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Edelnet E-Library News

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2018 Intercultural Communication Staff Training (C5), Hamburg (GER) April 16th-20th.....3



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Editorial



One of the strengths of EDELNet has been the institutional collaboration between the three Universities. OPEN UNIVERSITEIT, FERN UNI; UNED. For this, it has been necessary for a group of professors from these institutions to collaborate closely. This collaboration has been fluid but, without a doubt, neither our countries nor our Universities are equal and the idiosyncrasies of the people that make up our countries and our Universities are not similar either. We are united by Europe, we are united by the EU, we are united by the Euro. But we are different.

In September 2016 (Madrid) and in April 2018 (Hamburg) , a seminar for the teaching staff entitled “Intercultural communication” was held in the EDELNet Network. On both occasions, five professors from each institution met in Madrid and Hamburg respectively to receive a course on the peculiarities of the idiosyncrasy of each country and to see the formula that the differences are harmonized and do not lead to uncomfortable situations.

It is a training that has its basis in the field of the Psychology but also in practical Pedagogy. For three full days of the course, plus the initial meeting and welcome dinner on Monday and the working breakfast on Friday, the fifteen teachers enjoyed a time in common, learned about harmonious coexistence among people from various countries and, last but not least, they enjoyed the hospitality of the FERN UNI at their Study Center in Hamburg (and the attractions of the city, currently fashionable in Germany).

Prof. Dr. Pablo de Diego

Associate Professor UNED Faculty of Law.
Vicedean of the Faculty.

2018 Intercultural Communication Staff Training (C5)

Hamburg (GER), April 16th-20th



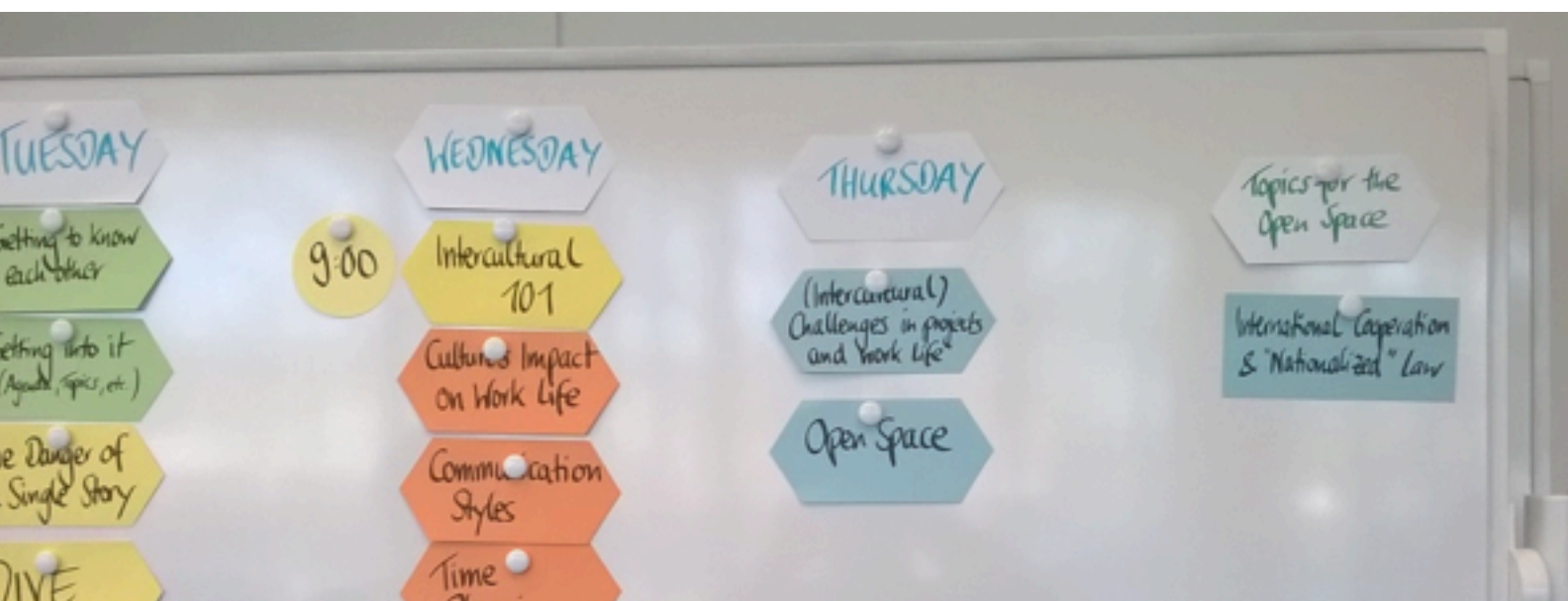
First Day: Monday, 16 April 2018, arrival and reception.

