Results are presented in *Figure 5*. Employers believe the company benefits most from internal and external courses and on-the-job training of their engineers. These are also the types of activities for which employers provide financial support. The other items are mostly individually oriented and undertaken on an engineer's own time.

When it comes to financing CPD, who is actually paying for the CPD activities? In both questionnaires there were three possibilities: "The company pays the complete amount when it is in line with the business", "The company pays a certain percentage and the employee the rest" or "The employee pays the amount depending on the subject". A closer investigation of the employer survey shows that 15% had not answered this question and

70% of the companies always pay the complete amount. Around 5% combine paying between the 3 options, 7% always choose option 2, that is paying a certain percentage, and in 3% of the cases the engineer pays depending on the subject. When compared with the results of the engineers, the values respectively are: 16.6% did not respond, 46.3% say the company pays the complete amount and 9% combine between the 3 options. Option two is referred by 9.2% and option three is indicated by 17%. The last 1.8% indicates the company combines options two and three.

Given the importance that companies ascribe to in-company and external training courses, it would seem logical that the employer would also want to evaluate the course results. However, this seems to be difficult to measure in most of the cases. This may indicate that there is no effective measurement process in place to verify if learning outcomes and competences were acquired.

In general, almost 60% of the participants responded that one or more evaluation techniques were in use. First of all, their own opinion was sufficient to judge the effectiveness of a CPD event. In half of those cases the company had a specific evaluation form to be completed and about 10% of them were asked for their opinion via an individual interview. Half of the group also noticed that they were subject to increased on-the-job observation following CPD completion.

Looking at these evaluation questions in more detail, participants were almost always or at least frequently asked about “participant satisfaction”, his or her “improvement in knowledge or skills” and “changes in views and attitudes” and if it was a “value for money” training course. Less important were questions pertaining to “changes in the participant behaviour” and if “organizational changes” were the result of a CPD activity.

Only 3% of the respondents affirmed that there is no evaluation at all and 12% did not answer.

Another question was intended to shed some insight on the main reasons a company wants their engineers to be involved in CPD. Four motives were presented and more than one could be selected:

- CPD of the staff is critical to the success of the organization;
- CPD is needed to keep motivated employees within the company;
- CPD is a necessity to maintain the quality of services and products;
- CPD is an investment in the future of the company.

This resulted in no significant difference between the options. They all scored almost the same value. Thirty percent of the employers even checked all four of them.

Survey results related with time invested in CPD

CPD requires time for engineers and for employers. An important aspect of the survey was about time and periods spent on CPD by engineers. It is relevant to know how much time engineers are willing to spend on CPD, how much time the engineers are allowed to invest in CPD and where employers stand in terms of sending engineers for CPD. These values may be sometimes difficult to calculate due to the nature of some CPD activities. There was a clear attempt to obtain as much reliable information as possible. Some of the answers were not direct and occasionally only estimates were provided in the questionnaire by engineers and employers.

For employers, questions were defined to provide the number of days for CPD courses per year an engineer needs to remain up-to-date in his or her job. Courses could be long

duration course or several short-duration courses or a combination of both. The choices for employers were between one to five days per year with possibility of having more days in one year.

Another question was related to the fact of having periodic mandatory CPD to maintain one's professional engineering status. From the part of the companies a bit less than 50% of the companies stated that it was mandatory in their country. These countries are the United Kingdom, Slovenia, Ireland, Malta and Belgium.

About the same rate of companies, 48%, stated that the company policy requires that each employee has a minimum number of credits or days of CPD per year. So, about half of companies responding were either legally forced or bound through internal policy to have mandatory periodic CPD for their engineers. The frequent interval of number of days per year of CPD for engineers was between three and five days per year.

Evaluating the answers of the individual engineers was complex. Engineers were asked to enter a number of days spent on the eleven different types of CPD during the previous year. Some responses were listed in hours since training sometimes did not have durations of entire days and were presented in hours. To get comparable results with those of the employers, only the "in-company" and the "external courses" were considered as these were all entered in days; that was directly in line with the question posed to the employers.

It is notable that 127 engineers, or about 19%, did not have the opportunity to participate in any course during a whole year. This does not mean they did not attend any other type of CPD. Analysing the data of these 127 engineers shows that they attended other types of CPD such as "service in professional engineering organization activities" and "updating professional development based on individual study".

On the other hand, about the same percentage stated they were able to participate in courses for 10 days or more per year. Taking the average of the 532 engineers who answered this question yields a result of around 4 days per year of CPD. This is about the same as the values obtained from the employer data that indicated 3 to 5 days a year of CPD as typical practice among employers.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This CPD survey of FEANI addressing engineers with EUR ING certificates and respective employers from across Europe was informative and presents a snapshot of needs and practices of the engineering community. It is relevant to note that CPD practices are, in a large part, independent of the LLL providers' organizations. It is clear that dialogue between LLL providers, engineering companies and engineering professional organizations, like FEANI, could and should be developed and implemented.

Another important conclusion is that engineers as well as their employers are putting their "technical knowledge" at the top of the list of CPD topics attended during training. This is followed by topics like existing regulations in areas of CE, safety, environment, sustainability, digital tools, etc. Competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) like leadership, coaching, mentoring related with the engineering community follow the other two groups.

The choice of the engineering community to develop these competences is to attend in-company or external courses and on-the-job training. Engineers also like to study on their own or through a formal postgraduate academic course. It appears that more can be done to design effective templates for evaluating the CPD needs of engineers. This area should be studied further by all stakeholders, especially the LLL providers.

From the study of the survey it seems that the annual average of 40 hours as the total minimum of CPD for an active and updated engineer is commonly achieved. Those hours may consist of 3 to 5 days of courses a year supplemented with CPD activities done by each engineers during private time. The collaboration of LLL providers with stakeholders to develop personal and company development plans may clearly benefit the organization and the implementation of a robust and effective system of providing adequate CPD for the engineering community. Considering initial questions by FEANI, the practice of CDP is constant, the majority of engineers want to have CPD as a necessity to progress in the career, the majority of employers support CPD of engineers, time spent yearly in CPD is more than forty hours and payment of CPD is shared by engineers, employers and official agencies.

Another important recommendation emerges from a FEANI proposal "E4E – Engineers for Europe" that has been proposed for funding by the European Commission (E4E, 2022). In fact, the proposal aims to build a structured and durable alliance between education and the engineering profession (professional bodies and industry) to foster innovation and resilience of European engineers through the acquisition of new skills and competences, including knowledge, attitudes and leadership, with specific focus on digital, green, resilient and entrepreneurial competences. One of the objectives is to prepare the engineering profession to tackle EU societal challenges and priorities (green and digital transformation, decarbonisation, etc.).

