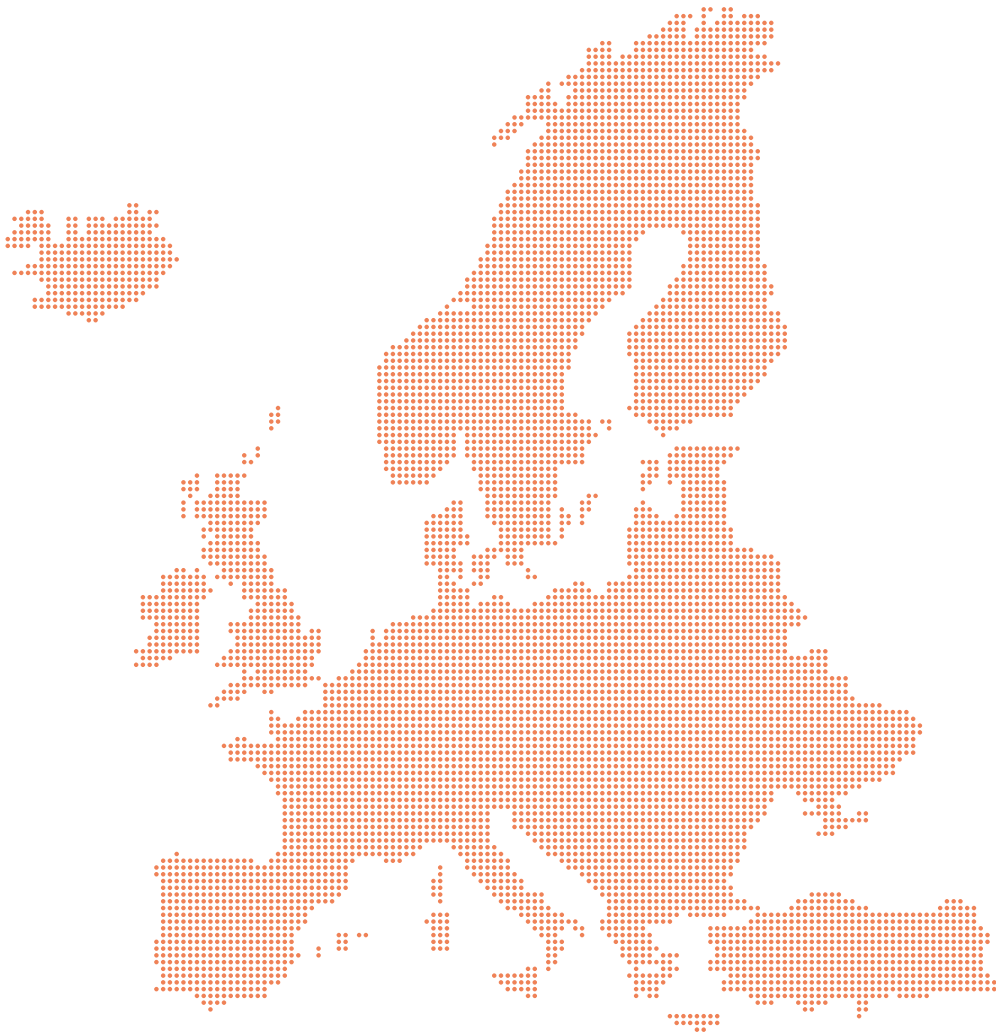




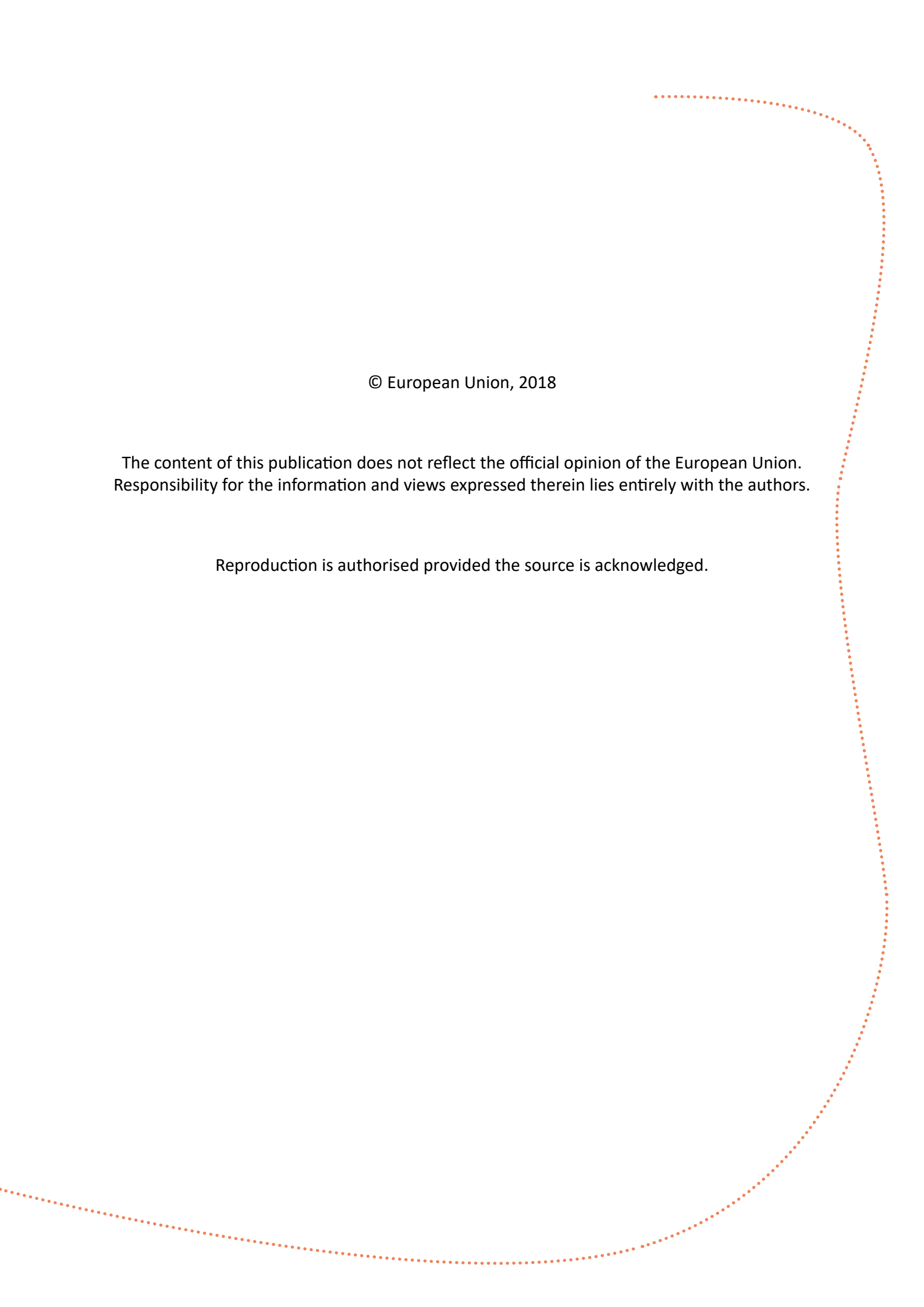
**Connect**

Intercultural Learning Network  
Connect! Share! Learn!

# Manual Online Curriculum and Experience Map



Funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



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# 1. Preface

Every year, thousands of young people participate in the EU Erasmus+ programme to volunteer, study or work abroad, and gain intercultural experience. The Erasmus student exchange programme celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2017, reaching the three million student mobility target in 2013 (European Commission 2014). All these programs foster intercultural learning and understanding of the host country, as well as oneself. Pedagogical support through intercultural training enables participants to systematically reflect upon their experiences in their host culture, which improves learning outcomes of their exchange.

In order to tap into the full potential of the intercultural learning experience, participants need to have access to comprehensive individual learning tools. In non-formal youth exchanges, pre-departure, mid-stay and re-entry trainings are common practice, usually taking place in face-to-face learning settings. At the same time, in this age of digitalisation, demands for free and open access to online courses increase immensely, not only in higher education. And this is precisely where 'Connect – Intercultural Learning Network' came in: bringing together experts from the university and youth sector, Connect has created an innovative intercultural learning scenario to support Erasmus+ participants before, during and after their exchange.

Connect has created face-to-face learning curricula for pre-departure and re-entry to support Erasmus+ participants' during their preparation phase, to ease the beginning of their immersion in a foreign culture, and also for their return, when everything back home still seems the same, but also very different. In addition to that, the whole exchange is accompanied by an online curriculum that invites participants to go through online learning modules on an e-learning platform. All modules are designed to help the participant reflect upon learning experiences during the different stages of the exchange, and to make the most out of it. These experiences can then be collected and shared on the Experience Map in the form of reports, as well as useful information and

links regarding the host community.

This manual introduces the face-to-face curriculum for pre-departure and re-entry. Besides giving background information on the project and the methodology of the curricula, it enables a deep insight into the implementation of the different learning modules and their content. The manual was created for exchange institutions (youth exchange organisations and higher education institutions) who wish to support the learning experience of their own exchange participants.

## 2. Introduction

In these times of increasing digitalisation, education too is more and more taking place online. This is an advantage in many ways, as it makes learning flexible. Depending on the format, learners can access online learning platforms at their own time and pace. The online modules of the Connect learning scenario were created in a self-manageable way, thought-provoking and encouraging (self-)reflection upon the participants' experiences abroad.

Nevertheless, classroom learning has its advantages, too. In direct contact with their advisor and peers, participants have the chance to discuss relevant topics for their upcoming or past intercultural experience. Therefore, the Connect learning curriculum is delivered in a blended learning format, getting the best out of each setup and phase. In both, the pre-departure and re-entry stages, motivation, insecurities and other topics related to international exchange can be shared and discussed with peers who find themselves in a similar situation, bringing in different points of views to support each other. The content of the face-to-face training encourages individual development by covering these relevant themes, and by creating interactive classroom settings for enhanced learning by harnessing the potential of the group. While participants bring in the important thoughts, reflection processes are guided by the advisor.

During the one-day pre-departure training, participants deal with the topic of culture, their own cultural awareness and perception of culture, and what to keep in mind when acting in intercultural settings; they get the chance to receive culture-specific information, and an introduction to the concept of 'narrative competence' – which, apart from sharing experiences in general, is also especially important to know for future posts on the Experience Map.

During the one-day re-entry training, participants have the opportunity to reflect upon their time abroad, and upon how they and their environment have changed since their return. They learn how

interculturality is a key competence in their lives now, and how to make the most out of it. Apart from this, participants receive an insight into the field of intercultural mentoring, i.e. how they can use their newly gained skills to support future exchange participants. This may be extended by participating in the Connect Mentors' Training (more information on the website: [www.weconnecteurope.eu](http://www.weconnecteurope.eu)).

### 2.1. About this manual

#### 2.1.1. How to use this manual

This manual gives advisors an overview of the content of the different online modules of the Connect learning curriculum. As all these modules are structured in a self-manageable way, participants should be able to make their way through them by themselves. Nevertheless, this manual gives some additional information regarding aims and background information that can be helpful (1) when it comes to support of participants during the use of the online modules, and (2) when it comes to understanding the whole picture of the Connect curriculum and to prepare the students for the engagement with the modules. It also includes an introduction to the Experience Map. Both the modules and the Experience Map should ideally be introduced to participants during the face-to-face pre-departure training by the advisor to smoothen the introduction phase. With the support of this guide, advisors should also be able to answer any questions the participants may have, and to give an overview on what to expect.

The overview on each online module is structured in the same way as in chapter 3: after an introduction and an outline of the learning objectives, each activity on the Connect online learning platform is explained regarding aims and tasks; this may include additional background information and solutions to the tasks that participants take online. Wherever useful, in the attachment you can find material that the module is based on.

A brief overview on the Connect project – in order to understand the content of

this manual in the context of the whole curriculum – can be found in chapter 2.2. Chapter 2.3. gives an overview on how the modules were constructed and which methodology and theoretical background it is based on. This is important to understand the educational idea behind the curriculum. The underlying model, the didactic rhombus spiral by Jürgen Bolten, is described in detail so that the reader can easily follow each learning unit.

Chapter 3.1 contains the module before going abroad, chapter 3.2 those for the participants' time abroad and chapter 3.3 the module for the re-entry phase.

### 2.1.2. Target group

This manual is for Connect Advisors who are going to support outgoing participants before, during and after their stay abroad. Advisors are usually staff members at exchange institutions, such as Erasmus student-exchange coordinators at higher education institutions, or pedagogical staff at non-formal educational institutions who accompany participants e.g. during a European Voluntary Service experience.

In general, this manual is written in a way that ensures that anybody can take and apply it. It guides anyone in the advisor role through the learning process. Detailed descriptions of the activities and background information provide advisors with all the necessary knowledge to support their participants.

## 2.2. About Connect

“Connect – Intercultural Learning Network“ (short: Connect) is a cross-sectoral project bringing together experts from the university and youth sectors to create an intercultural learning scenario for Erasmus+ participants. It has been funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union (Key action 2 – Strategic partnership) over a period of three years. During the project duration from September 2015 until August 2018 partners from all over Europe collaborated virtually as well as in project meetings to design the innovative intercultural learning program. The partners from the higher education sector are: Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

(Poland), Fernando Pessoa University (Portugal), Friedrich Schiller University Jena (Germany), Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (Finland), Karlshochschule International University (Germany), University of Limerick (Ireland), University of Urbino “Carlo Bo“ (Italy), University of Vic - Central University of Catalonia (Spain). The partners from the youth sector are AFS Interkulturelle Begegnungen e.V. (Germany) and InterCultur gGmbH (Germany).

Connect promotes intercultural learning through a combination of online learning and face-to-face training. The online learning modules ensure that all participants can work at their own pace to generate an intercultural learning path before, during and after an exchange program. The modules and learning activities serve as the basis for further individual and group reflection and experimentation during face-to-face training components and during their stay abroad. On the Experience Map, participants are then able to gather and store experience reports, pictures and short videos regarding their host locations. This consumer-to-consumer generated platform makes it possible to directly link experiences to a network where participants can exchange and discuss intercultural experiences as well as useful information about the different exchange locations. This data pool of information will fill up from generation to generation, ensuring regular updating by new exchange participants.

The entire Connect intercultural learning scenario contains the following elements:

## Pre-departure

**Face-to-face training** at the home institution together with peers. Introduction to the exchange programme and the online platform. Intercultural learning activities: what is culture; intercultural self-awareness and perception; intercultural acting; narrative competence.

**Online module 1:** get hungry for new experiences; key concepts of intercultural communication

## Experience Map

Throughout the whole exchange experience, useful links and experiences can be shared on the Experience Map.

## During stay abroad

**Online module 2:** coping with uncertain situations within the new environment

**Online module 3:** experiencing the stay abroad as an enrichment

**Online module 4:** learning how to share experiences in an interculturally sensitive way

## Re-entry

**Online module 5:** thinking back and moving forward

**Face-to-face training** at the home institution: reflecting upon experience abroad; interculturality as a key competence; intercultural mentoring

*Upon request, the face-to-face trainings can be implemented by professional intercultural trainers.*

## Mentors' Training (optional)

Participants who have returned from their stay abroad are welcome to join the Mentors' Training to qualify as mentors for intercultural exchange experiences. The training develops skills related to mentoring, project and event management, presentation and PR skills, and other useful areas.

*Upon request, the Mentors' Training can be implemented by professional intercultural trainers.*

## After the Connect learning cycle

Participants can apply their intercultural competencies and enthusiasm by organizing projects and events for exchange communities, at their home institution or beyond, to inspire more young people to undertake intercultural exchange experiences. Intercultural mentoring programs at institutions can benefit greatly from Connect participants' intercultural skills and knowledge.

### Benefits for educational institutions:

- An innovative intercultural learning scenario for your Erasmus+ participants before, during and after the exchange
- an interactive and easily accessible e-learning platform
- proven methods from both the non-formal youth education and academic education sectors to support the exchange experience
- curricula without licence fees
- application guides for education institutions, easy implementation of the Connect learning program
- certification of participants' intercultural learning journey

### Advisors' Training

Using the Advisors' manual, institutions can implement Advisors' Training to qualify staff members to carry out the Connect learning scenario at their institution. The training includes:

- An introduction to the Connect learning curricula (face-to-face and online) and Experience Map
- Intercultural learning basics
- Experience-based learning methods for the implementation of the face-to-face trainings
- Upon request, the Mentors' Training can be implemented by professional intercultural trainers.

All manuals (face-to-face and online curriculum, Mentors' and Advisors' manuals) can be downloaded from [www.weconnecteurope.eu](http://www.weconnecteurope.eu).

## 2.3. Connect Online Curriculum

Connect has designed a virtual intercultural learning curriculum for all phases of an intercultural exchange experience: before, during and after the time spent abroad. After the face-to-face interaction with the advisor and peer exchange during the pre-departure training, participants will be able to support themselves during their experience through the online modules. Despite taking place online, the modules are structured in a way that participants can find answers to their questions. The modules are diverse in regard to content, activities and methods, which makes each module interesting and keeps participants' motivation high. Nevertheless, it will be part of the advisor's role to animate participants to actually take the modules while abroad, as it will need some extent of self-discipline to go through these extra tasks. Therefore, it will help to emphasise the usefulness of the module's content.

