**IEREST**

**Intercultural Education Resources for Erasmus Students and their Teachers**

**Module 2 - Activity 2**

**Intercultural geography**

1. **Introduction**

This activity is designed to help students reflect on how their host environment - the place or region, its neighbourhoods, the university, etc. - has been shaped by its history and culture(s), by the activities and interactions of the communities who live there and by the way they occupy and use the spaces available to them. The tasks within the activity are intended to encourage students to compare their own experience and perception of the host environment with those of others, namely those of both other students and more permanent residents.

The estimated overall time for completing the activity is 11 hours.

1. **Learning objectives and outcomes**

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|  | **Learning objectives**  This activity aims to enable students to: | **Learning outcomes**  Learners will be able to: |
| **1** | Reflect on each person's uniqueness but also similarities, and on the fact that difference is not necessarily negative and that sameness in not necessarily positive either. | Recognise and explain the variety and complexity that exist among individuals in social groups. |
| **2** | Understand how different types of identities (gender, age, racial, ethnic, national, geographical, historical, linguistic, etc.) impact on communication with others. | Be able to explain ways in which different types of identities (gender, age, racial, ethnic, national, geographical, historical, linguistic, etc.) impact on communication with others. |
| **5** | 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. |

1. **Overview and description of tasks**

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| ***Task 1.***  **Tracing the territories** | * Ask students to personalise a map by tracing boundaries and routes on a map of their host place. |
| ***Task 2.***  **Team cartography** | * Ask students to discuss and compare, in small groups, each other’s maps and draw up a group map incorporating the features of their individual maps. * Hold a plenary discussion about the groups’ findings and reflections. |
| ***Task 3(1).***  **Places shown, places hidden** | * Get students to watch in class some videos on the local place (see *Attachment 1* for some examples). Ask them to reflect on what gets shown or hidden there, while answering the questions in *Attachment 2*. * Discuss in class the perspectives or images that the videos project and reflect on what could add more depth or complexity to that image. |
| ***Task 3(2).***  **Revealing places** | * Ask students to choose a place from the host area (either shown in the videos or something else) and research it, using *Attachment 3* as a guide. * Ask students to present in class what they have found out about the place they chose and about the local area. |
| ***Task 4.***  **Exploring the *terra incognita*** | * Ask students to find, set up, and prepare for a meeting with a local informant, during which they ask about that person’s experience of living in the local place. Provide guidelines in *Attachment 4*. * Ask students to present or report on what they found out about the local place from their informant as well as on their own experience of encountering the local informant. * Invite students to assess other students’ reports (*Attachment 5*). |

***Task 1. Tracing the Territories***

Time required: 1 hour

*Task overview: In this task, students reflect on their own (probably quite brief) experience of their host environment: the areas/places that they are familiar with and those that are less familiar or unknown, and why.*

1. Give students a map of the place where they are studying. Choose the map format which better suits you and your students, considering that they will be asked to personalise their maps with highlights, labels, etc. For example, the low-tech way to personalise a map is to print out copies of a local map (or get a pile of free maps from the tourist office), distribute them to the students and get them to draw on them with markers. It is probably also the easiest way to compare maps in class. An alternative is to use an online map-making tool, which allows users to add markers, labels, lines etc. to an existing map and share their personalised maps online. Various such applications exist, usually based on *Google maps*. One which is free and simple to use is *Scribble Maps*: <http://scribblemaps.com>.
2. Ask students individually to mark out roughly different zones or areas in the city. The areas can be determined by whatever criteria students want (such as residential areas, business areas, shopping areas, industrial areas, ‘rich’ areas, ‘poor’ areas, new areas, old areas, renovated areas, derelict areas, leisure areas, tourism areas, student areas). Guide the students by asking questions such as: what modes of transport are used in the city? Do you know which are the busiest lines/parts of the town at different times of the day? Which are the main directions of movement in the morning and in the evening? Ask students to explain the divisions on their map and to state whether these are the result of their own experience/knowledge of the place, some official information, or of hearsay.
3. Tell the students to mark on their maps the place where they live, the part(s) of the university where they study, and other places where they go regularly (at least once a week). Moreover, ask them to trace with different colours the routes they take (for whatever reason):

* Every day;
* Regularly at least once a week;
* Rarely.

