



## Developing Intercultural Communication Competencies Using Various Learning Methods at a Media Communications Study Programme

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	<b>ABSTRACT</b>
<p>2016 Research Leap/Inovatus Services Ltd. All rights reserved.</p> <p><b>DOI:</b> 10.18775/jibrm.1849-8558.2015.46.3002 <b>URL:</b> <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.18775/jibrm.1849-8558.2015.46.3002">http://dx.doi.org/10.18775/jibrm.1849-8558.2015.46.3002</a></p>	<p>Various previous researchers of journalism and media communication education demonstrated the necessity and importance for media workers to be competent in intercultural communication (IC). Slovenian researchers do not discuss these topics, and IC themes are withal mostly part of a non- obligatory courses where usual teaching and learning methods are applied. To examine the effectiveness and usefulness of different teaching/learning methods in developing students' intercultural communication competencies, an educational intervention research was suitable, as the method is being useful mostly to solve pragmatic issues. Additionally, the study aimed at determining outgoing students' intercultural communication competencies (ICC) - knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness through their cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions. Two theoretical approaches were used – one stating that ICC are developed by learning on the ground of our innate predispositions and character and the behavioural perspective. This qualitative-evaluative research was conducted within the International and Intercultural Communication course at the first year of Graduate Study of Media Communications at the University of Maribor. It was a trilingual intercultural situation where learning activities such as role-playing, pantomime, case studies, simulations, individual exploration, and reflection were implemented, since students were not used to them. Participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, qualitative questionnaires, evaluation of class activities and a final exam were used as main research methods. Even though the group adapted very soon, the nonverbal activities were most demanding, and individual activities at home the least accomplished. Although they had theoretical knowledge, experience in public speaking, proactivity and self-reflection skills at basic level, their abstract thinking skills, self-awareness and adaptation were medium. However, they showed a great deal of persistence and creativity as a part of a collaborative and cooperative activities. Therefore, focusing on the learning activities stimulating students' ICC as a part of a real intercultural situation in journalism and mass communication (JMC) education is recommended.</p>
<p><b>Keywords:</b> Educational intervention, Intercultural communication competency, Journalism and media communication education, Learning methods, Teaching methods, Class activities</p>	

### 1. Intercultural Communication Competencies in an Educational Context

Intercultural communication competency (ICC) has been substantially contextualised in the educational framework. In communication sciences, those researches started in the 1960's, and are still a very important topic in the field (Arasaratnam 2016, p. 10-11).

Arguing about the importance of intercultural education (IE) as interactive, not abstract, because intercultural experience is far more valuable than intercultural knowledge, Perotti (1994, p. 78) stressed intercultural learning (IL) as a fundamental concept. The main objective of IE is, hence, not teaching about

other cultures, but relating with its carriers interculturally (Kragulj i Jukić 2010, p. 172).

Despite the fact that developing ICC in today's globally oriented world is unquestionably a never-ending life-long process, the results of many researches have shown the success of directly targeted educational activities. Formal pedagogy of intercultural competency prescribes how to achieve it. It involves the planned inclusion of learning outcomes, defined in terms of intercultural communication (IC) components involving a relationship between teacher and learner (Barrett et al. 2013, p. 14). The Council of Europe also articulated the importance of setting all pedagogical aspects - goals, methods

and requirements - as essential foundations for a proper implementation of IE (Perotti, 1994, p. 79 according to Otten 1991).

Teaching and learning methods, instruments, activities, textbooks, and other methodical and teaching resources in university education are prescribed specifically for each course syllabus. Therefore, the preliminary step for any educational intervention at that level is a clear and detailed activity plan in a combination with the explicit educational outcomes, depending on the topic. Furthermore, it is also important to define and explain the concept in detail and set 'measurable outcomes and corresponding indicators', bearing in mind that conceptual settings condition IC indicators (Deardorff 2011, p. 65-66).

Although it may seem easy, it is a very complex task, as IC and ICC are commonly and widely used in different research fields. That is why there is no consistent definition of the notions, especially in communication sciences, and these numerous theoretical approaches result in the phenomenon of conceptual versions. Even though Deardorff (2006, p. 242) found the existence of a mutual understanding of the term, she quoted 50 authors who from 1976 to 2006 marked the IC concept using different perspectives. Fantini (2007, p. 72), on the other hand, offered 20 alternatives used in literature about the same subject. Still, many variables connected to IC show its dependence on the general/specific culture, type of measurement and way of learning (Arasaratnam 2016).

### 1.1 What is ICC?

This work is grounded on a combination of the continuous scientific tradition understanding IC as the result of the developmental process of learning, the individual personality characteristics as a foundation (helping or interfering) for acquiring IC, and the specific human behaviour. It means that IC is a longitudinal learning outcome depending on a combination of a variety of individuals' internal and external variables manifested as behaviour.

Based on Byram's (1997) heritage, Fantini uses the term intercultural communicative competence (CC) as the sum of those acquired in the native culture and those gained from foreign ones. First, developing CC is a part of our 'native language and cultural system' education. Further, the effort has to be invested in the 'transcendence and transforming' of one's construction of the native cultural system, as it considers not only learning foreign languages or the important issues in different cultures, but deconstructing the old worldview in order to develop a new one (Fantini 2007:8). Thus, the prerequisite to ICC acquisition, he believes, is to define all personal characteristics that could be changed in the process of ICC development, such as flexibility, humour, patience, openness, interest, curiosity, empathy, tolerance of ambiguity, and suspending judgment. He defines ICC as "(...) a complex

of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself" one's ICC manifests in 'domains' of (...) relationships, communication and collaboration (...) and 'dimensions' of "(...) knowledge, attitude, skill and awareness (...)" (Fantini 2007:9).

Tracing that idea, Deardorff emphasizes the importance of performing IC knowledge into superior competencies that enable IC interaction. She focuses primarily on acquiring internal and external outcomes of the development of IC. Her Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff 2011, p. 67, according to Deardorff 2006 and 2009) shows how individual transformation leads to intercultural interaction. One should start by upgrading one's attitudes, such as respect, openness and curiosity which are prerequisites for gaining the upper cultural elements - cultural knowledge, comprehension and self-awareness, as well as intercultural skills, (listening, observing, evaluating, analysing, interpreting and relating). Referring to Bok's (2006) assertion about the importance of 'developing skills to think intercultural' rather than acquiring actual knowledge, she emphasises the idea of acquiring ICC as an educational process over time.

