DOit!

DO IT guidelines – HOW TO develop activities and strategies to Intercultural Competences and engagement of culturally diverse students in virtual and blended learning

Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences

VSB TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF OSTRAVA | FACULTY OF ECONOMICS

UNIVERSIDADE da MADEIRA

Wroclaw UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

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The present document is the result of joint work processed by four partners: University of Madeira, Wroclaw University of Economics and Business, Technical University of Ostrava, and Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. This consortium is responsible for successfull implementation of the "Developing Online International Teamwork" project, funded under the Erasmus+ program.

The document emphasizes the importance of fostering digital, communication, intercultural, and teamwork skills among teachers, academic staff, HEI (Higher Education Institution) providers, and students. It underscores the need to integrate blended and online mobility programs into university studies as a routine part of academic life. These mobilities enhance social understanding, broaden participants' worldviews, and facilitate cross-cultural interactions, although challenges such as language barriers and limited digital skills can hinder their success. The project aims to promote internationalization and intercultural (IC) competencies among all stakeholders, actively engaging both incoming and outgoing international students in university life and incorporating IC activities into online and blended study environments and HEI processes.

The growing demand for interculturally competent professionals with strong teamwork and digital skills highlights the need for intercultural education in HEI study programs and lifelong learning initiatives. This approach fosters diversity, social interaction, and a sense of shared identity in multicultural societies. The project introduces innovative strategies, encouraging collaboration among staff, teachers, and students, especially those with mobility experience, to address the needs of international students and bridge cultural gaps through shared experiences.

The initiative successfully developed an intercultural guide and course that enhance cultural understanding, communication, and respect. A comprehensive communication strategy for mobility students was implemented, covering all stages (pre-mobility, during, and post-mobility) in both physical and online contexts. Additionally, an intercultural communication course, including a buddy guide, has been integrated as a complementary component of study programs. These outputs, including the intercultural guide and strategies, have already been adapted and implemented in other HEIs across regions, countries, and the EU, fostering broader cultural exchange and cooperation.

In an increasingly interconnected world, higher education institutions play a pivotal role in cultivating global citizens equipped with the skills to navigate diverse cultural landscapes. Central to this mission are the processes of recruiting, admitting, and supporting international students, which go beyond administrative functions to embrace strategic efforts that promote inclusivity and intercultural growth.

Given the example at Wroclaw University of Economics and Business, the process of recruiting and admitting international students takes place at the Admissions Office of WUEB, where specialists in recruitment receive the necessary documents from the international student to be admitted to studies at . Detailed information that the student candidate should provide in order to be qualified for the recruitment process includes:

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1

First and last name

2

Date and place of birth

3

PESEL
(identification number), or in case of its
absence - the name and number of the
identity document issued by the
country

4

Gender

5

**Place of residence before
starting studies: village or city**

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6

Residental address

7

Mailing address

8

Email address

9

Contact phone number

10

Citizenship

In terms of supporting international students, WUEB promotes and engages them in developing intercultural and social competencies through various activities such as cooperation and co-creation opportunities. Our University prepared as well the Welcome Book for our international Students, that contains all the hints and intructions of how to operate at our University - in general. That kind of instruction is a very good way of the marketing communication of many projects, associations, activities and also organizational culture at the university. To prepare that kind of Product is highly recommended.

Below you may find the example of procedure for recruitment of foreigners applying for paid studies, where they have the opportunity to study in an intercultural environment:

In the case of foreigners, the name of the country of birth and information about having the Polish Card should also be provided.

How is it in your organisation?

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The first step is to collect the required documents.

The next stage is to create an account in the recruitment system according to the recruitment schedule for foreigners.

Then, a file with a photo (3.5 x 4.5 cm) is required to be attached, necessary for obtaining a student ID card - the format is the same as for a passport.

A direct email address for contact with the candidate during the recruitment process should be provided. Important information regarding the start of the academic year will also be sent to this address.

After the email address has been published, all personal data must be completed in the My Account → Personal Forms section (first name, last name, date and place of birth as in the passport). In the Education section, the candidate must enter the data regarding the education documents without attaching any files in this place. Candidates for first-degree studies, in the Edit Exam Results field, choose three required qualifying subjects from their high school diploma (without entering results).

The next step is to choose a course of study from the offer - the "Sign up" tab. To register for the selected course, the required data must be completed and all the required documents (PDF files) must be attached in the system. To do this, a file with a scan of each document on the list must be prepared. The rule is - one document per one file. In the case of multi-page documents, it is necessary to:

- Scan each page of the document
- Merge all scans with the pages of the document into one file

The prepared file should be saved in PDF format and attached in the designated place in the system (the New Recruitment Notification section). This must be done for all required documents. The attached documents must meet the conditions described in the "Required Documents" tab. It is important to note that scans of poor quality and in the wrong format will not be considered.
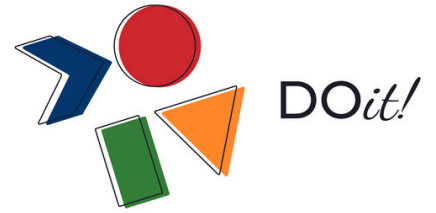
After signing up for the course, the appropriate recruitment fee must be paid into the individual settlement account indicated in the system on the website in the My Account → Payments tab. In the transfer title, please enter the candidate's first and last name and the name of the course. The recruitment fee is non-refundable.

If the documents submitted by the candidate meet all the requirements and the recruitment fee has been paid, the candidate will receive a message from enrolment@ue.wroc.pl requesting payment of the tuition fee for the first semester of studies (it is possible to pay for the entire year of studies. The email will include the bank account number for the transfer).

A scan of the payment receipt for the first semester must be sent by email to the Admissions Committee at the specified address: enrolment@ue.wroc.pl. In the subject line of the message, the candidate should write their first and last name from the passport with the annotation: tuition for the first semester.

After receiving the payment receipt, the Admissions Committee will issue a certificate of acceptance of the foreign student for studies. A scan of the certificate will be sent as an Project attachment to the Candidate's account in the recruitment system (available in the Messages tab). The original will be delivered by traditional mail to the address specified in the system. Note: the address must include the postal code.

The candidate who has been admitted to studies based on scanned documents must submit all original documents, required photocopies, and sworn translations into Polish to the University, according to the schedule. Sworn translations cannot be made from scans, photocopies, etc., but from originals. The documents should be translated after obtaining legalization/apostille.

