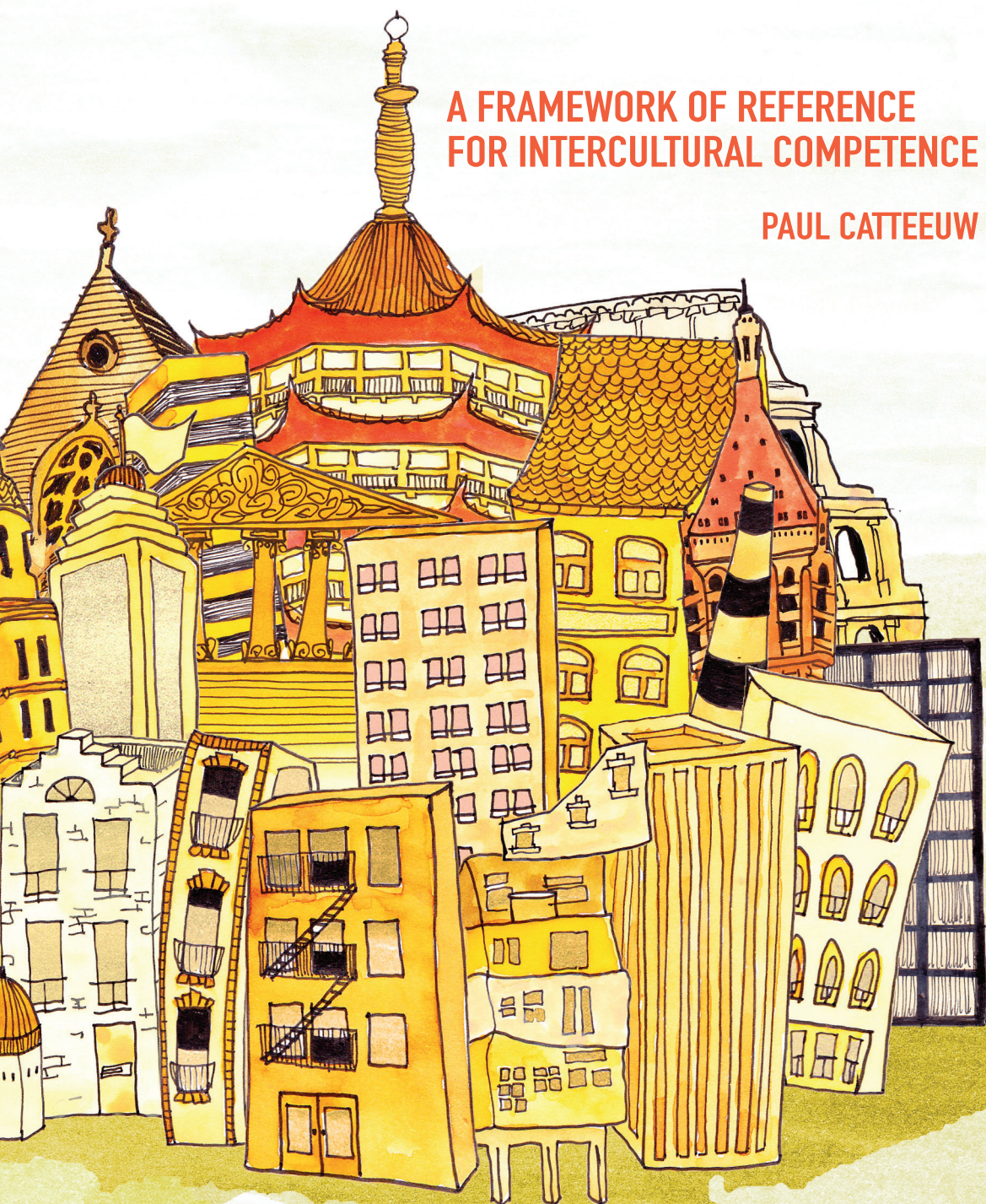


A FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

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A FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

A 21st century Flemish Experiment in Capacity
Building in Formal Education

Paul Catteeuw

INTRODUCTION

Notwithstanding a growing interest in intercultural communication in the 21st century, most professionals in the Low Countries (and elsewhere) have not been trained in this field during their education. Many managers believe that experience is sufficient to bring an international assignment to a favourable conclusion, for instance an agreed contract. What's more, in most cases those managers will have succeeded in even the most complex assignments, thanks to their experience and their intuition, guided by the motto "practice makes perfect". This doesn't alter the fact that coherent training would be an extra asset for this group of people. For young professionals entering professional life, it has become a very important issue. Intercultural competence can be trained and acquired, as will be described hereafter. Why not include intercultural communication training in the curricula of higher education (either as a structured module or embedded in other subjects), because such a programme¹ could fill a void in the competences of young professionals. Indeed, intercultural competence could even become a critical success factor when applying for a job, not only in business, but also in social work and indeed heritage practices².

We have tried to develop a programme and a framework of reference for intercultural competence, because we are convinced of the fact that you can train intercultural competence³. This

1 At the university college Karel de Grote-Hogeschool Antwerp the subject *Intercultural Communication and Training* was structurally introduced (as a compulsory subject) in the academic year 2004-2005 in the curriculum of the bachelor Office Management (department Commercial Sciences and Business Administration). From 2007-2008 the subject will be taught in other bachelors, such as Logistics and Marketing.

2 Jonas Stier, *Intercultural Competencies as a Means to Manage Intercultural Interactions in Social Work*, in Jens Allwood and Beatriz Dorriots (eds.), *Intercultural Communication at Work. Selected Papers from the 10th Nordic Symposium on Intercultural Communication*, Göteborg University (Göteborg), 225-242.

3 Paul Catteeuw and Marleen Coutuer, 'Hogescholen werken aan interculturele communicatie. Portfolio Interculturele Communicatie in professionele bachelor' (University Colleges and Intercultural Communication. Portfolio for Intercultural Communication in the Curriculum Professional Bachelor), *Delta. Tijdschrift voor Hoger Onderwijs*, 8 (2005), 38-45; Paul Catteeuw and Marleen Coutuer, 'Een portfolio voor interculturele competenties. Zoektocht naar een referentiekader interculturele communicatie' (A Portfolio for Intercultural Competences. In Search for a Framework of Reference for Intercultural Communication), *Mores. Tijdschrift voor volkscultuur in Vlaanderen*, 6-3 (2005), 15-20; Paul Catteeuw and Marleen Coutuer, 'Working with portfolios in a professional bachelor', *The proceedings of the eEuroInclusion International Conference "Equal Chances for Any European Language", Iasi (Romania), 30.09-02.10.2005*, 2005, 44-52; Paul Catteeuw and Marleen Coutuer, 'Higher education and intercultural communication: Intercultural Communication Portfolio at the Professional Bachelor Level', in: Nancy Aalto and Ewald Reuter (eds.), *Aspects of Intercultural Dialogue. Theory - Research - Applications*, Köln, SAXA, 2006, 237-251; Paul Catteeuw and Marleen Coutuer, 'Portfolio interculturele competentie' and 'Portofolio Kompetensi Interkultural' (Portfolio Intercultural Competence), in: Eliza Gustinelly, Mursidah, Yati R. Suhardi & Kees Groeneboer (eds.), *Tiga Puluh Lima Tahun Studi Belanda di Indonesia. Vijfendertig Jaar Studie Nederlands in Indonesië* (Thirty-five years of Dutch Study in Indonesia), Depok, Kampus Universitas Indonesia, 2006, 450-462 and 462-474; Paul Catteeuw and Marleen Coutuer, 'Higher education and intercultural communication: Intercultural Communication Portfolio at the Professional Bachelor Level', in: G.S. Ioannidis, S.G. Antonopoulos, D.M. Garyfalidou, A.C. Tsiokanos (eds.), *eStream Conference on Streaming Technology in Education in Europe, 14-16 June, Patras/Greece*, Patras, Patras University Press, 177-184.

framework of reference was introduced and tested over three academic years (2004-2007) with over 700 students in the course Intercultural Communication and Training, using the portfolio methodology at Karel de Grote-Hogeschool⁴ Antwerp (henceforth KdG). This article focuses mainly on the situation in Flanders (Belgium), because the research and the implementation of the framework of reference were carried through at KdG. We will also refer to the Dutch situation⁵.

⁴ University college is used for the Dutch word “hogeschool”.

⁵ For further information about this “Flemish-Dutch” relationship we refer to Marie-Thérèse Claes and Marinel Geritsen, *Culturele waarden en communicatie in internationaal perspectief* (Cultural Values and Communication in International Perspective), Bussum, Coutinho, 2002.

CHANGING: SOCIETY

Different migration waves have washed over Belgium and the Netherlands since 1945. In the previous century, Flanders (and Belgium) witnessed three major waves of migration: labour migration, family reunion and post-industrial migration since the Second World War⁶. Three types of immigrants define this last post-industrial wave: “highly skilled executives”, “asylum seekers” and “illegal immigrants”. The first two waves meant rather homogeneous groups (Italians, Spaniards, Turks and Moroccans). Post-industrial migration however is much more diffuse. These migrants⁷ come from all over the world and are very hard to classify. The situation in the Netherlands⁸ is analogous, though there is a difference in the size of the different groups, partly due to another colonial and post-colonial experience⁹. During the last few years there was a very clear shift from labour migration to asylum migration. But shortages on the labour market and the ageing of the population are leading to new waves of labour migration from Eastern Europe. When compared with the post-war situation¹⁰ there seems to be a greater amount of female migrants, not only because of family reunion, but also as labour force.

These different waves of migration¹¹ create a changed and still changing demographic image.¹²

6 Bart Meuleman and Jaak Billiet, ‘De houding van Vlamingen tegenover “oude” en “nieuwe” migranten: diffuus of specifiek?’ Vlaanderen gepeild, Brussel (Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap), 2003, 131-177 (The Attitude of Flemings towards Old and New Migrants: Diffuse or Specific?)

7 Klaas Schermer, *Interculturele samenwerking en communicatie* (Intercultural co-operation and communication), Houten, Wolters-Noordhoff, 2008.

8 Helga de Valk, Ingrid Esveldt, Kène Henkens & Aat Liefbroer, ‘Een demografisch profiel van “oude” en “nieuwe” allochtonen’ (A Demographic Profile of Old and New Migrants), <http://www.wrr.nl/english/content.jsp?objectid=3195> visited: 11 November 2011).

Klaas Bruin & Hans van der Heijde, *Intercultureel onderwijs in de praktijk* (Intercultural education in practice), Bussum, Coutinho, 2007.

9 For Germany, consult: Paul Mecheril, *Prekäre Verhältnisse. Über natio-ethno-kulturelle (Mehrfach-)Zugehörigkeit* (Precarious Relations), Münster-New York-München-Berlin, Waxmann, 2003, series *Interkulturelle Bildforschung*, 13. Werner Schiffauer, Gerd Baumann, Riva Kastoryano, Steven Vertovec (eds.), *Staat – Schule – Ethnizität. Politische Sozialisation von Immigrantenkinder in vier europäischen Ländern* (Nation – School – Ethnicity. Political Socialisation of Migrant Children in Four European Countries), Münster-New York-München-Berlin, Waxmann, 2002, series *Interkulturelle Bildforschung*, 10. One of these countries is The Netherlands.

10 Liz Collett, *The Civil Society Day of the Global Forum on Migration and Development. End Report*, King Baudouin Foundation (Brussels), 2007.

11 Guido J.M. Verstraeten & Willem W. Verstraeten, *Mijn thuisplek? Landethiek over geborgenheid en dreiging van ruimte-tijd en diversiteit* (My home? National ethics on security and threat of space-time and diversity), Budel, Damon, Budel, 2010.

12 Marie-Claire Foblets and Bernard Hubeau (eds.), *Nieuwe burgers in de samenleving? Burgerschap en inburgering in België en Nederland* (New Citizens in Our Society? Citizenship and Settlement in Belgium and the Netherlands), Leuven-Amersfoort, Acco, 1997.

Marie-Claire Foblets and Eva Cornelis (eds.), *Migratie, zijn wij uw kinderen? Identiteitsbeleving bij allochtone jongeren* (Migration, Are We Your Children? Identity Perception of Migrant Children), Leuven, acco, 2003. An Joly (ed.), *30 visies op wereldburgerschap. Wereldburgers bekenen kleur* (Thirty Visions on Cosmopolitanism. World Citizens Speak), Brussels, 2007. Liz Collett, *The Civil Society Day of the Global Forum on Migration and Development. End Report*, King Baudouin Foundation

This statement is backed up by figures produced by the two national institutes for statistics (*Nederlandse Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek*¹³ and *Belgische Algemene Directie Statistiek en Economische Informatie*¹⁴) and by Eurostat¹⁵.