After first meeting in the hotel lobby, the working dinner was held at [Restaurant Al Lido](#). Attendees were served an excellent dinner with delicious dishes while all of them had the opportunity to engage in conversations on subjects of common interests.

The participants of the event in Hamburg came from those three university members of the EDELNet network, namely the National University of Distance Education (UNED), the Open University (OU), and the FernUniversität in Hagen (FUH); and training sessions were held on the FUH Regional Center in Hamburg.

List of attendees:

Mr. Juan-Cruz Alli Turrillas (UNED)
Mr. Fernando Val Garijo (UNED)
Mr. Joaquín Sarrión Esteve (UNED)
Mr. Francisco J. Jiménez Muñoz (UNED)
Mr. Antonio Martínez Raya (UNED)
Mr. Jasper Ebbing (OU)
Mrs. Astrid Jordaans (OU)
Mrs. Wendy Guns (OU)
Mrs. Ton Lamers (OU)
Mrs. Wendy Guns (OU)
Mrs. Selina Pohl (FUH)
Mrs. Katerina-Maria Pohar (FUH)
Mrs. Ulrike Schellberg (FUH)
Mr. Denis Hadzalic (FUH)
Mr. Juan J. García Blesa (FUH)



Second Day: Tuesday, 17 April 2018, first training day.

The workshop began with a short introductory talk in public by each one of participants to make subsequently space for the presentation of the general structure of the event, which had been scheduled to take place for three training days (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) and was conducted by Frauke Schmid-Peter (<https://www.kessels-smit.com/en/1146>).

The script of the training proposed a wide range of activities that, although concentrated over three days, has managed to combine actions merely expository with other tasks of an eminently practical nature.

Thus, following the script shown above, Frauke Schmid-Peter was briefly presented each of the topics to be discussed during the three formative days, while at the same time placing us under the necessary context of intercultural communication as the main object of the event.

