

# **Connecting Academic Hospitality, Service-Learning and Basic Human Values Theory - A Case of Narrative Analysis**

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## Abstract

This study proposes a narrative analysis aiming at understanding through a personal experience of an Erasmus+ student hosted by a Higher Education Institution in Portugal how the principles stated by academic hospitality act as an enabler of positive behaviour leading to Service-Learning. The multicultural approach is also a key element for this study, the personal story will be used as a source for understanding how openness to integrate into a new welcoming cultural context could further develop the individual from an observer to an active benevolent participant into the new academic frame he is exposed to. The present article examines how openness for cultural and linguistic immersion is a key element in stimulating a reciprocally advantageous exchange of ideas leading to a better adjustment of the visitor and of the host in terms of contribution and scientific enrichment.

### Keywords:

Service-Learning; academic hospitality; ethico-moral intelligence; narrative analysis.

## Zusammenfassung

Diese Studie schlägt eine narrative Analyse vor, die darauf abzielt, anhand der persönlichen Erfahrung eines Erasmus+ Studenten, der an einer Hochschule in Portugal aufgenommen wurde, zu verstehen, wie die Grundsätze der akademischen Gastfreundschaft als Wegbereiter für positives Verhalten dienen, das zum Service-Learning führt. Der multikulturelle Ansatz ist ebenfalls ein Schlüsselement dieser Studie. Die persönliche Geschichte wird als Quelle für das Verständnis genutzt, wie die Offenheit für die Integration in einen neuen einladenden kulturellen Kontext das Individuum von einem Beobachter zu einem aktiven, wohlwollenden Teilnehmer an der neuen akademischen Welt weiterentwickeln könnte. Der vorliegende Artikel untersucht, wie Offenheit für kulturelles und sprachliches Eintauchen ein Schlüsselement bei der Anregung eines gegenseitig vorteilhaften Gedankenaustauschs ist, der zu einer Verbesserung des Besuchers und des Gastgebers in Bezug auf Beitrag und wissenschaftliche Bereicherung führt.

### Schlüsselworte:

Service-Learning; akademische Gastfreundschaft; ethisch-moralische Intelligenz; narrative Analyse.

## 1. Introduction

The ethics of hospitality, as Isabel Baptista states (Spolon, Netto & Baptista, 2015) are based on welcoming, responsibility and kindness. This ethics, stimulating a fruitful exchange between the host and the visitor is of paramount importance in the context of "the third mission" of Higher Education Institutions, along with teaching and researching as the first two missions. In the same context, Service-Learning is considered one of the best approaches related to a pedagogical endeavour resulting in a betterment of the civic engagement of the academic community, defined as "any closely monitored service experience where the student assumes intentional learning goals and actively reflects on what he/she learns from experience" (Billig, 2000, cited in Copaci

& Rusu, 2016; Brozmanova-Gregorova et al., 2020). A welcoming approach, a responsible attitude and an interaction based on kindness are the prerequisites that enable the empowerment of connectivity - belongingness, creativity and innovation - continuous improvement, knowledge acquisition - performance. Therefore, academic hospitality leads for the visitor student in this case to civic engagement.

Higher Education Institutions are nowadays not only responsible with delivering seminars following a curriculum or producing papers on various topics, but altogether develop the moral behaviour and the overall integration of the educated students in their communities in a proactive and sustainable way.



By relating the civic engagement mission of the Universities with a values frame, we will analyse the Theory of Basic Human Values proposed by Shalom Schwartz (1992). While the main impression would be that higher education fosters values from the achievement and power spectres and the majority of them indeed continue to do so, we suggest that in order to follow the principles leading to civically responsible and involved citizens, universities should focus more on stimulating values from the universalism and benevolent spectres (Schwartz et al., 2012).

Based on a revised theory of fundamental human values, Schwartz (2012) suggests that *Achievement* represents 'the underlying motivation to be judged as successful by others' (p. 10), *Power* is considered a more complex category "*the conceptual definition of power suggests three potential subtypes. They share the goal of promoting their own interests by controlling what happens and thereby minimizing or avoiding anxiety-arousing threats*" (p. 11), while *Universalism* has "*three potential subtypes, tolerance, societal concern, and protecting nature*" (p. 13) and *Benevolence* "*three caring items (helpful/working for others welfare, honest/genuine, forgiving/willing to pardon)*" (p.13).

