


OUTPUT 2

TEFE Framework for the Internationalisation of Teaching Practice and Employability

02



Graduate employability is "a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy" (Yorke, 2004, p.8).

TEFE

Framework for the Internationalisation of Teaching Practice and Employability

**Output leads: University of South
Bohemia (Czechia) and Comenius
University (Slovakia)**

Outputs objectives:

To equip future teachers of English with international employability competences in order for them to successfully participate in ITP through one of the Consortium partner institutions or across the EU and beyond, as well as secure employment in the teaching profession as a stable, lifelong career. The TEFE Framework defines employability competences for successful completion of ITP, describes appropriate pedagogical tools, identifies missing skills, and outlines a conceptual model for their development. By employing a practice-based methodology, bolstered by the TEFE Charter and TEFE Case Studies, the TEFE Framework systematically facilitates the development of employability competences and enhances teacher education within the Consortium and beyond.



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INTRODUCTION



The Teachers of English for Future Europe (TEFE) project was conceived with one focused objective: to develop the TEFE Framework for the Internationalisation of Teaching Practice and Employability (TEFE Framework). This objective is delivered below as a result of the efforts of the Output 2 (O2) team members as well as the combined efforts of the TEFE Consortium.

Output 2 follows the structure of Output 1, TEFE Internationalisation of Teaching Practice (ITP), further developing the areas of mobility and employability. It argues that the employability, mobility, and professional identity of future teachers of English must be developed with an international perspective in mind—and with due regard to the life-long career of teachers in the profession.

In the ever-evolving landscape of the European Union (EU) and its labour market, the employability of future teachers of English plays a pivotal role in shaping the educational landscape of the future. Recognizing the significance of that role and the potential opportunities it creates for new teachers places greater demands on educators and institutions to incorporate employability into teacher education and teacher training programmes.

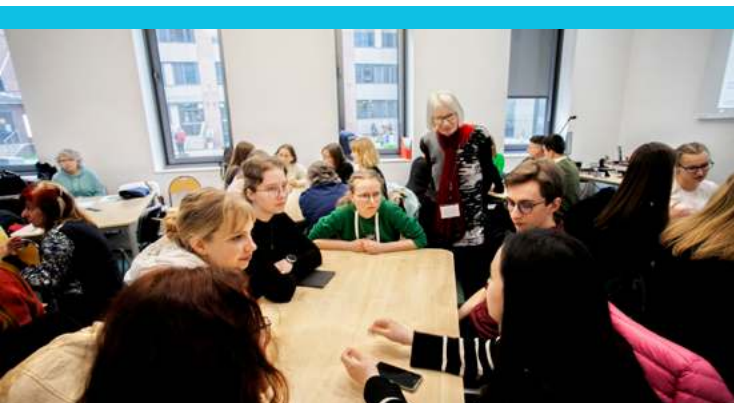
Output 2 introduces three key means of supporting and facilitating institutions, teacher educators, and students as they consider and undertake international teaching practice (ITP) across the EU:

1. **TEFE FRAMEWORK FOR THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF TEACHING PRACTICE AND EMPLOYABILITY (TEFE FRAMEWORK)**
2. **THE TEFE CHARTER FOR THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF TEACHING PRACTICE**
3. **THE TEFE CASE STUDIES**

The **TEFE Framework** emphasizes the role of internationalisation in enhancing the employability competences of future teachers. It seeks to influence and inform the foundation for comprehensive teacher education, where global perspectives and intercultural skills are not mere add-ons but integral components. By integrating these into existing teacher education and teacher training programmes, the framework provides a seamless introduction to internationalisation, teacher mobility and employability across the EU.

The **TEFE Charter** enables institutions to express a commitment to adopting

shape the future of teacher education and the employability of English teachers. By embracing a global perspective and redefining teacher preparation, the framework endeavours to support the education of a new generation of teachers who promote inclusivity, diversity, and mutual understanding within the EU and beyond.



the TEFE Framework and actively promote the idea of the internationalisation of teaching practice.

The **TEFE Case Studies**, gleaned over the three years in five European countries (Czechia, Germany, Poland, Slovakia, and Spain), encapsulate the diverse perspectives and experiences of student teachers, teacher mentors, and newly qualified teachers (NQTs). These stories offer real-world insights and lessons in teacher education, serving as tangible evidence of the positive impact of the internationalisation activities on young teachers of English in general and the influence of TEFE specifically.

In line with the TEFE project's philosophy, Output 2 advocates for a holistic approach to teacher education, one that places international experiences and perspectives at its heart. This shift towards a more internationally focused approach is inextricably linked to the strategic internationalisation of higher education. It requires institutions to prepare future teachers more effectively, i.e., to develop and assure the graduate employability of future teachers of English by equipping them with the necessary competences to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

By providing future teachers with the opportunity to engage in ITP, the TEFE Framework empowers student teachers of English to embrace diverse pedagogical approaches and various educational systems, while developing cultural sensitivity. Through this comprehensive and more internationally focused approach, future teachers grow competent to navigate the complexities of the modern teaching profession. It also fosters inclusivity and understanding in the classroom and empowers educators to contribute to their communities and society.

As a transformative initiative, the TEFE Framework thus seeks to



KEY ORIENTATIONS IN THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF TEACHING PRACTICE

In this section of the O2 report, we explain the theoretical basis that was utilized in the creation and development of the TEFE Framework for the Internationalisation of Teaching Practice and Employability (TEFE Framework). Firstly, we justify the selection of a competence framework as the chosen output of TEFE and demonstrate how competency-based education can enhance the professional qualities and the international employability of future EFL teachers. Secondly, we explain the concept of ITP which we see as a natural evolution of existing models of EFL teacher education within the EU, and we explore how experiential learning is implemented through ITP to help student teachers and newly qualified EFL teachers (NQTs) develop TEFE competences. Finally, we delve into the process of converting the detailed descriptors of these key competences into a comprehensive set of educational activities. This includes fostering intercultural awareness, conducting various learning activities, facilitating self-reflection and self-assessment sessions connected to classroom observations, and other activities comprised under the umbrella of ITP. The O2 key orientations thus offer a summary of the fundamental guiding principles and detail the recommended sequence of steps required for their practical application, drawing from the valuable insights accumulated over the course of the TEFE project.

COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION AND THE TEFE FRAMEWORK OF INTERNATIONALISATION OF TEACHING PRACTICE AND EMPLOYABILITY

The TEFE Framework is the result of first identifying and determining the desired educational outcomes, subsequently planning assessment strategies, and finally selecting and designing appropriate teaching methods and educational contents in order to reach those outcomes. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) call this approach to designing courses and content “Backward Design” (see Figure O2.1) and contrast it to what they call more traditional “Forward Design” where educators first plan the learning activities, then design assessment for these activities, and only in the final stage they try to draw explicit connections to the learning objectives. In the traditional forward design, the primary focus lies on the educational content (i.e., on teaching), whereas in backward design, the central emphasis is placed on the desired learning objectives. In the process of backward design, there are three distinct stages:

1. identifying desired goals
2. determining acceptable evidence and assessment
3. planning learning experience and instruction (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005)



Figure 02.1

Backward and forward design (based on Wiggins & McTighe, 2005)

Backward Design:



Forward Design:



Identifying Desired Goals: TEFE Competences for the Internationalisation of Teaching Practice and Employability

The initial phase in Wiggins and McTighe's model (2005) places a central emphasis on identifying curricular priorities. Within this phase, Wiggins and McTighe (2005, p. 15) encourage educators to contemplate the following three pivotal questions:

- What knowledge and skills should participants master?
- What are the big ideas and important understandings participants should retain?
- What should participants hear, read, view, explore, and otherwise encounter?

In the process of developing the TEFE Framework, we employed a comparable procedure to discern the essential professional attributes and traits that positively impact the employability of EFL teachers. Initially, our focus was directed towards practical skills considered essential for EFL teachers seeking employment beyond their home country, particularly within EU member states, or for those aspiring to effectively engage with culturally diverse student populations in their home education environment.

To identify these skills, we initiated interviews with experienced EFL teachers who have a successful track record of international work experience. Additionally, we distributed questionnaires to both experienced teacher educators and trans-national teams of student teachers during the TEFE Intensive Study Programmes (ISPs).¹ These questionnaires were designed to elicit respondents' individual perspectives regarding employability skills. The respondents most frequently listed skills such as communicative skills, critical thinking, problem solving, adaptability, resourcefulness, open-mindedness or language awareness. Subsequently, the outcomes were juxtaposed against existing frameworks for employability skills, general teacher competence frameworks, and quality standards for EFL teachers, such as the following:

- ACTFL/CAEP Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers
- Cambridge English Teaching Framework
- Continuing Professional Development Framework for Teachers
- European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages
- European Qualifications Framework
- The EAQUALS Framework for Language Teacher Training & Development
- UNESCO Global Framework of Professional Teaching Standards

It quickly became apparent that ensuring the international employability of EFL teachers required more than just a repertoire of practical skills. Fostering the knowledge component and shaping values and attitudes also emerge as pivotal factors in augmenting a teacher's employability. These three interrelated components collectively constitute competences, which represent the prevailing approach for articulating expected educational outcomes. Thus, a competency-based approach became the first theoretical foundation of the TEFE Framework. Indeed, this follows the generally recognized trend in European education where competency frameworks have become the primary means of specifying and assessing learning outcomes and Competency-Based Education (CBE) has been implemented across all levels, ranging from primary schools to universities, and encompassing both academic studies and workplace training.

The initial stage of CBE typically involves conducting a comprehensive needs analysis, which subsequently serves as the foundation for the development of study programmes, courses, or activities. This analysis encompasses a range of methods such as interviews, observations, tests, questionnaires, discussions, and other relevant means to gather essential input. The objective is to identify competence gaps and establish educational goals that effectively address these gaps.

¹ Ethical considerations were adhered to and consent was sought from all participants during the administration of questionnaires and interviews.

Similarly, the TEFE Framework focuses on identification, development, and self-assessment of teacher-specific employability competences that complement the general foundation of existing EFL teacher education curricula. An essential part of this process was the systematic comparison of education systems in the TEFE partner countries, leading to the identification of both similarities and differences in teacher education systems, while also aiding in the identification of areas of excellence and gaps in approaches to teacher education at individual TEFE institutions. Although the academic components of teacher education exhibit substantial uniformity across the TEFE consortium, the most significant differences can be seen in the scope and organisation of teaching practice. This is why the TEFE Framework places a particular emphasis on the transformative power of internationalisation of teaching practice. By incorporating international elements, educators can facilitate intercultural awareness among EFL student teachers, foster positive values, and empower them to effectively apply this knowledge to their own teaching. The key outcome of this process is the development of the TEFE Framework itself, presented in the form of tables delineating the essential TEFE competences along with their respective components. The TEFE Framework identifies and elaborates on three core competences as follows.

- Intercultural Communicative competence (ICC)
- Professional Teacher Competence for Internationalisation (PTCI)
- Global Civic Competence (GCC)

These are elaborated on in the later section on TEFE Competences for Employability.



Determining Acceptable Evidence and (self-)Assessment

After establishing the desired educational goals, the second stage in Wiggins and McTighe's model (2005) involves educators' deliberation on how students can effectively present and exhibit evidence of their learning. This process leads to conceptualizing the forms, methods, and criteria for assessment. During this phase, Wiggins and McTighe (2005, p. 18) encourage educators to explore and address the following key questions:

How will I know if students have achieved the desired results?

What will I accept as evidence of student understanding and proficiency?

Similarly, in CBE the (self-)assessment stage typically follows a criterion-based approach where students reflect on the level of their competences based on their ability to successfully perform specific actions. During the initial phase of reflection, student teachers typically utilise a set of competence descriptors as a checklist, simply indicating the level at which they have developed a given component of some competence. As they gain experience, they progress to a deeper level of consideration, contemplating individual descriptors, each of which leads them to pose questions about how they can effectively demonstrate mastery of a particular competence component. They engage in reflective analysis of specific scenarios and situations in which they have applied particular knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Importantly, comparing their current knowledge, skills, and attitudes to descriptors at a higher level on the competence development scale (i.e., intermediate-advanced), student teachers are able to reflect on and evaluate themselves. It also makes it easier for them to re-assess their behaviours and practices and focus on what specifically they need to work on. This self-assessment process therefore serves as a vital tool for continuous improvement and professional growth. It enables student teachers to pinpoint areas where they excel and areas that require further development. Through this ongoing reflection and comparison to established competence benchmarks, they can create targeted strategies for enhancing their teaching abilities and professional development.

Throughout the TEFE project, a diverse self-assessment and diagnostic resources were developed and subjected to pilot testing. These resources collectively constitute the third major intellectual output of the project, the TEFE Diagnostic and Evaluation Tools, which consists of the TEFE Toolkit and Teaching Practice Resource Pack for Internationalisation.

The overarching aim of the TEFE Toolkit is the enhancement of reflective skills, with a particular emphasis on fostering critical reflection of teaching practice. The TEFE Framework relies primarily on guided reflection and self-assessment of the subcomponents that constitute the three core competences. The tools and activities included in O3 are designed to demonstrate and monitor the development of specific components of employability competences (ICC, PTCl, and GCC) within the TEFE Framework and to provide evidence of learning achievements. Each learning activity includes a crucial reflective component, enabling participants to conceptualize and integrate their newly acquired international experience into their existing knowledge, skills and attitudes/values. Furthermore, the O3 team have developed and extensively tested a comprehensive collection of resources (Teaching Practice Resource Pack for Internationalisation) which encompasses a range of reflective and evaluative tools that draw upon both research and practical insights. Particularly, with regard to ITP, many of these tools focus on classroom observation and the intentional cultivation of intercultural and language awareness. They have been thoughtfully tailored for teacher education institutions and hold significant value as self-assessment instruments for pre-service teachers and NQTs.

Both the reflection and diagnostic tools designed by O3 team members at the Aston University were strategically employed before, during, and after classroom observations in TEFE consortium countries, forming the cornerstone of discussions held among transnational teams of student teachers and teacher educators during Intensive Staff Training programmes (ISTs) and Intensive Study Programmes (ISPs).

Planning Learning Experience and Instruction

Having chosen an appropriate form of assessment, it is possible to proceed to the final stage which within the Wiggins and McTighe's model is the creation of particular instructional strategies, selection of teaching methods, and designing learning activities. Wiggins and McTighe (2005, p. 18-19) recommend that educators reflect on the following questions:

What enabling knowledge (facts, concepts, principles) and skills (processes, procedures, strategies) will students need in order to perform effectively and achieve desired results?

What activities will equip students with the needed knowledge and skills?

What will need to be taught and coached, and how should it best be taught, in light of performance goals?

What materials and resources are best suited to accomplish these goals?



The learning activities used in CBE can be described as systematically designed activities to achieve a certain competence. These activities are real-world tasks which “may be related to any domain of life [...] but especially to survival-oriented and work-related situations in a new environment” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p.144). Similarly, in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2001), a task is defined as “any purposeful action considered by an individual as necessary in order to achieve a given result in the context of a problem to be solved, an obligation to fulfil or an objective to be achieved” (p. 10). CBE thus underscores the vital role of purpose-driven engagement in real-life activities as a catalyst for skill acquisition and competence development.

Student teachers naturally encounter such learning situations as an inherent part of their teaching practice. Nevertheless, when our objective is to systematically cultivate highly specific components of competence, as is the case with TEFE competences, it becomes imperative to immerse students in deliberately structured and methodical activities precisely designed to foster the development of each component of the competence. By crafting learning activities in this manner, we ensure that they closely mirror the real-world situations in which teachers will ultimately apply these competences in their actual teaching practice.

Learning and teaching activities and tasks in CBE are not strictly predetermined. Educators have the freedom to choose procedures that enable the achievement of educational outcomes. In general, technology and computer-mediated instruction are frequently utilised, offering opportunities for personalized learning accommodating the individual learning pace of each participant.

The activities in CBE ideally integrate more components of the target competences and are based on the active involvement of students. They also address different learning styles of participants. Furthermore, these activities involve higher-level cognitive processes such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, while fostering the transfer of critical thinking to real problem-solving situations, simulations, and behaviours. By considering these principles, CBE activities provide a comprehensive and engaging learning experience that supports the development of competences effectively.

Throughout the TEFE ISP, student teachers had the opportunity to engage in a diverse range of learning activities, each designed to address the fundamental dimensions of TEFE competences: the knowledge component, the practical skills component, and the values and attitudes component. On this note, Docking (1994) speaks of “a collection of units of competencies” which consist of “specific knowledge, thinking processes, attitudes, and perceptual and physical skills” (p.11).

The TEFE activities targeting specific knowledge building typically assumed the format of research-oriented tasks in which trans-national teams of student teachers were asked to compare education systems across TEFE partner countries and present the obtained data in the form of an academic poster. Both student teachers and teacher educators also analysed the structure and content of teacher education programmes with the focus on the practical teacher training component (i.e., teaching practice) and the opportunities for its internationalisation.

