



**SPIRAL**

*School-teacher Professionalisation:  
Intercultural Resources And Languages*



# RECOMMENDATIONS



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# INTRO DUCTION

## How to use this ebook? .....

This ebook is the fifth and last output of the SPIRAL project. The project aims at strengthening the quality of teacher-training programmes for primary school teachers by facilitating the integration of a placement period abroad during the teachers' initial training.

The ebook contains information, data, messages and tools produced during three years by participating institutions. It aims at providing the project's target audiences with key messages and recommendations backed by data gathered through research.

This ebook is organized in a way that, depending on who you are, you are directly pointed to the results and messages that may be of interest for you. Nevertheless, we invite you to read the ebook in its entirety.

**> To get started, go to the next page and click on the relevant profile.**





# I WHO ARE YOU?

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## I am a teacher trainer or a teacher-training institution

A teacher-training institution usually offers teacher-education programmes and certifications. They provide both professional and disciplinary teachings for future teachers. Teacher-trainers are individuals working in these organisations. They deliver courses within teacher training/development programmes.

You recognize your profile or your organisation's profile in this description?

[Please click here to see what we have in store for you.](#)

## I am a student/future teacher or a teacher

The SPIRAL project is specifically aimed at future primary school teachers. Nevertheless, students registered in secondary school teacher-education programmes may also be interested by the SPIRAL project. Also, teachers teaching in primary schools, as potential hosts for teachers-trainees will find tools of interest within this ebook.

You recognize your profile or your organisation's profile in this description?

[Please click here to see what we have in store for you.](#)

## I am a policymaker

A policymaker is a person responsible for or involved in formulating policies. In the SPIRAL context, they are individuals who have the authority to set or to influence the policy framework of the educational system, in particular with regards to teacher training provision. Of course, this includes members of European, national and regional parliaments, or members of executive authorities. It also includes civil servants working on educational issues. On a wider scale, teachers' and students' trade unions, lobbies, and networks can also be considered policymaking institutions, provided that they work on and may influence the policy framework of the educational system.

You recognize your profile or your organisation's profile in this description?

[Please click here to see what we have in store for you.](#)

## a. You are a teacher-trainer or a training institution

- > You want to know more about **the SPIRAL project.**
- > You want to know more about **the SPIRAL partners.**
- > You want to know more about **the SPIRAL results.**

As a teacher trainer, we think you should be especially interested in three of our recommendations:

- > **Training curricula for future teachers should be internationalised through the enabling of mobility periods**
- > **Funding schemes for short-term mobilities must be secured**
- > **Academic recognition of placements is essential**

You will find relevant data supporting our recommendations here:

- > **On teachers' confidence in including multilingual awareness, languages and cultural awareness in their teaching**
- > **On increasing linguistic competences**
- > **On increasing intercultural competences**
- > **On observing different professional values**
- > **On discovering new/different pedagogical practices**
- > **On benefits for host teachers and pupils**
- > **On whether a placement abroad should be compulsory**
- > **On the necessity of funding**
- > **On relevant length of placements**
- > **On the amount of extra work represented by a placement and the recognition of such placement**
- > **On informal recognition**
- > **On recognition in other teacher training mobility schemes**

We believe the following tools can help you organise beneficial placements abroad for both students and host schools:

- > **The SPIRAL Virtual Learning Environment**
- > **The SPIRAL competence cards**
- > **The quality charter**
- > **The SPIRAL Formative Assessment Grid**

- > You want to access **all the SPIRAL results**

## b. You are a student/future teacher

- > You want to know more about **the SPIRAL project.**
- > You want to know more about **the SPIRAL partners.**
- > You want to know more about **the SPIRAL results.**

As a future teacher, we think you should be interested in one of our recommendations:

- > **Training curricula for future teachers should be internationalised through the enabling of mobility period**

You will find relevant data supporting our recommendations here:

- > **On teachers' confidence in including multilingual awareness, languages and cultural awareness in their teaching**
- > **On increasing linguistic competences**
- > **On increasing intercultural competences**
- > **On observing different professional values**
- > **On discovering new/different pedagogical practices**
- > **On benefits for host teachers and pupils**
- > **On whether a placement abroad should be compulsory**

We believe the following tools can help you organise beneficial placements abroad for both students and host schools:

- > **The SPIRAL Virtual Learning Environment**
- > **The SPIRAL competence cards**
- > **The SPIRAL mobility Guides**

- > You want to access **all the SPIRAL results**

## c. You are a policymaker

- > You want to know more about **the SPIRAL project.**
- > You want to know more about **the SPIRAL partners.**
- > You want to know more about **the SPIRAL results.**

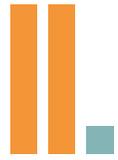
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- > **On the necessity of funding**
- > **On relevant length of placements**
- > **On the amount of extra work represented by a placement and the recognition of such placement**
- > **On informal recognition**
- > **On recognition in other teacher training mobility schemes**





# THE SPIRAL PROJECT



## a. What is the project about?

The SPIRAL project aims at strengthening the quality of teacher-training programmes for primary school teachers in the participating European countries by proposing a placement framework that allows each university to integrate a common reference framework compiled of evaluation grids, quality charters, competence cards, and mobility guides and adapt these tools to their own country's standards and procedures while maintaining the best practices determined during the project's life cycle.

Project partners also wish to inspire further countries to carry out a similar initiative by the activities undertaken and the results achieved. As a result of mobility periods abroad undertaken by both staff and trainee teachers on this project, the quality of primary school teacher-training programmes in participating European Higher Education Institutions (HEI) has been reinforced via the sharing of best practices for the classroom and the updating of necessary skills for teaching at primary school level in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

It is increasingly necessary to respond to the changing landscape of the teaching profession in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and to equip universities and young graduates with the required professional, linguistic, and intercultural tools for the modernisation of primary school teacher-training programmes. The partners of this project, all experts in the fields of teacher-training, language pedagogy and curriculum reform are confident that they have embarked on a worthwhile strategic partnership that set the bar high in terms of innovative practices in teacher-training programmes across Europe.

Graduates will have the required training to be able to respect the objective set by the Barcelona Council of March 2002, which called for the teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age and have received training in intercultural fields previous unavailable to their peers.

### **Cross-border cooperation has taken a multitude of forms in the current project:**

- A wide-ranging situational survey on cross-training programmes in the 5 participating European countries,
- A common European reference framework,
- A European online learning platform developed by experts from different European universities,
- A Mobility Impact Study by all project partners based on mobility periods carried out by trainee teachers in Europe,

- **Policy recommendations** on both national and European levels, written collaboratively by all partners.

