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APRENDER (N)UMA LÍNGUA ESTRANGEIRA NO ENSINO SUPERIOR: PERCEÇÕES DE EMPREGADORES E ALUNOS
LEARNING A /THROUGH A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: EMPLOYERS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS
APRENDER UNA/ EN UNA LENGUA EXTRANJERA: PERCEPCIONES DE EMPLEADORES Y ALUMNOS

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RESUMO

Introdução: As instituições de ensino superior (IES) devem preparar os alunos para o mercado de trabalho globalizado onde se espera que eles saibam comunicar de forma eficaz numa ou mais línguas estrangeiras (LE) em ambientes de trabalho internacionais, o que coloca uma enorme pressão de expectativa sobre o ensino e aprendizagem de LE no ensino superior (ES).

Métodos: O presente artigo explora modos de aprender (n)a LE nas IES, conjugando perspectivas sobre o estado da arte com percepções de empregadores e alunos. Usa-se uma abordagem de estudos de caso que combina resultados de questionários e entrevistas para descrever as percepções de como a LE deve ser aprendida e ensinada.

Conclusões: Fazem-se recomendações sobre como melhorar a empregabilidade dos alunos; sobre boas práticas de desenvolvimento da competência comunicativa intercultural e de LE para comunicar com eficácia em ambientes de trabalho internacionais e/ou virtuais; e sobre a preparação do corpo docente para tendências emergentes que incluem o uso da LE como meio de instrução ou o uso de CLIL, de integração da aprendizagem de língua e conteúdo em simultâneo, que testemunham a importância de aprender (n)uma LE e de combinar esta aprendizagem com o desenvolvimento de outras competências e capacidades transversais.

Palavras-chaves: Línguas estrangeiras no ensino superior; competência comunicativa intercultural; percepções de empregadores; percepções de alunos; CLIL.

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Higher Education Institutions (HEI) are allegedly preparing students for a globalized working area where people will need to be ready to communicate effectively in one or more foreign languages in international working environments, which puts a lot of pressure on how foreign languages (FL) are learned in Higher Education (HE).

Methods: This article explores how a FL or learning through a FL could be approached in HEI, focusing mainly on what employers claim in terms of skills of recent graduates or on-the-job workers. Case studies are used, combining interviews to employers and questionnaires to HE students to find out their perceptions on FL learning requirements for greater employability.

Conclusions: A series of recommendations are made for HEI on how to promote students' employability skills; on the best practices for the development of intercultural communicative competence and FL skills to communicate effectively in international or digitally-mediated working environments; as well as on how to prepare the teaching staff for emerging trends that involve using a FL as medium of instruction or CLIL, a content and language integrated approach. These testify to the importance of learning a FL or through a FL, as well as the need to combine transversal skills development in connection to FL learning.

Keywords: Foreign languages in Higher Education; intercultural communicative competence; employers' perceptions; students' perceptions; CLIL.

RESUMEN

Introducción: Las instituciones de educación superior (IES) deben preparar a los alumnos para el actual mercado de trabajo globalizado, donde se espera que sepan comunicar eficazmente en una o más lenguas extranjeras (LE) en entornos de trabajo internacionales, lo cual supone una enorme expectativa sobre cómo debe ser encarada la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras en las IES.

Métodos: Este artículo explora cómo se puede abordar el aprendizaje y la enseñanza de una LE, o a través de una LE, en la educación superior, centrándose principalmente en lo que los empleadores necesitan, en términos de competencias, de los recién graduados y de los trabajadores en activo. Se analizan varios estudios de caso, que combinan resultados de cuestionarios y entrevistas a empleadores y a estudiantes de IES, para conocer sus percepciones sobre los requerimientos en el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras que aumenten la empleabilidad.

Conclusiones: Se presentan una serie de recomendaciones a las IES, acerca de cómo aumentar la empleabilidad de sus estudiantes, así como sobre buenas prácticas de desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa intercultural (ICC) y de otras competencias en LE para comunicar con eficacia en entornos de trabajo internacionales y / o virtuales. También se exponen consejos referidos a cómo preparar a los docentes de las IES ante las emergentes tendencias que implican el uso de LE como medio de instrucción o AICLE/ CLIL, esto es, el enfoque integrado de contenido e idioma. Enfoques estos que evidencian la importancia de aprender una LE, o a través de una LE, así como la necesidad de vincular el desarrollo de competencias transversales con el aprendizaje de lenguas.