The Council of Europe starts defining ICC from the complex 'concepts of identity, culture, intercultural encounter and competence', as attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills, combined in action (Barrett, Byram, Lázár et al. 2013:8). On the same trail, UNESCO sees cultural literacy as 'the lifeline for today's world', "(...) a fundamental resource for harnessing the multiple venues education can take (from family and tradition to the media, both old and new, and to informal groups and activities), and an indispensable tool for transcending the 'clash of ignorance'. It can be seen as part of a broad toolkit of worldviews, attitudes and competencies that young people acquire in their lifelong journey for linguistic and cultural diversity within education, as an awareness-raising campaign in need of holistic and official recognition at the highest possible level in order to convince all parties of its benefits and relevance" (UNESCO 2013, p. 8-9 according to UNESCO 2009, p. 118).

Foremost, it explains ICC as learning to know, learning to do (applying acquired knowledge in intercultural interaction, which is a basis for gaining more knowledge), and learning to be (self-reflection of 'one's social self that has a place in a global world') (UNESCO 2013, p. 9). In describing cultural diversity, human rights and intercultural dialogue from either a cultural (identity, values, attitudes, beliefs) or communicational (language, dialogue, nonverbal behaviour) perspective as a part of the Intercultural Competencies Tree (the 'organic system of concepts'), the core terms were understood as the manifestation of their contextualization (UNESCO 2013, p. 22-23).

Liu, Volčić and Galois (2015, p. 312 according to Wiemann 1977, p. 198) conceptualise ICC, determining CC as an interaction ability emphasizing the individual choice of communicative behaviour, while taking into account the other. Based on Spitzberg and Cupach's (1984) IC model and understanding CC as a behaviour in a specific context, they set four interrelated components of IC: the knowledge component as the culture-specific and culture-general knowing of the other person's culture, the affective component, like emotions which occur in a communicator during each communication situation, the psychomotor component, which unites knowledge and emotions in an intercultural communication action during which communicators communicate 'culturally appropriate messages' and the situational component of intercultural communication based on their status, environmental context and previous history of contacts between them.

As IC always occurs in a context, there are situations in which more than just skilled behaviour is needed. Even though, in the general sense of CC, there are three main strategies of developing ICC - seek commonalities on a human level to overcome (visible) differences, overcome stereotyping and prejudice by exercising cultural relativism to eliminate ethnocentrism, and develop flexibility and openness in communication (verbally and nonverbally), according to the appropriate culture rules (Liu, Volčić and Galois 2015, p. 315). As an element of 'many aspects of communication behaviour', Liu, Volčić and Galois (2015, p. 313-14) sees empathy as the prerequisite of understanding communication.

### 1.2 Learning ICC

Even though the most effective way of learning ICC is studying abroad, there are also on campus possibilities to gain IC experiences. An effective way to maximise courses' curricula and learning opportunities is internationalization at home (Deardorff 2011, p. 77 according to Nilsson 2003) with the intention to 'create intercultural learning opportunities' and interculturally competent students (Deardorff 2006, p. 241).

To achieve optimal goals in ICC education, different types of learning that include students' activity are needed, such as experiential, cooperative learning, and learning by doing, thereby respecting the five 'principles of planning' - experience, comparison, analysis, reflection and action (Barrett, Byram, Lázár et al. 2013:15-16). Although they are clearly differentiated, those principles depend on and continue toward each other mixing according to teaching and learning methods, sources and activities.

The central goal of learning through experience is to enable students to actively participate into real or imagined situations, during which they develop ICC. One of the prerequisites in IL is to enable students to effectively participate in provided class activities, meaning 'participation should lead to learning' (Batelaan 1999, p. 23). Comparing their own values and attitudes others in order to realise their construction of 'the

other', students develop the understanding and respect for the worldviews of different cultures. Further, analysing specific similarities and differences of an intercultural practice - others' behaviour, language use and body language characteristics, leads to detecting certain cultural values and beliefs. On the other hand, as a basis for action, reflection and the development of critical awareness and understanding should be particularly planned. Setting educational situations in which students need to participate in intercultural dialogues and cooperative activities with people from different cultures, means assuring the ultimate chance to practice intercultural action, exceptionally important for the development of ICC (Barrett, Byram, Lázár et al. 2013:15-16).

Collaborative (Helm 2009; Sablić 2014; Zhang 2012) and interactive learning, are especially effective and useful in IC learning and for the development of ICC, while active learning is fundamental in developing responsible citizens (Sablić 2014, p. 218). Discussion has a crucial role for IC education, for it is central in the acquisition of a set of complex attitudes and skills through connected activities - listening, analysing, comparing, communicating positively, and expressing individual attitudes (Sablić 2014, p. 219). Chiper (2015) thus prescribes recordings of real-life situations', 'case studies' and 'online simulation' as learning activities that result in students' active involvement into IC situations.

### 1.3 ICC Assessment Tools

Since a wide range of scientific fields are interested in the IC and ICC topics with different starting points and aims, there is no universal instrument of assessing ICC, but it depends on the purpose (Perry and Southwell 2011). Representing multiple approaches into the research of this complex topic from the mid-1950's, Fantini's list of 90 different assessment tools of intercultural communicative competence most vividly demonstrate the extent of the different perspectives (2006:87-93).

The comprehensive review and deep explanation of a palette of IC assessment tools and the evaluation of the IC assessment as educational outcomes show many practical examples from around the world (Sinicrope, Norris and Watanabe 2007). Those authors further highlight the theoretical perspective, conceptualization of ICC elements, pedagogy and assessment tools, as conditions to assess ICC learning outcomes. Quantitative and qualitative measurements of IC and ICC are commonly used, depending on what the study requirements and goals are, and there is even a tool (The Intercultural Development Inventory) for transferring qualitative into quantitative data (Bennett 2009).

Quantitative measurement is mostly based on respondents' self-reporting data. Data collected by qualitative instruments are focused on the usual observation and interviews, as well as portfolios and 'written reflection' that could assess IC 'deeply,

authentically and, perhaps, accurately' (Perry and Southwell 2011, p. 462 according to numerous authors).

While videotaping as an observation source is a common method to gather data of IC in real situations, qualitative questionnaires are frequent in gathering IC data (Oetzel, Pant and Rao 2016 according to numerous authors) as 'self-administered' and 'self-reporting instruments' (Oetzel, Pant and Rao 2016).

A semi-structured interview is an interpretative research method which, apart from revealing participants' deeper 'understandings and meanings' (Oetzel, Pant and Rao 2016 according to Denzin 2001) provides interpreting meanings active in the group (Oetzel, Pant and Rao 2016 according to Carbaugh 2007).