Furthermore, the mobility initiative for a selected number of teacher-trainers and trainee teachers, taking place in each year of the project, has enabled each partner to better understand how to fine-tune their primary school teacher-training programmes and incorporate a mobility into their curricula in order to make them as relevant and demanding as possible to meet the needs of the teaching profession today and in the future. These short-term mobility periods took place between each of the 5 European countries participating in the SPIRAL project.

The objective of the teacher-trainer mobility is to provide certified teachers with further insight into the specificities of the educational system and evaluation and assessment modalities in teacher-training programmes of other European countries. This training, which was delivered by colleagues of project partners to a public composed of teachers from partner universities once per year and also paved the way for discussion on the common reference framework, thus providing an opportunity for feedback on the tools developed within the project.

A selected number of trainee teachers undertook a 2-week mobility period in a partner university. This intercultural experience has been beneficial to both the trainee and the teaching establishments as the trainees were assessed by a foreign trainer which allowed to test the tools developed as part of the common reference framework. Consequently, the trainees gained confidence in a professional intercultural and multilingual setting and returned to their home countries with reinforced skills.

The previously mentioned Barcelona Council of March 2002 also called for the improvement of the mastery of basic skills. The SPIRAL project aims to use innovative methods in the forms of blended learning and an online learning platform made available to both trainers and trainees and the universities at large. Both trainees and trainers have been afforded the opportunity to hone their basic and transversal skills throughout the SPIRAL project. Transversal skills such as linguistic competences and initiative-taking shall be greatly developed through the learning and training activities.

[> Click here to go back to the “Who are you?” page](#)

## b. Who are we?

The consortium, through its principal partners, associate partners and advisory board, includes a varied range of institutions, academic partners, networks and schools, all having experience in the field of teacher training.

Trusted academic partners with a history of international collaboration were chosen based on a track-record of mutual respect, shared research interests and common objectives regarding teacher training and continuous professional development.

**The SPIRAL Consortium is composed of seven partner institutions:**

### Centre international d'études pédagogiques



Founded in 1945, and a national public institution since 1987, the Centre international d'études pédagogiques (CIEP) is recognised both in France and abroad for its skills with regard to expert evaluation, training, assessment, and management of international projects. The CIEP is a key public operator under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Research. It then is a public institution of reference on an international level, in the field of education and training. Its primary mission is to promote French expertise on the subject.

### Université Paris-Sorbonne



The “ESPE Paris” is the University Paris Sorbonne’s School of Education and the University’s primary school teacher-training institute. It was officially created in September 2013 to replace the former “IUFM” (Institut universitaire de formation des maîtres), a school which was in charge of teacher training but was independent from universities. In partnership with all Paris-based universities, the “ESPE” offers and delivers Master’s degree programmes in teacher education which are profession, recruitment, and research oriented. It is also in charge of teachers’ continuing professional development (CPD) within the Paris local education authority.

### Université de Caen – Normandie



Caen ESPE (Higher School for Teaching and Education) was created like all French ESPEs in 2013 as an evolution of the former IUFMs and following the creation of a Master's degree demand initiated in 2010 and complementary to the competitive exam necessary to become a school teacher in France. Caen ESPE is a higher education institute fully affiliated to the University of Caen Lower-Normandy. Its main partners are the local offices of education (Caen regional educational authorities and Caen Education Inspectorate), schools (pre-primary, primary, lower and upper secondary) and local and international partners. In January 2015 there were 1,179 students enrolled (561 in year 1 of the MEEF Master's degree including 260 specializing in primary education and 591 in year 2 including 264 specializing in primary education).

### University of Brighton



The University of Brighton's School of Education is one of the UK's largest providers of education and training for teachers and other learning and development professionals. Its courses and its research span all phases of learning and development, from the early years through to adult education. We've been educating teachers for more than 100 years and have a permanent teaching and research team of more than 90 experts. At any time, we have around 2,500 students registered on courses of undergraduate and postgraduate teacher education and CPD and the academic study of education. The SoE works in partnership with schools across the South East of England.

### Universidad de Alcalá



The Normal School for Teachers of the University of Alcalá (UAH), now the Faculty of Education of the same, was founded at the Convent of Saint John, Guadalajara, on the 29th of October, 1842. It is therefore, one of the oldest Higher Education Schools for Teachers in Spain (last year we celebrated its 175th anniversary). Since then it has been committed to excellence in the training of our future kindergarten, primary school, and adult education teachers and to research in every relevant field pertaining to education. The Faculty of Education of the UAH is involved in a variety of European and International partnerships (the SPIRAL Project being one such partnership) and welcomes hundreds of international students every year to its undergraduate and post-graduate teacher-training courses.

### Hogeschool van Arnhem en Nijmegen



The Faculty of Education of HAN University of Applied Sciences is committed to training passionate teachers who are ready to educate the next generation. They are professionals who are skilled in teaching and research, who have learned to embed computer technology into their teaching and who are aware of their mission in an ever-changing environment that reaches beyond the region of the Netherlands and has a direct effect on learning in schools. We train over 4000 teachers for primary and secondary education. Our training is done with a view to the development of children, youth and adults in a complex society. As an educational institution, we also facilitate 'lifelong learning' in our region. We are a dynamic organisation in a challenging environment. We also have developed a minor programme for teachers to specialize in bilingual education in Primary as well as in Secondary education.

### Universität Hamburg



Universität Hamburg was founded in 1919. It is the largest research and educational institution in northern Germany. The Faculty of Education has 5 areas of research and 60 Professors. Together, these departments offer teacher education for primary education, secondary education, professional schools and for special pedagogy/needs. The Spiral team integrates the Department of Languages and Aesthetic Disciplines Education (Romance Languages teacher education) which is committed to several European research and intervention plans, focusing on language and teacher education, mainly in the fields of interculturality and multilingualism.

[> Click here to go back to the "Who are you?" page](#)

### c. What are the SPIRAL results?

The SPIRAL project has five main results called “outputs”. They are available online, both on [the project website](#) and on the [Erasmus+ Project Results Platform](#).

- **Output 1** contains a view on the content and modes of delivery of cross-training programmes for trainee teachers within SPIRAL partner countries.

- **Output 2** is a tool elaborated for trainees, trainers and teacher-training institutions with postgraduate teacher-training programmes in Europe. It consists of a guide comprised of practical tools. It aims at facilitating the integration of mobility periods in cross-training teacher-training programmes.

