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Part One
Consideration for Pedagogy and Education

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"When the facts change …" - The future of pedagogy between continuity, departure, and contemplation –

Celebration Speech at Doctor Honoris Causa

Rolf ARNOLD•

The future is the most fundamental focus of pedagogic thinking; although, it is also its blind spot. Generally, the debate is oriented on the betterment of man over time; whether as an advance in the personality development and competencies of individuals or, as the more generic project we call: civilization. The latter has been defined by the degree to which reason has been properly used throughout history. How much personality development seems to be necessary and attainable can make sense only in the context of the use of reason. The form of expression is also measured by the self-distancing achieved through the development of the necessary skills to rationally analyze the world and justify the appropriate actions.

John Maynard Keynes once said: "When the facts change, I change my mind... and what do you do?" (Damodaran2012, p.4) –a question that confronts us as we think and make judgments, but also as we use language and the historical experience it reflects. In this sense, a person is "educated" if they are in a position to see "the use of reason as problematic" (Ruhloff 1996). This interpretation distances itself from educational practices that show a bias for knowledge, truths, and beliefs without sensitizing for forms of mistake, illusion, and ignorance. To "problematize" must be learned and practiced – especially, to see your own preferred art of speaking as problematic because meaning is not necessarily true just because we say it is or because we express our thoughts in a language that we have learned by chance.

We observe and think in "a prison of language"

Our language holds us prisoner with its words (Wittgenstein 1984) – a fact that becomes especially clear with the German term for education. The word is very difficult to translate into any other language since it contains connotations that are ultimately

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religious in nature: God created man in his own image. In Germany, education always has had the aspect of transforming individualssuch that the divine in every person is brought to expression. It would be interesting to continue to follow this line of thought in the education debate in Germany, as I am sure other languages – perhaps also in Rumanian – also make use of connotatively-charged terms. However, such a *linguistic turn* would get lost in the realm of specifics, where it is a question of understanding across languages.

I will limit myself to a brief look at the concept of learning, which is increasingly important in the European education debate. "Learning – The Treasure Within" is the title of a UNESCO report published in 1996. An etymologic analysis of the German word *Lernen* (to learn) reveals that it belongs to the Indo-European root word "*Leisten"* and is closely related to the words "*Lehren*" (to teach) and "list."

"*Lais*" was the Gothic expression for "I know."*Lis*" is the Indo-European word for "go." There is much evidence to suggest that learning has long been understood as a process in which the learner has to take a path and acquire knowledge along the way."[1]

The similarity of the two words "*Lernen*" and "*Lehren*" is striking in German; in other languages, just one and the same word is used for the two activities: for example, in classic Greek "*didaskein*" is used for both: "*learn*" and "*teach*":

"Hence, the original Greek merges the causative sense of teach with the mediative"learn" into one form (…), just asamong the average German people today who use "lernen" and "lehren" interchangeably (Riemer 1819, p.385) –as printed in a Greek-German dictionary from the year 1819.

An interesting exercise is to examine how "Lernen" as a natural activity of life (like breathing) increasingly became defined as a certain action through "Lehren" – even to the point of forming an inseparable relationship and, from a didactic science, to not having a scientific character of its own (cf. Holzkamp 1993). It would also be interesting to trace the concept of learning in the Rumanian language and investigate the didactic world view conjured by the Rumanian words "*invat(z)are*" (to learn) and "*predare*" (to teach). The word "*Predare*"like "preach" have the same root word and most likely have something in common with the Latin word for "prey" (German: "*Beute*".) To learn is to capture

[1] cf. www.h-age.net/hinter-den-kulissen/144-was-ist-lernen-etymologische-wurzeln-definitionen.html(retreived: April 13, 2017).

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something and "prey" is always associated with something wild and free that is acquired, so to speak, illegally appropriated – again a connotation referencing the power and authority that continues to affect the didactic world view.

Could it have been this urge for social power that sought to restrict and control self-directed learning? Was it the motives of the church and the nobility to maintain control that lead to attempts to create the "teachable body" through rigid discipline as Michel Foucault has proposed? Are these the motives that ultimately generated a separate concept of "teaching" from the concept of "learning" and led to a "pedagogical disproportionality" as the Austrian Nora Sternfeld, professor at Aalto University in Helsinki, suggests in connection with Rancière, Gramski, and Foucault.In reference to Foucault, she writes:

"In the genealogy of disciplinary mechanisms, the members of the society appear to be nothing more than conditioned beings. It is appropriate to ask to what extent "controls and punishments" reflect a deterministic view of society" (Sternfeld 2009, p.97).

But is this deterministic view a realistic one, since it was conceived in the first place through the duality of learning and teaching? Or, is it derived from the illusion of controllability over a matter that – after a rational analysis– cannot be controlled?

Let us remember the Keynsian question: "When the facts change, I change my mind... and what do you do?" (Damodaran 2012, p.4). This question is directed at us,as we are all socialized in a teaching and learning context and so think of ourselves as teachers and instructors and will, most likely, continue to do so. Are we really able to abandon our hard won assessments, when a rational analysis reveals something better? What emotions drive us when we have to realize that we have been mistaken? Do we correct ourselves, or do we insist by means of trying to hold on to a part of our former conviction without knowing why; stuck on teaching when the focus should be on learning?

The future as a continuum: anticipating future application scenarios

To this day, the notion of *anticipating*future challenges remains an essential element of pedagogic thinking. While it is true that no one can actually foretell the future, the general assumption is that it will not be all that different from the way it is today. This assumption may have been valid for a long time, but it loses nearly all of its justification in times of disruptive innovation (cf. Christensen 2011). The innovation seldom emerges from the

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current status quo, but often tends to infiltrate via the crossover effect from other areas. No more powerful analogy exists than the story of the leading photo developer that revolutionized the dominant technology of the time, pushing out the previous market leaders. Then, at some other location (for example, Silicon Valley) a digital technology was introduced and perfected, which ruthlessly proved to be an unanticipated and extremely capable alternative to the status quo. Such was the fate of the Kodak Corporation – once the world's foremost photo technology company– completely overwhelmed and liquidated by the new digital photo technology. Today, Google's attempt to insert itself between the current market leaders and their customers in the taxi and transportation sector is another threatening first step towards the takeover of the core business.

How can we anticipate a future use scenario in the disruption following innovation? How can we prepare the apprentices, students, and adult work force for the disruption of the future job market?

Such questions shake the foundations of traditional beliefs. We can no longer rely on the – supposedly – safe ground of the technical and predictable, rather we must learn to move on the uncertainty and openness of the future and derive the right education policies, curricula and, above all, the didactic consequences. This is far from easy, especially, since the key competitive selling point will always be the attainable technical level of the products and services: We all buy the better design and the most user-friendly mobile phone, without asking about the relationship of education to the production that gave us the options to compare in the first place. However, technical superiority today is not just the result of the professionalism of the actors involved, but comes from a globally networked product design. In simple terms: *The concentration of all expertise in one and the same person – the professional – is replaced in the digital world by the networked combination and use of distributed specialization and competitive advantages.*

The "age of specialists" (Max Weber) is coming to an end. It appears that its fragmentation, blurred borders, and "de-specialization" are the signs of future times. In addition, we are all threatened by the "continuity trap." We are tempted to follow an unintended conservatism that, ultimately, holds to the assumption that the future, for the most part, will be the same as the past has been. The effect is that we find ourselves again and again in the position of wanting to solve problems with the same "type of thinking" that

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we used to cause the problems – a self-limitation that can never lead to success as Albert Einstein (1879-1955) pointed out (cf. Stahlbaum 2014).

The future as a departure: anticipating the "yet to come"

Proposals for the new future thinking are found, in particular, among those who have failed at the given forms of education and have had to discover for themselves new – mostly informal - pathways to their own learning abilities. There are the support methods of integrative or even therapeutic instruction (cf. Kreszmeier 1994) as well as the character development approaches of vocational training in the European concept of lifelong learning. It is worth remembering the fact that advances in adult education for many decades were developed in the shadow of the spirit of the time: "You can't teach an old dog a new trick!" In contrast, the recent view of the lifelong struggle of adults for identity and competence has gradually emerged and established the point of view summarized by the Swiss cognition researcher Elsbeth Stern: "What the puppy didn't learn, the old dog will figure out!" (Stern 2006, p. 93ff).

At the same time, the informal nature of human learning moved clearly into view along with a focus onlifelong learning and the search for identity. There was a re-thinking of adult education as a "lifetime-related cognition process" (Schmitz 1984), and the practice of *learning from others* began to take hold. This view – since extended to constructivist and systemic concepts of adult learning (cf. Arnold/ Siebert 2006; Arnold 2013) – anticipated what brain researchershave increasingly and unmistakably pointed outsince the turn of the century concerning new learning. One brain researcher summarized thesefindings from a 2016 study as follows:

"The extent of all internally triggered change depends on what patterns of response and reaction the person already has available and how efficiently they can activate and employ these patterns. This, in turn, depends on previous experience used in the past to solve similar problems and challenges and that has since become anchored as an appropriate response and reaction.

These previous experiences are essential if a person is to seriously consider and assess a change occurring in the external environment or internal world of the person – and whether or not it triggers a separate self-learning process. (...) All people develop their own

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structurally anchored reaction and response patterns on the basis of the solutions experienced over the course of past development. These experiences are not objectively and equally important for everyone, but are important only to the person concerned. All learning processes are characterized by a subjective attribution of meaning. In summary, nothing can ever be learned if it is without meaning to the person." (Hüther 2016, p.45).

The insight gained from the natural sciences reinforces a view long held in the theory and practice of adult education. This view of the teaching/learning process focuses on appropriation logic as a support movement of the subjective change processes. *The living world self is, to some extent, anchored in the "synaptic self" discussed in the natural sciences.* (LeDoux 2002). In both of these we find the unavoidable premise that the concept of controlling the input must first be overcome before effective learning and skill development can be stimulated, guided, and supported in the inside-out teaching logic. Competence development and the EUeducation policy are similarly guided by the didactic program: If there is input, there must also be an outcome.

Education yet-to-comemust be initially confronted in its outline form. If we carefully follow the educational science debate in Europe, we cannot fail to notice the foundation of the educational institutions' claim to the specification of requirements is already starting to shake. If we give credence to the predictions of Ray Kurzweil, a change in living conditions, demands, and opportunities for people in the 21st century (which, in their intensity, closely approximate the changes of the past 20,000 years in human history), will force us to seriously modify the educational pillar of "learn from the past." We will have to shift away from the fixation on curricula content to strengthen the next generation as individuals, ensuring that they are truly able to master "new situations in a self-directed and appropriate manner" – as expressed in the definition of the concept of competence in the European framework of qualifications. Leading education theorists have already recognized that these concerns are in line with the concepts of formal educational theory, which seek a deeper explanation of how such abilities can actually be cultivated and promoted in the subjects. Those people who can only see the loss of proven concepts in this effort (Liessmann 2016; Türcke 2016) not only ignore and trivialize it, but also deny the evidence acknowledged by Keynes: "When the facts change, I change my mind... and what do you do?" (Damodaran 2012, p.4). By ignoring the evidence, education policy is created

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in a "continue the way it has been" manner, which will not be convincing to anyone in the long run.

The future as a continuum: contemplating the biographic

What do we currently know about the development and support of the skills needed for a self-directed management of new requirements – for not yet foreseeable situations? Again, very little focus beyond the "business as usual approach" has been given to this question in the European educational debate. It is frightening how little critical discussion takes place in the debate on the actual results of earlier educational practices: There is very little said of the scandalous lack of effectiveness of previous learning in curricular programs, in which the knowledge of several school years often fades away almost completely; nor is there any real discussion of the findings of brain researchers, that unanimously tell us:

Even if we want to imagine and believe in our established patterns, until we break them up, it will not be possible to convey content, let alone competence!

Facts point to the *need to establish a context for the self-structured appropriation of content*, whereby the focus is less on the control and teaching by an instructor and more on the counseling and support of the search process. It should be clear: We have to strengthen the concept of a "multi-dimensional education" as proposed in a recent essay titled "Education - More than Specialization" (Vereeniging 2015). In addition to teaching expert skills, a "multi-dimensional education" conceptmust strengthen "personality development, behavioral security, and character building of the next generation." This demands a kind of professionalism from those responsible that is better described as "learning support" than as the one-dimensional, back-to-back kind suggested by those who avoid the Keynesian question.

What are the requirements with respect to the role of the teacher as well as for the parents and trainers, in the lifelong learning process? It should be clear: We need a contemporary concept of learning. Learning can no longer be primarily defined as the result of teaching. In recent years, brain researchers and educators have focused on this emerging subject and speak of humans as the "animal capable of learning" (the adaptive species), which has always been able to adapt to the indications of the environment in self-

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determined and creative ways – at least for the past 400,000 years and not just starting with the first teachers (first recorded instance approximately 2,000 B.C.).

When inquiring about the future, we cannot ignore our own temporal limitations and the question "What is human?"– asubject with a deep and tradition-rich history in pedagogy (which has lost favor today). Only from a non-self or selfless or "egoless" state can we gain access to an explanatory approach that can lead us beyond ourselves! We are not what we think, nor do we have to become what we would have been – according to the evidence of the "contemplative approach," as proposed by Francisco Varela and some representatives of the American pedagogy. They sketch out a form of knowing and shaping reality – their own internal and the supposedly external while showing us another image of the future in the pedagogic debate. Ultimately, the aim of the "contemplative approach" is to develop,

"the ability to be able to clearly observe and utilize one's own subjectivity in an unbiased fashion" (Roth 2014, p.102).

