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Abbreviations

C	Class
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FLT	Foreign Language Teaching
G	Group
ICC	Intercultural Communicative Competence
LCC	Literary Communicative Competence
P	Pair work
S	Student
SHIC	"A Short History of Indians in Canada"
T	Teacher
TATDPTI	<i>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian</i>
TFAEC	Teenage Fiction in the Active English Classroom
YAL	Young Adult Literature

Introduction

Globalization, a 20th century phenomenon, is an all-encompassing force, characterized by growing relationships and interdependencies in political, economic, cultural, societal and information sectors. Its presence and consequences affect not only the world as a whole, but distinct societies as well as every individual. Globalization becomes visible through different actualities: the world is changing as fast and drastically as never before, empowered to do so by the new possibilities globalization opens up for it. Highly developed and advanced systems of communication, new technologies and other factors pave the way for the world to become much more narrow and widespread at the same time.

People are required to communicate not only in their direct environment but also with individuals that may be located on the other side of the world. Growing mobility and other new world trends require people that are sufficiently equipped for these currently emerging demands and standards. It is, hence, a task of education to ensure that students who belong to this global community receive the necessary input to be able to exist in a complex and globalized world. Global Education, the educational response to the phenomenon of globalization, needs to be implemented as a teaching principle in every subject taught at school; its ethics need to run like a red thread through school curricula worldwide.

Global Education wants to ensure that students become aware of the interdependencies that exist not only between nations, but also between individuals in the global network. Furthermore, it is indispensable that students realize that they, too, are part of a world as a system. Apart from that, they need to understand that decisions taken today by the global community have the power of affecting the future – therefore, it is necessary to educate them towards a thinking pattern that is directed to create a desirable future for mankind.

In the EFL classroom, however, it is Intercultural Learning, closely connected and associated with Global Education that prevails and is fostered by different activities and tasks. It is implemented as a teaching principle in the Austrian curriculum for foreign language teaching in order to create ground for successful intercultural communication between different cultures. Due to the fact that Austria has become a multicultural state, it is a necessity to encourage intercultural communication and invite students to take a step out of their egocentricity, try to view the world out of somebody else's view and see differences as well as similarities between themselves and other cultures that are by no means a negativity but an enrichment to our societal landscape.

The main issues addressed in this thesis have been split up into two main parts that are subsequently subdivided into smaller sections. In the first part (theory part) I will briefly examine the phenomenon of globalization as it is the basis on which educational approaches such as Global Education and Intercultural Learning emerged. In the next chapters I will then present the concept of Global Education. Based on the model of Graham Pike and David Selby I will highlight the components that need to be included in teaching at school.

However, the focus of the theory part is put on Intercultural Learning in the EFL classroom. I will thus provide a detailed analysis of the Intercultural Learning approach, highlight its origins and historical development as well as include an in depth presentation of its ground principles and of concepts closely connected with it. Great emphasis will be placed on its presence in the Austrian curriculum for foreign languages and to the reasons for this need in our contemporary Austrian society.

The second main part (practical part) contains an analysis of three literary texts written by native North American writers. I will examine the texts according to their levels of difficulty in language as well as in content. On the basis of this discussion I will argue what age group the students need to be part of and what language proficiency level they are required to have to be able to successfully work with the texts. I will provide three lesson plans for each of the three texts which will contain teaching suggestions with the target of creating an

Intercultural Learning environment for the students. By means of working with an exemplary culture, in this case native North Americans, the students will learn how to open up for a foreign culture and appreciate the world's richness in societies and their special characteristics and markers. They will learn how to change their perspective for a short time while engaging in tasks that require them to do so and get in touch with the concept of culture and phenomena such as stereotyping and prejudice. With the help of this exemplary culture, the native North Americans, the students then go back to their own surroundings (city, neighborhood, school) and analyze these in an intercultural light as they nowadays offer a very colorful human mosaic that needs to have open-minded, tolerant and welcoming members.

The last chapter of the thesis will then present a conclusion in which I will discuss that my lesson plans have fulfilled their purpose. It assesses the thesis and includes a brief outlook on how educational tendencies such as Intercultural Learning and Global Education might continue in the future.

1. Global Education/Learning

The first chapter of this thesis will be dedicated to a brief discussion of the phenomenon of globalization as it is the basis for educational approaches such as Global Learning and Intercultural Learning. After that I will present the Global Education approach in more detail – demonstrating it by means of the 4 dimensional model developed by Graham Pike and David Selby.

1.1. Introduction to the field and historical perspective

A few decades ago, educational theorists began to discuss educational concepts that referred to the relationship between education, development and globalization under the heading ‘Global Education’ or ‘Global Learning’¹. It is not entirely clear when the discussion about globalization and its effect on education began (Scheunpflug *Globalisierung/Erziehungswissenschaft* 163); but some authors, like Trembl, claim that Comenius and Kant were first to provide theoretical input on how to deal with globalization (qtd. in ibid. 163).

The term Global Education was first coined in the 1990s (*Globaleducation*), and refers to an educational concept that focuses on globalization and its effects on society. Moreover, it attempts to “reflect on and build up a system of values, based on Human Rights, social justice and sustainable development” (Ibid.).

Seitz, one of the numerous theorists and authors concerned with Global Education, explains that, at its beginnings, the term Global Education functioned as an umbrella term for all the emerging pedagogical reactions to the development of the world’s society (*Bildung Weltgesellschaft* 9 – 10). It is essential to highlight that there are many different interpretations of Global Education. Examples of titles chosen for interpretations of the concept include: Peace Education, Human Rights Education and, as already mentioned in the introduction, Intercultural Learning. The latter interpretation will form the main

¹ Since both terms refer to the same concept(s), I will use them interchangeably.

focal point of this thesis; however, before going further into depth discussing Intercultural Learning, I want to give a brief description of the fundamental catalytic qualities of its mother concept - Global Education (namely Globalization).

1.2. Globalization

Globalization has become an important term and a phenomenon in today's world. It is an all-encompassing force that affects not only the world as a whole, but societies and individuals as well.

The discussion of globalization will be rather concise, because globalization itself is not the focus of this paper. Nonetheless, it is valuable to at least briefly address the fundamental notions of globalization, as it is the basic reason why educational approaches such as Global Learning were created. I will, therefore, give a short insight into what globalization comprises and how far it inevitably and fundamentally affects people's lives (Hallitzky and Mohrs VII). Due to the great effects globalization has and continues to have on the world and society, it is necessary to react to it – also on an educational level. It is thus indispensable to reconsider rather ancient and inflexible educational principles and adapt to this current situation globalization confronts us with.

In her article, “Die *globale Perspektive* einer Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung”, Scheunpflug describes globalization as a key word - a subject of universal concern discussed the world over. Like other authors she mentions that the term is used in various contexts and that it is a tool to describe different phenomena – be it for the purpose of describing increasing worldwide economic interdependence, or as a synonym for problems in universal political affairs (315).

The World Youth Report (WYR) 2003 defines globalization as follows: “In its broadest sense, globalization refers to the extension of a whole range of

economic, cultural and political activities across the world landscape” (3). As becomes evident from this definition - economy, culture and politics are the omnipresent and shaping factors of globalization. Since many people primarily associate globalization with the economy and see the closest link in this connection², the other significant factors are often disregarded³. Scheunpflug suggests an explanation for this. She claims that different areas are globalized on different levels. I support this argument, as Scheunpflug’s examples are rather obvious – various companies and industries worldwide have been cooperating over the last decades; yet if one examines the educational systems of different countries, one will not find many conformities - neither in terms of their organizational constitution, nor in terms of their curricula.

Globalization is a highly complex term. It can be regarded as an often fairly ambiguous description of the manifold and multilayered interdependence of the different states and regions of the world. It is a result and a cause of world problems; it creates, for example, the danger of ecological self-destruction as well as the development of the so-called global community (‘Weltgesellschaft’) and widespread migratory movements. Globalization has enabled the expansion of organized crime worldwide and the proliferation of international terrorism (Hallitzky and Mohrs XI).

It is obvious that our world is experiencing a rapid and radical change. Populations are growing, and the fields of science and technology are constantly evolving. Knowledge is expanding and being shared via communication systems which are in themselves rapidly progressing. A special characteristic of our modern 20th century world is that these changes are visible globally; though it is important to note that these changes differ considerably in terms of their nature, extent and in terms of their direction within individual social and regional areas (Forghani 13-14).

² Other authors, such as Albert, likewise claim that globalization is perceived as economic phenomenon to a large extent (355).

³ This quote and this idea can also be found in Sandra Reisenleutner’s diploma thesis *Global and Intercultural Learning (GIL) in the EFL classroom*.

This notion of rapidity, and the fact that all of these developments and changes take place at considerable speed, is a characteristic of globalization that is also highlighted by other authors such as Hans Böhler. He states that we, the global community, are neither sufficiently equipped for this considerable pace, nor ready to face the ecological and peace educational consequences of such an extreme transition (304). Never before has the world changed as fast as it currently does; new technologies have enabled formally insurmountable borders to be crossed. Old views of the world are in trial and new dilemmas are being constantly created. To mention a few of them, let me quote von Hentig:

Tradition und Fortschritt, die Werte und der Nutzen (...), Polis und Kosmopolis, Wissen und Information, Gespräch und Kommunikation – das sind die ja auch nicht harmlosen, aber gewohnten Gegensätze, zwischen denen das gesellschaftliche Bewusstsein hin und her zuckt. Anonymer internationaler Bombenterror und die Ohnmacht der Staatsgewalt, Kinderpornographie und Rassenhetze im Internet und die Kapitulation von Technik, Wirtschaft und Politik vor ihren eigenen Schöpfungen, Kopftuch und Kreuzifix im Klassenzimmer und das doppelte Maß unserer Liberalität, unsägliche, wie die Beobachter behaupten: Künstlich herbeigeführte Hungerkatastrophen und eine durch Nichteinmischung in interne Angelegenheiten gehemmte Staatengemeinschaft, geklonte Wesen, In-vitro-Befruchtung, Organhandel und die Freiheit der Wissenschaft – das sind die neuen Dilemmata, die insgesamt in schreiendem Gegensatz zu der vernünftigen modernen Lebensordnung stehen, zu dem Guten Leben, an das man hoffentlich bei guter Erziehung denkt. (Hartmut von Hentig qtd. in Rathenow 328)

I think that these examples demonstrate very well the scope and dimensions of globalization.

As has become evident, globalization affects many different areas in today's world – economy, culture and politics, as well as social life. The global community has to find ways to deal with these effects. It must prepare today's society for life in this heavily globalized world - a world that is constantly in flux. Globalization presents people with new challenges everyday, as it influences business, cultural and social life. All of these areas have become increasingly interwoven and highly complex, it is therefore necessary to revise rather ancient and inflexible pedagogical concepts worldwide. We must adapt to our

new needs and we must prepare the younger generations of today for life in a world of tomorrow.

1.3. Global Education/Learning

Scheunpflug defines Global Education as the pedagogical/educational reaction to the current state of affairs in the global community. It reacts to the challenges of education and learning that are the result of increasing globalization (*Globale Perspektive* 315). Brown goes even further by saying that educational systems are obliged to develop curricula that prepare young people to become world citizens, with their own rights and responsibilities - people who reflect the diversity of the communities they belong to (322). Hence, Global Education theories are one of the pedagogical approaches that try to offer a solution to these newly raised educational questions. "Non scholae, sed vitae discimus" – acquire knowledge not for school, but for life (Hallitzky und Mohrs VII). The question is: how can our education systems provide sufficient education for students in this highly globalized world?

In the following part of this paper, I will present the model of Global Education developed by Selby and Pike. It shows the four dimensions of the Global Educational Approach, as well as the five main objectives of Global Learning. Note that there are different approaches towards Global Learning and many interpretations and varieties. There are people "who perceive [the global educational] purpose in terms of increasing competitiveness, reinforcing dominance and buttressing decline in the global market" (Selby *Global Education* 146) – their main goal is to increase global competitiveness. Selby, one of the first academics to work on Global Education, calls this standpoint towards Global Education:

the baldest manifestation of the 'liberal-technocratic' paradigm of global education within which global interdependencies are viewed uncritically [...], culture is treated fragmentally and superficially rather than holistically and paradigmatically, and a

management interpretation of the 'global village' with its reliance on experts and elites, is [...] embraced. (Ibid. 146)

Selby argues that his approach to Global Education is biocentric, holistic and transformative (Ibid. 147).

I will not look in detail at every approach that has been mentioned in literature covering Global Education, as the information would be surplus to the requirements of this discussion. Moreover, it would not stand in relation to the practical part of this thesis. I will, however, present a basic model of Global Education, as well as explaining some of its objectives, in order to provide an in-context and integral overview of the focal point of my analysis – Intercultural Learning.

1.4. The four dimensions of the Global Education Approach according to Graham Pike and David Selby

According to Selby, Global Education is not simply accomplished by handling global ecological or economic problems; it must be accompanied by a fundamental change in people's self-understanding (*Global Education* 145).

To better illustrate their understanding of Global Learning, Pike and Selby established a model divided into four dimensions representing Global Learning's characteristics. This model was developed to support the work of the Centre for Global Education (CGE), which originated in Great Britain in 1986. The CGE's central term was Global Learning, and its aim was to foster the aforementioned concept in Wales and England (Selby *World Studies* 307 – 308).

In their model, Selby and Pike distinguish between the so-called *spatial dimension*, the *issues dimension* (or *outer dimension*), the *temporal dimension*, and the *inner dimension*. All these parts are closely connected, and can only be seen as an interrelated model (Selby *Quantum Model* 130). This model was

one of the first developed to corroborate the theory of Global Learning and the work of educational theoreticians (Selby *World Studies* 308).

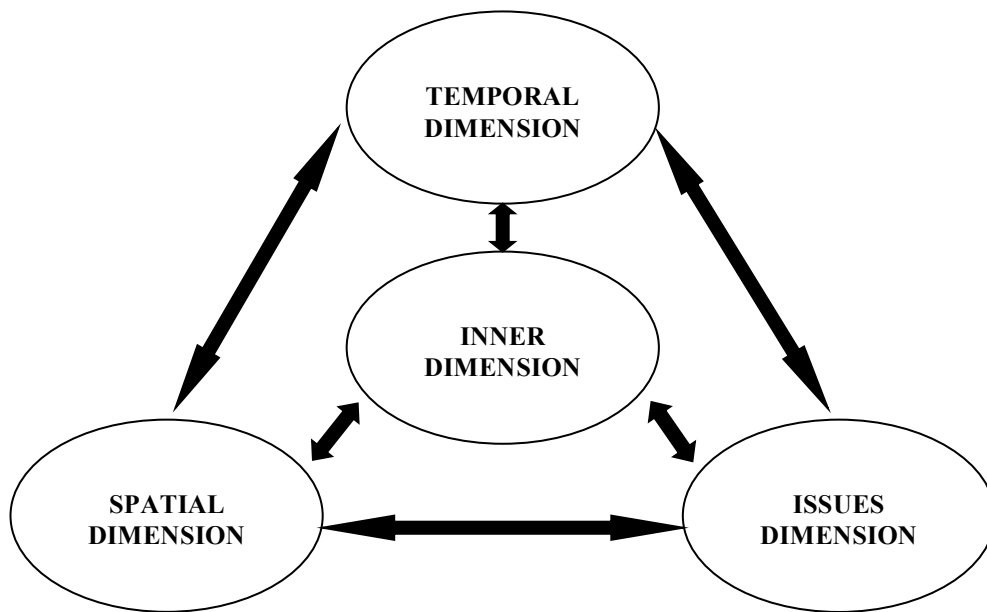


Illustration 1: The four dimensions. (Selby, *Quantum Model* 130; Selby *World Studies* 309)

The Spatial Dimension

Selby writes that the spatial dimension addresses the “concepts of interdependence and interconnectedness at multiple levels including intrapersonal, interpersonal, local, bioregional, national, international and global” (Selby *Quantum Model* 130). Some scholars use the term “global interdependence” to refer to this phenomenon (Pike and Selby 3). According to Pike and Selby, a necessary part of the spatial dimension’s teaching aim is to raise students’ awareness of the interdependency of nations worldwide, and of each individual’s position within a global network of political, economic, cultural and personal dependence (1-8). Most people around the world are caught up in this “network of links, interactions and relationships that encircle the planet like a giant and intricate spider’s web so that the wider world is a pervasive and ubiquitous element in the routines of everyday life” (Ibid. 3). It is important that the students develop an understanding of the world as a system rather than a conglomeration of states and peoples (Rathenow 333). People should be encouraged to develop a “holistic mindset and attendant skills usually

marginalized within the citadels of mechanism we recognize as schools” (Selby *Global Education* 130).

In his article, Rathenow continuously refers to Anderson and Becker, who explain that this new system of the world can be compared to a *net model*. This model can be best illustrated by comparison with the structure of an atom, whereby the inner structure of each electron is related. The electron experiences its identity only by means of its relation to other electrons. In a certain way, the local reflects in the global and the global in the local in this model (Rathenow 333). Local effects relate to a concrete space in terms of their cause, as well as in terms of their consequence. Global effects, in contrast, do not know any specific spatial relation; they are more or less without space, and leave their traces on the whole world (Scheunpflug *Globale Perspektive* 318).

The Issues Dimension

It is not sufficient to examine the network between different regions of the world purely in terms of the spatial-geographic level; another important factor is the topic of content and issues. The issues dimension has three aspects. First of all it demands that students learn about key global issues and themes, “each of which will have multi-levelled, including personal and local, manifestations” (Selby *Global Education* 131). Secondly, teachers should encourage students to consider different perspectives on these issues “from a variety of cultural, disciplinary, social, ideological, paradigmatic vantage points” (Ibid. 131). Thirdly, it is essential for students to understand the links between different issues, not only for the purpose of understanding and assessing the facts, but also for finding ways to solve possible problems. The presentation of global issues demands a new understanding of both, the concept of ‘problem’ and ‘solution’. “‘Problems’ are manifestations of interwoven and multi-layered webs of relationships; ‘solutions’ are at best provisional adjustments within an ongoing, dynamic process” (Selby *Global Education* 131). It is, therefore, vitally important to demonstrate to students the relationship between existing problems and their

solutions (Rathenow 334). The Club of Rome⁴ brings forward the same argument:

Suddenly mankind finds itself confronted by a multitude of unprecedented crises. Attempts at solving any of these in isolation has proven to be temporary and at the expense of others. Real solutions are apparently interdependent. (Mesarovic and Pestel 1975 qtd. in Rathenow 335)

One of the major objectives – if not the most central – is to make the students aware of all these links. They need to understand that we all are linked to one another and that their actions will have effects and consequences also on other people in this world.

The Temporal Dimension

The temporal dimension, as discussed by Selby and Pike, refers to the traditional division of time into the three phases of past, present and future (Selby *Global Education* 131). These three phases are closely and dynamically related, yet, approximately twenty years ago, many educationalists started to emphasize the importance of a future education for students, rather than concentrating on mediation of past and present affairs (Rathenow 335).

Future, in this sense, does not mean the simple continuation of the present. It means a future that ameliorates life and living conditions for mankind and whose composition and design is a task of all people. It is a future that demands everybody's active, creative, and self-determined participation. Everything that mankind does or fails to do has consequences for the future (Rathenow 335). Students should be able to reflect upon "alternative futures" - futures which are "typically divided up into probable futures, futures which are likely to happen if present trends continue, possible futures, futures that might conceivably come about or [...] futures, we would like to have come about"

⁴ The Club of Rome was founded in 1968 and is "an independent, non-profit organization with an international membership [... which] draws on the insight and expertise of its members from all regions of the world, from different cultures and histories and from different fields of science, public policy and from academia, civil society and the corporate sector." Furthermore it engages in "thoughtful, interdisciplinary and independent analysis of many critical issues in the world affairs" – such as globalization and its effects (Briefing Note Mission and Activities of the Club of Rome).

(Selby *Global Education* 131). Thus, the temporal dimension is about learning from the past in order to put new ideas into effect in the present - thus orienting towards a desirable future (Rathenow 335 – 336). This idea can also be found in Scheunpflug's writings. She argues that global effects most often manifest themselves in a time that exceeds one generation (Selby calls this the present). They are marked by long temporal distances and thus by future and past surcharges, as well as recoveries between cause and consequence. An example that perfectly demonstrates this idea is the world's problem with the hole in the ozone layer. If the global community radically changed its behavior now, this hole would most likely show the first reactions and changes in approximately thirty years – which is the next generation (*Global Perspective* 317)

The Inner Dimension

Students need to find their own will to develop the so-called inner dimension. Selby uses a metaphor to illustrate what he means by this component, and talks of a traveler who goes on journeys of discovery. During the traveller's expeditions and sojourns in different countries, he not only gets to know and appreciate new landscapes and new countries, but also foreign people(s). He also, by extension, undergoes a form of self-transformation, as his experiences and reflections lead to an inevitable personal evolution of sorts. He describes such a progression thus: "The outward journey is also the inward journey" (Selby *Global Perspective* qtd. in Rathenow 336). The two journeys are "complementary, reciprocal and mutually resonating", and essentially mean an education for "authentic personhood" (Selby *Global Education* 132). Selby is convinced that the present symptoms of crisis can only be solved if the structures of thinking change in favor of a holistic paradigm (Selby *Global Perspective* qtd. in Rathenow 336). The tendency to give prominence to the intellectual abilities of students is a system that has been omnipresent in schools up to today and needs to be revised.

Human potential can only be fully realized when the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual dimensions of personhood are seen as indivisible and complementary. Students should be encouraged, through heightening their full potential and, hence,

achieve higher levels of personal autonomy and empowerment.(Greig qtd. in Rathenow 336)

As can be seen by this presentation of the 4 dimensions of Global Education, they are all closely connected with one another and thus cannot be regarded separately. All of them are equally important in order to foster inside of people rethinking and restructuring for the purpose of continuing life on Earth the way we know it.

1.5. The cultural dimension of Global Learning

Although it is evident that globalization and Global Learning are most often thought of solely in connection to the economy, the cultural impact is of greatest importance for the purpose of this paper. I will therefore provide a more detailed discussion of the cultural dimension – this inevitably brings me to the subject of Intercultural Learning.

Habig and Kübler believe that one of the most central objectives of Global Learning is the ability to change one's own perspective – the attempt to see the world through somebody else's eyes. This way, people will acknowledge that things that are normal and natural for them might not necessarily be normal and natural for others. It is important to instill in students the ability to understand the many varied values and 'norms' so that they are hence inspired to reflect on their own and foreign systems of orientation (345 – 348). I do not wish to go into more detail about cultural issues at this point as I would like to introduce the concept of Intercultural Learning. I will take time later to discuss the notion of changing one's perspective and the notion of empathy ('putting oneself in somebody else's shoes').

2. Intercultural Learning/Education

As already mentioned in the first part of this paper, there are numerous approaches and perspectives that can be adopted in regard to Global Education. Apart from topics such as Peace Education, Human Rights Education or the economic aspect of Global Education, a very important subject is Intercultural Learning (or: Intercultural Education), which is concerned with the cultural component of Global Education.

2.1. Historic development and definition

A few decades ago, when the United Nations was founded, many big changes were undertaken - the foundation of a European Union was formed, an aim to end colonization was enforced, and working migration began. Members of different social, cultural and national movements coined the key terms multicultural, transcultural and intercultural. These key words were later defined in more detail - by sociologists, via theories, and by educationalists and politicians via practical orientations. Hence, it is not possible to assign the invention of the term intercultural to a specific person. According to Demorgon and Kordes it was the national Bureau of Intercultural Education in the United States of America that replaced the previous politics of acculturation, of assimilation and of mergence with these terms (28 - 33). Thus, an era began when conditions were created for differing people to coexist on the same territory. Working migration, however, created multicultural societies and generated problems between the settled culture (major culture), and the foreign cultures (minority cultures). In the course of these developments the term intercultural was coined. Hence, in a German context for example, Intercultural Learning is primarily associated with the intercultural pedagogy that evolved from the 'Ausländerpädagogik' – foreigners' pedagogy – in the 1980s (Desch 23). 'Ausländerpädagogik' means the pedagogical developments in German-speaking countries, from the 1960s onwards, to compensate the needs of guest workers and their children. It presented an educational concept developed to deal with their integration, most of all through learning the German language.

