

# Towards Understanding and Fostering Intercultural Competence Within Double-Degree Programs

Eika Auschner<sup>2</sup>, Marcus Laumann<sup>1</sup>, Daniela Gröschke<sup>3</sup>

1 University of Applied Sciences Muenster, Johann-Krane-Weg 25, 48149 Muenster, Germany

2 University of Applied Sciences Muenster, Johann-Krane-Weg 25, 48149 Muenster, Germany

3 Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Ernst-Abbe-Platz 8, 07743 Jena, Germany

Due to the growing globalization of economy and Higher Education (HE), intercultural competence (IC) plays a crucial role in internationalization strategies of universities. Many joint and double degree programs have been established during the last years; at the same time, universities focus on “internationalization at home”. Yet, little is known about how IC is developed in double degree programs and how this development can be made visible. Consequently, institutions of HE lack important knowledge about which measures really foster intercultural competence. It is often assumed, for example, that a stay abroad automatically leads to a higher intercultural competence. However, the contact itself is not enough: literature suggests that it should be supported and organized. Our action research project follows a dialectic action research spiral and focuses on two main questions: 1) How does the intercultural competence of students enrolled in double degree programs develop over time? 2) How should double degree programs be designed for IC development? We focus on the development of intercultural competence of German undergraduate students who take part in the double degree program CALA (German-Latin American Business Administration). The authors apply Deardorff’s Process Model of intercultural competence development as a theoretical framework. Based on semi-structured interviews and group discussions with students, the authors derive first findings concerning the structure of that double degree program and IC development. We will present learning outcomes on how to design double degree programs that have the potential to enhance IC in this context.

## Key Words

intercultural competence, double-degree programs, intercultural competence development, systemic approach