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## **IO4 Online Training Material: Module 4**

### **Unit 2. Social Impact of intercultural training**

#### **InterTrainE**

Intercultural Training for Educators

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## Intercultural communication and development of intercultural sensitivity

Education relies on effective interaction between the teacher and the learners. Intercultural communication has become important because the educational organizations are becoming more diverse culturally. Roux (2002) argued that successful educators are effective communicators and thus culturally competent in cross-cultural encounters. Teachers should therefore be sensitive to the potentially problematic outcomes of intercultural communication in the culturally diverse class. Communication can be a useful source of intercultural knowledge and mutual enrichment between culturally diverse students if managed proactively by the teacher. Otherwise, communication could be a source of frustration, misapprehensions, intercultural conflict and ultimately school failure. Thus cross-cultural communication is complex and potentially problematic in education.

Successful communication is a prerequisite of effective transfer of knowledge. A rich repertoire of verbal and nonverbal behaviors appropriate to the intercultural situation and the ability to reach in a sensitive manner to people from other cultures is a necessity in education. Obstacles to effective intercultural communication include attitudes and dispositions, stereotyping, and ethnocentrism. (Linde, 1997). In order to successfully communicate cross-culturally, it is of vital importance to acquire knowledge and understanding of cultural factors such as values, attitudes, beliefs and behavior.

<https://openiuc.lib.siu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1013&context=ojwed>

Intercultural adaptation has great significance in developing an intercultural communication and maintaining it. Intercultural communication refers to communication that occurs on the basis of the different knowledge and experiences of people coming from different cultures or subcultures (Kim, 2005). A person who communicates with a different culture or people from different cultures may have adaptation problems due to the given differences and changes at the beginning of the process. Intercultural adaptation refers to reduction of the uncertainty that a person feels and developing an understanding of the new culture as a result of living in that culture and having social interactions (Halsberger, 2005).

It can be stated that when a person gains cultural adaptation, he/she also improves his/her cultural communicative competence. Intercultural communicative competence (or cross-cultural competency) implies the development of integrated competency related to proficiency in the host country's language, cultural awareness,

knowledge, attitudes and skills. It is therefore seen as possible to improve intercultural communication competency by gaining discourse, linguistics, pragmatic, strategic competency (Usó-Juan and Martínez, 2008). Intercultural sensitivity is to be able to experience by approaching a culture and its values open-mindedly; intercultural awareness is approaching intercultural experiences positively and understanding cognitive / emotional clues and intercultural adroitness is having self-disclosure, social and social skills regarding the culture (Kim, 2004). Intercultural sensitivity is extremely important for intercultural educators, and it is the only way to engage with a diverse group of students, build a trusting and comfortable environment and help them achieve their goals and help them adapt to the new country. (Source: <http://ijasos.ocerintjournals.org/en/download/article-file/225745>)

## The significance of international experience in today's society

Furthermore, the understanding of internationality and the international experience has changed over the years, and it has a very different meaning in terms of today's society. Nowadays, the international aspect is present in many - if not most - areas of life and society. In the following chart, you can see some of the differences that define the international experience now and before:



Source: <https://blogi.eoppimispalvelut.fi/lumenlehti/2017/09/26/international-competence-and-intercultural-communication-skills-investment-in-the-future/comment-page-1/>

In the extended understanding of international competence, language and communications skills are seen as the basis for international networking and development of expertise. Versatile communication skills are needed in the global working life when working in multicultural and multidisciplinary teams and networks. (Jalkanen, Almonkari & Taalas, 2016) Language and communication studies play a central role when training internationally competent professionals at

educational institutions and they are a vital part of improving intercultural competence. They are important aspects of gaining intercultural competence and an ethnorelative mindset (as further discussed below).

(Source: <https://blogi.eoppimispalvelut.fi/lumenlehti/2017/09/26/international-competence-and-intercultural-communication-skills-investment-in-the-future/comment-page-1/>)

## Developing an ethnorelative mindset

There are many studies on the effect of intercultural education. For example, in an article on the effectiveness of cross-cultural training, it is stated that “cross-cultural training enables the individual to learn both content and skills that will facilitate effective cross-cultural interaction by reducing misunderstandings and inappropriate behaviours” (Black & Mendenhall 1990). Therefore cross-cultural training has a positive impact on “skill development, adjustment, and social learning theory”, and it increases various skills that facilitate effective cross-cultural interaction” (Black & Mendenhall 1990).