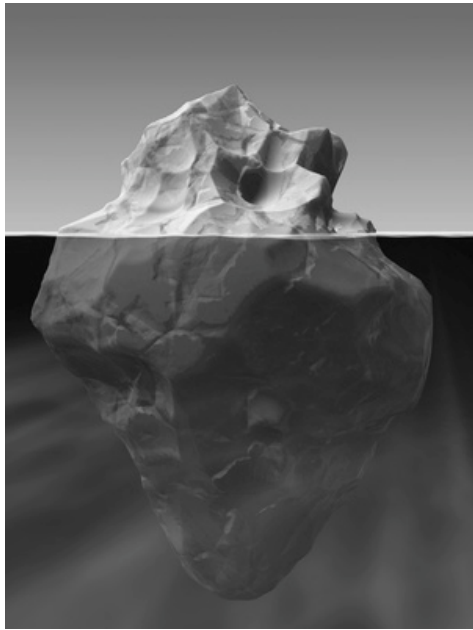
These absent abilities were most often perceived as negative factors that handicapped education at schools (Ableitinger 1).

Before continuing my discussion of Intercultural Learning, it is necessary to briefly explain and define the term *culture*, as it is one of the terms that is central to the concept of Intercultural Learning. The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham has developed the following extensive and widely adopted definition of culture:

[D]ie Kultur einer Gruppe oder Klasse [... umfasst] die besondere und distinkte Lebensweise dieser Gruppe, oder Klasse, die Bedeutungen, Werte und Ideen, wie sie in den Institutionen, in den gesellschaftlichen Beziehungen, in Glaubenssystemen, in Sitten und Bräuchen, im Gebrauch der Objekte und im materiellen Leben verkörpert sind. (Kalpaka and Rähzel, 46 – 47)

Culture, therefore, encompasses language, moral norms, religion etc. – all the intellectual, artificial and social manifestations of life in a community. The members of a community are connected with one another insofar as they understand their community's own 'code of conduct', and adjust their actions according to it. Nonetheless, it is essential to understand that culture is not a static system: it inspires constant processes and is subject to perpetual fluctuations and changes. It is never stagnant because it has to adapt to changing societal conditions (Densch 28).

With regards to Intercultural Learning, I would like to make a reference to a well-known model of culture at this point. Edward T. Hall developed the *Iceberg Model of Culture*, where an iceberg is the metaphorical visualization of (a) culture.



Obvious, visible and conscious parts of culture: language, customs, traditions, clothing, music, theatre, literature, food ...

Obscure, invisible and unconscious parts of culture:

(norms and values, basic assumptions);

- time, space, power, emotions, conflicts.
- idea of beauty, sin, respectability.
- meaning of poverty, identity, freedom, honor, fairness, justice, friendship, work etc.

Illustration 2: Iceberg Model of Culture (adapted from: Transkulturelles Portal)

Hall argues that, in the construction of models, almost all anthropologists bear in mind that there are many different layers and levels of behavior: “overt and covert, implicit and explicit, things you talk about and things you do not” (14). He states that many anthropologists have examined only matters that people were *willing* to discuss; therefore many essential facts and characteristics of cultures - “cultural patterns that make life meaningful and really differentiate one group from another” (14) - are ignored or overlooked. He thus suggests calling the visible components of culture “surface culture”, beneath which lie the more hidden elements of culture, which might, in fact, have more influence on the behavior of a culture and its members (15 – 16).

The reason I have presented this iceberg model of culture is that it creates, for students, a very approachable illustration of the concept and components of a culture. The more obvious cultural elements such as Art, Music and social customs are easily identified, but it is important to dig a little deeper, and to explore with the students also those features of a culture that are less visible. After all, it is these less obvious characteristics that ultimately make up the idiosyncratic landscape of a culture, and, as Hall said, might be even more important in the journey towards understanding a culture, than, say, music or food. An interesting evolution of this topic would include the discussion of more abstract cultural factors, such as attitudes towards death in combination with

religious beliefs. In *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, as well as in *Halfbreed*, death and the attitudes towards death are described to the reader, who receives different perceptions of death. Passages from these novels might be good starting points for a discussion on this topic, as, in Austria, attitudes towards death are rather different. Dealing with bereavement and grief can differ considerably from one culture to another, and it would be interesting to see if people from other cultural backgrounds can share some common ground.

I argue that it is essential to talk with the students about the concept of culture, and create within them an understanding of what the word actually means. The reason why I have tried to extensively explain the word is because it is present at the foundation of Intercultural Learning. Therefore, in using Intercultural Learning as a model in education, there must be a primary emphasis on the discussion of culture, its definition and its inclusive elements. As previously mentioned, students might initially be able to present the visible elements of a culture, but will need prompting and enlightenment to unveil the less obvious features.

Since there is not one conclusive definition of culture, there is neither a fixed definition for Intercultural Learning. One can summarize that it refers to the learning *between cultures* and thus includes the learning *about other cultures*, *about one's own culture* and *about the encounter and the intercourse of different cultures with one another*. Intercultural Learning is not only about the conveyance of factual information, or about the adjustment of the minority cultures to the majority culture (as was practiced during the era of the '*Ausländerpädagogik*' in the 1960s); but about the mutual and reciprocal process of learning via interaction between the different cultures. Intercultural Learning is designed to encourage encounters between people from different national, ethnic and religious backgrounds, in order to promote reflection on one's own culture through the examination of foreign cultures (Desch 23 – 24).

2.2. General contents of and competences encouraged by Intercultural Learning

Intercultural Learning takes place when a student deals with worlds⁵ that have not been part of his/her life up to that instant. It is characterized by the attempt to engage with foreign worlds, with the aid and tolerance of fellow human beings. Reich argues that this means suspending the seeming implicitness of one's own orientations, norms of knowledge and behavior(s) - for the purpose of learning and understanding other orientations, norms of knowledge and behavior(s). Due to globalization, culture as we know it, is in a constant state of flux, and the merging of different cultures means that their boundaries are no longer as defined. Thus, the need for a conversion to intercultural communication, through Intercultural Learning, is very much legitimated. Intercultural Education, as such, is not about a distant learning about other cultures, but more about questioning one's own culture in the presence of another culture (Reich 106). Byram argues, in similar stead, that, "before acquiring an understanding of their own culture, children must be able to 'decentre' and understand points of view different from their own" (16). He furthermore states that children are said to:

pass through three stages: 'egocentricity', in which their utterances about their own and other countries are arbitrary and based on momentary preferences; 'sociocentricity' in which they express opinions reflecting the views of their immediate social environment; 'reciprocity' when they can perceive others' views of themselves and that they themselves could be seen as 'foreigners'. (16)

Apart from the 'intercultural communicative competence' (ICC), which will be discussed in detail in a later chapter of this thesis, a sense of empathy should be fostered inside the students. In his writings Byram quotes the English and Welsh National Curriculum which promotes "identify[ing] with the experience and perspective of people in the countries and communities where [a] target language is spoken" (EWNC qtd. in Byram 24). Byram argues that there are different possibilities of interpreting empathy as 'sympathy' or 'imagination', but

⁵ Reich uses the term 'Sinnwelt' in this context. 'Sinnwelt' is a very philosophical German word that defies direct translation; therefore, I will only refer to it as "world(s)".

that it also illustrates the art of “placing oneself into somebody else’s shoes” (24). He mentions four elements that are essential for empathetic understanding of another individual - personality, situation, social groups and national identity. He claims that, in learning about language and culture during foreign language classes, social and national groups will be given better attention. This is because the lessons focus on inter-group communication, though personality and situation are granted importance too in some contexts. Aside from mentioning the four factors of personality, situation, social groups and national identity, he also addresses other essential characteristics that are highly connected with empathetic processes: the age, gender, ethnicity and religion of the people in question. All of the factors mentioned have a strong impact on how empathetic people might be when faced with various situations or tasks. With regard to real foreign language lessons at school, Byram argues that superficial elements of a culture, such as food, places and historic buildings should be substituted for topics that “relate more directly to individuals’ experiences within that culture: the home, the workplace, the social norms and expectations” (26).

In the practical part of this paper I will analyze three different texts, and prepare these for fostering Intercultural Learning in the EFL classroom. The novels I will discuss will provide students with deep insight into what it feels like to be a Native American in the United States of America, or a so-called Métis⁶ in Canada. They will gain a profound view of the daily lives of the main characters - their social environment and their living conditions – including factors which are also fundamental to the students’ own lives and thus possess the potential to create a higher degree of identification and empathy between the students and the characters.

In the next part of this chapter I will define a few more terms that are inextricably linked to the notion of Intercultural Learning. Whenever people belonging to different cultures or from contrasting backgrounds come together and interact, it is necessary to have a closer look at topics such as stereotyping and prejudice.

⁶ The expression ‘Métis’ is commonly used in Canada to label people who stem from First Nations and European settlers.

Both are factors that are common and natural to all human beings, and play a part in shaping our opinions on other people/things.

2.3. Stereotypes and prejudice – the complexity of imagining the Other⁷

I will base this chapter of my thesis on the writings of Edmond Marc Lipiansky, who gives a short but very informative overview of some of the most important terminology of Intercultural Learning in his article: *Die Komplexität der Vorstellungen vom Anderen*.

Lipiansky states that the picture that we construct of the Other in our mind is a complex phenomenon, where numerous factors – cognitive, affective, behavioral and ideological – work together to form an impression. Some of these impressions are created before people even have contact with the Other. This is because they are not so much the result of an immediate acquaintance with the Other, but rather of environmental impacts and historically motivated cultural visions, which are conveyed by social discourse, family and the media. Lipiansky also gives an illustrative example: the traditional French picture of ‘the Germans’ rests upon a history of conflict. A French national with no previous contact with a German national might, therefore, already have an opinion formed about ‘The Germans’ (and vice versa). Processes like this represent prejudice in its pure and undiluted form. It is not always possible to equalize stereotypes and prejudice as stereotypes can be based on concrete experiences as well. If, for example, a French national meets a German national on holiday, it is likely that both parties will create a certain image of each other’s country and fellow countrymen based on their experience. This process is a useful one in some

⁷ I will use capital letters when referring to the concept of “The Other” as it is not a conventional adjective in the context of this thesis but an academic term that is socially highly loaded and complex. It was defined by different scholars, including Lacan, Nietzsche and Said. In an imperialist context, as for example with Said, ‘othering’ refers to the act of stressing a marginalized group’s weaknesses as well as emphasizing the strengths of the group in power. In a more general cultural context, everything that is not ‘us’ and does not belong to the ‘in-group’ can be defined as the ‘Other’ as it is alien and different to us.

respects, as it helps human beings to simplify and abstract their thoughts and opinions. These forms of perception are partially influenced by previously existing (prejudiced) ideas. These ideas, in turn, tend to validate themselves - we think that we see people the way they really are because we think that they really are the way we perceive them. In reality, however, these ideas rest upon our own direct experience, which is always partial. Generalizations are about a metonymic illusion, which is built up by the fact that we look at something partial and see the whole (Lipiansky 117).

An additional factor, to be mentioned at this point, is that the reality of the Other is basically subjective, because it is perceived and interpreted through the glasses of a special subjectivity – an egocentric, sociocentric and ethnocentric point of view. This subjectivity can be overcome partially via inter-subjectivity - if more persons perceive certain behaviors in the same way. Let us return to the French-German relationship already addressed. Lipiansky recalls a discussion with French teachers who had visited a German school. All of them shared the same opinion that German classrooms were notable for their 'anarchic' conditions. This evaluation is not related to prejudice at all; it is motivated and justified by an implicit comparison with French classrooms and thus mirrors an ethnocentric and egocentric standpoint. This example demonstrates that the perception of the Other is always relative – there is not only a perceived 'object', but also a perceiving subject, and the relationship that originates and develops between the two (Lipiansky 117 – 118).

Another noteworthy reason for the complexity of our perception of the Other, is the fact that *models*, as well as *behavioral patterns*, are contributors to our perception. Every culture has models, certain preferred prototypes, which it imposes on its members (for instance the model of the 'gentleman' or the 'proper and decent woman'). These prototypical ideals most often serve as a basis for reference. They might influence, for instance, how we imagine a 'real Frenchman' or a 'real Englishman'. Models like these do not create a uniform society, they merely present certain norms which are consciously or subconsciously adopted (in part or in whole) by each individual. Thus, these models have a referential and unitizing impact on our behavioral patterns.

Individuals may react differently to these norms according to unique factors, such as personality, milieu or context. They can opt to either correspond to the norm, deviate from it, or oppose it (Lipiansky 118). Hall, who states that models are the basis for behavior, believes that people strongly identify with their models (13).

Moreover, Lipiansky argues that supplementary topics deserve further attention. These include the so-called 'effects of interaction' (*'Interaktionseffekte'* (119)). These effects are expressed when human beings want to correspond to their own model when faced with a stranger - the Other. He illustrates this theory with an example, using France as his focus. He argues that, for instance, gastronomy is part of the traditional French model. Therefore, a French family who has a foreign guest might decide to prepare a real, 'traditional' French meal. This would appear to serve the purpose of fulfilling their own (and their guest's) acquired notion of what being French represents. This meal, however, might not be a very good representation of the family's true, everyday eating habits. The foreign person, however, concludes that the French attach great importance to gastronomy (119).

2.4. Stereotypes and prejudice in foreign language teaching

At this point I would like to refer back to pedagogy, by shortly discussing the concept of stereotype and its relevance to cultures in foreign language teaching. Husemann explains that, to most people, whether readers or listeners, the term stereotype "is heavily loaded with negative connotations". Originally, however, the term was more or less "innocent" (16) when introduced by Walter Lippmann in 1922. Lippmann argues that human beings' nature encourages them to categorize perceptions and understandings into standardized patterns, because, without doing so, orientation would not be possible (qtd. in Husemann 16). Lippmann's definition of the term has been revised and developed over the years to add social and cognitive functions of stereotypes. The subject of stereotyping could fill many pages, so I will not elaborate. I would, however, like

to discuss the extent to which negative stereotyping should be discussed in the classroom. Some educationalists, Husemann observes, suggest developing an approach to the introduction of other cultures that “deliberately accepts the students’ stereotypical information as a basis onto which more differentiated information can be grafted”. They argue that, by doing so, stereotypes themselves can become the “subject of debate”, enforcing the students awareness of the real existence of stereotyping (25). He suggests teaching with stereotypes against stereotypes (28), an argument that I definitely support. I personally think that they create a good starting point for introducing a new culture, not only for sheer *Landeskunde* purposes, but also for Intercultural Learning. As already mentioned before, stereotyping is a definitive feature of the human condition – be it personally or collectively enforced. Stereotyping must be addressed in the classroom in order to fulfill the requirements of Intercultural Learning - to promote mutual acceptance and understanding of other cultures. Furthermore, although stereotypes form good starting-ground for discussion, they must be consequently deconstructed and critically examined.

As a slight deviation at this point, I would like to refer to Nancy Grimm. She comes to the same conclusion in her essay *“Minority Voices: (Re-)Introducing Native America to the EFL Classroom”*. With special interest in Native American culture and the promoting of natives as mascots in popular culture, she highlights the fact that the fight against the stereotype of an ‘Indian’ is a hopeless one. This is because many Americans are of the opinion that the use of Indian warriors as mascots for diverse sport teams is their way of honoring and paying tribute to the native peoples and their common past. Grimm argues that, although the battle against stereotypical images of ‘the Indian’ continues, “the American mind seems to be saturated with not only individual prejudices against Native Americans, but also by institutionalized bias that perpetually inform and therefore reinforce each other” (108). In Germany, and also in Austria, I argue that pupils and their teachers are confronted with an image of ‘the Indian’ depicting the Native American people as “past and bygone, destined for extinction” (109). Grimm says that the EFL textbooks attempt to transmit a contemporary picture of Native Americans, but that otherwise they are continuously misrepresented. When it comes to illustrating present-day Native

Americans, they are often painted as unemployed, hopeless drunkards who are not able to handle life in or beyond their territory, the reservation. Naturally, most of these depictions do not correspond to the reality of life on the reservations, nor explain why residents often drift into alcoholism. Furthermore, they more or less erase any hopeful present-day and future perspectives for these cultures. Thus, Grimm proposes to “actively tackle these presumptions and stereotypes in the EFL classroom” (109), just as Husemann did in his article. She criticizes the fact that EFL textbooks hardly ever favor Native American voices. This is despite Native American (and also Native Canadian) literature currently flourishing, with an extensive variety of texts to choose from and work with. Unfortunately, the majority of students are still confronted with limited and biased information in lessons covering the history of the USA (109).

On the basis of her controversial mascot argument, Grimm carves out four Intercultural Learning aims that teachers should try to achieve in classes covering Native American cultures. They should try to “encourage historical and cultural literacy, [...] challenge and deconstruct stereotypical images, [...] introduce Native American voices as voices from ‘inside’ the target culture [and] apply multifaceted angles to the creation of history, meaning, and identity as ever-shifting categories” (110).

These objectives are also particularly relevant to the practical part of this paper, and I myself have of course taken them to heart for the planning of the lessons in the practical part of this thesis. As I will work with three texts by Native American and Native Canadian authors, the objective of introducing native voices from within will be already definitely covered. Grimm even quotes Highway, who says that Sherman Alexie, the author of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, is “one of the major lyrics voices of our time” (qtd. in Grimm 113). I will discuss this more in the chapter covering this novel, but for now I would like to lead over to the next point.

2.5. The cultural difference

Apart from his writings on prejudice and stereotyping, Lipiansky argues that, even if you know the Other in great detail and directly, this does not entirely eliminate repellent reactions, intolerance or misunderstandings. The sheer confrontation with otherness, as such, can lead to aggression, judgments or rejection. In some domains (e.g. gastronomy, aesthetics or art), being different is accepted and inspires curiosity; here, diversity attracts, interests and engages people. Things change, however, if being different abuts on the deep-rooted values, traditions, customs and habits that compose our own identities. All of these factors strongly influence how people perceive and interpret the behavior and attitudes of others. In the course of analyzing others, people differentiate between those who are similar to themselves and thus familiar, and those who are strange and alien. It becomes evident at this point, that there is a certain tolerance limit when it comes to accepting otherness. Beyond this border, differences become unbearable and are not tolerated anymore, generating an ethnocentric reflex. People might consider some behavioral patterns of the Other as immoral, shocking or offensive, especially when they reject values which they themselves are deeply attached to (e.g. hygiene, religious beliefs, work ethic etc.). If we are confronted with behaviors which appear to ignore our own moral code, these behaviors can be perceived as a personal attack, justifying negative judgment. In such cases, the conflict is not based on prejudice or stereotyping but rather on the reality of cultural differences. Intercultural Learning aims to make those differences clear, whilst also pointing out the similarities of other cultural backgrounds. Its core aim is to encourage communication between the different parties (Lipiansky 119 – 120).

2.6. Intercultural Learning in the Austrian educational system

As has become evident in the previous sections, all the varying factors covered by the umbrella term of globalization need to be reacted to. Austria, being an attractive land to immigrants, for instance, is asked to act appropriately to the

evolution of its society, and to accept that its population has become more heterogeneous over the last few decades. Even though many still refuse to acknowledge the fact that Austria has become a multicultural state, we must realize that such a transformation demands adaption to evolving circumstances. Austrian classrooms are no longer filled purely by children from Austrian background, with German as their mother tongue; Austrian classrooms present a very conglomerate demographic landscape. Children from Turkish, Serbian and Egyptian families - people with different cultural backgrounds to our own - are being brought together in our contemporary classrooms, bringing with them diverse languages, beliefs and attitudes. Our schools, as places for communication and discussion, are charged with the task of encouraging intercultural communication between the different members of the class community, and therefore generating a mutual and reciprocal understanding within the student-body. To clarify and deepen this statement further, I would like to refer, once again, to a concept I first addressed in the chapter on Global Education, namely the so-called 'Perspektivenwechsel'.

In this thesis I will work with literary texts on Native North Americans, as well as with texts written by Native North Americans, for the purpose of Intercultural Education. I am trying, thus, to mediate North American Native cultures to the students via literature, and to raise their critical awareness of these people and the problems they face. I want my students to see differences, but also similarities, between their own culture and the target culture. They should learn to take a step away from their ethnocentricity, and try to view a culture from another perspective. Whether the new impressions created will remain is another question - perspectives are liable to fluctuate, as every human being was born into a specific cultural context, and thus has their own, ingrained, personal belief system. An important name to mention here is Lothar Bredella, who concerns himself with such problems in his writings. In one of his first books, *Didaktik des Fremdverstehens*, he coined the term 'Perspektivenwechsel'. He writes: "Aus dem dialektischen Zusammenspiel von fremd und eigen ergibt sich eine besondere Chance von literarischen Texten, nämlich, dass sie zum Perspektivenwechsel einladen" (148). Bredella claims that this change of perspective can take place on many different levels. Despite

their isolation, literary texts create the potential for multiple perspectives. Facts and cases are presented from different points of view, and through opinions by diverse characters. The recipient, the reader, is then asked to adopt these various perspectives for a short time. Being able to “nachvollziehen wie ein anderer die Welt erlebt” (Bredella *Literatur Schule* qtd. in Bredella *Didaktik des Fremdverstehens* 148), motivates the expansion of one’s ability to share in the experiences of others and promotes greater sensitivity in the understanding of the Other (148).

Denkt er [der Leser] die Gedanken eines anderen, dann springt er temporär aus seinen individuellen Dispositionen heraus, denn er macht etwas zum Thema seiner Beschäftigung, das bisher nicht – wenigstens nicht in dieser Form – in seinem Horizont lag. Das hat zur Folge, daß im Lesen eine künstliche Spaltung unserer Person geschieht, indem wir etwas, das wir nicht sind, zum Thema erheben. (Iser qtd. in Bredella *Didaktik des Fremdverstehens* 149)

The main point here is the encouragement of an empathetic analysis of the fictional characters and their actions; yet Bredella believes that such a level of understanding can also be bestowed upon real communicative situations as well as Intercultural encounters. He furthermore claims that the ability to change one’s perspective is especially relevant when reading intercultural texts as part of an Intercultural Learning process (148). I argue that, although one can potentially alter one’s perception to some extent, under the influence of a particular text or literary character, one can never fully adopt another’s perspective. A character or text might influence us, and cause us to reflect upon our belief systems, but it is hard to completely escape our own culture-cultivated preconceptions.

I want to highlight the relevance of this argument, as I am hoping to achieve some progress through the lesson plans I have developed in the second part of this paper. My chosen texts for analysis are designed to inspire students to adopt the perspective of chosen characters. For instance, I hope to encourage them to adopt the point of view of 14-year-old Arnold Spirit in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. Arnold, and other characters, such as Maria

Campbell's autobiographical self in *Halfbreed*, as these provide good starting ground in my attempt to promote intercultural understanding. My students will be able to reflect on life as a member of an ethnic or minority group. Being outsiders to the stories themselves, they will have the distance needed to clearly analyze the characters' individual, personal situations. They will be able to see how factors such as racism or poverty are difficult and humiliating for Arnold. At this point – and this is my ultimate goal – this understanding should then be related *back* into present-day Austria and its multicultural classrooms. It is imperative to discuss our cultural situation in today's world; different cultures and differing social circumstances must be presented and reflected upon for the sake of fostering mutual intercultural understanding in our schools.

The importance of intercultural knowledge and acceptance is even referred to in the Austrian curriculum for foreign languages:

Durch interkulturelle Themenstellungen ist die Sensibilisierung der Schülerinnen und Schüler für die *Sprachenvielfalt Europas und der Welt zu verstärken, Aufgeschlossenheit gegenüber Nachbarsprachen* – bzw. gegenüber Sprachen von autochthonen Minderheiten und Arbeitsmigrantinnen und -migranten des eigenen Landes – zu fördern und *insgesamt das Verständnis für andere Kulturen und Lebensweisen zu vertiefen*. Die vorurteilsfreie *Beleuchtung kultureller Stereotypen und Klischees, die bewusste Wahrnehmung von Gemeinsamkeiten und Verschiedenheiten sowie die kritische Auseinandersetzung mit eigenen Erfahrungen bzw. mit österreichischen Gegebenheiten* sind dabei anzustreben. (bm:uuk a, 1. italics added)

According to the homepage of the *Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur*, Intercultural Learning was first included as an educational 'principle' in the general Austrian curriculum in the 1990s. An educational principle should not be constrained to one subject only; it is to run through all subjects and lessons and is to direct and support teachers in their work. Adding the principle of Intercultural Education promotes mutual understanding, the acknowledgement of cultural differences as well as similarities, and the reduction of prejudice (bm:ukk b).

Intercultural Learning is not limited to familiarizing ourselves with other cultures – but about learning, recognizing, experiencing and co-creating cultural values. Moreover, it is about raising interest in cultural differences. Students should be able to grasp that cultural parallels as well as diversity are precious contexts (bm:ukk c).