The conclusions listed above indicate that some recommendations can be made to foster cooperation between the engineering professional sector and ULLL providers. One possibility is the joint participation in projects and proposals funded by the European Commission related to innovation, technology development and qualification. Another possibility is the nomination of joint observatories and/or committees to define training programs and cooperating platforms. A third action might involve periodic surveys, like the one described in this paper, to define what is needed by engineers and what ULLL providers can contribute. A better mutual understanding and knowledge among ULLL providers and engineering professional associations could be promoted with benefits for all, but especially for the qualified engineering population.

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THREE PILLARS FOR BETTER INCLUSION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Keywords: *diversity, inclusion, migrant background students, women in leadership, low socio-economic status students, higher education, intersectionality*

ABSTRACT

Universities around the world are developing strategies for inclusion. This policy level attempts to strengthen social responsibility in higher education - universities reflect a number of perspectives to promoting equality and non-discrimination in relation to their organizational values. In this paper, we explore inclusion in universities through three perspectives: ethnicity, gender and socio-economic background. Firstly, we present an outline of a European development project addressing these perspectives to form a better understanding of the causes and effects of these social categories to the experiences of students and staff members in universities. Secondly, we reflect on the critical points identified in the project to inform academics about concrete steps for a more inclusive higher education. Thirdly, we discuss what measures can be taken to disseminate and mainstream these findings to the attention of decision makers in higher education institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Equity, diversity and inclusion have become key policy incentives for higher education institutions (HEIs) in the European higher education area. These incentives are highlighted in educational policies of institutions like the European Union, OECD and UNESCO. In order to facilitate change for more inclusive higher education, eucen[7], the European Universities Continuing Education Network, has launched a development project to address these incentives among its own network of higher education institutions.

The SMILE project[8], co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission, addresses three perspectives relevant to equity, diversity and inclusion in higher education: migrant background students, women in leadership in higher education and low socio-economic status students. In the project, we call these perspectives the three pillars for inclusion in higher education (HE). Carried out in universities in six different EU countries with the help of social partners representing the civil society, the project intends to pinpoint the main challenges of each pillar and to understand the experiences of the affected individuals in the aforementioned disadvantaged social categories. With this understanding,

[7] European university continuing education network: www.eucen.eu
[8] Social Meaning Impact through LLL universities in Europe: https://smile.eucen.eu

the project aims to create tools to help HEIs address the identified problems with the final objective of making universities more aware and inclined to dismantle discriminative structures and act against discriminative approaches in the academic community.

This rationale of the SMILE project is rooted in the Erasmus+ programme key action “Social inclusion and common values”, and the sub-programme “Support to Policy Reform”. In this framework, the European Commission expects project consortiums to explore policy challenges in Europe and possible solutions or recommendations to better any current matter that needs improvement from policy level and into society. The final objectives of this type of call foresee results (or at least contributions to the current European debate) to be focused and with a useful set of tools and/or results at the end of the funded period. Stemming from this framework, the eucen has offered to take the lead in facilitating change in European universities for a more inclusive higher education for all citizens and stakeholders.

PERSPECTIVES OF ETHNICITY, GENDER AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND IN UNDERSTANDING STUDENT AND STAFF EXPERIENCES

A number of research and policy reports indicate that EU countries face similar diversity and inclusion challenges across the HEIs. These reports, like the Education and Training Monitor (2018)[9], highlight an important, yet alarming state of inclusion in the European higher education area. Despite the attention to inclusion present in the HEIs, an overview of policy measures to broaden educational attainment shows that less than half of EU countries set specific targets to support participation of under-represented groups in HE. Hence, research and policy reports emphasize the need for HEIs as research and knowledge centres, in taking responsibility to implement internal transformation, and to incite and lead societal changes in their surrounding environments.

Following these findings, the eucen-initiated SMILE project focuses on social categories of ethnicity, gender and socio-economic background in higher education. These categories are explored via a metaphor of three pillars of diversity: migrant background students, women in leadership in HE, and low socio-economic status students. Based on a review of research and policy literature, we identified a research gap in collecting data on experiences of individuals in these social categories with a focus on lifelong learning. Within the topic of ethnicity, evidence of inequities and challenges of minorities in higher education has been reported by the European Students Union (ESU) (ESU, 2016). Furthermore, accounts on gender equality in research and research leadership have been shared by the European University Association (EUA). In addition, the European Commission has reported on the conditions of third-country nationals across the EU in terms of employment, education, and social inclusion (Joint Working Group, 2017). The consensus of these aforementioned accounts is that individuals from the above social categories are at risk of facing inequality and discrimination in European HE.

Based on this review of research and policy literature, we identified the need to form a better understanding of the authentic experiences of individuals representing the mentioned social categories, to contribute to a deeper understanding of the underlying causes and effects to lifelong learning and career advancement of these social groups.

In order to understand these perspectives, the project established Focus Advisory Groups (FAGs) in universities in six countries. In these FAGs, stakeholders from universities and social partners discussed current challenges and inequities and prepared a report on each pillar to highlight the critical points that need to be addressed. Based on this, the project will

[9] https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/volume-1-2018-education-andtraining-monitor-country-analysis.pdf

develop a Diversity Audit Model for HEIs to reflect upon and self-assess how diversity is addressed in their institution. The project will also develop a set of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses to train HE staff on diversity and inclusion matters. To conclude, the SMILE project will create policy recommendations to make the challenges more visible to policy makers at institutional, national and European levels.

The SMILE project consortium is formed by 11 partners from eight different countries and comprises six universities and five associations or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as social partners. We foresee that this balance between HEIs and civil society assists in forming a better understanding of the challenges that diversity and inclusion present for both parties (i.e., society and HEIs) and facilitates potential solutions that consider the perspectives of all actors involved.

