

“They should want to be internationally mobile”: From mobility prescriptions *for* to engagement *with* immobilised students in times of Covid-19.

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Abstract

This article critically reflects on the ways that the global pandemic has influenced internationalisation practices in teacher education. As a case study, we discuss the setting-up phase of the ‘trans-campus’, a digital Internationalisation at Home (IaH) project in teacher education at Europa-Universität Flensburg (Germany). The difficulties related to Covid-19 travel restrictions have exposed the limitations of institution-driven internationalisation as the persuasive ‘recruitment’ of a minority of students to perform a cosmopolitan ideal of transnational mobilities and intercultural exposure. Instead, general immobilisation has inspired us to re-conceptualise IaH as a bottom-up scheme that shifts focus to the ‘immobile’ majority of students, taking its starting point in the valorisation of domestic diversities. Our emerging ‘trans-campus’ for multimodal experimentation within the Initial Teacher Education curriculum explicitly addresses the vast majority of non-mobile domestic students to form a common digital space based on each student’s individual being in the world. Instead of ‘convincing’ students to go abroad, we create a platform that enables students to reflect on their experiences during school internships and interaction with peers. This gradually allows us to shift the pre-pandemic institutional discourse around internationalisation towards a concrete platform for proximity and dialogue through which we address students as partners in the renegotiation of horizontal belongings, not as performers of exclusive mobilities. A student-centered perspective on ‘domestic internationalisation’ implies to step out of our own comfort zones as internationally educated staff and enable a non-prescriptive continuum between “the global citizen at home and the local citizen abroad” (Beelen et al., 2016, p. 169).

Keywords:

Internationalisation at Home; (im-)mobility; digital place of learning; trans-campus

Context

Introduction

This article critically reflects on the ways how the global pandemic has influenced the setting-up phase of the ‘trans-campus’, a digital Internationalisation at Home (IaH) project in teacher education at Europa-University Flensburg in Germany. The difficulties related to Covid-19 travel restrictions have exposed the limitations of institution-driven internationalisation as the persuasive ‘recruitment’ of a minority of students to perform a cosmopolitan ideal of transnational mobilities and intercultural exposure. As conventional patterns of mobility were halted, we have tried to investigate the prevailing immobility around us. The global pandemic has inspired us to re-conceptualise IaH as a bottom-up scheme that shifts focus to the immobilised majority of students, taking its starting point in the valorisation of engagements with local diversities. Taking student teachers from geography at our university as a case study, we reflect how the effects of the pandemic have allowed the authors to refocus on student’s experiences of diversity in different contexts – beyond international mobility – a horizontal perspective that had not been that prominent on our agenda before Covid-19.

Internationalisation of HE during Covid-19: challenges and opportunities

Covid-19 has obliged university institutions to reduce or pause mobility schemes. This disruption has rendered major issues of internationalisation of Higher Education (HE) more visible. But this pause was also an opportunity to critically question the dominant prescriptive undertones in our own conviction as internationally connected researchers when we address our students – assuming that ‘they should want to be internationally mobile’. An uncritical promotion of student mobility as the primal source of diversity experience can run the risk to sustain a projection and idealised idea of what internationalisation implies, rather than what internationalisation actually entails for students in their own contexts.

The current discourse on internationalisation in HE is strongly driven by a neoliberal logic of competition (Knight & de Wit, 2018). It therefore does not necessarily coincide with students’ goals and aspirations – and may even result in students’ resistance to internationalisation (Harrison, 2015). In this reasoning, internationally ambitious universities try to increase international student mobility numbers through incentives and persuasion. As we will discuss below, in case of our university, a relatively low rate of outgoing students among student teachers led to an intensification of IaH and digitalisation efforts.

