



Towards Understanding and Fostering Intercultural Competence Within Double Degree Programs



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Agenda



1. Motivation and Research Questions
2. Research Method
 1. Focus of Research
 2. Data Collection
 3. Data Analysis
3. Implications for Next Steps





Motivation



- **Bologna process** in Europe and the inclusion of the term „employability“ lead to a review of international strategies of many universities (HRK 2009):
 - Internationalisation at Home
 - Internationalisation Abroad
 - Double degree programs
- „**Intercultural Competence**“ more and more present in curricula and description of study programs
- **Little information on how IC is developed in Higher Education**
- It is often assumed, for instance, that **living abroad automatically leads to IC development** (Dehmel et al. 2011)
- **Intercultural learning** is not supported via international contact only (Grosch/Leenen 1998)
 - It has to be structured and organized (Bennett et al. 2013),
 - Because otherwise the contrary effect (stronger stereotyping) is also possible (Layes 2005)
- Many students are facing **integration obstacles** when living abroad (DAAD 2014)
 - That hinders the process of IC development (Mendelson 2004)
- **Measurement of IC is also problematic:** usually only multiple-choice-tests or self assessments; consideration of external perspectives difficult; combination of different methods useful and necessary (Dervin 2010)

Guiding Research Questions



(How can IC development of students be assessed?)

How does the intercultural competence of students enrolled in double degree programs develop over time?

How should double degree programs be designed to foster IC development?



Definition of Intercultural Competence and Process Model of Intercultural Competence

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“... effective and appropriate communication and behavior in an intercultural situation.”
(Deardorff 2006)

- Attitudes:** Respect (valuing other cultures); Openness (withholding judgment); Curiosity & discovery (tolerating ambiguity)
- Knowledge & Skills:** Cultural self-awareness, deep cultural knowledge; To listen, observe, analyze, evaluate...
- External Outcome:** Effective and appropriate communication & behavior in a intercultural situation
- Internal Outcome:** Informed Frame of Reference Shift (adaptability flexibility, ethno-relative-view, empathy)

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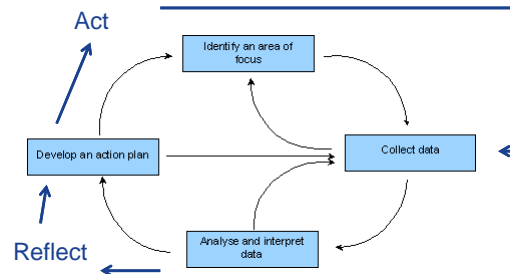
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Research Method: Dialectic Action Research Spiral

