

# **Intercultural Training as Part of the Bachelor Degree Programme of Management and Economics at the Chemnitz University of Technology**

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## **Abstract**

This paper describes the structure and implementation of intercultural training in the frame of the Bachelor degree programme of Management and Economics. We are especially focussing on the subject “Basics in intercultural cooperation and communication” with respect to the content of lectures and exercises as well as on the disposed didactics. Another main aspect is the selection procedure and education of suitable tutors for more than 300 students in several tutorials. Starting with general ideas and concepts of intercultural competences, we try to developed requirements of intercultural trainings at universities. Our experiences with respect to the mix of methods and several didactic techniques concerning the training of intercultural competences and communication are explained comprehensively. It shows the possibilities, chances and advantages to teach and train intercultural competences with a smaller number of participants in tutorials at universities. At the same time a number of limitations for such university base training of intercultural competences become visible.

## **1 Introduction**

Internationalisation and globalisation of business activities are leading to an increase of intercultural and interorganisational cooperation and networks, as well as shorter innovation cycles and crossovers. Therefore, intercultural training for expatriates and global leaders is becoming a standard element (Szkudlarek 2009: 975). The new generation of international actors must be able to deal with conflicts while negotiating and managing different national cultures, corporate identities and business objectives (Ofori 2008: 119-120). Consequently, not only management students but also future managers are facing an increased demand to obtain and cultivate intercultural competence. The University of Technology in Chemnitz has recognised that the conveyance of social and intercultural competencies is of importance for the education of prospective economists and managers. Therefore, the training of intercultural competences and social key skills is an inherent part of the curriculum for prospective alumni of Management and Economics. The conception of the programme was aimed at answering the following aspects or questions:

- to determine the importance and place of intercultural training within the whole programme,
- to select those aspects that can be taught at universities,
- to find and develop the relevant contents to be taught,
- to look for appropriate didactics, teaching and learning methods, especially with a view to combine theory with practice,
- to find appropriate forms of examination and control of the learning outcome,
- to find organizational forms that guarantees a good quality of teaching and learning despite of limited capacity of experienced teachers,
- to look at criteria for the selection of student trainers for the tutorials.

## **2 Theoretical Basics**

Intercultural competences are not to be discussed cognitively on knowledge and comprehension based levels (Weidemann 2010: 21). Although, the critical discussion from other different points of view all over the world like lifestyles, the playful use of language, the way of thinking and behaviour on the basis of rational thinking is part of these skills. The term intercultural competences and communication means according to Bolten the ability to handle intercultural situations successful (2006a: 163). It affects the person more deeply and concerns partly unconscious emotional processes, as anguish and fears, hopes and dreams. Most of the learning processes in affective, behaviour-related and cognitive dimensions touch deeper areas of a human's cultural and psychosocial identity.

Affective/emotional dimension	Cognitive dimension	Behaviour-related dimension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tolerance of ambiguity</li> <li>• Tolerance of frustration</li> <li>• Capability to manage stress</li> <li>• Capability to reduce complexity</li> <li>• Self-confidence</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Being without prejudices, tolerant, open-minded</li> <li>• Less ethnocentrism</li> <li>• Respect and acceptance for foreign cultures</li> <li>• Ability for intercultural learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehension for culture-related perception, thinking, attitudes and behaviour</li> <li>• Comprehension for different cultural correlations of actions</li> <li>• Comprehension for correlations of actions in the home country</li> <li>• Comprehension for cultural differences of the interacting partners</li> <li>• Comprehension for cultural particularities in the communication process</li> <li>• Ability for meta-communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will to communicate in situations of the behaviour-related dimension</li> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Social skills (gain of faith and reliance of interacting partners)</li> </ul>

*Table 1: Components of intercultural competences by Bolten (2006b: 63)*

Schedules like the table above are simply classifications of characteristics that persons with intercultural competencies regard as important. In several cases there are justified reasons why the listed know-how, skills or acquirements were defined as characteristics for intercultural competence. Although a wider use, this list is not an elaborated theory for intercultural competences. Many of these schedules were composed for plausibility reasons but they are neither deliberated nor proved empirically (Weidemann 2010: 18). Nevertheless, such schedules are actually classified lists, they are helpful for the first contact with the concept and illustrate the meaning of having intercultural competence and being able to behave with cultural competence. Differentiation of decision-making competences into an affective, a behaviour-related and a cognitive dimension is also common for other responsibilities and shows on the one hand the human's variety of competences in this field (Bolten 2000: 68). On the other hand, it poses the question which components and combinations the training should focus on and which expectations accord to that (Weidemann

2010: 126). Furthermore, which teaching and learning methods are suitable and if the needed resources are available.