*Academic hospitality* and the other one is *Service-Learning* are appropriate while exploring ways to facilitate a transition to a more benevolent and universalist academic community. Academic hospitality as stated by Phipps & Barnett (2007) could be an extension of touristic hospitality, of what we usually understand as hosting and caring in a specific accommodation transaction. This 'philoxenia' as ancient Greeks named the 'love of the strangers' could be successfully manifested while organizing scientific activities, conferences, mobilities and any other type of educational multicultural exchange. The two previously mentioned authors emphasize on various forms of academic hospitality, such as material - the actual hosting, epistemological - openness to innovation and novelty regarding ideas, linguistic - translation or learning the language of the host, touristic - presenting the cultural context (Phipps & Barnett, 2007). Celebratory, communicative, and critical are the modes proposed for evaluating the applications of academic hospitality (Williams, 2000).

Service-Learning activities are considered in the case study presented in this paper as being those activities that are addressing the needs of the community, i.e. in this case, the host academic community, in which the visitor student was engaged

in connection with his curricular offerings. The needs targeted by Service-Learning, as proposed by the team of the project Service-Learning in Higher Education Institutions (SLIHE, [www.slihe.eu](http://www.slihe.eu)) are: the student needs, the school needs and the community needs (Brozmanova-Gregorova et al., 2020). The circle of Service-Learning components associated with the mechanism of change in terms of empowering the students at levels of social-emotional and academic functioning are: connecting, community, creativity, knowledge and innovation (Brozmanova-Gregorova et al., 2020).

## 2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide an analytical frame for the identification of the readiness/openness of various Erasmus+ students to getting immersed in the existent Service-Learning programs at the host Universities. This should later on facilitate the emergence of reciprocal Service-Learning exchange programs between the countries and help the teachers to train the students to identify the universalities of human needs and of the empathy manifestations. The narratives of a successful Erasmus+ student can foster the development of further International/ Global Service-Learning exchange programs.

## 3. Research methodology

### 3.1. Research questions

This study is concerned with the general question "How do we stimulate these values within the academic community" and how "superior" in terms of education should not relate only to social power, higher income, greater influence, capability or cognitive intelligence, but to broadmindedness, helpfulness, openness to share resources, contribution to equity, servitude. The following specific research questions were formulated:

- (1) How was the experience at the hosting university?
- (2) Can the narratives of the visiting students help to answer the question of how can a host university develop into a hospitality-based ecosystem? If yes, which are the basic human values enacted by the student and by the university?

In accordance with the research questions, the research hypothesis is that there is a change in fundamental human values while students are exposed to Service-Learning and academic hospitality.

### 3.2. Design and procedure

The study design is a qualitative one, based on a thematic content analysis approach. To further develop the correlation between academic hospitality and Service-Learning an individual experience of an Erasmus+ student will be analysed through narratives. Furthermore, a parallel with existing examples will be elaborated. Narrative analysis is performed on a testimonial written by the author A.G.S. for the host university after an Erasmus+ experience of 7 months, from December 2021 to June 2022.

As stated by Gabriela Spector-Mersel *“The aims of narrative inquiries range from psychological questions focusing on internal, emotional or cognitive processes on the one hand, to sociological, anthropological and historical questions on the other. In between are questions focusing on linguistic and interpersonal processes, which examine narrative as a means of communication”* (p. 215, 2010).

In order to analyse the testimonial and correlate the identified key-actions with values, we will use the thematic analysis guidelines proposed by Erlingsson & Brysiewicz (2017) through pre-defined themes and categories. The two values proposed by Schwartz (2012) will be the predefined key-themes (universalism and benevolence), while the sub-values will be the sub-themes and they will be related with examples of attitudes and actions covering the “guesting” and the “hosting” perspectives, along with the forms of academic hospitality proposed by Phipps & Barnett (2007). The components of the circle of Service Learning as proposed by Brozmanova-Gregorova et al. (2020), i.e. empowering learning experience, community, creativity, knowledge, innovation, connecting, would be represented as ways for transitioning from power and achievement to universalism and benevolence.