Going back to the initial goals of internationalisation – student mobility with the intention to enable diversity experiences in a foreign country – our concern is to revise this quantitative and strategic model of internationalisation and to reimagine intercultural student engagement as starting in students’ own motivations and aspirations. We therefore question the predominant practice of looking at statistics on ‘outgoings’ and ‘incomings’, while reframing it in its original bottom-up idea of transnational student mobility enabling individual experiences of cultural diversity. Our approach then seeks to explore what happens when the pre-established template for ‘formal’ internationalisation is removed. We acknowledge the extensive body of

literature around intercultural learning and global citizenship (e.g. Bamber, 2020; Leask, 2016) that informs and inspires this debate based on a cosmopolitan ideal, but we deliberately zoom into local and individual contexts in order to investigate the internationalisation debate from the framework of student-centeredness. In order to find novel ways to engage with students, irrespective of where they experience diversity, we now shift the focus of our laH framework as follows: A student-led perspective on domestic internationalisation implies to enable a non-prescriptive continuum between “the global citizen at home and the local citizen abroad” (Beelen et al., 2016, p. 169).

Internationalisation at Home: laudable intentions and implementation gaps

There is a growing interest in laH within the debates about internationalisation in HE. laH expands the predominant focus on transnational student mobility through the idea to internationalise the academic everyday life. This often means redesigning the curriculum as well as enabling individual professionalisation and acquisition of transcultural competences in a globalized world (Leutwyler, 2013, p. 9; de Wit and Altbach, 2021, p. 29).

laH can be defined as “the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments” (Beelen and Jones, 2015). According to Harrison (2015) laH stresses the idea of the democratisation of transnational experience in internationalisation efforts. Whereas the access to international mobility programmes was – and still is – often reserved to a small, often financially and educationally privileged minority of students, laH efforts were “intended, inter alia, to offer a democratisation of the benefits of internationalisation to a much wider segment of society (Harrison, 2015, p. 414). This supposed horizontality implies that internationalisation permeates the institutional routines and that different stakeholders ‘breathe’ the diversity of the world in an eclectic multitude of formal, informal and non-formal occasions, all the time and not only with like-minded peers.

laH is not to be considered a form of ‘mobility light’, a compensatory replacement offer for domestically bounded student populations in order not to feel left out. If laH was functionally driven to lure students out of their alleged ‘nests’, we might potentially overlook that this nest is far from a homogenous, diversity-averse lifeworld. Indeed, the constant deficit-focus that implies compensatory efforts of our students to reduce their ‘lacks’ and catch up with the world is problematic if we want to engage with students’ positive resources rather than their alleged shortcomings. In this perspective internationalisation, if reduced to a narrow vision of transnational student mobility, is not very student-centered, let alone student-led, in its definition and acceptance of diversity. While the vision of internationalising as a bridge between local and global runs like an imaginary horizon through the scholarly literature, critical voices have pointed at a massive discrepancy: the local-to-global ambitions do not translate easily into a qualitative provision of meaningful intercultural experience for individual students and members of staff:

“The concept of ‘internationalisation at home’ is partially founded on a belief that shared spaces can lead to improved intercultural skills and understanding. However, [...] more work is needed to provide a managed context in which intercultural encounters are positive, meaningful and non-threatening. At present,

it would appear that home students are not being engaged with and that this is a clear challenge to ‘internationalisation at home’.” (Harrison & Peacock, 2010, p. 897)

According to Knight (2015) laH sits in a continuum between home and abroad and the aim is to connect both in novel ways. Even though internationalisation in HE evolves around the two pillars of ‘at-home’ and ‘cross-border’, they are not necessarily conceptualised as polarities:

“Many notionally home students will have been born in another country and have a minority language as their first, potentially feeling at odds with the prevailing majority culture. Conversely, some international students may be so only in terms of formal definitions, perhaps sharing many aspects of culture, heritage and language with the country in which they are studying.” (Harrison, 2015, p. 413)

Gaps in the scholarly literature point at the need to conceptualise the notion of ‘at home’ in laH from the bottom up, rather than institutionally top-down, in order to initiate participatory processual practices. A horizontal engagement with domestic diversity can help to build communities of practice informed by concerns of access, participation and social justice rather than input, prescriptiveness and an idealised global habitus.

