Virtual Mobility Phenomenon

Educational Perspective

Margarita Teresevičienė, Airina Volungevičienė and Estela Daukšienė

CONTENTS

Theoretical Background of Virtual Mobility Concept .......................................................... 797
Virtual Mobility Concept ...................................................................................................... 797
Characteristics, Components, and Activities of Virtual Mobility ........................................ 799
Virtual Mobility Case and Its Organization Peculiarities ...................................................... 801
Virtual Mobility Competencies Improved During VLHE Module ........................................ 802
Participants’ Attitude and Virtual Mobility Recognition ...................................................... 805
  Attitude toward Virtual Mobility ....................................................................................... 805
  Virtual Mobility Recognition ............................................................................................ 806
Conclusions ........................................................................................................................ 807
References .......................................................................................................................... 808

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF VIRTUAL MOBILITY CONCEPT

Virtual mobility (further VM) is rather a new phenomenon and has been influenced by the development of ICT very much. Therefore, we start our research from the theoretical background analysis of the concept in order to identify its characteristic features and to define the virtual mobility concept from an educational perspective.

The “virtual mobility” concept is usually referred to as either mobility or technology-enhanced (sometimes referred to as virtual) learning. Although there have been very different approaches to the concept discussed, here we briefly describe these approaches in the chronological order, however, focusing only on the educational approach of the phenomenon.

VIRTUAL MOBILITY CONCEPT

The first notions on virtual mobility are indicated in the last decades of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st in some research papers (Bunt-Kokhuis 1996, 2001) and project result reports (Humanities project report 1995), (Spot+ project team 2001). S. Van de Bunt-Kokhuis (1996, 2001) creates a rather interesting although specific definition of VM in which it is described as “the collaborative communication between a faculty member and his/her counterpart(s) mediated by a computer. More often, these meetings will be interactive and take place across national borders and across time zones.”

In the HUMANITIES project (1995), the concept of virtual mobility is considered to be “effective networking” whereas the “Spot plus” project team (2001) widens the understanding of this concept and brings in two forms of mobility: physical and virtual. Virtual mobility is defined in this project outcome as a situation within a university that implies a “possibility to attend classes, seminars, and other events held in a place located anywhere in the world; the possibility to access
reference materials and contents at a distance by using ICT–based solutions; the possibility to communicate with other people located anywhere” (Spot+ project team 2001, p. 10). The idea of virtual mobility as a “hybrid model” in which a distance-learning module is introduced into normal curricula can be recognized here. The training material also indicates that “virtual mobility includes all forms that are communication intensive and run at international level” (Spot+ project team 2001, p. 12). “Virtual Erasmus student” training material, referring to the Humanities project, specifies that virtual mobility is constituted of the following elements:

- Transnational lectures and/or learning materials
- Cross-border recruitment of students
- Intensity of communication flows
- International accreditation of achievements
- Multilingualism
- Complementarity between virtual mobility activities, traditional lectures, and physical mobility
- International recognition and accreditation of study achievements (Spot+ project team 2001)

To sum up, the above descriptions of virtual mobility elements suggested that in 1994–2001 virtual mobility concepts covered formal and informal education activities with the main focus on communication and collaboration, using different resources that were not location dependent.

A different kind of approach to virtual mobility was introduced by J. Silvio (2003), who distinguished three types of space—geographic, social, and virtual—and described virtual mobility as a new phenomenon. He indicated virtual mobility as a movement “from one place to another in a new space called virtual space ... enabled by computer-mediated communication” (Silvio 2003). Supporting the French philosopher Pierre Levy’s ideas, Silvio (2003) suggested that “virtual is not opposed to the real.” Explaining the basis of the virtual reality term and ideas that a language, online course, or the whole university campus can be represented by digital numbers, the author used M. Dertouzos’ words to define the main principles of the virtualization process and computer-mediated communication. Thus using the mentioned concepts and taking Dertouzos’ “pillars” into account, J. Silvio defined virtual mobility as a representation of physical mobility taking place in a virtual space, implying no movement of persons in a geographic space, in which “information and the objects represented by them ‘move’ electronically from the computer center of one university or enterprise to another located in different places in the geographic space” and drew a conclusion that “virtual mobility is mobility of ‘bits’ instead of ‘atoms’” (Silvio 2003). Similarly to Silvio (2003), Vilhelmsen and Thulin (2005) defined virtual mobility as “physical transportation and face-to-face contacts, replaced, complemented, or even generated by virtual ones.”