This approach was stimulated by experiences from another project coordinated by eucen, the HE4u2 project[10], carried out from 2016-2018 to facilitate integration of newcomers and migrant background students specifically after the 2015 refugee crises in Europe. This project aimed to reduce disparities in learning outcomes that affected learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. Hence, the results from HE4u2 project provided eucen with a rationale to reflect on the need to continue working in the area of diversity and inclusion in order to improve the current approaches in HEIs. Stocktaking from this previous project encouraged eucen to design an outline for the SMILE project, keeping with the principles of co-creation and engagement, in order to give voice to the experiences of students and staff members to better understand how ethnicity, gender and socio-economic background forms conditions for learning and teaching in universities. As project work was carried out, we became increasingly aware of the notion of intersectionality, and started to examine situations when individuals from overlapping disadvantaged social categories enter higher education, and how these overlapping social categories can create additional challenges and discrimination in academia.

CRITICAL POINTS IN INCLUSION – WHAT STEPS TO TAKE?

As we started to work on the three perspectives for inclusion in higher education, the overlapping nature of disadvantageous social categories to individuals soon became apparent in the accounts collected. As accredited to Kimberlé Crenshaw in her 1989 paper *Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: a black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics*, this overlapping nature of unfavourable social categories has been defined in research as intersectionality. In order to pave the way for more inclusive higher education, we must first reflect on the critical points in inclusion identified in the project, and then draw particular attention to the intersectional character of these points.

Figure 1. Intersectionality perspectives in the SMILE project

The Oxford dictionary defines intersectionality as:

> *"the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage"*.

[10] Integrating Cultural Diversity in Higher Education: https://he4u2.eucen.eu

During the first consultation phase of the project, while talking to the concerned minority groups, the three diversity and inclusion topics were clearly identified as overlapping situations. In practice, academics with a migrant background are less often offered the opportunity to assume managerial roles. If these academics also happen to be female, representation becomes even rarer.

Similarly, low socio-economic income students may include nationals but very often the students with a migrant background have more challenging situations economically. In general, students from migrant backgrounds also receive more pressure from their families to abandon their studies and start working in order to help at home. If they are women, the chances of them finishing their studies are certainly low.

Based on this finding of intersectionality of the disadvantaged social groups, the project advanced into the phase of desk research process. Nine of the SMILE partners were grouped by pillars at the beginning of the project. Two universities and one association worked together in each pillar as shown in *Figure 2*. The structure is not a coincidence, but a considered decision – one university from the north and another from the south of Europe were paired in each pillar to bring different perspectives to each pillar.

In parallel with the work carried out by each pillar, eucen and ESU also conducted transversal research on global pieces of literature from European organisations and official European papers discussing diversity and inclusion. These were identified and shared with the consortium.

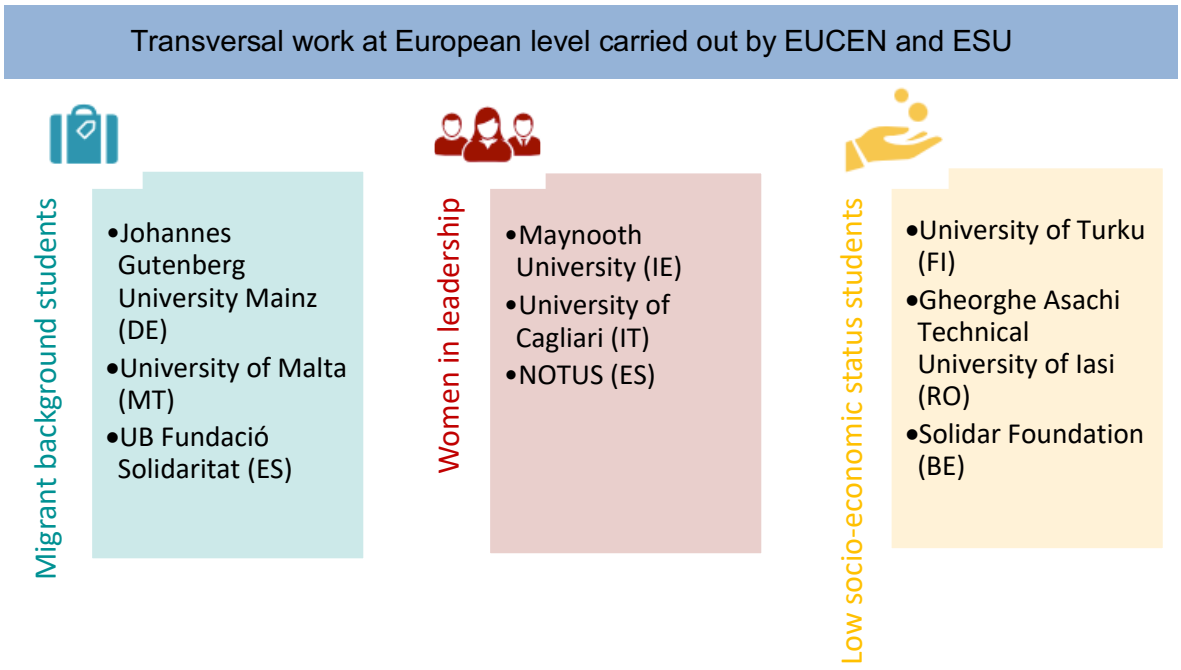

Figure 2. Distribution of project partners per Pillars of inclusion.