Moving from the abstract theory to practice, the concrete application of such conceptualisations still lacks behind. In several studies, “a gap between the laudable intention and the reality on the ground” (Harrison & Peacock, 2010, p. 897) can be observed. Some of these very real challenges are now described from our own experience.

Internationalisation of HE at Europa-Universität Flensburg (Germany)

Firstly, it is important to situate our case study and experiences in a specific national and regional context of HE. As the most northern university of Germany, our university can be described as a peripheral institution proudly wearing its name as one of the two ‘Europa’-universities of the country, located very close to the Danish border.

The project we describe is embedded in a wider collaborative research framework of the two major institutions for teacher education in the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein (OLaD@SH), focusing on digitalisation and internationalisation in university teaching. The ‘trans-campus’, the sub-project led by our department of geography, was initially much more focused on building digitalisation infrastructure for internationalisation than on a precise student engagement plan. This is because the project was conceived alongside a university-wide drive for digitalisation that started well before Covid-19. Due to the sudden necessity to shift all teaching online during Covid-19, the digital infrastructure that was meant to be developed during the project suddenly became its starting point, since the digital turn in education had invaded everyday practices of teaching and learning. Starting summer 2020, we used the liberated space and time of not having to develop digital infrastructure in order to shift our attention to new concerns and adapt the first project phase to the new context of Covid-19.

Internationalisation at EUF has distinct characteristics due to the fact that most of its degree programmes focus on teacher education. In principle, student mobility lies at

the heart of most German universities' internationalisation efforts, but notably in teacher education, much lower percentages of student mobilities are reported than in other study programmes (Baedorf, 2015; Kercher and Schifferings, 2019). Regarding the German context, Ahlgrimm et al. (2019, p. 221f.) identify two specific reasons for the low student mobilities in teacher education programmes. Firstly, students in teacher education study two school subjects plus complementary elements like educational studies, psychology, sociology, or alike. The specific structure of combining two subjects for secondary school teaching makes it difficult to move between national systems, sometimes even between federal states within Germany. The offers at international partner universities rarely meet the German accreditation requirements. Secondly, the study programmes are separated according to different school forms. This mobility barrier refers to the distinction between segregated and hierarchised secondary schools.

These specific restrictions may result in a perception of going abroad as a complicated endeavour for German student teachers as they fear – despite increased transferability and validation efforts on the side of international offices – that they will encounter difficulties obtaining credit points during stays abroad, and thus often opt to stay at home (Woisch and Willige, 2015).

At Europa-Universität Flensburg, incentives for mobility have been integrated into the undergraduate and postgraduate study programmes, including semester-long Erasmus exchanges and school placement abroad. Albeit university-wide, there is limited data available, recent figures confirm the low uptake of such mobility opportunities: Concerning participation in long-term semester exchange programmes like Erasmus only 2.6% (n=149) of the undergraduate students spent a semester abroad during winter term 2019/2020 (EUF, 2021, p. 45). These numbers do not include short-term mobilities such as excursions, summer schools or intensive programmes.

In the relevant Master of Education, the mandatory school placement for a three month internship is the most common form of international mobility. But here, too, students predominantly remain in the immediate region, or rather in the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein: During winter term 2016/2017 a total of 24 students left Germany for an internship abroad (7.1%), just as only 15 students (4.4%) decided in favour of an internship in one of the fifteen other federal states of Germany (Winkel, 2017, p. 4). In Germany, education policy is organised on the level of the individual federal states, therefore, the distinction here is important, as even choosing the school placement in another federal state means that students must overcome barriers of a slightly different education system. More recent figures point to an increase in the percentage of students deciding to spend the school placement abroad – even during the Covid-19 pandemic: During winter term 2019/2020 their number went up to 36 students (9.3%) while in the following winter term 2020/2021 it reached 33 (9.7%) (Pollmanns et al., 2021, p. 5).

