Intercultural Learning Strategies for the 21ˢᵗ Century:

Revitalizing a Long-standing Study Abroad Immersion Program through Active Pedagogy and Action Research

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Outline

- Overview and background (Markot)

- Language learning through active immersion (Muñoz)

- Changing pedagogy through action research (Greenwood)

- Pleasures, perils, and potential (Markot)

- Small group discussions – questions and observations

- Q & A; open floor

Overview and Background

A Flagship Program at the University of Seville, Spain

❖ Founded in the 1980s (Cornell +/- Michigan + Penn)
❖ Immersion program with direct enrollment in classes at University of Seville
❖ Additional courses at Program Center taught by U.S. faculty or select University of Seville faculty
❖ Homestays with local community members
❖ Program Center provides orientation, educational excursions, cultural events, and logistical and language support to students

The Challenge:
- Decreased immersion – program not meeting stated goals
- Decreased staff and faculty motivation

The Solution:
- Active learning approach
- Contextualizing language use and intercultural learning

The Paradox:
- Students need more guidance/cultural facilitation
- Students need to take more personal responsibility for their own learning

The Journey:
- Rallying stakeholders
- Engaging expertise
- On-going feedback loop

2 years and counting…

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Program through Active Pedagogy and Action Research

Improving Linguistic Progress in Study Abroad by Linking Intercultural Competences and Cultural Immersion: Using the CEFR as a Learning Tool in CASA- Sevilla

Juan A. Muñoz, Language Coordinator. CASA-Sevilla

I.- LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL IMMERSION

II.- DECISION TO CHANGE

    a.- WHY?

- Results.
    - Linguistic and cultural progress.
    - Insufficient cultural immersion.
    - Lack of intercultural competence.
    - Language and cultural progress assumed as «natural consequence» of physical exposure to the language and culture.

- New profiles, interests and attitude of students.
    - «Travelling experience».
    - Lack of responsibility in the learning process.
    - Lack of independence as learners.
    - Socializing in the social networks.

II.- DECISION TO CHANGE

   a. WHY?

   b. HOW?

   - Action-research. Involvement of faculty and staff.

      - Self assessment of strengths and weaknesses.
      - Suggestions and proposals. Difficulties: budget, staff limitations. Faculty

   c. WHAT?

   - Pedagogical approach.

   - Assessment: criteria, tools, feedback.

   - Attention given to five skills.

   - Students' awareness and involvement in the learning process.

   - Roles of faculty and staff.

   - Lack of connection between linguistic and cultural learning.

III.- THE CHANGES.

A) PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH.

- Student centered.
- Development of five linguistic skills: speaking, listening, writing, reading, interacting.
- Students learn to learn.
- Instructors teach, facilitate, monitor learning.
- Students' independence and responsibility as language and culture learners.

B) INTERACTION OF LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL LEARNING.

C) ASSESSMENT: Initial / midterm / final. Self assessment. Faculty evaluation. Use of CEFR standards and rubrics.

D) LANGUAGE CLASSES (3 weeks): Learning Strategies, tools and materials; Intercultural Competence; Adaptation to the linguistic and cultural environment (Andalucía)

E) LINGUISTIC AND INTERCULTURAL MENTORING. (8 weeks).

F) CONNECTION OF LINGUISTIC PROGRESS WITH ALL ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM: homestays, visits, classes, community organizations.

IV.- THE CEFRL.

		A1 Basic User	A2 Basic User	B1 Independent user	B2 Independent user	C1 Proficient user	C2 Proficient user
Understanding	Listening	I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
	Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.
Speaking	Spoken interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.
	Spoken production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
Writing	Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.

IV.- THE CEFRL

A) THE CEFRL AS OUR MAIN TOOL FOR LINGUISTIC PROGRESS.

- Pedagogical approach. Skills. Progress.
- Instruments to measure progress (for students and faculty)
- Easy adaptation to our needs and objectives. Creation of scales.
- Action/Task oriented.

B) OUR ADAPTATION OF THE CEFRL.

- Reasons to make an adaptation:
    - Easy, fast, objective.
    - Useful and constant information for faculty and students.

