4 The proPIC study weeks: experiencing transnational exchange

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1. Introduction

A core element of the proPIC project is the development and implementation of the so-called study weeks: a five day face-to-face stay abroad at one of the partner institutions in which all the participating students took part. In this chapter, we present and discuss the results and impact of these events which took place twice during the project[3]. In order to do so, we have included the overall framework of the events, as well as assorted materials developed by the project partners to present the scope of the various study weeks. Additionally, an overview of relevant literature dealing with the concept of short stays abroad in teacher education programmes will be provided.

To discuss the impact of two cohorts of exchange students, we use a rich body of collected data of the project partners and students, as well as some fieldwork data (e.g. video- and audio-recordings) that were gathered during the study week and analysed afterwards. The chapter will conclude with recommendations for conducting similar activities in collaboration with international partners.

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3. Unfortunately, a third study week had to be cancelled on short notice due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.   Literature review

Especially for future language teachers, a certain amount of time spent abroad is much more than the icing on the cake of one's studies. Obviously, it is not a new idea to provide opportunities for studying at a foreign university when becoming a foreign language (FL) teacher (Bruce, 1991; Heuer & Klippel, 1987). Thus, it has already been implemented in many study programmes across the globe, and also the European Commission is heavily promoting this notion when they state that "spending time abroad to study and learn should become the norm" (European Commission, 2018b, p. 21). Nonetheless, the global pandemic showed us how difficult this can get, especially with regard to longer stays.

For a number of reasons, it looks like an important educational aim to give students the opportunity to attend institutions abroad: next to improving one's linguistic competences in a natural and (more) authentic environment of the target language – even if it is 'just' used as a lingua franca – gaining inter- and transcultural competence is usually considered the greatest asset in going abroad (Boye, 2016; for a general perspective on teacher education see e.g. Marx & Moss, 2011). In addition, personal growth seems to be a key feature of such endeavours (Dwyer & Peters, 2004). Furthermore, student mobility can help to elevate one's professional perspectives in teacher education (Bruce, 1991). Additionally, it can raise awareness of global issues (Jaritz, 2011), which are important in today's diverse, multicultural, and multilingual classroom settings (Stewart, 2008). Finally, international mobility is intended to strengthen the identity of European citizenship (European Commission, 2018a).

Interestingly enough, this understanding is not just promoted by teacher educators or other professionals in the field, but by students alike. In a survey conducted by the European Commission (2018b), it turned out that more than 90% of the participating young people between the ages of 15 and 30 "consider it important to have an experience abroad" (p. 3) and almost 50% of them considered it to be "very important" (p. 4). However, other studies

indicate that, in particular, the field of education still remains quite locally, if not nationally oriented (Goetz, Jaritz, & Oser, 2011; Jaritz, 2011), which can be related to the fact that teacher education policy is still overly dependent on national policy makers and often lacks a global perspective.

It is obvious that international endeavours such as virtual exchanges or short study abroad programmes cannot fully compensate for an extended stay abroad of one or two semesters. They are more likely to be seen as an option for those who are not able to spend a longer time away from home due to personal or financial reasons (Dooly & O'Dowd, 2012; Kessler, Haim, & Schwab, forthcoming), or as an add-on to existing agreements (Waldman, Harel, & Schwab, 2019). Nonetheless, we have also seen in another of our projects, 'Extended Telecollaboration Practice', that these short term engagements can be a trigger for further activities abroad (Waldman et al., 2019).

Summing up, we agree with Marx and Moss (2011) when they state that "[t]eacher education study abroad programs can be powerful vehicles in teacher educators' efforts to prepare preservice teachers for work with culturally diverse students, providing a unique opportunity for them to learn how to 'mind the culture gap' that can exist in school contexts" (p. 45). In this line, the study week abroad became key to our study programme.

3.   The outline of the study weeks

3.1.   How were the study weeks organised?

The study week is a central component of the proPIC project (see Figure 1). As part of the overall study programme (see Hoinke & Clausen, 2022, Chapter 3 this volume), prospective teachers visited one of the other four European partner institutions where they worked and studied together with international students from the other participating universities. All study weeks took place at the same time as this turned out to be the only way of handling the sheer amount of differences among students and lecturers and their national constraints with

regard to workload or examinations. The study weeks were (almost) completely funded by the project grant.