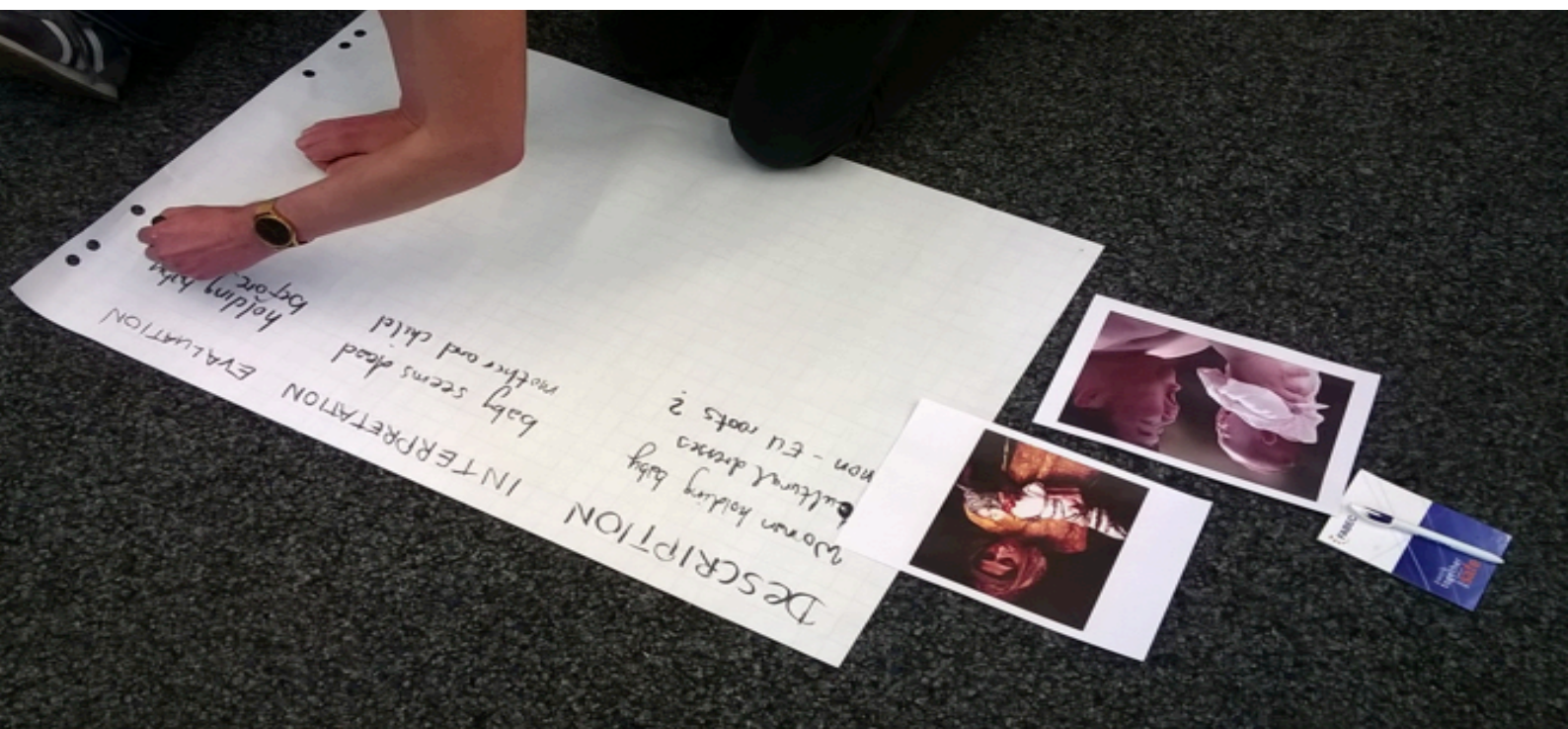
Next, participants were asked to participate in a practical task where, assigned according to the four card symbols (pike, heart, diamond and clover), they had to openly answer an objective question. Thus, each of those four groups according to the assigned card symbol wrote down what they considered most appropriate to the proposed questions.

Answers were grouped into panels to be presented in the classroom, as well as being analyzed according to the question before assigned to the symbol in each playing card of each group.

The next scheduled action was the viewing of a conference that, in TED format, revolved around the dangers of the unique story through the personal history of the renowned Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. This video warns, in the voice of its protagonist, on risks involved in generating an opinion about a specific country, or society as a whole, solely on the basis of a certain history.

Therefore, by creating a general opinion based on a singular history, you can fall into a serious risk of being run over by incomprehension of the intercultural fact. The video is available under https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story

The following task was a practical task based on the methodology DIVE [Describe, Interpret, Verify, Evaluate] that, in order to consider certain intercultural situations from which it is unfamiliar, allows to face multiple perspectives to elaborate a critical thought on the prism with which reality is perceived.



Participants, which were divided into groups of three people, received two photos per group, so that each group wrote their comments about both photos in terms of description, as well as interpretation and evaluation.

For verification purposes, Frauke Schmid-Peter gave participants information about the photos to check how well the interpretations noted on the sheets were correct. Conclusions were presented publicly by a representative from each group, and by commenting very briefly on appraisals of interest arisen during the experience DIVE. Likewise, there were contributions of interest from personal facts that, with respect to intercultural interaction, were shared with the group as an example of the matter addressed therein.

After lunch break, the next scheduled action was an outdoor activity to explore the city from a challenge proposed by a tourist guide that was waiting for all of participants in the center of the city of Hamburg as the start of the tour. Then, city tour participants were divided into two groups.

During the city tour, both groups had the opportunity to discover unique places of the Hanseatic city, following the indications described in the tourist brochure, while trying to guess the right answers to the quiz provided by the tourist guide.

At the end of the tour both groups met with the tourist guide, where each participant received a diploma after having successfully completed the questionnaire delivered at the start of the city tour.





Third Day: Wednesday, 18 April 2018, second training day.