19,38% of the Dutch population is labelled as of “foreign origin” (including 5% from the former colonies). In Belgium the figure is 14,5% (including 5,7% naturalised “foreigners”¹⁶). We have to stress the fact that the distribution of this “foreign population” in Belgium is very unequal. There are huge concentrations around the cities of Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, Charleroi, Liege and the former mining regions¹⁷.

It is prognosticated for the Netherlands¹⁸ that by 2050 the “foreign”, “non-European” population will have doubled, whereas the indigenous population will have decreased by more than 10%. This would mean that three out of ten inhabitants of the Netherlands would have a so-called different cultural background. The same tendencies are expected in Belgium¹⁹. In Belgium this inflow is reinforced by the numerous vacancies in bottleneck jobs, these are jobs for which there are hardly any qualified candidates in Belgium²⁰. Up to now we have spoken about people “with a different cultural background”. On purpose we have not used the Dutch expressions “allochtoon” (allochthonous, foreign) and “autochtoon” (autochthonous, indigenous). The word “allochtoon” often has a stigmatising effect and is hard to catch in a simple definition. When are you “allochtoon”? How far do you have to go back? Can you switch from

(Brussels), 2007.

13 At: [http://statline.cbs.nl/StatWeb/Table.asp?STB=G1&LA=nl&DM=SLNL&PA=37325&D1=a&D2=0-3,19,38,51,63,86-88,90,95,126,141,162,183-184,202,204,220,229,231&D3=0&D4=0&D5=0&D6=\(l-g\)-l&HDR=T&LYR=G5:9,G3:0,G2:0,G4:0](http://statline.cbs.nl/StatWeb/Table.asp?STB=G1&LA=nl&DM=SLNL&PA=37325&D1=a&D2=0-3,19,38,51,63,86-88,90,95,126,141,162,183-184,202,204,220,229,231&D3=0&D4=0&D5=0&D6=(l-g)-l&HDR=T&LYR=G5:9,G3:0,G2:0,G4:0) (visited: 11 November 2011).

14 At: <http://www.ibz.rrn.fgov.be/index.php?id=2471&L=1> (visited: 11 November 2011). Algemene Directie Werkgelegenheid en Arbeidsmarkt, *De immigratie in België: aantallen, stromen en arbeidsmarkt. Rapport 2006* (Immigration in Belgium: Figures, Currents and Labour Market. Report 2006), at: <http://www.ibz.rrn.fgov.be/index.php?id=2471&L=1> (visited: 11 November 2011).

15 Eurostat at <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/population/introduction> (visited: 11 November 2011).

16 We have to be very careful with these figures. As soon as a migrant has taken the Belgian nationality he disappears from the statistics and his offspring is considered to be Belgian and therefore untraceable. This number of people with a different cultural background is substantial, but is subject to conjecture.

17 Jan Pickery, Ann Carton & Guy Pauwels, *Sociaal-culturele ontwikkelingen* (Socio-cultural Developments) in Josée Lemaître and Peter De Smedt, *Algemene omgevingsanalyse Vlaanderen* (General Environmental Analysis Flanders), Brussel (Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap), 2004, 129-178.

18 Centraal Bureau voor de statistiek, *Demografie van allochtonen, historie en prognose* (Demography of Migrants: History and Prognosis), at http://www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/unique/_search/default.htm?cx=018020871965988641477:fvvmzjph02wq&cof=FORID:11&q=Demografie+van+de+allochtonen#901 (visited: 11 November 2011). - Joop Garssen, Han Nicolaas en Arno Sprangers, *Demografie van de allochtonen in Nederland* (Demography of Migrants in the Netherlands), at www.cbs.nl/NR/rdonlyres/CCD504EA-9D41-40C2-AE28-BFBoA51C2045/0/2005k3b15p096art.pdf (visited: 11 November 2011).

19 At <http://statbel.fgov.be/nl/statistieken/cijfers> (visited: 11 November 2011). Edwin Pelfrene, *Demografische ontwikkelingen* (Demographic Developments) in Josée Lemaître and Peter De Smedt, *Algemene omgevingsanalyse Vlaanderen* (General Environmental Analysis Flanders), Brussel, Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, 2004, 29-76. Bea Bossaerts (ed.), *Hoger onderwijs voor elk talent. Instrumenten en aanbevelingen voor meer diversiteit* (Higher Education for Each Talent. Instruments and Recommendations for More Diversity), King Baudouin Foundation (Brussels), 2007.

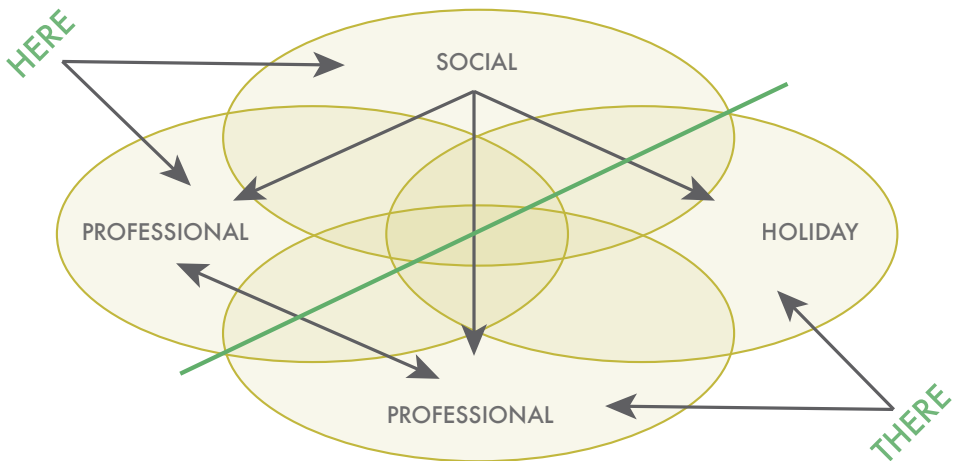
20 Nicolas Perrin, *Internationale migraties en bevolkingsgroepen uit de immigratie in België: een statistisch overzicht* (International Migrations and Groups of Population from the Migration in Belgium: A Statistical Survey), 2007; Nicolas Perrin, *De redenen tot verblijf en de gezinsherenigingen* (Reasons for Residence and Reuniting of Families), at http://diversiteit.be/?action=publicatie_detail&id=81&thema=4&select_page=216 (visited: 11 November 2011).; Nicolas Perrin, *Evolutie van het aantal vreemdelingen in België* (Evolution of the Number of Foreigners in Belgium), at http://www.diversiteit.be/?action=publicatie_detail&id=80&thema=4&select_page=216 (visited: 11 November 2011). Nicolas Perrin, *Asielzoekers* (Asylum Seekers), at http://www.diversiteit.be/?action=publicatie_detail&id=87&thema=4&select_page=216 (visited: 11 November 2011).

the category “allochtoon” to the category “autochtoon”? If so, what do you have to do to achieve this? The Dutch employer’s organisation training centre even suggests replacing the word “allochtoon” with the word “bicultural” as a positive equivalent²¹.

We can argue that each section of society has its share of people with a different cultural background. And between these different groups there are unremitting contacts, socially and professionally, in Belgium and in the Netherlands. These contracts will only increase.

From the perspective of many people operating in the Low Countries, contacts can be split up into two parts: contacts here and contacts there. There is always convergence between these types of contact, so that these contacts can therefore not be disconnected from one another.

Figure 1



■ Contacts *here*: contacts within one’s own society:

- Social contacts

These social contacts can take place at home, in shops, hospitals, schools, youth clubs, or at social events ...

Social contacts start at home within the own family from birth onwards. The extent of social contact depends on one’s own attitudes and characteristics. Human beings continually explore new social surroundings: family, kindergarten, school, clubs, work ... increasing possibilities of meeting new people, and therefore possibly also in meeting more people with a different cultural background. This can clearly be seen in the population of schools²². Within the foreseeable future this fact can be translated into

²¹ At http://www.nu.nl/news/845640/10/Allochtoon_moet_bicultureel_gaan_heten/.html (visited: 11 November 2011): it’s a proposition by De Baak, the training centre of the labourers organisation VNO-NCW.

²² Jos Cré, ‘Testonderzoek en B.O.-verwijzing bij allochtone en kansarme kinderen’, *Alle kinderen gelijk voor de wet? De praktijk. Over het intelligentie-onderzoek bij allochtone en autochtone kinderen uit sociaal zwakke milieus* (Test Research and

an even larger participation of people with a different cultural background in business activities. People who can not build up intercultural competence as a social competence within their own environment will have more problems in doing so on a larger scale.

- Professional contacts

You will find these contacts in any kind of job. This can mean factories, but also ministries or hospital administration or any job related situation or location. Even the smallest SMEs employ people with a different cultural background or do business with such partners. And these people will want training in the field of intercultural communication. And as an individual you will come into contact with people with a different cultural background. It is certainly in this field that we do not want to limit a different cultural background to an ethnic background, even when ethnicity seems to be one of the most significant elements in this process.

- Contacts *there*: contacts with foreign countries

- Holiday: travelling abroad

International travel creates manifold opportunities for contact with different cultures. These contacts are mainly superficial, non-recurrent and noncommittal. Good travel guidebooks can offer great help, pointing out the do's and don'ts of how to behave. Users should however be aware of the frequently stereotyped and distorted conceptualization²³ of the country or region that is visited. For quantitative and qualitative reasons this field of research doesn't belong within the scope of this article. Summing up do's and don'ts is endless and the verification of their accuracy would need an expert for each different country or region. ICC however deals with general values and norms which – in ideal circumstances – must be applicable in each and every situation.

- Professional contacts

We refer to contacts with customers, business partners, affiliated companies ..., study abroad²⁴ ...

Today's globalised business world is an international one with worldwide contacts and encounters with every possible culture. It is therefore necessary to train people to be interculturally competent. These people must be able to do business with other people in a correct way. Professional intercultural competence will lead to effective negotiations and success in business. We will explore these professional contacts (both on the here and there levels) more deeply. Professional contacts at every possible level transcend the small talk of the en-

Special Education Reference with Foreign and Underprivileged Children. All Children Equal for Law? Practice. About the Intelligence Research on Foreign and Native Children from Socially Weak Environments), 2000.

23 At http://statbel.fgov.be/port/cou_eu_nl.asp#BE (visited: 5 May 2008): You can find a survey of what guidebooks think and write about Belgium. One must admit that this offers a good laugh, every now and then.

24 Herman Blom, *Interculturele samenwerking in organisaties* (Intercultural Co-operation in Organisations), Bussum, Coutinho, 2008; Catherine Way, Guadelupe Soriano, David Limon and Carolina Amador, *Enhancing the Erasmus Experience: Papers on Student Mobility*, Granada, Editorial Atrio, 2006; Mathilde Anquetil, *Mobilité Erasmus et communication interculturelle. Une recherche-action pour un parcours de formation* (Erasmus Mobility and Intercultural Communication. Research for a Course of Education), Bern, Peter Lang, 2006; David Atkinson, Marián Morón and Dorothy Kelly, *Teaching in the Multicultural Classroom at University: The Temcu Project*, Granada, Editorial Atrio, 2006.

counter. In business life it is important to find the correct form of interaction. This is valid for any form of contact (conversation, telephone call, sign language, e-mail, blog, ..., verbal or non-verbal) on a national and international level. Different factors play a part in it, but professional skill is one of the most important. Because of the growing internationalisation there is an enormous increase in encounters at which the participants do not speak their mother tongue or are hardly aware of the cultural backgrounds of their interlocutor. And then again in these situations, good communication is of the utmost importance.

In the very near future training of intercultural competence could very rapidly become a critical success factor in job interviews with young professionals. There is a strong possibility that the acquisition of intercultural competence will be decisive for employment.

However, it would be short-sighted to limit this competence to the business world. As seen above, intercultural competence will be needed in other aspects of society and at all ages. It should therefore be logical and extremely important to include intercultural communication in teacher training at all levels (from kindergarten to academic level), because (future) teachers are the first people in the Low Countries who are/will very much be confronted with this rapidly changing society. In a recent Flemish study²⁵ we read:

A second conclusion concerns teachers in schools with specific needs or specific needs in schools. Starting teachers and their managements and counsellors in schools for special education or in schools with extreme opportunities issues do not only experience that they need extra support and counselling. The culture shock between training and the sphere of action is enormous. At the same time teacher training is assessed as insufficiently adapted.