**The common reference framework comes with several annexes:**

- [SPIRAL competence cards](#)
- [Guides for placements](#) in Paris and Caen (France), Brighton (United Kingdom), Alcalá de Henares (Spain), Nijmegen (The Netherlands) and Hamburg (Germany)
- [A formative assessment grid](#)

- **Output 3** is an online training platform containing training modules in order to prepare trainee teachers and their trainers to a mobility period abroad.

- **Output 4** studies the impact of that mobility and of cross-border cooperation on the profile of the teaching professions.

- **You are currently reading Output 5.** This output aims at elaborating recommendations based on the results of the previous outputs. Within this ebook, you will find excerpts from all the project’s outputs. If you are interested in knowing more about methodology, or want to get into details of the results, you can click on the URLs placed above to access the entire outputs.

> [Click here to go back to the “Who are you?” page](#)





# III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on three years of international cooperation which included the placement of 90 students in foreign classrooms and the exchange of 15 teacher trainers as well as on the results of the project which stem from a thorough investigation of the impact of such mobilities, the SPIRAL partners wish to deliver recommendations. These address the needs of future primary school teachers with the aim of strengthening the quality of their initial training programmes in order to respond to the changing landscape of the teaching profession in the 21st century and to equip young graduates with the required professional, linguistic and intercultural tools for the modernisation of primary school.

Even though future teachers are the main beneficiaries of the SPIRAL project, the following recommendations are aimed at various stakeholders, as action is needed at different levels, from local training institutions to higher authorities both at national and European level.

## a. Training curricula for future teachers should be internationalised through the enabling of mobility periods

This recommendation represents the project's main conclusion. Based on the results from the SPIRAL situational survey and impact study, all partners strongly recommend policy-makers and teacher training institutions to internationalise the curriculum of future primary-school teachers through the enabling of mobility periods.

**The SPIRAL project has allowed partners to send 90 students abroad for wo-week placements in a school. The data collected clearly shows that these mobilities are beneficial for teachers:**

- Mobilities **increase future teachers' confidence** in including multilingual awareness, languages and cultural awareness in their teaching.
- Particularly, **these mobilities** have a positive impact on:
  - > **Linguistic competences**
  - > **Intercultural awareness**
  - > **Professional values**
  - > **Pedagogical practices**

Our research also shows placing students in foreign schools is also **beneficial for host teachers and pupils**. Their offer new and fresh perspectives on teaching to host teachers. They are an opportunity to internationalise pupils' curriculum and they create the possibility of ongoing links with teachers in different countries.

The SPIRAL partners recognise that it is unlikely that all trainee teachers can, or want to, take part in such a mobility. Added to that is the financial impracticality of making subsidised mobilities compulsory for all trainee teachers. SPIRAL research shows that there is **disagreement among students over whether such placements should be compulsory**. It then seems important to explore and develop the potential to extend the benefits of placements abroad to those unwilling or unable to participate in such mobilities.

As an example, students participating in mobilities of the SPIRAL type can be a resource for such internationalisation of the curriculum for those that do not participate. This can be facilitated by new technologies. Through the SPIRAL **online training platform**, students on mobilities can keep a video diary to share with fellow students on their return. There could also be live podcasts from students on placement, for example interviewing a teacher and talking about pedagogical differences they have observed.

Many initiatives exist. Some have been tested by SPIRAL partners such as **"Global understanding"** and **"Internationalisation @ home"**. The European Commission also offers support through its **Erasmus+ virtual exchange** and **eTwinning** platforms.

> [Click here to go back to the "Who are you?" page](#)

## b. Funding schemes for short-term mobilities must be secured

**Our research** shows that the funded nature of a mobility programme is an important consideration for students in terms of their own participation and in terms of equality of opportunity for all students.

Unfortunately, funding schemes for short term mobilities do not exist. This precludes future teachers from benefiting from the possibility of discovering different professional values and pedagogical practices and improving their **intercultural and linguistic competences**. Throughout Europe, their curriculum is often too dense to undertake longer mobilities without hindering their chances of getting their diploma without delay.

As of now, the shortest mobility scheme funded for higher education students by **the Erasmus+ programme** has a minimum duration of 3 months<sup>1</sup>. At the dawn of the preparation of the new European Commission's Programme for education that will succeed Erasmus+ in 2021, it appears to the SPIRAL partners that the most relevant step towards upscaling the internationalisation of teacher training would be the creation of a new funding scheme allowing short-term mobilities for future teachers. This scheme should encompass mobilities ranging from two weeks to one month as **SPIRAL research shows** that this is the most convenient length for pre-service teachers.

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## c. Academic recognition of placements is essential

**SPIRAL research** clearly shows that academic recognition of placements abroad is essential to their success. Students go through a lot of effort with the **SPIRAL training platform** in order to maximise the benefits of their mobilities. The fact these efforts are not officially recognised **decreases the value of the mobility scheme**, according to them. Granting recognition would mean allocating relevant time for students to benefit from mobilities.

In **other cross-training programmes** analysed by the SPIRAL consortium, such mobilities are rarely recognised. When they are, it is thanks to local or case by case arrangements. A

notable exception may be observed in the Netherlands – this is the case at the University of Arnhem and Nijmegen – where ECTS are credited to students undertaking an international experience.

Even where there was no possibility for formal institutional recognition, students **could see the potential of a placement abroad for enhancing their CV**. Obviously, this is not enough to ensure the sustainability of such a mobility scheme.

Eventually, recognising common and relevant competences developed abroad through ECTS is not that difficult when it comes to trainee teachers. The common reference framework, built by SPIRAL partners, and especially **the competence framework**, show that there is more than significant overlapping between national teacher curricula. These similarities facilitate **the recognition of European placements**. This represents an interesting finding that was not primarily considered by the project partners: there are sufficient common grounds in teacher training provision across Europe to envisage placing trainee teachers abroad and, in the same time, there are enough national specificities, in terms of professional values and pedagogical practices to make the placement relevant and actually very beneficial for students, host teachers and pupils.

The SPIRAL partners highly recommend giving placed students ECTS in recognition of the competences acquired or reinforced abroad. The **formative assessment grid** developed during the project can be a first notation base. Another handful of ECTS could be awarded based on the **online platform** assignments completed by students.

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<sup>1</sup> Erasmus+ Programme Guide, Version 1 (2018), European Commission, 25 October 2017, p.35



# IV. TOOLS

During the timeframe of the SPIRAL project, the partners developed several tools so that, provided that their recommendations are considered, organising placements abroad for future primary school teachers is at the same time:

- Easy and framed for training institutions,
- Beneficial, both for students and host schools.

These tools are presented below and aim at encompassing all the dimensions of a mobility scheme, from administrative organisation by sending and hosting institutions to final recognition. Training modules and activities to perform by students before during and after the placement are also proposed.

