



Teaching, learning, training, and researching throughout Europe – Languages and cultures in contact

Lipóczi-Csabai, Sarolta – Szabó, Ildikó

Since the early 1990s, the Kecskemét College Teacher Training Faculty has been involved in important bilateral and multilateral projects targeting cultural and linguistic themes. Due to new challenges in pedagogy, didactics and ICT competences in higher education, the projects' aims and objectives as well as the list of participating countries of the projects have changed. Our study introduces and analyses those pre-EU and EU projects that focused on teaching pre-service teachers, training in-service teachers based on the research results garnered through cooperation with our partners, and learning from one another's educational and cultural settings. This study has a twofold goal: through the introduction of how cultures and languages enriched one another in several intercultural projects, we aim to record a very rich period at Kecskemét College Teacher Training Faculty.

Keywords: intercultural teaching programmes, pre- and in-service teacher training, curriculum development, offline and blended courses

Introduction

Since the early 1990s, both students and lecturers at Kecskemét College Teacher Training Faculty have been involved in important bilateral and multilateral projects targeting cultural and linguistic themes. The first step to launching this collaboration comprised establishing bilateral contacts to get an insight into our partners' cultural background and exchange experiences regarding innovations in foreign language teaching and pedagogical methods. Due to new challenges in pedagogy, didactics, and ICT competences in higher education, the aims and objectives as well as the list of countries participating in the projects have changed. Our study introduces and analyses those pre-EU and EU projects that focused on teaching pre-service teachers, training in-service teachers based on research results garnered through cooperation with our partners, and learning from one another's educational and cultural settings.

The first multilateral project analysed in this study aimed at improving students' intercultural competences at a time when Hungary had not yet joined the EU. The European seminar held at this time could be regarded as the

forerunner of some upcoming EU projects at Kecskemét College. This seminar was followed by several EU projects discussing various topics. The present study focuses on those collaborations that examined the topic of foreign language teaching in pre-service teacher training, literacy in in-service teacher training, and designing blended courses for continuous professional development. Our study has a twofold goal: by introducing how cultures and languages enriched one another as a result of several intercultural projects, we aim to record a very rich period at Kecskemét College Teacher Training Faculty¹.

A Hungarian – Austrian intercultural student and teacher mobility model (1990–2000)

Framework conditions

Between 1990 and 2000, approximately 400 students took part in pedagogical and civilisation exchange studies and arts programmes. In addition, five joint volumes and several studies were published on the outcomes (Jakab et al., 1999, p. 123). The exchange programme was supported by applications submitted to the Austro-Hungarian Action Foundation and local sponsors. The objectives of this cooperation were to improve language learning, renew pedagogical methods, expand subject content, conduct joint research, develop curriculum activities for trainers teaching German as a foreign language, and hold intercultural exhibitions and concerts for representatives of the fields of arts.

Results of the Austrian – Hungarian partnership

Among the bilateral projects, the longest and most effective cooperation was the intercultural relationship with the Krems Pedagogical Academy (Sági & Szinger, 2019, p. 143). This fruitful partnership and its common outputs were published in several publications. The ‘management’ of the partnership had a good strategy given that they worked in a visionary manager style.²

During the practical training sessions held in Austrian schools, pre-service teacher students from Kecskemét became familiar with new teaching methods, e.g., cooperative techniques, project, drama, and experience pedagogical methods, techniques that gradually replaced frontal education in Hungary after the change of regime. Students were given consultation classes to discuss these ‘new’ methods. In return, pre-service teacher Austrian students could test their intercultural teaching skills in Hungarian schools. Language learning did not only mean learning German for Hungarian students: Austrian students were also given introductory lessons in learning Hungarian.

The objective of each lesson – that was also observed by the partners

¹ Kecskemét College Teacher Training Faculty was the legal predecessor of John von Neumann University Faculty of Pedagogy, and merged into Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary Teacher Training Faculty on 30 July, 2020.

² The members of the management team on the Hungarian side were Edit Jakab and Sarolta Lipóczi-Csabai while Austria was represented by Friedrich Striberny.

– was to expand the content of the subjects. The research and subject development work was carried out in the field of language and literature teaching methodology by Hungarian-Austrian authors who worked in pairs. As a result, three textbooks and two volumes of studies were created jointly. As cultural areas without language barriers, music and fine arts were included in the successful programme.

