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Experience in Running a Computer Science Master's Programme in English. First Steps towards Internationalization

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Abstract: *The main aim of this paper is to analyze several international master's programmes in Computer Science in order to identify their common elements, their strengths and their particularities. Various mobility patterns specific to the case of joint programmes, involving from two up to six partners, are also identified. This information is then used to evaluate the status, with respect to the internationalization potential, of a research master's programme in Artificial Intelligence and Distributed Computing, taught in English, organized at the Department of Computer Science from the West University of Timisoara. The context which motivated the creation of the programme, as well as the main outcomes are discussed with an emphasis on the internationalization related aspects. Finally, some critical elements in ensuring the success of international master's programmes in Computer Science are discussed and the main steps towards internationalization are identified.*

Keywords: *internationalization, mobility patterns, joint programmes, quality assessment*

Rezumat: *Scopul principal al acestei lucrări este de a analiza câteva programe de master internaționale din domeniul informaticii, cu scopul de a identifica elementele comune, punctele lor tari precum și elementele specifice. Pentru programele organizate in parteneriat, cu un număr de parteneri variind între doi și șase au fost identificate diferite scheme de asigurare a mobilității studenților. Aceste informații au fost ulterior utilizate pentru a evalua starea de fapt, din perspectiva potențialului de internaționalizare, a masterului de cercetare în domeniul Inteligenței Artificiale și a Calculului Dustribuit, predat in engleză, și organizat la Departamentul de Informatică al Universității de Vest din Timișoara. Sunt discutate contextul care a motivat lansarea programului de master precum și principalele realizări obținute până acum, punându-se accent pe aspectele corelate cu procesul de internaționalizare. In final, sunt discutate câteva dintre aspectele critice pentru succesul unui program de master internaționalizat, în domeniul informaticii și sunt identificați principalii pași de urmat în procesul de internaționalizare.*

Cuvinte cheie: *internaționalizare, scheme de mobilitate, programe in parteneriat, evaluarea calității.*

1. Introduction

It is usually acknowledged that an international experience during the academic studies brings several important benefits both to undergraduate and to graduate students, creating premises for better career opportunities. Studying in an international environment can reinforce adaptability and initiative, improve the problem solving abilities and enhance the collaboration and communication skills (Michel and Stratulat, 2010: 135). In the field of Computer Science the internationalization process should be rather natural, as this is one of the domains which stimulate the globalization process by offering tools which enhance the contact and collaboration between people located at large distances. On the other hand, the interest in studying Computer Science and related topics is

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still high, despite some decreasing trends noticed in the last years (Marsan, 2009: 23). Thus, internationalization of master's programmes on topics related to Computer Science answers to an existing request on the academic market. However, it is not easy to design trans-national programs as long as there is still a significant heterogeneity among the education systems, even in Europe. In an ENQUA report (Bitusikova, 2010: 18) is stated that the „master level is not yet stabilised across Europe and varies from country to country" and there are three main types of programmes: professional master programmes, research intensive master programmes and programs containing specialized modules offered to returning learners (designed mainly as re-professionalization programs). In the same report it is stated that the research content of master's programmes varies between different countries and different universities. In the context of internationalisation of studies it is important to identify the common elements of different programmes and to make them compatible without altering their specificities.

Therefore, one of the aims of this paper is to analyze several international master's programmes in Computer Science in order to identify their common elements, their strengths and their particularities. Various mobility schemes in the case of joint programmes are also identified. This information is then used to evaluate the current status, with respect to the internationalization potential, of a research master in Artificial Intelligence and Distributed Computing (AIDC) organized at the Department of Computer Science from the West University of Timisoara.

In another ENQA report (Mulder, 2010: 41) it is stressed out that, as long as the research is the moving force of economies, strong master's programmes oriented toward research are more likely to be attractive for talented international students. Moreover it is emphasized the fact that, at least in the Netherlands, the stakeholders have formulated four perspectives on the research master's programmes. Thus, such a programme could: exclusively prepare for a PhD; prepare for a position in research, but not necessarily a PhD; offer orientation on research, but with an intrinsic value; just offer top education.

The paper is organized as follows. Section two presents the particularities of various types of international master's programmes on topics related to Computer Science, as they were extracted from a comparative study involving fifteen programs. In section three is presented a case study concerning a master's programme taught in English, which is organized at the Department of Computer Science from the West University of Timisoara. The last section discusses some critical elements related to the quality and success of international programmes and analyzes the current status of the AIDC master with respect to the main steps of the internationalization process.

2. Particularities of international master's programmes in Computer Science

In order to identify the particularities of successful international master's programmes in Computer Science we conducted a comparative study involving 7 master's programmes organized by universities and professional associations from Europe and 8 European Masters in Computers Science developed in the framework of Erasmus Mundus programme of European Commission. The analysis allowed us to extract some common elements and to identify several models used in designing and conducting an international master's programme.

Data collection methodology. The information concerning the international programmes was extracted from public data accessible by web search, the main source being the programmes web pages and the Erasmus Mundus web page[1]. The list of international programmes involving one host university is presented in Table 1 and the list of analyzed Erasmus Mundus master's programmes is presented in Table 2.

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[1] Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/results_compendia/ selected_projects_action_1_master_courses_en.php

***Table 1.** International Computer Science related master programme organized by one university*

Master Programme	Institution	Web site
International Studies in Informatics	University Johannes Kepler, Linz, Austria	http://www.isi-hagenberg.at/
Media Informatics	RWTH Aachen University, Germany	http://mi.b-it-center.de/
Software Systems Engineering	University of Aachen, Germany	http://dbis.rwth-aachen.de/SSE/
Computational Science and Engineering	Technical University of Munchen, Germany	http://www.in.tum.de/en/for-prospective-students/master-courses-of-study/computational-science-and-engineering.html
Information Technology	University of Stuttgart, Germany	http://www.uni-stuttgart.de/infotech/
Computer Science and Networking	University of Pisa, Italy	http://www.xtreemos.eu/news/international-master-course-in-computer-science-and-networking-university-of-pisa-and-ssup-s-anna
Computer Science	University of Gottenborg, Sweden	http://www.itufak.gu.se/english/education/programmes/cs/

***Table 2.** European masters courses related to Computer Science organized in the framework of Erasmus Mundus Program.*

Program	Web site	Number of partners
EuMI - European Master in Informatics	http://eumi-school.org/	3
DESEM - Erasmus Mundus MSc in Dependable Software Systems	http://www.cs.nuim.ie/courses/desem/	3
EMECS - European Master Embedded Computing Systems	http://mundus.eit.uni-kl.de	3
EMDC - European Master in Distributed Computing	http://www.kth.se/emdc	3
European Masters Program in Computational Logic	http://www.computational-logic.eu	4
IT4BI - Information Technologies for Business Intelligence	http://it4bi.univ-tours.fr/	5
NORDSECMOB - Master's programme in Security and Mobile Computing	http://nordsecmob.tkk.fi/	5
DMKM - Data Mining & Knowledge Management	http://www.em-dmkm.eu	6

Common elements. All analyzed programs are in taught in English, which is natural, as long as the professional language of Computer Science is based on English. In fact English can be considered the lingua franca of computing. Therefore, professional communication barriers are almost

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inexistent in the case of Computer Science, making the internationalization of academic programs in this field considerably easier than in other fields, at least with respect to the language issues. Nevertheless, all master's programmes include in the admission requirements the necessity of proving sufficient fluency in English.

Another common point is related to the overall structure of curricula. All programmes offer a mixture of fundamental courses and professional projects distributed over four semesters. The standard curriculum groups the harmonization and core courses in the first semester, the specialization courses in the second and third semesters, while the last semester is usually devoted to internships and master thesis preparation. Despite the technical profile of the programmes, almost all of them offer humanities modules, mainly oriented toward the language and culture of the host university, and also leadership modules.

Another aspect, particularly important in Computer Science programmes, is the emphasis on the teamwork. Thus, all of them include professional projects and stimulate both individual and team work. A critical element is represented by the existence of internships organized at internationally recognized companies. In the case of research masters a similar element is represented by the cooperation with research institutes. For instance, in the case of the Media Informatics programme organized by the University of Aachen the tight collaboration with the Fraunhofer Institutes of Applied Information Technology (FIT) and Intelligent Analysis and Information Systems (IAIS) represents a strong point, which significantly contributed to the attractiveness of this programme for international students. In the programme description is mentioned that the programme attracted, up to now, students from 46 countries.

Internationalization models. By analyzing the programmes listed in Tables 1 and 2 it follows that there are several internationalization models. A first classification is that dividing the programs in those organized by a host university and those organized by consortia involving two or more universities and which offer double or, in some cases, even multiple degrees.

Model 1: One host university. All programs listed in Table 1 belong to the first category. The main international dimension of programmes organized by one host university is the fact that they attract international students. The goal of attracting international students is not easy to be achieved. There are some critical elements which have an important impact on the success of such programmes: the master's programme should be a strong and competitive one in the field in which it is offered; the host university should have a good international visibility; the programme should offer attractive internships to the students; the programme should be properly advertised. Components addressing other dimensions of the internationalization are related to the mobility offers for students (both local and international) and to the involvement of international teachers. Thus, many of such programmes offer to their students the opportunity the follow some modules at another university, usually in a different country. On the other hand, the strong programmes attract teachers from other universities. Thus the first dimension of internationalization, that ensured by the existence of international students, is enriched by the other two dimensions: international mobility and international teachers.

Model 2: Two partners universities. The simplest partnership in organizing a master's programmme is that involving two universities which are compatible but, in the same time, at least partially complementary with respect to the resources, academic offer and the research/industrial environment. The simplest example is that involving two universities which offer programmes in the same field but with a different emphasis: one of the programmes excels in the theoretical background provided to the students and the other one excels in the applications part and internship opportunities. Such a program, in Industrial Mathematics, is currently running at the Department of Computer Science from the West University of Timisoara in cooperation with the Technical University of Eindhoven (TUE). The first year, containing harmonization and core courses is organized in Romania where are also hosted the students coming from TUE, while the second year, which focuses on specialization courses, project work and internship, is organized at TUE where the Romanian students

are also enrolled. The advantage of this model is the possibility to exploit the particularities of the partners and to construct a powerful programme by merging two programmes with complementary strengths.

Model 3: More than two partners. Partnerships involving more than two partners are specific to Erasmus Mundus master's programmes. The typical number of partners is between 3 and 6, as is illustrated by Table 2, where currently running successful programmes are listed. Most of these programmes offer double degree, given by the universities where the highest number of credits was obtained. The European master's programmes are coherently constructed by combining both common and specific topics currently offered by the partner universities. The main particularity of these programmes is the mobility scheme followed by the students. In the simplest case, all students follow the same mobility scheme, e.g. the first year at University 1, the third semester at University 2 and the thesis preparation at University 3 (in the case of three partners). The current programmes offer a more flexible variant, the student being able to choose his/her own route as long as some requirements concerning the core and specialization courses are satisfied.

One of the simplest schemes is that of the European Master in Informatics (EuMI) involving three partners: University of Trento, RWTH Aachen University and the University of Edinburgh. Three joint curricula involving two universities of the consortium are designed and each student has to choose one of these variants (depending on his/her preferences on the specialization topics offered by the three universities). The student will spend the first year at one university and the second year at one of the remaining two universities. The thesis will be prepared at the university visited in the second year, but it will be jointly supervised and evaluated by two professors, one from each visited universities. Upon the successful completion of the curriculum, the students will be awarded a qualification equivalent to Master's degrees in the two visited universities.

An even more flexible program, also organized by a consortium of three partners (Royal Institute of Technology - KTH in Sweden, Universidad Politècnica de Cataluna - UPC in Spain and Instituto Superior Técnico - IST in Portugal) is the European Master in Distributed Computing. The first year of studies is carried out at one of the universities in Spain and Portugal. The third semester is organized at KTH and the students can choose any of the partners for preparing their master thesis. Such a scheme allows to exploit the strengths of each partner (e.g. UPC and IST are strong on topics related to distributed computing fundamentals while KTH offers expertise in more specialized topics).

There are programmes, as the European Master in Computational Logic, which involves besides European academic partners (in this case four partners: Technische Universitaet Dresden, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Technische Universitaet Wien), also institutes outside Europe (in this case ICT Australia (NICTA) Research Centre of Excellence) where the students can spend three summer months in a research internship. The mobility scheme is as follows: first semester at the Technische Universitaet Dresden (TUD), the second semester at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano (FUB), and the second year in one of the 4 partner universities chosen by the student.

As the number of partners increases, the number of possible mobility patterns also increases, allowing the students to personalize their academic trajectory according to their interests. The European Master in Information Technologies for Business Intelligence, involving 5 academic partners and several associated industrial partners, is such a program. The first semester is organized at Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) and the courses of the second semester are offered by the Université François Rabelais Tours (UFRT) in France. For the third semester, devoted to specialisation, the students can choose between Ecole Centrale Paris (ECP) in France, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC) in Spain, and Technische Universität Berlin (TUB) in Germany. The fourth semester is dedicated to the master's thesis which can be realised either as a placement in industry, or as an internship in a research laboratory at any full or any associated partner. At the end, the graduates will be awarded with a triple degree, the national master's degrees from ULB, UFRT and

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from the specialisation of the university. A specific aspect of programmes involving a large number of partners is the fact that the contact between students is limited to the semesters when they are all enrolled at the same university. In order to ensure the contact between all students, some common events (as summer schools or common workshops) are usually organized.

One of the most complex model encountered among the currently running European Master's programmes is that provided by the EU Master in Data Mining and Knowledge Management which involves 6 partners (Universite de Lyon - France, Universite Paris 6 - France, Polytech Nantes - France, University of Piedmont - Italy, Politehnica University of Bucharest - Romania and Politècnica de Catalunya - Spain). The mobility pattern is very flexible: the student can choose any of the universities in France to follow the fundamental courses of the first semester, then he/she can follow the second and third semester at one of the other three partners. Finally, the internship (fourth semester) can be followed at any of the partners or even at an associate partner from a third country. In order to ensure effective communication between the students distributed to different partners, the fundamental courses are offered in common by videoconferencing systems. Another particularity of this program is the fact that each partner offers a specialty in the field of Data Mining and Knowledge Management, and the students can decide which one of the six specialties suits better to them.

Designing a successful joint master's programme involving more than three partners is not an easy task. The EC project EMACS (European Master in Computer Science)[2] proposed a „reusable methodology for identifying coherent combinations of course components from a large set of geographically distributed subjects". This methodology can be used to design a curriculum for masters' level modules in Computer Science provided by several partner institutions. Usually the teachers are those of the host institution, but a module can be taught by a professor from another institution.

In the programmes presented above the building block (minimal amount of time spent at one institution) consists of one semester. The EMACS project introduced the concept of short modules (modules requiring 1-2 weeks stay at the host university) and proposed a methodology to design a personalized curriculum by combining the building blocks represented by the short modules. The advantage of such short modules is the fact that they can be offered also to companies or to anyone interested for further education in the context of life long learning process.

The key issue in designing a study program is to ensure coherence between the course components. The flexibility is ensured by the possibility of replacing one module with another one, as long as they are equivalent. In the context of the EMACS project, the notion of equivalence is fourfold: thematic (the modules should address similar topics), workload (expressed by the same number of credits), time-compatible (modules offered in the same semester) and language-compatible (the modules should be taught in the same language). There are also some restrictions in the choice of the modules: those included in the first and fourth semester should correspond to the curriculum in the home university (the first and the last semester are followed at the home university). During the second and the third semesters the student has the possibility to visit other partner universities.

The various models presented above illustrate the existence of many facets in the internationalization process and the fact that successful programmes are obtained when the strengths of different partners are adequately exploited.

3. Case Study: A Master's Program in Computer Science taught in English

This section presents the experience of running a master's programme in English at the Department of Computer Science from the West University of Timisoara. The "Artificial Intelligence and Distributed Computing" master's programme has been launched in 2008 and since then 40 students already graduated. The average number of students per year was 25. The particularities of this

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program are highly influenced by the context represented by the other undergraduate and graduate programmes existing at the Department of Computer Science.

Context and motivation. The main motivation of launching the "Artificial Intelligence and Distributed Computing" in English was the existence of an undergraduate Computer Science programme also taught in English with a first series of graduates in 2008. In the same time, a similar master's programme, taught in Romanian, was already functional. Thus, the context was appropriate: there were graduates interested in continuing their studies in English and also an already well established research master's programme in Artificial Intelligence and Distributed Computing. The existence of an already validated curriculum and of course materials, initially in Romanian, facilitated a smooth transition toward the program taught in English.

In the same time, since Distributed Computing and Artificial Intelligence are the main research directions at the Computer Science Department, there are several research projects on topics related to the curriculum and also collaborations with research teams from Europe. Thus, there was an environment which stimulated the involvement of master students in the research activity of the local team or in collaboration with international teams. On the other hand, there were several academic agreements with international universities, creating opportunities for student mobility and for attracting teachers from partner universities.

From initial aims to outcomes. The main initial aim was to ensure the continuity of the academic trajectory for the graduates of the undergraduate Computer Science in English. The initial expectations were fulfilled, as almost 60% of the graduates of the undergraduate programme in English followed the master's programme also taught in English. The feedback from graduates is encouraging, as they acknowledge the benefits of following both the undergraduate and the graduate programme in English in obtaining good positions at international companies or in accessing to international PhD programmes.

Another aim was to create opportunities for students to work in an international environment. As outcomes we can mention here the fact that 11 students (representing 17%) benefited of mobility programs at European universities and research institutes. Besides traditional Erasmus mobility programme, the students also participated at research stages at INRIA[3] and at research secondments organized in the framework of the FP7 project SPRERS[4]. Consequently, 6 of the 20 master theses defended in 2011 were prepared during stages at universities and research institutes in Europe (4 in France and 2 in Denmark). Also, during the last two years, 9 students were included in the teams of national and international collaborative research projects.

A third aim was to attract researchers from universities outside Romania to give invited lectures. Since 2008, 2 associate professors taught short modules each year and 23 researchers gave invited talks on topics related to the master program.

Thus the AIDC master satisfies some of the particularities of an international programme: international mobility for students, foreign teachers and involvement of students in international research teams. However, besides a small number of Erasmus students, no other international students were attracted into the programme. Thus the internationalization is partially achieved, being ensured only in one direction: outgoing students (from the West University of Timisoara to other universities in Europe). Efforts should be made now to step toward full internationalization.

4. Steps towards internationalization

There are several pre-conditions which should be satisfied by a master's programme in Computer Science in order to have chances to become an international one: *competitiveness*, *accessibility*, *visibility* and *attractiveness*.

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[3] INRIA (http://www.inria.fr/en/institute/international-relations)
[4] SPRERS-Strengthening the Participation of Romania at European R&D in Software Services (http://sprers.eu)

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By competitiveness we mean that the programme should be compatible and qualitatively comparable with study programmes in the same field offered by other universities. In the same time, it should satisfy the requirements of the international IT (Information Technology) labor market, which is a particularly dynamic one. Unless the program is able to keep up with the technological changes and the latest results of the research in the field, it cannot be a competitive one. This means that the Computer Science curricula should be frequently updated and aligned to the international trends. In this field, the guidelines provided by ACM (Association for Computing Machinery)[5] are particularly useful. By providing recommendations aligned to the up-to-date status of the research and development in computing technologies, the ACM reports help in ensuring the compatibility between different programmes addressing similar topics.

By accessibility we mainly refer to the language aspect. As already mentioned, computer science is one of the privileged domains for which there are no significant linguistic barriers. However, an international master has not only the aim of providing specific knowledge, but also the aim of offering to international students the possibility of a smooth integration in the social and cultural environment of the host university/country. Therefore, the modules on the Romanian language and culture to international students should not be neglected.

There are a few aspects which contribute to the visibility of a master programme. A first important role is played by the visibility of the host university itself. These days, this can be easily ensured by a comprehensive and friendly web site with multilingual support and easy access to information for international students. Another important role is played by the visibility of teachers and researchers. This is mainly ensured by their scientific outcomes included in international publications, their participation to conferences, summer schools and trainings, their involvement in research teams of international projects and their collaboration with international companies. The existence of research and academic collaboration agreements between the host university/team and other universities/teams is important in ensuring the program's visibility and in identifying appropriate mobility schemes.

A Computer Science master's programme is attractive for international students if it offers an up-to-date curriculum and, in the same time, opportunities for internships at highly-placed companies or for research stages in the framework of international projects. Other aspects contributing to the programme's attractiveness are related to the research infrastructure, accommodation facilities, scholarships and opportunities to learn about local language and culture.

In the context of the internationalization process a critical issue is represented by the variability between the quality requirements of different master's programmes (Bitusikova, 2010: 18). Therefore the development of common procedures for quality evaluation is highly desirable. In the framework of EMACS project[6] some quality indicators addressing the evaluation of students, teachers, industrial placements and quality of mobility have been proposed. The indicators which are particularly relevant with respect to the internationalization process are: number of students and teachers that participated to mobility programmes (both out-going and in-going); satisfaction of the students participating in the programme; number of companies and research institutes (local and international) with which there are agreements for work placements; percentage of students who participated in work placements (local or international). In the case of research oriented master's programmes the quality assessment should take into account the particularities of such programmes. Such particularities are: the students should do, at least in the final year, research activities materialized in a master thesis with scientific value; the admission should be highly selective in order to attract outstanding students, able to conduct a research activity and continue with doctoral studies, even if their number is reduced (Mulder, 2010: 41).

The idea of working with small groups of students in order to ensure high standards of quality, especially in the case of research master's programmes, is also emphasized by Andree Sursock

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[5] ACM – Association for Computing Machinery (http://www.acm.org/education/curricula-recommendations)
[6] EMACS - Erasmus Project 134385-LLP-2007-PT-ERASMUS-ECDSP

who states that „a successful international strategy cannot be simply financial but should be linked to academic concerns with quality, and that this costs rather than brings in money" (2010: 15). Thus, even the most important international players in the academic field can have difficulties unless they accept that studying abroad is a long term investment yielding very little short-term financial gains.

To summarize, the main steps towards internationalization are:
- Develop a strong and competitive master's programme taught in English.
- Identify academic partners and ensure the compatibility of the study programmes and also of the evaluation and quality assessment procedures.
- Identify attractive IT companies and research institutes for internships and research stages, respectively.
- Ensure participation to international research projects, especially in the case of research oriented master's programmes.
- Identify funding schemes for financial support to be offered to international students.
- Enhance the visibility of the programme and promote it through various actions and instruments.