## a. SPIRAL Virtual learning environment

The idea of developing modules for trainee primary school teachers emerged as a core component of the SPIRAL project, as well as that of offering these modules online, so that partner institutions would be free to integrate them as they wished in their training programmes (in blended learning or fully online formats). The overall objective of the modules is to frame and enhance trainee teachers' mobility periods abroad by helping them develop their intercultural competence in a professional context and turn them into more than simple "intercultural speakers" (Byram & Zarate, 1997: 11), that is intercultural teachers. Indeed, SPIRAL partners didn't simply want their typical primary school teacher to be "someone who has an ability to interact with 'others', to accept other perspectives and perceptions of the world, to mediate between different perspectives, to be conscious of their evaluations of difference" (ibid: 11) but someone who has an ability to act with others for professional purposes.

In line with Huber and Reynolds (2014: 17), SPIRAL partners believe that "an individual's intercultural competence is never complete but can always be enriched still further from continuing experience of different kinds of intercultural encounter". This is why the training offered is not only theoretical but includes real-life professional encounters as part of mobility periods abroad. In a nutshell and as recommended in previous research, the SPIRAL modules "include experience, comparison, analysis, reflection and action" (Huber & Reynolds, 2014: 29) and comprise three phases: before, during and after the mobility period. As teacher education is now delivered as part of master's degree programmes in some of the partner countries, the online modules integrate a research dimension. In addition, the modules aim at helping trainee teachers develop specific professional competences that may only be developed while experiencing a placement abroad, as identified by the SPIRAL partners and spelt out as competence cards.

The SPIRAL modules have been designed with a view to being delivered on blended learning mode which includes face-to-face sessions as well as online activities. The mobility period is at the heart of the blended training offered, as shown in the following chronology.

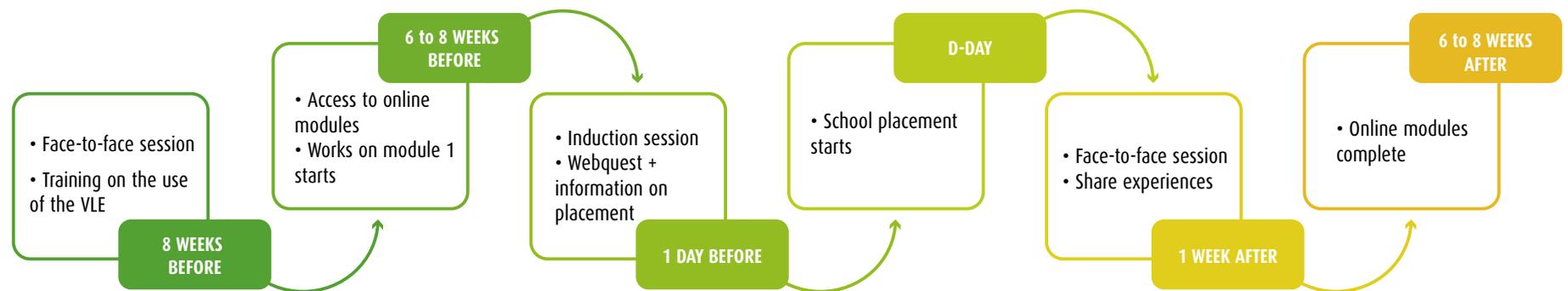


Figure 1: SPIRAL module chronology

The overall objective of the training modules is to frame and enhance the mobility experience.

Five learning pathways have been developed in that respect, one for each of the project's host countries for mobility periods (France, England, Spain, Germany and The Netherlands). Each learning pathway consists of three modules related to their time of delivery: **before, during and after the mobility period.**

The overall structure of the learning pathways follows that of scientific enquiry: from the competence cards, trainee teachers explore their initial perception of/assumptions about teaching in the host country (before the mobility period), then form hypotheses and put them to the test (during the school placement), and eventually go beyond their preconceptions and alter their initial assumptions (during and after the mobility period).

- After an initial self-assessment task based on the common competence cards identified by the SPIRAL partners, **module 1 (before the mobility period)** encourages trainee teachers to explore their own views of their future host-country's education system, to reflect upon the notion of "intercultural competence" by reading research papers and to start preparing for their mobility period through interactions with their future host school.

- **Module 2 (during the mobility period)** mainly aims at helping trainee teachers collect appropriate data while on placement as it invites them to explore themes related to the specific competence cards they have chosen to focus on (following the result of their

self-assessment) and therefore focus on a number of observable elements.

- Finally, **module 3 (after the mobility period)** aims at helping trainee teachers reflect upon the whole experience using the data collected in module 2 and to identify specific gains from the SPIRAL training they have received (modules + mobility period).

The SPIRAL impact study shows that these modules help **frame and enhance the mobility experience.**

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## b. SPIRAL competence cards

For the competences developed by trainee teachers during their placement abroad to be recognised in their home country, it is necessary to set up **standard procedures** allowing results obtained abroad to be **immediately transferable** to the home institution systems. A SPIRAL competence framework, describing all the competences that can be developed by trainee teachers during their placement in any country is **a first step towards this standardization**. It formalises a common international understanding of what the competences to be developed and assessed are.

Furthermore, this framework is seen as an effective tool to support **future teachers' engagement** in competence development. It also forms a basis for the planning and provision of the **SPIRAL placements**.

The framework encompasses four competence domains and a total of **16 competences** and is based upon European and national competences frameworks for teachers.

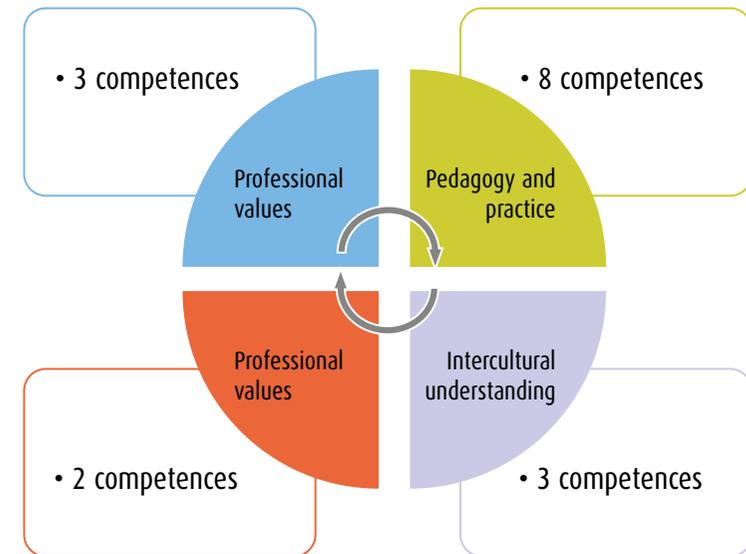


Figure 2: SPIRAL Competence Framework

More information on methodology can be found in the **complete deliverable**.

