

PROBLEMATISING ‘CROSS-CULTURAL’ COLLABORATION: CRITICAL INCIDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION SETTINGS

KATRIN KRAUS
RONALD G. SULTANA

Abstract – *Many EU projects are premised on the assumption that collaboration between academics and students from different national contexts adds value to knowledge production and to learning. It is very rare to come across accounts of how challenging such cross-cultural collaboration can be, especially when the notion ‘culture’ is expanded to include both national and gendered identities, as well as cultures embedded in particular academic disciplines. This paper sets out to explore the ‘critical incidents’ that arose in the context of an Erasmus curriculum development project, showing how these ‘incidents’ open a window onto the complex and challenging processes that come into play in cross-cultural and inter-disciplinary settings.*

Introduction

This paper is one of the ‘products’ developed in the context of an Erasmus curriculum development project called **CROSSLIFE**, which focuses on cross-cultural collaboration in the field of lifelong learning and vocational education. The project offers an 18 month-long learning pathway to students registered in MA or PhD programmes at the Danish University of Education, and the universities of London, Malta, Monash, Tampere and Zürich, with tutors from all six institutions involved in lecturing and mentoring through both virtual and face-to-face meetings¹. The project therefore could be seen as a ‘higher education consortium’, as Beerkens & Derwende (2007) call this kind of international cooperation between institutions of higher learning. Students are clustered in home-groups, but interact with and across all groups via Skype telephony, video-conferencing, and workshops². The course focuses on both content and process issues. The substantive focus is on Vocational Education and Training (VET) including, for instance, the issue of policy borrowing and lending in VET-related areas in both the EU and beyond. The process dimension examines the issues that arise when academics and students from different ‘cultures’ collaborate in their attempt to generate a deeper understanding of a particular area of research. In this paper, it is this second, process-oriented dimension that is foregrounded.

A key assumption underpinning many EU programmes in education and training is that research and learning can be enhanced through bringing together academics and students from different countries. It is however surprising to note that while *content* outcomes from such collaboration are given high visibility through publications, accounts of the *process* issues that arise in the production of that content are rarely to be seen³. This paper is an attempt to address that gap.

The article is divided into two parts. The first part considers the general meaning of ‘culture’. The latter term is here defined broadly to include not only considerations of ‘national’ cultures, but also cultures that are linked to gendered ways of being, and to academic disciplines. These distinctions help us unpack the implications that cultural diversity can have for cross-cultural collaboration, especially between academics involved in researching, planning, studying and teaching together. They also provide us with a more nuanced way of considering ‘cross-cultural competence’, which often tends to be limited to the kinds of attitudes, values and skills that are required when people from different national cultures interact.

The second part of the paper connects the theoretical reflections about ‘culture’ with ‘critical incidents’ that arose in the course of a three-day CROSSLIFE curriculum planning workshop held in Malta in March 2007, which brought together ten project members from four different countries⁴. These ‘incidents’ were ‘critical’ in the sense that, for individual workshop participants, they represented key instances or moments that arose spontaneously while interacting with colleagues, and which opened a window onto the complex and challenging processes that come into play in cross-cultural and inter-disciplinary settings.

‘Culture’ and its meanings

It is important to define ‘culture’ if we are going to analytically consider the cross-cultural issues that arise when working with colleagues and students from different countries, European or otherwise. In the tradition of Clifford Geertz (1993), ‘culture’ is here taken to mean ‘a forum for negotiating and re-negotiating meaning and for explicating action’ (Bruner, 1986, p. 65). Moreover, culture is an ‘ensemble of tools of discourse that a group employs towards exchanging information, expressing states of consciousness, forming bonds of solidarity, and forging common strategies of action’ (Bowles & Gintis, 1988, p. 22). Growing up in a certain cultural context entails the imparting of these meanings, practices and tools of discourse. This process is not necessarily explicit, but is more likely to be implicit, involving what can be referred to as ‘embodied’ knowledge. This process of ‘socialisation’ or ‘enculturation’ takes place not only in the early years, but is

a lifelong developmental process whereby individuals interact with others and with their broader environment.

These ‘forums’ for communication, or ‘webs of significance’ (Geertz, 1993), can be organised around different aspects of human existence and experience. In what follows, we will look at three elements of culture that proved to be particularly pertinent when it came to understanding the challenges of cross-cultural collaboration in academic labour, namely ‘national’ cultures, gendered cultures, and disciplinary cultures. It is important to consider each of these at some length, acknowledging at the same time that there are other elements of culture – such as religious affiliation, for instance – that could prove to be equally if not more important in collaborative settings.

National identities

While ‘culture’, as we shall see, is not only marked by national borders, much of the interaction between *CROSSLIFE* participants was coloured by the different national experiences that formed identities and shaped them in particular ways. Differences in behaviour, expectations, attitudes and values were, overtly or covertly, attributed to ‘national cultures’, and it therefore becomes critical to unpack the notion and to problematise it.

For a start, it is immediately clear that ‘national’ and ‘cultural’ identities are not one and the same thing. Indeed, the boundaries surrounding culture can be smaller or larger than the confines determined by the nation state. The borders of the latter unit are often the outcomes of historical and political processes – such as wars and treaties signed by leading elites – rather than markers of the boundaries of the kind of cultural ‘forum’ referred to earlier.

The process of nation state building is in fact often accompanied by violent forms that have as a goal the ‘production’ of cultural homogeneity as a basis for a collective identity inside national borders. Among these violent forms one can refer to so-called ‘ethnic cleansing’, or to a very rigid language policy – with the goal being of marking a sharp cultural difference against ‘the other’. Benedict Anderson (1991) describes nations as ‘imagined communities’ to highlight the fact that part of the process of nation-building is to create a culturally homogenous community that is identical with the borders of the nation state. Once established these nationally defined borders of course *are* real, and with time can and do end up shaping human interaction in spatial and temporal terms, thus generating ‘national cultures’ that wield an influence on the way of being of individuals. Nevertheless, while in some contexts it may make sense to talk of ‘national cultures’, or even of a ‘European culture’, it is critical to acknowledge that such terms are constructs, and that the very act of speaking of ‘culture’ in this way

serves to reify it, giving it a ‘solidity’ and ‘permanence’ that is ideological. There is no such a thing as a closed, homogenous national culture, but there are national states as ‘imagined communities’ that are influential in shaping the individual’s identity and behaviour and to some extent lead to ‘cultural homogeneity’ within the defined national borders.