Figure 1. Overview of the proPIC study programme[4]

COURSE I			COURSE II			final conference (July 2020)
Module I.A	**Module I.B**	**Module I.C**	**Study week**	**Module II.A**	**Module II.B**	
course introduction get in touch with the students from the other partner institutions (social media, MOODLE)	**input** theoretical framework (CPD, working with *cases*) **research project** develop your own research question start your ePortfolio	work with the *interactive tutorials* elaborate your research design get individual **online-coachings**	**visit a partner university** collaborate in transnational groups elaborate work with *interactive tutorials* visit a local school	finalise your research project and create your **creative outputs** get individual coaching	**present** your results and creative outputs **final discussion**	**optional** submit a proposal and present your results at an international conference
f-2-f / online	f-2-f / online	online	5-Tage-Aufenthalt	online	f-2-f	f-2-f
*constant reflection through **ePortfolios***						

3.2.   Who took part in the study weeks and who hosted them?

All participants of the study weeks were prospective foreign and second language teachers and therefore students already enrolled in one of the partner universities' study programmes[5] (graduates and undergraduates). Students had to apply for these trips in advance as there were only a limited number of spots available. The events were hosted by the project partners and usually conducted by two local partners. In Germany, Study Week 2 was hosted by the University of Kiel (CAU) and conducted by both partners from Germany: Kiel and Karlsruhe. Where possible, a number of teacher trainers were given the opportunity to teach in one the study weeks at a different institution in order to broaden their own professional development in the field of internationalisation[6].

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4. http://www.propiceuropa.com/uploads/1/0/8/0/108097905/propic_io1_online_handbook_2020.pdf

5. This is important for their health insurance status.

6. Based on the very positive feedback of both lecturers and students, we intended to extend this idea in our third cohort which then had to be cancelled due to the pandemic.

In total, 30 students took part in the first study week and 44 in the second study week.

The following graph (Figure 2) shows how students – here: those attending Karlsruhe University of Education (PHKA) – were to be distributed equally among the other four institutions during the study week.

Figure 2. Distribution of students during Study Week 1 sent by PHKA[7]
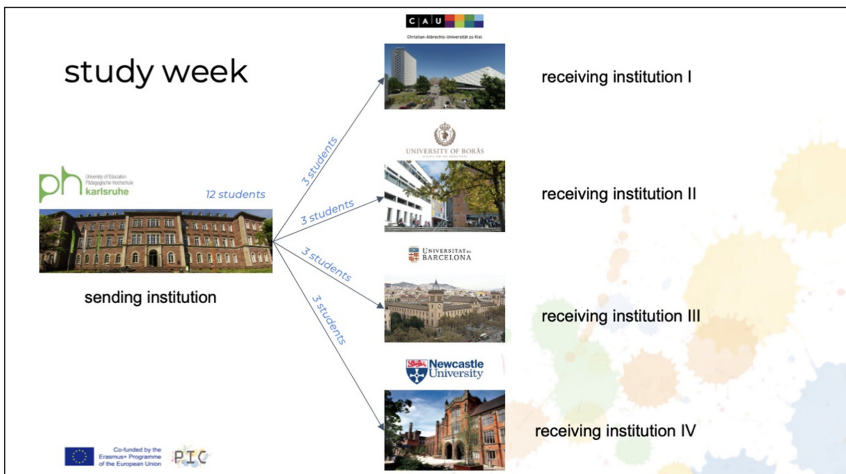
As not all of the 12 students were able to go abroad, the number of students from Karlsruhe dropped to nine. This also happened at other institutions. It transpired that some students were more reluctant (or afraid?) to go abroad than others and that organisational and more subjective challenges for such a trip ('Can I afford the extra costs?'; 'Will the accommodation provided be suitable for me?'; 'I only want to go to xy') formed an obstacle so that we could not send as many students as we wanted to and as our budget would have allowed us to do.

