



The IEREST project
intercultural education resources for study abroad

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Outline

1. Overview of the IEREST project
2. The IEREST teaching package
3. A sample activity '24h Erasmus Life'
 - Task: Academic Life
4. Where to find the IEREST resources



Part 1

IEREST: an overview





- Three-year project (start: October 2012)
- EACEA (Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency) & European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture
- Programme: Lifelong Learning, 2007-2013
- Action: Erasmus Multilateral Projects

IEREST consortium

Full partners

- University of Bologna
- Durham University
- University of Savoy Mont Blanc, Chambéry
- University of Primorska, Koper
- University of Leuven

Associate partners

- AEGEE-Europe
- AEDE-Hungary
- T.M.Kempen

The project aims

- Encouraging Erasmus student mobility
- Supporting Erasmus students in benefiting as much as possible from their international experience in terms of personal growth and intercultural learning

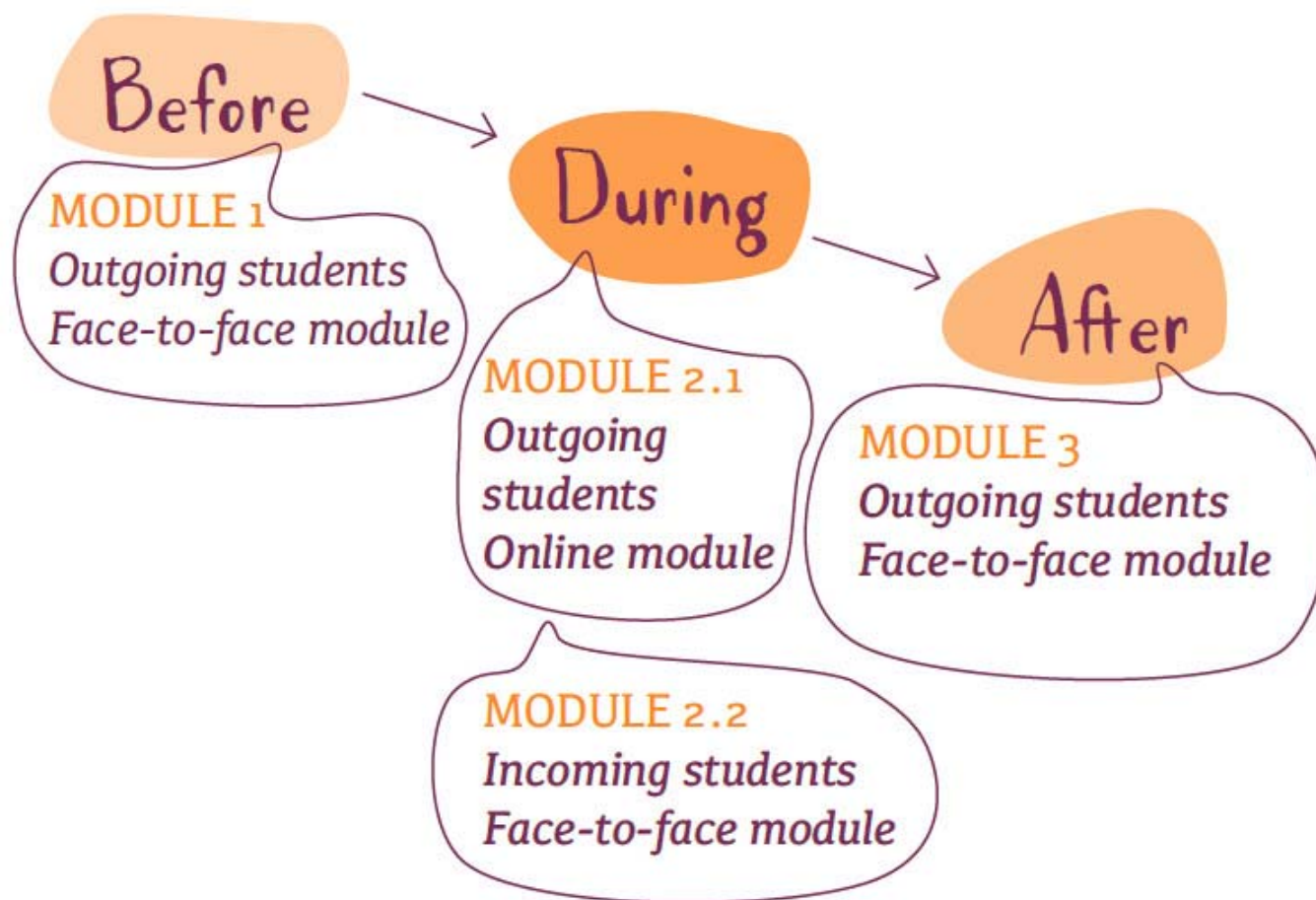


Quantity



Quality

IEREST intercultural path



Research and work line

1. Review of target groups' needs
2. Planning of the intercultural paths
3. Testing of the intercultural paths
4. Adapting IEREST to remote access