## 2. ICC in Journalism and Media Communication Education

As our reality and media testify, IC is 'the most serious of all the problems confronting humankind' (Kim 2010), questioning Journalism and Media Communication (JMC) education in that context is justifiable. In a way, problematization of intercultural (communication) competencies has been a part of JMC education from its beginning in the early 1920's. Having in mind the education of those who will form media content for different publics, ICC are essential for future journalists and media professionals for numerous reasons:

"(...) truths are perceptions of the truth viewed through the prism of culture; a journalist's effectiveness as an information gatherer is enhanced through intercultural communication competence, verbal, as well as non-verbal; the perception of what constitutes "news", as well as gauging the importance of "news", is culturally determined; and interpretations and perceptions of journalists are culture bound, which means that errors of interpretation and perception are inevitable without sensitivity to and knowledge about cultural differences (Starck, 1998:54 according to Taylor, 1989).

In other words, media workers must be socially non-judgemental, liberated from prejudice and stigmatization attitudes, and cultivate their intercultural knowledge to evaluate cultural diversity. Namely, it is an everyday necessity as from the perspective of intercultural globalism there are no media limits. Further, it should not be marginalised that media content for minorities is often their only source of information and education in the context of their culture, while the importance of promoting the idea of tolerance, communion, and human universality in other media content rises, as it fulfils the mass media social inclusion function. Not less important is the fact that regional and national media have the obligation to explore, thematise and present the overall richness of regional and national identity in every way, which is seen peculiarly through the many actual and important topics they cover, different

approaches, and sources to the stories they use, the width and depth of showing the national values, etc. Journalists should, therefore,

"(...) be able to identify issues of salience to multicultural groups; develop messages that are tailored for individual multicultural groups; use appropriate channels to reach these multicultural groups, and become more comfortable doing business across cultural lines" (Kern-Foxworth and Miller, 1993:55).

Briefly, to build others' attitudes and worldviews, journalists and media workers first have to be interculturally competent humans. It is, however, a long-term targeted process, because the formation of the journalistic professional identity depends on cultural features, and social and political circumstances in which journalism education is implemented (Nygren and Sigbrand 2014).

Therefore, there are multiple reasons why scientists all over the world dealing with JMC education find it crucial to incorporate intercultural subjects into the curriculum (e.g. Kern-Foxworth and Miller 1993). Internationalization of journalism education (Ghiglione in Cohen 2001, p. 15) as 'curriculum de-westernization' (Breit, Obijiofor and Fitzgerald 2013), class organisation as a micro example of contemporary cultural diversity (Dates in Cohen 2001, p. 21), and integrating topics that develop students' sensitivity to cultural diversity, 'international human rights work' and inclusiveness (Jakobson in Cohen 2001, p. 19), are only several recommendations. On the ground of intercultural new media studies theory (Shuter 2012), ICC are especially important for those working in the new media. There are numerous good practice examples in the cross relation of ICC and JMC study programmes, as well as many quality proposals of upgrading their curricula aimed at educating media professionals able to participate in or initiate social change. Despite the complexity of discourse and understanding, praxis in transnational journalism education derives numerous benefits (Skare Orgeret 2016; Grieves 2010), like field trips (Woolley 2014), while 'global journalism curriculum' seems to be a constructive way for deepening students' ICC (Skare Orgeret 2016).

Comparative journalism curriculum content research (the USA, the Netherlands and Australia), however, warns about the inadvisable reality of graduates entering the profession "(...) without ever having actively thought about intercultural communication, cross-cultural reporting, or multicultural journalism" (Deuze 2001:143), even though contextualization of multiculturalism and journalism as a scholarly topic has been traceable since the 1990's (Deuze 2001). While not so long ago, study programmes of US journalism education contained a minimal portion of the topic of intercultural journalism (Starck 1998), today there is a new trend in US journalism and mass

communication education of making space in a curriculum for diversity and inclusiveness (Biswas and Izard 2009).

Unlike these circumstances, African study programmes need modernization, either by including obligatory topics of IC and different social sciences courses as a way of fighting the prevailing xenophobia (Mogekwu 2010), or with an application of ubuntu in journalism teaching, which could lead to the neutralization of sensationalism, elite reporting and other contemporary appearances in journalism (Motsaathebe 2011). It is, however, a double challenge to incorporate ICC into JMC studies, for the African and Asian culture constantly crosses with western values.

The inclusion of Intercultural Journalism syllabi in the UNESCOs' additional content of the Model Curricula for Journalism Education, while focusing on topics of importance as a part of actual journalism practice, reflects the importance of IC in contemporary journalism education. Its objective is to develop:

“(…) intercultural competence required to handle stories in a culturally diverse manner, enabling journalists to acquire skills of interaction and discovery that promote the acquisition of new knowledge of cultural practices and the ability to use them to operate under the constraints of real-time communication and collaboration“ (UNESCO 2013, p. 25 according to Davis et al. 2005).

The main goals of the course connecting IC topics with the actual profession would be:

“(…) developing students' awareness and knowledge of intercultural issues in all their dimensions, applied to the field of journalistic production (content development; identity introspection; mediatization of social domains; management policy and human resources management of the media organisation; economic performance (business case), and industrialization of culture, communication and information; social issues in the construction and development of public spaces; social legitimization; knowledge development, and so on)” (Cabedoche 2013, p. 55).

For the educational proposes of processing all topics that cross two fields - interculturality and journalism - a number of pedagogical methods have been used so far, e.g. interactive workshops focusing on analysing the media content on intercultural topics, discussion with a special focus on asking questions, theoretical reflection, role-playing, and individual field projects with oral presentation (Cabedoche 2013, p. 57).

Having in mind all the before mentioned, the logical reference should be integrated intercultural JMC education, in fact, the implementation of a certain amount of IC content into every BA and MA study programme and mandatory courses on the topic.

Despite tradition and actuality of that type of research in the world, systemic curricula's content of JMC education, particularly regarding ICC, has not been of scientific interest in Slovenia so far.<sup>24</sup> Still, there are university professors engaged in researching IC topics related to education (like Welzer 2016 and others).

Research of the Slovenian study programmes' course titles, done for the needs of the research, reveals that only the Study of Journalism and Media and Communication Studies (Ljubljana) has an obligatory course on the subject (Social and Political Anthropology) connected to this topic. Other study programmes of JMC education plan only optional courses in their curricula. Thus, Mass Communication Study (Maribor) has International and intercultural communication, Media, citizenship, identity and Intercultural space managing as optional courses. Media Studies and Media and Journalism Studies in Ljubljana have respectively one and three optional courses. Even though just systematic courses' content study could determine the IC topics' quality and quantity, the aforementioned findings raise the question of ICC as content of value in education for JMC professionals.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Perspective and Type of Research

Social science, the interpretive and critical viewpoint are three main methodological perspectives in IC research (Oetzel, Pant and Rao 2016). As for this paper, seeking deeper understanding of the particular educational intervention in JMC education, and having in mind the initial understanding of the ICC concept and related meanings as a product of interaction, an interpretive view was suitable.

