Internationally Co-ordinated Curriculum Development

For Modules in Intercultural Communication

Evaluation Report 1

This report will introduce an outline of the evaluation of the ICCD module 1 *Self-Awareness and Images of the "Other" in Asian and Western Cultures*. The module was evaluated at the end of summer term 2005.

Introduction

Module 1, parts 1 + 2, *Self-awareness and Images of the "Other" in Asian and European Cultures* was taught simultaneously at the four partner universities Beijing Institute of Technology, China (BIT); Dresden University of Technology, Germany (TUD); University of Dhaka, Bangladesh (DU) and University of Limerick, Ireland (UL). Due to differently structured academic years at the four partner institutions, the module was taught during the academic year 2004/2005, covering the winter and the summer terms at BIT, TUD and UL and during the year 2005 at DU.

On a meta-level the module aimed at internationalising education in a globalised world. It was therefore implemented multimedia based, and with transnational, transcultural and interdisciplinary approaches to strengthen the mutual understanding of the participating students. To check whether this ambitious aim was achieved or not the module was evaluated.

Altogether 323 students attended the module. The questionnaire was developed during the winter term 2004 but completed too late to evaluate part 1 at UL. Furthermore, not all attending students returned the questionnaire. 109 questionnaires were returned for part 1 and 89 for part 2. Because only part 2 was evaluated at all four partner universities, selected results which are regarded as representative for this part will be presented here.

The questionnaires were analysed by Integrale e.V., Dresden.

(Dr. Birgit Häse)

General Summaries of Local Evaluations

Dresden University of Technology

Module 1 was implemented in the Technical University of Dresden (TUD) as a new course covering 2 terms. Student participation in both terms was welcomed but not mandatory. On the contrary, the term structure at TUD makes it necessary to open the course 1.2 (=2nd term) for new students in order to fill up the ranks. The majority of students voluntarily participated in both terms. Both courses were delivered by Dr. Carsten Storm.

The students generally responded quite enthusiastic to the opportunity of getting into contact with their fellow students at the other three locations. In course 1.1, however, the message board discussion was almost exclusively among the Dresden students. Some administrative measures were taken by the lectures before course 1.2. The discussion was more moderated in the 2nd term and started with more provocative statements. There was a lively discussion especially with the students from Limerick, although due the differences in term schedules, only for a short time.

According to students' demands the theoretical impact was reduced in term 2 in favour for more practical case studies. Three films from Ireland, Bangladesh, and Germany were used to illustrate the course's content. The students reacted positively to the updated concept.

The use of the class pages was a meaningful tool to most students. Since the students' reports were presented online and were therefore public, most students made more efforts in presenting their results than in other courses. Publicity strengthens students' motivations.

(Dr. Carsten Storm)

University of Limerick

Module 1 was implemented in the University of Limerick as part of the pre-existing courses in Cultural Studies. The two modules chosen (CU-4111: Introduction to Cultural Studies and CU-4116: Cultural Theory) were delivered, in the main, by the same lecturer, Dr. Kate Boulay.

While little use was made of the class pages for Module 1.1 (CU-4111: Introduction to Cultural Studies), a greater emphasis was placed on its importance for the students and the project in Module 1.2 (CU-4116: Cultural Theory). The objectives, intended outcomes, and user instructions were presented to the students at an early stage, and they responded enthusiastically.

The students' attitude to the class pages concept and structure was positive, and many of the students were proactive in adding content to the message board. However, they were disappointed with the response from students in the other universities. They indicated this verbally to the lecturer, and also reflected it by presenting a generally negative opinion in their evaluation feedback.

(John Lannon)

Beijing Institute of Technology

Module 1 was implemented in the Beijing Institute of Technology (BIT). It was integrated as part of the pre-existing course in intercultural communication and management covering 2 terms. The students participated in both terms are mostly majored in economics and languages. They could choose one or both parts of this module. Both courses were delivered by A. Professor Dr. Fanchen Meng.

The students generally were quite happy to have the opportunity of getting into contact with their fellow students at the other three locations. The students' attitude to the concept and structure of the class pages was positive. In course 1.1, there are not many of the students who were proactive in adding content to the message board. However, they often participated in the discussion with students from other universities. In the course 1.2, the discussion of the students was more moderated and the students were better motivated.

The use of the class pages was a meaningful tool to most students. Especially after students learned the theoretical knowledge and were given some topic about the practice in the case of intercultural communication, the students could image the problems in the intercultural situation.

(A. Professor Dr. Fanchen Meng)

University of Dhaka

Module 1 was introduced at the University of Dhaka as part of 3rd year undergraduate course in Sociology. It was taught as full one- year course. It was offered jointly by two teachers- Professor S. Aminul Islam and Professor A. I. Mahbub Uddin Ahmed. The instruction was delivered through lectures and extensive question and answer sessions. Students used the computer lab quite extensively. They liked the class page and were very positive towards the idea of class page and the message board. However, due to their weakness in English many students were shy to use the message board.

They were shown two films—*Nowhere in Africa* and *The Clay Bird.* They liked the films very much, especially the German film. Some of them were able to interpret the films in terms of theories which they were taught. There was lively discussion of the films in the class room as well as through the message board.

Students found, on the other hand, the concepts and theories of the course a bit difficult to follow, but eventually they were able to follow the instruction and understand the complex issues like postmodernism, post structuralism and globalization. They found that these new ideas were relevant for understanding the complex social reality and life experiences of contemporary society. They appreciated the course; it gave them a new perspective from which to look into the issues of self and identity and the other within the context of Europe and Asia which was quite different from conventional courses that they attended.

(Professors S. Aminul Islam and A.I. Mahbub Uddin Ahmed)

Selected Data and Analysis

Following are selected data from the analysis. All participating students were asked to file the questionnaire during one of the last lessons of part 2.
The numbers refer to the listing in the questionnaire. Please find its complete blank version in the Annex.

A) Please state your opinion concerning the module

1 = totally agree to 5 = totally disagree; [AM = Arithmetic Mean]

	Question	UD n = 38	TUD n= 6	BIT n = 19	UL n = 26	Total
		AM	AM	AM	AM	AM
4.	The suggested reading is useful for understanding the module.	2,1	2,2	1,7	-	2,0
5.	The case studies were well chosen.	1,8	2,0	2,1	-	1,9
8.	The module content is relevant:					
	for modern societies.	1,2	1,8	1,8	2,0	1,6
	for internationalisation.	1,3	1,3	1,9	-	1,5
11.	The following are important categories for constructing concepts of identity in modern societies:					
	class	1,3	2,5	2,2	1,6	1,7
	ethnicity	1,4	1,3	2,0	1,6	1,6
	nationality	1,2	2,0	1,9	1,7	1,5
	gender	1,3	1,3	2,4	1,8	1,7
12.	Topics of orientalism and colonialism are relevant to describe today´s international relations.	1,4	1,7	2,3	1,7	1,7
13.	Migration and diaspora are decisive aspects of globalization. [only for module 1, part 2]	1,5	1,8	2,1	2,0	1,8
14.	The dichotomy local vs. global identities is a relevant analytical tool for describing problems of the contemporary world. [only for module 1, part 2]	1,3	2,0	2,0	1,9	1,7

Please note that graphs of the results of key questions contained in the questionnaire are available in the chapter "Graphs of Evaluation Results"

Main findings:
- The average opinion concerning the module is good.
- There are cultural differences in identifying the importance of identity categories. Nationality is the preferred category in Dhaka and Beijing. Ethnicity as well as Gender and Class are the preferred categories in Dresden and Limerick respectively.
- In Dhaka the students understand concepts like orientalism, colonialism, migration, and a global/local dichotomy as more relevant and useful intellectual tools than their counterparts in Beijing. This might be explained by their different study background. In Dhaka the students major in sociology, in Beijing in German Studies and MBA.

