

ERASMUS:

20 Years of Evaluation Studies

Prof. Dr. Ulrich Teichler

**International Centre for Higher Education
Research Kassel**

University of Kassel

ERASMUS: A frequent topic of evaluation studies, research projects, doctoral dissertation

Studies undertaken by INCHER-Kassel

- The ERASMUS Experience 1987/88 – 1994/95
- SOCRATES Evaluation Study 2000
- The Professional Value of ERASMUS

Findings I

- (1) Expansion of ERASMUS worked without major gains or losses of administrative and academic quality
- (2) Constant calls for improvements:
 - The timing of the decisions
 - The financial support per mobile student
- (3) Problems abroad: more frequently of financial, infra-structural and administrative nature than of academic nature
- (4) Problems have not led to high social selection of ERASMUS participation as compared to all students in Europe

Table 1: Selected Problems During The ERASMUS-Supported Study Period Abroad – A Retrospective View Of Former ERASMUS Students (percent)

	ERASMUS students 1988/89 surveyed 1993 (Cohort of Study A surveyed in 1989/90)	Graduates 1994/95 surveyed 1999 (Study B)	ERASMUS students 2000/01 surveyed 2005 (Study C)
Accommodation	22	*	24
Financial matters	21	*	22
Administrative matters	21	*	19
Obtaining credits/ credit transfer	*	*	16
Different teaching/ learning methods	17	*	15
Teachers meeting/ helping students	15	*	13
Taking courses in a foreign language	10	*	9
Too high academic level	8	*	5

Findings II

(5) Overall satisfaction: About 90 % positive

(6) Academic results

- ERASMUS students believe that they had more academic progress abroad than at home
- No higher self rating of general competences at graduation
- Major impact: Reflexion, comparative insights, relativizing home idiosyncrasies

(7) Cultural impact

- Knowledge of other countries
- Improvement of ability to understand and cope with other cultures, persons, unknown situations
- changes of opinions?

Findings III

(8) Language impact

- About 2/3 host country language
- Almost half English
- In general improvement of proficiency

(9) Recognition

- A recognition of about 80 % can be viewed as high
- ECTS helped increasing recognition
- Prolongation of overall study due to ERASMUS is interpreted in most (not in all) countries as undesirable. Some „paper-tiger recognition“

Table 2: Degree of Recognition, Correspondence and Non-Prolongation in 1990/91 and 1998/99 reported by ERASMUS Students – by Type of Recognition (mean of percentages)

	Degree of recognition			degree of correspondence			degree of non-prolongation		
	ECTS	Other	Total	ECTS	Other	Total	ECTS	Other	Total
1990/ 1991	95	74	(75)*	84	72	(73)*	77	54	(55)*
1998/ 1999	87	74	81	81	80	80	53	37	45

Findings IV

(10) Professional Value

- Almost 20 % lived, studied or worked abroad at least shortly after graduation
- Transition to employment is facilitated but status and income only moderately improved
- Clearly more often „international / intercultural“ job assignments
- The distinction in terms of international / intercultural job assignments between formerly mobile students and formerly non-mobile students declines over time

Table 3: ERASMUS-Related Work Tasks of Former ERASMUS-Students – A Comparison Between Various Surveys (percentage of employed graduates)

	ERASMUS students 1988/89 surveyed 1993 (Study A)	Graduates 1994/95 surveyed 1999 (Study B)	ERASMUS students 2000/01 surveyed 2005 (Study C)
Using the language of the host country orally	47	42	38
Using the language of the host country in reading and writing	47	40	38
Using firsthand professional knowledge of host country	30	25	25
Using firsthand knowledge of host country culture/society	30	32	24
Professional travel to host country	17	18	14

Regional Differences

- Some „North“–„South“-Differences
- The specific British case
- Higher value for students from Central and Eastern European Countries

The Future

- Problems of mal-adjustment of evaluation rhythms and decision-making rhythms
- The declining professional value might call for a reconsideration: More high-quality options (curricular integration)?