

CO-DISCOVERY – A STAFF/STUDENT
COLLABORATIVE EVALUATION OF
BROADENING WITHIN THE UNDERGRADUATE
STUDENT JOURNEY | The case for
language learning

Project Report

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Executive summary

Introduction

Following the Browne Report (2010), the consequent rise in student fees and internal and external deliberations on the value of a university degree, the Leeds Curriculum (LC) was the outcome of a large-scale curriculum transformation project (2010-2016). The project aimed to demonstrate the value and distinctiveness of the Leeds offer as a key benefit for all undergraduates. The Leeds Curriculum framework is defined by three elements: Research-based Learning, Core Programme Threads (Employability; Global and Cultural Insight; Ethics and Responsibility) and Broadening which is offered, in part, through Discovery modules across ten interdisciplinary Discovery Themes. Discovery modules seek to enhance students' knowledge and skills, and in turn, their graduate attributes plus career and employment opportunities. Further opportunities that contribute to Broadening are found in University co-curricular activities such as study abroad, industry work placements, volunteering and research internships.

The continuing debate on the value of Higher Education is a backdrop for this LITE Teaching Enhancement Project: for example, the current focus on 'learning gain' (McGrath et al 2015), the emergence of the Teaching Excellence Framework (2016) and the recent Higher Education and Research Act (2017). Learning gain – the attempt to measure the different ways in which students benefit from their learning experience – is now a core part of the Government's plans for Higher Education and signals a focus on student outcomes (BIS 2016a in Howson 2016).

Focusing specifically on students studying language Discovery modules, the project's objectives were to:

1. Explore how the value of Broadening is understood by students and its effect on their learning, their choices and their career aspirations; in particular language learning
2. Explore employer perceptions of the value of Broadening and language learning in relation to their expectations of graduates' knowledge, skills and attributes
3. Map students' learning experiences to the perceptions of employers to reveal the resonance and dissonance in their understandings of Broadening and in particular language learning
4. Exemplify to key stakeholders the possibilities and barriers to Broadening from student and employer perspectives
5. Provide evaluative research opportunities to undergraduates recruited to the project using a co-creation model¹
6. Enable undergraduates to participate in reflective practice
7. Adopt the University's delivering results methodology² in project management

Intended benefits

1. To be confident in evidencing the value of Broadening to academic staff, current and prospective students, alumni, employers and peers nationally and internationally
2. To provide evidence for the TEF narrative
3. To contribute to the sustainable impact of Broadening as a distinctive feature of a Leeds education

¹ Bovill & Bulley (2011).

² <http://deliveringresults.leeds.ac.uk>

Methodology

Informed by a developmental utilization-focused approach and Saunders's RUFDATA tool (Patton 2008, Saunders 2000, Saunders 2012), inductive analysis was the method used to analyse the qualitative data (Strauss 1987, Corbin and Strauss 2015, Miles and Huberman 1994, Silverman 2015). Data collection was via semi-structured interviews, followed by a systematic process of coding through the 'constant comparative' method. In finding commonalities (resonance) and differences (dissonance), each were connected to emergent *core categories* and their *sub-categories* (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

Sample populations

Convenience and snowball sampling techniques were used to source 25 undergraduates and 15 employers.

Findings

1. In the context of learning languages through Discovery modules, students value the wide range of choice on offer within Broadening for both their intrinsic and extrinsic value but this offer is not always realised owing to a programme's structure, credits available and/or timetabling constraints, particularly with reference to language Discovery modules. This raises concerns over parity of opportunity across the undergraduate experience.
2. Students choose a language Discovery module because the skills developed therein enhance their overall skill set for future employability, for example, team working. In the short term this affords additional (co-) curricular opportunities which they had not always previously considered, for example, study or work abroad.
3. Employers, as with students, value Broadening as inherently beneficial in pursuit of a rounded graduate. However, employers did not view Broadening as a distinctive element of a Leeds education. This may indicate a greater need to better communicate the distinctiveness of the Leeds offer given that a number of employers interviewed did not associate Broadening as special to Leeds.
4.
 - a. Broadening through language learning helps shape a student's identity, learning across disciplinary boundaries and enhancing intercultural awareness. Students focus more on the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge, skills and how they learn and less on the value of wider attributes of Broadening such as social capital, which is enhanced by foreign language competence, and emotional intelligence, which are emphasised by employers.
 - b. Employers generally perceived learning a different language more as added value, foregrounding intercultural awareness over the merits of language acquisition. Students emphasise the importance of learning languages for enhancing employability; employers are less explicit, accepting that the variance in need and value of other languages is industry sector-dependent.
5. Employers focus on the product or graduate outcomes as they are interested in the (almost) finished article. In developing or building a personal brand, it is about the student as a whole: including their discipline, the variety of subject areas studied, the motivations behind making those choices, the transferable skills developed and also their life experiences. Yet students do not explicitly mention this in articulating the benefits of Broadening.
6. Employers value social capital and in particular emotional intelligence. This was not explicitly referred to by students or even described in other ways i.e. there was no mention of increased awareness of oneself or working effectively within diverse groups.

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7. Students' rationale for choosing a language Discovery module tended to be transactional and extrinsic in improving career opportunities rather than for self-development. Any development observed by students, which related to 'self', focused on opportunities to travel and to experience of different countries and cultures.
8. Employers anticipate graduates will make a difference to, and help shape, an organisation. However, students do not explicitly refer to these attributes or see it as within their gift i.e. being 'agents of change'.
9. Employers highlight the need for resilience in the workplace; students do not explicitly mention resilience as an attribute they have or are developing on their learning journey.

Recommendations

For academic and support staff

1. Encourage students to adopt a deeper level of reflection of their learning in the broadest sense, that is, the opportunity and associated benefits to develop:
 - an ability to articulate explicitly this learning and its benefits;
 - social capital, including self-awareness, and more broadly emotional intelligence;
 - a global perspective and intercultural awareness.
2. Make more explicit both skills and self-awareness developed in addition to linguistic skills; design reflection tasks to help students realise the value of their learning on a language Discovery module and how this has developed their identity and social capital.
3. Communicate to students and employers what is distinctive about learning languages and what the benefits are. Are we articulating these benefits as a (languages) community of practice? Are we sufficiently aware ourselves?
4. Reflect on the purpose of Discovery modules as opposed to pre-existing optional/elective modules that have simply been rebadged as Discovery. In reviewing new language Discovery modules, focus more on intercultural awareness, redressing the balance with language skills.
5. Make more explicit to students that Discovery modules require the same level of commitment as any other category of module.
6. School of Languages, Cultures and Societies (LCS) to run workshops for staff and students on the broader value and the transformative effect of language skills.
7. LCS to build links with employers and invite the employer voice in reviewing the curriculum and learning outcomes.
8. Consider where (or indeed whether) the graduate skills and attributes valued by employers are found and articulated in the Leeds Curriculum.
9. Revisit module learning outcomes and make explicit the tacit skills that are developed e.g. social capital and emotional intelligence.
10. Provide examples of student reflections on how Broadening via curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities have developed their awareness, understanding and skills plus how this has enhanced their employability.

For students:

1. Be aware of the idea of developing a personal brand or identity from Year 1 and understand how they might do this during their undergraduate journey through curricular and co-curricular opportunities. In turn, this will foster a greater awareness as graduates of their employment value. In the case for language learning: to know and to articulate the benefits or added value of learning another language i.e. beyond the level of knowledge acquisition.
2. Understand and articulate the value of Broadening in being able to communicate and work across disciplinary boundaries from a position of disciplinary strength – the T-shaped graduate – including social capital, interconnectedness and being values-driven.
3. Be aware of the increased intercultural awareness developed from studying language Discovery modules.

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For the University:

1. Re-imagine Broadening to include deeper reflective practice for students on their learning within the undergraduate journey and the implicit skills and attributes developed.
2. Review graduate attributes, developing these further to be more nuanced, with examples, in order to better support students in their ability to articulate their values, knowledge, skills and experience throughout their undergraduate journey; include curricular and co-curricular opportunities to develop and demonstrate not just core knowledge but also social capital including emotional intelligence, interconnectedness and intercultural awareness.
3. Engage further with employers including communication of key messages – for example, the Leeds Curriculum as a distinctive offer of the University, the merits of Broadening and the value of learning languages above and beyond linguistic competence, namely important implicit skills and attributes, such as social capital, emotional intelligence, intercultural awareness, resilience and working across disciplinary boundaries. Consider the concept of the T-Shaped professional in informing curricular framework and programme design and delivery.
4. Consider the barriers to Broadening including programme structures, timetabling constraints and the nature and timing of information communicated to students at significant points on the undergraduate journey.
5. Foreground and embed curriculum evaluation at institutional level as a model of good practice for developmental purposes.

For project dissemination/impact activity: see Appendix A.

Appendices

- A. Project dissemination/impact activity
- B. RUFDATA analysis
- C. Interview schedules

1. Introduction

1.1 Context

Following the Browne Report (2010)³, the consequent rise in student fees and internal and external deliberations on the value of a university degree, the Leeds Curriculum (LC) was the outcome of a large-scale curriculum transformation project (2010-2016). The project aimed to develop and demonstrate the value and distinctiveness of the Leeds offer as a key benefit for all undergraduates.