This approach is a departure from the common third-person approach as well as from the scientific observation which lets us look objectively at the world and talk about things with our random use of language. Instead, it relies increasingly on a first-person approach of careful observation as proposed in the phenomenology of Husserls and Merleau-Pontys and as it relates to the Buddhist or environmentalist concepts (cf. Karafilidis 2016, p. 227f). In this form of seeing, speaking, and acting, the use of language remains anchored in a reflective logic that enables self-referencing and self-criticism. A widely quoted thought from Ludwig Wittgenstein "From it seeming to me – or to everyone – to be so, it doesn't follow that it is so" (Wittgenstein 1984, p.119) explains why such contemplative seekers are constantly aware of their increasing ability to "manage" the mechanisms of their cognition and their language-dependent perceptions. In this context, Francisco Varela and others speak of a conscious and practiced "handle of cognition" that people use to consciously perceive, judge, and interact – ultimately, routinely and transparently – with how our perception, judgment, and language function (cf. Depraz/ Varela/ Vermersch 2002, p.155ff). People can see that they are lagging behind their potential and how their life follows repeatedly misunderstood patterns. Immanuel Kant's "sapere aude!" is another call for reflection and transformation (to interrupt) these patterns – a call for a deeper

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approach to access the world, which has very little to do with the promises of advancement made in modern pedagogy.

At the forefront of such self-reflective and contemplative education concepts are *the* dimensions of personality and attitude formation, which Wilhelm von Humboldt presented as an alternative or, at least,as an equal alongside the material education theories. Such *personality formation* is concerned with

- Strengthening the ego and the potential of the individual,
    - Promoting its justified positioning as to what life actually means,
    - Advancing self-empowered education and self-learning skills (as we like to say today). This requires social access to supporting contexts, but also needs embedding in the emotional experiences of appreciation and self-empowerment (efficacy) and the context of life.

Such education is less concerned with transferring specific knowledge than with the promotion of an inner attitude, capable of questioning its own beliefs and constantly seeking new, appropriate, and feasible answers. This kind of attitude formation relies on the contemplative abilities of the individual related to themselves and the world around them. For example, the ability

- to fully focus your attention without the distorting whisperings of your ideas,
- to set aside your own assumptions and opinions,
- to gain insights, deeper connections with others, their needs and situations,
- to have empathy and compassion as well as respect for the lives and views of others,
- to express trust and intimacy,
- to form a more holistic and integrated perception of causal relationships, and
- to have deeper and more active participation with others (cf. Gunnlaugson et al. 2014, p. 5).

The sustainable development of these abilities has more to do with emotional adjustments made throughout your biographic development phases than with the content of teaching plans and curricula. In later development phases, the biographic characteristics can still be socialized through self-examination and guided exercises, although the original forms of dealing with yourself and the world can rarely be completely overcome. In any

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case, such attitude formation demands reflective learning that encourages seeking and self-awareness, since both are, ultimately, what subtly determine the way we acquire and manage knowledge.

Those who are unable to develop these so called contemplative abilities tend to adopt a world view that "objectively" describes the world and other people in the belief that all can be technically mastered. In contrast, a self-reflectivecontemplative education favors the formation of a subjective awareness, which in other concepts and behavioral patterns is seen only as an expression of the human search. Contemplative thinkers do not ask later on who is right; they simply try to identify the patterns activated when dealing with themselves and others in the world, in order to improve the reciprocal connectivity. They are masters of seeking, not finding. They are not very good at arguing over who is right. Rather, they are always seeking awareness of the kind Socrates demonstrated when he said: "I know that I know *nothing*." Only the supposed knowledgeable person hopes for more knowledge and greater opportunities whereas, those less aware are skepticalof the hardening effect of their beliefs, which can put them in a trance and keep them from continuing the search.

Personality formation is not just an idea, but rather a program – in fact, a rather important one. It contains the notion that a person can set out on their own along a path to become the person they could be (cf. Arnold 2017). This formulation may seem nebulous and ambitious and perhaps even sounds more like a constant effort than an achievement; but it nevertheless brings focus to the idea of self-empowered education – a movement supported by a vital interest to learn "what the world looks like through different eyes" and how we can, "expand our own field of vision in this way" (Spaemann 1994/95, p. 34). This change of perspective is at the center of concept of freedom, as Carolin Emcke, winner of the 2016 Peace Prize of the German Book Trade emphasized in her address. It should be clear just like freedom demands education – education without freedom is unthinkable. She said:

"We can no longer be permitted to merely claim to be a free, secular, and democratic society: we have to actually be it. Freedom is not something one owns; instead it is something one does. Secularization is not something we can finish; instead, it is an unfinished project. Democracy is not a static certainty; instead, it is a dynamic exercise in dealing with

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uncertainty and criticism. A free, secular and democratic society is something we must learn again and again. By listening to each other, thinking about each other, and becoming active together in word and deed; In mutual respect for the diversity of ways of belonging and individual uniqueness. And, last but not least, in reciprocal admission of our weaknesses and our ability to grant forgiveness.

Is this difficult? Yes, absolutely. Will there be conflicts between different practices and beliefs? Yes, certainly. Will it be tricky to create an equitable balance between different religious references and the secular order? Definitely. But why indeed should it be easy? We can always start again. What is it going to take to do this? Not much: some strength of character, some cheerful courage and, last but not least, the willingness to change one's perspective so that more and more of us find ourselves saying: Wow. So this is what it looks like from up here"(Emcke 2016).

Such self-reflection in a contemplative speech is not new, yet it is not taught. While it is true that self-reflective theories andour knowledge of language-bound mechanisms influencing our perceptions are not new developments, it is also true that despite the many references in linguistic philosophy, cognitive and brain research, and meditation studies in our professional and private daily routines, we generally pretend that these hold no significance for our thinking, feeling, speaking and acting. The wise management of the transparent mechanisms of cognition and emotion is not yet a widespread art. Exactly this art helps us to rethink our biographical possibilities with *new* concepts and to learn greater *self-distancing* from our past experiences. Acquiring and practicing this art is an "inside-job." That is, it can lead to us new forms of reflection that trace the self-mechanisms that manage our inner vitality – another aspect of continuing education, and obtainable only through practice (cf. Arnold 2017). This is personality development in a reflective and transformative sense – much like the fundamental definition of adult education in Germany, which defined education as "the constant effort to understand the self and the world and to act in accordance with this understanding" (cf. Arnold/ Nuissl/ Rohs 2017).

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The Hungarian Education System and its School-Critical Responses

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Abstract:

This short description reviews the basic characteristics of the Hungarian school system and its problems. It speaks of the newly mandatory made institution of extended school and tries to outline two possible ways that are in front of the Hungarian school system.

Keywords: Education system, Hungary, extended schools

The Main Characteristics of the Hungarian Education System

Although the compulsory school age in Hungary is six, children are already obliged to attend kindergarten from the age of three. Compulsory school attendance lasts until the age of 16 (until the year of 2012 this was 18 years of age). In addition to the 8+4 year-long primary and secondary school structure, there are 6+6 and 4+8 year-long structures as well.

In 2016-2017, 318 000 children participated in kindergarten programmes.

The number of primary school pupils is 742 000. 56% of primary school pupils take part in after-school care and whole-day school programmes, in the lower level of primary school this is 87%. 78% of pupils receive school meals (92% at lower primary, 62% at upper primary). 78 000 teachers work in primary schools, there is 9.6 persons per teacher.

The secondary education system was restructured in the 2016/2017 academic year. In secondary education the vocational schools (and skill-developing schools) students with special educational needs are prepared. Iin other schools students with SEN receive

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integrated education.In vocational schools, students can gain professional skills during 3 years.This is followed by the so called preparation year for the school leaving exam. After four years in specialized grammar schools, students take a professional school leaving exam, and by completing one more year of study, they can obtain professional qualification linked to school leaving examination. Grammar schools are also finished with a school leaving exam.

During the Bologna process, from 2005 higher education – with the exception of some fields – was changed from united study programmes to a three-level system: the graduates of a 3-4-year bachelor's programme could apply for a 1-2-year long master's programme. The highest level was the 3-year long doctoral programme. In Hungary, during the 2016/2017 academic year, one million and seven hundred thousand children and youngsters – the 85.5% of the 3-22 year-old generation – takes part in the several different levels of daytime public education and higher education programmes (KSH, 2017).80 000 applied for daily higher education programmes, 53 000 were admitted. In the 2016/2017 academic year, 206 000 students took part in daily study programmes. 40 000 persons received a higher education degree this year. 28% of students – i.e. 82 000 persons – in higher education continue their studies in non-daily study programmes. Out of these, 15 400 received a higher education degree in 2016.

435 000 persons signed up for the full time programmes of secondary school institutions. 7000 studied in vocational schools and skills development schools, 78 000 studied in secondary schools, 168 000 studied in specialized grammar schools and 182 000 studied in grammar schools. 100 000 students took part in correspondence programmes in public education institutions. 62 000 passed the school leaving exam, 55% of these graduated from grammar school and 45% from specialized grammar school. 41 000 students passed a professional exam.

The typical problems of Hungarian schools

In connection with the very strong intentions of childhood institutionalization, Mihály (1999) – one of the fathers of Hungarian school critique – describes the self-excelling process in six segments: The school forces us to understand education as the only option; it

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is a total institution strives to integrate the largest possible segment of life (in age, number, and sphere of action); primarily serves the maintenance of social order; artificially generates additional schooling needs;maintains, overproduces and generates social inequalities; and it is an impersonal institution opposing individuality and uniqueness and does not serve the development of personality. If we interpret these critics we see, that the Hungarian school system makes it difficult in three main areas: it is extremely competitive, selects too early and is very stiff (Bocsi-Nagy-Szeifer, 2017).

Hungarian schools are too competition-centred. As opposed to the often-exemplary Finnish or Estonian schools, which simultaneously teach to compete and cooperate, the Hungarian education system considers competition as a legitimate goal in its curriculum organization, assessment procedures and evaluation.

Schools – like it or not – have a kind of selective task. At the same time, in Hungary, the children's school career is in fact already narrowed down in lower primary school and is practically completely determined at secondary school. In a profane way, it could be claimed that already during the first couple of years the Hungarian school decides on who can be a worker at a petrol station and who can be a cardiovascular surgeon. One of the strongest determining factors of the attendance of secondary school institutions in Hungary is family background. The recent PISA results support the theories of inequalities in the Hungarian education system. The survey shows – in an unprecedented way in Europe – that the school and the family background in Hungary practically predetermine the learner's achievement in addition to tasks, the PISA also assesses family background). Early selection mechanisms and drop-out are linked to measures such as changing the conditions of compulsory school age or the conditions of the entry into the institutions.

Based on the research of FerencGazsó and ZsuzsaFerge(1986), it can be claimed that the curricula, student ways, methods and even physical space organization of Hungarian schools – in European and regional comparison too – are strikingly rigid[2].A recent Eurofund (Eurofund, 2017) survey found that in the European Union, Hungary is the worst in social mobility. According to the study, our country offers the smallest chance for a child to find a job better than his parents. Regarding the rigidity of the school, it is not only

[2] Although the research was carried out in the 1970s, it still has a good reflection on today's school system, and it even indicates how little has changed in Hungarian schools over the past half a century.

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necessary to renew the internal school curriculum and methodology structure, but also cooperation between the school and spaces outside the school is desirable. Especially because the European Union and the Council of Europe underline the importance and recognition of knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal learning, since it improves employability.

According to Csányi (2011), "the school is an important institution from an evolutionary point of view, due to which we can thank the democratic institutions of modern states. ... without school there would be no modern society" (Csányi, 2011). But not only because it teaches to write and read, but because it "incidentally" (but according to Csányi, evolutionary by-products often become a selective advantage, i.e. hidden curriculum) teaches to rebel against the teacher, but usually also against power. According to Hungarian school critics, lifelong learning cannot be distorted as lifelong schooling, and one must not forget about the important concept of lifewide learning, which is often pushed to the background. In postmodernism, they say, the many patterns are not just an obstacle but are just a prerequisite for identity seeking and socialization (Nagy-Trencsényi, 2016). Therefore, it should not be a tolerated, permissible, suppressed phenomenon, but an indispensable element (Nagy-Trencsényi, 2012), however, in the Hungarian school only one out of the many value systems can prevail.Even though its embodying people are diverse, yet one in substance: the power factors of commitment-basedness.

The extended schools in Hungary

In Hungary, the practice of after-school care is not a new phenomenon just like the several forms of whole-day school in certain institutions. The 1993 Public Education Act understands the term as after-school care, school care and the study room as well, so it includes several different methods. Writings dealing with this issue as well as analysis describing the impacts of the operation of existing form can be found also in the literature of domestic education research (Darvas – Kende 2009, Mihály 2003). Darvas and Kende (2009)[3] highlights the impact of community development, the decrease of student

[3] Whole-day schools were supported as a kind of reaction due to the decline of student performances in several areas (as a kind of result of the PISA-shock).

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behaviour disorders, resp. that social and health services are becoming more and more accessible to children. International impact investigations report on the decline in juvenile delinquency and the decline in educational inequalities as a result of the introduction of the institution (Mayer-Varga 2017)[4]. The Hungarian educational institutions have faced similar problems as Western institutions: the deterioration of PISA results, the opening hours of institutions do not fit the parents' working time, the lack of targeted and developing use of leisure time, etc. In 2008, a new framework curriculum for school-based education was also introduced, hoping for a more effective and differentiated operation of the school, however, this did not bring about any substantive change; although whole-day school could play a role in equal opportunities in education (Darvas – Kende, 2009), the topic of whole-day school was not on the agenda during that time[5].

