Using German Web Sites to Teach Culture in German Courses

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ABSTRACT

Using the World Wide Web to teach foreign languages is ever increasing. In addition, the teaching of culture in foreign language instruction has become a standard element in most language classes. The combination of these two aspects leads to a dynamic approach for preparing students to compete in the global job market by making them more culturally competent. Moreover, this teaching technique provides students the opportunity to foster their skills at developing cultural hypotheses and at the same time confirming their validity through the use of web sites.

KEYWORDS
Web Sites, Culture, Professional German, Intercultural Communication

INTRODUCTION

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Increasing globalization makes it imperative that foreign language courses assume an even greater role in preparing students to compete in a global economy. Young professionals must possess a mindset that is open to foreign cultures and facilitates international encounters, dealings and decision making (Rhinesmith, 1996). The following discussion will demonstrate how this can be accomplished through the use of German culture and German web sites. First, however, a short review of culture in foreign language instruction, the use of authentic materials in the foreign language classroom, and technology in teaching foreign languages will be presented and discussed.

Culture in Language Instruction

German instruction usually includes a textbook. Advanced level Business German includes supplemental articles that pertain to the business topics covered in the textbook. Some of these topics are Steuern ‘taxes,’ Aktien ‘shares,’ betriebliche Organisation ‘company structure,’ Marktforung ‘market research,’ and Produktpolitik ‘product policy.’ These topics inherently cover various aspects of
German business culture, which an instructor often has to supplement with additional cultural information in order to make them more transparent for American students. However, teaching culture in a German course could and should go further. It should stimulate students’ awareness and appreciation of underlying elements of German and American culture in general and business culture in particular. In teaching culture, students are usually shown how to bridge the gap between their own culture and another; however, they should learn how to enter the other culture on its own terms (Kramsch, 1993). In a Professional German course, students should discover and learn how to negotiate the boundaries of reality in the German business world and simultaneously prepare themselves to enter the American workplace. Therefore, teachers need to provide their students the necessary culture skills to be culturally competent and successful in a foreign work environment. The National Standards for Foreign Language Learning provide a very good framework for accomplishing this task.

The Standards consist of five goals: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities. The aim of goal one is to engage students in real communication using the foreign language. Students supply, receive, interpret and present information, express feelings and emotions and exchange opinions. Goal two aims at providing students knowledge and understanding of the foreign culture. Students demonstrate their understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives and between the products and perspectives of the foreign culture. The third goal is to connect this learning process with other disciplines and to acquire information. Students gain knowledge and information about other disciplines. Sometimes this information is available only through the target language or the target culture. Goal four promotes the development of insight into the nature of language and culture. Students demonstrate their understanding of intercultural communication from the perspective of their own culture and that of the target culture. They should be able to apply this cross-cultural understanding to products, practices, and perspectives of their native culture. Through the use of such techniques, Fantini (1999) believes that learners are then able to look back on their own culture from a new vantage point while exploring the target culture. The final goal encourages the participation in multilingual communities at home and abroad. Students use the target language not only in the classroom but in real-life situations that promote their life-long use of the new language (see Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century, 1999).

According to Valdes (1986) the study of culture must include looking at the behavior and values of the majority of a particular cultural group that forms this group’s observations and theories. Only after getting to know, understand, and appreciate elements of another culture can one understand the importance of providing cultural clues to assist the language learner in a new environment. In addition, learners need to know what values and behavior patterns of the new culture will assist them in future dealings with the new culture. To achieve this, students need guidance in developing their understanding of a foreign culture (Valdes, 1986); however, they should have enough freedom to be able to develop their own hypotheses about cultural differences (Seelye, 1993). Afterwards, they should have
the chance to test and refine their hypotheses. The Internet provides students a good opportunity to accomplish these goals by using authentic materials for learning culture. This writer’s suggestions about how to do this are below in the section entitled Culture and German Web Sites.

