

Projects Higher Education

Theme 1: Transition from secondary to higher education: the first year experience.

Connecting, interacting and supporting. Social capital, peer network and cognitive perspectives on small group teaching.

PhD project (2013-2017)

Small group teaching can help students meet academic requirements and build a new social network (Hattie, 2009; O'Donnell, 2006)—two of the most pressing challenges that first-year students encounter when they enter higher education (Beyers & Goossens, 2002; Buote et al., 2007; Rausch & Hamilton, 2006; Wilcox, Winn, & Fyvie-Gauld, 2005). This thesis proposes that building social capital and informal peer networks are important mechanisms for effective small group teaching.

Furthermore, the formation of peer relations, which constitutes a form of social capital that can be leveraged in small group teaching settings, depends on students' prior achievement and cognitions, especially their self-efficacy, growth mindsets, and self-perceived popularity in a network. In this project the effects of learning communities on study success are investigated from different perspectives, such as social capital, academic integration and (the development of) social networks.

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Dr E.P.W.A. Jansen (co-supervisor)

Selected publications:

Brouwer, J., Jansen, E., Hofman, W., & Flache, A. (2016). Early tracking or finally leaving? Determinants of early study success in first-year university students. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*.

Brouwer, J., Jansen, E., Flache, A., & Hofman, A. (2016). The impact of social capital on self-efficacy and study success among first-year university students. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 52, 109-118. doi: 10/1016/j.lindif.2016.09.016.

Brouwer, J., Jansen, E.P.W.A., Hofman, W.H.A., & Flache, A. (2016). Een goed begin is het halve werk: Het belang van kleinschalig onderwijs voor de interactie, zelfeffectiviteit en studiesucces in het eerste semester [Well begun is half done: The importance of small group teaching for interaction, self-efficacy and study success in the first semester]. *Pedagogische Studiën*, 93(3), 119-135

Transition from secondary to higher education: which student and teacher characteristics influence students' preparation for university?

PhD project (2013 – 2017)

Despite many efforts of universities to enhance students' academic success and reduce dropout many students still encounter difficulties at university. Problems range from possessing inadequate

study skills to motivational problems due to an inadequate choice of major. These issues raise the question whether pre-university sufficiently prepares students for university. Therefore, this research project aims to map pre-university students' strengths and weaknesses regarding university preparedness, resulting in university preparedness profiles. The elements of university preparedness that will be measured and consequently make up the profile are achieving to one's potential, need for cognition, metacognition, critical thinking and conceptions of science. In a second project among teachers in upper-secondary education the question to which extent teachers pay attention to university preparation will be central. The third sub-project investigates which student characteristics, such as their preparedness profile, relate to study success in the first year.

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Dr E.P.W.A. Jansen (co-supervisor)

Selected publications:

Van Rooij, E., Jansen, E., & van de Grift, W. (2017). Secondary school students' engagement profiles and their relationship with academic adjustment and achievement in university. *Learning and Individual Differences, 54*, 9-19

Van Rooij, E.C.M., Jansen, E.P.W.A., van de Grift, W.J. C.M. (submitted) The impact of academic attitude and behaviour on secondary school students' self-efficacy in their prospective university studies.

The effectiveness of intensive exposure programmes in EFL classes in relation to transition and study success in higher education

(2013 – 2017)

In this project, nine schools for pre-university education that offer an intensive exposure programme for English participated. Students were followed from year 4 up to and including year 6. Some students volunteered to be surveyed during their career in higher education.

Data about curriculum, teaching and programme contents have been gathered by surveying and/or interviewing coordinators and teachers participating in the programme. Students in both the intensive English exposure classes as well as parallel regular English classes filled out questionnaires measuring their motivation, study behaviour, need for cognition and attitude towards homework. Furthermore, they were tested on the Meara vocabulary twice, and made three writing assignments, one in subsequent schoolyear.

Contact: [Janneke Sierksma](#)

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Theme 2: Interactive engagement: the role of lecturer-student interaction, learning environment and curriculum organization in student careers.

