

An action research approach: developing intercultural competence in German Studies at Rhodes University.

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Abstract

The need to develop interculturally competent graduates is a concern for universities across the world. In South African universities this need is linked to globalization and increased diversity in terms of student demographics since 1994. Considering the legacy of apartheid, South African universities especially, and pressingly, need to respond to both global and national diversity concerns. ICC can play a significant role in creating more culturally inclusive spaces as students are provided with opportunities to “relate to and with people from vastly different cultural and ethnic backgrounds” (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 4). In a similar way, Germany has faced, and continues to face, challenges relating to diversity especially in relation to migrants and as such, interculturality is a topic of debate in society and scholarly discourse. Therefore, ICC is as relevant to German society as it is South African society. Courses that explicitly deal with ICC are however, not common in South African universities and discourse, and as a result universities are “missing out on developing students’ intercultural competence” (Deardorff & Quinlan, 2016). This thesis aimed to address this gap by investigating the viability and necessity of introducing a module that deals explicitly with ICC into the German Studies course at Rhodes University. In doing so it contributed to the creation of disciplinary knowledge as well as furthering the aim of aiding the creation of responsible global citizenship, alongside ‘academic citizenship’, and aiding the internationalisation at home concept by encouraging the students to understand their own lived reality in a diverse society. This research made use of an action research approach to implementing a module and tracing its development. Student responses, as well as reflection and observation, found that a module dealing explicitly with ICC was viable and able to contribute to developing students’ sense of cultural self-awareness and their awareness of ICC as a set of transferrable skills and knowledges. This module aimed to serve as an introduction to ICC for students in order to begin to develop their intercultural competence and increase their awareness and critical approach to culture and intercultural encounters.

Key words: ICC/action research/diversity/curriculum/culture/reflection/German Studies

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List of Abbreviations

CLIA 101	Cultures and Languages in Africa 101
<i>DaF</i>	<i>Deutsch als Fremdsprache (German as a foreign language)</i>
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
ICC	Intercultural Competence
HBU	Historically Black Universities
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HWU	Historically White Universities
FL	Foreign Language
FSI	Foreign Service Institute

Preface

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1. Introduction

Both national and global diversity result in greater contact between people of different social backgrounds and a need for people to be able to interact effectively and harmoniously despite seeming differences (Bok, 2006). It has, thus, become a priority for institutions to integrate internationalisation processes into policy and curriculum as one way of responding to global social trends surrounding increasing diversity. Furthermore, Higher Education institutions have a significant role to play in developing graduates that can operate effectively in the workplace, and thus, have a mandate to increase students' ability to negotiate diverse contexts. Diversity is no new concept to South African universities and South African universities especially need to respond to both global and national diversity concerns. This is largely due to the context of a post-apartheid transformation project, which has resulted in technically increased inclusion and access of previously excluded black students to historically white universities, and as a result, a more demographically diverse student body. This diversity is not limited to race but includes, amongst others, academic preparedness, belief systems, gender and disability (Cross, 2004, p. 391). Nevertheless, this has not necessarily led to increased epistemological access. Wally Morrow (1994, p. 40) explains this further and argues that "formal access to the institutions which distribute knowledge is different from, and not a sufficient condition for, epistemological access". Epistemological access however, is not the only diversity challenge facing South African universities. The intercultural encounters between students and lecturers from vastly differing backgrounds need to be intentionally addressed as well if we are to create inclusive learning spaces. Orla Quinlan and Yusuf Sayed (2016) explain this need in the context of an increasingly xenophobic environment, and argue that

South Africa's universities need to imbue the curriculum with intercultural competencies. Students need to be equipped to engage meaningfully with each other and people from elsewhere, at a time when South Africans have never been more interdependent in forging a sustainable, inclusive and constructive future for all (Quinlan & Sayed, 2016).

Moreover, despite the statistical diversity of South African universities, it is clear from mounting protests on campuses across the country that historically excluded students are unable to participate in institutional cultures of universities and a curriculum that is still dominated by a western world-view¹ (Shay, 2016). Numerous interventions¹ have attempted to address meaningful transformation of university institutional culture from a policy level, or in terms of broad curriculum changes in the form of 'decolonizing the curriculum'. As a part of

¹ This is explored in detail at the end of this chapter.

these attempts questions about what to do with inherently western subjects such as German Studies or other foreign language courses – how they fit into the image of a new, transformed and decolonized curriculum, have become pressing. A common view held, reports Lesley Le Grange (Le Grange, 2016), is that the existing Western-based curriculum should be destroyed and replaced it with something new, and this should be “something indigenous or African”. This speaks to the need to recover and reclaim knowledges that have been “denigrated during the colonial and apartheid periods” as well as “legitimizing the commitments, worldviews, beliefs and values held in common by the world’s colonised people” (Le Grange, 2016, p. online). While this, according to Le Grange, is an important part of decolonisation, he argues that although it is crucial that “colonial relations of production that continually characterize and shape academic practices” should be challenged, “indigenous knowledge doesn’t reside in ‘pristine fashion’ outside of the influences of other knowledges” (Le Grange, 2016, p. online). As such, he calls for a process in Western knowledge in South African universities is not destroyed but is rather decentered, so that it “would then become one way of knowing rather than the way of knowing” (Le Grange, 2016, p. online). An approach such as this is the approach that overtly western subjects such as FLs can really begin to embrace. Drawing from the idea that FLs can decenter ways of knowing, this study therefore aimed to use an action research approach to address this broad concern of the relevance of German Studies (and by association other overtly western subjects) by reviewing the German Studies curriculum at a micro-level and then designing and teaching a new module focused on intercultural competence and increasing student participation. This was done in order to discover more ways in which German Studies can respond, and contribute to diversity efforts of South African universities. This was achieved by implementing a largely student-driven module on intercultural competence (ICC).

1.1. Aims

This research aimed to respond to the need for universities to internationalise and diversify curricula. This research thus, explored ways in which German Studies at Rhodes University can contribute to this need by equipping students with skills that are necessary to live and work in a culturally diverse world. Furthermore, this research aimed to develop a more inclusive teaching environment ‘at home’, or in a specifically South African context. Inclusive education is a significant part of the aims of this research and involves looking at the curriculum in terms of what and how is taught with the acknowledgement that curriculum consists of no less than four parts: content, organisation, learning and teaching methods, and assessment (Knight, 2001,

p. 369). Content is usually what is transformed rather than other aspects of the curriculum and thus, how lecturers teach and assess is often neglected when ‘curriculum transformation’ is discussed. By exploring ways of explicitly equipping students with the skills needed to interact efficiently in a culturally diverse world, I focused on teaching and learning over and above content, and I looked at how theory is transformed into real-world skills. I thus aimed to explore two main areas: firstly, whether including a specific module on ICC can contribute to fostering the type of skills necessary to operate in cultural diverse contexts, with a particular focus on developing critical self-awareness and empathetic interactions. Secondly, I explored the process of introducing a stand-alone ICC module using an action research approach. Bernstein’s pedagogic device is used to frame the discussion of how ICC knowledge and theory is recontextualized and reproduced in order to achieve these specific aims. Bernstein’s pedagogic device refers to the “ordering and disordering principles of the pedagogising of knowledge” (Singh, 2010, p. 574) or the way in which knowledge becomes curriculum and ultimately classroom discourse². Considering the above, this chapter will discuss the role of ICC in the *DaF* (*Deutsch als Fremdsprache* = German as a Foreign Language) classroom and its role in being able to assist internationalisation and diversity efforts, particularly at Rhodes University. It will also contextualise this research by providing a brief overview of the challenges facing South African universities, and German society, in terms of diversity and transformation.

1.2. *DaF*, ICC and Internationalisation at Higher Education Institutions

The following section will contextualise the need for ICC in higher education and the role *DaF* can play in developing the skills and knowledges associated with IC. Intercultural Competence (ICC) is an important part of the internationalisation process and is in fact one of the important outcomes of the internationalisation of universities (Deardorff, 2006, p. 241). In brief, ICC is defined as “a combination of skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to engage successfully across difference”³ and is required in order for people to “get along at an interpersonal level with those who may not seem like [them]” (Deardorff & Quinlan, 2016). As mentioned, as part of the larger context of Higher Education, South African universities are required to become both “nationally responsive and cosmopolitan” (Habib, 2015, p. 2). This requires universities to manage national diversity as well as prepare students for a cosmopolitan context where “people are expected to work across racial, cultural, religious and linguistic boundaries”

² This is further discussed in Chapter 2.1.

³ A more in- depth discussion on ICC and the complexities surrounding its definition is included in Chapter 2.2.1.

(Habib, 2015, p. 4). It thus becomes important that universities “provide their students with the soft skills necessary to operate in diverse cultural settings” (Habib, 2015, p. 4).

Internationalisation policies respond to, and recognise, this need and form part of how universities aim to address the need to develop graduates who are nationally and globally responsive. Internationalisation of higher education is conceived of by the DHET (Department of Higher Education and Training) as the “intentional or steered process to integrate or infuse intercultural, international and global dimensions in higher education” (DHET, 2017, p. 9). The DHET views the “international dimension” of higher education as “central feature” and has thus aimed to develop specific frameworks and policies which “guide and regulate the activities that relate to internationalisation of higher education” (DHET, 2017, p. 3). As such, internationalisation is a prominent concern for many higher education institutions in South Africa, but as will be discussed towards the end of this chapter, it goes hand-in-hand with national concerns of transformation and diversity.

Rhodes University has responded to this concern by setting targets and mandates in relation to promoting multiculturalism and “an institutional learning environment inclusive of international, intercultural and global dimensions at every level of thinking and practice within the institution” (RU, 2017). This includes curriculum, interaction and participation with global academic communities as well as exchange programmes and a goal of promoting “internationalisation at home” (RU, 2017). The latter is particularly relevant for this research as it deals with Rhodes University’s commitment to promoting “values of diversity” and nurturing “a culture where everyone feels valued” (RU, 2017) and allows internationalisation to contribute to a learning environment that supports diversity. Furthermore, it is the component of internationalisation that the implemented module aimed to contribute towards developing.

Despite well-meaning policies Deardorff and Quinlan (2016) argue that universities are “missing out on developing students’ intercultural competence” especially in relation to courses such as language courses which can be considered best suited to developing ICC owing to the interdependence of language and culture (Kiet Ho, 2009, p. 63). Nevertheless, there are emerging studies that argue ICC can, and should, be woven into multiple disciplines⁴, as the need to develop skills and attitudes that enable us to live and work with culturally different others is “no longer specific to a few particular disciplines and professions [,] but rather is a

⁴ Examples of this can be seen in the emergence of intercultural training in fields such as teacher education, nursing, social work, and management (Deardorff, 2009B, p. xii).

call to cultural consciousness in a much wider context” (Bennett, 2009, p. 122). It is this missing out on developing intercultural competence that this study aimed to address through an action research approach to teaching ICC in German Studies at Rhodes University. As such, the aim of developing graduates for the local and global market is of particular interest for this research as it is one of the ways western-orientated subjects and foreign language courses in particular, such as German Studies are able to have the greatest impact. This is partly due to the fact that if HEIs aim to prepare graduates who are able to operate in global and local contexts, they will need to develop students’ cultural awareness and intercultural competence. This is made even more crucial by the fact that, as noted by Ntuli (2012), a “lack of understanding of other people’s culture and nonverbal behaviours can cause misunderstandings and even conflict”.

Looking more broadly, the development of ICC in the twentieth century is routinely linked to the increasingly globalised and multicultural social landscape which reaches into every aspect of daily life. The globalization trend has stimulated the migration of populations and the increased development of multicultural societies (Chen & An, 2006, p. 196) which requires a “new way of thinking and lifestyle” from members of a society (Chen & An, 2006, p. 196). This is particularly for German Studies as diversity and interculturality challenges are a prominent concern and ongoing debate in German society and academic – a context that is explored more fully in Chapter 1.6. However, it is also a concern for universities, including South African universities. As mentioned above, universities are not exempt from this trend and the impacts of globalization and migration for universities are linked to demographics, as well as policy and access to education. Altbach (2004, p. 4) argues that universities are inescapably affected by globalization as they “have always figured in the global environment and thus been affected by circumstances beyond the campus and across national borders”. The long-term results of globalization are unclear. However, scholars argue that globalization has the ability to both “level the playing field in the new age of knowledge interdependence” as well as contribute to “both worldwide inequality and the McDonaldisation⁵ of the university” (Altbach, 2004, p. 3). What this means for universities is that globalization

opens access and makes it easier for students and scholars to study and work anywhere. But in many respects, existing inequalities are only reinforced, and new barriers erected (Altbach, 2004, p. 7).

⁵ According to Altbach, McDonaldisation refers to “multinationalisation, which is defined as academic programmes or institutions from one country offered in other countries (Altbach, 2004, p. 6)” See (Altbach, 2004).

Globalization and increased diversity thus provide opportunities but also significant challenges to overcome in order to capitalise on the benefits of diversity. These “existing inequalities” are particularly relevant for developing societies in that “much of the non-Western world [has] had European university models imposed on them by colonial masters” (Altbach, 2004, p. 4). This means that the “theories and theorists you’ll find today in university disciplines from the humanities through to the social and natural sciences are largely derived from Europe or the global North” (Le Grange, 2016). These mostly excluded and decimated the knowledges of colonised people. For HEIs, the need to transform organisational culture, and university policy in a way represents and values a variety of perspectives, experiences, and epistemologies and is therefore of significant importance.

Nevertheless, the reality of the 21st century is that “every serious account of the major forces transforming our world today includes the word *globalization*” and hence, the increased need for people to figure out ways to “live and work productively and harmoniously with people having different values, backgrounds and habits” (Bok, 2006, p. ix). Thus, addressing the organisational culture and university policy of a highly diverse country such as South Africa, which not only needs to respond to global trends but address national diversity and interests, requires careful consideration of the cultural perspectives and identities of a number of stakeholders. It is crucial that universities are places that value cultural diversity and develop cultural awareness and sensitivity. This is not unique to the South African context, and measures to address multiculturalism have led to an increase in intercultural interactions and multi-ethnic and multicultural societies in which it is necessary for people to “learn new ways of interacting, to deal with frictions in the process of adjusting ourselves to new cultural realities” (Chen & An, 2006, p. 197).

In light of these challenges, ICC can play a significant role in creating more culturally inclusive spaces as students are provided with opportunities to “relate to and with people from vastly different cultural and ethnic backgrounds” (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 4). Weber, Domingo & Fourie have addressed the value of German Studies in this regard. Concerning the teaching of a foreign literature to South African students, they state:

[The] study of foreign- or additional-language literature, preferably in the original language, facilitates a more critical engagement with that culture, precisely because the student can be ‘lifted beyond the boundaries of the ... culture of origin’ (Lefevere 1992: 9) and is thus in a position to engage in some form of metacritique”. (Weber, Domingo and Fourie 2017, p.326-327)

When approaching literature from a different culture and language, students are presented with the opportunity to begin to learn critical and analytical ways of engaging with materials related to culture. Weber and Domingo (2011, p.183) argue that this process is able to take place as “questions of equivalence, domestication and fidelity do arise, as highlighted by the degree of ‘foreignness’ of the FL [foreign language] student’s culture”. They further note that these questions encourage students to question their own position in relation to the foreign text and culture and thus “foster a self-reflective approach to the entire process of understanding and coming to terms with cultural differences in general” (2011, p.183). Nevertheless, Weber, Domingo & Fourie (2017, p. 329) acknowledge that a university-level German literature course is “probably not going to arm students with knowledge that is directly transferable to and in our South African context”, yet it can incorporate ways that encourage and contribute to developing students that are more globally aware and interculturally sensitive. In this way, this research aims to show that German Studies can play an important role in contributing to transformation and diversity efforts of South African universities.

The inclusion of Cultural Studies into the German Studies curricula provides opportunity for students to develop a process of understanding cultural difference. Despite students seeming to have little opportunity to recognise and apply the intercultural skills and knowledges learned through the encounter with German culture in courses based in South Africa, culture is now easier to appropriate due to immigration, and technologies such as video, television, electronic communication, internet chatrooms (and social media in general) and a host of other computer-based technologies (Kramersch, 2008, p. 5). Although information about other cultures is easier to access than ever before, this does not guarantee the appropriate use of this cultural knowledge and may lead to it being misused or misinterpreted. This has serious implications for how a culture is perceived due to the limited understanding of the culture’s history, experience and traditions, which mostly affects historically marginalised groups (Matthes, 2016, p. 343). Therefore, it is important that the Cultural Studies component of German Studies at Rhodes University confronts students explicitly with issues of culture and ICC in a way that both avoids harmful cultural appropriation, and at least makes explicit the oft-occurring essentialisation of culture.

1.3. Broader context of curriculum design and transformation at Rhodes University

The following section will discuss efforts to address curriculum challenges faced in the wake of transformation and Rhodes University. Transformation and curriculum concerns have been taken up by Rhodes University in general, and therefore by German Studies at Rhodes as well. In order to address the need for effective curriculum development, Rhodes University has implemented an approach of “collegial rationality” in which academics are encouraged to be critically self-reflective and engage in self-evaluation of their respective courses (Belluigi, 2015, p. 4). The purpose of this approach is to empower staff to “improve or transform their practice” towards bettering the quality of student learning (Belluigi, 2015, p. 4) and approach the evaluation of their courses in a way that transforms curricular responsively and allows for student participation and ownership (Belluigi, 2015, p. 4). Evidence of this type of evaluation is present in German Studies, and Weber, Domingo & Fourie (2017) argue that German is able to add to the role that universities play in “developing democratic ideals” and has in fact developed significantly from its *Germanistik* origins. Nevertheless, this shift alone was not enough to make it suited to effectively developing ICC. As *Germanistik*, German Studies was taught to a select few as it required mother-tongue or near mother-tongue proficiency, promoting a curriculum that was modelled on those taught in Germany (Weber, Domingo, & Fourie, 2017, p. 323), without ever taking into consideration the diverse cultural realities of the context it was taught in, thus being, in effect, a colonial act. It was also not suited to the full development of interculturally competent students as it did not include cultural or translation studies as students were expected “to have gained insight into those fields either through their (German-speaking) upbringing or through their high school education” (Weber, Domingo, & Fourie, 2017, p. 242). Thus, the subject served rather as a personal enrichment course. It was in the 1960s that *Germanistik* began to shift to include a broader range of concerns and students, including cultural studies. Hess-Lüttich (2003, p. 75) traces the development of cultural studies in the 1960s in the US and Britain and its relation to the increase in foreign students in Germany which allowed for the first concepts of what became *Deutsch als Fremdsprache (DaF)*. He further links the rise of *DaF* to ICC and its growing development within DaF and presents ICC as an intra-national and inter-national everyday phenomenon which gained academic attention over the last twenty-five years of the 20th century. He argues that,

die Erforschung interkultureller Kommunikation in ihren alltäglichen wie ästhetischen, historischen, medialen und institutionellen Aspekten kann im Zeichen global

zunehmender transkultureller Kontakte, Kontexte, Konflikte auch in der Germanistik nur an Bedeutung gewinnen (Hess-Lüttich, 2003, p. 75)..

Monetary concerns also influenced the development of *DaF* as academia and departments came under mounting pressure to attract more students to prove themselves financially worthy of keeping. This is largely due to issues of financial viability coming to determine the structure of academia. This resulted in the university system becoming increasingly bureaucratic and has led to the “steady erosion of the idea of culture as formation (*Bildung*)” and the consequent displacement of education as the central principle of the university in favour of information” (Horn, 1999, p. 85). Despite the study of literature being the focus of Horn’s argument, the economic imperatives of university study are reflected in the increasing link between a university degree and ‘getting a job’. These elements contributed to the name of *Germanistik* being changed to *German as a Foreign Language* and the courses becoming geared more towards communicative language learning and thus, towards students learning German for the first time. During this phase, the subject, while still satisfying personal enrichment, is also, to some extent, is a “service course to satisfy the needs of the South African political and economic market” (Weber, Domingo, & Fourie, 2017, p. 324).

At Rhodes University, renaming the subject *German Studies* in 2008 highlighted the place of the subject as more than language and literature, and paved the way for the inclusion of courses dealing with cultural studies. This shift in itself resulted from self-evaluation and places the subject in a better position to develop intercultural skills. German Studies, as it stands at Rhodes University now, consists of language acquisition, cultural studies, literature and, from second year onwards, translation studies (German Studies, 2017).

1.4. *DaF* and ICC in the South African University

Although this research is largely connected to global processes that influence national policy, it cannot be ignored that it is situated and took place in the context of a contested university space. The following section will thus briefly sketch the South African context in which this study is situated and discuss how *DaF* may be able to contribute to helping solve difficult historical problems facing South African universities.