From September 2013, in Hungary, in the lower level of primary school, the institution of whole-day school lasts until 4 p.m. for lower and upper-level children. From this academic year on, school care workshops, tutoring and study groups should be organized in a way so that they fit into the time frame lasting until four in the afternoon. The attendance of these workshops is obligatory, though parents can request exemption – a larger number of the parents of higher level primary school students used this opportunity. The law did not forbid teaching classes in the afternoon. Moreover, the 2011 CXC. Act on National Public Education defines whole-day schools where teaching and other classes follow each other in the morning and afternoon in proportion**.** Supervision must be provided by the institution until 5 p.m.

Changes in institutions have raised the cost of human resources as well as the cost of things, and the new frameworks require new material conditions. Their background is not always assured, for example, the introduction fell into a time when the source of material costs decreased, while the whole-day school increases these costs (Mayer – Varga 2017).

[4] In Hungary, the staff of the Institute for Educational Research has developed research on the introduction of the full whole-day school. Their work, on one hand, points out the areas where such institutions would be most needed, they help schools organize time frames and reflect on the needs of teachers and institutions (collecting good practices, preparing educational programs to assist institutions).

[5] International literature generally understands the concept more widely: in many cases schools provide more complex services, connect the other institutions of settlements, resp. they connect parents more closely to the school.

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With regard to the new system, great advantages include the possibility of differentiation, the possibility of catching up, and the provision of recreational programs for pupils whose family and social background do not provide these. The measure is also in line with the determined hours worked by teachers i.e. 32 hours. Segregation appears to be a problem (those children stay at school who cannot pay for extra lessons elsewhere), as well as new expectations for teachers (for which they were not been prepared). Nowadays, Hungarian practice does little to promote schools to Western models, where the institution is a real community space and it provides a great number of services and focuses more on keeping in contact with the parents. In addition, the expectations that lay down the principle of flexibility and gradualism for successful establishment are not met, so that no one should feel being forced to enter whole-day schooling (Mayer – Varga, 2017). Therefore, the experiences of the period starting from the introduction are quite contradictory (Kovács – Mayer, 2015).

What is next?

Based on the above principles, it is two kinds of answers to the Hungarian school problems (Trencsényi-Nagy, 2016).

There are trends that answer with school extension. Trends that imagine reforms and a new school have provided many new functions to schools beyond the traditional "schooling of knowledge".One of the most significant changes in Hungarian public education was the introduction of whole-day schools. The measure was also justified by a number of social phenomena that are closely linked to the issue of inequalities. Looking at the PISA results, apart from the deterioration of national data, it is also clear that the differences between the institutions are very high and that the family background of children in Hungary particularly vigorously shapes students' success. Meanwhile, Hungarian society as a whole shows the signs of polarization.The concept of the day-long school thus set the goal of increasing institutional time for lower-primary pupils. The afternoon timeframes theoretically provide opportunities for complex catching-up work, talent management, and the development of skills. But institutions did not have enough time for preparation. However, the legal framework provided the possibility of exemption, respectively; the

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programmes that schools could provide would require extra resources.Researchers have also found examples of such children excluded from afternoon schools, who were the most in need of such convergence (for example, because of their behaviour or behavioural disorders, they could not stay at school in the afternoon school).The new system did not cause a serious change in the life of children since the children were in the school before that too, and in the institutions the study room and supervision had already existed. And afternoon supervision could not be provided by the parents. (Bocsi, 2015). At the same time, the lack of skilled supervision and financial resources, and the scarcity of infrastructure had an impact on implementation. Parents' opinions on all-day long school differ – the higher the parents' educational level, the more critical they are toward the change, as the law allows them to take the child from the school before 4 p.m. only upon permission (SIC!).

According to the next trend, the school's power-building structure does not give any answer to the dozens of questions that affect young people, so the trend looks for answers outside the school. Leisure environment is, in fact, different from the school, because roles are created based on spontaneously (or manipulated, but seeming spontaneous and non-power, in Csányi's term "tyrannical") formulated communities.The Hungarian social pedagogical (with the 21st century narrative: youth) tradition – not exceeding but countering the school – offers the benefits of a wide variety of socialization patterns on the field of authorized (chosen) powerless situations outside the school. It provides a practical platform for these extra-curricular approaches[6]. In relation to these organizations, there is little relation to membership, the so-called postmodern forms of participation are more typical for Hungarian young people, i.e. responses typically characterize participation in a certain programme or event[7].At the same time, the attacks of the Hungarian government

[6]About 4000 to 5,000 civilian youth organizations, representing about 8% of all Hungarian NGOs. According to data, there were 54,000 classical civil organizations (20000 foundations and 34,000 associations) in 2015 (KSH, 2016). According to the searchable database of non-governmental organizations (www.birosag.hu) we get 1500 hits for youth, another 750 for the young, 3000 hits for the child ("gyermek"), and 100 for the child ("gyerek") words. Although they cannot be summarized simply (there may be an organization with a name including the combination of these words), we can count with the approximate number of 4000-5000.

[7]According to the latest 2012 research data, 27% of 15-29-year-olds have connections with a civil organization. 10% of young people have specific organizational membership, 10% of young people attended the events of an organization and 7% participated in the activities of an organization (Fazekas-Nagy, 2015)

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against civil organizations and the scarcity of resources (Nagy, 2015), and administrative burdens make the existence of civil organizations difficult.

The practical impacts of the above trends are therefore very dispersed in Hungary. Although their impact could be perceived in the traditional school, eruptions were short-lived; they existed only insularly once in a while: the power of regeneration was stronger. The reason for this is the insistence of the Hungarian "school institution, the traditional inertia of the pedagogical culture and the insistence of the «guardians of the bastions» in order to preserve the attributes of their (modest) powers against the increasingly «obnoxious» student youth" (Trencsényi-Nagy, 2016, p. 83.).

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The penitentiary school: between didactic and education of the individual.
Theatrical methods and artistic languages as a tool of didactic innovation in adult's penitentiary reality.

Maria Rita MANCANIELLO•

Abstract

In the Italian prison reality, the school activities of every order and degree have been guaranteed by law since the end of the 70s of the last century. The present contribution intends to stimulate a critical reflection on the dimensions of educational action in complex social situations such as that of prison. He wants to offer an opportunity to rethink paths and tools of educational planning in relation to the use of new training methodologies, such as the theatrical methodology in its different modalities and its specific styles. It is difficult to satisfy the needs of treatment, orientation, social integration and re-education and at the same time develop formal knowledge. The active and participatory methodologies of the theater can be useful for the change of the context of life.

Keywords: adult education, theatrical methodologies, school in prison, innovation, participation

Social and pedagogic-didactical scenario: the reason of theatrical activities in penitentiary education

The reflection about education and school didactics has an initial presumption. We are asked to focus our education action on the subject and his learning potential that allows him to develop knowledge trough making contact, elaborating and transforming symbols and the environment knowledge. The educational action has as a source of knowledge the relation between the subject and the environment. Because of this, the educational action,

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generates significant learning only if it comes from a continuous experience. All individuals, when starting a formal education experience, bring implicit and informal knowledge coming from their previous experiences. This pattern leads towards the creation of engaging and open-minded didactical situations, also trough experiences of collective knowledge building where personal learning becomes the heritage for building new intergroup connections (Strollo, 1997).

Inside Italian correctional facilities, school activities of any level are guaranteed by the law since late 1970's. The Penitential Ordinance and the execution rules include the arrangement of mandatory school courses and professional training, while for high school education there are memorandums of understanding for their launch between the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education and the agreement between the Local Education Authority and the Regional Provider of penitentiary administration. All Italian penitentiaries follow an organization pattern where a Didactical Commission is provided. The Didactical Commission is composed by different expertise (Director, Pedagogy responsible and teachers) that work towards the inmate re-educational path. They have to define an individual learning project for all inmates that wish to participate to learning activities (Benelli, 2012).

The 34th article first subparagraph of the Italian Constitution says: "school is open for all", recognising everyone's right of using the public service offered by the Italian State (as described in the 33rd article second subparagraph) to satisfy educational needs.

The article goes on specifying how secondary school is mandatory and free and has to be provided for at least 8 years, nowadays has been extended to 10 years by the law (n. 9, January 20th 1999, G.U. n. 21, January 27th 1999). The article specifies that this right is extended to the "highest studies", for all individuals, capable and worthy, even if they can't afford it as specific grants are set in order to overcome economic inequalities that can prevent from the use of this service. The article 33 of the Italian Constitution (involved in the article 21 about freedom of expression) about "art and science freedom", "informational right" and "health protection" (Constitutional Court sentence of December, 7th, 1994 n. 420) highlights an overview where is underlined the psychological, intellective and physical welfare right even if detained, where personal growth through activities that can enrich people is an integral part. It is important to deliver tools for the fulfilment of the

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mandatory school to those who enter the penitential circuit, guaranteeing individual educational paths that respond especially to the "week subjects" needs. First of all, alphabetization as the Directive n.22 of February, 6th, 2001 of the Public Education Ministry establishes.

The academic year 2014-2015 stats show how the Italian facilities schools attendance is growing. The stats say that 1.139 studies courses have been launched, with a total of 17.096 subscriptions. CILS courses (Ex. Alphabetization) have been 212 with a total of 2.966 subscriptions of which 2.753 foreigners. The percentage of promotion is 38,4%.

Regarding CA courses (Ex. Primary School) in Italy have been launched 182 courses, with 2.860 subscribers, 1.947 foreigners that led to a promotion percentage of 37,2%. The higher education courses (Ex. 1st grade CSI Secondary School) is active with 311 courses and 4.801 subscribers (2.397 foreigners) and a promotion percentage of 30,8%; 434 CS courses (Ex. 2nd grade Secondary School) have been launched with 6.649 subscribers, 1.410 foreigners and a promotion percentage of 52,4%.

The penitentiary school, through the Ministerial Ordinance 455/97, has been competing with the Permanent Territorial Centres (CTP) that have been taking care of adults education, working towards specifics expertise and for a professional re-qualification.

Since last academic year (2014-2015) new Provincial Centres for Adults Education (CPIA) have been launched. These new centres perform the functions that Permanents Territorial Centres (CTP) and evening courses schools use to do. Their activities are based on the right of an Adults Education (EDA) system and a lifelong learning as stated during the 5th UNESCO International Conference held in Hamburg (July 1997) that led to the subscription of a document that focuses on education for all adults in the world.

Regarding mandatory school and professional education, are provided and ruled by the Penitentiary Ordinance and the executional laws, secondary education courses launched through memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education and the agreement between the Local Education Authority and the Regional Provider of penitentiary administration.

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Specifics about teacher's role in the penitentiary school

To be able to teach in a special and specific reality like this, teachers have to be employed at the public school, but a specific education or training is not provided, neither a method or one about the adults educational relation. The educational activities rely just on the ability of the teacher to adapt didactical methods and educational encouragement to a reality where the security paradigm restricts technological support or ICT (Information and Communication Technology) aid for adults education, with a lack of significant teaching-learning processes. (Orefice, 2011)

In this context, the risk of developing a weak educational process and a rather toothless learning path is high. This is the reason that calls on fostering methods that allow a real building process for new knowledge while using the best opportunities coming from reflections elaborated in the pedagogic-didactical field.

In a paradoxical logic – as the prison shows in the guise of Institution and as set social goals – penitentiary school reality works as a "workshop" where is easier experimenting artistic practices today seen as necessary, and sometimes essential, when talking about subject education and his basic, specific and transversal skills development. (Lizzola, Brena, Ghidini, 2017)

This contribute wants to stimulate a critic reflection on the dimension of education action towards complex social situations like in prison, giving the chance to re-think educational planning paths and tools related to the use of new educational methods, like the theatrical method in his different ways and specific styles. Compared to other working methods on adults teaching-learning processes, the benefit of the theatrical method in education is to think at the educational moment as a "workshop time", where every adult can experiment himself on a better self-communication and on communicating with others. Body language, expressive arts and communication languages like photography and video production in both traditional way of work documentation and research of new approaches to these techniques, allow the subject to feel active and to communicate with the reality, that during the detention, remains mostly just a thought rather than rarely experienced. (Costantino, 2016)

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The didactical methods for penitentiary school

The construction of the didactical method in prisons reality and penitentiary school activities is both Constructivism and Metacognitive theoretically and methodologically oriented. The core of the didactic is about the learners who learn through their cognitive potential and gets in touch with reality by transforming, elaborating and processing sings and relationships in different settings.

The group's methodology is a participated and a relational approach. Such approach refers to either the proposals of tools construction and the reflections concerning education and school experience in prison. Following the relational orientation, the subject's educational experiences take part of a bigger part of reality including either the different relational and experiential contexts and the local territory as concrete set of life too. A dynamic relational perspective provides a more accurate picture of the world, and guides us toward more helpful ways of living.

According to the relational perspective a global educational approach has to be used to focus on the connection among subject's education and external reality (which has got its own specifies at detainment). In this way, the educational issue is studied by the connections put on in every experience of life.

