Module 1

Cultural Awareness and multi-culturism

Learning Objectives

This module aims to shed light on these questions through the following **learning objectives:**

1. Explore what is culture
2. Understand better what is intercultural learning
3. Explore the different models of culture that help to understand cultural patterns, prejudices and stereotypes
4. Understand the immigrant children in a new environment with specific emphasis on the integration process and the competencies needed by the educators to implement activities in a multicultural environment

Index

1.1 Introduction

Diversity in Europe has deep historical roots. The variety of cultures and people led to an unparalleled richness. However, is this fully exploited? Are we really given the opportunity to know one another and work on our prejudices? Whilst it comes as a normal reaction to defend one's own culture and values, it is time that we start looking at the differences around us and find ways how to respectfully live together.

Nowadays, people from different cultural backgrounds live together. Migration is due to easier mobility as well as unjust political, economic and environmental circumstances.

Multi-culturalism can give rise to uncertainty and diversity can be perceived as a threat to what we define

as our cultural identity. One way how to make sense out of this complexity is through intercultural learning and awareness. It helps us to understand better ourselves and others by creating added awareness and helps us to understand better the children in our classrooms.

What is culture?

Culture and cultural differences have been at the heart of the human behaviour throughout history. Globalization brought different cultures into closer contact and represented a challenged to the traditional patterns of culture and social order. All peoples faced the dilemma of what in their cultures would be maintained and what would be lost. Cultural changes created friction as people of one culture perceived those of another culture as alien and different, creating thus the threat of potential conflict.

Whenever human beings form communities, a culture comes into existence. All communities produce beliefs and practices that characterize social life and indicate how society should be run as well as linguistic, literary and artistic genres. An awareness of a common language, ethnicity, history, religion and landscape represent the building blocks of culture. Culture can help us understand why humans act in the way they do, and what similarities and differences exist amongst them. Due to globalization and migration, people from different cultures today live side by side. The consequences of cultural proximity are complex. Multicultural settings create multiple identities and challenge existing cultures.

What is intercultural learning?

Intercultural principles concentrate on openness to the other, active respect for difference, mutual comprehension, active tolerance, validating the cultures present, providing equality of opportunities, fighting discrimination. Communication between different cultural identities can appear paradoxical in the sense that it requires recognition of the other both as similar and as different. In this context, intercultural education can be designed to promote and to develop:

- A better comprehension of culture in modern societies,
- A larger capacity of communication between people from different cultures,
- A more flexible attitude to the context of cultural diversity in society,
- A better capacity of participation in social interaction and the recognition of the common heritage of humanity

Intercultural learnings indeed are based on:

- Constant and slow learning process
- It is about diversity and difference, about complexity, reflection and change
- It is about relationship and solidarity
- Dealing with the forming and alteration of personal identity
- Discerning changes of meaning
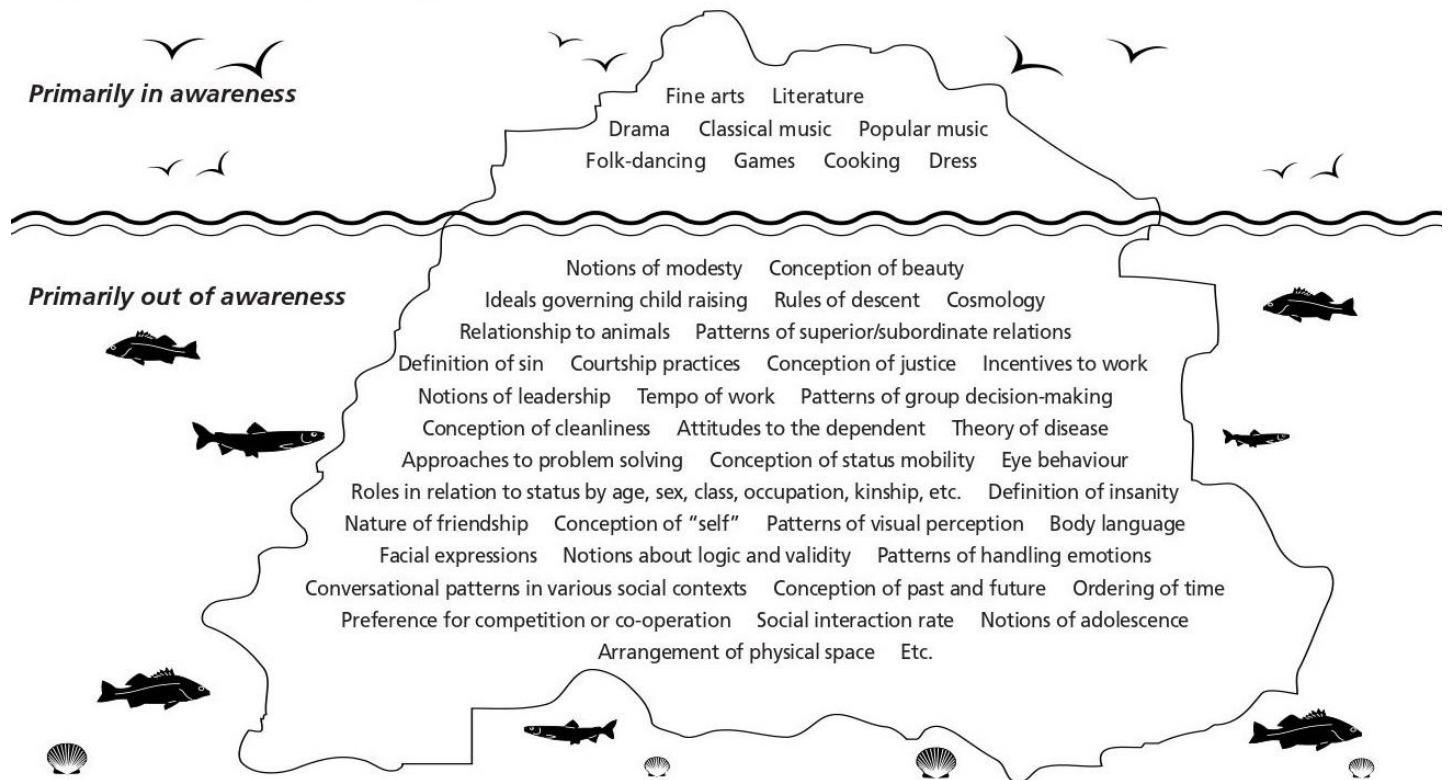- It is about cultural relativism

