



MULTICLASS

Multicultural Classrooms: Inclusive Learning and Teaching in Classrooms

www.multiclass.yasar.edu.tr

NEWSLETTER-I

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About MULTICLASS

Background

In today's rapidly changing world, education systems are being influenced by a multitude of factors. The influx of foreign students through exchange programs like Erasmus and Mevlana, government scholarships, online education courses, as well as an increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers, have created diverse classrooms with students from different religions, languages, cultures, and ethnicities. To address this evolving landscape and ensure an optimal learning experience, the project identifies university lecturers as key figures in providing a multicultural and multilingual environment.



Project Objectives

Within the scope of the MULTICLASS project, the consortium aims to achieve the following goals:

- Develop an innovative in-service training course curriculum and methodology for teaching staff in higher education institutions (HEIs) on the effective management of multicultural classrooms.
- Create innovative teaching materials that enhance the multicultural dimension of the teaching process, enabling educators to embrace diversity and foster inclusive learning environments.
- Encourage instructors to develop their skills for the management of multicultural classrooms through short-term staff training programs.

MULTICLASS Kick-Off Meeting in Ghent, BE

Kick-off Meeting

We are thrilled to bring you the highlights of the kick-off meeting of the MULTICLASS project, which took place on January 26-27, 2023, in Ghent, Brussels. Hosted by HOGENT - Ghent University of Applied Sciences, the meeting marked the beginning of an exciting collaboration among seven partner organizations from Turkey, Spain, Czechia, Belgium, Bulgaria, and Romania. Coordinated by İzmir Katip Çelebi University, the project aims to enhance the skills and competencies of academic staff in providing effective, high-quality, inclusive, and multicultural education.

Kick-off Meeting Highlights

During the kick-off meeting, partners engaged in fruitful discussions to establish a solid foundation for the project. The consortium reviewed the project timeline, shared their expertise, and outlined the upcoming tasks and activities. The collaborative atmosphere fostered an exchange of ideas, ensuring the project's objectives align with the needs of the target audience.



Looking Ahead

The MULTICLASS project holds significant promise in addressing the challenges faced by higher education institutions in the multicultural education landscape. By equipping academic staff with the necessary skills and competencies, the project strives to enhance their ability to effectively manage diverse classrooms and deliver inclusive education.

As the project progresses, stay tuned for updates on the development of the innovative training course curriculum, the creation of engaging teaching materials, and the implementation of short-term staff training programs.

RESEARCH PHASE

After the kick-off meeting partners started to work on the research phase of the project to prepare the country reports titled "Current Situation of the Internationalization of Higher Education Institutions".

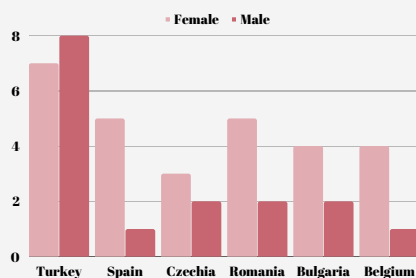
We invite you to dive into the captivating world of internationalization of higher education sector in partner countries. Our dedicated partners have worked tirelessly to bring you a comprehensive analysis of the challenges, trends, and opportunities shaping the global education landscape in their countries.

These reports are a treasure trove of knowledge for educators, students, policymakers, and anyone interested in the fascinating realm of international education. Discover the initiatives, achievements, and future prospects of higher education institutions in partner countries as they strive to create a more connected and diverse academic community. The reports will be available at project web site: www.multiclass.yasar.edu.tr

In the next sections of the newsletter you can find the highlights from partners' country reports.

Research Phase in Numbers

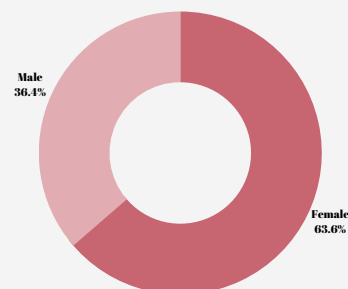
Number of the Students Interviewed by Country



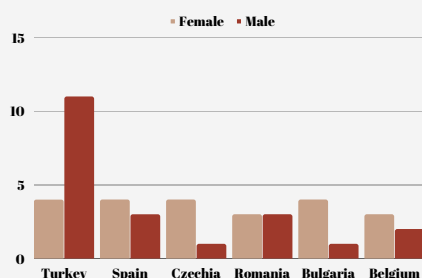
Total 44 students were interviewed in 6 countries.



Gender Distribution of Students



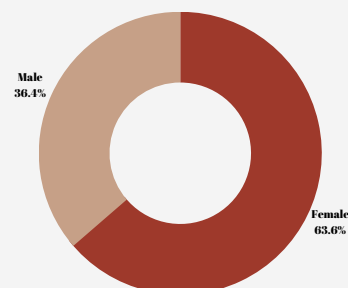
Number of the Staff Interviewed by Country



Total 43 teaching staff were interviewed in 6 countries.



Gender Distribution of Staff



TURKEY

Total 15 students and 15 academic staff were interviewed at İzmir Katip Çelebi University, Yaşar University and Yıldız Technical University in Turkey.



Students

The students emphasise the value of social interaction beyond the confines of formal classroom settings, advocating for the integration of social events and excursions to foster a sense of community among students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, they recommended integrating technological tools and interactive pedagogical approaches within the classroom to promote student engagement and self-expression.