Our reflections on the 'trans-campus' during the Covid-19 pause has led us to a shift from imagining internationalisation *for* students to imagining internationalisation *with* students through a digital place of learning. This also means making more space for students' own life worlds. The 'trans-campus' project follows the processual shift in the literature from input to outcomes and the emphasis from staff-designed activity to learner-centered environments. As studies in student engagement suggest, students are frequently underestimated by academic staff when not given their own space

(Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019). IaH then needs to be imagined more as an experiential environment rather than the design of obligatory and prescriptive activity.

In light of internationalisation efforts, we chose for our 'trans-campus' project to elaborate on one specific course in the study programme: the seminar accompanying the school placement in the Master of Education. While students spend approximately three months in schools as student teachers, they are accompanied by seminars in which they meet once every two to three weeks. These seminars are held at the university and meant to be a forum to dialogically reflect on the everyday school experiences during the internship from a more theoretical subject-oriented framework. Those students who chose to spend their school internship outside of Schleswig-Holstein – either in another German federal state or outside of Germany – do not have to take part in the seminar activities.

The initially set goal of the 'trans-campus' project was to integrate these transnational 'pioneers' in order to have their individual experiences from other school systems as an additional and diverse input. In the sense of IaH, this goal was expanded during the course of the project in order to include all students' teaching experiences, independently from the geographical location of the school they were placed in the reflection of these experiences were pursued throughout the redesigned seminar sessions.

As described above, the global Covid-19 pandemic had a huge impact on the digitalisation progress and, as we will show in the following, this led to a re-thinking of place-based student teacher experiences of diversity.

Conceptualising the impact of Covid-19: acceleration, immobilisation, pausing

A Covid-19 catapult: processes of institutional digitalisation

Firstly, we want to situate our observations about the global pandemic in the processes of institutional digitalisation which have occurred due to the shifts in teaching models. As briefly mentioned above, the 'trans-campus' project had been taken by surprise, if not to say overtaken, when it comes to the initially scheduled setting-up of digitalisation infrastructure. In 2020, within several months, the university invested in an online teaching infrastructure that we hoped to set up in our own pace and with attention to detail, until 2023. Where we had expected to work within a timeframe of years, the digital teaching inventory now 'popped up' during time-compressed months characterised by a mode of urgency and radical adaptation to technology.

This time cannot be characterised as focused on the 'how to?' of digitalisation but driven by the time-pressed 'when is it up-and-running?' for instantly available online teaching. The strategic axis for digitalisation in HE, something that had already been on the agenda but not so much on the immediate priority spot, was significantly accelerated through Covid-19. While the start of our project was delayed due to the pandemic disruptions, some of our technological targets were significantly achieved before even having started the research project. This infrastructure was rolled out across the whole university in a spectacular effort to be ready for crisis online teaching but did not emerge from within our internal project dynamic. The accompanying research into these technologies that we had imagined needed to be done in retrospect. This raised the question of the future significance behind our now ticked-

off technology goals and outcomes. While we felt 'out of place' in comparison with the project's preparatory phase, Covid-19 had catapulted us into new challenges. What would now be a meaningful investigation beyond the already existing technical dimension of a digital platform of learning?

During the first semesters of the global pandemic, students as well as staff were thus catapulted out of the comfort zone of well-known in-person teaching and thrust into an all-digital environment. By the time we had thought that we were now settled into this new digital work environment, a constant flow of new tools to be mastered as well as continuous updates on digital teaching innovations reached us in our provisional coping mode by teaching enhancement channels. This was not a time of stillness, but of technological acceleration that we had successfully 'avoided' up until then.

We therefore conceptualise the transformative disruptions to our routines through Covid-19 as a call to sidestep – but not to ignore or boycott – narrow digitalisation discourses. In these strolls off-site we have given more reflective space to issues of student engagement, as well as of little questioned assumptions about successful internationalisation, which helped us bring back attention to dimensions that had fallen off the wall in inevitable accelerations.