## 4. Results

The main results of this narrative analysis consist in a conceptual model interconnecting the principles of academic hospitality with those of Service-Learning and a set of recommendations for Higher Education Institutions in implementing SL programs for visiting students. Also, the study aims at observing key elements for a better integration, such as proficiency in the official language of the host, readiness for action and volunteering motivation. The findings are presented for each of the research questions formulated by the authors.

### Step 1: Transcript of the narratives provided of the international student

*“In the end, we always arrive at the place where we are expected.”* (José Saramago). On December 4th, last year (2021), I arrived in Lisbon with just two pieces of luggage and with a dream to turn into reality - living in the country of Saramago. Even though my Erasmus+ fellowship was to start two months later I indulged myself in this experience of letting my family and friends a few thousand kilometres behind me just before Christmas and I left for Portugal.

Emotionally it was a lot, it was not easy to preview what will happen in this new country I have never visited before my long-term move to it. So many expectations tend to be tricky when dealing with the real experience. I loved the hilly geography of the city, I adored listening to Portuguese language, one I always found familiar even though it has very little to do with official Romanian, but more in terms of accent with my native dialect - Moldavian Romanian, which sounds like a Romanian with Russian accent and with a stressed-time pronunciation, as European Portuguese has. One month before departing I was listening only to Fado music, especially Ana Moura, which turned into my favourite singer that time, with her glimpse of a very emotional state and deep connection with her feelings, something I tended not to do lately in my life. Portugal started as a retreat experience for me, as a point of disconnection from my old habits.

My life was always a life of a “little adult”, always working, being involved in several projects, leading a business, training people that are my parents' age, giving interviews and really appearing as a successful young man with an already sorted-out life at only 23 years of age. In Bucharest I already had the recognition that many people don't have even when they worked a lot for their careers and are in their middle age. For some, this choice of mine of moving to another place when nothing was missing in my life back in my country sounded crazy, like a rupture, or for my family like a lack of gratitude for what I achieved, a sort of a *“it's never enough”* type of thinking. I was always asking for more from me, sometimes from others too, but mainly from me. My success expectations when I was a young poor village boy back in a little community in North-Eastern Romania were very limited. If I wouldn't have had this mentality of *“more and better”*, maybe my highest achievement in this life would've been becoming a schoolteacher in my village, maybe of history or biology.

But something gorgeous happened in my life when I was pretty young - I discovered reading. Reading - this very common but also extraordinary invention. For me, reading was a way of travelling, of being a guest in worlds I would've never explored otherwise. Reading was always hospitable to me, a feeling that my environment, even though my natal place, was not providing because I never felt like being a farmer or having a deep connection with my age fellows whose only dream was buying a car or marrying at 20 years, I felt being completely different and scarcely adapted there.

It took a long time and some significant events in my life until I discovered Saramago, already in my final year of high school, just before my Baccalaureate. That time I was meeting with my friend Vanessa, in a park in the eastern area of Bucharest, we both loved reading, so we had this joint ritual of sitting on a bench each of us with our book and spending some hours this way. I remember I was reading Irving Stone with his fictional biography of Michelangelo, while she was reading something...intriguing, something that made her pass from an emotion to another very fast, from agony to ecstasy, which actually was the title of my book, not of hers. Hers had a pretty boring name - The Elephant's Journey. A laughing crisis of hers made me stop at a certain moment and ask her who is so witty, while deep and wise that's being able to make her enjoy this emotional carousel, I'm an observer of. Her answer was confusing - now I can say she misspelt it - using the Spanish pronunciation of Jose Saramago's name. It was not confusing because of the pronunciation, but because I haven't heard of him until that moment, which was more shocking when she told me he is a Nobel Prize laureate.