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7. proPIC Europa (2020). Study Week; http://www.propiceuropa.com/study-week.html

3.3.   What was the main content and what were the main activities of the study weeks?

All study week events were given a special focus in line with the expertise of the host institution. Continuous Professional Development (CPD), however, was an overarching topic all partners dealt with. The accompanying material on CPD was developed in advance by one partner and then presented during the study week. In addition, all partners included social activities and at a certain point all groups met online on Zoom for a brief welcome session.

The following image depicts a typical schedule of such a study week (Figure 3).

Figure 3.   Programme for Study Week 2 (University of Barcelona, UB)[8]

STUDY WEEK AGENDA

Monday (6th)	Tuesday (7th)	Wednesday (8th)	Thursday (9th)	Friday (10th)
9.00-9.30 Study week opening: introductory session	10.30-11.30 Digital communicative strategies in the elaboration of an e-portfolio (Joan-Tomàs Pujolà)	9.00-10.00 Introductory workshop on the use of VEO for lesson observation (Jaume Batlle)	9.00-9.30 Presentation session: mobile tasks (Preparation)	9.00-11.00 Show & Tell: our e-portfolios (Azahara Cuesta y Joan-Tomàs Pujolà)
9.30-11.00 1 image and 1000 words: Reflective introductory activity (Azahara Cuesta)			9.30 -11.30 Presentation session: mobile tasks (Azahara Cuesta y Joan- Tomàs Pujolà)	11.00-12.00 Study week evaluation
BREAK	BREAK	10.30-12.30 Lesson observation (UB-Vanesa Torquero y Cristina Castillo)		12.00-12.30 Certificates, Farewell cava and deadline for handing in extra cost original copies of tickets and invoices
11.30-13.30 Elaborating a Starting Point on a snapshot of digital competences with Digcompedu (Azahara Cuesta)	11.45-13.45 Active Learning, mobile learning (Joan-Tomàs Pujolà)	12.30- 13.00 Uploading video	BREAK	12.30 Study week closing
13.30-14.30 LUNCH	13.45-15.00 LUNCH	13.00-13.30 LUNCH	12.00 -13.00 EPORTFOLIO TIME: Improving your e-portfolio	
14.30-16.00: Catalan survivor toolkit: A first day lesson in catalan language (Jaume Batlle)	15.00-16.00 Designing a "mobile" communicative task	13.30-15.30 Shared reflection with VEO (Jaume Batlle)	13.00-13.30 LUNCH	
	16.00-16.30-Skype PROPIC partners	15.30-16.00 EPORTFOLIO TIME: Individual work on the personal e-portfolio	13.30 -15.30 Cultural visit: Laberint d'Horta	
16.00-17.00 EPORTFOLIO TIME: Individual work on the personal e-portfolio	16.30-17.30 EPORTFOLIO TIME: Individual work on the personal e-portfolio	21.30 Social Event: Dinner La Cerveseria de Gràcia	16.00-17.00: Use of ICTS in Secondary education. (Maria del Mar Rosso Febrer)	

As can be seen in this outline, the Spanish partner focused in particular on e-portfolios as a substantial aspect of professional development and reflection

8. http://www.propiceuropa.com/uploads/1/0/8/0/108097905/propic_p4_stud_week_ii_schedule.pdf

for future language teachers. As this is also a core feature of the university's FL teacher education programme, it tied in very well with the objectives of the project. Of course, other students involved in the project also worked on e-portfolios as part of their professional development though less intensively than the groups in Spain (for more details on the use of e-portfolios in general see also Cuesta, Batlle, González, & Pujolà, 2022, Chapter 7 this volume).

Though based on a similar framework, each partner had a different focal aspect they dealt with. In Kiel, students worked intensively on video production (cf. Whelan & Baldwin, 2022, Chapter 11 this volume). In Newcastle, the main focus of the students' work involved the VEO (Video Enhanced Observation) and Linguacuisine app. The Swedish partners approached the notion of professional development from a slightly broader angle as they dealt with an array of digital and mobile devices, a topic that turned out to be more than beneficial for both students and lecturers just a few months later when the pandemic broke out. In Karlsruhe, we took a specific look at the use of iBooks and their potential use in the (foreign) language classroom (more on these topics in Baldwin & Ruhtenberg, 2022, Chapter 5 this volume).