Table two shows how to gain intercultural competencies concerning their methods and contents (Woltin/Jonas 2009: 474-475). There is a difference between didactic and experience-related methods (Gudykunst 1996). Didactic methods mainly focus on cognitive learning targets and teach methods for mediation of knowledge and information. In comparison, affective and behaviour-related learning targets are taught by experience-related methods and involve the participants actively. They often build the basic for training programmes. Effective training programmes often apply a mixture of both methods (Fowler/Blohm 2004).

Method	Didactic	Experience-related
<b>Intercultural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports</li> <li>• Movies/Films</li> <li>• Books</li> <li>• Culture assimilator</li> <li>• Discussions</li> <li>• Questionnaires for self-evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simulations</li> <li>• Learning by concepts</li> <li>• Study of behaviour</li> <li>• Communication exercises</li> <li>• (Questionnaires for self-evaluation)</li> </ul>
<b>Culture specific</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports</li> <li>• Movies/Films</li> <li>• Books</li> <li>• Culture guides</li> <li>• Culture assimilator</li> <li>• Case studies</li> <li>• Critical events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role plays</li> <li>• Communication exercises</li> <li>• Specific simulations</li> <li>• Field studies</li> <li>• (Questionnaires for self-evaluation)</li> </ul>

*Table 2: Examples for intercultural trainings (by Woltin/Jonas 2009)*

The second classification concentrates on the contents. Intercultural methods and culture specific methods are separated from each other. Culture specific methods are important if the context is restrictable on one culture. However, intercultural methods are interesting for the preparation of foreign assignments, for becoming aware of cultural differences and they help to understand the cultural basics by learning about cultural concepts and dimensions.

Intercultural didactics are types of information brokerage in general. They convey general aspects of culture like reports, books and websites. These methods have the advantage that industrial nations and western nations are familiar with it and that information spreads quickly to a wide range of addressees. There is also the possibility to control knowledge acquisition actively by reading books or by means of E-learning. Disadvantageous is the fact that implemented knowledge cannot influence the behaviour directly. Often, information about intercultural circumstances do not show a practical relation to common situations in a several culture.

With culture specific didactic methods, it is possible to explain complex problems and solution strategies concerning a certain culture quickly. Knowledge-based methods also play an important role in this case. Guide books for specific cultural areas like Rowlands (1999) "Japan Knigge for Managers" introduce culture specific behaviour patterns for almost every situation and event from negotiations to an informal drink at the pub. The latest popular science reports about intercultural trainings often refer to this teaching method and mention their advantages in comparison to oral intermediation (Teßmer 2009). Besides, there is the risk to stall in stereotypes, like "Indians never complain about working conditions" (Teßmer 2009). In addition, the transfer from theory to practice is unsatisfactory.

Taking additional methods and elements of self-reflection into consideration the risk of insufficient practicability can be reduced. Also other didactic elements can improve the practical relevance. Case studies about certain topics like the culture specific impart of negative feedback can be discussed by imagining possible results and reactions of interacting partners. The culture assimilator, which was invented and already used in 1971, (Fiedler/Mitchell/Triandis 1971) is a typical example. Basic knowledge about the differences between foreign cultures and one's own culture and comprehension for basics of cultural competences like reports and self-research is essential to use the culture assimilator. Triandis (1995) describes the function of the assimilator and also Brislin (1995) mentioned an example for it. It is one of the most applied methods for intercultural trainings and its positive cognitive results are well documented (Albert 1995). The transfer of implemented knowledge to own behaviour in real life is as complicated as with all other didactic methods. This is why didactic methods should always be combined with experience-related methods (Podsiadlowski 2004).

Intercultural and cultural specific experience-related teaching elements allow active collaboration of the participants by gaining personal experiences in practical situations. The training directly influences personal emotions and behaviour in handling new and unfamiliar situations. They often build the foundation for intercultural trainings. The disadvantage of the methods is its high expenditure of time both in preparation and processing. An example for intercultural and experience-related methods is the simulation of inexistent cultures that is to sensibilise the participants. They make the experience to fail getting along with the unknown culture. This helps to reorganise existing behaviour patterns in several situations and to practice stress management. The following discussion defines basic characteristics and rules of the simulated culture. Learning by doing and by making own experiences while gaining knowledge about the importance of culture for own behaviour and the foreigner's actions are the objectives of the training.