As virtual mobility started to be included in the agenda of more and more political documents, project activities, or education-related conferences, more of the different virtual mobility aspects and characteristics appeared in the concept definitions. Schreurs et al. (2006) stressed that “virtual student exchange allows collaboration with foreign students and teachers that are no longer location dependent. The exchange might range from a single course to a full academic year. Through Virtual Mobility a university can also offer international experience for students and staff through an international discussion group, an international seminar, an international learning community with regard to a theme of a course or a cluster of courses.”

A more full-scale interpretation, which included an intercultural aspect and the reference to education, was provided in the Best-Practice Manual on Blended Mobility (Op de Beeck et al. 2008) in which the authors consider virtual mobility to be “a form of learning which consists of virtual components through an ICT supported learning environment that includes cross-border collaboration with people from different backgrounds and cultures working and studying together, having, as its main purpose, the enhancement of intercultural understanding and the exchange of knowledge.”
A very diverse approach of VM, in which its reference to physical mobility was presented, can be found in the Glossary of the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007–2013. Virtual mobility is characterized here as “a complement; or as a substitute to physical mobility (Erasmus or similar) in addition to a type of independent mobility which builds on the specific potentials of on-line learning and network communication. It may prepare and extend physical mobility, and/or offer new opportunities for students/academic staff who are unwilling or unable to take advantage of physical mobility. It involves the development of virtual mobility for academic staff. It means that full academic recognition is given to the students for studies and courses based on agreements for the evaluation, validation and recognition of the acquired competences via virtual mobility. In this context, cooperation agreements are the key to ensuring sustainable mobility schemes” (EC Glossary on the LLP 2007–2013, 2007).

In late autumn 2009, the Teacher virtual campus: Research, Practise, Apply (TeaCamp 2009–2011) project launched its analysis on the existing virtual mobility practices in the six consortium countries. One of the problems with the identification of the existing virtual mobility practices indicated in the analysis results was a “diversified definition of virtual mobility” (Dauksiene et al. 2010). Thus, as the processes of the European youth and academic mobility policy and higher education modernization facilitated virtual mobility, it became emphasized, used, and discussed in various research papers; however, common agreement of the virtual mobility concept had not been crystallized out.

To sum up, the following characteristics of virtual mobility can be distinguished on the basis of the above mentioned publications: cooperation of universities as well as students and teachers and international study experience with the stress on cultural aspects, recognition possibilities, and different kinds of activities that may lead to physical mobility or exist separately as virtual exchange or virtual mobility. As the concept of virtual mobility is only being implied and changing, it will be referred to and described here indicating the characteristics and activities it may include.

**Characteristics, Components, and Activities of Virtual Mobility**

Different research studies and papers pointed out a lot of different characteristics of virtual mobility. In 2010, the TeaCamp project consortium indicated virtual mobility in higher education concept as an activity or a form of learning, research, and communication and collaboration, based on the following characteristics:

- Cooperation of at least two higher education institutions
- Virtual components through an ICT–supported learning environment
- Collaboration of people from different backgrounds and cultures working and studying together, creating a virtual community
- Having a clear goal and clearly defined learning outcomes
- Having, as its main purpose, the exchange of knowledge and improvement of intercultural competences
- As a result of which the participants may obtain ECTS credits and/or its academic recognition will be assumed by the home university
- Providing visibility of university in higher education area, capitalization of educational process
- Leading to the integration of ICT into their mainstreaming in academic and business processes (here from Tereseviciene et al. 2011)

About at the same time, in September 2010, the Movinter project white paper “In praise of Virtual Mobility: How ICT Can Support Institutional Cooperation and Internationalization of Curricula in Higher Education” (Dondi and Salandin 2010) stressed the need to reformulate the existing virtual mobility concept while assessing the possibilities created by virtual mobility. They also mentioned
that the virtual mobility concept is often misconceived with distance learning or education and
e-learning; however, “e-learning and distance education do not necessarily imply internationali-
zation of learning/knowledge, intercultural dialogue and cross-border academic cooperation ... which
are, in turn, the major VM drivers” (Dondi and Salandin 2010). Discussing the benefits and poss-
sibilities created by virtual mobility they also identified 10 major virtual mobility descriptive ele-
ments and called them VM components (here from Montes et al. 2012):

1. International student groups
2. Interactivity and communication between students of different countries through ICT
3. International teaching groups
4. Multicultural exchange
5. Use of appropriate technological solutions
6. Joint choice of the subject to be studied through VM
7. Joint curricula design
8. Joint production of learning resources
9. Joint titles
10. Mutual confidence relationships

The indicated VM components are rather broad; notwithstanding that they may exist in differ-
ent backgrounds via various models and include from some to all of the mentioned 10 components.
However, “regardless of the learning format and the involved VM components, three key-elements
are essential to design an internationalization strategy” for a successful virtual mobility. These
key elements are interculturality, all partners’ participation, and strong communication aptitude
(Montes et al. 2012).