Most of the content of the study week programme remained the same all through the project period. However, some minor adjustments had to be made, especially after the first cohort. This was related to the sheer amount of activities offered by some partners. At the beginning, ambitious schedules were put up to provide students a comprehensive insight into the different focal points, together with a wide array of educational and social activities. It soon turned out that students needed more time to work on their individual and group projects, as well as to digest the new environment. By limiting the amount of work in the courses (e.g. reducing the number of activities), we managed to get more students involved in the second and (planned) third cohort (which unfortunately could not take place due to the restrictions caused by the pandemic).

During the study week, student teachers visited local schools, got to know teachers and the education system of the respective countries, documented their learning in a personal e-portfolio, developed a research project, and took

part in social and cultural activities. Most importantly, the participants had the opportunity to meet and collaborate with international students and professionals with different expertise and cultural backgrounds (Figure 4).

Figure 4. proPIC Europa video – Study Week 2

In addition to that, participating students were introduced to a wide range of mobile technologies that they could use for their own teaching and learning. Among the tools included here were such popular apps as Kahoot, Flipgrid, Padlet, or Nearpod, but also more specific tools such as the classroom observation app VEO (Schwab & Oesterle, 2021), the Linguacuisine app (Seedhouse, Heslop, & Kharrufa, 2019), and different tools for video production. As the project was conducted pre-COVID-19, we were pleasantly surprised to see many of these tools used afterwards during numerous online-teaching sessions in higher education programmes and at schools.

Additionally, students were given the opportunity to work on small projects with students coming from the other partner institutions, exchange their experiences and their traditions and methodologies of learning and teaching a foreign and second language, and build intercultural and transnational networks.

4.   Evaluation of Study Weeks 1 and 2

As our programme was specifically tailored to the needs of future language teachers, we dedicate the main body of this section to the feedback given by the

participating students. Nonetheless, the teacher educators' comments on their work with the students is considered here as well.

4.1.　Student evaluation

Beyond doubt, the study weeks and their impact on the participants can be considered as one of if not the most crucial element of the proPIC project. In order to receive a comprehensive picture of what those participating students perceived during their stays at one of the partner institutions, we conducted a number of evaluative activities. Among them were (1) an online survey, (2) collections of written reflections as provided in a Padlet, as well as (3) Flipgrid video feedback by individuals or in pairs. The data will be presented in the following.

The main instrument used to evaluate the two study weeks was an online survey (SurveyMonkey) which all participating students had to fill in at the end of the week. In the following, we showcase the main results of it graphically as well as with sample comments by the participating students. In the latter part, we also include data from data sources (2) and (3).

4.2.　Student surveys

The survey comprised ten items (Q1-10) and included multiple choice questions (e.g. 'Please select the institution you come from') as well as six open-ended questions. The latter ones will mainly be referred to in the next section. Here, a summary of the overall judgement of the students is given.

When looking at the overall feedback of both study weeks, especially with regard to how useful students considered them (Q8), a number of indicators become obvious: in both cases, the most positive category is 'interaction with teacher educators/lecturers' (100% and 94%).

In Cohort 1, this was followed by 'fun' (84%), 'clarity of presented input' (76%) and 'effectiveness of presented input', 'technical support', and

'supporting international collaboration' (72% all). Cohort 2 gave high marks to 'cooperation with international students' and 'fun' (both 84%), and 'clarity of presentation' (76%). Only one student in each cohort made use of the option 'poor' for any of the categories. Interestingly, a lot of students named 'school visits' as a highlight of the study week in other evaluations (Flipgrid video/ Padlet), though only 68% and even 40% indicated this activity as 'very good' in the survey on the usefulness of the activities. It seems as if the social aspects of working or being together with others were perceived as very beneficial, which becomes even more enlightening when looking at it from a post-COVID-19 angle.

Figure 5 and Figure 6 provide an overview of all the aspects asked about.