The quality of teaching in Higher Education

PhD project (2015-2019)

This PhD project focuses on the development and validation of an observation instrument aiming at the registration of quality of lecturers in higher education. Through valid and reliable registration of teaching quality in higher education we can monitor, evaluate and further enhance lecturer quality. The main research question is: which indicators of the existing ICALT-instrument need to be adapted, removed or added in order to be able to use this (new) instrument in judging the pedagogical and didactical quality of teacher behavior in academic oriented higher education?

Contact: [Ine Noben](#)

Researchers: Ine Noben (PhD candidate)
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Research into Honours College's alumni and employers of alumni
(2016)

In this project alumni of the Groningen Honours College bachelor's and master's alumni will be surveyed and interviewed regarding their experiences in the Honours College and the perceived benefits of the honours programme in their career. Also employers will be surveyed about their knowledge of the honours programme and about the extent to which a honours certificate is beneficial for candidates when they apply for a position. This project is built on several evaluation projects within the Groningen Honours College.

Contact: Erwin Landman

Researchers : Erwin Landman MSc
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Selected publications:

Landman, W., Jansen, E. P. W. A., & Suhre, C. J. M. (2016). Meerwaarde van het HC Bachelortraject.
Landman, W., Jansen, E. P. W. A., & Suhre, C. J. M. (2017). Meerwaarde van het HC Mastertraject.

The added value of interdisciplinary excellence tracks in higher education

PhD-project (2016 – 2021)

Interdisciplinary excellence tracks, such as the honors programs of the University of Groningen, offer talented and motivated students the opportunity to broaden and deepen their knowledge within and outside of their own discipline. Such excellence programs become increasingly popular in The Netherlands and receive financial support by the government. While evaluations of these programs tend to be positive, no scientific research has been conducted yet to measure whether the learning goals that honours education focusses on are actually met by the students. To do this, longitudinal measurements of the development of knowledge and competencies of honours students will be adopted in this research project. This project aims to add to the current knowledge base concerning the effectiveness of honors programs by investigating what factors contribute to honors students' academic and motivational development

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Selected publications:

Jansen, E. P. W. A., & Suhre, C. J. M. (2015). Factors influencing students' perceptions of graduate attribute acquisition in a multidisciplinary honours track in a Dutch university. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 34(6), 1138-1152. 10.1080/07294360.2015.1024626

Supervision and emotion development during writing the master thesis (Faculty of Spatial Sciences)
(2015-2017)

In 2015/2016 students in the research master at the faculty of Spatial Sciences have the opportunity to choose either one of two options for their master's thesis: a) a traditional master thesis like a report or b) a first draft of a scientific article that possibly can be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal. Students in this new design of the thesis programme and their supervisors will be followed during the thesis process. Students fill out diaries in which they can score their emotions and explain what happened during a week in the thesis process. Supervisors will be interviewed. Next year a comparison will be made between students in the regular master and students in the research master.

Contact: [Ellen Jansen](#)

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Dr L. Meijering (Spatial Sciences)

Primary school teachers' pedagogical behaviours and innovation.
PhD project (2015 – 2019)

Due to recent developments and innovations in primary education aimed at enhancing learning outcomes and didactic knowledge of teachers, the pedagogical part of teaching, which concerns aspects such as students' personal development and classroom climate, seem to be under pressure. This study aims to explore the educational perceptions, beliefs and performances of Dutch primary school teachers in the current decade and examines how teacher education programs can help teachers to develop their professional pedagogical behaviours.

In the first part of this study teachers will be surveyed and interviewed regarding their beliefs, perceptions and professional needs. The second study focuses on the quality of teaching and the relationship between the pedagogical and didactic part in teachers' behaviours in the classroom. The quality of teaching is measured by observations of both teachers and students. On the basis of these results, teachers will be selected for a work-related intervention in order to enhance the level of educational performance and improving teacher education programs.

