

Global Mobility Education, One Size Does Not Fit All!

Over the years, the GM function has become increasingly complicated and the importance of specific GM education manifest. But what is education, why is it so difficult to create education geared toward the GM domain, how do working professionals learn and what is so special about education for GM professionals?

This article brings some clarity into the different stages of a learning process and demonstrates why a one-size-fits-all approach is not only ineffective, but even hazardous when adding GM and GM working professionals to the equation.

Before 2008, there was hardly any interest in education in the area of Global Mobility. Not surprisingly, since the complexity of the disciplines was still manageable, the departments were adequately staffed, and there weren't any serious restrictions on financial resources for external consultancy and support. Moreover, governments were still struggling to get a grip on non-compliance of cross-border workers, and the occasional penalties and reputation damages were embarrassing, but not disruptive.

In 2008, things changed. Almost overnight, GM departments were confronted with severe constraints on resources due to the economic crisis. In the years to follow, the situation became even grimmer. Economic, political and demographic developments forced countries to protect their labour markets and national treasury. As a result, strict enforcement was introduced resulting in delays, extra costs, penalties and reputation damage, etc.

At the same time, business demands changed due to growing international competition and shortfall of talented employees. GM departments had to cope with diversification in assignment types and compensation approaches, the growing demand for flexibility and agility and the need for strategic support and solutions.

And last but not least, the profile of the assignee changed: the influx of generation X and Y brought new challenges in terms of work-life balance.

In this climate, GM staff started to feel the full weight of the shortcomings in knowledge and skills. The importance of education became obvious.

As a dedicated GM education institute,

we receive many requests for information about which learning solution would fit the requester best. Unlike what you might expect, answering this question adequately is not easy. After all, we're dealing with Education, Global Mobility and GM Working Professionals, a challenging and at first sight incompatible trinity.

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What Is Education

Not just the world of Global Mobility has changed dramatically, the world of education has too. New insights into learning and the development of learning technology opened up a playing field with unprecedented opportunities for education.

Without delving too deep into the world of education, to grasp the effectiveness of modern learning you need to distinct five stages: awareness, knowledge, understanding, skill and maintenance.

Stage 1

Awareness initiates learning provided there is an interest and a sense of urgency. Awareness is driven by data (facts and figures) and information (the context in which data is presented).

In practice, awareness is often confused with knowledge, but having read an article

or attended an event does not mean one has gained knowledge on the topic that has been discussed. Even worse, without knowledge to validate the underlying data and information acting upon this data and information is hazardous.

Stage 2

Knowledge is comprehension; the ability to perceive and interpret information correctly. Knowledge is gained by studying, repeating and testing. However, knowing does not mean understanding.

Stage 3

Understanding is instilled knowledge that has been built layer-upon-layer by repetition over a longer period of time. It enables you to reach a higher level of abstraction, consider subject matter from different perspectives and apply it strategically to different situations and purposes.

The path from awareness to knowledge and from knowledge to understanding needs a purposefully designed curriculum, defined learning objectives, proven methodology, skilled teachers, attuned study materials, substantial time investment and ... perseverance.

Stage 4

It's often presumed that knowledge and skill are identical, but that is not the case. Knowledge is about theory, skill is about performance. Skill is gained by experiencing in practice.

Stage 5

Knowledge and skill need maintenance. In a world as volatile as GM, ongoing education and training is imperative to prevent it from fading away or becoming obsolete.

Applying these principles into education programmes and training schemes demands a thorough understanding of the field in question.

Embedding Global Mobility In Education

The GM domain is a myriad of cross-border movements, stakeholders with competing (and often conflicting) interests, (academic) disciplines with a strong interdependency, and wide geographical spreading. To make embedding GM in education even more difficult, fundamental differences exist between organisations regarding GM roles, functions, competences and job titles. Moreover, the landscape is constantly changing in terms of statutory and regulatory

requirements, technology, internal organisation, business demands.