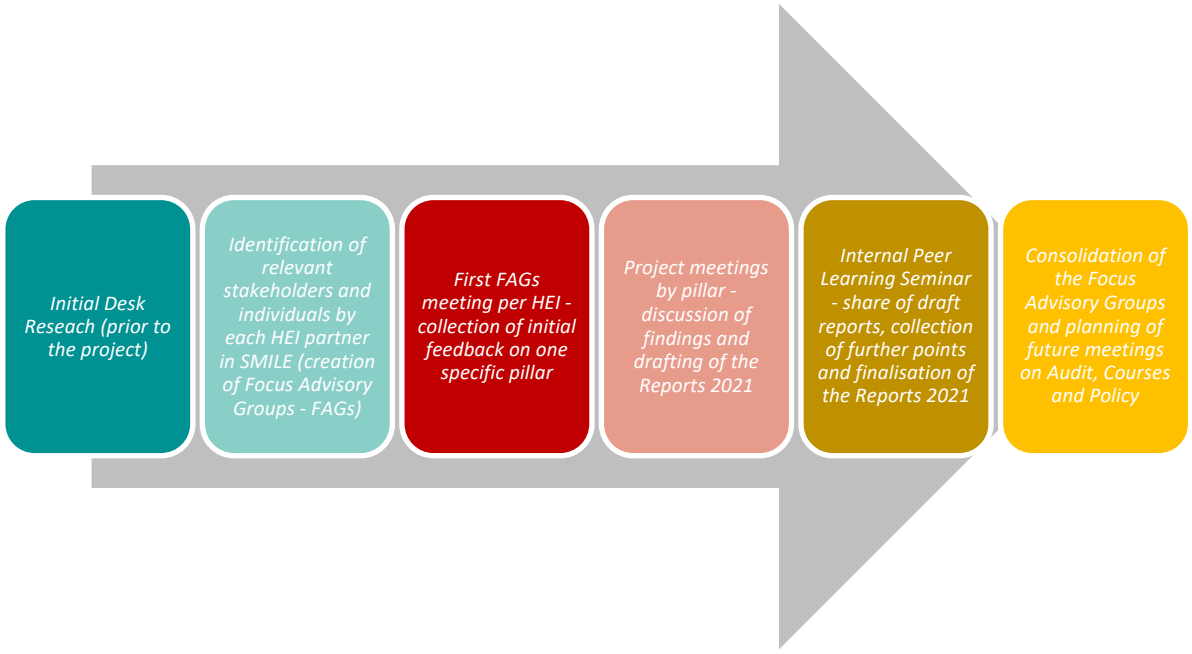

Figure 3. Desk research process and external consultation in the SMILE project

Each partner identified local/regional individuals or associations that, somehow, could represent the minority group of their pillar. These identified groups became their "Focus Advisory Groups". The SMILE partners have consolidated discussion environments with these groups and consulted with them on different aspects of the project.

In the first phase of the SMILE project, each partner working with a Focus Advisory Group planned one or several meetings. This allowed them to collect general feedback regarding the challenges of the pillar they were working on – challenges of the group, ways society are already helping them, ways HEIs are involved in their needs, etc. Partners collected all the feedback and compared the answers from the different contributors within their pillar.

The project also organised an internal Peer Learning Seminar to discuss and contrast findings with the other members of the consortium. All partners were invited to reflect on the three pillars during one preparatory week, send comments, watch videos and read interesting articles. Furthermore, draft reports were presented during the seminar.
Both the feedback collected during the Focus Advisory Groups and the discussions carried out during the Peer Learning Seminar were the basis for the writing of the SMILE Reports that can be found on the project website[11]. The three reports (one for each pillar) collect the different contributions and offer a short conclusion.

The other social partners (i.e., eucen and ESU) did a more global study, identifying European cases, approaches and examples both from university environments and from the point of view of students and their perspective. Based on this stocktaking of the state-of-the-art of inclusion in higher education institutions, the project will next create a diversity audit model, create CPD courses and create a set of policy recommendations and an action plan for policy makers at institutional, national and global levels. The authors think that these steps are relevant for inclusion of social groups representing ethnicity, gender and socio-economic background, and the individuals who identify with the overlapping nature of those categories within their own life experiences.

[11] http://smile.eucen.eu/about-smile/

DISCUSSION

Dissemination of the aforementioned inclusion activities and tools is crucial in making inclusion a reality in European higher education. In order to disseminate and mainstream these outputs, the SMILE project is producing open source materials, licensed under the attribution 4.0 international (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 licence). The design and format of the materials will allow adaptation and transformation as needed. This means that any institution will be able to use or adapt the materials to their particular needs and benefit from the experience of those who have already used the original version.

Furthermore, eucen promotes the SMILE project through a global media approach, making use of a dedicated "Inclusive Europe" channel, available on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, which also publishes a periodical newsletter focusing on diversity and inclusion. This open approach is intended to highlight the topic and reach the highest number of people possible. Access to the Inclusive Europe social media is possible through LinkedIn[12], Facebook[13], Twitter[14] and a dedicated Newsletter[15].

Dissemination and mainstreaming actions depend, however, on how the project outputs are aligned to institutional strategies with respect to equality, inclusion and non-discrimination. Most EU countries have national policies covering equality and diversity at different levels. Similarly, universities have numerous competing demands on their capacity to develop strategies to implement the wide range of policy changes required in current global circumstances, especially the social issues raised by a changing economy, demographics, and growing inequality, in particular. This means that HEIs may be at different states or positions in developing diversity and inclusion policies in Europe. The biggest challenge is to establish a diversity-oriented university culture that perceives diversity as an opportunity for enrichment while also dealing with heterogeneity. This approach requires transversal work in designing structures, proposals, instruments and measures for various groups of students and staff members. It involves reflections and discussions with a wide range of stakeholders.

The SMILE project intends to facilitate this process for HEIs, taking into consideration existing tools and developing new tools, accompanying HEIs interested in going that extra mile in the promotion of genuine commitment, and support for the implementation of diversity and inclusion approaches.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we reviewed a framework of three perspectives in facilitating equity, diversity and inclusion in higher education: migrant background students, women in leadership in higher education, and low socio-economic status students. In the context of an Erasmus+ development project, eucen included the perspectives of both students and staff members to explore experiences of individuals and groups in these particular social categories. As the project work unfolded, it became evident that intersectionality would provide a more focussed lens for examining organizational policies and processes. With this lens, the project consortium was able to observe how the sense of belonging and inclusion may be further deteriorated in the intersections of these social categories, hence exposing the already disadvantaged individuals and groups to experiences of further discrimination in academia.

In conclusion, ethnicity, social class and gender are still drivers for advantage or disadvantage in education, and purposeful strategies need to be taken into use in higher

[12] https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13929176/
[13] https://www.facebook.com/inclusive.eu
[14] https://twitter.com/EuropeInclusive
[15] https://mailchi.mp/26b889688d7b/inclusive-europe

education to enhance equity, diversity and inclusion.

Awareness raising and call for action are key in facilitating inclusion. However, in our analysis of the actions proposed by the project, a more clear alignment to institutional strategies is suggested. Increased coherence within the strategies may establish a common ground for the development of diversity-oriented university culture. In such a culture, questions of intersectionality can also be addressed. The tools developed by the project enable universities to carry out audits, build a genuine understanding of the responsiveness and relevance of their current diversity policies and practices, and plan the implementation of further strategies to improve present inclusive approaches.

Acknowledgement

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THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN CREATING CRITICALLY INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

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Keywords: *Inclusion, anti-racism, teaching*

ABSTRACT

Even when universities and institutions of learning have policies on inclusion in place, individual teachers still play a major role in making the classroom experience truly inclusive or otherwise for the student. In this paper, I reflect on my experiences in two different classrooms – one inclusive and the other not inclusive – and highlight the differences in techniques and methods used by the educators to create the different atmospheres.