Contact: [Michelle Gemmink](#)

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Secondary teacher training in classroom management

PhD project (2014 – 2018)

Many teachers experience problems with classroom management when they start their professional career. Because students have been trained in a four-year programme among others in classroom management this seems rather odd. That is the rationale for this project in which the first challenge is to come up with a definition of the concept of classroom management. In a second study 150 first-year students are surveyed about their conceptions of classroom management. Furthermore, observations of student teachers and analysis of different teacher training programmes on this subject make part of this project.

Contact: [Bruno Oldeboom](#)

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The contribution of practitioner research in teacher education to the professional development of student teachers

PhD project (2014 – 2018)

This research regards practitioner research by student teachers for primary schools. The purpose is to gain knowledge about how to design a curriculum in which practitioner research is most meaningful for the professional development of student teachers. The main research question of this doctorate is:

What is the contribution of practitioner research to the professional development of student teachers in primary education?

The first part of the PhD- research focused on the relationship between the quality of teaching and the quality of research conducted by student teachers. In this study the quality of teaching is measured by observations with the ICALT-instrument¹ as well as marks of assessments by mentors and teacher educators about autonomous practice in the last year of teacher education. The quality of research is measured by marks on final research reports and presentations. The perception of students and teacher educators about the value of practitioner research is established with a questionnaire.

In the second study, the impact of a research learning program in the new curriculum of the school of education of Stenden University is going to be evaluated. In the old curriculum research was just placed in the last part of teacher education, while in the new curriculum practitioner research is introduced in the first year and is integrated in different subjects and tasks. Research skills are trained during four years. Besides the same methods as used in the first study, in this second study a checklist 'Inquiry-as-stance in practice' is developed and used to operationalize the factor 'investigative attitude'.

In the third and fourth study practitioner research in different national as well as international curricula for teacher education is going to be compared.

Contact: [Lidewij van Katwijk](#)

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Assessment and self-selection for the teacher education programme (Teacher Selector Tool)
(2016 – 2018)

In this project in collaboration with the Melbourne Graduate School of Education (University of Melbourne) the Teacher Selector Tool is used as an assessment before or at the very start of the teacher education programme. The project aims at determining the predictive value of (the different aspects) of the tool and how these information can be used by the students and teachers in the programme.

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¹ The ICALT is an observation instrument developed for the International Comparative Analysis of Learning and Teaching project (ICALT). This instrument was tested for its reliability and validity in England, Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands (Van de Grift, 2007).

Teacher motivation

(2009-)

Until now, many studies have investigated student motivation and its relation to academic outcomes. Much less is known about teacher motivation and its relation to, for example, teaching behaviour and learning outcomes. Studies have shown that teacher motivation is not always optimal. Teachers indicate lower levels of motivation and stress than other professionals. Furthermore, teacher motivation influences learning processes and outcomes. Thus more information on teacher motivation and its relationships with processes and outcomes are needed. This project has the following aims:

- 1) to define the most important concepts and instruments that are used in research on teacher motivation,
- 2) to describe teacher motivation and relations with learning processes and learning and teacher outcomes for teachers in secondary and higher education,
- 3) to design, implement and evaluate interventions that focus on enhancing teacher motivation

Contact: [Marjon Fokkens-Bruinsma](#)

Researchers: Dr M. Fokkens-Bruinsma
Dr E.T. Canrinus (University of Oslo)

Selected publications:

Bruinsma, M. & Jansen, E.P.W.A. (2010). Is the Motivation to Become a Teacher Related to Preservice Teachers' Intentions to Remain in the Profession? *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 33, (2) 185 - 200.

Canrinus, E.T., & Fokkens-Bruinsma, M. (2014). Changes in student teachers' motives and the meaning of teacher education programme quality. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 37, 262-278. DOI: 10.1080/02619768.2013.845162

Fokkens-Bruinsma, M., & Canrinus, E.T. (2012). Adaptive and maladaptive motives to become a teacher. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 38, 3-19.

Fokkens-Bruinsma, M., & Canrinus, T. (2012). The Factors Influencing Teaching (FIT)-Choice scale in a Dutch teacher education programme. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*. 40(3), 249-269.

