INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT OF FINNISH HIGHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

Case: LAHTI UAS

Lahti University of Applied Sciences
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                                        Finnish higher education personnel
                                        Case: LAHTI UAS

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ABSTRACT

The background of this study is associated with an increasing number of multinational students and imported cultures in Finland. National has become international and new skills and competences may be needed to meet the changing education environment. This Master's Thesis explores the current state of intercultural competence development in a Finnish University of Applied Sciences. The factors and challenges bound to this development are analysed and improvements proposed. The focus is on the institution's employees; due to the close connection, students are also included to a certain extent.

The less-than-satisfactory results of the International Student Barometer survey served as a trigger point for this study. The research then began by reviewing the literature on culture and intercultural competence. The empirical section of the study consists of qualitative and quantitative approaches within a group of voluntary respondents from teachers and other school personnel. A preliminary survey was distributed to all Lahti UAS personnel in two waves, in 2014 and 2015. A survey was performed by 98 teachers altogether. Its purpose was not only to map the culture view of the school staff, but also to collect a group of volunteers from the target group, who were willing to participate in the following research. Subsequently, an Intercultural Development Inventory® questionnaire was filled in by 12 volunteers, followed by in-depth interviews. Results from all three stages of the research were analysed and as a consequence, intercultural development areas were recognized and recommendations were proposed.

As a conclusion, the survey revealed that the intercultural education of the school personnel has been neglected, and rather expected to be automatically achieved by all teachers and other staff. The outcomes of the survey draw attention to the need and the importance of developing intercultural competences among the employees. Subsequently, students' intercultural competence is unfolded as well. The results show that new habits and skills in today's changing world would significantly raise understanding, motivation, study success and well-being of all involved in the education process.

As a result, the institution would enhance its positive reputation and competitiveness as an international school and attract more students and maintain the quality of teachers and teaching results.

Key words: intercultural competences, multicultural, culture, teaching, lifelong education, teachers' training

CONTENTS

We are all the same; we are all different.

ABBREVIATIONS

DO- Developmental Orientation

FISB – Finnish International Student Barometer

IC – Intercultural Competence

IDI – Intercultural Development Inventory

ISB – International Student Barometer

LUAS - Lahti University of Applied Sciences

PO – Perceived Orientation

RQ – Research Question

TO - Trailing Orientation

UAS - University of Applied Sciences

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1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as an introduction to this study, outlining the background, objectives and scope of the study, as well as the three research questions that will be examined.

Globalization provokes the world to change, people travel across the globe for business, education or leisure. We meet people of different origins, backgrounds, habits, values and cultures. What is common in one culture can be unknown in another. The meaning of a gesture, a word or a communication style in one culture can have a totally opposite meaning and understanding in another one. That can bring along tension, frustration and misunderstandings together with unpleasant and ineffective working or studying environment, leading often to unsatisfactory results.

At the same time, the cultural diversity in teams can bring new ideas, new ways of working and thinking, it brings the new 'blood' and 'fresh air'. Multiculturalism enriches our lives in the means of discovering new cultures and making us think about our own culture, in particular.

Intercultural competence development in the schools for future teachers as well students has been underestimated and has not been taught and trained much. In the modern world the 'intercultural intelligence minimum' should be a part of a basic education; it should be seen as important and natural, in the same way as having a driving licence, computer skills or speaking foreign languages. Intercultural education is a vivid and dynamic lifelong development process, which advances individuals' orientation in the world of internationalisation. The process connotes the reasons for dissimilar behaviour, promotes mutual respect and teaches that 'being different' is only a matter of a too narrow definition of language, skin colour, religion, behaviour, etc.

As stated by Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen (2011), the analysis of teachers' needs for further education identified, among others, a multilingual and multicultural teaching and development of well-being in schools in Finland to be important.

From the national point of view, the teaching and learning competences in multicultural schools and societies in Finnish universities needs a strategical focus. The success of teacher education relies upon teachers' capability and willingness to integrate new working culture in everyday reality. Intercultural competence education and training must become a core to teacher education so they can prepare the students to see the world through the 'intercultural lenses'.

1.1   Background

Lahti University of Applied Sciences (LUAS), one of the largest higher education institutions in Finland, was established in 1992 and since January 2015 has operated as a limited company, Lahden ammattikorkeakoulu Oy. It is located in Lahti, Southern Finland, and consists of six faculties; Faculty of Business Studies, Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality, Institute of Design and Fine Arts, Institute of Music and Drama, Faculty of Social and Health Care and Faculty of Technology. LUAS provides a variety of Bachelor's and Master's degree programs. For the last 15 years, LUAS has offered studies also in English, the programs in English are seen below:

- The Bachelor's Degree Programs
    - o Degree programme in Business Information Technology
    - o Degree programme in International Business
    - o Degree programme in Nursing

- Master's Degree Programmes
    - o Degree Programme in International Business Management
    - o Degree Programme in Environmental Technology

(LUAS 2015)

To become more competitive and increase the quality of education, LUAS is a member of an alliance called FUAS (Federation of Universities of Applied Sciences). Students can benefit from courses provided by this cooperation with Hämeenlinna UAS and Laurea UAS. (LUAS 2015)

1.2   Internationalisation

Higher education institutions are confronted with many challenges of the twenty-first century, such as how to prepare students to be competitive and competent in this multicultural world. A response to these challenges is an internationalisation of higher education. (Deardorff 2004)

Jane Knight (as cited in De Wit 2011) stated 'Internationalisation is changing the world of higher education, and globalization is changing the world of internationalisation'.

There are two aspects of the process of internationalisation. One is 'internationalisation abroad' involving mobility and cooperation in the form of exchanges or partnerships. According to Harari (1992), De Wit (2011) and Tekeens (2013), an institution does not become international only by a presence of many international students. The 'internationalisation at home' should be addressed too, covering the internationalisation of the curriculum as well as of the teaching and learning process, emphasizing the need for international awareness and intercultural skills development. Tekeens (2013) comments on focusing on bringing together non-mobile students, those who are 'at home' with the international students, not only at school but most of all outside school as well. As Harari (1992, 75) remarks, the need for developing better understanding and increased curiosity in interaction with other cultures and societies, cooperation across cultures and nations in order to solve world challenges no matter of one's origin or status is desirable.

The Ministry of Education of Finland published a Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009–2015 (2009), where five main goals were set up. These goals are: enhancement of international community (including a considerable increase of Non-Finnish teachers, researchers as well as students by 2015), growth of quality and attractiveness of education, export of expertise (education, research and cultural cooperation), multicultural society support, and lastly, global responsibility.

As a consequence of this trend, or rather 'a must', internationalisation is embodied in the LUAS' International Strategy 2013-2016 (2013). As stated, multicultural pedagogic approach, continuous staff training and development as well as staff internationalisation are integral parts of the document. The reason is to meet one of the strategic objectives, which is to educate students to possess multicultural skills and are ready to work in an international environment. Benchmarking at national and international level will be one of the indicators of quality assurance of education.

According to statistics provided by the LUAS' Human Resource department from 2014, the university operates with 370 employees, of whom around two-thirds are teachers and one-third represents the supporting staff. Based on the nationality, the majority of the people are of Finnish origin, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Statistics of the LUAS employees (LUAS human resources 2014)

Non-Finnish staff based on nationality			
	Finnish	Other than Finnish	Total
Teaching staff	221	4	225
Support staff	144	1	145

Non-Finnish staff based on mother tongue			
	Finnish	Other than Finnish	Total
Teaching staff	218	7	225
Support staff	144	1	145

LUAS provides education to nearly 5 300 students in total, of which 350 are international degree students. In addition, around 150 exchange students from all over the world come to study in LUAS. (LUAS 2015) The new international student statistics in LUAS are collected by the Ministry of Education and Culture, as see in Figure 1 (Statistics on international students 2015).
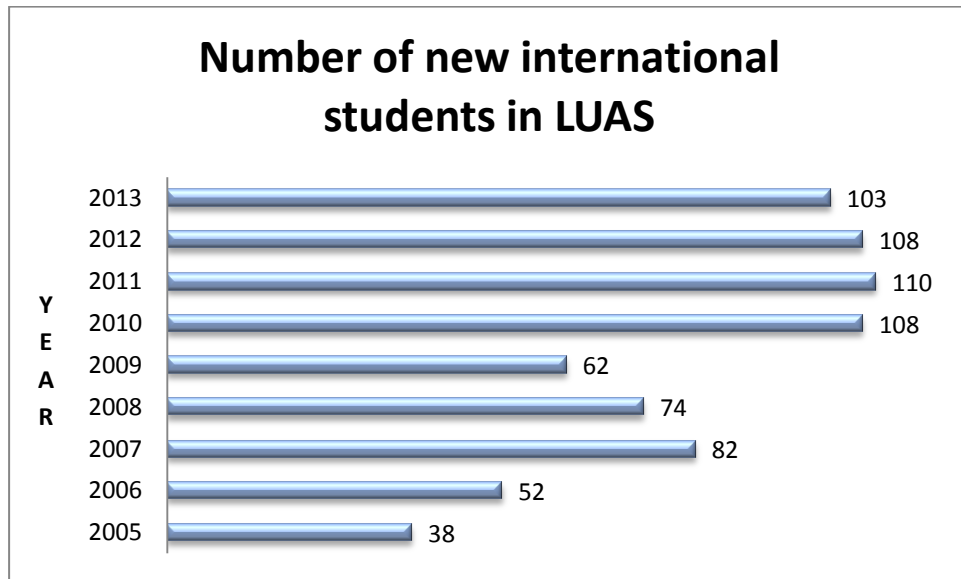
Figure 1. Number of new international students in LUAS every year (The Ministry of Education and Culture 2014)

The new funding act of UAS came into force on January 1, 2015 (Ministry of Education and Culture 2012). This funding reform aims to increase the efficiency and shorten the time to graduation. The principle is determined by several performance indicators; the number of completed bachelor's degrees (46 %), the number of students completing 55 credits / semester (26 %), the number of the completed master's degrees (4 %), external funding of research and development (4 %), the paid service activities (4 %), the feedback of the students (3 %), the internationality of the education (3 %), the number of the graduates employed (3 %), the number of the credits in the open studies and the separate studies (2 %), the amount of the credits of the teacher education (2 %), the number of the publications, artistic activities, audiovisual material and applications of information and communication technology (2 %) and lastly, the level of the international mobility of staff (1 %). This funding reform even more supports internationalization of higher education.

1.3   International Student Barometer (ISB)

Student intercultural competence is not the primary target of this study. However, student intercultural competence is conditional on the competence of teachers and

staff. The less-than-satisfactory results of the ISB survey served as a trigger point for this study.

ISB is a global benchmark for international students' experience conducted by The International Graduate Insight Group, a British consultancy and benchmarking service. ISB is an online survey, which compares views of more than two million students worldwide, their expectations and perceptions in all phases of their studies. Student satisfaction is measured in four main areas: learning, living and accommodation, support services, and services at arrival. ISB helps the educational institutions to better plan and to manage student experience, to effectively allocate resources and investments, and to opt for the correct management strategy to attract more students. (i-graduate 2014)

This summary of ISB results will focus on areas connected with this study. The outcome of the survey draws a comparison between the results of LUAS, Finnish national level (FISB) and international level. Some of the LUAS' ISB results from the entry wave in 2010 were not satisfactory. It showed that the international students at Lahti were not fully committed to the student experience, primarily regarding the overall learning satisfaction. (The International Student Barometer 2010)

Current students have the greatest impact on decision making of future students in LUAS.

LUAS scored 5% lower in overall learning experience in comparison with FISB and ISB benchmarks. The survey pointed out concerns of 'Multicultural', 'Quality lectures', 'Good teachers' and 'Course organisation' (Figure 2). (The International Student Barometer 2010)
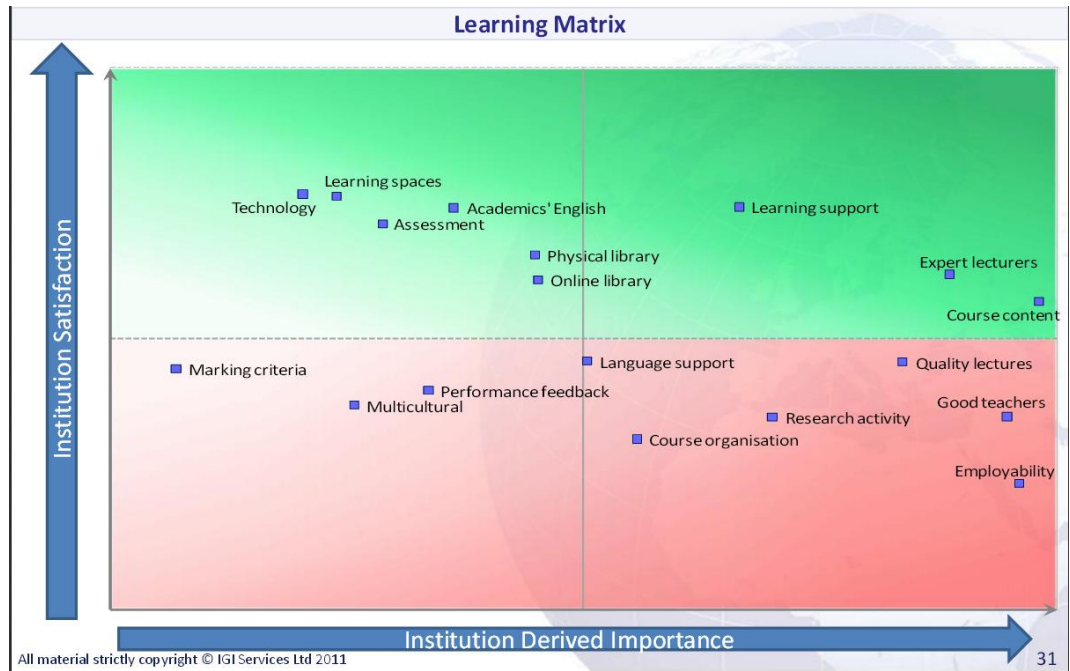
Figure 2. The Learning Matrix LUAS (The International Student Barometer 2010)

Cultural diversity and the cultural differences play a significant role in the evaluation. People working primarily with the international students need to be interculturally competent enough to help to overcome culture shock and to function as the bridges between Finnish and other non-Finnish cultures.

The host friends, the social activities and facilities scored at the lower levels. All previously mentioned areas are essential for well-being and social integration of the international students. On the other hand, Lahti is considered as a safe and eco-friendly place and the relationships are easily made among other than host students (Figure 3).
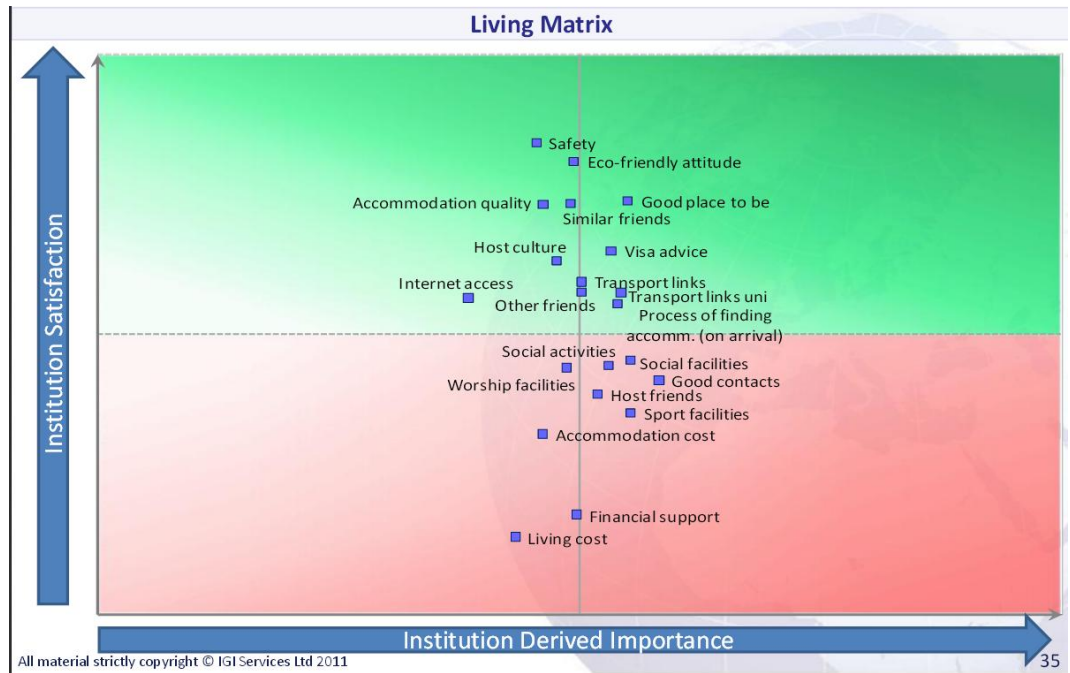
Figure 3. The Living Matrix LUAS (The International Student Barometer 2010)

The survey reveals lower scores in friendship-making upon arrival. International students tend to stay with other students from the home country. The satisfaction rate with making friends from the home country is 7 to 9% higher than in other Finnish institutions or on international level in general.The higher rate is unfortunatelly counter-balanced by lower satisfaction with making friends among other international students and most of all among the host students in Finland (Figure 4).

	% Satisfaction	p-value*	Lahti UAS vs ISB	Lahti UAS vs Finland
SOCIAL				
Other friends	74%	0.06	-13%	-17%
Host friends	58%	0.31	-12%	-7%
Home friends	95%	0.02	9%	7%
Meeting acad. staff	93%	0.78	4%	3%
Social activities	80%	0.19	-2%	-4%
Study sense	80%	0.36	-2%	0%

Figure 4. Benchmark Arrival LUAS (The International Student Barometer 2010)

The next round took part in 2014 and the results are expected to be published in the first half of 2015.

1.4   Research Questions, Objectives and Scope

The research questions to be addressed are:

> 1. *What are the key factors influencing intercultural competence?*
> 2. *What is the current situation and what are the main challenges that LUAS personnel are facing regarding intercultural competence/sensitivity?*
> 3. *What should be done to improve intercultural competence?*

This research objective is to map the current situation and the existing challenges. The research aims to raise the awareness, interest and importance of intercultural competence. The target population for the study are all LUAS employees. LUAS students are not considered as a focal group. However, there is a strong relationship between the students' view of multiculturalism and the multicultural awareness of the staff and teachers, as the first reflects the effectiveness of the teachers and staff. The second is a self reflection of the teachers and staff about themselves. When there is an overlap between the views, the issue will be discussed.

The scope is that the pilot project can be extended to the entire LUAS or FUAS, and at the same time, it could be applied to any international educational institution or organization, where its employees are in contact with people from different countries and cultures.

Limitations

There are two limitations in the study due to the researcher's time constraints. The first limitation refers to the intercultural competence assessment. This study will not focus on exploring the different ways to assess student and teacher intercultural competence. Only brief recommendations based on previous research will be discussed.

The second limitation pertains to the teaching methods applied in multicultural teams. Intercultural competence in education is closely connected to the mastering of various teaching techniques, utilized in multicultural environment. In order to

keep the focus of this Master's Thesis on the above mentioned objectives and research questions, the author decided to exclude these teaching methods from the study.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework consists of primary and secondary data, such as academic books and articles, studies in intercultural competences as well as student surveys related to studying and living in an international environment (International Students Barometer 2010). Moreover, the LUAS employee survey as well as related professional websites and forums are part of the framework.

2 CONCEPT OF CULTURE

To understand the complexity of the concept, it is important to present the basic definitions and to explore various perspectives.

Culture is the key element of this study; therefore, the meaning of the word is essential for further examination. Variable approaches defining the meaning of culture and cultural diversity are presented as well as the term of cultural competence and its theoretical development models.

One distinctive way to define culture is like Hofstede's metaphor of 'mental programming' being similar to the way computers are programmed. Culture works as software for mental programming. This is acquired in the social environment through life; starting in a family and continuing at school, work, etc. Moreover, mental programs are learned and they vary in different social environments.

> *Culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.*

(Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 4)

The meaning of the 'category' in the above definition refers to nations, regions, religions, or a member of an organization, ethnicity, profession, and gender. Culture functions as imaginary glue, which sticks people together. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2014)

> *Culture is the pattern of beliefs, behaviours, and values maintained by groups of interacting people.*

(Bennett 2001)

2.1 Geert Hofstede

Geert Hofstede is a pioneer, known for his extensive groups and organizations cross-cultural research. Hofstede is an internationally recognized leading social psychologist, who developed methodical concept, which manifests the relevance

of culture in behaviour of societies and groups. Hofstede's empirical model is based on statistically grouped national cultural values that discern the cultures of nations. These groups are regarded as cultural dimensions, which unfold the concept of culture (Hofstede 2011b, 2011c).

Over years of research, Hofstede's cultural dimension theory expanded from four categories to six. The former four categories were Power Distance, Individualism, Masculinity, and Uncertainty Avoidance. The fifth dimension, Long Term Orientation, was added in 1991. In 2010, the sixth dimension, Indulgence, was appended. (Hofstede 2011; The Hofstede Centre 2014)

- Power Distance (PDI)

The first dimension, Power Distance, expresses how human inequality is perceived by the less powerful, involved in a relationship, such as a boss and a subordinate, a parent and a child, a teacher and a student, etc. PDI also demonstrates, to what extents a culture honours and prefers the authority and the hierarchical relationship. (Hofstede 2001; Hofstede & Hofstede 2005)

In high power distance cultures, power is recognized as a natural part of life and people tend to believe, that a specific place for everyone exists on the power scale. The power is then distributed unequally. In low power distance societies, power is not autocratic or paternalistic, but rather democratic and consultative. Dependence of the subordinates on bosses is minimized. (Hofstede 2001, 2011a; Hofstede & Hofstede 2005)

  o Power distance at school

In high power distance situations, the teachers are treated with high respect and they govern the teaching process. Students communicate only when asked to. It is a teacher-centred environment, whereas in low distance situations, it is student-oriented; students and teachers are treated equally and students freely ask the questions and are expected to take their own initiative in their intellectual development. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 53-54)

- Individualism (IDV)

The second dimension focuses on the level to which individuals are incorporated into groups, with individualism on one side of the scale and collectivism on the other. The majority of people belong to collectivist societies, with a low IDV index. The interest of society or a group precedes the interest of the individuals. It is typical to live in extended families and cling together into a 'we' group, whereas in individualistic countries, people live in nuclear families, the contact with other relatives is seldom and they tend to think in the 'I' mode. (Hofstede 2001; Hofstede & Hofstede 2005)

A certain relation between Power Distance and Individualism exists. Countries with high PDI are more likely to be collectivist, and low PDI countries tend to be rather individualistic. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 82)

- o Individualism at school

The challenges appear, when a teacher from an individualistic society teaches students brought up in collectivist environment and vice versa. Such a teacher expects students to be actively involved in discussions, which is not appropriate for a student from a collectivistic background. In such a case, the teacher should pose the question to a particular student. Collectivism also influences student's hesitation to say an opinion in front of a bigger audience. This issue could be diminished by operating in smaller groups. The teacher should treat students from low IDV index cultures as being a part of their group, not as an individual, where in contrast to high IDV index, this is expected. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 96-99)

- Masculinity (MAS)

Masculinity dimension with its opposite pole Femininity represents the social and emotional role of genders. Masculine societies are ego-oriented and the roles between genders are strongly defined. On the other hand, in feminine societies, which are relationship-oriented, the roles overlap. Masculinity focuses on material wealth and competitiveness, and men are supposed to be tough and ambitious, women being modest and tender. The salary gap between genders is remarkable.

In contrast, in low MAS cultures, people and quality of life are valued over money and things, both men and women are supposed to be modest and tender and a conflict should be solved rather by negotiation than through power and force. (Hofstede 2001; Hofstede & Hofstede 2005)

For the students as well as parents from high MAS cultures, good grades are essential and their aim is to excel. Students may retake an exam if the grade is unsatisfactory. Furthermore, a failure is considered as a disaster. In low MAS cultures, feminine, mediocre grades are satisfactory and being just an average student is expected and preferred to excellence. A failure is seen as a minor issue. MAS dimension plays an important role in self-estimation and confidence. High MAS index is connected with overestimation and low MAS rather with underestimation. The crucial evaluation factor of teachers and students differs based on the MAS index. Masculine cultures value the results, grades, academic degrees contrasting the feminine values of social skills and friendliness. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 135-140)

- Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)

Uncertainty Avoidance expresses feelings related to uncertainty and unpredictable situation resilience. In order to avoid the threat of uncertainty, technology, law and religion play a vital role. Low UAI communities incline to feel more relaxed and secure and are more pragmatic. In contrast, communities on the other pole of UAI are more emotional and try to carefully plan every step and need rules and regulation to feel safe. (Hofstede 2001; Hofstede & Hofstede 2005)

At school, different learning habits as well as different teaching methods could be seen. People from high UAI countries tend to have detailed and accurate instructions, with precise schedule and are concerned about finding a correct answer. Teachers are expected to be the experts, having answers to every question and using academic language while teaching. On the other hand, people from low UAI countries prefer to work with just basic non-structured information, with no limitation to only one correct answer and with no timetables. Originality and inspiring discussion and argumentation are what they appreciate. It is acceptable for a teacher to say, he or she does not know an answer to a question and it is

preferred to use non-academic language, both in oral and written forms. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 178-180)

- Long Term Orientation (LTO)

Based on a study of Michael Harris Bond, supported by Hofstede, the fifth dimension was added in 1991. The dimension depicts the culture's orientation towards time horizon. The priority of long term oriented communities lies in the future, they tend to be more pragmatic and adapt their traditions to new circumstances. A close connection between family and work exist, very often even family businesses. Short term orientation represents the priority towards the past and the presence, respect for tradition and normative approach with the importance to fulfil obligations to society. They rather separate work from family life. Virtue plays an important role; in LTO, thrift is valued most, in contrast with those from short term orientation societies, where tolerance and respect for others have a priority. (Hofstede 2001; Hofstede & Hofstede 2005)

The study shows that the students from LTO countries have talent for applied and concrete sciences; they are good in mathematics and believe that the success is connected to effort. In contrast, students from short term oriented countries are distinguished by success in theoretical and abstract sciences and the success is seen as a question of luck. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 215-217)

- Indulgence (IND)

In 2010, a sixth dimension was added to Hofstede's model, which was based on a study conducted by Michael Minkov. Indulgence and its other pole, Restraint, express the importance and to what extent people enjoy their life and are free to voice their thoughts and desire. (The Hofstede Centre 2014; Hofstede 2011c)

The Indulgent countries focus on happiness and well-being of individuals, free time and importance is attached to freedom and enjoyment of gratification. In contrast, low indulgence, high restraint countries are stricter with such gratification and they believe it should be restrained by norms. Among these countries, emotions are less freely shown and personal happiness, freedom and leisure are of less importance. (Hofstede 2011a; Hofstede 2011c)

2.2   Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner

While working closely with Hofstede, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner expanded Hofstede's model into seven different cultural dimensions.

According to Trompenaars, every culture differs from one another by the distinctive way of solving certain problems. These problems can be grouped into three areas related to relationship with other people, attitude to time and the environment. Based on that, seven essential dimensions of culture and their reverse images can be distinguished. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1993, 8)

How people handle relationships with people is defined through five dimensions, followed by one dimension, which characterizes the attitude to time and last, one dimension related to the environment.

- Universalism versus Particularism

It reveals the importance of rules over relationships. The Universalists favour general laws, rules and obligations to friendship, as rules are universal and the same to all people, with no regard to what kind of relationship exists between them. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1993; Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars 2000)

The Particularist cultures believe that each and every relationship and circumstance create a unique situation, to which the rules should be adjusted. The Particularists deal more with emotions than the Universalists, who are rather pragmatic and monotone. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1993; Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars 2000)

- Individualism versus Communitarianism

The second dimension displays the balance of individual's importance and rights against the society. Individualists prioritize personal freedom and decisions, and at the same time, they believe it is one's own responsibility to take care of him- or herself, not the society's. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1993; Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars 2000)

The Communitarians, in contrast, prioritise society, since society is created by many individuals and thus the use of 'we' prevails over 'I' form. Help, support and safety are expected to be provided by the community. That is in exchange for their loyalty to the group. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1993; Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars 2000)

- Neutral versus Emotional

Neutral or Emotional context depicts how much people express their feelings and emotions. In neutral countries, the aim of the relationship, especially in business, is to reach the objective and emotions are put aside as they are regarded as distructors. It is important to be unbiased in decision-making and physical contact is non-acceptable. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1993)

In Emotional oriented countries, both positive and negative feelings are freely expressed. It is natural and acceptable, for those coming from Emotional countries, to show their reactions, fervour or anger directly, verbally and non-verbally as the relationship is a human affair and it is important for building trust. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1993)

- Specific versus Diffuse

This dimension represents the ratio between private and working life. In Specific-oriented countries, people strictly separate work and home. Even though they find a relationship as such important, it is believed not to be fundamental for people working together. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1993; Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars 2000)

In Diffuse cultures, however, work and personal life overlap. Good relationship is indispensable for successful business and it is natural to spend time with co-workers and customers even outside the working environment. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1993; Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars 2000)

- Achievement versus Ascription

Status characterizes what the position of a person or group of people are in society. In different cultures, the status is accorded differently. In Achievement

cultures, the status is granted based on person's own accomplishments and performance. However, Ascription-oriented cultures pay attention to who you are, not what you do. Kinship, gender and connections play an important role. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1993; Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars 2000)

- Sequential versus Synchronic

The sixth dimension is related to how time is perceived. The importance of past, present and future vary among cultures. On one hand, the Sequential cultures apprehend time as one straight line consisting of diverse events in logical and planned order. What happened in the past is less important, and the stress is put on presence and careful planning for future. A saying 'Time is money' appositely describes the thinking of sequential-oriented cultures. On the other hand, in Synchronic cultures, time is flexible, perceived rather as a circle where past, present and future influence each other. It is typical to do several activities at a time, thus flexibility is fundamental. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1993; Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars 2000)

- Internal versus External Control

The last dimension describes how much the natural environment and changes can be controlled. Cultures with Internal Control assume it is possible to manage nature and destiny. People from these cultures have a dominant attitude and focus on reaching the targets and feel uncomfortable in unstable situations. In contrast, cultures with External Control believe destiny is granted and the environment controls them. As a consequence, one should focus on living in harmony with others and the given environment. People with External Control approach are comfortable with changes. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1993; Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars 2000)

2.3 Other Approaches and Similarities between Concepts

Other researchers, anthropologists and sociologists have developed their models which, in the end, show certain similarities or commonalities with the above mentioned Hofstede and Trompenaars models. For instance, the US

anthropologist Edward T. Hall's model of culture consists of three dimensions; Context, Time and Space.