This calls for skilled teachers who themselves have been trained in intercultural communication.²⁶

²⁵ Peter Michielsens (ed.), *Onderwijsspiegel. De beginnende leraar. Een nulmeting van de aanvangsbegeleiding en de start-competenties. Doorlichtingen en opvolgingscontroles* (Educational Mirror. The Starting Teacher. Zero Measurement of the Tutoring at Start and the Initial Competences. Screening and Successive Control), Flemish Ministry of Education and Training (Brussels), 2007, 57.

²⁶ Here you will find a random selection of recent or successful material: Klaas Bruin and Hans van der Heijde, *Inter-cultureel onderwijs in de praktijk* (Intercultural Training in Practice), Bussum, Coutinho, 2007.

Volker Eismann, *Erfolgreich in der interkulturellen Kommunikation. Trainingsmodul* (Successful in Intercultural Communication. Training module), Berlin, Cornelsen, 2007. This module even introduces the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. This course is meant for the levels B2/C1.

Joseph A. De Vito, *The Interpersonal Communication Book*, Boston, Pearson Education, 2007.

Pamela J. Cooper, Carlyn Calloway-Thomas and Cheri J. Simonds, *Intercultural Communication. A Text with Readings*, Boston, Pearson Education, 2007; Lies Sercu (ed.), *National helpdesks for intercultural learning materials. A guideline*, Utrecht, Parel, 1999.

ICC AND (HIGHER) EDUCATION: A TRAJECTORY

'No man is an island' wrote the English poet John Donne – and the same is equally true of cultures. Cultures, almost by definition, are mixed. This is becoming increasingly true in Western Europe. The resulting social evolution means that there is a greater-than-ever need for citizens with intercultural skills. And in the development of these skills education plays an irreplaceable democratising role.²⁷

The large majority of graduated bachelors at KdG's Department of Commercial Sciences and Business Administration end up professionally in the maritime sector or in a related business. Antwerp as a main port and its hinterland is centrally located in Europe. From this inland port 110 million people/customers can be reached within a working day. This makes Antwerp an economic centre with a myriad of companies from all over the world. And precisely in sectors related to the port contacts with people of different cultural background occur very frequently. The same phenomenon can be seen in Rotterdam.

Higher education should play an important and extensive role in training future undergraduates and postgraduates to become interculturally competent. This statement is backed up by the final report of the commission of accreditation of the NVAO²⁸, in which the members of the commission explicitly put forward that intercultural communication was experienced as an absolute asset and that (the teaching of) interculturalisation should even be expanded.

What's more, education in this field is promoted on a much larger scale, as we read in a recent UNESCO Courier in which 2008 was proclaimed as the International Year of Languages:

Languages, with their complex implications for identity, communication, social integration, education and development, are of strategic importance for people and planet. Yet, due to globalization processes, they are increasingly under threat, or disappearing altogether. When languages fade, so does the world's rich tapestry of cultural diversity. Opportunities, traditions, memory, unique modes of thinking and expression – valuable resources for ensuring a better future – are also lost. ... Cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, the promotion of education for all and the develop-

27 Marc Colpaert, *Tot waar beide zeeën samenkomen. Verbeelding, een sleutel tot intercultureel opvoeden*, Heverlee, Lannoo Campus, 2007, 6 and Marc Colpaert, *Where Two Seas Meet. Imagination, the Key to Intercultural Learning*, Heverlee, Lannoo Campus, 2009, 6.

28 See <http://nvao.net> (visited: 11 November 2011): NVAO (Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie – the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders) accredits higher education in Flanders and the Netherlands and ensures the quality of higher education. The Bachelor Office management, Department Commercial Sciences and Business Administration of KdG was visited to this purpose (20-22 March 2006). You <http://nvao.net/instellingen> (visited: 11 November 2011).

*ment of knowledge societies are central to UNESCO's work. But they are not possible without broad and international commitment to promoting multilingualism and linguistic diversity, including the preservation of endangered languages.*²⁹

It will be clear from this excerpt that to a larger extent language and intercultural communication are strategic partners and will become increasingly important in research.³⁰

At KdG's Department of Commercial Sciences and Business Administration there was no intercultural communication course in the different curricula. In some subjects there were occasional references to intercultural aspects, but this was never systematic.

■ Academic year 2004-2005

Owing to the lack of a designated course we had a free hand to start tabula rasa with the subject Intercultural Communication and Training at KdG. As our educational methodology we decided on a portfolio (which we will discuss later). To incorporate intercultural communication into a competence-oriented education it soon became clear that there was need for a framework of intercultural competence to complement the theoretical introduction.

In the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages³¹ authors keep referring to the intercultural component of language education. These references however are always vague. Michael Byram³² talks about an unfinished discussion:

One very obvious result of these changes is the need to take forward the unfinished discussion of intercultural competence in the CEF, for it is in the acquisition of intercultural understanding and the ability to act in linguistically and culturally complex situations that European citizens could benefit from a common framework of theory and practice not only for linguistic but also for cultural learning.

At the very beginning of our research no framework was available to serve as a substantial basis for an elaborate competence profile. That's why we made use of the existing profiles as deline-

29 At http://www.unesco.org/culture/files-langues/broch2008_en.pdf (visited: 11 November 2011).

30 Ildikó Lázár, *Incorporating intercultural communicative competence in language teacher education*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing, 2003.

31 This framework mainly aims at transparency and exchangeability. See further at: http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/documents_intro/common_framework.html (visited: 11 November 2011): Developed through a process of scientific research and wide consultation, this document provides a practical tool for setting clear standards to be attained at successive stages of learning and for evaluating outcomes in an internationally comparable manner. The Framework provides a basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications, thus facilitating educational and occupational mobility. It is increasingly used in the reform of national curricula and by international consortia for the comparison of language certificates. A recent European Union Council Resolution (November 2001) recommended the use of this Council of Europe instrument in setting up systems of validation of language competences. The Framework is a document which describes in a comprehensive manner 1° the competences necessary for communication, 2° the related knowledge and skills and 3° the situations and domains of communication.

The Framework facilitates a clear definition of teaching and learning objectives and methods. It provides the necessary tools for assessment of proficiency. The Framework is of particular interest to course designers, textbook writers, testers, teachers and teacher trainers - in fact to all who are directly involved in language teaching and testing. It is the result of extensive research and ongoing work on communicative objectives, as exemplified by the popular 'Threshold level' concept. The Framework has become a key reference document and valuable tool for educational and professional mobility.

32 Michael Byram, Introduction, at: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/SourcePublications/Intercultural-Competence_EN.doc (visited: 11 November 2011).

ated by the Flemish authorities through Vlhora.³³ In these profiles you can read which starting competences a beginning professional should have on graduation as a professional Bachelor of Office Management. We're talking about general, profession-related and profession-specific competences³⁴. A beginning or young professional needs general competences to be able to function as an autonomous and critical participant in society. Profession-linked competences are clearly aimed at the field of action in which the professional will end up. And profession-specific competences are a realistic rendering of what a professional starting out needs at his/her working place.

"Can communicate interculturality in a multicultural and diverse society" was added as a specific competence to the general competences to support the new subject. This means that a student - when graduating - should be able to possess and apply this specific competence.

During the first academic year we tried to fit in intercultural communication into this profile. The booklet *Inkleuren*³⁵ was a guideline and a great help in preparing the course. Main aim of the publication was to raise the influx of "foreign students" into higher education. The emphasis here was on students in social studies. To back up the research the authors have drawn up a list of intercultural learning outcomes³⁶ for the Department of Applied Social Studies (social workers, remedial educationalists). These final levels have been divided into three parts leading to eight perceptions, ten skills and six attitudes.

Given the aim and the general character of the publication the phrasing of the final terms is rather general. There was a clear need for refinement. And there was need for a path to put these final attainment levels into practice.

In the autumn of 2004 we tried to draw up an operational framework of reference (version o.o) to make the students interculturality competent in a practical manner. A first step was the employment of the concept competence. Our starting point was the postulate:

*Being competent means being able to combine knowledge, skills, personal characteristics and attitudes in order to carry out a specific task in a specific situation in reality".*³⁷

In spite of the subdivision into partial competences, because a subdivision of competences is not always possible and even often works artificially, we wanted to formulate one integrative

33 This profile came about on the advice of the university colleges themselves: a field specific framework of reference including the competences for the professional bachelor Office Management: list of competences by Vlhora (Vlaamse Hogescholen Raad, <http://www.vlhora.be> – visited: 11 November 2011).

34 These competence profiles for Office Management within KdG are to be found at <http://bb.kdg.be> (visited: 11 November 2011). The use of this electronic platform is however restricted to registered users with a login.

35 *Inkleuren. Een werkboek voor diversiteit in het hoger onderwijs*, Gent, 2004. A publication by three university colleges: Arteveldehogeschool Gent, Katholieke Hogeschool Limburg and Karel de Grote-Hogeschool. The title is difficult to translate as it is a play on words. Literally it means "to colour in", but at the same time it means "in colours". The publication is no longer available but can be downloaded at: <http://www.kifkif.be/actua/inkleuren> (visited: 11 November 2011).

36 *Inkleuren*, o.c., 88-89.

37 Will Meeus and Linda Van Looy, *Portfolio zonder blozen. Het instrument doorgelicht vanuit het perspectief van de leraarenopleiding* (Portfolio without Blushing. Screening the Portfolio Method, from the Point of View of Teacher Training), Garant (Antwerpen-Apeldoorn), 2005. "We see competences as complex entities of knowledge, skills and attitudes which show themselves in multifarious, but authentic contexts" (own translation).

basic competence.³⁸ In our first version this general competence read as follows:

As a citizen you are capable of communicating interculturality in a multicultural and diverse society in which you are living and working.

To formulate learning aims for a basic course you need knowledge (knowing your own social and professional environment), skills (knowing how to communicate interculturality) and attitudes (being aware of the multiculturalism and diversity of the society). Starting from this basic competence a student can acquire insight into the systems of communication and the communication itself between different cultures. And s/he learns how to apply this competence in his contacts with people or groups from another culture.

This basic competence was elaborated according to the competences of Office Management (cf above) and was thus finalised in an operational framework. This framework existed in six general (fourteen descriptors), three profession-linked (six descriptors) and four profession-specific (five descriptors) competences, neatly subdivided into knowledge, skills and attitudes. The young professional will need to carry out a certain assignment in a specific situation in reality. However, without the indication of levels as seen in the framework of reference vo.o³⁹.

The absence of levels proved to be the weak spot of this version of the framework of reference, because it made self-evaluation extremely difficult for the students. Whether or not you had acquired the competence in the past, there was no in-between. In practice this meant that no student commanded the partial competences, which was very demoralizing. Furthermore, the division in general, profession-linked and profession-specific competences was not really a correct subdivision of competences. The subdivision was forced and didn't function flexibly.

The basic competence and the corresponding framework had to be adjusted.

In May 2005 we started a Flemish-Dutch working group of people who were professionals in intercultural communication. The members of this group came from different university colleges and universities in Flanders and the Netherlands. We hoped to stress the cross-border character of this framework and to gather knowledge and expertise on the field of ICC.

³⁸ J. van Tartwijk et alii, *Werken met een elektronische portfolio* (Using an Electronic Portfolio), Wolters-Noordhoff Groningen/Houten, 2003, 17-18.

Joost Klep & Harry Paus, *Geen competentie zonder repertoire* (No Competence without Repertory), 4, op http://www.velon.nl/kennisbank/13/geen_competentie_zonder_repertoire (visited: 11 November 2011).

B. Slingerland, *Notitie competentie en toetsing* (Notion Competence and Testing), p. 3 at: http://www.mbo-economie.nl/Versiezcompetentie_en_toetsing.pdf (visited: 11 November 2011).

Ruud Klarus, *Competenties ontwikkelen in de lerarenopleiding. Standaardsetting, leren en beoordelen* (Development of Competences in Teacher Training. Standard setting, Learning and Assessing), at http://www.hetplatformberoepsonderwijs.nl/downloads/Competenties_ontwikkelen_in_de_lerarenopleiding.doc (visited: 5 May 2008) en *Competentiegericht opleiden* (Competence-oriented Training), in *Handboek Effectief Opleiden*, Elsevier, 2003, op: http://www.han.nl/restyle/shpo/content/Competentieontwikkeling.xml_dir/competentiegericht_opleiden.pdf (bezoekt op 9 november 2005).