Figure 5.   Study Week 1 – overall feedback
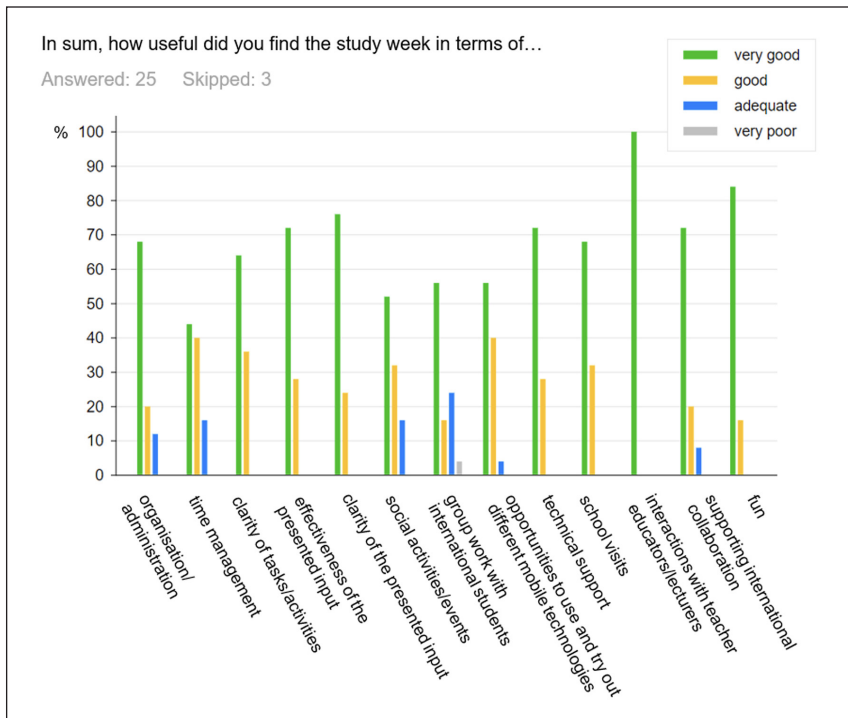
Figure 6. Study Week 2 – overall feedback
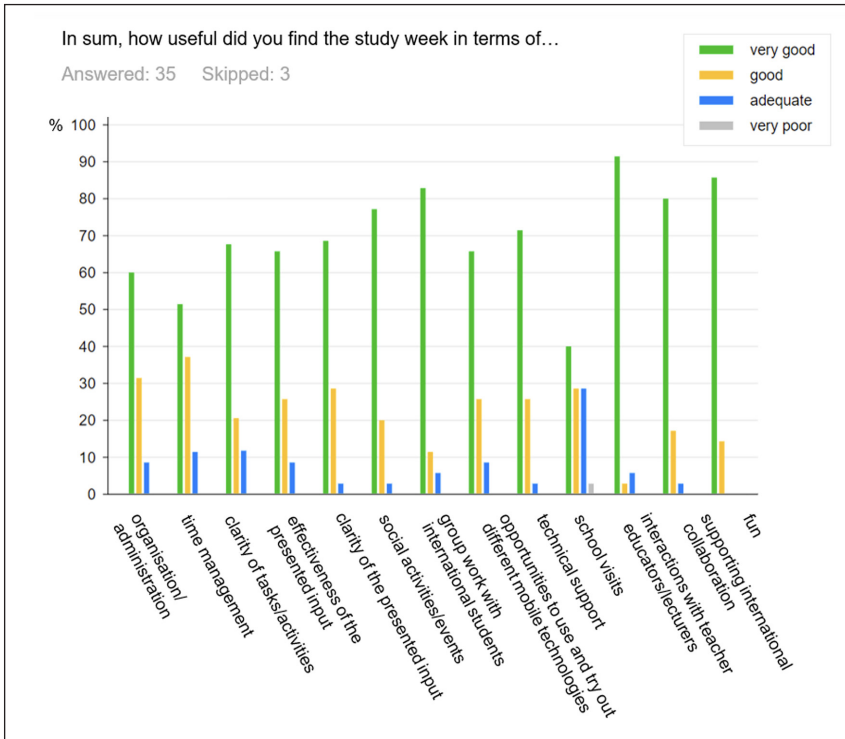
As we show below, students seem to judge some of the activities differently when using other reflection tools and formats such as Padlet (written) or Flipgrid (video). As all the evaluations were conducted during the study week, this seems to have other reasons. It might be that questions were not posed exactly the same way, e.g. 'How useful did you find the study week' (survey) versus 'What did you like the most about the study week' (Flipgrid). Thus, the feedback on the various aspects of the study week differed quite a bit.