These steps are not necessarily sequential, usually they are interrelated. When looking at the status of the Artificial Intelligence and Distributed Computing programme, as it is presented in the previous section, one can see that these steps has been partially made and there are strong reasons to believe that the internationalization goal can be reached. The main reasons for this belief are: the study programme is highly compatible with similar European programmes; there are academic agreements with universities and research institutes from Austria, France, The Netherlands, Japan and Canada; there are agreements with internationally recognized IT companies (e.g. Alcatel Lucent and Continental-Siemens) and with research institutes (e.g. Research Institute for Symbolic Computation – RISC from Linz, Austria and INRIA from France); there are research teams involved in several international projects both at the Department of Computer Science and at the Institute e-Austria (a spin-off developed as a partnership between the Research Institute for Symbolic Computation from Linz, West University of Timisoara and the Politehnica University of Timisoara); there is a research infrastructure of high standards at the High Performance Computing Center of the West University of Timisoara[7].

Further steps are to be made, especially by increasing the international visibility of the programme and its attractiveness among international students.

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[7] HPC Center http://hpc.uvt.ro

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Student perceptions of programme quality –
a tool for improvement

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Rezumat: *Evaluarea programelor masterale de către studenți reprezintă un element structural al procesului de monitorizare a calității. Ea poate fi realizată la sfârșitul programului sau modulelor individuale, cu scop evaluativ final, dar și pe parcursul desfășurării programelor. In această situație, evaluarea are un caracter formativ și este destinată pe de o parte monitorizării progresului studenților, iar pe de alta ajustării și reorganizării programului în funcție de nevoile studenților (lucru nu ușor de făcut în timp ce programul este in desfășurare).*

Lucrarea de față se concentrează pe evaluarea cu caracter formativ desfășurată în cadrul programului masteral Comunicare în Limba Engleză pentru Predare și Cercetare Economică, organizat de Academia de Studii Economice din București. Studiul prezintă datele obținute printr-o serie de interviuri individuale cu studenții la sfârșitul primului an de studiu al masteratului și discută aspecte legate de progresul studenților, așa cum il percep aceștia, precum și aspecte care pot genera schimbări în structura programului în încercarea de imbunătățire a calității. Acest proces, în viziunea noastră, înseamnă conformitatea cu standarde bine definite și larg acceptate, dar are și o latură mai greu de definit, care ține de percepțiile celor implicați în procesul de predare/învățare.

Cuvinte cheie: *managementul calității, evaluare de program, autoevaluare, dezvoltare profesională, percepțiile studenților.*

Abstract: *Student evaluation is a structural element in monitoring the quality of MA programmes. Evaluation can have a summative character if carried out at the end of a module or of the whole programme. When carried out during the course of the programme, evaluation is more formative in character and intended to monitor student progress on the one hand and to adjust the programme (to the extent it is possible) to the students' perceived needs on the other. Our presentation will focus on formative evaluation of the MA programme "Research and Teacher Education for Business and Economics" (EDU-RES) run by the Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest as a staff development programme. We will discuss the data obtained through individual interviews carried out at the end of the first year and will highlight issues related to student progress as well as issues that tutors can build on in the attempt to improve programme quality. Apart from compliance to standards, quality is also a matter of perception and the students' perspective needs to be taken into account particularly in the case of internationalized programmes.*

Key words: *quality management, programme evaluation, self-evaluation, professional development, student perceptions.*

1. Introduction

Student evaluation of programmes or specific modules within programmes is a frequently-used indicator of quality, in recognition of the fact that quality assurance and enhancement are essential processes in all learning environments. The understanding of participants in the quality assurance process of the features of effective/good teaching is to be regarded as both a tool for quality evaluation and an exercise in reflection and self – development. By reflecting on the learning experi-

ence within a particular programme, students have a chance to reexamine their learning objectives and to reflect on their own performance and development.

This paper reports on the results of a piece of qualitative research conducted within the wider framework of monitoring the quality of the MA programme "Research and Teacher Education for Business and Economics" (EDU-RES) at the Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest. The programme was designed as a staff development initiative meant to enhance academic skills – teaching, research and educational management – and academic communication in English. The students are university lecturers (most of them at the Academy of Economic Studies) interested in strengthening their presence on the international academic field.

Their perceptions were recorded through a series of individual interviews carried out at the end of the first year of study with the following objectives:

- To assess progress in relation to initial personal objectives;
- To identify new objectives or changes in initial objectives;
- To reflect on achievements in terms of: skills, knowledge, language abilities, networking;
- To identify necessary/suggested changes to the programme.
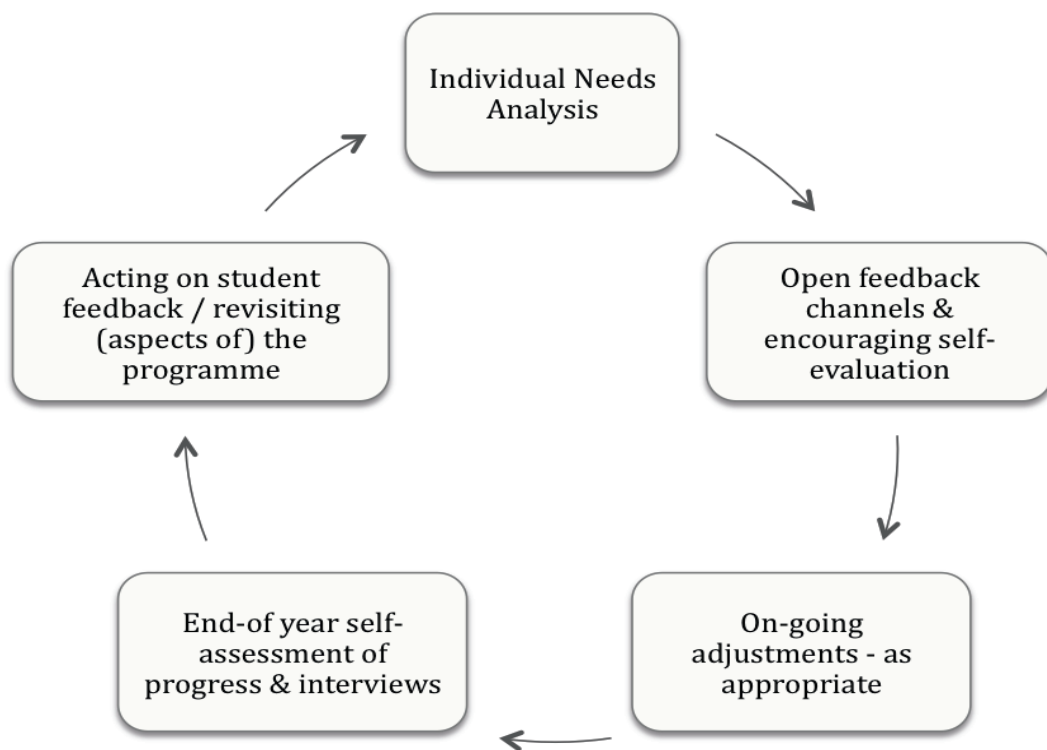
2. Approach to quality management

Recording student perceptions of the programme and of their own study progress is a type of formative evaluation. Notions of formative and summative evaluation are widely-mentioned in the literature (Alderson, 1992, Rea-Dickins 1994) although in practice the distinction is not that clear-cut. We agree with Alderson (1999) who points out that the reality of evaluation is more complex than such concepts indicate:

> '*Formative evaluation is said to be intended to help participants to learn and develop, to improve a project, to adjust its direction and methodology, whereas summative evaluation draws conclusions, makes judgements, has consequences, comes at the end of a project. Formative evaluation is something many claim they do, whereas summative evaluation is something that is done to them by outsiders. I believe that these are false distinctions, far too black-and-white, and obviously value-laden.*' (Alderson, 1999: 3).

To continue Alderson's argument, do we claim we do formative evaluation or do we actually carry it out? Our work with student perceptions of programme quality has consequences and the programme is redesigned according to suggestions and priorities, therefore we can justifiably claim that we carry out formative evaluation.

Our approach to quality management encourages us to link formative evaluation to quality enhancement. Quality assurance, both as a concept and a set of practices, has many practical implications, and in order to ensure its effectiveness, it is essential to integrate both individual self-assessment and institutional self-evaluation with managerial decision taking and external quality assurance. We will argue, therefore, that quality assurance should be analysed in connection with the process of managing quality, and carrying out formative evaluation is one aspect of quality management.
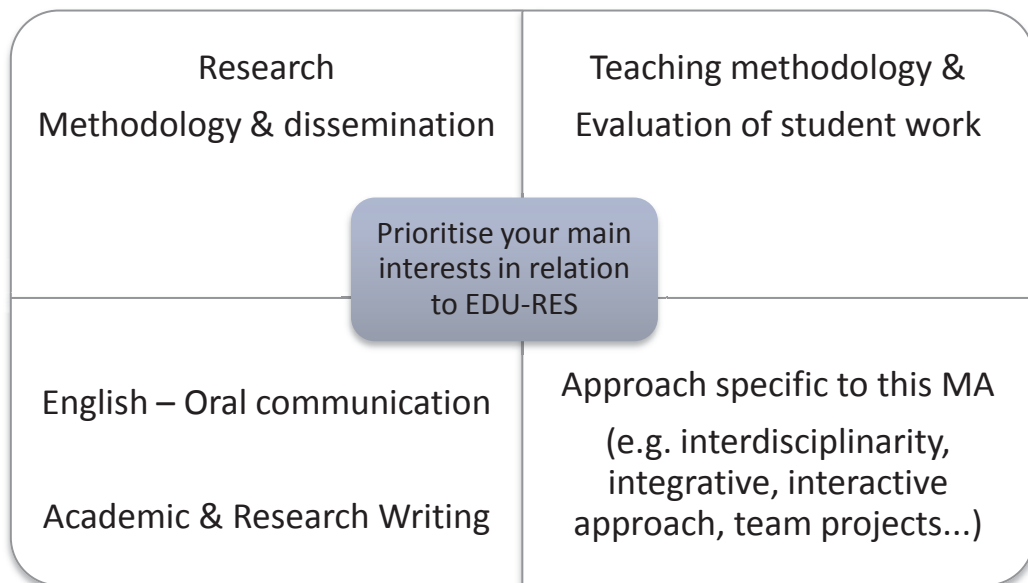
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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │ Individual Needs│
                    │    Analysis     │
                    └─────────────────┘
        ┌───────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
        │ Acting on student │      │  Open feedback   │
        │ feedback /        │      │  channels &      │
        │ revisiting        │      │  encouraging self-│
        │ (aspects of) the  │      │  evaluation      │
        │ programme         │      │                  │
        └───────────────────┘      └──────────────────┘
        ┌───────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
        │ End-of year self- │      │  On-going        │
        │ assessment of     │      │  adjustments - as│
        │ progress &        │      │  appropriate     │
        │ interviews        │      │                  │
        └───────────────────┘      └──────────────────┘
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A process approach to quality management (adapted from Muresan, 2007: 39)

The process-approach to quality management has been an integral part of this Master programme from its inception and has taken various forms in the course of time. It is inspired by the quality assurance system developed by EAQUALS - The European Association for Quality Language Services (Matheidesz, 2010) and builds on the expertise of introducing the European Language Portfolio in language education, as a powerful tool with multiple functions, including needs analysis, goal-setting, monitoring progress through self-assessment. (EAQUALS-ALTE, 2000)

Even before joining this Master programme the candidates were encouraged to self-assess their language proficiency on the basis of the "Self-assessment Grid" developed by Council of Europe experts (Council of Europe, 2001) and to reflect on their main personal professional objectives in relation to both career development and the various programme components. Thus, the 'entrance test' actually included a self-assessment component, as well as self-reflection on needs, interests and objectives. The following diagram - designed specifically for this purpose - illustrates the collaborative approach to needs analysis, intended as a springboard for programme adjustments, depending on the specificity of each series of master students.

Further aspects addressed during the initial (pre-programme) interview included:
- relevance of EDU-RES to the candidates' professional activities;
- motivation to participate in it in relation to career development plans;
- commitment and time availability (considering that most of them were university lecturers with a busy schedule);
- strengths to be contributed to the programme (e.g. participating in group discussions and team projects, sharing knowledge and experience, personal qualities, etc.).

EDU-RES Dimensions & Personal Priorities / Preferences

Research Methodology & dissemination	Teaching methodology & Evaluation of student work
Prioritise your main interests in relation to EDU-RES	
English – Oral communication Academic & Research Writing	Approach specific to this MA (e.g. interdisciplinarity, integrative, interactive approach, team projects…)

3. Methodology for collecting student feedback at the end of the academic year

Individual interviews were carried out at the end of the first year of the programme in order to monitor student progress and to make decisions about curriculum design. Although it is often unfeasible to make changes according to students' perceived needs while the programme is underway, in this particular situation the course tutors tend to be very much accountable to students and to the institution that entirely sponsors the programme. We have constantly built in new course elements, redesigned the balance of topics and tried to respond to students' suggestions. It is the tutors who initiate most of the changes but we always make sure that we get student feedback on the new topics or balance of topics.
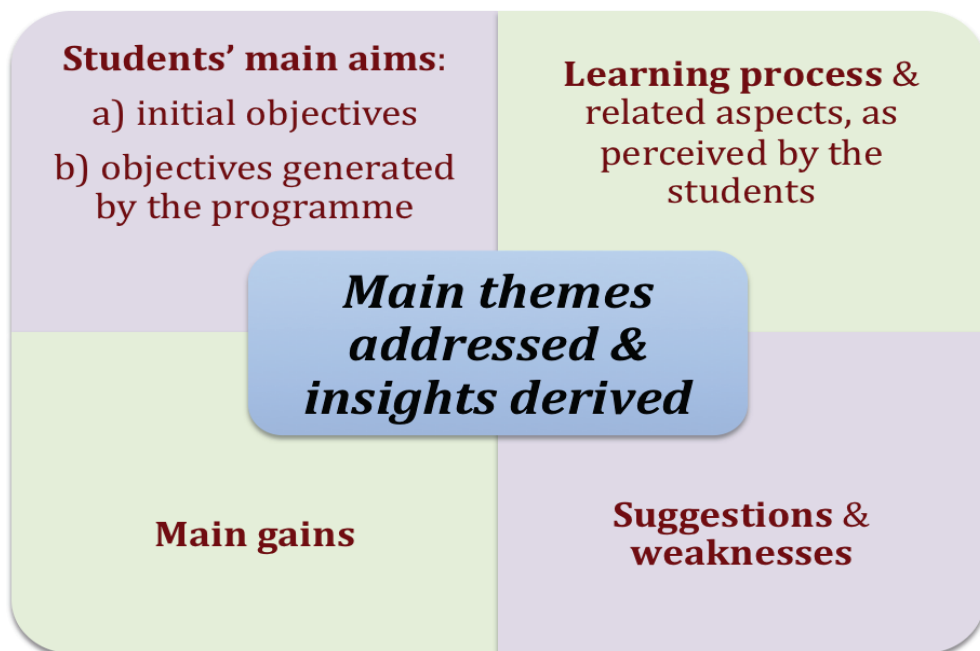
A sample of 18 interviews were carried out by three interviewers. The interview was semi-structured and the interview schedule was organized according to 4 main themes: students' initial and emerging aims, elements of the learning process, gains at the end of one year, suggestions and weaknesses.

The semi-structured interview was chosen as a data collection method because of its suitability to the research objectives. It was important to focus on issues that enabled the course designers to revise and redesign – to the extent it was needed and feasible – the programme, but also to enable participants to express their views openly and to comment on those particular issues that they wanted to highlight, particularly in relation to their learning experience.

The interviews were transcribed and the data was categorized according to the themes highlighted by the interview guide structure (objectives, learning experience, gains, suggestions). We were not interested in how many people mentioned one particular theme but on how we can respond to/ build on their suggestions.

4. Results and discussion

This section will present the main results, organised according to four themes addressed in the interviews, as synthesised in the diagram below.

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Theme 1 – Personal objectives

Respondents were encouraged to recollect their initial objectives when joining the programme. Not surprisingly, most of them were interested in upgrading their research skills, learning about more research methods and improving their academic writing skills with particular focus on writing research articles for international publication. Teaching was another area of interest and the students who were mostly interested in diversifying the range of teaching methods were particularly interested in increasing student motivation and improving student participation in class.

The learning experience and self-evaluation of their progress generated new or redefined objectives. Among these were:

- increased awareness of research paradigms (positivism and interpretivism) to be pursued further;
- an interest for understanding better the specifics of quantitative and qualitative methodology;
- more interest for structure over content when writing research;

The new objectives generated by the course experience indicate increased awareness of research paradigms and methods and the need to deepen their knowledge of research options and their ability to use a wider range of options in their own research. Such an interest is not surprising for us because we have seen the same focus with programme graduates in previous years. Students on the programme who were drafting their PhD theses chose to widen the range of methods they were using in their doctoral research (eg, by introducing qualitative research dimensions) as a result of attending research modules in the programme.

Theme 2 - Learning process/experience

Participants have found the classroom experience extremely worthwhile. In their responses, they have highlighted the process approach to learning which is organized around discussion, debate, group work and cooperation on tasks. What is more, the content is often approached as process – an example given by one respondent mentions the critical reading of research articles and analysis

of articles from the perspective of the writing process which makes it easier for students to transfer new awareness and skills to their own practice.

The good integration of knowledge elements from different modules is another process element highlighted by respondents, and so is the fact that in spite of many opinions being expressed in the classroom, there is no loss of focus and the discussion stays always on track. As the group brings together academics with mutual concerns (despite various levels of expertise), organizing classroom activity as interaction allows expression of diverse opinions generated by experience and expertise. Participants have developed their specific group roles and identities that are recognized by their colleagues.

In summary, responses highlight the following process aspects:

- integration of elements from different modules;
- critical reading of articles - easier for students to transfer new awareness/skills to their practice;
- analysis of the process of writing research articles (genre awareness);
- open classroom communication - launching new ideas;
- discussion/interaction more appropriate than description;
- capitalizing on all participants' experience and expertise through interaction;
- no loss of focus, staying on track at all times despite debate and discussion;

For the course tutors, such responses indicate the fact that encouraging interaction among participants is indeed the best way to organize classroom activity. In a way, one can hardly do otherwise given the group structure: academics interested in their professional development who take this programme in order to refine their skills. Students and tutors are participants in the learning process and we all learn from each other. It is extremely encouraging that participants enjoy our process approach to delivering content. For example, during the academic writing module we have introduced a genre approach to the discussion of research articles, which highlights text structure and choice of language in relation to the communicative purpose of the text. Respondents enjoy this approach because it presents texts as a set of choices to be made by the writer in order to deliver content more convincingly. Therefore, we have been looking at research articles not as 'finite objects' but rather by highlighting 'the making' of those texts. Students regard this approach as suitable to enabling then to refine their writing skills and would like to continue the analysis of each section in a research article from a genre perspective. The responses we have obtained will inform the organization of the academic writing module in the second year of the programme.

Theme 3 – Gains

The benefits derived from participation in the programme seem to be quite diverse according to the views expressed in the interviews, ranging from increased knowledge and awareness to experiencing new learning processes and redefining perceptions of their own expertise in relation to academic practice elsewhere.

In terms of new knowledge and awareness, participants say they are more aware of the methodology of conducting rigorous research and of the international requirements for publication of research articles. Development of research skills is considered to be directly relevant for PhD work underway. Moreover, by examining their own practice more critically, they have become more concerned about the quality of the argument put forward in their research writing and more preoccupied by structure and form of presentation. It is interesting to point out that students feel that awareness of research practice in international educational environments makes them more confident in their ability to produce high quality internationally acceptable research work.

Conducting good research seems now possible (Respondent 3)
We know less than we thought we did, but we know what we need to do. (Respondent 2)

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Respondents have also noticed differences between the local educational environment – with focus on content and transmission of knowledge – and the international environment with much more concern for structure of research articles submitted for publication.

The learning experience itself is identified as a gain, and the theme of interaction comes up again. Classroom interaction has enabled participants to refine expression of their opinions so as to make it clearer and more convincing in the exchange of opinions that is the basis of most class encounters. They enjoy new forms of socialization inside and out of class as well as encounters with peers from other universities in the world.

Theme 4 – Weaknesses/Suggestions for improvement

Suggestions put forward by respondents are very much in line with the themes outlined so far. They require support with introducing new forms of collaboration to be experimented in their own teaching and research practice, such as peer teaching and team writing of research articles. Such a suggestion reinforces the results discussed above, with students emphasizing the value of diverse types of interaction in the classroom.

They require more language input, in spite of the fact that language support is offered throughout the programme with dedicated language classes organized separately for intermediate and advanced students. It is easy to understand why students are so much concerned about increasing their language proficiency. Some of them teach in English and some plan to do so in the future. They need confidence that they can handle language in unpredictable situations generated by interaction with their students. The need to publish in internationally reputable journals is one more reason why they are concerned about English proficiency – one needs complex language resources in order to put forward a convincing argument. Such a requirement came up constantly throughout the years of running the programme and therefore the provision of language support was gradually extended to cover the whole duration of the programme. Moreover, many of these sessions focus on academic language to supplement the module on academic writing which focuses on text structure and genre features. The suggestion needs to be taken into consideration for the following academic year and new ways of providing language support will be identified because, as pointed out at the beginning of this paper, student feedback is acted upon and the programme is redesigned to cater for their requirements.

Weaknesses as identified by students relate to group composition and the diverse needs arising from this. Language proficiency varies and more proficient students tend to dominate discussion while less proficient ones tend to keep silent due to concern for ability to express their views accurately. While tutors constantly try to involve weaker students and help them express their views in English, some of the participants seem to be more impatient with their colleagues' struggle for expression in a foreign language. There are differences in terms of levels of know-how about particular course topics, with the same lack of patience of more experienced students for their less experienced colleagues. The module on "Quantitative Research" is such an example which required a series of extra sessions in order to enable the students with less expertise in this area to catch up. The timing of some modules was identified as problematic, with the suggestion to plan more complex and challenging modules later in the programme.

We have claimed at the beginning of this paper that student feedback is a type of formative evaluation because it informs programme design and action is taken to respond to student suggestions. All these weaknesses need remedial action that will be implemented in the new academic year.

By way of conclusion

As with previous series of master students and comparable also to the outcomes of other forms of evaluation carried out during the year, the results of the end-of-year interviews have con-

firmed to a large extent that the programme has contributed to personal professional growth. The interdisciplinary dimension, the methodological approach, the thematic relevance to student needs and the collaborative, friendly atmosphere were particularly praised. The interviewees have also confirmed transferring some of their learning experiences into their own teaching practice, while adoption of new methods and styles of work are an on-going process.