Palabras clave: Lenguas extranjeras en la educación superior; competencia comunicativa intercultural; percepciones de los estudiantes; percepciones de los empleadores; AICLE / CLIL

INTRODUCTION

In the prevailing narrative on the fourth industrial revolution (Schwab, 2016), emerging digital technologies shape contemporary social, economic and learning cultures, requiring positive mental attitudes towards learning and work, new educational systems of production and consumption, as well as calling forth a bold transformation of the way in which we work, learn, communicate and promote and consume entertainment.

What is important for education in general and for Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in particular is to understand how technology, in its interaction with people, transforms their lives, and to use these new trends as an educational opportunity. The fourth industrial revolution can either destroy the human in favour of the machine or empower multiple groups of individuals, for example, through globally connected virtual collaboration. Never before have there been so many opportunities for interconnected, individualised and non-linear learning; besides this, the need to know how to live with the global and the diverse both in physical and virtual space has never been so evident. The 'super-diversity' (Vertovec, 2006) in which we live today is both cultural and linguistic, dictating a new, central, but almost invisible place for foreign languages (FL) and for individual learning paths of students.

Dunford, Muir, Teran, and Grimwood (2015) examine six key areas that could potentially influence the way we think about education and which we adopt here to refer to FL teaching and learning: (1) intercultural dialogue and the need to gain access to multiple perspectives and different assumptions; (2) the construction of a global citizenship or towards a globalised world; (3) the role of the teacher as guiding increasingly individualised learning pathways; (4) the design of study plans and of types of assessment that respond to the international diversity of students; (5) as well as international collaboration and (6) international communication.

In light of the reasons mentioned above, we have tried to cross-check these new global trends in education with a set of local (international) responses, trying to find out what employers think about FLs and the labour market in the face of the fourth industrial revolution in the hospitality sector; and what students think about initial training courses in HE in four European countries that have new approaches to the teaching and learning of a FL and through a FL. Our objective is to suggest recommendations for the reconfiguration of the role of FLs in HEIs in order to respond to the challenges of employability and competitiveness in a globalised world.

1. CHANGING CONTEXTS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

We have been witnessing several changes involving FLs in Portuguese and in foreign HEIs, without the chance for us to take a critical stance to improve or even intervene, as expert instructors in FLs, in the training of those who use FLs to teach whole curricula, but who are not qualified in language teaching; in deciding upon academic writing requirements in a FL for those who carry out their studies in their native language (NL); in bilingual study programmes; in groups of ERASMUS and international students forced to learn in a FL or in non-maternal languages; in the use of different varieties of the same language in the same context of HE without making adjustments in evaluation; in demands of communicative and professional fluency in a FL upon completion of HE, to mention just a few of the most obvious.

As an example, in the Italian context, Catanaccio and Giglioni (2016, p. 207) warned about the need for teacher training institutions to rethink basic initial training in order to include the areas that are required for future teachers to understand the foreign language taught in basic education – English and the second language learning methodologies, as well as the content and language integrated learning methodologies, even if, as in the Portuguese case, they will not be English teachers in basic education - 1st cycle. For example, the CLIL approach – *Content and Language Integrated Learning* – involves the whole team of teachers at a school and it is essential that everyone is able to participate in an informed way. The same will apply to contemporary HEI contexts.

On the other hand, HEIs are increasingly diverse in linguistic and cultural terms, not only due to the presence of international students and teachers, but also due to international study programmes shared with other HEIs in the global space that affect the intercultural relationship among teachers, - among these and the students and the educational paradigms themselves – values, attitudes, content and pedagogy – requiring new action norms and availability leading to truly intercultural encounters (Dunford et al., 2015).

Several efforts have been made within the framework of FL education to deal with these new trends. In the framework of an EU-funded Erasmus + project for the period 2015-2017, a number of HEIs have explored how to develop intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in the context of higher education in the ICCAGE project, *Intercultural Communicative Competence: The Competitive Advantage for Global Employability* (<http://iccageproject.wixsite.com/presentation>), having conducted a survey amongst FL and intercultural communication employers and trainers in the four countries of the consortium (Czech Republic, Hungary, Spain and Portugal) on how to teach a FL more effectively to promote ICC, having subsequently designed teaching pedagogical units that conform to some common basic principles that guide this article.

One of the principles common to all pedagogical units designed was that a FL course unit, at any level of proficiency, should promote intercultural understanding and include interactive situations (even if simulated), so that intercultural understanding can be applied to concrete problems that students will face in their professional life.

