

Journal of Contemporary European Research

Volume 12, Issue 2 (2016)

Research Article

Innovating Teaching and Learning of European Studies: Mapping Existing Provisions and Pathways

Natalia Timuş, *Maastricht University*

Victor Cebotari, *Maastricht University*

Anesa Hosein, *University of Surrey*

Citation

Timuş, N., Cebotari, V. and Hosein, A. (2016). 'Innovating Teaching and Learning of European Studies: Mapping Existing Provisions and Pathways', *Journal of Contemporary European Research*. 12 (2), pp. 653 - 668.

First published at: www.jcer.net

Abstract

The selection of the pedagogical approach plays a crucial role in determining the learning approaches that students engage with (e.g. surface or deep learning) and the knowledge and skill transfer. This paper maps the existing student-centred pedagogical practices in European Studies (ES) using a worldwide survey conducted within the framework of the Innovating Teaching and Learning of the European Studies (INOTLES) project. This research investigates to what extent the ES teaching uses student-centred approaches worldwide and what are the factors that influence the practical application of these methods. The results do not highlight clear recurring patterns of interaction between the major indicators related to instructors' profile, course profile and the selection of the innovative teaching approaches. A certain degree of uniformity and consistency is revealed in the practical application of innovative ES teaching worldwide across various disciplines. While this finding may represent the evidence of a high degree of exchange of practices and internationalization of teaching ES, it requires further research.

Keywords

innovative teaching; European Studies; student-centred learning; deep learning

INTRODUCTION

The European Studies (ES) field has been evolving and strengthening its place within the social sciences. While the study of the European Union (EU) and the European integration process represents a common focus of teaching ES, the diversity of curricula in this field presents both advantages and limitations. On the one hand, it provides a variety of disciplinary and teaching approaches, which are particularly valuable for tackling the complex nature of the EU, European integration process, or the multi-level governance. At the same time it raises certain challenges. Often ES lacks a 'core curriculum' (Umbach and Scholl 2003) and pedagogical approaches that would define the profile of ES graduates and provide them with some core knowledge and skills.

Moreover, the contemporary higher education reforms, including the EU-driven reforms within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), have been aiming at strengthening the skills development, life-long learning and increasing the employability of students and professionals. (European Commission 2010). Thus, the questions of "*how* students learn and *how* we teach" (Maurer & Lightfoot 2013, p.1) are vital. There is a need to identify and apply suitable pedagogies (i.e. the teaching approaches) that ensure that students have both knowledge and transferable real-world skills (Timus 2013).

To achieve the desired learning environment, a student-centred pedagogical approach is needed. This implies a transition from the traditional role of the teacher as the knowledge provider to a facilitator of the learning process, that is, ensuring the student is at the centre of the learning (Trigwell, Prosser, & Waterhouse, 1999). The selection of the pedagogical approach plays a crucial role in determining the learning approaches that students engage with (e.g. surface or deep

learning) and the meeting of the intended learning outcomes (Biggs 1999; Biggs & Tang 2007). Further, the pressure of globalization requires modern education systems to provide learners with necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in the current job market. In this respect, creativity, innovation, and competitiveness are the prerequisites. Therefore, current higher education pedagogical practice seeks to achieve a deep learning process, where students make practical connections with the knowledge acquired. This type of learning is in contrast to surface learning, where students try to reproduce materials (Marton & Säljö 1976).

One of the issues facing academics is encouraging students to engage in various types of interaction - *learner-learner*; *learner-content*, and *learner-instructor* interaction (Moore 1989) - in order to prioritize deep learning rather than surface learning (Trowler 2010). Thus, the use of appropriate teaching methods contributes to the enhancement of the deep learning (Biggs 1999). Previous studies have shown that the teaching approaches can affect students' deep learning (Trigwell et al. 1999). In particular, they indicate that the traditional teacher-directed approach is related to a surface learning approach. Teacher-directed environments are where the learning is focused on the teacher and the transmission of knowledge (Norton et al. 2005). By contrast, a student-centred approach, where learning centres in, on and with students (Neumann 2013), is related to deep learning. Baeten, Kyndt, Struyven, and Dochy (2010) found that this was more likely occur for those students in the human sciences, such as, in ES. Hannan and Silver (2000) have shown that active teaching, based on the active involvement of students at every step of the teaching experience, has been reinforced via several specific innovative, student-centred methods. Among these methods they identified simulations or learning games; project- or work-based learning, team work, special expert sessions, peer-tutoring, distance learning, exchange programs and internships.