The following chapter describes the theoretical

background and methodology of the online curriculum. Chapter 3 describes the different modules in detail.

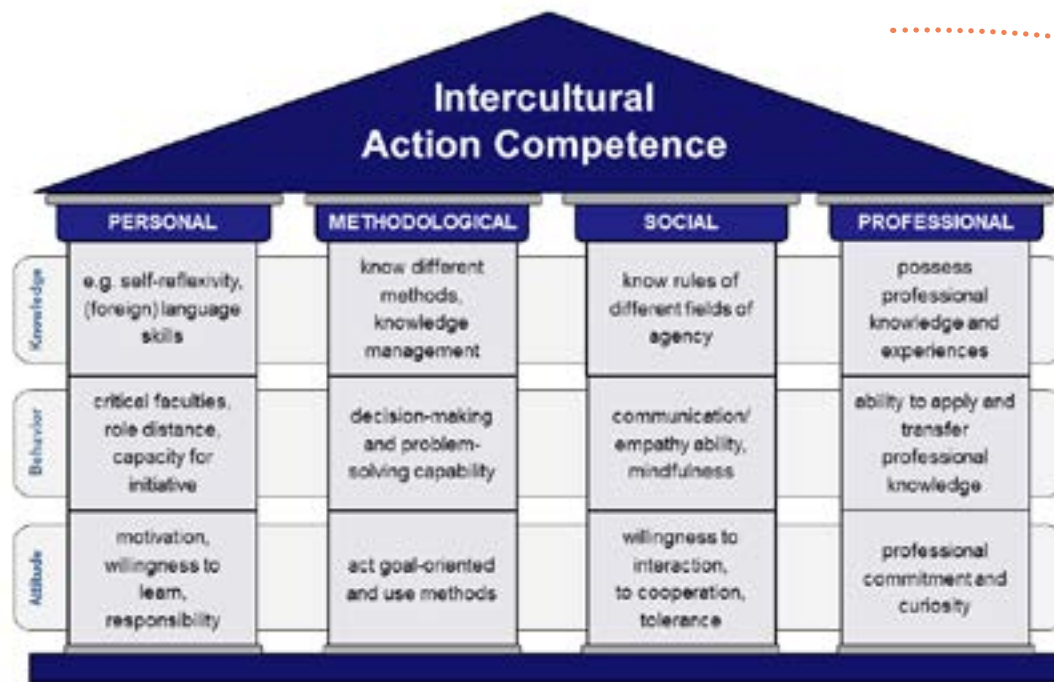
### 2.3.1. Theoretical background

The learning objectives of all modules within Connect are based on the model of intercultural action competence developed by Jürgen Bolten. This model combines two structural systems of intercultural competence in a matrix with the following categories:

- 1) knowledge, behaviour and attitude
- 2) personal, methodological, social and professional competence (active competence)

The three dimensions in the structural model (knowledge, behaviour and attitude) can be easily integrated into the four competence categories of the





Intercultural Action Competence model by J. Bolten.

process-oriented model. Intercultural competence simultaneously includes personal, social, methodological and professional competence. Characteristics like "openness", "flexibility", or "cultural awareness" would represent features of personal competence while "intuition" and "ability to communicate" are aspects of social competence and "having realistic expectations" belong to the category of methodological competence.

We can describe intercultural competence as the effective integrated interaction between personal, social, methodological and professional competence in an intercultural context. "Intercultural competence" must therefore be understood as a process, and not a static phenomenon that can be limited to unchanging personal and social clues sometimes referred to as "soft skills". As the process model accounts for the influence of methodological and professional competence (e.g. strategy and expertise), as well as the social and personal competencies, the resulting interplay between these competence categories includes the factors known as "hard and soft factors" in human resource development circles.

Therefore, one can be considered "interculturally competent" when he/she is aware of and able to effectively balance personal, social, methodological and professional criteria in an intercultural

environment. Intercultural competence also requires the establishment of effective synergies between the foreign culture and one's own culture. This balancing act between the foreign and the familiar might include the active negotiation and implementation of one's own communicative habits, but the idea of "balance" doesn't simply mean that all four of the integral competencies must be present in equal amounts. It also means that "intercultural competence" is never a universal concept that can be defined outside of situational or cultural specifics.

Connect modules are based on this model. Learning objectives that had been formulated for the Connect learning scenario have been divided within the matrix described above. The content development of the modules proceeded according to these criteria. The overview of learning objectives of each module is prefixed to its description and detailed outline for instruction.

### 2.3.2. Methodology

The methodology of the Connect face-to-face curriculum is based on two interlinking concepts:

- The didactic rhombus spiral: a didactic design and overview of conditions

for sustained learning, by Jürgen Bolten, Friedrich Schiller University Jena.

- The experiential learning cycle: a four-stage model for effective learning, by David A. Kolb, Experience Based Learning Systems, Inc.



### The didactic rhombus spiral: didactic design and conditions for sustained learning

From the perspective of constructivist learning theory, one may understand teaching as a design science (Baumgartner/Bergner 2014, 164). Supported by cognitive and action theory (c.f. Dewey 1910/2002), the aim is to design learning processes in a way that is structured consistently, but at the same time offering learners as much room as possible for self-realisation.

When developing such a training design with structured learning phases, the challenge consists in structuring a motivational learning process, which enables sustained learning. At the same time these structural aspects (such as the learning phases) also have to be disentangled from the learning processes' dynamic; so that they remain unnoticed by the learners.

We distinguish five diverse learning phases which in combination may be understood as the 'didactic rhombus spiral'.

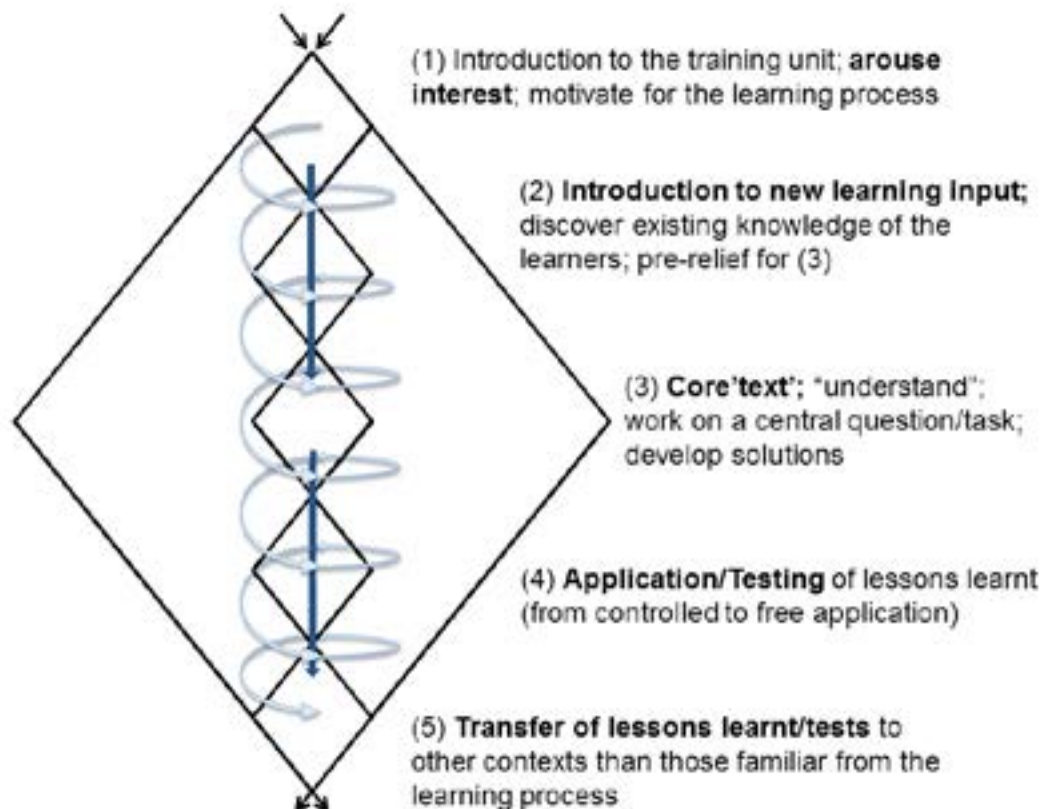
To clarify the interaction among the five learning phases in a training unit, one may imagine the figure of a rhombus: ideally, the learning process is oriented towards a core task (3), whose

understanding/solving is gradually prepared (1), (2). The sustainability of the learning process is ensured by a more-or-less controlled application/testing phase (4) and finally by a free, independent and action-orientated transfer phase (5).

Ideally, each training unit is based on a preceding learning process, and is prepared in accordance with another, subsequent learning process. Thus, a learning spiral is produced – or, to maintain the metaphor, a rhombus spiral.

From a micro perspective, a single training unit may consist of several small 'rhombuses' that strengthen the trained knowledge.

It may be helpful from the trainer's perspective to remember the image of the rhombus spiral when designing a training programme, even though it is idealised and remains hidden from the learners; it should help to design a consistent and sustained learning process.



### Phase 1:

The aim at the beginning of the training unit is to 'pick up' the learners: not just from the 'inner world' built upon their previous experience and knowledge, but also from their attitude towards the learning scenario.

Hence, the first phase is about opening the learners to the learning process and making existent knowledge transparent. This is the best way to create a common base for the learners in order to lead to the following questions and scopes of the learning unit.

### Phase 2:

In the introductory phase the learners were 'picked up', introduced to the subject and motivated to learn. The next step is about using the common base to gain new knowledge and experience – the aim here is to prepare learners for the learning objective.

In language teaching, for example, 'pre-relief' means to introduce new terminology or grammatical knowledge so that the learners can understand a subsequently presented text more easily.

During intercultural training, and ultimately in any random process of controlled learning, something similar happens: analogous to a delivery of building materials or tools, the primary aim at first is to become familiar

with the new material.

Just as it wouldn't make sense to translate a text whose lexical-grammatical elements one does not understand, it is also not advisable to present ad hoc complex information. In order to decide how much 'pre-relief' is necessary it is important to know, approximately, the existent knowledge and experience of the target group.

The introduction of new content should always be undertaken with regard to the objective: what is important are items which are clearly necessary for resolving the problem or task. There is a danger that distributive methods (via lectures, educast, reading of texts, etc.) may provide too much input. This makes it too difficult for the learner to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant material, and the learner may give up when faced with the volume of new information. In this case, a sustained 'intake' of information is unlikely to occur. In the event of different existent knowledge or levels of education among the learning group, it may be helpful to start discussions by asking open questions: in this way, participants may help one another by explaining things to each other (similar to peer-to-peer procedures).

### Phase 3:

As long as the new learning input is consciously chosen with regard to the objective, the related question or task should be easier to resolve. Maintaining, or even increasing, the participants' motivation with regard to learning success is only possible by respecting these 'preconditions of solvability'.

In this respect, this processing/working phase (preceded by the content introduction) constitutes the core of the training sequence. Taking up once again the analogy with language teaching: on the base of introduced terminology or grammatical structures, the following learning phase is about understanding and working on the 'core material'.

Intercultural training sequences consist of comparable core texts, with the term 'texts' here understood broadly; it includes classic text styles as well as games, movie sequences, images, scenic performances, noises, etc. It always refers to a learning 'object' or subject area. The training sequence aims at processing/understanding those.

The newly gained understanding and experience from the pre-relief phase as well as the introduction of the content are, as shown, to facilitate this process.

Some examples of working with core material in intercultural training are: (group) reflection upon a case study text; the interpretation of images, graphics, cinematic or scenic performances; and working on tasks in relation to defined problems or questions.

Regarding the content, it would be advisable to choose pointed, expressive and small-scale 'texts', depending on the available amount of time. Photographs, short newspaper reports or film clips often offer more complex reasons for reflection than extensive non-fiction texts. A didactic advantage here is that the dynamics of the learning process are no longer inhibited by long phases of working in silence.



Source: Learning pyramid based on: Cone of Learning of Edgar Dale (1969)  
Cf. Kowalski, Axel; Geyrhofer, Hans (2014): Education and Technology: An encyclopedia. IJTCU, P. 161

### Phase 4:

Many learning cultures stand out due to a prioritisation of cognitive learning objectives over conative and affective ones. In such contexts, it appears quite plausible that a learning process seems to be completed after the third learning phase: facts are understood and therefore, from a cognitive point of view, an important learning objective is achieved.

Under aspects of an integral and sustainability-oriented understanding of learning processes, one can say that this is at most an interim target.

Sustainable intake of knowledge (→ 'intake' instead of 'input') is mainly provided by applying and testing of what has been learned. However, the given percentages in E. Dale's learning pyramid (1969) should only be seen as an orientation: it's obvious that sustainable learning requires active as well as action-oriented interaction in the sense of 'learning by doing'.

With this in mind, the fourth phase refers to the results of the third one: it is all about independent application of the newly learned content.

Analogously, it is the step from 'reading a manual' to 'looking more closely at the device' to finally 'trying out and using the device'.

When one wants to put something into practice which is only known from a theoretical perspective, it is useful to firstly be taught by someone. After having had appropriate practice and training, one may then try it on one's own.

Therefore, a distinction is made between the phase of instructed application and the phase of free application. It may be necessary, depending on the target group, to accompany group work during the training application phase more intensively. Without such control at the beginning, it may result in some kind of aimlessness or frustration within the group.

#### Phase 5:

The fifth phase is the final learning phase of a training sequence. Its aim is to independently apply gained competencies from the preceding learning phases in other contexts.

The situation corresponds to that of a learner driver who has passed the practical driving test based on theoretical knowledge he/she had studied before. After having passed the test, he/she has to find his/her way in completely different areas (A) beyond those of his driving lessons, and (B) when driving alone and not being instructed. This only works well when the transfer of the learned knowledge onto the unknown and unfamiliar contexts succeeds – an intercultural challenge par excellence.

In the field of intercultural learning, you may find an analogous situation when leaving the secure 'classroom discourse' and applying the gained competencies in free project work. As an example, from the trainers' perspective this is the case when the participant is capable of adapting a compiled and tested training sequence to other target groups or training scenarios.

### 2.3.3. Learning modules

Following the theoretical background and the methodology described above, the online modules of the Connect intercultural learning offer a diverse and interesting setting for self-directed learning. All modules include the different steps of the didactic rhombus. This structure makes it easy for participants to follow the sessions. Beginning with activation activities, participants receive material to consider – either a text or video clip. Allowing some time to work on material regarding the respective topic, participants then get the chance to apply their new knowledge in an activity.

The topic of each module stands for itself. Still, they were structured in a logical order for an experience abroad, and therefore, they build on one another so that the spiral structure is constructed when working one's way through the modules. This allows the participant to go through a holistic learning experience, provided that s/he is taking the module in an engaged and serious manner.

The online curriculum of Connect covers the following topics:

- Hungry for new experiences
  - The adventure begins in your head!
  - Mainstream – my stream
  - Now it's your turn!
- Key concepts of intercultural communication
  - Communication
  - Culture
  - Interculturality
- Coping with uncertain situations
  - Uncertainty, ambiguity, (in)competence and negotiation
  - A game book: make your own decisions under uncertainty
  - Short stories: identifying uncertainty management strategies
  - Your own uncertainty story
- Experiencing a stay abroad as enrichment
  - Understanding identities
  - Engagement in a global world
  - Synergy
  - Communication conventions
  - Communication strategies – meta-communication & written communication
  - What would you do in these situations?
- Sharing experiences
  - Associations, forms, experiences, importance
  - Storytelling
  - DAE model (reflection)
  - Share your story from your experience abroad!
- Coming home. Thinking back and moving forward
  - Making sense of your experience
  - Knowing more: settling back in
  - Developing creative strategies that help reintegration
  - Passing the torch
- Experience Map

### 3. Online curriculum

#### 3.1. Before stay abroad

##### 3.1.1. Module 1: hungry for new experiences & key concepts of intercultural communication

##### 3.1.1.1. Learning objectives

	<b>Personal Competence</b>	<b>Methodological Competence</b>	<b>Social Competence</b>	<b>Professional Competence</b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	To become acquainted with the theoretical fundamentals of intercultural communication processes (bridging the gap between multiculturalism and interculturality)	To know the difference between intercultural and uncertain situations; To know how to handle uncertain situations	To know about the specific conditions of intercultural relationship building	To know the state of the art of the (scientific) situation and field of studies at the host institution; To know the cultural aspects of academic/ work styles
<b>Behaviour</b>	Be curious and look forward to going abroad; Be able to reflect upon own experiences	Be able to transfer the knowledge into practice of intercultural interacting	Be able to build glocal sustainable relationships	Be able to transfer expert knowledge in the field of studies/work at the host institution
<b>Attitude</b>	Be willing to see the stay abroad as a possibility to experience something new; Be ready to reflect upon experiences	Be motivated to use methodological tools	Be empowered to live in an uncertain way	Have self-belief to realise the transfer of knowledge

### 3.1.1.2. Overview of activities

#### 3.1.1.2.1. The adventure begins in your head!

##### Aim

Participants will prepare their stay abroad and their future work on the Experience Map.