South African universities have long been scrutinised for their failure to meaningfully transform in the post-apartheid era. In 2015 this failure manifested as urgent protests on a number of campuses across South Africa. The reasons for the protests are diverse and often debated, but in brief, they aimed to protest institutional culture that is overly western and thus

demanded the “decolonisation” of the university in terms of subjects that are taught from a predominantly western perspective and the absence of relevant courses that included African knowledges, as well as free tertiary education. These protests continued well into 2016 and will probably continue until universities and government begin to address the demands made by various stakeholders as the transformation process thus far has not been satisfactory to the student body it aims to serve. It has become clear that the transformation process of universities as outlined in the White Paper (1997), which called for the simultaneous “striving towards globalization on the one hand and social responsibility on the other” (Weber, Domingo & Fourie, 2017, p. 325) and subsequently, the Green Paper (2012), which called for affordable, equitable and accessible higher education (Weber, Domingo & Fourie, 2017, p. 326), have yet to be realised. This is further revealed by continuously emerging research that indicates pointedly poor levels of the adjustment of black students at previously white institutions in terms of the poorer academic performance of black students as compared to their white counterparts and the consequent effect on their dropout rates (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007, p. 386). Transformation⁶ is thus slow and, already in 1999, was labelled by Fourie as a “precipitous process” in which “almost daily there are shifts of emphasis and new issues which dominate the higher education debate” (Fourie, 1999, p. 276). The recent student protests at universities surrounding issues of transformation (which includes the issue of “free” education) have highlighted the failure of organisational culture, university policy and curriculum to transform in order to meet the needs of a more diverse student body.

Nevertheless, the call for transformation of universities is not exclusive to the South African landscape but is linked to global processes including (but not restricted to) globalization, democratisation, and the increased economic importance of knowledge (Brennan, King & Lebeau, 2004, pp. 7-8). As universities respond to these global processes, transformation is necessary and commonly linked to curriculum review, diversification efforts and readdressing access policies (Fourie, 1999, p. 275). This is even more critical for countries having undergone, or currently undergoing, major socio-political transitions as the transformation of previously exclusionary spaces such as universities are under the spotlight to spearhead social change (Brennan, King, & Lebeau, 2004, p. 16).

⁶ Transformation in this instance is defined as the restructuring of Higher Education to create a “democratic, non-racial and non-sexist system of higher education” (DHET, 2013, p. xi) involving the improvement of “access and success for those groups whose race, gender or disability status had previously disadvantaged them”. (DHET, 2013, p. xiv).

South Africa presents an especially difficult case for effective transformation processes. Historically race was used to determine who was granted access to which South African higher education institutions⁷. Separate organisations existed which catered to the apartheid government's ideas of perceived needs for different races (Bozalek & Boughey, 2012, p. 688). This type of structural organisation has resulted in the existence of historically white universities (HWU) (such as Rhodes University) and historically black universities (HBU). HBUs catered to training black students in line with “nursing rather than medicine, and public administration rather than political philosophy” as where research and funding was structured to serve the white population (Bozalek & Boughey, 2012, p. 691). Consequently, the end of apartheid resulted in increasing numbers of previously excluded black students seeking access to better resourced historically white institutions (Bozalek & Boughey, 2012, p. 695), and the “internal drive towards a more open, relevant and non-discriminating higher education system” (Fourie-Malherbe, 2014, p. 278). Indeed, the student protests that have characterised university life of late can be linked to this ‘internal drive’ that has yet to be realised fully. Shay (2016) for example argues that currently dominating western world views and their relevance (among others) are recurring grievances voiced by students. She argues that curricula need to be rethought in terms of “fitting” “the new students, many of whom don't fit the profile of the typical ‘mainstream’ middle class, white, ‘university-ready’ 18-year-old school leaver” (Shay, 2016, online). Furthermore, students feel that curriculum content “under-represents and undervalues the perspectives, experiences, epistemologies of those who do not fit into these mainstream categories” (Shay, 2016, online). This is echoed by scholars who argue that despite the steady transformation of the student body, senior positions remain white, and with it, the curriculum remains largely untransformed and western-orientated (Luckett, 2016, p. 1). As such cultural validation and recognition forms part of the struggles and tensions present in South African universities. Part of these points of contention is the domination of western-orientated subjects and ways of knowing at South African universities. Consequently, there are calls by African intellectuals and by students for the “Africanisation” of the higher education curriculum and “greater responsiveness and relevance to African identity, culture and issues” (Luckett, 2010, p. 7). Alongside ongoing curriculum reviews by individual departments, the above-mentioned calls have stimulated a proposal for a wide-scale review of subject curricula at Rhodes University with the acknowledgement that the last review was conducted in 2004 (Rhodes, 2016).

⁷ Higher Education Institutions, henceforth, HEIs.

The disruptions on campuses around the country can thus further be linked to questions about belonging and understanding between students and staff from variety of racial, religious, national and cultural backgrounds. Louise Vincent (2008, p. 1427) argues that many institutions, which have become more diverse since 1994, assume that it “seems intuitively likely that inter-racial contact improves racial/ethnic relations”. The concern for how diversity is managed on campuses, in terms of how students get along with one another and the university staff on an interpersonal level, needs to be considered if we are to develop truly inclusive learning environments. Vincent (2008, p. 1431) argues that diversity leads to increased contact between groups, but this contact happens “in the context of a society with a legacy of entrenched racial segregation”. As such we need to consider how much contact is actually happening, and recognize that there is an “important difference between ‘contact’ and integration” (Vincent, 2008, p. 1431) Cultural and racial conflict on campuses continues as various groups struggle to create a space where all feel included. Furthermore, diversity is commonly not clearly defined in policy or literature pertaining to diversification (Badsha & Harper, 2000, p. 24) and often used in place of efforts relating to the transformation of race demographics (Cross, 2004, p. 391). Badsha and Harper (2000) note that there is an emergent realisation that, if we are to embark upon an organised national campus diversity initiative, we will need to rework, rediscover, redefine and hopefully find sufficient consensus on what we understand by diversity and diversity initiatives within our own South African context. According to Cross (2004, p. 391), this makes ‘diversity’ a highly contested notion in South Africa and along with it, ‘transformation’.

Although racial demographics are an integral aspect of transformation and diversity issues, diversity on South African campuses is more completely viewed as the expression of the “social, educational, cultural, linguistic, religious and racial diversity of South African society” (Cross, 2004, p. 387). In order for institutions to fully respond to the need to diversify HEIs, they need to engage with programmes and policies (which fall under transformation efforts) which will impact on every aspect of academic life from student access and support, outreach programmes, staff recruitment and retention, to academic programme development, research, scholarship and the social and learning environment on campus (Cross, 2004, p. 388). Indeed, the creation of policy related to transformation and curricula are processes that require interculturally-competent decision makers. South African universities also need to find ways to manage diversity between various stakeholders as demographics, curricula and policies are developed, in order to ensure that with transformation comes greater cultural sensitivity.

Considering the global trends discussed above, as well as the calls for transformation of specifically South African institutions, transformation goals require universities to respond to national issues of establishing accessible HEIs, while additionally attempting to keep pace with global trends in Higher Education, civil society and economic demands. We thus need to produce graduates who can contribute to their immediate national community as well as the global community. This in turn requires a coming together of multiple identities, ethnicities and cultures, no matter whether under national or global circumstances, and therefore, graduates are in need of effective skills that will help them negotiate the multicultural spaces in which they find themselves. This further reinforces that argument and need for transferable ICC skills, especially those of tolerance and empathy, which are imperative when confronted with difference (Weber, Domingo, & Fourie, 2017, p.325).

Further adding to recent transformation processes is the increasing role technology plays in education, which is leading to the need for universities to begin to shift toward e-learning, blended learning and the use of other information and communications technologies (ICT). These technological advancements additionally add to the necessity for universities to re-evaluate courses and curricula at an institutional and departmental level, as access to ICTs is not equally shared by all students. Middle-class students have vastly different experiences from students from lower socio-economic backgrounds when it comes to the use of technology at university level. It is therefore important that how ICTs are used in courses is given careful consideration and no assumption is made that all students are equally technologically capable.

Despite the challenges and need for wide-scale policy and institutional culture shifts, individual departments can, and have been spearheading movements towards diversification of the curriculum and attempts to make their curricula more inclusive. This is even more crucial for overtly western-orientated subjects, like courses dealing with European languages, literatures and cultures, such as German Studies, which are under increased pressure to find ways to keep their curriculum ‘relevant’ to the experiences of all students by making explicit what these courses can offer to the broader context of diversity and multiculturalism in South Africa.

Western subjects such as *DaF* are not able to simply ‘Africanise’ the content of their curriculum to make their subject inclusive of, and relevant to, the African experience and history (Lockett, 2016, p. 2). Despite this, foreign language courses such as German Studies offer the opportunity for a critical encounter with “European configurations of power and knowledge”

(Noyes, 1999, p. 208) present in HEI's, and may enable meaningful transformation to occur (Weber, Domingo, & Fourie, 2017, p.327). This is because these encounters allow for an intercultural dialogue which recognizes the initial colonial endeavour of German presence in Southern Africa in order to foster the understanding and acknowledgment of unequal conditions needed to create such dialogue (Weber, Domingo, & Fourie, 2017, p.328). Furthermore, Fourie's (2001) research has found that learning an additional language is helpful in developing "the kind of critical civil society advocated by the White Paper and other policy documents" as language contributes to a critical theory of society that is the precondition of transformation (in Weber, Domingo, & Fourie, 2017, p. 326). Fourie (2001) argues (with Habermas) that "A critical theory of society needs a critical theory of language, because language plays a predominant role in the kind of interactions and transactions that make up society" (in Weber, Domingo, & Fourie, 2017, p.326).

German Studies is thus suited to the development of ICC, and its development from *Germanistik* has included a concerted effort to include *Interkulturalität*. The introduction of the term *interkulturell* into the discourse in Germanistik stems from the 1970s as a result of the work of translation and communication researcher Heinz Göhring. Despite being rooted in *Kontrastive Kulturanalyse*, it was the beginning of an attempt to take transnational *Fremdsprachengermanistik* (2003C, p. 257). A shift towards the inclusion of ICC in Germanistik as *interkulturelle Germanistik* has been crucial in order for the subject to respond to the need for a transcultural communication, which traditional models of Germanistik were not able to achieve (Wierlacher, Vorwort, 2003, p. ix). Indeed, Wierlacher (2003, p. ix) argues that

Leitziel interkultureller Germanistik ist, der kulturellen Vielfalt des Interesses am Deutschen und den deutschsprachigen Ländern sowie dem Bedarf an transkultureller Verständigung besser gerecht zu werden als es bisherige Modelle von Germanistik vermochten.

This has also led to the growth of Germanistik in terms of allowing for increased appreciation of the *Landeskunde* component as part of cultural studies . Moreover, the inclusion of *Landeskunde* in *Germanistik* has led to, according to Wierlacher (2003, p. ix), a "Beitrag zur Bedingungsforschung des Kulturverstehens und interkulturelle Verständigung"⁸.

⁸ Wierlacher further outlines, in the next chapter, the history and theory of *interkulturelle Germanistik* and its associated research (Wierlacher, 2003A).

Still, ICC has not been overtly dealt with in the courses currently offered in German Studies at Rhodes University, although ICC does weave implicitly throughout the Language, Cultural Studies, translation and literature components. This is not specific, however, to German Studies at Rhodes University; ICC in foreign language teaching has traditionally been viewed as a “happy accident” or by-product of the content-orientated aspects of teaching and learning such as language acquisition, literature and *Landeskunde* rather than a skill requiring stand-alone attention (Domingo, 2015, pp. 243-244). Indeed, a short analysis into students’ perceptions of ICC at Rhodes University revealed that foreign language learning and Cultural Studies may “aid the process of fostering empathy” and the creation of a critical civil society, but that it will “not automatically result in students’ heightened intercultural competence” (Weber, 2015, p. 239). This means that for ICC courses to be effective, ICC cannot be developed through contact with other cultures alone, but must be intentionally addressed and developed (Deardorff, 2009, p. xiii). For this to be achieved, however, it must be a stated and explicit objective of teaching (Domingo R. S., 2015, p. 243). Continuing to teach FL courses in which ICC is implicitly woven into the curriculum will not ensure that students develop a sense of intercultural awareness. Considering the growing need for interculturally aware graduates and citizens, it is thus imperative that courses such as *DaF* “plan their teaching to include objectives, materials, and methods that develop the specific elements of intercultural competence” (Byram M. , 2009, p. 331). It is this gap in the German Studies course that this action research will aim to address in the context of mounting pressure for subjects to develop interculturally competent graduates as well as transform curriculum to suit the lived experience⁹ of a diverse student body.

Still, much of the ICC literature claims that ICC “lacks clarity” and the current trend is to attempt to develop ICC in a way that has consensus, routine and foundational principles (Phipps, 2008, p. 219) which will develop definitions, modules and means of assessment that are established and agreed upon by theorists and thus streamline the approach to and teaching of ICC. Moreover, ICC is often conceived as the ability to communicate with “members of relatively homogenous, national cultures” or to “resolve conflicts resulting from miscommunication in social life” (Kramersch, 2008, p. 5). This definition is incomplete as the concept of ‘culture’ is recurrently interrogated and deemed complex in light of the “increasingly fragmented and hybrid nature of national cultures” (Kramersch, 2008, p. 5 f). Culture, whether it is the students’ target culture or own culture, can no longer be conceived as “one native language = one native culture”, nor can it be associated with specific speech

⁹ This is discussed in further detail later in the chapter.

communities or shared historical experience (Kramersch, 2008, p. 6). Thus, the problem with the way in which ICC is commonly approached is that, as Phipps (2008, p. 220) argues, “questions of culture and intercultural competence cannot be entirely answered in class” (2008, p. 220). That is to say, we live in an intercultural world which according to Phipps (2008, p. 220) is “messy and conflictual”. ICC faces a double-bind where it needs to be intentionally addressed in a curriculum which requires a degree of streamlining and routine, but also needs to do justice to culture and avoid essentialising culture by providing packaged lists of “dos and don’ts” in intercultural encounters. ICC needs to address culture in a way that “being intercultural trumps knowing about culture” (Phipps, 2008, p. 220). Phipps argues for an approach to ICC in *DaF* that moves away from competence and towards developing “intercultural being” which requires

not competence or skill, ready packaged and defined and ‘out there’ to be obtained as an objective. Rather intercultural being needs a readiness, even a will to learn, an ability to move through the impoverished cultural mess of social interaction (Phipps, 2008, p. 228).

Such an approach may serve to prepare students better for the improvised nature of contemporary language and cultural social interactions. As such, it is clear that the way we address ICC in German Studies at Rhodes University is one of the areas of the curriculum that can be re-evaluated in order to make it more relevant to the needs of a diverse student body and an increasingly globalised world. ICC can aid transformation goals, but it is in need of a re-evaluation and transformation in the way in which we approach the teaching, learning and assessment of ICC as part of Foreign Language courses and the broader context of South African university transformation calls and processes.

1.5. Germany and ICC

West Germany, particularly, has a long history of being a destination for migrants and recently especially, as a result of the first *Gastarbeiter* agreements between the countries of West Germany, Italy, Turkey and later Greece in the 1960s (Barker, 2002, p. 244). This trend has continued, with the added pressure of asylum seekers increasingly entering Germany in the 1980s and 1990s (Barker, 2002, p. 244) and more recently a surge of nearly a million refugees from Turkey, Greece and Syria that have led some commentators to label Germany a “land of immigration” (Ehsan, 2016, p. online). This has resulted in a multicultural society in Germany which has caused German officials and citizens to find ways of integrating and accepting *Ausländer*. Clearly, however, this has yet to be achieved with 54.9% in a 2016 survey believing

that “the onus was on migrants alone when it came to adapting to life in Germany” (Ehsan, 2016, p. online). Challenges of integrating *Ausländer* is not new to Germany and “Germany’s integration challenge with much of its ethnic Turkish population was already significant before the refugee crisis gathered pace” (Ehsan, 2016, p. online).

The emergence of authors such as Rafik Schami, Emine Sevgi Özdamar and Feridun Zaimoğlu through their explicit writing of experiences of ‘the other’ within Germany, have made it clear that there is a need to engage with the challenges associated with a multicultural society. Therefore, ICC has come to play an important role in public relations in Germany and is needed to “meet the challenges of multicultural society, particularly in regard to immigrant integration” (Moosmüller & Schönhuth, 2009, p. 208). Moosmüller and Schönhuth (2009, p. 225) argue that these challenges are especially complex in Germany where foreigners find it difficult to integrate into majority society due to a number of factors. These include the tendency to shy away from cultural difference and diversity as the construction of cultural difference can be easily equated with racism – which many Germans “feel a moral obligation to avoid” (Moosmüller & Schönhuth, 2009, p. 225). Furthermore, Germany’s position as an “ethnic nation” where citizenship was based on *ius sanguinis*¹⁰ (this law was only changed in 2000 which based citizenship of *ius soli*¹¹) meant that for many migrants and immigrants they remained foreigners in society despite many having lived in Germany for three decades (Moosmüller & Schönhuth, 2009, p. 225). This creates additional barriers to integrating migrants and immigrants into German society which is further compounded by the fact that the benchmark for integrating foreigners has been to not disturb “majority society” (Moosmüller & Schönhuth, 2009, p. 225). It is thus clear that despite being a “land of immigration”, German society is culturally divided with discussions on cultural difference either being approached with skepticism or centered on *German Leitkultur* in which many conservative politicians believe migrants should adapt the “dominant German cultural values” (Moosmüller & Schönhuth, 2009, p. 225).

The idea of German *Leitkultur* in itself is problematic considering cultural diversity within the notion of ‘German culture’. On the other hand, however, the concept of *Willkommenskultur*, or “culture of acceptance”, has been a major part of the German political discourse” (de Galembert, 2016). Thus, there is a clear divide between approaches to integrating migrants into

¹⁰ Children’s citizenship is determined by the citizenship of their parents.

¹¹ Allows children born in a country to obtain citizenship to avoid persons born and raised in a country from remaining foreigners because of the parents’ nationality (Honohan, 2011).

German society. Nevertheless, these discussions have led to an increased scholarly focus on the idea of culture and intercultural competence within Germany. The discussions have led to the development of additional terms such as “transculturality” developed by Wolfgang Welsch in the early 1990s, who looked at the concepts of multiculturalism and interculturality and defined their deficiencies, especially as Welsch argued that they are based on an understanding of cultures as monolithic. Welsch (1994, p. 4) argues that,

Unsere Kulturen haben de facto längst nicht mehr die Form der Homogenität und Separiertheit, sondern sind bis in ihren Kern hinein durch Mischung und Durchdringung gekennzeichnet. Diese neue Form der Kulturen bezeichne ich, da sie über den traditionellen Kulturbegriff hinaus- und durch die traditionellen Kulturgrenzen wie selbstverständlich hindurchgeht, als transkulturell. Das Konzept der Transkulturalität sucht diese veränderte kulturelle Verfassung ins Licht zu rücken.

However, as critics have pointed out, Welsch’s concept of transculturality is, in essence, building on interculturality and developing it to some extent; moreover it negates the real or imaginary existence of differences between cultures (Porsché, 2008, p. 15). Thus, Welsch’s theory leans toward the tendency to shy away from debating cultural difference, but this is problematic as differences between cultures cannot be theorized away and instead, according to Paul Mecheril (2011, p. 52), issues of difference and belonging need to be intentionally addressed. Mecheril offers a European, and thus also German, perspective on how to engage meaningfully with the complexity of increasingly diverse and hybrid societies, which extends to pedagogical matters:

Wichtige Aspekte einer Pädagogik natio-ethno-kultureller Mehrfachzugehörigkeit sind hierbei:

- Anerkennung von Mehrfachzugehörigkeit bedarf einer Einbettung in eine allgemeine Sensibilität für „das Uneindeutige und Mehrwertige“ und seine Wertschätzung. [..]
- Es ist wichtig, die Grenzen der Angemessenheit der Perspektive Mehrfachzugehörigkeit zu erkennen und andere Differenzlinien zu berücksichtigen (*gender*, Klasse, Behinderung, Sexualität usw.).
- Es ist sinnvoll, Unterschiede nicht so sehr als gegebene Differenzen anzuerkennen, sondern als Praktiken der Unterscheidung aufzuklären (Mecheril, 2011, p. 52).

Although it would be interesting to examine Mecheril’s conceptualisation of hybridity and its theoretical underpinnings, this thesis deals with the implementation of practical steps to possibly facilitate the recognition of the value of multiculturalism and hybridity. Nevertheless, Mecheril and Welsch contribute to explaining that ICC is as relevant to Germany as it is to

South Africa, albeit for different historical reasons. Germany faces the challenge of managing a multicultural society as its position as the second largest immigration country after the United States of America (Ehsan, 2016, p. online), whereas South Africa is faced with managing a multicultural society with deep divisions as a result of apartheid and must now find ways of meaningfully transforming society and its associated institutions and in doing so, address issues of belonging. The role of culture within both the challenges facing Germany and South Africa are important components. Therefore, incorporating an ICC module into a German Studies course makes sense on the level of creating disciplinary knowledge as well as furthering the aim of aiding the creation of responsible global citizenship, alongside ‘academic citizenship’, and aiding the concept of ‘internationalisation at home’ (RU, 2011, p. online) by encouraging the students to understand their own lived reality in a diverse society.

1.6. Brief outline of research

In light of the above contextualisation, this research specifically looks at ways of teaching intercultural competence (ICC) as part of the Cultural Studies component in German Studies as the Cultural Studies component is most geared towards equipping students with valuable intercultural skills which allow them to effectively communicate with people from cultures different to their own. Using the Cultural Studies component of German Studies at Rhodes University, I aimed to identify and implement a module in which the Cultural Studies course could be used to foster meaningful ICC skills and attitudes in an attempt to improve students’ broader application of cultural sensitivity beyond the DaF classroom.