B) Please state your opinion concerning the class pages

1 = totally agree to 5 = totally disagree; [AM = Arithmetic Mean]

		UD n = 38	TUD n= 6	BIT n = 19	UL n = 26	Total
	Question	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM
8.	The short personal self presentations of the student participants were helpful to start communication.	1,7	3,6	2,0	2,5	2,1
9.	I used the message boards to discuss topics of the module content.	3,0	2,0	2,9	2,8	2,9
10.	Class pages and message boards are useful tools for internationally organized courses.	1,1	2,5	1,7	2,2	1,6

Please note that graphs of the results of key questions contained in the questionnaire are available in the chapter "Graphs of Evaluation Results"

Main findings:
- The impact of self presentations within the class pages is regarded differently. Asian students prefer them to start online communication.
- The participation in message board discussion was mostly not mandatory, but offered as additional chance within the courses. Participation was relevant for marks in Dresden only. Students in Dhaka had difficulties to access the message board due to limited computer availability and electricity shortcuts.

C) Individual point of view

1 = totally agree to 5 = totally disagree; [AM = Arithmetic Mean]

		UD n = 38	TUD n= 6	BIT n = 19	UL n = 26	Total
	Question	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM
2.	The module content was completely new to me.	1,9	2,7	2,0	2,9	2,2
5.	It was interesting to work together with students from different countries.	1,3	2,3	1,5	1,5	1,5

Please note that graphs of the results of key questions contained in the questionnaire are available in the chapter "Graphs of Evaluation Results"

Main findings:
- The module is more congruent with the European than the Asian general curriculum. It therefore attracts more Asian students who value it as a new chance for intercultural communication.

Questions:

8. The module inspired me to continue working in this direction.
9. The course was especially meaningful because it is part of ICCD project.
10. I would like to intensify the exchange between students from different countries within the courses.

Q	UD n = 38		TUD n= 6		BIT n = 19		UL n = 26		Total	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
8.	100	0	66,7	33,3	78,9	21,1	47,8	52,2	79,1%	20,9
9.	94,6	5,4	66,7	33,3	84,2	15,8	30,0	70,0	74,4	25,6
10.	100	0	83,3	16,7	84,2	15,8	65,2	34,8	86,0	14,0

Please note that graphs of the results of key questions contained in the questionnaire are available in the chapter "Graphs of Evaluation Results"

Main findings:
- The differences in question 10 reflect two aspects: the level of absolute successful participation as well as a relative balance of personally satisfying communication and workload. Dhaka students mainly faced technical problems in connecting and therefore strongly want to intensify exchange. Limerick students participated successfully and regularly but at the same time experienced a heavy workload in other courses. Therefore their wish to intensify their already high level of exchange is not that strong.

Measures and Reactions

A number of lessons were drawn from the experiences of module 1:

General:
1   Having coordination and lecturer continuity between modules meant that the benefits of the project and the class pages were conveyed more effectively to the students the second time around (i.e. in module 1.2)
2   While students may be enthusiastic about the project and class pages initially, their busy schedules mean that they only remain enthusiastic if there are timely responses to their input.
3   Asynchronous discussions easily lessen students' enthusiasm. Synchronous forms of direct linking of students via chats should be taken into account.

Nonetheless, a message board proved to be a useful tool in connecting students across national and cultural borders. However, some aspects do need critical observation and close consideration:
1   Message board discussions need to be initiated and regularly moderated by the lecturers.
2   Message board discussions should have clearly defined topics. Topics should be related to class room performance, but should not just repeat it. They should widen the scope and refer to the different academic backgrounds at the four partner locations.
3   To include case studies concerning current problems as basis for message board topics enhances the students' motivation. Highly theoretical texts are less attractive.
4   Message board participation needs to be mandatory and relevant for marks in order to increase participation in terms of frequency and quality.

Graphs of Evaluation Results

Please note that absolute values (Absolute Werte) are used to illustrate the results.

Results of the 1st part of questionnaire: Opinion concerning the module

Question 1:

Question 4:

The suggested reading is useful for understanding the module.

Question 5:

The case studies were well chosen.
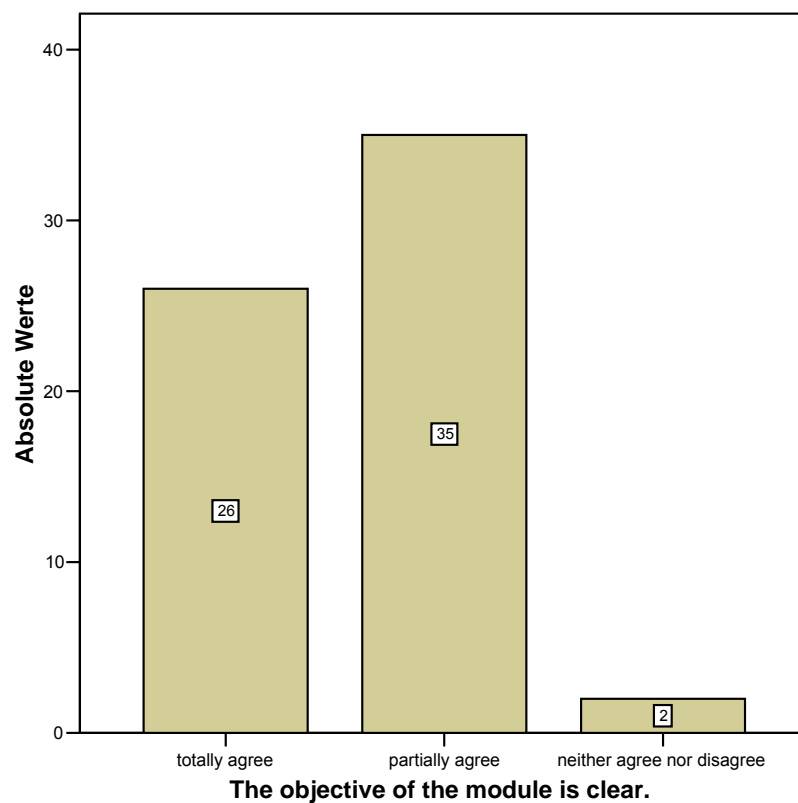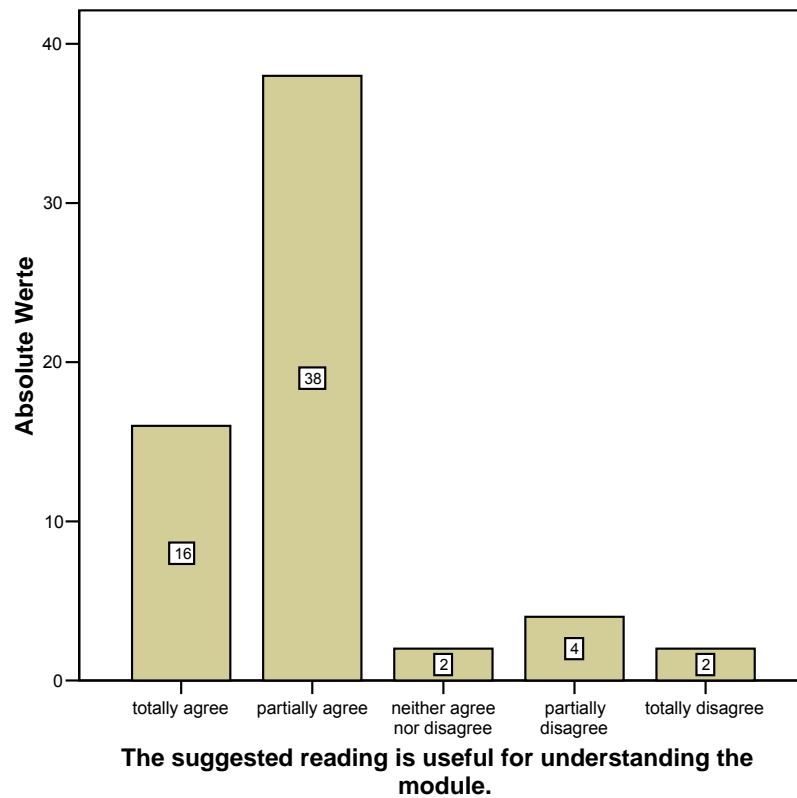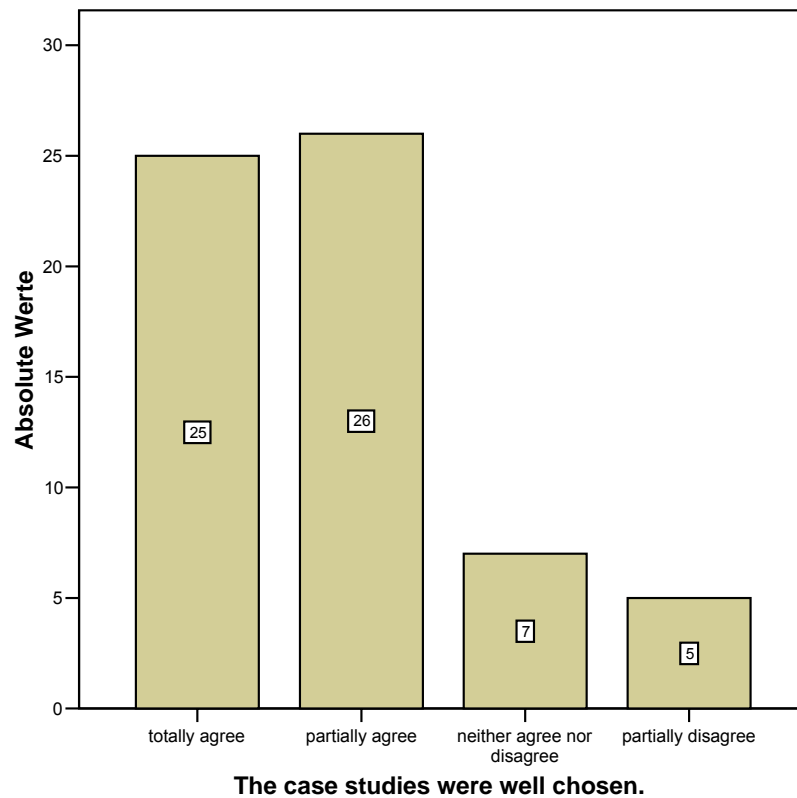
Question 8, part 1 (modern societies):
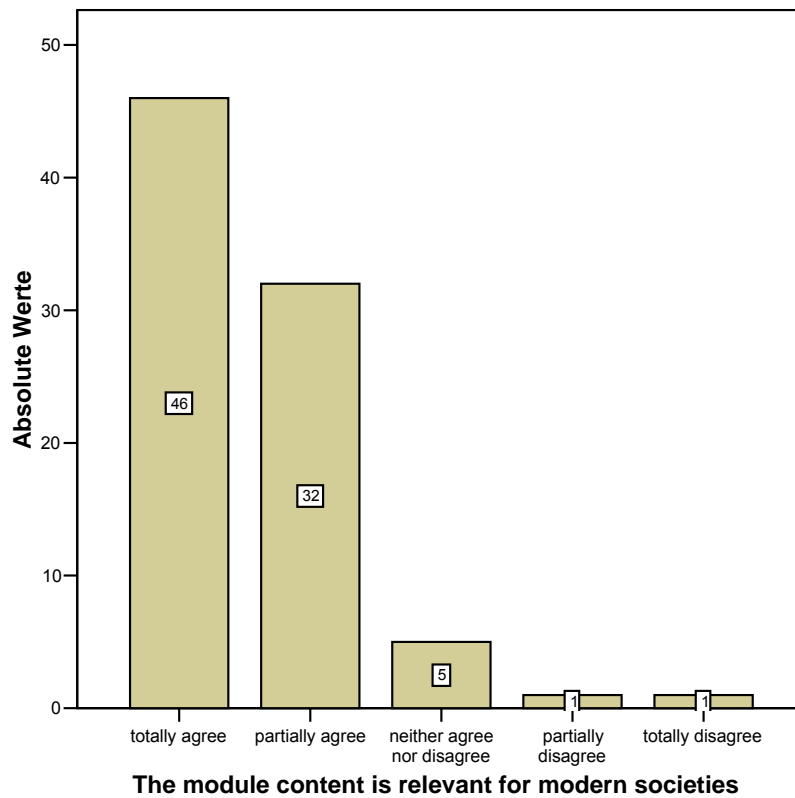
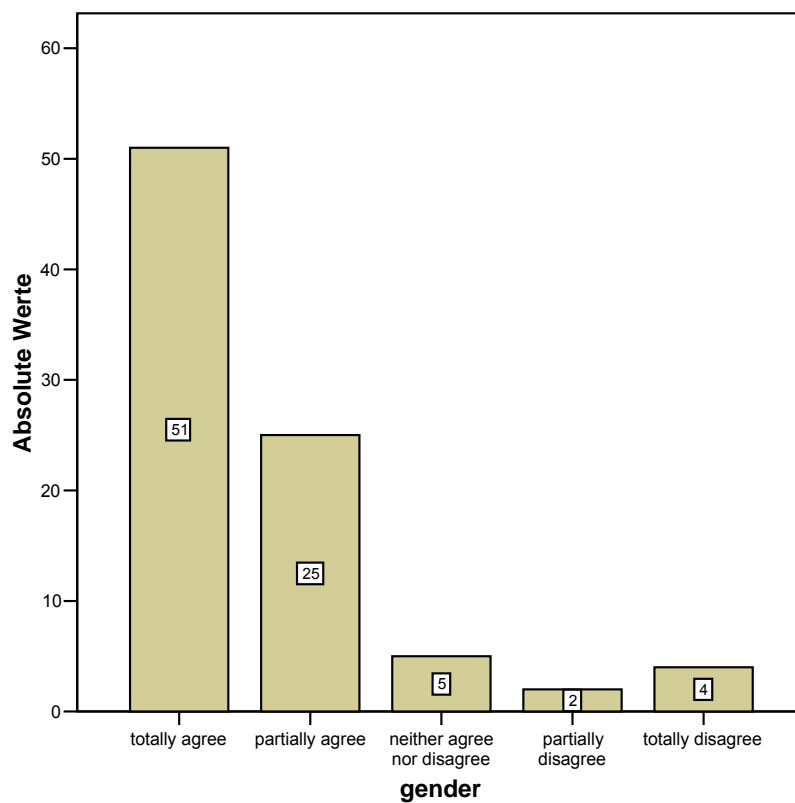Question 8, part 4 (internationalization):