Activities focused on the development of thinking processes and practical skills predominantly centred around enhancing ICC and PTCL. For instance, in the context of the TEFE Ambassadors activity which was the major project task during ISP01 České Budějovice, the trans-national teams were tasked with creating promotional videos for their international peers. These videos concisely summarized the core concepts of the TEFE project while also outlining the structure of the ISP and the participants’ experience gained during classroom observations of EFL lessons at Czech schools. In this manner, participating students honed their communication, presentation, and ICT skills, exhibited a solid grasp of the project’s key outcomes, and significantly contributed to disseminating the project’s ideas within their home institutions and to the wider public. Another activity that also focused on developing practical teaching skills in an international context was planning teaching units in trans-national teams and presenting them. The selected activities that the student teachers designed were then implemented during of the dissemination conferences in Krakow as a part of workshops for primary and secondary school EFL teachers.

Lastly, activities focused on forming student teachers’ perceptual skills, values, and attitudes primarily centred around fostering intercultural awareness. These activities were based on classroom observations and were conducted in the form of guided reflection sessions, utilising tools developed within O3.



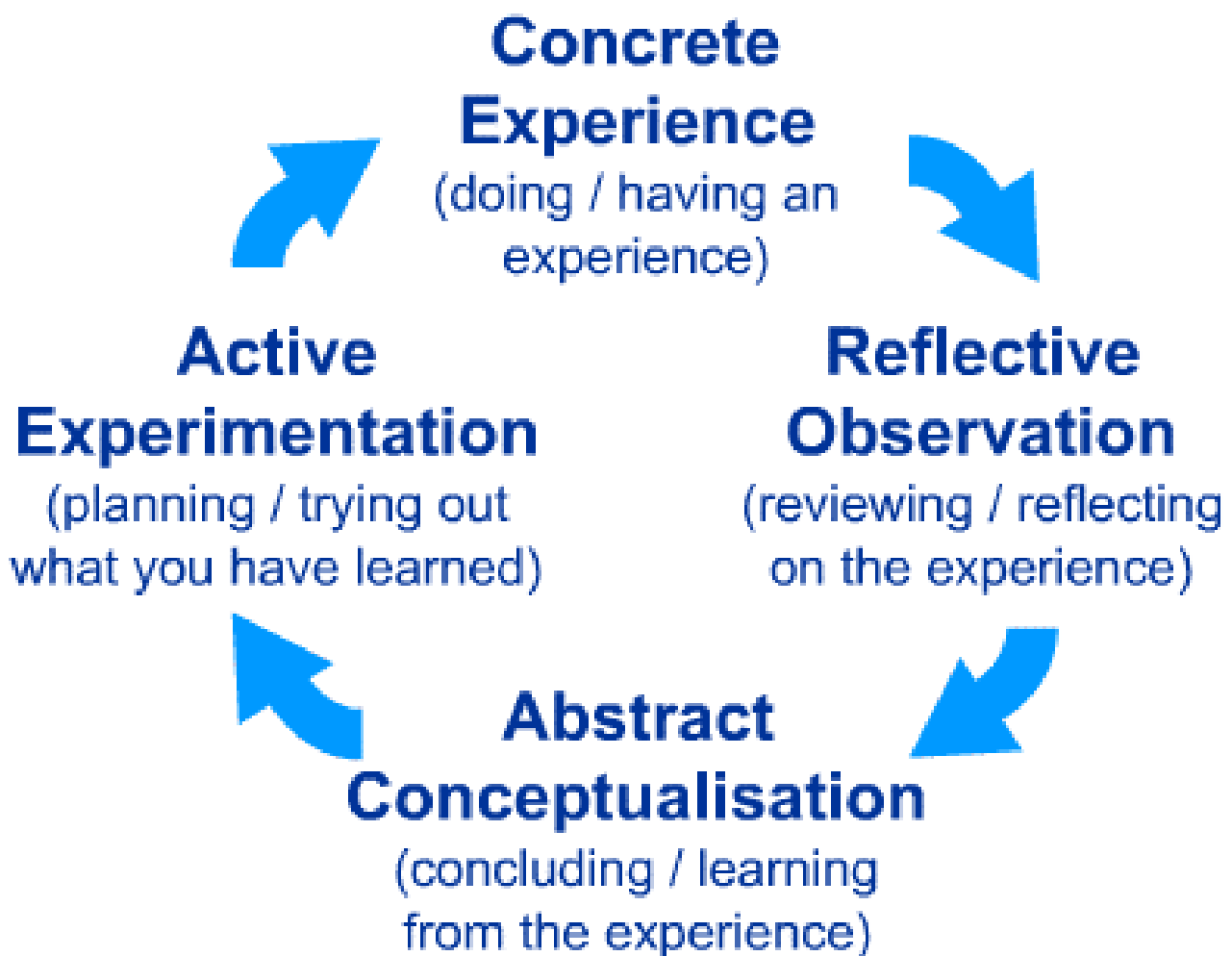
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND TEFE INTERNATIONAL TEACHING PRACTICE (ITP)

The TEFE project prioritizes the development of targeted employability competences (ICC, PTCI and GCC) among future EFL teachers by offering them extensive opportunities for experiential learning in international contexts. According to David Kolb (1984), experiential learning is defined as a four-stage process that involves concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (see Figure O2.2). The process implies that meaningful learning occurs when individuals actively engage with their experiences and integrate their observations and reflections into new knowledge and actions.

Figure O2.2

Kolb's experiential learning cycle

(Image source: "Benefits of Experiential Learning & Kolb's Learning Cycle Training", *Medical Interviews*, www.medical-interviews.co.uk/blog/benefits-experiential-learning-kolbs-learning-cycle-training. Accessed 20th March 2023)



Concrete Experience. This stage involves engaging in direct, hands-on experiences or situations. It involves encountering and interacting with something tangible, serving as the foundational basis for learning. Within the context of the TEFE project, this might encompass activities such as observing a lesson in a foreign country, undertaking an inquiry-based task comparing education systems of different EU countries, or planning a peer networking event for international students.

Reflective Observation. Following the experience, student teachers engage in reflective observation by carefully examining what transpired, what they observed, reflecting on their emotional responses during the experience. This stage involves thoughtful and introspective analysis of the encounter. Students often employ various tools to structure their reflections (including competence frameworks and descriptors) and focus on specific aspects of teaching. Encouraging group discussions and reflective journaling can provide valuable insights into their professional progression.

Abstract Conceptualization. In this stage, student teachers attempt to make sense of their experiences by developing theories, concepts, or generalizations. They try to understand the patterns and underlying principles that govern the observed phenomena. Suitable activities for this stage include concept mapping or case study analyses. Thus, TEFE O2 features case studies of pre-service teachers, NQTs, and experienced educators who actively participated in the TEFE project. Their international experiences are presented in a unified, structured manner, designed to enhance the learning experience for users of the TEFE Framework. These comprise the final section of the O2 report.

Active Experimentation. Finally, student teachers test their newly formed concepts and theories by applying them in new situations or taking an action based on their understanding. This stage involves taking risks, making decisions, and experimenting with different approaches to further develop knowledge and skills. In teacher education, this phase involves lesson planning and teaching in diverse contexts and conducting action research projects. The ideal form of this phase in the TEFE project is for student teachers to participate in ITP, whereby they have the opportunity to actively engage in classroom observations and teaching tasks in European countries other than their own.

Despite differences among European countries, teaching practice has proven to be a crucial factor in shaping future teachers' professional qualities and improving the retention rate of novice teachers in the profession.

“During teaching practice, a student teacher is given the opportunity to try the art of teaching before actually getting into the real world of the teaching profession. Student teachers also know the value of teaching practice and, they perceive it as ‘the crux’ of their preparation for the teaching profession since it provides a real connection between student hood and the real world of the profession.” (Magaña & Flores, 2016)

Teaching practice encompasses a wide range of learning and training tasks and activities directly linked to the acquisition of practical competences and skills specific to teaching. These activities typically involve various forms of classroom observations, lesson planning, simulations, micro-teaching, assessment and self-assessment, and self-reflection. Additionally, engagement with the school community plays a crucial role, allowing students to gain insights into the educational environment and develop the necessary interaction skills from a teacher's perspective.

TEFE International Teaching Practice (ITP) is based on the notion that teacher education is a cultural practice, and its internationalisation enables us to understand how both the teacher's culture and that of the learners' impact teaching and learning. This cultural introspection can enhance our intercultural fluency as educators.

TEFE ITP displays several characteristics:

- Firstly, it is **systematic**, ensuring that its various components are evenly distributed throughout the entire duration of the teacher's study and even CPD. This systematic approach allows for a well-rounded and comprehensive development of the student teachers' skills and knowledge.
- Secondly, ITP involves **reflective practice** providing student teachers with ample opportunities to analyse, discuss, process, and assess their experiences. This reflection can be facilitated through peer discussions, mentorship, interactions with teacher educators, and engagement with other experienced professionals. Additionally, the use of diverse observation, analysis, and self-assessment tools can assist student teachers in monitoring their professional development and promoting lifelong autonomous learning.
- Furthermore, it is crucial that it possesses a truly **international dimension**. This allows student teachers to immerse themselves in foreign educational environments, where they can encounter both similarities and differences. Such exposure serves to broaden their intercultural awareness, enabling them to understand and appreciate diverse perspectives and practices. Moreover, this international aspect facilitates the establishment of valuable professional relationships with future colleagues from around the world and it contributes to the strengthening of their own professional identity.

By emphasizing collaboration and embracing an international perspective, ITP enriches the learning experiences of student teachers, equipping them with the skills, knowledge, and global mindset necessary for successful engagement in the field of European education.



FROM COMPETENCE DESCRIPTORS TO TEFE LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND TASKS

Throughout the TEFE project, student teachers were actively engaged in a range of learning activities and tasks designed to enhance their TEFE competences. In this section, we describe the thinking behind the development of these TEFE learning activities and tasks, while also clarifying their direct connection to the TEFE Framework, its competences (ICC, PTCI and GCC) and descriptors.

TEFE learning activities and tasks are based on the principle of active learning which is defined by Carr, Palmer and Hagel (2015) as “students’ efforts to actively construct their knowledge”. Freeman et al. (2014) add that, “Active learning engages students in the process of learning through activities and/or discussion in class, as opposed to passively listening to an expert. It emphasizes higher-order thinking and often involves group work.”

In the context of the TEFE project, we differentiate between project learning activities and tasks. The activities are characterized by their focus on the process of learning itself and the active engagement of all student teachers and teacher educators, fostering collaboration and the co-construction of knowledge. The project activities played a crucial role in fostering a sense of community among TEFE student teachers and teacher educators. These activities encouraged active participation and the sharing of valuable experiences, contributing primarily to the development of the intercultural communicative competence. Overall, TEFE project activities provided examples of how to internationalize the education of future teachers of English.

On the other hand, learning tasks prioritize the end result, where in the TEFE project, the successful completion of a specific task serves as tangible proof of mastering a particular aspect of the chosen TEFE competence. CEFR (2001, p. 10) defines task as “any purposeful action considered by an individual as necessary in order to achieve a given result in the context of a problem to be solved, an obligation to fulfil or an objective to be achieved”. The project tasks were primarily associated with the classroom observations and their main objective was to guide student teachers in developing a deeper understanding of their own learning processes within the context of international teaching practice, emphasizing the importance of awareness-building and self-reflection. Included in the TEFE Output O3, project tasks guide student teachers through their experiential learning and reflection, helping them to self-evaluate the employability competences acquired through the process of internationalization.

Both project learning activities and tasks have a common basis, which is the TEFE Framework. It defines three key TEFE competences (ICC, PTCI and GCC) and specifies them in more detail by breaking them down into sub-competences. Each sub-competence is then complemented by a competence descriptor.

Council of Europe (2021, p. 12) defines descriptors as “positively formulated statements that describe observable behaviours which indicate that the person concerned has achieved a certain level of proficiency with regard to a competence. [...] The descriptors help to operationalise the competences and provide tools for curriculum planning, teaching and learning, and assessment.”



Transforming a competence descriptor into an educational activity involves converting a broad statement of what students are able to do into a specific learning activity that allows them to develop and demonstrate their competence of that component. The process typically involves several steps: analysing the competence descriptor, breaking it down into specific learning objectives, designing the activity, and aligning it with appropriate assessment methods.

Drawing from our TEFE experience, we would recommend that teacher educators interested in using competence descriptors as a foundation for designing specific learning activities consider the following steps:

1. **Analyse the Competence Descriptor**

Begin by thoroughly examining the provided competence descriptor. Gain an in-depth understanding of the context, subject area, and the desired outcomes associated with the competency. Identify the key verbs or action words in the descriptor that indicate the specific skills or actions student teachers should be capable of performing.

2. **Identify Measurable and Observable Learning Objectives**

Break down the competence descriptor into precise learning objectives that can be measured and observed. Ensure that these objectives describe what student teachers will be able to do upon completing the educational task.

3. **Align with Assessment Methods**

Consider the type of assessment that is both valid and reliable for measuring the expected learning outcomes. Determine whether the activity requires formative assessment (i.e., providing feedback during the learning process) or summative assessment (i.e., evaluating the final learning outcome).

4. **Design the activity**

Based on the learning objectives, design an activity that will enable students to develop and demonstrate the required competence. Consider the type of activity that aligns with the learning objectives, such as problem-solving activities, case studies, experiments, discussions, projects, simulations, or presentations. Clearly define the task by providing instructions, resources, and any constraints or guidelines that students need to follow. Determine an appropriate level of complexity and challenge that matches the target audience's abilities and prior knowledge.

Additionally, to ensure maximum effectiveness of the implementation of TEFE activities, we recommend considering the following factors:

- **Context of the task:** The context in which the activity is situated is crucial and should not be overlooked. It helps student teachers identify the relevant knowledge and strategies they need to activate in order to achieve a specific goal.
- **Detailed specifications of the target outcome:** Providing students with clear specifications of the expected outcome is important. This can be done through a model solution that students analyse during the preparatory phase and compare with their own results once they have completed the activity.
- **Well-structured, expert guidance:** The teacher-educator plays a critical role in active learning. They should have a clear vision of the expected activity outcome and how it can be achieved. The preparatory phase is crucial, and decisions regarding sequencing, material support, and division of sub-tasks significantly impact educational outcomes.
- **Students' autonomy:** It is important to give student teachers sufficient autonomy in their learning. They should have the freedom to research and plan their own workflow, make mistakes and learn from them, explore innovative and original solutions, and develop their reflective skills and general competences.

Examples of diverse project and learning activities and tasks are provided throughout all TEFE outputs drawing attention to specific goals of each output. These activities underline the pivotal role of the TEFE Framework in providing a common basis for the internationalisation of the teacher education and for the development of the employability competences of teachers of English for future Europe.



TEFE COMPETENCES FOR EMPLOYABILITY



This section sets out the TEFE approach to employability and explains how the concept of employability has been integrated into the TEFE Framework. The Framework's content and guiding principles are presented in two distinct but interrelated ways: firstly, through the visual representation of the TEFE Conceptual Model (Figure O2.4); and secondly, by outlining the Framework descriptors. Together, these elements elucidate the underpinnings of the framework and provide guidance for the development of employability competences for future teachers of English.

TEFE COMPETENCES – APPROACH TO THE EMPLOYABILITY FOR FUTURE TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

In the context of EU and global education, employability for future teachers of English is a comprehensive and multifaceted concept. It encompasses a wide range of skills, competences, attitudes, and values that are essential for individuals aspiring to become effective English language educators in an increasingly interconnected world.

The international Labour Organization (2011) defines employability as “a set of skills, knowledge and competences that enhance a worker’s ability to secure and retain a job, progress at work and cope with change, secure another job, if he/she so wishes or has been laid off and enter more easily into the labour market at different period of the life cycle.” Yet extends beyond mastering individual skills; employability should be seen as the harmonious integration of various competences, all of which are vital for success in today’s educational landscape.

Recognizing the complexity of employability for future English teachers, the TEFE project explored and conceptualized the key employability competences that future teachers of English need to foster as part of their teacher education. The competences are outlined in the TEFE Framework, which is visually depicted in Figure O2.3 below.

