

*Enhancing skills
to engage effectively in the dynamics of
intercultural interdisciplinary
TEAMS*

van Oppen | Internationalization | Diversity | Inclusion
For ICA-CoP Bio-Edu Community of Practice for
Bioeconomy Education April 2023 Warschau



Topics:

- Internationalization; how to understand the international classroom
- Opportunities and challenges of IC Teamwork
- Intercultural group dynamics and communication
- How to bridge: Future competencies.

The International Classroom

A comprehensive view

- All students / group members
- Learning and/or teaching in a second or third language
- The curriculum includes international, global, and regional perspectives relevant to the specific academic discipline or profession
- Intercultural & global competences are part of the intended learning outcomes.
- Alignment between the competences of lecturers and the complexity of the international classroom

**Not only managing
difficult situations
Creating international
and intercultural
learning from the
experience of diversity**

Purpose of an international classroom

An internationalised learning opportunity allows all students, irrespective of their provenance, to learn in a higher education setting together with their peers. The alignment of **the content** to be learned, **the teaching and learning activities**, and **the assessment** forms applied will allow **all students** in the cohort (i) to meet **internationalised intended learning outcomes** and (ii) **to develop international and intercultural graduate attributes as discipline-specific or generic competences and skills**

Integrating Intercultural competences as graduate attribute

These attributes include, but go beyond,
the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge
that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses.

They are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents for social good in an unknown future. (Bowden et al., 2000, p.3)



Opportunities and challenges:

what do lecturers say:

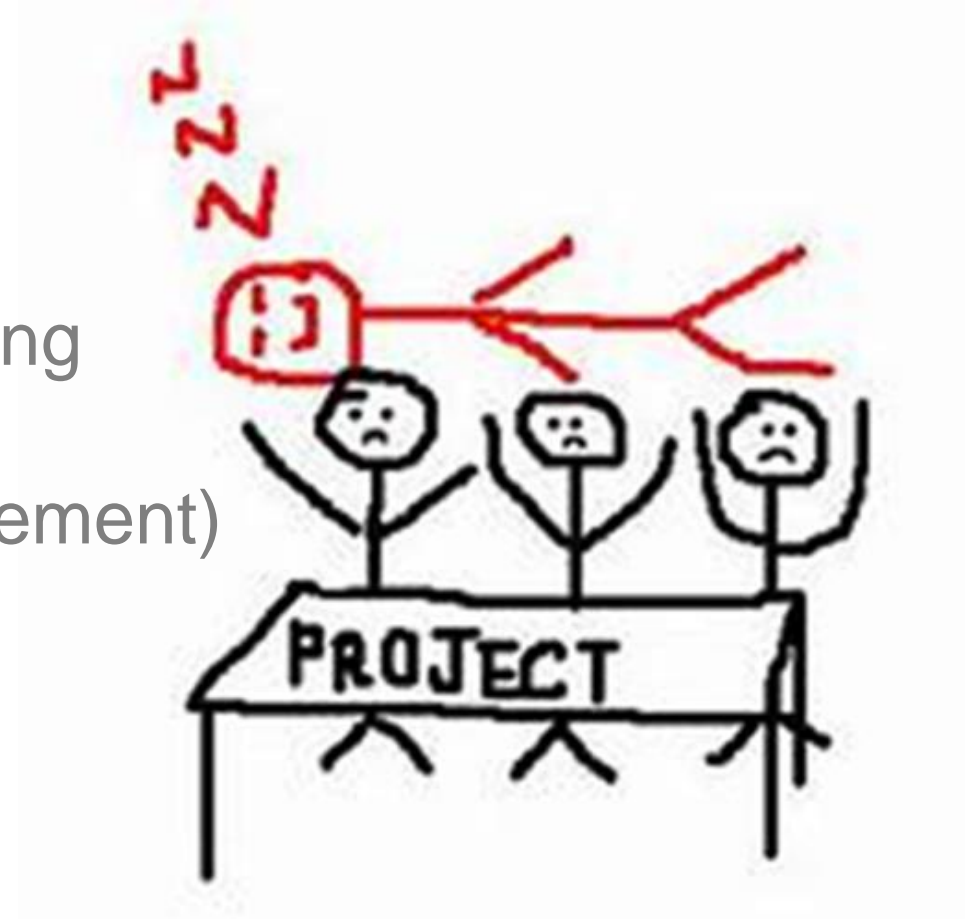
1. Students stick together
2. Making jokes
3. Dutch students are more used to activities,
4. Speaking up in group
5. Different expectations.
6. Troubles/conflicts in diverse student teams
7. Taking into account religious traditions.

You can add more experiences.....