The continuing debate on the value of Higher Education is a backdrop to this LITE teaching enhancement project: for example, the current focus on ‘learning gain’ (McGrath et al 2015), the emergence of the Teaching Excellence Framework in 2016 and the recent Higher Education and Research Act in 2017. Learning gain – the attempt to measure the different ways in which students benefit from their learning experience – is now a core part of the Government’s plans for Higher Education (BIS 2016a in Howson 2016) as part of a focus on student outcomes.

The Leeds Curriculum, as a framework, is defined by three elements: Research-based Learning, Core Programme Threads (Employability; Global and Cultural Insight; Ethics and Responsibility) and Broadening which is offered, in part, through “Discovery” modules across ten interdisciplinary Discovery Themes⁴. Discovery modules are accessible to undergraduates as a means of Broadening, seeking to enhance students’ knowledge and skills, and in turn, their graduate attributes and career and employment opportunities. Further opportunities, which contribute to Broadening, are found in University co-curricular activities such as study abroad, industry work placements, volunteering and research internships.

Situated within two Discovery Themes – ‘Personal and Professional Development’ and ‘Language and Intercultural Understanding’ – and focusing specifically on students studying language Discovery modules, the objectives of this LITE project were to:

1. Explore how the value of Broadening is understood by students and its effect on their learning, their choices and their career aspirations; in particular language learning
2. Explore employer perceptions of the value of Broadening and language learning in relation to their expectations of graduates’ knowledge, skills and attributes
3. Map students’ learning experiences to the perceptions of employers to reveal the resonance and dissonance in their understandings of Broadening and in particular language learning
4. Exemplify to key stakeholders the possibilities and barriers to Broadening from student and employer perspectives
5. Provide evaluative research opportunities to undergraduates recruited to the project using a co-creation model⁵
6. Enable undergraduates to participate in reflective practice
7. Adopt the University’s delivering results methodology⁶ in project management

³ The Browne Report (published 12 October 2010) *Securing a sustainable future for higher education: an independent review of higher education funding* Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

⁴ Creating Sustainable Futures; Enterprise and Innovation; Ethics, Religion and Law; Exploring the Sciences; Language and Intercultural Understanding; Mind and Body; Personal and Professional Development; Media Culture and Creativity; Power and Conflict; Technology and its Impacts.

⁵ Bovill & Bulley, (2011)

⁶ <http://deliveringresults.leeds.ac.uk>

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Intended benefits

1. To be confident in evidencing the value of Broadening to academic staff, current and prospective students, alumni, employers and peers nationally and internationally
2. To provide evidence for the TEF narrative
3. To contribute to the sustainable impact of Broadening as a distinctive feature of a Leeds education

Co-creation element

An important element of the project, illustrative of a research-based learning culture, was to provide research opportunities to three undergraduates as student researchers (SRs) so the project was designed as a scholarly collaborative enterprise with all five members of the team co-constructing and co-delivering the project. Bovill and Bulley's (2011) ladder of student participation proved to be a useful tool where the SRs were able to identify their positions at different points in the project.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Evaluation approach

In alignment with the wider University evaluation of the Leeds Curriculum, the project was informed by a developmental utilization-focused approach (Patton 2008, Saunders 2000, Saunders 2012). This approach is evaluation “*done for and with specific intended primary users for specific, intended uses... the focus... is on **intended use by intended users***” (Patton 2008:37). Hence the project evaluators were University staff and undergraduates and the project participants were undergraduates and employers. Integral to our developmental evaluation approach was the adoption of Saunders’ (2000) RUFDATA tool (see appendix A).

The RUFDATA analysis underpinned the research methodology in adopting a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis.

Research methodology

The developmental evaluation approach lent itself to inductive analysis rooted in grounded theory (Corbin and Strauss 2015, Miles and Huberman 1994, Silverman 2015). In collecting the qualitative data via semi-structured interviews, a systematic process of coding data ensued. Through the ‘constant comparative’ method, codes were conceptualised by attributing meaning either derived from ‘a priori’ knowledge or ‘in vivo’ from within the text (Strauss 1987). In finding commonalities (resonance), differences (dissonance), patterns and structures, each were connected to emergent *core categories* and *sub-categories* and characterised by their *properties* or characteristics (Lincoln and Guba 1985). The relationships between the categories for students and the categories for employers are described in the findings in Section 3.

Sample populations

Convenience and snowball sampling techniques were used for sourcing student and employer participants. The 25 students interviewed were from second, third and fourth years, from six of a possible eight faculties (see Figures 1 and 2), and the 15 employers were from a range of industry sectors (see Figure 3). It should be acknowledged that a limitation of the employer sample population is their Eurocentrism; that is, employers were mainly drawn from UK-based organisations. Within these organisations, participant roles ranged from executive/senior management through to graduate recruitment within HR. See Appendix B for student and employer interview schedules. N.B. Within the body of the report, student voices are represented and prefixed by ‘S’ and employers by ‘E’.

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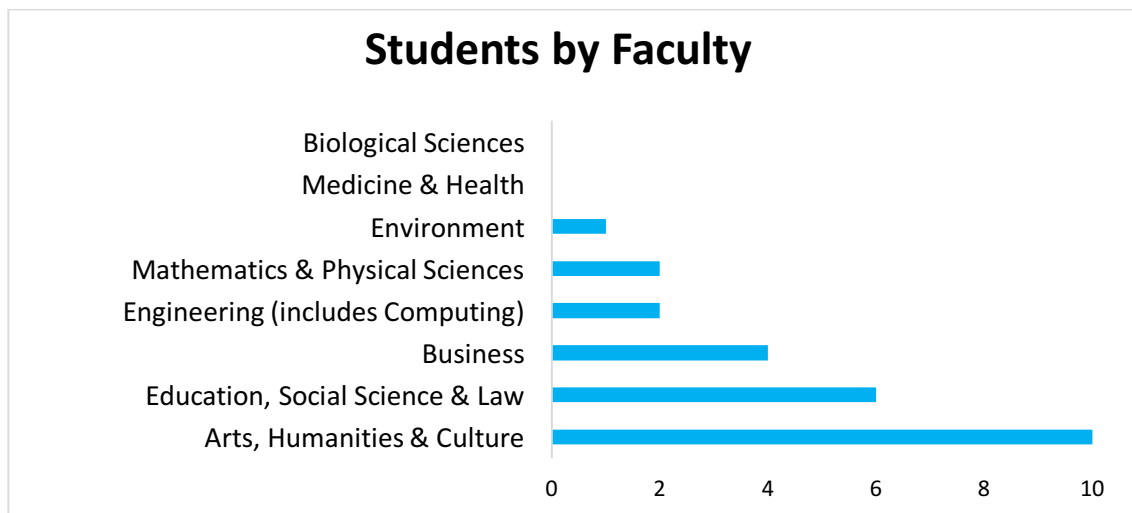


