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Learning through Research: Invigorating the Humanities

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Abstract. In this contribution, we argue that the educational quality of the Humanities will be greatly enhanced if students carry out their own research. We refer to a ten-year project between our three universities and report the empirical feedback from survey of 53 participants. It indicates that the skills acquired considerably influenced their future in different fields. Though the design of the study does not allow us to determine any causality in the effects of the program, we argue that the results are nevertheless highly suggestive of the project's motivational and intellectual success.

Keywords: *participatory teaching, learning by research, empirical methods, teamwork, developmental process, long-term impact.*

Introduction

Some fundamental problems of teaching in the Humanities
Did you ever ask your students to explain the difference between school and university? In our experience, most of them would be puzzled and unable to see the difference. Following the argument developed in Zyngier et al. (2007, 17–20), in both settings they are expected to attend classes, listen, take notes, study some books or articles, write an essay on them, or sit an exam where the knowledge they are supposed to have acquired is being tested. At times, they may be asked to do a presentation as well. And they get a grade for their exams and work. They then pass on to the following year. So where does the difference with school reside?

From the students' perspective, university is basically a 'high school'. How could they possibly hit upon the idea that schools disseminate existing ('old') knowledge, while universities, next to that, also generate 'new' knowledge? They are perennially required to study texts which are basically the opinions of other people, and the essays produced are heavily dependent on what they have read. Students may realize that staff members regularly write articles or books, and some may even be aware that research is carried out. This situation may have changed in some universities but they are not representative of the majority where students can graduate without having ever done research. That has implications: students will leave university without having acquired the skills and knowledge that will allow them to judge the quality and the merits of a piece of research. This ultimately means that they have not been at a university at all! Instead, they have attended some kind of education in which the content was a bit more voluminous than they had to learn in school. It may have also been more difficult, and the essays they had to hand in may have also been somewhat longer and more complex. But basically they did not produce 'new' knowledge.

Thus, with the view of the scientific problem of lack of new knowledge produced at modern Humanities departments, the aim of this article is to demonstrate how student engagement and learning by research have great potential in empowering learners as well as in shaping their future outlooks. The objectives are to look at how the experience with one specific research project translated into participants' longitudinal internalizations as well as how the educational and intellectual changes led to deeper changes in attitudinal and behavioural changes in the long run.

The methodology used in the reported research is mixed. We used three main methods which are complementary, each providing a different depth of evidence: a qualitative and quantitative profile of the assessed project participants, a corpus analysis of their comments on the project itself and a qualitative analysis of these responses.

So why is it that there is so much resistance to put Humanities students in a situation where they can participate in research activities? One possible answer would be that many Humanities departments do not engage much in 'research' themselves. If that were the case, it would have colossal consequences, for it would imply that the Humanities do not operate at the level of a university, since they do not add 'new' knowledge. This answer should not be taken seriously, and certainly the present journal you are reading belies it: here an uninterrupted stream of fresh insights is generated, reflecting on the status of the Arts and Humanities in higher education. The case we report here stands as a clear illustration that research does indeed occupy an important place in the Humanities.

The second possible answer is that students are not required to carry out research because they are not believed to be able to do so. When students google answers to questions asked by staff members, this cannot be really considered research. Students may know how to activate search engines but how far can they generate their own questions and contribute with new knowledge? Many in the Humanities tend to believe that students

must first acquire the necessary knowledge and skills of their discipline, after which they could go on and learn more in PhD programs, after which, finally, they could become researchers. In Germany, for instance, it is hardly possible to find financial support for those who present research papers at international conferences before the PhD level, and, in several cases even only after that. Although we have no space to develop a comparison with the natural sciences, our experiences point in the opposite direction: namely that there research activities are undertaken at a much earlier stage. And in many of the top universities students in the exact sciences are regularly embedded in on-going research projects.