In his book, *Cultural Studies in the EFL classroom*, Delanoy addresses a new phenomenon I mentioned earlier - the radical change from 'Landeskunde' to Intercultural Learning in the EFL classroom in the 1980s. He states that the so-called "area studies" (12) 'Landeskunde', which concentrated on conveying factual information to English-speaking target cultures, were replaced by Intercultural Learning approaches. Formerly, foreign language students were taught how to be simply competent tourists in English-speaking countries. Delanoy thinks that these conventions of teaching were formed in the light of Germany's rather controversial history – everything that could provoke conflict or questions was to be kept at a safe distance. When Intercultural Learning was introduced, in the 1980s, these perceptions changed drastically. The notion of cultures changed from the standpoint that they are fixed and stable, to the view that they are "highly complex entities [...] subject to continuous change, and [...] reactivated and redefined by concrete people." (Delanoy 12). Students became much more involved in the familiarization of other cultures, and thus received an opportunity to immerse themselves more personally in the analysis and research of target cultures. Formerly, students were seen as blank slates upon which one could impress a multitude of hard facts. The transition from area studies to Intercultural Learning changed this. According to Delanoy, Intercultural Learning represents "the processes of meaning creation happening *between* representatives of the target culture and their addressees in other countries" (13).

Byram also recognizes the 1980s shift, from 'Landeskunde' to Intercultural Learning, and its elements (e.g. intercultural communication) (*Language and Culture* 11). The question is, how does Intercultural Learning differ from the classically taught 'Cultural Studies'? Delanoy argues that there are some common features, including the fact that "cultures are discussed as ways of

life”, and that the “focus is on the dynamic interaction processes through which cultures are re-presented and shaped by people”. He furthermore states that the “addressees [...] are invited to become personally involved in shaping culture” (13). Other characteristics shared by both approaches are, the “interest in making the complexity of culture/s graspable”, and the desire to “reject [...] narrow and simplistic notions of culture”. Finally, both of them “aim at linking cultural learning to ethical and moral perspectives to further democratic agenda” (13). Kramersch, who Delanoy claims to be “one of the most influential Intercultural Learning theorists to date” (240), suggests that Intercultural Learning results in the formation of so-called ‘third places’ – which means a hybridization of different cultures, which leaves behind former attitudes to concentrate on more democratic societies. Kramersch suggests overcoming typical dichotomies, such as ‘Us vs. Them’ or ‘Self vs. Other’, and creating a third culture that focuses “on the relation itself and on the heteroglossia within each of the poles”. She argues that this third culture is a place that is not unitary, stable, permanent or homogeneous – but is rather “subject to change” (*Language Education* 238).

Before beginning the discussion of literature in the EFL classroom in the next chapter, I would like to sum up the most important points that constitute the concept of Intercultural Learning. As mentioned before, it is indispensable to educate children towards an open world view, to try to make clear to them that every culture has the same value and that it is not up to them or mankind as such to value and judge people that do not belong to their own culture. They need to become aware of the fact that all cultural systems and beliefs are equal in value and that it is important in our world today to acknowledge not only differences, but – even more important – similarities between different cultures. Intercultural Learning thus aims at freeing students from stereotypes and prejudice and encourages them to take a step away from the attitude that their culture is a norm against which every other one is measured. The Austrian curriculum for foreign languages promotes Intercultural Learning as teaching principle that needs to run through lessons like a red thread. Therefore, it is a vital task for teachers to include Intercultural Learning aims in their lesson plans. They are required to encourage their students to a more open-minded

attitude towards people from other cultural backgrounds and to make them see that all the differences can be welcomed to form a colorful human mosaic in our country.

Given the subsequently mentioned basic thoughts on the discussion of how to include and present cultural issues in the classroom has changed over time, I will now proceed with having a closer look on how to work with literary texts in an EFL classroom – specifying on texts raising awareness for cultural matters towards the end of the following chapter.

3. Motivations for using texts in the EFL classroom – with emphasis on the cultural aspect

Having presented the concepts of globalization, Global Education and Intercultural Learning, I would like to proceed to a subject of relevance to the practical part of this paper in which I will work with three different texts, analyzing their efficacy in the promotion of Intercultural Learning in foreign language lessons.

A foreign language lesson consists of many different parts that must be included and taught in class. Grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation are all vital components of a language, and therefore form an essential foundation for meaningful communication.

In addition to these factors the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* has established four distinct sections that are commonly called competences. These sections combine to form a complete learning experience, and promote communicative competence in each student. Besides speaking, writing and listening, reading is very important. It can be incorporated into a language lesson through the introduction of short texts, advertisements, comics, or other devices such as short stories or whole novels.

Hesse argues that reading, in all forms, is a necessity for promoting literacy and the ability to think and respond critically to the texts themselves, and, indeed, to future situations (6). I share this belief, and I think it is vital to include a wide variety of texts, and to promote reading on many subjects, within the school system.

Besides newspaper articles and short passages in schoolbooks, many fictional stories offer language teachers good material to work with. Now, why is it a good choice to make use of stories? Hesse, again, offers a valuable answer to this question:

Stories are part of human life. Stories appeal to all ages. Stories may tell us much about ourselves as well as about our own and foreign cultures. The cultural information of a narrative embeds itself in our memory much better because stories are holistic; they appeal not only to our intellect but also to our senses and our hearts. And stories are challenging! (6)

Hesse further reasons that reading stimulates a high degree of cultural awareness, and provides a great opportunity to teach pupils about their own and other cultures. Intercultural Learning can be well fostered with the aid of a few good stories. “[R]eading literature expands students’ knowledge of the world, giving them a new awareness of their own world and thus offering a great potential for intercultural learning (9)”. Fostering Intercultural Learning is the main objective of this diploma thesis, thus this idea is a significant one. Furthermore, encouraging students to read in a classroom environment might result in them opening up for continuing to explore different texts alone, which would contribute greatly to their own personal journeys towards cultural awareness.

Thaler, another academic working on this topic, is determined to endorse the inclusion of literature in the classroom, and has developed six arguments to support his theories. In his opinion, the main benefits of working with literature in the EFL classroom are language development, social prestige, interpretational openness, motivational value, personal enrichment and Intercultural Learning: “Reading books from other countries opens the window to the world and may contribute to mutual understanding between the members of different cultures” (Thaler 23 – 24).

Unfortunately, as Bredella and Delanoy state, “theories of foreign language teaching and learning ignored literary texts [for years. They] were regarded as inadequate for the central goals of foreign language learning (vii)”. However, in recent years, “the potential of literary texts for foreign language teaching, intercultural understanding and general educational goals has received great emphasis” (vii). Bredella and Delanoy mention that there has also been a drastic change in the teaching of literature itself. Instead of simply reading a

text in its original context, students are encouraged to present and articulate their own ideas based on prior knowledge and experiences (x).

Kramsch, concerned with the support of reading in the classroom likewise, says that the most important argument for using texts in the foreign language classroom is “literature’s ability to represent the particular voice of a writer among the many voices of his or her community and thus to appeal to the particular voice in the reader” (*Context and Culture* 131). She says that the long tradition of “approximat[ing] the voice of the target speech community” has been surpassed by interest in the individual voice and the creative visions that ensue. Literature, she believes, is the perfect example of a double-voiced discourse. Kramsch quotes Bakhtin who claims that: “the writer is a person who is able to work in a language while standing outside language, who has the gift of indirect speaking” (qtd. in Kramsch *Context and Culture* 131). If foreign language students want to find their own particular voice in a foreign language and a foreign culture, “literary texts can offer them models of particularity and opportunities for the dialogic negotiation of meaning” (131). She argues that, when students read, they create culture – which in turn is a “double process”, because “learning a language is learning to exercise both a social and a personal voice” (*Context and Culture* 233). She thus suggests teaching literature as a dialogue between the text and the reader.

In the 1980s, Byram developed a concept called ‘intercultural communicative competence’ (ICC), whose implementation, he says, should play a crucial part in FLT. He claims that FLT focuses on “the experience of otherness [...] as it requires learners to engage with both familiar and unfamiliar through the medium of another language” (*Intercultural Communicative Competence* 3). He argues, however, that the concept is more than the mere exchange of information, because “even the exchange of information is dependent upon understanding how what one says or writes will be perceived and interpreted in another cultural context [and] depends on the ability to decentre and take up the perspective of the listener or reader” (*ICC* 3).

Thaler made use of Byram's model of ICC, as mentioned earlier, and developed the idea further to expand on the use of literature in the EFL classroom. Thus, he formed the concept of 'literary communicative competence' (LCC). ICC represents particular skills, knowledge, attitudes and education. Additionally, it exemplifies these precise aptitudes: the skill of interpreting and relating, the skill of discovering and/or interacting, the knowledge of self and other, the attitudes of relativizing self and valuing other, and the political education/critical cultural awareness (ibid. 31).

Thaler believes that LCC in itself also denotes particular knowledge, attitudes and skills (e.g. reading, understanding, creating), and that all of these constituents "must be seen against the background of communication. They should [...] foster literature-based communication and negotiation of meaning" (31). Thus, Thaler wants literature to form the basis of lessons in communication. This objective correlates perfectly to the aim of my thesis - using texts to promote Intercultural Learning. My ambition is that, together, the novels and the short story are destined to form the platform from where the students can venture into the realms of intercultural dialogue. Onto more practical considerations, in terms of lesson planning - there are a number of topics that must be considered if a teacher plans to approach the discussion and understanding of a particular target culture through the use of literary texts.

One of the predominant queries is the question of how extensive the students' knowledge of the culture should be before they are presented with a text. For instance, how much information on Native North American cultures should they be provided with before confronting the students with the text? Context, with regards to literary texts, has mostly been pre-taught, or imposed upon students, before presentation of the actual transcript. This poses a big debate in literary theory. There are some authors who claim that the main contribution in the teaching of literature nowadays comes from teacher-based input. They say that literature is often presented in connection to a "contextualizing block of input covering biographical, historical, geographical, cultural and social background which is designed to provide knowledge about the text, the context, the culture, the author etc." This input is traditionally given before the

students are exposed to the text (McRae 228). McRae states, however, that this paradigm is steadily changing to allow people space for individual interpretation:

Recent methodologies tend to put the text before the context, the geography [...] and the background. From reading the text, the student will have some familiarity with how it works, what the author is trying to achieve, both ideologically and artistically, and, by comparing and contrasting the text with other texts read, will be able to arrive at some clearer ideas about the range of writing being studied. (228 – 229).

The debate on pre-teaching activities, and the feeding of contextual information to students before or after presentation of the text itself, continues. It is widely known that, in order to understand texts, readers use existing schemata, knowledge and information. Kramsch, too, is concerned with the question of whether information should be input before, or after, reading of the text itself. She argues, nevertheless, for transforming the question of 'before or after', into the *type* of information provided. She explains that, normally, in language classes, the information given to students is “content schemata – that is, referential knowledge concerning the author, the theme and its social and cultural value” (*Context and Culture* 125). Kramsch criticizes the fact that most language classes lack the discourse dimensions of context: “foreign language learners [are not] told how *native* readers might interpret, or have indeed interpreted the text in its foreign cultural context, nor are they shown how their own personal experience as *non-native* readers might help them understand the experience conveyed by the author” (125 – 126).

Another feature worthy of consideration is the range of aptitude and competence within a class of students, as well as the distinction of individual skills and talents. Each student, with his or her own abilities will bring a different view to, and understanding of, the text (Kramsch 126). A student's personality, combined with a text's polyvalence⁸, can therefore have an enormous influence on individual responses. Different readers' interpretations of a text are unlikely

⁸ Polyvalence means that one and the same text can have different meanings and purposes at the same time.

to be identical, as literature “demands personal involvement and asks for individual responses” (Thaler 24).

As has become evident in this chapter there are many different aspects that need to be taken into account when confronting students with literature in the classroom; especially if the chosen texts are concerned with cultural issues. Therefore it is indispensable to give the students the opportunity to fulfill a few pre-reading activities, providing them with the necessary time for questions before, during and after the reading of the text as well as letting them think critically about the text and giving them enough space for interpretations and their own constructions of meaning(s). After having outlined these theoretical implications of Intercultural Learning and the work with English literature in the EFL classroom, I will now proceed with the practical part of this paper, by analyzing my selected works according to the value of their contribution to Intercultural Learning in the EFL classroom.

4. Practical section: analyses and lesson plans

After having theoretically discussed Global Learning and Intercultural Learning, I will introduce three chosen texts in the following part of this paper. I will examine their practical usefulness for Intercultural Learning purposes by giving the respective plot summaries and – if relevant – by saying a few words about the authors of the texts. I shall then highlight the main topics and themes of each text. Finally, apart from analyzing the texts in this manner, I have developed lesson plans whose main objectives are to propose suggestions on how teachers can work with the texts in class to foster Intercultural Learning.

4.1. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie

The first book that will be dealt with is *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (TATDPTI) written by Sherman Alexie. It was published in 2007 as Sherman Alexie's first novel for young adults and up to now it has been outspokenly popular amongst readers all around the world.

4.1.1. Plot summary

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian is a semi-autobiographical novel written for young adults – I will return to the novel's categorization at a later point in this chapter – and it tells the story of a North American native boy named Arnold Spirit, better known as Junior. He is 14 years old and lives on the Spokane Indian reservation in a small town called Wellpinit. Upon encouragement of one of his teachers from the reservation high school, Arnold decides to leave the native high school and changes to a school in the town of Reardan, where he penetrates into a realm dominated by white children. In the course of the story the first person narrator deals with issues such as racism, poverty, alcoholism and the problems he faces when it comes to following his native American tribe's tradition. Other than that, typical teenage problems are

discussed as well, but the core of the novel remains Arnold's inner conflict as he is torn between the loyalty towards his tribe and family and the fact that he could make more out of his life by going to school outside of the reservation.

4.1.2. Sherman Alexie and native American⁹ literature

I am of course aware that all biographical interpretations end up arguing that an author can ever only write about what has really happened to him, hence I do not believe in giving biographical details of authors. With *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, however, one cannot help noticing a large number of references to Sherman Alexie's life. Whether knowing if these are autobiographical references or not helps to understand the book I am not sure. However, ignoring what is known about his life seems wrong too. The large number of parallels opens up the question whether this may not be a book of fiction entirely, but an autobiographical account fashioned for young adults and children. No matter which way, in this case it would clearly be a missed opportunity not to point out the parallels – these parallels as well as elements that might be purely fictive are my reasons for classifying the novel as 'semi-autobiographical'.

TATDPTI, after his numerous previous works, might be one further attempt of Sherman Alexie's to deal with his past life on a reservation. In his book *Understanding Sherman Alexie*, Grassian, apart from talking about Alexie's works, gives a brief description of the author's life on the first pages. *TATDPTI* was published after *Understanding Sherman Alexie* – nonetheless one can extract very useful information about the author and his understanding of life as a native person and his understanding of native literature – both elements that can be very well transferred onto the novel dealt with here.

Sherman Alexie, just like his character Arnold Spirit, was born in Wellpinit, on the Spokane Indian Reservation in Washington State. Alexie, just like Arnold,

⁹ When referring to the adjective, I will use the spelling "native American", when referring to the noun and individual I will adopt the spelling "Native American".

was born with a disease called hydrocephalus – after having undergone surgery he suffered from horrible aftereffects. He had an enlarged skull, seizures and was seriously affected by uncontrollable bed-wetting. His abnormal physical features resulted in Alexie often being mocked by other children. His solution for this situation was to withdraw from spending too much time with others and he thus started to read a lot of books and be successful in school. Arnold, too, is described as a very smart boy who spends a lot of time alone in his room drawing cartoons. While doing so, Alexie “learned the value of humor both as a means of deflecting the abuse from other children and also as a means of personal empowerment” (Grassian 2). His father, just like Arnold’s, was an alcoholic who often left his family behind without telling anyone where he went. Just like his character Arnold, Alexie changed from the school on the reservation to an all-white high school in Reardon – feeling isolated in the beginning as he was the first and only native child at that school. Later he started a basketball career at the school and became very successful and popular (Grassian 1 – 2).

So far many parallels between Sherman Alexie’s life and the life of his character Arnold Spirit can be noticed. In the novel one only gets an insight into Arnold’s life up to the point where he becomes the star player of the Reardan high school’s basketball team and starts to have a more or less normal life again – on the reservation and at school, accepting his fate as an outsider within and outside the reservation.

Sherman Alexie’s later life as adult is marked by heavy drinking that even caused him to drop out of college. After an eye-opening event he stopped his drinking and started writing poems and even graduated from college (Grassian 2 – 3). Drinking is a severe problem for many people belonging to native tribes; also Alexie’s novel is full with references to alcohol and also drug abuse – but more on this topic later.

Alexie has stated explicitly that he is not interested into deepening the stereotype even more that native writers should write about nature and the native American relation with nature. According to him, this is something that

they are expected to write about and thus he wants to avoid it. "I think most native literature is about place because they tell us to be" (Alexie qtd. in Fraser). With his literature he actively works and stands against the stereotype that Native Americans are "nature-loving noble savages" (Grassian 7). He confirms this position even more by saying that "you throw in a couple of birds and four directions and corn pollen and it's Native American literature, when it has nothing to do with the day-to-day lives of Indians. I want my literature to concern the daily lives of Indians" (qtd. in Fraser). Hence, this is what the reader gets: Arnold's truth of what life on a reservation must be like.

Rewriting "dominant American colonial history" is another important objective of Sherman Alexie as it "barely acknowledges the violent colonization and subsequent massacres of Indians by European settlers". He is of the opinion that what really happened between European settlers and native peoples should be discussed in school, but mostly it is not mentioned as it would "severely damage American national identity and pride" (Grassian 8). Thus, European colonization and the conquest of the Americas are widely ignored and left behind.

4.1.3. Stylistic elements and genre of *The Absolutely True diary of a Part-Time Indian*

For 15 years now, Sherman Alexie has explored the struggle to survive between the grinding plates of the Indian and white worlds. He's done it through various characters and genres, but "The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian" may be his best work yet. Working in the voice of a 14-year-old forces Alexie to strip everything down to action and emotion, so that reading becomes more like listening to your smart, funny best friend recount his day while waiting after school for a ride home. (Barcott, for New York Times)

In *TATDPTI*, Sherman Alexie adopts a satirical and ironic way of writing, depicting honestly and plausibly the life and view of the world of a fourteen year old native American boy. In a lively and exuberant manner he does not only talk about the fate and problems native people in the United States have to face

nowadays, but he also talks very openly about topics such as falling in love for the first time, masturbation and typical teenage problems.

Arnold Spirit's young life is, in fact, filled with – mostly - rather sad events and marked by tragic factors such as alcoholism, racism, death and poverty. Nonetheless, Alexie manages to make the reader laugh out loud most of the time and makes rather depressing events appear in a comical light and amusing way. However, when the story comes down to the most tragic events – such as the death of Arnold's grandmother's or his sister's Mary's – Alexie switches into a very dark and heavy tone that resembles the actualities taking place in the story. He presents Arnold's hard life on the reservation (and later, at the white high school) as matter-of-factual as it really is and does not draw the curtains over what happens on present-day native American reservations and, most likely, over what happens between native people and white people. His way of telling this story can be interpreted as an attempt of giving a – somewhat comical and black humor filled, yet partly undeniably sad – account of what it is like to be a Native American in the present-day United States of America.

The novel is categorized as 'Young adult fiction' (YAF) by a large number of both academic and non-academic sources. According to Thaler it is especially adequate for young readers at school because the main characters are teenage boys as well as teenage girls that the students – who are part of the same age group – can identify with. Furthermore, this kind of novel deals with typical teenage problems and topics that are enormously important during puberty (20). The genre of YAF allows Alexie to speak to a teenage audience by touching on themes that are resonant with younger readers. Topics such as the search for identity, the awkwardness of being a teenager and others are talked about. Thus, alongside the average puberty problems depicted in the novel, the specific problems of a native American youth make it very appropriate for teaching at school and the purposes of Intercultural Learning. *TATDPTI* is rich in different aspects of content and therefore offers a huge facet of elements that can be chosen for teaching in the classroom. The cultural elements and the problems between native people and white people offer a perfect basis for

Intercultural Learning and for opening up the question about stereotypes and prejudice in class.

Apart from the content issues (teenage problems, specific problems as Native American, etc) addressed before, it needs to be mentioned at this point that the language used in the novel is not too difficult – another characteristic that Thaler identifies typical for YAF: “they are authentic novels [...], but language and style are not too elaborate so that they can be read from lower secondary classes [onwards]” (20 – 21). Thus, children will be able to understand it without major difficulties and moreover they will get an insight into the informal teenage language of the 20th and 21st century.

Another important factor that essentially adds to *TATDPTI*'s impact on the reader are the cartoons included in the text. As already mentioned before, Arnold is described as a gifted cartoonist and the reader gets to see a lot of his artwork in the novel. Arnold draws portraits of people important to him or brings to life general factors in his life as well as specific situations via sarcastic cartoons peppered with brilliant ironic side-comments and explanations. Naturally, these comics serve as a certain breaking-up of the written text and offer the reader the possibility of an improved understanding of Arnold and his world. Especially for young readers these pictures will be a welcome expansion to the written word as they cleverly liven it up. For older readers these cartoons may be the trigger for even more laughter as Arnold's way of drawing and adding comments to them is humorous and amusing. Still, some of his cartoons are very sad as they accompany the tragic events such as the multiple deaths in his community. Hence, they can also serve as additional expression of Arnold's grieve.

Sometimes, his illustrations and the words going along with them are so sarcastic and witty that they can only be understood if one has reached a certain age and if one is familiar with sarcasm and irony. Therefore, for both, younger readers and older teenagers (and even adults), the text in combination with Arnold's fun cartoons present a matchless reading pleasure.

4.1.4. The setting of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

Wellpinit and the Spokane reservation, two of the main settings in the book *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, are located in Washington State. It is presented as a very impoverished neighborhood, where poverty, alcoholism and family dramas are on the daily agenda and basic necessities, such as food, are lacked very often. The novel examined in this thesis is not the only one set on this reservation; this place often serves as setting for Alexie's poems and fiction as it is "an actual place where he finds virtually inexhaustible literary wellspring for his writing" (Grassian 6). According to Grassian, Alexie aims at "explor[ing] larger issues" by "focusing upon a small geopractical locale" (6). Alexie himself states that "[e]very theme, every story, every tragedy that exists in literature takes place in [his] little community. Hamlet takes place on [his] reservation daily. King Lear takes place on [his] reservation daily. It's a powerful place. [He's] never going to run out of stories" (Alexie, qtd. in McNally 30).

Next to the Spokane reservation, the town of Reardan, located in Washington State likewise, plays a major role in the story. It is an almost only white town and home to Arnold's new high school – a place that, on the one hand, seems full of optimism and opportunities to Arnold, but yet, on the other hand, also causes him problems because of his origins. He describes Reardan as a "hick town" that is filled "with farmers and rednecks and racist cops" (45). Thus, his new surroundings are not merely a positive addition to his life, but have two sides to it.

As will be addressed in a later chapter of this analysis, the two settings are of utmost importance to Arnold's identity formation as they exercise great influence on the character.

4.1.5. The main topics and themes of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

In the following chapter I will give an overview of the most prominent topics and themes in Sherman Alexie's novel. By citing and discussing some passages from the book I will present the material that teachers can work with in class after the students have finished reading the novel.

Poverty on the reservation

I wish I were magical, but I am really just a poor-ass reservation kid living with his poor-ass reservation family on the poor-ass Spokane Indian Reservation (7).

This statement completely expresses the general situation on the reservation: not only Arnold, but practically all the natives who live on the reservation are poor as a church mouse. The poverty that reigns in his parents' house is not only responsible for the children often having to go to bed with an empty stomach or having to wear old clothes, but also for things that are even worse. At one instant in the novel Arnold's dog, Oscar, is very sick and is then shot by Arnold's father because his parents do not have the money for paying a veterinarian. Arnold is heartbroken and before his dog is killed he even thinks of getting a job to pay for the doctor but then is well aware of the fact that he would never get a job because of his native American origins (10). Throughout the whole novel the reader gets the impression that this is the fatal attitude which has been indoctrinated and anchored in his mind due to history and due to witnessing what happens in other native people's lives.

Arnold acknowledges with tangible bitterness the poverty he and his family have to live with, as this situation is not one that they themselves deserved, but something that they were born into – he accuses his heritage and his Indian roots of being responsible for their poverty. "My parents came from poor people who came from poor people who came from poor people, all the way back to the very first poor people" (11). He talks about his parents, who had dreams that they wanted to realize, but with dispirited attitude he states that "reservation

Indians don't get to realize [their] dreams. [They] don't get those chances. Or choices. [They]'re just poor. That's all [they] are" (13).