Main challenges

what do students say:

1. Unequal language skills
2. Communication issues;
quietness or silence, over-talking/interrupting
3. Leadership or role ambiguity
4. Conflict (expressing emotions and disagreement)
6. Unequal commitment to the group
7. Time keeping or punctuality
8. Free riders or lack of participation
9. Different expectations of groups



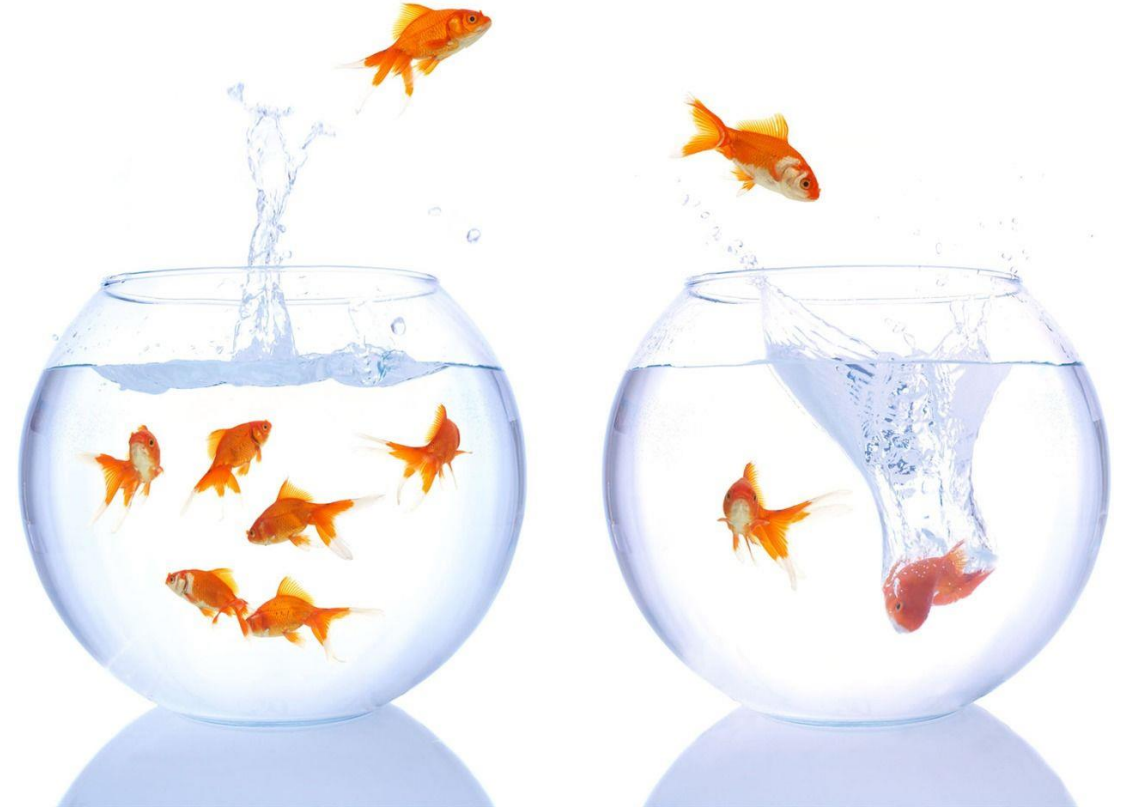
Intercultural Group Dynamics and communication; 3 underlying social needs

- Need to belong
- Need to have influence
- Need for affection



Culture is:

- Culture is about perception
- It is NOT what I THINK you are like and what you THINK I am like
- Our job is to harmonise our perceptions by building trust
- We do that by building rapport and credibility
- What do we need to study ?



A cultural Lens



Cultures differ in the extent to which context is considered an important element in the communication between its members. In the literature, this is referred to as the High–Low Context Continuum

Low context cultures

- Societies or groups in which people are loosely connected and tend to have many connections but of a shorter duration or for some specific reason.
- Verbal understanding: in order to function appropriately and effectively, cultural values, beliefs and behaviours are spelled out explicitly.
- Information tends to be segmented and formalised in detailed writing. It is shared on a “need to know” basis.

High context cultures

- Societies or groups in which members are closely connected over a long period of time.
- Context understanding: many aspects of cultural behaviour are not made explicit.
- Cultural values and norms are handed down through the generations.
- Information is available in the context for those who belong to the group and are sensitive to it.