The pausing of routines: questioning in times of immobility

A temporal lens allows us to make sense of the existential transformations taking place during the global pandemic. International mobilities and established teaching practices were suddenly halted, opening a temporal interstice in between a pre-Covid routine and a post-Covid horizon. This liminality opened up an unoccupied space for the questioning of the potentials and limits of digital learning environments for the exchange on international and intercultural experiences.

Covid-19 shifts had clearly been transformative for teaching. However, there needed to be a catching up with such transformations by questioning the limits of dynamic mobility. The act of pausing and the recognition of immobility as a potentially positive component of the global pandemic can be understood through the risks associated with rapid transformation. Yacek (2020, p. 268) speaks of an "existential risk" that is frequently overlooked in discussions that focus on crisis resilience, coping and adaptation, rather than deeper work with identity. There is a risk to lose continuity and feel displacement in constant movement and adaptation. In such contexts, immobility actually allows identity formation to process fundamental yet unexpected shifts such as societal challenges experienced by a person, in a sense

"that transformative educational experiences must be undergirded by some continuous medium which can provide students with resources for grappling with the existential challenge they pose" (Yacek, 2020, p. 268).

In pausing for breath lies the call for us as humans to reinvent ourselves in the face of challenges. In our own pausing, we have started to perceive immobility differently and refrain from the hierarchy that places the international mobility of our students over the interregional and intraregional experience. In this binary distinction between 'international'/'abroad' and 'domestic'/'at home' students the latter are often even perceived immobile:

“Internationalization’s global and local dimensions do not represent categorical opposites. They do, however, challenge practitioners, researchers, and policymakers the world over to make sense of a complex panorama of opportunities and imperatives, in a fluid, multifaceted, and potentially high-stakes environment” (Rumbley & Altbach, 2016, p. 12).

Immobility appeared as important as previous routine mobilities. Conceptually dissolving the dichotomies between ‘at home’ and ‘abroad’, stay-home and mobile, raises the interest in ways how mobility and immobility can be renegotiated in the light of diversity experiences. The question of at-homeness is then posed in a new context. What does ‘at home’ mean beyond the institutional catch-phrase of IaH? During Covid-19 our ‘trans-campus’ project shifted to the investigation of diversity experiences at home made during school placement in local schools. As Coelen (2016) has argued, the rigid distinction between home and abroad artificially frames multi-faceted life worlds, overemphasises categorisation and takes the attention away from the learners. Instead, the literature suggests the move to

“a close and managed relationship between the formal classroom curriculum and the ‘informal’ curriculum of mentoring schemes, social events and similar, with a view to cementing lasting and meaningful relationships between home and international students that are transferable between contexts [...]” (Harrison, 2015, p. 419).

In the loosely tied terms of IaH lies a provocation for novel avenues to research and practice that we have not used enough. When we try to define the ‘at home’ of IaH, we need to acknowledge that we routinely made assumptions about what the internationalisation of home students should encompass. Because of the complexity of discovering the students’ life worlds as distinct homes from those institutionally imagined and staff-enacted ideals of globalised homes, the project of a ‘trans-campus’ requires to be anchored in processes and practices with a strong participatory element. In other words, how can we value such ‘provincial’ diversities existing in all schools, if IaH processes were now conceptualised from the local-domestic diversities towards the global? Hence, we develop a frame giving the allegedly ‘less-international’ and ‘less-intercultural’ stakeholders a chance to speak out before their voices are contained as a deficit by the normativity of mobility-driven internationalisation. The shift in perspective needs to engage students themselves to claim with confidence what is different, diverse and singular in their school experience during the internship and what can be of benefit for their own discipline and teaching subject for encounter and dialogue.