Widespread as this opinion may be, the reasoning behind this is fundamentally flawed for at least two reasons. First of all, it paints a distorted picture of research as being highly complex. We are not talking here about studies that will get one a Nobel Prize. Simple, conceptually clear research is not all that complicated, as the lab exercises in the Natural Sciences amply demonstrate. Some explorations may require a complex design, a well-organized team of collaborators with a clear division of interrelated tasks, a large database, and sophisticated statistical analyses with enough power and low risks of bias. Such research does exist, for sure, and it is often of the best kind. But that should not blind us to the obvious fact that there are other, more modest forms which do not necessarily yield inferior insights. Neither Galileo, nor Newton or Einstein (to name only a few) had such teams of co-researchers at their disposal, and they created new knowledge by means of proposing hypotheses and elaborating them. There is no need to resort to full-blown institutes.

At the same time that the complexity of research may be overrated, the potential of students may be greatly underestimated. Why would interested students not be able to cope with the relatively simple demands of formulating a hypothesis, collecting independent data and comparing these with their hypothesis? In what follows we will present a considerable the results of a project that belies both reasoning's: it shows that research is not too difficult to conceive of and execute, and that even young undergraduates can carry out the task independently.

There is also a third reason why the view that students can't engage in real research is unfounded: many of us do not teach them methodology. So, how can we expect them to carry out research? It remains to be seen, of course, whether this is a real option and we will come back to this basic question in a minute, showing how even junior students can produce research results that are interesting and reliable.

On another note, why is it the case that Humanities curricula are by and large governed by the same practices and organized along the same principles? Why are nearly all lectures and seminars almost identical in structure? One can visit any number of classes in our fields, and – admittedly not always, but quite often – will observe the same routine: in scheduled weekly sessions of the same length students discuss texts that they have prepared according to specific instructions. True, some staff members may be creative in

the way they present the concepts. But in general, the prevailing teaching practice does not seem to indicate much instructional creativity. Could it really be the case that only by sitting for 90 minutes or so once or twice a week in the same room going through the same routines students can acquire information? That sounds rather counter-intuitive. It may not even be the best way to learn. What we know from the rapidly developing field of knowledge management is that there are various ways of learning, and that sitting in a seminar room may not always be the most optimal one. Learning that takes place in a meaningful environment, where the newly acquired knowledge is embedded functionally shows much higher rates of success. That Humanities curricula cannot be organized in a more creative way, or that it would be too demanding for students to become involved in such functional learning, may be why our curricula look so alike. We will venture to demonstrate that, again, this is a belief that is belied by the facts we will now present.

This was realized in the framework of the REDES project, in which graduates and undergraduates carried out research activities that took place outside the seminar room, and demanded forms of learning completely different from what goes on in the usual Humanities seminars and lectures. They acquired the necessary methodological techniques, were able to analyze the data they themselves collected, and were capable of presenting the results both in writing and orally, in several cases to a forum of specialists at international conferences. All this was done in a spirit of intellectual curiosity often lacking in the standardized courses that are taught in many departments. The philosophy of REDES is that research is the most motivating and the most efficient way of learning at the highest and deepest level.

But when it is possible, fascinating and rewarding, why is it that many Humanities departments do not set up research environments in which students can learn and participate? Fortunately, the awareness of these possibilities is growing in some corners. What follows is a description of a joint effort towards autonomy in research and in learning.

The REDES project

The REDES project (**Re**search and **D**evelopment in **E**mpirical **S**tudies) was founded in 2002 by three staff members from universities in different countries: Willie van Peer (Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich, Germany), Sonia Zyngier (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) and Frank Hakemulder (Utrecht University, the Netherlands). The seed was sown when van Peer and Hakemulder were invited to teach a course in Brazil in 2000 and came into contact with an on-going project being carried out following the tenets of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Shor, 1980; Apple, 2013). Again from personal contacts and having had the opportunity to lecture in other universities, in 2003, two more groups joined REDES (in Kiev, Ukraine, and in Edmonton, Canada).

Bringing students to participate in the project demanded some motivation, since it meant that they would get involved in forms of learning / teaching they were totally unfamiliar with. The main difficulty lay in convincing students of the value of such a project. This demanded local decisions whether participants would get study credits. In Germany and The Netherlands this was possible, but in Brazil, Ukraine and Canada, students had to participate on a voluntary basis.