Figure 02.3

The TEFE Framework for the Internationalisation of Teaching Practice and Employability – Competences Chart

1. INTERCULTURAL COMMUN

Competence	Descriptor	Awareness and understanding
Communicating effectively with individuals of different cultures	The candidate displays a well-rounded knowledge of their own and other cultures (e.g., perception of time, social conventions, etiquette, interpersonal relations, proxemics, eye contact, silence, small talk, greetings, politeness phrases, requests, advice, turn taking, etc.).	The candidate is aware of the cultural practices of both their own and other cultures.
		The candidate understands how one's own cultural background may determine thinking, values, and behaviour.
	The candidate has developed a range of approaches and techniques to identify issues and find appropriate ways to interact and relate positively those from different cultural backgrounds.	The candidate is able to interact with others from a range of diverse cultural backgrounds in a personal, professional, and positive manner.
	The candidate maintains an open and enquiring mind when interacting with others in an intercultural context.	The candidate demonstrates curiosity and openness, and is able to suspend disbelief towards other cultures while suspending belief towards their own.
Implementing principles of ICC in all aspects of the teacher's role	The candidate develops their own ICC and that of their learners through the creative use of materials and teaching techniques.	The candidate continually develops their ICC in order to enhance their effectiveness as a teacher.
		The candidate implements positive actions in the classroom in order to develop their learners' ICC.

COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE (ICC)

Candidate Self-Assessment

Foundation

Intermediate

Advanced

I am aware of obvious differences between my culture and other cultures. I know my culture has cultural practices but find it difficult to come up with specific examples.

I have developed an awareness of significant differences between my own culture and other cultures, and I try to adjust my behaviour accordingly, although I am not always successful.

I am aware of a diversity of cultures, and I am able to participate successfully in most social, practical, and professional interactions, including those that may require a range of formal and informal language and behaviours.

I have some understanding and knowledge of a number of different cultural backgrounds and realise that at times these can influence one's thinking, values, and behaviour.

I am aware that my cultural background can influence my thinking, values, and behaviour towards people of other cultures and can sometimes do so negatively. I acknowledge that others' cultural background can also influence their perception of me.

Based on my knowledge and understanding of the influence of one's cultural background, I can adjust my behaviour and avoid bias. I can comprehend the behaviour of others from different cultures (even if they are not aware of the influence of their own culture).

My English is good, and I know how to use the most common greetings, politeness phrases, and expressions of thanks, requests, and apology. However, I sometimes struggle to communicate effectively with people from diverse cultures.

I can use appropriate language and behaviour, but I occasionally misinterpret cultural cues or act inappropriately. However, I am usually able to identify and correct these misunderstandings.

I can adapt my language and behaviour to a variety of circumstances for appropriate interaction with people from diverse cultures for successful communication.

I am aware that there are different cultures, and although I do not always like how people from different cultures behave, I do not avoid interacting with them.

I understand that my culture is only one among many, and while I respect other cultures, I may not agree with everything they do. Nonetheless, I am curious to learn about and interact with people from diverse cultures.

I can appreciate different cultures, see the world "through different eyes," and intentionally adapt my behaviour and communication to effectively interact in an intercultural context. I am willing and able to engage in diverse intercultural relationships.

I try to enrich my teaching with cultural aspects, but I am aware of my limited understanding of ICC.

Through developing my own ICC, I gradually improve intercultural aspects of my teaching.

I systematically implement intercultural teaching to my lessons, but I am aware of the need to keep developing my own ICC.

I occasionally teach facts about different cultures and compare them to the learners' own.

I am aware of the complexity of ICC and do not only teach facts about different cultures but also use some interactive activities to develop my learners' ICC.

I systematically develop my learners' ICC (sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and non-verbal competences, critical awareness, positive attitudes and skills to interact) using a variety of materials, teaching techniques, and activities.

2. PROFESSIONAL TEACHER COMPETENCES

Competence	Descriptor	Awareness and understanding
<p>Teaching English as a foreign language in any EU country</p>	<p>The candidate is able to teach English effectively in any EU country</p>	<p>The candidate understands: the issues that might arise in teaching EFL in other EU countries; the cultural differences regarding colleagues and learners; the differences in the education systems; and the resources available in that given learning environment.</p>
		<p>The candidate is able to: effectively adopt and adapt various approaches to teaching EFL in any EU country; identify their learners' specific needs and capabilities and tailor their teaching accordingly; and integrate and incorporate best teaching practices inspired by a variety of contexts and experiences.</p>
		<p>The candidate expresses a range of positive values and attitudes towards colleagues and learners both nationally and internationally. These include: respect for colleagues; respect for learners; the value of others' work and their intellectual property; humility; equality; a love of learning; teamwork, a willingness to share and engage with a wider community; and personal professional development and self-care.</p>

ANCE FOR INTERNATIONALISATION (PTCI)

Candidate Self-Assessment

Foundation

I am aware there are some cultural and systemic differences among colleagues and learners, in education systems, and in the resources available in the EU country where I have chosen to teach but I am not sure what they all are or what issues I might face if I taught there.

In my home environment, I can produce language learning activities and lesson plans and implement them to meet the needs of learners and achieve my teaching objectives. I understand I will probably have to adapt my lesson plans if I teach in another EU country.

I have never really thought about values and attitudes in teaching EFL.

Intermediate

I know a bit about the education systems and school environments of a number of EU countries and how they differ from my own. Although I know of some of the issues surrounding teaching in a few countries, I realise there is a lot more for me to learn.

Even though I understand how a particular EU country and its educational environment differs from my own, I know I will need guidance to adapt my teaching to meet learners' needs, incorporate best practices, and achieve my teaching objectives.

I understand and appreciate the importance of these values and attitudes in my professional life.

Advanced

I have a broad knowledge of EU countries' school culture, their education systems, the resources available to those who teach in them, and the issues surrounding the teaching of EFL. I am always eager to learn more about those I do not yet know about.

I am able to create, adapt, and implement effective activities and lesson plans to meet the needs of my learners, incorporating local best practice to achieve my teaching objectives wherever I teach.

I actively encourage and promote positive values and attitudes when teaching and interacting with a diverse range of learners and colleagues.

Competence	Descriptor	Awareness and understanding
Advancing continuous professional development (CPD)	The candidate actively advances their own CPD	The candidate is aware of and knows how to access CPD opportunities offered by their institution, their country's educational authorities and agencies, and wider initiatives across the EU which support their professional growth and certification.
		The candidate displays a proactive, positive, and systematic approach to advancing their own CPD, maintaining a record of it through a portfolio, no matter where they are.
Reflecting on teaching and learning in the context of internationalisation	The candidate understands the importance of reflecting on their learning and teaching performance while undertaking international exchanges or employment.	The candidate understands the importance of reflecting on their teaching in order to learn from any experience to enrich their personal and professional development.
		The candidate understands, seeks out and implements a variety of skills, techniques, and tools to assist them in reflecting on their experiences, learning, and teaching in order to improve their personal and professional skills while on international exchanges or working abroad.
Working in a team and collaborating in an international context	The candidate has the ICC required to work collaboratively in a team with people from different countries and cultures.	The candidate knows how culture influences behaviour and communication and understands the principles of teamwork well enough to be able to work effectively in a culture not their own.
		The candidate has the interpersonal skills and communicative ability to collaborate well with others and work as part of an intercultural team.

Foundation

I know a little bit about what CPD is required for my professional growth and further certification.

I rely on my institution, emails, and social media to inform me about CPD events and go to only those I am required to attend. I have received several certificates for participation.

I am aware that reflecting on my own teaching is important whether I teach at home or in some other EU country, but I am not sure about my own beliefs about teaching and learning or about my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher.

I am willing to learn from experience and I have begun to reflect informally on my teaching when prompted by my mentor or colleagues. I am not sure how often my teaching reflects good practice or my own beliefs about teaching and learning, so I know I still have much to learn.

I am aware that collaboration and teamwork can be beneficial even in a multicultural setting, although I am not sure I would know how to communicate in such a team.

I am still learning about the skills needed to collaborate as a member of an intercultural team and, although I have never worked in one, I am working to develop them.

Intermediate

I am aware of different types of CPD opportunities and programmes available in my home country and abroad.

I understand that CPD is important for me to improve my ELT skills and grow as a professional, so I attend events on topics that interest me if they are nearby and collect certificates from them in a portfolio.

I understand the importance of reflecting on my teaching when either home or in another EU country, and I am reasonably aware of my own beliefs about teaching and learning as well as my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher.

I reflect on my teaching whether or not a mentor, colleague, or learner gives me feedback on it. I have started to try and change how I teach in those areas where my teaching has not reflected good practice or my own beliefs on teaching and learning.

I understand the benefits of collaboration and am aware of how culture can influence communication and teamwork both positively and negatively.

Having worked in an intercultural team, I have developed the skills to work collaboratively as a contributing member of such a team although I still have much to learn.

Advanced

I have a clear understanding of the importance of CPD, and I know how to actively take part in different CPD opportunities and programmes both in my home country and abroad

I believe that CPD is vital for me personally and professionally, maintaining a growing portfolio of it. I seek out local, national, and international opportunities to grow personally and professionally in areas in which I know I am weak.

I regularly reflect on my teaching whether at home or in another EU country. I have a good understanding of my own beliefs about teaching and learning as well as my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher.

I am able to reflect critically on my teaching and welcome feedback from mentors, colleagues, and learners no matter where I teach. When I find areas in my teaching which do not reflect my own beliefs and good practice, I adapt and where I do not know how to do so, I seek reliable solutions and advice.

I clearly understand the importance of collaboration and teamwork and use the skills and approaches required to do so in an intercultural environment.

Having been a member of an intercultural team, I am confident that I have developed the appropriate skills, techniques, and approaches necessary to enable me to be an effective, contributing team member in any intercultural situation.

Competence	Descriptor	Awareness and understanding
<p>Applying critical thinking to all aspects of the teaching profession</p>	<p>The candidate employs critical thinking strategies in all aspects of their role as a teacher, whether interacting with learners, their legal guardians, colleagues, or the local community</p>	<p>The candidate is able to draw on reliable and valid sources to support or challenge an argument, proposal, or opinion and not take things at face value. The candidate is able to question information in a constructive and non-confrontational manner.</p>
		<p>The candidate is able to present information in a factual manner free from bias. The candidate values the rights of others to express themselves, keeping an open mind and not prejudging situations.</p>
<p>Being professional in all aspects of the teacher's role</p>	<p>The candidate promotes both professionalism and the profession through their words and actions in ways appropriate to the culture in which they are teaching.</p>	<p>The candidate understands the importance of professionalism and acts accordingly, providing high quality teaching and positively representing the profession. The candidate treats others with courtesy, fairness, respect, and dignity, also taking their circumstances into account.</p>

Foundation

I am aware that, in order to communicate professionally, I need to consider the validity of others' arguments, proposals, or opinions and then think about how I will respond before supporting or challenging it, although I still sometimes end up arguing.

I can interact with learners, colleagues and the wider community in simple and routine professional contexts although we do not always agree.

I am aware that professionalism in my teaching is important as well as how I treat others.

Intermediate

I am reasonably confident that I know how to critically approach an argument, proposal, or opinion by using reliable and valid sources to either support or challenge it without getting into an argument.

I can interact appropriately with learners, colleagues, and the wider community in routine, and sometimes unfamiliar, professional contexts. I sometimes fail to keep an open mind and hear others out.

I try to present a professional image both in my teaching and how I treat others, taking into account the cultural norms of where I am teaching.

Advanced

I am confident that I have the knowledge and techniques to approach an argument, proposal, or opinion critically and appropriately in a constructive and non-confrontational manner.

I seek to interact appropriately with learners, colleagues, and the wider community in all professional contexts, keeping an open mind and not prejudging situations.

I understand that I am a teaching professional and seek to represent my profession well through the quality of my teaching and respectful interactions with others no matter where I am.

3. GLOBAL CIVIC C

Competence	Descriptor	Awareness and understanding
<p>Applying and mediating the principles and values of GCC in all aspects of personal and professional life</p>	<p>The candidate understands the importance of participating in society and applies the principles and values of GCC (e.g., democracy, justice, fairness, inclusion, equality, and the rule of law) to their teaching.</p>	<p>The candidate is aware of the key components that form the principles of GCC and understands how it applies to local, national, and international contexts.</p>
		<p>The candidate can facilitate a safe and open environment where all learners are free to participate. The candidate also creates and delivers activities which develop a responsible attitude towards living in a community and democracy.</p>
		<p>The candidate has a responsible attitude towards self, others, and the communities in which they live and work, taking an active part in civic engagement.</p>
<p>Applying and mediating the principles of internationalisation and employability in teaching</p>	<p>The candidate has the knowledge, skills, and abilities to teach EFL in a way which encourages the idea of internationalisation and EU employability.</p>	<p>The candidate has the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about teaching in another EU country.</p>
		<p>The candidate has the knowledge and skills to inform learners of opportunities for internationalisation and employment in EU countries, helping them make informed decisions about the most suitable teaching practice exchange programmes.</p>

COMPETENCE (GCC)

Candidate Self-Assessment

Foundation

Intermediate

Advanced

I am aware of some local, regional, and global issues.

I understand how local, regional, and global issues are relevant to my life as a teacher.

Because I understand the effect of local, regional, and global issues and how they impact democracy, I can adapt my teaching accordingly.

I am aware that by incorporating GCC values into my classroom I can make a positive contribution to improving the society in which we live.

I have taken some steps to create a safe and open environment for my learners and occasionally incorporate GCC values into my lessons.

I have developed a range of skills which enable me to facilitate a safe and open environment for learners to build a community, and I am able to effectively incorporate GCC values into my lessons.

I am aware of the importance of democratic values and consider myself a member of my local and professional community.

I understand the importance of my role in civic and professional communities and occasionally participate in those I consider relevant to my life.

I actively engage and contribute to the civic and professional communities—local, regional, and international—of which I am a member.

I have some information about teaching in other EU countries, but I am not sure of the steps needed to apply for a teaching position.

I have found limited information about teaching positions in other EU countries, and I know some of the steps that will be required of me, but I do not know how to proceed further.

I know where to find relevant information about teaching positions in EU countries and know what steps are required in order to be employed.

I am aware that encouraging internationalisation and employability among learners is important, but I am also aware that my knowledge on the subject is very limited.

I understand that informing learners about internationalisation and EU employability is important and occasionally encourage them to participate in such experiences and point them in the right direction. I know I could do more.

I have the knowledge and skills to inform learners of opportunities for internationalisation and EU employability. What I do not know, I know where to find. I am also willing and able to help learners with the process.

The TEFE Framework represents a significant milestone within the Teachers of English for Future Europe (TEFE) project. Developed collaboratively over three years within the TEFE Consortium, it was influenced by the active participation of student teachers of English from five European institutions of higher learning. Their involvement was instrumental in shaping the framework's evolution, from conceptualization to development and testing, resulting in a comprehensive model that encompasses the essential competences for future English educators.

The three core TEFE employability competences that serve as the foundational pillars of the TEFE Framework have been identified as follows:

Intercultural Communicative Competence. ICC reflects the ability of future teachers to navigate and effectively communicate across diverse cultural contexts. It encompasses not only linguistic proficiency but also the cultural sensitivity and awareness required to bridge cultural divides and foster effective intercultural communication. ICC empowers future teachers to engage with students and peers from different backgrounds, facilitating cross-cultural understanding and empathy. ICC comprises two sub-competences:

- communicating effectively with individuals of different cultures
- implementing principles of ICC in all aspects of the teacher's role

Professional Teacher Competence for Internationalisation. PTCI represents the proficiency and knowledge necessary to internationalise teaching practices. It goes beyond traditional pedagogical expertise and incorporates an understanding of how to adapt teaching methods, materials, and assessments to suit diverse international environments. It enables individuals and institutions to promote and project the professionalism of the role of a teacher and its worth and value of the society as a whole. PTCI equips future teachers with the skills to create inclusive learning experiences for students from various cultural backgrounds. PTCI comprises six sub-competences:

- teaching in any EU country
- advancing continuous professional development
- reflecting on teaching and learning in the context of internationalisation
- working in a team and collaborating in an international context
- applying critical thinking to all aspects of the teaching profession
- being professional in all aspects of the teacher's role.

Global Civic Competence. GCC encompasses the development of civic-mindedness and a commitment to global citizenship. It involves an awareness of global issues, cultural diversity, and the responsibility of educators to foster a sense of global citizenship in their students. GCC empowers future teachers to promote values such as social justice, environmental sustainability, and ethical behaviour, preparing students to become responsible global citizens. GCC includes two sub-competences:

- applying and mediating the principles and values of GCC in all aspects of personal and professional life
- applying and mediating principles of internationalisation and employability in teaching.

Developed in consultation with experts from diverse national backgrounds, the framework bridges gaps in teacher training programmes and introduces a distinct EU employability dimension by focusing on the practical element of teacher education (i.e., teaching practicums) and their international provision as an inherent part of strategic internationalisation of teacher education. Positioned within the European Union's cross-border mobility initiatives, the TEFE Framework aims to equip English language teachers with competences essential for success in various European contexts. It aligns with EU policies promoting attributes like adaptability, intercultural competence, and resilience for effective cross-border employment experiences. While some of these competences are inherent to English language teaching, the TEFE consortium recognizes the need for a comprehensive framework to better prepare modern and versatile educators. By engaging with this framework, future English language teachers can enhance their pedagogical competences, positioning themselves favourably for diverse employment prospects within the EU.

