



CULTURE  
CONTACT

# **Six-Stage-Model of an Intercultural „Integrative Training Programm“**

Presented using the example of the module:  
Planning and Organizational Styles

By

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# I. Introduction

## 1. Why are intercultural training programs useful?

As a result of economic globalization and the opening of new markets, an increasing number of companies are faced with intercultural challenges.

Experience has shown that those managers with intercultural training deal with their foreign counterparts and business partners more successfully.

As hidden and subconscious behavior and working practices are made transparent in an intercultural training program, invisible barriers can be overcome quicker, loss due to friction between colleagues and costly misunderstandings can be reduced significantly.

The „cultural categories“ in the intercultural seminar teach the participants to learn to identify intercultural aspects independently after the seminar, to develop strategies to make themselves understood and to cope with such situations. In this way, they are enabled to avoid unnecessary, time consuming and costly conflicts.

An understanding of one's own and the other's culture is taught to show the connection between them, making the participants more flexible in their handling of intercultural issues, thus providing them with increased cultural competence.

Seminar participants learn to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of both cultures, to respect them and also to integrate them in a meaningful way in order to be able to develop long-term synergies in finding solutions

## 2. The four quality criteria of "integrative training programs"

In order to be able to achieve these goals, the author has developed the **methodological approach to "integrative training"**. Based on her experience gained since 1990 in intensive training and research, the author has set down the following quality criteria for an intercultural training program:

Learning while using an integral approach, implies the following criteria, **which can only result in quality when all are taught together**: Under "integrative training approach" it is understood that reason, feelings and actions are given equal priority in the process of learning in an intercultural training program.

- First of all, participants are **sensitized** to the subject matter. This means that certain ways of thinking are brought to light to be able to deal with the subject of culture openly.
- The next step entails the **cognitive** description and analysis of specific cultural patterns and categories of culture.
- Building on this, negative assumptions are re-valued emotionally in the **affective** section, with the aim of changing the participants' attitudes.
- This in turn is a pre-requisite for the concrete modification of **behavior and actions** and to be able to develop coping strategies.

The aim of an „integrative training program“ is to provide and familiarize participants with instruments that they can apply and utilize **independently** in unknown situations in intercultural practice.

## II. Description of an “integrative training approach” using the example of the training module: Working and organizational styles, an intercultural comparison

### 1. First Stage: General Cultural Sensitization

Culture: Differentiation between nature, culture and individual

A young boy walks behind an adult, the sun is shining, or: **What is culture?**

The American anthropologist, Clyde Kluckhohn, once said: "Every man is in a certain aspect like ALL, SOME and NO other men". What does this mean? First of all one assumes that **all** people in the world have much in common - at least the fact that we are all human beings. This is the level of human nature, which we are all subject to. All human beings are born, have feelings like happiness, fear, anger and sadness. All humans die, all are sexual beings, we need affection and love, we all laugh and cry etc.

All this together makes up the basis of human existence which is almost unchangeable, static, predetermined and inherited. We will always need food. That is the law of nature which always applies, just as we always need to breathe and can't fly. The necessities of nature are things which human beings can't avoid. They form the predetermined reality to which everyone is exposed to the same extent and which is not always easy to distinguish from the subsequent so-called SOME level, as the border between them is difficult to define. (cf the „nature or nurture” discussion).

Everything which constitutes human nature is, to keep with Kluckhohn, interpreted in different cultures, and here again differently by **some**: Everyone must die – **how** death is handled in a culture, how people interpret the general fact of dying, giving it different values, norms, rituals and symbols, is expressed in the various interpretations of a cultural reality which is always created by humans.