One week I waited for Vanessa to finish the book in order to borrow it and read it - and then my journey with Portuguese culture started - with The Elephant's Journey, the Romanian edition. It has also a philosophical touch, as anything Saramago wrote has - that made me understand I actually am that elephant, all of us are. I have in mind a citation I loved "*In each elephant there are two elephants - one that struggles to learn everything and one that stubbornly ignores everything*", which is just a subtle manner of Saramago's intention of describing human nature. After finishing the book, a fever started and in one year I read all the books of this author translated in Romanian. When this happened, I moved to The Book of Disquiet of Fernando Pessoa and then I said I'll have to learn Portuguese and to read these two authors

in their native language. Also, at that moment one Romanian magazine published an article with the best countries to move and Portugal was the first one on the top. I remember exactly the moment I told Vanessa - "You know, maybe one day I'll be able to live there!".

Anyways, in the meanwhile life happened, I resigned my job as a board member in one of the best educational organisations in Romania, a tough decision that time, I established a business just before the Pandemic, I had to make this business grow and last in maybe one of the most challenging periods in recent history, I had to invest in my accreditations and competence as a trainer and coach, so there was no time for any Portuguese. Only after four years did I see the opportunity of finishing my master studies at Universidade Católica Portuguesa, which made me finally take my decision of moving to Portugal.

In my second day in Lisbon, December 5th, I went directly to the Foundation Jose Saramago, located in Casa dos Bicos in Lisbon and when I arrived, I read the huge letters on the windows of the main entrance: "Sempre chegamos ao sítio aonde nos esperam". It was a moment of pure awareness and presence, of a clear understanding that actually in this life we are visitors, we are constantly travelling, even though sometimes we are not moving, the wisdom of my favourite writer made that highschool child transform into a precocious adult with a well-established and deep interior life that has permitted the freedom of acknowledging how important is to follow your spirit even though sometimes the road is unclear, full of obstacles and harsh - it is because we always arrive at the place we are expected.

The next day I bought two books - "A Viagem do Elefante" - a brand new Portuguese anniversary edition of the book, celebrating 100 years from the birth of Saramago and from the Fernando Pessoa Museum a literary review of Miguel Real about the similarities between the two main figures of Portuguese culture, called "Pessoa & Saramago".

Two months I took online Portuguese language classes and in this period of time I reached a B2 fluence in European Portuguese, while practising it with my neighbours from Rua das Taipas, in the Downtown neighbourhood of Oporto, the city that is now my home. Exactly after these two months on February 9th I also had the first day of courses at the University and very soon I met Professor Isabel Baptista during a photo shoot I was involved in. Her appreciation of my Portuguese style boosted my confidence, and one month later, when we met during

the classes she gives at my specialisation I got to discover the concept of hospitality in a new, extensive approach that includes *academic hospitality*, which felt like having an incredible connection with my story of becoming a Portugal resident.

The entire community of Católica has a very natural approach to hospitality. The person in charge with the international programmes and mobilities, Professor Patrícia Oliveira-Silva with her warmth and welcoming attitude had the power to really make every international student feel at home at Católica. My first discussion with Professor Oliveira-Silva was online. She immediately treated me as being already a part of Católica, and accepted me in the Human Neurobehavioral Laboratory, a group of science-driven professors, PhDs and undergraduate students, all very kind and open to share their experiences and knowledge. A very special person I met at the laboratory is Ana Morena, a current PhD student in Applied Psychology whose work I appreciate enormously and gladly had the opportunity to better understand during an international conference organised by the Faculty of Psychology during the International Week of FCEP at the end of March 2022. In that week I had the pleasure of overseeing the branding of the programme and as a part of the organising team, I was spending time with our international guests presenting them the city and sharing my experience at the best Portuguese university. There were moments of pure joy and fulfilment during that week that will remain as key experiences in my life.

The photo shoot I previously mentioned was organised by Professor Oliveira-Silva and the marketing team of Católica. When she invited me to be a part of this project, I didn't really realise that the pictures were going to be used for promoting the image of the faculty. What can somehow be seen as funny is that every moment when the social media team uploads a picture that has my face on it, Professor Oliveira-Silva sends it to me with a nice caption and makes me think how cool it is that a Romanian Erasmus+ student gets to be the image of a Portuguese university. I see that as mastering hospitality and I feel a lot of gratitude each time I think about it.

