



# ICOPROMO

Intercultural competence for professional mobility  
*Compétence interculturelle pour le développement  
de la mobilité professionnelle*



## All eyes and ears

### Acquiring cultural knowledge

Culture-specific

### Rationale

Through ethnography, participants can find out essential elements about individuals or groups. Ethnographers try to look at a small and clearly defined number of variables which they observe diligently. Subsequently, they try to interpret the meaning of these observations.

When looking at cultural issues in an organization (school respectively company), many factors come into play. In this activity, the participants are encouraged to train their cultural observation and interpretation skills and are then called upon to check whether their own observations match the organization's self-image.

### Learning Outcome

- Development of cultural observation and interpretation skills
- Critical evaluation of organizational values
- Awareness of own cultural biases

### Competences:

- Developing a non-judgemental, exploratory, investigative attitude
- Learning to understand the assumptions and values on which behaviour rests
- Information gathering and analysis
- Making sense of experiences in a new environment

### Time

- Site visit: 2 hours
- In class: 45 minutes

### Participants

Up to 20

### Materials required

- list of questions
- guidelines for observation
- mission statement(s) of the organization(s) to be visited



### **Procedure (for the site visit)**

**For this activity it will be necessary to visit an organisation (e.g. a company, a school, an NGO etc). The aim is for the participants to train their perception of cultural features and to find out how values based on national and corporate cultures are translated into everyday working life. The examples attached are just meant to serve as guidelines. The facilitator will obviously have to adapt the questions to the respective organisation.**

1. Participants receive the guidelines for observation and the list of questions.
2. They take part in a site visit and take notes on relevant observations they make during this visit.
3. Participants engage in conversations or make interviews during the site visit.
4. Participants take notes of how they would interpret their observations.

### **Debriefing (after the site visit)**

- (1) The participants share their observations in small groups, preferably multicultural groups. They are encouraged to reflect upon how their own cultural background may have influenced their observations and interpretations.
- (2) They are then provided with copies of the **mission and value statements** of the organization they have visited.
- (3) Participants try to evaluate to which extent their observations match the publicly declared values of the organization. Again, they should ask themselves whether an organization in their home culture would bring the same or different values to the foreground. Would these values manifest themselves in a different form?



## **Facilitator's notes**

The handouts included in this activity are meant to serve as examples. They will require adaptation according to the organizations that are visited.

Before the site visit, the facilitator will have to prepare a set of questions that will help participants to make relevant observations. For this purpose, the facilitator will take a close look at the organisation's Website and any other publications available that reflect the values represented by the respective organisation.

If the training situation allows it and if the necessary technology is available, the participants could take over this task and conduct a brief research on the organisation they will visit. By doing so, they will be even more sensitised to certain questions and issues that may be worthwhile observing during the proposed visit. By doing so, they will actually structure their task themselves, which will make learning even more intense.



## HANDOUT: Guidelines for observation

1. You are about to visit an organization you are not familiar with. Try to observe as closely as possible and take notes of your observations. You are requested to pay attention to the following variables.

### Workplace:

- Description of office and production facilities
  - o Design of individual work places or work stations
  - o Lighting, health and safety, general perception of working conditions
  - o Dress code;
- Interaction between workers:
  - o Frequency, tone
  - o Language(s) used
  - o Non-verbal behaviour
  - o Means of communication: e.g. bulletin boards, company newspaper, what type of information is made available?
  - o Visibility of status differences
- Overall mood of workers and employees / atmosphere
- Signs of corporate identity (logos, symbols etc.)
- Time clocks, visible signs of control / supervision (quality control)
- Level of cultural diversity
- Do cultures mingle? (e.g. during breaks)
- Linguistic diversity (how many languages are used?)

2. You are allowed to make enquiries with the people you encounter in this organization.
3. If your own observations and the answers you obtain to your questions diverge, make sure to highlight this in your notes.
4. Try to discipline yourself to describing any observations you make as objectively as possible before you interpret them.
5. Avoid being judgemental about your observations.



## Site Visit AVL List GmbH

### Values

Tomorrow's challenges require complex, resource intensive and timely solutions. AVL is committed to turning pioneer achievements into world-class products and processes:

- Co-operation with the world's top university research departments
- In-house research in basic phenomena
- Advanced tools for a more integrated development process
- A worldwide network of engineers and scientific experts with individual strengths and cultural diversity

### Pioneer Spirit

Turning visions of the future into reality with courage and expertise. AVL has cultivated the ability to recognize important break-through targets early on and reach them ahead of the market. Because only the courageous look beyond the horizon and make discoveries that lead to outstanding developments.