Indeed, the very fact of focusing on ‘culture’ – whether in national or European terms – actually serves to *create* the object of our analysis, a case, therefore, of what Dale & Robertson (2005) would refer to as *productive* discourse. In many ways, notions of national or supra-national cultures are generated discursively: politicians keen to have national unity often make references to ‘a national culture’ that unites an otherwise heterogeneous population, serving to distinguish them from others, who are, in this way, considered to be ‘outsiders’, located in a different cultural space defined by national and/or cultural borders. On a broader scale, the discourse around Europe often essentialises ‘culture’ (Wilterdink, 1993) in an attempt to generate a collective identity among a disparate group of nations, and in order to demarcate fault lines that keep the ‘other’ out (Sultana, 2002). Much of the debate about Turkish aspirations to become a member of the European Union – like earlier ones concerning Morocco – have revealed the extent to which Europe *is* a political and economic construct, with considerations of culture serving to legitimise particular points of view.

In relation to this, it should be acknowledged that education – including, for instance, European study programmes – is part of the EU strategy to create a ‘European identity’ as a foundation for the European integration process, that is it is part of European *identity politics* (Kraus, 2004). In aiming for a ‘European identity’, a key assumption and argument is the project of a ‘shared’ cultural heritage. Education and education policy are thus part of the discursive production of cultural homogeneity embedded in re-structuring political units. This notion is caught by the interesting twist that Habermas gives to the idea of a ‘learning society’. Reflecting on the need for a European constitution and for the necessity of constructing a ‘European’ sense of identity, Habermas (2001) points out how individuals have historically been able to make the ‘abstract leap’ from building their sense of belongingness to a ‘clan’ to that of belonging to a ‘nation’, and that nothing precludes learning how to extend this educational process to generate a sense of identity *beyond* the nation to supra-national cultural and political consciousness.

The acknowledgement that ‘national cultures’ are constructs opens up an important analytical space: it provides us with the possibility of conceptualising ‘culture’ in a more *anthropological* sense, namely in ways that prevent us from ‘glossing over’ differences in the manner in which meaning is co-constructed within and between groups of interacting individuals. Such groups typically

cohere around a variety of forms of *embedded identities*, reflecting more or less conscious forms of membership in – and allegiance to – *bounded/bonded communities*. This embeddedness manifests itself through discursive codes and symbols, such as language, dialect, linguistic registers and jargon, as well as values, aesthetic taste, beliefs, and what Bourdieu would refer to as ‘habitus’ – all of which are shared in order to create feelings of group identity and of ‘belongingness’. Bourdieu’s notion of ‘habitus’ tends to surround the notion of culture with a certain deterministic flavour considering ‘habitus’ as a more or less stable part of a person’s ‘inventory of behaviour’. We are here in the realm of dispositions that are deeply ingrained through socialisation – in other words, dispositions which are basically unalterable, and which therefore tend to create a certain pattern and stability in the group membership of individuals, largely attributable to their ‘distinctions’ and social class location (Bourdieu, 1984).

Nevertheless, the way individuals belong to one ‘cultural unit’ varies from person to person, and a ‘cultural unit’ is not a monolithic bloc but rather manifests a high degree of diversity. Such diversity arises from the uniqueness of individuals, as well as from the nature of the social structures in a society, which give rise to differences related to gender, class, ethnicity, religion and so on. The ‘culture’ of a group, community or nation is always under construction and a permanent object of negotiation, as is the positioning – by oneself or the others – of individuals within that cultural unit. ‘Culture’ is at the same time ‘stable’ and ‘in flux’. Culture is an effect of homogenising practices and at the same time ‘produces’ cultural borders and collective identities, categorising some as ‘insiders’ and others as ‘outsiders’, some as ‘us’ and others as ‘the other’.

Working with an understanding of culture as articulated above helps us see people not only as belonging to one (national) ‘culture’ but also as being positioned within that ‘culture’ in ways that are socially structured by different factors. Individuals can have privileged access to – and interactive rights in – different groups marked by their social class, gender, ethnic, and religious location in the overall social structure. It is easy to understand how individuals can belong to several groups within one culture where meaning and identity are expressed in particular ways, whether these are political parties, sports clubs, music genres, and so on. These groups exist within ‘national cultures’ but also beyond national borders. Sociology and anthropology have shown us that typically individuals weave their identities in complex ways, claiming membership in a variety of cultural (as well as so-called ‘sub-cultural’ or ‘counter-cultural’) groupings. This ‘promiscuity’ in membership has been heightened by the new technologies, which permits exposure to and interaction with ‘cultures’ that have cross-spatial boundaries and which can take virtual rather than visceral forms. On an individual level that process is described as ‘process identity’ or even ‘fragmented identity’.

As with 'culture', the category 'identity' is also in permanent flux and is built up by more or less temporarily integrating different aspects within the process of identity formation. Identity and culture have some stability but are at one and the same time undergoing a process of continual transformation (Baumann, 2004).

There is often a continuity of values in the usually overlapping set of 'forums' to which an individual belongs, even if the 'language' spoken in the different groups may vary. Still, one of these 'forums' (e.g., social class membership) could provide the key 'linguistic' structure that defines the interactions in all the other groups, so that being working class, for instance, more (in some accounts) or less (in other accounts) determines which political party one associates with, which sports one practices or supports, which music one listens and dances to, and so on.

How such different aspects and elements of national identity/identities influence and structure the academic collaborative process is a key focus for our reflection, and as we shall see in the second part of the paper, contributed much material when CROSSLIFE workshop participants came to write up their critical incidents.

Gendered identities

The category gender played also an important part in structuring cross-cultural collaboration among CROSSLIFE participants in particular ways. The issue of gendered identities, for being a 'woman' or a 'man' – however these categories are *socially* constructed within particular 'cultures' and discourses (Butler, 1990, 1993) – is also one of the 'key influences' of personal existence. Much of the scholarship in gender studies in fact alerts us to the ways gender functions as a source of 'collective identity' that provides a resource for the individual identity-building process. This active construction of one's gendered identity follows not only national borders, but is also differentiated *across* and *within* 'national cultures', a fact that helps us refrain from either essentialising gender or reifying gendered hierarchies (Holmes, 2007). Gender boundaries can therefore be said to both *intersect* with and to *transgress* national borders, in the sense that the categories 'female' and 'male' have generic relevance, even if there are many ways to understand and interpret these categories, both in culturally-embedded as well as individual ways.

