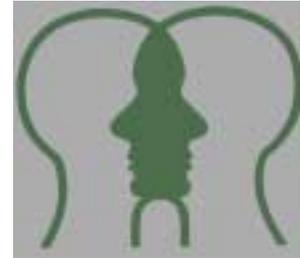


Academy of Management  
Denver, USA 2002



# How culture specific is intercultural training?

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*Dr. Stefan Kammhuber*



iko-Institut fuer Kooperationsmanagement  
University of Regensburg,  
Universitaetsstr. 31  
93040 Regensburg, Germany

Fon: +49 941 9433830 e-mail: [stefan.kammhuber@iko-consult.de](mailto:stefan.kammhuber@iko-consult.de)  
Fax: +49 941 943 1977

# Agenda

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- ◆ Globalization and the need for intercultural competence
- ◆ Learning Culture and the Culture of Learning.
- ◆ Intercultural training and cultural pitfalls
- ◆ Lessons learned from the „Intercultural Sensitizer“
- ◆ How to improve intercultural trainings

# Globalization and the need for intercultural competence

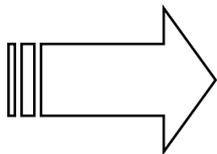
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1. A global village needs global citizens.
2. „Appreciation“ is needed, not just „tolerance“.
3. Appreciation for different cultures requests an understanding of the cultural logic, sympathy and respect for the stranger as well as behavioral abilities to create a mutual benefit.
4. Intercultural Learning can be fostered by intercultural training.
5. But intercultural training, as any learning environment, is itself culture bounded.

# Learning culture and the Culture of learning

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- ◆ Learning is an universal human capability. It is best described as an active, constructive and social process. (Bransford et al., 1999)
- ◆ Learning is inevitably embedded in a temporal, spatial, personal and socio-historic context. (Greeno, 1998)
- ◆ The location and subject of learning, the role of learner and instructor/trainer, the instructional methods, the learning media, the assessment of learning have a specific cultural meaning, which have to be taken into account. (Lave & Wenger, 1991)