At this point, I want to introduce one of Arnold's cartoons included in the novel. The following example shows Arnold's parents and what they would have become if they had been born under more favorable circumstances.



Illustration 3: Arnold Spirit's parents and their life if "somebody had paid attention to their dreams" (*The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* 12)

It becomes evident that his parents' lives would look completely different if they had had more money and more opportunities in life. Naturally, the poverty reigning on the reservation are a very influential factor in this regard, but yet, one must not forget that, just like Arnold managed to succeed, they could have made more out of their life by putting more personal effort in it.

As already mentioned before, Arnold often comments on the poverty in his life with bitterness and adopts a voice full of sarcasm. He calls the poverty an "ugly circle" (13) and thinks that there is nothing one could do to change it. He

believes that, just because he is native American, he is damned to being poor and to living on a reservation.

The poverty of his reservation also eventually leads to Arnold's hard and momentous decision to leave his native American high school, because the poverty also decreases the quality of his school education. On the first day of his high school career on the reservation he discovers that the school is so poor that they have to hand out school books to the children that are over 30 years old. This enrages Arnold so much that he smashes his book into the teacher's face and is suspended from school. Hopelessly he says that "[t]hat old, old, decrepit geometry book hit [his] heart with the force of a nuclear bomb. What do you do when the world has declared nuclear war on you?" (31). He transfers to an 'only white' high school in a different town upon encouragement of the same teacher.

It turns out that Arnold has hopes and dreams: he even wants to go to college – but he doubts being able to do so, first of all because there is no financial support for it, and secondly because Native Americans simply do not go to college. Nobody in his family has ever even dreamt about going to college and receiving higher education, but somehow college education seems to be near at hand all of a sudden when he changes to the other school (180). But still, financing a college is entirely out of Arnold's reach as he cannot even afford things that other kids at his new school take for granted. He has a hard time to hide that fact that he is poor – even his parents seem to feel ashamed about that fact and "[...] gave [him] just enough money so that [he] could pretend [he has] more money than [he] did" (119). The lack of money does not only lead to precarious situations when Arnold spends time with his white friends, but it also puts Arnold's daily journey to or back home from school at risk, because he always has to fear that his dad takes the little money they have and spends it on alcohol or in one of the casinos on the reservation (87) instead of paying for the school bus.

Still, his former teacher believes that Arnold is the only Native American on the reservation who has not given up hope yet and who has not given up the dream

of changing his life – otherwise Arnold would have just accepted having old and used books at school and lived with it. But he does not give up: Arnold is not satisfied with the situation he is in and his true inner self clearly wants a change. He wants to make more out of his life, which means not staying on the reservation forever, where drugs, violence, poverty and Native Americans who have given up on themselves are the only things that await him. Arnold is supposed to take the little bit of hope that is left inside of him and bring it far away from the reservation to a place where hope is high and where people still have hope. His decision to go to a white high school, because according to him and his parents, the white people are the ones with the most hope, is the first step towards a more successful future.

Tribal traditions

When his sister Mary runs away and marries a random native American man, the whole family is absolutely shocked. Arnold says that “Indian families stick together like Gorilla Glue, the strongest adhesive in the world”. He explains that the “Spirits stay in one place” and that they “are absolutely tribal” and not supposed to leave one another (89). But, in fact, his sister running away from the reservation to Montana and breaking with the native American tradition of staying in one place, is a sign for Arnold that he is not the only one who has not given up hope yet and who tries to upgrade life to more than just living on the reservation. In a certain way he is even proud of his sister for running away and for trying to make her dream come true.

In a few instances in the book one gets an insight into other native traditions on the reservation. Not only his own family has a strong sense of family and familiarity – he says that it is typical for native American people that everyone knows everyone. Arnold tells the reader that, although his people “are screwed up”, they are “really close to each other” (153) – all of them normally stick together like one big family. Maybe this is also the reason why Arnold’s fellow tribal members are so angry with him and feel betrayed when he appears to be the one leaving the family for their ‘enemy’, the white people. They even start

calling him an apple “because they think [he is] red on the outside and white on the inside” (132). Their sense of community especially shows when the tribe has to bury one of its members, Arnold’s grandmother. Arnold says that two thousand people showed up at his grandmother’s funeral. I think, as already mentioned in a previous section, that this offers a great possibility to discuss funeral traditions in class as one of the differences between cultures as Catholic funerals in Austria, for example, look entirely different to how the native American funeral is depicted in the book. This example moreover offers the perfect ground for Intercultural Learning about the students’ own societal environment: in Austria itself there exist many different funeral traditions depending on different cultural backgrounds. Thus, Arnold’s account of his grandmother’s funeral opens up a good possibility to tie in with discussing funeral rites in Austria itself.

Another tribal tradition that becomes apparent during Arnold’s grandmother’s funeral is the Native Americans’ love for story telling and cultivating their dance rites, as both nurture their sense of community and public spirit. It needs to be mentioned here that Arnold presents even more tribal traditions, but it would surpass the limits for this chapter to mention all of them.

Alcoholism and drug abuse

As becomes evident in the course of the novel, alcoholism and also drug abuse are a big problem for the native American tribe on the Spokane reservation. According to Arnold’s narration, there are so many alcohol addicts and drug users on the reservation that alcoholism has basically become a normal life condition. His father, too, is an alcoholic. Although Arnold emphasizes very often that his father is a very caring and loving person, the whole family always is in danger of losing the little money they have or losing any chance of saving any money because Arnold’s father just takes it and spends it on drinks or on visits to casinos – he even often uses their Christmas money to do so (150). His father’s alcoholism brings a lot of pain to the family; nonetheless he tries to be a good father: “Yes, my daddy was an undependable drunk. But he’d never

missed any of my organized games, concerts, plays, or picnics. He may not have loved me perfectly, but he loved me as well as he could” (189).

Alcohol is an extensive problem for many native American people: many people die of it. As the readers are told by Arnold, “[a]bout 90 percent of the deaths have been because of alcohol. [...] [A]ll Indian families are unhappy for the same exact reason: the fricking booze” (200). Also Arnold’s sister death is caused by alcohol. After it becomes known, that she is dead, many Natives from the tribe come to Arnold’s house to mourn Mary’s death. But instead of having dignified obsequies, they get drunk. They celebrate the death of a drunken couple by drinking. Arnold is disappointed and does not want to remain in the house. “I couldn’t stay and watch those people get drunk. I couldn’t do it. If you’d given me a room full of sober Indians, crying and laughing and telling stories about my sisters, then I would have gladly stayed and joined them in the ceremony. But everybody was drunk. Everybody was unhappy” (212).

Unfortunately, Arnold’s sister Mary is not the only one who is killed because people are under the influence of liquor. His father’s best friend Eugene, one of the biggest alcoholics on the reservation, is shot by a drunk friend of his (169) and Arnold’s beloved grandmother is run over by a drunk driver (158) – two incidences that make Arnold hate alcohol even more and that make him swear to never ever start drinking.

Perceived inferiority of native people and racism

As becomes evident right from the beginning of the novel, Arnold obviously believes that Native Americans are inferior to white people. I assume that this is not his real and honest opinion, but what people around him and history has taught him to believe – naturally, the difference between the two is hard to tell, but yet, I argue, that if Arnold had grown up in more unbiased circumstances, he would have formed a different picture of himself and his tribe than by being harassed by whites. He tends to peg Native Americans as noble wild people whereas the white people are described as the “missionary saviors” of the

native American peoples (30) – always keeping his sarcastic undertone. When talking about his white high school teacher Mr. P, Arnold mentions that he really does not understand why “lonely white people love to hang around lonelier Indians” (30). I suppose this is because Mr. P tries to make up for the past – as the reader gets to know he used to be one of the notorious missionaries who tried to convert Native Americans to Christianity and to white culture. The tried to eradicate native American culture (35) – and now Mr. P feels sorry for doing so and his effort to help Arnold seems to be his remorseful attempt of relieving his bad conscience over what he did in his earlier days.

After his change to the Reardan high school, Arnold is often confronted with racism towards his people. Not only the school, but also the whole town is depicted as very racist (45). In the beginning, most children at his new school stare at him like he is “Bigfoot or a UFO” (56). The white children at the school simply cannot believe their eyes that a native American boy from the reservation will go to school with them – they and some of the teachers, too, (85), openly show their aversion towards him and make fun of him and tell racist jokes (64). There are numerous instances in the novel that show that the white children let Arnold feel their antipathy at first. Undoubtedly, Arnold does not feel very comfortable at the school as he feels like an outsider and very lonely (66 and 94). He even thinks that all the things that happen, on the reservation and at the new school, are his own fault because of his egoistic decision to leave his tribe and simply because of the fact that he is native American. He is not only harassed and ignored by the tribal community – but also at school he is no fully appreciated member in the beginning.

Arnold’s status in the school gets better after some time, as he becomes the star player of the Reardan’s high school team and close friends with a beautiful white girl named Penelope – a friendship which is absolutely shocking to others (109). Also the other kids start accepting him even if they still let him feel that he is somehow ‘different’ (181). Nonetheless, Arnold develops a deep relationship to some of his new colleagues at school: “All of these white kids and teachers, who were so suspicious of me when I first arrived, had learned to care about me. Maybe some of them even loved me. And I’d been so suspicious of them.

And now I care about a lot of them. And loved a few of them” (212). He even comes to the conclusion that the world is not only divided into ‘white’ and ‘native American’, but simply into good and bad people (176).

Still, Arnold is not the only one who has to fight hard against prejudice and racism; the whole novel is loaded with references to the generally problematic relationship between white people and native people. Arnold for example states that the whole town of Reardan is a really racist town, where Native Americans are stopped by the police just for the fact that they are native American (45). Also his sister Mary sends Arnold an e-mail and tells him about the place she lives in at the moment. It is a reservation too, where native people and white people co-reside. She tells him that “the people who live in those white towns don’t always like Indians much. One of those towns [...] tried to secede [...] from the rez. Really. It was like the Civil War” (100). As becomes evident, the white people there do not want to have anything to do with native people and would like to end all bonds to the natives to finally get rid of them. This then, obviously, results in their acts of putting them into reservations and degrading them to second-rate people.

Arnold being an outsider among the outsiders

Well, life is a constant struggle between being an individual and being member of the community. (132)

Arnold Spirit is an outsider. He is the member of a minority group already, being a native American who are regarded as different and strange and as outsiders by white people; but even within his own tribe on the reservation Arnold is treated like a disgusting insect and has only one true friend, Rowdy.

In the beginning of the novel Arnold describes his outer appearance, which is a crucial factor for his position on the reservation as it contributes a lot to why other people treat him the way they do. Due to an illness called hydrocephalus, Arnold’s skull is unusually large and his big head makes him the perfect victim

for all the bullies on the reservation: they call him “Orbit” or “Globe” (3) and like to make fun of him by going around him in circles. Apart from this, the narrator describes his physique in a way that makes the reader think he overdraws the negativity of his outer appearance – thus, the account of his looks is highly unreliable.

In addition to his abnormal big head, Arnold suffers from seizures and a speaking disorder: he stutters and lisps which leads to everybody on the reservation calling him a retard. “They call me retard when they are pantsing me or stuffing my head in the toilet or just smacking me up the head” (4). Although Arnold really suffers from this treatment by other people on the reservation, he takes it in and deals with it with some dry sarcasm: “Do you know what happens to retards on the rez? We get beat up. At least once a month. Yep, I belong to the Black-Eye-of-the-Month Club” (4). So he rather stays at home to walk away from all the trouble and draws cartoons.

It can have a very saddening impact on the reader to witness that Arnold is not even fully accepted in his own tribe. Arnold experiences painful rejection within a group that should know better as Native Americans themselves have been treated like misfits by their white counterparts since European settlers claimed their land. Something else can be noticed here too: being an outsider because of physical abnormalities seems to be a universal phenomenon. Cruel incidences like that – and bullying people because they look unlike oneself definitely is cruel – happen all around the world. As is known, especially immature children and teenagers can do or say very atrocious things that make the victim of the attacks feel miserable and inferior. Hence, this feature of the novel offers itself as a really good point for discussing mobbing and bullying in class.

As already mentioned before, Arnold has only one true friend on the reservation: a boy named Rowdy. He has the reputation of being very tough – his name already gives a hint towards his character – but, in the same take of breath, he has a big heart. Arnold has huge respect for Rowdy because he always tells him the naked truth and never lies to him and always protects

Arnold when bullies are near them. He is a very aggressive young man – this must be the result of his own family life, where domestic violence and aggression appear on the agenda daily. His father is an alcoholic too and often beats Rowdy, making him and his mother walk around the reservation covered with bruises. Of course, Rowdy suffers very much from this treatment – but how could he become any different but aggressive and pugnacious if his father does not exemplify him a peaceful way of treating others?

After Arnold's change to Reardon's white high school, his position as an outsider on the reservation is reinforced even more: his fellow tribal members cannot forgive him for leaving behind the reservation and going to a different school. His mother already predicts this behavior of the other natives when she is informed about Arnold's decision to change schools: "The Indians around here are going to be angry with you" (47). The fears of his mother shall become true: Arnold is bullied and called names, sometimes just ignored as if he were not there at all, by the other people on the reservation. I suppose that this is a somehow natural reaction, as the antagonism between Native Americans and whites has existed ever since and his fellow tribe members feel betrayed and get the feeling as if they and their reservation were not good enough for Arnold – and they never leave out the smallest opportunity to remind him of the fact that they regard him as a traitor (79). On the one hand it is understandable that they react in this disappointed way, on the other hand it is very discouraging and sad that they do not support Arnold in his aspirations to have a better life than the generations before them had.

Even Rowdy does not support Arnold's decision and their friendship breaks apart; at first he does not even believe that Arnold is serious when talking about leaving the reservation and even tries to discourage him. He shouts at Arnold and yells at him, saying that he had always thought that he was better than him – isn't this the behavior of a person that has just been hurt very, very badly (49 – 53)? Not only Rowdy turns against him, the whole tribe does. In my opinion Rowdy's reaction can be interpreted as a sign that he fears Arnold could forget him over his new friends and it just shows how hurt he is.

Arnold's identity

[...] I woke up on the reservation as an Indian, and somewhere on the road to Reardan, I became something less than Indian. And once I arrived at Reardan, I became something less than less than less than Indian (83).

In the novel, the problem of being different and Arnold's personal identity stand very much in the foreground. Arnold, being native American but going to school in a white surrounding, is completely confused about who he really is. Arnold finds himself in a complicated situation. At home, on the reservation, he is Junior, a boy who is discriminated because of his physical abnormalities and his decision of going to a white high school; in Reardon, he is Arnold, who is the only native American boy at an almost white high school, outsider at first, then the star player of the school's basketball team. These two different contexts and the respective identities cause Arnold big difficulties in finding out who he really is and where he really belongs to. The entire novel is concerned with the reconciliation of these two different selves – not an easy task to accomplish for Arnold. In the end, he acknowledges that it is not possible for him to restrict himself to one of these identities; he decides that he does not want to be Junior, the Native American only or Arnold, the Traitor only. For him, the best solution is to accept that he has to move from one 'tribe' to the other – he realizes that personality and identity cannot be ultimately determined and thus finds a meaningful and less restrictive form of identity.

As is obvious, hybridity and the intermingling of different identities is a crucial topic in this novel – I believe that this is a phenomenon that definitely has to be discussed in class because it is also part of our daily lives in Austria where different cultures come together and merge and children might have the same feelings as Arnold. Yet, it is indispensable to emphasize that it is still Arnold's particular voice and situation that is conveyed in the novel. Thus, people might be part of a certain culture and society in their respective homes, but in the same take of breath they might be part of different groups at school and in public life. They somehow have to come to terms with balancing both identities and maybe even arriving at forming a completely new and exciting identity for them.

Arnold himself serves as a perfect example for Intercultural Learning: he too experiences the need for intercultural communication and for dealing with a culture different to his own when he transfers from his reservation's high school to the new one. Apart from being directly confronted with people that are different from the ones he is familiar with, he needs to be aware of how to behave in each context.

Undoubtedly, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* offers a great variety of topics and issues to choose from – not only in terms of common teenage dilemmas but also in terms of fostering Intercultural Learning as Arnold has to deal with severe difficulties caused by his native American origin.

This chapter has served as basis for the lesson plans that will be introduced in the next part of this thesis. Before dealing with a book in class it is necessary to think about how much of it really gives teachers good substance to work with. I will now proceed with presenting the lesson plans that I have developed for the teaching of *TATDPTI* and its usefulness for Intercultural Learning in the classroom.

4.1.6. Lesson plans for *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

The following pages will be dedicated to suggestive lesson plans containing activities dealing with Sherman Alexie's novel. Starting off with a pre-reading lesson that leads the students toward native North American cultures, the other two lessons will be concerned with Intercultural Learning tasks designed on the basis of the novel.

Lesson plan 1/3

Target Group: 6th form upper secondary (AHS),

Time: 50 minutes

Assumption: The book has not yet been read; thus the students are not familiar with its content.

Objectives: The students

- engage in pre-reading activities to foster their already existing knowledge about North American native cultures
- get to know native North American cultures, their history and the problems they face nowadays in more detail
- thus create the necessary basis for the reading of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* and for the understanding of Arnold's situation

Material: pictures; overhead projector slide; copies of novels, handouts with quiz

Abbreviations: T = teacher; C = class; G = group; P = pair work;

TIME	CONTENT / ACTIVITY	AIMS	MATERIAL	INTERACTION FORMAT
5'	1) <u>Brainstorming</u> . The students are confronted with the picture of a "traditional north American chief" and describe it	The students are introduced into the topic of the novel and towards the novel.	overhead slide with picture	T - C
5'	2) <u>Brainstorming</u> . teacher shows the students the book cover	The students predict what the content of the book might be about.	picture of the novel's cover	T - C
15'	3) <u>Discussion</u> about "How do you think do Native Americans live today?"	The students express their ideas of the Native Americans' present-day situation and of about how these people master their lives today	overhead slide with guidelines and questions; paper to take notes;	G
10'	4) <u>Presentation</u> of the results by one group.	The students compare their results and ideas	notes	G - C
15'	5) <u>Quiz</u> about Native Americans today	The students - are provided with factual knowledge of Native Americans - compare these facts with the results from the group discussions - know about the real present-day situation of Native Americans	handout with the quiz questions	P

This lesson is held before the students read the novel *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. It serves as a short introduction to North American history with special regard to native cultures and their present-day situation. By means of this introduction, the students will be capable of understanding the numerous hints and references to history in the novel. Based on the students' perception and their already existing knowledge of the world, the topic is presented, always focused on these cultures. Of course, there are many different tribes whose individual histories might diverge, but in an Austrian EFL classroom it is impossible to avoid generalizations and indispensable to make an abstraction as otherwise the information would be too detailed and complex. After these primary considerations, the lesson goes over to the novel itself: the students have to engage in pre-reading tasks to get in touch with the novel and to be led to the topic of the novel. If there is still some time left at the end of the lesson, the students can start reading the book.

The start of the lesson looks as follows: The teacher does not tell the students immediately what the lesson will be about; they have to find out about it themselves. First of all, the teacher shows them the picture of what most people would describe as an 'Indian person' or maybe as 'Indian chief'. The students are asked to describe the person on the picture. Most of them might simply say that they see a native American person, but this answer, of course, is not satisfactory for the teacher. They are supposed to describe what they can see on the picture in more detail and, in a further step, tell the other students and the teacher what they know about Native Americans. Many students might come up with stereotypes or clichés, but, as already mentioned in the theory part of this paper, these can be two good starting points for dealing with a culture. They might even call the people 'Indians' – a perfect point of contact for the teacher to clarify and explain to the students that the people, who had inhabited the Americas before European settlers conquered their land, are nowadays called 'Native Americans' and that the term 'Indian(s)' has been classified as politically incorrect and that it is very biased. It is important for them to understand, that even the labeling of these people as 'Indian' already contains a certain stereotype and is closely connected to their often outdated idea of Native Americans.

The purpose of this activity is relatively straight-forward: it is necessary to activate the students' already existing world schemata and the knowledge that they have already acquired. Naturally, this activity also has a second purpose: it directs the students towards the novel and its content. Of course, the book is not about an old traditional native American chief but I believe that the picture might serve as a good basis for what will be talked about afterwards as the book is about a native American boy in today's world. Based on this, one can make a welcome connection from traditional past natives to their present-day ways of life. The interaction format is rather obvious as the teacher asks questions and lets the students give answers; the whole activity adopts the format of a brainstorming.

After this first picture, the teacher goes over to showing the students the cover of the novel. From this, they guess what the novel could be about. Starting with what they have just said in the first brainstorming, their already existing knowledge about native North American cultures as well as the picture of Arnold and the title of the book, they predict what the novel is about. Seeing the picture and the content might raise the students' motivation for reading the book, and they get curious to see if their expectations will be proven right or wrong.

After this first introduction the students take part in a group activity. I am a fervent adherent of the communicative language teaching approach and I believe that a language is learned best through interaction. But with focusing on interaction, teachers are always confronted with the same problem: if they try to accomplish a task in the whole class it is desirable that all of the students are involved in the activity. But, as everybody assumably knows from personal experiences, there are students who are very active and not afraid of talking whereas others might sit quietly in the corner, happy with the fact that their colleagues give answers to the questions and that they do not have to engage in the conversation. To avoid a scenario like this, the class is divided into 5 groups and the students discuss the question in these groups. On the one hand, smaller groups are very suitable for discussions because every member has the possibility of talking and shy people might be more likely to open up and

present their ideas. On the other hand, it is not possible to have very small groups (2 – 3 people) in big classes because there is not enough time for every group to present their ideas afterwards.

In the assigned groups the students make up their minds about the present-day situation of native people in the US. They are required to consider everything that they have read or learned so far or maybe even information they have gathered when watching television – the ultimate aim of this task is to encourage the students to talk about a specific problem. Supposedly, they know most of the vocabulary they need for this discussion, in case they lack words the teacher serves as source of information and helps them if they struggle with expressing what they want to say. As already mentioned earlier, there are always some people who know more and really like to talk, but they should not become dominant or outshine the weaker students. Not the shy persons are asked to do the group presentations afterwards, because this might just make them feel very nervous and insecure. In this case the group decides who will talk in front of the class because, personally, I do not want to be one of the teachers who push silent and shy students into the spotlight in front of the whole class, but I do want to make sure that in a group of 4 – 5 people, a rather safe environment, every person talks and contributes. Apart from discussing how Native Americans might live today, the students take notes about what is being said.

After the group discussion one person from one group presents the results. I do not think that there is enough time to talk about what every single group has come up with, but all the other students have the possibility of adding and commenting on what the presenting group says. The ideas of the different groups will in no way be very much alike, so this is important to get an insight into the students' levels of knowledge about native American cultures and bring everybody's assumptions together. Moreover, one gets a feeling for their potential of creativity, because they might also mention some things that they do not know for sure but which stem from their imagination and creativity.

After the discussions and presentations, the teacher goes over to the last activity of the lesson, which serves the purpose of providing the students with factual information and knowledge about Native Americans. After having talked about the former image of the 'Indian' as noble savage (brainstorming 1) and having discussed possible ways of living of present-day Native Americans, it is definitely necessary to talk to the students about how they really live like to wipe out stereotypes and prejudice. It is indispensable to finally give a solution to the question what the Native Americans' present-day situation looks like and to come full circle in this lesson. Of course, the students will get an insight into life as Native American when reading *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* but still, one has to keep in mind that Arnold's voice is a particular one; a voice out of many. It can be seen as an exemplary showcase for the fate of Native Americans, but one must not over-generalize and think that every Native American leads the same life as Arnold does. Thus, for mere factual information, the reading of the novel does not suffice and definitely is not a reliable source.

To make this relatively dry part of mere information input more lively and amusing, the students find out more about these cultures in the form of a quiz. They have the last 15 minutes to solve the quiz in pairs; at the end the results are compared. I argue that letting the students solve a short questionnaire automatically raises their interest in and attention for the subject matter, as they are actively involved in the process of information acquisition. It is not the teacher who simply talks to them and 'feeds' them with information; it is their own task to find out the right answers.

Lesson Plan 2/3

Target Group: 6th form upper secondary (AHS)

Time: 50 minutes

Assumption: The book has been read by the students.

