



# INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES



## The ICCS micro-module – A collaboration of ECIU universities in organising student-driven education for intercultural competences development

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### Abstract

Within the context of the European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU), the University of Twente co-created a micro-module following the Challenge-Based Learning (CBL) pedagogy within a partnership of European universities. Our micro-module is centred around the development of intercultural competences through the framework of Citizen Science. The micro-module is a blended course consisting of a 2-ECTS online part (12 weeks) and an optional 1-ECTS addition (1 week) on-site at one of the collaborating institutions. The design of the course is embedded within the experiential and cooperative learning frameworks utilised by the Honours programmes of the University of Twente, from which this spin-off was formed.

### Course design

#### Online components (2 ECTS)

##### Team project

- Familiarising students with intercultural teamwork.
- Citizen Science proposal in an intercultural context.
- CBL framework.

##### Expert meetings

- On topics of culture, cultural research and Citizen Science.
- Sessions chosen from engaging selection of topics ('self-directed learning').
- Diverse experts from within our collaboration's network.

##### Coaching

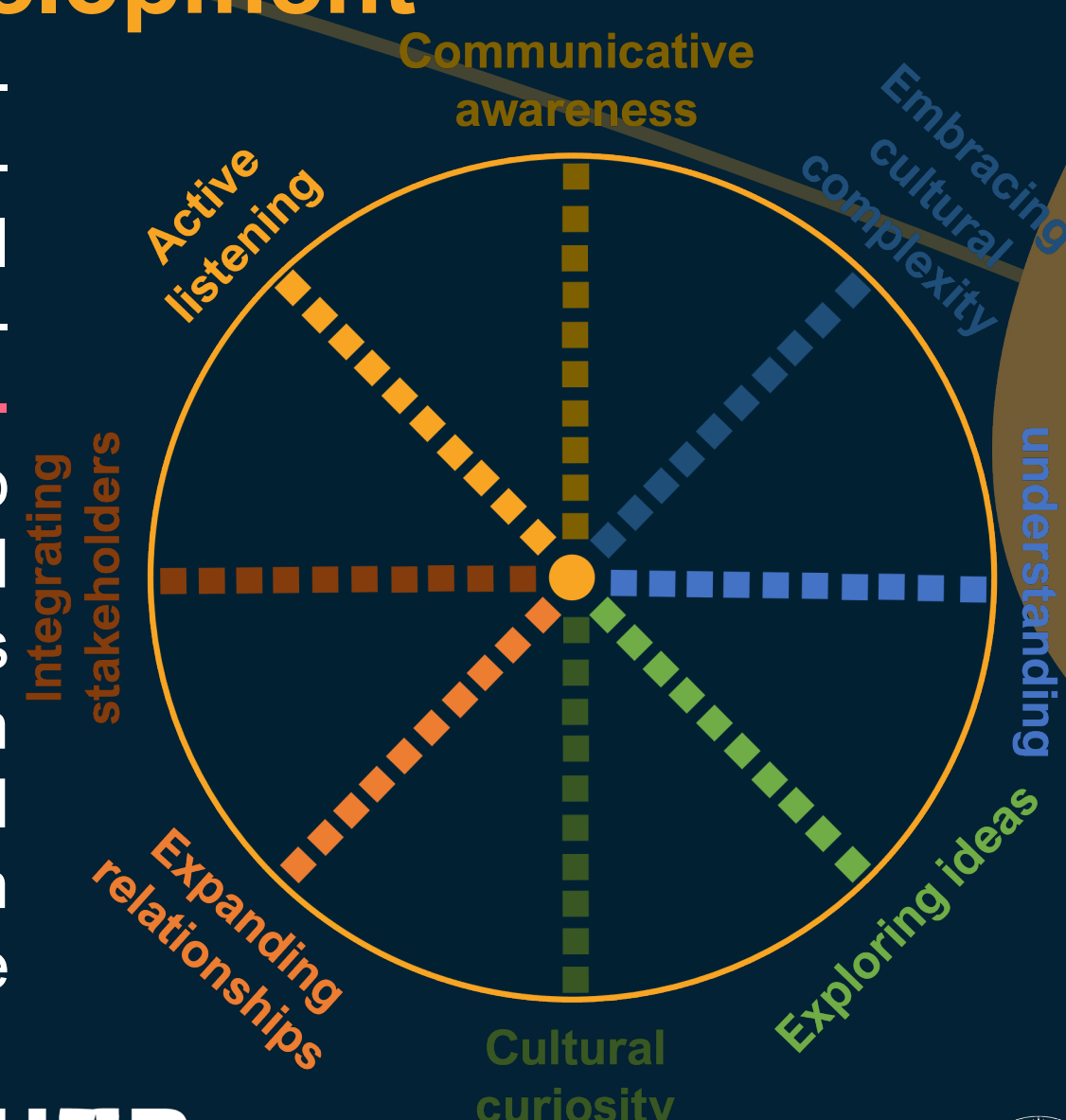
- Reflecting on team dynamics & intercultural communication.
- Four coaching sessions within groups.
- Coaches from within our collaboration's network.
- Separating project and coaching groups.

#### Add-on mobility experience (+ 1 ECTS)

- On-site workshop week at one of the collaborating institutes.
- Immersion in (local) culture, intercultural communication and Citizen Science workshops and project.

### Self-reflection and development

A central theme within our micro-module is continuous self-development on intercultural competences. For this, we developed a 'Development Acceleration Journal' (DAJ) to help students scaffold their learning and coaching. In addition, students reflect on their development through four mini-reflections that helped guide students on how to learn ('lifelong learning') throughout the module.



### Educational framework & collaboration

The course facilitates flexible learning paths for students in their intercultural competences development. This form of self-directed learning, supported by team coaching, was utilised within a cooperative learning framework, allowing students to learn both with and from each other. Specifically, students purposefully work together to compare information, inform one another of relevant cultural importance and come to an understanding of their own team dynamics. Our use of CBL here moves beyond the standard integration of academia across society and includes crossing perspectives in a cultural sense.

In our collaboration, we have created an initial proposal for the course which has been expanded together with our partners. There is a shared responsibility for the education, which allows experts and coaches from the different higher education institutes to join in our design-based and flexible educational innovation. To facilitate and further our collaboration, we organise online meetups and physical mobilities for staff members to jointly discuss the continued development and evaluation of our micro-module.

### Learning points & future perspective

This micro-module has been previously run in February and in November 2022. It is currently being prepared for a third edition to take place in November 2023. While the previous evaluations have shown a strong appreciation for the flexibility and student-centeredness of the course, continuous improvements are made for the course coherency and overall collaboration both flexibly throughout the module and in post-run evaluations. For the upcoming run, the micro-module aims to further include more staff-centred needs of using the course as a (research) opportunity for innovative education. We further aim to support connections across universities and to move towards a common language of intercultural coaching both within the ECIU and in this collaboration.



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