This is an educational intervention research with a qualitative-evaluative approach. Its primary intention was to provide information about the impact of implementing certain teaching and learning methods in developing ICC in the context of the present JMC education in Slovenia. Those kind of researches, with different extent and complexity, have a long history, dating from the beginning of the 20th century, and are still popular (Pressley, Graham and Harris 2006). Aiming at 'systematic appraisal of the quality of teaching and learning', they are understood as a tool for curriculum development or change (Wilkes and Bligh 1999, p. 1269).

Exploring the phenomenon and interpreting the findings of the research in the contemporary real-world context is a specificity of a case-study research (Yin 2014). Its importance, in this example, lies in the possibility of considering such educational approach for future Slovenian JMC education and an extension of the research either to other universities and study programmes (cross-sectional), a sequence of various semesters or cohorts (longitudinal), both (panel) or even cross-country (Slovenia-Croatia for example).

### 3.2 The Research Question, Subject and Study Goals

The so far applied pedagogy in the optional course International and intercultural communication in the first MA year of Media Communications Study at the University of Maribor resulted mostly in broadening students' IC knowledge and understanding, acquisition of research and analytical skills, as well as the experience of expressing attitudes.

Having that in mind, the question was which ICC categories were targeted by that different method and if they could be valuable in that subject future teaching, indispensable for the local future JMC specialists.

There were two additional research circumstances, connected to the studied course and taken into account when designing the research. Firstly, the fact is that this is the final course at the study connected to IC topics. Secondly, the concrete research about outgoing students' study programme ICC assessment outcomes in Slovenia is so far missing. Those formalities created an opportunity to evaluate with which ICC degree and with what IC characteristics that particular group of students enters the profession. Hence, it was a both programme and student-oriented research with a summative role.

Following that, the central study aims were two folded. Firstly, we wanted to find out the effectiveness and usefulness of specific IC pedagogy applying to JMC education and, subsequently, we were interested in the degree of ICC (knowledge and understanding, skills, attitudes, and awareness through their cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions) students acquired on the overall study programme. That kind of research design entailed two preparation sets: planned IC pedagogy and research methods.

### 3.3 The Research Sample

The educational intervention was piloted on a convenience group of 13 students (nine female and four male students) enrolled in that optional course in the 2016/2017 academic year. It was conducted as a part of an ordinary, university study programme course of a four-month period in the second semester, lasting for nine weeks, from the beginning of March until the end of June 2017.

Besides, the majority were domestic students (12), while one was from Bosnia and Herzegovina. As the domestic ones were from several parts of Slovenia or had relatives in them, an added group characteristic was regional cultural diversity. Regardless of the fact that Slovenia is a small country, it has a variety of regions with different gastronomical specificities, different ethnic population, customs, and characteristic Slovenian dialects, as well as differing multicultural ways of life on the borders with Croatia, Hungary, Austria and Italy. Therefore, an additional feature of the group was its intraculturality.

There were multiple sample units in the research part: individual students or the group (depending on the set aims and in terms of the course pedagogy) ICC, as well as one teaching/learning activity.

### 3.4 Research Phases, Methods and Instruments

#### 3.4.1. Stages of Research

It was a project of a visiting professor as a part of her internationalization mobility programme. With the help of the course-teaching assistant, she completed the research that had been carried out in five stages. First, a basic idea of the research was proposed to the holder- professor of the course. Secondly, complete literature on the subject was collected and elaborated. Further, a detailed draft of the research design was prepared, divided into two basic categories – IC pedagogy and students' ICC. The fourth research stage included the organisation and implementation of the classes and data collection. That was followed by data systematisation and analysis of the results and, finally, describing the research findings by writing this paper.

#### 3.4.2. Research Methods

It can be argued that the main advantage of this research is methodological, data and investigator triangulation, as multiple research techniques were used in collecting data, different data sources were used, and three researchers were involved in data analysis. Triangulation is sometimes problematic, but if properly conducted, educational and other social science legitimate approach aim at increasing the research credibility and validity. Four qualitative research methods - interviewing, observation, questioning and evaluation – along with appertaining instruments, were used in the different research phases.

Data about the two abovementioned subjects – students' acquired ICC and pedagogical methods - were collected during three phases: before, during and after the intervention. For pre-testing, semi-structured interviews were applied; during the intervention, participatory observation, oral reflection/self-reflection, qualitative questionnaires and activity evaluation were used, and as a post-test, a qualitative test combined with written reflection was used.

(1) Semi-structured interviews were firstly used to determine the students' so far gained knowledge and experience on IC education as a part of their current study programme. Further, apart from revealing participants' deeper understandings and meanings of particular teaching units (and interpreting a pallet of group meanings which had arisen during the course) they enabled an insight into the latent content of their psychological - emotional state connected to the IC learning situation, and inclination to different activity types. The combination with a set of data collected by the qualitative questionnaire resulted in significant students' feedbacks about managing the planned and implemented activity types.

(2) In-class participatory observation was based on recording ICC dimension indicators (cognitive, affective and behavioural) through all ICC categories (knowledge and understanding, skill, attitudes and awareness). It provided an insight into their manifested appearances (positive, neutral and negative), essential for regulating teaching activities; those that students weren't aware of or didn't articulate.

(3) Qualitative essay questionnaires were structured across two indicators: students' ICC (four sets of questionnaires' regarding their knowledge and understanding, skills, attitudes and awareness) and features of the course's activities (one questionnaire for students' reflection and self-reflection on the educational experience).

(4) Evaluation of class activities (final written exam and oral feedbacks during the course). Data collected in combination (after every activity, from other qualitative questionnaire sets) with the final written exam, were crucial for the determination of course assessment. Apart from evaluating students' knowledge and understanding, exam and questionnaires were set as written reflections of students' work with which their ICC was documented.

For examining factual knowledge and reflection, the final written exam was constructed in a foreign language (English) a week after the course ended. It consisted of 36 questions organised in four categories - multiple choice and true/false questions, short questions for the examination of factual knowledge, and essay questions for analysing and explaining concepts and their application, as well as problematic tasks resolving imaginary situations. The evaluation of students' ICC (applied for each IC indicator) matched the universal university evaluation process of courses' educational outcomes. The numerical evaluation system was compared to the usual degrees scale of the Bologna ECTS-system as following: 5 (A) - excellent, 4 (B) – very good, 3 (C) - good, 2 (D and E) – sufficient and 1 (F and FX) – insufficient). Besides, INCA (2004) ICC evaluation degrees (basic, intermediate or full) served as a template regarding the overall group evaluation.