The most common example for culture specific and experience-related methods is role play. Focus is on specific differences of the foreign culture and the participants have the chance to adapt their behaviour for explosive situations in an intercultural context. Feedback and the possibility to repeat the situation help the participants to improve their own behaviour (Bandura 1977). While watching other participants in the role play, effects of the training are deepened on the long run. The training is concerned with the knowledge about own cultural standards and dimensions and participants learn about strategies to handle situations with people from foreign cultures.

In general, every explained method can only be a part of the complex training of intercultural competences.

### **3 Intercultural training means training soft skills**

To accommodate the increasing demand for social key skills the Europe Ministers of Education initialise the Bologna Process. Its purpose is to ensure the graduate's employability and to develop the international competitiveness of Europe's Universities.

*“A set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy” (Bologna Follow-up Group 2004).*

These are features that define employability. As the acquirements on the job market have changed in the last years, universities are challenged to adapt their offer of courses and programmes to these circumstances. This is a precondition to impart social key skills that ensure employability with a lasting effect.

Social key skills support the ability to use and to develop professional competences. They are separable into three parts: individual competences, interpersonal skills and system oriented skills (Bologna Follow-up Group 2004). All three parts depend on each other and complement one another as the following example shows: Somebody who is able to understand and manage his or her own thoughts, emotions and behaviour is well prepared for interpersonal interaction. Self-perception and feeling for the own impact in groups helps at the same time to develop system oriented skills. Skills describe the ability to interact proficiently in social systems like enterprises and other organisations.