To facilitate our work, a constitution with the objectives of REDES was drafted, as follows:

a. promote international contact between junior and senior researchers;
b. disseminate empirical research methods for the study of the Humanities;
c. facilitate intercultural forms of empirical research, by using the pool of human resources in each culture to carry out cross-cultural studies;
d. stimulate students to actively carry out research independently, from an early stage in their studies onwards, with the possible prospect of becoming researchers within and beyond academia;
e. stimulate the exchange of information, views and methods about research projects and their development in each participating group;
f. motivate junior researchers to present papers at local, national and international conferences, as well as to prepare them for publication;
g. create an Internet database of participants' publications and further references;
h. promote critical thinking, collaborative work and ethics in research among its participants worldwide;
i. work and function as a source of cultural education and international exchange, where respect, cooperation and mutual friendships develop.

These objectives imply that a switch had to be made from passively sitting in a lecture room to developing skills in acquiring relevant knowledge. A clarifying metaphor has been offered by Karl Popper in 'The Bucket and the Searchlight' (1972) where he discusses two opposing views of knowledge. On the one hand, the 'bucket' represents the view that knowledge is seen as a deposit of known facts, events, relations, etc. Basically this is reflected in most school curricula: subjects like chemistry, mathematics, geography, French, or history transmit pieces of knowledge into the heads of young people, seen as buckets to be filled. Popper contrasts this view with a procedure for discovering things. Here people actively search for knowledge, and thus the process is seen metaphorically as a 'searchlight'. The first concept corresponds to the way knowledge is generally treated in school. The second one, by contrast, corresponds to that of research, and hence to what is expected of the student at university. Popper was not the only one to promote this view of knowledge. In an effort to bring learning to the socially and economically underprivileged, Freire (1970) also invested on *active* and critical learning. Based on his experience with the theatre, Boal (1979) also contributed.

Let us give here a couple of examples of REDES junior members' research projects. As will be appreciated, they are of simple and limited scope within a short period of time. This is not only inevitable given the fact that they were only beginners, it is also desirable, in that they had to learn to formulate clear hypotheses and develop feasible forms of data collection. One could add that as a preparation for MA theses or PhD dissertations, this is an excellent platform. Usually beginners want to do too much and lose themselves in the details. Learning how to focus, how to set boundaries to what one wants to investigate, are skills that are usually learned too late.

Examples of students' research projects are diverse. Teles's (2006) study looked at the influence of dubbing and subtitling on viewers' involvement, identification and empathy with films. Haua (2007) investigated the way elementary school students reacted to textual manipulations of fairy tales. Another piece of research (Boechat, 2008) dealt with the reading of original literary texts compared to that of abridged readers'. A further study (Paliichuk, 2007) looked at responses to media differences in treatment of human trafficking. Students from the universities in Munich and Rio de Janeiro together investigated the representation of gender-related disease in German and Brazilian literature (Mäkinen & Lemos, 2008). In another study, a student from Brazil collaborated with one from Germany (Coachman, 2009) to look at taboo breaking and obscenity in post-modern literature and culture-specific and gender-specific reactions to them. Two juniors (Menezes & Mendes, 2003) replicated a study carried out by a German student on the influence of authorial prestige on the reception of poetic texts by doing a similar study in Brazil, coming up with interesting differences. More work was conducted on metaphors of restricted space in post-modern literature (Rumbesht, 2009). Also issues of cultural differences in reading love poetry were investigated (Chesnokova & Mendes, 2006). Yet another paper (Sergeyeva & Chesnokova, 2008) looked at correlation between experiences with secondary school instruction in non-native language and learning foreign languages.

Linking groups of students from five countries from three continents, the project functioned for about a decade aiming at the investigation of culture, literature, language and media from a multicultural perspective (for more details, see Viana et al., 2007 and Mendes, 2008). A very important goal was to help students become autonomous researchers by way of using and disseminating the empirical investigation of literature and language.