Hall (1976) has a cognitive approach to his model of culture and it is based on many years of observation in different countries rather than other models which are supported by extensive statistics. Hall focuses on a nonverbal area of communication. He is well known for his high and low context dimensions. (Yeganeh, Su & Sauers 2009)

- Context

This concept deals with the way information is communicated and to what extent one needs to be aware of the context, in order to be able to effectively exchange information. Context is a background for the meaning of an event, coded by words. In high context cultures (HC), the message is delivered mostly by what is not spoken directly but through cues, body language, etc. On the contrary, in low context cultures (LC), a message is delivered with explicit information. (Hall 1976; Hall & Hall 1987, 7-11)

- Time

Hall's time concept focuses on how cultures structure, perceive and deal with time and thus communicate. Monochronic time (M-time) cultures are characterized by planning and scheduling in details and working and paying attention only to a single thing at a time. In contrast, Polychronic time (P-time) systems handle easily multiple tasks simultaneously; the completion of a task is of more importance than the schedule. Time is less structured or organised in comparison with M-time systems. (Hall 1976, 17; Hall & Hall 1987, 15-27)

- Space

Hall believes Space plays an important role in communication. He developed a Theory of Proxemics, based on different human perception of territory, influenced by culture, Hall's distinguished intimate, public and social 'bubbles' of spaces. (Hall 1976; Hall & Hall 1987, 13-15) High territoriality represents people who are concerned with their ownership and are more territorial. They tend to be low

context. People with low territoriality find space ownership and boundaries of less importance. A certain link to high context cultures exists.

In Hall's concept, both high versus low context and Monochronic versus Polychronic evince similarities with Trompenaars's Universalism versus Particularism and Sequential versus Synchronic, respectively.

Another researcher, a British linguist Richard D. Lewis segmented national cultures into three dimensions, Linear-actives, Multi-actives and Reactives that he claims don't change greatly over time. The categorization is based on the way the information is gathered, the use of space and time. (Lewis 2006; Lubin 2013)

Linear-actives are data oriented, think logically and schedule and manage their actions carefully. Their focus is on one thing at a time, but with high accuracy. Their target is a result and they prefer to obtain data in a written form. Multi-actives easily change between tasks depending on how urgent tasks are or based on own interest. The interest in schedules and punctuality is low. They are lively and consider relationship as an important part of their job; thus are regarded as more social in comparison with the Linear-oriented people. Multi-active people also prefer oral form and face-to-face meetings as a source of information. Reactives stand in between those two categories mentioned above. Reactive people are less social than Multi-actives, but more social than Linear-actives. They are good listeners and they think deeply before making judgments. They are persistent and seek for harmony and principles rather than plans. They can work with both oral and written source of information; however their way of communication is rather monologue than dialog as it is for Multi-actives. Reactives and Linear-actives like to maintain their personal 'space bubble' stranger free. The size of such a bubble is bigger than for Multi-actives. (Lewis 2005, 2006)

Lewis's Linear-actives and Multi-actives match Hall's Monochronic versus Polychronic time dimension, which resembles Trompenaars' Sequential versus Synchronic. Lewis extended this time dimension to tripartite by Reactives, as they neither fitted into the classification of Monochronic, nor Polychronic.

Similarly, some resemblances between the Hofstede's and Trompenaar's models were identified with a slightly different interpretation. For instance, the notions of Hofstede's Individualism versus Collectivism and Trompenaars' Individualism versus Communitarianism are very similar. Some level of similarity can be found in Hofstede's Power Distance dimension and Trompenaars' Achievement versus Ascription.

The diverse concepts of culture discussed above inform about certain tendencies of culture on national level. Different models have been also criticized for being out-dated as data were collected some tens of years ago or providing generalizations. In contrast, others confirm stability and continuity. Even so, the dimensions of Hofstede and Trompenaars framework have been used by a variety of culture related reseachers. (Dahl 2003) The majority of the models, excluding Hall, are value-based, and somewhat do not take into account cognitive patterns (Yeganeh, Su & Sauers 2009).

For instance, Meyer (2014) in her new book, The Culture Map, presents a new tool, a culture map that could visually help to decode the complexity of cultural differences, predominantly in business. Meyer introduces eight scales or dimensions, (1) Communicating (Low context vs. High context), (2) Evaluating (Direct negative feedback vs. Indirect negative feedback), (3) Persuading (Principles-first vs. Applications-first), (4) Leading (Egalitarian vs. Hierarchical), (5) Deciding (Consensual vs. Top-down), (6) Trusting (Task based vs. Relationship based), (7) Disagreeing (Confrontational vs. Avoids confrontation), and last (8) Scheduling (Linear-time vs. Flexible time). (Meyer 2014)

Meyer (2014) brings together some already existing models and dimensions, as well as adds some dimensions based on research of her own. The Culture Map dimensions are based on models of Hall (Communicating, Scheduling), Hofstede (Leading) and others (Persuading, Trusting) and Meyer herself (Evaluating, Deciding, and Disagreeing).

To avoid cultural stereotypes, one should bear in mind, that all the above mentioned models generalize cultures based on prevailing tendencies of groups of people, such as nations or countries, not of individuals. An individual may show

similar, neutral or opposite tendencies in comparison with the 'group' he comes from. According to Bennett (2001), 'cultural generalizations must be applied to individuals as tentative hypotheses' combined with open-mindedness to individual uniqueness. (Bennett 2001)

3   INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

By examining the literature, various definitions and terminology were found. Different authors apply the terms as synonyms for intercultural competence, for example: intercultural sensitivity, cultural intelligence, intercultural awareness, cross-cultural adaptation, multicultural competence, international competence, cultural competence, etc.

To decrease the confusion and uncertainty, terminology used in this study will be defined below. Many scholars prefer the use of the term 'intercultural communication competence' (Deardorff 2004, 32).

Intercultural Sensitivity

According to Bennett, intercultural sensitivity is an ability to transform oneself, acknowledge and accept cultural differences in affective, cognitive and behavioral ways. This occurs through a developmental process, described in detail in Chapter 3.2.1. (Bennett 1984, 1993, 2004, 2011b; Bennett & Bennett 2001) Increased sensitivity is seen as a valuable sign of greater intercultural competence. (Bennett 2013)

Guo-Ming (1997) defines intercultural sensitivity as 'an individual's ability to develop a positive emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences that promotes an appropriate and effective behaviour in intercultural communication'.

Cultural Intelligence

Similarly to Bennett (Bennett 1986, 1993, 2004; Bennett & Bennett 2001), Early and Ang (2003) define Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as an adaptational capability of an individual to new unfamiliar cultural contexts. Three kinds of aspects define CQ; cognitive, motivational, and behavioural. (Earley & Ang 2003, 9)

According to Deardorff (2004), no conclusive agreement on the terminology use among scholars exists. For the purpose of this study, the term 'intercultural competence' will be used.

3.1   Intercultural Competence Development

Intercultural competence is a vital competence in the globalized world, especially for those involved in the interaction with people. In this chapter, several definitions of such a competence will be introduced.

> *'Culture' is an observation about the human behaviour of coordinating meaning and action in a group. Everybody who is successfully socialized in a culture is 'culturally competent' in that culture. 'Intercultural competence' is also an observation about human behaviour, in this case, a kind of meta-behaviour that involves coordinating meaning and action across cultures, each of which has its own coordinating system.*

> (Bennett 2013)

Another definition given by Hammer (2011) is introduced as it corresponds to the IDI tool, used later in this study.

> *Developing intercultural competence is a core capability in the 21st century and involves cultural self-awareness, understanding the experiences of people from diverse communities, and the capability to adapt one's mindset and behaviour to bridge across differences.*

> (Mitchell R. Hammer 2011; IDI 2014)

Early and Ang (2003, 263) describe intercultural competence as a process, thanks to which people and systems effectively acknowledge people from other cultures, backgrounds, languages and religions in a way, that 'recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and that protects and preserves the dignity of each' and thus enables people to work effectively in a multicultural environment.

> *Intercultural competence is not something that we have; it is something that we do.*

> (Bennett 2013)

People are not automatically equipped with intercultural competence when they are born; it is rather an educational and lifelong process of acquiring a set of knowledge and skills. It is a lifestyle where one keeps developing his/her skills

and seeks new information. In the case of teachers, it is also the incorporation of cultural materials on deeper level in lectures and learning processes of any kind to help students to see the world in a different view. (Deardorff 2009, 14-16)

Intercultural competence is an ability to effectively and appropriately interact in culturally diverse situations. Such behaviour includes thoughts and emotions, skillset and mindset, retrospectively. (Bennett & Bennett 2001)

Bergan, the Head of the Educational Department of the Council of Europe (2010) points out, one does not develop intercultural competence only through classic courses, but one must live it in a school campus and even outside it. Bergan likens it to 'one can no more learn dialogue by listening to lectures than one can learn how to swim without getting into the water'. Mobility of students, an increased number of international students and teachers from various backgrounds create an excellent environment to gain diverse experiences and put the theoretical knowledge into practice. However, it is often seen that foreign students hang out with other students from the same home country instead of spending time with host country students or those of other countries. (Bergan 2010)

The foreign language studying only is not efficient enough to obtain cultural knowledge. Knowledge of own or/and other cultures on its own is insufficient for acquiring intercultural competence. The cultural contact itself is also not enough to discourage stereotyping. According to Bennett (2011b, 5) and Deardorff (2004, 9), the combination of three perspectives, attitudes (affective), knowledge (cognitive) and skills (behavioral) leads to intercultural competence.

Deardorff (2009) wrote 'as teachers become more interculturally competent, they can help to guide their students towards greater intercultural competence'. Deardorff introduced a framework for developing interculturally competent teachers. Her grounded theory-based model of intercultural competence will be introduced in the following chapter. (Deardorff 2009, 3)

3.2   Models of Intercultural Competence

There are several models of Intercultural Competence based on massive research, which shows the developmental process and outline phases of the growth. Among others, they are Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (1993), Deardorff's Model of Intercultural Competence (2006), King and Baxter Magolda's intercultural maturity model (2005), and Cross's cross-cultural continuum (1988), etc.

Bennett's model was selected for detailed analysis, due to the fact, that one of the pivotal research methods, used in this study is based on the model and thus it is fundamental to explain the principles of the concept. Also, Deardorff's model will be explored closely. Both models serve as a theoretical base for partially answering the research questions.

3.2.1   Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)

DMIS is a framework based on a long-term observation of students and their behaviour and perception of cultural difference, intercultural sensitivity, and their development of intercultural communication skills in various intercultural courses and international programs. Based on this theory approach Milton Bennet's six stages of a sensitivity study were identified (Figure 5). At the same time, the developmental model explores the reasons behind the weakening in the development of intercultural sensitivity. (Bennett 1993, 2004; Bennett & Bennett 2001)
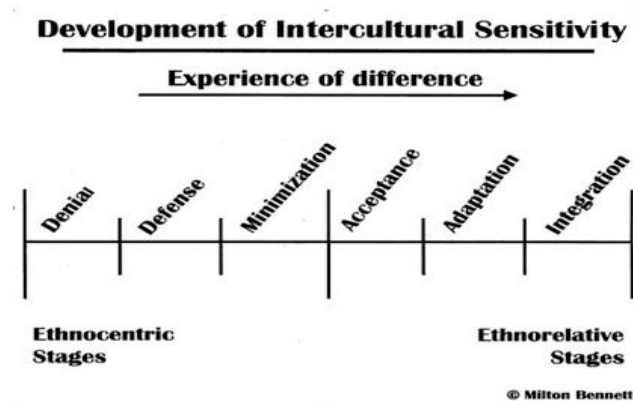
Figure 5. DMIS model (Bennett©)

The first three stages of Bennett's model are considered as ethnocentric. Ethnocentrism is characterized by a view of superiority of one's own culture or a group, meaning the in-group being better than others and central to all. Generally in these stages, people tend to avoid recognizing any cultural differences.

- Denial

In this early stage, people do not experience any cultural differences at all or only on a very vague and simple level by regarding the others as foreigners or the minority. People avoid contemplating other cultures as their own culture is the only good one. Individuals in Denial stage isolate themselves both physically and psychologically, either due to a lack of interest or as a protective act from the unknown. (Bennett 1993, 2004, 2011a; Bennett & Bennett 2001; IDRInstitute 2014)

- Defense

Any cultural difference with one's own culture is disparaged as the only superior one is one's own culture or an adopted culture as a result of naïve reversal to one's original culture. The polarized variation of Defense is then called Reversal. Threatened by cultural differences, people tend to criticize and find faults with the culture they don't find as superior. Defense is simply dualistic and only two poles exist, 'us and them', or 'superior and inferior'. Accordingly, any neutral statements are not feasible and, therefore, cultural differences are simplified and stereotyped. (Bennett 1993, 2004, 2011a; Bennett & Bennett 2001; IDRInstitute 2014)

- Minimization

In this stage, people minimize the cultural differences and consider others to be the same, alike themselves, sharing the same universal values and beliefs; and having the same needs as people from one's own culture. Due to certain superficial similarities and masked principal dissimilarities, people are more accepting than in Defence stage. This approach is rather trivial and differences are veiled. (Bennett 1993, 2004, 2011a; Bennett & Bennett 2001; IDRInstitute 2014)

On the contrary, the second three stages of the DMIS are seen as ethnorelative. In ethnorelativism, no one culture is superior and the differences between cultures are recognized and the worldview redefined. Central to these stages is empathy, defined as 'the ability to experience some aspect of reality differently from what is given by one's own culture' (Bennett 1993, 53).

- Acceptance

In Acceptance, one's own culture is recognized as being just one of various equally comprehensive but different cultures. People are inquisitive and respect cultural differences however they do not necessarily like or agree with alternative cultural values. At this stage, the knowledge of foreign cultures is still limited. (Bennett 1993, 2004, 2011a; Bennett & Bennett 2001; IDRInstitute 2014)

- Adaptation

In Adaptation stage, people are able to precisely understand and empathize with intercultural differences. Moreover, they are capable of performing in a number of culturally alternative and appropriate ways. The intercultural sensitivity is developed and, therefore, the competence of intercultural communication is acquired. (Bennett 1993, 2004, 2011a; Bennett & Bennett 2001; IDRInstitute 2014)

- Integration

Integration is the final stage of DMIS model. People are able and conscious of the possibility to move in and out of different cultures. One's identity does not come from a particular culture; it is a construct of one's own reality, very often finding oneself somewhere in between various cultures, either bicultural or multicultural. This can be used for bridging cultures in the sense of acting as an intermediary. (Bennett 1993, 2004; Bennett & Bennett 2001)

3.2.2 Deardorff's Model of Intercultural Competence

Dr. Deardorff has published widely on topics in international education, global leadership and intercultural learning/assessment. Her pyramid model is based on grounded-research approach, where experts agreed upon essential elements, vital

for mutual cooperation between diverse people. These elements are attitudes, knowledge, skills, and internal and external outcomes as seen in Figure 6. (Deardorff 2010b)

DESIRED EXTERNAL OUTCOME:
Behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately (based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes) to achieve one's goals to some degree

DESIRED INTERNAL OUTCOME:
Informed frame of reference/filter shift:
Adaptability (to different communication styles & behaviors; adjustment to new cultural environments);
Flexibility (selecting and using appropriate communication styles and behaviors; cognitive flexibility);
Ethnorelative view;
Empathy

Knowledge & Comprehension:
Cultural self-awareness;
Deep understanding and knowledge of culture (including contexts, role and impact of culture & others' world views);
Culture-specific information;
Sociolinguistic awareness

Skills:
To listen, observe, and interpret
To analyze, evaluate, and relate

Requisite Attitudes:
Respect (valuing other cultures, cultural diversity)
Openness (to intercultural learning and to people from other cultures, withholding judgment)
Curiosity and discovery (tolerating ambiguity and uncertainty)

NOTES:
- *Move from personal level (attitude) to interpersonal/interactive level (outcomes)*
- *Degree of intercultural competence depends on acquired degree of underlying elements*

Figure 6. Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence© (Deardorff 2004)

Intercultural competence is a lifelong process, which illustrates Deardoff's process model (Figure 7). This model denotes that there is not such a stage in the process, where one would be entirely interculturally competent. (Deardorff 2010a, 90)

Figure 7. Process Model of Intercultural Competence ©(Deardorff 2006, 2009)

Deardorff (2004, 2009, 2010a, 2010b) claims, people's attitude is the foundation for intercultural competence. She defines core aspects influencing the initiation of the process; openness, respect and curiosity. Then, their knowledge and skills can be improved, such as 'cultural self-awareness', which enables them to understand reasons and values for their own behaviour and subsequently of others as well. As the best way, it is advised to experience it outside the home country; unfortunately that is not possible for all people. Another knowledge worth of interest is culture-specific knowledge (worldview, history and influences on a culture). Scholars

agree that one should be able to understand the world from others' perspective. Concerning requisite intercultural skills, listening and observing were pointed out, as well as an ability to reflect and assess the gained knowledge. Deardorff proposes her OSEE© tool (2000) (Observe, State, Explore, and Evaluate) to be applied as a measure of one's intercultural competence. As a result of gained essential attitudes, knowledge and skills, the process moves to 'internal outcome', where a person's flexibility, adaptability and empathy are included. When these are obtained, the process moves to 'external outcome' representing a stage, in which an individual behaves and communicates appropriately and effectively in the intercultural environment. This is a stage, where one rates himself/herself how culturally appropriate he or she is and what could be improved in the future (self-reflection, feedback from others).

3.2.3 Education and training of Intercultural Competence

Scholars concur that intercultural competence can be developed in the first place through an intercultural training and education, combined with a continual exposure to diverse cultures. One of the main factors is one's overall willingness to develop such a competence. (Lohrenz & Pestereva 2013)

A Status Report of the Intercultural Profession in 2014 explored the common methods and tools used by over 400 interculturists in their training (Table 2). Over half (52.3%) of the international professionals selected examples and storytelling, and case studies (49.4%) as the most preferred, followed by role plays and simulations, games, and videos. Slightly over one third of interculturists prefer lectures or presentations, models and theories as well as the use of assessment and instruments.

Table 2. Preferred methods and tools (The Intercultural Profession 2014)

Method	Percentages
Examples & Storytelling	52.3%
Case Studies	49.4%
Roles Plays/ Simulations	42.5%
Games/ Icebreakers	36.8%
Videos	34.8%
Lectures & Presentations	34.1%
Models & Theories	31.9%
Assessment & Instruments	20.7%
Immersion	19.3%
Online Tools	11.1%
Checklists & Tip Sheets	8.9%
Music/Dance/Art/Poetry	7.9 %
Journaling	6.4 %

Professionals in this field were also asked about advice for those being new in this field. The most recommended advice was to live or work abroad (49.9%), followed by a dedicated training or developing skills (45.2%) and obtaining work experience (35.1%). Acquiring a degree was suggested only by 25.2% of respondents. The other pieces of advice for newcomers are visible in Table 3 of this study. (Salzbrenner et al. 2014)

Table 3. Advice to newcomers (The Intercultural Profession 2014)

Suggested Advice	Percentages
Living/Working Abroad	49.9%
Receiving Training or Developing Skills	45.2%
Gaining Work Experience	35.1%
Developing skills beyond intercultural work	32.6%
Gaining a degree or an academic background	25.2%
Reading	22 %
Attending professional conferences	18.8%
Developing a niche	14.3%

The same survey asked about the areas, the interculturists find as challenging. In general, stereotypes, missing open-mindness, racism, the ability to change superior paradigms are considered as the common challenges they deal with. The over-simplification and missing development of current models is viewed as an obstacle also. (Salzbrenner et al. 2014)

Based on the literature review on the intercultural competence definitions and models presented in this chapter, the founding elements of intercultural competence are Attitude, Knowledge and Skills, that lead to Behaviour through the transition period. The transition period is a time demanded of an individual on acquiring the theoretical knowledge and skills and its implementation into good practice. Since being aware and understanding of an issue does not necessarily mean that one is applying these new insights, knowledge or skills into everyday practice, the length of this period varies depending on individual factors (internal) and challenges (external) which will be explored later.

Building on these four elements, the preliminary conceptual framework depicted below in Figure 8 shall serve as an approach to analysing intercultural competence. This preliminary conceptual framework will be evaluated and later developed and modified as a refined conceptual framework. The factors influencing these elements are described in Deardorff's (2004) pyramid model. These factors will then be compared with the case company specific factors. These findings will serve as an information source for creating the themes for the interviews and therefore as a foundation for answering the first and the second research questions.
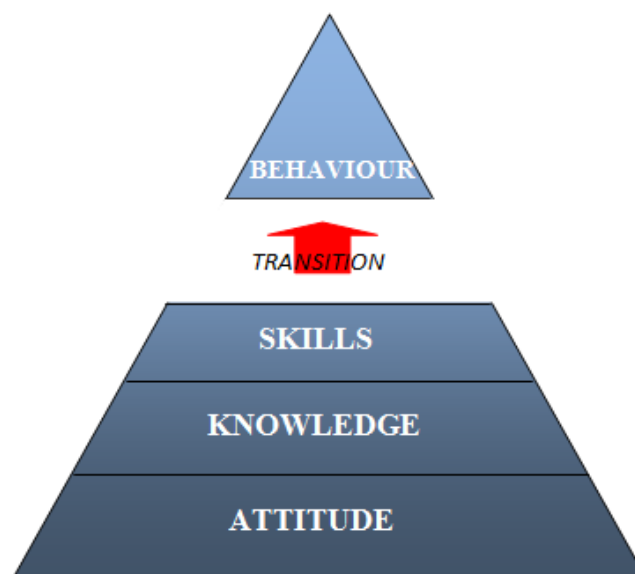
Figure 8. Intercultural competence elements – preliminary conceptual framework based on Deardorff's model (Medkova)

RQ1: *What are the key factors influencing intercultural competence?*

Deardorff (2004) assigns certain factors, which have an impact on the elements intercultural competence is comprised of. Bennett (2011b) divides the factors into a set of cognitive, affective and behavioural skills and characteristics.

Attitude is affected by the ability of a person to respect others, being curious and willing to explore new cultures. Also the openness to other cultures and the willingness to learn interculturally grow. Knowledge covers the understanding and awareness of own culture and other cultures, and the aspects influencing one's perception of the world. Listening, observation and communication skills and the correct interpretation of received information not taken out of context, play a major role. Along with that, cognitive flexibility, empathy and adaptability are conducive to interculturally appropriate behaviour and communication of people. Skills, such as the relationship building skills, and problem analysing and solving can be of a great advantage. (Bennett 1993, 2011b; Deardorff 2004)

4   RESEARCH CONTEXT AND METHODS

This chapter reveals the research approach and description of the individual methods and tools used in this study, presenting both the primary and secondary data. The research methods were selected based on the focus of this study.

4.1   Research Approach

The study is a part of a potential bigger development plan under the Pedagogical development unit in Lahti UAS. The planned project can be divided into three phases; (1) pre-assessment, (2) training and (3) post-assessment. This document focuses on the pre-assessment phase, which represents a pilot project conducted among LUAS' personnel. The pre-assessment phase is formed of a preliminary survey, IDI questionnaire and in-depth interviews. These three steps are described in detail in the following chapters.

The majority of research on assessment of intercultural competences employs qualitative instruments, as it is believed to provide more reliable data. According to Bennett (2001) and Fantini (2000), it is debatable, as emotions and thoughts are an inseparable part of the intercultural development identified by qualitative methods. Therefore, a mixed method approach assures reliability and validity.

That being said, the author decided to combine the benefits of both quantitative and qualitative methods and let them complement each other in this research. Mixed method design gains from the benefits of quantitative and qualitative approaches and at the same time it compensates for the weaknesses of each method when applied standing alone (Domínguez & Hollstein 2014, 3). Quantitative methods, such as large-scale surveys or questionnaires, provide a general picture of a phenomenon and are used to provide statistical data from larger groups and entities as a whole. Whereas qualitative methods, such as interviews, are useful for obtaining the intricate details about the topic in question, such as people's thoughts, feelings and perception of the studied objective that are not easily gathered and perceived from the quantitative methods (Strauss & Corbin 1998). Thus this mixed method, which refers to both 'numbers'

(quantitative) and 'words' (qualitative), involves statistical and analytical analysis, respectively (Kvale 2007).

The preliminary survey was conducted anonymously; IDI questionnaires and interviews were confidential. The results are presented as group results, except the individual IDI feedback which would be delivered only to the respondents themselves, not to a third party. Participation in all three phases of the study was entirely voluntary.

The first phase of the project was undertaken in three steps explained in the following sub-chapters. The overview of the thesis process flow is seen in Figure 9 emphasizing the continual learning and mutual relationship between the theoretical framework and the empirical findings.
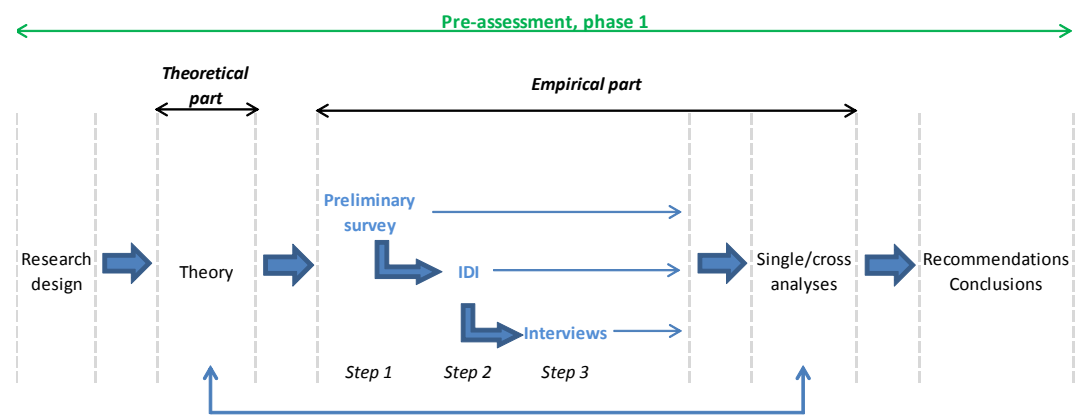
Figure 9. Thesis process flow

4.1.1   Preliminary Survey

Surveys are often used to measure thoughts, feelings, and attitudes of larger numbers of people. In the case of this research, a preliminary survey was designed and used for collecting data from all LUAS personnel in order to identify their experiences and challenges with intercultural matters and to function as a source mediator of volunteers for further research.

First, the draft of the survey was pretested and sent via e-mail to a small group of people (9) outside LUAS. The reason for this decision was to make sure the

questions are clear and easy to understand also for those who have never been involved in higher education. The group was asked to comment on the survey as well as to write any ideas for improvement. The response rate was 100% and few adjustments were added to the survey. The whole group found the questions clear.

Pre-assessment, the first step, consists of a short 17-item web-based survey instrument directed to all LUAS personnel. It is mostly structured quantitative method with an inclusion of a few open-ended questions that gave the respondents an opportunity to write further insights based on their experiences and to comment on other relevant issues. The closed-type questions were either multiple-choice or single questions. The language of the survey is English; the reason is to emphasize the importance of a foreign language in term of internationalisation of the Lahti UAS institution. The preliminary survey can be seen in Appendix 1 of this study. A link to the web-based preliminary survey was emailed to all LUAS personnel. The survey was distributed in two waves, the first at the end of November/beginning of December 2014 and the second one at the end of January 2015. A reminder email notification was also sent out in order to increase the response rate.

The aim of the preliminary survey is to outline the current situation regarding multiculturalism in working environment shaped not only by international students but also colleagues from different countries. Similarly, the respondents were asked whether they would be willing to take part in the voluntary based pilot project about intercultural competences. A dedicated email address was designed where volunteers interested in the pilot research could apply.

For the success of the study, a voluntary based research group is fundamental as it brings a positive attitude, openness and the will to cooperate and desire to make a change. Altogether 12 volunteers signed in and participated in the pilot project, described in the step two and three.

In order to maintain the anonymity of respondents, e-mail communication was sent out individually each time to each volunteer/respondent. Participants were

informed that all individual results would remain confidential and answers would not be linked to individuals but the group as a whole.

The 12 participants come from four different faculties in LUAS. The majority of them work as teachers and two of the interviewees work as non-teachers. Nevertheless, all the respondents interact with foreigners often or on a daily basis in their job, through international projects or through the International Office in LUAS. Seven interviewees were Finns; five interviewees were non-Finns. The demographic of the research group was gender balanced.

