

TEACHING CULTURAL SKILLS

Adding Culture in Higher Education

Maribel Blasco
Mette Zølner
Editors

Nyt fra
samfunds
videnskaberne

Maribel Blasco and Mette Zølner (eds.)

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– Adding Culture in Higher Education

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© Nyt fra Samfundsvidenskaberne, 2009
Printed in Denmark by Narayana Press, Gylling
Typeset: SL grafik
Cover design by Klahr | Graphic Design
E-bog produktion: PHi Business Solutions Ltd. (Chandigarh, India)

1st edition 2009

ISBN 978-87-7683-018-2
E-ISBN 978-87-7683-128-8

Published by:
Nyt fra Samfundsvidenskaberne
Rosenørns Allé 9
DK-1970 Frederiksberg C
Denmark
Tel + 45 3815 3880
Fax + 45 3535 7822
slforlagene@samfundslitteratur.dk
www.NFSV.dk

Distribution:

Scandinavia
DBK, Mimersvej 4
DK-4600 Køge, Denmark
Tel +45 3269 7788
Fax +45 3269 7789

Rest of Europe
Gazelle Book Services Limited
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FOREWORD

Philippe d'Iribarne

It is becoming increasingly clear that the complex world in which we live cannot be managed without taking into account cultural diversity. China, India, Africa, the Middle East and even the United States have their own singular ways of looking at the world which persist despite the pressures of globalisation. It is also evident that the need to understand cultural diversity is no longer exclusively, or even primarily, a task for anthropologists, but concerns all those whose activities regularly take them to other parts of the world, whether this be for political or economic purposes. These developments have resulted in a proliferation of courses on culture, especially at business schools.

Against this background, this anthology edited by Maribel Blasco and Mette Zølner is particularly welcome. In the book, those responsible for teaching courses on culture pose a series of questions: What should be taught, and how? What material must students, managers and other professionals learn who have no intention whatsoever of becoming anthropologists, and how should this be taught? Every teacher in this field struggles with these questions, sometimes with a feeling of being rather alone in this task.

This new book, which gathers a rich range of experiences, will be a valuable tool in helping teachers to question their own practices and improve their knowledge in the field of 'appending culture' to other disciplines.

The way in which culture is taught is bound to differ depending on where one is in the world. Americans, for instance, prefer a teaching style that delivers recipes for action, and do not set much store by 'speculative' reflection. The French, conversely, are generally wary of simplistic guidelines and prefer a teaching style that encourages them to think for themselves. Accordingly, attempts to conceptualise cultures using quantitative measures may be received positively in cultures that value objectivity, while others would frown on this as be-