**Integration Summit
7 March 2013**

Enhancing Integration through training and assessing intercultural skills

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Overview

- Background
  - What are Critical Incidents?
  - How can they be used?
  - How to obtain CIs?
- Hands-on: from questionnaire data to CI narratives
- Discussion: contribution of CIs towards enhancing integration

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Background

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What are CIs?

Example (Göbel, 2007)

Fire alarm

Daniela has recently moved from Germany to the UK, into student accommodation on campus. This is now the second time that she stands in front of the building at 5am in her pyjamas – due to a false fire alarm! When this keeps happening during the next few weeks, Daniela grows more and more angry. She tries to seek support amongst other British students who share the accommodation: She wants to complain and ask for a different kind of fire detector. The British students, however, seem not to be bothered by the fire alarms. Daniela does not find much support amongst them, but rather a sort of indifference. Daniela finds that very puzzling, as do her German friends!

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What are CIs?

- CI: any kind of challenging encounters in intercultural communication
- Perceived as 'critical', 'challenging', 'puzzling' by any one participant or by bystanders
- In training often used in form of a narrative, as stimulator for reflection and discussion
- In assessment often used with follow-up questions (open or MC) to elicit level of understanding, ability to analyse

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Using CIs

- Self-reflection (diaries, portfolio)
- Learning purposes (e.g. Finch, 2010)
- Training programmes (e.g. Schmid & Thomas, 2003)
- Assessment purposes (e.g. McAllister et al. 2006) and tests (e.g. Göbel, 2007)

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Obtaining CIs
(e.g. Chell, 2004; Webster & Mertova, 2007)

- Reported by participants, e.g.
  - Interviews
  - Diaries
  - Questionnaires
- Reported by bystanders, e.g.
  - Observation
- Direct discourse data, e.g.
  - Recordings at workplace, university

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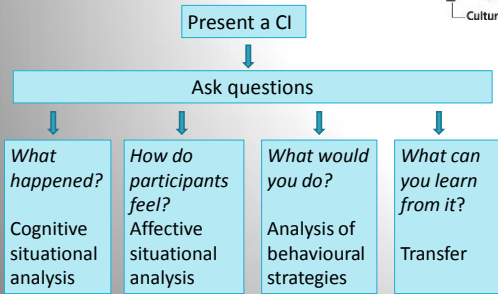
CIs in assessment

1. Collect CIs for a specific context
2. Analyse CIs using relevant frameworks (issues, competencies needed in the situation, and for analysing it)
3. Develop assessment scenario: narrative and questions for analysing, interpreting, evaluating CI
4. Pilot CIs in an open, interactive approach
5. Develop closed items based on interaction analysis

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Follow-up questions (e.g. Göbel, 2007)

Present a CI

↓

Ask questions

| What happened?	How do participants feel?	What would you do?	What can you learn from it?
Cognitive situational analysis	Affective situational analysis	Analysis of behavioural strategies	Transfer

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Follow-up questions (e.g. Göbel, 2007)

Questions could also reflect a model of intercultural competency, such as Bennet's (1993) developmental model of intercultural sensitivity:
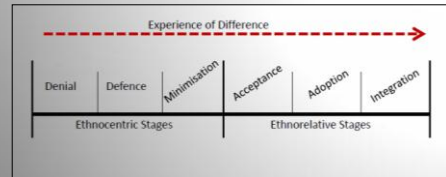
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Assessment Example (Göbel, 2007)

Fire alarm

Daniela has recently moved from Germany to the UK, into student accommodation on campus. This is now the second time that she stands in front of the building at 5am in her pyjamas – due to a false fire alarm! When this keeps happening during the next few weeks, Daniela grows more and more angry. She tries to seek support amongst other British students who share the accommodation: She wants to complain and ask for a different kind of fire detector. The British students, however, seem not to be bothered by the fire alarms. Daniela does not find much support amongst them, but rather a sort of indifference. Daniela finds that very puzzling, as do her German friends!

Please tick the option you find most appropriate to explain the incident or deal with it.
a) British and German students have different ways of dealing with anger.
b) The British students are not interested in Daniela's problems.
c) There are no differences between Germans and British, it's down to personality.
d) British people don't show their anger in public, so I wouldn't do it either.

Hands-on Experience

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Your task in groups

- Read the data carefully.
- What is the issue?
- What perspectives can you detect?
- How could the issue be addressed?

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Your task in groups

- Choose the purpose of your CI
  – Should it stimulate reflection, enhance learning, be part of a training programme or be used for assessment?
- Decide which kind of questions are most feasible for your CI
  – Bear in mind the purpose of your CI
  – You could ask open-ended questions, MC-questions, use an interactive interview, etc. ...

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Your task in groups

- What narrative could you construct, based on the data?
  – Think about issues and challenges.
  – Think about stimulating learning or eliciting competencies in assessment.
- What follow-up questions could you develop?
  – Think about skills, competencies you want to target.
  – Think about stimulating learning or eliciting competencies in assessment.

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Your task in groups

Be prepared to present your narrative and the follow-up questions to the plenum.

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Data Sheets

- Data from a questionnaire, open comments
- Belgium university, Engineering department
- n = 285 international students total
- Pre-selected data extracts:
  – Make use of students' comments to base your CI and the questions on it

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Discussion

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Presentation

- Please present your narrative and the follow-on question to the plenum
- Discuss with plenum the validity of the narrative: Does it reflect the data?
- Discuss the usefulness of the follow-up questions:
  – Do they enhance learning, reflection?
  – What aspects, skills, competencies do they assess?

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My suggestion

At a Belgium university, students on an undergraduate Chemistry course are required to do a project in the lab in multi-national groups; the working language is English. There is a student team leader to organise the work towards accomplishing a set task within a given deadline.

In one team, there are three Belgian students, a Chinese, a Latvian and a Nepalese student. The Belgium team leader wants to discuss and plan the work with the group in English. The Belgians participate quite lively; the other students remain rather quiet. After a while, as there is not much more participation, the Belgian team leader finally explains the task and assigns roles, asking if everybody understood and agreed with the roles. Students either remain silent, nod or say 'yes, ok'. Everybody goes off to do their assigned work.

At the next team meeting, it turns out that the Chinese student had not understood the task and had not produced the required work.

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Possible follow-up questions

- *What happened?*
- *Can you tell the story from the team-leader's perspective?*
- *What would the Chinese student most likely tell his friends/other Chinese students?*
- *What advice would you give to the team leader / the team / the Chinese student?*

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