

5th Newsletter

MODES PROJECT



The Final Phase of the MODES Project

The MODES Project was launched with a clear ambition: to rethink the way European universities respond to the challenges and opportunities of increasingly international classrooms. Today, with the publication of the **Toolkit for Excellence in International Learning**, the project reaches its concluding phase and delivers its most tangible and practical outcome.

Over the past three years, the project consortium worked on four main steps. It started with an exploratory research phase, during which teachers and students from different European universities were involved in focus groups and questionnaires.



[Click here to discover and download the Toolkit](#)

1

This first step allowed the project to map the most pressing issues: difficulties in ensuring inclusion, barriers linked to language and cultural differences, and the need for more innovative teaching methods.

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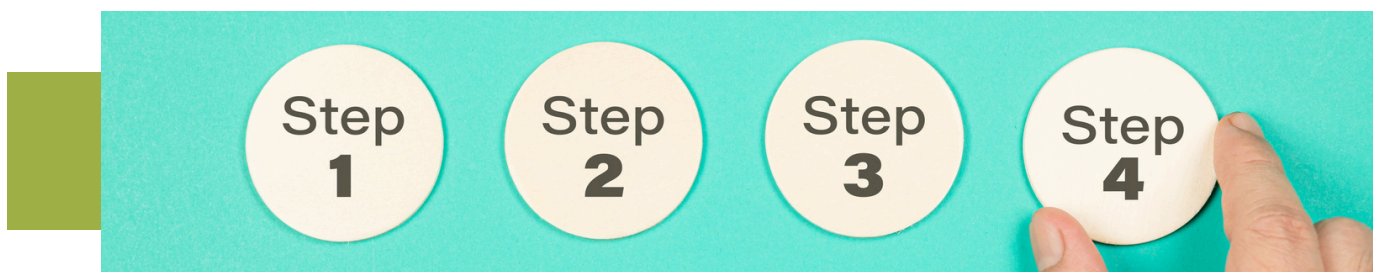
The **second step** was the development of a set of **methodological guidelines**. These guidelines provided educators with practical orientations on how to adapt their teaching to culturally and linguistically diverse groups. They did not propose abstract theories, but rather a concrete roadmap to guide teachers toward more inclusive practices.

3

The **third step** was the creation of an **online modular training course for university staff**. Divided into accessible and independent modules, the course combined theoretical insights with interactive examples, case studies, and reflective tasks. Teachers who took part in this training reported a **significant increase in confidence when dealing with multicultural groups**, as well as a broader understanding of digital and intercultural pedagogies.

4

Finally, **the fourth and most significant step** was the **Toolkit**, which collects, systematizes, and expands all the knowledge produced during the project. It was designed as a practical companion for teachers and institutions wishing to embed **inclusion and interculturality into their educational strategies**.



This final phase represents not only the conclusion of the project, but also a new starting point: universities now have at their disposal a structured set of tools to integrate internationalization into the very foundations of their teaching and learning processes.

[**Click here to discover and download the Toolkit**](#)



The Toolkit: A Resource for Inclusive and Innovative Higher Education

The **Toolkit for Excellence in International Learning** is the legacy of the MODES project. Rather than being a static report, it is a **dynamic resource designed to be adapted across disciplines, institutions, and national contexts**.

The Toolkit is structured **around six key themes that emerged from research and fieldwork**:

- **Active Student Involvement:** promoting participatory methods such as group projects, peer learning, flipped classrooms, and authentic tasks, where students become active agents of their own learning.
- **Intercultural Communication:** creating space for cultural exchanges, valuing different perspectives, and supporting dialogue as a tool for empathy.
- **Inclusive Teaching Design:** applying the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), offering flexibility in materials, assessment, and pathways to accommodate diverse learning styles.

[**Click here to discover and download the Toolkit**](#)

- **Language Support:** providing bilingual glossaries, visual aids, accessible rubrics, and fostering peer interaction between native and non-native speakers.
- **Digital Dimension:** using technology not only as a technical aid but as a means of personalising learning, encouraging interaction, and making teaching more adaptive.
- **Extracurricular Activities:** structuring initiatives like buddy programmes, cultural cafés, and guided visits to strengthen community-building and integration.

What makes the Toolkit unique is its **practical orientation**. Alongside conceptual frameworks, it includes ready-to-use resources: fact sheets, checklists, assessment grids, and teaching examples that can be directly applied in the classroom. Moreover, it offers **institutions guidelines for adopting the MODES model on a larger scale**, ensuring that change does not remain limited to individual teachers, but can transform entire departments or universities.