INTRODUCTION

There is an obvious heightened awareness the world over on issues of equality, equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism. In an attempt to advance reforms in their practice, education providers and practitioners have begun to engage in various interventions, some more effective than others, in a bid to 'diversify' their institutions or 'include' more non-traditional students. In the week of writing this paper alone, I have been invited to speak and have indeed spoken at three different panels to discuss matters of inclusion and diversity in education. There has not been a month in the last two years where panels and discussions have not been held in relation to these issues.

While diversity and inclusion are usually understood and executed in the light of assisting historically underrepresented groups to access higher education, (Bolitzer *et al.*, 2016), I will argue that the techniques used within the classroom, after members of the under-represented groups have gained access, can serve to either facilitate inclusion or further deepen the disadvantage and systemic exclusion experienced by non-traditional students.

Critical Race Theory (CRT), a theory that originated in the United States of America in the 1970s but has now gained traction with researchers all over the world, advocates the use of (counter) stories to highlight the experiences of disadvantage, inequality, exclusion and racism endured by marginalised people (Stefancic and Delgado, 2017). It is expected that story-telling will bring the experiences of the marginalised into the consciousness of people whose life experiences differ. Stories serve not just to counter the majoritarian storyline but also to un-silence the voices of people who are not ordinarily heard in the mainstream (Stefancic and Delgado, 2017).

Therefore, in keeping with this tenet of CRT, I will utilise story-telling to reflect on and share my experience as a learner in two different higher education classrooms (classroom A and classroom B). I will then suggest five things that differed in the approaches of the educators and offer concrete suggestions on ways that educators can embrace critical inclusive

practices in their classrooms. To put my stories in perspective, I will begin with a brief description of the unique racial climate of the Republic of Ireland as well as a brief description of my own journey as a migrant from Nigeria.

THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Throughout the 19th century, a combination of famine and bonded servitude resulted in mass movement of Irish people outside of Ireland. Between 1820 and 1930, it is estimated that over 4.5 million Irish people migrated to America (Library of Congress, 2021). This mass outward migration created a large 'Irish diaspora' and it is now projected that there are at least 70 million people all over the world who claim Irish ancestry (Lentin, 2007). In the 1990s, Ireland experienced a period of rapid economic growth and prosperity that was fuelled by foreign direct investment (popularly referred to as the Celtic Tiger). The country previously characterised by mass emigration suddenly became a choice migration destination, with people from all continents of the world, including returning Irish citizens, flocking to take advantage of the booming economy (Lentin & McVeigh, 2006). Ireland suddenly found itself facing a diversity situation, the magnitude of which it had never had to deal with since the inception of the state. By 1997, in addition to other categories of migrants, black communities began to spring up first in Dublin and then in other parts of the country (Fanning, 2002). The Irish who had in the past experienced racialisation and 'othering' by the English and Americans were 'suddenly' racialised as white (Garner, 2004) and were now full circle in a position where they were doing the othering. Even though there had always been an autochthonous anti-traveller racism strand in Ireland, a new strand of anti-black racism became obvious and more visible with the arrival of the black community. A report authored by Lucy Michaels (2015) is one of a few detailed reports that documents the lived experiences of black people living in Ireland. Compared to the rest of the West, Ireland's introduction to in-migration of diverse racial backgrounds is fairly recent. The fabric of the Irish state has changed significantly, especially by the entry and growth of a black population. Ireland is now a heterogenous, multi-racial society and is still in the process of making sense of and dealing with issues of diversity and inclusion.

MY STORY

I am a black Nigerian-Irish woman. I came to reside in Ireland in the summer of 2012. Prior to that, I was fully resident in Nigeria. I did not necessarily come to Ireland because I wanted a better life (I was doing quite well in Nigeria, actually). I came to Ireland because I got married and my husband worked in Ireland. When people refer to me as an economic migrant, I feel uncomfortable. Money was the last thing on my mind when I chose to migrate to Ireland. I was, in fact, leaving independence and financial comfort to come to a system that made me totally financially dependent on my husband. It was a sacrifice I made for family. I was coming with a track record of academic excellence, achievement in the corporate world, and a confidence rooted in the fact that I could replicate my successes anywhere in the world. I was fired up and ready to give my new home a chance. Within a few months of residing in Ireland, I realised that my dreams of continuing to achieve were not going to be fulfilled. I met an impenetrable brick wall. I could not get a job – it didn't matter how many applications I put in, no one called me for an interview or even shortlisted me for any sort of recruitment process. Until then it had never crossed my mind that I would remain unemployed for long. I was sure that with my experience, I would be at least shortlisted for an interview. First month, nothing. Second month, nothing. Third month, not a word. There was not even an acknowledgement of any of the applications I had submitted. Research validates my experience. In a research experiment carried out, McGinnity (2008) made up fictitious CVs, some with African sounding names and others with European and Asian names, but all with similar qualifications and sent them out to recruiters. CVs with 'Irish' names were twice as

likely to be called for interviews than other foreign names. Black women in Ireland have often shared stories of their 'job-seeker' experiences and how changing their names to more Irish sounding names gained them access to interviews (Akinborewa *et al.*, 2020).

Prior to this, I had applied for a Masters programme in what I had heard was one of Ireland's most prestigious universities. Just before the effect of not getting called for interviews began to impact me, I received admission into that University to study for a Masters in International and European Business Law. I was elated! I finally had something to look forward to - Uni became a refuge to me. I enrolled and attended what I will now refer to as classroom A.

CLASSROOM A

I had just come into the country. I cannot say I had settled. It had been one full year and I was still far from adjusting to food, the weather, accents, life in general. I was still culture shocked. I had no friends. I felt trapped because I was coming from a very active professional life and suddenly everything had stopped. No job. No friends. No networks. I was starting again. And as flippant as I make this sound now, it was a big deal. Had I not had a faith in God, I would probably have caved in. It was a struggle to maintain sound mental health. So, you can imagine my joy when it was time to resume at a prestigious university in Ireland. I was elated. I knew the exposure, the broadening, the sense of fulfilment engaging in academics brought so I was excited. I started the course. Teachers were fantastic. They knew their onions. Course content was good enough, but I was invisible. No one spoke to me and I spoke to no one. Honestly, I was afraid to speak to anyone. Even though I was doing a Masters in 'International and European Law', International was obviously interpreted to mean America and Britain. There was no mention or reference to Africa or anything relatively familiar. I was always the last to be chosen by my peers for group work, and even when I asked to join a group, I was never chosen to speak or present on behalf of the group. I never shared anything in the classroom even when I knew I had things to say that could buttress what the teacher was explaining. I just came to class and went home. I was invisible.