In the tab Recruitment Applications → Documents and Further Steps, the candidate should download, print, and additionally sign four documents: Personal Questionnaire, Application for Admission to Studies, Oath, and Declaration, and add them to the set of documents. In the case of underage candidates, the Declaration is signed by the candidate and their parent (or legal guardian). Failure to submit the documents within the deadline specified in the recruitment schedule will result in a decision not to accept the candidate for studies.
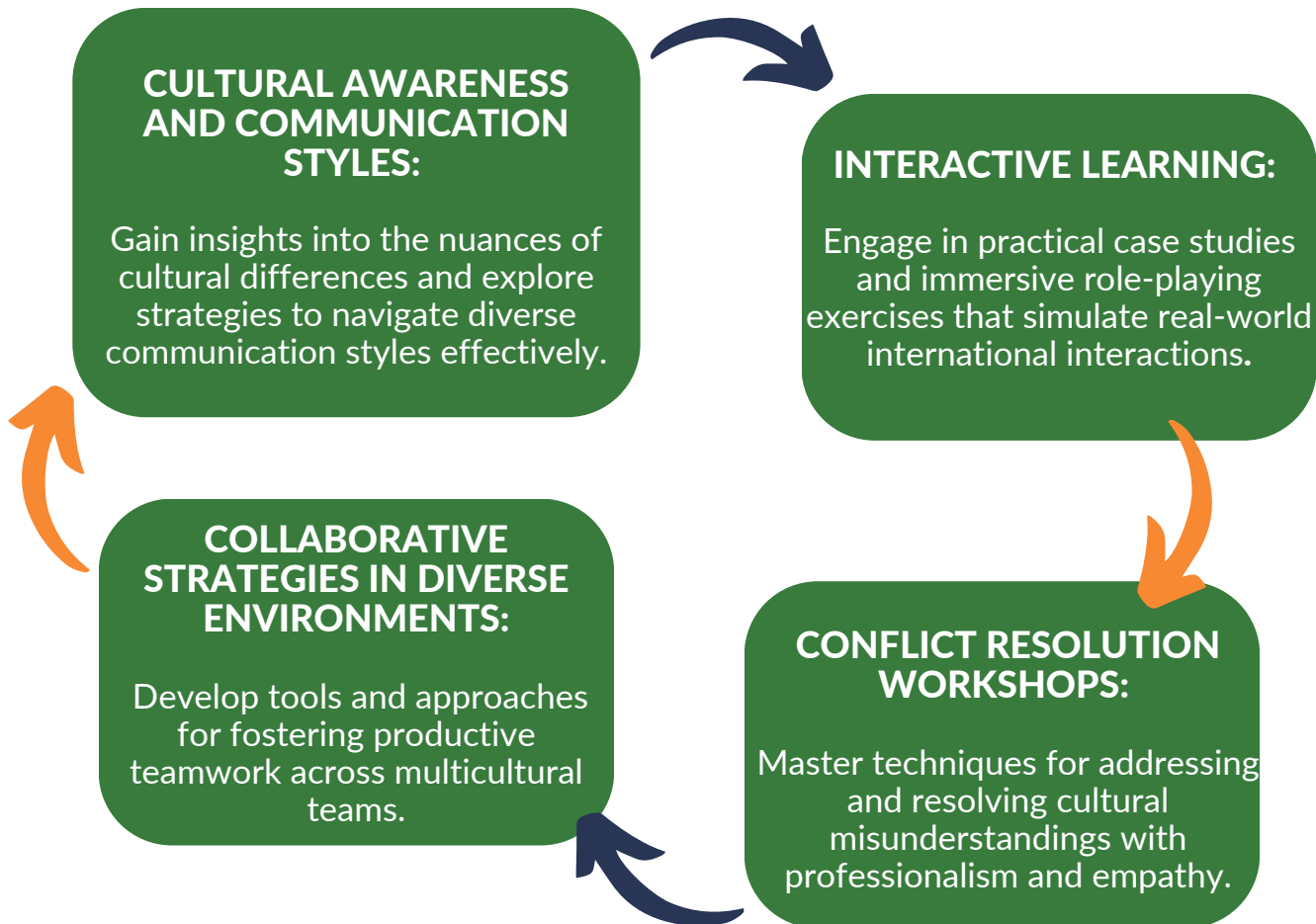
In the scope of developing intercultural competences, events engaging diverse partners representing different countries and cultures are organized by the International Cooperation Center and the Business Cooperation Center. An example of such an initiative to raise cultural awareness was an open lecture for students of the Wroclaw University of Economics and Business on the topic: "Is Cultural Awareness Money? Korean New Year Kite and Japanese Maneki Neko in the context of intercultural relations in business," organized in cooperation with one of the professional accounting and bookkeeping services companies operating on the market. During the lecture, the speaker from the KOREA Desk in the visiting company at the University discussed the theoretical aspects of intercultural communication and also shared valuable information regarding ways of thinking about reality and ethical values embraced by various cultural communities represented by East Asian business partners. The students had the opportunity to learn that cultural awareness in business is a key to facilitating effective communication, and often, cultural elements that may go unnoticed can have a direct impact on the success of negotiations.

What is more the International Mobility Section organizes twice a year Orientation Days for students of the ERASMUS+ Program, during which foreign students improve their intercultural competences by participating in sightseeing tours. This event brings together various cultures, and the social interactions resulting from participating in this initiative contribute to raising intercultural competences.

Your organization can launch Intercultural Communication Course, designed to equip students and staff with essential skills for thriving in today's globalized and culturally diverse world. This innovative program focuses on fostering a deeper understanding of cultural dynamics and building competencies critical for successful international collaboration.

Key Components: The International Mobility Section may organize twice a year Orientation Days for students of the ERASMUS+ Program, during which foreign students improve their intercultural competences by participating in sightseeing tours. This event brings together various cultures, and the social interactions resulting from participating in this initiative contribute to raising intercultural competences (ICC).

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ICC, GO TO THE NEXT SECTION

DO*it!*

CULTURAL AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATION STYLES:

Gain insights into the nuances of cultural differences and explore strategies to navigate diverse communication styles effectively.

INTERACTIVE LEARNING:

Engage in practical case studies and immersive role-playing exercises that simulate real-world international interactions.

COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIES IN DIVERSE ENVIRONMENTS:

Develop tools and approaches for fostering productive teamwork across multicultural teams.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION WORKSHOPS:

Master techniques for addressing and resolving cultural misunderstandings with professionalism and empathy.

Key components of Intercultural Communication Course

The course aims to enhance participants' intercultural intelligence, preparing them to excel in global professional environments and contribute to the creation of inclusive, collaborative spaces.

As an example in September 2019 a summer course was organized as part of the COEUR project - Competences in EuroPreneurship. The general aim of the course was to help participants transition from their specific fields of study to the workplace by creating feasible entrepreneurial ventures (for a new company, product, or service) or new solutions to social problems, taking into account the European environment. Course participants were tasked with creating international, creative entrepreneurial teams that, with the support of the team trainers, identify problems and needs in the European market and develop entrepreneurial solutions.

The aim of the Intensive Summer Course in Business Creativity and Innovation was to help course participants transition from their specific fields of study to the workplace by creating feasible entrepreneurial initiatives (for a new company, product, or service) or new solutions to social problems, taking into account the European environment. Course participants were tasked with creating international, creative entrepreneurial teams that, with the support of the team trainers, identify problems and needs in the European market and develop entrepreneurial solutions.

The course program included didactic activities such as Intercultural Awareness, during which course participants learned to understand each other's cultural codes. Another element of the course were TEAMWORK project workshops, during which new ideas and prototype business concepts were created through brainstorming. One of the key objectives of conducting this course was to engage students in developing intercultural competencies, as well as to develop social and interpersonal skills.

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCIES

Intercultural competencies in academic teaching refer to the skills, attitudes, and knowledge educators need to effectively teach and engage students from diverse cultural backgrounds. As classrooms increasingly become multicultural, developing intercultural competencies is essential for fostering an inclusive learning environment, enhancing student success, and preparing students for global citizenship.

Educators must develop a solid understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds, learning styles, and educational expectations. This includes recognizing how culture shapes communication, participation, and attitudes toward authority, collaboration, and individual work. Familiarity with inclusive pedagogical frameworks that accommodate different cultural norms and values is also critical.

Key skills include culturally responsive teaching, which involves adapting methods and materials to respect and reflect diversity, and effective communication, which requires clear, inclusive, and culturally sensitive language. Educators must also be adept at conflict management to resolve misunderstandings or tensions arising from cultural differences. Flexibility and adaptability in teaching strategies, along with facilitation skills to encourage intercultural dialogue, are essential. Empathy and respect for students' cultural identities, a willingness to learn from students, and ongoing self-reflection to address personal biases further enhance these competencies.

Practical strategies for cultivating intercultural competencies start with inclusive curriculum design, which integrates diverse perspectives and global topics. Teaching methods should include participatory approaches, like group discussions and projects, to encourage intercultural exchange. Differentiated instruction and clear communication of expectations can help address varied learning needs. In fostering an inclusive classroom environment, educators should encourage dialogue about cultural differences, create space for students to share their perspectives, and address microaggressions constructively. Assessment practices should incorporate diverse methods and transparent criteria to accommodate different learning styles and cultural norms.

Educators can also engage in professional development opportunities, such as workshops and collaborative learning sessions or intercultural activities, to build their intercultural skills. Sharing best practices with peers and staying open to growth ensures continuous improvement in multicultural teaching.

Developing intercultural competencies in academic teaching benefits students and educators alike. It enhances student engagement and success by making learners feel respected and understood, while creating inclusive classrooms that leverage diverse perspectives. Ultimately, it prepares students for global citizenship and equips educators to inspire and connect with a broader range of learners.

