Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

# UNICULTURE

# Guide on Intercultural Communication & Social Inclusion

**Intellectual Output 5**

**coordinated by**

PAX RHODOPICA

**Project: Development of innovative approach for training for university professors to work in the modern diverse and intercultural environment UNICULTURE 2019-1-RO01-KA203-063400**

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union



www.uniculture.unitbv.ro

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Introduction

The "UniCulture Guide on intercultural communication & social inclusion" has been developed within the Erasmus+ project "Development of innovative approach for training for university professors to work in the modern diverse and intercultural environment" UniCulture 2019-1-RO01-KA203-063400. The project is coordinated by Transilvania University of Brașov (UNITBV, Romania) and is implemented in partnership with Buckinghamshire New University (BUCKS, United Kingdom), Zagreb University (UNIZG, Croatia), Foundation for the Development of International and Educational Activity (FRAME, Poland) and Pax Rhodopica Foundation (PAX, Bulgaria). The project implementation timeline is November 2019 to December 2021.

The Guide provides the link between working in an intercultural and cross-cultural (ICC) environment, supporting the inclusion of vulnerable groups and promoting the social inclusion process in universities. The document is structured in five modules, with dedicated teaching units. The Guide's aim is to be a practical tool for a larger audience involved in higher education processes or in the education system at any level, including teaching and non-teaching/support staff. Thus, key concepts such as ICC and social inclusion are defined, along with short and suggestive answers to the most frequent questions and inquires on the subject (e.g., What do we mean by intercultural communication, cross-cultural communication, verbal and nonverbal communication in cultural contexts, reasons for social exclusions in the university, etc.).

The "Guide on Intercultural Communication & Social Inclusion" is also an invitation to reflect on universities' ICC strategy and vision, while also providing in its last module a step-by-step approach in addressing the topic from an organizational perspective.

If they decide for self-training, readers are encouraged to use the integrated UniCulture training kit (UniCulture Handbook, UniCulture Workbook & Manual for trainers), to provide feedback on their progress or any query using the contact details on the project website (www.unitbv.ro).

# MODULE 1. BASICS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

## Units

- What do we mean by Intercultural Communication?
- The diversity advantages and principles for intercultural integration
- Forms and models of intercultural communication
- How does it relate to the university context?

## MODULE 1. BASICS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

**by FRAME, Poland**

### 1. What do we mean by Intercultural Communication?

Communication is defined as the process of using symbols and signs to induce an understanding of meaning in the recipient. A sign is a consciously created system of things or phenomena used to elicit a specific reaction. A sense of communication as a cultural process derives from these two definitions, because culture is a conscious and valuable human activity. Communication is deeply embedded in culture because it is made up of many cultural components. The basic one is, of course, the language, that is, the sign system. However, language should not be understood solely in verbal terms, as both communication and language can also be non-verbal: behavior, gestures, facial expressions – they are all important, but entirely mediated by culture.

In the case of language as speech, it is obvious that there are differences between different cultures, because we have so many different languages. However, when it comes to non-verbal communication, we often do not realize how closely it is related to our own specific culture. Therefore, intercultural communication is much more than simply translating speech. It can be described as interaction (both verbal and nonverbal) between people from different cultural backgrounds (Allwood, 1985).

However, both communication and intercultural communication are social skills, and the latter is specific, as it consists of different factors. To understand what the differences are, let's start by illustrating the communication process. It takes place between the sender and the recipient in a certain environment. We are not simply talking about the natural environment (in which communication also takes place: e.g., in the air when we speak), but about the cultural environment. The sender broadcasts a message that is received by the receiver in the same environment.

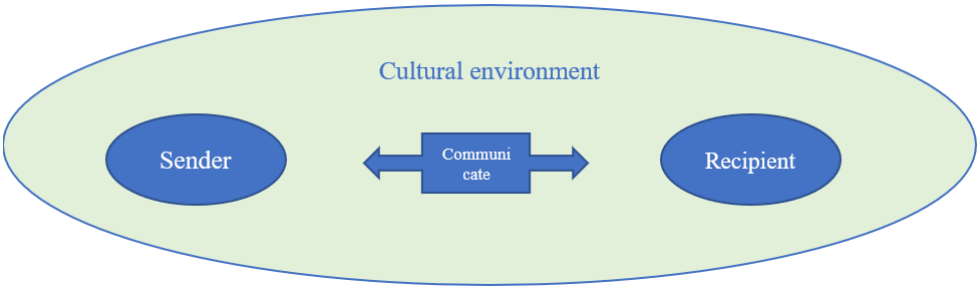



*Figure 1: Communication in homogeneous cultural environment*

In intercultural communication, the sender and the recipient are in different environments. This is of great importance for the communication process, as the sender draws patterns, signs and other elements of the message from the cultural environment. When the sender and recipient are in the same cultural environment, the latter finds it easy to understand the message because they are surrounded by the same patterns and symbols. But when he/she is in an environment different from the sender's, the message fills with alien patterns for him/her and can be out of reach or, worse, misunderstood. An excellent example are idiomatic phrases, which, when translated literally, cause a lot of confusion.

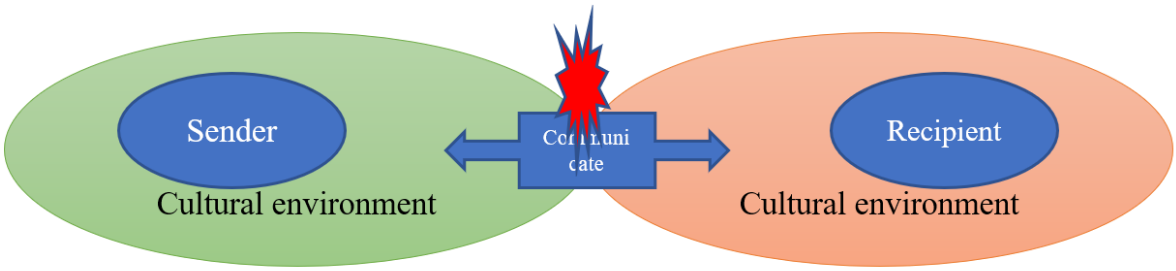



*Figure 2: Communication in different cultural environments*

The reason is not a purely linguistic one. People who grew up in a cultural environment are full of patterns, knowledge about how to behave, communicate, how to perceive and assess values. Therefore, when communicating with other cultures, they experience cultural shock: they face not only another language, but other patterns of behavior, and they cannot understand the way of thinking – the mentality of other people, living in this other culture. This also works from the perspective of the recipient: the recipient does not recognize (properly or at all) what is being communicating as it is full of information provided according to patterns and values with which he/she is not familiar.

Culture shock is related to the patterns enumerated by Jens Allwood (1985):

1. Patterns of thought – ways of thinking and mentality
2. Patterns of behavior – ways of behaving, common reactions for specific situations
3. Patterns of artifacts – ways of using materials and tools
4. Imprints of nature – ways of changing natural environments

All these are, in some way, perceived by other cultures, they make up a superficial image in the eyes of these cultures, called stereotype. Stereotypes are usually viewed as a negative phenomenon, but that is not the case if certain conditions are met. A stereotype is the initial knowledge of a foreign culture, and it should be treated as such. It makes it possible to deepen the

knowledge about a given culture and reach its true image. But to do so, the will to gather knowledge, as well as the will to obtain the necessary intercultural competences are crucial. According to Bennet (1986), the way to deal with culture shock can be presented as follows:

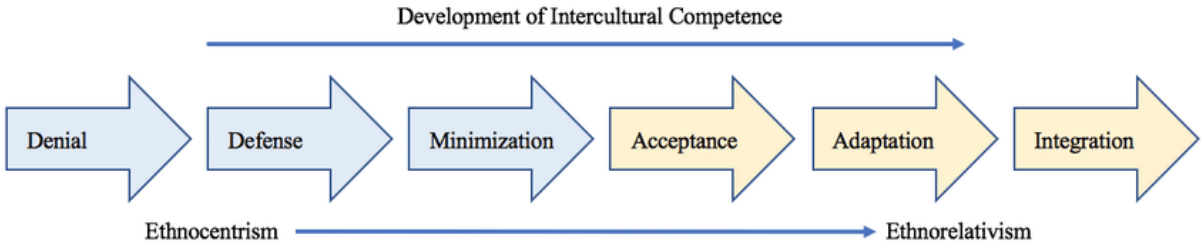



*Figure 3: Bennett's Model of Cultural Competency; adapted from Bennet M. J. "A developmental approach to training for intercultural sensitivity," International Journal of Intercultural Relations, Volume 10, Issue 2, 1986.*

As Bennet describes: "The developmental continuum moves from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. Earlier stages of the continuum define the parochial denial of difference, the evaluative defense against difference, and the universalist position of minimization of difference. Later stages define the acceptance of difference, adaptation to difference, and the integration of difference into one's world view." (Bennett, 1986, p. 179).

Intercultural communication is not an exceptional phenomenon. In a world where culture is becoming increasingly globalized, it becomes something natural. It requires skills that are becoming necessary to find oneself in a world that is more and more often referred to as the "global village".

## 2. **The diversity advantages and principles for intercultural integration**

Very well-known philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein used to say that the limits of our language are the same as the limits of our world. These words, written in the first half of the 20$^{th}$ century, perfectly reflect the way human reason functions. When we think, we don't use images, but we use language, we use symbols. Thinking is really talking to yourself. After all, language is an element of culture, so our thinking is limited by the products of our language, our culture. If a given construction is not in the language, it will not be in our thinking either. Therefore, the

more constructions from different languages we know, the more we expand our thinking possibilities.

The principle of drawing from other cultures, however, is not limited to language. In the sciences of management, research has been carried out for a long time which clearly shows that working in groups gives rise to the phenomenon of synergy, because it accumulates the possibilities of all members of the group. If, in addition, they come from different cultures, have different points of view, different mentalities and different ways of solving problems, developed by their native culture, together they can act even better, faster and more creatively (Jones, Chirino-Chace and Wright, 2020; Pless and Maak, 2004). This tactic is more and more commonly used because it is universal. It brings results with every social activity, which is why people talk more and more often not about the desirability, but about the necessity of intercultural education, multicultural cities (Wood and Landry, 2008), and a diverse society. In 2008, the Council of Europe published a White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, which emphasizes the advantages of social diversity, but also the need to work on the principles enabling full intercultural dialogue and building cooperation platforms.

There are several basic principles that should be followed when we want to talk about intercultural dialogue or integration.

- The first is to look for what is common to us. The essence of cooperation is finding common ground for action. Therefore, when looking for contact with someone from a different culture, you should rely on what we have in common. The differences are obvious anyway and will be clearly visible during the contact itself. What connects, however, must be found. Common roots, values, historical experiences, customs and methods of conduct provide an excellent opportunity to enter into a dialogue that can then be developed further.
- The second rule is the principle of acceptance. Often confused with tolerance, as for most people the two terms are synonyms. But in fact, tolerance is a value concept that puts the values of the tolerant above those that are tolerated. On the other hand, acceptance is a more neutral term (Gogacz and Sołtys, 2016). It means full reconciliation with a different worldview. From the perspective of intercultural dialogue, acceptance is a prerequisite.
- A third principle that is closely related to the previous ones is mutual adaptation. It is about focusing on the similarities and trying to reach a consensus on the differences; it requires a conciliation approach, the art of compromise.

- The fourth principle is curiosity. Curiosity is the desire to know what is different and is a motivator for dialogue. Without curiosity about another culture, without the will to get to know it, one cannot speak of a full participation in dialogue, nor can there be acceptance. When someone doesn't care about another culture, doesn't try to get to know it, they won't be really interested in getting in touch with any of its representatives.