##### Task

I'm sure you've already gathered information about where you are going. You definitely have images in your head of what to expect. Maybe you've already been to the place you're going to? Whatever the case, this introduction is to help you prepare for your stay abroad and for your work on the Experience Map.

Thanks for taking part, for writing about your experiences in your new environment, and for noting insights into the life of your new city and institution. Thanks also, indeed, for making your thoughts available for future exchange students on the Experience Map. Maybe you could, later, also help to prepare others for going abroad, as a mentor.

You will notice that it is really not hard to make new and helpful experiences and to share these with others. It is important to be curious and eager to face unusual things that you have never seen before, experiences you have yet to make, and to instil this curiosity into others. It is about the individual experiences, unique to you, which will remain with you forever. Wandering through an unknown place, enquiring for tram and bus stops, catching a glimpse of small but unusual things, hitch-hiking, conversations with locals off the beaten track, new food, something that you never knew or even thought of before, observing passers-by at a market square, taking pictures, short videos and, and, and... Of course, the unfamiliar can also give us a fairly unpleasant feeling of insecurity. This online module will show you how to deal with such feelings and see intercultural situations as a chance to develop new perspectives, new ideas and maybe even new friendships.

This is what you have to be: hungry for new experiences. How exactly would you say "Erfahrungshunger" ("hunger" or "appetite" for experiences) in your own language?





### 3.1.1.2.2. Mainstream – my stream

#### Aim

Participants will reflect on the difference between "mainstream" and "my stream" and get in touch with the concept of multiperspectives.

#### Task

Being hungry for new experiences – how does that work, then? As we have already said, curiosity is the most important requirement. And it is not just there: you really have to want to be curious. Also, remember every now and again that you really want this :-)

It is worth it! If you are just passive and follow travel-guides and tourist offices, you will just see what everyone sees (or indeed should see). This perspective is as mainstream as the pictures of a 'classical' travel guide – no matter what part of the world it comes from:



If you take the time and really look for yourself, you will notice that every place is full of hidden facets, and that a variety of perspectives is possible. Like here in these photos of Tiananmen Square: they were all taken at the same time, but from a variety of perspectives. This potential variety is evident when looking more closely at virtual images and descriptions of this square, as in this example from Google Earth:



### 3.1.1.2.3. Now it's your turn!

#### Aim

Participants will start to be curious about the place they will go to. Participants will write down their expectations for their stay abroad.

#### Task

Zoom yourself, via a virtual map or street view, onto your future place of study/work! Find out what your institution or the part of town in which you will live looks like. See what photos and written descriptions are already available.

Now it is time to write a letter to yourself. You can click on the picture below in order to download the template. Note 5 to 7 places which you would like to investigate further. Imagine what you could expect from these locations and write down key words that express your expectations. You can maybe also download photos of these places from the internet. After you have written a few sentences that go together with your general expectations of your international stay, your letter to yourself is ready.

Save your letter and open it when you are in the last month of your exchange. We will remind you to do this again :-)

And now: be hungry for new experiences!



### 3.1.1.2.4.

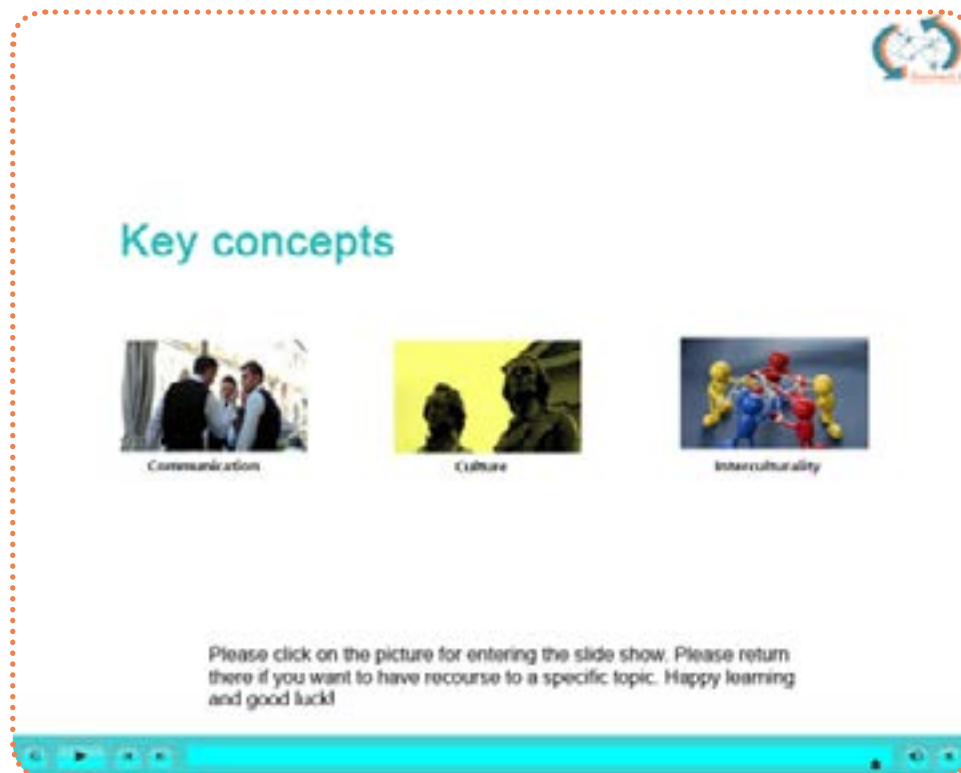
## Key concepts of intercultural communication

Aim

Participants get to know the key concepts of intercultural communication.

Task

Overview



Part 1: communication




## Part 1: communication

**Communication - Overview** 


- 1. "Communication can mean anything nowadays"?**  
Considerations about the definition of communication from the intercultural communications research
- 2. Communication is more than speech**  
About the alternating relationships of the verbal, nonverbal, paraverbal and extraverbal communication levels
- 3. The interplay of the levels**  
Communicative systems and communicative styles
- 4. Communicative change as a systematic change**  
Considerations about the ability to control corporate communication

## Part 2: culture

**Culture - Overview** 

- 1. Culture is More than Art:**  
The narrow vs. the broader concept of culture
- 2. Are National borders Cultural borders?**  
The closed vs. the open concept of culture

## Part 3: interculturality

**Interculturality - Overview** 

- 1. Interculturality as a term describing interaction**
- 2. Migration Politics and Globalization:**  
Concepts regarding multiculturalism, interculturality and transculturality
- 3. What does "Intercultural Competence" mean?**

## 3.2. During stay abroad

### 3.2.1. Module 2: coping with uncertain situations

In a very critical manner, Baumann stated that the global age is characterised i.a. by the privatisation of uncertainty (Bauman 2011: 50). From another standpoint, Kogut (1985) had already considered, in the 1980s, that the main difference of international business (compared to local or national ones) was not the growing market sizes, but rather the increasing uncertainty, variability and discontinuity of environmental developments, so that flexibility would be the main virtue of a transnational organisation (Kogut 1985). At the personal level, Gudykunst and Hammer (1987) developed their anxiety and uncertainty management theory (AUM) as interpersonal and intergroup communication theory. Nevertheless, since then it has been broadly

applied to the process of intercultural adaptation, for there seems to be broad agreement regarding its centrality to successful communication across cultures. Therefore, this module is dedicated to the topic of coping with uncertainty, considered independently of the amount and depth of culture-specific training among programme participants: regardless of any prior training, they will be frequently confronted with situations in which knowledge and understanding are lacking, so that they will need to apply strategies for coping with such situations. Accordingly, the overall learning objective of the module is that participants will be able to render uncertain intercultural situations into intercultural learning opportunities, and to make use of them as such.

#### 3.2.1.1. Learning objectives

After completion of the module participants will...

	Personal Competence	Methodological Competence	Social Competence	Professional Competence
Knowledge	...know possible sources of uncertainty.	...know strategies for dealing with uncertainty (e.g. changing perspective, developing ambiguity tolerance, focusing on the relation).	...be aware of typical forms of human reaction in front of uncertainty.	...know typical situations of uncertainty in university and youth exchange context (e.g. teaching and learning styles, scientific canons, examination forms, communication with lecturers / monitors).
Behaviour	...be able to critically discuss the relation between uncertainty and anxiety; ...be able to formulate advantages of experimenting uncertainty.	...be able to handle uncertain situations in a creative and culturally sensitive way; ...be able to deal with conflicts whose cause isn't obvious.	...be able to communicate sensitively on the situation itself; ...be able to explain their own perspective in a friendly manner.	...recognise and use the learning potential of the above-mentioned situations.
Attitude	...acknowledge and accept their own no-knowledge, no-understanding and no-competence; ...be willing to leave their personal comfort zone; ...be self-reflective and self-critical.	...be willing to practice a pragmatic learning attitude; ...consider ambiguity and polyvalence as a favourable starting point for interaction.	...be willing to suspend their own judgment, to change their own perspective and interpretation, and to develop empathy for others.	...see the existence of different patterns of behaviour in their learning contexts, and of different paradigms and schools in their specific discipline, as enrichment.

### 3.2.1.2. Overview of activities

#### 3.2.1.2.1. Introduction

##### Aim

Participants will understand the concept of uncertainty, know its nature and definition and will be able to recognise its main characteristics and effects, as well as its relation to anxiety.

##### Task

- 1) After reading a short introduction, the participant is invited to follow an interactive "learning snack" that tells a story about uncertainty. Through the process of answering the questions of the snack, the participant intuitively acquires a first idea of the concept.
- 2) A multiple choice question helps the participant to formalise their knowledge on typical aspects of an uncertainty situation.
- 3) Scientific definitions are introduced, as well as the idea that people react with different strategies to uncertain situations. To illustrate it, a video is shown where several people tell their anecdotes about uncertain situations in intercultural contexts. Thereafter, the participant is invited to comment in a forum and share with other participants (as a collaborative learning form) their impressions about the strategies chosen by the storytellers and their level of success with such a strategy. A second question formulated in this forum is whether uncertain situations can be considered positive or negative. This way participants can realise themselves that, if stress is under control, uncertainty offers also learning potential.

#### 3.2.1.2.2.

#### Uncertainty, ambiguity, (in)competence and negotiation

##### Aim

Participants will know and understand the meaning of managing uncertainty and are aware of its opportunities and potential. They will also be able to consider it critically, resorting back to concepts like "competencelessness competence", ambiguity and contradiction (from a cosmopolitan perspective) and "negotiating reality" (as a fruitful alternative to "adjustment"). Furthermore, they will be familiarised with the main five strategies of dealing with uncertainty.

##### Task

- 1) The first part is a lecture in the form of a hypertext, which allows the participant to follow different paths for learning scientifically-oriented content related to the given topics (managing uncertainty, competence to the recognition of one's own incompetence, ambiguity and contradiction as a characteristic of a cosmopolitan world, negotiation of reality as a means of avoiding assimilation).
- 2) Finally, the five strategies for dealing with uncertainty (according to Brashers (2001): social support as assisted uncertainty management, seeking information, avoiding information, managing uncertainty management and adapting to chronic uncertainty) are introduced interactively using a drag & drop exercise.

### 3.2.1.2.3.

## A game book: make your own decisions under uncertainty

### Aim

Participants will be able to make decisions on realistic uncertainty situations and critically reflect on the strategies adopted, bearing in mind factors such as cultural sensibility and empathy.

### Task

- 1) The participant is confronted with two stories of uncertainty situations in the university environment (both cases were compiled from informants after university exchange) and invited to adopt the perspective of the protagonist.
- 2) Following this, the participant can decide what actions they would take if they really were in the protagonist's position. According to their decision, the end of the story is told in a following video.
- 3) Multiple choice questions help the participant reflect on the strategy selected and to infer if it was a proper choice for the specific context of the story.

The opportunity to change the decision, and see what would have been the outcome of the story in that case, is always given. The first story has three possible choices and the second, two. This way, all five strategies are trained.

- 4) Finally, a forum offers all participants the opportunity to share knowledge and perspectives on the decisions made by the protagonist and to reflect on possible outcomes of communicative action choices in uncertain situations.

### 3.2.1.2.4.

## Short stories: identifying uncertainty management strategies

### Aim

Participants will consolidate their acquired knowledge and abilities for managing uncertainty, and will be able to classify decision-making in this regard analytically from a meta-perspective.

### Task

With a multiple-choice format, the participant reads five short stories (similar to critical incidents) related to managing uncertainty. In every case they have to analyse the case and the decision taken by the protagonist, and select one of the five strategies as the one for which the protagonist opted. After completion of the questionnaire, using the feedback the participant can see whether their classification of the strategy was correct, and why. Further attempts to answer the questionnaire are possible.

### 3.2.1.2.5. Your own uncertainty story

#### Aim

Participants will be able to apply their newly-acquired knowledge, perspectives and abilities to their own biography and this way be prepared to use them in real life situations in the future.

#### Task

Finally, the participants are invited to share their experiences of uncertainty during their stay abroad.

First, they could think about situations of uncertainty experienced during their stay abroad, select the more interesting one and reflect on their reaction.

Second, they could analyse that reaction and see if it fits into one of the strategies described by Brashers (2001).

Third, they could discuss the question of whether the outcome was positive for them, as well as for other people involved.

Finally, the participant is asked to implement this content in a self-chosen format (text-post, podcast, video-cast, etc.), upload it on the Experience Map under the category "intercultural challenges" and link it to the assessment page of the e-learning module.

#### 3.2.1.3. Attachment

At the end, the bibliography used in the module is compiled, so that participants can resort back to it at any time during or after completion of the module, for preparation or further reading. When a bibliographic source belongs to an online repository, the link is always provided. Obviously, access to them is only possible if the institution to which the participant belongs owns a licence for using the referred repository.

#### Bibliography

*Appiah, Kwame Anthony (2007): "Global Citizenship", Fordham Law Review 75 (5), p. 2375-2391.*

*Bauman, Z. (2013): collateral Damage. Social Inequalities in a Global Age, Cambridge, Polity.*

*Brashers, Dale. E. (2001): "Communication and uncertainty management", in: journal of Communication, 51 (3), p.477-497.*

*Friedman, Victor J. / Berthoin Antal, Ariane (2005): "Negotiating reality. A theory of action approach to intercultural competence", in: management Learning, 36 (1), p. 69-86.*

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*Kogut, Bruce (1985): "Designing global strategies: comparative and competitive value-added chains, in: MIT Sloan Management Review, Summer 1985.*

*Mecheril, Paul (2002): "«Kompetenzlosigkeitskompetenz». Pädagogisches Handeln unter Einwanderungsbedingungen", in: Auernheimer, Georg (ed.): Interkulturelle Kompetenz und pädagogische Professionalität, Opladen, Leske u. Budrich, p. 15-34.*



### 3.2.2. Module 3: experiencing a stay abroad as enrichment

It is commonplace among post-Erasmus+ participants to make statements like "the Erasmus+ stay abroad has been one of the best experiences of my life". The main aim of this module is to show participants different ways of deepening and taking advantage of their time abroad in terms of intercultural learning.

As Penman and Ratz (2015:51) claim: "the expectation that a prolonged sojourn should lead to a rise in interactional opportunities and significant cultural encounters (...) cannot be taken for granted and needs to be consciously fostered once in the host environment". Although pre-Erasmus+ participants voice their expectations of improving language skills and learning more about the host country and their people, they do not always step out of their comfort zone and, instead, they tend to stick with internationals or even with other participants from their own culture. In this module, Erasmus+ participants will find encouraging experiences of travellers who have managed to relate to their host culture. They will also find an array of activities to foster reflection on intercultural challenges. Moreover, they will find background information about communication conventions, communication strategies and synergy processes that may help them during their stay abroad.

When individuals leave their cultural comfort zone, they may experience multiple "new" aspects of their own identity and may start to become acquainted with their plurilingual identity. Indeed, the person who is aware of this more differentiated picture of himself/herself might be in a position to avoid the undifferentiated categorisation of the "out-group," and this attitude may help him/her "explain" the attitudes and behaviours of the others and start constructive intercultural engagement (Kim 2009: 55). It is true, though, that going from the stage of individual self-awareness to a change — or in Deardorff's words (2006:256), to a shift — in one's frame of reference, in order to behave effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations, is a long learning path. The readings and activities of the module seek to destabilise "stereotyping thinking" and convey the idea that there are no simple recipes to handle the complexity of intercultural encounters.

#### References

Deardorff, D. K. (2006). *Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization*. *Journal of studies in international education*, 10(3), 241-266.

Holmes, P., Bavieri, L., & Ganassin, S. (2015). *Developing intercultural understanding for study abroad: students' and teachers' perspectives on pre-departure intercultural learning*. *Intercultural Education*, 26(1), 16-30.