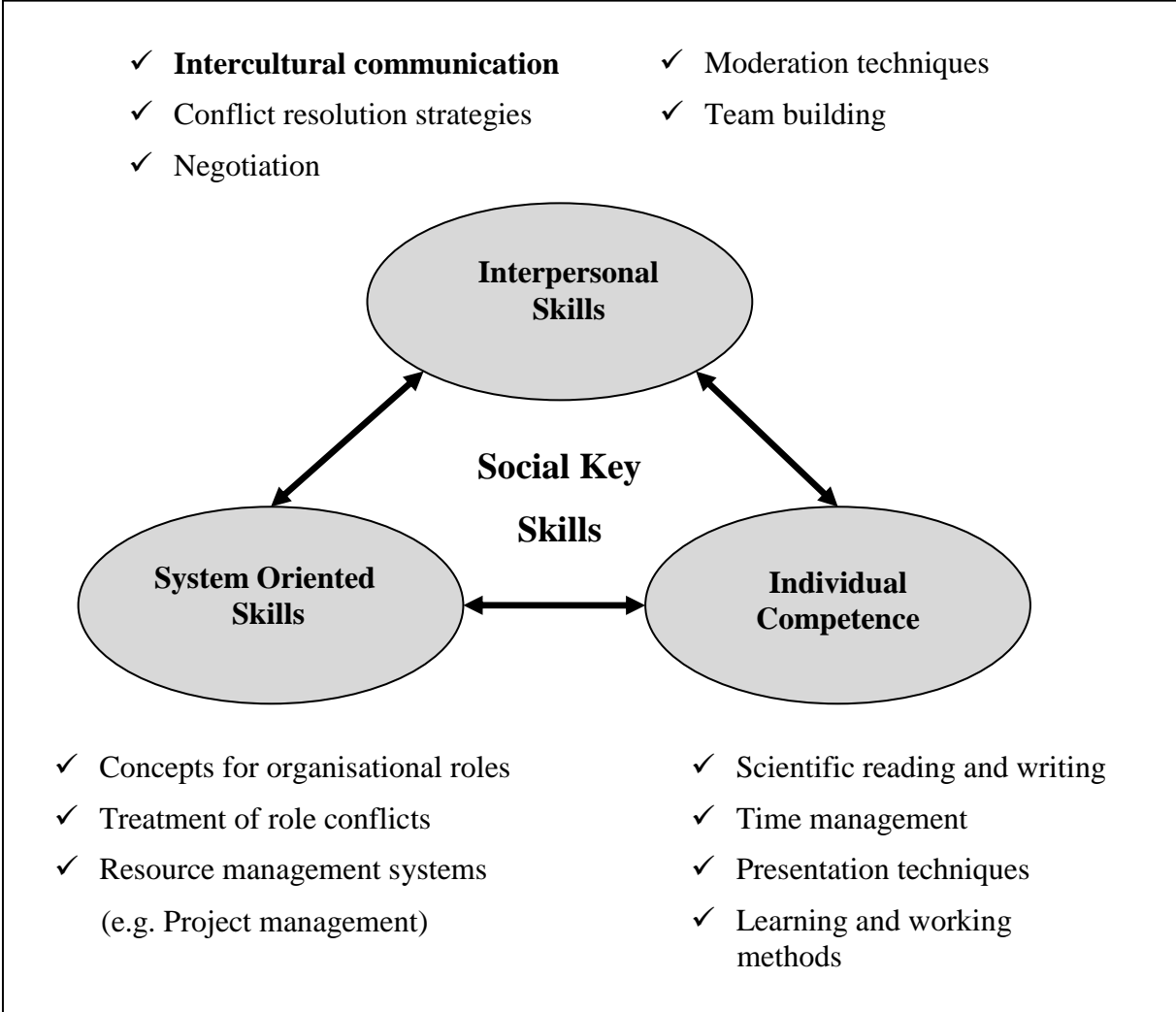


Figure 1: Social Key Skills at the Chemnitz University of Technology

Mentionable is the fact that the Chemnitz University of Technology belongs to the few universities in Germany, which has included the education of intercultural competencies as a module component as a compulsory subject for the Bachelor degree programme of management and economics. In the training of social key skills at the Chemnitz University of Technology, intercultural competencies play an important role. A comparison of universities across Germany showed that the Chemnitz University is the only one offering intercultural competences and communication as an obligatory module of the Bachelor degree programme of management and economics. There are German universities offering lectures, tutorials and courses concerning this subject, but all of them are optional.

The subject “Basics in intercultural cooperation and communication” takes place within the context of the qualification in socio-scientific fundamentals and social competencies in module one of the Bachelor degree programme Management and Economics. About 350 students of the Management and Economics studies being in their 4th term, as well as Erasmus exchange students, take part.

The foreign language training of the Chemnitz University of Technology comprises four obligatory language courses in Business English. They occur weekly and provide the basis to communicate, to present or to negotiate in English and they prepare students for dissertations and scientific debating. The first course teaches the basics of using English as a business language. Grammar and spelling exercises are combined with expertise knowledge about economic and corporate structures as well as manufacturing processes. Furthermore, the students are trained in standardised situations, e.g. acquiring first contacts, making telephone calls, writing letters or presenting product and service specifications professionally. The aim is qualification of students in oral and written business communication. They learn handling job-related linguistic operations and activities. The ability to deal with more complicated business situations is taught intensively during advanced semesters.

Advanced courses train strategic and practical attitudes in business situations. Case studies with increasing complexity like negotiations are analysed and imitated. All courses terminate with written and oral examinations that request the discussed topics. The so-called reading project forms a special part of the examination and trains academic research and writing and skills in using the foreign language. Participants analyse and discuss a subject-specific article on economics from a specific journal, textbook or monograph. For example, they write a summary about the entire contents or a particular section, which will then be used for further



discussions and for analysis of the students' language use. The aim of the reading project is to gain more confidence in reading and understanding subject specific texts. Students practice the use of reference books and dictionaries as well as extending knowledge of specialist vocabulary. Nevertheless, they also learn to explain and discuss academic articles in detail and to use appropriate communication skills in the tutorial group.

One more element is that the Chemnitz University of Technology works in close collaboration with the Erasmus college programme. As one of the most successful education programmes of the European Union, Erasmus has realised semesters abroad for more than 1.7 million students and organised a temporary employment abroad for more than 100,000 academics (European Commission). The Erasmus programme names the following advantages for a stay abroad (Chemnitz University 2009: 4):

- better career prospective,
- additional expertise in studies,
- development of personality,
- improving language skills,
- get to know foreign cultures – gain intercultural competences,
- international relations and a circle of friends.

#### **4 Lecture and Tutorial on „Basics in Intercultural Cooperation and Communication“**

The subject consists of and is taught in two components. Regular lectures every two weeks deal with aspects regarding the meaning of culture in international economic cooperation. In weekly tutorials, the contents of the lecture are deepened and are applied directed to the target culture. Goals of the lectures and exercises are intermediation of basic knowledge regarding the handling and working under different cultural frame conditions, national-cultural differences and their consequences for intercultural communication and cooperation, elaboration of international cooperation of German enterprises, executives and employees and dealing with foreign cultures and their particularities in a sensitive and target-oriented way.

The subject finishes with a country conference, in which all 15 target countries from the tutorial groups are introduced. So, students get the possibility to get to know cultural particularities of other cultures in a summarised form. The last two lessons of the lecture are provided for the team presentations about previous chosen countries. All tutorial groups meet

in the Countries Conference where students present their studies in 15-minutes presentations. In advance, they decided for a favourite country in working groups and worked out the particularities of its culture. After the conference, students decided for another target culture to analyse empiric studies and cultural concepts in preparation for the exam.