**The World Wide Web as a Resource for German**

The World Wide Web can serve as a treasure trove for authentic material. Abrate (1999) maintains that, “authentic documents provide an excellent vehicle for incorporating the national foreign language standards into the curriculum” (p. 75). Bacon (1992a) and Herron and Seay (1991) have demonstrated that students show increased improvement in their listening and reading skills when exposed to authentic materials. Such materials open doors to cultural items that students might otherwise never have exposure to. The Internet can be the major element in providing this up-to-date experience. Web materials can provide realistic communicative scenarios and settings for students to complete real-world tasks and other related activities in the target language. Their implementation at the appropriate level demonstrates to our students that they can navigate within and understand “real” language (Abrate, 1999; Di Bella, 1997; Finger, 2001; Cohen, 2002).

Many of these authentic materials do not incorporate language alone. Some include illustrated texts (e.g., online newspaper or magazine articles from www.faz.de, www.tagesspiegel.de, www.sueddeutschezeitung.de, www.handelsblatt.de, www.focus.de, and www.wirtschaftswoche.de, while others consist primarily of images or may rely on audio or video materials (for audio or video reports, see e.g., www.inforadio.de/magazin.php and www.n-tv.de). Two portals provide a listing of many newspapers and magazines online for a large array of countries throughout the world www.onlinenewspapers.com and www.metagrid.com. Whatever material one chooses, even beginning students should have exposure to authentic materials (Cohen, 2002). The subjects should pique learners’ interests and the activities dealing with these topics should be challenging enough to stimulate learners (Abrate, 1999; Di Bella, 1997; Finger, 2001).

Documents written by and for native speakers implement structures and usages that are often too challenging for many learners, which is a standard problem when using the Web. Any detailed analysis of these structures and usages would discourage and frustrate many students and often defeat the purpose of using such materials. Consequently, learners should be encouraged to skim the text for its intent, for information about specific facts or for the document’s purpose, and/or to examine it for cultural implications instead of being expected to understand every word or detail.

In addition to authentic written texts, audio and video materials can provide learners with the appropriate listening skills to be able to survive in real-life situations (Bacon, 1992a, 1992b; Herron & Seay, 1991). Through appropriate use, such materials prepare students to selectively listen to input and scan it for necessary information. Abrate (1999) states “rather than frustrating students, working with authentic audio documents in an appropriate way gives students confidence
to handle real-life situations they might encounter later. Video provides added visual support to an audio message and combines elements of cinematic construction through a director’s guidance, editing camera angles, background music, and sound effects in support of the linguistic and cultural content” (p. 80). It was once necessary to carry such materials back from a trip abroad; however, today we can have these items at our fingertips by using the Web.

Technology is a continuously developing element for teaching foreign languages. The Internet is a prime example of computer technology that is being relied on more extensively not only for authentic materials but also for various forms of communication. In the following section, several of these uses within foreign language teaching are reviewed.

**Using Technology in Foreign Language Instruction**

The use of technology has proven to be very useful in teaching language skills and culture. Lyman-Hager and Burnett (1999) have found that many instructors prefer a four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing plus culture) curricular approach in lower level language instruction. Simultaneously, they stress the building of transferable skills and strategies among these four skills and the interaction of linguistic and cultural dimensions. According to Lyman-Hager and Burnett (1999), reading is a key element in achieving this. Alm-Lequeux (2001) has ascertained that teaching reading through technology improved learners’ acquisition of the target language as well as supplying real-world contexts for teaching and learning target language grammar.

Lyman-Hager and Burnett (1999) also contend that foreign language reading is perfectly matched with various technological applications. McManus (2001) has confirmed this in her VRoma project in which she found that the use of web sites expedites the teaching of Latin culture. Through the use of this virtual Roman site, students can read various types of texts that can transform their experience of Latin culture into a virtual culture experience. McManus (2001) maintains that even beginners can have this experience through reading English translations. Hager, Rieper, Schmitt, and Shastri (2001) have also shown how it is possible to use the Internet to teach German culture to beginners through reading.