Having acknowledged the ‘blindness’ to local diversities in a routine habit to always focus on the abroad, the student-centred reinvention of the ‘trans-campus’ starts with a gap to be invested and inhabited differently. This implies to move away from the visible. As pointed out during the RAISE conference 2021, the challenge is to leave the reductionist and binary thinking of the visible digitalisation debate:

*“Not ‘face-to-face’ vs online
Instead: Online vs Onsite
And what about ‘Offsite’?” (Gombrich, 2021)*

We doubt that students’ own life worlds evolve around the onsite-online binary. Student lives are much more than the teaching contact time, but the experience of

pandemic-times digitalisation shows us that staff members are largely cut off from this third dimension, described as ‘off-site’ by Gombrich (2021). We therefore acknowledge the two-dimensionality of pandemic times teaching and the need to go beyond the obvious. As we taught our students in virtual courses without their presence on campus, we have experienced the absence of the informal curriculum, the social components that had gained significant traction in approaches to teacher education before Covid-19:

“the major implication for future practice is to allow for non-verbal, non-textual reflections within teacher education [...] future work surrounding student engagement will need to incorporate such immeasurable and intangible aspects if they are to address student engagement comprehensively” (Brown et al., 2019, p. 31).

In moving towards the concrete design and application of a student-centred trans-campus, we therefore question how to maintain dialogue beyond the obvious of online and presence teaching.

Case Study ‘trans-campus’ – Shaping the future of student engagement in a digital environment

A work-in-progress

In this final part of our reflection, we share some concrete components of our currently emerging ‘trans-campus’ project. We cannot report fixed and firm findings as this text does not draw from data of a completed and achieved research project but rather responds to the immediacies of the global pandemic and the observations from a process of constant reshuffling. The absence of firm data illustrates the intangibility and temporary assurances of current times. We argue that this struggle to renegotiate consistency in contemporary fluctuations has also been a chance to welcome an approach such as student engagement which unsettled our own routines. Our ‘conclusions’ are therefore preliminary snapshots from a journey that has gradually taken us to create a meaningful platform for bottom-up internationalisation ‘at home’.

The project consists of two elements: the redesign of the seminar, which complements the student teacher’s school placements with the overarching aim to create a digital place of learning, as well as the accompanying research, which documents and evaluates the redesign process. The seminar plays a crucial role within the study program, as for the first time during their Master of Education, student teachers reflect on their own professional practices and experiences in geography education while taking part in school placements. The foundation for these reflections in terms of content and concepts has been systematically laid in advance (Bohle & Jahnke, 2020).

The accompanying research – which is not discussed in this paper – started in winter term 2020/2021 by documenting the existing seminar which was due to the Covid-19 pandemic already held via WebEx, albeit in terms of content and organisation followed the pre-Covid-19 form of the seminar. The documentation was followed by a thorough evaluation of the course structure as well as the individual sessions considering the project’s established goals. During winter term 2021/2022 the accompanying research

systematically documents the newly established seminar. An interpretative qualitative analysis of the sessions' discussions and students' reflective tasks is ongoing. Next, it is planned to carry out narrative interviews with some of the participating student teachers.

The 'trans-campus' project has three main goals: Firstly, to establish a platform to connect all student teachers, whether their school placement is in Germany or abroad. Secondly, to further develop the seminar via a redesign as digital trans-campus'. And thirdly, to reflect on a conceptual level on digital place-making and digital learning culture as impulse for internationalisation in HE. This leads us to the question: How can student engagement in the context of internationalisation be concretely facilitated in a digital learning environment? This is a question of horizontal access points to invite every student irrespective of internationalisation expertise into a debate previously occupied by those who had already accumulated previous international experiences.