The competence cards forming the competence framework are intended to be used as a basis for **the assessment of a training period abroad**. Participating students are encouraged to choose which specific competences they want to focus on in addition to card D3 "Promoting cultural understanding" which is compulsory for all of them; student teachers will therefore come up with their **own individual pathway**, depending on the competences they have chosen to focus on.

<b>Competence domain</b>	<b>D</b>	Intercultural understanding
<b>Competence title</b>	<b>D.3</b>	Promoting intercultural understanding
<b>Competence description</b>	I encourage intercultural respect and understanding	
<b>National references</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU-EC18 Promote mobility and co-operation in Europe</li> <li>• EU-EC19 Encourage intercultural respect and understanding</li> <li>• EU-TGC11 appreciation of diversity</li> </ul>	

Figure 3: SPIRAL Competence Card D3

Access the SPIRAL competence cards [here](#).

> [Click here to go back to the “Who are you?” page](#)

### c. SPIRAL mobility guides

SPIRAL Partners have elaborated [mobility guides](#) for incoming students. They are meant to be disseminated to students prior to their placement abroad. Together with the preparation activities the students may carry out using the SPIRAL [online modules](#), these guides allow them to get familiar with the [educational system](#) of the country they are placed in. Guides have been created for host universities participating in SPIRAL. However, guides all follow the same structure and are very easily replicable in other languages, should another institution want to [experiment cross-training programmes](#).

Find here guides to:

- > [The UK](#)
- > [France](#)
- > [The Netherlands](#)
- > [Germany](#)
- > [Spain](#)

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### d. Quality charter

In order for students to benefit most from their placement abroad, it is important that sending and receiving institutions agree on different aspects of the mobility. The SPIRAL consortium thus advises institutions willing to include a placement abroad within [the curriculum of trainee teachers](#), to agree on and sign a quality charter with the host institution. The European quality charter for mobility defines [10 quality aspects](#) that need to be addressed when preparing an international mobility:

#### 1. Information and guidance:

Potential candidates for mobility will have equal access, at all levels, to reliable sources of information and guidance for mobility and the conditions in which it can be taken up. Among other things, clear information will be provided on each of the points contained in this Charter, about the role and tasks of the sending and hosting organisations and about the various education and training systems.

#### 2. Learning plan:

Before undertaking mobility for education or training purposes, a learning plan, taking account of linguistic preparation, will be drawn up and agreed by the sending and hosting organisations and the participants. A learning plan is particularly important in the case of long-term mobility and may also be useful in the case of short-term mobility. The plan should outline the objectives and expected learning outcomes, as well as how these will be achieved and implemented. Any significant modification of the learning plan will be agreed by all parties. When drawing up the learning plan, the issues of reintegration into the home country and evaluation will be borne in mind.

#### 3. Personalisation:

Mobility undertaken for education or training purposes will fit in as much as possible with the personal learning pathways, skills and motivation of the participants, and will develop or supplement them.

#### 4. General preparation:

Prior preparation of the participants is advisable and will be tailored to their specific needs. It will include linguistic, pedagogical, administrative, legal, personal and cultural aspects, and information on financial aspects, as necessary.

### 5. Linguistic aspects:

Language skills are important for effective learning, intercultural communication and a better understanding of the host country's culture. Participants, and their sending and hosting organisations, will pay special attention to appropriate linguistic preparation. Wherever possible, mobility arrangements should include: language assessment before departure and an opportunity to follow courses in the language of the host country and/or the language of instruction, if different in the host country, linguistic support and advice.

### 6. Logistical support:

Where necessary, adequate logistical support will be provided to the participants. This could include information and assistance concerning travel arrangements, insurance, residence or work permits, social security, the portability of government grants and loans from the country of origin to the host country, accommodation, and any other practical aspects, including safety issues relevant to their stay, as appropriate.

### 7. Mentoring:

The hosting organisation (educational establishment, youth organisation, company, etc.) will provide schemes such as mentoring to advise participants and help with their effective integration into the host environment and will act as a contact point for obtaining ongoing assistance.

### 8. Recognition:

If a study or placement period abroad is an integral part of a formal study or training programme, this fact will be stated in the learning plan, and participants will be provided with assistance to facilitate recognition and certification, where appropriate. In the learning plan, the sending organisation will undertake to recognise successful periods of mobility. For other types of mobility, and particularly those in the context of non-formal education and training, an appropriate document will be issued so that the participant is able to demonstrate his or her active participation and learning outcomes in a satisfactory and credible way. In this context, the use of the Europass will be encouraged.

### 9. Reintegration and evaluation:

On return to the home country, particularly after long-term mobility, participants will be given guidance on how to make use of competences and skills acquired during the stay.

Where necessary, help with reintegration into the social, educational or professional environment of the home country will be made available to people returning after long-term mobility. The experience gained will be properly evaluated by participants, together with the organisations responsible, to assess whether the aims of the learning plan have been met.

### 10. Commitments and responsibilities:

The responsibilities arising from these quality criteria will be agreed by the sending and hosting organisations and the participants. They will preferably be confirmed in writing, so that responsibilities are clear to all concerned.

In case **both** sending and hosting universities **hold an Erasmus+ charter**, these should already be covered. It then can be interesting for participating institutions to go into **more detail** if required.

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## e. SPIRAL Formative assessment grid

Assessing the development of teachers' competences is important because it "*can support a transformation in teaching culture and practice [and] permit the recognition of the competences acquired or developed*" (Supporting teacher competence development for better learning outcomes European Commission, 2013: 36).

The **SPIRAL formative assessment grid** ensures that trainee teachers are **actively engaged** with the objectives of the placement and that they are correctly monitored by host teachers. It provides **useful support** for the home institution to get an overview of the work carried out during the placement. Its use is only recommended as each university or country might already have assessment processes **dedicated to placed student**. In this case, they should feel free to use their own. It is important, however, that at some point the sending institution can **learn about the performance** of its student abroad.

SPIRAL partners have compared their needs in terms of assessment and have agreed **formative feedback** is the most relevant form of assessment for placements such as **SPIRAL ones**. Indeed, there was the right balance to be found between the needs in terms

of assessment for an international placement and procedures and frameworks already implemented at national level. The short project's timeframe did not allow participating institutions to create an official assessment framework that would have allowed formal recognition of the time spent abroad. However, it is with that objective in mind that partners have built a **formative assessment grid**. It allows **fair, transparent, and comparable assessment** across different national educational systems.