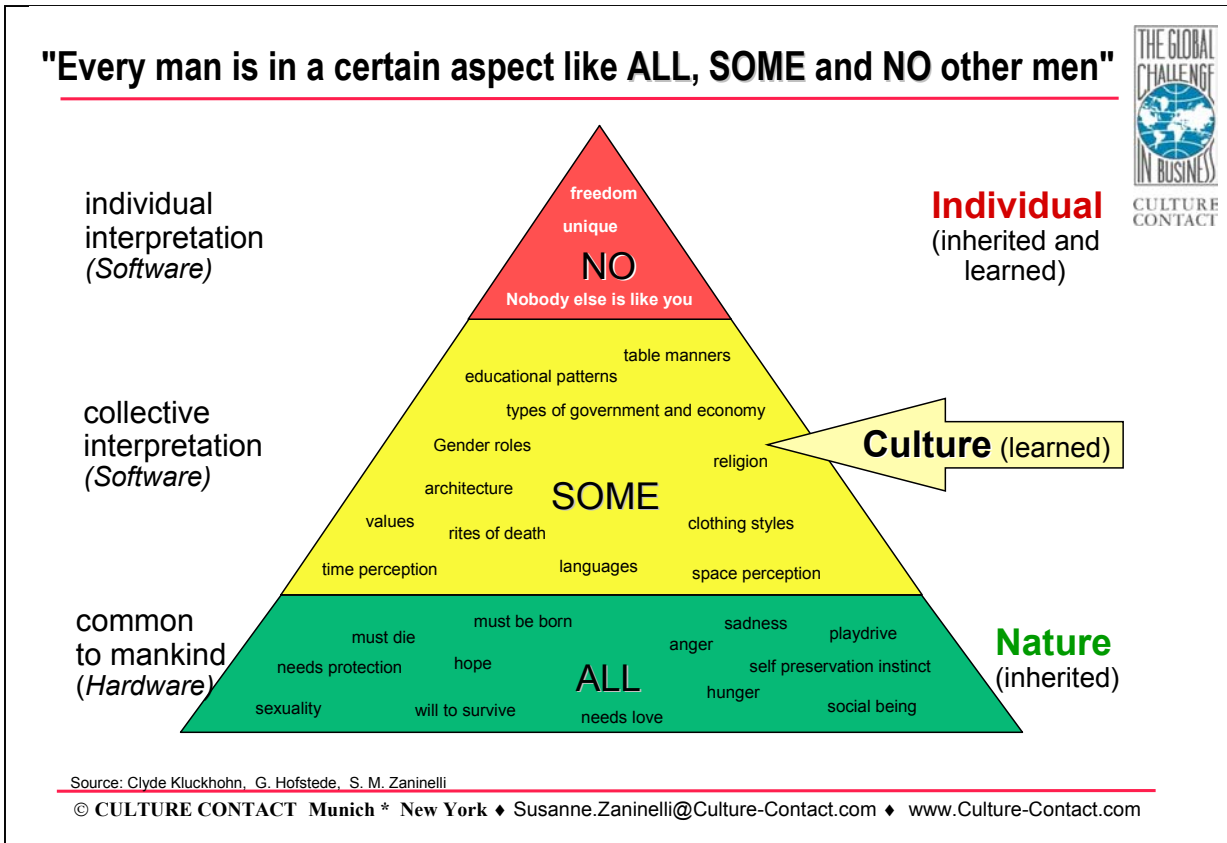


Figure 1: Differentiation between nature, culture and individual

When someone close to us dies in **Germany** for example, we wear black or dark mourning clothes. In the past a certain period of mourning was to be respected, recognizable by the clothing and behavior; this type of mourning can still be observed in more rural parts of the country. In **Greece** in small villages it is still often the case, as it also was our tradition in the past, that a widow dresses in black for the rest of her life after the death of her husband. In some village communities in certain cultural regions of **India** the widow is burned with her dead husband on the funeral pile (even if this practice has long been abolished and itself is a rather marginal phenomenon). Another cultural variation in dealing with death in very few parts of India was the simultaneous burial of the still living husband in the burial vault of his dead wife. In Japan white is sometimes still worn, while a funeral is a colorful affair in **Mexico**.

Everyone has to die. But the way in which this same natural necessity is **interpreted** varies with different cultures and their own specific ways. Reality therefore becomes a **self-created** cultural truth through *interpretation*. Culture is a learned **collective** program (Hofstede 1993). It constitutes the software, compared to human nature, which constitutes the hardware. Hardware means the fact that people need to eat to survive. However, **how** we eat, be it with chopsticks, our hands or with a knife and fork, is the cultural software, containing values. This software, however, is always subject to change, compared to the unchanging hardware of human nature.

<h2>What is culture?</h2>		
<b>ALL</b> Hardware	<b>SOME</b> Cultural Software	<b>NO</b> Individual Software
<b>That</b> all people must die is a fact of nature which is unchangeable and predetermined.	<b>How</b> we deal with death is dependent on culture which is expressed through different conceptions of afterlife in religions and philosophies as well as in rituals of mourning, customs, etc.	Every individual person can define their personal attitude concerning death and afterlife <b>relatively freely</b> , as long as they don't clearly exclude themselves from society.
<b>NATURE</b> <b>Predetermined</b>	<b>ORDER</b> <b>Collective Interpretation</b>	<b>FREEDOM</b> <b>Individual Interpretation</b> <b>=&gt; produces change</b>

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Abbildung 2: Differentiation between nature, culture and individual

Culture is not hereditary or inborn like natural necessities. It is learned, passed on through tradition, exists in symbolic, emblematic form and is mostly subconscious.

Culture shapes the awareness of the self. Our individualistic western world has created e.g. psychoanalysis as a typical cultural product. This type of "treating the soul" in China or Japan would meet with a complete lack of understanding, as people in these cultures define their "self" differently. In the USA there have been many publications and research projects on the subject of intercultural psychiatry over the last ten years or so.

Culture is the *interpretation* of the world, expressed in various myths, religions, views and philosophies. For its members, culture creates an identifiable form of **order**, giving the natural necessities a specific structure, to which it is possible to **orientate** ones self.

It gives us a framework, within which people belonging to a particular culture can be **safe** and in **harmony with others** of the same group.

Culture teaches us what is **normal**, and *selects* and *evaluates* specific behavior or views as "good" or "bad". While in Japan, for example, it is normal, relative to our culture, "almost always" (our interpretation!) to smile, in our culture, anyone behaving in such a way would be sent to see a psychiatrist, or he would be felt to be at least abnormal and peculiar.

Culture provides us with a **means of coping**, which help us to regulate the social aspects of our lives, to give us security in the dealing with others. But foreign cultural

behavior first of all puts our own life-strategies in question, which in the worst case could result in a so-called *cultural shock*. At best the recognition of the different means of coping and their inherent opportunities brings about *synergies*.

Every person, although he grew up, was educated and molded in a particular culture, is at the same time a distinctive and unique *individual*. A German among millions of Germans and a Chinese person among millions of other Chinese, is and remains an unique individual.

Every person is unique in the world thanks to his own specific life experience and hereditary characteristics. What makes him **unique** is his ability to make his own individual interpretation of his environment and culture, to be able to create an entirely personal, individual reality.

An individual is on the one hand shaped by his culture, but on the other influences and shapes his culture. He is both active and passive, creator and created.