Comparative cross-national research in student-centred pedagogical approaches within ES is rather sparse. For example, in 2009-2010, the Thematic Network of European Studies (SENT) surveyed the pedagogical practices in ES based on the non-traditional teaching methods identified by Hannan and Silver (2000) such as active learning. However, this was limited to EU members (Baroncelli, Fonti, & Stevancevic 2014; Fonti & Stevancevic 2014), having also a special interest in the analysis of teaching methods applied by Jean Monnet instructors and the EU-driven innovative pedagogies. They found that within this region the most popular student-centred pedagogies were based on teamwork, student-led discovery (approximately 90% used at least 'sometimes'), expert sessions and project-based learning (81% and 68 % respectively,) (Baroncelli, Fonti, & Stevancevic 2014, p.104).

ES however is an evolving and expanding field, taught beyond the EU, such as in Eastern Europe and in non-European countries. The extent to which student-centred approaches are used in these geographical contexts is uncertain. However, if the ES student across the world is expected to have certain knowledge and transferable skills, it is necessary to gauge the extent of student-centred approaches. Depending on the results, this would then have implications on how the ES community share their pedagogical practices to ensure similar qualities in their graduates.

Moreover, as there is an increasing demand for active learning in order to ensure knowledge and skills transfer, it is vital to map and assess the extent of the practical use of student-centred teaching methods and the advantages and constraints in their application within the ES discipline.

Therefore, this paper maps the existing student-centred pedagogical practices in ES using a worldwide survey conducted within the framework of the EU TEMPUS project "Innovating Teaching and Learning of the European Studies" (INOTLES).¹ It extends and complements the SENT survey in several ways. Firstly, it gathers respondents worldwide and allows for an assessment of the geographic factor on the use of student-centred teaching methods. Secondly, although it builds on

Hannan and Silver's (2000) methods identified as innovative, i.e. non-traditional and student-centred, it expands the range of examined teaching methods. Also, the survey has designed specific open questions for defining the major advantages and disadvantages for the practical use of most often applied teaching methods. This offers a practical understanding of the pedagogical approaches within the ES discipline and a better understanding of the context-specific factors facilitating the choice and application of teaching methods within ES. Last, but not least, the methodological approach applied for data analysis within this study varies from the one applied by the SENT team, revealing new insights regarding the relationship between various indicators and the choice of the teaching method.

This research investigates to what extent ES teaching uses student-centred approaches worldwide and the factors that influence the practical application of these methods. The empirical analysis is focused on instructor profile (position, experience, geographical location) and course profile (discipline, level of studies, class size and number of teaching hours). The analysis seeks to identify also the degree of uniformity and consistency of use of innovative teaching methods by ES scholars across various disciplines and geographic locations.

The paper is structured as follows. The following section examines the academic debates on the student-centred pedagogical approaches, presenting also the hypotheses guiding this research. Next, the survey methodology is explained. The study turns then to the analytical strategy of data analysis and the empirical results. The paper concludes with summative observations and specific recommendations for implications of teaching within ES and further research based on the survey data.

HYPOTHESES

We developed specific hypotheses for several major independent variables (IVs) identified in the literature as determining the choice and use of innovative teaching methods - our dependent variable.

IV1 Academic position of the instructor

We expect that the professional stability provided, for example, by the academic tenure, would give more time and 'safer' opportunity for instructors to engage in experimenting with innovative teaching methods. The potential danger with testing new teaching methods is that something might go wrong. Often this also has an implication on instructors' evaluations and their academic promotion. Professional stability, in this respect, provides an incentive for engaging with innovative methods, as the career risks are low. Moreover, some studies claimed that senior or tenured faculty might have greater access to university or external financial resources for promoting innovative pedagogies (Fonti & Stevancevic 2014, p.113). In line with this reasoning, we expect the following hypothesis (H) to hold true:

H1. Senior or tenured professors are more likely to use innovative teaching methods.