³⁹ The numbering refers to the competence profile for Office Management, i.e. not all competences needed by future office managers are present here. The following abbreviations are used: K = knowledge (kennis), V = skill (vaardigheid) and H = attitude (houding).

■ Academic year 2005-2006

Right after the introduction of our first framework (vo.o) the INCA project⁴⁰ was concluded and publicly presented. The INCA project deals with a framework of reference for intercultural competence, a series of assessment tools (even online) and a portfolio for assessing intercultural competence, linked to language and subject knowledge competence. The definition of intercultural competence⁴¹ fitted in closely with our reading of the concept:

Intercultural competence enables you to interact both effectively and in a way that is acceptable to others when you are working in a group whose members have different cultural backgrounds. The group may consist of two or more people including you. 'Cultural' may denote all manner of features, including the values and beliefs you have grown up with, your national, regional and local customs and, in particular, attitudes and practices that affect the way you work.

⁴⁰ A Leonardo da Vinci II-project of the European Community. The partners came from Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany and the United Kingdom. More information can be found at: <http://www.incaproject.org> (visited: 11 November 2011). Large parts of the project were translated into German and Czech.

⁴¹ At: <http://www.incaproject.org> (visited: 11 November 2011). The theoretical basis can be found at: http://www.incaproject.org/en_downloads/24_INCA_THE_THEORY_eng_final.pdf (visited: 11 November 2011).

Figure 2 INCA Framework (Assessee version)

Level	level 1 Basic	Level 2 Intermediate	Level 3 Full
Dimension			
Overview of competence	<p>"I am already willing to interact successfully with people of other cultures. I tend to pick things up and learn from them as I go along, but I haven't yet the experience to work out any system of dealing with intercultural situations in general. I respond to events, rather than planning for them. At this stage I am reasonably tolerant of other values, customs and practices although I may find them odd or surprising and approve or disapprove.</p>	<p>As a result of experience and/or training I am beginning to view more coherently some of the aspects of intercultural encounters I used to deal with in a 'one-off' way. I have a mental 'map' or 'checklists' of the sort of situations I am likely to need to deal with and I am developing my skills to cope with them. This means that I am more prepared for the need to respond and adapt to the demands of unfamiliar situations. I am quicker to see patterns in the various experiences I have and I am beginning to draw conclusions without having to seek advice. I find it easier to respond in a neutral way to difference, rather than approving or disapproving.</p>	<p>Many of the competences I developed consciously at level 2 have become intuitive. I am constantly ready for situations and encounters in which I will exercise my knowledge, judgement and skills and have a large repertoire of strategies for dealing with differences in values, customs and practices among members of the intercultural group. I not only accept that people can see things from widely varying perspectives and are entitled to do so, but am able to put myself in their place and avoid behaviour I sense would be hurtful or offensive. At this level of operation I am able to intercede when difficulties arise and tactfully support other members of the group in understanding to each other. I am confident enough of my position to take a polite stand over issues despite my respect for the viewpoint of others.</p>
Openness	<p>o1.1 When uncertainty arises from cultural difference, I adopt a tolerant attitude as long as the issue is not a sensitive one for me TA o1.2 Sometimes I may jump to conclusions about different behaviour that I later realise were not entirely correct RO</p>	<p>o 2.1 I now see the uncertainties that can arise from intercultural encounters as an interesting challenge, provided that the issues involved are not sensitive to me TA o 2.2 I react neutrally to cultural differences, rather than hastily categorising them as good or bad RO</p>	<p>o 3.1 I am aware of always coping with ambiguous situations even when these give rise to inner moral conflicts that are serious for me TA o 3.2 I fully respect the right of those from other cultures to have different values from my own and can see how these values make sense as part of a way of thinking RO</p>
Knowledge	<p>k 1.1 I have some general knowledge about the cultures of those I work. This knowledge consists of facts that are not always connected and I don't yet have an overall picture of the relevant cultures KD k 1.2 I learn from intercultural experiences and add to my previous knowledge KD k 1.3 Although I often find culturally different behaviour curious, I try to make allowances for it E</p>	<p>k 2.1 I take the trouble to find out about the cultures I am likely to be working with, paying attention not only to isolated facts, but to values, customs and practices common in those cultures KD k 2.2 When I experience new values, customs and practices I use the knowledge to develop into an overall system of principles KD k 2.3 I have developed a mental checklist of how others may perceive, feel and respond differently to, a range of routine circumstances. This supports my concern to put others at ease and avoid upsetting them E</p>	<p>k 3.1 I have a deep understanding of cultures I encounter frequently. When involved in new intercultural situations I strive to acquire the best possible available knowledge and understanding both through prior research and by seeking regular clarification within the group KD k 3.2 I have acquired a system of principles that can be applied reliably to almost any intercultural encounter KD k 3.3 I often imagine myself in the place of those from different cultures when trying to understand all aspects of a work problem. This supports my spontaneous concern that others in the group should receive fair treatment and consideration E"</p>

The INCA programme has primarily been developed for engineers, but it is a tool that – on condition that it is adapted – can be used in other fields. Therefore as study matter for our framework of reference it was very convenient. INCA presents three levels (basic, intermediate and full) and six competences (1. tolerance of ambiguity, 2. behavioural flexibility, 3. communicative awareness, 4. knowledge discovery, 5. respect for otherness & 6. empathy).⁴² The user/student is only put into contact with three competences at the three levels mentioned: openness, knowledge and flexibility. This division helped in building the basis for the re-designing of the new framework of reference.⁴³

The private organisation WorldWork⁴⁴ has worked out a different concept, which we also made use of when designing the new framework. Their framework presents six international competences⁴⁵ falling into 22 categories: 1. openness (new thinking, welcoming strangers and acceptance); 2. flexibility (flexible behaviour, flexible judgement & learning languages); 3. personal autonomy (inner purpose & focus on goals); 4. emotional strength (resilience, coping & spirit of adventure); 5. perceptiveness (attuned & reflected awareness); 6. listening orientation (active listening); 7. transparency (clarity of communication & exposing intentions); 8. cultural knowledge (information gathering & valuing differences); 9. influencing (rapport, change of styles & sensitivity to context); 10. synergy (creating new alternatives).

⁴² At http://www.incaproject.org/en_downloads/2_INCA_Framework_Assessor_version_eng.pdf (visited: 11 November 2011).

⁴³ At http://www.incaproject.org/en_downloads/1_INCA_Framework_Assessee_version_eng.pdf (visited: 11 November 2011).

⁴⁴ At <http://www.worldwork.biz/legacy> (visited: 11 November 2011).

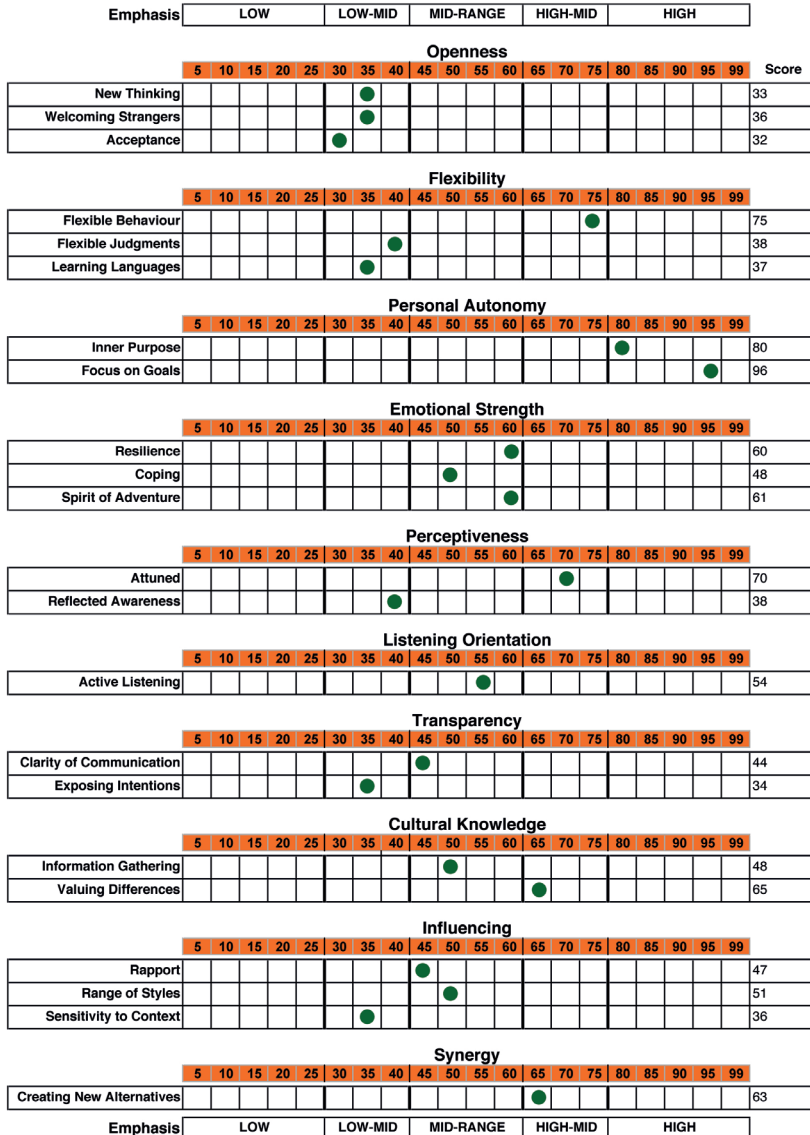
⁴⁵ At <http://www.worldwork.biz/legacy/www/docs3/tip.html> (visited: 11 November 2011).

Figure 3

The International Profiler

Range Profile

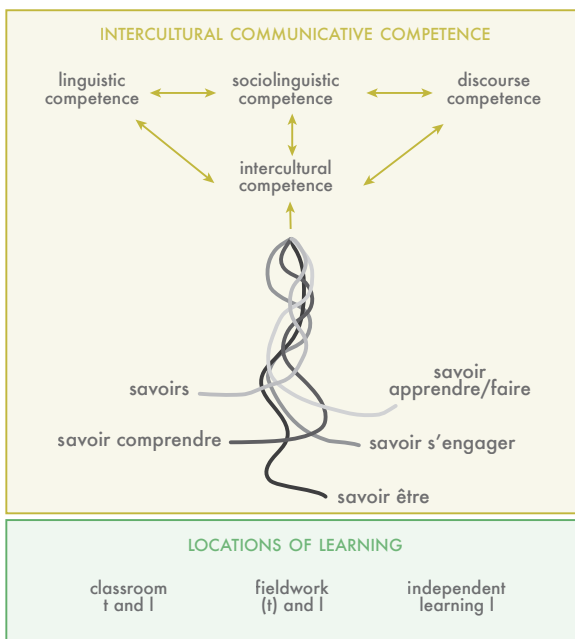
Mimi Lee



To assess intercultural competence WorldWork uses a kind of score card (the international profiler) to indicate the level attained. In our proposition we clearly deviate from this approach, but we make use of some of the factors contained in their international competences.

To draw up the scheme we leaned heavily on the insights of Michael Byram, Bella Gribkova and Hugh Starkey.⁴⁶ And we made use of the findings of Lies Sercu⁴⁷, whose studies are based on the results of Byram et al. to assess intercultural competence when learning a foreign language. Byram et al.⁴⁸ are right in arguing that there is no perfect model and that all models have a right to exist. According to the authors mentioned above, the components of intercultural competence - being knowledge, skills and attitudes - should be complemented by personal values. These components are described in a conceptual framework as the five *savoirs*: 1. *savoir être*, intercultural attitude; 2. *savoir comprendre*; 3. *savoir apprendre*; 4. *savoir faire* and 5. *savoir s'engager*. Lies Sercu⁴⁹ summarizes the whole in a sixth *savoir communiquer*.

Figure 4



46 Michael Byram, Bella Gribkova en Hugh Starkey, *Developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching. A Practical Introduction for Teachers*, at http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Guide_dimintercult_EN.pdf (visited: 11 November 2011).

47 Lies Sercu, 'Testing Intercultural Competence in a foreign language. Current approaches and future challenges', in *Belgian Journal of English Language and Literature*, 3 (2005), 149-167.