As noted, successful ICC courses recognise that simply meeting others from different social positions does not constitute cultural awareness or foster interpersonal sensitivity (Dervin, 2014, p. 192). Similarly, this can be said for changing the demographic of an institution – creating a diverse and international student and staff body will not automatically equate to cultural awareness and interpersonal sensitivity. Instead, ICC courses require the continued advancement of both internal outcomes, aimed at developing a “frame of reference shift” allowing for adaptability, flexibility and empathy (Deardorff, 2015, p. 142), and external intercultural outcomes, concerning the “effective and appropriate behaviour and communication in intercultural situations” (Deardorff, 2015, p. 142). ICC is fundamental in being able to create a sense of internal empathy for people from different social positions. This study aimed to highlight and recognise opportunities to learn these transferrable intercultural skills throughout the DaF course. This was planned to be achieved by not only looking at the content involved in the Cultural Studies section of DaF at Rhodes University, but also

attempting to incorporate new methods of teaching that keep up to date with the current move towards a more student-participation approach. Thus, the research required close collaboration with the students and aimed to contribute to both a practical concern in students' immediate situation as well as keep the course material relevant to German Studies.

To achieve this, a three-stage, interrelated, cyclical process involving planning, action, observation and reflection (Coats, 2005), in line with action research, was best fitted to this project. The action research is based on the implementation of a module that included a mixture of lectures and group problem-solving activities, and case-studies designed to challenge participants to engage with their own cultural perspective as well as work with participants from other cultural perspectives. The lectures served as short introductions to the different skills, competencies and theory of ICC, with class discussions allowing for a deeper engagement with ICC and culture. The activities and assignments were aimed at encouraging a personal engagement with the theory by relating theoretical concepts to students' personal ideas of their culture.

The module did not aim to implement an ICC training course or assess learners' entire ICC development, rather it was based on the idea that ICC should be intentionally addressed and not a hoped-for outcome of existing courses. The existing course already deals with communicative competence and the impact of culture on communication in the language and translations components, as well as with aspects of German culture in the Cultural Studies and literature components. Therefore, it was not necessary to implement an entire ICC course that re-teaches the knowledge and skills being covered by these existing courses – this would only serve as repetition and interfere with valuable teaching time. Rather, it was found to be more useful to make ICC visible to the students and provide them with tools and skills to monitor and develop their own intercultural competence journey. The module aimed to facilitate the knowledge taught throughout the existing DaF course by making students explicitly aware of the skills and attitudes required when attempting to negotiate cultural challenges in their day-to-day interactions. In this way, students were provided with opportunities to apply ICC skills and attitudes to existing course material and thereby, not only improve their intercultural competence in relation to German culture but develop intercultural dialogue in their day-to-day cultural interactions.

This chapter has thus situated this study in terms of the South African Higher Education context and highlighted the need for ICC at South African HEIs. It has also provided an overview of

how German Studies can aid the development of ICC in terms of its discipline but also in regard to the multicultural challenges facing Germany. Chapter Two will serve as a literature review in which I discuss the theoretical lens that I use to examine the process of implementing an ICC module. It will also explain significant theoretical underpinnings by providing an overview of culture, intercultural competence (ICC) and interculturality. This will be done to clarify what is meant by culture and ICC in relation to the scope of this research, as well as map the development of ICC teaching and assessment. This chapter will provide a more in-depth notion of how the teaching, learning and assessment of ICC were approached in the module. Furthermore, it will provide an overview of interculturality in order to give an idea of how issues of ICC have been approached in the German context. Chapter Three will outline the methodology. This chapter provides a rationale for the use of action research and lays out specific goals of the module and discusses research methods commonly used to research and data collection for ICC in order to differentiate this research from ICC research, yet simultaneously highlight areas of similarity and overlap. Moreover, it provides a rationale for how the module will be analysed through the lens of Bernstein's PedagogicDevice (Singh, 2010). Chapter Four will then form the Action Research component of this study in which I discuss the context of the study, the planning stages, action and reflection stages in relation to Bernstein's PedagogicDevice. The concluding chapter will then review the results of the implemented module and provide conclusions and recommendations for further research.

2. Theoretical lens and literature review

This chapter will provide an overview of Basil Bernstein's Pedagogic Device as the theoretical lens through which the implementation of the module was analysed, as well as provide an overview of ICC literature in order to explain how content was chosen for the module and why. It is important to make explicit that this research aimed to look at how ICC can be taught in a way that can contribute to the national context in which it is taught, and not only be used as a tool for preparing sojourners and tourists for trips abroad. The research thus aimed to contribute to curriculum research as well as ICC research and it is therefore necessary to draw from theory from both fields.

2.1. Theoretical Lens: Basil Bernstein's Pedagogic Device

The Pedagogic Device refers to three fields of knowledge; knowledge production, knowledge recontextualisation and knowledge reproduction (Myers, 2017, p. 195), and essentially makes up the "grammar of pedagogic discourse" as it "regulated the ideal universe of potential pedagogic meanings in such a way as to restrict or enhance their realisations" (Bernstein, 2000, pp. 28-29). The field of production refers to rules dictating knowledge creation and distribution (Myers, 2017, p. 195), recontextualisation refers to the selection, appropriation, relocation and focusing of knowledge into a specific order or curriculum (Singh, 2010, p. 576). Knowledge reproduction focusses on the level of the classroom and is used to describe where knowledge becomes classroom practice and is acquired by the students (Myers, 2017, p. 195). To explore and explain and how ICC theory was used in this module, Bernstein's Pedagogic Device proved useful in that it provides a way to track how students responded to, acquired and interpreted the content related to ICC and culture instead of focusing on the level to which they could be considered 'interculturally competent'. Bernstein's theory is most commonly used for analyzing the processes by which "discipline-specific knowledge or domain-specific expert knowledge is converted or pedagogised to constitute school knowledge" (Singh, 2010, p. 572). Despite its focus on school curriculums, it can easily be applied to the creation of university curriculum as well although the boundaries between pedagogic fields can be blurred in certain contexts.

This can be seen in the comparison between Bernstein's Pedagogic Device when it is applied to the subjects of Accounting and History. Peta Myer uses Bernstein's theory in a similar way to analyze how first-year university Accounting students constructed knowledge by investigating why some students were able to construct knowledge effectively while others

were not (Myers, 2017). The field of production, in disciplines such as Accounting, controls and limits what is available for recontextualisation, and this, in turn, regulates and limits what is available in the field of recontextualisation and hence, reproduction (Myers, 2017, p. 196). Accounting can thus easily be fitted into these fields as it also has a “conceptual spine” that regulates how students construct knowledge (Myers, 2017, p. 195). Humanities subjects such as History, however, find it far more difficult to make clear distinctions between the fields Bernstein describes and are more prone to creating new knowledge (Myers, 2017, p. 193). Carol Bertram (2010) also used to Bernstein’s Pedagogic Device to describe and explore the implications of curriculum reform in the South African History Curriculum in 2006. Bertram found that Bernstein’s theoretical language was useful in structuring and ordering the various parts of her research (Bertram, 2010). This distinction can further be seen in these two subjects’ classification and boundaries. Myers explains this as classification referring to power and the “strength of boundaries between disciplines” and framing as control and “who influences what within these boundaries” (Myers, 2017, p. 196). Again, Accounting would have far stricter classification and boundaries, and thus be less open to change in the field of recontextualisation and reproduction. Similarly, what is considered legitimate knowledge would be more flexible in a subject such as History as opposed to Accounting where “‘truth’ and its distribution are tightly controlled” by professional bodies (Myers, 2017, p. 196).

Landeskunde in German Studies and ICC are much like history, in that they have far less rigid classification and boundaries, and the fields of recontextualisation and reproduction are less distinct than in a subject such as Accounting. Although the language component of German Studies can be considered to have a stricter classification, the department voluntarily prepares students for an external examination, the actual curriculum is chosen solely by the teachers involved in implementing courses, thus creating at the same time, a less rigid classification. Nevertheless, there is a degree to which strict boundaries between years of study as each year progresses from the last in terms of ensuring language proficiency and the teacher is bound by the grammar structures of the language. There is however, no professional body limiting the field of recontextualisation, and the teacher is free to choose from a range of topics relevant to Germany, Austria and Switzerland and German Studies in their packaging of the grammar that needs to be taught. Furthermore, when it comes to the translation, literature and Cultural Studies components of German Studies, the teacher is in control of what topics or set-works to choose. There is no set curriculum that the teacher is bound by. This thus makes it easier to conduct an action research project that alters curriculum with relatively little disruption.

Framing in the German Studies curriculum can vary according to who is teaching the course and which course is being taught. For example, the language course requires that there is stronger framing in that the teacher, as assumed expert, has control over the selection, sequencing, pacing and evaluation of the course (Bernstein, 1975, p. 88). An alteration to this relationship would be highly disruptive in terms of attaining the practical outcome of producing proficient language speakers. Conversely, the literature and, especially, Cultural Studies components are able to accommodate change to the teacher-student power relation (framing) with relatively little disruption. Bernstein thus provided useful language to help explain how a micro-level curriculum study was able to be implemented in German Studies with relative ease and how students reproduce content presented to them in the module. The consequence of introducing a module with relatively weak framing is discussed in Chapter 4.

2.2. Field of production of ICC knowledge

In the following section I clarify how the terms ‘culture’ and ‘ICC’ are conceptualised in this research and explore some of the relevant literature that informed what was included in the ICC module. This literature is important to review as it forms part of the field of production of knowledge that I drew on and recontextualised into the curriculum for my module. The process of recontextualising this content is discussed in Chapter Four.

2.2.1. Clarifying Culture and ICC

Owing to the nature of ICC as a relatively new field, certain terms are constantly being reviewed and debated. As such, before embarking on a review of literature pertaining specifically to teaching and assessment, it is necessary to clarify how this research conceptualises culture and ICC.

2.2.1.1. Culture

Understanding culture is an integral part of developing ICC (Moeller & Nugent, 2014, p. 2). The concept of ‘culture’, however, is recurrently interrogated and deemed complex in light of the “increasingly fragmented and hybrid nature of national cultures¹²” (Kramsch, 2008, p. 5 f). Thus, as mentioned, before embarking on any discussion of ICC, it is essential to clarify the way in which culture is conceptualised for the purposes of this research.

Culture contains both concrete and abstract elements making it difficult for scholars to come to one agreed upon definition (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 9). So much so, that Kroeber and

¹² As a result of the process of rapid and continued globalization.

Kluckhohn (1952) identified over 160 different definitions for the term ‘culture’ (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 9). Their definition of culture was further derived from the idea that within anthropological literature, there are six classes of definition of culture: descriptive, historical, normative, psychological, structural, and genetic (Berry, 2004, p. 168). Drawing from the varying definitions and ways of defining culture, Kroeber and Kluckhohn proposed that culture is:

The patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; cultural systems may on the one hand be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 181).

Since then, the way culture is defined as undergone refinement and there is now an increased focus on “nonmaterial or ideational meaning of culture”, as well as a move towards viewing culture, as a “symbolic system of shared meanings” (Berry, 2004, p. 169). This shift, Berry (2004, p. 169) argues, is largely a result of Geertz’s semiotic definition of culture as:

an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life (Geertz, 1973, p. 89)

Geert Hofstede has similarly been influential in understanding what culture is and how it works. Hofstede defines culture as that which distinguishes the members of one group from another (Hofstede, 1997, p. 5). Included in this distinction are “patterns of thinking, feeling and potential acting which were learned throughout [a] lifetime” (Hofstede, 1997, p. 4). He uses the metaphor of “mental programs” to explain how culture is learned in one’s social environment and through “collective life experiences” (Hofstede, 1997, p. 4). Although his definition does not capture the complexity and range of culture, his Six Dimensions¹³ of culture are useful, specifically for ICC practitioners and scholars, when describing and comparing cultures. Hofstede classified countries in terms of their varying cultural attitudes and proposed a ranking system from 1-20 which identified the degree to which certain countries held different values (Hostede, 1994, p. 6). Although his research dealt with employees of a multinational corporation and thus cannot comprehensively account for an entire culture, and despite its “methodological and conceptual flaws” it has still “spawned a great deal of research

¹³ These will be discussed further on in this chapter.

by academics around the world” (Friedman & Berthoin-Antal, 2005, p. 71). Hofstede’s research primarily pertains to national cultures and is closely linked to culture as it relates to corporations. Nevertheless, his classification of cultures into six dimensions has influenced research and conceptualisations of culture far beyond the narrow field of business communication. These Six Dimensions are often used in ICC courses in order to describe and compare two or more different cultures.

Hofstede’s Six Dimensions of national culture are viewed as a landmark study for understanding culture and how it works. Nevertheless, this study and the subsequent model have been widely criticised and, similarly, widely defended. Hofstede’s model can be viewed as useful when comparing two dissimilar and assumed homogeneous cultures in terms of cultural dimensions. Although his model does not provide guidance on the teaching and development of ICC, it can be useful in situating one’s culture in relation to another and has been developed alongside tools to aid such comparisons. Hofstede’s cultural dimensions are defined as aspects “of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures” (Hofstede, 2011, p. 7). The dimensions are as follows:

1. *Power Distance*, related to the different solutions to the basic problem of human inequality;
2. *Uncertainty Avoidance*, related to the level of stress in a society in the face of an unknown future;
3. *Individualism* versus *Collectivism*, related to the integration of individuals into primary groups;
4. *Masculinity* versus *Femininity*, related to the division of emotional roles between women and men;
5. *Long Term* versus *Short Term Orientation*, related to the choice of focus for people's efforts: the future or the present and past.
6. *Indulgence* versus *Restraint*, related to the gratification versus control of basic human desires related to enjoying life (Hofstede, 2011, p. 8).

One initial limitation to this model is that it assumes culture only exists by comparison. More importantly, the assumption that national cultures represent the entire population is open to debate, and there exists “extensive literature which has ‘found’ national *diversity*”

(McSweeney, 2002, p. 110). This model tends towards a traditional culturalist approach and thus may promote

essentialist and deterministic tendencies [as they] homogenise the contingencies and fractures inherent in cultural practices and tend to ignore the caesuras and splits pointing to the 'other' *within* a culture (Witte, 2011, p. 93).

Indeed, the social context of my research questions the idea of national culture. Applying such a model to a highly ethnically and culturally diverse nation such as South Africa is exceedingly problematic. Such a criticism has been discussed in detail by McSweeney (2011) who argues that “the attribution of national level actions/institutions to national cultures is an easy but impoverishing move” (McSweeney, 2002, p. 112). The limitations of Hofstede’s model are further criticised in terms of its fundamental methodological flaws and underlying assumptions including an argument that the seemingly large sample size revealed a relatively small average of participants per country, with all participants taken from a single company¹⁴ (McSweeney, 2002, p. 94). Further limitations relating to the field of Higher Education also found Hofstede’s study oversimplified cultural differences, lack of empirical evidence from educational settings, a view of culture as static (instead of dynamic) and a lack of consistency between categories (Paola, Wiesemes, & Murphy, 2009). Nevertheless, Hofstede himself notes that “the Hofstede dimensions and country scores were validated through replications by others, using the same or similar questions with other cross-national populations” (Hofstede, 2011, p. 8). Despite debates surrounding Hofstede’s model, his work has been influential in challenging the “universalistic notions of management” (McSweeney, 2002, p. 111) and inspired subsequent research and interest in cultures effect on behaviour, specifically his dimensions relating to collectivist and individualistic cultures which are often cited in ICC literature when comparing Western or Anglo cultures to Eastern, Latin and African cultures. Considering the emphasis that has been placed on national diversity, the assumptions underlying his notion of national culture are wholly inconsistent with the way culture is conceptualised in this research.

Although these dimensions are useful in describing specific cultures, a more general definition is necessary. Kramsch describes culture both in terms of “the way a social group represents itself and others through its material productions” and as “the attitudes and beliefs, ways of thinking, behaving and remembering shared by members of a community” (Kramsch, 1996, p. 1). This definition, although relatively comprehensive, is outdated in that it falls short in its acknowledgement of the fluidity of culture. Historically, culture has been understood as “a

¹⁴ For a more detailed discussion on the limitations of Hofstede’s study see McSweeney 2002.

bounded, reified entity that exerted strong influence on a person's behaviour" (Moosmüller & Schönhuth, 2009, p. 224). As where culture is still thought to strongly influence one's behaviour, it is more commonly thought of as "unbounded, fluid and relational" (Moosmüller & Schönhuth, 2009, p. 224). This shift has significant implications for the way in which ICC and culture is conceptualised and taught. Acquiring specific culture knowledge alone is no longer effective (Moosmüller & Schönhuth, 2009, p. 224). In order to incorporate the complexity and range of culture, culture will be defined (in brief) in this study as the:

enduring yet evolving intergenerational attitudes, values, beliefs, rituals/customs, and behavioural patterns into which people are born but that are created and maintained by people's ongoing actions (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, pp. 6-7).

Despite the little consensus of a single definition of culture, many scholars have come to agree on certain elements that define and make up culture. Firstly, culture, whether it is the target culture or own culture of students, can no longer be conceived as a "one native language = one native culture", nor can it be associated with specific speech communities or shared historical experience (Kramsch, 2008, p. 6). Secondly, as discussed above, culture is dynamic and is thus "situated in time and space and variable across time, regions, classes and generations" (Kiet Ho, 2009).

Lastly, the metaphor of an "iceberg" has come to be a frequently cited, and useful, metaphor to explain how culture is experienced and perceived. Essentially, the iceberg concept divides elements of culture into visible and invisible dimensions of culture (Deardorff, 2009C, p. 274). The invisible dimension "deep cultural assumptions which shape the norms and values that the members of a culture share", while the "behaviours, rituals, symbols, material artefacts and written rules, although a small part, are the only visible parts of a culture (Friedman & Berthoin-Antal, 2005, p. 71). Nevertheless, according to Friedman and Berthoin-Antal (2005, p.71), these visible parts are still an "expression of the underlying cultural assumptions, norms and values".

2.2.1.2. ICC

The origins of Intercultural Communication (ICC) as a separate field of study have been linked to anthropological studies in the 1930s and 1940s by Edward T. Hall and Margaret Mead, among others and later, specifically by Hall and George L. Trager at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) in the 1950s (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2010, pp. 22-24). Despite ICC's strong connection to the field of anthropology, Hall's work allowed for the creation of a separate field of study because, whereas anthropology, in the 1950s, looked at macro-level, single-culture studies,

Hall's work is considered important because his approach at the FSI focussed on "micro-level behaviours of interactions between people of different cultures" (Rogers, Hart, & Miike, 2002, p. 9). Moeller and Nugent (2014, p. 2) note that ICC has come to include multiple models and numerous contexts such as international business, study-abroad, international schools, medical careers and living or travelling abroad. Moreover, as a result of developments in science, technology, and globalization, intercultural objectives are forced to continuously evolve in order to reflect the needs of modern citizens (Moeller & Nugent, 2014, p. 3). As such, the way ICC has come to be conceptualised has gone through numerous changes resulting in diverse definitions and conceptualisations of key terms and relatively little consensus regarding teaching models or effective assessment criteria – making ICC a notoriously complex term to attempt to define. Furthermore, there exists numerous terms to describe essentially similar processes such as intercultural communication competence, cross-cultural competence, and transcultural communication competence (Fantini, 2009, p. 457), amongst others. The differences in these terms are subtle and can usually be attributed to how ICC is applied and what the specific focus is. Nevertheless, for this research, the term intercultural competence will be used, and applied, to describe (in short) attempts to prepare individuals for appropriate and effective interaction encounters with people from differing cultural backgrounds (Moeller & Nugent, 2014, p. 2).

ICC is defined differently according to the specific field in which it is being used and there are many debates as to how ICC should be conceptualised, taught and assessed. As such, it is necessary to discuss some areas of contestation and clarify this researcher's position in terms of these debates. Most conceptualisations now agree that intercultural competence (ICC) involves a process which, according to Brian H. Spitzberg and Gabrielle Changnon (2009, p. 5), "broadly implies systemic aspects of ongoing or continuous change over time". The underlying assumption often repeated by scholars is that there is no point at which someone becomes "interculturally competent" as ICC is a "lifelong process" (Deardorff, 2009B, p. xiii). Often contested however, and of particular interest to many scholars, is the concept of competence, which has been associated with criteria such as:

understanding (e.g., accuracy, clarity, co-orientation, overlap of meanings), relationship development (e.g., attraction, intimacy), satisfaction (e.g., communication satisfaction, relational satisfaction, relational quality), effectiveness (e.g., goal achievement, efficiency, institutional success, negotiation success), appropriateness (e.g., legitimacy, acceptance, assimilation), and adaptation (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 6).

Deciding on which criteria are most appropriate thus hinges on the specific context and purpose of ICC research and application. As such, criteria such as relationship development are not appropriate for the purpose of using ICC to foster greater understanding and cooperation in a highly multicultural context.

Unfortunately, many conceptualisations of ICC and ICC assessment are “equated to a set of abilities or skills” (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 6). The biggest problem with this one-dimensional approach is that it fails to consider the context of the intercultural encounter – certain skills or abilities may be appropriate and effective in one context, but not in another (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 6). Furthermore, when conceptualising ICC for any context, it is essential to acknowledge that ICC involves “a combination of skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to engage successfully across difference. It’s what is required to get along at an interpersonal level with those who may not seem like us” (Deardorff & Quinlan, 2016). Successful ICC courses recognise that simply meeting others from different social positions does not constitute cultural awareness or foster interpersonal sensitivity (Dervin, 2014, p. 192).