The module ends with a written examination of 90 minutes regarding basic principles for intercultural cooperation and communication. In this exam, the contents taught in the lecture and tutorials are tested. The written examination is separated into three parts. Part A is composed of eight open questions concerning the taught subjects in lectures and tutorials, it accounts for 30 percent to the final score. The analysis and interpretation of critical incidents in intercultural connections build part B of the examination, which accounts 20 percent of the final score. A short essay takes the main part of the task and describes the particularities of the chosen countries.

#### 4.1 Lecture

The lecture, that occurs every second week, teaches the following basics of cultural competences. Explanations about meaning of culture for international cooperation mark the beginning of the lecture. In this conjunction students hear about common problems in intercultural cooperation and communication management. Another focus of the lecture is laid on the introduction of several important concepts concerning intercultural differences work related values and national culture dimensions by Geert Hofstede (1991) as well as national culture patterns by Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner (1997). Most attention is paid to the following cultural concepts that are comprehensive and widespread in the cultural research sector and often quoted in the field of management. If taking several cultural concepts into consideration, the students gain the opportunity to explain cultural differences in different ways and from variable points of view; for example the values by Hofstede or the principles and values by the GLOBE study (table three). Discussion about these cultural concepts enables the students to look into various levels of culture (i.a. Hofstede's).

For the German cultural area, the concept of Cultural Standards by Alexander Thomas is most important. It explains specific guiding systems to communicate and illustrate perception, thinking, feeling and acting of other people (Krewer 2003: 152).

Acculturation processes, culture shock and cultural learning are subjects that also play an important role in the table of the lecture's contents. The concept of culture by the GLOBE

Study and the concept of National Business Systems by Whitley et al. are mentioned as well and the lecture's final topic is about globalisation of economy. The NBS study by Whitley deals with institutional structures like the banking system of cultures and makes them comparable with each other. In this reason, this concept plays an indispensable role for the Bachelor degree programme of management and economics. Globalisation as the last topic brings the lecture down to a round figure and helps showing similarities of different cultures by stressing theories about institutional economics.

Besides, there is additional time for reports of economic experts visiting the course to give lectures on intercultural aspects in organisational cultures, to demonstrate the practical relevance of the lecture's contents and to provide concrete examples and experiences.

<b>Explanation for</b>	<b>Focus on cultural elements</b>	<b>Concept by</b>	<b>Topic</b>
<b>Cultural diversity of management practices</b>	• Values	• Hofstede	• National culture
	• Values and methods	• House et al. (GLOBE)	• Social culture / Organizational culture • Leadership
	• Behaviour	• Thomas et al.	• Cultural standards
	• Institutional structures	• Whitley	• National Business System
<b>Cultural affinity of management practices</b>	• Methods • Behaviour • Structure		• Globalisation • Institutionalism • Isomorphism

*Table 3: Concept of lecture's topics*

#### 4.2 Tutorial

In weekly tutorials, the contents of the lecture are deepened and are applied directed to the target culture. Tutorials take place in 15 groups with 20 participants each for the respective target culture. The tutorial groups are kept small on purpose to make individual supervision of students sure and so an appropriate atmosphere for working in small groups can be guaranteed. Target cultures on offer are Italy, New Zealand, China, the Ukraine, the UK or Austria. In each summer semester, different target cultures are introduced. At the beginning of

the semester, students get the possibility to enroll for one of the offered 15 target cultures. On the basis of textual work (lecture), discussions of critical incidents and video analyses, theories introduced in the lectures are deepened and are transferred to the target culture. In small groups, students elaborate on intercultural topics about the target culture including final presentations. In addition to that, participants have the task to create a country report about the target culture serving as the basis for preparing the examination. So, students learn to cooperate in a team and to occupy themselves intensively with a foreign culture.

Exercise lessons are normally composed as follows. In the first 45 minutes, students are occupied with the basic literature from the exercise script. The provided texts in the exercise script are chosen with regard to the cultural concepts that will be taught in the lecture. The second half is for the team work on a project. The students build small groups and elaborate an intercultural topic about their target culture. In the end, there are final presentations showing the results of the project work. Theoretic facts are to be applied to the chosen target country.