Evaluation of the first partnership programme

This bilateral relationship was carried out with a high level of international professional interest. For their scientific achievements, organisational and teaching activities in the framework of the Krems – Kecskemét Inter-Institutional Relationship, its coordinators were recognised by the Ministers of Education and Culture of the two countries. In a study published on the tenth anniversary of the relationship, Friedrich Striberny, (1999) the Austrian coordinator of the programmes, pointed out that one of the aims of the programmes was to develop a sensibility to another culture; this goal was achieved at a high level. Based on his further statements, an important aspect in teacher training in Austria is that anyone who wants to represent intercultural educational goals as a teacher must also act interculturally during their studies (Jakab et al., 1999, p. 122). The fulfilment of this requirement was also supported in a report made by Johannes Fonatsch, Stefan Dellacher, and Thomas Fraissl. These students from Krems expressed their admiration for the landscape and their respect for Hungarian people (Jakab et al., 1999, p. 124). From the perspective of time, it can be stated that the Krems – Kecskemét relationship preceded Hungary's accession to the EU, but its goals, content, and impact on the participating students were as important as student EU programmes. That is why it can deservedly be called a type of 'small-scale, Hungarian-Austrian Socrates/Erasmus project'.

The development of intercultural competences in a European student mobility model (1996–1998)

With the launch of multilateral EU projects in 1995, Kecskemét College already had a cooperation agreement with 36 institutions from 17 countries (Rigó, 2019, p. 70). The cooperating teacher training institutions significantly contributed to the growth of the members of the affected generation within the framework of international cooperation. 'Growing together in Europa means more than just the introduction of the Euro and a policy of economic agreement. On the contrary, this process takes place in the heads and hearts of people who are not only resolved to peace among neighbours but who also have an interest in their neighbouring country.' (Lipóczy & Oomen-Welke, 1999, p. 9) The development of European competence meant education for Europe, international cooperation, common thinking, getting to know and appreciating each other's culture.

The first multilateral project of Kecskemét College – a TEMPUS-Project – was implemented to carry out the principle of *'European student mobility*

in order to develop their intercultural competence.³ This project was meant to link the different objectives and possibilities of the partners from countries in Europe: Austria, German, Hungary, Italy, and Spain. The aim was to implement the programme within a *TEMPUS Mobility Joint* European project. The common interest was a better understanding of social and professional life throughout Europe via schools, teacher training institutions, and economic spheres. The two major axes around which the participant built the project were the Network for Student Mobility and European Studies. The Network comprises 18 students from EC institutions who had teaching practice and job experience in Hungary in different schools. Roughly 12-15 students from two Hungarian colleges studied at least a semester or two at the host institution. The course entitled *European Studies* or *European Seminar* for future teachers involved many segments of the educational, cultural, economic and political life of Europe and was elaborated according to the training needs of Hungarian higher education institutions in cooperation. This learning experience enabled students to discover their own Europe by working independently on different projects held in courses in both home and host countries.

The transversal educational principle of the application is the principle of the European dimension, which can be incorporated anywhere where the traditional individual professional and subject themes can be supplemented and expanded with elements of a cross-border educational aspect that sensitises the culture of other countries (Lipóczi & Oomen-Welke, 1999, p. 216). The following sections contain a few examples.

'Who are the Europeans?' Seminar on Europe

At the beginning of the programme, an international group of educators participating in the competition mobilised the geographical, historical, social knowledge, experience, and ideas of students from the five countries within the framework of an introductory seminar. The seminar sought answers to the questions, 'How to define Europe?' 'Who are the Europeans?' Although Hungary was not a member of the EU at that time, in 1996 the Hungarian answers revealed that Hungarian students felt European by birth due to their culture. Based on their answers, the geographical location, religion, and culture of their country were what made them so. From an economic point of view, Hungarians had been enduring years of austerity, yet they were still looking to the future with confidence.