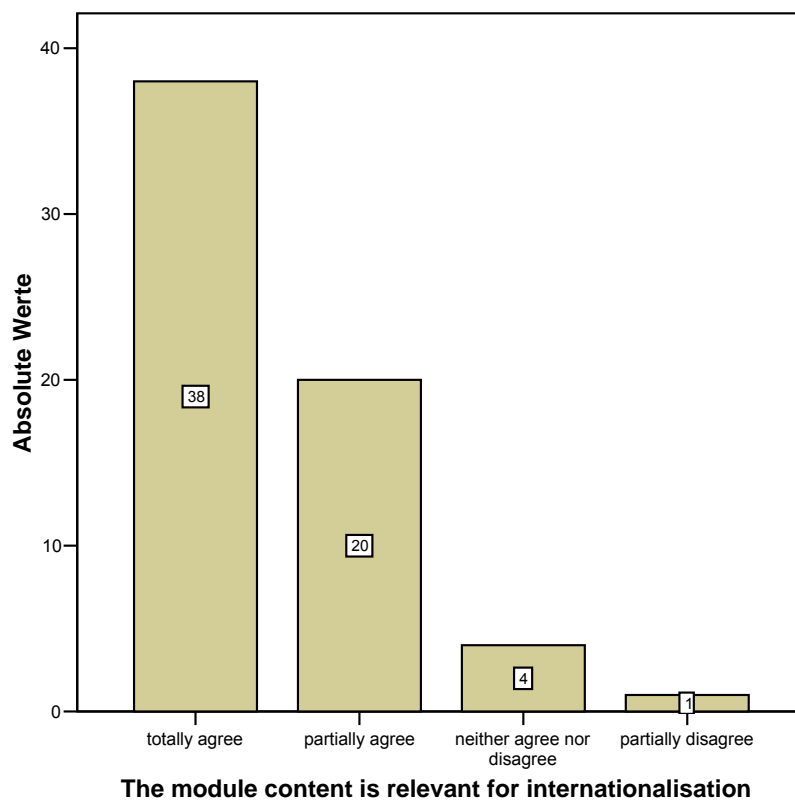
Question 11, part 1 (class):
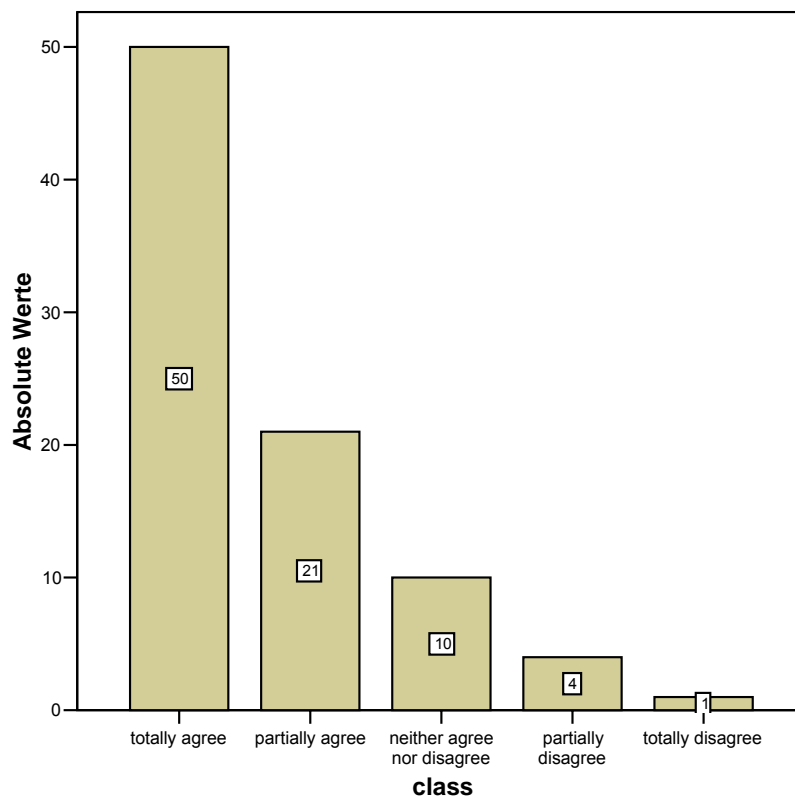
Question 11, part 2 (ethnicity):
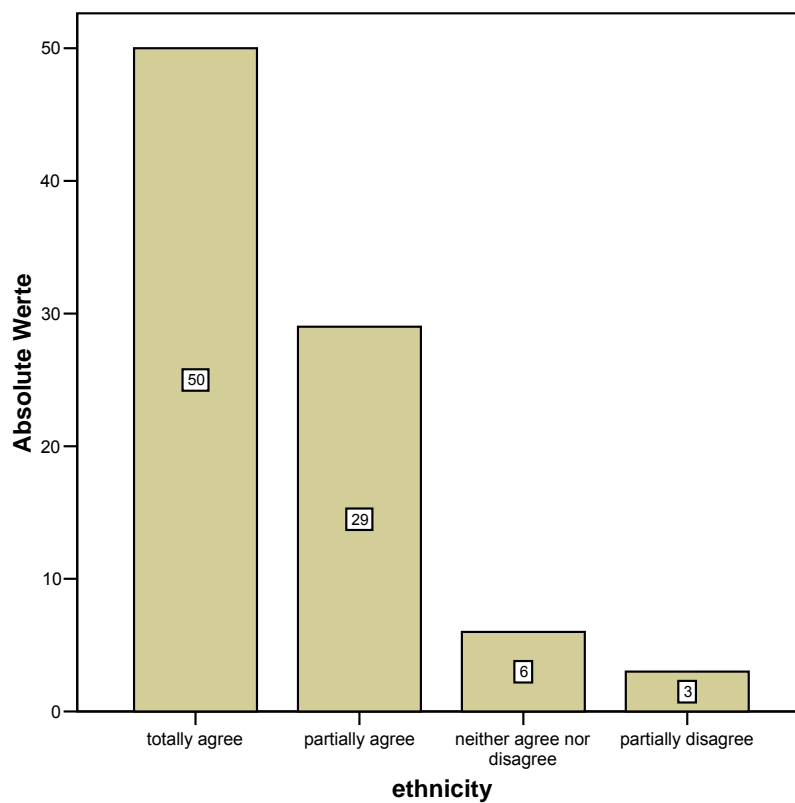
Question 11, part 3 (nationality):
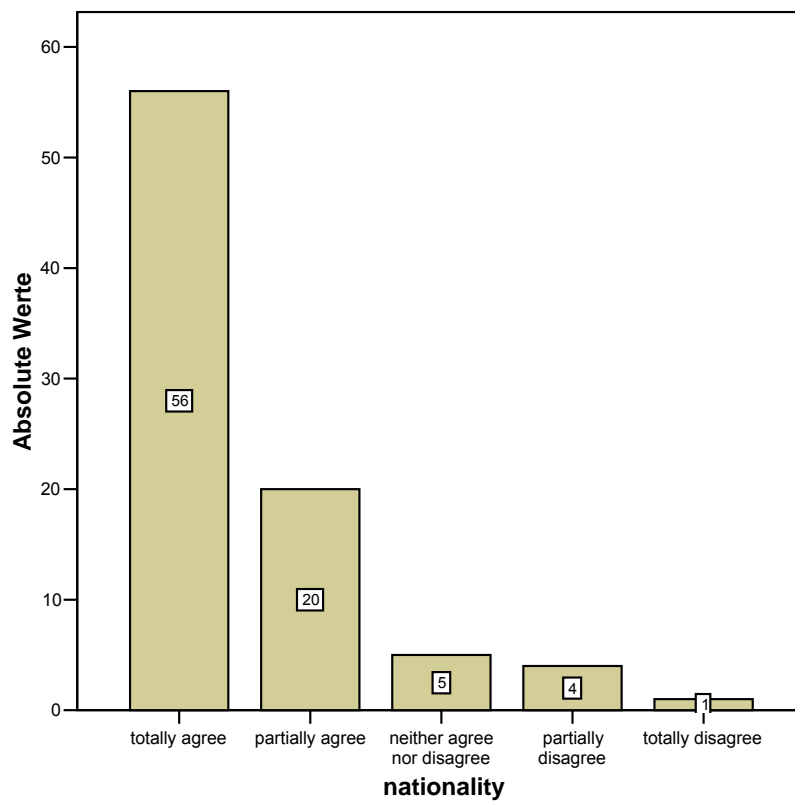
Question 11, part 4 (gender):