Most surprisingly, the school visits did not get such an overwhelmingly positive review by either cohort, as this was expressed by individual students, especially in the video feedback.

A further point of interest for us was how useful students considered digital tools and mobile technologies presented during the study weeks. A great majority perceived this part of the study week as very positive (88%/86%) whereas all the others deemed it 'somewhat useful'.

When looking at the comments from the students, it becomes obvious that there is still a great need for more emphasis on the topic of digitisation in teacher education.

4.3.   Student voices

All of the surveys conducted provided room for individual written feedback. Additionally, students were given the opportunity to record their feedback on video – in teams or on their own. Consequentially, a number of key features emerged from the comments. The most salient were: (1) school visits, (2) use of digital tools and mobile technologies, (3) collaboration, (4) one's own individual and professional development, as well as (5) reflections on the study week. This section will finish with (6) some general feedback, together with (7) recommendations students gave to improve the concept of a study week abroad.

4.4.   School visits

As mentioned above, school visits were referred to in the video feedbacks in a more positive way than in the survey.

> "This project provided me the chance to visit some German schools, some local schools. This is a really good experience" (SWII_Repondent No. 4_Flipgrid).

> "I think the classroom observations gave me the most, actually. It was so fun to see how lessons are done in other countries" (SWII_ Respondent No. 5_Flipgrid).

In the feedback on Study Week 1, this perception was described as below.

"If I talk about an activity that I considered especially useful, I have to say the school visit and all that this implied" (SWI_anonymous_Padlet).

"For me the school visits was what I was looking forward to the most I think they also got me a lot to reflect about" (SWI_Respondent #3).

Still, students occasionally referred to some aspects that could be improved, in particular with regard to the organisation of the different school trips in the participating countries.

"Nevertheless I think it would have been good to separate our proPIC group and watch different classes or even different schools" (SWII_Respondent #10).

"The school trip could be improved so as for us to stay there for four hours and observe and also reflect upon it deeply or complete an activity in which you have to think about the pros and the cons of the class and also what you'd have changed" (SWII_Respondent #13).

All in all, most students asked for 'more school visits', often in combination with a request for an extension of the study week(s).

4.4.1. Use of digital tools and mobile technologies

Fostering digital competences among future teachers has become a common goal in teacher training programmes all across the globe (e.g. European Commission, 2021). Nonetheless, there is still a wide gap between what policy makers intend and higher education institutions actually offer. In order to narrow this gap somehow, digitalisation and mobile technologies became a major part of our programme, including during the study weeks. Obviously, students appreciated this.

"Glad to have been part of this project, and I have learned a lot about many technologies and tools that I can use both in the future as a teacher, and in my studies" (SWII_Respondent #25).

Although each partner could use different apps and mobile devices, the core of the mobile technology is described by a student who went to the CAU during the second study week.

> "We have worked with e-portfolios, mentimeter, socrative, video editing software (iMovie and Movie Maker), Splice, Padlet, Google sites, Plickers, etc. […]. We also completed our own e-portfolio using wix, wordpress, etc" (SWII_Respondent #23).

On the whole, the feedback on this part was fairly positive and may be summarised with the following quotation:

> "For me, this one week experience outcome is worth a full course on teaching technologies" (SWII_Resondent #7).

Even if this might be considered an exaggeration, it clearly tells us something about the state of digitalisation in European teacher training programmes.

4.4.2.   Collaboration

A core feature of proPIC was to bring together prospective teachers from different countries and backgrounds, an aspect which met with overwhelming approval:

> "To meet the other students and talk about learning was the best part" (SWII_Respondent unknown).

This aspect was also referred to in the written account of a student using a Padlet for her evaluation:

> "I have never imagined that proPic could be so beneficial in so many ways (I absolutely encourage people to do it!). I have learnt a lot with the interviews, courses and conferences, but I believe that the best thing above all was meeting you [=other participants of the week]" (SWI_anonymous_Padlet).

This might include working with international teacher educators too, who certainly provided an additional twist to the notion of collaboration and motivation in one's professional and personal development.