1.2 Different models of culture

Various models are used to explain culture;

1. The Iceberg Model of Culture

This model was developed by Edward T. Hall in 1976 and focuses on the elements that make up culture. Some elements are highly visible whereas others are hard to discover. In summary, this model compares culture to an iceberg whereby only the tip can be seen above the waterline. The tip, however, is supported by a much larger mass underneath the water line which forms the foundation, but which is invisible to the naked eye. Likewise, in culture there are visible parts such as literature, music, dancing, dress, cooking and games. Yet, the foundations of the culture and its biggest part are not immediately visible and are more difficult to be aware of. These are history, norms, values and assumptions about space, time, education to name a few. The iceberg model goes on to say that the visible part of cultures are the expressions of the invisible part. It also goes on to show, how difficult it is to understand people with different backgrounds as we notice only the visible parts, but we cannot immediately see what lies deeper down.

Although the iceberg model is a very good way how to visualize culture it lacks a deeper understanding of culture. It should thus be used as a starting point for a more in-depth look into culture.

Primarily in awareness

Fine arts   Literature
Drama   Classical music   Popular music
Folk-dancing   Games   Cooking   Dress

Primarily out of awareness

Notions of modesty   Conception of beauty
Ideals governing child raising   Rules of descent   Cosmology
Relationship to animals   Patterns of superior/subordinate relations
Definition of sin   Courtship practices   Conception of justice   Incentives to work
Notions of leadership   Tempo of work   Patterns of group decision-making
Conception of cleanliness   Attitudes to the dependent   Theory of disease
Approaches to problem solving   Conception of status mobility   Eye behaviour
Roles in relation to status by age, sex, class, occupation, kinship, etc.   Definition of insanity
Nature of friendship   Conception of "self"   Patterns of visual perception   Body language
Facial expressions   Notions about logic and validity   Patterns of handling emotions
Conversational patterns in various social contexts   Conception of past and future   Ordering of time
Preference for competition or co-operation   Social interaction rate   Notions of adolescence
Arrangement of physical space   Etc.

Source: p.14 AFS Orientation Handbook Vol.4, New York: AFS Intercultural Programs Inc,. 1984 as found in the Intercultural Learning T-kit No. 4, 1st Edition

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u37t0u-4BTI&fbclid=IwAR3kKOBMUAhxaCswyTQHTwQM_fQVpAE0dBg0en8Y0Vg_UqFVYWHrXJdqjB8

2. The model of cultural dimensions

Geert Hofstede came up with this model at the end of the 1970s and since then it has been an internationally recognized standard for understanding cultural differences. Hofstede studied people who worked for IBM in more than 50 countries and tried to study the differences that

existed in the various plants. Indeed, he concluded that since the educational background of the employees was roughly the same everywhere and since the structure of the organisation, the rules and the procedures were the same, the differences found in the various locations had to be attributed to the culture of the employees and of the host country. Initially, he identified four dimensions that could distinguish one culture from another. Later, he added fifth and sixth dimensions, in cooperation with Drs Michael H. Bond and Michael Minkov.

These are:

i.   Power Distance (high versus low)

This refers to the degree of inequality that exists – and is accepted – between people with and without power. A high power distance society accepts an unequal, hierarchical distribution of power, and that people understand "their place" in the system. A low power distance society means that power is shared and is widely dispersed, and that society members do not accept situations where power is distributed unequally. Venezuela, Malaysia and Panama are examples of countries that fall under the high power distance category, while countries such as Israel fall under the opposite extreme. Other societies such as Korea and Canada, fall somewhere in the middle of the spectrum.

Power Distance	Characteristics	Tips
High	• Centralized organizations • More complex hierarchies. • Large gaps in compensation, authority and respect.	• Acknowledge a leader's status. As an outsider, you may try to circumvent his or her power, but don't push back explicitly. • Be aware that you may need to go to the top for answers.
Low	• Flatter organizations.	• Delegate as much as possible.