Feedback regarding improvable aspects will inform future action. Further to suggestions received, changes to the programme in the new academic year will include:

- a more detailed genre-based approach to research writing, with an in-depth analysis of each section of the 'research article' genre, integrating work on authentic articles with the latest research developments in the field (Swales, 2004; Feak and Swales, 2011);
- re-visiting the sequencing and duration of more challenging modules, ensuring that they are not scheduled for the first semester, and/or introducing extra hours;
- dealing with differences in area-specific expertise, e.g. by streaming participants into two groups for the seminars, in response to development needs in a particular area;
- addressing - in a more nuanced manner - differences in English language proficiency, making sure that participants in the specialised language seminars stick to the group they have been assigned to, so as to enhance the communicative confidence of less proficient English language users;
- offering more targeted support for dissertation writing, esuring an even better inter-relatedness among the modules focusing on communication in academic contexts, on research writing for publication, and genre analysis for academic and research purposes, while ensuring an even closer link between "target situation and learning situation analysis" (Paltridge et al., 2009: 50-51).

At the same time, we will continue inviting international guest lecturers (e.g. from universities in Australia, UK, USA), for specific additional sessions, held for both current students and alumni.

In order to close the loop, towards the end of the academic year, we have created opportunities for external feedback gathering within the framework of the inter-university "ASIGMA" project (with a special focus on Quality Assurance in HE Internationalised Master Programmes). Thus, during their visit to the Academy of Economic Studies, colleagues from an "ASIGMA" project partner (Universitatea de Vest Timisoara) had a focus group meeting with current EDU-RES students, in order to elicit the latter's perceptions of the programme.

To extend the circle and the scope of this small-scale evaluation exercise, we have shared its outcomes within the "ASIGMA" framework (ASIGMA, 2011) and intend to take it further, through a comparative study, enriched with the views of external experts.

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Quality Measurement and Quality Improvement in International Master's Programmes: a Case Study

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Abstract: *A significant amount of attention is paid nowadays to quality and quality-related issues in virtually every area of human activity. Continual measurement and enhancement of quality are of paramount importance in higher education because the accelerating process of 'Europeanisation' has made it necessary for universities to take stock of their assets and liabilities when it comes to the educational services they offer.*

Grounded on data collected from our home University, in this paper we draw on quality-related strategies, tools and insights originating from business studies in order to discuss how and to what extent they could be useful in measuring and enhancing the quality of the educational processes and of their outcomes. Therefore, after briefly outlining our context set against the European backdrop (1), the paper includes an excursus on the strategy and tools which are deemed to be particularly applicable to our context (2), we then go on to use these tools to perform a succinct quality analysis of the activities involved in the operations and management of three international master's programmes (3) and to suggest ways to improve the quality thereof (4).

Keywords: *quality measurement and enhancement strategies and tools, Deming Cycle, Process Model, case study, linguistic competence, operative mode.*

Rezumat: *O atenție deosebită se acordă în ziua de astăzi calității și aspectelor legate de calitate în, practic, toate domeniile legate de activatea umană. Măsurarea și îmbunătățirea continuă a calității prezintă o importanță extremă în învățământul superior deoarece procesul accelerat de „europenizare" a făcut necesară evaluarea, de către universități, a îndatoririle și responsabilitățile pe care le oferă când vine vorba despre servicii educaționale.*

Bazându-ne pe date culese din propria universitate, în această lucrare ne propunem să operăm cu strategii, instrumente și viziuni legate de calitate, care își au originile în studii din domeniul economic, pentru a discuta cum și în ce măsură ar putea fi folositoare în măsurarea și îmbunătățirea calității proceselor educaționale și a produselor acestora. Prin urmare, după descrierea situației proprii pe fundalul contextului european (1), lucrarea prezintă strategia și instrumentele care se pretează a fi aplicate în mod particular contextului nostru (2); continuă prin a folosi aceste instrumente pentru a efectua o analiză succintă a calității activităților implicate în desfășurarea și conducerea a trei dintre programele de masterat internationalizat din instituția proprie (3) și își propune, în final, să sugereze modalități de îmbunătățire a calității acestora, în consecință (4).

Cuvinte cheie: *strategii și instrumente de măsurare și îmbunătățire a calității, ciclul Deming, modelul procesului, studiu de caz, competențe lingvistice, modelul operativ.*

1. The European Context and the Local Context: Preliminary Points

One of the key objectives of the *Bologna Process* (1999) has been to render Europe more attractive internationally. This has led countries and higher education institutions across Europe to promote themselves as study destinations and academic partners with high quality offers. In the

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same vein, the process of internationalization of master's programmes in general has been discussed within the framework of the *European Higher Education Area* (2010) which promotes, among others, international academic cooperation between European universities, focusing on the community of interests which both respects and fosters academic values and cultural diversity. Quality in higher education was considered a precondition for the success of the Bologna process; but the slowly emerging concept of quality was reified by the *Berlin Communiqué* (2003) which stipulated explicitly that 'consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself'. Quality assurance in European higher education comprises three levels: (1) the institutional level: *Enhancing quality*, (2) the national level: *Enhancing external accountability procedures,* and (3) the European level: *Promoting the development of a European dimension for quality assurance.* While the Bologna process has clearly offered excellent opportunities to both teachers and students to gain access to many European universities, the strong competition on the international higher education market has put universities under a lot of pressure, requiring them to reconsider their quality standards and to take steps towards raising them.

Anticipating this threat, *Transilvania* University of Brașov started, in 2004, the development of a strategy and action plan aimed to increase its competitiveness nationally and internationally by integrating the research and education structures. The restructuring of the University has been described as a ten-step process (Vișa, 2009). As part of this process, the University's internal assessment was aimed at informing the institution about itself, allowing it to evaluate its own position and decide on appropriate actions and quality objectives for the future; the ensuing baseline study highlighted a number of strong and weak points: for example, well trained academic staff, on the one hand, and overlapping activities, on the other. One of the most important objectives of this on-going strategic plan is the effort to enhance quality in education, in order 'to offer our graduates a fast and successful insertion on the labour market, in Romania and abroad' (Vișa, 2009: 128). Accordingly, the master programmes were redesigned and step 5 stipulates 'training through and for research' to be the philosophy behind the master's programmes run under the aegis of *Transilvania* University: to this end, they have a flexible student-centred structure, which enables each learner to follow a full optional path, while being also able to attend additional courses from other optional modules (Vișa, 2009: 131). This philosophy is in tune with the belief that the main outcome of institutional quality assurance strategies should be to support the enhancement of the experience available to students (Sharp, 2009).

2. On Strategies and Tools in Quality Management

Extensive practice has shown that to be effective, quality management must be based on both assurance and enhancement. This is because quality assurance processes that are not linked to enhancement fall rapidly into neglect (Sharp, 2009). Furthermore, according to Filip (2006), continuous quality enhancement is based on different strategies adopted by an organization, among which competitive strategies are quality-oriented, since quality is aimed at facing competition. Filip claims that competitive strategies may be focused on (1) quality adaptation to the demands of each social segment, (2) qualitative differentiation comparative to other competitors, and quality improvement (2006: 21). The last category involves intensive and extensive methods, regarding the change of the quality features of the product or activity, or the increase of the number of quality features.

Referring to the continuous quality improvement strategy, Filip (2006) describes the KAIZEN strategy, which is directed to the progressive, continuous improvement of products and services, as well as to the increase in productivity and competitiveness, involving the entire staff of the organization. The focal point here is the quality of the staff who must internalize the need for

continuous quality improvement. This strategy enables them to identify the functional problems in their work and find methods and tools to solve them on their own. The implementation of this strategy presupposes the change of the organizational culture and of the whole values of the organization. The KAIZEN strategy is based on different methods, techniques and tools, such as the Deming Cycle (*Plan-Do-Check-Act* – PDCA), quality circles, small working groups, suggestions system, etc. (2006: 21-22). The Deming Cycle entails a permanent collaboration between research, design, production and sale in order to improve quality. The diagrammatic representation in Figure 1 below suggests that the cycle *Plan-Do-Check-Act* must be permanently restarted in all management activities. PDCA indicates the succession of the improvement activities, considering that before acting, the consequences must be correctly evaluated.
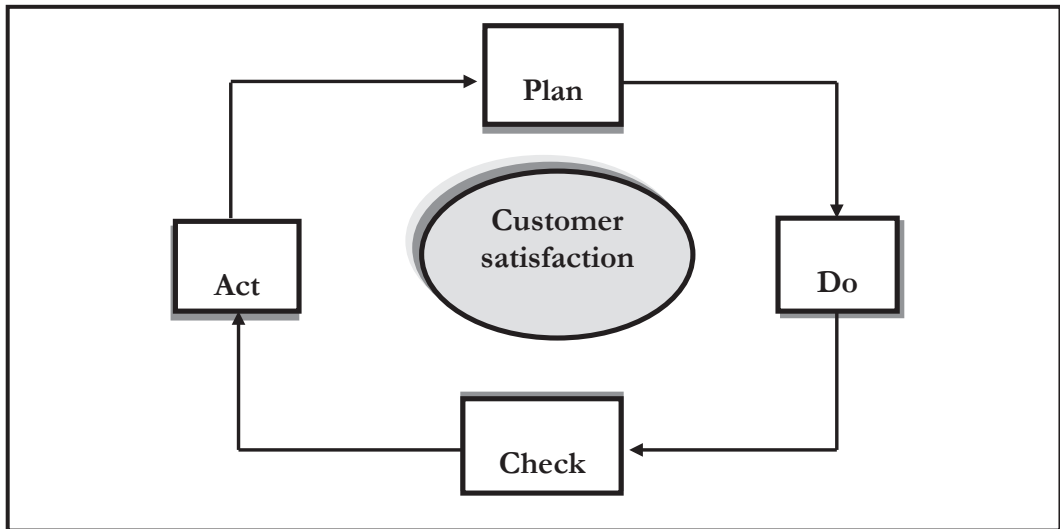

Fig. 1 The Deming Cycle (source: Filip, 2006: 24)

According to Filip (2006: 25), the four main stages in the Deming Cycle involve the following:

- *Plan:* showing that the existent situation is analysed and a future action plan is set (for example, by finding answers to such a question as: *what are the customer needs that must be satisfied?*). Next, an evaluation is performed to see how the demands can be satisfied, what changes are required, the main results that must be acquired, if the available data are sufficient and what new information is necessary. The priorities are fixed and the improvement plan, based on the evaluation, is then established.
- *Do:* showing that the improvement plan is implemented on a small scale and the first information regarding the possible results is obtained.
- *Check:* showing that the results (effects) acquired from the application of the improvement plan are evaluated and the critical points are identified.
- *Act:* showing that the results are studied and if the expected improvements were achieved, then the existent operating procedures are changed accordingly.

These can be further improved through a new plan, thus restarting the cycle.

Filip (2006) also introduces the **Process Model** as another effective tool in the quality management kit. This model describes the relationship between customer and supplier as functional elements of an organization – a relationship which entails mutual exigencies. The process model concept implies that (a) each activity can be assimilated with a process and, by similarity, the reason of an activity is customer satisfaction; (b) every employee has to manage an activity/process, thus being in a horizontal supplier-customer relationship flow; (c) there is mutual exigencies formalization; (d) the 'activity' concept has been redefined by replacing the verb **to do** with the verb **to add value**

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(2006: 71). Moreover, the process model concept rests on four pillars (see Figure 2 below): (1) *the operative mode* stands for the succession of necessary stages for the on-going activity; (2) *the means* refer to material and logistic resources – all inputs without added value; (3) *the human resources* are viewed from both a quantitative and qualitative point of view; (4) *the quality indicators* of the process are the issues that result from and allow measurement and evaluation.

For the purposes of this paper, Filip's process model has been adapted here with the aim of examining higher education institutions, specifically international master's programmes, as shown shown in the figure below:
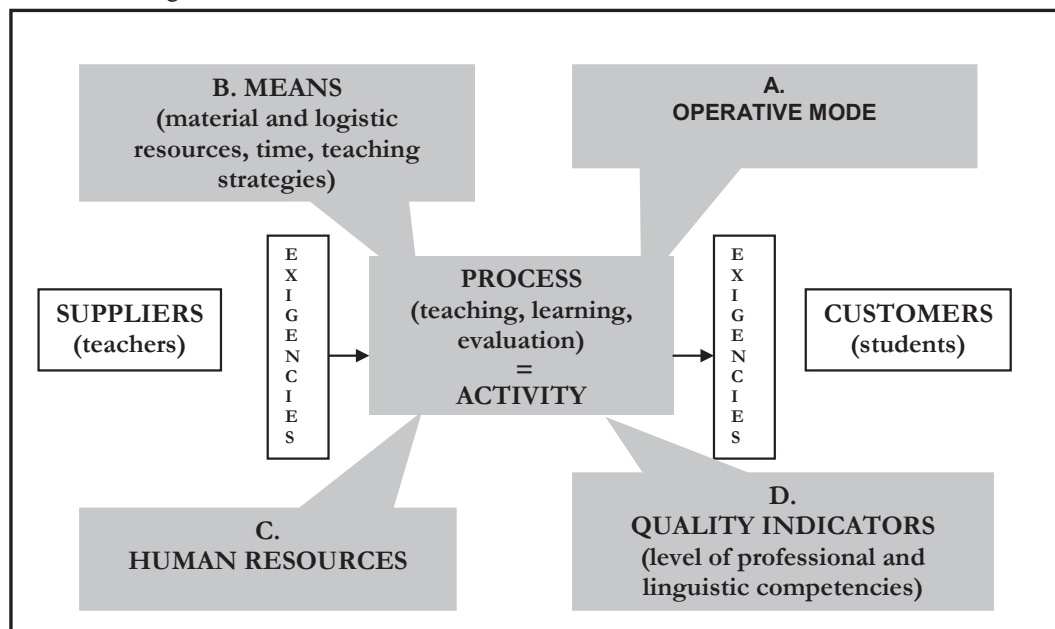

Fig. 2: The Process Model applied to the international master's programmes
(adapted from Filip, 2006: 71)

3. Quality analysis and improvement procedures of international master's programmes: a case study

In what follows, we will be using the adapted Process Model represented above to examine three internationalized master's programmes currently running at *Transilvania* University of Brașov: *Language Studies for Intercultural Communication* (LSIC), *Internet Technologies* (IT) and *Advanced Electric Systems* (AES).

3.1 MEANS (material and logistic resources, time, didactic strategies)

3.1.1 Curricula

The curricula used for the three master's programmes are similar to those from European universities. Thus, LSIC combines a number of disciplines from the curricula of British universities; IT has been synchronized with similar programmes from USA (Bloomfield College) and Europe (England, Germany), while with AES the curriculum is compatible with curricula from EU universities, such as TU Eindhoven, TU Ilmenau, Aalborg University and also American models. All these curricula have been attuned to the labour market requirements.

3.1.2 Resources and teaching strategies

There are some differences between the programmes, but also some commonalities. For instance, with LSIC, every teacher offers the course support and the required bibliography. In the IT programme the course notes are in English and the students have access to printed or electronic textbooks and to virtual libraries. AES supplies an English-only reading material to their students: it consists of online books and periodicals, accessible in the data bases acquired through ANELIS project and by our university. Also, every teacher offers the electronic course support in English, which is accompanied by a small glossary of professional terms. The teaching, learning and evaluation are facilitated via the e-learning platform, increasing the autonomous, self-organized learning abilities, according to the interactive model that focuses on the interaction between teaching, learning and evaluation.

The teaching strategies used at all master's programmes are directed towards the formation of professional and language competences. Moreover, these strategies aim at students' development (students' opinion request), personalization (the expression of their own opinion and personal experience), interpretation, positive or negative feedback. Worth mentioning here are also the adoption of teaching and learning methods based on European student-centred higher education paradigms, such as international projects focused on applying modern teaching/learning methods (Problem Based Learning, Project Based Learning), and the development of an educational IT platform that comprises professional courses and virtual laboratories (for ex. *http://vlab.unitbv.ro/ velab), VET-Trend* - Leonardo da Vinci pilot/transnational network projects).

3.1.3 Time

The time allocated to the learning process does not differ significantly from one specialisation to another. We suggest that it should be optimized according to the difficulty of the subject, that is, the relation between the time of learning and the comprehension of the content matter.

3.2 QUALITY INDICATORS

According to Sharp (2009), the main quality indicator of the teaching/learning process should be the learning outcomes. As the author puts it, 'A scientist who graduates from a university must not be restricted to a speedy acquisition of training skills, but should possess the characteristics of a mature scientist who, apart from knowledge in the area in which he has been trained, must also possess the philosophical approach of his science and the educational perceptions of society' (2009: 169-170). If these outcomes are to be achieved, then students must engage in deep learning. Deep learning is characterized by activities such as: reflecting, applying to novel problems, hypothesizing, relating new information to principles, arguing, comparing and contrasting a range of perspectives. In the same line of thought, Lache (2009) maintains that the globalization of the labour market has changed the demands for higher education graduates in such a way that, besides good professional knowledge, there is the need for communication skills, entrepreneurial abilities and foreign language knowledge. Course attendance requirements, graduation rate and employment rate are quality indicators that could be also mentioned.

Next in this section, with respect to quality indicators, we will give an overview of the linguistic competences of both the teachers and the students involved in the three master's programmes of *Transilvania* University that could be internationalized. We will start with a short presentation of the recruitment strategies employed in each programme, then we will examine the benefits of linguistic competence and the importance given to the language component in the three master's programmes and finally, we will show how the Deming Cycle (see section 2 above) could be applied to the improvement of linguistic competence of both teachers and students.

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3.2.1 Recruitment strategies

The three master's programs seem to have different recruitment strategies as far as the language competence is concerned. These are summarized in the table below:

Programmes	**LSIC**	**IT**	**AES**
Teachers	Not available	Language competence certificate	Language competence certificate
Students	Not available	No initial evaluation	Language test

Table 3: Recruitment strategies related to the English language competence

If we first consider the Language Studies for Intercultural Communication (LSIC) master program, we have to point out that neither the teachers, nor the students need to demonstrate their competence in English as all of them (with minor exceptions) are graduates of foreign languages, so the language competence is quite homogenous. There have been cases of candidates who had graduated from other faculties (e.g. The Police Academy) whose level of English was tested by means of an interview. As far as the teachers involved in the other two master programmes [i.e. Internet Technologies (IT) and Advanced Electrical Systems (AES)] are concerned, they all have language competence certificates issued by the Centre for Modern Languages of *Transilvania* University, a support structure in our local teaching paradigm.

The difference appears in the recruitment of the students: in the IT programme, the candidates need not have their knowledge of English tested, while in the AES programme, students are required to take an exam which contains a language component. But, as most of the candidates are graduates of a study programme in English, namely Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, it is assumed that they have sound knowledge of English. From this point of view, they seem to be on a par with the candidates of the LSIC master's programme.

3.2.2 Benefits of linguistic competence

We will next take a look at the benefits that the English language competences offer to the people involved in these programmes. Thus, there are mobility programmes for both teachers and students. The teaching staff can publish articles in international journals and can have a fruitful collaboration with members of the partner universities: Bloomfield College (USA), Heilbron University, Wiesbaden University (Germany) and Vienna University (for IT) and Aalborg University (Denmark) (for SEA). At the moment, LSIC is in the process of finding a partner university. Another advantage that is worth mentioning is the possibility to participate in international educational projects (LEONARDO) and in FP6-type of international contracts. Teachers can also benefit from specialization courses through TEMPUS international projects. At the same time, their good knowledge of English could be an asset in recruiting students from European and non-European countries. As for the students, the English language competence enables them to communicate with their foreign teachers (the IT master's students have American guest lecturers in their first year, while the AES students are offered lectures in English by Danish professors), to travel abroad for internship, and to write and defend their dissertation in English. Last but not least, once they graduate from the programme, they will have better employment opportunities than most of the master's students in other programmes run through the medium of Romanian.

3.2.3 Importance of language

One other aspect we will consider is the importance given to the language component in the master's programmes under examination here. We will only discuss this aspect from the perspective of two of the programmes: IT and AES. This is because, for LSIC, language is the main component and both the teachers' and the students' high competence is one of the greatest assets of the programme. Therefore, in both IT and AES there are foreign language option courses throughout the programme. When it comes to the role of language knowledge in evaluating knowledge of the field, in both of these programmes students are provided with bilingual terminology (English and Romanian), exam questions are formulated in both languages, and teachers give students extended time for preparing answers in exams in the foreign language.

The process management in higher education, related to teaching, learning and evaluation with respect to language competence can be described as a flow of activities aimed at improving quality in education. This starts by an examination of the status quo (at the Plan stage of the Deming Cycle) followed by the application of the other three stages of the cycle as a suggestion for the succession of activities directed at the quality improvement of the three master's programmes:

- PLAN

At this stage, an analysis of the existing situation seems necessary in order to detect the language needs of both the teaching staff and the students. This is meant to show how demands can be satisfied, what changes are required and the main results that must be acquired in view of the establishment of the improvement plan.

- DO

A small scale (university level) improvement plan may be implemented with respect to homogeneity regarding 1) the initial evaluation of the teachers' and students' language competence; 2) the existence of refresher language courses in the syllabi for the students and professional help for the teachers; 3) the weight carried by language competence in evaluation of professional knowledge.

In order for the improvement plan to be implemented, there appears to be a necessity for the following course of action:

1. Formulation of criteria for master's programmes with respect to foreign language teaching/learning/evaluation and establishment of required performance indicators.

2. Identification and formulation of solutions for quality improvement of the teaching, learning and evaluation activities as a result of going through the following steps:
   a) Collecting data by:
      - designing and administering questionnaires to teachers and students;
      - forming quality circles (teachers and students involved in international master's programmes);
      - applying the suggestions system and brainstorming.
   b) Data processing and charting (histograms, correlation diagrams, Pareto diagram).
   c) Graphs and diagrams analysis.
   d) Process measurement and analysis: the assessment of the results by means of the requested performance indicators.

The international master's programmes may also be analysed with respect to the present situation and trends making use of a SWOT scheme consisting of an internal analysis: strong and weak points, institution diagnosis and an external analysis: development opportunities, threats, results estimation under competitive conditions.

- **CHECK**

It consists of a permanent control and continuous evaluation (feedback) of actions designed to improve the quality of teaching, learning and evaluation and the identification of critical points.

- ACT

A strategy (objectives and actions) for the quality improvement of the teaching, learning

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and evaluation processes of the international master's programmes is formulated and the results are studied. If expected improvements are achieved, the existent operating procedures are changed and then, further improvements are planned to restart the cycle.

3.3 THE OPERATIVE MODE

In what follows we will focus on the organizational frame or, rather, on that particular area of the overall organizational frame which allows for the operative mode(s) of the master's programmes to be put into effect. By 'operative mode' – a pillar in the Process Model discussed above (see section 2) – we refer to the succession of stages necessary for the progress towards the successful completion of a set of activities and tasks associated therewith. In our particular case, the key elements approached below are (1) the admission procedures, (2) the training process and (3) the evaluation strategies. We believe that by synchronizing these elements across programmes – which, as our survey has indicated, take on different forms depending on the faculty responsible for their implementation – and casting them into a joint operational framework would perceptibly enhance the quality of the processes involved in the management of such programmes and, by way of consequence, their 'appeal' to an international audience.

