



International Case Comparison @ home,
developed into

COPILLOT (Cooperative Online Peer and Intercultural Learning in Occupational
Therapy)

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR STARTING, PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING YOUR OWN COPILLOT ONLINE LEARNING MODULE

Based on experiences, evaluation and continuous development of the International Case
Comparison@home module

Authors: The ICC/ COPILLOT project team: Elisabeth Fattinger, Sabine Hendriks, Ulla Pott, Maria
Prellwitz, Liliya Todorova, Siska Vandemaele, Bettina Weber, as well as Stefania Agustoni and Jens
Schneider.

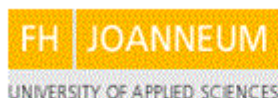


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Graph: Screenshots of moodle course

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1. Background and goals

Higher Education plays a pivotal role in contributing to the solution of societal problems, through research, driving innovation and educating the new generations of professionals and experts who will shape Europe's future. New challenges in our societies, such as the information age, internationalization, globalization, and migration movements, require a new set of skills from young professionals all over Europe. There is an increasing demand for highly qualified people, who can process complex information, think creatively, communicate effectively across national and professional cultures, and show entrepreneurial spirit (European Agenda for the Modernisation of Higher Education, 2017).

This is also and especially true of the health sector, where demographic and economic developments call for innovative, flexible and intercultural approaches. Much can be gained here by fostering the exchange of good practices among European countries and a better understanding of other health and health care cultures.

In order to prepare our graduates adequately for these demands and challenges, we need innovative teaching and learning methods at our Higher Education Institutions (HEI) that foster transversal skills and key competences together with subject-specific skills.

One way of approaching this goal is shared, international, intercultural learning in combination with subject-specific content, using cooperative, student-centered, peer-assisted and intercultural learning methods, and the "international, digital classroom" as a setting.

Learning in an international context does not only develop intercultural skills but works as a catalyst for the acquisition of key skills and subject-specific skills alike, by stimulating comparative, critical thinking, collaboration, creative problem-solving and flexibility, and improving foreign language skills (Kniel, 2009; Knight, 2003). In Occupational Therapy, which seeks to enable people with temporary or lasting physical or mental limitations to participate in everyday life, understanding cultural meanings is essential. However, many students, especially in medical fields of study, cannot or will not go abroad for a number of reasons (Implementation Report of the Bologna Process in the European Higher Education Area, 2015). There are stumbling blocks to semesters or placements abroad, such as the importance of language skills in working with clients, the restraints of national medical laws, or the fact that health care students are predominantly female and often restrained by family obligations.

As a response to that challenge, three HEI's (FH JOANNEUM, HAN, HOWEST) in 2011 started "Intercultural Case Comparison@home", an joint online course based on peer-assisted learning, in which students from the partner institutions work together to establish a comparative research report about OT approaches and Health Care provisions concerning specific client groups in their respective countries and discuss an OT-related topic (mostly connected to the European theme of the year).

Since then, the network of partners has risen to nine Higher Education institutions, the course has been further developed and differentiated and has by now been run eight times, addressing nearly 200 students.

In 2016, we realized that our group had reached its maximum size, yet we wanted to share this model of international learning and develop and extend it further. For this purpose we received funding from ENOTHE for a project from 2016-2018. We developed the basics of a much expanded version of International Case comparison@home and called it COPILOT, and will luckily be able to develop this model in the next few years through an Erasmus+ grant.

Here, we would like to share with you what to consider and how to go about starting your own COPILOT or International case comparison@home learning module.

Good luck, and please contact one of us if you have any questions!

Elisabeth, Sabine, Renée, Ulla, Maria, Liliya, Siska, Bettina



Institution	Contact person	Address details
HOWEST, BE De Hogeschool West-Vlaanderen, University College West Flanders	Siska Vandemaele	Siska.Vandemaele@howest.be Tutor: Magda van Soom magda.van.soom@howest.be
FH JOANNEUM, AUT University of Applied Sciences	Elisabeth Fattinger	Elisabeth.fattinger@fh-joanneum.at
ZHAW, SUI Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften	Sabine Hendriks	sabine.hendriks@zhaw.ch
LTU, SWE Lulea University of Technolgy	Maria Prellwitz	maria.prellwitz@ltu.se
ZH, NL/GER Zuyd Hogeschool - Zuyd University	Bettina Weber Ulla Pott	Bettina.weber@zuyd.nl Ulla.pott@zuyd.nl
University of Ruse Faculty of Public Health and Health Care Department of Public Health and Social Work	Liliya Todorova	litod@uni-ruse.bg
HAN, NL Hogeschoold van Arnhem en Nijmegen	Renée Mulders	renee.mulders@han.nl