The time passed very fast, but in the meanwhile, I had great learning and awareness moments during my master classes with all the teachers and the colleagues. Professors Cristina Palmeirão, Renata Machado, Diana Soares and Marisa Carvalho were all examples of great pedagogical talent and scientific ability. The

collaboration with Professor Isabel Baptista got a greater dimension after she honoured me by accepting my proposal by being a coordinator of my dissertation thesis in a cotutelle with my Romanian very dear collaborators, Professor Alina Rusu and Professor Daniel Andronache. As an expert in ethics, professor Baptista had a great contribution in my thinking about my work entitled "*Ethical Intelligence or Moral Intelligence: An integrative literature review in relation to organisational and educational leadership*".

Each meeting with professor Baptista is a positively challenging exchange of ideas, a provocative intellectual exercise and a fulfilling sincere human connection experience. The trust and the kindness professor Baptista expressed in our professional collaboration helped me contour not only my thesis, but also my academic path and my PhD plans. My most memorable day in Portugal will forever be the 18th of May 2022, the National day of Social Pedagogy, a day proposed by Professor Baptista herself that remains already for more than a decade the official celebration of social educators and experts in the field of pedagogy. There is an official event called *Encontros de Pedagogia Social*, organised by Professor Baptista and her team from the Master of Social Pedagogy that brings together experts from Portugal and other countries. The big proposal for me was being one of the official speakers in the event, being one of the three trainers in the workshops held during the event. My workshop *Ethical Intelligence - A Practical Approach* was the favourite of the public and was my first experience of public speaking in Portuguese. The energy of our group was remarkable, we were connected by significance, morality, vulnerability and empathy following the principles of the ethics of hospitality during one hour of great co-creation of an educational experience.

As I say at the beginning of all my trainings "*If you don't open yourself, you cannot be seen*", I truly believe that our openness to embrace otherness, diversity and newness is the main building factor of fruitful relationships, but our availability is not enough, we need also the availability of the others to see, to hear and to feel. Here, at Católica, I felt seen, heard and recognized and that was the only reason I had the chance to express my capabilities and to bring my contribution. I'll always be grateful to my Portuguese family that will stay in my heart and with which I'll further develop international projects that will grow and prove once more that education without educational communities of people that share the same

values is nothing, that learning without a human touch doesn't exist and that growth without being part of a nurturing social environment is not possible.

Thank you, Saramago, Católica and Portugal! Thank you for being my second home!"

**Step 2: Content analysis of the transcript (identification of codes within the predefined themes and sub-themes)**

Through the categorisation of the informational units, we aim to prove that the content of the narratives is useful in underlining the key-aspects needed for a university to become a hospitality-based ecosystem. In the figures below (see Figure 1 and Figure 2), we illustrate the process facilitating the motivation of students through Service-Learning to change / adjust their own values from a conservative, self-enhancement dimension to a self-transcendent one. Hence, values such as Power and Achievement could be replaced by Benevolence and Universalism (Schwartz, 2012).

Figure 1. Service-Learning components enhancing the transition from anxiety-based Power values to anxiety-free Universalism values



Figure 2. Service-Learning components enhancing the transition from anxiety-based Achievement values to anxiety-free Benevolence values



Table 1 presents the informational units and codes included in themes and categories, proving of the manifestation of growth and personal transcendence values through an academic hospitality lens.

Table 1. Information units and codes for the predefined themes. The quotes are extracted from the testimonial of the Erasmus student presented in the case study