It focuses on future teachers' skills and attitudes. It gives home institutions the possibility, if wanted and depending on their own assessment framework, to go further with summative assessment, notably by evaluating the essays written by students as part of the tasks they are asked to carry out on the **virtual training platform**.

In this context, the formative assessment grid proposed **here** is very helpful and easy to use.

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V.



DATA

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The following data stems from two SPIRAL research-oriented outputs:

- **Output 1:** Situational survey on cross-training programmes for teachers,
- **Output 5:** Impact study on SPIRAL mobilities

During the three years of the SPIRAL project, 90 students and 15 of their trainers were sent abroad, respectively for a 2-week placement in a classroom and for a training week with peers. Most of the data below ensues from their feedback.

For more information (methodology and detailed results) on the quantitative and qualitative analyses carried out by the SPIRAL partners, you may want to read the entire outputs on [the project's website](#).

## a. On teachers' confidence in including multilingual awareness, languages and cultural awareness in their teaching

An important aspect of the placements in primary schools in partner countries was the potential for impact on trainee teachers' views on [the importance of including one or more foreign languages in their teaching](#), of multilingual awareness, and of cultural awareness in their teaching.

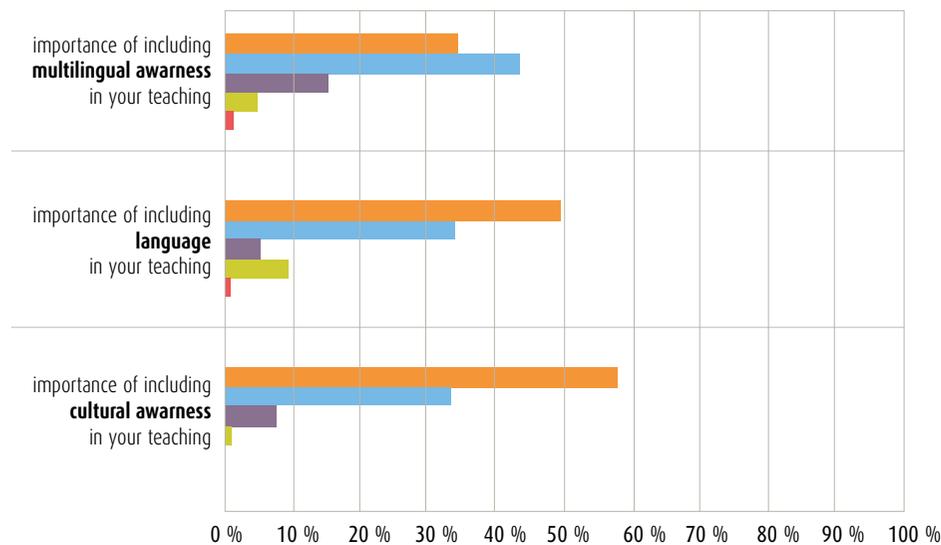


Table 1: Pre-placement importance of including multilingual awareness, languages, cultural awareness.  
(1= not at all important 6= extremely important)

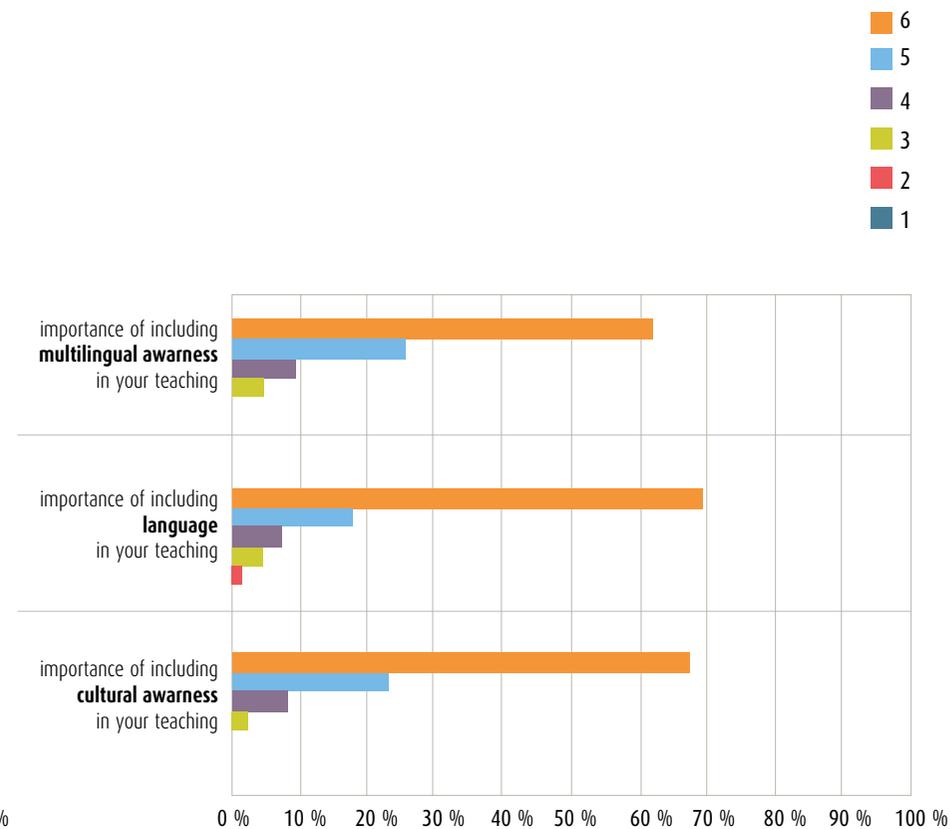


Table 2: Post-placement importance of including multilingual awareness, languages, cultural awareness.  
(1= not at all important 6= extremely important)

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## b. On increasing linguistic competences

There was a recognition that the placement helped improve [the students' language skills](#).

*"Regarding English skills, you acquire much more vocabulary –even with just 15 days."*

*"suddenly I could pick up on a few words and start to, not understand what they were saying but get the gist of the conversation."*

Often this was a question of developing [greater confidence](#).

*"we talked so much English during our stay, I can speak German, but everyone preferred to speak English!, and it went that far that when we were talking to one another we started in English... even think in English. And last week I had to teach an English lesson, and my English had improved so much! In my own secondary education I was so afraid to speak English,... and now I spoke so much English that my fear has almost gone and I dare to teach English in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade! So my self-confidence has grown enormously!"*

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## c. On increasing intercultural competences

There was a strong consensus amongst the participating students about [the value of placements abroad](#) to teacher education.