This key learning objective is subdivided into more specific steps, such as collaborative knowledge building in international teams through telecollaboration methodology (also included in most of the designed units). Telecollaboration or 'virtual exchange' aims to place students from diverse contexts in interaction, in a collaborative and guided way, to get to know each other, compare certain aspects of their culture and possibly create a joint product (O'Dowd, 2014, O'Dowd & Lewis, 2016; O'Dowd & Ware, 2006). Virtual interaction with students from other cultural environments over a significant period of time has the potential to develop attitudes of acceptance and appreciation of diversity in a positive way, as well as of critical skills to judge the perceptions and intentions of others beyond the surface culture, especially when there is the need to work together at a distance and use virtual means only. The negotiation of common goals favours the ability to work in teams, the familiarisation with active and open learning environments focused on specific tasks to be performed and builds cross-border networks among colleagues.

ReCLES.pt, a network association of Language Centres in Higher Education, carried out an exploratory study introducing CLIL modules in several polytechnic institutions (Morgado et al., 2015) while creating a training booklet to support on-campus and blended training courses offered to CLIL trainers. This course joins FL teachers with content-based instruction teachers in the design and operationalisation of FL and content-based integrated modules (Morgado et al., 2015), with interesting results on the HEI teachers' participation rates and on the positive perceptions of students. The report of this experience of collaboration between HE Professors (a Professor of English as a FL and a Professor of Industrial Engineering) (Gaspar, Reggio, & Morgado, 2017; Morgado, Régio, & Gaspar, 2017; Reggio, Gaspar, & Morgado, 2018) is rich in suggestions on how to integrate the academic, intercultural and on-the-job training dimensions.

According to Valcke and Wilkinson (2017, p. 17), FLs can be taken to develop intercultural and international communicative competence. Date and Tanner (2012) recommend making the pedagogical frameworks and practices explicit for the teachers themselves. Weinberg and Symon (2017, p.145) advocate that the intercultural pedagogical training of teachers should be a priority if they are already proficient in a FL and they recommend that HEIs establish FL centres supporting writing and self-study, as an awareness-raising infrastructure for both students and teachers to methodologies prone to FL learning, and collaboration between FL teachers and teachers from other disciplinary areas (Weinberg & Symon, 2017, pp. 146-7).

However, in order to complete this discussion, we need to understand what employers and students think about what can make a FL effective in the labour market and how FL should be learned to help develop working skills in multicultural, international and globalised spaces. The two case studies below, although not representative, may help us to validate some of the recommendations made.

2. METHODS

CASE STUDIES: PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYERS AND STUDENTS

A case study methodology using interviews/questionnaires was adopted and the responses were qualitatively analysed in order to identify recommendations for FL teaching and learning in HEIs. Each case study is presented sequentially, and it will include characterisation, results and discussion.

2.1 ICCAGE Hospitality Case Study

2.1.1 Presentation/Characterisation

In the scope of the *Intercultural Communicative Competence: A Competitive Advantage for Global Employability* (ICCAGE) project, co-financed by the EU's Erasmus+ programme (Morgado, Gómez, & Arau Ribeiro, 2019), four European Tourism and Hospitality managers were interviewed in the Iberian zone (two hotel general directors, a hotel local director and a manager of an international hostel) working with a total of 125 employees. The purpose of these interviews was to collect data that would allow a needs analysis in terms of identification and development of the skills currently required to work in the Hospitality and Tourism industry.

The interview guide for the semi-structured interviews was developed following the methodology of groups of discussion, between nine specialists in FL for specific purposes and in intercultural communication, from Hungary, Spain, Portugal and the Czech Republic. To this end, five meetings were held through video conferencing, with the final version of the interview being conducted with eight international employers, which improved the clarity and appropriateness of the questions. The four open questions asked to the tourism unit managers interviewed in this case study were:

1. How do you assess intercultural diversity in your organisation?
2. What do you consider to be the necessary skills for the hospitality and tourism sector?
3. Are new graduates well prepared to work in multicultural environments?
4. Recommendations/suggestions for dealing with clients' intercultural diversity.

5. With the first two questions, we attempt to answer the first objective of this exploratory research: to determine the basic requirements, in terms of competences, that Hospitality and Tourism managers consider essential for new graduates in this field. In turn, with questions 3 and 4 we intend to find out which training is most suitable for future workers in Tourism and Hospitality, regarding the activation and development of competencies to cope with the requirements of the new industry 4.0 paradigm.