***Task 2. Team cartography***

Time required: 1 hour

*Task overview: In this task, students explore the similarities and differences between their own experience of the host environment and that of other members of the group. The purpose is to see to what extent their experiences converge (the places they have in common outside the university, the intersections between their regular routes, etc.), but also which parts of the place remain outside their joint experience, and to ask together why that is so.*

1. Have students compare, in groups of 3 or 4, their own maps of the local place with those of other members of their group and also discuss the criteria/reasons for their choices. Then instruct students to produce together a ‘group map’, showing which places/routes their maps have in common, the features which are more particular to each student, and which places/areas do not figure on any of their individual maps: the *Erasmus terra incognita*. While they are working, guide the discussion within the teams through questions such as:

* Did you agree on the ‘zones’ on your maps? How do your places intersect with the zones that you marked on the map? Are there parts of the city where you have never been? If so, why have you had no reason to go there? Do you think you might have a reason to go there in the future?
* Are there any parts of the city which have a ‘bad’ reputation? If so, why do they have such a reputation, and how did you learn about it? Have you yourself ever been in one of these areas?
* Have you discovered any particularly important places or information that you wish to share with the rest of the class? Mark them on your map and give them a name or think of a symbol to label them.

1. Hold a class (plenary) discussion, building upon comparison of the students’ group maps and on the following questions:

* What similarities can you see in the ‘zoning’ of your places?
* What specific characteristics do you find in your host place but not in other places that you know?
* How does the host place compare to the place where you live?
* Are there any parts/elements/facilities in your hometown that you miss in the host place? Why?
* Are there any parts of the host place that you particularly like/appreciate/find convenient or beautiful?
* Are there any facets of life in the host place that you cannot explain? If so, which ones?
* What conclusions can you draw about the way cities develop distinct areas of activity or population?

***Task 3(1). Places shown, places hidden***

Time required: 2 hours

*Task overview: This task is based on short videos presenting the host institution, place or region (see Attachment 1 for some examples). The purpose of the task is to reflect on how such videos project a particular image of the place which they present, what kind of image they want to present, and how this image corresponds - or not - to the students’ own experience of the host environment.*

1. Have students watch a video on the local place and take notes on what they see. Examples for a number of places are collected in *Attachment 1* for your convenience. Provide a sample viewing grid, with questions to guide the students (*Attachment 2*). The grid can be adapted to take into account the content of specific videos.
2. After watching, ask students to discuss what they thought about the content of the video and the perspective on the local place it projects. Guide the discussion toward the following questions (given at the end of *Attachment 2*).
   * From your own knowledge of the host place, are there any important things which the video did not show? Are there things that get shown too much?
   * What sort of perspective or image would you say this video projects of the place?
   * Given your own experience, would you say the image is true to reality? Partly true? Misleading?
3. If sufficient video material is available, show a second video, and discuss the following points:

* What (if anything) do the two videos have in common?
* What does the second video show that the first video did not?
* Do you think the two videos are trying to project a similar image of the town/region?

Emphasise with students that a video can only show a very partial view of a city. Each video shows a different picture, even though there may be key landmarks that appear repeatedly. Similarly, each person has a different experience of the city, even though they may all regularly walk past the same places.

***Task 3(2). Revealing places***

Time required: 3 hours

Task overview: This task encourages students to explore the background to the places and landmarks in the city.

1. Ask each student to choose one place, building or landmark that appeared in the videos that they watched (or one which did not appear and which they think is significant or interesting). Students may choose between many sorts of place: public building, monument, shop, restaurant or bar, park, playground, market, transport facility, etc. The students should add this place to the ‘group maps’ that they made in *Task 2*.
2. After the students have made their choice, give them *Attachment 3*, containing questions about the place they have chosen. Some of this information can be gathered through observation (e.g., “who uses [the place], and what for?”). Another good source of information for students is to find someone who knows the place well - for example someone who works there, or uses it regularly - and ask him/her to tell them about it. They can also use other sources of information - internet, libraries, local museums - to complement what they find out. In *Attachment 3*, students are also requested to return to class with pictures (and/or other documents) relating to (1) their chosen place and (2) evidence of how different social or cultural groups are (or have been) present in the city.
3. After students have completed their out-of-class assignments, in class ask them to share and discuss how the information and material they have gathered illustrates the everyday life of the town/city and its historical/cultural background. The focus should be on the following questions:

* How do different groups of people (young/old, students/non-students, men/women, different social/cultural groups) use public spaces in the town/city?
* To what extent have they left their mark, and/or continue to leave their mark on the town/city: in buildings, place names, monuments, notices, shop signs, adverts, things in the street?