Kim, Y. Y. (2009). *The identity factor in intercultural competence*. *The Sage handbook of intercultural competence*, 1, 53-65.

Penman, C., & Ratz, S. (2015). *A module-based approach to foster and document the intercultural process before and during the residence abroad*. *Intercultural Education*, 26(1), 49-61.

### 3.2.2.1. Learning objectives

*After completing this module, the participant will be able to identify changes in his/her knowledge, attitude and behaviour when coping with unfamiliar experiences in new environments, and will also be willing to try new experiences and to interpret unusual/ unfamiliar life experiences abroad as enrichment. The indicators of his/her competence development are:*

	<b>Personal Competence</b>	<b>Methodological Competence</b>	<b>Social Competence</b>	<b>Professional Competence</b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	Familiarity with basics about theories of multiple identities	Awareness of techniques for handling diverse group dynamics in intercultural situations	Familiarity with communication strategies	Identification of characteristics of academic/work-life discourse
<b>Behaviour</b>	Experience of the development of multiple identities; Develop ability to tolerate ambiguity	Recognition of similarities and differences as a resource to create synergy; Ability to apply meta-communication in order to create synergy; Handle new situations in a creative way	Appropriate interaction with participants, lecturers and locals; Negotiate multiple identities during stay abroad in formal and informal contexts	Being able to actively play a part in area/ field discussions
<b>Attitude</b>	Willingness to leave one's personal comfort zone; Willingness to show curiosity for discovery	Willingness to act according to methods learned; Willingness to practice a pragmatic learning attitude	Willingness to interpret unusual/unfamiliar ways to solve problems as an enrichment	

### 3.2.2.2. Overview of activities

#### 3.2.2.2.1. First steps

In this lesson, the participant is first presented with content in video format, and then has the option of going to further activities within the lesson path. This method forces participants to follow the planned learning path, although he/she may jump from one step to the following one without having finished the activity

#### Aim

The aim of this first lesson of the module is twofold:

- 1) to offer participants examples of students explaining their experiences of what it meant for them to go out of their comfort zone
- 2) to give participants the opportunity to review and remember the first significant intercultural challenges they faced during the first weeks or months of their stay abroad.

#### Tasks

- 1) Look back to the letter you wrote to yourself after finishing the Module 1.1. and ask yourself:
  - What did I expect?
  - How much did I know about my new place?
  - What have I heard about it before?
  - Which differences and similarities have I found?

\* If you didn't work with Module 1, you can either skip this or just reflect a little bit on your first weeks of your experience abroad and try to answer the questions.
- 2) Watch the following videos where former Erasmus students share some of their first observations upon arrival both inside and outside university. These are students who are doing a stay abroad at the University of Vic, a medium sized private university in Catalonia.
  - Link to the video: [https://youtu.be/c\\_mPTd71amQ](https://youtu.be/c_mPTd71amQ)
  - Before watching the video, try to guess what the narratives could be about: Accommodation, language, classes, transport, eating, academic conversations, parties, sightseeing ...
  - Afterwards complete the exercises.
- 3) Complete the three comprehension activities.

Tip: open the video in a new tab so that you can watch the video as many times as you need without losing your progress.

  - Exercise 1. Life inside the university.
  - Exercise 2. Life outside the university
  - Exercise 3. Categorising experiences.
- 4) Once you have analysed experiences, you may be more aware of your own point of view. The challenge now is to act in an appropriate manner. In Lesson 2 you will learn more about engagement, synergy and communication. Please reflect first on the challenges that you have encountered so far in the country where you are on your stay abroad and check the Experience Map to find other participants and their experiences in the same country. You may write down your impressions in your learning diary.

## Additional information:

The comprehension activities linked to the videos of task 3 have two main goals:

- 1) ensure that participants have watched thoroughly the videos and
- 2) help participants to categorise single experiences into broader groups of intercultural fields: social interaction, culture-specifics, social habits and routines and time management.

These categories have already been introduced in the pre-departure training and the module 1.2. (Key concepts).

In the instructions for task 4, there are important cues: the verbs "reflect" and "encourage" as well as the substantive "challenge". At this initial stage of the module, participants should begin to sort out their experiences and be able to explain them in an orderly manner, and at the same time, the task should encourage them to go beyond their comfort zone and share the "challenges" as a source of learning. Finally, they should also watch the videos of other participants in order to be confronted with other worldviews.

## 3.2.2.2.2. Identities, engagement, synergy and communication abroad

The contents of the input in module 3 pivot around these topics:

- 1) Understanding identities
- 2) Engagement in a global world
- 3) Synergy
- 4) Communication conventions
- 5) Communication strategies – meta-communication

The content and activities are presented as a lesson. This method forces participants to follow the planned learning path, although he/she may jump from one step to the following one without having finished the activity.

### Lesson 2.1. Understanding identities

#### Aim

Participants will become familiar with the concept of multiple identities and reflect about their own attitudes when interacting in a multilingual and multicultural environment.

#### Tasks

- 1) Watch the video "Understanding Identities" and read the full article that goes along with it.

Video: <https://youtu.be/Ock3RbRlqeE>

Full article: <https://glocal-campus.org/mod/lesson/view.php?id=1287&pageid=8>

- 2) Please mark which statements reflect best how Mohammed lives his identities (more than one answer can be selected):

"The year I studied abroad in Poland was crucial to developing my identity. I was frequently asked what it meant to be Spaniard and I realized that I felt Catalanian. Before I came to Warsaw I thought it meant little to me that I was Catalanian. I had never been nationalistic or overproud of my country when I lived in Vic, Barcelona, but when I was in Poland, I understood it definitely mattered to me. I liked telling people that I was from Catalonia, and also explaining things about my country and my language to other people. I sometimes engaged in discussions with other participants from Spain. They tended to be surprised when they knew that both my parents were from Morocco and they did not seem to understand my Catalan feelings. I am also very proud of my Muslim background. I was not too much of a practitioner back home, but I found a number of Muslim participants from Turkey and my religious perspective somehow changed. Speaking English is a major challenge for me, so this is why I am usually around my compatriots." (Mohammed, Vic, Barcelona, Spain)

- Living abroad and sharing information about your origins, language and values usually sharpens your self awareness.

- Mohammed has an identity problem. This will make socialising difficult for him.
- If Mohammed spoke good English, Polish participants wouldn't be so surprised when hearing him speak about his background.
- Most immigrants of second generation are aware of having several identities.

### Follow-up reading activity

If you want to know more about the role of identities in intercultural communication, read the article "The Role of Identity in Intercultural Communication", by Ildiko Hortobágyi:

*Hortobágyi, I. (2009). The Role of Identity in Intercultural Communication. Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Braşov, 2(51), 257-262.*

[http://webbut.unitbv.ro/BU2009/BULETIN2009/Series%20IV/BULETIN%20IV%20PDF/42\\_HORTOBAGy.pdf](http://webbut.unitbv.ro/BU2009/BULETIN2009/Series%20IV/BULETIN%20IV%20PDF/42_HORTOBAGy.pdf), retrieved September 2016)

## Lesson 2.2. Engagement in a global world

### Aim

Participants have the opportunity to see and hear how experienced sojourners handle new situations in a creative way and to learn out of these experiences.

### Task

Read this introductory text

Statements like "Leaving our comfort zone makes us grow" are frequent, particularly after having taken the risk of leaving the comfort zone of your dorm or flat during your time abroad. Engagement in local activities with locals is one way of getting involved in your host society, and it may help you experience something that will certainly enrich your stay abroad. When going out there, you should consider aspects related to

- attitudes and feelings,
- diversity of social and communicative conventions,
- interpersonal and social skills,
- diversity in values and world views,

and be able to reflect afterwards on your experience [Note: you'll find out more about narrative competence when you get to Module 4.]

Be aware: often people try to reject the unexpected in new situations and try to fit diversity into their own cultural expectations or even try to ignore the differences. Another possible psychological reaction is idealising the new world and their conventions. Although this is a natural way to react, it hinders real interaction with the people one encounters in this new situation.

Following Laura Johnson (2015), "engagement" means connection, care and collaboration. This implies confronting the new experiences with an open attitude because:

- to engage is to not know

- to engage is to reflect
- to engage is to adapt
- to engage is to be aware and to act
- to engage is to be alive

**ACTIVITY 2.2.1.:** Please go to Youtube and search for the video "[Engagement is the Answer! Cross-Cultural Lessons in Life and Psychology](#)" where psychologist Laura Johnson shows how engagement can help you learn in and from cross-cultural encounters.

**ACTIVITY 2.2.2.:** In the context of a stay abroad, there are different ways to engage. You may engage in the organisation of an event at your institution or a students' party, you may engage in volunteering activities, or you may simply engage in the lectures by contributing to academic debates or working in a project group. In any case, engaging in those activities may offer you an enriching learning opportunity.

Try to find examples in your host university or organisation of how you could engage in local activities, whether inside or outside the university/organisation. Share your first experiences in the space of the Experience Map, (category "intercultural challenges"/tags "Engagements"...). Focus on Johnson's tips and give specific examples!

**Activity 2.2.3.:** Follow up activity on Laura Johnson's video

According to Laura Johnson's video:

Please detect which ways of acting may be "Recommended" and which may be "Not recommended".\*

\* Again, you can open the video in a new tab so that you can watch it while you answer the questions.

Statement A:

Mateo has received an invitation to have dinner at a student's flat. He has just arrived at his host university and he has only met one of the participants living there. He feels a little bit uncomfortable and he thinks it might be impolite to accept the invitation right away. The best option could be to make up an excuse to decline the invitations, perhaps by saying that he has already made plans.

Statement B:

During the first two weeks, participants have to build work groups in a seminar. Adrian doesn't know anyone there. Yet he really wants to work with local participants. He thinks the best option is to start talking with some of these participants after the first seminar session, and to propose them to make a group together.

Statement C:

Laia arrived two weeks ago. She read an announcement on the participants' board where some participants are looking for other participants interested in cooking together one day per week. She doesn't particularly like cooking, but she thinks that a hands-on activity like such might help her socialise. She decides to join the group for this reason.

Statement D:

After living two months in the host town, having carefully observed how locals interact, Mateo thinks that he is now prepared to engage in interaction with local participants and suggest activities for the weekend. He is sure that he is experienced enough to be successful in any interaction.

- A and B are recommended.
- B and C are recommended.
- A and B are not recommendable.
- B and D are highly recommendable.

## Lesson 2.3. Synergy

### Aim

Participants will learn to recognise similarities and differences as a resource to create synergy, be aware of techniques for handling diverse group dynamics in intercultural situations, and identify characteristics of academic/organisational discourse

### Task

#### Read the following text

When engaging and acting in cross-cultural encounters a cooperative attitude is paramount. People need to learn to cooperate in many contexts: school, university, work place, groups of friends, but what does "cooperation" mean? In short, it means working together towards a common goal.

The word "synergy", that has its origin in the Greek word "συνεργία", meaning cooperation, is the term used nowadays in communication studies to describe a positive communication course, despite any differences in the conceptual or content level, which stems from a mutual predisposition to cooperate. The ability to act in a synergistic way in intercultural encounters is one of the important intercultural competences.

As Alexander Thomas puts it "Synergy is not for free" (Thomas and Grosse-Leege 2010:323), meaning that synergy requires an effort on all sides implied. The challenge of learning to act in a synergistic way is being able to be flexible and open to other ways to cope with conflicts.

A clear parallel between synergistic behaviour in intercultural contexts and the principles of cooperative learning or teamwork can be easily established (Pujolàs, 2004):

- Need for diversity: being exposed to the cognitive challenge of expressing and understanding different points of view helps you to learn. Verbalising these different points of view and being able to listen to each other is a good starting point for successful teamwork.
- Positive interdependence: all members of the group have different roles and different



aptitudes that might be needed to successfully solve the task. All these efforts imply commitment and will to solve any given task in a successful way. It is often essential to verbalise first which functions are assigned to any member according to the role. Giving and receiving mutual support can be very helpful in difficult struggling moments during the completion of a task. Interactional/communicative strategies must be utilised.

- Individual responsibility: although the final product is the result of the engagement of the whole group, individual responsibility is needed in order to complete the different tasks.
- Need to pause on the way: it is always necessary to stop at a certain moment and to review if the chosen way is really helping the group to achieve its goals. These are also good moments to express your doubts, or ask questions, or check if all the members of the group are on the same page in terms of tasks and goals. Interactional/communicative strategies must be utilised here also.

In intercultural work groups or encounters, there is the danger of just applying the techniques that work for us and that we are used to. Failing to take into account that people of other cultures may not consider these techniques helpful for a good cooperation climate may create uncomfortable situations. On the other hand, we may ignore their attempts of being cooperative because we are not able to interpret their techniques. Therefore, social skills that are essential in multicultural cooperative teams are:

- Mutual trust,
- Precise and direct communication,
- Mutual support,
- Constructive and creative ways (win-win strategy) to solve conflicts,
- Respecting turn-taking and being aware of voice tone.

## REFERENCES

*Pujolàs, P. (2004). Aprender juntos alumnos diferentes. Los equipos de aprendizaje cooperativo en el aula. Barcelona: Octaedro.*

*Thomas, A., & Grosse-Leege, D. (2010). Managing Intercultural Aspects of Mergers and Acquisitions. In A. Thomas, E.-U. Kinast & S. Schroll-Machl (Eds.), Handbook of Intercultural Communication and Cooperation: Basics and Areas of Application (pp. 313-327). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.*

## Activity "Opening the way to synergy"

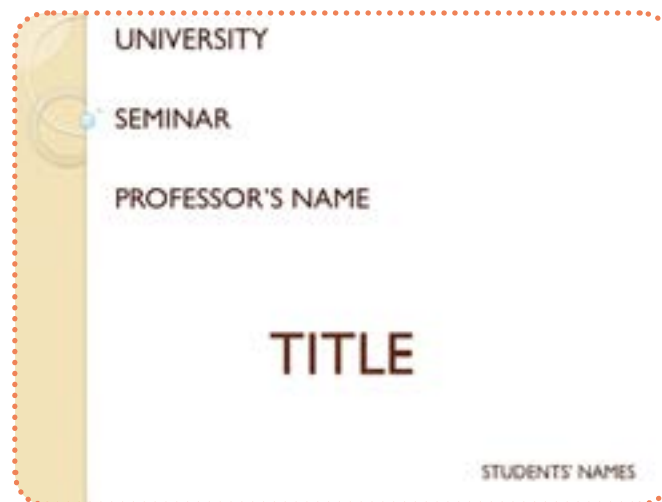
Read the following situation:

Student A and student B have prepared a topic for their seminar. They worked quite well for three weeks and now they are just deciding on the layout of their 15-minute presentation. They are stuck in the first slide because each of them has a different proposal. Besides, they disagree on the number of slides, the use of slide transitions and visuals.

Student A's proposal: 20 slides, few visuals and no transitions. Layout of first slide:



Student B's proposal: 10 slides, transitions and a picture on each slide. Layout of first slide:



Each of them defends his own proposal with plausible reasons from his own point of view. The discussion is getting "hot". If this was a film and we could stop it to give them some advice, what do you think might help them?

- 1) It's important to respect everyone's point of view.
- 2) Just play dice. The winner's proposal will be chosen.
- 3) Ask some local participants if there are any conventions in the host university for the formal presentation of the first slide.
- 4) Look calmly at both proposals and try to combine them by being creative and offering a smart presentation.
  - 2 and 4 would help.
  - 2 and 3 would help.
  - 3 and 4 would help.
  - 1 and 2 would help.

## Lesson 2.4. Communication conventions

### Aim

Participants will become familiar with communication conventions and strategies.

### Task

#### Read the following text

During the pre-departure training, and moreover in module 1.2. "Key concepts", you were introduced to basic aspects related to communication, communication conventions and intercultural communication. Let's review some aspects briefly.

Nonverbal, paraverbal and verbal signs build a complex netting in the communicative act itself, so that we are able to produce our message and to interpret the messages of others. Members of the same culture – we understand "culture" here as the "subjective construction of culture [Busch 2015], that interactants display in interaction (See also Module "Key elements") – mostly share knowledge about these signs and the necessary contextualisation cues (Gumperz 1982) so that they establish a shared communication rhythm (Erickson and Schultz 1982).

Normally the interaction partners are not aware of using so many signs, but nonverbal signs, such as gesture or paraverbal ones like prosody, have a big impact on how the communication-rhythm is established and perceived. Indeed, children – and later on adults – learn how to co-construct communication through observation, experience and, of course, education.

#### EXAMPLES FOR CO-CONSTRUCTION IN ENGLISH:

##### Example 1:

[Asking for information at the international office]

Staff: Good morning. How can I help you?

Student: Good morning. I would like to do some sport during my stay here. Could you please tell me about the facilities at your school?

Staff: Of course, there are a lot of different options. May I ask you what are you especially interested in?

Student: ...

In example 1, scripts and routines are stressed. Each language and culture has typical opening and closings, standard forms for demanding information, and some other more sophisticated discourse forms like argumentative figures, etc. (Rehbein 2006).