A wide range of research done in feminist theory and gender studies allows us to understand gender today primarily as 'doing gender', that is as a social practice that actualises, interprets and re-enforces culturally specific understandings of 'female' and 'male' in social practices, all the while acknowledging differences within gender. Among the latter especially those that are linked to class- or race-based social relations (Hooks, 1981). As 'queer-theory' has taken pains to point out, being a 'woman' or being a 'man' can be lived in many different ways.

Awareness of the fact that ‘genders’, however they are conceived, are socially constructed – and as such contingent and changeable – does not mean that ‘gendered-ness’ is not highly relevant for the personal and social life of people. Women and men do not find it easy to overcome the limits set by belonging to one of the two gender categories. Gender may very well be a social construct, but this is lived in very deeply personal ways, and as a ‘way of being’, since we grow up – and live – in gendered social environments (Maihofer, 1995), where ‘social life continues to be organised along very gendered lines’ (Holmes 2007, p. 38).

Critically important too in considering gendered identities is the insight by such authors as Donna Haraway, Sandra Harding and Rosi Braidotti who emphasised the structural ‘in-visibility of masculinity’ (and of ‘whiteness’). The fact that, in Western societies, male (and white) are considered to represent the norm, leads to men enjoying a hegemonic position as an ‘unmarked category’, representing ‘objectivity’ (Haraway, 1988). In contrast, and as a consequence, women are structurally marked as a ‘special-interest group’ which is so-named by men who, as representative of the ‘referent’ or the ‘norm’, have the power to ‘locate’ others without themselves being socially located. It is for this reason that Haraway, among others, makes a case for a ‘politics of positioning’ that renders the partial position from which people interact transparent because it is part of the argument they make and the way they behave.

Crossing cultures for CROSSLIFE members also entailed confronting such issues, thus making being ‘male’ and being ‘female’ a focus for reflection on the ways gender plays itself out in academic collaboration.

Disciplinary identities

Many collaborative ventures among academics set out to add value to their endeavours by including researchers from different disciplines. Cross-disciplinary teams also tend to form in an unplanned manner, when, as with CROSSLIFE, the project focuses on education where, typically, researchers have a varied background in the humanities and sciences⁵. This can be considered to be both an opportunity and a threat to cross-cultural collaboration, in the sense that *academic disciplinary traditions* are ‘knowledge forums’ bringing together ‘academic tribes’ (Becher, 1989) that have developed their own ‘codes’ and ‘language’, as well as acting as powerful sources of belief (Clark, 1983). These ‘tribes’ have also developed their own specific ways of generating, valuing, validating and legitimising meaning, as well as of distinguishing themselves from other disciplines not only by their object and methods of research but also by their ‘codes’ and ‘languages’. As Knorr Cetina (1999) has argued, ‘epistemic cultures’ determine how people know and what they know.

In these ways, academics mark ‘insiders’ of their academic discipline, as well as ‘outsiders’. Cross-cultural work among scholars and researchers would therefore demand an enhanced awareness of the way ‘scientific’ protocols are embedded in competing academic disciplinary traditions. As Schoenberger (2001) notes, we as academics ‘need to think explicitly from time to time about our own disciplinary culture, including its epistemological and ontological commitments; who it includes and excludes; what it values and what it does not value highly; and so on’ (p. 379). Cross-cultural work across disciplines also requires an effort to develop dispositions and competences that enable individuals to ‘read’, ‘translate’ and ‘decode’ the work of colleagues, and to converse in their ‘language’. While this, as the critical incidents generated during the CROSSLIFE workshop confirmed, is easier said than done, it is not an impossible task. This is because while ‘each tribe has a name and a territory, settles its own affairs, goes to war with others’ and has ‘a variety of symbolic ways of demonstrating its apartness from others’, ‘nevertheless the whole set of tribes possess a common culture: their ways of construing the world and the people who live in it are sufficiently similar for them to be able to understand, more or less, each other’s culture and even, when necessary, to communicate with members of other tribes’ (Becher, 1994, p. 151). The ‘stability’ of these academic tribes means that disciplinary cultures can even transcend national cultures, as witnessed by international discipline-based associations, international conferences, and cross-national collaboration between academics.

Border crossings

CROSSLIFE’s ambition to examine the often-unexamined complexities that surround ‘culture’ and cross-cultural academic work has to confront at least two challenges. On the one hand cross-cultural work is difficult, given the seeming *impossibility of sharing meaning* of codes, symbols and practices embedded as this is in deeply-engrained dispositions that are culturally shaped through process of socialisation and ‘enculturation’. On the other hand, we have the critical humanist notion of culture as an *educational project*, where education is defined as a process that provides individuals with the dispositions and competences to converse with communities other than one’s own. From this perspective, the curricular emphasis on learning languages, a range of ‘subjects’, as well as opening up windows on the world beyond one’s own town or village is precisely to enable the citizen to move out of and transcend the parochial, and to become a more global citizen or, in the language of education, a ‘cosmopolitan’.

In this sense, CROSSLIFE can be seen as a small ‘laboratory’ in which participants try to soften and blur the boundaries drawn by their regular

membership in ‘disciplinary clans’ as well as in national-, class-, gender-based cultures (to mention only a few of the many possible borders and boundaries). This is well worth the effort, as it is through these attempts at ‘border-crossing’ (Giroux, 2005) that we develop tools of discourse that facilitate the exchange of information, the development of a shared understanding of meaning, the expression of states of consciousness, the forming of bonds of solidarity, and the forging of common strategies of action, including cross-cultural planning and research as well as teaching and learning. This cultural project, however, is, ironically, jeopardised by the very entities that set out to promote it. This is true of EU policy discourse, for instance, which, as Heikkinen (2003) points out, endangers authentic dialogue through ‘the shared simplistic, a-cultural terminologies and rhetorics’ (p. 31), avoiding and eliding the complexity of the cultural embeddedness of phenomena.

Learning from the ‘critical incidents’ generated in the CROSSLIFE ‘laboratory’

The challenges that arise in attempting to ‘cross borders’ have been caught experientially by the CROSSLIFE partners during a three-day planning-workshop in 2007, referred to in the introductory section of this paper. At the end of the workshop, and inspired by the ‘Critical Incident Technique’ (CIT) developed, among others, by Flanagan (1954) and Fivars (1980), participants were asked to write two or three ‘critical incidents’ that they experienced in the course of the curriculum planning meeting, and to reflect on the significance that these incidents potentially had for doing scholarly work together cross-culturally. These critical incidents provided enough ‘raw’ qualitative data to facilitate ‘experiential learning’, thus enabling the whole group to reflect on the sets of cross-cultural issues, tensions and difficulties that might arise for academics as well as for students in working together, and on the implications that this might have for organising teaching and learning contexts with students and lecturers from different countries⁶.

