

CUMULUS WORKING GROUP

X-files for Internationalization

The Immediate Future of Student Exchanges

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Summary of CumulusConnects Global Conversation

MODERATOR OF THIS
SPECIAL EVENT

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The unprecedented Covid crisis has been and still is, very challenging on many sides for HEIs all over the world, not only because of the need of implementing new learning methods that take advantage of the Information and Communication Technologies but also because of the drastic reduction or the interruption of the fluxes of International Exchange.

This was the topic of the Global Conversation “The Immediate Future of Student Exchanges”, organized by the working group X-files for Internationalization and hosted by Cumulus Connects on December 10th. I had the opportunity to moderate the session with an extraordinarily rich and diverse panel of speakers who addressed many ideas on how to approach student exchanges and international mobility with a new mindset, considering that the Covid crisis is a turning point also for education.

Even if there is a broad consensus on the fact that for Art, Design, and Media studies, face-to-face activities have a primary and irreplaceable role in learning processes based on human contact, it is now evident that this situation is also an opportunity for reformulating the modalities of such a “contact” with the help

of technology. After a welcome by Mariana Amatullo, focused on the central role of internationalization in Arts and Design education, Philipp Heidkamp discussed the need for new perspectives on international collaboration through concepts as New Normal, New Mobilities, New Experiences, New Formats, and New Collaborations. A recent example of how these concepts have been applied was explained by Sara Xiangjie Chen, presenting the dynamics of incoming and outgoing mobility in China during the pandemics.

As Hilary Collins remarked, there is a fundamental value in the mobility dimension of the international exchanges, since the fact of living in another country and city is part of an immersive cultural experience. It is important to be aware that learning in a remote or blended format is something different from a traditional exchange, even if there are strategies for promoting collaboration and interaction. The present situation is, again, an opportunity for HEIs to be creative and imagine new forms of “mobility”, which don’t require the traditional journey and propose new forms of “international exchange”, which could also benefit students who can’t access the traditional mobility formats. Maria Hansen developed a broad reflection on the opportunities, focusing on the role of the digital environment and the mobility at home as territories to be explored. Albert Fuster remarked how it is possible to bring part of the contextual experience of exchange even in the remote teaching since there are persons belonging to different places and design cultures behind the screen.

The success of new forms of mobility remote or blended depends also on the support of institutions that promote exchange programs like the Erasmus+ in the EU, which, as José Ravenstein explained, are opening up new modalities of collaboration in the next future.

We encourage you to view the video recording of the session at cumulusconnects.org

PARTICIPANTS

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