Value Spectrum (predefined themes)	Value (categories)	Academic Hospitality (Material - M, Linguistic - L, Epistemological - E, Touristic - T)	
		Hosting	Guesting
Universalism	Broadminded	“While practicing it with my neighbours from Rua das Taipas” (L)	“I reached a B2 fluency in European Portuguese; I'll definitely have to learn Portuguese and to read these two authors in their native language (L)”
		“Were all examples of great pedagogical talent and scientific ability” (E)	“I had great learning and awareness moments during my master classes with all the teachers and the colleagues” (E)
		“We were connected by significance, morality, vulnerability and empathy following the principles of the ethics of hospitality during one hour of great co-creation of an educational experience” (E)	“We were connected by significance, morality, vulnerability and empathy following the principles of the ethics of hospitality during one hour of great co-creation of an educational experience” (E)
Equality	Equality	“With her warmth and welcoming attitude had the power to really make every international student feel at home at Católica” (M, T)	
		“When she invited me to be a part of this project I didn't really realize that the pictures were going to be used for promoting the image of the faculty” (M, E)	
	Social Justice	“The entire community of Católica has a very natural approach to hospitality” (M, T, E, L)	
		“Sends it to me with a nice caption and makes me think how cool it is that a Romanian Erasmus+ student gets to be the image of a Portuguese university” (E, T)	

		“There is an official event called <i>Encontros de Pedagogia Social</i> ” (E, T)	“The big proposal for me was being one of the official speakers in the event, being one of the three trainers in the workshops held during the event” (E)
	Inner Harmony	“Sempre chegamos ao sítio aonde nos esperam” (E)	“Dealing with the real experience” (E, T)
		“I truly believe that our openness to embrace otherness, diversity and newness is the main building factor of fruitful relationships” (E)	“I see that as mastering hospitality and I feel a lot of gratitude each time I think about it” (E)
Benevolence	Responsible & Honest	“All very kind and open to share their experiences and knowledge” (E, L)	“Whose work I appreciate enormously” (E)
		“Her appreciation of my Portuguese style boosted my confidence” (E, L)	“I felt seen, heard and recognized” (E)
	True friendship	“She immediately treated me as being already a part of Católica” (E, T, M)	“I had the chance to express my capabilities and to bring my contribution” (E)
		“A provocative intellectual exercise and a fulfilling sincere human connection experience” (E)	“I’ll always be grateful to my Portuguese family” (E)
	Helpful	“Trust and the kindness professor Baptista expressed” (E)	“I had the pleasure of being in charge of the branding of the programme and as a part of the organizing team” (E)
		“She honored me by accepting my proposal by being a coordinator of my dissertation thesis” (E)	“I was spending time with our international guests presenting them the city and sharing my experience at the best Portuguese university” (T)
		“...had a great contribution in my thinking about my work” (E)	“ <i>Ethical Intelligence - A Practical Approach</i> was the favorite of the public and was my first experience of public speaking in Portuguese” (E, L)
	Meaning in life	“Growth without being part of a nurturing social environment is not possible” (E, T, M)	“With a dream to turn into reality - living in the country of Saramago” (E)
			“There were moments of joy and fulfillment during that week that will remain as key experiences in my life” (E)
			“It was a moment of pure awareness and presence, of a clear understanding that actually in this life we are visitors, we are constantly traveling” (E)

## 5. Conclusions

For a modern education, oriented to holistically develop the individual and the community in a global, multicultural context, the proposed approach of linking hospitality and service in the community (Service-Learning or any other forms of civic engagement of students) can bring valuable applied values in terms of students’ exchange program based on cooperation agreements among Higher Education Institutions. International students usually express enthusiasm and willingness to be part of their new environment, i.e. to belong to their host HEI. Hence, a focus on strategies that are fostering belongingness as an important factor for their psychological comfort can

be considered an active contribution that could lead to fulfilment and a better overall international experience.

Besides the relational and civic aspects that our paper focuses on, it is important to be aware of that in the light of a new paradigm in education (centred on learning), the consideration for each student, for their personal history, for their values and truth, is relevant for their own educational success. In truth there is an unbreakable connection between the relational culture and the quality of the teaching-learning process. As stated by Bennett (2000) “*Without the mutual openness and reciprocity of hospitality, teaching becomes mechanical transmission of data, learning*



becomes receipt of information without internal impact.”

Being hospitable and caring as members of an academic community means that we are capable of positively interrelating in a setting of reciprocal validation - where the stranger can become your colleague or even though your friend, this being what takes us to the approach of a Pedagogy of Hospitality, extensive in all the dimensions of academic life (including curricula). When we talk about pedagogy, we talk about recognising the necessity of intentionally promoting workplaces that are caring and interactive, rich in humane and inclusive experiences.

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