- Use of rubrics:
    - Interviews.
    - Self assessment.
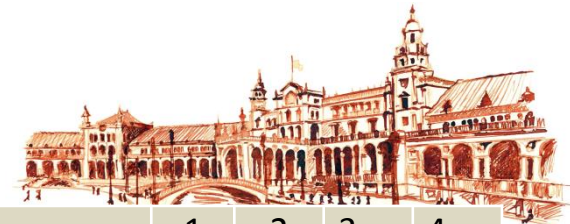   - Students' needs and preferences.

- RUBRICS

LISTENING COMPREHENSION	1	2	3	4
I can understand simple phrases about me, my family, people I know when they speak to me clearly and slowly.				
I can understand common words and phrases about personal information, likes, free time, studies. I can understand the relevant information in short messages and announcements.				
I can understand clear "standard" speech about everyday life, free time, school. I can understand the main ideas from radio or television programs when they talk about topics that I am familiar with or that I'm interested in when they speak clearly and slowly.				
I can understand longer pieces of speech and lectures about complex topics I know about. I can understand most of the information from TV programs and I can follow most of the story in films and TV shows.				
I can understand spoken language even when it is not clearly structured and when ideas and thoughts are not expressed in an explicit way. I can understand films and TV shows without much effort.				
I can understand any kind of spoken language, both live and in the media. I can understand a native speaker who speaks fast if I have some time to get used to the accent.				

EXPLAIN YOUR EXPERIENCES AND DIFFICULTIES WITH THIS SKILL:

DO YOU NEED EXTRA HELP TO IMPROVE THIS SKILL? EXPLAIN.

WRITING	1	2	3	4
I can write short simple texts, like postcards, greetings, e-mails. I can fill in forms with personal details.				
I can write short notes and messages about my life, interests and needs. I can write a simple personal letter.				
I can write simple texts on familiar topics or about personal interests. I can describe people, places. I can explain experiences and opinions. I can narrate stories and events in the present and in the past.				
I can write detailed texts on a wide range of topics. I can write essays and reports, giving information and presenting opinion about a topic. I can write texts highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.				
I can write clear and well-structured texts. I can express my points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in letters, essays or reports.				
I can write clearly and smoothly and in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles. I can write like an educated native speaker.				

EXPLAIN YOUR EXPERIENCES AND DIFFICULTIES WITH THIS SKILL:

DO YOU NEED EXTRA HELP TO IMPROVE THIS SKILL? EXPLAIN.

WRITING	1	2	3	4
I can write short simple texts, like postcards, greetings, e-mails. I can fill in forms with personal details.				✖
I can write short notes and messages about my life, interests and needs. I can write a simple personal letter.				✖
I can write simple texts on familiar topics or about personal interests. I can describe people, places. I can explain experiences and opinions. I can narrate stories and events in the present and in the past.				✖
I can write detailed texts on a wide range of topics. I can write essays and reports, giving information and presenting opinion about a topic. I can write texts highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.			✖	
I can write clear and well-structured texts. I can express my points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in letters, essays or reports.		✖		
I can write clearly and smoothly and in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles. I can write like an educated native speaker.	✖			

24	**C2**
23	C1+
22	C1
21	B2+
20	B2
19	B1+
17-18	B1
15-16	B1-

Contrast between the students' self-assessment and our faculty's evaluation of their linguistic competences.

	COINCIDENCE BETWEEN THE STUDENTS' AND OUR FACULTY'S EVALUATION	PESSIMISTIC ASSESSMENT BY STUDENTS	OPTIMISTIC ASSESSMENT BY STUDENTS
LISTENING COMPREHENSION	42.84 %	42.84 %	14.32 %
READING COMPREHENSION	52.36 %	19.04 %	28.6 %
WRITING	33.32 %	9.52 %	57.16 %
SPEAKING	28.56 %	33.32 %	38.32 %
ORAL INTERACTION	42.84 %	42.84 %	14.32 %

Students' priorities for linguistic support by the program by skills.

SKILL	FIRST PRIORITY. PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS
ORAL INTERACTION	32.39 %
SPEAKING	26.76 %
WRITING	21.12 %
READING COMPREHENSION	11.26 %
LISTENING COMPREHENSION	8.45 %

IV. THE CEFRL

A) THE CEFRL AS OUR MAIN TOOL FOR LINGUISTIC PROGRESS.