### 3.4.3. Planned IC Pedagogy

The course International and Intercultural Communication is the only study course dedicated fully to the IC topic on the Media Communication study programme in Maribor. Even though, IC issues are contextually part of other courses (Interpersonal communication; Media, citizenship, identity; Intercultural space managing; Media politics in society) or professional ones (Public relations; Media communicology and public relations).

Previous groups of students were developing ICC mostly through frontal teaching of courses' thematic units according to syllabus, individual work – writing seminars on the topic of interest, record of teacher's intercultural experiences, discussions, additional lectures on IC topics presented by

foreign professors and IC scientists, film watching, reading scientific and media texts, as well as work on joint projects.

Unlike them, the research group was set in an intercultural educational situation - the professor was from abroad, and the whole course was held bilingually, in English and in Croatian, while the Slovenian language was used only for translation and explanations. It was conducted in 85 hours, from which 15 were for interactive lectures, 55 for different types of activities (from which three hours were intended for the written exam), and 15 for filling in questionnaires.

In combination with the usual teaching and learning methods, new ones were introduced, that way avoiding the inability to adjust. Further, all pedagogical methods, activities, processes and forms were aligned with IC methodical principles and targeted students' ICC dimensions as showed in Table 1.

Experiential learning was applied through the entire course, for it was an IC learning situation. Cooperative and collaborative learning were used for the learning process, and knowledge repetition to find original solutions in different types of activities, and to activate students as teachers for some specific topics, or as translators. Interactive learning was very convenient to develop ICC and understand class dynamics, as the self-regulation process of individual and group students' learning conclusions by applying reasoning through polemics was the main teaching environment. Active learning placed students in the focus through a palette of class activities, as one of the teaching objectives was to imbue the idea that one of the ICC learning outcomes is developing active citizenship. Anchored learning was used when a medium was involved (film, text, oral story or else).

The above described intracultural group features were used to set pedagogical determinants as, according to Gay (2000), overall 'former student's experience' and 'personal styles', especially family experience, as well as all their previous knowledge gained through formal and informal education, are fundamentals in cultural responsible learning (Sablić, Škugor i Malkić 2010, p. 92). Hence, valid teaching is 'to and through' the student's background (Gay 2010, p. 31).

It was particularly used for the individual oral presentation of students' personal history, applying the widely used ABC (Schmidt 1998) and ABCD models (Finkbeiner and Koplin 2001), which aim at creating autobiography as the start for life-long intercultural learning. It also helped in exploring self-image and cultural self-concept (Schmidt and Finkbeiner 2006, p. 6) because memories provide the present self and contemporary society recognition (Mehmedbegović 2010, p. 133).

Table 1 – Planned IC pedagogy

Planning principles	Teaching method	Teaching (I) process	Activities	Learning (I) process	Teaching forms			ICC dimensions
					frontal	individually	in pairs group	
C, An, R	multimedia	problem based I; contextual I; heuristic discourse	film watching	experiential I; cooperative I; anchored I; discovery I			x	K, A, S, AW
C, An, R, Ac	conversation	contextual I	face to face interaction	experiential I; I, by doing	x		x	K, A, S, AW
C, An, R	reading/writing	contextual I; heuristic discourse	reading and analysing IC texts	experiential I; I, by doing; anchored I; discovery I		x	x	K, A, S
E, An, Ac	conversation; reading/writing	contextual I	role playing	experiential I; I, by doing				K, A, S, AW
E, An, Ac, R	conversation	problem based I; contextual I; heuristic discourse	discussion	cooperative I		x	x	K, A, AW
E, An, Ac, R	conversation	problem based I; contextual I; heuristic discourse	debate	experiential I; cooperative I; collaborative I			x	K, A, AW
C, An, Ac, R	demonstration; drawing	problem based I; heuristic discourse	creating abstract IC models	experiential I; cooperative I; I, by doing; collaborative I				K, S, AW
E, An, Ac	conversation; demonstration	problem based I; heuristic discourse; brainstorming	creating IC situations	experiential I; cooperative I			x	S, A, W
E, An, Ac, R	demonstration; writing; conversation	problem based I; heuristic discourse; brainstorming	resolving IC situations	experiential I; I, by doing; cooperative I			x	K, S, A, AW
C, An, R, Ac	demonstration; writing; conversation	problem based I; heuristic discourse; brainstorming	imagining ICC behaviour	experiential I; I, by doing	x			K, S, A, AW
C, An, R, Ac	conversation	contextual I	interactive lecture	experiential I; interactive I; I, by doing			x	K, A, AW
An, R, Ac	conversation	problem based I; contextual I	simulations of IC oral history/ autobiography	experiential I; discovery I; I, by doing; cooperative I			x	K, S, AW
An, R, Ac	conversation	problem based I; contextual I	paratime	experiential I; I, by doing; cooperative I	x			K, A, S, AW
E, Ac, R	demonstration; conversation	problem based I; contextual I			x	x		K, S, AW

Symbols (planning principles): Ac - Action; An - Analysis; C - Comparison; E - Experience; R - Reflection. Symbols (ICC dimensions): A - Attitude; AW - Awareness; K - Knowledge; S - Skill.

4. Key Results and Interpretation

All planned topics were processed through the course: the concept of culture (models and definitions), the communication process in IC, IC conflicts, theories and concepts of IC, cultural value and identity, social categorization and subgroups, stereotypes and prejudice, IC variations (intercultural, intra-cultural, multicultural, cross-cultural, international, cross-border), IC terms and concepts (race, identity, language, acculturation, intercultural adaptation, ethnocentrism, world citizenship and immigration), IC reality perception, international language codes/thinking concepts, nonverbal communication and ICC.

Group members showed different manifestations of the ICC dimension indicators regarding stimulated ICC categories during the educational intervention, as showed in Table 2.