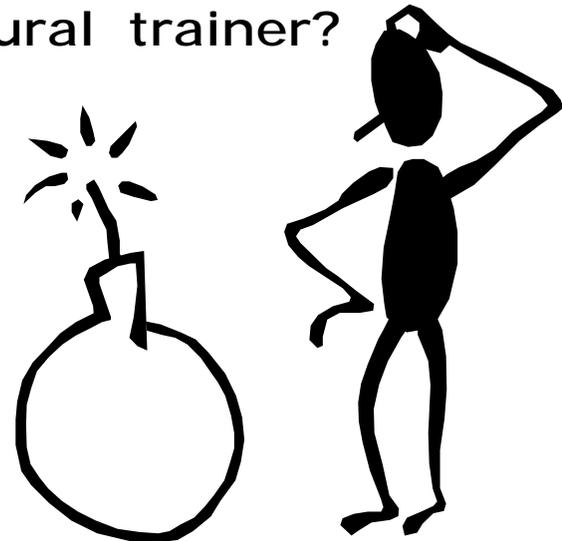
## **The 7W-Question:**

**Who learns where what from whom under which conditions, by which methods and which goals?**

# Intercultural training and cultural pitfalls

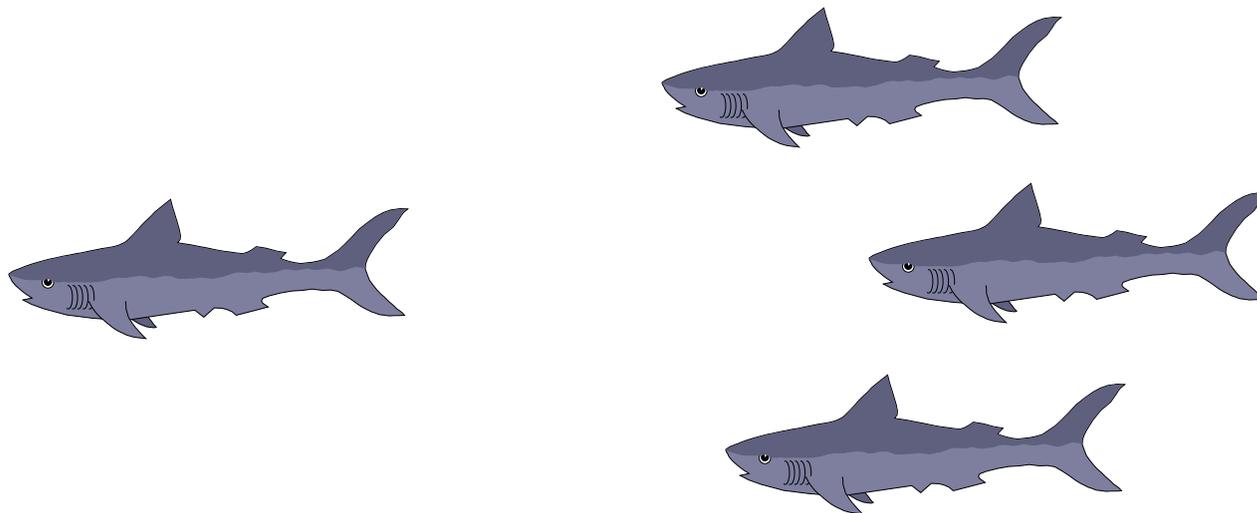
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- ◆ **Knowledge:** What means „intercultural competence“?
- ◆ **Content:** Addressing the differences or the commonalities?
- ◆ **Methods:** Selecting which intercultural training techniques?
- ◆ **Identity:** Who am I as an intercultural trainer?



# Fish is Fish? (Morris, Nisbett & Peng, 1995)

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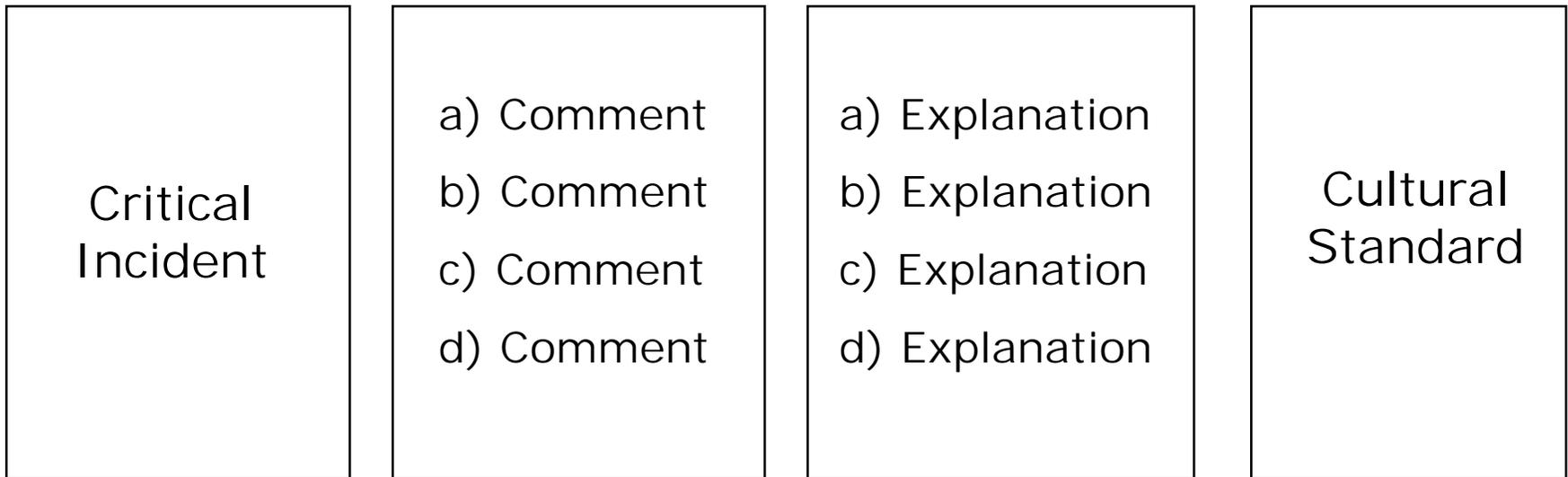


What do you see?

