



## Research Report

# Needs of language skills, intercultural knowledge and international abilities of VET students and young apprentices





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# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1. *The age we live in*

The rapid development of communication and information technologies, globalization of the economy, new developments in the field of science and technology, the major changes under the influence of our age. Our contemporary societies, which highlights the ability to use the information or the flow of information has changed the traditional environment, to establish an order directed to a knowledge-based way of life. Social, economic and political change, the most important element is the rapid advance of information and communication technologies.

Providing communication satellites, mobile phones, electronic mail, Internet, and so on. access to knowledge, conveying and using it knows no boundaries of time and gained a new dimension. Globalized world such rapid developments in information and communication flow makes continuous dynamic. This situation, organizations and institutions, developments in the areas of work, to follow and to adapt to innovations, makes it dependent on the flow of information up to date. In this context, information which can be stored, are obtained once a stationary object from being used for many years, recurring, repeating the contents of a dynamic property has required.

Excessive appreciation of the phases and powers of knowledge and technology, has also influenced the concept of the traditional professions. Knowledge in the profession, "the ability to take action," something "ability to mobilize" emerges as (Stehr, 2001, p.44). From this approach the individual vocational training, experience in business change required to comply with the new conditions ensure that potential. Because "excessive specialization in vocational training should be terminated. The person may need to work in the long term, develop new business areas. Teaching is a profession rather than a narrow understanding of individuals in a single work to solve problems related to the job, be able to follow new developments in brain technology to develop a broad-based vocational training should be given. (Eighth Five-Year Development Plan. 2001, p.11).

This determination should influence general and vocational education. In order to ensure sustainable development in every field of life-long learning with the international (especially European Union Countries) have been mandated in accordance with the standards of professional education, information analysis, use, transfer of relevant and required fields, has highlighted even more than knowledge of a foreign language.

Global competition, but with this kind of knowledge and skills to coordinate the human resources. In today's individual and professional knowledge of foreign languages, supporting skills and abilities acquired in business life be able to pass. To this end, developed EU countries, responsive acting in the field of vocational training, educational programs, as well as arrangements to respond to international competition, compulsory foreign language teaching options, are trying to improve. On the other hand the Council of Europe, Foreign Languages, improving the Common Criteria, the EU member states, which measures students' levels of language learning and exams determined levels determined by standardizing the principles of certification (Quetz, 2001).

The New Skills for New jobs Forecast by the EU predicts that the number of low skilled jobs will diminish in favour of higher skilled jobs in a society where knowledge is the basis of each and every productive process and where workers will change tasks many times during their working life. According Europe 2020 Strategy, it is fundamental to provide students with the most suitable tools to understand and to live in the future labour market and one of the best way is by learning on mobility.

## 1.2. Mobility of European VET Students

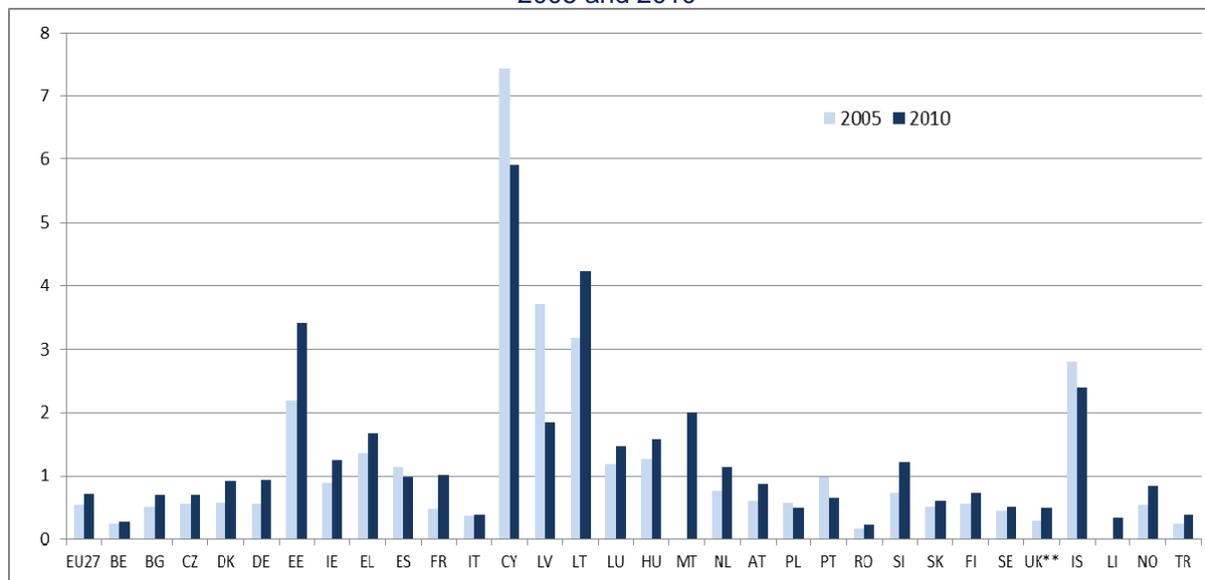
Spending a period of time abroad encourages foreign language learning and boosts personal development and self-confidence, especially as the placement is sometimes the participant's first stay in a foreign country.