Power Distance	Characteristics	Tips
	• Supervisors and employees are considered almost as equals.	• Ideally, involve all those in decision making who will be directly affected by the decision

Source: www.geerthofstede.com and *Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, Michael Minkov, "Cultures and Organizations, Software of the Mind", Third Revised Edition, McGrawHill 2010*

The hereunder table is an adaptation of the model to the classroom environment and the roles attributed to the teacher and student and how these are perceived in the low power distance societies and high power distance societies respectively:

Low Power Distance Societies	High Power Distance Societies
Stress on impersonal "truth" which can in principle be obtained from any competent person	Stress on personal "wisdom" which is transferred in the relationship with a particular teacher (guru)
A teacher should respect the independence of his/her students	A teacher merits the respect of his/her students
Student-centered education (premium on initiative)	Teacher-centered education (premium on order)
Teacher expects students to initiate communication	Students expect teacher to initiate communication
Teacher expects students to find their own paths	Students expect teacher to outline paths to follow

Students may speak up spontaneously in class	Students speak up in class only when invited by the teacher
Students allowed to contradict or criticize teacher	Teacher is never contradicted nor publicly criticized
Effectiveness of learning related to amount of two-way communication in class	Effectiveness of learning related to excellence of the teacher
Outside class, teachers are treated as equals	Respect for teachers is also shown outside of class
In teacher/student conflicts, parents are expected to side with the student	In teacher/student conflicts, parents are expected to side with the teacher
Younger teachers are more liked than older teachers	Older teachers are more respected than younger teachers

Source: Journal of International Education Research – Second Quarter 2014 Volume 10, Number 2 Copyright by author(s); CC-BY 171 The Clute Institute The Effect Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Have On Student-Teacher Relationships In The Korean Context Alice Julianna Yoo, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, South Korea

ii. Individualism versus Collectivism

This refers to the strength of the ties that people have to others within their community. A society that is highly individualistic has weak interpersonal connection among those who are not considered as part of the core "family." Here, people take less responsibility for others' actions and outcomes. In a collectivist society, however, people are supposed to be loyal to the group to which they belong, and, in exchange, the group will defend their interests. The group itself is normally larger, and people take responsibility for one another's well-being. For example, in Panama and Guatemala, a marketing campaign that emphasizes benefits to the community would likely be understood and well received, if the people addressed feel part of the same group.

Individualism versus Collectivism	Characteristics	Tips
High Individualism	• High value placed on people's time and their need for privacy and freedom. • An enjoyment of challenges, and an expectation of individual rewards for hard work. • Respect for privacy.	• Acknowledge individual accomplishments. • Don't mix work life with social life too much. • Encourage debate and expression of people's own ideas.
Low Individualism	• Emphasis on building skills and becoming master of something. • People work for intrinsic rewards. • Maintaining harmony among group members overrides other moral issues.	• Wisdom is important. • Suppress feelings and emotions that may endanger harmony. • Avoid giving negative feedback in public. • Saying "No" can cause loss of face, unless it's intended to be polite. For example, declining an invitation several times is expected.

Source: Source: www.geerthofstede.com and Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, Michael Minkov, "Cultures and Organizations, Software of the Mind", Third Revised Edition, McGrawHill 2010, ISBN 0-07-166418-1.

Individualism versus collectivism can also be adapted to the classroom and the following characteristics help to identify instances and situations where this is beneficial:

Individualism	Collectivism
The student as an individual	The student as part of the family
Independence	Helpfulness and interdependence
Individual achievement	Group success
Scientific information disengaged from social contexts	Scientific information embedded in social experiences

Source: http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr99/vol56/num07/Bridging-Cultures-with-Classroom-Strategies.aspx

iii.   Masculinity versus Femininity

This refers to the extent to which a society values predominately stereotypical male or female attributes. Hofstede claims that a 'masculine' society places greater value on assertiveness/aggression, money and personal success, whereas a feminine society places greater emphasis on caring for others and quality of life. In masculine societies ambition and competitiveness are valued attributes; whereas in feminine societies modesty and humility are valued.

Masculinity versus Femininity	Characteristics	Tips
High Masculinity versus Femininity	• Strong egos – feelings of pride and importance are attributed to status. • Money and achievement are important.	• Be aware of the possibility of differentiated gender roles. • A long-hours culture may be the norm, so recognize its opportunities and risks. • People are motivated by precise targets, and by being able to show that they achieved them either as a group or as individuals.
Low Masculinity versus Femininity	• Relationship oriented/consensual. • More focus on quality of life.	• Success is more likely to be achieved through negotiation, collaboration and input from all levels. • Avoid an "old boys' club" mentality, although this may still exist. • Workplace flexibility and work-life balance may be important, both in terms of job design, organizational environment and culture, and the way that performance management can be best realized.