Part 2

The IEREST teaching package



Teaching package: 10 activities

1. Perceptions of self and other
2. Anti-discrimination study circle
3. Exploring narrative in intercultural mobility contexts
4. Meeting others abroad

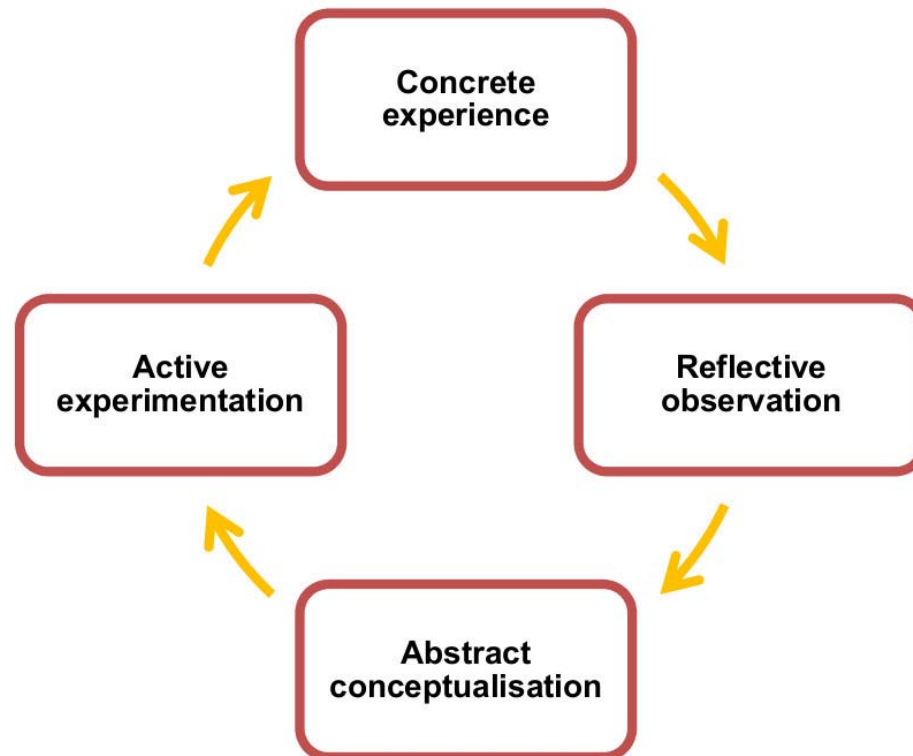
5. 24h Erasmus life
6. Intercultural geography
7. Experiencing interculturality through volunteering

8. Bringing interculturality back home
9. One, two, many... Erasmus experiences
10. Mobility beyond the Academy

IEREST activities: some features

- Each activity comprises **3-4 tasks**; 6-12 hours of classroom work + some extension tasks
- **Languages** - English, but be freely translated (examples in Italian, Slovenian, and Dutch)
- **Context** - European mobility, but activities can be adapted to other contexts
- **Methods** - texts, videos, ppts (theory), interactive discussions, guided tasks (hand-outs), encounters in the community, reflection on experience (e.g., via blogs, autoethnography)

Teaching (Kolb, 1984)