B) OUR ADAPTATION OF THE CEFRL.

C) RESULTS / BENEFITS.

- Useful information for students, faculty and staff. Changes
- Easily measurable progress in five skills.
- Students have clear objectives, goals in five skills.
- Constant feedback:
    - During the program.
        - Adaptations to students' needs.
    - At the end of the program.
        - Self assessment.
        - Improvements.

V. THE RESULTS

A) FACULTY'S OBSERVATION. (subjective)
- Integration of cultural and linguistic progress.
    - Students learn to improve their learning by using all the tools and experiences in the program.
    - Students are more aware of what they need to learn from an immersion experience.

- Students learn to use learning tools to foster linguistic and cultural progress.
    - Portfolio.
    - Interviews.
    - Homestays.
    - Mentoring.
    - Work in community organisations.

- Students assume more responsibility for their learning process. More independence as learners (they can use in other learning projects).

V. THE RESULTS

A) FACULTY'S OBSERVATION (subjective)

B) LINGUISTIC PROGRESS. (Objective).
- Use of CEFR standards and rubrics.
- SKILLS:
  - READING COMPREHENSION.
  - LISTENING COMPREHENSION.
  - WRITING.
  - SPEAKING.
  - INTERACTION.

SKILLS	IMPROVE	SAME
LISTENING COMPREHENSION	92.95 %	7.05 %
READING COMPREHENSION	73.23 %	40.85 %
WRITING	88.73 %	26.77 %
SPEAKING	91.54 %	8.46 %
ORAL INTERACTION	100 %	

SKILLS	IMPROVE (at least one level)	SAME LEVEL
LISTENING COMPREHENSION	92.95 %	7.05 %
READING COMPREHENSION	73.23 %	40.85 %
WRITING	88.73 %	26.77 %
SPEAKING	91.54 %	8.46 %
ORAL INTERACTION	100 %	

SKILL	INITIAL	FINAL	PROGRESS
LISTENING COMPREHENSION	6.95/10	8.6/10	16.5 %
READING COMPREHENSION	7.61/10	8.47/10	8.6 %
WRITTEN EXPRESSION	7.15/10	8.79/10	16.4 %
ORAL EXPRESSION	7.25/10	8.9/10	16.5 %
ORAL INTERACTION	7.12/10	9.1/10	19.8 %

VI. REMAINING PROBLEMS

A) Heritage speakers.

B) Measuring and assessing cultural learning. Creating a framework for intercultural learning.

C) Orientation of students at their home institutions.

D) Improving the use of online platforms.

Action Research as a Strategy for Reforming Higher Education Programs and Its Application to Developing Active Intercultural Competence

Session: Intercultural Learning Strategies for the 21st Century: Revitalizing a Long-standing Study Abroad Immersion Program through Active Pedagogy and Action Research

Davydd J. Greenwood, Goldwin Smith Professor of Anthropology Emeritus
Cornell University

Action Research as a strategy for reforming higher education programs and its application to developing active intercultural competence

- **AR defined**
  - Tapping the experience, intelligence, and interests of groups better through participatory team structures

- **Problem owners/stakeholders**
  - Local staff, faculty, tutors
  - Cornell Abroad
  - Penn Abroad
  - Cornell and Penn faculty and related units: Engaged Cornell, Cornell Public Service Center, Center for Teaching Excellence
  - Cornell and Penn students interested in study abroad, now expanded to include students in the Consortium for Advanced Study Abroad (CASA)

The Action Research Process

- **Collaborative problem definition**
  - Students in a cultural bubble reinforced by the internet
  - Increased campus paternalism controlling the student environment, student speech, and the shift to the student as "customer" model, decreasing student learning and increasing their fragility in the face of any unfamiliar challenge.
  - Departure of one of the program's university partners, the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, for "budgetary reasons" and the attendant potential collapse of the program and loss of jobs for the staff

- **Identification of stakeholder interests and wishes**
  - Search or Dialogue Conference methods
  - Shared history, probable future, ideal future
  - Keep, drop, and create to set priorities for revision