### Customer Orientation

Our success can only be measured by that of our customers. True understanding regarding a customer and his needs combined with experience and a global view allows us to create innovative solutions. Expertly conceived, uniquely tailored and efficiently carried out - a shared success.

### Problem Solving Competence

It's a demanding world. Oriented basic research, cutting edge technological developments and clear product orientation are requirements for global competitiveness. In multi-disciplined teams, AVL offers expertise, creativity, innovative thinking and effective project management network as support for professional solutions.

### Responsibility

Modern mobility represents progress only when its goal, its form and its requirements respect nature. Our work at AVL reflects a deep understanding of the responsibility we share for our society, for mankind and for the world's achievements. Assurance that our world is one we can live in - now and in the future.

## **Independence**

A company with personality. Embodied in Helmut List and reflected in his company.  
A personality rooted in a life-long pursuit of knowledge, characterized by a deep sense of responsibility and expressed in the company's independent status.

AVL is present on four continents. Internationalism, openness for other cultures and flexibility are being encouraged. A special exchange programme has been designed so as to allow AVL employees a transfer to another affiliate for approximately one year.

## **After Sales & Customer Service**

Consulting and helping to meet your requirement is not only our pleasure but also our life.  
Our mission to support your valuable requirement is that "To be the preferred partner for Power train development and Test instrument systems" and we are seen as "Customer oriented, innovative and professional".

## **Quality Policy**

AVL is the world's largest privately owned and independent company specialising in the development of engine instrumentation, test systems and powertrain systems with internal combustion engines.

AVL's worldwide leadership is assured by its unique mixture of powertrain system development, mathematical simulation, instrumentation and test bed development.

AVL offers products and services which benefit from the synergy of originating all from one company.

## **Quality Objectives**

We insist on the best possible quality standards in order to continue increasing our customer base and provide efficient support. They are based on the following quality aims which are integrated in the quality policy.

- ⌘ Increasing our technology leadership based on our own research and development programmes, strategic partnerships and cooperation with the leading university institutes in our field of work
- ⌘ Continuous improvement of the development processes through, for example, the development of our own simulation software and development methods
- ⌘ Strengthening our presence world-wide
- ⌘ Promotion of occupational and personal development
- ⌘ Management setting an example by maintaining the company culture
- ⌘ Confidential treatment of customer-specific information with regard to third parties and the public
- ⌘ Continuous development of AVL as an organisation geared to customer needs with clear responsibility structures
- ⌘ Ensuring the quality of sub-contractors and other cooperation partners
- ⌘ Preserving the company's independence through continuing growth and good yields
- ⌘ Creation and further development of a quality system with regular internal and external audits by an international, independent company.

# Safety Statement

Creating a healthy and safe place of work for our employees is an integral part of our corporate policy.

To achieve this goal, we continuously work to improve ergonomic conditions and reduce hazards and health risks to employees.

# Environment Policy

For AVL LIST GMBH, protecting the environment is a vitally important issue. The aim of many of our services and products is to reduce pollution. Quite apart from that, AVL is committed to acting in the interests of sustainability and optimising all in-house procedures so that they do not, or only minimally, affect the environment. It goes without saying that AVL complies with all the statutory provisions and, wherever economically feasible, uses systems and machines that least harm the environment. But at the same time we strive to continuously improve environmental protection at our operational locations.

The Environmental Management System is defined by AVL's top management, whose duty it is, at least once a year, to check how well the Environment Policy is being implemented.

AVL has published its Environment Policy detailed below and made it compulsory for all members of staff in each individual area of influence in which they work.

- ⌘ All members of staff are to receive regular training and information to promote a sense of environmental awareness and responsibility.
- ⌘ Environmental impact is to be assessed objectively, checked and reduced right from the planning stage through to design, procurement and manufacture, in all workplaces and stores.
- ⌘ The application and further development of energy/water-saving, low-emissions and low-waste technologies is to be constantly advanced. Preventive measures must be taken to save resources, prevent environmental accidents and minimise their effects on the environment (in both normal and non-normal operations).
- ⌘ In-house regulatory bodies are to monitor the Environment Management System and ensure that specific measures are implemented if environmental targets are not achieved.
- ⌘ AVL LIST GmbH undertakes to comply with all legislation, directives and requirements stipulated by various authorities.
- ⌘ The public (i.e. local residents, local authorities, customers) must be given all the necessary information to permit an adequate understanding of our operational location and its effects on the surroundings. Dialogue with the public and scientific sectors is always preferable to confrontation.
- ⌘ Precautions are to be taken to ensure that suppliers, customers and subcontractors working on the premises understand the Environment Policy of that location and are requested to adhere to it.
- ⌘ AVL Management is requested to set an example.