These benefits go hand-in-hand with the development of an enhanced sense of European identity and citizenship, which results in an individual being better equipped to make the most of the potential of the wider European labour market

The main target of eBridge2 are VET students, defined as inscribed in the vocational orientation within upper secondary education, apprenticeships included, stipulates that by 2020 'an EU average of at least 6 % of 18-34 year olds with an initial vocational education and training qualification should have had an initial VET-related study or training period (including work placements) abroad lasting a minimum of two weeks.

According EU, very little evidence exists concerning the actual magnitude of IVET mobility within the European Union and its Member States. The Leonardo da Vinci programme covering VET mobility provides some indication of the level and development of IVET mobility flows. This data shows in general low participation rates in this programme with 2% out of total IVET upper secondary enrolments. The percentages are slightly higher for some smaller EU member States. In total this gives an EU level of VET mobility of only 0.7% only for the Leonardo da Vinci programme in 2010, up from 0.5% in 2005.

Percentage of students participating in Leonardo da Vinci programs out of total number of students in vocational training\* at upper secondary level vocational orientation, 2005 and 2010



Sources: DG EAC estimates based on Eurostat and DG EAC data sources. Leonardo da Vinci programme, European Commission: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/leonardo-da-vinci/statistics\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/leonardo-da-vinci/statistics_en.htm). Eurostat (UOE collection) \* The number of students participating in a Leonardo da Vinci project (selection database) as a percentage of students enrolled in initial vocational training programmes (ISCED 3 upper secondary vocational orientation.) \*\* UK: 2006 (break in series from 2005 to 2006).

The available evidence shows that the present European average is far from the 2020 benchmark target. However, these figures do not cover all IVET mobility within the European Union. Multi- or bilateral specific national programmes may add significantly to these figures in the future.



Reports about mobility during the vocational training coincide that the great challenge is learning a foreign language and intercultural skills. Students and teachers recognize that they don't participate in exchanges because of lacking language knowledge and cultural problems that would restrain them to understand the labour environment and common situations in the everyday life in a foreign country.

Vocational education training provides career and technical education to interested students. These students are prepared as trainees for jobs that are based upon manual or practical fields. Jobs are related to specific trades, occupations and vocations.

Between 18-20 years, these VET students usually go to develop a practice period in enterprises and in real work places. So, they develop daily professional activities in companies.

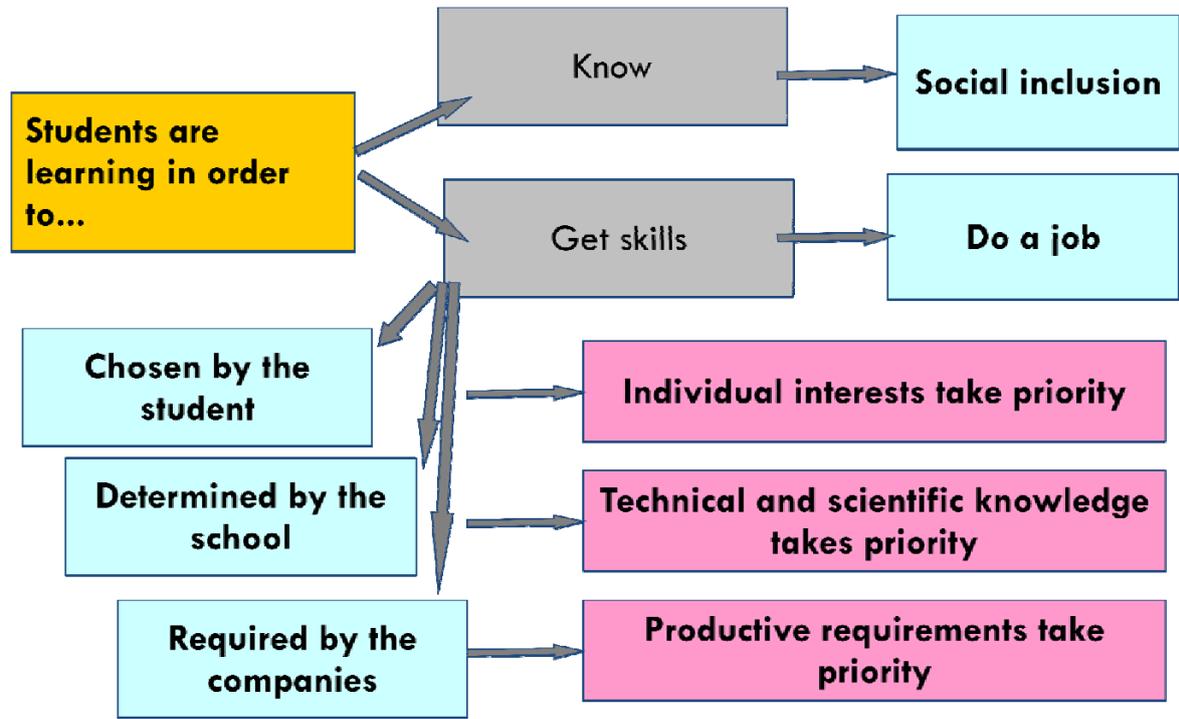
These students normally are living during a short period of 3 to 8 weeks in the destination country, and they used to live in shared apartments with other students or students residences or as guests in families. Normally, Mobility Agencies or their own schools in coordination with other similar schools of other smiliar Agencies from the destinations countries, organize all the details of theses stages.