IV2. Instructor's experience

The instructor's experience of teaching in a specific field of study can relate both positively and negatively to the use of innovative teaching methods. The teaching experience is positively associated with the age of the instructor (i.e. the older a person, the greater the experience). The

age contributes to setting in certain teaching habits that are resistant to change (Stasz & Stecher 2002) and lower awareness of new teaching methods (e.g. e-learning and digital skills).

We hypothesise, therefore:

H2a: Researchers who are more experienced in teaching European Studies are less likely to use innovative teaching methods.

However, the opposite might also be true. The experience in a particular subject is a valuable factor in enacting the practical implementation of teaching innovations (Fonti & Stevancevic 2014, pp. 115-116). We would expect this line of argument to hold true, taking into account also ES characteristics. The interdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary character of ES and the constantly evolving EU political system demand a constant revision of teaching material and pedagogies. Thus, pedagogical experience in this specific field of study is expected to have a significant weight in enacting the use of innovative teaching methods. Hence:

H2b. Researchers who are more experienced in teaching European Studies are more likely to use innovative teaching methods.

Several variables based on course profile are expected to influence the innovativeness of teaching ES.

IV3. English language

English-language programs are more open to the internationalisation and exchange of knowledge and skills among academic staff and students (Huang 2006). In our globalised world, English is the leading language in exchange programs, dual degrees or academic research on sharing best practices on innovating teaching in higher education. Therefore:

H3. English language courses are more open to innovative teaching than other languages of instruction.

IV4. Class size

The literature investigating the role of class size on the learning process has mixed results. However, we focus on innovative teaching, which requires a higher degree of student engagement and motivation, and a community of practice. Thus, we argue in line with scholars that claim that smaller class size fosters a learning environment where students are more engaged (Harfitt & Tsui 2015) and affords powerful teaching opportunities (Finn & Achilles 1999):

H4. The smaller the size of the class the higher the use of innovative teaching methods

IV5. Number of teaching hours

When instructors are limited in the number of contact hours with students, or teaching hours, we expect them to be more likely to stick to their old habits. The time constraint leads to a more risk-averse behaviour and teachers are less inclined to experiment with new teaching methods. Thus:

H5. The higher the number of contact hours with students, the higher the likelihood of using innovative teaching methods.

Apart from the mentioned above specific hypotheses, we also control whether there is a relationship between the use of innovative methods and the course level: graduate and undergraduate, the specific discipline (e.g. certain skills required by a discipline), and geographical factor.

METHODOLOGY

The study largely builds on the indicators used in a previous survey on teaching ES, carried out within the framework of the SENT project² in 2009-2010 (see Baroncelli et al. 2011, chapters 7-9). This allows a comparative overview of the evolution of teaching ES, planned as a further step of this research. The major goal was to ensure the opportunity of identifying the continuity and change in the pedagogical approaches and the traditional and innovative teaching methods and tools applied within the ES field. This study expands from the SENT methodology and incorporates two additions. First, our survey integrates a wider range of innovative methods to accommodate the later techniques in the study curricula of ES. Second, our survey extends its sample beyond the European geographical area and includes respondents from around the world. The interest in teaching and doing research in the area of ES has gained increased popularity in countries beyond the geographical area of Europe. Therefore, accounting for diversity in coverage of respondents is paramount to understand how the innovative teaching methods are currently applied in the field of ES.

Survey Data and Sample

The survey was carried out as part of the EU TEMPUS project INOTLES. This project tackles core problems of the ES field by identifying common and specific needs of teaching ES in both EU and Partner Countries universities, developing innovative pedagogical strategies that transfer both knowledge and skills, and providing an example of curricular reform.³

The survey was conducted in LimeSurvey, a web-based anonymous survey that allows the online setting of the questionnaire and free access for answering the survey. LimeSurvey is user-friendly and self-guiding for the respondents. The survey invitation was sent to lecturers teaching ES courses worldwide (both at graduate and undergraduate levels) via major European and international networks related to ES (such as University Association for Contemporary European Studies (UACES), European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), European Union Studies Association (EUSA) etc.), the INOTLES website, as well as personal and professional networks of INOTLES project partners. The survey, conducted between March and May 2014, yielded data from 159 academics teaching ES, which represents our sample. The response rate in of the survey was 87% (182 respondents approached the survey and only 159 respondents completed the survey). The sample employed in this analysis retains only completed survey cases. As we used online contact points to approach respondents, the resulting sample may not be representative at the region, country or university levels but detailed protocols have been established to allow future replications.