The thoughts, feelings and reflections of partners involved in the attempt to talk to each other ‘across cultures’, and as expressed through the articulation of critical incidents, are here synthesised and organised around the following key-themes:

- Difficulties encountered in writing up the critical incidents
- Tensions and challenges involving value differences
- Tensions and challenges involved in trust-building

- Tensions and challenges around the medium of communication
- Tensions and challenges around the notion of ‘academic traditions’
- Issues related to different roles in the group

Each of these is considered in turn, with an effort to tease out the implications that these challenges have for lecturers, researchers and students embarking on collaborative academic work.

Difficulties encountered in writing up the critical incidents

A first point that emerges from the exercise of writing down a critical incident concerning issues of cross-cultural work is the range of difficulties the participants reported having when attempting to articulate their experiences. Among the difficulties referred to were the following:

First difficulty. A major difficulty encountered by many was the ability to *disentangle cultural from other issues, including personal ones*, that is to account for tensions that arose due to:

- cultural orientations that are the results of individual’s belonging to a ‘cultural forum’ as described above, that is in relation to embeddedness in national cultures, social class or gender cultures.
- organisational and academic practices which might themselves also be rooted in regional, national, disciplinary or institutional cultures *or*
- individual personality traits (e.g., a person might have a more ‘competitive’ rather than ‘collaborative’ orientation when working in a group context or some people are in general more extrovert than others) and such orientations might be rather more linked to personality and biography than to broadly cultural traits.

Given that identity, biography and social environment are closely inter-linked, comments about an individual’s actions may end up being (or being perceived to be) personal criticism rather than a discussion about more broadly structural features (such as attitudes or behaviours absorbed from a surrounding culture). *Writing up a critical incident raised concerns that, in doing so, the feelings of individual group members might be hurt.* The way individuals occupy space and time in group interaction, how quickly or slowly they move to the core of the group or remain on the periphery may very well be a feature of personal characteristics,

in the way a person processes new situations. However, it may also be closely inter-linked with power arising from processes and dynamics that have, for instance, strong gendered issues layered in. The situation is rendered more complex by the fact that perceptions are strongly influenced by the pre-existing relationships that exist between members of the group (e.g., whether one finds the other likeable or not), by the nature of the group dynamics, and the specific situation in which such dynamics are played out. Factors such as these contribute to the blurring of the category 'cross-cultural' critical incident.

Additionally, some participants in the critical incident exercise felt that one (national) culture does not quite determine who they are. Often people have lived in different countries, have forefathers or relatives with other nationalities, and live or work together with people with very different cultural backgrounds. Due to these facts one might consider oneself as being already 'cross-cultural' in one's very own identity and also as experienced in cross-cultural social settings, and might feel uncomfortable when viewed reductively as representing one culture.

The implications are:

- Learning groups made up by members from different disciplines and from different national and cultural contexts may need to be aware of the various layers of intra- and inter-cultural diversity in order to be more effective communicators and collaborators.
- The very notion of 'cross-cultural' communication, as the basis of the **CROSSLIFE** project, may itself be overly optimistic given the complex inter- and intra-personal processes involved in constructing meaning in the context of a group and the diversity within every 'cultural unit'.
- It is important to acknowledge that groups are always heterogeneous and group dynamics are always complex. The dynamics in cross-cultural groups is perhaps more complex than that in groups where the members share the same 'cultural background', though in some ways, the fact that diversity is signalled by the very composition of the group enhances the awareness that the 'otherness' of participants should be recognised (Akkerman et al., 2006).
- Another way of putting this would be to state that obstacles in communication within a culturally mixed group are often complex and intertwined, and cannot be easily 'explained away' by referring to 'culture'.

Second difficulty. There was a concern that, in an effort to describe and account for irritating experiences due to cultural diversity, individuals would end up using *cultural stereotypes*. The trap is not only to simplify things by using this

kind of ‘explanation’ for a person’s behaviour but also to reinforce the stereotypes, even if these are used in a critical manner. Sometimes perceptions of cultures – whether one’s own or those of others – are so deeply engrained that they are barely available to one’s consciousness and hence not particularly susceptible to examination and problematisation. During the *CROSSLIFE* workshop, differences were attributed to (often essentialising) *regional* besides *national* groupings, such as ‘Nordic’ or ‘Anglo-Saxon’. Needless to say, the content of these categories need to be unpacked, not necessarily (and simplistically) to see whether there is any ‘objective’ basis for them, but rather to see what gives rise to them in one’s consciousness in the first place (e.g., perceptions of historically-embedded academic traditions, or of broad cultural frames of mind).

The implications are:

- Awareness of deeply embedded cultural prejudices can be heightened if such prejudices are pointed out by the person whose culture is being stereotyped.
- To some extent, typecasting is ‘unavoidable’ because we all grow up in cultural contexts that are full of stereotypes about who we are (‘us’) and who ‘the other’ is (‘them’). The challenge is perhaps to acknowledge that we do work with stereotypes, and that we need to allow the experience in cross-cultural interaction to question these deeply embedded orientations towards ‘us’ and ‘the other’.
- Another challenge for cross-cultural communication and cooperation is the tendency to over-generalise or over-individualise. As already noted earlier, ‘good’ or ‘bad’ habits of people with a different ‘cultural background’ are likely to be interpreted as an expression of her/his ‘culture’ rather than as an individual trait. At the same time, one’s cultural background does in fact influence one’s behaviour.
- To question stereotyped perceptions and unpack the content of culturally bound categories, however, requires a degree of trust in the group, as well as a sense of belonging, both of which take time to be established.
- There are specific sets of challenges in establishing this level of trust, especially if the interaction between members of the group is based solely or largely on virtual communication and the group is constituted as a group more or less by accident. There are also other sets of challenges in building up this level of trust between academics and their students.