Table 2: Recorded ICC indicators across ICC categories

ICC categories	Manifestation of the ICC dimension indicators		
	Cognitive	Affective	Behavioural
Knowledge and understanding	Short-term concentration; long-term remembering; semi-comprehension; abstract reasoning difficulties; partial recognition of terms; different levels of languages' proficiency; medium level of curiosity; misunderstanding	Impatience; anger; surprise; indifference; discomfort; good feeling	Articulation; silence; non-asking questions; mutual helping; participation
Skill	Comparing; describing; writing; listening; talking; translating; mediating; interpreting; low level of scientific argumentation; creativity; individual and group support	Boredom; indifference; resistance for nonverbal expressing; good sense; grouch	Cooperativity; partial proactivity; freeing in action
Attitudes	Vagueness; simplifying personal expression; individual doubts; group support; open-mindedness; different levels of tolerance; changing perspective difficulty; non-willingness of suspending beliefs	Insecurity; fear of public speaking; delay of personal expression; different levels of self-confidence	Absence from classes; hardly changeable; silence; fast/slow adaptation
Awareness	Low level of self-awareness; Ignorance; partial awareness of external conditions; difficulty in comparing abstract concepts; nonexperience in contemplation	Indifference; confusion; self-intuition; eureka effect	Observation; activities; nonparticipation; opposition; withdrawal; patience

The results are presented regarding the crossover variables. As far as structural evaluation (attendance of classes, participation in certain activities), outcome evaluation (students' overall achievements and developed ICC competencies, satisfaction with the intervention), and process evaluation (students' psychological characteristics; group work characteristics; individual learning styles) are concerned, those findings follow the course chronology.

4.1 Cognitive Dimension

4.1.1 IC Knowledge and Understanding

The level of students' IC knowledge and understanding was examined as it supports other central elements of intercultural

communication competency and is strongly connected with them in the successful development of ICC.

Respondents evaluated their IC knowledge as more theoretical than the one coming out of real situations, mostly referring to politics, general issues, pop culture and social processes from global forces or countries that are nearby (i.e. the European Union). They commonly describe their theoretical knowledge about other countries and cultures as incomplete, weak, or simplified, because they consider in-depth IC knowledge results from experiences. Objectively, participants were at the recognition level regarding main concepts and terms and even though they could exemplify and identify the specific theoretical appearances in the real world intuitively, a lack of grounded arguments was noted (grade C).

As the course continued, the majority showed a high degree of culture specific knowledge (A). They gave adequate examples of values, practices and products used by people who have particular cultural orientation, described different culture features in general or in detail and understood concepts of internal cultural diversity and heterogeneity seeing its positivity, but warning about misbalance, or even frictions, as unwanted effects. In addition, they understood the importance of language as the primary tool for IC, standing for everyone's proficiency for at least one "universal" language (i.e. English). Regarding knowledge of IC in the media and media profession context (grade C) they have had basic experience in analysing IC topics in media content, could describe to a sufficient extent only part of the connections on the related IC topics – media – public, and understand the basic importance of media workers' ICC in media practice. However, they connected those specific topics with the media - their prime source usage, arguing their content focus on certain countries and topics. Travellers warn about the media's simplification of IC processes, media picture of reality, and reality itself, along with stereotypes as its serious consequence. Therefore, they pointed out the importance of gathering information ahead in order to facilitate adaptation and appropriate behaviour in the new environment.

4.1.2. IC Attitudes

As students' attitudes are the basis for new learning, changing and adaptation relating IC, those that respondents have towards interculturality in general, intercultural experience and developing intercultural communication competencies were studied.

Although so far, students have had little experience of learning in the process, there was an incompatibility in making themselves willing and ready to engage in intercultural communication with a higher level of visiting teacher acceptance (grade A) than of educational intervention (grade C). Besides, it is in line with their knowledge of accepting cultural diversity colorfulness as grounds for tolerance, coexistence and changing individuals' lives – on both sides, wherein a culturally diversified environment plays a great role (grade A). It, however, could be a signal that accepting different



persons is easier than accepting unfamiliar circumstances and situations, since issues about self-awareness were raised.

The group is convinced that deep understanding of other cultures, which, among other things, results also out of knowledge, has profound importance in today's world, firstly aiming at improving life quality, (improve IC, avoiding judging, prejudices and conflicts, understanding behaviour, learning new things, suitable answering to constant migrations and mixing of cultures etc.). Consequently, gaining knowledge for IC is easiest if one is observant, adaptable, and able to make conversation, analyse and relate foreign cultural practices, beliefs and values to their own (grade A). A very high acceptance of diversity of views during the educational intervention (grade B) could not indicate the overall IC encounter, as all participants of the educational intervention came from a similar cultural environment. Peculiarly considering the findings show that students partially value cultural views and practice diversity (grade C), particularly regarding oppositional norms/values and beliefs/customs, they generally see violating human and animal rights as a problem, find ethnocentrism repulsive, and there are those who are particularly sensitive to harmful and life violating norms, habits or customs.

Students express their respect for other languages, readiness to learn foreign ones, and willingness to adapt, believing their positive attitude is shown by openness, acceptance and readiness to adjust to the new environment and learn about others (grade A). Even though the majority was or tried to be open-minded, as it is thus easier to understand and accept other cultures, there is a lower degree of understanding the concept of decentralisation from their own perspective as well as the practice of doing it (grade C), accompanied by the sense that it is hard to accomplish or too abstract.

Emphasizing the effort in trying to understand, accept and respect others and their cultural characteristics, they warned it does not mean they are prepared to change their opinion or view (grade E). According to their attitude, results show that respondents adapt their behaviour (in foreign cultures) more easily than change opinions, arguing everyone's right to their own view. Still, the group advocated for adapting instead of conflicting, in that way showing a certain respect towards another's habits and norms (grade B).

Nevertheless, the majority believe culture and personal history are connected, interfering and influencing each other (there is also thinking that personal history is a culture, and vice versa), they showed a high ability of identifying and separating the influences of their culture to their personal history (grade A). Listing a colourful set of examples of differentiations, they were more united at identifying with the culture in traditional cuisine, language, celebration of national holidays, and values. There is also the belief that national culture affects some emotional responses, e.g. cheering for athletes.

#### 4.1.3. IC Skills

Having in mind IC skills are the concrete application of IC knowledge, this IC competency is also an overall indicator of IC behaviour. Skills of discovering, interpreting and relating to information are primary for journalist and media communication professionals. As they usually search for data and information using the media (web, movies/documentaries, books, magazines, social media etc.), or directly (travelling, observing, interpersonal communication etc.) the students tend to compare and relate their own culture with foreign ones rather than interpret the gathered information (grade C).

The importance of not forgetting their own culture while learning about others is stressed, as well as the fact that it is easier to accept cultures that are familiar and closer to ours. Those data match the ones reflecting a high degree (grade A) of willingness, fully or partly, to question the 'normal' in their culture unlike their readiness to suspend so far gained IC beliefs, for they were either partly or not ready and willing to do so, believing it is a very hard task to do (grade C).