As an individual makes decisions using his own free will, he creates change, adjustment, innovation and thus makes his own environment. *Cultural change* always stems from the individual, the same goes for corporate culture..

The influence of our culture is not something we are aware of. We assume quite simply in many things that they are normal for all and that they apply to the same extent to all people. Just how little we question our own cultural behavior can be seen in the following study: In the 70's, an American insurance company wanted to reduce the accident rate in a South African mine. The workers there could neither read nor write. For that reason, one of the American employees of the insurance company had the idea of making drawings of the most frequent cause of accident, assuming that pictures would be a universal language, which everyone could understand.

Fifty posters were made up and put up everywhere for all to see. Astonishingly, for months on end nothing in the slightest changed in the miners' behavior. At first no one could explain why, until an American employee made an experiment: In his office he hung up a poster showing two people at work. The worker in the foreground was carrying a long, heavy length of wood, with which he accidentally hit a colleague on the head who was walking behind him, and who consequently "saw stars". The intention of the picture was the following: Take care when carrying long and heavy loads. As he asked each miner individually to come into his office and tell him what they saw, they said: *A young boy is following an adult, the sun is shining*. Some said that it was night time and the stars were shining (Wyndham 1975).


What had happened? Our Euro-American depiction convention (Keller 1982) is based on **three dimensional** representation. This was developed in the west during the Renaissance, the most famous representative of this period is Leonardo da Vinci. (In China, India and Greece, this perception was known for thousands of years, but never developed into a convention.) In the middle ages we still had the **two dimensional** depiction convention. There are many cultures in the world which use two dimensional representation. That means that they do not see the vanishing point in a three dimensional representation. They therefore are right in saying that the smaller figure (we would say the one behind the one in front) had to be a child, as they see the image as flat. And, as in this culture children have to walk behind adults, they all „saw“ a child walking behind an adult, which from a purely, visual point of view was not portrayed, but culturally "seen" as such.

They interpreted the comic image of the “stars” very realistically. It was also no problem to teach the South African miners how to view a three dimensional picture, as culture is learned and thus can be learned.

## Euro-American Illustration Conventions

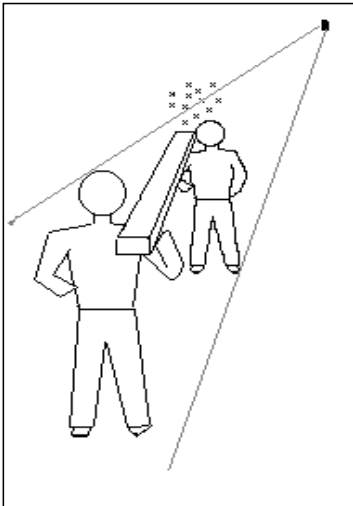
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### The spatial perception of African workers in South Africa



3-dimensional

**Intention** of the poster: "Danger! Be careful when carrying a long and heavy board."



2-dimensional

**Interpretation** of the South African workers: "A little boy is following an adult person. The sun is shining."

Source: Wyndham 1975

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Abbildung 3: Differing Depiction Conventions

This example clearly visualizes for the participants of an intercultural training seminar how quickly we assume that everyone sees the world as we do. That is the first stage of "natural" ethnocentrism, which should be overcome in this section of the seminar. The first step therefore serves as *sensitization to cultural differences* in an intercultural training program. It should show how relative and how subconscious our awareness is shaped. The participants learn to understand that we can attempt with words to talk about the same “thing” that we see before us, but we can argue about it considerably, as everyone sees his own specific cultural reality through his “cultural spectacles” and therefore everyone is right.

This is the contents of the **"First Stage: Sensitization"**. It is concerned with the differentiation between nature, culture and the individual and with the creation of a functional and common cultural term.



## 2. Stage: Conveying the theory

### Cultural category: monochrone - polychrone

#### *Learning from "cultural categories" as a tool for analysis*

At this point a historical review is given: Why **time** is a cultural product, even if everyone is born into a culture and why the western world, due to its linear perception of time and several other religious and philosophical factors, developed this industrial culture.

The aim is to clarify what makes our idea of work different from other cultures. An explanation is given as to why we, compared to other cultures, have developed different ways of thinking with all the advantages and disadvantages that entails. The challenge facing our industrial culture today is to become aware of the cultural practices of our perception of values and work, in order to be able to compare our culture to others. The aim of an intercultural seminar is to expand our repertoire of thinking and of behavior, without losing any of our own cultural identity in the process.

Then the "cultural category "monochrone - polychrone" by E.T. Hall is introduced. **A "cultural category" is an instrument of analysis which demonstrates the ideal type of a particular cultural principal or system, by which we are subconsciously shaped.** There are as many "cultural categories" as a scientist can identify. In other words an infinite number. In this regard, to make the training method more clear, only one of these "cultural categories" is presented.

The terms "monochrone - polychrone" stem from the following words: chronos (Greek) - time and mono (Lat.) - one and poly (Greek) - many or much. Here, this means: What do I do with time? Do I allocate it and work systematically through one task after the other – in as planned and structured a way as possible? Do I divide it up and deal with many tasks at the same time working with a relaxed, open and spontaneous system? These are two extremes in dealing with time. In Figure 5 the most marked characteristics of monochrone working practices are placed to the left of the "culture spectrum", while the most extreme characteristics of polychrone working practices and behavior to the right. Following this, each of these systems of values (poles) produces a series of different logical ways of thinking and behaving.