Davydd Greenwood, Cornell University, WISE 2017

The Approach that Emerged

- Active pedagogy involving the student as the protagonist of their own learning with mentoring support and ongoing evaluation
- Holistic integration of all dimensions of the program into a 360 degree approach with individualized mentoring for all students
- Teaching how to learn rather than the banking method of teaching by providing content to be assimilated and reproduced
- Linking all parts into a common pedagogy
  - language learning, anthropology, history, and art/art history content, home stays, community organization work, cultural visits, direct enrollment in the University of Seville
- Shifting what was a 4 week orientation course to a semester-long envelope for the whole study abroad experience in the program

The Challenges This Created

- **Fundamental reorientation for many of the staff, faculty, and tutors toward Deweyian pedagogy rather than the "banking method”:**
  - Less of a shift for the language instructors but a big shift for the others.
  - Requires more interaction among **ALL** the staff, faculty, and tutors.
  - For Cornell and Penn, this meant letting the local stakeholders in Seville take the risk of reorienting and proposing a fundamentally different approach to the program.
  - Changing student expectations from a "light" semester abroad with lots of leisure time in a European theme park to a coherent and challenging intellectual and personal growth opportunity.
  - Not limiting the few students who spontaneously take to intercultural learning without much coaching while bringing the middle and passive students to a more engaged intercultural position.

The Challenges This Created

- **Uniting the apparently non-academic and the academic activities of the program in an integrated pedagogical approach.**

  - From a pedagogical point of view, this remains the greatest challenge because there are many moving parts and every student is different. How to keep track, mentor well, and evaluate fairly.

Development of the Common Frame of Reference for Intercultural Learning

- This began with the recognition of the need to integrate, equalize the importance of, and promote an active pedagogy approach in every aspect of the program.
- It also required using a mentoring system to place the student at the center as the responsible protagonist of their own learning.
- Based on Greenwood's enthusiasm about the CEFRL in language, he decided, working with Richard Feldman (Director of the Cornell Language Resource Center) and Melina Draper (Intercultural Education Specialist, Cornell Center for Teaching Excellence), to develop a Common Frame of Reference for Intercultural Learning

Development of The Common Frame of Reference for Intercultural Learning

This frame of reference has a modular structure based on the areas of intercultural competence we have determined are fundamental, based on many years of teaching that Feldman and Greenwood did for a course entitle "Engaging Other Cultures ".

- The modules
  - language and linguistics - this part has been presented in the prior talk by Juan Muñoz Andrade
  - the relations between language and culture
  - social roles, social structures, social processes
  - culture as systems of symbols and meanings; cultures a performances (rituals, etc.)
  - reading art and the built environment
- In all cases, the approach is inquiry-based and focused on learning ethnographic techniques of participant observation, data gathering, interpretation, and writing up the results.

Individual, yet Integrated Learning

- Individualizing learning commitments through a blog system
  - Blog Landing Page
  - For each module, there is a combined student self-assessment and a tutor assessment. Together these lead to the formulation of a set of learning objectives and specific dated learning plans that are assessed and revised regularly.
  - 3 screenshots of one module
    - Bridging Language and Culture Module
    - Bridging Language and Culture Learning Assessment
    - Bridging Language and Culture Learning Plan
- Mid-term evaluations on all dimensions for all students
- End of semester individual research paper showing the skills that have been mastered
- End of semester evaluation on all dimensions for all students

Pedagogical Principles

- Based on Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development", ethnographic inquiry techniques, and "reflective practice"
  - Active learning through cycles of action, analysis, presentation, new questions, actions, analysis, and presentation.
  - On the direct analogy of the best current ways to teach language as combined speech production, comprehension, writing, etc.
- Mentoring as a coaching rather than a hierarchical teaching activity
- Making students responsible for their own learning and into serious self-evaluators rather than as competitors for a grade from an authority figure.
- Having all the staff, faculty, and tutors become aware of the strengths, weaknesses, and developmental trajectory of every student in the program throughout the semester