Daily life issues don't use to be very complex for them: just transport, leisure, emergencies (sometimes health), tourism activities to know the country, everyday shopping.

But the more complex situations they face are related to workplace and corporate/labor culture. They need to know specific expression and words related to their branch speciality.

## 2. Context of VET Students Participating in Mobility

### 2.1. What's VOCATIONAL TRAINING?



## Professional Competences

These competences are developed in a comprehensive manner throughout the academic programme; furthermore they interact in the fulfilment of the majority of tasks the student will face in diverse professional fields

### Generic Competences

These are the competences which can be applied to a wide range of occupations and professional roles; they provide the intellectual tools and the basic procedural skills which the student will need to analyse problems, evaluate strategies and provide appropriate solutions.

### Specific Competences

These are the competences which as they are developed establish a specific professional qualification for the student in training. That is to say, knowledge, knowhow and the correct deployment of the technologies related to a specific professional field.

### **3. Didactic implications for the training and development of professional competences**

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- Encourage activities such as searching for, selecting and analysing different sources of information.
- Encourage the use of new technologies in the development of the subject (word processor spreadsheet, database, graphing, internet, etc...).
- Encourage group activities which bring about communication, the debate and exchange of ideas, reflection and further the integration of and collaboration between the students.
- Encourage the student in the development of intellectual activities such as inductive-deductive reasoning and analysis-synthesis which will lay the path for the student towards research and investigation.
- Carry out practical activities which encourage the development of skills of experimentation, such as: identification, handling and control of relevant variables and information, analysis and presentation of hypothesis, team work.
- Develop learning activities which involve the application of the concepts, models and technologies that have been learned during the development of the subject.
- Put forward problems which allow the student to integrate them and use the contents of individual subjects and between other subjects to analyse and solve the proposed problem.
- Relate or link the contents of the subject with the protection of the environment.
- Observe and analyze phenomenons and topical problems in the work field.
- Relate the contents of this subject with other subjects of the study plan to develop an interdisciplinary view in the student.
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## 4. Learning Experiences

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### 4.1. *Learning a foreign language through experience, the moment of truth*

Individuals are not really aware of their ability to communicate in a foreign language until they have to deal with everyday situations as an expatriate. The “stress moments” when dealing with a communication situation (foreseen or not) which is outside our language comfort zone push us into a corner and force us to pay special attention which “forces” learning on the spot, without doubt conditioned by the level of pressure of the context situation. It is when we have to deal with real situations in our working or private life that a giant leap in our ability to communicate occurs and also there is an adaptation to the culture of the country.

Concentrating on the workplace, the continuous process of paying special attention to language comprehension during the working day leads to significant progress in a relatively short space of time, which will be even shorter or slightly longer depending on the previous knowledge and the individual’s own skills in language assimilation, and other factors. As such, working abroad is highly recommendable if you want to advance quickly in your ability to communicate in a foreign language, rather than doing intensive courses either in the country of the language or your own.

We are not saying that intensive language courses aren’t important, we believe that they are important especially in developing foundation of vocabulary which functions as a platform upon which a grammatical structure can be built. Notwithstanding, the real thrust forward, especially with regard to communicative capacity takes place dealing with everyday situations both in the workplace and out of it.

### 4.2 *The Culture of Diversity*

Reports about mobility during the vocational training coincide that the great challenge is learning a foreign language and intercultural skills. Students and teachers recognize that they don’t participate in exchanges because of lacking language knowledge and cultural problems that would restrain them to understand the labour environment and common situations in the everyday life in a foreign country. Spain, followed by Portugal, is the European country with the fewest VET mobility: less than 3% of VET students participate in these kinds of programmes (Ministerio de Educación 2010) and just 41% of them receive a previous preparation (Estudio WSF 2007). In the case of Portugal, the corresponding numbers are 4% (Eurostat, 2009) and 43%. The majority of mobility is addressed to English speaking or Latin language speaking countries. This indicates that for diversification, the knowledge of other languages and other countries should be aided in the vocational training.

The Move-iT study (CINOP, 2006) affirmed that employees and employers of 33 European countries considered the acquisition of multi-cultural experiences and better language competencies as key aspects for the internationalisation of the labour force and the lack of foreign languages and multicultural skills as serious obstacles in VET mobility. The study also revealed that Germany, Spain, Italy, Great Britain and Sweden are preferred destinies, existing a growing interest in the new member states of the UE (Poland and Lithuania) and Turkey.

In Germany, there exists the concept of an international occupational qualification (Borch et al. 2003), considering language skills, intercultural knowledge and international dispositions as basic and key qualifications to permit mobility in the field of work (Cologne Institute for Economic Research, 2009).

Green Paper “Promoting the mobility of young people” (COM(2009) 329/3) and the Europe 2020 strategy (COM(2010) 296 final) stress that these competencies should be provided through motivating the mobility during the formation and that it is important to provide that countries with minority languages can also be destinies of this mobility. In 2010, the European Youth Forum (COMEM 0354-10-FINAL) also recommended the VET education centres to increase the quality of their education programmes with a view to guarantee that its students acquire these transversal skills.