Languages in Europe in the project

Several approaches were taken as regards the topic of languages. As a first step, the students interpreted graphics reviewing the languages of the world, Europe, and the languages of the countries participating in the project in internationally

³ Members of the project management included Éva Kruppa (international manager), Friedrich Striberny (Austria), Ingelore Oomen-Welke (Germany), Sarolta Lipóczi (Hungary, Kecskemét), Fausto Minciarelli (Peruggia), Mária Koperniczky Torma (Hungary/Kecskemét), Mercedes Costas Costa (Spain), Erzsébet Drahotá-Forgács (Hungary, Szeged).

mixed groups. The groups used *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Language*⁴ as an important literature source. Then came the discussion of the concepts surrounding bilingualism and multilingualism. The seminar also contained a comparative linguistic part. The presentation, 'European Language Hierarchies on the Way to a United Europe' (Janurik, 1999, p. 17) familiarised students with why Europe had not become a homogeneous, monolingual continent. It was further emphasised that Europe's linguistic future depends on how Europe finds common languages that make communication between Europe smooth. The cross-cultural language of Esperanto could have become a world language if it had become a mediating language on the Internet (Janurik, 1999, p. 21).

With their requirement of possessing strong language skills, fiction texts also offered many opportunities for common thinking. It was easy to find topics that addressed multiple nations in world literature. In this case, ancient Graeco-Roman theatre, the tragedy of Faust, as well as works depicting prejudices and enemies were chosen.

The situation of minorities

At least some partial knowledge regarding the different situations of minorities in the countries participating in the project was available. Participants in the competition thought that the European Union should certainly be sensitive to the situation of minorities. The complexity of the topic and the diverse situation of minorities in each country required studies and serious discourse. The project provided students with a comprehensive knowledge of 'Ethnic, Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Problems in the Carpathian Basin', a topic that illustrated some of the relevant problems related to this issue and the efforts being made to address them based on some examples taken from historical and modern Hungary (Földes, 1999).

Educational systems and methods as a topic in the TEMPUS project

An international comparison of educational systems and methods was an instructive and professional topic. In Hungary, in the years following the political transition from state socialism to democracy, the modernisation of education began as a result of the transformation of the entire education system and a renewal in pedagogy. A thorough analysis of teaching methods was also a part of school visits, during which the application of project, drama pedagogical, and other modern techniques were already present. Music, fine arts, and sport are disciplines that convey and connect cross-border thinking and feelings between different nations. It was worth taking advantage of its potential.

Lessons to be learnt from the first two intercultural teaching programmes at Kecskemét College

It can be concluded that both projects were implemented before Hungary became the member of the European Union. The Krems – Kecskemét project series was

⁴ Crystal, D. (1997, 2010). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Languages*. Cambridge University Press. dt. 1993 Frankfurt a. M. Campus

based on the coordinating instructors' ideas and concepts regarding education while its financial background was largely provided by the foundation of the Ministries of Education in the two countries. The TEMPUS Mobility Project was implemented following a call for proposals, taking into account the EU concept. Among the goals achieved by the two projects, the following ones are to be highlighted:

1. acquisition and extension of knowledge on intercultural topics (Candalier, 2007, p. 1–140) (geography, history, civilisation, attitude to the past, customs, school systems, teaching methods, languages, language learning for understanding between the peoples of Europe)
2. improving intercultural competence (including critical thinking, culture-specific knowledge, tolerance, improvement of observation, interpretation, comparison skills, interest, openness),
3. understanding, acceptance, tolerance, recognising and eliminating one's own stereotypes.

The student reports completed in the project show that the participants of the seminar experienced interculturality and European dimension as a personal experience by making friendships (Dósa et al., 1999, p. 209). A participant from Barcelona wrote, 'I particularly think that no one should be deprived of the opportunity to come into contact with that wonderful land and its charming people' (Almendros, 1999, p. 214). It should be mentioned that student visits have been integrated into the Socrates/Erasmus programme which provided students with even greater opportunities to develop their intercultural competences and resulted in upcoming intercultural dialogues, new projects.

Towards new horizons: partnerships after joining the EU

In the 2000s, interaction between languages and cultures has also been carried out by Kecskemét College and partner institutions in international linguistic, didactic, literary⁵ and literacy projects. This series began with the *Janua Linguarum* project⁶ and was followed by Primary and Secondary Continuity/PRI-SEC-CO7 project (Lipóczi, 2011), a project in language teaching methodology with an interactive platform (Szabó & Lipóczi-Csabai, 2014) and literacy projects.