Objectives: This lesson is dedicated to post-reading activities and work on the novel. The students

- know what the novel is about
- talk about Arnold's most prominent problems and thus better understand his economic status and life situation
- understand the concept of culture and that it is never-ending and constantly in flux

Material: the novel, the blackboard, the cards with quotations and magnets

Abbreviations: T = teacher; S = student; C = class; G = group

TIME	CONTENT / ACTIVITY	AIMS	MATERIAL	INTERACTION FORMAT
10'	1) Revision of the novel's content. The students • discuss questions in groups	The students • quickly remember and summarize the novel's content • are able to talk about the book	overhead projector slide with questions for the students' group work;	G
20'	2) <u>Brainstorming</u> . The students • figure out the most important shaping factors in Arnold's life	The students • analyze and understand why Arnold's life is why it is • label these influencing factors	quotation cards	G
10'	3) <u>Presentation of results and placement of quotes</u> . The students • present their respective umbrella terms • come to the blackboard and put down the quotations to the respective category	The students • present the categories they have come up with • figure out the most prominent problems in Arnold's life. • understand how an individual's life can be influenced	blackboard; cards with the quotations; magnets to attach cards to blackboard;	C – T
10'	4) <u>Discussion</u> . The teacher and the students • discuss the term culture and try to find out what it is	The students • engage in finding a definition of the term culture • understand that it is not possible to give on stable definition of this term • get aware of the fact that a culture is constantly evolving		T – C

The first lesson after reading the book serves as the first attempt to really work with the book and its content and as a starting point for all the further exercises and discussions. The first half of the lesson is dedicated to the novel in very general terms: the students are provided with the possibility of recapitulating the plot of the novel as some of them might have finished reading the book earlier than others and have therefore forgotten some of the actions taking place in the book. The other half of the lesson is spent working on the book in more detail: Arnold's life and the problems he faces are portrayed and discussed in group work with the help of quotes taken from the novel.

As already mentioned before, the first part of the lesson is spent on the revision of the novel's content. Supposedly, all of the students have read the novel in time, but some of them might have already finished reading the book earlier than others. Thus, a mere recapitulation of what happens in the book is necessary to revitalize their knowledge about the content. To foster negotiation of meaning between the students and to get them to practice their oral skills in English, the class is divided into groups. Each group receives questions to work on. The group members briefly revise the content of the book by answering guiding questions the teacher has put on an overhead slide. The students are granted about 10 minutes for this activity as the questions should not be too difficult to answer – if they need more time for accomplishing their task, the time slot can be extended to about 15 minutes. There will not be any presentations of results in class afterwards, as the content of the book is not very complex and the story line rather straight-forward without many side branches. However, the teacher needs to make sure that all of the students are familiar with the novel's content as this is necessary for the further work in class. During this activity, the teacher steps into the background and lets the students do their work, in case of gaps they are provided with the necessary hints to continue. The aim of this exercise is to revitalize the students' knowledge about the novel; to remind them of all that happens and everything that Arnold has to go through.

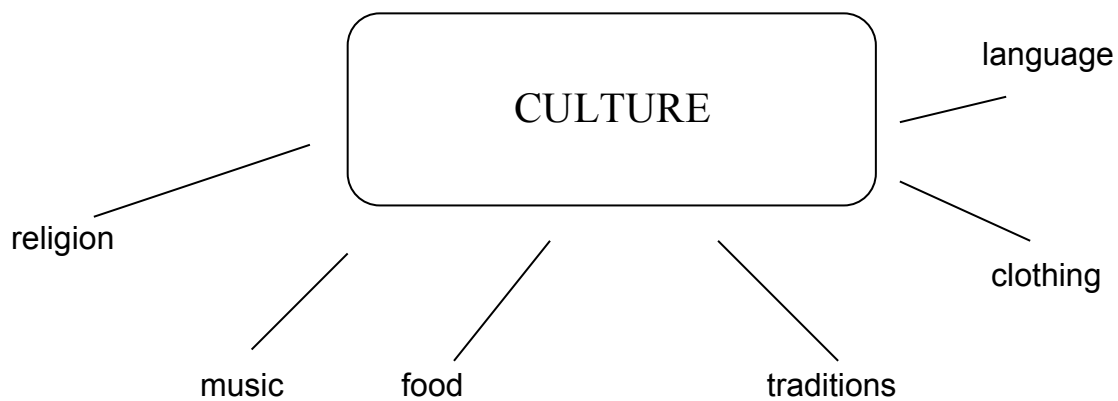
After the novel's content has been revised, the teacher leads the students to their next task. This activity is a brainstorming activity and is concerned with the

most important topics in the novel. The students remain in their groups and the teacher distributes cards with different quotations from the novel. The students' task is to read the quotations and find umbrella categories according to what the quotations express. The following is one example of the quotes that are on the cards: "I wish I were magical, but I am really just a poor-ass reservation kid living with his poor-ass family on the poor-ass Spokane Indian reservation." The aim is to get the students to find the category 'poverty' to place this quote. Each group gets 6 quotes that they have to put into the respective 6 categories. Of course, a desirable outcome would be that the students find the same categories so that the follow-up activity can be accomplished without greater difficulties. The students get approximately 10 minutes for this activity, in my opinion it should be easily possible to read the quotations and classify them in this given time as the students are (or should be) already familiar with the quotations from reading the book. After the brainstorming and group internal categorization has been finished, the students are asked to tell the teachers the categories they have developed. The teacher writes down the umbrella terms on the blackboard. Naturally, the teacher has made up his/her mind before the students tell him their categories and he/she guides them into the right direction if their words are wrong.

After the categories have been established, members of the different groups take turns in coming up to the blackboard and attaching their quotations to the respective category on the blackboard. Of course, when doing so, the students should become aware that these categories are not restricted to themselves only, but understand that all of them are closely related to one another. After reading the novel they should in fact know that poverty and alcoholism for example are tightly interrelated and dependent from each other; just as race and Arnold's search for identity are associated. This activity follows the aim of making the students realize how many factors heavily influence Arnold's life and how many problems he is already confronted with in his young life. It should sharpen their senses for the inter-racial tensions between white Americans and Native Americans.

In the book Arnold often talks about tradition and rites, about his tribe's native American beliefs and compares them to what most white people do or believe in. He often makes fun of what many white people think of his culture, influenced by stereotypes formed by media or their ways of socialization. Hence, this term is also used very often in connection with *TATDPTI* – it is already important if one has a closer look at the title of the book – and in general, culture is a word that is uttered quickly and only a few people really know what it actually means. I thus believe that it is important to talk to the students about the concept of culture and attempt to find a definition of this concept with them. Therefore, the last 10 minutes of the lesson are dedicated to simply talk about culture – the students find out quickly that it is rather difficult to talk about something everybody thinks he/she knows but in fact cannot really put into words.

The teacher introduces the last activity by merely asking the students what they think is culture. Starting off with the fact that it is a vital component in connection with the novel they have read, he/she tells the students that it is important to think about what culture actually comprises and how it can be defined. The teacher writes down the word culture in the middle of the blackboard and asks the students to come out to write down everything that comes to their mind when they think of the term and everything they think is part of a culture. At the beginning the teacher does not give the students any impulse to foster their thoughts; he/she just waits what the students come up with. If the students slow down and do not have ideas anymore, the teacher gives them hints to continue. Hopefully, the blackboard shows a result like the one following:



As mentioned in the theory part of this thesis, the students might come up with the visible parts of culture and leave out the invisible parts that can be even more important and characteristic, because they simply have never thought of them before. At this point I would like to emphasize that the students are only approximately 15 years of age, so most of them are likely to not have spent any thoughts on the concept of culture before. Thus, one cannot expect too much from them in this first activity but find a solid basis on which to work with in greater detail in the next lesson.

By the time the brainstorming on the blackboard is done, the lesson is over. The teacher tells the class that the discussion of culture will be taken up again in the next lesson and worked with in more depth. Moreover, the teacher tells the students that their homework is to think about the concept of culture at home – he/she encourages them to look up the term in dictionaries or on the internet and thus invites them to collect a few further ideas that can be talked about in the following lesson.

Lesson Plan 3/3

Target Group: 6th form upper secondary (AHS)

Time: 50 minutes

Assumption: The novel has been read and the students are familiar with its content as well as with the most important topics and themes that reoccur throughout the book and who primarily form Arnold's life.

Objective: The students

- work with the concept of culture in more depth
- understand that culture is very personal
- notice that culture can never be finite
- grasp that it is not possible to give one all-encompassing definition of culture

Material: the novel and the blackboard

Abbreviations: T = teacher; S = student; C = class; P = pair work;

TIME	CONTENT / ACTIVITY	AIMS	MATERIAL	INTERACTION FORMAT
10'	1) <u>Revision</u> of last lesson	The students - revise what has been done in last lesson - reactivate their knowledge acquired		C – T
5'	2) video clip “What is culture?”	The students get input via different people’s thoughts on what culture is	computer with internet access	
10'	3) <u>Review</u> of the youtube.com clip	The students - talk about the statements in the video - begin to understand how broad the concept is and that it is almost not possible to grasp it - that it is hard to give one all-encompassing definition		C – T
10'	4) <u>Pair work</u> . The students try to come up with their own definition of culture	The students - attempt to process the information given and their own thoughts - put them into one coherent paragraph	overhead projector slide	P
10'	5) <u>Presentation</u> of results	The students - understand that all the definitions are correct in a certain way - come to the conclusion that there is no definite explanation of the concept - understand that culture is not stable but constantly in flux		S – C – T
5'	6) Homework	The students make up their mind about features of their own personal culture		

At the beginning of the third lesson, the students briefly revise what has been done and said in the last lesson. As is obvious, the class takes up the discussion of the term culture again; they quickly go through what has been mentioned on this topic in the last lesson and talk about their brainstorming to recall the information. Of course, the work on the concept of culture needs to be deepened and the students need to understand that there is more to it than the language or literature of a certain group. The following 45 minutes are thus spent with creating a broader picture of the concept of culture.

To give them an impulse for more in-depth work with the term culture the students watch a short video clip from the internet platform youtube.com. In the video¹⁰ the students can see quotations from people from all over the world talking about what they think is culture. While watching the video, the students take notes as the information presented in the video can be very helpful for later activities. Via this video the students get some more input on the concept of culture and understand that to different people, culture means different things and that these definitions can be highly personal. The video makes visible to them that culture does not only refer to rather obvious elements such as languages that are spoken or a certain kind of food or music; they rather recognize that there is much more to culture than what they have previously thought of.

After having watched the video twice, the students quickly recapitulate and talk about the statements that came up in the video. They begin to understand that the concept of culture is very hard to grasp and that culture more or less comprises everything in mankind's existence. They thus acknowledge how immensely broad this concept is and that it is almost impossible to give one finite and all-encompassing definition of what a culture is and of what it includes. Furthermore, they become aware of the fact that many people constantly use the term culture in random conversations without even knowing

¹⁰ The video can be watched under
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57KW6RO8Rcs&feature=related>

what the word actually means and that it is necessary to make up one's mind before talking about something that difficult to define.

The next activity takes the student even one step further as they engage in a 10 minutes pair work where they make an attempt to create their own personal definition of the concept of culture. With all the input given before and the discussions based on the video clip, they try to process the information, their own thoughts and ideas to put them into one coherent paragraph on what culture is and embodies according to them. To support their work even more, the teacher puts up an overhead slide containing Edward Hall's iceberg model of culture – I have already presented this model in the theory part of this paper. After they have finished this activity, some groups, on a voluntary basis, read out what they have come up with; the results are hence presented and compared. By means of comparing and contrasting the different definitions, the students understand that all the definitions are correct in their own way. Moreover, they come to the conclusion that there is no definite explanation of the concept – they accept that culture is something very personal and can never be finite. They see that a culture can never be finished; that it is not stable and constantly subject to change and fluctuation.

The remaining five minutes of the lesson are dedicated to explaining the students their homework. They are asked to do a short brainstorming at home and think of all the elements that make up their individual culture – they can include elements coming from their ethnical background, their religion, their nationality – whichever factors are important to them and constitute the characteristics of their individual culture.

Conclusion

The three lesson plans presented in the section above contain teaching suggestions related to *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. The focus has been put on the concept of culture based on Sherman Alexie's novel. Needless to say that learning about the elements that constitute a culture is just

one factor of Intercultural Learning and the work with Sherman Alexie's novel can be the basis for many more intercultural activities in class. Some of them can still be closely connected to the book itself: the students can think of their own surroundings, which means their neighborhood or their school environment, and investigate if there are people that can be compared to the character of Arnold Spirit from the novel. They can think of similarities between these people and also differences – the people they think of can face similar but also very different problems that complicate their life. It is definitely possible that we find 'Austrian Arnolds' in our own society – nonetheless it is always vital to highlight the fact that Arnold is an individual in a different society who tells his unique story.

4.2. “A Short History of Indians in Canada” by Thomas King

“A Short History of Indians in Canada” (SHIC) is a short story written by Thomas King and it is part of a short story collection from 2005 that carries the same name. Thomas King is one of the most famous writers of fiction about Canada’s native people and is commonly included in the First Nations canon of Canada. Today he works as university professor in the field of Native Literature and Creative Writing (Northwest Passages). He himself has an aboriginal background: his father is Cherokee and his mother is of Greek and German descent.

4.2.1. Plot summary of “A Short History of Indians in Canada”

The short story “A Short History of Indians in Canada” tells the story of Bob Hayne, a business man who is in Toronto for the first time. He is bored in his hotel room and talks to the hotel’s doorman who tells him to go to Bay Street to find some entertainment. On Bay Street he becomes the witness of a rather bizarre scenario: He looks up into the sky and sees native people flying into the city, smash against high buildings and then fall down to the ground. Suddenly two men, Bill and Rudy, jump out of a vehicle and tell Bob that their job is to clean the streets from dead natives or nurse hurt ones back to health. Bob watches them do their job for a while and then goes back to his hotel.

4.2.2. “A Short History of Indians in Canada” and Thomas King’s unique way of writing

Before moving on to discussing the short story and analyzing it, I will cite a statement from the publishing house of Thomas King’s collection that gives a perfect impression on what to expect when one reads his latest short stories.

Thomas King is back in fabulous, fantastical form in this latest collection of short stories [...]. Compiled in a comic *tour de force*,

all of the selections in *A Short History of Indians in Canada* are showcases for King's wholly original brand of imagination and wit. In 20 tales, King pokes a sharp stick into the gears of the native myth-making machine, slyly exposing the raw underbelly of both historical and contemporary native-white relationships. Through the laughter, these stories shimmer brightly with the universal truths that unite us (HarperCollins Canada).

This acknowledgment perfectly depicts Thomas King's style of writing and it also tells the reader what his stories primarily are concerned with: the complicated relationship between white and aboriginal people in Canada.

The short story itself is only one and a half pages long, yet it is heavily loaded with precious references that give the reader valuable material to work with. At the beginning, when reading it for the first time, the story does not seem to mean anything and it is definitely necessary to read it again to fully understand what it might be about. It resembles an absurdist scene rather than a meaningful story and it is hard to make sense of it first, but then, after some contemplating, most of the readers will be puzzled by what they have just read and might not believe how bluntly and boldly King displays white-native Canadian affairs.

Making sense of King's stories is considerably difficult as they are highly ambiguous and rather vague and deceptive; deceptive in a way that the story raises certain expectations and all of a sudden the reader finds himself in the middle of events that he/she has not anticipated at all. He manages to present First Nations affairs in a deeply shocking and disturbing way and he definitely has the skill to startle the reader with his provocative way of presenting the content. He tells his story with a special humor and quirkiness and tends to be very satirical. Sometimes it is very hard to take the harsh reality that this humor highlights; a reality that has the power of leaving the reader profoundly absorbed by the story long after its reading.

In SHIC, King uses an extended metaphor of native people as migratory birds which hit Torontonians' skyscrapers during their night migration. Before morning traffic comes along, their bodies are swept out of view, discarded if dead or

rehabilitated and released again if only stunned or injured. This metaphor first of all presents native Canadians as animals, meaning that they are inferior to the white people and that white people do not concede rational intelligence to them, the possibility to speak a human language or other characteristics that are said to differentiate human beings from animals. Moreover, it evokes the feeling that white Canadians seem to feel ashamed of their aboriginal fellow citizens and try to hide them from the public eye by cleaning up the streets after they have fallen to the ground. Thus, in the morning, there will be no proof at all of what happened at night and nobody will be disturbed by the sight of inferior natives.

Due to King's unique style of writing, his text requires a lot of reading between the lines and leaves room for interpreting likewise. Furthermore, while reading this confusing, yet amazingly clear and blunt short story, many thoughts are provoked in one's head. Why is it that white Canadians feel ashamed about native people in their country? How can they dare to compare them to wild animals? How can they dare to feel superior to them? And finally, how can peaceful and fair cohabitation of different groups be possible if one of them emerges as superior group and the others are perceived as inferior?

King's style of writing and his rather provocative way of presenting the relationship between white Canadians and aboriginal people shows that it still is really complicated and troublesome. This is the case even after many centuries of living together on the same ground. Apart from this, it unveils that apparently there has not been a remarkable change over time in how white people perceive aboriginal people and in how they are still discriminated against on different levels. It is important to mention that white-aboriginal tensions definitely are a societal phenomenon and that the public discourse about this problem exists; I personally have already been witness to this phenomenon and can thus only emphasize the importance of dealing with bringing those population groups together more closely.

4.2.3. “A Short History of Indians in Canada” and its value to the EFL classroom

Thomas King's short story proves to be excellent material for teaching at school¹¹. Although the language used in the story is not very sophisticated (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages I suggest that it ranges on a B1 level), one should not use this short story for teaching students under the age of 17 or 18 years. It is advisable to consider the text for the work with older and more experienced students (7th or 8th form AHS) because the text demands more developed interpretation and reading between the lines skills. Thus, from a purely linguistic point of view, the short story should be easy to understand for students at this level. For most young students this text might be too complex, because they have not gained enough experience in interpreting texts yet – for older students in contrast it might be a suitable challenge and a welcome possibility to prove their interpretation skills.

In addition to this challenging opportunity, the short story offers itself as wonderful ground on which to work with the concepts of stereotyping and prejudice. As the students who read the text are already at the end of the upper secondary form, it is possible to develop and discuss these concepts further and go into more detail with their definitions. This creates favorable circumstances for the students in which they can elaborate their understanding of stereotyping and prejudice, of how their attitudes originate, thereupon function and of how society, the media and other factors heavily influence their formation and shape. Thus, the students' horizons of how to think of people stemming from different cultural or ethnical backgrounds can be broadened and they can realize how the images in their heads are modified and defined by outer factors. The time spent on discussing these elements will contribute a lot to their attitude towards differences in culture(s) and it will foster their ability for empathy and hence support Intercultural Learning in the classroom. I argue that this text is a wonderful basis for Intercultural Learning purposes as it opens up

¹¹ “School” here means AHS – Allgemein Bildende Höhere Schulen in the Austrian school system.

the question about intercultural problems in Canada that can continuatively be the basis for increasing the students' intercultural competence in interpreting and understanding their own and other cultures.

4.2.4. Lesson plans for “A Short History of Indians in Canada”

In the following section I will present 3 lesson plans that contain suggestions for the teaching of SHIC in the EFL classroom. It shall be mentioned at this point that these three lesson plans are only exemplary as the work with the short story, naturally, can – and should – be extended to more than 3 lessons only. It offers manifold possibilities of working with the students, but presenting all of them would definitely surpass the limits of this paper.

Lesson Plan 1/3

Target Group: 8th form upper secondary (AHS)

Time: 50 minutes

Assumption: The short story has not been read yet and the students are not familiar with its content. The students might have some knowledge about the country or the culture(s), but the information has not explicitly been given to them.

Objective: After this lesson the students

- know what the story is about
- can express how they feel after having read the story
- understand at least some reasons for Thomas King's way of presenting the story

- understand the representation of cultural tensions from the perspective from a voice from within the exemplary minority culture

- activate their empathetic potential and open up for the problematic situation of the First Nations

Material: the copies of the short story

Abbreviations: T = teacher; C = class;

TIME	CONTENT / ACTIVITY	AIMS	MATERIAL	INTERACTION FORMAT
10 ‘	1) <u>Distribution of copies and introduction.</u> the students guess from title what story might be about	The students activate their creative potential		T - C
15 ‘	2) <u>Reading of the story.</u> - students read and - take notes	The students - are familiar with the content of the story and - get first impressions of this content	copies of the short story; a sheet of paper to take notes;	none
20 ‘	3) <u>Class discussion.</u> - the students and the teacher talk about the story and about how the students feel after reading it. - vocabulary work and introduction of new adjectives	The students - show that they are familiar with the story’s content. - interpret the text - express their thoughts and feelings about the story. - learn new adjectives	copies of the story; the notes they took while reading; the words the teacher tells them;	T – C
5 ‘	4) <u>Explanation of homework.</u> the teacher explains to the student what is expected from them for their homework	The students - write a text and - express their thoughts and feelings in words that are appropriate for written language		T – C

The first lesson concerned with “A Short History of Indians in Canada” is spent with a short pre-reading activity, the reading of the story and a post-reading discussion in class. It prepares the students for the content of the short story and Thomas King’s special way of presenting it. Apart from that, it helps them with channeling their feelings that might be created while reading the story and it helps them to express these feelings. I am convinced that empathetic students will be somehow shocked and disturbed by what they get to read. Thus, the teacher will be required to help them with the necessary vocabulary so that they can convey their thoughts.

Before starting with the reading of the short story, it is interesting to hear what the students think the story will be about. They only get its title, which shows, they might predict, the story’s content rather obviously as it is named “A Short History of Indians in Canada”. They might most likely tell the teacher that the text recounts the history of Canadian aboriginal peoples. The teacher asks them what they think this might look like, how the Indians’ story is presented in the text. The answers to this question can be very manifold and creative; yet I believe that most of the students will assume that they will read an account of the history of aboriginal people in Canada in chronological order, similar to a history book. Due to the fact that the students – supposedly – do not know Thomas King, they, naturally, cannot know what to expect and get their guesses wrong. Thus, they might be even more surprised and startled when they notice that their hypotheses are false. Moreover, these wrong assumptions can be talked about later and the connection between title and content can be discussed.

After the first 10 minutes of introducing the short story, the students get 15 minutes (as the story is not very long, this time span should be enough) for reading the story twice or even more often. Apart from reading the story, the students are asked to take notes of those elements or passages in the story that catch their eye most and that are especially striking to them. They are told to give reasons for their choice. After the reading, the class goes on to discussing the story. The students and the teacher talk about its (presumed) content or rather of what they can make of the story, as with this story it is hard

to ever really say what its content or its meaning is. They compare their pre-reading thoughts with the impressions they have after reading the story. The students make up their mind about it and talk about how they feel after reading the story; the teacher encourages the students to tell their classmates what atmosphere and mood the story creates for them individually and gives them the opportunity to openly share their opinion.

Naturally, it is likely that some students already have some knowledge about aboriginal peoples around the world; a fact that renders understanding the story and making meaning of it easier for them as this story definitely withdraws from being open to classic interpretation. These students might be shocked and agitated due to the way the story presents native people and to how white people seem to degrade them. Others, in contrast, students, whose interpretation skills are not very elaborate yet, might not even have fully grasped what the story is about. Hence, it is necessary to reprocess the story and work through it with the students.

It is indispensable to talk about how the students think and feel after reading SHIC as even to experienced readers and people who concern themselves more often with literature about aboriginal peoples, Thomas King's provocative way of telling a story can seem rather confusing and harsh. Thus, the teacher is required to ask the students systematic questions¹² to rework the story and make sure that they completely understand it. Of course, the questions can already go one step further and lead the students away from the story's content only and towards an interpretation (it is arguable if in this story content and interpretation can actually be separated) and towards finding possible reasons for King's choice of writing. Naturally, it is necessary to remind the students that one can never definitely know what an author means with his/her story and that all interpretations simply remain what they are –attempts of explaining the meaning of somebody else's creative work. In the course of the discussion in class, the teacher has the opportunity of introducing new vocabulary to the students. As they are required to express their feelings about the story, it is

¹² Please find examples for these questions attached to the paper.

essential to equip them with the necessary vocabulary to do so. In case they lack a word to express what they feel, the teacher provides them with this word. In this way, their vocabulary range can be enlarged. As the discussion after the reading is the point of most importance in this lesson, it is granted 20 minutes¹³. In case the discussion really appeals to the students and their concentration allows it, the teacher can give them even more time to talk about the story as in King's case the impression his story makes is of utmost interest. During the discussion the students take notes again which will later help them with writing their homework.

At the end of the lesson the teacher explains the homework to the students. They are asked to write a short text, not longer than 150 words, about what has been talked about in the discussion. Their task is to take the thoughts and feelings about the story that have been addressed in the conversation in class and transform them into a coherent piece of writing. They are expected to use the notes that they have taken down during the reading and discussion of the story as well as the newly learned vocabulary to write the text; the teacher reminds them of integrating conjunctions and linking words to give the text fluency and cohesion.

