Introduction: What was the study about?

University teachers in the Netherlands who are integrating international and intercultural dimensions both in their Dutch and English-medium courses and degree programmes are in a compelling change location. This entails both challenges and opportunities for staff learning. In a recent white paper (2013) of the Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen (hereafter HG) staff office’s internationalisation team, certain limitations on the capacities of teachers in international teaching/learning were identified. Some of these are:

- Limited international orientation of teachers, resulting in inadequate preparation of students in the international labour market
- Limited opportunities for international mobility of teachers making an increase desirable
- Limitations in terms of English language proficiency of teachers

It is important to understand that these limitations do not mean that teachers need remedial programmes because they are somehow inadequate or deficient. The limitations come out of the new situation and can, if addressed honestly and handled skilfully, be a stimulus for greater professionalism.

This monograph is a condensed version of a doctoral research (Troia, 2013) into how to support teachers in gaining new, or enhance existing, competencies for international teaching. The investigation used an educational design research of a professional development programme, called the ‘Teachers’ Internationalisation Programme’ (hereafter TIP). The TIP was created specifically for and during this investigation by me. The approach used was to design, execute, analyse and redesign the programme across multiple contexts with small groups of teachers from five different Schools in different settings, for different lengths of time. Elements of the programme were trialled over a period of two and a half years in three distinct cycles (hereafter called iterations).

There were two strands of research. Strand A investigated what worked or did not work to stimulate teachers’ learning for English, Intercultural and Pedagogic skills enhancement through the TIP by offering activities and materials and studying what was effective and why. Strand B investigated what the strengths and weaknesses were of two ways of structuring and delivering professional development by a comparative study on the TIP as professional development support in two modes of delivery, namely a ‘stand-alone’ mode and an ‘embedded’ mode.

What was achieved?

Design research aims to achieve both practical, pragmatic goals and to discover design principles rooted in a conceptual framework. In this case, three aims on the ‘practical’ side of the research and two on the ‘theoretical’ side can be said to have been achieved to a modest degree.

Practice oriented aims

One aim was at a systems level of institutional change. It was to provide university policy makers and managers, internationalisation experts, human resources officers and teacher-educators (that is professional developers) with a critical understanding of teachers’ English, intercultural and pedagogic learning needs
and demonstrate how those needs can be met. In addition, insights from change theory and social practice approaches from the ‘middle out’ should support those involved in facilitating sustainable changes in teachers’ practices.

Second, a set of principles and guidelines are provided which team leaders and/or professional developers can use in setting up their own professional development interventions. This set of principles is combined into a model called the ‘Multimodal professional development model for university teachers of applied sciences for internationalisation of the curriculum’. It can be said that this model goes some way to interweaving ‘practice based evidence’ with ‘evidence based practice’. Its strengths are in its practicality, flexibility and cost effectiveness. The model includes four principles for developers of interventions and some advice about each principle.

A third aim was to provide professional development units with concrete, practical materials, programme models and recommendations. In fact, it might be said that the main result of the research, and its main strength, is in these outcomes. For example, when the two delivery models were trialled and compared it was found that both modes of delivery have their strengths and weaknesses (see Appendix). Recommendations were made on how best to use the strengths of each as well as warnings about the negative consequences of using the delivery modes inappropriately. Further, an Annex was provided. It contains materials developed and tried out during the different phases of the TIP explaining which materials and activities were useful and which need to be improved. The Annex is available in digital form on request.

**Scientific or theory oriented aims**

An interesting theoretical strength of the research is the dynamism of conceptualisation. Especially the treatment of ‘transcendent learning’ offers an original interpretation of this concept, introduced by Illeris (2007) in relation to adult learning. Transcendent learning will not be discussed in depth in this paper. Anyone interested in it can consult the original study.

Finally, the investigation was carried out using an innovative research paradigm namely, educational design based research or EDR. It was my aim to demonstrate that EDR can lead to theoretical and practical outcomes in a complex research environment by a sole researcher where an exploratory approach was needed. The methodology of EDR was inspired by the work of several scholars from the University of Twente (see for example McKenney, Nieveen, & van den Akker, 2006; McKenney, & Reeves, 2012). Just as transcendental learning, EDR will be referred to in a very restricted manner in this summary those with a particular interest in the approach are asked to consult the dissertation.