

Employer perspectives on virtual exchange.

CRAWFORD, I.

2020

The CC BY licence applied to this file covers only the author's own text and images. Any third-party materials remain subject to their original terms of use.

Employer Perspectives on Virtual Exchange

IVEC 2020
14-16 September, Newcastle University, UK

Isabella Crawford
Robert Gordon University,
Aberdeen, Scotland
i.c.crawford@rgu.ac.uk

Research Questions

The research questions underpinning this project include:

1. What impact can COIL projects have on students' transversal skill development and employability?
2. Should universities engage with emerging pedagogical theory in the field of borderless experiential learning, and how should learning and teaching strategies evolve to accommodate this?
3. How should different stakeholder perceptions of borderless experiential learning shape the adoption, design, delivery and evaluation of COIL projects within universities?

Theoretical Underpinning

- Globalization and multicultural teams (Fortune Global 500; World Bank)
- Transferable skills and employability (Albandea, 2018; Balcar, 2016; Gibb, 2014; O'Brien et al, 2016; Robles, 2012)
- Social interaction skills include intercultural competence (ESCO; Diamond et al, 2011)
- Growing emphasis on theoretical education in intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2009) but:
- Mismatch between student and employer perceptions of intercultural competence (NACE Jobs Outlook Survey, USA 2018)
- Need to use intercultural skills to acquire competency (Bauer-Wolff, 2018)
- Technological advances enable intercultural experiential online learning (Bhat and McMahon, 2016)

Analytical Approach

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Brocki and Wearden (2007)

- Superordinate themes – linked to interview questions
- Subordinate themes – common constructs across each interview
- Reflective themes – individual experiences and self reflection
- Significant themes – derived from the above

Significant Themes

- **ST1** Technological challenges and opportunities
- **ST2** Virtual team-work challenges and solutions
- **ST3** Transversal skills and future employability
- **ST4** Intercultural skills and globalisation
- **ST5** Pandemic effect, remote-working and digital literacy
- **ST6** Pedagogical balance, challenges and opportunities
- **ST7** Business ethics and social responsibility
- **ST8** Generational and sectoral differences and adaptability

Next Steps

- PhD by public output (five-year timeframe)
- Solo book chapter and journal article (20/21)
- Develop new conceptual model for virtual exchange based on stakeholder perceptions
- Improve COIL activity and embed more widely across university
- Develop business plan for bespoke COIL training in public, private and third sectors

References

- Albandeda, I. (2018). The Employer Perception of Non-linear Educational Pathways. A Vignette Study with French Employers, Post-Print halshs-01947264, HAL. <https://ideas.repec.org/p/hal/journal/halshs-01947264.html>
- Balcar, J. (2016). Is it better to invest in hard or soft skills? *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 27:4, 453-470. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1035304616674613>
- Bauer-Wolff, J. (2018). Overconfident Students, Dubious Employers. Inside Higher Ed. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/02/23/studystudents-believe-they-are-prepared-workplace-employers-disagree#.WpATRgkybjY.linkedin>
- Bhat, C. S. & McMahon, M. (2016). Internationalization at home for counseling students: Utilizing technology to expand global and multicultural horizons. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 38, 319-329.
- Deardorff, D. K. (2009). Implementing intercultural competence assessment, in D. K. Deardorff (Ed.), *The SAGE handbook of intercultural competence*, 477-491. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Diamond, A., Walkley, L., Forbes, P., Hughes, T., & Sheen, J. (2011). *Global graduates into global leaders*. London: The Council for Industry and Higher Education and CFE Research and Consulting.
- ESCO (2020) available from: <https://ec.europa.eu/esco/portal/browse?type=Skill>
- Fortune Global 500 (2020) available from: <https://fortune.com/global500/2019/>
- Gibb, S. (2014) Soft Skills Assessment: Theory Development and the Research Agenda, *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 33(4) 455-471 <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2013.867546>
- O' Brien, W., Belton, S. & Issartel, J. (2016). Fundamental movement skill proficiency amongst adolescent youth, *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 21:6, 557-571, DOI: 10.1080/17408989.2015.1017451
- Robles, M. (2012). Executive Perceptions of the Top 10 Soft Skills Needed in Today's Workplace. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1080569912460400>
- World Bank (2020) available from : <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/sme/finance>