How teachers enhance learning strategies and motivation: the psychological-pedagogical competence and its relationship with classroom goal structures.

Learning strategies and motivation are important to academic outcomes, but how can we enhance these learning strategies and motivation? Research into classroom goal structures has shown that teachers can design their teaching in such a way that it enhances students use of learning strategies and their motivation. Teachers can achieve this optimal motivating learning climate by focusing on learning goals, goals that emphasize developing one's own knowledge and abilities. In contrast, in classroom climates that focus on performance goals, social comparison and competition is

emphasized. In practice teachers find it hard to design an optimal motivating learning climate. Especially since the competence needed to achieve this, the psychological-pedagogical competence, requires more complex teaching behaviours such as activating and differentiation. This study assumes that teachers who are motivated and score high on the psychological-pedagogical competence are better able to create a learning goals oriented classroom and thus enhance students learning strategy use and their motivation. This study aims to:

1. Gain more insight in the concepts of psychological-pedagogical competence and optimal motivational learning climates and their mutual relationships.
2. Describe teachers' psychological-pedagogical competence and its relationship with learning climates for secondary school teachers and higher education teachers.
3. Describe how we can help (student) teachers develop their the psychological-pedagogical competence and thus enhance students learning strategies and motivation.

Contact: [Marjon Fokkens-Bruinsma](#)

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Dr R. Maulana
Dr E.P.W.A. Jansen

Who influences student teachers' learning and performance?
(2013-2016)

In study 1 we followed the 2012 cohort to see which factors influence student teachers' learning and performance. Information is gathered at the beginning of the introductory course, the end of the introductory course (after five months) and at the end of the education master's programme. With surveys students are among other things questioned on their beliefs about learning and teaching, perceived teaching self-efficacy, the support from teachers, mentors and tutors, and perceived chance to get a job in the teaching profession. Also the school mentors received a questionnaire about their beliefs and perceived self-efficacy. For all students achievement data were available from the student administration. Results reveal that students have about an equally strong subject-matter and student-oriented belief, where significant changes are visible in the development of student-oriented view, but not for the subject-matter orientation. Teacher students showed higher scores on student-orientation than their mentors. The ultimate grade for the introductory course correlates significantly with the other grades students received for following subjects in the degree programme. The school experiences and mentor are much more influential than experiences in the university based subjects and support. Study 2 is following the cohort that started the teacher education programme in 2014.

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Researchers : Dr E .P.W.A. Jansen
Dr S. de Vries
Dr M. Fokkens- Bruinsma
Dr C.J.M. Suhre

Theme 3: ICT in higher education: the impact of virtual learning environments, technologically-enhanced teaching methods, online-learning on teacher roles and student performance.

Effects of flipped classroom on students' achievement (Faculty of Law)

(2015-2016)

There have been several projects related to study success in the faculty of Law. The latest project regard the flipped classroom. To improve students' understanding and application of course content many teachers in higher education experiment with flipped classroom approaches. In this project we study students' experiences with the use of a flipped classroom approach in a course on European Law. In this course students are expected to watch short introductory video's on legal issues, read texts and complete a diagnostic quiz before visiting lectures. Teachers use these quiz results to decide which topics need further clarification during lectures before they evoke discussions about learned material. Subsequently students participate in working groups where they face the task of designing solutions to resolve conflicts resulting from European directives or to take advantage EU legislation. In this project electronically stored data as well as questionnaire data are used to study the impact of using the flipped classroom approach on students' study behavior and examination participation and performance for different groups of law students.

Contact: [Cor Suhre](#)

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Dr E.P.W.A. Jansen
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prof. mr. dr. H.H.B. Vedder (Law)
C. Vermue MSC (ESI)
Drs. G.J. Verheij (ESI)

Selected publications:

Suhre, C.J.M. , Jansen, E.P.W.A. & Torenbeek M. (2013) Determinants of timely completion: The impact of bachelor degree programme characteristics and students' motivation on study progress. Higher Education Research and Development, 32(3) 479 – 492. DOI:10.1080/07294360.2012.684374

Jansen, E.P.W.A. & Suhre, C.J.M. (2010) The effect of secondary school study skills preparation on first-year university achievement. Educational Studies, 1-12.