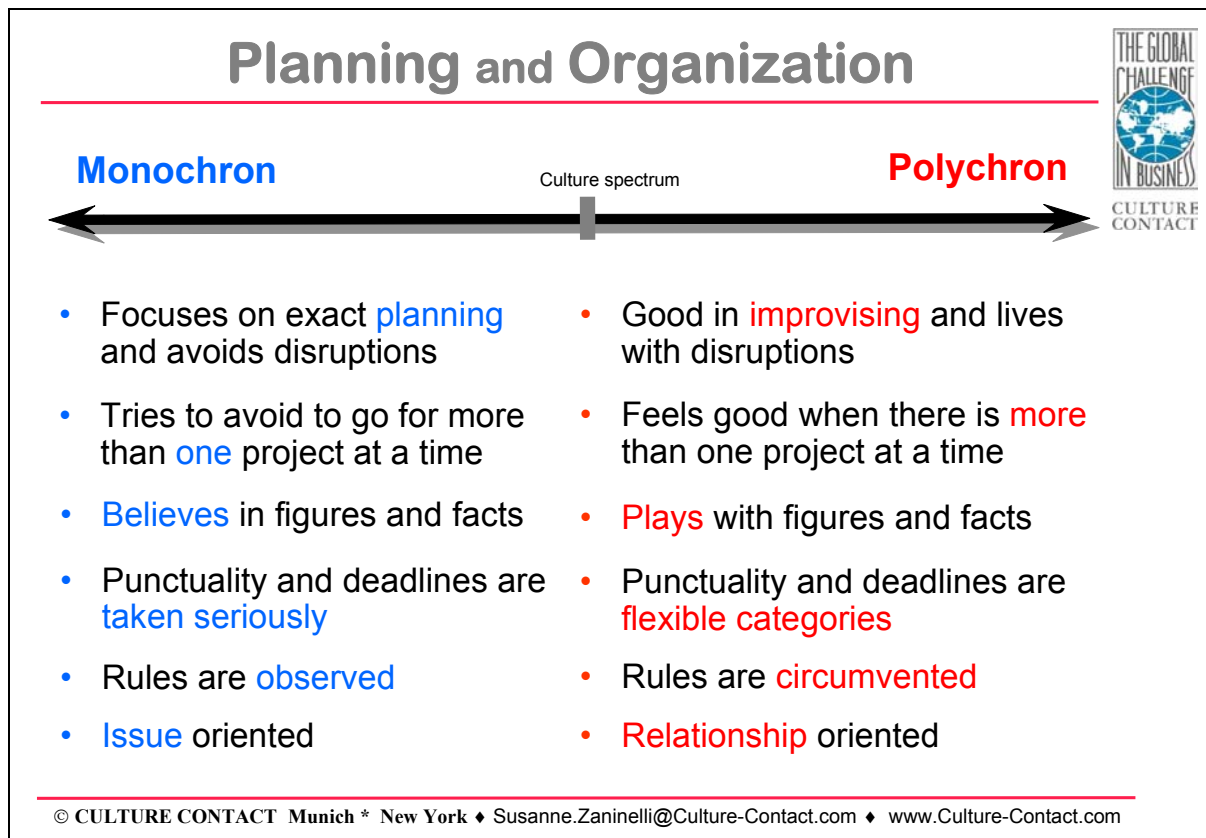


Figure 4: Cultural Category „monochrome – polychrone“

A striking characteristic of western industrial culture was for a long time an extreme bias towards a monochrome organization of work. But, as every culture changes, our industrial culture naturally changes, too. Various management approaches from different cultures have had an influence on and modified this very successful monochrome way of operating. The ever quicker rate of change on markets and shorter product life-cycles contribute to there being a slight shift towards a polychrone way of operating. Nevertheless, it can still be said that in relation to all the other cultures in the world, the German-speaking cultures are still the most monochrome, next to the Anglo-Saxon influenced cultures.

When working with "cultural categories", the aim is to understand the ideal type of a cultural principle or pattern which shapes and affects us subconsciously. Many cultures can be placed between the two extremes.

The next step entails the participants using the analysis tools they have just learned on small case studies in real-life situations. Here an example is given.

### 3. Stage: Analytical Transfer Exercises


#### Critical Incident: Business Transactions

##### *Use of the learned tools of analysis*

One of Richard Brislin et al. methods of intercultural learning is the use of "Critical Incidents", or small case studies, which the author largely uses in seminars or in the follow-up coaching sessions with the participants from abroad. These cases are thus not construed or artificial, but very close to real-life and reality, actual incidents from intercultural business life. A "Critical Incident" is based primarily on one or more cultural categories, which the participants identify and analyze:

### **Talking Business**

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Mr Baus, an experienced German businessman, was sent by his company to a meeting in **Portugal**, to win a future business partner for the company. Punctual and as agreed, Herr Baus arrived at 10.30 am at the office of the person he was to meet. Mr Ribeiro, however, arrived at around 10.45 am, greeted Herr Baus very warmly, but didn't seem to think it necessary to apologize for his being late. Furthermore, he didn't make any effort to ensure that the meeting went ahead undisturbed: Despite Herr Baus' presence, he repeatedly made short telephone calls and allowed members of staff to interrupt. After an hour Mr Ribeiro invited him to lunch, and Mr Baus believed that finally the opportunity had come to be able to discuss business. But here again Mr Ribeiro was involved in an infinite number of conversations. Not only with business partners, who made themselves comfortable at their table, but he even chatted with friends he

happened to meet. Very enthusiastically, he introduced Mr Baus, who just sat there, feeling too overcome to be able to start a conversation with any of these people. After this seemingly endless lunch, Mr Ribeiro then invited a completely exasperated and ever increasingly impatient Mr Baus to a game of tennis! Mr Baus sat rather forlornly at the side of the tennis court, while Mr Ribeiro chatted to all and sundry quite loudly, swinging his tennis racquet. Later that afternoon Mr Baus left empty handed to go to the airport and was hardly able to contain his anger. Years later he became aware that Mr Ribeiro on that day – for him wasted – executed two lucrative deals.