Importantly, the TEFE Framework serves as a valuable tool for shaping the journey of future English teachers in the global educational landscape.

Graduate employability, as defined by Yorke (2004), encompasses a range of skills, understandings, and personal attributes that enhance graduates' potential for successful careers, benefiting individuals and the broader community.

In teacher education, this is particularly significant. Universities are therefore tasked not only with producing competent educators but also with cultivating sustainable teaching careers that contribute to socio-cultural development and economic growth.

In reflection of evolving educational challenges, new teachers face multifaceted demands. The TEFE Framework addresses these challenges with the introduction of its three global competences as a core of international teaching practicums. Each of these competences includes core sub-competences that cater to the global employability needs of future teachers of English. For example, within PTCL, the sub-competence "Applying critical thinking to all aspects of the teaching profession" equips future teachers with the discernment needed to navigate modern educational complexities. Additionally, the framework's structured self-assessment tiers (i.e., foundation, intermediate and advanced) empower educators to engage in reflective practice, adapting to the dynamic demands of international classrooms.

In essence, the TEFE Framework offers a transformative pathway by aligning graduate employability with global competences. It cultivates a global professional mindset, enabling future teachers to navigate diverse teaching landscapes, transcend borders, and foster cross-cultural understanding. This framework, tailored specifically for the teaching profession, propels institutions, teacher trainers, and student teachers toward enriched employability, positioning them as global leaders in the realm of English language education.

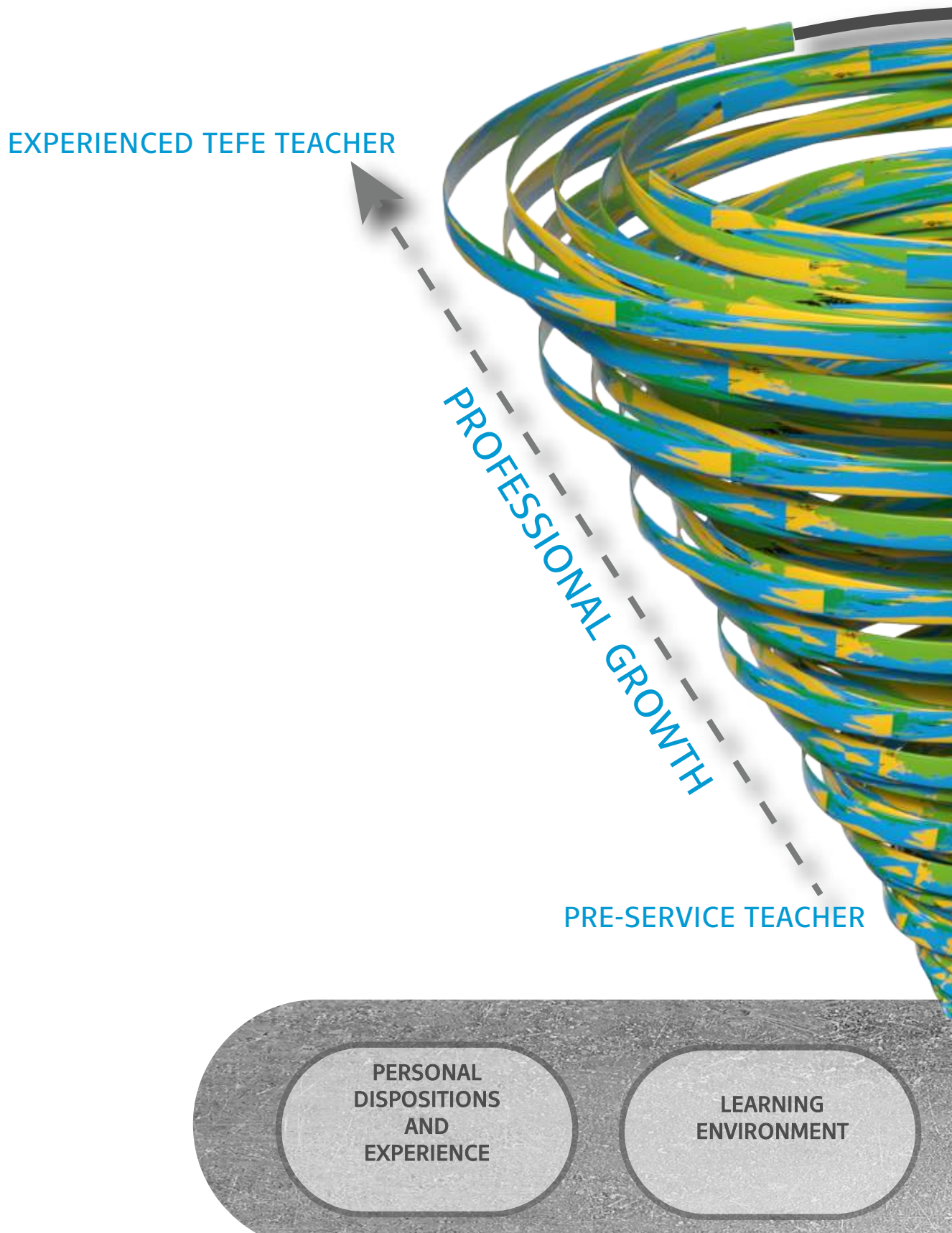
THE TEFE CONCEPTUAL MODEL: NURTURING THE GROWTH OF EMPLOYABILITY COMPETENCES FOR INTERNATIONALISATION

The TEFE Conceptual Model: Nurturing the Growth of Employability Competences for Internationalisation (see Figure O2.4) portrays the journey of developing the three integral employability competences within the TEFE architecture: Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), Professional Teacher Competence for Internationalisation (PTCL), and Global Civic Competence (GCC). These competences evolve and progress in a widening spiral but also intertwine, acknowledging their dynamic and interdependent nature. The TEFE Conceptual Model thus accentuates the fluidity of developing employability competences, their interconnections, and adaptability, empowering both individuals and institutions to cultivate an enriched internationalised teaching practice for English language educators. As a visual guide, it is aimed to serve as a compass for individuals and institutions, guiding them through the complex landscape of competency growth and internationalisation.

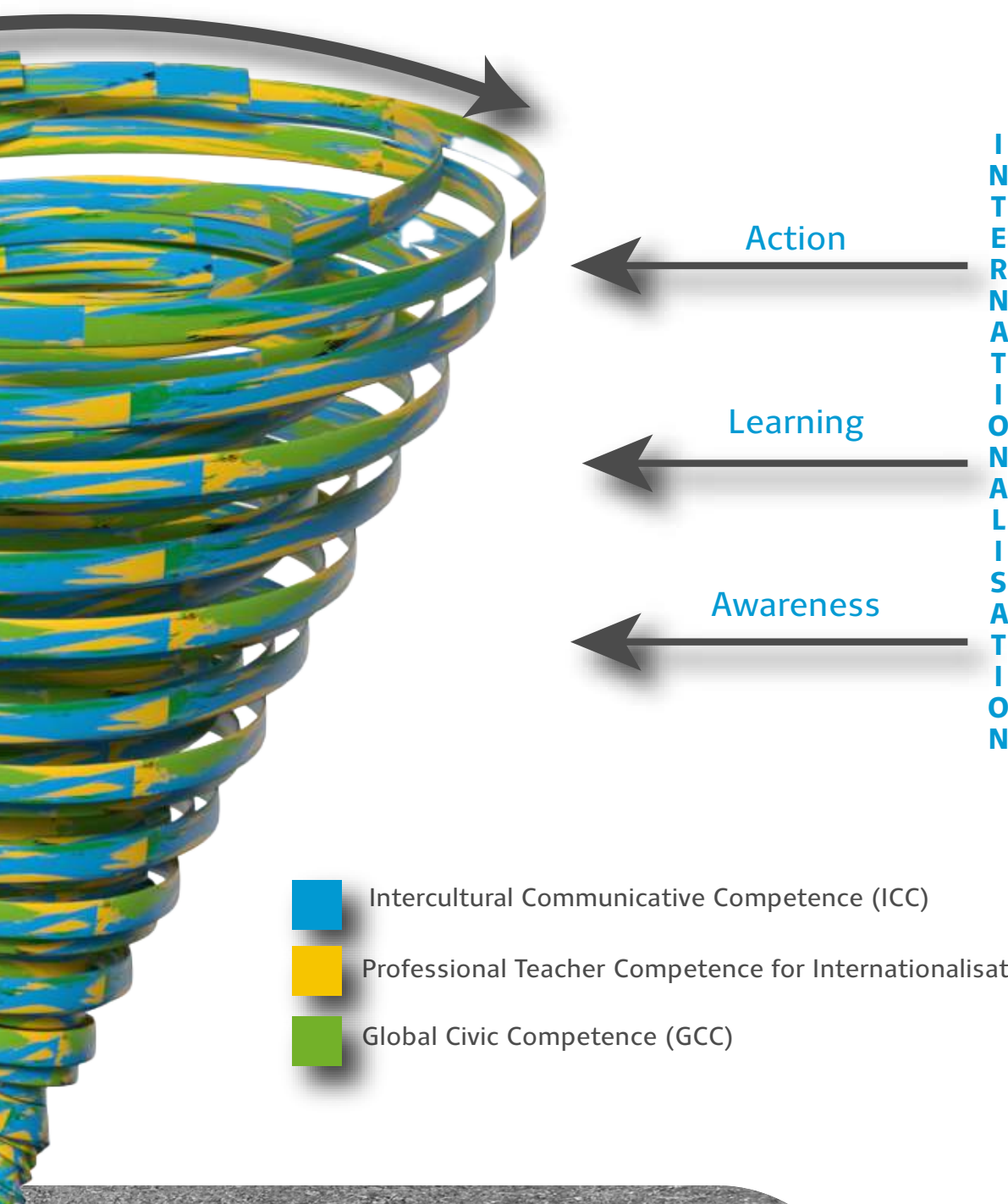
Figure 02.4

The TEFE Conceptual Model: Nurturing the Growth of Employability Competences for Internationalisation

NURTURING THE GROWTH OF TEFE EMPLOYABILITY



QUALITY COMPETENCES FOR INTERNATIONALISATION



TEACHING
PRACTICE

EU DEMANDS
FOR TEACHING
PROFESSIONALS

Key Elements of the TEFE Conceptual Model

- **Interconnected Competences.** The model captures the intricate relationships among the three competences, reflecting their symbiotic nature. Each competence is represented by a distinct colour—blue, yellow, and green—symbolising their uniqueness yet interconnectedness. This visual representation underscores that competency development is holistic, emerging from the harmonious fusion of these three dimensions.
- **Entrance with Experience.** Individuals and institutions step into the framework from varying points, bringing their diverse past experiences and professional backgrounds. This recognition of prior knowledge and expertise acknowledges that growth is not always linear. The model invites educators and aspiring teachers to tailor their journey based on their existing foundations, creating an inclusive learning environment.
- **Dynamic Growth Spiral.** A spiral structure signifies the progression of competences over the teacher education cycle. The interwoven threads depict the development of each competence, illustrating how they evolve in tandem. As individuals traverse the spiral, they accumulate experiences, insights, and expertise, contributing to their comprehensive competency profile. Informally, the TEFE Consortium calls the model ‘The TEFE Tornado of (positive) Change in Teacher Education’.
- **Influencers of Development.** The model underscores four driving forces that shape competence development: professional dispositions and experience, learning environment, existing teaching practice, and the demand for teaching professionals. These factors impact the pace and quality of competency enhancement, creating a dynamic learning trajectory that adapts to the evolving educational landscape.
- **Internationalisation Catalyst.** Internationalisation infuses momentum into competence development. Through authentic international experiences, student teachers gain awareness, learn from real-world scenarios, and evolve through guided mentoring and reflection. This exposure cultivates their ability to navigate professional challenges, gradually transforming them into adept TEFE educators.

In summary, the TEFE Conceptual Model embraces visually the TEFE philosophy of developing employability competences of future teachers of English. It promotes a holistic approach to competence growth, acknowledges that development is unique to each learner’s journey, and fosters collaboration and excellence in the teaching profession.

TEFE FRAMEWORK DESCRIPTORS

The TEFE Framework for the Internationalisation of Teaching Practice and Employability – Competences Chart (Figure O2. 4) encompasses the three core TEFE competences. Within each competence, there are sub-competences, each defined by specific descriptors. These descriptors not only guide the development of employability competences but also equip future teachers of English with the necessary skills to excel in international teaching contexts.



INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE (ICC) DESCRIPTORS

- **Communicating effectively with individuals of different cultures.** This sub-competence focuses on enabling candidates to engage in meaningful cross-cultural interactions. It empowers them to navigate linguistic and cultural boundaries, fostering understanding and empathy among diverse cultural contexts.
- **Implementing the principles of ICC in all aspects of the teacher's role.** This sub-competence emphasizes the integration of intercultural education into all aspects of teaching. It guides candidates in creating inclusive learning materials, promoting cross-cultural understanding, and cultivating intercultural awareness within the classroom.

PROFESSIONAL TEACHER COMPETENCE FOR INTERNATIONALISATION (PTCI) DESCRIPTORS

- **Teaching English as a foreign language in any EU country.** Candidates develop adaptability, cultural awareness, and the ability to teach English effectively across diverse educational systems within the EU.
- **Advancing continuous professional development (CPD).** This sub-competence encourages candidates to actively pursue opportunities for growth. They document their progress, enhancing their teaching practices to align with the evolving demands of international education.
- **Reflecting on teaching and learning in the context of internationalisation.** Future teachers critically assess their pedagogical methods, adapting them to cater to the needs of internationalised classrooms. This fosters their ability to effectively deliver education across diverse settings.
- **Working in a team and collaborating in an international context.** This sub-competence underscores the importance of effective collaboration. It equips candidates with skills to collaborate with colleagues from diverse backgrounds, ensuring cooperative teaching and learning experiences.
- **Applying critical thinking to all aspects of the teaching profession.** Candidates develop the ability to question information constructively, enhancing their decision-making skills. This empowers them to provide well-informed guidance to their students.
- **Being professional in all aspects of the teacher's role.** Emphasising professionalism in communication and actions, this sub-competence equips candidates with skills to navigate professional interactions in diverse educational environments.

GLOBAL CIVIC COMPETENCE (GCC) DESCRIPTORS

- **Applying and mediating the principles and values of GCC in all aspects of personal and professional life.** This sub-competence focuses on integrating values such as democracy, fairness, and justice into teaching practices. It nurtures socially responsible classrooms and fosters the development of global citizens.
- **Applying and mediating the principles of internationalisation and employability in teaching.** Future teachers incorporate internationalisation and employability concepts into their pedagogical strategies. This equips students with the skills required to excel in a globalised job market.

In addition to embracing the three TEFE employability competences, a further important feature of the TEFE Framework is its dual structure, aiming to systematically support two key stakeholder groups: (a) university educators of future teachers of English and teacher mentors; and (b) student teachers of English (STEs). With respect to teacher educators and mentors, it provides underpinning TEFE competences which can be integrated into existing teacher programmes. With respect to STEs, it provides an assessment framework to use to determine their current progress towards competence, facilitate continuous self-reflection, and plan their ongoing development. At the same time, the framework enables institutions to assess their preparedness to promote internationalisation and determine what else they need to put in place to make TEFE a reality. The architecture of the TEFE Framework therefore comprises two main components, each serving a distinct purpose in facilitating competence growth.

COMPONENT 1: IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYABILITY COMPETENCES

This section is organised into three columns: Competence, Descriptor, and Awareness and Understanding. These columns play a crucial role in delineating competences and their corresponding developmental objectives. For instance, within the ICC sub-competence of "Communicating effectively with individuals of different cultures," the Descriptor column indicates specific skills such as adapting communication styles. The Awareness and Understanding column contextualizes this descriptor by explaining the importance of adept communication in culturally diverse settings.

For instance, in the PTCI sub-competence of "Advancing continuous professional development (CPD)," the Descriptor column specifies the necessity for candidates to proactively seek growth opportunities. The Awareness and Understanding column explains how CPD ensures that future teachers remain updated with evolving international teaching methods, contributing to their competence in delivering effective education globally.

COMPONENT 2: CANDIDATE SELF-ASSESSMENT AND STRUCTURED REFLECTION

This facet of the TEFE Framework guides candidates in self-assessing their progress and reflecting on their international teaching experiences. The assessment process is categorized into three tiers: Foundation, Intermediate, and Advanced. This structured approach empowers candidates to gauge their competence development at various stages of their international teaching journey.

For example, within the GCC sub-competence of "Applying and mediating the principles of internationalisation and employability in teaching," the self-assessment process enables candidates to evaluate how effectively they integrated internationalisation and employability concepts into their pedagogical strategies during ITP. This self-reflection facilitates identifying areas for improvement and further growth.

In summary, through its sub-competences and their respective descriptors, the TEFE Framework systematically guides the development of employability competences among future teachers of English. The methodical structure of the framework strives to ensure that prospective teachers not only comprehend the desired competences but also possess a clear roadmap for their development.