Rather than teaching, the growth of participants as researchers was seen as a process of continuous knowledge building through actively shared and collective activities. Contrary to more traditional forms of academic instruction, REDES offered a new interactive template, where the roles of teacher/student were replaced by those of senior and junior researchers, which in many ways put away the conventional academic hierarchy and instead shifted the focus onto the quality of the research produced. Junior researchers would bring up possibilities of research, and these would be jointly discussed and

designed. The projects would then circulate among all members, and the possibility of comparing different cultures and settings would be explored. At a time when no funds were offered and students could not travel, the project relied heavily and made the best possible use of virtual exchanges over the internet.

Therefore, for practical reasons, REDES functioned largely online by way of using a discussion forum (Viana et al., 2009). Participants did meet at local – and occasionally at international – conferences, organized by regional groups. Throughout the years of its existence, these were: ten events in Rio de Janeiro, six in Kiev, five in Munich, and two in Edmonton. Additionally, REDES participants organized six meetings at PALA (Poetics and Linguistics Association) conferences, and four at IGEL (International Society for the Empirical Study of Literature) congresses. Totally, that amounted to 33 conferences and international meetings in ten years. Needless to say that much synergy was derived from these meetings.

In order to guarantee that the new knowledge obtained was recorded, participants prepared a number of publications, including Zyngier et al. (2007), which is unique as a collection of articles by junior researchers. Likewise, the Festschrift by Zyngier et al. (2008) also contains a part written especially by REDES junior members. All these publications stand as evidence of the quality of the new knowledge produced. What they do not account for is the change that was being effected on the participants themselves. We will come to that when we evaluate the project.

Technical aspects of international communication

Since participants lived in different continents, communication over the internet was vital. We will therefore share some of the more technical experiences with readers. Our emphasis here is not on the software itself (most of which may be outdated by now), but on the experiential dimension of providing a communication platform to our students, and the benefits entailed.

Two junior members of the group from Ludwig Maximilian University Munich constructed a portal for international communication between the participating groups. The World Wide Web offered itself as a viable means to allow this communication (see Auracher et al., 2007), and the means to achieve it was an Internet forum. In this way every member was able to read and distribute news, ideas and private greetings (which especially in the beginning made out a good deal of the communication). A number of facilities were offered. Registered members could post stories, add/see pictures, download/upload files, add/check relevant web links, send private messages, use chat rooms and describe themselves and their interests in the profile section. However, the most important aspect of the portal was the possibility of enabling participants to communicate with one another. This tool both guaranteed the networking within REDES and helped

enhance a sense of community. The portal contained a forum in which members could discuss their research projects, ask for help and try to find international partners, but also exchange general information, for instance reviews of recent publications, critical discussions and the like. In addition, members attending courses offered by the different area coordinators posted projects, comments or questions. This way, the portal also functioned as a site where discussions initiated in separate groups were extended and further developed online within the REDES community.

Participation in the forum required an attitude that promoted criticism of their peers' work, and thus helped them develop their research. This openness entailed a change in attitude. The portal was a real revolution for the students and lively interactions ensued for several years. To give an example: the rubric 'Research projects' generated 432 posts to 34 threads, being viewed more than 5.000 times. Nowadays, this forum can be replaced with Skype conferences and other more updated means of virtual communication.

In addition to the forum, international meetings were held at major international events. During these meetings, administrative issues were dealt with, prospects for future developments discussed and, most importantly, members had their sense of community enhanced once they got to know their colleagues in person and were able to socialize with them.

Assessment of the project

In this section we evaluate the project both as it unfolded (van Peer et al., 2011) and in terms of its long-term impact. The first, and most visible, change to be noted once the project was off the ground was a profound change in the students' attitudes. Without any interference from the senior researchers, participants viewed the project as a totally new form of self-organisation. They all now viewed issues in the Humanities as interesting and relevant.