Social diversity is a great opportunity for every person to be more creative, to broaden their horizons, to better understand the world. We must understand that today there are only two possibilities in connection with the progressing globalization: either we will close ourselves to what is different and thus deprive ourselves of development opportunities because we cannot adapt to the conditions prevailing in it, or cultures in order to be able to derive from them what may seem necessary to us for a better, more complete functioning in the modern world, but also to learn to give to others the things we consider to be the most valuable and worth sharing in our own culture.

## 3. Forms and models of intercultural communication

There is no one model of intercultural communication. As there are many aspects of the phenomenon, the emphasis may differ according to many aspects: functional, organizational, or structural. We can adopt a basic division, identical with the general division into verbal and non-verbal communication.

From this perspective, the verbal intercultural communication requires not only linguistic skills and philological knowledge, but most of all interpreter skills. It is very important to know the contextual rules to be able to recognize the thought behind the words.

Verbal communication cannot be considered in isolation from non-verbal communication. A comprehensive treatment of the communication process requires taking into account many factors and limiting them to verbal communication would be a big mistake. Above all, however, it would not allow for a dialogue to be established, but at best could be a form of one-way communication, without being able to obtain proper feedback. There is a fundamental difference between dialogue and communication. Communication does not have to be a two-way process; it can be a one-way or multi-way process. Dialogue, on the other hand, requires two-way communication and feedback. It is not possible to get feedback when the message is not properly received.

Nevertheless, it is non-verbal communication that is far more complicated and multidimensional. It requires a lot of cultural knowledge. About habits, gestures, contexts of using given expressions. First of all, however, it is about behavior and patterns of this behavior that are proper, adequate to the situation. Even the range of non-verbal communication itself may differ depending on the culture, as there are those in which the symbolism of gestures is much more important, but also those in which completely different forms of communication are important, e.g., voice intonation. However, it is non-verbal communication that can also be a very good point to start an intercultural dialogue, for example with the help of a symbolic graphic language or the language of universal gestures.

Communication models are very different depending on the perspective we take. Narula (2006, p. 80) writes about two possible categorizations of models depending on whether we are dealing with a multicultural or monocultural society. However, due to migration, there are fewer and fewer of the latter. In multicultural societies, communication models depend on social models. The classic approach distinguishes two models: melting pot and salad bowl. The melting pot model is about developing a social dialogue around shared values. An example of this model is American society, which draws from the multinational roots of its society, but the common values based on the new nation, which is the American nation, are put to the fore. In this model, therefore, the emphasis will be primarily on shared, transnational, or rather trans-ethnic values, as the goal of intercultural dialogue is to unify the American nation based on multi-ethnic roots. The salad bowl model, which is characteristic of European society, emphasizes above all diversity. The basis of dialogue in this model is acceptance of the multiplicity of values and cultures. Although this model refers to shared values and shared history, it does not try to unify anything. Dialogue is much more difficult here, but also ethnic and cultural traditions are much stronger and cannot be of secondary importance. Therefore, communication in this model must emphasize unity in diversity.

In monocultural societies the models are strictly dependent on needs; here we have a technological model that is based on new technologies, which are mostly transcultural, or inclusive model that can be developed in universities that host students from all over the world.

Another approach can take into account individual, not social factors. In this perspective, the spheres in which dialogue can be developed thanks to individual competences are considered. Therefore, we are talking about three areas of competence: behavioral, cognitive, and affective (Varhegyi and Nann, 2007). In the first, behavioral, negotiation and relationship skills are the

most important. In this model, the most important thing is to establish a dialogue and maintain proper relationships based on shared values. It is also important to maintain an acceptance attitude and to ensure that it is a dialogue, not a monologue. The model based on cognitive competences mainly concerns the accumulation of knowledge about another culture. In this model, communication refers to moving from stereotypes to deep knowledge of the other culture. The third model, the affective one, concerns communication based on emotions, the most important of which is empathy. Respect, a sense of connection are emotions that lead to communication with another person, coming from a different culture, but living like us, although in a different way.

The last approach, described by Al-Araki (2015), provides a model of communication through the description of the process. This process is related to the successive stages of cultural integration. First, we are dealing with the recognition stage in which a person becomes oriented towards another culture. This stage includes the so-called culture shock that causes the recognition that we are dealing with a completely different culture than our own. It somehow forces the recognition of oneself, it exaggerates the self-identification. Therefore, this stage should be followed by the next one in which it comes to self-esteem. The individual recognizes himself and his worth. The next stage is to satisfy the sense of security. An individual who has recognized himself and his worth already knows that he will cope with new circumstances. This is the stage of recovery from culture shock. However, man needs others to function efficiently. Hence the next step, attracting attention. This is the moment when relationships are established, and proper interpersonal communication takes place. This leads to the next stage of understanding, i.e., mutual understanding of communicating individuals from different cultures. The point of reaching the process is cooperation. It is worth noting that, apparently, this process only partially concerns communication. This is a mistake because communication takes place as a whole, but in the first stages it is intrapersonal communication. In many theories, the basis of good intercultural communication is getting to know yourself and personal identification (Baldwin & Hunt, 2002).

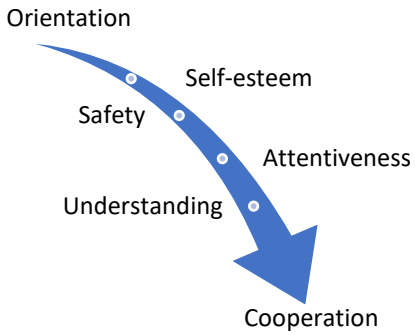



*Figure 4: Intercultural communication process according to Al-Araki (2015)*

**4. How does it relate to the university context?**

It is safe to say that thanks to modern globalization, universities have come full circle. In the Middle Ages, when they formed in a culturally universalist Europe, they gathered people from all over the Christian world. The question of geographic origin was less important than belonging to the university community. Today's world is more and more multicultural thanks to the mobility of people and ideas resulting from globalization. Not only do people move easier and faster than ever, but they also have unlimited ability to communicate. This also affects universities, which are becoming very multicultural again. As in the past, ethnic or cultural origin does not matter much, what counts is enthusiasm and dedication to acquiring knowledge and skills.

However, it is not so simple anymore, because we no longer live in a culture of universalism, but of enormous cultural diversity. Therefore, it is very difficult, despite the growing trend, to meet the requirements of the multicultural environment at universities (Ippolito, 2007). Many values, patterns of behaviors, ways of cognition and many more issues require continuous work on multicultural communication in universities.

This is a problem that is necessary to focus on for two reasons. Firstly, because the number of foreign students in universities continues to grow, as shown by statistics. For example, in Europe, the share of international students in European universities increased from 8.4% in 2016 to 9% in 2018 (Eurostat, 2019).

The second reason is that universities benefit greatly from more students from different cultures. As it has already been mentioned many times, the multicultural social environment in which the processes of intercultural communication take place is closely related to the synergy phenomenon that occurs in team activities (Thom, 2009).

Universities founded from the beginning of their existence on the universal values of truth, equality and solidarity are responsible for social inclusion on an equal footing with any social institution, and due to their role in the development of humanity, this responsibility rests even more with them.

The very function of the development of knowledge and technology also requires openness to the diversity of the contemporary world. That is why universities should set an example of proper communication and real intercultural dialogue.

**References**


Al- Araki M. (2015). Models of Intercultural Communication: Identities, Styles of Acculturation, and Premises for Enjoying the Company of One Another - Empirical Data From the Public Sector in Norway, *Sage Open*, 1-13.

Allwood J. (1985), Tvärkulturell kommunikation" (1985). In Allwood, J. (Ed.) Tvärkulturell kommunikation, Papers in Anthropological Linguistics 12, University of Göteborg, Dept of Linguistics.

Baldwin, J. R., & Hunt, S. K. (2002). Information seeking behavior in intercultural and intergroup communication. *Human Communication Research*, 28, 272-286.

Bennet M.J. (1986). A developmental approach to training for intercultural sensitivity, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 10 (2), 179-196.

Bennett, M.J. (Ed.). (1998). *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication: Selected Readings*. Yarmouth: Intercultural Press.

Council of Europe (2008), White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, retrieved from: https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white%20paper_final_revised_en.pdf

Gogacz A. (2013). Pedagogy, not Politics as the Real Stabilizer of Europe as the Home for Many nations. In: Kucha R., Cudak H. (Eds.), *European Ideas in the Pedagogical Thought: From National to Supranational Points of View. Some Totalitarian Aspects*, pp. 343-354, Łódź, Społeczna Akademia Nauk.

Gogacz, A., & Sołtys, A. (2016) Towards Inclusive Education in the Perspective of Teachers Opinions and Needs. *Pedagogika Rodziny. Familiy Pedagogy*. 6(4).

Ippolito, K. (2007). Promoting intercultural learning in a multicultural university: Ideals and realities. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 12, 749-763.

Jandt, F. E. (2001). *Intercultural communication: An introduction* (third ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Jones, G., Chirino Chace, B., Wright, J. (2020). Cultural diversity drives innovation: empowering teams for success. *International Journal of Innovation Science*, Volume 12(3), 323-343.

Klyukanov, I. E. (2020). *Principles of Intercultural Communication* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Kudo, K, Volet, S., & Whitsed, C. (2019). Development of intercultural relationships at university: a three-stage ecological and person-in-context conceptual framework. *Higher Education*, 77, 473-489.

Narula, U. (2006). *Communication Models*. Atlantic Publishers: New Delhi.

Pless, N., & Maak, T. (2004). Building an Inclusive Diversity Culture: Principles, Processes and Practice. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 54, 129-147.

Sarbaugh L. E. (1993). *Intercultural Communication*. Transaction Publishers.

Thom, V. (2009). Mutual Cultures: Engaging with Interculturalism in Higher Education. In Jones, E. (Ed.), *Internationalisation and the Student Voice: Higher Education Perspectives* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Varhegyi A., & Nann S. (2007), A Framework Model for Intercultural Competences. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/?action=media.download&uuid=2A9F9C37-9E58-868E-3E553C47D6B85536

Wood, P., & Landry, C. (2008), *Intercultural City*. Earthscan: London.

# MODULE 2. BASICS OF CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

## Units

- What do we mean by cross-cultural communication?
- Forms and models of cross-cultural communication
- How does it relate to the university context?
- Similarities and differences between intercultural and cross-cultural interaction

# MODULE 2. BASICS OF CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

**By University of Zagreb, Croatia**

## 1. **What do we mean by cross-cultural communication**?

The cross-cultural communication is "a process of creating and sharing meaning among people from different cultural backgrounds using a variety of means" (Allen, 2017). People involved in cross-cultural communication can have different cultural backgrounds and belong to different ethnicity, nationality, race, age, gender, sexual orientation, working culture, etc. As members of a group, they have learned and adopted certain patterns of behavior and communication including the sets of attitudes, values, norms and beliefs. Moreover, members of different cultures perceive the world around them in different ways and use different verbal, non-verbal and written forms of communication.

Cultural differences can cause misunderstandings and "cultural clashes" in communication and lead to tensions and conflicts between individuals and groups. Therefore, cross-cultural communication is important for all areas of human activity where members of different cultures communicate with each other. In education, economy and business, tourism, medicine etc., it is necessary to establish successful and effective communication, cooperation and trust, and to promote tolerance. Understanding and learning culturally appropriate communication skills thus becomes integral part of contemporary life and work.