4.4.3. Individual and professional development

With proPIC we intended to empower prospective teachers in their profession by giving a better understanding of what CPD is or could be (see also Mann & Webb, 2022 Chapter 1 and Oesterle & Schwab, 2022 Chapter 2, this volume).

> "proPIC has already been one of the most intense study experiences I've had and it has enabled me to work on many aspects of my professionality as well as personality" (SWII_Respondent #18).

> "For my professional development, I can say that I have really and, but not fully, grown as a future teacher" (SWII_Respondent #9).

4.4.4. Reflection

Professional development to a great extent relies on reflection processes (see also Mann & Webb, 2022 Chapter 1 and Oesterle & Schwab, 2022 Chapter 2, this volume). In line with this notion, all participants had to regularly reflect upon their activities, either in their e-portfolios or in our course and study week feedback.

> "The most enriching experience was the reflection in the end after having held a lesson with and for the others and doing a videopaper based reflection. It was useful not only to see our process but also the ones of the others" (SWII_Respondent #18).

> "E-portfolio. A blog with everything we did and my reflections about it. It is a good way to remember what I was thinking about things to see how that changes, also a good way to share my experiences with others to have a deeper discussion about it and develop skills for my future profession" (SWII_Respondent #22).

4.4.5. Overall judgement by student

Wrapping up this section, we would like to provide written feedback from one student summing up their experience during a study week abroad:

> "I think what I've learned here [during the study week] and in Kiel will have a big impact on my future way of teaching and reflecting" (SWII_Respondent #11).

4.4.6. Suggestions for improvement

Even if a number of students were more than satisfied with the study week ('it was perfect'/'It was great! I wouldn't change anything'), we still asked students what needed to be changed or improved, especially as the programmes offered at the various institutions differed in some ways. One main theme was that students came with different expectations and background knowledge. This diversity made things more complicated and challenging not only for the lecturers, but also for the students who suggested the following.

> "Have the same preparation before the week, so everyone here has got the same knowledge (the tutorials). It had made a better discussion, it felt now that people didn't know things about the digital benefits, which made it hard to discuss things in the level I expected" (SWII_ Respondent #22).

> "every university should do the same beforehand […]. Same prerequisites (some were primary school teacher trainers, others were secondary)" (SWII_Respondent #35).

Often the study week was not directly linked to the study programme at home and students had difficulties in connecting their individual research projects to what was offered abroad. Regarding the organisation and logistics, students thus recommend a few important aspects be taken into consideration when planning a study week.

"General: better organisation and clarification towards the aim of the project; prerequisites should be all the same, only secondary school teachers" (SWII_Respondent #34).

"The only problem we experienced during the study week was that not all universities were on the same page in regards of the tasks to be completed" (SWII_Respondent #36).

Additional suggestions mentioned were as below.

"Providing more opportunities for participants to use various technologies regarding L2 teaching" (SWII_Respondent #38).

"In my opinion, I would like to have the opportunity to use the apps that were introduced" (SWII_Respondent #26).

Or in an even more specific way:

"I would focus more on video editing, different softwares and how to use them. Maybe a video-related project that assembles all of the study week could be great, so that there is some thread that connects all the different workshops, school visits and activities we have had" (SWII_Respondent #23).

Teacher education has just begun to foster these aspects of the curriculum in an appropriate manner and one course or study week is by no means sufficient. There is certainly still a long way to go before digital and online devices become as self-evident and natural as textbooks and vocabulary tests.

4.5.   Teacher educator evaluation

Although we consider students' feedback on the study week as pivotal to a final judgement and possible starting point for improvement which was or should have been taken into consideration, we also asked all participating lecturers to

share their impressions. This again was done in various ways, such as video feedback (Flipgrid), a joint teacher educator e-portfolio, or written comments for the final evaluation of the project. When being part of such a project, one would certainly expect a large amount of enthusiasm and motivation on the part of the lecturers. Looking back at the two study weeks we were able to conduct, it turned out that this was undoubtedly the case even if almost all of them admitted that it was an 'exhausting' week and experience. Some referred to it as the 'highlight' of the project.

> "It was great to see students from different European universities come together to discuss learning and teaching from their perspectives and thereby enriching each other" (final report).

Enthusiasm among students was observed across the cohorts and courses. Their work attitudes and eagerness were mentioned together with the intensive collaboration among participants from different social, ethnic, and institutional backgrounds.