Respondents were asked to provide information across a wide range of questions, including their teaching methods for at least one of their courses taught in the area of ES. The questionnaire provided the option of recording multiple teaching methods used by respondents in their teaching practice.

The questionnaire was divided in three main parts. In the first part, respondents were asked to provide general information about their institution and location, position held, field of expertise and experience in teaching ES. In the second part of the questionnaire, we collected information about the ES classes taught, such as – among others – the main subject, the type of degree, course level, the number of students enrolled, teaching language, and course length. Finally, in the last part of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to detail the methodological approaches they used to teach in classes, with a focus on teaching methods and tools. Here, the respondents were asked to name the teaching methods and tools, the advantages and disadvantages for employing such a teaching methodology, and the frequency the methodology is applied.

Dependent variable

Similarly to SENT survey, our survey operationalized the dependent variable (student-centred pedagogical methods) based on the Hannan and Silver (2000) categorization. This includes: team work, special expert sessions, simulation/role plays/learning games, project-based learning (e.g. research project), work-based learning (e.g. collaboration with companies), peer-tutoring, distance learning, field-work (e.g. excursions), internship/student's volunteering and exchange programs. Moreover, it examines two other methods: problem-based learning⁴ and blended learning (face-to-face and distance learning), becoming more widespread in the last years within the ES field.

To test our hypotheses about the innovative teaching methods in the area of ES we use six different measurements: team work, project-based learning, simulations, problem-based learning, expert sessions, and exchange programs. We chose innovative teaching methods that were named by at least 40% of all respondents in our sample as being used moderately and often in their teaching routine. The regularity of implementation of these methods signals that students are more likely to benefit from their use. Additionally, these methods are relevant for more practical reasons, such as the enhanced mobility of students (exchange programs), the focus on student interaction (problem-based learning, simulations, and team work), and their applied nature in relation to the job market skills.

From the operational point of view, we asked respondents to indicate the frequency of use of the six teaching methods on a three point scale: 1) never, 2) sometimes, and 3) often. For the purpose of this study, the scale of each method was recoded as binary where 1 indicates that the method is sometimes or often used by the respondent. The dependent variables were standardized as binary to facilitate their comparability in our study.

Independent and control variables

There were five variables of interest in this analysis (academic position of the instructor, instructor's experience, language of instruction, class size and the number of teaching hours) and three indicators used as controls (course level, main subject of the course, and the region). We captured the *academic position* of lectures by distinguishing their level of seniority: graduates (PhD students or masters), junior level (lectures, assistant professors and post-docs), and senior level (associate and full professors). We measured respondents' *teaching experience* by distinguishing between those with five years or less and those with six years and more of experience in teaching ES. Since the analysis spans over a large spectrum of countries, we recorded the information of whether the *language of teaching* of the respondents was English or non-English. As for the *number of students*,

we employed a continuous indicator recording the total number of students enrolled in the program in which respondents taught. The analysis also used some control variables. The first one is the *course level*, whether graduate or undergraduate, taught by the respondent. Since innovative driven approaches can also depend on the intrinsic nature of the *ES disciplines*, we included an indicator that differentiates between courses taught in the area of EU political and administrative studies, EU historical studies, EU legal studies, EU interdisciplinary studies, EU economic studies and EU international relations and diplomacy. Finally, we considered the *geographic area* of respondents in relation to teaching innovative methods. We extracted the geographical location of respondents based on their home universities. The region indicator was coded to comprise four geographical areas: EU (28 members), Eastern Europe, the United States (US) and Others (Canada, Egypt, Singapore, Turkey, Uruguay, New Zealand and Chile). Correlation scores were produced for all indicators and no strong relationships were observed for any given indicators included in the analysis. The correlation matrix is not included in the analysis but it is available upon request.