2.1.2 Results and discussion

1. DETERMINING THE BASIC REQUIREMENTS, IN TERMS OF COMPETENCES, THAT HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGERS CONSIDER TO BE NECESSARY FOR NEW GRADUATES IN THIS FIELD

We noticed convergence in the interviewed managers' description of the contexts and situations that currently characterise the industry 4.0 area in Hospitality and Tourism. The four managers responded that, in their sector, interaction with people from other countries and with world cultures happens on a daily basis. They added that customer service with other cultural identities occurs both face-to-face and online, and it is customary that the first contact with the client is made through e-mail or through social networks.

The managers that were interviewed also stated that they receive customers from all over the world and, to illustrate it, they mentioned countries as far away as Vietnam, Japan, Thailand, Azerbaijan and India in Asia; Canada, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, and Ecuador in America; and Australia and New Zealand in Oceania, which shows the marked cultural diversity of situations in which interaction between visitors and service providers currently takes place.

Given the consensus in the answers to the first question in the interview, we can conclude, on the one hand, that professional activity in the area of Tourism and Hospitality takes place in transnational contexts of intercultural, international communication on a global scale and, on the other hand, that the use of various electronic means is carried out on a daily basis to establish the synchronous and asynchronous interaction between employees and visitors.

Regarding the answers to the second interview question, all competences that the managers consider essential for new graduates to be successfully incorporated into their Tourism and Hospitality units were ranked according to frequency and classified into thematic areas, resulting in the following four groups. Firstly, we can include a set of skills known as 'soft skills' in reference literature. They are, in other words, the workers' personal features, namely positive attitudes towards the other and the will to embrace change. Among them, empathy was the one mentioned more often, as all the managers that were interviewed highlighted the importance of their workers developing this competence, which they consider essential to effective customer service. The other interpersonal skills or 'soft skills' mentioned were, from the most frequent to the least frequent: resilience, pro-activity, teamwork, coping with change, moderation, and acceptance of new challenges. It should be noted that this set of interpersonal skills was not only the most frequently mentioned but also the first to be mentioned by the four managers when they were asked the second open question.

Secondly, regarding the frequency of allusion, we find linguistic and communicative competences. Among them is the need for their employees to fluently speak English and Spanish, as mentioned by three of the four managers. However, according to the four managers interviewed, good linguistic competence is not enough for the service provider to ensure effective customer care unless some communication skills that facilitate adaptation to the needs of the client are also activated. Among these competences, the two most frequently mentioned were: communicative fluency and communicative effectiveness, depending on the context in which customer service takes place (adaptation to the contexts of the interlocutor's culture, direct and indirect communication and use of different styles of communication).

Specialised knowledge in the tourism sector was also mentioned by the interviewed managers as a determining factor for successful integration in their Hospitality units. Thus, the managers mentioned some competences related to the need for students to acquire specific knowledge within this industry, both globally, in the case of specialised terminology in Tourism and Hospitality, and locally, concerning the organisation and key services within the organisation they manage.

In the fourth and last group of skills that the interviewed managers believed to be fundamental in the current environment of the industry 4.0 area in Hospitality and Tourism, there are the techno-digital skills. Two of the managers underlined the importance of their employees effectively using a wide variety of technological resources for intercultural and interlinguistic communication, which, in the opinion of these managers, greatly facilitates effective assistance to clients with different linguistic and cultural references. In turn, the other two managers have given special relevance to the fact that their employees effectively use various techno-digital tools, which will allow them, from their point of view, quick access to information about customers' cultural specificities.

2. FINDING OUT THE MOST SUITABLE TRAINING FOR FUTURE WORKERS IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY, REGARDING THE ACTIVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCES TO COPE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE NEW INDUSTRY 4.0 PARADIGM.

When questioned about the preparation of new graduates to meet the most recent demands in their professional area, a consensus was achieved, since the four managers reported experiences that, in their opinion, evidence that HE does not provide

the students with appropriate training to work effectively in the transnational contexts of intercultural communication that characterise today's Hospitality and Tourism industry.

We then tried to find out the reasons for such deficient training. We asked the managers about the skills that they believe new graduates lack when they start working in the hotel units they operate. Two of them answered that, during their HE training, students do not acquire soft skills, that is, the personal skills considered fundamental to work effectively in their sector, as mentioned in the answer to the second survey question. The two other managers stated that the new graduates who had begun working in their Hospitality units had not been prepared in two areas that they felt were essential in order to adapt to the needs of the clients: how to deal with diverse cultures and how to approach a specific culture.