2.3. Pedagogicrecontextualising field, an overview of significant ICC literature

The field of ICC has grown in response to the increasing diversity in societies, and this has led to numerous disciplines attempting to define, model and assess ICC (Perry & Southwell, 2011, p. 453) as a way to confront the challenges that arise in a globalised, multicultural environment. As such, some of the same conditions that give rise to the need for curriculum reform as discussed in Chapter One – globalization, diversity and inequalities – also explain the current interest in ICC. As a consequence, there is now a wealth of differing ideas about how ICC should be conceptualised, taught and assessed. Nevertheless, much of the literature agrees that approaches to teaching ICC differ according to specific contexts and purposes. Still, numerous models for teaching and assessing ICC have been developed. These models are used as frameworks that guide the structure of intercultural training by providing ordered lists of “knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviours” (Perry & Southwell, 2011, p. 455) that should be developed through activities and ICC training sessions. Furthermore, most literature discussing models for teaching Intercultural Competence (ICC) present similar themes – empathy, perspective taking, and adaptability (Deardorff, 2009, p. 265). These modules influence how knowledge is recontextualised into a teachable curriculum. Essentially, these ICC models

facilitate cultural learning opportunities and guide the creation of culturally responsive learning environments (Bennet, 2012, p. 11).

Fittingly, teaching models also tend to differ in their main focus and thus may be best suited to specific contexts: introducing core concepts, managing cultural transitions, communicating successfully, resolving differences or developing professionally (Berardo & Dearthoff, 2012, p. 6). Scholars have yet to reach a consensus on the role of language acquisition in intercultural competence, as “language alone does not ensure one’s competency in that culture”; yet language is also a vehicle for culture and assumes a central role in the process of ICC as “the social norms and cultural patterns are mainly mediated through language” (Witte, 2011, p. 90). Moreover, one of the main purposes of ICC is the ability to effectively communicate. Therefore “sociolinguistic awareness and successful verbal and non-verbal communication are key to intercultural competence” (Krajewski, 2011, p. 140), and many existing models¹⁵ of ICC focus primarily on communicative skills and include foreign language proficiency which is viewed as an “asset that raises the potential of intercultural understanding” (Krajewski, 2011, p. 140). When ICC is taught as part of a foreign language course it is usually taught as integrated into the language learning curriculum, whereas as separate ICC courses are primarily used in organisations to facilitate harmonious intercultural working environments. When considering ICC in relation to German studies however, it is important to note that we are dealing with an entire university degree, not purely a language learning course. In university settings, foreign language degrees such as German Studies usually involve language and translation, cultural (*Landeskunde*) and literature components. The challenge in these contexts is then to integrate cultural knowledge and ICC skills throughout the curriculum.

The literature that will be reviewed in this chapter has been selected according to their appropriateness to a German Studies course, and even more specifically, German Studies at Rhodes University. The purpose of this research is to hone in on developing ICC in the *Landeskunde* component of German Studies in order to make it more student-driven, explicit and fitting to a South African context. This included introducing a module within the *Landeskunde* section that looks specifically at questions surrounding ‘what is culture’, what is German culture’, ‘how students perceive their culture’ and ‘what happens at points of intersection between different cultures’. The aim and details of this module will be discussed in Chapter Three. The module drew from models and activities that would traditionally be

¹⁵ Byram, 1997; Kramsch (1993).

reserved for separate ICC courses. Consequently, the following chapter will review some relevant existing literature that has been significant in the development of teaching and assessing ICC.

2.3.1. Teaching ICC

Teaching ICC in the classroom is often met with criticism. Arnd Witte argues that that ICC as a skill or qualification must be developed by the individual and that there are significant limitations regarding ICC's teachability and learnability (Witte & Harden, 2011, p. 10). Witte (2011, p. 89) for example argues that living in another sociocultural context does not automatically guarantee the acquisition of intercultural competence, nor does studying other sociocultures from a detached position as part of ethnography or anthropology. This approach may result in the learning remaining at cognitive level and not challenging the individual's construct of self, other and world as they may remain "firmly rooted in the familiar native socioculture and language" (Witte, 2011, p. 10). According to Witte ICC needs to be developed through the inclusion of "cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions" which involve the four core components as set out by Byram, namely: attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating and skills of discovery and interaction (Witte, 2011, pp. 89-90). Additionally, since the perceptions of the self, other and world are constantly changing "due to the inherent dimension of language and culture", it is difficult, according to Witte, to conceptualise ICC as a "precise definable aim of learning" (Witte, 2011, p. 90). Essentially, despite acknowledging that ICC teaching and learning is problematic, Witte proposes, in line with many ICC scholars such as Deardorff (2006), Bennet (2012) and Ting-Toomey (1999) that the development of ICC is a life-long process and that

the only viable access to the foreign cultural constructs and linguistic conceptualisations is facilitated by following a developmental constructivist approach which recognises that subjective intercultural competence evolves over time (Witte, 2011, p. 91).

Most contemporary literature on ICC echoes Witte's standpoint and it has become standard that ICC be treated as a process that cannot be attained in a single course.

Despite this, there still exists a multitude of various models, frameworks and approaches to ICC teaching. This is attributable to the idea (commonly argued in ICC literature) that approaches to teaching ICC differ according to specific contexts and purposes (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 7). There are numerous teaching guides available which are geared towards informing the teaching, assessment and research of ICC. These teaching guides bring together contemporary research and methods and usually involve a number of different authors and

topics. This, however, also means that only parts of these handbooks are relevant for certain topics and contexts. Nevertheless, it is clear that there exists an abundance of “feasible approaches or models for guiding conceptualisations, theories, measurements, and investigations of intercultural competence” (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 35). Spitzberg and Changnon aptly note that these models are considerably similar in terms of their main components such as motivation, knowledge, skills, context and outcomes, but offer diversity at the level of conceptual subcomponents (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 35). It is, however, unrealistic to review all literature available for all contexts. This review will thus focus on the literature relevant to ICC in tertiary education context.

In terms of seminal research into the field of ICC, Michael Byram is consistently cited in terms of his work on the role of culture and ICC in foreign language teaching (FLT) and assessment. Although his work acknowledges the necessity of other subject areas to include components of ICC by introducing “learners to other worlds and the experience of otherness” (Byram M, 1997, p. 3), Byram argues that FLT has as its main concern “the experience of otherness” and most requires learners to “engage with both familiar and unfamiliar experience through the medium of another language” (Byram M. , 1997, p. 3). As where this is true of FLT, more contemporary research has found the existence of specific ICC courses to be effective in aiding the development of ICC regardless of language proficiency¹⁶. Nevertheless, Byram’s work has been influential in debunking the idea that culture is not the job of language teachers and proposing instead that “the exchange is dependent upon understanding how what one says, and writes will be perceived and interpreted in another cultural context” (Byram M, 1997, p. 3). Byram’s approach to ICC is thus an integrative one, in which language and culture combine to ensure effective communication. Moreover, his framework stresses the need for context-specific approaches to FLT as there can be “no generalizable syllabus, neither linguistic nor cultural” (Byram M, 1997, p. 4). This can also be seen in subsequent research into ICC teaching, although his focus on specifically FLT is not wholly compatible for the aims of this module. Nonetheless, Byram offers a descriptive model of ICC which outlines components that contribute to the ability to understand and relate to people from other countries” (Byram M, 1997, p. 5). Byram’s model includes similar components to later models. His main components include:

1. Intercultural attitudes

¹⁶ Such research will be discussed later in my discussion on contemporary approaches to ICC.

2. Knowledge
3. Skills of interpreting and relating
4. Skills of discovery and interaction
5. Critical cultural awareness (Byram M. , 1997, p. 33).

Attitude forms the foundation of ICC and involves openness, curiosity and the willingness to reflect on one's own cultural position and stereotypes with the intention of raising awareness of one's own values in order to consciously control biased interpretations of intercultural interactions (Byram M. , 1997, pp. 34-35). Knowledge however, does not pertain solely to specific cultural knowledge as many contemporary models do, but rather of "knowledge of the processes of interaction at individual and societal levels" (Byram M. , 1997, p. 35). Skills are broken into two groups relating to interpreting aspects and documents of a culture and relating it to one's own, as well discovery of knowledge about a culture and cultural practices (Byram M. , 1997, p. 33). What is not made clear in this model of ICC is the relationship between different components, nor how these components may be realised. In fact, Byram acknowledges that his model is not a blueprint for all FLT, but rather emphasises it as a work in progress, open to change and context (Byram M. , 1997, p. 5).

More contemporary literature and research are comprehensively overviewed by Spitzberg and Changnon (2009). They provided an overview of the various conceptualisations and models specifically geared towards the teaching and development of ICC and further categorise models into five types: compositional, co-orientation, developmental, adaption and causal path models (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 10). Within this they highlight notable scholars attached to particular models. Of interest for this research are developmental and causal path models as these stress a process approach to ICC as these models best fit the definition of ICC provided earlier in the chapter. Developmental models present "stages of progression or maturity in acquiring intercultural competence" (Reid, 2013, p. 43). Development models imply that ICC is a process that develops over time and claim that students "are capable of becoming more competent through ongoing interaction, which produces greater co-orientation, learning, and incorporation of respective cultural perspectives" (Reid, 2013, p. 44). Notable developmental models according to Reid include: *Model of Intercultural Maturity* by King and Baxter Magolda (2005), the *U Curve Hypothesis Model* by Lysgaard (1995), the *extended W Model of Acculturation and Re-acculturation* by Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) and the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)* by Bennett (1993) (Reid, 2013, p. 43). The downfall

of development models for this study, however, is that they imply a destination or maturity in intercultural competence in which, once certain competencies are attained, the student moves onto the next stage without needing to revisit the previous stages. On the other hand, causal path models, “envision a simultaneous interactional process that feeds back into itself at almost all levels but also anticipates several specific sequential causal paths” (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009), thus allowing for interaction between variables and a cyclical process of development. Furthermore, causal path models are presented as a theoretical linear process which makes it suitable “to empirical tests by standard multivariate techniques” (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 29). Notable models include Arasaratnam’s (2005) *Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence*, Griffith and Hravey’s (2000) *Intercultural Communication Model of Relationship Quality*, Ting-Toomey’s (1999) *Multilevel Process Change Model of Intercultural Competence*, Hammer, Wiseman, Rausman, and Brusckke’s (1998) *Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Model of Intercultural Competence* and Deardorff’s (2006) *Process Model of Intercultural Competence* (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, pp. 29-33).

Within the causal path models, Deardorff’s (2009) ICC Process Model is one of the most recent, and most appropriate for this research as it best fits the definition of ICC provided earlier in this chapter and is a framework already in practice and familiar to the German Studies section at Rhodes University. Furthermore, Deardorff’s study on identifying and assessing ICC has had significant impact on how ICC courses are developed, taught and assessed throughout much of the western world. Cited as one of the few research-based attempts to conceptualise ICC, Deardorff used a Delphi methodology in which 23 intercultural experts participated and documented a consensus on a definition and components of ICC (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 13) as well as recommended methods of assessing ICC (Deardorff, 2006, p. 243). This study has since impacted the development of Deardorff’s model of ICC as well as practical recommendations for the assessment of ICC¹⁷. Deardorff synthesised the models into two visual models: a pyramid model in which the lower levels concerning attitudes, knowledges and skills are viewed as enhancing the higher levels concerning internal and external outcomes, which can be grouped with compositional models (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 13). Compositional models “identify components of competence without specifying relations among the components” (Reid, 2013). This means that they only “list relevant traits, characteristics, and skills that are supposed to be productive for competent intercultural interaction” (Reid, 2013, p. 43). Clearly then, no guidance as to the actual process of developing

¹⁷ This is discussed later in this chapter.

ICC is offered in these models. The process version of Deardorff's model, however, can be viewed as a causal path model. Deardorff's model in this form is comprehensive in that it acknowledges the process element to ICC, emphasises the cyclical, ongoing nature, and allows for specific, predictable progress.

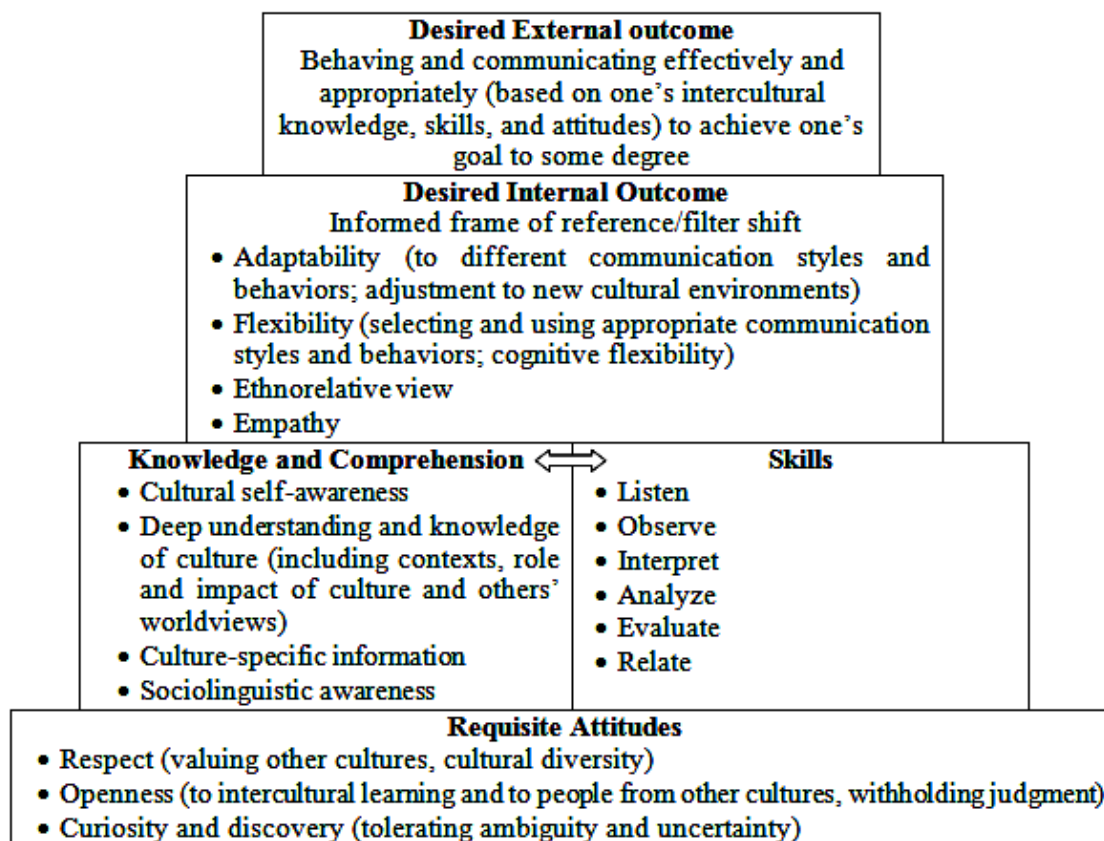


Figure 1: Deardorff's Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2012).

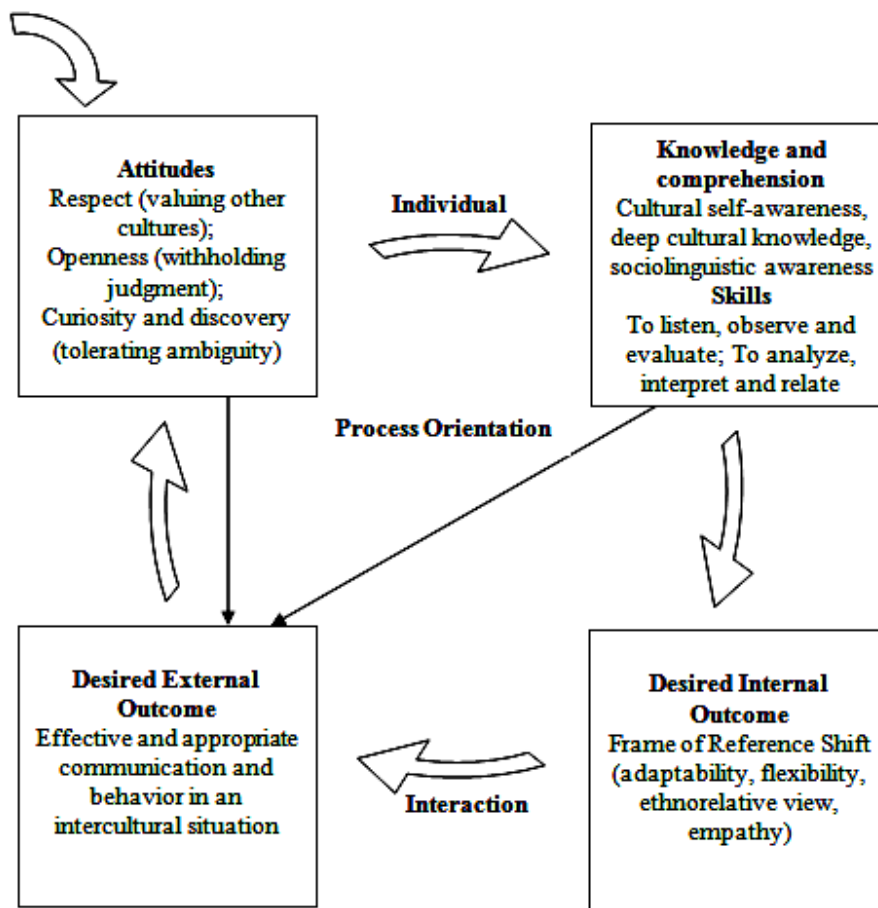


Figure 2: Deardorff 's Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2012)

Both versions of Deardorff's model are of particular use because they incorporate specific contexts within each level, but the causal path version emphasizes ICC as a lifelong process, and is designed to allow students of ICC to "reflect on their own intercultural competence development, develop their own specific outcomes, [and] map their own intercultural competence development" (Deardorff, 2012, p. 45). The emphasis on self-directed learning is useful for this study as the module aimed to incorporate blended learning but also encourage learners to invest their own ideas and opinions in the generation of module content, as it introduces them to the core concepts of Intercultural Competence (ICC). Deardorff's model is specific enough in the skills, attitudes and knowledges required for ICC development, yet broad enough to adapt it to specific contexts and needs, so it will be able to adjust to different contexts with relative ease. Nevertheless, like most models, Deardorff's model alone provides a checklist of characteristics and skills required for developing ICC but does not address practical ways of developing them. Thus, if looked at in isolation, the model does not bridge the gap between knowledge and application (Bennett, 2009, pp. 122-123). This model then is useful as a starting point to provide an overview of what, exactly, ICC entails and as a frame-of-reference that students can refer to when monitoring their own progress in developing ICC.

For the context of this research a significant drawback of Deardorff's model and many other models is the development of them from a western perspective. Although there is growing literature from Central and South Americas, India, South Korea, Japan and Africa (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 44), further research is still needed to develop these conceptualisations. This is one of the areas of focus which are gathering scholarly momentum and increased interest. Numerous scholars in the ICC field are attempting to introduce previously overlooked perspectives and conceptualisations of ICC. These include African, Arab, and various Asian perspectives¹⁸. Additionally, the importance of relationships, the place of identity and context are themes garnering increasing attention in the field (Deardorff, 2009C, pp. 265-267). For the purpose of this research, the focus on context and the African perspective are particularly relevant.

Currently, there is an acknowledgement that a significant amount of scholarly effort has been invested among so-called western cultures, and models thus present a particularly American perspective (Deardorff, 2009C, pp. 264-265). There are increasing calls for scholars to interrogate the western lens through which ICC has been conceptualised and taught. The thought is that, since ICC has developed out of an American context and aimed to serve American needs, it is therefore most likely in need of reconceptualisation. Peter Ogom Nwosu's research in this regard has underscored the importance of understanding Africans' conceptualisations of ICC, citing the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of the continent (Nwosu, 2009, p. 158). Nwosu's research traces the causes of ICC's lack of growth as a field of study in Africa, citing the need for targeted professionals and the impact of the colonial experience on mass media and communication studies (Nwosu, 2009, p. 160). Moreover, his attempt to create a taxonomy of intercultural competence in Africa, and among Africans, which explains the general characteristics and communicative behaviours is considered appropriate in relation to the dimensions of cultural orientations¹⁹ (Nwosu, 2009, p. 165). Nwosu's approach is particularly useful in influencing the selections of theorists for the module. A model for teaching ICC in an African context has yet to be established or fully investigated, and thus teaching ICC from an African perspective is made even more challenging. As such, it is necessary to work with existing models and adapt them according to the specific need and aims of an African (more specifically South African) context.

¹⁸ See for example, Nwosu (2009), Manian & Naidu (2009), Chen & An (2009).

¹⁹ See Table 1 on p. 44 for a detailed overview of this taxonomy.