Similarly, these masculine and feminine values are transferred to the classroom. In masculine educational settings, students strive on showing themselves off and competing openly with classmates. Failure is hardly acceptable. Competitive sports are taken very seriously. Job choice decisions by students are mainly based on a student's perception of availability of career opportunities. A teacher's brilliance and student success are the most important criteria in evaluating teachers. Boys tend to get priority in education. Women generally teach younger students, whereas men teach at a senior level. In feminine educational settings, success is something that one keeps to oneself and assertive behavior is mocked. Displays of smartness and excellence easily induce jealousy. Failure is a minor issue and is not cared about as much. Competitive sports are only extracurricular activities that do not carry much importance. Job choices are made based on a student's interests. A teacher's social skills and student's social adaptability are the main criteria for evaluating teachers. Both boys and girls are educated using the same curricula. Both men and women can teach young children and older students, since roles are mixed.

iv.   Uncertainty Avoidance

This refers to the extent to which people feel uncomfortable or threatened by ambiguous and uncertain situations. In societies with high levels of uncertainty avoidance there is a desire for consensus and written rules and an intolerance of deviations from the norm. In contrast, there is a greater degree of tolerance of ambiguity and risk-taking in cultures with low uncertainty avoidance. In this context Hofstede claims that this uncertainty avoidance will manifest itself in the learning context through a more positivist perspective on knowledge. Furthermore, he claims that student conformity in class and the expression of emotions is expected in strong uncertainty avoidance cultures.

Uncertainty Avoidance	Characteristics	Tips
High Uncertainty Avoidance	• Conservative, rigid and structured, unless the danger of failure requires a more flexible attitude. • Many societal conventions. • People are expressive, and are allowed to show anger or emotions, if necessary. • A high energy society, if people feel that they are in control of their life instead of feeling overwhelmed by life's vagaries.	• Be clear and concise about expectations and goals, and set clearly defined parameters. But encourage creative thinking and dialogue where you can. • Recognize that there may be unspoken "rules" or cultural expectations you need to learn. • Recognize that emotion, anger and vigorous hand gestures may simply be part of the conversation.
Low Uncertainty Avoidance	• Openness to change or innovation, and generally inclusive. • More inclined to open-ended learning or decision making. • Less sense of urgency.	• Ensure that people remain focused, but don't create too much structure. • Titles are less important, so avoid "showing off" your knowledge or experience. Respect is given to those who can cope under all circumstances.

Source: www.geerthofstede.com and Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, Michael Minkov, "Cultures and Organizations, Software of the Mind", Third Revised Edition, McGraw Hill 2010

Uncertainty Avoidance is particularly relevant to the teaching methodology in a cross-cultural setting. A wide range of conditioning factors affect the patterns of interaction and behaviour within the cross-cultural classroom. These factors may include previous experiences at school including expected patterns of interaction, the expectations of parents, teachers and peers and class size amongst others. Hofstede points out that it is up to the teacher to adapt to the situation and thus focus on cross-cultural learning. This is much easier than to change the learning behaviour of all the students.

Societies with strong Uncertainty Avoidance	Societies with weak Uncertainty Avoidance
Low tolerance of ambiguity/vagueness/imprecision	High tolerance of ambiguity/vagueness/imprecision
Low risk-taking - there is a need to avoid failure	High risk-taking - mistakes are seen as part of the learning process
"Teacher knows everything"	Teacher can say "I don't know"
A good teacher uses academic language.	A good teacher uses language to communicate
Student accuracy is rewarded	Student innovation is rewarded
Strong need for affirmation and consensus	Conflict can be used constructively and seen as fair play

Source: The Effects of Uncertainty Avoidance on Interaction in the Classroom Andrew Atkins July 2000 as found in https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-artslaw/cels/essays/languageteaching/Atkins1.pdf

Students from weak uncertainty avoidance groups feel comfortable in unstructured learning situations. They welcome broad assignments and accept the lack of timetables. On the contrary, students from strong uncertainty avoidance groups need more structure, precision and detail. It is

thus important that teachers must be aware of these differences to be able to reach all students in the classroom. Instructions should always be clear and concise to avoid ambiguity. This might be more difficult if the student is listening to these instructions in a language that is not his/her mother tongue.

v.   Time orientation

This indicates the extent to which a society bases its decisions on traditions and events of the past, or on short-term, present gains or on what is perceived desirable for the future.

Time Orientation	Characteristics	Tips
Long-Term Orientation	• People often wonder how to know what is true. "What?" and "How?" are asked more than "Why?" • Thrift and education are seen as positive values. • Modesty. • Virtues and obligations are emphasized.	• Behave in a modest way. • Avoid talking too much about yourself. • People are more willing to compromise, yet this may not always be clear to outsiders; this is certainly so in a culture that also scores high on PDI.
Short-Term Orientation	• People often want to know "Why?" • Strong convictions. • As people tend to oversell themselves, others will assess their assertions critically.	• Sell yourself to be taken seriously. • People are less willing to compromise as this would be seen as weakness. • Flattery empowers.

Time Orientation	Characteristics	Tips
	• Values and rights are emphasized.	