Staff

The lecturers expressed their goal of creating inclusive learning environments that foster open dialogues and promote intercultural competence. They highlighted their challenges related to language barriers, cultural interpretations, and the adaptation of teaching materials. The presence of international students was recognized as advantageous for academic performance and personal development.

ROMANIA

Total 7 students and 6 academic staff were interviewed at Transilvania University of Brasov in Romania.



Students

Language: English language proficiency is recognized as essential in well matching to the groups.

Cultural differences: These are important especially for students enrolled in Humanities, who appreciated that learning in multi-cultural classrooms widens their own profile and supports developing new skills; for the students enrolled in technical (engineering) studies, the cultural differences are not considered to be relevant.

Challenges: The most important challenge was perceived to be the language barrier as there is limited understanding of different accents (at least in the first one-two months).

Staff

Language: It is important to well consider the different English language level of the students and the common solution was to offer, in the beginning, additional time with foreign students for a better interaction, targeting a better inclusion of these in the students group.

Cultural differences: Teachers appreciate that teaching in multi-cultural classrooms asks for adapting their teaching and including examples coming from a broader geographical area; this leads to gaining awareness on multiculturalism, improved language skills, improved confidence and improved work satisfaction.

Challenges: The various level of proficiency in English language is considered to be the most important challenge and the need to adapt to this uneven level asks for specific teaching methodologies for each multi-cultural students groups.

BELGIUM

Total 5 students and 5 academic staff were interviewed at HOGENT University of Applied Sciences and Arts in Belgium.



Students

Language: Language poses both challenges and opportunities for students. They recognize that English proficiency varies among themselves and their peers. Some students find it difficult to communicate effectively in English, especially if they haven't mastered the language completely.

Cultural Differences: Students highly value the exposure to diverse cultures and consider it an inherent advantage that contributes to their personal growth and broadens their perspectives. They appreciate the opportunity to learn different study and work methodologies, experience various course structures, and gain insights into multicultural societies.

Challenges: Students encounter several challenges in international classrooms. Such as language problems, leaving behind their social networks and starting anew in a foreign environment and building connections with local students.

Staff

Language: Teachers adjust their teaching methods to cater to English being a foreign language in the classroom. They acknowledge the varying levels of English proficiency among students and strive to ensure understanding. They also take language skills into consideration when grading, often employing different assessment approaches for international students.

Cultural Differences: Teachers appreciate the significance of cultural diversity in the classroom and see it as a valuable opportunity for both students and themselves. They believe that exposure to different cultures enriches the learning experience and challenges their own teaching methods and perspectives.

Challenges: Teachers encounter several challenges in international classrooms. They navigate differences in teaching styles, academic expectations, and familiarity with the subject matter among students.

BULGARIA

Total 6 students and 5 academic staff were interviewed at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski in Bulgaria.



Students

"I'm really motivated in a positive way, as multicultural classrooms challenge me to be a better lecturer"

"To be in the multicultural environment is one of the best things that has ever happened to me. Every day I have the opportunity to develop my language skills as well as my knowledge of the world."

Staff

The international students are more focused, more active in class, they try to perform tasks more accurately than Bulgarian students.

In Multiclass environments, students feel more challenged and motivated to learn more and to catch up with learning.

The most important skills for teaching in multiclass environment are the good communication skills and the good English language skills. Then, the teachers should have appropriate mindset and to be open - not to have prejudices, but to be ready for challenges, to be open-minded, accepting cultural differences. Teachers need mostly personal level skills, covering communication and the ability to be more people-focused and student-oriented (and not so much task-oriented).

CZECHIA

Total 5 students and 5 academic staff were interviewed at The Czech University of Life Sciences Prague in Czechia.



Students

"If you meet students from other groups, you feel more involved", so therefore extra activities are highly welcomed.

"I had to travel halfway across the world to learn more about my own country."



Staff

"Teaching in multicultural classrooms is more fun."

"Among positive experiences that made me (teaching staff) happy while teaching in a multicultural classroom, is to see that students defend their Master's thesis and go back to their country saying "I want to help develop my country".

"Among the essential skills and competencies that teaching staff need to train in multicultural classes are well-mastered language, insight, patience and "treating all people exactly the same, as a person, personality as such."

SPAIN

Total 6 students and 7 academic staff were interviewed at Universidad San Jorge in Spain.



Students

Students find their experience in multicultural classrooms as very positive. They enjoy those classes more than the ones they are the only ones with local students. One of the participants affirmed that she found a great difference in the way of teaching being here at (USJ) more practical and back home more theoretical. They feel excited to have the opportunity to study abroad and they see it as something that it would greatly improve their CV in a very near future.



Staff

They all agreed that it [teaching in multicultural classes] is a positive experience, enriching and at some points it has been challenging for them. The main benefits are how these classes are “different” from the rest of classes that they teach. It is encouraging for them, to help the environment to be good and how international students participate in the classes brings a new approach and light to the content they teach. As one of the teachers explained “international students participate more in classes and give very good examples from their own countries” this makes local students to reflect about certain realities and situations that they take for granted or that they never thought about.

NEXT STEPS

Where do we go from here?

1	2	3
Second Partners Meeting The second partners meeting will be held in Braşov, Romania between October 31st and November 1st, 2023.	Teaching Materials Development of the teaching materials is already underway. Partners started to work on the teaching materials.	Didactical Guidelines Partners will also develop didactical guidelines that will focus on pedagogical aspects.



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