The Descriptors and Awareness and Understanding columns provide a comprehensive grasp of each competence's components and their relevance. The structured self-assessment tiers afford candidates the chance to critically assess their progress, facilitating adjustments to enhance employability competences for international teaching contexts. This systematic approach empowers future teachers to be well-prepared, adaptable, and effective educators in diverse global classrooms.



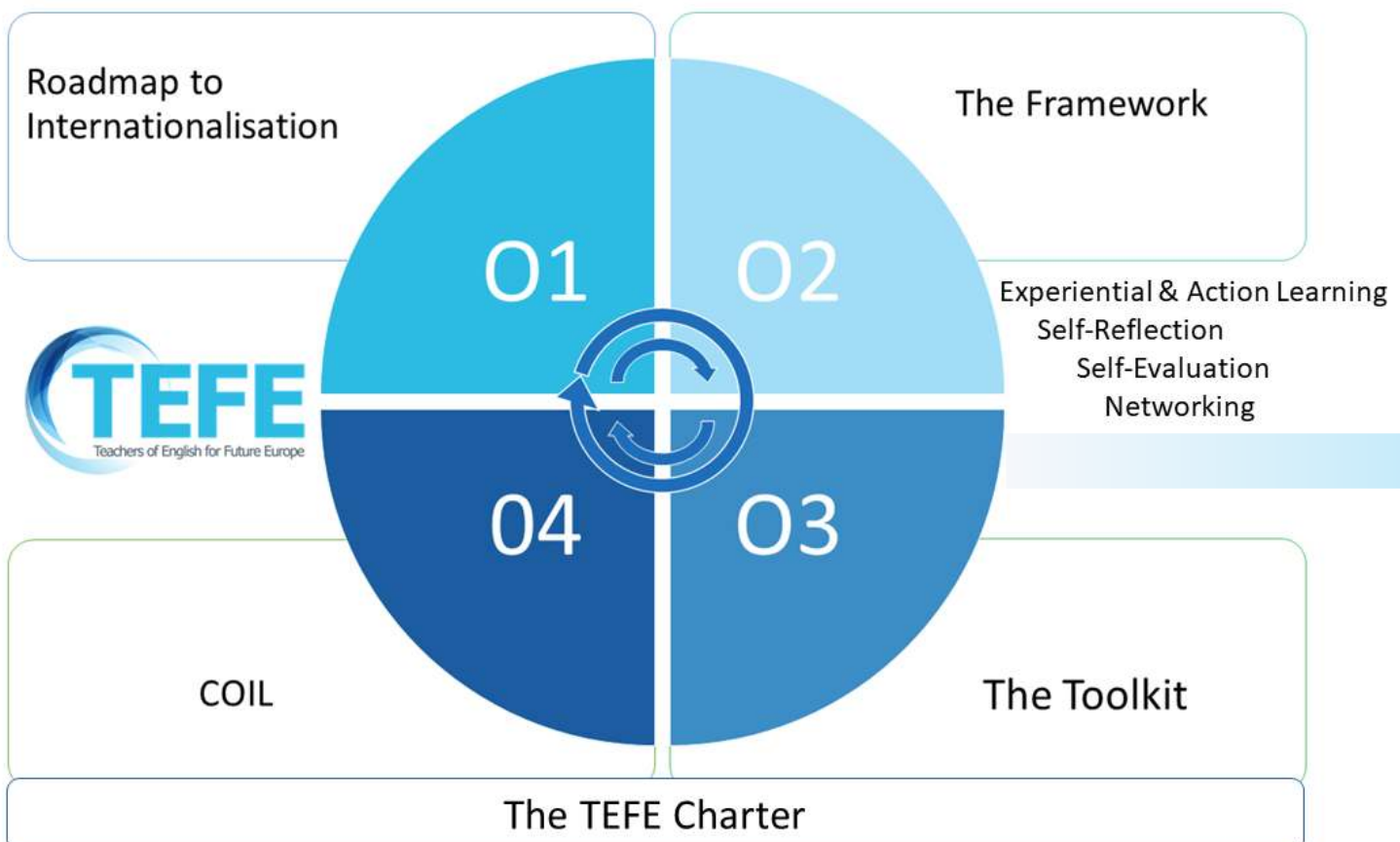
INTEGRATING EMPLOYABILITY WITH INTERNATIONALISATION

KEY ELEMENTS OF TEFE IMPLEMENTATION METHODOLOGY

In the pursuit of aligning employability with internationalisation within the context of teacher education, this section outlines the methodology for implementing the TEFE Framework. The TEFE Methodology is first summarized visually in Figure O2.5, followed by a description of its key components. This discussion highlights the symbiotic relationship among the four project outputs and underscores the significance of fostering institutional commitment to internationalisation. Such commitment plays a pivotal role in influencing the extent and success of curricular changes and an institution's adaptability to meet employability demands.

Figure O2.5

The TEFE Methodology





Teacher education
curricula development

ITP:
Internationalisation of
teaching practice

Experiential
learning

Awareness
development

Pedagogical
expertise

Figure O2.5 is grounded in the notion that the close relationship between internationalisation and the employability of university graduates is no longer merely an aspirational goal but a strategic imperative for higher education institutions (Fakunle and Chan 2021; Lorber and Pram 2020; Tomlinson and Holmes 2017; Knight and Yorke 2004). In the context of educating future teachers of English, internationalisation becomes an institutional undertaking that concerns all dimensions of higher education. Its aim is to enhance the curriculum, equipping students with the skills needed for successful graduate employment (Bui and Nguyen, 2019).

Within the TEFE Methodology, graduate employability is not viewed as merely addressing a skills gap. Instead, it is considered a collection of skills and competences that distinguish future English teachers, rendering them professionally qualified for international employment. Drawing from Holmes (2001),

TEFE's approach to teacher employability emphasizes the role of social practices and graduate identity, which are crucial for understanding human behaviour in the field of language education across diverse school systems and environments.

To empower future teachers of English to activate and develop their unique, essential teaching competences, TEFE adopts a holistic approach that incorporates experiential and reflective learning, often described as "learning by doing" (Caulfield & Woods, 2013; Grair, 2007; Kolb, 2015). By strategically introducing the ITP component into teacher education curricula, TEFE nurtures employability at four interconnected levels advocated by Clarke (2017) as constituting the essence of graduate employability: the development of human capital, social capital, individual behaviours, and individual attributes.

The interconnectedness of the four project outputs is represented on the left side of Figure O2.5. Methodologically, the mutual and integrated relationship of the TEFE outputs holds significance from two distinct perspectives. Firstly, when an educational organisation initiates the incorporation of ITP into their teacher education curriculum, these outputs serve as a guide for assessing the organisation's readiness, offering valuable insights into content and key components. Secondly, the symbiotic relationship among these outputs establishes a platform for strategically advancing the development of internationalised teaching practice.



Each of the outputs develops one of the four pillars of the TEFE ITP methodology:

- **TEFE ITP is organisationally-led.** Output 1 promotes institutionally supported internationalisation of teacher education. This approach, integrated into the TEFE Roadmap for the Internationalisation of Teaching Practice (TEFE ITP Roadmap), focuses on the internationalisation of the teaching practice component of teacher education curricula in a two-fold manner. One serving university and faculty management and administration, and the other addressing the specific needs of future teachers.
- **TEFE ITP is competence-based.** Output 2's TEFE Framework integrates ITP with employability competences that are developed through the undertaking of ITP in an international classroom context and that are required for future teachers of English. Bolstered by TEFE Charter, and TEFE case studies, the framework encourages student teachers and teacher educating organisations to reflect on and further develop their professional practices.
- **TEFE ITP instruction is underpinned by a portfolio of research-informed and practice-based, self-reflective and self-evaluative tasks and tools.** Output 3's TEFE Toolkit provides a valuable resource for institutions and future teachers of English. These tools aim to enhance reflective skills, with a focus on fostering critical reflective teaching practices among teachers. Particularly noteworthy is the Classroom Observation Tool, which directs students' attention to a wide range of interactional phenomena, both inside and outside the classroom. It encourages a broader observational scope, encompassing aspects like power dynamics, somatic awareness, teacher and cultural identity, and more. This comprehensive approach is essential for preparing teachers to navigate complex intercultural contexts.
- **TEFE community and professionalism continues to develop via the TEFE COIL.** Output 4's TEFE Platform serves as the outward-facing component of the project, offering digital accessibility to essential resources and fostering collaboration of student teachers of English as well as of teacher education institutions across the EU. Through sustaining an international dialogue and ongoing collaboration, the TEFE COIL serves as a vehicle integrating internationalisation into teacher education, helping future teachers engage in international experiences and further develop their TEFE competences.





Pedagogically significant are the practice-based orientations of the TEFE ITP instruction, visually represented in the middle of Figure O2.5 as part of the TEFE journey: Experiential and action learning, Self-evaluation, Self-reflection, and Networking. These embody and drive the actions that continuously underpinned the TEFE project for the period of its first three years and that also informed the creation of the project outputs. As methodological principles, these four attributes play a pivotal role in shaping the professional development of future teachers of English whilst also engaging them with the project and its outputs.

Specifically, experiential and action learning immerse future teachers in hands-on educational experiences, providing them with practical insights and skills gained through active participation. Self-evaluation encourages individuals to critically assess their own performance, fostering a sense of accountability and continuous improvement. Self-reflection prompts deep introspection, allowing future teachers to refine their practice and develop a heightened awareness of their teaching approaches and methodologies. Networking facilitates connections with peers and professionals, opening doors to collaborative opportunities, sharing of knowledge, and expanding one's educational horizons.

Altogether, these attributes are crucial to the development of TEFE competences—those competences that are essential for future teachers of English as they navigate the complexities of ITP and contribute to their overall growth and professional success. Moreover, they also guide the actions of various project stakeholders, enabling them to harness resources in versatile ways as they work towards advancing the internationalisation of teaching practice. Institutions may utilise the TEFE Charter to conduct organisational audits and devise implementation plans, which include strategies for securing Erasmus+ and other funding for international teaching programmes. Educators and mentors may incorporate the TEFE Framework into teacher training while proactively planning the integration of students from other EU countries. Additionally, mentors play a crucial role in providing support to new teachers during international teaching experiences. Students engage with these resources for self-assessment, reflective practices, and continuous professional development, aligning their progress with key career stages outlined in the TEFE vision. This approach underscores TEFE's commitment to a comprehensive, action-oriented strategy for promoting internationalisation within teacher education.



Finally, on the right side of the TEFE implementation methodology diagram (Figure O2.5), the process curricular change in teacher educations and its interconnectedness with the need to adopt internationalised teaching practice is presented as encompassing ITP as an integral part of the learning process for future teachers of English.

As part of the curricular change, the TEFE methodology recognizes that while the theoretical foundation of pedagogical expertise is similar across various EU countries, the practical component of teacher education programmes often differs significantly. The teaching of the foundations of pedagogical expertise in EFL is relatively uniform across TEFE institutions, with common specialised subjects including linguistics, literature, cultural studies, and methodology. However, the divergence lies in the coverage of intercultural and global studies and most notably in the scope and organisational structure of pedagogical practices, as seen in the examples from different countries. Historically, mobility programmes, such as Erasmus, have focused primarily on the academic aspects of teacher study programmes, overlooking the crucial pedagogical differences. Teaching practice, along with the development of related competences, is therefore still firmly situated within the national context of English language teaching, which is limiting and insufficient in terms of European and global education standards.

International teaching practice exposes student teachers to diverse pedagogical and interactional aspects of language teaching that might otherwise go unnoticed. TEFE competences thus begin to take shape during practical experiences, as student teachers grapple with these variations, which serve as a catalyst for awareness development, indicated in Figure O2.5 through the intersection of the Experiential learning and Awareness raising features. When pre-service teachers step outside their familiar teaching contexts and encountering diverse educational systems during international practice, their learning is significantly influenced. These experiences stimulate the transformation of teaching practices and the development of competences, demonstrating the powerful impact of internationalisation on teacher education.

In summary, the TEFE Implementation Methodology acknowledges the crucial role of experiential learning and awareness development in nurturing TEFE competences among future teachers of English. It underscores that while the foundational aspects of pedagogical expertise are relatively uniform, the diversification of pedagogical practices across different countries is an invaluable source of insight and growth. To successfully advance curricular changes that foster internationalisation, it is essential to recognize and address these variations comprehensively. This process demands a dynamic and adaptive approach that not only acknowledges the diversity of pedagogical practices but harnesses it strategically in the national educational plans that function as prerequisites for enhancing teacher education. The next phase for TEFE is therefore to move into the implementation stage and acquire wider engagement of educational institutions and policy makers. By doing so, the TEFE project stands a chance to pave the way for a new generation of educators equipped with the competences necessary to excel in a global and interconnected educational landscape.

METHODOLOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

To support and facilitate the implementation of the TEFE Methodology and the next phase of the project effectively, TEFE proposes the following set of methodological recommendations:

1. **Incorporate the TEFE Framework.** Institutions should prioritize the integration of the TEFE Framework into teacher education curricula. This involves aligning specialised subjects such as linguistics, literature, cultural studies, and didactics with the overarching goal of internationalised teaching practices.
2. **Organisational Audits and Implementation Plans.** Educational organisations should conduct comprehensive organisational audits using the TEFE Charter as a guide. The results of these audits should inform the creation of detailed implementation plans tailored to the institution's unique context. These plans should outline strategies for incorporating ITP into the curriculum.
3. **Seek Funding Opportunities.** Institutions should actively explore opportunities to secure funding, such as ERASMUS+, to support international teaching programmes. This funding can be instrumental in facilitating internationalised teaching experiences for students and faculty.
4. **Promote Reflective Practices.** Emphasize the importance of reflective practices among educators and students. The TEFE Toolkit, including the Classroom Observation Tool, should be utilised to enhance reflective skills and foster critical reflective teaching practices. Encourage educators to incorporate these tools into their teaching methodologies.
5. **Support for Mentorship.** Recognize the vital role of mentors in guiding future teachers during international teaching experiences. Mentorship programmes should be established to provide valuable guidance and support to new teachers as they navigate international contexts.
6. **Empower Student Engagement.** Encourage active student engagement with TEFE resources. Students should utilise materials for self-assessment, self-reflection, and continuous professional development at key career stages. Ensure that students are aware of the valuable insights gained through international teaching experiences.
7. **Awareness Development.** Highlight the significance of awareness development, particularly regarding the variations in pedagogical practices across different countries. This awareness should serve as a catalyst for transformation in teaching practices and the development of TEFE competences.
8. **Dynamic Approach.** Emphasize the need for a dynamic and adaptive approach in the face of pedagogical diversity. Understand that the foundations of pedagogical expertise may be similar, but the application can vary significantly. Adaptability and strategic planning are key to addressing these variations effectively.
9. **National Educational Plans.** Collaborate with educational policymakers to incorporate internationalisation and the development of TEFE competences into national educational plans. This will ensure that teacher education programmes are adequately equipped to prepare future teachers for global and interconnected educational landscapes.
10. **Wider Engagement.** Extend the project's reach to involve a broader spectrum of educational institutions and policymakers. Wider engagement will facilitate the integration of internationalised teaching practices into teacher education on a larger scale, maximising the impact of the TEFE project.

By following these methodological instructions, the TEFE project can successfully transition into the implementation phase and achieve its goal of equipping future teachers with the competences necessary to excel in a global and interconnected educational landscape.

TEFE CASE STUDIES

The positive impact of internationalisation activities on the employability of young people as well as on their personal and professional growth cannot be overstated. Over the course of the three-year project, we asked pre-service teachers, NQTs, and teacher mentors what impact internationalisation activities, in general, had on them and how TEFE, in particular, influenced them. To gather this information, we created an online form of questions using the TEFE Framework as its foundation. Thus, it has three sections, each asking about various events and activities they participated in internationally and how that related to the three TEFE competences, ICC, PTCL, and GCC. All participants were requested to fill out the form, with far more student teachers responding than teacher mentors.

Based on the depth of their responses, these twelve were chosen to represent the dozens more who participated in the ISTs and ISPs from the five EU TEFE partners. Where responses were unclear, respondents were requested to clarify via email. These are their stories, in narrative form. Some names have been changed as requested but most of these TEFE student teachers and teacher mentors wanted their real names used. More stories are available on the TEFE website.

More than inspiration, these narratives are intended to be used for critical reading, discussion, and reflective activities in preparation for ITP. They also testify to the power of internationalisation on the lives of teachers of English.



TEFE STUDENT TEACHERS

Petra (Czechia)

Petra is a 25-year-old university student in her final year of an MA ELT programme in the Czech Republic. She has been teaching English and Czech for a language school and tutoring privately for three years and, as a student teacher, she taught under the supervision of a mentor in a primary and lower secondary school in Spain for 3 months this past winter.

