



INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES



The ICCS micro-module - A collaboration of ECIU universities in organising student-driven education for intercultural communication 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 and Citizen Science.
- Three weeks of flexibly organised sessions.
- Diverse experts from within our collaboration.

Coaching

- Reflecting on team dynamics & intercultural communication.
- Four coaching sessions within groups.
- Coaches from within our collaboration.
- Upcoming run: 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, Citizen Science and intercultural communication.

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. 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 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 run in **February 2022**, **November 2022** and **November 2023**. Evaluations of the course have shown a strong appreciation for its flexibility and student-centeredness. Continuous improvements are made for the course coherency and overall collaboration. The micro-module aims to further include more staff-centred needs of using the course as a research opportunity and connecting platform across universities and to move towards a **common language** of intercultural coaching both within the ECIU and in this collaboration.



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