Cross-cultural communication is the subject of scientific and applied research. The aim is to understand how members of different cultural groups communicate with each other, in order to reduce barriers and to improve cross-cultural communication. It often includes the understanding of cultural differences and similarities, generalizations, preconceptions and stereotypes, etc., as well as the process of developing and acquiring cross-cultural communication skills i.e., gaining awareness and knowledge on how "to exchange, negotiate and mediate cultural differences by means of language, gestures and body language" (Stringer and Cassiday, 2009).

## 2. **Forms and models of cross-cultural communication**

Hall and Hal (1990) point out that communication differs between cultures with regard to the following aspects: **high versus low context** - most Western cultures can be defined as being cultures of low-context communication, whereas e.g., China is one of high-context. While Western European, especially Germans, tend to communicate in a very direct, explicit way,

Chinese do usually communicate rather implicitly, indirectly (Tirpitz & Zhu 2015: p.159); **space** (the perception of space is also determined by culture. Space and related boundaries begin with an individual's physical boundary (skin), continue with one's personal space and end with one's territory (ibid.160). Teachers have to be aware of the communicative notion of space in order to avoid misinterpretations (Hall & Hall, 1990, p. 10). According to Hall & Hall (1990, p. 13) especially the cultural determined **time** systems of monochronic (e.g., North-western European countries) and polychronic (e.g., Asian) time are relevant.

Thus, when communicating in a cross-cultural setting, the involved parties have to be aware of the culturally determined frame of references of either party. Drawing on different aspects of (cross-cultural) communication, Browaeys and Price (2011) suggest a model of cross-cultural communication that takes into account the knowledge, experience, norms and values and assumptions as the frames of reference of the communicating parties. Furthermore, they outline four key communication filters (verbal and non-verbal language, style of thinking and communicating, stereotypes, relationships), which influence the way an intended message is received by either party. Consequently, it is not only necessary to understand basic assumptions, norms and values, and communication patterns, but also the notion of relationships (Tirpitz and Zhu, 2015, p. 161).

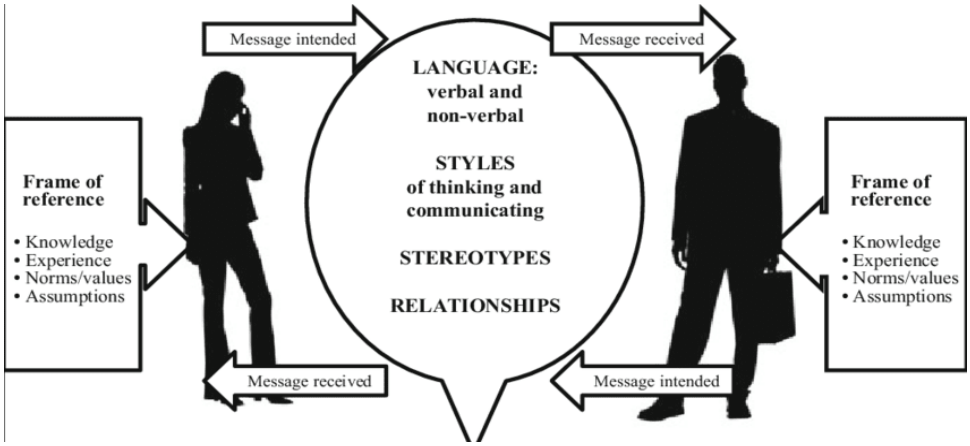



*Figure 1. Model of cross-cultural communication. Source: Based on Browaeys and Price (2011, p. 276)*

3. **How does it relate to the university context?**

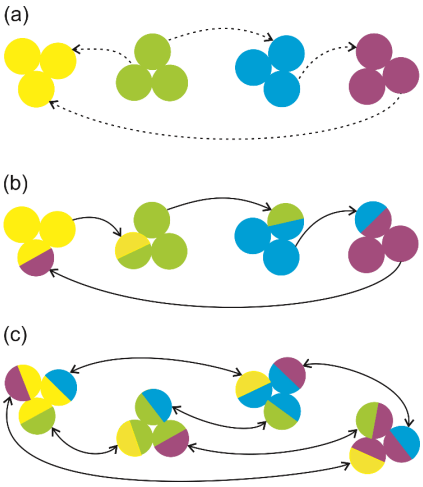
Many universities have taken great strides to increase intercultural understanding through processes of organizational change and innovations. University processes revolve around four major dimensions which include: organizational change, curriculum innovation, staff development, and student mobility (Rudzki, 1995, pp. 421-422). Ellingboe emphasizes these four major dimensions with his own specifications for the internationalization process. His specifications include: (1) college leadership; (2) faculty members' international involvement in activities with colleagues, research sites, and institutions worldwide; (3) the availability, affordability, accessibility, and transferability of study abroad programs for students; (4) the presence and integration of international students, scholars, and visiting faculty into campus life; and (5) international co-curricular units (residence halls, conference planning centers, student unions, career centers, cultural immersion and language houses, student activities, and student organizations) (Bartell, 2003, p. 46).

Universities are both teaching and research institutions, and they closely intertwine teaching and empirical scientific and research knowledge. In science, and not just in teaching, the terms inter-, trans-, and multidisciplinarity are occasionally mixed and/or used as synonyms. In his recently published work, Toš (2021) attributes this confusion to various historical and cultural traditions and points out that "differences between them, and especially the lack of knowledge and understanding of these differences, can create difficulties and even obstacles for inter- and/or transdisciplinary collaboration. In this regard, and due to the development of world globalization, the concept of intercultural competence is emerging, which is increasingly important in all forms of collaboration in science and practice, especially in transdisciplinary collaboration between scientists, experts, and interested non-professionals (Toš, 2021, p. 71). In other words, in scientific research and any other teaching or administrative-organizational interaction at universities, it is crucial to create and nurture an educational environment in favour of diversifying and multiculturalism, to raise awareness of the diversity of historical and cultural traditions as the foundation from which modern university interactions start in a globalized world, and to be aware of the challenges, similarities, and differences between intercultural and intercultural interaction, ranging already at the level of terms and concepts used.

## 4. Similarities and differences between intercultural and cross-cultural interaction


On several websites, in some dictionaries, and in various literature, the terms intercultural and cross-cultural are equated. But there is a difference, those two terms have different meanings. This error sometimes occurs due to the translation of these terms from different languages. In *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* the term *intercultural* is defined as an occurrence between or includes two or more cultures. In the same dictionary, the term *cross-cultural* is defined as dealing with or providing a comparison between two or more different cultures or culture areas. The Facebook page *"Language and Linguistics*" states that intercultural communication describes communication between at least two people who differ significantly in cultural ways. Cross-cultural communication is not the same as intercultural communication. **Intercultural communication** deals with the interaction between at least two people, while **cross-cultural communication** describes the comparison of communication styles between cultures.

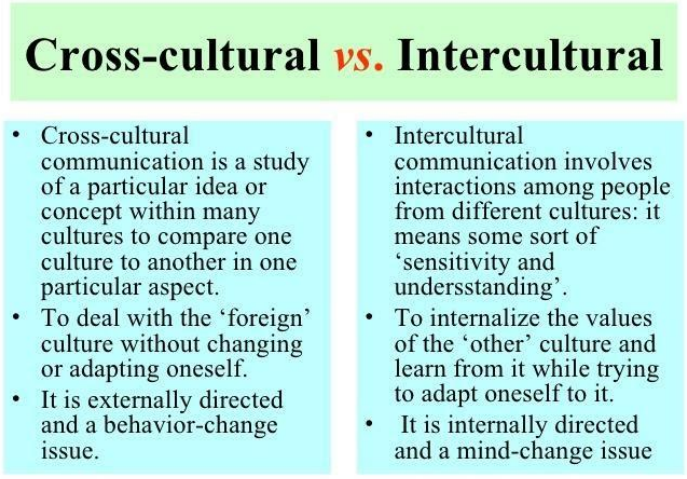
For example, an article about what happens when a Moroccan man talks to a Hawaiian woman would be intercultural, but an article that compares the communication patterns of people from Morocco with the communication patterns of people from Hawaii would be cross-cultural. Schriefer (2016) explains how "intercultural communication focuses on the mutual exchange of ideas and cultural norms and the development of deep relationships. In an intercultural society, no one is left unchanged because everyone learns from one another and grows together." She further states that in cross-cultural communication, "differences are understood and acknowledged and can bring about individual change, but not collective transformations. In cross-cultural societies, one culture is often considered the «norm», and all other cultures are compared to the dominant culture."




*Picture 1 Schematic image depicting (a)multicultural (b)cross-cultural and (c)intercultural (adapted from Schriefer, 2018).*

Allen (2017) emphasizes that "cross-cultural communication and intercultural communication differ based on the focus of research. Intercultural communication focuses on interaction with different cultures, while cross-culture communication focuses more on the comparisons of different cultures". According to Taylor (1994) and Valchev (2004), "intercultural communication expresses different forms of interaction between people of different ethnicities and cultural roots, leading to mutual understanding and reduction in conflicts… Intercultural communication is an exchange of wealth and wisdom that each community possesses. By exchanging this wealth, people get to know each other better as nations, religious communities, and human beings."

Sinden (2021) states that intercultural communication involves the exchange of information between different cultures and social groups, including individuals with different religious, social, ethnic, and educational backgrounds. *The Communication Theory* website explains how cross-cultural communication refers to communication between people who have differences in work styles, age, nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Cross-cultural communication can also refer to the exchange, negotiation, and meditation of cultural differences through language, gestures, and body language.




*Picture 2 Difference of cross-cultural and intercultural communication (source: Garbey, 2004)*

We notice how intercultural and cross-cultural communication and interaction are defined in different ways. We can agree that there are similarities and differences in definitions. More details can be found in the UniCulture Handbook and UniCulture Workbook. Readers can find additional literature on the subject and find information on the project website, in the Digital Library section.

**References**

Allen, M. (2017). Sage Research Methods. Cross-Cultural Communication. Retrieved from https://methods.sagepub.com/reference/the-sage-encyclopedia-of-communication-research-methods/i3766.xml

Bartell, M. (2003). Internationalization of universities: A university culture-based framework. *Higher Education*, 45(1), 43-70.

Browaeys, M. J., & Price, R. (2011). *Understanding cross-cultural management* (2nd ed.). Harlow, England; New York: Financial Times/Prentice Hall.

Communication Theory. (n.d.). *Cross Cultural Communication*. Retrieved from https://www.communicationtheory.org/cross-cultural-communication/

Garbey, E. (2004). Intercultural Awareness through EFL teaching (SlideShare). Retrieved from https://www.slideshare.net/Svetagal/intercultural-1127674

Hall, E. T., & Hall, M. R. (1990). *Understanding cultural differences*: Germans, French and Americans (1. publ. ed.). Yarmouth, ME.: Intercultural Press.

Language and Linguistics. (2016). What is the difference between intracultural, intercultural, cross-cultural, and international communication? (Status update) Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/LINGUISTCS/posts/what-is-the-difference-between-intracultural-intercultural-cross-cultural-and-in/1774889972786510/?_rdc=2&_rdr

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Cross-cultural. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cross-cultural

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Intercultural. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intercultural

Rudzki E. J. Romuald (1995). The application of a strategic management model to the internationalization of higher education institutions. *Higher Education*, 29(4): 421-441.

Schriefer, P. (2016, April 18). Spring Institute. *What's the difference between multicultural, intercultural, and cross-cultural communication?* https://springinstitute.org/whats-difference-multicultural-intercultural-cross-cultural-communication/

Shaw Findlay, M. (1998). *Language and communication. A cross-cultural encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO.

