

**Title of example of practice:** **Case study: How do we teach culture.**  
 Example of practice: The teaching of British & American Studies, a second language area study and a course in Culture, Economy and Organisations in Contexts in a social science programme (Bsc. programme in Business, Language and Communication) at the Copenhagen Business School

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**Institution and initiating department/faculty**

**(i.e. where example of practice takes/took place):**

Copenhagen Business School, Department of Intercultural Communication and Management

**Departments/faculties in which initiative is/was implemented/to be implemented:**

The initiative (courses) are taught as part of a BSc degree in Business, Language and Culture at CBS.

**Abstract**

**(QA question: What are/were you trying to do?)**

This example of practice describes a one semester course in Culture, Economy and Organizations (CEO) which forms part of a BSc. programme in Business, Language and Culture at the Copenhagen Business School. The example illustrates an innovative way to teach and study cultural analysis in a specific programme. The CEO course follows up on four previous semesters' focus on cultural analysis.

**Background – contextual issues giving rise to the initiative**

**(QA questions: Why are/were you trying to do it? / What are/were the aims and objectives?)**

The Bsc in Business, Language and Culture is primarily a social science degree, but it also contains substantial courses in foreign language area studies and cultural studies. The programme is taught in English, except the courses in the students' chosen second foreign language (German, French or Spanish). Students are required to integrate cultural analysis in, inter alia, their concluding 3<sup>rd</sup> year bachelor project, and their grades are partly dependent on the extent to which they do this.

British and American studies, and a second foreign language area study, are taught during the first three semesters, followed by an obligatory exchange semester (4<sup>th</sup> semester) in a country, where the student's second foreign language is spoken. Upon returning, the students take a course in Culture, Economy and Organisations in Context (CEO). These five courses, in combination, are designed to foster and train awareness of and practical hands-on experience with the negotiation of different cultural experiences and contexts.

### Learning objectives

The *first aim* of the concluding CEO-course is to follow up on students' experiences from their semester abroad, with a view to encouraging critical reflexivity concerning their stay abroad. The course works in particular with students' awareness of their own cultural situation, and the ways in which they apprehend and negotiate difference. This is done in workshops using exercises, presentations & opponent sessions where students, organized in groups across their language classes, will draw on and exchange experiences based on logs written during their exchange. During the workshops, students are also introduced to theories of culture, self and identity that they will be encouraged to draw on in explaining their own experiences (see below). Various approaches to data-gathering are part of this (e.g. individual/focus-group interviews, surveys).

The *second aim* is to introduce theoretical perspectives that enable students to analyse questions of selfhood, identity & cultural economy and their relationship to cultural contexts. Included under this is the study the shifting frontiers between the public and the private, multiculturalism, the impact of media and mediation on selfhood, and questions of semiotics & representation as they relate to processes of consumption, exchange and production in different contexts. The course aims to sharpen students' awareness of organizations, actors and economic activities as cultured, and to provide them with conceptual tools to identify and analyse these phenomena.

The specific learning objectives are the following:

- Define and discuss key concepts relating to selfhood, identity, culture and cultural economy
- Apply appropriate readings and concepts taught during the course to critically discuss the question of cultural situation, based on their own and others' experiences abroad.
- Deliver constructive, professional feedback to fellow students, based on the readings and own experiences, concerning the way they tackled the question of differences while abroad.
- Use appropriate methods to gather and analyse data (quantitative or qualitative, as preferred) on fellow students' experiences abroad.

### Description of activity or initiative

(QA question: How is/was the activity/initiative implemented?)

**Course organization and teaching methods:** The CEO-course is organized as lectures and workshops where students apply the conceptual tools they have learned in the lectures in connection with empirical cases based on their own experiences from their 4<sup>th</sup> semester abroad. Students are required to keep a diary or log while abroad, containing thoughts, anecdotes, interviews, images, music, newspaper articles, film clips, etc. that they found thought-provoking, interesting, shocking, surprising etc. This log serves as the point of departure for the workshop exercises carried out during the semester. Exercises include, *inter alia*, presentations and student-student interviews, thus also offering students an opportunity to practice data-gathering skills that they will need for their 3YP.

**Examination:** The course concludes with a 10-page essay, written individually, where students, using the data they have gathered themselves and from one another, compare and contrast their exchange experiences, and discuss them in the light of the challenges and opportunities raised by multicultural collaboration, as well as the concepts taught during the course

### Evaluative comments

**(QA questions: What are/were the outcomes? What is/was the impact? Is/was the activity/initiative successful? How do you know whether or not it works/worked?)**

Students from the Business, Language and Culture programme often orient themselves towards Master programmes where they may continue to pursue cultural analysis and sociological and anthropological methods and they often successfully orient themselves towards (multicultural) jobs where those types of competences are useful.

Graduates from business school/social science programmes like the one sketched above are likely to be employed in multicultural organizations, nationally and/or abroad. The ability to work effectively with people from a wide range of backgrounds is therefore increasingly crucial. Collaborative abilities, a professional attitude, and awareness of one's own cultural situation, and that of one's organization, are important elements in enabling this.

### Advice to others

It is hard work to impart these competences to students and it takes time. It is not done with a short course in intercultural communication. It requires more than one semester and the willingness on both teachers and students to work with substantial theoretical literature. If that willingness, and the time to do so is there, it is rewarding and gives students important competences useful for their subsequent careers.