The Participatory dimension resumes the premises of the relational model and it is adapted to the relations, consciousness activated and informally developed among subjects' knowledge, local knowledge, teachers' knowledge and disciplines. Participation is a constituent element of cognitive processes and refers to emphatic aspects of the knowledge construction and management. (Orefice, 2006)

Learning is not a transfer of contents from teacher to learner. Learners cannot acquire new information if they are not able to relate new knowledge to their own processed knowledge and their real life experience. Every learning is useless and irrelevant if the learner does not perceive this kind of connection among his knowledge and if different knowledges do not connect to each other. These specific working methods require a huge willingness from teachers and educators to dialogue between them and trying not to be self-referential but fostering an active dialogue among different disciplines and different arts. (Buccolo, 2015)

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A participative method, interdisciplinary, through which can be differentiated the educational proposal, based on participant subjects different needs, becoming an incentive for self-knowledge and a chance to get involved as a possibility of comparison and relations with others. This working method requires involving subjects while learning directly in the whole planning process, starting from a real interest and from needs definition or facts considered as relevant towards the construction of possible solutions or shared actions, until assessment and successive re-planning, stimulating students to a sharing and responsibility process, not always possible through other teaching ways. Such educational process requires a continuous re-elaboration, reflection and content assessment and a systematic analysis of the educational and animation patterns that are possible to be structured in every reality and every specific context. Satisfying needs of treatment, orientation, social integration and re-education on one hand and formal knowledge development on the other hand, is extremely complex, but the challenge is that participative and active methods from theatre can be used as an engine for changing life context and subjective shift. An Integration that starts from enhancing the best practice, already existing, carried out by institutions and private individuals, integrating capacities and abilities of the institutions involved and those existing on the territory, with the goal of inmates social reintegration. This is an aspect that Institutions outside prison have to undertake at first-hand. (Buccolo, Mongili, Tonon, 2014)

The theatrical approach offers a learning experience that goes over didactic, where it's easier accept and reflect about ourselves while thinking on how to improve, as theatrical methods play on emotions which are action and changing engine sources. A significant learning process from any discipline integrates the intellectual understanding of issues and solutions through experience thanks to the "holistic" learning capacity activated by mind, body and emotions. This process pushes, naturally and spontaneously, towards a continuous interaction among different disciplines levels and foster the whole range of human intelligence. (D'Ambrosio, 2015)

It is important to apply the theatrical approach in education contexts and penitentiary education as it is a pedagogic way that allows to promote didactic changes building flexible contexts. This allows students to explore different methods necessary for adults education in schools with a specific focus on *lifelong learning* study area.

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Improvisation and comedian art theatre method

Using theatrical improvisation method in the penitentiary field has a huge value in terms of knowledge of the own potential and development of own relation capacities while facing the unforeseen, for relation building, systemic and interdependent actions as well as managing situations that require clearness of action, and abilities development in the complex language use area (Borgato, Vergnani, 2007).

Improvised theatre major features have a significant value for subject education. Complex dimensions that play an active role towards potentials development useful for the individual in order to build positive relationships with the environment and to improve the ability to interact with others. The action carried out within improvisation field encourages to acquire communication and relation expertise based on listening and emotive connection, to build interaction and a constructive dynamic with others, to rely on the own creativity, to know how to accept and manage risks. (Molinari, 2008).

Improvisation method has a pedagogic ability within, as it allows the subject to show immediately and spontaneously, deep aspects of his own being and feelings. At the same time it stimulates high levels of relations with alterity.

A circular process that allows listening education as well as the attention on what happens inside and outside the subject and frustration tolerance. It allows also to transform displacement felt when facing the unexpected trough building a solution unforeseen before, adaptation and taking quick decisions when facing unthinkable situations. A good intersubjective relationship is key for subject's welfare and when it becomes dialogue and confrontation testing site, it allows belonging sense shaping towards a given context and his goals. In this way the subject can feel more involved within the community, starting an active participation to social life with his own relation expertise and a significant self-consciousness.

The subject, during the performance finds himself as leader of his own acting and thinking with others, compare with others and goes along with different points of view. The subject finds himself handling and managing his own body that becomes a privileged tool of expression, but at the same time uses complex cognitive knowledges that makes him more self-conscious and aware of his own abilities and potential.

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Theatre is an art that develops within a *life form,* a simulated life experience that anyway develops emotions and feelings of real life itself. It is a *poetic art* that becomes concrete reality where individuals create, construct, and what takes shape – trough words, gestures, movements – is always something new, a *quid* that has the same taste of life. Improvising on stage becomes mostly a time and place where testing complex dimension of subjective self and social self, interacting with others that, trough the dynamic and communicative circularity, can communicate to the audience and observers, the value of listening, the taste of attention to small gestures, the pleasure of harmony and mutual understanding and support (Burroni, 1999). Within improvisation there is an educational action towards those who have the observer role. Being able to observe the development of a creative story and see how, even without a cognitive conciliation and common meanings building determined by a dialogical interaction, we can not only understand, but also create together, producing an interesting, and often funny act of education. Nowadays the subject that observes feels the value of relationship and interaction based on body, mind and goals synergy. For this reason the improvisation of few opens participation for all: on one hand active, for those who are on the scene, on the other hand, mediated by the pleasure and raised interest of those who observe. Emotions that take space within dynamics, offering role-playing experiences, sharing, empathy, triggering even within the observer a creative and involving activity.

Improvisation within education field is still not read in his potential that can have, as education activity planning, often is based on a high goals willingness and the teacher tend to use methods that are more manageable not only in what is held within the same method potential, but also within the implementation process (Buccolo, 2008).

Clearly is not the teacher or the tutor of an educational process that improvise, but it is the method that offers stimuli and education paths defined and structured. This does not mean that the teacher has to have expertise on this field, if the group that he his facing put itself on a difficult reception of the proposed activities from who is the process responsible. In this case even the sight of who has the task to manage the education context has to know how to improvise, in other words he has to have a point of view capable of compete with the unforeseen, dimension of being of who does not fear his own limits and who can rely on his own resources.

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Theatrical improvisation, in truth, is precisely the opposite of approximation, because it associates a long self-training work on oneself with personal preparation. The trainer, as well as the trainees, has the opportunity to increase their ability to listen and communicate with each other, through improvisation, using their own body and their own voice, all the senses, within a careful direction of the spaces, timing, and a communicative style, which opens to a continuous transformation through others.

What is exceptional is that, when you start to improvise, contrary to what you would expect, like being afraid not to know what to say or do, you realize how much we all need to express ourselves and we are able to create, although with a few solicitations and no object available, a broad and dense dialogue between the participants. During improvisation it clearly emerges how, in our daily work, we are often not attentive to the messages that are offered to us, as we have repeatedly the tendency to speak over the others, to carry forward only own point of view and our own message, showing a certain difficulty in sacrificing what one is about to say to the words of the interlocutor, and even to give him support when he feels in difficulty. Interesting is the analysis of the dynamics that have been created on stage which bring out how often in the dialogues the subject tends to move away from the goal of communication and how difficult it is to stay focused on the issues to be addressed, without wandering or leaving the domain of imagination on reality (Pittau, 1999).

Training based on theatrical improvisation allows the development of certain skills, such as self awareness and group awareness, time and space management, individual listening, group and situation listening, the ability to recognize one's own creativity and expressiveness, the ability to face and solve problems and unexpected situations, the speed in interpreting and responding to stimuli, the ability to take risks and responsibilities, all elements that are found in training with such a method of work.

In fact, improvisation requires speed and flexibility of thought, the ability to change even instantaneously in a given direction, openness of mind, mnemonic abilities, absence of prejudices and a cultural baggage to be used without being mediated by the intellect. Improvisation fosters ideas, creativity, enlightenment and inspiration. It happens in the presence of certain and precise rules. It is neither anarchy, nor the absence of rules or laws, nor chance, but it is simply a flexible path of learning, as well as of research, with a precise

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aim, which requires a good dose of openness, flexibility and speed of thought, ability of confrontation and dialogue, continuous consideration in progress of the various possibilities existing for the attainment of the purpose that we set ourselves.

The theater-laboratory methodology: from disciplines to expressive didactics

Another form of theater of reference for the development of disciplinary skills is the use of different forms of expression for the discussion and the construction of new knowledge on the great themes of life. Since the end of the Eighties, the idea of using theatricality to deepen certain issues, such as the environment, multiculturalism, food, health, etc., has been increasingly developed. Addressing a theme in a theatrical way has its pros and cons. A common defect when dealing with a workshop that revolves around a thematic project, is the "constrictive" dimension in which the teacher, the theatrical expert and the participants visiting are forced to meet, as any theme needs an immediate definition of the objective to be reached and therefore a choice and a selection of theatrical techniques to be used, in order to obtain an effective and exhaustive theatrical communication. The pro is undoubtedly that the theme becomes a catalyst of energies, avoiding dispersions and digressions, because theatrical techniques are immediately applied and deepened in their communicative capacity. A thematic project undoubtedly requires more time than a simple laboratory approach to theatricality as it requires a specific work on communicative, expressive and interpretative skills, but, above all, it requires a capacity to identify and develop a content. A research phase must therefore be opened with the participant group, which must be constantly followed by the teacher and such a type of laboratory represents an integral part of the program and in the teaching activities. The first phase then moves to the search for objective information (scientific or literary) but also through the sedimentation of the same information and the subjective analysis of the meanings that the theme suggests. The emotional experience of each individual participant must "contaminate" the objective information in order to make an image closer to the imaginary of the participating group. To use a metaphor, the participant (and the whole group) must digest (internalize) the information. In this phase the teacher must be able to grasp the elements of interest aroused and launch "emotional solicitations" in order to "activate" the individual imagination in order to be able, in the end, to take over that interweaving of

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thoughts, feelings and emotions, which are the basics of the dramaturgical material. The second phase foresees a much more difficult aspect, that is the choice, among all the emerged materials, of the most functional stimuli for theatrical communication. A selection work, of which the teacher will have to take responsibility, having to deal with that part of the attachment to ideas and proposals, to which no one intends to give up as products of their own creativity. In this sense, the teacher must have consolidated his own leadership that allows him to make each member of the group feel as recognized in their ability and to feel welcomed their intellectual product and their commitment, trying to make the most of each one, leveraging more on the dimension of the product that comes from collective collaboration than on the subjective product. After this choice of content, the real stage of the dramaturgy is opened, in which the teacher and the students share their creative abilities: the construction of a dramaturgical structure, made up of the emerged materials, able to express the best the results of the first two phases. The concluding representation will have a ritual function, in which the gratification of arriving, having fun, to a theatrical communication (improperly called a show) takes on a double meaning:

1°) through the theatrical synthesis able to communicate the result of a long and elaborate work;

2°) achievement, after the representation, of the global comprehension of the communication set up. It is not rare, in fact, that only after meditating on the work carried out and represented, the group that participated in the laboratory fully understands the meaning of the whole project. Precisely during the process of verification of the work carried out the knowledge learned is re-established, the potentialities emerge, the unexpected reversals of roles usually considered unmovable, the awareness of having other and many expressive possibilities (learning how to make new emotional notes play) etc. The experience of a laboratory thus conceived and so practiced is a seed deposited in the soul of the participant.

Conclusions

Learning at a personal level of *empowerment* through the acquisition of new skills while planning, organizating and realizing school activities through active and participatory

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methods, allows the maturation of a greater protagonism and a greater knowledge of oneself and the expressive potentials.

At the same time this allows a different relationship between teachers, detainees, agencies and the non-profit world present in the territory, allowing different subjects involved to increase the quality of life and contribute to the process of promoting well-being for our daily life.

Putting the school world at the center of prison reality means activating an important value in local development, using it as a device for a social and cultural change. A development path that requires sharing at all levels to activate real participation models, in the awareness that each path requires constant and significant monitoring and evaluation, with criteria and indicators that allow the detection, from the operators, of the strengths and weaknesses in order to establish a redefinition of school improvement plans in the prison reality.

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Part Two
Higher Education in Knoledge Society

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Reaching millennials: a brief proposal for promoting university programs to young millennials

Corina Sîrb•

Abstract:

Millennials are "digital natives. They were born in a connected, perpetually communicating environment and thus they are accustomed to finding all the information they need by a simple web query. This feature, corroborated with the increasing competition between universities in their attempt to attract students, stresses the need to find an answer to the following questions: how should academic representatives reach millennials, in order to promote their educational offers? What communication strategy should they follow? What tone of voice and media channels should they use? In order to find an answer to any of the above questions, I think the first step is to analyze the public and their decision-making process. And that is what I will try to do in the first part of the present paper, based on which I later make a clear proposal of a communications strategy

Key words: millennials, digital communication, social media, university programs

Introduction

Promoting goods and services to younger publics is quite challenging, as both marketers and researchers in the field of communication note. In his book, *Marketing to Millennials*, Jeff Fromm makes the case that all those who were born in the late 90s represent a specific kind of public – at least from a marketing point of view – and therefore should be addressed accordingly.

According to many social studies that have been made in the recent years (see, for example, *The 2016 Millennial Impact Report* conducted by Achieve, *Millennials. Political Explorers*, conducted by Third Way or the many studies on this matter developed by Pew Research Centre), millennials are all those who were born in the late 80s and beginning of

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the 90s.Their main characteristic is that they were born in a profoundly digitalized world, and that is why they know intuitively how to use every new gadget that appears on the market. Moreover, their sociological and cultural environment is different from the ones of the previous generations: they were raised in a free and more open-minded environment and thus they are used to be granted freedom of speech, freedom of choice and freedom of action. (Tapscott 2008, p. 35)

Millennials are often called "digital natives", a term used for the first time in the *Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace*(1996), to define the only generation for which new technologies are not something they had to learn and adapt to, but a natural environment they were born and raised in. Keeping this in mind, it is not a surprise that millennials are the most avid internet users. According to a Third Way report on millennials social behaviour (2017), it seems that nine in ten millennials are online. They are wirelessly connected when away from home or work (62%). Three-quarters of Millennials use social networking sites (e.g., Facebook or Twitter). And 55% of Millennials check those sites daily (or multiple times per day).

The conclusion of the same studies mentioned above stress the fact that millennials were born in a connected, perpetually communicating environment and thus they are accustomed to finding all the information they need by a simple web query. Moreover, they were raised in the spirit of questioning authorities, which makes their relationship with public institutions, universities included, rather conflictual. This idea is also developed by Dan Tapscott (2008).

