

Lecture on May 12th, 2014

Developing intercultural competence in practice – challenges, experiences and recommendations from a consulting perspective



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Overview



- Background and working fields
- Challenges and typical requests
- recent tasks & our approach
- Gaps: 2 Examples
- Recommendations

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- International business experience, multicultural encounters
- Scientific and applied engagement with the topic of developing intercultural competence: specific question: **how is intercultural learning possible?**
- Empirical research: Conversation analysis of intercultural competency measures (culturally universal/ culturally specific) and anti-racism activities
- **Key focus:** research and description of stereotype communication and “intercultural learning as conversation work”
- Work as intercultural trainer, consultant, coach
- Continuation and refinement: **How can one work culturally reflexive in coaching, counseling and therapy?**
- intermediate result: “handbook of intercultural coaching- concepts, methods, competencies for the culturally reflexive support“(cf. Nazarkiewicz/Krämer 2012)
- testing the theory: discussions in various contexts (talks and contributions on congresses, in academia, at professional associations)
- **Current interest: the (inter)cultural as an immanent factor**

Who are we? Part of the consilia cct team



Sectors and clients



- business consultancy
- auditing companies
- service industry
- aviation, traffic and transport sector
- financial service providers, banks
- automotive industry, vehicle manufacturers and sub-suppliers
- IT hardware and services
- Hospitals, care facilities, social services
- NGOs, public, churchly, and charitable organizations
- Schools, universities and vocational training establishments
- Tourism, hotels, conference centres and restaurants

Services



- Consulting
- Coaching
- Training
- Change processes
- Team development
- Conflict mediation
- Project management
- Moderating Workshops
- Further qualification (Train the trainer, Train the Coach)
- Lectures
- Therapy

Challenges of our clients in times of globalized business life



- „Offshoring“ and „smart sourcing“ → off site, virtual, global teams
- „Follow the sun service“ → international processes
- Ex-/impatriation, migration and multicultural teams → managing diversity
- International project management / rollouts → achieving goals across borders
- Customers from all over the world (B2B, single clients) → intercultural adjusted services
- Mergers & Acquisitions → organizational change
- Migration → integration debate, majority/minority cultures
- skills shortage → “a culture of welcome”, international recruitment
- xenophobia, racism → campaigns, stabilization for diversity
- opening bureaucratic sector and social services → intercultural adapted services
- people with (and without) migration background → orientation, key competencies

Typical requests



- We have colleagues / clients / patients / students / pupils from all over the world. How can we avoid pitfalls?
- Our project is international and virtual with employees in N.Y., London, Singapore, Bangalore. What do we need to consider when collaborating or leading?
- We are implementing a new IT product and have to train our employees, How can we train on the job in a culture sensitive way?
- Our board is virtual, multi-cultural and has a conflict, could you moderate a workshop?
- How can we recruit in China?
- We would like to prepare our inbounds / expats for the culture(s) they work in and with
- We would like to foster the topics intercultural competence / marketing world wide / sales negotiations international – how can we consider cultural aspects?
- We are getting two new colleagues from India, what do we have to consider?
- How can we foster intercultural competence in our organization?
- Our staff is dealing with migrants from all over the world, there were some strange experiences?

Recent tasks



- Intercultural consulting for training technical specialists from abroad
- Culture sensitive support in crisis (culture general + for relatives in Asia)
- Leading in cross-cultural contexts
- Internationalization: new? different? collaborative!
- Living and working with the Germans
- Intercultural competence for Brunei (USA, China, India...)
- Remote Management: Working in a virtual team – leading from distance
- Global, local, glocal or...what? Best practices of intercultural marketing
- Transcultural coaching, intercultural coaching
- Telephone contact in case of claim management with clients all over the world
- Guests and delegations from and in Asia
- Welcome to all: Building a welcome culture
- Conflict mediation, conducting change management processes