Third difficulty. A third difficulty concerned *feelings of ‘awkwardness’, ‘embarrassment’, ‘discomfort’ and ‘uneasiness’* associated with expressing what one felt during interactions with others, with some of these feelings being triggered off by ‘cultural differences’ in the broad sense that the term is being used here. The reports reflecting on the critical incidents in communication indicated that individuals sometimes felt ‘misunderstood’ or even ‘silenced’ by the reactions and attitudes of others, and that this created ‘tensions in the air’ and a negative sense which, of course, one and all have learnt to handle as part and parcel of life, but which are nevertheless very real. That sense of ‘hurt’ and/or ‘anger’ and ‘frustration’ was generally balanced by an awareness that individuals in the group were not being consciously or wilfully unpleasant, and that relations, even if sometimes marked by stress, were generally governed by an overall feeling of good will.

The implications are:

- Cultural assumptions that we carry around with us are often so deeply rooted that they are not immediately available to us to reflect on them, so that individuals end up behaving and reacting in ways that ‘silence’ or ‘misconstrue’ others. This could be due to different cultural backgrounds that imply different ways of acting or maybe to different personal styles of acting or their individual ‘habitus’. However, the educational work of alerting each other about such cultural forms of power is felt as an awkward exercise, and individuals often prefer to put up with it than to make an issue out of it. The question arises as to whether a multi-cultural learning group should bring these issues and processes to the surface, as one way of dealing with them is to articulate them. This would however require particular sets of skills in human communication and competences in management of group dynamics combined with a high capacity of reflectiveness among the group members – and a strong basis of trust within the group – if the openness and transparency is to be constructive.

Tensions and challenges involving value differences

Project partners may value different aspects of the work they are doing together in different ways. The origin for these differences may be varied, and may be rooted in culture (national or otherwise), stage in the life-cycle (e.g., still having dependent children at home or other relatives to take care for), gender, and so on. Furthermore, differences in what is valued may also be influenced by the institutional requirements and routines of the different universities and national university systems people are based in (e.g., a partner may put more emphasis on

product than process because job tenure at his or her institution is dependent on publications) (see also Beerkens & Derwende, 2007). Negotiations about values and meaning are difficult because they easily touch very personal and/or sensitive questions.

The implications are:

- Value differences are important in a group and indeed such differences need to be acknowledged. Due to age, for instance, students in different phases in their life-cycle may have different priorities. They may also have different access to such resources as time and finance, and due to a variety of personal situations, specific targets may be more or less difficult to achieve. Course demands and mutual expectations need to take this into account.
- Different values, irrespective of their origins, need to be acknowledged. Research on group dynamics and group facilitation (Tuckman, 1965, 2001) suggests that partners typically go through a series of stages, that is 'forming', 'storming', 'norming', 'performing' and 'adjourning'. It may be important to have facilitators who can 'manage' such processes in order to make sure that value (norming) issues are adequately addressed.
- Negotiations about values and valuing processes are necessary in order to understand each other and find common rules for the group, but this process has to be handled carefully and skilfully.
- Working successfully through the 'norming' stage facilitates trust building among group members, and a great sense of feelings of belonging to the group, shared targets, ownership and commitment.

Tensions and challenges involved in trust-building

The importance of trust-building as a basis for communication between and within cultures came through in many of the critical incidents. Trust can be jeopardised for several reasons, including, for instance, when partners feel that there is not the same level of commitment to the project, or when individuals feel that some of the agendas related to the project are being set elsewhere, or when people feel stereotyped and not recognised as individuals.

The implications are:

- Trust-building should be an explicitly set task for the group. This can be part of the 'norming' process where ground rules are established, and where

agreement is reached on appropriate professional behaviour, shared methods, and working procedures and tools.

- Trust is difficult to build up when group members do not know each other well, and this has pedagogical implications (e.g., students and academics may find it difficult to overcome anxieties in asking questions, which might make them appear to be less gifted than other members in the group or to raise issues that may be sensitive).
- Trust is built up not necessarily by talking about it as a goal, but in actually performing group tasks, around which and out of which group processes will evolve. Some of the most powerful of these team-building processes may not, in themselves, be project-task oriented: leisure activities can sometimes be the most effective ways of creating 'joint foot-ground and contact surface'. They can also create more appropriate contexts in which differences (cultural or otherwise) can be worked out in a positive manner, while in traditional academic contexts the 'script' inherent in the formal situation can easily lead to confrontation, aggression and frustration. Interaction in the context of 'leisure' seems to engage people with each other at a more personal level, possibly lessening the impact of other layers that impact on relationships, derived deep from the history of nation states, language, academic disciplines or gender relations.
- We have to also accept to some extent the limits of active trust-building measures within a given group due to personal relations between the members. Nevertheless, learning groups need to reach a certain level of trust among their members because that is a crucial condition to enable (cross-cultural) learning.
- Ultimately, in organising positive teaching and learning environments, it is clear that actors have to have the competence of 'being human beings', that is of valuing such qualities as tolerance, respect and honesty.

Tensions and challenges around the medium of communication

(a) Written vs. other forms of expression. Some academic traditions place a great deal of emphasis on the printed word, using journal articles and chapters as the key reference point for discussions in a seminar setting, focusing on exegesis and critical debate in relation to texts. Other traditions use texts only as a springboard to discussion, in which the main focus is not the text itself, but the participant. The function of preparatory documents for planning meetings and

learning situation may also be seen differently as are the related expectations toward the other participants concerning this issue. This may also have implications for such pedagogical issues as assessment, with the former tradition privileging written forms of assignment-setting, and the latter oral assessment. Similarly, and possibly for related reasons, some traditions are more open to ICT-based forms of communication between participants in a learning situation. We are therefore here in the realm of cultural patterns of interaction and communication, where again aspects of gender (different ways of expressing masculinities and femininities), of class, of national and also institutional culture are layered into the way we present ourselves to others and open ourselves to them.

(b) English as the language medium. Groups can sometimes be divided by the use of the same language: while they may be using English as the *lingua franca* for communication, the same words (e.g., the term ‘case-study’) may have different meanings and connotations in the different academic/disciplinary traditions that individuals belong to in their home country. Talking the same language can in fact be even more hazardous for communication than talking in different languages, since attention is focused on the superficial surface of ‘sameness’ of language, forgetting that the use and meaning of the English words is inevitably rooted in one’s own cultural background and mother tongue.