Logistical Difficulties

- Keeping track of all the dimensions of student learning in all dimensions of the program while also providing individualized mentoring appropriate to each student is a tremendous challenge
- Dealing with it partly by the blog but also by having the staff gain an analytical overview of the entire program to be able to situate themselves and the students within the overall process of intercultural learning
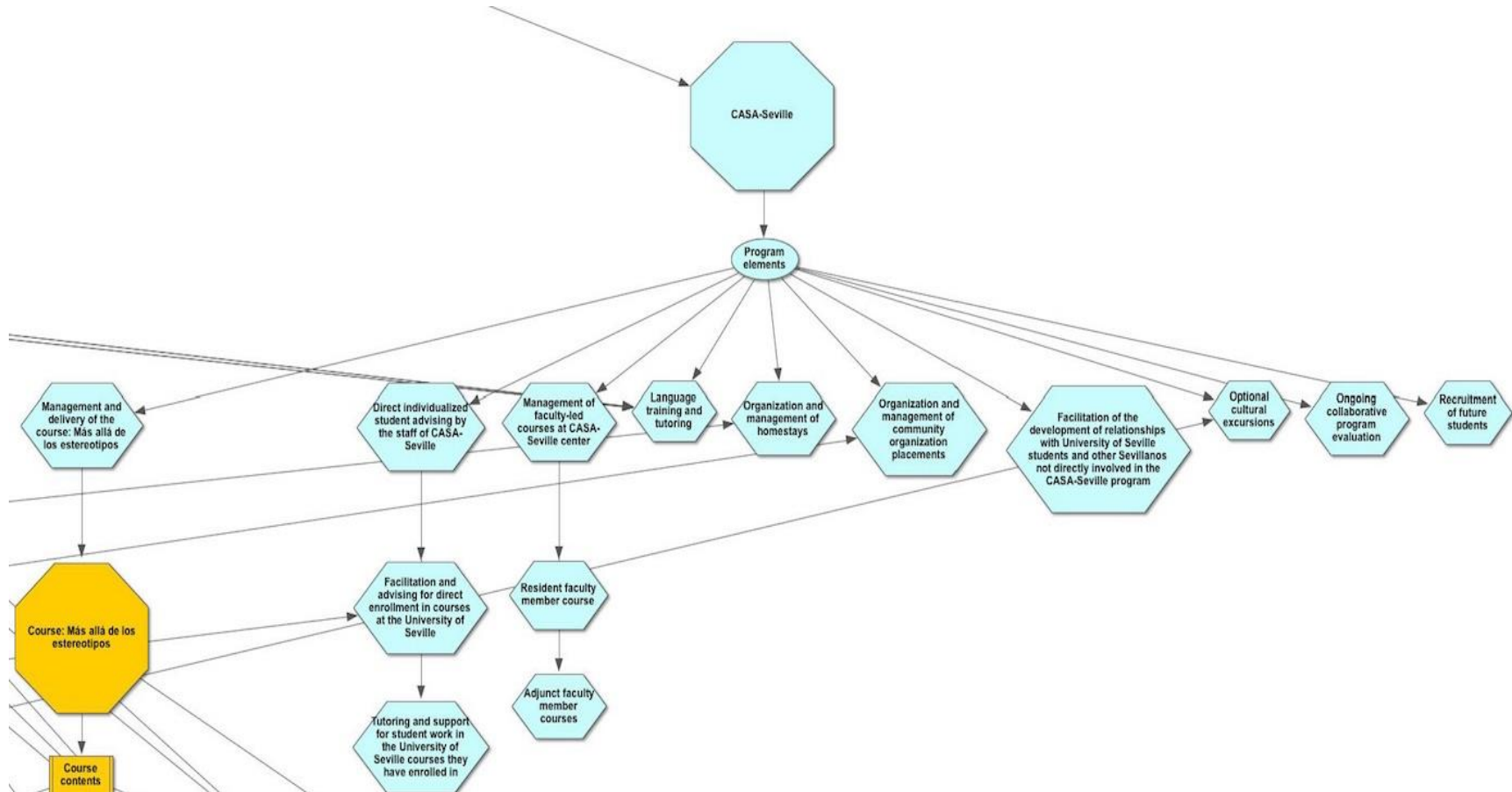
This is no small challenge as the following analytical diagram shows:
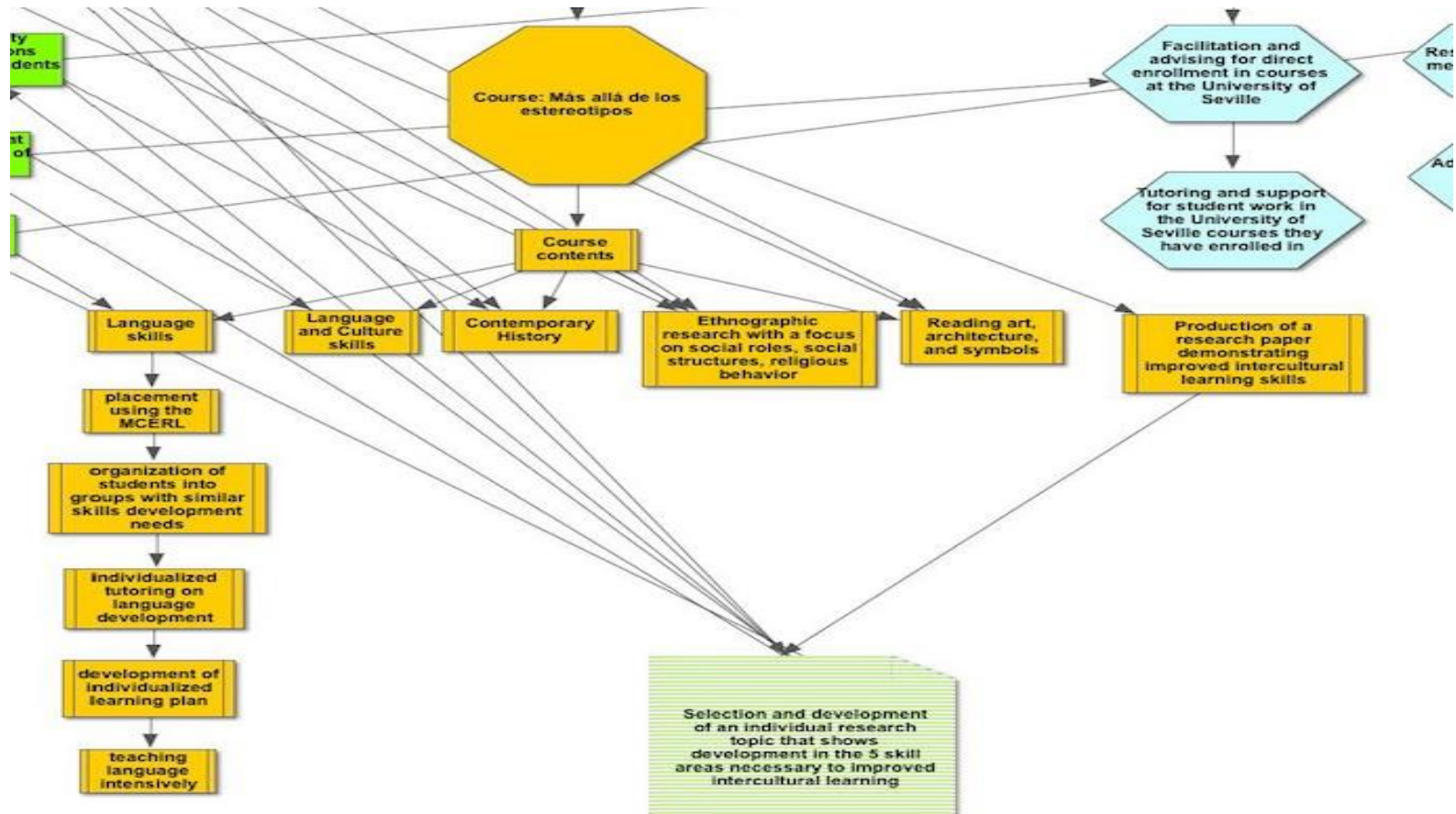
[The overall analytical diagram of the program](#)