##### Example 2:

[Small talk in the cafeteria between unknown students]

Student 1: Hi, do you mind if I sit here?

Student 2: Sure, go ahead.

Student 1: It's really tough to go to class on Friday morning. I need a cup of coffee!

Student 2: Mhm, so do I...

This is an example for the introduction of "commonplaces"/clichés into conversation in order to help to establish a common ground between speakers.

### Example 3:

[EST and CAR, two non-native students, speak about relevant points when searching for a job]

EST: I think physical appearance is important, mhm, I don't know, mhm, if you're a secretary and you have to... to... [hesitates, seems to search for the right wording]

CAR: To work with...

EST: To work [with

CAR: other] people

EST: other people.

CAR: Mhm.

EST: Physical appearance is then important.

CAR: Mhm.

Co-constructing collaboratively the interaction (Günthner 2013) leads individuals to perceive communication as flowing. This example shows how CAR and EST construct their argumentation together, offering pieces of discourse and repeating and recovering what the other partner says.

### Example 4:

[A and B are good friends and neighbours. They live 3 km away from university and, as A doesn't have car license, they use B's car. Today A has to go to the university, but B has no seminars.]

A: Can you give me a lift to the university? You could use the occasion to speak with your professor...

B: Mhm, ok. But I need 10 minutes. I have to call my mother. It's her birthday today.

A: Sure, of course! No problem. And give your mum my congratulations.

Example 4 shows some strategies of so-called negative politeness ("You could use the occasion to speak with your professor...") and positive politeness ("Sure, of course! No problem.")

Politeness or "face-work" are connected with the need for saving "face" or "image". Following Brown and Levinson (1978), there can be distinguished the need for "positive face" – that is, the wish of being accepted by the community –, and the "negative face" – the need for autonomy and personal space. When interacting with others, one usually tries to maintain "face", and

that implies maintaining a respectful balance between self and others' image. In the literature, researchers use the term "face-work". In this sense, some commonly used strategies include:

Positive politeness:

- explicit references to shared knowledge (Hi, you got the computer you wanted...)
- selecting for conversation openings' "safe topics" such as speaking about the weather or trips
- presupposing you know the wishes of the interlocutor (I know you hate parties; do you really want to go there?)

Negative politeness:

- conventionalised courtesy forms (interjections like "please", subjunctive or equivalent, hedgers, etc.)
- de-focalisation (use of passive forms, nominalisations, no direct deixis use, etc.) (In such a situation, it's often difficult to react appropriately)
- stressing the potential benefits for the interlocutor when we ask him/her for something (You could use the occasion to speak with your professor...)
- "Facework" acquires its full significance during interaction, and according to Imahori and Cuppach, "Facework is an essential ingredient of interpersonal competence (...) and validates situated identity" (2005:198).

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## Answer the communication conventions' quiz: how do communication conventions affect cross-cultural interactions?

- A lot of problems and miscommunication can arise. Regardless of the language we are speaking, we tend to reproduce the learned cues of our own culture while producing and interpreting messages; these cues are culturally marked and may differ from each other.
- It depends on the attitude of the interactants. Being aware of possible differences that can influence the collaborative co-construction of interaction can help. We then have the possibility of introducing clarification sequences in order to solve problems and miscommunication without losing face.
- They don't, because we co-construct communication collaboratively, independently of the language we are speaking or our own cultures.
- It depends on the attitude of the interactants. Being aware of possible differences that can influence the collaborative co-construction of interaction can make it easier to avoid problems and miscommunication.

### Lesson 2.5. Communication strategies – meta-communication

#### Aim

Participants will observe and analyse intercultural interaction.

#### Task

In intercultural communication, cultural conventions, together with differences in values, social roles and world-views, may create uncomfortable situations, misunderstandings or even communication breakdowns. Therefore, it has sometimes been recommended to get as much information as possible about other cultures and their communication conventions before travelling to the country. However, even if you try hard to prepare yourself by acquiring encyclopaedic knowledge about other cultures' conventions, it is inevitable that you will go through the so called "trial-phase". In this phase, interactants try to figure out how to establish common shared interpersonal rules and at the same time be aware of differences. If you manage to deal with these situations in a synergistic and dynamic way, using metacommunicative strategies when necessary, those experiences may represent a rich learning moment, since interactants subjectively construct culture in their intercultural/cross-cultural encounters (Busch 2015).

#### Activity:

Watch this video and try to figure out which differences in communication conventions are reflected and how the interactants deal with these differences. Bear in mind that these are simulated situations.

Video: <https://youtu.be/YjrDLbP4jV4>

Read the comments on the video:

<https://glocal-campus.org/mod/lesson/view.php?id=1287&pageid=23>

## Lesson 2.5.1. Communication strategies – written communication

### Aim

Participants will learn to be aware of differences in academic discourse.

### Task

**Please read and compare the following texts:**

Text 1:

Hello Przemek,

I am writing to request your notes from the last session. I do not have access to the virtual campus so I cannot see the powerpoint presentation you uploaded today. I tried to reach you this morning but without success. Send them as soon as possible because I need them for next week's test.

Thank you.

:)

María Pérez.

Text 2:

Dear Mr. xxx,

My name is... and I'm enrolled at your course "xxxxyy" as an Erasmus student. Unfortunately, I couldn't attend your last session and due to administrative delays I still don't have access to the virtual campus. Therefore I cannot see the powerpoint presentation you uploaded today.

Is there any possibility to receive the materials of the session via email?

Thank you in advance for your time and understanding.

Best regards,

María Pérez

**Try to find out why text 2 is possibly the better option. You may find clues in the following text:**

Faceless emails may be a big challenge for participants at international exchanges. Indeed, the lack of social context cues may pose a barrier in email communication (Garton & Wellman 1994; Holmes 1994). In face-to-face contact, people have immediate feedback, through body language, word choice or voice intonation, via email, however, the writer cannot adjust immediately to the necessary and expected politeness levels in the interaction (Baron 1998) and politeness

indicators are reduced or omitted (Bunz & Cambell 2002) in email writing. It is often not obvious what forms of social etiquette are appropriate at any given time in intercultural email communication. Even if there is some evidence to suggest that, successful intercultural email communication cannot be assured. Greater knowledge and understanding of email writing can only assist email writers in developing better strategies for intercultural email communication. Some cultures may prefer starting an email by addressing someone with their name and sometimes even their surname. Other cultures may not do this at all and simply head straight into the email content. Some cultures tend to pay less attention to hierarchies (Sweden, Denmark...) while others feel that it is important to keep track of academic titles (Poland, Italy, Germany...).

Clarity is a fundamental consideration in email writing. The addressee may not know which course you are talking about, which assignment or which book. This is why a careful explanation might be needed. Emoticons (smileys) are not recommended because they are very subjective (much more than words) and someone who does not know you very well could find them difficult to interpret. Another important factor which could hinder communication is humour. It does not travel well and it may be very difficult to sound funny in a second language.

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In all the activities of this lesson, special emphasis has been placed on favouring reflection upon the ideas that may spring from both the readings and the activities. The authors have avoided presenting "one-way" answers and on more than one occasion, there are two possible appropriate solutions. Furthermore, there is always a feedback component, which seeks to provide the student with different options, because there is not usually one "right" answer when experiencing the discovery of multiple identities in oneself, engaging with others or coping with unknown communication conventions.

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### 3.2.2.2.3. What would you do in these situations?

#### Aim

In this module, participants will apply theory in appropriate ways when interpreting given situations, and when selecting one or two different ways of behaving in those situations. Participants will develop the ability to tolerate ambiguity with the support of the feedback they receive after answering the quiz questions.

#### Task

##### Question 1

Read the following case and answer the question below:

##### My Erasmus experience

My name is Amália. I am currently spending a year in Brno, the Czech Republic. I come from Setúbal, a city near Lisbon. My father is from Mozambique and I was born in Maputo. My mother was a teacher and I spent my childhood at a small city called Manhiça. I had a very happy childhood and my parents have always been very caring maybe because I was born deaf. I have to admit that living in the Czech Republic was shocking the first months because I missed my family and my friends, but I have gradually come to grips with it. Being deaf has undoubtedly made communication harder, but I have contacted a deaf association in Brno and they have been very helpful. I have had the chance of meeting some locals who are deaf like me and I have shared with them very nice moments. In spite of my disability, I speak very good English and I have even learnt some Czech words to get by. I have often been told that I have a gift for languages!. I look African and many students believe that I come from a disadvantaged social background because of my skin colour.

(Amália Silva, Setúbal, Portugal)

What does Amália's international experience tell us?

Select one:

- It points out that individuals have different identities and their relevance could depend on the situation.
- It reminds us that national identity is always crucial.
- It stresses the need for European inclusive policies.
- It reinforces the importance of international experiences for individuals with a disability.

## Question 2

Read the following case and answer then the questions below:

My first teaching experience as a Catalan teacher in the USA

I was appointed as a first grade teacher at Martha Baldwin Elementary School in Maryland. On my first day I met Debbie Vas, one of the teachers in my first grade team. We began our conversation by the front door and 5 minutes later we were already in the hallway. I realised there was something wrong: I was simply trying to get close to her and she was stepping away. I interpreted the message as "she does not like me" and she thought I was too forward.

Three months had passed when I had another cultural misunderstanding with Ms. Lee, the second grade teacher. We used to have lunch together in the teacher's lounge and we had a lot of common values. I started looking her in the eyes and I even touched her arm every now and then when we talked. Some days later, she had a very serious conversation with me. She was feeling harassed by the way I looked at her and she was ready to report me to the principal. I was puzzled and it took me some months to feel comfortable around her.

Where is the first problem that Ms. Vas and the Catalan teacher have?

Select one or more:

- Social conventions.
- Personal space.
- Nonverbal communication.
- Paraverbal communication.

## Question 3

How would you solve the problem between Ms. Vas and the Catalan teacher?

Select one:

- Both teachers should express their concerns openly and try to reach a viable solution for both in spite of their home culture.
- Ms. Vas needs to improve her intercultural skills to be able to teach a diverse classroom.
- Both teachers should politely ignore each other.
- The Catalan teacher should not be so aggressive with Ms. Vas.

## Question 4

The misunderstanding in Ms Lee's case is that ...

Select one:

- The Catalan teacher is too keen on Ms. Lee.
- The Catalan teacher is desperate to make friends with other teachers.
- Ms. Lee feels threatened by being looked in the eyes.
- Ms. Lee has very little international experience.

### Question 5

Read the following case and answer then the questions below:

A Finnish and Catalan experience: misunderstandings in conversations

Mikael was an Erasmus exchange student who had been paired up with Montse, a Catalan student, to prepare a presentation on "How teachers can effectively communicate with parents". Mikael complained to the teacher about Montse because he stated that it was impossible to hold a conversation with her. She tended to jump in with her own account of the story and she did not seem to listen to what he wanted to say because she kept interrupting him all the time. Montse also went to the teacher to say that Mikael's long pauses before responding were very disruptive and that he kept silent for very long periods. In her mind, Mikael was cold and not engaged in any sort of small talk, which made him appear to be cold and distant.

These Finnish and Catalan participants may have difficulties in communication because...

Select one:

- Mikael does not seem to know about the Catalan ways.
- Montse is not ready to work with people from other cultures.
- There are different ways to interpret prosody and to organise turn-taking in both cultures.
- Montse and Mikael have personality problems.

### Question 6

How would you solve the problem of these Finnish and Catalan participants?

Select one:

- The lecturer could show them how to talk to each other. It could be part of her teaching job.
- Both participants should express their concerns openly and try to apply a form of talking that allows both of them expressing themselves.
- Both of them should visit the campus counsellor.
- The lecturer should separate the participants and assign them a different partner.

Online quiz version: <https://glocal-campus.org/mod/quiz/attempt.php?attempt=763>

## 3.2.2.2.4. Final transfer task

### Aim

To encourage the participant to leave his/her comfort zone and identify changes in his/her knowledge, attitude and behaviour when coping with unfamiliar experiences in new environments — such as his/her will to try new experiences — and to interpret unusual or unfamiliar life experiences abroad as enrichment.

Participants will share the experience with other participants on the Experience Map in a reflective way.

### Task

There are four different options of tasks:

- 1) Task idea 1. Discover at least three buildings / places of the city with a local.
- 2) Task idea 2. Present a tale/ legend/ music/ dance/ dish/ social habit or convention of the host country.
- 3) Task idea 3. Difficult situations you have experienced or witnessed that have been solved using intercultural knowledge and creativity.
- 4) Task idea 4. Write an essay together with two international participants about the challenges you have found when engaging in the host country.

The different tasks open up the way for different places and ways of engaging:

- inside or outside your university or organisation
- with locals or with other Erasmus+ participants
- moving through the city or sitting at one place
- speaking, observing or writing
- creating photos or videos etc

The tasks are formulated in a way that encourages participants to communicate with others, and the tasks' instructions show always the same structure:

- 1) Objective
- 2) Process
- 3) Result

The full text of the instructions is attached to section 3.2.2.5.

### 3.2.2.3. Attachment

#### Transfer tasks

The final task of this module seeks:

- 1) To motivate your engagement abroad and your will to share with other participants the results of your efforts on the Experience Map.
- 2) The publication of your own view or perspective after having watched or read the entries of others.

#### A. TASK INSTRUCTIONS

We have prepared different ideas among which you can choose one. Please read these work instructions carefully.

##### **Task idea 1. Discover at least three buildings / places of the city with a local.**

###### *Objective*

What is the difference between going alone and going with someone else? What does the other see that you don't see? What do you see that he/she doesn't? What kinds of things can you observe together?

###### *Process*

How can you make an appropriate choice? There are many ways. Here, you have some options: your colleague might suggest some famous sites, you might propose one because you have heard about it, or you can simply decide together the place to go.

The trip is also part of the approach:

- Somewhere on the way you can stop and explain what you can see, what you hear on the street, how you feel, what you have been talking about, and you can record it. You can either go with a fixed idea of what you want to learn or observe, or you can let yourself be carried away by the immediacy. Remember that it is important to differentiate between what you observe, ensuring that your observation is objective, and what you infer or interpret from that observation.
- On the way, you can collect clues or traces that have been left by different cultures living in the city over the years. You can record yourself reacting to these traces.

###### *Result*

The resulting product of the activity can be a video, a photomontage, a painting, a drawing or a piece of music, together with a reflective written text. We recommend that you focus on a specific action: the synergy between the two of you, multiple identities, nonverbal communication, routines and politeness, language... We invite you to publish your product and a brief reflection on the most crucial/significant aspects of your experience in the Experience Map (Intercultural Challenges). Moreover, you should upload all of your files in the space provided below.

## **Task idea 2. Present a tale/ legend/ music/ dance/ dish/ social habit or convention of the host country.**

### *Objective*

First, choose one of these options: tale / legend / music / dance / dish / social habit or convention (in academic/work or beyond academic/work context) / tradition of the country that, in your opinion, identifies and illustrates its culture and idiosyncracies.

Contrast then the information you have collected on your own with other participants.

### *Process*

- Look for information about the subject you have chosen, either by reading or web surfing.
- Prepare an interview to gather more information to complete your search and contrast with it.
- Choose 3 or 4 participants to interview and ask them about their age, origin (people born in another country but living in this country for a long time), work status, etc.

### *Result*

The resulting product of the activity can be a video, a photomontage, a painting, a drawing or a piece of music, together with a reflective written text. We recommend that you focus on a specific action: the synergy between the two of you, multiple identities, nonverbal communication, routines and politeness, language... We invite you to publish your product and a brief reflection on the most crucial/significant aspects of your experience in the Experience Map (Intercultural Challenges). Moreover, you should upload all of your files in the space provided below.

## **Task idea 3. Difficult situations you have experienced or witnessed that have been solved using intercultural knowledge and creativity.**

### *Objective*

Recognise cross-cultural elements in daily life; develop cross-cultural awareness and recognise its usefulness.

### *Process*

- Describe the situation: context, people involved, place, etc.
- Analyse the situation from the cultural point of view: what cultural elements were involved, what are the triggering factors, why did it come to a critical point?
- Detail the intercultural strategies involved in the resolution of the conflict. If you happened to be one of the protagonists of the situation, to what extent has your intercultural awareness helped you? Which were the tools that you used to solve the conflict? Was the resolution completely satisfying to all the parties involved?

### *Result*

Write a reflective written text. We recommend that you focus on a specific action: multiple identities, nonverbal communication, routines and politeness, synergy, communication strategies... We invite you to publish a brief reflection on the most crucial/significant aspects of your experience in the Experience Map (Intercultural Challenges) and upload your whole file in the space provided below.



**Task idea 4. Write an essay together with two international participants about the challenges you have found when engaging in the host country.**

#### Objective

Collect your own memories of a recent experience and compare them with other participants from other countries, in order to identify your own previous values and prejudices and think about any changes since you arrived.