Sinden, J. (2021, March 2). Association for Talent Development. *The Importance of Intercultural Communication Training to the Global Workforce*. Retrieved from https://www.td.org/insights/the-importance-of-intercultural-communication-training-to-the-global-workforce

Stringer, D. M., & P. A. Cassiday. (2009). *52 Activities for Improving Cross-cultural Communication*. Boston – London, Intercultural Press, Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Tirpitz, A., & Zhu, M. (2015). Business Relationship Management and Marketing in a European-Chinese Context. Retrieved from https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Business-Relationship-Management-and-Marketing-in-a-Tirpitz-Zhu/248a1f2737c5895d4aaf6db06ac5df2616e74aca

Toš, Igor (2021). Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity - Problems and Guidelines. *Collegium Antropologicum*, 45(1), 67–73.

# MODULE 3. COMPETENCES FOR INTERCULTURAL & CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

## Units

- Verbal and nonverbal communication and culture
- Importance and functions of nonverbal communication
- Body language and paralanguage
- Communication styles – use of touch, use of space, eye contact, etc.
- Models of cultural learning, intercultural and cross-cultural adaptation
- Knowledge and skills for intercultural and cross-cultural communication

# MODULE 3. COMPETENCES FOR INTERCULTURAL & CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

**by Pax Rhodopica, Bulgaria**

## 1. Verbal and nonverbal communication and culture

Verbal and nonverbal communication is a unity that cannot be separated to convey a message. Teaching and learning activities involve communication between teachers and students, both verbal and nonverbal. These communications are interrelated in learning practice. The teacher's ability in applying both can help improve the quality of learning in the class. It has an impact on the academic and non-academic performance of students (Wahyuni, 2017).

The components of verbal communication consist of a number of elements: a dominant language and its dialects; contextual use of the language; paralanguage variations, such as voice volume, tone, and intonations; the willingness to share thoughts and feelings; degree of formality; and name format (Purnell, 2018). All of them consist of sounds, words and are part of language, which is directly related to culture. Nonverbal communication is defined as those actions and attributes that have a socially shared meaning, are intentionally sent or interpreted as intentional, are consciously sent or consciously received, and have the potential for feedback from the receiver (Jackson, 2014). These two types of communication are learnt over time and can be understood in different ways according to culture.

## 2. Importance and functions of nonverbal communication

When working in a culturally diverse classroom, the non-verbal communication should be taken into account. This is because students from different cultures may misinterpret non-verbal cues, escalating conflict or creating a barrier for effective communication to prevent the development of conflict. In the past centuries, researchers have learnt a great deal about nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication is considered as an indispensable component of human interaction, and it bears close relationship with culture. Each culture has a set of norms regarding the appropriateness of different types of body language and paralinguistic factors. However, nonverbal communication is often overlooked in second language teaching programs (Shi and Fan, 2010).

Often non-verbal communication is unconscious and culturally-biased. Therefore, professors and teachers may unconsciously use non-verbal forms of communication that could

lead to conflict evolving with the culturally-diverse students. However, if managed proactively by the professor, non-verbal communication could support the mutual enrichment and intercultural knowledge among culturally diverse students. To develop and enhance the competences in non-verbal communication, professors need to investigate existing non-verbal communication patterns among their culturally diverse students. Such actions would support the teaching staff in better understanding the specific needs of their culturally diverse students, as well as to apply and use communication strategies that are culturally sensitive in order to reduce the possibility of conflict and to support its resolution if it occurs. Non-verbal communication could be used as a tool to prevent conflict during lectures, as well as to mitigate potential conflict situations that could arise. Even though non-verbal communication may be effective in facilitating classroom management, the issue of culturally diverse student populations may require educators to examine nonverbal behavior and tailor non-verbal behavior to meet the unique needs of diverse student groups. Given the overall impact that non-verbal communication can have on classroom environment, educators owe it to themselves to understand this form of communication and to employ it strategically in order to improve classroom management and learning outcomes for all students (Okon, 2011).

With the development of globalization, intercultural communication has become more frequent and more significant than ever before (Wang, 2007). It seems that intercultural communication will be successful if the speaking one is language proficient. However, it is indicated in many studies that misunderstandings or failures in intercultural communication are largely caused by the misinterpretation or misuse of nonverbal behaviors (Ma, 1996). This leads us to the importance of raising awareness of nonverbal communication in the process of intercultural communication, meaning that nonverbal communication is a critical component of human communication. In addition, intercultural communication and nonverbal communication have become two important areas of communication study. The fascinating relationship between the two areas has drawn many scholars (Ma, 1999).

Many studies have demonstrated the close relationship between the two areas on a theoretical basis and explored the specific nonverbal behavior in cross-cultural or intercultural contexts (Althen, 1992; Barnlund, 1989; Ma, 1996; Shi and Fan, 2010). The types of non-verbal communication could vary based on culture or country. The differences could be found within at least eight areas: eye contact, gestures, touch, facial expressions, physical distance, posture,

appearance, paralanguage. Each of them provides how people should understand the nonverbal communication differences between cultures and how to prepare for them[1].

**3. Body language and paralanguage**

A lot of misunderstandings but also a lot of good knowledge about others lay in body language, gestures and paralanguages. The largest part of non-verbal communication is made up by body language, as it can convey powerful and strong messages. However, people with different cultural backgrounds use their body language in different ways in the communication process: at times it can be very obvious, while other times it can be very subtle. There are many examples of cultural differences including even a simple handshake that could vary in meaning from culture to culture:

- A strong handshake is perceived as a sign of authority and confidence in Western culture.
- In many countries in the Far East, a strong handshake is regarded as aggressive and a bow is advisable to be used instead.
- In Northern Europe, a quick and firm handshake is the usual greeting.
- In some countries in Southern Europe and in Central & South America, a handshake should be warmer and longer, usually with the left hand touching the clasped hands or elbow.
- In Turkey a strong handshake is regarded as aggressive and rude.
- In some African countries, a limp handshake is the usual greeting.
- Men in Islamic countries never shake hands with women outside their family.

Another example could be the sitting position when in meetings or dining. Sitting cross-legged is considered disrespectful in Japan. In parts of India and the Middle East showing the soles of your shoes or feet is considered offensive. Thus, the people in these countries consider throwing shoes at someone as a way to protest and to insult.

A lot of people who work mainly in international environments tend to keep their hand gestures to a minimum, as hand gestures could easily be regarded as a “minefield”. For example, in most parts of the world pointing at someone else is considered as an insult, while in other – it can be regarded simply as a reference; Polynesians stick out their tongue when greeting people, but that is something specific to the country.

The most commonly used gesture in the world is the nod. But even this common gesture could mean different things among different cultures. In some parts of India, people swing their

[1] https://online.pointpark.edu/business/cultural-differences-in-nonverbal-communication

head from side to side to confirm something and demonstrate that they are actively listening. Bulgarians also attach different meanings to “No” and “Yes” when answering with a headshake. They use nodding to emphasize their opinion and to illustrate what they are saying.

Hand gestures can also mean different things in different cultures: the ‘OK’ sign with the thumb means that you are calling someone with very unpleasant words in Greece, Spain or Brazil. In Turkey it could be an insult for gay people. A thumbs up is an indicator of a job well done in America and in EU.

Paralanguage means communication that is vocalized without words. It combines verbal and nonverbal communication using voice volume, tone and posturing as a way to express one’s thoughts and feelings. Paralanguage plays a key role in understanding the context or meaning of the used words. It’s important to be careful with paralanguage and to be aware that it is not discernible in emails and texts. Thus, great care must be paid when choosing one’s words. People normally use paralanguage multiple times per day and are sometimes not even aware they are doing so; this can include healthcare providers during assessments and at other times communicating with patients. The ability to interpret this kind of human communication correctly is considered an important competency in both personal and professional settings (Purnell, 2018).

**4. Communication styles – use of touch, use of space, eye contact, etc.**

Communication is not restricted to the framework mentioned above. It could also include eye contact, physical distance, touch or personal space. Eye contact signals confidence in western culture. However, it can be seen as rude or challenging in some parts of the Middle East and Asia. In many Eastern cultures there are gender rules about eye contact: women are discouraged to make eye contact with men as it could convey sexual interest or supremacy.

Regardless of their social status, people from more individualistic cultures are expected to maintain direct eye contact without staring. A person who fails to maintain eye contact could be perceived as not listening, not caring, not being trustworthy, or being untrue. However, among some more traditional cultures, sustained eye contact can be regarded as offensive. Furthermore, in some cultures a person of lower social class should avoid eye contact with superiors or those with more education. Thus, eye contact must be interpreted within its cultural context to optimize relationships (Purnell, 2018).

Touch (like handshakes) is often used in communication, even in a business setting. However, some cultures consider touching each other in conversation as inappropriate. Such

examples are the Northern Europe and the Far East countries that could be classified as non-contact cultures. They require very little physical contact beyond a handshake with unknown people or with people that they do not know very well. In such countries, even when accidentally brushing someone's arm on the street, one should offer an apology. By comparison, in the high-contact cultures of the Middle East, Latin America, and southern Europe, physical touch plays a key role in socializing. In many Arab countries, men hold hands and kiss each other in greeting. However, they would never do the same with a woman. Some Asian societies follow a more conservative approach when it comes to touching – in such countries the bow replaces the handshake. Other example of the differences is the patting on the head. In the U.S. it can be seen as endearing and a way to show affection to children. But in some Asian cultures touching children or adults on the head is considered disrespectful.

Personal space also needs to be respected when working with multicultural staff, colleagues, or students. In more individualistic cultures, the participants in a conversation should leave at least 40 centimeters of space between them. Other more collectivist cultures accept less personal space when talking to each other. They are quite comfortable standing closer to each other than are people from individualistic cultures; in fact, they interpret physical proximity as a valued sign of emotional closeness (Purnell, 2018). The rule here, no matter where you are in the world, is to give people more space than you think they might need. Only get close if invited. People in different cultures view physical distance differently. However, it's best to never enter anyone's personal space, about 2 feet. If it's not personal intimacy, many people find such proximity uncomfortable (Purnell, 2018).

The facial expressions for happiness, anger, sadness, fear are also viewed as universal. However, not every culture accepts to use them in every situation. For example the Japanese try to maintan a neutral facial expression as they believe that showing one's emotions burdens the other person. In general, there are seven different facial expressions which correspond to distinct universal facial emotions:

- Happiness - raising and lowering of mouth corners, cheeks raised, and muscles around the eyes tightened;
- Sadness - lowering of mouth corners and raising the inner portion of brows;
- Surprise - arching of eyebrows, eyelids pulled up and sclera exposed, mouth open;
- Fear - brows arched and pulled together, eyes wide open, mouth slightly open;
- Disgust - eyebrows lowered, upper lip raised, nose wrinkled, cheeks raised;

- Anger - brows lowered, eyes bulging, lips pressed firmly[2].

It is also good to have in mind that some cultures and some societies are deeply impressed by appearance and posture, which are also considered part of nonverbal communication. For example, some places in USA allow very relaxed attires, while others regard even an exposed shoulder or leg as offensive.

However, when it comes to posture, the best route is the traditional route. One should not slouch when sitting or sitting with one's legs crossed. One should face people as they speak to them and nod enough to show interest in what they are saying.

One of the best ways to understand cultural difference in nonverbal communication is understanding the difference between high context and low context cultures. High-context cultures rely more on nonverbal communication than low-context cultures. They use personal relationships, social hierarchies and cultural knowledge to convey meaning. In "low-context" cultures, words are more important. Communication is direct, relationships begin and end quickly, and hierarchies are relaxed[3].