Source: www.geerthofstede.com and Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, Michael Minkov, "Cultures and Organizations, Software of the Mind", Third Revised Edition, McGrawHill 2010

Adapting this to the classroom environment, it can be fairly concluded that long-term orientation cultures believe that perseverance will pay off one day and that students, influenced by their families, tend to focus their students on perceived futuristic needs. In contrast, short-term orientation societies see friends as a potential source and students tend to focus their learning on current needs. Teachers, in a multi-cultural class environment needs thus to be able to offer and communicate a mixture of long-term goals as well as short-term goals for learning. Students needs also to be provided with continuous feedback and goals need to be well articulated and aligned.

vi.   Indulgence versus restraint

Hofstede's sixth dimension, discovered and described together with Michael Minkov, is relatively new. It states that countries with high indulgence over restraint allow or encourage relatively free gratification of people's own drives and emotions, such as enjoying life and having fun. In a society with low indulgence over restraint, there is more emphasis on suppressing gratification and more regulation of people's conduct and behavior, and there are stricter social norms. This tends to apply more for Eastern European countries including Russia. Hofstede argues that in these countries little emphasis is put on leisure time and people try to restrain themselves.

Indulgence versus restraint	Characteristics	Tips
• High Indulgence	• Optimistic. • Importance of freedom of speech. • Focus on personal happiness.	• Don't take life too seriously. • Encourage debate and dialogue in meetings or decision making. • Prioritize feedback, coaching and mentoring. • Emphasize flexible working and work-life balance.
• High Restraint	• Pessimistic. • More controlled and rigid behavior.	• Avoid making jokes when engaged in formal sessions. Instead, be professional. • Only express negativity about the world during informal meetings.

Source: www.geerthofstede.com and Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, Michael Minkov, "Cultures and Organizations, Software of the Mind", Third Revised Edition, McGrawHill 2010
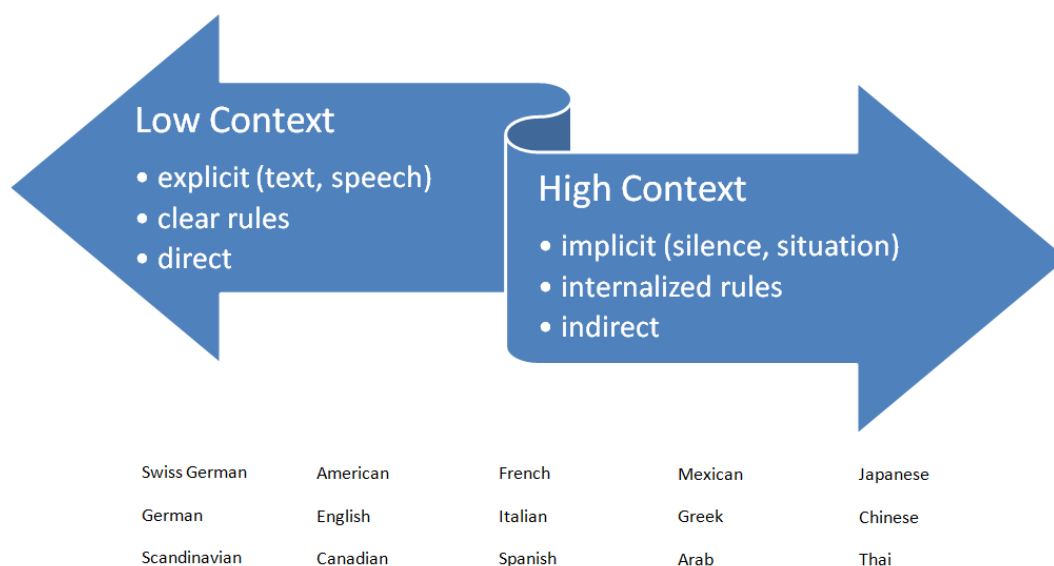
3. Edward T. and Mildred Reed Hall's behavioral components of culture

Each culture operates according to its own internal dynamic, its own principles and laws; both written and unwritten. Even time and space are unique to each culture. The world of communication can be divided into three parts; words, material things and behaviour. Words are the medium, material things are indicators of status and power and behaviour provides feedback on how other people feel and provide techniques to avoid confrontation. By looking into these three different parts of the communication process, we realise that some human behaviour exists outside of people's conscious awareness which can be referred to as the 'silent language'. This is

usually transmitted unconsciously. This silent language is rooted in the shared experiences of people and provides insight to the underlying principles that shape our lives. Through their model of culture, the Halls provide tools to help educators understand better and decipher the complex and unspoken rules of different cultures.

Low Context
- explicit (text, speech)
- clear rules
- direct

High Context
- implicit (silence, situation)
- internalized rules
- indirect

Swiss German	American	French	Mexican	Japanese
German	English	Italian	Greek	Chinese
Scandinavian	Canadian	Spanish	Arab	Thai

i.   Context

According to Hall, context is the information that surrounds an event. At the same time events and context - are in different proportions depending on the culture. Therefore, he introduced a scale on which cultures can be compared by their use of direct or indirect communication, which could lead to cultural misunderstandings. This describes cultures from high to low context characteristics.