Table 1: Taxonomy of Intercultural competence in Africa

Taxonomy of Intercultural Competence in Africa (Nwosu, 2009, p. 166)		
Dimensions of Orientations	Characteristics	Communicative Behaviours Considered Appropriate.
Self-orientation	Communalism	Deference to group, subordination of self, reverence for age and status, and value for interdependence.
Relational orientation	Lineal	Deference to authority, including within-group authority; social distinctions made based on hierarchy; preference for formalised interactions; distinct gender roles; cautious approach to relational development but strong interpersonal bonds valued; focus on obligations and relational interdependence.
Time Orientation	Cyclical	Emphasis on the past; slow pace of life desired; time perceived as connections, ongoing, unlimited and flexible; value for in-time polychromic orientation.
Activity orientation	Being	Human events determined by fate; fatalistic; work seen as a means to an end; blurred distinction between work and play; workplace as extension of home; less mobility, extended loyalty to organisation, and longevity of service.
Discourse orientation	Nonlinear	Indirect, nonlinear narrative style, oral emphasis; listener responsible, reliance on nonverbal codes; covert and implicit messages valued; greater value of face needs and preference for reserved

		reactions. The purpose of communication is “to confirm, solidify, and promote communal social order” (Moemeka , 1996).
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Adapted from: (Nwosu, 2009, p. 166)

As such, it is necessary to build on models when teaching ICC by using the theory provided to inform which tools are best suited to specific needs and contexts. Bennett explores the tool of cultural maps as a way of developing ICC by using the metaphor of “intercultural positioning systems” (Bennett, 2009, p. 122). Whereas this metaphor initially comes across as unnecessary and perhaps overly complicated, it does stress the importance of students locating their own cultural position before attempting to understand another. This self-reflective basis for Bennett’s tool aids self-directed and student-driven learning as it places an onus on the student to personally interrogate their own cultural assumptions and prejudices. This framework is further suited to the purpose of this module it is based on the idea of collecting cultural perspectives from multiple cultural maps which provide cultural-general categories that allow one to explore cultural variables in any culture (Bennett, 2009, p. 126). This enables students to build a tool box of categories that they can explore in relation to their own culture when attempting to adapt to another culture. As such, it provides students with a set of transferable skills that they can begin to apply to new cultural contexts independent of the German Studies classroom. Bennett introduces a useful four step process strategy for ‘cultivating’ ICC which includes:

1. Fostering attitudes that motivate,
2. discovering knowledge that informs our own and others’ cultural position,
3. assessing the challenge and support factors that affect adaption,
4. developing skills that enable us to interact effectively and appropriately (Bennett, 2009, p. 126).

These four steps incorporate much of the criteria listed in Deardorff’s (2009) process model but allow for a more integrated approach to ICC that break up elements of Deardorff’s model which tend to overlap. Whereas Deardorff separates learning cultural knowledge and cultivating self-awareness, these are seen as overlapping dimensions in step two of Bennett’s framework. Indeed, Bennett notes that such lists describing required knowledge, skills, and attitudes that constitute ICC are good starting points for “assessing the appropriate

characteristics for the specific situation” but they do not address “the application of knowledge and skills to complex interactions with culturally different others” (Bennett, 2009, p. 122).

This application of knowledge is possibly lost by what Phipps describes as the attempt by ICC scholars to develop consensus, routine and foundational principles with the hopes of streamlining the teaching and assessment of ICC (Phipps, 2008, p. 219). The attempt to streamline the assessment and teaching of ICC, is a trend that is evident from the above discussions of scholars such as Deardorff and Byram establish rigid frameworks. Phipps, however, offers ICC an alternative approach to ICC by celebrating the ‘four Fs’ of culture – food, family, folklore and festivity instead of viewing them as problematic as most Foreign Language Literature tends to. Instead, Phipps critically scrutinizes the ‘four Cs’ – class, culture, consensus and competence to highlight the potential of the often rejected ‘four Fs’ in an intercultural German curriculum (Phipps, 2008, p. 217). The problem Phipps highlights regarding ICC is that attempting to theorize and teach the innately partial subject of culture is the attempt to develop a method of teaching ICC that has consensus, solidity, is systematic, formal and routine, and most importantly, “to move beyond food, family, folklore and festivity, and anything that smacks of tourism” (Phipps, 2008, p. 219). Indeed, this chapter has routinely stressed the difficulty scholars have in attempting to establish consensus and the multitude of approaches that are the result of their inability to do so. Phipps does not attempt to offer a model, instead she offers an approach that embraces the messy and conflictual nature of living in an intercultural world (Phipps, 2008, p. 220). Her approach sees the ‘four Fs’ as “an exciting and highly productive symbolic resource for practical classroom teaching if re-thought and reflected on interculturality” (i.e. subjectively, anthropologically and ontologically) (Phipps, 2008, p. 220). The problem with most attempts to use these elements, according to Phipps, is that they are too often approached epistemologically, leading to them being overly reified and objectified. The idea is that her students bring what they understand as “German Stuff” to the classroom and then to use that as starting point to explore elements of culture and interculturality (Phipps, 2008, p. 220). Phipps thus urges a move away from competence and towards developing “intercultural being” which requires less focus on objectives and more focus on developing “a readiness, even a will to learn, an ability to move through the impoverished cultural mess of social interaction” (Phipps, 2008, p. 228). Phipps has put this approach into practice with John Corbett running an Intercultural Connections course that put “relational, cultural artifacts center stage” (Phipps, 2008, p. 224). Their course is student-driven, with the “tutor’s role being to provide a strong structure, questions and academic

resources” (Phipps, 2008, p. 225), and it also involves the use of blended-learning approaches as it makes use of online programs as well as class contact time. Particularly for this module, being able to allow learners to bring in cultural artifacts that is relevant to their lives, allowed me to develop a course that takes the students’ needs into consideration while still serving the purpose of making explicit the skills and knowledges required for ICC. Phipps achieves this by marrying the students’ content with a structured course that gets them to consider how to teach culture and how to integrate this with reflection on language learning (Phipps, 2008, p. 224). The proposed module did not cover language learning because, as noted, this is comprehensively covered in the language component of German Studies at Rhodes University. Nevertheless, Phipps’ approach provides a useful practical example of how to allow ICC teaching to be at once student-driven and theoretically grounded.

2.3.2. Assessment of ICC

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Deardorff’s study presented recommendations for assessing ICC which have been synthesised and presented in subsequent articles and handbooks. The following discussion thus draws from a variety of articles based on the original 2006 study. The study originally concluded that intercultural experts agreed that in order to assess ICC a clear definition of ICC that is informed by the research and literature available, is required and this involves a detailed discussion of what is meant by ICC by various stakeholders (Deardorff, 2009A, p. 479). Subsequent articles draw on this research to debunk the idea that ICC cannot be assessed and present methods for assessment (Deardorff, 2009A, p. 477). Similar to the various terms and conceptualisations of ICC, a look at assessment instruments reveal a general lack of consensus and varied approach to how best to assess ICC (Fantini, 2009, p. 457). The one area that is finding growing consensus is the need for developing an assessment plan that stresses the importance of ongoing assessment, a variety of assessment methods and warns against attempting to assess the ICC in its entirety, but rather to focus on specific components which directly relate to the outcomes of an ICC course or programme (Deardorff, 2009A). Assessment, particularly in a university setting is unavoidable and thus Deardorff’s argument that only relevant components are assessed at a time, delineates the ICC assessment process and allows for a variety of assessment techniques that serve purpose of the assessment. Indeed, Domingo has similarly argued that “the purpose of assessment should determine its design” (Domingo, 2015, p. 244). The purpose thus of assessing ICC (or a component of it) is to “ascertain whether [students] can successfully navigate/negotiate a situation in which intercultural differences will become apparent (and

possibly problematic)” (Domingo, 2015, p. 244). Moreover, since ICC is a life-long process, assessment needs to reflect this. As such, the purpose of assessing ICC comes to include the need to encourage learners’ awareness of their own progress and help teachers gauge what needs to be done to better facilitate students’ learning (Domingo, 2015, p. 247). Nevertheless, this Chapter has continually referred to the primary problem of ICC being its highly subjective nature. Although Phipps provided a useful way of negotiating this subjective dimension above, Domingo notes that there is a common trend throughout ICC literature in which the subjective dimension is “implied or perhaps taken for granted” and thus remains “a rather vague and nebulous aspect” (Domingo, 2015, p. 243). Fantini similarly argues that:

educators are accustomed to assessing knowledge and perhaps even skills, the assessment of attitudes and awareness is uncommon. Moreover, attitudes and awareness are not easily subjected to quantification and documentation. This causes problems when trying to define ICC, model ICC and teach ICC (Fantini, 2009, p. 259).

ICC literature proposes that use of ongoing assessment - to match the process nature of ICC as well as multiple assessment techniques to cover the various, often dissimilar, components of ICC (skills, attitudes, knowledge). As such commonly proposed techniques include:

- Closed and open-ended questions;
- Objective strategies that involve scoring (e.g., matching items, true/false questions, multiple-choice questions, Cloze or gap-filling items);
- Oral and written activities (e.g., paraphrasing, translation, essay);
- Active and passive activities;
- Individual and interactive activities in pairs or groups;
- Dialogue, interviews, debate, and discussion;
- Demonstrations, poster sessions, role-plays, and simulations;
- Structured and unstructured field tasks and experiences;
- Questionnaires that require self-evaluation, peer evaluation, group evaluation, and/or teacher evaluation (Fantini, 2009, p. 264).

Self-evaluation becomes particularly important for the subjective elements of ICC. Drawing on an assessment approach for translation studies, Domingo, for example, suggests that the subjective elements of ICC be assessed through a method of self-evaluation through guided writing exercises (Domingo, 2015, p. 250).

As such this chapter has served to outline the theoretical lens and language used to discuss the process and result of introducing a module on ICC into the Landeskunde component of German Studies at Rhodes University. It has also reviewed the literature of ICC in terms of theorists and models potentially relevant to my module. In the course of this review I have highlighted elements of theorists I found particularly useful as well as limitations specifically related to the context of this module. On a whole, this review sketched what Bernstein would define as the pedagogicrecontextualisation field (Singh, 2010, p. 576) which highlighted the theory influencing how ICC is taught and pedagogised. I have also begun that process of knowledge recontextualisation as I highlighted elements that I specifically drew from when putting together the curriculum for the ICC module I implemented. This chapter thus served a further purpose of introducing the rationale behind the chosen content – essentially, the ‘what’ of the module. The following chapter will thus take this a step further and outline the research methodology as well as provide a rationale for the main pedagogicdecisions I made in terms of how the course was taught and planned.

3. Methodology

The previous chapter provided an overview of research of ICC, since ICC makes up the content taught in the module. This chapter will outline the methods used to structure this research in terms of how the module was developed, taught and studied. This involves a discussion on action research, and the goals of this research, as well as a brief discussion of common methods used to research ICC in order to differentiate this research from ICC research, but also to highlight similarities in data collection that proved useful.

3.1. Action research

An action research methodology allows for a collaborative, mixed-methods approach to data collection involving qualitative and quantitative methods. Reason and Bradbury (2001, p. 2) define action research as:

a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview which we believe is emerging at this historical moment. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.

Although this research is not action research in its entirety, it draws from the components of action research that allow it to, as defined by Herr and Anderson, be “orientated to some action or cycle of actions that organizational or community members have taken, are taking, or wish to take to address a particular problematic situation” (2015, p. 4). These cycles of action include an ongoing process of planning, action and reflection aimed to achieve two core goals of improving something (the Rhodes German Studies curriculum in this case) and involving participants (i.e. the students) (Henning, Stone, & Kelly, 2009, p. 6). As discussed in earlier chapters, this research aimed to implement a module that included a mixture of activities such as lectures and group problem-solving activities, and case-studies among others, which were designed to challenge participants to engage with their own cultural perspectives as well as work with participants from other cultural perspectives. As such I did not implement an entire new course to the German Studies curriculum but attempted to etch out a space in which the focus of the *Landeskunde* component could be geared towards making the skills and benefits of ICC explicit, hence the introduction of a shorter module within the course. The module was studied and evaluated as it was implemented and thus required a methodology that can accommodate this. Action research fits this as it is geared towards this type of cyclical, in-action research that it “is inquiry that is done by or with insiders to an organization or

community, but never to or on them” (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 3). The implication here is that the participants are active in the research process and not merely observed by the researcher. Likewise, the researcher takes part in, and learns alongside, participants. The study departs from action-research in that the scope does not allow for the cycle to be repeated. Nonetheless, the results and conclusions drawn from the module are used to suggest a way forward should this module be repeated. The evaluation of the module further draws on action research in the structure of the discussion which presents the context, process and results. It is important to note that my position is as a researcher and that I am not a lecturer in the department, and thus will not teach this module again. I am, however, a high school teacher, which has informed my interest in curriculum studies. The aim of this research is to prove its viability and usefulness for courses such as German Studies and thus lends itself to being revised and repeated both in the German Studies section and other language-orientated courses. Furthermore, due to the weak framing of the module, it is possible that the module, or elements of it, could be taught by someone else in a different context.

Additionally, an action research approach further fits the nature of intercultural learning that this study is exploring. In which I aim to draw on Phipps’ notion of ‘intercultural being’ rather than competence and consensus (Phipps, 2008, pp. 234-235).

Action research in this study will be organized along the lines of a process in which I set out to:

1. Plan: assess the viability and need for a module on ICC in the German Studies department of Rhodes University.
2. Act: to implement the plan,
3. Observe: the effects of the action in the context in which it occurs; and
4. Reflect: on these effects which can be used as a basis for further planning, revised action through a series of cycles (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 5).

3.2. Research Goals

The goals set out for this research correspond to the process of actions research. This was done to align the research aims with the action research approach. As such, a three-stage, interrelated, cyclical process involving planning, action, observation and reflection (Coats, 2005), in line with action research, was best fitted to this study. In order to achieve these goals, a module on ICC was implemented into the existing *Landeskunde* course in German Studies at

Rhodes University. In the subsequent chapter, the specific objectives of the module will be discussed as to differentiate them from the research as a whole. This research was split into three stages that aimed to contribute to achieving certain goals: The three stages and goals were as follows:

1. Planning: assess current Cultural Studies course and students' perception of culture in order to ascertain whether a module on ICC was feasible, suitable and necessary in the German Studies department at Rhodes University:
 - a. Assess the context of German Study at Rhodes University, as a subject potentially in need of, and viable for, a module of ICC.
 - b. Assess the students' understanding of the term 'culture' and how they perceive their own cultural identity before the start of the module.
 - c. Assess students' perception of the extent to which the current course material explicitly deals with culture and cultural awareness in South Africa.
2. Action: develop and implement a short module, for German Studies 2 and 3 students²⁰, designed to address the gaps identified in stage one, as well as contribute to creating a more inclusive classroom environment.
3. Observation and reflection: evaluate the degree to which the research has:
 - a. Implemented a module that makes ICC explicit as a set of transferable skills and knowledges, developed students' awareness of culture and ICC and created a more inclusive teaching environment;
 - b. Used an action research approach to contribute to curriculum development within the German Studies department at Rhodes University.

The timeframe for the implementation of this module was six weeks. The entire German Studies course already deals with communicative competence and the impact of culture on communication in the language and translations components, and deals with aspects of German culture in the Cultural Studies and literature components (German Studies, 2017). Therefore, it was not necessary to implement an entire ICC course that re-teaches the knowledge and skills being covered by these existing courses – this would only serve as repetition and interfere with valuable teaching time as well as cause Cultural Studies fatigue. Rather, it may be more useful

²⁰ The rationale for the selection of 2nd and 3rd year students is discussed in the next chapter.

to make ICC visible to the students and provide them with tools and skills to monitor and develop their own intercultural competence journey.

3.3. Ethics Consideration

Students were made aware at the start of the module that they would be participating in an action research project. Anonymity was guaranteed, and no students' work was explicitly used or quoted in this research. The questionnaires were voluntary and completed online anonymously. Furthermore, this research obtained ethics clearance on a departmental level.

3.4. Research Methods commonly used for ICC

This research fits into two fields; curriculum research and ICC research. The aim of data collection within the field of ICC is to assess the effectiveness of certain frameworks and models in specific contexts. Although this study uses the content of ICC and aims to teach its associated skills, I did not aim to test a model and report back on its effectiveness. Instead, I am more concerned with identifying how to teach ICC at a university level and whether an ICC module of this nature is feasible or worthwhile in the current educational landscape of South African universities. Nevertheless, common methods used to collect data for ICC research can be used and applied within this study as well. As such, I will provide a brief overview of the types of data method collection typically used in ICC research and the rationale thereof, before discussing how these methods suit my study.

ICC research is commonly associated with a mixed-methods approach to assess the level to which frameworks, models or programs are effective in developing ICC. Deardorff's questionnaire of a group of leading intercultural experts to ascertain the most commonly used and accepted methods of assessment concluded that case studies, interviews and a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures were most commonly agreed upon. Other useful methods, in order of agreement between the intercultural experts, included narrative diaries, self-report instruments, observation by others or host culture, judgement by self or others, developing specific indicators for each component/dimension of ICC and evidence of each indicator, triangulation²¹ (Deardorff, 2009A, p. 478). Nevertheless, Fons J. R. Van de Vijver and Kwok Leung argue that there is a lack of "well-designed research that can further the understanding of intercultural competence" (2009, p. 404). By this they do not suggest that existing research that has led to the development of a number of frameworks, conceptualisations and models, is

²¹ The use of multiple data collection efforts as corroborative evidence for the validity of qualitative research findings.

not valuable, only that there is a need for these frameworks, definitions and approaches to be put to the test (Van de Vijver & Leung, 2009, p. 405). Ultimately, they argue that the field of ICC is “in the stage where we are unable to decide which theories are well supported by empirical data, which frameworks should be modified, and which ones should be abandoned altogether” (2009, p. 405). Methods for data collection in ICC, as noted in Deardorff’s study, are typically characterized by a mixed-methods approach involving questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, or self-assessment/reflection among others. Moreover, as interest in intercultural competence research has expanded, Sinicrope, Norris and Watanabe note that

approaches to its description and assessment have evolved as well, from short attitude and personality surveys to more complex behavioral self-assessments, performance assessments, portfolio assessments, and others (2007, p. 2).

The growing use of mixed-methods approach in ICC is in line with the growing interest in mixed-methods approaches to research in general that reveals the “need for a notion of paradigm that can be sufficiently flexible, permeable, and multilayered to reflect the reality of social research in the 21st century” (Denscombe, 2008, p. 271). As such, the mixed methods used for ICC research are specific not only to the field but are becoming an ever-increasingly common method of data collection. This approach was used by Weber (2015) to ascertain whether studying a foreign language can improve ICC. Weber used a mixed-methods approach which included questionnaires (Weber U. S., 2015, p. 239). Weber’s study was set in a similar context to this research (German Studies students at Rhodes University) and the use of questionnaires allowed for quantitative data in the form of overall perceptions and conclusions, it also allowed for the qualitative analysis of the questionnaires for individual responses. In terms of typical data collection methods for measuring intercultural competence (ICC), my research differs from Weber’s in that it does not seek to gather data concerning the level to which the module²² makes students interculturally competent, rather it is aimed at exploring ways of integrating components of ICC into, and throughout language courses, more specifically, German Studies at Rhodes University. Nevertheless, a mixed-methods approach is still relevant in order to ascertain the extent to which the course is able to make students explicitly aware of ICC and its associated skills and knowledges in order to allow them to recognize it in other disciplines or components of this course, and begin to engage with the process of ICC in a meaningful way beyond the classroom. The data methods thus comprised primarily of questionnaires, reflective writing and observations from class discussion and

²² An in-depth discussion of this module can be found later in this chapter.

assignments. A more in-depth discussion of the purpose and findings of the questionnaire will be discussed in the next chapter. An overview of the data collection methods at each stage is presented in Table 2, page 55.

Action research stage	Data collection method
Planning	Pre-module questionnaire
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class observations (teacher/ reflective practice) • Reflective writing (students)
Reflection/observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective practice: week-to-week journal notes • Module evaluation questionnaire

Table 2 Data Collection Method

As mentioned above, questionnaires, reflective writing, and class observations formed the main method of data collection. The intention for the data collection in this way was to track the development of students understanding of culture and ICC, particularly in relation to Bernstein’s theory of the Pedagogic Device and what happens in the fields of recontextualization and reproduction. For this study, this would include the process of selecting and repacking ICC theory and models to create a curriculum that is suited to a university context, spans over six weeks and achieves the specific outcomes set out for this module. Bernstein’s description of the field of reproduction helps explain the processes in which recontextualised knowledge is “appropriated by teachers and converted into modes of common and shared classroom knowledge in interactions with students” (Singh, 2010, p. 577). For this research, I am interested in using Bernstein’s work (as explained in a more accessible way by Singh) to explain and identify what happens in moments in which the privileged and privileging texts created in the field of recontextualisation (Singh, 2010, p. 577) are reproduced, that is, what happens to the initially planned curriculum for this module when it is applied to the classroom. By using the Pedagogic Device, I am therefore able to locate the fields of action where students co-shape the curriculum design. This is particularly relevant to analyzing a curriculum which encourages student participation and influence on the content and trajectory of lessons. It allows for the identification and explanation of moments when the curriculum is

altered or contested. For this study, I use the Pedagogic Device as a lens through which I analyze the development of students' understanding of ICC as well as the impact a relatively weak curriculum framing has on student participation and influence on the overall curriculum.

3.5. Reflective practice

In relation to the second and third goals (action and observation), reflection was an integral method of data collection. Reflective practice at its basic level involves considering what happens in the classroom. This however, is insufficient when the aim of reflection is to better understand, “what [you] know and do as [you] develop [your] knowledge of practice through reconsidering what [you] learn in practice” (Loughran, 2002, p. 34). An absence of analysis will lead to, according to Thompson and Pascal (2012, p. 311),

simply a superficial discussion of having paused for thought from time to time – with no indication of analysis, no links to an underlying professional knowledge base and no hint of being able to draw out learning or new knowledge from the experience.

