

# **Promoting and Assessing Undergraduate Students' Intercultural Competence Development - Exploring the Benefits and Challenges of Peer-Training**

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# My Motivation – From Specific ...

- Following up upon previous research on peer-training at Jacobs University Bremen which found:
    - ✓ Support of peer-training approach for one-day intercultural training during orientation week of incoming freshmen students
    - ✓ Peer-training could meet its aims of preparing students for living and studying on JUB's multicultural campus
- ✗ Intercultural competence development = complex process  
→ requires more time, more reflection, etc.

(Binder et al., 2013; Röhrs, 2013)

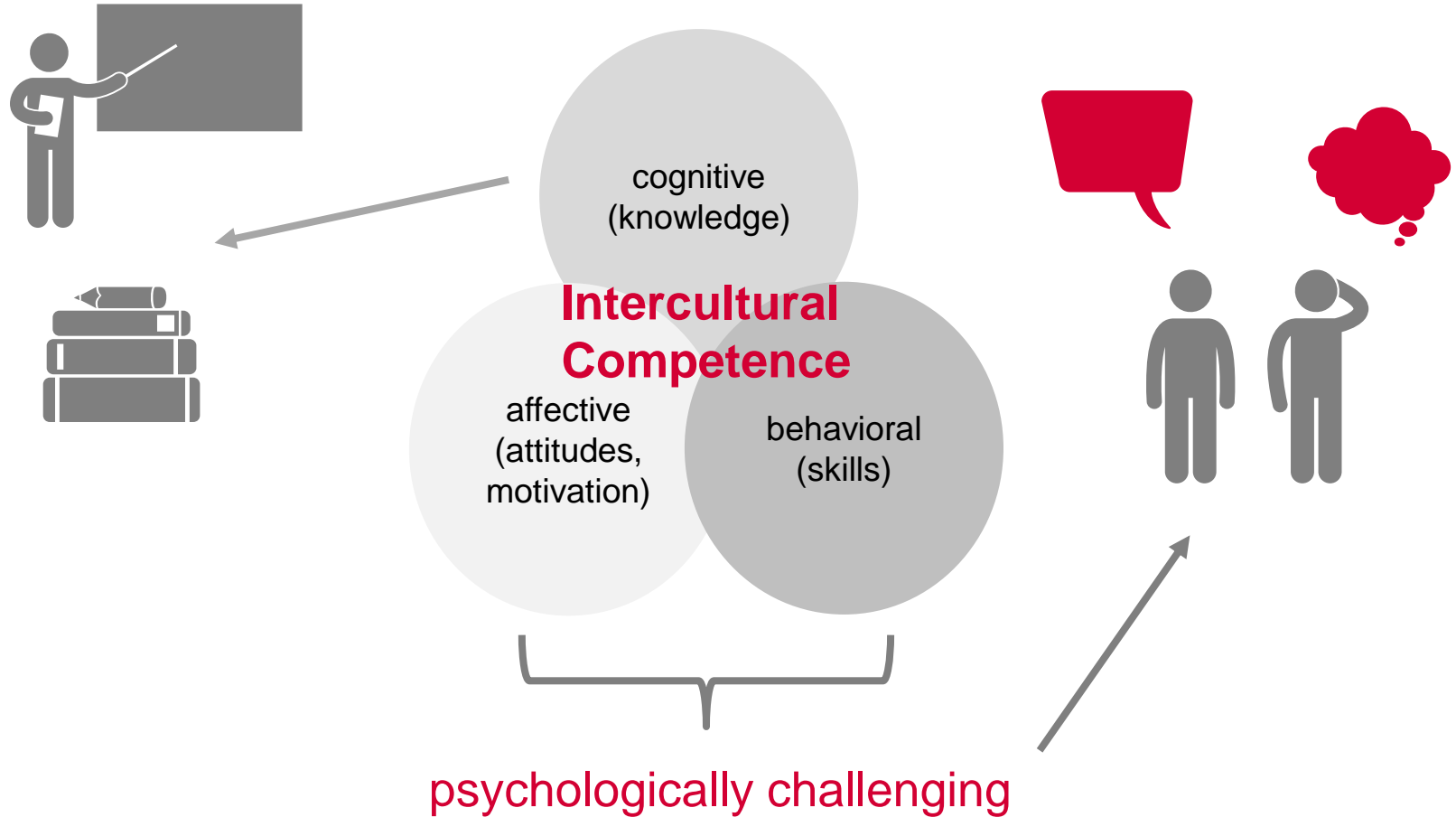
## ... to More General

- Increasing cultural diversity on university campuses offers a rich potential for developing intercultural competence  
(cf. e.g. Deardorff, de Wit, & Heyl, 2012; Hiller, 2010a; Leask, 2009)
- (But) Intercultural competence does not develop automatically in multicultural settings → need for facilitation/intervention  
(cf. e.g. Engle & Engle, 2004; Sample, 2013; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009)

1. How to **conceptualize** intercultural competence (as a learning outcome/graduate skill)?
2. How to create intercultural **learning opportunities** for all students?
3. How to **assess** students' intercultural competence development?



# Why Involve Peers in Training?



# Why Involve Peers in Training?

- **Behavioral and affective intercultural learning** can be psychologically highly challenging (cf. e.g. Paige, 1993)  
→ issues of trust and motivation
- Credible and accessible **role-models** with better understanding of trainees' concerns (Binder et al., 2013; Röhrs, 2013)
- Financial reasons / **effective use of resources**  
→ “win-win” solution (Hiller, 2010a, 2010b; Hiller & Wozniak, 2009)

# RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODS & WORK PLAN

# Research Objective

... to **design, implement, and evaluate** an intercultural **peer-training** program that follows up upon the orientation training for students at **Jacobs University Bremen** and that contributes to their **intercultural competence development**

# Project Overview

Conceptualize  
ICC (for Target  
Group)

- Literature review
- Open question on ICC definition in baseline survey (to all incoming undergraduate students)
- Focus groups (culturally homogenous groups)

Promote &  
Assess ICC  
Development

- **Training design** based on literature, needs assessment, and in collaboration with peer-trainers (including recruitment and training of peer-trainers)
- **ICC assessment** in a mixed-methods, longitudinal design, combining self-report, situational judgment tests, interviews, peer-ratings, and observations



# Research Design – Mixed-Methods Longitudinal

## Quantitative strand

- Longitudinal questionnaire
  - baseline, pre- and post-test
  - training vs. control group
- Test to Measure Intercultural Competence (TMIC-S) + SJTs (Schnabel, 2015; Schnabel, Kelava, Seifert, & Kuhlbrodt, 2015)
- Short Form Cultural Intelligence Scale (SFCQ) (Thomas et al., 2015)
- General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995)
- Flourishing Scale (Diener et al., 2009)
- Ten-Item Personality-Inventory (Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003)
- Demographics, cultural background, previous experience

## Qualitative strand

- Students' ICC understanding:
  - Open question (baseline questionnaire)
  - Focus groups
- ICC assessment:
  - Semi-structured interviews (pre/post)
  - Peer-ratings and observation during role-plays
  - Analysis of student portfolios (produced as part of the training)
- Peer-trainer evaluation:
  - Focus groups and/or interviews

# Possible Contributions



- Concept of **intercultural competence and its correlates** as well as emic understanding of students
- **Intercultural competence assessment** by a multi-method, multi-dimensional approach
- **Peer-training and affective and behavioral intercultural learning**
- **Systematically** designed and evaluated peer-training program
- **Recommendations** for implementing peer-training (recruitment, selection, training) and intercultural competence assessment

# Questions & Comments



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