Another language skill is listening comprehension, which is a key element in the globalized world exemplified by frequent presentations, talks, and meetings. According to Abrate (1999), this is the skill that many instructors tend to avoid because of its difficult implementation. Hedderich (1999) asserts that authentic listening materials were subject to many limitations in the past. However, we can reduce these limitations by using radio and video found on the Internet. Web-based audio opens up new opportunities, for example, access to up-to-date information on business, world affairs and culture (Hedderich, 1999).

The number of sources and quality of audio and video materials are constantly increasing and evolving. Some such sources are Deutsche Welle www.deutschewelle.de and N-TV/CNN www.n-tv.de, www.ard.de, www.zdf.de, and www.germanytodayradio.com. These sources have an array of different programs ranging from stock market reports to music broadcasts on Deutsche Welle and
from business reports to the latest happenings on N-TV/CNN in various formats, including text, audio, and/or video. Two portals for radio and TV news broadcasts provide links to many countries throughout world: www.real.com and www.msn.com.

Hedderich (1999) shows how the use of Web radio can supply students with essential real-world listening experience. He provides four examples that are applicable to various language levels. For the introductory level, he suggests a listening exercise dealing with a traffic report; for the introductory/intermediate levels, an activity with weather reports; for advanced learners, an exercise with a business news report and for various levels an activity with stock market reports. Internet-based radio in connection with texts provided on many of the broadcasting systems’ web sites serves as a valuable resource for authentic listening material as well as cultural information (Hedderich, 1999).

Hedderich (1997) maintains that email can function as a tool for student tutoring which is instrumental in improving reading and writing. He indicates that tutoring via email has several benefits. First, the student’s counterpart is a native speaker who functions as a resource on language and culture. Second, writing in a peer-tutoring environment has a more communicative focus than standard writing activities. Third, through extended contact with their counterparts from the target culture (L2), students are better informed about the L2 culture. Through these examples, we can see that the use of technology can expedite these two dimensions (reading and writing) in the teaching and learning of German.

Jogan, Heredia, and Aquilera (2001) came to the same conclusions for an email project they conducted for Spanish. They maintained that email partnerships resulted in personal interaction that lowered the affective filter, motivated learners to write about and learn culture, and, consequently, challenged cultural stereotypes. Challenging cultural stereotypes is extremely important in culture instruction (see The Posttask Phase section below). However, Jogan et al. (2001) do not explain how they went about doing this; using email in this way provides an excellent forum for American students to confirm their understanding of the target culture and revise their stereotypes. Abrams (2002) demonstrates how she was able to do this with third-semester German students by using the Internet. In this writer’s opinion, however, students must be aware of differences in beliefs and values between their culture and the target culture before attempting the question of cultural stereotypes. The following examples for teaching culture through video could provide the basis for such consciousness-building in students.

Various researchers (Hager 2002b; Kitajima & Lyman-Hager, 1999; Spodark, 2001; Rifkin, 2000; Katz, 2001) maintain that the use of videos expedites the teaching and learning of culture. Kitajima and Lyman-Hager (1999), and Spodark (2001) show how the use of videos benefits situated learning in beginning Japanese and French. Rifkin (2000) demonstrates how using movies can teach advanced learners of Russian about everyday cultural situations and apply these cultural insights to the students’ own lives. However, these experts could use these materials to make their students aware of cultural differences in beliefs and values similar to what Hager (2002b) has suggested.
Hager (2002b) has shown how the Web can be a resource for teaching about the mass media in Germany and German culture simultaneously. He has suggested using videos of news broadcasts on Deutsche Welle and CNN for cultural comparisons in broadcasting style and belief and value systems for both Germans and Americans. He proposes that the students first read background information about cross-cultural differences to make students aware of them. Then he has his students apply this information to the analysis of German and American news broadcasts. Finally, the results of these comparisons are applied to the German business world. Through the use of such techniques, students learn about the target culture (German) while getting new insights and perspectives on their own culture (American).

