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Application Form

Innovative Teaching Award 2024[1]

APPLICANT
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GENERAL INFORMATION
Course level master's **Course number:** 2306 **Semester**: Winter semester 23 **ECTS credits:** 5 **Course title:**   Virtual Collaboration Across Cultures
Further information on the course: (e.g. number of students, prior knowledge of students, position in the curriculum/program) Total: 32 from ENGAGE.EU partner institutions, but mainly from Hanken, NHH and WU (4) Elective course; Students have different knowledge base about the topic and different cultural backgrounds (10 nationalities in the group), but we use this diversity as a resource in our teaching. More details under.

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[1] Courses held during the 2023 calendar year (summer semester 2023, winter semester 2023/24) are eligible for the 2024 Innovative Teaching Award. Courses held over two semesters (WS 2022/23–SS 2023) can also be nominated.

[2] Please name all the people involved in the development of the course design. (ATTENTION: only people with teaching activities at WU or the Executive Academy in listed semesters are eligible.) The people named in this field will also receive the award in case of a successful application.

If applicable links to the course's online environment:

Here you can provide the jury with links to the contents of your course's online environment for review.

1. SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE DESIGN (max. 180 words)

If your course is selected for an award, this text will be published on the WU website along with the submitted application form.

This course addresses the imperative for future leaders to excel in virtual teamwork within a globalized context. Emphasizing the advantages of multicultural teams—increased productivity, profitability, and creativity—the course highlights the need for effective diversity bridging.

The course draws on the diversity that the ENGAGE.EU alliance offers to develop multicultural collaboration competencies to tackle the complexities of globalisation. First, academics from three institutions joined forces to co-create and teach this course, bringing their complementary expertise on topics related to design thinking, diversity and inclusion, remote work, peer feedback and cross-cultural management and communication.

Second, the diversity of the student group and the online format allowed students not only to *learn about* but also *practice and develop* their virtual and multicultural collaboration competencies. In addition to weekly group work in class, students engaged in a practical team project applying design thinking processes to better understand challenges linked to virtual collaboration. They provided feedback to each other and reflected on the learning process.

2. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE DESIGN

2a.) Overview

- What are the learning outcomes to be achieved by the students?
- What are the content elements of the course and how is the course structured?
- What are the elements on which the final grade is based?
- What kinds of peer learning and student collaborations are integrated in your course design?

Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, the students will have attained the following:

- Knowledge

Knowledge of core concepts and theories in relation to: cross-cultural teamwork, communication across cultures, languages, distance and over technology, leadership and collaboration in global virtual teams management of diversity and inclusion, management of individual and team well-being and performance.

- Skills

Ability to work and communicate effectively with people from different cultural/language backgrounds; ability to collaborate in global virtual teams; ability to include diversity to enrich teamwork and integrate resources into the team; ability to apply the design thinking process to tackle international business challenges and to produce a solution; ability to evaluate team members' contributions and give constructive feedback; ability to reflect upon and develop a meta-perspective on one's culture and behaviour; ability to reflect on the feedback received and identify an action plan to improve one's behaviour and ability to present ideas and concepts both verbally and visually to different audiences .

- General competence

Improved interpersonal skills to collaborate and lead in intercultural and virtual settings; global mindset and tolerance; toolbox to face complex intercultural situations and analytical and problem-solving skills.

Content element and course structure

The course was taught over 6 weeks, online, using Zoom. Each session lasted 4hours and covered the following topics:

- Global teamwork and design thinking
- How does culture affect team interactions?
- Becoming a virtual intelligent team member and leader
- Cross-cultural communication
- Diversity and inclusion

Before course start, students were put in multicultural teams. Teams remained permanent during the course, which allowed students to get to know each other and practice and develop their intercultural skills.

Each class followed a similar structure: individual quiz time; team quiz; short lecture part and/or case study to apply knowledge. Twice during the course, they also gave

peer feedback to each other. They also worked in a team project throughout the course. More information about the course and teaching method are provided below.

<u>Final grade</u>

The final grade was based on the evaluation of these elements:

- Individual reflection paper (20 %)
- Group project: oral presentation (25%) and written report (25%)
- Peer evaluation (10%)
- Multiples choice question tests (group score) (20 %)

<u>Integration of Peer learning and student collaborations</u>

Students were assigned a team in which they worked during the whole duration of the course. This setup fosters relationship building but also requires students to manage collaborations with individuals different from themselves, thereby developing essential collaboration skills. These teams were tasked with working together every session, by discussing case studies/ challenges/ shared experiences. They also worked on an international business project. Team scores represent 70% of the final grades, which gives an incentive for students to work well together.