(Source:

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/258109.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A0aa741afba54192b06834c03cc579b39>)

Many studies have also shown that intercultural education for teachers improves their intercultural competence. According to Popa, Butnaru and Cozma, there are three stages of reaching an ethnorelative mindset:

- acceptance – “recognizing other’s beliefs and world representations and displaying respect to these”
- adaptation – “knowing the other’s culture and behaving when needed based on the other’s cultural norms”
- integration “having a multicultural identity by integrating cultural differences, and transgressing the cultural borders”

(Source:

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/3d03/b7759bd40a46bbd076eda03e6f5caf395bd2.pdf>)

The aim of the InterTrainE training is to develop an ethnorelative mindset and to apply it to teaching. Ethnorelativism is extremely important from a social perspective, as it provides the possibility for better understanding and communication between

people from different cultures and thus makes social environments more inclusive and encourages cooperation.

Developing intercultural competence means “appreciating the complexity and diversity of cultural variations and learning how to learn about cultural others” (Smith, Paige, Steglitz p. 91) . For educators, when learning ethnorelativism and intercultural skills, “the key issues related to a humanistic approach are respect and compassion for all of the individual and cultural perspectives that they may encounter.” (Smith, Paige, Steglitz p. 96)

It is therefore important for the educators to understand a wide variety of pedagogical strategies, their usefulness and impact on various learning and cultural styles and stages of cultural sensitivity, the limits of their own knowledge and skills, as well as to understand the importance of the learning environment (including physical and emotional climates).

(Smith, Paige, Steglitz p. 96)

## Emotions and emotional adjustments

Emotions could be considered as internal experiences to be aware to grasp both:

- the meaning i.e. feelings that relate to emotions, and,
- motivational indications i.e needs, interest and
- the related tendency to action i.e. behaviour consistent with the emotion associated with survival and adaptation

They are adaptive, they govern the priorities of the person and are regulators of social behaviour.

Emotions can be distinguished in:

- Primitive emotions of adaptive nature: these emotions are universal, they indicate the most adaptive direction of the action, for example facing danger, feeling fear and escape, anger, joy, sadness.
- Secondary emotions: these are the reactive emotions because they reflect adaptations structured in the past that become automatic, i.e. getting angry when you feel scared etc.
- Instrumental emotions: these are adaptive emotional processes that aim to manipulate others for personal benefit purposes, and they should be considered to invite the person to put himself in the relationship in a direct and assertive way.

- Non-adaptive primitive emotions: these emotions are immediate and automatic and they are in contrast with reality i.e. fear in the face of harmless stimuli, anger in the face of loving gesture, and these reactions are responses to traumatic emotional processes.

### **Emotions in the school context**

- Emotions are very important in learning because they enter the cognitive system and modify the patterns of thought that influence the experience of how students learn
- Emotions work as filters to cope with self-image threats and protect self-esteem.

## **Teachers' emotions**

Investigating teachers' emotions is invaluable for the teachers' own lives as well as for improving instructional quality in educational context. These emotions are among the most frequently experienced by teachers, among the various emotions that teachers are confronted with in numerous classroom situations such as enjoyment, pride, anger, anxiety, and frustration.

Teachers might experience enjoyment when their instructional goals are achieved, pride when students successfully complete important tasks, anger when their goals are interrupted by students' misbehavior, anxiety when they are uncertain if they are doing a good job or their competence is challenged, and frustration when students are not able to comprehend certain concepts. Managing these experienced emotions is an integral part of a teacher's job and it is important for teachers to use appropriate strategies to manage these emotions.

Emotion regulation is related to both burnout and job satisfaction in the teaching profession. Teachers employ emotion regulation strategies because they believe it helps them to reach their teaching goals and be more effective in classroom management, discipline, and their relationships with students and it is part of their role as a teacher and helps them to be more professional. In other words, emotion regulation means the capability to manage the emotional experiences and expressions.