A digital site for dialogic learning

After testing several platforms, we decided to create the 'trans-campus' on an interactive, multimodal map that allows more-than-cognitive expression. The course interaction is mediated without the help of the more linear 'Moodle' interface on which all other courses at the university are structured. We chose 'Padlet Maps' because it allows us to invite students into an accessible platform which was ready to be invested by them. Content is gradually added as students started sharing media about their origins and own educational trajectories on an almost empty geographical map. For every session (which are held every two weeks at the same time), students have a 'reflective task' which they post on the Padlet Map beforehand. Based on experiences in other transnational projects we encourage visual expression to stimulate students' self-reflections and dialogue (Moate et al., 2019) These assignments then serve as starting point for reasoning and reflection during the joint sessions. The semester's six sessions have each a different main focus revolving around questions of becoming a professional geography teacher: belonging, diversities, futures, creativities, transdisciplinarity, and professional compass.

As of writing, we can only provide a glimpse into the ongoing process of the students' appropriation of the platform. The following figure is a snapshot of an extract of the map, which was taken right before the second session. As a starting point we offered an empty world map to the 23 participating students to locate different steps in their educational biographies. It is our intention to continue on this platform the following years – in this way creating over time together with the students one common platform and thus establishing a learning community which might outlast and transcend our students' time at the university.

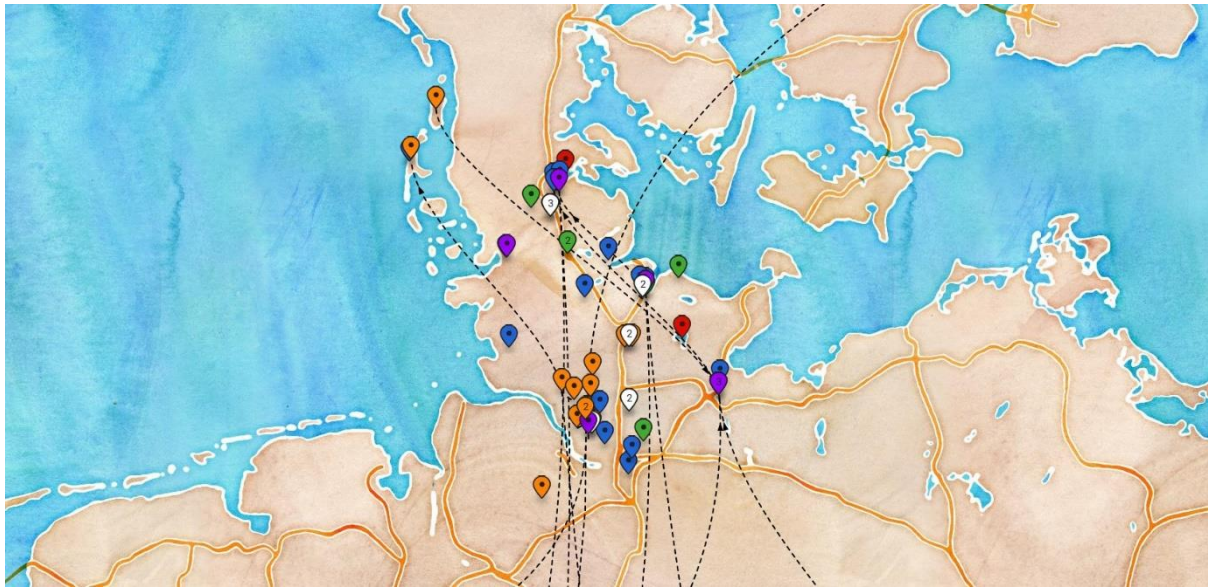


Figure 1: Extract of the ‘trans-campus’ Padlet Map right before the seminar’s second session, end of september 2021

On the map, the blue posts represent the current school placement of each participating student. Locating them on the map creates a shared digital space integrating all students independent from their actual geographical location. This year, only two students were placed outside Schleswig-Holstein: one in Hamburg – the most Southern blue post in the map - and one in the global city Singapore not shown in this visualisation.