In order to achieve this, it is imperative that reflection is analyzed in order to discover what works and why, and what does not work.

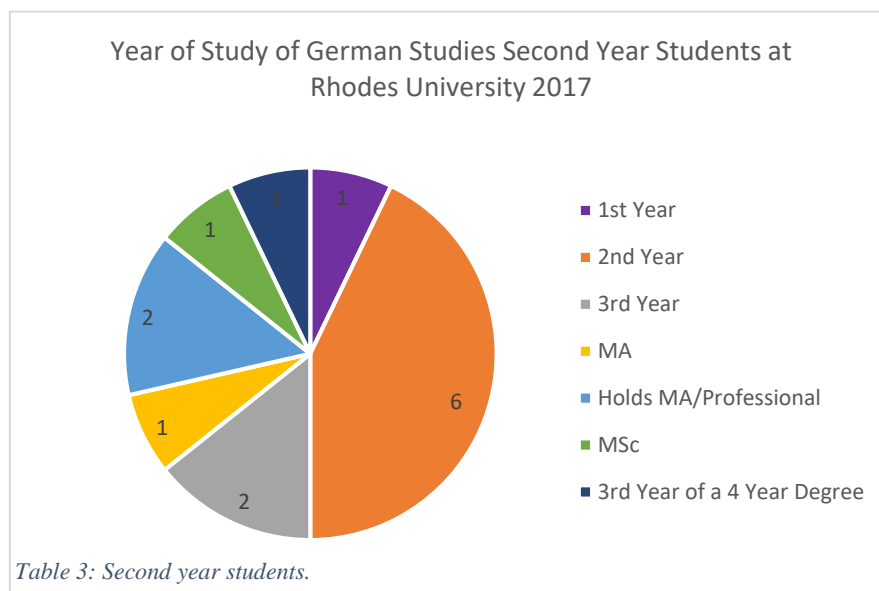
It is not surprising then, that action research and reflective practice go together. Action research requires one to solve a problem while immersed in the context in which the problem arises, and reflective practice allows one to track and continually assess one's practice, and in the process, identify when to adapt teaching to address the evolving research problem. When used as a research method in action research, reflection is most commonly found in the form of research diaries which enable researchers to reflect on their role as a researcher as well as capture class observations, memos, ideas and insights learned from the teaching and learning process (Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 2005, pp. 12-13). Moreover, reflection in this way ensures that data collection is not separated from reflection and analysis (Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 2005, p. 13). In line with action research, a weekly diary was kept which recorded the process of the lesson – to be used as a comparative tool to the planned lesson- any notes or observations of student participation and reception of teaching methods and activities. The diary also contained questions, notes and comments on these recordings to be analyzed and interpreted after the module was completed. This process allowed for the consistent monitoring of the process so that changes and adaptations could be made, as well as being a method in which to collect data on the effectiveness of the module. In this way, I was able to critically think through what was happening in the classroom and why, and begin to translate knowledge into practice

Action Research

4.1. Planning

4.1.1. Context

The study took place in the German Studies Department at Rhodes University which as discussed can be considered as a discipline with weak classification, especially in terms of the *Landeskunde* (cultural studies), translation and literature components. German Studies can be taken as a three-year degree, with further post-graduate studies available. The main sections of focus are language acquisition, cultural studies, and from second year, translation and literature studies. Second and Third year students make up the *Landeskunde* class. Despite content being the same, the levels of assessment are differentiated to match the respective academic years of the students. This is further made possible by the structure of the Rhodes University Humanities degree. The structure provides a relatively loose framework in terms of how students structure their course of study. To obtain a BA, students are required to complete a minimum of ten year-courses and complete their intended major subjects at a first, second and third-year level. Apart from the parameters around the two required major subjects, students are free to choose from courses across departments and faculties. As such, it is possible for a student doing a humanities degree to take a science subject and vice-versa. This was evident in the students participating in the module as students were studying towards a range of different degrees. This means that students are able to be in third year, yet be enrolled in second or even first-year subjects. Likewise, postgraduates are able to take one year-course in an undergraduate subject and can thus choose German Studies. The implication for implementing a module or designing any course material is that it needs to be pitched at a level that can accommodate a range of abilities and levels of educational development.



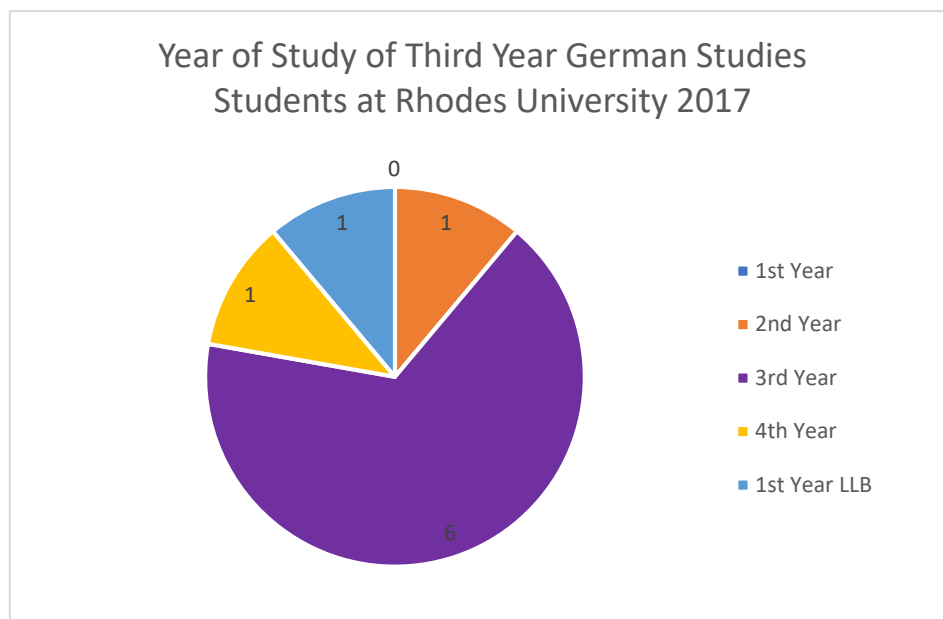


Table 4: Third Year Students.

German Studies Cultural Studies or *Landeskunde* specifically involves a critical exploration into aspects of German, Austrian and Swiss culture, current affairs, geography and history. The lectures are once a week for 45 minutes, and this module ran over a term of six weeks.

A total of 23 participants were involved over a term of six weeks. Participants included German Studies 2 and 3 students but excluded first-year students as the focus of first year German Studies is language acquisition as it is beginner course (Weber U. S., 2015, p. 233) and they only encounter a short module on German History in their first year (German Studies, 2017). This means that they have had less contact with German Cultural Studies and are unable to extensively comment on aspects of German culture and ICC within this specific course. Furthermore, the weak classification of the Cultural Studies courses at a second and third year level was able to accommodate the implementation of a new, trial module with relatively little disruption.

4.1.2. Pre-Module Questionnaire

The participants were asked to complete a pre-module questionnaire (see Appendix A) which included questions pertaining to their knowledge of how culture and intercultural competence is defined, their perception of their own cultural identity, their level of prior exposure to German culture and perceptions of German culture and their views on local diversity and its link to culture and ICC. This initial questionnaire collected quantitative data – in the form of students' age, number of years studying German, and cultural identification. The qualitative analysis of this questionnaire allowed me to obtain a better understanding of the students'

knowledge and beliefs surrounding culture and ICC, as well as their perspective of the extent to which the German Studies course acknowledges and incorporates their, and others', cultural backgrounds. This was necessary as it enabled me to identify a gap or need in the *Landeskunde* component in terms of ICC and thus to determine the direction and focus the module took

As discussed in Chapter 1, there is a need for curriculum review at a micro-level in overtly western subjects such as German Studies. Moreover, it was made clear in Chapter 1 that ICC is a key way in which universities, and specifically German Studies, can begin to develop students' cultural awareness. Language courses such as *DaF* are inseparable from culture and thus the "importance of intercultural understanding as a goal of language education" (Kiet Ho, 2009, p. 63) should be recognized. The pre-module questionnaire supported this conclusion as most students indicated that they either took German precisely because it gives them access to another culture or, that despite them not identifying with a culture, they are interested to learn about other cultures. This indicated that, for German Studies students, a course dealing with culture would be of relevance. Furthermore, a need for a module on ICC was seen in the questions pertaining to students' prior knowledge of ICC and culture. The pre-module questionnaire indicated that they had a generally good idea of culture and many had engaged with culture on a critical level. Therefore, students had a general idea of elements that made up a standard definition of 'culture' and few presented a more complex understanding of culture in terms of culture being 'flexible' or 'in flux'. Students noted that culture, especially German culture and issues such as stereotyping and assumption making, is explicitly dealt with in the course resulting in them having a greater knowledge of German culture and making them realize the need to be cautious when approaching topics surrounding culture. However, students' idea of their own cultural identity was varied, and often revealed little attempt at self-reflection. Only 6 out of the 21 responses identified a culture or mix of cultures and most respondents spoke around the idea of culture instead of making the personal connection to a culture or mixture of cultures.

Students' definitions of ICC further supported Deardorff and Quin's (2016) assertion in Chapter 1 that universities are not developing intercultural competency in that most students were able to identify one or two elements of ICC, especially attitudes, but all bar one student could present a complex understanding of ICC. This indicated that ICC is not being addressed explicitly in the German Studies curriculum as there was no clear understanding of ICC across all students, and thus justified implementing a module on ICC.

The questionnaire also addressed the issue of whether students felt that their culture was acknowledged and included when learning about German culture. Interestingly, most students felt that it was to varying degrees and that they were encouraged to draw on their own culture when exploring elements of German culture. 6 of the 21 participants felt that their culture was not acknowledged to varying degrees in the German Studies course and in other courses. However, the general lack of critical awareness of what exactly makes up their own culture as identified above questions the validity of this claim. In other words, the question is whether one can claim one's culture is acknowledged if one a) claims not to identify with a culture or b) has not been able to identify one's own cultural position. This finding thus further underscored the need for a module that explicitly deals with culture in a critical and self-reflective way.

From the findings in the pre-module survey, I was able to pitch the module at an appropriate level. This meant that I did not need to teach 'what is culture?' from scratch but could rather go straight into critically looking at culture and encourage students to begin the process of introspection in terms of their own positionality when it comes to culture. In this way, the module was directed by the learners as much as by me as it was designed to respond specifically to the issues and perceptions identified by the students.

4.1.3. Planning and the field of recontextualisation

Teaching strategies for ICC largely relate to recontextualising ICC theory and modules into the foreign language curriculum. There is a definite gap in recontextualising ICC theory for the purpose of university courses. Language courses at a university level tend to focus on an array of subjects related to the specific language such as cultural studies, literature and translation and thus require strategies for teaching and situating ICC which can fit into these various subjects as opposed to ICC being a stand-alone course. It may be perhaps because ICC is the assumed aim of Cultural Studies courses, but it is often a by-product rather than an intentional goal or aim of the curriculum (Domingo R. S., 2015, p. 243). This module aimed to address this need by introducing a module that increases students' awareness and knowledge of ICC so that they may begin to notice and develop it throughout the German Studies course and in their day-to-day life. The more specific goals of the module were as follows:

- Internationalising and diversifying the curriculum by encouraging student participation in curriculum decisions.

- Creating an inclusive teaching environment; i.e. with active student participation which will determine the course of the module.
- Providing students with tools and knowledge that will allow them to develop and monitor their own intercultural journeys.
- Develop a sense of empathy and awareness of cultural diversity and its pitfalls (like cultural appropriation) at a national and global level.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that for effective ICC development, ICC should be present in some shape or form across the curriculum – hence the need for ICC to be taught through literature, translation studies and language learning.

The module was conducted over a period of six weeks and made use of a blended-learning approach to teaching and assessment using the online platform RUconnected (a Moodle-based platform). This allowed for traditional lectures to be supplemented with additional readings and was used as the primary method for students to hand in assessments. Furthermore, this platform allowed for students to submit work in a number of different formats, which became particularly useful in their final “cultural capsule” assignment, and encouraged them to explore creative ways of presenting their work. The aim of this module was also to incorporate a more student-centered approach to ICC, so the way in which content was recontextualised into a curriculum, attempted to accommodate this.

In terms of recontextualising ICC theory and content as discussed in Chapter 2, the structure of the module ultimately followed a pattern as suggested by Huber and Reynolds that allowed for the combination of informal and formal education and the inclusion of a number of different activities and assessment types in order to address the need to draw from a variety of theories, and moreover, to allow for greater student participation. Formal education here refers to a “structured education and training system” (Huber & Reynolds, 2014, p. 28) and informal education refers to the “lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, skills and knowledge from the educational influences and resources in his or her own environment and from daily experience and conversation” (Huber & Reynolds, 2014, p. 27). Huber and Reynolds propose an ICC planning approach that moves from experience, comparison, analysis reflection and action (2014, pp. 29-30). This module, however, did not follow this pattern in a linear manner, but attempted to incorporate the components in sometimes separate and sometimes overlapping ways. Experience involves creating opportunities for students to experience how other cultures act, interact and communicate, which they argue is the most effective way to “develop attitudes of respect, curiosity and openness, and to acquire

knowledge of other cultural orientations and affiliations” (Huber & Reynolds, 2014). This is difficult to achieve fully in a six-week course with no direct exposure to German lived culture, but Huber and Reynolds note that this experience can be real or imagined (2014, p. 29). The importance of imagined or virtual intercultural interaction opportunities are of significant importance, especially for students who have limited “foreign exchange experience as they provide some virtual intercultural settings, and help to create an intercultural environment at home” (Huang, 2016, p. 188). As such, this module attempted to achieve a level of experience by using video (imagined/virtual) and encouraging students to experience each other’s cultures (real) through interviews and discussions. The next element involves comparison. This was used from the outset in week one, to encourage students to position their own cultural worldview and assess their initial ICC in the context of German culture. Comparison also involves exposure to difference as to “encourage understanding and respect for people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from themselves” (Huber & Reynolds, 2014, p. 29). This was the underpinning idea for the activity named “German ideas, South African ideas”, undertaken in weeks three and 4 as well as week 5 where students began to deal with case studies and unpack cross-culture case studies and reflect on a cross-cultural situation they found themselves in. This activity was based on the idea of ethnographic learning which requires students to go “outside to explore life in the real world in order to bring back experience and knowledge that they can compare, analyze and reflect on – a process which can also promote self-discovery and self-reflection” (Huber & Reynolds, 2014, p. 42).

Analysis was present throughout the planned module as the module aimed to encourage elements of formal education. Huber and Reynolds explain analysis as having the aim of unpacking the explanations for similarities and differences “for the practices, the values and the beliefs which many people of a particular cultural affiliation may share” (2014, p. 29). Reflection was also present throughout as it is crucial in the “development of critical awareness and understanding” (Huber & Reynolds, 2014, p. 30) as well as allowing students to track and develop their own ICC journey and is the practice that will hopefully encourage students to apply ICC theory into their daily lives and make the skills, knowledge and attitudes highlighted in the module, transferable. The element I have not specifically included in the planning is action. This element involves “engagement with others through intercultural dialogue and for becoming involved in cooperative activities with people who have different cultural affiliations” (Huber & Reynolds, 2014, p. 30). Although an intercultural dialogue may take place during class discussions and lectures, a module of this scope is not realistically capable

of fully achieving this outcome. The type of intercultural dialogue and cooperative activities this element suggests would require a far more in depth and longer module. Nevertheless, this is the ultimate goal of ICC but, as stressed in previous chapters, ICC is a process and thus to expect this outcome to be fully realized for a module, course or workshop of any duration and complexity is unrealistic. As such, this module worked with a mixture of formal and informal educational methods. Formal education was evident in this module in terms of it needing to fit into a university curriculum and thus having elements of standardised assessment. Bernstein's Pedagogic Device provides a useful framework to explain how I achieved this. The theory drawn from the field of production had to fit homework tasks that encouraged students to explore elements of culture and ICC but also analyze and unpack concepts critically²³ as to ensure an academic approach was taken as well as a developmental one in terms of developing students' empathetic capacity and ability to cope effectively with intercultural contexts. Moreover, as noted in Chapter 2, teaching ICC in a non-western context required that I draw on existing models and adapt them according to the specific need and aims of an African, (more specifically South African), context. In this way, I relied on students to bring a great deal of their experience of culture into the classroom to be used as content alongside selected theories and models. It is for this reason that I used of Deardorff's Pyramid Model of ICC as the main structured theory component. The use of this model for informing and structuring ways of looking at intercultural encounters and case studies was specifically useful in it being specific enough in skills, attitudes and knowledges required for ICC development yet broad enough to adapt it to specific contexts and needs. This was evident in the relative ease of applying Deardorff's model to the refugee integration process in Germany and allowing students to explore this context interculturally in terms of the way in which Germany is attempting to integrate refugees. Similarly, Bennett's notion of "cultural positioning systems" (Bennett, 2009, p. 122) informed the progression of the lectures by stressing the importance of locating one's own cultural position before attempting to understand another. This was achieved by structuring the lectures in a way as to allow for the progression from an inward self-reflective process to looking more broadly at other cultures and experiences.

The informal component of this module was a core aim of this research especially in terms of student-participation and diversifying the curriculum. Consequently, Phipps' approach of allowing students to bring cultural artifacts in the form of stories, and experience, into the class greatly impacted the way in which the module was implemented. As noted in Chapter 2, this

²³ See Appendix B for detailed module outline and activity descriptions.

module aimed to draw on aspects of Phipps' approach to ICC teaching in which she stresses that there is "no such thing as teaching or learning German culture" (Phipps, 2008, p. 234). Instead Phipps argues that approaching culture as a 'learning object' should be abandoned in place of a classroom set up where students and teachers "co-create intercultural learning objects using a variety of methods and resources" (Phipps, 2008, p. 234). A Moodle-based approach to ICC was used by Phipps to this effect as online Learning Management Systems (such as Moodle) allowed Phipps in this instance to extend the classroom virtually so "preparing for class is shared across all participants" (Phipps, 2008, p. 234). This was recontextualized in my module as student-participation was encouraged and an emphasis was placed on exploring and sharing one's own culture and experience of culture and ICC. The result of this was that students influenced the content and direction the module took. This allowed students to become active participants in the teaching and learning process as opposed to passive consumers of the perceived 'expertise' of the lecturer. This was further achieved using RUconnected that allowed students to upload work in a variety of different formats, thereby not restricting them to one standard format. Nevertheless, the possibility of RUconnected as platform to co-create lectures was not fully explored and co-creation more subtly influenced the trajectory of lecture content through discussions which took place in class, and out of class that were then raised in the next lecture, as students commented on the continuation of class discussions beyond the scheduled 45-minute lecture. This indicates that students personally and meaningfully engaged with ICC and elements of culture beyond the classroom – an important goal of the research. Additionally, Weeks 3 and 4 really provided the opportunity for students to drive the content as they presented their ethnographic interviews. Phipps's theory was further incorporated through the use of the "four F's" (food, family, folklore and festivity) as a basis for the "cultural capsule" assignment. This assignment allowed for the celebration of these cultural elements by using them as a productive symbolic resource which students reflected on interculturally (Phipps, 2008, p. 220), and supported the encouragement of critical self-reflection as proposed by Bennett (2009).

4.1.4. Module Assessment

This section serves as a rationale for the planned assessment methods, but a comprehensive overview of assessments can be found as part of the detailed course overview in Appendix B. This module fitted into the existing Cultural Studies course in German Studies at Rhodes University. It therefore needed to contribute meaningfully to the course assessment requirements and aims as well as ICC assessment methods and aims. This is a difficult

combination to achieve considering the debate surrounding the ability to assess ICC effectively, if at all (Deardorff, 2009A, p. 477). Despite the belief in some academic fields that ICC is not able to be assessed, Deardorff concludes that leading intercultural experts “agreed that it could be assessed but also agreed on methods for assessing intercultural competence” (Deardorff, 2009A, p. 277).²⁴ In order to effectively assess ICC however, Fantini (2009) and Deardorff (2009A, p. 277) agree that the starting point lies not in methods or tools but in “defining what it is we are measuring and ensuring that the goals are aligned with overall mission and purpose of the course, program, or organization” (Deardorff, 2009A, p. 277). The alignment argued for in Deardorff’s assessment theory, however, is better suited to a fully incorporated course. Domingo simplifies this process by arguing that assessment needs to be determined by its purpose (2015, p. 244) and thus the purpose clearly defined. Similarly, Byram defines the role of assessment as “to encourage learners’ awareness of their own abilities in ICC [a]nd to help them realize that these abilities are acquired in many different circumstances inside and outside the classroom” (2002, p. 26). Deardorff further notes that a starting point for designing assessments of ICC is defining exactly what is meant by ICC in the specific context and then prioritizing “specific aspects of intercultural competence” based on the overall mission and purpose of the module (Deardorff, 2011, p. 72). This was undertaken in the introductory lecture in week 1 which was geared towards an overview of what ICC is and introducing students to models associated with ICC. This lecture formed part of the theory that underpinned the students’ exploration into ICC throughout the module. The prioritized elements of ICC for this module included cultural self-awareness, attitudes of respect, openness and curiosity and internal outcomes related to an “informed frame of reference shift” (adaptability, flexibility, ethnorelative view, empathy) (Deardorff 2011: 67).