*"you really have to help teachers go on a mobility because education doesn't stop at the French borders and that education is a European issue, a worldwide one."*

*"If you want to teach children about global citizenship and things like cultural awareness, I think it is essential you have experienced that yourself."*

*"Lisa and Lucile talked to each other in Spanish ... Lisa and I sometimes tried to speak*

*German and also in English and that was interesting too as far as interculturality is concerned. The language three people use to exchange, two who speak the same language and who didn't speak to the third person with the same language ... that was definitely interesting."*

Many students also experienced what it meant to study in a language you do not know. They gained [empathy towards pupils who are not native speakers](#).

*"I truly don't speak a word French, so I didn't understand a bit. I just didn't know what they were talking about and then it crossed my mind how difficult it must be for children in our schools who don't speak Dutch. It takes a while before they can understand what you are saying."*

*"I think it would definitely help me with teaching children with EAL because that's essentially what I was there. I had no clue what anyone was saying and you realise how much gestures and facial expressions help. And also, just the pace as well. When obviously they're fluent, like, I can't understand a thing they're saying but if it's slower you might pick up on key words. Just thinking about how you talk to people."*

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## d. On observing different professional values

[Reflexions on pedagogical styles](#) were also associated with broader discussions of classroom climate and relationships. Students often compared the level of curriculum demand:

*"we demand a lot of our French pupils compared to Spanish pupils and there, there is a lot of 'dead time' - they spent two hours on a father's day card. We would never do that."*

*"For us it was the opposite, we found the English system too demanding, with the levels of demand in maths for example, they start on learning fractions very early, their multiplication tables."*

The experience sometime provoked reflections on [wider cultural and professional issues](#).

*“Here in the Netherlands as a teacher you just don’t touch children, and for sure don’t kiss them but over there it’s quite normal to hug and kiss a child.”*

*“It’s something cultural to touch and kiss one another frequently, more than we are used to and also by people you’re not really close to. It was really amazing to see the effect of that on children.”*

*“To come back to caring ... well in our school you could feel love and care. It was even for everybody the teachers were very close whereas I think in France we put up barriers because we’re worried about what parents might think about our relationships with the children.”*

Consistent with this was the commonly shared view that the placement enabled a more [critical perspective](#) on their own [education system and education practice](#).

*“[...] from the [teacher education] institute you only hear what they think is the right way to do things. But now I realize there are more ways because I’ve seen how they do things differently abroad and it also works out fine.”*

*“it’s important to go and look elsewhere to become aware of our own education system, to take a step back from the French system and to try and find pedagogical solutions which might be more appropriate for pupils from abroad.”*

*“I think it’s just different. I don’t know if I could necessarily say it was better or worse because from my perspective maybe it is worse but I’ve been trained to do it differently but the children still learnt, they still understood. So in terms of the children learning I think it’s just different and there are different ways to get the same results.”*

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## e. On discovering new/different pedagogical practices

Another important opportunity offered by a mobility was the possibility to [discover different pedagogical practices](#). For instance, practices in terms of foreign language teaching

in their host school which drew both positive and negative comparisons:

*“I do think in terms of a bilingual approach as well, we got to see how that works [...] we could see a different way to teach other languages. And that immersive approach to teaching languages, like we can see the pros and cons of that. And how like it was a [...] really, really good thing because obviously their level of English was far, far better than any primary school child’s level of Spanish.”*

*“In our placement school, for instance, they only included about 45 minutes for foreign language classes per week, so I think there should be more time for children to practice. Maybe because English is the universal language they don’t really care to teach other languages.”*

In all the focus groups there was extensive commentary on observed differences in pedagogy and particularly between [more active and group-work or individualised pedagogies](#) and [more passive text-book based pedagogies](#).

*“...we were both really struck by how the children would just sit and listen happily, just seemed to take it in and learn. But in England we’re, we’re taught like if you have a lesson and the children just sit there for an hour, it’s not a good lesson.”*

*“they’re more autonomous, especially as they really learn together, it’s really a socio-constructivist approach; classes are always noisy, but this noise is always positive, whereas in France, we’re a lot more controlling; this is how the exercise is organised, this is how it has to be done, and as soon as there is a bit too much noise, it is considered as chaos and the class as unruly, whereas in England, this is not the case [...]. And in fact, they learn better.”*

*“Well, what I was struck by is the fact that they don’t use textbooks at all! It’s the complete opposite to us because we use it (the textbook) too much. So, I think that it should be used somewhere in between; not too much nor too little... It should just be an aid in class. And I’ve learned how to deal with some issues in class and how to approach certain matters without leaning on the textbook...”*

Another area of comparison which was the focus of much commentary was the use (or not) of [digital technologies](#).

*“Well related to our practice is the use of digital technology because we observed an impressive use of digital tools; they have a digital white board in every class, they have everything they need to work, tablets, computer suites for several classes, they really have a lot of things and they use it a lot, sometimes a bit too much.”*

*“there was a digital schoolboard, but it was broken. There were no iPads, just a few outdated PC’s. and they weren’t really used at all, but still the achievement level was really high so it was very interesting to see those achievements without modern devices... in the Netherlands we really focus on using ICT in our education but this makes you question if that’s an improvement.”*

*“ it made me re-evaluate our way of using ICT devices. In the school I visited there weren’t beamers or digital blackboards but only the old fashioned overhead projectors with sheets... after a while I realized, you don’t really need it... so since my return I take a critical attitude towards the use of the digital blackboard. I’ve realized that bringing real object into the classroom and let children touch the objects is way more effective than watching a video on the subject.”*

There was a clear consensus amongst students that they had observed [pedagogical and classroom practices](#) which were of direct relevance to their own professional practice.

*“I’ve been able to learn things [...] I’ve been able to apply those things at school here. For example, the way in the lessons are taught in Brighton is very dynamic. The children always work in groups and the teacher is constantly giving them things to do – they even have debates and the children participate in them!”*

*“[...] we found the fact that they use text books for everything really shocking. I think we would all agree though that after seeing how much work they have compared to us [...] we sort of realised that maybe all of our lessons don’t have to be amazing and have all this [teacher designed] input” - “having that [better] balance [between teacher designed input and] pre-prepared lessons that you didn’t have to spend hours resourcing yourself and differentiating yourself [...] yeah we need a laid back Spanish approach to everything.”*

Whether or not the pedagogy and classroom practice was viewed positively, it was seen as useful in [helping student teachers clarify their views](#).

