



JÖNKÖPING UNIVERSITY



# Host Report for NordPlus Horizontal Project Teaching and Learning in Multicultural Classrooms

Visit at Jönköping University and Campus Gränna  
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# **Host Report: Teaching and Learning in Multicultural Classrooms Conference**

## **Introduction**

Continuing the work on the Nordplus Horizontal project Teaching and Learning in Multicultural Classrooms, representatives of the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences, International School of Tallinn, RISEBA University of Applied Sciences, UCL University College in Denmark, Vilniaus kolegija/University of Applied Sciences and Jönköping University gathered at Campus Gränna, Jönköping University, Sweden for a conference as part of the NordPlus faculty exchange program at Jönköping University from 18th to 20th October, 2022. The aim of the conference was to provide an opportunity for participants to learn about teaching in intercultural settings, focusing on English medium instruction programmes for native and international students as well as Pathway Programmes for international students in Swedish higher education. The opportunities for observation and examples from practitioners were given specifically in the context and setting of Jönköping International Business School, the School of Education and Communication and Jönköping University Enterprise that is a company within the university delivering Pathway Programmes and engaging in projects to promote internationalisation and academic readiness. As the host, we aimed to provide an informative and engaging experience for all participants, including experiential learning, examples of current practices, projects and theoretical frameworks, as well as opportunities for observation, discussion and exchange.

## Background

### Internationalisation at Jönköping University

Jönköping University has a strong international profile, and internationalization and collaboration are two important strategic areas. The university offers education in English at all levels, and around 1,850 international students from 120 countries study at the university each year. Jönköping University has partnerships with around 350 universities worldwide and in 2016, STINT, the Foundation for the Internationalization of Higher Education and Research, launched an index as a tool for measuring the degree of internationalization at the higher education institutions in Sweden. Jönköping University was awarded 4 out of 5 stars. A current project funded by STINT at JU aims to increase inclusive internationalisation. The university also offers Pathway Programmes in English, skills training for academic studies at undergraduate or graduate level. Jönköping International Business School is the most internationalised of the schools at Jönköping University, both in terms of faculty and students. Most of the international students at the university, above 50%, are European. The two European countries with the most students at the university are Germany and France. Jönköping University also attracts students from other parts of the world. The countries outside Europe with most students at the University are China and Pakistan. Other countries with many students in Jönköping are Iran and India.

### Academic readiness

The Pathway Programmes are courses designed to help international students meet the requirements needed to enter a bachelor's or master's degree program. On Pathway, students can complete the eligibility requirements, develop academic language, and improve their academic, intercultural, and transferable skills. Examples of such skills are information literacy, intercultural competency, agency, co-creation, and collaboration. They also get the experience of living in Sweden, familiarizing themselves with the

local culture and meeting people from all over the world. Between 2017 and 2022, an average of 8% of international students at the School of Health and Welfare at JU completed a Pathway before their undergraduate or graduate programme, with the corresponding number being 27% at the School of Education and Communication, 28% at the School of Engineering, and 40% at the Jönköping International Business School.

## Mission and Vision

Jönköping University has the mission to be “Embedded in the region and engaged worldwide we bridge knowledge and society, developing the talent of tomorrow.” Our vision is to be “leading as a collaborative, internationally connected and globally oriented university.”

## Activities during the visit

### Day 1 - Tuesday, 18th October

The conference began with an introduction and welcome session conducted by Jesper Boesen and Carl Johan Odehammar at Campus Gränna. The session provided an overview of the conference and the objectives of the program. A step exercise was also conducted, which helped participants to build connections with each other – a conversation starter about inequity, prejudice, equal opportunity and expectations on higher education in a global context. Step exercises are carried out by first assigning each participant a fictional character. In this case, the theme was international students, and each participant was given a character with different prerequisites for mobility, participation in education, engagement in society and life-long learning. By asking the participants, standing in a line, to take one step ahead if a statement applies to them, the barriers to and prerequisites for participating in globalized, multicultural education can be visualised. Some student characters are forced to “stay behind”. After the welcome session, we took the bus to Campus Jönköping, for a short tour. This was followed by a lecture by Carl Johan Odehammar on "Scandinavian Thoughts and Ideas"

