

REPORT



3.2 & 3.3 Development, validation and translation of two instruments to assess international mobility competencies among students and educators.

The working group: MENDELU

Activity dates:

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Introduction

The aim of Intellectual Output 3 (IO3) is to develop an effective and interactive digitally positioned Toolkit which has the overall objective to support Staff and Students on mobility programme. These mobilities demands careful planning and execution to try and improve the success, experience, sustainability and educational value and impact of the mobility.

As deliverable 3.3 (Translation and validation of an instrument to assess international mobility competencies among students and educators participating in International Weeks) includes a similar topic, this report is done for both deliverables (3.2 & 3.3).

Methods

The International Mobility Competence Questionnaire (IM-COQ) for students and International Mobility Competence Questionnaire (IM-COQ Prof) for educators were placed on the website SurveyMonkey.com, an online survey tool. Both questionnaires were distributed among all partners, educators and students to evaluate the understanding of the item. In total, the first

questionnaire IM-COQ had 70 responses and the IM-COQ Prof questionnaire had 21 responses.

Results

The final results of the two questionnaires are available in the attached files:

- Analysis of responses – Staff
- Analysis of responses – Students

These results offer very important perspectives and can be grouped into the following main categories.

- Effective, accurate and focused preparation of ICSM's at the destination institution is very important. Successfully engaging and integrating with the social and academic environment at the destination institutions seems a challenge. Identifying sustainable scientific and academic opportunities and gaining purposeful access to relevant leading scientists, opinion leaders and influential peers at destination institutions are considered barriers to successful ICSM's.
- The language barrier is recognized as a potential challenge but of lesser importance and is perceived to be an easier challenge to master. English-speaking regions are indicated as the easiest destinations where to complete ICSM's. Social and inter-relational orientation and survival outside the academic environment are considered important aspects for the success of ICSM's.
- The forging of research and publication networks with strong ongoing academic interaction is considered very important skills and competence challenges. Effective communication skills and the development of effective learning strategies like innovation and originality skills, critical thinking, and post-arrival orientation, are considered very important supportive competencies of success.
- The ICSM experience (in terms of numbers completed) does not seem to be associated with improved mobility competence but seems to be associated with an increased need for collaborative networks and opportunities for research. Alternatively, ICSM successes also do not seem to guarantee the confidence or competence to effectively identify or develop future opportunities.

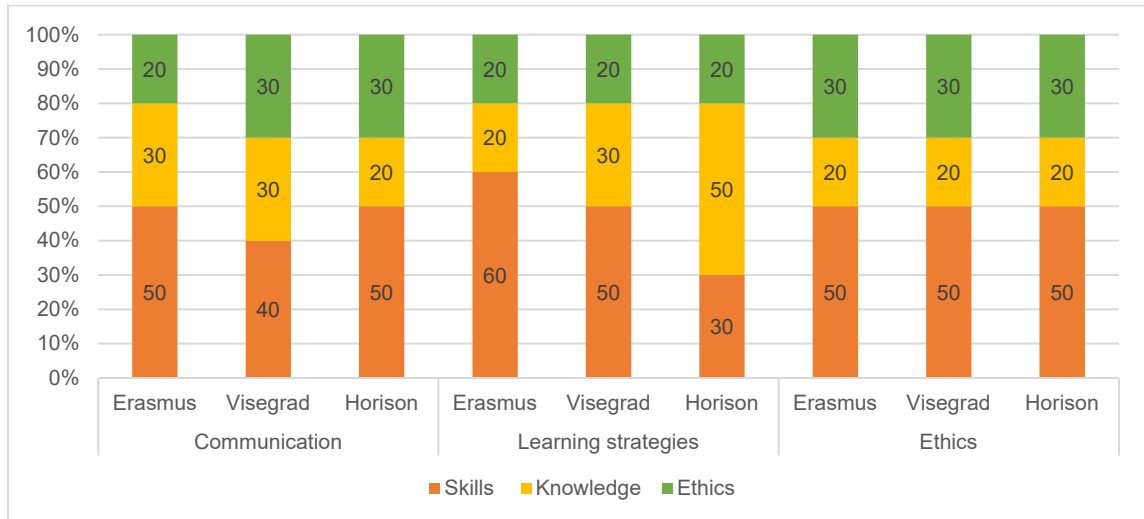


Figure 1. Different motilities have different generic support and skills needs profiles.
 (Source: own project empirical investigation)

These categories and findings largely support the information provided in the work of IO1 and IO2. It is, however, important to appreciate that different mobility types require different competence matrices where relative importance between skills, knowledge and ethics clearly differ. Figure 1 offers some perspective on the differential relative importance of important capacities associated with different mobility types. It is clear that each mobility type has its own specific structural and support needs and requirements from staff and students.

