CAPIRE
Development of a digital culture simulator training tool to foster intercultural competence in Europe

IACCM 2023
Oct 25th – 28th, 2023, Naples, Italy

Svenja Schumacher, Anna Wiegand, Sylvie Chevrier, & Arnold Enklaar
Fostering cross-cultural relations within the EU through intercultural competence development

People within the EU benefit from a common market and freedom of movement, where intercultural competence (IC) plays a crucial role in navigating the cultural diversity within the EU¹, ².

The training of IC in (higher) education and professional training (e.g., teams, leaders, expatriates) needs reliable, easy-to-use, digital and enjoyable tools that are accessible for a wide range of people regardless of time and space³, ⁴.

Culture simulators (or cultural assimilators⁵) train IC by presenting intercultural situations, possible solutions and explanations that participants can work through⁶. Traditionally, paper-based⁷, there are only few digital tools available today⁸.

¹ Beacco et al. (2016). Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education.
² Rai et al. (2023). Massive Open Online Courses and intercultural competence: analysis of courses fostering soft skills through language learning.
⁵ Fiedler, Mitchell, & Triandis (1971). The culture assimilator: An approach to cross-cultural training.
⁷ Thomas, A. (Ed.) (since 2001): ”Beruflich in…”
What is a Culture Simulator or Cultural Assimilator?

A culture simulator is based on the following structure:\[5\]:

1. **Case Story 1 Question**
2. **Interpretation A**
3. **Interpretation B**
4. **Interpretation C**
5. **Interpretation D**
6. **Comment on A**
7. **Comment on B**
8. **Comment on C**
9. **Comment on D**
10. **Broader explanation 1**
11. **Case Story 2 Question**
12. **Broader explanation 20**

---

The CAPIRE project aims to:

foster cross-cultural understanding within the EU

by developing a digital, freely accessible culture simulator tool to train intercultural competence and knowledge

about the German, Dutch, Polish, Italian, and French cultures.
The CAPIRE Culture Simulator will provide many benefits

Content

• **Simulations of cultural interactions** based on real situations of expatriates in the workplace that are an aggregation of similar experiences of multiple expatriates
  - 80 critical incidents for each country set (mostly) in the workplace developed through interviews with expatriates
  - Focus on experiences of interviewed expatriates regarding most frequent frictions/surprises between host culture and expatriates’ culture as a starting point for developing the cases (instead of transporting etiquette, rules or trivia etc.)
• Users are trained to **recognise cultural behavioural patterns, decipher** and **understand the cultural logic** behind behaviors (e.g., values, ideals)

Application

• **Digital tool** aimed at a high user experience (regarding usability and pleasure)
• For **free** (EU funded)
• Available for **five countries** (i.e., Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Netherlands)
• Available in **6 languages** (i.e., German, French, Italian, Polish, Dutch, English)
• **Flexible setting**: For individual training or classroom use in diverse target groups (e.g., schools, higher education, leadership training, expatriation preparation)
Who we are – Our research team

Dr. Arnold Enklaar (PL) 
Nienke Smit

Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences | Organizational Behavior, Change Management & Consultancy (OBCC) | IEBIS

Prof. Dr. Karsten Mueller 
Dr. Svenja Schumacher 
Anna Wiegand

Institute of Psychology | Department of Work- and Organizational Psychology – Emphasis Cross-Cultural Business Psychology

Prof. Dr. Sylvie Chevrier 
Helen Eve 
Sarah Dhaiby

Department of Management 
Institut de Recherche en Gestion ESIEE Paris

Dr. Lia Tirabeni 
Dr. Simone Pulcher

Department of Sociology and Social Research

Prof. Dr. Aldona Glinska-Newes 
Dr. Pawel Brzustewicz 
Kasia Pawlonka

Department of Organisational Behaviour and Marketing
Gathering critical incidents from expatriates

Interviewing expatriates from 5 countries for:
(Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Poland, France)

- Target: 80 critical incidents per country
- Critical incidents based on recurring real-life work situations experienced by various expatriates in the respective host country
- Recruiting expatriates from a range of industries, professions, and regions within the respective host country

Example: Poland

The Polish project partner interviews...

- 16 Polish expats in the Netherlands
- 16 Polish expats in France
- 16 Polish expats in Italy
- 16 Polish expats in Germany

= 64 interviews with Polish expats

Current Status of Interviews

Number of Interviews completed
Developing cases based on recurring themes from interviews

Writing the cases based on the interviews

- The cases and interpretations are aggregated from recurring themes from the critical incidents told by expatriates and summarized by the project partners whose cultures are involved to include both perspectives.