#### Process

- Draft the most outstanding challenges at the very beginning of your stay and later on in your host country: something you didn't expect, something that surprised you in a positive or negative way, something that made you reflect and call into question your own values, routines and beliefs, etc.
- Compare your list with that of your colleagues and discuss with them, focusing on cross-cultural aspects. Analyse your different perceptions and impressions, analyse what you have in common, and try to explain why.

#### Result

Compile the conclusions and reflexions of the team and write a text together. We invite you to publish a brief reflection on the most crucial/significant aspects of your experience in the Experience Map (Intercultural Challenges) and upload your whole file in the space provided below.

**B. COMMENT ON AT LEAST TWO CONTRIBUTIONS OF OTHER PARTICIPANTS ON THE EXPERIENCE MAP.**

### 3.2.3. Module 4: sharing experiences

#### 3.2.3.1. Learning objectives

	<b>Personal Competence</b>	<b>Methodological Competence</b>	<b>Social Competence</b>	<b>Professional Competence</b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	Acquire basic knowledge about theories of storytelling	Understand the concept of storytelling; Get to know and apply the DAE model; Be aware of the importance of wording	Understand how to deal with experiences and stories from others; Be aware of multiple meanings and perspectives of a story	Be aware of the benefits and dangers of storytelling; Acquire narrative competence
<b>Behaviour</b>	Be able to reflect upon one's own experiences; Be able to discover differences between one's own culture and the host culture	Be able to differ between objective description and individual interpretation; Be able to share experiences in an interculturally reflected way	Be able to enjoy listening to other stories; Be able to tell stories, keeping in mind wording and meanings	Be able to listen to, and tell stories from, different perspectives
<b>Attitude</b>	Be willing to look at one's own experiences from different perspectives	Be willing to reflect wording	Be willing not to tell a single story	

### 3.2.3.2. Overview of activities

#### 3.2.3.2.1. Starting

This module is all about sharing experiences that participants have gained during their stay abroad.

This first part is an introduction to the topic. First, participants will brainstorm about their ideas, associations and experiences with the topic of "sharing experiences". The second task of this part is about differences participants experienced in their host country.

The lesson covers the following 2 activities:

- Task 1: "Sharing experiences": associations, forms, experiences, importance
- Task 2: experienced differences in host country

#### Aim

Participants will reflect on how they can share their experiences they made abroad, and reflect upon differences between their own and their host country in preparation for the final exercise in this module.

#### Task

##### **Task 1: Mind Map**

Create a personal mind map with the term "sharing experiences" in the center (on paper if you like). Brainstorm your associations with this term. You can think about possible topics (what), forms/media (how) and audience (who). You can also ask yourself what sharing experience gives you, or why sharing experiences might be important. Write down your main thoughts and associations here.

##### **Task 2: Thinking Activity**

What are differences in your host country that have caught your attention (e.g. habits, special customs, ways of dressing, ways of eating, values and perspectives)? Write down some keywords.

Tip: you will need these keywords for the final exercise of this module.

### 3.2.3.2.2. Input

Participants receive input in the field of storytelling and sharing experiences.

First, they will learn about the importance of the multiple meanings and perspectives that every story carries within itself. The second task is about an intercultural misunderstanding between a woman from Bulgaria and a woman from the US. In the final task, the participants will learn how important the wording they use for telling a story is and that small changes in words can make a huge difference.

The lesson covers the following 3 activities:

- Task 1: multiple perspectives in storytelling
- Task 2: an intercultural misunderstanding
- Task 3: awareness of "Power of Words"

#### Aim

Participants will learn the multiple perspectives and meanings in storytelling and the danger of telling a single story; participants will become aware of cultural differences and potential intercultural misunderstandings; participants will get to know the importance and impact of wording.

#### Task

##### **Task 1: multiple perspectives in storytelling**

Participants watch the video "The danger of a single story"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9lhs241zeg>

##### **Question 1:**

Which story among others does Chimamanda mention as an example for a "single story"?

- African writers showed her that girls with dark skin and curly hair could appear in books.
- She told her roommate that Nigeria happens to have English as its official language.
- A professor told her that her novel was not authentically African, because her characters were educated, part of the middle-class, and not starving.

##### **Question 2:**

Where did Chimamanda's single story about Mexicans as "the abject immigrant" come from?

- The U.S. media coverage of Mexicans.
- Her trip to Mexico.
- The immigration debates in Mexico.

##### **Question 3:**

What does Chimamanda think of stereotypes created by a single story?

- Stereotypes are always true and representative for a certain group.
- Stereotypes are not totally wrong, but they create an incomplete picture.

#### Question 4:

What could be a consequence of a single story according to Chimamanda?

- It emphasises that we are all similar.
- It encourages us to understand others better.
- It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult.

#### Question 5:

What do you think the last statement of Chimamanda means?

“That when we reject the single story, when we realise that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise”.

Write down your understanding and interpretation of the quote above.

Possible answer:

It is important for us to try to engage with a variety of stories which make people, places or things what they are, although a single story has a strong power on people to misunderstand that it defines them. To get multiple perspectives is the way to relieve us from the stereotypes about them and to balance the awareness of differences with that of similarities, which leads to the recognition and maintenance of the equal dignity of humans.

Chimamanda explains that one problem of a single story is that it creates stereotypes, and she says: “The problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete.” By overcoming a single story, one broadens the personal horizon and gains a more complete impression of people, places and things.

#### Task 2: An intercultural misunderstanding

Participants read the story “How much do you share?” written by Maria Jicheva. Afterwards they proceed with the exercises.

<https://interculturalstorytelling.wordpress.com/2013/09/12/how-much-do-you-share/>

#### Question 1:

Why did Maria feel privileged?

- Her client was sharing very personal details about herself with her.
- Her client cooked for her.
- Maria has a better education than her client.

#### Question 2:

With whom do Bulgarians normally share personal details?

- They often think about things on their own and don't share with anyone.
- With everyone - they are very open people.
- Only with people they are close with.

### Question 3:

What did Maria's "new friend" do during the lunch?

- She friendly greeted Maria and sat down next to her.
- She said "Hi," but went to sit with other people.
- She left the room.

### Question 4:

Why didn't Maria share personal details about herself with her client?

- Because Maria did not feel comfortable with sharing very personal details with people she does not really know.
- Because Maria did not have anything to share.
- Because Maria did not like her.

### Question 5:

What is the "problem"? Why did it come to such different reactions? Write down an explanation.

Possible answer:

Maria is not used to sharing personal things with a stranger because it's not appropriate in the Bulgarian culture. Her client from Kentucky (USA), on the other hand, is totally used to sharing personal things, even with strangers or persons she had just briefly met. Her client misinterpreted the fact that Maria didn't share any personal stuff, that Maria doesn't like her. Maria, on the other hand, was totally happy that someone shared very personal stuff with her and thought – as she would interpret this in Bulgaria – that she might have a new best friend. So, she didn't know what was going on when her "new best friend" just greeted her, but sat down with other people and wasn't that open and friendly anymore.

### Task 3:

#### Task 3.1: awareness of "Power of Words"

Participants watch the video "The Power of Words". Afterwards they proceed with the exercises.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hzgzim5m7oU&list=PL2320B9C194B4AF6C&index=5%20%282%20min%29>

### Question 1:

What was written on the sign before the woman changed it?

- "I'm blind please help"
- "I'm hungry please help"
- "I have two children please help"

### Question 2:

What did the woman do with the sign?

- She changed it to: "I'm blind, please help me"
- She changed it to: "It's a beautiful day and I can't see it"
- She placed it more prominently.

### Question 3:

What did the woman answer the man when he asked her what she did to his sign?

- She answered that she wrote the same but in different words.
- She said that she made it better.
- She said that she just placed it more prominently.

### Question 4:

To what extent did the two signs differ from each other? How would you explain it? Write down a short answer.

Possible answer:

Both signs describe the fact that the man cannot see anything, but the latter one is more specific with the example; the people who can see the scenery around them can notice how much they enjoy it and imagine how they would feel if they could not see it. Then the man's situation is no longer removed from them. That's why it can be said that the power of connecting people is different between two signs.

### Task 3.2: "Eiffel Tower"

Read the two texts about the Eiffel Tower and answer the following question:

- To what extent do the two reports differ from each other?
- Do you get different impressions of the Eiffel Tower when reading the texts? How would you explain it?

You can write down a short answer on the next page after having read the two texts.

Text 1

(see appendix 1)

"The Eiffel Tower" by Eric & Chun-Chih Hadley-Ives is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Text 2

(see appendix 2)

"Terra: the Eiffel Tower – Paris, France" by The LEAF Project is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

### 3.2.3.2.3. Theoretical Frame

Participants will learn about some theoretical frames in the field of storytelling.

First, they will get to know a model that raises awareness about reflection processes. In the second task, they will read two articles about storytelling as an intercultural practice.

#### Aim

Participants will get to know the DAE model of reflection processes and the benefits of storytelling; participants will understand the link between intercultural communication and storytelling.

#### Task

##### Task 1: Introduction of the DAE model

##### Task 1.1 Look at this picture and write a short story about it. What happened?

<https://glocal-campus.org/mod/lesson/view.php?id=1715&pageid=48>

##### Task 1.2 "The DIE is cast: the continuing evolution of intercultural communication's favorite classroom exercise"

Read the paper "The DIE is cast: the continuing evolution of intercultural communication's favorite classroom exercise" written by Kyoung-Ah Nam and John Condon. Afterwards proceed with the exercises

[https://www.academia.edu/7395948/The\\_DIE\\_is\\_cast\\_The\\_continuing\\_evolution\\_of\\_intercultural\\_communications\\_favorite\\_classroom\\_exercise?auto=download](https://www.academia.edu/7395948/The_DIE_is_cast_The_continuing_evolution_of_intercultural_communications_favorite_classroom_exercise?auto=download)

Question 1: how do the authors explain the DIE exercise?

- The DIE exercise requires people to describe one situation with judging it at the same time.
- The DIE exercise encourages reversing the usual order of response.
- Through the DIE exercise the subjective evaluation is encouraged.

Question 2: how does the DAE version differ from the DIE exercise?

- The acronym DAE avoids the negative connotations.
- The order of three tasks has been changed.
- The DAE exercise is the adaptation of General Semantics.

Question 3: choose the adequate description for each blank in the table.

Order	task	question	Standard for agreement
1	(A)	(D)	General agreement
2	(B)	(E)	Alternative explanations possible
3	(C)	(F)	No one else has to agree



Answer:

- (A) Description
- (B) Analysis
- (C) Evaluation
- (D) What is going on?
- (E) Why is it happening?
- (F) How do I feel about it?

Question 4: what is the purpose of the DIE and DAE exercise? Write a short explanation.

Possible answer:

The purpose of the DIE and DAE exercises is to encourage people to become more aware of what can be described objectively, what can be said from inference, and what may be expressed as their judgment or personal opinion. Furthermore, the exercise promotes greater discernment when countering the unfamiliar withholding judgment.

## Task 2

### Task 2.1 : REVIVING the tradition of STORYTELLING FOR GLOBAL PRACTICE

Read the article "REVIVING the tradition of STORYTELLING FOR GLOBAL PRACTICE" from Margret Steixner and Manuel Heidegger.

<https://interculturalstorytelling.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/the-power-of-storytelling.pdf>

Question 1: If the following statements are mentioned in the article, choose "true", if not choose "false".

- 1) Only people with special abilities can tell stories.
  - Answer: "false"
- 2) We tell stories to digest our experiences.
  - Answer: "true"
- 3) Listening to each other's experiences creates a positive environment.
  - Answer: "true"
- 4) Facts and figures are much easier to remember than stories.
  - Answer: "false"
- 5) Learners can get out of the stories whatever is relevant to them.
  - Answer: "true"

Question 2: Why is storytelling useful for intercultural practice?

- Storytellers and listeners find similarities and connections while sharing their experiences.
- Working with stories, myths and tales of different cultures enforces our stereotypes about them.
- Stories give instructions on how to deal with particular intercultural situations.

Question 3: Why is the process of storytelling so appealing? Answer this question from the perspective of both storyteller and listener.

Possible answer:

Listeners can learn from the stories by developing pictures of the stories' scenes in their mind, taking part in creating the stories with storytellers, finding connections to their own life, and reflecting on how they would have reacted to the described situations.

Storytellers can get a feeling of being in charge of reality by deciding what to tell. This makes it possible for people to deal with the feeling of being lost, which they often have in different cultural settings. Furthermore, it makes them feel good, that there is a person listening to their stories.

Suggestion:

If you want, you can visit the website (<https://interculturalstorytelling.wordpress.com/>) to get to know more about the project of Steixner and Heidegger. There you can find different stories about cultural diversity and you can even add your own story: send your story to [interculturalstorytelling@gmail.com](mailto:interculturalstorytelling@gmail.com) and it will be published as soon as possible by the website owners.

### **Task 2.2: "Pema's tale: Intercultural Communication as Storytelling"**

Read the article "Pema's Tale: Intercultural Communication as Storytelling" written by Ellen Rose and take some notes. Afterwards proceed with the exercises.

(Source: <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/NW/article/view/18473>)

Question 1: Which statements does the author offer or apply (choose "Author's view") and which are traditional theories (choose "Traditional view")?

- 1) Intercultural communication is conceptualised as storytelling.
  - Answer: "Author's view"
- 2) Intercultural communication is conceptualised as the understanding of the differences between cultural groups.
  - Answer: "Traditional view"
- 3) Intercultural communication can be understood as information transmission.
  - Answer: "Traditional view"
- 4) Intercultural communication can be understood as the development of a feeling of connection and an appreciation for diverse ways of being in the world.
  - Answer: "Author's view"

Question 2: How does the author evaluate the traditional view of intercultural communication?

- An emphasis on the differences between Us and Them can form the basis for meaningful communication.
- This view does not recognise that cultures are organic and not fixed.
- This view of intercultural communication as information transmission is useful for conceptualising what it means to communicate with someone from another culture.

Question 3: Choose one statement, which does not match the author's explanation on storytelling.

- Stories make it difficult for us to accept exceptionality.
- All people in all cultures develop the narrative gift from an early age on.
- Stories play an important socialising role.
- In listeners stories create an engagement with the lives of the individuals whose experiences they illustrate.
- Stories are collaboratively constructed by storytellers and listeners.

Question 4: There are three possible objections to the author's suggestion of conceptualising intercultural communication as collaborative storytelling. Summarise the author's arguments against each objection.

- 1) Language differences will necessarily diminish possibilities for the intercultural co-construction of narratives.
- 2) Storytelling can only ever allow us a partial insight into another culture.
- 3) Destroying a culture's binding stories and replacing them with those of the conquerer is an important part of the process by which one culture attains dominion over another.

Possible answer:

- 1) The absence of the shared language is not an obstacle of intercultural communication. The story relies not only on dialogue but also on the tone of voice, the movement of hands and body, and the expression on the face of the speaker, and thus enhances the possibilities for true communication even in a situation of lacking the shared language.
- 2) The sense of a sympathetic connection and the understanding between people can be established independently of total comprehension, and this sense of connection is required for total comprehension of another culture.
- 3) Telling stories with others together, and from a variety of perspectives, enables us to acquire fair-minded understanding, expand our sense of the possible, and develop our acceptance of the many diverse ways of being in the world, without being caught in the cycles of power and resistance.

### Task 2.3: power of storytelling

Now that you have read the articles "REVIVING the tradition of STORYTELLING FOR GLOBAL PRACTICE" and "Pema's Tale: Intercultural Communication as Storytelling", what do you think?

- 1) What are benefits of storytelling?
- 2) What are possible "dangers" of storytelling?

Write a short answer to each question.

Possible answers:

- 1) Through storytelling, co-constructing stories, storytellers and listeners can find similarities between them and develop a feeling of connection. Furthermore, stories from a variety of perspectives help people to understand and accept exceptionality and diversity of being in the world.
- 2) An emphasis on the differences obscures an understanding that people can communicate through similarities they share as human beings, and labeling the characteristics of people or cultures might not accurately represent them, because these characteristics are actually not fixed.

### 3.2.3.2.4. Theoretical Frame: quiz

Quiz about the content in this module.

#### Aim

Participants will review their knowledge on storytelling, intercultural communication and the DAE model.

#### Task

##### **Task 1:**

##### Question 1

What is the danger of 'a single story'?

- A single story always provides people with wrong information about what it refers to.
- A single story makes people fail to see many other aspects of what it refers to.
- A single story confuses people by destroying stereotypes of what it refers to.

Question 2

Choose the right example for each blank on the table.

	DAE	Process	Examples	Standards for Agreement
<b>Level 1: describe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What happened?</li> <li>• What was said?</li> <li>• What did you see?</li> <li>• Statements about what appears to be "objectively" out there</li> </ul>	What I see	(A)	General agreement
<b>Level 2: analyse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do these observations fit together, and what else must be assumed to make sense of them?</li> <li>• Try to think of at least three different analyses/interpretations.</li> <li>• "This might mean that..."</li> </ul>	What helps explain what I see?	(B)	Alternative explanations possible
<b>Level 3: evaluate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What positive or negative feelings do you have? (My good reaction)</li> <li>• My reasoned judgment (any feelings of resistance when I tried to do D and A, but if you ask how I feel, if you ask my opinion...)</li> <li>• "Here's how I feel about that!"</li> </ul>	What I feel about what I see	(C)	No one else has to agree

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<http://www.eurospanbookstore.com/building-cultural-competence.html>

Answer:

(A) "This is a cup."