INTERCULTURAL ACTIVITIES

If you need some inspiration to incorporate some intercultural activities into your organisation, you may be inspired by the few most engaging examples below. Read the descriptions and check out if they are suitable for your enviroment. You may find the extended summary table as annex no.1.

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TEA/COFFEE CULTURE DISCUSSION

Explore cultural diversity through the lens of tea and coffee practices, highlighting how different cultures prepare, consume, and socialize around these beverages

3 SIMILARITIES AND 3 DIFFERENCES

Encourage cross-cultural learning by exploring shared traits and differences among young people from different cultures.

COOK WITH ME!

Promote cultural exchange through food by learning about and preparing traditional dishes from different regions.

SPEED MEETING

Facilitate quick, meaningful interactions to help participants discover shared interests and cultural differences in a short timeframe.

The understanding of the process of making a specific - interantional group - work together as a team- makes the "host" brings the educator into the position of being more of a conductor than a teacher at the begining of the session. And within that trend, it is also possible to make students understand, that we can be "just the same" no matter where we are from. To do so - we can use easy ways to show them, that sometimes we need to look outside the box to see what devides us - and that tool is... the calendar. We can ask all the group members to stand and divide themselves into the line that will show the calendar of the year - with their birthdays. Try to guess! That will crush the national borders - by showing different way of quallification.

It is crucial to organize the meeting with a warm, empathetic atmosphere and create the space for each of the group member. The "golden rule" of that kind of performance would be: HUMOR & SMILE. That is the tool that works within every culture and region.

DO*it!*

Every action needs strategy and strategy needs structure. Please find below the proposition of stuctured plan for scaling and shaing innovative practices

1

Formal Framework
for Scaling
Innovations:

Development of Guidelines: Create a standardized set of procedures and documentation for implementing intercultural initiatives like COIL courses or blended learning models. This should include step-by-step instructions, key resources, and success metrics.

Pilot and Evaluate: Implement pilot programs in new departments or partner institutions to evaluate their scalability and refine methodologies.

Dedicated Teams: Form "Innovation Scaling Teams" responsible for identifying best practices and adapting them for broader application.

2

Knowledge Sharing
Mechanisms:

Open Educational Resources (OERs): Publish methodologies, case studies, and course content as downloadable, freely accessible materials on institutional websites.

Workshops and Training Programs: Organize capacity-building sessions for faculty and administrative staff at partner institutions.

Collaborative Networks: Partner with other universities, particularly those involved in ERASMUS+ or similar programs, to share strategies and findings at regular intervals.

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STRUCTURED PLAN FOR SCALING AND SHARING INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

3

Utilization of Digital
Platforms:

Create a repository of resources (e.g., best practices, evaluation reports) accessible through platforms like Moodle or the university's e-portal.

Host webinars and virtual conferences to share insights with a global audience.

4

Promotion through
Conferences and
Publications:

Present successful practices and outcomes at international academic conferences.

Publish articles in peer-reviewed journals or institutional magazines, emphasizing the replicability of these approaches.

5

Long-term Strategy
and Continuous
Improvement:

Establish a monitoring system to track the success of scaled initiatives and collect feedback for ongoing improvement.

Create sustainability plans to ensure these practices continue beyond initial funding cycles or leadership changes.

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DO YOU NEED SOME INSPIRATION? FEEL FREE TO USE OURS!

WUEB has implemented within its organisation few "communication and dissemination activities" which are part of the recruitment process in the context of the Erasmus+ Program. Based on these examples, each of you can utilize them while creating a catalog for students during the recruitment stage. Take this as inspiration for further actions to diversify the offerings available at your university. Use your imagination. The sky is the limit.

1. **Informational meetings** preceding the recruitment process, during which Mobility Section Specialists answer questions from potential candidates for ERASMUS+ program participation. These meetings take place cyclically and the recruitment process is discussed during their course. Instructions are given on what steps need to be taken to participate in the recruitment process. As part of the meeting, candidates for ERASMUS+ program participation have the opportunity to hear the story of a student from our university who has participated in such an exchange and can share their experiences. The meeting is broadcast on the Teams platform.

2. **Meetings with students promoting Erasmus** - during the recruitment process for the ERASMUS+ Program, meetings are organized with students who have experience with student mobility. One of the students who participated in a student exchange prepared a multimedia presentation, which included photos from their trip and shared the most important information necessary for potential candidates to make a decision about participating in student mobility. The event was supervised by a specialist from the International Cooperation Center who monitored its course. The event was concluded with a panel discussion during which students potentially interested in student exchange could ask questions that concerned them.

3. **Participation in WUEB Open Days** - International Mobility Section employees participate in the WUEB Open Days every year, during which a stand with leaflets and brochures promoting the ERASMUS+ Program and other International Cooperation Center activities is set up. During the Open Days, International Mobility Section specialists answer questions and doubts that potential student exchange candidates may have. A new idea is the organization of a quiz competition for students interested in participating in the ERASMUS+ Program. The competition is based on knowledge about student mobility, and the prize is gadgets promoting the ERASMUS+ Program at the Wroclaw University of Economics and Business.

4. Update of the WUEB website - Information regarding studies for foreigners and details about the student exchange program are constantly updated on the WUEB website.

5. Erasmus+ Podcast series - created by International Mobility Section specialists. More info below.

Podcast is one of the most popular mean of communication right now at WUEB. You might get inspired!

What were the goals of creating the podcast series:

The goal of creating the podcast series was to reach a larger audience. The aim was also to convey knowledge about opportunities for study abroad in a simpler way - using popular streaming platforms and with "one click" knowledge about the Erasmus+ program. All information can be obtained. It is interesting to note that the podcasts will be available to a wider audience on the YouTube and Spotify platforms.

? What was the intended format of the podcast (informal conversation, concise information, formal/informal tone)? The podcasts are conducted in a casual tone using the informal "you" form to better reach the student audience. The aim is to blur boundaries and reduce distance, so there are no formalities such as using titles like "Mr." or "Ms.", even though Polish social norms require it. The goal is to speak more directly to the student, so they feel that the study abroad offer is directed specifically to them and that they are a unique individual who must take advantage of it. This creates a sense of uniqueness among the students.

? Were the information obtained in the podcast useful? Did they cover the topic in-depth? Were the answers in line with expectations? Or did they lack details and specifics? Such conversations contain a lot of information and plenty of specifics. Through the form of a non- binding conversation, the interviewer can freely conduct a dialogue and ask questions about interesting issues related to the ERASMUS+ program. Through a friendly and enjoyable atmosphere, the interviewee is stimulated and encouraged to ask probing questions, as well as to gather more and more information that students need.

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The use of podcasts as a form of communication resulted from the need to reach the target group, which is the young generation using social media and new technologies in their daily lives. It is an effective communication channel with the student, focused on their needs, easily accessible and available, reaching the potential user. The use of podcasts to promote the ERASMUS+ program at UEW and inform about its details is in line with modern trends and communication standards with students treated as the target group - the recipient of the idea of international mobility. It is a so-called knowledge in a nutshell, condensed information that is easy to reach and easily digestible due to the student form, i.e., an informal style, accumulation of colloquialisms, high expression, short messages and the host of the podcast fraternizes with the interlocutor.

Don't Spill the Tea: Keeping Communication Professional and Light

Always Maintain Professional Courtesy

WHILE THE LANGUAGE USED IN BUSINESS NEGOTIATIONS MAY SOMETIMES NEED TO BE CANDID AND DIRECT, IT SHOULD REMAIN RESPECTFUL AND FREE FROM RUDENESS OR INSULTS. SIMILARLY, WHILE SHARING EXAMPLES CAN ENHANCE DISCUSSIONS, AVOID ANECDOTES THAT ARE DIVISIVE OR CONTENTIOUS, AS THEY MAY HINDER COLLABORATION AND UNDERSTANDING.

Stay in Character

WHEN ENGAGING IN PROJECT COMMUNICATIONS, YOUR STATEMENTS SHOULD ALIGN WITH THE ROLE OF THE STAKEHOLDER GROUP YOU REPRESENT. THINK OF THIS AS PLAYING A PART IN A STRUCTURED SCENARIO RATHER THAN SIMPLY EXPRESSING PERSONAL OPINIONS.