Lies Sercu, *Autonomes Lernen im interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht. Kriterien für die Auswahl von Lerninhalten und Lernaufgaben* (Autonomous Learning in Intercultural Foreign Language Teaching and Learning. Criteria for the Choice of Materials and Tasks), at <http://zif.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/jg-07-2/beitrag/sercu.htm> (visited: 11 November 2011).

48 Michael Byram et alii, *Developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching*, o.c., 7 e.v.

49 Lies Sercu, *Autonomes Lernen im interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht. Kriterien für die Auswahl von Lerninhalten und Lernaufgaben*, o.c., 7.

Ursula Bertels⁵⁰ et al. have studied the transfer of intercultural competence within the classroom. Their starting point is five learning aims (*Lernziele*): 1. the appropriation and acquisition of information and the development of interest; 2. development of willingness to change perspective; 3. acknowledgment and avoidance of ethnocentrism; 4. reflection on situations of intercultural contact and 5. stimulation of attitudes and values. These *Lernziele*, similar to the partial competences in our framework of reference, are each time subdivided in *Unterlernziele*, similar to the descriptors in our framework.

The work of David Pinto⁵¹ was very inspiring because it introduced the three-step method: 1. getting to know one's own norms and values; 2. getting to know the other's norms and values and 3. coping with these norms and values.

As with the INCA-project, and by analogy with the aforementioned Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, we came down to a classification of the framework of reference in three levels, specifically we could link three professional levels⁵² to this framework: the professional starting out, the experienced professional and the expert. This three-way split seems to suffice for our framework of reference.⁵³ In actual practice this subdivision clearly coincides with the experience of a professional.

For the transfer to our framework of reference we also made use of the division of the different phases in learning and acquiring competences, as described by Miller⁵⁴, and used in the medical world when training doctors and nurses.

⁵⁰ Ursula Bertels, Sabine Eylert, Christiana Lütkes, Sandra de Vries, *Ethnologie in der Schule. Eine Studie zur Vermittlung Interkultureller Kompetenz* (Ethnology at School. A Research about Transfer of Intercultural Competence) (Münster-New York-München-Berlin, Waxmann, 2004, series Praxis Ethnologie 1) and Ursula Bertels, Sandra de Vries & Nina Nolte (eds.), *Fremdes Lernen. Aspekte interkulturellen Lernens im internationalen Diskurs* (Foreign Learning. Aspects of Intercultural Learning in International Discourse), Münster-New York-München-Berlin, Waxmann, 2007, series Praxis Ethnologie 3)

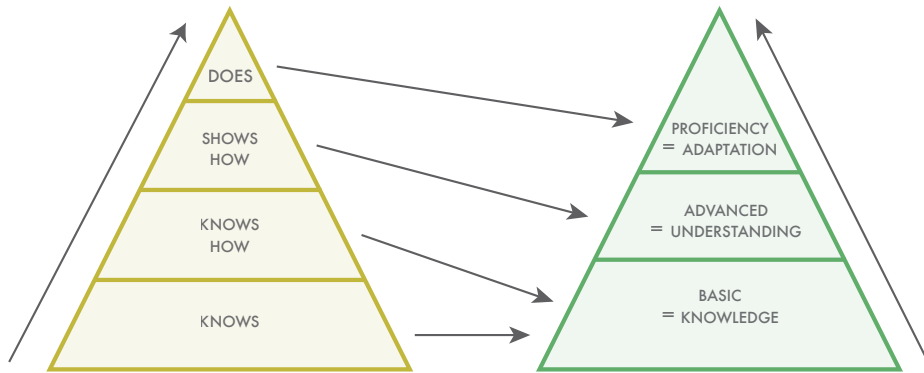
⁵¹ David Pinto, *Interculturele communicatie, conflicten en management (ICCM)* (International Communication, Conflicts and Management), Houten, Bohn Stafleu Van Loghum, 2004). David Pinto, *Intercultural Communication. A three-step method for dealing with differences*, (Leuven-Apeldoorn: Garant, 2000). See also http://www.davidpinto.nl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=37&Itemid=64&lang=nl (visited: 11 November 2011).

⁵² Jan van Tartwijk et alii, *Werken met een elektronisch portfolio* (Using an Electronic Portfolio), Groningen/Houten, Wolters-Noordhoff, 2003, 62-63.

⁵³ The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages subdivides each level into two sublevels: A Basic User (A1 Breakthrough, A2 Waystage), B Independent User (B1 Threshold, B2 Vantage), C Proficient User (C1 Effective Operational Proficiency, C2 Mastery). Such a subdivision can be accounted for in the field of language acquisition.

⁵⁴ Millers Triangle of clinical competence in G.E. Miller, 'The assessment of clinical skills/competence/performance' in *Acad Med* 65 (1990), 563-567.

Figure 5



In Miller's triangle the lower layer is always the basis for the next step, the next layer. The first two layers are situated at the level of knowledge, corresponding to the basic level. The third layer can be situated on the level of skills, which can be translated in the professional level by understanding. The fourth layer is the ultimate competence, which is applying the competence at the level of expertise.

This research resulted in a second operational framework of reference which strongly deviates in form and content from the first experimental framework of reference.

All partial competences were checked for compatibility with and found their validity in the universal declarations of the United Nations and its affiliate organisations. This involves the Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁵⁵, the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity⁵⁶, the United Nations Resolution 1325 on Women⁵⁷, the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms⁵⁸, the Convention against Discrimination in Education⁵⁹, the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities⁶⁰ and the United Nations Millennium Declaration.⁶¹ These different declarations build the foundations of our framework of reference.

55 At <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/> (visited: 11 November 2011).

56 At <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001271/127160m.pdf> (visited: 11 November 2011).

57 At http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf#search=%22%22un%20resolution%201325%200n%20women%22%22 (visited: 11 November 2011).

58 At [http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/A.RES.53.144.En](http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/A.RES.53.144.En) (visited: 11 November 2011).

59 At www.unesco.org/education/pdf/DISCRI_E.PDF (visited: 11 November 2011).

60 At <http://www.peace.ca/univdeclarticle.htm> (visited: 11 November 2011).

61 At <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm> (visited: 11 November 2011).

Figure 6

FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE FOR BUSINESS PURPOSES			
Basic		Advanced	Proficiency
1. Critical awareness Can deal critically and consciously as an individual with the society in which he/she lives			
1	Notifies that he/she lives in a changing society	Dares to question the society in which he/she lives	Is aware of and has a critical approach to the society in which he/she lives
2	Recognizes prejudices, racist feelings and attitudes within oneself and others	Can make prejudices, racist feelings and attitudes within oneself and others subject of discussion	Can prevent oneself and others from prejudices, racist feelings and attitudes
2. Openness - tolerance of ambiguity - right to differ - respect for otherness Can deal with ambiguous situations, is open to others and can accept and respect possible differences			
3	Recognizes other cultures and cultural diversity	Tolerates other cultures and cultural diversity	Functions within other cultures and cultural diversity
4	Recognizes otherness (culture, class, gender, age, health, sexual inclination, ethnicity, appearance, ...)	Accepts otherness	Functions according to the principles of equality
5	Recognizes ambiguous situations	Tolerates ambiguous situations	Can deal with ambiguous situations
6	Recognizes culture shock within oneself and others when in contact with a different culture	Knows how to deal with the problems of culture shock	Effectively overcomes the problems of culture shock
3. Behavioural flexibility Can be flexible when dealing with realistic situations and demands			
7	Is aware of past experiences	Learns from past experiences	Adapts to the actual situation
8	Is willing to learn the partner's language: CEF - A	Is willing to learn the partner's language: CEF - B	Is willing to learn the business partner's language: CEF - C
4. Empathy Can understand intuitively what other people think and feel in realistic situations			
9	Notifies that business partners can react differently	Understands that business partners can react differently	Accepts the other as a coherent individual and deals tactfully with different reactions
5. Cultural knowledge Can acquire knowledge of a different culture and can use this knowledge in actual realistic situations			
10	Knows the concepts relating to interculturality	Can see a link between professional situations and the concepts relating to interculturality	Can apply the concepts relating to interculturality in professional situations
11	Knows the cultural stereotypes	Understands the origin of stereotypes	Can see through the cultural stereotypes
12	Recognizes the problems of neglected target groups: immigrants, asylum seekers, the underprivileged, .. whom he/she has to deal with in his/her working environment (subordinates, colleagues)	Knows how to deal with and understands the problems of neglected target groups	Effectively deals with people from neglected target groups in a natural way
13	Recognizes the sociocultural conventions of target groups he/she comes into contact with: companies, expats, ...	Understands the sociocultural conventions of the target groups he/she comes into contact with	Incorporates the sociocultural conventions of the target groups he/she comes into contact with
6. Communicative awareness Can communicate effectively and correctly with others in realistic situations			
14	Recognizes the intercultural background and possible problems in written and oral communication	Recognizes the intercultural background and possible problems in non-verbal communication	Can prevent possible intercultural problems in written and oral communication and in non-verbal communication
7. Solution oriented Can think and act in a solution oriented way in realistic situations			
15	Recognizes misunderstandings and conflicts	Understands the origin of misunderstandings and conflicts	Can prevent misunderstandings and conflicts
16	In individual situations, makes an extra effort to learn from misunderstandings and conflicts.	As a rule makes an extra effort to learn from misunderstandings and conflicts.	Will purposely seek out situations in which can be learned from living, working or studying with people from different cultures or with a different background

The general basic competence was kept, but the transfer of this concept was different. The general, profession-linked and profession-specific competences were dropped in favour of seven partial competences and sixteen general descriptors:

1. Critical awareness (two descriptors)
2. Openness, right to be different and respect for otherness (four descriptors)
3. Flexibility (two descriptors)
4. Empathy (one descriptor)
5. Cultural knowledge (four descriptors)
6. Communicative skills (one descriptor)
7. Solution oriented attitude (two descriptors)

For the user this framework of reference was clearly a step forward because of the transparency. The use of the scheme for self-evaluation made this obvious. For each descriptor the user could tick the boxes with the qualifications: not, vague & good, through which the user could outline an overview of his competences in the intercultural field.

■ Academic year 2006-2007

The second test phase also led to some adaptations. The basic competence was extended to:

As a critical and conscious citizen (1) you are capable of functioning (5) flexibly (3) and interculturally (4) in an open and respectful manner (2) in the multicultural and diverse society in which you live (6) and work (6).

The framework of reference was reduced to six partial competences and fourteen descriptors, for which the levels were kept and explicitly stated (basic level = to know, advanced level = to understand, and expertise level = to apply).

While the basic competence is the crystallization of the partial competences, the competence had to be extended to cover all aspects. Moreover, the concept *communication* was replaced by the concept *functioning*, while this last concept implies a broader scope of actions, including communication.

This led to the following partial competences.⁶²

Attitudes

1. Critical awareness (two descriptors)
2. Openness, right to difference and respect⁶³ for otherness (three descriptors)
3. Flexibility and empathy (three descriptors)

Skills

4. Communicative skills (one descriptor)
5. Solution-oriented attitude (two descriptors)

⁶² The numbering refers to the basic competence.

⁶³ Bart van Leeuwen, *Erkenning, identiteit en verschil. Multiculturalisme en leven met culturele diversiteit* (Recognition, Identity and Difference. Multiculturalism and Living with Cultural Diversity), Leuven, acco, 2003.

Knowledge

6. Cultural knowledge (three descriptors)

In this scheme the partial competences *flexibility* and *empathy* have been put together. And the shift of the partial competence *cultural knowledge* made a logical sequence of attitudes, skills and knowledge possible. The descriptor dealing with ambiguity was removed and the descriptor on stereotyped images was added to the descriptor on prejudices, racist feelings and attitudes, as this seemed more logical.

The merging of two partial competences and two descriptors seems sensible and makes the overall scheme less heavy. As a consequence the scheme for self-evaluation was adapted in the same manner.

We wanted to verify in how far we can fit in with the conclusions of ICOPROMO (Intercultural competence for Professional Mobility)⁶⁴ of the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz. ICOPROMO is a new European project that wants to build further on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages by fitting in the European Language Portfolio in their framework. The programme is very ambitious. Among the objectives you will find the development of intercultural communication and interaction competences, the integration of language and knowledge of culture and the development of critical awareness and intercultural competences.