## Lessons learned from the „Intercultural Sensitizer“

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ICS are available as paper & pencil, video-supported or computer-based tests.



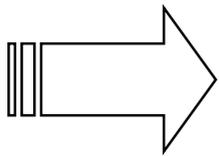
Cultural standards are regarded as specific ways of perceiving, thinking, judging and acting, which are seen as normal and naturally obligatory by members of a certain culture (Thomas, 1993)

## US-Cultural Standards and ICS (Mueller & Thomas, 1995)

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- ◆ Individualism
- ◆ Action/ Goal orientation
- ◆ Achievement orientation
- ◆ Equality of chances
- ◆ Social support
- ◆ Pragmatism
- ◆ Minimization of interpersonal distance
- ◆ Patriotism
- ◆ Mobility

The ICS supports individual, goal- and achievement oriented learning.



Any learner has equal chances to „hiscore“ and to get feedback and social acknowledgement frequently.

ICS is seen as a pragmatic way of learning cultures and fits well to US-American cultural standards.

# Chinese Cultural Standards and ICS (Thomas & Schenk, 2000)

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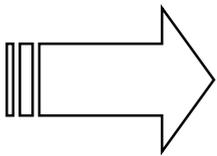
- ◆ Social Harmony
- ◆ Face-giving and Face-saving
- ◆ Patriotism
- ◆ Guanxi  
(network of social relationship)
- ◆ Etiquette (modesty and politeness)
- ◆ Danwei (unity of life and work)
- ◆ Hierarchy
- ◆ Bureaucracy

Addressing cultural gaps disturbs social harmony.

Creates the danger of losing face.

The clear distinction between right and wrong answers conflicts with an holistic world view.

The ICS in its classical form is not appropriate for Chinese learners.



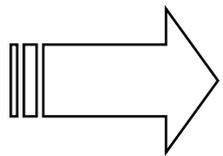
# Czech Cultural Standards and ICS (Schroll-Machl, 2001)

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- ◆ Personal relationship/ importance of face-to-face interaction
- ◆ Depreciation of structures
- ◆ Simultaneity
- ◆ Control by people
- ◆ Diffusion of work- and personal domains
- ◆ Implicit communication (context-orientation)
- ◆ Evasion of conflicts
- ◆ Fluctuating self-confidence

Well-structured ICS vs. „depreciation of structures“

„Evasion of conflicts“ vs. addressing critical incidents



„implicit communication“ vs. rational planning procedure

Face-to-face-interaction vs. Author as an anonymous expert.

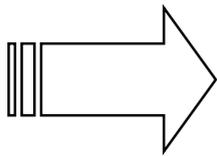
ICS does not fit well to Czech Learning Culture.

# The German Perspective on ICS (Schroll-Machl, 2002)

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- ◆ Fact-orientation
- ◆ Rule-orientation
- ◆ Direct interpersonal communication
- ◆ Interpersonal distance differentiation
- ◆ Hierarchy and authority orientation
- ◆ Time planning

Analysis of CIs is an (time-)effective way for intercultural learning.



Cultural Standards are understood as rules which can be followed.

Authors seen as intercultural authorities.

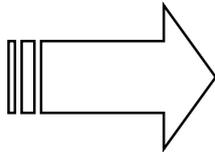
ICS fits in a modified version well to German Learning culture.

# How to improve intercultural training...

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- Stronger research focus on the cultural embeddedness of „intercultural knowledge“.
- Stronger research focus on the cultural background of intercultural training methods.
- Establishing *truly* multicultural expert panels for developing, implementing and evaluating intercultural training methods.



**Synergy is not for free!**