Source: [//psycnet.apa.org/record/1998-11434-001](https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1998-11434-001)

## **Social and emotional competence**

Social and emotional competence is a skill that can be taught and developed by practice and the aim is to learn to understand and manage your feelings as well as to identify and respond to the feelings of other people. It is an essential competence for one's well-being and for building relationships. Then you can teach learners to:

1. Recognize their emotions in the body - by paying attention to sensory experience.
2. Identify emotions/feeling by giving a name-by describing the emotions in words such as motivated, proud, grateful, pleased, discouraged, enthusiastic.

By expanding their emotional vocabulary, they will also be able to transmit the intensity of the emotion they feel: if it is mild, moderate or intense. For example, contentment is mild, very satisfied is moderate and ecstatic is intense. Ignored is mild, dismissed is moderate and abandoned is intense.

Some practical tips:

- Make periodical emotional checks

Think together with the students about how things go and encourage them to tell what they feel by using the words of emotions. In that way they learn to share their feelings

- Use literary fiction to teach emotions

Read stories where characters live events where they are happy, sad, surprised or frustrated and then discuss why the characters feel this way and about what they say or do to show their feelings and how they evolve emotionally over time.

- Show pictures and drawings

Or role-playing games in the classroom when certain emotions emerge and learn to recognize the language of the body, use the examples of the stories as well as the recent experiences of the student.

3. Help them realize an effective communication of their feelings

Discuss their emotions when they occur, even through the following facilitators attitudes: convince them that their feelings are valid, people often apologize for their feelings. Feelings are never intrinsically wrong or bad. You can commit actions that are wrong or bad based on your feelings, but they are not the same. By and analyzing feelings will improve the resulting acts.

- Encourage students to use words or write about their feelings and have a different and quiet place outside the classroom for students to take a break

when they are angry or sad, equipped with tools and teach them how and when to use them, for example an anti-stress balloon, a board game or Gymnastics tools. These tools help students to vent their energy in a positive way.

#### 5. Respond appropriately to the feelings of other people

When someone is angry, sad or agitated, teach them the appropriate answers through role-playing games and revisiting the events of the past. Discuss how different people feel in the role play, how their body language and words show their feelings and the best response to the situation. Also discuss how students would feel if this happened to them and how they would like other people to respond. This helps pupils to learn how to get into empathy with others 6. If possible, orient yourself towards solutions. Approaching conversations with a calm, positive and proactive attitude can help to advance the conversation and end with a positive note.

## Exercise

1. Make a role play of a situation in which there is an emotion involved and then discuss the choices and their impact with other teachers. One could be a teacher and the other one a student.
2. What emotional reactions did you encounter from students as a teacher with students?
3. Have you been in contact with a student with an intense emotion? How did you manage the situation? What were the difficulties?
4. How do you take into account the culture of belonging in observing the non-verbal communication? Which non-verbal indicators affect you more?
5. How would you observe the discrepancies between verbal and non-verbal communication? Provide examples and practice role playing with other teachers.

## Non-verbal communication (NVC)



Non-verbal communication or NVC means anything that we communicate with others not expressed with words, i.e. interaction, mimic, gestures, postural and paralinguistic signals, spatial aspects and Outward appearance or clothing, where the interaction takes place, i.e. secondary non-verbal phenomena. There are some specific functions of non-verbal communications like:

1. Transmission of interpersonal attitudes, therefore all information concerning matters of relationship (love, hatred, sympathy, dominance, submission and dependence) that can also be linked to codes related to the culture of belonging.
  2. Expression of emotions, feelings and attitudes that one has of himself and his body image, which we can also refer to the observed indexes highlighted in the part concerning the trauma and the expression of hypo-arousal or hyper-arousal.
  3. Meta communication, which qualifies the verbal behavior, i.e. inflection of voice, gestures, facial mimicry and other non-verbal aspects that provide information on how the verbal message should be understood.
- Language is considered as a part of the wider communicative process that includes in addition to words, voice intonation, facial expressions, inflections, gestures, and any other aspects that body can transmit information. When dealing with other cultures it is essential to keep in mind during the observation of non-verbal communication, the overall ways of expression of other cultures. This is protected from the use of stereotypes filtered by one's own culture and which can hinder the meeting with the other.
  - Acculturation can be defined as the process whereby a person adopts as their own the standards and norms of the culture of belonging. It should be kept in mind that while belonging to a family, community or nation there are not two cultured individuals in the same way, and it is necessary to be careful not to use simple and misleading stereotypes of the complexity and uniqueness of the person. It is risky to attribute to the non-verbal communication static meanings, independent of the context, from the knowledge of the culture of the person and not confirmed by explicit verbal expressions.
  - Observation skills of what happens between the teacher and the students, both verbal and non-verbal is essential to establish a relationship, an essential basis for promoting effective learning processes or for capturing signs of psychological distress in pupils. Observation skills will help to respond to individual and multicultural differences and to provide guidance for addressing the problems here and now.

## Discrepancies

It is possible to observe discrepancies between verbal and non-verbal communication, i.e., for example, we could hear a guy speak quietly about a subject and observe a smile and hands contracted. In this case we would have two behavioral indexes in contrast, or have a verbal affirmation "I am quiet" and behavioral indexes that disconfirm it: redness and babbling. These aspects can be read as internal elements in conflict. will be deepened in the unity of the conflict.

In this case, the teacher can take note of the signals and keep the observation, or he may decide to use verbal techniques (postpone the elements in contrast or incongruent) to verify his comprehension and help the pupil to clarify his mood. This can facilitate the internal understanding of the pupil and facilitate its ability to find creative and respectful solutions of oneself and of the other.

## Exercises

## Individual task

After the training, it is important to consider whether the goals of intercultural training for educators that have been presented above have been reached. We present here some self-reflective questions to see what you see as the value of the course in terms of its social impact:

What is the greatest benefit of the Intercultural Training for Educators from a social perspective, in your opinion?

Why is intercultural training important from a social perspective?

What kind of social competences has the training given the educators?

Why is intercultural training very essential from a social perspective? How does the development of intercultural communication and intercultural sensitivity affect your teacher's identity as well as personal identity in the socio-cultural context?

What impact has the course had, or will have in the future, on the lives of the migrants, as they gain more support from educators?

The course aims to help educators develop an ethnorelative mindset and improve cultural sensitivity. Has this been successful?

How will learning about cultural backgrounds, different cultural concepts of time, dignity etc. help educators better understand and teach adult migrants?

How will the improved knowledge of both adult education practices and theory help educators find better approaches to teaching adult migrants?

How will the improved knowledge on intercultural education and its concepts help educators better support and teach adult migrants?

What is the value of the course from a social perspective?

## Discussion task

1. How would you develop and improve your knowledge on intercultural education and in your role as an educator?
2. How can you develop the ethno-relative mindset as an educator? Discuss.
3. Has learning about the theory and practices of adult education and intercultural communication in this course helped you better understand or help adult migrants in your classes? Please share examples.
4. How would you observe and develop the discrepancies between verbal and non-verbal communication?
5. How will the improved knowledge on intercultural education and its concepts help you as educators better support and teach adult migrants? Discuss.
6. Are there any other points that have not been mentioned in the material that are important for intercultural education?

### **Group activity**

This activity addresses the importance of the emotional competence in a socio-cultural perspective:

- Divide the participants into 4-5 (depending on the number the participants)
- Make a role-play and think of a situation in which there are emotional competences involved in the intercultural communication and the socio-cultural aspect and then discuss the choices and their impacts
- One group could represent teachers and the other group students
- Use paper sheets and markers to highlight the most important points
- Create a PowerPoint/SlideShare or Sway to present it to other groups of teachers (if you have time). If you are lacking time, present briefly the paper sheet to others in a form of presentation and discuss the main highlights and how you would handle the situation differently.
- Make a summary and write down the results and identify the most important aspects and viewpoints from both groups. For example, you can write down the perceptions and what emotional reactions did you encounter both in your roles as teachers and as students?
- Are there any other points that you would like to add to the list?

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