Five years after my experience with classroom A, I enrolled for a Higher Diploma in Education and encountered classroom B[16].

CLASSROOM B

From the first day I stepped into the class, I was drawn into a discussion. Notice my phrasing – drawn in. I wanted to hide. I was not allowed to hide. In the first few days, when groups were formed, myself and the other African in the class were again left to ourselves but within a week of attending, that changed almost miraculously. People actually spoke to me. Teachers knew my name. I was able to tell them things about my life because they wanted to know. They knew when I became an Irish citizen and the class actually took a break to celebrate me! I existed in the minds of these people. We shared biographical stories in the class. People were learning about where I came from and I was learning things about Ireland that I hadn't in the six years I had been in the country. We were doing heavy course work. There was a lot of learning going on, yet it was like a community. Everyone respected me. We were able to have tough discussions about race, class, and gender, and while we argued, we made up afterwards. Once, we were discussing race in one of our sessions. A white male had flippantly mentioned that he didn't think racism existed and that the disadvantage faced by people of colour existed more in their minds than anywhere else. The class went quiet. No one responded. Suddenly, all the years of applying for jobs without even

[16] I admit that a lot could have changed in classroom A in the 5 years that elapsed between the two classrooms (I hope that a lot has changed), but the points I am making are not limited to these two classrooms. I use these classrooms merely as an in-road or an entry point to an important discussion about practices that encourage inclusion in the classroom.

an acknowledgement from the employers flashed through my mind. All the years of knocking frantically on doors that I was qualified to enter but that remained tightly shut because I was black flashed through my mind and I responded. I responded more emotively than I would have liked and by the end of the class I felt drained, low, and tired. As I got home that evening, I remember receiving a call from the class facilitator. She had called to check up on me as she understood the toll the conversation had taken on me. I didn't share how drained I was with anyone, but she knew and ensured she made contact. I mattered. Our class had become our family and I had a place in that family.

Classroom A and B were both within universities that had robust diversity and inclusion policies. I had gained access into both very easily as a result of these diversity and inclusion policies, and yet, my experience in one was starkly different from my experience in the other. In classroom A, I did not engage with the class or the faculty, I was excluded from discussions when they did happen, and I felt anything but included. Classroom B was different. My experience in classroom B did not happen by chance, but rather was a derivative of an intentional choice of a particular pedagogy and ethos. Williams, Berger, and McClendon (2005) highlight four dimensions that organisations need to work on to achieve inclusive practice: (a) access and equity, (b) campus climate, (c) diversity in the curriculum, and (d) student learning and development. When institutions and practitioners focus on some of these but not others, the student does not have access to what is referred to as 'Inclusive excellence' (Williams, Berger, and McClendon, 2005). In my story, classroom A paid attention to the first and second dimension but not the other two. The result was that I got into the school but was excluded in the class. Some of the other issues that gave rise to the difference in the experience in both classrooms are:

Teaching Methods

In classroom A teachers utilised traditional teaching methods which tend to exclude rather than include. Writing on the importance of teaching methods in inclusive practice, Danowizz and Tuit (citation) suggest that

> *Even in cases where the curriculum is diverse (Banks, 1991), faculty members often use traditional modes of instruction, which serve to exclude rather than include students (Tuitt, 2003b). Thus, faculty members must not only concern themselves with what they teach; they must also be concerned with how they teach. (p. 43)*

Freire (1972) describes this form of teaching as a banking approach to education where the educator's principal function is to transfer certain fixed ideas into the minds of the passive learner in a way that often re-enforces rather than disrupts the status quo. Freire described the educator who uses this kind of method as suffering from narration sickness, as only the educator's voice is heard, filling the passive student's brain with information. In classroom A, teachers primarily utilised this method of teaching. They came to class, delivered their PowerPoint presentations and left. There was very little room for interaction or dialogue. In Classroom B, on the other hand, the teachers created a democratic and safe space where educators took on the role of facilitators and co-learners (Freire, 1972; hooks, 2009). Students were encouraged to think and question taken for granted assumptions. Classes started with students reflecting on their own experiences and sharing these reflections. Classes were characterised by debates, discussions, and reflection and very little 'lecturing'. The methods used were intentionally designed to include in an organic and seamless way.

Community in the Classroom

bell hooks (2009) writes about the power of building community as a teacher. Describing her own practice, she writes

> *Knowing all that I know now after more than thirty years in classrooms, I do not begin to teach in any setting without first laying the foundation for building community in the classroom. To do this it is essential that teacher and students take time to get to know one another. That process can begin by simply hearing each person's voice as they state their name. (p.20)*

The teachers in classroom B built a community within the classroom. Community building involves the educators, making the class a safe and supportive environment for sharing, debates and peer-learning (Brookfield, 2018). Classrooms do not become communities automatically. Instead, educators must intentionally build trust and engender collaboration amongst students as well as between teachers and students. Whereas I could come into classroom B and share things that were happening in my private life, like the news about becoming an Irish citizen, no such avenue was presented in classroom A. Classroom A was not a community – it was impersonal, rigid and very traditional. Classroom B, on the other hand, became almost like a family and relationships I formed in that class have stayed with me until today.

Attention to Cultural Differences

Williams, Berger, & McClendon (2005) opine that one of the key drivers of inclusion within the classroom is paying attention to the cultural differences diverse learners bring to the educational experience and how those cultural differences enhance the teaching and learning environment. In classroom A, even though there was ample opportunity for the educators to leverage my knowledge as the only black African in the group, this was never utilised. As it was a course in law, a simple question asking about how the laws in my jurisdiction differed from Irish laws could have easily ticked this box and included me in the activities. In classroom B, on the other hand, even with the use of pre-planned activities and exercises, there were adjustments and re-adjustments of learning outcomes and teaching methods to accommodate the differences in the group. The educators in classroom B also took advantage of the knowledge in the group and we were often called on to share perspectives from our own cultural paradigms.