Taking into consideration all these specific features of this generation, I think that it is important to give our attention to a less popular, but rather urgent communication challenge: how should academic representatives reach young millennials, in order to promote their educational offers? What communication strategy should they follow? What tone of voice and media channels should they use? How informal and "user friendly" can an academic communications representative be in order to achieve his goals? These are the main questions I am trying to answer in the present paper.

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Who are young millennials and what do they want?

As stated in the introduction, millennials' generation includes all those people who were born beginning with the late 80s until the first years of the 21st century and their main defining features come from the fact that they were born and raised in the middle of the digital revolution, acquiring impressive adaptive skills, flexibility and mobility:

"Not willing to be passive consumers any longer, this generation wants to actively participate, co-create, and, most important, be included as partners in the brands they love. Often, the co-creation process begins with the product or service design, includes the customer journey or shopping experience, and is more easily seen in the marketing and social media space closer to the end of the marketing cycle." (Fromm & Garton, 2013, p. 8) This definition brings to discussion another specific characteristic of young millennials: they are *prosumers*. The word prosumer is a hybrid between consumer and producer, which means that they are no longer satisfied with being just at the „receiving" end of the marketing processes. They want to get involved and, even more, they want to be taken into consideration in the communication and production processes. The term is not a new one, it began to circulate in the '80s and it referred to the professional consumer, focusing especially on users of high-performance audio-video equipment. At about the same time, Alvin Toffler (1980), talks about the prosumer as a new type of consumer, which produces much of the goods he consumes.But the digital environment is the one which brought new nuances to this notion. A prosumer is not only confined to consuming products and services, he will also share his experience on his social accounts and he will try to influence their production process.

The prosumer is a kind of unsolicited advocate of companies, who will articulate his opinions publicly and with frankness whenever he will feel the need. Prosumers strive to be part of the production process. They know theyare well informed and feel responsible to improve the products and services they consume. This idea is in tone with the conclusions of the social studies mentioned earlier in this article. For example,according to the researchconducted both by Achieve (2016) and Georgetown University (2012),millennials have a different relation with social institutions. Their unlimited access to information, together with the diversity of media resources and the worldwide

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connectivity, contributed to increased expectations regarding public institutions' activity and transparency.

Closely related to this idea, Dan Tapscott (2008) gathers a list of principles and values that define the generation formed by young millennials, that I think that are very relevant to the way they perceive both educational institutions and media channels. Firstly, they expect to have liberty of action, ranging from liberty of choice to liberty of expression. This characteristic is significant especially during the process of university scouting and seeking information about various educational programs. Not only do they want do be in charge of this decision, but they also expect to find the same feeling of liberty and openness in the institutional communication strategy.

Secondly, they are used to customizing their products, experiences and interactions. As stated previously, they are prosumers, a quality that affects not only their relations with goods and products, but also with services, more specifically, it affects the interactions they have with educational programs. In my opinion, on the one hand, it influences their expectations regarding the communication with the institution's representative, as prosumers expect to find dialogue partners at the other end of the line, not just information transmitters. On the other hand, the content strategy that an institution follows should englobe different forms of user generated content, so that prosumers feel actively involved in the institutional activity.

Thirdly, Tapscott adds, they are used to investigate institutions, brands and service providers. They have a big appetite for information seeking and expect organizations to put resourceful channels at their disposal. Another thing one must consider is that young millennials need speed, especially as far as information exchanges are concerned.Next, millennials are looking for common grounds (from an axiological point of view) with the institutions they collaborate with. This implies that an educational institution should find a way to share its organizational values, in amore or less explicit manner. It may be a declaration of principles, a personal manifesto or just a more personal tone of voice.

In addition, Tapscott depicts young millennials as playful beings, who expect to have fun even at school and work. In my opinion, this is less a matter of age and more a matter of the generation they belong to. As stated before, millennials are more relaxed, detached and in consequence approach all aspects of their life with humour, which should be taken into

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consideration when creating a communication strategy that is directed at them as a core target. This idea is also confirmed by a research conducted by Quacquarelli Symonds (2017), which analysed both the way millennials gather information about educational programs and how universities use digital media and reached the conclusion that higher education establishments that want to appeal to their audiences on social media should cleverly balance academic-related content with creative posts their fans will want to engage with. That is the reason why itis important to mix educational and branded content with light-hearted pieces of information.

Last, but not least, millennials are the generation of cooperation and communication. Their decisions are influenced by the people they are networking with. This observation brings to attention not only the importance of constant communication, but also the need to nurture alumni relations and business to business contacts.

Promoting educational services to young millennials: media channels

Besides millennials' personality, the way they use media in searching is also important. In order to have a clearer picture of how they use certain channels and why, here is some relevant data extracted from two complex social studies: *Millennials and Education* (2017), conducted by Echelon Insights and *How do Millennials research universities* (2017), conducted by Quacquarelli Symonds:

- Official websites of educational establishments are perceived as an essential source of information. 71% perceive them as the most essential tool for online research, while 90% of respondents rated official websites as at least 'quite important' to their searches.
- Social media is regarded by respondents as important predominantly for creating an image about their university choices. This sustains my idea that I will develop later on in this article, that websites are used for getting information, while social accounts reveal the organizational culture and personality.
- Information about finances and applications is usually the hardest to find online, even though it is of great importance.

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- Students are increasingly researching universities on mobile devices. This is relevant because information is read differently on mobile, and content creators should use styles and formats that are mobile friendly.
- Email remains the most popular communication tool in this context. 80% of respondents said their ideal method of being contacted by universities was email, and 67% felt the same way about initiating a communication with universities themselves.

As a personal conclusion of the abovementioned facts and figures, it appears that, from a communications point of view, a university representative should make sure that the institution they promote respects the following principles:

1. It is reachable

Information about educational programs and admissions should be found easily by a simple descriptive query.

2. It is informative

All important information should be found on the main information channels that the institution owns and/or manages.

3. It is open to dialogue

The willing to engage in dialogues with prospective students should transpire in the organizational tone of voice, but this is not enough, as far as communication tactics are concerned. Thus, the educational institution should implement specific technical features to enable successful dialogue, be it a chat room, a forum or a communication representative that is always available to answer the phone, emails or online messages.

4. It is user friendly

Being user friendly refers mainly to two aspects regarding communications. Firstly, the tone of voice, meaning the used vocabulary, the imagery, the manner of addressing the public etc. Secondly, it refers to user experience, user interface and information architecture. The communication channels, whether we are talking about the classical web page or a mobile app, should offer useful information in a natural, pleasant and effortless

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manner. The way information is structured, categorized, filtered and presented makes a significant impact on the way it is perceived, not to mention that it can even determine the user to abandon the information query.

A Young Millennial Client Persona

Before heading to sketching a communications strategy model, I would like to use a valuable marketing instrument and create a persona that represents the target audience. A persona is a fictional, but accurate character that represents the main categories of the public that is being targeted. In other words, I gathered the most representative data we have on young millennials and imagined a character that reunites their strongest and most specific features. In this way, finding the way to reach and communicate to them is easier. This persona should offer the answers to the following questions:What are their needs and aspirations regarding the process of choosing an educational program? How do they search for information and where?

Below is how I think such a persona should look like:

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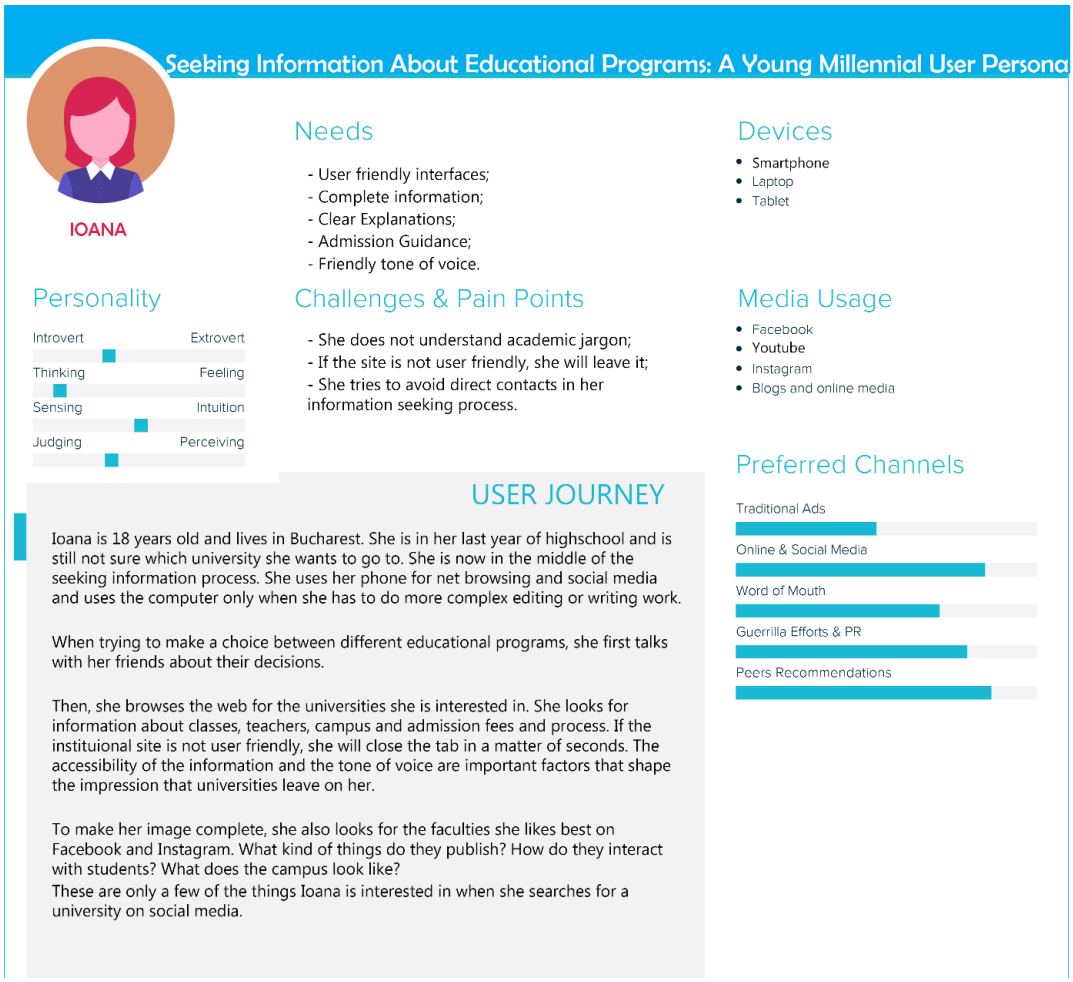

Proposing a structure for admissions web pages

As seen earlier in the present paper, websites are the main source of information when trying to conduct a research on prospective universities. Unfortunately, most university/faculty webpages are not up to date, both from a user experience perspective and an informational one.

In my opinion, the best way to channel and measure the activity during research and admissions is to create a dedicated page, where the information is written and organized for this specific target. Take into consideration the fact that when a highschool student enters a university website, he probably feels lost in all that academic jargon and rapidly abandons his journey.

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A dedicated page for admissions is not only better for search engine optimization, but it is also more efficient to organize the information this way. There is no pre-existent structure and the audience feels they are given more attention.

As far as the content published on the site is concerned, I think a WHY- WHERE - HOW triad suits all kinds of university programs and satisfies young millennials already discussed profile. I will explain it below

So, first, there should be some type of message about the institutional image and reputation, its mission and values. Then, an identification of common grounds with the prospective students. What is the profile of the typical student, what are his dreams and expectations and where does the institution steps in in making them possible. Thus, the audience is given a sense of community, trust and a feeling of belonging.

The WHERE is the place where educational programs are presented. It is the section where the educational establishment should offer answers to the following questions:
what is your educational offer?
what kind of job and qualifications is it preparing me for?
who will be my teachers?

The HOW is where prospective students are guided through the admission process, step by step. Downloadable documents should be at their disposal, whenever it's possible. It is very important that they are easily reachable from a mobile device. If at least a part of the admission process can be achieved online, it is recommended to do so. Rules, regulations, taxes and calendar should be clearly presented and explained in a user-friendly form.

Proposing a direction for social media content

Besides creating an appealing and informative website, it is important to build a strong presence on social media, so that the audience could get a sense of the organization's brand culture and personality. As far as content is concerned, I propose another triad, this time focused on the topics that are brought to discussion on the institutional social accounts: ACTIVITY - PEOPLE - COMMUNITY

Institutional activity

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The topics should concern the day to day activity of the educational institutions: events, special courses, administrative decisions, student guidance, news and advice etc.

The People

This approach gives the institution a human side, as it brings forward the people behind the programs, both teachers and students. It is all about creating an organizational personality and friendly tone of voice.

The Community

By building up an organizational community, young millennials, which, as we have seen, are prosumers, are given the time and place to get involved and shape institutional decisions and actions.

Old-school tactics and new technology

Besides digital communication, direct meetings are essential. But the common educational fairs are no longer enough. They too play an important role in reaching the communication objectives, but to my mind, they do not have enough persuasive powerfor the public we have described. Personal branded events are a good solution to fill this gap, whether it is an annual big conference or smaller events, specifically targeted to special audiences, like summer schools or courses, scholarship contests, special guest conferences, informal meetings with prospective students, CSR or charity work.

If direct contacts are hard to acquire, technology can be used to simulate them. More exactly, there are hi-tech solutions that can help prospective students get a vivid impression about the institution's community and personality. Below are a few of the solutions that I think are best fitted in this context:

- virtual reality videos,
- augmented reality applications,
- live sharing events,
- 360 degree videos,
- branded mobile games and apps,
- interactive microsites.

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Conclusions

In my opinion, taking into consideration the profile of their target audience, educational institutions must follow the path of commercial organizations and think efficient promotional strategies to convince prospective students to apply. To succeed in this complicated mission, their communication representatives must keep in mind the fact that they are addressing an audience with slightly different habits regarding their needs, expectations and, more importantly, regarding the way they use media; the persona I sketched hopefully succeeds to illustrate this idea.