## 5. Models of cultural learning, intercultural and cross-cultural adaptation

Of course, such variety of communication forms, manners and specificities leads to a growing number of attempts to create models. The historical development of "traditional" theories of culture shock led to the emergence of contemporary theoretical approaches, such as "culture learning", "stress and coping" and "social identification". These approaches can be accommodated within a broad theoretical framework based on the affective, behavioral and cognitive aspects of shock and adaptation. This "cultural synergy" framework offers a more comprehensive understanding of the processes involved (Zhou et al., 2008).

It can be seen in the following tables 1 and 2 there are almost a dozen of different approaches, theories and models trying to explain intercultural and cross-cultural adaptation and learning.

As Zhou et al. (2008) noticed, the study of "culture shock" has come to draw more from social psychology and education than medicine. "Culture learning" and "stress and coping" models have become well established, and "social identification" theories have become more prominent. These three contemporary theories are more comprehensive, considering the different

[2] https://virtualspeech.com/blog/cultural-differences-in-body-language
[3] https://online.pointpark.edu/business/cultural-differences-in-nonverbal-communication/

components of response – affect, behaviour and cognition – when people are exposed to a new culture.

Table 1. "Historical" concepts. *Source: Zhou et al. 2008.*

| Theory | Epistemological origin | Originator | Conceptual formulation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Grief and bereavement | Psychoanalytic tradition | Bowlby 1969 | Sees migration as experience of loss |
| Locus of control | Applied social psychology | Rotter 1966 | Control beliefs predict migration |
| Selective migration | Socio-biology (Neo-Darwinism) | e.g. Wells 1907 | Individual fitness predicts adaptation |
| Expectations | Applied social psychology | Feather 1982 | Expectancy-values relate to adjustment |
| Negative life-events | Clinical psychology | Holmes and Rahe 1967 | Migration involves life changes, and adaptation to change is stressful |
| Social support | Clinical psychology | e.g. Brown, Bhrolchain, and Harris 1975 | Social skill offers a buffering effect between life-events and depression |
| Value difference | Social psychology | Merton 1938 | Value differences lead to poor adaptation |
| Social skills and culture learning | Social psychology | Argyle & Kendon 1967 | Lacking social skills may cause cross-cultural problems |

Table 2. Contemporary theories and models *Source: Zhou et al. 2008*

| Theory | Theoretical origin | Conceptual framework | Theoretical premise | Factors affecting adjustment | Intervention guidelines |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stress and Coping (Affect) | Social psychology – stress, appraisal and coping (Lazarus & Folkman 1984); life events (Holmes and Rahe 1967) | Cross-cultural travellers need to develop coping strategies to deal with stress | Life changes are inherently stressful | Adjustment factors involving both personal (e.g. life change, personality) and situational (e.g. social support) | Training people to develop stress-management skills |
| Culture Learning (Behaviour) | Social and experimental psychology – social skills and interpersonal behaviour (Argyle 1969) | Cross-cultural travellers need to learn culturally relevant social skills to survive and thrive in their new settings | Social interaction is a mutually organised and skilled performance | Culture-specific variables such as: knowledge about a new culture, language or communication competence, cultural distance | Preparation, orientation and culture learning, especially behavioural-based social skill training |
| Social Identification (Cognition) | Ethnic, cross-cultural and social psychology – self (Deaux 1996; Social Identity Theory, e.g. Phinney 1990) | Cross-cultural transition may involve changes in cultural identity and inter-group relations | Identity is a fundamental issue for the cross-cultural travellers | Cognitive variables such as: knowledge of the host culture, mutual attitude between hosts and sojourners, cultural similarity, cultural identity | Enhancing self-esteem, overcoming barriers to inter-group harmony, emphasising inter-group similarities |

## 6. Knowledge and skills for intercultural and cross-cultural communication

Several important skills and the accumulation of a certain amount of knowledge prove to be crucial for working in an intercultural environment. The features listed so far in the forms of communication should be upgraded by mastering various intercultural didactic technologies as well as by getting acquainted with basic ethnocultural stereotypes for different ethnic and religious

groups. The acquisition of ethnological / anthropological techniques for entering a certain ethnic and confessional environment can also be useful and contribute to the improvement of communication in the educational process. It is very useful to get acquainted with the leading systems in intercultural education and to learn the basic principles of learning about otherness and multicultural dialogue for tolerance and compatibility between ethnic, religious and other groups with distinctive identification features.

**References**

Barnlund, D. C. (1989*). Communicative styles of Japanese and Americans: Images and realities. Belmont*. CA: Wadsworth.

Jackson, J. (2014*). Introducing language and intercultural communication.* New York: Routledge.

Ma, R. (1996). Saying "yes" for "no" and "no" for "yes": A Chinese rule. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 25, 257-266.

McNeill, D. (2000). *Language and gesture*. New York: Cambridge University Press

Okon, J. J. (2011). Role of Non-Verbal Communication. *Education, Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(5), 35-40.

Purnell, L. (2018). Cross Cultural Communication: Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication, Interpretation and Translation. In M. Douglas et al. (Eds.), *Global Applications of Culturally Competent Health Care: Guidelines for Practice*, pp. 131-142, Springer International Publishing AG.

Wahyuni, A. (2017). The Power of Verbal and Nonverbal Communication in Learning. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 125, 80-83.

Zhou, Y., Jindal-Snape, D., Topping, K., & Todman, J. (2008) Theoretical models of culture shock and adaptation in international students in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 33(1), 63-75.

# MODULE 4. SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE UNIVERSITY

**Units**

- What are social inclusion and social exclusion?
- Reasons for social exclusion
- Ways to promote social inclusion in the university
- Different age groups and approaches
- Good practice of social inclusion within the university

## MODULE 4. SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE UNIVERSITY

**by Transilvania University of Brașov, România**

### 1. What are social inclusion and social exclusion?

The two terms are often treated together because one – social inclusion – comes to counteract the other – social exclusion. The term *social exclusion* was the first to appear in use, relatively recently, describing a phenomenon that has always existed.

**Social exclusion.** Arpinte et al. (2008) shows that the origin of the term *social exclusion* can be found in France. In 1974 Lenoir published the book 'Les Exclus' (*The socially excluded*). They "represented all social categories that were not included in the social security systems specific to the welfare state: people with physical and mental disabilities, people with suicidal tendencies, disabled veterans, abused children, families with divorced parents, drug users, socially maladapted people and other categories of people who could not find a place in society" (Arpinte et al., 2008, p. 340). Over time, the scope of the term has expanded, as the authors point out.

There are voices who view social exclusion as just an euphemism for poverty, but it seems that the more widespread opinion is that "exclusion is a concept that covers more social issues" and that, in fact, the term is more closely related with the idea of participation: "exclusion is the denial of participation in various aspects of social life, such as activation on the labour market, access to public services, political life, as well as various forms of discrimination, physical isolation from peers" (Arpinte et al., 2008, p. 342).

Thus, social exclusion "describes a state in which individuals are unable to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life, as well as the process leading to and sustaining such a state" (Report on the World Social Situation 2016, United Nations, p. 18).

Similar definitions are provided by many authors. For example, Levitas et al. (2007) argue that social exclusion 'involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas" (p. 9). The authors also state that one can also speak of different degrees or forms of social exclusion. See, for example, *deep exclusion*, which "refers to exclusion across more than one domain or dimension of disadvantage, resulting in severe negative consequences for quality of life, well-being and future life chances" (idem).

**Social inclusion.** It seems that the history of the term *social inclusion* is not as long as for *social exclusion*. Arpinte et al. (2008) show that other terms were used for a while in connection with combating social exclusion – for example "integration" or "insertion". According to the authors, "the reference point for the introduction of the term social inclusion is the Lisbon European Council of 2000", when social inclusion was defined as "the policy of responding to situations of social exclusion" (p. 348).

And these response policies have general terms and adaptations to particular cases. For example, European bodies deal with social inclusion in many of their analyses, strategies, policies, protocols, and agreements. In Romania, social inclusion is a process defined in the Social Assistance Law itself: 'the set of multidimensional measures and actions in the fields of social protection, employment, housing, education, health, information-communication, mobility, security, justice and culture, aimed at combating social exclusion and ensuring the active participation of people in all economic, social, cultural and political aspects of society' (according to art. 6 lit. cc, from Law no. 292/2011).

The United Nations report quoted above defines social inclusion "as the process of improving the terms of participation in society for people who are disadvantaged on the basis of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status, through enhanced opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights" (p. 20).

Although the history of the terms *social exclusion* and *inclusion* is not very long, today the terms are used very often and will probably remain in the vocabulary of social policies for a long time, given that minority groups will always exist, and disadvantaged ones will always need assistance.

## 2. Reasons for social exclusion

In summarizing the reasons for social exclusion we will start from one of the definitions of the phenomenon, which was mentioned above in subchapter 4.1 and according to which social exclusion "describes a state in which individuals are unable to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life, as well as the process leading to and sustaining such a state" (Report on the World Social Situation 2016, United Nations, p. 18). Therefore, we will continue by listing the main reasons why some people or groups do not have the opportunity to fully participate in the life of their community, being exposed to discrimination and social exclusion.

**Age** – Age is thought to be one of the reasons for discrimination and social exclusion. Studies show that a certain age can be an impediment to full participation in social life. This is the case for people over 65, for example, about whom the literature states that "as people grow older, the chance that they will become socially excluded is greater than the chance that they will move out of or become less excluded" (Sacker et al., 2017). Another age group that is subjected to the risk of social exclusion is that of young people (14-35 years), who, according to the National Strategy on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction in Romania (2014-2020), is the main group affected by the financial crisis, registering the second rate of poverty in size" (Ionescu, 2017).

**Gender** – Another variable correlated with social exclusion is gender. Whether it is access to education or the labor market, women are more exposed to social exclusion than men. Data collected from many countries and cultures demonstrate that all girls and women have lower social status than boys and men. Even if social exclusion creates barriers to education for both girls and boys, many of these barriers are higher for girls (Lockheed, 2010).

**Disability** – According to data published by Eurostat, in 2018, in the EU, approximately 28.7% of people with disabilities over the age of 16 were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Although the percentage of people with disabilities varies significantly from one country to another within the EU, in all Member States people with disabilities are much more exposed to the risk of poverty and social exclusion than those with none. The percentage of people with a disability at risk of poverty or social exclusion ranged from 18.4% in Slovakia (2017 data), 21.0% in France and 21.7% in Austria to 43.6% in Latvia, 43.0% in Lithuania, peaking at 49.4% in Bulgaria.

**Ethnicity** - Immigrants and ethnic minorities are seen as disadvantaged in almost every Member State. They have a low degree of social inclusion such as employment and wage income and a high rate of dropout, homelessness, financial exclusion, and criminal propensity. The Member States of the European Union are making every effort to increase the participation of immigrants and ethnic minorities in the labor market and to bring it up to par with the majority population, and to promote their participation to social life in all its aspects. The difficult situation of Roma, for example, is tackled accordingly in all countries in which they reside (Schiffer and Schatz, 2008).

**Race** – Race is another important reason based on which people experience social exclusion, especially when it comes to employment. Unfortunately, there are still socially determined differences in the labor market, based on different personal attributes (ethnicity, race, gender,

sexual orientation, age, etc.) that have nothing to do with the skills or abilities of employees and should not have any influence on their job opportunities. Race continues to have a significant impact on occupation, especially where formal discrimination and the denial of opportunities during apartheid has left a legacy of racially embedded inequalities, including in the labor market (e.g., South Africa). Racial differences in occupation are also widespread in Latin American countries, such as Brazil and Ecuador.

**Religion –** Despite the European Union's strong efforts to fight discrimination and social exclusion of members of religious minority groups, recent studies and significant empirical evidence still support the consensual and cumulative ranking of exclusion of typical ethno-religious outgroups: most Europeans wish to allow no Gypsies to come into their country, followed by Muslims and finally Jews as the least excluded ethno-religious outgroup (Gesthuizen, Savelkoul and Scheepers, 2021).