The assessment of this module was thus planned in line with the above theoretical underpinnings to ensure that assessment was aligned with the overall mission and purpose of this module. The assessment of this module therefore, was designed according to the purpose of developing strategies for incorporating ICC into an already crowded and time-constrained curriculum, as well as making students explicitly aware of the skills and attitudes required when attempting to negotiate cultural challenges in their day-to-day interactions, thereby encouraging an awareness of their ICC capabilities and knowledge as well as practical opportunities to learn in and out of the classroom. To ensure this, an overall outcome and aim

²⁴ A detailed list of these are provided in Chapter 2.

statement has been included for the module as well as aims and outcomes for the weekly contact sessions (see Appendix B).

Assessing ICC at a university level brings with it the need for both formative and summative assessments. Additionally, there is the task of assessing both the objective and subjective elements (Domingo 2015; 244) of ICC. The objective elements can be assessed effectively through the use of content-based assessment which allow for summative assessment that is, according to Domingo (2015; 244), easier to score and meets three out of four assessment criteria (validity, reliability and consistency) (Domingo 2015; 244). The imperative in ICC assessment is that it involves a both direct and indirect collection of evidence of student progress. Direct evidence involves measuring performance in intercultural situations, critical reflection, E-Portfolios, and learning contracts while indirect evidence is collected mainly via questionnaires or inventories from the learner perspective (Deardorff 2011; 73-75). Although indirect assessment in this way is useful for the student to track their own intercultural journey, it is also important to include “multiple perspectives, beyond the learners” (Deardorff 2011; 73). This is because, although a student can assess the effectiveness of their intercultural interactions, only another person can determine the appropriateness (Deardorff 2011; 74). The importance of such assessment is most beneficial to programs, courses or modules geared primarily towards external outcomes involving effective and appropriate communication and behavior in an intercultural situation. This module however, was not geared towards external outcomes but rather an introduction to ICC and its associated skills and competencies so that students are more equipped to begin to work toward external outcomes by applying ICC skills in daily interactions. As such, assessing the appropriateness of the students’ behavior in intercultural situations was neither necessary at this stage, nor practical to achieving the outcomes of this module.

This module did not test their cultural knowledge of ‘German Culture’ as that is routinely tested throughout the *Landeskunde* component. Instead, direct assessment involved assessing students’ knowledge of ICC models, skills, attitudes and knowledges in order to assess their level of awareness of the elements involved in developing intercultural competence²⁵ and was achieved primarily through critical reflective writing and a standardized exam. Indirect

²⁵ This testing did not test their level of intercultural competence, only their knowledge of the theory underpinning ICC.

assessment was achieved via the pre-module questionnaire, week 1 personal ICC evaluation (see Appendix C) and post-module questionnaire.

As mentioned, a large portion of the assessment was in the form of critical reflections as it is more geared towards developing students as life-long learners of ICC in line with Deardorff's claim that ICC is a process requiring one to "regularly engage in reflective practice in regard to their own development" (Deardorff 2009; xiii). Other direct assessment included imagined intercultural situations and opportunities to apply intercultural skills through case-studies (see Table 1) as well as an exam written in November. Due to the focus placed on lifelong learning, there was a large focus on reflective writing as a measure of ICC progress. The value of reflective writing for promoting life-long learning is commonly acknowledged (Ryan, 2011, p. 99) and is particularly suited to the teaching and assessment of ICC (Deardorff, 2011, p. 75). Assessment was geared towards developing student skills of self-awareness and reflection in order to develop empathy. Domingo argues that in a specifically South African context, these skills are direly lacking in university students due to an "abysmal schooling system" (2015, p. 250) in which multicultural education "does not succeed beyond a one-dimensional engagement with diversity" (2015, p. 247). The value of reflective writing as an assessment tool for ICC has been further argued for by Deardorff who argues that "reflection is essential in developing learners' intercultural competence" (Deardorff, 2011, p. 75). However, reflection must be intentional and structured which "facilitates exploration for deeper contextualized meaning linked to learning outcomes" (Deardorff, 2011, p. 75). When reflective assessment is used in this way, Deardorff (2011, p. 75) argues²⁶ that reflection helps students "engage in an examination of their personal opinions, attitudes, and positionalities; explore their relation to others and the work in which they are engaged; and bridge their day-to-day interactions with individuals to broader social and cultural issues." The type of reflective writing was geared towards academic reflective writing as opposed to personal reflection and thus required a conscious and stated purpose, and to show evidence of learning (Ryan, 2011, p. 101). This process is further supported by resources made available to students on how to write an academic reflective writing piece in the German Studies Handbook (RU German Department, 2017), which sets out specific guidelines. Ryan (2011, p. 101) argues that reflective writing in this way "is underpinned by a transformative approach to learning that sees the pedagogical process as one of knowledge transformation rather than knowledge transmission". This is critical, not only in that it supports the development of life-long ICC learners but is also a

²⁶ With reference to O'Grady (2000) and Rice and Pollack (2000).

method that can be used to begin to transform the way we approach teaching and learning which involves and values the students' opinions and insights in an academic and assessable way. The value of including such a method of assessment is part of transformative learning (Mezirow, 2006, p. 24). According to Mezirow transformative learning "is defined as the process by which we transform problematic frames of reference (mindsets, habits of mind, meaning perspectives) – sets of assumptions and expectations – to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective and emotionally able to change." The reliance on reflection as a key method for achieving transformative learning is a way to provide students with "opportunities to examine and reflect upon their beliefs, philosophies and practices, and deconstruct prevailing ideologies" that "they are more likely to see themselves as active change agents and lifelong learners within their professions" (Ryan, 2011, p. 101). As such, despite the term 'problematic' being a point of contention, with regard to what viewpoints are deemed 'problematic', the term transformative learning is useful to use in this context as its premise of using learning to create frame-of-reference shifts via self-reflection supports a key objective of this module and helps to explain why reflective writing was used so extensively as a means of assessment.

A formal assessment was executed during the Rhodes University end-of-year examinations. This module was examined as part of the *Landeskunde* paper which examines the work covered in the Third Term. This term students covered a module on ICC in term 3, as well as a research-based module on "Germans in the Eastern Cape" in term 4. The examination²⁷ was differentiated to accommodate the levels required at a second and third year level. The second-year examination had shorter questions which tested students' knowledge of culture, theory and their ability to discuss these theoretical concepts in relation to real-world challenges facing Germany. The third years were required to answer two longer questions in more (theoretical) depth. A cartoon was used to prompt a discussion on ICC, in which students were asked to relate ICC to real-world challenges facing Germany with regards to migrants and refugees by looking explaining the challenges and evaluating German governments response to these challenges in terms of ICC. The second question looked at culture and ICC and asked students to critically respond to a quote by using theory, and their own experience doing research as part of their "collecting perspectives" assignment. These exams were intended to examine the level to which students had engaged with theories, readings and class discussions more than testing their ability to regurgitate theories and ready-packaged arguments. In this way, the

²⁷ A copy of the examination is provided in Appendix D.

objective of this final assessment was to determine the extent to which students had critically engaged with the topics and reflected on the applicability of ICC to real-world contexts.

An overview of assessments is provided in Table 5 page 71 below and a detailed description of what each assessment required and was made up of, is provided in Appendix B. The overall idea behind the assessment methods outlined in Table 5 was to provide continuous and varied assessment that provided students with opportunities to use and showcase their intercultural journey at various stages throughout the module.

Table 5: Assessment Overview

Week	Assessment Type	Assessment Name and short description
1	Indirect (Homework)	“Map My Own ICC Competence”- students make use of a cross-cultural checklist to identify what they do/do not know in relation to German culture as well as identify their own cultural positionality.
2	Indirect (in class) Direct (in class) Direct (assignment)	‘Values Checklist’ identify some ways in which their own cultural background influences behavior. Reflect: paired-up with another student with a different culture and answer questions on cultural differences that arise between their checklists. Ethnographic-based interview assignment in groups on a prescribed topic. Comparative analysis of collected information and typical German responses to the same topic. Presentations in weeks 3 and 4.
3	No assessment	Presentations.
4	Direct (assignment)	Presentations. ‘Culture Capsule’: Students design a cultural capsule and attach a reflective essay detailing why they chose certain items in relation to their culture.

5	No assessment	
6	Indirect	Post-module questionnaire: Students evaluate the course and provide feedback to be used as part of the action research process. This will also serve as a self-assessment of their progress through the module.
n/a	Direct	Final <i>Landeskunde</i> examination.

3.3. Action and Observation

The above section explained how ICC theory and models were recontextualised into a curriculum that was taught in the module as part of the *Landeskunde* course. The original module design aimed to move from critically looking at “What is culture?”, and “What is ICC?” to clarifying and setting the theoretical underpinnings, especially in terms of ICC so that students had a clear idea of each key term as we used and explored theory in class. From there an exploration of different elements of ICC in terms of the skills needed, in general, to be able to begin the process of becoming more interculturally competent, followed by case studies and attempts to apply ICC to real world situations was planned. The way in which this planned curriculum became classroom discourse will be the focus of this section.

The lectures followed a very similar path and maintained the overall essence of what the module set out to achieve but grew organically as I tried to respond to student interest and perceived need from week to week. In this way the field of recontextualisation and reproduction influenced one another. This is significant when it comes to achieving a more inclusive teaching environment where the students feel like co-creators of the curriculum and thus more valued. Furthermore, time-constraints became evident and a six-week module does not provide sufficient time in which to fully explore or achieve the aims set for this module. This was not only evident in the need to adjust lectures, but was commented on repeatedly in the evaluative questionnaire in which many participants felt that more time was needed, or the module should focus on more niche topics in detail rather than attempt to provide an overview of the field²⁸.

The duration of lectures was 45 minutes once every week and these lectures were structured to promote student participation and input which further added to the need to adjust lectures. I created basic outlines that introduced theories and definitions but allowed for the examples and connections to come from the students. Using Bernstein’s terminology discussed in Chapter 2, the structure of the lectures accommodated a great deal of student input which resulted in weak framing in that students had a degree of control over the pacing and selection of content (Bernstein, 1975, p. 88). The idea behind this approach is influenced by Phipps’ notion of allowing students to bring the “stuff of culture” (Phipps, 2008, p. 220) into the classroom and thus link theory of ICC to real, lived concerns and experiences of the students. Each lecture was structured along the lines of:

²⁸ This finding will be discussed in further detail in the reflection later in this chapter.

1. 'Hooking' students by either playing an interactive game or having to solve a problem. The idea behind this was to set the tone for student-engagement by breaking down the traditional barrier of "lecturer speaks and student listens".
2. Delivery of theory/content: in this part of the lecture I would generally introduce a section or theory/ definitions or models relating to ICC and examples of Germany.
3. Assignment briefing/wrap up: the lectures would then generally finish with a briefing of an assignment and a wrap up by myself attempting to bring together the major themes brought up in that lecture.

In the second stage of the lecture, the students would most often be the most active and questions (either posed by myself or asked by a peer) would spark discussion and debate about the relevance or application of ICC in and to everyday life. Similarly, the series of lectures that dealt with culture would become robust discussions as students were encouraged to bring their own experience of culture to bear on official definitions and discourses surrounding culture. Consequently, this had a significant impact of the micro-structuring of lectures, as the discussion and themes debated in the classroom came to influence, and alter, the trajectory of the lecture, and the mezzo-level of the module design.

Week 1 looked critically at culture and ICC, and encouraged robust debate about what constitutes culture through the use of personal experience. The importance of ICC was underpinned by a commonly used ICC introduction game involving "awkward greetings", which was particularly effective in creating imagined spaces of cross-cultural interaction without the pressure of really offending any specific culture. Furthermore, the culture analogies activity worked particularly well to get them to engage on a critical level with the idea of culture by creating either a visual/metaphor to explain what culture is (Berardo, 2012, p. 61). The activity also provided an indirect method of evaluating the level to which they had grasped the concept. Examples included culture as a soup, house with various rooms, or blade of grass, as well as the more commonly used metaphors of an onion.

Week 2 built on the idea of "What is culture" by exploring how values influence norms and behaviours. In this lecture students were encouraged to critically engage with their own culture or perceived lack of culture through the deconstruction of everyday norms they unconsciously adhere to. A picture stimulus was used to provoke a stereotypical response based on students' norms and values before moving onto the theory portion of the lecture that explored what norms and values are and how they affect our behaviour and ICC. The exploration of norms and values

was done through an activity that allowed students to match norms to values and then transgressing behaviours. The introspection came when students were then required to either alter an example, or create an example based on a norm they adhere to daily. This led to an interesting discussion on “what constitutes a transgression of a norm” and underpinned the complexities of cultural norms and values as well as the importance of context in relation to culture and cross-culture encounters.

Weeks 3 and 4 were completely student-driven in that they were required to present their own ethnographic-based research assignments. This assignment explored the complexities of cultural consensus and, specifically in a South African context, the diversity within “South African culture”. Students critically assessed whether there is such a thing as “South African” culture and, at a third-year level, they additionally looked at whether national culture is still relevant. The real rationale behind this assignment was to encourage students to engage with notions of culture outside of their own. Weeks 1 and 2 were largely self-reflective and concentrated on their personal construction of culture in relation to theory of national culture. Weeks 3 and 4 required students to speak to people around Rhodes University campus and discover the complexities and heterogeneity of culture even within a microcosm of society.

Week 5 revealed the consequence of a relatively weak framing and the inclusion of student-driven content as the planned lecture for this week took a different direction and altered the lecture for Week 6 in a way that was more relevant and responsive to the class’s interests and context by addressing the idea of “whose responsibility is ICC?” in relation to the refugee crisis in Germany. In Week 5 and 6, I had planned to focus on the theory of ICC and how ICC acquisition is theorised. Case studies and imagined simulations were the planned activities; however, as mentioned, the relevance of ICC in relation to refugees stirred up a great deal of interest and debate. Adapting the lecture to fit this organic progression encouraged even further participation from the students, and even allowed the theory of ICC to be applied to a current situation.

3.4. Reflection

3.4.1. Introduction and Evaluation Questionnaire

Thus far, I have explained what I chose to include in the module’s curriculum and why, discussed how this planned curriculum was implemented and moments in which the content and trajectory were altered. In light of this, this section will reflect of some of the implications

for the above-mentioned changes as well as, evaluate the extent to which the module was successful in achieving the core aims of:

- Internationalising and diversifying the curriculum by encouraging student participation and exploring blended learning approaches (creating an inclusive teaching environment).
- Providing students with tools and knowledge that will allow them to develop and monitor their own intercultural journeys.
- Develop a sense of empathy and awareness of cultural diversity at a national and global level.

The extent to which the above aims are realized, is dependent on how knowledge was reproduced by students.

The module was evaluated in the following ways. Firstly, throughout the module I made notes on lectures and assignments as part of a continuous teacher reflective process tracking my own perception of how lectures went as well as making notes on evidence of developing empathy and knowledge base. This was further evaluated by the reflective assignments, which served the purpose of assessing the students' progress and application as knowledge, but also provided students a platform not only to include their own knowledge and experience. Students were able to respond to issues of cultural awareness and empathy and discuss their own perception of their development in the understanding of culture and ICC, thus reproducing knowledge. A second method used to evaluate the module was via a module evaluation questionnaire (Appendix C) which provided students a chance to provide feedback on the module as well as their own sense of ICC development. As such, it is from these methods of data collection that I will evaluate the success and limitations of the implementation of a stand-alone ICC module into the *Landeskunde* component of German Studies at Rhodes University. The questionnaire was divided into two sections; the first included short questions which required students to respond in terms of a scale between one and five, with one being 'strongly disagree' and five being 'strongly agree'. The second part then allowed for greater elaboration as students were asked to comment on various aspects of the module.

3.4.2. Achievement of module goals

In terms of internationalising and diversifying the curriculum by encouraging student participation, this module made inroads in exploring methods in which individual departments can do this at a micro-level of curriculum. Student participation and diversification are linked

in that it allowed for students to contribute the content of the module and explore topics that are meaningful to them. Four ‘agreed’ and seven ‘strongly agreed’ that the lectures encouraged participation and discussion. Furthermore, the students elaborated that lectures provided a ‘platform to voice our own opinions’, ‘hear different ones’ and that they felt able, and encouraged to ask questions, debate topics and continue the discussions outside of lectures. These results are further confirmed by my own observations in terms of the high-level of student participation discussed in the above chapter.

In terms of diversifying the curriculum, the relevance of the over-reaching theme of ICC was noted by students, particularly in its role in encouraging them to reflect critically on their own cultures. 6 of the 11 ‘strongly agreed’, and 2 ‘agreed’ that the module “encouraged a critical exploration of culture and ICC”, and many students particularly commenting on the fact that they reflected on their own culture. However, one student commented on that the focus was too heavily on western cultures. This indicates that although students were encouraged to think about their own cultures, there were not enough links to an African perspective on culture and ICC. This is a concern raised in Chapter 2, and a concern that is gaining increasing traction in the field of ICC research. Therefore, my attempts to develop a more inclusive space, where students are able to bring their lived experiences to the classroom and reflect on them in an academic way, did not equate to a more Africanist lens on the topic of ICC and is a significant limitation of the module that requires consideration were this module to be revisited.

Furthermore, students felt that the module made them more aware of ICC and culture, and encouraged self-reflection. This links to the third and fourth goals of this module; providing students with tools and knowledge that will allow them to develop and monitor their own intercultural journeys and developing a sense of empathy and awareness of cultural diversity at a national and global level. Assessing students’ level of empathy is difficult. However, their level of self-reflection in terms of how they approach their own culture was evident not only from their responses to the evaluation questionnaire, but also in terms of their reflective essays in which students engaged with what constitutes their culture in a critical way. Nevertheless, evidence that students still confuse heritage and culture was evident in that a few students equated family as their culture.

The final goal; developing a sense of empathy and cultural awareness, is far more difficult to evaluate and I was only able to gain a sense of this from my own observations and the students’ responses in assignments and the evaluation questionnaire. Evaluating empathy is difficult

because it forms part of the “subjective dimension of intercultural learning” (Domingo R. S., 2015, p. 243) which are difficult to teach as well as assess. The approach this module took was based on the idea that students are life-long learners of ICC (Deardorff, 2011, p. 68) which meant that I did not attempt to assess the degree to which students could be considered ‘interculturally competent’. Instead the focus was on encouraging learners, in line with Byram’s *et al.* (2002, p. 26) idea of the purpose of assessment, to reflect and become aware of their own cultural position, become aware of cultural diversity in their daily interactions and encourage them to critically reflect on intercultural moments using the tools and knowledge acquired in this module (i.e. make ICC skills and knowledges transferable and applicable outside the classroom).

As such, the degree to which the students developed empathy is difficult to evaluate, although students commented that the module did increase their awareness and knowledge of ICC, with some adding that it was the first time they had dealt with this topic from an academic perspective, that they were more aware of the nuances surrounding ICC and culture and that they have become more aware of their own conduct when coming into contact with other cultures. The feedback that reoccurred most frequently was that students felt that they were given a chance to reflect on their culture and became exposed to other cultures in a way that they have not been able to in an academic setting before. This is significant in that the module dealt, from a recontextualised perspective, with elements of so-called ‘German Culture’²⁹ and South African multiculturalism. The fact that students felt that they had been exposed to numerous cultures is the result of their reproduction of the module content. This was most evident in, as mentioned, class discussions, but also their cultural capsule assignment which was the opportunity for the students to consolidate theory as it related to their own experience by creating a ‘culture capsule’ of the most significant elements of their personal identification of their culture, as well as write a reflective essay on the process and their journey throughout the module. Furthermore, students had time in class to showcase their capsules and discuss the contents with fellow learners. This was a significant learning moment for many students, as they learnt about other cultures, but also articulated their own sense of culture as it related to their everyday experience. This activity was successful in contributing to creating awareness of cultural diversity, as students with whom they thought they shared a culture produced very

²⁹ As noted in Chapter 1.5 the notion of a ‘German Culture’ is problematic considering the diversities of cultures related to German and Germany (see p.23).

different cultural capsules. This focus on national cultural diversity was then linked to concerns and challenges facing Germany in terms on interculturality and refugees.

Overall the module managed to achieve its aims to a certain degree. However, certain limitations (which are discussed in the next section) were made clear in the module evaluation as well as during the teaching process. Nevertheless, this module was most successful as a starting point for developing ways in which departments, especially language departments or sections within a School of Languages, such as German Studies, can begin to encourage more student participation in class but also in driving the content of lectures and thus making it more relevant to their experiences.

3.4.3. Module limitations

The difficulties with the module largely concerned time and scope. Many students commented that the module was not long enough to fully deal with the issues and themes raised in the module, and that a semester would be better suited to a module of this scope. In connection to this the goal of the module was too broad and many participants felt that it would have been more beneficial to deal with parts of ICC and explore them in more depth. This was picked up especially in relation to the group work task that required students to collect views and collate them into a presentation on a specific topic related to culture. The issue of scope was further confirmed by my own observations. Attempting to include such a broad range of theorists was difficult and resulted in the lectures that put a barrier to student participation because they were too content-laden.