Question 12:

Topics of orientalism and colonialism are relevant to describe today´s international relations.

Question 13:

Migration and diaspora are decisive aspects of globalization.

Question 14:

The dichotomy local vs. global identities is a relevant analytical tool for discribing problems of the contemporary world.
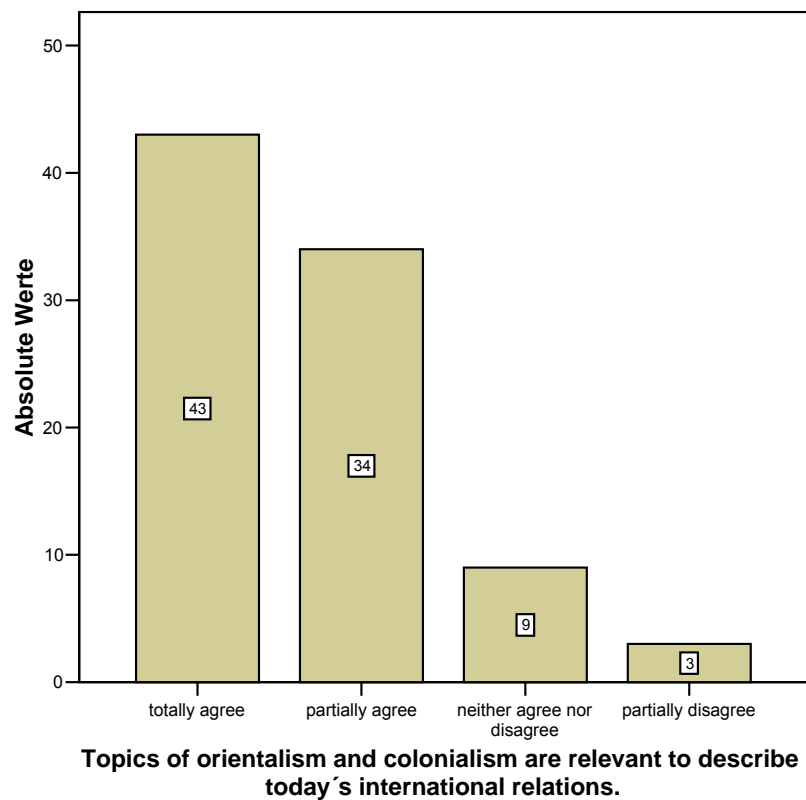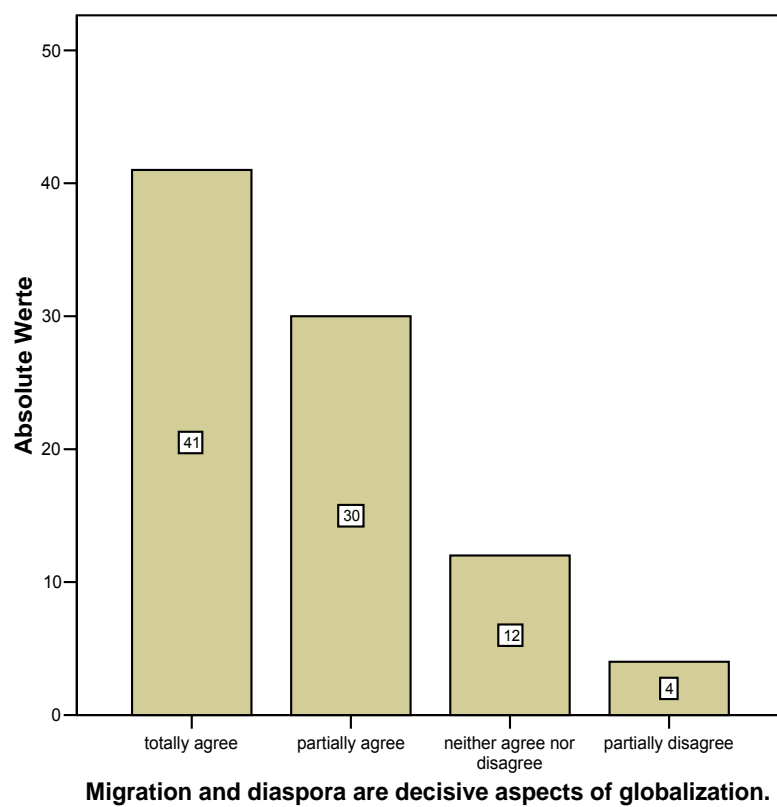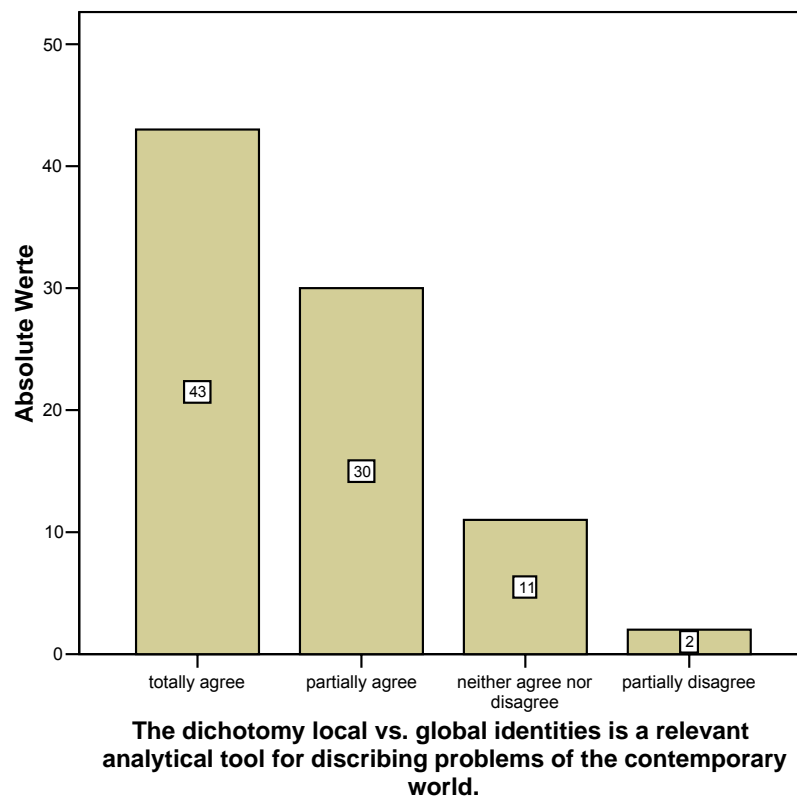
Results of the 2nd part of questionnaire: Opinion concerning the class pages