Our approach: Working with different notions of culture



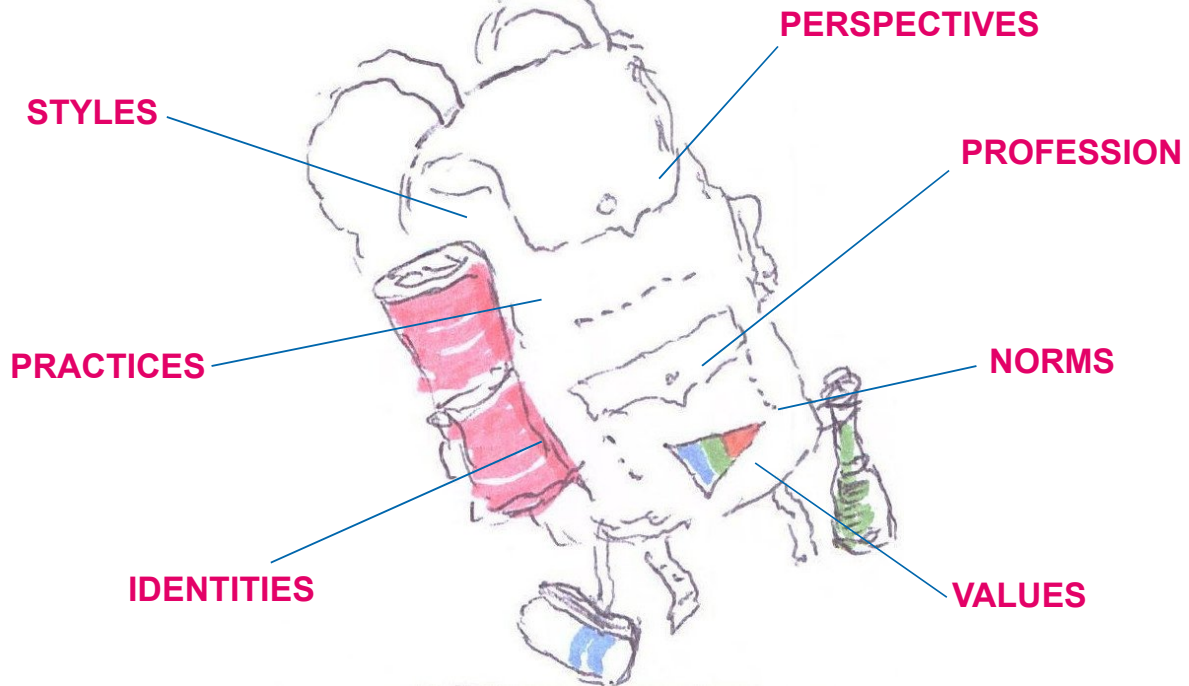
Metaphors

- Ice berg
- Hippo
- Onion
- Foot print
- Back pack
- ...