Before each session, students engaged in pre-work (readings of relevant literature). At the beginning of each class, they answered a few questions (multiple-choice format) which gave them the possibility to check if they understood the content. Then, in their teams (in breakout rooms), they compared and discussed the answers to their quiz questions and submitted only one test per group. They explained concepts to each other, explained their rationale and by doing so, engaged in peer learning/ peer teaching.

2b.) Teaching methods

- Which teaching methods do you use to help your students achieve the intended learning outcomes?
- What methods do you use to support student collaboration and enable peer learning?
- Why did you choose this/these particular method(s)? What specific advantages does it/do they offer in your teaching? What do your students learn through the use of this/these method(s)?
- In which way do the students benefit from the teaching methods used in the course?

The course employs an active learning approach (flipped classroom and team-based learning) to achieve the learning outcomes.

Students are expected to prepare by studying theories before coming to class. In class, instead of traditional online lectures, students, in their teams, actively engage in discussions focused on cases and concepts, which allow them to apply knowledge and practice their intercultural collaboration skills.

The teaching method, inspired by Team-based learning (Sweet & Michaelsen, 2012), offers a set-up that allows for competencies development:

1) Using the cultural diversity of ENGAGE.EU, students from different partner institutions are set in multicultural and multilingual teams. The teams remain permanent throughout the whole course. The permanence of the teams allows relationships to form, but it also implies that students must manage relationships throughout the course with people different from themselves and work on their collaboration skills. Students work in their group in each session and during the whole duration of the course (in a group project). The course, as a whole, works as a semester-long experiential activity where students practice and develop their communication and collaboration skills across cultures.

2) Each session focus on a specific topic (e.g., virtual teams, cross-cultural communication, diversity management…) Before class, students learn the basic knowledge/concepts at home, e.g., by reading assigned texts or watching a video lecture. Given the different knowledge base of the students, this prepare them effectively to peer-learning/teaching.

3) Class activities include group tests (multiple-choice questions) that check that the basic knowledge is understood and application activities, such as case studies and group discussions. In these class activities they engage extensively in peer learning.

4) Twice during the course, students engage in a student-to-student peer feedback exercise. These activities allow students to reflect on the process of working in a global team and see how their behaviours are perceived by team members who have another cultural backgrounds than theirs. Feedback is an essential part to grow and as future leaders, students will provide but also receive feedback. This exercise is interesting and constructive for the students, as mentioned in their reflection papers (see appendix)

5) At the end of the semester, students engage in a personal critical reflection that allow them to make sense of their experience of working in a multicultural team and giving/receiving feedback.

This particular teaching method has been used previously by one of the course lecturers who has also written about the teaching method in research articles (Ly,2022a, 2022b and forthcoming). The teaching method is deemed effective (see, eg Ly, 2022) to develop skills global leaders need to possess.

2c.) Innovative character of the course
- Which didactic elements of your course design do you consider particularly innovative with regard to the focus of this year's award "Peer-Learning: Innovative ways of promoting student collaboration"?
- In which ways can your course design be adapted for other courses? Which didactic elements of your course can also be used in other courses?
- Which elements could be improved/reconsidered in further editions of the course?

In the skills domain, students will possess the ability to work and communicate effectively with individuals from diverse cultural and language backgrounds. They will demonstrate proficiency in collaborating within global virtual teams and integrating diversity to enrich teamwork. Furthermore, students will showcase their competence in applying design thinking processes to address international business challenges and propose innovative solutions. Their skill set will also encompass the evaluation of team members' contributions, the delivery of constructive feedback, and the capacity for self-reflection to develop a meta-perspective on one's culture and behaviour. Moreover, students will be adept at analyzing feedback received, identifying action plans for behaviour improvement, and presenting ideas and concepts verbally and visually to diverse audiences.

In terms of general competence, students will emerge with improved interpersonal skills, enabling them to effectively collaborate and lead in intercultural and virtual settings. They will have cultivated a global mindset and tolerance, equipped with a toolbox to navigate complex intercultural situations. Lastly, students will have honed their analytical and problem-solving skills, providing them with a well-rounded and applicable skill set for the challenges of a globalized and interconnected world.

This course clearly promotes peer learning and student collaboration across cultures.