***Task 4. Exploring the* Terra Incognita**

Time required: 4 hours

*Task overview: In this task, students as asked to obtain a broader and more diversified experience of their host environment, arrange an intercultural encounter and reflect on their own expectations and on the actual outcome of the encounter. This is done by having students engage in ethnographic fieldwork.*

1. Introduce students to ethnography. Explain that, for social researchers, ethnography implies doing fieldwork and using a number of methods (participant observation, interviewing, questionnaires, etc.) in order to describe what people do and what meanings they assign to what they do. See also *Slides 68-70*.
2. Ask students to find a local informant. This could be somebody that they already spoke to when gathering information for *Task 3(2)*, or another person, for example a local student or a local acquaintance. Give students the following instructions:
   * **Who**. The informant should preferably be someone who has lived in the local place for several years and who comes from or is familiar with one of the places outside the common areas of the ‘group map’ made in *Task 2*, i.e. a part of the local area which the student does not know well.
   * **Why.** The purpose of the meeting(s) is to find out about the informant’s experience of living in the area and how she or he views the neighbourhood and the city and any changes that have taken place.
   * **When.** Just one meeting with the informant is enough, but students can arrange more if necessary and if the informant is willing.
   * **How.** Before the meeting, students are to prepare by thinking about the questions they will ask to initiate discussion (see *Attachment 4*) and about their own expectations. During the meeting(s) with their informant, students should find out as much as they can about their informant’s experience of the city, and particularly about her or his particular neighbourhood and its interaction with the rest of the city. Ask them to take notes that they can later use to make a short report (300-400 words) about their findings. Specify that, after obtaining the informant’s permission, students can record, take pictures or video the discussion, but this is not an obligatory part of the task. Referring to the informant by name is strictly optional and should only be done after that the person has explicitly given permission to be identified in the students’ report.
3. Out of class, students conduct their fieldwork individually.
4. In class, get each student to exchange their report with another student, and to assess their peer’s report using the grid in *Attachment 5*. Leave time at the end for a follow-up discussion on what they have learned during this activity.
5. **Assessment methods**

* Peer assessment, asking students to comment on each other’s reports according to *Attachment 5* (*Task 4*).
* Teacher assessment of students’ reports, using the same form used for self-assessment (*Attachment 5*).

1. **Suggested readings**

* Barro, A., Jordan, S. & Roberts, C. (1998). Cultural practice in everyday life: the language learner as ethnographer. In M. Byram & M. Fleming (Eds.), *Language learning in intercultural perspective: Approaches through drama and ethnography* (pp. 76-97). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
* Holmes, P., & O’Neill, G. (2012). Developing and evaluating intercultural competence: Ethnographies of intercultural encounters. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 36*(5), 707-718.

1. **Materials and resources**

* A computer, access to the Internet, a projector.
* Maps of the place where students are studying.
* The IEREST slides.
* Five IEREST attachments:
  + *Attachment 1*: Example videos for teachers (*Task 3(1)*).
  + *Attachment 2*: Grid for website analysis (*Task 3(1)*).
  + *Attachment 3*: Guiding questions for gathering information on city places (*Task 3(2)*).
  + *Attachment 4*: Guidelines on ethnographic field work based on interviews (*Task 4*).
  + *Attachment 5:* Grid for peer- and teacher-assessment of students’ reports (*Task 4*).

**Attachment 1 (*Task 3(1). Places shown, places hidden*)**

This attachment is meant for teachers and should not be distributed to the students. It reports example videos for each of the partner institutions in the IEREST project. For other institutions it will be necessary to identify corresponding videos. These can be promotional videos (often the easiest to find), documentaries, TV reports, photo-montages, short fictions, etc. What matters is not so much the quality or content of a video, but the extent to which it can be used to trigger discussion about how places are represented.

**Bologna, Italy**

*Univercity: living and studying in Bologna*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4f3mwsiB98>

Bologna, where every day is special: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObBreSoNzZY>

**Chambéry, France**

*Une erasmus à Chambéry*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-wOApibVj8>

*Découvrir Chambéry*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCCPp6AyGEc>

**Durham, UK**

*City of Durham*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eIjGaluM8_Y>

*Durham City*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DydhBGGrRCU&list=PL78854430DF22AFCC>

**Koper, Slovenia**

*Why Koper?*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_k3-n5qVTc>

*Koper In Your Pocket*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVAkEhxkQl0>

**Leuven, Belgium**

*International students in Leuven, Part 1*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-VJwltgd34>

*Leuven: Introduction for foreign students*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oo9kr6HKwlA>

**Attachment 2 (*Task 3(1). Places shown, places hidden*)**

Watch the video(s) and note what you see. You can use the grid below to guide you.