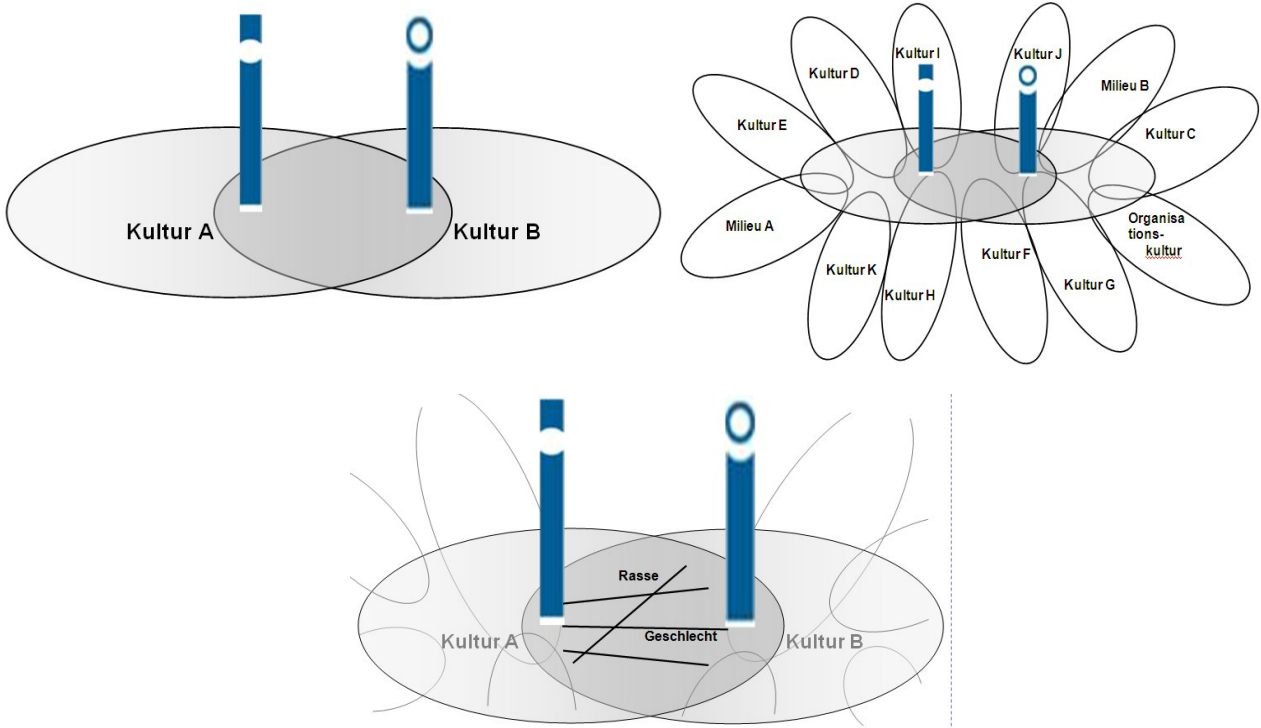
How can we talk about what is separating you and me?

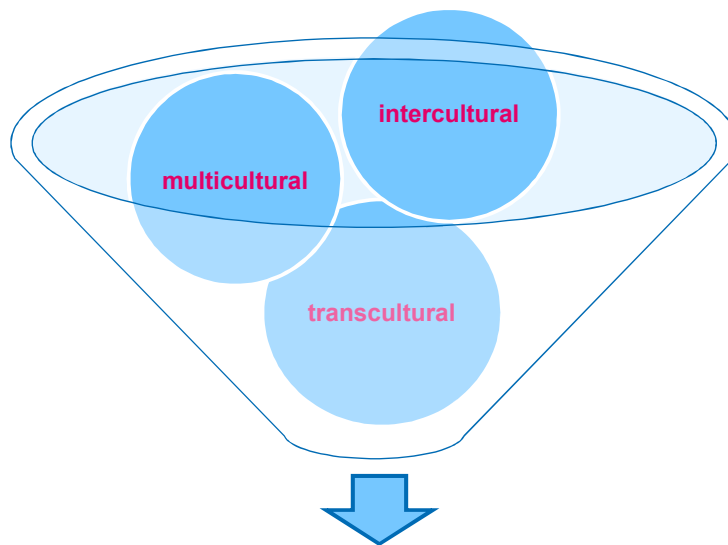
What helps us to analyze the situation?

How can we describe differences and commonalities?



Our approach: 3 concepts, 3 notions of culture, 3 perspectives:
„intercultural – multicultural– transcultural“