The first lesson offers the chance to get to know each other and to introduce all topics to the participants. Together with the tutor, the objectives and expectations concerning the exercise are declared. Students have the opportunity to report about personal experiences abroad while the tutor explains the concept of the exercise. The second lesson deepens the mentioned aspects of the first meeting in relation to basic texts out of the "Handbuch Interkultureller Kommunikation und Kooperation" (Reference book of Intercultural Competences and Cooperation) (2007) by Alexander Thomas. It briefs the term cultural interference and tells parameters of intercultural communication and cooperation problems. Another article named "Deutschland" (Germany) (2007) by Schroll-Machl deals with particularities of the German national culture. The given task should lead the students to Alexander Thomas's general concept of Cultural Standards. The fourth and fifth lesson is about the definition of culture by Geert Hofstede and his cultural dimension developed during the IBM study. They help comparing different national and organisational dimensions. The German version of his publication called "Cultures and Organizations. Software of the mind" from 1993 is considered as basic literature in this case. Contents of the sixth unit are detailed as following bullet. Acculturation and concepts of acculturation building the core of exercise seven which refers to the article "Interkulturelles Lernen und Akkulturation" (Intercultural learning and acculturation) (2005) by Gabriel Layes. Students learn about the meaning of acculturation, the

proceeding and its influence as well as management strategies to support the process. Basic literature for unit number eight and nine are provided by the text “Culture, Leadership and Organizations” (2004) by Robert J. House. The participants discuss the cultural concept of the GLOBE study and compare it to other concepts, e.g. the one by Hofstede. Results concerning national and organisational cultures are in the focus of the investigations. The empiric approach and the defined cultural clusters are taken in consideration. Furthermore, students occupy with the relation between culture and leading in the GLOBE concept and with the consequences in intercultural communication and cooperation especially for managers. The following unit is about the National Business Systems (NBS) invented by the economist and sociologist Richard Whitley. NBS is a scheme classifying corporate structures of specific countries with regard to the results of institutional surroundings for corporate organisational structures. The students work with the Case Study “Experimentierfeld Ostmitteleuropa. Deutsche Unternehmen in Polen und der Tschechischen Republik” (Eastern Central Europe as field of investigations. German Enterprises in Poland and in the Czech Republic) (2007) by Katharina Bluhm and an article by Hartmut Wächter: “Global Players” the role of culture in the NBS concept. They discuss the impact of globalisation for the NBS and the role of multinational companies. Unit 11 broaches the issue of globalisation and the results for management structures and practises. The basics are delivered by Bhagat et al. (2003) and the article “Knowledge in Cross-Cultural Management in the Era of Globalization” and the publication by Kinast and Schroll-Machl (2005): “Überlegungen zu einem strategischen Gesamtkonzept für Interkulturalität in Unternehmen“ (Research about strategies for company’s interculturality). It is essential that all participants read these articles in advance in preparation for the lessons. The main contents are discussed and repeated with regard to pre-assembled questions by the tutor. The remaining lessons provide time to deepen the gained knowledge and to prepare for the examination. Intercultural competences and rising of cultural awareness can be supported with several training methods that are likely to be combined with Critical Incidents. Critical incidents are conflicts or misunderstandings among people of different cultural backgrounds (Bertallo et al. 2004: 26-27). Participants discuss topics like “Team work in Spain” or “Defer an appointment in Japan” (Bertallo et al.: 2004: 109-111,140-142) and try to find interpretations for the described cases. Critical incidents advance intercultural competences in three dimensions. The cognitive dimension is to implement knowledge about values, standards and behaviour. The affective dimension increases empathy and awareness for intercultural problems. The students solve practical

tasks within the behaviour- related dimension and do short role plays (Bertallo et al. 2004: 30). They also deal with movies and literature concerning a specific culture to develop intercultural competences.

Mainly, cognitive learning targets are in focus within the context of the subject “Basics in intercultural cooperation and communication” to sensitise students for cultural differences.

#### 4.3 Explanation of a case tutorial

The tutorial themed Cultural Standards is the sixth of 14 tutorials during the semester and teaches particularities of German culture. To develop an understanding for foreign cultures, it is important to realise one’s own cultural system (Schroll-Machl 2007: 2). Table four shows the concept of exercise six.