Colour-blind Ideology

It is possible that the teachers in Classroom A did not do more to include me because they were working from a colour-blind standpoint. Educators who work from this standpoint claim they 'do not see colour' and therefore treat all their students the same. What taking this stance does is that rather than eliminate racism, it further deepens racial inequality by erasing the past experiences of people of colour and assuming a meritocratic perspective by putting them on a level playing field with others who have not been marginalised (Hearn, 2009). It is possible that the educators in classroom A expected that I would participate in the class and behave the same way as other (White) students if I wanted to and did not see the need to intervene or at least question my silence. The educators in classroom B, on the other hand, acknowledged my 'difference'. They allowed themselves to see my 'colour' and the challenges that came with being a person of colour in a predominantly white country. They were flexible enough to ensure that I was included in classroom activities, and every time this inclusion did not happen organically, were able to steer the class through the use of activities and exercises to ensure that everyone was included.

A Pedagogy of Love

The last difference I will highlight between the two classrooms is the presence of what I like to call a 'pedagogy of love' in one of the classrooms. Paolo Freire once wrote that education is an act of love and courage. Not love as an emotion, but love as a verb. bell hooks (2000) defines love as an extension of oneself for the purposes of nurturing another's wellbeing. The

educators in classroom B understood their privileges as white people, the dominant cultural norms that played out in Irish society, and went above and beyond to use their privilege to advance my wellbeing. Beyond the curriculum, the educators positioned themselves as humans who could be touched by the feelings of the 'other'. The phone call made by the educator in classroom B was a seemingly small gesture but it did more to foster my inclusion than the well-written diversity policy that adorned the offices of classroom A. The educators in classroom B embraced a critical inclusive pedagogic approach (Bolitzer, et al., 2016).

CONCLUSION

Even though the rise in awareness and advocacy for inclusion in education is laudable, unless educators go beyond access and curriculum change and pay attention to their teaching methods and practices, inclusion and diversity interventions will continue to be tick box exercises with very little effect on the lives of marginalised students. When teachers create counter-hegemonic and dialogic spaces, understand and harness the cultural difference in their classrooms, as well as teach with consideration for the different categories of learners, their classrooms become truly transformative and inclusive spaces where marginalised students are empowered to thrive.

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DRIVERS FOR FLEXIBILITY. THREE QUESTIONS TO MAUREEN ANDRADE AND KAREN FERREIRA-MEYERS

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The global pandemic has affected the lives of everybody and from all walks of life. The world of education is no exception to this, and academics have embraced online and blended learning to meet the urgent needs for increased flexibility in learning and teaching. In this interview we explore the experiences from two contrasting realities to understand the drivers for flexibility.

Maureen Snow Andrade is a professor in the Organizational Leadership Department at Utah Valley University. She has an EdD in higher education leadership and is a former associate vice president and associate dean. Her research interests include flexible learning, assessment, global education, leadership, and student access and success.

Karen Ferreira-Meyer is an associate professor at the University of Eswatini in Eswatini (the former Swaziland). She is Coordinator of Linguistics and Modern Languages at the Institute of Distance Education (University of Eswatini) and Research Fellow of the University of the Free State (South Africa).

Timo Halttunen: Universities around the world were, maybe surprisingly, quite agile in their transition to online learning when the COVID-19 pandemic started. Suddenly, there was a great demand for increased flexibility in the educational process. What sources of information did you use to understand what kind of flexibility is in demand?

Maureen Andrade: The challenge at the onset of the pandemic was to prioritise the health and safety of the university community while designing and delivering a high-quality learning experience. Both faculty and students needed to be successful in what was for many an unfamiliar teaching and learning environment. At Utah Valley University, we used surveys and course data to help us understand stakeholder perspectives with the transition to new delivery modalities and technologies. This helped us determine what was working, where changes were needed, and how to bring about those changes. A few examples follow.

We learned that students felt more connected to their instructors in courses delivered synchronously through live stream technology than in traditional face-to-face courses, but

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less connected to their peers. This pointed to the need to identify how instructors could connect students using the tools in virtual conferencing platforms such as the chat feature or breakout rooms, link to external collaborative tools such as Google docs or Microsoft forms, or require virtual teamwork outside of class. We also learned that students thought faculty needed more training to use delivery technologies and faculty thought students needed more training. Consequently, targeted, accessible instructional videos and infographics were designed by the university's instructional technologists.

Another strategy for understanding flexible modes of delivery and their impact was disaggregating course data to determine performance differences across gender, ethnicity, age, and year of study. For example, females in live stream synchronous classes were failing at higher rates than males, first-year students were failing at higher rates than second-year students, and ethnic minority students were failing at higher rates than ethnic majority students. However, first-year students over the age of 25 were more successful than second-year students in the same age category and non-White females over age 25 outperformed those in all other categories. This information expanded the awareness of academic advisors and faculty members of variations in performance and the need to monitor performance and actively reach out to students, but more research is needed to fully understand the patterns.

Karen Ferreira-Meyers: Wow, Maureen, you did quite a lot at your institution. I really like the disaggregation of data. I think that can really assist you (and everyone) in redesigning programmes to respond to the needs of the students too. Before I talk about what we did in our institution (on the other side of the world, in Eswatini), let me add some thoughts about the question.

It is interesting to note that the adjective 'agile' appears in the question. Personally, I am not sure that universities were that agile in responding to the pandemic, at least not at first. It took a while for university management to act, but luckily there were, in most universities from what I gather, individuals (in some cases whole faculties or departments) who were proactive and put in place ways and means to ensure that teaching and learning continued. Nevertheless, I feel much time was lost at the beginning of the pandemic, valuable time.

Indeed, more flexibility was needed. While everyone looking at skills in the 21st century had noted the importance of flexibility, implementing that competency was another issues altogether. Who needed to be flexible? Who was flexible? How can we train people to become more flexible? A whole lot of questions to be answered if we were to be flexible enough to respond adequately to the challenges thrown to us in the world of education by the pandemic.

At the onset of the pandemic, we had very little data at our disposal to verify whether flexibility in delivery, programme design, materials' design, etc. even existed and who were the champions of flexibility, both among staff (academic and administrative) and among the student population. With staff, we proposed an online course on blended teaching. The way people took on the course (early uptake by a few, slower start by the majority, and then there are the laggers-behind, who we may not yet have reached at all, even after two years of the pandemic) was definitely an indication of their flexibility, and so was the manner in which they performed in the course (interaction in the forum and chatrooms, design of plans and materials, etc.). In addition, we were able to assemble some data via the Moodle features, as Moodle was our teaching and learning platform for this particular course on blended teaching.

It is clear today that we still have insufficient information, especially when it comes to flexibility and our students. In general, their reaction to online learning has been dual: some have been keen to continue their studies and have had a positive attitude towards online

environments, flexible design and modes of delivery, while others (perhaps the majority – this needs to be further checked) have been demotivated, discouraged and generally feel online and blended teaching and learning does not work in the context of Eswatini (Southern Africa).