2. Synopsis: Structure and process of a COPILOT learning module

Steps:

- Partners decide on a learning activity: Topic, contents, goals, methods, products, ECTS and time frame.
- They recruit students at their home institutions and match them into internationally mixed teams (usually, 3-4 students). Each team is assigned a tutor from among the instructors at the partner institutions.
- Partners provide students with a study guide, which explains the learning activity they will do together, and access to a shared e-learning platform, which serves as a documentation and instruction “hub”.
- Students work together, using any kind of social media or means of communication they like. They upload bi-monthly very brief “progress reports” on the e-learning platform so that tutors have an impression of the work process. Tutors just guide the process – give feedback if deemed necessary for students to reach goals, check if teams keep together etc. and are there for any questions (usually, there aren’t many questions).
- At the deadline fixed ahead of time, students hand in their final product (report, paper, discussion, reflection, ...) on the e-learning platform. Students’ product are graded by their instructors at home according to regulations at their home institutions (not by the tutors, although they can make a suggestion).

Graph illustrating process of a Copilot learning activity:



3. Characteristics of a COPILOT module

- **No curriculum changes:** Topics / goals for learning activities are chosen in such a way that they fit into an existing course at each institution, or can be acknowledged for an existing purpose, e.g. courses with an international focus etc.

- **Flexibility:** Student numbers can change every year among partners, as long as mixed teams can be formed. Topics can change, too, agreed on by the partners. In our group, for example, we changed the topics for online discussion nearly every year. Partners can also change the number of ECTS they award to students or for which class at their home institution they award the ECTS from the COPILOT module.
- Relative simplicity of administration
- Manageable work load for tutors and students
- Increases students' motivation
- New roles for students, promotes variety of competences
- Also benefits instructors and their institutions – fosters exchange of good practice, illustrates emerging fields of practice, teaching approaches etc.

4. Step-by-step guide

4.1. Finding partners and identifying a learning activity

Learning activity and goals:

Ask yourself questions such as

1. Which generic and OT specific competences (OT areas) would you like your students to strengthen most? In which ways could this internationalisation module help you in facilitating this?
2. In which ways do you think this internationalisation module could be interesting for your institution?

Examples: OT competences, contents & approaches for students (occupation based, use of self, community based, etc.); internationalization@home; research; networking, etc.

3. Which learning activities or classes at your institution can relatively easily be done online and internationally instead of face-to-face and nationally? Which of them can benefit from an international perspective?

Partners:

Number: COPILOT works with 2 partners but ideally has more partners. Tip: Start with 2- 4 and then see if more partners would be beneficial or difficult.

Advantages of more than two partners: More international comparison, and a “safety net” in case one partner cannot fully participate in any given year for some reason (fewer students than expected, partner is abroad, etc.).

Language diversity is important – try to have partners from countries with different languages so that students have natural incentive to communicate in English.

4.2. Agreeing on the framework

Time frame: Which semester (spring, fall)? The whole semester, or just a part of it?

Tips: Make sure you compare academic calendars (holidays, placement periods, exam periods) so that you can consider them in the schedule of your online course.

Number of students: This is really up to how many you can manage. It can be a whole cohort, a certain group, or volunteers within a class. In the latter case, a few students do your online class while the others do a regular class, and all get the same number of credits for the class as it is listed in your curriculum. We now usually work with 30-35 students, 3-6 from each institution.

Tip: Agree beforehand how many students each institution will recruit / try to recruit and see if there is a balance considering languages or national cultures.

ECTS: The number of ECTS depends, of course, on the workload connected to your learning activity within the module. It should be noted, here, however, that we do not always have the same number of ECTS for each institution: Generally, we started with a low ECTS number, and institutions that wanted to award more ECTS added another activity for their students only, e.g. presentations of results of the online module etc., upgrading the results into a poster etc.

4.3. Use of e-learning platforms / communication media:

While students may use any kind of social media for their communication when working on their joint project, it has proved to be important to have one shared e-learning platform as a “meeting place”, a shared space for all information and announcements concerning the online module, and as a tool for documentation, guidance and discussion.

We have been using moodle, with one of our institutions acting as the “moodle host” and providing guest accounts to instructors and students from partner institutions. We have used the tools “Announcements / news” (for instructors only), “forums” for exchange among the members of each group (including the tutor), which are visible only to members of the group; a “forum” for all participants for the purposes of introducing themselves and discussing an OT-related topic, a forum for uploading the students’ final products, so that all students can see all groups’ final products.