Their opinion that linguistic and sociolinguistic skills are the most important skills for IC encounter fits the fact that all of them speak at least one foreign language. When necessary, they also (quite successfully) combine languages, and are consequently able to lead a conversation with a foreigner. Nevertheless, if language becomes a problem, gestures and facial mimics or technology (e.g. mobile phone) are options (grade A). Considering 'grammar isn't important, but initiative', learning a few basic phrases in the local language is an advantage.

Emphasising language proficiency as a prerequisite, there is also an agreement about spending a longer period in another country as the ideal IC learning and understanding approach. It is consistent with students' positive overall evaluation of different pedagogy implementation for developing ICC, above all, because they got what they have felt lacking in classes so far - building new knowledge through IC experience. The group saw advantages of IC learning through a real IC situation, as experiencing different world-views, participating in practical IC situations and broadening horizons. In this context, willingness to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty that comes with intercultural encounter is also a group specificity (grade A). Yet, and even though a lot of them saw it as an opportunity to improve their foreign language, they were used to having lectures in Slovene, they marked language as a common difficulty; some needed additional time to adapt to a foreign one (English/Croatian).

Believing that to be critical and rethink or question things connected to culture (either their own or foreign) is an important skill, the majority estimated themselves as skilled for critically evaluating beliefs, values, practices, discourses and products, including those associated with their own culture. Objectively, their critical skills were intermediate (grade C).

#### 4.1.4. IC awareness

Awareness means to think about the self in relation to everything else in the world (things, people, and thoughts) (Fantini 2009). IC awareness, as a grounding for IC interaction, comes out of reflection and introspection, which occurs when an individual compares its native culture with another one (Fantini 2000). Self-understanding is thereby of key importance.

Even though students mostly see themselves as self-aware because they reflect a lot, they show a basic level of (grade D) self-awareness during the educational intervention. It is also registered that they are usually aware of their appearance. Even though some are still at the starting point of thinking about the self in relation to other things and people in the world, most students regularly think about their identity (grade C).

A high level of awareness regarding other cultures' worldviews was also noted (grade A). It is absolutely 'logical' and 'self-evident' that different cultural backgrounds have different worldviews, as 'it is clear that there is no universal worldview'. They see worldviews conditioned by different historical events or circumstances, religion, environment, language, media, etc. signalling their high level of meta-understanding of reality. Vitaly, they are aware that beside language proficiency, IC critical thinking, evaluating beliefs, values, practices, discourses and products and re-questioning are exceptionally important IC skills, like, for instance, acquisition and processing of information (grade A).

#### 4.2 Affective Dimension

There were three types of differences considering students' emotions in an IC situation. There were those who did not have problems with these kinds of encounters, describing themselves as open and communicative, relaxed and positive, stating language as their main question for effectiveness. There were also those reluctant to expose themselves in groups or unfamiliar situations, or those who generally avoid these situations, feeling fear or insecurity. At first, some feel somewhat awkward, reserved, or they freeze, mainly because of low English proficiency, and are unsure of mutual understanding or appropriate behaviour, but through time, it gets easier, and they relax. More than half of the respondents were concerned about self- presentation, take time to overcome shyness in new situations and are usually attentive to their inner feelings.

As the course progressed, and they had more or less adapted to the new educational situation, they were, each time, coping more successfully with negative emotions they felt about public speaking and revealing personal things in public (grade B), even though they were not aware of it. A high level of individual perseverance and courage (grade A), enabled the group to complete the course successfully. That could be illustrated with a personal triumph at the end of the course - the one that had the biggest adaptation problems, low level of language proficiency, abstract understanding, and felt anxiety when asked to speak publicly about his/her attitudes, and yet

completed the most difficult tasks adequately. Every obstacle they managed to solve as a group motivated them to proceed to the next level (grade A). The most negative individual emotion that appeared during the intervention was anger, and the most positive one was happiness.

#### 4.3 Behavioural Dimension

In general, the group dynamic depended on the nature of activities; when connected with new learning methods, it was lower than in a familiar learning situation (from grade D to A). Although the group emphasized teaching and learning in foreign languages as the main obstacle, the central observed problematic was not so much the articulation of their thoughts or attitudes, as the fact that the intervention (an intercultural experience and carefully chosen methods they were not used to, or even familiar with) constantly demanded their active presence.

Regardless of it, the non-recorded necessity for asking questions about ICC topics during the whole course (grade D) is indicative considering the nature of media work, even though they find themselves very curious about their own histories, customs and rituals, language, life- views, and traditional cuisine.

Since only a few of them have had real intercultural experiences previously, the group altogether had was in no condition to stay concentrated and be active the whole time (for three hours on average) (grade C), even though activities were divided carefully into smaller units. Further, results show respondents adapted their behaviour more easily (in foreign culture) than changed opinions, arguing everyone's right to their own view (grade C). Still, the group advocated for adapting and assimilating instead of conflicting, in that way showing respect towards another's habits and norms. Since one of the media-work features is changeable work occasions, this case reminds of how training in intercultural conditions is valuable. Cognitive proactivity was mostly prominent in activities connected to developing IC skills (grade A). Besides, the group's overall major problem of participating in and completing nonverbal activities (grade D), their scientific argumentation was weak (grade D), which draws attention to the essential nature of that particular skill in key phases of media work processes.

#### 4.4 Outcome of ICC Learning Activities

Students showed most interest and greatest results in activities implying cooperative and collaborative learning (grade A), and the lowest interest and lowermost results in learning by doing and discovery learning activities (grade C). It is understandable, considering it is easier

to cope in a real educational IC situation as a group than as an individual, which got the group closer by helping each other with understanding and translating a concept and words (grade A), and those who could help felt good. Reasonably, the overall group grade for creating and resolving IC cases, as learning by doing, was graded the best (grade A). Difficulties they faced

when they needed to involve themselves actively in discovering and reflection, were in-depth thinking and articulating their thoughts, showing their feelings, and talking about their identity and themselves in public was demanded (grade C). At the same time, role-playing activities weren't too successful (grade D), which is accordant with the received mixed reviews. Respondents either found it useful and amusing (experience stays longer in our mind; fun and fast way of learning; brings new dynamic in class and takes us out of the comfort zone; forces you to start thinking differently, because you are acting from a different position than normally; active participation in lectures and forced to think out of the box), or pointless (inappropriate way; the use of stereotypes, because you aren't familiar with culture you need to represent; you forget about the learning aspect, because you live in your roles too much; not useful; don't see how this role-playing connects me with intercultural communication; unnecessary and useless at our level of study).