Be Mindful of Diverse Interpretations

PEOPLE FROM VARIOUS CULTURAL OR PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUNDS MAY INTERPRET THE SAME WORDS DIFFERENTLY. ENSURE THAT YOUR LANGUAGE IS CLEAR AND ALIGNED WITH THE INTENDED MESSAGE TO MINIMIZE MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND PROMOTE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION.

Use the Designated Shared Platform

ALL COMMUNICATION CONTENT, INCLUDING TEXT, IMAGES, AND MEDIA LINKS, SHOULD BE UPLOADED TO THE SHARED PLATFORM MONITORED BY YOUR INSTRUCTORS. WHILE YOU ARE WELCOME TO INTERACT WITH PARTICIPANTS OUTSIDE THE PLATFORM, THESE INTERACTIONS ARE OPTIONAL AND NOT PART OF THE PROJECT REQUIREMENTS.

Respect Privacy in Role-Playing

RECOGNIZE THAT OTHER PARTICIPANTS ARE ALSO REPRESENTING ROLES, NOT THEIR PERSONAL IDENTITIES. AVOID SHARING PERSONAL INFORMATION YOU CONSIDER PRIVATE AND DO NOT EXPECT OTHERS TO SHARE PRIVATE DETAILS DURING ROLE-PLAYING INTERACTIONS.

Communicate Your Role's Perspective Clearly

IN EVERY ROUND OF THE PROJECT, ENSURE THAT YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS REFLECT YOUR CHARACTER'S POSITION AND SUPPORT THE INTERESTS OF YOUR STAKEHOLDER GROUP. STRIVE TO ARTICULATE YOUR PERSPECTIVE SUBSTANTIVELY WHILE SEEKING TO BUILD CONSENSUS WHERE POSSIBLE.

Do Not Be Discouraged by Challenges in Consensus-Building

ACHIEVING CONSENSUS IN A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GROUP CAN BE CHALLENGING AND, AT TIMES, UNATTAINABLE WITHIN THE PROJECT'S TIME CONSTRAINTS. TAKE THIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR REFLECTION AND GROWTH, RECOGNIZING THAT THE OUTCOME DOES NOT DEFINE YOUR ABILITIES OR EFFORTS.

Prioritize Project Objectives Over Socializing

WHILE FORMING FRIENDSHIPS IN A COLLABORATIVE SETTING IS ENCOURAGED, DO NOT LET SOCIALIZING DETRACT FROM THE PRIMARY GOAL OF COMPLETING THE PROJECT. STAY FOCUSED ON ACHIEVING THE LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERING MEANINGFUL OUTCOMES.

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1. Stay Respectful: Be direct yet courteous, avoiding rudeness or controversial examples that might disrupt collaboration.

2. Consider Cultural Nuances: Recognize that language can be interpreted differently across cultures and contexts. Be clear and intentional.

3. Role-Play With Purpose: Keep your communications aligned with the role you represent, ensuring relevance and professionalism.

4. Respect Privacy: Avoid sharing personal details or expecting others to do so during role-play scenarios.

5. Focus on the Goals: While friendships are welcome, don't let socializing overshadow project objectives. Stay on task.

6. Stick to the Platform: Use the designated tools for official communication. Off-platform interactions are optional, not mandatory.

7. Articulate Your Perspective: Share your role's viewpoint clearly, aiming to protect group interests while seeking consensus.

8. Embrace the Process: Don't get discouraged if consensus is difficult; reflect on the experience as a growth opportunity.

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NEW WAYS OF COMMUNICATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Intercultural activities are structured interactions, events, or programs that enable individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds to exchange ideas, foster understanding, and develop competencies necessary for effective communication and collaboration in multicultural settings. These activities are essential in preparing students and staff for globalized environments, equipping them with the skills to navigate cultural differences and collaborate effectively. Examples of such activities include workshops, team projects, cultural festivals, language exchange programs, study-abroad opportunities, and virtual collaborative learning environments.

To enhance the effectiveness and engagement of these programs, it is essential to integrate innovative communication methods and develop dynamic intercultural activities that resonate with diverse participants. Analyzing the situation as it is in the education market today, taking into account the previous experience of the COVID pandemic, the switch of all broadcasting channels to remote, the number of hours spent organizing virtual learning, it can be concluded that the best method to involve students in COIL courses may be to involve students in the thing itself. Analysis of the product as to the target group showed that the most successful initiatives among students are those led by students - so involving students in promoting courses in an international environment may enjoy the best and lasting effects. The appointment of leaders and guides provides an opportunity to take responsibility, but an incentive in the form of, for example, extra points towards a scholarship is needed to take this responsibility. Another method that can work as a motivation system could be a course delivery formula whose stages are achievements, in youth jargon this method could be compared to a game (creating the illusion of a game) in which one passes specific levels. For each level, one can set , 'rewards', which are confirmation of a given achievement. This method assumes a high level of student involvement in the first stages of the project in order to popularize it.

Subsequent stages of the project would have larger intervals between stages where an achievement can be obtained, as well as less significant rewards (with the assumption that exceptions can be made). Encouraging students to motivate each other is important, but the participant must show a willingness to actively participate from the beginning. Ice breakers are indispensable on this path and should be used not only to break the first ice, but also when the group of participants is not sufficiently cohesive to facilitate opportunities to meet after the activity.

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INNOVATIVE WAYS OF COMMUNICATION IN INTERCULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Digital collaboration platforms, such as MS Teams, Zoom, and Slack, provide real-time and asynchronous communication for students from different cultural backgrounds, enabling seamless teamwork and project management. Social media platforms like Instagram, LinkedIn, and Discord offer informal spaces for interaction, encouraging engagement through storytelling, live sessions, and discussion forums. Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) bring immersive cultural experiences to life, allowing students to virtually visit landmarks or participate in global team-building exercises.

Gamified tools like Kahoot and Mentimeter make communication engaging by incorporating quizzes, polls, and real-time feedback. Additionally, AI-driven multilingual tools provide real-time translation and cultural tips, helping participants overcome language barriers. Podcasts and video series focusing on cultural insights allow students to learn through relatable content, while hybrid events combining physical and virtual participation ensure inclusivity and accessibility.

NEW METHODS FOR DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Cultural hackathons encourage collaboration by bringing together students from diverse backgrounds to solve global challenges. Peer mentorship programs pair individuals from different cultures, promoting mutual learning and understanding. Dialogue circles provide a safe space to discuss cultural stereotypes, ethical dilemmas, and global issues, fostering open communication.

Collaborative International Online Learning (COIL) integrates global collaboration into academic programs, enabling students to work on shared projects with peers from partner institutions. Cultural immersion experiences, whether virtual or physical, offer first-hand exposure to different traditions and practices. Events celebrating art and culinary traditions provide an engaging way for participants to share their cultural heritage. Leadership training programs focus on managing multicultural teams and understanding global business ethics, preparing participants for international challenges.

DO*it!*

NEW MOTIVATION SYSTEM FOR PARTICIPATION AND EVALUATION

To ensure sustained participation and engagement in intercultural activities, institutions must implement a structured motivation system. Achievement-based rewards can include points redeemable for certificates, scholarships, or exclusive workshops. Gamification, such as a "level-up" system with badges and leaderboards, motivates students by making participation competitive and fun.

Integrating intercultural activities into academic curriculums allows students to earn credits for participation, emphasizing their importance. Recognition through newsletters, social media posts, and awards highlights active participants, boosting their sense of accomplishment. Feedback incentives, such as early registration for events, encourage valuable insights from participants. Peer-nominated awards foster community and appreciation, while skill-based certifications in areas like teamwork and communication enhance employability.

Exclusive opportunities, such as mentorships, internships, or study-abroad preferences, reward active participation, further motivating students to engage. A robust motivation system not only drives interest but also ensures long-term commitment to intercultural activities.

BENEFITS OF THE MOTIVATION SYSTEM

A well-designed motivation system fosters increased engagement, sustained interest, and skill development. Students gain a sense of accomplishment and recognition, while institutions benefit from enhanced program participation and impactful intercultural outcomes. Gamification and skill-based incentives align with modern trends, ensuring long-term success.