The volunteers in the research group have all experienced living abroad. The length of living in a foreign country differs from a few months up to over ten years (Figure 10).
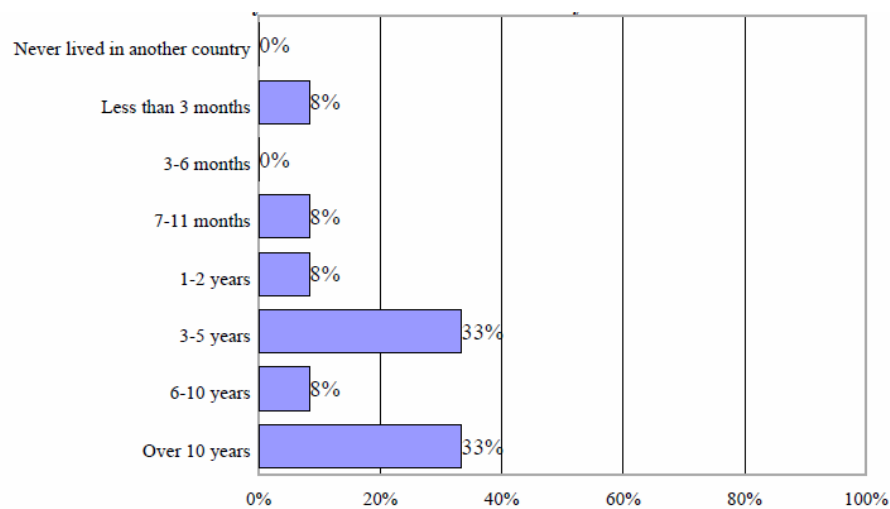
Figure 10. Demographics of the pilot group: Total time lived abroad

4.1.2   Intercultural Development Inventory® Questionnaire

The second step of Pre-assessment is comprised of the Intercultural Development Inventory ® (IDI®). It is a quantitative method which measures one's intercultural competence for bridging the distinctions in cultures, one's world perception and acknowledgement of cultural differences and commonalities. It has been successfully applied in corporate and educational sectors, including government and non-profit organisations. This tool possesses a high cross-cultural validity and reliability and thus has been widely used in academic articles and

studies. IDI® is constructed based on Bennett's developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. The orientations on the Intercultural Development Continuum® are Denial and Polarization (Defense/Reversal), representing monocultural orientations, followed by transition in Minimization to the intercultural orientations typified by Acceptance and Adaptation (Figure 11). (DMIS; Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman 2003, 421-422; IDI 2014)
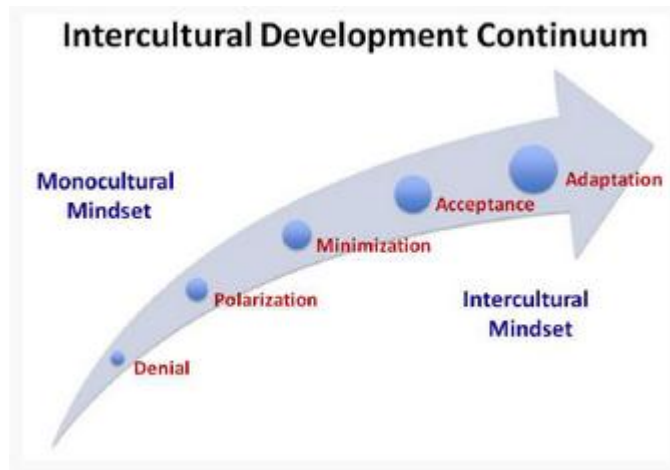
Figure 11. Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, source: http://www.icoachacademy.com/blog/coaching-resources/research-papers/tamara-lebak-using-the-intercultural-development-inventory-in-coaching/

IDI® is an online or a paper format questionnaire that can be completed in 15–20 minutes. IDI® consists of 50 Likert-type items, and in addition, it is possible to include up to six customized and contexting questions. It is the only theory-based tool for measuring intercultural competence, which evaluates both mindset and skillset. The questionnaire has been back translated into 17 languages and for our purpose an English version has been selected. A fee of 15 USD per questionnaire is applied. (IDI 2014)

Once the IDIs® are being filled in by all respondents, the IDI® web-located analytic program evaluates the answers and creates a number of reports. In our case, an IDI Individual Profile Report assessed one's level of intercultural competence and an IDI Group Profile Report, illustrated group's or organisation's way of dealing with cultural issues. Moreover, an Intercultural Development

Plan^{TM} (IDP) was tailored to characteristics of the IDI's® profile outcomes. (Hammer 2012)

According to the policy of the IDI®, the results are required to be delivered in person and only by the Qualified Administrator. LUAS has its own in-house expert available, who has the licence to analyze the IDIs®. All respondents were invited to a meeting, where group results and general information were presented, followed by individual feedback and their Individual Profile Reports ®. Each respondent benefits from insights reflecting one's own intercultural challenges, goals for further development, better understanding of one's own orientation towards diverse communities as well as determines advanced learning. (IDI 2014)

The individual IDI® results were delivered after completing the third step of the first phase, the interviews. The reason for this decision is to avoid any bias from the IDI®'s results before the interviews and thus influence the responses of the interviewees.

4.1.3   Face to Face Interviews

Pre-assessment, the third step incorporates in-depth personal interviews with the same group of volunteers filling the IDI questionnaire. This qualitative method reveals important findings and information. It also clarifies the reasons for such IDIs results and the factors influencing them.

Interviews are often used in case studies and aim to get attention to a particular situation or institution. An interview is a way to obtain the substantial knowledge of interviewee's perception of the lived world, opinions and experiences of a phenomenon. It is implemented by an interaction created between an interviewer and an interviewee through conversation, by posing and answering questions, listening and observing not only the factual content but also the meaning level, in other words, the way the content was expressed. (Kvale 2007)

This being said, the author decided for a semi-structured informal type of an interview and acted as an interviewer herself (Appendix 2). According to Kvale

(2007), informal conversations provide more relevant data than formal conversations.

The interview themes and questions were carefully planned beforehand. The design of the interview themes and questions were based on the findings of the literature, the preliminary survey and the IDIs. Some of the questions of the preliminary survey were repeated as the survey was anonymous and the interviewer aimed to find a linkage between the respondents' replies and his or her background as well as to deepen some of the information.

To meet the aim of this thesis, all 12 interviews were carried out between the end of December 2014 and January 2015. The interview schedule is seen in Table 4. The language of the interviews was English. All the interviewees were informed in advance about the time to be reserved for the interviews and proposed days and times. In nearly all cases, the one-to-one interviews were organised in school premises, in a quiet meeting room. The duration of the interviews was between one and a half hours and three hours.

Table 4. Interviews schedule

Respondent	Date
A	14. January 2015
B	12. January 2015
C	8. January 2015
D	14. January 2015
E	13. January 2015
F	9. January 2015
G	27. January 2015
H	9. January 2015
I	19. January 2015
J	20. January 2015
K	23. January 2015
L	31. December 2014

After the first interview was conducted, the author transcribed the audio recording. The transcribed text was 27 pages long and took several days to be finished. It was intended to transcribe all the interviews however due to the time limitation, the author decided to use only the digital audio recordings and short summaries with the key points and quotations. Another reason was a fact, that

these interviews are key sensitive and are not available to the public. It was agreed with the respondents that the only people who would have an access to the audio files would be the author, her supervisor and opponent, who would sign a confidentiality agreement beforehand. The reason for such an agreement was to secure respondents' anonymity in order to get valuable data, which are case sensitive. All the recordings will be stored on a CD media as well as in a digital form in a virtual cloud for 5 years.

Meaning condensation analyses were applied to the audio records, meaning the interviewees statements were rewritten in noticeably shorter way and expressed with a few key words. During the interviews, only brief field notes were taken and were considered in the analyses as well. Moreover, short summary descriptions with answers to the key questions and themes were written after every interview. The data were categorised, marked with numbers related to the themes and questions. Key words were highlighted in various colours and also valuable citations of the respondents were added.

For the cross-analyses, the main information from the interviews together with the results of IDIs and the preliminary survey were collected in a master excel sheet. Some of the results were expressed in charts, tables or simply described in the text.

5 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the empirical results from all three methods will be introduced and analysed. First, every method will be discussed separately. Later, all results will be combined and cross analysed. Finally, the results reflection on the research questions will be executed.

5.1 Preliminary survey

Out of 370 employees, 80 responded in the first wave and 18 answered the survey in the second wave, overall 98 answers. The overall survey response rate was 27% despite follow up. According to the Online Survey Response Rates and Times study, the majority online surveys receive a 26% response rate or higher (Hamilton 2009, 3). However, it would be expected to reach higher rates from internal employee surveys.

Responses were tabulated and weighted arithmetic means were calculated. Open-ended questions were coded and categorized according to similar patterns. The list of these responses can be found in Appendix 5. In addition, various charts were developed to display the results. Selected questions were compared and examined from different perspectives. Moreover, the correlation matrix was used for analyzing the dependencies between two questions from the survey (Figure 12).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1	1	-0,65	0,14	0,14	0,36	-0,14	0,08	-0,11	0,02	-0,08	-0,09	-0,08	-0,13	-0,27	0,05	0,19	-0,05	-0,08
2	-0,65	1	-0	-0,08	-0,44	0,14	-0,03	0,19	-0,07	0,03	0,02	-0,03	0,18	0,23	0,03	-0,17	0,08	0,16
3	0,14	-0	1	0,03	0,12	-0,1	0,03	0,16	0,16	-0,04	0,06	-0,06	-0,17	-0,14	-0,06	-0,21	0,14	-0,16
4	0,14	-0,08	0,03	1	0,39	-0,45	0,23	0,03	-0,15	-0,12	-0,24	-0,13	-0,23	-0,41	0,19	-0,14	-0,15	-0,04
5	0,36	-0,44	0,12	0,39	1	-0,38	0,12	-0,16	-0,18	-0,13	-0,19	-0,25	-0,13	-0,29	0,11	-0,09	-0,1	-0,25
6	-0,14	0,14	-0,1	-0,45	-0,38	1	-0,18	-0,2	-0,03	0,13	0,26	0,12	0,15	0,47	-0,03	0,02	0,13	0,29
7	0,08	-0,03	0,03	0,23	0,12	-0,18	1	-0,01	-0	-0,03	0,12	0,05	-0	-0,01	0,03	0,04	0,05	0,03
8	-0,11	0,19	0,16	0,03	-0,16	-0,2	-0,01	1	0,54	0,03	-0,14	0,02	-0,25	-0,25	-0,13	-0,08	-0,19	-0,27
9	0,02	-0,07	0,16	-0,15	-0,18	-0,03	-0	0,54	1	0,1	0,07	-0	-0,32	-0,2	-0,27	0,02	-0,02	-0,26
10	-0,08	0,03	-0,04	-0,12	-0,13	0,13	-0,03	0,03	0,1	1	-0,04	0,12	0,07	0,01	-0,09	0,06	0,21	0,02
11	-0,09	0,02	0,06	-0,24	-0,19	0,26	0,12	-0,14	0,07	-0,04	1	0,15	-0,05	0,31	0	0,11	0,04	0,07
12	-0,08	-0,03	-0,06	-0,13	-0,25	0,12	0,05	0,02	-0	0,12	0,15	1	0,25	0,3	-0,13	0,07	0,2	0,2
13	-0,13	0,18	-0,17	-0,23	-0,13	0,15	-0	-0,25	-0,32	0,07	-0,05	0,25	1	0,61	-0,03	0,23	0,32	0,27
14	-0,27	0,23	-0,14	-0,41	-0,29	0,47	-0,01	-0,25	-0,2	0,01	0,31	0,3	0,61	1	-0,01	0,14	0,2	0,29
15	0,05	0,03	-0,06	0,19	0,11	-0,03	0,03	-0,13	-0,27	-0,09	0	-0,13	-0,03	-0,01	1	0,18	-0,26	0,13
16	0,19	-0,17	-0,21	-0,14	-0,09	0,02	0,04	-0,08	0,02	0,06	0,11	0,07	0,23	0,14	0,18	1	0,02	0,33
17	-0,05	0,08	0,14	-0,15	-0,1	0,13	0,05	-0,19	-0,02	0,21	0,04	0,2	0,32	0,2	-0,26	0,02	1	0,13
18	-0,08	0,16	-0,16	-0,04	-0,25	0,29	0,03	-0,27	-0,26	0,02	0,07	0,2	0,27	0,29	0,13	0,33	0,13	1

Figure 12. Correlation matrix

Positive correlation coefficient shows the degree of dependency. The higher the correlation number, the higher the dependency is. Negative correlation coefficient indicates non-dependency and the lower the correlation is, the lower the dependency exists. Based on the matrix, scatter (XY) plots were created to display the relationship.

At work, LUAS personnel mostly interact with foreigners on a daily basis or often and outside of work less often as seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Frequency of dealing with foreigners

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Constantly	Total	Average
At work:	1	23	36	37	97	3.12
Outside the work:	3	52	31	10	96	2.5
Total	**4**	**75**	**67**	**47**	**193**	**2.81**

Of the respondents who completed the survey, the majority (67%) feel confident when dealing with people from different countries and cultures, some (26%) are slightly reserved and a minimum of people feel reserved or afraid (Figure 13). Non-Finnish respondents find themselves 100% confident, whereas only 65% of Finnish respondents feel the same.
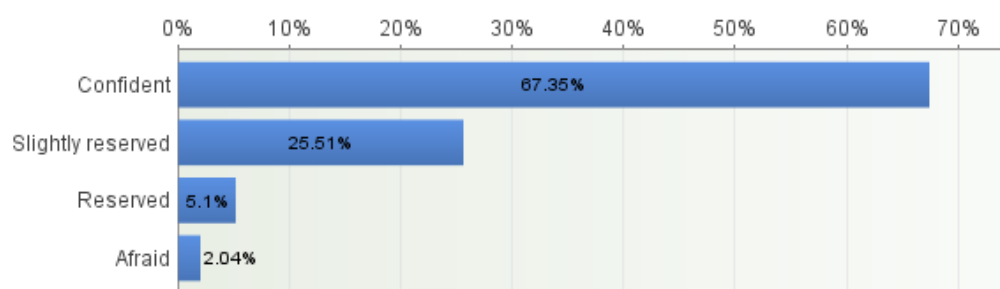
Figure 13. Respondents' level of confidence to deal with foreigners

The more often people deal with people from different countries and cultures, the more confident they become. Figure 14 indicates the mutual impact of these two circumstances. The X-axis represents the level of confidence (1-Confident, 1-

Slightly reserved, etc.) and Y-axis indicates the frequency of interaction (1-never, 2-sometimes, 3-often, and 4-constantly).
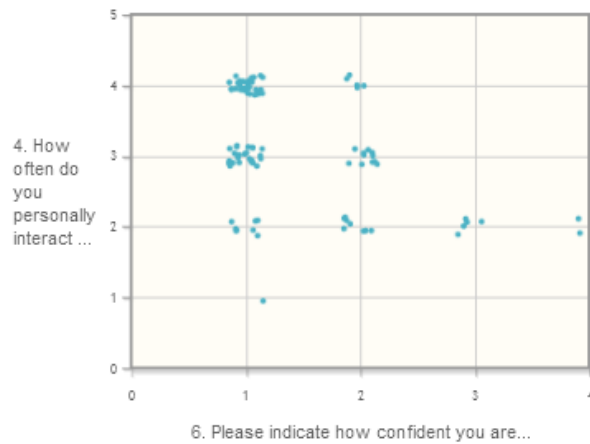
Figure 14. Correlation between the confidence and higher frequency (left) and lower frequency (right) of interaction with foreigners

Those, who are of Finnish origin but married to non-Finn, the confidence increased to 80% (Figure 15). The X-axis represents the level of confidence (1-Confident, 2-Slightly reserved, etc.) and Y-axis indicates a partner of non-Finnish origin (1) and Finnish (2).

Figure 15. Correlation between the non-Finnish partner and the level of confidence

There is a positive correlation between how much people consider themselves confident when interacting with a foreigner and the confidence with non-verbal

communication (Figure 16). The X-axis represents the level of confidence (1-Confident, 2-Slightly reserved, etc.) and Y-axis indicates the level of non verbal communication confidence (1-I am sure in most case, 2-50/50, 3-I am guessing, 4-I am lost).
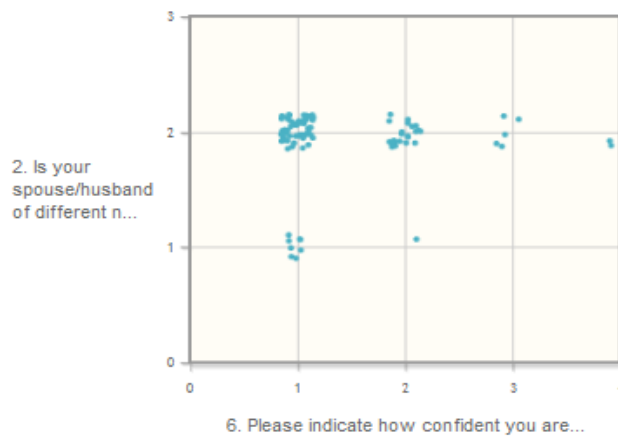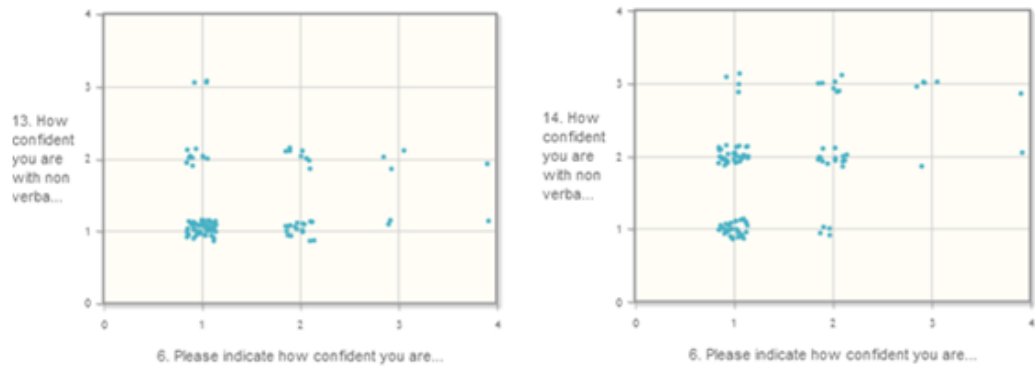

Figure 16. Correlation between the confidence of interaction with foreigners and non-verbal communication with people from the same culture (left) and people from the different culture (right)

Primarily, language (59%) and communication (55%) are considered as the main challenges when dealing with a foreigner, followed by general behaviour (23%) and sense of time (18%). Least challenging are discipline and other challenges. Other challenges were specified by the respondents, such as general knowledge of different cultures, cultural nuances or no challenges at all (Figure 17).

Of those who interact with foreigners often or constantly, 50% selected the language and 61% communication, whereas of those who deal with people from other cultures not often or at all, 89% selected the language and 68% communication. Of those who have attended any intercultural workshop or seminar at some point, approximately 50% found language and communication the most challenging and other areas less than 18% except discipline (9%). On the other hand, of those who have never participated in any intercultural training, 70% selected language and communication, 31% general behaviour and other areas less than 20%.
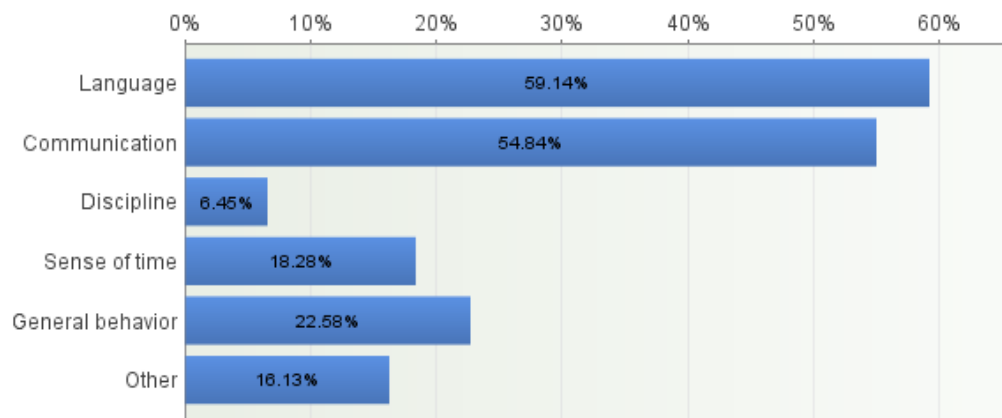
Figure 17. Main challenges while dealing with foreigners

The survey asked respondents to comment on possible preferences of someone based on gender, nationality, culture or religion that would take place in LUAS. The results are similar regarding LUAS personnel and students (Table 6). The majority of people (73%, 75% respectively) have not experienced any preferences. No preferences among personnel were experienced by 76% Finns and 33% non-Finns. Preference for nationality and culture could be combined, as they are linked to each other, and therefore altogether 20% of all respondents faced such inequality. This view was shared by 17% of Finns and on the contrary by 67% of non-Finns.

Table 6. Experienced preferences in LUAS (number of people)

	Gender	Nationality	Culture	Religion	No	Total	Average
Among personnel:	6	12	8	1	74	101	4.24
Among students:	4	11	11	0	77	103	4.31
Total	10	23	19	1	151	204	4.27

Two-thirds of the personnel agree with the statement regarding people's tendency to think their own background and culture are the most appropriate. One-third

disagreed with the statement. Of all respondents, two-thirds think foreigners staying in Fi nland try to adapt to Finnish culture.

LUAS personnel was asked to express their opinions whether their employer sufficiently supports them to cope with intercultural challenges. The majority of the people (70%) regard LUAS not supporting their work sufficiently and the minority (30%) thinks LUAS support its employees enough in intercultural issues (Figure 18).
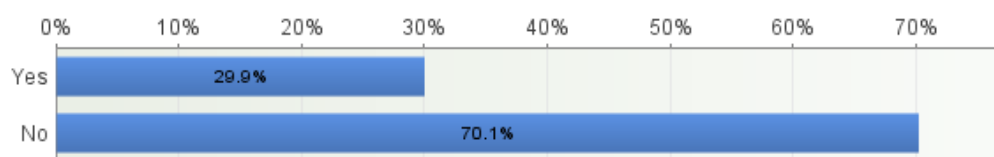
Figure 18. 'Does LUAS support sufficiently its personnel with intercultural challenges?'

The questionnaire asked respondents to state when the last time they have participated in any intercultural education was and to describe what kind of education it was (Figure 19). Most of the people either have not attended any training (39%) or took part in a training some time ago (37%). Only 24% of the LUAS personnel participated in some intercultural training recently.
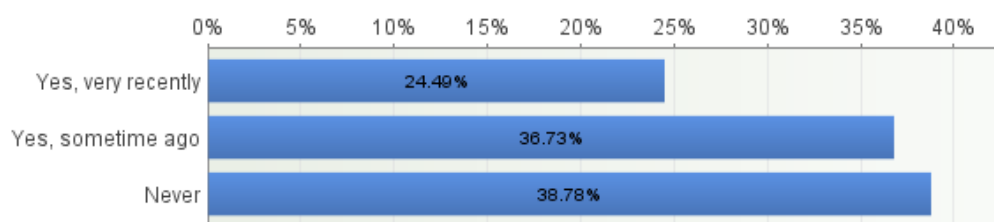
Figure 19. 'When was the last time respondents participated in intercultural training or seminar?'

By reviewing the comments of the respondents, the number of people who have never participated in any intercultural education should be remarkably higher. Data were coded and clustered into 3 areas; intercultural education (1) including language courses, multinational events/work (2) and other (3) including not specified/missing answers (Appendix 4). The comments revealed that respondents

understood the question in the survey in different ways; one being educational as such, in the form of a training, course, etc. and second being a form of an experience at an event where one could meet and deal with people from different countries.

First of all, original results were adjusted so, that only one answer is possible per person. The original survey result showed 100 responses altogether, as two people selected two answers to a question. The actual number of people participating in an intercultural training was calculated based on the comments clustering. From these adjusted results, the actual number of people was deducted. The unspecified/missing comments were deducted from the total number of respondents to reflect the real situation. The percentages for each option were counted. More details are available in Appendix 4 of this study.

Of those, who replied to the survey, more than two-thirds (67%), have never participated in any intercultural training. One-third of the participating respondents have attended some training, Over ten percent took part in some training very recently and some 20 percent attended a training some time ago (Figure 20).

	Yes, very recently	Yes, some time ago	Never
■ Series1	11%	22%	67%
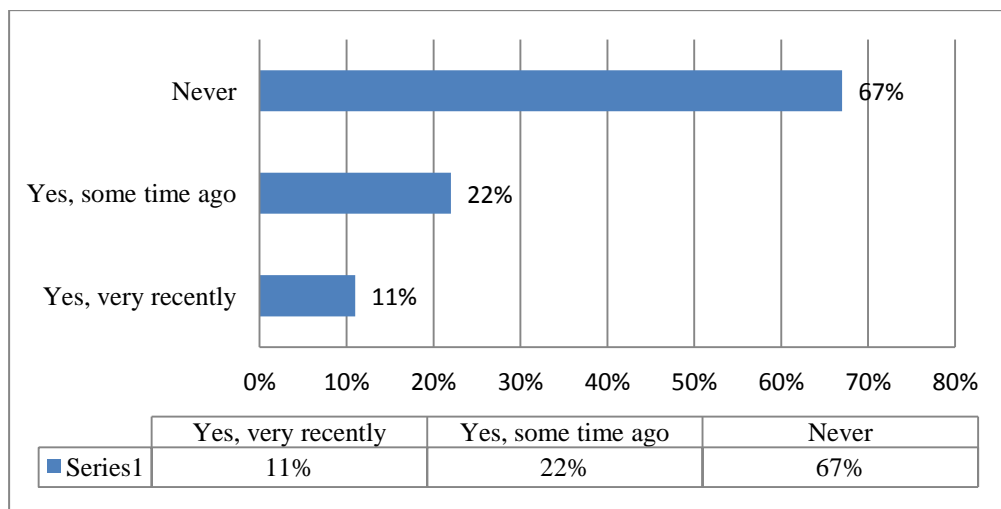
Figure 20. Adjusted results on 'When the last time respondents participated in intercultural training or seminar?'

Nearly all (95%) who responded to the survey agreed that intercultural development would bring benefits to all employees. For informative purposes, respondents were asked about their opinion regarding the accuracy of others' reflection on this survey. Over two-thirds (65%) expected others to reply accurately and one-third indicated the answers to be not accurate.

Last, the participating employees were asked to write their ideas, comments or experiences when dealing with people from different countries and cultures, as well as to propose recommendations for LUAS. Only 37% of all who filled in the survey made use of this opportunity, however, the comments were valuable and strategic for the study.

Comments were coded and divided into six categories (Figure 21); language (1), education (2), mobility of teachers and students (3), cooperation, international projects/experience (4), time/resources (5) and other (6). Texts were also rewritten in a shorter condensed way; however the main message was maintained (Appendix 5).

Most people commented on the need for increased cooperation between Finns and non-Finns. That involves work and friendship between students of all nations and as well between worldwide colleagues, universities, and companies. By increased cooperation, one is forced to frequently encounter people from different backgrounds and thus learn and experience other cultures, improve language and communication skills as well as professional knowledge. Such an experience could be gained by mobility growth of school staff and students but most of all, by using the opportunity to interact with the LUAS multinational body of students and partially colleagues as well.
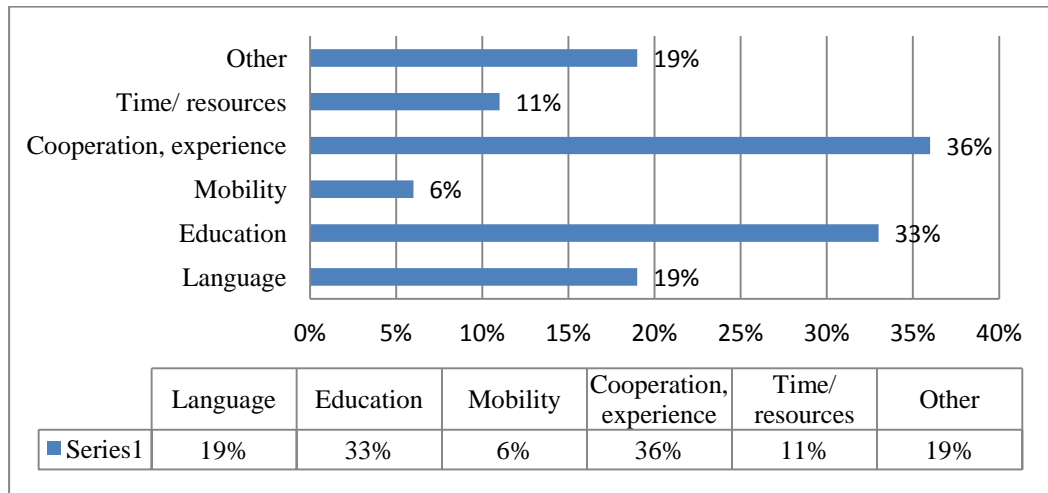
Figure 21. LUAS staff comments

Educating school staff in intercultural matters is considered as important and should be recognized as part of their academic upbringing. One should start with acknowledgment of own culture, to be able to understand the reasons behind existing differences. Equally important is a mutual conversation with others and reflection on gained knowledge and experiences.

The level of language skills of students and staff play a decisive role in communication. As it is expected from Finnish students to speak English, a certain level of Finnish language is expected from foreign students. Similarly, such a rule should be applied to school staff. Another way to improve language skills among personnel is by having more international colleagues in their work place.

In the 'other' category, people commented on internationalisation in general, what it really means for each and everyone and every faculty. Some people expressed their feelings that this culture related topic is 'a kind of taboo topic even though we should debate it openly' or that 'people rather close their eyes than solve a problem concerning differences'. Two people also commented on the quality of the survey, asking for more options to select from or put more time on creating the questions.

The biggest obstacle influencing the quality of service to students is the time and enough resources. Especially when dealing with people from different culture, more time is needed. School staff should be trained, and are willing to be trained, however the lack of time is stopping one to actually take part in any training if offered.

Limitations and errors

Having the preliminary survey in English language only, presented a limitation with the number of responses received. Among others, it could be also a lack of interest in this topic or even timing of the survey being at the turn of the year, when one semester is about to end and a new one is about to begin.