**Marital status –** Unfortunately, there are still states and cultures around the world where marital status can be a reason, even a hidden one, for people to experience social exclusion. Thus, a person can be discriminated against because of being single; or married or in a civil union or de facto relationship; or separated or divorced (including if you've split up from your de facto partner), or widowed. In Indonesia, for example, those who do not have a husband or children, do not contribute to the economy of "tanean", and as a result are socially excluded lose access to various resources and are later forced to come out of their home (Noer, 2012).

**Sexual orientation** – Even though many states fight against discrimination and social exclusion based on gender identity and sexuality (McFadden and Crowley-Henry, 2018), these phenomena continue to exist and manifest, either in a hidden or direct way. As Hoel et al. (2014) reported, LGB workers are twice as likely to be victims of harassment and bullying than heterosexual colleagues (Di Marco, Hoel and Lewis, 2021). Moreover, when looking for a job, almost 30% of European transgender people perceive discrimination (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2013).

### 3. Ways to promote social inclusion in the university

The purpose of promoting social inclusion in the university is to provide access to "higher education to under-represented groups, such as low socio-economic or educational backgrounds, ethnic minorities, migrants and refugees" (Kottmann at al., 2019, p. 5). Special education needs (SEN) students will benefit from different social inclusion programs by increasing their learning

performances, reducing rates of inappropriate behavior and a better use of social skills acquired during the educational process.

Inclusive Education (IE) can be defined as the "commitment to include students with SEN in mainstream education by improving and adapting specific classroom practices to the individual needs of the learner, where students should not only be physically integrated, but also socially included" (Van Mieghem et al, 2020).

Bates et al. (2015) found that attitudes of teachers towards IE being rather negative, as opposed to the attitudes of parents and peers. This is one of the reasons for continuously looking for methods and tools for actively engaging all stakeholders (educators being on the top of the list). For promoting social inclusion in education one of the key issues is the development of a communication strategy that draws on different channels to reach different stakeholders (UNESCO 2017, p. 20). The stakeholders of the teaching communities can be briefly divided as being from outside of the schools (e.g., government officials, policy makers) and from inside the school (principals, administrators and teachers themselves), and „these different categories might induce tensions or communication issues on different levels caused by different interpretations and potentially conflicting agendas" (Vangrieken et al., 2017).

The simple communication, strategic or not, should aim to stimulate collaboration and a collaborative climate by" developing a community of practice in which team members work and learn together to address all students' educational needs" (Sannen et al., 2021).

By increasing the access to open educational resources (OER), the result will be the "easy access to resources that may otherwise not be accessible by potential user groups" (Geser, 2007, p.21). Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) could offer solutions in order to solve educational and societal inequality by developing partnerships with group communities or creating programs addressing gender and indigenous inequality (Lambert, 2020). MOOCs offers alternative access routes and opportunities toward higher education (Farrow, 2020).

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) represent another key element for facilitating inclusive education by providing all learners equal and personalized opportunities to develop the different set of skills required nowadays. ICTs have a big potential to be used as a tool for reducing inequalities and enhancing collaboration among students with diverse social, economic and cultural backgrounds. Digital tools can contribute for providing equal opportunities to all students coming from minority segments of the society and give a voice to all of those involved.

ICTs are not a panacea for curing inclusive education problems. ICT offers many tools in order to close many gaps. For example, when designing digital learning objects, „obvious" issues have to be kept in mind such as facilitating effective user navigation, reviewing the patterns of the links aiming to avoid disorientation, repetition, and unnecessary backtracks, or choosing more intuitive and standardized symbols, reviewed colors, or the main menu (Bisol, Valentini & Braun, 2015).

Before the tools and technologies, to increase the engagement and foster the inclusion of diverse communities of learners, using relevant case studies and storytelling techniques are prerequisites for helping students to understand abstract terms and concepts. "Stories are the way we make sense of the world and translate abstract concepts into understanding, and through storytelling, we define culture, construct meaning, enter the realms of others, and build empathy and compassion" (Hoffer, 2020).

**4. Different age groups and approaches**

Including all learners (children, youth and adults) in education is a major objective of contemporary international policies. Social inclusion refers to both ensuring access to education and establishing quality learning processes. From this perspective, differences between individuals and social groups are seen in a positive light, as opportunities or stimuli which can foster education for all and gender equality (UNESCO, 2017).

In the European Union, increasing social inclusion in tertiary education is also a very important goal of contemporary educational policies; social inclusion in higher education "refers to the increasing access to higher education and degree completion for underrepresented groups, improving Europe's human capital and innovation capacity, while fostering social inclusion of citizens and increasing their labour market opportunities" (Kottmann at al., 2019, p. 7).

Despite the worldwide consent regarding the importance of inclusive education, there are various interpretations of this concept, ranging from the inclusion of certain groups (e.g., students with a disability) in mainstream education, to a broader view of social inclusion as a reform that responds to the social diversity of all learners (Sannen et al., 2021). In Europe, although the number of students who attend higher education have increased significantly since the 1960s, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, migrant backgrounds and students with chronic illnesses or disabilities are still underrepresented; moreover, European countries operate with different definitions of underrepresented groups and only a few of them have explicit strategies

for widening participation to tertiary education for disadvantaged students (Kottmann at al., 2019).

Social inclusion concerns not only academic achievement, but also students' emotional well-being, their social inclusion in class, and their academic self-concept (Schwab, Zurbriggen and Venetz, 2020). These dimensions of inclusive education are applicable for both youth in universities and children in schools. Referring to children, Venetz et al. (2014 apud id.) defined these concepts as follows: *emotional inclusion* refers to "the student's emotional well-being in schools, which especially indicates how much a student likes school as one facet of school well-being"; *social inclusion* refers to „the student's peer relationships in class and it includes friendships as a positive indicator and feelings of loneliness as a negative indicator, among others"; and *academic self-concept* refers to „the student's perception of his or her general academic abilities (e.g., related to working speed and solving tasks)" (p. 2). For youth and adults in universities, these concepts are also valid, as social inclusion relies on general well-being in an academic environment, not only on learning outcomes.

According to Karimi and Matous (2018), the role of universities is not only to create and transfer knowledge, but also to support students' social lives and experiences, "especially within an increasingly diverse and multicultural climate" (p. 184); diversity in higher education – as these authors claim – is associated with positive outcomes at many levels: personal, educational and societal.

A more recent approach to social inclusion emphasizes the participative dimension of learning and education. The traditional model of education is based on unidirectional teaching, while a more recent educational model empowers students to create and modify contents and encourage students' interaction (Marta-Lazo, Osuna-Acedo and Gil-Quintana, 2019); such a new pedagogical model is largely supported by information technologies, which could facilitate both the acquisition of knowledge and collaboration between participants.

In order to address contemporary social challenges related to migration and the integration of immigrants in host countries, educational institutions have become increasingly concerned with the development of new teaching methods and tools meant to facilitate the social, economic and cultural integration of immigrant populations in Europe. For instance, Sotomayor-Moralesa, Grande-Gascóna and Ajaaouani (2017) describe a research-intervention project aimed at improving the education and training of immigrants in four European countries with high level of immigration: Spain, France, Greece and Italy. In particular, this project identified effective

training methodologies and teaching tools that could facilitate integration, but also cultural, linguistic, social and professional barriers that immigrants faced in host societies. Such projects are important not only at a micro-social level, through their contribution to the social inclusion of migrants from certain communities or regions, but also at a macro-social level, as they attract the attention of the general public and raise awareness of the need for integration and the social benefits of integrating vulnerable groups into education systems and the labor market.

For supporting inclusive practices, educators need to approach the diversity among learners with a positive attitude; they also need to be aware of the four core values of inclusive education (UNESCO, 2017): a) valuing learner diversity (differences between students are viewed as a resource for education); b) supporting all learners (teachers support the educational achievement of all students); c) working with others (teachers encourage collaboration and teamwork) and d) continuing personal professional development (teachers accept responsibility for their own lifelong learning).

**5. Good practice of social inclusion within the university**

Although developed countries are highly committed to the correction of social exclusion, there is still much to be done in this regard. Paradoxically, the idea of social inclusion in higher education has a longer tradition in universities in countries such as Britain, Australia or the US, where the exclusion of various group from higher education has historical roots and is still problematic. Because the best universities in these countries are private, there is an access problem for students from disadvantaged communities and on low incomes. While old, traditional universities may have a monopoly on the best knowledge offered to students, while newer universities tend to focus on educational strategies for the social inclusion of students from different categories, in order to build a brand. Thus, some universities have developed a number of policies and practices that have proven successful and have managed to make these vulnerable students the focus of their recruitment strategies and even the central element of the whole organizational culture. Besides a series of programs aimed at helping them financially, mentoring and coaching is a strategy through which these students are taught to find solutions to overcome obstacles.

For example, the entire organizational culture in Smith College aims to integrate students from low-income families (usually belonging to certain minorities) and, as a result, 86% of these students complete their studies (almost 30% more than the US national average). First of all, they

have a specific recruitment procedure, so they select those future students who demonstrate resilience and perseverance (some specific tests are carried out on admission). Once admitted, they are part of a mentorship process, where mentors are graduates who in turn were the first in their family who have graduated from a university. They have the role of helping and guiding the freshmen in discovering what they can do in certain situations. Peer-to-peer mentoring plays a crucial role in helping students of certain minorities achieve excellence in the exact sciences (where the drop-out rate is higher) and find solutions to specific problems they encounter along the way, but also integrate into the social life of the campus. Besides this mentoring, the university offers them several types of financial aid for certain teaching materials. In order to increase their self-confidence and to provide equal access to internships and interviews, students have been given access to appropriate clothing for these activities.

Another example in this regard is the University of Texas at Austin, which has a partnership with secondary schools and high schools for preparing children from low-income families, thus giving them a real chance of becoming students. Rutgers University has a program to increase academic success in life sciences among students from under-represented categories. So, in the summer, they take courses that help them deepen their knowledge. Some universities, such as Howard University, are taking remedial courses to help students pass their exams. It focuses on summer programs designed to integrate students into the life of the university campus and takes extra courses to better develop their critical thinking and essay writing skills.

There are also universities that put more emphasis on training students on social inclusion and offer workshops or courses on this subject. For example, Southern Methodist University from Dallas has a compulsory discipline in the socio-human sciences in its curriculum. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign offers sessions training to freshmen to be open to differences among students. There are also universities that engage students belonging to under-represented categories in the decision-making process. For example, at the University of Illinois-Chicago, such students are involved in drafting proposals on university policies to improve the climate, whereas in Georgia State University there is a multicultural Program Council. University at Albany from New York has an Office of Intercultural Student engagement, whose role is to organize activities for the development of cultural diversity skills among both students and employees.

Some universities established a partnership with national organizations to achieve better integration of ethnic minorities. The Meyerhoff Scholars Program at the University of Maryland,

Baltimore, is a complex program that supports a larger number of students from various minority groups in graduating from technical faculties by means of personal counseling, mentoring programs, financial support and summer schools to develop research skills. Another example of collaboration programs is the Alliance for Graduate Education and the Provessel (AGEP). The program is a collaborative initiative between Howard University, Texas University, El Paso (Umet) and NSF. The program has been successful, increasing the number of graduates from ethnic minorities.