Figure 1: Students by Faculty

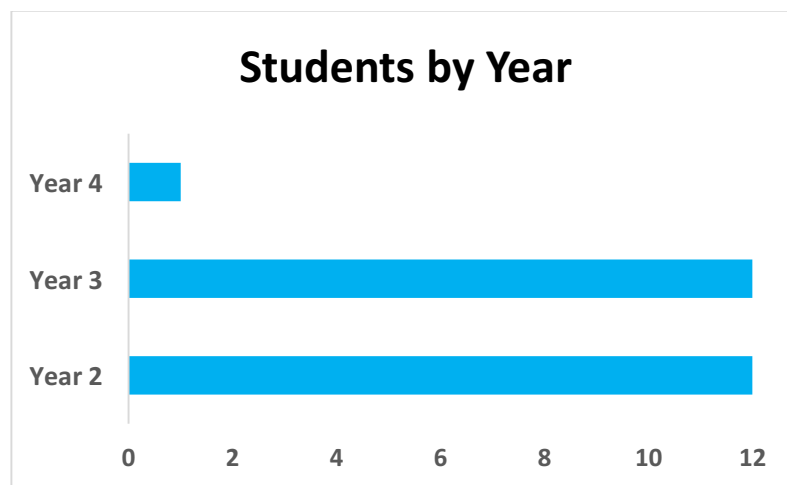


Figure 2: Students by Year

Employers by Industry Sector

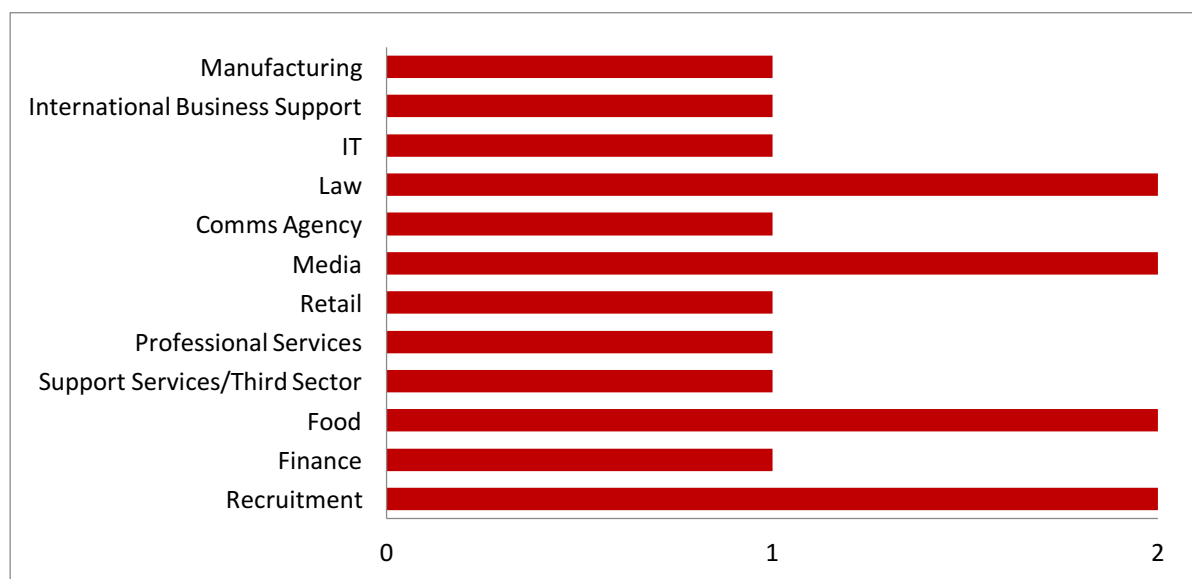


Figure 3: Employers by Industry Sector

3. Results and discussion of findings

3.1 Students

In pursuit of Broadening within the Leeds Curriculum, and within the parameters of a programme's structure, students can design their own pathway through the Discovery Themes, taking as much or as little risk as they wish, choosing from different disciplines and from different themes, or pursuing depth over breadth if they prefer.

In analysing the data, three core categories emerged in relation to the elements of Broadening and language learning that students value. These are: *Choice*, *Identity* and *Learning Experience*.

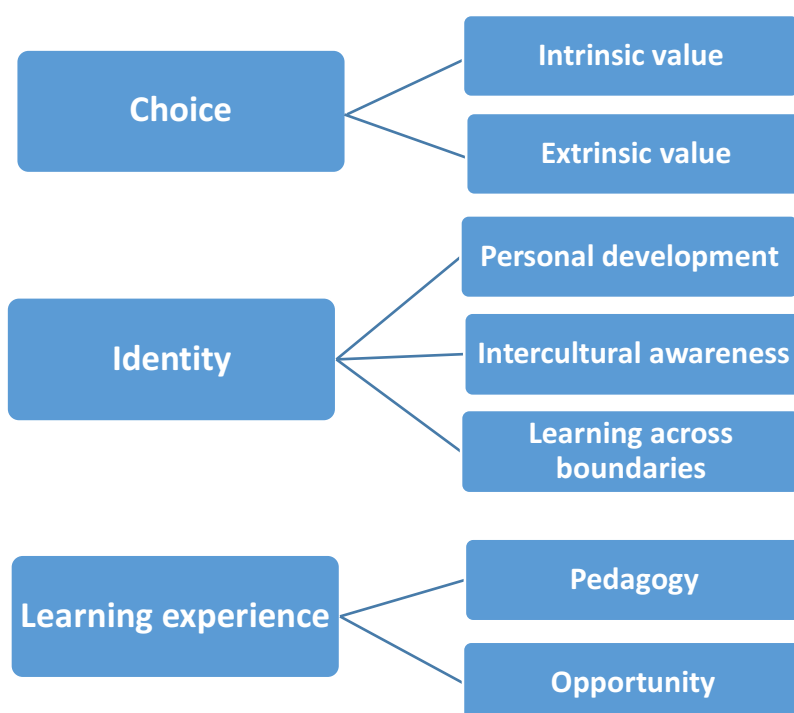


Figure 4: Student core categories - Choice, Identity and Learning Experience

Choice

Choice represents the importance students place on the opportunity to broaden and the extent to which they can tailor their degree: *"You're giving more scope for people to start designing their own degrees, which fundamentally is what most people would really want to do"* (S16). Choice also represents the range of Discovery modules on offer and the breadth of languages available. Some students selected Leeds as their preferred university based on the opportunities Broadening afforded and the consequent breadth of choice on offer.

Figure 4 shows the two sub-categories *intrinsic* and *extrinsic value*. Intrinsic value here refers to value as an end in itself, independent and self-contained, rather than an extrinsic value for some strategic need or instrumental purpose. Using Skilbeck's (1976) notion of 'value-choices', students choosing language Discovery modules have the opportunity to shape their learning whilst reflecting the wider

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values of the Leeds Curriculum and the University – for example, academic excellence, which includes increasing knowledge and encouraging critical independence⁷.

Intrinsic value

In this participant group some students choose to learn a language for its inherent satisfaction. Some had enjoyed studying a language at GCSE or A-level and wanted to continue, whilst others valued the opportunity to learn a new language, for its own sake. Also, most students said that Broadening through Discovery modules was an opportunity for them to either complement their discipline or to provide a contrast. S4 stated *“I enjoy learning languages and learning about other countries”* whilst S8 said they enjoyed having something different to do each week, and that their learning would have been considerably narrower if they had not studied a language Discovery module. *“Because it is so different to computer science, it helps to break up my week to study something completely different”* (S22). For Linguistics students, studying a new language was instructive for their degree; students on the BA English, Language and Education could apply theories of learning a language to their core discipline.

Extrinsic value

Extrinsic relates to aspects beyond the curriculum, such as the University’s reputation and position in league tables, its location, campus structure and facilities. Some students identified Leeds as their first choice of university because of the opportunity to study languages alongside their core degree. For example, when choosing universities, S13 only applied to those with a strong language focus and the chance to spend a year abroad. They felt that Broadening was a way of differentiating themselves from other students who will graduate with the same degree and therefore made a strategic choice to continue studying a language as part of the BA English, Language and Education programme.

Many students demonstrated similar foresight and chose a language Discovery module to influence future outcomes. For example, a student of History found that studying Discovery modules in Latin over three years was a significant advantage in preparing for a Masters in Medieval Studies. Some mentioned making a strategic choice in relation to a specific job or area of work – that is, they made a career-related decision to learn a new language. For example, S1 aspired to work in the United Nations so chose Arabic alongside their International History and Politics degree to facilitate this. Similarly, S20, who studied Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence, chose French owing to their interest in a robotics company based in France. Whilst not all students have a specific career in mind, there is an assumption among students that knowing more than one language will enhance their employability. Others realised on completing the module that knowledge of the language opened career paths they had not previously considered, such as teaching, or gave them the confidence to consider working abroad. These positions resonate with a recently-published external student view that those who learn a language enhance their employability (Cooper and Turner, 2017).

It was rare for students to express solely intrinsic or only extrinsic values underpinning their choice of a language Discovery module. This is exemplified by S14 who said *“learning languages is more for personal gain but then it makes sense to do it professionally as well.”* This suggests that intrinsic and extrinsic value-choices are not necessarily independent of each other in students’ decisions.

Despite the positive experiences, structural factors such as timetabling, lack of credits and the barrier of pre-requisites sometimes prevent this choice, and some would have liked more information and more guidance about choosing their Discovery modules. S2 regretted not having a choice of Discovery modules after Level 1 as they could have progressed to a higher language level had this been an

⁷ https://www.leeds.ac.uk/info/5000/about/136/values_and_responsibility

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option. Although choice is a valued part of Broadening, there are limiting factors which prevent this. S6 commented on the time and effort required each year to research the Discovery modules available *“and if I wouldn’t have done that I wouldn’t have chosen the right one for me and I think that is also why a lot of people are put off ... So it is easier to stick with your own [discipline].”* Others reflected on their strategic decision not to continue with the language, as demonstrated by S9: *“I thought that continuing with Japanese might affect my mark going forward”; “it’s so difficult that it would take me years and years to get to a good level and there’s a very limited usage ... unless you’re going to go and live in Japan”.*

Identity

The second core category of *Identity* focuses on the impact that learning through Broadening and Discovery modules has on shaping a student’s identity. Hinchliffe and Jolly (2009) define student identity as *“primarily formed through subject discipline and a range of student experiences”* (2009:3). Discovery modules serve to broaden a student’s experience and perspective and are intended to shape the student’s identity as they develop what employers refer to as ‘graduate identity’. In the current context, *Identity* is contingent on *Choice*, and comprises three sub-categories: *personal development, intercultural awareness, and learning across boundaries.*

Personal development

In shaping a student’s identity, for example as a Mathematician or Historian, this sub-category focuses on the personal attributes that the students consider they have developed through Broadening and in particular the contribution that learning another language has made. One of those attributes is empathy, notably home students with international students regarding the challenges of moving to a country where English is the dominant language. S6 became aware of this challenge and wanted to give the international students on her degree *“a bit of help or guidance, which I probably wouldn’t have thought twice had I not have embarked on the French module”.* This is indicative of growth of both self-awareness and intercultural awareness. S15 embodied this view: *“A sense of empathy. There are a lot international students, and I think it’s more of an appreciation if anything.”* In addition, S9 observed how learning other languages fosters an understanding that no one language is superior.

Students developed a number of additional skills through taking language Discovery modules. S13 stated that doing a language Discovery module offers the *“opportunity to expand your studies and gain extra skills”* for instance, improved oral communication such as public speaking. Another student proposed that *“[learning] languages is just the most transferable skill ever”* (S7). This endorses Merritt’s (2013) assertion that learning another language raises awareness of the mechanics of language: grammar, conjugations, and sentence structure and

“...the ways it can be structured and manipulated. These skills can make you a more effective communicator and ... writer. Language speakers also develop a better ear for listening ...”

