

# Connectivist Teaching in Classroom Exercises Workshop

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# Significant Trends in Learning

(Siemens, 2013)

- (1) The variety of fields in which learned knowledge will be applied is growing.
- (2) Informal learning is of growing importance.
- (3) Learning is a lifelong process.
- (4) The organization and the individual are both learning organisms.
- (5) Technology can support many learning processes.
- (6) Know-where, the understanding of where to find knowledge is essential.

Accepting the fact, that competences acquired in a class-room will be applied differently by different students in course of their future careers, leads to the logical conclusion that more than one learning path might be required and more than one result might be correct.

# Connectivist Knowledge

(Downs, 2015)

Following the argumentation of Downes (2005), we can add **a third type of knowledge** to the two types, namely qualitative and quantitative knowledge, which we already know and use. Downes calls it connectivist knowledge. This type of knowledge can be described as distributed, it is spread across more than one entity. The connection between two entities and more specifically the interaction between those two is what can be considered a new kind of knowledge. The knowledge of the interaction.

“If Janet votes a certain way because I told her to, an interaction has taken place and a connection has been established. The knowledge thus observed consists not in how Janet and I will vote, nor in how many of us will vote, but rather, in the observation that there is this type of connection between myself and Janet.”

# Connectivist Principles and Implications

(Siemens, 2015)

Siemens defined eight core principles which define connectivist learning. These have been analyzed and four implications for designing exercises have been concluded:

## Providing Nodes:

Learning is facilitated by providing various connection points (nodes) for students, which allow to explore the topic from different angles. More than one solution can be applied to a problem.

## Output Orientation:

The exercise should involve current topics and should clearly indicate how the acquired competences can be applied. The competence of students is the aim, not the acquisition of static knowledge.

## Building Connections:

The exercise should make use of various interdisciplinary information sources and lead to the development of “Know where” and “Know who”. These information sources can be people, books, databases, social networks etc.

## Student Centered:

Students make decisions about their own learning pathways. Lenses and filters which are involved in the learning process are actively addressed and become obvious. The teacher is taking the role of a moderator.



“Academic staff are naturally reluctant to change their methods of teaching and learning (and move from stage one—flapping—to stage two—flying) without a deep understanding of why and how and what the impact will be in terms of quality and any resultant benefits.” (Salmon, 2005)

# Making cultural differences visible?

## (Rupert Beinhauer)

“Culture hides more than it reveals, and strangely enough what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants.” (Hall, 1976)

Making cultural differences visible and tangible is a central part of learning about intercultural interaction and communication.

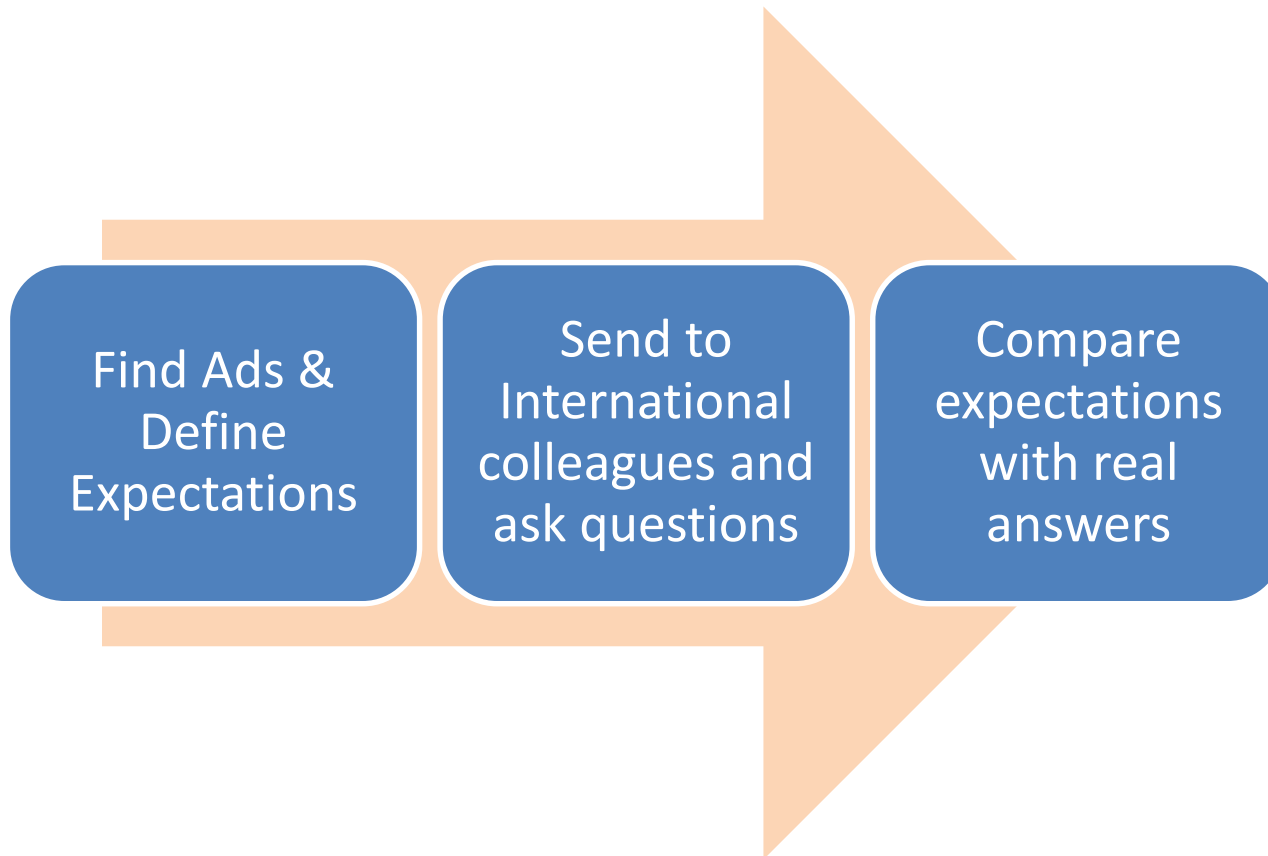
It is essential to demonstrate that:

- a) Culture has a huge impact on perceptions
- b) No matter how much we train, we cannot fully predict the behaviour or the perceptions of individuals.
- c) Expectations are often based on (sophisticated) stereotypes.



# Bachelor Level Exercise

(In 2017, 181 students from 4 countries: AT, IN, RF, US)



# Example #2: Learning in Project Courses

(Doris Kiendl)

## Applied projects with companies as an integral part of the study programmes

- 1 Semester (4 months)
- Students work on real projects with companies (Bachelor and Master level) under supervision of a lecturer; **students as team leaders** („**Student Centered**“)
- Start-ups get business models and established companies get market analysis and/or competitor analysis („**Output orientation**“)
- WIN-WIN situation of students and companies („**Building Connections**“)



# Learning in Project Courses: Outcomes

Applied projects with companies enable students to improve their skills in

- Leadership and Team work
- Problem Solving and Decision Making
- Self- and Time Management
- Understanding the Needs of Customers
- Communication and Presentation in front of the Customer



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