X-Culture Academy Handbook

More info: www.X-Culture.org
Contact us: Academy@X-Culture.org

Updated: August 25, 2019
Tell them and they will forget.
Show them and they will remember.
Engage them and they will understand.

Why X-Culture?

**International Experience**

We live in a globalized world. In school, at work, and in our personal lives, we must interact with people from different cultures. People with international experience are more effective at these interactions. International experience helps when applying for jobs or university stipends.

Teaching how to work with people from different cultures is notoriously hard. It is not something one can learn from books or lectures. Learning in a classroom how to interact with foreigners is like learning how to swim on a football field.

You must get in the water to learn how to swim. You must have practical international experience to understand other cultures.

Unfortunately, it is not easy to find opportunities to gain international experience. International travel is costly. Even if one can afford to go overseas as a tourist, there is a big difference between being a tourist and being a co-worker.

Working in another country is not enough either. Work teams in multinational companies tend to be comprised of more than two nationalities. It is not unusual to see work teams where each team member comes from a different culture. Being a foreigner in a new culture is different from working in a team where every team member is from a different culture. The group dynamics in a truly multicultural team is very different than in a team with only two nationalities.

Lastly, most international interactions happen online. The rapid development of online communication technologies makes it possible to work in globally dispersed teams. The group dynamics in virtual teams is much more complicated than in face-to-face teams. Ability to work in global virtual teams cannot be learned from books, by visiting other countries, or by working in international face-to-face teams. It can only be learned by working in virtual teams.

X-Culture is an inexpensive, safe, and an effective way to gain international experience and learn how to work in truly multicultural globally dispersed teams.

**Business Experience**

Just like international experience, business experience is hard to gain from books or lectures. It is hard to understand business theories without applying them in practice.

X-Culture students solve international business problems for real companies. The students receive detailed information about their client company and its products, have live webinars with company managers, present their work to their clients and receive feedback, and can even see their best ideas implemented. In addition to international experience, X-Culture students also receive business consulting experience.
**Better Learning**

Our research shows that practical experience aids theoretical learning. Compared to control groups, students who had the X-Culture experience as part of their International Business courses did better on the course exams (same exam, same questions).

It is possible that the knowledge the X-Culture participants gained during the project helped them answer exam questions. However, better performance on the exams could also be attributed to improved interest in the subject and a stronger motivation to learn.

Practical application of the theories helps students understand and appreciate the importance of the course materials. Seeing theory work in practice creates a sense of discovery, which makes learning more engaging and enjoyable.

We receive hundreds of letters from former X-Culture participants who share that the experience was so interesting that they read several additional books on International Business that were not even assigned for their course. Many also shared that because of X-Culture they changed their majors to International Business.

Our research on the topic has been published in leading scholarly journals (for example, AMLE, AIB-Insights).

**A Better World**

Most importantly, X-Culture makes the world less divided.

Our research shows that X-Culture reduces prejudice against people of other cultures, increases interest in working with people from other cultures, and increases confidence in one’s ability to complete a project with people from other cultures.

These are very important outcomes.

With every X-Culture graduate, we reduce the chance of international conflict. With every X-Culture graduate, we increase the chance of successful international collaboration.

The more people who go through X-Culture, the more likely we are to collectively find solutions to the challenges we face as a civilization.

**What Is X-Culture?**

X-Culture was launched in 2010. It was originally designed as a practical supplement for International Business courses taught at universities around the world. The students would be placed in international teams, each student in a different country. As the students are working together on a project, they are experiencing on practice what their professors teach them in the classroom, such as how to collaborate across national borders, time zones, and cultural differences.

X-Culture started with an email sent by Dr. Vas Taras to his Academy of International Business colleagues. They email asked if any professors would be interested in creating an international collaboration project for their students. Dozens of professors from around the world replied within hours. The X-Culture Project was born.
About 400 students from 7 universities in 7 countries participated in X-Culture the first time. Since then, the number of participants has been growing steadily. As of 2019, over 150 universities in 45 countries on 6 continents (close to 5,000 students) participate in X-Culture every semester. Almost 60,000 students have participated in X-Culture over these 9 years of the project (see the complete list here).

In 2013, several companies approached X-Culture and asked if X-Culture students could help with solving their real-life business challenges. Mercedes-Benz was our first partner. It went well and the students presented many interesting ideas. Thirty students were invited to visit a Mercedes-Benz factory near Istanbul, Turkey.

Since then, we select about 10 partner companies every semester. The students work on the real-life international business challenges presented by our partners. Cooperation with real businesses makes the project more practical and interesting for our students. These partnerships are mutually beneficial: the companies receive ideas from thousands of bright young students around the world, while the students gain valuable business consulting experience.

In 2012, the first X-Culture Global Symposium was held in Florida as a part of the AIB-SE conference. It provided students with an opportunity to meet face-to-face with their teammates, exchange ideas, and expand professional and personal networks. We now organize two X-Culture Global Symposia every semester (list here). The symposia are usually hosted by a local university and several companies, such as Mercedes-Benz, Home Depot, Louis Vuitton, JCB, Hard Rock International, Perkins, Nuova Simonelli, Eurosuole, Cocco Grifoni, iGuzzini, or Calgary International Airport to name a few.

As X-Culture grew, many students would come back and ask if they could participate again. In response, we created the X-Culture Coaching Program. After successfully completing the project as a member of a global virtual team, the best students become coaches and share their experience with the next generation of X-Culture students.

As X-Culture became more known and popular, we started receiving inquiries from non-students who wanted to participate in the project, both older professionals, but also younger pre-college teens. Starting in 2013, non-student professionals were allowed to participate in X-Culture. Typically, these people are interested in gaining international experience and strengthening their resumes for a future job or promotion.

In 2018 the first class of kids ages 9-17 completed the X-Culture project. These younger students worked in international teams with other kids of the same age. Our experience shows that younger kids can greatly benefit from completing a project with peers from other countries. With proper training and support, younger kids can work in international teams and are eager to learn about other cultures and international business.

**X-Culture for Professionals**

X-Culture has been open to non-student professionals since 2013. Most of them are people interested in improving their chances for a promotion or a new job and, thus, seeking opportunities to gain new experiences and skills. Some are students who were not lucky enough to have X-Culture as part of their regular coursework, so they applied to the program individually.

The X-Culture Professionals go through exactly the same program as university and MBA students. Same clients, same challenges, same deadlines, same deliverables, same certificates.

The university students who participate in X-Culture are typically enrolled in International Business courses and have several years of general business training. Some professionals who apply to X-Culture have rich work and
managerial experience, including in International Business, but many do not have the necessary theoretical training.

To make certain everyone is properly prepared for completing a business project in an international team, non-student professionals are required to complete a four-week pre-project theoretical training.

---

**X-Culture for Kids**

Right after the first round of X-Culture in 2010, the university professors started asking if their own children could participate in the program. For several years we were rejecting these requests. There is a big difference between a 23-year-old university student and a 13-year-old kid. Placing them on one team would not work.

However, due to the increasing demand, in 2017, we started experimenting with “X-Culture Kids”. Our early tests confirmed that children, perhaps as young as 9, are ready to work in international teams and complete simple business projects.

Inspired by the success of the initial tests, we launched the X-Culture Academy program for pre-university youths, and the first cohort of kids ages 10-16 graduated in the spring of 2018.

The kids complete the same project as the university students. However, because the participants are younger and less prepared, the following changes have been made:

1. **Age-appropriate challenges**
   Industries and products that are more relevant to younger populations are selected for the challenges. For example, in 2018, we had selected two clients: a toymaker and a private school. The kids were asked to either design new toys, or to design a school of their dreams, and then develop a marketing and promotion for their product. In the program for kids, the challenge questions are also less technical (e.g., less financial analysis) and more creative (e.g., more product design).

2. **More rigorous selection**
   Most universities are selective and offer rigorous training. The university students tend to be highly skilled. Also, X-Culture is part of a course grade, so the university students work hard to get good grades.

   X-Culture Kids are not pre-selected and trained by universities. They receive no grades. To compensate for this reduced selectivity and extrinsic motivation, a stricter selection is needed, both to attract only most prepared applicants, and to make the project more prestigious to improve motivation.

3. **More pre-project training**
   Unlike university students who have substantial training and are enrolled in International Business courses, kids and teenagers need to receive more detailed pre-project training in online collaboration, cross-cultural communication, business report writing, and the like.

4. **More gamification**
   For university students, the project is designed to resemble real business consulting projects: strict deadlines, dry communication, professional formatting of deliverables. X-Culture Kids rely on gamification and fun to provide extra motivation.

5. **More reliance on parents and teachers**
   University students are mature and responsible. They require little guidance and oversight. We still work
closely with their professors, but in most cases, the role of the professor is limited to grading students’ work. Younger children need much more supervision and guidance. They may need an adult by their side at all times: when having a team meeting on Skype, doing research, or writing the report. The older teens (ages 14-17) may be able to do most of the work on their own, but for the younger kids (ages 10-13), it is not just the kids, but also their parents and teachers who enroll in X-Culture.

X-Culture Academy Program Design

Pre-Project Training (4 weeks)
A series of training modules, such as:
- Online Collaboration Tools (Skype, Doodle, Dropbox, Google Docs, WhatsApp, etc.)
- Cross-cultural communication.
- Problem solving in teams.
- Team leadership.
- The art of writing winning business proposals.
- Plagiarism and academic referencing.
- The basics of International Business.

Practical Training (8 weeks)
Work in global virtual teams:
- The students are placed in international teams (typically 5-6 people per team, each from a different country).
- The students are serving as consultants to real businesses and develop their solutions to real-life problems presented by our business partners.
- They experience the challenges and learn best practices of working in teams, communicating online, dealing with time-zones, and cultural differences.
- Students have webinars with the CEOs of their client organizations.
- After completion of the project, the teams submit their final business proposals.

Post-Project Reflections (4 weeks)
After the reports are submitted:
- Students present their work in class and/or in a live online teleconference.
- Students write papers where they reflect on their experiences.
Benefits for Students

1. **International experience**
   Complete a project in a team where each team member is from a different country.

2. **Business experience**
   Solve a business challenge for a real client company.

3. **New knowledge and skills**
   Train in cross-cultural communication, online collaboration tools, international business, business writing and presentation, and more.

4. **Personal and professional network**
   Make friends around the world; develop contacts at many universities and several companies.

5. **Cultural intelligence**
   Gain a significant improvement in cultural intelligence from before to after the project.

6. **X-Culture Certificate and Recommendation Letter**
   You learn and grow. We provide supporting documentation.

7. **Stronger resume and improved chances of a new start**
   X-Culture experience makes you a stronger applicant for a stipend or new job opportunity.

Benefits for Teachers

1. **Enhanced student learning**
   Compared to control groups (no X-Culture), students in courses with X-Culture do better on exams.

2. **Improved teaching evaluations**
   Compared to control groups, students who have X-Culture give their teachers higher evaluations.

3. **Research and publications**
   X-Culture is a great research platform that provides high-quality, multi-source, multi-level longitudinal data. If you are interested in scholarly work, X-Culture will provide you with the necessary data.

4. **Professional network**
   Meet the hundreds of educators and business professionals on the X-Culture team.

5. **Documented proof of your achievement:**
   X-Culture Global Educator Certificate and support letters sent to your principal or department head. You do a great job; we make sure the world knows about it.

6. **X-Culture certificates for your students**
   Students get X-Culture International Business certificates, which help with college and job applications.

7. **Helps us make education more interactive and experiential:**
   The workplace is becoming global. Learning how to work across cultures in a classroom is like learning to swim on a football field. X-Culture is developing new teaching methods for the new today – and you can be part of our team.
The Task

The goal of X-Culture is to give students an opportunity to complete a business project in an international team. The exact questions that the teams need to answer are less important than experiencing and learning cross-cultural interactions, teamwork, and problem solving.

The students in X-Culture serve as business consultants to real companies and help solve their real-life international business challenges. There are typically up to 7 client companies, each representing a different industry. In the past, our clients were manufacturers of clothing, organic fertilizer, auto parts, snowmobiles, video games, chocolate, tea, shoes, toys, industrial lighting, coffee shop equipment, wine, music producers, schools, shampoos, cow pregnancy tests, adventure tourism agencies, medical care, private schools, charities, and even cities.

The students have two or more live webinars with the managers of their client company. In the first webinar, the manager talks about the company and answers students’ questions. In the later webinars, the students share their ideas and the manager provides feedback, plus answers students’ questions.

Here are examples of the questions the clients ask for help with the following. Do NOT worry if some of these questions look difficult. The students will receive the necessary training and guidance.

1. **Competition Analysis**: How does the industry work, who are the competitors of the client company and what are the client’s strengths and weaknesses compared to the competition?

2. **Identify New Promising Markets**: In what new country the client’s product/service is likely to be in high demand? Describe the culture, economy, and customer tastes in this country.

3. **Product Design**: Should the product design be changed to make it more appealing to the customers in the new market? Should the client develop a completely new product or add new features?

4. **Pricing Strategy**: What is the best pricing strategy for the proposed market? (fixed price, bulk pricing, repeat customer discounts, financing, stipends, etc.)

5. **Marketing Strategy**: What is the best way to convince consumers to buy the product? Where should it be advertised? What should be the marketing message, slogan, packaging, script of a TV ad, design of a Facebook ad?

6. **HR Strategy**: Would it be necessary to hire in the new market? If so, what is the best way to recruit employees, what should be their compensation be, and how should they be managed?

7. **Logistics**: What are the different ways to ship the product to the new market? How much and how long will it take to reach the consumer/buyer?

8. **Partnerships**: Should the client sell the product directly to consumers, or would it be better to form a joint venture or a partnership with a local company, distributor, retailer, or governmental agency?

9. **Certification**: Does the product need to be certified to be sold in the proposed market? If so, how such certification could be obtained?

10. **Trade regulations**: Are there import tariffs, customs duties, or other trade restrictions on the product in the suggested new market?
Communication

Before the project starts, we train the students how to use other online communication and collaboration tools such as Skype, WhatsApp, Viber, Facebook closed groups, Dropbox, Google Docs, and the like. Most teams start with email and use more advanced online collaboration tools throughout the project.

In the past, we have considered creating a proprietary communication platform where students would log in and communicate with their team members. However, we have decided to rely on publicly available tools for several reasons:

First, they are better, more functional, and develop faster than a platform we could develop on our own or license from someone else.

Second, the publicly available online communication and collaboration tools that the students learn to operate during the project, the students can continue using after the project, which will benefit them in the future.

Learning how to use the online communication and collaboration tools is one of the greatest benefits of X-Culture. These skills will be very useful in any professional career.

Teams

Each team is comprised of 5-6 students. We have experimented with different team sizes. Smaller teams have an easier time coordinating and managing their efforts. However, smaller teams are vulnerable to mid-term dropouts and/or lack of participation of team members.

When forming teams, we try to maximize cultural diversity within a team.

For the younger participants, we match them by age so that the age of the members of the same team is +/- one year.

For older participants, the age difference may be slightly greater, but we try to match team members by work experience.

Depending on the number of participants from different countries, it is possible that some teams have multiple students from the same country (e.g., two students from the U.S., four more students each from a different country).

Performance Appraisal and Management

To be able to identify problems early on, we monitor every student’s performance and provide help once problems are identified. The following performance indicators are tracked:

1. Four weekly theory tests
   At the end of each of the four weeks of the pre-project training, the students are taking a test. The tests are designed to evaluate the students’ ability to work with information and learn the skills that are necessary for completing a business consulting project in an international team.

   However, the four tests are also used as a selection tool. X-Culture is a team project. If one team member is not performing well or drops out in the middle of the project, the entire team suffers. Students who are not motivated or disciplined enough to complete their weekly assignments and pass the tests by
the deadline are probably not ready to work in a team. Therefore, missed tests or unsatisfactory performance on the tests will result in an exclusion of the student from the program.

2. **Weekly progress surveys**
   At the end of each of the eight weeks of the practical training, each student is asked to complete a progress survey. The survey asks how the student and the team are doing, how they are progressing with their task, and what kind of help may be needed.

3. **Weekly peer evaluations**
   The weekly progress surveys also ask the students to evaluate each of their team members in terms of their effort, intellectual contribution, leadership, and friendliness.

4. **Weekly deliverables**
   Each week, the teams are asked to submit a draft of a particular section of their report. The weekly deliverables are not used to select the winning team, but to monitor how well the team is progressing with their task and to provide feedback on the team’s work.

5. **Plagiarism**
   After the project is over, the reports submitted by the teams are automatically checked for plagiarism. Reports that contain plagiarized work will be excluded from the competition. A training module on plagiarism will be offered to the students in the pre-project training phase.

6. **Report quality**
   Each team report is evaluated by a panel of experts (university professors and client company representatives). The winning teams are selected based on the quality of their team report.

7. **Reflection paper quality**
   After the project is over, the students write a reflection paper that describes what they have learned from working in an international team and how they can use this knowledge in their future careers. These papers are evaluated for quality and the students receive feedback on their work.

---

**Underperforming Students**

It is our goal and expectation that every student who is admitted to the X-Culture Academy successfully completes the program. However, X-Culture is a team project. Students who do not meet the expectations of their teams may be excluded from their teams.

The reasons for exclusion could be the following:

- **Missed or failed one of the weekly theory tests.**
  Students who fail the theory test will be given a chance to re-take it, but a failure on the second attempt will lead to the exclusion from the program.

- **Low peer evaluations**
  Peer evaluations are measured on a 5-point scale (5=excellent, 4=good, 3=acceptable, 2=low, 1=bad). Peer evaluations below 2.5 will result in a warning. If the peer evaluations do not improve next week (2.5 or less two weeks in a row), the student will be excluded from the team.
• **Disrespectful behavior**  
Instances of conflicts and disruptive behaviors (bullying, excessive confrontation, obscene language) will be investigated and may lead to an exclusion of students from the project.

Instances when students underperform to the extent when they must be excluded from the project are extremely rare. Even if somebody is having difficulties meeting the team’s expectations, we try to provide help and guidance, which almost always helps.

### Certificates and Recommendation Letters

Upon successful completion of the X-Culture Project, the following documentation is distributed to the graduates:

**Students**
- Personal performance review
- Personal Cultural Intelligence report
- Personal recommendation letter that comments on the student’s experience, new skills and knowledge; and recommends (if deserved) the student for advanced educational programs and opportunities that require teamwork and complex business problem solving
- X-Culture Global Business Certificates

**Teachers**
- X-Culture Global Educator Certificate
- Personal recommendation letters that comments on the teacher’s experience with supervising students in experiential and team-based learning programs and recommends (if deserved) the teacher for jobs that require such skills
- If requested, a letter to the teacher’s supervisor (e.g., school principal) commenting on the teacher’s achievement, the importance of the project to the students and the excellent (if deserved) job the teacher has done supporting his/her students throughout the X-Culture Project.

All the documentation will be provided for free in an electronic high-resolution print-ready format.

It is extremely expensive and cumbersome to print, package, and mail out several thousand certificates and recommendation letters. Depending on the destination, mailing a stack of certificates may cost $40 to $70.

Therefore, we send out only electronic, print-ready PDF documents. It is much cheaper and easier to print them locally. The price is usually only 10 to 20 cents per color copy printed on high-density, high-gloss paper.

### Winner Awards

Additionally, the members of the Best Team receive additional Winner certificates. They will also be invited to the X-Culture Global Symposium where they meet their team members and other X-Culture graduates and participate in the program designed to prepare students for a successful career.
Enrollment Options

There are three main modes of enrollment in X-Culture:

1. **Individually**
   Most professionals and some pre-college youths apply individually. Older participants (16+) can apply on their own, whereas parents typically enroll younger participants.

2. **Professor/Teacher**
   All university students and many X-Culture Academy students are enrolled in X-Culture by their professors/teachers. The teacher applies on behalf of the entire class, so all students who take the professor’s/teacher’s course are automatically enrolled in the program. However, being in a course like this does not guarantee placement on an X-Culture team. The students still have to complete the pre-project training and pass the theory tests, to qualify, to be placed on teams.

3. **A Formal/Informal Club led by a Teacher or Parent Instructor**
   Often, it is impossible to add a project, like X-Culture, to a formal course and make it mandatory (or optional) for all students in the course. So many teachers create an X-Culture club and invite kids from their school to join it. It can be a formal club, similar to the various chess clubs, orchestra, or sports teams that often operate on the school premises, or it can be an informal club that simply meets from time to time and is led by the teacher.

   A parent can also organize such a club. Children have more fun and learn better when there are other children from their city in X-Culture. So, after enrolling their children, some parents talk to their friends, neighbors, other parents at the school to invite more children to participate in X-Culture. They apply as a group (3 people or more). Even though each child from the group will be on a different international team, they still meet as a local group from time to time, share experiences, exchange ideas and support each other. Being among friends helps both students and parents.

Privacy and Safety

We take the privacy and safety of our students very seriously.

- The students are placed on teams with children of their age.
- The names and contacts of the students are shared only with their team members.
- Any data collected are deidentified at the end of the project. That is, once the project is over, all names and other identifying information are deleted from our dataset and only completely anonymous data will be used for research and project effectiveness evaluation purposes.
- Any instance of suspected privacy or safety violation will be immediately investigated and dealt with.
Time Investment

The X-Culture students (and for younger students their teachers and parents) should expect to invest a considerable amount of their time and effort.

### Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-Project Theory Training (4 weeks)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying training materials</td>
<td>2-3 per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly theory test</td>
<td>1 per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practical Training (8 weeks)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence with teammates, per week</td>
<td>1-2 per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and report write up, per week</td>
<td>1-2 per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other unexpected tasks and issues that need to be addressed</td>
<td>1-2 per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-Project (4 weeks)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for presentation</td>
<td>2-3 total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation (in class or online)</td>
<td>1-2 total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing a reflection paper</td>
<td>4-5 total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average per week over the 4 months</strong></td>
<td>3-6 per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL over the 4 months</strong></td>
<td>40-80 total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Teachers/Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-Project Theory Training (4 weeks)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation session</td>
<td>1 total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying documents in the project package</td>
<td>2-3 total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping students</td>
<td>1-2 per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional webinars with the project administrators</td>
<td>1 per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practical Training (8 weeks)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping students</td>
<td>1-2 per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional webinars with the project administrators</td>
<td>1 per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-Project (4 weeks)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping students prepare for their presentations</td>
<td>2-3 total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending students’ presentations</td>
<td>1-2 total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping students write post-project reflection papers</td>
<td>up to 1 total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributing Achievement Certificates to the students (teachers)</td>
<td>1 total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average per week over the 4 months</strong></td>
<td>1-3 per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL over the 4 months</strong></td>
<td>20-40 total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### The Program Flow

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before project starts</th>
<th>Orientation Webinar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Meet and greet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How X-Culture works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What happens now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Expected challenges and best way to deal with them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Questions and Answers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks 1-4</th>
<th>Theoretical Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Each week, the students have to review several training modules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The training modules for the week will be released on Monday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The students should plan to spend 2-3 hours studying the training materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Each Wednesday, each student will receive an email with a personal link to the weekly Theory Test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The students have until 11:59 pm on Sunday of that week to complete the Theory Test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The test will require about 30 minutes to complete, but students can take as much time as they want to complete the test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To pass the test, the students much correctly answer 80% or more of the test questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Additionally, live webinars will be offered every Saturday, 9 am EST:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review of the theoretical concepts covered each week;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Guest speakers;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Opportunity to meet program participants;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Questions and answers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Only students who successfully pass the weekly Theory test will be allowed to advance to the next week’s block.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review of the results of the Theoretical Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Only students who successfully pass all four Theory tests and attend most (at least 2 out of 4) weekly webinars will be allowed to proceed to Practical Training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Participation fee due.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Only students who successfully complete the Theoretical Training and pass all tests advance to the Practical Training phase and are required to pay the participation fee.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Practical Training
- Students who pass all four Theory Tests are placed on international teams.
- The students receive the names and email addresses of their team members.
- The students start communicating by email, but can then use any other communication tools, such as Skype, WhatsApp, etc.
- The Challenge Instructions for each client company are released.
- We will have a webinar with the CEOs of each client company. The CEOs will tell more about their companies and explain what kind of help they need.
- The teams review the challenges and together select one that their team will work on.
- Every Wednesday, each student receives a personal link to the Weekly Progress Survey. The survey asks to report how the student and the team are doing and how much they have completed so far. The survey also asks to evaluate the performance of each team member.
- The Weekly Progress Surveys are due by 11:59 pm on Sunday of that week.
- The teams have to complete and submit their team business proposal by 11:59 pm on the last day of Week 13. The team business proposal must be 15-30 pages long.

## Post-Project Reflections
- After the project is completed, the students will individually write a Reflection Paper where they will reflect on their experience in X-Culture, what they learned, and what they would do differently if they had to complete another project in an international team.
- A teleconference will be held where the teams will present their work and students discuss their experiences.
- The students receive their X-Culture Certificates and recommendation letters.
- The best students will be invited to the X-Culture Symposium.
Partners, Not Clients

X-Culture is not a business or a service provider. X-Culture is a partnership of university professors, school teachers, parents, and students who come together to collaborate and provide students with an opportunity to learn about other cultures, teamwork, and business through experience.

People pay private schools or tutors for educational services. The student is a client and the school or tutor is a service provider.

At X-Culture, we are not clients and service providers. We are partners. We all work together and learn in the process.

Everyone in the project has the right and obligation to contribute to the project. If you see something is not working well, do not get upset and demand the problem be fixed. Tell us about it and try to help us fix the problem, as a good partner would.