Analytical strategy

As the dependent variables employed by this analysis are modelled as binary, we used binary logistic regressions for our models (Greene 2000). Regression results are reported as odds ratios with confidence intervals. Data are presented in both descriptive and inferential ways. Initially, for our analysis we considered including all 12 teaching methods as dependent variables. Based on initial screening of data, we decided to keep only six teaching methods that were found to be employed in the teaching practice by 40% or more of our respondents. The decision to establish a threshold for selecting the six teaching methods was motivated by the need for consistency of results given the sample size.

Regression models were performed by including a full set of control indicators for each teaching method. A multilevel modelling technique was considered but the test for intra-class coefficients showed limited variation (below 0.10) when cases were clustered at the regions' level. However, an indicator specifying the regions was included as fixed effects to account for unobserved differences among responses. All measurements were tested for co-linearity and none was detected – the variation inflation factors (VIF) ranged between 1 and 1.4 and the tolerance values were optimal (0.7-0.9).

RESULTS

This study employs both descriptive and inferential data analysis. Table 1 presents the descriptive data of the dependent and independent variables of our study. Data revealed that the most used innovative research methods by respondents were teamwork (74.4%), followed by project-based learning (66.2%), simulations (65.0%), problem-based learning (54.4%), expert sessions (50.6%) and exchange programs (43.1%). A significant proportion of the respondents were at the senior, professorial level (55.7%) and almost one third were at the mid-career level (30.4%). A large majority of respondents (69.8%) were teaching in the area of ES for six years or more. Also, the majority of respondents were involved in teaching ES at the graduate level (53.2%), with courses mostly taught in English (59.3%). It is worth noting that a significant proportion of respondents taught ES in local languages (40.7%), attesting to a widespread teaching of ES in different national environments. The average number of students enrolled in programs in which the European courses are taught was 34.6%. Consequently, the average number of teaching hours for the courses in the area of ES was

75.6%. The main subjects of the courses in which respondents teach were in the area of EU political and administrative studies (38.5%), followed by EU international relations and diplomacy (21.8%), EU economic studies (12.8%), EU historical studies (9.6%), EU legal studies (9.6%) and EU interdisciplinary studies (7.7%). There is a certain degree of regional diversity in the sample. The majority of respondents were from the EU member states (56.6%), followed by those residing in Eastern Europe (19.5%), the United States (13.8%) and other countries around the globe (Canada, New Zealand, Chile and Uruguay, etc.) (10.1%).

Table 1 Means/percentages of variables in the analysis

Variable	%/mean	N/n
Dependent Variable(s)		
Using Team Work	74.4	159
Using Project-Based Learning	66.2	158
Using Simulations	65	159
Using Problem-Based learning	54.4	159
Using Expert Sessions	50.6	159
Using Exchange Programs	43.1	159
Using Field-work	35	159
Using Internship/student volunteering	32.5	159
Using Blended Learning	30.6	159
Using Peer-tutoring	30.6	159
Using Distance Learning	19.4	159
Using Work-Based Learning	16.9	159
Independent Variables		
Academic Position	100	158
Senior level	55.7	88
Graduate: PhD student, Masters	13.9	22
Junior: Lectures, Post-doc	30.4	48
Experience	100	159
≤5 years	30.2	48

Variable	%/mean	N/n
≥6 years	69.8	111
Course Level	100	156
Undergraduate	46.8	73
Graduate	53.2	83
Language	100	182
Non-English	40.7	74
English	59.3	108
Nr. of students enrolled	34.6 (24.2)	155
Nr. of teaching hours for the course	75.6 (154.7)	154
Main subject of the course	100	156
EU Political and Administrative Studies	38.5	60
EU Historical Studies	9.6	15
EU Legal Studies	9.6	15
EU Interdisciplinary Studies	7.7	12
EU Economic Studies	12.8	20
EU International Relations and Diplomacy	21.8	34
Region	100	159
EU	56.6	90
Eastern Europe	19.5	31
USA	13.8	22
Other	10.1	16

Note: *n* indicates the number of observations with a given attribute when a variable is categorical.