- **Why did the planned negotiation between the two men not take place?**
- **Was Mr Ribeiro satisfied with how the day went?**

Quelle: Lewis / Zaninelli

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Abbildung 5: Critical Incident: Geschäftsabschlüsse

The participants work on the case in small groups and first make an attempt using the cultural categories "monochrome - polychrone" to answer the two questions on the worksheet. The results are then presented in a plenary session and discussed. The participants work on a total of four "Critical Incidents", which each highlight and emphasize different aspects of this cultural category. For the purpose of this article it is however sufficient to restrict the discussion to the contents of the critical incident to be able to make the method more visual. That also means being limited to a few aspects of the whole cultural spectrum of monochrome and polychrone working and organizational style.

Once the participants have become familiar with the principle of a specific "cultural category" in all its facets, they then have to ask the question as to how to fit it into their own views, habits and ideas of work and business. For this the *Culture Spectrum Exercise Assessment of Self and Others* was developed.

The degree of cultural molding of a category, either monochrone or polychrone, can be made more visual using figures. An extremely zealous monochrone way of working would be placed at the value of "100" on the left, the value shrinking as you go to the middle where the value is "0", where in turn to the right it goes back up to "100" in the direction of polychrone. One's *own* and then that of the *foreign* culture is entered onto the "Culture Spectrum", to be able to become aware of the relative closeness or distance one's own culture has to that of the other culture. In the same way the personal, individual psychological value is estimated as well as that of the person or group of the other culture. The aim being not to fall into the trap of stereotyping, but to appreciate your own individual characteristics.

The third stage of the seminar aims at the transfer and application of the theory learned in stage 2 onto the ideal type at the extreme poles and the cultural categories presented. This has to be done on different cultural and individual realities as close as possible to that reality, using strong differentiation and above all independently.

In order to make the relativity of cultural characteristics even clearer, the participants should also assess a third and fourth culture of their choice within the "culture spectrum". The goal here is not to fall into dichotomization, which is expressed in generalizations, stereotyping and simplistic phrases like: "The Portuguese are like that and the Germans are like this". This results in a very absolute picture. When further contrasting cultures are brought in it is possible to recognize a relative classification in the cultural structure. Only then is it possible to say: The Portuguese tend to behave in such a way *in a relative comparison* to Germans and, e.g. in a relative comparison to Americans or Arabs.

## 4. Stage: Emotional understanding and re-assessment

### a) Cultural Spectacles – Exercise

Working out the **expectations** of each cultural system

After this cognitive section we move on to exercises, which should support the **affective** process of the inner re-assessment of approaches of other cultures. The participants then work in groups on the question of which **subconscious expectations** imply the cultural system of thinking and values of the German and the Portuguese business partners and then present their results in a plenary session.

The result of the earlier exercise is mostly that the German, Mr Baus, is considered to be *very monochrone*, i.e. around "80-90 degree characteristic". Mr Ribeiro – who, even as far as Portuguese go, showed relatively *strong polychrone* behavior on that day– is mainly classified with "85 degree characteristic" on the right hand side of the culture spectrum. A Portuguese culture could on average be placed around the "65 - 70 degree polychrone" mark.

The concrete consequences resulting from this for the various expectations can be seen in Figure 6. This also mostly represents the results of the group work of the participants.