Unit	Intention <i>Why?</i>	Content <i>What?</i>	Method <i>How?</i>	Media <i>With what?</i>	Time <i>min</i>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	preparation, motivation	Explain the tutorial’s structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Repetition</li> <li>- German stereotypes</li> <li>- Concept for Cultural Standards by Thomas</li> <li>- Cultural Standards in Germany</li> <li>- Presentation about Culture of the chosen country</li> <li>- Terminal discussion</li> </ul>	Features of the tutorial		5
<b>2 Repeating</b>	deepen the knowledge	Repeating of aspects from exercise 5	Teaching conversation		10
<b>3 German stereotypes</b>	becoming aware	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect German stereotypes in the group</li> <li>• Note single characteristics on cards, stick them on the board</li> <li>• Cluster the ideas, match them to headlines</li> </ul>	Moderation	board, file cards	15
<b>4 Text related task</b>	acquirement of knowledge	<b>Question 1: What is typical for German culture?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build 6 teams</li> <li>• Find characteristics of German culture in the text</li> <li>• Summarise aspects on a foil</li> <li>• Present the results with the OHP</li> </ul>	Activating, building teams by lot	foils, OHP	25
<b>5 Presentation</b>	acquirement of knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report about cultural standards of the chosen country</li> </ul>	Presenting the report	beamer	25
<b>6 Discussion</b>	deepen knowledge	<b>Question 2: What is the difference between Germany and the chosen culture?</b>	Teaching conversation		10

*Table 4: Concept of exercise 6*

First, the tutor opens the tutorial by explaining the schedule to prepare the students for the following lessons (table four). Both the expectations of the participants and the declaration of the tutorial's objectives are part of the introduction. To deepen the facts of previous lessons, the tutor repeats the main aspects and subjects in the second part of the exercise by discussing them together with the students. Furthermore, the tutor asks the students to reflect typical German culture attributes. All participants are requested to note particular German characteristics on coloured cards and present them on the board to the others. The whole group is then going to arrange the ideas in clusters and attribute them to headlines. This exercise helps to mobilise the students in the lessons and to introduce them to German culture standards. Subsequently, participants work on text-related contents concerning pre-assembled questions.

To find new dynamic team constellations, students are divided into six smaller groups by lot. With regard to the final task, which is to write a collective research report, it is important to cooperate in teams. The twenty participants have to work on a culture related project and organise the application flow on their own. Experience showed that the explained way of splitting the group can be advantageous for the team's workflow.

The basis for further elaborations is provided by Schroll-Machl's text (2007): "Deutschland" (Germany) out of the Reference Book Intercultural Communication and Cooperation. The teams discuss and extract characteristics about one German cultural standard and visualise the results on a transparency to present them by means of an overhead projector to the other participants of the tutorial. The exercise enables the students to quickly focus on main aspects in texts quickly and to present the results confidently.

Referring to the previous topic, the tutor introduces the next part of the tutorial being a short presentation about the cultural standards of a chosen cultural area. Every participant has to decide for a topic to elaborate on during the tutorial and explains the results in a short presentation. In the first lesson, students sign in for a favourite country. The choice of topics corresponds with the treated cultural concepts and their application in the according country.

Finally, the students discuss cultural standards of Germany in comparison to the chosen culture. The discussion led by the tutor is to deepen the presented facts and to illustrate the Concept of Cultural Standards by Alexander Thomas.

#### 4.4 Tutor Programme

During the previous winter semester in 2009/2010, the University of Chemnitz had 2,129 registered students of Economics among the 10,316 students in total (Chemnitz University of Technology). On average, there are 300 students attending the compulsory lecture intercultural competences and communication in the fourth semester. Since the capacity of qualified teaching staff like assistant professors and lecturers is limited, student assistants are trained and introduced in a special programme to learn teaching intercultural competences and communication. The tutorial groups are comparatively small to ensure maximum benefit and quality for the students. Each of the tutors is responsible for one tutorial on one country with a maximum of 20 students of the whole group and split into 4-5 smaller self-organised student groups.

The author Michael Paige, among others, pointed out that intercultural trainers need specific competencies and for working in the field of intercultural competence and its conveyance. Personal experiences in using foreign languages and visiting different countries to experience their culture help to improve teaching skills and social competences (Paige 1996: 150-153). According to that, it is our particular conceptual approach to train intercultural trainers within the frame of a tutor programme. Personal competence in an intercultural context is one of the requirements for being able to teach intercultural competences (Weidemann 2010: 139). This is why the following qualifications are essential for the tutors. According to Paige (2004: 155) and Weidemann (2010: 142-143):

- cultural identity,
- patience,
- motivation und commitment,
- openness, flexibility, curiosity, empathy,
- respect,
- sense of humour,
- mental capacity
- sensibility for cultural differences,
- attendance for self-reflection.



Furthermore, prospective tutors should know about certain didactics and methods to teach intercultural competence and should possibly have experiences in practice. Expertise in theoretic concepts of intercultural research is also advantageous (Weidemann 2010: 142). The following criteria are decisive factors for interviews with potential tutors.

The decision for choosing the tutors is made depending on the following criteria:

- pleasant application,
- experience as a teacher,
- international experience in the target country or the home country respectively,
- IC studies or knowledge about the contents of IC and
- personal impression in an interview.