Challenges in European in-service teacher training: obstacles and solutions in reports from teacher training institutions

After the millennium Kecskemét College switched areas of focus from initial training to in-service teacher training when joining international projects.

⁵ Literary projects, like the worldwide Kästner-project, the project 'War in Children's Literature', Modernisation in the European Children's Literature, etc. will be introduced in a future publication from Sarolta Lipóczi-Csabai.

⁶ Candalier, M. (2004). *The gateway to languages*. ECML, Graz. <http://archive.ecml.at/documents/pub121E2004Candelier.pdf> (Accessed: 27 January 2021)

⁷ More information on the project can be found on its website: prisecco.ph-freiburg.de/en/home/ (Accessed: 27 January 2021)

Teaching and training materials were developed, country reports on the implementation were written, platforms to share the common products were created. Although the projects were different in their scope, outputs, and partners, the working method was mainly the same. The participating countries or institutions used their national educational culture as a point of departure to explore the topic and collect already extant materials before seeking commonalities. Common goals were identified and joint strategies were developed to reach these. The outcomes of these projects were produced in the national languages; in 2006, Kecskemét College Teacher Training Faculty entered the first international project in the field of literacy in (ADORE⁸) (Steklács, et al., 2010) by looking for good school practices all over Europe.

In the first step of the two-year project, various position papers were prepared and reported on the special needs of struggling adolescent readers in relation to each country's national, social, cultural, and linguistic environments, with special regard to the national characteristics of reading research and reading instruction. This process was followed by designing and implementing an in-service teacher training course (BaCuLit⁹) in 2011 (Steklács, et al., 2011), the follow-up of which comprised an international association organised to promote this knowledge among teacher trainers (ISIT¹⁰) in 2014 (Szabó & Szinger 2015b). In the ADORE project the aim was to identify good practice examples in Hungary, while in the BaCuLit project a teacher training curriculum on cross-curricular literacy was developed. Based on this experience and its rewarding results, Kecskemét College entered the ISIT project and was involved in developing a blended learning course in the area of literacy.

During the last phase of the BaCuLit project, the implementation opportunities for the curriculum in the seven participating countries were analysed based upon a method called 'mainstreaming reports' that was carried out by national experts. These reports from Germany, Hungary and Romania revealed the most promising opportunities for implementing the curriculum. As a follow-up, a comparative analysis of implementation strategies promised further rich insights and interesting research about implementing innovative concepts into national continuous professional development (CPD) systems (Szabó & Szinger, 2020, p. 54–58). The ISIT-consortium could identify some common (transnational) and/or specific (national) obstacles as well as

⁸ ADORE (Teaching Adolescent Struggling Readers in the European Union. A Comparative Study of Good Practices in European Countries) project was a SOCRATES Programme: initiating a multidisciplinary dialogue between reading researchers to produce case studies and suggestions in reading instruction for EU policy makers, funded between 2006-2009. The involved countries were Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Poland, Germany, Norway, Hungary, Italy, Switzerland, and Romania. The adviser and evaluator was Prof. Dr. Donna Alvermann from University of Georgia, Department of Language and Literacy Education. Hungary was represented by János Steklács, Ildiko Szabó and Veronika Szinger (Kecskemet College Teacher Training Faculty).

⁹ BaCuLit (Basic Curriculum for Teachers' In-Service Training in Content Area Literature in Secondary Schools) was an in-service training course developed within the Comenius Multilateral project bearing the same title, funded 2011–2012

¹⁰ ISIT (Implementation Strategies for Innovations in Teachers' Professional Development) was a Comenius Multilateral project, funded 2013–2015.

opportunities for implementing CAL-courses (Content Area Literacy courses) in the participating countries and developed some general and specific recommendations addressing teacher trainers, training institutions, and policy makers. It was very interesting to see the commonalities and the national specific conditions of successful implementation for the course developed by three EU-countries with different educational policies. Much was learnt from each other's insights, suggestions, and recommendations.

In all implementing countries, the lack of time for participating in CPD emerged as a major obstacle. As schools have to invest in substitute teachers during participants' presence in training programmes, principals are reluctant to allow teachers the long-term participation required by CPD during school hours. Possible solutions proposed by the ISIT trainers include,

1. an 'appetiser strategy' that offers a small unit of a course, e.g., a 'one afternoon demo version' in order to get teachers interested in learning more;
2. a blend version of weekdays and Saturdays or weekdays and summer schools;
3. a blended learning course combining face-to-face with e-learning units.