Question 8:

The short personal self presentations of the student participants was helpful to start communication.

Question 9:

I used the message board to discuss topics of the module content.

Question 10:

Class pages and message boards are useful tools for internationally organized courses.
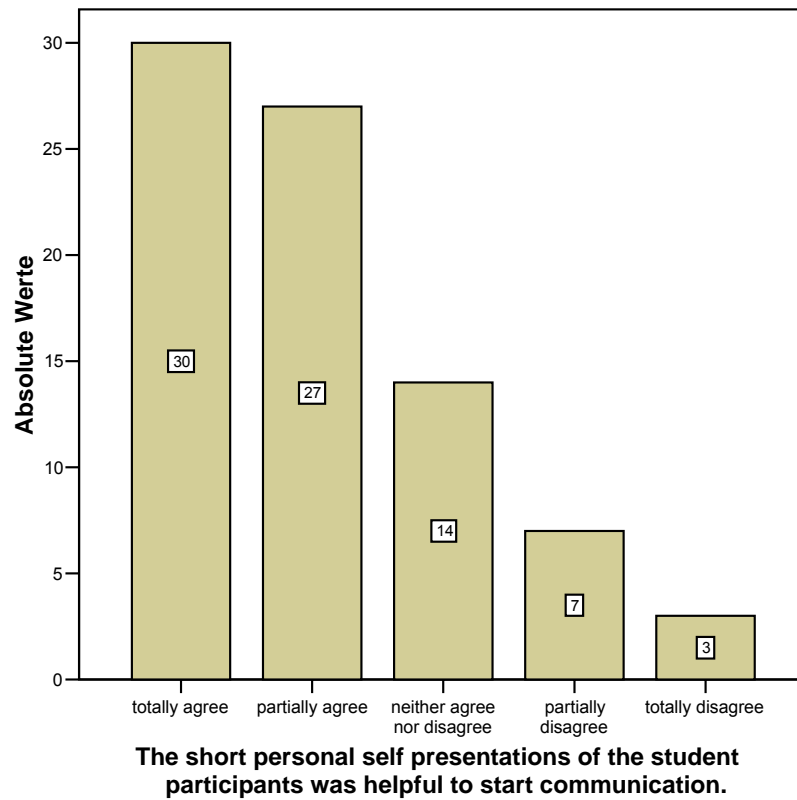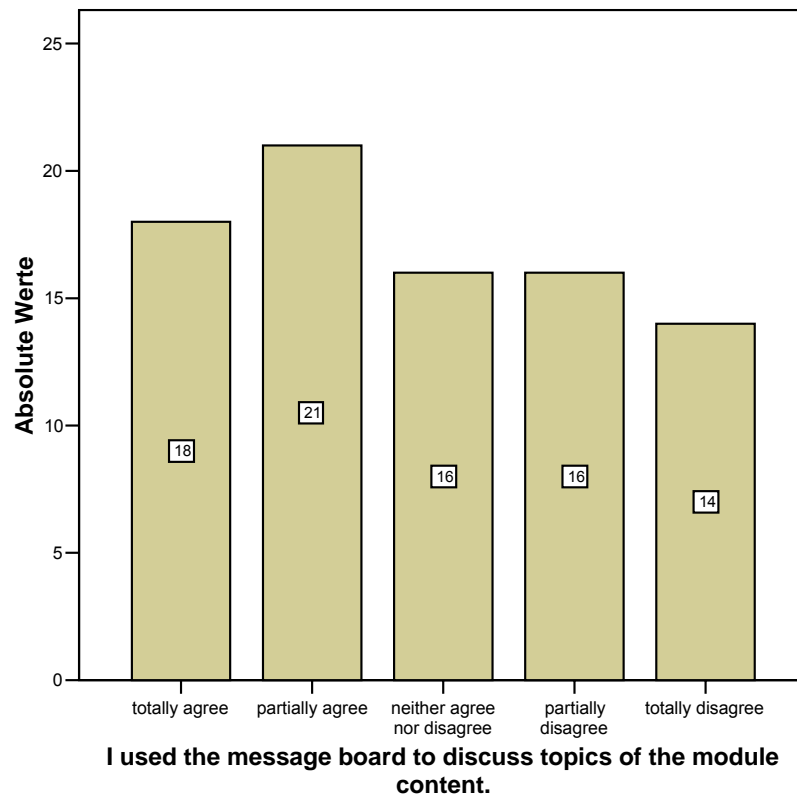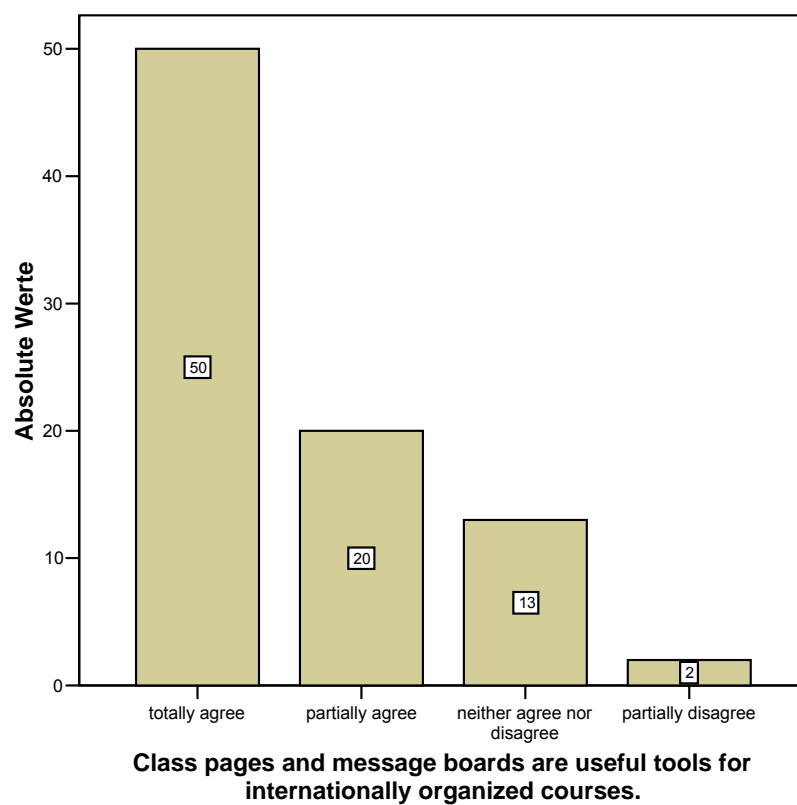
Results of the 3rd part of questionnaire: Individual point of view