While some courses resort to teamwork, this course is different because:

- Teams were set by the teachers based on heterogeneity criteria, to create as much intercultural collaboration as possible. This, in order to make them practice and develop intercultural collaboration skills.
- Most of the time, students are just "put in teams" but not not receive input on how to work effectively in teams. In this course, students learned about how teams work in the digital environment and discussed a case. They also reflected on their team dynamics and produced a team contract.
- Peer learning was an important part of the course through peer discussions in the weekly quizzes, case discussions in teams, student project and peer feedback.
- Peer feedback was an essential part of this course.

The course design can be implemented to courses that are taught online or on campus, using the same method, following the steps detailed in Ly (2022), among others.

In future edition of this ENGAGE.EU signature course, we would consider a physical meet up after the online part.

Note: By sending the application form and documents, the applicant confirms that the course design has not received any other awards or grants.

Attachment: Please attach evaluation results, if available.

ENGAGE Signature Course

2306 Virtual Collaboration Across Cultures

Winter Semester 2023-2024

1. Course description

In a world that has become more globalised than ever, future leaders need to work and collaborate effectively in virtual teams, with colleagues from different countries and cultural backgrounds. Research shows that multicultural teams are more productive, profitable, and creative.

Yet, this positive outcome depends on whether leaders and their team members can bridge diversity effectively.

In this course, students will learn about and experience first-hand the challenges and opportunities of working across cultures and reflect on the process. The course involves a team project in which students apply design thinking processes and collaborate virtually with students from other ENGAGE.EU universities.

This part allows students to apply and deepen their learnings in a project that simulates real-business-world global virtual teamwork.

Topics will include diversity and inclusion, leading globally distributed teams, design thinking, teamwork across cultures, remote work, cross-cultural management and communication. The course is based on recent research and insights from several disciplines such as global leadership, intercultural management, organizational behavior, information systems and human resource management. It has an international dimension and is business focused. The course will draw on the diversity that the ENGAGE.EU alliance offers to develop collaborative and cross-cultural competencies that are necessary when working in virtual teams.

2. Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, the students will have attained the following:

- Knowledge.
    - Knowledge of core concepts and theories in relation to:
        - cross-cultural teamwork
        - communication across cultures, languages, distance and over technology
        - leadership and collaboration in global virtual teams
        - management of diversity and inclusion
        - management of individual and team well-being and performance

- Skills
    - Ability to work and communicate effectively with people from different cultural/language backgrounds
    - Ability to collaborate in global virtual teams
    - Ability to include diversity to enrich teamwork and integrate resources into the team
    - Ability to apply the design thinking process to tackle international business challenges and to produce a solution.
    - Ability to evaluate team members' contributions and give constructive feedback
    - Ability to reflect upon and develop a meta-perspective on one's culture and behaviour
    - Ability to reflect on the feedback received and identify an action plan to improve one's behaviour
    - Ability to present ideas and concepts both verbally and visually to different audiences
- General competence
    - Improved interpersonal skills to collaborate and lead in intercultural and virtual settings
    - Global mindset and tolerance
    - Toolbox to face complex intercultural situations
    - Analytical and problem-solving skills

3. Requirements

Students need to attend at least 80% of class sessions in order to pass the course successfully. In case of an absence, please notify the lecturer in advance.

Portfolio assessment: A final grade will be given after the evaluation of the following elements:

Individual reflection paper (20 %)

Group project: oral presentation (25%) and written report (25%)

Peer evaluation (10%)

Multiples choice question tests (group score) (20 %)

4. Teaching and Learning Methodology

The teaching will take place digitally. The teaching method, inspired by Team-based learning, offers a set-up that allows for competencies development:

1) students from different partner institutions are set in multicultural and multilingual teams. The teams remain permanent throughout the whole course. The permanence of the teams allows relationships to form, but it also implies that students must manage relationships throughout the course with people different from themselves and work on their collaboration skills. In their teams, students will work on an international business project.

2) each session focuses on a specific topic. Before class, students learn the basic knowledge/concepts at home, e.g., by reading assigned texts or watching a video lecture.

3) class activities include group tests (multiple-choice questions) that check that the basic knowledge is understood and application activities, such as case studies and group discussions.

4) at the end of each class, students engage in a student-to-student peer feedback exercise and write personal reflection notes. These activities allow students to reflect on the process of working in a global team and see how their behaviours are perceived by team members who have another cultural backgrounds than theirs.

Thus, in addition to knowledge about collaborating in virtual teams across cultures (through theories and case studies), the course, as a whole, works as a semester-long experiential activity where students practice and develop their communication and collaboration skills

The teaching is once a week (4-hour class).