(attached file), where participants were invited to intermingle with international students on the Pathway Programmes, and to participate in a lecture and group discussions in a genuinely multicultural setting. This was an opportunity to observe the topics that international students are introduced to as part of their introduction to better navigate the culture and community, with the intended outcome to both present actions taken at Jönköping University to promote inclusive internationalisation and to supply intercultural experience to all participants. The lecture was held at Ha209, HLK, Campus Jönköping University. After the lecture, we returned to the Gränna Campus for dinner.

### Day 2 - Wednesday, 19th October

The second day of the conference focused on teaching practices in business education. The topic was introduced with a presentation called "Incorporating cultural diversity into the course design and delivery" (attached file) by Darko Pantelic at the Gränna Campus. The presentation details the experiences made from teaching a graduate level course where intercultural competency development is a product of the cultural diversity of the cohort, and where this development happens per design. The presentation simultaneously defines terms like internationalisation and diversity and describes how diversity can create both barriers and opportunities in education. During the day, the participants were also given the opportunity to participate in class together with students on the Pathway Programmes, to gain more insight into how teaching and learning there is conducted. After lunch, participants engaged in group work, discussing pre-prepared questions from the morning session. The day ended with dinner at Campus Gränna.

### Day 3 - Thursday, 20th October

The final day of the conference began with a bus transfer to Campus Jönköping, where participants engaged in report writing and discussed their experiences from the conference. The session was held at Ha208.

## Leading a discussion or debate

### Activities

A group work-based structured discussion around experiences, best practices, barriers, and opportunities when teaching in diverse, multicultural settings took place on the afternoon of Wednesday, 19 Oct. The topic focused specifically on discussing the impressions on the participants from the lecture visit, the meetings with students, the presentation "Incorporating cultural diversity into the course design and delivery" as well as the continuous conversations during the visit. The desired outcome was to consolidate the individual development of new knowledge into common knowledge and understanding. Questions asked to initiate the discussion included thinking about and documenting the participant's own observations made during the exchange, and comparing with their own teaching and learning environment and practices.

### Methodologies

The group work-based discussion was influenced by a think-pair-share pattern. The think-pair-share method is a collaborative learning technique that can be used in any subject and classroom size. The method involves three steps. First, the instructor provides a question or topic for discussion. Next, students take a moment to individually think about their response. Afterward, they pair up with someone sitting near them to discuss their ideas. Finally, groups share their discussions with the rest of the class. Through this process, the method encourages critical thinking and active participation in the learning process. In multicultural environments, the method is particularly beneficial as it allows students to work collaboratively, share their diverse perspectives, and build relationships with their peers.

## **Outcomes**

The "Teaching and Learning in Multi-cultural Classrooms" conference provided an opportunity for participants to learn about teaching practices in intercultural settings. The conference helped participants to understand the challenges and opportunities of teaching newly arrived students in Sweden. The lecture on Swedish and Scandinavian history and societies provided insights into the cultural context in which teaching takes place. The sessions on business education provided practical insights into teaching practices. The group work sessions allowed participants to engage with each other and share their experiences. Together with tours at the two campuses, the ongoing dialogue about the university's aims and challenges, as well as the exchange of experiences in teaching in multicultural environments, a main take-away is that many of the examples and experiences provided a starting point for discussion and learning. Overall, the conference provided a valuable opportunity for participants to learn from each other and develop their teaching practices in intercultural settings.

## **Conclusion**

As the host, we aimed to provide a comprehensive and engaging conference that met the needs of all participants. We believe that the "Teaching and Learning in Multi-cultural Classrooms" conference achieved its objectives and provided a valuable learning experience for all participants. We hope that the conference has helped participants to develop their teaching practices in intercultural settings and has encouraged them to continue to learn and engage with each other in the future.