In some implementing countries, the size of regions to be covered by CPD is an additional challenge. Two solutions have been taken into account:

1. it is the teacher trainers who travel to the schools (in the case of whole-staff-training);
2. the course has to be offered as a blended-learning course.

In all participating countries teachers or principals showed some reluctance to the 'innovative' offers provided by CPD. Too often they have been disappointed by CPD courses that bear attractive titles but contain no interesting content relevant to their daily practice. In other instances, top-down decisions made staff obliged to attend courses that did not meet their needs. Possible solutions are:

1. to take care of high quality offers and continuous quality monitoring;
2. to build teachers' confidence in the quality the course offers on a long-term basis;
3. to strive for scientific evaluations underscoring the positive effects of the programme.

In all participating countries, there was a lack of awareness surrounding the importance of content area literacy and the required qualifications for teachers in all subjects. The educational agendas and topics as well as the involved teacher training programmes and institutions change in accordance with political changes and often do not allow for the necessary continuity of educational reforms. Possible solutions must build upon continuous awareness-raising measures regarding the importance of literacy issues.

The certified BaCuLit trainers in Germany, Hungary, and Romania developed different strategies for implementing CAL-elements into their PD-practice. The qualified trainers who filled in the logbooks initiated careful adaption to the conditions of the respective country or region and witnessed a high amount of creativity. On a general level, the following key success strategies

could be identified. Implementing the programme in several phases of teacher education was the correct action to take. For instance, in one German federal state, the BaCuLit course was developed as a certified additional qualification for teacher trainees to be piloted, training multipliers in preparation. In several institutions, a systematic step-by-step planning of implementation on different levels within relevant institutions was performed. Careful information on the part of decision-makers at teacher training institutions turned out to be a key success factor in sustainable implementation of the programme.

In all countries, attempts were made to integrate BaCuLit elements into existing programmes or initiatives. In Hungary, the national initiative to develop a new generation of textbooks for all school subjects was used to integrate content area literacy elements and assignments into these textbooks; in Germany, national or federal literacy programmes and the respective structures (ProLesen, BISS: Bildung in Sprache und Schrift, "Lesen macht stark") were addressed; in Romania curriculum reforms and national assessments were taken into account for implementing CAL elements.

Several trainers raised the essential question of how to gain the expertise necessary for a facilitator. They decided to test parts of the programme in their own teaching practice at the schools or teacher seminars where they worked and thereby gained experience and self-confidence in their role as trainers. Their own learning process could be said to have been 'self-scaffolded' since they asked themselves questions that could be followed in their logbooks.

Several trainers discovered the opportunity of offering colleagues and clients 'mini-training sessions' containing characteristic elements in order to create an 'appetite for more'. These mini lessons turned out to be highly effective. In short, innovative PD programmes must be designed in a way that allows flexible adaptation to different needs, e.g., the needs of teachers at different levels (primary/secondary schools) or different types of schools, e.g., high schools versus vocational schools. For example, a CAL-course 'light' for in-service vocational teacher training and for CPD in the natural sciences was found to be the most suitable format in one federal state of Germany. In other institutions, a 'complete package' was designed for a teacher training college.

An essential element for successfully implementing innovations into teachers' PD is building cooperation and networks between different institutions or organisations. In Romania, several Teacher Training Houses developed a collaboration in order to have the BaCuLit course accredited. In Hungary, a national BaCuLit Association has been structured as part of the Hungarian Reading Association. In Germany, several trainers from different federal states decided to cooperate in order to develop additional modules for the BaCuLit course, e.g., an additional module on 'BaCuLit for students with migration background/with German as a second language' and to produce synergies between fields. Depending on national conditions the accreditation of the developed course turned out to be essential (in Hungary and Romania).

Several trainers recommended training the whole staff of a school as an optimal way to put the programme into practice. Although this was felt to be the most effective way to implement CAL into the daily classroom practice of teachers, it

needed personal and financial resources in order to be put into practice. Ideally, innovations in teachers' PD need a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches on school, local or national levels. Policy makers, curriculum designers or school principals have to provide the necessary legal and financial resources for enabling teacher participation in innovative courses. These kinds of courses will only create change in school and classroom practice if the teachers themselves are motivated and engaged in putting educational school programmes into practice.