At present, as far as the three master's programmes in question are concerned, we can say that they are all on the road to finding their niche on the international educational market but they are not actually there: none of the three programmes is fully 'international', as none of them fully meets the basic criteria requested of such types of programmes. As far as we are concerned, finding the ways to meet these basic criteria will be, it is hoped, the outcome of the ASIGMA Project.

A brief survey of the status quo in our home institution has highlighted the fact that 'internationalization' is a matter of degree: for instance, only two programmes (IT and SEA) satisfy the international partnership criterion, only one (LSIC) offers full tuition in a foreign language (English), and with none of them can we speak of an international student population. The administrative and academic frameworks within which these master's programmes are set and regulated institutionally and largely run locally, i.e. by each faculty, in a manner no different from the way in which the other, non-international programmes are operated. The status quo of the three master's programmes (MPs) under discussion may be represented as follows:
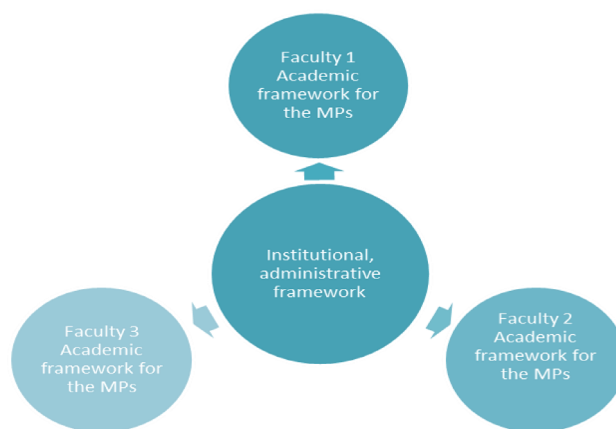

Fig. 4: The operational pattern of the Master's Programmes under analysis

The representation above suggests that there are no direct exchanges between the three programmes involved in the internationalization process, although their objectives are the same. To various degrees, each of them functions into what appears to be a rarefied, self-contained environment

shaped by content-specific considerations. This in itself should explain the discrepancies in the operational modes associated with each programme and, at the same time, the different perceptions that their respective decision-makers have on what an internationalization process should entail. As an alternative, more productive operational pattern we suggest the following:
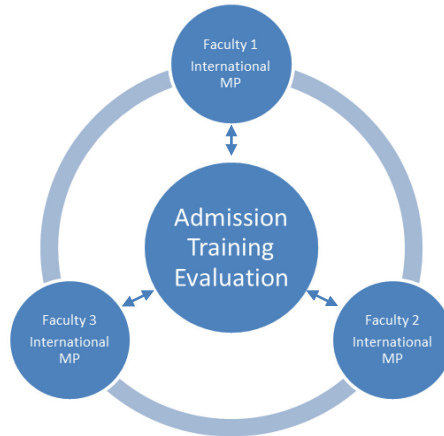

Fig. 5: A suggested operational pattern for international MPs

From this vantage point, the key phrase is 'joint operational framework'. The rationale behind this alternative framework is based on the realisation that international master's programmes seem to have more things in common than many of us may be aware of: the distinctions between them are mainly (but not completely) curriculum-related. We suggest that, instead of the current, specialism-based approach, master's programmes might benefit more, organization-wise, if grouped and managed on the basis of their type, e.g. international/national, vocational/research, monodisciplinary/interdisciplinary. Whilst assessing the administrative implications of the type-based approach falls outside the scope of this paper, we can offhand shortlist some of its benefits, in strict reference to the three international candidate-programmes we have drawn on here.

1.In terms of the **admission procedures**, the common framework would encompass the promotion stage, the entrance examination procedures, particularly the language proficiency test. Based on the results of the language test, tutors could diagnose the potential problem areas, diagnose the student's learning progress and recommend remedial solutions early on.

2.This brings us to the **training process**. The international master's programmes, irrespective of their scientific domain, could use a common pool of expertise and practice in providing their students the opportunity to increase their proficiency in a foreign language (and hence, to improve their study skills) by enrolling into joint language improvement modules. Similarly, content teachers using, say, English as a working language could also take refresher courses or seek language-related advice.

3.The **evaluation** component of the operative mode targets all the stages of the learning process, from its inception to its completion. The commonality here might translate into a joint batch of language tests, a common quality benchmark.

4. By way of conclusion: Benefits of sharing a common operational framework

Overall, operating within a joint framework is likely to come with a number of clear benefits,

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as follows: 1) consistency in the management and operation of the master's programmes, 2) sharing expertise and exchanging practices across various domains, 3) catering for the students' needs and interests by affording them the opportunity to attend relevant modules from another master's programme, e.g. academic writing courses, critical thinking workshops, etc., 4) avoiding redundancies and overlaps in the functioning of international programmes and, last but not least, 5) since it would operate on a 'unity-within-diversity' principle, the framework should be flexible enough to accommodate new international programmes, emerging from all areas of academic education.

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Innovative Trends in Curricula Design
The Acquisition of European Competencies
in Master's Studies: A Successful Project at the
Lucian-Blaga University of Sibiu - German and
European Studies (Cultures in Contact)

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1. Preliminary remarks

The profound social and political changes of the last twenty years, which can be described as "historical", have increasingly encouraged the development of a new "Erinnerungskultur" (culture of memories) and have conferred a fresh impetus to the study of European history and European spirituality.

The holding of multiple congresses and conferences, exhibitions and all kind of cultural events as well as a continuously growing interest of Europeans (who are already quite conscious of traditions and history) – in their own specific histories and cultures, bear witness to this trend. This new historical consciousness, i.e., the rediscovery of European cultural values, are clear signs of the fact that these European issues are experiencing a boom and steadily gaining in popularity, the same way they did in the 1950s and 1960s. This, at least, is a characteristic of the traditionally educated middle–class intellectuals, to such an extent that it has become a broader consumer product in the new century.

This cultivation of memories (*Erinnerungskultur*) is also a visible proof that in difficult and insecure times, Europeans return to a great extent to the fundamentals of their cultural and spiritual heritage, from which they have only (apparently) grown apart. After an (initially) successful economic integration, after the introduction of the European currency (a process which, till recently, could be regarded as accomplished on the whole), Europe's peoples must now step forward towards a new profound second stage in their unified development.

2. Towards a new spirituality and identity -
The guiding principles of the curricula's design

This second level of the Europeanization should be characterized by a process of reconsideration not only of the motivations of the founding fathers of the new Europe, but also by an increased attention paid to the immaterial fundamentals of this Continental integration.

As a matter of fact, it becomes imperative to discover behind the current syntagm of "Europeanization of the Common European Core" ("Europäisierung des Gemeineuropäischen") the necessity to forge a new sense of unity within the diverse European community, granting it an important role in establishing a trans-European identity and legitimacy. (Europe should, so to say, acquire a new individuality).

The initial rejection of the European constitution by several states and the difficulties in reaching consensus on so many levels of European issues (with the current financial and economic crisis bearing witness of this status), the openly sceptical attitude extant among the population on the adequacy of European enlargement illustrates one more aspect insufficiently considered up to now,

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i.e., that politics needs the moral backing and support of European citizens in order to be effective.

However, we do not need a new version of the Carolingian idea of Europe, but rather a renaissance of the true European spirit of the Enlightenment, that is, a rebirth of that era when the 'European consciousness' was not only a intellectual concept for elites but had also entered (for the first time in history) the actually of the people's existence (the *res republica*). In other words, we need a second Enlightenment, or, so to speak, another European mainstream culture-creation, oriented to the values of the Enlightenment, on whose bases we could determine the finality of European integration policies and define the future destiny of EU-Europe. (This process should preferably be accomplished in the frame of a widespread public debate.)

Similar considerations and reflections were made nine years ago in the Department of German Studies at LBUS in several intensive brainstorming sessions (which accurately anticipated some of the subsequent developments in Europe). These deliberations led to the elaboration of a master's study programme that would foster and develop the European competences of its students.

3. Objectives and aims of the Master's study programme

Faced with the accelerated process of globalization in contemporary society, with a huge impact on all levels of social and spiritual life, it became absolutely essential to promote a way of thinking in new dimensions and categories and to also implement its vision into the general and professional education of the young generation, all the more so because this generation was destined in the first place to ensure the proper accession and integration of Romania into the structures of a United Europe.

The setting up of the master's study programme, *German and -European Studies, Cultures in Contact*, nine years ago created these prerequisites for the training of top Romanian specialists with interdisciplinary competences and international awareness who would distinguish themselves within the EU. The achievement of this goal requires deepening, at the same time, explicitly prevocational studies. Due also to the interdisciplinary nature of this master's programme, the graduates can expect to be competitive for excellent working opportunities in the fields of: cultural management, journalism, community policies, communication management (as press officers, public work officials, public relation's experts), NGOs and enterprises, in education and the diplomatic services, public opinion polling, in personal consultancy etc.

4. The structural concept of the study programme: Content and topics

The extant master's programme, designed in a close collaboration with our partner university from Marburg (Germany) and benefiting the financial support from the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), is primarily oriented towards the deepening of German studies, whereas this is no longer regarded as a purely philological discipline but as part of the modern cultural sciences. At the same time, a second important focus on essential aspects of European sciences and European politics aims to consistently widen the students' knowledge on broader European issues.

These curricular components take into account, on one hand, the general interests of Romanian undergraduates; on the other hand, they are grounded on the actually existing interdisciplinary teaching potential and the proven professional qualification of professors from the Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu. The modularization, internationalization and interdisciplinary quality of teaching and learning in the programme is ensured by a harmonious combination of science and practices-oriented courses, seminars, exercises, workshops, colloquia and exams.

The study programme has been structured into four interdisciplinary modules, which can be differently combined in different semesters as circumstances warrant. The two core modules are

represented by the German and European studies and they are completed by a third module, which possesses a focus on cultural aspects of European society, and a fourth one that addresses religious issues in the EU.

The German studies philological module aims at both widening and deepening knowledge of German language and literature, and offers a large variety of exercises for achieving high competences in German for philologists and terminologists. It also introduces European language areas for study, points out the cultural contact phenomena in the dissemination of the German language in Romania, and gives due consideration to widespread minorities' languages (including Romanes) and their interferences with the majority language and culture.

These study specializations offer also an overview of life experiences in the German-Romanian literary context (especially through the history and practice of literary translation), they also focus on the city as a literary motif, and, lastly, they explore and examine European cities and their varying importance for both German and Romanian literature.

The second core module of the master's programme, entitled *European institutions/European policy*, offers students current information on different European organizations, institutions, perspectives and development tendencies. Other courses in this module focus on national and European identity, European regions, and European Union, European cultural policy, societies in transition in South-Eastern Europe, the culture of dialogue in multicultural societies, international conflicts, and conflict-solving potential, Romanian strategies and priorities in the EU integration process.

The complementary module on *cultural sciences* creates, by concentrating on the city as a phenomenon, generous points of contact for the interdisciplinary perspective. The city is presented as a form of habitat in its architectonic variety, as a motif for the creative arts, as a touristic attraction, and as a place for intercultural encounter. Modern topics such as the city economy and city ecology, city reconstruction and rehabilitation are also covered. The anthropological perspective within this module is present in the courses and seminars on city festivals, traditions and customs, as well as tendencies in modern gastronomic development in different European regions.

The fourth module on *religion* directly addresses varied religions and confessions in Europe, by analyzing ecumenism, piety versus atheism, the moral and political engagement of the church in civil society and the state; yet it also addresses the indirect influence of religion on modern Europe, as reflected in the capturing of biblical motifs in secular literature, music and arts, thus proving that the Bible is an inexhaustible source for such motifs.

The master's study programme is structured in four semesters and is concluded by a written thesis paper of at least 100 pages in length on a specific research topic. At graduation, the student is granted a master's diploma in German with a noted specialization in "intercultural European studies".

The principle of international recognition and academic/employment mobility under this degree has been ensured by the ECTS system and the pyramidal structure of the modules: in the first two semesters, the knowledge and the competences acquired are rather general ones (within the respective module), whereas in the following semesters (the third and the fourth) the number of hours in each module is diminished in favour of integrative, inter-modular courses. This approach has proven to be an effective way of accomplishing, on graduation, the main objective of the study programme: to give the participants a general picture and consciousness of European identity, built up from a complex of social, economic and political elements mixed with cultural elements, such as a religious history and the spiritual experiences it has fostered.

5. Favourable conditions for the study programme

A great number of favourable conditions have justified the establishing of the study programme at Lucian Blaga University in Sibiu:
- highly qualified teaching staff, researchers from the university and the theological insti-

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tute with excellent knowledge of German, who can teach the courses in the different modules with the highest standards;

- traditionally good relations with the best teaching staff from the universities of Cluj and Bucharest to be engaged as visiting professors;
- agreements of collaboration and scientific contacts to many universities from the German-speaking countries, e.g., the institutional partnership with the Philipps University in Marburg, financially supported by the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service);
- a great number of papers and documents in the archives, along with well-known museums and picture galleries of national and international importance in Sibiu (e.g., the Astra library and Brukenthal library);
- an internationally recognized theatre company in Sibiu (with both a Romanian and a German stage);
- important libraries in different fields of study;
- information and possibilities of publishing in scientific journals (e.g., *Germanistische Beiträge*) and in intercultural oriented journals like the *Euphorion* (with papers in English and French) or in the Romanian cultural publication *Transilvania*, that pays particular attention to German culture and German literature;
- the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities (a branch of the Romanian Academy in Sibiu) with professional publications like *Historia Urbana, Ethnological Studies and Research, Forschungen zur Volks-und Landeskunde (Folklore, Regional and Cultural Studies)* an institution that concentrates top specialists from Romania and abroad. "The Historical Atlas of Cities in Romania" ("Der Städtegeschichte-Atlas Rumäniens") as well as the "Transylvanian-Saxon Dictionary" ("Siebenbürgisch-sächsische Wörterbuch") are being published here, the latter one in close collaboration with the Romanian Academy, The Saxon Academy of Sciences in Leipzig and The Academy of Sciences and Literature in Mainz.
- Examples of academic activity carried out under the master's programme over the last decade include:
- Researchers from the institute and professors from the university have published a history of the German literature in Transylvania from the beginning till 1848, enjoying a consistent support from the Institute for German Culture and History in South-Eastern Europe (Munich);
- A documentation centre of the Evangelical Church A.B in Romania has been established in Sibiu. This centre has a rich, unexploited holding of documents from the 17th to the 20th centuries, which completes the well-known Brukenthal and Astra libraries with valuable Transylvanica; these facilities and the close collaboration with the Transylvanian Institute in Gundelsheim (Germany) offer various possibilities for further research and documentation.
- The existence of the General Consulate of Germany in Sibiu, of a German Cultural Centre and of the headquarters of the Democratic Forum of Germans in Romania, all of them institutions to which the university has excellent connections, and which support (with human resources and logistics) the present master's study programme

These are all important underpinnings and arguments in favour of the success of the existing master's study programme, *German and European Studies: Cultures in Contact.*

6. Conclusions

The awareness of the fact that a United Europe cannot be founded on finance and economic factors alone and that successful European integration is conditioned by the feeling of belonging to a "Common European" home (with a distinct core of common values, where identity in diversity

needs to be cherished and celebrated), has caused many decision-makers of curricula design in western universities to include in their plans an offer in European Studies. At the Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu these decisions were taken nine years ago, a fact which well entitles us to speak of prospective thinking and innovation at our Department and institution.

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The Language Policy Commission of the University of Lausanne: towards an institutional approach to the question of languages in the Bologna process

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Abstract

In parallel with the creation of the European Higher Education Area and the resulting processes of transformation and internationalisation, the Rectorate of the University of Lausanne created, in 2003, a Language Policy Commission composed of language experts, representatives from every faculty, students and staff members. The aim of this commission is to adopt, at institutional level, systematic and informed treatment of the question of languages and to promote plurilingualism and pluriculturality as an essential condition for quality in teaching, in research and in the promotion of the University in an internationalized context. Through diverse actions this forum allows, on the one hand to establish a clear picture of the status quo in the faculties and services, and on the other to raise awareness, deepen understanding and develop strategies for action on the part of the faculties and the University.

Keywords: Language policy, internationalization, plurilingual and pluricultural competence, quality in teaching and research, multilingualism, diversity

1. Introduction

The internationalization developed from the socio-political, economic and academic context, which has intervened in the past decades, conferred a central role to languages and, in particular, to plurilingualism and to individual pluriculturality in the society in general and especially in academic context. Thus, in a multilingual and multicultural European Higher Education Area (EHEA), the ability of various university stakeholders (students, teachers, researchers, administrative and technical staff) to effectively communicate in various languages and a plurilingual dimension in the scientific and institutional communication have become compulsory conditions for the quality of training, research and scientific and institutional communication. Since the question of languages affects the academic context as a whole, it has become necessary to treat it systematically. In this context, the University of Lausanne created, in 2003, a Language Policy Commission of the Rectorate, aiming to promote plurilingualism at the University of Lausanne. It also raised the question of plurilingualism, falling within the competence of faculties. Firstly, this contribution explains the "why", namely the reasons and underlying principles of an academic linguistic policy in relation with the stake of languages in the Bologna process, which has led to the creation of the Commission and which has appeared in the founding documents of LPC. Secondly, it shall describe the "how", namely the implementation of the defined principles, first concerning the creation of LPC, its objectives and composition and then, as an example, a certain number of its actions and projects that show possible approaches to this problem.

2. The LPC, the socio-political and economic context and the principle of plurilingualism

The reasons justifying the creation of a Commission whose objective is to implement an academic linguistic policy at institutional level at the University of Lausanne, can be found in the new

challenges posed by the transformations in socio-political, economic and university context. Indeed, European integration, the economic globalisation and intensification of transnational relations, the omnipresence of the new communication technologies, as well as the internationalization of training and research resulted in a multiplication and complexification of changes in intercultural and transnational contexts and an increase of the multilingual and multicultural nature of society and of the European and world labour market. It is equally the case of university institutions where we can ascertain a reinforcement of the importance of plurilingualism and of individual pluriculturality. The new demands and quality criteria of Bologna concerning the set of degree courses proposed in the universities equally affect the language training.

Taking into consideration the role of plurilingualism in the European educational policy, as well as in the discussions at the level of the European Union (Barcelona 2003) and of the Council of Europe (Council of Europe: 2001), the good command of minimum two other languages beside the first language for each citizen is currently considered a new key-competence intended to be developed throughout the whole life. In its economic dimension (Lisbon Strategy and Europe 2020), this competence represents an important element in the creation of a knowledge society and for competitiveness. In its socio-political dimension, this competence must contribute to the inclusion, equity and equality of chances. Thus, individual pluricultural and plurilingual competences guarantee the possibility of an active participation and of a successful involvement in these processes. Yet, from this perspective, universities share the responsibility with the educational system in order to make all students' plurilingual profile develop, according to their social, academic and professional needs.

If we examine the objectives of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), we also ascertain that an adequate plurilingual and pluricultural profile of students and teachers, as well as a plurilingual dimension in the scientific and institutional communication are prerequisites for the achievement of Bologna objectives and that their absence endangers these objectives, resulting in the necessity of a systematic approach of the question of languages within universities (Mackiewicz 2003 a and b, Tudor and Mackiewicz 2007). Indeed, the cooperation developed between the European university institutions through common projects in education, development, research and quality assurance, the elimination of barriers to mobility, the maintenance of diversity and attractiveness of EHEA, lifelong learning and employability in an internationalized labour market, are all linked by the question of languages. Students, researchers and staff members must be able to study, work, socially integrate into another language different from their first language and be able to act in multilingual and multicultural contexts. With regard to training and research, plurilingualism intervenes as a key-competence in the construction, communication and access to the knowledge and development of disciplinary and professional expertise. It is a means and a condition to mobility under all its forms, real and virtual. With regard to the creation of EHEA, it is a tool of intercultural comprehension and identity, allowing to create a European dimension and to contribute to the development of an evolving plural identity. The importance of plurilingualism is moreover explained in a communiqué published in the Bologna process. The Berlin communiqué (2003) *Realising the European Higher Education Area* (p. 5) emphasizes "the importance of the linguistic diversity and language learning, so that students may achieve their full potential for European identity, citizenship and employability". Hence, there is a clear option against a unique *lingua franca* (Mackiewicz 2003b : 90); even if English is indispensable, it is not enough to cope with the different economic, socio-political and academic stakes. Taking into account the above-mentioned, the principle of plurilingualism must represent the basic principle of an academic linguistic policy, according to the reference document of the Linguistic Policy Commission of the University of Lausanne.

3. New Bologna demands and the need of coordinated support to educational change

We now take into consideration the need of a systematic approach through a Commission this

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time in relation to language training. New external parameters with regard to the creation of EHEA are from now on to be taken into consideration in the design of training programmes, including language training. These are the new quality criteria for EHEA. Yet, their proper implementation demands a coordinated action at institutional level.

3.1 New general principles for the range of university study programmes

We note that the *Overarching Framework for Qualifications in the EHEA* (2005) aims at drawing up significant qualifications in the new socio-political and economic context and for the political choices carried out. Since then, beside the new educational values (employability, citizenship, personal development, lifelong learning), taking into consideration the needs of the target public aims at an increased social pertinence of the training. Moreover, at formal level, the transnational comparability and readability through various transparency tools (ECTS and competence descriptors) must be applied. The establishment of a quality culture in university institutions aiming to apply previous elements must support the credibility and mutual recognition of qualifications across EHEA. Thus, in this context, quality means a common and shared opinion with regard to a series of clearly-defined strategic objectives that provide coherence to the whole system and involve a shared responsibility of partners in order to apply them. It is obvious that these new principles involve a major educational change: instead of the local criteria, now there are new external and transnational quality criteria and demands to be applied. The goal of training is not only the transmission of abstract scientific knowledge but also the construction of competences having a social pertinence, involving a focus on student and learning and not solely on teaching.

3.2 Consequences for language training

With concern to language training, if we consider these new demands, now it is about fostering the development of a plurilingual and pluricultural competence regarding the specific utilisation situations of students and graduates in academic or professional context and at the time of social integration. Consequently, there is no room anymore for transmitting just knowledge on the language (grammar, vocabulary) but for developing competences that allow efficient communication in specific contexts and for various target audiences. From this point of view, plurilingualism is considered a resource to be mobilized for solving problems and manage situations specific to the academic, professional and social world. Furthermore, in order to foster transparency and transnational comparability, a transnational description of the training achievements as competence descriptors related to the Council of Europe's reference levels is necessary. These three principles – plurilingualism as the underlying principle of language learning, the application of an action approach, as well as transparency and comparability – become equally basic principles for a language policy concerning language training.