By combining innovative communication methods, dynamic intercultural activities, and robust motivational systems, educational institutions can create transformative experiences that prepare students for globalized careers and multicultural collaboration. These initiatives ensure the development of essential skills for navigating the complexities of an interconnected world.

SETS OF COMMUNICATION, STYLE AND EVALUATION TOOLS AND METHODS

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) courses have become increasingly prominent in higher education as universities seek to internationalize their curricula and provide students with global learning experiences without the need for traditional study abroad programs. COIL facilitates online, intercultural collaboration between students from different countries, leveraging digital technologies to promote cross-cultural communication and problem-solving skills. This model of virtual work and learning is designed to foster international collaboration and exchange without requiring physical mobility. COIL courses often involve joint projects, discussions, and assignments that require students to engage with peers from different cultural backgrounds.

Internationalization is a growing trend in higher education, where universities aim to prepare students for a globalized world by enhancing their academic experiences through international perspectives. While traditional study abroad programs are a key component of this process, COIL offers an innovative and cost-effective alternative to internationalization, especially in an era of digital education.

However, despite the clear advantages, implementing COIL courses comes with several challenges, including time zone differences, compatibility between partner institutions, technical difficulties, cultural or linguistic barriers, and the difficulty of finding a suitable time that fits both groups' schedules due to differing timetables.

This writing aims to analyze the various aspects of COIL courses based on responses from partner universities: Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, University of Madeira, Technical University of Ostrava and The Wroclaw University of Economics and Business, exploring their implementation, objectives, challenges, benefits, and long-term impact on both students and faculty.

This analysis will serve as a valuable resource for institutions considering the adoption or further development of COIL programs, in particular, being a source of discovery of sets of communication tools and style as well as evaluation tools and methods in connection with the conduct of COIL courses.

The conducted survey captures survey results and observations from various universities regarding internationalization practices, student communication channels, intercultural strategies, and evaluation methods. The data is segmented by target groups (incoming students, outgoing students, and full-time incoming students) and addresses specific questions regarding communication satisfaction, evaluation of activities, and strategies used. Different universities utilize varied channels, including emails, websites, presentations, and specific tools (e.g., SCAGO at Amsterdam University). Satisfaction levels vary due to differences in accessibility and the frequency of communication. Email and websites are the most common communication channels. Some institutions employ innovative methods, such as WhatsApp (University of Madeira) and online tools for specific needs. Evaluations are carried out electronically (via tools like IS Edison and Google Forms) or through personal interviews. Response rates are notably low at some institutions (e.g., 5% at Technical University of Ostrava). Feedback is processed by dedicated departments or individuals, and corrective measures are implemented when needed. The degree of action varies across institutions, with some focusing on internal discussions and others on compliance with national legislation. Intercultural strategies and activities include cultural and physical events, pre-departure sessions, and the use of digital platforms. Universities often integrate surveys to assess intercultural competence development. Orientation programs provide information on cultural nuances, logistics (housing, transport), and academic expectations. Post-arrival, orientation days, ESN activities, and guided sessions are common. Universities adhere to local laws for data protection (e.g., Portugal and Poland) but face challenges in ensuring complete anonymity in evaluations. Use of online platforms for surveys and evaluations is prevalent. Institutions are at varying levels of technological advancement. Recommendations include streamlining communication methods, enhancing survey response rates, aligning evaluation and feedback processing methods, standardizing orientation program content, introducing mandatory intercultural competency sessions, and ensuring robust systems for data protection and anonymity. This framework aims to improve internationalization practices across the surveyed institutions.

Below, you will find the survey results.

SUMMARY OF COIL COURSE SURVEY RESULTS

- **COMMUNICATION TOOLS**

  - **Most Used:** Teams, Zoom (video conferencing), and WhatsApp (messaging) were the top tools used for COIL courses.
  - **Effectiveness:** 75% of respondents rated the communication tools as effective, with 25% finding them very effective.
  - **Challenges:** Time zone differences, technical issues, cultural/language barriers, and scheduling conflicts were noted as major challenges in tool selection and use.

summary of coil course survey results

- **COMMUNICATION STYLES**

  - **Approach:** COIL courses generally used a balanced formal style leaning towards informal communication.
  - **Cultural Differences:** Cultural communication differences, such as varying working styles and gender-related norms (e.g., in Turkey), posed challenges.

- **EVALUATION TOOLS AND METHODS**

  - **Current Tools:** Evaluation included group projects, self-assessments, peer reviews, and instructor assessments.
  - **Effectiveness:** 75% found the evaluation methods effective, with some challenges related to cultural differences and varying academic standards.
  - **Improvement Suggestions:** Real-time feedback, peer reviews, structured reflections, and pre/post-course evaluations were recommended to better assess communication and collaboration skills.

- **INSTRUCTOR AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

  - **Instructor Support:** Various forms of support were offered, such as training, technical assistance, and financial support (especially in Madeira). Some institutions had limited support.
  - **Motivating Instructors:** Professional development, recognition, financial incentives, and the chance for international collaboration were key motivators for instructors.
  - **Student Motivation:** Students were motivated by career development opportunities, global collaboration, and the flexibility of COIL courses, which do not require traditional study abroad.

- **BENEFITS OF COIL**

  - **For Students: Intercultural competence, improved digital literacy, practical problem-solving experience, and enhanced employability.**
  - **For Instructors: Enhanced intercultural teaching experience, opportunities for international collaboration, and professional growth.**

- **LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS & STRATEGIES**

  - **Partnership Maintenance: Successful partnerships depend on clear communication, mutual respect, and strategic planning. Establishing formal agreements and fostering personal connections were also important.**
  - **Incentives for Instructors: Financial and professional development incentives, along with recognition, were key to engaging instructors in COIL.**

- **FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS**

  - **Communication: Tools like Teams, Zoom, and WhatsApp are effective but face challenges with time zones and technical issues. Simpler and more universally accessible tools were suggested.**
  - **Evaluation: Improving evaluation methods to better capture intercultural and collaborative learning was a common suggestion, including the use of structured rubrics and more frequent assessments of communication skills.**

CONCLUSION

The success of COIL courses depends significantly on the communication tools, styles, and evaluation methods employed by participating institutions. Video conferencing platforms, messaging tools, and collaboration software facilitate effective communication and interaction across geographical and cultural divides. Despite the challenges of time zones, technical issues, and cultural differences, these tools are generally considered effective in supporting COIL's goals of intercultural exchange and digital collaboration.

Similarly, the evaluation methods used in COIL courses—ranging from group projects to self-assessments and peer reviews—are instrumental in assessing both individual learning and the collaborative process. However, as COIL continues to evolve, institutions should consider further enhancing these evaluation methods to more effectively capture the intercultural and collaborative aspects of the learning experience. By doing so, COIL courses can continue to foster global competencies and prepare students for a diverse and interconnected world.

Given the example, the unit responsible for this area at the Wroclaw University of Economics and Business is the Office of Distance Education Development under the supervision of the Department of Accounting, Reporting, and Financial Analysis. Employees of the Wroclaw University of Economics and Business have the opportunity to create and conduct courses proposed by themselves on the e-portal electronic platform. All students can participate in the online courses and trainings designed by academic staff after logging into the e-portal system. The platform was created long before the COVID-19 pandemic and works excellently in the academic environment. It is intuitive and very easy to use. It has an international character and is available in both Polish and English. The platform's website displays an icon with the desired language in which the user wants to use the platform. Through it, interactive, multimedia training content can be designed using available Articulate tools. With these tools, potential creators of online training/courses can design multimedia presentations, upload training materials, photos, and sample tasks. It is also possible to link resources and necessary training content. Wroclaw University of Economics and Business employee, using the e-portal, also has the opportunity to create an online test and conduct it in real-time. The tests are automatically evaluated according to the algorithm introduced by the system, which significantly facilitates and speeds up the verification of the user's knowledge in such an online course. The platform, in the interest of the safety and comfort of students, guarantees that in case of a loss of internet connection and problems with the internet network, all data entered into the platform will be saved. In addition, it is worth noting that every 24 hours, all data is archived and at the end of each semester, completed online courses and trainings are archived for eventual inspection purposes.