Table 2 Number of methods used by respondents

Nr of methods used	% = 100	N = 159
No use of innovative teaching methods	6.9	11
1 method	3.8	6
2 methods	5.6	9
3 methods	11.8	18
4 methods	16.3	26
5 methods	8.8	14
6 methods	12.4	20
7 methods	17.5	28
8 methods	5	8
9 methods	3.7	6
10 methods	4.4	7
11 methods	1.3	2
12 methods	2.5	4

Table 2 presents data on the number of innovative teaching methods employed by respondents in their teaching activities. Interestingly, the teaching staff in our sample rarely employ a single teaching method (3.8%). Most respondents employed on average three or more innovative teaching methods in programs pertaining to ES. The survey allowed each respondent to detail up to three advantages and three disadvantages in using each innovative method they chose to declare. Among the most declared advantages of using innovative research methods were linked to financial affordability, the administrative capacity and the academic return from using them. Among the disadvantages, the most declared were crowding conditions, time-consuming and rigidity in administering and improving the method. However, one must be aware that the advantages and disadvantages in using specific methods should be placed in the context of characteristics surrounding each environment where the respondent teaches.

Table 3 summarises the results of the regression models, which examined the relationships of six innovative teaching methods, i.e. teamwork, expert sessions, problem-based learning, simulations, project-based learning and exchange programs, with a number of independent factors presented in Table 1. The results in Table 3 are presented as odds ratios. Overall, the academic staff at the junior and graduate levels did not show a differing trend in employing more innovative methods than their colleagues at the senior level. There are two exceptions however: the staff at the junior level appeared to be more likely than the staff at the senior level to use simulations while the graduate-level staff were less likely to use exchange programs when compared to senior-level staff. This result

is perhaps not surprising. While responding about the advantages of the most often used teaching method, the junior academic staff confessed to perceiving simulations as boosting student participation, improving student skills and being easily manageable. At the same time, the senior level staff had more experience in managing large scale exchange programs which might explain why junior respondents were less likely to be involved in this particular methodological action. Thus, the empirical evidence does not provide support for hypothesis 1.

Regarding hypothesis 2, the experience in teaching ES does not show a clear relationship, be it positive or negative, with engagement with innovative teaching methods. However, we are inclined to interpret it as supporting the H2b. A large majority of our survey respondent (69.8%) had six years or more of ES teaching experience and they appeared to still actively engage in the use of innovative teaching methods.

The language of the subjects in which ES was taught did not associate, positively or negatively, with the use of specific methods. There is one exception to this statement: programs in which English was the language of teaching were more likely to be involved in exchange programs. The association between English and the use of exchange programs is perhaps intuitive, as the use of English may indeed prepare students for exchange periods abroad. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is confirmed partially when related to exchange programs but rejected when considering all other methods. The class size was associated only with the use of exchange programs – i.e. the higher the number of students enrolled, the more likely the program involved exchange programs – thus providing only limited support for hypothesis 4. As for the number of teaching hours, the more time the courses had, had largely no effect on teaching innovation, thus disconfirming hypothesis 5. A small exception is noted: the higher the number of teaching hours the more likely teachers were to involve expert sessions. There was no difference in the use of methods between graduate and undergraduate classes, except for simulations where graduate courses were more likely to involve these particular methods when compared to undergraduate course. The results showed no difference in the use of methods across different disciplines in the area of ES. One exception was noted: scholars in the area of EU economic studies were more likely to use problem-based learning. This might be directly related to the specific needs of economic studies, focused on problem-based approaches.