Applying Hager’s (2002b) techniques for teaching about perspectives to the materials suggested by Kitajima and Lyman-Hager (1999), Spodark (2001), and Rifkin (2000), teachers would be able to teach their students about beliefs and values of the target culture at any language level. Once students are aware of these differences, Hedderich’s (1997) and Jogan et al.’s (2001) use of email supply an excellent chance for students to test their cultural knowledge about beliefs and values with native speakers of the target culture, either through direct questions about the native speaker’s belief and value system (Abrams, 2002) or through the use of surveys as suggested by Bateman (2002). However, Moran (2001) points out that direct questioning about beliefs and values often is not effective because native speakers are not always aware of these beliefs and values.

The following techniques demonstrate how the Web can be an excellent culture source for American learners of German and function as the basis for these students to construct and test their hypotheses about German culture and then apply these hypotheses to the German business world.

CULTURE AND GERMAN WEB SITES

This section presents how the author taught German culture to advanced German learners using web sites. The activities were part of a fourth-year German course. The approach used discussion consisting of three parts: the pretask phase, the task phase (hypothesis construction and hypothesis testing and refinement) and the posttask phase.

The Pretask Phase

In order to prepare for the upcoming cross-cultural encounters, the students read general background information about intercultural communication as homework which was discussed during the following session. These readings provided students with background information about what culture is, various problems that can arise in intercultural communication, and information about intercultural interactions and communication competence (see Losche, 2000). Because the students were business majors studying German, the researcher included background material that dealt with intercultural communication for business; however, the culture items covered for business also applied to everyday situations as well. The
researcher’s preferred source for a general overview was *Interkulturelle Kommunikation: Sammlung praktischer Spiele und Übungen* ‘Intercultural communication: A collection of practical games and exercises’ by Helga Losche and, for business, *When cultures collide: Managing successfully across cultures* by Richard Lewis. Losche provides not only readings about intercultural topics but also games and activities to practice and experience what one learns about in the readings. Lewis presents American and German business cultural tendencies in a very concise and clear manner, provides information on how others see Americans and Germans, and discusses whether these stereotypes are really justified. According to Sanders (1997), it is very important to include information about Americans because “American students typically lack awareness of the elements of American culture, taking their own milieu not for one possibility of living among many, but as the ‘normal’ way of life” (p. 135).

The following web sites provide an overview of some cultural items for Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and the United States:

www.windowontheworldinc.com/countryprofile/germany.html
www.windowontheworldinc.com/countryprofile/austria.html
www.windowontheworldinc.com/countryprofile/switzerland.html
www.windowontheworldinc.com/countryprofile/united_states.html

The web site www.windowontheworldinc.com/pps_index.html supplies interesting background information for businesspeople in the form of various articles; for example, “When Cultures Clash” or “Learning the Rules.” The Sietar web site provides a very good listing of articles about the United States from the German point of view (see www.sietar-deutschland.de). The Technical University at Chemnitz site has an excellent book list for intercultural communication in German (see www.tu-chemnitz.de/phil/ikk/alt/index). And the web site www.german-way.com/german/intervw_arch.html is a very good source for information about the experiences of Americans who lived in Germany. (See Appendix 1 for a list of all web sites.)

The differences between German and American cultures appear to be very subtle; however, they can make or break successful cross-cultural communication. In the pretask phase, several of these differences the author prefers to emphasize are (a) the difference in the need for being thorough and effective (German characteristic) versus efficient and fast (American characteristic) and (b) the difference between doing your best (German) versus being successful (American) (see Schmidt, 2002). It is important to discuss these differences because Americans consider themselves to be thorough and effective while putting forth their best performance. However, Americans generally do not meet German expectations when applying American standards. A second advantage to working with such topics is the opportunity to make American students aware that their standards are not universal. Scollon and Scollon (1995) refer to this kind of awareness as “world knowledge” which they define as “encyclopedic” knowledge one has about a type of situation. This knowledge provides one with the procedures or general knowl-
edge that one needs in order to navigate in such a situation. Rings (2000) points out that this “world knowledge” is, however, very culture specific.