To be more precise and to better represent the possible virtual mobility organization ideas as well
as the understanding of the phenomenon in higher education, the main activities of virtual mobil-
ity will be briefly discussed here. Referring to virtual mobility types indicated by H. Bijnens and
I. O. de Beeck (2006) or the categorization of VM activities presented by different authors (such as
Silvio 2003; Pigliapolo and Bogliolo 2007; or others), the broadest categorization of virtual mobil-
ity activities was presented in the “European Cooperation in Education through Virtual Mobility”
(Bijnens et al. 2006), in which VM activities are characterized:

• By their degree of virtualization
• By the technologies used for the activities
• By the teaching and/or learning scenarios
• Based on the circumstances in which the virtual mobility activity takes place

This categorization provides possibilities for different authors to specify VM from different
perspectives. As the paper analyzes VM phenomenon from the educational perspective, virtual
mobility activities discussed here refer to the ones based on the circumstances in which virtual
mobility activity takes place. The typology of virtual mobility activities, following the “European
Cooperation in Education through Virtual Mobility” (Bijnens et al. 2006), is described in the fol-
lowing way:

1. A virtual course (as part of a program) or seminar (series)
2. A virtual study program
3. Virtual student placements
4. Virtual support activities to physical exchange

The first three activities of virtual mobility may be taken as a complement or as a substitute to
physical mobility, and the last type of activities are set as a complement to physical mobility. The
The presented categorization lacks one more factor or characteristic of virtual mobility that can be noted here: a virtual study course(s) or a program can be designed and/or provided for students by more than one host university, which is not usually possible in a physical mobility case. This way, the students from different institutions can attend the course(s)/seminar/program studying and working collaboratively in a more diverse international group, gaining experience in dealing with cultural differences and opinions from more than one cultural background. This kind of virtual mobility was organized and implemented in the TeaCamp project and will be explored and analyzed in more detail in discussing the participants’ attitudes, skills, and competencies acquired during virtual mobility as well as virtual mobility recognition possibilities.

**VIRTUAL MOBILITY CASE AND ITS ORGANIZATION PECULARITIES**

The LLP Erasmus program project TeaCamp (Teacher Virtual Campus: Research, Practice, Apply) team, aiming to increase virtual mobility among academic staff, prepared an inter-university study module, realized via virtual mobility activities, and performed research in order to identify competencies acquired by students during virtual mobility studies, attitudes, and recognition possibilities of the participating academic staff. The virtual mobility case represented and analyzed in this paper is based on the preparation, delivery, and organization of the virtual mobility module “Virtual Learning in Higher Education.” The research was implemented in three diagnostic surveys carried out at the beginning and the end of the module.

The module was prepared by an inter-university team of 13 teachers and implemented as a study module in the 2010 autumn semester at six partner institutions. The aim of the Virtual Learning in Higher Education (further VLHE) module was to enable students to plan and experience virtual mobility sessions by practicing video lecture participation, performing group and individual online activities, and using and sharing virtual resources in a multicultural virtual learning environment.

The module preparation was organized online as well as in international group discussions at face-to-face and virtual meetings in April–September, 2010. Twelve learning outcomes were developed for students to be acquired during this course, and six sub-modules, during which these learning outcomes were to be reached and virtual mobility competencies were to be improved, were elaborated. The course curriculum was developed using the Moodle virtual learning environment. Each sub-module contained compulsory readings, group or individual assignments, recommended resources, sub-module guidelines, and discussion forums.

The module delivery was organized in September–December, 2010. There were 29 learning participants (further on the students) and 13 teachers attending the module. They all were from the following higher education institutions: University of Aveiro (Portugal), Jyväskylä University (Finland), UNIOVI – University of Oviedo (Spain), Jagiellonian University (Poland), BETI (represented by the students from Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania), and Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania) and interacting within preset international student groups (see Figure 70.1 for the module delivery design).