(B) "Plastic cups are made from oil."

(C) "Plastic cups are wasteful."

### Question 3

According to Steixner & Heidegger's article and Rose's article (see Step 3, Task 2), what does intercultural communication as storytelling provide? Choose three correct statements.

- Atmosphere that allows similarities to be appreciated
- Instructions how to deal with particular situations
- Effective exchange of information
- Development of a feeling of connection
- Acceptance of the many diverse ways of being in the world
- Awareness of the differences between cultural groups

### 3.2.3.2.5. Application

Participants apply what they have learned in this module in order to be able to express their personal experiences.

#### Aim

Participants will review/reflect and practice their knowledge to consolidate what they have learned about what has to be considered when they share their experiences.

#### Task

##### **Task 1**

Remembering lesson 2: do/did you have a single story about certain cultures, people, countries, etc.? Choose one and explain below what it is/was, where you got it from and how you think about it after having seen Chimamanda's talk.

##### **Task 2**

Remember lesson 3 about the DAE model? Have a look at the story you wrote about the picture below. Now that you have learned about the DAE Model, you should follow it. Please take a look at the picture from lesson 3 again (also see below) and rewrite your story by using the steps described in the DAE Model.

##### **Task 3**

Think about 5 stories of your experiences abroad that you want to tell and share. Write 1-2 sentences about each story.

##### **Task 4: share one short story**

Share one short story that could be interesting to other exchange students. Try to apply the newly gained knowledge of this module when you share it. Your fellow students may then comment on your story and assess whether they think that you were able to pass it on in an interculturally reflected and appropriate way.



### 3.2.3.2.6. Share your story from your experiences abroad!

Participants share a story from their experiences abroad.

#### Aim

Participants will reflect on their experiences and share them with other students, applying their knowledge about storytelling.

#### Task

##### **Task 1: share your story from your experiences abroad!**

Write a story about the most important experience you had during your stay abroad, or something that caught your attention in your host country. Try to apply what you have learned in this module. Create a document with the story and upload it here - be creative! And don't forget to upload your story in the Experience Map!

Tip: you can use the keywords from Lesson 1! "Guide for Your Experience Report" will also help you to write your experience.

Publish on Experience Map!

<https://glocal-campus.org/mod/data/edit.php?d=2>

### 3.2.3.3. Attachment

#### Text 1

#### The Eiffel Tower

The Eiffel Tower is located in Paris in France along the Seine river. It attracts thousands of visitors each year. The Eiffel tower was a symbol welcoming everyone to the grand opening of universal exposition in Paris in 1889, an event which celebrated the Centennial anniversary of French revolution. In preparation for the 1889 Exposition Universelle, the French government held a public contest and invited architects to submit their proposals for the best design. Alexandre-Gustave Eiffel (1832-1923), an architect who had experience as a bridge engineer won the competition, although Emile Nouguier (1840-1898), Maurice Koechlin (1856-1946), and Stephen Sauvestre (1874-1919) did most of the designing work. The construction of the Eiffel tower began in 1887 and finished in two years.

The actual height of Eiffel tower is 300 meters. It is made up of 18,000 wrought iron metal parts, and weighs 7,000 tons. Its base is supported by four piers, which are angled to offer efficient wind resistance, and Eiffel added decorative monumental arches connecting the base piers to make the tower more aesthetically pleasing. At three levels there are platforms to allow visitors to view Paris from a dizzying height.

Cast iron and wrought iron framing had become popular in the 19th Century, and many bridges, glass houses, railway stations, and early skyscrapers were built with iron frames or lattices. The Eiffel Tower was a spectacular innovation that demonstrated what could be accomplished with this relatively new method of construction. At the same 1889 world's fair in Paris another spectacular example of iron construction was the Hall of Machines (Galerie des Machines), which rose 43 meters high and covered a space that extended 420 meters by 110 meters. A few decades later, in the early 20th Century, steel frame or lattice construction began to replace wrought iron, but it was until 1930-1931 that any structure surpassed the Eiffel Tower in height (The Chrysler Building and the Empire State Building surpassed the Eiffel Tower).

The Eiffel Tower also represents a new taste or consideration of beauty in architecture. For its time, the Eiffel tower was an avant-garde building which worried some people. This iron lattice style of construction contradicted the prevailing opinions about elegance and refinement in French culture. Despite this, the tower attracted large crowds of visitors and brought in tourists whose spending helped the French economy. Nearly two million tourists came to see the Eiffel Tower during the world fair in 1889. The French government recovered its costs of spending and constructing the tower from the first year of ticket sales income.

Critics protested the tower and said it was an architectural disgrace, and these critics wanted the tower to be torn down. In fact, the original plan assumed the Eiffel Tower would be disassembled in 1909. However, by that time, the invention of the radio gave the tower a very useful function for radio station and military communication purposes. The tourist trade was also an advantage. Therefore the French government kept the tower standing, and it became a symbol of Paris and France.

(This work by Eric & Chun-Chih Hadley-Ives is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Link: <http://www.historylines.net/history/french/eiffeltower.html>)

## Text 2

### Terra: the Eiffel Tower – Paris, France

When I first traveled to Paris, France in 2012 with a group of fellow students, my friend Kira asked our tour guide a question that both humored me and got me thinking.

“How much would it cost to buy the Eiffel tower?”

Anne Marie, our tour guide, paused for a moment, slightly caught off guard, and then responded in a dainty French accent, her “that” sounding more like “zat”, and her emphasis being on the vowels rather than the consonants.

“I do not think that France would sell it.”

We were, in fact, standing just in front of the steel ribbed giant when Kira asked her question, and I for one, was star struck.

Star struck, I believe was an appropriate mood, because that’s exactly what the Eiffel tower, or la Tour Eiffel, is one of the many star edifices of Paris.

The Eiffel tower was designed by the engineer, Gustave Eiffel, in 1889 for the World’s fair, as Anne Marie made sure to inform us. Its construction was in fact, widely debated by many artists of its time, who deemed it “too ugly” for the city. After a while of standing there in awe and listening to her list off more historical facts about what was once the tallest man-made structure in the world, the group was led to a line where we’d wait to be taken up the tower by elevator.

There are two options that one who wants to reach the second floor of the Eiffel Tower has- You can either ride up one of its arched legs in an elevator like we did, or climb the stairs. The elevator ride was an interesting one; partially because you can watch the people and buildings get smaller as you’re lifted higher and higher from the ground. It was also interesting because of the variety of people you see and languages you hear during the ascent. People with all kinds of different backgrounds visit the Eiffel tower- French, British, American, Chinese...

When we finally reached the second floor, everyone stepped from the elevator onto the platform, and began gravitating toward the cross hatched fencing that was the only thing separating us from an ocean of city light below. At such a height, it appeared to be a vast collection of figurines in the midnight abyss, the Seine River running through it all like a jagged snake. To think that men worked at this level and even higher in the process of construction amazed me.

After a while of watching the view, I caught up with some other members of my group, who said they had already been to the third and top floor, and that now, it was time to leave! To get to the top floor, it’s necessary to take a separate elevator from the second, which I missed my chance to do, because I’d been so mesmerised by the scene.

If I had been able to reach the top floor, I would have found myself at the same level as Gustave Eiffel’s private apartment. I would have been able to see the beauty of Paris from even higher up, as well. However, even though I only got to the second floor, it was enough for me to agree with Anne-Marie that it would indeed be a smart decision on the part of France to hold on to their Tower.

Marcella Del Plato LEAF Contributor

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### 3.3. After stay abroad

#### 3.3.1. Module 5: coming home. Thinking back and moving forward

##### 3.3.1.1. Learning objectives

	<b>Personal Competence</b>	<b>Methodological Competence</b>	<b>Social Competence</b>	<b>Professional Competence</b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	<p>Be aware of one's own reactions in critical situations;</p> <p>Connect experiences abroad with acquired knowledge</p>	<p>Compare stereotypes with reality</p>		<p>Ability to reflect on academic/work styles and differences between cultures</p>
<b>Behaviour</b>	<p>Be able to face critical situations</p>	<p>Acquire methods to deal with symptoms of reverse culture shock</p>	<p>Be able to enjoy interaction with people of different backgrounds</p>	<p>Knowledge transfer (forth and back); Update CV to reflect new skills;</p> <p>Present Erasmus+ experiences in a professional, thoughtful and responsible way in different settings (online, through different media, face-to-face, in training sessions and presentations)</p>
<b>Attitude</b>	<p>Be willing to reflect on experiences</p>	<p>Be able to relativise stereotypes</p>		<p>Evaluate different approaches to generate a programme or subject-specific content;</p> <p>Willingness to become a mentor</p>

### 3.3.1.2. Overview of activities

#### 3.3.1.2.1. Warm up: making sense of your experience

Participants are invited to take a look back on their experience abroad and become aware of what kind of knowledge they have acquired.

The lesson covers the following three activities:

- Activity 1: Diary entry: share your experience abroad
- Activity 2: Experience Map
- Activity 3: What best describes your experience?

#### Aim

Participants will reflect on their experiences abroad; compare stereotypes with reality and learn how to relativise stereotypes; be able to reflect on academic/work styles and differences between cultures.

#### Material

Re-entry online form "Form for module 5", to be found under main module page above lesson 1 (see also attachment 1)

#### Task

##### **Activity 1:**

Read the following questions:

- 1) What parts of the preparation before you went away was particularly useful?
- 2) Looking back – what was missing from the preparation?
- 3) Which situations, do you think, will stay forever in your memory?
- 4) What was harder than expected when you were abroad?
- 5) What was easier than expected?
- 6) Did you have any preconceptions about the people or the culture of your host country before you left?
- 7) Which situations made you change your ideas?
- 8) Do you have different ideas now?
- 9) How did the stay abroad change your ideas about intercultural contacts (people from your host country and international students/volunteers that you met)?
- 10) What have you learned from the experience that relates to your academic/work career?
- 11) What skills have you learned while abroad?
- 12) Have you had any experiences that showed you how wrong you were about people of your host culture? (in terms of stereotypical views)

## Task

Pick only the questions that you feel are most relevant to your experience, maybe three or four, and take them as prompts for a diary entry. Type into Section 1.1 of the form.

### Activity 2:

Being back in your "normal" life after a time abroad often changes your perspective on things you have lived through and seen while away, and also on your "old" life. You have gained life experience, skills, self-confidence and received input from a diversity of sources.

Task 1: Go back to your entries in the Experience Map – what would you change if you were to fill it out now? Take some notes for yourself and bring them to the face-to-face re-entry training (see form attached in the main module description, fill out section 1.2).

Task 2: Reflect on your and other people's entries in the Experience Map: choose 2 of the 4 categories of Experience Map and draw comparisons between your home and two other institutions (university or organisation) (e.g. those that would have been your second and third choice). Take some notes for yourself.

### Activity 3:

What best describes your experience?

Select a photo that best describes your experience/feelings when thinking back to your host town/time abroad. For inspiration, have a look at this [pinterest page](#).

Save the link to your picture and copy & paste it on the form (section 1.3) so that you can show it in your face-to-face meeting. How could you explain to others why you picked the photo? In what way does it stand for your experience abroad? How does it make you feel now? Will this image have ongoing significance for you as a symbol for your present life and future plans?

Which other symbols have acquired a meaning for you, representing moments that were important for your understanding of your placement or for particular conversations or interactions that were important?

### 3.3.1.2.2. Knowing more: settling back in

Participants think about a phenomenon called 'reverse cultural shock', a state that is commonly felt by many people that have spent some time abroad and are experiencing difficulties to reintegrate in their home country.

A link will take the participants to a text that explains this phenomenon in more detail.

#### Aim

Participants will learn about reverse cultural shock and reflect on their own mental state; become aware of own reactions in critical situations; acquire methods to deal with symptoms of reverse culture shock

#### Material

Re-entry online form "Form for module 5"

#### Task

Participants read the text on cultural shock (see appendix 2)

#### Activity:

#### Questions

- The text you just read is about repatriation. Do you think coming home from just a year abroad has similar effects?
- Read through the comments at the bottom of the page. Do any of the described experiences remind you of your own?
- How would you describe your own situation?

Take notes of your thoughts (attached re-entry online form, section 2) and have them ready for your face-to-face training.

### 3.3.1.2.3. Developing creative strategies that help reintegration

Participants are encouraged to think about a creative production that encapsulates their experiences and emotions when thinking back to the stay abroad and how it might influence their future.

#### Aim

Participants will develop creative strategies that can help them reintegrate; learn how to present Erasmus experiences in a professional, thoughtful and responsible way in an online setting

#### Material

Re-entry online form "Form for module 5"

#### Task

##### Activity 1

Participants watch a video of a person experiencing reverse cultural shock and finding a creative way to ease the symptoms.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3COAlzdG9Vk> (2.59min)

Task:

Now, find your way of expression!

Suggestions:

- create a portfolio with different materials, e.g. using iSpring
- blog about your experiences
- put together a video with your best photos (e.g. using Adobe Spark)

Post your creative material on the Experience Map under your host institution (click on the link below, click 'Add entry', => select Entry Category: "Experience", category: "Intercultural Challenges" and your host institution). You will also be asked to share your material in your face-to-face training, so please save and post the link to your material in the re-entry online form "Form for module 5" (section 3.1).

##### Activity 2

Apart from creatively expressing emotions, which other strategies of dealing with reverse cultural shock are helping you re-integrate at the moment?

Think about and make a list of the most useful strategies, both academic/work-related and social. Add these suggestions to your re-entry online form "Form for module 5" (section 3.2).



### 3.3.1.2.4. Passing the torch

Participants become aware of their newly acquired skills and guide them through some possible ways of putting their experiences and skills into practice. For an overview, here are the activities:

- Activity 1: Update your CV
- Activity 2: Consider forms of engagement
- Activity 3: Get involved in "Connect – Intercultural Learning Network"

#### Aim

Participants will become aware of newly acquired skills; learn how to connect experiences abroad and acquired knowledge; update their CVs to reflect new skills; work through possible ways of putting their experiences and skills into practice; evaluate different approaches to generating a programme or subject-specific content on intercultural topics

#### Material

Their own CV, or use the provided link to download a CV template; re-entry online form "Form for module 5"

#### Task

##### **Activity 1**

What are key skills you think you have developed during the year abroad? Which relevant experiences have you had? Examples: language, intercultural skills, dealing with uncertainty, self-awareness, factual knowledge, communication skills, conflict management, any other new skills – such as computer or presentation skills, professional representation and appearance, any work or volunteering experience you might have had while abroad (don't forget to mention the intercultural training via Connect :-)

Update your CV and bring it to the re-entry face-to-face workshop.

##### **Activity 2**

How could you pass these skills on to others at your institution? At your home institution, what kind of possibilities are there that you could use to engage with current Erasmus+ participants or with outgoing Erasmus+ participants?

Take notes of your ideas on the re-entry form provided, "Form for module 5" (section 4). Please bring the completed form with you to your face-to-face meeting.

The next (and final) page will give you further suggestions in the context of Connect.

After the completion of these activities, the participants get the following information about Connect training possibilities:

Connect offers you a variety of ways in which you can stay involved in intercultural experiences. Here are two roles that might be of interest to you. You will get more information on how to become active in your face-to-face meeting at your home institution.

### **Become a promoter**

- 1) Engage with outgoing Erasmus+ participants – participate in workshops, one-to-one meetings, give presentations about your experiences, participate in information evenings about the country you went to, write an article e.g. for students' newspaper, participate in face-to-face pre-departure training.
- 2) Engage with current Erasmus+ participants at your home institution, become a buddy, facilitate support sessions, give language tuition.

### **Become a mentor**

- 1) Engage with outgoing Erasmus+ participants – organise workshops, one-to-one meetings, give presentations about your experiences, organise an information evening about the country you went to, write an article e.g. for students' newspaper, contribute or organise face-to-face pre-departure training.
- 2) Engage with current Erasmus+ participants at your home institution, become a buddy, facilitate support sessions, give language tuition.
- 3) Moderate the Experience Map.

Please contact [Mathilde.Berhault@uni-jena.de](mailto:Mathilde.Berhault@uni-jena.de) for more information.

### 3.1.1.2. Attachment

#### **Attachment 1: Form for module 5**

Please fill out and bring to your face-to-face meeting (print or electronic copy).

#### Lesson 1: Warm up

##### **1.1 Activity 1: Diary entry**

##### **1.2 Activity 2: Experience Map**

Task 1: Go back to your entries in the Experience Map – What would you change if you were to fill it out now? Take some notes and bring them to the face-to-face re-entry training.

*(See Appendix below in case you need to remember how to access the Experience Map)*

Task 2: Reflect on your and other people's entries in the Experience Map: choose 2 of the 4 categories of the Experience Map and draw comparisons between your home university/institution and two other institutions. Take some notes for yourself.

