

TRAINCREASE NEWSLETTER

HORIZON2020



October
2021

- Staff visit to AU
- Aarhus Workshop: Cultural Evolution in the Laboratory
- Tour of AU Facilities

November
2021

- Doctoral Network proposal (16 Partners across Europe, incl. all TRAINCREASE)
- Presentation of Traincrease at the Polish National Contact Point for EU Projects

December
2021

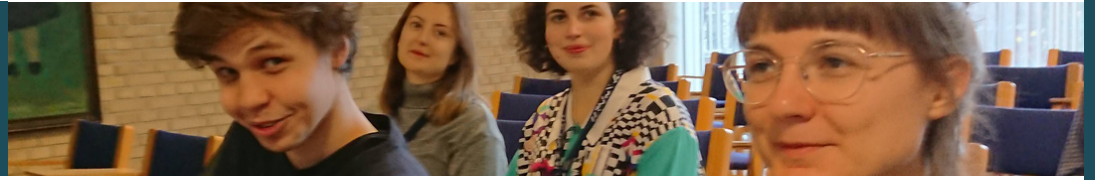
- Deliverable 4.2: Visual Identification & website of research group HILL
- Deliverable 5.1: Scenarios for outreach actions
- Milestone 1: Directions Paper accepted in PTB!

Greetings!

The end of the first year of Traincrease was highlighted by two large events: Experimental Semiotics Workshop “Cultural evolution in the laboratory” in October and the submission of the Doctoral Network proposal. The hospitality and generosity of the Aarhus Partners team were truly wonderful. The workshop allowed for an overview of the field of experimental semiotics and deep insight into the methods for studying the emergence of communicative systems. We also had a chance to try the methods and tools within hands-on projects, applying the new expertise to research problems in abstractness. The Doctoral Network application is the next logical step in sustaining the theoretical and methodological developments in research on the role of social interaction for emergence and use of abstract concepts and words. Please read on for more detailed descriptions.

In this Newsletter we also introduce the new Managing Team member, Ewa Nagórska and present other main activities of the past months. Finally, we offer a short summary of the first year – a daunting task in the face of the number and variety of activities we realized – and a peek into the incoming events in the next year.

We wish you a healthy and happy New Year, let it bring us good weather for the body and for the soul and many possibilities to meet and work together in person!



Cultural evolution in the laboratory:

how to experimentally investigate the emergence of abstract thinking

Aarhus, 28-29.10.2021

This year on October 27th-29th our first in-person event took place. During the workshop “Cultural evolution in the laboratory: how to experimentally investigate the emergence of abstract thinking” Traincrease Partners, as well as participating early stage researchers (ESRs) gathered at Aarhus University to dive into the Interactive Minds Center expertise, namely experimental semiotics. In total 31 people participated, including 15 from the University of Warsaw.



We have received a thorough review of the field of experimental semiotics, geared towards recognizing the interactive and cultural factors in the emergence of communicative systems. The second part of the workshop consisted of working on small group projects, with the aim to extend the applicability of the methods to the issues in abstractness. This part allowed for gaining actual hands-on experience and sparked collaboration between researchers at various stages of their career. The Aarhus Team presented also their science-art connection projects, an engaging way of science outreach and dissemination.

Workshop



Moreover, several microtwinning meetings took place. The collaborating teams had the opportunity to meet in person for the first time after the daunting online work during the pandemic isolation. As an additional activity, we visited AROs, Aarhus Art Museum, and were thrilled to see Olafur Eliasson's, James Turrell's and others' work together with an enchanting William Turner's exhibition "Sun is God".



Staff Visits & Tours

Training early stage researchers was only a part of our Aarhus visit. Traincrease project is dedicated to learning good practices for grant and science lab management. Workshop Participants had also visited the Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies, The Kitchen (University's Incubator), CodeLab, and the Interactive Mind Center lab facilities. This tour allowed us to feel the organization and atmosphere of these great places, as well as learn about the typical activities conducted there which we aim to implement in Warsaw.

Moreover, the four-way partnership has been designed specifically to help train Warsaw administrative staff, so the permanent changes could be implemented at the University of Warsaw in the future.

Therefore, one of The Management Team members - Adrianna Kucinska - went to Aarhus for a two-week visit to the Interacting Minds Centre, our Danish partner lab. Shadowing scientists, management, and administrative staff has been a deep dive into the everyday specifics of running a successful research institute within a university structure. Adrianna's experiences will help us identify weak points and processes in the existing UW's practices, and hopefully be a good start for designing a long-term strategy for developments at the University of Warsaw, which is one of Traincrease's goals. Her preliminary findings will be published through Traincrease channels to stimulate the discourse on academic best practices.

We would like to issue a special acknowledgements to all the Aarhus University employees who devoted their time to shows us AU's facilities during our time in Aarhus. We have learnt a lot from all of you!

Our visits in The Kitchen, AIAS, IMC and COBE Lab were inspiring experiences re-shaping our way of thinking about conducting research and promoting science. Moreover, it helped us to embrace a wide spectrum of tools a university can provide to help both early-stage and experienced scholars.

It was a pleasure to visit you.

THANK YOU

Below are the websites of our hosts:

[Interacting Minds Centre](#)

[Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies](#)

[The Kitchen community](#)

[CoBeLab](#)



Setting up the Doctoral Network

A steady development of the research area on abstract concepts and words requires building a task force of young researchers sensitive to these core problems in the cognitive sciences. The Horizon Europe initiative, Doctoral Networks, is a suitable action for training a network of new researchers in this field in a coordinated way. Prof. Anna Borghi and the Rome Team led the application for the Doctoral Network “*Abstract Concepts in Dialogue*” with all the Partners of the Traincrease involved. A group of 15 institutions, 9 beneficiaries and 6 associated partners, gathered their expertise to plan a network of the PhD positions with the aim to rethink the way we conceptualize the role of human sociality in abstractness and to use and develop new research methodologies. Thank you Anna, Luca and all for this hard work.