In European universities, we find examples of good practice especially in the integration of people with disabilities. Finland is one of the best examples of good practice. Their Education Ministry is actively committed to this and promotes equal opportunities by changing the attitudinal and physical barriers of teachers, institutions and organizations. They have created a guide consisting of recommendations made with the involvement of stakeholders addressing issues such as student recruitment, the design of access to admission exams, the accessibility of admission exams and evaluation, the development of the selection of students without barriers, accessibility in study and legislation and taking into account individual needs and instruments.

In Spain, the national education system promotes barrier-free learning in higher education institutions since 2006. Because of this, there is a multi-service support (OAM) offered by Fundación and co-financed by the European Social Fund. This organization has the role of providing information and support so that vulnerable youth can be admitted to university and find work afterwards. This project has been running since 2010, and now those universities that have implemented the program became examples of good practice.

Another example is Italy, where there are currently services for students with disabilities in every university. At Bergamo University and Trento University there are educational counselling, peer tutoring services and other services pertaining to social inclusion for different vulnerable student categories. They provide assistance to students with learning disabilities, helping them identify the subjects most suited to them and creating individual learning plans for them. Mentors help them integrate better into student life, attend courses and use course materials, mediate the examination procedure with teachers. There are also programs in these universities to integrate asylum seekers and students who are parents, developing a range of social and economic services for them.

**References**

Arpinte, D., Baboi. A., Cace, S., Tomescu, C. & Stănescu, I. (2008). Politici de incluziune socială. *Calitatea vieții*, 3–4, 339–364.

Basit, T. N., & Tomlinson, S. (Eds). (2012). *Social Inclusion and Higher Education*. 1st ed., Bristol University Press. Retrieved from www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1t891n1. Accessed 14 July 2021.

Bates, H., A. McCafferty, E. Quayle, and K. McKenzie. (2015). Review: typically-developing students' views and experiences of inclusive education. *Disability and rehabilitation* 37 (21): 1929-1939.

Bisol, C. A., Valentini, C. B., & Braun, K. C. R. (2015). Teacher education for inclusion: Can a virtual learning object help?. *Computers & Education*, *85*, 203-210.

Di Marco, D., Hoel, H. and Lewis, D. (2021). Discrimination and exclusion on grounds of sexual and gender identity: Are LGBT people's voices heard at the workplace? *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, 24. e18

Dovigo, F., Casanova ,L., Gairín Sallán, J., Pupponen, H., Mäkelä, T., Jerónimo, M., Duarte, A., Mangas, C., Sousa, S., Iucu, R., Stîngu, M,, Marin, E,, Maurariu, C,, Olmos Rueda, P,, Rodríguez-Gómez, D., & Lucas L. (2017). Good Practices for equity and inclusion in Higher Education. Retrieved from https://ddd.uab.cat/pub/llibres/2017/171121/A4A_BergConf_a2017.pdf

European Union Agency for Fundamental Right. (2013). European Union lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender survey: Results at a glance. Publications Office of the European Union. Retrieved from: https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2013/eu-lgbtsurvey-european-union-lesbian-gay-bisexual-andtransgender-survey-results

Farrow, R. (2020). The role of MOOCs in promoting social inclusion through employability: a rapid assessment of evidence. *Italian Journal of Educational Technology*, *28*(3), 189-209.

Geser, G. (Ed.). (2007). Open educational practices and resources: OLCOS Roadmap 2012. Salzburg: Open eLearning Content Observatory Services. Retrieved from: https://www.olcos.org/cms/upload/docs/olcos_roadmap.pdf

Gesthuizen, M., Savelkoul, M. and Scheepers, P. (2021). Patterns of exclusion of ethno-religious minorities: The ethno-religious hierarchy across European countries and social categories within these countries. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, (82), 12-24.

Govnet education. Retrieved from at https://blog.govnet.co.uk/education/what-is-inclusion-in-higher-education

Hoffer, E. R. (2020). Case-Based Teaching: Using Stories for Engagement and Inclusion. *International Journal on Social and Education Sciences*, *2*(2), 75-80.

Ionescu, I. (2017). Tinerii – grup expus riscului de excluziune socială: analizarea factorilor care le îngreunează situaţia pe piaţa muncii şi în educaţie, *Calitatea vieţii*, XXVIII, 75-104.

Karimi, F., Matous, P. (2018). Mapping diversity and inclusion in student societies: A social network perspective. *Computers in Human Behavior* 88, 184-194.

Kottmann, A., Vossensteyn, J.J., Kolster, R., Veidemane, A., Blasko, Zs., Biagi, F., Sánchez-Barrioluengo, M. (2019). Social Inclusion Policies in Higher Education: Evidence from the EU. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Retrieved from: https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC117257/jrc_117257_social_inclusion_policies_in_higher_education_evidence_from_the_eu.pdf

Lambert, S. R. (2020). Do MOOCs contribute to student equity and social inclusion? A systematic review 2014–18. *Computers & Education*, *145*, 103693.

Levitas, RA., Pantazis, C., Fahmy, E., Gordon, D., Lloyd, EHRR., & Patsios, D. (2007). *The Multi-dimensional Analysis of Social Exclusion*. Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

Lockheed, M. (2010), Gender and social exclusion. Retrieved from: https://www.iaoed.org/downloads/WEB_12_gender%20and%20social%20exclusion_final.pdf

Marta-Lazo, C., Osuna-Acedo, S., Gil-Quintana, J. (2019). sMOOC: A pedagogical model for social inclusion. *Heliyon* 5, doi: 10.1016/j.heliyon.2019. e01326.

McFadden, C. and Crowley-Henry, M. (2018). ”My People”: The potential of LGBT employee networks in reducing stigmatization and providing voice. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 29, 1056-1081.

Noer, K. U. (2012), Land, marriage and social exclusion: the case of Madurese exile widow, *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 65, 180 – 185.

Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development,Office of the Under SecretaryU.S. Department of Education. (2016). Advancing diversity and inclusion in higher education. Key data highlights focusing on race and ethnicity and promising practices. Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/advancing-diversity-inclusion.pdf

Report on the World Social Situation 2016: *Leaving no one behind: the imperative of inclusive development*. New York: United Nations Publications.

Sacker A, et al. (2017). Health and social exclusion in older age: evidence from Understanding Society, the UK household longitudinal study, *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 71, 681-690.

Sannen, J., De Maeyer, S., Struyf, E., De Schauwer, E., Petry, K. (2021). Connecting teacher collaboration to inclusive practices using a social network approach. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 97, 103182.

Sannen, J., De Maeyer, S., Struyf, E., De Schauwer, E., Petry, K. (2021). Connecting teacher collaboration to inclusive practices using a social network approach. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 97, 103182.

Schiffer, K. and Schatz, E. (2008). Marginalization, social exclusion and health. Experiences based on work of Correlation – European network social inclusion and health. Retrieved from https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/11927/1/Correlation_marginalisation_web.pdf

Schwab, S., Zurbriggen, C.L.A., Venetz, M. (2020). Agreement among student, parent and teacher ratings of school inclusion: A multitrait-multimethod analysis. *Journal of School Psychology* 82, 1-16.

Sotomayor-Moralesa, E., Grande-Gascóna, M.L., Ajaaouani, N. (2017). The social inclusion of the immigrant population in Europe through the development of new teaching and learning methods in vocational training. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 237, 535 – 540.

The education trust. (2015). The Pell Partnership: Ensuring a Shared Responsibility for Low-Income Student Success. Retrieved from https://edtrust.org/resource/pellgradrates/

UNESCO (2017). A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Retrieved from: https://inclusiveeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2013/07/UNESCO-InclusionEducation.pdf

UNESCO (2017). A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Retrieved from: https://inclusiveeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2013/07/UNESCO-InclusionEducation.pdf

Van Mieghem, A., Verschueren, K., Petry, K., & Struyf, E. (2020). An analysis of research on inclusive education: a systematic search and meta review. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *24*(6), 675-689.

Vangrieken, K., Meredith, C., Packer, T., & Kyndt, E. (2017). Teacher communities as a context for professional development: A systematic review. *Teaching and teacher education*, *61*, 47-59.

# MODULE 5. BUILDING AN INTERCULTURAL AND CROSS-CULTURAL UNIVERSITY

## Units

- Develop an ICC vision for the university
- Prepare an ICC strategy
- Build the ICC strategy of the university - elements of an intercultural strategy
- Implementation and measuring progress

# MODULE 5. BUILDING AN INTERCULTURAL AND CROSS-CULTURAL (ICC) UNIVERSITY

**by Buckinghamshire New University, United Kingdom**

## 1. Develop an ICC vision for the university

The Intercultural and Cross-Cultural University strategy framework for approaching intercultural aspects and opportunities has to find a way that best meets students' experiences. There must be a university approach to the commitment to intercultural understanding. To express rationality, the ICC vision is to explain the supporting concepts behind what the University intends to achieve and to establish guideline values on how to pursue this within the strategic framework outlining the University's strategic objectives.

For a variety of university disciplines, the ICC can interfere with learning, undermine university operational and academic excellence, disrupt innovation, and limit the influence of university alumni in communities. Intercultural consideration, beside broader participation, are the mechanisms and "ways of survival" that help universities produce students' education, research quality, and community participation more successfully.

As universities embrace internationalization and as the university student population becomes more diverse, the university and its staff require a greater level of intercultural trust. Failure to comprehend how student diversity affects the university environment does not serve the purpose of the university around student experience.

ICC understanding is essential in order to provide an environment conducive to the success of students at a university with diverse student collaborations. Students and staff have the highest level of cultural confidence and need the support of the university to provide rich cultural curricula, teaching excellence and student participation opportunities for intercultural experience and personal development. Being an employer of choice also influences intercultural understanding of the university's objectives.

Every university expects a learning environment and student experience that provides them with the intercultural abilities needed for diverse complex societies today and in the future. Therefore, university graduates and staff seek to gain an intercultural understanding - beginning with an in-depth understanding of different background, as well as self-awareness and openness to change one's personal and systemic orientation - to participate to social coexistence and contribute in future solutions.

**2. Prepare an ICC strategy**

Different universities have the potential for intellectual diversity and rich learning. ICC realization happens in every university in some way, but it does not happen by itself. Hence, it needs clear intentions, focused self-reflection, a nourishing cultural background, and the incorporation of intercultural advances into the university system. The development of an ICC strategy involves identifying underlying ideas surrounding international cultural understanding. These references are vital to starting a common approach around what the university expects, with clearer coordination among efforts between the university and the support units.

Having an intercultural ethos means having the right attitudes to appreciate diverse social and cultural diversity and to be open and flexible. This includes a keen sense of understanding or the "ability to be aware of those values, attitudes and assumptions" that inform one's viewpoints and conduct.

As academic cultures remain the predominant culture in a university, interdisciplinary understanding across subjects is essential for interdisciplinary action. A number of four initial ideas may help to establish the conceptual framework for intercultural understanding as follows: well-being, multiculturalism, interpersonal skills and changes to university standards (including expectations, policies, protocols, and processes).

Nurturing intercultural abilities and experience is but a key component of the university's excellence and supports any university's strategic goals of research and teaching. Furthermore, improving the intercultural profile of a university contributes to the well-being of students and staff, especially in regard to how they relate to being members of a vibrant institution.

**3. Build the ICC strategy of the university - elements of an intercultural strategy**

The ICC strategy assumes that international cultural experiences and environments are different and come from a multicultural society. The principles of multiculturalism as part of peaceful coexistence and cultural diversity are an ideal basis for intercultural sensitivity, or a sense of partnership between dynamic interactions and cultural groups. In other words, a university must have diversity before it can develop an intercultural strategy. However, as mentioned earlier, exposure to diversity does not guarantee an understanding of diversity.

Signing on to intercultural understanding requires, beside a multicultural university campus, deliberate, cohesive and collaborative efforts for connection and exchange across cultures.