However, some students recognised that the benefits of studying Discovery modules were not made clear to them. For example, they found that taking a Discovery module outside of their core degree area was a risk as it could jeopardise the breadth and depth of their knowledge in their main discipline as well as overall assessment outcomes. As a result, some students remained risk-averse, staying within their discipline.

Intercultural awareness

Intercultural awareness highlights the learning in terms of enhanced awareness of other cultures. As observed by Cherian (2016), *“Language is the best introduction to a new culture. It automatically makes you interested in the cultural traditions that are tied to learning a language.”* S6 illustrated how

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learning a language allows students to explore and learn about different cultures – “[*language learning*] gave me an insight into a different country, a different culture, a different history, different people” and acknowledged how these cultural insights have made them more open-minded. S16 felt that being able to study a language module alongside the core degree programme offered “*different flavours of other cultural and educational opportunities that are out there.*” One student now reads about current affairs in a French newspaper to see how their perspective differs from others. Students also recognised that English is not the ‘superior’ language (S19) and undertaking a language module made them realise that “*there are other ways and they [other languages] are not inferior, they are just different.*” Likewise, learning more about a culture increases cultural sensitivity. As mentioned earlier, home students developed a greater empathy towards international students whose first language is not English, realising how difficult coming to a new country and culture must be and developed a metacognition about their own language through learning another (S3).

Linking to the earlier *extrinsic value*, many students acknowledge that cultural awareness developed via learning another language enhances their employability (S13). Having the opportunity to study a language away from their core subject opens their minds to other cultural opportunities that are available (S16). Through learning a new language ‘*a whole new world will be open to you.*’ (Cherian, 2016).

Learning across boundaries

This sub-category demonstrates how Discovery modules allow students to explore a subject that may be completely different to their main discipline – for example, the International History and Politics student who chose to study Arabic, the Mathematics student who studied French and Korean, and the Sociology student who studied Mandarin. Some students value the opportunity to study a completely new language while others value the opportunity to continue a language previously studied without having to dedicate their entire degree to it. S3 wanted to “*learn something completely new every year*” and “*give myself a challenge*” and felt that not being able to broaden would have been a wasted opportunity.

A number of students enjoyed the contrast between their language Discovery module and their core and optional modules. For example, S8 mentioned that studying Mandarin was a “*source of relief*” when their course became overly-demanding – “*I genuinely think that had I not had Mandarin at the side, I would have dropped my degree*”. In some cases, studying a different subject was a welcome break from their core discipline. Experiencing different disciplinary modes of assessment helped to sustain their motivation throughout the degree programme. Others felt that more guidance regarding the assessment was needed to better support students in understanding the style of assessment and what was required – “*when it came to submitting essays I didn't know all the formalities involved that you just learn about almost automatically when you are a degree student in that subject ... because that's not how Maths works at all*” (S3).

Students who chose to learn across different disciplinary boundaries were able to switch their thinking and writing for different modes of assessment. They believed this made them better able to adapt and adjust to new situations. This begins to resonate with Kucharvy's (2009) ‘T-shaped graduate’ and Gardner and Estry's (2017) ‘T-shaped professional’: the ability to make links, communicate and work across disciplines (see Figure 6). Generally speaking, however, on completion of the module, students seemed to overlook how the module had helped develop their identity towards becoming a global graduate.

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Learning Experience

The third core category, *learning experience*, represents the value students place on the ways in which they gained knowledge and skills both formally and informally in studying language Discovery modules. It includes two sub-categories: *pedagogy* and *opportunity*.

Pedagogy

Comparing the experience of learning languages at school, S2 felt the module met their expectations “and more” – the intensive nature of the teaching and the pace of learning meant that a range of tenses were covered, unlike their experience of learning German at school. Similarly the extensive use of the target language in the classroom and the independent study required helped them make more progress than expected. Students commented positively on the small class size – S16 “*the small class size felt more personal; you learn far more in smaller groups*”, the “*completely different style of learning*” (S2), the interactive pedagogic approach and the enjoyment factor, all of which provided a welcome contrast to lectures in their core discipline and in some cases motivated them to continue – “*I thoroughly enjoyed it and that’s why I decided to continue with it*” (S16). S3 commented on feeling “*more refreshed*” and “*more able to focus*” when returning to Maths as a result. S6 commented, “*in French a lot of the work was in groups and I really did like that*” in contrast to working largely independently on their main degree programme. Students commented on how this had enhanced their team-working skills. Students also observed how closely the tutor affected their motivation to learn especially when aspects of the language were more challenging and required more application than they had expected. The tutor’s enthusiasm, support and rapport with the group were important motivators. One commented that their one-to-one meeting with the tutor as a result of being absent had helped them catch up and motivated them to continue working hard.

Reflecting on the drawbacks, the most common criticism was that the module was too difficult or required more work than anticipated. Many students taking a beginner’s course did not expect to cover as much of the language as they did. For example, S2 was surprised to cover past, present and future tenses. Others were surprised at the amount of work required for a Discovery module. S5 said “[I] expected there to be less work as it was a Discovery module.” They also commented on the amount of independent learning expected (students seem to assume that Discovery modules have a smaller workload than core or optional modules) and in some cases the difficulty of keeping up with the workload particularly for non-Roman script languages such as Arabic, Japanese and Mandarin, the need for more information about the mode of assessment and a desire for a greater focus on cultural aspects. Perhaps it should be made more explicit that Discovery modules require the same level of commitment as core and optional modules of equal credit value.

Another limitation was in reference to course credits. Many students were unable to choose a language Discovery module in a particular year of study or continue their language learning in subsequent years due to the lack of credits available for Discovery modules. For example, one student said “*I just had ten credits in my first year. If I was given more opportunity, I would have done more.*” Other students who had sufficient credits faced timetabling problems which led to the same result. One suggestion repeatedly mentioned by students was that language Discovery modules should also be available as non-credit-bearing courses for students who wish to learn languages but do not have sufficient credits. While this has resource implications, it is encouraging to note the enthusiasm that students taking these Discovery modules have for learning languages, linking back to the intrinsic and extrinsic value within the choice category.

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Opportunity

As a result of taking a Discovery module, many students became aware of the range of co-curricular opportunities such as study abroad or international summer schools. S1 was aware of the year abroad opportunity prior to choosing the Italian Discovery module and this influenced their choice. This links to the extrinsic value above, that is, *strategic* decisions are potentially not only made in relation to career aspirations. Others found these opportunities after choosing a Discovery module. S13 spent a year in China due to how much they enjoyed their first two years of Mandarin. Similarly S1 is considering teaching English abroad after graduation. S3 summarised: “*Four years ago I didn’t think about other countries. Now I want to live in other countries!*”. Several students mentioned being more globally aware in terms of politics, cultures and world affairs. The topics covered – both formally via the syllabus and informally via students’ presentations - had developed their knowledge and interest. Although value-choices may not always be explicitly strategic, the opportunities that arise from language modules can open up career paths that students would not otherwise have considered, illustrating a link between opportunities and career aspirations.

In summary, the students interviewed value the possibilities afforded through Broadening, particularly to study language Discovery modules and the further opportunities that materialise from these learning experiences. However, the anticipated breadth of choice is, for some students, misleading if not illusory, owing to programme structure, timetabling constraints and lack of timely information.

3.2 Employers

Building a brand

The emergent core category of *building a brand* surfaced as an ‘in vivo’ code and represents employers’ emphasis on the rounded graduate that embodies not just disciplinary knowledge as an outcome of their studies but the added value beyond this core knowledge. That is, during an undergraduate’s journey, students seek a wide range of opportunities and activities that can create a profile or a unique identity that distinguishes their ‘graduateness’ from another in a competitive job market. Importantly, it is also the capacity to articulate this individual ‘brand’. This is reflected in the two sub-categories *knowledge* and *social capital*.