WE KEEP OUR FINGERS CROSSED FOR THE RESULT!



SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

Welcome, Ewa!

We are happy to announce that **EWA NAGÓRSKA** joined the Management Team at UW as of 1.01.2022. You can reach her: e.nagorska@student.uw.edu.pl



Ewa is working on her Master Thesis at the Cognitive Science programme. She is interested in temporality in human interaction and in reading. She has extensive experience in organizing scientific conferences and workshops.

As a president of the Student Association of Neurobiology at the University of Warsaw, she focused on promoting and popularizing neurosciences.

She's a huge fan of uniting humanities and mathematics, as well as integrating social and life sciences.

OUTREACH

Outreach scenarios

Researchers at the UW are eager to learn how to better disseminate the results of their research and how to interest the wider public in the core issues for the cognitive sciences, education and technology development.

The expertise present at the partnering institutions will help us create events for high schools, science fairs, exhibitions and media. Detailed plans for developing the expertise at the University of Warsaw have been designed and uploaded as a deliverable to the EU.

Outreach actions

On 26.11 the Traincrease Management Team was given a chance to hold a short presentation for the future Twinning applicants from Poland. The meeting, organized virtually by the EC National Contact Point in Warsaw, gathered almost 70 participants, most of them considering applying for the Widening EU actions.

The TRAINCREASE Principal Investigator Prof. Joanna Rączaszek-Leonardi presented the information on the origins of the Traincrease idea, the application process as well as tips for successful applications. Our Management Team answered multiple questions from the audience and took part in the follow up discussion.



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Overview

The first year of Trainincrease was devoted to learning in-depth about the work of each Partner in order to gain a better grasp of the possibilities for theoretical integration of the field of research on abstract concepts and words. During the **Kick-off meeting in January** Partners presented their theoretical foundations and the ongoing projects in their laboratories. The meeting was open to UW Faculty and colleagues and collaborators of all the Partners. Approximately 50 people participated live. Materials from this meeting are accessible on the [Trainincrease webpage](#).

The Kick-off meeting immediately led to several collaborative research ideas, which were points of crystallization for the **Microtwinning joint projects**. By the time of the first call for the Microtwinning, several research alliances were already coalescing, which led to **9** accepted applications for the first call only. At least **4 MA Theses at the UW Faculty of Psychology** are being currently realized within the Microtwinning, and each Microtwinning involves at least 1 ESR alongside other researchers.

The possibilities for deeper theoretical integration of the information-processing approach of the cognitive sciences and ecological and anthropological approaches to the issue of nature, emergence, and learning of abstract concepts and words were further explored at the **March Symposium led by Roma La Sapienza**. **22** prominent philosophers, anthropologists, cognitive scientists, linguists, and psychologists from around the globe gathered to present their take on the issue. Each session was followed by a roundtable discussion summarizing the theoretical challenges. The full video recordings from each day are available on the [Trainincrease YouTube Channel](#). Each day was viewed respectively 1313, 853, and 702 times! The Symposium made us realize the complexity and multifaceted nature of the problem, thus it was decided that we will apply for a possibility of editing a Special Issue in one of the most prestigious journals in the field: ***Philosophical Transactions B***. The team of Editors, led by Prof. Anna Borghi submitted the Special Issue proposal with **as many as 24 papers from various domains**. The proposal was accepted in July and by now we have already 11 manuscripts in the reviews, planning to close the submission process by the end of January.

Towards the end of the year, as it can be grasped from the present Newsletter, we entered the phase focused on research methodology, initiated by the **Aarhus Workshop**. In November, the University La Sapienza **submitted the Doctoral Network proposal**, geared towards further development of research in our chosen field. The proposal included all Traincrease Partners! We have also created a detailed plan for outreach and dissemination actions for the years 2022 and 2023.

The University of Warsaw has already benefited greatly from the Traincrease project – gaining insight on the way to proceed with planning and realizing research, administrative challenges and solutions, dissemination of results and outreach to the broader public. We are looking with hope for the coming years, anticipating further learning and exchanges of expertise and stabilizing the contacts and achievements.

Thank you, Partners, for all your time, work and generosity!

2022

What's next

We are looking forward to the activities planned for 2022:

- We will continue the process of integrating methodologies, which will be showcased during 3 workshops: University of Warsaw, Roma La Sapienza & Manchester University planned for April, May and September - observe our channels for details soon!
- We will test the feasibility of the methods integration in the existing and novel microtwinning (new calls will be announced soon!). The joint work of partnering institutions, with special places dedicated for young researchers, should result in presentations and thematic sessions at the upcoming conferences as well as first submitted papers in peer-reviewed journals.
- We are also looking forward to the visits among the Partners, both of the administrative staff and the researchers. Let's hope that the world situation will allow for in-person meetings: They are the best way to exchange experiences, compare the procedures and facilities and indicate ways of improvement. Learning requires real social interaction!



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Traincrease Newsletter is prepared and distributed by The Management Team at UNIWARSAW. Please [contact us](#) if you don't want to receive this Newsletter in the future.

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or

any of the Traincrease-dedicated social media channels:



Human Interactivity
and Language Lab