While evaluating the survey, the author realised question number three of the survey, 'Is it different to deal with people from abroad?' is unclear and can be understood in different ways, depending on the level of one's intercultural competence and the different point of view. The author decided to exclude the question from the evaluation.

5.2   IDIs

IDI Group Profile

The IDI Group Profile indicates the group's comprehension and response to cultural differences and commonalities. Perceived Orientation (PO) reflects the position of the whole group, from their point of view, along the intercultural development curve (Figure 11). The group's PO is 125.72 points (see Figure 22), belonging to an Acceptance phase. The Acceptance phase occurs between 115 and 130 points. The individual phases are described in detail in Chapter 2.6.1. The IDI Group Profile report can be seen in Appendix 6.
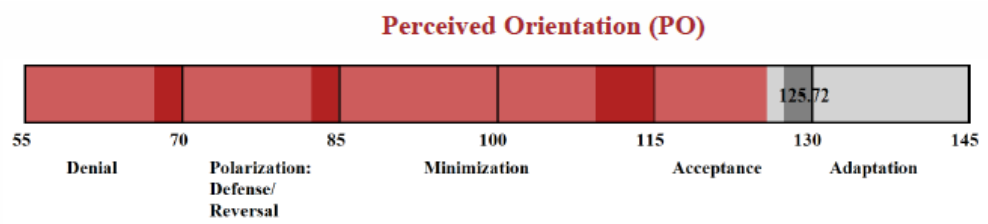
Figure 22. IDI Group Profile: Perceived Orientation

Developmental Orientation (DO) indicates the placement of the group along the intercultural development curve, based on the IDI results, as seen in Figure 23. The group's DO is 101.90 points, belonging to a Minimization phase. The Minimization phase occurs between 85 and 115 points.
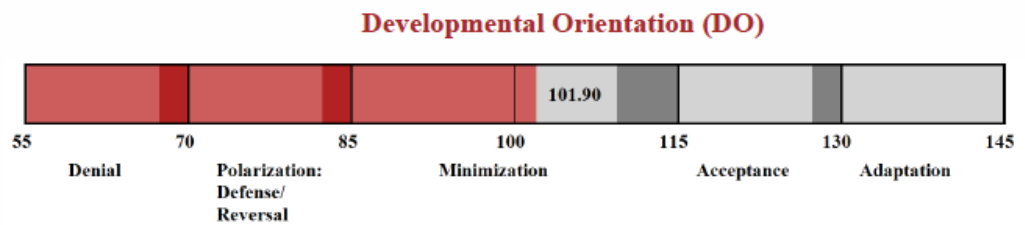
Figure 23. IDI Group Profile: Developmental Orientation

The Orientation Gap (OG) then expresses the difference between the Perceived and Developmental Orientation. If the difference is higher than 7 points, the group has overestimated its position on the developmental curve, in case of the difference less than 7 points, the group has underestimated its position. In our case, the OG is 23.81 points, representing a meaningful difference (see Figure 24). IDI Group Profile states 'the group substantially overestimates its level of intercultural competence and may be surprised their DO score is not higher'.
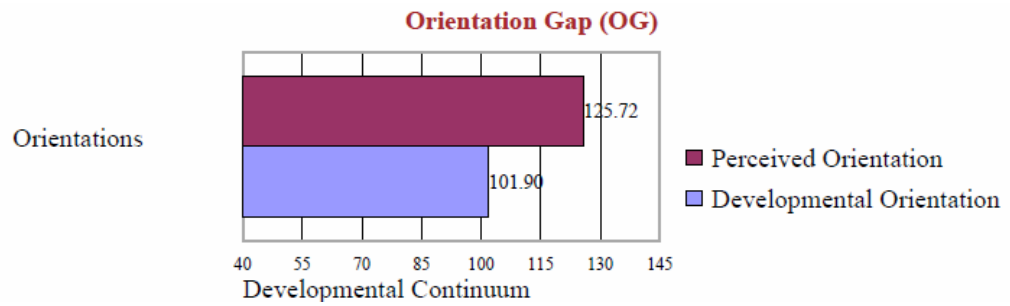
Figure 24. IDI Group Profile: Orientation Gap

In Figure 25, the chart on the left indicates the individual DO in percentage. The chart on the right, of the same Figure, reveals the percentage of individuals from the group in Polarization phase, which can take the form of Defense or Reversal.
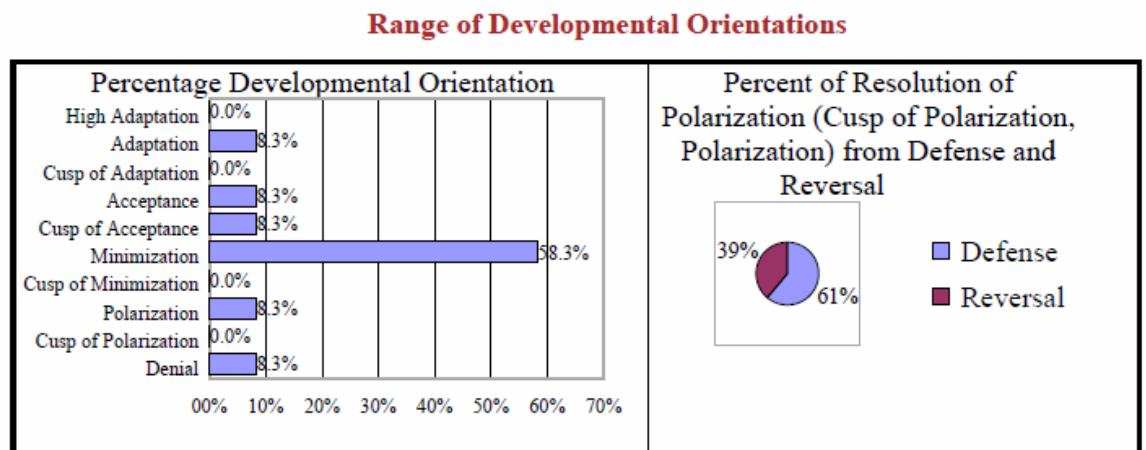
Figure 25. IDI Group Profile: Range of Developmental Orientations

The author decided to take a closer look at the group results and collected the individual scores of all respondents (Table 7). Nearly 60% of respondents are in a Minimization phase, which is the group orientation as well. The range of individual scores is from Denial (DO=66.27), up to Adaptation (DO=135.61). All, except one, of those who took the IDI questionnaire significantly overestimated their level of intercultural competence. This overestimation is expressed by the Orientation Gap number.

Based on the Group Report, there are no Trailing Orientations (TO), however on an individual level; seven out of 12 cases (58%) have some trailing or secondary orientations. TO indicates previous orientations that may not be resolved. In specific situations, one perceives cultural differences in a way typical for the earlier stages and slows down the movement forward on the Intercultural Development Continuum®.

Table 7. IDI Group Profile: Individual scores

	Perceived Orientation		Developmental Orientation		Orientation Gap		Trailing Orientation	Cultural Disengagement	
C	141,03	Adaptation	**135,61**	**Adaptation**	5,42	Underestimated		4,2	Resolved
J	135,61	Adaptation	**123,16**	**Acceptance**	12,45	Overestimated	X	4,2	Resolved
E	129,08	Cusp of Adaptation	**112,26**	**Cusp of Acceptance**	16,82	Overestimated	X	5	Resolved
G	127,99	Cusp of Adaptation	**108,79**	**Minimization**	19,20	Overestimated		5	Resolved
L	128,33	Cusp of Adaptation	**107,78**	**Minimization**	20,55	Overestimated		4,6	Resolved
B	129,65	Cusp of Adaptation	**107,13**	**Minimization**	22,52	Overestimated	X	2,8	Unresolved
I	120,61	Acceptance	**100,06**	**Minimization**	20,55	Overestimated		3,4	Unresolved
D	124,35	Acceptance	**98,49**	**Minimization**	25,86	Overestimated	X	5	Resolved
K	122,14	Acceptance	**94,92**	**Minimization**	27,22	Overestimated	X	5	Resolved
H	122,1	Acceptance	**94,74**	**Minimization**	27,36	Overestimated	X	4,6	Resolved
A	117,22	Acceptance	**73,63**	**Polarization**	43,59	Overestimated	X	3,6	Unresolved
F	110,48	Cusp of Acceptance	**66,27**	**Denial**	44,21	Overestimated		4,4	Resolved
	125,72		**101,90**		**23,81**				

The Cultural Disengagement (CD) is not a dimension of intercultural competence. It detects to what degree a person is disengaged from a primary cultural group. The two results could be considered resolved for values greater than four or unresolved, for values smaller than four. The overall group's CD is resolved (4.32); however 25% of members are unresolved.

Based on the IDIs, the group's orientation is perceived as Minimization. This orientation is characterized as a stage, in which individuals emphasize cultural commonalities and generalize own values and principles as to be the same for all humans. In this stage, it is assumed people are fundamentally similar to each other and thus no adjustments to the cultural context are recognized and made, which leads to a failure in the interaction with the 'others'. This overgeneralization of 'universal absolutes' may obscure (minimize) the identification and acknowledgment of cultural differences on deeper level. People tend to change

others to be like 'us'. In Minimization, the main task is to learn more about own culture (cultural self-awareness) and how this culture is perceived by people from other cultures. (Bennett 2004, IDI 2014)

Despite the fact that, the average IDI group results indicate Minimization, it is important to look at the individual scores as well. The range of individual orientations (Figure 25) is vast thus semi-tailored training is required.

Limitations

The study also shows some limitations regarding the IDI group report. The sample includes people who volunteered to participate. As the interviews confirmed, the reason for the participation was their own interest (positive attitude) and consideration of this topic as of a high importance. In fact, all the volunteers are in a constant or very frequent contact with foreigners and therefore have gained some knowledge and skills through times. All the above mentioned factors influence the IDI group results. It could be reasonable to assume, that if people, whose attitude is not positive enough and are not exposed to interactions with foreigners, the IDI group results might be even lower. The overestimation of one's own abilities in general, can cause certain 'blindness' in addressing the need for intercultural education and its importance.

5.3   Interviews

The author obtained new and enriching insights through the research interviews.

During the interviews, the respondents were asked whether they witnessed in LUAS anyone to be preferred based on a gender, nationality, culture, religion or no such preference. Nine out of 12 people have not experienced any previously mentioned preferences. Three people referred to a nationality or culture.

One of the interviewees stated first that he has not experienced any preferences at all in LUAS. However, after further discussion, he has realized that actually he has. He claimed that foreigners from Europe are more preferred than foreigners from other parts of the world, such as students from Asia and Africa. He assumed

there are two main reasons; the first being the extremely different cultures of the Asians and Africans Finnish people are not familiar with and the second being a difficulty to understand their pronunciation. Another opinion was that LUAS staff are either not aware of these preferences or have had not paid attention to them, "They chose not to see it, because if they see it, they have to respond to it".

Gender is not an issue in Finland at all. According to one respondent, gender plays a role only in combination of foreign nationality. If one is a foreigner and male, he is somewhat preferred or valued differently than a female foreigner in LUAS.

Results of the same question from the preliminary questionnaire were presented. Some of the interviewees were surprised as they expected the results to be 'No' with unanimity, however, the majority agreed that certain attitude towards different nationality and culture exist. One of the respondents explained it by saying: "The less often you interact with the foreigners, the stronger the feelings people (sic) have towards them", caused by previous negative experience with the 'others' or being threatened by something unknown.

For the group of the people interviewed, the biggest challenge while dealing with foreigners is language and communication (10 respondents), commented as "...the whole message doesn't get across in either direction because of different modes of communicating..." The level of English language skills defines the success in communication, thus a certain level of English should be required. Certification of students' English skills is part of the application process and has been tightened up in the last years. However, no certification of teachers' English skills is required. Interviewees agreed on the importance of teachers English level, primarily in the international programmes taught in English. The majority regards the current level as mediocre, three people finds staff's English as good and the same number of people think of the English skills as not good enough. Most of the respondents confirmed, they would appreciate language courses offered by their employer. One of the respondents even stated, that on their faculty they ask their supervisor for an English language course every year, and so far they have been offered one two-week intensive course during summer and a couple of hours delivered by one of the LUAS English teachers.

Even if one speaks a foreign language, it does not necessarily mean one is able to communicate effectively using such a language. The reason is that the communication styles vary across nations. In the chapter two of this study, various cultural dimensions and models were introduced. These models demonstrate the differences in communication styles, interactions and behaviour. For instance, the Lewis Model (Figure 26) generalizes a triangle between three types of interaction, linear-active, multi-active and reactive, in specific cultures, described in detail in Chapter 2.3.
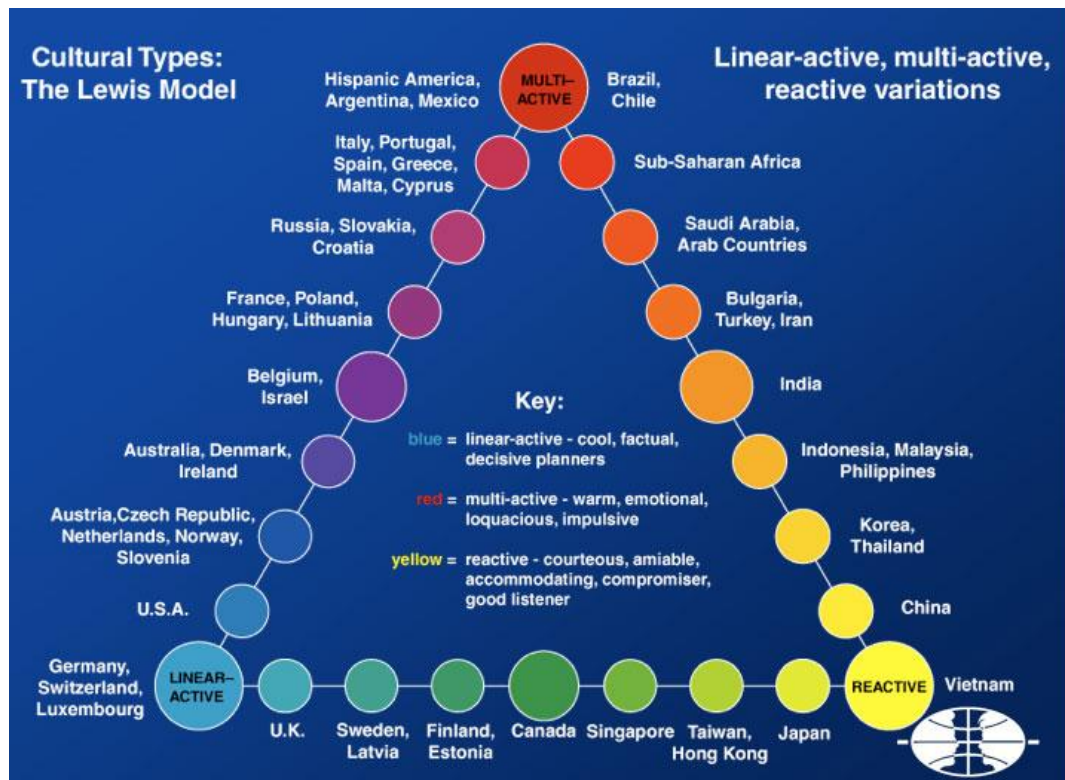
Figure 26. The Lewis Model of Culture, source: http://www.crossculture.com/services/cross-culture/

Lewis (2005) describes Finnish communication style as 'western in an Asian coat'. Even from a brief look at the triangle, an assumption of similar or opposite ways of interaction can be made. The awareness of one's own way of communication as well as the needs, expectations and perception of such a communication style by another interlocutor, helps to reach a consensus.

Hall's concept of high and low context, described in Chapter 2.3., allows us to understand basic typical communication and societal patterns for a specific culture. Finland belongs to the low context cultures, using direct, straight to the point style of communication, not interrupting others and listening carefully. The importance is given to the thoroughly thought information, not to the context. These characteristics are opposite to the high context cultures, such as Asian, Arabic and Latin countries (Figure 27).
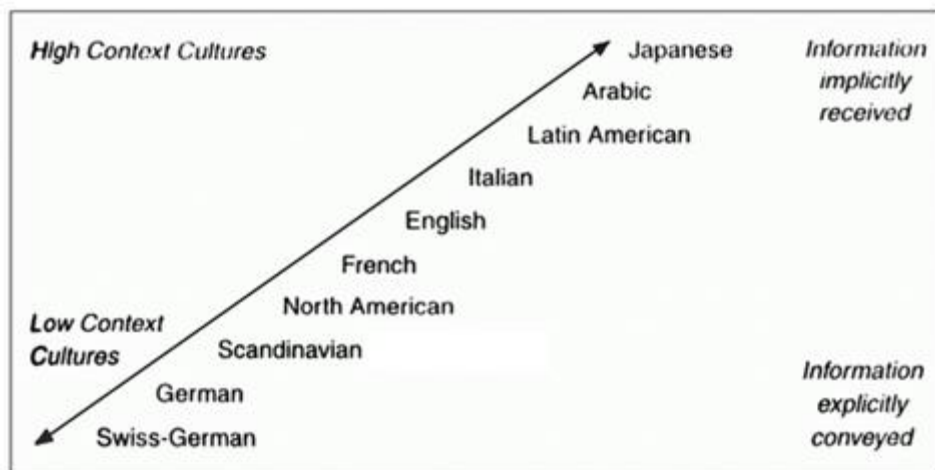
Figure 27. High vs. Low context by culture (Hall 1976)

As a conclusion, the interlocutors aiming at reaching consensus, should try to adjust their way of message delivery so, that it is understandable, appreciated and expected by other members of the communication action. In the case of the school environment, the teachers and other staff should be aware of possible barriers to communication and the typicalities bound to certain cultures. Effective communication should be part of the student education as well.

Among other challenges, the concept of time (5 respondents) is considered as crucial. As expressed by one of the respondents:

> *The sense of time, it causes a lot more problems than most people realize within our student body, being very specific in business faculty, I see the sense of time in a way of doing things is a big divider between especially the Finns and the others.*

The approach to time issues by the members of the group is rather flexible. They usually discuss the time-related matters at the beginning of a course or a project. Some teachers are more flexible and have no specific rules and offer, for instance, an assignment delivery after a deadline, however with a warning in a form of grading. The grade would be decreased by one degree. Some teachers require being in classrooms on time and require a notification in advance if one is going to be late for some reason or that tasks must be delivered by a specific deadline and it is not possible to do it after the time is expired. The respondents agreed that it is wise to dedicate some time to students regarding this topic and most of all, to explain the reasons for the importance and the impact of acting on time in diverse teams.

Previously mentioned models of culture (Chapter 2) could also contribute to the understanding of different time perception and typical ways of working with various cultures. For instance, Lewis (2005, 157) claims that Finns are punctual and on time; naturally, they expect the same from others. An example of a different approach to the time concept can be seen from Latin cultures, for instance, Italians. This only confirms the importance of discussing and explaining the time issues in teams, among students and colleagues as well.

In conclusion, being familiar with different culture models (Chapter 2) can contribute to increased general awareness and overcome possible misunderstandings and negative experiences. These cultural models should be therefore included in the intercultural education and training.

The group of volunteers was asked to describe the factors and skills motivating and influencing one's intercultural competence. The results are visible in Table 8. The majority of the respondents consider the willingness to learn, understand and accept the fact that differences between cultures exist as being of the utmost importance. The main idea is to approach this challenge as 'similar versus different' cultures, rather than 'good versus bad' cultures, habits or behaviour. It is obvious, that the knowledge of one's own culture, including the awareness of positive and negative tendencies and traits, are essential for the overall perception of cultural diversity. Only then, one should get familiar with other cultures, their

characteristics, behaviour, ways of working, history, etc. Empathy and genuinely caring for others, in other words, the attitude, plays an important role too. Being open-minded, curious and flexible, as well as being able to communicate efficiently all have an impact on one's intercultural competence, and that includes the non-verbal communication, listening, observation and language skills.

Table 8. Factors influencing one's intercultural competences

FACTORS	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Willingness to accept/adapt differences, to understand, to interact	8	67
Knowledge about own culture and other cultures, religions,...	6	50
Empathy & care	5	42
Openness	4	33
Curiosity	3	25
Language skills & communication	3	25
Body language & observation skills	2	17
Flexibility	2	17
Playfulness	1	8
Friendliness	1	8

People are not automatically equipped with intercultural competence when they are born; it is rather an educational and lifelong process of acquiring a set of knowledge and skills. It is a lifestyle where one keeps developing his/her skills and seeks new information. In the case of teachers, it is also the incorporation of cultural materials on a deeper level in lectures of any kind to help students to see the world in a different view. (Deardorff 2009, 14-16)

 Only two respondents agreed with the statement, that one can acquire this competence through a learning process only, even though some people are naturally more aware and sensitive to this matter than others. Two participants see the intercultural competence strictly as an emotional ability, which cannot be learned. The majority of the interviewees, five members, concur in intercultural competence being both given (the emotional part to be born with) and further developed by learning. Three participants have not answered the question.

The respondents agreed that the best way to learn intercultural competence is through experience with being a minority in a foreign country. According to the results of the group, the length of living, working or studying abroad only, does

not make one to be interculturally competent. It is more individual; however, such an experience is regarded as contributory. As one of the interviewees commented, the best way to learn intercultural competence is to be "put in a washing machine of another culture, to where you are the odd one out, that you feel stupid every time they're speaking and you have no idea what is it about". Others mentioned, that getting into situations where one is the minority, helps to increase one's observation skills and thus develop one's awareness of other cultures. Such an experience is then useful while dealing with the students from a diverse background as one is able to empathize with the feelings and challenges the students, and especially the international students, are going through.

According to the respondents, one of the biggest factors is the willingness to accept the existence of differences between cultures that leads to an adjustment and adaptation to such differences and thus influencing one's behaviour. Interviewees were asked whether they adjust their behaviour while dealing with foreigners either in Finland or while being a foreigner abroad. The majority adjusts their behaviour; the examples mentioned included increased carefulness not to offend anyone, being more flexible, being more patient and calm, to overall adjust the behaviour based on current knowledge, for instance, being more talkative, smiling more, being friendlier or on the other hand acting as authority, etc. One of the most significant adjustments is the language, the careful choice of words, frequent repetition by using various expressions, so one is able to understand the content or has a higher chance to understand it. All of the respondents use neutral language in situations where foreigners are present together with Finns, in our case it is the English language. However, four respondents expressed their feelings that the implementation and importance of the neutral language are underestimated by the students and staff in LUAS.

People were also asked about the change in their behaviour or personality when speaking in a language, different from the mother language. Most of the respondents assume their personality does not change, but it is rather the behaviour, such as gestures usage increment to balance the confidence and knowledge of the specific foreign language in use. Only three respondents estimate a personality change while speaking with non-mother language.

The adjustment in teaching methods was also explored. In the first round, the respondents were asked whether they adjust their teaching methods for mixed groups of Finnish and non-Finnish students. Of the teachers, five do not adjust their teaching, no matter the students' nationality. One teacher claims to treat each and every student differently as individuals, rather than Finns and non-Finns. Three teachers confirmed some adjustment in a form of communication, instruction reinforcement, making sure everybody understands, etc.

Then after, the ISB (2010) results indicating the poor student learning results were presented. Also, some examples of different pedagogical approaches and other challenges international students face when being abroad were discussed. The group agreed that the Finnish teaching style may bring challenges to the students who were taught their entire life in a clearly different way. Among the mostly mentioned differences were problem solving, having own opinions, working in teams or individually, asking questions, freely and openly stating that one does not understand, or even e-learning and having less contact lectures and more independent-study, to which some students are not used to.

Hofstede's model explains the tendencies of different cultures in general and also specifically in a school environment. Hofstede's model uses six dimensions of cultures, described in Chapter 2.1. of this study. Figure 28 illustrates principle similarities or differences in behaviour between nations. Countries are selected based on the most common nationalities of international students in LUAS.

	Power Distance	Individualism	Masculinity	Uncertainty Avoidance	Long Term Orientation	Indulgence
Finland	33	63	26	59	38	57
Vietnam	70	20	40	30	57	35
China	63	23	28	86	31	68
Russia	93	39	36	95	81	20
Germany	35	67	66	65	83	40
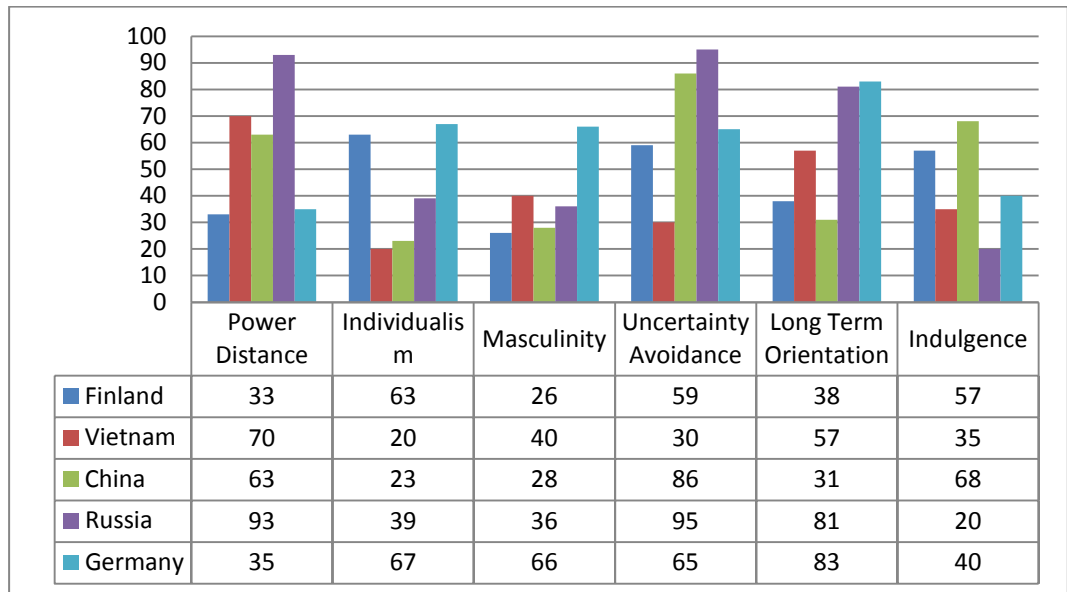
Figure 28. Hofstede's model, source: http://geert-hofstede.com/dimensions.html

In the second round, the respondents were asked again, whether they would adjust their teaching methods to foreign students if the information about these various styles were provided. The majority supported the idea, one teacher disagreed and one admitted that it would be beneficial, but believes that "I know I should change it but I don't, my reason is (the) Asians should learn the European way". It was also indicated, that more time dedicated to these adjustments is required but not included in their working hours at the moment.

Studying abroad is a great opportunity for all; it brings new experiences, knowledge and responsibilities. The downside of this experience might be the culture shock, to which the students are exposed. The students are young, most likely first time away from their families and for some of them even a first time to be abroad. It is a big change in their lives; the students learn to manage their finance, buying food, paying a rent, meeting new people who do not speak any common languages. They have to adjust to the language, weather, food, culture, way of living and studying or working, and most of all to deal and communicate with a variety of people from different parts of the world. According to the respondents, intercultural education, a sensitive adjustment in pedagogy methods and styles, and the school's support are fundamental for minimizing the effect of

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culture shock and thus increase the student's experience, motivation in their studies and interaction with 'others'.

The respondents acknowledged the importance of the time given to the international students coming to study in Finland, in adjusting their way of studying/teaching to the Finnish one. The interviewees stated that the basic information about the styles and culture are presented during an orientation week. The orientation week lasts one week for exchange students and two weeks for degree students. It is expected, that the students get familiar and are also able to implement these changes into their lives straight away. The respondents conceded the need for certain transition period for the students, as it is a radical change for all, after the secondary school level. The respondents proposed a transition period during the entire first semester, so all the students would have time to adapt to the new way of working. One respondent remarked that, for instance, the length of the transition period is one year in Norway. Some of the teachers stated that it would be beneficial also for the Finnish students. During this period, the students would be given another option, for instance, to choose to write an essay or to give a presentation, to work alone or in teams, etc. At the same time, the teachers would systematically prepare the students for the 'Finnish way', gradually require and emphasize the importance of its adoption for their future studies or even working in a global world. The respondents assume it would decrease the dropout rate during the first semester, and increase the well-being of all students.

LUAS employees also agree on the importance of every teacher dedicating some time, ideally at the beginning of a new course, to discussion with students about what their expectations are, what the ways of studying and teaching in their home countries are, etc. It would be also educational for all students to hear about these differences and enriching for the teachers too. Some of the respondents also proposed, that these issues should be required already when applying for studies abroad, so the teachers are already aware of these expectations and can prepare a plan for adjustment. In the case of exchange students who are coming to Finland usually only for one semester, it would be very beneficial in planning the lectures, number of contact lessons, deadlines, schedules, etc. All students coming to

Finland should be informed more about the Finnish pedagogy system, to decrease the possible surprises.

Intercultural education of students is necessary for their future. Such training is offered only to students of the Business Faculty, and recently to some extent in the Faculty of Healthcare. The course names are Cross-Cultural Competences (for the graduate degree students) and World Cultures (for the undergraduate degree students). All the respondents indicated that the courses should be offered and be preferably compulsory to every student in all LUAS faculties. The reason behind it is that it is an essential part of the education of every student and sooner or later every student will interact with foreigners, at school, at work, as a future exchange student or at some point in their private life.

The interviewees recognized the importance of their roles as a teacher and a supporter. All the interviewees confirmed that one of the equally important parts of internationalisation has been neglected, that being the intercultural training and development of the LUAS teachers and other staff. Only one of the respondents has actually participated in one short intercultural course, three respondents have studied the topic due to their previous education or own interest. Having LUAS offer the international student programs with no training and education of its teachers was considered as alarming by all the interviewed employees. One of them commented on it as being "scary to hear".