There were immediate changes that were impossible to ignore, and these in our perception lasted as long as the project itself. All of a sudden, motivating students was no longer necessary: they motivated themselves and each other. It was quite an experience for the senior researchers to be able to sit back and watch how students took over responsibilities without having been told so. The change was sudden and profound. Instead of resisting falling asleep in class, students now engaged in lively and prolonged discussions – and not merely theoretical ones: they were mainly interested in exploring new issues and finding ways to solve problems, to acquire better insight into historical, social, and aesthetic matters – thus producing new knowledge. These were the immediate changes that actually endured for the whole ten years of the project's duration.

One may wonder at this point how students *learned* things they needed to carry out their research projects. Apart from having to acquire methodological skills, no list of

mandatory readings was set, as all projects dealt with different topics. Instead, participants read up on their subject as they went along, usually at the behest of the senior researchers. But now the reading was done with a concrete aim in mind, and was thus firmly embedded in students' memory (and not afterwards forgotten, as is often the case when the reading only leads to a test.)

But how did all these outward observations translate into participants' longitudinal internalizations? Did the apparent changes also lead to deeper changes in attitudinal and behavioural changes in the long run?

In order to assess the extent to which the objectives of the project were achieved and how participants saw the experience one decade later, feedback was obtained on how they thought REDES had affected their lives and careers. To this end, the senior researchers contacted 53 members from the three regional groups (Brazil, Germany and Ukraine) who had spent on average 3 years with the project. Only 7 participants were male, and the age distribution was the following: 13 were in the group 20–29, 35 in 30–39, and 5 in 40–49. Participants answered a specifically designed questionnaire where they evaluated their experience on a scale from 1 to 6. They also assessed what they considered as the strengths and weaknesses of REDES. Their comments were also digitized into three files (one for each group) and submitted to corpus analysis using a concordancer software program AntConc (see Table 1).

Table 1. **Corpus Description**

CORPUS SIZE/TTR		
UA 751 types/2,142 tokens TTR: 0.35	GER 259 types/504 tokens TTR: 0.51	BRA 1,517 types/6,999 tokens TTR: 0.22

Thus the methods we used were:

(1) a qualitative and quantitative profile of the participants;

(2) a corpus analysis of their comments on the project itself to find out if patterns of language emerged, as we believe that these patterns reflect their collective thoughts about the project;

(3) a qualitative analysis of these responses.

Results

The analysis indicates that participants acknowledged the project's contribution to their professional development (the average score is 5.2, with SD = 1.1), to their personal development (5.1, with SD = 1.0), as well as intercultural development (4.9 with SD = 1.3). Here, as in all following results, the average scores on the 6-point scales are reported,

together with their standard deviations (SD). The latter is an indication of individual variation or, inversely, of the degree of agreement among respondents. In general, the SD's are at the low end, indicating substantial agreement among the answers given by participants.

As the project increased intercultural awareness and flexibility of its members, not surprisingly, and unlike at the time of its functioning, participants now live and work in nine different countries: in Brazil (22 persons), Ukraine (13), Germany (3), the UK (3), the USA (3), Japan (2), Canada (2), Switzerland (1) and the Netherlands (1).

Being given impetus for foreign language skills development (4.3 with SD = 1.6), the REDES members now speak a larger array of foreign languages. Out of 53, 51 participants acknowledged their fluency in English (which was the working language of the project), 21 in Portuguese, 16 in Russian, 15 in Ukrainian, 13 in German, 7 in French and Spanish, 1 in Japanese, and 2 in other languages. This indicates that an average participant of REDES speaks more than one foreign language, and many members are now competent in three languages and more.

The data also showed that most participants were motivated to pursue further degrees and that the skills they acquired by way of collaborative empirical research considerably influenced their careers in many different areas of action. Thirteen participants obtained their PhD's in various fields, and several have even obtained the Assistant or Associate Professor position. Fifteen more are currently working toward this degree, which means that as many as 53 % of the respondents have considerably advanced in their academic careers. Some participants also left academia for business, and 7 obtained MBA degrees while 4 more are working toward it (see Figure 1).