To sum up, the interviewed managers agree that, although new graduates can communicate in foreign languages with some fluency, they lack intercultural sensitivity skills, as well as skills in intercultural communicative interaction, which explains the reason why they do not reach an effective professional performance to cope with the demands of the authentic, multilingual and multicultural contexts of today's industry 4.0 in Hospitality and Tourism.

As a solution to these shortcomings, three of the four interviewed managers pointed to the need for future employees in this area to acquire real personal experiences involving cultural diversity, which would allow them to effectively develop the competencies required for successful integration into the new working paradigm of industry 4.0 in Hospitality and Tourism.

The managers participating in this exploratory study offered advice for their employees to deal with the cultural diversity of the clients with whom, as we have seen, they interact on a daily basis. These recommendations were also classified according to the number of times they were mentioned. First of all, we must emphasise the consensus of the managers that were interviewed in two respects: on the one hand, the workers must have a good command of the clients' language/culture; on the other hand, this command is not enough to achieve effective assistance, thus being necessary to highlight once again the need to complement the linguistic competence with the development of personal skills of assistance and response to one's cultural/communicative needs.

Three other suggestions were provided by the interviewed managers. The first has to do with the activation and development, by future workers in this globalised sector, of the intercultural competences that are required to evaluate the client's culture, especially those competences that help to identify the habits and customs of the visitor, which, in the opinion of two of the managers consulted, will allow the service providers to comply with the client's cultural comfort.

Another recommendation aiming at better responding to this cultural diversity, and agreed upon by two of the managers participating in the study, is the appropriateness of cultural and historical knowledge acquisition about the visitors' home countries. Finally, it is worth emphasising that the four managers insist that, whatever cultural interaction takes place within the scope of professional activity in this sector, it is essential that workers demonstrate flexibility to adequately manage the cultural diversity of the clients they receive.

2.2 Case study on the perceptions of Higher Education students

2.2.1 Introduction/Characterisation

As part of the application of a European project, INCOLLAB - *Innovative interdisciplinary collaborative approaches to learning and teaching*, to the EU's Erasmus + programme in 2018, the proponents developed an online questionnaire addressed to HE students from institutions in Portugal, Spain, Cyprus and the Czech Republic (including international students in these institutions coming from Cyprus, Russia, Mexico, Slovakia, Chechnya, Kazakhstan, Hungary, France and Vietnam) to listen to their views on FL learning in HE and at the same time to get to know their aptitudes for interdisciplinary and collaborative learning in the context of a FL. The purpose of this questionnaire was to document learning contexts of local HE regarding open, collaborative, interdisciplinary learning environments adapted to the students' individual needs, as a basis for the development of quality and effective pedagogical interventions using e-learning and mobile learning, and the development of transversal competences and integrated learning of both content and FL (CLIL).

The online survey questions, multiple choice on a scale of 1 to 5 (from I totally disagree to I totally agree), to be answered in English voluntarily by HE students of the proposing institutions, were designed collaboratively and made available in 2017 for two months.

There were 314 valid answers from HEIs in Portugal, Spain and the Czech Republic, involving undergraduate and master's students of courses as diverse as Secretariat, Basic Education, Bilingual Education, Mechanical Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Mechatronics Engineering, Tourism, Project Management, Economics and Management, Art History and Human Resource Management.

In addition to questions (P1 to P4) to characterise provenance (HE institution, country, course and FLs studied at the present time), the questionnaire included questions about FL learning practices (P5 to P73), other FLs studied, improvement strategies developed by students in specific areas such as writing, grammar, pronunciation, reading and reading materials, use of audio-visual and internet resources, preparation for exams, use of course books, need for a teacher, self-assessment in terms of competence and study needs, self-regulation of the study, etc.

The questions (P74) and (P75) are the ones that interest us most for the present study:

(P74) I find it important to link my knowledge and skills in FL to other curriculum subjects (or other curricular units in which I am enrolled in my higher education institution).

(P75) I find it important to link my knowledge and skills in FL to other skills and competences such as interpersonal and intercultural relations, problem-solving, etc.

The respondents' reactions to these two statements briefly allow us to see whether students see an advantage in linking FL learning with other subjects and disciplinary contents, as well as with transversal skills or soft skills, while the answers to the previous questions summarily described contextualise their practices in culturally diverse learning contexts.