In class these cultural characteristics are a topic of discussion. In talking about these traits, students become aware of the differences in the meaning of such terms as thorough and effective. The German meaning of thorough would be more equivalent to the English “meticulous,” while effective would mean “reaching a wanted result or target successfully the first attempt” (Schmidt, 2002). The researcher picked these cultural characteristics for this pretask phase because he experienced them as difficult for both Germans and Americans when working together. His experience is based upon his 14 years working at Siemens AG in Berlin, Germany. In addition, he intentionally chose these cultural differences for the initial class discussions because he knew that these points were less obvious on the web sites he would use for the following activities. The more obvious cultural differences he wanted to leave for the students to discover and then use for their cultural hypotheses.

Task Phase: Hypothesis Construction, Hypothesis Testing, and Refinement

This phase provides students with the chance to apply the acquired intercultural knowledge from the readings and expand upon it by constructing hypotheses about culture. The task is to compare a German and an American web site for cultural differences. For the first encounter, the researcher suggested comparing the BMW web site. Hager (2002b) pointed out that using the same company for two different cultures can more easily provide a quick source of cultural differences. However, teachers must be sure that the web sites they use have the necessary cultural differences. In the researcher’s opinion, as in intercultural advertising, there seem to be two types of web sites: those that use as few culturally dependent elements as possible (standardized) and those that use local cultural elements (adapted) (for more information about these forms of intercultural advertising, see Leppälä, 1994). For exercises such as the following, adapted web sites are an appropriate source of cultural differences. Of course, teachers need to regularly check the web sites because the companies are constantly updating or completely revising them. The comparison of the American and the German BMW web sites was homework the students completed in groups of three or four.

For the following class period, the researcher made transparencies of each web site so that the class would have easy and trouble-free access to the home pages of these sites. He chose transparencies because his classroom did not have a computer terminal. Of course, he could have ordered all the necessary equipment to have had online access in class, but he wanted to avoid standard problems such as not being able to access the sites or the server being down.

In class, each group presented one difference they found by pointing out the difference on each web site. Because there were only 12 students, the researcher had three groups which were able to present the three intended differences. The differences the students found were the amount of information and details on the
web sites. The American site tended to have less information and fewer details, while the German web site was loaded with information of all sorts, that is, background information about the company and many details about the cars and other products. The American web site tended to be more on the light, trivial side presenting contests, games, or other activities that viewers could enjoy. It contained no real background information on BMW and few details about the cars and other products. In addition, the German site presented the cars as objects of speed and quality, whereas these assets were not even alluded to on the American site.

In class discussions following the presentation of their findings, students speculated about what their findings could mean. Why did these differences exist? Because of their reading about intercultural communication they were aware that culture (American and German) was probably the reason or at least a part of the reason for these differences. But what did these differences indicate about each culture? Some of the conclusions were that Germans were very detail oriented, needed abundant information, and appreciated quality cars. Americans were less detail oriented, did not need as much background information, were perhaps more trivial and less interested in speed and quality.

The basis for the structure of this part of the task phase is what Seelye (1993) refers to as a “minimedia” unit. His example for a minimedia unit incorporates using a picture as the culture source. In order to focus students’ attention on the culture “document” (here a picture), Seelye provides students with a question about the culture document. He follows this up with additional questions that zero in on aspects of everyday life of the target culture. Students then generalize beyond the specific information found in the “document” and postulate a hypothesis about the cultural content. Seelye (1993) points out, that students should not feel under pressure to formulate a “correct” hypothesis because no hypothesis starts out by being 100% correct.

The conclusions of the researcher’s students for the BMW sites were a good basis for conducting the second part of the task phase: the testing and revising of their hypotheses. In order to do this, students compared the German and American web sites for the Financial Times. Their task this time was to find support for their conclusions about the BMW web sites or to revise these hypotheses if they were not able to find supporting information for their conclusions. This was the homework assignment for the following class period. The students worked in the same groups as for the BMW study.