Although many of the project participants are to a certain extent involved in teaching (4.6 with SD = 2.2) and research (4.5 with SD = 1.6), they also pursue other activities (5.2 with SD = .8). Listing their current professions, 42 indicated education. Other jobs included business (4), science (4), technology (3), advertising (3), finance/banking (2), law (2), charity (1), economics (1) and tourism (1). The option 'other' was chosen by 19 participants.

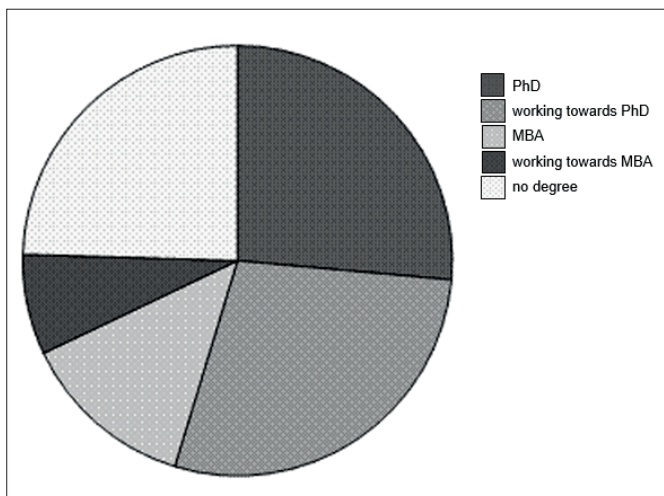As a second method employed in the evaluation was corpus analysis of respondents' comments on the

Fig 1. *Academic degrees of participants*

project, the analysis cast light on participants' collective thoughts about REDES. Once submitted to corpus analysis, participants' most frequent words, were, as expected, function words such as *the, of, to, and, a, in*. Quite interestingly, in the Brazilian corpus, the most frequent word was the personal pronoun *I*, which draws our attention to the fact that the members of the group must have felt the experience as something very personal. In the Ukrainian group it occurred in the 5th, and in the German, in the 3rd position, which tends to reinforce this interpretation. Another evidence is the high occurrence of the possessive adjective *my*, which held the 10th position for the Ukrainian and the German groups, and the 8th for the Brazilian one. This fact indicates that learning by research does indeed make the experience something the students really see as their own. It stands as evidence for the goal of developing students' sense of appropriation (see Shor, 1980; Apple, 2011, 2013).

The word 'research' also occurred. It appeared in the 8th position in the Ukrainian and Brazilian research corpora and in the 15th in the German one. It is quite interesting to note that the nouns *teacher, professor*, etc. occurred only in the Ukrainian corpus and in the 52nd position. Similarly, *teaching* occurred in the Ukrainian and Brazilian data in the 53rd and 71st positions respectively.

In terms of collocates, the possessive *my* occurred in the following vicinities (see Table 2):

Table 2. **Collocations of my for the three groups**

MY COLLOCATES		
UA	GER	BRA
students	own field of study	own
presentation skills	knowledge	experience
knowledge of research	studies	professional
language and communication skills	own weaknesses	work
	job	colleagues
		research
		personal
		life
		ideas
		texts

Participants from the three national chapters did tend to differ, though. The Ukrainian and German groups mentioned 'knowledge', whereas the Brazilians used 'ideas'. Brazilian group members also emphasized 'life', 'personal', and 'experience'. Additionally, the Ukrainian group concentrated on acquiring different kinds of skills, whereas the German and Brazilian ones targeted job and profession.

As to what participants evaluated as the strengths of the project, the results are the following (see Table 3).