Communication styles

Deal or Task



Relationship focus

Informal



Formal

Time rigid



Time fluid

Expressiveness



Reserve

Direct



Indirect

Nonverbal

eye contact



silence

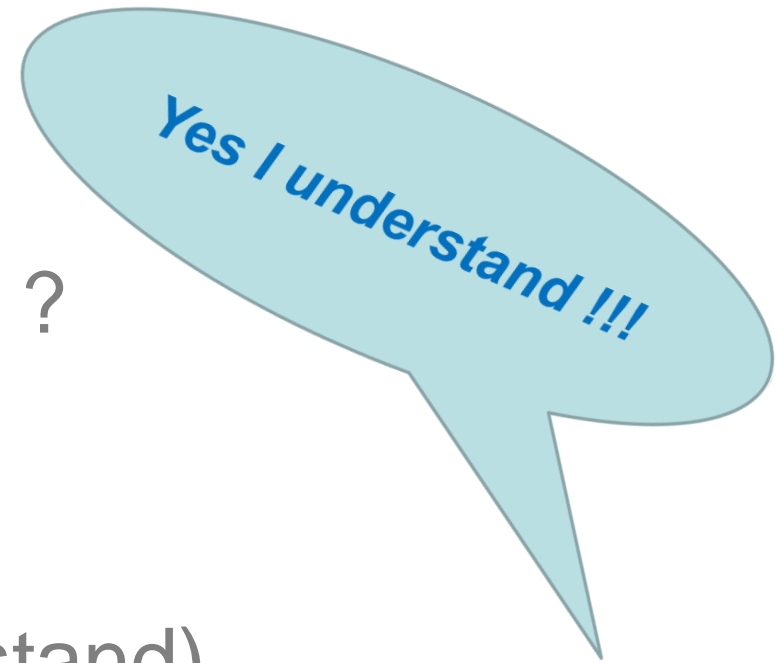


personal space,
touching



Feedback & culture

What influences feedback ?



Avoiding loss of *face*

Emphasis on *harmony* (yes I understand)

Respect for *authority*

Emphasis on group over individual (*loyalty*)

Emphasis on relationship over task

Previous experiences

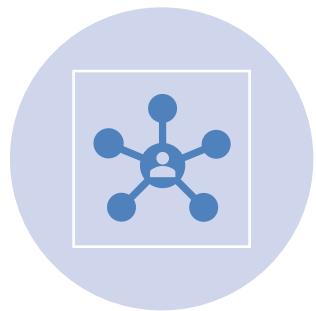
An intercultural competent graduate is:



Is able to understand, evaluate and relate to **ambiguous and uncertain situations**



Realizes the **relative validity of his or her own frame of reference** yet is firmly rooted in it.



Is able **to select and use communication styles** and behavior that fit a specific local or intercultural context.



Intercultural interaction is seen as successful when interactants **can develop shared meaning**, while acknowledging their own and others sociocultural context.

Integrating Intercultural competences

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(Bowden et al., 2000, p.3)



Lets have a closer look at ED competencies

International competences for ED's and (senior) staff, programme directors, course coordinators and other senior team members responsible for international programmes in their higher education institutions.



Competencies ED's

1. Promote inclusive behaviours
2. Develop and facilitate learner-centred programmes
3. Promote intercultural engagement and effective intercultural relations
4. Enable and embed a global learning experience
5. Embed social responsibility in the curriculum
6. Apply learning from different international and disciplinary contexts
7. Embed the various means of creating, critiquing and exchanging knowledge
8. Engage in critical reflection and continuous professional development

The Good Practice Principles for Learning and Teaching Across Cultures

- Treat all students as learners.
- Respect and adjust for diversity.
- Provide specific, explicit information that fits the context.
- Foster engagement and intercultural dialogue.
- Use reflection as a teacher: Be flexible, evaluate and use the results to make adjustments/changes.
- Prepare students for life in a globalising, diverse and interconnected world.

- the Good Practice Principles for Learning and Teaching Across Cultures (Leask & Carroll 2013; Carroll 2015; Leask 2015).

Checklist for Intercultural competency

- Suspend judgement
- Assume you don't understand
- Sift frame of reference
- Develop multiple interpretation's
- Seek "third culture" common ground
- Ask for advice from someone from the culture
- Take longer before you act
- Watch, then watch some more
- Use your cultural pattern as a last resort

• By: www.intercultural.org



Competencies in interdisciplinary context

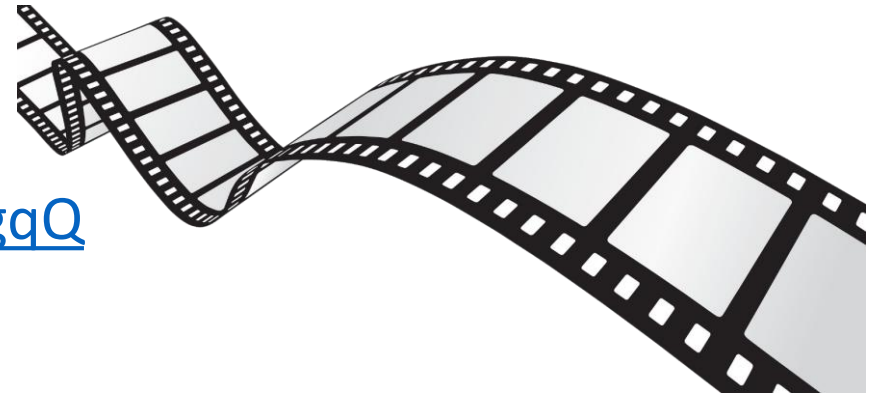
[EQUIIP:](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ztwNwEasgqQ>

Intercultural Group work

The voice of students

Van Oppen Consultancy: <https://youtu.be/7STqXUrAQ1c>



For further reading:

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