Part 3

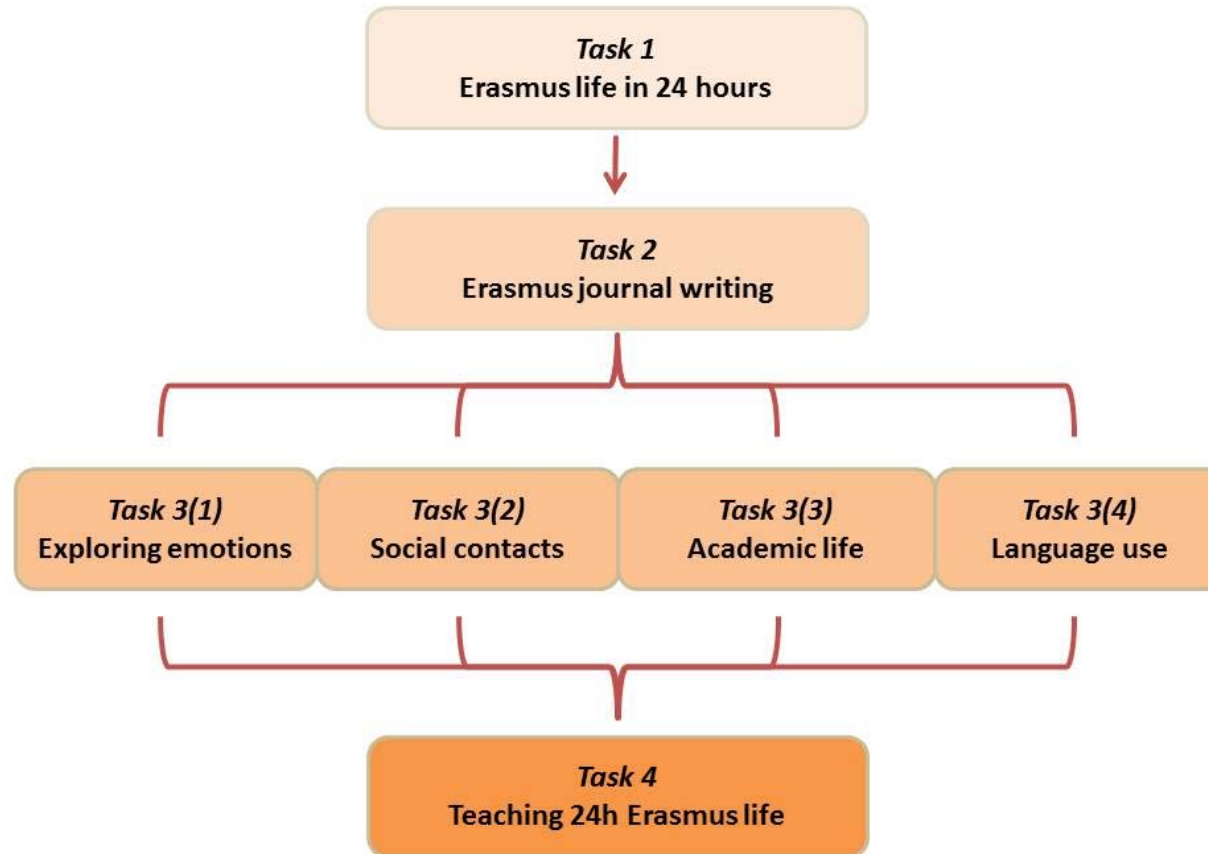
The activity “24h Erasmus Life”



Objectives and outcomes

Objectives	Outcomes
Explore and reflect on their emotional reactions (positive or negative) towards living abroad, going beyond easy attributions of their emotional states to cultural differences.	Analyse and describe their own emotional states and reactions and assign reasons to them beyond easy attributions to cultural differences.
Reflect on how communication in academic communities is shaped by differing histories, expectations and attitudes towards learning.	Interpret their opinions on the academic systems also in the light of their awareness of how communication in academic communities is shaped by differing histories, expectations and attitudes towards learning.
Develop curiosity towards and further knowledge about the new environment and the people who inhabit it.	Demonstrate willingness to engage with the local environment and the people who inhabit it.
Examine how using another language can affect one's self-image (and capacity to project an image) and feeling of belonging.	Interpret how their capabilities in using another language affects their self-image (and their capacity to project it), as well as their feelings of belonging.

Tasks



Pilotings in Bologna

Incoming students

- 20 students
- Total contact hours: 21
- Languages of instruction: English and Italian
- Attendance: minimum 70% (3 ECTS)

Outgoing students

- 40 students
- Online module (20-25 work hours)
- Languages of instruction: Italian and English
- Attendance: minimum 70% (3 ECTS)

A different academic environment

- Differences can be surprising, exciting, annoying, frustrating, etc. Besides coping with them to get things done, differences are **good opportunities to reflect on the expectations** we implicitly have towards everyday situations, including academic life.
- **Differences can affect our sense of self** (e.g. “I’m usually a good student, but not here”), which might already be challenged by language difficulties when having to study in a different language.

Assumptions about education

The differences in the **assumptions** people make, often as a result of their educational background, **are likely to affect experiences** (Bogain, 2012); the values sometimes embedded in their opinions (e.g., knowledge is built and co-constructed vs. knowledge is an individual strenuous attainment) are difficult to grasp.