The module delivery was organized in synchronous and asynchronous ways. There were 13 virtual synchronous meetings (video conference sessions) organized at the mentioned institutions each Friday from September to December, 2010. So the students staying at their home university participated in the virtual lectures, delivered by professors from various universities (depending on the sub-module), during which sub-module assignments were described, various unclear issues discussed and clarified, and feedback on the performed assignments provided. During the week, student learning was organized in VLE Moodle, in which all study materials and assignments were uploaded and discussion forums and consultations were organized. All video conference sessions were recorded and uploaded in VLE for the students who could not participate in the video conference to be revised.

The research was implemented in August, 2010, through February, 2011, in three stages: preparation of research instruments, implementation of the research, and analysis of the research data.
There were three types of questionnaires prepared and presented for the module “Virtual Learning in Higher Education” (VLHE) participants. The first online questionnaire, “A pre-session diagnostic survey,” was aimed at the identification of students’ achievements, referring to the module learning outcomes, and targeted to be improved at the module and had 29 respondents—module students. The second questionnaire, “A post-session diagnostic survey of students,” was performed in order to identify students’ achievements, competencies, attitudes, and recognition possibilities and was responded to by 23 respondents—module students. The third questionnaire, “A post-session diagnostic survey of teachers,” was performed to support the VM organization peculiarities and compare teacher and students’ VM competencies, attitudes, and indicated recognition possibilities. It had 13 respondents—module teachers.

**VIRTUAL MOBILITY COMPETENCIES IMPROVED DURING VLHE MODULE**

The virtual mobility module “Virtual Learning in Higher Education” was prepared and realized in order to improve certain competencies of the participating students—referred to as module learning outcomes—and virtual mobility competencies that were specified as the English language competency, ICT competency, intercultural communication, and personal and social competencies.

The data analysis of the pre-session diagnostic survey shows that before starting attending the module students felt most comfortable with information analysis and evaluation ($N = 29$, only one student indicated minimal level achievements). The learning outcome of knowing different technological resources for collaborative online learning was also self-assessed by the students to be at least at a minimal level. The students felt themselves to be most professional in understanding the skills needed to facilitate and manage collaborative online learning (11 students out of the total number of 29) and comparing learning styles and learning strategies (nine students, $N = 29$, stated that they had achieved this learning outcome).

After the module (see Figure 70.2), analyzing the achievement of the learning outcomes self-assessed by the module students ($N = 23$), it was evident that only one student indicated that he or she had not achieved at least a minimal level of one learning outcome. All the other learning outcomes had been achieved by all the participants at least at a minimal level. Comparing the learning outcome achievement of students before ($N = 29$) and after ($N = 23$) the module, improvements in all indicated course learning outcomes were found.
Virtual mobility competencies, improved by the students after the module, were indicated during the second stage of the research in "A post-session diagnostic survey." Virtual mobility competence was suggested to be formed of intercultural communication, ICT, foreign language (English being the case in the module), and personal and social (such as being structured and self-organized, keeping time and meeting deadlines, respect for others, working in groups, etc.) competencies. All the respondents \( (N = 23) \) admitted that their competence improved at least minimally as almost all \( (N = 20–22) \) assessed their competence improvement at a satisfactory level. Virtual mobility competence improvements in detail are shown in Figure 70.3.

"A post-session diagnostic survey" also asked the students to add any additional competencies or skills that had been improved during virtual mobility studies. There were very different outcomes indicated, such as "profession-related competence" or "data gathering," "working late nights and..."
weekends,” etc. Some of them stressed more specific skills or competencies that might be related to the above-mentioned ones and which comprise a general virtual mobility competence:

- Intercultural communication competence: “international communication,” “communication skills with people from other countries, cultures…”
- Personal and social competence: “tolerance,” “patience,” “I can organize my time schedule of studies better than earlier”
- ICT competence: “information literacy competence,” “virtual communication skills,” or “skills related to the evaluation of information (information literacy)” or a broader approach was suggested—the combination of ICT and learning (individual and in group) was indicated by the following achievements: “learning to work cooperatively in a virtual environment,” “one or two new programs,” “use different tools for group work.” The “international group work” and “collaborative work competence” as well as “experience in working in an international group” or “group working and encouraging members of my group to common work” were also stressed.

Other respondents specified the achievements related to module learning outcomes, such as “more defined understanding of my learning strategies” or “competence related with ... learning strategies and methods.” Others indicated a broader approach with “some difference between cultures and learning styles,” “new viewpoints of cultural differences in studying,” or, in general, “a skill to analyze learning outcomes/recourses was improved.”