The other posts represent significant ideas in the individual students’ education biography. These can range from concrete educational institutions like kindergarden or highschool to ideas or places of future educational aspirations. Students are free to digitally drop their contributions ‘abroad’ without the need to have been to that place in real life. The spatial nature of a module interface therefore allows to focus on non-linear and beyond-binary aspects of students’ own trajectories. Students are invited to situate their narratives, observations and questions where they feel it appropriate. As an example, one student marked the own educational journey in the middle of the sea, then giving way to discussion about the role of detours or so-called ‘errancies’ in educational trajectories.

Visually, one can observe in the graphic design choice of this geographical Padlet Map, which for the purpose of this article is centred on the German-Danish border region (cf. Fig. 1), that country borders are dissolved. The clear distinction between ‘abroad’ and ‘at home’ is becoming blurred. This visual detail seeks to encourage expressions that are not tied to national borders but encourage dialogue that transcends the dichotomy that contains student experiences in rigid categories. Students are not asked to add their information into a specific location, restricted to a limited radius, but are freely roaming on a global map that has reduced the visibility of territorial markings.

The map’s design thus supports the blurring and eventual removal of the binary thinking – inside of Schleswig-Holstein / outside of Schleswig-Holstein – through national and/or federal borders. The map’s watercolour style even further invites to

move away from a 'realistic-objective' representation of the world. It becomes evident for the students that this map is not about exactitude of location but openness and imagination. A multimodal cartography such as the Padlet Map identifies journeys and their related entanglements with space and place as horizontally accessible and inclusive. The aim of this design is to unblock the framing of diversity debates from the vertical dichotomy of 'fascinating mobility pioneers'/'stay-in-nest domestic students' towards a horizontal continuum where student voice is not bound to the places one has already visited in real life.

Instead of hiding the own local, rural educational trajectory that could be perceived as provincial rather than cosmopolitan and therefore as a stigma, there is a possibility to connect the more spectacular and exotic destinations of the few students abroad with the many facets of diversity and difference in the German-Danish border region. A school placement in a provincial town in Schleswig-Holstein can be the source of diversity experience as well as a stay in a global city like Singapore. Mapping diversity on a digital platform beyond physical mobility can potentially allow for horizontal dialogue and exchange of experiences between those students who left their familiar environment and those students who stayed in the local or regional sphere.

The digitally unbounded 'trans-campus' map thus challenges the tacit assumption that similar and comparable internal learning and identity formation processes (as they will inevitably happen among student teachers during a school placement internship) are more 'valuable' to hear or work with when they happen in an exotic location. The Padlet Map makes space for local engagements with domestic diversities, leading to the possibility of a virtual community of practice, connected through the multimodal reflection on personal internship experience abroad as well as at home. Different reflective tasks stimulate this sharing of local diversities based on own experience. This first step in the 'trans-campus' opens a platform where students can start curating their own contents about the diversities they encounter.

Towards digital belongings? From student-centredness to a student-led digital trans-campus?

The case study represents an attempt to think a geography education seminar through the lens of IaH during a period of technological acceleration. The disruption of established teaching practices in an early stage of the Covid-19 pandemic provoked an epistemological journey for the authors. In this reflection on a pandemic-induced redesign of an internationalisation project, we have narrated our own journey from the critical confrontation with top-down internationalisation strategies in times of immobility towards a digital platform for student-centredness. This mere act of technically creating an open space of possibility can potentially lead to increased appropriation by students themselves. This stance and hope to move from physical mobility to a digital platform for internationalisation at home poses the fundamental challenge of creating a digital place that fits the needs for human interaction and place attachment. While the journey is still ongoing, it became evident that the inclusion of the diverse individual experiences of our students, as well as the diversity they encounter in every school, are at the core of the 'trans-campus'. They form the starting point for any reflection about the internationalisation of (geography) teacher education.

We cannot force participation, but we can propose a frame within which the possibility of participation is preserved. The radical reduction and absence of contacts with students' more-than-virtual life worlds in times of imposed home office now asks us for a redefinition and reimagination of a different kind of presence in teaching: one of perceiving what is already existing in the life worlds and school experiences of our students, not only what still has to be acquired.

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