*“It enabled me to fine-tune my approach to teaching. I liked most of what is done in England which reinforced the opinion I had on the teaching profession.”*

Consistent with this was the commonly shared view that the placement enabled [a more critical perspective](#) on their own education system and education practice.

*“[...] from the [teacher education] institute you only hear what they think is the right way to do things. But now I realize there are more ways because I’ve seen how they do things differently abroad and it also works out fine.”*

*“it’s important to go and look elsewhere to become aware of our own education system, to take a step back from the French system and to try and find pedagogical solutions which might be more appropriate for pupils from abroad.” (Student, Paris)*

*“I think it’s just different. I don’t know if I could necessarily say it was better or worse because from my perspective maybe it is worse but I’ve been trained to do it differently but the children still learnt, they still understood. So in terms of the children learning I think it’s just different and there are different ways to get the same results.”*

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## f. On benefits for host teachers and pupils

There was a consensus among participating students that whilst they were the main beneficiaries from the SPIRAL project [there were benefits for host-schools and pupils too](#).

*“just being there and talking to the children, and interacting with them, and being able to, I guess, help with the teacher’s subject knowledge. There were quite a few times when we were there and they were like, ‘Oh, is this is it correct to say this? Is this how you would say it?’ Because most of their conversation assistants were American I think they liked to have another perspective of a native English speaker.”*

In some cases, trainees on placement were able to make [explicit links](#) between the pupils in the host schools and pupils in a placement school in their own country.

*“I managed a small project letting [the pupils] sing a song in Dutch from the Lion King which will connect them the kids from my Dutch placement school, who learned the song in French. I filmed both events so in that way I managed to connect the children from both schools in different countries.”*

This can also be observed among host teachers. There was an overall consensus from participating schools that the placements are of benefit to the school, they supported the [development of intercultural understanding and positive attitudes amongst staff](#), students were able to [support bilingual children](#), and meeting native speakers helps all children in terms of [language skills](#) and understanding there are people in the world who speak [other languages](#).

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## g. On whether a placement abroad should be compulsory

Whilst the benefits of a placement were universally agreed, there was disagreement over whether [such placements should be compulsory](#).

*“If you want to teach children about global citizenship and things like cultural awareness, I think it is essential you have experienced that yourself”*

*“I think everyone should have the chance to do it but, because there are also many people who don't want to go abroad, it should be kept as a voluntary choice.”*

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## h. On the necessity of funding

Our research shows the funded nature of the programme is an [important consideration](#) for students in terms of their [own participation](#) and in terms of [equality of opportunity](#) for all students.

*“In advance we didn't know what was all being paid for. We guessed the train ticket, so that made some difference, because it was all quite expensive. If I had to pay for it myself, I would have had doubts about going....”*

*“There are a lot of students who can't do a placement abroad because of the financial aspects. So, there should be more promotion for projects like this where the exchange is financed.”*

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## i. On relevant length of placements

According to our situational survey on cross-training programmes, suggested durations for the placement ranged from two weeks to one month with most participants suggesting that [4 weeks would be ideal](#).

Although students generally found the placement too short, for some it was the brevity of the SPIRAL placement, [when compared to longer ERASMUS exchanges](#), which was the attraction:

*“I chose this minor because I didn't want to go abroad for six months, but I would like the option of being here and going abroad for a shorter period. So, when I was offered this opportunity, why not?”*

*“It was short but at least we were able to do it within our PostGraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) year - anything any longer would have been impossible.”*

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## j. On the amount of extra work represented by a placement and the recognition of such placement

Students felt that the effort they put into the online activities was [insufficiently acknowledged and valued](#) either by the host school or their own institution.

*“...the fact that no attention was paid to the assignments we put a lot of effort in, was kind of disappointing.”*

*“...but it’s true that it requires a lot of work and with everything else we have to do for the competitive exam, what with the orals and the written papers, the various projects on new technologies, there is so much to do.”*

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## k. On informal recognition

Even where there was no possibility for formal institutional recognition, students could see the potential for [enhancing their CV](#).

*“I’m going to put it on my e-portfolio and reflect on it as placement experience because it, there’s areas on our e-portfolio where you can just write things. Definitely because I think although it’s technically not relevant because it’s not about the English National Curriculum, it’s relevant for my own personal pedagogy. Like I’ve learnt about the way people teach in a different country, and it’s helped me understand my own teaching.”*

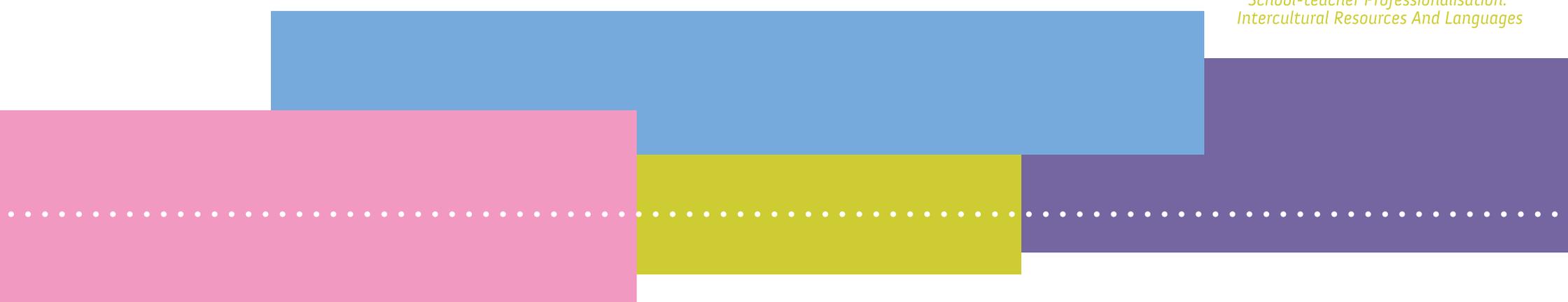
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## l. On recognition in other teacher training mobility schemes

Respondents to the [SPIRAL survey](#) were asked if sending institutions recognised teacher-training time spent in foreign countries. About [58% of them answered with yes](#) to this question. Nevertheless, [more than two-thirds of these](#) failed to answer when asked to describe how these mobilities were recognised.

Closer analysis actually suggests that recognition of teacher training mobility schemes, where they exist, [is rarely granted](#). When it is, it is through local arrangements or by assimilating the mobility scheme to another recognised scheme (internship), which is not entirely satisfying. A notable exception may be observed in The Netherlands where students are granted ECTS when undertaking any kind of international mobility.

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# SPIRAL

*School-teacher Professionalisation:  
Intercultural Resources And Languages*