Most of the students had a positive approach and valued their participation: “We all wanted to reach the same goals; we could feel the spirit and support from the national group” or “I am happy that I participated although it was not always easy. I have many positive feelings about the course. I think it was a valuable experience; I better understand virtual mobility and appreciate this form of learning. I see many possibilities of creating such courses in my field of studies, on a national or international level…” One of the students noted his or her personal discovery while participating in the module: “I realized that communication face to face is very important because when humans are communicating online, it is difficult sometimes.”

The teachers’ virtual mobility competencies were indicated in a “post-session diagnostic survey of teachers.” During the survey, teachers were asked to assess if planning, delivering, and organizing this course improved their virtual mobility competences. All of them (N = 13) marked that intercultural communication and personal and social competence were at least minimally improved. However, one of the teachers admitted having not improved his or her e-competence at all, and two of them had not improved their English language competence at all. The assumption for the lack of improvement might be attributed to a short time of partner institution responsibility for sub-module delivery, which took only two weeks. That is rather a short time, especially having in mind that more than one teacher were responsible for five out of six sub-modules. For a more detailed illustration of teachers’ virtual mobility competence improvement see Figure 70.4.

Among any additional competencies that had been improved by the teachers “curriculum development and course design,” “teaching competence concerning evaluation of e-learning or VM courses, e-assessment, or ICT tools usage,” and “planning and promoting of learning in virtual environment” were indicated. Although module teachers had too little time to improve their virtual mobility competencies, still the collaborative preparation for the virtual mobility course, course organization and delivery had presumably resulted in the improvement of some of their competencies.

Comparing the student and teacher competency improvement in virtual mobility competencies, higher progress was seen in students’ competencies. Module student and teacher improvement in virtual mobility competencies and their comparison are shown in Figure 70.4, in which some teachers admitted having not improved some of the competencies, and the students upgraded their competencies at least at a minimal level (see Figure 70.4). The same assumption with regard to failure
to improve their competencies due to too little time for teacher competency improvement might be considered here. It could also be noted that there were some comments from the teachers that they would like to try delivering more than two weeks of the virtual mobility course.

To sum up, before starting attending the module, the students felt most comfortable with information analysis and evaluation or with knowing different technological resources for collaborative online learning. The students felt most professional in understanding the skills needed to facilitate and manage collaborative online learning and comparing learning styles and learning strategies. After the module, the students noted their improvement in all learning outcome–related competencies as well as a strong improvement in most of the virtual mobility competences: intercultural communication, English language, personal and social competencies, and a bit smaller but adequate improvement of ICT competency together with some additional skills or competencies. After the module delivery, half of the teachers improved their virtual mobility competencies at least at a satisfactory level. As students spent more time learning than teachers did delivering, students’ virtual mobility competency improvements were higher than that of the teachers.

**PARTICIPANTS’ ATTITUDE AND VIRTUAL MOBILITY RECOGNITION**

The last chapter of the paper addresses the participants’ attitude toward virtual mobility and its recognition possibilities. The issues were addressed in post-session diagnostic surveys of students \((N = 23)\) and teachers \((N = 13)\).

**ATTITUDE TOWARD VIRTUAL MOBILITY**

The participation in a virtual mobility course not only helped most of the students and teachers to better understand the virtual mobility concept and its realization in practice. The experience also allowed most of the participants to see more of the positive aspects of virtual mobility (indicated by 72% the participants) although one fourth (25%) of the participants had not changed their attitude toward VM; still it remained positive (see Figure 70.5). Most of the students \((N = 17)\) also noted that motivation to choose the module changed during virtual mobility sessions. Only one teacher saw more negative aspects of virtual mobility after the virtual mobility course.
Concerning the provision of a similar virtual mobility course in the future, 19 students ($N = 23$) and 11 ($N = 13$) teachers indicated their interest in participating again, given the possibility. The diagnostic surveys of the students and teachers also asked for respondents’ opinion regarding physical and virtual mobility relations—if virtual mobility sessions should be treated or recognized as a supplement to physical Erasmus mobility (see Figure 70.6).