Some lecturers (those that embraced flexibility early on) tried to find out how flexible their students were by asking them to respond to surveys, by having conversations online (forums, chats, videoconferencing) with the students about the 'new normal'. This has yielded important information that needs to be collected and brought together for further analysis.

Timo Halttunen: Part of the transition has been to come up with a solid plan for instructional design – and to systematically evaluate what works and why. In your context, what actions enabled peer-to-peer learning and sharing of good practices among teachers?

Maureen Andrade: The university's success at rapidly transitioning nearly all courses to synchronous or asynchronous delivery was enabled by the collaboration of support staff and faculty. With practice and ingenuity, faculty members identified strategies for not only overcoming challenges but for innovating in the teaching and learning space. The instructional designers and technologists partnering with them also further developed their skills as they researched new technologies, sought answers to questions, and collaborated within their own learning communities and counterparts at other universities.

The university's teaching and learning unit sponsored a number of conferences and workshops that focused on technology-based pedagogical strategies. They were in a good position to identify faculty members who had sought their help in resolving issues and embracing opportunities, and consequently, had become innovators, models, and mentors on campus. Events featured panels of faculty members sharing their experiences with the transition from traditional instruction to interactive live stream or online approaches. For many, these modalities were new, and some were teaching subjects they had previously thought did not lend themselves well to virtual learning. Now they were leading out and breaking old paradigms.

These community-building opportunities brought campus faculty together to share and discuss across departments, which had not occurred to much extent previously. The faculty were clearly committed to students and helping them learn. To do this, they found new ways to engage students. They rose to the challenge; this resulted in student- and faculty-driven change necessitated by an external force – the pandemic. The events brought people together; post-event communities of learning were formed, which utilized document sharing and chats using communication technologies. The teaching and learning office regularly provided information and resources on new technologies and pedagogical approaches. Participants received stipends enabled by federal funding, although external motivators did not drive the success of these events, but rather a desire to learn and support students.

Karen Ferreira-Meyers: There are always challenges with planning, one of the major ones being whose responsibility is it to plan. This is a sore point indeed as it made us lose quite some time again at the start of the pandemic.

There are three main role players involved in the planning that occurred during the transition from face-to-face to blended and online teaching and learning when the country went into full lockdown at the end of March 2020. These are: university management (led by the main officers of the university – Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellors and Registrar, guided by the university Senate and Council), the Centre of Excellence in Learning and Teaching

(CELT) and the Institute of Distance Learning (IDE, mainly because of its long experience with distance and blended teaching and learning). Management gave CELT and IDE the mandate to work on strategies to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and to ensure that teaching and learning was not (or in a limited manner) interrupted. It was noted that blended learning (less than online learning) would provide a way forward in our specific context.

As was noted by Maureen above, it is important to set up communities of enquiry to ensure that whatever is planned also gets implemented. In addition to the course I spoke about earlier, CELT and IDE designed a series of webinars to build these communities, to allow for sharing of best practices (in particular on online assessment – this has been a very popular series which we started in August 2021 and which is ongoing).

Timo Halttunen: These exceptional times have called for resilience from academics and support staff members alike. In your opinion, what are the most important sources for resilience in the university community?

Maureen Andrade: Challenges, especially those as extensive as a global pandemic, typically bring people together. People share their skills and expertise to figure things out and move forward. As a result of the pandemic, probably every organisation across the globe was faced with the need to come together and determine not only how to survive but to thrive. The pandemic hit hard; it hit quickly; it required critical thinking, collaboration, problem-solving, and immediate action. People's best efforts and best thinking continue to be critical to understanding and overcoming the ongoing complications and threats it has generated.

Higher education institutions are entrenched in history and tradition. They are not known for acting quickly. The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to be recognized as a rare exception. In the university community, sources of resilience include the expertise of the faculty and staff, their willingness to collaborate and learn, their recognition of the need for diversity and diverse skills and perspectives, and the practice of shared governance. In many ways, administrators, faculty, staff, and students in higher education institutions are prepared for situations which involve contributing their knowledge, skills, and capacities to resolve issues. They are characterized by flat structures and distributed decision-making as well as the recognition that all voices must be considered. Communication, collaborative decision-making, and buy-in are hallmarks of higher education institutions. This has held true as higher education organizations across the globe have not only pushed forward in adverse circumstances but generated long-term changes in organizational culture that are likely to stick.

Karen Ferreira-Meyers: Resilience is another important 21st-century skill. It needs to be present at an individual level (all stakeholders involved), but also at an institutional and societal level. As the University of Eswatini operates in a third-world setting, it already had quite high resilience, even before the pandemic. But still, the pandemic caught us off-guard, took away part of our existing resilience and showed us that there is a need to keep on working on resilience, as a continuous effort.

Brewer et al.'s (2019) definition of resilience is useful as it was developed specifically for the higher education context: resilience is a "dynamic process of positive adaptation in the face of adversity or challenge. This process involves the capacity to negotiate for and draw upon psychological, social, cultural and environmental resources" (Brewer et al., 2019, p. 1114).

I have represented the way we can build resilience visually below. These points correspond to the different sources of resilience in a way.

When we analyse this list, we note that little was done. Even though on an individual basis, fear was acknowledged and peer support/mentoring provided, this was not necessarily so at an institutional level. Today, a few wellness resources are provided (for example, we are holding a wellness week as we speak – January 2022 – with information on mental and physical health). We have not been able to identify those who struggle the most and thus they have been left to deal with everything on their own.

Research has shown that resilient institutions have effective communication channels with a coherent crisis communication strategy. They have response plans for all kinds of teaching and learning disruptions. They have adequate digital infrastructure, and staff and students have – at least – basic digital literacy. Resilient institutions demonstrate a strong sense of staff and learner community, ensure academic professional development can take place, and support staff who seeks to undertake resilience-building strategies.
As an institution, we have done well, I feel, when it comes to digital infrastructure (even though more is needed) and digital literacy. However, because of the fact that we are in difficult economic situations in the university, ensuring continuous professional development is not easy.

All in all, we now better understand – two years into the pandemic and its multiple disruptions and challenges – what is needed. Whether we will, as an institution of higher learning, be able to provide all this is another story. But, if at least some individuals can demonstrate higher levels of resilience and become role models for others, we have done a good job.

Timo Halttunen: Thank you very much.

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