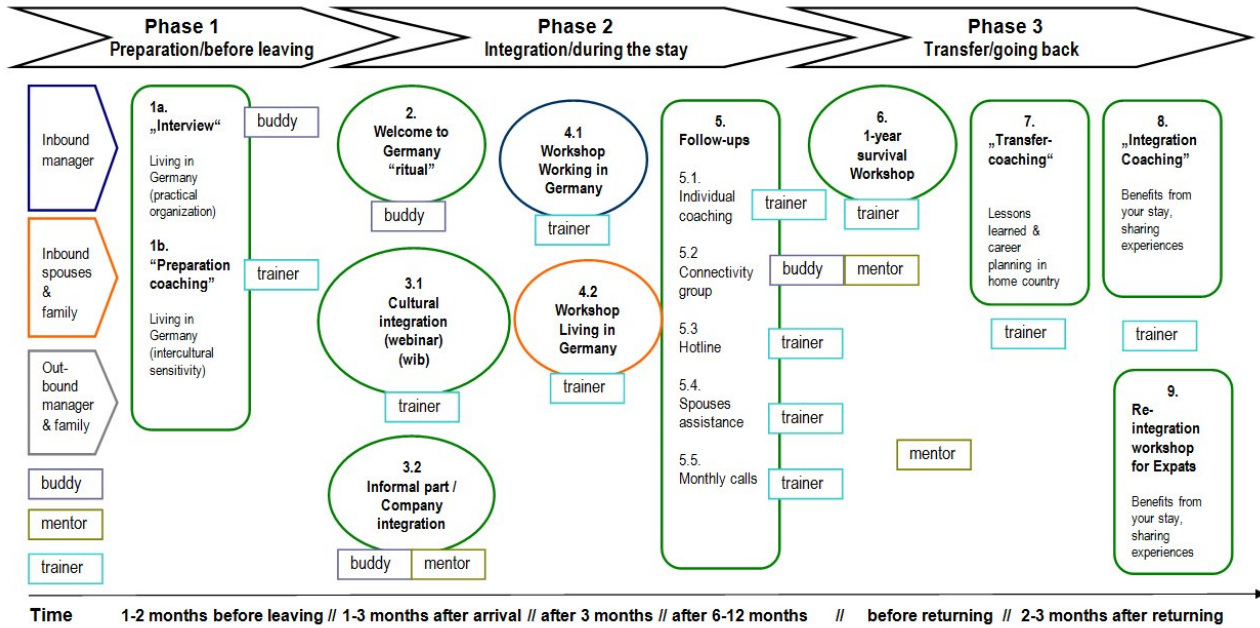
Where and how does culture play a role?

Gaps: Example 1

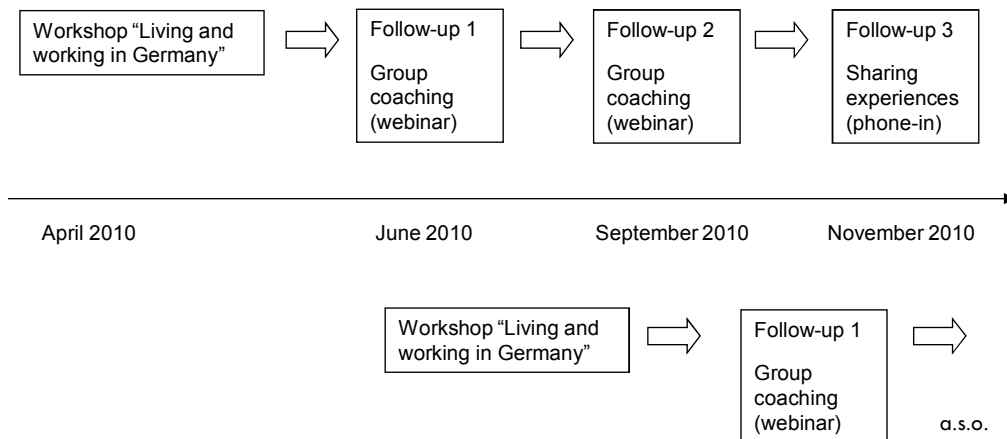
- process ideas versus single events (time, budget, relevance)