A new programme is LOLIPOP⁶⁵. This intriguing acronym stands for Language On Line Portfolio Project. Twelve Higher Education Institutions throughout Europe⁶⁶ worked together to create an on-line interactive version of the European Language Portfolio⁶⁷ with an enhanced intercultural dimension. This Socrates-project has been funded with support from the European Commission. Through self-assessment grids students can find out their level of competence of their linguistic and intercultural skills. They can report on their level and plan their future actions to improve their competence. The link between language and intercultural competence is a promising advantage and the first time that a European Language Portfolio has included intercultural competence in this way.

Another open source tool for assessment of oral intercultural competence is CEFcult. The KU-Leuven team have sought to integrate the assessment of language proficiency and intercultural competence. For the latter, they have made use of the INCA scales (see above). The scaling of intercultural competence is being done by means of self peer and expert assessment using social media. Several presentations and papers⁶⁸ have discussed the challenges that they have encountered and how they have tried to make things work. The most important ones will be posted on the official CEFcult website⁶⁹. The principal outcome of the project will be an online

64 At http://www.ecml.at/mtp2/ICOPROMO/html/ICOPROMO_E_pdesc.htm (visited: 11 November 2011).

65 At <http://www.lolipop-portfolio.eu> (visited: 11 November 2011).

66 The institutions were from Ireland, Spain, German, France, Austria, Norway, Poland and Latvia.

67 At http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/documents_intro/common_framework.html (visited: 11 November 2011).

68 Lut Baten, Jan Van Maele & Lutgarde Duser, CEFcult: an innovative web environment for online oral assessment of intercultural professional contexts. Presentation at Online Educa Berlin, 16th International Conference on Technology Supported Learning & Training, December 1-3, 2010, in Book of abstracts, Berlin: ICWE, 2010, 74-77.

69 At <http://www.cefcult.eu> (visited: 11 November 2011).

environment for the assessment of speaking skills and intercultural competence in professional communication. CEFcult is committed to developing a tool that will prove valuable for end-users in companies, job counseling services, employment agencies, chambers of commerce.

The Council of Europe on the other hand introduced the Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters⁷⁰ as they want to promote intercultural dialogue. Their aim is to make people aware of and learn from the intercultural encounters during their life. It's in the form of document in which formal and non-formal items can be included. Encounters cover all sorts of meetings between people, and in so doing it promotes respect for diversity. It is hoped that the users will develop understanding and intercultural competences by reflecting critically. The autobiography can be used in an educational context or as a self-evaluation and development tool.

During the academic year 2007 the course was observed and assessed by two students Marlies Baeten⁷¹ did research on the students' preferences about assessment and study methods. The results of this research should be taken into account for the further development of the course. Students seem to have difficulty in adapting to all new forms of assessment. Jane Catteeuw⁷² did research on intercultural education in Flanders. She made an inventory of all courses of intercultural communication being given in Flemish higher education (university colleges and universities). This was followed by a comparison of three Flemish university college courses (including our course at KdG). It gives a good overview of what intercultural education in Flanders was like in 2007. And it gives an insight into the students' opinion of the course. Most students considered an intercultural communication course useful.

Lut Baten, Lutgarde Duser & Jan Van Maele J., (2011). "Select for attitude, train for skills". Training language learners for intercultural competence in on-line screening interviews. Presentation at the 4th International BAAHE Conference, December 1-3, 2011, Brussels, 2011: at http://www.hubruessel.net/baahe/Congreswebsite-BAAHE/baahe_site.html (visited: 11 November 2011).

⁷⁰ At <http://www.coe.int/t/DG4/AUTOBIOGRAPHY/> (visited: 11 November 2011). French and English versions available and downloadable.

⁷¹ Marlies Baeten, *Evaluatievoorkeuren en studieaanpak. Een pretest-posttest design in een leeromgeving met nieuwe assessmentvormen* (Preferences of Assessment and Study Methods. A Pretest-Post-test Design in a Learning Environment with New Forms of Assessment), unpublished licentiate's thesis, Catholic University Louvain, 2007. Marlies Baeten is now master in pedagogical sciences. Her supervisors were Filip Dochy and Katrien Struyven. She's presently a researcher at KULeuven.

⁷² Jane Catteeuw, *Intercultureel onderwijs: Inventarisering en bevraging in Vlaanderen* (Intercultural Education. Status Quaestions and Enquiries in Flanders), unpublished licentiate's thesis, Catholic University Louvain, 2007. Jane Catteeuw is now master in Germanic Languages. Her supervisor was Lies Sercu.

EDUCATIONAL METHODS: EVOLUTION OR REVOLUTION?

One of the big challenges when introducing the subject intercultural communication at the beginning of the academic year 2004-2005 was the choice of methodology.

Somehow it was obvious that we wouldn't choose for a traditional method of *ex cathedra* tuition, but that we would steer a new course. The reasons for this change of direction can be found in the Bologna process⁷³, the Flemish educational decrees⁷⁴, the inspection of the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO)⁷⁵ and the changes within society. Sercu, Vyncke and Peters put it like this:

'Our society has changed during the last few years. ... Previously as an individual it was sufficient to know a lot about a certain domain, our present society however demands that we can master problem solving, communicative and social skills on top of our knowledge. Knowing a lot about one specific theme is largely insufficient, you have to be able to find the information, analyze it and communicate about it. And you must be able to reflect about your own actions and furthermore to adapt continually to this new situation and knowledge in our information society'.⁷⁶

These factors led to the conclusion that within modern Flemish education the emphasis should shift from pure knowledge to competence. Within the context of the subject Intercultural Communication our policy was completely reversed. Contact hours are no longer at the centre of the system, but the student's independent work is. This is expressed in credits. And how is this put into practice? The use of a portfolio⁷⁷ is a thread throughout the entire subject. The concept of this portfolio has been worked out by Marleen Coutuer⁷⁸ and is used as a basis for

73 At http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/bologna/bologna_en.html (visited: 11 November 2011).

74 At <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/decretenbundel/2009.htm> (visited: 11 November 2011).

75 The NVAO visited Office Management of the department Commercial Sciences and Business Administration at Karel de Grote-Hogeschool on 20-22 March 2006. See above.

76 Lies Sercu, Christine Vyncke en Elke Peters, 'Testen en evalueren in het vreemdetalenonderwijs' (Testing and Assessing in Foreign Language Acquisition), *Cahiers voor Didactiek* 15 (2003). Own translation.

Jonathan Newton, Eric Yates, Sandra Shearn & Werner Nowitzki, *Intercultural Communicative Language Teaching: Implications for Effective Teaching and Learning*, School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies and the Jessie Hetherington Centre for Educational Research, Victoria University of Wellington, 2009.

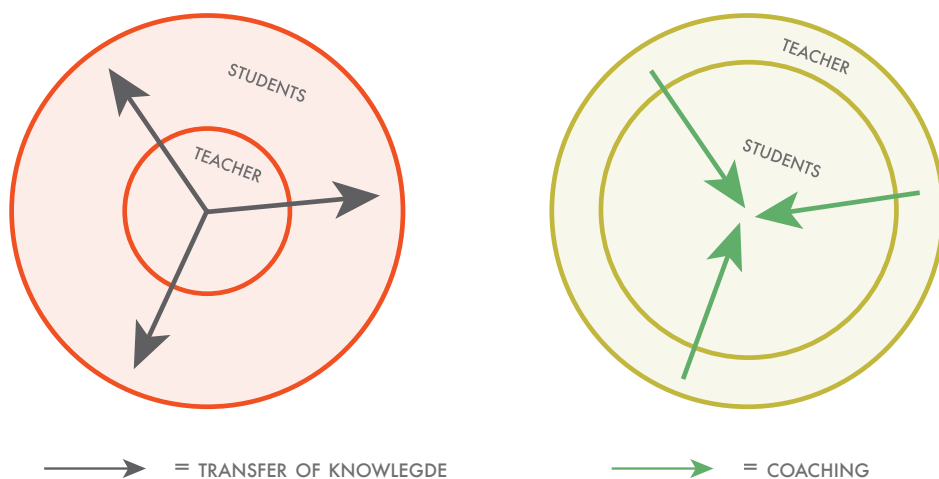
77 Literature about portfolio: Will Meeus en Linda Van Looy, *Portfolio zonder blozen. Het instrument doorgelicht vanuit het perspectief van de lerarenopleiding* (Antwerpen-Apeldoorn: Garant, 2005), o.c., and Jan van Tartwijk, Erik Driessen, Babet Hoeberigs, Jacqueline Kösters, Magda Ritzen, Karel Stokking en Cees van der Vleuten, *Werken met een elektronische portfolio* (Groningen-Houten: Wolters-Noordhoff, 2003), o.c.

78 Until 2008 Marleen Coutuer was head of the Language Centre at the department Commercial Sciences and Business Administration at KdG and did scientific research in the field of portfolio methodology. She has also specialised in Dutch as a second language. She's now coordinator of the Office Management Department at the university college

different subjects⁷⁹ in the curriculum.

According to Jan van Tartwijk⁸⁰ [the portfolio in higher education] *refers to instruments that have in common that they make transparent the unique development of a student or the result of that development* [at a certain moment]. This enhances the quality of the work. At the same time the portfolio enables the lecturer to support and tutor the development of the student's competences (development portfolio) and makes the process of development transparent. For a lecturer portfolios have an advantage in both tutoring (tutoring portfolio) and assessment (assessment portfolio). In this methodology there is a shift of role from the traditional teacher to that of a facilitator-coach. From the centre of the action the lecturer moves to the edges of the teaching domain. He/she takes on the role of the person who supplies information, of supervisor and coach, of critic of the student's process. In this process the student does not only gather knowledge, but he/she learns how to integrate knowledge with skills and attitudes to eventually be able to function competently, in our case intercultural. At the end of the path he can convert his portfolio into an application or presentation portfolio providing potential employers insight into his acquired competences. And thus this portfolio becomes the starting point for lifelong learning.

Figure 7



Artveldehogeschool Gent.

79 Apart from intercultural communication a portfolio was used in legal heuristics, Dutch business writing and translation. Since the business English and legal English have been added.

80 Jan van Tartwijk et alii, o.c., 10-11. Own translation.

For the students this means a self-evident step towards supported autonomous learning via shared guided learning to autonomous learning. This way of learning seems to be very appropriate for the acquisition of intercultural competence: it's an intelligent way of introducing this new subject according to current insights and it is adjusted to the needs and the situation of our times.

The central idea in this course is the basic competence (as described above), worked out in a framework of reference. The lecture will coach the students in acquiring this competence and assess the process afterwards. The student will follow his own learning process and – if necessary – remedy this process. For all these reasons the portfolio seems to be the most suitable instrument.

That's why the framework of reference for intercultural competence has been included in the portfolio, as the learning process is transparent and allows the learner to reflect on his/her progress. He/she will follow the process of acquiring intercultural competence throughout the different levels, expressed in the descriptors. The portfolio in question offers three components: a passport, a section of reflection and a dossier.

In the passport section the student presents him/herself. Previously acquired competences (formal and informal) and qualifications (diplomas, certificates) can be part of this. The reflection part starts with a self-evaluation⁸¹ that leads to a *personal development plan* and a *personal activity plan*. There's a log and templates for the reflection on tasks and activities. In this part the student will also find forms for interim self- and peer-evaluation and for feedback discussions with the lecturer. The dossier contains documents which both make the student's progress transparent and provide proof of the level to which he/she can perform certain tasks.

The educational process is a very clear example of blended learning, in addition to which different approaches (face to face, online, streaming ...) are being used: partly in groups with peers and the lecturer, partly only with reference materials and tasks on the intranet or online on the internet and partly in a virtual group via discussion forums. We therefore do not only use the classical auditorium, but also – and to a greater extent – the electronic learning platform Blackboard.⁸²

Through this medium the student gets his/her assignments (with starting date and deadline). But the platform provides more: discussion rooms, information on subjects, learning materials, forms, documents and links, a glossary and a gradebook. And all non-class communication takes place through this platform.

The lecturer can follow the student's evolution in the open gradebook.

At the start of the course the students will get a general theoretical introduction to intercultural communication. Their first task is filling in a self-evaluation form.

81 Sealll. *Self Evaluation in Adult Life Long Learning*, Alden Biesen, s.d. Can be downloaded from <http://www.sealll.eu> (visited: 11 November 2011).

82 The course can be found at <http://bb.kdg.be>. This platform is for internal use only (username and password are compulsory).