Table 3. **Evaluation of the project's strengths by the three groups**

STRENGTHS		
UA	GER	BRA
Research (6th)	Work (5th)	Research (5th)
Students (7th)	Great (7th)	Students (9th)
Experience (11th)	How (8th)	Group (11th)
Ideas (12th)	Results (13th)	How (12th)
Work (14th)	Allowed (16th)	Work (18th)
Cooperation (16th)		

The strengths of REDES concentrate in terms of 'research' for the Ukrainian and Brazilian (6th, 5th) and 'work' for all three groups (14th, 5th, and 18th). It is interesting to notice that the German and Brazilian groups pointed out 'how' (8th and 12th), which indicated that they saw the project as promoting the means to arrive at something. Ukrainian and Brazilian participants also mentioned 'students' (7th and 9th), 'cooperation' (16th in the Ukrainian corpus), and 'group' (11th in the Brazilian corpus). The German group was the only one that emphasized 'results' (13th), and 'allowed' (16th).

In trying to find out how participants responded to the item 'weaknesses', we ran into a problem of providing a table of occurrences that would indicate trends for two main reasons: (1) the wordings were too few; (2) when answering this item, many mentioned the strengths instead.

Therefore, in order to understand the shortcomings of the project, we had to check each answer and submit the data to qualitative treatment. We found that all three regional groups mentioned regretted the turnover of participants. This happened because students graduated and left the university, resulting in a replacement of participants. In this regard, the Brazilian members regretted 'lack of extrinsic/intrinsic motivation to get new members on board'. All three groups pointed out that they would appreciate more cultural diversity in REDES and more communication of its members. A bit more publicity, as suggested by the Ukrainian group, would help to solve the problem.

Though being explicitly different culturally, the Ukrainian and Brazilian groups nevertheless shared many reactions. Both focused on practical matters: lack of funding and thus 'the expense of going to conferences' (UA), 'difficulty to equate doing research, participating in conferences and finding means to live' (UA), 'difficulty to reconcile academic research with work' (BRA), and 'tight deadlines for students who do not have any grants and still have to work on 2 or 3 different jobs' (BRA). 'Lack of time' in general (UA) and 'lack of time to do all the reading and writing' (BRA) were also the shared categories. Additionally, both groups demonstrated certain dependence on senior researchers: the Brazilian group mentioned that there were 'too many people involved in the project, which reduced the time spent under supervision' while the Ukrainian one demonstrated their regret that just a 'few senior researchers [were] involved'.

At the same time, regional groups pointed out disadvantages of REDES which were culture-specific. Hence, for the Ukrainian group, the weaknesses of the project were largely

connected with the conservatism of local academic life: the project participants acknowledged that they faced 'difficulty of implementing empirical methods in the present context' and felt the 'need for more interactive practical seminars' to compensate for the lack of university training. At the same time, they worried that the project results might not be 'applicable to real life'. However, some Ukrainian members mentioned that they did not see any weaknesses of the project and felt really bad that it was too short and finally came to an end.

For the German group, the weaknesses of REDES were mostly connected with the project itself as they mentioned 'lack of rigor and coherence', low effectiveness of the communication platform and 'distance between participants' as they acknowledged that the 'web forum often was not enough'.

Although Brazilian participants, like the Ukrainians, had statements such as 'I can't find any [weaknesses]' or "REDES" was the best thing I found in University', some members listed local bureaucracy, lack of institutional support, 'the unfair competition from the market' as well as some difficulty in working together. Similarly, the German group also mentioned 'lack of structure' of the project.

Quite contrary to the German group who thought that REDES demonstrated 'at times oversimplified approach to research questions', Brazilian members pointed out that the project 'may have been too demanding for undergraduate students' and 'unfamiliarity with computer science' was an issue. As can be seen, difficulties arise but they can be dealt with if there is enough openness.

Conclusion

Results in education are not immediate (for more information on long-term research assessment, see Chesnokova et al., 2016). Time is needed not only for the participants to develop concepts and attitudes to mature, but also to allow them to progress in their careers and occupy positions in which they can implement what they learned. The insights and experiences reported here amply demonstrate the immense value of engaging in research with students in the Humanities. These students left university with the outcomes of research they had themselves conceived and carried out, and of which they could be proud, as they added practical value to their curriculum. Many of them had given presentations at international conferences and some had a list of publications on their CV. All this greatly enhanced their chances on the job market, and not just in the Humanities: their experiences opened up avenues also in business, administration and industry. One could discuss whether this is good or not. We ourselves believe that students from the Humanities bring visions and affinities that are of great value compared to students who have only technical knowledge at their disposal. This is why students of the Humanities should take a more active role in the decisions regarding economic and technical matters in society. The results of our project show that REDES participants