Screenshots of moodle course International case comparison@home 2018: see pages 8-9

4.4. Grading and tutoring:

The instructors from the partner universities always grade their own students only, as this is easier with regard to different assessment criteria and regulations at different institutions. This has proved easiest and has worked well. Of course, joint grades or shared grading is also possible.

4.5. Study guide:

It has proved helpful to provide students (and instructors) with a study guide that covers and explains all details about the online module. This study guide is developed by all partners together and uploaded onto the e-learning platform. It explains the task, its goals, deadlines, assessment criteria, the tutoring process, etc. A sample study guide is also made available on the ENOTHE website.

INTERNATIONAL CASE COMPARISON@HOME 2018

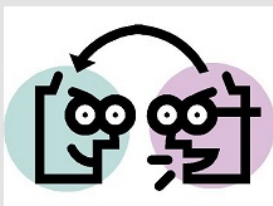


- FORUM No1 News and announcements
- Tutors' / instructors' forum
- [Hidden from students](#)

General Information

- Study Guide 2018** Uploaded 16/02/18, 19:37
- Instruction for moodle login and first steps** Uploaded 16/02/18, 19:38
- Students mail and login** Uploaded 16/02/18, 19:39
- Teams (revised version)**

TEAM Forum: CASE COMPARISON - discuss, plan, document the work on your case with your partners here



FORUM No 2

Here you can discuss your case, upload your reports, schedules, plans, and documents with YOUR TEAM.

- Please NOTE: Choose your team in the drop-down menu
- **Even if you use other means of communication, please post here**
 - a bi-weekly report (1st and 15th of a month): important decisions, steps in the groups work process, time schedules, summaries (just a few sentences) of what you have discussed in that time, even report a work - break
 - Reports of tutoring
 - Documents
 - Questions

This helps you and us to keep up-to-date with the work progress. Thanks!

PERSONAL introduction, FAQs, discussions & sharing within the whole group



FORUM No.3

Here you can post

- Your introduction (text about yourself)
- *general* questions to other teams about the project or the task
- experiences, interesting or funny comments...
- Contribute to general discussion -see below

TASK: Discuss the topic on "Connected in Diversity"

For this task, we want to you to discuss the questions that are stated below. This will be conducted in two steps.

1. Post a short text in this forum where you are answering/discussing all three questions.
2. Write a reaction to the texts of 2-3 fellow students.

The task should be completed latest on the 14/5.

QUESTIONS:

In your eyes, what is **diversity**? What does it mean to you (personally)?

How do you connect **diversity** with occupational therapy?


What might / does it mean for your future professional role?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS!

WE WISH YOU AN INTERESTING DISCUSSION! 😊

your finished papers



 Please upload your finished papers here (14th May 2018) and share with others

4.6 Module coordination:

We recommend that one partner is responsible for co-ordinating the online module every year. This task can include, e.g., calling the virtual meetings for partners, providing the e-learning platform, matching students into teams, sending out information to students, etc. We found it very useful and good for our project to rotate this task among partners.

4.7. Student recruitment, student interests and team formation:

We used various methods of recruiting students at our institutions, from powerpoint presentations by instructors, “marketing” the online module through the international coordinators, year tutors, course instructors etc.

Tip: If your topic and learning activity allow for this, it is a good idea to give students some choice concerning content matter, product, approaches – depending on your topic. In “International Case comparison@home”, we ask student who sign up to state three larger fields of interest (client groups, e.g. elderly after stroke, psychiatric clients, children with learning difficulties, etc.) and then try to fit them into teams with similar interests, so they share at least one field of interest / client group as the starting point for developing a narrower research question for that client group / in that field.

4.8. Evaluation of your online module:

We have done evaluations in several ways:

1. Peer evaluation of process to foster students’ team skills: see last pages of study guide
2. Evaluation for us as a team to develop course further. Here, we have used free comments, reflective reports of students, and short questionnaires such as the following:

Project ICC@home /// STUDENT FEEDBACK (Elisabeth Fattinger)

Questions for students’ feedback session and presentations:

- ***What have I gained from the project on the level of OT-related knowledge and insight?***
- ***(What) have I gained from the project on a personal level, concerning a) skills, b) fun, c) intercultural understanding?***
- ***Which factors have a) facilitated / supported learning process and results, b) which factors have impeded learning process and results?***
- ***If there were a similar project again, would you take part in it again?***
- ***Yes: Why? No: Why not?***
- ***What would you change if the project were to take place a second time?***

5. Other tips:

“Sell” your online well at your home institution as an activity providing benefits on several levels : for students, for instructors (tutors), for your curriculum development, and for your internationalisation@home profiles!

We wish you a successful start into your own new “COPILLOT” or
“International case comparison@home” online module!

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of us at
the email addresses listed in this guide!