All participants agreed unanimously that an effective, continual training, together with the experience with being a foreigner can improve one's intercultural competence and minimize the challenges while dealing with foreigners as mentioned earlier.

Bennett (1993) underlines the impact of intercultural training and education on our natural behaviour. It is a change helping us to explore 'new relationships across boundaries'. Such a sensitive and not easy endeavour must be accommodated delicately. Many people admit communication with people culturally different from themselves elicits more fear and worries than dealing with people similar to them. This leads to preferences and avoidance of one group to another. (Cushner 1998, 4)

The merit of such an education would be to understand the cultural diversity and its impact but moreover it would prepare both students and teachers to effectively live and collaborate together.

IC training proposals

During the interviews, the different training ideas were discussed and the participants provided valuable input. The various educational activities were coming from the preliminary survey, literature review and the interviews as well. The training ideas are divided into two groups, one dedicated to LUAS staff (Table 9) and the second to the students (Table 10).

First, the training and educational proposals for teachers and other staff will be presented.

- Basics of culture

All respondents agreed on using existing and successful intercultural courses, designed for LUAS students, for educating the school staff as well. The benefits are that the courses are ready to use, in-house professionals teaching these courses are willing and moreover, excited, to deliver the information to all LUAS employees.

The interviewees would appreciate including some real case studies, role plays and simulations, from which they could learn. The optimal ratio between the theory and practical issues is needed. The members of the group consider it beneficial to combine the practical part of the training with the international students, in the form of a case study, a project, an assignment, etc. There are students representing different cultures, and there is nothing better than getting them involved and by this interaction, everybody can learn and benefit. One of the respondents stated "we have the potential already in the building".

- Teaching in multicultural teams

The teachers confirmed it would be productive to support the staff education regarding how to teach in multicultural groups. The teachers commented it would help them to motivate the diverse students for reaching better results, which could also be reflected in the International Student Barometer, for instance.

- Intercultural communication skills

An effective communication with people is a foundation for success anywhere, at school, at work or even in everyday life. According to the respondents, it might get more challenging if the interacting people are of different cultures and using a non-mother language to communicate. It is very connected to basic cultural knowledge, as it helps to understand one's way of communication and furthermore, one can adjust one's own style.

- Non-verbal communication

Depending on the cultural background of an individual, one expresses him/herself more or less through the body language. As participants confirmed, they tend to use more gestures while using English to simply support what is said verbally. However, gestures, facial expressions and eye contact degree may have different and very often negative meaning in some cultures.

- Workshops/peer counselling

The respondents remarked that the workshops or peer counselling would be a great option for further education. People could reflect on their own experiences or challenges, discuss possible solutions and most of all learn from them.

- Mentoring

The group found mentoring as a useful tool. The principle relies on one more experienced colleague, a mentor, who closely works with and supports the less experienced colleague/colleagues. The benefit is also seen in a possibility to approach the mentor if one is having some difficulties or is uncertain. Just the existence of a concrete person is regarded as supportive.

- Handouts

All the respondents warned about the lack of time, therefore they would appreciate brief summaries of the most common cultures present in LUAS to help them in their work. They also proposed that such summaries/handouts could be prepared by the students, or even by a teacher and a student as a part of their intercultural training project.

- Cooperation with universities/companies abroad

Another way how to interact with foreigners and gain practical knowledge and experiences is through various international projects between universities or even companies.

- Buddy program/Teacher tutors

An interesting proposal came from the preliminary survey, where a Buddy program used in Mikkeli UAS is used. This Buddy program lies in forming small groups including a teacher and an international student/students and they do some activities together, such as cooking, having a cup of coffee, etc. As commented by one of the respondents "anything that would lower the barriers" would be useful.

Similarly, the role of teacher tutors is seen. According to the respondents, the tutoring has been promoted more, recently. However, some of the teachers interviewed have had experiences with tutoring, and they agreed that again the time is a restriction in order to deliver a quality service.

- Language courses

The respondents agreed that supporting employees in their language skills improvement could increase the quality of the student education. Through a language course, one also gets familiar to some extent with the culture and communication related issues. The offer of Finnish courses for foreign colleagues should be considered as well.

- Mobility of teachers

The majority of the interviewees confirmed that teachers who are giving lectures or courses abroad are mostly the same persons every year. The language skills,

time and planning/organizing, family issues and also anxiety were mentioned as the main obstacles for other teachers' mobility. As a solution, the respondents proposed going abroad in pairs. One newcomer would accompany and assist the already experienced teacher abroad. The next time, the newcomer would go already alone and it would ease the stress and motivate other teachers to experience such an opportunity. One of the respondents even affirmed that they have applied this approach in their faculty already.

- Socializing with the host teachers

An interesting idea came from the respondents, proposing to increase socializing with the guest teachers in an informal way. Especially for those teachers who are planning to go on exchange to the guest's country would find it useful, in order to build contacts and obtain information. Also other school staff could gain information about the culture or way of working. People could also share their challenges regarding the exchange students and how to deal with them.

- More international colleagues in LUAS

The respondents also expressed their wish to increase the number of the international colleagues in LUAS. They agreed the current level is too low for an international institution. They claim that more international environment could be instrumental in improving their language skills and also the intercultural awareness.

Table 9. LUAS staff training

	Name	Description
F o r s c h o o l s t a f f	**Basics of culture**	Finnish culture
		Other cultures
		Similarities and differences
		Involve international students -> part of the training.
		The perception of Finns by other cultures and vice versa -> overcome possible misunderstandings.
	Teaching in multicultural teams	Different teaching methods and tools used in multicultural groups, challenges and the reasons behind them, solutions, how to motivate students.
	Intercultural communication skills	Effective communication with foreigners.
	Non-verbal communication	Body language, gestures -> its meaning in different cultures.
	Workshops/peer counselling	To reflect on own experiences/challenges/solution and learn from them.
	Mentoring	Create groups of teachers -> one more experienced mentor + the less experience ones.
		Having a person to get an advice/support if one faces a cultural challenge.
	Handouts	Summaries of certain cultures, expectations, similarities and differences in behaviour, in education, etc. Could be a project between students and teachers during the intercultural competence course.
	Cooperation with universities/companies abroad	Involvement in international environment – international projects. An option if one is not able to go as exchange abroad -> experiences.
	Buddy program/Teacher tutors	Forming a small group of one teacher and one or more international students. Meeting informally, learn from each other and bringing the cultures.
	Language courses	Language and the culture
		English courses
		Finnish courses for foreign staff
	Mobility of teachers	New teachers to go exchange (not always the same ones).
		Support - going abroad in pairs (newcomer+somebody who has been there already)-helps to introduce newcomer to others, share information and expectations. The next time, the newcomer goes alone.
	Socializing with the guest teachers	For those planning to go as exchange teacher to the guest university -> making contacts, getting information
		Small group meeting -> exchange of information about culture, way of working, challenges teachers might face with students from such a guest country in Finland or the Finnish students have in the guest country.
	More international colleagues in LUAS	Language skills improvement, culture awareness, part of the internationalisation -> attractive to students.

Secondly, the training and educational proposals for the students will be offered.

- Intercultural courses

All the interviewees are in unison regarding the intercultural courses (Cross-Cultural Competences and World Cultures course) to be available to the students of all LUAS faculties. Such courses are an integral part of education.

- Language courses

Finnish language courses for foreign students should be available also in advanced levels to help the international students in their internship or work placements.

- Student Tutors

It is regarded as an efficient way of helping newcoming students in their 'university' life. The student tutors are being trained, however, it should be made sure, that the tutor is providing the support expected. There have been cases of tutors contacting and meeting the new student only once. According to the exchange student feedback from May 2014, 55% students found the student tutors less helpful regarding information source (The Exchange Student Feedback – spring semester 2014).

- Mobility of students

Mobility of students is a priceless part of the internationalisation process. Some of the teachers stated that mobility works well especially in the Business faculty. The stress should be put on the students of other faculties, for instance the Technical faculty.
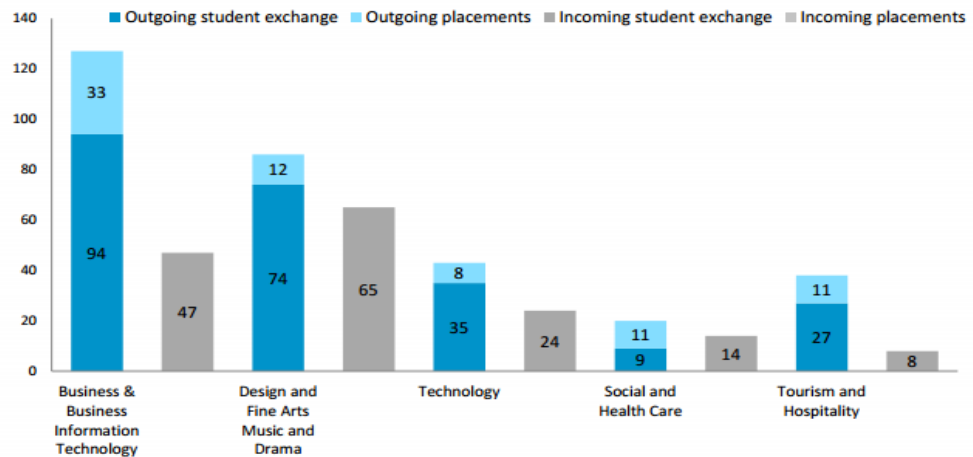
Figure 29. Student mobility in study fields in 2013 (CIMO statistics 2013)

According to CIMO statistics (2013), 314 students experienced student exchange or placement outside Finland longer than three months during 2013. LUAS hosted 158 students from abroad. In Figure 29, the number of students is divided according their field of study.

- Meeting with the guest teachers

Once having the guest teachers coming to LUAS, the students should take the opportunity and discuss what kind of studies the guest university offers, for instance. It could be valuable for those students considering an exchange placement.

- Tandem

One of the teachers notified a Tandem course. The core of the Tandem course is to bridge the different cultures with the Finnish one. One Finnish student and one international/exchange student meet on regular basis to discuss certain topics and learn about one's culture and habits. At the end of the course they are asked to write an essay about similarities or difference they found between the two countries. The two students can practice language skills, have a great chance to acknowledge other cultures and make new friendships. For the foreign student it could be very helpful to have somebody local to help with everyday issues or even to integrate into the local society.

- Friend-Family project

Two of the respondents mentioned a Friend-Family project, which was active in the past, but not anymore. There is a hope, to restart the project again. The idea lies in connecting international students with Finnish families. Both parties can broaden their minds; can improve their language skills, learn something about different cultures and in ideal cases, find a new friend.

- Increase cooperation and collaboration between foreign and Finnish students

A common obstacle of increased cooperation and collaboration between the local and foreign students was discussed. All the teachers agreed it is the teachers' role to mix the teams. Agreeing on the way of working in multinational teams and explaining the reasons behind could help the students to cooperate better. One sensitive option how to mix the teams is to state that there's a need of at least one Finn in the team in order to help with the translation of the Finnish texts. This might sound logical and useful to all. It is part of the education to learn how to cooperate with people from different countries as it is needed for their future careers.

- Content courses in languages other than English

To increase the students' language skills and also atractiveness of the school, content courses in other than Finnish or English languages could be offered. By this way, the students would acquire the language knowledge on a deeper level in comparison with the classic language courses. The exchange or international students, in whose home country the specific language is used, can be involved and contribute to the learning process. German, French and Russian languages were proposed.

Table 10. LUAS students training

	Name	Description
F o r s t u d e n t s	**Intercultural course**	To all students of LUAS.
	Language courses	Finnish for foreigners in advanced level.
	Student Tutors	Effective way to support new students, bridging the cultures. Making sure they meet more than once.
	Mobility of students	Especially to increase the mobility of students from other faculties than the Business Faculty.
	Meeting with the guest teachers	Asking information about the guest country, offers of the university, etc.
	Tandem	Finnish student+ international student -> discuss different topics, compare the differences or similarities, learn some basics of Finnish/other language. Great help, support or even friendship.
	Friend-Family project	Finding a friend family for international degree students -> both parties benefit from improving the language, learning about new cultures and getting a new friend.
	Increase cooperation and collaboration between foreign and Finnish students	Multicultural interaction is necessary for developing the intercultural competence.
	Content courses in languages other than English	Such as German, French, Russian, etc. To improve language skills of students, also increases attractiveness of the school.

Challenges

The biggest obstacle connected with the intercultural training is a time and resources. It includes the time and resources for organising the courses and meetings and the time of the school staff to participate in these trainings. Another challenge is the motivation of the LUAS staff to take part in these trainings. The interviewees believe those who are interested in this topic would engage in the training. The question here is how to motivate the 'others' who are not interested at all. Interviewees were asked whether they think such training should be voluntary or rather compulsory as a part of the employee's contract and training development. Of the respondents, ten proposed the training should be compulsory for all or for those involved in international programs at least. Only two respondents agreed with the voluntary option only. The members of the group also agreed on the way how this obligation would be presented and reasoned. They agreed, by definition having something compulsory is not motivating. However, if it is explained, that this is part of the school's strategy and employee's development in order to increase the well-being of students and teachers and thus increasing the competitiveness and attractiveness of LUAS,

people would approach it positively. The support of the LUAS management plays a strategic role. People agreed that a specific time should be dedicated for this education and development, in other words, the training should be implemented in their working hours. Another way how to motivate the employees is certain pay rise in case one is developing his/her competences or is being certified.

The intercultural competence development is a lifelong process, which never ends (Deardorff 2010a, 90). The same approach should be taken with the training itself. The respondents agreed, the training should be continual and people should meet regularly. Some people proposed the first general training to be organised rather as an intensive course, with several lectures per week. The continuation of the training could be on a monthly basis, as a part of the monthly school staff meeting or on the individual needs of the small groups.

In general, each and every training should bring some knowledge, development, and understanding, the goal is not one's attendance only. Therefore, personal development targets should be set up. One of the respondents said no targets are available at the moment. Based on the targets, further semi-tailored education can be organised.

No agreement on a standardized mechanism for assessment of one's level of intercultural competence exists among scholars and researchers (Deardorff 2004). According to Deardoff's study (2004), in institutions where students' competence has been measured, an average of five different qualitative and quantitative methods is being used per institution. The assessment consists of observation, case studies, self-evaluation, evaluation by others and interviews. To use a mix of methods is proved by the intercultural experts as the most appropriate way of assessing the intercultural competence.

As a conclusion, multiple methods should be used for measuring students and staff degree of intercultural competence. Self-evaluation (OSEE tool), student's feedback as well as others' evaluation and case studies should be considered. A mentor and his/her observation, evaluation and a subsequent feedback and recommendations play an important role in the developmental process of one's

intercultural competence. A number of assessment tools are available in the market, among others, the IDI questionnaire used in this Master's Thesis. The measurements should be executed over time, thus pre-post and ongoing assessments are recommended in order to measure the development of one's competence and also to evaluate the quality of the training itself.

Intercultural competence is a never-ending developmental process, thus it is difficult to measure one's competence. The aim should be rather on measuring the development, and therefore the pre-post assessment is recommended.

5.4   Cross-analysis

Upon completion of all of the research methods, outputs of the empirical section were combined and reflected in the theoretical framework. This cross-referencing will contribute to the Master's Thesis research questions answering.

The preliminary survey and interviews outputs confirmed that the experience of interaction with foreigners and its frequency have an impact on the interlocutor's confidence. Naturally, those of international relationships and marriages have a certain advantage. People also indicated that the higher the exposure frequency is the more confidence is gained with non-verbal communication. However, the IDI group results proved that people tend to overrate their abilities. Therefore, the number of people (67%) confident dealing with foreigners, expressed in the preliminary survey might be overestimated as well.

Both survey and the interviews validated the importance of the communication skills in interaction with people. In the case of the people being from different countries and cultures, the language skills are substantial. The level of the language skills limits the intensity of interaction and communication, understanding and integration into a society or a group. Increased awareness and knowledge of one's own and other cultures minimize the challenges people notice in terms of general behaviour, the stance towards the time or even the 'preferences' of one nationality to another as seen according to the preliminary survey in LUAS.

The IDI group profile indicated the Minimization orientation of the group of volunteers. These volunteers are people with a positive attitude, interest and experience with the multiculturality. The majority of the preliminary survey respondents answered affirmatively the question 'Do you think people tend to think their own background and culture are the most appropriate ones?' To regard one's own culture as the best or superior to others is one of the signs of Defense orientation (Bennett 2004). Therefore, we could assume that the LUAS orientation lies in between Defense and Minimization. The Defense stage is characterized by 'us and them' which can be seen as Finns and non-Finns. The International Student Barometer survey, the preliminary survey and the interviews brought attention to the existence of islands of Finnish students and international students. The need for increased interaction, cooperation and integration of those two islands was pointed out. The disparity between Finns and non-Finns are not limited only to the students but are exactly mirrored in the LUAS organisation dynamic. Based on the interviews, the same islands of Finns and non-Finns are seen also among the employees.

By being educated, acknowledgeable and exposed to multiculturalism, one becomes more aware and confident to deal with differences in a positive way. There is a strong need for intercultural education in LUAS, declared by the absolute majority of the respondents. The interviewees agreed such training should be mandatory for those involved in the international programmes and optional for other LUAS employees.

RQ1: *What are the key factors influencing intercultural competence?*

Based on the literature review, intercultural competence consists of four elements, these being Attitude, Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour. The most important element is Attitude, which forms the foundation of the competence. All elements are in a close relationship and they influence each other. If one is endowed with Attitude, Knowledge and Skills, a transition period starts. In this period, one needs maturity time to transform knowledge and skills into the competences, to

implement the theory into practice and start to behave and act in an interculturally competent way.

The whole process of the intercultural competence development is influenced by various factors and naturally it is exposed to many challenges.

According to the literature review and the interviewees, the most powerful factor is Willingness to accept the differences which exist; it is the willingness to learn, to understand and to adapt to these differences. Most of all, it is the Willingness hand in hand with Openness and Curiosity, to interact with diverse people and cultures in order to experience the differences and enrich our lives, our new way of thinking. It helps us to realize that things can be done and also perceived differently in different parts of the world. These factors influence our Attitude and thus our Motivation to gain new Knowledge and Skills. The outcomes of the preliminary survey and as well the interviews confirm that one should be aware of one's own culture, including the positive and negative aspects. It is also crucial to acknowledge that another culture is different but not necessarily good or bad. According to Meyer (2014, 248), 'People often find it difficult to see and recognize their own culture until they start comparing it with others'. However, only once people are able to identify the typicalities and differences from other cultures, only then one 'can begin to open a dialogue about sharing, learning, and ultimately understanding' (Meyer 2014, 244).

Empathy plays a significant role too. Some people are naturally more sensitive and empathetic than others. Empathy is connected, for instance, with the experience of being minority in a foreign country. This could be accomplished by increased teachers and staff mobility. Especially in education, Empathy can help to build the bridges between cultures faster. One can 'sense', how a foreign student might feel, why he or she behaves certain way and what would the student appreciate at that stage of his/her experience of being the 'odd' one. Among the most mentioned skills, one should possess when dealing with foreign cultures is the art of Communication, knowing 'what, how and when' should be said. It covers the ability to listen and observe, to read in between the lines, consider the body language, etc. Language skills are essential too. The Czech proverb says '*As*

many languages you know, as many times you are a human being'. According to Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, the first president of Czechoslovakia, the proverb has much deeper meaning, saying "It does not refer only to the ability to communicate in different languages, but also the ability to share in various spiritual spheres of different cultures" (Czech Language and Literature 2006, 54).

Nearly 70% of the employees participated in the preliminary survey feel, that they do not receive sufficient Support from LUAS regarding intercultural matters. Almost 95% of the respondents believe that developing the intercultural knowledge among the employees would be beneficial. Based on the interviews' outcomes, the missing employer support was divided into three areas. The first one being the most mentioned and most emphasized one, the time. In the interviewees' perception, there is a lack of time dedicated for the education and development or even not enough time for the teachers' support of international students, cooperation or projects. The teachers stated that due to the shortage of time, the quality of service and support provided towards students is at stake. That is also related to the second area being the lack of resources, followed by the missing intercultural training and education. The latter one is meant especially for those involved in the international programs, but most preferably to all LUAS employees.

According to the interviewees, Commitment is represented by LUAS policy and strategy. The implementation of the internationalisation strategy is falling behind, particularly in teachers and staff education, in how to teach and deal with multicultural groups. The personal development plans should be accompanied by the targets, so the improvement and development should be measurable. In this way, people feel more committed and also motivated. An example could be a pay rise based on the targets achieved.

These findings are reflected in the refined conceptual framework seen in Figure 30, where the theory based preliminary model is completed by the empirical outcomes.
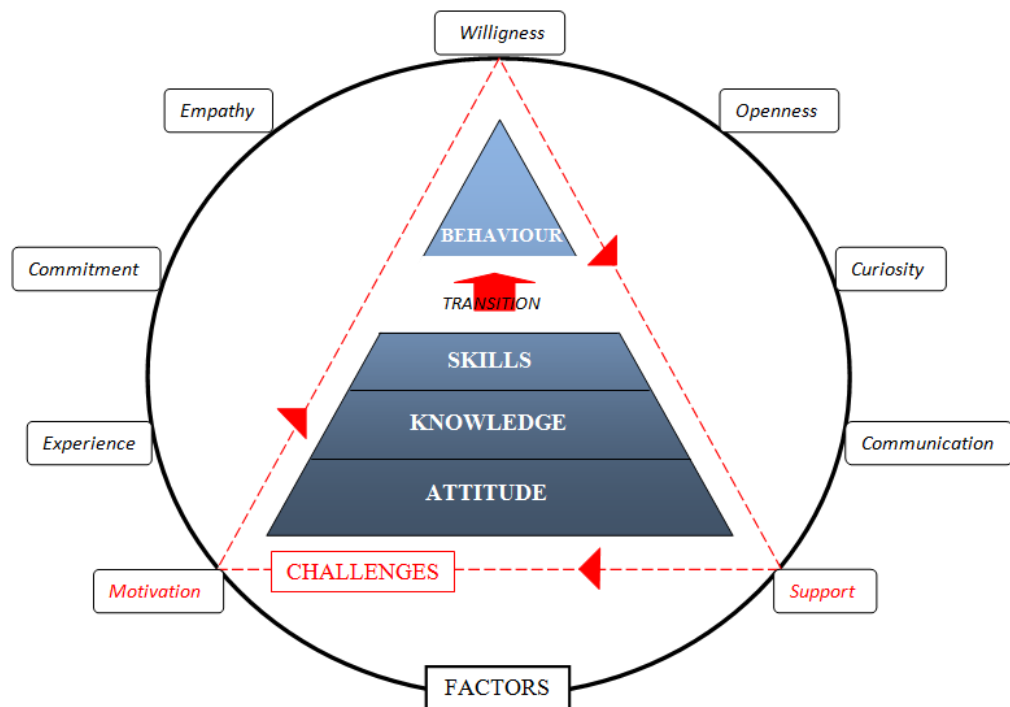
Figure 30. Intercultural competence – refined conceptual framework (Medkova)

RQ2*: What is the current situation and what are the main challenges that LUAS personnel are facing regarding the intercultural competence/sensitivity?*

The LUAS employees find intercultural competence as an inseparable part of the internationalisation of the higher education institution. Currently, the LUAS personnel feels the intercultural education and training among personnel has not been addressed adequately. The absolute majority (94.6%) of the people agreed that an intercultural education and development would be valuable and could decrease the challenges they face when interacting with foreigners. The interviewees agreed if such a systematic education is in place, it could enhance the quality of communication and mutual understanding. As a consequence, the quality of teaching and study results can grow and thereupon the students and teachers well-being improves. Subsequently, the interviewees concurred in changing the LUAS environment and brand for better, for instance, the International Student Barometer results. Based on the interviews, some people

expressed worries, that LUAS would prioritize other needs and challenges to the intercultural education, in general.

Through the whole process, people face various challenges, which are stopping them from moving forward. Based on the theoretical and empirical outcomes, challenges exist through the whole process, general challenges, and specifically in the transition period (Figure 29). The challenges are listed in Table 11.

Some of the factors mentioned before have been considered as challenges at the same time and are marked in red in Figure 39. According to the respondents, the general challenges are comprised of time and resources. Additionally, one of the challenges is the very awareness of the need and understanding the importance of intercultural competence. As it was mentioned earlier, people are not born with such a competence (Deardorff 2009). Another challenge is the tendency to overestimate one's own skills and abilities, in other words, people find themselves skilled enough and no need for further development is thus needed. This was also an opinion of some of the respondents. Stereotypes, prejudices and assumptions that we all share the same core values and beliefs, thus we are the same, are great obstacles as well. The factors mentioned above, such as Willingness, Openness and Curiosity help to overcome these challenges and, therefore, change one's attitude.

During the transition period, one faces the challenges of implementing the theory into practice. Even if one is aware and knowledgeable about an appropriate behaviour, subconsciously he/she keeps behaving and judging according to the same stereotypes like before. Here, the mentoring or peer group mentoring can help to share knowledge, address the areas, which need more attention and development and function as a support and motivation.

In order to overcome stereotyping and overgeneralization, it is crucial to be aware of the differences between personality traits and cultural differences, in general. A use of culture-specific information and cultural dimensions of various models should be sensitively balanced.

Table 11. IC related challenges

	Challenges	Description
Organisational	**Support**	Time and resources dedicated to IC education. Time and resources dedicated to international work (Students, projects, cooperation). Implementation of the internationalisation policy into practice - education and development of the teachers and staff (Change Management).
	Motivation	Motivation to actively develop one's competences, participation in trainings and projects.
	Overestimation	Overestimation of own abilities to act in IC way. Stereotypes, prejudices, assumptions.
	Awareness	Awareness of the need of IC education specifically among the LUAS employees.
	Priority	Understanding the importance of IC development and education as a part of internationalisation of higher education.
Transitional	**Implementation**	Implementation of the theory and new knowledge and skills into practice. The transition of knowledge and skills into competences.

RQ3: *What should be done to improve intercultural competence?*

This thesis offers several recommendations to the case company in order to improve the level of intercultural competence among the school staff and also proposes ideas for students' intercultural competence development.

To start with, LUAS needs to acknowledge the importance of and the need for the intercultural competence development. Continuous training and development are expected from people working in the educational sector, in general. Constant staff training and development, the staff internationalisation, multicultural pedagogic approach, etc. are incorporated in LUAS International Strategy 2013-1016 (2013).

Here, the implementation of the strategy lags behind in the staff intercultural education, for instance. In order to smoothly implement all the objectives, there must be a dedicated person or department communicating and managing the implementation and the change. Every change brings challenges and if those challenges are not addressed, it creates a negative attitude and zero motivation among the employees. In the case of LUAS internationalisation, a need for job description review resulting into and sufficient working hour's division exists. Personal development plans should be extended to personal targets in order to increase the employees' motivation. To reach the personal targets and the strategy objectives, education and training should be offered. Conducive to the newly obtained knowledge and skills, collaborative mentoring, coaching or peer counselling would be beneficial. The detailed training ideas for LUAS employees are listed in Table 9 and proposals for students training and education can be seen in Table 10.

Finally, the assessment of competences should be measured. As it was mentioned earlier, in the case of intercultural competence, the development determination should be applied rather than only measuring the competence level. The methods mix should be used, including self-evaluation, observation and evaluation by others, such as mentors and coaches, interviews, etc.

The assessment outcomes could function as quality indicators and should be incorporated in the school's internal quality audit and consequently in the external quality audit as well.

Quality audit, in general, provides a process overview directly linked to either company's products or services. Its aim is to ensure that an organisation operates effectively and by monitoring the current stage, it helps to maintain the quality of an organisations' management system by offering possible corrective actions and improvements. As teachers' and other school staff's intercultural competence influences the quality of services provided to its customers, the students, it should be included in the quality audits. In case of LUAS, the effectiveness of the implementation and progress of the intercultural competence development process would be checked against the targets of LUAS International Strategy 2013-2016

(2013) or other organisational documentation including the Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009–2015(2009).

During the whole process, the support is fundamental. The process visualisation is seen in Figure 31. Two kinds of support are required. The first one is the organisational support, which mediates the employees' satisfaction, motivation and commitment. According to the respondents, this kind of support is weak or missing. The second kind of the support is on individual or group level and it is crucial for personal development and reaching the targets. This kind of support is represented by mentors, coaches and group counselling, for instance.

A mentor provides advice by sharing knowledge and experience. A mentor guides people to their personal and professional growth and development and enriching him/herself at the same time. A mentor supports a person to overcome potential obstacles and challenges and gives regular feedback. Collaborative mentoring can be useful in applying the learned skills and knowledge into practice. On the other hand, a coach aims to improve one's abilities to better performance and helps a person to adapt to changes. Coaches can be very helpful in improving and reaching one's language skills, for instance. Both mentors and coaches would participate in one's evaluation process. Sometimes, people keep doing the same mistakes as own blindness is involved. One can attend a course, even successfully finish the studies, and then the transition period starts. It is very critical to have the support at this stage. It is vital to have a concrete person to ask for an advice or to assure oneself. Peer counselling can be very useful as well, as one does not feel alone with the same challenge. By sharing the positive and negative experiences within the group, creates mutual support between each other.