One of the benefits of the modern business world is that it allows us to participate in a multicultural working environment, this occurs quite commonly in the Anglo Saxon world but it has now extended to Asia and many other parts of the world. Working in a multicultural environment is hugely important, and allows us to grow and develop both on a professional and a personal basis. Companies which are culturally diverse also have competitive advantages, such as:

- More and better ideas.
- Greater problem solving ability.
- A more inclusive working environment.
- An increase in creativity and innovation.
- A greater ability to recruit and keep highly qualified employees.
- A greater knowledge and understanding of different markets and consumer preferences.
- An improvement in customer service.
- An improvement in corporate image.
- An improvement in social commitments.

Furthermore, we should not ignore the fact that according to 2009 figures 12% of the Spanish population are foreign citizens (almost 6 million people), and there is a high birth rate among the immigrant population. There is no doubt that Spain needs qualified human resources to “understand” an increasingly diverse internal market and to manage diversity both in the public and private sector, and to encourage much needed internationalization of the Spanish economy.

### ***4.3 The process of cultural adaptation and assimilation, a key competitive factor in international managerial and executive posts***

Adapting to and then assimilating a new culture, though difficult for an individual to achieve is both challenging and very enriching. Adapting to another culture cannot be achieved without the individual experiencing a certain sensation of “aggressiveness”.

When we undergo a process of this nature, and we move from adaptation to assimilation, there is no turning back, and from this moment on the perception that we have of the native culture has completely changed.

Once we have assimilated the cultural customs of a foreign country, whatever they may be, this makes us aware of the good and bad customs of our own native culture, customs which we didn't pay attention to before the new experience abroad opens our eyes.

This process is very highly valued in international managerial and executive posts, and gives a clear competitive advantage to those who have undergone it.

The students of vocational training, cultural differences must be able to distinguish the low sensitivity and respect for people of other cultures should have a desire to correct their behavior.

Students will create future sectors, the ability to interact with people of different cultural origin and identity should have. Relationship with other languages and cultures, the development of intercultural communicative competence creates an excellent opportunity. Entered the process of specialization in the development, under normal circumstances, continues to be a very long process that requires continuity. Sometimes, this process may also in certain periods of decline and stagnation. In addition, there is an end-point in each case in this continuity. Different individuals have different purposes, and



each individual becomes to reach different levels of competence. Some of them, such as learned behavior of native culture against culture, acceptance of others, such as the level of subtypes, some of them will give you just as much as he can have knowledge about other cultures.

#### ***4.4 Labour mobility, teamwork and orientation towards results***

Assimilating a culture of labour mobility is without doubt another important aspect to be taken into account. For example in the Anglo Saxon world labour mobility is always an option which is regarded as natural. In some countries like the United States is it normal to have a “change of scenery” to grow professionally, this forms part of the normal professional development process. In the modern era of globalization labour mobility and professional development go hand in hand, you can't have one without the other.

The modern international corporate environment also shows us that teamwork and orientation towards achieving objectives are essential, and that both of these contribute directly to moving forward in your professional career.

#### ***4.5 Networking, the importance of having a good network of contacts to develop your professional career***

The ability to build a network of contacts is one of the greatest advantages of working abroad. For example, keeping in touch with old colleagues who we have shared many working experiences (hours and hours of meetings, both good and bad moments) allows both parties to know and understand their attitudes towards and capacity for work, this is particularly important when we are looking for job opportunities on an international level.

These contacts also give us access to sources of knowledge through “expert” contacts, which gives us a competitive advantage essential for professional development. Once we have the training, the language skills, the experience and cultural assimilation, the final ingredient to complete the package is networking, which gives us trust.

#### ***4.6 Global International Competencies***

Spending a period of time abroad encourages foreign language learning and boosts personal development and self-confidence, especially as the placement is sometimes the participant's first stay in a foreign country. But the constant globalization of the economy makes imperative to be global ready. In terms of competencies that means, according job seekers interviewed in the Michigan State University "Recruiting Trends" report, to have geographic awareness and global understanding" as the primary "new competencies critical to future success".

The benefits to provide to VET students these competences go hand-in-hand with the development of an enhanced sense of European identity and citizenship, which results in an individual being better equipped to make the most of the potential of the wider European labour market.

## Competencies Description

According Sandra L. Russo and Leigh Ann Osborne (The Globally Competent Student, Michigan ST. 2010), the main competencies could be considered in global competent students are:

Competence	Description
<b>A diverse and knowledgeable worldview: strategic international thinking</b>	<p>The student no longer views the world through a single cultural lens and is able to identify and appreciate various viewpoints. While the globally competent student recognizes and values cultural differences, the student is also aware of the growing interconnectivity of the world and of the necessity of his/her ability to function within it.</p>
<b>Comprehension of international dimensions of his/her major field of study</b>	<p>While some disciplines may appear to be immune to the need for internationalization because they are deemed international by nature (e.g., Anthropology) or produce the same results regardless of culture or location (e.g., Physics), the globally competent student recognizes the need for the individual within the discipline to be internationally aware.</p>
<b>Effective communication effectively another language and/or cross-culturally</b>	<p>The globally competent student recognizes that while English is often considered the world's dominant language, it may not always, nor should always be the case. The case can be made for three types of language and communications competencies: at the specialist level, at the general proficiency level, and at the cross-cultural communication level.</p> <p>The globally competent student recognizes that knowledge of a foreign language opens the door to a more in-depth understanding of the cultures and peoples associated with that language. As a result of foreign language competency, even if fluency is not fully achieved, the student gains basic cross-cultural communication skills by learning about other countries and cultures.</p> <p>Due to the lack of emphasis on foreign language acquisition at the elementary and secondary levels, achieving cross-cultural communication competency may be one of the most challenging competencies for a student to gain.</p>
<b>Exhibition of cross-cultural sensitivity, knowledge and adaptability</b>	<p>The globally competent student exhibits both cross-cultural sensitivity and adaptability because s/he takes advantage of opportunities to interact with diverse individuals. The abroad experience that not only uproots the student but also immerses him/her within the host country's culture is critical to the development of global competence. While immersed in another culture, the student has perhaps the greatest opportunity to assess his/her own assumptions about the world and his/her own culture. Upon return, the student can no longer view the world only through one lens and builds his/her conceptual framework.</p>