Taking all this into consideration, to my mind, a great importance should be given to the admissions webpage, for which the *why-where-how* triad is an appropriate content strategy. Besides this, other communication tactics should not be forgotten: social media posts for conveying the organizational personality; personalized, branded events for direct contact with the audience;and new technology for simulating direct contacts when face to face meetings are not possible.

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Developing (new) language skills through student mobility - the impact of an Erasmus+ experience

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Abstract:

Language learning "folklore" has framed study abroad as one of the most efficient means of improving students` language competences. At the European level, Erasmus has been acting as the flagship student exchange programme for more than 30 years. In this context, the present paper proposes a "zoom in" on the influence that an Erasmus+ mobility for studies can have on developing (new) language skills for the participants. The analysis will reveal important details about the characteristics of students who decide to pursue a mobility for studies or about the status of English as a *lingua franca* during the mobility, emphasizing as well the difference between students` perception with regards to language acquisition after the mobility and the results revealed by the linguistic assessments taken through the Online Linguistic Support platform. Last but not least, it shall also look at the impact of the mobility duration on the level of language competences.

Keywords: student mobility, language skills, Erasmus+, higher education

1. Introduction

It has long been assumed that study abroad is one of the most efficient means of improving (students`) language competences, as it enables direct contact with native speakers and other international peers, immersion in a new culture and various opportunities to interact with foreign language(s).But despite this broadly accepted idea,

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the research surrounding this topic, and more particularly related to the impact of an Erasmus study mobility on language acquisition is rather scarce.

The Erasmus programme celebrated recently its 30th anniversary, being one of the most successful initiatives of the European Union. Thus, for three decades it has been offering to more than 3 million students the opportunity to have a mobility for studies in a higher education institution from another country and hence to develop (new) language skills, expand their personal development, gain new academic experiences, get to know a new country and culture, increase their employability prospects and, overall, broaden their horizons. Moreover, in terms of capacity building in the field of higher education, we could look, on the one hand, at the impact of the programme at the institutional level of the higher education institutions that are implementing it, or we could look, on the other hand, at the impact of the programme at the individual level of the participants. This latter approach shall be the one taken by this article, in an attempt to "zoom in" on the impact that an Erasmus+ mobility for studies can have on the participants` language skills.

In the literature, the impact of an Erasmus experience on student participants who pursued a mobility abroad has been approached from various perspectives, in different attempts to "unpack" its influence. Very acknowledged is its impact on employability and career development (European Commission, 2014; Engel, 2010, Bracht et al., 2006). Also, the impact on developing a supranational, European, sense of identification has been intensely discussed (King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Sigalas, 2010; Wilson, 2011; Van Mol, 2013,). Other aspects, such as the impact on personal development (Dolga et al., 2014) or the influence in developing the so called soft skills or transversal skills (Jacobone et al., 2015; Abermann and Tabuenca-Cuevas, 2016) have not been ignored in the literature.

2. The Erasmus programme - general considerations

Initiated in 1987, the programe takes its name from Desiderius Erasmus, a Dutch philosopher, but the name is actually a backronym meaning *EuRopean community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students*. In its first year of implementation alone, it enabled a number of 3244 students to pursue mobilities between 11 European states (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Frace, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and United Kingdom). Between 1994 and 1999 it was part of the wider initiative of the European Commission in the field of education called *Socrates,* followed by the *Socrates II*

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programme between 2000-2006, by the *Lifelong Learning Programme* between 2007-2013 and now by the *Erasmus+* programme, functioning between 2014-2020.

In its more than 30 year old history, the Erasmus programme has facilitated over 3 million student mobilities (European Commission, 2013) being considered as a "success story" of the European Union. The European Commission estimates that 2 million more higher education students will benefit from the programme during the 2014-2020 timeframe and the programme is expected to contribute substantially at making mobility the "hallmark of the European Higher Education Area" (Bologna process, 2009) and at reaching the 2020 target of 20% of the graduates having had study (or training) period abroad (Bologna process, 2009).

In terms of individual mobilities, a series of novelties have been introduced starting with 2014 and the launch of the Erasmus+ programme, meant to "upgrade" the programme and increase the quality and quantity of mobilities, as well as diminish the administrative burden of the programme`s implementation. Among the most noteworthy novelties would be the fact that every student can benefit from up to a maximum of 12 months of Erasmus mobilities during one study cycle (bachelor, master, PhD) (European Commission, 2017a:36), or the fact that the programme extended outside the European area, thus giving the status of "partner country" to (almost) every state on the map (European Commission, 2017a:22-23) and extending the "Erasmus model" worldwide. Moreover, a series of new on-line tools have been introduced, aiming to facilitate the implementation of the programme, data collection and communication between all the parties involved, the management and reporting process, etc. (these processes are mainly supported by the *Mobility Tool*programme of the European Commission) or to increase the quality of mobilities by supporting the language learning process (the Online Linguistic Support platform). These on-line tools also represented the starting point for the exploratory incursion proposed by this article, as they collect data that are also useful for a better understanding of the impact of the programme on individual participants in relation to the language acquisition process. While the first tool would provide data from a subjective perspective of the participant, through a questionnaire applied at the end of the mobility experience, the second tool would bring forth an objective perspective, through language assessment at the beginning and at the end of the mobility period.

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3. Aim and Methodology

Through the lenses of the aforementioned new on-line tools used in the context of the Erasmus+ programme, the present paper proposes a "zoom in" on the influence that an international study experience can have on developing (new) language skills for the participants. The results presented below are based on data gathered from two cohorts of Erasmus+ outgoing students (n=305) from one of the biggest universities in the Western part of Romania, who pursued a mobility for studies of one semester or one academic year, during the past 2 academic years (2015-2016 and 2016-2017). This exploratory incursion will be done through a quantitative approach, consisting of analysis of survey data gathered through questionnaires at the end of the mobility and on the analysis of participants` language assessment results on the Online Linguistic Support (OLS) platform supported by the Erasmus+ programme.

The questionnaire applied at the end of the mobility period gathers data about various aspects of the mobility and how the participant feels about subjects such as integration, satisfaction, practical and organizational aspects, support, personal development orthe details important for the purpose of this study related to language competences.

The OLS platform offers Erasmus+ participants the opportunity to assess their skills in the foreign language used during their mobility, as well as the possibility to follow an online language course to improve their language competences. The online assessment assesses participants' language skills (listening, reading and writing) according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. While this type of linguistic assessment is far from being perfect, with a major component– the speaking skills- being left out of the assessment, it can still provide important information and the opportunity to monitor the progress (if any) regarding the language competences in the main language of instruction during the international experience abroad. Since this is a mandatory step for all participants, at the beginning and at the end of the Erasmus+ mobility, this tool has a lot of potential both on short and on long term, for the mobility participant, for the sending institution as well as for the European Commission, making it possible to measure the impact of such an experience in relation to the process of language learning.

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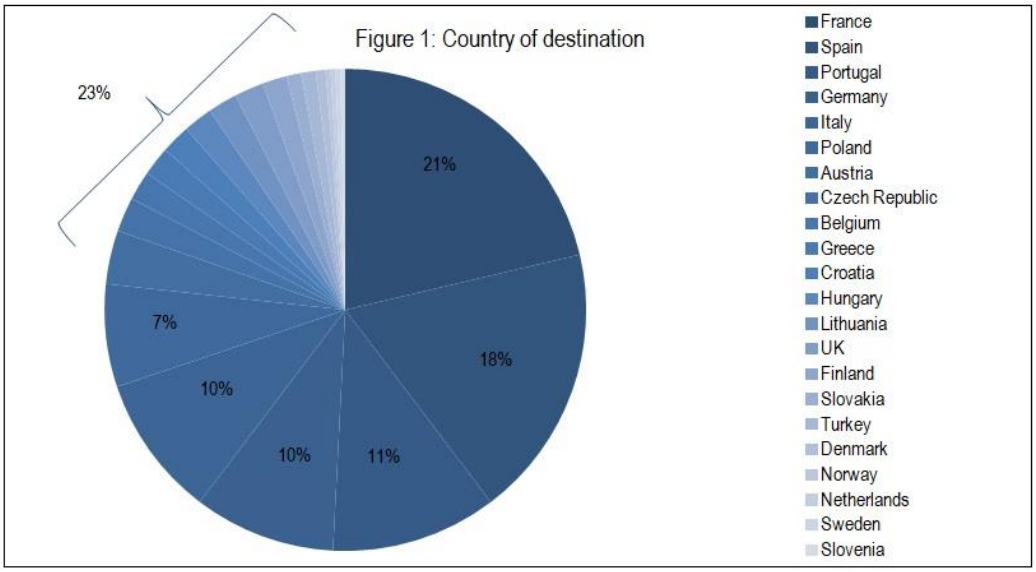
4. Results and discussion

The data gathered through the questionnaire at the end of the mobility proved to be useful also in drafting a profile of the Erasmus+ student from the selected Higher Education Institution (HEI). When looking at the mobility duration, 70% of the mobilities lasted for one semester and 30% had a duration of one academic year. In terms of gender, 72% of the Erasmus+ students were females and 28% were males. When looking at their study cycle, 56% were bachelor students, 41% master students and 3% PhD. candidates. These data are comparable to the characteristics of the typical Erasmus student at the European level (European Commission, 2017b). With some variations, but still comparable to the data at the European level (European Commission, 2017c:33-34) is also the situation about the country of destination for the Erasmus+ mobilities at the selected HEI, as shown in Figure 1. As we shall see further on, the country of destination is also connected to the foreign language(s) competences that students develop/improve during their mobility. Moreover, the "language element" is an important factor when deciding to apply for a mobility, and also when selecting the host country and host institution. Among the first five receiving countries, four are from the category of Romance languages (French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian), just like Romanian, thus being easier to learn by Romanian students, given the common roots and the existing similarities.



Furthermore, when being asked about their main motivation for studying aboad, 72% of the students selected "To learn/improve a foreign language" among their motifs. Also,

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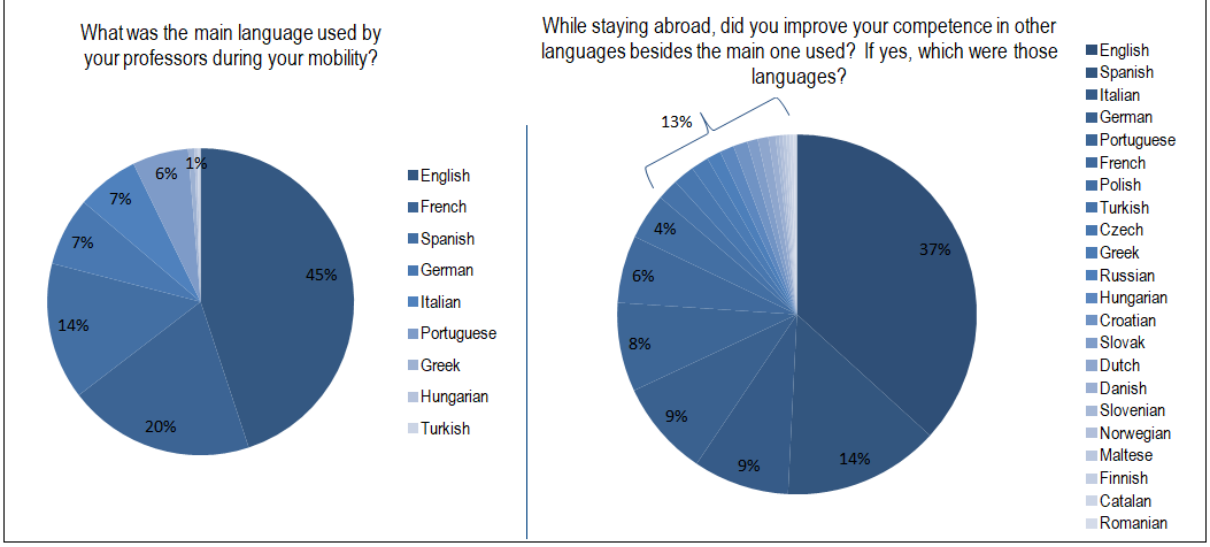
"To follow a study programme in a foreign language" was a motif selected by 40% of the students

Zooming it even more, towards the impact on the process of selecting a host institution, 57% of the students mentioned that the language criteria was very important when selecting it and 29% rated it as important. Only 7% of the students had no opinion on this matter and 7% considered it as being less important or not important. The level of language competences is expected to play an important role in the decision to apply for such an experience in the first place, and also in deciding on the destination, given the fact that the duration of a mobility can range from 3 to 12 months, thus being a long term mobility. Moreover, the academic activity will take place in a foreign language and so will most of the communication during the mobility period, which might imply that the adaptation process to the new country, city, university, etc, might be directly influenced by the level of language competences, among other factors. In order to ensure the quality of mobilities, the European Commission recommends a minimum B1 level of language competencies in the main language of instruction used during the mobility, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Figure 2: English as a lingua franca



Another noteworthy result is in relation to English as a *lingua franca* during the mobility period. English as a *lingua franca* can be defined as "a contact language between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and

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for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication" (Firth, 1996:240). As illustrated in Figure 2, when asked what was the main language used in their academic activity during their mobility, 45% of the students mentioned English, followed by French (20%), Spanish (14%), German (7%), Italian (7%), Portuguese (6%) and 1% other languages (namely Greek, Hungarian, Turkish). Not surprisingly, the picture is more nuanced when speaking about other language(s), besides the main language of instruction. 77% of the students mentioned that they also improved their competences in other language(s), besides the main one used. If we look at which were those languages, English is again the most widely spread (37%), followed by Spanish (14%), Italian (9%), German (9%), Portuguese (8%), French (6%), Polish (4%) and so on, as illustrated in Figure 2. In this second case, the language acquisition process also takes place through other channels, besides the formal one implied by the academic experience at the host HEI. Very often it is the language of the host country, a language used within the new social group, in the interaction with other colleagues, roommates, flatmates, and so on. Nonetheless, despite these new contexts that can facilitate the development of (new) language skills, English is the most widespread language used throughout the mobility, consolidating its status as a *lingua franca* during Erasmus student exchanges. However, we should not ignore that other foreign languages are also being used in significant proportions, being plausible that their proportion might increase in the future. These languages are also the main foreign languages used at the European level, besides English, namely French, German, Spanish (Special Eurobarometer, 2012:19), together with other widely spoken languages like Italian or Portuguese.