The WUEB units responsible for the processes and functioning of the e-portal platform are the E-Learning Development Office operating under the Department of Accounting, Reporting, and Financial Analysis and the WUEB Information Technology Center. Individuals dedicated to this platform are designated from these WUEB units and have access and appropriate keys enabling them to use the e-portal. Training is conducted asynchronously. A WUEB instructor can order a course that they plan to lead virtually through the e-portal at any time. To do this, they visit the WUEB homepage, click on the e-portal icon visible on the top taskbar, and then log into the platform using their internal university login and password. Then, an academic teacher or administrative employee (this service is also available for this group of employees) clicks the "ORDER COURSE" icon, then fills out a short survey with a preliminary needs analysis. Several essential questions appear there about the need for such a course, its name, its goals, etc. Then, the instructor who orders such an online course has the ability to provide links, tutorials, and various materials created for the course.

On the one hand, academic staff and administration can create and conduct online training through the e-portal platform, and on the other hand, any WUEB student can participate in them after logging into the system. The student first learns about a planned e-portal course from the instructors and then logs into the university's homepage and clicks on the e-portal icon. After receiving the online course access key from the instructor, the student logs in and enters the password. All courses are password-protected. The entire platform is based on MOODLE software, which defines remote learning environments through teleinformatics networks accessible through a web browser. The Moodle e-learning platform is based on Apache, PHP, and MySQL or PostgreSQL and can be run on Linux, MS Windows, Mac OS X, NetWare 6 operating systems and is a well-known tool for conducting online training/courses and tests.

DO*it!*

You can organize special training for academic staff and administrative employees, during which the following elements are discussed in particular:

Familiarization of training participants with the functionalities of the Moodle platform

Familiarization of training participants with the functionalities of the Moodle platform

Familiarization of training participants with the functionalities of the Moodle platform

Familiarization of training participants with the functionalities of the Moodle platform

As part of the intermediate-level training, the following are expected:

1. Placing resources on the platform

2. Graphic configuration skills for the e-course

3. Configuring virtual consultations - chat

4. Configuring a dictionary

5. Configuring functionalities related to activating students - e-course listeners:
- quizzes - tests
- offline and online assignments, file submission

6. Configuring grades for students

7. Managing the e-course

8. Activity reports

9. Class register

Proposing good practices in recruiting students for COIL and Blended courses

Study of needs among students and teaching staff, application to the appropriate institution, establishing a bilateral agreement with a foreign partner, promotional and marketing activities, implementation, ongoing monitoring, records in a system appropriately created for the needs of created courses, financial service, reporting, dissemination of the effects of work on the course and the results of their implementation.

It is advisable that the recruitment of students for COIL and Blended courses be "tailor-made" and matched to the current didactic offer of the University. Information on recruitment could be sent to students through various channels, with UsosWeb being the most effective channel through which the offer will be able to reach students potentially interested in COIL and Blended courses.

A good solution may be to include these courses in the regular study program so as to avoid situations in which attendance at classes, due to the lack of need to complete these courses to obtain a diploma, would be so low that it would be very difficult to complete the course. Determining the rules of student recruitment for COIL and Blended courses could be consulted with the Foreign Partner, however, it is not necessary to determine the ECTS score together with the Foreign Partner.

Please check our videos with more hints and recommendations of how to make COIL courses.

DOit!

GOOD PRACTICES FOR RECRUITING STUDENTS FOR COILS

Here are some good practices for recruiting students for Collaborative International Online Learning courses:

1.Defining the target group in detail - Conducting an initial survey, market research to determine exactly what group of students is interested in this type of course, taking into account research interests and educational goals.

2.Creating a marketing and communication strategy - Based on the needs analysis and detailed market research in this area, it is worth developing a marketing strategy that will reach the primary target group. Various tools can be used, such as word of mouth, mailing, social media and promotional materials (podcasts, social media post, brochures, flyers, banners, posters, infographics on the website, newsletter, etc.).

3. Creation of a website dedicated to the courses - The website should contain information about the course, program, objectives, syllabus, methodology, technical requirements, costs and detailed information regarding the recruitment process (documentation etc.). It should be easy to browse and visually appealing.

4. Organizing a webinar/promotional video/pilot meeting where the content of the course and answers to questions from potential students will be presented. This will allow for direct contact with those interested, and will also show how interesting and valuable the content of the course is. You can use the email template (see the template no.1).

5. Cooperation with partners - Establishing contact with universities and partner organizations from different countries to promote courses and gain their support in recruiting students.

6. Developing a common set of values related to the introduction of international COIL and Blended courses: intensifying perception of other cultures, ability to work in an international team, opening to new standards of working with students.

7. Providing technical support: guaranteeing students access to the necessary technological tools and software. Providing technical support to help students solve IT issues if they may occur.

SCALING AND SUSTAINING

Intercultural programs and online learning play a pivotal role in equipping students and staff with the skills necessary to thrive in a globalized world. To ensure these programs achieve lasting impact and can be widely implemented, it is essential to develop a structured plan for scaling and sustaining them. This comprehensive guide outlines strategies to achieve these goals effectively.

Developing a comprehensive scaling plan is the first step to ensure that successful intercultural programs can be replicated and implemented across diverse contexts. This begins with a detailed step-by-step replication guide that documents the processes, resources, and timelines needed for implementation. By providing adaptable templates tailored to different institutional settings, such as smaller universities or regional networks, the programs can be customized to address specific needs.

Pilot testing is another critical component. Conducting pilot programs in new departments, faculties, or partner institutions allows institutions to evaluate the scalability of methodologies and gather valuable feedback. This iterative approach ensures the refinement of programs before broader implementation. Additionally, establishing partnership models with other universities creates opportunities for collaborative integration of these programs, leveraging frameworks such as ERASMUS+ to foster cooperation.

To ensure the sustainability of intercultural programs, it is necessary to embed them into institutional structures. This can be achieved through policy integration, where intercultural initiatives become part of the curriculum rather than standalone projects. For instance, making intercultural communication courses a mandatory requirement for degree completion underscores their importance in a global academic environment. Dedicated support teams can further bolster these efforts by managing logistics, evaluating program effectiveness, and adapting initiatives to align with institutional goals.

Sustained funding is a cornerstone of any lasting program. A strategy of diversified funding sources is crucial, incorporating government grants, international cooperation programs like ERASMUS+, alumni donations, and private sector sponsorships. Collaborative approaches such as cost-sharing with partners can also distribute the financial burden, fostering mutual commitment and ensuring resource efficiency.
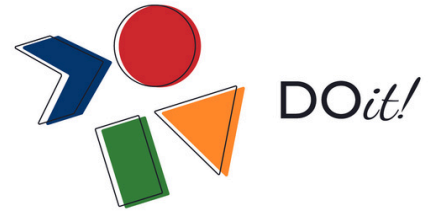
Leveraging digital platforms extends the reach and longevity of intercultural programs. By integrating materials into e-learning platforms such as Moodle or custom Learning Management Systems (LMS), institutions can ensure accessibility for students and faculty over time. Furthermore, publishing resources like course materials, evaluation tools, and best practices as Open Educational Resources (OERs) promotes global dissemination and
adaptation of these programs.

Establishing robust feedback and evaluation systems is vital for continuous improvement. Regular annual reviews can monitor program effectiveness using a combination of surveys, focus groups, and performance metrics. Feedback should be used to develop adaptation plans, enabling programs to evolve in response to changing cultural, academic, or institutional needs.

Promotion through collaborative networks amplifies the impact of intercultural programs. Sharing success stories, methodologies, and outcomes at global conferences and forums encourages other institutions to adopt similar practices. Additionally, knowledge-sharing platforms can serve as centralized repositories for resources like reports, instructional videos, and templates, fostering widespread adoption and fostering a global exchange of ideas.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, scaling and sustaining intercultural programs require a multi-faceted approach that integrates structured replication plans, institutional support, diversified funding, digital tools, and robust evaluation mechanisms. By embedding these programs into core academic structures, leveraging collaborative networks, and continuously adapting to new challenges, educational institutions can ensure that their intercultural initiatives have a lasting and meaningful impact. These strategies will not only expand the reach of such programs but also enhance their quality and adaptability, preparing students and staff for success in an interconnected and culturally diverse world.