In addition, those who are not native speakers of English often feel vulnerable when using it as the mode of communication. Many feel that they cannot express their thoughts in a sophisticated way, that they feel ‘simple’ or even ‘stupid’ or ‘silly’ as they search for the ‘proper way’ of expressing their thoughts in a language that is not theirs, particularly when native English speakers are present. Given that the latter may have had little experience of being in a linguistic minority, they sometimes tend to be insensitive to the fact that language skills are not just linguistic, but also social, and that language is a vehicle and indicator of power in communicative processes. At the same time, more cosmopolitan native English speakers may feel uncomfortable with the linguistic privileges they ‘naturally’ enjoy in international meetings, and are acutely aware of the fact that others may perceive them as ‘colonising’ or ‘dominating’ a forum that in principle should be equitable and democratic. Non-native speakers end up frustrated and vulnerable in this English-speaking space, where meanings shift on what feels, for many, like a slippery and treacherous slope, and where one’s intentions and ideas are redefined while one looks helplessly on. It is not surprising, therefore, that many critical incidents spoke of the hegemony of English in a multi-cultural setting as a form of ‘symbolic violence’, while acknowledging that alternatives were not easy to come by.

(c) *The use of technology.* The extent to which communication, interaction and group dynamics, such as building up trust, can take place adequately through digital forms of communication is debatable (see Palomba, 2006). The task is made even more complex because the level of skills in using different kind of technologies typically varies between different members of a group, with those who are most skilled tending to give more importance to the value of ICT for learning purposes. Those who are less skilled end up feeling both incompetent, and possibly also guilty as the unarticulated assumption is that they should put more effort in developing the required skills to reach the level of the other members of the group. Technology in fact quickly became one of the focal themes for the CROSSLIFE team, with one sub-group examining the way ICT can support, or serves as an obstacle to, cross-cultural collaborative teaching and learning.

(d) *Feelings of inadequacy.* Feelings of inadequacy can be felt by some when certain communications media are used, whether these are ICT-related, or, as noted earlier, language-related. Here, members of a group may inadvertently use their superior knowledge and skills in working in this medium to wield power in the group – or may be perceived by others as doing so. Those whose knowledge and skills are less developed end up feeling inadequate and even vulnerable. Language skills and technical competences are differently developed and being obliged to (or hindered from) acquiring and using them in a collaborative academic enterprise may evoke feelings of being inferior or superior and of being powerful or powerless – all of which are very likely to cause feelings of frustration. The negotiations and the choices for one or the other media is always interwoven with power relations.

The implications are:

- The differences in traditions in what constitutes academic work need to be acknowledged and integrated in CROSSLIFE's way of doing academic work collaboratively. It might imply that partners need to have a shared understanding of the role of documents and texts and the related expectations among the group members. This relates to both the way CROSSLIFE partners communicate with each other, and how communication with and between students is organised and their performance is assessed.
- It might also mean that we value (and accredit) students not just for their written production, but also for other aspects of 'performativity' (e.g., visual, audio, multimedia products) that may lead to creative and innovative insights about a topic.

- It may also be necessary to have some critical reflection and debate on the way certain media of communication ‘frame’ our conversations, and how they distribute control and power within the group. While ICT or English language on the one hand are often considered to be tools that empower communication, on the other hand those who feel they have not mastered such tools feel disempowered and rendered vulnerable and insecure in a group.
- While there are issues with preferred modes of communication (which can also have some cultural grounding, but which also relate to age or other personal situations), it may also be that resistance to ICT or struggling with the English language as a medium for communication may reflect other concerns, such as lack of clarity around goals, a lack of motivation to engage in open communication or even a ‘hidden strategy’ of resistance against the tasks.
- In relation to the use of English, which for many is a second or even a third language, there needs to be a greater realisation of the fact that language skills are both social and linguistic. It is therefore vital that the group creates a ‘safe’ and inclusive environment that encourages lecturers and students to feel as comfortable as possible when expressing themselves in a foreign language. It also seems important that the issue of English as the language of communication in the group is made the focus of explicit deliberation, so that project partners and students become more aware of the social dynamics and processes inherent in language issues.

Tensions and challenges around the notion of ‘academic traditions’

A project often provides a particular academic environment in which partners are expected to work. The ‘rules’ of the academic ‘game’ may be set by the fact that leaders of the project are, for instance, largely embedded in a particular academic discipline or because many (but not all) of the participants share a similar background. As we have noted in the first part of this paper, academic and professional cultures such as sociology, education or economics are ensconced in specific ways of valuing knowledge, in legitimising particular research methodologies and epistemologies, in approaching issues from specific angles, and in approving particular behaviour codes and conventions in the teaching-learning setting. Often, too, academic and professional cultures have their own organisational cultures, ways of going about things and of getting things done. In addition, there are shared discourses and similar stances toward several aspects of the project. Partners who are outside of this main academic community or ‘tribe’

might feel 'apart' unless the group takes it upon itself to make the issue of knowledge and disciplinary cultures an object of discussion and reflection. They may feel marginalised or inferior because they do not share the knowledge and language that the members of the leading discipline have.

The implications are:

- As with the other issues raised, it is clearly important to bring to the surface the ways in which our approach to the material that constitutes the project is steeped in ways of being that are embedded in academic traditions and disciplinary conventions.
- It is probably helpful to define some material that is to constitute the shared knowledge of the group. This foundation can be enriched by further readings suggested by members of the different academic disciplines represented in the group.

Issues related to different roles in the group

Group members typically have different roles. The role of the chair or moderator of a session, for instance, is a critical one in any group process. Many of the challenges for cross-cultural collaboration, as described above, converge in ways that have to be managed by the chair, even though he or she shares that responsibility with partners. Other roles are distributed among various members, and these, once established, tend to limit the range of an individual's behaviour in that context, and become interwoven with that actor's self-perception as well as with the perception that others have of him or her. These role specifications can be understood as the group's collective expectations from one another. The initial phase of group-building in which these roles are established plays an important part in influencing individual behaviour as well as the ways in which individuals represent themselves in the group. This 'positioning' process is shaped by national and disciplinary cultures, and mediated through factors such as age, gender and/or academic status, for instance. These elements and factors combine together in ways that suggest and legitimise different roles, and tend to give different weight to arguments that individuals make. As these roles congeal and become stable, they offer a different scope for acting and expressing oneself in particular ways, and of being heard by others in particular ways too.