**Ability to carry global competencies throughout life**

The globally competent student builds upon this established framework throughout life.

### Performance and Assessment Criteria

According to the Universities of Binghamton (USA) and Victoria (AU), it is possible to consider several performance and assessment criteria to confirm that a student has acquired the mentioned competencies, as well as desirable skills that could facilitate their acquisition.

The performance criteria to consider having these competences are:

- Adequate appreciation and respect of other cultural perspectives and norms (open-mindedness; non-judgments; acceptance of differences).
- Demonstrated experience in multicultural environments either abroad or in the own country.
- Adequate international awareness, knowledge and understanding.
- A mindset that appreciates and respects others.
- Effectivity in the communication across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

The assessment criteria to demonstrate them are:

Competence	Assessment
<b>A diverse and knowledgeable worldview: strategic international thinking</b>	The student demonstrates strategic thinking when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is conscious of her/his assumptions relating to cultural issues and question them at all times</li> <li>• thinks about how s/he can take initiative to learn from co-workers from different cultural backgrounds</li> <li>• plans how to pursue networking opportunities with people from different cultural backgrounds</li> <li>• considers new strategies during each cultural encounter</li> <li>• checks for opportunities for cultural growth</li> </ul>
<b>Comprehension of international dimensions of his/her major field of study</b>	The student demonstrates this competence when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• considers how her/his area of study is applicable in a global context</li> </ul>
<b>Effective communication effectively another language and/or cross-culturally</b>	The student demonstrates this competence when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand how to communicate with people who speak or write a different language</li> <li>• learn phrases in a new language, or learn a new language</li> <li>• learn appropriate, effective ways to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds</li> </ul>
<b>Exhibition of cross-cultural sensitivity, knowledge and adaptability</b>	The student demonstrates this competence when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognize and respect cultural diversity</li> <li>• know how to be diplomatic and sensitive to the dynamics of a cross-cultural workplace</li> <li>• know how to be accepted in a new environment</li> <li>• understand ways to cope with constant change</li> <li>• adapt to different cross-cultural communication norms</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• change your verbal and nonverbal behaviours according to different situations</li> <li>• demonstrate that you acknowledge the human, interpersonal and technical sides of a problem</li> <li>• show flexibility and explore possible solutions in an innovative and creative way</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ability to carry global competencies throughout life</b></p>	<p>The student demonstrates this competence when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome the opportunity to learn more about the geography and culture of your work term city, region and country</li> <li>• take initiative to explore the environment</li> <li>• actively network with people from different cultures</li> <li>• take interest in current events in your work term country</li> <li>• engage with people in the employer organization and community</li> <li>• network with potential international employers and inquire about the competencies valued by these companies</li> <li>• recognize your strengths and seek areas to improve</li> </ul>

**Facilitation skills**

To have determinate skills and attitudes could help the acquisition of these competences. These are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiative</li> <li>• Enthusiasm</li> <li>• Inquisitiveness</li> <li>• Interest in continuous learning</li> <li>• Courage</li> <li>• Positive outlook toward adversity</li> <li>• Appreciation of Diversity</li> <li>• Perseverance</li> <li>• Creativity</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-reliance</li> <li>• Self-confidence</li> <li>• Cultural awareness/sensitivity</li> <li>• Self-knowledge</li> <li>• Independence</li> <li>• Comfort with uncertainty</li> <li>• Open-mindedness</li> <li>• Language/ communication skills</li> <li>• Assertiveness</li> <li>• Sense of humor</li> </ul>
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## 5. Mobility Experiences

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### 5.1. Conclusions of Interviews in Spain

In order to illustrate this report, we have carried out several interviews in Spain and Turkey.

In Spain, LHL has carried out 5 interviews in the Miguel Altuna VET Institute from Bergara to complete the “Research Report about needs of language skills, intercultural knowledge and international communicative ability of VET students and young apprentices”.

4 students have been interviewed, who have participated in the working experience mobility program, and the person responsible for the Erasmus Grants as well. From these interviews some conclusions have been obtained which are presented below:

- Most of the students have more communication difficulties when they have to deal with technical terms in their workplace and when they do have to maintain longer conversations in the workplace or at home. **Therefore, on the one hand they would like to learn technical vocabulary related to their work experience destination, and on the other hand develop their capability to maintain household level talks fluently.**
- Other difficulties they deal with are the cultural issues, especially from countries which have different social customs from them. They have mentioned the mealtimes above all and the dress code. This allows us to conclude that apart from the technical vocabulary for their daily life in the working place or to communicate at the homes where they are greeted, they would also need background information about the country where they are going, their social customs, the time tables and so on, in order to get an idea and to adapt themselves before going.