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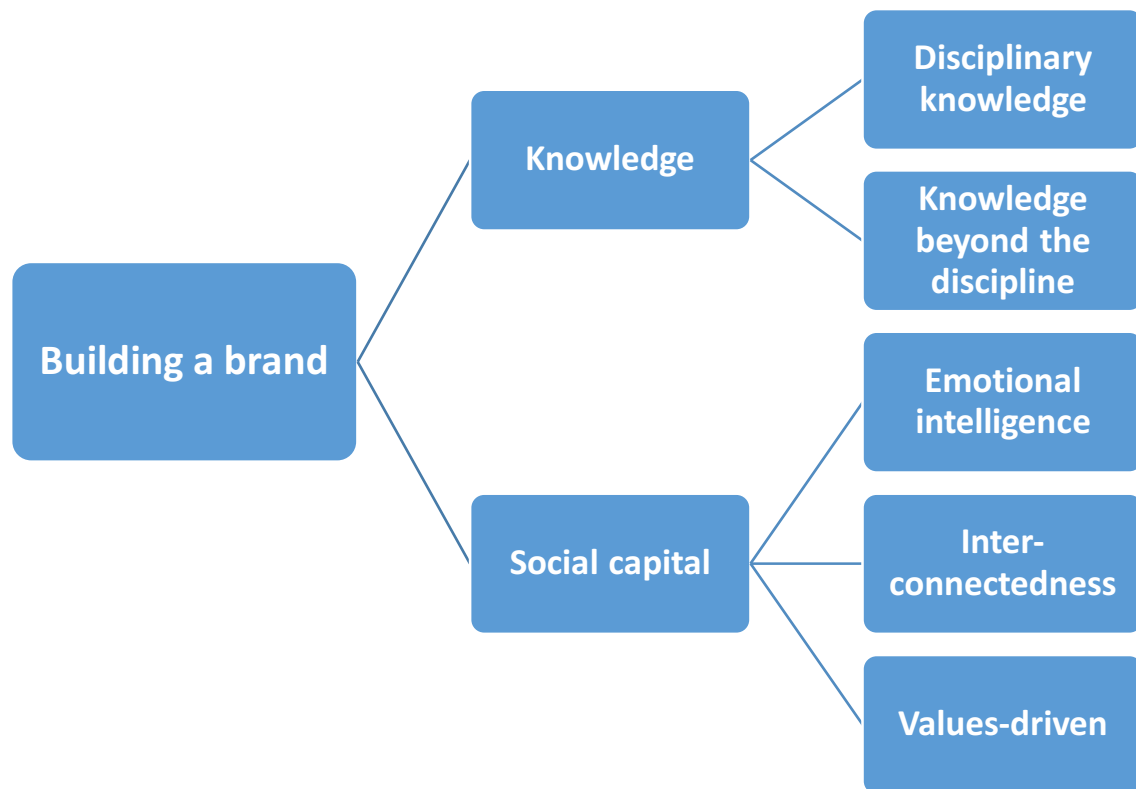


Figure 5: Employer core category - Building a brand

What is clear, as articulated by E3, is that the increased competition for jobs means that employers can expect considerably more from graduates in the recruitment process, raising the bar of expectations in terms of breadth of knowledge, skills and attributes –

“Being brutally honest, if there was a student that had only studied in the UK ... and didn’t have any language skills, even if they had a very good degree in terms of their academic qualifications, it would be unlikely they would get on to any of our graduate programmes purely because it’s such a competitive market for students that we can be that fussy”.

This resonates with Dacre Pool and Sewell’s (2007) employability model used as a framework for working with students to develop their employability and includes experience (work and life), degree subject knowledge and skills, generic transferable skills (e.g. communication, team working) and emotional intelligence.

The findings also chime with strength-based recruitment practices for a number of companies such as Ernst and Young, Barclays and Nestlé who look at graduates’ interests, strengths and inclinations rather than competencies (Stanbury 2016). *“Similarly emotional intelligence, resilience, cultural adaptability and the ability to understand data are prized by companies as different as BP, IBM and GSK”* (ibid); this includes the related concept of the ‘T-shaped professional’ (Gardner and Estry, 2017) as mentioned on page 13.

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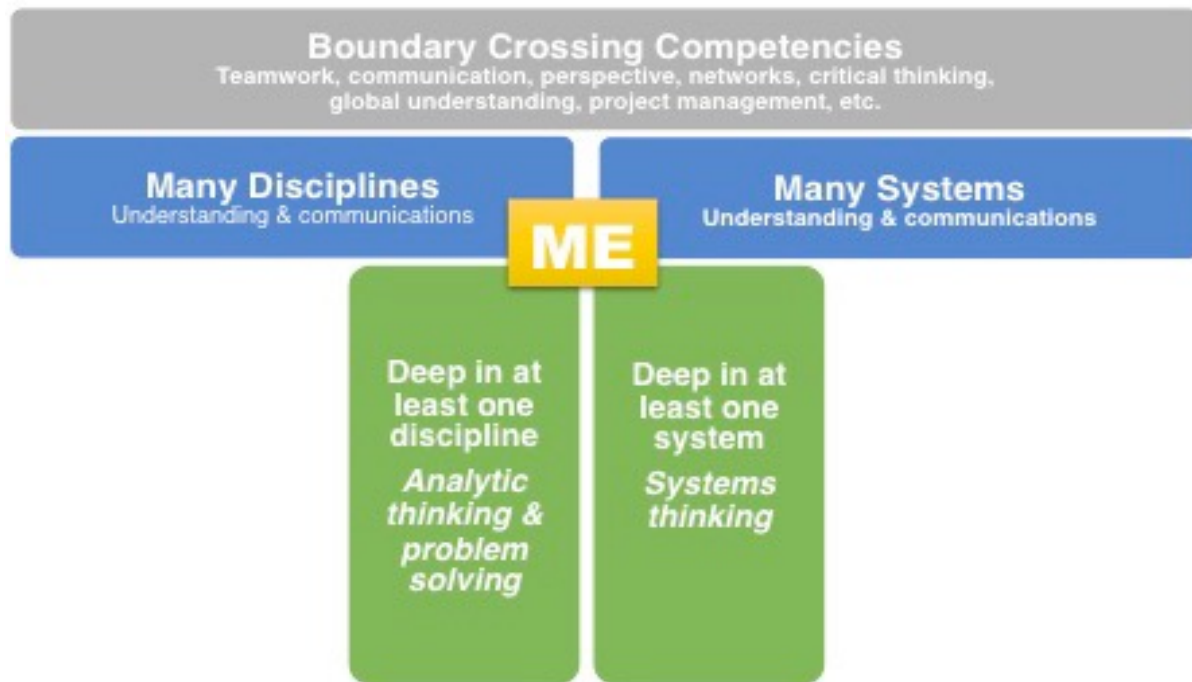


Figure 6: The T-professional: the Collegiate Employment Research Institute. © 2017, Michigan State University

In addition, as Kucharvy (2009) observes, such professionals “must be interdisciplinary, rather than narrowly-focused specialists. Although they must certainly have deep skills in a specialty (the vertical axis of the T), they must also have sufficient understanding of a broad range of related disciplines (the horizontal axis) to allow them to see contextual linkages, to constructively participate in interdisciplinary teams and to continually adapt their visions and their contributions to rapidly changing conditions and needs”.

Knowledge

Whilst specialist knowledge in a subject area is a desirable outcome for some job roles, for example, Food Science to work in the food industries where “*technical skills for food science and technology*” roles (E8) are required, expectations also exist where graduates can demonstrate *knowledge beyond their discipline*, which includes being able to articulate the value gained from outside interests or *prior experience*, be this volunteering, part-time or vacation work and/or sport/society officer roles. This could indicate the need for a student to understand how their discipline relates to other knowledge areas and how, as a result, they might be able to work across disciplinary boundaries becoming the ‘T-shaped graduate’.

Connected to this, as observed by E15, “*Looking ahead, a third of current jobs won’t exist and will be replaced by another set of jobs, so we need breadth and capability to develop a skills resource for areas that we don’t yet know will exist, so breadth is important*”. This supports Luckin’s (2017) view that graduates need to be lifelong learners – “*Being a good learner is going to be really in demand, because we don’t know exactly what jobs there are going to be in the future and exactly what skills and expertise you’ll need*”.

The value of prior knowledge is reflected in E10’s observations “*Work experiences shows you are dynamic, interested in other things, [have] used your time well, [are] bright, engaged and keen to learn*”. According to Stephen Isherwood, at the Institute of Student Employers, work experience is the most effective intervention – “*... it is no coincidence that graduates with meaningful work experience*

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are more employable” (2018). For others (E1) *“The discipline is not important, especially if the student demonstrates the necessary attributes”* such as a strong work ethic, cultural awareness, communication skills and an ability to build relationships. Additionally, E15 *“more important is you as an individual – how you execute that performance in terms of your behaviours, your ability to work with others”*.

Social capital

Social capital, the value of social networks, is the more dominant sub-category characterised in the data by *emotional intelligence*, *interconnectedness* and [being] *values-driven*.

This links to the recent work of the Higher Education Academy in highlighting the importance of social capital and how it might promote equity of opportunity (Naidoo 2015 and May 2017). Clarke (2017) observes that universities continue to focus on ‘human capital development’ (disciplinary knowledge and skills rather than the broader social capital) as the foundation for graduate success. This resonates with Holmes (2013) who sees social capital, including networks, as one of three competing explanations of graduate employability, namely: possession (human capital); position (social capital); and process (career self-management). This is exemplified by E8: *“If the person is exposing themselves to new experiences, which help them grow their social skills [and] their understanding of themselves, they will be a more rounded individual, will present themselves better, be more interesting and potentially be more employable”*.

Emotional intelligence (EI)

EI is an ‘a priori’ code developed by Goleman (1995) with which the findings resonate in terms of a graduate’s capacity to demonstrate *self-awareness*, *building rapport*, [showing] *leadership*, [being] a *change agent* and [demonstrating] *resilience*. EI is closely connected to language learning and *intercultural awareness* and an understanding that different cultures and markets operate differently. E10 (media industry) states *“[a reporter needs to be] emotionally intelligent, socially intelligent... [to] be able to adapt and notice that something is not quite right... even when they're speaking another language”*.

Self-awareness requires critical self-reflection and *building rapport* focuses on relational aspects with customers, such as understanding their needs, and since language learners are necessarily good listeners, they will know what the customer wants (E4). Another highlighted the need for social adaptability i.e. able to adapt how one talks to others (E12). E10 commented on the value of being *“in tune with people”* and therefore better able to build rapport. E15 (motor industry) cites EI as *“really important ... what was your impact working in a team?”* especially working in diverse teams *“If you’ve worked abroad [you] will be aware that people have different sensitivities to different things”*.