A high-context environment tends to transport the meaning of the conversation by context. Thus, most of the information is either in the physical context or internalised in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. People from high-context countries "often rely on unspoken understandings, hints, social rituals, and nonverbal cues. In contrast, low-context communication is defined by the fact that "the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code. They do not expect others to have the same background information, thus their communication is simple, explicit, precise, and direct. In conclusion, if people from different context dimensions want to avoid communication issues, the low context population has to gain more background data to understand people from high-context countries. In contrast, people from

high- context countries have to be as precise as possible when communicating with people from countries on the lower part of the scale.

ii. Space

Hall introduced the concept of space for his cross-cultural communication process. He argues that every human being has a visible border to the outside world, namely his skin. In addition there are other frontiers that surround every human being which he refers to as personal space and territoriality.

Personal space as it is defined in Hall's research is a "bubble of space, which expands and contracts depending on the relationship to the people nearby, the person's emotional state, cultural background, and the activity being performed. People from different cultures therefore have different feelings about whether they feel comfortable or not when people from different cultures approach. Thus, it is all about the distance between two people.

Territoriality relates to feelings and distinction about and of places. People try to assign to different spaces a high degree of importance, which in different cultures can lead to misunderstandings. Hall uses the example of Germany and a car, which is classified as a certain space directly connected to a single individual. Thus, intrusion by others is not accepted. The concept of territoriality is also associated with a method to show distribution of power. The size and location of offices in an office building have differing meanings in a cross-cultural world.

iii. Time

As with definitions of culture, several different systems of time exist. However, according to Hall two of them are especially important. He provides a model which categorises people according to their preference for more polychronic (p-time) or monochronic (m-time) behaviour. Accordingly, Hall examines the conscious and unconscious ways people, because of their cultural backgrounds, perceive and employ these two orientations towards time." Typical characteristics of p-time cultures are people who "tend to do many things simultaneously. They do not split their workday into small parts and do not take schedules as absolute but rather easily adjust them. Conversely, m-time cultures do only one thing at a time and are more schedule-orientated. Within such cultures time is also seen as tangible, for example compared to money, which can be wasted or saved. It is further seen as a way to prioritise tasks, by pointing out that someone does not have time to do something.

iv.   Speed of information

Communication can also be measured by the velocity with which somebody encodes, transmits and decodes a message. There are cultures which tend to be faster than other cultures. Hall provides some examples of messages which are either slow or fast-paced.

| Fast messages	Slow messages
• Prose • Headlines • A communique • Propaganda • Cartoons • TV commercials • Television • Easy familiarity • Manners	• Poetry • Books • An ambassador • Art • TV documentary • Print • Deep relationships • Culture

For example, friendship is a slow message because it takes time to discover and develop it. Cultural communication problems can occur between cultures that have a different message speed. As a result, misunderstandings occur within communication. It is further important to stress that people are often not able to realise that other cultures have a different speed of messages.

The model offered by Edward T. and Mildred Reed Hall, although being criticized as being one-dimensional, it provides a framework in which to recognize and interpret cultural differences.

When adapting this model to the classroom environment, educators need to keep in mind that the organization of time and space is of enormous significance in most cultures, and one of the most frequent areas for cross-cultural conflict or misunderstanding, in large part because it is so often unconscious. In particular, educators cannot assume that many of the concepts and attitudes regarding time and space (including personal space) held by the majority culture can be taken for granted, but must be explicitly taught. At the same time, a knowledge of the concepts and attitudes of the minority group regarding time and space is important, since it must form a point of departure in teaching, and is essential if the teacher is to recognize when students (or their parents) are following the rules of their own culture for appropriate behavior, so as to avoid penalizing them for apparent infraction of rules they do not know.

4. Milton J. Bennett's developmental model of intercultural sensitivity

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) was created as a framework to explain the reactions of people to cultural difference. His developmental model moves from ethnocentrism through stages of greater recognition and acceptance of difference to what he calls ethno relativism. The underlying assumption of the model is that as one's experience of cultural difference becomes more complex and sophisticated, one's competence in intercultural relations increases.
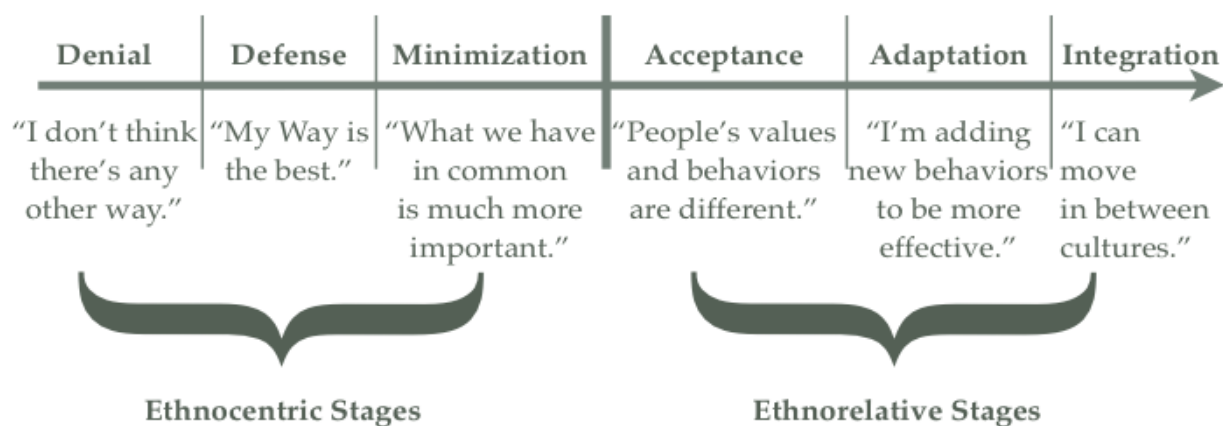
The first three DMIS stages are ethnocentric, meaning that one's own culture is experienced as central to reality in some way:

    i.   Denial of cultural difference; is the state in which one's own culture is experienced as the only real one. In this stage an individual denies that there is any difference. Other cultures are avoided by maintaining psychological and/or physical isolation from differences. People in the denial stage generally are disinterested in cultural difference, although they may act aggressively to eliminate a difference if it impinges on them. There is intentional separation; where an individual or a group set us barriers between people that are "different" on purpose so as not to be confronted with difference. An example of this is racial segregation.

    ii.   Defense against cultural difference; is the state in which one's own culture (or an adopted culture) is experienced as the only good one. Cultural difference can be perceived as threatening since it offers an alternative to one's own sense of reality. Difference is thus perceived but it is fought against. The world is organized into "us and them," where "we" are superior and "they" are inferior. The most common strategy of that fighting is denigration. Stereotyping and racism are examples of strategies of denigration. The other side of denigration is superiority. The emphasis is more on the positive attributes of one's own culture.

    iii.   Minimization of cultural difference; is the state in which elements of one's own cultural world view are experienced as universal. Difference is acknowledged, it may not be fought any more by strategies of denigration or superiority but an attempt is made to minimize its meaning. Similarities are pointed out as far outweighing differences. Organisations tend to consider minimization as the final stage of intercultural development and work towards a world of shared values and common grounds. These common grounds are built on physical universalism, that is on the basic biological similarities between humans. We all must eat, digest and die. Culture is considered as a continuation of biology, its meaning is minimized.

The second three DMIS stages are ethnorelative, meaning that one's own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures. In the ethnorelative stages, difference is not any more perceived as a threat but as a challenge.

iv.   Acceptance of cultural difference; is the state in which one's own culture is experienced as just one of a number of equally complex worldviews. Acceptance begins with accepting that verbal and non-verbal behaviour varies across cultures and that all these variations deserve respect. Second, this acceptance is enlarged to the underlying views of the world and values. This second stage implies knowledge of one's own values and the perception of these values as culturally made. Values are understood as process and as a tool to organize the world, rather than as something that one has.

v.   Adaptation to cultural difference; is the state in which the experience of another culture yields perception and behavior appropriate to that culture. One's worldview is expanded to include constructs from other worldviews. Adaptation is a process of addition; new behavior that is appropriate to a different worldview is learned and added

vi.   to one's repertoire of behaving. Culture is therefore seen as a process, as something that develops and flows rather than as a static thing. Empathy is central to adaptation. People in this stage are able to experience a situation different from one's own cultural. It is the attempt to understand the other by taking up his/her perspective.

vii.   Integration of cultural difference; is the state which occurs when someone's identity or sense of self evolves to incorporate the values, beliefs, perspectives, and behaviors of other cultures in appropriate and authentic ways. As Bennett explains, "Integration of cultural difference is the state in which one's experience of self is expanded to include the movement in and out of different cultural worldviews…. people are able to experience themselves as multicultural beings who are constantly choosing the most appropriate cultural context for their behavior."

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Qts048eJxU

1.3 Cultural diversity and intercultural learning in the classroom

No two students are the same, even if they share a lot in common. To foster cultural awareness, you need to consider all the different aspects of culture that can influence your students' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Common cultural differences include:

Race
It is important to recognize the fact that different students from different races are part of the classroom and how this can affect students' perceptions of each other and themselves.

Ethnicity
While ethnicity is sometimes used as a synonym for race, it is more accurately defined as the culture we derive from our nationality. Ethnic differences appear in all immigrant groups and can persist for generations. Understanding these differences can help you be attuned to your students' interests and outlooks.

Religion
While you know that not everyone worships in the same way—and that some do not worship at all—it is good to familiarize yourself with the ways religious traditions and requirements can impact your students' behaviors and free time.

Language
Language barriers should not be educational barriers. While you cannot be expected to speak every language, you can be expected to make accommodations for those who speak English as a second language.

Economic
The economic situation of a student's family can greatly impact his or her learning. You should be aware of how economic pressures can lead to classroom stress as well as to issues with finding time and a place to study.

Gender
A student's sexual orientation and/or gender identity can become a point of conflict in their lives. It should not also be a point of conflict in the classroom.

1.4 How do you foster cultural awareness and sensitivity in the classroom?

Express interest in diversity
You can go a long way toward fostering a culturally inclusive classroom by demonstrating your own desire to be culturally aware. Ask students to share their stories and relate their cultural experiences to the lessons you are teaching.