For the next class period of the task phase, the researcher prepared transparencies for the Financial Times homepages. He followed the same procedure for this class period as for the BMW web sites. Each group of students presented one difference they found. The differences they found were the same ones as for the BMW sites. Two additional items they found were that the German Financial Times’ “Mission Statement” was more than three pages long, while the American “Mission Statement” was only several sentences. This merely confirmed the students’ conclusion about details and information. In addition, students found a very interesting difference in the lay out of the web sites. The German web site had a pink/beige background, the same color as the paper used in England
and Germany for the printed version of the Financial Times. The American site used standard white. Students theorized that this difference could be attributed to Germans’ tendency to be more tradition oriented than Americans. One group of students was so interested in this difference that they researched the background of the pink paper and found it to be the original color used for the first publications of the Financial Times in England. This color was an eye catcher—an advertising ploy—to attract more readers when the competition for the Financial Times was very stiff. Students even ascertained that the color was so attractive with women of that time that they would use the pink newspaper as wallpaper.

According to Seelye (1993), the minimedia units develop the concept that such culture hypotheses need to be always refined. He believes that these hypotheses and their refinements should be based on empirical evidence. In his opinion, material from the media is valid empirical evidence. In addition, these “documents” sensitize students to the potential in developing cultural insights. Seelye (1993) maintains that this technique of hypothesis refinement helps us avoid the Fallacy of Dogmatic Finality. He recommends a three step procedure for refining cultural hypotheses.

1. Students observe a cultural pattern from a picture, news fragment or some other “document.”
2. Students make a generalization about the target culture extracted from the examination of the picture, and so on.
3. Students refer to other sources of information that can help in the refinement of the generalization.

In the researcher’s opinion, if students are adequately prepared with background information about intercultural communication, they will probably not need to revise their conclusions. The students in this class were a good example of this.

The Posttask Phase

By using the minimedia concept, students come up with many differences that are good material for discussions about intercultural communication. Many of them are stereotypes or clichés about Germans; however, Webber (1990) points out that stereotypes are the products of a normal cognitive process. Through this process, individuals attempt to make sense of their encounters and the world as a whole. He goes on to say that if one critically confronts stereotypes of the target culture as a part of students’ responses, this means acknowledging the implicit and pervasive presence of them. One can use them to explore why the image exists and to what extent the categorization is valid. Working with students’ stereotypes can contribute to their general knowledge base about the target culture as well as increasing reflection on the foreign culture, the students’ own culture, and the process of forming judgments in general.

In the posttask phase, the researcher’s students read more information about how experts within the field of intercultural communication see each cultural group.
Lewis (1996) presents information on both cultural groups but does not expressly compare the two. He concludes that Germans tend to plan well into the future and want to lay a proper foundation when explaining something, for example, while Americans are seen to be oriented to the moment or very near future and have the motto “Let’s get to business.” Schmidt (2002) provides a good comparison of German and American business and businesspeople. He covers some of the differences the researcher’s students were able to find on the web sites and supplies very viable explanations for why these differences exist. One such difference is Germans value details, Americans unconventional thinking. Hall and Hall (1990), and Stahl, Langeloh, and Kühlmann (1999) discuss several other differences the researcher’s students found.

The researcher finds it very useful to divide the class into two groups when using these sources. One group reads information from one of the above mentioned sources, while the other group reads a different one as homework, and in class we compare the information from both sources. (The teacher must be sure that both sources present the illustrative differences; not all sources talk about the same ones.) This provides good discussion material about Germans and Americans. In addition, it provides the opportunity to talk about how the information from different sources is similar or different and why there might be variations. This technique also allows for greater exposure to more sources. By supplying students with more cultural information on differences found between Americans and Germans and talking with students about them, we are able to achieve the third point in Seelye’s (1993) three step procedure for refining cultural hypotheses when and if refinement is necessary. In addition, we are accomplishing Webber’s (1990) suggestion for exploring why such images exist and to what extent such categorizations are valid.