Change agent

This is a recognition firstly that graduates are able to, and are given the opportunity to, shape an organisation and secondly perhaps how universities can prepare their students in advance, for example, as collaborative co-producers in their learning and in their professional development (see Dunne and Zandstra 2011, Healey 2012).

E6 (third sector) encourages graduates to question and challenge a particular initiative and how it might be done differently and to bring their ideas to the fore. E9 (media) prefers graduates that are open to develop and grow themselves and the business, encouraging what they can bring from their own experience and cultural background.

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Resilience

A further attribute that is valued by some employers is *resilience*. As described by Wolin and Wolin (1993) for example, individually, a graduate has the capacity to “*bounce back, to withstand hardship, and to repair yourself*” and also contextually, through relationships and support systems (Stevenson 2016). Both of these are relevant for the world of work. For example, E10 (media) proposes the need for “*tenacity, resilience - you get told no a hundred times before [told] yes*”. E5 (food industry) describes the need for resilience as the work environment is “*tough*”. E15 (motor industry) emphasises resilience as important as one progresses and takes on more responsibility. Conversely E11 (media) values EI (providing EI training courses for graduates) over resilience “*as we don’t push too hard*”.

Resilience continues to be of interest to the Higher Education sector with regard to how universities prepare students for a complex and uncertain world (Barnett 2007). Bleasdale and Humphreys (2018:6) suggest that universities should address this preparation developmentally on both an academic and a personal level and need to consider the necessity of existing challenges and “*whether some challenges need to be created within the university environment*”.

Several employers commented on the need for graduates to be “*prepared to get stuck in*” (E3), “*[to be] not frightened to get stuck in and do things*” (E5); “*willing to have a go*” (E6); “*realise that they are on a journey and have a lot of learning to do*” (E5). Others highlighted a need to be competitive, motivated by targets and able to perform in a high pressure environment (E1); E2 “*[to be] prepared to work in lots of different roles from entry level up*”.

Intercultural awareness (IA)

Professor Janet Beer, President of Universities UK (2017), has emphasised the need for cultural awareness – “*More graduates need international and cultural awareness as well as language skills*” and this was confirmed by the employers interviewed. E1 identified “*exposure and understanding to another culture*” and “*learning the nuances within cultures [whilst] on the job*”. E2 suggested it is imperative for graduates to demonstrate cultural sensitivity and tolerance towards others regardless of their background or beliefs and this was confirmed by E13 – “*If they can demonstrate intercultural awareness, they would definitely have a competitive edge*”. While E10 identified language skills as an advantage particularly in the field of current affairs as it “*helps you to build a rapport with your interviewee [client]*”, intercultural awareness was described as “*hugely important*” particularly for a world audience (E10) and a global broadcaster (E9) and is essential in embracing diversity and inclusivity.

As Norton (2018:43-44) elaborates,

“Learning languages helps raise awareness of our own culture and values, encourages openness to other cultures and attitudes and stimulates willingness and the ability to communicate and co-operate across language and cultural boundaries.”

E3 confirmed actively seeking students who “*show us that they are quite comfortable hitting the ground running and moving between countries and cultures*”. On the other hand, E5 felt that in the context of their company (in the food industry), languages do not give a graduate a competitive edge because “*[a graduate] could have languages and not be able to talk to me*”. Here effective communication skills in general are more valued over foreign language skills. However, intercultural awareness is very important, understanding the demographics of colleagues in the business, for example, eastern Europeans and understanding their cultural differences vis-à-vis British colleagues is crucial (E5).

As one employer commented (E4) “*cultural awareness is part of the rounding of the individual*” and the more awareness a graduate has of the difference in people’s motivations and drivers the better.

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As E5 disclosed *“the more they [graduates] can immerse themselves to understand different cultures and be open and respectful of them ... [the better]”*. In the context of the workplace, E1 observed *“If you don’t demonstrate cultural awareness, you will notice quite quickly that things aren’t going very well for you – there’s a direct correlation”*.

E6 (third sector) felt that knowing how those from other cultures do things would help an organisation make changes and be more creative in their ways of working. Experience of living in another country and an understanding of the culture and the values was definitely of interest to some employers; part of obtaining diverse perspectives that enhances their knowledge and insights, which is for the employer’s gain (E9).

In exploring employer perceptions of the value of language skills as part of Broadening (as opposed to language degrees), they were typically regarded as *“desirable”* or *“the icing on the cake”* but not essential. When asked whether the level of fluency was important, there was a general consensus that any language ability was better than none but conversational ability was preferred. This is reflected in the CBI/Pearson Survey report (2017) which confirms that there are benefits in having a basic level of language proficiency although a higher level is required for some roles. Businesses that were looking to expand internationally, or had experience of this, identified having the relevant language competence as making the process *“much easier ... to get up and running in a short time”* (E12).

One employer in the recruitment sector commented that a premium is paid for graduates with fluency in another language, regardless of their degree. Another employer mentioned actively looking for graduates with two languages for particular roles, such as buyers, when sourcing produce from other countries. Another reported that it may be the deciding factor when placing graduates with clients, so it can indeed be a differentiator. Others identified that there are more opportunities for graduates who have language skills as it makes them more deployable and opens doors by suggesting an ability to work across different cultures. Several commented positively that being able to speak another language is a useful aptitude, demonstrates a willingness to learn new things and learning agility and demonstrates commitment. Two were aware that language skills are valuable in building rapport though a good level of fluency is required. One commented that they have struggled to recruit graduates with language skills in the UK and this chimes with the CBI/Pearson Survey which identified *“a major shortfall in levels of foreign language accomplishment”* (2017: 34). Only two of those interviewed maintain a database of employees’ language skills.

As identified in the Born Global research project (2016), very few employers were able to articulate the skills and attributes of competence in another language and how these might contribute to an organisation beyond being useful in the context of an international market or global expansion. One employer valued linguists for having very good listening skills which are essential when finding out what the customer wants. This aligns with Merritt (2013) who observes that *“Language speakers also develop a better ear for listening”*. Listening skills are observed at interview and/or as part of the selection process in group interaction tasks as this is regarded as an important part of the relationship with the client (E7). It is clear that there is a need to clarify the skills and attributes associated with speaking other languages for the benefit of employers but also to make students aware.

“Businesses can and should do more to emphasise the value of foreign language skills. ... We must work together to ensure that the UK can effectively address its language deficit, which will help the UK to become a globally connected and open trading nation, and ensure our future prosperity.” (British Council, 2017: 3).

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To quote Holmes (2018: 64), *“it stands to reason that building a prosperous Britain post-Brexit will depend on capitalising on the knowledge and skills of the labour market, including its ability to speak multiple languages and understand diverse cultures”*.

Interconnectedness

This property relates to an awareness and knowledge of, for example, E7’s reference to *“global mega-trends”* such as multi-culturalism, technology, emerging markets and their impact. This foregrounds the valuing of *communications* (across a range of audiences), *networking* and *commercial awareness*. Employers’ references to global acumen are integral to interconnectedness – working with people in different countries – in an ever more interconnected world; *“important that graduates have a broad view of the world and are aware that they are part of a global network”* (E7). However, there seemed to be a lack of awareness of how language skills link to an individual’s interconnectedness.

Values-driven

There was a sense from certain values-driven employers of the importance of graduates subscribing to this approach and matching, in some way, those companies’ values e.g. E3’s company values in the food industry are: *‘lead, sense and create’* – where to *‘lead’* means, as a self-starter, taking initiative]; *‘sense’* – having an awareness and sensitivity to the needs of others, and different ways of working; and *‘create’* – being forward thinking in creating new products and new opportunities. For E7, *leadership* means leading yourself (with a commitment to self-development), leading others (i.e. teams to work more effectively) and leading the organisation (i.e. in an ambassador role). In so doing graduates would need to have a *systems-thinking* approach and be a *cultural fit* within an organisation.

In the context of University provision, Clarke (2017:11) observes,

“The role of social capital in graduate employability continues to be debated. However, universities have the capacity to ... help graduates build strong networks (for example through alumni associations) and [they] can teach students the art of networking before they enter the labour market”.

This prompts the question for the Leeds context - how far does Broadening enable students to both develop disciplinary knowledge and promote social capital, particularly emotional intelligence?

