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Abstract

Perceptions and interaction on Facebook:

Anxiety, openness, flexibility, privacy, growth and change

The Facebook phenomenon is now integrated into many aspects of our lives and through that, our national cultures. We use it to inform, share, to keep up with others, as a forum, to promote, to invite, to criticize and to have fun.

In this paper, an extrapolation and continuance of a learning and interactive presentation at the Sietar Europa Conference in Cracow, Poland, we will look at US and German perceptions of Facebook and examine them through use of statistics, survey data and examination of Facebook itself. We will look at adult learning theory as well as Mark Zuckerberg's vision of openness and changing social norms for Facebook and its impact on perceptions of Facebook across these two key cultures.

This paper will utilize the intercultural consultant Fons Trompenaars' "Sphere of Influence" (2008, pp. 81-100) dimension to explore the meaning of public and personal interaction, perceptions, expectations, results and learning and possible implications within the workplace in Germany and the US. Information gathered before and through the presentation will offer possible direction and ways forward.

We may ask if the Germans and/or Americans adjust their perception and use of private and public space through interaction with others with and within a larger public space and if so, how? Does small talk become big talk or otherwise? Do deep culture, or values and beliefs (Schaules, 2007) change? Does the concept of community change? What is being communicated? How is it being received? What are our expectations, reactions and perceptions to and of community on the Facebook platform?

Lastly, what are possible shifts in growth, learning and social change within Facebook? This is an exploratory paper with the goal of generating and stimulating thought.

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Jacquelyn Reeves is a workplace educator with demonstrated track record in generating improved workplace efficiency, staff satisfaction, and communication. She is consistently selected for challenging situations, is fluent in German and English, and has special expertise in social media and virtual teams.

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