acquired high level knowledge and skills in problem solving, in research methodology, the ins and outs of teamwork, and in the organisation of data collection and analysis. Apart from all these abilities, they had developed a much keener and deeper sense of the social significance, of what is really at stake in the Humanities. They did *not* study literary or theoretical texts for an exam. Instead, they internalized whatever literature they needed for their research and integrated it into their personality.

As this new outlook has proven itself a pedagogically effective strategy and as the virtual world has facilitated international exchanges among students, more energy could flow into the development of better ways to prepare our students for a professional life. In the case study reported in this article, most efforts were voluntary both on the part of both the senior and the junior researchers. The extra effort spent into this additional work tends to fade in time, due to more immediate material needs. The project's evaluation indicates, however, that the work generated a multiplication factor. It started a chain reaction, raising a generation of independent scholars who are today acting and interacting internationally.

On the basis of our experiences, but also on the basis of the long-term assessment we are convinced that learning by research is not only valid but opens up new and indeed visionary perspectives that can invigorate the Humanities. We are not here in the business of persuading you. It would be preposterous to advise colleagues to do as we did. What stands out, however, is this: if you engage your students in research, do it because of the future of your students. Do it because of the future of the Humanities.

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Mokymasis pasitelkiant tyrimus: humanitarinių mokslų atgaivinimas

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Santrauka

Šiame straipsnyje teigiama, kad humanitarinių studijų kokybę gali smarkiai pakelti ne paskaitos ar seminarai, bet pačių studentų atliekami tyrimai. Siekiama parodyti, kad studentų įtraukimas į tyrimų vykdymą ir mokymąsi pasitelkiant tyrimus turi didelį potencialą įgalinant studentus ir formuojant jų ateities akiratį. Straipsnyje pateiktos veiklos buvo išplėtotos vykdant Empirinių tyrimų vykdymo ir jų plėtros projektą (angl. The *Research and Development in Empirical Studies* – REDES), kuris buvo pradėtas 2002 metais. Sujungęs penkių šalių iš trijų žemynų tyrėjų grupes, projektas veikė apie dešimtmetį kaip tarptautinė tyrėjų grupė, kurios tikslas buvo tirti kultūrą, literatūrą ir medijas (žiniasklaidą) daugiakultūriu aspektu.

Straipsnyje nagrinėjamas vienas konkretus tarpkultūrinio tyrimo atvejis, kuris gali būti naudingas kitiems tyrėjams, siekiantiems ugdyti naujas savarankiškai ir kritiškai mąstančias studentų kartas, kurios stengiasi suvokti save, bendradarbiauti, suprasti kultūrinius reiškinius iš mokslinės perspektyvos ir reflektuoja, kaip jų veikla pakeitė juos pačius bei kitus žmones.

Šiame atvejo tyrime pasitelkti trys metodai, kuriais buvo vertinamas projekto poveikis jo dalyviams. Visi pasitelkti metodai yra komplementarūs, t. y. papildo vienas kitą ir teikia įvairaus pobūdžio duomenis. Tarp taikomų metodų yra kiekybinė ir kokybinė dalyvių charakteristika, iš projekto dalyvių pastabų apie projektą sudaryto tekstyno analizė, siekiant atskleisti kalbos dėsningumus, bei kokybinė šių atsakymų analizė.

Nors pasirinktas tyrimo planas neleidžia nustatyti programos ir rezultatų priežastinių ryšių, tačiau galima drąsiai teigti, kad rezultatai byloja apie projekto motyvacinę ir intelektinę sėkmę.

Esminiai žodžiai: *dalyvaujamasis mokymas, mokymasis pasitelkiant tyrimą, empiriniai metodai, darbas grupėmis, raidos procesas, ilgalaikis poveikis.*