In summary, there was a sense from employers that, in inherently valuing Broadening, intercultural awareness trumped language learning whilst accepting that language learning was a valuable, if not essential, asset. As Holmes observes,

“Even if transactions are carried out in English, intercultural understanding and cultural agility will be essential if a product or service is to match the cultural norms and consumer preferences of a diverse global client base.” (2018: 67)

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

1. In the context of learning languages through Discovery modules, students value the wide range of choice on offer within Broadening for both their intrinsic and extrinsic value but this offer is not always realised owing to a programme's structure, credits available and/or timetabling constraints, particularly with reference to language Discovery modules; this raises concerns over parity of opportunity across the undergraduate experience.
2. Students choose a language Discovery module because the skills developed therein enhance their overall skill set for future employability, for example, team working. In the short term this affords additional (co-) curricular opportunities, which they had not previously considered, for example, study or work abroad.
3. Employers, as with students, value Broadening as inherently beneficial in pursuit of a rounded graduate. However, employers did not view Broadening as a distinctive element of a Leeds education. This may indicate a greater need to communicate better the distinctiveness of the Leeds offer given that a number of employers interviewed did not associate Broadening as special to Leeds.
4.
 - a. Broadening through language learning helps shape a student's identity, learning across disciplinary boundaries and enhancing intercultural awareness. Students focus more on the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge, skills and how they learn and less on the value of wider attributes of Broadening such as social capital, which is enhanced by foreign language competence, and emotional intelligence, which are emphasised by employers.
 - b. Employers generally perceived learning a different language more as added value, foregrounding intercultural awareness over the merits of language acquisition. Students emphasise the importance of learning languages for enhancing employability; employers are less explicit, accepting that the variance in need and value of other languages is industry sector-dependent.
5. Employers focus on the product or graduate outcomes as they are interested in the (almost) finished article. In developing or building a personal brand, it is about the student as a whole including: their discipline; the variety of subject areas studied; the motivations behind making those choices; the transferable skills developed; and also their life experiences. Yet students do not explicitly mention this in articulating the benefits of Broadening.
6. Employers value social capital and in particular emotional intelligence. This was not explicitly referred to by students or even described in other ways i.e. there was no mention of increased awareness of oneself, working effectively within diverse groups.
7. Students' rationale for choosing a language Discovery module tended to be transactional and extrinsic in improving career opportunities rather than for self-development. Any development observed by students which related to 'self' focused on opportunities to travel and experience of different countries and cultures.
8. Employers anticipate graduates will make a difference to, and help shape, an organisation. However, students do not explicitly refer to these attributes or see it as within their gift i.e. being 'agents of change'.
9. Employers highlight the need for resilience in the workplace; students do not explicitly mention resilience as an attribute they have or are developing on their learning journey.

4.2 Limitations

It should be acknowledged that there are inevitably limitations to a project of this size and scope. Each researcher was on a 0.1FTE for one year so population sample sizes of both students and employers needed to be in keeping with the project's size. The student sample (n=25) was derived from those undergraduates studying language Discovery modules who volunteered to be interviewed. Employers (n=15) were mainly those who had a connection with the University, referred by the Alumni and Development team or the Leeds University Business School. A limitation of the employer sample population is their Eurocentrism; that is, employers were mainly drawn from UK-based organisations. The authors were aware of the project limitations at the outset and their impact on the project. Therefore the readership should interpret results with these in mind. This is intentionally a snapshot and not reflective of the value-choices of all students who take a language Discovery module or those of employers.

4.3 Recommendations

For academic and support staff:

1. Encourage students to adopt a deeper level of reflection of their learning in the broadest sense, that is, the opportunity and associated benefits to develop:
 - an ability to articulate explicitly this learning and its benefits
 - social capital, including self-awareness, and more broadly emotional intelligence
 - a global perspective and intercultural awareness
2. Make more explicit both skills and self-awareness developed in addition to linguistic skills; design reflection tasks to help students realise the value of their learning on a language Discovery module and how this has developed their identity and social capital.
3. Communicate to students and employers what is distinctive about learning languages and what the benefits are. Are we articulating these benefits as a (languages) community of practice? Are we sufficiently aware ourselves?
4. Reflect on the purpose of Discovery modules as opposed to pre-existing optional/elective modules that have simply been rebadged as Discovery. In reviewing new language Discovery modules, focus more on intercultural awareness, redressing the balance with language skills
5. Make more explicit to students that Discovery modules require the same level of commitment as any other category of module
6. School of Languages, Cultures and Societies (LCS) to run workshops for staff and students on the broader value and the transformative effect of language skills
7. LCS to build links with employers and invite the employer voice in reviewing the curriculum and learning outcomes
8. Consider where (or indeed whether) the graduate skills and attributes valued by employers are found and articulated in the Leeds Curriculum
9. Revisit module learning outcomes and make explicit which tacit skills are developed e.g. social capital and emotional intelligence
10. Provide examples of student reflections on how broadening via curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities have developed their awareness, understanding and skills plus how this has enhanced their employability

For students:

1. Be aware of the idea of developing a personal brand or identity from Year 1 and understand how they might do this during their undergraduate journey through curricular and co-curricular opportunities. In turn, this will foster a greater awareness as graduates of their employment value. In the case for language learning: to know and to articulate the benefits or added value of learning another language i.e. beyond the level of knowledge acquisition.

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2. Understand and articulate the value of Broadening in being able to communicate and work across disciplinary boundaries from a position of disciplinary strength – the T-shaped graduate - including social capital, interconnectedness and being values-driven.

For the University:

1. Re-imagine Broadening to include deeper reflective practice for students on their learning within the undergraduate journey and implicit skills and attributes.
2. Review graduate attributes, developing these further to be more nuanced, with examples in order to better support students in their ability to articulate their values, knowledge, skills and experience throughout their undergraduate journey; including curricular and co-curricular opportunities to develop and demonstrate not just core knowledge but social capital including emotional intelligence, interconnectedness and intercultural awareness.
3. Engage further with employers including communication of key messages; for example, the Leeds Curriculum as a distinctive offer of the University, the merits of Broadening and the value of learning languages above and beyond linguistic competence, namely important implicit skills and attributes such as social capital, emotional intelligence, intercultural awareness, resilience and working across disciplinary boundaries. Consider the concept of the T-Shaped professional in informing curricular framework and programme design and delivery.
4. Consider the barriers to Broadening including programme structures, timetabling constraints and the nature and timing of information communicated to students at significant points on the undergraduate journey.
5. Foreground and embed curriculum evaluation at institutional level as a model of good practice for developmental purposes.

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Appendices

Appendix A | Project dissemination/impact activity

Completed

- Interdisciplinary Network Conference poster presentation, University of Sheffield, April 2017
- 2 x LITE work-in-progress presentations, June and November 2017
- LITE Co-Discovery Blog LITE website, November 2017
- Article in University of Leeds Alumni magazine Issue 19 2018
- SEC2018 presentation University of Leeds, January 2018
- AULC Conference presentation, Sheffield Hallam University, January 2018
- Employability workshop, University of Leeds, 27 March 2018
- Interdisciplinary Network Conference presentation, University of Leeds, 22 March 2018
- HEA Conference presentation, Aston University, July 2018
- RAISE Conference presentation and poster, Sheffield Hallam University, September 2018
- International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning – poster presentation accepted – University of Bergen, Norway, October 2018
- Adoption of the University's project management methodology, *Delivering Results* See: <http://deliveringresults.leeds.ac.uk>

Planned

- International Journal of Students as Partners
- Faculty of AHC PRIA presentation (date to be confirmed)
- CELT/SLCS presentation (date to be confirmed)
- Presentation to Broadening group (date to be confirmed)

Appendix B | RUFDATA tool

Evaluation Decisions Using RUFDATA

Murray Saunders (2000)

What are our **Reasons and Purposes** for evaluation?

These could be planning, managing, learning, developing, accountability

1. *Learning*
 - a. To evidence the value of Broadening as experienced by undergraduate students; in particular through language learning in both Language and Intercultural Understanding (LIU) and Personal and Professional Development (PPD) Discovery Themes
 - b. To evidence the value of Broadening from the perspectives of employers; in particular employers' perceptions and expectations of graduates, particularly language learning
2. *Developing*
 - a. To disseminate to, and have an impact on, the HE sector, the outcomes of introducing a distinct and innovative curriculum
 - b. To exemplify to key stakeholders the possibilities and barriers to Broadening from student and employer perspectives
3. *Accountability*
 - a. To demonstrate/identify that a distinctive Leeds Curriculum (LC), and thereby a distinctive student experience, have been achieved

What will be our **Uses** of our evaluation?

They might be providing and learning from embodiments of good practice, staff development, strategic planning, PR, provision of data for management control

1. To provide evidence for dissemination of good pedagogic practice to raise the profile of Broadening through language learning with academic and support staff
2. To inform future curricular design and/or programme enhancements of new and existing programmes
3. To provide evidence/data for the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Steering Group and TEF narrative for future UoL TEF submissions
4. To provide evidence for dissemination at UoL open days and teacher/careers advisor conferences (current and prospective students, parents), HE academic conferences (HEI peers) and employability forums (employers) to raise the profile of the LC externally from 2018
5. To provide a template for the evaluation of other Discovery Themes

What will be the **Foci** for our evaluations?

These include the range of activities, aspects, emphasis to be evaluated, they should connect to the priority areas for evaluation. Focus on what your activity hopes to achieve

3. To ascertain whether and how the value of Broadening has been understood by students and by employers

- a. In interviews ask students about the benefits of Broadening as an integral part of the student journey and in particular learning a language – and any disbenefits
- b. In interviews ask employers to what extent they are aware of the intended benefits of Broadening

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- c. In interviews ask students about the information they have received to make informed Discovery module choices
- d. To explore the impact that learning has had on students' knowledge, skills, personal and professional development and co-curricular opportunities
- e. To explore student decision-making processes in choosing language Discovery modules, identifying any barriers
- f. To explore students' reflections on Broadening and in particular their suggestions to improve students' experiences of language Discovery modules

What will be our **Data and Evidence** for our evaluations?