3.3 Support to the implementation of educational change

In the field of languages, these changes need systematic support and the implementation of an institutional language policy in compliance with the new Bologna criteria. These needs led to the creation of LPC at the University of Lausanne. A change of educational paradigm of such extent as foreseen in the Bologna process involves, for most of the stakeholders (decision-makers, discipline teachers, language teachers, administrative staff and students), the acquisition of new knowledge and a new conceptual comprehension of the role of the languages to be acquired, new competences to be developed and a new professional identity to take. Thus, most of the stakeholders are driven to adopt

and develop a complex totality of new approaches, competences and professional attitudes. This requires an awareness of their convictions and beliefs, a reflection in relation to their practices, the application of new work methods, the capacity to tolerate incertitude, as well as a clarification and redefinition of the political and pedagogical principles. Or, this process may involve a destabilisation which can be accompanied by doubts and fears and is emotionally trying (Little et al. 2007 : 27-36). This educational change is a long process that must be thought through, scientifically-based, accompanied and actively supported otherwise the risk of resistances is important.

3.4 Phenomena of resistance to educational change

We note that one of the major obstacles, among more others, for example in the non-linguistic faculties and by decision-makers for the implementation of a linguistic policy is an obsolete conception of the content/language relation. Indeed, the relation language/knowledge and scientific approach is not neutral. The scientific contents do not exist autonomously outside the language. Languages have a configurative role in the knowledge construction and transfer. This is dynamic and contextualized and is carried out through social practices which make objects emerge and shape them (Mondada 2002, Berthoud 2003). In this respect, languages are a constitutive transversal element of each academic discipline and a major quality criterion. In the same respect, related to the previous one, there is always a lack of consideration of certain new demands. Thus, the cycle descriptors of the three cycles defined in the *Overarching Framework for Qualifications in the EHEA* (2005) comprise descriptors concerning communication competence. For example, for the Master level "Second cycle qualifications are awarded to students who: can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously" (CRUS/KFH/cohep 2009:14). This competence, which can only be a plurilingual and pluricultural competence in an internationalized context, should be developed and evaluated explicitly in most of the disciplines, which is rarely the case. Only a proactive and duration coordinated work can possibly have an influence on its preconceptions and attitudes.

3.5 Contribution of the European Language Council (ELC/CEL)

It is advisable to emphasize that the ELC/CEL, permanent and independent European association comprising 150 member universities from all over Europe, out of which the University of Lausanne drew attention, since the beginning of Bologna process, to the fact that Bologna objectives cannot be achieved without taking into account the language issue and, consequently, the need of an active university linguistic policy in favour of plurilingualism (http://www.elccel.org). In various communiqués, ELC draws attention to the fact that, as a quality criterion, the development of plurilingualism must be included in the overarching and national frameworks of qualifications, as well as in the institutional quality strategies. In this context, it launched a pilot-project from 2001 to 2003, the "European Language Council's European University Language Policy Group" (EULPIG) in which several European universities, one of which being the University of Lausanne, participated with a board member and a language specialist for each university. By means of a survey, it explored the university linguistic policies, making an inventory of the current situation, the existing practices and examples of good practices. This project's objective is to support universities in order to implement a policy or linguistic strategies in favour of plurilingualism, on the basis of decisions grounded on the objectives of the educational policy and on scientific research. The creation of the Linguistic Policy Commission by the Rectorate of the University of Lausanne (UNIL) in 2003 is the result of such participation.

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4. The Linguistic Policy Commission of the Rectorate of the University of Lausanne (LPC): Aims and composition

The University of Lausanne counts approximately 11,000 students. At institutional level, the student body is composed of approximately 20% international students, to which we must add Swiss students speaking another language than the local one (French), hence increasing the number of persons not speaking French as a first language to around 25 to 30%; moreover, the teaching staff and the personnel are very international. This situation creates a truly multilingual and multicultural context.

If we consider the situation of languages at UNIL in 2003, we can ascertain that there is a diversity of practices non-coordinated at all levels (award of ECTS credits, demands towards the languages of study, admission levels, scientific and institutional communication), often drawn up by non-specialists. There is a lack of overall vision, as well as a lack of common principles at institutional level. Thus, the creation of LPC was an attempt of approaching the issue of plurilingualism at institutional level and more exclusively at faculty level. Therefore, it is a permanent advisory commission of the University Rectorate which is nevertheless dissolved during the change of Rectorate and which may be renewed or not. Its objective is to support a dynamic process of implementation of new concepts based on well-grounded informed choices, from scientific point of view on the one hand and in agreement with Bologna guidelines in order to assure the quality of training and research, on the other hand.

LPC regulations define its aims and competences as follows: "It helps the Rectorate implement a linguistic policy aiming to promote plurilingualism at the University. In particular, this policy falls within the framework of the internationalization processes (Bologna Declaration) and in compliance with the guidelines set by the national and international bodies regarding languages."

LPC is also composed of stakeholders involved in different levels. The Rectorate designates the members. The Commission comprises a representative of each faculty, a representative of the Language centre, a member of UNIL board (vice-rector), a member of the Training and Youth Department, the deputy of international relations, a staff member, and a student representative. It may invite any other person who is able to contribute to its work.

5. Actions of LPC

5.1 LPC reference document "Bologna and languages": creating a common understanding

One of the first actions of LPC aimed at creating, by means of an interaction between the actors involved, a common understanding of the new stakes, as well as a common language as a basis for the implementation of various actions. It is for this reason that a sub-workgroup, under the direction of LPC president, Professor Anne-Claude Berthoud, drew up in 2003 a discussion document for the "Bologna and languages" recommendations (non-published). This document was released for consultation in Faculties (in order to be discussed by the deanships) and by other target groups (students, staff members). The issues approached in this document are the following: the principle of plurilingualism as a basis of a linguistic policy at UNIL, the choice of languages (languages of study, other languages proposed at UNIL), the stake of plurilingualism in the Bologna process, the types of plurilingual and pluricultural competences to be developed by the students, a proposal to integrate languages in the study programmes under the form of ECTS credits. In this context, it focuses on the importance of introducing ECTS language credits in all degree courses, which is not currently the case at UNIL. It equally approaches, in a general manner, the role of plurilingualism in the entire

academic life (research, administration, scientific and institutional communication) and the need for a clarification of the options and prerequisites, as well as the proper support measures. The positions of faculties and associations were integrated in this document. Even if a full agreement could not be found with concern to the approached fields, this document remained the reference document of LPC.

5.2 Activities to raise awareness

In parallel with this consultation process related to the reference document, LPC undertook a series of actions aiming at raising awareness of the actors concerned in the question of plurilingualism in the context of Bologna. On the other hand, these actions had as an objective to establish a clear image of the current situation in European context, as well as at the University of Lausanne, allowing to specify the vision to be embraced and to support the definition of the actions to be undertaken. The Commission regularly invited experts presenting examples of good practice of other European universities or scientific presentations with concern to the theoretical bases and the role of the plurilingualism in the development of knowledge and academic expertise. It also invited local stakeholders to problematize on the experiences in various faculties of UNIL with regard to the linguistic diversity in particular in connection with the introduction of Master's degree programmes in other languages than the local language. Secondly, the LPC organized a public event proposing conferences and a round table gathering language specialists, university decision-makers and other target audiences concerned. Finally, it elaborated a document on the situation of UNIL by inventorying the resources available at UNIL, which were at this moment scattered and non-coordinated.

5.3 Recommendations drawn up at the Rectorate's request

With regard to its attributions, the LPC elaborates either recommendations at the Rectorate's request, or sets up actions on its own initiative aiming to implement the objectives of LPC. In this context, LPC elaborated recommendations serving as a decision basis to the "Directive of the Rectorate 3.4. Languages used within the courses" (University of Lausanne 2007) which sets up the conditions in which courses can be provided in other languages than the official language – French – in order to guarantee the quality of education. It is worth mentioning that this directive is just as well attached to the teachers' competences, to the students' support structures, as well as to the indications concerning the languages in the study programmes. Hence, the teachers' minimal linguistic competences in the study language are set to B2 / C1 without however associating this directive with a system of control. The programmes in other languages than the local one should contain precise indications on the languages used and the minimal threshold of linguistic competences required by the students in the terms of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe 2001) in order to assure the common and international understanding. At Bachelor level, the courses of the first year are necessarily in French. Afterwards, if other languages are used, an adequate preliminary language training of students is necessary. At Master level, the faculties can choose the language of study but it is however recommended to include several languages or language modules to favour plurilingualism (University of Lausanne 2007). This directive is valid at institutional level and clearly supports a quality approach in this field.

6. Achievements of LPC

With regard to the actions undertaken on its own initiative since 2003, the LPC elaborated throughout the years an open list of relevant projects in order to implement a linguistic policy aiming

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to promote plurilingualism at UNIL. It comprises the following projects:

- Project 1: Integration of the language credits in the UNIL faculties: continuing the efforts by the faculties which have not introduced the credit system for language competences yet.
- Project 2: Multilingual education: setting up a group of dialogue and reflection on the existing practices of bi/multilingual education (plurilingual learning); this group will consist of teachers, specialists in university pedagogy and researchers. The purpose is to develop new issues of research and new practices of teaching, learning and documentation.
- Project 3: The multilingual dimension in the institutional communication: review of the consideration of multilingualism in the communication of UNIL outside education (website, advertising etc.), to analyse the image and the message which is given by these practices and to formulate recommendations.
- Project 4: Place of the language dimension in the integration of new students: integrating questions concerning the problem of the multilingualism / plurilingualism to be integrated into the questionnaire "How are you?" which serves as a basis for an onsite survey with the new students and is carried out by the Guidance and Counselling Department of UNIL.
- Project 5: Mobility and recognition of the acquisition of plurilingual competences: establishing a system allowing – in relation to well-clarified requirements – to award language credits to the achievements obtained during a stage of mobility.
- Project 6: Mobility and raising awareness towards the intercultural: setting up a training allowing to prepare for the heterogeneousness of the academic cultures for all the members of the academic community.
- Project 7: Academic communication competences in mother tongue: listing the existing offers (for example specific courses, theatrical improvisation, …) and implementing a training concept for various disciplines.
- Project 8: Integration of the non French-speaking students and teachers in the UNIL: stating the current situation so as to identify the difficulties non French-speaking students and teachers are confronted with; formulating recommendations to better take this situation into account.
- Project 9: The role of plurilingualism in the internationalization strategy of UNIL: drawing up a document completing the "International strategy of the University of Lausanne", approved by the Rectorate on 30.09.2009, having for objective drawing attention to the central role of plurilingualism and pluriculturality as an essential condition for quality in teaching, in research and in the promotion of the UNIL in the internationalization process.

These nine projects are all at a different state of progress and three (projects 1, 4 and 9) will be clarified as an illustrative example during this contribution.

Project 1: Integration of the language credits in the UNIL faculties

Project 1 starts from the following observation: if an adequate plurilingual and pluricultural profile is an essential transversal competence which should currently be a part of every graduate's profile, then ECTS credits should be reserved for the development of this competence inside every degree course. Students should thus have the possibility to obtain recognition of their efforts to develop these competences in the form of credits, at least on an optional base. This is not the case at UNIL in 2003 but only in a very limited number of faculties. Hence, a first approach of the LPC aimed at raising in the first place an awareness of this necessity, then at bringing about the structural integration of language credits in the degree courses of different faculties.

In order to support this process, a workgroup drew up two questionnaires, one referring to the communication skills in academic context and the other to the professional communication skills, as well as criteria grids as a basis of a needs' analysis carried out as interviews guided by the deans of each UNIL faculty. The purpose of this approach was double: on the one hand, raising awareness

on what is an adequate plurilingual and pluricultural competence to be developed by the students of their faculty and, on the other hand, obtaining onsite information for the design of study programmes in adequate languages for the faculty's students.

More exactly, an approach by achievement of training was adopted: what should students do at linguistic level during their studies and at the end of these? What competences and strategies should students and graduates develop in order to have the necessary flexibility and adaptability in a multilingual and multicultural context? The deans had to assess the relevance and the importance of a series of competence descriptors with regard to the academic and professional context and with regard to the most important three languages in their discipline used during the studies and in their future professional life (see excerpt below).

1) Situations of utilisation

Evaluate to what degree it is important for your students to be able to cope with the following situations. Please answer with concern to the first language (local language), the second and third language used.

Language 1 _____
Language 2 _____
Language 3 _____
- Importance: 1=not important / 2=not very important / 3=quite important / 4=very important
- For which cycle: BA / MA / Ph.D. / all 3

		L1	L2	L3	Cycle
1	Finding in scientific texts the essential or specific information, identifying the major and minor details, resuming, taking notes				
2	Understanding a lecture, a course or a conference				
3	Taking notes during a lecture, a course or a conference by identifying and selecting the relevant elements				
4	Understanding and interacting during seminars or during discussions concerning their field of study with the teachers				

For the academic context, the questionnaire also contained a question concerning the types of texts and specific interactions for the curricular area and the expected input and output level. For the professional context, the questions also concerned, among others, career prospects of the students of a specific faculty, professional profiles and types of positions they will occupy, thus linking this problem to Bologna objectives and more particularly to the issue of employability and lifelong learning.

We are not going to remain too long here, on the analysis of this survey, but on its practical consequences. Indeed, a certain number of faculties effectively introduced language credits on an optional basis and a financing for the implementation of this change could be obtained. It is also necessary to indicate that the faculties accepted the concept of extension of the plurilingual profile as a base of awarding ECTS. In this concept every language (available at the UNIL) can be credited regardless of the level because every language is a resource at individual as well as societal level. A variety of profiles consisting of different and multiple languages better serves the society and the individual development than the allocation of credits for a single language and a single level, or a unique profile for all the students. This basic principle clearly serves the promotion of plurilingualism at the UNIL.

Project 4: Place of the language dimension in the integration of new students
If our first example illustrated an action by the faculties, the second becomes attached to

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the perception of the non French-speaking students who start at UNIL in relation to the role of languages in connection with their integration in the academic and social life. An onsite survey entitled: "How are you?" is carried out every year with all the new students by the Guidance and Counselling Department of UNIL. The purpose of the survey, which is conducted a few months after the beginning of courses, is to question the new students about their adaptation to the university life, to identify problematic areas and, at the same time, to raise awareness and inform them about important aspects referring to integration. Every year this questionnaire integrates a specific theme (supplementing a series of general questions). In 2009, the LPC prepared specific questions as for the impact of the language dimension in the integration of non French-speaking students.

The survey was conducted in 2009 between 9.11 and on 10.12.2009. In September 2009, 2,268 students among whom 21.5% foreigners began their degree course at the UNIL. 1,557 persons were interviewed by telephone, representing an answer rate of 68.7%. 84.3% of the sample consists of persons having French as mother tongue and 244 students (approximately 15%) of non-French speakers.

As an example, we shall present some results of this survey which allow assessing the perception of the non-French-speaking sample regarding the problem of languages. All the information is extracted from the June 2010 report, prepared by Guillaume Conne and Elisabeth Lamont-Hoffmann.

In a general way, to the question "If you meet difficulties and if you are non French-speaking, do you consider that French plays a role? (N=245), 50.2% of the questioned non French-speaking students answer "yes" (against 49.8% of "no").

With regard to the influence of the language in the acquisition of work methods (taking notes, time management, preparation of examinations, effective and fast reading, research in library, the concentration and/or the memory, too slow work), and more exactly to the question "Do you think that language complicates things to acquire good work methods? (N=249), 34.5% of the non-French-speaking sample answer "yes" (against 65.5% of "no").

In the context of the educational experience and the difficulties in courses felt by the non French-speaking, to the question "Have you the impression that the problems related to French could affect your academic results? (N=231), 39.8% answer "yes" (against 60.2% of "no"). Among the points which pose the main difficulties in relation to language are the following aspects with several possible answers:
- Understanding the oral interventions of teachers/assistants (18.4%)
- Understanding and exploiting texts (21.3%)
- Drawing up academic works (29.5%)
- Expressing during presentations (26.6%)
The percentages relate to 207 stated opinions.

We can thus notice, on the basis of these results, that the linguistic aspect represents an additional challenge and, consequently, we can assert that an adequate plurilingual and pluricultural directory allows providing students with a better chance of success in their project of academic training. Furthermore, these results allow LPC to have concrete data supporting its recommendations and they constitute a starting point to strengthen the linguistic and structural measures put at the students' disposal.

<u>Project 9: The role of plurilingualism in the internationalization strategy of UNIL</u>

Our third example, project 9, had for objective to provide a document completing the "International strategy of the University of Lausanne", approved by UNIL Rectorate on 30.09.2009. This document aims at drawing attention to the importance of a plurilingual and pluricultural profile of teachers and students and to a necessary plurilingual dimension in the scientific and institutional communication of the UNIL as to assure the quality of these processes.

The international Strategy of the UNIL has five main objectives:
1. To increase its competences in research and teaching through collaboration with foreign partners
2. To increase the international renown of the UNIL in order to attract talented individuals at all levels
3. To facilitate access by UNIL students to the study programmes of foreign universities and strengthen the value of its degrees outside Switzerland
4. To develop the international competences of its students
5. To actively participate in international developments in the fields of teaching and research" (University of Lausanne 2009:1)

To fulfil its objectives, this strategy proposes a series of actions at various levels which represent either a reinforcement of the already existing elements or new initiatives. They refer to aspects such as human resources (international dimension of the teaching staff, integration in international networks, internationalization of the staff), the reinforcement of international partnerships, the promotion and communication of the UNIL (image of the UNIL, promotion programmes, position in classifications – rankings), actions related to training (international experience of students and Ph.D. students), actions related to research (reception of foreign researchers, research communication) and others (University of Lausanne 2009).

The LPC elaborated, adopted and submitted to the Rectorate a document which resumes the various objectives of the internationalization Strategy of the UNIL and adds to it an introductory text which explains the stake, as well as quality criteria in relation to plurilingualism to be considered and the state of the UNIL with regard to three main categories of action (training/teaching, research and scientific communication, promotion and institutional communication). This text appears in tabular form, see excerpt below:

1.2.2 <u>For the students whose first language is not the local language</u> 1.2.2.1 *…who study during a whole cycle*		
Objective	**Quality criteria**	**State of the UNIL**
All levels		
for competences in local language and possible other languages of study at the beginning	Ensuring that these students have an adequate competence level in local language and possible other languages of study in order to assure the quality and success of their education. To fulfil this, it is a question of: ➢ defining the necessary competence level for admission ➢ verifying that the student has it	
for a development of competences in local language and possible other languages of study	➢ Providing training programmes in order to acquire communication skills in academic context and intercultural skills ➢ Providing credits for the extension of their plurilingual directory	Cdl, CVAC, EFLE, Language sections
for a level in local language or other language of study required to exams	Defining the minimal acceptability criteria of the language quality in the works carried out and exams	

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So, this document allows having a clear image of the quality criteria to be considered during the internationalization processes with regard to plurilingualism, elements already existing in the UNIL and elements still to be implemented. It allows steering operated choices in a coherent way and the implementation of a linguistic policy at UNIL according to the demand of UNIL Rectorate.

7. Final remarks

There is currently a change of management at the University of Lausanne involving the dissolution of the advisory commissions. The LPC will be reorganised and integrated into another domain. Even if it managed to raise awareness of the role of plurilingualism in the internationalization processes, to set up Bologna quality criteria and to implement several elements of an institutional linguistic policy, an enormous work still remains to be carried out; it is a matter of a continuous process. Challenges to be taken up in relation to plurilingualism remain unchanged and are far from being acquired. The stakes for the future are to find strategies for:

- creating a real will to foster linguistic diversity and the development of plurilingualism as stated in various Bologna communiqués
- raising a greater awareness in all the target audiences of the central role of plurilingualism in the students' academic, professional, social and personal development
- ensuring that an adequate plurilingual competence (level and type of competences) is a part of every academic profile
- ensuring an adequate plurilingual competence of teachers
- creating a plurilingual dimension in research, scientific communication to avoid an erosion in scientific cultures
- fostering a plurilingual institutional communication for the promotion of UNIL diplomas and a quality of reception
- contributing to the integration of the new quality criteria into language programmes
- managing to integrate the plurilingual dimension as an essential quality criterion in the realisation of the Bologna process in the Overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA, in the national frameworks and in the institutional strategies.

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Internationalising Romanian Higher Education – Preliminary Findings of the ASIGMA Project Regarding Master's Level Programmes

Learning from the Learners: a student centred syllabus in preparation for the real world

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Abstract

In order to meet the demands of our interconnected world, many universities have embraced the concept of internationalisation, offering international programmes in many discipline areas. At the same time, European universities have been grappling with introducing all the necessary changes to meet with the Bologna requirements. At the level of both programme and syllabus design the focus has often been on specific knowledge and understanding and the setting of very laudable learning outcomes including professional competences and skills. How Language Learning/Support can play an important role in achieving these objectives and outcomes and in particular how a student-centred "professional syllabus" can be developed to meet future needs of the student is the focus of this talk.

Language Learning/Support on International or Foreign Language Mediated (FLM) Programmes, whether credit-bearing or not, needs to meet three main needs: Language for Academic Purposes (LAP) e.g. the mechanics of academic discourse, writing abstracts/dissertations, making presentations etc; Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) focusing on technical language, in particular terminology; and in addition to this more "traditional" kind of language support, Language Learning should also develop those language and communication skills and competences which will enable them to work effectively and efficiently in a professional working environment thus enhancing student employability. To answer this multifaceted challenge, the language teacher needs not only to know what the programme and individual course learning outcomes are and to work in close and constant collaboration with the content teachers (essential prerequisite) but also have some form of contact with the professional world of the specific content domain. One ideal source of up to date and relevant knowledge of this professional world is the students themselves. The Language syllabus can include "professional" tasks based on student feedback and authentic materials, provided either by current students following internships or alumni who are in contact with teachers. This invaluable input provides insight not only regarding technical aspects, but more importantly the text types most commonly found, the types of communication skills most frequently called for, the functional language (complaints, troubleshooting, requests etc) not always catered for in published LAP or LSP materials. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, by using students and alumni as informants to create their own "professional syllabus", motivation, that all-important ingredient in successful language learning, is greatly enhanced.

Keywords: *student-centred, syllabus design, language awareness, professional communication skills*

1. Background

When designing a degree course a whole series of expectations, requirements and restrictions from a series of stakeholders all need to be met. From the international perspective, the impact of

Bologna has had repercussions across Europe. In the context of Italy there are also the Ministerial requirements to contend with, which often feel like a straitjacket; discipline areas are clearly delineated and degree courses fall into a rigid disciplinary frameworks and have to include certain disciplines and subjects, leaving little room for manoeuvre. There are institutional expectations and restrictions, regarding the organisation and financing of the course. There are the departmental organs deciding which courses will be offered (this is the level at which the 'degree course pie' is usually sliced up!). There are the individual professor's expectations as to what exactly they will be teaching, how they will be teaching, who they will be teaching and to what end. Add to this the expectations and requirement of the workplace it is perhaps little wonder that sometimes the needs and expectations of the very people the course is intended for are overlooked. Indeed, one might ask "Who is the course for?" While the obvious answer is: The Students, in the case of International Masters the answer is not so straightforward. These courses are introduced for multiple reasons: political, to improve rankings (national and international); to attract students AND teachers – in particular international and from other national universities; to provide professors with a showcase – or even high status teaching hours; to attract funds from organisations, etc. Providing students with the ideal preparation for their chosen career or for further study at a higher level may not be top of this list, in particular when allotting courses and credits.