> "The most beneficial was the opportunity for our students to have a rich intercultural experience, to live with students with similar concerns, to work together in reflection, to begin to develop their teaching competence together with other future teachers" (final report).

In a similar vein, another lecturer stated the following when asked for the most beneficial aspects of the week:

> "Definitely border-crossing exchange of experience between students, insight into local teacher training practices and school life, and the joint exploration of learning paths that make students in different European countries good teachers" (final report).

During the study weeks, lecturers tried to offer a wide variety of input in order to foster their students' digital skills and professional development.

"The participants were able to pick up and adapt new ideas" (final report).

"The possibility of the students developing their own CPD through the activities we prepared" (final report).

Nevertheless, some of lecturers realised that their own enthusiasm and motivation in planning went well beyond what could be expected from students in such a time, which was also in line with comments collected from some students who noted that the workload during the study week was sometimes too much:

"A week before the study week I was amazed and proud of the diverse activities planned, but we just could not do all of them. This is something to consider when planning the second study week. I will leave more time and space to my students" (Study Week 1, written reflection).

With regard to their own profession, lecturers underscored the fact that this was not just a 'unique experience' with 'intensive cooperation' (Flipgrid), but also a great opportunity to learn from each other. This was even more the case when teacher trainers from different institutions could join or work together during the study week, e.g. by providing additional lectures, planning activities together with national hosts, or just supporting students in their research activities during the stay. However, this option was possible just once, when two teams were put together in Cohort 2 to save on personal resources. In order to foster this idea of international collaboration, though, lecturers were given the opportunity to join project partners during the regular part of the study programme before or after the study week (see also Hoinke & Clausen, 2022, Chapter 4 on the study programme, this volume).

Finally, the study week provided an intensive exchange between lecturers and visiting students so that relationships could be developed, and learning became twofold, i.e. students learned from lecturers and the other way around.

5. Discussion

Based on the online survey on the study week, as well as on the data collected through the e-portfolios, written reflections, and video feedbacks, it can be stated that the study week was reported to have the greatest impact on all participants, students, and teacher trainers alike. Students reported that taking part in it made them realise how important it is to experience 'otherness' in order to reflect better on one's own context. The notion of CPD, therefore, became a more important and settled part of their mind set. In particular, students perceived it to be helpful and inspiring to experience other perspectives on learning and teaching an FL. Interestingly, the participating teacher trainers reported that they felt that the returning students were much more motivated and thus put a lot of effort into their research projects.

The study week abroad was not only a key component of the whole study programme of the project, it was certainly the most important and popular part of it, as indicated by the student and lecturer feedback presented above. To us, this evokes an important consideration in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although students had been in touch with each other before and after the study week via Slack, email, or other social media and a distinct familiarity with digital tools could be seen among all participants, the impact of direct face-to-face interaction cannot be overstated. The close encounter of students in international collaboration cannot simply be replaced by virtual exchange, even if this has become more and more important (Waldman et al., 2019).

6. Conclusion: recommendations and checklist

ProPIC was planned pre-COVID-19 and conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Looking back at our attempt to combine student mobility and international collaboration, we need to see it through the lens of the developments triggered by the pandemic. This means that a student week may combine hybrid elements or can be conducted in different phases – on-campus and on-screen.

Still, a physical exchange remains the most important part and as such should be planned in-depth. In line with these considerations, we decided not to offer a replacement for the last and final stay abroad in 2020.

All in all, for us, the main important points of consideration are:

- the course programmes in which the study week is embedded should have the same or similar conditions, content, and objectives;

- the content, activities, schedule, and outputs of the study weeks should be similar at each partner institution and clear from the start;

- at least one school visit at each partner institution is recommended; if possible, two visits should be integrated;

- the recruitment of students should be planned thoroughly and long in advance;

- cooperation between local and international lecturers, as well as the integration of local students, is recommended; and

- thorough planning and organisation (timetable, finances, etc.) is crucial with regard to a successful and satisfying outcome.

In addition to these recommendations we have provided a checklist[9] for international study weeks based on our experiences.

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9. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/652237/IPOL_STU(2021)652237_EN.pdf

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