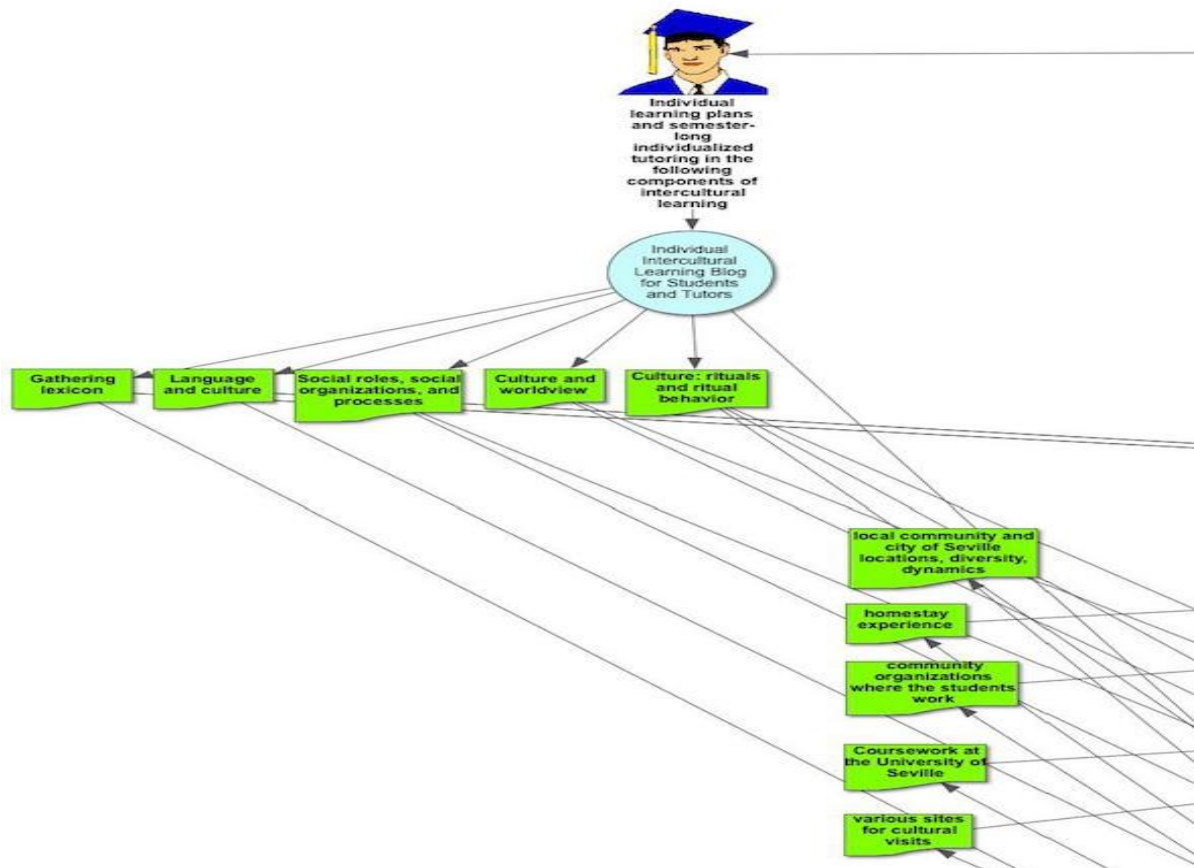# Overall Diagram of the Program Structure of CASA-Sevilla
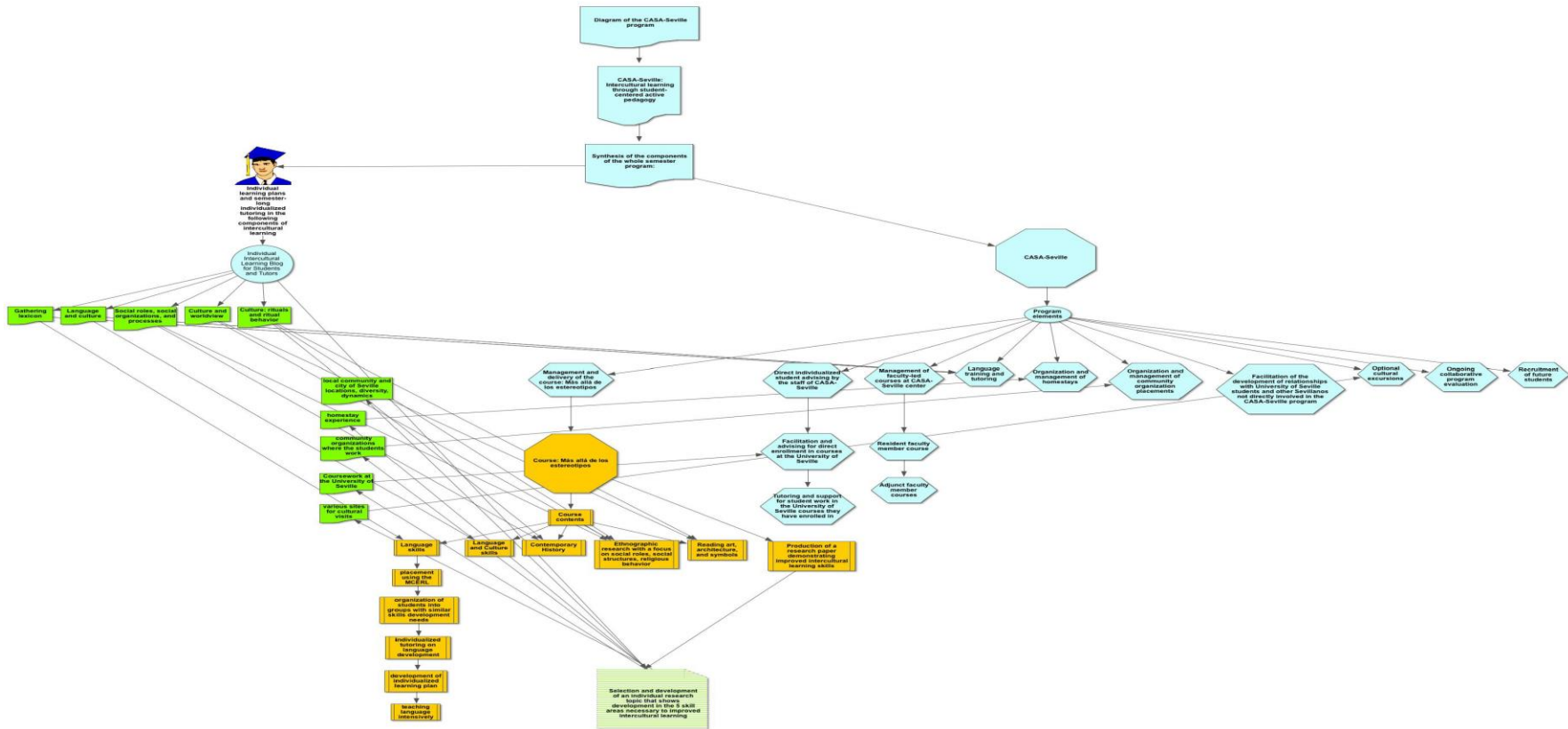
Structural elements in the CASA-Sevilla program

The integrating course in CASA-Sevilla

Common Framework of Reference for Intercultural Learning Mentoring Blog/Guide

Concluding Remarks

- This is work in progress and we are looking for comments, criticisms, and suggestions from the audience to assist in its further development. We will be glad to share the results of the fall, 2016 pilot as well.
- Related projects: a survey of the impact of the program on students 5, 10, and 15 years out (and carrying it forward to students 5 years out each year, a co-authored by all the participating CASA-Sevilla staff and me in Spanish and English describing the process, developing campus networks in support of the program and its approach, and creating a blog to permit current students, former students, prospective students, and the staff to share their experiences in the program

Reflection:

- What we are doing in Seville is actually more ambitious educationally than what normally happens in a semester on our home campuses.

- At home
  - Students take 4-5 courses, often from a checklist, taught by faculty who do not know (or often care) what else the students are studying or with whom.
  - The faculty have no common purpose nor any kind of an overview of their students' development.
  - Completing such semesters is called "getting an undergraduate education"

We have upped the ante on what "getting an education" means and I personally think universities would be well advised to rethink their structures and pedagogies along these lines, given what we charge now in undergraduate tuition and fees.