

Call for Contributions

International online conference on 'Developing intercultural competences in online and physical learning environments'

Friday 3 December 2021

*Utrecht University, Faculty of Geosciences
Utrecht, The Netherlands*

Intercultural competences have become a core asset in our globalized world, with increased cross-border mobility and highly diverse working environments. To effectively engage, collaborate and relate with people from different cultures and backgrounds, we need intercultural skills, knowledge and attitudes. As a result, higher education programmes increasingly include in their curricula training in intercultural competences, in order to prepare students for these diverse settings in their future professional careers. Some programmes focus on these skills in a rather generic way, while others specifically link these skills to research, for instance involving data collection in unfamiliar cultural contexts. Thus far, our knowledge of the differences in intercultural competences training between programmes is limited, in terms of teaching formats, tools, actors/stakeholders involved, assessment, learning effects and impact. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic raises new questions about how these competences can be effectively taught and developed in a digital learning environment, through online learning and intercultural encounters 'at a distance'. What challenges – and opportunities – can be observed in this regard?

This international conference will take place in the scope of the Comenius Senior Fellow project 'Encounters in the Field: a playful approach to the development of intercultural competences'. The aim of the project is to develop the intercultural competences of MSc students who are doing fieldwork in the global South. It is funded by the Netherlands Initiative for Education Research (NRO/NWO).

Conference aim

The aim of this conference is to bring together educators, practitioners and researchers to exchange and share knowledge of and recent insights into the development of the intercultural competences of students in higher education programmes, especially in these times of limited travel opportunities. We will do so by focusing on four sets of questions:

1. How are higher education programmes effectively and appropriately developing **students' intercultural competences, in general or specifically for doing research**? What conditions are required? What are good practices? What training elements are the most/least effective, and why?



2. How do **educators and education managers** prepare, reflect on and internalise intercultural competences? How do they facilitate the development of students' intercultural competences, either directly or indirectly (e.g., as a role model)?
3. To what extent are **external stakeholders** (e.g. clients, patients, NGOs, internship providers, host organizations, partner universities) meaningfully involved in the development of intercultural competences, and how is this realized? What about issues of power and representation in such partnerships?
4. What is the **impact of Covid-19 on the teaching and learning of intercultural competences in general**, in terms of format, quality of communication, learning objectives, use of new techniques or tools, and assessment?

Contributions

We welcome contributions that address one or more of these questions in the form of:

- A. Paper presentations:** reports on completed research or scholarly work on intercultural competences development (30 minutes, including Q & A);
- B. Posters:** presenting preliminary results of work in progress; posters will be grouped by key interest area, with a few minutes to present the core idea, followed by Q & A (30 minutes);
- C. Snapshots from practice:** suitable for demonstrating a particular practice, approach or technique in intercultural competences development. These sessions should include some explanatory or introductory information and also allow ample time for audience interaction, participation and involvement (45 - 60 minutes);
- D. Expert panel discussions:** suitable for addressing key dilemmas in the development of intercultural competences. Panel discussion organizers should propose key dilemmas and suggestions for panel experts (45 - 60 minutes).

Submission of abstracts (A, B, C and D)

Applicants should submit an abstract (max. 400 words). Please include the following information:

- the type of contribution (A, B, C or D);
- the title;
- the name, institutional affiliation and email address of the primary presenter;
- the names of all other co-presenters, their institutional affiliations and their email addresses;
- the contents of the contribution:
 - **A:** main question, methods, findings and conclusion; please note that authors submitting an abstract for a paper presentation will need to submit a short paper (2,000 words) by 1 November 2021;
 - **B:** main question, methods, (preliminary) findings and conclusion;
 - **C:** a description of the practice/approach/technique: aim, contents and format of the session;
 - **D:** a brief description of the overall topic of the panel, the names and backgrounds of the panellists, the issues to be discussed and examples of questions to be

addressed by the panel, and the relevance and significance of the panel for the ICC community.

The primary presenter will be responsible for contacting all co-presenters with details about the conference presentations.

All accepted abstracts will be published in a conference booklet. The authors of a selection of short papers (category A) will be invited to submit a full paper for a special issue in a relevant higher education journal.

Please use this link to submit your abstract: <https://www.formdesk.com/universiteitutrecht-geo/intercultural>

Timeline and deadlines

- 23 July 2021: submission of abstracts
- 1 September 2021: notification of acceptance
- 1 November 2021: submission of short papers (*Cat A only*)
- 15 November 2021: deadline registration
- 3 December 2021: conference (online, hosted by Utrecht University)

Conference format

In response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 global crisis, the conference will be held online. This will enable participants from all over the world to “attend” the conference without having to travel. There is no conference fee.

Conference organizers

Ajay Bailey, Faculty of Geosciences, Utrecht University

Gemma Corbalan, Faculty of Social Sciences, Utrecht University

Maggi Leung, Faculty of Geosciences, Utrecht University

Gery Nijenhuis, Faculty of Geosciences, Utrecht University

Veronique Schutjens, Faculty of Geosciences, Utrecht University

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact Gery Nijenhuis at g.nijenhuis@uu.nl