

Portfolio of Students' Projects

Collaborative Online International Learning
implemented within the ENLACED project

“Digitally-Enhanced Foreign Language Education For Active European
Citizenship and Democratic Culture”

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International Encounters

Ukraine – Cyprus – Bulgaria

Collaborative Online Intercultural Learning Project

Project idea

Students collect and compare mini case studies about first encounters with an international environment. The final product is a joint digital compendium prepared by mixed BG–CY–UA teams.

Research process

National teams design interview questions and conduct at least three short short interviews. Mixed teams exchange findings and prepare a comparative presentation.

Presentation focus

Only first intercultural encounters: context, emotions, challenges, lessons learned and comparative results across Ukraine, Bulgaria and Cyprus.



Research Design

Interview questionnaire, mini cases and comparative analysis



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A. Context

Where and when did the encounter occur?
Who was involved?
What was the purpose of the meeting?

B. Emotional experience

How did you feel initially?
What surprised you most?
Did you feel nervous, excited, confused or comfortable?

C. Challenges

Language difficulties and accents.
Cultural misunderstandings.
Different social norms and communication habits.

D. Learning & change

What did the student learn?
Did the encounter change perceptions?
Would the student join international communication again?

Deliverables

3–5 interviews per national team → mini case studies → joint digital compendium → final webinar presentation.



Ukraine: First Intercultural Encounters

Mini cases based on Ukrainian national team interviews



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Anna Kovalenko

Sumy State University · Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation

Anna joined an online English-speaking webinar with students from Poland and Germany. She felt nervous about speaking English and understanding fast accents. Supportive international students helped her become more confident and interested in future exchanges.

Maksym Petrenko

Sumy State University · Computer Science

Maksym first interacted internationally in an online gaming community with people from the United States, Turkey and Spain. His main challenge was slang and different humour. Teamwork taught him tolerance and mutual respect.

Sofia Melnyk

Sumy State University · Psychology

Sofia participated in a volunteer project with students from Cyprus and Bulgaria. At first she felt shy, but group tasks made communication easier. She learned flexibility, intercultural understanding and the value of cultural diversity.

Ukrainian team finding

First encounters often began with nervousness and language barriers.
Friendly support helped students gain confidence, openness and stronger English-speaking skills.



Project Group 3: Vereschahina Anna · Moskalenko Mariia · Lytvynenko Lesia · Anastasiia Lushpihan · Chernenko Angela

Bulgaria: First Intercultural Encounters

Model mini cases prepared for the Bulgarian national team



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Maria Ivanova

Sofia University · Education

Maria's first international encounter happened during an online COIL ice-breaking meeting with students from Ukraine and Cyprus. She felt excited but also worried about her English. She learned that direct questions can be friendly and help build trust.

Georgi Petrov

University of Plovdiv · Computer Science

Georgi joined an international online hackathon. The biggest challenge was turn-taking: some students waited quietly, while others reacted immediately. He learned to pause, clarify ideas and invite quieter peers into discussion.

Elena Dimitrova

Medical University of Varna · Nursing

Elena worked in a simulation task with international students. She noticed differences in eye contact, gestures and personal distance. The experience taught her to check understanding verbally and adapt her non-verbal behaviour.

Bulgarian team finding

International encounters may reveal different expectations about directness, overlapping speech and non-verbal expressiveness.
Clear clarification helps transform possible misunderstanding into cooperation.



Cyprus: First Intercultural Encounters

Model mini cases prepared for the Cypriot national team



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Berkin Kocaismail

University of Nicosia · Student participant

Berkin's first encounter took place in a mixed online group with Ukrainian and Bulgarian students. He was curious but unsure about accents and speed. The friendly atmosphere helped him ask questions and compare different student lifestyles.

Nikol Sarki

University of Nicosia · Student participant

Nikol joined a discussion about first international experiences. She noticed that some students preferred structured roles, while others spoke more spontaneously. She learned that successful collaboration requires patience and clear distribution of tasks.

Anna Maria Symeonidou

University of Nicosia · Student participant

Anna Maria's first international teamwork experience showed her how quickly people can connect through shared topics. Different accents and communication rhythms were challenging, but the encounter made her more open to future cooperation.

Cypriot team voices

Names preserved from the materials: Yakie Ebisidor Favour, Berkin Kocaismail, Nikol Sarki, Basheer Esmat Saleh, Anna Maria Symeonidou.

Key lesson: focus on meaning, not only accent, speed or communication style.



Comparative Results

What students learned from first international encounters



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Common emotions

Nervousness about English and accents.
Curiosity about other cultures and student lives.
Growing comfort after friendly support and shared tasks.

Common challenges

Fast speech, informal vocabulary and different humour.
Different expectations about directness, turn-taking and time management.
Different non-verbal habits and levels of expressiveness.

Common lessons

Tolerance, respect, openness and patience.
Confidence in international communication.
Better understanding of cultural diversity and teamwork.

Short national-language reflections

Україна

Під час першої міжнародної зустрічі я хвилювався/лася через англійську, але підтримка інших студентів допомогла мені стати впевненішим/ою.

България

В първата ми международна среща се притеснявах от различните акценти, но разговорът ми помогна да стана по-уверен/а и отворен/а.

Κύπρος

Στην πρώτη διεθνή συνάντηση ένιωσα λίγο άγχος, αλλά η συνεργασία με φοιτητές από άλλες χώρες με βοήθησε να μιλήσω πιο άνετα.