E.g. What is a good university?

What does 'learning' mean? And 'teaching'?

What constitutes a good teacher?

Just *academic* life? (from the class blog)

I spend my time in apathy/agony. I'm depressed, because I'm afraid I won't pass my exams (I'm more and more certain of this). **I attend classes which are far too difficult, everybody talks a language I don't understand, everybody is better than me** [...]. I live segregated in my own world, made of study, music and self-compassion.

At the beginning **I was depressed by the fact that the language limited my social interactions: in Italy I love to chat and introduce myself as a sociable person**, while here I was initially very shy, I weighed every word for the fear that someone could misunderstand the meaning. When someone asked me how my day was I couldn't express myself as some of my roommates who is always so good, but I only answered "it has been ok!"; not to mention the fact that **in class I appeared always the most silent** and I didn't ask the professors for explanations which I usually ask in my Italian university (for fear of appearing "silly" with my bad English).

Task 3.3 Academic life - version 2

How much you agree or disagree with the following statements? On a scale of 1 to 5:

- 1 means absolute disagreement
 - 5 means absolute agreement
- A. It is acceptable to drink or to eat during the class
- B. It is fair to complain to the teacher about too much homework
- C. Learning is about discussing one's own ideas with the teachers and the others students
- D. Independent study is a good way for universities to save money on teaching
- E. Being a good teacher has nothing to do with meeting students' needs



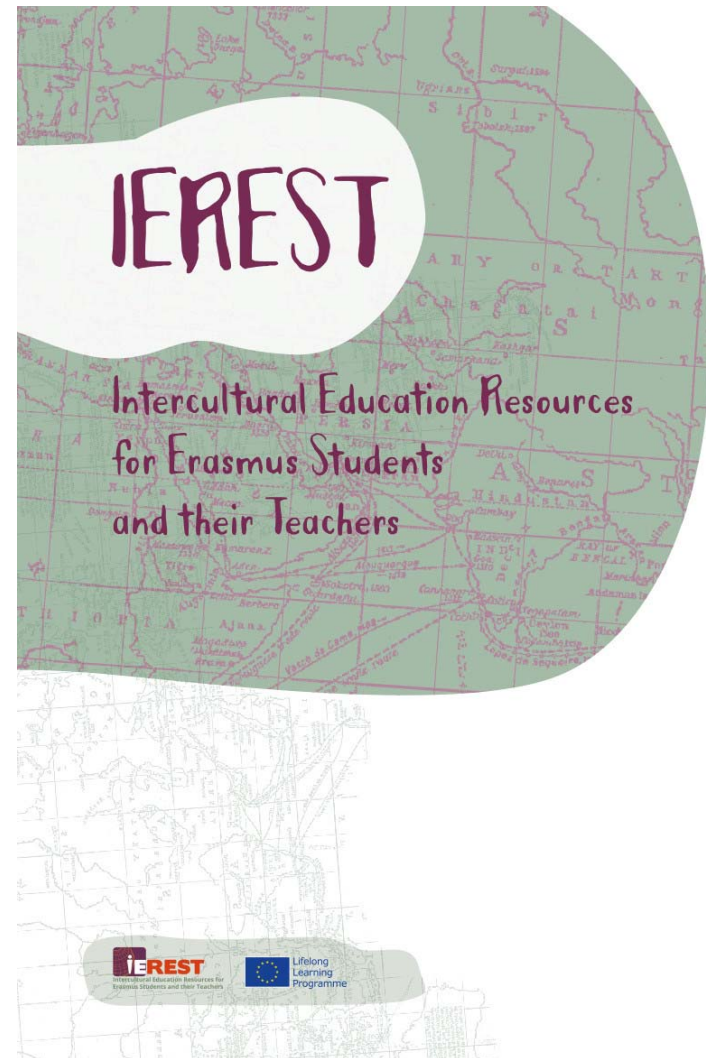
Part 4

Where to find IEREST



IEREST manual

- Freely downloadable from the **IEREST website**
<http://www.ierest-project.eu>
- Published under the Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 4.0 licence



IEREST page on *Humbox*

<http://humbox.ac.uk/group/19>



accessible also through the **IEREST website**

Additional services on *Humbox*:

- Versions of each IEREST activity in .doc
- Four set of theoretical slides
- An user manual
- The possibility to join a community of IEREST users



Thank you!

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