Petra's intercultural and international experiences include holidays in Croatia and Italy and rare visits to relatives outside the Czech Republic when she was a child. She has since travelled to many other EU countries and, when she was 21, she interned at the tourism office of the Czech Embassy in London for three and half months. She still enjoys communicating with British friends she met through others prior to London or while there.

Petra has *"always been in awe of other cultures"* but admits that she never gave her own culture a thought when she was a child on family holidays in other countries. As she grew older, her curiosity led her to travel as much as she could and all that changed: *"With that and the obvious privilege of knowing English, I can with certainty say that my perception of my culture has changed rapidly."* She now has a more critical perspective and can identify not only the differences between her culture and another, but she is also able to identify those things in her culture which other cultures might consider *"unlovable"*. Petra also says she learned the importance of cultural differences in shaping individuals' communication styles, decision-making processes, and problem-solving approaches. She has noticed how individuals from different cultures prioritize either collectivism or individualism, and how communication styles vary from direct and assertive to indirect and polite. *"An individual's cultural background can significantly shape their thinking, values, and behaviour,"* she says, *"which is why it's important to recognize and appreciate cultural differences."*

Petra is convinced that ICC should be part of every language classroom, as students need to *"be made aware of the cultural differences between their own culture and the culture associated with the language they are learning."* But she has come to the conclusion that only teaching country facts is not enough: *"Students should be encouraged to develop empathy for people from different cultures. This can involve exposing learners to different cultural perspectives, encouraging them to reflect on their own cultural assumptions and biases, and teaching them to recognize and respect the perspectives of others. It also involves developing the ability to adapt expectations and communication styles to different cultural contexts."* Based on her own intercultural experiences, she believes that the best way to achieve that is international experience: most influential factor influencing a person's ICC: *"If there were a scale of how different factors influence one's ICC, international experience would be on the top position."* If she is unable to provide that for her future learners, she now knows how to improvise focusing on various competences while using a variety of authentic materials and techniques.

Petra learned a lot about teaching, the teaching profession, and school culture while doing her student teaching in Spain. She found teachers and students more open-minded, working in tandem and accepting of her from the outset. In addition, although she has always thought CPD important, she was motivated to be even more involved by the keen interest of the Spanish teachers in such training. And finally, she became more open and receptive to feedback, even on a personal level while learning to work together with her mentor teacher.



Petra's intercultural and international experiences have uniquely equipped her to address cultural differences in the classroom as well as work in a group with diverse members. As a Czech student teacher in Spain, she has learned to be mindful of the diversity of students and what steps can be taken to ensure that all students feel heard and valued, including creating opportunities for students to share their unique perspectives and experiences, encouraging respectful and open dialogue, and addressing any instances of discrimination or bias. This also entails providing a safe space in which that open and honest communication can be facilitated, to the benefit of all involved.

Petra has gained valuable experience, knowledge, and skills through her intercultural and international experiences, including her student teaching in Spain. Apart from developing a deeper understanding of a range of perspectives and communication styles while working on diverse teams, she has also developed greater open-mindedness, adaptability, empathy, willingness to learn, critical thinking skills, cultural competence, language proficiency, and motivation to deepen her own learning. These attributes and values make Petra a strong candidate for a variety of job positions in the EU, not only in education.



Anna (Slovakia)

Anna is a 24-year-old university student in her final year of a Slovak MA teaching programme, majoring in teaching EFL and Hungarian, in Slovakia. As a part of her studies, she has completed several practicums, including her teaching practice for two months in September and October 2022 at a Slovak upper secondary grammar school where she taught L1 Hungarian learners. Outside of her studies, she has been teaching at a local language school and tutoring for over a year.

No matter where, Anna has always loved visiting other countries, learning about their history and culture, and considering what it might be like to live there. As a child she spent many summer holidays at children's camps in Hungary and, as an adult, has travelled to numerous other countries. She has participated in two TEFE Intensive Study Programmes: the first in Czechia in September 2021, the second in Germany in September 2022.

As a member of Slovakia's Hungarian minority, Anna's intercultural experience begins at home. Anna identifies culturally as Hungarian simply because her family has always been Hungarian and it was not her ancestors who moved, but rather the border. Yet, she still feels Slovak in some ways and believes that her bilingual Slovak-Hungarian community has its own culture that belongs to both nations equally. She recalls those summer camp experiences with her Hungarian Slovak friends as a child: *"we felt so exotic."* They taught their Hungarian peers some Slovak and compared their versions of Hungarian. She became the *"personal translator"* for a Slovak peer who spoke no Hungarian but kept going to the same summer camp in Hungary. It impacted her significantly: *"My norms and perception of norms are fundamentally different from [others'] norms, and this is more than ok, it's fascinating."*

Anna believes that seeing one's own behaviour in light of others' provides insight and *"healthy boundary-pushing"* and says that is what she experienced through TEFE. On the lighter side, she was amused to discover that some stereotypes she had learned were surprisingly accurate, e.g., Spanish lateness, German confidence, and Czech easygoingness. But she also recalls how the Slovak TEFE team were also treated differently by students from another TEFE-partner country because of their ethnicity: *"[They] knew that we were the Slovaks and were neutral towards us, but when they heard that there were Hungarians among us, they immediately got interested, as if they thought that the Slovaks weren't 'exclusive' enough."* It was a situation, she says, she has experienced numerous times in the reverse in Slovakia, with L1 Slovak speakers asking if she is an exchange student or when she moved to Slovakia but then becoming less interested in interaction once finding out she lives in Slovakia. She is no longer offended by such reactions but as a result of them, and her upbringing, she realises that most of one's attitudes are rooted in their own cultural norms and in how history is interpreted by different cultures: *"We identify the individual person with the 'whole nation' towards which we usually have some ill-founded (historically-based) attitudes."* But Anna is convinced that these attitudes can be changed through intercultural and international experiences, she says, *"it is possible to stretch one's thinking system [...] throughout our whole life."*

Anna has learned a lot about intercultural communication during her experiences. Naturally curious and outgoing, she has learned that even a simple conversation is a two-sided process, requiring conscious effort on the part of both participants to understand each other. It requires observing and adapting to others' communication norms. For example, if one's culture is more direct than the person's they are talking to, they need to adjust their speech, so they do not offend, and their partner needs to concentrate on being more to the point. *"We need to adapt [...] a little for the purpose of better understanding."*



Anna's intercultural experiences have had a significant impact on her approach to teaching. Apart from learning about other education systems, more than anything, she has realised that her students will be using the English she teaches them primarily to communicate with other non-native English speakers. Thus, she has decided to incorporate ICC topics and skills and elements of ELF into her lessons, building on her students' experiences, instead of focusing on typically-idealised British and American cultures and standard language varieties. In addition, the importance of CPD has become more and more apparent to her. She is much more motivated to seek it out now saying, *"I see the benefits, the personal gain and a strong sense of community that we all need so much."* Her involvement with TEFE has shown her how such training, in community, is always beneficial. Because of her desire to grow, she has every intention of continuing: *"There is so much more to learn and explore, it is possible only with the right amount of humility."*

"I am convinced that a teacher should be educated culturally, especially in the field of humanities. In Europe, nationality is a strong component of identity; it is often even a driving force for some, and if expanded with historical biases, it can lead to dangerous political agendas. That is why we should teach our students about the uniqueness and respect of 'others'. And I am sure the more genuine our experiences are, the more credible we are."





Viktoria (Poland)

Viktoria is a 24-year-old university student in her final year of an MA ELT programme in Poland. She has been tutoring or teaching English off and on for nine years and currently teaches part-time at a local language school.

Viktoria's intercultural and international experiences began at the age of 11, when her family immigrated from the United States to Poland. She has good memories of conversations with an Australian exchange student who spent a month at her school five years later. More recently, she participated in the first TEFE ISP in the Czech Republic in September 2021 and spent a week in the UK as a scholarship student at the Cambridge Summer School in 2022.

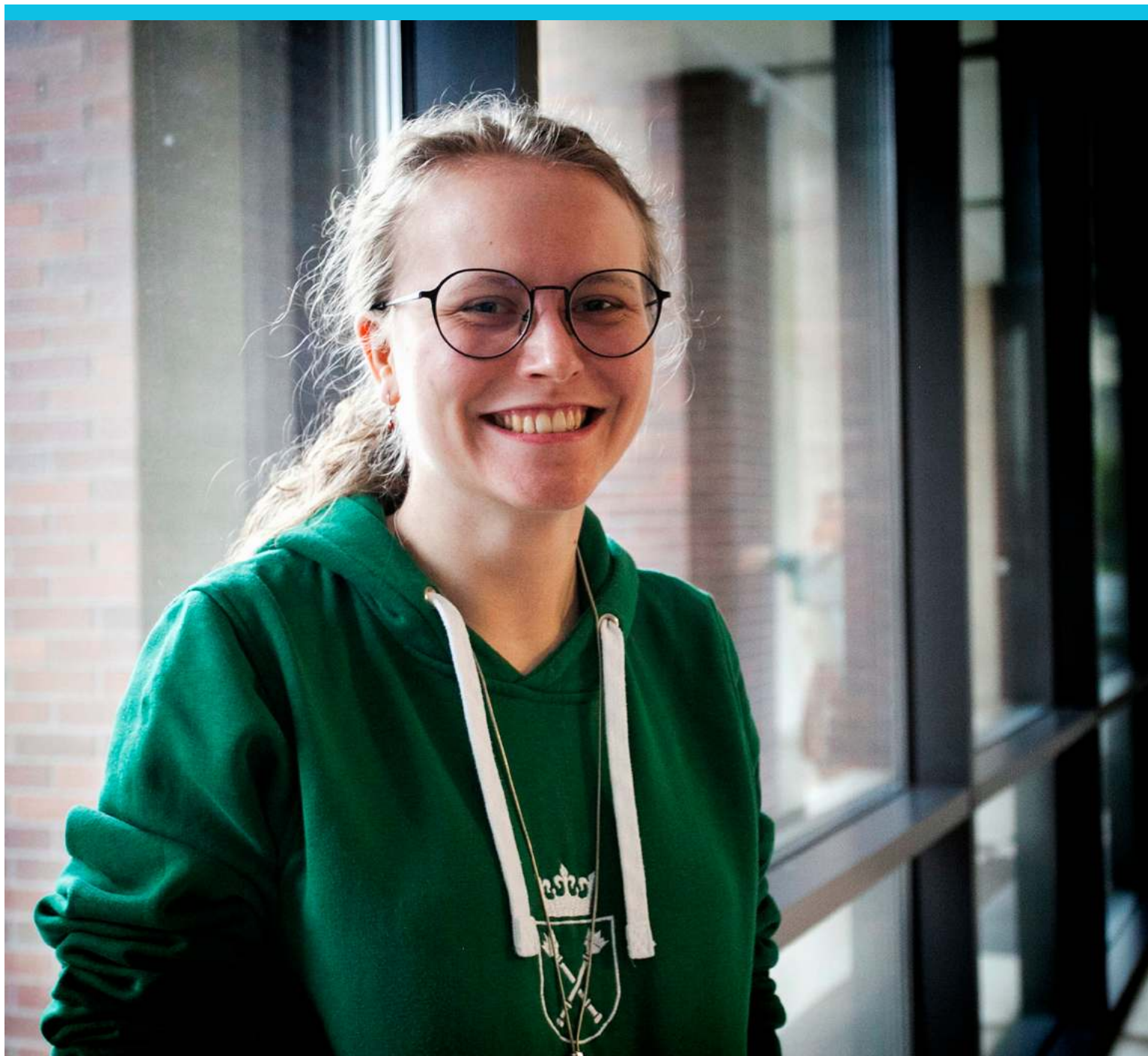
As a Third Culture Kid (TCK)¹, Viktoria has a unique perspective on her intercultural and international experiences. Growing up in the US surrounded by *"people who were of different skin colours, religions and cultures at elementary school,"* she does not remember a time when she was not aware that culture begets thinking, attitudes, and behaviour. But then, when she started school in Poland, she was bullied by her classmates for her weak Polish language skills and inability to communicate well. In an effort to include her, her teachers *"overcompensated"* by favouring her she says, having the opposite effect and making the situation worse. These experiences as a child, and other intercultural experiences since then, have strengthened her conviction that teaching and learning about diverse cultures is a crucial part of education, *"as important a learning English"*. Already as a child, she knew this: *"As a future teacher, I realized how important it is to teach children about other cultures and being kind to those of different cultures."* That is something she also applies to herself as she actively learns about the geography and history of other cultures, especially those not in the curriculum. And engaging other cultures has tempered her perception of Polish culture, one which she now views as her own. *"I try to be more open-minded when I see different cultural practices,"* she says, *"focusing less on judgement and more on understanding and curiosity."*

Interacting with others outside her own culture has taught Viktoria several things about teaching, the teaching profession, and communicating well with others. Firstly, her approach to teaching has been influenced, with her being more patient and open-minded, she says. In addition, Viktoria has learned that CPD is a *"never-ending process,"* one she is eager to continue even after her studies. And as she invests into others, she has also learned that maintaining her own wellbeing and that of others is important. This became clear to her while volunteering at an afterschool programme for children from underprivileged households: *"helping others learn require[s] me to take good care of myself and [...] be kind to others because often, students (and work colleagues) are going through invisible struggles."* Moreover, as a communicator, she has become a better and more willing listener because she is more and more aware of how much she does not know. She believes this allows her to participate in a discussion to the full and avoid unnecessary conflict. And finally, she says she has learned to adjust her language in order to overcome any communication barriers by using *"more 'universal' version of English."*

¹The concept "Third Culture Kid", aka TCK, refers to a person who has spent a significant part of their formative years (usually up to age 18) living outside their parents' culture due to their parents' work or other reasons (cf. Useem and Useem, 1963; Pollock and Van Reken, 2009). TCKs often develop a unique cultural identity that is a blend of their parents' culture and the culture of the country they grew up in. They are called "Third Culture" because their cultural identity is neither fully their parents' culture (the "first culture") nor the culture of the country they lived in (the "second culture"). TCKs often have diverse and enriching life experiences, but they may also face challenges related to identity, a sense of belonging, and adjusting to new environments. They tend to be adaptable, culturally aware, and capable of bridging different cultures, making them valuable contributors in global and intercultural contexts.

Victoria's intercultural experiences have helped her to further GCC and implement some of its principles into her teaching and community. In her teaching, she uses current events from other countries and cultures as a point of interest to promote language learning. When dealing with learners and their errors, she encourages self-correction by creating a safe space, free from ridicule, and using scaffolding. She is now also considering taking on a leadership position in her faculty's volunteer programme which offers EFL to those in difficult situations, like hospitalisation or poverty. More than anything, Viktoria says, *"I believe [my intercultural experience] has made me more open-minded [...and] encouraged me [to teach], because I realized how many doors teaching English can open"*.

The skills that Viktoria has gained from her intercultural experiences – from her open-mindedness and empathy to her intercultural communication skills and her belief in the value of CPD – qualify her for numerous jobs across the EU, both inside and outside education.



Paula (Spain)

Paula is a student of English in a BA primary education programme in Spain. She participated in the TEFE Intensive Student Programme in Germany in September 2022.

Paula's intercultural TEFE experience taught her a lot about teaching and the teaching profession and how different cultures approach it. Although she was "*shocked*" to discover how demanding, different, and difficult it is to become an English teacher in Bavaria, she says she learned a lot of practical things she can apply later when she teaches. From observing English lessons in a German primary school, she learned how to apply classroom management techniques and how to deal with students and their problems. From a session with a German teacher educator, she says she learned how to recognize and use different skills needed for teaching and, maybe more importantly, "*what to do in the classroom, when, how and why*". In another practical session with a Slovak teacher educator, she learned how to develop intercultural communicative competences in English language lessons using various activities. And then, working in her transnational group, she learned that other cultures have varying views on lesson planning. Listening to each other and negotiating through those differences, and then learning to incorporate feedback from a TEFE staff member to improve their lesson plan was something Paula found particularly helpful.

Paula's intercultural and international experience in TEFE have opened her up to new possibilities. It has provided her with qualities that future employers are looking for, among them adaptability, a willingness to learn, problem-solving skills, communication skills, teamwork, and the ability to receive and incorporate feedback.







TEFE TEACHER MENTORS

Monika (Germany)

Monika is a 43-year-old, full-time teacher with 20 years of experience at the lower secondary level in Germany. Aside from EFL, she also teaches her pupils other subjects, such as German, Maths, and History.

Most of Monika's intercultural and international experiences have been limited to spending her holidays in either Austria or Italy. However, she has had non-German pupils in her class, most recently a Hungarian child. This past winter, Monika also mentored a Spanish TEFE exchange student for their three-month student teaching practice.