¹³ 20 minutes is the maximum time span for one single task as most teenagers and adults are not able to sustain their undivided attention for a longer time period.

Lesson plan 2/3

Target Group: 8th form upper secondary (AHS)

Time: 50 minutes

Assumption: The short story has been read and the students are familiar with its content.

Objective: After this lesson the students

- understand that power relations and power struggles exist all over the world, as well as differences between people from different backgrounds
- understand that even in Austria these power struggles exist and that there is a need of ameliorating the situation between different population groups
- activate their empathetic potential for people in their direct surrounding

Material: the copies of the short story

Abbreviations: T = teacher; C = class = C, G = group

TIME	CONTENT / ACTIVITY	AIMS	MATERIAL	INTERACTION FORMAT
5 '	1) <u>Revision</u> of the last lesson	The students remember what was discussed after the novel had been read	notes from the last lesson	C – T
15'	2) <u>General discussion</u> about - the white-aboriginal relationship in Canada and other countries. - power relations in Austria and Germany	The students - are familiar with certain expressions (majority/minority culture). - understand that the relation between different groupings is problematic in more than just in Canada		C - T
25'	3) <u>Web quest/group discussion</u> about - which groups in Austria might face problems similar to native peoples - possible reasons for these problems.	The students - find out which groups in Austria are concerned with discriminatory problems - express their attitudes and opinions about power relations in other countries than Canada. - argue convincingly if discrimination and power relations are natural and thus acceptable or need to be demolished	computers	G
5'	4) <u>Explanation of homework</u>			T – C
	<u>Collection</u> of homework from last lesson			T – C

At the beginning of the second lesson a 10 minutes revision of what has been talked about in the last lesson takes place. The students repeat what they have read and what has been said about the story after its reading. They do not only repeat its content and what they made out of it, but also what becomes apparent about the relationship between white people and aboriginal people via the story. Naturally, the students can also refer to the little essays they have written and tell their colleagues about their ideas and thoughts.

After the revision of last lesson, the students engage in a discussion about white-aboriginal relationships in Canada. The teacher asks systematic and purposeful questions to lead the students towards thinking of other countries who have a colonial and post-colonial history (well known examples for this category are New Zealand and Australia whose indigenous people, the Maori and Aborigines made similar experiences to the indigenous peoples in Canada and the US). This is another step for the students to see that other countries have a common past with Canada and the US; that the relationship between aboriginal people and the successors of the white colonizers in these countries is tense and complicated too. The students understand that these intercultural tensions and power struggles are not unique and exclusive to North America but that they exist in different regions of the world.

After this first part of the discussion, the teacher leads the students away from specific aboriginal-white relationships and asks them whether in Austria one can also perceive tensions between certain population groups. To give the students the possibility to find out more about this topic, they are asked to do group web quests in the school's computer room. They think and research about whether some of these groupings might be treated differently due to their origins or other features, such as skin color or religious beliefs. While fulfilling this task and talking about the topic, the students realize that not only the tensions between native people and white people are worth mentioning and worth being talked about, but that in our own surroundings, power struggles and superiority-minority issues are on the daily agenda as well. With this discussion, the students acknowledge that the Austrian population is very mixed already and that this mixture is by no means negative. Naturally, the students are

encouraged to think of possible differences between these groups, but in the same moment they are encouraged to think of similarities that can be the basis for a peaceful cohabitation. Apart from answering these questions, the students are also asked whether they think that discrimination is a phenomenon that naturally accompanies power related struggles between different population groupings. By means of this directed conversation in class and some guiding questions, the students are led further into a general discussion about equality and discrimination in Austria's society.

The students' homework consists of a little brainstorming that addresses the students' creativity. They are asked to think of convincing ideas of how to overcome discrimination and of how it might be possible to equally integrate people into our society. I am well aware that this is a really difficult task and that this is exactly what nobody, not even politicians, has managed to do so far – thus, the teacher restricts “society” to their school environment, to make the task easier for the students. Apart from this instruction, the teacher tells them to imagine what they would wish for if they were in the situation of the ‘outsider’ coming into a new surrounding or living in a surrounding where people often are judged by their origins and background. For this homework it is not necessary to write a coherent text; they just write down some ideas (in the form of a list of points, for example) that come to their mind and can be used in the discussions in the following lesson. With this activity the students become aware of the fact that, naturally, people are different from each other due to the most diverse factors, but that in a world like ours, marked by immigration and heterogeneity, they need to learn to accept these differences and welcome them as enrichment to their own personal horizon. This, of course, does not happen simply by itself without useful impulses and initiatives – and in their homework the students try to find ways of solving the problem of integration at least on the level of their school surrounding.

Lesson plan 3/3

Target Group: 8th form upper secondary (AHS)

Time: 50 minutes

Assumption: The short story has been read and the students are familiar with its content and have a basic understanding of the underlying meaning.

Objective: After this lesson the students

- understand different concepts such as stereotype and prejudice and how they are formed and influenced
- understand how these can be overcome and how better intercultural communication can be fostered
- understand that foremost people's attitudes need to change in order to achieve better communication and understanding between different people

Material: the copies of the story "The Smith family"; their homework; the worksheet for "The Smith family"

Abbreviations: T = teacher; S = student; C = class; P = pair work;

TIME	CONTENT / ACTIVITY	AIMS	MATERIAL	INTERACTION FORMAT
5'	1) <u>Revision</u> of the last lesson.			
10'	2) <u>Collection</u> of ideas (homework) for better integration on the blackboard	The students - share their ideas - show in how far they think immigrants can be better integrated into society - understand that foremost people's attitudes need to change to reach better understanding	their notes from the homework	S – C – T
10'	3) <u>Reading</u> of the “Smith family” story	The students start to understand the concepts of prejudice and stereotyping (→ bottom-up process)	copies of the story	C
10'	4) <u>Review</u> of the story and <u>discussion</u> What can be taken out of that story?	The students - understand why John used to think about the Smith family the way he did - understand how his preconceptions are formed and influenced by different factors.		T – C
15'	5) <u>Pair work</u> : completion of work sheet	The students - make up their mind if all these things can also happen in their environment - hopefully absorb some basic guidelines for fair cohabitating	copies of the worksheet	P

The first minutes of the lesson are dedicated to the revision of the last lesson. The students are asked to talk to their neighbor about the contents of last lesson's brainstormings and discussions.

After these first minutes of revision the teacher tells the students to take out their homework to present their ideas for the amelioration of foreigners' integration into society. The students share their suggestions with the rest of the class so that all of the ideas can be collected and briefly discussed. An important factor that definitely needs to be addressed here is that it does not only suffice to plan social events or meetings to bring people from Austria and people from other countries or backgrounds together. In order to make them feel welcome and accepted, it is indispensable and a precondition for living together that people's attitudes are open and unbiased. By means of this collection of ideas and talking about them the teacher tries to lead the students towards learning about delicate subjects such as stereotyping and prejudice which will be worked with in the next tasks.

The third activity in this lesson is a reading task. The students read the story of a man named John whose new neighbors, the Smiths, apparently are Amish people. John has a rather biased opinion about this family, only based on what he had previously heard about Amish people, their customs and on what he superficially observes with the Smith family. The story is taken from *Intercultural Communication* written by Adrian Holliday, Martin Hyde and John Kullman. With the reading of this story, the students become aware of how John reduces his neighbor "according to a prescribed stereotype" (Holliday 22). What the reader can witness in this story is a combination of four interconnected concepts: stereotype, prejudice, otherization and culturism. The students are not confronted with definitions of these concepts before reading the story; the story itself should be the trigger for the students to think about them (bottom-up process). They might not be able to exactly name the concepts or how to put their thoughts into words, but the teacher can elicit it from the students. It is very likely that they will criticize John's behavior in the discussion afterwards and argue that his speculations were neither right nor fair.

As already mentioned above, John had formed a stereotype based on his observations of the Smith family. Holliday argues that stereotypes are often influenced by prejudice, which in turn might lead to otherization. According to them, John was influenced by movies he had seen about Amish people who led him to believe in the stereotype that is manifested in the story. They further argue that if

he had simply observed what he saw and heard of them in situ, without prior images, he would have had a far more complex picture of them. To compound this, were his a priori negative feelings about so-called 'fundamentalist' Christians – his prejudices – so that his final otherization of his neighbors reduced them to people who would never watch television, would always think it evil and, by extension, would not appreciate the complexities of such modern phenomena as Diana's funeral. One may think, so what? Amish people are strange and odd, and restrict their behaviour and opt out of 'normal' life. The point is that John judged his neighbours, and categorized them, and decided what they would and would not be before really investigating who they were as individuals (23).

This explanation is included in the following discussion with the students as it is the story's aim to precisely point out these concepts. Via this bottom-up process the students discuss the story and thus finally arrive at the concepts of stereotyping, prejudice and of stigmatizing people as the Other. Letting them read another story to eventually get them to understand all these concepts is an improved way of learning about them because it gives the students the opportunity to work out the concepts by themselves instead of simply being confronted with their definitions.

During the discussion the students are handed a worksheet that they are asked to complete with their neighbor afterwards – it is attached to this paper and I kindly ask you to have a look at it before continuing reading here.

Question number 1 might already be answered during the discussion in class. With the knowledge they have acquired while reading the story and during the guided discussion afterwards, they should be able to answer the questions and complete the short fill in activity. Before continuing with question 4, 5 and 6 the students find some guidelines that facilitate how to talk to and interact with

people that seem different from themselves. These guidelines are also taken from Holliday and I have adapted them for the students' needs and their language level. The students are expected to read these guidelines and then make up their minds about them and talk about them with their neighbor. They discuss if they think that these guidelines are helpful and good advice for their further encounters with people coming from other backgrounds.

All the discussions have the purpose of improving their understanding of how images about other people are constructed and of how they can prevent society, television or other media from influencing their attitudes too much. By means of these activities the students should be able to name specific concepts that are of importance for the construction of their ideas of the Other and of how to overcome them to become more open-minded and unbiased.

Please find all the texts, overhead transparencies, worksheets and other material attached to this paper.

4.3. Halfbreed by Maria Campbell

In the following section I will present a concise analysis of the novel *Halfbreed* by Maria Campbell that will be then followed by three exemplary lesson plans for the EFL classroom. *Halfbreed* is an autobiographical novel written by Maria Campbell, a Canadian author of Métis descent, and it was published in 1973. In the novel she tells the story of the first 33 years of her life, reporting her struggles as Métis woman in Canadian society.

4.3.1. Plot summary

Campbell is of Scottish, French and aboriginal descent and is born as the eldest daughter into a family with seven children. Living in very poor social circumstances, harassed by white people as well as First Nation groups, she leads a harsh life in northern Saskatchewan, Canada. When she is 12 years old her mother dies, leaving behind her helpless father and 7 children, one of them still a baby. As the oldest one she tries to keep the family together, the house in order and to not neglect school; apart from that she tries to prevent authorities from coming to their home to take the smaller children away and thus tearing the family apart. At one point in the novel – Maria is already married to an invidious, but wealthy man – the children are taken away and her family breaks apart. She then moves to Vancouver with her daughter Lisa (she gives birth to her first child when she is only 15 years old) and her husband. After their separation her life becomes even worse: Maria's further life is marked by poverty, alcoholism, domestic violence and other demolishing factors, such as prostitution, drug abuse as well as attempts to commit suicide. After her suicide attempts Campbell starts to attend meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous where she meets members of a newly emerging Natives' movement in which she becomes immersed and by whose help she starts recovering.

4.3.2. The Métis and Campbell's portrait of their daily life challenges

Many people nowadays do not know about the Métis. They mistake native people for one uniform mass and do not realize that there are many different forms of aboriginal peoples in Canada as well as different subgroups and various tribes. There are not only 'First Nations', as they are officially referred to in Canada, who themselves already represent 50 different nations (First Nations <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ap/fn/index-eng.asp> 4 August 2011) but also others, such as the Inuit, the inhabitants of the Canadian North and the Métis, or, as they are sometimes called, 'Halfbreeds'¹⁴. The name already suggests in how far these people differ from the rest of the aboriginal groups: they are a mixed people and stem from the fusion of European settlers and native people in Canada. This people, having very heterogeneous origins, first appeared in the 18th century (Sarkowsky). They differ greatly from the First Nations (aboriginal people without European ancestors) in terms of their history, their language, their cultural practices and their spiritual beliefs (First Nations).

As becomes evident throughout Campbell's novel, the differences between the Métis and the First Nations¹⁵ do not only show in their origins, language, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs; but according to Campbell there are many more discrepancies. The Métis do not live on reserves, as many First Nations do; moreover, their attitude towards life and spirit varies greatly. Campbell often mentions that her kind are very lively and loud people, people who love to laugh and dance whereas the First Nations seem to be rather quiet and dignified (*Halfbreed* 26). Nonetheless, and I will discuss this in greater detail later in this chapter as the two groups also share many problems: poverty, drug abuse, alcoholism and domestic violence are daily dilemmas in the First Nations' as well as the Métis' lives.

¹⁴ According to the Oxford Dictionaries Online, the correct spelling of the word is 'half-breed' but Maria Campbell chose the spelling "Halfbreed". Citing from her book, I will hence adopt her spelling. Yet, I will not actively use the word in my thesis as it is pejorative and offending for the population group it designates. Thus, I will refer to the group as Métis, which is the politically correct term.

¹⁵ Campbell refers to the First Nations as the "Indians" – again, I will not use this term as it is politically incorrect and abusive. Apart from these implications, the term can also be misleading as also people from India are called Indians.

Campbell's objective for writing her autobiography was to present to the common reader – a supposedly non-native person – what it is like to be a Métis woman in Canadian society. Right at the beginning of her novel she states: "I write this for all of you, to tell you what it is like to be a Halfbreed woman in our country. I want to tell you about the joys and sorrows, the oppressing poverty, the frustrations and the dreams" (8). The whole book is marked by Campbell's attempts to overcome the life that she leads; her attempts to transcend poverty, to escape the violence reigning in her home and in the home of other Métis and her aspirations for leading a better life, far away from the meager circumstances she has to endure.

4.3.3. Stylistic elements in *Halfbreed*

Campbell's style of writing differs greatly from what the reader encounters in *The Absolutely True Diary Of a Part-Time Indian* or "A Short History of Indians in Canada", where we often only get fragmented sentences, simple phrases or even one-word sentences. Although it is a first person narration as well, it has not much in common with for instance Sherman Alexie's novel, where the story is told from the perspective of a fourteen year-old. Campbell's narrator, in contrast, is unmistakably an adult woman telling her life story in retrospective – an element that definitely manifests itself in the different approach of writing. The sentences are more complex and elaborate; the vocabulary is more sophisticated and complicated.

Alexie's writing is dominated by sarcasm and black humor, his first person narrator tries to deal with the problems he faces by making fun of them and by trying to not take them too seriously to prevent them from taking over his life. This attitude is also mirrored in the style of writing Alexie takes on in this novel: the words and the style of writing resemble a 14 year old teenage boy. As in Alexie's case, *Halfbreed* is full of bitterness and anger and a very tangible undertone of dark sarcasm, almost cynical, disperses throughout the novel. Whereas Arnold's way of telling his story makes the reader guffaw, *Halfbreed* only has some small instances that will make the reader laugh. The story told is

so sad and bitter that it might rather make the reader cry. In the beginning, when Maria is still an innocent young girl, one might smirk when reading about her childish tricks she sometimes plays on people. Yet, the older she gets and the harsher her life becomes, the more the reader will feel with her and sense her sadness, despair and anger.

4.3.4. *Halfbreed* in the EFL classroom

I am well aware of the fact that this story, due to its content and the ambiance it creates, might be difficult to digest for some students, as it openly shows how poverty and bad social circumstances can drive people into prostitution and drug abuse. All these facets are portrayed in detail and without drawing a curtain over how desperate people can be to make them decline even further socially and drift into prostitution etc. However, I believe that this book, although it is not exactly recent being already more than 40 years old, still gives an incomparably unconcealed and honest account of life as aboriginal person in Canada. Furthermore, it shows how simple assistances and concessions granted by the white Canadian majority could vastly help those peoples.

Undoubtedly, this book can only be worked on with rather mature students in upper secondary forms. I suggest dealing with this book in either the 7th or 8th grade of AHS, as both content and language are very complex. Hence, the book is not appropriate for younger students. Topics, such as prostitution and drug abuse – when described in the way as is done in this novel – are not destined for the work with young students. Even for me, some parts of this novel were hard to deal with – thus, naturally, one cannot hand this book to young students as the content is not suitable for them. As already mentioned before, the language level of the novel is rather high (B2 or even B2+); it might hence only be understood by students who have an equally high level of proficiency in English. Younger children might understand parts of it, but definitely not all students of a lower class would do so. This then might lead to a high level of frustration as they really try to read and understand the novel but

simply cannot, because their range of vocabulary and their understanding of grammatically complex sentences would still be far too limited.

4.3.5. The main topics and themes in *Halfbreed*

In the following pages I will discuss the most important topics and themes that occur in *Halfbreed*. In the same way as I did with the other texts, I will identify the topics that are at a teacher's disposal for intercultural work in the EFL classroom.

White superiority, conflict with First Nations and their results

The most striking element that runs like a red thread throughout the entire autobiography is the outstanding poverty that Maria, her family and other Métis in their neighborhood suffer from. Maria retraces the beginnings of their scarce lives to the outset of white rule over aboriginal people in Canada (13) which gave rise to a vicious circle for aboriginal people that is almost impossible to escape from without miraculous intervention: white superiority led to land loss and thus social exclusion and marginalization of the aboriginal people; this in turn induced their lives in shabby old houses, unemployment as well as poverty. This hardship, again, led to despair and hopelessness, which then resulted in alcoholism, drug abuse and violence. As one can apprehend, Maria and the other Métis people find themselves in an almost intractable state of affairs that they run jeopardy of being broken by.

After the well-known wars between white settlers and aboriginal people, the so-called Riel Rebellion that started in 1869, all the land was confiscated by the Land Improvement District Authorities and the Métis “drifted back to the road lines and crown lands where they built cabins and barns” (13).

So began a miserable life of poverty which held no hope for the future. That generation of my people was completely beaten. Their fathers had failed during the Rebellion to make a dream come true; they failed as farmers; now there was

nothing left. Their way of life was a part of Canada's past and they saw no place in the world around them, for they believed they had nothing to offer. They felt shame, and with shame the loss of pride and the strength to live each day. [...] And there are some who even after a hundred years continue to struggle for equality and justice for their people. The road for them is never-ending and full of frustrations and heart-break (13).

In this regard, Maria seems to be the exception to the rule, as she always emphasizes that all the Métis around her have lost their hope in the improvement of their disastrous situation. For the Métis it might be even more pernicious that they have also lost their pride and dignity as they are beaten and defeated by the white people who let them feel that their presence is not appreciated. In the first chapters of her book Maria discloses how the Métis apparently feel and behave in front of white people:

I never saw my father talk back to a white man unless he was drunk. I never saw him or any of our men walk with their heads held high before white people. However, when they were drunk they became aggressive and belligerent, and for a little while the whites would be afraid of them. Even these times were rare because often they drank too much and became pathetic, sick men, crying about the past and fighting each other or going home to beat frightened wives" (13 – 14).

This quote perfectly illustrates the distribution of power between the white Canadian population and the indigenous population. As is obvious, the Métis people, in this case Maria's father, automatically accept their artificially created inferiority by showing arched body postures as well as reserved and restrained behavior towards white people. The Métis appear to be severely afraid of the white people's mastery and the power these white people hold over them. In some way, this whole process is paradoxical to a certain extent, because Métis people bear white European blood in them; but apparently the indigenous part in them is enough for the white Canadians to suppress and humiliate the Métis just as they did with the First Nations.

In the novel Maria often talks about this problematic relationship between whites and natives and emphasizes the condescending treatment by the whites towards her people. About her grandmother Campbell she writes for example

that “[her] home was always open to anyone in the community who cared to drop in, but in the forty years she lived there no white people ever visited her home [...]” (17) – although she worked for white settlers all her life. White people even held off Maria’s mother and her from going to church at one instance. They want to go to church as they are firm Roman Catholics and a white woman whispers something in Maria’s mother’s ear upon which she immediately gets up and leaves the church (29). Maria never gets to know what that woman told her mother, but one can imagine that it could not have been very warm words that made her mother jump up and walk out of the church.

The Métis are confronted with heavy prejudice by the white people: during the summers they go into towns to sell berries and other food they have collected and the white people insult and offend them just because of their mixed heritage: “Halfbreeds are in town, hide your valuables” (36) and other insults are voiced. When Maria recounts these situations she again emphasizes the change in the Métis behavior addressed a few paragraphs above: “I noticed a change in my parents’ and other adults’ attitudes. They were happy and proud until we drove into town, then everyone became quiet and looked different. The men walked in front, looking straight ahead, their wives behind, and, I can never forget this, they had their heads down and never looked up” (36). These words again demonstrate very well how the Métis people feel ashamed for their heritage and their origin and how the treatment by the white people makes them think they are worthless. Instead of being proud of their unique ancestry and descent, the Métis feel the need for hiding their faces and avoid looking into the white people’s eyes so as to not give them a reason for further affronts and humiliating words. The only one who always silently protests against this and encourages Maria to not let anyone degrade her, is Cheechum, her great grandmother: “Never forget that, my girl. You always walk with your head up and if anyone says something then put out your chin and hold it higher” (36). Cheechum seems to be a very self-confident woman who does not see any reason to be ashamed for where she comes from.

Even in schools white people and indigenous people are divided into two groups. This division is openly visible: the white pupils sit on one side of the

room, native students on the other side of the room. The two groups still are in the same classroom but nonetheless separated upon request by the white people (45). This situation basically resembles a form of segregation. The white children and the Métis children often are involved in fights: the white children like to provoke the others and Maria and her Métis friends, having a rather rebellious and belligerent nature, do not hesitate to fight back – tooth and nail if necessary to defend her and her friends' honor.

At some point in the story the Métis people begin to think that their situation could be ameliorated when they meet a politician who awakens in them the idea that indigenous people should be part of the country's politics just like white people. They do not want to accept the fact anymore that white people make all the decisions – decisions that also affect them. Maria's father also gets heavily involved into this new movement. They talk about a "strong united voice that would demand justice for [their] people" (65); a voice that can not be ignored by the government. Naturally, all these aspirations are ridiculed by the white people; even other Métis people who do not believe in the success of this intervention laugh at Maria's father and his fellow combatants – predicting what eventually really happens: the undertaking fails and Maria's father falls into a deep depression (66 – 67).

Throughout the whole novel, up to the last pages, one can find many situations and examples that exemplify the tense relationship between white Canadians and their indigenous fellow landmen. Only discussing the representation of this could fill a whole paper; thus I will proceed with the next prominent topics of the novel.

Maria's attempts to escape poverty

During the first thirty years of her life, Maria strives for release from the never-ending hardship aggravating her and her family's lives, but it seems to her that all her efforts are in vain. Her family has never had a lot – neither a nice house nor food or clothes or money – but they always stick together and manage to make their way through life and survive. At some points the resources of food are so scarce that the family does not even touch their supplies of flour to save it for even worse times or special occasions such as Christmas (49). The children take advantage of these particular holidays and “stuff [...themselves...] until they hurt, because it would be a year before [... they would] eat like that again” (51). At one point in her story, their father is arrested and sentenced to six months in jail for hunting out of season. Maria remembers that these six months as some of the hardest in her life as they barely have food to eat and no money left to buy supplies. After her mother's death, their life circumstances get even worse. Maria is twelve years old and should go to school, but instead she takes care of her 6 siblings and fulfills the chores of a mother and a father, as the father abandons the family for weeks sometimes. Maria wants to quit school to be there for the family all the time, but her father does not allow it because in his opinion, education is the most precious gift one can get (71-72).

The unacceptable situation the children find themselves in becomes very striking, when a nurse brings home the last baby their mother gave birth to and after whose birth she died; they simply forgot the baby at the hospital and when it is brought home they do not even have any milk to feed it with (73). Yet, they do not want the authorities to know of their dilemma because they fear their family will be torn apart. At some point Maria's father starts collecting leftovers from other families to be able to feed his children. Nonetheless, the family refuses to let other people help them; they want to conserve the little pride that they have left and do not want to be helped by people who normally avoid them and laugh at them (92) – a situation that is unimaginable for people in a society like ours.