It is dynamics such as these that make the moderator's task deeply challenging, and even more so in a cross-cultural environment. The chair has to facilitate group processes in relation to two goals, which are not always complementary: one goal relates to the personal dynamics between members, the other to the attainment of

project outcomes. In leading a group session, the chair assumes a certain degree of responsibility for the ‘success’ of the proceedings. Individuals exercise that responsibility in different ways. However, despite such diversity in ‘management’ style, one and all need specific competences, especially in finding the right balance between group dynamics and the project tasks. That balance is even more challenging to achieve given that the demands and dynamics of task-oriented activities (i.e., focusing on outcomes) may clash with person-oriented activities (i.e., focusing on process). The former, for instance, requires a different time-discipline and logic to the latter.

As a chair one has to attend to relations with and between individual members as well as the group as a whole. That has implications for her/his own role. S/he has to balance three ‘roles’ at one and the same time: (i) being a member of the group as all the other members and contribute by articulating a personal point of view; (ii) being in different personal relationships with the other members of the group; and (iii) being ‘in charge’ to attend to and organise the group process. These three roles may come into conflict with each other. Additionally these roles are interpreted differently according to the cultural background, gender and personal style of the individual.

In principle, the moderator or the chair should be both process- and goal-oriented, should ensure clarity and responsibility, should respect and support individual group members, and should strive to find the right balance between acting as a chair and attending to her or his own specific project-related interests. These *desiderata* are challenging at any time, but in cross-cultural collaborative contexts, that challenge becomes more acute.

The implications are:

- The role of the chair, together with the group’s expectation of him or her, should be established as clearly as possible by the whole group. Moderators should then define their role within that framework, with revolving chairpersonship ensuring that differences in style, gender and cultural backgrounds enrich both process and outcome.
- Implicit role expectations could be made explicit, becoming part of the process of negotiating group procedure and protocol.
- The group should be aware of the way rigid role definitions that take place in the team-building process limit the scope of an individual’s action and behaviour, and that social learning can be facilitated when members feel they can move beyond ascribed or adopted roles in order to experiment with new forms of practice.

- Chairing skills should be targeted as a goal, particularly when cross-cultural collaborative teams are involved. Such skills can be collectively learnt through providing structured opportunities for reflection.

Concluding comment

Awareness of the ways in which individuals and groups differ is not necessarily an obstacle to communication. Indeed, such awareness can bridge the differences not by encouraging everybody to be the same, or for the project to degenerate into ‘group think’, but rather to be enriched by the variety of knowledges, traditions, values and perceptions that we bring to the task. Heightened awareness of the way cultures and languages ‘talk through us’ can lead to better self-understanding, and more satisfying and constructive communication with others and could prevent us at the same time from seeing cultures as monolithic blocs or black boxes. The more we recognise diversity, the less likely are we to fall into the trap of understanding the other via ‘a grid of familiar typifications’, which lead ‘the other as other to remain unnoticed’ (Gurevitch, 1988; cited by Akkerman et al., 2006, p. 482). The more we treat the other as ‘strange’ and ‘new’, that is the more we treat the otherness of the other not as something to overcome, but something to be augmented, the more likely it is that ‘boundary-crossing dialogues turn into a meaning-generating venture’ (Akkerman et al., 2006, p. 483).

At the same time, for communication to succeed, there needs to be a constant search for what can be referred to as ‘touchstone discourse’ (Walker, 1988), that is some common space or ground, a common ‘language’ which makes interaction and mutual understanding possible. As with the use of English, however, the driving force behind this search for a *lingua franca* is not the hope that we will ever arrive at a stable state of equilibrium, but rather the constant awareness that power is inevitably implicated in all aspects of communication, and that making it visible is one way of democratising human relationships.

This striving for common ground while simultaneously celebrating, affirming and even augmenting diversity nevertheless gives rise to a number of tensions that are felt whenever two people ‘meet’, but are possibly more acute in cross-cultural contexts. These tension fields require academics and students to walk the tightrope between:

- Attributing meaning to the notion of ‘culture’ ...
... *without falling into the trap of stereotyping others and being stereotyped by others.*

- Being a unique individual ...
... while belonging to a collective (such as nations, disciplines, genders, generations, professions, research method ‘camps’, political backgrounds, social classes, families, and so on) that influences our behaviour, feelings, perceptions and thinking.
- Allowing the group process to question our identity, given that this is a powerful way of enabling social learning ...
... while at the same time being aware of the limits of this process in an academic and research-driven context, given that this is not a therapy setting.
- Building up trust as the basis of collaboration ...
... even if the group members have come together in a more or less haphazard, accidental manner, and have to interact in a situation where specific outcomes have to be produced within a given time.

Issues such as these are not specific to cross-cultural collaborative projects. However, the latter kind of setting possibly raises and foregrounds these concerns in a more striking manner. The challenge is for individuals committed to ‘speaking’ across cultures to find their own way in locating themselves and in acting in ways that enable social learning, for the benefit of their own development and of the group(s) they belong to.

Notes

1. The pathway does not in itself lead to a degree, but organises learning within an ECTS (European Credit Transfer Scheme) framework in order to enhance the possibility of incorporation of credits earned during the CROSSLIFE project within the post-graduate degree programmes at universities participating in the project. For further information about CROSSLIFE see:<http://www.peda.net/veraja/uta/vetculture/crosslife>
2. Three workshops were held in all (one in London, another in Tampere, and a third in Malta).
3. There are examples of such a focus in international literature (e.g., Wang et al., 2005), but to our knowledge, few examples focusing on the issue as it plays itself out in EU-funded projects (for two notable exceptions, see Akkerman et al. [2006] and Tartas & Müller Mirza [2007]. Both papers focus primarily, though not exclusively, on the psychological dimensions of collaboration).
4. The members of the group included one academic from Australia, three from Finland, two from Malta, two from Switzerland and two from the UK. Some had worked together on previous projects, while others were new to each other. A total of 14 critical incidents and reflections on these incidents were submitted by nine members of the group. Our task as authors was to provide a theoretical context, to synthesise the reflections made by group members, and to draw out and pull together the various reflections made in ways that might prove useful to teachers and learners involved in cross-cultural educational settings.