Once students realize that such differences do exist and what implications they can have, it is time to talk about what could be done in work-related situations where such differences occur. One problem the researcher experienced doing this was that his students had never worked in an office or company and had no experience in the real business world, either in the United States or Germany. So our possible solutions to this question were limited in scope. One suggestion was that each party needed to know about the beliefs and values of the counterpart so that each side could better understand the other’s attitudes. Another suggestion was that each party needed to adjust to the other’s needs as much as possible. Whether we came up with viable solutions or not, the main purpose of this activity was to broaden students’ awareness of their future professional realms and goals. This type of exercise is also good for non-work-related situations. Students can discuss what kind of information an American and a German friend would need in order to purchase a new computer, for example.

By doing such activities, learners are compelled to better understand their own and their counterpart’s cultural viewpoints. This type of exercise simultaneously challenges their sense of self and their cultural identity and worldview. This may result in students experiencing a lasting change in self-concept, attitudes, and behavior which ideally leads to greater openness toward other individuals and
cultures, as well as an increased desire to interact with other peoples (Bateman, 2002). Ideally this is what culture instruction should be all about.

CONCLUSION

The use of the Web can provide students with valuable background information for the study of culture. It also provides students access to culturally authentic material that they otherwise would not have a chance to experience. More importantly, it helps to develop students’ cultural understanding and Weltanschauung. Robinson (1988) confirms this by saying

cultural understanding is an ongoing, dynamic process in which learners continually synthesize cultural inputs with their own past and present experience in order to create meaning. As such, cultural understanding involves a synthesis between the learner’s home culture, the target cultural input and the learner as an individual (pp.11-12).

According to Bateman (2002), learners progress from an ethnocentric Weltanschauung to one that acknowledges the existence of different cultural perspectives. Students learn to accept these differences in culture, and perhaps later will even integrate some of these into their own lives.

NOTES

1 Moran (2001) defines perspectives as the perceptions, beliefs, values, and attitudes that underlie the products of a culture, and they guide individuals and communities in the practices of that culture.

2 Other possible business sources are Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997), and Hall and Hall (1990) in English or Kiesel and Ulsamer (2000) in German. For the German speaking countries in general the following sources are very helpful, James (1994), Zeidenitz and Barkow (1993), and Bilton (1999).

3 All cross-cultural books the researcher is aware of that compare German and American cultures are concerned with business. However, these cultural differences apply equally well to everyday situations.

4 The researcher’s students commented that had we not talked about these differences, they would have not been consciously aware of them. They would have noticed that something was different, but they would not have known what. According to Moran (2001), perspectives can be explicit but they often are outside of the conscious realm.

REFERENCES


**APPENDIX**

List of Cited Web sites

News services: these sites contain the most recent news items in text, audio and/or video formats.

- www.ard.de
- www.deutschewelle.de
- www.inforadio.de/magazin.php
- www.n-tv.de
- www.zdf.de
- www.germanytodayradio.com
- www.real.com
- www.msn.com

German newspapers online: these sites provide the daily news.

- www.faz.de
- www.sueddeutschezeitung.de
- www.tagesspiegel.de
- www.onlinenewspapers.com

German business newspapers online: these sites provide daily news for the business world.

- www.financialtimes.de
- www.handelsblatt.de
German magazines online: these weekly magazines provide information on current events throughout the world in general and business in particular.

www.focus.de
www.spiegel.de
www.metagrid.com

German business magazines online: these weekly magazines provide news, features and commentaries for the German businessperson.

www.bizz.de
www.dm.de
www.focus.de
www.kapital.de
www.wirtschaftswoche.de

Web sites for information on intercultural communication.

www.windowontheworldinc.com/countryprofile/germany.html
www.windowontheworldinc.com/countryprofile/austria.html
www.windowontheworldinc.com/countryprofile/switzerland.html
www.windowontheworldinc.com/countryprofile/united_states.html
www.windowontheworldinc.com/pps_index.html
www.sietar-deutschland.de
www.tu-chemnitz.de/phil/ikk/alt/index.html
www.german-way.com/german.intervw_arch.html

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