



INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES



Scaffolding the development of intercultural competences through a micro-module using the CBL pedagogy: a collaboration of 7 ECIU universities

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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 **seven 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

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

Expert meetings

- On topics of culture and Citizen Science.
- Three weeks of flexibly organised sessions.
- Experts from within our collaboration.

Coaching

- Team dynamics and intercultural communication.
- Four coaching sessions with the team.
- Coaches from within our collaboration.

Add-on mobility experience (+ 1 ECTS)

- On-site workshop week at one of the collaborating institutes.
- Immersion in (local) culture, Citizen Science and team dynamics.

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 reflected on their development through four **mini-reflections** that helped guide students on *how* to learn ('**lifelong learning**').



Educational framework & CBL

Within the collaboration, there is a shared responsibility for the education that allows experts and coaches from the different institutes to join in our **design-based** and **flexible** educational innovation.

The course facilitates flexible learning paths for students for 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. CBL allows students to not only create societal impact based on their own wishes and learning needs (therefore integrating disciplinary and societal perspectives) but also includes the integration of cultural perspectives. CBL is used as a framework to intuitively guide students to develop their intercultural competences alongside their peers.

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 **Autumn 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 and connecting platform across universities and to move towards a **common language** of intercultural coaching both within the ECIU and in this collaboration.