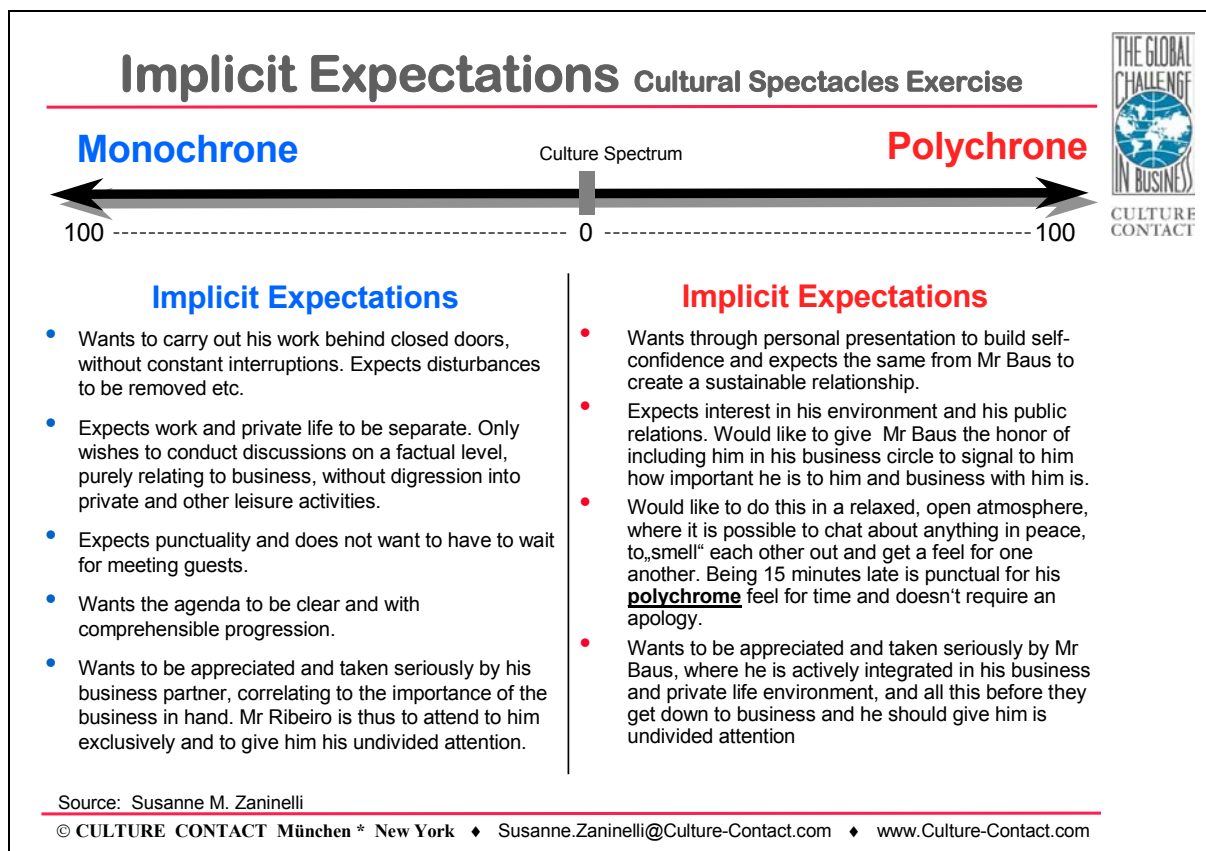


Figure 6: Expectations

## b) Cultural spectacles exercise-Übung:

Relative mutual awareness.  
*Interpretation of cultural signals.*

Once the mutual and mostly subconscious expectations of the participants have been worked out, they observe each other through their **own cultural spectacles**, which automatically reflect their own values and through which they understandably also perceive and interpret one another. The object of the exercise is to focus the view on **cultural signals**, which are always the same, but which from differing cultural angles, are interpreted completely differently. For example, let us take the signal Mr Baus received from his Portuguese business partner: **He doesn't talk to him in private about the business deal**, but chats with all number of people, makes telephone calls and even confronts him with private and leisure issues!

Such behavior would be interpreted and considered to be unbelievable and very impolite and offensive by a German business partner. He is unable from his standpoint and values to interpret this signal any differently.

Mr Ribeiro in turn, can equally not understand why Mr Baus doesn't empathize with him and doesn't take advantage of his offer. He wants to give Mr Baus the opportunity of getting to know him properly to be able to build up a basis of trust. That is why he offers himself to him on a silver platter, his whole self and all his business contacts.

Further perceptions of each of the characters can be seen in Figure 6. Here it could be also the results from the participants' group work. The interesting thing about the result is that both business partners want the same thing, to sign the contract. But how they want to achieve that is completely different and both of them see the other in a negative light and feel equally bad!

This results in typical descriptions of one another, which are almost insults. They are revealed very quickly as all-too-familiar typical prejudices. Now the participants can see them from a completely different perspective. The opinion of the other is no longer the result of a personal or cultural *inability* of my opposite number, but caused by *subconscious, different expectations* of a system of values. And it is possible in that way to mutually disappoint one another.

This realization mostly results in a greater understanding for *one's self* and the *other* cultural approaches. It reduces slightly the resentment and anger, which crop up instinctively in "incomprehensible" attempts at closing a business deal and which ends with mutual insults, such as: he is just so unprofessional, impolite and not the "right" business partner. But, as we can see, opinions vary considerably as to what actually makes the "right" business partner, or what is to be understood by "professional".