Another interesting observation was that scholars in the US were less likely than scholars in Western Europe to use expert sessions and exchange programs. At the same time, scholars in countries other than Europe and the US (i.e. Canada, Egypt, Singapore, Turkey, Uruguay, New Zealand and Chile) were more likely to use project-based learning. Apart from this specific variation, results showed no differing use of methods across different regions of the world. More analysis should focus on the differences in the use of some methods – i.e. expert sessions and exchange programs – between the US and Western Europe, which represented two main hubs for the development of high academic teaching standards. For example, based on our US respondents, the distinctive lack of expert sessions might be an indicator of lack of ES expertise, in contrast to the EU members. Furthermore, this observation might highlight the need of a stronger exchange of practices and inter-university cooperation (e.g. online or face-to-face) between the US and EU institutions in order to benefit from the ES expertise of the latter. The lower rate of exchange programs in the US as compared to EU countries might be a consequence of the limited experience of the US students within the European environment. This could play a main role in placing the US students at a disadvantage compared to the European students. But the higher use of exchange programs in the EU and Eastern Europe has to do also with the merit of EU educational policies and the Bologna process, encouraging the mobility of faculty and students in order to exchange best practices and mutual learning (European Commission 2010).

Overall, the analysis suggests a certain degree of uniformity and consistency in the practical application of innovative ES teaching worldwide across various disciplines. However, there are no clear patterns of interaction between the major indicators related to instructor' profile (position, experience), course profile (discipline, level of studies, class size and number of teaching hours) and the selection of the innovative teaching approaches.

CONCLUSION

This paper presents the findings of a worldwide INOTLES survey mapping pedagogical provisions in teaching ES. By focusing on the factors that determine the use of various innovative teaching methods, current research opens up new terrain for empirical and normative discussion on ES pedagogies and the extent that ES has encouraged student-centered pedagogies. Understanding the latter is important for assessing students' level of engagement in their ES degrees and their attitudes and confidence when using ES later in life (Trowler 2010).

The empirical study revealed a certain degree of uniformity and consistency in the use of innovative teaching methods across various instructors' profiles (tenured or not, more or less experienced in teaching ES) and various class characteristics (language of instruction, class size and the number of teaching hours). While this finding may represent the evidence of a high degree of exchange of practices and internationalization of teaching ES, it requires further research.

Moreover, INOTLES survey data has to be interpreted taking into account the specific context in which the survey was carried out and the resulting limitations. First, we captured a snapshot of time in which respondents declared use of a specific method or methods. Future research would require longitudinal measurements of using innovative methods among respondents. Second, our pool of respondents was gathered through a specific number of entry points, which may involve some kind of selectivity bias. The survey invitation has been circulated within personal professional networks of INOTLES universities as well as among major international associations specialized in ES (such as UACES, EUSA, ECPR). But we acknowledge potential distortion in the overall numbers of the use of some methods, such as problem-based learning, due to a high level of respondents from a specific university (e.g. Maastricht University), which officially applies a particular method included in our analysis. Third, our sample size is rather small and condensed mostly in the larger geographical area of Europe. Future research should make better use of larger sample and of a better geographical distribution. Lastly, our survey data does not include some indicators, such as gender, for example, and it limits the explanatory power of our findings.

Although this paper makes only partial use of the survey data, future research based on this data may provide directions on how to further develop ES pedagogies and provide appropriate capacity building for ES academics. A comprehensive comparison between INOTLES and SENT survey would be welcome in order to reveal the evolution of the teaching provisions and pathways in the field of ES. Also, it might be interesting to consider some in-depth case studies of specific methods, such as simulations, which have shown significant relations with several indicators (academic position, course level). Another interesting line of research would be to explore the regional similarities and differences. We would recommend engaging further in academic debates regarding cultural learning styles, considering learning as a culturally based phenomenon (De Vita 2001, Hofstede 1986). It could be interesting to assess to what extent teaching methods and learning environments in some cultures may be (in)effective in others as pedagogical methods and their perceived efficacy sometimes vary depending on culture. For example, whilst exchange programmes and expert

sessions were common in Europe, the extent of their effectiveness in helping student-centred learning in places such as the US with less commonality with Europe should be evaluated.

1 Maastricht University staff has been especially active in sharing pedagogical insights into the use of PBL within the ES during the last years, within the SENT network, but also UACES, ECPR and EUSA.

2 For more information see the official website: www.inotles.eu.

3 The Network of European Studies – SENT – brought together 70 partners from all EU members and candidates and other countries worldwide. Its major objective was to provide a comprehensive, comparative, cross national and cross-disciplinary picture of the developments in European Studies.

4 See more about the INOTLES survey at <http://inotles.eu/survey-teaching-es>"

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