DO*it!*

HOW TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF THE GUIDELINES?

To effectively implement the guidelines detailed in the provided text, international centers at universities can integrate these practices into their daily operations to ensure an inclusive, supportive, and structured environment for foreign students. Below is a step-by-step guide on how to embed these guidelines into routine activities:

1. CREATE A STRUCTURED RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSION PROCESS

CENTRALIZE ADMISSIONS:
Designate a specialist or team to handle the admissions process exclusively for international students

COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION:
Provide detailed instructions on necessary documents and processes, including tailored guidance for foreign students (e.g., visa requirements, translation of documents).

DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY:
Use an online admissions platform to streamline the submission and review of applications. Ensure the system supports multilingual access and user-friendly navigation.

Actionable Steps:

✅ Develop a welcome packet with admission requirements and FAQs including digital learning activities (see the template no.2).

✅ Offer virtual workshops explaining the application and onboarding process.

DO*it!*

2. FOSTER INTERCULTURAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

ORIENTATION PROGRAMS:
Organize activities like city tours, cultural awareness sessions, and workshops on navigating university life

COLLABORATIVE EVENTS: :
Host events that bring together local and international students to encourage cultural exchange, such as open lectures or intercultural festivals

LANGUAGE SUPPORT:
rovide access to language learning resources and conversation clubs

Actionable Steps:

✅ **Develop an annual calendar for intercultural events.**

✅ **Partner with cultural organizations to host engaging activities.**

3. ESTABLISH COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

DESIGNATED CONTACT POINTS:
Assign dedicated email addresses and helplines for international student inquiries

DIGITAL PLATFORMS:
Use e-learning systems (e.g., Moodle) and communication apps (e.g., WhatsApp groups) to keep students updated on important information

PERSONAL MESSAGING:
Send regular emails and notifications with tailored information for foreign students, ensuring inclusivity in tone and content

Actionable Steps:

✅ **Set up multilingual communication tools.**

✅ **Organize Q&A sessions before the semester starts.**

DO*it!*

4. EMBED INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCIES IN ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

MANDATORY COURSES:
Integrate intercultural communication modules into degree programs to build awareness and skills

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING:
Encourage participation in programs like Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), which involve teamwork across borders

Actionable Steps:

☑ **Work with academic departments to incorporate intercultural courses.**

☑ **Offer incentives like certificates or academic credits for participation.**

5. PROVIDE ROBUST STUDENT SUPPORT

DEDICATED TEAMS:
Form specialized units to assist with academic, social and mental health challenges faced by international students

BUDDY PROGRAMS:
Pair new international students with local peers to ease their transition

EMERGENCY SUPPORT:
Establish clear protocols for health, legal, or financial emergencies

Actionable Steps:

☑ **Train staff to handle multicultural interactions sensitively.**

☑ **Create a digital support hub accessible 24/7.**

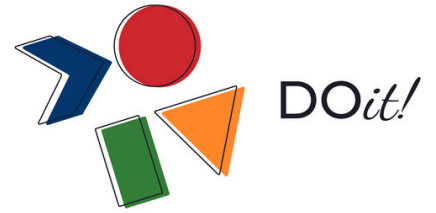## 6. ENHANCE COMMUNICATION FOR INCLUSIVITY

PROFESSIONAL AND RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION:
Train staff and students in inclusive communication practices

FEEDBACK MECHANISMS:
Regularly collect feedback from students about their experiences to improve services

AVOID STEREOTYPES:
Foster an environment that respects individuality and avoids generalizations about cultures

Actionable Steps:

☑ **Develop training materials for staff and faculty on inclusivity.**

☑ **Conduct regular review meetings to address feedback.**

DO*it!*

7. LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL RESOURCES

E-LEARNING PLATFORMS:
Use platforms like Moodle or MS Teams to host orientation materials, intercultural courses, and interactive guides

VIRTUAL REALITY (VR) TOOLS:
Offer virtual campus tours or cultural simulations to familiarize students with their new environment

OPEN ACCESS:
Make resources such as guides, tools and workshop recordings publicly accesible online.

Actionable Steps:

☑ **Collaborate with the IT department to create interactive digital resources.**

☑ **Use analytics to measure engagement with online tools.**

8. SECURE FUNDING AND PARTNERSHIPS

FUNDING SOURCES:
Apply for government or European grants (like Erasmus+), partner with NGOs, and seek corporate sponsorships to support intercultural programs
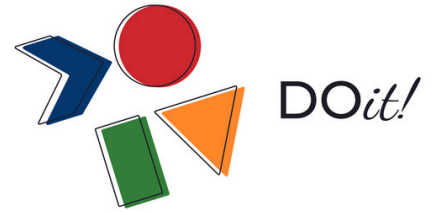
COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS:
Build partnerships with global institutions to share resources and best practices

Actionable Steps:

☑ **Identify potential funding opportunities annually.**

☑ **Host joint events with partner universities.**

9. CONTINOUSLY EVALUATE AND ADAPT

> **REGULAR REVIEWS:**
> Conduct annual assesments of programs and services, using student feedback and performance metrics

> **ADAPTION PLANS:**
> Update programs to align with changing needs and feedback

Actionable Steps:

☑ **Use surveys and focus groups to gather insights.**

☑ **Publish an annual report highlighting improvements and future plans.**

Template no.1 Template of the welcoming email

Subject: Discover Our Intercultural Course and Activities – Join Us!

Dear [Student's Name],
Welcome to [University Name]!

We are excited to invite you to participate in our Intercultural Course and a wide range of engaging activities designed to help you thrive in a globalized world. These opportunities will not only enrich your academic journey but also connect you with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds, fostering understanding and collaboration.

About the Intercultural Course

Our Intercultural Course is designed to:
•Enhance your cultural awareness and communication skills.
•Equip you with strategies to collaborate effectively in multicultural teams.
•Explore practical case studies and real-world scenarios to build your intercultural confidence.
•Develop key skills for resolving cultural misunderstandings and fostering inclusive environments.

Start Date: [Insert Date] Duration: [Insert Duration, e.g., 8 weeks] Eligibility: Open to all students, regardless of their program or background.

What Other Activities Are Available?
Alongside the Intercultural Course, we offer a range of activities to immerse you in our diverse community:
•Cultural Exchange Workshops: Learn about traditions, practices, and values from around the world.
•Language Conversation Clubs: Improve your language skills in a supportive, interactive environment.
•Global Events and Festivals: Celebrate cultural diversity through food, music, and art.
•City Exploration Tours: Discover the local culture and landmarks of [City Name].
Why Should You Join?
•Build Global Competencies: Gain skills that are highly valued in today's interconnected world.
•Expand Your Network: Make lifelong connections with students from different cultures and backgrounds.
•Have Fun While Learning: Engage in exciting, interactive activities that go beyond the classroom.

How to Get Started?
1. Sign Up Now: Register for the course and activities by [Insert Deadline] using [Registration Link].
2. Attend Orientation: Join our orientation session on [Insert Date] to learn more about these opportunities.
3. Connect and Engage: Dive into a world of learning, collaboration, and cultural exchange!

Need More Information?
For further details, visit [University Website Link] or contact [Contact Name] at [Email Address]. We're here to help and answer your questions.

Don't Miss Out! This is your chance to grow personally and professionally while experiencing the best of intercultural learning. We look forward to seeing you in the Intercultural Course and our vibrant activities!

Warm regards,
[Your Name] [Your Title] [University Name] – International Center [Email Address] | [Phone Number] [University Website Link]

Join us to explore, learn, and connect across cultures!

Template no.2 Q&A Template for Students in Collaborative International Online Learning (COIL) and Intercultural Courses

Welcome to [University Name]!

We're thrilled that you're joining our Collaborative International Online Learning (COIL) and Intercultural courses. These programs are designed to provide an immersive, globally-connected learning experience. Below is a Q&A template to address common questions about these courses. If you need further assistance, feel free to contact us at [Email Address].