Another detail revealed by the questionnaire answers is related to students` self assessment regarding the improvement of their language skills in the main language of instruction. Thus, in big proportion (84%) they felt that they have increased their language competences, while 14% mentioned that they were already fluent in the main language of instruction and 2% stated that they feel that they have not improved their skills.

But when comparing these self assessment data, which are subjective and reflect the students` perception about their language skills improvement, with the objective results from the language assessments taken by these students on the Erasmus+ OLS platform, we can notice considerable differences. Through the OLS platform, Erasmus+ students are

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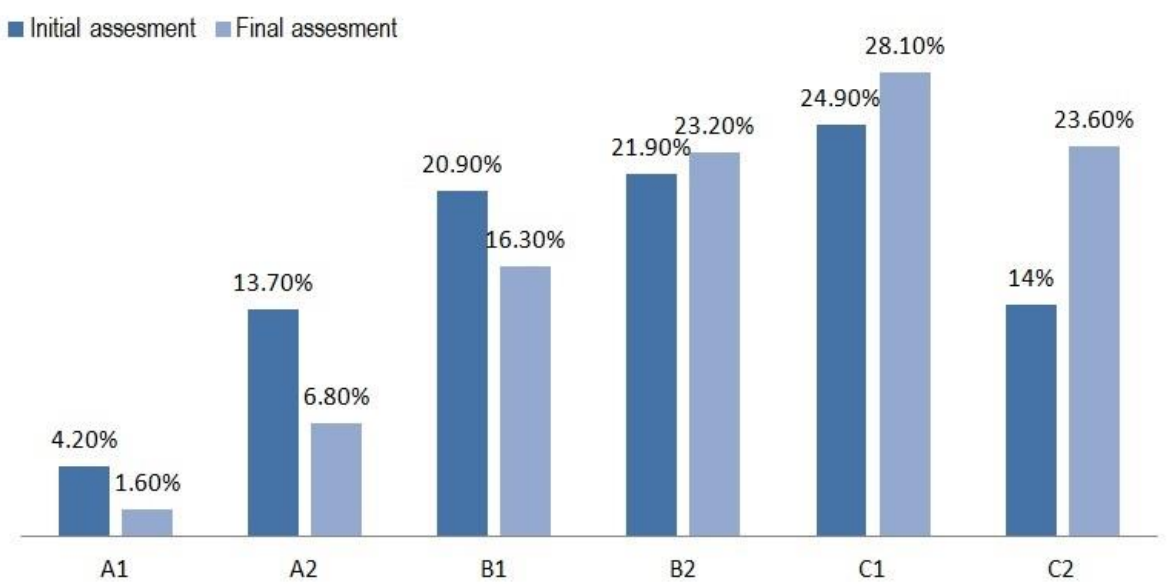
required to take two language assessments, one before the start of the mobility and one at the end of the mobility, for the main language of instruction used during their stay abroad. Thus, by comparing the two sets of results, it is possible to observe the progress (if any) regarding the level of language competences. The assessments results are shown using the six levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, ranging from A1 to C2.

A graphic illustration and a comparison between the initial and the final assessment are presented in Figure 3. In real terms, this would mean that 45.2% of the students proved an increased level of language competences, being either with one level higher (30.5%), two levels higher (12.1%) or three levels higher (2.6%). On the other hand, 41.5% kept the same level of language competences and surprisingly, 13.1% registered a decrease in their language skills by one level (11.4%) or in isolated cases even two (1.3%) or three (0.3%) levels.

Figure 3: OLS language assesment results



When comparing the fact that 84%of the students reported in the questionnaire at the end of the mobility that they felt they have increased their language competences with the OLS assessment results which show that only 45.2% actually proved an increased level of language skills, the difference is noticeable. Moreover, the fact that some students also

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showed a decrease of language knowledge in the final OLS assessment is surprising and would deserve further investigation for a better understanding of the causes that lead to these results.A possible explanation could lay in the imperfect nature of the way in which OLS platform is designed. Moreover, the assessment is not sensible to slight increases in the language performance, an important amount of progress being necessary for advancing from one level of language competence to another. Thus, it is plausible that a higher proportion of students actually improved their language skills, but the progress is not big enough to be reflected in an actual increase from one level of language competence to another. Moreover, the attitude of the participants towards the two language assessments might be different. While before the mobility students are paying more attention to all the details regarding their future Erasmus+ experience, including the language assessment, after the mobility their attitude might differ and the final language assessment might be just another administrative burden (given the fact that it is a mandatory component of their mobility) that they want to resolve hastily.

Furthermore, one of the general assumptions regarding mobility and the process of foreign language acquisition would imply that the duration of a mobility will have a direct impact on the level of language competences of students. Thus, a longer mobility period would also translate in a higher level of language competence.

Figure 4: Impact of mobility duration on the level of language competence

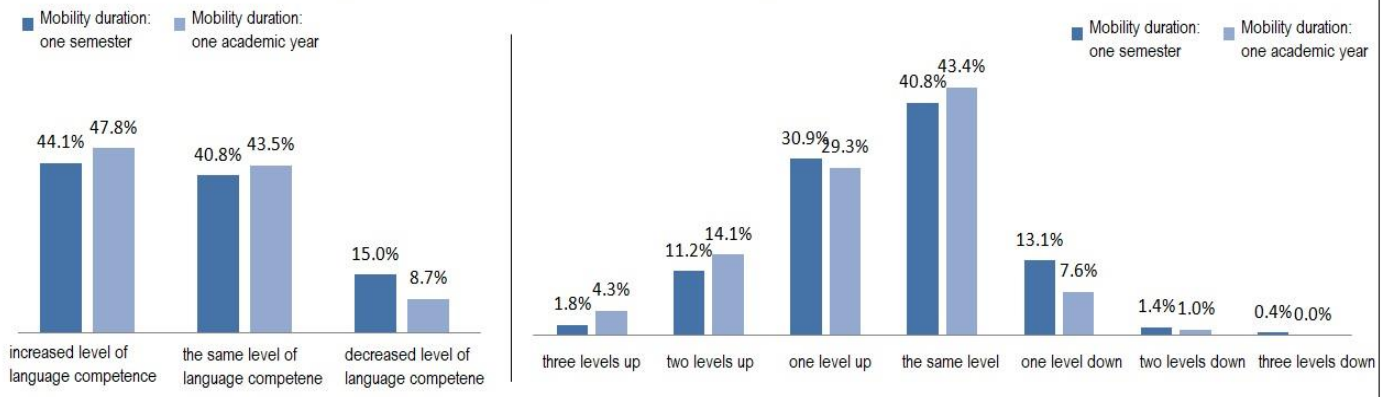

Figure 4 shows the results of testing this hypothesis. Thus, the data provided by the OLS language assessments reveal that there are, indeed, some differences and that the students whose mobility lasted longer (one academic year) are more prone to have an increasedlevel of language competence or to keep the same level of language skills,while being less prone to

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show a decreased level of language competence than the students who had a shorter mobility (one semester). Nevertheless, the differences revealed are not very substantial. For this reason we can conclude that mobility duration has only an incremental effect on the level of language competence of students who pursue an Erasmus+ mobility for studies.

This would suggest that the first months of the mobility have the greater impact in developing new language competences and that they should not be expected to increase proportionally to the duration of the mobility. In this context, it would be interesting to try to correlate this data to the situation of shorter term mobilities, like the student mobilities for Placement.

5.Conclusions

Starting from the popular belief that a study abroad experience is one of the most efficient ways for students to improve their language competences as it enables direct contact with native speakers and other international peers, immersion in a new culture and various opportunities to interact with foreign language(s), while also having an academic activity in a foreign language, this article proposes a ”zoom-in” on the Erasmus programme, the biggest mobility programme at the European level. Through the lenses of two on-line tools used within the Erasmus+ programme, we go on an exploratory incursion and try to look at the influence that an international study experience can have on developing (new) language skills for the participants.

One of the first noteworthy elements that emerged from the analyzed data is that we can use it for drafting a profile of the typical Erasmus+ student. Details such as gender, mobility duration, field of study, country of destination, language of instruction, etc., would prove to be very useful in outlining the Erasmus+ student profile from a particular institution, region, country, etc. (depending on the source of the analyzed data).

Also, when looking at the main language of instruction used during a mobility and also at the language(s) that students report to have improved their competences in during the mobility, we notice that English is the most widespread language used. While this consolidates its status as a *lingua franca* during Erasmus+ student exchanges, we should not ignore that other foreign languages (French, German, Spanish, Italian, etc.) are also being used in significant proportions, being plausible that their proportion might increase in the future.

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The data analyzed also reveals that the Erasmus+ experience contributes to improving the language competences of the participants and also to developing new language skills, but there are considerable differences between the students` perception about their language skills improvement and the results of the on-line linguistic assessments taken on the OLS platform.

Furthermore, there doesn`t seem to be a substantial difference in terms of language acquisition between students who pursued a mobility of one semester and those who benefited from a mobility of one academic year, which indicates that we should not necessarily expect an increase in the level of language skills proportionally to the duration of the mobility.

Besides some answers, this exploratory incursion also brought along a series of more questions that would require further investigation for a better understanding of the impact of an Erasmus+ experience on its beneficiaries. Also, since this study is small scale, the findings cannot be generalized to the entire Erasmus+ population. Nonetheless, despite the limitations, this study provides valuable information about the contribution of an Erasmus+ mobility for studies to the process of developing (new) language skills. This analysis also contributes to the larger discussion about the process of internationalization of higher education and the role that the Erasmus+ mobility programme plays in this context.

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Student performance in online and face-to-face second language courses: Dutch L2 in adult education

Liesbeth DE PAEPE•

Abstract

Due to immigration, globalization and a changing labor market, there is a recognized need for flexible learning. In Europe, second language (L2) acquisition specifically has become of vital importance. Research on less commonly taught languages (LCTL), however, is scarce and focuses mainly on foreign language acquisition, compulsory education and on face-to-face (F2F) and blended learning. However, the effectiveness of learning a LCTL - such as Dutch - as a second language fully online in adult education has yet to be uncovered. The principal objective of this paper was to investigate whether learning Dutch L2 fully online can be as effective as learning it fully F2F. A quantitative methodological approach was adopted. Independent samples t-tests were carried out to compare online and F2F adult learners' performance in a Waystage-level Dutch L2 course in Flanders, Belgium. The key variables 'previous knowledge', 'course level', 'content', 'teacher', 'assessment' and 'learning outcomes' are controlled. Main findings indicated that online Dutch L2 learning in adult education can be at least as effective as F2F learning. This study should, therefore, be of value to language course providers wishing to implement flexible L2 learning, and to LCTL and computer-assisted language learning (CALL) researchers.

Keywords: second language learning (L2 learning); online learning; adult education; effectiveness; computer-assisted language learning (CALL)

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Introduction

The past decade has seen the rapid development of innovative ways of L2 learning and teaching for many languages, including the less commonly taught languages (LCTLs). Despite the increased interest in blended L2 learning and teaching and the growing number of initiatives to set up blended language courses, there is a dearth of studies on fully online language courses (Blake and Delforge, 2007; Sun, 2014), especially of studies comparing the learning results of fully online and face-to-face learners (Blake, 2013; Coleman and Furnborough, 2010).

Providing fully online courses for a LCTL is hardly comparable to providing a commonly taught language course online, because there are fewer readily-available learning resources, and because institutions have smaller scales and correspondingly lower budgets and fewer skilled teachers to develop online courses and to teach online. Moreover, the target groups for LCTL courses are smaller, and at the same time, learners have very diverse learning needs: some take Dutch L2 courses for professional reasons (and the professions and corresponding learning needs also vary greatly), others because they want to enter university; because they want to get by in everyday life or because they have children in a Flemish-speaking school and wish to communicate with the teachers. Along with the fact that setting up online learning for a LCTL is challenging, there is also a reluctance or even disbelief in the efficacy of learning a language online, especially when it comes to the oral skills. Blake (2013)remarks that those who question the efficacy of distance learning for languages, are especially concerned with oral proficiency, and "finding the answer is particularly important in the case of the less commonly taught languages (LCTLs), where access to beginning instruction is especially limited due to teacher shortages, low enrollments, and the concomitant financial constraints." (p130-131).

At the time the current research is carried out, there is one center for adult education offering fully online Dutch L2 courses. As White (2016) states, there are two main reasons for assessing online language learners' acquisition of the target language skills: "to investigate student gains in performance as a means of establishing the effectiveness of distance language teaching environments and processes (Volle, 1995; Blake et al., 2008) and/or as a means of assessing particular skills and providing feedback to learners on their

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progress" (p142). This study relates to the first reason: to find out whether online Dutch L2 learning can provide an alternative for F2F Dutch L2 learning, for those students who are in need of a different learning format.