Regarding the interview that they carried out with the head of Erasmus grants in the Miguel Altuna VET Institute from Bergara, the main conclusions that have been obtained are basically the same.

- On the one hand, from her point of view students should go abroad with an open mind and they should also be aware that they have to adapt to another country, because on many occasions they think that they have to act as if they were at home. **The experience consists of not only working, but living in a foreign country and adapting to their social and cultural habits or customs.**
- Moreover, another conclusion that we can obtain from this interview is that students themselves, should search for information about the country where they are doing their work experience.

Finally, we would like to point that both students and the head of Erasmus grants, agree that this is a beautiful experience which is worth doing and serves to learn to be more autonomous as well as to travel and to meet people from other countries.

### 5.2. Detailed Contents of Interviews in Spain

INTERVIEW N°1:

The name of the first interviewed person is Unai Retolaza. He is a Miguel Altuna VET Institute's student. He feels that the program wasn't very useful for his work experience but very useful for his personal experience. Firstly he spent 2 weeks in order to learn Portuguese and then 2 and half months in Porto at an aluminium foundry with 300 employees. He didn't spend so much time in the factory because he stayed at the CNC and machining rooms.

Apart from the job the way of living on the weekends of Portuguese people is quite similar to ours. He didn't know a word of Portuguese but he found it easy because it resembles to Spanish. He carried

out his working practice sometimes in Spanish with the qualified staff and in Portuguese with the not qualified. In his daily life he tried to communicate in Portuguese but he recognizes that he communicated mostly in Spanish.

One of the main problems he dealt with was that they wanted him to work 6 days a week and he didn't want. The bigger cultural difficulty was the difference with the mealtimes. For the rest they didn't have any other difficulty. Finally, to improve the mobility program he suggests more information about the transport in the destination country.

#### INTERVIEW N°2:

The second interviewed person is Gorka Lazkano and he is from Iurreta Bizkaia. The specialty which he studied was setting and adjustment of punching and threading machines. The destination country of his mobility program was Italy, because the factory where he wanted to do his working practice was in this country. The name of the factory is SACMA Limbiate and his working practice consisted on knowing how the machines that they produce work.

He stayed there for three months and he didn't know previously the language of the destination country. The language that he used during his working practice was English and sometimes Spanish. In the daily life he used as well these two languages to communicate with people.

Regarding to the issues that he had more difficulties to understand from a cultural or functional point of view related to his working practice were the technical terms. Related to the country he didn't deal with any problem because he found Italian people quite similar to us.

Finally, to improve the mobility program he suggests to give the students vocabulary with the technical terms that they probably will use in their working practice.

#### INTERVIEW N°3:

The third interviewed person being interviewed has been Miren Errasti. She is from Bergara and when she went abroad for her working practice, she was Miguel Altuna VET Institute's student. She went to England in 2006 more concretely to Devon. She stayed there from March to May, therefore for three months. She worked at a job centre company in the central department and her practice consisted on organizing the communication with smaller offices and sending faxes, post cards and information guidances to people.

Before going she previously knew a little English but she thinks that her level was quite poor. She developed her practice in English in the workplace and with the second family with whom she lived she used Spanish as well because there was a Mexican girl living with her. In the daily life she communicated in English and she dealt with more difficulties to understand using the public transport because she couldn't understand the name of the town where she was. From a cultural or functional point of view related to the working place, the issues that she had more difficulties to understand were basically to manage with the timetables; especially with the mealtimes because they had dinner at 16:30 and then she had all the afternoon free without anything to do. Related to the country of destination the same and as she says the lack of sense of humour of the British people.

In order to improve the mobility program she will suggest to give the students more information about the country, the culture and the program but that she will recommend everyone to go abroad and live the experience.

#### INTERVIEW N°4:

The last interviewed student's name is Itsaso Mendizabal. She is from Bergara and when she went abroad she was student in the Miguel Altuna VET Institute from Bergara. Her specialty for the mobility program was the mechanical design and the country of destination for her working practice was

England, in a small town in the south. The reason to choose this country was that it was the only opportunity that she had.

Crown Graphics was the name of the company where she developed her working practice and her job, consisted on designing graphics and organizing the store house as well. She stayed there for 3 months and she previously knew a little English; she says that she could write but for spoken communication she didn't manage very well. The language in which she developed her working practice was English. In the daily life she used also this language to communicate. She found easy for shopping or using public transport because they were basic communication but at home she found more difficulties because she had to maintain longer conversations.

About the issues that she had more difficulties to understand from a cultural or functional point of view related to the working practice were basically the mealtimes and the food, because they don't cook for lunch and they just have sandwiches and chocolate; she didn't manage with the dinner time neither that in her point of view was very early. Another thing that she had difficulties with was the way of dressing to go to work. She was told to go in a smart way and when she went to the workplace she realized that almost everyone was dressed in a casual way.

Lastly she wouldn't suggest anything to improve the mobility program because she thinks that everything was fine and she enjoyed it so much.

#### INTERVIEW N°5:

As we have said, the last interviewed person has been the head of the Erasmus Grants in the Miguel Altuna VET Institute from Bergara. Her name is Aurea Salazar and she is teacher in the mentioned Institute as well. She has organized several grants in European countries as Poland, Germany, United Kingdom, Rumania, Italy, Portugal, and France and so on.