A common strategy in teachers' professional development: developing a blended course

As it turned out from trainers' logbooks in ISIT country reports, in many European countries the time for face-to-face learning in teachers' CPD is limited to a few days per year and thus privileges 'one-shot-approaches' that are not effective in changing classroom practice. The National Report on Hungary for the ISIT Project (Szabó & Szinger, 2020, p. 97–100) also highlighted some specific conditions of education policies in Hungary that were similar to the aforementioned situation. The concept of an ISIT course was already meant to combine synchronous and asynchronous learning settings in the training, a factor that was very much appreciated by the participating trainers. The ISIT project partners therefore initiated BleTeach (Blended Learning in Teachers' Professional Development – Developing a Blended Learning Course in Content Area Literacy for Secondary Teachers)¹¹ project to explore and analyse the most promising formats in blended learning offers in CPD with the aim of developing and implementing a blended learning course (BLC) for secondary teachers (and teacher trainers). BleTeach pursued two main objectives:

1. a general objective: modernising structures of teacher education by integrating digital learning opportunities into teachers' professional development;
2. a specific objective: developing a model blended learning course (BL-course) in CAL to be included into the regular course programme in a number of European teacher training centres.

Blended learning can make professional development far more affordable and convenient for teachers because they do not have to travel too often and they can participate in a course either without missing teaching time or with the least absence. Compared to conventional professional development programmes, it is also good for schools because they do not have to arrange for substitute teachers. Beyond these advantages, a blended learning course allows participants to deepen their knowledge to a greater extent as they can reread, rewatch or relisten to the resources. Furthermore, these trainings can be more self-reflective as forums while communication-based activities

¹¹ BleTeach (Blended Learning in Teachers' Professional Development – Developing a Blended Learning Course in Content Area Literacy for Secondary Teachers) project was an Erasmus + project under KA 2: Strategic Partnerships with partners from five European countries and guest participants from the Russian Federation between November 2015 and April 2018.

make participants weigh their entire learning process. By doing so, they can revise their practice, make alterations, and gain individualised feedback from both their tutor and peers. Self-reflection can also be strengthened by the asynchronous nature of blended courses because participants can access materials on their own schedule. The learning-by-doing approach of blended courses additionally improves the ICT competences of the participants.

Designing a blended course in CPD does not mean only including both face-to-face and online sessions into one, integrated unit. It also means considering issues of designing learning activities different from traditional in-service teacher training course (Szabó & Szinger, 2015a). To design a successful blended learning course, the BleTeach project published a handbook on success factors in blended learning offers for teachers' in-service-training, a source that is available in Hungarian as well (Szabó & Szinger, 2020).

Meanwhile, the participating countries designed a Master Version of the blended course in English. The title of the course is "Improving Disciplinary LEARNING through Literacy (IDEAL). The project approach was to agree on a basic English Master Version of the course and give all national teams the flexibility to adapt this Master Version and modify, reduce and/or complete it according to specific national conditions and needs. Two guiding principles underlay this transformation (rather than translation):

1. in terms of conceptual decisions, each team was free to decide either to delete modules from the master version that were not needed in the national version, or to supplement the master version with additional modules that responded to national needs or requirements;
2. in terms of material and references, each team was requested to use as many national materials, textbooks, curricula, and research resources as possible. This principle could make the national versions of the course much more attractive for national teacher training institutions to implement as they were now supposed to be much more responsive to national conditions and needs.

By following these principles, both the national context of education and linguistic needs or challenges of each country could be taken into consideration. The national resources to create a common European training course were collected and then selected for inclusion into the master course. Resources available only in one of the national languages were translated into English, if they were to be used in the master version. The whole process of creating a common course was very similar to a dialogue between educational cultures. At first, a collection of best practices and high-quality research was created by the national participants; then each nation adjusted these resources to their expectations. The national versions could either use the master course as an inspiration or not use any of its items.