Suhre, C.J.M., Jansen, E.P.W.A., Harskamp, E.G. (2007). Impact of degree program satisfaction on the persistence of college students. Higher Education, 54 (2), pp. 207 - 226 . DOI: 10.1007/s10734-005-2376-5.

Theme 4: The role of institutional contexts in higher education: the impact of leadership and governance, 'freedom of choice', faculty/university policies, quality assurance arrangements and ranking systems on the quality of education.

University workforce diversity and representativeness and its effect on the performance of ethnic and gender minority faculty

PhD project (2015 – 2019)

In Kenya, representation of the nation's diverse communities in public establishments and service is a legal requirement. It is against the law for a public establishment to have a workforce with more than one third of its members drawn from the same ethnic community; and, for more than two-thirds of the workforce to be of the same gender (GoK, 2010). However, in a study conducted in 2012 on ethnic diversity in public universities, the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) reported that 81% of the workforce was drawn from the top five ethnic communities which make up only 66% of the national population (NCIC, 2012). The purported over-representation of dominant ethnic groups is against the principles of diversity and equal opportunity in employment that are clearly articulated in the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, and in various Acts of Parliament, policy documents and strategy documents.

Key research question:

Does workforce diversity in universities, influenced by diversity management practices and perception of employment, have a significant effect on academic output and enhance the performance of ethnic and gender minorities?

Specific research questions:

1. To what extent does the workforce in universities reflect the ethnic and gender diversity of the relevant population, and what university factors have a significant effect on workforce diversity?
2. Is there a correlation between the proportions of ethnic and gender minorities in the university workforce and their proportions in structural positions within the university structure; and does it have any effect on their perception of diversity?
3. To what extent are the diversity management practices, influenced by the perception of employment equity, associated with workforce diversity and the proportion of ethnic and gender minorities in the workforce?
4. Is there any relationship between the demographic proportion of ethnic and gender minority faculty in the workforce and their output in terms of research and publication, graduate supervision and community engagement?

Contact: [Lynette Kisaka](#)

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Dr E.P.W.A. Jansen (co-supervisor)

Determinants of Graduate Employability in Kenya: A Stakeholder Perspective

PhD project (2015 – 2019)

Employability is the propensity of graduates to secure a job and progress in their career. It is not just about getting a job; it is about developing attributes, techniques, or experience for life (Harvey, 2005:13). It is a wide range of attributes and competencies that enable job seekers to gain and maintain employment (UNESCO 2012). There is need for a study to explore determinants of graduate employability in Kenya.

The main research question of this project reads “What are the factors that contribute to graduate employability in Kenya, from the perspective of employers, graduates and the universities themselves being the key stakeholders in university education”, with the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent have universities adopted strategies that address graduate employability?
- 2) To what extent are employers involved in addressing graduate employability?
- 3) To what extent does work-based Learning (internship and work placement) influence graduates employability?
- 4) To what extent do life skills determine graduate employability?
- 5) To what extent does innovation and entrepreneurship training promote graduate employability?
- 6) How does university/employers partnership enhance graduate employability?

Contact: [Elizabeth Onyango](#)

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Dr J. Kamphorst (co-supervisor)

Impact of Work Experience on Undergraduate Students in Kenyan Universities

PhD-project (2015- 2019)

This study is concerned with the impact of work experience on the performance of undergraduate students in Kenyan universities. Kenya has in the last two decades experienced rapid growth in university education in terms of the number of degree awarding institutions and the population of registered students. This has led to funding constraints, lack of adequate and suitable facilities and insufficient competently trained and experienced human resource; which have made managing the diverse and large student population tricky.

The study is expected to: develop a framework for recognising students’ work experience in Kenya, provide intervening mechanisms to enhance the success of working students in their studies, make useful conclusions to inform policy formulation and implementation, and give directions for further research.