With each teaching unit the students are briefly introduced to one of the intercultural partial competences. This brief theoretical introduction is linked to a task the students have to assimilate individually. Students then have to write down their personal thoughts in a blank task template. After having completed personal reflection the students will meet in a fixed reflection group of 10-15 students, in which they can test their personal understanding with the reflection of the other participants. At the same moment a discussion forum on Blackboard is running to put the different reflection groups into contact with one another. The final report shows the personal understanding of the aforementioned activities and thus makes this whole evolution transparent. During this process the students get extensive feedback. The personal final report is then put into the dossier of the portfolio.

Structure, contents and selection of the competences control the instrument. The contents are to a larger extent determined by the students who decide which documents, reports of reflection, self-evaluation reports and representative outputs of assignments they introduce in their portfolio. The students decide which attitudes, which aspects of knowledge and skills they will work on. Because of this the standardized portfolio can be turned into an individualized instrument, which is very motivating for the student.

During this learning process a whole range of activating learning methods⁸³ are given a chance. Without a further analysis of these different methods we would like to mention: discussion, introductory questions, general questions, development of problem-solving thinking (and lateral thinking), use of topical subjects, preparatory or assimilation assignments, buzz sessions (in which students get the chance to think and talk about a question with his/her neighbour during the contact hours), a course reader, video and streaming (in which live images are shown).

For most students the new forms of evaluation, the personal understanding of the group reflection and the self-evaluation was the most innovative aspect of the course. The traditional final exam was abolished in favour of a combination of new methods: assessment portfolio (cfr. supra), co-assessment, peer assessment, self-assessment and continuing evaluation. These alternative evaluation methods are made use of and are linked to an open gradebook, through which the students can follow their own evaluation in a transparent way. Student feedback shows that the openness of the process through Blackboard is very much appreciated.

These alternative forms of evaluation devote a lot of attention to reflection on their own competence and their own learning process. If you reflect, you will learn your strengths and weaknesses. And if you recognize your weaknesses, you can work on them.

83 In this respect we refer to Hilde De Backer, *Onderwijzen met souplesse: interactieve werkvormen. Flexibiliseren in onze hogeschool* (Flexible Teaching at Our University College: Interactive Methods), (Antwerpen: Karel de Grote-Hogeschool, 2005). Brochure as a result of the university college congress on 17 March 2005.

CULTURAL APPROACH FROM AN (EUROPEAN) ETHNOLOGICAL ANGLE

The American anthropologist Edward T. Hall⁸⁴ introduced a.o. the concepts high context and low context cultures and he did research on time, personal space (proxemics) and context within various cultures. In his writings he soon demonstrated connections between differences in communication and cultural differences. Geert Hofstede⁸⁵ did research on the employees of the multinational IBM in seventy countries. He reduced the differences between (national) cultures to five basic dimensions: 1. power distance; 2. individualism versus collectivism; 3. masculinity versus femininity; 4. uncertainty avoidance and 5. long-term orientation versus short-term orientation. Hofstede is often criticized because of his “imperialistic” (read: Western) approach of cultural differences. Still, his research was pioneering in the field of intercultural communication.* The Dutch economist Fons Trompenaars⁸⁶ discriminates three categories that can differ when dealing with culture and are put down as dichotomies: 1. human relations; 2. time orientation (past, present or future orientation and sequential versus synchronic) and 3. environment (internal versus external orientation). The first category can be split up in five subcategories: 1. universalism versus particularism; 2. individualism versus collectivism; 3. neutral versus affective (i.e. emotional); 4. specific versus diffuse and 5. achieved status versus ascribed status. Another scholar worth mentioning is David Pinto.⁸⁷ He developed the three-step method (3SM), on which we commented above.

But other forms of interdisciplinary research are also taking place. We refer to the lively debates and the large dynamism that have taken place in Flanders and the Netherlands since the 1990s about “volkscultuur”⁸⁸, but also in the recent policy and practices of cultural heritage.

The study of popular culture is not merely diachronic, studying former cultural traditions of

84 See a.o. Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language*, New York, Doubleday Publishers, 1959, Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Cultures*, New York, Doubleday Anchor, 1976 and Edward T. Hall en M. Hall, *Understanding Cultural Differences*, Yarmouth, Intercultural Press, 1990.

85 For the many publications of Geert Hofstede: See http://www.geert-hofstede.com/geert_hofstede_resources.shtml (visited: 11 November 2011).

86 See Fons Trompenaars, *Riding the waves of culture. Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business*, London, Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 1993. See <http://www.thtconsulting.com/Website/index.asp> (visited: 11 November 2011).

87 See a.o. David Pinto, *Intercultural Communication. A three-step method for dealing with differences*, Leuven-Apeldoorn, 2000 en David Pinto, *Interculturele communicatie, conflicten en management (ICCM)*, Houten, Bohn Stafleu Van Loghum, 2004. See http://www.davidpinto.nl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=37&Itemid=64&lang=nl (visited: 11 November 2011).

88 For a status questionis: Marc Jacobs en Gerard Rooijackers, *Een onbeschaamde blik. Etnologie, volkscultuur, erfgoed en dagelijks leven* (An Impudent View. Ethnology, Popular Culture, Heritage and Daily Life), in *cULTUUR. Tijdschrift voor etnologie*, 1 (2005), 3-21.

a people or community. The attention for the contemporary evolutions is strongly present and produces an added value. We see a new paradigm emerging in the notion of “safeguarding”, connected to intangible cultural heritage in UNESCO’s agenda.⁸⁹ The *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage*⁹⁰ of 17 October 2003 has given the highest priority to the debate on cultural diversity⁹¹. It can be combined and developed with the *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* (UNESCO, 2005):

*Interculturality” refers to the existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect.*⁹²

When complying with and implementing such conventions much depends on the goodwill of the affiliated nations. Annick Schramme very justly warns of forum shopping, i.e. countries will only use the convention when it suits them.⁹³ We even fear that some countries might not even limit themselves to forum shopping, but that they might misuse the convention as real window dressing. Perhaps capacity building can provide a solution.

This recent evolution at UNESCO has created a new academic élan in European ethnology⁹⁴ or folklore studies in the Low Countries and in international networks: new subjects and methods have appeared on the agenda. It is sufficient to read the contributions about cultural heritage in the publication *Wegwijs cultuur* (2005) to be convinced of these changes. Marc Jacobs discusses the recent evolutions in the landscape of cultural heritage: huge shifts in this field with special attention to cultural diversity and with an enormous influence on scientific developments.⁹⁵ In his article on “popular culture” Eric Corijn concludes:

*“This growing dynamism can also be seen in the ‘sector’ popular culture (...). Culture becomes increasingly the product of intercultural interaction, of dealing with the unusual and less and less a repetition of tradition (...). And that’s precisely the contribution of contemporary ethnology (...). Bringing up to date, in the meaning of ‘adapting to contemporary insights’, but also as ‘making usable for contemporary practice’.*⁹⁶

Cultural diversity, multiculturalism and interculturality are central themes in this debate. Until recently however the discussion remained limited to the (academic) world of historians, ethnologists, museums, heritage workers and cultural policymakers. The research results and the experiences however are not only relevant within the world of cultural heritage, but also outside this world. This is proved by the number of politicians and policymakers who crank up the debate by implicitly and explicitly introducing interculturality in their policy documents. Very remarkable and usually not connected to the UNESCO debates and safeguarding issues, is the recent movement of research about intercultural communication in European ethnology

89 See <http://whc.unesco.org> (visited: 11 November 2011).

90 See http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich_convention/index.php# (visited: 11 November 2011).

91 An., *UNESCO World Report. Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue*, UNESCO (Paris), 2009.

92 See <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001429/142919e.pdf> (visited: 11 November 2011).

93 Annick Schramme, ‘Europese Unie, Raad van Europa en UNESCO’ (European Union, Council of Europe and UNESCO), in: R. Dillemans en A. Schramme (red.), *Wegwijs cultuur* (Guidebook to Culture) (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 2005), 48.

94 Sabine Wienker-Piepho and Klaus Roth (eds.), *Erzählen zwischen den Kulturen* (Relating between Cultures), (Münster-New York – München-Berlin: Waxmann, 2004, series Münchener Beiträge zur Interkulturellen Kommunikation 17).

95 Marc Jacobs, *Het culturele-erfgoedlandschap. Convergentie en beleidsinstrumenten in de erfgoedsector* (The World of Cultural Heritage. Convergence and Policy Instruments in the Cultural Heritage Sector), in R. Dillemans en A. Schramme (red.), *Wegwijs cultuur*, Leuven, Davidsfonds, 2005, p. 271-277.

96 Eric Corijn, *Volkscultuur*, in R. Dillemans en A. Schramme (red.), o.c., p.264-265, quotation p. 265.

within the German-speaking world. We refer to (and recommend) articles and books of the German-speaking ethnologists Klaus Roth, Lutz Röhrich, Helge Gerndt, Sabine Wienker-Piepho, Alois Moosmüller, Peter Niedermüller, Ronald Lutz and others. Their work is not merely a gloss on the sociological approach, but a clear and strong scientific movement with vast influence in Middle and Eastern Europe. A lot of research even directly links ethnology and intercultural education.⁹⁷

A cross-fertilization⁹⁸ with other disciplines would be interesting in this field.

The flow of migrants from former Eastern European countries caused an acceleration in research of integration issues, precisely because Germany and Austria are the closest neighbours⁹⁹ and the gate to Eastern Europe and because they received the first flow of immigrants from these countries. A pragmatic policy is very necessary to face the present and future problems. And European ethnology can play a main part in this. Klaus Roth says:

*The necessity of European ethnology doesn't only lie in the aggravated problems at the turn of the century, but principally in the realities of Europe.*¹⁰⁰

He clearly pleads for cultural awareness of the own culture. Watching and studying other cultures can improve this awareness. To this end he uses a quotation of Riehl dating back to 1910. The contents are still of topical interest and haven't lost their value in a century:

*Only those people who have been abroad, are able to understand and depict their own country objectively; [...], and the real ethnologist does not merely travel to portray what he has seen abroad, but rather to gain the correct angle to study the conditions within his own country.*¹⁰¹

97 Sabine Klocke-Daffa, *Interkulturelles Lernen in Deutschland aus der Sicht der Ethnologie* (Intercultural Learning in Germany from an Ethnological Perspective), in Ursula Bertels, Sandra de Vries & Nina Nolte (eds.), *Fremdes Lernen. Aspekte interkulturellen Lernens im internationalen Diskurs* (Foreign Learning. Aspects of Intercultural Learning in International Discourse), Münster-New York-München-Berlin, Waxmann, 2007, series Praxis Ethnologie 3.

98 Christoph Köck, Alois Moosmüller and Klaus Roth (eds.), *Zuwanderung und Integration. Kulturwissenschaftliche Zugänge und soziale Praxis* (Immigration and Integration. Cultural-scientific Approach and Social Practice), Münster-New York-München-Berlin: Waxmann, 2004, series Münchener Beiträge zur Interkulturellen Kommunikation 16.

99 Klaus Roth (ed.), *'Nachbarschaft. Interkulturelle Beziehungen zwischen Deutschen, Polen und Tschechen'* (Neighbourliness. Intercultural Relations between Germans, Polish and Czechs), Münster-New York-München-Berlin: Waxmann, 2001, series Münchener Beiträge zur Interkulturellen Kommunikation 11.

Klaus Roth (ed.), *'Vom Wandergesellen zum "Green Card"-Spezialisten. Interkulturelle Aspekte der Arbeitsmigration im östlichen Mitteleuropa'* (From Peregrinating Migrant to Green Card Specialist. Intercultural Aspects of Labour Migration in the East of Middle Europe), Münster-New York-München-Berlin, Waxmann, 2003, series Münchener Beiträge zur Interkulturellen Kommunikation 14.

Werner Schiffauer, Gerd Baumann, Riva Kastoryano, Steven Vertovec (eds.), *Staat - Schule - Ethnizität. Politische Sozialisation von Immigrantenkinder in vier europäischen Ländern* (Nation - School - Ethnicity. Political Socialization of Migrant Children in Four European Countries), Münster-München-New York, Waxmann, 2002, series Interkulturelle Bildungsfor-

schung 10. Paul Mecheril, *Prekäre Verhältnisse. Über natio-ethno-kulturelle (Mehrfach-) Zugehörigkeit* (Precarious Relations. About National-ethnic-cultural Poly Belonging) (Münster-München-New York, Waxmann, 2003, series Interkulturelle Bildungsforschung 13.