The students, their needs and requirements, are not alone in being left on the sideline. In degree course design, language courses, be they a credit-bearing Module or extra curricular Language Support as part of an International Master's[1], are very often an afterthought. Although languages are a compulsory element of ALL degree courses in Italy[2] the Ministerial restriction of 12 exams per Master's, including the final dissertation, mean they are often relegated (in everyone's eyes) to course requirements under the label "*conoscenze linguistiche*" rather than being afforded 'official subject' status, whether as a core subject *("Caraterizzante")* or subsidiary ("*Affine*"). Indeed, at the engineering faculty in Trento, languages are listed under 'Other' (*"Altro"*), almost an afterthought, at Sociology it is part of the final dissertation mark – or rather a requirement needed to be able to graduate.

Attendance at Italian university is not compulsory (this holds true for all courses in all disciplines bar medicine) and students can take an exam as many times as they like until they pass (again true for any course in any discipline bar medicine). Until recently the language courses on all non-specialist degrees, i.e. degrees in subjects other than languages, consisted in general language courses held both at the university language centre and in the faculties. Attendance rates were below 30%, meaning 70% of students sit the appropriate level exam, which comprises all 4 skills, without attending any language courses. As a result success rates were even lower than attendance rates, constituting a huge cost for the language centre. Moreover, many students were unable to graduate, sometimes for years, because unable to obtain the language requirement (at Trento usually B1 on a Bachelor's and B2 on a Master's). Pressure was put on the language centre by the faculties to find a solution to the problem. The Language Centre, which sets all language exams, suggested lowering the degree course requirements to A2 and B1 respectively. The reply was to leave the levels but make the exams much easier – an illustration of how meaningless, outside language teaching circles, the CEF levels actually are. Pressure was also put on the Language Centre to cut costs, in particular the huge budget for exams (the average number of times a student sat the language exam was 3.4 times).

This, then, is the backdrop to a series of decisions taken by the Language Centre's Scientific Committee[3], in particular regarding English language, which counts for over 70% of language exams in the university and over 90% at Master's level. There were multiple, interconnected challenges to be addressed:

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[1]The interpretations of this term vary from a course with some international students present, delivered in the local language, through courses where students spend a period abroad, to courses with a mixture of international and local students delivered wholly in a foreign language, often English. For the purposes of this paper, this latter definition is the one intended, and in the case of the University of Trento, all International Masters are delivered in English.

[2]Laudable in theory and an idea which would make British Universities, for example, grind to a halt with very few students able to graduate.

[3]*Committato Didattico* of which the author is a member in her role as English Language Coordinator for the university (*Responsabile Scientifico Didattico della Lingua Inglese*).

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a) increasing attendance

b) making courses relevant to the students and their real needs

c) improving pass rates without meddling with CEF levels

c) cutting costs

d) getting students to do the language course(s)/exams during the degree and not the week before they hope to graduate

e) changing the attitude of the stakeholders (**all of them**) to languages and language learning

This last being perhaps the most challenging of all. In short a change in mind-set regarding languages across the university was perceived as essential.

2. A student-centred approach for a student-centred syllabus

With this in mind, I wondered whether the approach I had adopted on my own language courses at the School of International Studies, greatly appreciated by the students, could be applied on International Masters (and indeed Bachelors) in other discipline areas. This approach is based on a simple premise – putting the focus on the students: both on their needs AND on their role in the learning process.

Meeting the immediate and future needs of the students has immediate implications for syllabus design, involving needs analysis, both pre-course, *in itinere* and of particular interest to me, post course. A practice I have always promoted, even when not encouraged by officialdom[4]. This (re)evaluation process can be summed up in the reflective-practice quality model proposed by the LANQUA project[5], requiring continual dialogue with the students, both present and past, on all aspects of their learning, both for languages and other core subjects. This approach also requires continual dialogue and cooperation with professors of (the other)[6] core content modules, but this is not the focus of the present paper.

Before moving on to discuss ways of identifying students' immediate and future needs and incorporating these into the syllabus, I would first like to briefly discuss learning theories and approaches, and how they influence the role of the students (and teacher) in the learning process, with particular reference to learning language through content (as well as content through language).

While teacher trainers and many teachers at the primary and secondary levels may be familiar with cognitive (e.g. Pinker 1997), socio-cultural (e.g. Vygotsky 1978) and socio-cognitive (e.g. Bereiter and Scardamalia 2005) learning theories and relative teaching approaches (e.g. scaffolding - Simon and Klein, 2007, task/problem based learning – Nunan 2003, Willis & Willis 2007, interaction – Larsen-Freeman 2011, Van Lier 2007), and embrace, or at least pay lip-service to a task-based, student centred approach, teachers at university level firstly go through no teacher training (at least in the Italian context) and their perceptions of the teacher student relationship depend very much on their own experience. This can be seen, at the risk of making broad generalisations, in the way professors who have studied abroad have a more interactive, process oriented approach, rather than the product oriented, 'chalk and talk' approach of many of the more 'traditional' teachers. The focus on skills and competence development advocated by the Bologna process[7], more or less overtly ignored. A teacher's beliefs about learning will affect the all-important teacher student, but also student-student relationship (if we are to consider the classroom a learning *community*). Perhaps more importantly, students' perceptions of the learning process, their role in it and the teacher-student relationship, will be very much influenced by the student's own experience. In a

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[4]Students' own perceptions of their role in the QA cycle are similar to those of the lecturers and professors, i.e. that they 'have no role' (cfr student comments on page 4 below)

[5]The Quality Model is retrievable at http://www.lanqua.eu/sites/default/files/LanQua_quality_model.pdf.

[6]English was made a core content Module on the Master's in European and International Studies, upgraded from a subsidiary, at the request of the students a few years ago. This is rare in the context of Master's courses in Italy, other than specialist Language Masters.

[7]http://www.eassw.org/internatSW/Bologna%20as%20a%20frame%20for%20CBL%20and%20supervision.pdf

multilingual, multicultural class these perceptions will be even more varied than in the mono-cultural classroom. What might these perceptions be, then? I suggest, somewhat tongue in cheek[8], a list of learner roles as perceived by both teachers and the learners themselves: *Resisters* (unruly rabble), *Receptacles* (jugs and mugs), *Raw Material* (clay to mould), *Clients* (at their service), *Collaborators* (team spirit), *Individual explorers* (Scott vs Amundson), *Democratic Explorers* (Page and Brin[9]), *Partners* (we're all in it together)[10]. As for perceptions of the teacher, then we have a mirror image of the above[11]: *Enforcers* (quashing the rabble), *Distributors* (filling the pots), *Shapers* (moulding the clay), *Service Providers* (doing their bidding), *Coaches* (training the teams), *Cartographers* (setting them on their way), *Partners* (we're in it together). While at certain moments in the classroom life we might assume many of these roles, depending on the task in hand, in the socio-cultural learning approach I personally favour, what must first and foremost be remembered is that both the students and teacher are people, and should each have a voice in the learning process and, consequently, syllabus design.

From discussing what kinds of activities and tasks to do in class, whether or not they want activities to be filmed, be it for feedback, self-assessment or teacher assessment purposes, through the choice of topics to be covered, whether to do group work or work individually, to offering students a choice of alternative assessment methods, and asking them about **their** desired learning outcomes, at each level of the syllabus, students can be engaged in the decision making process, or rather reflective-practice cycle. Indeed, discussions, whether pre course, *in intinere* or post course, can constitute an occasion for genuine debate, in particular if the content teachers are also involved. Making sure the students' voice is not only heard but also heeded at all levels of the decision making process is essential if the reflective-practice quality approach is to work. The ASIGMA project (http://lett.ubbcluj.ro:3636/) is to be congratulated on making one of the four working groups for the students – at a national level their voice will be heard and heeded.

At the School of International Studies in Trento, this degree of debate and discussion with the students has evolved over several years. The main obstacle has been to win the trust of the content professors but also the students, who are still reluctant to speak out or even profess an opinion on the learning process. My students have even questioned my 'expertise', wondering whether I am a very good teacher if I need to ask them what we are going to do next lesson/over the semester or how they want to tackle some task[12]. Some have openly questioned whether they should be called upon to do so, as this question and response from a pilot questionnaire show:

Q: Do you think that teaching through a foreign language requires different pedagogical skills from teaching through the local language?

Comment: The question has to do with pedagogical skills that we students are not entitled to know and discuss about [sic] [13]

It is my contention that students do, indeed, need to reflect on these very same skills, and that they not only have a right to discuss them, but a duty[14]. In fact, involving students in the learning process implies not only rights, but also responsibilities. Indeed, I see the process of learning as that of helping students become independent learners, helping them recognise that they are the principle 'agents' in their own learning process (Van Lier 2007). Given the student perceptions as to their own role and the mismatch between student and teacher perceptions as to what constitutes appropriate teaching methodology (see e.g. Brown 2009), this change in perceptions is a fundamental part of the language training and learner development. Thus they need to become aware of and accept their

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[8]But sadly I still see many of these perceptions alive in the halls of Italian academia still today.

[9]Perhaps not so democratic everywhere in the world, e.g. in Iran or China

[10]After Meighan and Meighan 1990

[11]My own suggestions, for which I ask Meighan and Meighan's forgiveness.

[12]One student expressed this feeling: "Isn't that what she is paid for, after all?" See Appendix is one comment .

[13]Questionnaires submitted as part of the Lanqua project – CLIL sub-group. http://www.lanqua.eu/

[14]It is my personal mission to convince both students and professors of this. We (in Italy) are still light years away from the enlightened system in Finland, for example, where university professors also do teacher training to help them understand the different student needs and indeed different teaching approaches needed on International Programmes and domestic programmes.

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role in the process. In addition they also need to develop those skills, strategies and competences which enable them to become effective learners and thus take charge of their own learning (Holec 1981). This does not mean that they learn how to become merely information processing machines or sponges absorbing information and language along with it[15], rather it is the interaction that takes place within the classroom that enables the learners to build on former knowledge and make the new knowledge encountered their own – if they so wish – and by interacting/engaging actively with teacher and fellow students and with texts, using a wide variety of discourse modes, to develop those very skills and competences which will enable them to become lifelong learners. As far as language learning is concerned, in particular with regard to International Masters programmes, if this interaction takes place in the content classroom with some focus on language or in the language classroom with some focus on content, then we are much closer to Pennycook's notion of 'voice'[16] (Pennycook 1997).

"The notion of voice […] is not one that implies *any* language use, such as the often empty babble of the communicative language class, but rather must be tied to an understanding that to use language is not so much a question of mastering a system as it is a question of struggling to find means of articulation amid the cultures, discourses and ideologies within which we live our lives." (Penycook 1997, p. 44)

I would add that these discourses include the academic discourses of the university classroom, and the professional discourses of the chosen career path of the student.

This brings us back to the main focus of this paper, namely identifying the (immediate and future) needs of students in order to design a language syllabus which enhances the whole learning process (both content and language), helps achieve the desired learning outcomes (both language and content) i.e. helps develop both language skills and competences and the specific skills and competences relative to the discipline area. In other words, the skills and competence based syllabus must reflect the dual focus of the whole learning process.

Designing the syllabus around the needs of the learner, rather than a knowledge/product oriented syllabus, is by no means a new idea, over 30 years ago, Illich (1979), asserted that the most effective learning is to fulfil a personal need. The immediate language needs of students on International Masters (cfr note 1) are those related to academic study skills as outlined by Räsänen at a workshop at the first ASIGMA conference in Brasov (Räsänen 2012). At Trento, in the first year of the two-year MA in European and International Studies (MEIS), these needs are met by a General English course focusing on skills development and language awareness and two Language Support courses in the form of an EAP course (both semesters – 48 hours) which is content focused and student-centred[17] and specific ESP language support for the Law courses (autumn semester – 24 hours)[18]. The introduction of the latter was the direct result of feedback provided in TQA questionnaires and feedback sessions with students after the first year of the Master's in 2003-2004. Over the years it has developed from an ESP course with no direct cooperation with the Law Professors, to a content driven adjunct CLIL format[19], i.e. the syllabus is negotiated with the Profs and the students at the beginning of each year, with adjustments made during the year, depending on whether the Law Profs hold a moot court or other simulation (depending on whether students **want** to do this). In short, student-centred practices from the language courses have 'spilled over' into the content courses. Evidence that in many contexts a bottom up approach is perhaps the best way forward. So much so that other content teachers, upon hearing the appreciative **voice of the**

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[15]Cfr van Lier 2007 "The learner is a whole person, not an input-processing brain that happens to be located inside a body"

[16]"The notion of voice […] is not one that implies *any* language use, such as the often empty babble of the communicative language class, but rather must be tied to an understanding that to use language is not so much a question of mastering a system as it is a question of struggling to find means of articulation amid the cultures, discourses and ideologies within which we live our lives."

[17]The MEIS is interdisciplinary, and each discipline has different academic practices and conventions which students have to be sensitive to.

[18]Despite these courses being non-compulsory and additional to the English Language Module, attendance is often higher than in the discipline courses, especially those disciplines where 'Book Exams' are still the norm.

[19]See page 6 of Lanqua CLIL sub-group Year 1 report: http://www.lanqua.eu/sites/default/files/Year1Report_CLIL_ForUpload_WithoutAppendices_0.pdf

students, were keen for similar cooperation on their courses. This cooperation is in the form of close cooperation between the English Language lecturer and the History and the Politics lecturers, further collaboration will take place with the Economics lecturer from the coming academic year. In short, positive feedback from students has meant Professors have become sensitive to alternative ways of teaching, including letting non-specialists (the language teachers) into their classrooms and the sanctity of their discipline area. It has not been an easy ride; a roller-coaster[20] is perhaps the best metaphor, and it is obviously a work in progress. However, despite the context and the obstacles, considerable progress has been made.

Moreover, and more importantly for the language teachers and students alike, greater recognition has been given to languages as a whole, both in terms of academic recognition, and more importantly for the students, in terms of credits. Thanks to student pressure on the degree board, both via the student representatives and feedback from all students, English Language has increased from an initial 6 credits with subsidiary status in 2003/4 to a whopping 16 credits over the two years 10 + 6) from 2012/13 and was upgraded in 2007/8 to core subject. Proof that **students can make a difference** at all levels of the process.[21]

Moving now to meeting students' future needs, once they have left the halls of academia and engage in professional activities, whether paid or unpaid, given the general tendency to make graduates serve a series of internships before being gainfully employed. Once more using the MEIS as an illustrative example, while some students still need EAP, and can attend the courses organised for first year students, the focus of English language in the second year is 'professional' English. Here also the syllabus has developed over the years thanks almost wholly to the feedback and input from students returning from internships or former students doing internships or in employment. The syllabus consists in a series of complex tasks, all of which have been performed by (ex)MEIS students in the 'real world'. The materials are all authentic, the situations as authentic as possible, the content authentic, the outcomes based on authentic outcomes: in short, the whole course is based on preparing for and performing in simulations, simulations which are as authentic as possible. To do this the students need not only to develop specific discipline related language skills, such as the language of negotiation, but also refine the metalinguistic and language awareness skills developed in the Language Module[22] in the first year, to enable them to produce the documents in the appropriate style and register and using the appropriate technical terminology. For example even advanced students are often unaware of the various degrees of register needed when operating professionally, something often taken for granted.

In the last academic year students organised a "political debate" on the Roma question (with 'guests' from the French and Italian governments, human rights groups and a Roma person) involving research, presentation and arguing skills, held a simulated meeting of country representatives over the Arctic Question, held an EU meeting of Foreign Ministers to discuss Turkey's accession to the EU and organised a United Nations Panel Meeting to draw up proposals for Security Council Reform. In all cases students have to produce a series of documents, ranging from invitations to speak, conference programmes, press releases, reports, emails regarding accommodation and transport arrangements etc. all taking as models authentic materials provided by MEIS interns. Over the last few years I have built up a huge store of materials, but each year students come back with more examples, each wanting to contribute to the next edition of the 'Advanced English Workshop'. They are also eager to share their experiences with me, even if no longer my students. Without their contribution, the course would simply not exist, and I am grateful for their continued cooperation. I still receive materials and messages from students from the very first edition of the MEIS in 2004, some of whom have worked their way up the career ladder in international organisations. This means we also get materials and input of a higher, more challenging kind. But this is even more stimulating

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[20]When new content professors and lecturers take over a course, the whole process has to start again.

[21]For more information see the case study "Promoting Collaboration between Content Teachers and Language Teachers for the Master's in European and International Studies" at http://www.lanqua.eu/theme/content-language-integrated-learning-clil

[22]Including genre analysis and noticing skills, but in particular awareness of such things as collocation and colligation in specialised texts.

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for the students, who aspire to follow in the footsteps of their former colleagues. One could not wish for better motivation, the key to successful language learning, albeit instrumental motivation.[23]

It is perhaps interesting to note that although I use an anonymous online questionnaire,[24] which I send to students during the summer after completing the course so they will feel completely free to answer whatever they like, many students prefer to come to see me in person when they get back from the internship, or they prefer to write me an email (obviously no longer anonymous) with their thoughts about the English course, the degree course, and many other things. From being sceptical and even resistant to take charge of their own (language) learning in the first year, by the time they go out into the real world, they really appreciate being listened to and are happy to make a contribution, even if they will no longer profit from it.

This approach to syllabus design takes a considerable amount of effort on the teacher's part, as selecting and collating the model materials is time consuming. However, it is well worth the effort. Student motivation is high, and while they sometimes complain (still) that the amount of time they spend is disproportionate to the credits they get in the second year (just 6 for a year long course whereas other courses are 6 per semester) they often write to me when out in the real world, to say it is worth it in the end.

3. Is this model transferrable?

To return to the problem at the beginning of this paper – namely of improving attendance and pass rates on non-specialist language courses across the university. Projects are currently underway in the Law, Sociology and Engineering Faculty. Let us look at each of these in turn.

In the first case, ESP courses had been run for years by an experienced EFL teacher with no background in law, based on an outdated international law text book. Both attendance and outcomes were well below expectations. A recently appointed Law Professor thought it might be interesting to introduce the Cambridge ILEC exams to stimulate attendance. These, while valid in the appropriate context, are based mainly on British Law – of little relevance in the Trento context. It was therefore decided, three years ago, to change the format of the ESP courses, organising them on similar lines to the first year at the MEIS, where topics suggested by the students taking the form of student-led seminars form the basis of the lessons, though some units of a course book are used. Last year the faculty asked the language centre to double the number of courses offered and there is still a waiting list for free places. The success of these courses is due in large part to close collaboration between the language teacher and Law professors and not least the involvement of the students in selecting the topics which form the content basis of the language lessons. It should perhaps be noted that few courses, bar those with visiting professors, on the Law degrees are offered in English.

In Sociology there has been an increased demand for ESP and EAP courses at the Bachelor's level which are now geared to preparing students for entry to the MEIS (which is highly selective) and other MA level courses offered in English. According to feedback from the students, this increase in interest (and attendance) in language courses is a 'trickle down' effect from the International Master's that they hope to attend after graduating.

At engineering, perhaps the greatest challenge at Trento, the ESP project has taken longer to get off the ground, despite a great deal of interest and cooperation from the Faculty. With 5 different Masters with very different needs offering one English for Engineers course to satisfy all 5 disciplines is more or less an impossibility. However, with the introduction of the Cambridge English 360 platform this year (2011/12), which has an English for Engineering Course as one of its resources and at the same time enables course creation (the platform is similar to but more flexible than Moodle) we have been able to create a course with differentiated online activities. We are also

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[23]The role of motivation, of whatever type, is the greatest enhancer to learning and motivational teaching practice underpins my whole teaching ethos. See Dörnyei (2001) and Dörnyei and Ushioda (2010)

[24]I use the free surveymonkey platform at http://www.surveymonkey.com/

in the process of developing specific online English for Engineering language tests[25], with texts from the appropriate subject area and multiple writing options so the student has a choice of which questions to answer, and individualised oral exams where the student can choose which topics to talk about. Materials, syllabus design and tasks for both the course and the exams is the result of online questionnaires sent to alumni regarding language skills used/needed and text types encountered/ produced in the normal course of their work and discussions with course professors.[26] It is hoped, in the future, the creation of similar feedback and materials from former students will ensure that also at engineering the reflective quality cycle will be adopted. It remains to be seen whether this switch to ESP from general English will achieve the desired effects from an institutional point of view (higher pass rates). But I firmly believe that trying to match learning outcomes with student's needs will increase motivation and as a consequence attendance and subsequently pass rates. Indeed, motivation will increase on two counts, firstly students will begin to see the relevance of the course to their future profession (whether or not they realise they will be given Life-Long learning skills) and if pass rates increase, there will be further motivation to attend the course. If the new ESP course can engage students in this virtuous cycle, they too, will be more inclined to make a contribution to the improvement of the course for future generations.

4. In conclusion

The evolution of the English Language course and English Language support at the School of International Studies has provided a model on which to base other forms of language provision across the university. The form this provision takes depends very much on the context, the cooperation of the faculty, and the determination of the language teachers involved. The underlying principle of these language courses is that the students' real needs, as voiced by them, be met. As far as is possible, learning outcomes should be set and the syllabus should be designed based on input from both students and professors and they should reflect both the immediate needs of the students and their future needs.

The experience at the MEIS has shown that by encouraging students to speak out and listening to what they have to say results in a more highly motivated, interactive and successful learning process, making all the extra effort needed to introduce such an approach in a sometimes hostile context all the more worthwhile.

We owe it to our students to provide them with the opportunity to develop their own skills and strategies so that they can have the confidence to act assertively in the real world. But we must not forget that students should also be given their own 'voice'. And more importantly, we should listen to what they have to say – they have an important part to play in the quality model cycle.

5. Appendix

Below is a selection of student comments which illustrate both student perceptions of the approach described above and how they reacted to it. As these are the students' own words, I have not adapted/corrected any of their utterances, even if they may appear unorthodox or non-academic. These are their words, which I wish to share with you, with, of course the students' full consent.

- First of all thank you for asking our opinionOn the Student's vs Teacher's role in the learning processLeaving up the choice to students is a clever alternativeI am really pro

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[25]Students have to pass the Listening, Reading and Writing parts online before being admitted to the oral discussion. Numbers at engineering are so high that tailored assessment methods, such as those at the MEIS, are unfeasible.

[26]An initial request to Engineering Professors for sample materials resulted in us being sent a series of bibliographies – mainly academic texts. Missing the point entirely. Students have resulted in being far more reliable 'informants' in this regard.