4. Conclusion and recommendations

5.1. Final summary and addressing the research goals

The core aims of this research were to evaluate the extent to which intercultural competence was explicitly dealt with in German Studies at Rhodes University, in order to implement a module that introduces students to ICC from an academic perspective as well as to contribute to developing the students' sense of cultural awareness. Furthermore, the research aimed to use an action research approach as a way of contributing to the call for curriculum reform by teaching a module that encouraged participation and responded to students' input. Finally, this research aimed to explore the efficacy of the module to make ICC explicit as a set of transferable skills and knowledges. This section will thus discuss the extent to which this module was feasible and achieved the intended research goals. It will do so by evaluating the findings of each research goal as it pertained to the action research cycle.

1. Planning: Assess whether a module on ICC was feasible, suitable and necessary in the German Studies department at Rhodes University.

As argued in Chapter 1, German Studies, like other foreign language and culture courses, has the potential to take on a key role in developing democratic ideals and fostering intercultural attitudes such as empathy, respect, openness and curiosity (Deardorff, 2011, p. 67). Chapter 2 also highlighted the weak classification of German Studies which allowed for a module to be implemented with relatively little disruption to the overall course outcomes. This makes it suitable for the implementation of a module on ICC. I further argued that curriculum reform is too often associated with content and not with methods of teaching. From the contextualization in Chapter 1, as well as the pre-module questionnaire it was clear that:

- Germany and South Africa both face diversity challenges that ICC can contribute to helping people engage in constructive intercultural dialogues that may aid transformation and internationalisation efforts.
- Curriculum reform is dealt with in policy, but those policies are slow-moving, and it is thus the responsibility of individual departments/ sections to find ways of addressing transformation and diversity challenges at a micro-level.
- Contemporary research indicated that there was a need for students to be more culturally sensitive and aware of differing cultures on campus (Deardorff & Quinlan, 2016). Moreover, it was clear that ICC is a key way in which universities can begin to develop students' cultural awareness (Weber & Domingo, 2011, p.183). Furthermore,

language courses such as *DaF* are the courses that can most easily implement such courses.

- German Studies at Rhodes does not explicitly deal with ICC, although it is implicitly woven into various components of the curriculum. This does not guarantee that students will develop interculturally, and it is important that ICC is a clear and stated objective of teaching (Byram M. , 2009, p. 331). Therefore, there was a need to develop ways of more explicitly exploring ICC with the students.
- Students had a good idea of the definition of culture and an idea of some of the components of ICC but showed, overall, that they had not engaged with their own cultural positions adequately and thus lacked cultural self-awareness which forms a key component of developing ICC (Deardorff, 2009A).

This research thus showed that German Studies was not only suitable for a module on ICC but that the skills and knowledges associated with ICC were implicitly dealt with and therefore, in order to develop these skills further, a module that explicitly deals with ICC was necessary.

2. Action: Developing a module that addresses that gaps identified as part of the planning stage, as well as contribute to a more inclusive teaching environment.

The contextualisation and outline of research in Chapter 1 was followed by the theoretical underpinnings of this research as well as an overview of significant ICC literature which was used to construct the module. This chapter highlighted the use of Bernstein's Pedagogic Device (2000) as a useful tool for explaining how knowledge was structured, communicated and received throughout the module. The chapter then picked up on the field of knowledge production in terms of explaining what ICC is and significant theorists relevant to the creation of the module. This discussion highlighted the complexity of trying to teach ICC (Witte & Harden, Introduction, 2011), and from this established the criteria used in deciding which theorists to include. The acknowledgement here was that recontextualising ICC into a teachable curriculum depended on context and purpose. This was complicated however by the context of this research being situated in a non-western, South African context but most ICC theories stemming from a self-acknowledged western lens (Deardorff, 2012). This was informed largely by Nwosu's approach (2009) to ICC that stresses the importance of understanding conceptualisations of ICC in African cultures. As such it was necessary for me to make sure

that theorists that were recontextualised aligned with my research goals and this research's specific context. This meant that I looked for theorists whose models and approaches allowed for high-levels of student engagement and experience, and who could be used in parts (as opposed to rigidly following a set framework) and in conjunction with other theorists.

The main theorist that was then recontextualized into the curriculum for the module were Deardorff (2012) as her pyramid model provided a clear blueprint of ICC and was used as a starting point and overview of the field. Bennett's (2009) process model proved useful as a comparative theorist to Deardorff and offered a more condensed process of developing ICC, as did Byram's model (1997), which formed one of the early attempts to conceptualise ICC in terms of significant components. Fantini (2009) and Domingo (2015) were used in conjunction with Deardorff to inform the way in which assessments were structured and what assessments methods were most suitable to testing ICC. Hofstede's theory of culture (1994) was used quite differently to how his theory is typically applied; instead of being used to compare and contrast cultures in order to prepare students for intercultural encounters, it was used to develop students' ability to critically engage with theory and notions and culture. Lastly, Phipps (2008) did not provide a theory as such, but her progressive approach to teaching ICC formed the backbone of this module, as it was based on Phipps notion of allowing students to bring the 'stuff' of culture (Phipps, 2008, p. 220) into the classroom to be used as a way into culture and into investigating what culture means. This aligned with the need to develop an inclusive classroom environment as it is an approach that puts the student in the center of learning and encourages student participation.

3. Observation and reflection:

3.1. Evaluate the extent to which the module achieved its aims, created a more inclusive teaching environment and whether the module was successful in making ICC explicit as set of transferrable skills and knowledges.

This theoretical base informed the structure of the research, research goals, and the methods used. Action research was particularly suitable in dealing with research surrounding curriculum, as it allows for a continuous process of planning, action and reflection. This is useful in trying to implement a new module as the repeat-cycles involved with action research allows for revision and improvement of the module. Nevertheless, the scope of this research meant that the action research cycle could not be repeated. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, it did allow for the identification of areas that would need to be revisited were this module

to be implemented again. These include: time planning and scope of content. The process of implementing a module based on an action research approach and using Bernstein's Pedagogic Device to help explain the relationship between the various elements of the curriculum and stages of its development was discussed in Chapter 4. This Chapter also gave an in-depth analysis of the extent to which the module achieved its aims.

Chapter 4.3 addresses the success the module had in achieving its aims and concluded that the most significant way it did this was in terms of making ICC explicit as a set of transferable skills and knowledges, as well as in creating a more inclusive teaching environment.

The curriculum that was developed from the theorists identified in Chapter 2 and was structured in a way that allowed for weak framing as to create a space for increased student participation. The module was largely successful in addressing the gap in the German Studies curriculum discussed above. The module looked at culture critically and encouraged students to critically reflect on their own culture as this was identified as lacking from their responses to the pre-module questionnaires. In Chapter 4.3.2 I discussed the findings of the evaluation questionnaire that indicated that students felt they were given the space and encouraged to critically reflect on what culture is and their own position in terms of culture. Furthermore, the module dealt explicitly with ICC by introducing students to the field of ICC and what it means to develop ICC. The goal was not to fully develop interculturally competent students in six weeks³⁰, but to make students aware of the skills and knowledges associated with ICC as well as its relevance to their immediate context. The former was particularly successful, and noticeable in their final examination that assessed the Landeskunde course as a whole and thus included a variety of modules. Some students, particularly third years, "applied what they had learnt and had been made aware of in [my] module to other modules" (Weber U. S., personal communication, 2017). Weber (Personal Communication, 2017) explains this further by providing the example:

in my section of the Cultural Studies exam this year, I had asked students to engage with how we see the German settlers that came to the Eastern Cape in 1857/8 today, and a couple of those nine third years immediately critically interrogated the notions of culture at the heart of an article that I gave them positionality of the article's author (<http://www.dispatchlive.co.za/news/2015/06/02/creating-new-mythology-about-german-settlers/>).

³⁰ As mentioned in chapter 2 p.35, ICC is a life-long process and so to attempt to fully develop interculturally students would be unrealistic for a six-week course.

This indicates that students showed a “deeper level of understanding of interculturality/ belonging and empathy for “the other” and were able to transfer the skills and knowledges learned as part of the ICC module to topics and modules across the *Landeskunde* course.

The latter was achieved to a lesser degree as some students commented that the focus was too heavily on western cultures (i.e. German culture) despite attempts to create a space where students were able to bring their experiences to bear on class discussions and content. This links to the limitation raised in Chapter 4.3.3 that the scope of the module was too broad to deal with certain topics in depth.

Nevertheless, the module was largely successful in creating a more inclusive teaching environment where students felt comfortable and able to contribute to discussions and the weak framing further allowed for these discussions to come to bear on the direction future lessons took. The success was further aided by the relatively loose lesson structures that were not content laden but aimed to spark question and debate.

Thus, although there is space for improvement when it comes to making the module more relevant to the immediate context of the students, it did pave the way for beginning to open a seemingly overtly western subject to incorporating content that relates to the lived-experience of students. Consequently, the module will be adapted and incorporated into School of Languages and Literatures’ interdisciplinary CLIA 101 course (Cultures and Languages in Africa 101) at Rhodes University with the aim of making the course more student-centered and to “teach students heightened reflexivity when it comes to their own cultures and those of others” (Weber U. S. ,personal communication, 2017)³¹.

3.2. Evaluate the use of an action research approach to contribute to curriculum development within the German Studies department at Rhodes University.

As discussed in chapter 3.1 this research used an action research approach to investigate the implementation of the module but did not attempt to fully follow action research in its entirety. The reasons for this were largely time-constraints and the nature of this research which does not have the scope to conduct multiple cycles in one year. Despite this, this research followed the basic structure of action research to accommodate my position as both a researcher and a teacher, as well as proved useful in allowing for the implementation of an experimental module to explore the viability of such modules.

³¹ See Appendix F.

This research was most successful in achieving the core aims of action research; that is, improving an element of a curriculum (the German Studies curriculum in this case) and involving participants (i.e. the students) (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 4). The planning component of action research was used to identify the feasibility and necessity of the module, the action cycle was used to develop the curriculum that would form part of the module as well as implement it as part of a six-week module, and the reflection component of action research was seen in the evaluation of the module in terms of whether it achieved its aims and the observed limitations.

The main component of action research that was omitted was the repetition of the cycle in which the module would be, yet again, reviewed, altered and repeated. Nonetheless, possible ways in which the module could be reviewed and altered as part of an additional cycle are discussed as part of the recommendations and further research (Chapter 5.3).

5.3. Recommendations

Based on some of the limitations of the project and as part of the reflection component the action research cycle, this chapter will discuss the most significant challenges and limitations encountered throughout this process as well as suggest possible alterations to address these limitations for readers who may wish to adapt the module for different contexts.

1. Small number of participants

The small class size proved to contribute to the success of this module, but was also a limitation in that it was not a true representation of the average university course class size. This was not by design but by circumstance. As such, the viability of this module for larger class sizes has not been proved and the implementation of such a module to a larger class would need to be approached with caution as it is the intimate class size that allows for students to feel more willing and able to have meaningful discussions within the timeframe of a 45-minute lecture. This limitation can however be worked around. Workable solutions to implementing this course in a large group, especially at Rhodes University, where tutorial spaces provided smaller class sizes, would be to use lecture times to introduce theory and pose questions which could then be explored in smaller groups as part of tutorials. Intercultural activities used as part of the module can be adapted and changed to suit larger class sizes as well. Berardo and Deardorff (2012) provide a wealth of activities in one of the first practical intercultural competence books which clearly guides teachers on which activities are suitable for certain contexts depending on size of the group, time needed, level of challenge and intended audience – an overview of

this activities are also provided making the book accessible and practical for teachers (Berardo & Deardorff, 2012, p. 7).

2. Sourcing appropriate ICC resources for a South African context.

As discussed in Chapter 2.3, a particular research interest for teaching ICC is the development of models and frameworks that are not western-centric. Nwosu (2009, p. 158) highlighted the need for more “African conceptualizations of ICC” and although Nwosu’s research has made progress into developing a taxonomy of Intercultural competence in Africa and among Africans, there has yet to be a model developed from an African perspective that can guide the teaching of ICC in an African or more specifically, South African context. As such, I found it useful to draw on many different models and activities and open these up to discussion and interrogation. Although this was not achieved in depth enough, it did open the way for a more critical look at ICC models in a collaborative way and could aid research into this field. As noted Berardo and Deardorff’s collection of innovative intercultural activities and models (Berardo & Deardorff, 2012) were particularly useful in this regard, although activities were best used when adapted to suit my specific context especially and it served as useful resource and reference for finding inspiration and ideas for lessons. Moreover, it was useful to create assignments that encouraged reflective practice on behalf of the students as it allowed them to use their own cultural lens to compare ICC models and theories. The Culture Capsule assignment was particularly useful in this regard.

3. Scope and time

A limitation of this module that was most commonly commented on in student feedback was the scope in relation to the time-frame. This was also noted in my own journal notes and observations. The class consisted of 23 students and could thus accommodate a weak framing more easily. Considering that the average university course has a far greater number of students, the viability of this module for larger class sizes cannot be guaranteed. Which may be a limitation in terms of the ability for this module to be transferred to other courses, especially in terms of increasing student participation through a weak framing. However, for language courses with smaller class sizes, this module could be easily adapted. Nevertheless, the timeframe given was adequate for introducing a module to facilitate the knowledge taught throughout the existing *DaF* course by making students explicitly aware of the skills and attitudes required when attempting to negotiate cultural challenges in their day-to-day interactions. Still, the content covered would be more effective and more able to be explored

in depth if the module focusses on specific aspects of ICC, such as specific skills or knowledges or specific frameworks. In this format the module would be most effective taught progressively each year (i.e. a certain ICC focus in first year, which is then built on in subsequent years). Indeed, integrating the module in this way would further the aim of developing “life-long” (Deardorff, 2009B, p. xiii) learners of ICC and allow it to be a skill that students are constantly building on and developing. It would also allow students to engage more regularly with reflective practice, an element of ICC that Deardorff argues is imperative to students’ personal development of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2009B, p. xiii).

Breaking the module up over years would further allow for a specific focus in terms of the content and theory studied. This would correspondingly, allow for more in-depth comparisons such as looking at case studies in both Germany and South Africa, such as the challenges facing German society with regards to migrants and refugees and the challenges facing South Africa with regards to transformation and diversity could be explored in more depth and solutions and ideas discussed by the students. This would make the module relevant to the immediate context of the students as well as provide them the space to begin to tackle these challenges. Another example could be to look at differing conceptions in terms of African and European concepts of culture and ICC. In this regard, a comparison using Nwosu’s taxonomy of intercultural competence (2009) could be discussed in comparison to German notions of culture and western frameworks of ICC.

4. Data collection

Although the pre-module survey provided valuable contextualization for the module and research, certain questions could have used a space for students to justify why they either agreed or disagreed. A drawback of the evaluation questionnaire was that only 12 out of the 21 students who answered the pre-module questionnaire responded. The use of only two questionnaires was limiting in that in order to retain interest, they had to be kept short and thus missed out on asking questions that could have provided more insight into the process and usefulness of implementing such a module. The use of perhaps one or two more questionnaires would have provided a space to collect more in-depth analysis on the students’ feelings during this process as well as encouraged greater student involvement beyond the classroom. An alternative approach to multiple surveys is suggested by Edward Gehringer (2010) who has had specific success with using ‘daily surveys’ to track students’ responses and thoughts on a course. These surveys are conducted after each lesson using Google Forms and focus on simple

questions such as “name one thing that is still not clear from today’s class” and students were asked to complete the survey in a round-robin fashion as to avoid “survey-fatigue” (Gehring, 2010, pp. 4-6). The particular success of this course, despite challenges of reminding students to participate, was that he was able to evaluate his course constantly and adjust teaching as needed because “information arrives and [could] be put to immediate use” (Gehring, 2010, p. 8). An approach like this would be particularly useful in larger groups as one could have more respondents at any given time, despite only asking a portion of the class to answer after each lesson. Furthermore, in terms of action research, this method of data collection would prove to be especially useful in supplementing observations and journal notes and would allow one to rework the module as one runs into challenges.

A further challenge was getting all students to fill in the questionnaires due to the online platform, especially after the module was completed. Another approach could be to conduct forums and on-going discussions about the module, teaching methods and content. These however, would need to be either run by a third-party, or done on an online platform, to ensure students have the space to voice opinions without the pressure of having their teacher there, which could lead to disingenuous responses. This, and the suggestion of ‘daily surveys’ could prove useful in establishing a fuller picture of the effectiveness and limitations of the module.

5.4. Further Research

In terms of further research on ICC that would aid the development of curriculum, such as was the purpose of this project, more research is needed in the field of ICC concerning African conceptualisations of ICC in order to better equip educators with the tools and knowledge necessary to develop ICC curriculum. Although this thesis has highlighted some progress made in this regard, a gap exists in models and frameworks that could be used for teaching ICC in an African context. Nwosu’s taxonomy (2009) revealed the difference in African concepts of time, self-orientation, activity orientation, relational orientation and discourse orientation. It is therefore logical that an intercultural competence framework created from the lens of a western culture may be incompatible in an African context.

In terms of curriculum development, the question remains how do universities continue to respond to transformation and diversity challenges? In the introduction to this thesis I discussed some of the challenges facing South African universities with regards to transformation and highlighted the dissatisfaction with the pace of transformation. These challenges are not going to disappear and there needs to be a more concerted and focused effort on developing

curriculum in a way that is responsive and relevant to the students it serves as well as global education trends across disciplines, not only those overtly western subjects with a sense of obligation to do so, but by all stakeholders. This research proved that departments are, and can, influence curriculum reform at a micro-level, in a meaningful way, but the inclusion of students in the decision-making process is crucial to the success of these ventures. Furthermore, Anné Verhoef (Verhoef, 2016) argues that interculturality and internationalisation have a role to play in transformation. He argues that transformation research in South Africa has a vital gap. Through a close analysis of recent articles pertaining to transformation in higher education in South Africa, Verhoef concluded that transformation research in South Africa centres around four main areas; Transformation through curriculum, Transformation through structures, Transformation through redressing equity, Transformation through access (Verhoef, 2016). While these are important areas to address, he notes that they “fall short in three critical ways: internationalisation, interdisciplinary contributions and embracing transformation’s inherent complexity” (Verhoef, 2016). Internationalisation, although a policy at many universities, is not given sufficient scholarly attention when it comes to its role in transformation. Verhoef argues that internationalisation refers to the “process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the core activities of higher education – teaching, learning, research and community engagement” and “is necessary to broaden the discourse around transformation” (Verhoef, 2016). In light of this, this research explored ways of internationalising the curriculum, but there is still much research needed around exactly what form effective transformation will take in South African universities.

With regard to this specific module, a repetition of the action research cycle would be useful to further develop and refine the module in a way that addresses the limitations particularly concerning the scope of the curriculum in terms of time. Furthermore, there is a great deal of potential for this module to be applied in other contexts such as in larger class sizes, and different disciplines.

5.5. Final Conclusion

This research has shown that a module on ICC can contribute to helping overtly western subjects such as German Studies make their curriculum relevant to a diverse student body as well as contribute to transformation efforts in terms of curriculum reform at a micro-level. It has shown that an explicit focus on culture and ICC contributed to increasing students’ awareness of the complexities involved in intercultural interactions as well as the frequency of these interactions in their daily life. It further provided students with the knowledge about

culture and encouraged introspection in terms of their own cultural positionality that influenced the way they came to view and understand culture and intercultural encounters. Thus, the broadening and scope of not only topics taught in German Studies, but how they are taught, signals a shift towards a greater integration and awareness of diversity within the German Studies curriculum.

Furthermore, this research has provided insights into the process of introducing ways in which German Studies can explicitly address ICC in a way that will influence students' awareness of ICC and interculturality in the other components of German Studies. In this way, developing a module on ICC can contribute to developing ICC as an explicit outcome of language courses and not a hoped-for outcome. The module used may be of particular use to other courses dealing with culture and language and many of the activities and assignments can be easily adapted to suit different contexts and cultures. This has been seen in the decision to adapt the module in 2018 as part of an interdisciplinary course dealing with a variety of cultures. While there were planning oversights that created challenges and limitations, these may be overcome by adapting the module in line with the above-mentioned recommendations. This module has shown that it is possible and viable to integrate ICC into existing courses in an explicit way. However, as seen in the number of suggestions and possibilities provided above, there is scope for further revision and exploration of such a module. Furthermore, this research has shown that modules on ICC, or a focus even just an engagement with ICC in a critical way, can go a long way in developing students' sense of empathy and intercultural awareness, thus contributing to the need for responsible global citizenship, alongside 'academic citizenship', and aiding the internationalisation at home concept by encouraging the students to understand their own lived reality in a diverse society. Lastly, this research paved the way for a wealth of possibilities for ICC in higher education in South African universities that has yet to be realized.

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Appendices

Please see the disk in the folder at the back of this thesis for a copy of all appendices.

The appendices are organised in the following way:

Appendix A: Pre-module Questionnaire

PDF in folder 1:

Appendix B: Pre-module Questionnaire results

Excel sheet in folder 2:

Appendix C: Introduction to Intercultural Competence

PDF in folder 3:

PPPs in folder 3:

Appendix D: Examinations

PDF in folder 4:

Appendix D: Evaluation Questionnaire

PDF in folder 1:

Appendix E: Evaluation Questionnaire Results

Excel sheet in folder 2:

Appendix F: Personal Communication:

Email in folder 5:

Folders are organised in the following way:

