



# INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH



**THE BLENDED LEARNING COURSE**  
FOR THE TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT  
OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE



*“Every time we speak we perform a cultural act.”*

Claire Kramersch (1993). Context and culture in language teaching

## International English



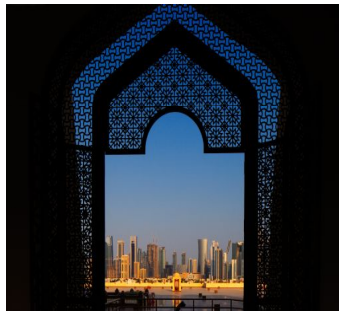
For most people world-wide, British-American conventions do not always seem appropriate. The very opposite may even be true. English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) has, therefore, become a crucial issue for the training of intercultural competence. What this implies is a topic of this course.

## Discourse Conventions



How we communicate says a great deal about ourselves. So what we do and how we do it will always be interpreted by others. Therefore, knowing about diverse discourse conventions and being able to use these adequately in a variety of cultural and other contexts is essential when getting ready for intercultural encounters.

## Country Specifics



Context is crucial - and so is good preparation. Showing interest in another culture, its history, its traditions, its special characteristics, its recent developments, its relevant legal regulations etc. is the first step to establishing a trustful relationship. Preparing a presentation on a culture of one's own choice has proven to be an effective method for getting ready for intercultural communication.

## Theory & Practice



“A map is not the territory.” Korzybski's famous quote is worth remembering when it comes to finding helpful theoretical support. Purely cognitive or psychology-based training concepts will not be effective. Instead it is in practical communication and interaction that trustful relationships are established — or otherwise. This is where theory can be of help.

## Corporate Cultures



Some highly influential contributors to intercultural research have analyzed corporate cultures and provided an impressive number of corporate culture typologies. Three questions need to be answered: When and why is corporate culture an issue? Who are the most influential scholars in this field? How do their findings affect international business communication and the training of it? This course gives answers.

## Gender Issues



Gender questions may seriously affect the success or failure of practical intercultural communication in many cases. In view of the growing number of intercultural partnerships, both in organizational settings and in personal and/or romantic contexts, gender has been the focus of a great deal of intercultural research over the last twenty years. It needs to be addressed in training.

## Case Studies



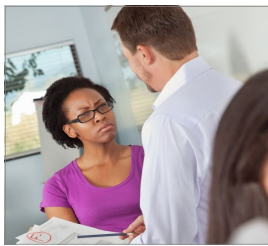
Studies of cross-border mergers and acquisitions provide examples of costly failures, among them those of BMW-Rover and Daimler-Chrysler. The term ‘culture-clash’ is always mentioned. Equally, some studies of social conflicts have shown that culture-based misunderstandings may lead to dramatic consequences, as was the case, for example, in Los Angeles in 1992.

## Politeness International



Politeness, understood as a process of positive relationship-building through communication and interaction, is the core element of intercultural competence. Knowing how politeness is expressed in different contexts and being able to apply it in practice is what this course is about.

## Conflict Management



Conflict is inevitable, necessary and – if handled well – potentially productive. If handled poorly, however, it can lead to personal disaster and damage the success of a project or even worse. Therefore, you need to know about the nature and types of conflicts, understand yourself in conflict and know how to handle conflict.

## Experts' Experience



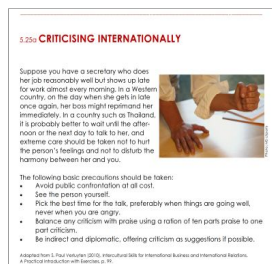
Experts from various professional fields have talked to us about their experience in international environments. These interviews serve as introductions to the topics of each unit and are an important part of the six self-study sections. Among the experts we interviewed are business consultants, student advisors, retailers, bankers, professors, teachers, coaches and authors. All of them have practical experience and good advice to give.

## Teaching Mixed Groups



Generalisations about 'individualistic learning cultures' as opposed to 'collectivistic' ones may be of little help when working with culturally diverse groups. We suggest focussing on building 'communities of practice' (Wenger 1999) by using proven methods and activities and allowing appropriate time for these.

## Classroom Material



The course includes 6 units. Each of them provides a rich variety of activities, scenarios, role-plays, worksheets, critical incidents and more, for training sessions of 90 to 360 minutes. Exercises for speaking and writing focus on establishing trustful relationships in a wide range of intercultural situations.

## Awareness Raising

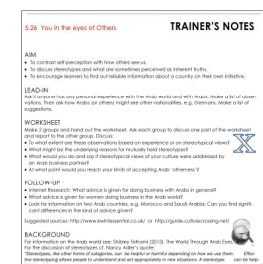


## Assessment & Test



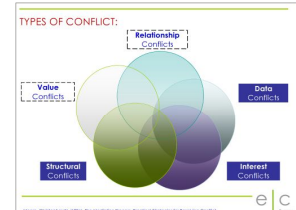
Based on a valid construct of intercultural communicative competence, practical formats and procedures for the testing of intercultural competence are provided. These are important for employers, employees, teachers and learners. The tests have been extensively piloted and practically administered for many years.

## Trainers' Notes



All the material provided for face-to-face teaching is accompanied by extensive trainers' notes. These specify the aims, suggest a lead-in, elaborate on possible methods, provide background information and suggest follow-up activities.

## Background Information



1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>GETTING STARTED</b> <i>Preparing the ground</i>	<b>EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION (1)</b> <i>Mistakes in intercultural encounters</i>	<b>EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION (2)</b> <i>Showing respect</i>	<b>LIVING &amp; WORKING INTERNATIONALLY (1)</b> <i>Organisational cultures</i>	<b>LIVING &amp; WORKING INTERNATIONALLY (2)</b> <i>Gender, hierarchy, conflict</i>	<b>BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER</b> <i>Limits of learning</i>
<b>Case-study</b> <i>"Me and my culture(s)": Thinking about yourself</i>	<b>Case-study</b> <i>International mergers: Why BMW-Rover failed</i>	<b>Case-study</b> <i>The LA riots of 1992: How culture clash happens</i>	<b>Case-study</b> <i>Working in international teams: What it takes to succeed</i>	<b>Case-study</b> <i>Gender internationally: A pre-determined breaking point?</i>	<b>Case-study</b> <i>An invitation and a critical incident</i>
<b>Language</b> <i>Relationship-building in writing &amp; speaking</i>	<b>Language</b> <i>British-American English vs. International English: What are mistakes? Meta-communication</i>	<b>Language</b> <i>Polite correspondence West vs. East Diplomatic language international</i>	<b>Language</b> <i>Negotiation styles West v. East Culture-based discourse strategies</i>	<b>Language</b> <i>Critical functions in practice Meta-communication</i>	<b>Language</b> <i>Interculturally appropriate use of (International) English in diverse situations</i>
<b>Theory &amp; Practice</b> <i>What is 'normal' for you? Experiencing ambiguity</i>	<b>Theory &amp; Practice</b> <i>"Culture is a verb" Why the map is not the territory</i>	<b>Theory &amp; Practice</b> <i>Politeness world-wide: Is your politeness my politeness?</i>	<b>Theory &amp; Practice</b> <i>Corporate culture analysis: When, why, how?</i>	<b>Theory &amp; Practice</b> <i>Conflict management internationally</i>	<b>Theory &amp; Practice</b> <i>Testing the testable: What the ICE test is about</i>
<b>Country specifics</b> <i>Stereotypes vs. facts: How to find out</i>	<b>Country specifics</b> <i>Presenting relevant information</i>	<b>Country specifics</b> <i>Presenting relevant information</i>	<b>Country specifics</b> <i>Presenting relevant information</i>	<b>Country specifics</b> <i>Presenting relevant information</i>	<b>The Test of Intercultural Competence in English - ICE</b>

# FACTS ABOUT THE ICE BLENDED LEARNING COURSE

## The course is not meant for beginners in English!

Linguistic competence in English corresponding to level **B1 (CEFR) or higher** is required.

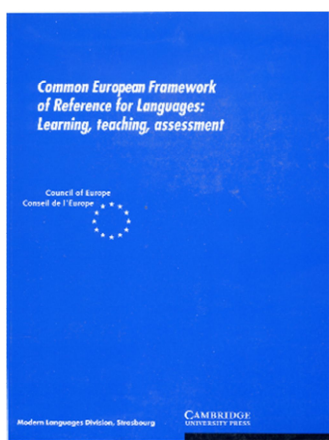
The course consists of six sections. Although these constitute a learning progression, trainers are advised to select the training material on the grounds of - and appropriate to - the needs of the learners they are working with.

- The web-based self-study material ('homework') is designed for study sessions of 25 to 45 minutes per unit.
- The material provided for face-to-face teaching can be used to prepare training sessions between 90 and 360 minutes per unit. Depending on the time available and the methods used, some of the activities suggested may extend over 1 hour or more.

## The ICE test is provided at two levels.

These relate exclusively to the candidate's linguistic competence level. No progression is suggested in terms of a candidate's intercultural competence, since intercultural communicative competence and linguistic competence are not directly related.

< B1 CEFR	ICE Test Level 1
< B2 CEFR	ICE Test Level 2



The ICE test is based on quality standards as described in *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)* and the *Manual for Relating Language Examinations to the CEFR*.

The focus of the ICE test is on

- polite communication in a variety of intercultural environments, both orally and in writing.
- the use of English, both Anglo-American varieties and when used as a lingua franca.

For a detailed documentation of the ICE test, download the ICE Manual at [www.elc-consult.com/ICE-Test](http://www.elc-consult.com/ICE-Test)

[www.elc-consult.com](http://www.elc-consult.com)

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The ICE Blended Learning Course is a joint project of