In this sense, the Toolkit does not simply provide “solutions” but encourages a **structural change of perspective**: internationalization should no longer be considered an add-on or a separate dimension of education, but a central and integrated component of high-quality, empathetic higher education.

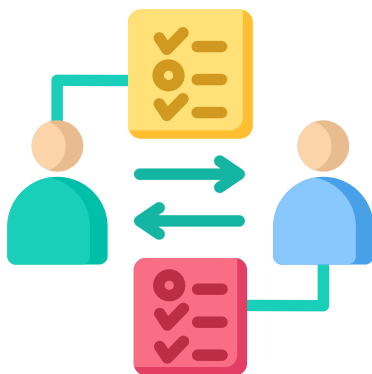


[**Click here to discover and download the Toolkit**](#)

Tricks & Tips: Practical Approaches for International Classrooms

Perhaps the most engaging section of the **Toolkit** is the one dedicated to “**Tricks and Tips**”, which offers a **concrete selection of innovative practices tested during the project**. These are structured into **five thematic Entries**, each representing a cluster of strategies that teachers can adopt, adapt, and combine according to their needs.

Entry 1: Collaborative and Peer Learning Methodologies



Encourages **shared responsibility and intercultural cooperation**. Examples include the “**international jigsaw method**,” where students learn different parts of a topic and then teach each other, or reciprocal **bilingual peer teaching**, where students exchange knowledge in different languages. Such approaches not only **enhance understanding but also create stronger bonds between learners**.

Entry 2: Gamified and Digitally Adaptive Learning Environments



Demonstrates **how simple digital tools can transform learning** into an **engaging and inclusive process**. Interactive quizzes with branching feedback, micro-challenges with points and leaderboards, and customizable learning playlists are some of the strategies that **make courses more dynamic and responsive** to students’ different backgrounds.

[Click here to discover and download the Toolkit](#)

Entry 3: Integrated Intercultural Teaching Practices



Promotes the **inclusion of cultural perspectives directly into course content**. Teachers are encouraged to use comparative case studies, student mini-ethnographies, and cultural mapping tools to turn each lesson into an intercultural dialogue. This entry shifts diversity from being a “topic” to being a structural element of learning.

Entry 4: Development of Critical and Reflective Thinking



Focuses on **cultivating students’ ability to think critically and reflect on their experiences**. Examples include digital learning diaries, Socratic circles on ethical dilemmas, and video reflections. These practices foster empathy, argumentation, and personal growth, preparing students for academic and professional challenges alike.

Entry 5: Structured Inclusive Extracurricular Programming



Extends inclusion beyond the classroom. Initiatives such as international **buddy systems**, **cultural cafés**, and **guided reflection visits** help students integrate socially while reinforcing what they learn in academic contexts. **These activities, often undervalued, can become pillars of inclusive internationalization** when planned and structured properly.

Each of these **Entries is interconnected**: collaborative methods prepare the ground for digital and intercultural practices, which in turn stimulate critical thinking and extend naturally into extracurricular initiatives. Together, they form a system-wide approach that can be scaled up within institutions.



RECOMMENDATION

The MODES Recommendations: A General Framework for Innovation in International Teaching

In recent years, **European universities have welcomed an increasing number of international students**, creating classrooms that are more multicultural and multilingual than ever before. **This richness represents an extraordinary opportunity**, but it also raises important challenges: how can institutions ensure equity, inclusion, and high-quality learning in such diverse environments?

The **MODES Project set out to respond to these challenges**. Through research, pilot teaching initiatives, and training courses in Italy, Greece, and the Netherlands, **the project collected data, tested new methods, and validated strategies that have led to the formulation of a set of strategic recommendations** for innovation in international higher education.

These **recommendations are the result of a joint process that included both teachers and students**. They are not abstract theories, but field-tested proposals that have proven their value in real academic contexts. The fact that the same priorities emerged consistently across different countries demonstrates that **these challenges are shared across Europe and require systemic solutions**.

[**Click here to discover and download the Recommendations**](#)

The true value of the recommendations lies in their systemic potential. Taken together, they outline an educational model that can:

- **position diversity as an asset rather than a barrier;**
- **increase student motivation and participation;**
- **reduce linguistic and cultural barriers;**
- **strengthen transversal skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, and intercultural communication.**

Furthermore, the recommendations are directly **connected to the MODES Toolkit, which provides ready-to-use materials**, operational guides, and assessment tools. This integration ensures that universities not only understand the principles of inclusive teaching but also have the practical means to implement them.

In conclusion, the MODES project **shows clearly that inclusion is not an “extra” in higher education – it is a driver of quality and innovation.** The recommendations are a decisive step forward in transforming European classrooms into equitable, participatory, and international learning environments that prepare students for the interconnected world of today.





At the heart of the MODES project's work lies a **set of seven priority recommendations, selected because they were repeatedly highlighted in Italy, Greece, and the Netherlands**, and because they reflect the **voices of both teachers and students**.

One-off training is not enough to change teaching practices. Post-course communities of practice provide a continuous space for teachers to share experiences, adapt methods, and support each other. They help sustain innovation over time and foster transnational cooperation among educators.

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Click here to discover and download the Recommendations

3 Institutionalization of collaborative and peer learning

Group work and peer learning are not only teaching methods but also tools for social integration. When institutionalized, they become structural practices that boost motivation, lower language barriers, and develop teamwork and intercultural communication skills essential for future careers.

4 Inclusive educational technologies and gamification

Technology, if used purposefully, is a powerful ally for inclusion. From captioned videos to adaptive glossaries and interactive platforms, digital tools make learning more accessible. Gamification – with quizzes, challenges, and badges – enhances motivation and participation across diverse student groups.

5 Development of critical and reflective thinking

Higher education must go beyond content delivery. Activities such as reflective diaries, structured debates, and intercultural case studies stimulate students' capacity to analyze, question assumptions, and engage empathetically with different perspectives – key skills for global citizenship.

6 Structured mechanisms for continuous participatory feedback

Feedback should not be limited to final evaluations. Continuous and participatory feedback – through real-time surveys, anonymous polls, or co-designed rubrics – turns students into co-creators of their learning process, increasing motivation and ownership of their education.

7 Real and virtual intercultural exchanges and inclusive extracurricular activities

Intercultural experiences – whether through mobility programs, language tandems, cultural cafés, or virtual exchanges – are transformative. They allow students to experience diversity authentically, building empathy, adaptability, and the ability to collaborate in global environments.

These **seven recommendations** are not isolated measures, but **interconnected components of an inclusive educational ecosystem**. Together, they create the conditions for universities to embrace diversity as a resource, foster inclusion, and prepare students for life and work in a globalized world.

With its integrated and evidence-based approach, the MODES project offers universities across Europe a clear compass: ***innovating international teaching is not only possible, it is essential for the future of higher education.***





MODES Multiplier Event in Kassel – 9 September 2025

On **9 September 2025**, a MODES Multiplier Event will take place in Kassel at the Rumi Kulturzentrum, Germany. The event **will start at 14:30**.

This event is **dedicated to presenting the main outputs of the MODES project**, in particular the MODES **Toolkit** and the **online training course**, which were developed to promote inclusive and socially engaged internationalisation in higher education.

The Multiplier Event will showcase how these resources help universities and educators to:

- support equity and participation in diverse classrooms,
- foster intercultural dialogue and empathy,
- provide practical methodologies for teaching in multicultural contexts.

With this event, MODES continues **its mission of sharing innovative practices** and ensuring that the project results reach a wider academic and institutional community across Europe.

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MODES Final Conference & Closing Multiplier Event in Leiden

We are delighted to announce the **Final Project Meeting of the MODES Project**, which will take place on **Thursday 11 September 2025 in Leiden, The Netherlands**. This will be followed by the **Final Conference on 12 September 2025**, gathering all partners to conclude the project's journey.

The conference will present the **main outcomes and tools developed through MODES**, a project that has worked across Italy, Greece, and the Netherlands to improve the integration of international students in higher education. Participants will discover:

- The MODES Toolkit and methodological guide for inclusive international teaching.
- Insights into student experiences in Europe.
- Modes' Online Course
- Case studies and best practices from partner universities.
- A closing panel and networking moment to foster further collaboration.

This event **is open to academics, policymakers, students, and stakeholders interested in internationalization and inclusion in higher education.**

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Alongside the conference, the MODES consortium will hold its final project meeting to:

- Review project deliverables and finalize reporting requirements.
- Verify completed outputs and assess the overall impact.
- Conduct a financial and administrative closure.
- Discuss strategies for sustaining the project's outcomes beyond its official end.

The **MODES Final Conference is more than a closing event** – *it is a knowledge-sharing platform bringing together educators, researchers, and stakeholders committed to creating inclusive, **student-centered learning environments**.* It is also an opportunity to network in the historic city of Leiden, home to one of Europe's oldest universities and a vibrant academic community

We warmly invite you to join us in Leiden for this milestone occasion and to be part of the dialogue on shaping the future of inclusive international education.



Follow us on social media to find out more!



JOIN US IN THE MODES PROJECT!

By signing the expression of interest for the Modes project, you can actively contribute to promoting an inclusive and diverse higher education environment.

Join us in making a positive impact and ensuring that every student has the **same opportunity!**

SIGN NOW!

↓ Pledge Card.

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