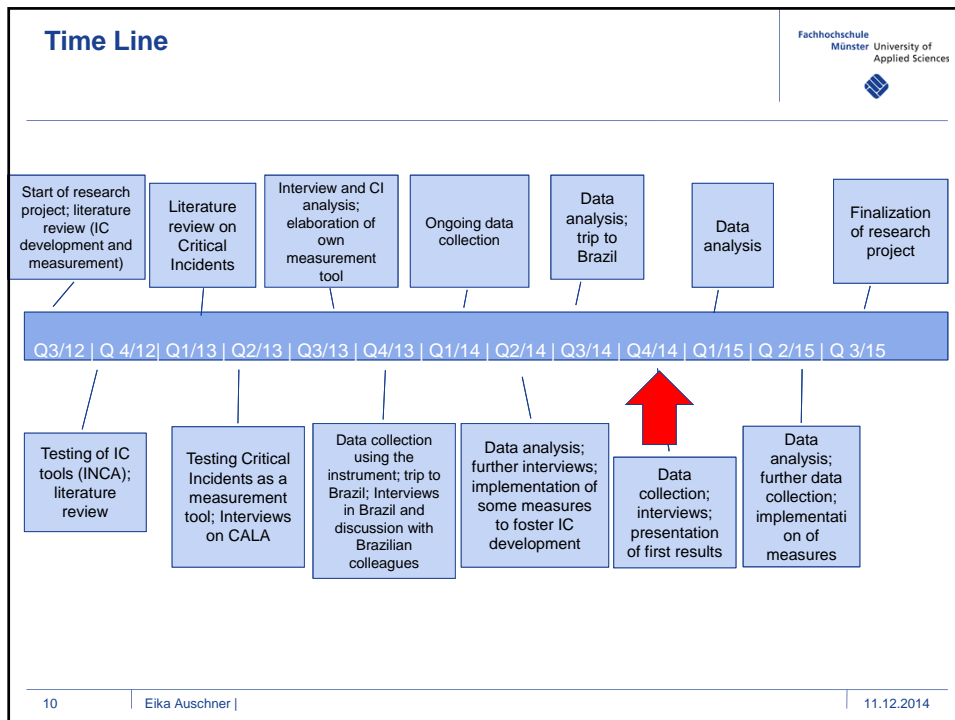


- Action Research is used to analyze and solve **problems within the context of teaching and learning**
- "...research done by teachers and for teachers and students, not research done on them, and as such is a **dynamic** and **responsive** model that can be adapted to different contexts and purposes"
- Four stages, **repetition** is possible
- In this project:
 - **Amendment of two more stages:** "Reflect" and "Act"
 - Two cycles

Object of Research: Double degree program CALA at the UAS Münster

- **Carrera Alemana Latino Americana de Administración**
- Implemented in 1999, re-designed in 2005 (Bachelor of Arts)
- Content:
 - International **Business Administration**
 - **Regional expertise** of Latin America and Germany
 - **Key competencies** relevant in international businesses (language skills, communication skills etc.)
- Structure (for German students): 1.- 4. semester in Münster, 5. - 7. semester in Latin America (for Germans); Latin American students enter the UAS Münster in the 5th semester
- Approx. **20 German students** (selection process) and **30 Latin American students** per year admitted
- 9 partner universities in Latin America





Research Stage 1: Identify an Area of Focus

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- **9 semi-structured interviews** in May/June 2013 with people involved in the CALA program (students, graduates, program director and staff, representatives of Latin American partner universities)
- First findings:
 - Only **one course** taught to both student groups
 - **Extra-curricular activities** organized by students themselves
 - **No equivalent** of the CALA program in Latin America -> usually little to no preparation for Latin American students
 - Common agreement that **IC is important** for CALA students
 - But **no common understanding** of Intercultural Competence (when matching answers to different dimensions of Deardorff's Model)

Attitudes	Knowledge and Skills	Internal Outcome	External Outcome	All dimensions mentioned
5	7	4	3	0

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Research Stage II: Collect Data

- In **October 2013**: Group discussion with seven German CALA (5th and 6th semester) students in Curitiba, Brazil
- In **May 2014**: three interviews and one group discussion with three students (4th semester) in Münster, shortly before their departure to Latin America
- **Semi-structured** interviews
- Interviews are **part of a bigger research project**; measurement tools were also applied, but are not discussed here

Overview of interviews conducted

Period	Number of interviews	Interview partners	Main focus of interest
May/June 2013	9	Students, staff, graduates, representatives	To gain first insights into the program
October 2013	1 group discussion with 7 students	German CALA students studying in Brazil	Challenges and difficulties when living abroad
May 2014	3 interviews and 1 group discussion with 3 students	German CALA students shortly before departing to Latin America	Perception of personal development

Research Stage III: Analyze and Interpret Data and Reflect

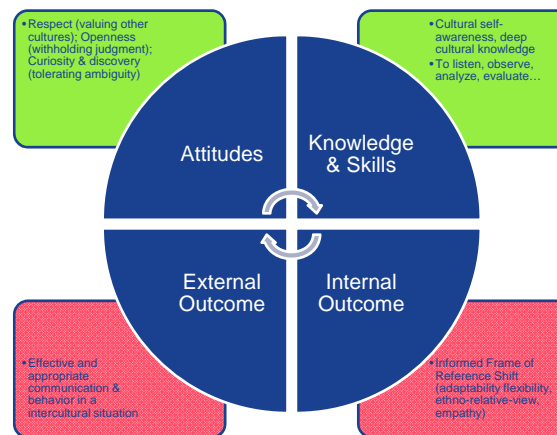
- Interviews were transcribed and analyzed with content analysis
- Deardorff's model was used to build categories
- First findings:

Attitudes	Knowledge and Skills	Internal and External Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motivation is very high - CALA students are eager to live and study abroad - When being in Brazil, they seem to be less enthusiastic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most students stated that they know a lot about Latin America - Can not say if the UAS has contributed to their development of certain skills - Feel they have also been competent before, as most of them had already lived abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When being in Brazil, students feel not well prepared - Different routines are not that easy to adapt to - They prefer to do group work among themselves, because "it is more efficient"

- Professors and staff seem to be more aware of the topic



With Reference to Deardorff's Model



Focus on knowledge development, but not on change of behavior!

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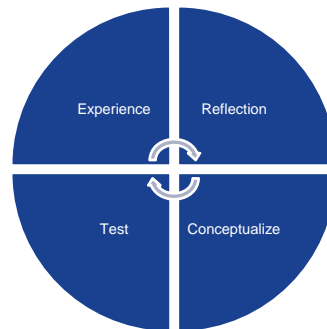
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Research Stage IV: Develop an Action Plan and Take Action

- Findings were **discussed with the CALA team**
- Literature suggests that, under certain conditions, **contact between students** of different cultures may foster IC development (e.g. Holmes 2012, Soria & Troisi 2013) -> feedback and exchange important to change behavior
- Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb 1984)

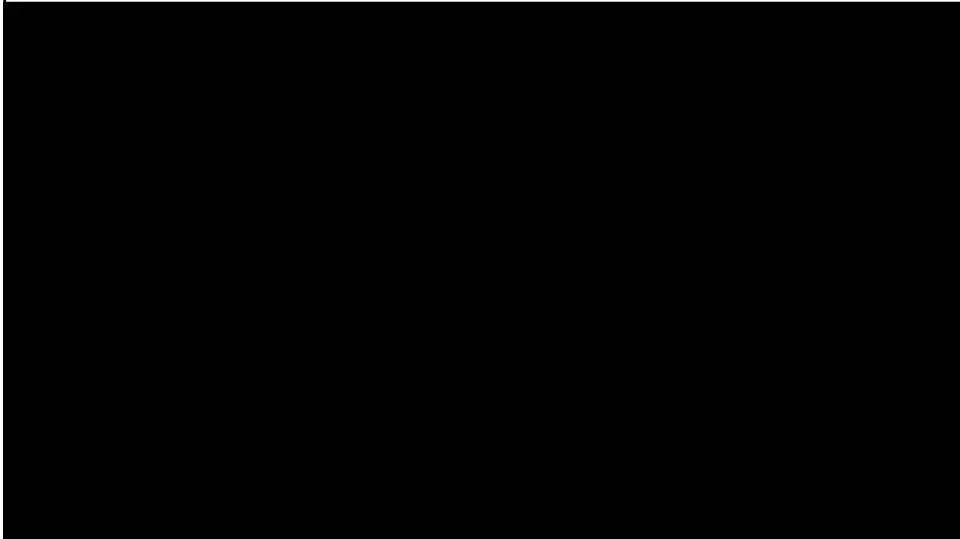


Research Stage IV: Develop an Action Plan and Take Action

- Measures were developed to **foster the contact** and especially international group works, for example:
 - In the lecture ‘Intercultural Management’ taught to German and Latin American students, the students have to produce a **video of a critical incident** themselves in binational teams. The entire process of reflection is facilitated. Furthermore, the students need to analyze their critical incidents in the team and carry out a shift of perspective
 - In a yearly **conference on Latin America**, Latin American students were included as speakers and participants. They reported the actual situation in their respective countries and participated as “experts” in a World Café
 - The **orientation week** is held for German and Latin American CALAs jointly most of the time, including informal “Getting-to-know”-activities
 - ...
- Elaboration of further measures to provide possibilities to gain knowledge, practice skills, reflect and undertake a change of perspective via **e-learning tool** (Learning by Sharing)
 - Internationalization at home
 - Preparation for students going abroad
- Ongoing **assessment**



Exemplary Critical Incident



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Thank You For Your Attention!



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