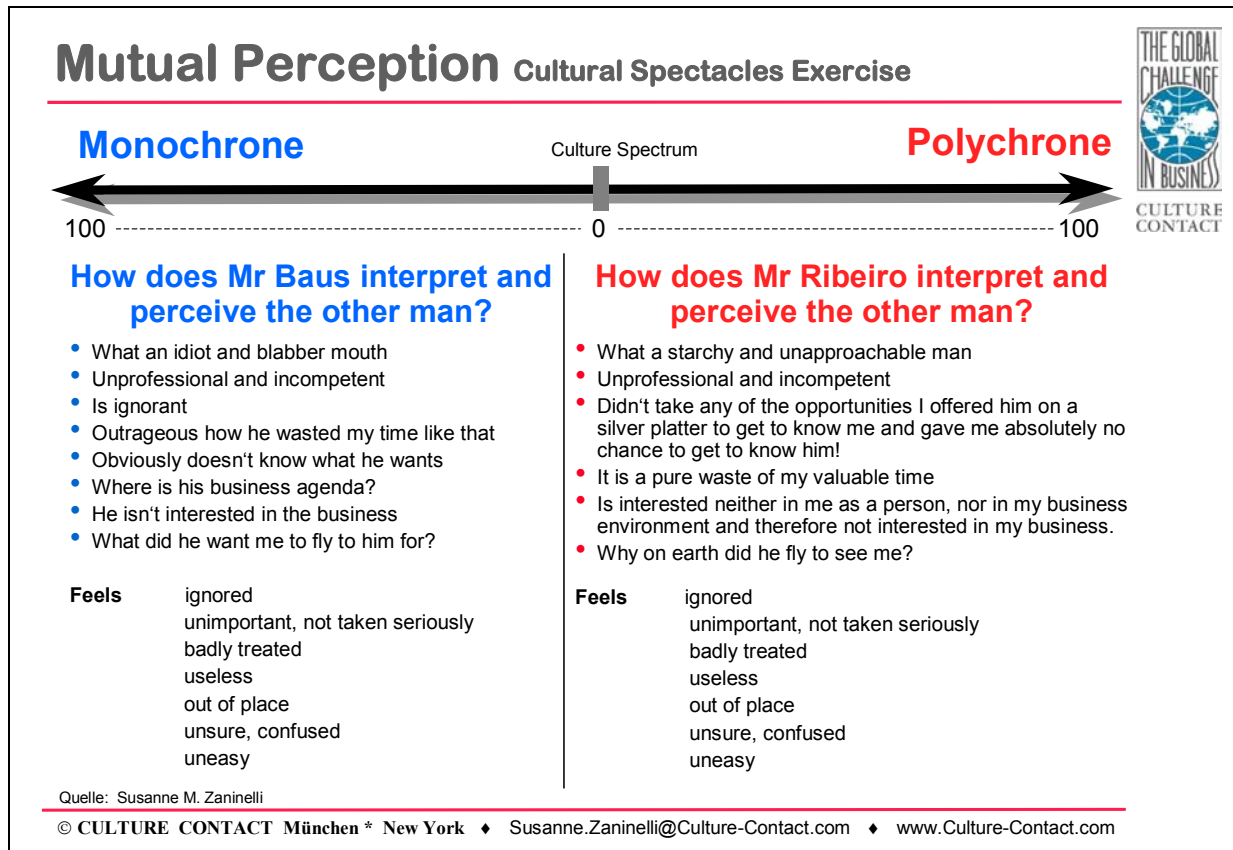


Figure 7: Mutual Perception

## c) Culture Spectrum Exercise

### *Every system has its Advantages and Disadvantages*

What is it with all these different approaches? The French and Italians for example can more or less be described as polychrone, but are still able to produce goods of high quality and be leading industrial nations. Why then does this polychrone system have an industrial culture?

The aim of this exercise is to put yourself deep in the other system of values, to sit on the other culture's "chair". That is the hardest part of the whole module. It demonstrates how well someone has understood a cultural category in all its facets, or how someone is able to feel that culture out. This step is the pre-requisite for - at least momentarily - being value-free: It is discovered, that **every** system has its own advantages and disadvantages. Differing approaches are relativized from being "better" and "worse" to being simply "different". Of course in the process it is absolutely necessary to explore the advantages and disadvantages of one's own system of thinking and values.

The second aim of this exercise is being able to be aware of the disadvantages of any system and to avoid them where possible, as well as being able to recognize and utilize the advantages. In Stage 5 (Coping Strategies) they can then be used meaningfully in a face-to-face interaction or in strategic management. The participants now work on the advantages and disadvantages, the opportunities and risks of any system, writing them down on cards in small groups. The results are then presented in a plenary session.



# Advantages and Disadvantages



<p><b>Monochrome: Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliable when dealing with facts</li> <li>• Smooth-running processes</li> <li>• Good at creating and carrying out plans =&gt; e.g. relocation of Munich airport</li> <li>• Time is calculable, appointments reliable</li> <li>• Clear processes</li> </ul> <p>⇒ <i>binding, reliable, accurate, predictable</i></p>	<p><b>Polychrone: Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliable when dealing with relationships</li> <li>• Flexible when adapting to changing conditions and disruptive factors</li> <li>• Good at juggling with the unexpected</li> <li>• Makes use of unplanned opportunities</li> <li>• Good contact with people and information</li> </ul> <p>⇒ <i>lively, relaxed, easy going</i></p>
<p><b>Monochrome: Risks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too little contact with reality as it changes</li> <li>• Inflexible and can thus become irrational if carried out to the bitter end</li> <li>• Strong separation of subject and object</li> <li>• Can breed mentality of rules</li> </ul> <p>⇒ <i>impersonal, cold, square</i></p>	<p><b>Polychrone: Risks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tendency to be chaotic, due to constant consideration of changing circumstances</li> <li>• Projects will disintegrate, if there is too much juggling with facts</li> <li>• Time investment is hardly calculable</li> <li>• deadlines are not taken seriously =&gt; relationship related</li> </ul> <p>⇒ <i>chaotic, unreliable, unpredictable</i></p>

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Figure 8: Advantages and Disadvantages of Monochrome and Polychrone Working Practices

This exercise makes it possible to enter deep into the other cultural system, and enables you to distance yourself more from negative *assumptions*, which due to normal misunderstandings are all too quickly made.

This new attitude has an enormous influence on the behavior of the participants when dealing with cultural differences.

Frequently this exercise leads the participants to being suddenly extremely enthusiastic about the conduct of another culture that they prefer it to their own.

In this regard it is indispensable to go into the subject of *cultural self-awareness*. One of the most important requirements when dealing with other cultures is that German participants learn to stand by their own German "cultural habits" and to accept them. This is, as is repeatedly proven in international management training programs, notably a problem specific to Germans. Being able to accept yourself as a specific cultural being, with all the disadvantages and advantages is equally important as being able to accept another.

Self-denial would be just as fatal as over estimation of your own capabilities. This is one of the most difficult sections of an intercultural training program, but without a doubt one of the most important.