The second training day started nicely with a brief reminder, by way of summary, of the matters dealt with during the previous day. This was used as introduction of the key link with “Situation, Individual and Culture” from the intercultural fact, and to be considered in the context of this formation.

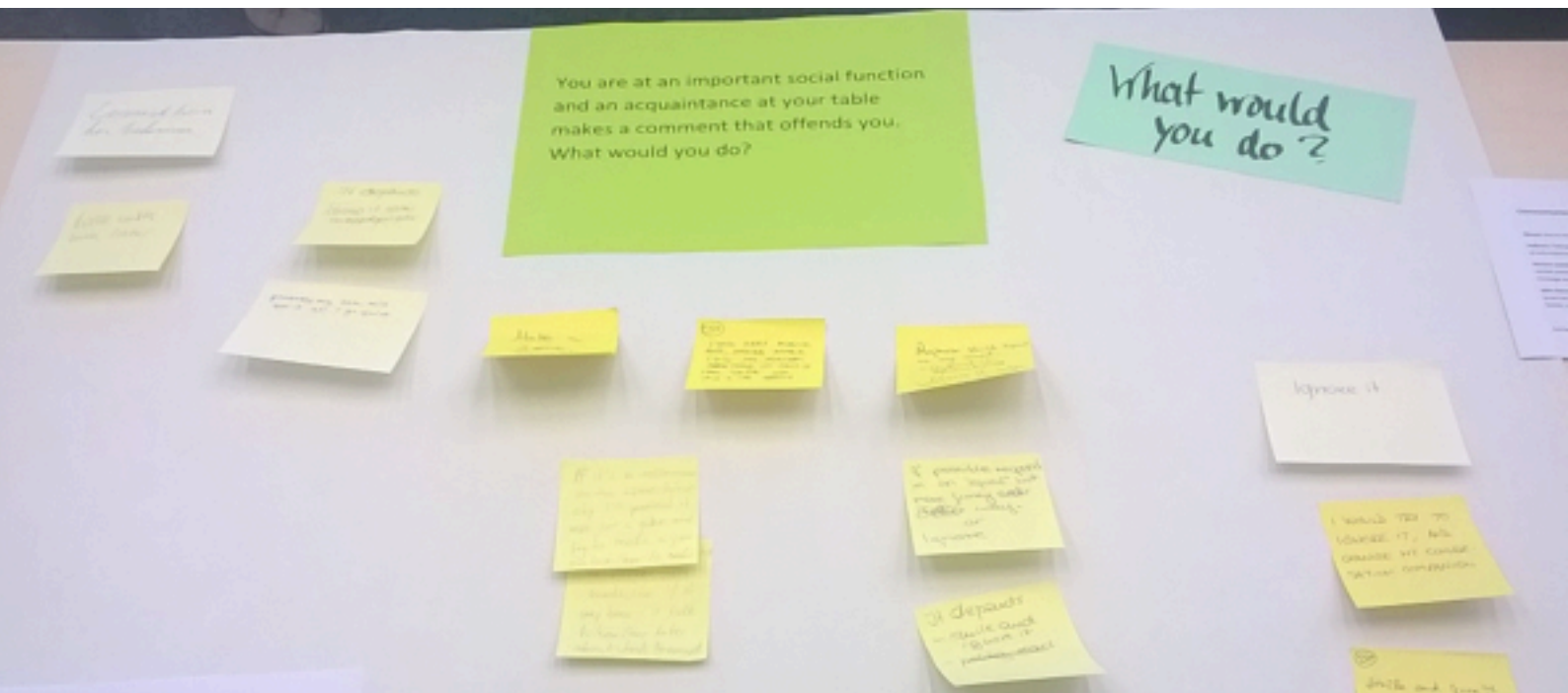
Likewise, mention was made of the discourse of the TED video, previously viewed, highlighting the personal history of Chimamanda Adichie as a subversive element in the face of the risks of the single message when elaborating an opinion within the intercultural context.

And this served as a guiding thread to address the concept of culture, which could be defined as “a system of orientation that is typical and unique for a defined group, organization or society”. Thus, “it influences our perception, our thinking, our values and our actions; it therefore defines to which group we belong” (A. Thomas, 1993). In other words, as indicated in the training session, “Culture is the pair of glasses through which we see the world”.