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| **People** | * Who are the people shown in the video(s)? Men/women? Old/young/children? Profession? Social status? National/cultural origin? * How many *different* social groups would you say are represented in the video? |
| **Activities** | * What are people doing in the video(s)? Professional activities? Leisure activities? Daily routine? * What kinds of *interaction* between people/groups of people are shown in the video? |
| **Places** | * What kinds of places are shown in the video(s)? Inside/outside? Urban/non-urban? Buildings/monuments? New/old? Natural/geographical features? * How many of the places correspond to things that you marked on your map? |
| **Times** | * What times of the day/year/history are shown in the video(s)? Present/past? Day-time/evening/night-time? Spring/summer/autumn/winter? * Why do you think these times were chosen? |
| **Sound-track** | * Is there a commentary? Music? Other sounds? * If there is a commentary, what seems to be the message? Do you notice any key words/expressions? * If there is music, why do you think this music was chosen? |

Additional questions:

* From your own knowledge of the host place, are there any important things which the video did not show? Are there things that get shown too much?
* What sort of perspective or image would you say this video projects of the place?
* Given your own experience, would you say the image is true to reality? Partly true? Misleading?

**Attachment 3 (*Task 3(2). Revealing places*)**

Choose one place, building or landmark that appeared in the video(s) that you watched (or one which didn’t appear and which you think is important or significant). Mark the place on the map you prepared in *Task 2*. Your task is to find out information which will enable you to answer the following questions. Some of this information can be obtained through observation (go to the place and look around; if possible, take some pictures). A good source of information is to find someone who knows the place well - for example someone who works there, or uses it regularly - and ask them to tell you about it. You can also use other sources of information (the internet, libraries, local museums) to complement what you find out.

About the place, building or landmark you have chosen:

* Why is this place important or significant?
* Who uses it, and what for?
* How long has it been there?
* Who originally put it there and why?
* What was there before?

More general information about the city:

* What physical features are there in the city (river, sea-front, hills, open spaces)? What influence have these had on the organization of the city?
* What do you know about the historical development of the city? How many people lived there in 1950? In 1900? In 1800? Earlier? Where did the new inhabitants come from? Which part(s) of the city did they settle in? Is the population of the city continuing to change? If so, where do these new inhabitants come from, and where do they settle?
* What is the proportion of temporary inhabitants (e.g. students) in the city? Where do these temporary inhabitants come from and where do they live?
* Are there any signs of different nationalities/ethnicities residing in the city? What do they show/express?

**Attachment 4 (*Task 4. Exploring the ‘terra incognita’*)**

Find an informant who has lived in the city for several years, preferably in one of the parts of the city that you are not familiar with. Your task is to meet with your informant and find out about his/her experience of living in the city.

Before you meet with your informant, think about the questions you will ask (there are a few suggestions below) and also about what you expect to find out about the city, its inhabitants and especially about your informant.

Here are a few questions that could be useful. Of course you can modify them or add some of your own, according to the circumstances.

* How long have you lived in the city?
* Have you always lived in the same place?
* What do you like about your neighbourhood? Is there anything that you don’t like?
* How has the city - and your neighbourhood - changed since you have been here? What do you think of these changes?
* Are there any other changes you would like to see?

During the discussion, take notes, which may be used for a short report. You can also record or film the discussion, but only if your informant is happy about being recorded/filmed and gives permission.

After the discussion, reflect on the following questions:

* Was there anything that surprised you about your meeting(s) with your informant, or that you didn’t expect - about the information that she or he gave you, attitudes, language, way of interacting with you and/or other people around you?
* What conclusions can you draw from this about your own expectations or preconceptions about your host city and the people who live in it?
* Write a report or make a short documentary (a photo-report or short video) presenting what you learnt from your informant and how it corresponded to or differed from what you had expected.

**Attachment 5 (*Task 4. Exploring the ‘terra incognita’*)**

Using the following grid, provide feedback on an assessment of one of your peers’ reports.

The grid is inspired by the “plus/delta method” (Helminski & Koberna, 1995). It invites you to identify three positive points in report, and three areas that could be changed/improved according to how well the learning outcomes were met. Use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is ‘weak’ and 10 is ‘strong’.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title of report:**  **Author’s name:** | |
| **Three things that were good about the report:** | **Three things that could be improved in the report:** |
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