Mentor's or coach's feedback guides a person in the right direction (personal targets) and decreases the transition period and in some cases even the stress from a change or something new. At the same time, a mentor and a coach together with other assessment results help to design the semi-tailored training for individuals or groups.
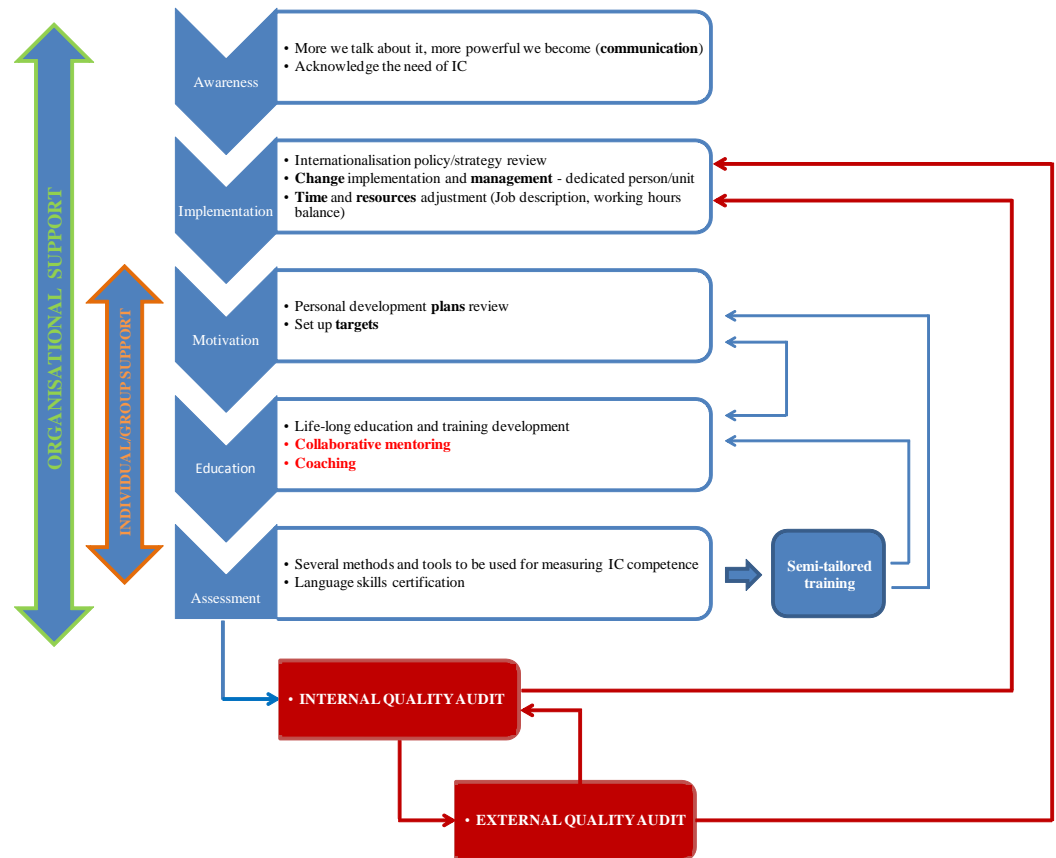
Figure 31. LUAS improvement process

LUAS should aim towards an environment without the imaginary islands of Finns and various groups of foreigners and focus how to bridge the islands and cultures. This involves the body of both the staff and students. The interaction between people of different countries of origin should be implemented in the intercultural training in the practical part. This would connect different people, students and teachers, and enrich their knowledge and experience. Teachers should assure the diversity in student teamwork. The same should be reflected in staff cooperation on projects. The aim would be to involve the international and exchange students more in school activities (Language and culture courses, projects) but also outside the school (Chinese New Year party, International Days, Tandem courses) to be used as part of the intercultural education.

The intercultural competence development is an endless process and, therefore, the training and education approach should be life-long.

6   CONCLUSIONS

The chapter first discusses and reflects on the need and importance of intercultural competence development among the LUAS employees, and the students as well. Then, the validity and reliability are presented, followed by the implications for further study. Later, the research questions summaries are presented. Finally, a number of recommendations and the study conclusions are introduced.

6.1   Discussion and reflections

As the good reputation of Finnish education and expertise is internationally recognized, LUAS could export and sell Finnish know-how with the 'international twist' more in order to gain more finances. Among the LUAS strategic countries are Russia, China, Brazil and India, lately also the Middle East (International Strategy 2013-2016 2013, 8; interview source 2015). And even here, and mostly here, one needs to be interculturally competent and aware of the cultural differences and adjust the Finnish way to the target cultures.

Internationalisation should also be integrated into all teaching and goals of teachers' internationalisation should be set.

Based on the interviews, the author gained a lot of insights and the feeling of the working environment. Being a student at the same institution gave to the author the chance to see the LUAS environment from both perspectives, the students' and employees' one. The LUAS employees have good and constructive ideas and opinions about improvements. Their voices should be heard and taken into consideration. The teachers and other staff should be more involved in decision-making, especially directly connected with their job.

To obtain a feeling of an international environment in LUAS, where every single person, no matter his/her nationality or culture, is equally important and appreciated, it should be made sure all messages meant for all people are distributed in Finnish and English as well. A few non-Finnish interviewees commented on this topic 'if they want me to be involved, they speak English, if not they speak Finnish' even if it concerns that person. In one case, a non-Finnish

colleague missed a social event due to not understanding the invitation in Finnish, despite the fact that everyone in the faculty was aware of it.

Contradicting with the above mentioned, LUAS employees would appreciate more international colleagues in their workplace also in order to improve their language skills. When the non-Finnish interviewees were asked about their opinion, their comments were that if they speak Finnish, no one would speak English with them anyway. Increasing the cooperation between the Finnish and non-Finnish students is heard from every corner of the school. However, there is an equally important need to increase the interaction and break the isolated islands between the LUAS Finnish and non-Finnish colleagues too.

6.2   Validity and reliability

This Master's Thesis is based on both qualitative and quantitative studies, supported by the theoretical framework. Using the three different methods for empirical data collection increases the validity and reliability of the study.

The methods used in the empirical part of this study are reliable. However, the reliability of the research is inherently compromised due to the human factor. The survey and interviews can be redone, nevertheless the outcomes may vary based on the presence of respondents and non-respondents and other circumstances. Current mood, recent experience or even a schedule pressure can influence human judgment and attitude. That being said, this view is also supported by the preliminary survey respondents' view on response accuracy. The results revealed the opinion of 64% of the participants that people would reflect their views in the survey accurately and 34% not accurately. The preliminary survey design could be improved, as two of the respondents commented on the questions' quality. The author herself also discovered that one of the questions was not clearly stated and therefore was not included in the analyses. The IDI questionnaire features high reliability and validity, therefore it is expected the results to be the same if repeated.

The multiple sources of data collection, such as internal and external reports, formal studies and academic articles, together with the selected empirical methods, contributed to answering the research questions.

The validity of the research is good as the volunteers sample for the IDIs and in-depth interviews represent both teachers and non-teachers, Finns and non-Finns and the sample was gender balanced.

6.3   Further study

The author suggests that student intercultural competence should be explored further as such a competence is expected and required from the global working and living environment.

Given the main factors and challenges that are having an impact on the staff competence development, support and motivation were found as the core ones. Further studies on organisational support and motivation ought to be researched.

Further research on how to best measure one's intercultural competence needs to be carried out as well.

The author developed a hypothesis of a cultural identity shift among a couple of interviewed foreigners. The interviewees 'C' and 'L' have scored higher in their IDI results in comparison with other non-Finns (Respondents 'B', 'I' and 'H'). The interviewees 'C' and 'L' do not find their nationality entirely belonging to their original nationality but through times, they have integrated themselves as locals as well. At the same time, living abroad the majority of their life causes certain detachment from the primary nationality. Other Finnish interviewees also confirmed they find these two people ('C' and 'L') as Finns to some extent. Respondents 'B', 'I' and 'H' find themselves in 100% of original nationality. The fact of being unresolved in Cultural Disengagement after living in a foreign country for some years might inhibit respondents 'B' and 'I' from adapting to a new culture. However, the cultural disengagement is not directly related to the degree of one's intercultural expertise. The existence and the reasons behind this phenomenon may be explored.

Another area worth examination is the definition and expectations of an international education, in general. What does 'international' education mean? In terms of Finland, is it Finnish, European or 'international'?

6.4 Research questions (RQ) summaries

RQ1: What are the key factors influencing intercultural competence?

The literature review was a foundation for creating a preliminary framework of the intercultural competence concept. The factors mentioned in the literature were then compared with the factors presented by the respondents in the preliminary survey, but mostly during the interviews. The preliminary framework was then modified and factors were identified. The factors can be seen in the refined conceptual framework in Figure 30 and are described in detail in Chapter 5.4.

RQ2: What is the current situation and what are the main challenges that LUAS personnel are facing regarding the intercultural competence?

The outcomes of the preliminary survey and the interviews confirmed the early hypothesis, that the intercultural competence of LUAS teachers and staff has not been addressed enough. The majority of the employees feel that LUAS does not support them sufficiently and consider the development of intercultural competence education and training as needed and required.

The list of challenges is seen in Table 11. From the organisational point of view, the biggest challenge is the LUAS support towards its employees, including the time and resources needed for quality service. Also, the same challenges seen in the classrooms and outside the school are mirrored in the organisation itself. Greater interaction and cooperation between locals and foreigners should be built.

Intercultural competence is not a gift one is born with. It is a systematic and never-ending development process or even a lifestyle. Therefore, active participation in the process of education and training plays a fundamental role. Intercultural competence is a part of higher education internationalisation. In order to boost its development, support and motivation are needed. Only when these conditions are met, the employees' positive attitude and willingness can be expected. LUAS should provide education and training in the first step. The training proposals are listed in Table 9 and 10. The time for training participation should be allocated. In the second step, individual or group support should be provided. As an example, mentoring, coaching and group counselling were pointed out. In the third step, the international experience should be enhanced, including the mobility of teachers, increased number of international colleagues in LUAS, more international projects and cooperation, etc. In this step, the focus should also be in bridging the diversity and connect the people of different cultures together.

6.5   Conclusions and recommendations

Internationalisation of higher education has led to a greater appreciation and importance of intercultural competence development of students and staff. This provided the impetus for the research. The aim of this Master's Thesis was to raise the awareness of the intercultural competence importance. By understanding the current situation regarding the LUAS employees' intercultural competence, recommendations for improvement were proposed. The study helped to understand the process of intercultural competence development and the factors and challenges LUAS employees are facing.

LUAS has put a lot of effort into internationalisation in terms of the curriculum, the presence of international and exchange students, embedding the process into the school strategy, etc. However, this research, conducted in 2014/2015, highlighted a number of weaknesses in the implementation of LUAS internationalisation among its employees, the cornerstones of the institution.

The teachers and the other school staff are the ones, who are exposed to the interaction with the students from different cultures the most. They are the ones who need the support and attention at first, as only interculturally competent people can educate and help the students to navigate these culturally diverse waters respectfully. And still, after 15 years of providing the international programs in LUAS, the majority of the employees have not been trained to deal with multiculturalism.

By understanding the current situation regarding the intercultural competence in LUAS, the factors and challenges of LUAS employees were analyzed and finally the recommendations were made. Cognizant of these factors and challenges, the internationalisation implementation and organizational support among the LUAS employees should be reviewed. The employees' intercultural education and training should be added. Moreover, a review of the curriculum of all LUAS students should be enlarged by the intercultural education modules, to ensure that graduates have the competence required by the globalised world.

Understanding the factors and challenges at play in the intercultural development process, and by addressing them, LUAS establishes a healthy productive environment for its employees and subsequently for the students also.

Intercultural competence is increased by experiencing intercultural encounters. Travelling, student and staff mobility are valuable. However, one does not need to travel far away as the school is full of opportunities to meet new cultures, to practise one's language skills, to learn more about other cultures or to find a new friend. It would be very beneficial to have more international teachers and staff in LUAS. One should however also think about grabbing such an opportunity and to really speak to his/her international colleagues or a student, to discover their culture, to discuss and help the colleague to integrate into the local community.

 It is a paradox, that the same challenges seen in the students' intercultural matters are mirrored in the organization dynamic of the school. While 'theirs' (students) challenges have been noticed and discussed, the 'ours' (LUAS staff) challenges have been overlooked.

Concluding from this thesis, the school should concentrate on how to bridge the cultural spaces between Finns and non-Finns, within the student environment, the organisation itself and the local community, and ultimately all these environments together. This should be done in school but outside the school as well. All these activities should be considered as part of the diversity promotion and education and could be well incorporated in the course's syllabus.

Additionally, to create more international environment in LUAS, more international teachers should be hired. The teachers and staff mobility strongly support this idea. Also, attention should be paid to the thoughtful language selection in the LUAS communication. The international environment creates such condition, that even with no knowledge of a local language, one is still able to work or study in another language, such as English. However the ability to speak a local language should always be appreciated and supported. Communication in LUAS should be in Finnish and English. The more exchange students and teachers the school has, the more it becomes important as the aim is to connect all people together, no matter of their country of origin or mother language. The level and simplicity of the communication set up the dynamic of the institution.

The level of the English language skill is core to the success of this international environment. There is no mechanism in place at the moment. The same principles of language certification requirements for students should be adopted for the school staff as well. It should be kept in mind that language itself is only a vehicle helping us to understand the world from others' perspective. LUAS should provide language courses (English, Finnish) to its employees. For instance, the English language teachers could act as coaches and attend the lectures given in English by other colleagues. They could then evaluate the teachers' skills and materials. At the same time, these English language teachers could give ideas for development and consequently the semi-tailored courses could be then organised into smaller groups to meet the needs.

According to the scholars, intercultural competence is a process with several stages. It is obvious, that such a process needs time, knowledge and experience to

develop. At first, culture-general and specific knowledge should be delivered to all, combined with the practical training, such as case studies, tasks and simulations. In order to effectively develop the theoretical knowledge and skills, mentoring and coaching can provide the needed support and feedback. Based on the assessment from multiple sources, a semi-tailored training plan for individuals and groups can be established in line with the personal targets.

In general terms, certification is important in the Finnish context as the meaning of being 'certified' is a synonym to being 'qualified'. The question is how we establish that one is interculturally competent, whether he or she is able to deal, communicate, work and teach multicultural students?

The intercultural competence development, its assessment, the language certification and the students' feedback and surveys (ISB), should be incorporated in LUAS internal and external quality audit.

Being 'certified' does not necessarily mean being competent. It takes more than that. The transition period is required in order to mature. During this transition period, mentoring would be very supportive and effective. Therefore developing the collaborative mentoring in LUAS is essential.

Intercultural competence is a continuous process. It should be implemented in other than culture courses. This competence plays its role in many activities, such as a new product design, when marketing and presenting a new product or service, anywhere where people are involved. Intercultural competence is essential for working in diverse teams, dealing with customers, colleagues and partners from different countries and cultures.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. Preliminary survey

Interaction between foreign people and cultures has been increasing due to the accelerating globalization. Some of us deal with foreign cultures and habits daily, others less often so. In any case, multinational and multicultural interaction brings challenges as well as changes to our work.

In order to understand where we stand with challenges and to be able to cope with continuing internalization in the future, we have prepared a questionnaire to assess possible developing needs related to cultural diversity in LAMK.

Your contribution to this preliminary survey is highly important. These answers will be treated confidentially.

LAMK Pedagogical development office

Socio-Demographic characteristics

1. Nationality:

   Finnish

   Other, please specify

2. Is your spouse/husband of different nationality than you? If yes, please specify the nationality.

   Yes, _____

   No

Intercultural experience:

3. Is it different to deal with people from abroad?

   Yes

   No

4. How often do you personally interact with people from abroad?

   | At work: | Never | Sometimes | Often | Constantly |
   | Outside the work: | Never | Sometimes | Often | Constantly |

5. Please indicate how confident you are when dealing with people from other countries and cultures?

   Confident

Slightly reserved

Reserved

Afraid

6. What are the main challenges while dealing with foreigners?

Language

Communication

Discipline

Sense of time

General behavior

Other:

7. Have you experienced in LAMK anyone to be preferred based on:

Among personnel:

Gender

Nationality

Culture

Religion

No

Among students:

Gender

Nationality

Culture

Religion

No

8. Do you think people tend to think their own background and culture is the most appropriate one?

Yes

No

9. Do you think foreigners living, working or studying in Finland are adapting enough to Finnish habits and way of living?

    Yes, very much so

    Yes, they try to

    I have paid no attention to it

    No, not at all

10. How much do you agree with the statement: 'Knowing and understanding of my own culture can help me to understand other cultures'?

    Agree

    I don't know

    Disagree

11. How confident you are with non verbal communication?

    With people with the same nationality/culture:

    I am sure in most cases

    50/50

    I am guessing

    I am lost

    With people from other nations/cultures:

    I am sure in most cases

    50/50

    I am guessing

    I am lost

Education, training

12. Do you think LAMK supports the personnel sufficiently to cope with intercultural challenges?

    Yes

    No

13. When was the last time you attended intercultural training or seminar? If yes, what type and where?

Very recently,_____

Sometime ago, _____

Never

14. Do you consider it would be beneficial to develop intercultural knowledge among the LAMK personnel?

Yes

No

15. Last, how accurately do you feel respondents reflect their personal views on these topics?

Accurately

Not accurately

Please write here any of your own ideas, comments or experiences when dealing with people from different countries and cultures, and recommendations for LAMK to focus on or explore more. We value your contribution.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

As a next step we are looking for volunteers who would like to participate in our pilot research project. The aim of the project is to map the current situation and challenges. The project involves one on-line questionnaire that could be completed in 15-20 minutes (November/December) and one face-to-face interview (January/February). Based on the outcomes the development program will be prepared.

If you are interested in this unique pilot project, please send us an email to ICCproject.lamk@gmail.com and we will contact you.

Thank you for your time and we kindly ask you to fill the survey until …

APPENDIX 2. Interview questions and themes

Background/preliminary survey

- Years lived abroad (where and for how long)

- How often do you interact with foreigners?

- A foreigner definition

- Have you experienced in LAMK anyone to be preferred based on:

  Gender, nationality, culture, religion (among personnel/students)

	Gender	Nationality	Culture	Religion	No	Total	Average
Among personnel:	4	11	8	1	57	81	4.19
Among students:	3	10	10	0	61	84	4.26
Total	7	21	18	1	118	165	4.22

- Indicate the main challenges while dealing with foreigners?

  Language, Communication, Discipline, Sense of time, General behaviour, Other

- Results from other LUAS respondents:
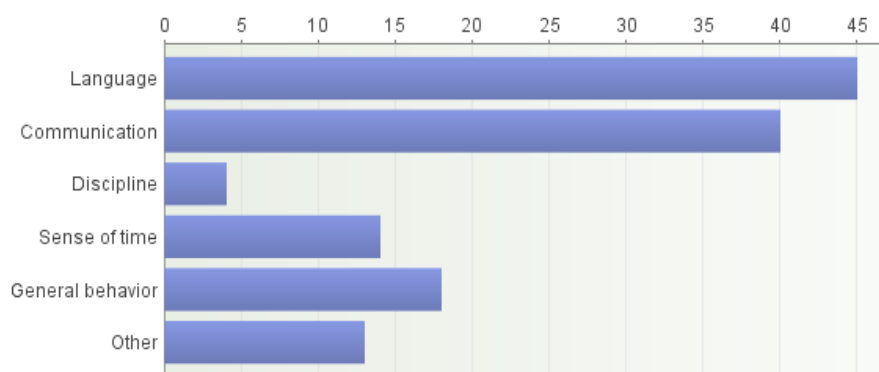
- Language skills of the teachers and staff in LAMK?

Intercultural competence

- Definition of intercultural competence
- Learned vs.born (intellectual vs. emotional)
- Abilities, skills, factors
- Best way to learn it?

Adjustments/Behaviour

- Do you adjust your behaviour when dealing with different cultures?
- What language (neutral vs. Finnish) used in groups of mixed nationalities
- Neutral language in LUAS?
- Do you change your behaviour when being abroad?
- Does your personality change when you change language?
- Do you change your teaching methods with foreign students? How?
- If you had more information about teaching styles in different countries, would you change your style? (Handouts)
- Have you received any info about it or have you asked from students?

Training

- Do you think an intercultural training would influence the results of the challenges?
- What kind of training would be needed?
- Obstacles/Challenges
- Have you attended any training? If yes, what have you applied your learning in practise?
- IDEAS (preliminary survey)
  - Culture-specific information
  - Intercultural communication skills, non-verbal communication
  - Handouts
  - Workshops
  - Mentoring
  - Student/teacher mobility

- o   More foreign colleagues
- o   Increased cooperation and collaboration Finns/non-Finns
- o   Buddy program – teacher+student (case Mikkeli)
- o   Besides English, also German, French, Russian - subject courses
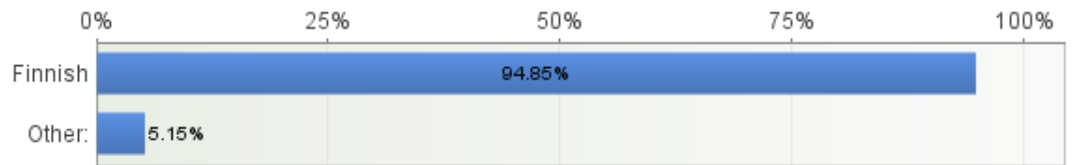- o   Student/Teacher tutors

Other

- LUAS organisational culture - what to improve

APPENDIX 3. Preliminary survey's results

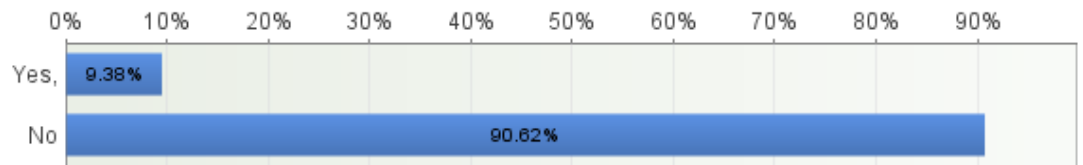1. What is your nationality?*(Please specify)*

Number of respondents: 97

Open text answers: Other:

- Canadian
- USA
- Irish
- British
- American

2. Is your spouse/husband of different nationality than you? If yes, please specify the nationality.
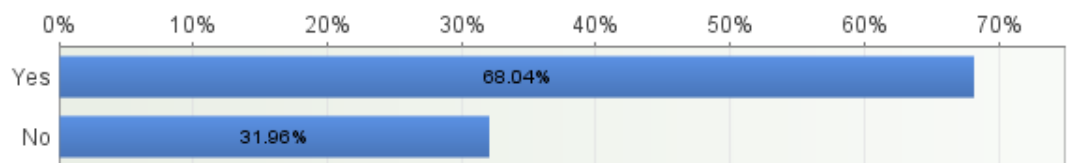
Number of respondents: 96

Open text answers: Yes,

- British
- German
- Russian
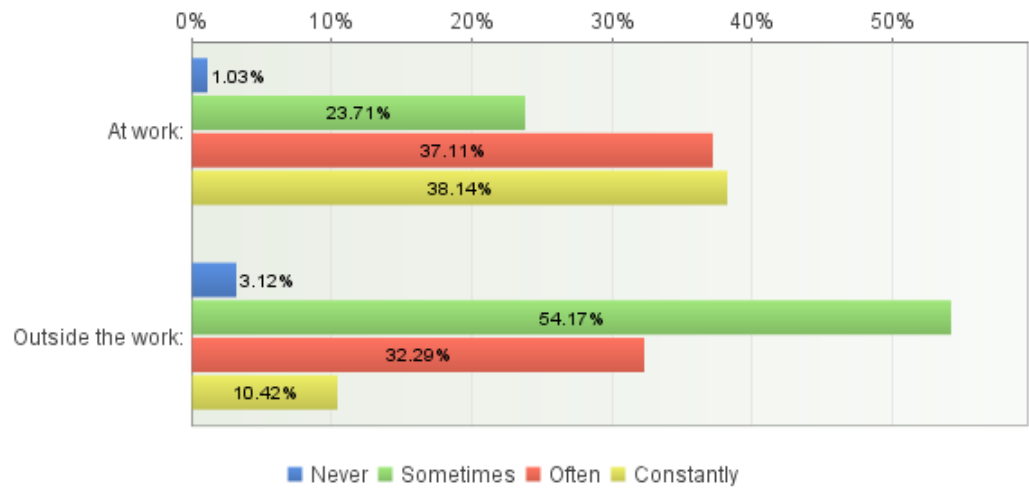- Finnish
- Czech
- Finnish
- Finnish
- Finnish

3. Is it different to deal with people from abroad?
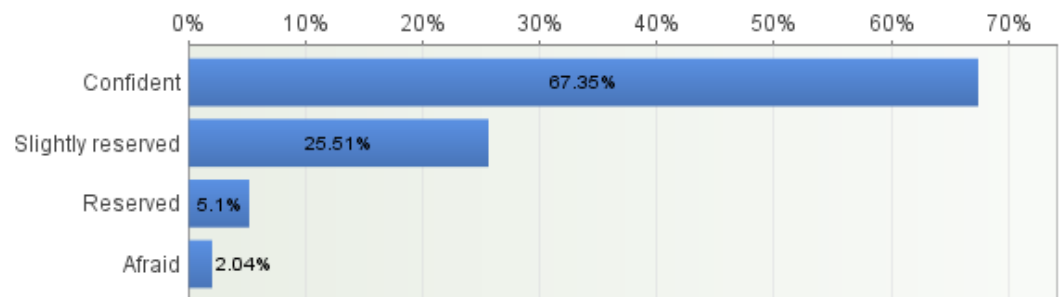
Number of respondents: 97

4. How often do you personally interact with people from abroad?

Number of respondents: 98

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Constantly

At work:
- 1.03%
- 23.71%
- 37.11%
- 38.14%

Outside the work:
- 3.12%
- 54.17%
- 32.29%
- 10.42%

5. Please indicate how confident you are when dealing with people from other countries and cultures?

Number of respondents: 98

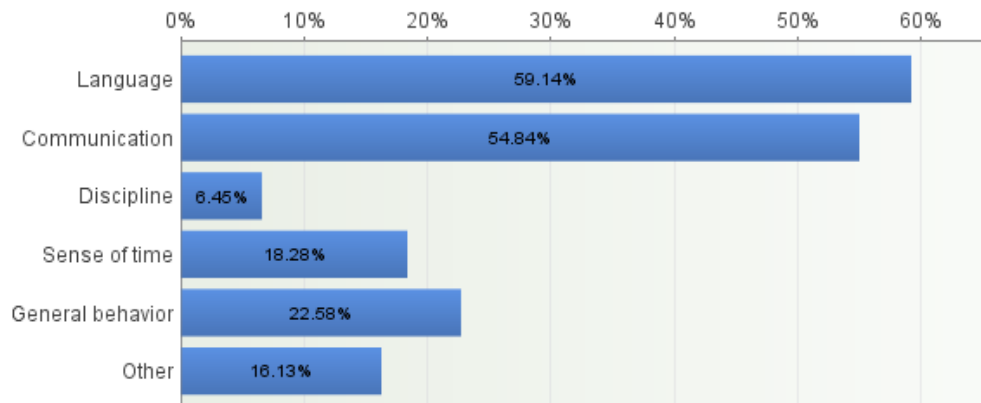- Confident: 67.35%
- Slightly reserved: 25.51%
- Reserved: 5.1%
- Afraid: 2.04%

6. What are the main challenges while dealing with foreigners?

(Please select all possible options)

Number of respondents: 93

- Language: 59.14%
- Communication: 54.84%
- Discipline: 6.45%
- Sense of time: 18.28%
- General behavior: 22.58%
- Other: 16.13%

Open text answers: Other

- Cultural differences in everyday life and in the way of thinking
- Cultural differences, but if I meet a foreigner in Fin, they usually understand that we have different taboos and approach. But it isn't always so and it's different when travelling...
- Sometimes some habits are strange
- culture related topics in general
- No special challenges
- Cultural differences such as accepting a 'no' answer or always requesting 'special services'.
- values
- None
- Cultural differences
- I do not have a clear sense of who is foreign, I suppose not Irish or Finnish..but Europeans are so familiar too. No problems anyway.
- Knowledge of different cultures and differences
- Cultural issues
- None
- different cultural features
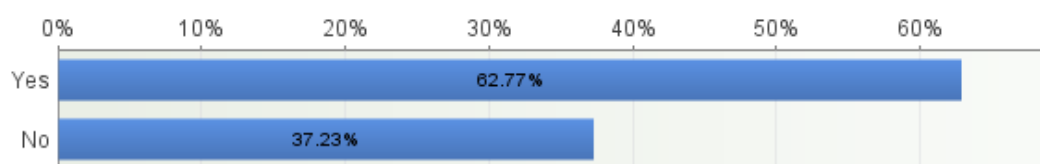- Understanding cultural nuances in gestures and language. Little things matter.

7. Have you experienced in LAMK anyone to be preferred based on:
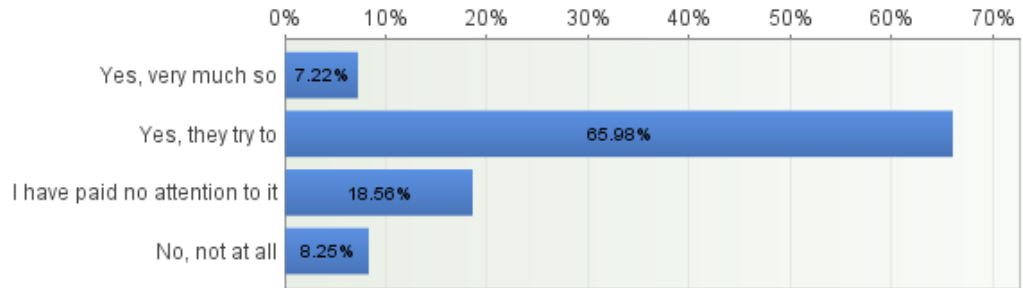
Number of respondents: 95
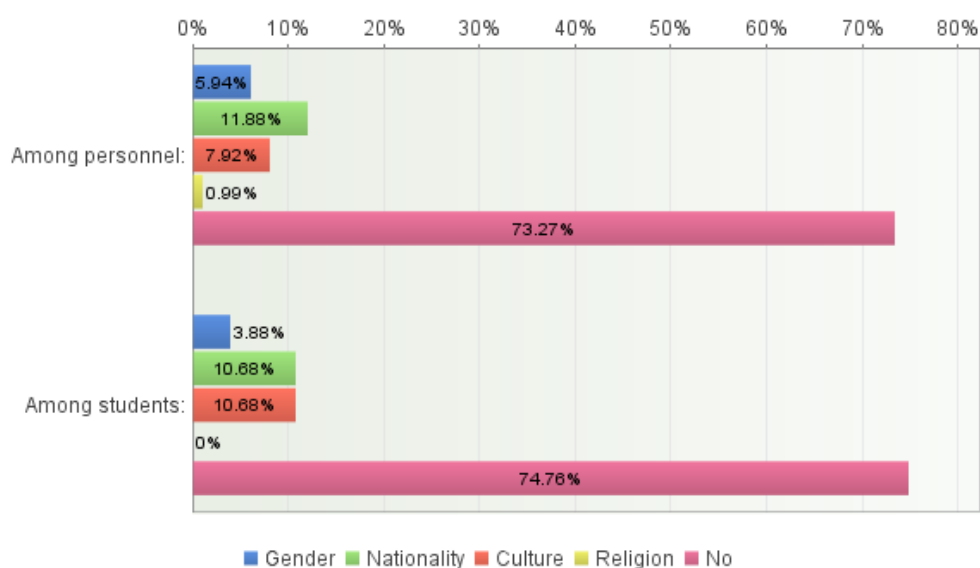
8. Do you think people tend to think their own background and culture are the most appropriate ones?