General Information

Q: What are COIL and intercultural courses?
A: Collaborative International Online Learning (COIL) courses are virtual learning experiences where students from different countries work together on shared projects, engaging in cross-cultural collaboration. Intercultural courses are designed to develop your skills in understanding and navigating cultural diversity, preparing you for global professional and social environments.

Q: Do I need prior experience with intercultural or online courses?
A: No prior experience is required. Both COIL and intercultural courses are designed to support beginners and help you grow your skills throughout the program.

Enrollment and Participation

Q: How do I enroll in COIL or intercultural courses?
A: You can enroll through [Registration System Name]. Detailed instructions will be shared via email or are available on the [University Website Link].

Q: Are these courses mandatory or optional?
A: COIL and intercultural courses may be mandatory depending on your program. If optional, they are highly recommended for their value in building intercultural and collaborative skills.

Technology and Tools

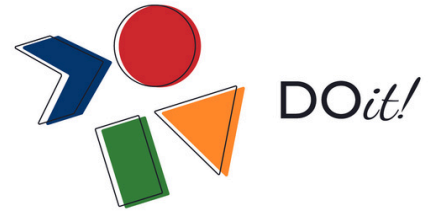Q: What technology will I need to participate?
A: You'll need:
A computer or laptop with a stable internet connection.
Access to communication platforms such as MS Teams, Zoom, or the university's Learning Management System (e.g., Moodle).
A working camera and microphone for online discussions.

Q: Will there be training on how to use these tools?
A: Yes, we will provide a virtual orientation session and tutorials on using required platforms. Look out for an email with details closer to the start date.

Course Structure

Q: What does a typical COIL course look like?
A: COIL courses typically involve:
Weekly online meetings or discussions with international partners.
Collaborative projects requiring cross-cultural teamwork.
Assignments such as case studies, presentations, or reports.

Q: How are intercultural courses structured?
A: Intercultural courses include:
Lectures on cultural theories and communication strategies.
Role-playing activities and case studies.
Workshops focused on resolving cultural conflicts and enhancing collaboration.

Collaboration and Communication

Q: How will I communicate with international peers?
A: You'll collaborate through platforms like MS Teams, Slack, or WhatsApp. Each course provides specific guidelines for effective and respectful communication in a multicultural setting.

Q: What if there are language barriers?
A: COIL courses are conducted in [Language, e.g., English], and language support is available if needed. Tools like real-time translators and glossaries will also be provided.

Assessments and Feedback

Q: How will I be assessed in these courses?
A: Assessments typically include:
Individual and group project evaluations.
Peer reviews and self-reflection assignments.
Participation in discussions and activities.

Q: Will I receive feedback on my performance?
A: Yes, instructors will provide regular feedback, and there will be opportunities for peer-to-peer evaluations to enhance learning.

Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusivity

Q: How can I prepare for intercultural collaboration?
A: We recommend attending our pre-course workshop on cultural sensitivity and reading the "Cultural Interaction Guide" provided by the International Center.

Q: What should I do if I encounter cultural misunderstandings?
A: Approach misunderstandings with an open mind and seek guidance from your course instructor or cultural mentors. The courses are designed to help you navigate and learn from such situations.

Time Commitment and Scheduling

Q: How much time will I need to dedicate to these courses?
A: Typically, you'll need to commit [X hours per week] for COIL and intercultural courses, including online meetings, independent study, and project work.

Q: What if time zone differences affect collaboration?
A: Flexible scheduling and asynchronous options (e.g., recorded lectures, shared documents) are incorporated to accommodate time zone challenges.

Support and Resources

Q: Who can I contact if I have questions or technical issues?
A: For course-related queries, contact your instructor at [Instructor's Email]. For technical support, reach out to the IT Help Desk at [IT Support Email/Phone].

Q: Are there additional resources to help me succeed?
A: Yes, we provide:
A dedicated mentor for intercultural guidance.
Access to our online resource library with tutorials, templates, and cultural learning materials.
Regular check-ins with the course instructor or support team.

We're excited to have you participate in COIL and intercultural courses at [University Name]!
These programs will not only enrich your academic journey but also equip you with essential global skills. For additional questions, contact the International Center at [Email Address].
We look forward to seeing you thrive!

Annex no.1   Intercultural Activities

Summary Table: Activities, Criteria, and Implementation

Why	What	How
Getting to know each other: Build trust and understanding between team members by sharing cultural and personal insights.	Participants answer questions about their own country, others' countries, and hometowns.	Use platforms like Padlet or Wooclap to share and display answers collaboratively.
Discussion on inequality and prices: Learn about economic differences and shopping behaviors across cultures.	Compare shopping receipts: 1) Regular weekend shopping. 2) Discount shopping. 3) Eco-friendly shopping.	Collect receipts and data, then share findings through group discussions or presentations.
Discussion on inequality and education: Understand how education systems and their value appreciated in different countries.	Discuss how education is organized, valued, and appreciated in different countries.	Host group discussions or presentations to facilitate knowledge sharing.
Intercultural Competences: Reflect on personal and cultural identities, breaking stereotypes.	Create and interpret sketches representing oneself and one's country, exploring similarities.	Share and analyze sketches in groups, fostering open dialogue about perspectives.
Create a recipe for a healthy, economical meal: Foster multidisciplinary learning (nutrition, economics, culture, culinary skills).	Design an economical, healthy recipe using ingredients typical of a chosen country.	Use the Design Thinking method: 1) Choose a country and ingredients. 2) Select affordable, nutritious options. 3) Develop the recipe and prepare the meal collaboratively.
The One Letter Story: A stress-free, creative group activity for ice-breaking and collaboration.	Teams create a short story (min. 30 words) where all words start with the same letter.	Assign letters to teams, set a time limit (e.g., 20 min), and let teams collaborate online or in-person. Optionally include horoscope discussions based on group timelines.
Get to Know Each Other Bingo: Identify shared interests to build connections and friendships.	A Bingo game with cards listing simple shared traits (e.g., birth month, favorite food).	Use tools like MyFreeBingoCards to create and print Bingo cards. Organize in-person sessions for teams to mingle and play.
Kahoot Quiz on Languages: Fun, interactive way to learn about languages and cultural differences.	Quiz with word meanings in different languages; options include obvious, similar, or completely unrelated meanings.	Participants join via Kahoot (kahoot.it), enter PINs, nicknames, and avatars. The game takes 1–2 minutes.
Tea/Coffee Culture Discussion: Explore cultural practices and preferences.	Discuss tea/coffee preparation, timing, accompaniments, and social settings.	Group or classroom discussion, optionally combining visual aids (photos/videos of preparations).

Activity	Description	Method / Tools
World Map Activity: Learn about students' origins and cultures.	Students pin their hometowns on an interactive map and share insights about their country.	Use Padlet, Mural, or a similar tool for collaboration. Add photos or fun facts to enhance presentations.
Introduce Your Country: Exchange cultural knowledge through visuals and discussions.	Students share pictures (food, music, traditions, etc.) or personal photos representing their identity.	Use Padlet or similar platforms for uploads. Each student explains their selections, with Q&A for engagement.
3 Similarities and 3 Differences: Cross-cultural learning through comparison.	Teams identify three similarities and differences among young people across cultures. Optionally focus on personal traits.	Groups discuss topics (education, family, leisure, etc.) for 10 minutes, then present findings to the class.
Speed Meeting: Quick interaction to discover shared interests and differences.	Groups of students discuss similarities and differences.	Timed interactions (e.g., 3–5 minutes per pair or group), with rotations to maximize exposure.
Cook With Me!: Culinary exchange to learn about traditional dishes.	Students share recipes, prepare local food, and explain cultural contexts (e.g., when it's eaten).	Provide ingredient lists and tools beforehand. Conduct virtual or physical cooking sessions with step-by-step instructions.
Survival Guide for Students: Foster integration and ease cultural adjustment for new students.	Experienced students share tips on surviving the first year, finding local spots, and navigating the city.	Organize interactive sessions or buddy programs to pair experienced students with newcomers for ongoing support.