Question 2:

The module content was completely new to me.

Question 5:

It was interesting to work together with students from different countries.

Question 1 of t

It was interesting to work together with students from different countries.
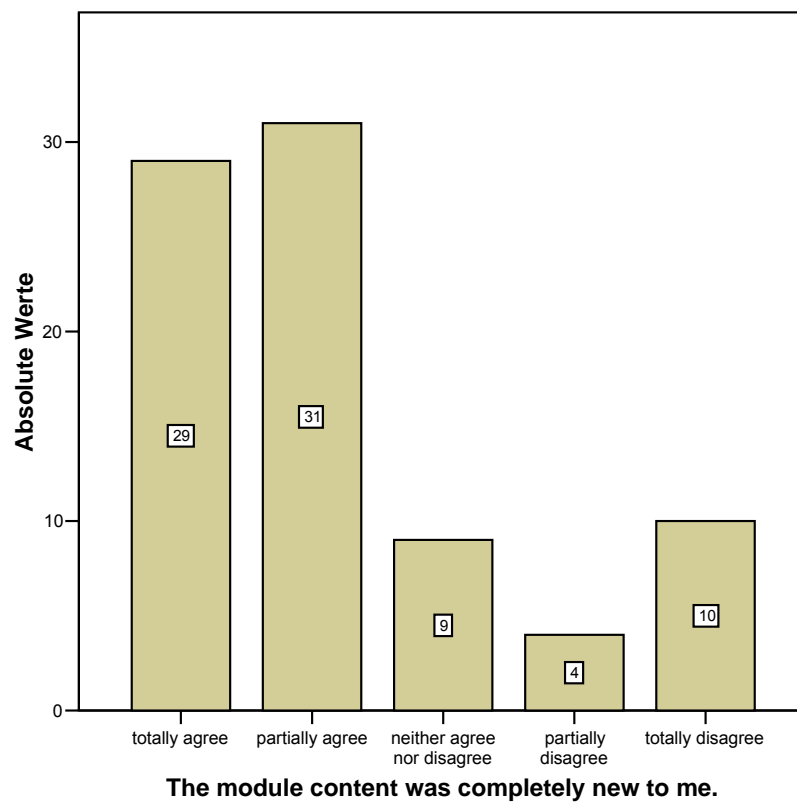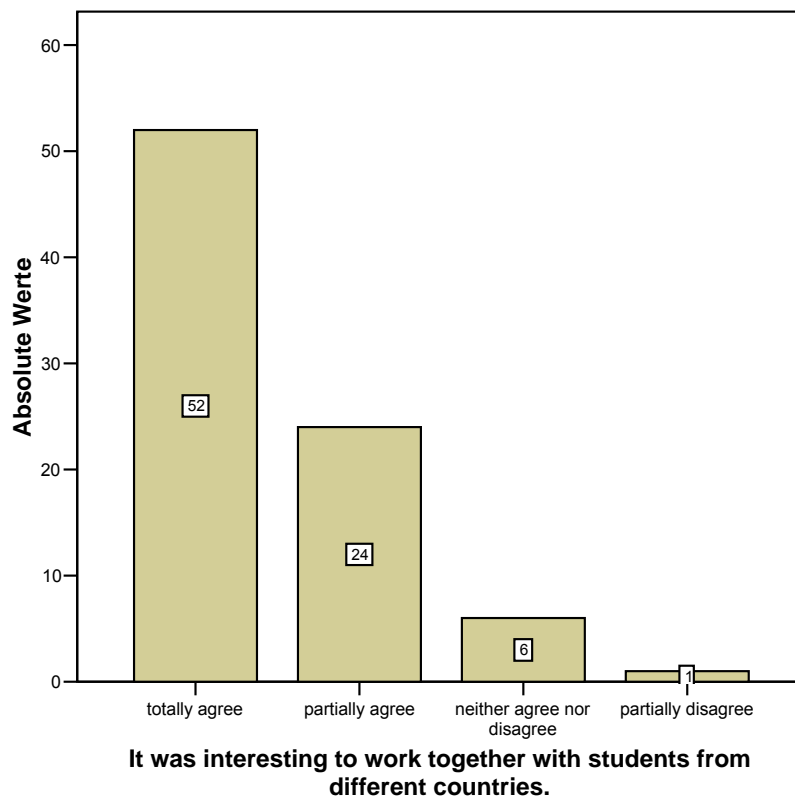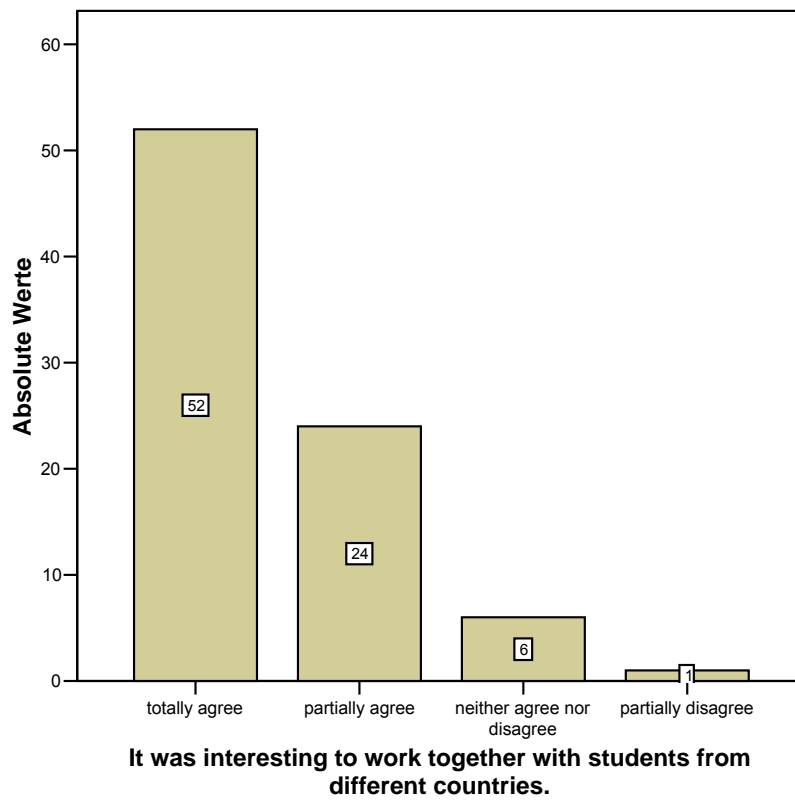
Question 3 of the second table in section 3:

**I would like to intensify the exchange between students from
different countries within the courses.**
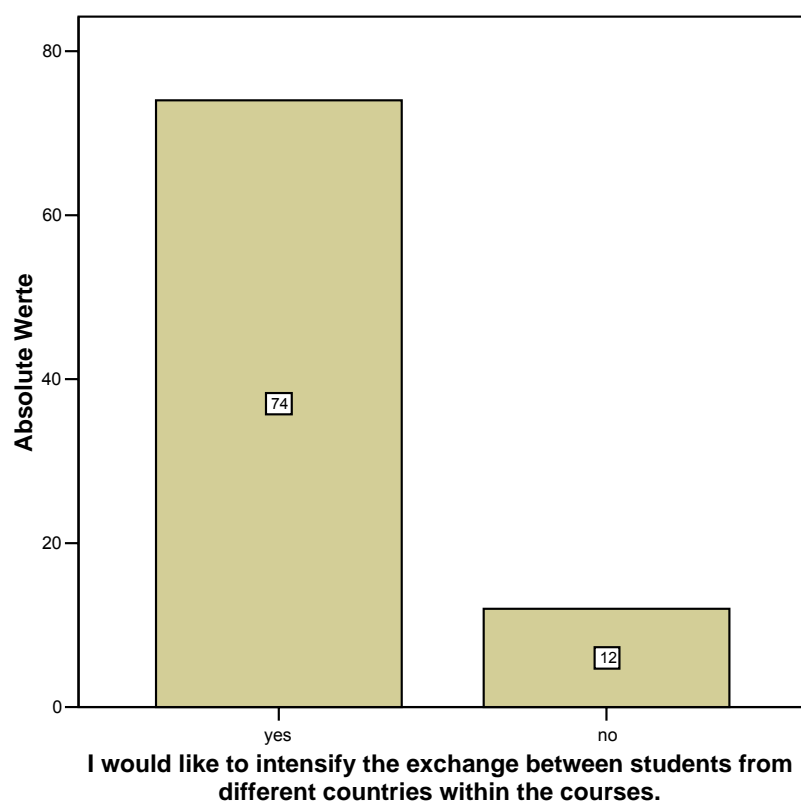
Annex

Questionnaire (blanc)

Questionnaire for Evaluating the Modules within the ICCD – Project

Module 1.1   : Self-Awareness and Images of the „Other" in Asian and European Cultures

Please mark your answers as follows   ●   corrections with X

University   : TUD   ○   UL   ○   BIT   ○   DU   ○

I am   : Female   ○   Male   ○

<u>1. Please state your opinion concerning the module</u>

	totally agree	partially agree	neither agree nor disagree	partially disagree	totally disagree
1. The objective of the module is clear.	○	○	○	○	○
2. The module is reasonably structured.	○	○	○	○	○
3. Complex contents are explained understandingly.	○	○	○	○	○
4. The suggested reading is useful for understanding the module.	○	○	○	○	○
5. The case studies were well chosen.	○	○	○	○	○
6. The case studies do elucidate the theoretical framework.	○	○	○	○	○
7. The module content was interesting.	○	○	○	○	○
8. The module content is relevant:					
for modern societies	○	○	○	○	○
within the academic discourse	○	○	○	○	○
for me personally	○	○	○	○	○
for internationalisation	○	○	○	○	○
9. The module helped me to develop a more comprehensive understanding of globalization and identity.	○	○	○	○	○
10. The theoretical/methodological part of the module was sufficient to meet the course requirements.	○	○	○	○	○
11. The following are important categories for constructing concepts of identity in modern societies:					
class	○	○	○	○	○
ethnicity	○	○	○	○	○
nationality	○	○	○	○	○
gender	○	○	○	○	○
12. Topics of orientalism and colonialism are relevant to describe today's international relations.	○	○	○	○	○
13. Migration and diaspora are decisive aspects of globalization. [only for module 1, part 2]	○	○	○	○	○
14. The dichotomy local vs. global identities is a relevant analytical tool for describing problems of the contemporary world. [only for module 1, part 2]	○	○	○	○	○

Did you miss any other concepts of identity?   yes   ○   no   ○

If yes, please specify

2. Please state your opinion concerning the class pages

		totally agree	partially agree	neither agree nor disagree	partially disagree	totally disagree
1.	The class pages are well structured.	○	○	○	○	○
2.	The class pages are easy to access.	○	○	○	○	○
3.	The class pages are useful to elucidate the content of the module.	○	○	○	○	○
4.	I used class pages for the first time.	○	○	○	○	○
5.	I liked to use the class pages.	○	○	○	○	○
6.	The class pages didn't help to understand the course.	○	○	○	○	○
7.	I didn't have any problems in using English class pages.	○	○	○	○	○
8.	The short personal self presentations of the student participants was helpful to start communication.	○	○	○	○	○
9.	I used the message board to discuss topics of the module content.	○	○	○	○	○
10.	Class pages and message boards are useful tools for internationally organized courses.	○	○	○	○	○

3. Individual point of view

		totally agree	partially agree	neither agree nor disagree	partially disagree	totally disagree
1.	I did learn a lot.	○	○	○	○	○
2.	The module content was completely new to me.	○	○	○	○	○
3.	I didn't have any problems in reading the course material.	○	○	○	○	○
4.	It was the first time for me to work together with students from different countries.	○	○	○	○	○
5.	It was interesting to work together with students from different countries.	○	○	○	○	○
6.	To work with students from different countries is difficult.	○	○	○	○	○
7.	It was difficult to switch between the mother tongue and English.	○	○	○	○	○

		yes	no
1.	The module inspired me to continue working in this direction.	○	○
2.	The course was especially meaningful because it is part of the ICCD project.	○	○
3.	I would like to intensify the exchange between students from different countries within the courses.	○	○

Thank you for your cooperation!