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student led seminars, also for the fact that we have chosen current and stimulating topics
(if we are interested in them it's easier to involve people in debating them).
Teacher chosen topics and student chosen topics are both very important.
Students should be able to manage both.I really appreciated that you let us choose
the topics. But it is doubtful that all students can manage "this kind of freedom"

6. On more formal aspects of language learning

- During and after the presentation the teacher (you) should intervene more and correct
  pronunciation/grammarThe intervention of the teacher is fundamental, as being
  corrected while you are speaking gives you the exact perception of your mistake. [27]
- I think you were able to ..let's say "drill deeply enough" to fix important concepts into
  students' minds (listening of conferences, long difficult exercises, challenging,
  but really effective in putting people at work with English, and therefore successful).

When I went to do my stage (internship) at the OECD I was really thankful for the tasks as they helped me understand how I could approach things in the office without keep asking the others what I must do. In particular identifying key points and summary writing was useful. And email writing.I really found challenging the listening of long conferences (and I hated you quite a lot while doing it), but I think it's really proving something. If you don't do, and don't learn, you won't improve. And what you do is to put a student in the situation of realizing it, and doing it, with a good master showing what's right and what's wrong. So that a student can really progress.On the cooperation with content teachers

Integration[28] The right way to go is the one of the last years: specific subjects and
simulations in accordance with other courses (e.g. the last one with professor S.[29]). In particular,
I would suggest at least one simulation per semester. Maybe something more intimate and
easygoing just for the first semester of the first year, without law professors around. In general, the
more integration the better.

7. One last comment on being asked for involvement in the learning process

Thank you for asking and listening to our feedback. I wish all the professors would do the same!

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[27]These are very commonly held beliefs, expressed every year, in particular by first year students. See Brown 2009 for a detailed study on student vs teacher perceptions of the place for correction

[28]By this the student means integration between the language learning programme and the content courses. While having no knowledge of language learning methodology, he used the very terms used in the CLIL label - **Content Language Integrated Learning**. Yet again proof that we chould listen to our students as to what they feel works well.

[29]European Politics Lecturer.

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Strategia de internaționalizare la Universitatea din Craiova: poziționare, misiune, acțiune

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1. Prezentarea Universității din Craiova

Universitatea din Craiova este o instituție de referință pe harta învățământului superior românesc, o componentă esențială a sistemului educațional național, dar și internațional, o structură solidă și echilibrată.

Misiunile asumate de Universitatea din Craiova, de a participa activ la consolidarea și afirmarea conștiinței profesionale, de a acumula, prelucra și transmite un volum impresionant de cunoștințe, de a forma tânăra generație în spiritul performanței, eficienței și creativității, au fost asumate responsabil de-a lungul celor 65 de ani de existență, contribuind astfel la dezvoltarea științei și culturii, la tezaurizarea și difuzarea valorilor culturii și civilizației umane, la înnoirea și acumularea de cunoștințe, la formarea și consolidarea profilului intelectualului care va răspunde imperativelor zilei de mâine a României.

Conceptele orientatoare ale instituției noastre – unitatea dintre cercetare și învățare, libertatea academică, autonomia universitară, nevoia de formare nu doar a cunoștințelor, ci și a viziunii studentului, chiar opțiunea pentru o organizare corporativă – toate acestea se regăsesc în toate documentele noastre programatice.

Universitatea din Craiova trăiește acum o perioadă efervescentă a reconsiderărilor și a aplicării de inițiative pentru sporirea competitivității fiecărei facultăți și a universității în întregimea sa. Administrația academică s-a concentrat asupra schimbării în vederea competitivității sporite, iar orientarea prioritară în această direcție s-a dovedit a fi adecvată având în vedere reglementarea legală a ierarhizării universităților și accentuarea competiției universităților în țară, în Uniunea Europeană și în lume. Criterii de evaluare, recunoscute în lume, cuprinse sub termenii „cercetarea științifică *per capita* și impactul acesteia”, „calitatea absolvenților”, „centrarea activității pe student înțeles ca un real partener pe drumul cunoașterii, au constituit reperele acțiunilor noastre.

Multe inițiative noi au fost puse în lucru, încât au devenit referințe în evoluția universității noastre.

1.1 Ipoteza de cercetare

În acest context, ne propunem să analizăm, din punct de vedere calitativ, strategia de cooperare internațională a Universității din Craiova, pentru a putea vedea care sunt punctele tari și punctele slabe, care sunt zonele care necesită o regândire structurală care să conducă la optimizarea activității.

2. Strategia de cooperare internațională

În cooperarea internațională, Universitatea din Craiova a schimbat abordarea, focalizându-se

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asupra cooperărilor reale și productive[1], extinderii mobilităților, atât la cadre didactice cât și în rândul studenților, și urmărind ca aceste mobilități să aibă consecințe vizibile în schimbarea intelectual-atitudinală (crearea de programe de cercetare științifică, de cooperare etc.). Toate aceste măsuri au condus, în mod firesc, la sporirea competitivității și la atragerea de studenți din alte țări, dar și la consacrarea universității noastre ca centru de reuniuni internaționale majore.

Astfel, în anul universitar 2009-2010, la nivel instituțional, au fost promovate politici compatibile cu cele europene, în ceea ce privește asigurarea de șanse reale pentru toți, asigurarea mobilității persoanelor care activează în universitate (studenți, cadre didactice, personal tehnic și administrativ), educația în limbi străine, dimensiunea europeană a educației.

a) Programul Erasmus a inclus următoarele activități:

- *acorduri bilaterale ERASMUS – 108*, față de 97 în anul universitar precedent;
- *mobilități studenți – 175 (127 - studii și 48 - plasament)*, numărul menținându-se relativ constant în raport cu anul universitar 2008-2009 când au fost realizate 177 de mobilități (127 - studii și 48 - plasament);
- *mobilități cadre didactice – 71* (21 cu activități de predare, 50 cu activități de instruire), în creștere față de anul universitar precedent când au fost realizate 61 de mobilități (32 cu activități de predare, 29 cu activități de instruire);
- *studenți Incoming Erasmus – 17*, proveniți de la universități partenere din Franța, Turcia si Spania (aceștia sunt studenți cetățeni ai altor state, primiți la studii de licență, master sau în practică la universitatea noastră pe o perioadă de 3 până la 10 luni); în anul universitar 2008-2009 universitatea noastră a primit vizita a 16 studenți Erasmus;
- *Visiting professors Erasmus – 14*, fiind vorba despre profesori invitați de la universități partenere din Spania, Germania, Italia, Franța și Turcia; în anul universitar precedent au vizitat universitatea 8 profesori străini, de la universități din Franța, Germania și Turcia.

b) Acorduri de colaborare academică

În prezent, Universitatea din Craiova are *25 de acorduri de colaborare academică* în vigoare cu universități ale altor state din Europa, Asia, Africa, America de Nord și America de Sud; 7 dintre acorduri au fost semnate în anul universitar 2009-2010.

c) Alte tipuri de programe internaționale de cooperare inter-universitară

O altă direcție a activităților-suport desfășurate de *Departamentul de relații internaționale* este crearea spațiului informațional productiv, pentru ca Programele Long Life Learning *Erasmus, Tempus IV, Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig* și *Comenius 1* să poată fi implementate și la nivelul facultăților noastre.

În anul universitar 2009-2010 sunt în curs de desfășurare 4 proiecte Erasmus, 1 proiect Tempus IV, 3 proiecte Leonardo da Vinci, 2 proiecte Grundtvig, 2 proiecte Comenius.

Pe lângă dezvoltarea relațiilor internaționale în cadrul programelor comunitare, a căror sumă a atins deja indicatorul jumătății de milion de euro, Universitatea din Craiova este implicată în rețeaua *AUF* cu programe care însumate ating 200.000 euro.

Pentru sporirea vizibilității internaționale, universitatea noastră a organizat un important număr de reuniuni regionale și continentale semnificative, dorința noastră fiind aceea de a ne dezvolta ca centru de reuniuni științifice internaționale și centru de reuniuni academice de prestigiu.

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[1]V. Anexa 1.

3. Starea de fapt a rezultatelor obținute în activitatea de cooperare internațională

Chiar dacă anii care au trecut au aduc o dinamizare efectivă a activității de cooperare internațională, rezultatele obținute nu sunt pe măsura dorințelor noastre.

De aceea, strategia pe termen lung în domeniul cooperării internaționale vizează mai multe aspecte:

3.1 Strategia pe termen lung 2011-2016

Obiectivele strategice ale Universității din Craiova pentru perioada 2012-2016, urmăresc transformarea acesteia într-o universitate cu mare deschidere internațională. Dintre acestea amintim:

- creșterea numărului de studenți, masteranzi și doctoranzi care finalizează studiile la universitatea noastră, astfel ca cel puțin 10% dintre aceștia să fie studenți internaționali
- realizarea unor programe majore de cooperare care să aibă consecințe științifice și instituționale (crearea de centre, institute, laboratoare de cercetare, programe de cercetare științifică, programe de formare), în colaborare cu parteneri externi de mare prestigiu.
- consacrarea unei prezențe masive a specialiștilor în cadrul asociațiilor științifice profesionale și participarea acestora la un număr semnificativ de manifestări științifice și reuniuni de prestigiu, ca profesori sau cercetători invitați, membri în jurii de doctorat sau în colective de cercetare integrate;
- valorizarea internațională a vârfurilor cercetării științifice (școli, personalități, opere), și a vârfurilor învățământului și învățării prin programe de *joint master*, doctorat în cotutelă, programe de studii și de cercetare avansate, atât prin sistemul de învățământ tradițional, cât și în formele netradiționale (ID, E-learning);
- creșterea semnificativă a publicațiilor științifice ale universității în limbi de circulație internațională, creșterea numărului de publicații (cărți, studii, articole), publicate la edituri prestigioase din străinătate, prezența în baze de date internaționale, creșterea numărului de premii internaționale obținute de profesorii noștri;
- creșterea semnificativă a numărului de cărți și studii co-editate în colaborare cu edituri de prestigiu, în limbi de circulație internațională;
- participarea la expoziții și târguri internaționale, în vederea promovării consistente a ofertei de studii a Universității din Craiova, în vederea creșterii semnificative a numărului de studenți, masteranzi și doctoranzi străini;
- realizarea unor legături cât mai strânse a cercetărilor aplicate în relație cu companiile internaționale de prestigiu din spațiul european, central-european, național și regional;
- identificarea de noi parteneri, universități de prestigiu din fiecare țară, de regulă universități care se plasează în elita universitară din țările respective;
- creșterea calității tezelor de doctorat și publicarea lor în limbi de circulație internațională sau la edituri de prestigiu din țară și străinătate;
- instituirea doctoratului în co-tutelă ca formă curentă de obținere a unui titlu științific prestigios;
- organizarea cu periodicitate a unor manifestări științifice de înalt nivel, cu participarea partenerilor internaționali relevanți științific și academic și susținerea de publicații comune (editări, co-editări de volume și cărți), editarea în comun a unor reviste și publicații periodice cotate internațional;
- afilierea structurilor de cercetare existente la institute și centre de cercetare de prestigiu, în vederea constituirii unor rețele internaționale de excelență;
- stimularea participării cadrelor didactice în calitate de experți în structuri științifice

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europene și internaționale, în calitate de membri în board-urile științifice ale unor publicații de specialitate;

- aducerea unui număr mare de studenți din afara granițelor României (Ucraina, Republica Moldova, Serbia, Macedonia etc.);
- prezența mai semnificativă a studenților din bazinul mediteranean (Turcia, Cipru, Israel) și din zona magrebină (Tunisia, Maroc, Algeria etc.), prin contacte directe și prin intermediul rețelelor francofone de colaborare universitară;
- deschiderea spre spații extra-europene – spațiul extrem asiatic (Japonia, China, Coreea de Sud, India etc.);
- dezvoltarea unor cooperări zonale, care să fructifice toate oportunitățile de cooperare și colaborare științifică și academică, oferite de calitatea României de membru al Uniunii Europene cu universitățile din Europa centrală și de sud-est, cu universitățile din zona Balcanilor, cu cele din spațiul francofoniei și cu universitățile mediteraneene;
- dinamizarea stilului de lucru al Departamentului de cooperare internațională, în vederea sporirii eficienței și obținerii unor rezultate semnificative, materializate în rezultate concrete: Rezultatele cuantificabile se traduc în număr de studenți aduși, programe finalizate cu cercetări și publicații comune, programe finalizate cu finanțări semnificative;
- elaborarea, în colaborare cu facultățile, de materiale de promovare;
- publicitarea adecvată a tuturor programelor de cooperare internațională și a tuturor facilităților oferite studenților și cadrelor didactice în vederea sporirii calității cooperărilor internaționale.

4. Organizarea de noi mastere internaționale

Problematica noilor programe de formare universitară, a obiectivelor și structurilor lor, precum și rolul profesorului și adaptarea sa la era numerică în care trăim sunt câteva din elementele care alimentează reflecția noastră instituțională. Așa cum arăta Cynthia Eid, profesor la Universitatea Antonină Baabda, Liban, în alocuțiunea sa din deschiderea Colocviului Internațional *Didactică și Tehnologii de Informare și Comunicare adaptate la Învățământ*, mai 2010, „nu mai dorim în programele noastre să formăm consumatori de cunoștințe, ci dorim să producem bogăție, căci așa cum spunea Bachelard „nimic nu predispune mai mult la conformism decât lipsa de formare adecvată" (Eid 2011, 18).

Cynthia Eid are perfectă dreptate atunci când susține că „o dată cu mondializarea, sistemul universitar este invitat să opereze o profundă mutație care va consta nu numai în reformarea programelor, ci și în reformarea mentalității atât a profesorilor (să fie evaluați de către studenții lor, să evite sistematic cursurile magistrale și să le înlocuiască prin cursuri interactive) cât și a studenților (în cadrul unei abordări pe bază de competențe, proiecte și programe). E vorba deci de un adevărat șantier strategic și operațional pentru a ajunge la o formare universitară eficace și pertinentă care să pună în evidență imperativul de a se adapta noului mediu economic și cultural" (Eid 2011, 19).

Suntem puși în fața unei adevărate schimbări de paradigmă, căci acum „a educa" nu mai înseamnă simpla transmitere de cunoștințe și abilități, pedagogia frontală și instructivistă dispărând practic cu totul, ci „a-l ajuta pe celălalt să-și dobândească autonomia de gândire și de comportament, în calitatea sa de ființă umană, în paralel cu conștiința solidarității pe care o implică orice ființă socială" (Dumas 2011, 78). Această schimbare de mentalitate nu se face ușor, iar parteneriatele, schimburile reale de experiență, colaborarea efectivă cu partenerii noștri de la universități de prestigiu nu va face decât să ușureze trecerea noastră, în calitatea noastră de dascăli, la ceea ce presupune cu adevărat meseria de profesor: „meseria de profesor evoluează și nu se mai reduce la rolul de actor și transmițător de cunoștințe. Profesorul imaginează și creează activități ce permit fiecărui învățăcel să își construiască și să își însușească propriile cunoștințe. [...] El devine, astfel, un ghid, un regizor,

un facilitator de învățare și, în final, un adevărat inginer pedagogic" (Dumas 2011, 84).

Convinși de pertinența unei asemenea abordări a viitorului de mâine al universității noastre, am procedat la o analiză serioasă a modului în care ne concepem programele de formare universitară, dezvoltarea lor și, mai ales, internaționalizarea lor.

Chiar dacă există, în cadrul universității noastre, câteva programe cu o dinamică de colaborare internațională extrem de susținută (Facultatea de Drept și Științe Administrative, Facultatea de Litere[2], Facultatea de Economie și Administrarea Afacerilor), lipsa unor mastere internaționalizate cu dublă diplomare ne-a condus la adoptarea unor soluții ferme pentru perioada următoare:

- organizarea, la nivelul ciclului II, de noi masterate sub forma de Joint Master, realizate cu universități partenere prestigioase, care să conducă la asumarea unei a doua diplome sau la co-diplomarea absolvenților;
- dezvoltarea de parteneriate pentru organizarea unui număr semnificativ de masterate în programul Erasmus Mundus;
- schimburi de bune practici cu universități naționale și internaționale performante din acest punct de vedere.

5. În loc de concluzie

Analizele anuale ale activității de cooperare și colaborare internațională realizate la nivelul rectoratului Universității din Craiova se încadrează în voința instituțională de ameliorare și diversificare a formației universitare oferite în programele noastre de studii, cu un accent deosebit pe internaționalizarea structurilor la nivel masteral. Este evident faptul că „centrul vieții universitare […] se referă la programul de formare" (Tardif, Eid 2011, 146). De aceea, atenția noastră se va focaliza în perioada următoare pe concretizarea unuia dintre obiectivele de la Barcelona (1995) de creare a unui spațiu european al cunoașterii, prin organizarea și deschiderea de noi forme de învățământ masteral internaționalizat, proiectul ASIGMA constituind, în acest cadru ambițios, un suport informațional extrem de util și de binevenit.

Organizarea de mastere internaționalizate reprezintă pentru Universitatea din Craiova obiectivul prioritar al perioadei imediat următoare având în vedere faptul că suntem conștienți că „învățământul universitar a devenit un spațiu în care se confruntă instituții și țări, un spațiu al concurenței între economii și sisteme educative" (Bertacchini 2011, 185) cu atât mai mult cu cât „numărul studenților care efectuează o parte sau integralitatea formării lor într-o altă țară s-a dublat între 1980 și 2002, ca să atingă 1,9 milioane de studenți străini în întreaga lume" (idem), ultimele previziuni anunțând multiplicarea cu cinci a numărului lor în următorii 20 de ani. Calitatea profesional-științifică a personalului didactic, infrastructura de care ne bucurăm, determinarea și implicarea organizațională a factorilor de decizie instituțională reprezintă garanții suficiente pentru intrarea și afirmarea Universității din Craiova pe această piață concurențială a sistemelor educative performante.

Anexa 1: Acordurile bilaterale ale Universității din Craiova:
Albania
- University of Vlore, Vlore

Belgia
- Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve
- Université Libre de Bruxelles, Bruxelles

Brazilia
- Universidade Estadual de Goiás, Anápolis

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[2]Facultatea de Litere are o excelentă colaborare cu Université Catholique Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgia, dar nu a reușit încă semnarea acordurilor de cotutelizare a masterului *Langue, littérature et didactique du FLE* (Collès, Bachi 2011, 213).

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- Universidade Federal de Goiás
- Universidade de Brasilia, Brasilia
- Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo
- Mackenzie Presbiterian University, São Paulo
- Centro de Extensão Universitária, São Paulo
- Universidade Estadual do Oeste do Paraná, Foz do Iguaçu
- Universidade do Amazonas, Manaus

Bulgaria
- University „St. Kiril and Metodiu", Veliko Tirnovo
- University of Forestry, Sofia
- University of Chemical Technology and Metallurgy, Sofia

Canada
- L'École Polytechnique de Montréal, Montréal
- Université de Sherbrooke, Québec

Cehia
- Tomas Bata University In Zlín, Zlín

Chile
- Universidad de Santiago de Chile, Santiago de Chile
- Universidad Diego Portales, Santiago de Chile

China
- Xiamen University

Columbia
- Fundación Educativa San Francisco de Asis, Bogotá

Franța
- Université de Franche-Comté, Besançon
- Université de Technologie de Compiègne
- L'Institut National Polytechnique de Toulouse
- L'école d'Ingénieurs CESI, Paris
- Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris
- Université de Bourgogne, Dijon
- Université Jean Monnet, Saint-Etienne

Germania
- Universität des Saarlandes, Saarbrücker
- Universität Bielefeld, Bielefeld
- Fachhochschule - University of Applied Sciences, Regensburg

Grecia
- National Technical University of Athens, Atena
- Aristotle University, Thessaloniki
- SPEK Thessalia, Larissa

Israel
- Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv
- University of Be'er Sheva

Italia
- Università per Stranieri, Perugia
- Università degli Studi L'Aquila
- Università degli Studi di Trento, Trento

Coreea
- Ajou University, Suwon

Macedonia
- Universitatea „Sf. Chiril si Metodie", Skopje

Marea Britanie
- University of Luton

Peru
- Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola, Lima

Serbia si Muntenegru
- University of Belgrad

Spania
- Universidad de la Rioja, Logroño

SUA
- Auburn University, Auburn
- Washington State University, Washington
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg

Uruguay
- Universidad de Montevideo, Montevideo
- Universidad de la República, Montevideo

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Internationalising Romanian Higher Education – Preliminary Findings of the ASIGMA Project Regarding Master's Level Programmes

Specific Aspects Concerning the Internationalizationof Electronics and Telecommunications Master Studies at "Politehnica" University of Timisoara

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Abstract: *After presenting the background and a survey on similar study programs in other universities, the discussion is focused on the international master programs in Electronics and Telecommunications offered by the "Politehnica" University of Timisoara. Specific aspects of the introduction of the programs, of staff selection and the strategy of attracting international students are presented. Quality assurance of these study programs is of major concern and thoroughly reviewed. Some of the international programs have already run for 10 years, so a series of pertinent conclusions could have been drawn, that could improve future activity.*

Keywords: *internationalization, master degree programs, quality assurance.*

Rezumat: *După prezentarea contextului și a unui studiu privind programele similare de master din alte universități, lucrarea abordează aspectele specifice programelor de master în Electronică și Telecomunicații de la Universitatea "Politehnica" din Timișoara: introducerea programelor, selecția personalului, strategia de atragere a studenților străini, asigurarea calității programelor de studiu. Unele programe rulează deja de 10 ani, astfel încât au fost trase concluzii care permit îmbunătățirea activității viitoare.*

Cuvinte cheie: *internaționalizare, progame de master, asigurarea calității.*

1. Introduction

"Politehnica" University of Timisoara is one of the largest technical universities of Romania, comprising 10 faculties and more than 14,000 students. It has an International Office that is very active in managing, coordinating and supporting international exchanges and cooperation, a Department for Communication and Foreign Languages (DCLS) with important contributions in implementing the internationalization strategies of the university, a Department for Quality Assurance (DGAC) and an Office for Student Career Advising (CICS). It offers study programs for all three cycles according to the Bologna declaration (Bachelor/Master/Doctorate). The university committed itself to internationalizing study programs. Moreover, the university joined a consortium of 8 Romanian universities together with ARACIS (National Agency for Quality Assurance of Higher Education) that won an EU funded project entitled "ASIGMA" (Asigurarea Calității în Învățământul Masteral Internaționalizat: Dezvoltarea cadrului național în vederea compatibilizării cu Spațiul European al Învățământului Superior).

The paper is focused on the international master programs in electronics and telecommunications offered by the "Politehnica" University of Timisoara. Specific aspects of the introduction of the programs, of staff selection and the strategy of attracting international students are presented.