Graz, August 2002

Helmut List  
Chairman and CEO

Source: <http://www.avl.com>



## HANDOUT: Guidelines for observation

1. You are about to visit an organization you are not familiar with. Try to observe as closely as possible and take notes of your observations. You are requested to pay attention to the following variables.

### School:

- Description of school building:
  - o Size and equipment of classrooms, halls, recreational areas
- Interaction between pupils / teachers and pupils / teachers and teachers
  - o Frequency, tone, language(s) used
  - o Non-verbal behaviour, means of communication: e.g. bulletin boards, school newspaper, what type of information is made available to pupils / teachers?
- Overall mood of pupils / teachers and atmosphere
- What types of values are promoted?
- Level of cultural diversity
- Do cultures mingle?
- Linguistic diversity (how many languages are used?)

2. You are allowed to make enquiries with the people you encounter in this organization.
3. If your own observations and the answers you obtain to your questions diverge, make sure to highlight this in your notes.
4. Try to discipline yourself to describing any observations you make as objectively as possible before you interpret them.
5. Avoid being judgemental about your observations.





Site Visit  
Graz International Bilingual School (GIBS)

Mission Statement



Using a wide range of learning strategies to acquire skills and academic knowledge as a basis for life-long learning



Developing autonomy and team qualities through taking responsibility for one's actions



Teaching, learn and communicate in several languages



Encouraging respect for cultural diversity



Developing critical awareness and constructive ways of dealing with criticism of oneself and the world at large

## **GIBS School Profile**

GIBS is a bilingual (German-English) senior secondary school. At present the school comprises 422 students and 47 teaching staff. The rest of the team is made up of the French-, English- and Spanish-speaking co-teachers, the secretary and the janitor.

The language of instruction is English in the form of "flexible monolingualism". The first three months of Year 1 take the form of an intensive phase of language acquisition after which the students have reached a level of language competence which enables them to participate in lessons conducted in the target language. Following the intensive phase, linguistic back-up for other subjects is provided when required in the English class. In Year 7 History is taught in French.

## **Teaching Methods**

We aim to use a broad range of methods. According to the criteria of the new Austrian curriculum, projects and cross-curricular teaching are an integral part of classes. Further methods include workshops, task sheets, portfolios and response journals. Methods are discussed, ideas are shared and new and young members of staff receive support from more experienced colleagues.

## **Careers Guidance**

Careers advice is integrated in teaching in Years 3 and 4, in particular in German, Religion, English and Geography classes. In the upper school there are elective courses dealing with the working and professional world which can help students decide on their future careers. These courses offer practical work experience in line with the particular interests of the students. Students are advised by tutors on their choice of courses. Group and individual activities are carried out to help students become aware of their skills and talents.

## **Key Skills**

The acquisition of key skills such as team competence, time management, conflict solving strategies, presentation techniques and use of new media is practised in all classes but is given special emphasis in such courses as Public Speaking, Academic Writing, Presentation Techniques, Computing and Business.

## **Social Learning**

This is an area we would like to expand. On starting school, Year 1 students are looked after by "companions", older volunteer students, and this has proved very successful. We value the cultural diversity at our school and take every opportunity to celebrate it. Different addiction prevention programmes are offered for students of different ages.

## **Publications and Events**

Yearbook: all activities, achievements and important events and occasions are recorded in the Yearbook. The editorial team is a group of teachers who collect interesting contributions from students, parents, staff and friends of GIBS in the course of the year.

GIBS News: GIBS News appears three times a year offering all members of the GIBS community a platform to pass on information. It also contains the school calendar and news about finances, current events and topics of interest, the Parents Association, the School Community Committee and so on.

## **Home – School Partnership**

A spirit of cooperation and mutual support between parents and staff is not only beneficial to students' academic progress and social integration, it also greatly facilitates administration and the smooth running of the school.

## **School Climate**

At GIBS we aim to maintain a harmonious school climate based on mutual understanding and respect and a working atmosphere conducive to study. The staff make every effort to work with commitment and motivation and in return we expect students to do likewise in order to derive maximum benefit from what our school has to offer them. We also expect our students to show a certain self-discipline in their behaviour and in their attitude towards school property and to treat all members of the school community with respect. Our code of conduct is drawn up with the above principles in mind.

Students who neglect their duties or disrupt the school climate through uncooperative behaviour and who do not respond to discussion of their problem with the teacher involved must be prepared to face consequences.

Source: <http://www.gibs.asn-graz.ac.at/>