Number of respondents: 94

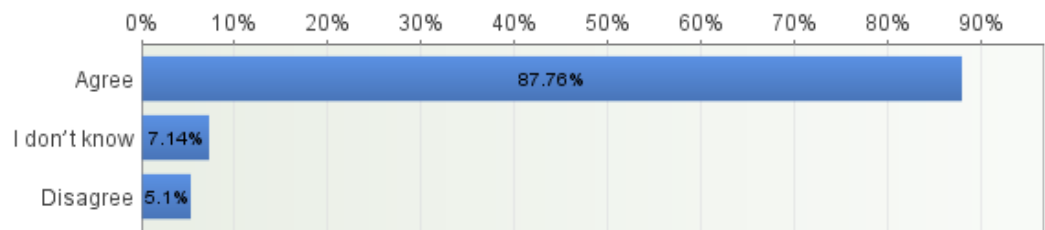9. Do you think foreigners living, working or studying in Finland are adapting enough to Finnish habits and way of living?
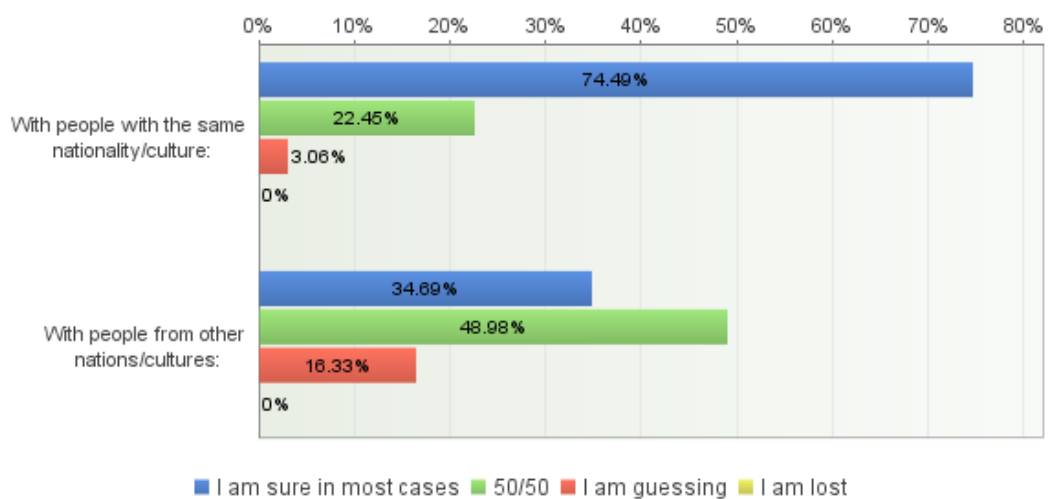
Number of respondents: 97

10. How much do you agree with the statement: 'Knowing and understanding of my own culture can help me to understand other cultures'?
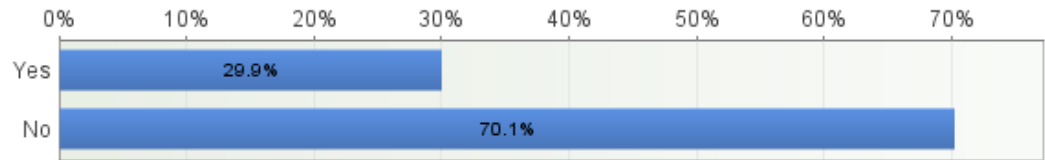
Number of respondents: 98

11. How confident you are with non verbal communication?
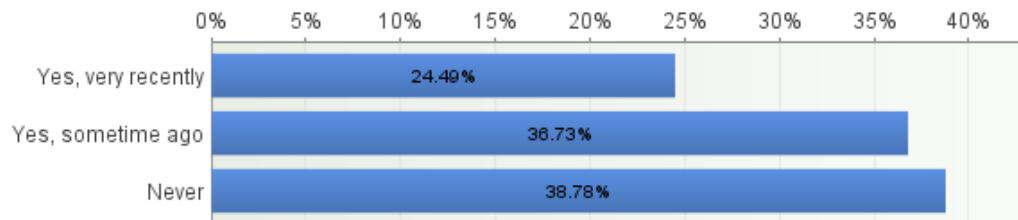
Number of respondents: 98

12. Do you think LAMK supports the personnel sufficiently to cope with intercultural challenges?

Number of respondents: 97

13. When was the last time you attended intercultural training or seminar? If yes, what type and where?

Number of respondents: 98

**Open text answers: Yes, very recently**

- In October in India
- English course
- well, when doing the project for a company, the outcomers were just like Finns involved with the task, that is just natural to give points of view from intercultural foundation --
- I prefer to do this all the time, if I don't have this kind of opportunity in LAMK, I do it in my own time.
- Last week a strategic partner visit in Europe.
- last Monday, it was online meeting, EU-project, people from Finland, Denmark, Scotland and Italy
- I am working in one project aroun this theme, if that is counted in
- International Pop-Up week is going on....
- Language course
- multicultural projects
- Tandem learning session yesterday, BOKU university Wien
- Weekly basis
- when Alan Barrell visited LAMK (Fellmannia) in September
- COOPERATION ACROSS BORDERS – COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSES TO TRANSECTING GLOBAL CHALLENGES - seminar (FinCeal / Unipid)
- meeting in Copenhagen
- I am involved in a project where we develop multicultural competencies of teacher and clinical supervisors, also have studied it in university
- Last spring Riitta Metsänen Multicultural lecture
- International week, LAMK
- Last one was info day by Finnish national agency- the audience and speakers were multinational.
- Development Studies, FUAS, Hämeenlinna
- Days of International Degree Programmes in Seinäjoki, October 2014
- English discussion course.

Open text answers: Yes, sometime ago

- CeBit fair in Germany in March 14
- I has been some time, I do not remember what was the name of it
- Multicultural training at JAMK
- TCE 2011
- Travelling seminar in Matkamessut (Travel Fair) 2012
- Haaga-Helia training few years ago
- some course I tried to take, but then found out that I do not have time for it
- Spring 2014
- Courses in Denmark and Netherlands
- Intercultural competencies for global leadership
- How to teach multicultural group of students, Lahti
- Multicultural customer service, in Turku at my previous workplace
- In HAMK one year ago
- about month ago
- HAMK Teacher training arranged a small course on intercultural competencies. It was organised by Riitta Metsänen.
- at HAMK
- Staff exchange in Netherlands
- exchange students, teacher mobility
- 4 years ago, an international conference
- Informal at the LAMK for staff
- Sometime between 2003-2006, when I did two modules on intercultural communication as part of my English Language BA at University of Luton, UK
- at a previous place of employment, subject was Arab cultures
- Last August, the largest international conference in my field in Lyon, France
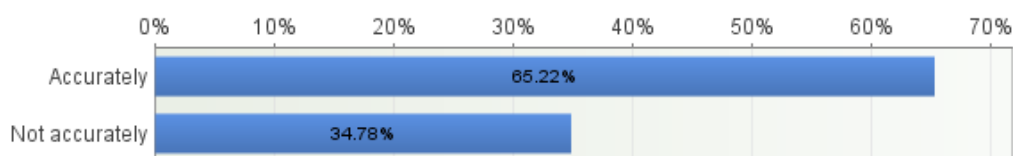- during some conference some years ago
- November in Denmark

14. Do you consider it would be beneficial to develop intercultural knowledge among the LAMK personnel?

Number of respondents: 98
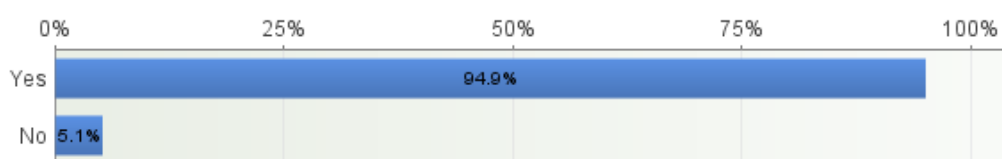
15. Last, how accurately do you feel respondents reflect their personal views on these topics?

Number of respondents: 92

16. Please write here any of your own ideas, comments or experiences when dealing with people from different countries and cultures, and recommendations for LAMK to focus on or to explore more. We value your contribution.

Number of respondents: 36

- I would love to have more international colleagues with different cultural backgrounds. It is very important for me to maintain my language skills.
- I think that most important for foreigners who come to Finland to stay here is to learn Finnish that they can cope with everyday situations as soon as possible. To me it is no use to offer for foreigners services with their own language very long because it can increase their difficulties to adapt Finnish society and habits. On the other hand it is also good for Finnish people to make friends with foreigners for example you can improve your skill in foreign languages.
- Lamk has own professionals who are really deep in these issues. So they could have educational hours for colleagues
- The main problem is the language skills of the foreign students. Especially students coming from China, Taiwan, Japan, the skills of English is normally poor. it is not understanding, when smiling and running away..
- Many of these questions were to be answered by Yes or No only. There topics could have needed some other possibilities too.
- I have been involved with the orientation week for the degree students. At the moment in Lahti UAS we don't have a person who is responsible for the services addressed to foreign degree students. It is said to be in the hands of student services office but maybe the resources are not enough. In the future if we hope to have more international students and if we would like to sell out training or, if legislation changes, degree programmes in the international markets, we have to have the international services for those students all year around.
  Other thing is that to be genuinely international it doesn't mean that we take more international students. Every faculty and every department should consider what it means for them to be international and how to fulfill the promise of international Lahti UAS. And also we should try to enhance the cooperation and co working between international and Finnish students - that is not happening enough currently.
- Let people from different countries and cultures be more visible, let them tell us more about their backgrounds.
- My friend, teacher in Mikkeli, told me, that they have a 'project' where teachers provide some nice 'cultural' possibilities to foreign students - one teacher/one student. For instance my friend baked Carelian pies (Karjalan piirakka) at her home with one AMK-student from Asia. Nice way to build bridges. :)
- Please stop treating international activities as some strange different/difficult/distant function which is separated from normal daily life. International functions should be a part of every academic staff member's daily duties and it is nothing that should be afraid of!
- For me the most difficult situations has been to deal with people from other cultures who have been in Finland long enough that they think they speak good Finnish, but actually I don't understand much or I don't know if I understand right, or I don't know if they understand me.
- Just in my opinion and I might be just making these statements from my own-created stereotypes:
  Many Asian people may be a little bit shy (or something) and tend to stay in groups of their own nationality during their free time. This was different when I lived some time with a couple of Vietnamese guys and they 'had to be with me'. Totally super cool, great and friendly people. I don't know if LAMK can do something about this. The main point being that every culture and nationality is their own complex thing.
- Some of your questions and the options you offer are a bit weird... not carefully thought questionnaire in general.
- This is just a question of time spent with people from other cultures. More time and experience and things will run on their own path.
- Education of intercultural communication would be good for the staff members.
- The key issues in here are cultural related topics. They cannot be learned in seminars or in

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occasions like that. Instead of mass seminars, where everyone has fun but don't learn a thing, the focus should be on those who really have to work with foreign cultures regularly. They need personal assistance and mentoring.

- Although I have much experience with intercultural communication and interact on a daily basis with people from other cultures, I find that I still manage to learn new things from such situations as intercultural communication and 'the other culture'. Also, as a lecturer of intercultural competence in international business I understand the importance of needing to know one's own culture in order to be successful interactions with other cultures.
  LAMK has a long way to go to become interculturally competent. The first focus should be supplying intercultural training programs to all personnel working at LAMK - from the student office to lecturers, from the library personnel to the bosses of different departments. This training should be compulsory to all - many think they know it all already but in real life situations this know-how is not in play.
- Firstly staff would need to become aware of own cultural behavior and values. Next step is to learn about cultural differences and third step is to act successfully in intercultural situations.
- More training for staff needed
- It is not only the people that do deal with foreigners in Finland. It is especially the ones that do not have to deal with them and choose not to, that could also benefit from some training.
- Our organization and way to work in 'silos' in different departments with students from own department is a practical obstacle. Even the students want to work with 'similar' people and that's when a lot of intercultural strengths and opportunities are lost. Could we try more efficient methods (pilots, cases) with different approaches in the whole LAMK.
- In my opinion, the most challenging people are colleagues and their superiors from foreign cultures. We can expect our students to adapt to the practices at our university to a certain extent, but how to deal with colleagues? You need to be polite but also effective and professional. There are big differences in working culture and habits/practices that you should know.
  How to act in a class room or a group where there are representatives of several different cultures?
- I suppose I have learned most from communication and working with foreign students, colleagues (some also in LAMK) from partner universities. Especially I have enjoyed working with colleagues during past years in an international Project. Also it has been very interesting to read the applications of foreign students of our Master programme and corresponding with them.
  I think the best way is to experience real situations and have then opportunity to reflect own experiences with colleagues.
- People rather close their eyes than solve a problem concerning differences.
- Very good project idea. We have an EU-funded project ongoing where we develop the clinical supervisors' and teacher supervisors' multicultural competencies to be better able to supervise multicultural social and health care students.
- Personally I think that all dealings with people from other countries should not be carried out in English, even though this is the typical Finnish approach. One reason for this is that for example in international courses given in Lamk those who have English as their native language are at an advantage. Indo not know of any efforts made to take other language groups into account. There is then the problem that staff language skills are limited, this could be improved. I know of cases where teachers are not to comfortable about giving courses in English either, it cannot be presumed that this work is equally easy for all. Anyway, it is not the job of Lamk (or Finland as a whole) to spread English in the world. There could be more confidence of Finnish as a European language that young people can learn ....then at least the big European /languages could be accommodated better: French and German, and the special neighbor language Russian. Then maybe my views are different to those of others ...but you asked!
- This is a strange questionnaire; it appeared to be aimed at Finnish respondents. I guess I'm trying to say, that actually researching this topic, makes it appear to be a problem. I am not suggesting the topic be ignored- but concentrating on more universal human problems (eg. are staff and students happy?) across ALL nationalities is preferred. Imagine if this survey were about race? That would feel offensive. So why does nationality come under scrutiny, and it feels that you are asking natives to give opinions on foreigners. Why not reverse that

attitude and ask only the foreigners how they feel about the natives?

I've worked for many years with fully multinational teams of people. I once worked closely with a team of 7, of which only 3 were 'local' natives. In the truly international workplace, colleagues are judged on abilities and results- never on nationality. Nationality is never considered- except for language skills, which of course must have some commonality for important communication (usually English). The language doesn't have to be native to the location of the team. Language restrictions actually reveal more subtle and more important human interactions- such as mood, feeling, comfort, stress etc. Body language for example, is truly universal regardless of spoken language. I also studied among an international group of students (not temporary exchange students) and again we never considered each other's nationalities negatively- we actually competed with each other to learn and improve together in our chosen subject. The subject, the study, the course was what mattered to us, not where we came from.

- The staff of LAMK should be aware of
  - The cultural differences of the students that they often co-operate.
  - The challenges that the foreign students have when living and studying in Finland.

- It is kind of a taboo topic even though we should debate it openly in faculty of technology, we need to increase international affairs ie. exchange students and stuff mobility in projects and Erasmus exchange.

- I'm afraid that the administration feels, and justifiably so, that personnel might be interested in developing their intercultural skills, but that it is very difficult , in fact nearly impossible, to arrange times so that this type of thing could be participated in. Somehow it's much easier to arrange cultural knowledge courses for students simply by telling they have to take this course to graduate. Even though there is a bit of interest among staff in this sort of knowledge-building, there isn't clear or strong enough motivations to get people to regularly make time for participation. Our personnel work FULL-TIME!!

- Make the Finnish students to work with the foreign students.
  Lecturing courses in English should have as clear resources as for normal courses. Now the situation is unclear.
  Support teacher exchange and international cooperation.

- I think more attention should be paid to the language skills of students coming from abroad. Their spoken English is sometimes so broken that it's really difficult to understand them, which of course makes communicating a bit difficult.

- I myself would be interested in doing some practical training abroad for a week or two - and I think it could be very good for some of my colleagues, too. This would help to improve language skills and also to understand other cultures and to expand knowledge in our professional skills also.
  On the other hand, we have a lot of foreigners here quite near - our exchange students. Why won't we mix these two: our needs to speak foreign languages and the needs that our students have - to get to know our Finnish culture and people?
  Maybe we already do this? But where and how - I don't know! Does it happen only among students?
  It takes much more resources from the teachers when teaching and helping the exchange students. Some of the faculties don't have enough people who are willing to cooperate with the foreigners.

- - Intercultural trainings and fellowships for staff members would help to cope with people coming from abroad.
  - Also international projects will help this matter as people are forced to deal with this topic.
  - Learning to respect our own cultural background helps to give a proper attention to people from different origins.

- We should be international in our work. Are we? There are a lot of problems in our structures and in our rules. For example someone who came to work here from abroad has problems to follow information we sent to employers and he had problems to get right salary because other countries don't exist same kind on working testimonial system we have. We need to work more intensively with other universities and companies abroad. We need more self-confidence for that, also.
  Last November in Copenhagen I notice that we do right things here; almost anyone of our teachers could give a lecture in seminar abroad. And we need to learn write better English.

APPENDIX 4. Preliminary survey: an adjustment of question number 13, 'When was the last time respondents participated in intercultural training or seminar?'

	Yes, very recently	Yes, some time ago
Intercultural education	I prefer to do this all the time, if I don't have this kind of opportunity in LAMK, I do it in my own time.	I has been some time, I do not remember what was the name of it
	I am working in one project around this theme, if that is counted in	Multicultural training at JAMK
	When Alan Barrell visited LAMK (Fellmannia) in September	Travelling seminar in Matkamessut (Travel Fair) 2012
	COOPERATION ACROSS BORDERS – COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSES TO TRANSECTING GLOBAL CHALLENGES - seminar (FinCeal / Unipid)	Haaga-Helia training few years ago
	I am involved in a project where we develop multicultural competencies of teacher and clinical supervisors, also have studied it in university	Spring 2014
	Last spring Riitta Metsänen Multicultural lecture	Courses in Denmark and the Netherlands
	Development Studies, FUAS, Hämeenlinna	Intercultural competencies for global leadership
	Days of International Degree Programmes in Seinäjoki, October 2014	How to teach multicultural group of students, Lahti
		Multicultural customer service, in Turku at my previous workplace
		In HAMK one year ago
		About month ago
		HAMK Teacher training arranged a small course on intercultural competencies. It was organised by Riitta Metsänen.
		At HAMK
		Exchange students, teacher mobility
		Informal at the LAMK for staff
		Sometime between 2003-2006, when I did two modules on intercultural communication as part of my English Language BA at University of Luton, UK
		At a previous place of employment, subject was Arab cultures
		During some conference some years ago
		November in Denmark
	8	**19**
Language course	Language course	
	English discussion course.	
	2	
	10	**19**

	Yes, very recently	Yes, some time ago
Multinational event or work	Well, when doing the project for a company, the outcomers were just like Finns involved with the task, that is just natural to give points of view from intercultural foudation	CeBit fair in Germany in March 14
	Last week a strategic partner visit in Europe.	TCE 2011
	Last monday, it was online meeting, EU-project, people from Finland, Denmark, Scotland and Italy	Staff exchange in Netherlands
	International Pop-Up week is going on	4 years ago, an international conference
	Multicultural projects	Last August, the largest international conference in my field in Lyon, France
	Tandem learning session yesterday, BOKU university wein	
	Weekly basis	
	Meeting in Copenhagen	
	International week, LAMK	
	Last one was info day by Finnish national acengy- the audience and speakers were multinational.	
	10	**5**
Other	Not specified/missing description 4	Some course I tried to take, but then found out that I do not have time for it
		Not specified/missing description 12
	4	**13**
Total	**24**	**37**

	Original results	Original results adjusted	Actual number	Difference	Unspecified/ missing replies	Original total responses	Adjusted total responses	Adjusted /%/
Yes, very recently	24	24	10	14	4	98	94	**11 %**
Yes, some time ago	37	35	19	16	12	98	86	**22 %**
Never	39	39	69			98	98	**67 %**

Total answers   100   98   98   16

*adjusted to 1 option only per respondent

APPENDIX 5. Preliminary survey: results of the question 'Please write here any of your own ideas, comments or experiences when dealing with people from different countries and cultures, and recommendations for LAMK to focus on or to explore more.'

Language
More international colleagues with different cultural backgrounds, good for maintaining language skills.
Foreigners learning Finnish as well.
Level of language skills of international students.
Finnish skills of foreigners-misunderstandings.
Other languages in place, not only English. Staff's language skills limited.
Level of language skills of international students.
Improve written English.

Education
LUAS professionals educate other colleagues.
Own culture knowledge and awareness - international students.
International functions as part of every academic staff member's daily duties.
Education of intercultural communication beneficial.
One's culture knowledge crucial. Compulsory training for all staff as some may think they know it all already but reality is different.
Own culture knowledge, then cultural differences and act successfully in intercultural situations.
More training needed.
Training to all and especially to the ones that do not have to deal with foreigners and choose not to, that could also benefit from some training.
International colleagues, working culture differences - training.
EU-funded project ongoing to develop the clinical supervisors' and teacher supervisors' multicultural competencies to be better able to supervise multicultural social and health care students.
Knowledge of cultural differences and challenges of foreign students.
Intercultural trainings and fellowships, own cultural background helps to give a proper attention to people from different origins

Mobility of teachers and students
Increase exchange students and stuff mobility in projects and Erasmus exchange.
Support teacher exchange and international cooperation.
Practical training abroad for a week or two - and I think it could be very good for some of my colleagues => would improve language skills, understanding of other cultures and expanding professional knowledge.

Cooperation, International projects/experience

Finnish people to make friends with foreigners, you can improve your languages skill.
Enhance the cooperation and co working between international and Finnish students - that is not happening enough currently.
Mikkeli project-teachers provide some nice 'cultural' possibilities to foreign students - one teacher/one student.
Every culture and nationality is own complex thing. Increase cooperation between Finnish and non-Finnish students.
More time spent and experiences with people from other cultures help.
Cultural related topics cannot be learned in seminars or in occasion, the focus on those who really have to work with foreign cultures regularly. Personal assistance and mentoring.
Efficient methods (pilots, cases) with different approaches in the whole LAMK to increase cooperation between different nationalities and cultures.
Most learned from communication and working with foreign students, colleagues (some also in LAMK) from partner universities. Experience real situations and have an opportunity to reflect own experiences with colleagues.
Cooperation between Finnish and non-Finnish students.
Cooperation between Finnish and non-Finnish students => language and culture knowledge improvement.
I still manage to learn new things from such situations as intercultural communication and 'the other culture' every day.
Increased cooperation and collaboration with international universities and companies.
International projects=> people forced to deal with this topic.

Time/resources

Not enough resources.
No time for development as staff fully booked for daily work.
Unclear resources for lecturing in English.
More time and resources needed for international students.

Other

Number of international students does not mean being international. Every faculty and department should consider what it means for them to be international and how to fulfill the promise of international LUAS.
People rather close their eyes than solve a problem concerning differences.
A taboo topic even though we should debate it openly.
Nationality should never play a role, except for language skills. Language restrictions reveal more subtle and important human interactions- such as mood, feeling, comfort, stress etc. Body language is truly universal regardless of spoken language.
Problems in our structures and in our rules to function internationally, information flow, documents required, etc.
More options for answers needed in the survey.
Weird questions not carefully thought.

Intercultural Development Inventory v.3 (IDI)

EDUCATION

GROUP PROFILE REPORT

Prepared for:

LAMK Staff

Prepared by:

, Lahti University of Applied Sciences, 13.1.2015

In conjunction with Mitchell R. Hammer, Ph.D.
IDI, LLC

For information or ordering the IDI, contact:
www.idiinventory.com

The IDI v.3 is developed and copyrighted (2007-2011) by
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USA

Introduction

Success in the 21st century in our educational institutions demands the *development of intercultural competence*. Intercultural competence spans both international and domestic educational contexts and is essential for students, faculty, staff and administrators as well as society at large.

A Group Profile

Your IDI Group Profile Report provides valuable information about *orientations toward cultural difference and commonality found within an identified group of three or more people*. These groups can include, for example, teaching departments, classrooms, athletic and other school sponsored groups, the parents of your students and members of the community as a whole. The IDI Group Profile can help you gain insight about how your group makes sense of and responds to cultural differences and similarities. Please be assured that the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) is a cross-culturally valid and reliable assessment of intercultural competence. It is developed using rigorous psychometric protocols with over 5,000 respondents from a wide range of cultures. Further, "back translation" procedures were followed in accurately translating the IDI into a number of languages.

The IDI Group Profile identifies the way your group collectively experiences cultural differences. As you review your IDI profile results, your group might consider past situations in which the group attempted to make sense of cultural differences and similarities. Re-framing your understanding of *past events* in this way can help you uncover assumptions that may have guided actions in these situations. In addition, you may wish to focus on a situation or challenge your group is *currently facing* in which cultural differences and similarities have emerged. In education, these challenges can range from changing community demographics, achieving local or national educational learning objectives, graduation rates, curriculum relevancy, as well as school violence concerns. The IDI Group Profile results can help you proactively address these and other concerns as well as increase your own cultural "self-awareness" of your group's own, unique experiences around cultural differences and commonalities. As you reflect on your IDI Group Profile results, consider the following:

- **Did the group respond to each of the statements in the IDI honestly?** If so, then the IDI profile will be an accurate indicator of your group's approach for dealing with cultural differences and commonalities.

- **Did the group think about their culture group and other cultures with which they have had the most experience when responding to the IDI?** For example, if the respondents thought of some idealized "other culture" with which they have had little experience, then you might consider having these members re-take the IDI.

- **Have members had or are currently experiencing a significant professional or personal transitional experience (e.g., moving to another country, traumatic event)?** If so, in some cases, their individual responses to the IDI may reflect their struggle with this transitional situation rather than their more stable orientation toward cultural differences. If this is the case, you may consider having these members re-take the IDI at a later date.

Intercultural Development Continuum

Intercultural competence is *the capability to accurately understand and adapt behavior to cultural difference and commonality*. In education, intercultural competence reflects the degree to which cultural differences and commonalities in values, expectations, beliefs, and practices are effectively bridged, an inclusive learning environment is achieved, and specific differences that exist in your institution are addressed from a "mutual adaptation" perspective.

People are not alike in their capabilities to recognize and effectively respond to cultural differences and commonalities. The intercultural development continuum (figure 1 below), adapted from the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity originally proposed by Dr. Milton Bennett, identifies specific orientations that range from more monocultural to more intercultural or global mindsets.

This continuum indicates that individuals and groups who have a more intercultural mindset have a greater capability for responding effectively to cultural differences and recognizing and building upon true commonalities. That is, your group's success in achieving its educational mission is better served when the members are able to more deeply understand culturally-learned differences, recognize commonalities between themselves and others, and act on this increased insight in culturally appropriate ways that facilitate learning and personal growth among diverse groups.

Monocultural Mindsets
- Makes sense of cultural differences and commonalities based on one's own cultural values and practices
- Uses broad stereotypes to identify cultural difference
- Supports less complex perceptions and experiences of cultural difference and commonality

Intercultural/Global Mindsets
- Makes sense of cultural differences and commonalities based on one's own *and* other culture's values and practices
- Uses cultural generalizations to recognize cultural difference
- Supports more complex perceptions and experiences of cultural difference and commonality

The specific competence orientations identified in the developmental continuum are Denial, Polarization (Defense & Reversal), Minimization, Acceptance, and Adaptation (figure 1). The IDI also measures **Cultural Disengagement** as a separate dimension. Cultural Disengagement is not a dimension of intercultural competence along the continuum. Nevertheless, it is an important aspect of how people relate to their own culture group and other cultures.