2.2.2 Results and discussion

According to the answers given to question (P74) about the importance of associating FL learning with other subjects, 78% of students agree (30%) or totally agree (48%) with it. Only 1% strongly disagrees and 6% disagree, with 15% being indifferent, that is, neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Regarding question (P75), 76% of the students interviewed agree (30%), or strongly agree (46%) to associate FL learning with the development of interpersonal, intercultural and problem-solving skills, with 2% totally disagreeing, 4% disagreeing and 18% of the respondents stating that they do not agree nor disagree.

Skimming the questions about learning practice, without going into great detail, we notice that all the interviewed students are learning English in HEIs and, if they learn another FL, they do it on their own, or in private contexts with a teacher, or in language schools (P7 and P8).

The overwhelming majority of the students who were surveyed also state that they have already tried to learn a FL in an autonomous way to improve their skills (P9), choosing grammar exercises, reading magazines and listening to online programmes, watching online films, listening to music online, practising speaking and writing. Online FL learning resources, such as pronunciation practice or exam preparation, are less commonly used than the previous ones.

In the open-ended question about resources, one student said s/he had attended courses abroad, two other students referred to video games as a FL learning strategy, two mentioned travelling, three pointed out FL and Duolingo listening apps, five mentioned working abroad as *Au pair* in hotels, or without specifying where, one mentioned correspondence with other people using the Internet and one valued "making friends who are native speakers of the FL."

The respondents emphasise authentic materials (films, newspaper articles and music) as well as web pages and online resources, although they have been globally neutral on the question of trying out new and unfamiliar resources and materials (P36).

Responses regarding the experimentation of e-learning courses and learning apps were also more neutral (P38).

We also noted some dependence on the teacher for the FL learning process to be successful, as well as the expectation for following along with what is suggested by the teacher (P45).

In the answer to question P49, most students did not strongly support the idea that the success of learning a FL depends on the amount of time that this language is practised outside the classroom.

From the data gathered, there is some lack of pedagogical innovation in the way students say they prefer to learn a FL, perhaps due to traditional teaching methods. Physical and/or virtual mobility is hardly ever addressed, and the same happens regarding experiential exchanges with people from other FL cultures, or collaboration in multinational groups and experimentation with new digital resources such as apps; thus, students consider that the teacher continues to be an important facilitator of their own knowledge of a FL and that the classroom is the place, *par excellence*, for the practice of a target language.

However, the data gathered points towards the students' openness to the idea that learning a language is associated with the acquisition of personal, communicative and intercultural skills, as well as of attitudes showing intercultural sensitivity, being an advantage to both specialised FL learning environments and CLIL (content and language integrated learning).

CONCLUSIONS

From the data gathered and discussed, there are several lessons to be learnt and recommendations to be made for the process of FL teaching and learning in HEIs. First of all, the need to frame FL learning in an interdisciplinary way, both through specialised FL and through collaborative practice between HE teachers, leading to content and language integrated learning (CLIL).

Additionally, FLs can and should develop a range of skills considered important in the labour market, such as the intercultural communicative competence (ICC), intercultural communicative effectiveness, empathy, resilience, proactivity, and the ability to cope with change and with diversity, among others.

Learning should preferably make use of online environments, be collaborative and network teachers and students, in order to create communities of practice and of international learning, where the use of FLs will make perfect sense. The use of methodologies, such as telecollaboration or virtual exchanges with students from other countries in a controlled and monitored environment, is recommended as a way of developing intercultural sensitivity and the pragmatic competence of using FLs in

more authentic contexts, as well as of building common projects in international teams, taking advantage of the cultural and linguistic diversity of each member in a positive way.

In order to better adapt to globalised labour markets, the FL learning context should also be rich in moments when students make decisions and are entrusted with the curatorship of digital content in FL using digital tools, rather than being regarded as mere consumers of digital content in FL.

Finally, it is important to cultivate the notion, among students and teachers of HEIs, that we use several languages in the learning process and that knowing the pedagogical mechanisms that can facilitate the flexible integration of knowledge in an interdisciplinary way, from the linguistic repertoires of each one, is very important.

The areas of activation of these recommendations will not only be the FL classroom, but also the coordination of courses of a HEI, or the HEI itself as a whole, and may also refer to structures that support learning such as the Language Centres of HE, an important part leading to the promotion and development of FLs that are less frequently taught in HEI, or to the definition of language policies to support students and teachers, as well as validation and accreditation of learning.

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