While some comparative studies have been carried out to determine learning results in blended learning or online and F2F foreign language learning, there is a notable paucity of well-controlled studies in the field of second language acquisition specifically comparing learning results in fully online and fully F2F courses. Even fewer studies have addressed a LCTL, like Dutch.Most studies suffer from a weak methodology (comparing different proficiency levels, using different assessment tasks, including different teachers…). *"The burden of isolating the experimental treatment so as to focus on the medium alone (DL vs. classroom instruction), to the exclusion of all other factors, remains a daunting, if not insurmountable, challenge. (…) One of the difficulties in this line of research is isolating the format variable from all the other factors that contribute to L2 learning outcomes – for example, learner characteristics, instructional method, and media attributes."* (Blake, 2013, p144).

The current study provides a quantitative analysis of student performance in fully online and fully F2F Dutch L2 courses. It accommodates these challenges by controlling the key variables 'previous knowledge', 'course level', 'content', 'teacher', 'assessment' and 'learning outcomes'.The study is set in formal adult education in Flanders, Belgium. By the time the research is carried out, there is an increasing interest in blended learning. Several centres for adult education (*Centra voor Volwassenenonderwijs* (CVO), providing general language courses) have set out to organize blended learning Dutch L2 courses in addition to the mainstream, face-to-face curriculum. The proportion of distance learning in these courses may vary greatly, in extreme cases it can be 5% up to 95%. As 95% distance learning is legally the maximum allowed part of distance learning, and is considered fully online learning. Most schools offering blended learning, opt for less than 50% distance learning. The Dutch L2 courses which are subject of this study, are organized online for 95%. Learners only come to school once, to take the final exam.

The main aim of this study is to investigate the differences in learning outcomes between fully online and F2F learners of Dutch L2 and thus to find out if fully online Dutch L2 learning can be as effective as F2F learning. The specific questions which drive the

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research are:

- RQ1: Are the learning achievements significantly different in online and F2F learning modes?

Literature review

The importance and originality of this study is that it compares the performance of fully online and fully F2F students of a less commonly taught language, Dutch, for which no previous research is available.In Brave New Digital Classroom, Blake (2013) reports on several online language evaluation studies. He concludes that *"the result of no significant difference between the in-class students and the online students was the most frequent finding from these comparative studies for first-year language study. Occasionally, the online students performed slightly better, but never worse."* (p146).

When looking at reading, writing and listening skills, Chenoweth, Jones and Tucker (2006) and Chenoweth and Murday (2003) found minimal statistical differences in learning results in Spanish and French courses respectively. There is only a small body of literature that is concerned with the assessment of oral proficiency in online L2 courses (Moneypenny & Aldrich, 2016). Though oral skills are claimed to be difficult to handle in online learning formats (Sánchez-Serrano, 2008), existing studies showed no significant differences between the oral skills of online and F2F learners (Blake, R., Wilson, N., Pardo Ballester, C. and Cetto, 2008; Chenoweth, Jones and Tucker, 2006; Chenoweth and Murday, 2003; Moneypenny and Aldrich, 2016). The reasons why online and F2F learners achieve comparable results for speaking skills might be that synchronous video-based computer-mediated communication (CMC) is very similar to F2F communication (Yanguas, 2010) and that online learners' weekly conversations with the instructor may surpass the individual practice of F2F learners, who often take classes in groups of 25 to 30 students (Blake et al., 2008).

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Methodology

Research context

The central aim of this paper is to compareonline and F2F adult learners' achievements in formal Dutch L2 courses. The level of the course addressed is Waystage (or A2 in the Common European Framework of References of Languages, CEFR). The provider is a center for adult education in Flanders, Belgium. The level requires 120 hours of study time. (The previous level, A1 or Breakthrough, also comprised 120 hours of study). Students who pass, receive a certificate of Dutch L2 level A2 (Waystage). The online course is 95% online, which is legally the maximum allowed share of online learning in Flanders. The learners take all the lessons (including the introductory session) online and only take the final assessment at school.

Participants

The participants in the current study are adult immigrants who have finished the Breakthrough (A1-level) course in Dutch L2 learning and take the Waystage (A2-level) Dutch L2 course in the next semester. Their performance level is the same at the start of the course.Twenty students take the fully F2F course, nineteen the online course. In the online group, eight learners are male and eleven are female; in the F2F group, there are twelve male and eight female learners. In the F2F groups, there are more learners with a lower prior educational level than in the online group.[8]Eighteen out of the twentylearners who registered for the online group, had also taken the previous Dutch L2 course online. All thelearners who registered for the F2F group, had taken the previous level F2F.

Teacher

The teacher is the same in both the online and F2F groups. He is experienced in online and F2F teaching of Dutch L2, also in the A2 level courses.

Course and assessment

Both courses, F2F and online, are based on the Common European Framework of References (CEFR) and includeall the learning outcomes of level A2 (or Waystage). The contexts of the lessons cover the four domains of language use (personal, public, occupational and educational). The learning materials have a communicative approach and

[8]In another comparative study of Dutch L2 learning, which is currently undergoing review, findings indicated that the prior educational level did not have an effect on the learning results.

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involve the acquisition of the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking).The duration of the course is one semester for F2F as well as online students. The final exam is held at school. Online and F2F students take the same written and oral exams.

The content of the online course is similar to the content of the books used in the F2F groups, including the four broad domains of language use (professional, educational, personal and public) as described in the CEFR. The content relates to the seven student roles (manager of housing and family administration, consumer, learner/student, participant in leisure activities, educator/coach (as a parent), worker, jobseeker, entrepreneur) as described in the Training Profiles Dutch L2 (*Opleidingsprofielen NT2)*.

Computer-mediated Communication (CMC) in the online groupincludes synchronous(weekly individual 15-minute skype sessions with the teacher) as well as asynchronous interaction (oral exercises in Flipgrid; writing exercises in Google Drive; learning objects; e-mail for interacting with the teacher).

For both the online and F2F groups, the continuous assessment part represents 60% of the total grade, and the final exam, which is held at school, makes up 40% of the total grade.The continuous assessment as well as the final exam include the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). Though some assignments for the continuous assessment are slightly different for online and F2F learners, the content, learning outcomes, level of difficulty, question types and the relative amount of the variousquestion types are very similar. The final exam is exactly the same for both groups. The passing marks are fifty percent for the final exam, and fifty percent for the continuous assessment. This is the same in both the online and F2F groups.

Data

Prior to commencing this study, informed consent was obtained from the A2-level course participants to use the results for scientific research. Then, the students' continuous assessment scores and the final exam scores of the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) were collected for analysis.

Statistical analysis

SPSS version 24is employed to performLevene's tests to assess the equality of variances for the variables reading, listening, writing, speaking, total exam score, continuous

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assessment and final total score for the online and F2F groups. Subsequently, independent samples t-tests were performed to compare the online and F2F students' performance.

Results

Dutch L2 adult learner achievement in A2 level online and F2F learning modes

Table 1. Scores of online and F2F Dutch L2 learners in A2-level course.

	Mean SD	Mean %	t	Sig.
Exam reading /15	12.16 (1.77)	10.95 (2.18)	-1.89	.066
Exam listening /15	11.18 (2.08)	11.68 (1.92)	.77	.448
Exam writing /20	12.68 (4.74)	11.73 (5.74)	-.57	.574
Exam speaking /30	21.21 (5.22)	19.65 (7.24)	-.77	.447
Exam total /80	57.24 (12.04)	54.00 (14.03)	-.77	.445
Continuous assessment /120	95.53 (15.52)	80.93 (20.70)	-2.48	.018*
Total /200	152.76 (22.71)	134.93 (33.55)	-1.93	.061

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Levene's test was used to measure whether or not equal variances in the online and F2F groups can be assumed. The online and F2F students' (*n*= 39) scores were compared by means of independent samples t-tests.

First, the test was conducted to compare the *reading* scores for the online and F2F students, with the maximum score beingfifteen. As can be seen from table 1, the test results indicated that online learners (M=12.16; SD= 1.77) performed better in reading than F2F students (M= 10.95; SD= 2.18), though not significantly (t(37)=-1.89; p=.066).

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For *listening*, the maximum score was also fifteen. The scores for listening between online (M=11.18; SD=2.08) and F2F learners (M=11.68; SD=1.92) are not significantly different (t(37)=.77; p=.448).These results suggest that F2F learners perform slightly better in listening skills than online learners.

For *writing*, the maximum score was twenty. There was no significant difference between the scores of the online (M= 12.68; SD=4.74) and F2F (M=11.73; SD=5.74) learners; t(37)=-.57, p=.574. These results suggest that online students have slightly better writing skills than F2F learners, but the difference is statistically not significant.

For *speaking*, the maximum score was thirty. There was no significant difference in the scores for speaking between online (M=21.21; SD=5.22) and F2F learners (M=19.65; SD=7.24); t(37)=-.77; p=.447. These results suggest that online learners perform slightly better than F2F learners in listening skills, but the difference is statistically not significant.

The score for the sum of the *final exam* parts (reading, listening, writing and speaking skills) was eighty. As can be seen from table 1, the test results indicated that online learners (M=57.24; SD=12.04) performed better in the final exam than F2F students (M=54.00; SD=14.03), though not significantly (t(37)=-.77; p=.445). These results suggest that online and F2F learners overall have comparable exam grades.

For the *continuous assessment*, the maximum score was one hundred and twenty. There was a significant difference in the scores for continuous assessment between online (M=95.53; SD=15.52) and F2F learners (M=80.93; SD=20.70); t(37)=-2.48; p=.018. These results suggest that online learners perform statistically significantly better than F2F learners in continuous assessment.

The *overall maximum score* (the sum of the exam score and the continuous assessment score) was two hundred. There was no significant difference in the scores between online (M=152.76; SD=22.71) and F2F students (M=134.93; SD=33.55); t(37)=-1.93; p=.061. These results suggest that online and F2F learners have comparable final grades.

Discussion and conclusions

The aim of the present study was to determine if fully online L2 learning of Dutch can be as effective as F2F learning.In accordance with the present results, previous

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comparative studies evaluating learner performance in online and F2F language courses showed marginal differences between both groups, with the online learners performing at least as good as the F2F learners. It has previously been suggested that oral skills are harder to manage in online learning formats(Sánchez-Serrano, 2008). This does not appear to have an effect on the learning results. Comparison of the findings with those of other studies (Blake, R., Wilson, N., Pardo Ballester, C. and Cetto, 2008; Chenoweth, Jones and Tucker, 2006; Chenoweth and Murday, 2003; Moneypenny and Aldrich, 2016) confirms that online learners can reach at least the same oral proficiency level as their F2F counterparts. A possible explanation could be that online learners get more personal attention from the teacher than F2F learners studying Dutch in large groups, as was already suggested by Blake (2013).

Returning to the question posed at the beginning of this study, it is now possible to state that online Dutch L2 learningand teaching environments and processesare effective and could thus provide an alternative for F2F Dutch L2 learning, for those students who are in need of a different learning format. These findings may open up new horizons for teaching LCTLs online: it might be a solution to reach special target groups, to create more flexible learning solutions for L2 learners combining different demands, or to reach people who want to study a LCTL from abroad.

Limitations of the current study

Due to the number of participants, this study is exploratory in nature. Despite these promising results, questions remain. In the field of L2 learning and teaching, there is abundant room for further progress in exploring the instructional design of online L2 courses, especially for LCTLs; in developing a quality framework for online language (and L2) courses, and in determining which kind of teacher training is necessary to prepare teachers for teaching online. Regarding learning results, more comparative studies are needed for different LCTLs.

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Affordances of the current study

The importance and originality of this study is that it compares the performance of fully online and fully F2F students of a less commonly taught second language, Dutch, for which no previous research is available. Moreover, most key variables are controlled: the course level, learning objectives, final exam and the teacher.This study has demonstrated, for the first time, that online Dutch L2 learning can be an efficient alternative for the traditional, F2F courses, while providing more flexibility for the learner.

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Book Review. Anca Luştrea's The psychology of children with auditory disability: development and adaptation (2017, Timisoara: West University Publishing)

Ioana DÂRJAN[9]

Acknowledging and understanding the complex aspects of hearing impairment or loss in children are of critical importance for all those influenced by it: child itself, family and community, and, of course, professionals (doctors, teachers, therapists, etc.).

A real and efficient educational and social inclusion will require an individualized approach for each child with special needs. In pursuing this objective, the entire society, the community and medical and educational systems should be informed, prepared and willing to respond responsible and competently to the challenges of raising and educating the child. The specialized and continuously updated approaches enhance the probability of optimal stimulation of child's own developmental potential, improving his chance to a better quality of life, and a higher level of autonomy, involvement and active citizenship as adult.

The book is structured in ten chapters, presenting relevant theoretical and practical information, helpful for parents, teachers, and other categories of helping professionals.

This book is intended as a guide for those involved in the education and social inclusion of children with auditory disorders. It offers expert knowledge about the psychological and developmental particularities of these special children: the specific modalities of perception, memory, information processing, learning, communication, and relationships.

Also, the book indicates the best practices and offers suggestions for better school inclusion and educational, therapeutic and remedial strategies. The author advocates for well-articulated techniques, well-coordinated multidisciplinary teams who can assure child's accommodation, and assistance, through curricular, instructional and environmental adaptation, assistive technology, in multiple context (in family, at school, in community).

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The final conclusions stress the heterogenous development of the children with auditory difficulties and advocate for individualized educational strategies. Another important idea highlighted by the author is the necessity of acknowledging the importance of the family in educational and therapeutic approaches of this children, and the benefits of empowering and involving the family in the process.

The list of references is representative, containing influent papers in the field.

Illustrating the author's theoretical and practical expertise and interests in this topic, this book represents a valuable resource for the field of special education, both for research and applied purposes.

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