The intercultural experience of mentoring the Spanish student teacher had a significantly positive impact on Monika and her pupils. Being open to new experiences and cultures, Monika welcomed the opportunity to have the student teacher in her classroom, despite having few students from other countries in the past. Monika and her pupils were able to adjust to the situation smoothly, with Monika noting that her own English has improved due to having to communicate in English only with her mentee. The same was true for her pupils, as their language skills were stretched, and their cultural perspectives broadened. Monika's enthusiasm for the project and willingness to participate in the TEFE mentoring scheme *"again and again"* highlights the benefits of TEFE's objective to internationalise teaching practice.

Monika gained valuable insights about teaching and the teaching profession from her experience mentoring her Spanish student teacher, all of which benefitted her pupils' learning. Perhaps the most important was the collaboration: *"It was a great pleasure. We learned from each other. Teamwork: 2 teachers in class are perfect."* She also realized the benefits of learning from a younger colleague who brought new perspectives and innovative ideas, such as online learning games and apps, into her lessons. And then she saw her pupils step up to the challenge as she encouraged them to use their minimal English to communicate with the student teacher. Their *"bravery"* is something that will stick with them for a long time, encouraging them to overcome other challenges. Overall, the opportunity allowed for all involved to learn from each other and grow, for Monika and her mentee, as educators, and for Monika's pupils as more confident individuals.



Jitka (Czechia)

Jitka is a 43-year-old, full-time teacher of English and Spanish at a secondary comprehensive school in Czechia. An experienced teacher of 15 years, outside of school, she also teaches Czech as a second language to non-Czechs, including a group of teenagers from Brazil, Mexico, the USA and Taiwan who are involved in a Rotary Club programme, and also EFL.

Jitka has had diverse international experiences related to teaching foreign languages since graduating from university 15 years ago. The first was a 10-day course for teachers of Spanish on Granada. A couple of years later, she was back in Spain but this time shadowing English language teachers in a secondary school for a week, observing and teaching a few lessons as well. Last summer, she spent two weeks participating in an Erasmus+ programme in Dublin, taking ELT courses on Irish culture, literature, politics, history, and ELT methodology. And finally, as a part of TEFE, Jitka hosted international student observations in her lessons in September of 2021 and mentored two Spanish TEFE exchange students for their three-month student teaching practicum this past winter.

While Jitka values respecting other people's views and ways of thinking, her intercultural experiences have helped her realize that culture can influence those beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour. Despite her many trips, this really did not occur to her until last summer when, during a history lesson in Dublin, she noticed how the teacher's admiration for British culture resulted in them imitating everything British. While there, she also realized that her Austrian colleague had a different sense of humour to her own Czech humour. It did not bother her in any way; it was just different. At the same time, she found that she could more easily relate to her Polish colleagues' sense of humour and understanding of things. No matter the differences, she says, *"I am curious and always happy to meet new nationalities."* She particularly enjoys teaching the Rotary Club group of teenage international students, hearing their perspectives and opinions on everything from culture to politics.

Perhaps more than anything else, Jitka's intercultural experiences have influenced her professionally. What she particularly noticed were the differences, both positive and negative, between Czech and Spanish language lessons. While in Spain, she *"perceived Spanish people as very communicative but [...] they didn't practise speaking with students."* She found a similar attitude in language schools while there. She says of the shock, *"I realized I had done [sic] my job well [and] Czech students are provided [with a] good education."* It seems that previous to that experience, Jitka's perception of the Czech educational system, of which she is a part, was primarily negative. Having something to compare it with boosted her confidence as a teacher. At the same time, she discovered that language teachers in Spain have teaching assistants, something non-existent in Czechia. So, when the opportunity arose through a TEFE-inspired project this past winter, Jitka was happy to take on two Spanish students of English language teaching. While she mentored them as pre-service teachers, they helped her in lessons: *"They even helped with communication activities in class, so when I put students to groups, they also monitored their speaking or helped them with vocabulary."* In another situation in Dublin, Jitka learned the negative influence a teacher's attitude towards their students' learning can have on those students: *"I was quite disappointed that they didn't try to encourage us to explore their culture more, I mean some teachers, they simply didn't care what impression they would make on us."* This in turn led Jitka to reflect on her own learning and motivation as a teacher.



She recognizes the importance of intercultural competence in teaching and respecting other people's views and ways of thinking in everyday life, so she frequently engages her students in debates and role plays, using country facts, course books, and authentic materials to promote intercultural competence. Jitka finds working with people from diverse cultures enriching and believes her intercultural experiences have encouraged in her a deeper respect for colleagues. They have also deepened her love of learning and motivated her to invest into her own professional development – she is even considering joining a teachers' association.

Jitka's international and intercultural experience have provided her with skills most employers seek out. She is able to work effectively with people from different backgrounds and cultures and is respectful of other people's views and ways of thinking. Her strong sense of curiosity and love of learning mean she is always looking to expand her knowledge and experience new things, which makes her adaptable and able to take on new challenges. Jitka's skills and competences not only make her a more effective teacher but also a top candidate for positions in many fields.





Alaia (Spain)

Alaia, who has been teaching for 10 years, is a 36-year-old full-time teacher of English as a foreign language at an upper secondary state school in Spain.

Alaia has travelled widely, having visited Australia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Colombia, Morocco, Algeria, Mali, Peru, the UK, and Denmark. Her first trip abroad was born out of the desire to “*have a different experience in an English-speaking country*”. So, at the age of 25, she spent six months with ‘WWOOFers’ from other European countries volunteering on organic farms around Glasgow, Scotland, in exchange for room and board. A year later, when her then-partner got a job in Ecuador, she spent a year teaching middle-school English at a middle school there. Six years ago, she accompanied a group of her students on a week-long trip to a partner school in Copenhagen, Denmark, as part of an exchange programme her school is a part of. And this last year, she mentored a Czech TEFE student teacher for their student teaching practice in at her school in Navarra.

Alaia’s interest in and openness towards other cultures has had a profound impact on her life. In fact, it was that passion that led her to choose to study English at university: “*English studies meant learning a new language, a new culture and an eagerness to relate to English speakers.*” Wherever she goes, she immerses herself in learning everything about that country. She feels that learning things about the culture first-hand helps her communicate well with others as well. She has found working on diverse teams enjoyable, learning how to interact with various personalities from different cultures and keeping in mind that people cannot be forced to change: “*We shouldn’t be afraid of sharing our ideas and points of view; however, it is true that you cannot always push someone to be what you would like them to be.*” Being aware of “*the strengths and weaknesses they may have*” allows a person to “*value the strengths more*” which in turn brings better “*understanding [of] the way in which they do things or the reasons why they act in a certain way.*” And “*having this background knowledge allows us to understand their difficulties or the points where we don’t see eye to eye*” resulting in true intercultural communicative competence.

Alaia is aware of culture’s influence on values and thinking as it is passed down from parent to child, school to students, and generation to generation. But during her stay in Guayaquil, Ecuador, she realised something that she would not have understood if she had not lived it.

Even if Ecuadorians and Spanish people share the same language, the use we make of it can be different in some situations. While in Spain the expression “en un momento/momentito” means that things are going to get done quickly, in Ecuador it means just the opposite. When I was first told this expression in Ecuador, I thought that I was going to get what I wanted very fast. However, it came as a complete surprise to me when I had to wait for longer than an hour to get what I was expecting. I felt really upset about this fact until I realized that they were doing things the right way and it was just me feeling upset, not understanding their way of behaving.

This has taught Alaia to not make assumptions when talking to others, whether from her own culture or another. She says she tries to keep an open mind and although some topics are still difficult, she has learned to listen. “*We all are different,*” she says, “*and can have different opinions on a given topic, but there’s always a lot to listen to and there’s usually a reason behind every act. That’s why it’s important to listen and then analyse the different views.*” She tells of one situation that arose when she met an international student with political views quite the opposite to her own: “*I listened, and I tried to understand her opinion. The most recent historical events of her country led her to see things in the way she explained so I was able to understand her a bit more.*”

As someone who loves teaching and wants to improve as a teacher, Alaia believes that her intercultural experiences also help her grow as a teacher, causing her to reflect on her own teaching, pushing her to innovate her teaching practice, and learn new things which she later implements in her lessons:

“International experiences always give you a new perspective of your own teaching methodologies. You get to see different ways of doing things and that encourages you to apply the positive ones in your teaching practice. It is also beneficial to see what your strengths are to maintain them as well as to become aware of what does not work so well in order to enhance it.”

The week at the Danish upper secondary school is a case in point. It also taught her to view her own culture differently. While she saw that some things were very different in Denmark – such as 90-minute blocks of two dynamic 40-minute lessons with active students, sitting in a U-shaped arrangement and responding in fluent English to the teacher’s questions, who could then easily determine their level of proficiency – she realised that other things were not. She had always held the view that “old-fashioned methodologies” which were sometimes used to teach subjects such as history or languages had to change. And that was her experience in Spain: “We were working hard to try to implement new methodologies [...] we’re trying to make the student the centre of attention, we are the makers of his/her learning experience.” But that was not what she observed in Denmark: “I was impressed to see [...] Danish teachers were not so concerned about this. Teachers led the most important role in the class while students listened. [And those] Danish teenagers seem to be more eager to listen to the teachers and maintain an interactive communication with them while in class.” It made her think how important students’ activity or behaviour is in the classroom. That made her consider her own students and their lack of activity: “Maybe, our students sometimes lack that ease to say what they think using a foreign language and give their opinions.” This capacity to reflect on and learn from her experiences and apply them to improve her teaching also enhances her employability in other professions.

Knowing how much she herself has benefited from her international and intercultural experiences, Alaia regularly incorporates knowledge about other places, podcasts, tutorials, and authentic materials into her lessons. Role plays that reflect culture, she admits, are enjoyed the most. But she believes that interacting with people from different countries is unique, enriching her students’ education more than anything else as it offers them opportunities to learn how other people think and what they value. Referring specifically to the TEFE student teachers, she says, “getting to know someone who made the decision to come to a foreign country and teach is very encouraging for them.” And she hopes that these interactions influence her students “to do the same in the future.”

Alaia’s intercultural experiences have equipped her for her profession and beyond in further ways. They have reinforced her commitment to democracy, justice, human rights, and the rule of law. The diverse nationalities and backgrounds in her classroom seem to make her proud of what can be accomplished together:

“Some of them came to this country looking for a better life and some of them really take advantage of the opportunity which they are given here. They work hard and I feel that they value the equal treatment and equal opportunities they are given. Both these students and their families are contributing to build a multicultural society where equality and inclusion become key concepts.”

She creates safe places for these students to grow in community saying, “In my classroom everybody is more than welcome to make mistakes if they are trying to work hard. I try to teach my students that making mistakes is a natural step of their learning process and we all make them.”

Alaia’s experiences outside her own culture have equipped her with employability skills and competences that many employers value today. She is not afraid to face new challenges believing she is adaptable to whatever comes her way. But today, her objective is to be a true educator: “I always hold an open attitude towards young learners and try to motivate them. I know I treat them with kindness, and this is one of the most valued attitudes I can offer them.”



Elise (Germany)

Elise is a 44-year-old, full-time primary school teacher in Germany, teaching pupils from numerous migration backgrounds. An experienced teacher of 20 years, she also teaches pre-service teachers at a state university.

Elise's intercultural and international experiences are varied. While in university, she was a teaching assistant at a secondary comprehensive school and a hotel and catering college in Northern Ireland for 8 months. More recently, she spent a week back in that country teaching German to primary school pupils as a part of a school partnership project. In between, she has spent holidays in countries from South Africa to Thailand. Elise was a TEFE project staff member for a year and a half and also hosted TEFE students for observations in her primary classroom during the Intensive Student Programme in September 2022.

Elise's interest in and perception of her own and others' cultures has grown over the years, providing her with skills and competences that she uses daily. Prior to her stay in Northern Ireland at the age of 22, she had seen other countries only as interesting holiday destinations but sharing a flat with other university students from Greece, Spain, France, and Canada helped her to see cultures in a different light. She also realised that if she could not and did not compare and contrast her own cultural background to other cultures, her own thinking, values and behaviour would not grow. She strongly believes that *"This is why we all need intercultural encounters: in order to question our own thinking, values and behaviour."* One thing she noticed and began to question was how *"Germans tend to be very direct which can lead to misunderstandings."* As a result, her perception of her own culture changed and she now tries to view it from a meta perspective, for instance *"how [the] kids with migration backgrounds [in my class] and their parents might feel about German traditions and culture."* At the same time, she views other cultures through a more faceted lens: *"I try to be more open-minded and see other cultures from several perspectives."* Elise is a firm believer in the importance of learning about a language's culture: *"Learning a language without learning about its culture is useless for enhancing mutual understanding in today's globalized world."* Consequently, she uses all kinds of authentic materials, cultural topics, and techniques in her lessons to teach her young learners' intercultural competence. Elise's ability to view her own culture from a meta perspective and to be open-minded towards other cultures not only makes her a better teacher but would make her an asset in any workplace that deals with a diverse customer base or a multicultural team. Her knowledge and understanding of different cultures which now help her to effectively communicate with students and parents from various migration backgrounds would also help her build rapport with clients in another setting.

Elise believes that her intercultural and international experiences have made her a better teacher: *"personal intercultural experiences definitely improve your teaching not only content-wise but also method-wise."* She also considers such experiences and school partnerships a part of her continuous professional development, not only to learn more about other school systems and observe best practice but to improve one's English language skills. She has also added to her feedback skills. In Northern Ireland, she observed that *"positive reinforcement was valued much higher than in Germany, [for instance] the kids were awarded special 'letters' during assembly every week, [and] every kid is good in something so everyone gets an award several times during the school year, e.g., for nice handwriting despite a broken arm."* Creating a positive learning environment is important to her and she admits that not giving the direct feedback commonly found in Germany but using the positive reinforcement she observed works – including feedback she receives. And what Elise learns elsewhere, she brings back to her colleagues, sharing new methods and ideas and encouraging them to also participate in international partnership schemes.

Elise's international experiences and the lessons she learns from them equip her for any profession that values cross-cultural communication, inclusivity, diversity, and a positive work environment. Her exposure to different teaching structures, methods, and techniques, as well as her knowledge of working with diverse students and diverse partner schools, can be particularly valuable in today's globalized world.



TEFE NQTs

Andrea (Slovakia)

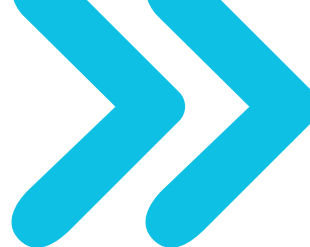
Andrea is a 24-year-old full-time teacher of Biology (in English) and English as a Foreign Language in a secondary grammar school in Slovakia, where her students include Slovaks, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, and Austrians. Having graduated from a teaching education programme at a national university in June 2022, she has just entered her second year of full-time teaching in public education in Slovakia. Andrea is hoping to mentor future TEFE student teachers after getting some training in mentoring.

Apart from holidays in other EU countries, Andrea's intercultural and international experience is drawn primarily from two long stays in the US, both times due to her father's job. The first was for a year when Andrea was six and she attended first grade in an American elementary school. Roughly two years after returning to Slovakia, the family moved back to the US, this time for three years, and Andrea completed fourth through sixth grade of her schooling while there. Andrea was also one of the first students to participate in TEFE as a student teacher consultant during the first Intensive Staff Training in November of 2020.

Andrea believes that one's cultural background can affect their perceptions of their own and other cultures, as well as their worldview to a great extent, but that there are also other factors at play and that the end result varies from person to person. In her own case as a child, her intercultural experiences caused her perceptions and understanding of, and attitude towards her own Slovak culture to swing like a pendulum. She could identify differences, both positive and negative, between the two cultures and a bit later, felt that Slovak culture was *"poor and xenophobic"*.

When she returned to Slovakia, the pendulum moved, and she found herself defensive about US culture. As a TCK, Andrea experienced that *"dissonance between how I felt about other cultures and how some of my classmates felt"* and felt like *"a blend of two cultures"*. She has since grown to understand that it is *"less about the polar opposites and what's better here or there but more about how things from both cultures can blend to make a situation better."* Listening to others share their own perspectives and experiences *"humbles"* her, she says, and helps her understand that situations are often more complicated than they first appear and rarely straightforward. It is an attitude she seeks to facilitate and foster in her own classroom.

Andrea's first-hand experience as a pupil in the American education system has given her, she says, a unique perspective on how education can be done differently. Although she was too young at the time to realise how much it would influence her, she says that valuing others' work and intellectual property is the thing that has stuck with her from her US primary school experience and the value she is determined to pass on to her own students. More recently, she has been able to provide constructive insights on the proposed school reforms in Slovakia which include the teaching of science at the primary level for the first time. As a Slovak biology teacher who experienced a primary science class as a child in the US, Andrea is better able to analyse and understand how such a change can fit into the Slovak education system.