*Growing ICC fluency*. ICC fluency comes from intercultural outlooks (including self-awareness and appreciation of socio-cultural differences), diverse intercultural and interpersonal skills (such as the ability to build cross-cultural communication and relationships) and intercultural awareness (such as knowledge) of different cultures and oppressed groups (such as their history, traditions, values and customs).

A key element of intercultural eloquence is the increase of "intercultural awareness" of one's cultural values and assumptions, including self-awareness, openness to diversity, and recognition that one's own approach is not universal. ICC proficiency means interpersonal skills, "interpersonal capacity" that enable one to adapt more fluently to different cultural settings. Such settings require cultural knowledge (or cultural literacy), some ability to communicate across cultures (intercultural communication skills) and the development of a network of social contacts across different communities (intercultural capital).

*Values and approach*. Understanding how the university aims to achieve intercultural understanding requires a consensus on what is important. An approach to the development and implantation of intercultural understanding in every aspect of the ICC might be developed following the next key elements:

- People. Improving diversity, equality, ICC understanding between students, alumni, University in general and employees, is mainly about people - their interactions, cognitions and interactions with each other.
- Build on successes. Functionally, ICC strategy is based on several examples of university excellence and builds on the best results of pre-designed strategic plans.
- Linkages (to be at least the sum of our parts). Specialized expertise is not in shortage, University boost with ideas and expertise on how to enhance intercultural understanding of students, staff, and alumni. One of the biggest challenges is to connect and coordinate activities and resources more effectively, hence, to reduce duplication and to gain a critical mass on university campus.
- Expanding. Facilitating the natural development of intercultural understanding ideas and ideals across many systems of the university.
- Developing Solutions. The process of arriving to an intercultural strategy is one of co-producing through widespread and continuous partnership and deployment across the University. The ultimate goal of an ICC strategic plan is to establish a common ground in a meaningful place.

*ICC Strategy Goals: Aim for where it really counts.* The pledge to create university

environments that foster intercultural understanding among students, employees, and past students is achieved through several strategic objectives. These objectives are broken down into permanent programs at the university various levels.

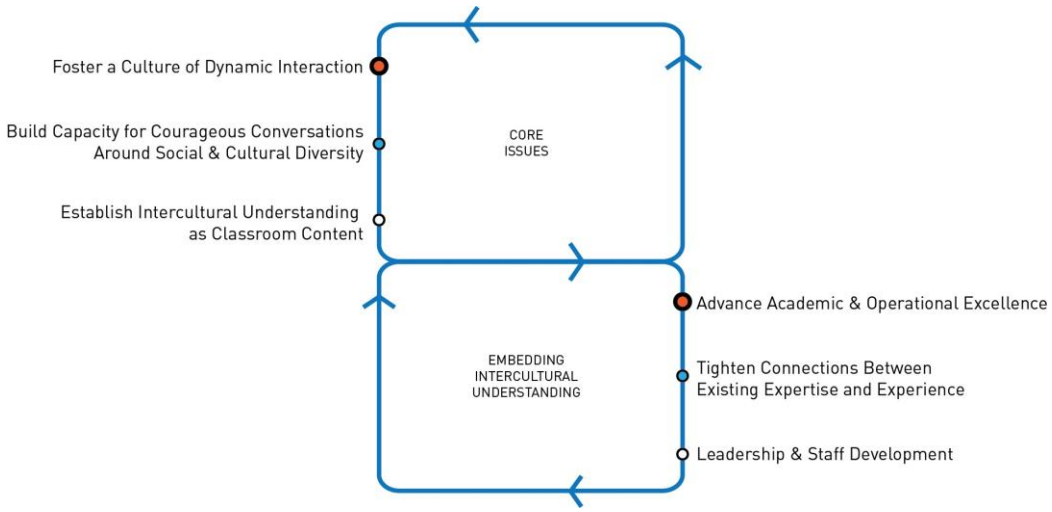



*Figure 1. ICC Strategy Goals*

Strategically, the foundation and the measure of an intercultural approach include:

1. to be a place where students and employees can easily make eloquent social connections by nurturing an ethos of dynamic interaction through cultural change and discipline;
2. develop the ability of students, employees, and past students to participate in social and cultural change and through difficult or courageous conversations;
3. experiencing intercultural tolerance as classroom curricula through curricula, teaching and / or student involvement.

The next three objectives focus on the institutional changes or practices needed to successfully inculcate ICC understanding effectively, meaningfully, compactly and sustainably in every aspect of university experience:

1. utilizing intercultural consideration as a medium to enhance academic and operational quality;
2. at the very least being a collection of university measures by strengthening the connection among existing specialization and experience;
3. improving university direction aspirations and staff provision through leadership and staff development in a structurally effective and innovative way.

*Strategic and Reeled Approach*. This ICC strategic plan presents a basis for achieving the six strategic goals over time. Because the commitment to intercultural understanding requires strategic objectives or areas to focus on, they act as central points for consistent and continued backing from the university.

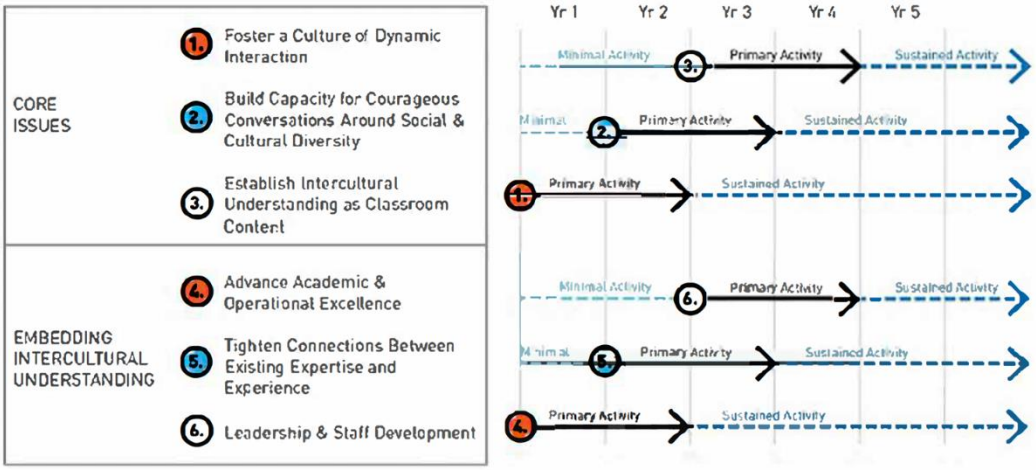



*Figure 2. Strategic Reeled Focus*

Parts of university might be encouraged to select and focus on one or two goals per set, as per their readiness and access to different levels of resources. This will make the university structures to be more effective in achieving these strategic goals. As shown in the diagram above, it is advisable to reach the stagnant, phased targets within five or seven units, gradually building on the next target group (Fig. 2).

At a minimum, it is recommended that goals 1 and 4 be combined with existing initiatives for years 1 and 2 as "primary activities" and then integrated into "sustainable activities" (pursuing objectives activities, as opposed to initiating them). Goals 2 and 5 become the main activity for years 2 and 3; similarly, goals 3 and 6 become the main activities in years 3 and 4. By 5, all considered objectives have been commenced and it is a point of continuous activism.

This considered sequence is suggested as the initial pair of goals, "nurturing a culture of dynamic interaction" and "advancing operational and academic excellence", providing the basis for the next set of goals, etc. This makes it simpler to attain the following objectives.

The stagnant advance allows university parts to focus on a minimum of two targets each year (one per set) and allows units to minimize overlap with other targets if needed, depending on the unit's capacity.

*Foster a Culture of Dynamic Interaction*. Supporting eloquent and dynamic social relationships through change - especially in the lecture room, research and work labs - is at the center of developing understanding, developing originality and excelling in academic, research and work labs. It is also a matter of urgency. As per recent research, students should have the chance to make connections between cultures and curriculum in their first year (Pettigrew et al.,

2020). This progressive approach affects the new staff and students.

For several students, “dynamic interaction” represents making meaningful relationships, often friendships, with colleagues from different cultural perspectives. This is what all students assume from going to a culture diverse university. Occasionally referred to as “high quality peers”, this is critical for students’ academic success and mental health and for a fruitful relationship with peers. This is likewise essential for staff and can contain a wide range of social links through disciplinary and administrative units.

A university campus size and disciplinary structure may create noticeable barriers to making friends and developing collective associations and are often responsible for a background that is considered as “cold” and “neutral”. Active interactions from professional partnership to collective alliance through deep social and cultural changes are the true extent of ICC understanding and are the basis for courageous conversations about ICC experiences in the lecture rooms and at a sociocultural level.

## 4. Implementation and measuring progress

Straight conversations are a vital part of the university involvement in an international context where it is essential to understand the different pressures on students, such as conflicting attitudes about dating or parental pressure to succeed.

Universities, by their very nature, should be a sheltered space for difficult, but informative and respectful dialogue, diversity debate and cross-cultural discussions. Because every conflict is in some way “cultural,” intercultural attitudes are almost always a sheltered space for refereed disagreement and the ability to engage in controversial conversations. There is also a need to understand and minimize asymmetric power disparities and other forms of inequality among students on campus.

In order to become part of the core activities of the university, the intercultural understanding of the classroom must be learned and demonstrated. The range of students in each lecture room presents intercultural learning aptitudes and can be a cause of intercultural rigidity, gangsterism, and miscommunication. Unregulated, lecture room diversity can lead to more difficulties in teaching effectively, encouraging group interaction, and managing the diversity of scholar views.

How to make ICC understanding a part of the studying experience varies between subjects and universities. For some, a deeper understanding through deep diversity is the key subject matter

and can be easily seen in the syllabus; for other universities, intercultural ease is vital for vocational training. For many universities, it is a combination of these approaches.

Making intercultural understanding the focal point of classrooms needs university-specific methods: what can work for the humanities may be unsuitable for science. To help departments integrate intercultural understanding into the lecture room, they need to share creativity, innovation and building on what is already in place.

The development of intercultural understanding and intercultural fluency contributes to some arrangement of academic quality. Furthermore, nurturing diversity understanding also pays off in regard to the academic and operational quality of universities. When incorporated, diversity understanding becomes a way of achieving the university's priorities and aspirations, especially to fulfill strategic commitments.

Supporting universities' vision for quality involves:

- an analysis of how "quality" is customarily defined and to what extent universities value and accommodate diversity perspectives of "quality" (as it may relate to teaching or physical and mental well-being, for example);
- helping the university to undoubtedly identify and articulate how diversity understanding (or advance of diversity eloquence) between staff, or staff and students promotes academic and workplace quality or meaningfully address university's challenges;
- strong motivations and rewards for integrating diversity confidence into operations, lectures and research quality and contributing to scholarships around the challenges and solutions of diversity understanding.

This also involves supporting managers directly by:

- undoubtedly providing supports and resources, such as best practices and access to knowledge across disciplines, taking into consideration existing limitations (such as access to support and resources for multilingual materials and research);
- identifying and sharing solutions led by local departments to the university's utmost critical diversity challenges among staff and pupils;
- providing all staff with the data and skills needed to develop intercultural informed instruction and intercultural eloquence in the classroom.

*Promoting an Intercultural Physical Environment*. Spaces that demonstrate cultural diversity and inclusion values help deliver a more conducive environment for intercultural understanding. Universities may investigate opportunities to encourage and support intercultural

diversity and understanding through the visual recognition of diversity. It is important to assess and develop the ability and ease of staff and students to speak different languages and provide multilingual views to create a diverse environment in any university.

References

Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2006). A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90(5), 751–783.