##### **1.3 Activity 3: What best describes your experience? Please copy and paste your symbol here:**

Why did you pick this picture/symbol? In what way does it stand for your experience abroad? How does it make you feel now? Will this image have ongoing significance for you as a symbol for your present life and future plans?

Which other symbols have acquired meaning for you, representing moments that were important for your understanding of your placement or for particular conversations or interactions that were important?

## Lesson 2: Reverse Cultural Shock

You have read a text about repatriation. Do you think coming home from just a year abroad has similar effects?

Read through the comments at the bottom of the page. Do any of the described experiences remind you of your own?

How would you describe your own situation?

## Lesson 3: Developing creative strategies that help reintegration

### 3.1 Task 1: Find your way of expression

Suggestions:

- 1) Create a portfolio with different materials, e.g. using iSpring (?)
- 2) Create a blog about your experiences, post the link
- 3) Put together a video with your best photos (e.g using Adobe Spark)

Post your material in the Forum and comment on others' material. You will be asked to share your materials in the face-to-face training, post a link to your material here so you can find it quickly.

### 3.2 Task 2: Strategies of dealing with cultural shock

Apart from creatively expressing emotions, which other strategies of dealing with cultural shock before are helping you at the moment? Think about and describe the most successful strategies to re-integrate into the new environment, both academically and socially and how they might be beneficial now. Add these suggestions to your online form.

## 4. Lesson 4: Passing on the torch

### Activity 2: Consider forms of engagement

How could you pass your skills on to others at university? At your home university, what kind of possibilities are there for you to engage with current Erasmus students or with outgoing Erasmus students?

## Attachment 2: Reverse culture shock text

[https://www.expatica.com/nl/moving-to/Moving-home-Reverse-culture-shock\\_104957.html](https://www.expatica.com/nl/moving-to/Moving-home-Reverse-culture-shock_104957.html)

### Reverse culture shock: what, when, and how to cope

**Moving home isn't always easy – many who repatriate feel different and utterly out of touch. This article explains what happens when culture shock is reversed, what to expect, and how to cope with its effects.**

Just like expatriation, repatriation has its psychological phases that are unexpected and daunting. Most notably, encountering reverse culture shock when returning home is a surprising situation that's overlooked by both expats returning and their businesses calling to come home.

Like culture shock, reverse culture shock has a number of stages; imagine this to be a U-shape curve. At first, you may be excited to return home – seeing friends and family members, wearing the rest of your wardrobe, and eating at your favourite restaurants.

This initial euphoria eventually wears off, and that's when you find yourself feeling out of place in your own culture. This is the experience of reverse culture shock; it's the bottom of the curve and often the roughest part.

The good news is, although it may take time, you will begin a gradual adjustment back towards feeling comfortable with where and whom you are.

#### How reverse culture shock happens

“Reverse culture shock is experienced when returning to a place that one expects to be home but actually is no longer, is far more subtle, and therefore, more difficult to manage than outbound shock precisely because it is unexpected and unanticipated,” says Dean Foster, founder and president of DFA Intercultural Global Solutions, a firm that specialises in intercultural training and coaching worldwide.

Foster explains that expats learn over their time in a host country “...to behave and think like the locals, to greater or lesser degrees, while on international assignment.”

“By the time most traditional international assignments come to an end several years may have passed, providing the international assignee a significant amount of time to learn new patterns of behaviour and thought necessary to fit into their host country.”

Foster points out that expats returning home are “shocked into the realisation that they have in fact changed substantially, usually when they encounter their home culture upon repatriating. Both they and their home culture have changed, and this is often the first time that expats have had the opportunity to experience any of these changes.”

#### What is reverse culture shock?

As strange as it sounds, expats become less and less familiar with their home stomping grounds. Returning brings a blanket of fog on perception, like an audience member walking around in a setting that's familiar but still unreal.

Robin Pascoe, author of *Homeward Bound*, writes: "Re-entry shock is when you feel like you are wearing contact lenses in the wrong eyes. Everything looks almost right."

Simply put, being an expat is such a lengthy and deep international experience it brings about great professional and personal changes. Old norms and values from your home country are viewed from a fresh perspective, and expats and their families see things in a new light; something like Dorothy going from black and white to Technicolor.

In addition, expats can begin to feel frustrated or confused when their close friends and family are anything but curious and intrigued about their experience. After all, the expat was gone to a foreign land for years, with sights, sounds and smells exotic and new.

Expats returning home can expect their top re-entry challenges being:

- Boredom
- No one wants to listen
- You can't explain
- Reverse homesickness
- Relationships have changed
- People see "wrong" changes
- People misunderstand you
- Feelings of alienation
- Inability to apply new knowledge and skills
- Loss/compartmentalisation of experience

(According to Dr. Bruce La Brack from the School of International Studies at University of the Pacific, see also [http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/pub/2-2-3\\_Ten\\_top\\_challenges.htm](http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/pub/2-2-3_Ten_top_challenges.htm).)

### **How to deal with reverse shock**

Share your experience with others

Although you might feel like no one wants to listen, there will be close ones who will support you with open ears and honest interest.

Start a blog, contact friends you made as an expat, or write articles – find new ways to incorporate your urge to share stories with an audience who will listen intently.

Maintain your style and stay international

Things might be different, people (including yourself) might have changed, but this doesn't mean a "repat" should give up character and interest learned from abroad just to fit in. Maintain your lifestyle, from the food you ate abroad to the nature of your evolving personality.

"Remember that being flexible and expecting the unexpected helped you get through the difficult times abroad. The same attitude can help you back home," says the Office of International Studies at Northeastern University.

"Reverse culture shock is a transition, and an important learning experience. Use this time

to rebuild relationships, interests, and your new worldly self.”

Keeping an international perspective is a special skill not to take for granted or put away. Read international magazines and foreign newspapers, or access news from your host country via websites and forums.

Ask for training

From an occupational point of view, to help expats have a successful repatriation Foster recommends training courses not just for the employee but the entire family that is returning.

“It needs to involve the HR [human resources] department at least six months prior to the return, so that the company can ensure a position for the repats that value their new skills. Repatriation training helps the entire family adjust to the fact that they have all changed significantly while on international assignment,” says Foster.

“Training will assess and value those changes, and see the ways their home country has changed while they were abroad.”

In the end, the transition requires patience and even more of an open mind than before. Careful preparation will ease the bumps experienced on the ride home for the entire family. Brace yourself for the shock and enjoy the unique thrills of seeing your home from this different and, in a sense ,far out’ perspective.

*Expatica*

*Some excerpts in this article were taken from Expatica article Managing the shock of re-entry, Northeastern University’s Office of International Study Programs website, and Dean Foster’s Repatriation 101: demystifying Reverse Culture Shock.*

*3 Comments To This Article*

- *Samantha posted:*

*on 2nd November 2011, 14:47:06 - Reply I’m dealing with this now - left NL in August and I’m back in California. The weather’s better, I’ll admit, but I do miss my friends. And yes, jen, shopping is cheaper - but I had to buy a car last week because I don’t have access to any viable public transit, and that means I’ll spend more on gas/car payments/insurance/maintenance. So it definitely cuts both ways.*

- *jen posted:*

*on 28th October 2011, 10:11:11 - Reply “Reverse Culture Shock??” This is hilarious. OMG, the shops are all open and I can buy things that aren’t marked up 600%. They’re all speaking my native language, too. How will I ever cope with it all? I’m just kidding, I suppose if you’re moving back to a place that is exceedingly boring it would be a shock, otherwise,... no.*

- *Marie posted:*

*on 27th October 2011, 14:45:16 - Reply For me a return to my birthplace made me aware of how I had become used to much more stimulating and challenging social and natural environments.*



## 4. Appendix- Experience Map

The online Experience Map works similarly to Google Maps. It enables the gathering and storage of experience reports, pictures and short videos concerning specific institutional locations. Participants can access an up-to-date pool of information and up-close experiences when they are looking for a host institution for a stay abroad. Via the map they can inform themselves about conditions of study/work and living in the different locations. Furthermore, they can get in contact with exchange participants who currently live and study in these places. This makes their start easier at the host institution. The project aims to develop an innovative and sustainable intercultural curriculum and support participants before, during and after the mobility. Institutions which want to support the dynamism and the peer-to-peer idea of the programme can become an active part of it. Participants who decide to become a "creator" follow the online modules and get creator access on the Experience Map so that they have the possibility to publish their own posts.

Currently (05.06.2018) we have 51 institutions (universities) from 16 countries on the Experience Map.

The Experience Map is a plugin that we developed for the use on the Connect online learning platform.

On the Experience Map each pin corresponds to an institution. There is the possibility to post official links as well as experiences in three categories and their subcategories, which are the following ones:

### 1) Institution:

- My first week
- International Office
- Library
- Sport offers
- Conditions of study
- Lectures
- My typical day
- Eating at the university

### 2) City:

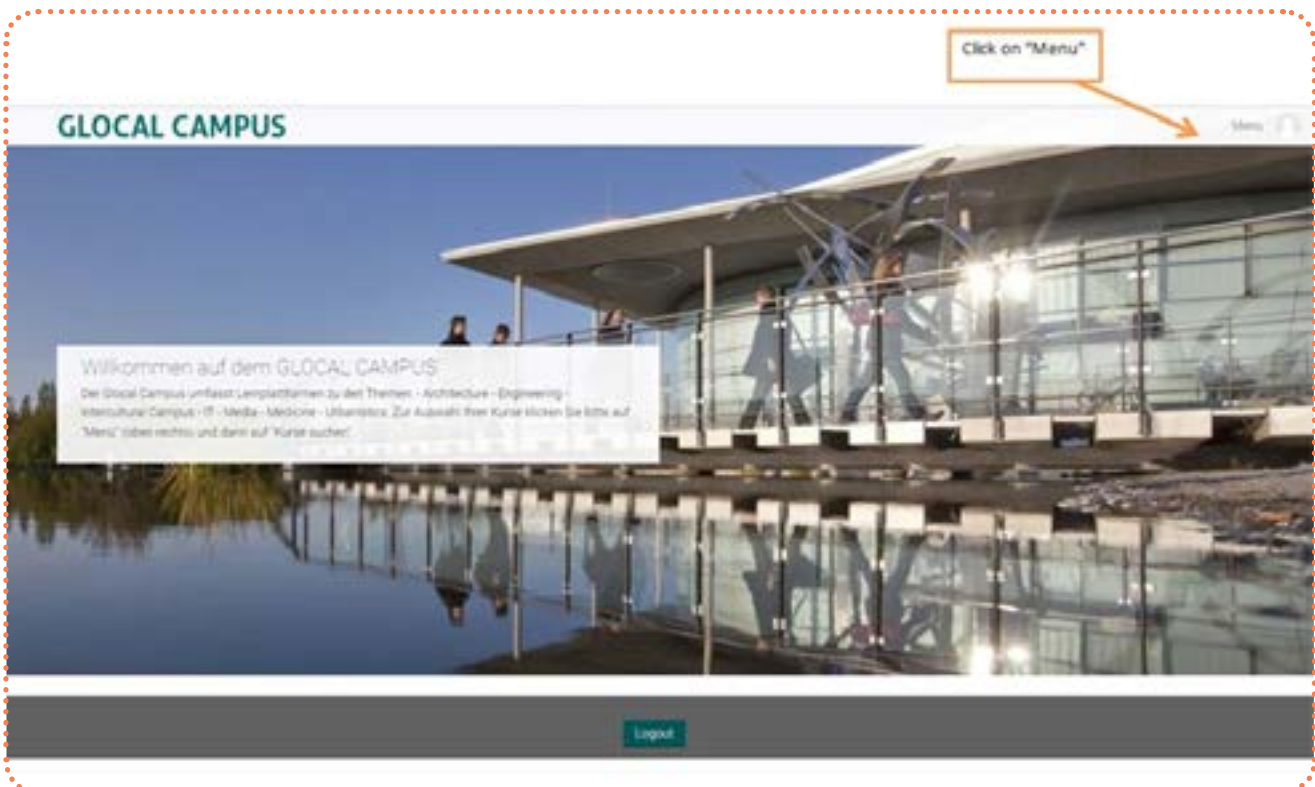
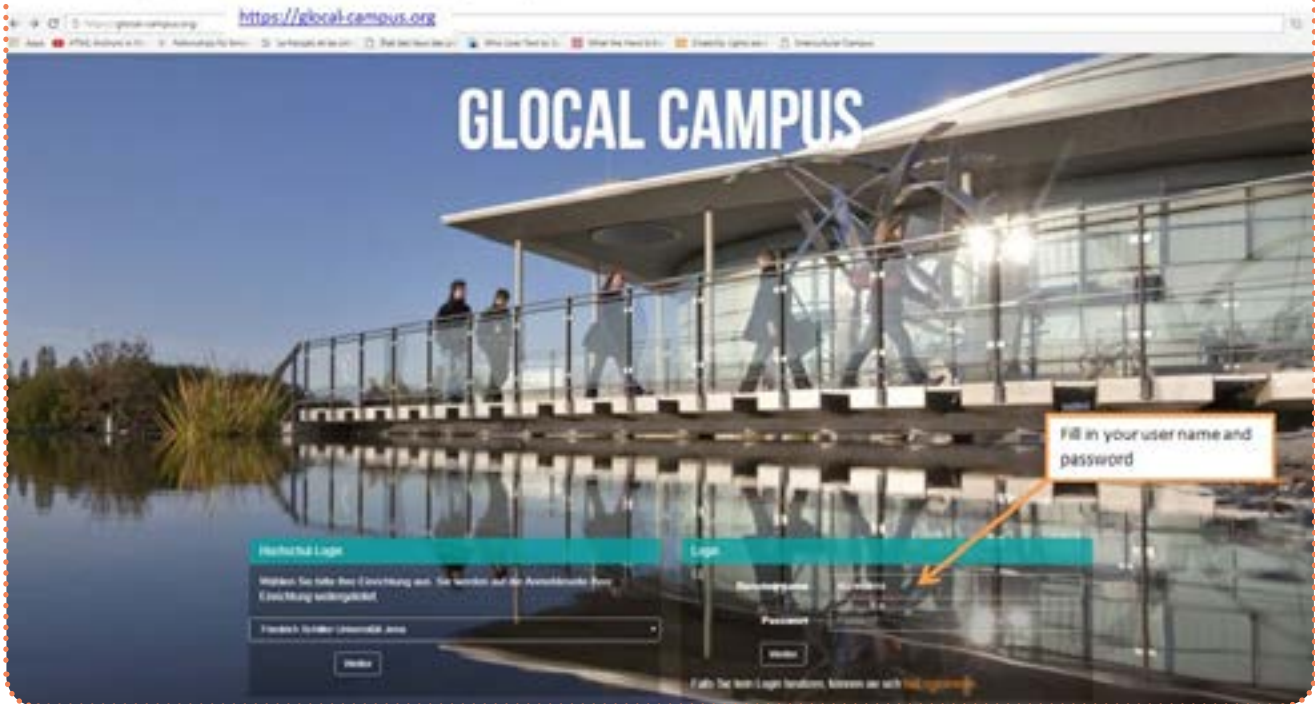
- Arrival and orientation
- Transport
- Accommodation
- Shopping / Supermarkets
- Healthcare
- Cultural Events
- Restaurants
- Leisure activities (my top 5)

### 3) Intercultural Challenges:

- Learning the language
- Language norms / Use of titles
- Meet locals and internationals
- Survival tips
- What I would have loved to know before I went
- More intercultural challenges

## Experience Map

Access to the platform – Information for Students (Creators)



Click on your name to change your user details and preferences (for example to change your password)



Click here to go to the Experience Map

## Moodle Room Experience Map

If you want to add a post on the ExpMap, click on "Add entry"

View all    View single    Search and Sort    Add entry

Subcategory ▾    Topic ▾    Time added ▴ ▾    Author ▾    Rating ▾

A map of Europe with numerous blue location pins placed across various countries. Below the map are three filter buttons: 'Institution', 'City', and 'Intercultural challenges'. A zoom control is visible in the top left corner of the map area.

View all

View single

Search and Sort

Add entry

## New entry

Entry Category

Category

Location

Topic

Description



Click on this symbol to add a link. Copy and paste the link. Moreover you can choose to open it in a new window.

HTML format

Save and view

Save and add another

You can choose if your post belongs to the category Official Link or Experience. Fill in the blanks and write your post.

Then click on "Save and view" or "Save and add another". Your post is on the ExpMap!

As soon as there is at least one post about one location, the university pin will appear on the Map.

View all

View single

Search and Sort

Add entry

## New entry

Entry Category

Category

Location

Topic

Description



Click on this symbol to add a link. Copy and paste the link. Moreover you can choose to open it in a new window.

HTML format

Save and view

Save and add another

You can choose if your post belongs to the category Official Link or Experience. Fill in the blanks and write your post.

Then click on "Save and view" or "Save and add another". Your post is on the ExpMap!

As soon as there is at least one post about one location, the university pin will appear on the Map.

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