All teams worked on their modules for the English master version in tandem with their national versions. The master version of the IDEAL course was not implemented at all, as the project partners represented non-English speaking countries. The national versions of the IDEAL course are not publicly available due to copyright restrictions as well as didactical considerations. The Hungarian

course is 'BaCuLit Blended – A tanítás és tanulás sikerességének támogatása a tantárgyi szövegek feldolgozásán keresztül blended kurzus formájában.' The target group for the BaCuLit Blended-course are secondary school teachers across all school subjects, meaning teachers of grades five to twelve or thirteen in general or vocational education. Here is a short overview of the modules in the BaCuLit Blended course (Szabó & Szinger, 2020, p. 101–108):

- a) Module 1: Basic (key) concepts of BaCuLit (Engagement, Metacognition, Interaction);
- b) Module 2: Text diversity and text structures;
- c) Module 3: Vocabulary instruction;
- d) Module 4: Teaching reading strategies;
- e) Module 5: Formative assessment.

As a conclusion, it can be said that all partners felt inspired while developing the course and finding the right response to a common challenge; at the same, developers were encouraged to use one another's efforts and products.

Training the trainers to meet digital challenges in higher education in Europe: lessons to be learnt from the AduLeT-project

Even though blended learning, online learning, and training have recently become crucially important, many teachers (or even lecturers in upper education) do not feel confident in such environments. A lack of formal training and support of digital skills is still characteristic of faculty training. The AduLeT project¹² was a cross-cultural cooperation involving exchange in connection with country-specific TEL (Technology Enhanced Learning) situation at universities on the European level. One of the project outcomes addressed barriers to basic TEL usage at universities and provided further insights into the reasons why educators are hesitant to include TEL-based teaching methods in their daily teaching practice. To identify barriers for implementing ICT in higher education, the project applied a research methodology called Group Concept Mapping (GCM). Forty-nine, upper education, experienced instructors with different educational backgrounds from Finland, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain generated 87 ideas about barriers for implementing ICT in learning and teaching. Then, a sub-set of 28 participants individually sorted these ideas into more general categories and rated each barrier on the basis of importance and level of ease/difficulty in usage. This analysis showed the following six categories of barriers: lack of organisation support; teachers' lack of knowledge and skills; lack of time; lack of hardware and software; students' lack of knowledge, skills and motivation; and lack of reward and recognition¹³.

¹² The AduLeT (Advanced Use of Technologies in Higher Education) project ran between 2017 and 2019. More information on the project can be found on its website: <https://sites.google.com/site/aduleteu/> (Accessed: 10.02.2021)

¹³ Detailed description of the survey analysis is available at AduLeT platform: <https://cop.aduleteu/research-publications> (Accessed: 10. 02. 2021.)

According to Hungarian respondents (Szabó, 2020), lack of time was found to be the most important barrier. This was followed by lack of hardware and software, a circumstance that was held as difficult to solve. As a barrier, teachers' lack of knowledge and skills is crucial in Hungary, albeit not the most important one. Students' lack of knowledge, skills and motivation is in the final third of the importance scale, but the easiest to overcome. Lack of organisation support is regarded as the least important barrier, however, it is not the easiest to solve.

Although there were differences between the level of importance for each barrier in the participating countries, it was revealed that both technological and pedagogical support from the institutions is very crucial. Although the problem is common, the technological, methodological or even working contexts display great variation among the six AduLeT countries representing several cultural regions of Europe. By sharing knowledge, case studies, research results, and the methods applicable with TEL tools, lecturers can improve the diversity of their teaching approaches, adapt them to different learning scenarios and subjects according to the students' needs. This knowledge can contribute to the usage TEL based methodologies and more strategic and integrated use of TEL tools and create a continuous cultural exchange in virtual educational settings.

Summary and conclusion

The European projects introduced in this study have had a great impact on generations of pre- and in-service teachers, their vision on Europe, methodological culture, and professional development. This approach is transmitted to their students during their teaching practice and career. This study has collected those examples and good practices that aimed at developing cooperation between European countries so that they could appreciate different cultures via learning from one another while developing common frameworks that could be used in their nationally, culturally, and linguistically diverse educational environments. Kecskemét College Teacher Training Faculty and its accessing institutions, Pallas Athene University, John von Neumann University Faculty of Pedagogy, were very active in developing and implementing programmes and projects that promoted multilingual and multicultural cooperation in educating the teachers of the future.

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