With regard to the analyses completed in preparation for the design and creation of the e-Toolkit, Table 2 offers a comprehensive perspective on the subjectively identified competences (requiring different skill sets) considered necessary for the successful completion of ICSM's. These competences are viewed as problem-based competences.

This means the demands posed by each of these competences are presented as activity areas requiring very specific skills sets. This is a very important perspective and presents the ideal access points for users to access the e-Toolkit and the interactive knowledge and competence improvement possibilities it is structured to deliver.

Table 1. Matrix of subjectively identified specific competences associated with successful mobilities (indicated as problem-based access points for engagement with the e-Toolkit).

How to deal with academic life	How to deal with social life	How to deal with practical life	How to deal with emergency situations
Developing suitable teaching and learning practices to complement the student teaching and learning culture at the destination institution.	Overcoming the language barrier in destination institutions.	Establishing and effectively functioning in group and individual relationships and interactions in destination countries.	Assessing my available resources to complete my tasks.
Developing networks to complete tasks successfully at the destination institution.	Establishing groups and effectively engaging in group and individual relationships and interactions in destination countries.	Social engagement and assimilation into society	Developing networks to complete my tasks successfully at the destination institution.
Being successful in mobility tasks (Overcoming the academic challenges and accessing opportunities).	Social orientation, engagement, and assimilation into society	Local regional orientation and planning site visits and tourist attractions in destination countries	Finding and buying normal life support and study equipment and food
Building strong and successful networks with peers for further collaboration after the mobility.	Local regional orientation and planning social site visits and tourist attractions in destination countries	Understanding social conventions and informal institutions in destination countries for optimum mobility experience	Planning and managing travel and accommodation needs in destination countries
Building strong and successful networks for the successful development of further collaborative research projects	Understanding social conventions, ethics, codes of good practices and informal institutions in destination countries for	Accepting or agreeing on research ethics and integrity issues during mobilities	Local regional orientation and planning site visits and tourist attractions in destination countries

	optimum mobility experience		
Meeting top scientist/opinion leaders to increase own network effectiveness and expertise.	Identifying informal institutions and using them for a better mobility experience	Negotiating and overcoming the research legal issues and protection challenges when publishing after a mobility	Assessing my available resources to complete my tasks.
Creating and orientating collaborative relationships and opportunities with peers	Finding and buying normal life support and study equipment and food	Identifying informal institutions and using them for a better mobility experience	Sufficient support levels (for successful completion of mobility)
Overcoming the language barrier in destination institutions.	Planning and managing travel and accommodation needs in destination countries	Finding and buying normal life support and study equipment and food	Essential guidance and leadership (to meet objectives of mobility)
Establishing and effectively functioning in group and individual relationships and interactions in destination countries.	Financial management and budgeting to meet mobility requirements	Planning and managing travel and accommodation needs in destination countries	
Building publication networks and research ethics agreement during and after mobility visits	Creating a generally rewarding personal mobility experience	Financial management and budgeting to meet mobility requirements with the available mobility funding	
Optimizing academic interaction during a mobility	Managing all my available resources to complete my tasks.	Local regional orientation and planning site visits and tourist attractions in destination countries	
Creating a personally rewarding mobility experience	Effective communication skills (language skills, conflict	Understanding social conventions and informal institutions in destination countries	

	management, social interaction, etc.)	for optimum mobility experience
Effective communication for a successful mobility (language skills, conflict management, social interaction, etc.)	Managing and meeting expectations of mobility (outcomes, etc.)	Generally creating a rewarding mobility experience for myself
Personal development strategies to enhance the mobility outcomes (innovation and originality skills, critical thinking, post arrival orientation, etc.)	Answering to your aspirations (career improvement, etc.)	Social engagement and assimilation into society
Meeting expectations of mobility (outcomes, etc.)	Managing and securing sufficient support levels (for the successful completion of a mobility)	Assessing my available resources to complete my tasks.
Answering to your aspirations (career improvement, etc.)	Essential general guidance and leadership (to meet objectives of mobility)	Effective communication skills (language skills, conflict management, social interaction, etc.)
Using mobility support structures for successful mobilities		
Essential mobility guidance and leadership (to meet objectives of mobility)		

Important findings following the student and staff questionnaires

From the analyses, four very important generic questions addressing experience and previous successes and their possible impact on future mobility successes were addressed. The motivation was to find out if experience or previous success has any perceived influence on future mobility success. The results below suggest no such interaction exists.