The main reason for having selected these countries is the language and she think's that's very important to select good companies and to make good contacts as well.

The kind of companies in which they develop the mobility program must be related to the mechanical area as machining, mechanical design, administration and business and robotics. For mechanical area the companies are usually from the industrial sector and for administration and business they are offices, hotels, etc.

The kind of working practices that students develop when they go abroad depend on what they study. For example, students from mechanical area work with CNC programs, milling machines, etc. Mechanical design students work with several programs such as Solidedge, Solidworks, etc. Administration and business students develop their work doing secretary functions, accountancy, customer service, etc. And finally, students of robotics mostly work in this area. The period of the working practice is for three months for everybody.

Students that go abroad are supposed to achieve a minimum level of English because is the international language. Apart from that, when they arrive to the destination,, they learn the language of the country for the first 2 weeks. She realizes that it is not too much, but at least they get a minimum knowledge about the language of the country where they have to develop the working practices.

Students have to try to use the language of their destination country in their daily life, despite they have English as international language.

She thinks that the situations where the students experiment more difficulties to communicate are at the beginning, when they are there for the first weeks and also, when they go to the company, when they use the public transport, etc.

Regarding to the issues that they have more difficulties to understand from a cultural point of view related to the company or to the country, she thinks that it depends on the country where they are

going, because countries as Italy and Portugal are similar to ours but other ones like United Kingdom, people have different social and cultural habits on the way they get dressed and also on the way they communicate, that they do it in a more polite way than us. She says that another important point for the students is to adapt to the working method. She thinks that here, people do more street life and go much more to the pubs than people use to do in other countries and another difficulty, is to match with the dressing code.

The recommendation that she gives, is that students should go with their mind open and that they should be aware that they have to adapt to another country, because sometimes they act as if they were at home. She suggests that they should search for information about the country where they are going, about its social issues, etc. Apart from that she thinks that it is a beautiful experience because they learn how to live with different people, most of them travel by plane for the first time, and when they come back they are more autonomous. For this reason, encourages everyone to live this experience.

### ***5.3. Conclusions of Interviews in Turkey***

Vocational training and education is a growing and progressing area in Turkey but still has a long way to go. A lot of effort has being spent by both the Turkish Government and the European Union in order to improve the conditions. However, some structural problems derived from more than a decade ago still have influences over the sector.

First of all, applicability of the immersion program is still being argued by the authorities and when the system of the vocational high-school education in the last 10 years is considered, it is quite understandable. In the beginning of the 2000s, some of the instructors volunteered to write a Turkish-English vocational dictionary for the students but their offer was rebuffed by the Head Council of Education and Morality on the grounds that the terminology used in Turkey could only be in Turkish. A couple of years later, it was realized that there was a self-created common literature in vocational trainings that was being used by everyone in this sector around the world and it was necessary for the Turkish students to use it too.

After this realization, training modules for every field of vocational studies in compliance with ISCED 1997 was formed. Even if it was a slow process because the instructor had to work for the modules after their formal working hours the outcome was very satisfying. Thanks to these modules, the students started to get used to the international technical terms in English and to use them commonly. Starting with the department of Graphics, Turkey started to integrate its modules to the European Unions'. Nevertheless, the problems were not finished yet.

The content of vocational and technical education is codified by Vocational Education Law (No. 3308) in Turkey. It requires the senior high school students take %20 of their last year education in their school and %80 of it in either public or private institutions. The reason of this regulation is to help student to gain experience in every related production line. This system is useful in theory but since the master workmen see these students as labor force rather than apprentices and making them run the errands, it is not working very well in practice.

Another problem the students face is the lack of occupational standards for every department of vocational training. Vocational Qualifications Authority of Turkey, despite its very supportive attitude, could not able to provide certain standards and scales of vocational training except for 3 or 4 departments. This has been making hard to determine the level of professional competence of the applicant and skills needed for proper job performance decided by the employer. It is already hard to find a job especially in the Eastern Turkey where the sectorial capacity is too low and the economy fails to create employment; and uncertainties like this make it even harder.

Another problem during the integration process results from the students personally. They are not keen to go abroad and broaden their viewpoint. It is not a regional but a global problem that the today's generation shows signs of stagnancy. Further, even if they decide to go abroad for education,

they sometimes lose their self-confidence vis-à-vis the foreigners or shows prejudgments against them.

Turkish people did not lean towards the Leonardo da Vinci Program at the beginning but as the time passed they understood the opportunities it offers to them. It was a great chance for the students to go abroad, to observe different techniques, procedures, equipments and teaching methods, to practice foreign language, to gain self-reliance, to get used to another culture and to meet people there. Since Turkey included in the Program and started to work partners from across the Europe, a lot of progress in multinational cooperation has been achieved. The more the sharing between the Turkish people and European people increases, the more they are able to look each other from a different standpoint. Both sides started to realize the capacity, the reputability, and the social and cultural legacy of each other.

As long as the partners keep benefiting from it, the Leonardo da Vinci Program will maintain its importance. Still, there can be things to do in order to make it even more effective and the key word for this is "sustainability". By encouraging people to be more interested in writing projects, in implementations of them and in improvement of their contexts, the outcomes achieved can be even better.