Regarding cultural generalizations, an example (see picture 27) was used to approach the subject from two different prisms (Ecuadorian and Germans) referring to the notion of time, either under a fixed (punctuality) or flexible conceptualization.

Emphasis was also placed on those aspects based on the benefits of stereotypes to providing guidance regarding personal intercultural interactions. Thus, a key element such as the scientific conceptualization of cultural values allows us to shape intercultural dimensions in all their scope. Likewise, considerations related to the context (high/low) were mentioned, as well as aspects of indirect communication, where the intercultural fact is carried on.

Next, a joint activity was proposed, consisting of each participant having to consider four hypothetical situations and ask himself what he would do in each of the cases. Each response was noted in its respective panel; In total there were four dashboards. It should be noted that sticky notes were given to record the responses in two



shades of yellow (light color for Dutch and German participants, dark color for Spanish attendants) to identify those answers altogether. In addition, the answers were arranged within the panel according to the approach (indirect or personal) indicated in them.

Answers given by attendants were presented on four dashboards in order to be able to be commented by all participants, and under the watchful eye of the group supervisor.

Then some aspects related to the „power of distance“ were emphasized, distinguishing according to whether they were „high“ or „low“, which also served as a prelude to the next practical action.

Next, a task was proposed consisting of filling out a questionnaire individually for each participant where certain situations were raised (escalated from 1 to 5) referring to the question about „where you feel most comfortable“.

Once the questionnaire was completed, the PDI (Power Distance Index) value was calculated, which, climbing from 0 to 100 participants, arises through an easy formula that emerged from the “Hofstede’s Dimension of Culture”.

Then, the PDIs calculated by the participants were graphically represented, also calculating the arithmetic mean of according to the nationality of the participants (Germans, Dutches and Spaniards).





Fourth Day: Thursday, 19 April 2018, third training day.

The session began by reviewing certain considerations of interest about the time perception, differentiating between own terms called “monochron” y “polychron”.

At the end of the theoretical session, the not inconsiderable question of how “dealing with the flow of things” within the intercultural context was discussed.

A significant activity, which aroused considerable interest in the participants, took place with a set of cards in order to study the behavior of individuals when the rules are altered in intercultural environments. Thus, the attendees of the event were divided into two groups: players and observers. At the beginning of the game each group was given a summary of the rules of the same, but each group of players received different rules, albeit without their knowledge of this. Precisely the object of the game was to observe to what extent an individual in his natural territory (in this case, the card table) can impose his rules on the visitor or instead allow himself to impose the rules of the other. Subsequently, the winner of each game table moved to another table, acting as a visitor.

In summary, this is a game of equilibria where the aim is to put individuals who, in addition, were not allowed to communicate orally at the gaming table in order to model an environment similar to that of different languages between the one visited and the visitor.

Finishing the activity, there was a brief debate moderated by the coordinator to exchange the opinions of the participants, whether they had the role as players or observers.

Finally, the compendium of the training was updated on a dashboard to be discussed within the EDELNet working groups. Some issues of interest, which had been proposed by several participants, were displayed on this board.

The last activity of the training session was a written annotation of answers to certain key questions addressed to each participant that were related to the definition of their personal characteristics. All answer sheets were hung on a board to be visualized by all members of the group.



As a conclusion to the three training days, led by Frauke Schmid-Peter, participants had the opportunity to share their opinions on the training, expressing both those tasks that have aroused more interest and those that should be improved.

Already in the afternoon session, and as the culmination of the last training session, Dr. Juan J García Blesa announced the strategic objectives of EDELNet, as well as achievements and progress, to be performed by working groups of members from FUH, OU and UNED.

It should be noted that during this fruitful session, there arose two very interesting initiatives that emerged that will see the light soon within EDELNet's framework thanks to the appropriate working groups created for this purpose. Finally, the session was closed with a family photo of all participants in the EDELNet 2018 training event in Hamburg.



Fifth Day: Friday, 20.04.2018, Farewell and Departure.

During the last breakfast, attendees had an affectionate farewell, and were truly hoping to be able to meet again soon to continue these discussions, and other topics in the next EDELNet event as well.

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Imprint

EDELNet eLibrary

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