Contact: [Gilbert Opanga](#)

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Dr E.P.W.A. Jansen (co-supervisor)

Theme 5: Internationalization of and in Higher Education.

Internationalisation of and in Higher Education

(2007 -)

This is one of the spearheads of the University of Groningen strategic plan 2015-2020. The new strategic plan of the University of Groningen (2015-2020) strongly addresses the impact of globalisation in terms of the changing labour market, increased mobility of students and staff, diversification in the classroom, the use of advanced ICT tools and, consequently, the high strategic relevance of internationalisation in higher education. The university has the strong ambition to become a “truly international university” with an excellent reputation and a distinctive research and teaching profile worldwide. In teaching, this requires internationalisation of the curriculum, implementing innovative concepts in an integrated approach, including the flipped classroom, learning communities, employability, and the international classroom. These concepts are connected through an active learning philosophy, group binding and purposeful interaction (RUG Strategic Plan, September 2015).

Projects in this field regard international cooperation in comparative research, research in international programmes delivered at the university of Groningen, research of international PhD students.

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Dr E.P.W.A. Jansen
Dr C.J.M Suhre
Dr J. van der Meer (University of Otago)

Selected publications:

Jansen, E., Suhre, C., & André, S. (2017). Transition to an international degree programme: preparedness, first-year experiences and study success of students from different nationalities. In: Eva Kyndt, Vincent Donche, Keith Trigwell, & Sari Lindblom-Ylänne (eds.) *Higher Education Transitions: Theory and Research*. Routledge

Jansen, E. , André, S., & Suhre, C. (2013) Readiness and Expectations Questionnaire: a cross-cultural measurement instrument for first-year university students? *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability* 25 (2) 115 – 130. Doi: 10.1007/s11092-013-9161-2.

Jansen, E.P.W.A. & Van der Meer, J. (2012) Ready for university? A cross national study on students' perceived preparedness for university. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 39(1), 1 -16. doi 10.1007/s13384-011-0044-6

Jansen, E.P.W.A. & Suhre, C.J.M. (2011) Preparedness, first-year experiences and outcomes: A comparison between students in domestic and international degree programmes in a Dutch university. In: *Higher Education on the Edge, refereed proceedings of the 33rd HERDSA Annual conference*.

Suhre, C. & Jansen, E. (2007) *Crossing the border. Internationalization of Dutch Higher Education*. Project commissioned by the Higher education and research partnership organisation for network services and ICT in the Netherlands.

Jansen, E.P.W.A., Suhre, C. and Bruinsma, M. (2007) Crossing the border: Internationalization and student mobility in Dutch Higher Education. In: *Enhancing higher education theory and scholarship, refereed proceedings of the 30th HERDSA Annual conference*, pp.265 - 274.

Factors that promote effectiveness of intercultural group work in a higher education setting
PhD project (2016 – 2020)

In an increasingly globalizing world, an international and intercultural learning environment is becoming a reality for many higher education students and teachers. Intercultural group work is considered an effective way to prepare students to participate in this world by teaching them intercultural collaboration skills. It also can deepen their learning as exposure to diverse experiences and engaging with different perspectives will shape their thinking. However, the presence of multiple cultures does not automatically lead to intercultural collaboration. Working in a multicultural group can cause misunderstanding and frustration due to different communication styles and study habits. When given a choice students tend to choose to work with same culture peers and withdraw from intercultural interaction. Previous research proposes several factors that might explain this reluctance to engage in intercultural group work. Relevant student characteristics that emerge from the literature are language proficiency and intercultural competence, previous experiences with intercultural collaboration, and motivation. Factors in the learning environment that seem to promote students' engagement in intercultural group work are conditions for effective group work in general, group formation and composition, and preparation for and guidance during intercultural group work. This research project aims to provide further insight into the role of these student characteristics and factors in the learning environment, and the extent to which they contribute to students' active and effective engagement in intercultural group work. Interventions with the purpose of influencing the main contributors to students' active and effective engagement will be designed and implemented. Based on the results and effectiveness of these interventions, recommendations for educators and curriculum design in higher education will be formulated.

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