In Turkey vocational education students, as other citizens of Turkey, find going abroad difficult because of economic and political reasons. They do not even leave their hometown. Students see their own culture as a basic cultural framework of its own culture and other cultures to evaluate looking at. Students first of all, cultural diversity is the stage of rejecting one's own culture as the only evaluates culture.

Other cultures, differences, creating a shield against the psychological and physically. At the same time, not completely ignored in other cultures. As a result, cultural difference, or experienced, or the individual's location is literally 'foreign' or 'migrant', as you are in a plane. The step of rejecting contacts, if they affects, even if they tend to eliminate it aggressively, in general, not on cultural difference. Bennett 1993, cultural diversity, and reject a defective condition typically describes in a single culture-based socialization.

Second case: defense against cultural differences, culture interacts with a person's own culture or the culture thinks that the only good condition. World 'we' and 'they' are organized. 'We are superior, dominating,' they ', the lower layer, the dominated. People who have a tendency of Defense, is threatened by cultural differences, and thus the owners of others, their own home, whether or not guests or members of their communities, whether they are new, taking into account other cultures 'high risk' is followed carefully.

Cultural differences experienced by people with self-defense is still a conventional perspective. However, in the case of rejection compared with people who seem more realistic than being defense positions. The wrong type of Defense (reversal) and they adapted to their own culture, a culture is thought to be the top priority than socialization. Just as wrong as the defense 'us' and 'them' just reflects the polarization that reflects the vision of the world. However, in other cultures does not see itself as a threat. Finally, we disdain cultural differences.

Students think that a universal world view of the state of their own culture. It's a definite thought, leads to deep cultural differences remain confidential. As a result, other cultures, be regarded as trivial and imaginary. People tend to underestimate other cultures wait to be some similarities between their own culture and their own expectations to match, will insist on correcting the behavior of others. Defensive threats to cultural differences, differences equals similarly to make ineffective. Similarity experience, certain religious, economic or philosophical concepts can be observed in the specified counter-cultural applicability. Tend to underestimate the dominant culture, especially the people, their culture, the institutional recognition and the privilege of the people of that culture tends to hide.

On the other hand it must be said steps of healthy cross-cultural orientation: Acceptance of cultural differences, the students own culture, equivalent to only one capable of complex views of the world to accept the situation. People who have this view of the world, regardless of cultural differences (including their own culture), and those without a high level of awareness that their own culture, and they admit that they are human beings. Granted, not in terms of alignment.

Be judged negatively, but the judiciary is not ethnocentric cultural differences. Cultural differences in the tendency to accept that people are curious and respectful (Hammer, 2003:425). The issue to be resolved here is 'value relativity'. To accept the relativity of values in cultural context, people need to understand how to create such a connection is ethical in relativity. Compliance with cultural diversity (adaptation), another culture, perception and behavior of that culture is to be delivered. One's view of the world, is expanding to include structures of other world views.

Compliance with people in the process, look "through other eyes' the world and other cultures may tend to change their behavior in order to provide more effective communication. In other words, empathy is not a force that person can be obtained. The process of changing the frame if deepens and becomes a habit or multi-culturalism foundations biculturality is taken now.

Difference of cultural integrity (integration), vocational training, experience, mobilization of other world views, such as inclusion and to cover the expansion of thinking outside the state. Completeness position people, their cultural authenticity (cultural marginality) is engaged with issues relating.

Students the basic features of intercultural communication skills must include: flexibility, humor, patience, openness, interest, curiosity, empathy, tolerance for ambiguity, suspending judgment. Students intercultural communication skills consider three areas: The ability to establish and maintain relationships, The ability to communicate with a minimum of loss and degradation, Mutual interest and ability to cooperate to meet the requirements. For Vet students there are also intercultural communication skills which have four sizes: vocational knowledge, positive attitudes, vocational skills, awareness.

Ability to communicate in a foreign language is important for the development of intercultural communication. To have another language, how a person perceives, and expresses itself that term crystallizes. This makes it possible to develop communication skills and other alternative communication strategies. This skill transcend itself in a person's perception of the world and paves the way for the conversion of providing.

To have a second language, or have a very low level, a person keeps thinking of other cultures around the world and as a result the individual may be deprived of intercultural experienced one of the most valuable appearances. As we have noted the importance of vocational education students learning foreign languages, intercultural skills, language skills should be supported.

## 6. Recommendations

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Drawing up a strategic plan to allow access to the international labour market through the academic field, particularly for those students who have the desire and motivation to work abroad

In the case of those students who have the desire to work abroad, our recommendation is that they draw up a strategic plan to enter the world of work. For example, it would be advisable to identify university and other similar international exchange programmes which give students the opportunity to do work experience, and for those who cannot participate in an exchange programme to look for degree programmes in foreign universities which offer the opportunity to do work experience, or simply to find out about job opportunities which academic institutions provide for their own students (there are some countries such as the United States where you can work in the university environment with a student visa, it would also be advisable to find out about other similar opportunities in the U.S.A. or Asia), much of which are unfamiliar to Spanish students.

In conclusion, the experience of working abroad provides many other positive learning experiences: efficient time management, planning your labour mobility according to where the best resources and possibilities are, understanding the empowerment and motivation culture, among others.

Regardless of the academic level or the initiative for work of the individual student, the possibilities that working abroad will provide personal and professional development will be very high once it is organised and planned well and there is a motivation to work and learn.

Just by considering working abroad we realize the opportunities we are letting escape.

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