## 5. Stage: Coping Strategies

### *Expanding monocultural behavior*

When carrying out international business, it is important to be able to analyze or understand the other culture. Furthermore, it is however necessary to be able – where required – to *behave* differently. This is easier for those participants who were successful in the previous step of affective re-assessment. This requirement of being able to accept others and no longer to view different ways in a negative light makes it possible to change behavior and to adapt where necessary. Coping strategies ensure that it is possible to remain able to act despite any differences. Examples of this can be seen in Figure 9.

## Coping Strategies

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THE GLOBAL  
CHALLENGE  
IN BUSINESS  
CULTURE  
CONTACT

- In general, be prepared for delays. Use the time for personal contacts (also with staff), do not waste your valuable time by waiting.
- Enter meetings in your calendar allowing for a 2-3 hour time buffer.
- Never plan to leave or fly back on the same day.
- Faxes and letters are not enough! Keep in regular contact by phone, visit your partner regularly, remain in “close contact”.
- Plan delivery periods in advance with time buffers of several weeks (without informing the polychron partner).
- Make professional use of small talk. Develop relationships, „networking“.
- Superior must identify the situation and should not blame increased time dimension and higher investment costs (time and travel budget) on the incapacity of his employee, but must take different cultural conditions into consideration!
- Quicker transactions in polychron cultures compensate for the often longer initial phase!

Source: Susanne M. Zaninelli

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Figure 9: Coping Strategies

In this group exercise the participants bring in their own experiences. In debriefing and then again in a plenary session the presented group results are compared with the intercultural experience of the trainer and expanded upon.

## 6. Stage: Behavioral Change

### Exercises, role play and simulations

*Affective and behavior-orientated learning in the training program and for life*

In the last section of the module the participants learn e.g. to acquire the different interpersonal distance from the colleagues of the other culture and to practice their communication and small talk behavior as well as the different handling of time and space.

A suitable exercise here is **role play** and **simulations** or „**thought theatre**“, where the participants work on a case study of one situation seen through the eyes of two different cultures. The participants are from that point on script writers, directors, lyricists, dramatic advisors and actors. They are not only writing one story from two points of view, but are also looking for the thoughts of the people involved, who make the different, subconscious cultural system clear and who also act it out. In this way, they act out the behavior and perceptions and thus affectively deal with it. Basically, the participants at this point can apply and realize all the knowledge they have gained during the seminar and use their own intuition.

It should, of course, not be forgotten that intercultural learning is a process, which carries on through your whole life and which presents us with an ever lasting challenge.

For this reason, an increasing number of companies are taking the opportunity of offering intercultural training programs to their staff and managers at intervals of a few months up to three years.

Several one and two-day intercultural follow-up seminars offer the opportunity of refreshing, repeating, deepening, questioning, clarifying and evaluating mutual and individual experience.

Thus these interval training programs take on the character of coaching and accompanied learning over a long period of time. This increases the knowledge transfer and thus the benefits of such a training program considerably. The experience the author has made with this now tried and tested form of teaching has been extremely good.

# Summary

## Most important goals of an "integrative training program"

The most important goal of an *integrative training program* for the future handling of other cultures is the expansion of the monocultural behavior of the participants, without them losing their own cultural identity in the process.

The method here is first of all working with a number of "cultural categories". These are *tools of analysis*, which can also be used outside of the seminar and without a trainer. The aim of using this method is to put the participants in the position of recognizing independently the cultural patterns learned in the seminar and the different expectations and behavior connected with that.

Once the reality of the other culture *experienced* in the interaction has been practiced, this can then be put into real-life practice using the strategies given in the seminar. The foundations of how to recognize cultural patterns and to develop your own *coping strategies* were laid down in the seminar, with the aim to expanding the participants' ability to interpret and act.

This training approach is not about do's and don'ts, but about recognizing and coping with different cultural patterns which form the basis of the cultures of this world.

The extent of to which the consequences these cultural patterns reach in each of the specific intercultural situations is up to the individual *independent transfer*. The basis however is first and foremost the basic recognition and understanding of cultural behavioral patterns, and in that way the participants gain the ability to assess and cope with situations in a different way than before.

# Conclusion

## Who adapts to whom?

To conclude I would like to briefly touch on the **frequently asked** question of who should adapt to whom:

Of course, contact with others from different cultures remains to a certain degree a question of *pure intuition*: What country am I in? What is the order of power? Who wants what from whom? How long do I want to stay in this country? What is the reason for my visit? Am I receiving business partners from another country, or am I their guest? How was the relationship to this country in the past, does this have an adverse effect on the relationship now? Furthermore, the size of the company being dealt with plays an important role in how much foreignness the business partners are faced with. There would be much that could be added to this.

For those who already have a "healthy cultural identity" and a "healthy cultural self-awareness", there is no real need to ask this difficult question. The idea of adapting to another's cultural habits is therefore not seen as a loss. There is no fear of pressure to conform or to give up something of one's self.

Quite the opposite, adapting to another's culture is seen rather to be as enriching, a benefit, a furthering of one's person and an expansion of one's ability to develop strategies to cope with such problems.

However we answer the question for ourselves personally, it appears to me to be most important to have the ability to be flexible and adapt where necessary to certain situations depending on the circumstances and people involved and to have the certainty of being in a position to adapt to business partners of another culture.

That means *using cultural competence where appropriate* - assuming of course that we have acquired these skills beforehand

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