In this versatile domain, it is paramount education is versatile too. It doesn't make sense to put corporate GM professionals, HR business partners, relocation agents, tax consultants, etc. in the same class. But it also doesn't make sense to offer role-specific education without taking the variety of tasks within the role into account or disregard the other stakeholders in the value supply chain. Furthermore, in-depth assessment when basic knowledge is non-existent is pointless, as is a silo approach when the disciplines involved are so entangled with each other. In other words, GM education needs a high degree of diversification and at the same time a holistic approach.

We took up this challenge and created "new school" education based on competence-driven learning objectives, proven methodology, and an overall approach differentiated in perspectives and levels, from beginner to academic level.

There was just one challenge left: tailoring it to the GM Working Professional.

Pièce de résistance: Customising GM Education For GM Working Professionals

Every person is unique, has his/her very specific needs and preferences when it comes to learning. GM education must incorporate this individual approach, simply because diversification as described above is not enough to guarantee effective learning for working professionals in the GM domain.

What is so special about this category of learners compared to other working professionals, you may ask? Well, as opposed to other highly specialised professions, there was no intrinsic GM education and training available for a long time. This resulted in a generation of GM professionals who had to learn the profession by themselves or with the help of

colleagues who had to learn it themselves and are now feeling the ice cracking beneath their feet due to the fact that their knowledge and skills are no longer matching up to the demands of their environment.

This is a generation that is being torn between the increasing complexity of compliance requirements and priority claiming demands of the business, between strategic support of the business and constant change of organisational structure, between heavy workload and ongoing time and

budget constraints, between coming to grips with new technology and wanting the best assignment experience for their assignee.

To repair gaps in their basic knowledge, eliminate misconceptions, and bring them to the level that matches the required competences within the limitation of available time and budget, traditional learning – even if differentiated as described above – won't work. What they need to meet their individual purpose and potential is individualised learning based on a personal development path.



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Inge Nitsche LL.M. is a leading authority on Global Mobility education & CEO of the Expatisse Academy.

Her GM expertise originates from the early 1990's and the many expatriate management roles she has been involved in since then. Besides her passion for the GM field of work she has also been involved in research on teaching and learning while working for several universities. This combination of expertise led to the inception of the Expatisse® formula in 2002 and the founding of the Expatisse Academy, a not-for-profit education institute dedicated to providing individualised Global Mobility education.

About the Expatisse Individualised Learning Approach

Whether you choose a comprehensive course, a single on-demand course or a

handpicked selection of courses, the content is attuned to your interests and professional development path. We will support this personal learning strategy not only with teaching expertise but also with cutting edge technology that adapts to your level and pace of learning. Do you want to belong to the premiere league of highly educated and trained GM Professionals? Then join us:

- In September, the master course Global Mobility at Erasmus University Rotterdam will start, a comprehensive course at academic level, leading to level-4 certification
- In case you prefer a fully online course, have a look at our Elementary course
- Interested to gain knowledge in a specific topic when you're in need of it or when it suits you best? In September 2018 we will launch the Expatisse Educate Yourself Portal.

Visit our website (www.expatisse.academy) for information or send an email (learning@expatisse.academy).

Expatisse Academy: Gateway to worldwide recognition of the GM Profession

In 2010, Expatisse Academy was founded by visionary GM and Compensation & Benefits Leaders who were convinced that specialised education is the gateway to becoming a credible partner who can add value to GM stakeholders.

Nowadays, the Academy is a worldwide provider of proven individualised learning solutions and is actively supported by many influential followers who are well aware of the fact that life-long individualised learning is the most powerful investment in the future of Global Mobility. Together, we will survive the storm of outsourcing and offshoring, like we did before, provided you keep investing in yourself in terms of learning, don't settle for insignificant certifications and titles, and don't let yourself be discouraged by providers wishfully thinking their technology will replace the GM function. Believe in the complexity of the GM domain, in the importance of the GM function for the overall success of the company and above all ... believe in yourself, the human dimension that is indispensable in terms of empathy toward the company's most important asset, its Talents, but also indispensable for keeping technocratic decision makers on the right path. Global Mobility cannot work without GM specialists; anyone who claims otherwise does not understand the dynamics of the domain. We welcome passionate GM experts to join our movement and become our ambassador as Expatisse Advisor, Faculty Member, Education Partner or Knowledge Partner. Interested? Let me know.

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