Quality assurance of these study programs is of major concern and thoroughly reviewed. Some of the international programs have already run for 10 years, so a series of pertinent conclusions could have been drawn, that could improve future activity.

2. Background

International study programs bring benefits to both students and teaching staff. Among the benefits for students there are: employability, improved communication skills in the language of study and personal development in a multicultural environment, while for teaching staff there are personal development and international networking.

Introduction of internationalized study programs at "Politehnica" University of Timisoara was preceded by a careful preparation in which extensive international cooperation played a crucial role. The university focused mainly on bilateral agreements as well as on European projects on education and research (such as Tempus, Leonardo, Grundtvig, Socrates/Erasmus, Copernicus, Cost, FPx).

As a result, in 2001 two international master programs were introduced, both in cooperation with major multinational companies with facilities located in Timisoara:

- Automotive Embedded Software – in cooperation with Siemens (Continental) and
- Traitement du Signal – in cooperation with Alcatel – Lucent.

Another step for insuring students for the internationalized master degree programs was the introduction of English medium bachelor degree programs.

3. Survey on Master Programs on Electronics Worldwide

Importance of master studies is highly recognized in Europe and worldwide, in all fields of teaching. Our focus is on Electronics.

International master programs are more and more numerous in different universities all over the world. They are mainly of one of the following four types:

- study programs in English (generally) or other foreign language
- joint masters, involving several universities
- internet-based master programs
- double diploma master programs.

An important aspect of every master program is Program and Curriculum Development.

The problems and curriculum development of a two-cycle preparation for engineers have been debated early in the United States, together with the fact that one four-year cycle is not enough for specialized preparation of engineers (Gross 1968, 75-76).

The Diplom-Ingenieur degree meant in Germany more than 100 years of tradition and a very high international reputation. Nevertheless, the country decided to adopt the Bachelor / Master / Doctorate system, motivated mainly by political pressure, financial reasons and internationalization (Wiesbeck 1999, 80). The EE curriculum changes have such implications as cutting lectures in Mechanical Engineering and specialty lectures in Physics in favor of lectures in Economics and Management. However, it is considered that the tradition of in-depth study of Mathematics, Physics and Informatics in the first years must be kept. Is that in contradiction with the same author's statement that more practical (hands-on) work has to be introduced in the same years?

Electrical and Computer Engineering Curricula have little changed in the last 30-40 years in the US. Fundamental changes are necessary to keep up with technological developments such as information processing systems, light wave technology, biotechnology and manufacturing (Mitra 1997, 27). Educators agree that a 4-year BS program does not provide adequate preparation to enter

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engineering profession. Today's graduates must specialize in more than one field in order to quickly change their direction of work as their companies change their product lines. Engineers must have cross-disciplinary backgrounds. Joint master programs are proposed to be established involving cross-disciplinary fields such as e.g. Engineering, Computer Science and Industrial Administration. Core courses have to be restructured accordingly. Following the shift paradigm towards research in universities, courses shifted away from practice. It is argued that this tendency must be reversed. An "Internship-in-Industry" program is proposed, which may be developed only with the active cooperation of industrial partners.

Early experience in Master curriculum development for *Engineering of Computer-Based Systems* has been gained in Israel (Lavi 1996, 405-410).

Master degree programs, combined with modern education technologies such as distance learning and Internet based teaching are by now currently introduced in Russia in fields such as Material Science, Electrical Engineering and Applied Physics (Chucalin and Soloviev 2003, 254). An integration of the regional scientific potential with academic research and international cooperation is targeted. Discussions on some aspects of radio engineering education from the same geographical area (ex Soviet Union) in the context of Bologna declaration have been published (Pravda et al. 2008, 643-644).

The organization of the Microelectronics education in an innovative way at the Brno University of Technology, Czech Republic, including bachelor (three years), master (two years) and doctoral stages is discussed in (Bursik et al. 2009, 2-6). The new conception of the education in the field is gaining interest among students due to orientation towards practical aspects.

Other examples of Master program and curriculum development are: at the Indiana's University's School of Library and Information Science (Cronin el al. 1997, 14) in the field of social informatics and an early experience in the field of Simulation and Modeling at Brunel University, UK (Paul and Hlupic 1994, 1394).

Defining reference curricula for academic fields and disciplines is a very important activity that helps educators create their own versions of course programs. For example, an early, highly regarded work in defining a Software Engineering reference curriculum for Master degree in view of satisfying industry needs has been realised by G. A. Ford and N. E. Gibbs (Ford and Gibbs 1989, 59-70). A review, taking into account the present situation in 28 US universities and an up-to-date proposed version are available (Pyster et al. 2008, 2009). A full-time MS degree in Software Engineering designed to compress five semesters in one calendar year, through employer support and sponsorship has been created at the University of Florida in 2009 (White and Coffey 2011, 257).

Authors discussed various syllabi, such as one proposed for a Master Degree in Software Engineering that meets Bologna Declaration requirements (Fernandes and Machado 2006, 2-4). The two-year study cycle degree is intended for students that have finished undergraduate computer degrees and both professional and scientific paths are provided.

A comprehensive list on United States programs offering master Degree Education in Software Engineering and requirements, background and educational offer can be found in (Bagert and Mu, 2005, F1G3-F1G4). Software Engineering master program in the United States offer professional degrees in general, similar to the MBA degree. Students have a bachelor degree in a computing discipline, but many of them are software developers in industry.

Recognizing that "distributed computing systems and applications are not only changing the face of computing, they're also continually changing the way we live, work, and interact as a society", a Master Program in this field has been proposed at the University of Melbourne, Australia (Buyya and Ramamohanarao 2007, 1). This is an illustration of the flexibility of the three-level organization of education, when industry needs stemming from an emerging field can be fulfilled in a fast way.

Curriculum development poses special problems when interdisciplinary fields are involved, such as biomedicine and bioinformatics (Sahinidis et al. 2005, 269).

An Internet-based, intercultural and interprofessional 2-year master curriculum has been developed and successfully tested recently in the field of Biomedical Engineering (Molenaar and Verkerke 2011, 77). Three Asian and three European universities participated in the project. Although collaborating in virtual environment proved feasible, face-to-face meetings and video chat sessions had to be scheduled in order to cope with issues such as cultural differences and mutual expectations.

Students attending multidisciplinary Master programs, e.g. Biomedical Engineering, have different backgrounds. Special care must be taken by educators in order to develop their ability to solve problems related to very different areas. Innovative approaches, such as multidisciplinary charge activities related to particular courses have been proposed in a joint Spanish master, involving two universities (Colomer and Pere 2010, 321-322).

Particularities of Medical Informatics and Telemedicine education in an institution comprising almost half of the students in the field in Italy and offering, among others, a one-year "post-Laurea" master's degree have been reported (Pinciroli, Masseroli and Tognola 2003, 394). The discussion was made in the context of an important educational reform in the country.

Joint Masters and Double Diploma pose different problems.

A national joint master program in EMC has been started quite early (Marvin 1992, 159-161). The introduction of this Master program was motivated by the development of the field, by the necessity for three-year bachelor graduates to improve access on the European labor market (where at least four years were more credible at the time of publication of the paper), by availability of interested persons in a recession time and by the needs of average physics graduates to enhance their employability. Funding opportunities and a complete curriculum have been presented. A pan-European version has been proposed.

Defining Master degree curricula is an important activity, which is advisable to be approached in a systematic, scientific manner, especially when programs from newly identified fields have to be introduced. Examples of such an approach, financed through European programs, exist (Dubois et al. 2011, 573). The participants defined a new professional Master program, in the field of Innovative Service Systems, aimed to professional individuals working in Information and Communication Technology, with duration of 1 year (60 credits) and conceived to fulfill previously identified needs in the service sector in Europe. The program has been supposed to start in January 2011 in 6 European Universities. According to the authors of the cited paper, the content of the curriculum has been established in three steps, by defining the attendant's job profile, requirements and skills, by defining a so-called *knowledge map* and finally by establishing the *learning trajectories*. Professional attendance from industry and academia ("Think Tank") have participated to meetings organized for this purpose.

Master programs must respond not only academic and personal fulfillment requirements, but also industry needs. A Master Degree education program, involving 4 French Engineering and Business Grandes Écoles from PARISTECH, and dealing with electric energy driven cars has been described (Semail et al. 2010, 1-4). According to the authors, the program creation has been fostered by the interest the French producer Renault has shown in having specialized staff in this field and the curriculum has been developed following the industrial partner's needs. Conversely, the program is supported by the well-known car producer.

Joint master programs in Electronic Systems, came about as results of EU-ERASMUS cooperation, have been developed quite early – 1991 (Lydon et al. 1991, 1518). The creation of a new, successful Joint Master Program in Microelectronics, Microsystems and Nanotechnology, involving three European Institutions from Italy (Politecnico di Torino), France (INP Grenoble) and Switzerland (EPFL) has been described (Montes and Morfouli 2007, 155). According to the authors, besides the specific character of the syllabus, the success of the master has also been ensured by the different social and cultural identities of the countries hosting the educational institutions.

A double diploma international, two-year master program in Image and Signal Processing and Microelectronics, set up by two institutions form France (University Rennes 1) and China

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(South-East University of Nanjing) is reported in (Bonnaud et al. 2010, 325-326). The program is described as fully compatible with the Bologna Process rules and its creation has been motivated by the decreasing number of French students at all levels in Electrical Engineering and Information Processing. The claimed outcomes after one education cycle are exceptional. The admission examination is held nationwide across China and therefore only candidates with outstanding results are admitted. All students from the first promotion graduated with marks corresponding to the "top-ten" level of a class in France.

Other aspects refer to the relationship between research master programs and doctoral programs, the European Credit Transfer System, etc. A tight relationship between research master programs and doctoral programs is recognized. The necessity of integrated development of curricula has been demonstrated for the case of universities from Mexico (Herrera 1997, 809). A multidimensional analysis of Master Degree final thesis importance and assessment has also been tackled (Xiaohong and Hongpin 2009, 4203-4206).

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), together with the learning outcomes for every course, allow for course evaluation, comparison, recognition and validation throughout European universities. A certain number of credit points is allocated to each course and a maximum number of credit points (60) must be realized by a student per academic year. It has been demonstrated that the ECTS may be used to optimize the student workload per week, by correlating credit points with attendance and self-study hours required for each individual course (Komenda and Malisa 2010, 170). A case study for the Master level at the University of Applied Sciences Technikum Wien, Austria, is presented in the cited paper.

A method of recognizing and assessing learning at Master level and monitoring competence in the work-place, aimed to individuals having great experience and competence at the work place, but who are not registered as chartered Engineers in the UK, and using work-based learning methods, has been developed at the Kingston University, London (Ling et al. 2010, 391-394).

Original methods of quality management in a System Engineering master program have proposed recntly (van Peppen and Rojigh-van der Ploeg 2000, 189).

4. Master Degree Programs at "Politehnica" University of Timisoara

Out of a total of 68 master programs comprising 3250 students, 6 are international (5 in English and 1 in French) with 357 students enrolled. The university offers the following international master programs: Computer Engineering, Software Engineering, Information Technology, Automotive Embedded Software, Advanced Design of Steel and Composite Structures, Advanced Electronics in Intelligent Systems, Communication Networks and Traitement du Signal.

International master programs are of two types: developed solely by the university or developed jointly with major companies.

Master programs developed jointly with major companies (Automotive Embedded Software and Traitement du Signal, that are both monitored by ASIGMA) benefit of full support from the companies in jointly developing the curriculum, quality management and assessment, participation in defence of diploma and dissertation theses, as well as equipment, software, technical literature and teaching staff. Some companies also offer facilities for students (e.g. joint projects, internships, reduced work program – 6 h/day).

Internalization of master degree programs refers not only to teaching in a foreign language, but also to involving international students and teaching staff from partner universities. In recruiting international students of great importance are the English medium bachelor degree programs of the university and the Erasmus framework which offers excellent opportunities for student mobilities. However, there is a limited number of incoming international students, despite the efforts to promote and develop international cooperation; for the time being the university is not too

visible to the outside world. One should not forget that the opening of Romanian universities to international life started only 20 years ago. So, one of the goals of the management team is to increase the international visibility of the university and to promote the international study programs at all levels.

At the Faculty of Electronics and Telecommunications of the „Politehnica" University of Timisoara, a massive promoting campaign has been under way. Members of the teaching staff visited European partner universities and presented the international study programs. On the other hand, between 1996-2011, the Faculty of Electronics and Telecommunications hosted for practical stages over 150 French students (from IUT Rennes and IUT Angers). As a result, over two consecutive academic years, more than 20 students from Germany and France have been following one semester or one full year of study at the Faculty of Electronics and Telecommunications. Efforts are still to be made to increase the number of incoming international students.

Quality assurance of all study programs is of major concern for the management team. Besides ARACIS norms, that are carefully observed, the "Politehnica" University of Timisoara developed its own methodology and procedures of quality assessment. It set rules and regulations for Master Degree Programs developed in UPT. It developed evaluation questionnaires and performs internal audits on a regular basis.

Visits to and from partner universities within the ASIGMA project played an important role in quality assurance. A particular aspect of quality assurance that should be revealed is that at the "Politehnica" University of Timisoara a careful selection of the teaching staff for the English medium study programs was performed. Professional competence of candidates was assessed through research and publications portfolio. Each candidate was asked to submit a written essay on personal vision of course development (in English). Each candidate was required to commit himself/herself to produce teaching materials (in English) by the end of the first year. Foreign language proficiency was assessed by the Department of Communication and Foreign Languages.

Another aspect of quality assurance is the way the foreign languages are used for instruction. The lines below are aimed at outlining peculiarities in teaching foreign languages for specific purposes to master students attending classes in the English / French medium of internationalized studies.

To start with, we have to admit that the LSP (language for specific purposes) practitioner trained as a language teacher exclusively has become a legend nowadays. To permanently develop and meet the requirements of present-day education (master programs included) an LSP teacher is supposed to gain new skills and competences; moreover, his/her profile is influenced by several factors such as: the development of linguistics and of the teaching methodology based on different learning theories, the inter- and multidisciplinary approach present in all professions, the need for specific skills and competencies to communicate appropriately in various professional situations, the impact of global issues on our daily lives.

For this presentation we are going to explore one of the less tackled aspects, namely, the development of terminology skills, a component of the multidisciplinary know-how. All the ideas dealt with below are addressed mainly to the foreign language practitioner, but, inherently, they relate to the learners as well. From among the disciplines that relate nowadays more and more to LSP we mention:
- communication science / professional communication;
- terminology;
- intercultural (cross-cultural) communication;
- information science
- knowledge engineering.

Knowledge of terminology does not mean simply looking for meanings of terms or just translating terms from one language into another. Languages for specific purposes can benefit from developments of terminology, a science on its own, that has progressed significantly during the last

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few decades. Terminology includes activities of selecting, describing, processing and presenting terms as a means of accessing knowledge in a subject field.

Knowledge of selecting terms from documents of a field is linked to understanding the concepts terms are assigned to. The selection of general and individual concepts based on understanding their relationship with each other results in grouping, structuring, organizing information that leads to conceptual systems. Such systems of concepts are vital tools that help in grasping the logical framework of that field. By building a conceptual system, definitions of terms, based on the place of the term in the system and its relationship with the surrounding concepts, help in describing a term and in understanding its meaning. At the same time, comparison and confrontation of definitions of terms belonging to two or more languages represents the possibility of establishing the correct equivalents with respect to the underlying concepts; these equivalents are not mere formal translations of terms.

Additionally, knowledge of term formation helps in understanding and creating appropriate terms. Terminography, in its turn, becomes a precious tool in accessing, storing and retrieving information of various specialisms. Information and documentation within terminology means acquiring knowledge of selecting and evaluating the quality of terminographic products. Nowadays, terminology proper is perceived more and more as terminology management. Besides managing the terminological units, one becomes aware of the value of terminology used properly. In other words, basic terminology knowledge can contribute to successful communication in occupational settings. Today's learner, tomorrow's employee in a certain domain, will be able to use the jargon of his domain, being more independent in the professional communication events.

5. Conclusions

In the globalization context sustained efforts for promoting international master programs are required. An increasing number of international students in internationalized study programs is highly desirable since they are an important source of added value. In attracting international students direct contact with potential students and personal links of the teaching staff are much more efficient than web pages.

The international visibility of the university is highly important and efforts are still to be made to increase it. Quality assurance of the international study programs is of major concern and is carefully dealt with by the management team of the university. Besides, the ASIGMA project is supposed to significantly contribute to this matter.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Collegial Tradition in the Age of Mass Higher Education
Ted Tapper and David Palfreyman, Springer, United Kingdom 2010, 192 p.

Carmen Dobocan

The higher education area steps into a process that goes into contemporary times. Having in mind the collegial tradition, the book discusses this theme in the middle of mass higher education development. Focused on British higher education, the authors will provide a broad image on how tradition influences collegiate and non-collegiate universities.

The starting point of discussion is the analysis of Oxford and Cambridge as both collegiate universities and "most developed model of collegiality" (Tapper and Palfreyman, 2009: v). Comparative and international references on the idea of collegiality will come through this book, as well as new challenges on the system of higher education.

Authors' interpretation on the term

Contemporary times challenge the collegial tradition perspectives. Therefore, there is a need for conceptual clarity.

The references to collegiality imply the following concerns:

a. There is "a focus mainly upon collegiality as a federal model of governance" (Tapper and Palfreyman, 2009: vi). Federal model is to be seen not as a balance of power, but as a way of functionality in which university and college share the governance and assume equally the delivery of academic products.

b. Colleges are units that function on their own and with their social basis the relationship between the members is defined. Authors name the social environment of the colleges as commensality, which is basically "a framework for college development" (Tapper and Palfreyman, 2009: vi).

c. Collegiality is a principle that gives an institutional structure to universities; therefore it concerns the organization of the academic life. The book gives an insight of how non-collegiate universities manage the idea of collegiality. Authors' assumption is that "universities need to be organized collegially if they are going to deliver high-quality academic goals" (Tapper and Palfreyman, 2009: vi).

The Collegial Tradition in Higher Education

Collegiality, seen as a value, is considered to be one of the core elements in the national systems of higher education, also can be used as an instrument in distinguishing "a university from an institution of higher education as simply managed machine for teaching at the tertiary level" (Tapper and Palfreyman, 2009: 17).

As institutions, the role of the colleges is influential in teaching undergraduates, in selection of their undergraduate students (they control the admission) and colleges can provide, via inter-collegial system, a financial support for the more poorly endowed colleges.

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Characteristics of collegiality

Authors propose the discussion of the most important elements of collegiality. Therefore, **the federal structure of the governance, donnish dominion, intellectual collegiality** and **commensality** represent the model in a more broad sense.

There are different opinions on how federal governance works within collegiate universities. It seems that Oxbridge has increased the power of the center (the university) over the periphery (the colleges). It is important to keep in mind that this change of power can be reshaped. Authors mention the fact that "the federal systems of governance can be viewed as both inherently stable and inherently fragile" (Tapper and Palfreyman, 2009: 20). Moreover, not to forget how colleges organize themselves, in the shape of university functionality and inter-collegial relationship. Colleges, within the federal model, are described as "autonomous institutions with a legally defined corporate status" (Tapper and Palfreyman, 2009: 21).

Oxford and Cambridge remain university colleges due to the fact that their federal governance is effective. University and college have clear role in the functionality of the institution.

Donnish dominion is somehow a way of governing. Analyzing, Oxbridge are institutions driven from below: "equal rights and obligations for their members, traditionally a leadership that seeks consensus rather than presents an unequivocal way forward, governance by committee and a significant reliance on key individuals who serve on more than one committee or are rotated steadily through the committee system". In other words, authors describe this as a way of governing dependent upon de engagement of all the governed. The credit is given to the academic control, in what concerns how the university functions and how to fulfill its mission. Any other interests within the university are secondary when comes to policy making decisions.

Intellectual collegiality is about multi disciplinary research and stimulant given for those who participate in the academic life. The intellectual interactions result in the development of different research on crossed disciplines where members have equal rights and show mutual respect. Transparency and access to its findings are also core values of this.

Commensality refers basically to the social life within the colleges. It is a process that concerns both sides, students and professors, and which eventually creates the community within the colleges and the institutional loyalty.

The two historical universities both take in consideration the social life of the students and built upon it a character of day to day familiar activities.

Higher Education in Britain

The book discusses in several chapters the situation of other universities in Great Britain that have embraced the model of collegiality, although there are not considered collegiate universities in their real sense (or at least in the Oxbridge sense). For example, universities like Kent, Lancaster, York and Durham tried to follow the pathway to federalism, going beyond shared responsibilities. Chapters present the evolution of colleges in these universities and their obstacles in institutional development.

The University of London and the University of Wales claim to have federal model of governance, but "do not embrace the collegial values on a wide front".

Cross National Perspectives on Collegiality

America's system of higher education comes in comparison with Oxbridge collegial model. There are some differences, but shared cultural models exist in both situations. Important to keep in mind that the United States model does not have a federal model in governance, "which shapes

power over the central academic functions between a university and its colleges" (Tapper and Palfreyman, 2009: 130).

Importing the Oxbridge model involves more then just applying a model on the existing institutional forms. Authors point out from Duke's *Importing Oxbridge* (1996) that there is a failure in appreciating the essence of collegiality, which needs to evolve in time and be constantly.

The experience America has tried while tackling collegiality, even if is considered a failure taking in consideration their goals, is not to be ignored. The American system of higher education had met the impact of some universities that left behind ideas of what the character of education should be.

On the other hand, in Continental Europe, authors remark that there is difficult to conclude whether universities have sustained collegial tradition. The development of nation states had influenced the collegial approach and discouraged it, somehow.

Important to mention that in Europe there is the trend of education as public good and this wide spread of the idea suggests more power to the state. Taking in consideration the context of it, is questioned whether the universities are to become independent corporate bodies and how they will promote the public good. Authors suppose that there will be a clear direction of "stronger institutional identities with policy directions that are not simply the product of building a consensus out of competing interests" (Tapper and Palfreyman, 2009: 154). On European level, this remain in discussion, more because there is a preoccupation on how the decision making process takes place, and not who controls it.

At the end of the day, the European higher education system is constrained by different external factors where the university can become an actor independent of its internal interests. If the universities will focus more on academic affairs and not on management, the more approached they are to collegiality.

However, the term of collegiality has met some of the greatest challenges in time. From social pressure to different interpretations of the term, institutions in higher education have showed an interest in developing the collegial model. Other factors in higher education development should be taken in consideration and foreseen when comes to new collegial values and institutional characteristics.

This book leaves the impression of collegiality as one of the most popular models of social interaction and governance, though this model is marginalized. Threats exist in the managerial revolution, therefore the collegial governance can be eroded. But, as historical tradition, it remains a core element that can revive in line with mass higher education development.

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