Clinging on to hope and finding a way out of misery

Throughout her life and despite all the negative things that happen to Maria, she never loses hope, especially encouraged to stay strong by her great grandmother Cheechum. Even when she grows up, poverty does not leave her and her family, the circumstances in which they live become continuously worse. Maria then makes a portentous decision: she decides to make life better for herself and her siblings and marries a man that she does not love, but who will bring money to the family. She does all this, because she thinks it is the only solution to their poor situation and will help her fulfill her everlasting dreams of a bright future: “I longed for something different for us; [...] I didn’t want to be like our women who had nothing but kids, black eyes and never enough of anything; [...] I didn’t want my brothers to be like the men around us, who just live each day with nothing to look forward to except the weekend drunks” (86). Hence, she is even willing to sacrifice herself as a person, physically, and her own happiness.

Alcohol and drug abuse, prostitution and domestic violence

As already described in the first part of this chapter, the Métis seem to find themselves in a rather hopeless and unsolvable situation caused by their suppression and the non-support by the white part of the population. This is the reason for most of the problems they are confronted with on a daily basis. Poverty and hardship are the eventual results from this complicated connection between the two groups. For many indigenous people alcohol is the last resort out of their daily dilemma; it is the only way of escaping their sad reality and getting at least a few carefree and unworried hours. The Métis in Canada do not seem to be an exception to this: according to Campbell it is a common phenomenon that, mostly the men, get drunk and become aggressive towards other people or even their own family. The sad facet to this is that the Métis children and women seem to be used to these situations and that they do not seem to be afraid or shocked by what they have to witness on a regular basis. It rather seems to be a common part of their lives that they have to deal with

the scenarios caused by alcoholics and the results these scenarios have. Sometimes the Métis men get so drunk that they rip off their women's clothes and "hit them with their fist or whips, knock [...] them down and kick [...] them until they [are] senseless"; at some point even the Métis women start to drink because their situation becomes increasingly unbearable (37).

When Maria moves to Vancouver with her daughter Lisa and her husband Darrel, her big dreamy bubble of the glorious city, where all the people are happy and rich, bursts within minutes. She ends up in a dangerous and poverty-stricken, neglected neighborhood where she does not dare to take one step out of her apartment. When her husband Darrel does not come home one day and leaves her alone with Lisa, without any money or food, Maria starts slipping into prostitution to ensure survival for her and her daughter. Through her colleagues at work she firstly gets in touch with "pills" (118). Maria quickly ends up an alcoholic and drug addict:

They helped me to sleep, they kept me happy, and most of all, I could forget about yesterday and tomorrow. [...] Once my body grew accustomed to them all they did was make me feel worse. But I continued to take them because by that time I was hooked and couldn't go on without always believing that they would make me feel really good like they had in the beginning. But they never did. I only ended up feeling numb and depressed (118).

Her drug and alcohol abuse drives Maria even further into poverty and she forgets about everything that she once loved and that once was of value to her (119). Again, she finds herself in a vicious circle she cannot escape from: she becomes just like all the Métis men she remembers from her childhood and the indigenous people she sees every day in Vancouver – drunk, intoxicated, homeless. All she ever wanted was a better life for herself and her family – and all she gets is a situation that is even more complicated and desolate, caused for the most part by white politicians who seem unwilling and reluctant to help, according to her. "Regardless of what they promise, they'll never change things [...]" (118). Here, again, the problematic relationship between white Canadians and indigenous people manifests itself. What is even more sad at this point in

the novel, is that Maria does not even have a family around her anymore that helps and supports her the way it used to be in Saskatchewan where all the Métis people helped one another when times became hard.

It is very important to talk about Maria's desolate situation with the students when dealing with the novel in class as it is a direct result of problems that many different population groups in Canadian society face. Naturally, Campbell writes about her personal fate in the 1950s and 1960s, but still, the tense situation between white Canadians and native population groups – not only the Métis but also the First Nations – has not changed a lot up to the present day. Apart from this one has to be aware of the fact that, although the words '1950s and 1960s' create the impression of times being long bygone, there are only 50 to 60 years between the time periods displayed in the novel and today. Peter Dimsday from the Assembly of First Nations in Canada even goes so far as to say that today there is still practically no equality between indigenous people and white Canadians; they co-exist next to white Canadians but they are still not properly recognized. Consequently, they have to endure either homelessness or awful housing conditions. Unemployment, alcoholism and drug abuse still are a big burden on the indigenous people's backs. He states that alcoholism and drug abuse are the result of poverty and boredom: some of the indigenous people do not have the basis for economy or they – frankly – just are not employed because of their native background (Dimsday).

All of these factors in Campbell's life can be perfectly transferred onto the indigenous people's lives today. I have seen the situation she describes with my own eyes in Vancouver. When reading the passages where Campbell describes the desolate circumstances reigning the streets of the city, it reminded me of my last visit to the city and the district around East Hastings Street which is the most problematic area in terms of drug addicts and homeless people. I can only support her report over what she sees there: "The street was filthy and [...] I felt sick as I saw the people who were there. They looked poorer than anyone I'd seen at home; there were drunks, and men who walked aimlessly and seemed not to see anything or anyone; women who

appeared as though they had endured so much ugliness that nothing could upset them” (114).

The reason why I quote this and why I insist on addressing this topic with the students is because these scenarios still happen in the streets of Canadian cities. Apparently, they are the direct results of the unwillingness of the white Canadian majority and white Canadian politicians to integrate native minority cultures into an equal and fair societal landscape. The situation there is exceptional, no doubt. But still, Austria definitely has, as already mentioned in the theory part of this paper, difficulties with the integration of minority groups likewise. Naturally, Austria is not opposed to the integration of different ethnic groups, yet Austria’s problem is the failing implementation.

4.3.6. *Halfbreed*’s usefulness for Intercultural Learning in the EFL classroom

An integral part for the success of integration undoubtedly is intercultural communication and intercultural understanding – unyielding attempts of separating people from rigid clichés and stereotyping, open conversations between members of different cultural and ethnic groups are an indispensable part of integration. Integration can, however, be a big problem not only in Austria as a country in general, but also in smaller units belonging to this entity. A classroom can definitely be counted to these units; it is not uncommon that one can hear offending and insulting words in school. To me it is, hence, logical that one needs to start working on integration and mutual acceptance already when people’s attitudes and identities are still in the fledging stages so that possible rejection towards members of other cultural or ethnic groups are nipped in the bud. Moreover, according to the curriculum for foreign languages in Austrian AHS this is actually supposed to happen in class: intercultural communication and Intercultural Learning need to be fostered. *Halfbreed* is a novel that delivers a offers the perfect basis for Intercultural Learning in the shape of an exemplary culture and an exemplary difficult relationship between

a majority and minority culture(s). Starting out from this example, students start thinking about the power distribution in their homeland and about whether they think that immigrants and 'non-Austrian' people are treated correctly – be it regarded from a political angle or from a social angle. Austrian students make up their mind about their colleagues from other backgrounds and start noticing things about them that they have not seen before; these children in turn get the possibility and most of all hopefully the courage to open up about their experiences as a foreigner in this country.

On the basis of *Halfbreed's* analysis and with the help of the themes discussed above in mind, I will now proceed with presenting three lesson plans covering activities not only dealing with Maria Campbell's novel but also Intercultural Learning tasks based on the work with the novel.

4.3.7. Lesson plans for *Halfbreed*

In this chapter I will present three lesson plans dealing with Maria Campbell's novel *Halfbreed*. It is necessary to mention again at this point that these three lesson plans are exemplary and suggestive; hence, they only demonstrate one of different approaches towards working with the book. Moreover, many more lessons can – and should – be dedicated to mere work with the text as well as work based on the book. Three lessons definitely do not suffice to alter people's attitudes and to discuss with them important topics such as migration, differences in cultural backgrounds, stereotypes and others. So please keep in mind that the next pages only contain teaching suggestions that can be changed or expanded if one desires.

Lesson plan 1/3

Target Group: 7th or 8th form upper secondary (AHS)

Time: 50 minutes

Assumption: The book has been read and the students are familiar with its content.

Objective: The students

- show that they are familiar with the novel's content
- argue why they liked or why they did not like the novel
- activate and show their empathetic potential
- embody a different person
- engage in a lively discussion in this new role

Material: copies of novels; overhead projector slide; cards with quotations; pictures of Maria Campbell and Oprah Winfrey;

Abbreviations: T = teacher; S = student; C = class; G = group; P = pair work;

TIME	CONTENT / ACTIVITY	AIMS	MATERIAL	INTERACTION FORMAT
5 '	1) How did you like the book?	The students express their opinion about the book.		T – C
5 '	2) Explanation of the questions on the overhead projector slide.	The students understand the questions and what the teacher expects from them.	overhead projector slide with the questions	T – C
15 '	3) <u>Group work</u> . The students answer content questions	The students - memorize the content of the book - are able to define special terms that appear in the novel - reactivate their knowledge of the book is	copies of the novel; handout with quotations; questions on the overhead slide;	G
15 '	4) <u>Comparison</u> of group results.	The students show what they know and get a complete but concise summary of the novel.		G – C
10'	4) <u>Preparation for homework</u> . The students - watch a short video clip from an Oprah Winfrey talk show - instructions for their homework	The students - know how to write compose a short newspaper article containing a interview review - include those elements of the talk show that were especially striking and important to them. - are able to filter important from non essential features	sheet with instructions and rules for composition	T – C

The first lesson after reading Maria Campbell's novel *Halfbreed* will be mainly dedicated to revising its content and to the preparation for an interactive task in the second lesson.

At the beginning of the lesson the teacher asks the students for their opinion on the book. I believe that it is necessary to do that because it shows that the students and their opinions are taken seriously and that their opinion really matters. Apart from conveying that their thoughts are a valuable contribution to the work with the novel, it is furthermore essential to listen to what they have to say about the novel, because it is not only a rather complex one, but the events and incidences described might have been hard to understand and digest for some of the students. They might be a little shocked by Campbell's way of telling her story, as it does not draw any curtain over her harsh reality and thus they might perceive her account as too detailed and intimate. Others, in contrast, might tell the teacher that they really like the book just because it tells Maria Campbell's destiny without forgetting to mention unattractive details. They might be of the opinion that Campbell's account does not only tell one personal story, but also gives voice to the Métis as a whole, depicting their fate as realistically as possible.

After giving their personal impression of the book, the students need to revise its content. I am convinced that it is especially important in this case, because *Halfbreed* covers a big time span and thus contains a lot of content. There is a vast amount of action and events that take place – a natural result from the actuality of Campbell's eventful life. Not all of the anecdotes given in the book are of big importance for Intercultural Learning purposes, but yet, the most essential corner posts (Maria's mother's death or when Cheechum leaves the family, for example) need to be recalled and talked about as they have a great impact on Maria and the decisions she takes.

In order to quickly go through the different stages of the book, the students are divided into 6 groups. The teacher shows the students an overhead projector slide with 6 questions; each group is assigned one question that it needs to answer. Every question covers a certain epoch of Maria's life. As an impulse for

this activity, the questions are accompanied by quotations that should serve as an inspiration for the students and help them answer the questions. Please find the questions as well as the quotations attached. The students are then asked to answer the questions together – I am sure that in a group they manage to do so, as they can work together and complete one another's thoughts. One student might remember certain parts better than the others or vice versa – and apart from all these arguments from the teacher's and pedagogy's side, it is simply more fun for students to work on a task together than being confronted with it all alone.

The students take notes and after they have finished their internal group work, the results are presented in class. One group after the other reads out their questions and then tells their answer. The teacher tells the students to take notes of what is said in class, because the students will need them for the next activity and the next lesson. In this comparison, the students have the possibility to show what they know. But yet, they are not confronted with revising the whole novel as this would be too much for each group alone. The other students can add important details to the information given during the short presentations if the group that has the floor, forgets to mention certain parts. I allocate 30 minutes to this activity as a whole; I do not think that more is needed as the work is equally distributed and all the groups should be able to finish answering their question within 15 minutes. After that, the class has 15 minutes to present their results – as they do not retell every single detail, it should be enough time for every group to talk.

After this interactive group activity, the teacher uses the last 10 minutes to explain the homework of the second lesson (the students cannot start their homework unless they have taken part in an activity fulfilled in the next lesson). The students' homework after the second lesson will be to write a newspaper article containing an interview review based on a so-called hot-chair activity that will be acted out in the next lesson. In this lesson the students will witness Maria

Campbell's conversation with a talk show host, acted out by the students themselves¹⁶.

Apart from giving the students guidelines for what to include in their interview review, the teacher advises them in terms of formalities for a text of this kind. As the students have already learned about that special text sort in previous lessons, the teacher makes a short revision and distributes a handout to the students containing some instructions and tips for their piece of writing. They recall the necessary guidelines for writing the kind of reviews that are often published in the form of a newspaper article in diverse magazines. Apart from revising how to separate the wheat from the chaff, thus filtering out the most important information and leaving out unessential elements, the teacher tells the students' to consider that it is also important to analyze how a person says something. They are told to pay attention to the choice of words or to the person's gestures and mimic during the interview – of course, for the sake of this homework, necessary details can be invented by the students to give their text more color and spice. It is indispensable to talk to them about all these criteria in order to enable them to write a meaningful text that corresponds to certain rules. Please find the handout with guidelines for the composition of a review attached. In addition to working through the handout, the teacher shows the students a short video clip of one of Oprah Winfrey's talk show interviews so that they know what they will be confronted with in the next lesson.

¹⁶ For a detailed description of the hot-chair activity please read lesson plan 2 on *Halfbreed*.

Lesson plan 2/3

Target Group: 7th or 8th form upper secondary (AHS)

Time: 50 minutes

Assumption: The book has been read and the students are familiar with its content.

Objective: The students

- show their empathetic potential and try to embody a different person
- try to see life out of this person's perspective
- engage in a lively discussion in this role

- understand that the factor racism leads to discrimination
- understand that these phenomena also exist in Austria
- find out that Austria is on the way of becoming a multicultural state but still it is not free of negative stereotyping and prejudice

- understand how interview reports are constructed by learning some guidelines for doing so

Material: copies of novels; overhead projector slide; cards with quotations; pictures of Maria Campbell and Oprah Winfrey;

Abbreviations: T = teacher; S = student; C = class; P = pair work;

TIME	CONTENT / ACTIVITY	AIMS	MATERIAL	INTERACTION FORMAT
30'	4) <u>Hot chair activity</u> . The students take on the roles of Maria Campbell and, for example, Oprah Winfrey and engage into a talk show conversation	The students - activate their empathetic potential and try to feel, talk and perceive out of Maria Campbell's perspective. - emphasize Maria Campbell's opinion and attitude on different matters	pictures of Maria Campbell and Oprah Winfrey on the blackboard	P – C – T
5'	2) <u>Resume</u> of the hot chair activity.	The students summarize and revise what has been said in the talk show performances.		T – C
15'	3) <u>Pair work</u> leading over to discrimination and xenophobia in Austria by filling out a worksheet	The students - revise that racism is the number one reason for discriminating the Métis - make the bridge to Austria and - understand that many people in Austria are often confronted with prejudice and discrimination	worksheet with questionnaire	T – C

The first activity in this lesson is a further attempt to engage the students in a meaningful and lively interaction and takes on the form of a hot chair activity: One half of the class take on the role of a talk show host, and the other half of the class put themselves into the position of Maria Campbell. The teacher tells the talk show hosts to consider 2 or 3 questions that they would ask Maria Campbell about herself and her book if they had the possibility to meet her. The 'Maria Campbells' in turn are asked to think about what they would want their interviewer and the audience to know about herself, her life and the publishing of her autobiography. After 5 minutes the teacher tells them to stop and picks one person from each group and tells them to come up to the blackboard and sit down at the teacher's table, on the 'hot chairs'. The chairs are arranged in the way we know it from famous talk shows, like for example in David Letterman's show. Behind the students there are pictures of Maria Campbell and a famous talk show host (Oprah Winfrey, for example) pinned onto the blackboard. The teacher tells the students to imagine that they are in a live talk show and that Oprah Winfrey's guest is Maria Campbell and that they talk about her and her autobiography that she has just published. After a few minutes (I suggest 3 minutes), the teacher can either click his/her fingers or use a buzzer to indicate that their time is over. The students leave the hot chair and the next pair takes the seats and continues the interview. After 2 or 3 changes, the teacher stops and asks the rest of the class for their opinion of what has been said so far. Furthermore, he/she wants to know what the students still miss in the conversation and what has not been talked about yet. After these short impulses, the teacher appoints the next pair of interview partners. This procedure is maintained for about 30 minutes and consumes most of the time in this lesson.

I believe that the hot chair activity does not only encourage the students to engage in a meaningful conversation; it automatically also leads them towards dealing with the text in more depth. Apart from retelling mere content, the students are inconspicuously animated to interpret the text and deal with what could possibly be behind it. Thus, they are required to ask the text questions and also answer them with its help. Next to being engaged with the text, the students also make up their mind about Maria Campbell's possible reasons for

writing down her life story which might also already draw their attention towards the fact that her destiny is by no means unique but shared by many other Métis. Moreover, as I have already mentioned before, this activity is fun and a welcome change to the students' normal work in the classroom. Apart from the fun factor, this task activates the students' empathetic potential and is an amusing and creative activity where the students engage in a reasonable discussion. All the things addressed during the hot chair activity are important for the students' further tasks on *Halfbreed*. Thus, the audience is also encouraged to comment on what is being said and interfere if things are wrong or unreasonable; moreover, they can ask important questions and add information if some elements are left out. Naturally, this does not happen by allowing the students to just randomly interject and interrupt the students on the hot chairs with their ideas, but, just as in the first lesson, the teacher stops the talk show from time to time and asks the students for their comments. After this, the talk show can continue. Another noteworthy aspect of the hot chair activity is that, apart from revising the story's content and the need for putting oneself into somebody else's shoes, the students train their oral interview skills and need to make connections from one question to the next. In a well-prepared and well-conducted interview, the questions are not simply asked one after the other, but there are suitable bridges in between and it is necessary to lead from one topic to the next. The students' oral communication skills are hence requested in order to make the interview a successful one.

After the hot chair activity, the teacher and the students make a summary of what has been mentioned and touched upon during the conversation between Maria Campbell and Oprah Winfrey. It is necessary to outline the most important points that have been made for the further activities, such as the students' homework. The teacher asks the students about the most significant parts of the interview to make them remember them once more. Moreover, the teacher reminds the students of taking notes by telling them that all the information collected now can be very helpful for their homework. This activity only takes up between 5 to 10 minutes as the students do not go into depth here but only briefly recapitulate the essence of the interview.

As soon as the summary of the hot chair activity is finished, the teacher goes over to leading the students away from focusing on the Métis culture in Canada only and draws their attention to their own country, Austria. Outgoing from noticing that racism and prejudice are the number one reasons for the Métis' tensions with the majority of the white Canadian population and even First Nations, the teacher asks the students to have a closer look at their direct surroundings. The students are guided towards thinking of tensions in their own environment: their hometown, their neighborhood or their own classroom. Apart from considering this, the students make up their mind about which groups are the ones mostly confronted with xenophobia and prejudice. They are required to talk about the different population groupings and about which stereotypes are closely related to them. In order to help the students fulfill their task, the teacher provides them with a handout containing a questionnaire about discrimination and xenophobia in Austria. In a pair work activity, they are asked to go through the questionnaire, consider the questions and impulses in their discussion and fill out the empty spaces with their answers. The purpose of this activity is to sensitize the students for the fact that they themselves are witnesses to or sometimes even people actively taking part in situations influenced by prejudice and racism; sometimes these incidences even happen with people being completely unconscious of what they actually utter or do. If one has a closer look at a city like Vienna, conversations containing derogatory phrases such as "There are only foreigners in this tram..." or "Why don't you go back to where you came from, filthy 'Tschuschn'¹⁷?" can often be heard. This activity takes up approximately 15 minutes and serves as the kick off for further work on this topic in the next lesson as the last 10 minutes are needed for preparing the students for their homework.

¹⁷ It is not easy to find an appropriate translation for the Austrian term 'Tschusch'. One could attempt at translating it with "yogi" or "wog", but still, these terms do not mean the exact same as 'Tschusch' is a very derogatory and abusive term specific to Austrian German that commonly refers to people from former Yugoslavia or Turkey.

Lesson plan 3/3

Target Group: 7th or 8th form upper secondary (AHS)

Time: 50 minutes

Assumption: The book has been read and the students are familiar with its content.

Objective: The students

- get an input on how many Austrian people talk and think about people from different countries via a youtube.com clip
- express their attitude on this video clip
- make up their mind about Austria's situation concerning migration and integration
- discuss if features such as religion, skin color or country of origin justify judging people
- share their opinions and thoughts on how successful intercultural encounters should/could look like if both ends welcome the other with open arms and unbiased pictures in mind
- see that it is a favourable idea to take differences as they come and appreciate them as enrichment to a diverse human mosaic

Material: overhead projector slide

Abbreviations: T = teacher; S = student; C = class; G = Group, P = Pair work

TIME	CONTENT / ACTIVITY	AIMS	MATERIAL	INTERACTION FORMAT
5'	1) <u>Feedback</u> about the hot chair activity	The students • express their opinion about the hot chair activity • can give the teacher honest feedback • know that their thoughts are taken seriously		S – C – T
5'	2) <u>video clip</u> . The students • watch a short video twice	The students • get an impulse for a class discussion	laptop with internet access	
5'	3) What is your first impression of the video clip?	The students • express their first impression of what can be seen in the video		C – T
20'	4) <u>Pair work</u> . Discussion of the video clip	The students • make up their mind about the immigrants' situation in Austria • talk about their personal intercultural encounters and analyze these • share their opinions on how intercultural encounters should look like • think of concepts such as nationality and affiliation • talk about concepts such as stereotypes • ...	overhead projector slide with guiding questions	P
10'	5) <u>Class discussion</u> . What can be done to get rid of these attitudes?	The students • brainstorm on how stereotypes		C – T

		and prejudice are formed • understand how they can be influenced – in a positive as well as negative way		
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At the beginning of the third lesson the teacher asks the students for some feedback on the hot chair activity. With all the arguments brought in the description of the hot chair activity, it is easily understandable why teachers welcome spending lessons with tasks of that kind; however, it is interesting to find out whether the students also liked the activity and what they think its advantages and disadvantages are. As the students are already 17 or 18 years old, teachers need to make sure that tasks like the hot chair activity, are not perceived as childish or immature. I personally believe that the students' judgments highly depend from their personalities. Apart from asking for the general opinion on acting out in front of the class, the teacher asks the students what it felt like to assume a different role and view the world out of somebody else's eyes – essential steps for successful intercultural communication.

After the first few minutes of recapitulating the hot chair activity, the teacher goes over to a completely different activity. The students are told that they will watch a very short youtube video. They are not informed beforehand what this video clip will be about, as the teacher wants to achieve a certain shock effect by watching it. Unfortunately, I did not find any suitable video in English; hence the short clip is in German. In the video¹⁸ the students can see an FPÖ party member in search for Austrian people who she can distribute a newspaper to. She explicitly states that there are almost no worthy consumers for her newspaper in the neighbourhood shown in the video. She walks past Turkish children referring to them with the word 'Türkenkolonie'¹⁹; then notices an Asian couple that she shrugs off with the words "Die sind auch nicht von uns"²⁰. After that she finally finds two recipients for her paper (she first calls them "Tschuschn" but then finds out that they apparently have the Austrian citizenship): interestingly, these two have an immigrant background as well but have a prefabricated image of the Turkish population in Austria just like the woman from the FPÖ has.

¹⁸ The video can be found under <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LS8K3MTREVs>

¹⁹ "Türkenkolonie" might be best translated with "the Turks' settlement", referring to a neighborhood that is (almost) exclusively inhabited by Turkish people.

²⁰ "Die sind auch nicht von uns" = "These people do not belong here either"

The students watch the video twice because at some point the recording's quality is not very good and furthermore it can be guaranteed that they really understand everything that is said in the video.

Of course, the discussion after watching the video is held in English. Immediately after the video has been shown to the students, the teacher asks them about their first impression and the first thoughts that have come to their head. I think it is important to do that because this video undoubtedly has the power to strongly polarize.