5. While we find Snow's (1969) identification of three broad academic cultures – namely cultures of humanities, sciences, and the culture which contains elements of both humanities and sciences (such as sociology and psychology) – unnecessarily polarising, that early characterisation does alert us to important distinctions that have, since then, been explicated in more nuanced terms by the likes of Biglan (1973) who focused on the epistemological aspects of disciplines (hence a continuum between hard to soft sciences, and between pure to applied sciences), and Kolb (1981) who focused on styles of intellectual inquiry (hence a continuum between abstract and concrete reflective, and abstract and concrete active).
6. CROSSLIFE partners also developed pedagogical material in order to help students address some of the process-oriented issues related to cross-cultural collaboration, including the impact of national, gender and disciplinary cultures. A case in point is a set of reflective questions that students were invited to focus on, addressing challenges in working through the medium of English, and in trying to cross 'cultural' borders marked by one's country of origin, gender and academic discipline. In this way, aspects of intercultural communication – including implicit ones such as social roles, values, behaviour, politeness, body language, status symbols, mutual expectations, sense of humour – could be addressed if students and tutors felt that they wanted to reflect on them.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the feedback to earlier drafts of this paper that we received from our CROSSLIFE partners, who also suggested that this account might have relevance to a broader audience.

Katrin Kraus works as a researcher and lecturer in the Department of Vocational Education at the University of Zurich, Switzerland Her main research topics are further and vocational education and social change, international comparison and policy analysis, social space theory and the philosophy of (vocational) education. Dr Kraus' e-mail address is: katrin.kraus@igb.uzh.ch

Ronald G. Sultana is professor of Educational Sociology and Comparative Education at the Faculty of Education, University of Malta. He is also director of the Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Educational Research (EMCER) at the University of Malta. His e-mail address is: ronald.sultana@um.edu.mt

References

- Akkerman, S., Admiraal, W., Simons, R. J., & Niessen, T. (2006) Considering diversity: multivoicedness in international academic collaboration, *Culture and Psychology*, Vol. 12(4), pp. 461-485.
- Anderson, B. (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (revised edition). London: Verso.
- Baumann, Z. (2004) *Identity: Themes for the 21st Century*. Oxford: Polity Press.
- Becher, T. (1989) *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Cultures of Disciplines*. Bury, St Edmunds, Suffolk: Society for Research into Higher Education and Oxford University Press.
- Becher, T. (1994) The significance of disciplinary differences, *Studies in Higher Education*, Vol. 94(19), pp. 151-161.
- Beerkens, E., & Derwende, M. (2007) The paradox in international cooperation: institutional embedded universities in a global environment, *Higher Education*, Vol. 53(1), pp. 61-79.
- Biglan, A. (1973) The characteristics of subject matter in different scientific areas, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 57, pp. 195-203.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London: Routledge.
- Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (1988) A reply to our critics. In M. Cole (ed.) *Bowles and Gintis Revisited*. Sussex: Falmer.
- Bruner, J. (1986) *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.
- Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1993) *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*. London: Routledge.
- Clark, B. R. (1983) *The Higher Education System: Academic Organization in Cross-National Perspective*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.
- Dale, R., & Robertson, S. (2006) The case of the UK: Homo Sapiens Europaeus vs. Homo Huaestuusus Atlanticus? European Learning Citizen or Anglo-American Human Capitalist? In M. Kuhn & R. G. Sultana (eds.) *Homo Sapiens Europaeus? Creating the European Learning Citizen*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Fivars, G. (ed.) (1980) *Critical Incident Technique*. Palo Alto, CA: American Institutes for Research.
- Flanagan, J. C. (1954) The Critical Incident Technique, *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 51(4), pp. 327-359.
- Geertz, C. (1993) *The Interpretation of Cultures* (first published in 1973). London: Fontana Press.
- Giroux, H. (2005) *Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education* (2nd edition). New York: Routledge.
- Gurevitch, Z. D. (1988) The other side of dialogue: on making the other strange and the experience of otherness, *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 93, pp. 1179-1199.
- Habermas, J. (2001) Why Europe needs a constitution, *New Left Review*, Issue No.11 (September-October), pp. 5-26.

- Haraway, D (1988) Situated knowledge: the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective, *Feminist Studies*, Issue No. 3 (Fall 1998), pp. 575-599.
- Heikkinen, A. (2003) Vocational Education and Training as the co-constitutor of Europe as a project. In E. Figuera (ed.) *Vocational Education and Training in Europe: Culture, Value and Meanings*. Lisbon: Instituto Para Inovacao no Formacao.
- Holmes, M. (2007) *What is Gender? Sociological Approaches*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.
- Hooks, D. (1981) *Ain't I a woman: Black Women and Feminism*. Boston: South End Press.
- Knorr Cetina, K. D. (1999) *Epistemic Cultures: How the Sciences Make Knowledge*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kolb, S. A. (1981) Learning styles and disciplinary differences. In A. Chickering (ed.) *The Modern American College*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Kraus, K. (2004) Constructing 'Europe' and the 'European identity'. In T. Geisen, A. Hickey & A. Karcher (eds.) *Migration, Mobility, and Borders*. Frankfurt/M and London: IKO.
- Maihofer, A. (1995) *Geschlecht als Existenzweise*. Frankfurt/M.: Ulrike Helmer Verlag.
- Palomba, E. (2006) *ICT Technologies and Intercultural Issues*. Available online at: <http://www.formatex.org/micte2006/Downloadable-files/oral/ICT%20Technologies%20and%20Intercultural%20Issues.pdf>
- Schoenberger, E. (2001) Interdisciplinarity and social power, *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 25(3), pp. 365-382.
- Snow, C. P. (1969) *The Two Cultures: A Second Look*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sultana, R. G. (2002) Quality education and training for tomorrow's Europe: a contrapuntal reading of European Commission documents. In A. Novoa & M. Lawn (eds.) *Fabricating Europe: The Formation of an Education Space*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Tartas, V., & Müller Mirza, N. (2007) Rethinking collaborative learning through participation in an interdisciplinary research project: tensions and negotiations as key points in knowledge production, *Integrative Psychological and Behavioural Science*, Vol. 41(4), pp. 154-168.
- Tuckman, B. W. (1965) Developmental sequence in small groups, *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 63, pp. 384-399.
- Tuckman, B. W. (2001) Classics for group facilitators: developmental sequence in small groups, *Group Facilitation: A Research and Applications Journal*, Issue No. 3 (Spring), pp. 66-81.
- Walker, J. C. (1988) *Louts and Legends: Male Youth Culture in an Inner City School*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Wang, X., Dannenhoffer III, J. F., Davidson, B. D., & Spector, J. M. (2005) Design issues in a cross-institutional collaboration on a distance education course, *Distance Education*, Vol. 26(3), pp. 405-423.
- Wilterdink, N. (1993) The European ideal, *Archives Européen Sociologiques*, Vol. 34, pp. 119-136.