Andrea believes that intercultural experiences have taught her valuable lessons about feedback, reflection, teamwork, and effective communication. In the US, her knowledge and skills differed from those of her classmates because she came from elsewhere. As she has reflected on that since, she has become *“more aware of the need for feedback and reflection, and understanding that this process is helpful.”* Such reflections *“are put to good use”* when talking with colleagues to deal with a complex situation or solve a problem. And this is when she realises her experiences have taught her how to listen better and avoid conflict. *“It is sometimes difficult and maybe a little bit overwhelming because you might not understand everyone’s point of view at first and where they’re going with what they’re saying and everyone wants to chip in with their experience, but sometimes it’s important to listen and to hear what the people are saying and ask questions.”* This includes diverse groups where she says she learned that people can *“express [themselves] with respect towards the other person and with an understanding for where they’re coming from.”*

Andrea’s intercultural experience as a child have had an indelible impact on her global civic competence. Interacting with peers from all over the world who were facing various issues made her aware of the importance of equality, inclusion, fairness, and justice. As a teacher, providing a safe space for students is crucial for her as she remembers how she felt as a child, *“when there were situations where I felt judged and those feelings of shame stick with you”*. Moreover, she says her intercultural experience helped her build an open-minded approach towards teaching as a global practice. *“In other cultures, it might look different,”* she says, *“but we’re all basically trying to achieve similar things and connect with students and make them feel safe.”*

Andrea says that participating in intercultural and international activities have impacted her as a teacher: *“It has encouraged me to incorporate things from my experiences with people from various cultural backgrounds into my classroom; to be more observant of behaviour that may be perceived as xenophobic and try to deal with it; and to understand that teaching itself can be done in a different way since I have been able to compare my own experiences when I was a child.”*



Max (Slovakia/UK)

Max is a 29-year-old, full-time learning mentor at a college in England. Originally from Slovakia, he has taught learners at every level of education except university, either as a supply teacher or a teaching assistant, but still considers himself a novice teacher as he is only entering his second year of full-time employment in education. He is currently taking a Level 3 SEN Teaching Assistant course and continues to work towards qualified teacher status in the UK.

Max's first significant intercultural and international experience was during his bachelor studies in Slovakia when, at the age of 25, he spent a semester taking primary education courses at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia as part of the Erasmus+ programme. Two years later, also through the Erasmus programme, he spent a semester taking MA courses on ancient history at the University College London's Institute of Archaeology. Having completed his MA studies, Max moved to the United Kingdom in November of 2021 and, that month, also participated in the first TEF Intensive Staff Training which was held online due to pandemic restrictions.

Max's intercultural experiences have enabled him to broaden his understanding of different societies, their values and norms, and how they function. As a result, he has developed a strong awareness of how cultural biases can impact one's mindset and mental wellbeing. He recalls the first time he realised *"how much the negativity present in my own culture can influence personal mental well-being and willingness to pursue new challenges."* He had mentioned to a British friend that *"not a lot of students [aged 11-15] are particularly interested in what's going on in the classroom."* His friend's sharp response, challenging his attitude as conflicting with his chosen career path, stopped Max in his tracks. He realised what he had said *"wasn't even my own opinion or how I personally feel about teaching, but rather a package of negativity and discouragement I carry from discussions with my older colleagues in my home country."* The awareness he has gained has made him more receptive to different perspectives and adaptable to new challenges.

Max's exposure to different education systems has allowed him to appreciate the importance of professional development and professional standards. Based on his experiences, he has concluded that in competitive environments, competence and professionalism are highly valued, regardless of one's cultural background. *"Especially in large countries with multicultural populations, the only relevant factor in employment is competence and professionalism, as the competition is bigger. This competitive environment is something that pushes professional standards higher and ensures the quality of professionals in all fields of employment."* As a direct result, his desire to be professionally competent in his field has motivated him to pursue opportunities that offer him the chance to improve his skills and expertise.



Max's international experiences have grown him to the point where he says he is *"much more comfortable with my personal and professional life."* He has become more confident, proactive, and independent in professional settings. As an employee in another country, he has learned to navigate the legal and professional aspects of his position, availing himself of all the support available to him. Always curious about and open-minded, he says these experiences have also made him more adept at identifying what aspects of the other cultures he encounters are relevant for him to do his job well. As a member of a diverse team, he has also developed a greater understanding of various education systems and the importance of inclusion. Because of what he has already learned, Max believes that *"ICC should always be present in teaching, as intercultural experiences are not exclusive to travelling abroad"* and points out that even small nations like Slovakia have ethnic and language minorities. For Max, the significance of ICC is that it plays the *"vital role in maintaining healthy relationships and effective communication."*

Max's experiences have helped him become a better education practitioner by pinpointing the gaps in his own training and as well as allowed him to contribute to the collective knowledge at his workplace with experiences from his home country. His interpersonal skills have grown, and he is able to recognize the value diversity brings to any professional or personal discussion topic. He is more mindful and aware of his own choice of words and has developed a habit of strictly focusing on the problem at hand from a professional perspective. He says, *"My experiences have taught me to always to use appropriate, professional and inclusive language, as that is the only way to communicate effectively, regardless of whether the environment is diverse or not. Intercultural experiences help everyone realise the importance of decency and professionalism."*

Max's many intercultural experiences have made him more aware of global civic competence and the importance of its values. As a result, he has been able *"more able to adapt to different professional requirements and I'm more aware of implications of living in different cultures."* His experience managing diverse and inclusive classrooms, including collaborating on lesson plan adaptations for his SEN learners, further demonstrates his ability to not only work in multicultural settings but do so well in a diverse team. Additionally, Max's openness to learning about whatever new situation he enters and his recognition of the importance of CPD highlight his commitment to personal and professional growth.

Overall, Max's intercultural and international experiences have equipped him with skills and attitudes that are essential for success in today's multicultural workplaces.



O2 APPENDIX 1:

The Tefe Framework for the Internationalisation of Teaching Practice

The Teachers of English for Future Europe (TEFE) project was conceived with one focused objective: to develop the TEFE Framework for the Internationalisation of Teaching Practice and Employability (TEFE Framework). This objective was delivered as a result of the efforts of the Output 2 (O2) team members as well as the combined efforts of the TEFE Consortium.

The TEFE Framework emphasizes the role of internationalisation in enhancing the employability competences of future teachers. It seeks to influence and inform the foundation for comprehensive teacher education, where global perspectives and intercultural skills are not mere add-ons but integral components. Developed collaboratively over three years within the TEFE Consortium, it represents a significant milestone within the TEFE project, influenced by the active participation of student teachers of English from five European institutions of higher learning. Their involvement was instrumental in shaping the framework's evolution, from conceptualization to development and testing, resulting in a comprehensive model that encompasses the essential competences for future English educators.

Visit the <https://tefe.online> website to download a printable version of the TEFE Framework chart (Figure O2.3).





O2 APPENDIX 2:

The Tefe Charter: Become a Tefe Charter Institution

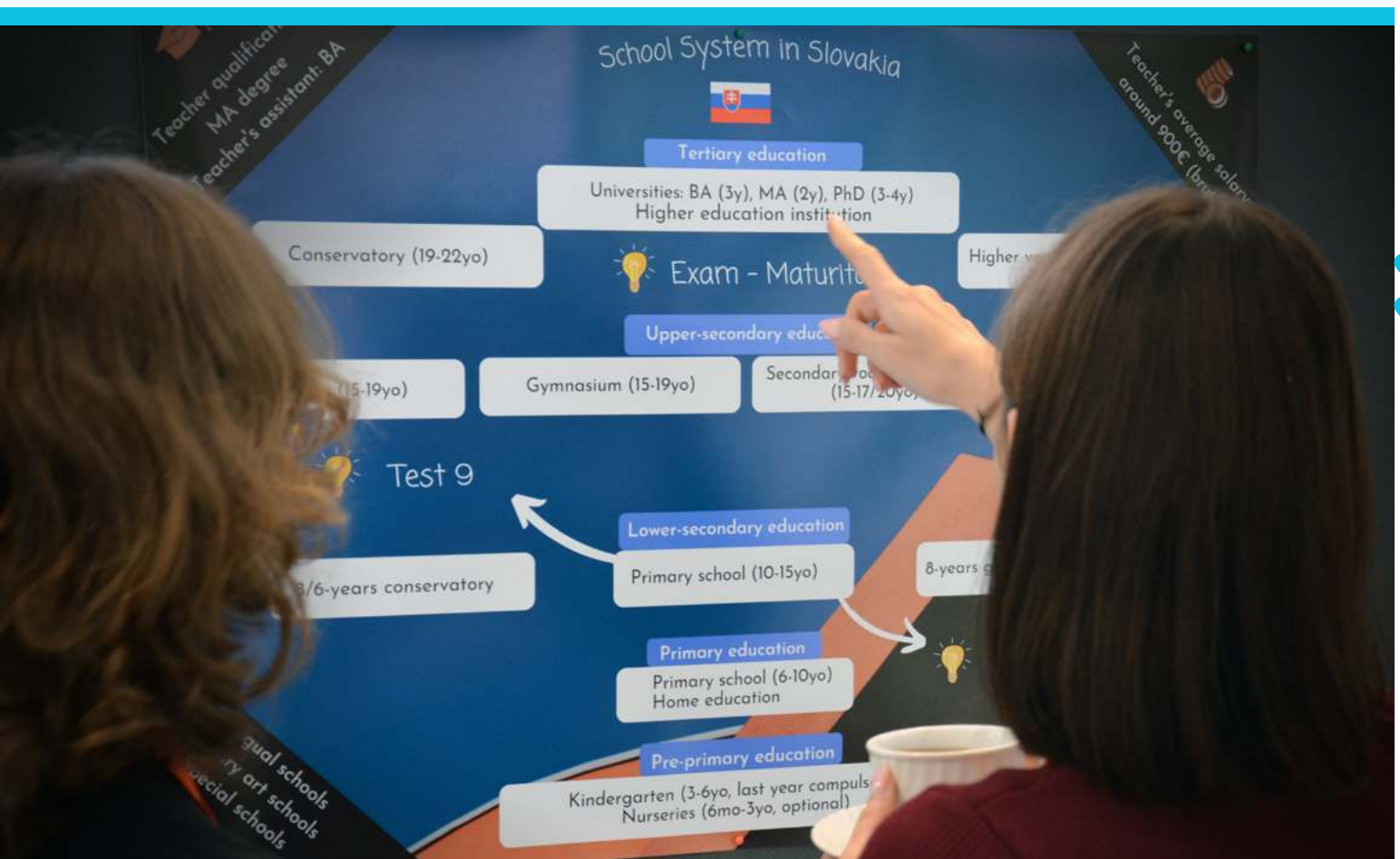
The TEFE vision invites teacher education institutions to become a part of the Teachers of English of Future Europe (TEFE) consortium in promoting the status of teachers and the teaching profession through the internationalisation of teaching practice (ITP), the mobility and future employability of teachers across the EU, and their continuous professional development.

A TEFE Charter institution publicly commits its support for and adherence to the TEFE vision. By applying to the TEFE Charter, an institution declares its desire to join the TEFE consortium and adopt the TEFE Framework for the Internationalisation of Teaching Practice and Employability (TEFE Framework). It also commits to creating positive, professional, and intercultural environments for the education of future teachers of English.

The TEFE Charter is a voluntary commitment to the TEFE Framework and its values, carrying no legal or academic weight for its enforcement.

The TEFE Charter application process is based on self-assessment for the sake of increased transparency and reduced administrative barriers. The application form is designed to enable the consortium's core partners to assess candidate institutions quickly and reliably in a timely manner, while relying on the personal and academic integrity of those applicants.

Become TEFE Charter candidate institution by completing the online application form.



THE TEFE CHARTER APPLICATION FORM

Section One: YOUR INSTITUTION

Section	Descriptor	TEFE Criteria	Applicant's response	Assessment
1.1	Information about the institution	<p>Name of academic institution</p> <p>Location</p> <p>Website</p>		<p>Accepted (the applicant's response is clear and meets the assessment criteria)/</p> <p>More information required (the applicant's response is unclear, incomplete and does not meet the assessment criteria).</p>
1.2	Applicant	<p>Name of Department/ Faculty / School</p> <p>Name of contact</p> <p>Telephone number</p> <p>Email address</p> <p>Institutional website</p>		<p>Accepted/</p> <p>More information required</p>
1.3	Types of initiatives	<p>Your institution sends both staff and student teachers of English to other academic institutions across the EU and beyond to facilitate their continuous professional development. This includes both physical and virtual mobilities.</p> <p>Your institution receives both staff and student teachers of English from other academic institutions across the EU and beyond to facilitate their continuous professional development. This includes both physical and virtual mobilities.</p> <p>Your institution is a partner school or HE institution that offers mentoring and/or professional cooperation to both educators and student teachers of English from across the EU.</p>	<p>Please select which activities your institution is currently involved in. For each selected, briefly describe the specific initiative(s) undertaken by your institution.</p>	<p>Accepted/</p> <p>More information required</p>

Section Two: INTRODUCING YOUR TEAM

Section	Descriptor	TEFE Criteria	Applicant's response	Assessment
2.1	Applicant's department	<p>Introduce your department / faculty / school</p> <p>Name of department head</p> <p>No. of staff</p> <p>No. of students</p> <p>No. of students studying to become future teachers of English (if you offer both BA and MA programmes, please provide numbers for both)</p> <p>Programmes offered (e.g., translation & interpreting, etc.)</p> <p>Degrees offered (e.g., BA/MA in Philology, etc.)</p> <p>Department / School website</p>		Accepted/ More information required
2.2	Exchange visits – outgoing	Average number of exchange visits undertaken by staff and/or future teachers of English to other educational establishments in an academic year		Accepted/ More information required
2.3	Exchange visits - incoming	<p>Average number of exchange visits your institution (or department) offers to staff and/or future teachers of English in an academic year</p> <p>Briefly describe the type(s) of what type(s) of activities in which those staff and students are engaged.</p>		Accepted/ More information required



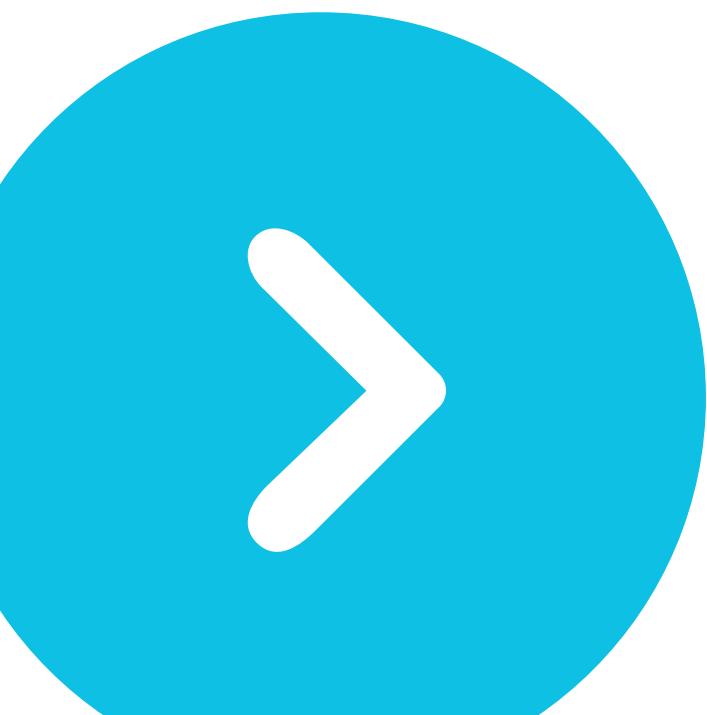
Section Three: STANDARDS

Section	Descriptor	TEFE Criteria	Applicant's response	Assessment
3.1	TEFE Framework	Confirm your institution's commitment to the TEFE Framework for the Internationalisation of Teaching Practice and Employability (TEFE Framework).		Accepted/ More information required
		Describe how you intend to use the TEFE Framework in your institution.		Accepted/ More information required
3.2	TEFE logo and brand	<p>Average number of exchange visits your institution (or department) offers to staff and/or future teachers of English in an academic year</p> <p>Briefly describe the type(s) of what type(s) of activities in which those staff and students are engaged.</p>		Accepted/ More information required
3.3	Collaborative Online International Learning Platform (COIL)	Confirm that you will encourage staff and students to use the platform to facilitate future communication and collaboration across the TEFE partnership.		Accepted/ More information required

Section Four: DECLARATION AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Section	Descriptor	Applicant's response	Assessment
4.1	Declaration	<p>I confirm that our institution commits to introducing and promoting the values of the TEFE initiative in our institution.</p> <p>Signature</p> <p>Name</p> <p>Position</p> <p>Date</p>	Accepted/ More information required
4.2	Comments	Please make any additional comments you wish to support your application:	Accepted/ More information required
4.3	Supporting documents / Information	Attach any supporting documents you feel support your application.	Accepted/ More information required

Thank you for submitting your application to become a TEFE Charter Institution. The core partners of the TEFE consortium will carefully consider your application and contact you in due time.





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Ethical considerations were adhered to and consent was sought from all participants during the administration of questionnaires and interviews.