Learning activities, which stimulated abstract thinking and imagination, had a better grade - C as the course continued and the best - B, at the end of it. Lower overall participation results were recorded when asked to complete tasks at home (individual discovery learning), that way preparing for the next meeting (grade D), than to in-class activities results (grade C). They seek opportunities to discover new cultures mostly using media sources. While only some of them actually travel, all want 'direct personal contact' and 'meeting with locals' only when travelling (grade D). They are partly finding ways of IC engagement and cooperativity whether in their own or foreign country and see themselves generally more passive toward proactivity in their local environment.

As they were used to anchored learning (text, documentary etc.) there is no surprise about the most positively evaluated watching/analysing/discussing films/documentaries, describing it as a useful learning activity for improving intercultural attitudes, enabling students to process a broader spectrum of knowledge and analyse things from different points of view. However, that is in discrepancy with the group showing no particular interest in those activities (moreover partial boredom and non-participation was recorded) and gained no significant results from completing them (grade C). An important record regarding contextual learning showed negligible results in activities aiming at connecting IC topics and media/journalism (grade D), bearing in mind the study programme they were enrolled in.

Finally, the group showed no particular self-confidence considering contextual knowledge and skills. The real situation is, here, inconsistent with their self-reflection results: having low self-belief in their interpersonal IC skills.

#### 4.4.1 Final Exam

The written exam showed students' outcomes after completion of the educational intervention. At the end of the first term, it was passed by 62 % of the group (8 students or 2/3rd of the group), with mean value of all passed exams of 63 % (grade C).

Those results signalled that even though they had most difficulties with questions about factual knowledge, analysing, explaining and resolving problems was very successful. That corresponds to their quite productive participation at the course (grade C), very high understanding of selected topics (grade B), and a high level of creativity on the intercultural problematic issue (grade A). There were four objective challenges, which mark the course:

- Students were placed at a partially intercultural situation
- Participating actively in the course meant a certain degree of Croatian and English language proficiency
- The methodical structure of the course differed from the one students were used to
- The exam was taken as a part of the course (thus, the students were not given the usual time of a month or so for learning by literature).

Calculating them, the overall written exam results could be evaluated higher, as grade B.

## 5. Conclusion

As interculturality is our reality, ICC should now more than ever be an essential part of journalists and mass media professionals' competencies. It is because they are responsible for creating a socially non-judgmental, free of prejudice and stigmatisation content and should be able to influence others' attitudes and worldviews positively. Therefore, subjects dealing with (inter)cultural communication in media and journalism study programmes are mandatory.

The main aim of this article was to present the results of an educational intervention research with a qualitative approach examining the effectiveness and usefulness of different teaching/learning methods and in-class activities and an evaluation of a mass communication students' ICC degree. The research was conducted in an 85 hours long optional course International and Intercultural Communication, with a group of 13 students. The visiting teacher held interactive lectures in three languages (Slovenian, English and Croatian) and group and individual exercises were implemented such as film watching, text reading, role-playing, debate/discussion, face-to-face interaction, case studies, simulations, oral history, pantomime, individual exploration/introspection etc. Four research methods were used - participatory observation, semi-structured interviews during classes, qualitative questionnaires and evaluation of class activities and students' ICC. It was about studying implemented pedagogy features and students' ICC as the overall study programme outcome in four main categories (knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness) through their cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions. This research was a one-case study and our goal was never to generalise findings. The idea was to induce an important debate about ICC in the field of JMC education in Slovenia and Croatia by raising different questions and developing grounds for further investigation.

The analysis has shown that all participants appreciate cultural diversity and are open and willing to learn about it. They entered the course with a small degree of IC theoretical knowledge, but recognising the main concepts and terms, and were able intuitively to give examples and identify the specific theoretical appearances in the real world, but lacking the ability to give grounded arguments. Respondents evaluated their IC knowledge as more theoretical than coming out of real situations. However, they showed a very high level of awareness regarding other cultures' worldviews, as every one of them believed there was no such thing as a universal worldview.

Results regarding the new educational approach showed that the group's overall major problems were active participation, completion of nonverbal activities and scientific argumentation. As the course progressed participants slowly, but successfully adapted to the new educational situation and gained IC knowledge. Each week they were better in coping with negative emotions that accompanied public speaking and revealing personal things in public. It is believed the reason for successful adaptation could also be found in the high level of perseverance and courage of certain individuals that motivated other participants, and positively influenced group work. In addition, every obstacle they've managed to solve as a group motivated them to proceed on to the next level. Consequently, they were mostly interested, and had best results in activities which included cooperative and collaborative learning as these got the group closer by helping each other with understanding concepts.

Key findings of our main research goal – examination of the effectiveness of different learning methods in ICC learning – are that group progress and dynamic depended on the nature of the activities. Participants stated they had most problems with articulation of their thoughts or attitudes and use of foreign languages. It was hard for them to discover, reflect and articulate their thoughts, show their feelings, and talk about their identity. However, our analysis showed the central observed problem was their active presence, which was demanded constantly by the intervention (an intercultural experience and carefully chosen methods they were not used to, or even familiar with at all).

Even though activities were divided carefully into smaller units, participants had difficulty staying concentrated and being active the whole time. Role-playing activities had the lowest rate of success, as well as those which demanded home tasks and preparing for the next meeting (individual learning). Activities that stimulated abstract thinking and imagination weren't very well liked at the beginning, but got better grades as the course continued, and the best at the end of it. Even though students evaluated watching video content and post-watching discussions as the most positive and useful activity, our observation and analysis showed the opposite. We recorded partial boredom and non-participation in these activities, and no significant effect of this learning method.

The following features characterise the ICC competencies of the researched group, future JMC professionals:

- Basic – theoretical knowledge; flexibility to change attitudes, opinions and views; self- belief; curiosity; readiness to suspend beliefs; decentring; re-questioning phenomenon; public speaking; proactivity and self-reflection; critical skills and IC awareness; self- awareness.
- Intermediate – abstract thinking, concentration on IC tasks; behaviour adaptation; valuing and practicing diversity; language proficiency.
- Full – knowledge of sociolinguistic skills, cultural specific knowledge, foreign cultural awareness; resource usefulness, bravery, persistence, adaptability, collaborativeness and cooperativeness, requisitioning externalities, acceptance of different persons; creativity.

Conclusively, a few key things for future (re)thinking of including developing intercultural communication competences in JMC education could bridge such outcomes of the above reviewed successful educational intervention:

- IC subjects as obligatory courses;
- IC situation in-campus;
- Activities of learning by doing (in particular those which encourage a student's nonverbal communication);
- A diapason of contextual IC learning (especially those developing IC contextual skills);
- Media practice in minorities/subcultures, or other media reflecting social categorization;
- IC pilot projects in the local environment activated by students;
- Different languages` usage;
- An IC field trip.

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