100 Klaus Roth, 'Europäische Ethnologie und Interkulturelle Kommunikation', in: Klaus Roth (ed.), *Mit der Differenz leben. Europäische Ethnologie und Interkulturelle Kommunikation* (Living with Difference. European Ethnology and Intercultural Communication), Münster-München-New York, Waxmann, 2000, series Münchener Beiträge zur Interkulturellen Kommunikation 1, 23. Own translation from German.

101 Klaus Roth, o.c., 2. Quotation from Wilhelm H. Riehl, 'Die Volkskunde als Wissenschaft' (Folklore as Science), in *Kulturstudien aus drei Jahrhunderten* (Three Centuries of Cultural Studies), Stuttgart, 1910, 195-218. Own translation from German.

And the need for intercultural competence isn't even questioned, as Alois Moosmüller justly puts:

*Intercultural competence is a key qualification for everybody who has to deal with people from other cultures.*¹⁰²

Proceeding from a strong theoretical base they tried to turn this theory into practice. And so we automatically end up with Juliana Roth¹⁰³, who introduced intercultural communication at the university of Munich, and Ursula Bertels, Sabine Eylert, Christiana Lütken and Sandra de Vries¹⁰⁴. Those four people start from the premise that teaching intercultural competence is necessary, if members of a society want to live together successfully. They assume that teaching intercultural competence is a pedagogic mission in the educational system and that ethnology can be a vital link in this process. Their *Lernziele* (learning aims) bear close resemblance to the partial competences we proposed in our framework of reference. They assume that an interdisciplinary approach is very important:

*[...] that the results of the project are important because of the interdisciplinary stimuli for different branches of science – ethnology, pedagogy, psychology and sociology. This can be illustrated by the fact that many requests for the pilot study from representatives of different disciplines reached us.*¹⁰⁵

Therefore it shouldn't surprise us that intercultural communication is being lectured at most German-speaking universities and university colleges, where it is treated as an interdisciplinary subject and where they try to summarize the different points of view. Through these readings we can have an actual and multiperspective introduction to interculturality.¹⁰⁶

But it is very clear that the application is not limited to education. In practice it starts with the problems migrants have to deal with when they arrive in their new country. And even there you will find a lot of literature on how to deal with the problems. Galina Koptelzewa¹⁰⁷ and Sabine Krönchen¹⁰⁸ have done research on culture-sensitive social work to create possibilities for better understanding.

102 Alois Moosmüller, 'Interkulturelle Kompetenz und interkulturelle Kenntnisse. Überlegungen zu Ziel und Inhalt im auslandsvorbereitenden Training' (Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Knowledge. Reflections on Goals and Contents in Training for Migrants), in: Klaus Roth (ed.), o.c., 287. Own translation from German.

103 Juliana Roth, 'Interkulturelle Kommunikation als universitäres Lehrfach. Zu einem neuen Münchner Studiengang' (Intercultural Communication as University Course. A New Curriculum in Munich), in Juliana Roth (ed.), *Blickwechsel. Beiträge zur Kommunikation zwischen den Kulturen* (Change of Viewpoint. Contributions to Communication between Cultures), Münster-München-New York, Waxmann, 2003, series Münchener Beiträge zur Interkulturellen Kommunikation 15, 179-195.

104 Ursula Bertels et alii, o.c.

105 Ibidem, 228. Own translation from German.

106 Alois Moosmüller (ed.), *Interkulturelle Kommunikation. Kontouren einer wissenschaftlichen Disziplin* (Intercultural Communication. Outlines of a Scientific Discipline), Münster-New York – München-Berlin, Waxmann, 2006, series Münchener Beiträge zur Interkulturellen Kommunikation 20).

107 Galina Koptelzewa, *Interkulturelle Kompetenz in der Beratung. Strukturelle Voraussetzungen und Strategien der Sozialarbeit mit Migranten* (Intercultural Competence in Counselling. Structural Assumptions and Strategies of Social Work with Migrants), Münster-New York – München-Berlin, Waxmann, 2004, series Münchener Beiträge zur Interkulturellen Kommunikation 18.

108 Sabine Krönchen, "Mutiger werden und sich einmischen". *Interkulturelle Kompetenzentwicklung in der sozialen Arbeit* (Becoming Braver and Getting Involved. Development of Intercultural Competence in Social Work), Münster-München-New York, Waxmann, 2001, series Interkulturelle Bildungsgänge 2.

CONCLUSION

The framework of reference for intercultural communication in its present form is the result of research of existing frameworks of reference and of the contemporary literature¹⁰⁹. But at the same time it is a framework that – for the time being – concentrates on higher education, as part of the curriculum of the graduation Office Management (professional bachelor). During the past academic years more than two thousand students came into contact with this framework of reference. Of course, the course was/is too limited to train these students in order to be interculturally competent citizens. For this to happen there is not enough time available and the training takes place in too sterile an environment, i.e. this “laboratory” environment is too far removed from the practical experience of business life. It needs to be a lived experience. The next phase is the practice of this competence on the shop floor. We talk about business life, but also about administration, the social sector, the world of culture, authorities and so on. No organisation or company can be excluded from this, as diversity in all its aspects will only increase. It will also be crucial for those mediators, brokers and experts who will be involved in the implementation of the UNESCO conventions, in particular in projects and programmes of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

This framework can be finetuned and adapted for training in several sectors, like that of cultural heritage¹¹⁰ or other sectors¹¹¹. The partial competences have to be translated for the diverse end users. It's logical that a nurse should be trained differently than a forwarder (logistics), a museum professional, a cultural broker or a civil engineer. This problem can be dealt with by adapting the descriptors going hand in hand with the partial descriptors.

By analogy with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages¹¹² different portfolios can be designed on the basis of the general framework of reference but with specially adapted descriptors.

To reach this goal we still have a long way to go. And yet this framework of reference is a first step in a long way to general acknowledgement. And such an acknowledgement would mean a

109 An., *Handboek interculturele competentie* (Handbook Intercultural Competence), Uitgeverij Politeia (Brussel), 2011. By the Cimic team: Jo Bastiaens, Gunilla de Graef, Dorien De Troy, Yunsy Krols, Fanny Matheusen, Guido Minne & Joke Simons.

110 Kirsten Gibbs, Margherita Sani and Jane Thompson (eds.), *Lifelong Learning in Museums. A European Handbook*, Ferrara, Edisai, 2007.

111 Sigurd D'Hondt, *Interculturele communicatie in rechtbanken* (Intercultural Communication in Court), Brussel, Politeia, 2004.

112 At http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio?L=E&M=/main_pages/portfolios.html (visited: 11 November 2011). At the moment 113 different portfolios have been validated. It took a long time (2009) for a Flemish portfolio that complies with the demands of the European Commission. More than twenty countries from the EU (including Wallonia) have at least one portfolio and even countries from outside the EU (like Turkey, Armenia, Georgia, Croatia and the Russian Federation) have a validated portfolio. No portfolios have been validated from Luxemburg, Denmark, Finland and Romania.

giant leap in the dissemination. Not only because of the transparency, but also because of the recognizable validity and exchangeability. And this again could enhance economic mobility. These are the analogous advantages offered by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. But for the moment this is merely wishful thinking.

In a society that is continually changing, the role of intercultural communication and training of intercultural competence will become increasingly important. Globalisation¹¹³ makes every individual a world citizen in his/her own way. Within the scope of this article we have tried to supply a framework and an instrument to meet the needs in this field. The propositions mentioned here are not end points, but the possible impulse to question the issue of intercultural competence and the possible officialisation of a framework of reference more openly. And to give possibilities to tackle this important matter with a sound amount of imagination.¹¹⁴

Kontich, 11 November 2011¹¹⁵

113 Fred Dervin (ed.), *Analysing the Consequences of Academic Mobility and Migration*, Cambridge, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011.

114 Marc Colpaert, o.c.

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FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE FOR BUSINESS PURPOSES			
Basic = knowing		Advanced = understanding	Proficiency = applying
1. Critical awareness (attitude) Can deal critically and consciously as an individual with the society in which he/she lives			
1	Notifies that he/she lives in a changing society	Dares to question the society in which he/she lives	Is aware of and has a critical approach to the society in which he/she lives
2	Recognizes prejudices, racist feelings and attitudes within oneself and others and knows the cultural stereotypes	Can make prejudices, racist feelings and attitudes within oneself and others subject of discussion and understands the origin of stereotypes	Can prevent oneself and others from prejudices, racist feelings and attitudes and can see through the cultural stereotypes
2. Openness - right to differ - respect for otherness (attitude) Can deal with ambiguous situations, is open to others and can accept and respect possible differences			
3	Recognizes other cultures and cultural diversity	Tolerates other cultures and cultural diversity	Functions within other cultures and cultural diversity
4	Recognizes otherness (culture, class, gender, age, health, sexual inclination, ethnicity, appearance, ...)	Accepts otherness	Functions according to the principles of equality
5	Recognizes culture shock within oneself and others when in contact with a different culture	Knows how to deal with the problems of culture shock	Effectively overcomes the problems of culture shock
3. Flexibility and empathy (attitude) Can be flexible when dealing with realistic situations and demands and can understand intuitively what other people think and feel in realistic situations			
6	Is aware of past experiences	Learns from past experiences	Adapts to the actual situation
7	Is willing to learn the partner's language: CEF - A	Is willing to learn the partner's language: CEF - B	Is willing to learn the business partner's language: CEF - C
8	Notifies that business partners can react differently	Understands that business partners can react differently	Accepts the other as a coherent individual and deals tactfully with different reactions
4. Communicative skill (skill) Can communicate effectively and correctly with others in realistic situations			
9	Recognizes the intercultural background and possible problems in written, oral and non-verbal communication	Understands the intercultural background and possible problems in written, oral and non-verbal communication	Can prevent possible intercultural problems in written and oral communication and in non-verbal communication
5. Solution oriented attitude (skill) Can think and act in a solution oriented way in realistic situations			
10	Recognizes misunderstandings and conflicts, possibly related to the cultural background	Understands the origin of misunderstandings and conflicts, possibly related to the cultural background	Can prevent misunderstandings and conflicts
11	In individual situations, makes an extra effort to learn from misunderstandings and conflicts.	As a rule makes an extra effort to learn from misunderstandings and conflicts.	Will purposely seek out situations in which can be learned from living, working or studying with people from different cultures or with a different background
6. Cultural knowledge (knowledge) Can acquire knowledge of a different culture and can use this knowledge in actual situations			
12	Knows the concepts relating to interculturality	Can see a link between professional situations and the concepts relating to interculturality	Can apply the concepts relating to interculturality in professional situations
13	Recognizes the problems of neglected target groups: immigrants, asylum seekers, the underprivileged, .. whom he/she has to deal with in his/her working environment (subordinates, colleagues)	Knows how to deal with and understands the problems of neglected target groups	Effectively deals with people from neglected target groups in a spontaneous way
14	Recognizes the sociocultural conventions of target groups he/she comes into contact with: companies, expats, ...	Understands the sociocultural conventions of the target groups he/she comes into contact with	Incorporates the sociocultural conventions of the target groups he/she comes into contact with

Personalia

Paul Catteeuw (1956) studied Germanic Philology at the Catholic University Leuven. From 1985 till 2007 he worked in higher education. At the Karel de Grote-Hogeschool Antwerp he mainly lectured German and German translation and led the Language Centre for two years. Since 2004 he did research on the acquisition of intercultural competence in a multicultural society and published on this matter. He also lectured on intercultural communication, both to Flemish and international classes. From 2007 till 2009 he worked for CANON Cultuurcel, Flemish Ministry of education and training.

In 2009 he resumed his job at the Karel de Grote-Hogeschool Antwerp. At present, he is member of the Board of Directors of FARO (www.faronet.be) and secretary of the editorial board of the scholarly journal *Volkskunde*. He published textbooks for German and a frequency list with German vocabulary for higher educations and articles on folklore for different publications.

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I AM A CRITICAL AND
CONSCIOUS CITIZEN AND I
CAN FUNCTION FLEXIBLY AND
INTERCULTURALLY IN AN OPEN
AND RESPECTFUL MANNER IN
THE MULTICULTURAL AND DIVERSE
SOCIETY IN WHICH I
LIVE AND WORK



With the support of
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