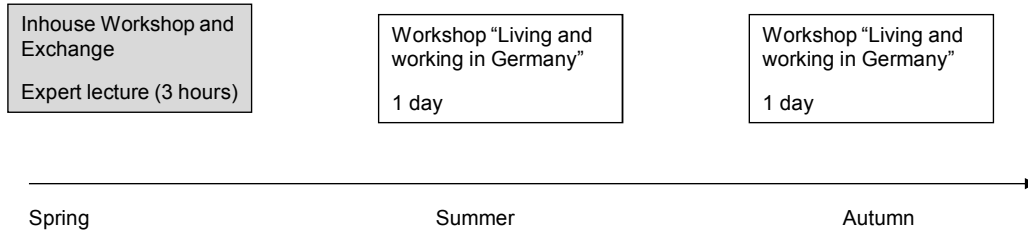


Process idea, developed with HRD



Implemented process





Gaps: Example 2

- perceived needs and required competencies



Motives and goals for intercultural competency measures



- commitment of individual people
- systemically caused alteration (change, mergers, outsourcing)
- occasions and survey
- situational changes/ “crisis” (irritation, conflict)
- personnel changes
- systemic changes (new goals, mission statement)

typical goals:

- general sensitization
- minimization of losses due to frictions
- “implementing good intentions” (improved understanding of self and others)
- pressure for solution and “need for recipes”

Increasing need for very specialized knowledge and skills

Where intercultural competence is mostly needed



The main target groups...

- people „at the sharp end”
- skilled personnel
- Multipliers in support- and continued training services: HR, trainers, coaches...

have...

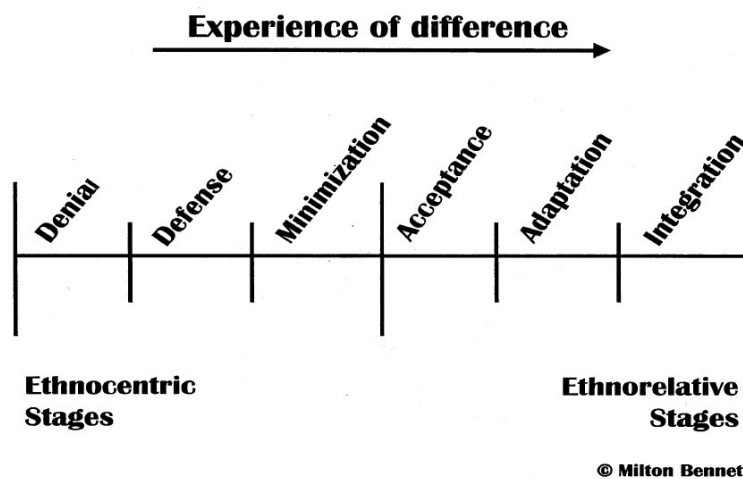
- global perspectives and contacts
- action- related problems and limited time
- pressure to be efficient and productive

... and therefore wish for:

- easy solutions
- practical advice (preferably in the shape of applicable “recipes”)
- short sessions (cf. Pecha Kucha: 20/20)

- Most questions and needs stem from perspectives of the ethnocentric stages
- Daily work requires behavior, attitude and activities from the ethnorelative stages

Development of Intercultural Sensitivity



Recommendations: „Create culture together“

- **Start early:** include intercultural matters before problems arise
- **Clarify expectations and needs:** change of perspectives is limited...
- **Build social and communication skills:** self-reflection, relationship building, style switch
- **Do focus on different styles:** culture is not only the „foreign“, „exotic“, „ethnic“ charm
- **Build a common ground:** don't forget what is in common or universal
- **Invest time + reflection on soft factors:** communication, exchange, personal meetings
- **Mind the power map**

Recommendations for personal skills in intercultural communicative competence



- **Self reflection** • Awareness of your own expectations, cultural influences
- **Knowledge** • E.g. soft factors, cultures, politeness conventions in ELF...
- **Appreciative attitude** • Non-judgemental astonishment, ability to make contact with s.o.
- **Rhetorical strategies** • Repeating, reformulating, stressing, posing questions, register shifts, style switching
- **Meta communication** • To express how I see and interpret the situation and our relationship (can be offending in some cultures)
- **Meta sensitivity** • To vary own style in case of tension in the contact

Thank you for your participation!



**“Men do not stumble over mountains,
but over molehills.”**

Konfuzius



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