Question: Does experience make a difference?

- No correlation between the own subjective rating of competence in developing teaching methods and the experience of the respondents.
- No correlation between the number of mobilities and the competence to identify opportunities for further collaboration.
- No correlation between the number of mobilities and the competence to identify new collaborative research themes or opportunities.

Question: Does mobility success make a difference?

- No significant relationship between own subjective mobility success rating and the competence in developing teaching methods.
- No significant relationship between own subjective success rating of mobilities and competence to identify opportunities for further collaboration.
- No significant relationship between own subjective mobility success and competence to adapt to learning culture at new institution.
- No significant relationship between own subjective rating of mobility success and competence to identify new collaborative research.
- No correlation between own subjective rating of mobility success and competence to adapt to learning culture at new institution.
- No correlation between subjective rating of mobility success and the competence to develop networks.
- No correlation between own subjective rating of mobility success and identifying and developing opportunities for successful mobility.
- No correlation between the number of mobilities and identifying and developing opportunities for successful mobility.

Figure 2. Other important findings about the experiences and perceptions of students and staff regarding ICSM success.

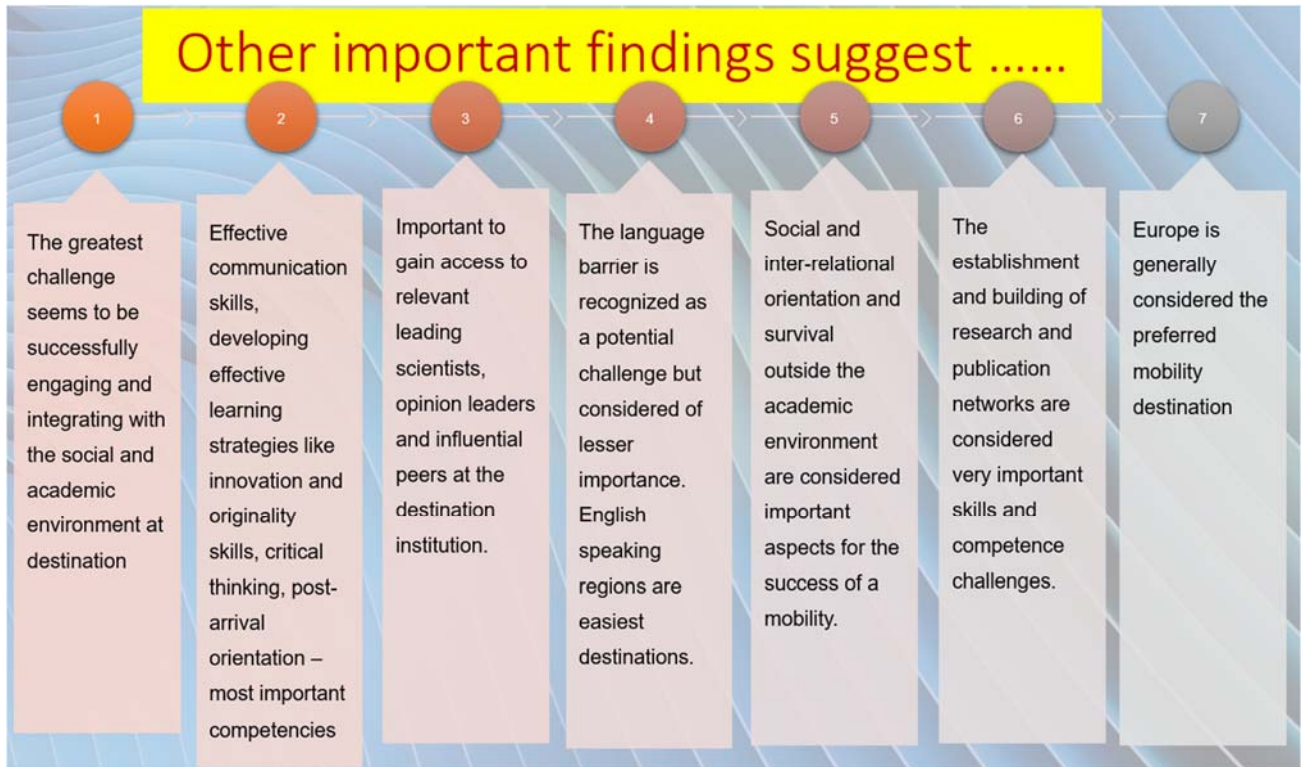


Figure 3. Other important findings

Regarding the more operational aspects of the mobilities, respondents provided the following important information:

- Respondents consider careful and focused preparations to meet the demands of the tasks associated with the mobility at the destination institution as being very important.
- Challenges and opportunities for further post-mobility collaboration need to be very specifically and clearly identified and conceptualized
- Gaining access to relevant leading scientists, opinion leaders and influential peers at the destination institution is important.
- The language barrier is recognized as a potential challenge but considered of lesser importance. This is supported by the suggestion that English speaking regions are the easiest destinations where to complete mobilities.
- Social and inter-relational orientation and survival outside the academic environment are considered important aspects for the success of a mobility.
- The establishment and building of research and publication networks with strong academic interaction are considered very important skills and competence challenges.
- Europe is generally considered the preferred mobility destination.
- The greatest challenge seems to be successfully engaging and integrating with the social and academic environment at the destination institutions.

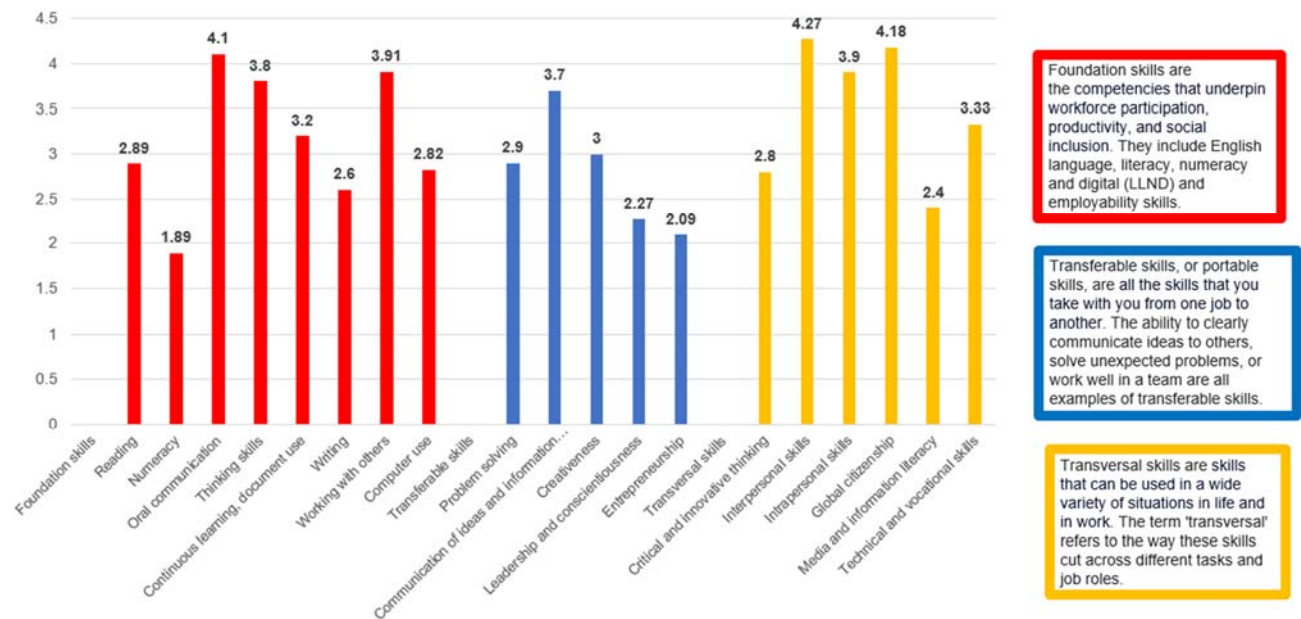


Figure 4. Experts' responses regarding important skills cultivation.

(Based on the approach published in: Garcia-Esteban, S. & Jahnke, S. 2020. *Skills in European higher education mobility programmes: outlining a conceptual framework*. Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning, Vol. 10 No. 3, 2020, pp. 519-539. DOI 10.1108/HESWBL-09-2019-0111.)

Expert opinions regarding the essential skills that are fundamental to mobility success are reflected in Figure 4. It is clear that different sets of foundation, transferable and transversal skill sets collectively contribute to ICSM success.

Conclusion

Several very important aspects became evident from the analyses. It seems that differential approaches to skills and competence assessments cause disparities when it comes to subjective assessments of what successful mobilities constitute. The most important differential approaches which were identified were the following perspectives:

- Completing a mobility as opposed to managing a mobility.
- Network development as opposed to expert academic interaction.
- Successful mobility experience as opposed to developing scientific and academic opportunities.
- Academic integration as opposed to successful mobility experience.

It became clear that important differences in these perceptions exist, and that this could have an important influence on the attractiveness or acceptability of any interventions where these

aspects are addressed to improve the competences associated with a more successful mobility experience or out come.