Remain sensitive to differences
Some students will be more forthcoming about their cultural differences than others. Before assuming a student is lazy or lacking ability, consider what cultural differences might be influencing a student's study habits and learning—and how you can adjust your methods and/or provide accommodations.

Maintain high expectations for all students
Cultural diversity does not require you to have diverse expectations. You should maintain the same high expectations for all students. Yes, you may choose to make special accommodations for those students who need them, but you want all students to excel. Maintaining different expectations for different students can wrongly teach students that cultural differences determine educational abilities.

Teach a culturally inclusive curriculum
You should make a concerted effort to teach a broad curriculum that more accurately captures the world in its whole. By doing so, you can help ensure students do not feel as if their culture is unimportant or that their own contributions are not wanted.

Video:
https://www.ted.com/talks/hayley_yeates_it_s_past_time_to_appreciate_cultural_diversity

A multicultural classroom is a huge benefit for students because it promotes critical thinking, helps to prevent prejudice, and more. Unfortunately, not all students get that kind of exposure and that begs the question: How can teachers better create cultural awareness in the classroom?

Step 1: Research Different Cultures

At the beginning of the school year, research the cultures of your students as well as cultures they will not have direct exposure to. This will help you find balance when planning your lessons and activities.

Step 2: Educate Yourself

The most important part of introducing another culture is having the facts. As an educator, you should be able to engage with your students and answer questions they may have about the cultures being taught in the classroom.

Step 3: Music Hour

Choose an hour during the day when students are performing basic tasks and play music from a specific culture. Engage with students by asking them how the music sounds to them, what it reminds them of, and what they think the lyrics mean within the context of when and where it was created. Be sure to choose songs that have age-appropriate content.

Step 4: Cultural Corner

Create a cultural corner in the classroom! Each month, you can decorate this section based on a different cultural group. You can ask your students to bring items that represent that culture and showcase them in the display. These items could include flags, books, magazines, artwork, toys, instruments, dictionaries, and more.

Step 5: Flavorful Cook-Off

Another great activity to help strengthen cultural awareness in the classroom is a cook-off. At the end of the year, you could ask students to prepare a dish at home from one of the cultures you studied. Let them know that they will share the food with the rest of the class.

To keep it simple, choose basic dishes from each culture and provide students with recipes to follow. Ask the students to present some facts about the culture when they bring in their dishes, then have the rest of the class ask questions and talk about the flavours they taste in the food.

Before beginning any food activity, ask families' permission and inquire about students' food allergies and religious or other food restrictions.

Step 6: Real-Life Story Time

Take your cultural history lesson to the next level by sharing a real-life story of an individual from the time period you wish to highlight. You can do this in two ways:

- Read a story from a biography or an online publication. The story should be interesting and include many references to the person's specific culture and customs.

- Give your students the chance to tell stories about people from different cultures. Students can choose someone from their families or someone they've studied for homework.

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=U5rKgDOs33U&feature=emb_logo

Creating cultural awareness is of the utmost importance in our increasingly diverse world. It is important to teach our youth how to not only live in but also support a society that welcomes the rich knowledge and perspective that comes with learning about different cultures.

Key Learning Points

- Culture defines the identity of society and the individual. A culture is composed of the customs, norms and genres that inform social life.

- Intercultural principles concentrate on openness to the other, active respect for difference, mutual comprehension, active tolerance, validating the cultures present, providing equality of opportunities, fighting discrimination.

- Intercultural learning aims to promote and to develop the capacities of interaction and communication between students and the world that surrounds them. It ensures that every culture is to be equally valued and that minorities are not obliged to forget their cultural references.

- The Iceberg Model of Culture focuses on the elements that make up culture; some of these elements are very visible, whereas others are hard to discover.

- Geert Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions describes culture as the "collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of the human group from one another". He concluded that differences in culture can be reduced to six basic dimensions

- Edward T. and Mildred Reed behavioural components of culture focoused on several dimensions of differences that are all associated with communication patters or with space or time.

- Milton J. Bennett's developmental model of intercultural sensitivity is defined in terms of stages of personal growth. His developmental model posits a continuum of increasing sophistication in dealing with cultural difference, moving from ethnocentrism through stages of greater recognition and acceptance of difference, which Bennett calls ethno relativism.

- No two students are the same, even if they share a lot in common. To foster cultural awareness, educators need to consider all the different aspects of culture that can influence the students' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors

- Educators who are interested in fostering a cultural awareness in their classroom should actively demonstrate to their students that they genuinely care about their cultural, emotional, and intellectual needs. This can be done through different strategies such as for example having a music hour, cultural cook-off and real-life story time.

Reflection questions

- If you had to create your personal iceberg model, how would it be?
- Can you remember of an instance where you felt you were being discriminated against and another instance where you discriminated others?
- What can you do to foster a multi-cultural environment with your students or young people you work with?
- What were some of the most powerful learning moments during this module? What made them so?
- What will you be doing differently after reading this module?

References

- Baylis John and Smith Steve (2001), *The Globalization of World Politics*, Second Edition, Oxford University Press, United States

- Haralambos and Holborn (2000) Sociology: themes and perspectives, Collins, London

- T-Kit No.4 Intercultural Learning (2007), Council of Europe, Strasbourg