Intercultural Development Continuum
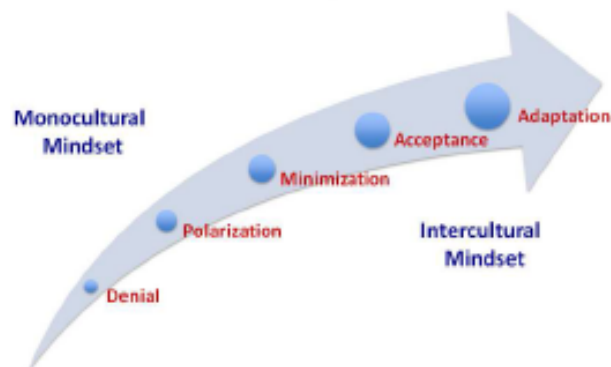
SUMMARY ORIENTATION DESCRIPTIONS

Denial	*An orientation that likely recognizes more observable cultural differences (e.g., food) but, may not notice deeper cultural differences (e.g., conflict resolution styles), and may avoid or withdraw from cultural differences.*
Polarization	*A judgmental orientation that views cultural differences in terms of "us" and "them". This can take the form of:*
Defense	*An uncritical view toward one's own cultural values and practices and an overly critical view toward other cultural values and practices.*
Reversal	*An overly critical orientation toward one's own cultural values and practices and an uncritical view toward other cultural values and practices.*
Minimization	*An orientation that highlights cultural commonality and universal values and principles that may also mask deeper recognition and appreciation of cultural differences.*
Acceptance	*An orientation that recognizes and appreciates patterns of cultural difference and commonality in one's own and other cultures.*
Adaptation	*An orientation that is capable of shifting cultural perspective and changing behavior in culturally appropriate and authentic ways.*
Cultural Disengagement	*A sense of disconnection or detachment from a primary cultural group.*

How to Interpret the IDI Profile

The IDI Profile presents information about how your group makes sense of and responds to cultural differences and commonalities. In addition to demographic and statistical summaries for your group, the IDI profile presents the following information:

- **Perceived Orientation** (PO): A group's Perceived Orientation (PO) reflects where the group as a whole *places itself* along the intercultural development continuum. The Perceived Orientation can be Denial, Polarization (Defense/Reversal), Minimization, Acceptance or Adaptation.

- **Developmental Orientation** (DO): The Developmental Orientation (DO) indicates the group's primary orientation toward cultural differences and commonalities along the continuum *as assessed by the IDI*. The DO is the perspective the group is most likely to use in those situations where cultural differences and commonalities need to be bridged. The Developmental Orientation can be Denial, Polarization (Defense/Reversal), Minimization, Acceptance or Adaptation.

- **Orientation Gap** (OG): The Orientation Gap (OG) is the difference along the continuum between the Perceived and Developmental Orientation. A gap score of *seven points or higher* indicates a meaningful difference between the Perceived Orientation and the Developmental Orientation. The larger the gap, the more likely the group may be "surprised" by the discrepancy between their Perceived Orientation score and their Developmental Orientation score.

  - A Perceived Orientation score that is seven points or higher than the Developmental Orientation score indicates an *overestimation* of the group's intercultural competence.

  - A Developmental Orientation score that is seven points or higher than the Perceived Orientation score indicates an *underestimation* of the group's intercultural competence.

- **Trailing Orientations** (TO): *Trailing orientations* are those orientations that are "in back of" the group's Developmental Orientation (DO) on the intercultural continuum *that are not "resolved"*. When an earlier orientation is not resolved, this "trailing" perspective may be used to make sense of cultural differences at particular times, around certain topics, or in specific situations. Trailing Orientations, when they arise, tend to "pull you back" from your Developmental Orientation for dealing with cultural differences and commonalities. The IDI identifies the *level of resolution* groups have attained regarding possible Trailing Orientations.

- **Leading Orientations** (LO): *Leading Orientations* are those orientations that are immediately "in front" of the Developmental Orientation (DO). A Leading Orientation is the next step to take in further development of intercultural competence. For example, if your group's Developmental Orientation is Minimization, then the group's Leading Orientations (LO) would be Acceptance and Adaptation.

- **Cultural Disengagement** (CD): The *Cultural Disengagement* score indicates how connected or disconnected the group feels toward their own cultural community as defined by each individual within the group. Cultural Disengagement is *not* a dimension of intercultural competence along the developmental continuum. Rather, it is a separate dimension of how disconnected or detached people feel toward their *own* cultural group.

IDI Group Profile

Perceived Orientation (PO)

| 55 | 70 | 85 | 100 | 115 | 130 | 145 |

Denial | Polarization: Defense/ Reversal | Minimization | Acceptance | Adaptation
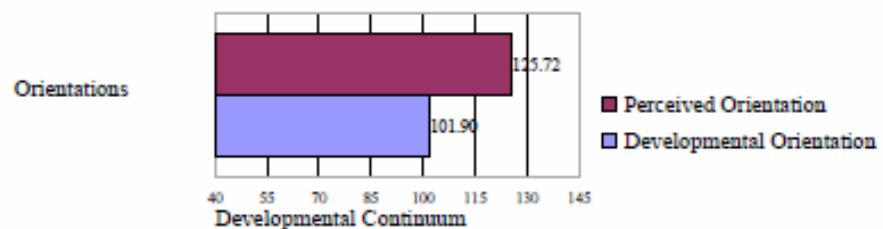
The group's **Perceived Orientation Score** indicates that the group rates its own capability in understanding and appropriately adapting to cultural differences within Acceptance, reflecting an orientation that recognizes and appreciates patterns of cultural difference in one's own and other cultures in values, perceptions and behaviors.

Developmental Orientation (DO)
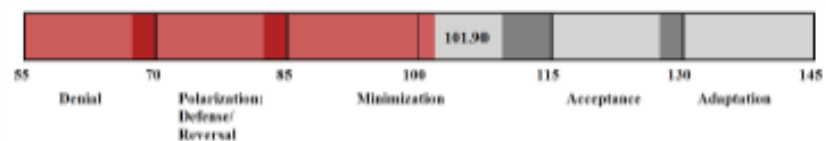
The IDI's **Developmental Orientation Score** indicates that the group's primary orientation toward cultural differences is within Minimization, reflecting a tendency to highlight commonalities across cultures that can mask important cultural differences in values, perceptions and behaviors.

Orientation Gap (OG)

The **Orientation Gap** between the groups' Perceived Orientation score and its Developmental Orientation score is 23.81 points. A gap score of 7 points or higher can be considered a meaningful difference between where the group perceives it is on the developmental continuum and where the IDI places the group's level of intercultural competence.

A Perceived Orientation score that is 7 or more points higher than the Developmental Orientation score indicates the group has overestimated its level of intercultural competence. A DO that is 7 points or more than the PO score indicates that the group has underestimated its intercultural competence. **The group substantially overestimates its level of intercultural competence and may be surprised their DO score is not higher.**

An Education Example

An IDI Group profile of 25 school administrators indicates that their Developmental Orientation is at Minimization. It is likely that, overall, the group's current (Minimization level) efforts at building understanding and awareness of cultural differences and commonalities within the school environment is effective at times and less effective in other situations. Further, there is likely a sense (especially around issues of equal treatment and tolerance of cultural differences) that the educational institution is on the "right track" in creating an inclusive, multicultural community. However, a likely "blind spot" is that the group's efforts at establishing common goals, policies, and practices in the organization may not attend as deeply as needed to cultural differences and integrating those differences in the solutions generated. It is likely that the group will struggle with making decisions and solving problems when cultural differences arise that demand creative solutions in ways that value the differences. The group's level of intercultural competence suggests they will likely be challenged to identify cross-culturally adaptive policies and practices that can guide common efforts across differences.
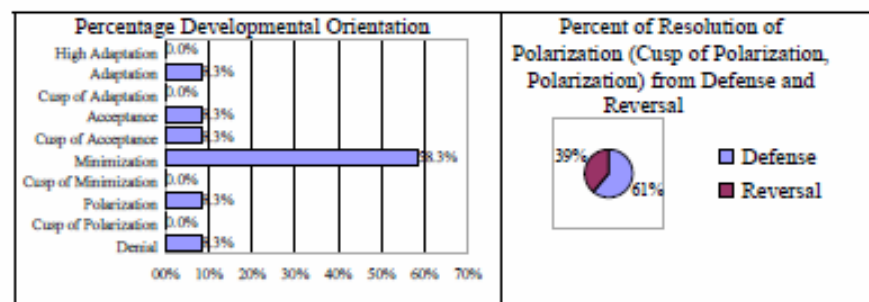
Range of Developmental Orientations

Chart A identifies the percentage of the group whose Developmental Orientation falls within each of the Orientations. Chart B indicates the percentage of Resolution of Defense and Reversal Mindsets among respondents whose Developmental Orientation is Cusp of Polarization or Polarization.

A *narrow range* of Orientations suggests the group has a more consistent perspective they use when confronted with cultural differences and similarities. When this narrow range exists within Acceptance or Adaptation, the group would more likely demonstrate relatively consistent perceptions and behavior that is generally adaptive around cultural differences. One key is how many members possess an "intercultural/global mindset" (i.e., Acceptance and Adaptation) as these members represent particularly helpful perspectives that can aid overall competence development of the group.

A *wider range* of Developmental Orientations (e.g., from Denial or Polarization through

Acceptance or Adaptation) within the group reflects a lack of consensus on how the group makes sense of and adapts behavior to cultural differences and commonalities. In effect, the group has both monocultural mindsets and intercultural mindsets at work. Without targeted, intercultural competence development of the members of the group, it is likely the group will find it difficult to achieve a "shared vision and focus" for meeting educational objectives in a culturally diverse environment.
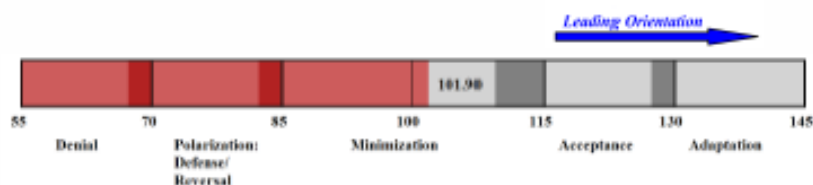
Trailing Orientations

Trailing Orientations are those orientations that are "in back of" the group's Developmental Orientation (DO) on the intercultural continuum that are not "resolved". When an earlier orientation is not resolved, this "trailing" perspective may be used to make sense of cultural differences at particular times, around certain topics, or in specific situations.

Trailing Orientations essentially represent alternative "currents" that flow through an educational institution. When trailing issues arise in a school, a specific situation or decision is then made from the perspective of this "earlier" orientation rather than the Developmental Orientation or mindset that characterizes the predominant way the group deals with cultural difference challenges. When this happens, there is often a sense that "we have been going one step forward and now we just went two steps back." When a group has trailing orientations, it is not uncommon for "progress" in building intercultural competence to have a "back and forth" quality in the school setting, as these earlier orientations arise. As the group begins to "move past" or resolve the trailing orientations, a more consistent sense of progress and "shared focus" emerges.

Below are graphs for each of the orientations that come before the group's Developmental Orientation. Scores of less than 4.00 indicate a Trailing Orientation for the group because they are not "resolved".

There are no trailing or secondary orientations for you.

Leading Orientations

Leading Orientation

| 55 | 70 | 85 | 100 | 115 | 130 | 145 |
| Denial | Polarization: Defense/ Reversal | | Minimization | Acceptance | Adaptation | |

101.90

Leading Orientations are the orientations immediately "in front" of the group's primary (developmental) orientation. The Leading Orientations for this group are **Acceptance through Adaptation**. Acceptance is focused on both increasing cultural self-awareness and learning culture general and culture specific frameworks for more deeply understanding patterns of difference that emerge in interaction with people who are from other cultures. In addition, Acceptance involves the capability to make moral and ethical judgments in ways that take into consideration other cultural values and principles as well as one's own cultural values and principles. As the group begins to more fully recognize and appreciate cultural differences, it is well positioned to look for ways to shift cultural perspective and adapt behavior around cultural differences.

Cultural Disengagement
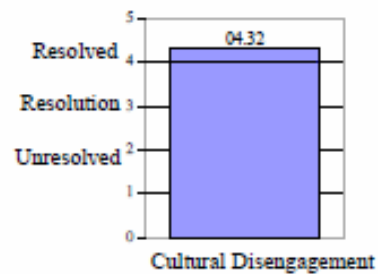
Cultural Disengagement is a sense of disconnection or detachment from one's cultural group. Scores of less than 4.00 indicate the group is not "resolved" and is experiencing to some degree a lack of involvement in core aspects of being a member of a cultural community.

Cultural Disengagement
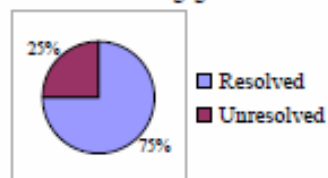
This chart lists the percentage of respondents who are either Resolved (experiencing no sense of being disconnected from a primary cultural group) or unresolved (experiencing a sense of disengagement from a primary cultural community). Overall, the group's Cultural Disengagement score is 4.32, indicating the group is Resolved.

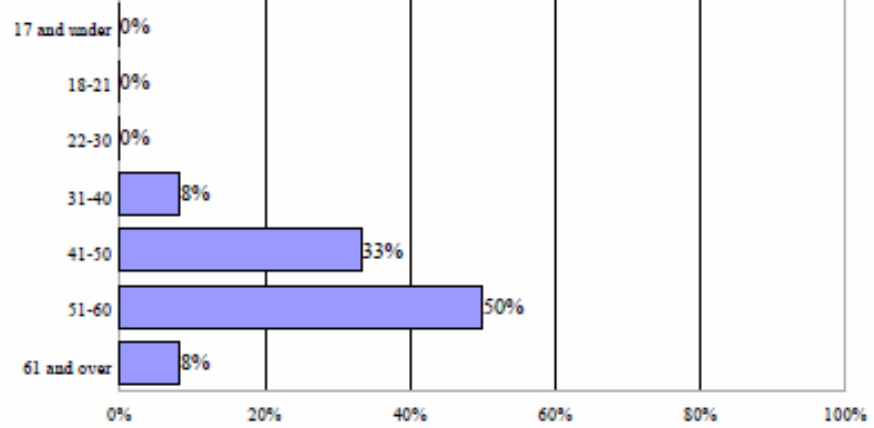# IDI Group Profile

Demographic Information

4. Gender

- Female
- Male

50% 50%

5. Age category:

Age	%
17 and under	0%
18-21	0%
22-30	0%
31-40	8%
41-50	33%
51-60	50%
61 and over	8%

6. Total amount of time you have lived in another country:

Category	Value
Never lived in another country	0%
Less than 3 months	8%
3-6 months	0%
7-11 months	8%
1-2 years	8%
3-5 years	33%
6-10 years	8%
Over 10 years	33%
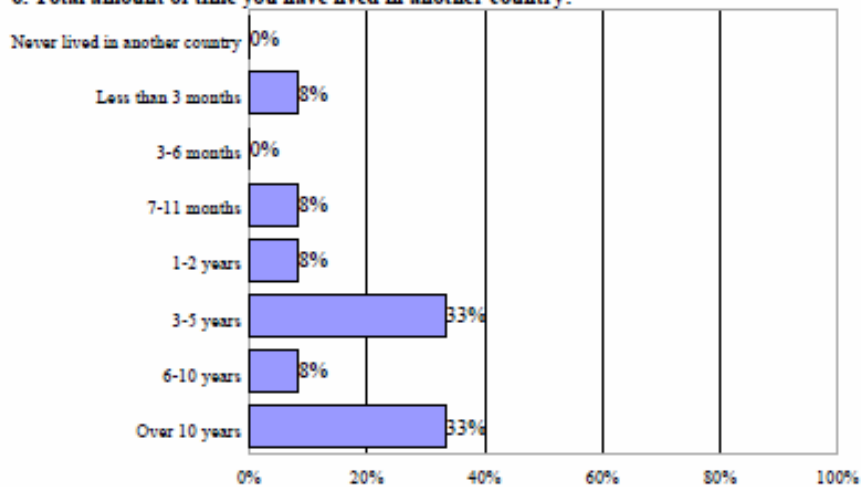
7. Education level (completed):

Category	Value
Did not complete secondary (high) school	0%
Secondary (high) school graduate	0%
Post Secondary (university) graduate	8%
M.A. degree or equivalent graduate degree	58%
Ph.D. degree or equivalent level graduate degree	33%
Other	0%
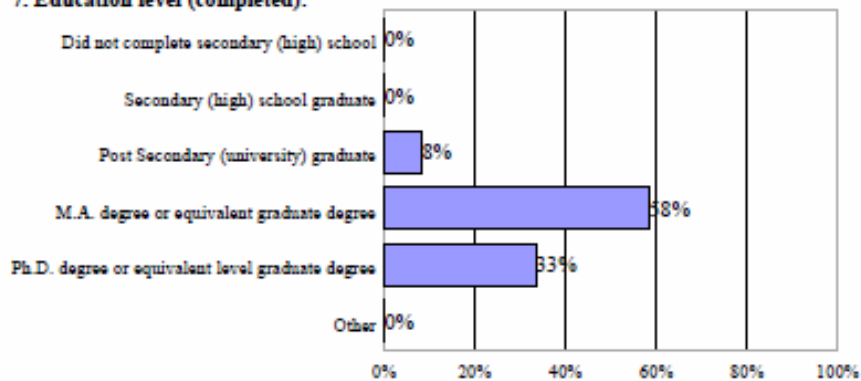
8. In what world region did you primarily live during your formative years to age 18 (please select one):

Region	Percentage
North America	25%
Central America	0%
South America	0%
Middle East	0%
Africa	0%
Australia	0%
Asia Pacific	0%
Western Europe	67%
Eastern Europe	0%
Other	0%
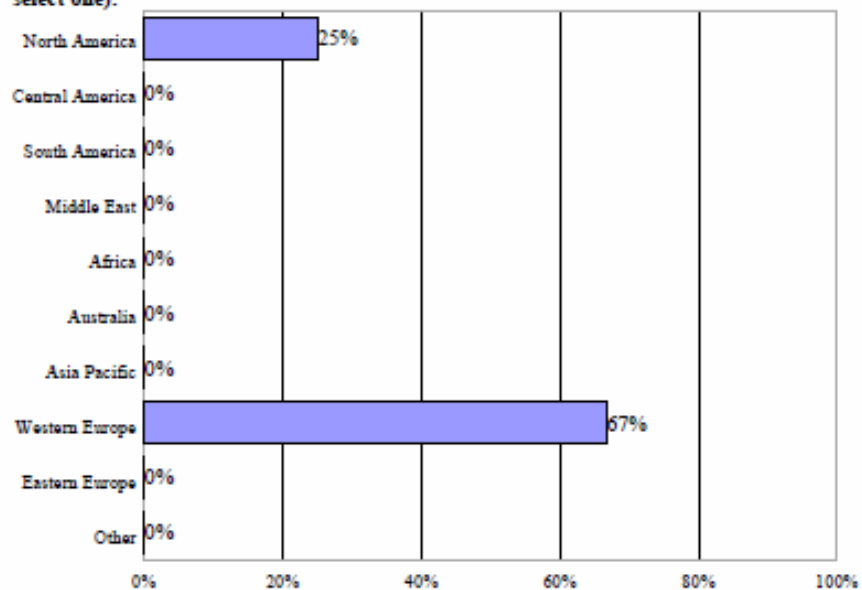
9. Are you a member of an ethnic minority in your country?

	Percentage
Yes	8%
No	92%
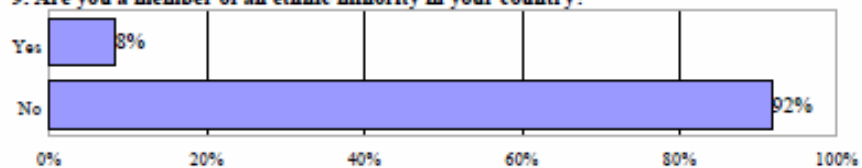
10. Country of citizenship (passport country). Indicate the country that you consider your primary country of citizenship.

Country	Percentage
IRELAND	8%
UNITED KINGDOM	8%
FINLAND	67%
UNITED STATES	8%
CANADA	8%
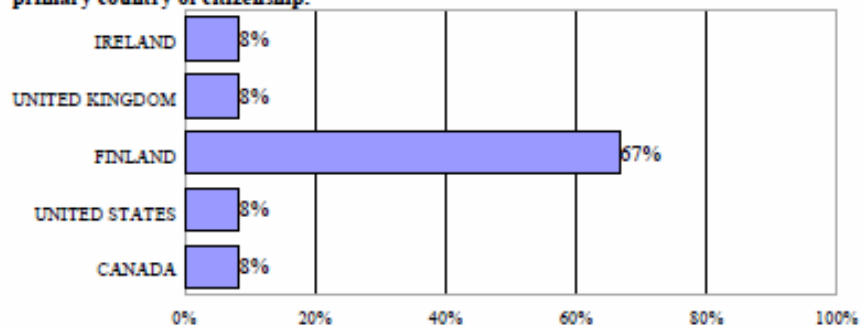
11. Current position in your educational institution:

- Administration: 8%
- Faculty: 58%
- Staff: 33%
- Student: 0%
- Volunteer: 0%
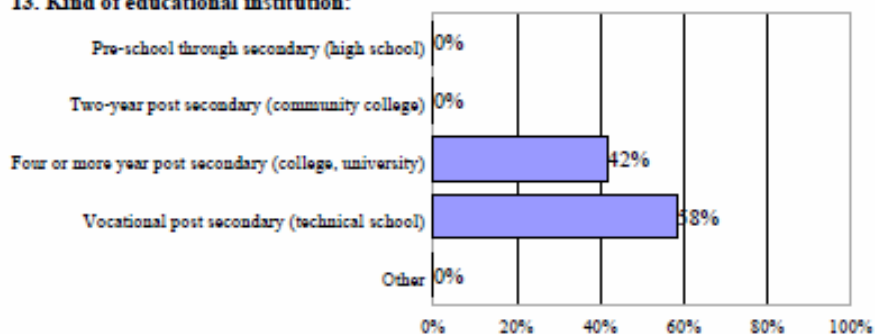- Other: 0%
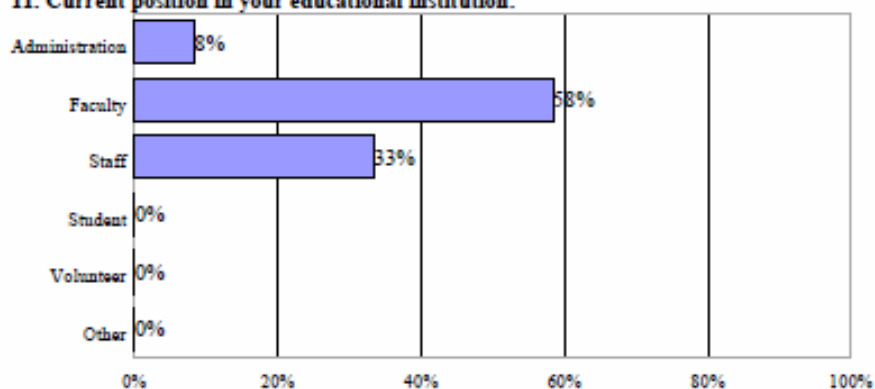
13. Kind of educational institution:

- Pre-school through secondary (high school): 0%
- Two-year post secondary (community college): 0%
- Four or more year post secondary (college, university): 42%
- Vocational post secondary (technical school): 58%
- Other: 0%

14. Type of educational institution:

- Public (non religious) school: 92%
- Private (non religious) school: 0%
- Public (religiously affiliated) school: 0%
- Private (religiously affiliated) school: 0%
- International School: 8%
- Other: 0%

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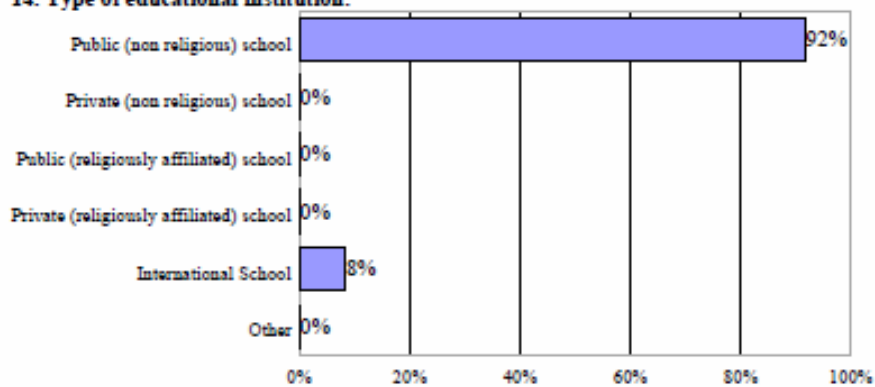
15. Percentage of students who are international (visa holder) and minority (underrepresented) populations:

Category	Percentage
0-10%	50%
11-25%	25%
26-50%	0%
51-75%	0%
76-100%	0%
I am not able to give a general estimate	17%
Not applicable	0%
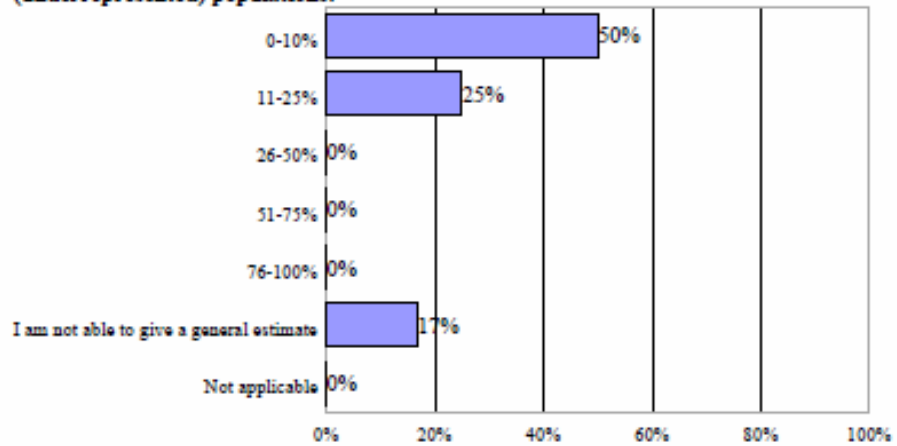
16. Number of full-time administrators, teachers and support personnel in your educational institution:

Category	Percentage
Less than 10 full-time staff	0%
10-20 full-time staff	0%
21-50 full-time staff	0%
51-100 full-time staff	17%
101-1,000 full-time staff	75%
1,001-10,000 full-time staff	0%
10,001-50,000 full-time staff	0%
50,001-100,000 full-time staff	0%
100,001-500,000 full-time staff	0%
Over 500,000 full-time staff	0%
I am not able to give a general estimate	8%
Not applicable	0%

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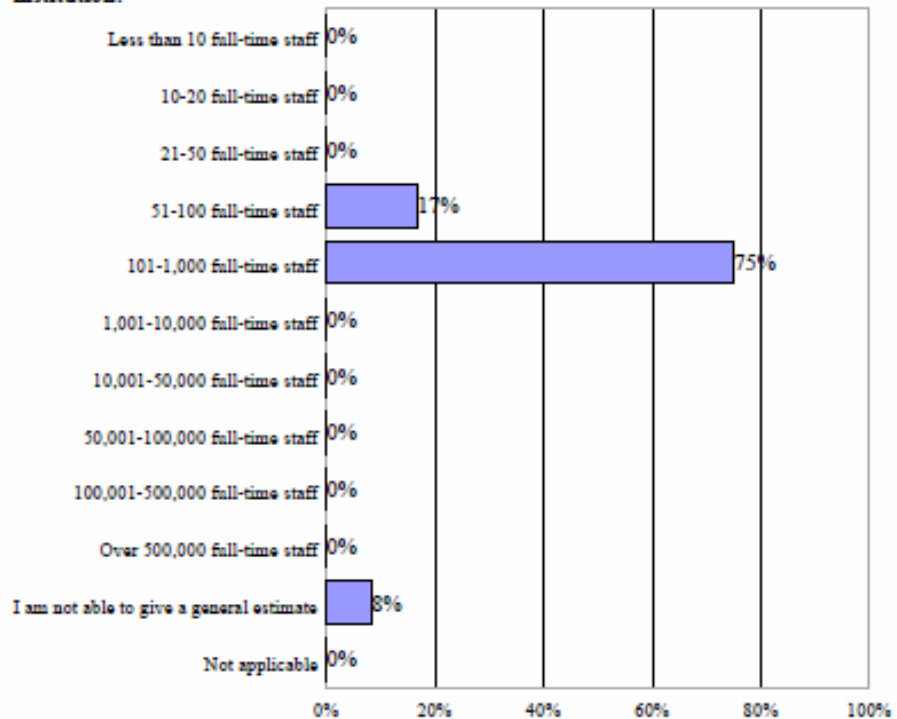
17. Percentage of administrators, teachers and support personnel (staff) in your organization who are from minority (underrepresented) populations:

Category	Value
0-10%	83%
11-25%	0%
26-50%	0%
51-75%	0%
76-100%	0%
I am not able to give a general estimate	8%
Not applicable	0%
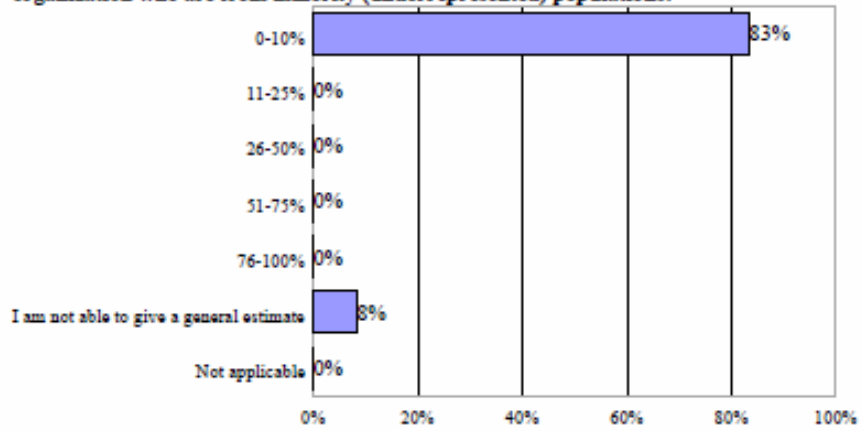
18. Percentage of administrators, teachers and support personnel (staff) in your organization who are from other countries (i.e., international visa holders):

Category	Value
0-10%	83%
11-25%	0%
26-50%	0%
51-75%	0%
76-100%	0%
I am not able to give a general estimate	17%
Not applicable	0%