Seventy-five percent of the respondents on average (83% of the students and 62% of the teachers) agreed that virtual mobility sessions should be treated or recognized as a supplement to physical Erasmus mobility. One of the students, who had participated in physical mobility before the module, opposed that virtual mobility sessions should be treated or recognized as a supplement to physical Erasmus mobility “because virtual mobility is not equal at all to physical Erasmus mobility”; however, the other three students who had some physical mobility experience, and 16 who had not ($N = 19$) as well as eight teachers (who had not indicated their physical mobility experience) agreed that virtual mobility sessions should be treated or recognized as a supplement to physical Erasmus mobility. Two more students (who both had not participated in physical mobility programs before) and one teacher indicated that virtual mobility sessions could be partly treated as physical Erasmus. One of them explained: “Virtual mobility sessions should be treated as a supplement to physical Erasmus mobility just partly because nothing can replace study in a different country and getting to know other cultures during learning.”

**Virtual Mobility Recognition**

The last section of the surveys intended to identify virtual mobility recognition possibilities at participating institutions. At the beginning of the TeaCamp project, while preparing a “State of the Art” report, systemic analysis of documents, legal acts, and scientific literature was implemented in project partnership institutions, and a pilot survey was organized. The aim of the survey was to identify the existing virtual mobility practices at TeaCamp partnership institutions and countries. The survey provided only some existing practices that should be discussed and analyzed in order to
be recognized as existing virtual mobility. The survey respondents, being institution experts in the virtual learning area, were asked to indicate if there were any legal restrictions for VM of teachers and students to occur. The respondents of the pilot survey indicated no legal restrictions for VM of teachers and students at any of the participating institutions.

Thus VLHE module teachers were addressed with a similar question: If there were any legal possibilities at their institutions (that they were aware of) for the recognition of this course. Six teachers from five HEIs admitted being aware (the other seven were not) of the legal possibilities for the course recognition. Module students and teachers were also asked to indicate if the module would be recognized at their HEI institution. Seventeen of the students (N = 23) and five of the teachers (N = 13) from Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania), University of Aveiro (Portugal), University of Jyvaskyla (Finland), and Jagiellonian University (Poland) indicated that the VLHE module would be recognized at their HEI; the other respondents were not sure if the module would be recognized at their HEIs. One of the module teachers also suggested that VM mobility sessions were to be “arranged as a part of a regular study program.” This was noted to be an easier way to recognize the module, which was also one of the important issues addressed by the teachers to be improved. Module institutional recognition was also indicated by the respondents as leading to a higher commitment of participants.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Although virtual mobility is at the core of European education policy, modernization trends of higher education institutions, and European project activities, its benefits are discussed and stressed constantly; the concept itself is still changing and sometimes misconceived with the distance education and e-learning. The recent projects’ initiatives have tended to harmonize the perceptions of its definition; however, some time for the emergence of common agreement regarding virtual mobility awareness is still needed.

2. Virtual mobility at the TeaCamp project was organized as the delivery and organization of a joint study module “Virtual Learning in Higher Education,” which involved 13 teachers and 29 students from five countries and six higher education institutions in participation in synchronous (virtual sessions with discussions and lecture delivery, group assignments) and asynchronous (virtual learning organization in VLE Moodle with virtual sessions’ records, group and individual assignments of students, and other learning organization methods used) ways. After the module, which was the virtual mobility case analyzed in this paper, students and teachers identified a strong or satisfactory level of improvement in virtual mobility competencies that can be divided into ICT, English language, intercultural communication, personal and social competencies, learning outcome–related competency, and some additional skills, such as time management, learning to work cooperatively in a virtual environment, and better understanding of virtual mobility as a form of learning.

3. The analysis of student and teacher attitudes toward virtual mobility showed that the experience of virtual mobility course participants changed their attitude and more positive aspects of virtual mobility were identified after completion of the course. The peculiarities of virtual mobility studies were discussed from the teacher and learner perspectives, and a lot of improvement or different organization scenarios were drawn; virtual mobility experience was valued from a positive perspective. Most of the students and teachers who have already experienced virtual mobility supported the idea that virtual mobility sessions should be treated or recognized as a supplement to physical Erasmus mobility. This suggests that not only virtual mobility activities should be organized, but virtual mobility could also enrich physical mobility.

4. After the virtual mobility experience in the VLHE module, the majority of the students and half of the teachers indicated that the module would be recognized at their HEIs; the others were not sure or aware of the module recognition possibilities. The uncertainty of
students and teachers confirmed that the phenomenon is rather new at traditional universities, and a lot of procedures have to be implemented in order for students and teachers to benefit from the possibilities and advantages created by virtual mobility.

REFERENCES