Numerical, qualitative, observational, case accounts
Qualitative and quantitative

1. Qualitative data drawn from interviews with UG students studying language Discovery modules within LIU and PPD
2. Qualitative data drawn from interviews with a range of employers

Who will be the **Audience** for our evaluations?

Community of practice, commissioners, yourselves

NB through a communications strategy

1. LITE Board
2. Broadening /DTLs Group
3. Leeds Curriculum Evaluation Group
4. DVC for SE /TSEB
5. Academic and support staff
6. UoL Careers
7. Current students
8. LUU
9. Alumni
10. Employers
11. Marketing/ Prospective students
12. Sector HEIs e.g. Interdisciplinary networks, peers

What will be the **Timing** for our evaluations?

When should evaluation take place, coincidence with decision making cycles, life cycle of projects *NB to be developed further e.g. consider pilots?*

1. Between May and December 2017

Who should be the **Agency** conducting the evaluations?

1. LITE Teaching Enhancement Project Team – 2 staff and 3 undergraduate interns

Appendix C | Interview schedules

1. Student interview schedule (final year example)

Thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed for our project. We are interested in understanding your undergraduate experiences here at Leeds, the journey you have undertaken and your reflections on your learning within the context of the Leeds Curriculum. We are particularly interested in your experiences within the Broadening element of the Leeds Curriculum and especially the language-based Discovery modules you have studied; what you value about studying a language Discovery module. Also the ways studying a language might have contributed to your development, both personally and professionally and how these Discovery modules relate to your core subject(s)

Programme and University

1. a. Could you begin by describing why you chose your particular degree programme

Prompt: What was it about the programme that attracted you?

Probe: Was it the programme content? its structure? types of assessment? your career aspirations?

Additional opportunities wrapped around the programme – if yes what were these opportunities?

1. b. And why you chose Leeds in particular?

Prompt: What was it about Leeds that attracted you?

Broadening

2. What do you understand by the idea of Broadening within your degree?

Probe: And what is your view on Broadening?

Prompt: What do you think of Broadening within an undergraduate curriculum?

Probe: How important do you think it is to be able to broaden your academic pursuits through studying modules outside your main subject(s)?

Discovery modules

3. What Discovery modules have you studied during your undergraduate degree?

Probe: What were the reasons for choosing these Discovery modules?

Probe: What informed or influenced your decisions?

Probe: Did module grades have any influence on your choice?

Probe: How would you evaluate the information provided in order for you to make an informed decision?

Probe: Where was the information sourced?

Probe: Was the information sufficient? If not what would you have needed further to make an informed decision?

Probe: Were there any barriers to selecting and then studying these Discovery modules?

Probe: Why was this? If yes, how might these be overcome?

Probe: Can you recall the language level?

4. What is your experience of studying these modules?

Probe: Did your experience meet your expectations?

Probe: Could you say why this was the case? Can you give further examples of other Discovery modules studied?

Probe: In what way do you think your Discovery modules relate or connect to your core subject(s) (if at all)?

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Language learning

5. What motivated you to study a language as part of your degree programme?

Probe: Did you continue the language after the initial module of study?

Probe: If you did more than one language across the three years, were your experiences consistent?

6. Why did you choose this particular language?

Probe: What did you think would be the benefits of this language?

Probe: Has this proved to be the case so far in your learning of the language?

Probe: How have you applied your learning of this language?

Probe: What else have you gained as a result of this learning personally?

Probe: What else have you gained as a result of this learning professionally?

7. Have there been any demerits within these modules? If yes what might these be?

Probe: Are there any ways in which these demerits might be minimised?

Overall, based on your comments so far, is there a need to improve students' experiences of language learning at Leeds?

Probe: If the case, what suggestions do you have?

Prompt: How the module(s) are structured, organised, delivered, practised and/or assessed.

8. Do you think having these language skills will make you more employable?

Probe: Why might this be the case? What is it about learning a language that employers might value?

Probe: What additional contributions do you think you can make as an employee with language skills?

Probe: Did studying a language Discovery module open up career paths you might not have considered previously?

Probe: Were there any other opportunities?

Prompt: e.g. summer schools

Wider reflections

9. Has learning a language influenced your perspective or outlook more generally?

Probe: Do you identify with the idea of being a global citizen through language learning?

Probe: How is that evident in your perspective or outlook or perhaps your disposition?

Prompt: Thinking back to your perspectives before University, has your outlook or 'world-view' changed?

Probe: Is this attributed specifically to language learning? What do you think or is it a wider influence than that?

10. Do you have anything additional to say in relation to your experiences of both Broadening and language learning that might be important for us to hear?

To remind you, all the data will remain confidential and anonymised when made public. We have requested that we use anonymised quotes in our writing up. We hope we still have your consent to do this?

Would you like to know the outcomes of our findings when available? If so, which email address should we use?

Very best of luck in your next venture and sincere thanks again.

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2. Employer interview schedule

Project title: Co-Discovery – a student/staff collaborative evaluation of the value of Broadening within the undergraduate student journey; the case for language learning

Thank you very much for giving up your time to assist us with our project. We would really appreciate your views as we find out what employers think about 2 key aspects:

- the value of Broadening as part of the Leeds Curriculum
- the value of language learning as an element of Broadening

And also how these elements of our curriculum match your expectations as an employer in relation to the knowledge and skills you would expect graduates to be applying in the workplace

Preamble on Leeds Curriculum

- Leeds Curriculum: 3 strands – RBL, CPT and Broadening through Discovery – what it is, how it's presented to students – enabling students to widen their personal and professional horizons through exciting curricular and co-curricular opportunities in the Leeds context
- Our project - measure the effectiveness of this curriculum transformation project in developing a distinctive Leeds UG education; evaluate Broadening through the Discovery Themes – how this value is understood by students and its effect on their learning, their choices and their career aspirations; employer perceptions;

Are there any points of clarification?

Section 1: Leeds Curriculum/Broadening

1. Can you begin by introducing yourself, describing your role within your organisation and what your organisation does?
2. What would be your expectations of a graduate?
Probe: What are the knowledge, skills and attributes that you are typically looking for or value when you recruit a graduate?
Probe: When you've interviewed graduates for a job, what are the determining factors – what are you looking for?
Probe: How do you choose between two similar candidates?
Probe: Can you say why this is the case?
Probe: Which key skills or attributes are **essential** to you?
Probe: Which key skills are **desirable** though not essential?
3. From what you know, what is your view of the University of Leeds offer for UGs?
Probe: Is there anything that stands out about the curriculum that is distinctive about Leeds?
Probe: Can you expand on the value/give examples/how do you know this (of their given answer)
4. From what you know, what do you think about the concept of Broadening in an UG curriculum?
Probe/prompt: describe Discovery, pathways, co-curricular study abroad, work placement, volunteering
Probe: How important do you think it is for a student to be able to broaden academically through studying modules outside their main subject?
Probe: Is there any Broadening aspect that you particularly value? And why is that?
Prompt: Is work placement more valued than volunteering?

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5. Does Broadening help to differentiate Leeds students in a way that makes them more attractive to an employer?
6. Through the curriculum we are enabling students to take a managed risk by stepping outside their main discipline but do you agree that this is worthwhile?
Probe: Is breadth an asset – to explore other areas of learning
Probe: Are risk-taking and exploration valued attributes? (*or is it just the core discipline that you look at?*)
Prompt: Kucharvy's T-shaped professional
7. When recruiting what recruitment models do you use? And why?
Prompt: We understand that employers like Ernst & Young, Nestlé and Barclays are moving away from competency-based recruitment methods to a strengths-based model
Prompt: Are you looking for attributes such as curiosity, emotional intelligence, resilience, cultural sensitivity, appetite for risk, tolerance of ambiguity and persistence
Probe: Are graduates exhibiting these kinds of attributes? What other attributes do you value?
Probe: Should universities be doing more to encourage these attributes?
Probe: If yes, how should we as a university do this? What would you like to see?
Probe: Why would this be the case?

Section 2: The value of language skills as part of a student's degree

8. How important/necessary or useful/valuable is it for a student to have language skills as part of their degree?
Probe: Can you explain further your reasons why?
Prompt: Because of what it adds to the organisation's value/functionality/ability to develop international business relationships/student's mobility?
Probe: In what ways would a student deploy language skills in your organisation/sector?
Probe: In your experience are language skills not important and why is this?
Prompt: Not important to the organisation?
9. If you have 2 students with the same degree and a similar work/life experience, do language skills give a student a competitive edge?
Probe: If so, why is this?
10. Are some languages more valuable to your organisation than others?
Prompt: Which ones and why?
11. Is the level of fluency important?
Probe: What will the language be used for? Is a beginner's level of language sufficient?

Section 3: The value of intercultural awareness

12. We think that we are encouraging students to develop cultural sensitivity and to become global citizens - having awareness of other cultures. How important do you think it is for students to demonstrate intercultural awareness? And why/why not?
Probe: Are there any examples?

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13. Is there anything else that we should be doing at Leeds to develop this in our graduates?

14. Is there anything else you'd like to add that we didn't cover earlier?

Sincere thanks for your time and valued contribution.

Would you like to know the outcomes of our project?

If yes, what is the best email address to send a report to you?

About the authors and acknowledgements

About the authors

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