After talking about this first impression, the students engage in a pair work where they discuss and analyze the video. To help them with their conversation, the teacher provides them with an overhead projector slide containing some guiding questions for the activity. Within the framework of this conversation, the students make up their mind about Austria's situation in terms of migration and integration. First of all, they have a closer look at the video and on what is being said in the video. They analyze the words the protagonist uses and assess them critically. Apart from this, they exchange their experiences with conversations like the ones displayed in the video and can tell their partner about similar situations that they might have already been confronted with. Next to these personal accounts, they discuss questions such as whether people coming to Austria need to adapt to the country's customs and traditions (here arises the question if it is still possible to talk about *its* customs and traditions in a multicultural state such as Austria – do specific Austrian rites still exist and are they valid for every inhabitant?) or whether they need to be integrated sufficiently – carefully paying attention to the difference between adaptation/assimilation and integration. Moreover, they think about concepts such as nationality, skin color or other features that distinguish people from another. Naturally, people are different from one another and it is a fact that Austria is transforming into a multicultural state. But still, they are asked to make up their mind about the question if these distinguishing features are a justification to lower people's social status and value. Are elements such as language, religion, skin color justified reasons for rejecting people and for derogatory utterances such as "They need to be sent back home"? It needs to

be stressed that it is an actuality that different cultures live side by side in one and the same country but that every individual, no matter where he/she comes from, is of equal value and deserves to be treated like that. With this task, as well as the last task in this lesson, the students are required to broaden their horizon and take a step away from their own point of view and try to connect to others' ways of perceiving and judging things – yet, the impulse to approach the other culture must be a mutual one and should be embraced by both. The teacher guides them towards discussing negative stereotypes, their formation and how they can be influenced and positively altered. I believe that in an 8th grade AHS one can assume that students are familiar with the term stereotype and do not need an extra explanation and definition for the concept. Of course, the time given in this lesson is not enough and the discussions and results made in this lesson need to be taken up again in the next one to deepen the students' understanding of the matters in questions. There are manifold approaches to the subject's continuation: the students can act out sketches, they can do web quests, they can write different texts concerned with all the topics firstly addressed in this lesson. Unfortunately I cannot elaborate further on these various possibilities but intercultural work in the classroom can never be finished and should be an integral, if even most of the time unconscious, part of every lesson.

To conclude it is to mention that, beginning with these three lessons, the students become aware of the fact that assimilation is not only unrealistic but also undesired, as the aim of successful intercultural encounters is to ensure that those elements that differentiate between people, as well as similarities between them essentially add to the cultural richness of a society. The students grasp that cultural diversity makes society and life exciting and fascinating and that, instead of rejecting everything that is alien, welcome these elements with open arms and interweave them into one colourful mosaic.

5. Conclusion

The task to fulfill within the scope of this diploma thesis was to demonstrate how Intercultural Learning can be fostered in an EFL classroom via exemplary native North American cultures. Three literary texts have been chosen for this challenge: *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie, “A Short History of Indians” in Canada by Thomas King and *Halfbreed* by Maria Campbell.

In order to attain this target, a theoretical basis had to be established. The first main section of this paper has been dedicated to defining Global Education, Intercultural Learning and many different concepts, such as stereotyping, prejudice or intercultural communicative competence – all of these being tightly attached to the educational approaches mentioned. By referring to different authors concerned with Global Education and Intercultural Learning I have supported the argument that it is vital nowadays to create Intercultural Learning environments in schools.

With the lesson plans established on the basis of the three chosen texts, I have sought to create favorable circumstances at school that encourage students to engage in meaningful activities that demand their active participation in terms of activating empathetic potentials and taking a step away from their supposed egocentricity. I am well aware of the fact that a teacher cannot force students to do so – some of them maybe cannot even take on a different role and hence a different perspective as their personality does not allow them to do so. Nonetheless, it is the task of teachers at school to invite the students to change their perspective and risk an attempt to take a closer look at the world out of somebody else’s point of view.

Especially in countries such as ours, being an attractive country to immigrants, it becomes more and more essential to include Intercultural Learning in any way possible in every subject at school. Austrian classrooms are hybrids: children from the most diverse cultural backgrounds, religions or ethnicities meet and merge in a collectivity that needs to be prepared for the challenges it poses

itself. Awareness has to be raised that all the different aspects and elements brought to the collectivity by each individual need to be valued and tolerated to guarantee equal and fair cohabitating.

At the end of this diploma thesis I would like to recall once again why the three chosen texts prove to be very good material for Intercultural Learning purposes. Not only are all of them what is commonly called “a good read” – the justifications for this argument have been laid out in detail in the respective chapters on the texts – but they also offer a teacher a perfect possibility of creating a bridge between a specific Native North American culture and general questions about culture and, also, Austrian culture.

The specification on Native North American culture allows the teacher to create a very condensed and limited context the students work with to commence. This is a necessary first step that needs to be taken in the beginning of working with and the introduction of topics and concepts such as stereotyping or prejudice – all of them touched upon in the lesson plans designed. The work with literary texts written by Native North Americans as well as dealing with native north American experiences and life stories leaves room for work with and analysis of one specific individual voice – be it Arnold Spirit, a 14 year old native American boy from a reservation, or the first person narrator in Maria Campbell’s autobiography *Halfbreed*. Both allow the reader a deep insight into their personal life as well as simultaneously into what it must feel like to be an outsider and unwelcome in their own country. The activities created for the lessons dedicated to the respective texts then give the learners the unique possibility of making the move from the individual voices in the novels to a more general voice, having a closer look at their own culture and surroundings – an abstraction on other cultural contexts can thus take place.

To conclude, I can only emphasize once again that the teaching sequences presented in this thesis only show one way of dealing with the texts in class. Furthermore it needs to be mentioned that three lessons per book are not enough – the work of the students with the stories can be intensified and prolonged individually if desired. But for the purpose of this thesis a selection

had to be made as it would have considerably gone beyond the boundaries of this thesis to demonstrate more ways of approaching the chosen texts.

As global and intercultural issues are very influential shaping factors, the importance of their integration into the classroom must not be disregarded. If this world continues developing in the way it has been over the last decades, this importance of including global or intercultural questions and tasks into – not solely – Austrian schools will by no means shrink but gain even more weight. Hence, it is to be hoped for that teachers will take their task of being mentors to their students seriously and help them find their place in our global community.

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7. Appendix: Lesson material

7.1. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

7.1.1. Lesson 1: Overhead projector slide 1

What/Who can you see on this picture?

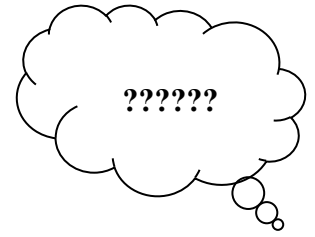
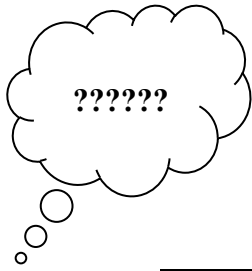


<http://www.schulbilder.org/malvorlage-indianer-i9416.html> (August 29, 2011)



**Questions and guidelines for “How, do you think,
do native people live today?”**

- Where do they live?
- What do their places of residence look like?
- What are their jobs?
- Are they rich or are they poor?
- Do they have enough money to survive?
- Do many native people go to college and receiver higher education?
- Are they confronted with racism?
- Are they respected by other people?
- Are they very religious?
- ...



Handout (quiz)

IT'S QUIZ TIME!!!!!!

This time we answer questions about.... NATIVE AMERICANS!!

taken and adapted from: <http://www.american-indians.net/today.htm>

February 9th, 2012

1. How many Native Americans live in the US nowadays?			
a. a few hundred	b. ~ 250.000	c. more than 500.000	d. more than a million
2. How many of their native languages are still spoken?			
a. there is only one native American language	b. ~ 100 different languages	c. they only speak English	d. more than 1000
3. What does their economic status (Lebensstandard) look like?			
a. most of them are really rich	b. most of them are poor and live at near-starvation levels	c. it can be compared to the standard of most white people	
4. Where do they live?			
a. on reservations in isolation from the white communities	b. in the wilderness in tents	c. only in the countryside	d. in cities and towns, due to relocation programs and their hope of finding better life
5. What does their level of education look like?			
a. all of them are really educated	b. most NAs' education is rather poor	c. only few are educated and assimilated to the white society	d. they are not educated at all
6. Are the NAs generally willing to change their standards of living with the help of US politicians?			
a. yes, they are willing to change everything and give up all their culture in order to have a better life	b. yes, they are willing to change some parts, but cling on to their culture, because they are very proud of their traditions and rituals	c. they do not want to change anything because they are too proud to take on help from white people	d. they do not even talk to other people

7.1.2. Lesson 2

Overhead projector slide with content questions

The Absolutely True Diary Of a Part-Time Indian

Content Questions

GROUP 1:

- Where does Arnold live?
- Is he happy where he lives?
- What does his family look like?
- Does he have many friends? What does his circle of friends look like?

GROUP 3:

- Does Arnold's family support their son's idea of going to a different school? If yes: why / If no: why not?
- How do the other Indian people react to Arnold's decision?
- What does Rowdy do/say?
- How does Arnold himself feel about his decision? Does he feel guilty/sad/happy/ ... Please try to describe his emotions.

GROUP 5:

- What happens to Arnold's grandmother, his dad's friend Eugene and his sister Mary?
- What is the ultimate reason for what happens to them?
- How does Arnold feel after all these tragic events?
- How does the novel end? What happens to Arnold?

GROUP 2:

- Arnold changes to a white high school. What leads him to doing that?
- Is he afraid of the people at his new school? If so, why?
- Does he quickly make friends ('Freunde finden') at his new school? Who are his friends?
- Please give some reasons why the white children do not want to spend time with Arnold at first.

GROUP 4:

- At some point Arnold gets accepted by the white children at the school. Why and how does this happen?
- How do they react when they find out that Arnold is poor?
- Arnold is the new basketball star of his school team. How does he feel when playing against the Wellpinit high school's team?
- Is he proud of what he has achieved (to achieve sth = 'etwas erreichen')

Groups cards with quotations

I wish I were magical, but I am really just a poor-ass reservation kid living with his poor-ass family on the poor-ass Spokane Indian reservation. (desired category: poverty)	Indian families stick together like Gorilla Glue, the strongest adhesive in the world. My mother and father both lived within two miles of where they were born, and my grandmother lived one mile from where she was born. Ever since the Spokane Indian Reservation was founded back in 1881, nobody in my family had ever lived anywhere else. We Spirits stay in one place. We are absolutely tribal. For good or bad, we don't leave one another. And now, my mother and father had lost two kids to the outside world. (desired category: family and tribal traditions)
I didn't literally kill Indians. We were supposed to make you give up being Indian. Your songs and stories and language and dancing. Everything. We weren't trying to kill Indians. We were trying to kill Indian culture. (desired category: race and racism)	Way drunk, Eugene was shot and killed by one of his good friends, Bobby, who was too drunk to even remember pulling the trigger. The police think Eugene and Bobby fought over the last drink in a bottle of wine: fig 24.2. When Bobby was sober enough to realize what he'd done, he could only call Eugene's name over and over, as if that would somehow bring him back. A few weeks later, in jail, Bobby hung himself with a bed sheet. (desired category: mortality and death)
Eugene was a good guy, and like an uncle to me, but he was drunk all the time. Not stinky drunk, but just drunk enough to be drunk. He was funny and kind drunk, always wanting to laugh and hug you and sing songs and dance. Funny how the saddest guys can be the happiest drunks. (desired category: alcoholism)	I woke up on the reservation as an Indian, and somewhere on the road to Reardan, I became something less than Indian. And once I arrived at Reardan, I became something less than less than less than Indian (83) (desired category: identity)

7.1.3. Lesson 3

Overhead projector slide

The Iceberg Model Of Culture (Edward Hall)



Obvious, visible and conscious parts of culture:
language, customs, traditions, clothing, music, theatre, literature, food ...

Obscure, invisible and unconscious parts of culture:
(norms and values, basic assumptions);
- time, space, power, emotions, conflicts.

7.2. A Short History of Indians In Canada

7.2.1. Lesson 1

Questions to start a discussion about “A Short History of Indians in Canada” by Thomas King

- What is the story about?
- Did you understand what Thomas King wants to tell us with this story?
- Was it difficult to read for you?
- Did you have difficulties with understanding what it means?
- Can you tell me about how white people apparently perceive Indian people?
- Can you tell me how Indians are presented in the short story?
- Can you tell me reasons for the white's behavior?
- What do you think of the way that Thomas King tells us the story?
- Do you think it is shocking/perturbating/agitating/harsh/inappropriate/confusing/ etc.?
- What does Thomas King want to achieve by telling the story the way he does?
- Did he reach his goal? How do you feel now?
- What are your feelings about the story now after reading?
- ...

7.2.2. Lesson 3

The Smith family

A while ago John had neighbors, the Smiths, who belonged to a Christian sect related to the Amish. John and his family took this as a matter of fact because Mr Smith told them so several weeks after moving in during a residents' meeting. However, from the very first John's family saw of them they had suspected something of the sort. There were six children. The girls and Mrs Smith were dressed in long dresses with aprons, which came down to their mid-calf, and wore headscarves over long hair. The boys had long shorts with braces [US, suspenders], which also came down to mid-calf. Mr Smith was clean-shaven, except for a beard around his chin. As they were moving in John and his family could see that their furniture was like old-fashioned wooden school furniture; and they didn't seem to have a television, stereo or video. There was, however, a piano and John could hear them making their own music for entertainment in the evenings. They were also American.

Several events took place after the family moved in which began to reveal the way in which John was thinking about them.

One afternoon, John was in his garage pottering about when Mr Smith came out and got into his large people carrier. He guessed he was waiting for the rest of his family before going out with them. He really was amazed when Mr Smith turned on the car's CD player and listened to music. He had thought that because the Smiths didn't have a television or stereo in the house their religion forbade them from listening to such things.

It was the time when the whole country seemed to be involved in the events surrounding Princess Diana's death. Mr Smith's American parents were staying with them and his wife had encountered his mother in the driveway. Mrs Smith senior told her that because there was no television or radio in her son's home, and no one was allowed to read newspapers, it was difficult for her and her husband to find out what was going on, and they felt they were missing a critical aspect of being in England. Despite the incident with the car stereo, this confirmed to John that the Smith family were indeed fundamentalists, and that he had been right all along about how they abstained from modernity. He was therefore shocked and indeed concerned that it would be an inconsiderate invasion of their religious culture when his wife suggested inviting Mr and Mrs Smith senior, and indeed the whole Smith family, in to watch Diana's funeral on the television. John really felt that this invitation would put the whole family in a very difficult position. It would be like inviting Muslims to eat pork he thought. His wife said that it would be impolite to invite Mr and Mrs Smith senior alone, and that anyway they all had the choice to refuse.

John was amazed again when the whole Smith family accepted the invitation and all ten of them came into their living room, the children sitting on the floor, to watch the whole funeral. He was even more amazed when Mrs Smith later wrote his wife a note to say that they had all really appreciated the opportunity.

Taken from: *Intercultural Communication* by Adrian Holliday, Martin Hyde and John Kullman. Abingdon [u.a.]: Routledge, 2004. 21 – 22.

WORK SHEET for “THE SMITH FAMILY”

- 1) What is the story about? Give a short summary.
- 2) What are John’s reasons to think about the Smiths the way he does?
- 3) Do you think, he is right with drawing his conclusions the way he does or do you think he has to change his way of seeing other people?

John reduces the Smith family to something they are not. He shares the popular belief about specific people and characterizes them according to the ideal he has of the Amish people – he thus uses a _____ to categorize the Smiths.

Apart from this, he also does something else; he judges the Smith family and makes assumptions about them without having enough knowledge to be able to really know if these are true or not. He makes judgments made on the basis of interest rather than evidence. This is what is commonly referred to as _____. Some people call it “to judge a book by its cover”.

All these concepts are mostly created by very influential factors, such as _____, _____ and _____.

Guidelines for better understanding people from other backgrounds

- 4) Do you think that it is easy to follow these guidelines? If yes, why? If no, why not?
- 5) Think of your classmates. Do you think that some of them might have already been confronted with prejudice and stereotypes by other people?

- Respond to people according to how you find them rather than according to what you have heard about them.
- Avoid easy answers about how people are – put aside simplistic notions about what is “real” or “unreal” in your perception of another culture.
- Appreciate that every society is as complex and culturally varied as your own.
- While respecting whatever people say about their own culture, take what they say as evidence of what they wish to project rather than as information about where they come from.
- Take what people say about their own culture as a personal observation which should not be generalized to other people from the same background (→ stereotype!)
- Avoid falling into the trap (to fall into a trap “in eine Falle geraten”) of reducing people to less than they are.
- Be aware that what happens between yourself and others is influenced very much by the environment within which you are communicating and your own preoccupations (“Voreingenommenheit”).
- Become aware of our own preoccupations in order to understand what it is that people from other backgrounds are responding to.
- Avoid being seduced (to seduce “verführen”) by previous experiences of the Other.

Taken and adapted from: *Intercultural Communication* by Adrian Holliday, Martin Hyde and John Kullman. Abingdon [u.a.]: Routledge, 2004. 9 – 23.

7.3. *Halfbreed*

7.3.1. Lesson 1

Content Questions *HALFBREED*

Remember from reading...

1. What/who is a Métis or, as Maria Campbell calls them throughout the novel, a “halfbreed”? Please define these words and explain how they developed.
2. What happened during the famous Riel Rebellion? Please explain the relationship between the white settlers and the aboriginal people in Canada from the beginning of their first encounters up to the present day.
3. What was Maria Campbell’s purpose for writing down her story? Please think of her reasons for publishing this book. Do you think that she achieves her aim? If yes: why; if no: why not?
4. Please describe Maria’s and her family’s life conditions and how her early life looked like before leaving her family. Don’t forget to mention the most influential events (for example her mother’s death).
5. What happens when Maria marries Darrel and leaves her family? Please recount her life beginning at their marriage up to the point when she moves to Calgary.
6. What happens after her relocation to Calgary? Maria meets important people that help her get back on her feet. Who are they and what do they do? Does her life ameliorate or does she go back on the street?

Quotations for the first group work on *Halfbreed*

Group 1 “Mom’s parents were different from Dad’s family. Grandma Dubuque was a treaty Indian woman, [...] Grandpa Dubuque was a huge, strong-willed Frenchman from Dubuque, Iowa” (18).	Group 2 “Great Grandma Campbell (Cheechum) [...] often told me stories of the Rebellion and of the Halfbreed people. She said our people never wanted to fight because that was not our way. We never wanted anything except to be left alone to live as we pleased” (15).
Group 3 “That is when I decided to write about my life. I am not very old, so perhaps some day, when I too am a grannie, I will write more” (8).	Group 4 “So began a miserable life of poverty which held no hope for the future. That generation of my people was completely beaten” (9).
Group 5 “Even though I wanted to run away, I couldn’t do it, because I knew they (her siblings) completely depended on me” (105).	Group 6 “It was here that I first met the people that would play an important role in the Native movement in Alberta” (143).

7.3.2. Lesson 2

Questionnaire - Discrimination in Austria

1. Who is experiencing xenophobia and discrimination?

- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Please give at least 3 reasons for why people might become racist.

- _____
- _____
- _____

3. Many Africans are often stigmatized, especially in connection with _____.
This makes daily life very hard for them and has negative consequences for them.
Many African women are often accused of being _____.

4. Do you think that the events from September 11th, 2001 also had an influence on the Austrians' attitudes towards Islam? If yes, how can you tell?

5. Do you think that Jews are still confronted with racism in Austria?

6. Have you already experienced xenophobia either as witness or victim? What happened? How did you react?

Taken and adapted from: http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/pdf/austria_en.pdf, February 10th 2012.

Guidelines for your interview review

- Your interview review will appear in a newspaper. So you need a catchy headline for it of course!
- Keep your sentence structure easy and simple. Readers do not want to read sentences that stretch over 3 lines!
- Start off with a basic introduction of the interviewee (= the person that is interviewed). With this you give the reader of your review a feeling for the person's accomplishments and history.
- Make clear why that person in particular was invited for an interview (in this case: her book has just been published, for example, or an important day in the Métis history has its 60th anniversary, etc.)
- After your introduction, you compose the main part of your review. Filter out those things of the interview that were striking to you and that are of importance to you. Retell what Oprah and Maria have talked about (don't forget to use reported speech!).
- Always indicate if the information you write down was given by the interviewer/the interviewee or if it was added by you.
- In our review it is not only interesting *what* has been said, but *how* things have been said and the impression you got from the interviewee as such. How has she reacted to certain things? Do you think it was hard for her to answer to some questions etc.?
- Don't forget to write one concluding sentence at the end of your text.



7.3.3. Lesson 3

Overhead projector slide with questions after watching the video

Which words/sentences the blonde woman uses sound familiar to you? In what contexts have you already heard them?

Should these words be a normal part of every person's vocabulary or do you think nobody should talk like that? Why yes, why no?

Do foreigners need to *adapt* (just like the man in the video says) to the new surrounding or do they need to *integrate*?

Is integration only the immigrants' duty or are other people also involved in this? Does successful integration depend on their own initiative solely or do they need help for this?

Is it ok to show signs of affiliation (eg. the man interviewed mentions the Turkish national banner)? How far should that go?

What is your personal opinion about Austria's problems with integrating people from different countries/backgrounds? Where do these problems come from?

Do you think that some people also do not want to be integrated? If yes, why do you think so?

Do you know immigrants in your near vicinity? What do you know about them?

What does your passport say? Which nationality do you belong to? Does that make you so much different from other people that you can feel superior to them/that you must feel inferior to them?

Is it okay to make differences between people from different backgrounds? Or should everybody be treated equally and in the same way?

What is especially striking in this video?

Always make sure you justify your answer and give plausible reasons.

Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit beschäftigt sich mit der Frage, wie man anhand indigener nordamerikanischer Literatur Interkulturelles Lernen im Fremdsprachenunterricht fördern kann.

Das erste Kapitel befasst sich mit dem Phänomen der Globalisierung und versucht sowohl eine Definition zu finden als auch die Gründe, warum sich die Welt, so wie wir sie heutzutage kennen, in den letzten Jahrzehnten so drastisch verändert hat und noch immer im Begriff ist, sich weiterhin zu verändern. Ausgehend von dem Konzept der Globalisierung wird danach die Tatsache aufgezeigt, dass junge Leute für die neuen Herausforderungen, vor die sie Globalisierung stellt, ausreichend ausgestattet und ausgebildet werden müssen, damit ihr Überleben in einer zunehmend globalisierten Welt gesichert ist.

Zunehmende wirtschaftliche, industrielle sowie politische Abhängigkeit der verschiedenen Staaten, sowie kulturelle Vermischungen erfordern eine Adaption der Curricula weltweit: Globales sowie Interkulturelles Lernen müssen ein unverzichtbarer Bestandteil im Unterricht werden. Viele Staaten, darunter auch Österreich, haben diese Notwendigkeit bereits erkannt und jene beiden Konzepte in ihre Curricula als Unterrichtsprinzipien integriert.

Für den praktischen Teil dieser Diplomarbeit war vor allem das Konzept des Interkulturellen Lernens von größter Wichtigkeit. Angesichts der Realität, dass staatliche Grenzen heutzutage nicht mehr bedeuten, dass sich verschiedene Volksgruppen und Kulturen nicht vermischen, muss schon in jungen Menschen das Bewusstsein geweckt werden, dass jede Kultur von gleichem Wert ist und dass kulturelle Unterschiede – Hautfarbe, Religion, Sprache, etc. – als etwas Positives zu betrachten sind. Auch in der Schule im Unterricht soll in Kindern und Jugendlichen jene Einstellung gefördert werden, sich für andere Kulturen zu öffnen, aus ihrer eigenen sozialen Normativität herauszutreten und zu erkennen, dass manche Dinge, die für sie als abnormal gelten, für Menschen anderen Hintergrunds völlig normal sind.

Mithilfe einer exemplarischen Kultur – indigene Bevölkerungsgruppen Nordamerikas – soll nun in dieser Diplomarbeit jene Zielsetzungen erreicht werden. Anhand von drei ausgewählten Texten (die Romane *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* von Sherman Alexie, *Halfbreed* von Maria Campbell und die Kurzgeschichte „A Short History of Indians in Canada“ von Thomas King) werden zuerst auf einer Mikroebene Konzepte wie „Kultur“, „Stereotypen“ oder „Vorurteile“ aufgearbeitet und dann auf eine allgemeine Makroebene abstrahiert, damit SchülerInnen erkennen, dass sich etwaige Probleme, wie sie etwa nordamerikanische UreinwohnerInnen mit ihren weißen MitbürgerInnen haben, auch in anderen Kontexten (sogar in ihrem unmittelbaren Umfeld) zu finden sind und Aufklärung bedürfen.

Im vierten Kapitel der vorliegenden Arbeit werden, aufbauend auf dem Theorieteil sowie detaillierten Textanalysen, jeweils pro Text Unterrichtsvorschläge, bestehend aus Plänen für jeweils drei Unterrichtsstunden, vorgestellt. Natürlich sind all diese Unterrichtspläne rein exemplarisch und suggestiv zu verstehen und in jedem Fall individuell abänderbar.

CURRICULUM VITAE

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