Example: Poland & Netherlands

- The Polish project partner interviews...
- 16 Polish expats in the Netherlands → writing 20 cases
- 16 Polish expats in France → writing 20 cases
- 16 Polish expats in Italy → writing 20 cases
- 16 Polish expats in Germany → writing 20 cases

= 64 interviews with Polish expats

= 80 cases of Polish expats

Together with Dutch partner

writing 4 interpretations for each case

Together with Dutch partner

Testing the cases & interpretations with participants

Criteria:
- Meeting the model and framework
- Being clear and characteristic of the culture involved
- Sound interpretation, based on relevant literature
Developing an online tool with a positive user experience

Adaptable for different application contexts

Responsive

Freely accessible
Sneak Preview: CAPIRE tool (Mock-up by Julien Bosnjak, Nadine Belinga, Adrien Houee, & Heyu Feng – Université Gustave Eiffel)
Culture Simulator: Netherlands

The Culture Simulator will offer you twenty situations from the Netherlands that might be puzzling to foreigners. You are challenged to solve these puzzles by choosing the right answer from four alternative interpretations. Don’t worry, if you do not get it right the first time. Just try again! When you have solved a case, you will receive some more information on the Dutch cultural logic involved. You will receive a score after finishing all twenty cases. You can earn more points for getting it right on your first try. Good luck!
Karol is collaborating with Dutch colleagues in laying fiber-optic cables. What strikes him is that they proceed in a slow pace, every so often sit down for a chat or smoking a cigarette. At fixed times, they also take a break to drink coffee or have lunch. This irritates Karol, because he wants to finish the work as quickly as possible so that they can possibly go home early. However, the Dutch colleagues do not seem to be in a hurry. It seems to Karol that they do not take the work very seriously and unnecessarily prolong the working day.

Why are the Dutch colleagues not keen on finishing the work as quickly as possible?

A. They are afraid that the workload will increase in the future, if they rush to finalize the project as quickly as possible.

B. They like to create a nice atmosphere at work including breaks and chats to be most productive.

C. They aim to proceed with their work in a structured way, taking the time to do their work carefully. Having regular breaks helps them to stay focused.

D. They put a strong emphasis on work, which plays a great part in their lives. Thus, relationships at work are cherished.
The Dutch colleagues perform best when there is an amiable atmosphere at work and in the team, and chatting and making jokes during breaks contributes to this. Although this interpretation is partly true, it does not explain why they work at a slower pace. So, there is another interpretation which explains the situation better.

A
They are afraid that the workload will increase in the future, if they rush to finalize the project as quickly as possible.

B
They like to create a nice atmosphere at work including breaks and chats to be most productive.

C
They aim to proceed with their work in a structured way, taking the time to do their work carefully. Having regular breaks helps them to stay focused.

D
They put a strong emphasis on work, which plays a great part in their lives. Thus, relationships at work are cherished.
Working slowly

Karol is collaborating with Dutch colleagues in laying fiber-optic cables. What strikes him is that they proceed in a slow pace, every so often sit down for a chat or smoking a cigarette. At fixed times, they also take a break to drink coffee or have lunch. This irritates Karol, because he wants to finish the work as quickly as possible so that they can possibly go home early. However, the Dutch colleagues do not seem to be in a hurry. It seems to Karol that they do not take the work very seriously and unnecessarily prolong the working day.

Why are the Dutch colleagues not keen on finishing the work as quickly as possible?

A. They are afraid that the workload will increase in the future, if they rush to finalize the project as quickly as possible.

B. They like to create a nice atmosphere at work including breaks and chats to be most productive.

C. They aim to proceed with their work in a structured way, taking the time to do their work carefully. Having regular breaks helps them to stay focused.

D. They put a strong emphasis on work, which plays a great part in their lives. Thus, relationships at work are cherished.
They are afraid that the workload will increase in the future, if they rush to finalize the project as quickly as possible.

A

They like to create a nice atmosphere at work including breaks and chats to be most productive.

B

They aim to proceed with their work in a structured way, taking the time to do their work carefully. Having regular breaks helps them to stay focused.

C

They put a strong emphasis on work, which plays a great part in their lives. Thus, relationships at work are cherished.

D

Instead of finalizing the work as quickly as possible, the Dutch colleagues prefer to work steadily and diligently to avoid mistakes. In this situation, a plan has probably been made in advance, so the workers know how many meters of fibre optic cable they should lay per day to meet the deadline. They could probably not maintain working at a higher pace throughout the day and errors might occur. This interpretation explains best why the Dutch colleagues in this story are not keen to finish the work as quick as possible.
The Dutch value a highly structured environment. They think that society needs a clear order, neatness and rules, because this creates a predictable and safe world to live in. When nobody sticks to the rules, it becomes a mess and things might get out of hand, so that one loses control.

Above all order is maintained in time management. The life of most Dutch people is reigned by the clock. Most activities are tied to a fixed time of the day, such as times for eating, sleeping, working that most Dutch people stick to. Life is arranged precisely according to a fixed schedule. Appointments and commitments are recorded. Forgetting appointments or being late is considered very annoying, as it is creating disorder and damaging the tight schedule of others.

Both at work and in private life, planning ahead is important. Once you know at what date a task should be achieved, you can split the work up in small parts and can check everyday day, whether you are on track or speed up. If you have to rush to meet a deadline or even miss it, this means that either you have too much work or you are a bad organizer, a disordered person.
How you can get involved

Connect us with expatriates for the interviewing phase

Take part in events for intercultural educators/trainers hosted by project partners

Test the tool with your students/participants

Help evaluate the tool by giving feedback on your user experience
THANK YOU!

For more information contact us here:

![QR Code]