The student applicants come from study programmes like European Studies, English studies, Master IC and Vocational education. Deficiencies in specific knowledge or didactics are to be eradicated in the training programme for tutors.

Student assistants need to be supported and trained especially when giving a lecture or tutorial for other students. They are educated not only with regard to the contents they mediate, but also with focus on the impart knowledge. Another main part of the training concentrates on the development of social skills. For every prospective teacher, assertiveness is as important as empathy to teach other students in the tutorials.

Within the frame of the tutor programme, the student tutors have to take part in a tutor training. In this training, theories from the lecture and tutorial are developed and methods directing at forming of intercultural competencies regarding cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects are learned before the beginning of the tutorial. Therefore, tutors have to work out a presentation concerning one part of the concept. Afterwards, they get a first comprehensive feedback concerning their presentation style and use of methods.

During the semester, tutors meet regularly to educate trainers further and to make suggestions for their teaching. Predominantly, the meeting offers an exchange of experiences and hints for improving the tutor's didactics.

Several times during the semester, teachers attend the tutorial to observe the tutors and to assist and help them developing their teaching methods and supporting them in gaining social competences. The tutor's teaching attitude, operation with different methods and the

descriptive presentation of contents are observed criteria. A clear structure and a main focus during the lesson are as important as transparency and saving results. The participants' collaboration, discipline and interaction with the tutor complete the evaluation (ISB). The tutor receives a comprehensive feedback in subsequence to the observation.

The tutor programme ends with a certificate, which quotes the competences and skills gained in the training in written form.

## **Summary**

The case study provides an overview of the intercultural training as part of the Bachelor degree programme of management and economics at the Chemnitz University of Technology. After having attributed the training for intercultural competences and communication to the course of studies, the concepts of language teaching and the possibility of semesters abroad were introduced. The mix of methods and several didactic techniques concerning the training of intercultural competences and communication were explained comprehensively.

With regard to teaching intercultural competences and communication at the university, the following most important aspects were considered:

To determine the importance and position of intercultural training within the whole programme and as the training of intercultural competence and communication is essential for expatriates and global leaders, the subject became a standard element for studies of economics. To train intercultural competence and communication, it is necessary to use different methods. The complex set of requirements for the new generation of global players demands and deliberated concept to teach the several aspects of intercultural competence and communication adequately.

To select those aspects that can be taught at universities, we tried to combine different dimensions by using several methods. Nevertheless, the described concept of education has limits. It is impossible to cover all fields of education entirely, but unfortunately academic studies mainly focus on the cognitive level. The gain of knowledge in this field shows faster progress and success in developing competences than other dimensions.

To find and develop the relevant contents to be taught, the lecture's objective is to teach possible perspectives and points of view in becoming aware of cultural differences. Not only general cultural concepts, but also specific concepts for management were taught. Exercises should transfer theory to practise and support intercultural competence and communication

by a mixture of methods. One focus of the language lessons is set on the cultivation of social skills.

To look for appropriate didactics, teaching and learning methods, especially with a view to combine theory with practice, the exercise's character is mainly about collaboration, discussion and team work. A high value is also set on small working groups of maximum twenty students.

The common scheme of classification (Gudykunst 1996) on elements of intercultural competence and communication to the three dimensions of intercultural competence and communication provides a good and proven theoretical basis for the lessons.

To find appropriate forms of examination and control of the learning outcome, the final examination tests the cognitive knowledge of the students. The country report checks the understanding for cultural differences and role plays help to observe and evaluate the cultural awareness of the students. The interactive character of the lessons provides the possibility to apply theoretic aspects in reality, but the difficulties in transferring theory to practice remain. This is what influences the student's motivation and sometimes makes them resist against contents of the training. Without having visions how to use the theoretic concepts in real life, they are not able to relate the meaning of intercultural competences and maybe even refuse it.

To find organisational forms that guarantee a good quality of teaching and learning despite of limited capacity of experienced teachers within the conception of lessons raises the question if the needed resources are available. Offering smaller groups in tutorials leads to a lack of teaching staff and unavailable classrooms. Therefore, student assistances were trained intensively to become able to teach intercultural competences.

To look at criteria for the selection of student trainers for the tutorials, student assistants are especially selected and educated to support academic teachers adequately and in a sophisticated way during the semester.

The tutorial has continuously been evaluated to develop the teaching and learning concept further under the influence of recent scientific findings. First steps are already planned to advance and consolidate the concept. The subject „Basics in intercultural cooperation and communication“ will be upgraded in the following semester by becoming an independent module with five credits.

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